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A N N U A L
R E P O R T

VOTERS NOT POLITICIANS



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Letter from Nancy

Voters Not Politicians (VNP) was formed to put power back in the hands of the people. We led the successful campaign to end gerrymandering in Michigan in 2018 and continue to protect redistricting reform.

2020 was a difficult year for all of us, shadowed by a global pandemic that threatened the health and well-being of our loved ones. The year also exposed the cracks in the foundation of our democracy. At VNP, we know that democracy is stronger when voters are engaged, educated, and demand to be a part of government decision-making and public policy. However, that begins with the fundamental right to vote, which was threatened at almost every turn this year. With so much at stake, we prioritized protecting voting access to ensure no one would have to risk their health to vote.

I am proud of the work that our staff and volunteers accomplished in 2020, though it is clear that we have much more work to do.

Thank you for your support of our people-powered movement.



NANCY WANG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VNP Reflections: A Challenging Year

To protect the safety of our team, partner organizations, and program beneficiaries, VNP moved all of its programming and events online in March of 2020. This posed a challenge for our team and tested our skills and resilience.

Additionally, our team operated in a polarized and uncertain political environment where resources, including volunteers, were scarce.

We interviewed our team to find out the biggest challenges they faced in 2020.



What was your biggest challenge in 2020?

"We are doing all of this organizing digitally."

"Voting has become polarizing."

"Trying to stay motivated when I have been stuck at home."

"The current government system."

"Zoom."

"There were a gazillion campaigns out there recruiting volunteers."

"I was intimidated by the technology."

VNP Reflections: Stepping Up to the Challenge

What are you most proud of in 2020?

Our team stepped up to the plate in 2020, accomplishing our program objectives to defend the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, advocate for voters, and hold elected officials accountable when they act counter to our democratic values. We are proud of our team. It is their passion and commitment to strengthening democracy that drives our organization.

We interviewed our team to find out what they were most proud of in 2020.

"How many volunteer leaders really stepped up to the plate and helped out in every possible way they could."

"We had a lot of people who signed up and said this is worthwhile. There are attacks on our elections system right now and I can make some phone calls and make sure people know their rights."

"Being a part of the work that got done to really get the vote out in Michigan."

"The way that VNP made that quick transition after the pandemic hit to online, and it seems like they hardly skipped a beat."

"During the pandemic you can feel like you don't have a purpose and to wake up every morning knowing that my purpose is to reach as many Michigan voters as I can, it fuels you."

Impact

250,000

Voters provided with the tools and information they needed to vote safely

802,662

Voters in 17 jurisdictions with expanded access to early absentee voting

216.5

Additional hours for early in-person voting and registration at clerks' offices

74%

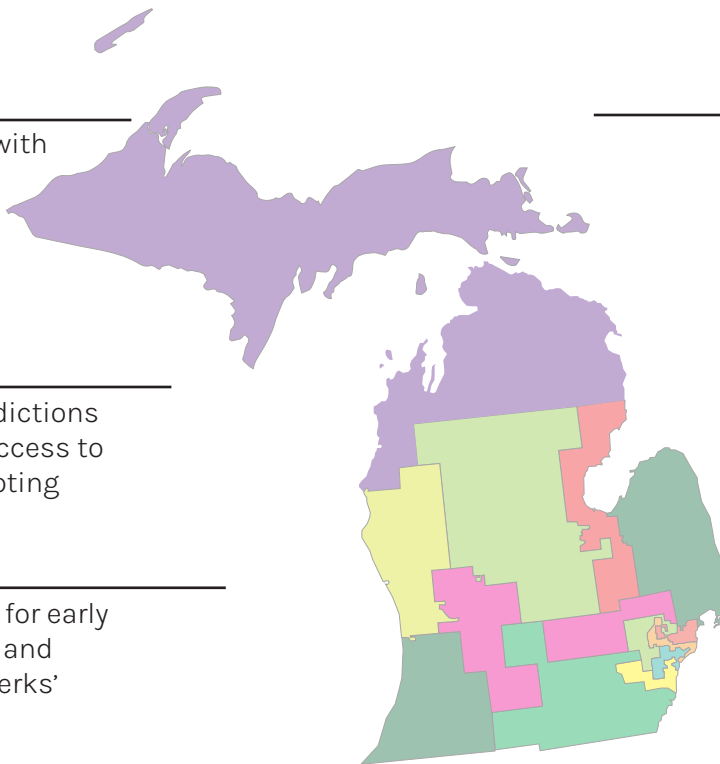
VoteSafe-approved candidates won their races

2,539

Volunteer text and phone bank shifts completed

286

Earned media hits from local, state, and national press outlets.



VNP in the News

Michigan to live-stream selection of 200 redistricting commission finalists Wednesday

- MLive (6/22/20)

Opinion | Michigan earned an 'F' in government integrity. Help us do better

- Bridge Magazine (1/11/20)

Michigan Starts Steps To Let Voters, Not Politicians, Map Political Districts

- Deadline Detroit (3/3/20)

Federal judge dismisses challenge to redistricting commission

- Michigan Radio (7/6/20)

U.S. Court of Appeals upholds Michigan's redistricting commission

- The Detroit News (4/15/20)

Pontiac expanding clerk hours for absentee voting

- The Oakland Press (7/15/20)

More than 6,000 apply for Michigan's redistricting commission as deadline hits

- MLive (6/1/20)

Opinion | Vote at home. Can everyone in Michigan agree on that?

- Bridge Magazine (6/16/20)

Accountability Project

Michigan is consistently rated last in the country for government integrity by the Center for Public Integrity. It is one of only two states where the legislature and governor's office are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), one of only two states where no financial disclosure is required of lawmakers, and it has the shortest and most restrictive term limits in the nation. There is no effective ethics oversight, conflict-of-interest rules are weak, and there's nothing stopping legislators from taking lucrative lobbying jobs immediately after leaving office. Weak policies encourage corruption and the lack of transparency means voters are unable to hold their elected officials accountable.

As a trusted, nonpartisan voice for the people, VNP has been working with the legislative leadership of both major parties to enact a package of reforms

**MICHIGAN GETS F GRADE
IN 2015 STATE INTEGRITY
INVESTIGATION**
- The Center for Public Integrity (11/9/2015)

which would finally bring Michigan's government up from the bottom of the barrel. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit just as we were making significant progress on the bills.

Not to be deterred, we see a rare and valuable opportunity in 2021 to advance a sweeping package of ethics, transparency, and accountability reforms that will change the political landscape of Michigan for decades to come.

LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

- Rules preventing outgoing lawmakers from cramming through extreme legislation during "lame-duck" sessions
- Close the "revolving door" to the politician turned lobbyist
- Public access to government records
- Public financial disclosures by elected officials
- Strong conflicts of interest rules and an independent body to enforce them

Proposal 2

Voters Not Politicians started as a citizen-led ballot initiative that reformed the redistricting process in Michigan in 2018. To end gerrymandering and truly unrig our elections, however, we must make sure the law is implemented as the people intended: in a fair, transparent and impartial way.

Overseeing Implementation

In 2020, VNP volunteers played a significant role in the state's recruitment of 9,367 applicants for the Commission by educating voters and supporting them step-by-step through the application process. When the pandemic hit Michigan, VNP quickly shifted programming online, holding 13 virtual workshops and providing 518 applicants with free, remote notary services. We were delighted to see the 13 members of Michigan's first Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC), who were selected randomly from

the applicant pool, mirror the demographic makeup of the state.

Protecting From Legal Attacks

Since 2019, VNP has defended the ICRC against legal challenges brought by the Michigan Republican Party and the Michigan Freedom Fund, and we have won at every stage. We thought we could finally close the books on these meritless lawsuits in 2020, after both the District Court and 6th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Commission as constitutional.



In February, VNP hosted the members of the 2010 California ICRC

But the legal fight continues. In November of 2020, Tony Daunt of the Michigan Freedom Fund appealed the dismissal of their case. The case is once again before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and it may go all of the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2021.

VoteSafe

Voters Not Politicians launched the VoteSafe campaign in the spring of 2020 to ensure that no voter would have to risk their life to exercise their right to vote.

The VoteSafe campaign raised awareness among voters of their right to cast an absentee ballot without providing a reason, one of the hallmarks of the “Promote the Vote” constitutional amendment passed by the voters in 2018. VNP also mobilized our grassroots army to advance legislation to make absentee voting and vote-by-mail more safe, secure and convenient; and held elected officials accountable for their opposition to vote-by-mail policies.

VNP identified which state legislators support vote-by-mail by administering a questionnaire to all sitting legislators and state house candidates. Candidates who passed were given the “VoteSafe Approved” stamp to let voters know that the candidate supported VNP’s pro-voter agenda.



VNP Executive Director Nancy Wang led a team of experts, including Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, on voting access and vote by mail during a VoteSafe Townhall on May 21, 2020.

In addition, VNP launched a robust campaign, using text and phone banks, digital ads and direct mail, to inform voters in 5 key competitive Michigan House districts on where their legislators and candidates stood on voters’ rights. Of the 57 VoteSafe-approved candidates, 42 were elected to the Michigan House, a success rate of approximately 74%.

Advocating for a Pro-Voter Legislative Agenda

VNP mobilized volunteers on two fronts: contacting voters by phone and text to inform them about VoteSafe legislation, and calling Michigan legislators directly in support of key bills through our Dial for Democracy Program. We successfully advocated for an amendment to Public Act 116, which allowed clerks in larger municipalities to process ballots the day before Election Day, and provided a requirement that clerks notify voters if a signature error that would invalidate their absentee ballot.

VOTE SAFE LEGISLATION

HB 5991	Requires notification to voters of a missing signature or signature mismatch on an absentee voter application or ballot.
HB 5987	Ballots postmarked by Election Day counted up to 48 hours post-election.
SB 757	Allows certain city clerks to open absentee ballot return envelopes on the day before Election Day.
SB 756	Allows for election inspectors working in shifts on an absent voter counting board after polls close on Election Day.



Activists across the political spectrum agree that picking up the phone and calling your elected officials is one of the most effective ways to make your voice heard. Many elected officials and their staff members have stated that a phone call from a constituent holds more weight than an email or a tweet. VNP's Dial for Democracy Program provides volunteers with a script and the info needed to have an easy and productive call. Sign up at votersnotpoliticians.com

Nights & Weekends

In addition to passing redistricting reform in 2018, Michigan voters passed Proposal 3, the Promote the Vote amendment to expand voters' rights in Michigan.

Proposal 3 permits no-reason absentee voting and same-day registration. In 2020, 3.2 million Michigan voters took advantage of these rights by casting an absentee ballot by mail, at a drop box, or at their clerk's office before election day.

Proposal 3 also requires that all clerks' offices be open for at least 8 weekend hours immediately before election day. However, Proposal 3 sets a floor, not a ceiling. Each of Michigan's 1,520 city and township clerks have wide discretion to provide greater voting access in their jurisdictions.

To maximize the benefits of Proposal 3 for voters, VNP mobilized our grassroots volunteers to advocate for

expanded voting access in their communities. Our Nights & Weekends program uses our organization's lean staff and expansive network of volunteers to engage city and township clerks. In 2020, we maintained, organized, and trained 26 active teams across Michigan. The program demonstrates the power of meaningful engagement with local officials. VNP volunteers helped expand clerk's office hours for early voting and registration by a total of 261.5 hours in 17 municipalities, benefiting 802,662 registered voters.

Nights & Weekends not only made voting more convenient in 2020, it also made voting during the pandemic safer by reducing long lines and crowding on the day of the election. Moreover, VNP's volunteer teams continue to build upon their relationships with clerks to effect more pro-voter change on the local level.



People-Powered Success in Kalamazoo

VNP's success in the Nights & Weekends program in Kalamazoo provides a shining example of "the power of the people." In 2020, VNP volunteer, Jessica Swartz, led a months-long effort to expand voting access in the city.

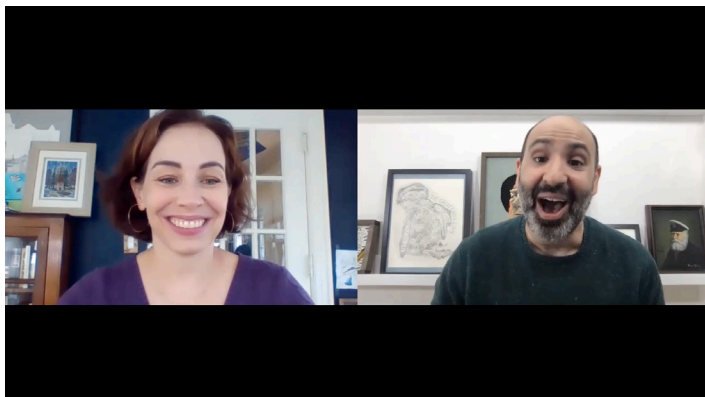
Jessica organized a team of VNP volunteers; formed partnerships with four community organizations to advocate for ballot drop box locations, pre-paid postage for return ballots, and expanded clerks' office hours on nights and weekends; and met with the City Clerk and City Commission members. Jessica's team collected over 100 petition

signatures calling for the City Commission to pass a resolution and Jessica gave public comment at several public meetings to support the effort. As a result, the

City Commission unanimously passed a resolution that established 4 ballot drop boxes, provided pre-paid postage for absentee ballots, and increased the clerks' office hours by 16 hours on nights and weekends

leading up to election day. One of the teams biggest wins was a satellite office on Western Michigan University's campus. The City Commissioner who introduced the resolution acknowledged the role Jessica and her team played in the Commission's decision to pass the measures. The expansion of voting access in the City of Kalamazoo

for the 2020 election can be directly attributed to the tireless efforts put forth by passionate VNP volunteers and community partners.



Jessica Swartz talks more about the N&W program in Kalamazoo with fellow VNP volunteer, Amir Baghdadchi.

Vision for 2021



Voters Not Politicians is looking both back to our roots and forward as we continue to evolve as an organization to make our government work for all Michiganders. VNP began as a citizen-led campaign to end gerrymandering and 2021 will be an important year for Proposal 2 implementation. While ending gerrymandering will help us fix some of the structural issues in our state, it is clear it is not the only change that needs to happen. We will continue to steward Proposal 2 to ensure the will of the people is carried out, and work on important reforms both in the legislature and the voting booth.

Acknowledgements

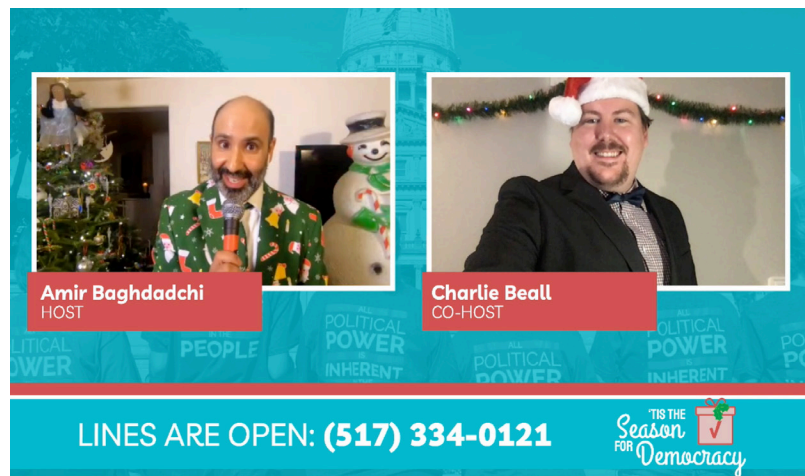
We are grateful for the grassroots donors who make our work possible. In particular we would like to thank our Democracy Champions of 2020.

Adam Goodman
Anne Ballew
Anthony Barclay
Anurag Acharya
Caranne Fields
Carol Levin
Carol Myers
Carolyn Hendrickson
Colleen Spencer
Daniel Hein
Diana Raimi and John Dryden
Donna O'Connor
Fran and David Korten
Gary Stark
Hilary Cohen
Inta Grace
Irma Glaser
James Turner
Janet Smith
Jason Schwalb

Jeffrey Padden
Jennifer Tislerics
Joseph Guiltinan
Judy and Steve Kesler
Jurate Landwehr
Linda and Charles Anderson
Lisa Disch
Lori Boyce
Monica Donnelly
Nancy McCrohan
Naomi Morse
Patrice Aaron
Paul Kinney
Paula Jo Kemler
Peter Houk
Phil Roos
Ted and Wendy Lawrence
Thomas Carr
Thomas Trautmann
Tim Storey

Telethon Event Sponsors

The Voters Not Politician's annual Telethon is VNP's Signature fundraising event. It is an opportunity to showcase the talent and creativity of volunteers, staff, family and friends. The Telethon featured special guests, presenters and performers, along with volunteers who are phone banking to raise money during the event. This year's event was hosted by VNP allstars, Charlie Beall and Amir Baghdadchi. Telethon sponsors help us reach our fundraising goal.



LINES ARE OPEN: **(517) 334-0121**



Hour

Mike Staebler*

Volunteer

Martin Waymire

Lisa Wozniak

Marianne Udow-Phillips

Jim & Natalie Kerby

Dana Thompson

Buck Baker

Host

Adam Conover

June & Richard Swartz*

Joe Schwarz

Booster

Carl Bekofske

Jamie Lyons-Eddy

*denotes a contribution to the Count MI Vote Education Fund

Financials

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY		
Revenue		
	Individual	\$385,086
	Grants	\$650,000
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,035,086
Expenses		
	Management/General	\$97,559
	Fundraising	\$46,982
	Programs	\$886,853
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,031,395
	NET REVENUE	\$3,691

About Us

Voters Not Politicians' journey to end gerrymandering started with a facebook post in November 2016, when a group of internet strangers, all political novices, came together to take on gerrymandering in Michigan. Our group quickly grew from hundreds to thousands of volunteers who came from a variety of backgrounds – from retirees and students to veterinarians and lawyers, young and old, of different political stripes.

Against the odds, our citizen-led campaign ended gerrymandering with the overwhelming approval of Michigan voters (61%) on November 6, 2018.

VNP continues to defend and promote policies that strengthen democracy. Michigan's government must truly represent the will of the people, all votes must count equally, and all voices must be heard. Our representatives must not be unduly influenced by lobbyists or special interests or motivated by personal gain.

VISION

We envision a truly representative democracy, where the will of the voters drives government decision-making and public policy.

MISSION

Voters Not Politicians is a nonpartisan advocacy organization that works to effect structural and systemic democracy reform by engaging people across Michigan in effective citizen action.

VALUES

Integrity • Inclusiveness • Empowerment
• Innovation • Impartiality • Excellence

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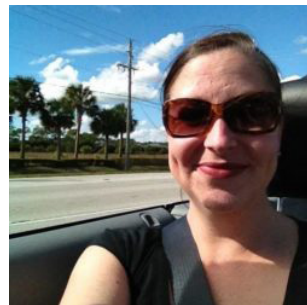
CHARLIE BEALL
DIGITAL & TARGETING DIRECTOR



JENNIFER ALBERTS
CAMPAIGN MANAGER



MELISSA HORSTE
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



CARANNE FIELDS
OPERATIONS MANAGER

Volunteer Advisory Council

Sherri Dansby (Region 5)
Deborah Grogan (Region 1)
Hal Gurian (Region 1)
Jay Kilpatrick (Region 2)
Laurence Kloss (Region 4)

Jessie Iliff List (Region 2/3)
Shawn Manley (Region 6)
Naomi Morse (Region 2)
Toni Wilson (Region 5)
Marie Woznicki-Likavec (Region 3)



Volunteers are an integral part of the organization. The Volunteer Advisory Council is a group comprised of VNP volunteers who provide key guidance and feedback on issues impacting volunteers and the direction of the organization.

Contact Us

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at vnp.vote/donate

