

Most of the people I know never believed that the current occupant of the White House would win the primary, but he did. We were in the same state of denial, helped by virtually all the pundits, about the possibility of him being elected as our president. Although we were expecting the worst, the reality surpassed our fears. Wiping out most of the gains of the last eight years, this administration has done massive damage to people's lives, our environment, our standing in the world. It seems as if every day brings another outrage.

The dread I have been feeling since the election has only increased with the very real possibility that Donald Trump may be re-elected. If that happens our democracy will be seriously imperiled. He and his administration will take re-election as a sign that they can continue to do as they please, further shredding the safety net and the constitution while the overt white supremacists that are his closest advisors will have another four years in power.

I have been an activist for most of my adult life, but living in the bluest of blue states poses a dilemma about how to work to get my candidates elected in other states. In past elections, I did what many people did – contributed to candidates I supported, canvassed in nearby states, wrote postcards, made phone calls. None of this activity feels as if it is enough in the face of the very real and present danger of four more years of this presidency.

But then something happened that gave me a boost. I learned about the Movement Voter Project (MVP) from an article in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* and then joined the Western Mass organizing team. MVP is a national organization based in Northampton and has been working for progressive change since 2014. Sometimes very simple ideas are the most brilliant ones. The idea behind MVP is to connect the dots between grass roots activism and electoral politics. MVP does what no other group does. It seeks out, vets, and supports progressive community-based organizations around the country, particularly in communities that are most affected by economic and racial injustice. Based in their communities, these groups know their neighbors, know the issues people care about. They are successful in engaging people to make real change in their communities year round. At election time they turn out votes up and down the ticket. With more than thirty million dollars raised in 2019, MVP is supporting almost 500 groups that not only get out the vote, but organize communities for long term progressive change as well.

The grass roots groups MVP funds make a difference. In the 2019 special election in Virginia, MVP supported the New Virginia Majority with a grant of \$475,000, which helped to turn Virginia into a totally blue state for the first time since 1994. In the special election in 2017 in Alabama between Roy Moore and Doug Jones, MVP sprang into action when the press reported that most Black voters were unaware of the upcoming special election. Through their contacts with community organizers in the state MVP learned about and funded four grass roots groups: Woke Vote, Righteous Vote, Black Voters Matter, and Alabama Grass Roots Mobilization Project. These groups reached out to people the traditional Democratic campaigns were ignoring. Organizing in the twenty-one counties with a majority Black population and on the campuses of historically Black Colleges and Universities in Alabama, these groups delivered a huge black vote for Doug Jones, who handily won by more than 21,000 votes. In 2018 in New Hampshire, MVP funded groups in communities of color in the state. With this support the groups were able to get out the vote for Maggie Hassan, who won by a 1,207 vote margin. With

her vote in the Senate the Affordable Care Act was saved. These examples are a few of the victories MVP has made possible all over the country since 2014.

MVP has very clear criteria for funding groups. Groups must be engaged in getting out the vote *and* building towards a larger movement for progressive change. To this end, these local organizations must function year round, work collaboratively with other groups, focus on communities of color, low income people, and youth. The MVP team, seasoned community organizers, works closely with the groups they fund, assessing their immediate needs and challenges, offering advice as well as funding. Groups submit reports to MVP on an ongoing basis, including qualitative and quantitative indicators of successes and challenges. Groups may be well established or just starting out. If they are new, MVP might fund them for a small amount, see how they do, and then give them a larger grant. Eighty percent of the funds must be used to get out the vote while the other twenty percent can be used for group infrastructure.

Teams across the country, like ours right here in western Massachusetts, raise money to support these community-based organizations. We contact individual donors, host house parties, and get out the word about the great work MVP is doing.

Working with MVP these past few months is giving me hope, in this time of terrible peril for our democracy and the world. I also feel excitement as people respond with a sense of relief and renewed commitment when they learn about MVP.

You can donate, tell your friends, host a house party, or join our team. You can make a general donation to MVP, contribute to the Five State Fund, or to a particular group. MVP doesn't take a percentage for administration; every penny goes to the groups they support. They are organized by state or focus so you can find a group that meets your particular interests.

To find out more about Movement Voter Project visit the web page at <https://movement.vote/>
Be sure to watch the short video. Please do not hesitate to contact me at avakian@wost.umass.edu I would love to answer any questions you might have.

Some victory photos from 2019 election night in Virginia, Minnesota, California, and



Pennsylvania.



Canvassers from New Virginia Majority, the major local organization that drove many of the victories on Tuesday. MVP moved \$475,000 overall to partners in Virginia.

Democrats took control of Delaware County as Republicans are fading across the Philadelphia region

by [Michaëlle Bond](#) and [Vinny Vella](#), Updated: 4 minutes ago



TIM TAI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Reform candidate Jack Stollstierner [narrowly won](#) the Delaware County District Attorney race by 4,706 votes. MVP invested more than \$200,000 in five groups to turn out progressive voters in this race. It was a major geographic expansion project, and it was all of their first time doing an electoral campaign in this important suburban county.



**parties at
2019
the polls!**

**TUESDAY
NOV 5
4PM-7PM**

HOMWOOD GAZEBO

#JUDGETHEJUDGES

1HOOD 

Five major grassroots organizations in Pennsylvania, including 1 Hood, ran election programs for the very first time. We helped them launch a C4 and hire 103 organizers to target 65 precincts for GOTV.



Philly One PA committee member Ahmad (with committee leader Ms. Agnes) went from never having voted to canvassing three times and working the polls.



UNIDOS MN helped win a [referendum to fund schools](#) in Worthington, Minnesota, in the county that received the second most unaccompanied minors per capita of anywhere in the country. One of the three ballot measures passed by just 17 votes. MVP invested seed funding to launch UNIDOS as a C4 in 2017.



COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY:

The Albemarle Commonwealth's Attorney (CA) has the power to decide who and what types of crimes to prosecute. Since 2009, reported crimes in Albemarle have fallen by 29% **yet felony bookings are up by 79%**.

source: Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board Report, 2019

THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTED OFFICIAL YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF.

THE CA CONTROLS:

- marijuana decriminalization
- use of cash bail
- use of the death penalty
- tracking racial disparity data
- prosecuting the torch-bearing Nazis who marched at UVA

WHO'S RUNNING:

JIM HINGELEY
 Democrat challenger
jimhingeleyforcwa.com

ROBERT TRACCI
 Republican incumbent
roberttracci.com

MVP supported Virginia Student Power Network to run a dorm storm at UVA for the Albemarle County Attorney election. Students who were injured in the Nazi rally and car attack were involved. Turnout in their targeted precinct increased from 249 votes in 2015 to 1,018 in 2019 - a quadrupling of student turnout.



NAKASEC ACTION FUND
IN THE FIELD

