

## CHAPTER THREE:

# MULTIPLE TYPES OF RESISTANCE: GAME CHANGE, OUTSIDE GAME, AND INSIDE GAME

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Active popular support is the fuel for successful social movements. Turning active popular support into social change requires three different types of resistance: 1. game changing events that change public opinion and recruit new people; 2. outside game strategies that pressure decision makers; and 3. inside game strategies that put movement-identified leaders in positions within the system where they can effect change.

Strategy asks the question:  
'What can we do today, so that  
tomorrow we can do what we are  
unable to do today?'"

– Paulo Freire

"Keep the pressure on with  
different tactics and actions, and  
utilize all events of the period  
for your purpose."

–Saul Alinsky, *Thirteen Tactics for Realistic  
Radicals: from Rules for Radicals*

*Since the November 2016 election, new organizations have sprung up like wildflowers to absorb the revitalized energy of mass protest. Amid this whirlwind of activity, however, it can be difficult to know how or where plug in. Many people have asked us how they can get involved and how they can make the biggest difference.*

*The study of civil resistance points to some answers.*

*Almost every tactic used across the broad spectrum of civil resistance falls into one of three types, and most effective movements in democratic countries succeed by employing some form of all three. We call these three types of resistance: game change, outside game, and inside game.*

*This section will explain what makes each type of resistance effective, as well as how they complement one another. While it can be beneficial to center your efforts around one organization and focus primarily on the type of resistance that best suits your circumstances and passions, we recommend that everyone support all three types of resistance. The Tea Party showed us how much power can be leveraged when all three are used at once. If hundreds of thousands of people contribute in this way, Trump and the Republicans won't stand a chance.*

### **The Tea Party**

The Tea Party's rise to power is an example of how game change, outside game, and inside game can all work together to drive political transformation.

The massive Tax Day protest that established the Tea Party as a political force was a classic game change: It shifted the political debate, putting Obama and the Democrats in Congress on the defensive.

The Tea Party followed this with a blazingly effective outside game, flooding Congressional offices with phone calls, letters, and delegations.

Finally, as election after election saw vulnerable Democratic seats fall to Republicans and mainstream Republicans fall to Tea Party candidates, they demonstrated their mastery of the inside game. With such influence in Congress, they often left President Obama with no option but executive action, even preventing him from filling a Supreme Court vacancy.

We can build progressive power if we learn from—and improve upon—the strategies of their insurgency.

## Type I: Game Change

**Game change includes two different kinds of activity. The first is massive protests that shift public opinion enough, redefining what is and is not possible under the current circumstances, and fuels active popular support. Such protest can either be a response to external events or generated by the movement. We call these sorts of protests trigger events. The second kind of activity consists of small actions that may not have the same scope as trigger events but still communicate to the public and help change the political weather.**

From great mass protests, great social movements are born. Successful events use clear messaging, rich symbolism, and captivating imagery to inspire and motivate participants and to make observers want to join in. These actions are designed to speak to, agitate, move, and recruit the public. They do not include pressure on politicians or other decision-makers as a primary goal.

Large-scale game changing protests are known as **trigger events**. These are the engine for the resistance. They fill our ranks with people who want to help create change. They dramatize injustice and speak to core values. They give even those who keep to the sidelines a stronger connection to the message. **We call it game change because trigger events can cause such a dramatic culture shift that the entire political playing field is rearranged.**

Smaller acts of protest and noncooperation also fall under game change. In response to Trump's election, students walked out of

classes across the country to support sanctuary campuses. Yemeni bodega owners shut down their operations in New York City to oppose the travel ban. These actions demonstrate a refusal to allow abuses of power to be normalized. They target the public. When ordinary students or storekeepers disrupt business as usual in the face of injustice, anyone watching may be inspired to take a stand.

### ***The movement can create game change from outside events***

Watershed news events that occur outside the control of movements can result in game-changing movement responses.

In 2013, activists created #BlackLivesMatter in response to George Zimmerman's acquittal for the murder of Trayvon Martin. The following year, the #BlackLivesMatter movement organized mass protests in response to the police killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown. Polarized by the protests, few could ignore the issue of racial justice in policing. In this case, the horrific killings prompted trigger events in the form of game-changing protest actions.

The moments of intense protest that follow calamitous events generate the images and create the awareness that changes people's hearts and minds. **But calamity alone does not lead to protest. It is the movement's ability to create trigger events in moments of crisis that will determine how effective and lasting those changes are.**

Considered this way, the movement built a trigger event out of Trump's victory. The day after the 2016 election, more than 350 protests broke out in cities large and small across the United States. Within five days, activists announced plans for a Women's March that would take place immediately after the inauguration. This march turned out to be the largest protest in U.S. history, with more than 4.2 million participants in more than 600 cities, and forced a brand new presidency into an unprecedented defensive crouch.

#### ***Small actions can build towards game change***

Game change can occur even in the absence of explosive or monumental trigger events. With small actions, protesters communicate the values and goals of the movement to targeted slices of the public. These actions don't necessarily grab the national media spotlight or pressure decision makers. By reframing an issue, however, they can force members of a community or a sector to take sides and thereby gradually change the game. Certain actions can be duplicated week after week, or staged to similar effect in different locations. These types of activities

are important—and many can be undertaken with little preparation or expense. Document them, share them on social media, and encourage your friends and followers to join you in them. They help to maintain a sense of urgency and keep the movement growing. In the dozens, hundreds or even thousands, these types of actions can move mountains.

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**Small Action Ideas**

- Protesters showing up at Trump Tower.
- A guerrilla theater troupe interrupting a college dining hall with a song or a skit to dramatize a particular issue.
- College students turning their backs on a commencement speaker who represents the administration.
- Dropping a banner from an office tower or a freeway overpass.
- Holding a wheatpasting session in a business district.
- Changing one's Facebook profile picture in solidarity with a movement or event.

**Trigger Events**

Some game-changing protests that have shifted public discussion around an issue:

- The civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama, that broadcast to the world images of Bull Connor's use of dogs and firehoses on protesters, 1963
- The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, 1963
- The coming out of Ellen DeGeneres on her television show, 1997
- The occupation of Zuccotti Park (Occupy Wall Street) and the propagation of Occupy camps worldwide, 2011
- The protests generated by the killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown and Eric Garner, 2012-14
- The Women's March that followed the inauguration of Trump, 2017
- The airport protests that followed the travel ban, 2017

**WHAT'S POSSIBLE**

Game change protest, if successful, would shift public opinion firmly to the side of the movement and against Trump and the Republicans.

**Imagine if tens of thousands of people flood the streets in response to every unjust law, every committee vote that goes against American values, every executive action that threatens our democracy. Imagine if from these trigger events, everyday people working in small groups spin off hundreds of small actions to drive the message home in their communities.**

Politicians who support the Trump/GOP agenda would see their approval numbers collapse and their legitimacy falter. As the political weather changed, the media would cover the resistance with admiration, not disdain. Trump's presidency would start to be perceived as a failed presidency and would pull the GOP down with it.

**HOW TO ACT**

Here's how you can make that vision real: You can show up every time. Show up to long-planned protests and show up to spur-of-the-moment protests that turn new headlines into trigger events.

Bring a sign that speaks to the media or the public, and stay on message. One unified message repeated over and over is stronger than many disconnected messages.

You can't count on the media to give protesters credit for change, so celebrate the impact of your protests and frame them as successful in light of subsequent events.

Follow up on large-scale protests with small actions in your community that elaborate on the messages of trigger events.

Consistent, rapid protest responses with strong messages have driven Trump's approval rating down, inhibiting his ability to enact the GOP agenda. We should do everything we can to drive it down further. And the most important part of this is showing up.

You may not agree with every aspect of a particular protest. You may feel critical of certain messages and actions promoted by the groups that are organizing it. But that doesn't mean you should disengage. The best way to contribute is to show up time and time again. Find the organizers and offer to help promote, organize or set up. The more protests you support by simply showing up, the better sense you'll have of what works. (Existing resources can help you identify what works—for practical protest tips, check out BeautifulTrouble.org, which provides an online toolbox for grassroots action.)



Showing up is a muscle, and regular exercise of this muscle makes our movements stronger. **If we build a movement that mobilizes every time democracy is threatened, we'll see a culture shift.** Politicians will run from Trump and the GOP agenda for fear of awakening a sleeping giant. That's game change.

### **KEYS TO SUCCESS**

- **Does the protest generate passion, support, and attention?** Participants should feel energized after successful game change protest. Both passive and active support should grow, as observers move towards our side, and new participants join in.
- **Does the protest help reframe the issue for the public?** Game change protest should include a strong message that educates people about our issues and helps observers emotionally connect with our cause. It should highlight common values that Americans share and should delegitimize or undermine the stance of the opposition. This can help people in the middle of the spectrum of support move towards our side.
- **Does the protest attract attention?** Media coverage is the best vehicle for game change protest. Social media can heighten media impact and focus messaging. You'll know game change protest is working when the media is spreading our frame and more and more people understand our issues.

### **The Women's March and the Airport Protests Were Game-Changing**

From the moment Donald Trump prevailed in the electoral college—and thus won the presidency—the resistance was visible. Unrest erupted all over the country. Protests filled the days and weeks following Election Day as people took to the streets to express their grief and anger. Some observers criticized the protests, but the feeling of widespread disapproval proved contagious: Trump took office with the lowest approval rating of any modern president.

The day after Trump's inauguration, four million people gathered together in 653 different cities to protest his presidency. The Women's March was the biggest single-day demonstration in U.S. history. For many protesters—up to a third, according to a survey conducted by University of Maryland professor Dana Fisher—it was their first participation in any kind of civil resistance. Many others hadn't protested for decades.

Public opinion surveys immediately after the march showed that the protesters had greater public support (50 percent) than Trump himself (44 percent). The pressure only increased during Trump's first week in office. A new movement was springing to life. Tens of thousands started meeting in Indivisible groups, showing up at town hall meetings, participating in subsequent protests big and small, and calling their representatives.

Then the administration issued a draconian executive order targeting Muslims and refugees, banning the entry into the country of even those who had been here for years, with legal papers. In response, tens of thousands of people flocked to airports nationwide to demand that detainees be released. Many were mobilized through networks born out of the previous protests.

Those massive protests kept the spotlight on those declaring their resistance. The visibility of protesters' anger helped keep support for the travel ban under 50 percent. Soon, a large base of corporate leaders, academics, and law experts stood up to oppose it. With the active popular support of a movement behind them, the courts soon followed. The law was struck down by two federal judges.

In June 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the ban to proceed within certain limits while it considered its constitutionality. As writer [Rob Hunter](#) put it in a review, "It is more important than ever to form coalitions among organizations, to forge stronger bonds of solidarity, and to build the social movement power of Muslims, refugees and immigrants... Only a mass movement will successfully fight the ban."



## Type II: The Outside Game

**While game change protest is focused on building mass public support, outside game protest targets the powers that be. Some outside game protests have chiefly symbolic value. Others yield practical outcomes. Outside game protest can be effective in various spheres of influence, but targeting decision-makers is the most critical.**

Outside game strategies allow individuals who are outside the channels of power to collectively raise their voices, issue demands, and achieve change by either halting bad policies or propelling good ones forward. Outside game tactics call out decision-makers who would often prefer not to hear from us.

Of course, none of us is truly an outsider. We all have connections to places where power is exercised and decisions are made. We live our lives in various **spheres of influence** where we can make our views known. Working together, we can use these spheres of influence to drive change.

With all the energy generated by game-changing protest, our movement is flush with new recruits who believe in the power of the resistance and are eager to stay involved. Creative thinking about our spheres of influence will help us turn this growing active popular support into tangible achievements.

### ***You have more power than you know***

One of the reasons social movements can make such a big impact is that each of the millions of people who belong to a movement has influence and power in many different aspects of their life.

Perhaps the most important sphere of influence in which we can act is as constituents to elected officials. As community organizer and theorist Saul Alinsky put it in his book *Rules for Radicals*, “Action comes from keeping the heat on. No politician can sit on a hot issue if you make it hot enough.” Our influence with our representatives doesn’t begin and end on Election Day: We can call or write their offices and show up at their town halls. Tea Party activists confronted their representatives en masse to great effect, and the *Indivisible Guide* has shown the Trump/GOP resistance how to respond in similar fashion (see sidebar).

**When activists make it costlier for politicians to support the status quo than to oppose it, we see change.** Republicans ease off their attacks on environmental regulations or protections for the poor. Establishment Democrats tilt their efforts away from Wall Street backers and towards working people.

The most important arena for the outside game is electoral politics, but pressure need not only be applied to elected representatives. This is where other spheres of influence come into play: We can move corporations, for example, as employees, consumers, or shareholders.

Tech industry leaders felt pressure to resign from Trump's advisory council when their employees organized against using their skills to support deportations or religious discrimination in the form of a Muslim registry. The #DeleteUBER hashtag went viral after the company attempted to profit from an anti-travel-ban taxi strike in New York City, showing the power of consumer pressure.

Independently of electoral politics, boycotts have used consumer power to win direct reform from corporations. Apple, Nike, and Target, for instance, have all responded to consumer-led action in recent memory, improving working conditions and addressing anti-LGBTQ bias. Boycotts often begin to alarm corporations simply by gaining traction on social media—even before broadcast and print media take notice, and long before they begin to noticeably slow earnings. Union fights, local development environmental battles, and campaigns to pressure religious organizations or professional societies on particular issues also count as outside game protest.



### Resistance Within Different Spheres of Influence

- **As workers:** Federal employees refused to implement parts of the travel ban.
- **As consumers:** Consumers launched the #DeleteUBER campaign when Uber tried to take advantage of the travel ban taxi strike by offering low prices, leading thousands to ditch the app and ultimately pressuring the CEO to step down from Trump's tech advisory council.
- **As students:** Students on college campuses responded to enhanced immigration enforcement by demanding sanctuary campus policies, including non-cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- **As local constituents:** Similarly, residents demanded that their cities, towns, counties and states declare themselves sanctuary jurisdictions, and that local police stop enforcing immigration law—even as Trump threatened to withhold federal funds from sanctuary cities.
- **As federal constituents:** Constituents put the pressure on their members of Congress to oppose the travel ban.

Many outside game campaigns are designed by experienced strategic campaigners. If you start a small group, don't feel that you need to design your own a campaign. You can link up with one that has already begun. One campaign that everyone can join is putting pressure on members of Congress.

### WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Imagine that the thousands of people who participated in game change protest have been joined by thousands more who were moved to oppose the Trump/GOP agenda because of that protest and subsequent small actions. Now they form their own small groups and flood established organizations to join existing campaigns.

Every proposal that comes out of the Trump administration or the Republican Congress sets off a barrage of phone calls, town halls, and delegations, day after day. Democratic officials, their fighting spirit restored, work harder to resist Trump's every move. Republicans hesitate to endorse Trump's agenda for fear of losing constituents.

### HOW TO ACT

You can make this happen. The *Indivisible Guide* has been incredibly effective at getting the ball rolling. Now we need to keep up the pressure! Use the four tactics described in the *Indivisible Guide*: Confront your member of Congress at town halls; participate in events in his or her home district; join in district sit-ins (or, if fighting for health care, "die-ins"); and barrage them by fax and phone.

Don't leave out your Democratic representatives either. Even the most progressive Democrats need to know there's pressure on them from the movement, and most Democrats will slide towards the middle (or keep their heads down) if they don't see that the movement is alive and kicking in their district. Positive feedback can be important too. It helps politicians stay strong when doing the right thing—and it lets them know that you're watching.

Even if it isn't your primary focus, participate in outside game resistance at least once a month. Make phone calls. Show up to town hall meetings. Or find other strategic campaigns that influence decision makers.

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

- **Is this type of resistance using our sphere of influence to pressure a decision maker?** Unlike small actions, which focus on winning active popular support, outside game tactics focus on pressuring decision makers.
- **Pressuring decision makers who control laws, policies, or institutions.** A good outside game tactic will use the smallest amount of force necessary to make a decision-maker feel the greatest amount of pressure. Look for signs that the decision-maker is nervous about a damaged reputation or a loss in power.
- **Has the decision maker changed their stance, started to behave differently, or found themselves in a dilemma?** For example, an elected official might have to decide between showing up to face a jeering town hall crowd or appearing cowardly by canceling their appearance.



### **Indivisible and the Health Care Fight**

From the day that President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, Republicans have vowed to repeal it. Throughout four congressional election cycles and two GOP presidential primaries, Republicans continuously promised to “repeal and replace” Obamacare.

Sure enough, Trump’s first major legislative push after his inauguration in January 2017 was a new bill called the American Health Care Act (AHCA), which aimed to strip Obamacare bare, effectively denying health coverage to tens of millions of Americans.

Obama’s health care plan had been widely unpopular with Republicans since its introduction in 2010. But when Trump’s AHCA was set to go to the House floor, constituents flooded their elected representatives on both sides of the aisle with phone calls, faxes, letters, and personal displays of protest.

Thanks to groups like the [Town Hall Project](#), typically mundane town hall meetings with members of Con-

gress grew contentious all over the country as citizens shouted at their representatives or told emotional stories about pre-existing conditions and life-saving access to affordable health care under Obamacare. When broadcast on social media, many town hall meetings went viral, particularly those featuring personal stories.

The *Indivisible Guide* strategy of pressuring members of Congress, both Republican and Democrat, spread like wildfire during the AHCA debate. Constituents made thousands of coordinated calls, flooding phone systems and shutting down switchboards. Republican representatives who planned to vote in favor of the bill canceled public events for fear of having to answer for their actions.

The first vote on Trump’s health care plan had to be canceled for lack of support. After a series of amendments were adopted, House Republicans—and only Republicans—voted to pass the AHCA.

As of July 2017, the AHCA is staggeringly unpopular, and the Senate has failed to pass multiple versions of their own repeal bill. Legislative leaders desperately seek strategies to navigate it through Congress with minimal public attention. Meanwhile, public approval of Obamacare has surged to its highest level yet.

Through coordinated outside game strategies, the resistance scored an incredible upset with the AHCA. Obamacare repeal and replace,

heralded for years, was to be the centerpiece accomplishment of Trump’s first 100 days. Now, though the battle is far from over, the 217 Republican representatives who voted in favor of the AHCA face significant pressure in their districts, where they will have to run for re-election in 2018. In congressional districts with vulnerable Republican office holders, Democrats are seeing an influx of volunteers and donations to help turn them blue.



## Type III: The Inside Game

**Inside game resistance requires using the established system of elections, the legal system, and the current bureaucracy. We can advance the inside game by ousting vulnerable Republicans and by running and supporting Democratic candidates who put pressure on the Democratic Party to represent the aims of the movement rather than those of the establishment.**

Game-changing protest can generate enough active popular support to change the political weather. Outside game resistance can stop seemingly unstoppable opponents in their tracks. But we have to do more.

We need to put new people in power, and we need to pressure purported allies to step up. Our current system has been corrupted by corporate lobbyists, Wall Street money, and a billionaire class that employs politicians to divide us through racial fear-mongering.

But we can change that by running candidates who share social movement values. Even winning a few races can put establishment politicians on notice and change the dynamics of current politics.

### ***What's so corrupt about the Democratic Party?***

The Democratic Party is flooded with Wall Street and billionaire money. Democratic candidates court wealthy donors in order to fund their campaigns, and those donors don't disappear after Election Day. They exert disproportionate influence on elected officials, making it harder for popular movements—movements made up of ordinary people—to have a voice.

Wall Street and the billionaire class dominate the Republican and Democratic parties alike. Often, the same wealthy donors contribute to both parties—even to opposing candidates in the same election. Once they are elected, politicians reward their donors with policies and regulations that favor their industries. This system often puts Democratic politicians at odds with their constituents. They try to gain support from the working and middle classes, immigrants, and people of color with promises to raise minimum wages and worker protections, dismantle institutional racism, pass immigration reform, improve health care, and protect the environment. But their debts to their financial backers often leave them following the path of least resistance. They might make symbolic progressive gestures to win votes, but they avoid significant action that could get in the way of collecting campaign funds.



### ***Racism has left Democrats off balance***

Since the late 1960s, the Republican Party has appealed to White voters' racial resentment in an effort to peel them away from the Democratic Party. This is often called the "Southern strategy."

The Democratic Party has never managed to unify around a powerful response. The Southern strategy was developed in response to the Civil Rights Movement. As the movement won concessions for people of color from federal government programs, Republicans developed coded racial messages—what has been called

dog-whistle politics—that played on fears of rising crime and resentment about welfare. When Southern politicians claimed to advocate for “states’ rights,” for example, they were really advocating against federal civil rights protections that overstepped a state’s right to enforce Jim Crow.

One of the worst ‘triangulations’ undertaken by the Democratic establishment in the 1990s was its attempt to neutralize the Southern strategy by adopting similar messages, leading to short-term gains but leaving the Democrats in a strategic quagmire. The Democratic-led, bipartisan welfare reform and crime laws of the 1990s accepted the racist framing that Republicans had developed over the previous decades. Ultimately, they offered no alternative to the strategy that continued encouraging working-class whites to align with conservative billionaires and blame people of color for their misfortunes. As President Harry S. Truman put it as far back as 1952, “If it’s a choice between a genuine Republican, and a Republican in Democratic clothing, the people will choose the genuine article, every time.”

After many decades of Republican exploitation of racial resentment, Donald Trump’s declarations concerning immigration, Islam, and inner-city “American carnage” transformed the dog-whistle into a full-on bullhorn. The reactionary agenda made possible by dog-whistle politics continues to impede multiracial solidarity and threaten communities of color.

### ***Corruption is at the heart of Democratic losses***

When both establishment Democrats and Republicans play this game, it’s no wonder that voters doubt the ability of government to take their side against economic elites. A crisis of legitimacy has ensued, as the vast majority of voters come to find that neither party truly represents their interests against the powerful. **Watching a Democratic establishment cater to the billionaire class, people become disillusioned and stop participating.**

The failure of the Democratic Party to push back against the billionaire class gave Trump a path to victory. Throughout the eight years of the Obama presidency, wealth continued to concentrate in the hands of the one percent. Obama’s accomplishments did not affect the balance of power in a society that had seen rising inequality for decades. Voters understood that the Democratic Party would not seriously challenge the status quo, and despite Obama’s personal popularity, Democrats lost more than 1,000 state and federal seats during the eight years he served as president.



By the time Hillary Clinton ran for president, she was seen as the representative of a failed establishment. This allowed Trump to run against that establishment. Polls show that many of his supporters felt they were casting their votes less *for* Trump than *against* the status quo.

Now, Trump has ditched the populist fig leaf he campaigned with. Working with the congressional GOP on dismantling health care protections to promote tax cuts and stacking his cabinet with representatives of the finance industry, he has promoted the interests of the billionaire class with naked determination. Even as his administration is rocked by allegations of corruption and abuses of power, the Democratic Party has failed to make the case that, if it regains control of government, it won't once more sell out its base of voters, appease its donor class, and put us right back where we started.

### ***A fighting movement party will win elections***

A Democratic Party that either ignores the people or responds only to fierce protest is bad for social movements. Getting the brush-off from politicians is demobilizing. It can prevent passive support from turning into active support. Even passionate supporters feel that their time has been wasted when elected officials don't respond to them. Without evidence that elected officials will be responsive, even a movement with millions of participants will have a hard time translating its numbers into real power and change. Discouraged by lack of action from their own party, activists and voters will once again stay home.

***... our  
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**But our movements will win when we elect officials who will passionately advocate for our issues.** At the federal level, it will be slow going so long as Democrats remain in the minority—not even the most progressive Democratic Party will secure many real victories under Trump and the GOP. But a reinvigorated party will slow down the worst abuses of conservatives. And there’s plenty of room for gains at the state and local level. Look at how Tea Party-affiliated movements transformed Wisconsin and North Carolina during the Obama years, gutting labor protections and stacking the deck for permanent Republican power. They did this by eschewing compromise in favor of inside game tactics as part of a movement strategy.

The only way back to power—the only way to defend the hard-earned protections we’ve gained for civil rights and the environment, and the only way to win new gains for working people—is to build a Democratic Party that is not held captive by billionaire donors and that stands strongly against racism. And the only way to build such a party is to pour the same energy we have for marches, rallies, and calling elected officials into holding house parties, knocking on doors, and getting out the vote on election day for **movement candidates**. That’s the way to build a party that legitimately represents the people and our social movements.

### ***What is a movement candidate?***

A **movement candidate** is more than a “liberal” or “progressive” Democrat. A movement candidate is a candidate at any level of government who is not beholden to Wall Street funders and who recognizes the critical role of social movements in pushing for solutions. These candidates can energize people and give them hope for change—not only by saying the right things, but by demonstrating that they are not compromised by debts to the billionaire class.

Establishment candidates, on the other hand, funded by many of the same Wall Street interests that control the Trump administration, might object to Trump’s policies here and there but cannot convincingly stand against the interests that back him.

The presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders (see sidebar) relied on small donations and engaged with social movements across the spectrum, from #BlackLivesMatter to the little-known Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida. Sanders emerged as a movement politician years ago as the mayor of Burlington, Vermont, and his track record echoes this commitment to supporting movement values.

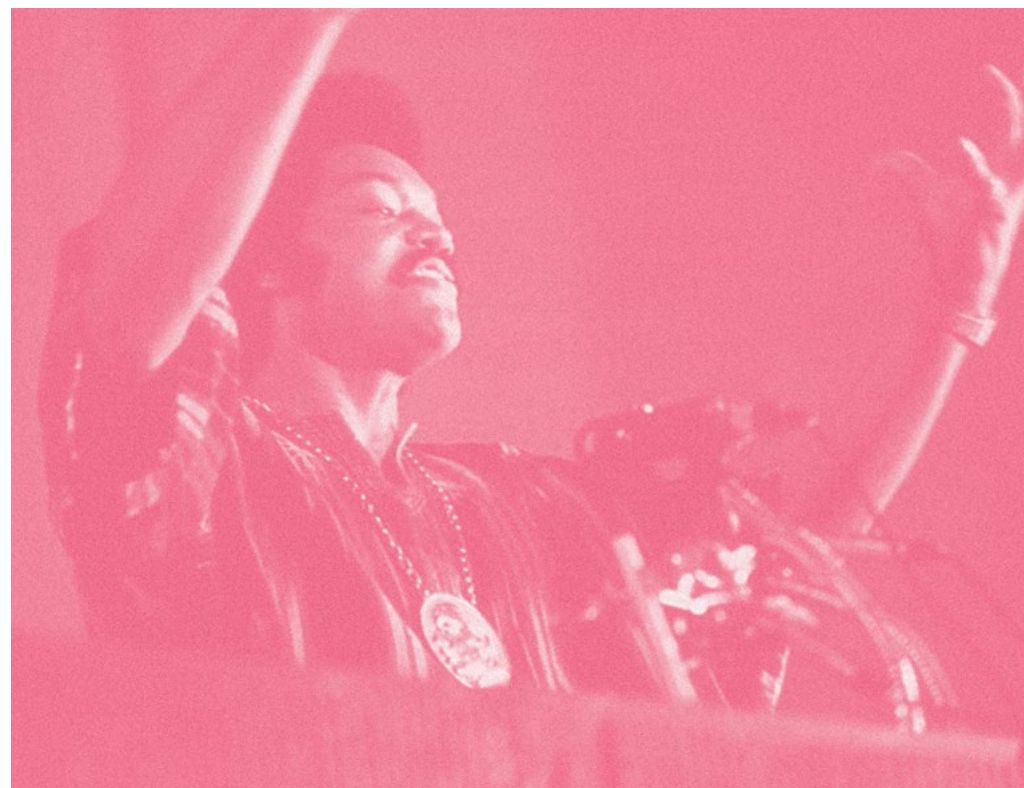
Movement candidates can make huge strides even at the local level, restoring faith in the ability of government to defend rights and improve lives. At the national level, movement candidates are essential in facing down the ruling GOP’s destructive agenda.

**Even when movement candidates lose, their campaigns can pull the party in a better direction.** Recall that many Tea Party candidates who attracted derision when they lost in general elections nonetheless succeeded, by winning the primary, in shifting the center of gravity in the GOP to the right.

Running movement candidates is vital to taking back power through the state. If establishment candidates are the only option, voters may still reject the more extreme manifestations of the GOP agenda. But that’s simply not enough. **We need to build a movement strong enough to change the Democratic Party while also returning it to power.** Once it is back in power, we need the movement to demand that government work as a force for good. For that to happen, we need the kind of active and sustained popular support that will both draw movement candidates to run for office and carry them to victory.

### Historical Examples of the Inside Game

- *Harold Washington's 1983 Chicago mayoral campaign* defeated the entrenched Democratic machine that the first Mayor Daley had built. Once in office, Washington installed a "rainbow cabinet" that represented movements led by women, Blacks, Latinos, the disabled, and others long excluded from Chicago politics.
- *Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition presidential runs of 1984 and 1988* bridged the false divisions between Democrats in the white working class and communities of color.
- The late 1990s and early 2000s saw the emergence of a *Latino-labor-left coalition in Southern California politics* that passed living wage and other pro-labor legislation while ousting conservative Republicans and corrupt Democrats alike.
- The *2008 Obama campaign* created a movement (see chapter 4), though President Obama's administration kept its distance from this movement.
- Over the last decade, movement-driven electoral coalitions, most notably *Podemos in Spain*, have risen to push back against austerity in Europe.
- In New York, the *Working Families Party* both cross-endorses progressive mainstream candidates and runs its own candidates in primaries against establishment Democrats, allowing it to build power while challenging the establishment.
- Public defender and longtime movement ally *Larry Krasner* was propelled to victory in *Philadelphia's 2017 district attorney race* by a coalition of progressive forces including racial and economic justice organizations and staff and volunteers from the Sanders campaign.
- *Jeremy Corbyn* led the British Labour Party to a *massive increase in Parliamentary seats* in June 2017—a stunning upset that the media and the political establishment (including many members of Corbyn's own party) thought impossible and worked against. Corbyn promoted an unapologetic movement agenda, rejecting decades of compromise and triangulation style politics from Labour. The victory was fueled by movement organizing that fought the establishment to restore faith in progressive politics.



**WHAT'S POSSIBLE**

Imagine if the energy, numbers, and uncompromising attitude that filled the streets and pressured our representatives was turned toward electoral politics? In the 2018 election cycle, it would bring the broad sense of urgency produced by Trump's presidential election to a traditionally low-turnout primary and midterm election. Up and down the ticket, corporate Democrats would face challenges from movement candidates, shifting the center of gravity in the Democratic Party. And those movement candidates would have the popular support they need when the establishment turns full force against them. The House of Representatives—historically known as “the people's house”—would be returned to the people.

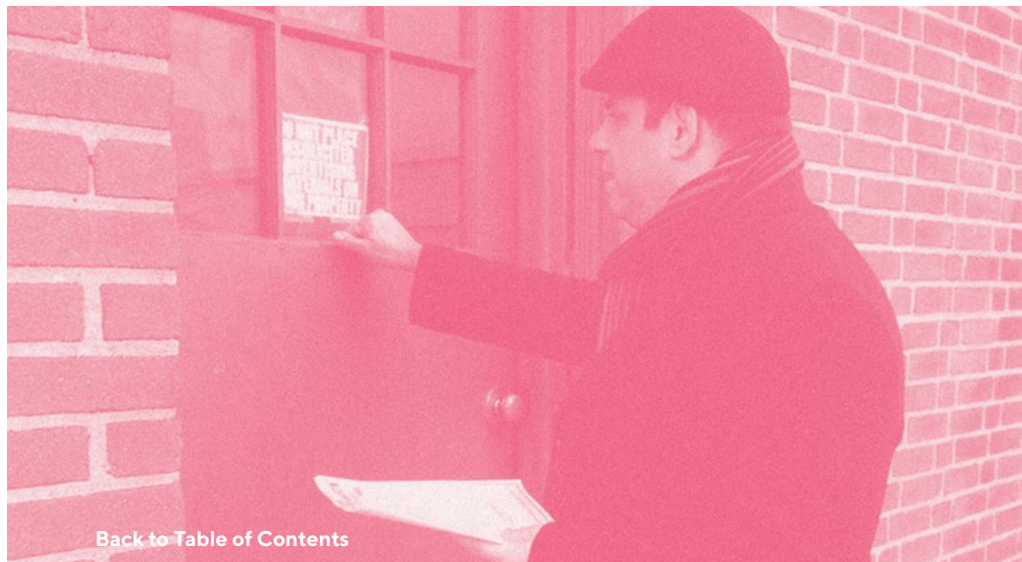
**HOW TO ACT**

To do this, we all need to get involved in electoral campaigns, and especially get out the vote operations. At minimum, show up to make phone calls or knock on doors the last week before election day. If inside game activity becomes your area of focus, you can join movement-focused candidate campaigns or electioneering organizations (see sidebar) more than a year in advance of the election. Throw a house party or a grassroots fundraiser. Become a block captain.

**KEYS TO SUCCESS**

- **How can we identify movement candidates?** Look for endorsements from social movement organizations that focus both on resisting Trump and transforming the Democratic Party at the same time. Locally, look for candidates who partner with the labor movement, housing rights champions, immigration advocates, racial justice organizations, and groups fighting for issues affecting your community. Back candidates who don't take corporate money and who ally themselves with other movement candidates, and recruit from your own organizations.
- **How can we have a chance at winning?** Get involved in elections early, in the primaries, when a small group of activists can shift the balance of power in the party. By the time the general election campaign begins, it's much harder to make a difference within the Democratic Party.
- **How will we know if we're winning?** A successful inside game strategy will allow politicians who work with social movements to advance our agenda. It will also pressure establishment Democrats to change their votes because they fear a challenge from a movement candidate. As this happens, we'll see the center of gravity shift in the party, as it did when Hillary Clinton moved towards progressive positions in the 2016 Democratic primary. We're already seeing this progress on minimum wages, single-payer health care, and tuition-free college. We may also see heightened tension as our progress loosens the political stranglehold of Wall Street and the billionaire class.

Remember that the media will downplay your importance and mock your efforts. Resist! Value your impact, claim victories, and educate others about your strategy.



### ***These Groups Are Hard at Work on the Inside Game***

- *Brand New Congress* and *Justice Democrats* are developing a campaign to run more than 400 new candidates in the 2018 election cycle on a platform to “rebuild the economy, repair our communities, and radically reform our institutions.”
- *Swing Left* is targeting swing districts to oust Republicans from Congress.
- *#AllofUs* and *#WeWillReplaceYou* are supporting primary challengers against Democrats who don’t stand up to Trump by providing an alternative vision grounded in an America that works for all of us.
- *Emerge America* and *Run for Something* are recruiting and supporting women and millennials to run for down-ballot offices.
- *#KnockEveryDoor* is building a mass canvassing organization to get out the vote for movement candidates.
- *Our Revolution* is continuing to build the Bernie Sanders coalition by supporting candidates across the country who will fight corporate power.

### ***The Bernie Sanders for President Campaign***

In the spring of 2015, when Vermont’s Senator Bernie Sanders threw his hat in the ring against Hillary Clinton in the Democratic presidential primary, he wasn’t even a registered Democrat. Sanders, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, had served as an Independent for 16 years in the House and eight in the Senate. A longtime critic of centrist Democrats, Sanders centered his candidacy on economic inequality, the embattled middle class, and the shrinking social safety net, embracing the principles of movements like *#FightFor15* and *Occupy*.

At first, observers thought Sanders had only entered the field to shift the debate, with little hope of winning. But his message captured the hearts of many Americans. He quickly became a serious challenger to the much-better-funded frontrunner.

In the years leading up to 2016, the stage had already been set for a movement campaign. *Occupy Wall Street*, which began in New York City in the fall of 2011 and spread to city centers and college campuses across North America, rallied many young people, including those who had yet to enter the workforce, behind the cause of economic inequality. States and cities around the U.S. saw concerted efforts to raise the minimum wage as high as \$15 per hour. Coalitions to stop the Keystone XL oil pipeline and the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement stimulated cross-pollination between multiple social movements.

Because of these and other grassroots movements, a large base of voters were ready to discuss these issues at a level that went well beyond the narrow, watered-down discourse acceptable to the establishment.

Sanders went to great lengths to synthesize a variety of progressive goals into a concise, cogent message. He was successful in large part because he believed in a movement strategy that activated tens of thousands of people around that message. Notably for a Democratic presidential candidate, his approach did not begin from an assumption that he needed to compromise his values in order to win. Sanders' leadership allowed his supporters to feel personally invested in the campaign. From the beginning, Sanders was clear that his election would be only one step, and that much-needed change could only be accomplished with sustained movement activity.

Sanders' popular message changed the national conversation, eventually moving Clinton's positions leftward. As social movements found more recognition in a reinvigorated primary

season, Clinton eventually adopted progressive stances on issues such as the \$15 minimum wage, police brutality, and mass incarceration. A [Saturday Night Live sketch](#) lampooning her attempts to capture the appeal of Sanders' candor inadvertently illuminates the differences between movement and compromise approaches.

The Sanders candidacy has created a 21st-century model for rejecting compromise politics and embracing movement strategy. Though Sanders did not win the nomination, he has continued to shape American politics, touring the country for key issues and supporting progressive candidates through the organization he helped start, Our Revolution. He has the highest approval rating of any active politician, and the positions he espoused on the campaign trail draw support today from establishment Democrats—witness New York governor Andrew Cuomo signing a bill for free college tuition with Senator Sanders by his side. Sanders has illuminated a path for social movements in the electoral arena that has not been seen for a generation.



## ***Game change, inside game, and outside game: we need it all***

Working together, these three strategies create cascading virtuous circles, each making the next more powerful. Game changing actions can inspire hundreds of thousands of people to become active popular supporters of movements. Outside game tactics put those people in direct confrontation with the powers that be, polarizing issues and forcing cowardly elected officials to take stands. Matching that energy with a strong inside game will lead to wave elections and social movement politicians taking power.

**And—critically—if the movement can sustain active popular support once its candidates are elected, we can stand up to Wall Street and the billionaire class and create truly transformative change.**

Many organizations and activists find themselves drawn to one type of resistance more than another. Our movement is stronger when we work from complementary strengths. What weakens us is privileging one of these strategies over another. We all know people who believe that street protest is irrelevant compared to electoral politics, while others claim that electoral politics is a distraction from real issues or that there are no good politicians.

These are dead-end debates. Social movements need to master every one of these three strategies if they are to win power and create change.

As a minimum commitment, everyone should make some contribution to all three types of action, even those who are drawn primarily to one or the other. Our recommended minimum commitment looks like this:

- **Once a month, show up to either a trigger event protest with game change potential or a small, group-led action.**
- **Once a week, put pressure on decision makers with phone calls or at town halls.**
- **Vote for and do get out the vote work for movement candidates in local, state, and federal elections.**

**An energetic social movement based in any one of these three strategies can win individual victories. But a movement using all three together can be downright revolutionary.**

