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New Report Outlines the Making of a More Progressive California How California Donor Table played a pivotal role in moving California to the left by investing in communities of color

Oakland, CA – The California Donor Table has released a new report that outlines how, over the past 15 years, it played a pivotal role in pushing California to become the progressive bellwether it is known to be today.

Until now, California Donor Table has been a largely invisible force behind key progressive wins in California. The new report, [***Together We Win: How the California Donor Table Moved California to the Left by Investing in Communities of Color***](#), shares its story and strategy to encourage more donors to align philanthropic and political giving behind community organizations and elected officials committed to building long-term power for communities of color. The report also highlights how its formula for coordinated giving can continue to push the state – and by extension the country – into a new progressive era.

“In less than a generation, a small group of donors with an unwavering vision for a racially just California helped to reverse the state’s 30-year run of conservative, racist, anti-immigrant elected officials, initiatives and policies that we’re still digging ourselves out of,” said California Donor Table Executive Director Ludovic Blain. “After 15 years, we have a proven strategy and widespread, multiracial public will to finally do right by California’s emerging people of color majority. This previously untold story can hopefully chart a path for other states and the country to follow.”

California Donor Table, originally called the Progressive Era Project, began in 2005 with five donors from three families. Combining political strategy with community organizing and training, the project aimed to develop and support Black, Latinx, and Asian Pacific Islander progressive leaders, organizations and candidates. To date, the table has invested and aligned approximately \$30 million over 15 years. It has financially supported 57 candidates (75 percent people of color, 51 percent women, 42 percent women of color, 23 percent Latina women, 14 percent Black women).

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During the 2020 election cycle, it is projected to raise \$4 million and align a much larger dollar amount to key groups and candidates.

“We are witnessing an unprecedented multiracial mobilization in support of Black lives in California and across the U.S. and the world,” said Steve Phillips, one of the founding donors of the California Donor Table. “Now, we must mobilize an unprecedented amount of dollars from individual and institutional donors to ensure that California continues to advance progressive ideals to move the state and the country toward real racial equity.”

The report outlines how the California Donor Table played a pivotal role in flipping conservative counties like Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego through long-term investment in the people of color-led political infrastructure – progressive nonprofits, community groups and leaders – and developing a shared power-building strategy and relationships built on mutuality and trust.

“From the beginning we were focused on racial equity and on the empowerment of communities of color. In California that means making blue more progressive,” said founding donor table member Quinn Delaney in the report. “We have to put up candidates who are maybe ahead of their constituency, pushing for progressive ideas that maybe aren’t super well known. Even if someone isn’t going to win, they are tilling the soil and getting it ready for the next candidate.”

As the November 2020 elections approach, California Donor Table is taking a long view to ensure that California lawmakers on the state and local level continue to defend and invest in the Californians hardest hit by COVID-19 and the long-term economic and public health ramifications of the pandemic, namely Black, Latinx, other communities of color and immigrants. Over the next 10 years, the table aims to strengthen and multiply its support for groups across the state, helping them project power at the state level and influence the country.

“Sometimes groups come in and do something splashy for a cycle or two. But California Donor Table is in it for the long haul,” said California State Senator Holly Mitchell in the report. “They looked for people at the local level doing the work, followed their lead, and moved resources to them year after year. They really committed to their allies and developed a shared vision and strategy with them. Capacity-building takes time. This is how you build a long term Movement.”

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View and download the report

[here.](#)

More quotes can be found

[here.](#)

About the California Donor Table The California Donor Table is a statewide community of donors who pool their funds to make investments in communities of color so they have the power and resources they need to (1) elect people who represent their values and needs and (2) help govern and hold decision-makers accountable. California Donor Table believes that California can and must lead the nation in becoming a healthy, just place to live with shared economic success and a democracy that works for all our people. Please visit: californiadorortable.org