



Democratic  
Socialists  
of America

# DSA Dispatch

From the DSA National Office - October 15, 2018

**We fought hard against the Brett Kavanaugh appointment to the Supreme Court, but it was not enough. Now that we have taken time to mourn, it is time to organize.** Right now Trump controls all three branches of the federal government. Because they recognize the power of the vote, Republicans in recent years have closed over 1000 polling sites across the country where black, brown, poor and/or student voters have voted in the past, and are purging or blocking hundreds of thousands of voters this fall.

Meanwhile, **Trump is using increasingly violent rhetoric against journalists and the Left.** The recent infiltration of a number of DSA chapters by Project Veritas, in order to bolster Trump's rhetoric about a socialist "Deep State" out to undermine him, was part of a broader strategy. If you have any doubt about what is in store for us should we not decisively defeat the Republicans on November 6, look to Brazil. Steve Bannon has helped the openly fascist candidate Bolsonaro whip the country into a frenzy. Or Germany, India, the Philippines or Hungary.

Bernie Sanders gave a speech recently about increasing coordination between fascists around the world, and as democratic socialists we know that the only solution to the urgency of our times is a strong international Left, starting in the belly of the beast. **In the face of catastrophic climate change, we truly only have a choice between socialism or neofascism.** A key part of being a national organization is disrupting the national conversation which is dominated by neoliberals and the far-right.

But in this moment, **we must vote, we must knock on doors and phonebank, we must spend every day between now and November 6 fighting like hell to protect our imperfect democracy.** Let's do it in a way that also builds our power outside the formal political system. Working class and poor people are the 99% and we must remember that as we head into an election where the results are uncertain and the spin will likely be fast and furious on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Supporting the strike wave happening across the country is one key way to do this.

**Our get out the vote work needs to be done in ways that build our power** - our lists, our skills, and our capacity as chapters, independent of candidates - so that we can pivot to the next stage of struggle once new conditions, new challenges, and new contradictions reveal themselves.

**I encourage you to take time to read our full National Electoral Strategy, which elaborates on how to do just that, discuss it with other members in your chapter, and use it to inform your approach to the home stretch until election day, November 6.**

**The National Electoral Strategy can be found here:**  
<https://electoral.dsausa.org/national-electoral-strategy/>



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**NATIONAL UPDATE # ONE: Staffing** - We're pleased to announce our newest staffer, Heidi Chua, who will become our Assistant to the National Director.

## **TWO: National Priorities Projects Updates**

- **National Electoral Committee** - The NEC has been hard at work developing training videos for chapters and supporting our local groups who have nationally endorsed candidates..
- **Democratic Socialist Labor Commission** - The DSLC organized a webinar on the Rank and File Strategy webinar with Kim Moody October 14.
- **Medicare for All** - One of the foremost policy experts on Medicare for All, Sanders Institute fellow and former DSA national director, Michael Lighty, is touring to help DSAers organize the South and South West. The ALL IN tour has stops in TX, FL, LA, AZ, and CA.

**THREE: Additional Regional Leadership Trainings** - We are organizing more of the popular Regional Leadership Trainings (RLTs) for chapter leaders to help them strengthen their chapters. After our first round across the South and Midwest, we are now working with chapters to host trainings in WA, CA, AZ, UT, OH, NC, ME and others still being scheduled.

**FOUR: Regional Pre-Convention Conferences** - Feedback from the 2017 national convention was that members loved our pre-convention process, but it was too late and rushed. To respond to this concern, I and other staff proposed to the NPC Convention Planning Committee that we organize a series of regional "unity conferences" next spring. The goal is to improve on the process by providing earlier and equal access to conversations and information across the entire organization. We would encourage the broadest member attendance possible and have small group political discussions to create an even playing field and opportunity for deep participation for all members. In accord with our "big tent" nature, we believe the political prompts should get at the central debates in the organization and be developed by people representing different political tendencies. We also proposed that there be a training component.

**FIVE: New Organizing** - We continue to grow! DSA now has 52,000 members and 26 chapter and organizing committees applications in the pipeline nationally.

**SIX: Building a Socialist Feminist DSA** - Our National Harassment and Grievance Officer Paula Brantner is attending the upcoming NPC meeting, October 20-21, to do a training and discuss next steps for her work, including trainings at regional conferences this spring. Paula is at [nationalgrievanceofficer@dsausa.org](mailto:nationalgrievanceofficer@dsausa.org).

**SEVEN: Resisting the Right** - As you may know, DSA has been targeted by the far-right's Project Veritas. Left organizations have always been infiltrated by cops, other government agents, and provocateurs. How should we respond? We should keep being open, proud socialists focusing on our positive vision of a world. In the coming weeks, we will be holding national webinars about the history of intervention in Left wing movements by outside actors and how we can build a resilient organizational culture.