

CA-DSA Housing Ballot Measure Slate: Affordable, Rent-Controlled Housing (ARCH) Campaign

Overview

Housing affordability is one of California's most pressing and urgent political crises, yet the root causes of the high cost of housing are difficult to address with a single policy. The real roots of housing unaffordability in California lie in its function as a commodity: an instrument for producing value, rather than as one of the most essential of all social needs. Several housing-related initiatives will be on the November 2024 ballot that present California DSA chapters an opportunity to articulate socialist housing policy that confronts the political economy of the housing market: lifting limitations on rent control by repealing Costa-Hawkins and de facto bans on publicly-funded and publicly-owned housing through a repeal of California Constitution Article 34, and the reduction of the infrastructure funding supermajority threshold. California DSA should, in concert with its member chapters and relevant national structures, develop a statewide campaign in support of these measures, as well as other local or statewide measures that support the aims of funding, preserving, and building affordable, rent-controlled housing in California. The goals of doing this campaign will be as follows:

Organizational goals

- Develop a shared political language to use to describe the housing crisis in California.
- Develop engagement ladders appropriate for chapters of all sizes, locations, and levels of development encompassing internal and external education as well as community organizing and field organizing/turnout
- Recruit active participants in the campaign into DSA before, during, and after the election

Field campaign goals


- Obtain contact information for a target percentage of voters in endorsing chapters' territories by zip code through canvassing, outreach, education events, or other activities
- Organize a statewide weekend of action for affordable, rent-controlled housing using this contact information
- Activate a target percentage of contacts obtained during GOTV activities

Policy outcome goals

- Improve the likelihood of Costa-Hawkins repeal by activating DSA members to campaign for it across the state
- Create more favorable statewide policy conditions for the development of social housing by supporting or opposing statewide or local taxation- and funding-related measures as appropriate.

Timeline

The campaign will have three main phases:

- I. **Ramp-up (Mar-Jun)**  **Spring 24 CA Ballot Measure campaign steps**
 - A. Elect a steering committee and recruit locals to endorse the project
 - B. Research and reach out to partner organizations
 - C. Develop provisional branding and political language around the issue
 - D. Develop member engagement and organizing structures
 - E. **A final campaign platform for the slate will be submitted to the CA DSA state council for approval at the June state council meeting**
- II. **Education and chapter organizing (Jun-Sept)**
 - A. Each participating chapter organizes internal and external education events and recruits volunteers according to the political language and organizing structures
 - B. **A statewide get-out-the-vote plan will be submitted to the CA DSA state council for approval at the September state council meeting**
- III. **Field organizing and election day (Sept-Dec)**
 - A. Chapters engage in both traditional electoral field and experimental canvassing
 - B. Coordinate a statewide weekend of action prior to the release of mail ballots
 - C. Debrief and recap after election day
 - D. **A final report on political outcomes, objectives met, lessons learned, and other reflections from participants will be presented at the December state council meeting and distributed to CA-DSA members**

Campaign structure

The campaign will have a structure to be decided by the state committee; the following is the recommendation of the ballot measure working group.

- **Steering committee:** The project will be implemented by a five-person steering committee elected by CA-DSA delegates. Any DSA member in good standing in California is eligible to run for Steering. The steering committee will be composed of two co-chairs and three leads as outlined below. The ballot measure working group will manage implementation until the election of the Steering Committee.
- **Co-chairs:** The co-chairs will be ultimately responsible for facilitating campaign activities, steering committee meetings, and reporting to CA-DSA as well as interfacing with relevant national DSA bodies (NEC, GDC, NPEC, HJC, others as needed).
- **Internal organizing lead:** The statewide organizing lead will interface with liaisons to identify local organizing goals and to oversee the development of CA-DSA and DSA chapters' implementation of the project.
- **External organizing lead:** The external organizing lead will interface with coalition partners at the statewide and regional levels, and develop the campaign's field operation through election day.
- **Political development lead:** The political development lead will facilitate the development of a political program for the campaign to be adopted at the June state council meeting, educational events to take place over the summer, and

literature/promotional materials to be used during get out the vote. They will also be in charge of planning the post-election debriefing activities.

- **Campaign liaisons:** Each chapter endorsing the campaign should designate a liaison between the steering committee and the chapter's most relevant organizing body (electoral committee, organizing committee, or other body) to serve as an organizing lead. At-large DSA members in CA can also serve as liaisons if they are interested in developing the project but do not have a local chapter in their area.