

AFFORDABLE HOUSING WINS

Leveraging Lessons from 2018 Housing
Ballot Initiatives for Future Efforts

2019

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Our Homes, Our Votes

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NATIONAL LOW INCOME
HOUSING COALITION



**OUR HOMES,
OUR VOTES**

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LEVERAGING LESSONS FROM 2018 HOUSING BALLOT INITIATIVES FOR FUTURE EFFORTS

In 2018, advocates and voters confronted affordable rental housing shortages and skyrocketing rents by taking action at the voting booth – and the results have been encouraging.

The momentum grows with each election: voters want an end to the housing crisis! The more low-income residents and allies vote affordable housing, the more the push elected officials to follow their lead and commit resources to ensuring a safe, accessible, affordable, and decent home for everyone. Win or lose, ballot initiative campaigns represent real progress in mobilizing advocacy resources, increasing awareness of the issue, and moving the needle in public opinion. Each ballot initiative effort brings new resources and allies, and these campaigns provide a roadmap for future success in other communities.

Our Homes, Our Votes, NLIHC's nonpartisan voter engagement project tracked the major local and state ballot measures for affordable housing revenue and tenant protections across the country.

There were two major types of affordable housing ballot measures during the 2018 election cycle:

- Measures that increased funding for affordable homes; and
- Measures that increased tenant protections (e.g., implementing rent-control laws).

Voters overwhelmingly passed ballot measures to issue bonds or raise taxes to fund affordable housing in 2018.

The vast majority of ballot measures to expand funding for housing production and

preservation – 22 of the 26 – passed. Of those that failed, two measures passed with considerably more than 50% of the vote but failed to gain the required two-thirds threshold. Seven obligation bond ballot measures were passed, including one in Charlotte, NC, that will increase the city's affordable housing trust fund from \$15 million to \$50 million. Several ballot initiatives that passed created hotel taxes or increased sales taxes that will dedicate millions of dollars to affordable homes. Voters in San Juan County, WA, for example supported an additional real estate excise tax that will enable the county to collect and dedicate .5% of the selling price for county-owned real estate and use those resources for affordable housing production.



**OUR HOMES,
OUR VOTES**

The momentum grows with each election: voters want an end to the housing crisis!

While measures on issuing bonds or raising taxes to support affordable housing did well in 2018, the results on rent-control laws were more mixed. Chicago voters overwhelmingly supported lifting the statewide ban on rent control but unfortunately the vote was only advisory and nonbinding: it would not repeal the ban without legislative action in the Illinois legislature. Voters in Berkeley, CA, approved Measure Q, which will allow for newly

constructed properties to have rent control and will prevent landlords from increasing rents in existing rent-control units when the units become empty. Measure Q, however, will not take effect until the state changes its policy on what types of rent control cities can consider.

Tenant-protection measures won in several states. Santa Cruz, CA, required moving assistance be provided for tenants evicted without just cause and limited rent increases in apartments built before 1995.

ORGANIZING A NONPARTISAN VOTER-ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

At the heart of each ballot initiative was a campaign. Some were broad and well-funded campaigns; others were built from the grassroots and with limited resources. Some campaigns built off of previous ballot initiatives, and others were first-time efforts. In many cases, community coalitions led the efforts at every step of the way, while others were initiated by the elected officials who helped put the measures on the ballot. Some campaigns were even able to build broad-based coalitions of business leaders, veteran organizations, transportation advocates and more.

With the 2020 elections around the corner, it is important to look at what happened with housing ballot initiatives in the last election cycle. How did advocates advance so many ballot measures on affordable housing – and what were the winning strategies? Ballot initiative campaigns can require a significant investment of time and money, which are scarce resources in many advocate communities – so it is important to build on best practices and successes.

Here are some lessons from 2018 ballot campaigns:

✓ Don't start from scratch.

Where possible, build on existing infrastructure and lessons learned. Many of 2018's most

successful ballot efforts stood on the shoulders of other ballot initiatives. This included understanding the logistics of how to collect signatures, maps and lists that showed where and when to engage likely voters, and an awareness of tactics that worked in previous efforts. Voter lists, media strategies, and voter outreach plans all can build from examples in other communities.

Learning from prior experience is not limited to housing ballots – other successful ballot initiatives can provide a roadmap. For example, three major statewide ballot initiatives on Medicaid expansion passed in Utah, Idaho, and Montana against huge odds and highly funded opposition. Looking to 2020, it is important to collect the information, data and institutional memory of the 2018 ballots and document the lessons now.

Where possible, build on existing infrastructure and lessons learned.

Austin's Proposition A affordable housing bond bill victory is built on over a decade of activity on other ballot measures to support affordable housing. The Keep Austin Affordable coalition was comprised of 16 advocacy, development, and service organizations, notably including HousingWorks Austin whose ongoing leadership has helped structure stronger campaign messaging. Advocates' work has been a slow build and a continual forward progress that has a multi-level strategy. Importantly, they use national and state-level data to analyze the need for affordable housing. They have learned that it isn't enough just to say that there is a housing shortage and that people are paying too much for housing – they are able to demonstrate the impacts of past bond measures and connect that data to the community's overall economic growth. They have also been able to identify messages that appeal to both the moral imperative and the self-interests that motivate local voters. They have also learned through trial and error that appealing to voters with fear is less effective than offering a vision of a positive future. They have developed a careful and

effective messaging strategy as a result!

✓ **Learn the rules of the game!**

Ballot initiatives are governed by state rules and are allowed in only certain states and jurisdictions, and vote thresholds for passage sometimes vary based on the type of question put forward to voters. This can present a challenge in advancing a ballot measure and winning on Election Day. There are also very specific rules that govern some of the processes for processing ballots.

In Chicago, IL, the campaign to support ballot initiatives learned some lessons the hard way too. For example, Illinois requires that the individual collecting signatures for a ballot initiative be a U.S. citizen. The campaign and resident leaders do not screen their volunteers on citizenship – and it is not a requirement for participation in these efforts. As such, the campaign was forced to throw out a number of signatures collected by non-citizens when that rule became clear. The campaign came up with an appropriate screening process for volunteers, and non-citizen volunteers were given other meaningful assignments. They also learned that in Chicago, there is a very specific rule for delivering signatures. Pages must be numbered, ordered and bound together according to a distinct protocol.

✓ **Know the political climate – and where there is momentum.**

Ballot initiative campaigns are a tremendous tool in communities where elected leaders are resistant to spending public money on housing infrastructure, or when public officials drag their feet and delay decisions with drawn-out study and discussion. These winning initiatives show that in many cases, voters are further ahead than their elected officials in support of affordable housing solutions.

It is also important to build off where there is political momentum and opportunity – and where voters can see and feel the problem in their community. Harnessing voter emotion can bring support for a ballot initiative.

In Oakland, CA, Measure W was designed to

prevent or penalize the practice of real estate speculation in which property is purchased just to sit empty until future development is approved. This practice has been widespread in the Bay Area in recent years, exacerbating an already severe shortage of rental housing. In Oakland, a real estate transfer tax can be a small deterrent to the practice of house flipping, whereby investors purchase a property, own it briefly in order to increase its value with improvements, and then sell it soon after. Paying the transfer tax multiple times is a penalty that can discourage this practice, or at least extract value from it.

In West Marin, CA, one ballot measure directly linked affordable housing needs to the potential loss of housing due to wildfires. Connecting the two issues expanded support and presented the issue as a timely one. This strategy maximized voter support with the recent threat of wildfires ever-present in local discourse. In fact, a key campaign slogan for the effort was, “**Support Firefighters, Fund Community Housing!**”

✓ **Utilize all resources available!**

Successful campaigns rely on the support of all available resources. Some campaigns have the ability to hire campaign consultants who can provide great value and expertise – but they can be very expensive. Some campaigns are staffed entirely by committed volunteers, including housing residents themselves.

In San Juan, WA, the campaign for Proposition 1 (setting aside .5% of the selling price of any county-owned property for affordable housing development) was an entirely grassroots operation staffed by volunteers. San Juan County is unique in that it consists of about 15,000 people spread out over 400 islands with only ferry connections to mainland Washington. The dedicated volunteers were able to overcome the geographic challenges thanks to their extensive local knowledge of the community.

Successful campaigns rely on the support of all available resources.

✓ **Build a coherent campaign around all ballot measures.**

Voters may be asked to vote on several ballot initiatives when they go into the polling booth. Some may be on affordable housing – some may be on other issues. It is important for voters to be informed about the measures and their impact. They need to walk in confident in their vote and how they can support affordable housing and other issues of importance to them. To do this, individual campaigns can work together to elevate a slate of ballot measures. This helps present a clear message to voters. It also lets campaigns leverage scarce resources to support the broader campaign.

Charlotte, NC, traditionally has very strong support for bond measures, and a measure for affordable housing had the support of the new mayor and city council. But many African American community members felt as though promises are often not kept with bonds, so the campaign worked with the community to build trust on the ballot measures. The campaign worked to educate the community about the value of bond measures overall and held conversations within communities about how best to spend the money once they have it. On three different bond measures, voters supported affordable housing, transportation, and neighborhood improvements. The three bond initiatives campaigned as one through the “Vote Yes for Bonds Committee” that brought together a diverse coalition of advocates. The campaign collected endorsements from community organizations and notable leaders and gained the support of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and other private sector leaders such as Bank of America and the NBA’s Charlotte Hornets.

✓ **The converse is also true: ballot crowding can be a problem.**

Faced with lots of ballot measures, it is important to differentiate each ballot measure and to combat voter confusion.

In California, Proposition 1 was an extremely large \$4 billion bond proposal to support housing production. Initial polling showed that

Prop 1 was enormously popular, in part because it was paired with veterans’ issues and services. Proposition 10 was also on the ballot in 2018, and it was substantially less popular. Prop 10 would have repealed California’s preemption on local governments wanting to pursue rent control. Unlike Prop 1, the rent control campaign had a very well-funded and very active opposition that gained a strong presence in the public conversation. Over time, Prop 10 took over the narrative and was largely becoming thought of as “*the* housing initiative on the ballot” to the lesser-informed voter. Because Prop 10 was unpopular and voters weren’t differentiating between the two, support for Prop 1 decreased considerably over time, and the eventual margin of victory at 54-43% was much closer than initially expected.

Faced with lots of ballot measures, it is important to differentiate each ballot measure and to combat voter confusion.

✓ **The wording of the ballot question matters!**

The wording of the ballot question matters! Ballot measures can be very technical for the average person and written in a way that their meaning is not always clear. Worse still, a poorly written measure could result in voters making a choice they did not intend.

Taking the time to research the wording of the ballot question is worth the time and effort.

California’s Prop 1 was officially called the “Housing Programs and Veterans’ Loans Bond.” But the campaign called it the “Veterans and Affordable Housing Act” – leading with “veterans.”

A ballot initiative in Napa, CA, had different names in different parts of the county, making it difficult to brand a campaign with a name such as, “Vote YES on Measure ___!” To address this messaging problem, supporters started

calling it the “TOT Measure” – TOT stands for “transient occupancy tax” – and clearly tied the tax increase to increased affordable housing production and homelessness programs. They knew that telling voters how the new revenue will be used was essential to providing a positive message to build support.

✓ **Tell voters what the money is for!**

Voters want to know where their money is going. Be clear and transparent. Many ballot initiatives raised new revenue through hotel taxes, general obligation bonds, sales taxes, real estate transfer fees, or vacancy taxes. Getting voters to agree to these new revenues is more promising when the proposal and the ballot explicitly state how the money will be used, with a narrow message about how the housing production or homeless services, for example, are best practices. Revenue ballot questions that say they will generate revenues for general funds tend to receive less support.

Be sure to present clear information – and get that information out there.

In Charlotte, NC, the campaign produced a helpful FAQ page on its website and weekly newsletters to campaign supporters. These were critical tools in educating voters.

Organizers for the Bellingham Home Fund in Bellingham, WA, were able to estimate the past impact of the Home Fund initially passed in 2012. They told voters the fund built or preserved 700 affordable homes, and 5,000 low income people have benefited from rental assistance to prevent homelessness. The campaign was able to clearly demonstrate the value of the tax to voters who were choosing to continue it.

In Mountain View, CA, a business license tax or “head tax” would impose a tax in the range of \$8 and \$149 per employee on average, with larger companies paying greater amounts. The tax on businesses is based on the concept “every employee needs a place to sleep at night” and looks to the burgeoning employers of Silicon

Valley to be a part of the solution to the shortage of affordable homes, which they are helping create with the influx of so many new high-paying jobs.

✓ **Develop a broad coalition – but keep the message simple.**

When it comes to ballot measures, **having a diverse base of support is extremely important.** It shows deep reach into various sectors of the community and brings along resources and word-of-mouth connections that allow campaigns to go beyond their traditional bases of support. That said, it remains important to keep a clear and unified message about the measure. Oregon’s Ballot Question 26-199 had a broad coalition of supporters, including Nike, a major employer in the region that officially endorsed the measure. But leaders for the initiative kept the message clean and simple: “Measure 26-199 is an affordable housing bond that will create safe, permanently affordable housing for thousands of people across Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties.”

✓ **Build support in the media – traditional and social.**

An informed media and social media campaign can bring visibility and support to the campaign, but it does not happen overnight and can require a planned effort by a campaign’s communications team.

The effort can include well-placed letters to the editor and op-eds by influential local voices.

Campaigns should establish ongoing relationships with journalists who cover community development, affordable housing, and homelessness issues so that every time there is a news piece about homeless encampments or a rise in students tripling-up in tiny apartments, for example, the natural solution also mentioned in the piece is the passage of the ballot measure. Campaigns can also gain earned media by generating new data or publishing reports on the expected impact of a

ballot initiative's passage.

Overwhelming support from the media was very important for Oregon's Measure 102. Oregon Housing Alliance was able to win editorial endorsements on 102 from *The Oregonian*, *Willamette Week*, *Portland Mercury*, *The Ashland Daily Tidings*, *The Bend Bulletin*, *The Medford Mail Tribune*, *The Albany Democrat Herald*, *The Corvallis Gazette Times*, *The Eugene Weekly*, *The Corvallis Advocate*, *The Source Weekly*, and *The Herald and News*. They also engaged in a successful social media campaign, and many prominent individuals submitted letters to the editor.

A CLOSER LOOK AT BALLOT INITIATIVES IN 2018

ARIZONA

Flagstaff, AZ, has lost much of its rental housing to short-term rentals and needs to make up for it with new affordable housing production. Prop 422 would have allowed the city to sell \$25 million in housing bonds over 10 years, a bold proposal in a city as small as Flagstaff and the first time a housing bond was ever put before city voters. The ballot measure faced significant opposition from the Flagstaff Realtors Association, however, which argued the proposal was vague and did not specifically state how the \$25 million would be used. In addition, many conservatives in the city did not want to see public money used for "redistribution." While the measure was unsuccessful, the very close vote suggests an opportunity for future success as voters become more familiar with the issue and solutions.

Flagstaff Prop 422: The measure would have allowed the city to sell \$25 million in bonds for the construction, rehabilitation, redevelopment and acquisition of land for housing units; and the related infrastructure. The new resources also would be used to fund grants and loans for low income households requiring rent assistance.

Prop 422 failed 47-52%.

CALIFORNIA

California had several statewide ballot initiatives in 2018.

Prop 1 was placed on the ballot as a result of a bill that passed through the legislature the previous year. From the beginning, Prop 1, a \$4 billion general obligation bond for affordable housing, polled extremely well, in part because of effective messaging. The measure's official title was the "Housing Programs and Veterans' Loans Bond" – but the campaign called it the "Veterans and Affordable Housing Act," putting veterans front and center.

The coalition that supported Prop 1 was diverse. NLIHC state partner Housing California was a sponsor of the legislation; the California Housing Consortium (a housing developer-focused coalition) was a campaign co-chair from the start; and The Silicon Valley Leadership Group was a business-friendly co-chair as well. These three groups coming together on the legislation is noteworthy because they do not always agree with one another on other issues. In fact, they were split on another measure in the same election (Prop 10) with Housing California in strong support and the other two opposed. But on Prop 1, there was unity.

The Prop 1 campaign strategy focused on outreach to "squishy" voters rather than on broad grassroots engagement. The targeted voters were likely to support the issue but were not definite supporters. Research identified Latino voters and older voters as a significant part of the target population. The campaign focused heavily on media and direct mail rather than on door-to-door canvassing. The campaign also invested resources to have Prop 1 listed on the mailings of various candidate slates.

Prop 2 was a measure to support affordable housing for people with high mental and behavioral health needs. The campaign for Prop 2 had to work to overcome the initial concerns of some in the advocacy community, particularly mental health and domestic violence advocates who had reservations that resources for people with disabilities was being diverted away from other services to affordable housing exclusively. Importantly, however, there was eventually no

formal opposition to either Props 1 or 2 – not even from the realtors. The campaign for both measures raised over \$9 million – including substantial contributions from candidates traditionally on the opposite side of Housing California. These resources allowed the campaign to hire political consultants who managed the day-to-day operations. Bringing in professional political operatives came at considerable cost but reduced the strain on Housing California’s staff.

The campaign focused heavily on media and direct mail.

Unlike the broad support for Props 1 & 2, Prop 10 (repealing state limits on the kind of rent control cities and counties could offer) was highly controversial, dominated public discussions on ballot initiatives, and deeply divided advocates. Housing California was a strong supporter of Prop 10, but the developer and business communities were actively opposed. The opposition to Prop 10 was very well funded, predominantly by landlord associations.

Voters became confused, and soon all the housing ballot measures became lumped together in the minds of many voters. Opposition to Prop 10 led to more “no” votes on Props 1 and 2.

A summary of California ballot measures:

California Proposition 1: This \$4 billion general obligation bond was placed on the ballot by the state legislature after the passage of Senate Bill 3 in 2017. The bill allows the state to invest resources in the creation of supportive housing and homeowner assistance programs, including \$1.5 billion dedicated to the Multifamily Housing Program. The funding also includes \$1 billion for the CalVet Home Loan Program. There is also \$150 million for the Transit-Oriented Development Implementation Fund, \$150 million for the Home Purchase Assistance Program, \$300 million for the Farmworker Housing Grant Fund, \$300 million for the Local Housing Trust Fund Matching Grant Program, and \$300 million for the Self-Help Housing Fund.
Proposition 1 passed 54-46%.

California Proposition 2: This referendum authorizes the state to spend \$2 billion of previously appropriated funds for the purpose of building housing specific to ending homelessness. People who are chronically homeless, have a mental health diagnosis, or live with a physical disability are specifically prioritized. Moving forward, the state will use up to \$140 million of county mental health funds per year to repay up to \$2 billion in bonds.
Proposition 2 passed 61-39%.

California Proposition 10: Prop 10 would have repealed state limits on the kind of rent control cities and counties could offer, giving control to local regulators to, for example, impose rent control on single-family homes or cap the rent on an apartment when it becomes vacant. Under current California law, cities can only impose rent control policies on properties built before 1989.
Proposition 10 failed 38-62%.

East Palo Alto Measure HH: A tax on large commercial office space will raise an estimated \$1.675 million dedicated to affordable housing and job training opportunities specific to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).
Measure HH passed 76-23%.

San Francisco Measure C: A new tax on gross receipts for businesses with incomes above \$50 million. The new tax will raise an estimated \$300 million annually dedicated to affordable housing, supportive services for the chronically homeless, and legal assistance programs.
Measure C passed 60-40%.

Oakland Measure W: A tax on vacant housing units will generate approximately \$10 million annually, some of which can be used for affordable housing production.
Measure W passed 68-31%.

Oakland Measure X: A real estate transfer tax will raise an estimated \$8 million in annual revenue, which can be used for housing and homeless programs.
Measure X passed 66-33%.

Santa Cruz County Measure H: A \$140 million general obligation bond that would have provided affordable housing for local workers, including teachers, healthcare workers, service workers, and farmworkers, and vulnerable populations which include people experiencing homelessness, veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities.
Measure H gained a majority 52-47% vote but failed to win the necessary two-thirds threshold.

Santa Cruz Measure M: A rent-control measure to limit rent increases in apartments built before 1995. Measure M also includes the requirement that renters evicted for no cause when their leases are terminated must be provided with relocation assistance. The rent-control provisions of Measure M cannot be implemented due to

the failure of the statewide Prop 10 initiative. **Measure M passed 65-34%.**

Berkeley Measure Q for rent control: A measure that would have changed Berkeley's rent-control laws to exempt new buildings from rent stabilization for 20 years, while maintaining all rent boosts made under state law when there are tenancy changes and starting rent control from that level. **Measure Q won the city vote 71-29%, but most of it will not go into effect because California Prop 10 failed.**

Berkeley Measure O: \$135 million in general obligation bonds to create more affordable housing options for low income families and residents. **Measure O passed 75-24%**

Berkeley Measure P: A real estate transfer tax will raise \$6 million annually, some of which may be used for homeless services. This tax, like Measure X in Oakland, can be a deterrent to house-flipping. **Measure P passed 70-29%.**

San Jose Measure V: A \$450 million general obligation bond for affordable housing production and preservation. **Measure V gained a majority 61-39% vote but failed to win the required two-thirds threshold needed.**

Napa County TOT Measure: A hotel tax to raise nearly \$5 million annually in dedicated funds for affordable housing and homelessness programs. **The measure passed 66-33%.**

Santa Rosa Measure N: Santa Rosa lost a significant amount of its housing stock when many households were displaced in nearby communities during recent California wildfires. Measure N will raise \$124 million in general obligation bonds for housing production. **Measure N passed 58-41%.**

Mountain View Measure P: A business license tax or "head tax" in the range of \$8 and \$149 per employee on average, with larger companies paying greater amounts. The new tax will generate an approximate \$6 million annually for the city general fund, some of which may go to housing. **Measure P passed 69-30%.**

Richmond Measure T: A vacant-property tax would have raised an estimated \$5.4 million annually for 20 years to fund homelessness services, housing, and blight remediation. **Measure T gained a majority 58-41% vote but failed to win the required two-thirds threshold.**

Santa Clara County Measure A: Extends a previously-approved sales tax of 1/8 of a cent to fund a variety of essential community services, including affordable housing production and preservation. The sales tax will generate an estimated \$50 million annually. **Measure A**

passed 72-27%.

West Marin Measure W: A hotel tax will raise an estimated \$1.3 million annually to support fire and emergency services. Approximately \$600,000 of the yearly revenue from the hotel tax increase will be made available to community organizations and non-profits to provide housing assistance through grants and loans to cover earnest money, security deposits, and emergency rent relief for renters in needs. The housing funds will also help to pay for inspection fees and acquisition costs to build or rehabilitate affordable homes. **Measure W passed 73-26%.**

National City Measure W: National City proposed moving forward with a residential rent control program, including provisions to require only just-cause evictions and to create a five-member review and regulation board to manage the program and establish recommended rent levels. Measure W required the statewide Proposition 10 to pass to be implemented. **Measure W failed 49-51%.**

COLORADO

A summary of Colorado ballot measures:

The housing ballot initiatives facing voters in Telluride, CO were unique in that there was not a large campaign to support the measures, nor in opposition for that matter. Mayor Pro Tempore Todd Brown and Council Member Tom Watkinson identified some ideas for housing solutions through public input at Town Council meetings, and formed those ideas into legislation to put before voters. There was no campaign committee filed in support of Measures 2A, 2B, and 2C, and no campaign finance expenditure reports were filed. In many ways, Telluride's experience was the simplest and purest form of direct legislation, as there was little public discourse between the voter seeing the ballot question and then making a decision.

Telluride Measures 2A, 2B, 2C: Measure 2A will increase property taxes equal to a \$72 tax increase on a \$500,000 property for affordable housing and is expected to raise \$554,000. Measure 2B would have increased sales taxes by a half-cent (the existing half-cent tax raised \$761,048.48 for affordable housing in 2017). Measure 2C is related to 2A and will allow the town to increase its debt for affordable housing and use the tax revenue from 2A to pay it off. **Measure 2A passed 51-48%; Measure 2B failed 49-51%; and Measure 2C passed 52-47%.**

ILLINOIS

The campaign to pass a Chicago, IL, rent-control measure was staffed by the team at ONE Northside, a Chicago community organizing group. Their ambitious effort started a few months before the election and required the dedicated coordination of a team that had never run a ballot initiative, did not have a playbook, and had few resources. While the team had not done this kind of work before, they viewed it as an opportunity to support their resident action efforts and to increase their own leadership capacity. ONE Northside staff researched ballot initiatives and reached out to others who had led other successful efforts. They invested in resources to support volunteers of differing abilities and matched volunteers with their own communities, ensuring positive experiences for volunteers and more effective canvassing. The campaign was also successful in creatively utilizing volunteers in ways beyond just canvassing, which built strong buy-in and engagement. Volunteers were given different jobs, like phone banking and organizing mailings, so that everyone who wanted to participate was given a meaningful role that they felt comfortable with. ONE Northside eventually got the requisite number of signatures to put the measure on the ballot and the votes needed to pass the measure.

Chicago rent control: Voters weighed in through advisory referenda on the Rent Control Preemption Act potential repeal at the state level. The current law explicitly forbids any local government from passing an ordinance or resolution “that would have the effect of controlling the amount of rent charged for leasing private residential or commercial property.” **Voters support lifting the Illinois ban on rent control in all three wards where it was proposed: 71-28% in Ward 35; 70-29% in Ward 46; and 66-34% in Ward 49.**

NORTH CAROLINA

Voters in Charlotte, NC, went to the polls to decide whether the city would borrow \$50 million in affordable housing bonds, far more than the \$15 million the city usually seeks for the Charlotte Housing Trust Fund. The campaign emphasized four potential uses of the Charlotte Housing Trust Fund: 1) multi-family new construction and rehabilitation;

2) homeownership development in targeted neighborhoods; 3) housing for seniors, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness; and 4) acquisition of properties for developing mixed-income communities. The neighborhood improvement bond was more money than the housing bond at \$55 million but is set to benefit neighborhoods showing signs of distress. The eligible uses include sidewalks, landscaping, storm drainage, pedestrian lighting, and curbs and gutters. It will “fund subsidies for developers building low-income housing, as well as programs that fund the rehabilitation of foreclosed, blighted, or dilapidated single-family houses and apartments,” reported the Charlotte Observer.

As noted previously, Charlotte traditionally has very strong support for bond measures, and this measure had the support of the new mayor and city council. The campaign worked with the community to build trust, particularly with the African American community which has felt city promises are often not kept with bonds. The campaign worked to educate the community about the value of bond measures overall and engaged in conversations with the community about how best to spend the money once they have it. The housing bond passed 68-31%.

OREGON

Oregon has lagged behind other states that allow municipalities to use bond financing for housing production. Prior to Measure 102, local governments could only use bond funding for housing if the government retained ownership of the housing and operated it moving forward. Measure 102 amended the state constitution to allow local bonds for financing affordable housing with nongovernmental entities. The legislature voted nearly unanimously to refer the measure to voters, which gave the measure strong political support from the beginning. More than 100 local elected officials supported the measure, as did Nike, a major area employer.

Gaining overwhelming support from the media was very important. The Oregon Housing Alliance engaged in a successful letter-to-the-editor campaign and won editorial endorsements on Measure 102 from most major news outlets.

A summary of Oregon ballot measures:

Oregon Measure 102: Amends Oregon's state constitution to "allow counties, cities, and towns to – with voter approval and certain restrictions – use bond revenue to fund the construction of affordable housing without necessarily retaining complete ownership of the constructed housing," allowing jurisdictions to partner with nonprofits and private developers and to use federal tax credits. **Measure 102 passed 56-44%.**

Portland Measure 26-199: Allows the regional, multi-county government "to issue \$652.8 million in general obligation bonds to build affordable housing, buy and rehabilitate existing housing, and buy land for affordable housing." The bonds are expected to fund affordable housing for about 7,500 people. **Measure 26-199 passed 59-41%.**

TEXAS

Austin's Proposition A affordable housing bond bill built on more than ten years of effort on ballot measures to support affordable housing.

The advocates employed a multi-level communications strategy.

They demonstrated the impacts of past bond measures in addressing the shortage of affordable housing and connected national and state-level data to the community's overall economics. They also identified messages around both the moral imperative and the self-interests that motivate local voters.

Austin Proposition A: The measure will issue a \$250 million bond to fund "the creation, rehabilitation, and retention of affordable rental and ownership housing." \$100 million will be devoted to land acquisition for affordable housing development through the Austin Housing Finance Corporation, \$94 million into the Rental Housing Development Assistance program, \$28 million for an acquisition and development program for new homeowners, and another \$28 million into home renovations or repairs through the GO Repair program. **Proposition A passed 73-27%.**

WASHINGTON

Advocates for the Bellingham Home Fund in Bellingham, WA, were able to estimate the past impact of the Home Fund, which initially passed in 2012. Since then, 700 affordable homes

were built or preserved, and 5,000 low-income people benefited from rental assistance to prevent homelessness. Using these numbers, the campaign was able to clearly demonstrate the value of the property tax levy, which would be extended through Prop 2018-5. The levy would continue to fund new construction of affordable housing and the preservation of existing buildings, with a focus on housing for veterans, people with disabilities, and working families. The campaign secured the endorsement of 63 organizations and 16 local officials.

In San Juan, WA, the campaign for Proposition 1 (setting aside .5% of the selling price of any county-owned property for affordable housing development) was an entirely grassroots operation staffed by volunteers. San Juan County is unique in that it consists of about 15,000 people spread out over 400 islands with only ferry connections to mainland Washington. The dedicated volunteers were able to overcome the geographic challenges thanks to their extensive local knowledge of the community.

A summary of Washington ballot measures:

Bellingham Home Fund, Prop 2018-5: The measure will extend an existing property tax for new construction of affordable housing and the preservation of existing buildings in the City of Bellingham. The cap on what that levy will collect is now set at \$4 million annually over the next ten years. Two-thirds of all funds must benefit very low-income families at or below 50% of area median income, with the remainder benefiting low-income families at or below 80% of area median income. Program estimates for the next ten years of Home Fund resources indicate that \$21.7 million will be spent for production and preservation, with an additional \$13.6 million to be spend on rental assistance and support services; \$1.8 million will be used for low-income homebuyer assistance; and \$500,000 will be used for land acquisition. **Proposition 2018-5 passed 66-33%.**

San Juan County Proposition 1: Sets aside .5% of the selling price of any county-owned property and allocates the funds to affordable housing development organizations. **Proposition 1 passed 54-45%.**