

How We Win 2026

A tiny guide to elections when everything feels broken

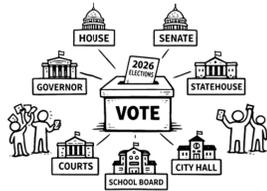


Use this zine to start a conversation

Elections = An Ecosystem

When we say “the 2026 elections,” we are not just talking about one big race.

- **Power is spread** through an ecosystem: House, Senate, governors, state legislatures, courts, school boards, city councils, secretaries of state, and more.
- Republicans showed us they will **abuse every lever** they control: state laws, gerrymandered maps, courts, local boards.



Our mission in 2026:

1. **Take** some of those levers **back**.
2. **Build new** ones they don't control yet.

Will elections even... happen?

When Republicans push laws to disenfranchise millions and seize ballots, it's easy to wonder.

- Yes, there **will be** elections. Counties, states, and local officials still run most of the process.
- **Even authoritarian** governments hold elections: rarely fair, but they create chances for pressure, organizing, and exposure.
- Our job is to use every election we **still have** and be ready to defend them.
- Support groups that guard the process: election-protection hotlines, League of Women Voters, Democracy Docket cases, etc.
- Be ready to document and protest if anyone tries to cancel, delay or overturn results.

Flipping the House: The Most Winnable Lever

To flip U.S. House will take just about **five seats**. A Democratic House can:

- **Block** extremist bills and budget riders
- **Run** real oversight of corruption and abuse
- **Protect** investigations and democracy-defending agencies



Good news: there are **winnable districts** where a **few thousand votes** make the difference. Think Arizona (HD 1, 6), California (HD 22, 48), Iowa (HD 1, 3), New York (HD 1), and Pennsylvania (HD 7, 10, 8). There are ~20 plausible R seats nationwide, plus a few D seats we'll have to defend in OH, TX, and ME.

Senate & Courts: Playing the Long Game

The 2026 Senate map is rough. Republicans currently hold a majority; to take it back, Democrats need to defend GA and MI, and flip in tough races in ME, NC, AK, OH, and even IA and TX.

Why fight an **uphill battle**? Senate decides:

- Judges, including the Supreme Court
- Heads of Justice, Homeland Security, EPA, Labor, and other key agencies
- Treaties and national security posts



A hostile Senate can lock in voter-suppression judges and corrupt enforcers **for decades**. Even if we don't win them, every race we contest **builds power**.

States: Where the Rules Get Written

State power is where a lot of democracy lives or dies. State legislatures draw the maps that decide who gets a real shot at winning. They write laws about:

- How easy it is to register and vote
- Abortion access
- LGBTQ+ rights
- Public schools and libraries



Governors sign or veto those laws, appoint key officials, and can refuse to go along with anti-democratic schemes. State supreme courts are often the final word on gerrymandering, abortion bans, voting rights, and whether officials can refuse to certify election results.

Local Races: First Line

Local races are the ecosystem **closest to daily life**. Many of us once thought, “I only care about who is President or Senator.” The right wing never made that mistake. **They invested** in school boards, city councils, sheriffs, secretaries of state, and election boards that:

- Decide what kids learn in school
- Choose where and how people vote
- Enforce or ignore civil-rights protections

When we win local races, we:

- Build lasting **infrastructure** instead of campaigns that fly in and vanish
- Boost **turnout** up the ballot
- Grow the **bench** for future leaders



Your 2026 Action Checklist

- Knock doors for a candidate
- Make calls for a must-win race
- Write postcards for a special election
- Text voters to check their voting plans
- Chip in for a down-ballot campaign
- Phonebank for a key race
- VOTE in every election
- Sign up to be a poll worker
- Help register new voters
- Get training in curing ballots
- Share election info on social media
- Host a small house party for a candidate
- Volunteer with a democracy group



 **It's Blue Turn**

JOIN OUR FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY Regular Meetings and Actions in SF Bay Area

Pick three of these and text a friend to join you!