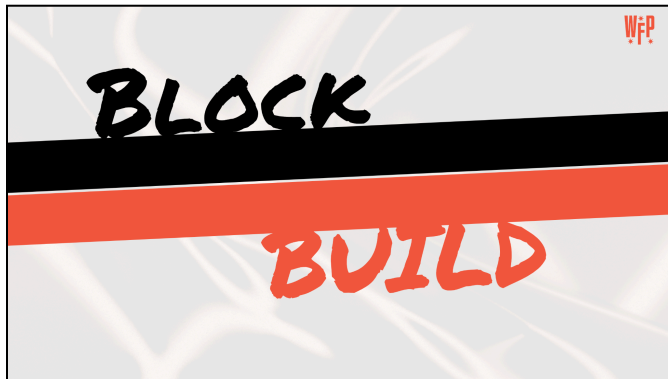


WORKING FAMILIES PARTY MASS CALLS

Mass Call #7 - Political Education Script



- For this political education session we are going to dig deeper into Project 2025.
- Before we do that, we have people who are new to these calls, so let's go back over some of the materials we've covered on past calls to get you up to speed.

Watch the recordings and download the materials at:
www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls

MASS CALL #1: WHAT'S THE SCORE IN AMERICA

In this call we talk about the threat posed by the MAGA movement, and the need for a united front strategy to defeat it. We make clear that in the context of the ongoing political crisis in America, elections are a doorway, not a destination.

Download the Curriculum



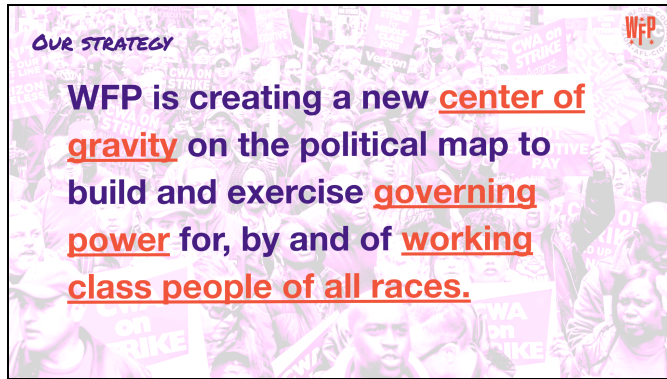
(Sample slides from the curriculum)



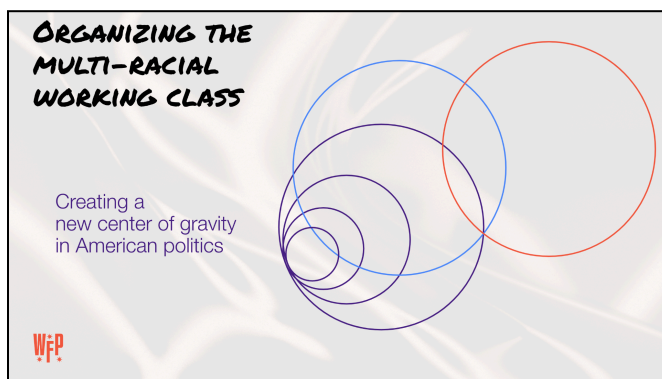
- Sidenote, if you like what you've been hearing in these sessions, or if you want to get caught up on things you've missed, we are posting the recordings on the WFP website at www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls. We'll drop the link to that in the chat.
- And here's the cool thing...you can do more than just watch the videos. We've put downloadable versions of all the slides and speakers notes for these political education sessions right there on the website.
- So again, you can find the materials at www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls. We will drop that link for you in the chat one more time.



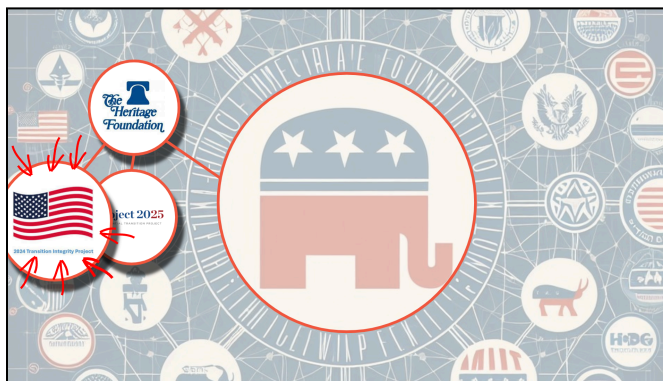
- In our earlier calls we've talked about the current political crisis in the United States.
- This crisis is defined by the interconnected phenomena you see on this slide. Republicans have been taken over by an authoritarian faction. Democrats are tending to the needs of affluent voters and losing working class people. And we've got a two party system that largely attempts to tie our hands to prevent addressing these dynamics.



- With this understanding of the political terrain, WFP has an overarching strategy. In one sentence it can be summed up like this: “we are creating a new center of gravity on the political map to build and exercise governing power for, by, and of working class people of all races.”



- Here is what that strategy might look like if we were to draw it in a simple picture.
- Most people think there are just two teams on the US political map – the red team and the blue team. But we are working to create a new circle on this map.



- Today, because we want to talk about Project 2025, we are going to zoom in on one of the circles on this map and look at the Republican Party.
- Political parties do not stand out there on their own. They are actually part of a dense network of organizations, interest groups, think tanks, media organizations and other entities. All of these contribute to the gravitational pull of the politics of any of the circles on the political map.
- Recently, one of the organizations in this network in and around the Republican Party has been making headlines. That organization is the Heritage Foundation – the authors of Project 2025.
- The Heritage Foundation has been around since the 1970's, and they really rose to power during the Reagan administration.
- Every four years Heritage puts out a document called the *Mandate for Leadership*.
- Does that sound familiar? That is the full name of the document we have come to know as "Project 2025." When Ronald Reagan was elected, he actually gave a copy of the 1981 version of the *Mandate for Leadership* to every one of the members of his cabinet.
- Now here is where it gets interesting...that 1981 document was published just as Reagan was first taking office. This year's document was published many, many months ago.
- And this is what has gotten Heritage into so much trouble. WE found out about Project 2025 (they didn't really hide it). And thanks to the work of OUR movement, vast majorities of voters not only know about Project 2025, but they also disagree very strongly with its contents. There are people on the Right who are mad at Heritage about Project 2025. They are mad because Heritage committed the sin of **saying the quiet part out loud!**
- Heritage gave up the game by putting this document out in *advance* of the election...and then actually doing a PR blitz about it.
- If you have read the book by Nancy McClean, *Democracy in Chains*, you know that the right wing in this country has spent decades quietly putting their loyalists into positions of influence inside of institutions. They found that their ideas were

not popular, so they made a conscious decision to take their political project underground. The fact that Heritage **publicly** revealed what they 're up to is against the bigger plan these guys have been following for a very long time.

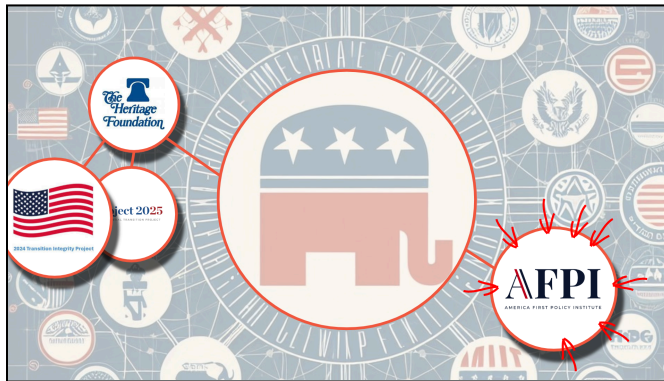
- But that is not all that Heritage is up to. This is a bit of a preview of the stuff we plan to go over in our next Mass Call on October 30th, but Heritage is also part of an ecosystem of organizations on the right that are fully engaged in the business of election subversion.
- Recently, they released a report on something they are calling their “2024 Transition Integrity Project.” If that name sounds at all familiar it is because it is the same exact name of a project that came together in 2020 and sounded some of the first alarm bells about how Trump might try to stay in power even if he lost.
- Sadly, that original Transition Integrity Project was very much right in what they predicted would happen in 2020.



- Heritage's off-brand sequel of the Transition Integrity Project has a different agenda. They are fully part of the noise machine attempting to create conditions for Trump to yet again contest the election result in 2024.
- This is Mike Howell. He is the person behind the scenes leading this work. The thing to really know about this guy is that he is an attorney who under Trump worked at the Department of Homeland security. He is a board member of the National Immigration Enforcement Center where he claims a specialty in "advancing the Deportation Sciences and Technology."
- And currently he is also the leader of a massive project, also run by Heritage, that has submitted over fifty thousand Freedom of Information requests to various government agencies seeking to build a list of government employees

who have used terms like “climate change” and “diversity, equity and inclusion” in their internal communications.

- In the context of a potential second Trump administration, one that is promising mass deportations and the purge of career civil servants so they can be replaced with loyalists, let's remember that these processes of government repression have a face and a name. And near the top of the heap is this guy, Mike Howell.
- So the Heritage Foundation and Project 2025 make great headlines. They are truly scary. If Project 2025 were enacted at the national level it would represent a destructive and permanent shift in the way our federal government works in favor of the wealthy and the elite. But if all we do is talk about Project 2025 as a list of “scary things” we are missing the bigger point.



- Now I want to tell you about another think tank in Washington DC that you maybe have not heard about: the America First Policy Institute.
- Compared to the Heritage Foundation, they are a new kid on the block.



- This is Kellyanne Conway, formerly Trump's campaign manager and senior advisor, now an employee of AFPI.
- One of the goals of America First is to be better prepared for a second Trump presidency than the right wing was for the first.

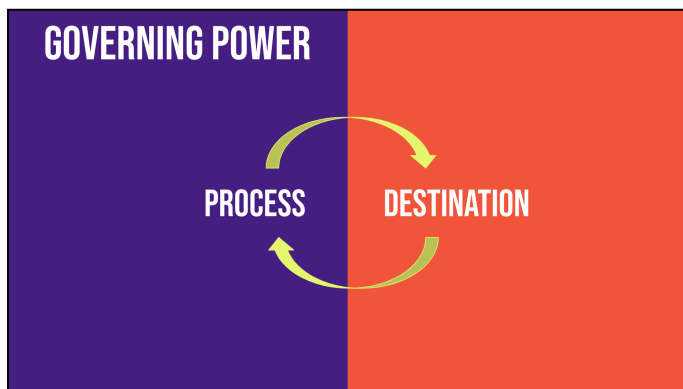


- So who are some of the people at America First? Well there's its President, Brooke Rollins. She used to be the Director of Trump's Domestic Policy Council.
- There is Linda McMahon (McMan), the former Chief Executive of the World Wrestling Entertainment network and a major Trump donor. She is the Chair of the think tank.
- We have Larry Kudlow, who used to be the chief economist at Bear Stearns and also a Fox News commentator. He worked as an economic advisor in the Trump administration. He is the Vice Chair.
- And there is Chad Wolf, the CEO of America First. He was the acting head of Trump's Department of Homeland Security. Along the way, he was an architect of Trump's family separation policy and he was the guy to send federal cops to cities in the wake of the murder of George Floyd.
- These are the top people in leadership positions at AFPI, but their website lists over 150 people on their staff, working on a range of issues from the economy, energy, and education, to healthcare and social issues, to foreign policy and security.
- If you want to know what a government-in-waiting for an incoming Trump administration would look like, you need to look [HERE](#). And it's not just me

saying that...over the summer Trump himself literally named Linda McMahon, the Chair of the AFPI, to be the co-chair of his official transition planning team.

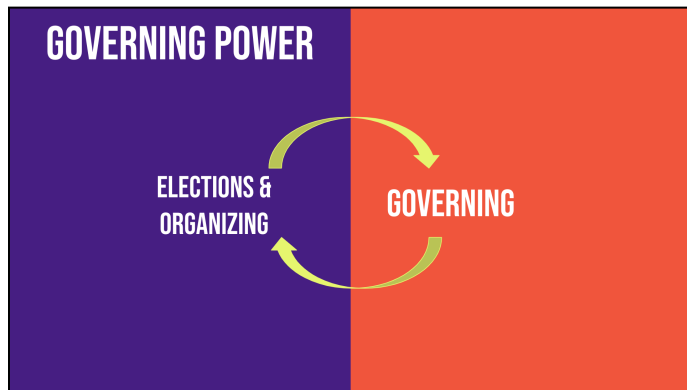
GOVERNING POWER IS ABOUT CONTROLLING THE GOVERNMENT.

- So what can we learn from all this, besides the fact that this situation is no laughing matter? What lessons can it teach us?
- For one, it can teach us something about how governing power works. This is a definition of governing power, which is actually not as simple as it seems: “Governing power is about controlling the government.”

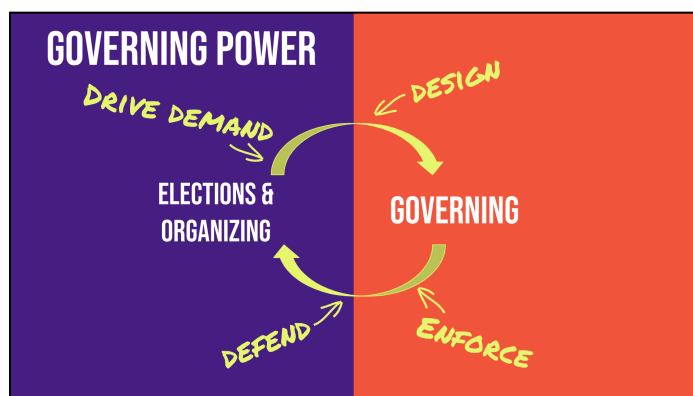


- For a lot of folks, when we hear the term “governing power” we think of it as a destination. We may think of it as a place we will arrive someday when we win enough elections.
- If you live in a state like I do, where the forces of American authoritarianism are already firmly in control, this destination can feel very far away. It can lead folks to lose hope that things could ever change – which is exactly how they want us to feel!

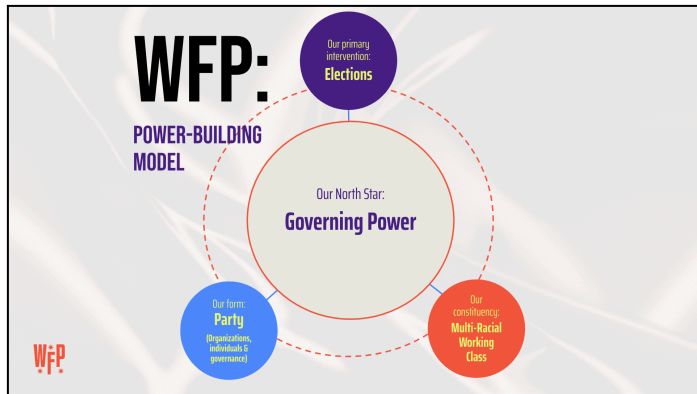
- But governing power is actually a process.



- There is a constant churn of elections and governing. Did the people at the America First Policy Institute come out of the 2020 election saying, “well, our guy is not in the White House, I guess we should just sit around and wait for the next election”?
- Nope. They kept building infrastructure to govern. They researched. They did interviews with former government officials in the Trump administration. They raised a lot of money. And they have been developing a blueprint for governing the next time they are sitting in the seat.
- And they are not even hiding the fact that they are already looking beyond Trump. They have the goal of advancing their agenda for decades to come.



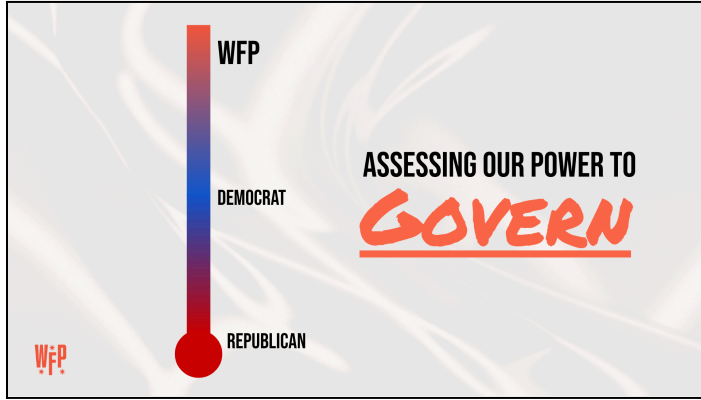
- Let's get even more specific...and think about what it means for our movement.
- Our movement needs to develop the capacity to create a **demand** for change.
- We need aligned policy experts able to **design** our proposals.
- We need electeds who have mastered the skill of **governing and legislating**.
- We need the expertise to shape the administrative state and craft **enforcement** strategies.
- And we need the ability to **defend** our gains in the courts and in future elections.
- We also need to pass laws that can “defend themselves.” In other words, we need the ability to pass large structural changes to the system that ratchet in only one direction towards greater democracy. The right wing spends so much of their time creating one-way ratcheting laws in the other direction. They restrict our right to vote, or they constitutionally lock in the power of corporations to dictate the shape of our economy.



- At WFP we have just spent the past four years getting very clear on our power-building model. As you can see, we place achieving the power to govern in all the ways I just described at the very center of

our political project.

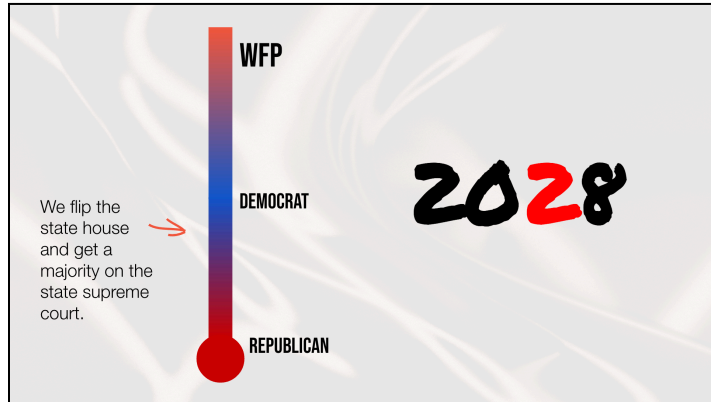
- Governing power is our North Star.



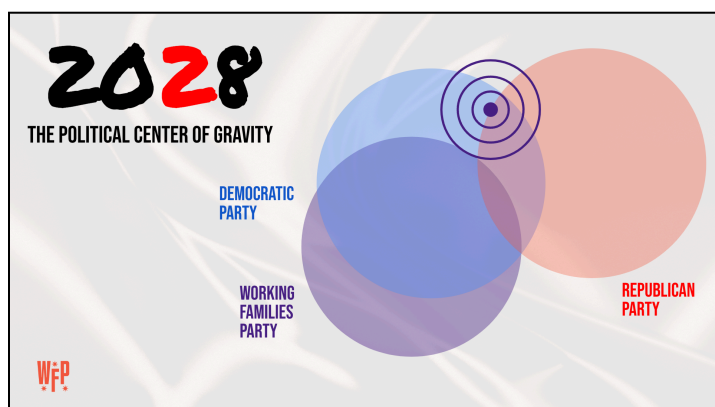
- But how do we measure our ability to govern? How do we know how much governing power we have?
- At our WFP National Convention last year we gave a presentation on the next 25 years of our party's growth.
- To prepare for that, we asked leaders in every WFP state to make some predictions about the governing power they thought they might have in 5 years, 15 years, and in 25 years.
- We asked them to give us their answers on the simple thermometer you see on this slide.

BLUE STATE

- Let's look at an example of what I am talking about. This is a hypothetical example of the kinds of answers we got from people in WFP who are working in so-called "blue states."

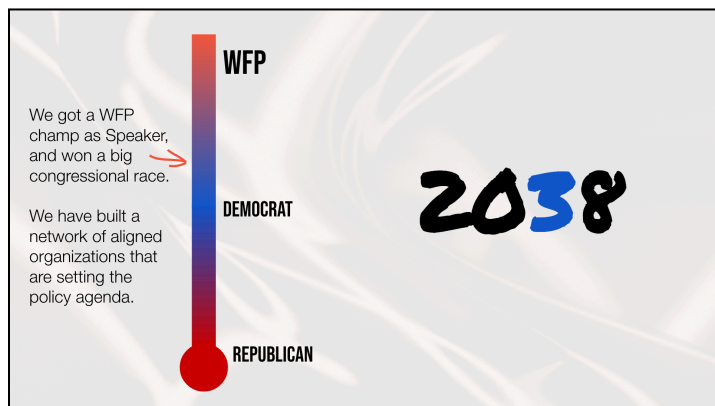


- A common goal for WFP is to do the organizing work to flip state legislatures. This does not get the headlines that Presidential elections do, but in terms of being an indicator of our ability to govern, state legislatures are quite often where the rubber meets the road.
- So in this hypothetical state, the goal for five years out is to flip the state house. We have also gotten a majority on the state supreme court helping us ensure fair electoral maps without gerrymandering.

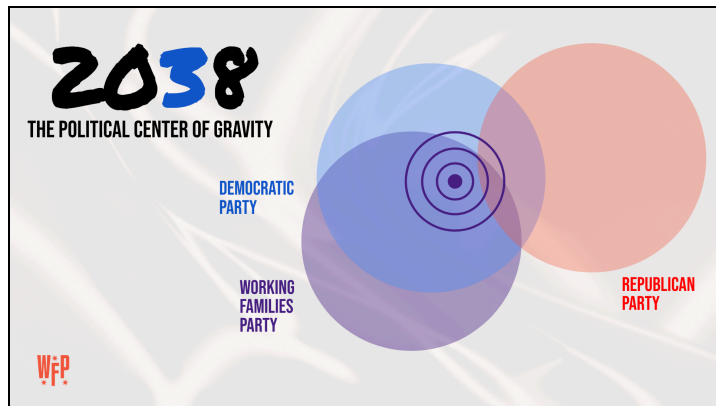


- Now, remember this map? These are different gravitational fields on the big political map.

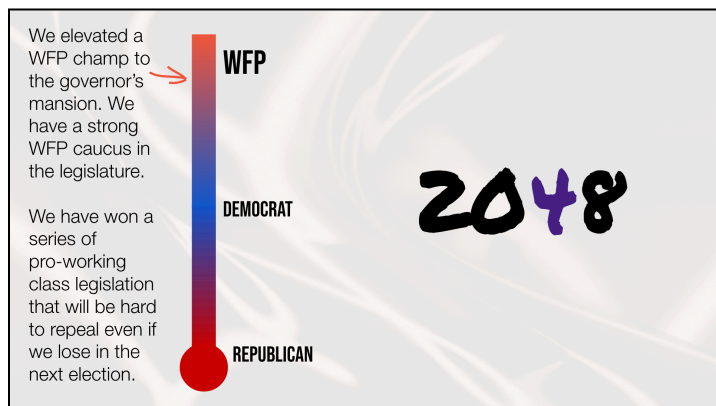
- Based on those 2028 indicators, we are going to try to locate where exactly the *center of the center* of gravity is located. An analogy we can use to explain what we are doing here is to ask where is the Overton Window on this map? That means: Where is the window of political possibility?
- In this 2028 scenario, let's say that the center of gravity has just tipped over from the red circle into the blue circle. But not by much. And the center of gravity is still at the top of the circles, very much being defined by the elite forces inside both the Democratic and Republican Parties.



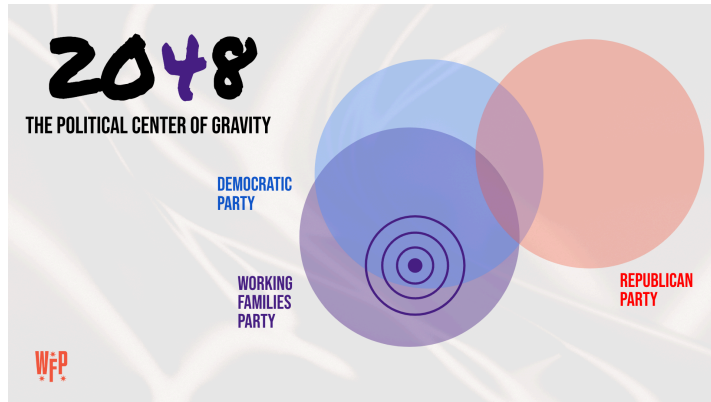
- Now let's fast-forward to 2038. As you can see, folks have continued to organize and now they have a WFP champion serving as the Speaker of the House. They have won a big Congressional race, showing that the party is now able to operate at a much larger scale.
- Also, through their organizing in the state, the WFP is now part of a denser network of aligned organizations that are doing some of the work of designing and driving demands for new policies.



- And what does this mean for our center of gravity on the political map?
- We can see the center point has moved further in our direction. It is very clearly in the blue circle now. But it is also moving downward towards our purple circle.



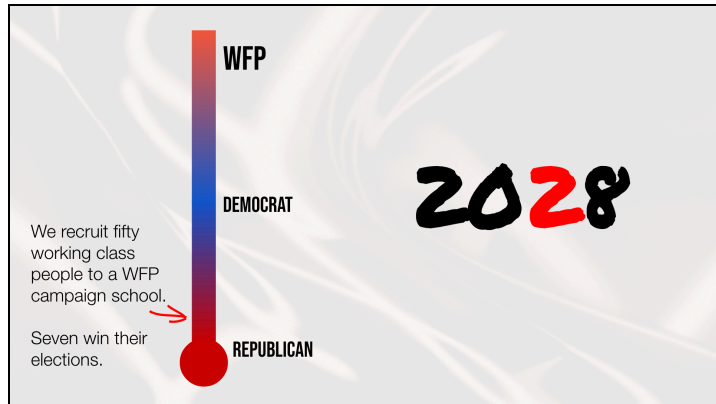
- Hold on tight as we fast forward 25 years. Here are the indicators—We won the Governor's mansion, y'all. We have built a strong and organized caucus of WFP-aligned members in the state legislature. And we have begun to pass real legislation.
- And importantly, these laws are not so easy to overturn. They'll be able to "defend themselves" as we were talking about earlier.



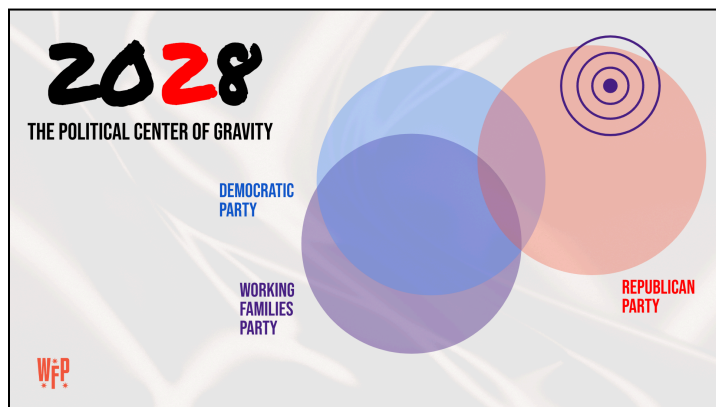
- And this is how the center of gravity is continuing to shift in this 2048 scenario. As you can see, it continues to move in our direction. The real power struggle in the state has now shifted from one between Democrats and Republicans, to a power struggle between Democrats and the WFP.



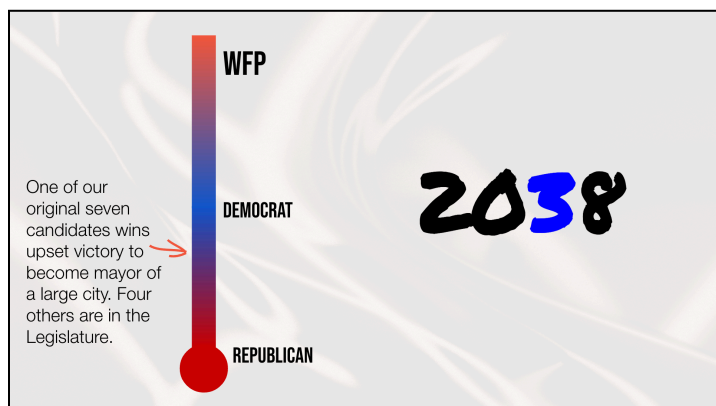
- So let's look at a version of this for a red state.



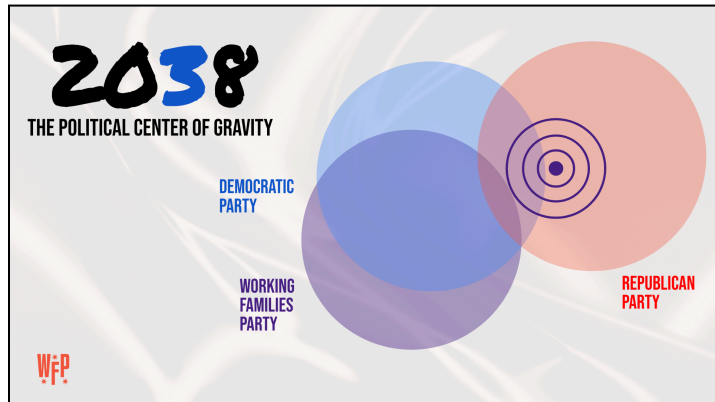
- In this hypothetical red state, we have to start at a different place. Here we can see that by 2028 we have begun to build our pipeline of aligned candidates.



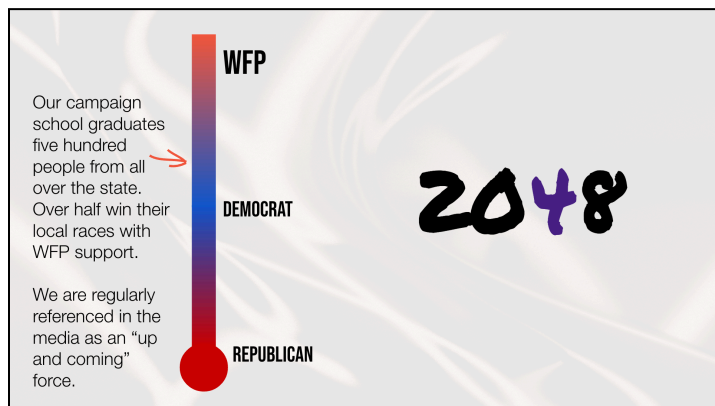
- The center of gravity is still clearly in the elite echelons of the Republican party. So not much has visibly changed at this point.



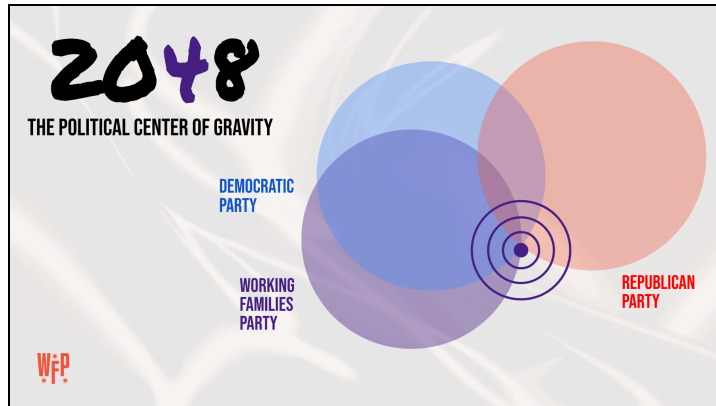
- But by 2038, maybe we are starting to see some of the fruits of our labor. We won a hard-earned victory in a major city. Some of our original class of people from our campaign school have continued to climb the rungs of power.



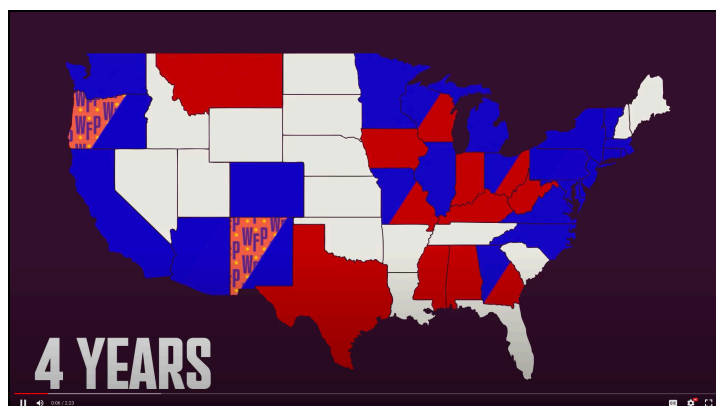
- And sure enough, the center of gravity is starting to shift. It is still in the red circle, but it is moving in our direction.



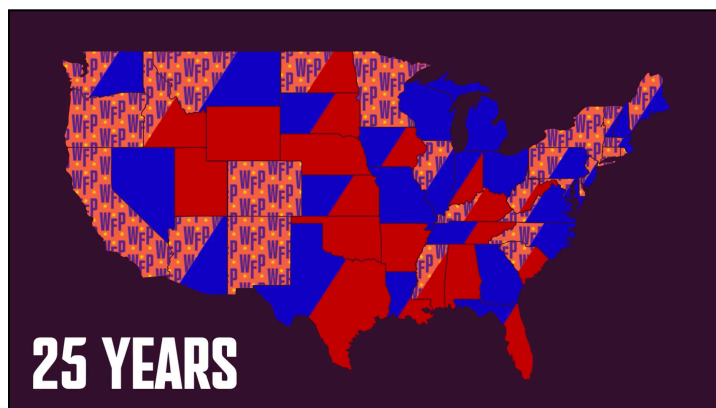
- By 2048, our candidate pipeline has grown and there is a new narrative shaping the political scene. It is giving our folks hope that we can win stuff – people are seeing WFP as a real player.



- And here is where the center of gravity might be in 2048.
- I want you to notice something here. Did you notice how the center of gravity did not actually travel through the blue circle over those 25 years?
- There are certainly states where through our organizing we might move the center of gravity from the Republican red circle to the Democratic blue circle.
- But we also think it is possible to imagine states where the Democratic Party – either because it is weak organizationally, its brand is too damaged in the minds of voters, or both – is not actually a player. We can imagine states where 25 years from now the central power struggle could actually be one between the Republican Party and the WFP.



- If you had the good fortune to be at the WFP national convention last year, you will have seen this.
- After we asked leaders in all the WFP states to think about where they would be on the path to governing power in the next 25 years, we put it all together into one animated map.
- As you can see, the map starts off with the places where we are organizing right now, and as time advances we can see new states coming online.
- We can see the evolution of each of the states. Some go from red to blue, or become new swing states.
- Some states go from Blue to becoming swing states with the WFP.
- Some go from being red to being a swing state with the WFP.
- And we also think it is possible to imagine states where WFP has become the dominant political force over the next 25 years.



- So we will end this political education session with this picture of the governing power we can and will build in the next 25 years. Of course, you might be thinking, none of this is guaranteed. But we are guaranteed to fail if we don't try. And I know that the combined organizing savvy represented by the people on this call is enough to – at the very least – get us started in a real way down the road to this vision of what could be.