

**Impact.
Leverage.
Long-term
investment.**

**Progress
Alliance of
Washington**



“Too often we try to pull on the wrong political levers, those requiring huge effort and having small and temporary impact. Progress Alliance is all about finding the larger levers that are surprisingly easy to move and have lasting, significant impact.”

Jabe Blumenthal, Progress Alliance Co-Founder

A better way to invest in progress.

More interested in progress than politics, Progress Alliance founders came together in 2005 to make leveraged, high return philanthropic investments in lasting political change that reach beyond any single election cycle or issue campaign.

Conservatives have spent decades methodically building their political “infrastructure” by investing in public policy think tanks, candidate training, message coordination, and base building. As a result they have seen significant electoral, ideological, and policy gains.

OUR GOAL:

Build a permanent and powerful progressive movement in Washington State supported by a network of committed donors.

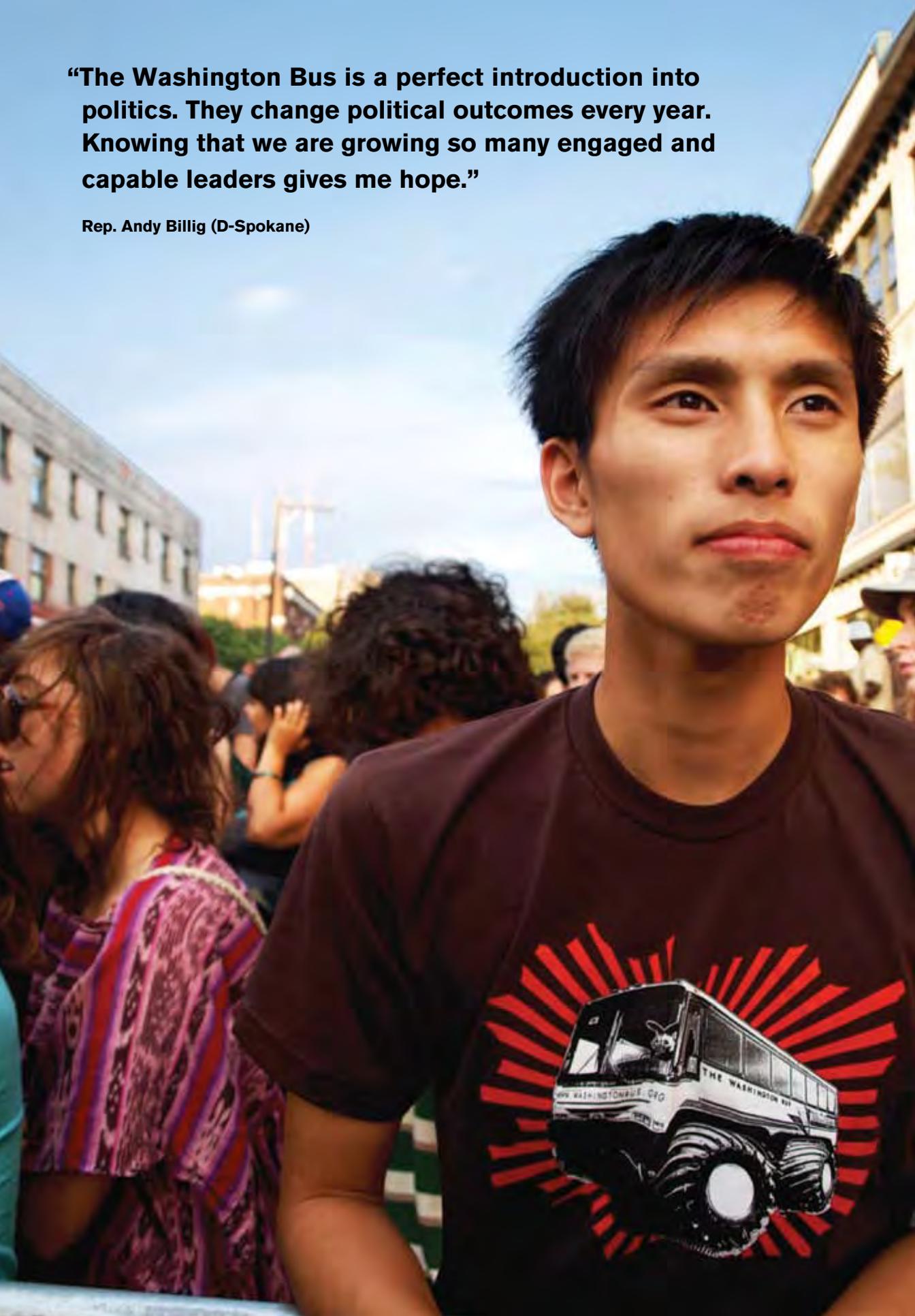
In order to build a robust progressive movement, we researched critical missing capacities on our side, including those where we must match conservatives. We quickly saw that in the areas of sophisticated voter databases, online activism, as well as engaging youth and immigrant constituencies, we have a potential competitive advantage. Guided by the experience and dedication of our staff and members, we are now filling those gaps and creating the infrastructure necessary for long term progressive success.

In just our first few years we helped create more than ten new programs and organizations, raised and invested over \$4 million, and tripled our membership. Together our donor families give substantial grants to a dozen or more leveraged projects and start-up organizations each year.

While we invest in Washington State, we are just as interested in national progress. As one of the first, largest, and most innovative state political donor alliances in the country, the Progress Alliance is now a leader in a network of nearly 20 other state alliances. Several Progress Alliance members are active and influential members of our national partner, the Democracy Alliance.

“The Washington Bus is a perfect introduction into politics. They change political outcomes every year. Knowing that we are growing so many engaged and capable leaders gives me hope.”

Rep. Andy Billig (D-Spokane)



CASE STUDY

No. 1

The Washington Bus

Today’s youth are the most progressive and diverse voting age group, and they represent a powerful base of volunteers. That’s why one of the first investments the Progress Alliance made in 2007 was to incubate the Washington Bus.

Before the Washington Bus, most political organizing on college campuses was done by Young Republicans. Progressive campaigns adhered to the outdated political thinking that young people don’t vote. Meanwhile, the narrow missions and limited resources of single issue organizations made it impossible for them to focus on youth.

1,000

volunteers knocked on 38,000 doors and tipped the balance

“The Bus” is serious about filling this gap. Run by, and for, young people, the Bus is authentic, meeting youth on their turf with arts, culture, and fun. They recruit thousands of new voters and hundreds of young activists each year, and train dozens of leaders who go on to launch political careers.

In just the few years since its founding, the Bus has gained a reputation for inspiring, well-executed events, and massive volunteer turnout. A national model, the Washington Bus is now a strong statewide force in politics and youth culture. This is what success looks like:

- ▶ In its first five years, the Bus organized 18 voter contact trips around the state. In all, 1,000 young volunteers knocked on 38,000 doors, providing a critical tipping point for many candidates and ballot initiatives. For example, in 2010 the Bus mobilized for Joe Fitzgibbon, who, at age 23, was the youngest and most progressive candidate in a critical four-way legislative race. After the Bus knocked on 4,300 doors in his district, Fitzgibbon beat out his nearest opponent by just 500 votes. Marilyn Strickland, Tacoma’s first African American mayor, gives them similar credit for her win.
- ▶ Conceived of in 2009, an event known as “Candidate Survivor” has turned into the largest and most unique City Council candidate forum in Seattle. Typically attracting an audience of more than 600 voters, Candidate Survivor brings talent, culture, and political acumen to the masses. In sold out events, city council candidates perform talents and speak on issues relevant to young people in Seattle in a competition for audience text votes.

“The Progress Alliance is a smart way to invest. It’s a lot like a venture fund, allowing me to have more impact with my political dollars.”

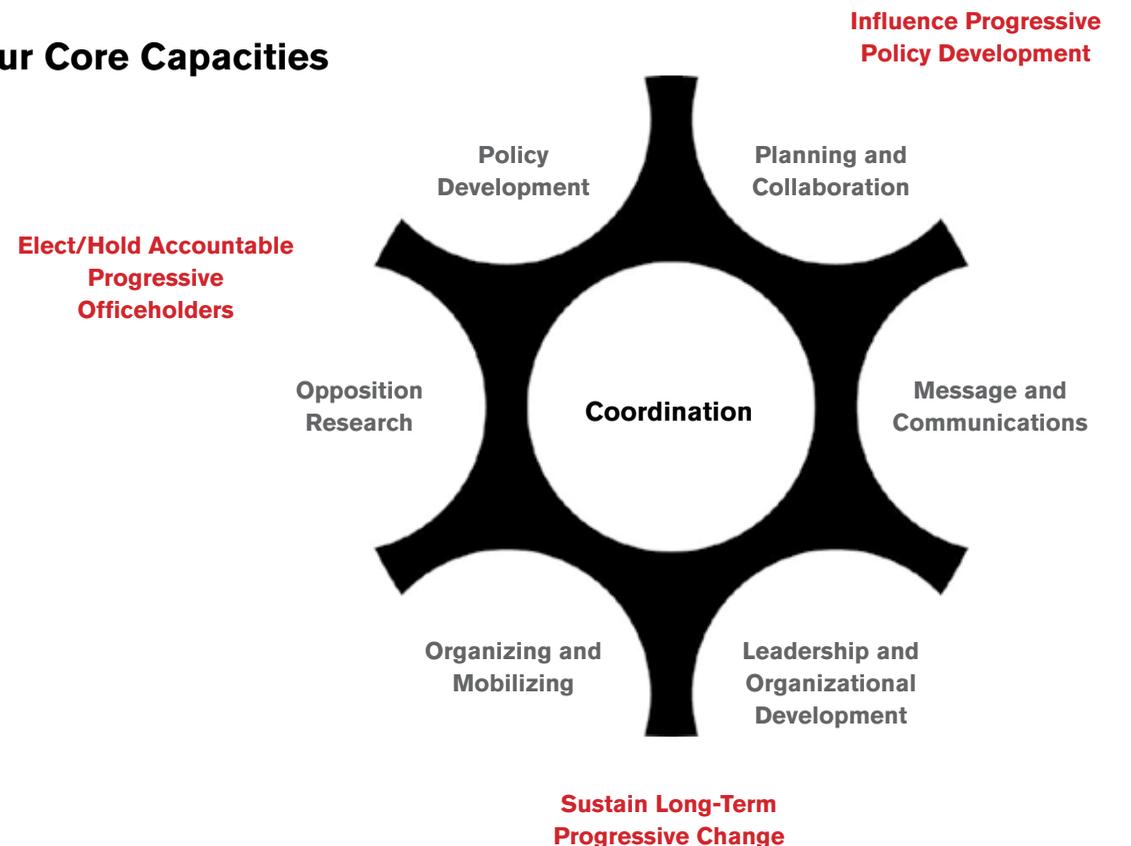
Bill Gates Sr., Progress Alliance Member

Bridging gaps, building collective capacity.

We are an active investor, not simply a granting organization.

While we do not invest in electoral campaigns or single-issue advocacy organizations, we build the connective infrastructure that makes these efforts more effective. We specifically invest in those elements where our shared resources can have maximum impact in the areas of greatest need. And our staff and members lend significant time and expertise to the cause.

Our Core Capacities



“Win/Win saved us a bunch of money and helped us talk to hundreds of thousands more voters. What else is there to say?”

Karen Deal, Washington State Labor Council



CASE STUDY

No. 2

The Win/Win Network

As recently as 2007, many of Washington’s most successful progressive advocates had never even met each other. They worked too often in isolated silos, rarely partnering across issues or geographies.

The Progress Alliance created the Win/Win Network to bring these groups together and increase their collective power and capacity, enabling them to do things together that they could not accomplish on their own. Win/Win has grown to include over sixty nonprofit organizations and two affiliate networks in Yakima and Spokane.

60+

nonprofits increased their collective power

The network sets common priorities, runs shared campaigns, and enforces best practices. Member organizations benefit from tremendous economies of scale, sharing the cost of powerful voter engagement tools like Catalyst, an interactive online database that helps build, track, target, and mobilize a common base of support.

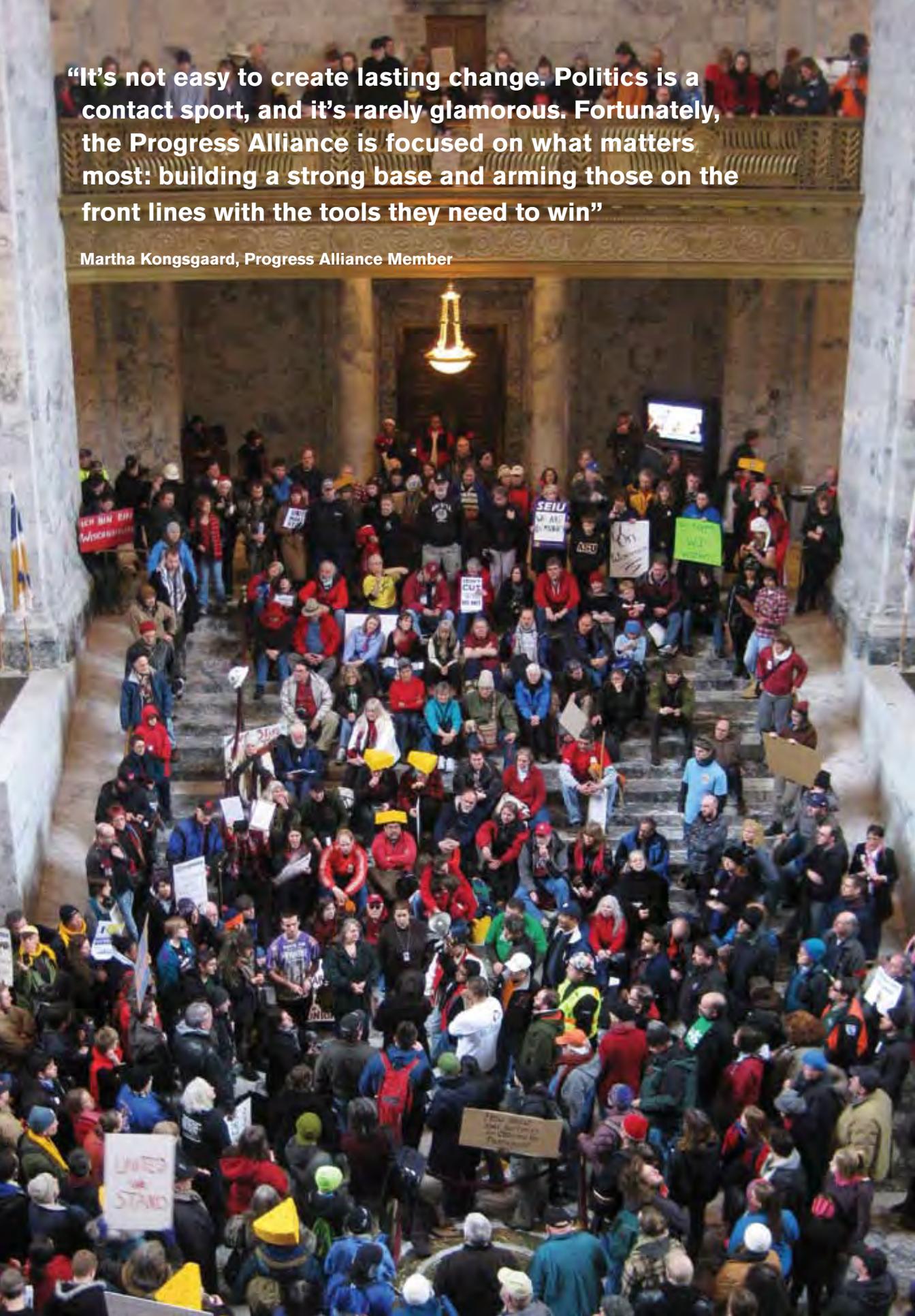
In the past four years, Win/Win has re-defined civic engagement in Washington, orchestrating a seamless year-round cycle of voter registration, civic education, legislative advocacy, and get-out-the-vote activity.

In just one regional example:

- ▶ Central Washington’s growing young immigrant population holds great political opportunity, however individual groups cannot invest sustained resources there. Working together through Win/Win’s “Central Washington Progress,” a network of groups has created a series of impactful wins, and a new majority Latino legislative district.
- ▶ In 2009 Central Washington Progress organized the campaign to pass Yakima’s first local school bond victory in 16 years, garnering 70 percent of the vote. CWP teamed up with the Washington Bus to engage more than 1,000 local students in the campaign. They were the spokespeople and the field engine, and they were irresistible.

“It’s not easy to create lasting change. Politics is a contact sport, and it’s rarely glamorous. Fortunately, the Progress Alliance is focused on what matters most: building a strong base and arming those on the front lines with the tools they need to win”

Martha Kongsgaard, Progress Alliance Member



Powerful, progressive partnerships.

The Washington Bus, Win/Win Network and many of our other partners would not exist without support from the Progress Alliance. We provided the seed funding and outreach to the impacted communities, convened the launch teams, and recruited the executive directors for these organizations.

Some of our investments are highly visible, easy to understand, and fill an obvious gap. Others operate behind the scenes and are more difficult to describe, but potentially even more transformative. A partial list of our investments includes:

OUR BOARD:

Paul Abrams
Brian Arbogast
Jabe Blumenthal
Brett Burris
David Giuliani
David Kaplan
Ruth Lipscomb
Elise Lufkin
Bill Pope
Valerie Tarico

- ▶ American Narrative Project
- ▶ Fuse
- ▶ Progressive Majority
- ▶ Sightline Institute
- ▶ The Washington Bus
- ▶ WA State Budget and Policy Center
- ▶ Win/Win Network

So what’s next? You can help shape it.

Join us.



We are looking to grow our network of donors willing to commit energy and funds to the cause. Our work is critical to the success of progressive social change in Washington State and beyond, and we need all the best minds at the table.

We ask members to make a significant financial contribution because we believe that solving our biggest problems takes intelligence, time, and commitment. Members stay engaged through regular briefings, educational sessions with progressive leaders, and volunteer opportunities with many of the organizations we support.

Contact us.

We are actively recruiting new members. For more information, visit us on the web at washingtonprogress.org or call (206) 324-2741.

