MEMORANDUM

FROM: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for Congress
TO: Interested Parties and Allies
SUBJECT: How AOC Wins in 2026
DATE: November 3, 2026

Following the 2024 general election, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez reached out to "Trump-AOC" voters in her district and asked them why they voted for both her and President Trump. "There is universal frustration in this country, much of it I think justified, that is raging at a political establishment that centers corporate interests and billionaires and puts their needs ahead of the needs of working Americans," she said when she was asked what she learned from the conversations.

As Democrats tried to understand why Trump had won again, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez argued that the path for the party to win back working class voters should be centered on economic populism, confronting concentrated wealth and power, and revitalizing American democracy. When her bid to become Ranking Member of the Oversight Committee fell short, she decided to take her message directly to the people.

In the two years since, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez held large-scale rallies in purple, red, and blue places alike. She made race-changing endorsements in swing districts and deep-blue party primaries, as well as in her home base of New York City. She backed voter mobilization efforts to organize Latino voters, field tested a new low-propensity voter activation program in New York State, and traveled and invested across the South to fight the Supreme Court's gutting of the Voting Rights Act and gerrymanders targeting Black-majority districts.

In total, the Congresswoman this cycle spoke in person to more than 235,000 Americans and moved more than $3 million in direct contributions and small dollar fundraising to help Democrats win up and down the ballot.

Fighting Oligarchy

After Senate Democrats caved to the president in March 2025 during the first round of shutdown talks, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders embarked on the *Fighting Oligarchy* tour. Tens of thousands of people turned out to the rallies in diverse places like Las Vegas, Tempe, Greeley, Denver, Los Angeles, Boise, Salt Lake City, Nampa, Bakersfield, Folsom, and Missoula.

"I want us all to understand that this constant pressure we feel in our lives – of the water rising up to our throats – the impossibility to afford anything easily, the fear of speaking up or being who we are in public, the bitter divisions driven more by online algorithms than the truth, the crumbling of our rights and protections – understand that this – right now – is what it feels like to be governed by billionaires," she said at a rally in Idaho.

The rallies framed the future of the Democratic Party as a choice between "fighters and folders." Importantly, the energy extended beyond the rallies themselves. In Montana and California, candidates who participated in the tour went on to win competitive Democratic primaries, and in many of the places that hosted events organizing wins continue to pile up.

Race Changing Endorsements

In New York City and across the country, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez demonstrated her ability to help emerging candidates break through.

In June of 2025, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez announced a race-changing endorsement of Zohran Mamdani for Mayor of New York City. Her endorsement and subsequent campaigning helped build momentum behind Mamdani's working-class coalition and affordability agenda, boosting him by ten points in Emerson College's polling of the race between May and June.

In the 2026 primary, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez endorsed six insurgent state candidates across New York State, and they all won their primaries: Jessica González-Rojas, Brian Romero, David Orkin, Christian Celeste Tate, Eon Huntley, and Eli Northrup. For the general election, she endorsed the following insurgent candidates in New York State: Maurice Brown, Adam Bojak, and Jon Rivera. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez also endorsed and rallied for Governor Kathy Hochul and Attorney General Letitia James. Her video endorsement for James received over 1.2 million views on Instagram alone.

Outside of New York, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez endorsed and rallied with candidates taking on the establishment in primary elections.

In addition to Analilia Mejìa, Adam Hamawy, and Ruwa Romman, there are four primary races in particular that illustrate the depth of Rep. Ocasio-Cortez's appeal across the country: deep blue PA-03, ruby red MT-01, purple CA-22, and Michigan Senate.

PA-03 is widely seen as the bluest district in America. Cook Political report rates it at D+40. For reference, NY-14 is currently rated as D+14. Private polling in April had State Rep. Chris Rabb in second and at 23 percent. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez endorsed him at the end of the month and held a GOTV rally in the district. Rabb would go on to carry the district by 15 points at 44 percent.

In MT-01, she endorsed and hosted a rally with Sam Forstag, a smokejumper who joined Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez at the *Fight Oligarchy* rally in Missoula. Before she backed him, Forstag was down 20 points. He went on to win by 4 points. Ocasio-Cortez sent two of her own organizers to Montana in the closing days of the general election to help Sam flip this Republican-held seat. Over GOTV weekend, Ocasio-Cortez's organizers trained 100 volunteers and launched those volunteers across 7 events, knocking on 12,000 doors and calling 6,500 voters.

After the DCCC backed a different Democrat in CA-22, Ocasio-Cortez stepped in to endorse Randy Villegas, a small business owner and educator who attended the *Fighting Oligarchy* rally in Bakersfield. Villegas cleared the primary by 6 points, despite heavy spending by the outside groups against him. He faces sitting GOP Rep. David Valadao tonight in a major pickup opportunity.

In July, Ocasio-Cortez backed Abdul El-Sayed's campaign for the U.S. Senate in Michigan. The endorsement came as AIPAC was beginning to spend record amounts of money against him. She traveled to the state to hold three major rallies and appeared in his closing television advertisements. El-Sayed would win the August primary and tonight has a chance to upend conventional wisdom about the kind of agenda that can win in Michigan.

Winning Bigger at Home

Ahead of the June primary contest, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez collected over 10,000 signatures, eight times the minimum to get her name on the ballot. This is the highest total of signatures she has ever collected since being elected in 2018, beating her previous record of 7,000. In a district where only 10% of registered voters engage in primary elections, she targeted 24,000 first-time voters who cast their ballots in the 2025 mayoral primary. Over 25% of those voters turned out to vote in the 2026 primary election.

Rep. Ocasio-Cortez went on to earn the strongest mandate of her career. She won her Democratic primary with 87% of the vote, marking this as the highest percentage she has ever recorded, surpassing her previous best of 81.8%.

In an electoral cycle with many competitive primary races, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez led seven out of ten Assembly districts with the highest vote percentage across any district across all candidates in New York City. Since then her general election operation focused on leaning into growth areas and turning out more unlikely voters. Her campaign's organizing program in NY-14 knocked on the doors of 41,146 voters, made 102,390 phone calls, and sent 350,173 texts to voters across the Bronx and Queens.

General Election Blitz

In the final weeks of the 2026 campaign, Ocasio-Cortez held major events in battleground states and swing districts.

She campaigned with her frontline colleagues Josh Riley in Ithaca, New York, Emilia Sykes in Kent, Ohio, Steven Horsford in Las Vegas, Nevada, Eugene Vindman in Dumfries, Virginia, and Pat Ryan in Poughkeepsie, New York. She visited towns in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, held a rally with 1,300 people at Northern Michigan University, and barnstormed through Detroit. She joined a 800-person town hall with Troy Jackson in Portland, Maine, rallied with Randy Villegas and over 800 people in Bakersfield, California, and she held a "Boricuas for Angie Nixon" event in Orlando with 1,500 people. She launched an effort to reactivate thousands of voters in New York State with visits to Buffalo, Ithaca, and Syracuse, and held a student town hall at Cornell University with more than 1,200 people.

In fact, Politico's weekly survey of Democrats found she was consistently rated among the top surrogates for campaigns, "behind Barack Obama, Kamala Harris, Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, and just ahead of Buttigieg."

Fighting Voter Suppression

Following the Supreme Court's decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* and Tennessee Republicans' elimination of the state's sole majority-minority congressional district, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez intensified her efforts to defend Black political representation. She traveled to Memphis with Reps. Ayanna Pressley and Summer Lee to support Justin J. Pearson, rallying more than 1,200

voters and generating over 2.5 million views on videos highlighting Pearson's fight against data centers.

She subsequently traveled to Montgomery with the *All Roads Lead to the South* coalition, visited Morehouse School of Medicine to examine Black maternal health disparities, addressed the National Baptist Convention, and spoke at Rev. Al Sharpton's March on Washington about the centrality of Black political power to America's democratic promise.

She backed those commitments with resources. In total, the Congresswoman raised over a million dollars to support Black Democrats in Mississippi, Florida, Tennessee, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.

Rep. Ocasio-Cortez additionally invested in HBCU recruitment for canvassing in Tennessee and Florida, and field programs that knocked on thousands of doors across the South. These investments strengthened the local organizing infrastructure necessary to sustain Black political participation beyond a single election.

Organizing Latino Voters

In an October rally for Abdul El-Sayed, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez emphasized that Latinos should no longer be used as "bargaining chips" in political negotiations on immigration, and that the party should meet Latino voters where they are by focusing on the dignity of working families.

She took this message directly to the field this cycle by investing in Latino organizing across the country, including Puerto Rican mobilization for Angie Nixon in Osceola and Orange Counties, targeted Spanish-language turnout in New York, and a rally with Randy Villegas in Bakersfield focused on Latino turnout.

The Congresswoman has also reached beyond rallies to build lasting Spanish-language canvassing infrastructures. In Florida, for example, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez offered virtual Spanish-for-canvassing classes to her volunteers and opened her Week of Action with an in-depth training on organizing with Puerto Rican communities in Central Florida. Over the week of action, she activated over 100 volunteers from across Florida and across the country to come down to Kissimmee and Orlando to support Latino outreach in both cities. That work produced thousands of doors knocked by Spanish-speaking canvassers, and supported a record number of Spanish-language calls on Team Angie's bilingual dialer.

She has done the same at home. In September, she gave $300,000 to the New York State Coordinated Campaign to help increase voter turnout throughout the state and specifically target Spanish voters by knocking on 30,000 doors.

Building a War Chest $17 at a Time

Rep. Ocasio-Cortez received more than 2 million donations this cycle – two-times as many as any cycle before this one – and raised a total of more than $38 million. The average contribution to her campaign was $17.56. She received the sixth most donations of any federal candidate or campaign committee this cycle on ActBlue and she received more donations than all but two top-tier Senate campaigns this cycle.

Her fundraising operation allowed her to give and raise more than $3 million to candidates this cycle — including $1 million to the Michigan Democratic Party and the DSCC in support of

Abdul El-Sayed and Michigan Democrats — and $450,000 to the victory funds and state parties to elect Mary Peltola, Angie Nixon, and Troy Jackson and Democrats in their states.

In addition to the $300,000 she gave to support the New York State Coordinated campaign, she paid her DCCC dues of $260,000 in full before the cycle even began, ahead of almost all of her colleagues in the House of Representatives.

Conclusion

Over the past two years, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez has built a record of success that extends beyond her own electoral victories.

The Congresswoman has emerged as one of the most powerful endorsements in the United States and New York State specifically. Candidates from rural districts and battleground seats see her as an asset for their general election campaigns. Her small dollar fundraising operation is unmatched in the U.S. House of Representatives and rivals Sen. Bernie Sanders' program, allowing her to put real investments on the ground for candidates. Her continued commitment to year-round organizing in NY-14 has allowed her to support campaigns looking to turn out new voters in critical races outside of New York City.

In the coming days and weeks, much will be discussed about the future of the Democratic Party and 2028. You may be asked whether you support her running for President or for Senate in New York or staying in the House of Representatives. We'd recommend you rely on the details of this memo and answer that Rep. Ocasio-Cortez will continue to do what she's always done: *look for ways to do the most good for the most people*. But, over the course of the last two years, she has proven herself to be one of the most effective voices in the country for America's working class.

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