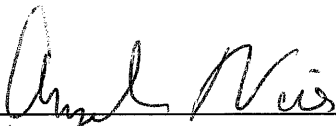
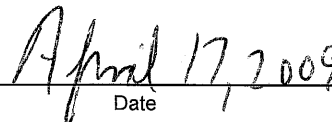


**U.S. PROGRAMS**  
**Seize the Day**  
**Summary of Recommended Grants**  
**April 17, 2009 Docket**

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b><u>U.S. Programs, Seize the Day T1:21079</u><sup>1</sup></b>			
<b><u>Economic Recovery - Equity</u></b>			
PolicyLink	\$500,000	\$500,000	1 year
<b><u>Economic Recovery - Transparency</u></b>			
Rockefeller Family Fund <sup>2</sup>	\$250,000	\$300,000	1 year
<b><u>Public Participation</u></b>			
Jobs with Justice Education Fund (Inter-Alliance Dialogue)	\$70,000	\$70,000	6 months
<b><u>Innovations in Organizing</u></b>			
ProgressNow Education <sup>3</sup>	\$250,000	\$250,000	1 year
League of Young Voters Education Fund (Civic Engagement Laboratory and Color of Change)	\$250,000	\$250,000	1 year
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 1,370,000.00</b>	



Approval Signature



Date

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the five Seize the Day grants recommended above for approval, the Equality and Opportunity Fund (EOF) is also recommending a grant to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in its own docket that will be co-funded through Seize the Day funding. The total grant to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is to be split between Seize the Day T1: 21079 (\$180,000) and the Equality and Opportunity Fund T1:24023 (\$175,000).

This grant recommendation is incorporated into EOF's write-ups and is reflected on the EOF April 17 Docket approval sheet.

<sup>2</sup> The total grant to the Rockefeller Family Fund is to be split between Seize the Day T1: 21079 (\$100,000) and Transparency and Integrity Fund T1: 21093 (\$200,000).

<sup>3</sup> The total grant to ProgressNow Education is to be split between Seize the Day T1: 21079 (\$150,000) and Democracy and Power Fund T1: 21091 (\$100,000).

## Memorandum

To: Aryeh Neier  
From: Bill Vandenberg  
Re: Seize the Day Fund Docket  
Date: April 13, 2009

Enclosed are five write-ups recommending grants through our Seize the Day Fund. The recommendations include \$1.37 million, of which \$1.07 million will come directly from the Seize the Day Fund and \$300,000 from co-funding with other U.S. Programs funds. One additional write-up – the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force – will be included in the Equality and Opportunity Fund’s docket although this recommendation, too, is for the grant to be co-funded with Seize the Day support.

As you know, we are working to move Seize the Day funds into the field as quickly as possible so that recommended grantees can act with the strategic mobility and speed required to take advantage of this moment. Following your approval of the first round of Seize the Day Fund recommendations on March 20, we sent three recommendations to you on April 6, and would be happy to answer any questions you have about those recommendations. We now enclose five additional Seize the Day Fund write-ups, and have scheduled time this Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, to discuss your feedback and questions on this docket, summarized below:

### **Ensuring equity in the economic recovery**

#### **PolicyLink, \$500,000, 1 year general support**

To support PolicyLink’s work to cover three principal areas of activity. First, PolicyLink will work to ensure implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) addressing the particular needs of low-income people, women, and people of color. It will seek to shape the distribution of recovery funding that federal agencies distribute by competition and advocate for the provision of additional equity guidance to federal agencies, states, and localities on how recovery dollars should be spent. Second, it will build a field strategy to shape implementation of ARRA funding by providing technical assistance, training, and re-granting to state and local organizations. Third, it will strengthen a national network of nearly 2,500 local equity organizations called "EquityNow" through the development of online resources, mapping of the equity field, and convenings.

### **Expanding public participation in policy efforts/ Equity in the economic recovery**

#### **Jobs with Justice Education Fund, \$70,000, six months project support for the Inter-Alliance Dialogue**

To support an upcoming convening and strategy session for the Inter-Alliance Dialogue, a dynamic new partnership of five national, people of color led grassroots organizing networks that seek to advance an urban rooted agenda to shift the federal debate on economic recovery, structural inequality, and green equity issues. The networks include the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, Jobs with Justice, National Day Laborers Organizing Network, National Domestic Workers Alliance, and the Right to the City Alliance (an OSI grantee) and collectively represent more than 100 local and state social justice organizations and hundreds of thousands of activists in low-income and people of color communities in over 25 states. Through a unique

partnership with the Institute for Policy Studies, the Inter-Alliance Dialogue seeks to address racial indicators as a central benchmark for how the economic recovery impacts education, employment, housing, and transportation. It will also focus on labor law and social policy exclusions that leave day laborers, domestic workers, and immigrant workers unprotected in the economy.

### **Expanding public participation**

#### **Rockefeller Family Fund, \$300,000, 1 year project support for the Voter Registration Modernization Project**

To support the Rockefeller Family Fund's new program to transform our nation's voter registration process through the creation of an automatic or universal system of registration. This opportunity builds not only on the 2008 election experience but also on a long and well-documented history of voter registration problems in this country. To assist in these efforts, RFF has created a program fund dedicated to the successful implementation of what advocates are calling the Voter Registration Modernization Project (VRM). As the fund's administrator, RFF will provide strategic advice and assistance with the Project's architecture and approach; monitor the groups' activities and work plans; review their budgetary needs; work with them to determine program funding necessary to facilitate their efforts; and help recognize and seize emerging opportunities to better develop policy solutions, educate, and inform the public and policy officials about issues in this fast-moving policy arena. This grant would include \$100,000 in Seize the Day Fund support along with \$200,000 from the Transparency and Integrity Fund.

### **Innovations in advocacy/ Advancing the hardest issues: Criminal justice**

#### **League of Young Voters Education Fund, \$250,000, 1 year project support for the Citizen Engagement Laboratory and Color of Change**

To support the Citizen Engagement Lab (CEL) and its project, Color of Change (CoC), an Oakland, CA based national online and innovative research and development organization that was established to enhance civic engagement and amplify the advocacy voice of people of color communities. Using the internet, Color of Change amplifies the voices of community members to make government more responsive to the concerns of African-Americans and to bring about positive social change. CoC members have been an influential voice on inequality in the criminal justice system, drawing international attention to the Jena Six and spotlighting the Oscar Grant shooting by the Oakland police, among others. Citizen Engagement Laboratory is currently researching the viability of a new online organizing initiative to advance criminal justice reform while Color of Change is planning ongoing campaigns on voting rights, media bias, and the 2010 Census. OSI support will allow CEL and CoC to continue to build and activate their membership, deepen their work on criminal justice reform, and explore the development of a new Latina/o community online organizing project.

### **Innovations in advocacy**

#### **ProgressNow Education, \$250,000, 1 year general support**

To support ProgressNow Education, a fast expanding Denver, CO based national organization that was founded in 2003. Through its 12 state affiliates, hundreds of community-based partner organizations, and 1.5 million online members, ProgressNow Education inspires public

participation and coordinates activism at the local and state levels. At the grassroots level it provides web-based tools and trainings to activists and organizations to help them more effectively communicate, organize, and advocate around issues of importance, including economic inequality, tax and budget policy, immigrant rights, and climate change. In addition to the online tools it provides, ProgressNow Education combines civic engagement, earned media placement, and coalition building activities to build the capacity of community based organizations so that they may better shape the issue landscape at the local, state, and national levels. OSI funding support would assist ProgressNow Education in building state capacity to impact federal level issues through the Unity 2009 coalition and expand its criminal justice and drug policy reform work. This grant would include \$150,000 in support from the Seize the Day Fund and \$100,000 from the Democracy and Power Fund.

### **Advancing the hardest issues: structural inequality**

#### **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**

To support the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, a recommendation that is included in the Equality and Opportunity Fund's first docket of 2009. EOF had already planned to recommend renewed general support funding to continue to strengthen the Task Force's leadership on LGBTQ rights at the state and federal levels. With additional Seize the Day funding, the Task Force will lead a collaborative effort involving leading LGBTQ rights and civil rights groups to advocate for non-legislative changes that can be made at the federal executive branch and agency levels to eliminate the structural barriers that prevent LGBTQ people from enjoying equality and opportunity in various spheres of public life. This grant would include \$180,000 in Seize the Day Fund support and \$175,000 from the Equality and Opportunity Fund.

**Name of Organization:** League of Young Voters Education Fund

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** To support the project, Citizen Engagement Laboratory and Color of Change (*application for 501c3 pending*)

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$1,492,312

**Project Budget:** \$1,029,125

**Major Sources of Support:** Ford Foundation \$400,000  
 Tides Election Administration Fund \$253,125  
 James Rucker/Heidi Hess \$250,000  
 Nathan Cummings Foundation \$75,000  
 Mitchell Kapor Foundation \$60,000

**Amount Requested:** \$250,000 over 1 year

**Amount Recommended:** \$250,000 over 1 year

**Term:** One year, beginning May 1, 2009

**Description of Organization:**

The League of Young Voters Education Fund supports young people, particularly non-college youth and youth from low-income communities and communities of color, helping them to build power and lead and actively participate in creating change in their communities. The League was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization by the Tides Center in 2004. It grew out of several pre-existing networks of youth organizers, hip-hop activists, and union and community organizers that noticed a lack of leadership development infrastructure for and sustained participation by young people.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought:**

The Citizen Engagement Laboratory (CEL) and its project, the Color of Change (CoC), based in Oakland, CA and established in 2006, are dedicated to developing innovative online vehicles to enhance civic engagement and amplify the advocacy voice of people of color communities. CEL/CoC use digital media and technology to organize issue and identity-based communities, with a focus on amplifying the voices of underserved groups, in order to make government more responsive and to bring about positive social change.

Color of Change, established to elevate the advocacy voice of the African-American community, has effectively leveraged organizing moments through national incidents like Hurricane Katrina, policy battles including immigration reform, and compelling pieces of media like An Inconvenient Truth. Using the internet, CEL and CoC identify the individuals inspired by

particular moments, convene them into a community, and provide them with ongoing opportunities for strategic social justice action.

During the past two years, CoC members have been an influential voice on inequality in the criminal justice system, drawing international attention to specific cases like the Jena Six, the Oscar Grant shooting by Oakland police, and others. In 2009, CoC will continue to activate its members around these and similar cases, including work on the crack/powder sentencing discrepancy; a joint video project, “My First Vote,” with the Brennan Center for Justice to document disenfranchisement of people with criminal convictions; and joining with the Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights to promote awareness about the need for voter registration modernization. CoC regularly launches campaigns in conjunctions with MoveOn.org, has worked with Brave New Films to create video outreach on projects related to examining bias at Fox News, and works with Credo Mobile (formerly Working Assets) on projects like the Pollworkers for Democracy.

The Citizen Engagement Laboratory functions as the research and development arm of the organization but shares a common engagement model including three basic steps:

1. Identification of constituencies that have yet to be fully organized online and creation of an organization requiring limited administrative capacity to serve them;
2. Deployment of digital media and targeted campaigns to build a member base and establishing the organization as a trusted source for information and action opportunities; and
3. Usage of data analysis to identify community members who show potential for deepening their engagement and encouraging them to transition their activity from online (internet) to offline (community rooted engagement) activity.

While Color Of Change is the most successful and well recognized project of the Citizen Engagement Laboratory, CEL is incubating several other projects including:

#### Latino Community Engagement (Recruitment phase)

CEL understands the great potential to launch an online organizing effort that engages the Latina/ o community, with an approach that recognizes the unique dynamics of that community – lower rates of Internet usage, high cell phone penetration, and tight-knit community structures. Latinos represent the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States but, despite their size and strategic importance, there exists no significant online organizing initiative focused on Latino community concerns. Indeed, the past years have been marked by key missed opportunities, like the 2006 immigration marches, to turn flashpoint events into a sustained, technically networked movement.

Central to this effort will be the upcoming mobilization on immigration reform. The Obama Administration has signaled in the April 9, 2009 *New York Times* its intentions to move comprehensive immigration reform forward this year. If 2006 is any indication, Latinos and others will come out in force to support that effort and, of course, anti-immigrant forces will continue to be well organized. If pro-comprehensive immigration reform forces are organized well, this could be a powerful organizing moment to seed a sustained online community of Latinos that can both advance CIR and be activated on an array of complementary issues. CEL is in discussions with groups working on immigration reform and in the Latino community, including the National Council of La Raza, Center for Community Change, Democracia-USA and America’s Voice – all OSI grantees – to assess potential opportunities for collaboration.

### Criminal Justice/Drug Policy (Research phase)

The United States has the largest correctional population in the world, with more than seven million people under some form of supervision, a number that continues to swell even with crime rates down. While the scope of the problem is daunting, its sheer size represents a potential silver lining from an organizing perspective. There are tens of millions of Americans directly impacted by the criminal justice system, either from personal experience or through a family member. And many of these people are online, participating in chat rooms and criminal justice-focused social networks.

Among the most active and effective citizen advocates around criminal justice issues are those concerned with drug policy. Just recently, marijuana legalization supporters were successful in forcing their issue into the mainstream media by gathering enough votes to place high priority of discussion interest in the inaugural online presidential town hall. CEL is in the process of researching the overlapping issues of criminal justice and drug policy to determine the existing online organizing capacity in the space and the viability of a new initiative. This could be an area of particular interest for OSI's Criminal Justice Fund as the fund seeks to grow the base of criminal justice activists at all levels of activity and also to elevate it as a national priority.

### Stimulus Oversight (Research phase)

The recently passed \$787 billion stimulus package represents an unprecedented government investment in the economy. While not guaranteed, it could also be a powerful potential organizing moment in support of increased government transparency. Putting aside the good intentions and necessity of the stimulus, rapid distribution of such significant funding has the potential to create massive waste and corruption. While the federal government has unveiled some promising transparency measures, much of the stimulus money will be expended at the state level. CEL believes that citizens can play an important role in promoting oversight of these state expenditures to make sure the money is distributed fairly, effectively, and in a way that rebuilds Americans' confidence in government. CEL is in the research and assessment phase of the project and has begun preliminary conversations with Project on Government Oversight (POGO), an OSI grantee, and other member groups of the Coalition for an Accountable Recovery – a recent Seize the Day Fund grantee and the primary coalition vehicle for TARP accountability.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

We recommend a grant of \$250,000 from the Seize the Day Fund to support the innovative advocacy and base building research and development of the Citizen Engagement Laboratory (CEL) and the high impact, large scale online organizing of its project, the Color of Change (CoC). This grant would connect to several Seize the Day Fund strategic funding priorities, including expanding public participation, particularly from communities most impacted by structural inequality; advancing the hardest issues, including criminal justice reform and immigration; and integrating innovative social engagement into the larger social justice organizational ecosystem.

Specifically, OSI funding would allow CEL/CoC to build and activate their base, deepen work on criminal justice reform, and explore the development of a new Latina/o community online organizing project. CEL/CoC work is rooted in people of color communities and effectively

links the community based concerns of people of color to the online advocacy world where they can garner more awareness, press coverage, and public participation. Focusing on the hardest issues, many of which are OSI priorities, such as criminal justice, voter disenfranchisement and immigration, CEL/CoC would benefit from additional Seize the Day funds to continue the civic engagement momentum that began prior to the 2008 election.

As evidenced by their work on the Video the Vote, CEL/CoC are committed to engaging citizens to take an active role in improving government accountability. Video the Vote grew out of the award winning film *American Blackout*, a documentary chronicling the legacy of African American voter suppression. CEL/ CoC connected to the need for a citizen-based election monitoring project that led to 3,700 volunteers submitting over 1,000 videos ensuring that voting irregularities and voter disenfranchisement were documented and addressed. The project also provides powerful video evidence to inform the debate around election systems reform, a Transparency and Integrity Fund priority.

CEL/CoC leaders are very well respected in the field of online organizing. James Rucker, Executive Director of ColorofChange.org, was a recent panelist at the USP board meeting and has served as Director of Grassroots Mobilization for MoveOn.org, where he was instrumental in developing and executing fundraising, technology, and campaign strategies. Ian Inaba, Co-Executive Director of CEL, is an award-winning director and producer with a wide range of experience in media, technology, and business strategy. His directorial credits include the 2006 Sundance Award-winning expose on voter disenfranchisement, *American Blackout*, and the controversial 2004 get out the vote music video for rapper Eminem's song "Mosh." He is the co-founder of Video the Vote and GNN.tv, an independent news organization, and a co-author of the book *True Lies*.

Support from the Seize the Day Fund would strengthen OSI's portfolio of support for organizations that are engaged in innovative methods to inspire civic participation in social justice advocacy. Importantly, OSI funding support for the Citizen Engagement Laboratory and Color of Change will provide necessary capacity building funding for a leading online organizing effort that is rooted in people of color communities. Through a number of reports and our own due diligence we know that people of color community organizing efforts, online and offline, receive less philanthropic investment. We believe that it is important for OSI to lead the way to assist CEL and Color of Change in leveraging additional support to enhance their sustainability and to increase their overall advocacy impact.



**Name of Organization:** Jobs with Justice Education Fund

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** To support the Inter-Alliance Dialogue

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$1,737,435

**Project Budget:** \$70,000

<b><u>Major Sources of Support:</u></b>	Ford Foundation	\$150,000
	Veatch	\$80,000
	Public Welfare Foundation	\$78,750
	Panta Rhea Foundation	\$65,000
	French American Charitable Trust	\$50,000
	Marguerite Casey Foundation	\$33,333
	General Service Foundation	\$30,000
	Discount Foundation	\$25,000

**Amount Requested:** \$70,000 over 6 months

**Amount Recommended:** \$70,000 over 6 months [Seize the Day T1:21079]

**Term:** Six months, beginning May 1, 2009

**Description of Organization:**

Jobs with Justice Education Fund (JWJEF) is a Washington, DC-based national network of over 45 coalitions in 25 states comprised of both member organizations and over 100,000 individual activists that engage workers and allies in campaigns to win justice in workplaces and in communities where working families live. Since its founding in 1987, JWJEF has built a base of diverse constituencies at the local level and provided training, coordination, and networking at the national level to more effectively advance economic and social justice.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought:**

JWJEF is the fiscal sponsor and a key participant of the Inter-Alliance Dialogue (IAD), a dynamic new partnership of five national, people of color led grassroots organizing networks that also includes the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, National Day Laborers Organizing Network, National Domestic Workers Alliance, and the Right to the City Alliance (an urban policy and organizing network and current OSI grantee). The networks collectively represent more than 100 local and state social justice organizations and hundreds of thousands of activists in low-income, people of color, and immigrant communities in over 25 states. Through a unique collaboration with the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), IAD aims to develop and advance a new national urban-rooted agenda and complementary organizing vehicles in order to shift the federal debate on immigration reform, economic recovery, structural inequality, and green equity issues.

This grant, should it be approved, would support IAD’s summer convening and strategy session that will bring together representatives of each of the participating national alliances and IPS. The purpose of the convening is to chart out strategies, begin laying the groundwork for long-term capacity building, and refine and adopt the federal policy directions of IAD. It has already started developing the policy framework that will be fleshed out at the convening, including:

Structural Racism and the Recovery

The IAD will study and address racial indicators as a central benchmark of how the economic recovery reflects and impacts various issues such as education, housing, transportation, and employment;

Excluded Workers

The IAD will address labor law and social policy exclusions that leave day laborers, domestic workers, and immigrant workers unprotected in the economy;

Urban Democracy

The IAD will seek interventions in the various processes, regulations, and power structures that need to be addressed for urban communities to effectively participate in state and local decision-making in order to benefit from the recovery; and

‘Green’ Equity

The IAD will press for policies to ensure that an economic renewal is based on a shift to environmentally-oriented production and services, investments in low-income and people of color communities, strengthened worker organizations in those industries, and, overall, a fundamental view of systemic social well being.

While these are broad agenda items, IAD has already identified particular policy change goals aimed at the executive branch which has considerable power to prevent abuse of many vulnerable people through regulatory changes that do not require Congressional approval. These policy change goals, that will mapped at the conference then put into action, include coordinated efforts to address problems associated with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Labor. No OSI funding will be used to support IAD lobbying efforts.

Reflecting its diverse base of leaders and grassroots local partners, IAD is currently discussing a possible campaign to call on the Department of Homeland Security to: (1) halt residential and workplace immigration-related raids; (2) end agreements with local and state law enforcement agencies to enforce federal immigration laws (287(g) programs); (3) reform rules for verification of immigration status to discourage employer intimidation tactics; and (4) amend trafficking regulations that now inhibit some trafficking victims from applying for T visas, which protect immigrants from deportation during trafficking investigations.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

We recommend \$70,000 in funding for the Inter-Alliance Dialogue from the Seize the Day Fund. The IAD’s goals – and future efforts that are expected to grow from this convening – connect to three of the four Seize the Day priority strategies, including increasing grassroots public participation from the local and state levels in federal policy efforts; ensuring that equity will be

prioritized in the economic recovery conversation; and advancing the hardest issues, specifically confronting structural inequality, and immigration reform.

The five participating networks, with great breadth in terms of their participating communities and constituencies and significant rooting in the local and state level struggles of low-income, people of color, and immigrant communities, hold significant promise in bringing new voices and priorities to Washington, DC's advocacy community. With the recent meltdown of ACORN, following its embezzlement scandal and coverup, we believe that there is an urgent need for OSI to support the capacity building of organizations and networks that have authentic leadership and that build engaged bases of activism in people of color communities to build power on federal issue efforts.

The leadership of the networks also reflects a new generation of activism, integrating grassroots organizing, a policy overlay, an intersectional approach to constituency and coalitional work, and a civic engagement underpinning. Each of the five network leaders – Pablo Alvarado, National Day Laborers Organizing Network; Michael Leon Guerrero, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance; Sarita Gupta, Jobs with Justice; Gihan Perera, Right to the City Alliance; and Ai-jen Poo, National Domestic Workers Alliance – is well regarded in the field and often cited among the most effective grassroots and network organizers in the nation. Where these leaders have faced challenges is on how to elevate grassroots issue agendas at the federal level. This is where the Institute for Policy Studies, under the leadership of John Cavanaugh, comes in.

IPS has strong research, policy development, and advocacy capacity in Washington, DC and is utilizing its expertise to provide a structure for the grassroots networks to facilitate policy analysis so that they may develop a federal issue agenda in a timely and strategic fashion. With IPS's strategic support, the Inter-Alliance Dialogue will be better positioned, sooner rather than later, to impact the debate on economic recovery, federal budget, and comprehensive immigration reform.

The national Inter-Alliance Dialogue convening will follow an expected briefing that IAD and IPS leaders will provide to Congress in May through the Congressional Progressive Caucus (the CPC is an OSI grantee, through the National Security and Human Rights Campaign, but OSI support will not be used to fund this briefing). The convening will refine the networks' agendas and identify capacity needs in order to impact the issue landscape in Washington, DC. The capacity building model that will be formulated at the conference is geared towards building a bridge to decision-makers in DC; developing a collective communications and information sharing capacity; and fostering collaboration among the networks. The resulting increased capacity would allow IAD to advance systemic policy reforms in a number of additional areas, including the federal budget, future stimulus packages and comprehensive immigration reform.

We recommend a \$70,000 grant to assist IAD in the launch and support of the summer convening. If the convening is successful, we'll likely seek to provide further Seize the Day Fund support to ensure that the networks have the capacity that they need to implement their plan.

**Name of Organization:** PolicyLink

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** To engage in structural equity advocacy related to the national economic recovery package and invest in state partners

**Previous OSI Support:** \$600,000  
SOF: \$100,000 (2006-2007)  
Racial Justice Initiative: \$100,000 (2004-05)  
Governance and Public Policy: \$400,000 (2000-01)

**Organizational Budget:** \$13,177,979

**Project Budget:** \$1,790,000

**Sources of Support:** Annie E. Casey; The Boston Foundation; California Community Foundation; The California Endowment; California Healthcare Foundation; Citigroup; Deutsche Bank; East Bay Community Foundation; Edna McConnell Clark Foundation; Ford Foundation; Irvine Foundation; Kresge Foundation; Marguerite Casey Foundation; Prudential Foundation; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Rockefeller Foundation; Kellogg Foundation; Hewlett Foundation (partial list)

**Amount Requested:** \$500,000 over 1 year

**Amount Recommended:** \$500,000 over 1 year [Seize the Day T1 21079]

**Term:** One year, beginning March 1, 2009

**Description of Organization:**

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by lifting up policy solutions that work. It is guided by the belief that those closest to the nation’s challenges are central to the search for solutions. With partners in cities and regions across the country, PolicyLink translates promising practices into public policy, supports advocacy campaigns, engages in coalition development, and helps bridge the traditional divide between local communities and policymaking at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

**Description of the Project for Which Funding Is Sought:**

PolicyLink seeks project support to engage in the following activities.

***1. Advance Equity-Focused Federal Policy***

In the near term, PolicyLink will focus on implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in order to maximize gains for low-income people, women, and people of color. As the grant term progresses, it will focus on shaping federal policy related to issues such as transportation and workforce investment that may fall outside the scope of ARRA. Specific activities for the coming year include:

- **PolicyLink will work to shape the distribution of recovery funding that federal agencies distribute by competition.** While the majority of ARRA funds are flowing by formula to states with broad discretion on how resources will be spent, there are significant pots of recovery money that will be distributed by federal agencies such as the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, and Health and Human Services. PolicyLink will work with agency officials to shape how the rules, regulation, and criteria are developed to maximize equity outcomes in how these dollars are invested.
- **PolicyLink will advocate for additional equity guidance to federal agencies, states and localities on how recovery dollars should be expended.** PolicyLink is already making inroads in leading OMB to issue guidance to federal agencies to encourage them to take additional policy considerations into account when determining how to use ARRA funds, such as supporting projects that ensure compliance with equal opportunity laws and principles, supporting small businesses, engaging in sound labor practices, promoting local hiring, and engaging with community-based organizations.
- **PolicyLink will launch the Equity and the Recovery policy briefing series.** It recently issued two analyses of the Recovery Act – *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User’s Guide to the 2009 ARRA* and *An Engine of Opportunity: A User’s Guide to Advocate for Transportation Equity in the 2009 ARRA*. Building on the success of these two user guides, it will launch a series of short policy briefs on issues of common for cities and states focused on implementation. Topics include: how to integrate pots of money focused on green job training and energy efficiency at the local level; mapping and tracking of transportation stimulus dollars; and how to access competitive recovery grant dollars.

## 2. *Build a Field Strategy to Shape Implementation of ARRA Resources*

With OSI support, PolicyLink will leverage and grow its local and regional partnerships to influence ARRA implementation. This field strategy will consist of three components.

- **Broad Education and Strategy Dissemination.** PolicyLink will host a bi-weekly call-in series beginning on April 10 that will cover important aspects of the recovery. Currently scheduled calls (from April through June) will cover topics such as Equity in the Federal Budget, Rural Strategies for the Recovery, Transparency and Accountability Activism, and Evaluating the Green Recovery. Each briefing is expected to draw 200 to 500 participants.
- **Technical Assistance and Training to State Partners.** PolicyLink will develop a wholesale technical assistance program on how to leverage recovery resources through a series of in-person and online trainings. The trainings will be tailored to incorporate local and regional data for elected officials and community activists who want to shape their advocacy around ARRA implementation.
- **Re-grant Funds to Support Local Organizing.** The final component of the field-building effort will be a \$200,000 re-granting pool for local ARRA mobilization and implementation. One hundred percent of the re-granting resources will be distributed to organizations on the ground during the next 60 to 150 days. Initially, PolicyLink plans to re-grant funds to eight to ten organizations in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Minnesota where it has relationships with advocacy coalitions. Staff

The following are a few examples of state organizations who will receive re-granting funds. In Georgia, it would support Equity Atlanta, a group organizing community participation in the Atlanta beltline, a MetroRing 22-mile rail corridor project. ISIAH in Minnesota is monitoring transportation spending and pursuing an equity strategy with the Metropolitan Planning Organization in Minneapolis/St.Paul. In Pennsylvania, the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition is seeking to integrate pots of federal funding and apply them to particular neighborhoods on workforce development, green jobs and school infrastructure.

### ***3. Build and Activate the EquityNow Network***

In the past year, PolicyLink has helped to build a national network of nearly 2,500 local equity organizations called EquityNow. Groups included in the EquityNow network are the Miami Workers Center, Urban Habitat, Churches Supporting Churches, the Louisiana Justice Institute, Rural Dynamics, Sojourners, and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement. In partnership with EquityNow, PolicyLink will do the following:

- Map the equity field, complete with a sense of its strengths, its points of contact, and tangible examples of how policy change at the local level can have national impact;
- Build a DemandEquityNow.org website to complement coordinated activities in the field with an emphasis on achieving equity in public infrastructure investment at the federal and state levels that will provide equity advocates with a one-stop location to identify allies, sharpen campaign frames, and build alliances (in discussions with nearly 20 national allies, none has identified something comparable);
- Develop EquityNow webinars that disseminate timely information on issues including foreclosure, inclusionary zoning, and public transit development;
- Solicit policy briefs and thought pieces by various leaders in the fields of community and equitable development to lend expert testimony to emergent campaigns;
- Convene advocates from different regions who can boost their colleagues' respective equity agendas (interest has been expressed in Atlanta, Boston, New Orleans, Seattle and the Bay Area); and
- Develop a Rural Caucus to ensure that rural communities concerned with equitable development can contribute to the national agenda for equity and are connected to resources that deepen their capacity to serve isolated populations.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

PolicyLink's proposed work advances a number of OSI priorities. Consistent with the goals of the Seize the Day Fund, PolicyLink will advance strategies to challenge structural inequality as part of a transformative national agenda. It will increase public participation in policy reform efforts by those most impacted, including people of color and low-income communities. It will also work to ensure transparency, accountability and equity in the development and implementation of economic recovery plans.

Established a decade ago, PolicyLink has built a solid national reputation as a leader in promoting regional equity. The regional equity concept emerged in the late 1990s as social justice advocates recognized the role of metropolitan development patterns in maintaining and exacerbating racial and economic disparities in opportunity. The central thesis is that post-World War II sprawl – the movement of jobs, people, investment, infrastructure, and tax base away from cities to the farthest edges of metropolitan regions – left cities without needed investment while consuming exorbitant amounts of land and resources. As opportunity shifted to the suburbs, many communities of color were left behind in isolated and distressed central city neighborhoods or rural communities.

PolicyLink has worked with community-based organizations, community developers, elected officials, labor, faith-based organizing groups, researchers, and other policy advocacy groups as part of a regional equity movement to ensure that regional growth and development benefits everyone living in a metropolitan area. Over the past decade, there has been significant momentum within the regional equity movement. National organizing networks such as PICO are setting regional goals for cross-county issues, building urban/suburban coalitions, and partnering with labor unions. Dozens of communities are negotiating community benefits agreements to ensure that large-scale development projects meet community goals for jobs, housing, services, facilities, and more. Inclusionary zoning is more widely embraced and more than 200 communities now have local or country policies that require or encourage private developers to include affordable units in their market-rate developments.

Bolstered by this momentum, PolicyLink has gained significant access to the new presidential administration, prepared eight policy briefs on the importance of addressing structural equity concerns in the economic recovery package, and received media coverage by *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and other media outlets. Staff welcomes PolicyLink's analysis and approach because it insists that principles of fairness and equality are infused throughout all levels of policy development. By posing simple questions regarding who benefits, who decides, and who pays at the front-end of policy decision-making processes, it helps to ensure that new systems and structures address the needs of those traditionally left behind. It also reveals how old systems and structures have excluded groups to the detriment of the entire country. What is most exciting about PolicyLink's work is the opportunity to demonstrate how high levels of inequality and poverty are bad for the economy because they undermine regional and national growth and competitiveness.

PolicyLink is in the process of expanding its partnerships with other organizations to maximize the impact of its proposed work. Gary Bass at OMB Watch, the convener of the Coalition for an Accountable Recovery, is the lead speaker at an upcoming EquityNow activist briefing. PolicyLink serves on the Executive Committee of the Emerald Cities Collaborative, a national coalition of organized labor, community advocacy groups and research institutions seeking to create opportunities for low-income people and communities of color to benefit from weatherization and energy efficiency investments.

There are very few national, people of color-led policy organizations that address structural equity from the vantage point that PolicyLink does. It performs rigorous analysis of community and infrastructure development projects, engages local communities and residents in policy development, and has growing access to national policy arenas. Its plans to influence the national policy debate by applying an equity lens to the economic recovery, to strengthen the

national equity field, and to increase the capacity of its local partners are well-developed and compelling. Staff recommends \$500,000 to strengthen its work in this critical moment.



**Name of Organization:** Progress Now Education

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** General support

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$3,250,000

**Project Budget:** N/A

**Major Sources of Support:** Bohemian Foundation - \$150,000  
Beldon Fund - \$100,000  
Brico Fund - \$100,000  
Gill Foundation - \$60,000

**Amount Requested:** \$250,000 over 1 year

**Amount Recommended:** \$250,000 over 1 year (including \$150,000 from Seize the Day and \$100,000 from Democracy and Power)

**Term:** One year, beginning May 1, 2009

**Description of Organization:**

Progress Now Education, founded in 2003 and based in Denver, is a national organization that is dedicated to shifting the public debate to promote public participation on social justice concerns at the local and state levels. Progress Now Education (PNE), provides web-based tools and trainings to activists and organizations to help them more effectively communicate, organize and advocate around issues that include economic inequality, tax and budget policy, immigrant rights and criminal justice reform.

ProgressNow Education combines civic engagement, earned media placement, and coalition building activities to build the capacity of community based organizations so that they may better shape the issue landscape at the local, state, and national levels. PNE has replicated its model across the country and now operates programs in twelve states. It has rapidly built a combined network of 1.5 million online members, making it one of the largest state-based networks of activists in the country.

Progress Now Education was founded with two goals: 1) to help grassroots activists use new media and the internet to organize online at the state and local level; and 2) to assist partner organizations with message development and earned media strategies to shift the public debate on social justice issues and to catalyze increased civic participation.

Specific areas of support that PNE provides to local and state organizations include: providing a communications hub both online and offline where members gain earned media, develop their messages and build relationships with media representatives; engaging citizens by maintaining

focus on local issues that are most likely to motivate people to action; and building cutting-edge outreach to activate citizens online and advance a broad-based agenda that follows the lead of local and state driven issue priorities. PNE also provides support to local and state organizations to build engagement with federal advocacy efforts. As part of their weekly phone calls with state-level executive directors, guest leaders from national organizations are invited to discuss their efforts and collaboration on the state and local level. This work has resulted in state level advocacy around the stimulus package and healthcare reform.

Recent examples of PNE's state-level work include:

### **Economic Inequality**

Minority-Owned Business Opportunity in Ohio: Since its launch in 2006, ProgressOhio Education has partnered on multiple occasions with Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Push Coalition to bring public attention to issues relating to equality for minority owned businesses in Ohio. In 2007 ProgressOhio Education organized a press conference at which Reverend Jackson and Governor Ted Strickland addressed the need to expand participation by minority owned investment companies in the state's workers compensation investment fund. Currently, ProgressOhio Education has generated print media coverage of a recent report that spotlights how Ohio has fallen significantly short of Governor Strickland's pledge to expand state contracting with minority owned businesses to 15% of all state contracts – the state has only reached 1.2% to date.

### **Immigration**

The Courage Campaign's Dreams Across America program in 2007: Before the Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill came to a vote in Congress in 2007, the Courage Campaign, Progress Now Education's California state-based organization, participated in a public education program, with a coalition of labor and small business organizations, called "Dreams Across America". The purpose of this program was to provide an alternative narrative to the xenophobia prevalent in the media at that time and demonstrate that nearly all Americans have immigrant origins and that the challenges in our national immigration policy are complex. Over the course of two weeks, the Courage Campaign and Dreams Across America coalition leaders traveled by train from California to Washington, DC, telling stories of immigrants through media events and online videos. This campaign drove earned media in states across the country as well as in the national media.

### **Criminal Justice**

Ohio Investigative Report on Prison Labor Abuse: In 2007, ProgressOhio Education broke a major story in Ohio that brought to light a scheme through which large political donors were being rewarded with lucrative contracts to use prison labor. The report on which the press was based generated significant print media coverage and led, ultimately, to a reform effort in the state legislature.

### **Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought:**

N/A

## **Rationale for Recommendation:**

We recommend a grant of \$250,000 to Progress Now Education (\$150,000 from Seize the Day; \$100,000 from the Democracy and Power Fund) for its work to address several Seize the Day Fund strategic priorities, including increasing public participation on federal policy fights and elevating OSI priority issues, including immigration reform, criminal justice reform, economic equity, and drug policy at the national level.

Additionally, PNE is widely recognized as an advocacy innovator through its cutting edge work with technology and online organizing. We're recommending Democracy and Power Fund co-funding to support PNE's work to enhance public participation and advocacy to advance social justice priorities at the local and state levels.

As the recent federal budget fight reveals, the role of organizations engaging activists at the state and local levels to participate in public policy debates is an essential piece of the larger social justice advocacy puzzle. Progress Now Education has created a unique online/ offline organizing model to enhance post election public participation, shape the issue environment, and shift the public will to support social justice issue priorities. As a new member of the emerging Unity 2009 coalition, ProgressNow Education will be, for the first time, taking on a leadership role on federal issue priorities. The organization expects to conduct public education on the issues already identified as Unity 2009 priorities, including comprehensive immigration reform, tax and budget priorities, and energy independence. With ProgressNow Education's 1.5 million members in various states, many of which are central to federal issue fights, we expect that the organization can bring a meaningful new base to federal issue public education efforts.

Progress Now Education works in twelve carefully selected states that offer the greatest possibilities for advancing social justice. PNE's online tools for individual activists and organizations measurably enhance the ability of smaller local and state groups to elevate issues in policymaking arenas and among opinion shapers. Its large base of activists, from the tens of thousands to several hundred thousand in each state, adds impact to issue fights thus allowing groups to be more effective in advancing their agendas.

We also note that issues of structural inequality, criminal justice reform, and drug policy reform are not thoroughly and consistently integrated into the agendas of many "progressive" identified organizations that take a more majoritarian approach to issue selection and campaign development. Several of the case studies referenced earlier in this recommendation demonstrate that PNE is actively working to bridge the issue selection gaps between constituencies, thus building a larger activist base to advance issues like criminal justice and drug policy reform.

Progress Now Education's leadership includes well regarded and politically experienced state level activists, including Michael Huttner, its executive director. Huttner is an attorney, former university public policy instructor, and policy advisor to a former Colorado governor. Bobby Clark, the Deputy Director, was one of the earliest staff members on Howard Dean's 2004 presidential campaign and established a national relationship as a savvy internet strategist and web tool developer. Both are well connected in Democracy Alliance state and national funding circles and the ProgressNow Education network has grown rapidly through leveraging significant individual donor funding support. They are now seeking to expand their relatively underdeveloped institutional support.

OSI funding would enhance Progress Now Education's capacity building for its state affiliates in order to expand the base of activists which are engaged in key local and state issue fights. Progress Now Education also seeks to amplify its 1.5 million members' voices and aggregate them so that they may have an impact in national level issue efforts. In this vein, ProgressNow Education could become an important addition to the federal issue advocacy community.

**Name of Organization:** Rockefeller Family Fund

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** To launch a collaborative effort to transform our nation’s voter registration processes through the development of a system of automatic (universal) voter registration

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$8,200,000

**Project Budget:** \$2,677,892

**Major Sources of Support:**

Carnegie Corporation	\$250,000
Rockefeller Family Fund	\$250,000
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	\$150,000

**Amount Requested:** \$250,000 over 1 year

**Amount Recommended:** \$300,000 over 1 year [\$200,000 from Transparency and Integrity Fund T1:21093; \$100,000 from Seize the Day Fund T1:21079]

**Term:** One year, beginning May 1, 2009

**Description of Organization:**

The Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) is a public charity that is part of the Rockefeller group of philanthropic organizations. RFF works to leverage strategic opportunities capable of advancing issues of national concern, both through direct grantmaking and through special initiatives for which it coordinates funding. Accomplishments include: assisting in the passage of paid sick-days legislation in New Jersey and Washington, DC; development of the concept of “Climate Security” and engagement of four star generals and admirals to document the national security threats of climate change; creation of the Campaign Desk, a project of the Columbia School of Journalism designed to improve the quality of presidential campaign reporting by correcting errors in real time; creation of the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA), an affinity group of foundations working on environmental issues; and defeat of proposed coal-fired power plants in a number of states across the nation.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought:**

RFF recognizes the opportunity presented by the recent election to advance the transformation of our nation’s voter registration process through the creation of an automatic or universal system of registration. This opportunity builds not only on the 2008 election experience but also on a long and well-documented history of voter registration problems in this country. To assist in these efforts, RFF has created a program fund dedicated to the successful implementation of what advocates are calling the Voter Registration Modernization Project (VRM). As the fund’s administrator, RFF will provide strategic advice and assistance with the Project’s architecture

and approach; monitor the groups' activities and work plans; review their budgetary needs; work with them to determine program funding necessary to facilitate their efforts; and help recognize and seize emerging opportunities to better develop policy prescriptions, educate, and inform the public and policy officials about issues in this fast-moving policy arena. While lobbying will be part of the program, OSI's funds would be used strictly for 501c-3 purposes.

The groups participating in this timely enterprise will include a range of organizations, many of which are well known to US Programs, either as grantees or as allies of current grantees. Participants at this point include: Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU, AARP, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, US Public Interest Research Group, League of Women Voters, and the National Military Family Association. Also, the Glover Park Group, a consulting firm, is playing a pivotal role in public education and outreach to policy officials. There is also the likelihood that state-based groups will participate to further the public education mission of the VRM Project.

The coalition will work to build support among policymakers, the public, and other key stakeholders for this effort. Significant resources will be devoted to research and policy development to forecast logistical and implementation challenges. The coalition will conduct and release research on the following topics: problems reported to the Election Protection hotlines in 2008 both at the national and at the state level; voter registration systems in eighteen countries, focusing especially on those elements of the systems that would be most instructive for expanding voter registration in the US; potential source lists for automatic voter registration; legal issues including Congress's authority to require states to adopt a system of universal voter registration for federal elections; and cost aspects of implementing automatic voter registration.

Recognizing the need to build a broad base of support for these efforts, the coalition will engage several key sectors, among them nonprofit organizations representing marginalized constituencies and state and local election officials. The proposed project will entail a substantial communications and public education effort targeting the media. Coalition groups will mine data being collected on voter registration related issues and weave together a coherent story for mainstream media. Key talking points will include why voter registration should become automatic and standardized; why the federal government should take responsibility for implementing this reform; and how moving to a standard system will improve efficiency and prevent fraud. The project will communicate these messages through editorial board outreach as well as through print, television, and radio outreach efforts. This work has already garnered significant press attention including lead editorials in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other media outlets.

In addition to current efforts to advance reform at the national level, a few states have already expressed interest in automatic voter registration. To capitalize on these existing opportunities, the coalition will assess how this form of voter registration works in at least two of these states to build momentum toward a national policy change. Project staff members will also identify the states where secretaries of state and - with separate c4 funds - key legislators, are interested in pushing permanent voter registration; develop strategies to counter opposition; provide counseling to key administrative and - again with separate c4 funds - legislative officials; and partner with state-focused organizations such as the Make Voting Work initiative of the Pew Center on the States and State Voices, an OSI grantee. OSI funds would be focused on efforts

that engage the range of constituencies traditionally kept out of the voting process, and to project partners not currently funded by U.S. Programs (e.g., the Brennan Center).

Success of the proposed effort will be assessed through benchmarks that include: federal action in support of automatic voter registration; the organization of an effective coalition working toward automatic voter registration; the number of effective state advocacy campaigns supported by local groups; the number of key state legislators, officials, and advocates who support automatic voter registration; pilot projects in at least two states; and the extent to which research is used by the media, legislators, administrators, and allies.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The recommended grant to RFF is consistent with the goals of the Transparency and Integrity Fund, which seeks to provide critical support to strategies that ensure the fair administration of elections and full participation by all voters. It also advances the goals of the Democracy and Power Fund, through which many of U.S. Programs' nonpartisan voter registration grants have been made, and ensures the Equality and Opportunity Fund's target constituencies can freely exercise their right to vote.

The ability of citizens to participate in decision making through voting is a hallmark of representative democracy and essential to advancing open society interests. Yet, in the United States today, there continue to be significant obstacles to voter registration, creating disproportionate barriers for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups within society. The recent surge in civic participation and engagement among the American public has created a significant and timely opportunity to cement this engagement into more lasting participation. However, there is a need to address the barrier posed by voter registration requirements to fully realize this opportunity. Voters, election officials, advocates and policymakers agree that our antiquated elections infrastructure is one of the most significant barriers to civic participation. It can no longer meet the needs of today's voters and is unprepared for demands of the future. While the 2008 election saw an impressive increase in civic participation, a recent MIT study (cited in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*) reported that four million Americans encountered problems with their registrations and were thus unable to vote, and another four to five million citizens reported administrative problems as a reason for not registering at all. Shifting the onus of registering voters to an automatic registration process (modeled on systems used by other democracies such as Canada) would not only engage tens of millions more citizens in our democracy, but it would help redress the fact that these problems disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities, low-income Americans, military service members, seniors, students, and Americans with disabilities.

Current proposals for automatic voter registration would involve three main requirements for states. First, states would be required to automatically and affirmatively register eligible citizens, rather than placing the onus for registering on the individual citizen. Second, once entered into the rolls, voters would remain registered as long as they lived in that state, requiring states to institute a system of automatically updating voter rolls. Third, voters who for some reason are not on the rolls at Election Day could register or update registration records with election officials or at the polls on Election Day. To meet these new requirements, states would receive federal funding toward implementation.

Advocates, election officials and legal experts from around the country have come together to develop this more efficient approach to bringing our voting infrastructure into the 21st Century. They have identified new ways to simplify the process for voters, make it less burdensome for election officials, less susceptible to fraud and, ultimately, less expensive for taxpayers. This sweeping and potentially transformational proposal will meet several critical needs. It will simplify the process, which is confusing for voters and creates needless bureaucratic hurdles. It will reduce the expensive and duplicative burden on election officials caused by the last minute deluge of voter registration applications. It will also secure the system by creating a simple and uniform process that reduces opportunities to manipulate the system. And it gets out in front of other voting issues such as Voter I.D. by establishing fair rather than punitive I.D. requirements for participation in the democratic process.

OSI has made significant investments in both election administration and nonpartisan voter registration, notably via the successful Election Administration Fund in the last cycle. One result of that investment is an understanding that the nation's antiquated registration system, which represented the bulk of problems in elections, needs repair and modernization. This collaboration engages many of the anchor election administration groups. It is timely and will capitalize on significant interest in the field and among policymakers. The already significant support garnered by the coalition suggests that success may be in striking distance. The risk is that with any such enterprise, ultimate success may be beyond the control of one effort. Future grant recommendations to programs such as the Make Voting Work initiative (historically a JEHT-Pew partnership) are likely to further bolster this important agenda. We are working closely to advance this important work with funding partners at the Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Atlantic Philanthropies, all of which share OSI's interest in ensuring that the structures of our democracy enable full and fair participation by all.