



## Vote Forward Letters 2020 Impact and 2022 Promise



Compiled by Swing Left Peninsula, December 2021

### Summary

The 2020 Vote Forward Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) letters were incredibly effective, causing 126,000 additional votes to be cast compared to a control group that did not receive the letters. Those votes may have delivered Biden's victory. Swing Left Peninsula volunteers contributed 460,000 letters to the 2020 effort, and we're planning to make an even bigger impact in 2022 by sending ONE MILLION letters! In midterm elections, voter turnout is an even stronger driver of Democratic wins. Fewer voters routinely show up in these non-Presidential years, leaving even more potential for programs such as Vote Forward's to boost turnout.

Are you ready to join Swing Left Peninsula's letter-writing efforts to deliver Democratic victories in 2022? Get started on our [letter website!](#)

Read on for more details.

### Get-Out-the-Vote letters results

To measure the numerical impact of Vote Forward's letter-writing efforts on the 2020 election, Vote Forward registered its program with the Center for Open Science and engaged the Analyst Institute, a Democratic-leaning number-crunching outfit, to review its methods and data. After state voter files became available in the summer of 2021, they processed the results.

Vote Forward volunteers like us wrote 14 million letters to prospective voters in swing states and districts before the 2020 Presidential election. By comparing their turnout with a similar control group who did not get these letters, researchers found that **Vote Forward's efforts increased turnout by 0.8 percent, generating 126,000 votes in 2020.**

President Biden's cumulative margin of victory in battleground states was just 0.3%, according to Real Clear Politics. Biden won Wisconsin by fewer than 21,000 votes, Georgia by fewer than 13,000 and Arizona by just over 10,000. Without their 36 electoral votes President Biden would not have defeated Donald Trump. **A handful of voters in a few swing states were decisive.**

Vote Forward's 2020 letter-writing effort is among the highest impact and most cost-effective voter turnout programs ever measured in a Presidential election. GOTV efforts can struggle to produce any net votes in a Presidential election year, because turnout is already high compared to other years. Generating net votes of even 0.2 percent is considered a big effect. Our collective efforts produced four times that amount, and **may well have tipped the scales in these states.**

	Letters sent	Margin of victory
Arizona	879,994	10,457
Georgia	1,550,406	12,760
Wisconsin	291,074	20,682

## **Letter writing is cost-effective**

From the perspective of Vote Forward's operating budget, each new vote cost just \$14. Cost per vote of hundreds or even a thousand dollars is typical with other methods (if an effect can even be discerned at all). Even counting our contributed stamps, paper, and envelopes, **our efforts were cost-effective as well as high impact.**

Moreover, unlike other GOTV strategies, letters can be written all year and stockpiled to deploy before the election. [This TIME article](#) adds perspective on how critical such letters were in 2020.

## **Letter Captains are force multipliers**

Swing Left Peninsula volunteers alone wrote 460,000 letters ahead of the 2020 Presidential election, about 3.2% of Vote Forward's 14 million letter total. That's a huge contribution for a group of our modest size. How did we do it? Party Hosts and Letter Captains! Pre-COVID, our Party Hosts trained hundreds of letter writers and managed the production of tens of thousands of letters. After COVID hit, Letter Captains built a distribution network that exponentially increased letter production. With Letter Captains, Swing Left volunteers wrote more than 1,700 letters per day (a number that required a week to achieve before we built the Letter Captain network). Peninsula writers sustained that high pace for months.

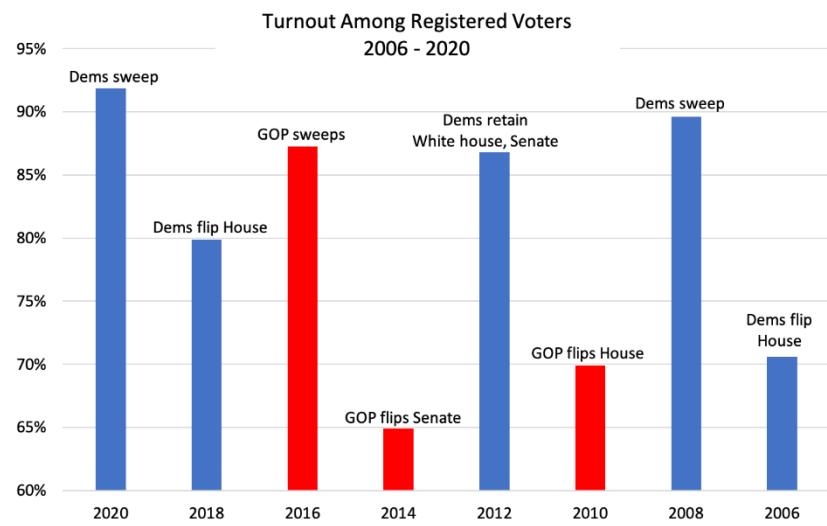
## **2022 is different**

We can have an even bigger impact in the 2022 midterm elections.

In Presidential election years baseline turnout is already high. That's why our impact in 2020 - a 0.8% increase in turnout and 126,000 extra votes - was so remarkable. In midterms, **fewer voters routinely show up, leaving more room for effective programs to boost turnout.**

Take a look at recent election cycles to see the huge impact of turnout. In 2008, Democrats swept the House, Senate, and Presidency. In the 2010 midterms, however, turnout among registered voters fell by nearly 20 percentage points, and Democrats lost the House. Even lower turnout led to a loss of the Senate in the 2014 midterms. Then, in 2018, nearly 80% turnout returned Democrats to control of the House. In midterms, **voter turnout is an even stronger driver of Democratic wins.**

As this table shows, it is not inevitable that the party that wins the Presidency will lose seats in Congress in the midterms. Rather, it is a question of differences in enthusiasm and work. It was our work and enthusiasm that won the House in 2018, the Presidency in 2020, and the Senate in 2021 when Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff became the two Senators from Georgia. As Stacey Abrams often says, "when we fight, we win."



### **What's the plan?**

Vote Forward has announced a goal of writing 30 million letters in the 2022 cycle. **Our goal at Swing Left Peninsula is to facilitate one million targeted letters by supporting our letter writers to write as many as possible at parties and at home, and by growing our community of letter writers and distributors.**

As expected, [Swing Left's and Vote Forward's 2022 strategy](#) will focus on states and districts key to retaining the House and Senate and also on a few strategic gubernatorial and state legislative races to thwart voter suppression. Within these priorities, Swing Left Peninsula will focus on key California House races in the Central Valley, the Arizona and Nevada Senate races, and the Arizona governor's race. We might also print letters for other races depending on availability.

Visit our [letter website](#) to get involved in this proven, impactful activity...writing, hosting and/or distributing!