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AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK

# Mapping the Left

# *Charitable Dollars for Politics*

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September 10, 2021

**Scott Walter**

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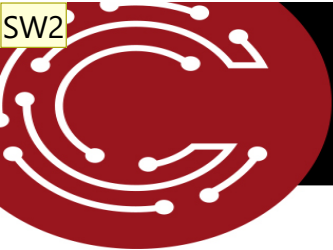
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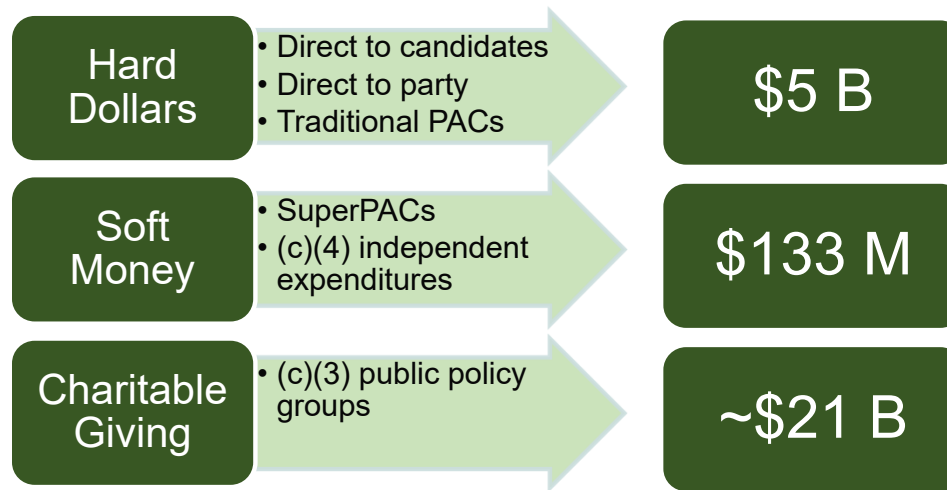
**Since 2005,  
the nonprofit tail  
has wagged the  
Democratic Party dog**

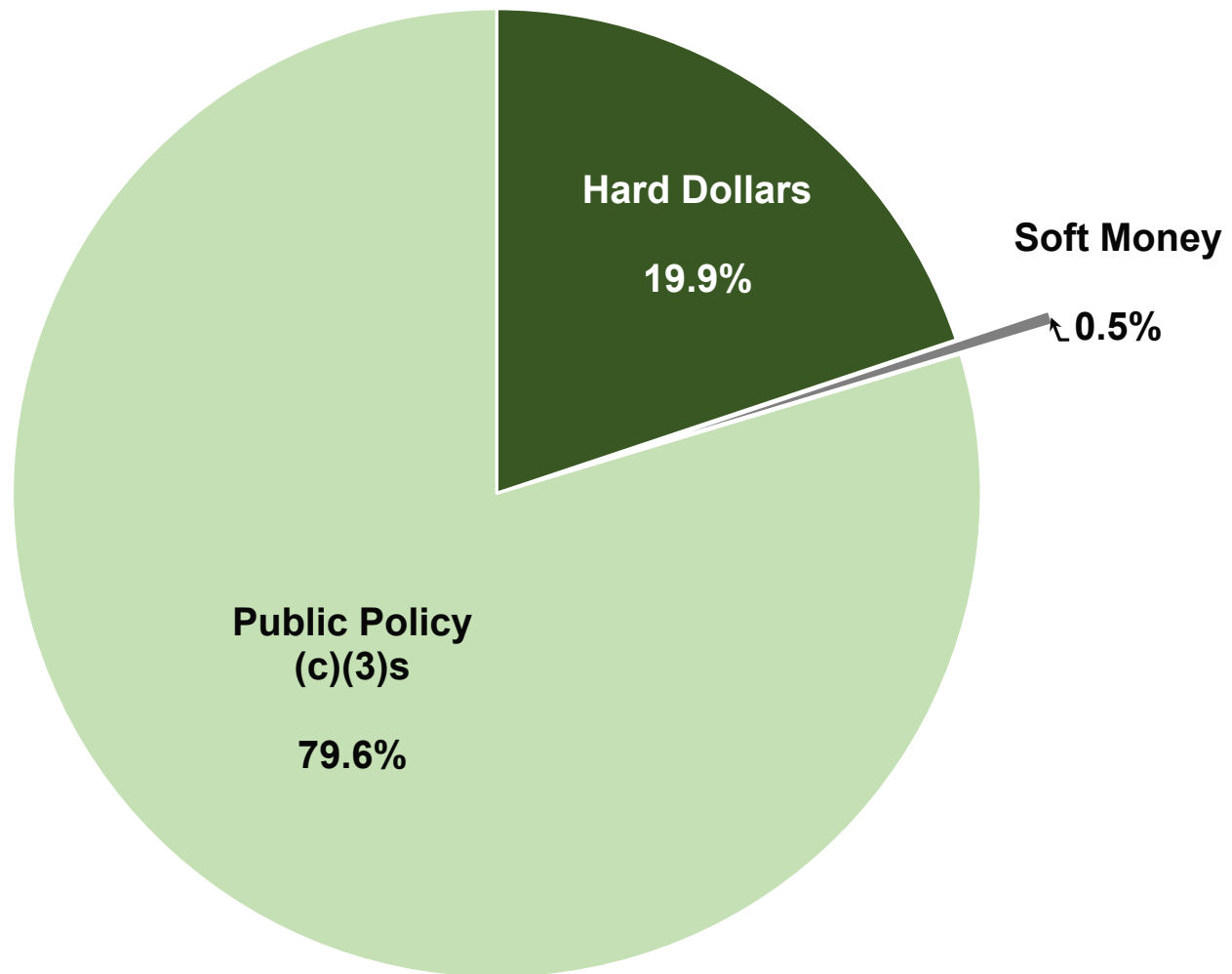
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# Three Rivers of Political Spending

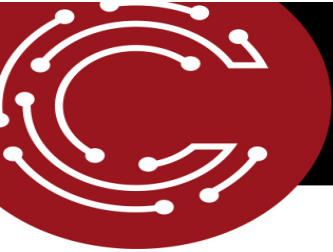
(2018 Cycle)





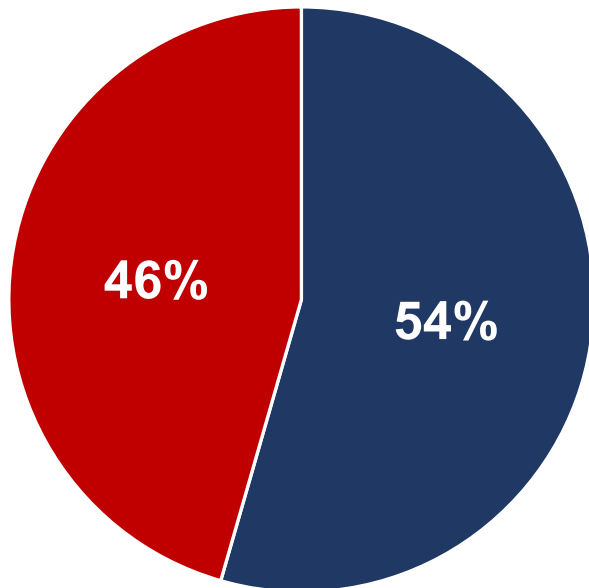
**(2018 cycle)**

■ Hard Dollars ■ Soft Money ■ Charitable Giving

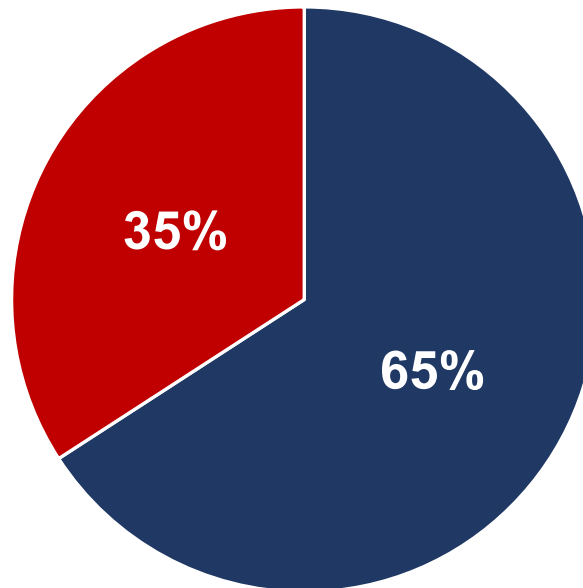


# Partisan Split

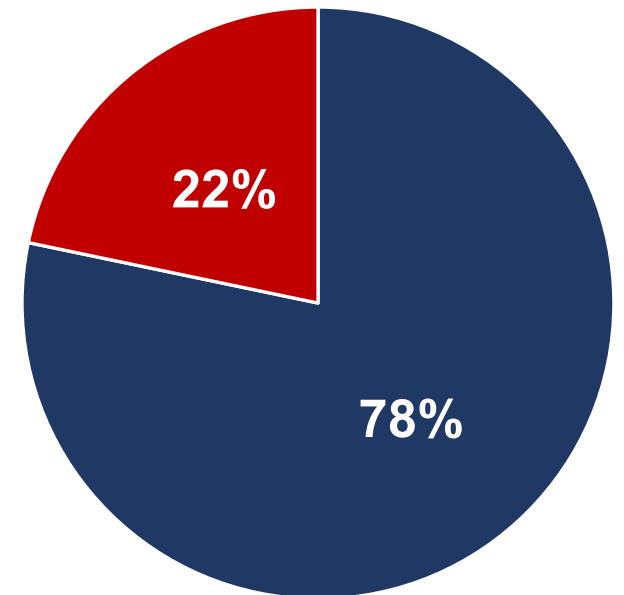
(2018 Cycle)



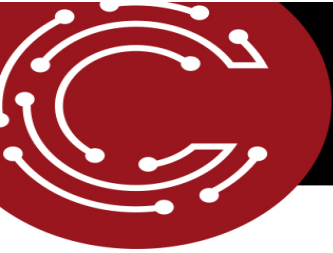
**Hard Dollars**



**Soft Dollars**



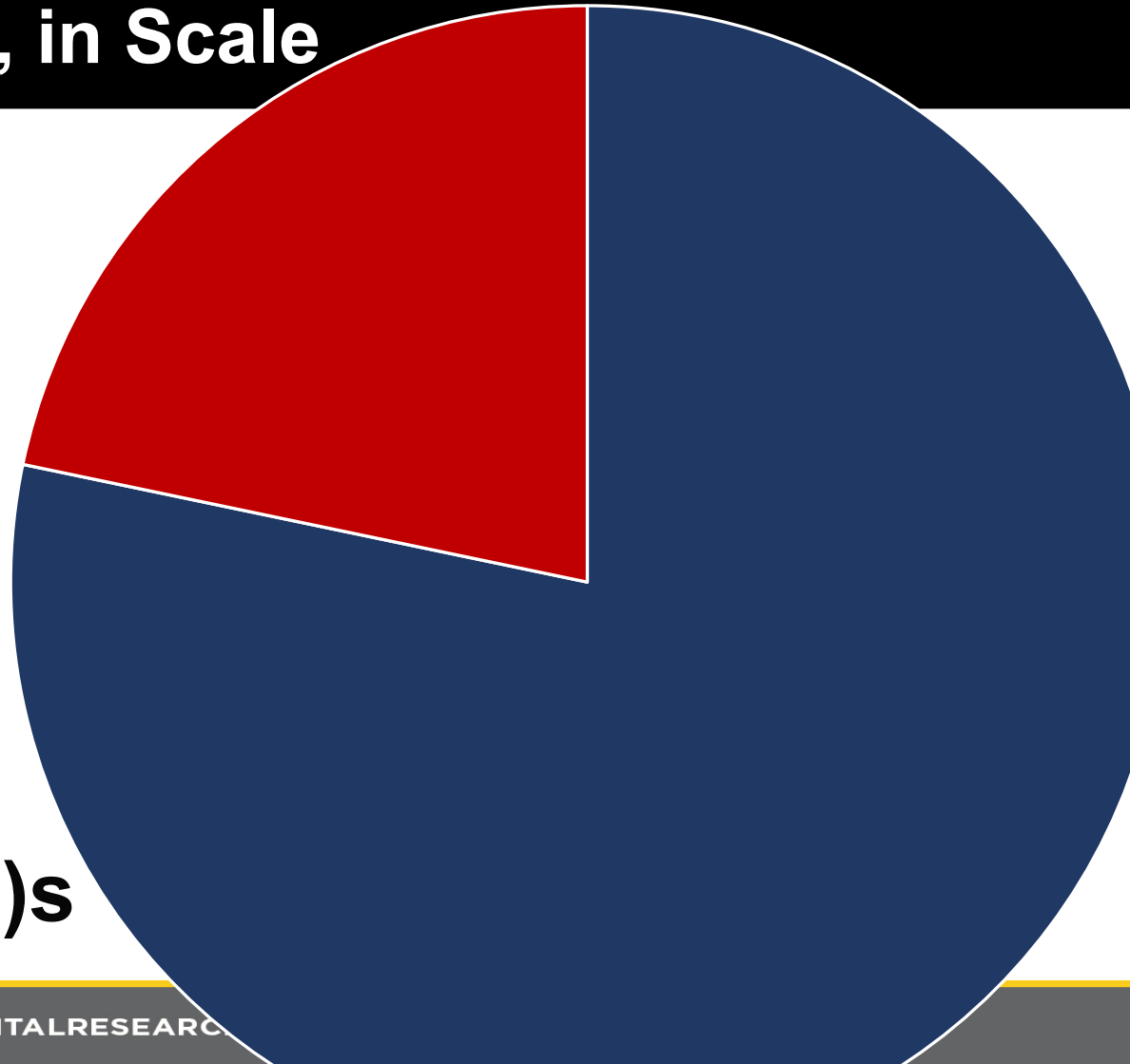
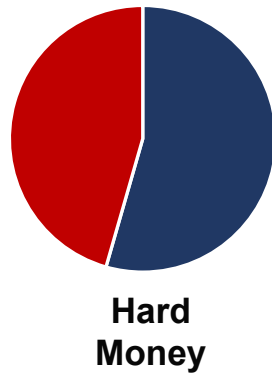
**Public Policy (c)(3)s**



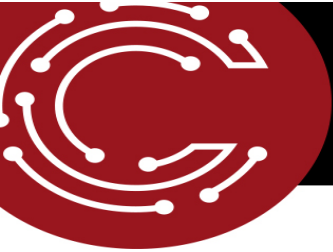
# Political Giving, in Scale

(2018 Cycle)

  
Soft  
Money



**Public Policy (c)(3)s**



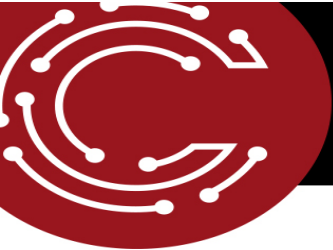
# 2005

DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE



- **George Soros & Peter Lewis**
- **~\$27 M each on party apparatus in '04 cycle**
- **Turned to nonprofits**
- **DA still advises ~100 billionaires and millionaires**
- **DA works with...**

7

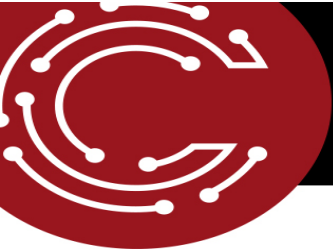


# 2005



- **Eric Kessler (Clinton Administration)**
- **New, darker legal structure**
- **Huge growth: 2019 nonprofit revenues of \$731 M**
- **2018 cycle revenues: \$1.2 B = 2x (DNC + RNC)**

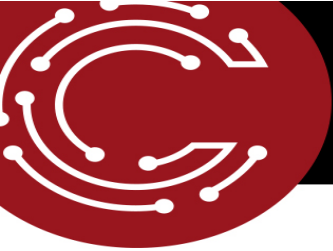




# 2006



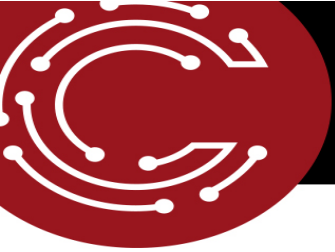
- **Michael Podhorzer (AFL-CIO)**
- **Secret, for-profit think tank**
- **Studies voter turnout research**
- **Research needs data...**



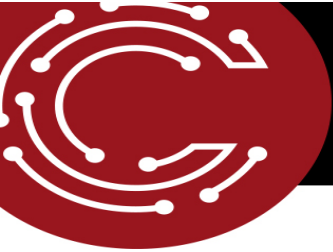
2006



- **...so Catalist formed by Podhorzer & Harold Ickes**
- **Podhorzer/AFL-CIO coerced left-wing groups**



**“Hand over data or lose union endorsements, money, & boots on the ground.”**

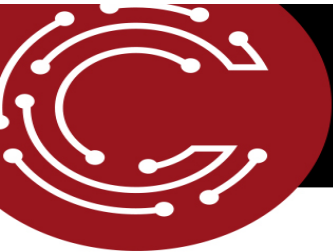


2006



**Also a for-profit  
to hide...**

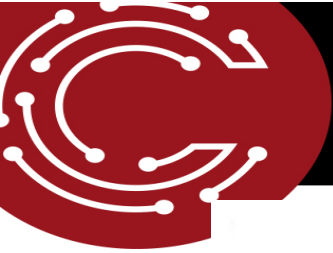
**...to violate campaign finance walls between  
campaigns & outside groups.**



# Who is Michael Podhorzer?

- **AFL-CIO Political Director**
- **Starts 1997**
- **1981-1993 at Citizen Action...**
  - started by SDS alumni
  - collapsed in 1997
  - amid campaign scandals & Teamsters/Dems money laundering scandals



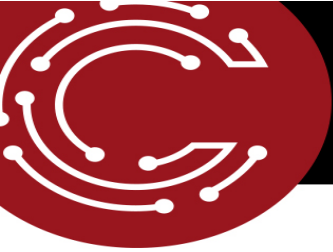


# Podhorzer is “The Architect”

TIME

The Secret History of the Shadow Campaign  
That Saved the 2020 Election





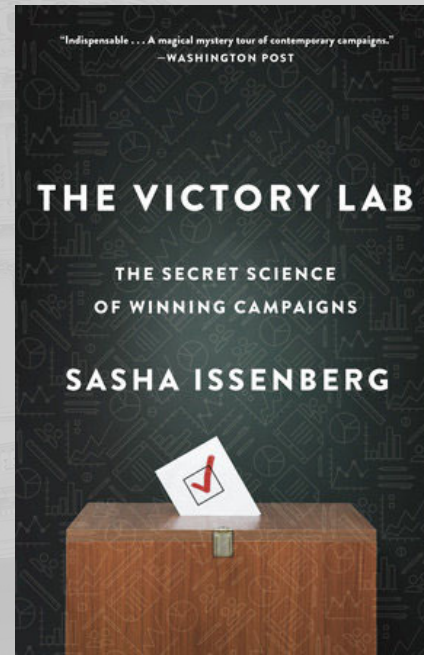
## **Podhorzer is “The Architect”**

- **Central planner of 2020 “conspiracy”**
- **Organized the Zooms to align the Left**
- **... which continued his AFL-CIO lunches that launched the Analyst Institute & Catalyst**



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# The pre- history of the *Time* article is....



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# Interlude: 2004-2008

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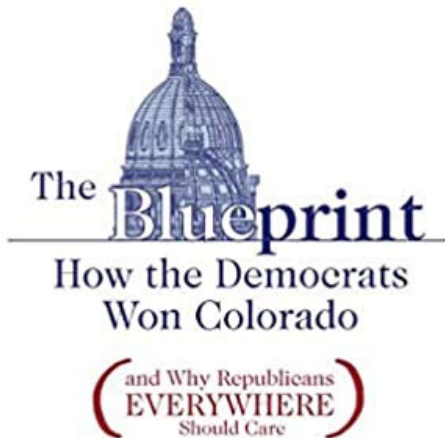


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Includes updates on the 2010 elections

"A must-read for every American."  
—Michael Hattner, founder and CEO of ProgressNow

"If you care about the country, you need to read *The Blueprint*."  
—Hugh Hewitt, nationally syndicated radio host



Adam Schragger and Rob Witwer

# Colorado births the Blueprint for left-wing nonprofit electioneering

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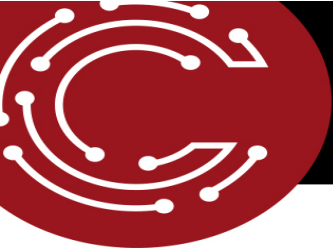
# The **Blueprint**

How the Democrats  
Won Colorado

(and Why Republicans  
**EVERYWHERE**  
Should Care)

Adam Schragger and Rob Witwer

“Campaign finance reform had completely changed the rules of the game. By limiting the amount of money candidates and political parties could raise and spend, the new law had **seriously weakened candidates**—and **all but killed political parties.**”



## **Interlude: 2004-2008**

- **In 2004, Left takes over both CO legislative chambers.**
- **By 2008, Left takes over state-wide offices, U.S. Congressional delegation, and electoral college votes.**
- **Four megadonors fuel the engine of victories from 2004 onward.**
- **This Colorado Democracy Alliance of donors is model for national version in 2005.**



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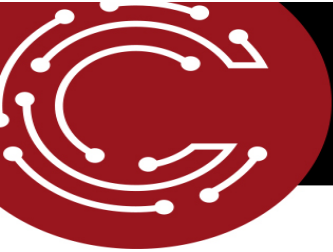
## The **Blueprint**

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(and Why Republicans  
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**“Colorado Democracy Alliance has been likened to a political venture capital fund.”**

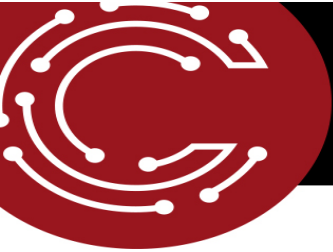


# 2011

- **January Memo (beginning of 2012 cycle)**
- **Written by Andy Stern, SEIU (top West Wing visitor)**
- **& Deepak Bhargava, Center for Community Change**

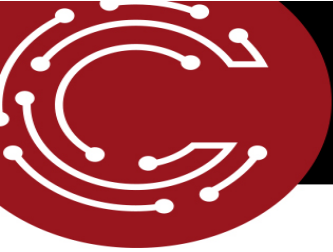
**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Sherrilyn Ifill, George Soros, and the U.S. Programs Board  
**From:** Deepak Bhargava and Andy Stern  
**Re:** New Thinking on 2012 Election and Beyond



# Three Points

- 1. Winning the 2012 presidential election is everything**
- 2. Only way to accomplish #1 ...**  
*again give (c)(3) grantees millions to register & GOTV*  
(\$84 M budget: OSF, Ford, Carnegie, Democracy Alliance, etc.)
- 3. Long-term solution:**  
**election reforms like ending voter ID laws, automatic registration, early voting, etc.**



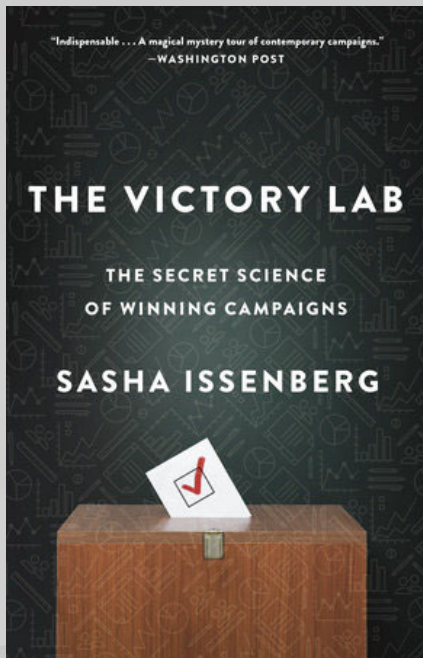
# 2012

- **Liberal journalist writes *Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns***
- **Pre-history of 2020 *Time* article on “conspiracy”**
- ***Time* praised Voter Participation Center, a c3, for sending 15 M absentee ballot applications in 2020.**

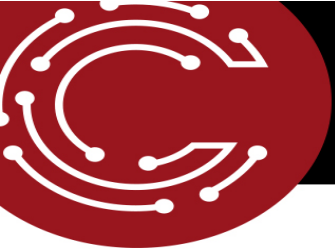




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“Even though the group was officially nonpartisan, for tax purposes, there was no secret that the **goal** of all of its efforts was to generate **new votes for Democrats.**”

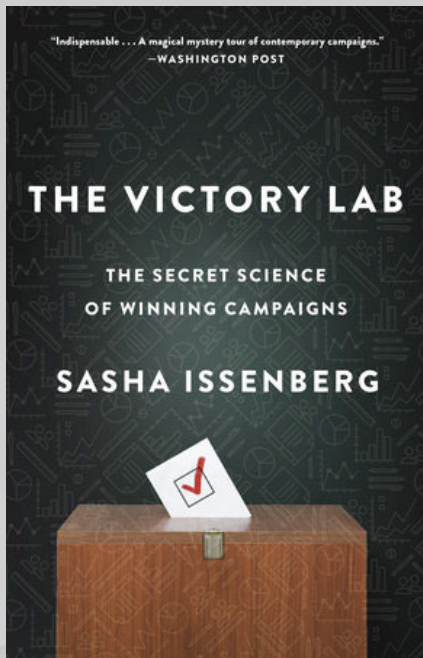


# 2012

- ***Victory Lab* was also honest about the donors**
- **Carnegie foundation in 2011 Soros memo**
- ***Victory Lab* admits Carnegie's intentions**



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“Because the tax code allowed nonprofit organizations to run registration and turnout drives as long as they did not push a particular candidate, organizing ‘historically disenfranchised’ communities (as Carnegie described them) became a backdoor approach to **ginning up Democratic votes outside the campaign finance laws** that applied to candidates, parties, and political action committees.”



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**“historically disenfranchised  
communities”**

***What electioneering c3 used that  
for cover in 2020?***