

To: Anti-War, Pro-Ceasefire Progressive Leaders and Organizations
From: Vote “Uncommitted” Coordination Team (VUCT)
Date: January 29, 2024
Re: Urgent Organizing Plan for Michigan Democratic Primaries (February 27, 2024)

[Table of Contents](#)

Table of Contents	1
I. Background	1
II. Theory of Change	2
III. Who?	3
IV. Timeline	3
V. Budget	5
VI. Roles and Needs	7
VII. Pros and Cons	8
VIII. Messaging, Talking Points, Gotcha Questions	10

I. Background

The Michigan Democratic presidential primary is an important venue to demonstrate a large rejection of President Biden’s backing and financing of the Israeli government’s war in Gaza. In 2008, Obama did not make the ballot in the Michigan primaries but his campaign mobilized young and Black voters to vote “[uncommitted](#)” as a symbolic (and real) rejection of Hillary Clinton. It embarrassed Clinton.

According to 2008 CNN exit polling of the Michigan primary, 68 percent of Black voters chose uncommitted, compared with 30 percent for Clinton. 48 percent of all voters ages 18-29 voted uncommitted, compared with 43 percent for Clinton.

In the 2020 presidential primaries, 19,106 voters or 1.2% of Democrats voted uncommitted.

To vote Uncommitted you have to register as a Democrat. It appears that in Michigan, a candidate needs to file a [declaration](#) of intent two Fridays before election to be a valid write-in candidate. In other words, a write-in candidacy is a possibility with the cooperation of the potential candidate, but not otherwise (at least, not if we want the votes to be counted by the Secretary of State). However, voting “Uncommitted” is another option that does not require such pre-authorization.

In New Hampshire, a last minute and low-budget voter outreach campaign was undertaken, where approximately 3,500 calls were made, achieving a contact rate of about 10%. Out of those reached, 57 total conversations were held with voters regarding their primary vote and stance on the ceasefire issue.

Among these, 14 individuals were against the ceasefire, while 43 supported it. 18 committed to a write-in action for the ceasefire. We will need to really crank up those phonebank and/or canvassing numbers to reach an impact.

If that math roughly holds, almost 75% of Bernie/Warren 2020 voters were pro ceasefire. Bernie got 577k votes in 2020 in MI which could mean ~430k pro-ceasefire voters. That's about 30% of the total 2020 D electorate in MI.

II. Theory of Change

If progressives can politicize and electoralize discontent over Biden's support for Israel's brutal war in Gaza through a substantial number of 'Uncommitted' votes in the Michigan Democratic primaries, then the Biden administration would feel more afraid of losing Michigan in the general election, prompting a potential reassessment of the administration's position on the war.

The primaries also provide a lot of free mainstream media press for the ceasefire and Palestinian human rights movement. Reporters are bored and looking for stories to cover about Democrats and Biden. The primary elections provide a venue to do that. This campaign could generate weeks of scrutiny of the Biden re-election campaign that they would not receive otherwise from political reporters over Gaza's effect on the 2024 elections.

For organizations, this might also allow leaders and activists in your organizations to get necessary training and skills in communicating their message "beyond the choir" through canvassing and phonebanking to likely voters in the Michigan Democratic primaries who may not prioritize Gaza as one of their priority issues.

The situation in Michigan isn't just a choice between universal support for Biden or complete rejection; it's about a widespread yet dispersed dissatisfaction that is still registering at the polls regardless of what we choose to do or not, potentially making Michigan a decentralized referendum on these issues. This campaign would be trying to give that disapproval some additional electoral and mainstream media coherence.

Michigan voters are sending Biden a clear message in the February 27 Democratic primary that he can count us out. We are filling out the UNCOMMITTED bubble because we strongly reject Biden's funding war and genocide in Gaza.

Trump only won Michigan in 2016 by about 10,000 votes. Uncommitted Michigan Democrats opposed to Biden's policy in Gaza can demonstrate that we hold his margin of victory for re-election. Biden must earn our vote through a dramatic change in policy.

President Biden has been a successful candidate in the past by representing a broad coalition, but right now he's not representing the vast majority of Democrats who want a ceasefire and an end to his funding of Israel's war in Gaza. He's not representing the young people who put him in office and turned out in the midterms — and are now out protesting his policies in the streets.

III. Who?

Instead of creating a new organization, we should try to put together an organizing committee and mobilize the management, field, digital, communications, and political outreach capacity of existing national, state, and local organizations toward this campaign. If there was a competitive 2024 primary, this capacity would already exist but we need to try to forge it now.

(501c4s and PACs: IfNotNow, JVP, WFP, AMP, USPCR Action, Sunrise, Detroit Action, We The People MI, Dearborn/Detroit area electeds, CPD, who else?.)

IV. Timeline

Immediate Pre-Launch Activities (Now - February 6)

- Coalition Building: Secure commitments from influential organizations and individuals.
- Media Preparation: Develop a comprehensive media plan with press materials ready for immediate release; identify key spokespeople locally and nationally
- Digital Campaign Setup: Set up operational back-end and digital platforms
- Identify potential staff and consultants with field, communications, digital, or management experience in Democratic primaries
- Identify partner individuals organizations to provide expertise, volunteer or staff capacity, email list, content creators, etc. (Dearborn/Detroit area electeds, IfNotNow, JVP, WFP, Sunrise, Detroit Action, We The People MI, etc)
- *If there's a budget, it would be good to have VAN targeted digital ads and voter contact phonebanking and canvassing operations, especially targeted to 2020 Dem primary voters for Bernie and Warren in high voter precincts and 2022 primary voters for Rashida.*

Campaign Launch (at latest February 5-6)

- Public Launch Event: Host a high-impact virtual event with key speakers, including figures like Rashida Tlaib, Mayor Hammoud, and Arab/Muslim groups and Jewish groups like IfNotNow and JVP.
- Intensive Media Engagement: Release press materials, initiate a series of media appearances, and publish op-eds.
- Social Media Surge: Launch an aggressive social media campaign with posts, memes, and videos.

GOTV Mobilization (February 14 - 26)

- Nationwide and Local Surrogate Engagement: Organize events and media appearances, both in Michigan and nationally.
- Comprehensive Voter Outreach: Implement extensive VAN-based phone banking, text banking, and canvassing activities.
- Partnerships with
- High-Visibility Actions: Distribute posters, flyers, and yard signs extensively across Michigan.

Election Day GOTV (February 27)

- Do the thing!

V. Budget

Minimum Viable Project	Cost	Details
Campaign Manager	\$8,000	40-60 hours a week
Procuring Voter List	\$7,500	
Calling through the list twice	\$17,500 x 2	
Texting the list	\$17,500	
Michigan Field Director	\$5,000	On the ground activities
National Remote Field Director	\$5,000	For remote phone banks
National Communications Consultant	\$5,000	
Political Outreach Director	\$5,000	
Nice to Have		
2 Michigan Field Organizer(s)	\$3,500 each	
Digital Consultant	\$3,500	
Digital Organizing Platform	\$2,000	
Michigan Communications Consultant	\$5,000	

Graphics	\$2,000	
Tiktok/Video Content	\$2,000	
Digital Ad Budget	\$100,000 min	Targeted to likely voters in high-turnout precincts
Signs/Posters	\$5,000	
T-Shirts	\$3,000	
Food/Water	\$2,000	

Total: \$216,000

(Add 10% Admin/Legal Cost)

With Admin Cost: \$237,600

VI. Roles and Needs

Management & Coordination:

Waleed for now, but I would like to replace myself ASAP with someone with 40-60 hours a week capacity for next month since I have a day-job.

Finance/Fundraising:

NEED

Political Outreach (with electeds, organizations, influencers):

Communications:

National Press: Waleed, Yonah, Natalia

Local Press: **NEED**

Field (Voter Contact, Digital Organizing):

Digital (Email List, Social Media, Etc):

Social: Naftali, Samee

Digital Organizing:

(Action Network): **NEED**

Creative/Content Creation:

Rafael S, **could use more**

Operations/Legal:

NEED