

# People-Powered Politics 2008

## POST-ELECTION REPORT

***MoveOn.ORG***  
***POLITICAL ACTION***®

## INTRODUCTION

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In September of 1998, Wes Boyd and Joan Blades started MoveOn with just \$89.95 and one big idea: use technology to bring people back into American politics. It seemed crazy at the time, but since then, MoveOn has grown to 4.5 million strong and the technology we helped to pioneer is now commonplace among campaigns. And in 2008, American politics is more people-powered than it has ever been.

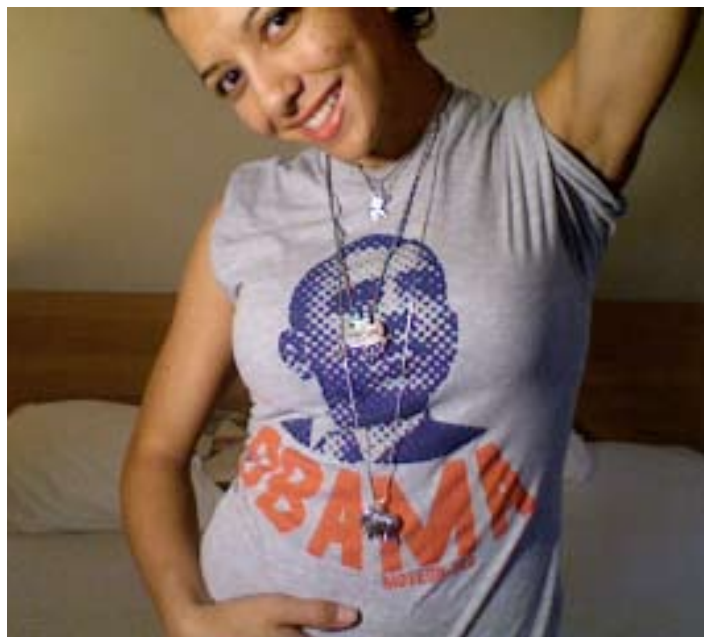
Technology has created more direct communication between constituents and their elected officials, allowed groups of small donors to compete with the influence of big money in Washington, and helped millions to get involved and make a difference in the most critical election in modern history. While we have a lot of work still to do to level the playing field, we've taken dramatic steps in the right direction. And nothing proves the power of this principle better than Barack Obama's campaign for President. With an incredible grasp of technology and

a dedication to on-the-ground organizing, the Obama campaign built an infrastructure early on which made so many Americans, and most of our members, excited to get involved.

MoveOn members made it clear from early 2007 that electing a progressive president was our top priority. After our members endorsed Obama early in the primaries, we launched the largest volunteer mobilization in MoveOn's history to help Obama secure the nomination.

As we reached the general election, MoveOn members' participation in the campaign skyrocketed. We contributed almost 1 million volunteers to Obama's campaign who together worked more than 20.8 million hours to put Obama in the White House.

From virtual phone banks to house parties, the organizing tactics we helped to pioneer in the last few election cycles



**Young people get out the vote for Barack Obama in record numbers.**

have been adopted broadly, and MoveOn members were among the most skilled veterans at using these tools to help elect Obama.

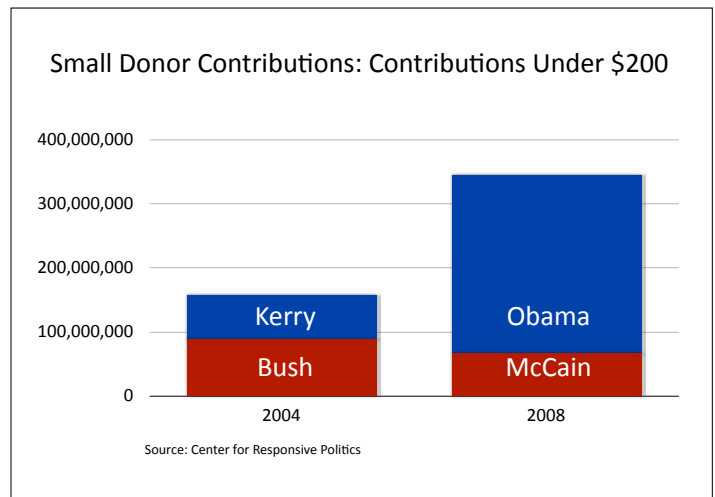
MoveOn pioneered online giving in 1999, and online small-donor cultivation has been a key part of our strategy ever since. So, we see the enthusiasm and participation from small donors in this year's election as an indication of both an inspiring candidate and a campaign ethic dedicated to giving ordinary people power on- and off-line.

All told this election cycle, MoveOn members:

- Delivered over 933,800 volunteers and over \$88,000,000 for Barack Obama.
- Helped to mobilize young folks, adding more than 1 million people in Generation Obama to the MoveOn ranks, registering nearly half a million with our friends at Progressive Future, and turning them out in battleground states.
- Helped Democrats win at least six Senate seats [three races are still outstanding at the time of this report] with almost \$3,854,978.92 in small donor contributions, ads, and direct mail in key Senate states.
- Put North Carolina over the top, raising and spending \$3,073,503.30 to run ads, support Kay Hagan, and register new voters in the state.

MoveOn didn't do this alone, of course. From SEIU to Brave New Films to VoteVets, we were honored to work with and alongside dozens of organizations to build a progressive infrastructure to help Obama make the change Americans want to see.

Bottom line, 2008 has seen the greatest democratization of American politics in a generation – and regardless of where on the political spectrum you stand, that's a very good, very healthy thing.



**Contributions under \$200 skyrocketed this election cycle, showing a renewed engagement in the political process from Americans all over the country.**

## ELECTING BARACK OBAMA

*In just a few years, the members of MoveOn have once again demonstrated that real change comes not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up. From their principled opposition to the Iraq war – a war I also opposed from the start – to their strong support for a number of progressive causes, MoveOn shows what Americans can achieve when we come together in a grassroots movement for change. I thank them for their support and look forward to working with their members in the weeks and months ahead.*

– Senator Barack Obama, February 1st, 2008  
On the day of MoveOn’s endorsement of Obama for President

MoveOn members pulled out all the stops to elect Barack Obama, donating over \$88,000,000 and volunteering over 20,841,507 hours.

MoveOn has been a pioneer in “online-to-offline organizing” – using email and the web to help folks make an impact in their neighborhoods. This cycle, MoveOn members in battleground states received daily emails alerting them to specific needs at their local Obama office, along with hand-written updates from local volunteer leaders. These regular and distributed communications tripled our recruitment rates over the course of the campaign and turned out almost one million MoveOn members to canvass, phone bank and register voters for Obama over the course of the campaign.

**Recruitment engine:** With lots of enthusiastic members in “safe” states, we came up with a unique solution to the ever increasing need for volunteers in the key battleground states. Members in states such as Texas and Vermont became a “recruitment engine,” calling every single MoveOn member in battleground states to get them to their local Obama office.

**Reaching out across the country:** With MoveOn’s small staff, running traditional campaign phone banks simply wasn’t an option. But the technology we pioneered in 2006 for our “Call for Change” program provided the solution. MoveOn members made 2.14 million calls at decentralized “phone parties” where neighborhood progressives would gather, cell phones in hand, and call through lists of MoveOn members in battleground states



like Ohio and Virginia. MoveOn members also made 557,000 recruitment calls from home on our easy-to-use web tool – including Richard S., of Mill Valley, CA, who made an astounding 5,431 recruitment calls!

**Working directly with the Obama campaign:** In a first-ever for MoveOn, our members joined forces with the Obama field campaign to mobilize voters across all 50 states. Our members brought years of field experience to the Obama team, filling their ranks with veteran organizers and enthusiastic volunteers. We turned out over 250,000 volunteers directly through our website to the campaign. All told, almost a million MoveOn members participated in the campaign, far out-doing our participation in 2004.

	<b>total volunteers</b>	<b>total hours</b>	<b>final week hours</b>
Battleground States	428,133	9,555,425	2,587,410
Non-Battleground-States	505,675	11,286,082	3,056,037
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>933,808</b>	<b>20,841,507</b>	<b>5,643,447</b>

Total participation of MoveOn members in Obama campaign.

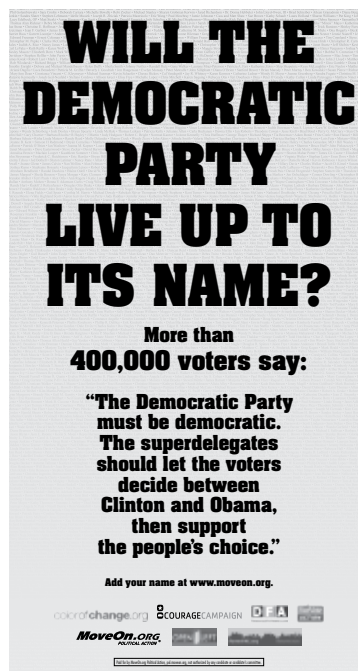
This story started more than a year and a half ago when our members flocked in April 2007 to our Virtual Town all meeting on Iraq. Out of a field of seven candidates, Obama won the town hall with 28% of the vote, largely due to his strong position on ending the Iraq war – a war our members had opposed from the start.

On February 1, 2008, five days before “Super Tuesday,” MoveOn members voted by 70 percent to endorse Barack Obama – the first presidential endorsement in our history.

MoveOn member Christine Y. in New Jersey summed up the feeling of so many voters:

*I’ve never felt so strongly about any one candidate in my entire life. He’s truly an inspiration to all of us – especially the younger generation. I will stand by him 100% for as long as he’s willing to stand up and fight for this country!*

In the days that followed, our members infused the fledgling campaign with over half a million dollars in small donations – an amount that Obama has subsequently dwarfed, but at the time provided the campaign with much-needed resources and helped the campaign build a foundation for their huge base of small donors.



**As Americans voted in overwhelming numbers in primaries, MoveOn.org and allied organizations ran this full page ad to tell the superdelegates to let the voters decide.**

Members poured personal endorsement e-mails into primary states, ultimately sending almost 700,000 e-mails asking friends and family to support Obama in their state primaries. And in the lead up to March 5, more than 20,000 volunteers called MoveOn members in Texas to turn them out for Obama to both vote and caucus in the famous Texas two-step.

Watch the Virtual Town Hall meeting on Iraq:  
[http://pol.moveon.org/townhall/iraq/report\\_back.html](http://pol.moveon.org/townhall/iraq/report_back.html)



MoveOn members wore their support for Obama proudly. We distributed millions of buttons, stickers, and t-shirts this year.

Once we hit the general election, members chipped in for ads that clearly defined the choice between Barack Obama and John McCain. Our “Obama in 30 seconds” ad contest generated over 1,100 entries. The winner, “Obamacan,” aired in four states and nationally throughout the election.



**Actor John Cusack challenges voters to try to tell John McCain and George W. Bush apart.**



**The winner of the “Obama in 30 seconds” contest, this ad was one of the first to show Obama’s crossover appeal to voters.**

We tried to advertise outside the box, with creative approaches that could break through the media noise. The “Bush-McCain Challenge,” a fun quiz that compared the two politicians, was promoted in TV ads; over half a million Americans played the game online.

*It’s the endorsements from the usual suspects that often generate the most money and organizational support. Few were surprised when the liberal MoveOn.org backed Obama, but the organization has become one of his top fundraisers and is urging its 4.2 million members to get out the vote for him.*

– US News and World Report, Oct. 21, 2008

Click here to take the quiz yourself:  
[www.bush-mccainchallenge.com](http://www.bush-mccainchallenge.com)

## MoveOn Councils At Work

It wasn't just online and on the airwaves that our members made a difference. Our local councils helped define John McCain in cities and towns around the country and were key to rallying the hundreds of thousands of MoveOn members who ultimately volunteered for Obama.

- Our councils highlighted McCain's ties to Big Oil. We organized over 200 "Oil-Free President" events outside gas stations in July, earning media hits in dozens of swing state outlets, including in Nashua, NH; Naples, FL; and Bloomington, IN.
- Our councils helped educate voters about the similarities between McCain and Bush. We ran over 300 "Bush-McCain Challenge" events on May 28th, attracting media coverage in places like Nashua and Portsmouth, NH, and Denver, CO.
- We added almost 4,000 local leaders doing GOTV over the course of the campaign, bringing our council leadership to 16,000 members nationwide.

## MoveOn Members Get Creative

At the Denver convention, MoveOn partnered with artist Shepard Fairey to host a gallery displaying art inspired by Obama's candidacy.



The Decemberists perform at a concert in Denver in the Shepard Fairey/MoveOn space for hundreds of Obama supporters.



These paintings were finalists in the Manifest Hope art contest. The contest generated more than one thousand entries. The finalists were on display at the Denver gallery.

## One Member's Story

Every chance I get, I've been volunteering here in Lafayette, Indiana. It's the most exciting, joyful, amazing experience I can imagine – and sometimes it brings tears to your eyes.

My friend and I were canvassing and registering voters the other day here in Lafayette. We knocked on a door, and a woman came out who was on the phone. She saw our campaign buttons, briefly put the phone aside to tell us she was on an overseas call, and took our clipboard to fill out a voter registration form while she continued to talk. She was obviously on the phone with her husband, who seemed concerned that someone had come to her door – he seemed to want to be sure she was safe. She kept saying, “No, honey, it's okay. They are Obama volunteers. I'm registering to vote. It's okay.”

Then finally she said to him, “Honey, I have to register so I can vote for Obama. He's going to bring you home!”

It was a beautiful moment. But the truth is, everyone who spends time knocking on doors meets people who don't know where to vote or how to vote early, or who just need some reassurance that it's okay to vote for Obama. They're grateful to see you.

– Mia Lewis , West Lafayette, Indiana MoveOn member

# A BROAD MAJORITY IN THE SENATE

No one can accuse MoveOn members of not being able to walk and chew gum at the same time. In a year with an extraordinary focus on the Presidential election, we also weighed in with \$3,854,978.92 and several defining ads to build a broad Democratic majority in the Senate.

We focused on helping in three ways:

1. We poured in small donations to help Senate candidates run competitive campaigns against well-financed incumbents.

Tom Allen	Maine	\$365,854.26
Mark Begich	Alaska	\$79,649.84
Al Franken	Minnesota	\$740,306.00
Kay Hagan	North Carolina	\$499,679.18
Jim Martin	Georgia	\$214,427.64
Jeff Merkley	Oregon	\$405,882.41
Jeanne Shaheen	New Hampshire	\$219,105.46
Mark Udall	Colorado	\$167,574.13

Blue indicates winner

Red indicates loser

Black indicates too close to call at time of report

2. We ran ads to help define the races and educate voters in uphill battles in Kentucky, Georgia, and North Carolina.



MoveOn partnered with Campaign Money Watch to get this ad on the air in Kentucky to challenge long-time Iraq war supporter Mitch McConnell.

3. Using direct mail and online ads, we encouraged young, enthusiastic Obama supporters to vote down-ballot in key Senate races.

Facebook ads proved to be a great way to alert young Obama supporters to the importance of voting down-ballot.



## MoveOn's Work in the House of Representatives

Our members also had some time for the House of Representatives this cycle, donating over \$800,000 to progressive House candidates.

No race was more exciting than helping **Donna Edwards** win her primary campaign against Al Wynn in February of this year. MoveOn members volunteered for Donna in Maryland, donated over \$81,000 to her campaign, and chipped in to keep ads on the air at a critical time in the campaign. We're proud to have been a part of electing a progressive champion like Donna to the US House. And the race put other Representatives on notice: fail to listen to your constituents, and you might be next.



FLICKR USER MATTHEWSTOLLER

**U.S. Representative  
Donna Edwards**

Darcy Burner	Washington 8	\$86,846.59
Donna Edwards	Maryland 4	\$81,459.19
Alan Grayson	Florida 8	\$30,312.26
Jim Himes	Connecticut 4	\$27,799.76
Larry Kissell	North Carolina 8	\$178,904.41
Alice Kryzan	New York 26	\$49,217.83
Betsy Markey	Colorado 4	\$157,810.60
John Murtha	Pennsylvania 12	\$235,147.01
Tom Perriello	Virginia 5	\$30,101.76
Patrick Murphy	Pennsylvania 8	\$125,129.94
Carol Shea-Porter	New Hampshire 1	\$45,218.55
Tim Walz	Minnesota 1	\$16,323.51

Blue indicates winner

Red indicates loser

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**MoveOn members contributed \$1.08 million to help put House candidates over the top.**

## NORTH CAROLINA

If you'd told us in 2006 we'd be focusing on North Carolina in 2008, we would have laughed. But it was clear early last summer that something was happening there, so we decided to step up and help turn North Carolina blue.

And we did! Our efforts helped put the state over the top for Obama and elect a Democratic Governor, Senator, and Congressman in this deep red state. We sent a message that the electoral map is changing and progressive issues are important in all states of the Union.

When we started, Obama was down seven points in the state polls and Kay Hagan who was running for Senate against the better known and better financed Elizabeth Dole seemed like a long shot. At the beginning of June, Hagan was ten points down.

But that month, we partnered with Elizabeth Edwards and EMILY's List to bring in some much needed early money for Kay Hagan.



*MoveOn is working with EMILY's List to highlight some great candidates like Kay Hagan, a legislator in my home state of North Carolina who is running for U.S. Senate. It is a race that the pundits and politicians had previously ignored, but no longer: Last week the Washington Post<sup>1</sup> rated it as one of the most winnable Senate races for Democrats in the country.*

– Elizabeth Edwards in a MoveOn email

Since that day, MoveOn members generously contributed \$499,679.18 to help elect Kay Hagan to the Senate. But it wasn't just Hagan who wanted to turn North Carolina blue – our members kicked in almost \$179,000 to Larry Kissell's race in NC-08.

In the summer of 2008, we blanketed the state with an ad that reminded voters where John McCain and Elizabeth Dole stood on energy issues. The ad showed that these two candidates were literally in the “pocket” of Big Oil.



MoveOn blanketed North Carolina with this ad linking Elizabeth Dole and John McCain to Big Oil interests.

Read the Washington Post article ranking the Hagan-Dole race one of the most winnable in the country: [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thefix/2008/06/friday\\_senate\\_line\\_6.html?hpid=topnews](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thefix/2008/06/friday_senate_line_6.html?hpid=topnews)



# you want **change?**

Vote for **BARACK OBAMA** for President,  
but **DON'T STOP** there.

Vote for **KAY HAGAN** for US Senate

**BEV PERDUE** for Governor

**LARRY KISSELL** for US Representative District 8!

In September, we focused on new and young voters – a potentially powerful voting bloc in North Carolina. We just needed to get them all registered. We opened eight voter registration offices in the state and registered close to 44,000 new and young voters. As the election drew near, we reminded them online and in their mailboxes that change doesn't stop with Obama and that they had a chance to help him bring an "A-Team" – Hagan and Kissell – to Washington, DC with him.

In the final weeks of the campaign, health care emerged as a deciding issue in the race. In partnership with Health Care for America Now, we sent thousands of DVDs outlining John McCain's health care plan directly to the doorsteps of undecided voters, and reinforced that message with two weeks of television ads on the subject.

All told, MoveOn members gave \$3,069,502.97 to support candidates, run ads, send mail, and register voters in North Carolina.

**Almost 300,000 new and young voters received this postcard to encourage them to vote down-ballot in North Carolina. A similar one was sent in Oregon.**

Ad Title	Market	Gross Rating Points	Cost
Gimmick	Greenville – New Bern	501.3	\$32,700
Gossip Girl	Charlotte	68.4	\$29,500
	Raleigh	68.4	\$23,150
Pocket – Cable	Charlotte	128	\$24,540
	Greenville – Spartanburg – Asheville	553	\$5,652.50
	Greenville – New Bern	299	\$4,334.20
	Raleigh – Durham	126	\$27,940
	Wilmington	246	\$10,594
Pocket – TV	Charlotte	775.4	\$153,850
	Greenville – New Bern	775.8	\$52,449
	Raleigh – Durham	775.4	\$167,435
Fighter – Cable	Greenville – New Bern	92.4	\$12,391.95
	Greenville – Spartanburg – Asheville	316.2	\$75,378
	Norfolk – Portsmouth – Newport News	209	\$3,443
Fighter – TV	Charlotte	500	\$129,360
	Greensboro – High Point – Winston Salem	500	\$59,400
	Greenville – New Bern – Washington	750	\$85,800
	Raleigh – Durham	500	\$164,120
	Wilmington	750	\$42,240
	Asheville (WLOS only)	250	\$18,260
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8184.3</b>	<b>\$1,122,538</b>

Total of all MoveOn television ad buys in North Carolina since July 2008.

# ORGANIZING GENERATION OBAMA

Until 2008, people under 35-years old were the least organized cohort in politics. “Generation Obama” was more progressive than the general electorate – strongly against the Iraq war, strongly invested in fighting the climate crisis, and far more socially and culturally tolerant than generations past. Still there were challenges: because they move around a lot and mostly stick to cell phones, they were left out of organizations and traditional GOTV efforts.

MoveOn’s staff is pretty young, so we knew we needed to reach these folks where they live and congregate: online.

Organizing on Facebook and other networks added over one million new members to our ranks between June and September.

We ran fun and edgy ads speaking directly to this constituency and their ability to move others.



Stars of the popular TV show *Gossip Girl* warn young people to talk to their parents about the perils of voting for John McCain in this funny television ad.

And our groundbreaking and interactive “CNNBC” video – which allowed people to show their friends what it would look like if they single-handedly cost the election – is one of the most popular online political videos in history. By Election Day, it had been seen over 20 million times and sent to 15 million people. As one reporter noted:

*MoveOn’s groundbreaking “Make Sure All Your Friends Vote” viral video tool uses social peer pressure to encourage friends to vote. A study of a controlled experiment, published in the February 2008 issue of American Political Science Review, found social pressure to be the single most effective way of increasing voter turnout by mass communication.*

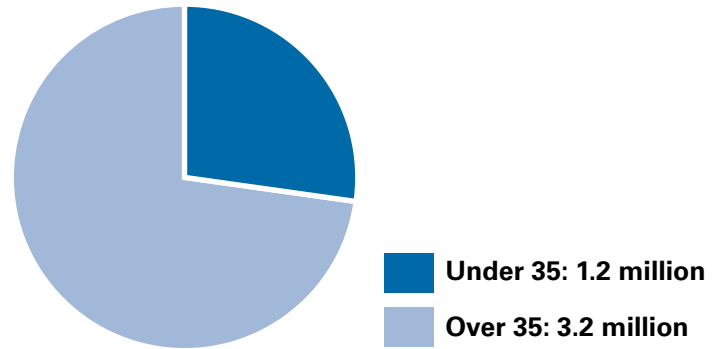
[http://www.r8ny.com/blog/alex\\_navarro\\_mckay/the\\_science\\_behind\\_moveons\\_nonvoter\\_campaign.html](http://www.r8ny.com/blog/alex_navarro_mckay/the_science_behind_moveons_nonvoter_campaign.html)



This innovative and funny video reminding people to vote for Obama was the most popular in MoveOn’s history.

Our program wasn't only online. Working with Progressive Future, MoveOn hired over 550 organizers in a program to register half a million young Obama supporters in key battleground states. These folks helped put Obama over the top in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and North Carolina. They were young, they were enthusiastic, and they were unstoppable.

### MoveOn Membership by Age

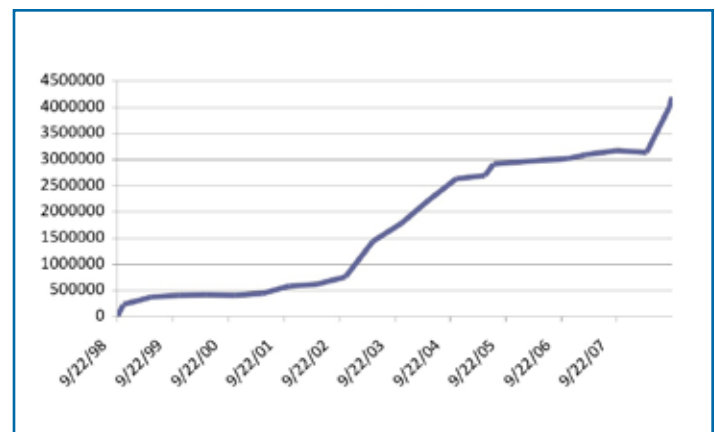


**Hundreds of thousands of young people joined MoveOn this year, bringing total membership to over 4.5 million – bigger than the National Rifle Association.**



**Young people get out the vote for Barack Obama in record numbers**

### MoveOn's Membership Growth Over Time



**Youth made up the bulk of MoveOn's million new members this year, most of them added since this summer.**

## CONCLUSION: LOOKING AHEAD

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As MoveOn looks ahead to what it will be like to work with a progressive Administration, we know in many ways our journey has just begun. Eli spoke about the road ahead to our members in a speech on Election Night:

I'm going to keep this short, because I'm not much of a speaker.

And in a way, that's kind of the point of MoveOn. It's not about me. It's about you – our members, who have made MoveOn everything it is.

This historic night is your night. Words can't do it justice, though I'm sure Obama's will come close. Our country, America, is back.

And this is your night. So I want to take a moment to remember where we've come.

Because when there are hundreds of thousands of people in Grant Park in Chicago, and millions of us working together in an unprecedented people-driven campaign, this whole change thing seems easy, and obvious, and inevitable.

But back in 2001 and 2002, it didn't feel that way. Try to remember. President Bush had an 80% approval rating. Democrats capitulated and caved at every turn. People were burning Dixie Chicks albums. The media was cheerleading the war. It was a scary time to speak out, to raise your voice.

But you did. We did, together. Because we love this country, and what it stands for, and we couldn't bear to see that destroyed.

In communities across the country, you stood up. We stood up. We found each other. We built a movement, and our voices got stronger. We talked to our neighbors, we enlisted our friends. And things began to change.

So I want you to remember that tonight wasn't inevitable. It wasn't destined to happen. It happened because people

stood up – people who didn't have lots of connections or money but who had a fierce desire for change were unwilling to let go of that hope no matter what.

MoveOn members, this is your night.

And it's a beautiful night. It's an amazing night. But it's not yet a victory.

The Presidency is in strong hands. But it's not a victory until we start putting people to work building the new, clean-energy economy. It's not a victory until we end the disaster in Iraq. It's not a victory until Americans everywhere who don't have health care can breathe easy because we've got them covered.

The last eight years was important. But the next eight are even more important.

And so we can't stop now. We mustn't stop now. If we sit down, if we go back to life as normal, if we stop fighting, it'll mean we failed to learn the lesson of the last eight years.

We can't wait for officials and the media to lead the way. We can't assume someone's got this covered. We have to take our fate into our own hands. That's the only thing that has ever changed things. It's the only thing that ever will.

And so I want to thank you for everything you do. Everything you've done. It's been the greatest honor of my life to work for you and with you.

But I especially want to thank you for everything you will do. Let's go rebuild America.

*MoveOn Executive Director Eli Pariser's remarks from election night.*