April 12, 2017

Dear Delegate:

A lot has changed since John Burton was elected Chair of the California Democratic Party in May 2009.

But one thing that will never change is his aversion to taking credit. In fact, he’s often been heard repeating the quote: “It is amazing how much can be accomplished if no one cares who gets the credit.”

So, with his second term as Chair coming to a close, we’d like to shine a light on the work he’s done and let his record speak for itself (since he won’t).

“The Burton Legacy: Empower the Grassroots, Build for the Future” is an overview of our roadmap for Democratic success, a bedrock that the next CDP administration can use and expand upon to continue our progressive victories.

John Burton has shown it’s possible to stick to your core Democratic beliefs and still make huge electoral and policy gains. A liberal leader his whole life, he did it as Senate president pro tem, and again as the Chair of the California Democratic Party.

For the last eight years, our programs and decisions were guided by the grassroots, bringing liberal positions to the forefront, and prioritizing inclusivity in organizing and field programs.

As the heart and soul of the California Democratic Party, we encourage you to continue to engage in those issues that are most important to you – then translate that energy and commitment into even larger electoral and policy wins as we move forward.

We are excited about where our Party will go next with new leadership and many new staff, and we look forward to seeing you May 19-21 at the State Convention in Sacramento.

Shawnda Westly
SENIOR STRATEGIST

Angie Tate
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Chris Masami Myers
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
The Burton Legacy:
Empower the Grassroots,
Build for the Future
We believe that health care is a human right and support a single-payer health care system.

We support abolishing capital punishment.

We support criminal justice reform.

We support death with dignity.

We support $15 minimum wage and COLA.

We oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership on the grounds that it would continue the trend of offshoring American jobs and driving down wages.

We support a common sense ban on deadly assault weapons.

We endorse Black Lives Matter.

We support debt-free college and free community college.

We reject any attempt for new offshore oil or gas development, call for an immediate moratorium on fracking, support the closing of California’s last dirty nuclear power plant, and urge Congress to pass a comprehensive energy security and climate protection law.

We banned oil company donations to the California Democratic Party.

We oppose the top-two Primary.

We support overturning the decision in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission and to end the doctrine that money is speech, by Constitutional Amendment if necessary.

We advocate for extended voting hours and days, scheduling elections on weekends, or declaring Election Day a holiday.

We support tying the votes of “Superdelegates” to the popular vote in the presidential nomination process.

During Obamacare consideration, we opposed the workers’ excise tax in partnership with labor – and supported a public option.
When John Burton ran for CDP Chair in 2009, the one request we heard repeatedly at every grassroots event was: “communicate more with us.” So, we did.

**Monthly CDP Leadership Organizing Calls**

CDP staff from all departments were on hand to answer questions and receive feedback from Statewide Officers, Regional Directors, Caucus Chairs and County Committee Chairs.

**Election Organizing Calls**

During election season, we hosted at least two additional monthly organizing calls.

**Resolutions Transparency**

Instead of a paper system for submitting resolutions, we democratized the process by creating a webpage with all committee rules and regulations, as well as an online form for submissions.

**Committee Appointments**

To replace an insider process for committee appointments, we created an online form for members to request appointments, provide diversity information, and include a home residence in order to make committees as inclusive as possible.

**Answering Questions**

CDP Controller Hilary Crosby held an open Q&A with the membership for financial transparency questions at every meeting.

**Tips and Tools for County Chairs**

Regularly emailed an e-Newsletter with essential information to County Chairs and Officers.

**Online Dropbox for County Chairs**

Created an online system for County Chairs to more quickly and easily access information, including Party activities, filing deadlines, a Bookkeeping Best Practices manual, and more.

**Revamped the CDP Website**

Made it easier for staff to access information and find answers to their questions. Also provided a CDP Menu of Services for County Chairs and activists.

**Protected the Vote**

Under Burton’s Leadership, the Promote and Protect the Vote (P2TV) Program was approved by the State Bar of California to provide MCLE Credit to participating attorneys.

**Level the Playing Field**

To ensure fairness, Chairman Burton instituted a Party policy to not donate to candidates who are not yet CDP-endorsed for the office they seek, and not to donate in support or opposition of state measures unless the membership has endorsed a corresponding position.

**Committed to Accessibility**

Instituted CART (the closed captioning system) for General Sessions and provided sign interpreters at e-Boards and State Conventions. Also allocated ADA sleeping rooms at each meeting, ensured our General Session stage was accessible to those in wheelchairs, and retained an onsite ADA consultant to work with each venue.

**Election Wrap-Up Reports**

Following every election, we produced and provided a recap on our work for increased transparency. See: www.cadem.org/BurtonLegacy
Fixing the LA Turnout Problem
“Operation Game Changer,” our 2011 project, improved the turnout in Los Angeles by converting 50,000 Democrats to become permanent vote-by-mail voters. In 2012, during the fights to support Proposition 30 and oppose Proposition 32, these voters turned out at a rate 12% higher than others in the same voting pool.

It Gets Bluer
In partnership with the local grassroots, CDP increased Democratic Latino voter turnout in Fresno, San Bernardino and Riverside counties which led to pick up of legislative and congressional seats in 2012.

CDP Bounty Program
The Chartered Organization Voter Registration (Bounty) Program helps solidify our Democratic majority statewide and pushes our registration advantage into traditionally “Red” areas (available to volunteer efforts only).

County Voter File
We’ve given every County Committee their county voter file through funding of MOE (Mobilize, Organize and Elect) – and it’s paid in full through the end of 2017.

Doorhangers, Doorhangers, and More Doorhangers
Every election cycle, CDP produced, printed and provided free doorhangers to every county based on their stated needs. This was made possible through Controller Hilary Crosby’s DEM (Donate Every Month) program.

Mailed Slate Cards
In the General Election, the CDP financed and sent out statewide slate cards featuring endorsed state and congressional candidates and ballot measure positions – no matter if the candidate or measure could afford to contribute.

Electronic and Web Slate Cards
CDP created personalized digital slate cards generated by the voter’s address for both Primary and General Elections which were emailed out and available at www.cademvote.org.

BOOSTING OUR DEMOCRATIC FIELD ADVANTAGE

John Burton – the ‘crazy liberal’ former Senate President pro tem who moved the Party to the left – knows how to win. We boosted the tools, trainings and assistance for local grassroots activists, aiding the large gains state Democrats have made in the past few cycles.
We rebuilt the Party communications systems from the ground up, not only to raise small donor money, but also to advocate for issues and electoral politics.

**REBUILT AND GREW THE DEPARTMENT**

- Re-established California Democratic Party as the voice of California’s liberal conscience
- Launched regular communications with Party stakeholders
- Revitalized external communications with Party supporters and small-dollar fundraising
- Launched direct advocacy campaign so that Party activists could influence the state budget to protect the underserved
- Redesigned organizational brand elements, including a new CADEM logo, website, letterhead, collateral materials and social media properties
- Enhanced the Party’s online security
- Provided ongoing training, assistance and materials for grassroots social media teams to help local committees enhance and expand their social media footprint

**DIVERSIFIED OUR OUTREACH**

- Expanded Spanish language on the CADEM website
- Increased outreach and placements in Spanish-language media
- Launched first Chinese-language state Party website in the country (translation provided by our API Caucus)
- Updated and translated into Spanish our “Why We’re Democrats” brochure
- Created “Win Like A Girl” campaign to promote women working in California politics

**ENGAGED ELECTORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- Highlighted CA GOP’s dismal gubernatorial candidate choices during the 2014 election with an aggressive digital and earned media campaign called www.FightOnTheRight.com
- Increased targeting of GOP congressional swing districts at www.WrongForCalifornia.com
- Created personalized digital slate card for the primary and general elections at www.cademvote.org
- Launched “Digital Dems” program with regular strategy calls with grassroots Democrats for 2016 General Election
- Launched coordinated campaign website to include a full-featured calendar of Party events, display social media, list watch parties and host materials for county committees
When we arrived, we understood the funding burdens we faced were unsustainable. We made changes to make the transition smoother for the incoming CDP Chair:

- Reduced staffing to essential positions and eliminated unnecessary contracts
- Purchased building for our permanent headquarters in Sacramento – paid for in full – so there is no more monthly rent payment
- Renovated the new HQ building to be LEED Gold certified, including solar panels to bring down utilities overall cost – living our values
- Created collaborative workspaces for better communication; rooms for training, phonebanks, fundraising and events; and, provided expandable office space to meet staffing needs during campaign cycles
- Promoted healthier employees by providing shower facilities, private spaces for nursing, a baby changing station, and internal and external bike racks
- Expanded the DEM (Donate Every Month) program created by San Diego Dems to help fund the new statewide doorhanger program by Controller Hilary Crosby
- Provided our incoming Chair with a substantial reserve of federal funds, as well as funding the day-to-day CDP operations budget, through December 31, 2017
- Ensured all current contracts are paid in full, with no surprise debt on the books
- Settled a major lawsuit we inherited for a fraction of the cost: CDP violated a contract in response to an HERE strike at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in LA which claimed $260,000 in damages. The CDP settled the suit by paying $7,200 and securing a block of delegate rooms at the hotel for our 2010 LA State Convention. We also instituted a new standing force majeure clause to allow us the cancel meeting space if union terms are violated going forward.
- Established an additional legal fund for unforeseen issues as they arise
- Raised all CDP funds internally by the Chair and senior staff, eliminating the need to pay for outside fundraising consultants
- Paid for the County Voter file (MOE) through 2017 so County Committees will not see a break in service
PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

It all worked. In order to empower the grassroots, we must be on the same page politically, and this administration made it a priority that our activists have the tools and trainings to run programs and affect change. Our partnership with the grassroots made the following possible:

**POLICY SUCCESS**

- Passed the California DREAM Act to open the door for all students to attend college, regardless of their immigration status
- Repealed the Maximum Family Grant rule
- Expanded early care options for working families
- Boosted K-12 spending by $3,600 per student
- Built up the state’s rainy day reserve
- Raised the state’s minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2022
- Passed one of the nation’s strongest equal pay laws
- Boosted renewable energy sources like wind and solar to 50% and double the energy efficiency of buildings by 2030
- Prohibited discrimination against transgender people by companies doing business with the state
- Passed bills to prevent oil spills and strengthen the state’s response to future spills
- Passed the California Motor Voter Act to improve voter turnout
- Passed the Climate Change Pact together with the leaders of other states and countries to reduce greenhouse gases and promote clean energy
- Combated wage theft and ensure hardworking Californians are paid
- Expanded Medi-Cal to cover all children regardless of their immigration status
- Approved a 2015-16 state budget that increased per-pupil K-12 spending by $3,000, froze tuition costs at the UC and CSU systems through 2017, put billions of dollars into rainy day reserves, and expanded health insurance through Medi-Cal for children from low-income families, regardless of their immigration status
- Obtained health care for nearly 4 million uninsured Californians under the Affordable Care Act
- Approved issuing state driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants
- Implemented online voter registration, making it easier for Californians to register to vote
- Passed the Middle Class Scholarship, which slashed student fees at UC and CSU by up to 40% for families making under $100,000
- Passed the Homeowner Bill of Rights to help stop fraudulent foreclosures and predatory lending practices and repair the damage of the foreclosure crisis

**ELECTORAL SUCCESS**

- Took back the Governor’s House and kept it, despite being outspent 6:1
- Won all statewide offices and kept them (twice!)
- Won 2/3 of the State Legislature
- Kept the US Senate in Democratic hands
- Picked up 6 Congressional races in 2012, and another seat in 2014, and kept them all in 2016
- Passed the Majority Vote Budget measure to stop the state budget from being held ransom by Republicans
- Defeated an anti-labor proposition which would have taken away our voice
- Passed a tax to increase funding for our schools
- Passed a tobacco tax to increase funding for health and human services
- Passed Props 47 and 57 – two essential criminal justice reform measures
- Safeguarded California’s water supply to save money to protect schools and public safety services from budget cuts in future recessions
- Reduced Republican registration from 31% to an all time low of just under 26%, and increased our Democratic lead to a historic 19 points
- Helped 5 counties turn Blue – Fresno, Mono, Nevada, Riverside and Trinity – in under 8 years
“The California Democratic Party stands as a model of electoral success and cohesion...”

The New York Times

MAY 29, 2016