

UNITE HERE's Take Back the Senate Campaign: Georgia Runoff Election Report

UNITE HERE—a union of hospitality workers known for its [impressive ground game](#) that was key to turning Nevada and Arizona blue—credits conversations at the door for the historic Senate election victory of Reverend Rafael Warnock and Jon Ossoff in Georgia. UNITE HERE led a program with 1,000 of its members, mostly laid-off workers hit hard by the pandemic, to reach 1.5 million doors in the six weeks leading up to the Runoff Election Day in Georgia. UNITE HERE's effort was one part of a statewide coalitional effort that in all hit an unprecedented 10 million doors.

Over 1,000 of UNITE HERE's union housekeepers, cooks, dishwashers and airport concessions workers—who are mostly women and people of color—canvassed full-time in the Atlanta metro area and Columbus.

- **UNITE HERE knocked on over 1.5 million doors** as part of a larger 10 million-knock statewide effort to get out the vote for Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff.
- **Each day, union members had 15,000 face-to-face conversations** with Georgians about the runoff race.
- UNITE HERE ran the **largest union field program** in Georgia.
- UNITE HERE **identified and made voting plans with 250,000 voters** who supported the Democratic candidates.
- **76% of the voters UNITE HERE identified were Black; 87% were people of color.**
- UNITE HERE sponsored GOTAVI (**Get Out The African Immigrant Vote Initiative**) to train African immigrant hospitality workers to canvass and phone bank naturalized African immigrant voters. Its three leads and fifteen African canvassers reached out to 30,000 African immigrant voters in DeKalb County. The larger groups included Ethiopian / Eritreans, Nigerians, Liberians, Somalis, and Cameroonians and other French speaking West Africans.



A relic of Jim Crow-era policies aimed at diluting the influence of Black voters, Georgia's runoff elections have historically favored Republicans. Democrats struggled in previous Georgia runoffs to maintain participation among Black voters and other voters of color critical to their success. Members of UNITE HERE supercharged a program to reach those voters directly by mounting the largest door-to-door canvassing operation in its history, becoming a central figure in the multi-racial statewide effort that delivered the win for Democrats by hitting 10 million doors altogether.

In conversations with voters, UNITE HERE canvassers stressed the urgent need to take back the Senate. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, workers across Georgia have dealt with unprecedented job losses, a government response that has been "too little, too late," and loss of employer-provided healthcare.

"This victory means everything to me. It means the long hours and late nights of door knocking paid off. After being laid-off I put my mortgage on hold not knowing when I would be able to get back on my feet and provide for my family, but this victory gives me hope that change is coming," said Joyce Roberts of Atlanta, a UNITE HERE canvasser and member of UNITE HERE Local 23, who was laid off from her job as a banquet server at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta after 34 years.

OTHER FORMS OF VOTER OUTREACH

ORGANIC DIGITAL

UNITE HERE leveraged digital media strategy that showcased the canvassers and the issues animating the Senate runoffs in thousands of social media posts that appeared on UNITE HERE social channels in Georgia and national feeds using the #TakeBackTheSenate hashtag.

#TakeBackTheSenate Snapshot: November 28-January 15

- Estimated Reach: 6M+
- Impressions: 23.5M+
- Tweets: 3.5K+
- Contributors: 1.9K



EARNED MEDIA

Through a comprehensive earned media program, UNITE HERE was able to uplift and amplify the stories of hospitality workers left behind during the pandemic and inject substance into stories run by local and national media outlets about the issues driving voters to the polls. In so doing, UNITE HERE has been able to reclaim power for working people by illustrating the demands needed for themselves and their families.

COVERAGE

- Bloomberg Businessweek: [How the Democrats' Massive Georgia Vote Push Flipped the Senate](#)
- Washington Post: ['Always about him': How Trump's obsession with baseless election claims cost Republicans in Georgia](#)
- The American Prospect: [That Old-Time Southern Populism](#)
- Huffington Post: [How Democrats Learned From November And Won In Georgia](#)
- Truthout: [Grassroots Organizers Flipped the Senate and Are Ready to Take on the Democrats](#)
- NBC News Now: [Black Women in Georgia on Voting for Biden & What They Hope He Delivers](#)
- Washington Post: [Ahead of runoffs, civic groups in Georgia mount ambitious campaign to mobilize Black voters](#)
- Atlanta Journal Constitution: [Why the ground game matters even more in Georgia's Senate runoffs](#)
- Vanity Fair: ["It's Raining Change In Georgia": On The Road With The Candidates Who Could Turn Congress Upside Down](#)
- The Progressive: [How Unions Helped Georgia Flip the Senate](#)
- The American Prospect: [Labor Unions Battle for Working-Class Georgians](#)
- WSB-TV: [Georgia group plans to knock on 1 million doors to help elect Ossoff, Warnock](#)
- Huffington Post: [Black Voter Backlash To Attacks On Raphael Warnock Gives Democrats Hope In Georgia](#)

