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Grassroots Organizations Using Social Media as a Lobbying Technique

By

Samantha Vo

Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Claremont Graduate University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in American Politics.

We certify that we have read this document
and approve it as adequate in scope and
quality for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Introduction

Grassroots organizations provide a way for communities to interact and form around topics through grassroots lobbying and direct lobbying. As the 21st Century is referred to as the Digital Age, many grassroots organizations have found it necessary to expand on their lobbying techniques. Rather than utilizing methods like traditional media, email, phone calls, or text messages, methods involving social media are becoming more prominent as society continues to advance. Social media is a distinctive part of the Digital Age, and as the usage of social media increases in popularity, it can be used to reach a large population of people.

The importance of lobbying has long been recognized in the political atmosphere. However, as society continues to advance and with the growing number of individuals online, people involved in nearly any kind of political or organizing work may spend a substantial portion of their time engaging and communicating on social media networks. Lobbying via social media entails fostering community in a new environment. However, grassroots organizations need to recognize that expanding on lobbying techniques is an essential element of recognizing a changing and challenging mediascape that fluctuates rapidly and draws narratives from the grassroots level to the frontline.

This research seeks to understand in what nature social media is being used by grassroots organizations, why grassroots organizations are using social media for lobbying, and how social media can be an effective tool for grassroots organizations. As a result, this research hopes to

provide insight as to when, why, and how grassroots organizations should utilize social media as a lobbying technique.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Grassroots organizations and lobbying

Grassroots organizations or “grassroots innovations” as described by Seyfang and Smith (2007), are networks of activists and organizations (p. 586) that use collective action from the local level to effect change at the local, regional, national, or international level (Bettencourt, 2019). Established methods of grassroots lobbying are recognized as traditional media, email, phone calls, and text messages carried out through mass mobilization. Common techniques of direct lobbying are acknowledged as direct, face-to-face, or one-on-one communications with a legislative body or state legislative through meetings, phone calls, and any verbal or written communications (Ballotpedia, n.d.; Dorn Policy Group, 2021; Duke Government Relations, n.d.; Kanitra, 2017; Sivaraj, 2020; Verma, 2020). Past studies have primarily focused on traditional methods and often do not identify social media as a new, modern method for grassroots and direct lobbying (Bergan, 2009; Hunter et al., 1991; Schlozman & Tierney, 1983). Newer studies discuss social media usage in other areas, like communication journals (Özkent, 2022), government (Bryer, 2020; Mergel, 2013; Mergel, 2017; Wukich, 2022), political and social movements (Berntzen et al., 2014; Manzoor, 2016), and even the barriers of digital activism for citizens (Dumitrica & Felt, 2019). Current research has yet to cover grassroots organizations' utilization of social media and its impact.

Legislative policy can be influenced from the inside and the outside. Inside lobbying is “based on direct exchanges with policymakers through ‘private’ communication channels (emails, letters, meetings, etc.)” and aims to exchange information perspectives to influence

policymakers. Outside lobbying “uses ‘public’ communication channels (media, social media, events, etc.)” and aims to raise awareness to broader audiences that can influence policymakers to take action (Holdorf, 2020). Both inside and outside lobbying have their approaches to achieving lobbying objectives and pros and cons. Grassroots organizations interested in using social media as a lobbying technique should utilize Holdorf’s 4 Factor Questionnaire to understand when outside and inside lobbying should be used: 1) Is your issue already in the public domain or is there a chance that it will gather attention in a relevant audience? 2) What is the policy context for your issue? And what do people think about your issue? 3) Are you a part of a wider coalition and how does the coalition look like? 4) What is the institutional context for your issue? And are there any situational factors? Depending on how one answers Holdorf’s 4 Factor Questionnaire, an inside or outside lobbying channel may be better suited, and in some cases, both may be utilized together for successful lobbying. Holdorf’s study of inside and outside lobbying adds to the overall understanding of when, why, and how grassroots organizations should utilize social media for lobbying.

1.2 Social media engagement

To continue the discussion of social media and its usage in this research, social media engagement must be defined. Engagement can be defined as following, liking/favoriting, replying/commenting, sharing/reposting, viewing media, and link clicks (Barger et al., 2016; Muntinga et al., 2011; Oh et al., 2017; Oviedo-García et al., 2014; Peltier et al., 2020; Rietveld et al., 2020; Schivinski et al., 2016). The most significant model to understand social media engagement in the context of this research is the Consumer Online Brand Related Activities Model (Schivinski et al., 2016). This model “differentiates between three levels of social media engagement: consumption, contribution, and creation. Consumption constitutes the minimum level of engagement and is the most common brand-related activity among customers (e.g., viewing brand-related audio, video, or pictures). Contribution denotes the response in peer-to-

peer interactions related to brands (e.g., liking, sharing, commenting on brand-related contents). Creation is the most substantial level of the online brand-related activities that occur when customers spontaneously participate in customizing the brand experiences (e.g., publishing brand-related content, uploading brand-related video, pictures, audio or writing brand-related articles)” (Schivinski et al., 2016, as cited in Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). Grassroots organizations need to understand what social media engagement means because engagement is influenced by the content being consumed, and the content that grassroots organizations put out needs to align with their goals.

1.3 State legislatures and social media

A research study by Straus (2018) examined the adoption of social media by members of Congress. He was able to find that congress members “have been using social media since at least 2009, when the first Representatives and Senators adopted Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Today, nearly all Members of Congress have Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube accounts, and many have also registered official accounts with other social media services”. Straus focused his report on how congress members adopted social media. There is room for future studies to measure how social media usage impacts the effectiveness of communicating with constituents in terms of pushing policy and legislation. Additionally, research on social media within politics can extend into other areas outside of Congress, such as within grassroots organizations and lobbying. While it is important to understand how social media is being adopted within the political atmosphere, those within the political space need to also understand how to best adapt social media to effectively meet their objectives.

Another report, by Kessel et al. (2020), looked at the audience engagement of congress members that have adopted social media platforms. The report was able to find a few key themes significant to this research: 1) 10% of the most followed members in the 116th Congress

received the bulk of audience engagement; 2) certain terms and/or phrases are common among members of one party; 3) lawmakers' social media posts engagement has fluctuated over time. Kessel et al.'s research also found that terms like "equal pay", "gun safety", "LGBT", "workers' rights", and "violence prevention" were more commonly mentioned by Democrats, and terms like "pro-growth", "bureaucrats", "unborn", "illegal immigrant", and "pro-life" were more commonly mentioned by Republicans. This study could expand on its finding by looking to see what kind of engagement resulted from the mentioning of specific phrases and if any of the social media posts directly mentioned a specific topic, legislation, or policy as well. Research on the importance of social media usage as a way to engage with the public could additionally expand upon how social media platforms can be adopted within the political environment. Understanding what keywords attract an audience and create engagement is one of the first steps for grassroots organizations to build a network that can lead to effective lobbying.

In 2021, Russell examined senators' Twitter communication, the dynamics that shape it, and the agendas that arise. Her study found that when senators communicated public priorities, it offered "a necessary tool for understanding how senators link their carefully crafted public image with potential voters". What was most interesting in this research was that state legislatures acted as congressional entrepreneurs by leveraging the Twitter platform to connect with their constituents and bring attention to their policy priorities and legislative activity. This behavior is important for grassroots organizations to consider in the social media space if they are to work alongside state legislatures and communicate with constituents as well. The understanding of how social media works within the political space and why some bodies or organizations choose to use it over other methods of communicating can be further expanded upon in research. Grassroots organizations should consider how to leverage different social media networks to connect with their state legislatures and the general public to push their policy priorities and legislative concerns.

1.4 General public and social media

As we see members of Congress utilize social media as a form of communicating with constituents, we can also see how the platform “has come to play a bigger role in how Americans get political news and information” (Anderson, 2015). As more voters use cell phones and social media platforms to follow election news and receive political information—28 percent of registered voters in 2014, up from 13 percent in 2010—it is clear that social media can be used to effectively mobilize volunteers and voters (Smith, 2014a). These findings support why grassroots organizations need to use social media platforms as a form of lobbying constituents. If the general public is already looking to social networking sites for their news and to connect with politicians, then the opportunity for grassroots organizations to further engage with the general public also exists. Grassroots organizations utilizing social media will be able to expand on how information and resources are shared within their network, essentially leading to more opportunities to provide the general public with ways to reach state legislatures.

A survey conducted in 2015 by Anderson found that “35% of registered voters who use social media to follow a political candidate say a major reason is that it makes them feel more personally connected to politician or group” and another “26% say that the information they get via a politician’s social networking site is more reliable than what they get from traditional news organizations”. Smith’s (2014a) findings closely link digital politics with other forms of campaign engagement, specifically that “16% of registered voters who follow political figures on social media participate in various traditional campaign activities at high rates—from volunteering and donating money, to encouraging others to get out and support their preferred candidates and causes”. Grassroots organizations can take this critical finding as a reason for how grassroots and direct lobbying would work on social media platforms. On any social networking site,

grassroots organizations could share call-to-actions with the general public or directly target a politician to pass legislation that they are pushing for.

Additional research from Smith (2014b) was able to connect social media as a platform for political engagement by measuring political engagement by social media users: like or promote political content (38 percent), encourage others to vote (35 percent), post own comments on politics (34 percent), repost others' political content (33 percent), encourage others to take action (31 percent), post links to political articles (28 percent), belong to a political group (21 percent), and follow candidates/elected officials (20 percent). These research findings are important in bridging the gap for grassroots organizations to understand how lobbying on social media platforms could increase their efforts through the political engagement of social media users. Grassroots organizations would additionally be able to expand their network and reach a larger audience by being actively present on social media.

1.5 General public's perception of social media and social movements

A survey in 2018 by Anderson et al. found "that majorities of Americans do believe these sites are very or somewhat important for accomplishing a range of political goals, such as getting politicians to pay attention to issues (69% of Americans feel these platforms are important for this purpose) or creating sustained movements for social change (67%)". However, the survey also notes that "a majority of Americans think social media help give a voice to underrepresented groups, but a larger share says they distract from more important issues". While this survey by Anderson et al. provides valuable insight as to the public's perceptions of political participation through social media, the participants of the survey were answering only based on opinion and without any evidence being provided to them to show both the positive and negative effects of online activism.

In 2020, a newer study was published by Auxier and McClain, which found that “Americans’ views on some of these issues are statistically unchanged since 2018” and that “there has been no notable change in people’s views about social media helping to give a voice to underrepresented groups, highlighting important issues and distracting people from important issues”. It would be interesting to see this survey expanded to allow surveyed participants to decide if the presence of grassroots organizations lobbying on social media platforms is making a difference, highlighting important issues, and/or helping underrepresented groups have a voice.

1.6 Why we need social media to reach younger audiences

As the 21st Century continues to advance digitally, it becomes increasingly crucial for grassroots organizations to be able to reach the younger generation where they are. A survey in 2020 by Auxier found that “experiences and attitudes related to political activities on social media vary by race and ethnicity, age, and a party”. For example, grassroots organizations can see the need to meet the younger generation where they are because “over half of social media users ages 18 to 29 (54%) say they have used these sites in the past month to look for information about rallies or protests happening in their area, compared with 36% of those ages 30 to 49, 26% of those 50 to 64 and 20% of those 65 and older”. Younger social media users consider social networking sites to be essential for certain types of online activism. While traditional methods of lobbying may work on older generations, newer, modern methods of lobbying may not be as effective for grassroots organizations to reach the growing audience of the younger generation.

In Ruth Milkman’s research, she built on Karl Mannheim’s theory of generations and “argues that U.S. Millennials comprise a new political generation with lived experiences and worldviews that set them apart from their elders” (2017). According to a 2016 Gallup poll, 30%

of Boomers rely primarily on television and other “old”, traditional media, compared to 71% of Millennials who rely primarily on the Internet for “news or information about national and international issues”. Lowering the costs of organizing, collective action, and mobilization, the Internet had become an important tool for political activists by the late 1990s (Earl & Kimport, 2013). It is important to note that while social media can be utilized by grassroots organizations as a newer, modernized lobbying technique, its impact alone is not enough. Traditional forms of lobbying are still necessary for an impact to be made.

1.7 Social media is supplementary, not a replacement

The proposed research is critical for grassroots organizations because it could showcase how social networking sites will not replace traditional, in-person interactions, but instead supplement them. This should sway grassroots organizations that have not begun to utilize social media to consider it as an option for lobbying and building their network. Additionally, in Milkman’s (2017) research, she highlights four movements in which the use of social media platforms was critical: Occupy Wall Street, Dreamers, anti-sexual assault, and Black Lives Matter. While exploring the Occupy Wall Street movement, Manuel Castells looks at new forms of social movements and declares that the Occupy Wall Street movement “was born on the Internet, diffused by the Internet” (2018). Sasha Costanza-Chock (2011) was able to find that for many Dreamers, the lack of accessibility to a driver’s license made the utilization of social media crucial for the movement in regard to physical mobility being limited for many undocumented immigrants. In the anti-sexual assault movement, researchers Karasek and Dirks (Forthcoming) found that activists used social media sites to coordinate, mobilize, and provide a safe space for advocates, activists, and survivors to share their stories. Research by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016) found that social media networks were used in the Black Lives Matter movement to mobilize, recruit, and communicate internally. Milkman was able to discover that while these four movements “relied heavily on virtual network building, in-person meetings and other direct

interactions were essential for all of them as well” and as Milkman describes it, “social media and traditional media are often counterposed as alternatives, but they are not mutually exclusive; in practice, they often feed on and amplify one another” (2017). For grassroots organizations, it is crucial to recognize that while grassroots and direct lobbying can be communicated through social media, in-person, face-to-face meetings are just as important. In an interview with undocuqueer activist, Julio Salgado, they stated to Hinda Seif that “even if [they] post an image on Facebook, that’s not enough. We still need to be in physical contact, we need to gather” (2014).

Research in 2017 by Luis E. Hestres discusses interviews with several digital strategists of advocacy organizations that rely on social media services to engage with their supporters. The findings highlight the potential concerns that the proposed research believes grassroots organizations would have when utilizing social media networks as a lobbying technique. One of Hestres’ empirical findings was “the overwhelmingly instrumental view that strategists hold of private information intermediaries” (2017). However, the strategists “mostly regarded mass email as the killer app that drives actions such as petition signatures, donations, and event attendance, while social media serve as tools for rapid response to unfolding events, new supporter recruitment, and ongoing engagement with existing and new supporters through online communities”. Grassroots organizations must be aware of the pain points that come with utilizing social media as a lobbying technique, specifically involving censorship by the platforms themselves. Hestres’ research is specifically important because “the general attitude among respondents toward disruptions stemming from technical or policy choices of information intermediaries is to treat them as inevitable consequences of using these tools, to be sidestepped, hacked, or simply endured because ‘there’s nothing else like it’ or they see a need to ‘go where people are’”. The consensus of these interviews with digital strategists supports the proposed research because as the Digital Age continues to advance, it is important for

grassroots organizations to recognize that it is necessary for them to utilize social media as an additional lobbying technique. While there may be concerns that censorship on the platforms could delay the results that grassroots organizations wish to see, the concerns should be treated as an expectation of using the platforms at all.

1.8 Grassroots organizations and social media

Another example of how grassroots organizations should utilize social media as a lobbying technique can be seen in how grassroots social media fundraising has been put into action. Media Director at 18MillionRising.org (18MR), Cayden Mak, recalls how “in addition to doing outreach to field organizers and other activists in El Paso, [he] agreed to ride along to help run social media and broadcast to [their] audience and the public what [Jakara Movement organizers and 18MR] were doing, where [they] were, and what [they] learned” (2020). It was important to 18MR that as they shared the story of El Paso 37 with their members, there was also a way for members to engage while they were on their journey. As a result, a “petition to ICE calling for the release of the detainees and the ability to pursue their asylum cases” and a fundraiser to help offset the costs of the trip were shared with their members on social media. Mak found that it was because of 18MR’s social media membership that “nearly all the money was raised off social media asks”. 18MR was able to build a successful social media campaign that collected petition signatures and received donations. However, Mak emphasizes that “organizers and groups need to be invested in cultivating relationships with their base and think strategically about building narratives about their projects and programs” because “effective use of social media takes an investment of effort over time, an understanding of your online stakeholders, and a commitment to a shared culture of action”. Grassroots organizations should follow in the same way by using social media as a lobbying technique to have an effect on legislation and engage with lawmakers and communities, as well as developing their existing community and expanding their outreach.

1.9 Existing social media frameworks

Highlighting what Mak was emphasizing, a research study in 2013 by Guo and Saxton “facilitates theory building by proposing a three-stage pyramid model of social media-based advocacy: reaching out to people, keeping the flame alive, and stepping up to action” (2013). Essentially, the stages describe how an organization’s first priority is to inform, bring awareness to, and reach out to users of social media. Then, from there, the second priority is to keep the audience of interested parties and supporters on the social media platforms. Lastly, the third priority is to mobilize the audience that the organization’s online presence has developed through call-to-actions. Figure 1 showcases this three-stage pyramid model of social media-based advocacy is crucial for grassroots organizations to understand, as it highlights how social media as a lobbying technique should be employed. Grassroots organizations interested in this proposed research will not only learn how social media will change how they engage in lobbying work and with communities and why it is necessary to utilize social media as a lobbying technique but also how to use social media properly and effectively as a lobbying technique that will create the wanted outcomes.



Figure 1. Pyramid model of social media-based advocacy (Guo & Saxton, 2013)

A model for social media use by grassroots campaigns and social movements, shown in Figure 2, explains how social media use matures. It can be seen that “use starts with informing the users/supporters, while building the network. The network is then mobilized, asked to disseminate information to friends and even take part in physical events. The third stage is when social media is used to interact among the users to plan and coordinate the campaign” (Berntzen et al., 2014). Understanding how to build a network within the digital space is vital to utilizing social media as a lobbying technique as it creates a set of steps that can be used as a guideline for successful lobbying. Grassroots organizations interested in utilizing social media as a lobbying tool can plan content that informs, mobilizes, and interacts with their intended audience on social media.

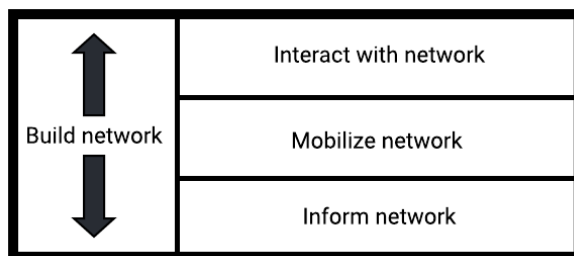


Figure 2. Maturity of social media use (Berntzen et al., 2014)

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 has presented the review of related literature to this research. This chapter will present this study’s methodology for the collection of data. This research aims to provide a thorough examination of the literature on lobbying and industry tactics, and thus a conceptual framework for social media advocacy through content analysis. The qualitative findings of this study will be useful to grassroots organizations for creating better legislative practice in the digital space, as well as provide insight on how grassroots organizations can improve public engagement among state legislatures and the general public. In the next sections, this chapter

will discuss the research questions, research framework, data collection, data analysis, limitations, and summarize the chapter.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what nature is social media being used by grassroots organizations?
2. Why are grassroots organizations using social media for lobbying?
3. How can social media be an effective tool for grassroots organizations?

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

This research looks for grassroots organizations' posts, especially regarding specific legislation, and collects the data to be analyzed. The qualitative data is collected, and a content analysis is conducted by observing different grassroots organizations' social media presence. Looking specifically at social media posts from different grassroots organizations, data will be analyzed and compared to existing research by Guo & Saxton's research methodology on nonprofits' social media advocacy (2013) and Berntzen et al.'s maturity of social media use (2014). The data collected additionally looks at social artifacts and media in terms of engagement analytics. Specifically, unique keywords that mention legislation are searched on social media networks and the engagement insights are recorded. The content within the posts made by grassroots organizations will also be analyzed to see in what nature social media is being used by grassroots organizations in hopes of understanding why grassroots organizations are using social media for lobbying. Data collected on engagement will showcase how social media can be an effective tool for grassroots organizations.

The qualitative findings of this research then go through a content analysis made up of a criterion that observes 18 things each social media post does or does not contain. The content

criteria guide is: 1) Advocates for a policy change; 2) Urges a specific policy position; 3) Includes data; 4) Urges mobilization; 5) Mentions a specific policy proposal; 6) Highlights positive/negative ramifications of the policy; 7) Tags targeted government officials in the caption/photo; 8) Tags original content creators in the caption/photo; 9) Tags organizations in the caption/photo; 10) Uses generic hashtags; 11) Uses branded hashtags; 12) Uses specific policy hashtags; 13) Organization-aligned content; 14) Shares organization-aligned resources; 15) Reaches out to people/Informs the network; 16) Keeps the flame alive; 17) Steps up to action/Mobilizes the network; 18) Interacts with the network. The collected qualitative findings are made up of a broad range of different social media posts in order to understand the nature of grassroots organizations using social media, why and when social media would be used as a lobbying technique, and how social media is an effective tool to grassroots organizations. The criterion is then used to showcase any similarities between the collected qualitative observations of social media posts made by grassroots organizations. Specifically, by looking to see the methods in which grassroots organizations use social media to understand the full effectiveness of using social media as a lobbying tool.

2.4 Limitations

This research is constrained only to the state of California and its legislation. Public engagement metrics were available to be pulled from each social network platform, but access to these social media accounts would have been able to provide this research with more data and insight on other engagement metrics as not all platforms have the same insight metrics available that could show how many times links were clicked or how many times a post was shared. While this research can show that grassroots organizations' utilization of social media acts as a complementary tool to lobbying, it cannot be fully confirmed that the legislation was passed due to social media usage by grassroots organizations because there exist too many external variables that are not included in this study.

2.5 Summary

The methodology for data collection for this study was provided in Chapter 2. The chapter addressed the research questions, data collection and analysis, and its limitations. In Chapter 3, the findings of the research are presented, and the conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for future research are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Findings

3.1 Introduction

Three research questions were attempted to be answered in this study: 1) In what nature is social media being used by grassroots organizations? 2) Why are grassroots organizations using social media for lobbying? 3) How can social media be an effective tool for grassroots organizations? Together, the answers to these research questions provide an understanding as to when, why, and how grassroots organizations should utilize social media as a lobbying technique. By observing the qualitative contents of different grassroots organizations' social media presence, posts, and content mentions of specific legislation, this research can explain in what nature social media is being used, why social media is being used for lobbying, and how social media can be an effective tool for grassroots organizations. Focusing specifically on existing research by Guo & Saxton and Berntzen et al., the findings of this research use the Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy (2013) and the Maturity of Social Media Use Model (2014) to provide a theoretical explanation as to when, why, and how grassroots organizations utilize social media as a lobbying technique. The collection of qualitative findings is presented through a content analysis that highlights the context of each finding and its significance to the overall research.

Guo & Saxton's Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy is made up of three stages. In the first stage, "Reaching Out to People", organizations are informing, bringing awareness to, and reaching out to social media network users. The second stage, "Keeping the Flame Alive", focuses on keeping the audience of interested parties and supporters on social media networks. Then, in the last stage, "Stepping Up to Action", organizations are mobilizing the audience that has been developed through call-to-actions. Berntzen et al.'s Maturity of Social Media Use Model is also made up of three steps to build a network throughout. Similar to the Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy's first stage, the first step of the Maturity of Social Media Use Model, "Inform Network" consists of informing users and supporters. The second step, "Mobilize Network", is similar to that of the Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy's third stage, "Stepping Up to Action", in which the network is mobilized and asked to share information with friends and attend rallies. In the third step, "Interact with Network", organizations are using social media to interact with other users to further their campaign through planning and coordination. The data collected within this research is organized into the different categories of stages and steps within Guo & Saxton's and Berntzen et al.'s frameworks to show when, why, and how grassroots organizations are using social media, specifically as a lobbying tool.

3.2 Content Criterion Guide and content analysis

A set of 18 criterion is put together to observe and analyze the research findings as a whole. Using content analysis, the data collected is qualitatively interpreted to understand social media usage by grassroots organizations and how it aids grassroots organizations as a lobbying tool. In Table 1, the criterion lists the 18 qualities that the social media posts collected may or may not have. In the first section, criteria numbers 1-7, focuses specifically on policy components such as the mentioning of a specific policy proposal, any call-to-action requests, inclusion of policy data, and more. Then, section 2, criteria numbers 8 and 9, notes if the captions or photos

within each post tags other social media accounts. Section 3, criteria numbers 10 to 12, highlights the usage of hashtags and the kind of hashtag that is used. A generic hashtag would be one that is general and is commonly used by any social media user, like #SocialJustice or #BlackLivesMatter. A branded hashtag would be one that is specifically used by the organization or is a representative hashtag for something the organization is known for, such as #ACLU or #HealingTogether. A specific policy hashtag would consist of the name of legislation or bill number, like #CRISESAct or #SB2. In section 4, criteria numbers 13 and 14 record if the post contains organization-aligned content and resources. Section 5, numbers 15 to 18 classify each observed post into Guo & Saxton’s and Berntzen et al.’s frameworks.

Table 1

Content Criterion Guide

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Figure Number	Advocates for a policy change	Urges a specific policy position	Includes data	Urges mobilization	Mentions a specific policy proposal	Highlights positive / negative ramifications of the policy	Tags targeted government officials in the caption / photo	Tags original content creators in the caption / photo	Tags organizations in the caption / photo	Uses generic hashtags	Uses branded hashtags	Uses specific policy hashtags	Organization-aligned content	Shares organization-aligned resources	Reaches out to people / Informs the network	Keeps the flame alive	Steps up to action / Mobilizes the network	Interacts with the network

By using the criterion found in Table 1, the observational findings of this research use content analysis to note the number of times each criterion is met and provides a percentage of the usage of each criterion to understand the nature of when and how social media is used by grassroots organizations. The following figures mentioned will have its content analyzed individually in the later sections of this chapter. In this section, the figures are analyzed in its entirety through the criterion in order to qualitatively review the research findings and answer the research questions. Each observational finding (Figures 3 to 53) is noted as Yes, No, or N/A for each of the 18 criterion. N/A is used as a signifier to note when a Figure cannot meet the criteria because the post is not related to policy (section 1), is unable to tag targeted government officials in the caption/photo due to its platform being a website (criteria 7), cannot tag the original content creators in the caption/photo due to being the original content creator (criteria 8), cannot use hashtags because of its platform being a website or use specific policy

hashtags because the post is unrelated to policy (section 3), and if the post is posted by a government official account in which the criterion does not apply due to being non-organizational or an informational announcement to intended audiences (section 4, criteria 7). This research finds that when grassroots organizations are not posting about policy change or specific policy proposals (18 N/As in section 1 for criterion 1 to 6), they are posting content that relates to their organizational mission and values. In some cases, these posts that align to their organizational mission and values may mention ideas and themes related to policy but do not always include specific policy proposals, policy positions, policy-related data, or urge for mobilization.

Table 2 provides a full view of the qualitative content analysis and is split up into sections by the indication of the dotted line to follow the order in which they are located within sections of Chapter 3. The asterisk noted beside Figures 10 and 45 signifies that the same post was recorded and is not counted twice within the content analysis. In the later sections, Figure 10 and Figure 45 will showcase the same post but the context that is highlighted is different. There is also an asterisk noted beside the account of the post for APSC (Asian Prisoner Support Committee) and SCS (Save California Salmon) because the posts are posted by directors of the grassroots organization, rather than by the grassroots organization itself. A content analysis of the qualitative research findings through the lens of the criterion allows for a better understanding of social media methods and strategies by grassroots organizations. In total, there were 50 examples collected, majority being social media posts and some being website observations.

Table 2

Content analysis of Figures 3 to 53

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Platform	Account of Post
Figure Number	Advocates for a policy change	Urges a specific policy position	Includes data	Urges mobilization	Mentions a specific policy proposal	Highlights positive / negative ramifications of the policy	Tags targeted government officials in the caption / photo	Tags original content creators in the caption / photo	Tags organizations in the caption / photo	Uses generic hashtags	Uses branded hashtags	Uses specific policy hashtags	Organization-aligned content	Shares organization-aligned resources	Reaches out to people / informs the network	Keeps the flame alive	Steps up to action / Mobilizes the network	Interacts with the network		
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Twitter	ABMoC
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Instagram	ABMoC
6	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Instagram	LEAP
7	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
*10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Twitter	ABMoC
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Twitter	APSC*
14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Twitter	APSC*
15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Twitter	SaP
16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Website	ABMoC
17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Website	ABMoC
18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Website	ABMoC
19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Website	ABMoC
20	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	ABMoC
21	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	ABMoC
22	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Website	ABMoC
23	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Instagram	CURYJ
24	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Facebook	CURYJ
25	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Twitter	ABMoC
26	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Facebook	ACLU
27	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Twitter	ACLU
28	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Website	ACLU
29	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Twitter	ABC
30	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	ALC
31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
32	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
33	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	AAP/WL
34	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	YJC
35	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	APSC
36	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	APSC
37	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	APSC
38	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	APSC
39	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	STOP
40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	ALC
41	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	VietRISE
42	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	APSC
43	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	APSC
44	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Instagram	STP
*45	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Instagram	ABMoC
46	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	No	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Twitter	Gov. Off.
47	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Twitter	Gov. Off.
48	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Twitter	Gov. Off.
49	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Twitter	Gov. Off.
50	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Twitter	SCS*
51	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Twitter	ICE Out CA
52	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Twitter	ICE Out CA
53	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Twitter	ICE Out CA

The results in Table 3 show that our findings met criterion 15 and 16 100% of the time, with criteria 17 being met at 66% and criteria 18 being met at 58%. Additionally, there is a preference for using hashtags that are branded (criteria 11, 50% yes) or specific to a legislative policy (criteria 12, 36% yes). Data is not often included in policy related content (criteria 3, 54% no), but regularly highlights the positive or negative ramifications of the policy being mentioned (criteria 6, 56% yes). This may be due to grassroots organizations modifying the policy related content to be easily digestible for online audiences and to attract more traffic to call-to-action links or organization websites for more information as many of the posts collected redirected social media users to click on a link or head over to the poster’s profile page.

Table 3

Content analysis count of Yes, No, and N/A

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Figure Number	Advocates for a policy change	Urges a specific policy position	Includes data	Urges mobilization	Mentions a specific policy proposal	Highlights positive / negative ramifications of the policy	Tags targeted government officials in the caption / photo	Tags original content creators in the caption / photo	Tags organizations in the caption / photo	Uses generic hashtags	Uses branded hashtags	Uses specific policy hashtags	Organization-aligned content	Shares organization-aligned resources	Reaches out to people / Informs the network	Keeps the flame alive	Steps up to action / Mobilizes the network	Interacts with the network
Yes	32	30	5	21	25	28	15	13	15	15	25	18	46	35	50	50	33	29
No	0	2	27	11	7	4	13	1	24	29	19	12	0	11	0	0	17	21
N/A	18	18	18	18	18	18	22	36	11	6	6	20	4	4	0	0	0	0
Yes	64%	60%	10%	42%	50%	56%	30%	26%	30%	30%	50%	36%	92%	70%	100%	100%	66%	58%
No	0%	4%	54%	22%	14%	8%	26%	2%	48%	58%	38%	24%	0%	22%	0%	0%	34%	42%
N/A	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%	44%	72%	22%	12%	12%	40%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%

As stated in Chapter 2, Section 4, the findings of this research were limited to the state of California and its legislation. With that in mind, majority of the collected data consisted of grassroots organizations operating within California. A total of 30 Twitter posts, 12 Instagram posts, 2 Facebook posts, and 6 websites were collected. The recorded findings showcase examples in which grassroots organizations cross-post the same content on all platforms in order to reach different audiences and broaden their network. Grassroots organizations are using social media to post about their legislative and policy efforts, as well as using it to update and inform their network and intended audience of what is happening within the grassroots organization and the community. Twitter is used as the dominant social media to share information on policy and urge for action to their network. It is also used to specifically target legislatures as part of their lobbying efforts. Instagram and Facebook are used to share more general organizational news to grassroots organizations' networks and audiences. Again, the asterisks beside APSC and SCS signify that the posts collected were posted by the accounts of

the directors of the grassroots organizations, rather than by the grassroots organizations themselves.

Table 4

Content analysis count of posts to each platform and by which organization

		ABMoC	19
		LEAP	1
		APSC	6
		SaP	1
		CURYJ	2
		ACLU	3
Instagram	12	EBC	1
Twitter	30	ALC	2
Facebook	2	YJC	1
Website	6	STOP	1
		VietRISE	1
		STP	1
		ICE Out CA	3
		APSC*	8
		SCS*	1
		Gov. Off.	4

The inspiration for this method of collecting research data and making qualitative observations of the findings was taken from King et. al's foundational piece, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (1994). When creating the Content Criterion Guide, King et. al's five guidelines for improving data quality were used: 1) record and report the process by which the data is generated; 2) to better evaluate a theory, collect data on as many of its observable implications as possible; 3) maximize the validity of our measurements; 4) ensure that data-collection methods are reliable; 5) all data and analyses should, insofar as possible, be replicable. During the search for appropriate content to analyze, social media posts were collected from different platforms, then recorded by account and number of posts collected overall by each account. Additionally, the process by which the data is obtained is reported to ensure that anyone could access the collection of social media posts. The research findings were ensured by checking to see that the social media posts could be accessed without an account associated with the platform and that the collected social media post came from a public account that could be viewed by anyone. This ensured that the data and analysis could

be replicable, reliable, and that there were more than enough observations to run through the Content Criterion Guide. Following King et. al's guidelines, this research collects data on all possible observable implications of the research questions, as well as notes all possibly observable implications through the extent of data collected, therefore also maximizing the validity of the Content Criterion Guide. When creating the different criterion within the Content Criterion Guide, this research chose to separate the criterion into sections because it allows for the data to be aligned with the research questions, allowing for the quality of the data to be improved.

3.3 Reaching out to people and informing the network

Grassroots organizations are reaching out to people and informing the network through social media. In cases of using social media as a lobbying technique, grassroots organizations are observed explaining legislation in content that is digestible for the general public to understand.

For example, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (ABMoC), shares posts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter about California legislation. In these posts, ABMoC explains what the legislation will do and how it impacts people. In Figure 3, ABMoC posted an Instagram carousel explaining why California needs a police decertification system, SB 2.

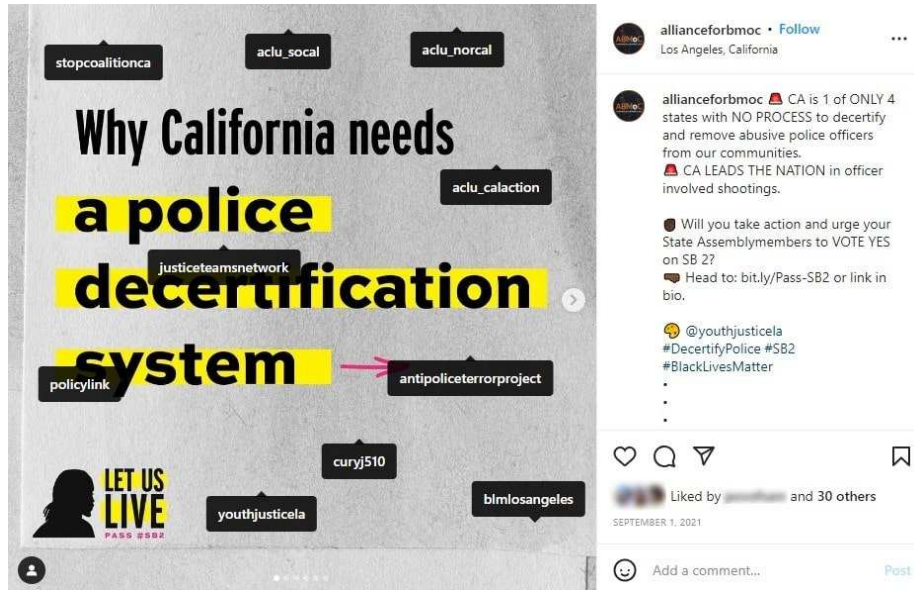


Figure 3. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, explaining SB 2

In another instance, ABMoC is reaching out to people by showcasing who they are and what they do. This is not only done through social media posts but also within their platform’s bios and profile descriptions. Figure 4 showcases an event in which ABMoC changed their Twitter profile picture and tweeted their new profile picture along with a caption explaining the organization’s purpose. Additionally, Figure 5 shows ABMoC’s Instagram bio, which informs the general public as to what the purpose of the grassroots organization is.

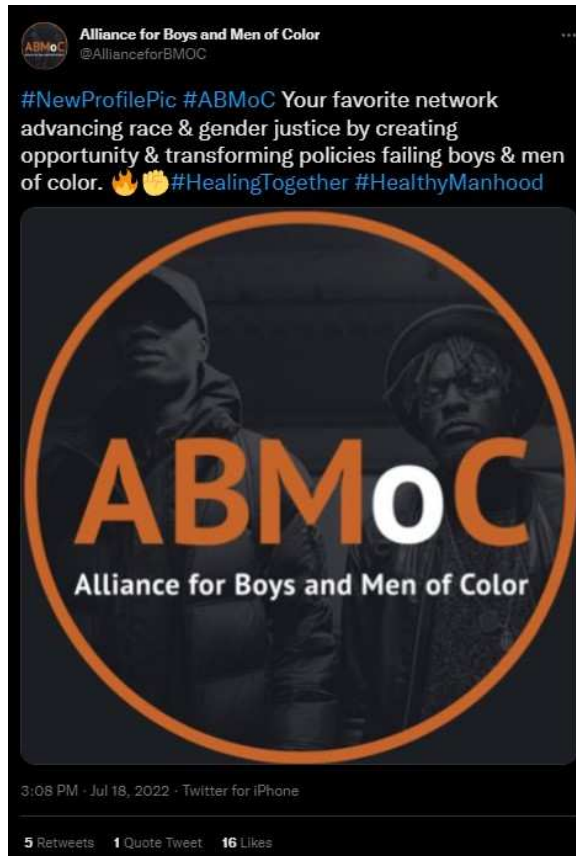


Figure 4. Twitter post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, reaching out to their audience



Figure 5. Instagram profile bio of Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

Law Enforcement Accountability Project (LEAP Action) reaches out to people and informs their network on police abuse and the murder of Black people through artistic expression. In Figure 6, LEAP Action shares a video reel on Instagram that shares statistics about how many people have been killed in 2022 so far. Through social media content like this, LEAP Action has been able to obtain over 32,000 Instagram followers and 10,000 Twitter followers.

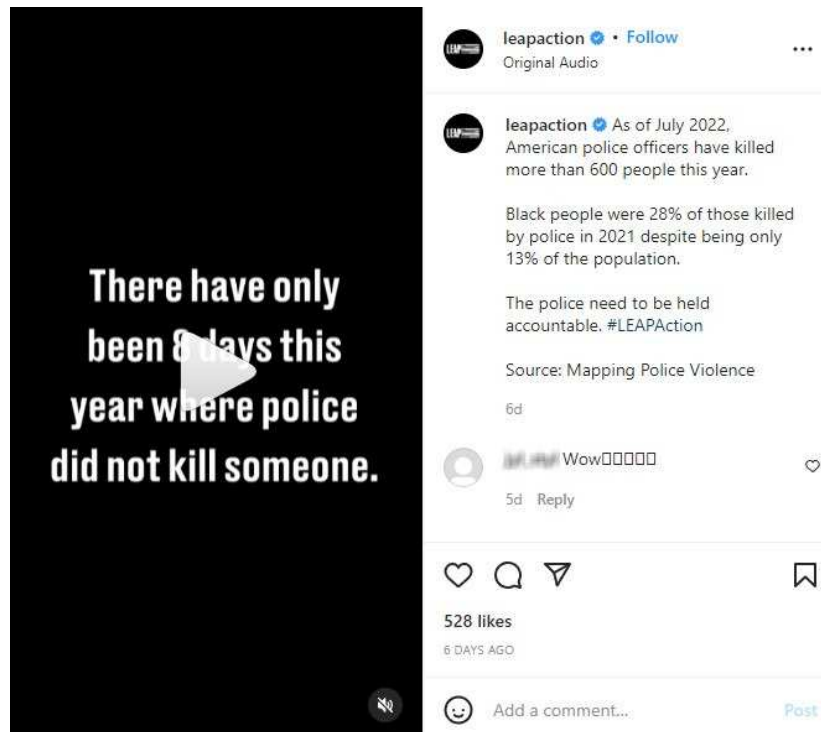


Figure 6. Instagram post from Law Enforcement Accountability Project, showing how to reach out to target audience

3.4 Keeping the flame alive

The momentum created by reaching out to the community and building a network is observed within the digital space for grassroots organizations as well. When the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color is not posting about their policy priorities, the grassroots organization is sharing content for boys and men of color. Whether this is through artwork; informational graphics; remembrances; or historical events and people, ABMoC is constantly providing content and resources that their community and network can relate to and find useful. Some examples of this are provided in Figures 7-12.



Figure 7. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, showcasing artistic content for intended audience



Figure 8. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, showcasing artistic content for intended audience

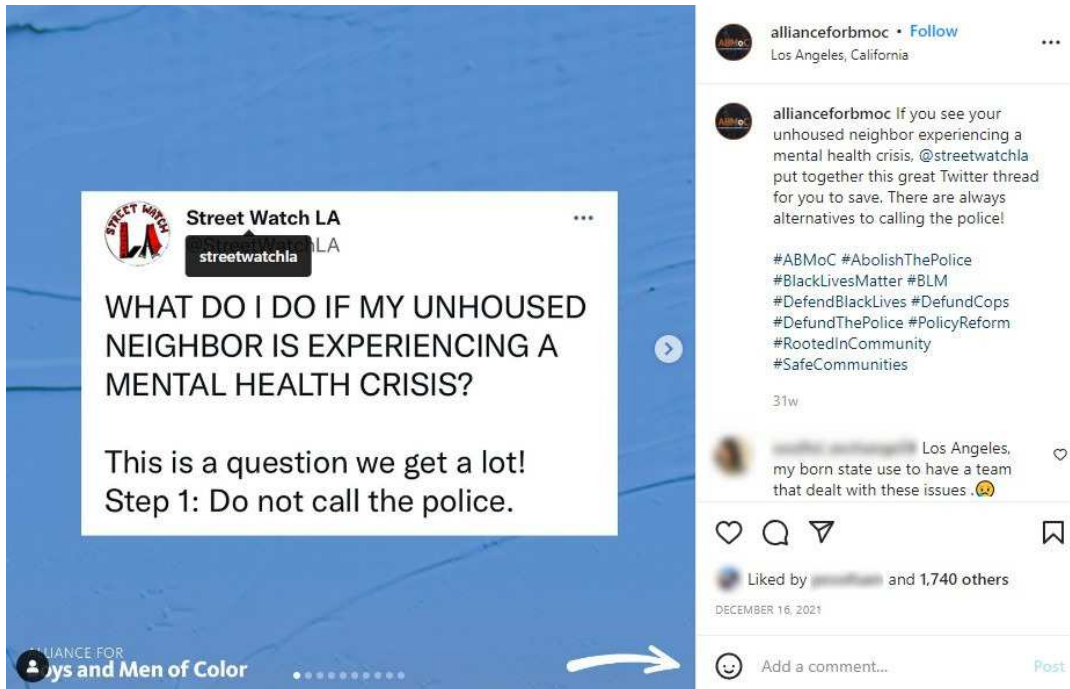


Figure 9. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, showcasing informational content for intended audience

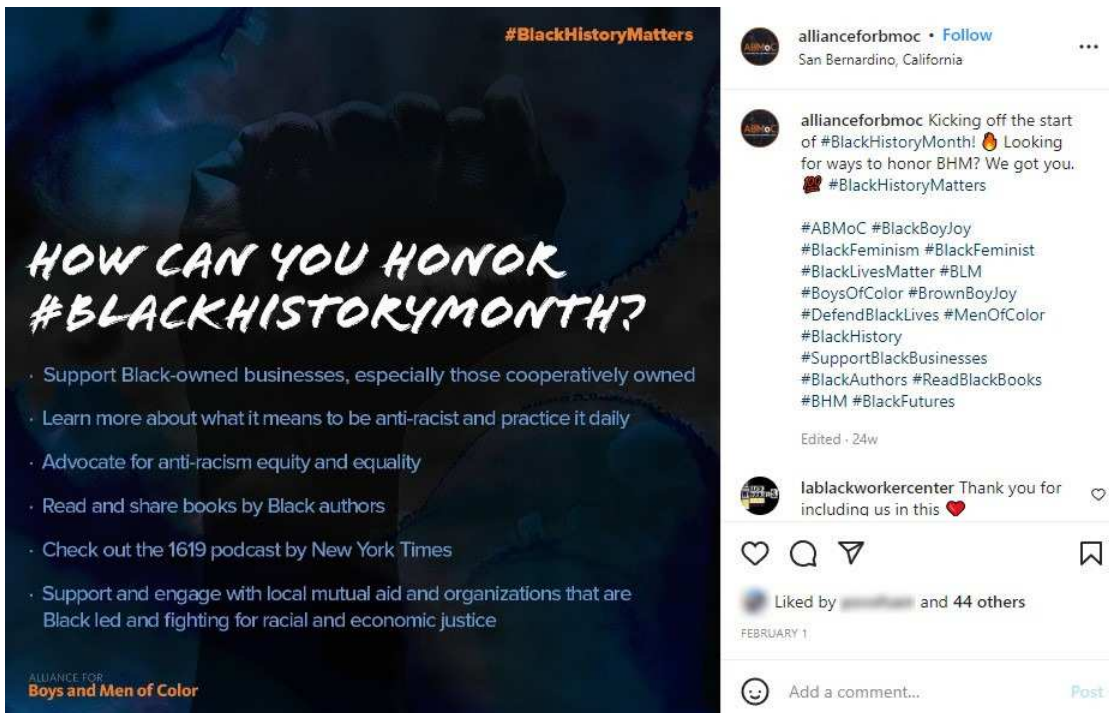


Figure 10. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, showcasing informational content for intended audience



Figure 11. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, showcasing remembrance content for intended audience



Figure 12. Twitter post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, showcasing historical content for intended audience

Grassroots organization leaders, such as the Co-Director of the Asian Prisoners Support Committee (APSC), also reach out to the community and keep the flame alive by telling personal stories that relate to their mission, values, and objectives. In Figures 13-14, we see

APSC's Co-Director share their personal story about incarceration, deportation, and gaining freedom. In doing so, the Co-Director could reach out to a broader network by highlighting APSC, ultimately introducing their followers to the organization and providing proof as to how network efforts have paid off so far.



Figure 13. Twitter thread from Co-Director of Asian Prisoners Support Committee, reaching out to the community



Figure 14. Twitter thread from Co-Director of Asian Prisoners Support Committee, reaching out to a broader network

In another example, Survived and Punished utilizes social media to share reports with their network and the community. The tweet, as seen in Figure 15, that shared a link to the report received over 200 retweets and 300 favorites. Resources like this help to keep the community that has been built engaged and expands upon the existing network.

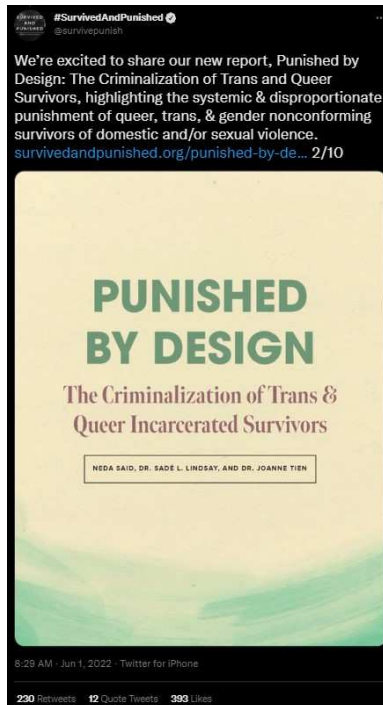


Figure 15. Twitter post from Survived and Punished, sharing resources with the network

3.5 Stepping up to action and mobilizing the network

Social media is being used as a lobbying tool by grassroots organizations through the use of call-to-actions. This has been seen by providing the general public with virtual town halls and informational meetings; in-person conferences and rallies; virtual petitions, automated pre-written emails, and call scripts. Again, in Figure 3, ABMoC's caption asks viewers if they will take action and urge State Assemblymembers to Vote Yes on SB 2 and provide viewers with a link to do so. Figure 5 also showcases a link that the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color provides to the general public and upon opening the link, the audience would be redirected to a website that hosts different resources such as an About page, a Policy Priorities page, a Links page, and a Resources page, which can be seen in Figures 16-19. This provides the network the ability to mobilize and step up to action. With constant, available, and direct access to the Policy Priorities page, ABMOC's network, along with the broader community and general public, can access different call-to-actions to assist with the grassroots work. For example, in Figure 17, we see that the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color has made automated pre-written email

forms readily accessible for Ending Cycles of Violence in California through a \$40.5 million budget and for AB 503, Ending Endless Probation. The site also hosts other call-to-actions such as toolkits that include graphics, pre-written captions, and the target audience to tag (i.e., state legislatures, co-sponsors, partners) for the general public and other community organizations to utilize by posting their content on the policies.

ABOUT

The Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

A national network of hundreds of community and advocacy organizations who come together to advance race and gender justice by transforming policies that are failing boys and men of color and their families and building communities full of opportunity.

STAY CONNECTED

INVEST IN THE ALLIANCE

ABMOC WEBSITE

Figure 16. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, profile link's About page

POLICY PRIORITIES

FUND CRITICAL SERVICES NEEDED TO END CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

Join us in telling CA legislators and Gov. Newsom to invest \$40.5M in safe and healthy relationships. Take 1 minute to email CA elected officials and demand they invest in ending cycles of violence.

SEND A MESSAGE ABOUT AB 503

It is time for CA to end endless probation and promote practices that support youth development and racial equity. Please join us by emailing your local senator and ask them to pass AB 503!

Senate Public Safety - End Endless
Probation: AB503
Social Media Toolkit

Virtual Power Hour

Figure 17. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, profile link's Policy Priorities page



A DOMESTIC-VIOLENCE HELPLINE FOR ABUSERS

If a perpetrator reaches out, it shows they want to do better. But what happens after they hang up?

Figure 18. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, profile link's Links page



Figure 19. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, profile link's Resources page

In Figure 20, ABMoC was a part of a coalition that worked alongside California State Senator Sydney Kamlager to actively ask social media users to share and sign a petition to pass the CRISES Act, AB 118, and call California Governor Gavin Newsom (Figure 21). The petition received over 800 signatures thanks to the work of organizers, the community, and advocates (Figure 22). Another organization part of the CRISES Act Coalition, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ), also shared a call-to-action for social media users on Instagram and Facebook to call the Governor's Office (Figures 23-24). In those posts, CURYJ also shared with their network that their Policy and Legal Services Manager hand-delivered posters and the signed petitions to the Governor's Office. Additionally, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color co-organized a rally, Figure 25, for the CRISES Act and invited social media users to join by posting about the event online.

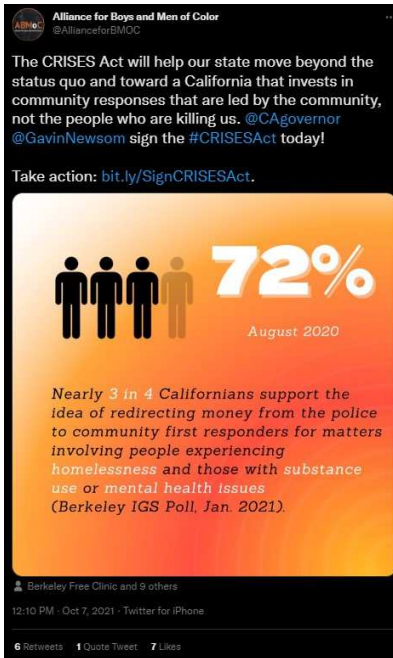
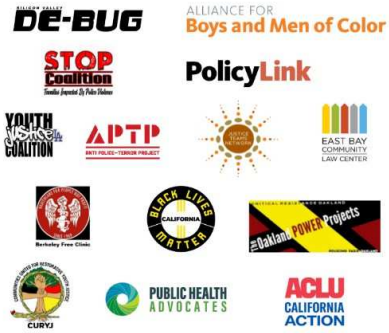


Figure 20. Twitter post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, CRISES Act Coalition, share and sign petition



Figure 21. Twitter post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, asking to make phone calls



Sign the #CRISESAct

821
Goal: 900


Will you take action to support community-based alternatives to the police?

Right now, the AB 118 - The CRISES Act is sitting on Governor Newsom's desk, and we need your support in ensuring that he signs the bill into law!

Figure 22. CRISES Act petition signature count



Figure 23. Instagram post from Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, using social media to share in person lobbying

 **Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice**
October 8, 2021 · 🌐

bit.ly/AB118CallGov

J. Vasquez, our Policy & Legal Services Manager is out in Sac today 📞 hand delivering petitions to make sure that @gavinnewsom signs the #CRISESAct into law. Today is the last day, and we're pushin with every bit of strength we got! 🙌💪

Will you help us by making a quick call to the governor's office? Only a few more hours to give police alternatives to those in crisis in CA. We do this for our Black & Brown fam in crisis so they can get the help they need safely!



CALL-TO-ACTION: URGE GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM TO SIGN THE CRISES Act | AB 118

Will you take action by calling Governor Newsom to ask him to support community-based alternatives to police?
> bit.ly/AB118CallGov <



The Governor must sign the CRISES Act within the next three days. Please call and leave a message or voicemail using this script.

My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am calling in support of the CRISES Act, AB 118 Authored by Sen. Kamelger. AB 118 will establish a grant program to fundamentally improve emergency responses for vulnerable populations in California, by strengthening, expanding and promoting community-based responses to emergencies. Please sign AB 118, the CRISES Act today!

Governor's Capital Office - (916) 445-2841

#SignTheCRISESAct



  5

Figure 24. Facebook post from Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, sharing in person lobbying action and asking social media users to make calls

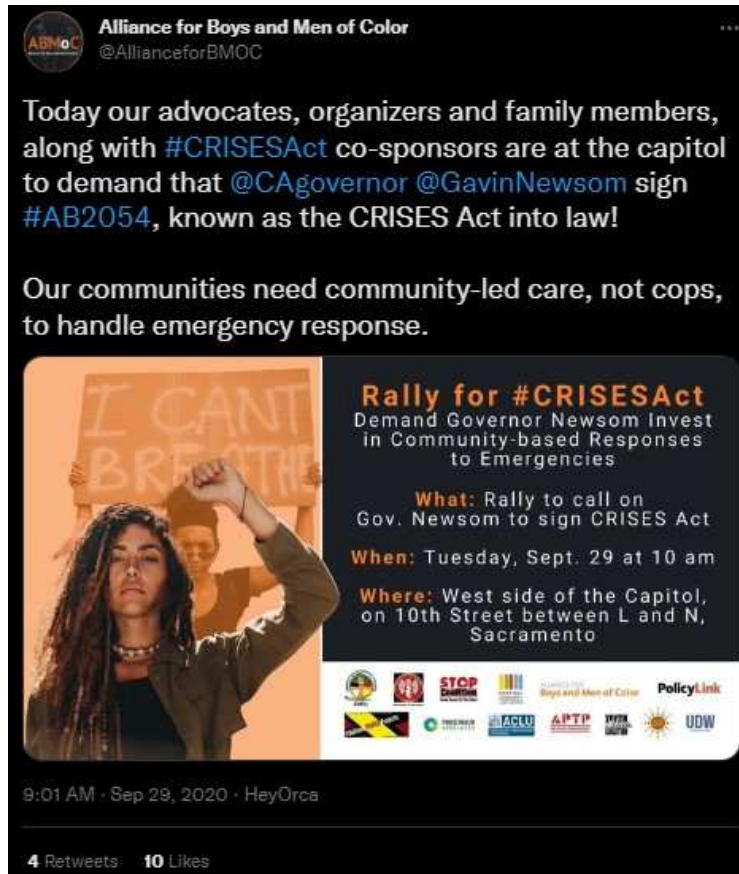


Figure 25. Twitter post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, sharing flyer online for CRISES Act rally

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) can also be seen using social media as a lobbying technique by mobilizing its network. In a post on Facebook and Twitter, ACLU asked for social media users to step up to action by signing a petition asking for Congress to end racial profiling. The posts received over 6,000 reactions, 400 comments, and 1,300 shares on Facebook (Figure 26); over 400 favorites, 200 retweets, and 50 comments on Twitter (Figure 27); and over 150,000 signatures on the online petition (Figure 28).

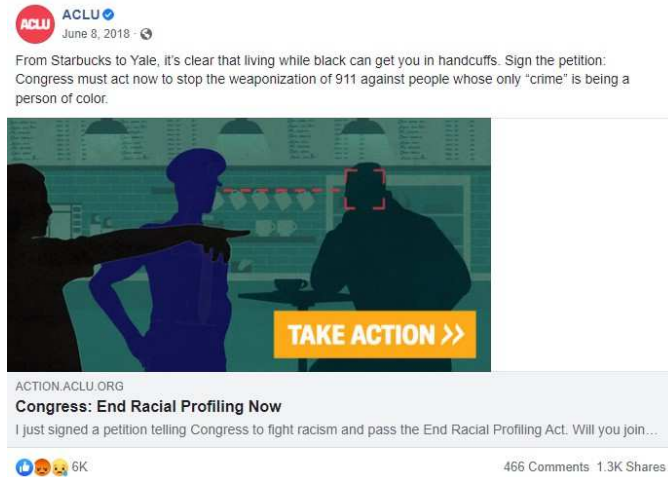


Figure 26. Facebook post from American Civil Liberties Union, using social media as a lobbying tool to mobilize its network



Figure 27. Twitter post from American Civil Liberties Union, asking social media users to sign a petition



DIVEST FROM THE POLICE. INVEST IN BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES.

The most recent eruption of protests across the U.S. – demanding justice for Daunte Wright, George Floyd, Dreazjon Reed, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and countless other Black people who have been killed by police – has laid bare what we've known for too long: **The policing institutions in our country are deeply entrenched in racism and violence, and we cannot allow it to continue.**

These inherently systemic issues require immediate and permanent solutions. That requires a bold reduction of the role police play in our society: **It is time to divest from law enforcement and reinvest in the Black and Brown communities they unjustly target.**

The ACLU is urgently committing to this broader, more profound fight – which Black organizers and Black- and Brown-led grassroots groups have been leading – and we need supporters like you to help achieve its critical goals. **Please add your name today in support of this vision and to receive further details and actions on how you can take part.**

Our plan for a new vision of 21st century policing will work to support

ADD YOUR NAME

158,902 Signed

200,000 Needed

Police violence against Black people must end immediately. I support the movement to drastically reduce the role, resources, and power of law enforcement and to reinvest in the communities they harm.

First name * Last name *

E-mail address *

Zip *

Phone

By completing this form, I agree to receive occasional emails per the terms of the ACLU's privacy policy.

If I have entered a phone number, I allow the ACLU, its state affiliates, and their respective representatives to call or text me about ways to take action and to support the ACLU organizations.

ADD YOUR NAME

Figure 28. End Racial Profiling petition

Other grassroots organizations such as Ella Baker Center and Asian Law Caucus, are also observed to use social media as a lobbying tool. In Figures 29-30, both organizations call upon their audience to take action and help by sending support letters and making calls to California Governor Gavin Newsom.



Figure 29. Twitter post from Ella Baker Center, asking social media audience to make calls

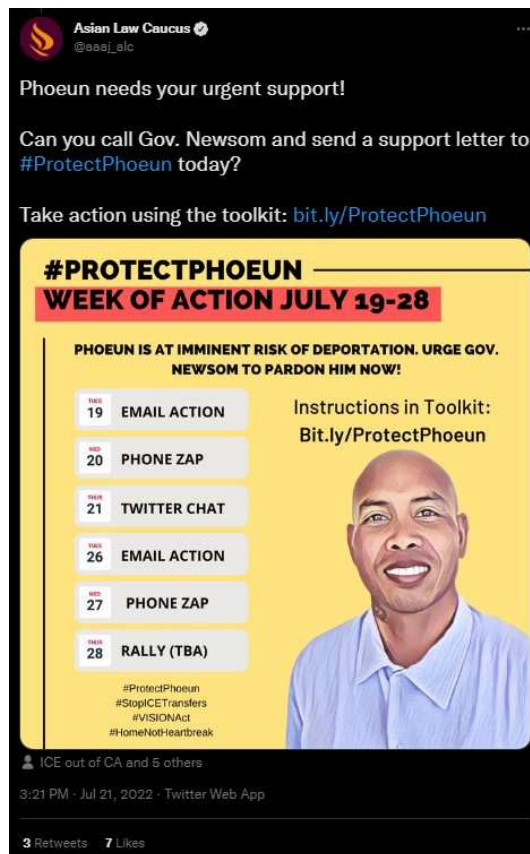


Figure 30. Twitter post from Asian Law Caucus, asking network on social media to use toolkit

3.6 Interacting with the network

Grassroots organizations are interacting with the network through the usage of social media. Whether it be through posts with open-ended captions, replying to tweets in which they are mentioned, or responding to comments on their posts, grassroots organizations are taking the time to interact with their networks.

For example, when the time came for ABMoC's Executive Director to move on to another career opportunity, a post went out to inform the network about this shift (Figure 31). Additionally, the network was again informed of ABMoC's new Executive Director through a social media announcement (Figure 32). The Alliance for Boys and Men of Color does social media interacting with their network very well, with the proof being in the numbers of more than 3,200 Instagram followers, 4,300 Twitter followers, and 3,000 Facebook Page likes!



Figure 31. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, informing network about leadership changes



Figure 32. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, announcing new leadership to community

Social media is constantly being used by grassroots organizations to interact with California Governor Gavin Newsom. In Figures 33-34, AAPI Women Lead and Youth Justice Coalition, use Twitter to directly call on California Governor Gavin Newsom by tagging him in their tweets. The tweets gain a lot of traction as they interact with the network by informing the general public about something that needs the attention of the governor.

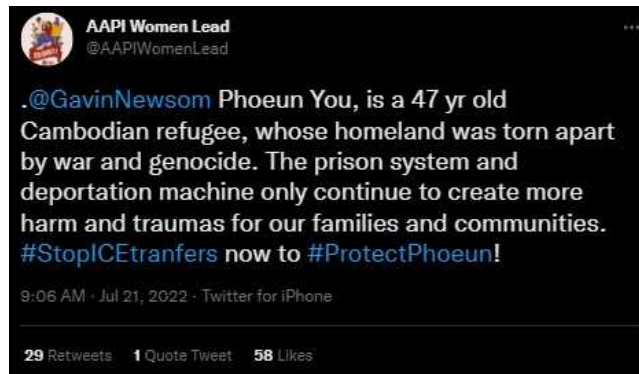


Figure 33. Twitter post from AAPI Women Lead, sharing community story and asking California Governor to act



Figure 34. Twitter post from Youth Justice Coalition, asking California Governor to act and sharing organization efforts

Asian Prisoner Support Committee, Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, Asian Law Caucus, and VietRISE, also interact with their network by posting updates about what they are currently working on as well as sharing community messages. Examples of this can be seen in Figures 35-41. Looking at how Asian Prisoner Support Committee posted updates about the pardon status of a recently incarcerated immigrant, Figures 35-38, provide a great example of how grassroots organizations can interact with their network outside of lobbying work to continue to strengthen the community and network. In Figure 41, VietRISE updates their community on what was done that morning to stop ICE transfers and get the VISION Act passed.

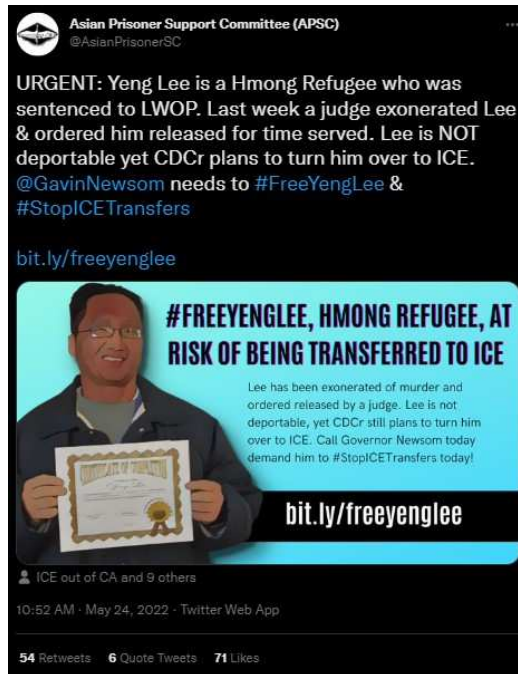


Figure 35. Twitter post from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, asking audience for support

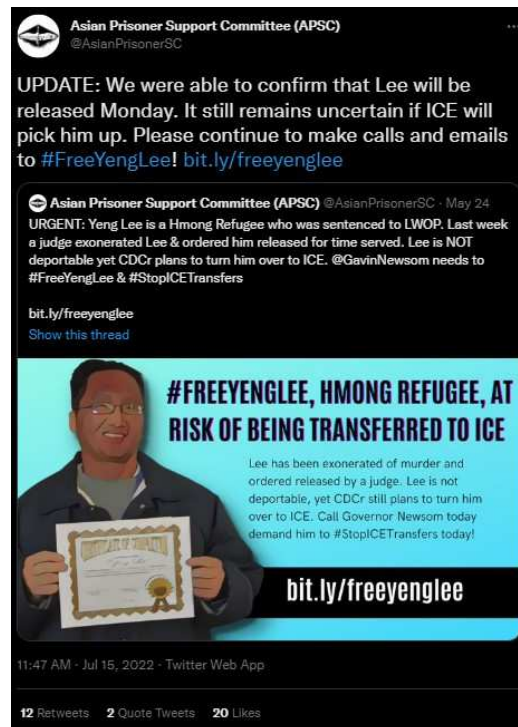


Figure 36. Twitter post from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, updating audience on support efforts



Figure 37. Twitter post from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, sharing update on support efforts



Figure 38. Twitter post from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, celebrating support efforts



Figure 39. Twitter post from Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, sharing thoughts on community work to network

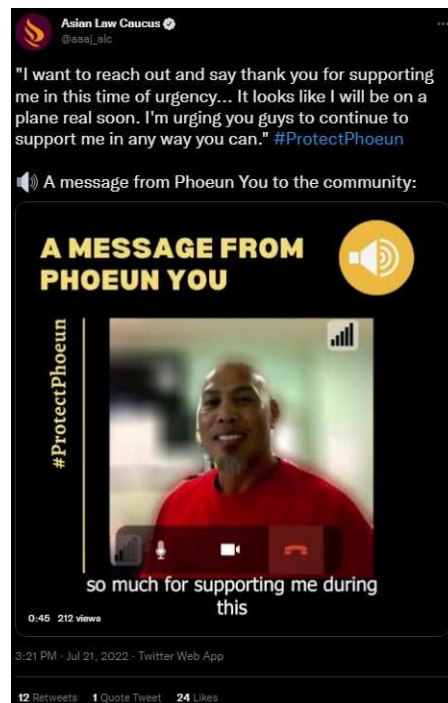


Figure 40. Twitter post from Asian Law Caucus, sharing video from community member in need of support to network

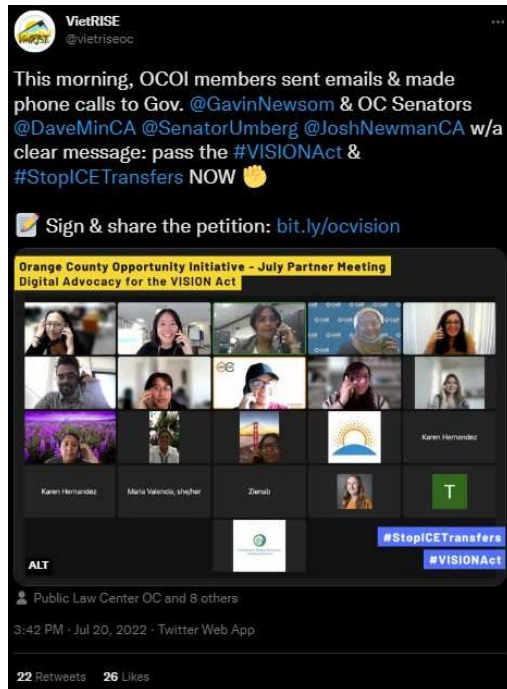


Figure 41. Twitter post from VietRISE, showing target audience what lobbying work is being done currently

In some cases, grassroots organizations are both calling out California Governor Gavin Newsom and their network directly. An example of this can be seen in Figure 42, where Asian Prisoner Support Committee is urging California Governor Gavin Newsom to protect and free previously incarcerated immigrants from imminent deportation. In the same post, Asian Prisoner Support Committee calls upon their network to take action by calling California Governor Gavin Newsom with the provided call script resource. In another post, Asian Prisoner Support Committee calls upon California Governor Gavin Newsom to pardon a previously incarcerated immigrant and also provides their network with a toolkit and week of action event flyer (Figure 43).

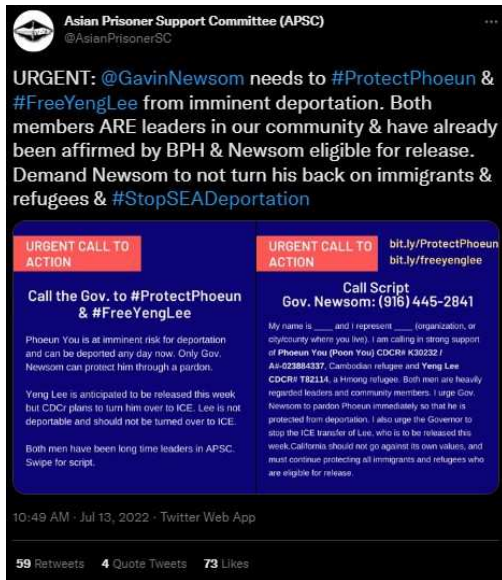


Figure 42. Twitter post from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, calling out governor and asking for network to make calls

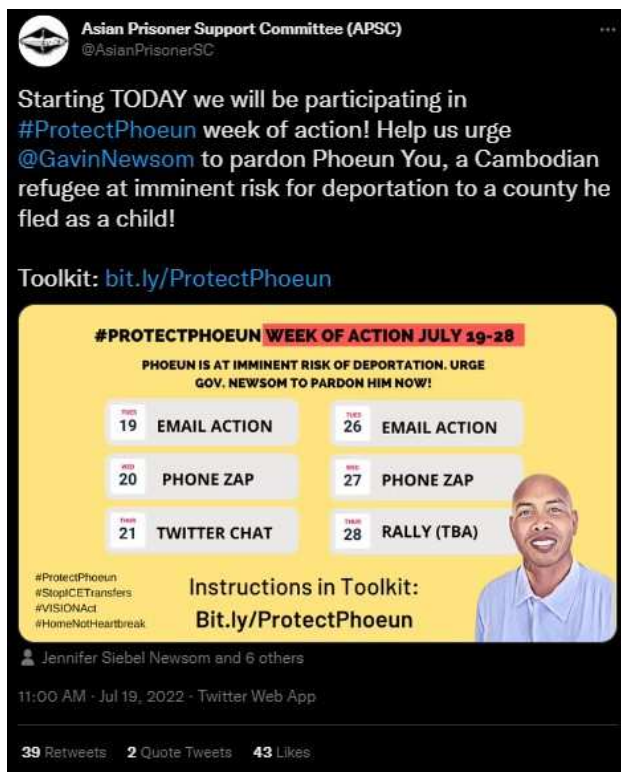


Figure 43. Twitter post from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, sharing tools and action events with community and targeting governor

Grassroots organizations are also interacting with the network and expanding their audience by tagging partners and co-sponsors or even crediting where the content was sourced from if it is not branded. By doing so, organizations can reach people who they normally would not reach.

This could be due to those tagged sharing the content with their audiences or other network audiences finding the content being suggested to them on their feeds because an account they follow was tagged. An example of this can be seen in Figure 44, where She the People tags the original content creator in their organization's branded graphic. This can also be seen in many of the pre-mentioned examples as well (Figures 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 20, 21, 23, 30, 32, 34, 35, 41, 43, 44). In other instances, grassroots organizations tag their partners and co-sponsors in their branded content, which can be seen in Figure 45, where the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color utilizes this technique of interacting with their network.

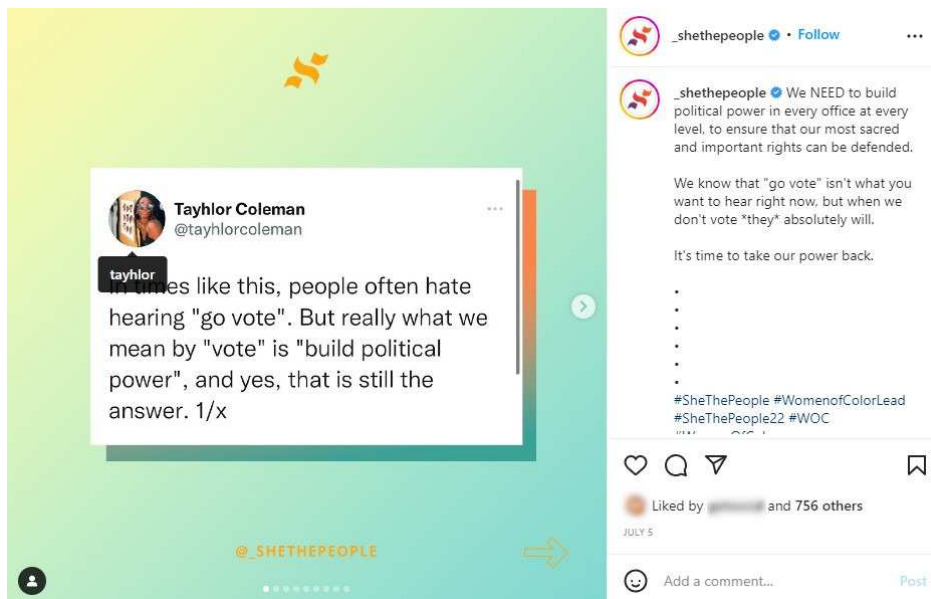


Figure 44. Instagram post from She the People, tagging original content creator in branded repost



Figure 45. Instagram post from Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, tagging partners and co-sponsors to reach a broader audience with branded content

3.7 Summary

The study collected data analysis on specific California legislation and observed a relationship between the metrics of the posts, the number of call-to-actions completed, and whether or not the legislation was passed. In all examples, social media was used by grassroots organizations as a lobbying technique. In some instances, the usage of social media as a lobbying tool had a direct effect on legislation and positive interaction among lawmakers like California State Senator Sydney Kamlager and California State Assemblymembers Luz Rivas, James Ramos, Cristina Garcia, and Alex Lee (Figure 46).



Figure 46. Twitter post from Assemblymember Luz Rivas, interacting with grassroots organization on social media

When the CRISES Act passed, California State Senator Sydney Kamlager tweeted a congratulatory image and tagged all the grassroots organizations and community leaders that worked alongside her on the legislation (Figure 47). Assemblymember Alex Lee has even participated in tweeting about the VISION Act to get California Governor Gavin Newsom’s attention to pardon a recently incarcerated immigrant (Figure 48). In another example, California State Assemblywoman Luz Rivas directly shoutouts the grassroots organizations and sponsors that helped lead the initiative on AB 46, California Youth Empowerment Commission (Figure 49).



Figure 47. Twitter post from Senator Sydney Kamlager, tagging grassroots organizations and leaders for their efforts



Figure 48. Twitter post from Assemblymember Alex Lee, sharing grassroots organizations social media content



Figure 49. Twitter post from Assemblymember Luz Rivas, thanking grassroots organizations sponsors

Other instances involve having state legislatures collaborate with grassroots organizations in person, with grassroots organizations later sharing about the meetup online to the community. This can be seen in Figure 50, where California State Assemblymembers James Ramos and Cristina Garcia meet with grassroots organizations, Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, ACLU California Action, and Save California Salmon for AB 2022, Racist Place Names.



Figure 50. Twitter post from grassroots organization leader, sharing with community an event with state legislatures

There is already some proof of grassroots organizations' efforts to lobby on social media. The legislation mentioned that was recently passed into California law includes Police Decertification, SB 2, and the CRISES Act, AB 118. Other legislation and policy budgets mentioned in these examples include AB 503, End Endless Probation; Ending Cycles of Violence, \$40.5 million budget; AB 937, VISION Act; and California Youth Empowerment Commission, AB 46, \$1.5 million budget. In some cases, grassroots organizations can utilize every stage of the Pyramid Model of Social Media-Based Advocacy and every step of the Maturity of Social Media Use Model. For example, ICE Out of CA posted a Twitter thread, as seen in Figures 51-53, that explains how ICE transfers are harmful to communities and the impacts of ICE transfers. The thread by ICE Out of CA additionally provided resources at the end of the Twitter thread for the general public to support ending the cruel practice.



Figure 51. Twitter thread from ICE Out of CA, sharing resources and amplifying cause



Figure 52. Twitter thread from ICE Out of CA, sharing information about cause

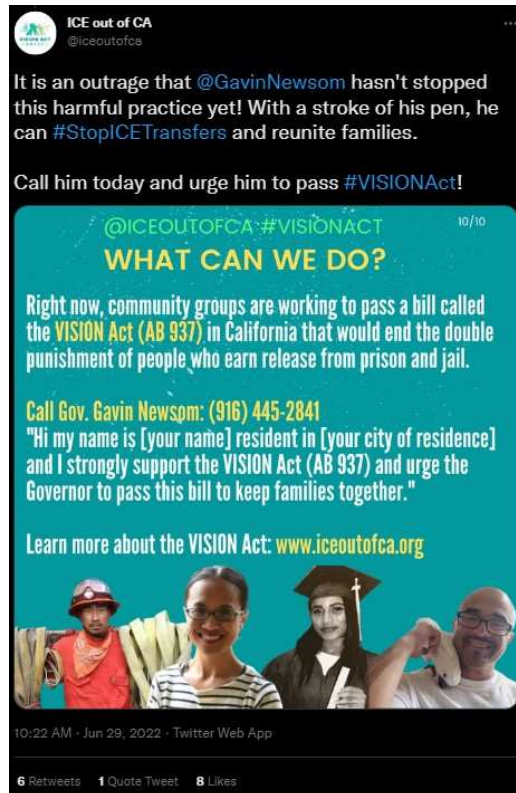


Figure 53. Twitter thread from ICE Out of CA, sharing resources and call to action to audience

Social media is changing how grassroots organizations engage in lobbying work and how communities engage with them. The impact of grassroots organizations using social media as a lobbying tool can even be seen through community members and the general public's posts. With the resources provided, such as call scripts, virtual petitions, and event flyers, social media users can repost the content on their social media accounts to further share information with a broader network.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 has presented findings addressing the research questions of this study. Chapter 4 provides conclusions and discussion based on research findings from data collected on the

usage of social media by grassroots organizations as a lobbying technique. It will then present recommendations for practice and future research.

The study's research questions:

1. In what nature is social media being used by grassroots organizations?
2. Why are grassroots organizations using social media for lobbying?
3. How can social media be an effective tool for grassroots organizations?

4.2 Conclusions and discussions

As the literature review (Castells, 2018; Costanza-Chock, 2011; Hestres, 2017; Karasek & Dirks, Forthcoming; Milkman, 2017; Seif, 2014; Taylor, 2016) has shown, social media is a modernized, supplementary tool and not a replacement to traditional methods of grassroots lobbying. This can already be seen through the actions of the grassroots organizations on social media collected within this research. For example, the CRISES Act Coalition members, Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, and Communities United for Youth Justice utilized social media as a lobbying tool to invite community members to learn about the CRISES Act, share an event flyer and attend a rally, and sign and share the petition and toolkit. Additionally, their social media messages on the CRISES Act targeted state legislatures and California Governor Gavin Newsom. In addition to their social media usage as a lobbying technique, they supported their online organizing with in-person mobilization through the hand-delivery of posters and signed petitions, as well as a rally. In other cases, grassroots organizations share their meetups with state legislatures on social media after meeting in person to discuss legislative objectives.

From these research findings, grassroots organizations are seen using social media as a lobbying tool in ways that reach out to, connect and engage with, and action their network. However, taking into consideration that this research focuses on grassroots organizations, this

data hopes to give insight to any grassroots organizations and community members that are looking to utilize the digital space to further mobilize their lobbying techniques. A link has been revealed between grassroots groups' use of social media and their influence and response on legislation, state legislatures, and the general public. Grassroots organizations are beginning to connect with their community about things the general public is already interested in. By forming a trusted relationship with their online communities, grassroots organizations are calling upon their following to take action and support policy work that aligns with the grassroots' values.

Through grassroots lobbying and direct lobbying, grassroots organizations enable communities to engage and coalesce around specific issues. Grassroots organizations need to broaden their lobbying strategies in the Digital Age. Methods incorporating social media, rather than conventional media, email, phone conversations, or text messaging, are becoming increasingly significant as society progresses. Social media is a particular feature of the Digital Age, and as its popularity grows, it may be utilized to reach a wide audience of individuals.

The industry has long acknowledged the value of lobbying. However, as society progresses and the number of people online grows, likely persons participating in almost any type of organizing or political work spend a significant percentage of their time connecting and communicating on social media networks. Fostering community in a new context is part of social media lobbying. However, grassroots groups must acknowledge that expanding on lobbying strategies is a crucial component of recognizing a dynamic and demanding mediascape that swings frequently and draws narratives from the grassroots to the forefront.

4.3 Recommendations for practice and future research

Further research should expand on the frameworks provided by Guo & Saxton (2013) and Berntzen (2014) to see how other organizations (i.e., nonprofits, nongovernmental

organizations, political organizations, educational institutions, partnerships, cooperatives, charities, etc.) can grow their audience, impact, and effectiveness on social media within the social justice environment. Additionally, future research should seek to analyze how effective call-to-actions are when they are linked to social media posts. With the limitations of having only publicly available metrics, more in-depth research on impressions and engagement should connect how often social media users are clicking call-to-action links and taking the next step to sign a petition, send an email, make a phone call, etc. It would also be beneficial for those interested in using social media as a lobbying tool to see if there exists a correlation between using social media and legislation getting passed. As other factors outside of social media were not considered in this research, insights on how social media usage amplifies policy work would be beneficial for organizations to further understand why social media should be used as additional leverage within grassroots work. Lastly, social networking sites also offer to advertise, and future research looking to observe the effectiveness of social media should look to possibly advertising their content online. Future findings would be able to see how and why grassroots organizations would spend money to advertise their policy priorities and its impact on pushing legislation and broadening their network.

Appendices

Appendix A – Social media posts references

1. *Alliance for boys and men of color on Instagram: "ca is 1 of only 4 states with no process to decertify and remove abusive police officers from our communities. ca leads the nation in officer involved shootings. will you take action and urge your state assemblymembers to vote yes on SB 2? head to: Bit.ly/pass-sb2 or link in Bio. @youthjusticela #decertifypolice #sb2 #BlackLivesMatter ••• #schoolsnotprisons #safecommunities #blacklivesmatter #california #californialaw #policyreform #cjreform #secondchances #healthymanhood #ABMoC #healingtogether #rootedincommunity #BlackBoyJoy #schooltoprisonpipeline #investinyouth #blackfeminism #BlackFeminist".* Instagram. (2021, September 1). Retrieved from [instagram.com/p/CTTE_IJpWUu/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CTTE_IJpWUu/)

2. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. (2022, July 18). #NEWPROFILEPIC #abmoc *your favorite network advancing race & gender justice by Creating Opportunity & Transforming Policies Failing Boys & men of color.* ☐☐#healingtogether #healthymanhood Pic.twitter.com/n0ff0PUXCG. Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/AllianceforBMOC/status/1549154170543882241
3. Alliance for boys and men of color (@allianceforbmoc) • Instagram photos and videos. (n.d.). Retrieved from instagram.com/allianceforbmoc/
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11. Alliance for boys and men of color on Instagram: "we are remembering and honoring Freddie Gray's life today. we will never stop fighting for him and the many other black victims who have died at the hands of the police. ☐

- @powertous_org #ripfreddiegray #freddiegray #justiceforfreddiegray #abmoc #abolishthepolice #BlackBoyJoy #blackfeminism #blackfeminist #blacklivesmatter #blm #boysofcolor #BrownBoyJoy #defendblacklives #DefundCops #defundthepolice #healingtogether #healthymanhood #investinyouth #menofcolor #policyreform #rootedincommunity #sayhisname". Instagram. (2022, April 19). Retrieved from [instagram.com/p/CciafOSMXPI/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CciafOSMXPI/)*
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 13. Nourn, N. (2022, May 28). *After 16 yrs of incarceration, facing deportation, and 4.5 yrs since freedom, this moment of celebrating my ba degree finally came true.thank you to My Community & Loved Ones for believing in me when the system didn't, telling me I was a failure & deserved to die in prison.* pic.twitter.com/ki5ohj9lsa. Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/nourn_ny/status/1530609451123675137
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 16. *About • @allianceforbmoc • milkshake website builder. • @allianceforbmoc • Milkshake Website Builder. (n.d.). Retrieved from msha.ke/allianceforbmoc/#about-1*
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 19. *Resources • @allianceforbmoc • milkshake website builder. • @allianceforbmoc • Milkshake Website Builder. (n.d.). Retrieved from msha.ke/allianceforbmoc/#healing-together*
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21. Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. (2021, October 8). *Will you take action by calling @gavinnewsom to ask him to support community-based alternatives to police? #AB118* head to: <https://t.co/lsvccg8rhx> <https://t.co/ujhovx27mo> pic.twitter.com/6vqbgv9rw6. Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/AllianceforBMOC/status/1446540362684657665
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31. *Alliance for boys and men of color on Instagram: "after 13 years at Policylink & Nearly 11 with abmoc, Marc Philpart is transitioning to a new organization & role*.

- we thank him for his commitment to the Mission & Vision of ABMOC during his time as principal coordinator. he will be missed dearly, but as a collective, we are all excited for what's to come! ☐☐ #abmoc #BlackBoyJoy #blackfeminism #blackfeminist #boysofcolor #BrownBoyJoy #calaw #caleg #healingtogether #healthymanhood #investinyouth #menofcolor #policyreform". Instagram. (2022, April 8). Retrieved from [instagram.com/p/CcGFv6TMFd_/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CcGFv6TMFd_/)*
32. *Alliance for boys and men of color on Instagram: "we are thrilled to have Eric as our next executive director. as we transition into this next phase as an organization and network, Eric's leadership will be a monumental part of our work here at ABMOC. let's all give Eric a warm welcome in his new role. #abmoc #blackboyjoy #blackfeminism #blackfeminist #boysofcolor #BrownBoyJoy #calaw #caleg #healingtogether #healthymanhood #investinyouth #menofcolor #policyreform". Instagram. (2022, April 12). Retrieved from [instagram.com/p/CcRCIXUPfbj/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CcRCIXUPfbj/)*
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37. (APSC), A. P. S. C. (2022, July 20). *Update: We are outraged that Lee was not released Monday despite having a release date set. CDCR refuses to parole him because of clerical errors beyond Lee's control. call cdcr case records to demand he be released now! <https://t.co/xrqceqskjq> pic.twitter.com/pgcjmxejxu.* Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/AsianPrisonerSC/status/1549799628630999041
38. (APSC), A. P. S. C. (2022, July 22). *Breaking: Lee is home! thank you to community members and supporters for calling in to demand Lee be released this week!welcome him home by contributing to his freedom fund!venmo: Queen-*

- Bee81 pic.twitter.com/CS2O5Xj9i0. Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/AsianPrisonerSC/status/1550618027091116032
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 42. (APSC), A. P. S. C. (2022, July 13). *Urgent: @GavinNewsom needs to #protectphoeun & #FreeYengLee from imminent deportation. both members are leaders in our community & have already been affirmed by BPH & Newsom eligible for release. demand newsom to not turn his back on Immigrants & Refugees & #stopseadeportation* pic.twitter.com/uw3hom0jem. Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/AsianPrisonerSC/status/1547276979627364352
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 44. *She the people on Instagram: "we need to build political power in every office at every level, to ensure that our most sacred and important rights can be defended. we know that "go vote" isn't what you want to hear right now, but when we don't vote *they* absolutely will. it's time to take our power back. #shethepeople #womenofcolorlead #SHETHEPEOPLE22 #WOC #WomenOfColor #representationmatters #womeninpolitics #humanrights"*. Instagram. (2022, July 5). Retrieved from instagram.com/p/CfpmEdcMQRG/
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