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cal journey began with a surprising victory over a six-term Republican incumbent in 2006, during a Democratic wave year. Walz maintained his seat in a typically red district until he ran for governor in 2018, after which the seat reverted to GOP control.

During his tenure as governor, Walz has faced significant challenges and navigated a series of political and social upheavals, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd, which sparked global anti-racist protests.

> "Walz has faced significant challenges and navigated a series of political and social upheavals

Despite criticisms and complaints, Walz's leadership led to a Democratic trifecta in Minnesota by early 2023.

Forbes Magazine highlighted Walz's appeal as a moderate Democrat with a working-class background and rural roots, making him an attractive option for independents and moderate Democrats. Former Senator Heidi Heitkamp praised Walz for his relatable life experiences, which align with many rural Americans.

Walz's political career began with a stint on former Massachusetts Senator John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. His transition from teaching on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where he met his wife, Gwen, to teaching in China and later at a high school in Mankato, Minnesota, set the stage for his political aspirations.

As governor, Walz's accomplishments include ensuring tuition-free meals at state universities, enshrining abortion rights into state law, banning conversion therapy, and protecting gender-affirming healthcare. Recently, he defended those measures against right-wing criticism, emphasizing the importance of accessible healthcare and education.

In May, Walz expanded voting rights in Minnesota for an estimated 55,000 formerly incarcerated residents.

While he has faced backlash from Minnesota Republicans over his stance on gender-affirming care, Waltz has also been criticized for recent comments targeting political opponents.

Meanwhile, Harris' presidential campaign has continued to gain momentum, securing significant endorsements and unprecedented financial support. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the United Auto Workers (UAW) have all endorsed her candidacy.

Fueling Harris's campaign is a historic fundraising effort. More than $310 million was raised in July alone, marking the largest single-month haul of the 2024 cycle. That brought her campaign's total fundraising to over $1 billion, surpassing previous records and outpacing the Trump campaign.

PHOTO COURTESY WORD IS BOND

Youth Get a Look at the Rebirth of Albina

This past July, Word is Bond ambassadors had an opportunity to explore Lever Architecture, a prominent architecture firm based in Portland, Oregon, known for its innovative and sustainable designs. The firm focuses on using mass timber and other sustainable materials to create functional and aesthetically pleasing buildings. "It was such a pleasure to have the young men from Word Is Bond spend time at our office to talk about all of the reinvestment happening in Albina," said Chandra Robinson, Principal, Lever Architecture.

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This voter-approved change may seem drastic, but it will bring Portland more in-step with other large- and medium-sized city governments in the U.S.

New Districts

Previously, candidates for city council ran citywide campaigns, and there was no guarantee that there would be equal geographic representation across the city. Often, this meant that areas like East Portland – home to diverse communities that include refugees and Portlanders pushed out of older neighborhoods due to gentrification, and comprising nearly a third of the city's population – did not seem to get equal consideration to downtown or the more central core of the city. In fact, in the city's history, only three commissioners have lived east of 82nd Avenue.

Now, East Portland will be known as District 1 on a new map that delineates four council districts.

Members of the Government Transition Advisory Committee explained to *The Skanner* that as this first cohort of leaders is elected and takes office, details will still have to be ironed out: It is likely city councilors will opt to have physical offices within their respective districts, where their constituents can visit and possibly obtain resources from the city. Due to the size of the new council, GTAC volunteers recommend new councilors create sub-committees to tackle various policy issues more efficiently.

Ranked-Choice Voting

How do voters specify their three selections for city councilors in their district? Through a system called ranked-choice voting. Simply put, when voting for mayor, auditor and city councilors, voters will be asked for their top-six preferences, ranked in order of priority. When the votes are counted, whichever mayoral or auditor candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, wins. In council races, candidates receiving just over 25% of first-choice votes win.

It gets more complicated if no candidates achieve these marks. In that case, the lowest-scoring candidate is eliminated, and each first-choice vote for that candidate is then transferred to the number-two pick on ballots that selected the now-eliminated candidate as a first pick. This continues until a candidate or candidates in each category meet the minimum threshold for victory.

The city has provided a practice ballot at https://www.portland.gov/vote/ranked-choice-voting.

The process may sound overly complicated, but it is also referred to as the "single transferable vote" system – emphasizing that if a voter's top pick is eliminated, their vote is still used on a preferred candidate. This also eliminates the chance of run-off races, like the showdown between Jo Ann Hardesty and current commissioner Rene Gonzalez in late 2022.

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mobilized to affect election outcomes: 93% of Black women voted for Biden in 2020, and concerted voter registration drives flipped Georgia blue that same year.

Prior to the historic July 21 Zoom event for Harris, Win With Black Women had 4,000 Black women leaders from around the U.S., with emphasis put on a diverse array of professional backgrounds and creative skills. It is an impactful gathering of women who in 2020 coalesced around a common frustration with how Black women were being treated and depicted in political media and beyond.

With regular Sunday meetings, the group has boosted Black woman candidates and even advisors to positions in the White House. Initiatives include #thankyouGA and #livefromGA, which recruited 45 Instagram influencers to reach more than four million viewers, urging them to support Black women leaders in the Georgia runoff in 2022; and even organizing food trucks to polling sites, where some voters waited hours to cast their votes, during the last general election. They were part of an instrumental collaboration with other Black women-led groups to urge Biden to keep his promise to nominate a Black woman to the Supreme Court, and launched #ConfirmJudgeJackson on social media to amplify support for now-Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

> "Sister District has its origins on that dark night in 2016

In short, this is a group that prizes the myriad skills Black women bring to the table. For information about volunteering, and volunteering as an ally, visit https://www.winwithblackwomen.org.

Sister District

While many Congressional districts in the Portland Metro area remain consistently Democrat, there is no shortage of opportunities for local volunteers who want to make an impact on battleground races in other states.

Sister District, a 501(c)(4), taps into the power of virtual and in-person meetings to train and support phone bankers.

"Sister District has its origins on that dark night in 2016," cofounder Lala Wu said when introducing the organization's strategy. "Although this all began with a reactive spark, we have since fanned the flames of our work with intention, strategy and planning. We saw the gap that existed in organizing and resources at the state level, and we aimed to fill it."

For the rest of the decade, Sister District will focus its volunteer power

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Win With Black Women founder Jotaka Eaddy interviewed from home after her organization's successful Zoom fundraising meetup on July 21.