

About Tom

Tom Steyer stepped down as head of his investment firm in 2012 to dedicate all his time to philanthropy and political action focused on making America more just by putting the people, not the corporations, in charge of our democracy.



Tom, a self-made billionaire, and his wife, Kathryn Taylor, known as “Kat,” were among the first to sign the Giving Pledge — a commitment to give away the bulk of their personal fortune during their lifetimes.

In 2013, he founded NextGen America, a nonprofit group that combats climate change, promotes social justice and increases participation in our democracy through voter registration and grassroots organizing. In 2017, Tom became the first major Democrat to rally millions of Americans with a public call to impeach Donald Trump.

In the recent midterms, Tom led the nation’s largest voter-turnout effort. NextGen organizers worked hundreds of college campuses and city neighborhoods to increase voting by youth, people of color, workers and other underrepresented groups. Need to Impeach mobilized millions of its petition signers. All these voters contributed to Democratic wins that took back the House, won Senate seats and governorships, and captured state legislatures and local races.

“We need the broadest democracy possible,” Tom says, “to take back our government from the corporations that now control it and have stolen the rights of everyday Americans.” Only a broad-based grassroots movement can restore power, fairness and prosperity to the people,” he says. Tom has laid out his vision for putting the people in charge of our democracy with a “21st century bill of rights” — a new set of 5 Rights — that every American must have.

Across the country and in his home state of California, Tom has shown repeatedly that going directly to the people and raising their voices is the way to beat entrenched corporate interests and win fights for fairness. He helped beat big oil to protect California's landmark clean-air laws and he followed that up with wins for clean energy in Michigan and Nevada. He helped close a massive corporate tax loophole to generate at least \$1.7 billion for public schools. He helped beat big tobacco companies and forced them to pay their share of healthcare costs for the harm their products have caused.

Tom and his wife have devoted hours of their time and donated tens of millions of dollars to charitable projects that advance education, renewable energy, clean air and water, healthy food, sustainable agriculture, self-sustaining communities and more.

Their charitable foundation powered the birth of "California Food for California Kids," a program that now serves more than 300 million healthy meals yearly to the state's school kids using natural food from California farms.

Another charitable project is Beneficial State Bank, which since 2007 has loaned money affordably to working people, small businesses and nonprofit community projects shut out by regular banks. Tom and Kat have given more than \$120 million to building the bank, which reinvests any profits back into the communities it serves. Their support of the bank is ongoing.

Tom grew up in New York City, the youngest of three brothers. His father, Roy, interrupted his law career to join the Navy and serve on the legal team that prosecuted Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. His mother, Marnie, was a journalist and teacher who taught in the city schools and volunteered to tutor prisoners in a large city jail. Tom's parents taught him that action always speaks louder than words.

Tom graduated from Yale and earned his MBA at Stanford. Working on Wall St. was not for him, so he moved to San Francisco in 1986 and started his own small investment firm. Backed by two seasoned investors, Tom started managing the new fund, which began with \$9 million in investments. Over the years, Tom achieved double-digit returns for his investors — mostly universities, foundations and individuals. His success built the firm to \$36 billion in investments at the fund's peak.

Tom is 62. He and Kat have four grown children. San Francisco has been their home since 1986.