

BRIEFING PAPER: Higher Ground Labs & Kyanostech Strategic Partnership

Prepared for: Kyanostech Leadership

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Purpose: Strategic positioning for HGL engagement and funding

Executive Summary: Higher Ground Labs is the premier venture fund and ecosystem builder for progressive political technology. Their 2025 elections analysis reveals a critical gap in their investment thesis that Kyanostech is uniquely positioned to fill: AI discovery optimization. This briefing provides intelligence on HGL, demonstrates Kyanostech's strategic fit, and outlines an engagement pathway to secure funding and ecosystem access.

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING HIGHER GROUND LABS

1.1 Organization Overview

What They Are:

- Venture fund and accelerator focused exclusively on progressive political technology
- Founded 2017 by Betsy Hoover (Obama 2012 National Digital Organizing Director)
- 60+ portfolio companies including Mobilize, BallotReady, Impactive, Quiller
- \$50M+ invested across political tech ecosystem
- \$85M+ raised by portfolio companies post-accelerator

Why They Matter:

- Direct access to DNC, DCCC, DSCC, state parties, major PACs
- Kingmaker status in progressive political tech
- Training reach: 3,626 professionals in 2024 cycle alone
- Campaign reach: 7,500+ campaigns, 70M+ voters through portfolio

Unique Value Proposition:

- Only venture fund focused exclusively on progressive political tech
- Deep operational expertise from campaign veterans
- Ecosystem builder, not just capital provider
- Mission-driven with progressive values at core

1.2 Investment Track Record

Portfolio Performance:

- Average portfolio company increases monthly revenue 2.6x during accelerator
- 1,300+ strategic introductions facilitated
- 400+ one-on-one mentorship sessions
- 8 portfolio acquisitions (MainStreet most recent, May 2025)

Notable Success Stories:

- **Mobilize:** Event organizing platform, reshaped field organizing
- **BallotReady:** 88% US population coverage in 2024, millions of informed voters
- **Impactive:** 21M+ messages sent, multiple cycles of high-impact programs
- **Grow Progress:** 457 tests on 1,700+ ads for presidential campaign 2024
- **Oath:** \$37M directed to 750+ candidates in 2024

Investment Terms:

- Typical seed: \$100K via convertible note
- Follow-on investments: ~\$1M average
- Total pathway: \$1.1M+ in capital + invaluable network access

1.3 Key Decision-Makers

Primary Contacts:

Betsy Hoover - Founder & Managing Partner

- Twitter/X: @betsyhoov
- LinkedIn: Active
- Background: Obama Campaign, 270 Strategies
- Focus: Overall strategy, ecosystem building

Gerard Niemira - Managing Director, Fund IV

- Background: Hillary for America (Sr. Director Product), Kiva (VP Product/Engineering)
- Focus: Product strategy, technical evaluation

Leah Bae - VP of Programs & Partnerships

- Email: institute@highergroundlabs.com (for HGI)

- Background: Progressive AI Lab lead, award-winning tech/social impact innovator
- Focus: Portfolio support, partnerships, AI initiatives

Contact Strategy:

- General: info@highergroundlabs.com
- AI/Research: institute@highergroundlabs.com
- Warm intro preferred (leverage ecosystem connections)

1.4 Organizational Evolution

2017-2020: Foundation Building

- Launched accelerator program
- Built initial portfolio (HGL1-HGL3)
- Established ecosystem connections

2020-2023: Scale & Specialization

- Raised \$20M dedicated fund (2021)
- Expanded to 60+ portfolio companies
- Developed annual investment thesis process

2024: AI Era Begins

- Progressive AI Lab launched
- 14 AI-focused incubation grants awarded
- 140+ submissions received
- Validated AI adoption in progressive politics

2025: Transition & Evolution

- Progressive AI Lab → Higher Ground Institute
- Partnership with Cooperative Impact Lab
- Focus on "next era" challenges for 2026+
- Emphasis on scaling what works from 2024 experiments

Key Insight: HGL is transitioning from AI experimentation (2024) to AI adoption at scale (2026+). This is precisely when AI discovery optimization becomes critical.

SECTION 2: HGL'S 2026+ INVESTMENT THESIS

2.1 Three Strategic Priorities from 2025 Elections

HGL's November 2025 analysis of winning campaigns (Virginia Gov. Spanberger, New Jersey Gov. Sherrill, NYC Mayor Mamdani) identified three priorities shaping their 2026+ investment thesis:

Priority 1: "Make Your Message Personal"

What They Learned:

- Broad economic themes must be personalized to specific voter contexts
- Same message ("life is too expensive") needs different local framings
- Spanberger: government spending cuts affecting families
- Sherrill: electricity costs impacting households
- Mamdani: rent pressures on low-income communities

Investment Implication:

- Tools that enable message personalization at scale
- Context-aware content delivery
- Local relevance without sacrificing message discipline

Kyanostech Fit:

- AI discovery optimization allows personalized responses to voter queries
- Schema markup enables context-specific message variants
- When voters ask AI about housing, they get locally relevant framing

Priority 2: "Be Everywhere"

What They Learned:

- Campaigns must maintain persistent presence across every channel
- **"AI tools made this possible at scale"** (direct quote from HGL)
- One speech → dozens of digital assets
- Single staffer → multiple videos per day
- Experimentation with short-form video, social graphics, email, SMS

Investment Implication:

- Continued investment in AI content creation tools

- Omnichannel distribution platforms
- Scalable content production workflows

Critical Gap HGL Hasn't Articulated: "Be everywhere" doesn't yet include **AI assistants as a channel**. Campaigns create content everywhere but don't optimize for AI discovery.

Kyanostech Fit:

- Extends "be everywhere" to AI-mediated information discovery
- Ensures AI-generated content is discoverable through AI assistants
- Completes the omnichannel strategy

Priority 3: "Empower Supporters to be Messengers"

What They Learned:

- Volunteers, creators, local validators were "key multipliers"
- Supporters carried stories "in their own voice"
- Decentralized persuasion engines more effective than top-down
- Both traditional volunteers AND content creators critical

Investment Implication:

- Relational organizing platforms
- Creator economy integration
- Volunteer multiplier tools

Kyanostech Fit:

- When supporters advocate, their friends fact-check via AI
- AI discovery ensures AI confirms (not contradicts) supporter messaging
- Validator effect multiplied when AI reinforces trusted recommendations

2.2 AI Adoption Validation

HGL's 2024 Progressive AI Lab Demonstrated:

Scale of Adoption:

- Portfolio tools alone saved 21,000 hours and \$16M
- DonorAtlas: 100+ campaigns, 6,000 hours saved
- AAPI Victory Alliance: 3,500 hours saved

- Quiller: \$22.22 raised per minute (vs. \$8.33 without AI)

Adoption Pattern:

- 2024 was "experimentation cycle"
- Most orgs deployed internal/productivity uses
- Integrated AI into existing workflows vs. creating new ones
- Individual experimentation exceeded formal adoption

Key Finding: "While the 2024 election is over, the left should not and cannot lose focus on the impacts of generative AI. The AI industry is making leaps and bounds every single day with no regard for our electoral cycles."

Strategic Implication for Kyanostech:

- HGL has validated that campaigns WILL use AI at scale
- But they focused on content creation (supply side)
- Discovery/distribution (demand side) remains unsolved
- Perfect timing for Kyanostech's entry

2.3 Portfolio Company Ecosystem

Content Creation & Distribution:

- Quiller: AI fundraising content
- Grow Progress: Message testing & optimization
- Social Currant: Creator matching on TikTok/Instagram/YouTube

Organizing & Engagement:

- Mobilize: Event organizing
- Impactive: P2P texting, phone banking
- Unified: Social network for activism

Data & Intelligence:

- BallotReady: Voter information, ballot coverage
- Measure Studio: AI-powered content intelligence

None focus on AI discovery optimization - this is the white space Kyanostech occupies.

2.4 Identified Gaps

From 2024 Progressive AI Lab Report:

- 1. Most tools addressed internal productivity, not external-facing challenges
- 2. "Offensive" AI (winning) vs. defensive AI (protecting) - need more offensive
- 3. Moving from experimentation to adoption requires new infrastructure
- 4. AI bias and accuracy concerns remain unaddressed

From 2025 Elections Analysis:

- 1. "Be everywhere" strategy incomplete without AI discovery channel
- 2. Content creation at scale ≠ content discovery at scale
- 3. Supporter advocacy needs AI reinforcement, not contradiction

Kyanostech Addresses All Four Gaps:

- 1. External-facing tool (voter discovery of campaigns)
- 2. Offensive AI (proactive narrative control)
- 3. Infrastructure for AI adoption era (optimization layer)
- 4. Directly addresses AI bias through monitoring & correction

SECTION 3: KYANOSTECH'S STRATEGIC FIT

3.1 The Core Positioning: "We Complete Your AI Strategy"

HGL's Current AI Thesis:

- Help campaigns use AI to create content at scale ✓
- Enable omnichannel distribution ✓
- Empower supporters as messengers ✓

The Missing Piece:

- Ensure voters find that content when using AI assistants ✗

Kyanostech Fills the Gap: "HGL has invested in AI content creation. Kyanostech ensures AI discovery. Together, we solve both sides of the equation."

3.2 Alignment Matrix

HGL Priority	Kyanostech Solution	Proof Point
Make Message Personal	AI discovery enables personalized responses to voter queries at scale	Schema markup allows context-specific variants (rent control in NYC, property tax in suburbs)

HGL Priority	Kyanostech Solution	Proof Point
Be Everywhere	AI assistants are the missing channel in omnichannel strategy	When voters ask ChatGPT/Claude/Perplexity about candidates, campaigns need to control narrative
Empower Supporters	AI must reinforce, not undermine, supporter advocacy	When friends fact-check via AI, responses should confirm supporter messaging
Offensive AI	Proactive narrative control vs. reactive misinformation defense	Schema optimization is offensive; ensures campaigns shape their story in AI
AI Adoption	Infrastructure for campaigns moving from AI experimentation to adoption	Optimization layer that makes AI-generated content discoverable

3.3 Complementarity with Portfolio

Integration Opportunities:

With Quiller (AI Fundraising Content):

- Quiller creates compelling fundraising pitches
- Kyanostech ensures donor prospects researching via AI find accurate info
- Combined value: Better content + better discovery = more donations

With Grow Progress (Message Testing):

- Grow Progress tests what messages work
- Kyanostech tests which messages surface best in AI responses
- Combined value: Optimize both persuasion AND discovery

With Mobilize (Event Organizing):

- Mobilize drives event attendance
- Kyanostech ensures AI assistants provide accurate event/candidate info
- Combined value: Supporter recruitment backed by AI verification

With BallotReady (Voter Information):

- BallotReady shows voters what's on ballot
- Kyanostech ensures AI tells voters about candidates accurately
- Combined value: Complete voter information ecosystem

Key Message: "Kyanostech doesn't compete with your portfolio - we multiply their effectiveness by ensuring the content they create is discoverable through AI."

3.4 Market Timing Validation

Why Now is Perfect:

2024: Experimentation Validated

- Campaigns tried AI tools
- Progressive AI Lab proved adoption happening
- But focus was on content creation only

2025: Transition Year

- 2025 elections showed AI tools work at scale
- HGL transitioning from AI Lab to Higher Ground Institute
- "Next era" challenges becoming focus for 2026+

2026: AI Discovery Becomes Critical

- AI assistants becoming primary information gateway
- Voters increasingly ask AI about candidates
- Content creation without discovery = wasted investment

2028: Full Adoption Cycle

- Kyanostech business plan targets 2028
- HGL's portfolio companies will be mature
- AI discovery optimization becomes table stakes

Strategic Timing: Kyanostech enters exactly when HGL portfolio companies' AI-generated content needs discovery optimization.

3.5 Evidence Base: Kyanostech White Papers Validate HGL Concerns

"The Progressive AI Paradox":

- Documents progressive AI adoption despite trust concerns
- Validates HGL's finding that adoption is accelerating
- Shows campaigns will use AI regardless - must ensure accuracy

"Conservative Chatbot Bias: The Grok Case Study":

- Demonstrates real bias in AI political responses
- Proves the problem Kyanostech solves is current, not future
- Provides methodology HGL ecosystem can use

"Biased Chatbots Reshape Political Views":

- Shows AI influences voter opinions
- Validates urgency of controlling narrative in AI systems
- Research-backed case for offensive AI strategy

Value to HGL: Kyanostech brings not just a product, but research and thought leadership that strengthens the entire progressive AI ecosystem.

SECTION 4: THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

4.1 Accelerator Program Pathway

Program Structure:

- 4-month intensive (typically July-October)
- Three in-person intensives (Chicago, DC, San Francisco)
- \$100K seed investment via convertible note
- 250+ mentorship sessions across cohort
- 1,000+ strategic introductions per cohort

What Kyanostech Would Receive:

Capital:

- \$100K initial investment
- Structured for milestones-based follow-on
- Access to \$1M+ follow-on round pathway

Network Access:

- Direct introductions to DNC, DCCC, DSCC decision-makers
- State party connections (Association of State Democratic Committees)
- Major PAC relationships (EMILY's List, etc.)
- Presidential campaign infrastructure contacts

Training & Support:

- Sales/marketing coaching specific to political tech
- Product development guidance from campaign veterans

- Pitch refinement for political buyers
- Business model validation

Distribution:

- Demo Days with 150+ political tech practitioners
- Showcase events throughout cycle
- Integration with existing portfolio companies
- Jobs board for recruiting campaign veterans

Community:

- Join 60+ portfolio company network
- Peer learning from accelerator cohort
- Access to HGL Advisory Board
- Ongoing alumni support post-program

Historical Results:

- Portfolio companies increase revenue 2.6x during program
- \$85M+ raised post-accelerator
- 300+ client conversations during program
- Direct path to campaign pilots

Application Requirements:

- For-profit structure (Kyanostech ✓)
- Shipped MVP (need to confirm status)
- Alignment with investment thesis (strong ✓)
- Tech + Practitioner team (need to strengthen)

Timeline:

- Applications reviewed on rolling basis
- Likely HGL7 in 2025 or HGL8 in 2026
- 4-month program once accepted
- Post-program follow-on investment decisions

4.2 Higher Ground Institute Partnership Track

What HGI Offers:

- Research collaborations on AI innovation
- Testing and validation programs
- Training curriculum development
- Ecosystem thought leadership

Kyanostech Opportunity:

- Partner on AI discovery research before formal accelerator
- Contribute white papers to HGI knowledge base
- Present at AI Open Mic sessions
- Build relationships with decision-makers

Strategic Value:

- Lower-risk entry point while preparing for accelerator
- Establishes credibility and relationships
- Validates product-market fit with research
- Potential for small grant (\$0-50K)

Contact: institute@highergroundlabs.com

Positioning: "We'd like to collaborate on research extending the 'be everywhere' strategy to AI discovery, complementing your AI content creation focus."

4.3 Portfolio Integration Benefits

Once in HGL Portfolio:

Immediate Access:

- Campaign buyer network (7,500+ campaigns)
- Strategic partner introductions
- Co-marketing opportunities
- Cross-portfolio collaboration

Ongoing Support:

- Quarterly check-ins with HGL team
- Continued mentorship access

- Investor introduction support
- Strategic guidance for fundraising

Visibility:

- Featured in Political Tech Landscape Report
- Impact reports and case studies
- Blog features and thought leadership
- LinkedIn promotion (3,599+ followers)

Distribution Advantages:

- "HGL portfolio company" credibility
- Joint customer references
- Bundle opportunities with other tools
- Ecosystem-wide adoption pathway

Follow-On Funding:

- HGL participates in Series A
- Access to their investor network (Reid Hoffman, Ron Conway)
- Average \$1M follow-on from HGL
- \$3-5M+ Series A with HGL participation

4.4 Expected Outcomes & ROI

6-Month Outcomes (During Accelerator):

- 10-15 campaign pilots secured
- 3-5 paying customers
- Product-market fit validation
- Team expansion (2-3 campaign veterans hired)
- \$100K capital deployed

12-Month Outcomes (Post-Accelerator):

- 25-50 campaign customers
- \$500K-1M ARR
- Follow-on funding secured (\$1M+)

- Integration partnerships with 2-3 portfolio companies
- Thought leadership established in ecosystem

24-Month Outcomes (Series A):

- 100+ campaign customers
- \$2-3M ARR
- Series A raised (\$3-5M)
- Full-time team of 10-15
- Market leader position in AI discovery optimization

Strategic ROI Beyond Capital:

- Credibility: "HGL portfolio" = trust in political space
- Network: Access to every major Democratic campaign infrastructure org
- Knowledge: Deep understanding of campaign needs, budgets, timelines
- Ecosystem: Integration with complementary tools multiplies value
- Mission: Alignment with progressive values attracts talent and customers

Total Ecosystem Value:

- Direct capital: \$1.1M+ (seed + follow-on)
- Network value: Equivalent to \$2-3M in sales/marketing spend
- Credibility value: 2-3 year head start vs. cold market entry
- **Total value: \$3-5M+ equivalent**

SECTION 5: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

5.1 Immediate Actions (Next 30 Days)

Action 1: Email Higher Ground Institute

To: institute@highergroundlabs.com

Subject: Partnership: Extending "Be Everywhere" to AI Discovery in 2026

Key Points:

- Reference 2025 elections analysis directly
- Position as completing the AI strategy

- Offer research collaboration
- Attach white papers as credibility

Expected Outcome:

- Initial conversation with Leah Bae
- Potential research collaboration invitation
- Intelligence on accelerator timeline

Action 2: LinkedIn Connections

Priority Contacts:

1. Leah Bae (VP Programs & Partnerships)
2. Gerard Niemira (Managing Director)
3. Betsy Hoover (Founder)

Approach:

- Personalized connection requests
- Reference specific HGL work (2025 elections, AI Lab)
- Mention shared mission/values
- Soft touch, not hard pitch

Expected Outcome:

- Network visibility
- Conversation opportunities
- Warm introduction pathway

Action 3: Portfolio Company Outreach

Target Companies:

- Quiller (AI content, most complementary)
- Grow Progress (message testing synergy)
- Mobilize (event organizing integration)

Approach:

- Explore integration/partnership opportunities
- Share how Kyanostech complements their tools

- Build advocate network within HGL ecosystem

Expected Outcome:

- Potential pilot partnerships
- Advocates within portfolio for HGL introduction
- Product development insights

Action 4: Content Development

Blog Post: "The Fourth Channel: Why 'Be Everywhere' Must Include AI Discovery"

Key Points:

- Reference HGL's 2025 elections analysis
- Demonstrate understanding of their thesis
- Position Kyanostech as solution
- Offer to ecosystem

Distribution:

- Medium/Substack
- LinkedIn
- Share with HGL team
- Offer as guest post for HGL blog

Expected Outcome:

- Thought leadership credibility
- Conversation starter with HGL
- Shareable asset for network

5.2 Medium-Term Positioning (3-6 Months)

Action 5: Attend Ecosystem Events

Target Events:

- AI in Campaigns & Organizing Summit (if scheduled for 2026)
- AI Open Mic briefings (monthly)
- Political Tech Community Happy Hours (watch LinkedIn for announcements)
- America Votes summits

- Arena training events

Approach:

- Attend as participant, not vendor
- Network with portfolio companies
- Meet HGL team in person
- Share research insights

Expected Outcome:

- Face-to-face relationships
- Market intelligence
- Partnership opportunities
- Accelerator application credibility

Action 6: Research Collaboration**If HGI Partnership Develops:**

- Joint research on AI discovery bias
- Testing AI optimization effectiveness
- Campaign pilot case studies
- White paper co-authorship

Value:

- Validates product with HGL stamp
- Builds deep relationship before accelerator
- Contributes to ecosystem knowledge
- Demonstrates commitment to mission

Action 7: Product Development Milestones**To Strengthen Accelerator Application:**

- Complete shipped MVP with 2-3 pilot campaigns
- Document measurable results
- Build tech + practitioner team
- Develop case studies

Timeline:

- Q1 2026: MVP completion
- Q2 2026: Pilot campaigns
- Q3 2026: Results documentation
- Q4 2026: Accelerator application (if timing aligns)

Action 8: Advisory Board Development**To Meet "Tech + Practitioner" Criterion:**

- Recruit 2-3 campaign veterans to advisory board
- Target former HGL portfolio company leaders
- Include former campaign managers from 2024/2022 cycles
- Demonstrate political tech credibility

Expected Outcome:

- Stronger accelerator application
- Network connections to HGL
- Product development guidance
- Sales/distribution insights

5.3 Long-Term Relationship Building**Action 9: Ecosystem Contribution****Ongoing Activities:**

- Share research findings publicly
- Contribute to Progressive AI discourse
- Support other portfolio companies
- Participate in community events

Mindset:

- Give before asking
- Ecosystem member, not vendor
- Mission-aligned, not just profit-seeking
- Collaborative, not competitive

Action 10: Accelerator Application

When Applications Open (likely 2025 or 2026):

- Apply early (rolling basis review)
- Lead with "completing AI strategy" narrative
- Demonstrate traction with pilots
- Showcase tech + practitioner team
- Emphasize complementarity with portfolio

Application Strength Factors:

- Shipped MVP ✓ (pending completion)
- Early traction ✓ (with pilots)
- Mission alignment ✓ (strong)
- Team composition △ (need practitioners)
- Market timing ✓ (perfect)
- Ecosystem fit ✓ (excellent)

Expected Timeline:

- Application: When HGL7 or HGL8 announced
- Review: 2-4 weeks
- Selection: Cohort announcement
- Program: 4 months
- Post-program: Ongoing portfolio relationship

5.4 Key Messaging Frameworks

For HGL Team: "We complete the AI strategy your portfolio has begun. You've invested in AI content creation - we ensure AI discovery. Together, progressive campaigns control their narrative in AI systems."

For Portfolio Companies: "Your tools create amazing content. We ensure voters find it when they ask AI assistants about candidates. Let's explore how we can integrate and multiply each other's impact."

For Campaigns: "You're using AI to create content everywhere - emails, videos, social posts. But when voters ask ChatGPT or Claude about you, will they find your message or your opponent's?"

For Other Investors: "HGL validated that campaigns will adopt AI at scale. But they focused on content creation. Discovery is the missing layer - and our unique wedge into the market."

Core Value Proposition (30-second version): "AI tools let campaigns create content at scale. Kyanostech ensures voters actually find it - through the AI assistants they increasingly use to research candidates. We're the discovery layer for the AI content creation era."

SECTION 6: TALKING POINTS & QUICK REFERENCE

6.1 Elevator Pitch Variations

30-Second Version: "Higher Ground Labs invested in AI tools that help campaigns create content at scale. We solve the other half of the equation: ensuring voters find that content when they ask AI assistants about candidates. We're AI discovery optimization - the missing channel in the 'be everywhere' strategy."

2-Minute Version: "HGL's 2025 elections analysis showed winning campaigns used AI to create content everywhere - one speech became dozens of assets. But there's a gap: when voters increasingly ask ChatGPT, Claude, or Perplexity about candidates, campaigns have no control over what AI says. Kyanostech uses schema markup and AI optimization to ensure campaigns control their narrative in AI systems. We complete HGL's AI strategy - they funded content creation, we ensure discovery."

5-Minute Version (With Proof Points): "Let me share why we're the perfect fit for HGL's 2026 investment thesis. [Reference 2025 elections analysis] They identified three priorities: make message personal, be everywhere, empower supporters. We enable all three through AI discovery:

1. Personalization at scale - our schema markup lets campaigns provide context-specific responses to AI queries
2. Complete omnichannel - AI assistants are the missing channel they haven't addressed yet
3. Supporter reinforcement - when friends fact-check via AI, we ensure AI confirms their advocacy

Our white papers document real bias in AI political responses. The Grok case study shows this is happening now, not in the future. And we're perfectly complementary to their portfolio - Quiller creates fundraising content, we ensure donors find accurate info when researching via AI. Grow Progress tests messages, we test AI discovery. Together, we complete the ecosystem."

6.2 Objection Handling

Objection 1: "This seems like a future problem, not current"

Response: "Actually, our research shows it's happening now. [Reference Grok case study] We documented significant bias in AI political responses. And HGL's own 2025 elections analysis states that campaigns already used AI tools at scale. Voters are already asking AI assistants about candidates - we just need to ensure campaigns control those responses. The infrastructure needs to be built now for 2026 campaigns."

Evidence:

- Grok bias case study (current)
- Progressive AI Paradox research (current adoption)

- ChatGPT/Claude already have hundreds of millions of users

Objection 2: "We already have AI companies in our portfolio"

Response: "Exactly - and we complete what they started. Your portfolio companies like Quiller help campaigns create AI-generated content. We ensure voters find that content when using AI assistants to research candidates. We're not competing with your AI investments - we're multiplying their effectiveness. Content creation without discovery is incomplete."

Evidence:

- No portfolio company focuses on AI discovery
- All are content/productivity tools
- Kyanotech is complementary, not competitive

Objection 3: "Do campaigns really use AI assistants to find candidates?"

Response: "The question is do voters use AI assistants - and the answer is increasingly yes. ChatGPT alone has 200M+ weekly users. When they ask 'what's [candidate]'s position on healthcare?', campaigns need to control that answer. And campaigns themselves are starting to use AI for research on opponents. Both sides of AI usage create the need for optimization."

Evidence:

- ChatGPT: 200M+ weekly active users
- Claude, Perplexity, Gemini growing rapidly
- Gen Z especially uses AI for information discovery
- 2028 election will be first with mass AI adoption

Objection 4: "Isn't this just SEO for AI?"

Response: "Yes - and that's precisely why it's valuable. SEO for web search created a multi-billion dollar industry. AI is becoming the new search interface. Just as campaigns need websites optimized for Google, they'll need structured data optimized for AI. We're building the infrastructure for that transition, and the timing is perfect - campaigns are just starting to understand this need."

Evidence:

- SEO industry = \$80B market
- AI replacing traditional search (Google adding AI, Perplexing growing)
- Early mover advantage before market saturates

Objection 5: "Can't campaigns just do this themselves?"

Response: "The same reason they use your portfolio companies instead of building in-house: expertise, speed, and focus. Schema markup and AI optimization require specialized technical knowledge. Campaigns don't have

time to become experts - they need tools that work out of the box. Plus, monitoring AI responses across multiple platforms and fixing inaccuracies is ongoing work, not a one-time setup."

Evidence:

- HGL's entire thesis is campaigns need tech partners
- Specialization more effective than generalization
- Ongoing monitoring/optimization required

6.3 Fast Facts for Conversations

About HGL:

- Founded 2017, 60+ portfolio companies
- \$50M+ invested, \$85M+ raised by portfolio post-accelerator
- Typical investment: \$100K seed, \$1M follow-on
- 7,500+ campaigns reached, 70M+ voters
- Key contacts: Leah Bae (AI), Gerard Niemira (Product), Betsy Hoover (Strategy)

About 2024 Progressive AI Lab:

- 14 AI grants awarded from 140+ applications
- 3,626 people trained
- \$16M saved, 21,000 hours saved across portfolio
- Finding: 2024 was "experimentation cycle," 2026+ is adoption

About 2025 Elections:

- Three winning campaigns analyzed (VA, NJ, NYC)
- Key finding: "AI tools made this possible at scale"
- Three priorities: Personal messaging, Be everywhere, Empower supporters
- Gap: "Be everywhere" doesn't include AI discovery yet

About Kyanostech Fit:

- Completes AI strategy (creation + discovery)
- Offensive AI (not defensive)
- Complementary to portfolio (Quiller, Grow Progress, etc.)
- Perfectly timed (2026-2028 adoption cycle)

- Validated by research (white papers on bias, adoption)

About Market Opportunity:

- \$600-800M Democratic infrastructure market
- 259 target customers by 2028
- \$6.4M revenue projection
- No direct competitors in AI discovery optimization

6.4 Question Bank (For Your Own Use)

Questions That Make You Sound Smart:

"I've been following HGL's evolution from the Progressive AI Lab to the Higher Ground Institute. How is the research focus changing for the 2026 cycle?"

"Your 2025 elections analysis brilliantly captured how AI enabled 'be everywhere' strategies. Are you seeing portfolio companies thinking about AI as a channel itself, or still primarily as a content creation tool?"

"The complementarity between Quiller's AI content generation and our AI discovery optimization seems natural. Have you seen other portfolio companies successfully integrate?"

"Given that your AI Lab report noted 2024 was experimentation, what signals are you looking for to identify which AI applications will scale in the adoption phase?"

"Reid Hoffman and Ron Conway's involvement suggests strong conviction in the political tech thesis. How do they think about AI specifically in progressive campaigns?"

6.5 Red Flags to Avoid

Don't Say: ❌ "We're going to replace traditional search" ✓ "We optimize for the AI search interface"

❌ "Your portfolio companies aren't thinking about AI discovery"

✓ "We complete what your portfolio has started on the AI side"

❌ "This is the future of political tech"

✓ "This addresses the gap in the current 'be everywhere' strategy"

❌ "We compete with [portfolio company]"

✓ "We integrate with and enhance [portfolio company]"

❌ "Campaigns need to prepare for when AI takes over"

✓ "Voters are already using AI assistants - campaigns need optimization now"

Don't Do: ❌ Hard pitch in first conversation ❌ Criticize existing portfolio companies ❌ Claim to solve problems HGL hasn't identified ❌ Focus on technology over campaign outcomes ❌ Ignore the mission/values alignment

Do: ✓ Ask questions and listen ✓ Demonstrate understanding of their thesis ✓ Position as ecosystem contributor ✓ Focus on campaign wins ✓ Emphasize progressive values alignment

SECTION 7: DECISION FRAMEWORK

7.1 Is HGL the Right Fit for Kyanostech?

Evaluation Criteria:

Factor	Assessment	Score (1-10)
Mission Alignment	Progressive values, democratic outcomes	10/10
Market Access	Direct access to all major Democratic campaigns	10/10
Capital Availability	\$100K seed + \$1M+ follow-on pathway	8/10
Expertise	Deep campaign knowledge, tech + politics	10/10
Timing	Perfect - transitioning to AI adoption era	10/10
Network Value	60+ portfolio, ecosystem connections	10/10
Strategic Fit	Completes their AI thesis	10/10
Competitive	No portfolio overlap, complementary	10/10

Overall Fit: 9.75/10 - Excellent

7.2 Alternative/Complementary Funding Sources

While Pursuing HGL:

1. New Media Ventures (progressive VC)

- Similar mission to HGL
- Smaller check sizes
- Can be complementary to HGL

2. Eric Schmidt Political Tech Investments

- Tech-focused progressive funding
- Larger check sizes for later stage
- HGL connection could facilitate intro

3. Stand Together Ventures

- Civic tech focus
- Less partisan but mission-aligned
- Broader market (both sides)

4. Strategic Angels in Political Tech

- Former campaign managers with capital

- HGL network is full of these
- Seed round participation likely

Strategy: HGL should be primary target, but develop backup relationships. HGL portfolio status makes all others easier.

7.3 Go/No-Go Decision Points

Proceed with HGL Engagement If: ✓ Can ship MVP by Q1 2026 ✓ Can recruit 2-3 campaign practitioners to team/advisory ✓ Can secure 2-3 pilot campaigns for validation ✓ For-profit structure confirmed ✓ Comfortable with mission-driven investor ✓ Willing to focus exclusively on progressive campaigns (vs. bipartisan)

Pause HGL Engagement If: ✗ Product not ready for 12+ months ✗ Team lacks political expertise ✗ No campaign validation possible ✗ Prefer bipartisan market approach ✗ Need capital faster than HGL timeline

Current Status: STRONG GO

- Most criteria already met
- Main gap: team practitioner experience (addressable)
- Timing aligns perfectly with product roadmap

SECTION 8: IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Priority 1: Send HGI Email (This Week)

Action: Email institute@highergroundlabs.com with partnership proposal **Owner:** [Assign owner] **Deadline:** Within 7 days **Success Metric:** Response and initial conversation scheduled

Priority 2: LinkedIn Outreach (This Week)

Action: Connect with Leah Bae, Gerard Niemira, Betsy Hoover **Owner:** [Assign owner] **Deadline:** Within 7 days **Success Metric:** 2/3 connections accepted

Priority 3: Content Development (Next 2 Weeks)

Action: Write "The Fourth Channel" blog post **Owner:** [Assign owner] **Deadline:** Within 14 days **Success Metric:** Published and shared with HGL team

Priority 4: Team Assessment (Next 30 Days)

Action: Identify gaps in team composition vs. HGL criteria **Owner:** [Assign owner] **Deadline:** Within 30 days **Success Metric:** Recruitment plan for campaign practitioners

Priority 5: MVP Timeline (Next 30 Days)

Action: Confirm MVP completion timeline and pilot campaign targets **Owner:** [Assign owner] **Deadline:** Within 30 days **Success Metric:** Clear product roadmap aligned with HGL application timing

APPENDIX A: KEY DOCUMENTS & LINKS

HGL Resources:

- Website: <https://highergroundlabs.com/>
- 2025 Elections Analysis: <https://highergroundlabs.com/2025-elections/>
- 2024 AI Lab Report: <https://highergroundlabs.com/2024-progressive-ai-lab-report/>
- 2024 AI Lab RFP: <https://highergroundlabs.com/ai-lab-rfp/>
- Accelerator Info: <https://highergroundlabs.com/accelerator-program/>
- Portfolio Companies: <https://highergroundlabs.com/portfolio/>
- Jobs Board: <https://jobs.highergroundlabs.com/jobs>

Contact Information:

- General: info@highergroundlabs.com
- HGI/AI: institute@highergroundlabs.com
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/highergroundlabs>

Kyanostech Resources:

- Business Plan: <https://kyanostech-plan-edf.netlify.app>
- White Papers: Available in business plan appendices
- Grok Bias Case Study: Referenced in plan
- Progressive AI Paradox: Referenced in plan

APPENDIX B: TALKING POINTS CHEAT SHEET

One-Liner: "We complete HGL's AI strategy - they funded content creation, we ensure discovery."

Problem: When voters ask AI assistants about candidates, campaigns have no control over responses.

Solution: AI discovery optimization through schema markup and monitoring.

Why HGL: Perfect complementarity with portfolio, addresses gap in "be everywhere" thesis.

Why Now: 2024 validated AI adoption, 2026 is when discovery becomes critical.

Proof: White papers documenting bias, research on adoption patterns.

Ask: Research partnership with HGI, pathway to accelerator program.

END OF BRIEFING

This briefing should be treated as confidential strategic intelligence. Update regularly as new information emerges from HGL.