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Get-Out-The-Vote

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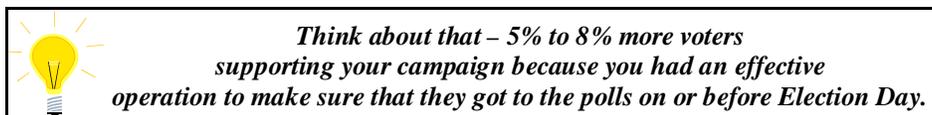
Introduction

"Organize the whole state so that every Whig can be brought to the polls ... Divide the county into small districts and appoint in each a sub-committee. Make a perfect list of all the voters and ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote, keep a constant watch on the doubtful voters and ... have them talked to by those in whom they have the most confidence, and on Election Day see that every Whig is brought to the polls."

-Abraham Lincoln
February 21, 1840

These basic organizational tenets are as true today as they were in President Lincoln's time. Abraham Lincoln understood the role of the precinct leader. Although we live in a technological age, the best way to identify, persuade and turn out favorable voters is still through an organized precinct and Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) operation. The task is the same: to identify our favorable voters, persuade the undecided, and make sure our supporters go to the polls on Election Day.

Election Day is the finish line in your campaign's marathon. Campaigns are about persuasion, but Election Day success is about making sure that the persuaded are actually delivered to the polls. It is here, on the get-out-the-vote battlefield, that elections are decided. Election Day operations and the preparation leading up to the first Tuesday in November will make the difference in your campaign's success. Experience has shown that a well run GOTV operation can add as much as 5% to 8 % to a campaign's overall vote total.



The new reality in today's campaign is that there are many Election Days. Research indicates that as many as 10% to 15% or even 25% of the electorate either cast their ballots early in person or vote by absentee ballot through the mail. Some states have even begun to test voting via the Internet. The reality that a quarter of the electorate may have already made their irreversible decision prior to the polls even opening makes it crucial for your campaign to ensure that every individual voting early has enough information about your campaign to make the decision to vote for your candidate months before Election Day. Meeting this challenge requires advance organization and planning.

Elections are won at the local level and that is where the hard work pays off. In this manual, you will find all the tools you will need to build an effective plan to maximize turnout with an aggressive Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) operation.

Voter turnout starts with a list. It's the most important tool that you're going to have in your campaign. The first step to creating your voter list is to calculate your campaign's *voter universe*, defined as the number of people your campaign expects to vote in your election based on current raw data. This two-step process involves researching past elections and analyzing current voter data. Because this process can be a bit tricky, it will consume the entirety of the next two chapters.

Before you begin to worry about pulling lists of registered voters from your local elections office or deciphering years of precinct data, your campaign will want to review the outcome of the previous election for the office you are now seeking. How many total votes were cast? Was the previous election in a Presidential or Gubernatorial election year? Compare these results with the election in the previous cycle to give your campaign a complete picture of the electoral battleground. If your election is in a Presidential or Gubernatorial year, pay special attention to past results from similar years. Also be sure to take into account any divisive or particularly popular/unpopular ballot measures that may coincide with your election. These will tend to drive up both registration and GOTV efforts as special interest groups work to turn out their constituents.

The next step is to research the *current* voter universe for your district. For example, if you live in a state of five million people with 100 state representative districts, each district will average about 50,000 men, women and children. It is safe to assume that at least 20% of those 50,000 people will be under eighteen years old and, therefore, ineligible to vote.

Assuming these numbers, your campaign then has an *eligible voter universe* of about 40,000 people. In this age of motor voter and issue-oriented registration drives, it is probable that about eighty percent of your 40,000 eligible voter universe will be registered voters. That's a *registered voter universe* of 32,000 people.

In a high turnout presidential election, history has shown that probably no more than half of all *eligible* voters will vote in a state legislative race, so only 20,000 of those 32,000 *registered* voters will actually cast a vote in your election – meaning you will only need 50% +1 or 10,001 votes to win.

With this in mind, your voter universe must be targeted so as to convince enough positive voters to reach your 10,001 mark. Chapter Two details how to successfully target your GOTV efforts so as to maximize your positive voter turnout and, thus, reach your campaign's vote goal.

Once your campaign has identified your *target number*, or the number of voters you believe will be needed to win, you must begin the work of identifying the households to target with your message and GOTV efforts.

Starting with a list of registered voters obtained through either a paid service, your local county Republican Party or your state/county elections office, you will need to follow three simple steps in order to turn that raw data into a usable, targeted, GOTV list.

- 1) Make sure all of your voters are *house-held* so that all registered voters in the same house are listed together. House-holding will allow you to avoid duplicate mailings and will save time and money by targeting homes with the highest number of registered voters first.
- 2) Build your list with as much contact information as possible. Add telephone numbers if your Election Commission does not provide them on the voter registration list, as well as important geographical information, such as a mailing address and precinct number. Biographical information is also valuable in an outreach effort. Often your campaign can purchase voter lists that contain information about voters' gender and age. These are all critical bits of information for your targeting effort. In many cases, you may simply need to go to the yellow pages or search on line for missing voter information.
- 3) A key component to your GOTV success will be in targeting not just *registered* voters, but *likely* voters. Those who have a history of voting on a regular basis are obviously more likely to turn out on Election Day. Most lists of registered voters will provide some form of voter history. Voters who have participated in off-year special elections, and in off-year primary elections, and have voted in three out of the past five elections are usually considered to be the highest propensity voters.

Once you have built this comprehensive list, you are ready to begin your GOTV effort. Depending on the size of the voting electorate in your campaign, it may not be possible to reach every voter as often as you would wish. This reality will require your campaign to establish a priority list of those precincts and voters you will need most for victory. Creating that targeted priority list and precinct guide will be a time consuming process. However, it is one of the more straightforward tasks of your campaign, and it should begin months before the election.

In creating your targeted precinct list you will need, in addition to your voter history list, a precinct-by-precinct printout of the election results from the previous election in your district. In analyzing that data, you will be looking for precincts in which Republican candidates either won or were competitive. Also, note the election results of any particularly divisive initiatives or referendums that may have been on the ballot. This information can be helpful in targeting your GOTV message to each neighborhood's interest. Here are a few samples of how to do effective precinct targeting:

Sample 1

<u>Precinct 101</u>					
President	Bush (R) 160	Gore(D) 80	Nader(G) 5	Buchanan(RF) 2	Brown(L) 1
State Leg. #24	Jackson (R) 140	Cohn(D) 90			

Sample 1 presents a snap shot of a county precinct (101) from the 2000 election cycle. It is obvious that this precinct is a Republican stronghold and should be targeted for attention in your GOTV operation. Unfortunately, not all precincts will be as straightforward as the one seen in sample two illustrates.

Sample 2

<u>Precinct 96</u>					
President:	Bush (R) 90	Gore(D) 105	Nader(G) 2	Buchanan(RF) 10	Brown(L) 15
State Leg. #24:	Jackson (R) 115	Cohn(D) 90			

Sample 2 presents a different view of County Precinct 96 from the 2000 election cycle. If you were to look only at the Presidential campaign, you might not choose to target this area since Democrats outpolled Republicans by more than 10%. However, the stronger than average support for the Reform and Libertarian Parties in this district tends to favor the Republican candidate in the absence of Reform or Libertarian candidates.

Careful examination of Precinct 96 shows that while the voters in the 2000 Presidential race were inclined to support the Democrat, they were not averse to crossing party lines to support down-ballot Republican candidates. These voters are becoming crucial voting blocks that decide elections nationwide and must be included in your GOTV efforts.

Once you have analyzed the precincts that tend to be receptive to Republican candidates, the next step is to sort your likely voter list by precinct number and then order the precincts in relation to their level of past Republican support.

With your targeted and prioritized voter lists prepared, you are now set to begin your Get-Out-The-Vote operation.

This chapter is designed to provide only a *brief* sketch of available avenues for delivering your GOTV message. GOPAC has developed a nationally recognized program on effective techniques for designing and implementing a successful communication program. If you would like a copy of the *Communicating Your Message*, book please visit www.gopac.org. You may download a copy in PDF format.

The number of methods that you can use to take your message to the voters is limited only by the constraints of time, dollars and your imagination. However, all forms of message delivery take place within three broad categories of voter outreach:

- News media coverage
- Paid media placement
- Direct voter contact

These three categories are somewhat self-explanatory. The great advantage of **news media** coverage is that it is FREE. News media is also known as “free media” or “earned media”. All you have to do is convince the news outlets in your area (newspapers, radio, television, magazines, Internet) to publish or broadcast accounts of your campaign’s activities. Your campaign can invite reporters or television cameras into your headquarters for an interview (of course, with the backdrop of busy campaign workers calling voters to remind them of the election). You can also invite the cameras along for a few stops as the candidate knocks on doors in *friendly Republican areas*.

Paid media involves a campaign’s decision to pay for exposure. Broadcast or print advertising in local area news outlets is one form of paid media. Sending mail that contains a message from the candidate or surrogate to large numbers of potential voters is another widely used form of paid media, as are yard signs, bumper stickers, door hangers and billboards that remind the voters of your candidacy and of the date of the election.

Direct voter contact also is largely self-explanatory. Every time a candidate or one of his/her supporters communicates in person with a voter, your campaign has engaged in direct voter contact. Speeches, debates or other appearances before groups of voters can fall under this category, but direct voter contact usually involves a one-on-one encounter between the candidate and a potential supporter. Many candidates will go door-to-door in their communities, introducing themselves to as many voters as possible. Others will station themselves at shopping malls, local sporting events, or bus or train stations in order to meet voters.

Many districts are too large for any candidate to meet all the voters, or even a significant percentage of them. That is why reaching those voters through the media, both paid and news, is so important to your campaign’s ability to communicate its message effectively. Simply put, it’s the difference between winning and losing.

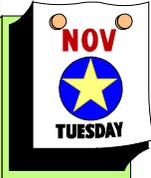
Another critical group that your campaign should be sure to reach is the military voting constituency. Federal, state and local laws allow active duty military men and women to cast votes in a variety of ways. In many cases, active duty men and women are allowed to vote in their “home districts” even after having moved away for active service.

Reaching these voters could mean the difference between celebrating a victory or going home to figure out where things went wrong. The Department of Defense (DOD) offers a free and easy service for candidates for congressional and gubernatorial offices to record messages for those serving in the armed services.

The DOD’s Military Voting Information Center (VIC) provides free access to military personnel and dependents around the country and the world. Additionally the VIC provides access to men and women serving abroad on naval vessels.

The VIC was established to give military personnel a way to find out about elections and public affairs in their home states and congressional districts, but the system currently is of little use because so few officials have recorded messages. If a candidate or representative fails to record a message, the default message is “No message has been recorded.”

To leave a message about your candidacy and the issues you are running on for these voters, contact the DOD’s Federal Voting Assistance Program at (703) 588-8108. They will provide your campaign with a telephone number and a personal identification number that you will need to record your message by telephone. Encourage active duty military in your district to access the VIC by calling 1-800-438-VOTE.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>GOTV FACT:</i></p> <p>According to the Department of Defense, 64% of active duty service members voted or attempted to vote in the 1996 Election - 15% above the national average and 72% of overseas service members voted or attempted to vote in 2000.</p>
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With millions of voters claiming to be “undecided” about which candidates they will support, your campaign must not only identify and target likely voters early in the process, but also be able to identify favorable voters later on. This reality places even greater importance on your campaign’s voter identification and GOTV operation.

Campaigns are always said to be about early organization, and this is true. However, beginning your voter identification operation too early isn’t practical. If voters have not yet heard of your candidate or focused on the election, they probably will not be able to give a truthful and honest answer about how they intend to vote.

For greatest effect start your voter identification process after your campaign has begun to distribute your message and the voters have begun to pay attention to the campaign, usually during the final three or four months. What you should determine during this process is not whether the voter will cast a ballot (you should already have a fairly good idea of who those voters are based on your research) but whether that voter will cast a ballot **either for or against your campaign**. In order to do that, you must have enough volunteers and telephones to do the job.

Once you have compiled your likely voter list, you are ready to begin. There are two kinds of voter identification that are conducted by telephone. Campaign consultants refer to them as the “straight voter identification” contact and the “advocacy” contact.

When your campaign is making straight voter identification calls, you are telling the voter your name, what office you’re seeking, and the party you’re representing. Here is a sample straight voter identification call:



“If the election were held today, who would you be more likely to vote for: Would you vote for Jill Smith, the Republican candidate who’s running for State House, or would you vote for Becky Jones, the Democratic candidate who’s running for State House?”

These straight questions are very useful in narrowing your voter universe. Your final result is a list of likely voters who are inclined to either support or oppose your campaign or who are undecided and thus open to the possibility of supporting your campaign. Consultants often refer to these folks as the Saints, the Sinners and the Saveables.

The second common form of telephone voter contact, the “advocacy contact,” goes beyond simply asking the voter for whom he will vote and offers positive information about your campaign. Below is a sample of a typical advocacy call:



“Hello this is Sue Johnson calling on behalf of Jill Smith’s campaign for State House. We just wanted to let you know that with your support Jill Smith will work to cut our taxes, make State government more efficient and support efforts to better our children’s education through teacher accountability and parental choice. Can I tell Jill Smith that she can count on your support on November 7th?”

Advocacy calls are obviously more biased in their content, but their purpose is not so much to gather completely impartial voter data, but to help move undecided voters into your column. Both the straight voter identification calls and the voter advocacy calls are useful tools when used in conjunction with each other.

Your campaign should first conduct a round of straight voter identification calls in order to identify both your base and the undecided voters. The next round of calls should be advocacy calls to those voters who described themselves as undecided or as inclined to vote for your opponent, the saveables and the sinners, if you will. This is your chance to make the soft sell. Keep accurate files on all calls made and note any voter movement either towards or away from your candidate. Depending on the availability of volunteers, your campaign should ideally make a third round of straight voter identification calls after most of your campaign’s outreach efforts are completed. This final round of calls will be crucial in directing your Election Day Get-Out-The-Vote effort.

If at all possible with available resources, send follow-up mail after you’ve done voter identification. Even if the person is voting for you, send a reinforcing piece of mail with a note of thanks. It is also important to remind your base of the critical importance of your election and of how close the races are predicted to be. Remember, voters like to feel important and know that their vote will count.

Another extremely productive tactic is to send a postcard out to your likely voter universe reminding them of the election, one or two (at most) of your key issues, the date of the election and their individual polling places. This final piece will be time consuming because you will have to sort by precinct and apply a printed label to each card that identifies the individual’s polling place. However, the last thing your campaign will want is to lose the election because your core voters did not remember where their polling places were. Time spent on this effort will be well worth it!

Typically, election turnout is estimated at less than half of all eligible voters. **So every vote really does count!** If someone is undecided, write that prospective voter a note about the importance of the election and reinforce your positive positions on the issues. Always remember to ask undecided voters for their vote. Ask and ask often! Don’t worry about angering voters. **Cheerful persistence is the key to turnout**, and it’s the hallmark of a successful GOTV operation.

Republican precinct leaders are extremely important. In many respects, they are the Republican Party within your neighborhood. If your campaign is in a heavily Republican area, it is likely that there are already established precinct leaders. However, if you are running a challenger campaign in an area that lacks a well-developed Republican infrastructure, you may want to develop and assign leaders to coordinate at least the major precincts in your district. These advocates represent Republican voters in your precinct and play a pivotal role in selecting and electing Republican candidates.

Former House Speaker Tip O’Neil is famous for his saying that “all politics are local,” and because politics is ultimately a personal business, a good precinct leader will try, and should try, to visit every home in the precinct. Studies have shown that this personal, one-on-one contact is more persuasive and effective than television advertisements or mail campaigns.

During the 1998 and 2000 elections, Yale political scientists Don Green and Alan Gerber conducted studies on the effectiveness of personal contact versus other forms of voter outreach. According to their findings, published in the *American Political Science Review*, brief visits by get-out-the-vote canvassers to the homes of registered voters raised turnout by 10 percentage points.

"Personal canvassing is highly effective, much more so than the direct-mail and telemarketing campaigns that have come to replace it," concluded Green and Gerber. "It may make information more salient and memorable, may trigger a feeling of connectedness to the electoral system, or may more credibly convey the urgency of the request."

The effectiveness of personal voter contact was further emphasized a year later. People who received a visit or a direct-mail appeal in 1998 were 40% more likely to vote in a local election in 1999 than those who did not. Not only will your precinct organizing efforts help your campaign, but they will build a foundation for future Republican efforts. In later chapters we will offer detailed plans on organizing an effective door-to-door campaign plan that maximizes available time and covers the largest voter territory.

In conducting your outreach efforts in the community, you and your campaign staff will begin to realize that GOTV messages resonate differently depending on the constituent groups on which they are focused. In order to drive an effective turnout operation that reaches out to all voters, your campaign may want to consider targeting your efforts to specific “coalition” groups.

In the 2000 Presidential Election, George W. Bush succeeded in building a diverse group of coalitions at the local and state level that effectively carried the Governor’s message across the country. One example from the 2000 contest can be found in the enormously successful efforts in attracting Catholic voters to the Republican ticket in targeted states.

Recognizing that more than a quarter of the electorate are Catholics, the Republican Party’s National Catholic Task Force targeted 3 million “active Catholic voters” in 14 states with at least

two phone calls and two pieces of direct mail. Within the 3 million active Catholic voters (those who attend church at least once a week) targeted by the Republican Party in 2000, George W. Bush won more than 57% of their votes.

A further example of effective “coalition” targeting was highlighted by a recently released study conducted by professors for the Pew Charitable Trusts. According to the study, available at www.youthvote.com, days prior to the 2000 election volunteers from a nonpartisan coalition of student and community groups phoned thousands of young registered voters in New York, Colorado and Oregon. The youths were selected from areas within close proximities to college campuses. Those students that were randomly selected to be in the “treatment group” each received a telephone call from a peer encouraging them to vote. The results clearly proclaimed the importance of “peer-to-peer” coalition work as those in the first control group experienced an 8% increase in turnout over those in similar control groups (i.e. those who received no call).

The authors of the study write in their report: “For young voters, nonpartisan contact represents a bridge to electoral participation. They sense that the election is important, but many regard themselves as spectators. They need the authentic encouragement of a peer to become a participant. Evidently, nonpartisan GOTV campaigns provide a link between young voters and the electoral system. A single phone call to 18-30 year olds from their age group can have a dramatic impact on voter turnout in the waning days of a campaign...results suggest that phone canvassing campaigns conducted by young people typically have a profound effect on voter turnout. Each successfully completed call made a single time to a young registrant raises the probability of turnout by about 8%.”

With such positive results, it is clear that whether your campaign is working to attract Catholics, youth voters or senior citizens, having an organized and well run coalitions program can be instrumental to your success.

One final thought: As the 2000 census data clearly illustrated, the face of America is dramatically changing and our ability as Republicans to embrace and engage a diverse coalition of voters in upcoming elections will determine our status as a majority party at both the state and federal levels.

Chapter 12 provides a brief overview of an additional coalition group requiring a specific, targeted plan. Effectively engaging the growing and politically diverse electorate now referred to simply as the “*Hispanic Voter*” will ultimately decide the future of our Party and the national electoral map. And whether it’s the job of a precinct leader or a coalitions director, your campaign must have the necessary tools ready to communicate your message and your vision to the diverse electorate that stands before you.

Precinct leaders normally work in conjunction with GOP campaigns and with those county and state organizations that directly impact the electoral outcome. County and state Party organizations often provide training for precinct leaders, and GOPAC has a successful training series on precinct organization available at no cost to your campaign.

When working with your precinct leader or building a precinct leadership team for the first time, there are several general guidelines you should follow. Remember to keep the precinct leader's goals simple and focused on Election Day. Try to build on the success of previous campaigns and the work of the party organizations in your area. That way you will find people to help and people who already know what to do. Also, be sure to coordinate with other local GOP campaigns that may overlap your district. Finally, be sure to reach out to groups and clubs, such as Republican Women, College Republicans and Young Republicans, that have a ready and willing force of dedicated volunteers.

The first step in becoming an effective Precinct Leader is to acquire the tools and information necessary to do the job. Have your volunteers drive through the precinct and review voter lists looking for people whom they or you may know. The best way to understand the precinct is by canvassing – going door to door. When you walk your precinct, you will likely discover valuable information, such as the best locations for posting signs or meeting locations for volunteers.

Know the geography. Get a precinct map from the Supervisor of Elections office. Find out the exact boundaries of each precinct as well as the boundaries of the local, state and federal districts that encompass the precinct. These maps will also be helpful when you drop literature, an activity that will be discussed later in this manual.

Know the people. Get acquainted with the Republican officials, activists and party workers who live and work in your precinct. You can often recruit workers if they know they will have access to elected officials who live near them.

This kind of precinct organization is effective if you have enough volunteers to implement it. If you are a candidate seeking office in a newly emerging Republican area, you may simply not have the time or the volunteer base to orchestrate such a time consuming operation. Your campaign may need to assign 10 or 15 precincts per volunteer to coordinate. Don't worry; this is very common and can be equally effective.

Your campaign's precinct leaders will be the captains who will lead your volunteer troops in the ground war. On the get-out-the-vote battlefield you will find numerous opportunities for reaching out to voters and sharing your message with them. As the Yale political scientists discovered, direct voter contact is often the most effective, and Chapter 6 gives you detailed advice for implementing your outreach plan.

Next to fundraising, precinct walking is the best use of a candidate's time early in the campaign. Voters like to be asked for their vote, especially by the candidate.

A now famous story that highlights the importance of asking for the support of voters comes from the 2000 New Hampshire Presidential Primary Campaign.

A volunteer for then-Governor George W. Bush was going door-to-door reminding voters of the importance of the upcoming election and asking for their support. Towards the middle of the afternoon the volunteer came across the home of a man with Republican signs adorning his garage and front lawn, including a Bush/Quayle 1992 sign. Figuring he had certainly found fruitful ground, the volunteer bounded up the driveway to find an older man shoveling snow out of the yard. After greeting the man and reminding him of the importance of the election, he asked if Governor Bush could count on his support. The gentleman put down his shovel and told the young volunteer that he probably would have voted for Mr. Bush earlier but he could not now. When asked what had happened to make him change his mind, the older man said that he still liked Mr. Bush very much, but since Senator McCain had come over to his home for coffee the previous morning, he felt obliged to give him his vote. Voters like to be asked by the candidate!

The primary purpose of door-to-door canvassing is to remind voters that there is an election and to familiarize them with your name. Ninety-five percent of those you contact will not remember the issues you talked about, but they will remember the simple fact that they spoke with you. **Keep your message simple and always be sure to mention the candidate's name at least three times.**

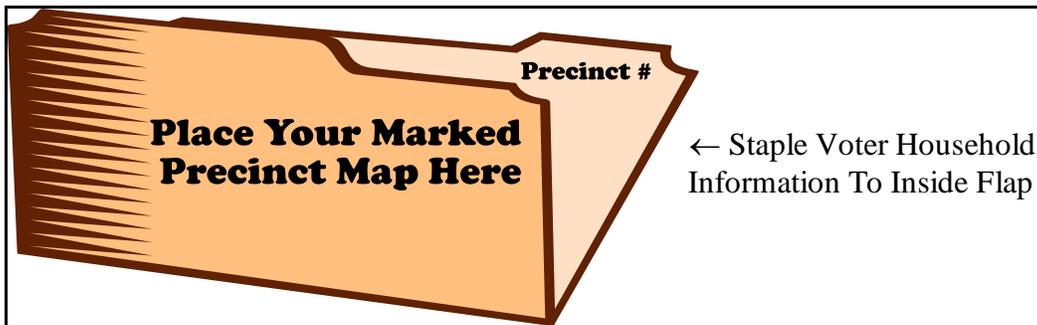
Beginning your precinct walking effort early in the campaign will also allow for valuable feedback from your voter base. If during your door-to-door outreach you hear a particular concern repeatedly voiced by the voters, you may want to look seriously at incorporating the issue into your campaign's message. By using the precinct analysis guides that have been outlined in previous chapters, you will be able to target every likely voter household in your district.

Once you have prepared your likely voter household lists and have organized them by precincts, you should assemble your "precinct packet." Preparing these precinct packets is one of the best early uses of volunteer time.

Once you have targeted your likely voter group, there are three steps to preparing a useful precinct packet.

- Place each precinct's targeted list of homes on a separate sheet of paper. You can simply highlight with a marker the targeted names and addresses on the voter lists obtained from the election office, or you may choose to retype the targeted names and addresses for a more compact list.

- Using either a map maker program that can be purchased on computer CD for around \$20 or using Internet Map Sites such as Yahoo Maps® or MapQuest®, print out a large map of the neighborhood or precinct. It will be helpful to the precinct walkers if you use a marker to define the areas they will be visiting.
- Purchase a large box of manila folders and write the precinct number in the provided tab. Glue the printed map to the outside front flap; staple the corresponding address list to the inside flap; and file in numerical order.



By completing this task months before the election, you will have a ready supply of work for your volunteers to do. In addition precinct walking is one of the most effective uses of a candidate's evening and weekend time. Depending on the size of a precinct, a candidate should try to walk three or four precincts during the week, with an additional four or five on the weekend.

Having the completed packets already targeted and assembled allows the candidate to set his or her own pace and will greatly facilitate any volunteer precinct walking. After all, if you have supporters who want to help but perhaps can't offer financial support or attend a particular function, they can help deliver your message with a personal touch if you can offer them a clearly organized precinct packet to walk with at their leisure. Many will be happy to have the opportunity both to help your campaign and to chat with their neighbors. Detailed precinct packets, along with a door hanger or printed flyer, will maximize your volunteers' efforts and ensure a highly successful GOTV operation.

As you prepare for the inevitable ground war that will precede Election Day, it is critical to plan for the first “silent battle” that will be fought for the critical absentee voter market.

The first step in soliciting absentee voters is to know the law. Have someone who knows and understands election laws gather all of the information needed to understand, early on, the absentee voting process for your area. A mistaken date or filing period deadline could cost your campaign its share of the absentee market and, ultimately, the election.

It is also important to know whether your state law allows you to include campaign material in the absentee ballot solicitation, which forms can be circulated to voters by your campaign, what information must be provided on the forms and other seemingly inconsequential – but highly important – details.

Some states also allow mail-in voting which enables you to check with the election board to ascertain which voters have returned their ballots – so you can make an ongoing effort to re-contact your identified supporters to insure they remember to mail in their ballots before the deadline.



*Remember the two absentee ballot lawsuits following the
2000 Presidential Election in Florida?*

Those lawsuits resulted from an error because the state party contracted with a vendor who sent absentee ballot applications to Republican voters but because of computer error failed to include a voter identification number assigned by the county!

Details matter!!!

Once you have a basic understanding of the dates, deadlines and laws regarding absentee ballot applications and voting, you will want to create a checklist and timeline to allow for the smooth implementation of your absentee ballot application and voting plan. **Mark the key dates on your calendar, including the first day voters can apply for absentee ballots and the dates for actually voting by mail, whether absentee or regular voting.** Absentee and early voting practices have been around for a while, and your State and County party probably have a basic understanding of the law and a plan to get out the absentee vote. However, never take for granted that someone else has completed the entire checklist accurately. Remember the Florida mistakes and don't let someone else's oversight impact your victory!

Find out what the other people in the party are doing, what the party itself is doing at the state and local level, and what the campaigns for Governor, Senator or the State House are doing to drive an effective absentee ballot or vote-by-mail plan. Then tailor your own plan to work in conjunction with the plans of others, always making sure that the unique aspects of your plan are

fully implemented so as to maximize the positive results and to gain the largest percentage of the absentee vote.

Typically, a united campaign would mail absentee ballot applications to all registered Republican voters. *This is an important piece of the absentee program that is often overlooked!* In tight races, turning out your Republican base will be crucial to success, and it is not enough to simply respond to absentee ballot requests. **You must also solicit your base to request absentee ballots and vote absentee.** By actively encouraging your base to vote early, you will free up valuable time and resources needed for targeting undecided and leaning voters before Election Day.

	<p style="text-align: center;">GOTV FACT:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As many as 10% -25% of voters cast their ballots early either in person or by voting absentee via mail. Some states even conduct elections completely by mail.</p>
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There are several ways to effectively solicit absentee voters. One of the most effective, but often most expensive, is to mail voters a note from the campaign along with a personalized, already filled out absentee voter request form. When voters get your mailer, all they will have to do is sign the form and place it in the mailbox. **Be sure you follow the requirements of your state law for the content of absentee ballot application forms. Every state is different.** The form will then be mailed to either your campaign office or directly to the local registrar of voters, depending on the legal requirements in your state. For the purposes of tracking and targeting your absentee market, it is more effective to have the voter return the form to you if that is permitted. Then you can forward it to the registrar of voters. This way, you can be assured that the applications are actually submitted in time for the voter to receive his/her absentee ballot. Again, it is important to know the laws regulating absentee solicitation programs.

This is a sufficiently complex and time consuming program that it may be pertinent only for campaigns which can afford to retain professionals who have a solid understanding of the process and the laws governing these types of programs.

A significantly less expensive way to solicit voters to cast votes via absentee ballot is to mail your Republican voters a note inviting them to request absentee ballots and offering the appropriate contact information. Virtually every state election board publishes official pamphlets which provide instructions on how to request absentee ballots, when and how to vote in advance of election day, how to ensure overseas and military voting, etc. If such publications are available, you can include one of those in your mailing to Republican voters. Voters lead busy lives, and they will appreciate a polite note from you with enclosed information on ideas and ways to make it easier for them to vote. Even if your state doesn't publish such pamphlets, take the time to find out specific alternatives to voting on Election Day and supply suggestions on how voters may find more information. Many states allow voters to apply via the internet or even via fax. Including the web address and contact phone and fax numbers of the election board will allow for a smoother process with fewer mistakes by the applicant.

After a voter has applied for an absentee ballot, it is important for you to follow up. In campaign

circles the follow up is known as the “Absentee Chase.” Campaigns must “chase” the absentee ballot with a direct appeal to the voter, either with a personal telephone call, by direct mail or by having a volunteer make a personal visit to encourage the voter to return his/her absentee or mail-in ballot.

Your local or state elections office should make available on regular days (every Wednesday, twice a week, etc.) updated lists of those voters who have requested absentee ballots and when their absentee ballots were mailed. Your “chase” begins as soon as your campaign knows that a voter’s absentee ballot was mailed. Ideally you should contact your absentee voter either just before, or a day after, the ballot actually arrives.

The absentee voter market is huge and important, and having a well-coordinated and efficient absentee voting campaign is crucial. By knowing those who vote early, you will be able to make significant progress toward your vote goal before the polls even open!

As the chart at the bottom of this page illustrates, Republican candidates do a great job locking in their voters early, but are loosing the late deciders by dramatic margins. Having an ongoing – not peaking, but pulsing – campaign is the key to your success. Remember, know the important absentee voting deadlines, set your absentee vote operation calendar, know the law and garner your campaign’s share of this critical market, and then keep the energy and your intensity up through Election Day.

VOTING TRENDS FROM THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

% Of Vote	Time of Decision Making	Voted For Bush	Voted For Gore
7%	Election Day	43%	47%
11%	First Week of November	42%	49%
12%	Last Two Weeks of October	43%	51%
9%	First Two Weeks of October	41%	57%
12%	In September	53%	39%
44%	Before September	50%	47%

Source: American Viewpoint, Inc

With the *Finish Line* in sight, it is critical that your campaign not fall into the stupor that afflicts many campaigns during the final week. Your energy and your campaign's output will need to be at their highest levels during this final week. Most campaign managers will get little, if any, sleep during the seven long days and nights leading up to the first Tuesday in November. It is important to keep yourself and the campaign staff (volunteers) pumped-up and excited, even though everyone may be physically and mentally exhausted.

During the last week your telephone committee should call all the registered Republicans and those who lean Republican that make up your Voter Universe Goal. They should identify themselves as volunteer Republican precinct workers and remind the voters that next Tuesday is Election Day before asking the following questions:



“Will you need a ride to the polling place?”

If the answer is yes, make a note of what time they would like to be picked up and assign someone to take them.



“Do you know the address of your polling place?”

Make sure they have the correct address.



“Have you applied for an absentee ballot?”

If yes, make sure they have filled it out and mailed it to the proper authorities in time to be received on or before Election Day.



“Will you please vote early on Election Day?”

Explain that voting early is important because it may be necessary to wait in line at the polling place if they vote late in the day.



“Can you help us get out the Republican vote on Tuesday?”

If yes, arrange for them to work your precinct, or, if you have enough Election Day workers, give their names and telephone numbers to the county headquarters.

Your absentee chase effort, GOTV list building and initial voter identification efforts should be completed prior to the weekend before the election. Beginning on the Saturday before the election, or, if your voter universe is smaller, on Sunday, your campaign should begin the final round of GOTV telephone reminder calls. These calls should continue all the way through Monday evening.

Up to this point, this manual has primarily covered volunteer operations for voter identification and turnout. Depending on the size of your campaign's budget, you can contract for a turnkey

voter identification and turnout program. There are consultants who will execute a complete turnout operation. There are many reputable firms – probably some in your city or your district – who have done this work before. GOPAC’s Washington D.C. office can put your campaign into contact with a local consultant specializing in just such an operation. So think through what you can get done with your volunteers and campaign staff, and if you don’t have enough peoplepower to accomplish your goal, you may have to pay a consultant in order to be successful.

The final piece of your Finish Line Strategy is your campaign’s Election Day efforts. Many campaigns fail to realize that their campaign is not over, and the work is not done, until every poll has closed, and *every vote has been counted* in your district.

A particular election-day activity that is often misunderstood and under-utilized is the effort known as poll watching. By Election Day, your campaign should have a fairly accurate picture of those voters who support your campaign. It is vital to your success that those voters get to the polls. Below are four steps to an effective poll-watching plan.

1) Know The Law

Research your area’s laws and regulations pertaining to poll watching. It is your legal right to ensure that all votes cast are legal. Every political party is entitled to have one poll watcher present at all times when the polls are open and through the count and certification of the votes. The watcher must be a registered voter residing within the county and must be certified by the county chairman. Be sure to comply with your election laws and regulations.

2) Assign Workers

Assign poll watchers in shifts of at least three to four hours depending on volunteer availability. These volunteers will be armed with precinct voter printouts and will be responsible for marking off the names of voters as they cast their ballots. If folks are willing and able to work all day at the poll, GREAT. However, you must be understanding of the busy schedules of your volunteers and make it possible for them to help on Election Day for shorter periods of time. Depending on the size of your campaign, you may also want to consider making child care available for your volunteers on Election Day. (Offering day care services can also be a great tool for weekend literature drops and evening phone banking activities.) The primary duty of the poll watchers will be to either perform regular checks on who has voted (every 5 minutes or so) or to keep a running tally as voters check in and pronounce their name out loud to the election board poll worker. The campaign poll watchers will then cross off the names of those who have voted from their voter list provided by the campaign and obtained from the local elections office.

3) Get The Information

Assign “runners” who will check in with each poll watcher on an hourly basis, either in person or via cellular phone, to update the campaign’s master voter list of who has or has not yet voted at the polls.

4) Get-Out-The-Vote

Between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (or 6-9 hours before your local polling place closes) on Election Day, volunteers should call Republicans who have not yet voted, reminding them to go to the polls and offering assistance in getting them there. If enough volunteers are available, your campaign should also make reminder calls to those Democrats and third party voters who have indicated to you in your previous calls that they are supportive. Personally reminding voters to go to the polls is an excellent use of the candidate's time on Election Day. Calling to remind Republicans and other supportive voters to vote may well be the single, most vital activity performed by volunteers and precinct leaders, and can literally mean the difference between winning and losing.

These activities take a lot of time and volunteers. To be well organized, you must begin planning now. Consider this fact: at the polling place alone, if you're covering 100 top polling precincts in your district, if you're asking people to work four-hour shifts, and if the polls are open for 12 hours, you will need 300 people working at the polls. That doesn't include the people who are actually making phone calls, or those who are offering rides to the polls, or those who are answering telephones at headquarters.

As we have demonstrated, Election Day operations require large numbers of people and an efficient organization. If you can coordinate your volunteer poll-watching program with those of other local and state campaigns and with your local party efforts, you will be able to expand your coverage area. High school and college civics classes and the local Republican Central Committee are great sources for Election Day volunteers. Be sure to reach out to these folks several weeks before the election. There will be a high demand for their volunteer services, and you need to get your request in first.



GOPAC SUCCESS STORY: Speaker Dennis Hastert

“GOPAC is critical to maintaining a Republican majority in Congress, and in statehouses throughout the nation.”

I know GOPAC's value firsthand because of the critical role they played in my early political career as they supported my successful run for the Illinois legislature in 1980.”

As the nation watched the election drama unfold in November and December of 2000, one fact became alarmingly clear – voter fraud and Democrat efforts to throw out military votes almost cost George W. Bush the election.

A key part of your Election Day operations must be a well researched “ballot integrity program.” Again, it’s important to know the law. Understand what is allowed and not allowed in the voting process. Are voters allowed to register and vote on the same day? Do they need to show any form of photo or other ID when checking in? Watch for suspicious circumstances such as buses or vans arriving at the polls with groups of voters that your precinct volunteers have never seen before. Know what your state law says about challenging suspected voter fraud at the polling place, and have training sessions BEFORE election day with your poll watchers.

Just as you discovered during your targeting process, there are voters who have been registered for ten years or more who have never cast a vote. It is fairly safe to assume that they will not vote in your election either. Your opposition knows this as well, and one form of voter fraud is simply to send an imposter into the polling place to cast a vote in the place of a voter your opposition is certain will not show up.

Most states have laws regarding “purging” of the voter rolls, a process of removing from the rolls any voter who hasn’t participated in an election for a certain period of time. If your state hasn’t actually purged such voters from the voter rolls, you should discuss with your election officials how it is they intend to insure that the person at the polls is actually the person listed on the voter rolls. Attention to this type of potential fraud is important – but it MUST occur BEFORE the first voting begins, including absentee and early voting.

You have to know the places where ballot integrity has been a problem in the past and have a plan to ensure that it is not a problem again. You need to know in advance what the ballot and voting integrity issues might be and what your remedies under the law are so that you know, personally, where you’re going to need a ballot integrity program.

On the following page is an excerpt from a *Miami Herald* article that illustrates just how serious a problem ballot integrity can be. It is absolutely critical that your campaign be aware of the precincts and polling places where suspected or actual illegal activities have occurred in the past, either intentionally or through honest mistakes. You should have trained volunteers ready to meet the challenges of insuring a clean and legal election.

Chapter 10 offers a detailed plan for effective ballot integrity.

The Miami Herald

2,000 Floridians Voted Illegally Nov. 7

By Manny Garcia & Tom Dubocq

Ninety-year-old Cora Thigpen voted twice in the presidential election -- and would have liked to have voted more. "If I had voted a half dozen times, I would have voted every time for Al Gore," the North Florida resident said.

Joseph Bonner, 21, voted just once -- and he's sorry he did. With a felony drug conviction, the Gulf Coast resident man was prohibited by state law from casting a ballot. "I wish to apologize for voting," he wrote after he got caught. "Please understand that my error was made in good faith."

Their votes were among more than 2,000 illegal ballots cast Nov. 7 by Floridians who signed affirmations swearing they were eligible to vote -- but were not, a review of election records in 25 Florida counties shows. The ballots, which all counted in the election, came from unregistered voters, ineligible felons -- and a handful of senior citizens who voted absentee first, then voted again at their local precinct after swearing they hadn't voted yet.

The voters cast ballots even though their names were not on precinct voter registration lists. All they had to do was sign the affirmations swearing they were eligible to vote. Poll workers never checked, ignoring county rules intended to combat fraud. Elections officials say the workers were overwhelmed by high voter turnout....

The 2,000 illegal affirmation votes add to an already troubling number of bad ballots cast in the Nov. 7 presidential election, which was decided by only 537 votes. In previous stories, The Herald has reported that at least 1,200 felons who had lost their voting rights somehow slipped through and cast ballots. Those counted in the razor-thin election, too.

"Numbers like that are very troubling," said Kurt Browning, the election supervisor in Pasco County. "What this does is chip away at the credibility of our whole elections system..." Browning, who identified 64 illegal affirmation votes in his county, is part of a governor's task force investigating ways to correct problems. While better voting machines could eliminate hanging ballot chads, he wonders what can be done to better train poll workers and inform voters of registration rules.

One possibility is the use of so-called "challenge" ballots issued by poll workers to voters whose registration is in question. Those ballots would be checked before they were tallied rather than afterward, as they were on Nov. 7. The 2,000 newly discovered illegal votes turned up in a review of affirmations filed in 25 Florida counties where records were available. Because ballots are secret -- and many of the voters failed to identify party affiliation on their affirmations -- it's impossible to know precisely how the votes affected the outcome of the election.

Statewide, the bad ballots were cast by about 1,700 people who were not registered to vote in counties where they cast ballots...more than 100 additional felons who had been stripped of their civil right to vote...six voters who cast absentee ballots, then voted at their local precincts...about a dozen people who voted in one county but live in another... and dozens of voters whose registration applications were deemed invalid because they were incomplete or filled out incorrectly.

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As discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, your poll-watching and ballot integrity programs may just be the “saving grace” of your campaign. To implement an effective operation, your volunteers must be well prepared for the tasks that lie ahead.

It is important to recruit reliable volunteers at least one month prior to Election Day. To provide complete coverage, determine how many poll watchers will be needed by drafting a schedule starting at 7:00 a.m. on Election Day with shifts from two to four hours (or all day) for each poll watcher.

Once you have your schedule prepared, you should train your poll watchers approximately two weeks prior to Election Day. (Some State Parties offer excellent programs for training poll watchers. Precinct leaders should check this out before creating their own training programs.)

In this training session, discuss the rights and duties of a poll watcher as they are covered in this chapter. Also provide a set of instructions and reasons why and how a poll watcher challenges a voter. Briefly explain how a well-organized poll watching program supports a successful Get-Out-The-Vote effort through which every Republican and favorable voter is contacted.

It is the duty of the first poll watcher to ask the election officials at the polls for a copy of all the voters who have voted absentee and to pull the names of those voters. Each poll watcher has the responsibility to pull the names from their provided voter list.

Inform your poll watchers that a runner will periodically be contacting them for voters who have not yet voted. After the last pickup, the poll watcher’s duty is to continue to challenge until 7:00 p.m. and verify the count after the polls close.

The poll watchers must be certified and must have the certificate with them on Election Day. Explain that their certificates will be issued when the appropriate person or entity provides them to your campaign. Some states do not have specific laws governing poll watching. In those states that do, you should tailor your poll watching certification program to meet your state’s requirement. Some states require that you need only provide proof of registration or proof of address to be eligible to be a poll watcher.

Regardless of how your state reviews poll watchers, it is a good idea to establish your own ‘official’ poll watcher certification program, especially if your state doesn’t have such a process. You can provide to your local election officials your campaign’s list of official poll watchers and provide certificates to your own volunteers, which they can present to the election officials where they are stationed for the day. This will provide an aura of ‘official’ status and also will indicate that these are individuals who have been trained to make certain that the laws are properly observed.

It is the primary responsibility of the poll watcher to observe voting and counting procedures and to report any questionable procedure to the elections officials at the precinct and at the county

elections office, to the county Republican headquarters and to the campaign headquarters. This may also require challenging any unqualified voter.

The poll watcher has the right to be in the polling place at all times on Election Day from at least 15 minutes prior to opening of the polls through the counting and certification of the votes. The watcher has the right to be seated reasonably close to the area where poll books and registration books are located, and every state establishes certain rules as to how close a poll watcher may be to the poll and registration books, the voting mechanism and the counting machines. State laws also specify the rights of the poll watchers during the voting process, such as the right to hear the judges call out the names of each voter and to have a clear view of the voting mechanisms.

It is important that the poll watcher also be aware of the regulations governing his/her actions. Most states do not allow official poll watchers to engage in *any* electioneering or campaigning or to wear political buttons or other political or campaign decorations of any kind. They are not to engage in any political discussions with voters or advocate for the election or defeat of any candidates. If poll watchers have political bumper stickers on their car, they should be instructed not to park within the locally mandated “no campaign zone” around the polling place.

One of the most important jobs on Election Day (and before) is making certain that only eligible voters cast ballots. Thorough preparation for this serious task will assure that the election is an honest one.



The critical thing to remember about ballot security is that no ineligible voter can be allowed to enter the voting booth without a challenge. Once the vote is cast, it is irretrievable.

It is important to know in advance the process for challenging an unqualified voter, and during your training session you should include some role-playing so that the process is familiar to your poll watchers. Know the process and what the appeal is in the event the precinct officials allow persons to vote who do not appear to be qualified. This could also involve asking a Republican election official to assert the challenge, but that system must be devised in advance.

Any election official, poll watcher, clerk or voter may challenge any potential voter when he has reason to believe that the potential voter is not qualified. Below are the typical reasons why your campaign and your poll watcher should challenge the would-be voter:

- The person is *pretending* to be a particular registered voter.
- The voter has already cast an absentee ballot or has already been issued one.
- The person registered is known to have died or is incarcerated.
- The person has moved from the precinct more than the number of days provided under state law before the Election (the most common challenge) to be eligible to vote in the precinct or is registered in another county.

- The person has not resided in the state for the number of days required to register to vote in that state's elections.
- The person is not a U.S. citizen or will not be 18 years old by Election Day.

Once you or your campaign workers have decided to make a challenge, they must do so according to the regulations established by your state. Normally, the challenge must be made in writing and should include the name of the person challenged, the reason for the challenge, and your name and signature. Be aware of any other procedural requirements for making such challenges. The local election officials should make available to each polling place Challenge Forms for use by poll watchers in registering challenges. If no official forms exist, make sure your campaign has worked in advance of Election Day with the local election officials to develop the forms and procedures which will be accepted in your county and at each polling place. Be sure of your facts. The challenge must be made at the time the elector tries to vote. Remember you must register the challenge *before* the questionable elector casts the vote.

Although your poll watchers should be thoroughly trained, you still need to develop a written instruction sheet that each poll watcher can take with him/her to the polls and to which he/she can refer during the day as events unfold. Include the contact number where poll watchers can be assured of getting someone from your campaign on a direct line to answer questions and provide assistance throughout the day. Make sure it is a phone number that is being staffed by a trained person who can act quickly to advise the poll watcher. Because election challenges and actions take place in a matter of minutes, poll watchers don't have time to be put on hold while a volunteer searches the headquarters for someone who can provide answers to questions.

Finally, be absolutely certain that you are training poll watchers to watch for illegal votes and voters based on legal eligibility for voting and NOT based on any type of ethnic, economic or racial stereotyping or profiling. The last thing you need is some allegation that your ballot integrity program is a thinly veiled effort to keep certain groups of voters away from the polls. But do not for any reason shrink from the task of upholding the law.

Your goal is to ensure that only legally eligible voters are allowed to vote, that only legally cast ballots are counted and that the election was conducted openly, honestly and legally, regardless of who wins.

So, you've done everything just right. You've run a great campaign; you've gotten your voters to the polls and your volunteers and supporters are at the victory party. You are now ready to celebrate! But as the vote totals come in through the evening, the totals are close. Very close. Too close. Oh, so close.

The election is too close to call. You (or your opponent) have won (or lost) by a handful of votes. What next? After the post-election experience in the Florida presidential race of 2000, Republicans should be prepared for an onslaught of post-election challenges like never before.

Just as you have prepared for the Election Day operation, you must be prepared for a post-election challenge. Hopefully, it is a process you will have planned for but will never have to execute. Just in case, however, there are two steps to any post-election strategy that your campaign should be familiar with:

- 1) **Recounts**
- 2) **Post Election Legal Challenges**

Every state has a procedure for conducting recounts and you should know *before* Election Day what that is. Here are six common questions your campaign should have answered prior to the close of the polls:

TOP SIX RECOUNT QUESTIONS



- 1) What is the minimum percentage difference that triggers an automatic state funded recount?
- 2) What is the procedure for requesting a recount if one is not automatically mandated by law?
- 3) Does your campaign have to pay for a recount or post a bond if you request a recount?
- 4) What do you have to demonstrate, if anything, to request a recount (illegal/invalid votes, etc.)?
- 5) What is the time frame for requesting a recount after the polls close?
- 6) Who else can request a recount besides the candidates? Local party? Any registered voter?

It is important to have planned in advance for a recount strategy, even if you think the election is not going to be close. You need to give some thought to your offensive strategy if you *lose* by a close margin – and your defensive strategy if you *win* by a close margin. The best way to do that is to be aware of the process available to you and how your campaign will implement it if it becomes necessary.

While recounts are infrequent, they are not uncommon. The second piece of your post-election strategy, the post-election challenge, is far more rare, significantly more difficult and can be exceedingly expensive. The post-election challenge is a legal proceeding, which requires lawyers, expert witnesses, fact witnesses, and other costly efforts.

The best way to prepare for that possibility is to talk with an experienced election law attorney prior to the election and make certain that you will be comfortable if you need to retain his/her services for a post-election challenge. There is nothing worse than having a thirty-six hour time frame for filing or responding to a legal challenge and then finding yourself flipping through the yellow pages to find an attorney who is competent in this highly technical and specialized area of law.

The state party can help point you in the right direction regarding attorneys who help Republican candidates, and you should take time to become acquainted with those individuals prior to Election Day. It is very likely that you may find a supporter who is willing to serve as your campaign's legal counsel at no charge. Again, as with every piece of your campaign, be sure to know the laws regarding these types of "in-kind" services because you may need to report them as contributions to your campaign.



GOTV FACT:

In the 2000 Election Cycle, both major parties and special interest groups spent a combined total of more than 100 Million Dollars on GOTV efforts.

This chapter is designed to offer the briefest of overviews into proven techniques for communicating to, and turning out Hispanic voters for Republican candidates up and down the ballot.

As the 2000 census data clearly illustrated, the face of America is dramatically changing. Our ability as Republicans to embrace and engage Hispanic voters in upcoming elections will, in large part, determine our status as a majority party at both the state and federal levels.

Much diversity exists in the Hispanic community. From national and geographic variations to disparate economic and generational perspectives, Hispanics in many ways are a reflection of the very differences that make up all of America. Fortunately, one common characteristic is that Hispanic voters offer an enormous potential for the Republican Party. Census data showed that Latinos have among the highest workforce participation rates. Hispanics are more likely than nearly every other ethnic group in the country to live in a traditional two-parent home and have significantly lower rates of divorce. And, as recent polling has shown, Hispanics who have relocated here seek one thing: Economic *oportunidad!* Indeed the fundamental promise of the Republican Party.

Some Hispanics speak only Spanish, others only English, while the vast majority speak some of both. Hispanics are rural, suburban and urban. Lower, upper, and middle class. And while some may have only arrived as immigrants three months ago, others may have been here three generations or longer. We've worked to design this section with all of those thoughts in mind.

Your GOTV TV Message

If you speak Spanish...great! If you don't, don't worry. News stations encounter this everyday and will either work with you if you'd like to brush up on a few phrases your comfortable with, or find appropriate translated voices to dub in over yours. Your best and most effective bet is to utilize a Hispanic or bilingual volunteer from your campaign to communicate as a spokesperson on your behalf. It's a great way to show the depth of support for your campaign, as well as give a hard working volunteer a moment to shine.

Spanish Language and Bilingual Newspapers

There has been an explosion in the numbers of small locally owned and operated bilingual or Spanish language circulars. These are often the main source of local community news in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods and may be distributed as little as once a month or as often as twice weekly.

These small papers are a great way to get to know who local community leaders are and what organizations hold significant influence in Spanish speaking Hispanic neighborhoods. They are also hungry for news and are a great way to augment your 'earned media' plan.

The reporter is also often the editor, copywriter, and publisher so he or she is generally a rather influential person in the community in their own right. Most of the business owners catering to the community probably advertise here – so they can be a great source of leads to other business leaders. And importantly, their ad space is generally pretty inexpensive and greatly appreciated.

If you're concerned about drafting your press release in Spanish to newspapers, television or radio for that matter – don't be. Almost every newsroom will have English speakers. In fact, most Spanish speaking news outlets prefer press releases in English. They are most familiar with the dialects, nuances, language and cultural differences of their audiences and would prefer to translate materials to make the greatest impact!

Precinct Operations

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all more comfortable associating in groups or with things we are familiar with. It's human nature and it's why we humans form the groups that we do. Business owners form Chambers' of Commerce. Green thumbs gather at Garden Clubs. Book worms bond at book clubs.

Imagine that you woke up one morning in a foreign country. Everywhere you looked everyone was speaking Spanish. The currency was different. The banking institutions were different. The government was different. Even the road signs and advertisements at the corner market don't make sense anymore. Just as you're about to throw up your arms in complete frustration you hear a smattering of English speaking voices off in the distance.

Naturally, you approach them. The expression of relief is evident on your face as they share their experiences with you and explain to varying degrees what all of these institutions mean and how they work.

Do you think this might develop a certain level of trust? Of course it will. And to a certain degree you'll have to trust them. Not that you didn't like or trust everyone else around you, it's just that there was little connecting them to you.

We are of course drawing a parallel between this story and what many Hispanic immigrants are experiencing in every state in the country. And just like immigrants at the turn of the last century, Hispanics are building networks of commonality and trust with people who share some life experience with them. This is not to say that if you're not Hispanic you're not trusted – what we're saying is human nature pushes us all to seek comfort in the familiar.

What we are pointing out is that to make inroads into the Hispanic electorate, especially in neighborhoods with many immigrants and recently naturalized citizens (and voters) you should seek out those who are leaders in the community and ask them to assist in your effort. The 'endorsement' of this type of person usually means an exponential amount of growth in the number of votes you can garner. People will begin to see a reflection of themselves in your campaign – that's the beginning of building support.

It's also an underutilized method of getting out the vote. Many opinion leaders have the ability to spread news quickly. Be it about an apartment to rent, a job vacancy, the need to register to vote – and most importantly, who to vote for. As stated in other chapters on GOTV, the most effective manner of reaching people is through door-to-door in-person contact. Not even the most effective piece of direct mail or radio ad can overcome a handshake and a trusting smile. Think back to the story we used about your waking up in a foreign land earlier and ask yourself 'What would have made a difference and had the greatest impact for me in this situation?'

Precinct Walking

Obviously, not all Hispanic neighborhoods are Spanish speaking or inhabited by recent immigrants, but for those that are it makes sense to take your GOTV and/or advocacy message alongside someone from the community, especially if there is a language barrier. Walk door-to-door with someone who is recognizable, if possible, but who can at least serve as a bridge by interpreting and answering questions.

Make sure that you have set aside enough time early on in your campaign to recruit a strong cadre of bilingual phone bankers and precinct walkers. Voters in these neighborhoods will be impressed and encouraged that people from their neighborhood are supporting you and that you considered their community when setting out to campaign.

Hand Out Materials and Brochures

Make certain that your collateral materials and brochures are available in Spanish and English. A truly effective campaign will have bi-lingual pieces that incorporate both languages into one piece.

A few notes to keep in mind:

Never assume that a voter speaks only one language or another exclusively. There are many Hispanics who speak no English at all, just as there are many who speak no Spanish at all. It can be taken as offensive to assume what language one speaks because of the sound of their last name. Materials targeted to these areas should incorporate elements of both languages – a truly bilingual piece. And the reader will usually be impressed at your sensitivity to their culture.

When translating, don't overestimate your Spanish language capabilities and try to go it alone – even if you speak Spanish or took it in high school. Hire a professional translator and even then run it past a few friends and volunteers from the community. Every person's translation will be a bit different – your best bet is to get approval from at least three or four sets of eyes.

Understand that the most effective materials are sensitive to and recognize cultural as well as linguistic differences. For this reason strict translations don't always work and in some cases can be cause for offense or embarrassment.

Two Examples Of Translations Gone Awry:

The Chevy “Nova” is a classic example of a translation problem. Only after a serious marketing effort by Chevrolet to Hispanic consumers did the company realize why this particular model was having difficulty selling within the Hispanic market – in Spanish *No Va* means “It doesn’t go”.



The infamous “Got Milk?” ad was a tremendous hit with English speaking audiences but never used in Spanish. Why? A direct translation asks “Are you lactating?”

Ballot Integrity and Poll Watching

As stated in an earlier chapter, when focusing on ballot integrity you must work diligently to be absolutely certain that while you are training poll watchers to look for illegal votes – they must not base legal eligibility for voting on any type of ethnic, economic or racial stereotyping or profiling. It is your goal to ensure that only legally eligible voters are allowed to vote, that only legally cast ballots are counted and that the election was conducted openly, honestly and legally, regardless of who wins. It is also your responsibility to represent your campaign in a politically sensitive and astute manner that will prevent you from being attacked, rightfully or wrongfully, as seeking to prevent Hispanic or other minorities from having their votes counted.

Flippant accusations of racism unfortunately have become a standard charge levied by Democrats in close contests. It was a tactic used during the Presidential race in Florida in heavily African American precincts (and created an uncomfortable situation for Democrats within the Hispanic community because Hispanics in Florida tend to be Republican and most Hispanic precincts went for Bush). Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly common in congressional races where Hispanic voters are increasing and in races that are becoming closer. A campaign would be wise to anticipate actions it can take beforehand to prevent accusations from occurring.

First, it’s basic common sense that charges of racism, especially unfounded ones, are difficult to make against someone of the same race or ethnicity. It’s also difficult to refute those charges when someone does not share the same race as the accuser. For this reason, and a host of other practical ones, have Hispanic members of your campaign serve as poll watchers in Hispanic precincts. These volunteers will also be more likely to understand cultural sensitivities and characteristics that could benefit the campaign’s GOTV efforts. Hopefully they will have bilingual capabilities that will be of benefit in the event of a challenge.

Second, a highly publicized meeting prior to election day with Hispanic community leaders – both supporters and opponents – should be held to inform them that your campaign will be engaged in efforts to turn out Latino voters. You do not need to delve into specific campaign strategies or targeted precincts, simply notify them that Hispanic staffers, volunteers and others

from your campaign will be seeking to turn out Hispanic voters since you're confident they will be supporting you anyway!

The meeting should also speak to ballot integrity in all neighborhoods as well as the necessity to ensure that ballots are cast appropriately so that every vote is counted. Invite the press and media (especially Spanish media) to raise awareness of the fact that all parties are seeking higher turnout, properly cast ballots and a positive successful outcome. Write a letter to the editor signed by you and your opponent pledging to work towards the achievement of these three goals. This will put everyone on notice that your campaign intends to win in a forthright and upstanding manner while forcing your opponents to think twice about casting illegal ballots – or making false accusations that you are trying to prevent voters from voting.

Challenging Ballots

In a previous chapter you have been notified of typical reasons why a voter might have their vote challenged. If the unfortunate event of a ballot challenge arises under these or other circumstances, some common occurrences might arise that the poll watcher should be aware of.

It is very common for Hispanic immigrants to use both their maternal and paternal last names interchangeably. This is a dynamic that has caused much confusion among U.S. public and law enforcement agencies. The reasons for this are varied but generally relate to customs in Mexico and other Latin American countries where government agencies and church officials record data differently. For this reason Hispanics will often sign their name differently than print it.

For example they may sign a check as “Juan Lopez Garza” or simply “Juan Garza” but the same individual will sign a rental or job application as “Juan Lopez”. While there is absolutely no intent to defraud anyone, confusion is often the result. Not the least of which is on the part of the signator and potential voter. (Remember the story of being in a foreign land and not understanding the ways of governmental institutions?)

This has proven particularly problematic in neighborhoods with many Hispanic voters. And it's the reason many Hispanic married couples go by different last names. In Los Angeles County, for example, a new registrant is asked to *print* their name on a voter registration card and yet is asked to *sign* their absentee ballot or at the polling place to receive their ballot.

In the event of a challenge the last names may not match – even though they are the same person and have every right to vote. If the first names match it is possible that the person is one in the same. Keep on the lookout for middle initials that match and other data that may shed light on the situation.

Of course, every state and county has different procedures and processes. Become very familiar with those in your area and as your campaign makes greater and greater inroads into the Hispanic community, continue to ask about how you as a candidate and future officeholder can assist Hispanic voters in exercising one of their most basic rights – the right to vote.

Conclusion

The tasks laid out in this manual may at first glance seem daunting. Hundreds of volunteers, thousands of dollars, and months of your life will be spent working on a political campaign.

Indeed the task is not for the faint of heart. However, the sheer fact that you have agreed to run for elective office or to help a Republican campaign in order to make a difference in your community, your state and your country says something about you.

As you move forward in your campaign, remember that there will be bumps in the road. People will discourage you in your efforts, and at times you may lose track of the bigger picture. *Remember: every vote is gained one at a time.* If you discover that an individual will not be supporting your efforts, try and persuade them with your message, but do not be discouraged. There are thousands more to visit.

Often the most successful way to keep your chin up during the campaign is to constantly remind yourself that you are not in this alone. Sending “thank you” cards to supporters and calling major donors to personally offer your gratitude is a very positive and rewarding way to keep yourself motivated and on track.

There are other useful things that your campaign can do to enhance voter turnout that were not covered in this manual. “Yard sign blitzes” the night before the election can be a helpful reminder of the election. Door hangers and flyers delivered to households where there are favorable voters the night before the election can also be very helpful and are a great campaign technique as a final get-out-the-vote effort. Undoubtedly, as you progress throughout your campaign you will soon discover what works and what doesn’t work for your particular situation.

And don’t forget, for more than a generation GOPAC has been the national leader in training, recruiting and electing Republicans for state and local office. We are here to help. At the end of this manual you will find a tear-out sheet to request additional training materials or to schedule onsite trainings in your community.

GOPAC.com, our online presence, offers many additional insights into campaign strategies as an online virtual community for Republican activists, candidates and elected officials to continually share ideas on what works and what doesn’t work in political campaigns.

Good luck. Now let’s Get-Out-The-Vote and Win!

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Time Line/Check List



Build Your Campaign Calendar

Date: The first day of your campaign

- You should obtain or create a detailed campaign calendar, complete with filing deadlines, financial disclosure dates, absentee request deadlines and early voting times.



Identify Your Voter Universe

Date: Up to 6-8 months before Election Day

- Pull the election results from the previous campaign for the seat you are now seeking and analyze the total votes needed for victory.
- Pull the raw voter data for your district to discover any trends that may not be clear from previous years election results (i.e. an increase or decrease in voter registration numbers).
- Calculate your total vote goal – the number of votes you will need to be successful.



Communicating Your GOTV Message

Date: Up to 4 months before Election Day

- Begin to implement your GOTV message. After building your campaign budget, work within the established framework to reach out to the voters and introduce your campaign and the importance of the upcoming election.



Phone Banking/Targeting

Date: Up to 4 months before Election Day

- Begin to further narrow your voter universe by locking in those voters who are solidly in your camp, enabling your campaign to focus precious resources on the undecided and leaning voters.



Precinct Operations/Retail Politics

Date: Up to 4 months before Election Day

- Organize your precincts and begin training your volunteers for the tasks that are ahead.



Absentee Program

Date: Up to 2-4 months before Election Day, depending on when voters can first apply

- Two weeks before the first day voters can apply for absentee ballots, your campaign should send all favorable voters (already identified) a notice asking that they vote absentee.
- Chase the absentee ballots immediately after they have been mailed and follow up with a phone call.



Get-Out-The-Vote Final Push/Election Day Activities

Date: Final week to two weeks of the campaign through Election Day

- Call voters until the polls close offering rides and driving up your base's turnout.
- Implement poll watching and ballot integrity program with trained volunteers.
- Plan Election Night "Thank You" Party!

Appendix 2: Estimated Volunteer Needs

Job	Number Of Volunteers Required	Date Of Job	Date For Training
Voter Identification Block workers, Telephoners			
Registration Telephoners Drivers Babysitters	_____ _____ _____		
Special Ballots Absentee Sick & Disabled Military	_____ _____ _____		
Voter Turn-Out Telephoners Drivers Babysitters Checkers Runners	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____		
Ballot Security/Poll Watching Poll Watchers Headquarters Staff Runners	_____ _____ _____		
Other 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____	_____ _____ _____		

Appendix 3: Volunteer Application Form

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM	
NAME _____	
PRECINCT/WARD (If Known) _____	
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____	STATE _____
ZIP CODE _____	
(H) PHONE: _____	(W) _____
CELL _____	
FAX _____	EMAIL _____
I am willing to help with:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking My Neighborhood Precinct	<input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Entry	<input type="checkbox"/> Driving
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Babysitting
<input type="checkbox"/> Filing	<input type="checkbox"/> Poll Watching
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Voter Registration
<input type="checkbox"/> Receptionist Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Mailings
<input type="checkbox"/> Door-To-Door	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Events
<input type="checkbox"/> Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Talent
<input type="checkbox"/> Art Work	
I prefer to work:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wherever Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> At Home
<input type="checkbox"/> At Campaign Headquarters	<input type="checkbox"/> In My Own Precinct
I am available on the following days and times (list days of the week and preferred hours or specific dates):	
MONDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
TUESDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
WEDNESDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
THURSDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
FRIDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
SATURDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
SUNDAY, _____	from _____ until _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I am not available on Election Day.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am available on Election Day to:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Distribute literature at the polls	
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive	
<input type="checkbox"/> Baby-sit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact voters door-to-door	
Thank you for any help you can offer. Together we will achieve victory on Election Day!	

Appendix 4: Election Day Volunteer Schedule

ELECTION DAY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Precinct Number _____ Chairman _____ Contact number _____

Volunteers to put Poll Signs Up At 5:30 a.m.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

POLL WATCHERS

Inside poll from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Must be registered voter in precinct:

6:00 am to _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

_____ to _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

POLL WORKERS

Outside poll from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Hand out literature

6:00 am to _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____

_____ to _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____