

2021 11th Annual Conference *"Take the Offensive"*

January 30th, 2021 at the Embassy Suites Hotel
9000 Washington Square Road, Tigard, Oregon

CONFERENCE AGENDA

9:00 – 9:50

OPENING CEREMONIES / MORNING PRESENTATIONS

- 9:00 The Hon. Jeff Kropf - Flag Pledge, Moment of Prayer and Reflection, and Honoring Veterans both Present and Online.
- 9:10 WLN Exec. Dir. Richard P. Burke - Greetings, Introductions, and Conference Announcements.

9:20 – 9:50

2021 Legislative Preview and How to be a Citizen Lobbyist

Kim Thatcher, State Senator and GOP Nominee for Oregon Secretary of State (2020).

10:00 – 10:50

Keeping Our Eyes on the Ball – The Kind of Government We Should Have and Expect.

Dennis Linthicum, State Senator.

11:00 – 11:50

The Tactics of Saul Alinski and How to Neutralize Them

Tom Cox, Fmr. Libertarian Nominee for Oregon Governor (2002)

12:00 – 1:20

LUNCH PRESENTATIONS

- 12:00 Richard P. Burke, WLN Exec. Dir., Announcements, Awards.
- 12:20 Mike Nearman, State Representative, Raising your first \$2,500 to be used in a local campaign or for an organizational project.
- 12:50 Liliya Zhukov, Secretary, Slavic Vote PAC, The purposes of Slavic Vote, 2020 Accomplishments, Plans for 2021, and Coordination with Western Liberty Network.

1:30 – 2:20

Running for, Winning, and Serving in Local Non-Partisan Office

Richard P. Burke, Western Liberty Network Executive Director, Winner of Seven Contested Elections for Local Non-Partisan Office, and Former Chair of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

2:30 – 3:20

Using Social Media in Campaigns for Local Nonpartisan Office

Greg Burnett, Owner, Burnett Media Group.



3:30 – 4:20 How To Respond to Executives Who Exceed or Abuse Their Power or Authority

Tootie Smith, Chair, Clackamas County Board of Commissioners.

4:30 – 5:20 CLOSING PRESENTATION

9:00 Announcements, Updates and Reminders.

9:10 Former Senior Economic Advisor to Pres. Trump, Stephen Moore.

5:20 – 5:30 CLOSING COMMENTS / ADJOURNMENT

LUNCH BUFFET AND OTHER INFORMATION

LUNCH BUFFET. A “Rosso Veloce Pizza Package” (cheese, peperoni, and vegetarian) will be served during the working lunch. The pizza will be served with a Garden Salad or a Caesar Salad, plus a chocolate chip cookie and bottled soda or water. This is off a limited menu due to Covid-19, so it is not as elaborate as usual. That said, the food here is excellent. – you never get “rubber chicken” at a WLN event!

FINE PRINT. All aspects of this conference and its planned agenda are subject to change without notice. Individual presenters may be affiliated with or employed by other organizations. Their participation in this conference or associated events is not to be construed as constituting a formal association with or endorsement of WLN or vice versa. Ideas, opinions, and objectives expressed by featured speakers and presenters do not necessarily reflect those of Western Liberty Network. WLN is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization. Although WLN works to advancing limited-government principles, it does not support or oppose any candidate for public office, political party, specific legislation, or ballot measure.



Scheduled speakers, clockwise from the top left: Fmr. Trump Senior Economic Advisor **Stephen Moore** (via remote), State Senator **Kim Thatcher**, WLN Exec. Dir. **Richard P. Burke**, State Representative **Mike Nearman**, former Libertarian nominee for Oregon governor **Tom Cox** (via remote), Chair of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners **Tootie Smith**, Slavic Vote PAC Board Member **Liliya Zhukova**, State Senator **Dennis Linthicum**, and Burnett Media Group owner **Greg Burnett**. Fmr. State Representative **Jeff Kropf** will conduct opening ceremonies.

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WESTERN LIBERTY NETWORK

Dear Fellow Patriot and Lover of Liberty,

Welcome to WLN's Eleventh Annual Leadership and Activist Training Conference! This event has become the premiere training event for people like you who want to re-weave the fabric of our political culture and bring about *enduring* change in support of limited government. WLN is a non-partisan 501(c)3 organization that provides training for activists who want to run for local office, become a citizen lobbyist, or simply learn how to be a more effective volunteer. We thank:

You. Simply by being here, you show a willingness to step up and help realize our founders' dream of a free self-governing society. If you apply the training available at Western Liberty Network, you will be more effective. In addition to the training you will receive here, WLN provides FREE live on-site group training along with the many resources available on the TRAINING tab of www.westernlibertynetwork.org.

Remember... ENDURING change can only be realized by changing our underlying political culture, and that can only be done from the grass roots. That means *you* and others like you are the ones that actually hold the keys to our nation's future. And that is how it should be.

Event Sponsors. Please take a good look at the sponsor sheet contained in this packet. Without these individuals and organizations, this conference could not take place. Many of them are financial supporters of WLN. Others provide logistical assistance and use their resources to make WLN training opportunities known. All of us associated with WLN including staff, board members, and advisory committee members are thankful for, and are proud to be associated with, these sponsors.

My Wife. Last but not least, I would like to publicly thank my wife, **Natasha Burke**, for being my partner, supporter, adviser, companion, ambassador, and friend. **We have been married for eleven years** and each year has been better than the last. Together, we have accomplished much more than I could ever have managed without her. **Also, she's much more popular than I am!**

You Can Help. If you find value at today's conference, consider using the enclosed envelope to make a contribution to WLN (hand the envelope to Natasha or I before you leave). Or, you can make an online contribution to WLN by clicking on the SUPPORT tab at the www.westernlibertynetwork.org website. **REMEMBER - All contributions are fully tax-deductible. For now, just enjoy the conference. Thank you!**

Yours in Liberty,



Richard P. Burke, Executive Director
Western Liberty Network

Enclosures



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WLN Conference Co-Sponsors

The following individuals and organizations have agreed to co-sponsor this conference. Without their support this conference would not be possible. Where you can, please offer these individuals and organizations your support. Thank you!

Mrs. Key Elton
Senator Kim Thatcher
Senator Dennis Linthicum
Rep. Mike Nearman
Senator Tim Knopp

FreedomWorks





FEATURED SPEAKER EVALUATIONS

Each year we ask conference attendees to complete and submit anonymous evaluations of our presenters and their presentations. This feedback helps us make future conferences better. **PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND LEAVE IT ON THE REGISTRATION TABLE WHEN YOU LEAVE.** *With respect to each speaker, please circle “Agree,” “Neutral,” or “Disagree” next to the evaluation criteria shown at right. There is also space to provide comments about each speaker’s presentation. Thank you for helping us make WLN conferences better and better!*
FIRST: How did you find out about this conference?

State Senator Kim Thatcher

TOPIC: *2021 Legislative Preview and How to be a Better Citizen Lobbyist*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

State Senator Dennis Linthicum

TOPIC: *Keeping Our Eyes on the Ball – The Kind of Government We Should Have and Expect*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

Tom Cox, Leadership, Management, and Innovation Consultant

TOPIC: *The Tactics of Saul Alinsky and How to Neutralize Them*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

State Representative Mike Nearman

TOPIC: *Raising Your First \$2,500 for a Local Campaign, Organization, or Project*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

Liliya Zhukov, Board Member, Slavic Vote

TOPIC: *Purposes of Slavic Vote, 2020 Accomplishments, Plans for 2021, and Work with WLN*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

Richard P. Burke, WLN Executive Director

TOPIC: *Running for, Winning, and Serving in Local Non-Partisan Office*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

Greg Burnett, Owner, Burnett Media Group

TOPIC: *Using Social Media in Campaigns for Local Nonpartisan Offices*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

Chair, Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, Tootie Smith

TOPIC: *Responding to Executives Who Exceed or Abuse Their Power or Authority*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:

Stephen Moore, Former Senior Economic Advisor to President Donald Trump

TOPIC: *The Importance of Limited-Government Grassroots Action in the New Political Environment*

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker presented the material effectively.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker were knowledgeable in the subject matter.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker managed their time well.
AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	The speaker provided applicable examples/demonstrations.

COMMENTS:



Lobbying: The Heart of It All

"Lobbying" public office holders, or trying to convince them to do something (or NOT), is at the very heart of citizen activism. There are many ways to lobby public office holders, referred to here as "electeds", but this unit will focus on personal meetings. **There is no form of citizen lobbying more effective than a personal meeting.** This unit will tell you how to lobby elected officials and convince them to vote your way on important issues. Following the advice in this unit will not guarantee success, but it will make you an effective citizen lobbyist - You will succeed more than you fail.

Set an Appointment and Be On Time

If you simply show up at an elected's office without an appointment, you probably won't get one - at least not on the same day. This is especially true of legislators who have jam-packed schedules. Occasionally, you might get lucky and the elected will say, "Hi, come on in!". But unless you already have a personal relationship with the elected, such opportunities are rare. But remember - even when you are granted an instant appointment, you may be disrupting the schedules of the elected and his or her aides (not a good way to start).

Make an advance appointment. You can almost always do this by phone. If the elected has no time available or if the earliest available time seems too far away, it may make sense to also try to make an additional appointment with the elected's senior staff member. The key is to make your issue an active issue in the elected's office. **When you get an appointment, BE ON TIME.** The schedules of electeds, particularly legislators, are usually packed. Still, five or ten minutes early - sometimes you will get in early and get a little extra time.

Staff and Aides - The Gatekeepers

Many electeds, especially at the state legislative level and above, hire staff to help them with their day-to-day work. It is VITAL that you develop a good relationship with staff and aides.

Staff members are the gatekeepers to the electeds you want to lobby. They have regular and easy access to electeds and often influence their

decisions. They control the schedules of their electeds. Because electeds often don't have time to read every piece of legislation, they sometimes ask their aides how they should vote - and usually follow their recommendations. **If you can win over the staff, you will often win over the elected too.**

Some staff members and aides are experienced while some are very young and inexperienced. In either case, don't underestimate their ability to help or hurt your cause. Staff and aides are used to being treated disrespectfully. They are usually underpaid. But if *you* treat them with respect, you will stand out from the many people who want something from them and treat them like dirt. Staff and aides will be more likely to remember you in a good light. They will be more inclined to work you into their elected's schedule or represent your position favorably.

① Observe Basic Etiquette

When you visit an elected, always look sharp.

While it is not usually necessary to dress like a business person, so-called "business casual" attire is usually appropriate. Always address the elected by their title - "Good afternoon, senator," or "Thank you commissioner, I wasn't aware of that." If you are talking to a staff member, address them by their surname: "Thank you Ms. Smith, have a nice day."

As they become familiar with you, electeds and their aides will often ask that you use their first name. Even then, resist doing so unless they insist. Although they are unlikely to admit it, most electeds like to be addressed by their title.

Don't be disruptive. If you are waiting to see an elected before an appointment, be sparing in your smalltalk. They are often very busy and, while they want to be polite to you, they need to get their work done. Their body language will tell you what to do. Don't try to look around at their computer screen (yes, people have done this), or otherwise intrude.

Always be polite and professional, even if you are angry. NEVER lose your cool even in the unlikely event that an elected or an aide shows disrespect to you. When your appointment is over, leave gracefully. If the elected wants you to stay beyond your appointment's scheduled end time, he or she will tell you. Always tell the truth, never exaggerate a position or misrepresent a fact.

Be prepared for your meeting. Before your appointment, be very clear with yourself about what

you want to accomplish. **Be clear about the central principle you are advancing.** If you need supporting information, have it ready and organized. Otherwise, your time and that of your elected will be wasted and it will be harder to get an appointment in the future.

Finally, thank your elected and his or her staff for their time. While electeds work for us, it is human nature for people to consider their time valuable. **If a staff member did a special favor for you, a "Thank You" note will help to ensure you will get preferential treatment in the future.**

② Tell Them Who You Are

When you meet with your elected, he or she will probably know your name. Introduce yourself anyway, unless you are familiar with the elected. **Tell them WHO you are that makes you worth listening to.** For example, if you are active in your PTA, your elected will know that you are active in your school and know a lot of people. The same holds true if you are a member of a civic club, organization, or service society. Telling them you are a member of Oregon Prosperity Network will let your elected know you are part of a large group. If you live in the district or zone they represent, tell them. **Remember: Electeds respond to political power and they want to know how much you have.**

③ Tell Them Why You're There

After you have told them who you are, tell them why you asked for a meeting. For example, "I have come to speak with you about House Bill 9999 which I think will make it hard for parents to put their children through college," or, "I have come to support House Bill 9998 which will create thousands of family wage jobs in my community." The elected will then know your name, why he/she should listen to you, and why you are there.

④ Tell Them Your Story

Consultants and professionals are great at showing graphs, charts, and focus group results. **But you might be astonished to know that, in the world of politics, few things have the impact that a personal story does. Politicians respond to political power.** Consultants and attorneys may be better armed with statistics and elaborate scenarios, but the personal stories of constituents who know people in their communities **REPRESENT VOTES.**

This is your chance to personalize the issue you are working on and make an impact on the elected or staff member you might be talking to. For example: "My father grew up in my home town manufacturing

widgets. So did his father. I am a third generation widget maker. The widget industry is key in my town and is important to our identity, drives our town's economy, and is part of our heritage. If this ordinance passes, you will shut down our industry. I will have to pull my kids out of school and move. This ordinance will kill my community and end a way of life that has endured for one hundred years. People like me will have to take unemployment and other forms of public assistance. It is humiliating, and I know my neighbors agree."

The objective here is to attach a human face and a human story. **By bringing emotional and intellectual impact to your position, you bring political power to your position. As you prepare your personal story, think about the central principle involved and articulate this principle clearly when you testify.** Such principles could be "freedom", "choice", "facilitating prosperity"...this will vary depending on your issue. But always be clear about the principle at the heart of your story, with those you are speaking to and with yourself.

⑤ Tell Them What You Want

Finally, and perhaps most important, TELL YOUR ELECTED PRECISELY WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO. As you conclude, always say something like, "These are the reasons I urge you to vote for Ordinance 32-3 and help preserve jobs in my community," or "So for these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote AGAINST Senate Bill 8888 and protect charter schools throughout Oregon". Bottom line, tell them what you want them to do.

You are a salesperson when you lobby an elected. Ask for their commitment. You might get it, you might not - but you will get an idea about where you stand. Your product is your position on an issue, and you are trying to convince the elected you are talking to, or his/her staff, to adopt your position instead of someone else's. Always ask for the sale.

Other Ways to Lobby

There are other ways to lobby your legislature. Emails work, but they are often discarded unless the recipient knows you or your email is one of many received on a topic. Faxes are better than emails. Phone calls are better than faxes. **Personal meetings are the best. When possible, DO EVERYTHING and ask your friends to do the same.**

In the long run, no matter how you lobby, following this formula will lead you to success. ☑



Up Your Lobbying Game: Put Yourself in Their Shoes

For any grassroots organization or individual activist who wants to be politically effective over time, it is important to learn how to effectively lobby public office holders. If you can persuade them to introduce, support, oppose, or amend proposed legislation, you will be able to move policy. For those who wish to be taken seriously by elected officials, it is important to learn how to see things from their perspectives and try to see things through their eyes – not just yours.

① Be Politically Realistic

It is important to remember that public officials, contrary to public opinion, are actually *human beings* with all of the egos, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses everyone else has. Remember that when lawmakers commit to taking strong positions on any issue you care passionately about, they will likely invest a lot of resources and take big risks to their positions in society, their careers, and political futures. Generally speaking, the more difficult the issue, the higher the risk.

Even more to the point, **failure always exacts a political cost**, and often personal and professional costs too. Here is an example:

Supporting a issue to reign in excessive public pensions can make a legislator look weak if he or she cannot advance the issue, and a perception of weakness held by other legislators can make it harder for him/her to advance other important issues. If the bill runs counter to the position of the company he or she works for when the legislature is not in session, support of the bill can compromise his or her career outside the legislature. And, don't forget, things might get cold at home if his or her spouse has a relative living on a public employee pension.

Perhaps, ideologically, none of these issues should matter. Ideally, an office holder will act solely on principle. Unfortunately, other motivations often determine what an office holder will do. Remember that many office holders are able to get elected because they are skilled in working out the consequences of decisions they make – they're not going to stop making

political calculations once they are elected. As frustrating as this can be to passionate activists, this dynamic can be overcome by showing them how supporting you will help them to secure and build their political position, reputation, influence, and prestige.

② Even the Good Ones Won't Want to Tilt at Windmills

There are good office holders out there willing to do the right thing on principle even in the face of political, professional, or social risks. But even these officials will rarely stick their necks out for you unless there is a realistic chance of success. Put yourself in their shoes: If you ask lawmakers to risk their political, professional, and personal lives *for causes that have no chance*, they will not take you seriously and your credibility as a serious citizen lobbyist could be seriously compromised. Make sure what you ask for is "politically do-able." Pick your battles carefully.

③ Let Them Know You've Got Their Back

Those who take strong principled stands usually come under fierce attack by their ideological opponents. They will be attacked on the blogs and in Letters to the Editor, and on social media. Legislation they care about might be killed or "gut and stuffed" by political opponents. They might get kicked off of committees which hear on important bills (I've seen this happen first-hand). Back home their opponents might spend a lot of money to sully their names in order to unseat them in the next election. Politics can be a very tough game. It has been said that if one wants friends in politics they should "buy a dog."

If you ask lawmakers to take tough stands that could invoke this kind of wrath, your chances of getting them to say "YES" are much better if you show them that you've got their backs. Show them that you are organized and are prepared to defend them on the blogs, in the newspaper, in your neighborhoods, in public venues, on social media, or anywhere else their opponents may try to sully their name. If you do, the lawmakers you lobby will know they will not be out there twisting in the wind. Once you demonstrate your loyalty, will also have a very strong ally.

③ Prestige is Power: Protect the Status of Your Friends

In politics, perception often becomes reality. If someone is perceived to be effective, they become effective. If they are perceived to be ineffective, they become ineffective. Strange, but that's the way it is.

Sometimes reputations are deserved, sometimes not. Over time the truth usually comes out, but frequently not in time to prevent political damage or save (or kill) a specific proposal. Either way, the reputations elected officials earn can have a real impact on their ability to do what you want them to do. This is a reality of politics.

After all, public officials must often influence other officials to pass or stop any controversial piece of legislation. He or she will need to share frank opinions in confidence behind closed doors and handle sensitive information carefully. He or she will have to find common ground when common ground is hard to find. To handle these challenges successfully, it helps if the public official you are working with has an intact reputation among other officials.

Bear this in mind when you lobby elected officials. Work to point out ways in which supporting your position could raise a lawmaker's stature among other lawmakers, lobbyists, reporters, and the people back home. Sometimes, one has to make the hard choice. But where possible, avoid asking public officials to do things that might undermine their reputation among others.

④ Form a Lobbying Team

It is often effective to form a three person lobbying team when preparing to meet with legislators or other public officials. Unless the public official you plan to meet with objects, all three of you should meet with the office holder at the same time. Unless the public official requests it or otherwise agrees in advance, don't bring additional people as this can sometimes make office holders feel like they are being "ganged" up on. According to your own judgment, you might want a lot of people to come with you to the meeting, but only your three person lobbying team should meet privately with the public office holder.

Your lobbying team would do well to meet prior to your appointment in order to plan your lobbying trip. All three members of the lobbying team should assist in research and developing lines of persuasion and discussion. Don't just research your issues – research the political, professional, and personal background of the public officials you will meet.

One member of your team should be selected to be the **leader**; the one who will take point in speaking with the legislators and fielding questions. A second member, an **assistant**, should be there to provide opinions and make comments which support and reinforce the leader. This person can also interject to break tension that might develop as the leader speaks with the office holder. A

third team member should serve the function of a **secretary**; he or she should carry and have at hand any information that is needed, be able to pull up any information or research your team brings along, keep an eye on the time, take notes, and occasionally interject in a way that supports the leader.

⑤ Focus on the Benefits

Any experienced sales person will be quick to provide you with the following quote: "*People always buy benefits, not features.*" The same is true here; you are essentially selling a position you want public officials to adopt. Office holders will respond favorably to benefits you can outline in the positions you want them to adopt.

⑥ They Might Not Eat the Whole Banana

Some or even all of the office holders you talk to may insist that the plan is too bold to be passed in one session or with a liberal governor in office. They may say that the proposal is unrealistic. If you think this could happen, organize your request in a way that can be taken up by the officials you are lobbying in whole or in part. This will increase the number of ways you and the office holders you are lobbying can find common cause.

If an office holder is adamantly opposed to your positions, ask he or she if there are any *portions* of your positions that he or she likes. This may make it possible to convince an office holder to take up at least a part of your idea. Assuming your agenda is not totally crazy, good public officials can usually find common ground to work with you on. If he or she cannot identify *at least one* idea in your proposal or position that he or she can support, that office holder may not be dealing with you honestly or may not have any interest in your success.

④ Keep Your Cool – Stay Professional

If you become frustrated, *keep your cool*. If any member of your lobbying team loses his or her temper, word will get around and the credibility of your lobbying team may be compromised. More immediately, your appointment will collapse and you will leave without having accomplished anything while burning a bridge behind you. At the very least, find ways to part that facilitate mutual respect even if you cannot agree. If you do not burn bridges, an opponent today could be an ally tomorrow when you are working on a different issue.

Stick With It and You Will Be Successful

Over time, if you lobby public office holders while bearing in mind the tips outlined in this document, you will eventually meet with legislative success. Stick with it and you WILL become an effective citizen lobbyist and successfully advance your political agenda! ☑



When you testify before a board, council or committee, (we will say board for the remainder of this document) you engage in one of the few activities with elected office holders that are both personal and public. If done correctly, public testimony can be one of the most powerful tools a grass roots volunteer can use to move public policy toward limited government.

Public Testimony is NEVER Futile

When you testify before a board, you are trying to convince them to do something or not do something. You may sometimes think that the board members are hopeless and will never adopt your position or idea. Occasionally this is true, but you might be surprised to know how often it isn't. **No office holder wants to be seen supporting a position that regular people can show will cause harm to their lives.**

Even if the members of the board you are testifying in front of cannot be convinced, your words may cause a reporter to interview you after your testimony. You may find that you have given voice to people in the audience who agree with you (you may then find allies who can help you). If television, radio, or even public access television cover any of your testimony, you may find yourself reaching thousands of other people. Your words might sometimes cause a board or committee to table a proposal, buying time to build support around your position.

So in the best of circumstances, you can convince a board to adopt your position or postpone a decision which will buy you time. In the worst of circumstances, you can still find an audience and, potentially, allies that can help you in the future. Testifying also builds your stature as a public activist, and will help you build credibility when you are active on other issues. **So remember: Engaging in public testimony is NEVER a waste of time.**

Make the Most of Your 3 Minutes of Fame

When you testify before a board or committee, you will typically get three minutes at the microphone (sometimes they allow five). If you follow the following basic guidelines, you will be able to make your point effectively within that small period of time. Here goes...

Remember Testimony Etiquette

First, remember that you are always speaking to the chair or president of the board when you testify -

even if another board member asks you a question. Always address the Chair first.

Begin by thanking the board for the time. Always use their titles. For example, when you begin, say, "Mr./Madame Chair, members of the board, thank you for this time today." If, after your testimony, a member asks you a question, begin your answer with, "Mr./Madame Chair, Senator Jones (the member who asks the question), my answer is..."

Second, when you are finished, offer to answer any questions. Say thank you when you are finished.

Third, and this is VERY IMPORTANT: **Always be polite and professional, even if you are angry, and even if one or more board member disrespects you. NEVER go over time.** If you need more time, create a "Tag Team" by getting one or more supporters to testify on different aspects of your issue. Always be well dressed and groomed to enhance credibility.

Finally, know that there is almost always a sign-up process. At the capitol, sign-up sheets are provided in hearing rooms shortly before a hearing begins. In local or county governments, there is usually a colored sheet you fill out with your name and address which indicates your desire to testify. Come early and sign up early. Many board chairs determine order on a first come, first serve basis, but not always. Public office holders and people with specialized information are often given preference. So sign up early, but be patient. If you do not sign up, don't expect to speak.

① Tell Them Who You Are and Why You Are There

Tell them WHO you are. When you begin, after you have thanked the board, tell them your name. But who you are is not just your name. Also tell them where you live and what you do for a living. Tell them who you represent if you are representing a group. If it is relevant, tell them whether you are married or have children. You can say you are a member of Americans for Prosperity if you are testifying on a prosperity related issue like taxes or property rights. If board members know that you are one of their constituents or that you are plugged into a network of lots of people, this will add weight to your testimony.

Tell them WHY you are there. After you have told them who you are, tell them what has brought you to their meeting and what compelled you to offer testimony. For example, "I have come to testify against House Bill 9999 which I think will make it hard for parents to put their children through college," or, "I have come to support House Bill 9998 which will create thousands of family wage jobs in my

community." At this point, the board now knows your name, who you are, and why you are there.

② Tell Them Your Personal Story

Consultants and professionals are great at showing graphs, charts, and focus group results. **But you might be astonished to know that, in the world of politics, few things have the impact that a personal story does.** This is your chance to personalize your testimony and give the board members, or whoever might be listening or watching, a reason to take your side on an issue. For example: "My father grew up in my home town manufacturing widgets. So did his father. I am a third generation widget maker. The widget industry is key in my town and is important to our identity, drives our town's economy, and is part of our heritage. If this ordinance passes, you will shut down our industry. I will have to pull my kids out of school and move. This ordinance will kill my community and end a way of life that has endured for one hundred years. People like me will have to take unemployment and other forms of public assistance. It is humiliating, and I know my neighbors agree."

The point here is to attach a human face and a human story to bring emotional and intellectual impact to your position. Namely, YOUR human face. You can bet that you will have an impact.

③ Tell Them Your Central Principle

As you prepare your personal story, think about the central principle involved and articulate this principle clearly when you testify. Such principles could be "freedom", "choice", "security", "prosperity"; this will vary depending on your issue. Always be clear about the principle at the heart of your story with those you are speaking to and with yourself. If you clearly name and discuss your central principle after you've given your personal story, you will put your personal story within a context that matters to everyone and adds weight to your testimony.

④ Tell Them What You Want

Finally, and perhaps most important, TELL THEM WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO. As you conclude, always say something like, "So for these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote FOR Ordinance 32-3 and help preserve jobs in my community," or "So for these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote AGAINST Senate Bill 8888 and protect charter schools throughout Oregon". Bottom line, tell them what you want them to do.

You are a salesperson when you testify. Your product is your position on an issue, and you are trying to convince the board to adopt your position

instead of someone else's. So remember, always ask for the sale.

EXERCISE

As an exercise, pair up in threes. Each person will take five minutes and think of an issue that is important to them. Imagine a bill is under consideration supporting your side of an issue. On a piece of paper, write down a name for this bill, what the bill does, and construct your testimony based on the material in this lesson.

The three of you will take turns in the following roles: 1) One will be a board chair, 2) One will be another member of the board and 3) One will be a citizen testifying to the board about the bill idea they came up with. The "citizen" who is testifying will offer his or her testimony. The "board members" will listen. The "board member" who is not the chair will keep time, and the "citizen" will be limited to three minutes. The citizen will use testimony etiquette as he or she testifies and the "board members" will respectfully assist if there are any mistakes (real board members usually, but not always, offer assistance too).

After the testimony, one of the "board members" will ask a question (any question - we are practicing etiquette here). After the question is answered, switch roles until each person has had a chance to play every role. When you are done, go out and be heard! Thanks, and good luck! ☑

HOW TO TESTIFY

AT THE OREGON LEGISLATURE



In order to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, entry to the Oregon State Capitol is for authorized personnel only until further notice. The Oregon Legislative Assembly has established a process to accept remote verbal public testimony on bills by video or phone during this time, in addition to written public testimony.

You can submit written testimony in the following two ways:

- Through the Testimony Portal on the [Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\)](#)
- By regular mail at 900 Court Street NE, Salem, OR 97301

You can submit written testimony up to 24 hours after the scheduled start time of the committee meeting at which a bill is listed on the agenda for a public hearing.

All committee meetings, as well as House and Senate floor sessions, will continue to be live streamed on [OLIS](#). A public access station will be set up outside of the State Capitol building if you do not have access to the internet. Closed captioning is available for all meetings when viewing online.

If you are only interested in watching a committee meeting, or submitting written testimony on a bill, there is no need to follow the testimony registration process starting on page 2.

BILL IS SCHEDULED FOR A PUBLIC HEARING

There are several ways to know when a bill is scheduled for a public hearing:

- You can search for a bill by bill number, bill text, or bill sponsor on the [Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\)](#), and look at the bill's measure history.
- When a bill has been referred to a specific committee, you can: 1) search for that committee or subcommittee on the [OLIS website](#), and look at whether that committee has scheduled the bill for a public hearing, or 2) subscribe to receive committee or subcommittee meeting agendas via email using the e-subscribe link on the committee webpage.
- If you do not have internet access and are near the Capitol, you can view committee or subcommittee agendas on a screen that is visible through the center State Street Capitol doors.

Once a bill is scheduled for a public hearing, you can register to speak at the hearing. It is not possible to register to testify before the bill is formally scheduled.

HOW TO REGISTER TO TESTIFY REMOTELY

You must register in advance to provide verbal testimony during a committee or subcommittee meeting. Registration closes at the start of the meeting.

There are three ways to register:

- Look up the committee or subcommittee meeting agenda on the [Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\) website](#) and follow the testimony registration link on the agenda. The system will send you an email with a registration meeting link and instructions for delivering your verbal/video testimony using the Microsoft Teams platform.
- Look up the committee or subcommittee meeting agenda on the [OLIS website](#) and call the listed toll-free number. The phone system will provide you with a phone number and access code to call into the meeting and deliver your verbal/audio testimony.
- On the day of the hearing, come to the public access station outside of the State Capitol building to deliver your testimony into a publicly provided laptop. Please note that this option is intended for those who do not have internet access or an available phone.

BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEARING

Use the MS Teams meeting link or phone number to join the committee or subcommittee meeting at least 5 minutes prior to the meeting start time. You will “wait” in a virtual lobby until staff admits all participants into the meeting, shortly before the public hearing begins.

If you are joining the meeting with an MS Teams link, please:

- Join the meeting with your camera off and microphone muted and stay in that mode until you are called on by the Chair to speak.
- If time permits, committee staff may be able to quickly test your video and audio.
- If you are not familiar with MS Teams, spend a few minutes reviewing the user interface ahead of time. This link may be helpful: [Join a meeting in Teams](#).

If you are calling into the meeting, please:

- Join the meeting with your microphone on mute until you are called on by the Chair to speak. At that time, press *6 to unmute.
- Be aware that when you call in, your phone number will be displayed on the live stream of the committee or subcommittee meeting.

DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING

- During the hearing your camera and microphone should be off/muted until you are called upon to testify.
- If you are watching the meeting live stream on the [Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\) website](#), close the live stream when public testimony begins and listen to the meeting on MS Teams or your phone instead (live streams have a time delay, and you may miss your name being called).
- When the Chair calls on you to speak, turn on your camera (optional) and microphone (*6 on your phone to unmute) and provide your testimony.
- Follow any instructions from the Chair for your testimony. This may include a time limit; in some cases, the Chair will use a chime to indicate when you need to finish.
- If you do not respond when called on to speak, or you encounter technical difficulties, you may not be able to testify. If this happens, you may submit your testimony in a written format up to 24 hours after the scheduled start time of the committee meeting at which you planned to testify.
- When your testimony is finished, the Chair may ask that you stay in the meeting to answer questions from committee members.
- When you are done with your testimony, turn off your camera and mute your microphone/phone. You may leave the meeting and continue to watch the meeting on the OLIS live stream. Or you may remain in the meeting to continue listening and watching with your camera and microphone off. If the meeting is at capacity, you may be removed from the meeting upon the conclusion of your testimony to allow others to join.
- People testifying remotely are subject to the same rules of decorum as an in-person meeting at the Capitol. Anyone who chooses not to follow the rules for remote testimony established by the committee Chair may forfeit their opportunity to testify. At the direction of the Chair, you may be removed from the meeting if you continue to disregard the Chair's instructions.

IMPORTANT LINKS AND PHONE NUMBERS

Oregon Legislature's Website: <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov>

Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS): <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1>

Questions about the legislature, legislative process, or other government agencies:

Email: help.leg@oregonlegislature.gov

Toll-free number: 1-800-332-2313



WLN Academy
www.westernlibertynetwork.org

***Assessing Yourself
as a Candidate for Public Office***
by Richard P. Burke, WLN Executive Director

CANDIDATE SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Our founders challenged us by envisioning a society where people take responsibility for their own governance. By stepping up and seeking elected or appointed office, you honor them (and yourself) by showing that you accept their challenge. This training is intended to help you decide the kind of position you will run for and how to go about winning your race.

Unless you are running unopposed (which you should do if you can), you will increase your chances of winning if you observe the tips outlined in this training. *Honestly* answer the questions asked on the back of this sheet. Your answers can be the foundation of a basic campaign plan that will help you win your election or appointment. Consider these following issues:

- ① **What Position Should You Run For?** Unless you are wealthy or already have high status in your community, consider running for the smallest position you believe you are in the position to win. Your passion may motivate you to run for a high position, but do not underestimate the good you can do serving in a local non-partisan office. **Too many good people run for high office their first time out without necessary resources and networks behind them.** Don't do that – if you do well in local office, it can be a springboard for you later!
- ② **Qualifications.** While not always true, the most important things you can bring to the table when seeking public office is your common sense, your ability to absorb and respond to good information, and to your ability to listen. Trust yourself. It isn't usually necessary for you to be an expert in the water industry, the fire and rescue industry, parks, or any other industry associated with the position you might be running for. You can learn what you need to fast enough. **People need your leadership, intelligence, and good judgment most of all!**
- ③ **Family Support.** **If you have a family, it is important that you have their support.** While it is possible to serve in local elected office without their support, it WILL negatively affect your home life. Life balance is important. If you do not have the support of your spouse or significant other, your life may be better served if you wait for a better time.
- ④ **Financial Resources.** Successful campaigns for many local non-partisan positions are not expensive, but some can be. **Either way, the candidate should be financially sound and be aware of the potential drain an active campaign can take on family resources.** An ideal candidate will have a steady income and resources to invest in his/her own campaign.
- ⑤ **Skeletons in Your Closet.** The candidate should take for granted that anything in his or her past probably will become public knowledge. That the public's "right to know" includes the candidate's personal and financial life. Have there been problems? It's okay – most everyone has skeletons these days and the Internet makes them easier to find. **Be honest about your past.** Have explanations prepared so you don't get blindsided. Most people are very forgiving.
- ④ **YOU ARE QUALIFIED! Don't be Intimidated.** There are over 7,000 local, non-partisan elected positions in Oregon. **Almost all of them are occupied by regular people like you and me who serve as volunteers.** A few have specific requirements, most only require that you be a citizen in the requisite district for the board or council you are running to serve on.

CANDIDATE SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

1. My three best personal assets **as a candidate** are:
2. My three greatest personal weakness **as a candidate** are:
3. These things in my background will be **campaign assets**:
4. These things in my background will be **campaign liabilities**:
5. **Beyond what I can personally control**, these two factors will work in my favor:
6. ***Beyond what I can personally control***, these two factors will work against me:
7. Here are five (5) people **who will help me get elected**:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
 - E.
8. Here are five (5) people **who will work to defeated me**:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
 - E.
9. Here are **three issues I will run on**:
 - A. Here is **one basic strength** of each of the three issues listed above:
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - B. Here is **one basic weakness** of each of the three issues listed above:
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
10. **I will NOT do the following things**, even if not doing them will cost me the election:



WLN Academy

Effective Campaigning with Little or No Money

by Richard P. Burke

DON'T LET THE PUNDITS ON TV FOOL YOU Old-fashioned hard work pays off!



Campaigns are more sophisticated, but don't be intimidated! With improved polling, micro-targeting, and other technologies, political professionals keep coming up with new ways to win people over, or at least manipulate them. But no matter what they come up with, NOTHING will take the place of a good ground campaign and elbow grease. This unit will offer proven and effective ways of doing the fundamental campaign work that lies at the heart of winning races.

Not every example here will be right for you or your group. You may come up with ideas of your own not shown here. But whatever you do, develop a written plan, preferably with a calendar. Assign responsibility to someone for each activity you undertake. Make sure someone follows up.

1. **Letters to the Editor.** These still work – don't ignore them! Send letters on a consistent basis. First, tell the reader what you want them to do. Second, provide a reason why the reader should do what you want. Third, offer a personal comment demonstrating why you are taking the stand that you are. Finally, repeat what you want the reader to do. Keep it VERY short.
2. **"Desktop Activism"**. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, email lists, and other Internet outlets are great for getting your message out. You can be sure that your opponent will be using them. When you see posts of news stories, leave comments favorable to the candidates and ballot measures you support. Take issue with those who support your opponents!
3. **Call Talk Radio Shows.** Don't limit yourself to major statewide talk shows. Call into talk shows offered on smaller stations. Call "Trading Post" type shows, even if you have nothing to sell, and shows where people are allowed "thirty seconds of fame." While larger stations may not offer such opportunities, struggling small stations do. Their audiences are smaller, but they vote! Refer to WLN Academy units on the media.
4. **Bulletin Board Campaign.** Grocery stores, laundromats, bus stops, laundry areas at apartment complexes, and other such places provide "Community Bulletin Boards" where people can post event information, business cards and so on. You can post campaign materials on these boards. Management may take them down, but people will see them first!
5. **Lobbying Local and Legislative Office Holders.** Prevail upon your elected local, county, and legislative leaders to make strong public statements in support of the campaigns you support. Refer to the WLN Academy units on lobbying. If the issue is sensitive, assure the local official that he or she will have the support of you and your friends. If the official refuses, ask why – you will learn a lot about that official from their answers.
6. **Hold a Voter Registration Drive.** You or a group you are affiliated with can secure booths at county fairs, gun shows, food festivals, or other exhibitions where you can offer to register people to vote. As they register, you can familiarize them with the positions, candidates, and ballot measures you support. You will find allies along the way to help in future campaigns!

7. **Testimony to Public Boards.** You can testify to public boards such as city councils and school boards during their "Open Communication" segments, where people can testify on any matter not on the meeting agenda. Emphasis should be placed on meetings where local newspaper reporters will be present or meetings covered by public access television. Better yet, inform newspapers in advance of your intent to testify on a particular campaign.
8. **Direct Voter Outreach.** You can do things on your own or you can coordinate with a group or a professional campaign. If you want to work with a group but one is not available, form one and coordinate with the campaigns you support.
 - a. **Door to Door.** Distributed literature or just shake hands with people going door-to-door. Do not get involved in long discussions or any arguments - you want to hit as many doors as you can. Dress neatly, and use sidewalks. Bring someone with you if you can. Wear a campaign button if one is available. Work at reasonable times. Do not litter or put literature in mailboxes or newspaper delivery boxes. Keep presentations short.
 - b. **Phone Banking.** If there is a funded campaign associated with your effort, you can volunteer to take part in phone banks. If not, you can call your friends or neighbors. You may wish to work with others in your group or with campaign representatives to come up with a script, but try to present it in your own words. Can't get to the phone bank headquarters? No problem... get a list from them and use your own phone.
 - c. **Get Out the Vote (GOTV).** A lot of winnable elections have been lost simply because campaigns simply failed to get their supporters to vote! In any case, if there is no GOTV effort behind a campaign you support, do one of your own! See WLN training materials on personal and "desktop" GOTV projects. You can do a lot with very little!
9. **Town Hall Meetings and Retirement Center Presentations.** Your group can hold a town hall style meeting or an open house where people can talk to members about the races you want to focus on. Perhaps you can organize a debate or a forum for your candidate. You might also want to make presentations to retirement centers. The elderly vote with high reliability, and the social managers of retirement centers are always looking for meeting content.
10. **Submit a Voter Pamphlet Argument.** You, either alone or with a group of friends, could raise a limited amount of money to publish a Voter Pamphlet statement for or against a ballot measure. This is a good way for groups to do community outreach and increase membership. You will have to raise a few dollars, but there is no less expensive way to reach every voter in a particular electoral district! No money? It is often possible to get your Voter Pamphlet argument published by collecting a few signatures!
11. **Sign Campaigns.** Signs or posters can be produced to be placed in the windows of businesses. If large field signs are available from a big-dollar campaign on your side, it may be possible to find high-visibility locations for them. Lawn signs can be a key component to any sign campaign. Friends and other activists can be asked to put up signs in their yards, find other locations to put up lawn signs, and pick up signs when the campaign is over. It may be possible for you to coordinate with a professional campaign. As election day approaches, you and your friends can hold signs over bridges and at well-traveled intersections.
12. **Hold an Election Night Party.** Victory parties give a sense of closure, accomplishment, and camaraderie. They can cement relationships built during a campaign and can provide a venue to come up with ideas about what to do next. They allow volunteers to share a common experience and compare notes in an informal environment. They offer a venue for your group to gain favorable media coverage, raising your group's profile thereby making it easier to recruit new members. ☑



INTRODUCTION. The purpose of this document is to provide a starting point for the development of a campaign plan. Details within campaign plans will vary widely depending on the race at issue, but all of the areas listed below should be incorporated in the plan. In addition to functioning as a working plan, the document can also be designed to teach important campaign workers about campaign plans, offer them an operational job description, and outline the thinking behind a campaign's strategy. The campaign plan should only be shared among trusted campaign workers.

- ① **Campaign Objectives.** Obviously, the primary objective is to win the election. Secondary campaign objectives also exist such as raising a candidate's stature for future political endeavors or campaigns. Sometimes candidates may not win but advance to a runoff election. Sometimes a campaign can advance an issue, raise the stature of a ballot measure, force the diversion of resources, or use a campaign as a rallying point around which to grow local organizations.
- ② **District Overview, Analysis, and Campaign Strategy.** This section includes a brief analysis of the district based on voter registration, recent voting patterns, and the current political climate. Based on this information, the basic strategy is outlined.
- ③ **Approaches Toward Achieving Objectives.** All major elements of the campaign will be discussed here. Each will be crafted to advance the campaign in accordance with the campaign strategy. Among them are issue identification, candidate positioning, branding, media strategies, voter outreach, volunteer deployment, voter identification, and voter turnout.
- ④ **Campaign Organization.** This includes a list of campaign positions, their job descriptions, and organizational lines of responsibility. This will vary by the campaign, but examples include the candidate, a fundraising committee and chairperson, strategist (or consultant), campaign manager, scheduler, treasurer, campaign compliance consultant, media consultant, researcher, candidate assistant, Get Out The Vote (GOTV) committee and chairperson, and office manager.
- ⑤ **Implementation With Rough Chronology.** This section includes key dates and a rough sequence of events. It is meant to provide a basic chronological structure for the campaign. A more detailed calendar built on this structure will develop with events. The Chronology should be planned in backward order from Election Day to the present day marking important deadlines, project time lines, and assigning responsibilities for specific tasks along the way.
- ⑥ **Campaign Budget.** This includes an overall budget and a summary of paid media costs. Some costs, such as contracts for key campaign team members, are not yet known and will be added into the budget as they are secured.
- ⑦ **Fundraising.** Although the last section of this plan, this is the most important section because fundraising makes virtually everything else possible. While candidate fundraising should already be underway at this writing, this section will discuss fundraising by the candidate, staff, and tertiary means.



WLN Academy

How to Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

by Richard P. Burke

Introduction. “Get Out The Vote” (GOTV) operations often determine whether campaigns win or lose, especially where local campaigns are concerned. While there are many things during a political campaign that candidates cannot control, they can help themselves with a strong GOTV effort. Likewise, individual activists can undertake their own GOTV projects to help the candidates and ballot measures they support. No matter what your campaign budget is (even if it is \$0), or what your strategy might be during the days before an election, it is critical that every single campaign carefully plans and executes a serious GOTV operation.

① The Psychology of Getting People to Vote

A 2012 Stanford University study found that people become much more likely to vote in any given election **if they see voting as a part of their personal identity and if they have a specific plan about when and where they will vote.** Keep this in mind whether you are an activist undertaking a personal or “desktop” GOTV project, or if you are working as a campaign volunteer as part of a professional campaign.

Though you will want to adapt the message for different situations, you could say something like, *“Jill, you’ve been a conservative most of your life. It is important that you stand for your values now by making sure you vote.”* This statement ties a person’s identity with the civic act of voting. Include a question like, *“When do you plan to vote or mail in your ballot?”* This forces people to consider a basic plan about when they will vote or at least plants the idea in their minds.

Live GOTV appeals are best - when you look someone in the eye and ask them to commit to voting, you will have the most success. Phone appeals, while interactive and also effective, are not as successful as live appeals. Email, robo-calls, and social media appeals are not as effective as live or telephone appeals, but are still effective and are certainly better than nothing. Keep this in mind as you formulate your GOTV plan.

② Collect, Organize, and Prioritize Your Voter Information

If you are an undertaking a “desktop” or personal GOTV project, start with a list showing all the individuals and groups you plan to contact, how you will contact them, and when you will contact them. You will reach some over the phone. You will reach some through social media. Perhaps you will want to reach out to a service club, community group, business or church group, or bridge club you belong to. It’s all good.

If you are working on a campaign, get a list of all voters in your district from the relevant state or county officials. You may also want to get information available online from the U.S. Census Bureau about demographic information associated with your district. Once you have the this information, prioritize voters according to how often they vote and by other metrics (like party affiliation, income, or education level) that you think are important. As needed, volunteers can look up phone numbers and find email addresses where they are missing. The goal is to make sure that voters generally inclined to vote, and those who are likely inclined to vote your way make it to the top of your GOTV list.

③ Prepare Your Messaging

If you are undertaking a personal or “desktop” GOTV project, consider what you will say to your contacts before you contact them. Write it down. Are there hot-button issues that will motivate your contacts? Is the political environment competitive? Whatever you think will motivate individual or groups of voters should be added to your contact list. As mentioned before, you will want to say something that connects the act of voting to their personal identity and a request for them to commit to a specific voting plan.

As you develop your message, you may want to contact one or more of the campaigns you support to see if they have tested any messaging they know will motivate voters. Be sure that you also include important information such as when voter registrations must be updated, when mail-in or absentee ballots must be mailed, and where ballot drop boxes are located. Example:

“Hello, Jane! I’m calling to encourage everyone I know to vote in the upcoming November 5th election. I know you have been a conservative most of your life and hope you can be counted on to stand for your values now. Joe Blow is running in a close race for the state legislature and we all want Ballot Measure Z to be defeated, right? Have you received your ballot? If you plan to mail it, you should do so before November 3rd to make sure it arrives on time. When do you plan to cast your vote? I have a list of ballot drop locations if you need it. Do you need any help? Thanks!”

④ Get to Work!

Sometimes, the hardest part of a personal or “desktop” efforts is just getting started. Set an appointment to start. Design and commit to a specific plan to work on GOTV a few hours per day. Take notes as you go you can use to determine who you will need to follow-up with, who may need assistance because of disabilities or some other reason, and who may have skills and interests that may be helpful in future campaigns.

If you are coordinating with a professional campaign, it may be able to give you daily information about who has voted and who has not. You can use this information to avoid wasting time following up with voters who have already voted. After the election, this information can also provide you with valuable feedback on how effective your GOTV plan was. If you are not working with a professional campaign, you may still be able to get this information from county or state election offices.

Conclusion. The history of big elections is rife with examples of campaigns decided by only a few votes. In smaller elections, a few more votes here and there can be even more decisive. Individual or “desktop” GOTV projects can literally put activists in the position of determining the outcome of elections, particularly close races and local races. GOTV work is among the most powerful tools that can be in an activist’s toolbox. The connections you make along the way will serve to elevate your reputation as an opinion leader and as an effective activist. As you build this reputation and your personal relationships, you will also have a lot of fun! ☑



WLN Academy

Developing Your Personal Media Campaign

by Richard P. Burke

From the comfort of your home, you can advance the campaigns you support using free media outlets. Examples include **letters to the editor, radio call-in shows, and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.** Newspapers readers, listeners of talk-radio, and politically active social media users are all high-percentage voters, the very people you will want to reach.

This document will help you to develop and execute a personal media campaign. Following the guidelines shown here will increase the odds that your message will actually get out. You may also find that these basic guidelines can also be applied or adapted to any venue or medium which accepts comment from the public.

- ① **Make a List of Media Contacts.** Go the websites of area newspapers and find out how to submit letters to the editor. Most newspapers have specific requirements including word counts and information about how they can reach you. Check out talk radio station websites and find out the call-in phone numbers and times of shows you can call into. On social media, check out groups and chat rooms you think are dominated by persuadable people who vote. If you follow specific blogs, get their web addresses. **Compile all of this information into a *written* list you can use as you execute your personal media campaign.** You can also share this list with friends to help them develop personal media campaigns of their own.
- ② **Use This “Four Point” Method to Develop SHORT Messages.** Short messages are far more likely to get make it to your target audience than long ones. In any medium, short messages are more likely to actually be read or heard and offer fewer opportunities for opponents to challenge. For your personal media campaign, develop your message by using the “Four Point Method” shown here:
 - A. **Explain the Purpose of Your Letter. Get right to the point.** The first line of your letter should say something like, “*Dear Editor, I write this letter in support of Jane Doe for Position 3 on the Anytown School Board in the upcoming local election on May 16th.*” That’s it. Boom!
 - B. **Say Why You Support Your Position.** Your next sentences should suggest a personal connection with the candidate. For example, “*I have known Jane Doe for ten years. She is a woman of integrity who has the good of our community at heart.*” **Express ONE main idea only.** If there are more reasons to support Jane Doe, have other people express them in separate messages. **Use no more than one, two, but no more than three sentences. In this case, less is more!**
 - C. **Close the Sale.** The last sentence closes the sale by saying something like, “*For this reason, I hope you will join me in supporting Jane Doe for Position 3 on the Anytown School Board – Election Day is May 16.*” Yes, it is a repetition of the first line. Drive the point home!
 - D. **Tell Them Who You Are and Why You Matter.** As appropriate for each media outlet, provide your name, address, email address, and contact phone numbers. Newspapers and some blogs require this information.

If you can, use a title of some kind. If you are a public office holder, member of a civic organization, member of a neighborhood organization, or almost anything else, a title lends credibility to your letter by showing you are connected and active in your community. For example, one could sign the letter, “*Sincerely, John Doe, Member, Anytown Elk’s Lodge #9999, 123 Oak Street, Anytown, OR 99999, 555-555-5555, johndoe@johndoe.com.*”

IMPORTANT: If you offer any kind of title related to an official body or group, you need to make clear that you are representing only yourself rather than the group or body you are referencing. One way you can do this by placing the words, “Speaking for myself,” at the very top of the letter. There are other ways to do this, but it is important not to imply that the group you are a member has endorsed your position unless they actually have.

- ⑤ **Build and Deploy a Personal Media Campaign Team.** Get as many friends and supporters as you can to develop personal media campaign plans like yours. **agree to submit letters to the editor on your behalf.** Provide copies of this document to your politically active friends and coordinate messaging with them. Doing this will multiply your impact.

In the case of letters to the editor, you can type letters to be signed and submitted by your friends who are too busy to write letters of their own. After all, **while friends and supporters may have the best of intentions, people get busy and follow-through can be a problem.** Getting them to sign letters in advance offers them a way to help you without imposing on them too much. Be sure to vary the tone of each so their authenticity is not questioned.

- ④ **Don't Go Negative.** We see negative campaigning all the time. Professionally done, negative campaign tactics can help high-visibility campaigns. **But remember – voters generally do not respond well to negative campaign tactics when it comes to local campaigns and ballot measures.** Most voters understand that local positions are usually unpaid and are undertaken by people who genuinely want to contribute to their communities. I was once challenged for my seat on a water district board of commissioners by a challenger who spent over \$12,000 on a negative campaign. It backfired big time (I spent \$0 and got over 60 percent of the vote and several endorsements). Do your best to keep your messaging positive in tone.

- ⑤ **Pace Your Personal Media Campaign.** Using a calendar from Election Day backward to today, **plan your personal media campaign.** Using the information on the media list you compiled, decide how many letters to submit to each local publication, when, and how often. Decide how often you will express your message on talk radio and social media. If you acquired signed letters to the editor in advance from your friends, submit them in a coordinated way. If you are relying on people to submit their own letters, have a plan to assure follow-through. **Remember to pace yourself and involve others if you can.** Editors and talk radio producers will get annoyed if they receive a constant bombardment of letters and calls from one person.

Following the suggestions in this document will not ensure that your letters and blogs will be published or that your call will be put on the air. But a personal media campaign can make the difference between victory and defeat for close races and local non-partisan races where people don't know the names of many candidates. Local races in particular feature low voter turnouts and low candidate expenditures that work against name recognition. By getting the names of the candidates and ballot measures you support into the public domain through a personal media campaign, you can do a lot to determine who makes up the fabric of the political culture in your community.

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Yes, most of the broadcast and social media outlets are biased toward the left. Sometimes their memories will be selective. Sometimes they will be unfair.

Fortunately, there are things you can do to increase the odds that you will be treated fairly by reporters, editors, and bloggers. Follow these pointers, and you will be able to navigate these waters more successfully.

① Remember Most Local Reporters Are Just Trying to Get Through Their Day.

Most reporters are almost always stressed, writing four or five stories against a hard deadline. Believe it or not, most local reporters only have two real concerns: A) When will they be able to finish their day and go home and, B) How can they complete their work and avoid getting fired. It is THAT simple.

Most reporters may be liberal, but they are not are not crazy TV personalities. Most of them are young, inexperienced, overworked, underpaid, and are anxious as they know they are in a dying profession. If you can make it easier for them to get through their day and look competent to their boss, they will value you as a source and tread you better

② Know Who to Talk To. Do not assume the editorial page department is connected to the news department. At most newspapers, they have nothing to do with each other, so feeding your news-related releases to the Editorial Page doesn't help. Find out who needs your press releases, who covers the news beat for the races you are working on, who the editors are, and who needs photographs. They are almost always different people. If you learn who these people are you will not waste your time or theirs and you will be more influential as a source.

③ Make sure everything you send media outlets is typed and looks professional. Believe it or not, people still submit handwritten press releases and letters to reporters

and editors. Unfair as it might be, handwritten releases don't get top priority. The people who have to type them in dislike having to decipher.

④ Get Good Photographs. If you are a candidate or group leader, have nice color and black-and-white photos made of yourself. Have glossy 5" x 7" photos and digital versions available. A decent quality publicity photo lends credibility. If a newspaper wants to publish a photo of you as a local leader, having a prepared photograph lets you control your image. If you rely on a news photographer to take your picture, or force a reporter to find one on the Internet, the photo used might not present you at your best.

⑤ Have a Social Media Presence. If you are a candidate or a group leader, it is important to maintain a website or basic social media pages you can refer reporters to. These sites should have photos reporters can download, videos they can link to, and any other information you would like reporters to see when they come to your sites.

⑥ Be Accessible. Reporters will often quote the person they can reach first. If they call you, answer immediately. If they don't reach you and leave a message, get back to them immediately. Always be available for interviews. If you develop a reputation as a news source who is easy to reach, reporters will start calling you first.

⑦ Don't Alienate Reporters. Remember that reporters are stressed, fighting to meet deadlines, and are usually more concerned about finishing their day and not getting fired than anything else. Reporters will take calls asking legitimate questions or announcing real news, but anything less gets bothersome to them even if it is critically important to you. Though sometimes unfair, if you start to be thought of as a pest, you will be marginalized. If they screw up, don't scold them. Even if you are right, you won't win the day.

8 Be Patient with Reporters. During an interview, reporters will sometimes mix up who you are, spell or pronounce your name wrong, get confused about which campaign or issue you are working on, or mess-up some other detail.

Remember that the same reporter probably is covering five or six other stories, each with two or three people offering their views, many of whom he or she likely spoke with just hours or minutes before speaking with you. When reporters make mistakes, be patient, do not assume they are messing with you, and do your best to patiently and calmly correct them.

If the mistake they make is insignificant, it is sometimes best to let it go. Remember, if you make their job easier, they will almost always treat you and your story with more professionalism and objectivity.

9 Don't Try to Dance with the Facts.

Never try to “B.S.”, trick, dazzle, impress or otherwise belittle the reporter. Be your best self, talking to someone struggling trying to do a complex job well. Speak clearly and directly. Reporters usually are not trying to unearth some terrible secret when they interview you; they just want good, concise answers.

That said, if a reporter does ask hard questions, remember that's part of his job, too. If you don't know the answer to a question, be honest about it. Tell them you don't know, have not thought about it before, or some other answer and that you will get back to them – then get back to them quickly.

10 Don't Make assumptions about the political persuasions of the news department(s) or individual reporters.

Editorial page departments are supposed to have a political bias. But news departments aim to remain as neutral as possible (or claim to). Individual reporters can and do belong to political parties, but they aren't *supposed* to favor one view over another.

As many have seen, bias often creeps into what are supposed to be objective news stories. But avoid making assumptions about the leanings of the reporters you talk to. Occasionally, you will speak to one that agrees with your world view. Sometimes, though the reporter does not agree

with your world view, they will agree with you on a particular issue or may acknowledge the legitimacy of particular arguments being advanced by the project or campaign you are working on.

Conclusion. Following these pointers will not guarantee favorable or even fair news coverage or your campaign or project by reporters and bloggers. They will, however, assure that you will be treated more fairly than if you do not observe them. If you practice these pointers consistently, over time, you will find that you will be treated more seriously. You will also become a regularly consulted source for stressed-out reporters who need information or quotes quickly from a person who has your perspective to round out a story. ☑



PURPOSE: Those who master basic debating skills will be effective in public life and (often) in private life. Whether debating with your spouse, your employer, your friends at a coffee shop, or your state senator, using basic debating tools will improve your chances of winning the argument. The purpose of this course is to provide you with these basic debating guidelines...



1. Identify Your Audience! *Who are you really talking to in your debate?*

Obviously, if you are in a private one-on-one discussion, your audience will be the person you are talking to. But if you are at a family event, a coffee shop, a TV or radio show, or a service club, think carefully about it - ***your real audience may be those around you who are listening, not the person you are debating.*** It might be smart to focus on convincing ***THEM*** instead of your opponent!

2. ALWAYS be Nice... No Matter What! Political debates can be vigorous and



emotional. ***But when an issue becomes too emotional or personal, reason stops working as a tool of persuasion.*** If you find yourself raising your voice, calling people "idiots" (especially those you are debating), pointing fingers at faces to make a point, or using profanity or wild gestures, you have already lost. ***Those in your audience will see any display of temper as a sign of desperation, weakness, and frustration.*** Let your opponents lose THEIR temper. ***Whenever they get meaner, you get nicer.*** You will come off as being reasonable, credible, and your audience will like you.

3. Your Opponent is NOT Your Enemy!

Misguided? Perhaps. Ill-informed? Very likely. Naive? Sure. ***But most people are well-intentioned and, like you, are doing what they truly believe will create a better world.*** America is about a competition of ideas, and our founders risked everything to preserve it for us. You will build credibility with your audience, and maybe even make friends with your opponents, if you treat them as honorable but mistaken colleagues, rather than an "enemy to be slain by the sword of reason."



4. You Don't Have to Know Everything! As much as we'd like to think so, we don't have all the answers. Who does? ***If your opponent raises an issue you don't have a good answer for, don't try to fake, bluster, lie, or bluff your way out of it.*** If your opponent makes an interesting point, it is alright to say so; state that you would like to think about it and discuss it later. This lets you to move on to the next point, buys you time to strengthen your position, and builds your credibility with others who will see you as reasonable and a good listener. ***Even if you lose this debate, your opinion will carry more weight in the future. ABOVE ALL ELSE - if you use facts, and claim to know something, be SURE of the facts you cite.***

5. Look for Common Ground! A debates rarely comes to a constructive conclusion unless a value is established to measure the arguments being made. For example, "cost" is a value established by debating "What is the least expensive way for us to maintain good roads?" Once this value is established, you have enough common ground for meaningful debate to take place. ***Ask your opponent what values they are trying to promote, and share the values you are trying to promote with your opponent and your audience.*** Maybe your values are the same; you only disagree about how to advance them. ***If so, you can win by simply showing that your approach is the best.***

6. Frame the Discussion by Establishing Values!

If you are promoting the virtues of chocolate, would you rather frame the discussion in terms of **pleasure**: "Does chocolate bring joy to people," or in terms of **harm**: "Does chocolate pose a health risk?" **As you can see, whomever is able to "frame a discussion" in this way usually wins the debate.** If you are not able to establish agreed values as discussed above, it is important to establish at least one value by first having a debate over what is to be achieved in the discussion.



7. Put Your BEST Arguments First!

In journalism, there is a rule saying, "Don't bury the lead!" ***This means, do not bury your best arguments deep in your news article.*** In debate, people sometimes do this with the intent of saving their knock-out blow for the end. This almost never works because leading with your weak arguments offers momentum to your opponent and you may lose your audience before you get to your strongest arguments. ***Always put your best arguments at the top!*** (The guy at the right buried his lead!)



8. Thank Your Opponent and Audience for their Attention!



This is really an extension of Debate Tool #2, "Always Be Nice... No Matter What!" as shown above. ***Remember - no matter how obnoxious your opponent might be, he or she believed you were worth spending their time and energy on. And no matter who makes up your audience, they thought you were worth their time.*** Thank them, and do it with sincerity no matter how pleasant or unpleasant they may have been. You will show yourself to be classy and will earn respect as a debater - even from your opponents.

EXERCISES:

1. **Pair up and choose an issue that is important to both of you. Choose opposite sides of the argument and debate it, even if you have to pretend. First, write down the values or objectives you are trying to achieve through your position. Write down what you think the most powerful arguments on your side are. Conduct a short five minute debate. Repeat, switching sides.**
2. **Practice the technique called "The Ransberger Pivot," to be demonstrated during discussion of item 6 as shown above. Using the topic chosen above, practice using the Ransberger Pivot and then repeat switching sides.**



Introduction. If you are a public official, may one day be a public official, or are an activist who monitors government boards and commissions, you will want to become familiar with Oregon's local budget process. NOTE: This training document is not a legal document, nor is it intended to constitute legal advice. Instead, it is a descriptive document about the basics of Oregon's local budget process.

① **What are the Basics of Local Budget Laws?**

Almost every local government in Oregon, regardless of size, must prepare and prepare and adopt a budget. With few exceptions, budgets must be annual or biennial. Schools, counties, cities, ports, rural fire districts, special district, urban renewal agencies, and special districts must all comply. Laws governing local budget processes can be found in Chapter 294 of Oregon's Revised Statutes.

② **Get Your Hands Dirty! Get Appointed to a Budget Committee!**

Budget Committees are a government body's fiscal planning advisory committee. The committee consists of the members of the governing body plus an equal number of qualified district voters appointed by the body. With few exceptions, all qualified voters of the district may serve on a Budget Committee.

Budget Committees are EXCELLENT places for activists to begin direct involvement in local government. Many of these positions remain vacant for years at a time. You can apply by filling out the appropriate forms at your county or city elections office. You do not need prior experience. You can learn on the job. Dive in! Committee members are appointed to three-year terms usually staggered. The Budget Committee must select a presiding officer who presides over Budget Committee meetings. Members are unpaid.

Once a "proposed" budget is distributed as described below, Budget Committee members may request any information required during consideration of the proposed budget from any district officer or employee. Budget Committees may amend the "proposed budget." Budget Committees, through the district's chief administrative officer, may require staff members to attend Budget Committee meetings.

③ **What are the Nine Steps of the Budget Cycle?**

- A. **A "Budget Officer" is Appointed.** This person works under the supervision of the governing body or a chief executive who works under that body.
- B. **A "Proposed" Budget is Prepared.** The Budget Officer is responsible for creating a proposed budget and presenting it to the governing body's budget committee.
- C. **The Budget Officer Publishes Notice.** A "Notice of Budget Committee Meeting" must be published. If only in a newspaper, it must be published twice, five to thirty days before the first Budget Committee hearing. If it is published on the governing body's website, it must appear at least ten days before the hearing and notice must be published once in a newspaper five to thirty days before (the newspaper notice must provide the website). If the notice is mailed, it must be provided ten days before the hearing.

If more than one meeting is held to solicit public testimony, only the first is required to be noticed as described above. Subsequent meetings may be noticed in accordance with notice requirements applicable to the governing body when it meets.

- D. **The Budget Committee Meets.** At least one meeting must be held to receive the proposed budget and hear the public. As soon as members of the Budget Committee receive the proposed budget, it becomes a public document. Members of the Budget Committee may not deliberate toward any decision before the meeting, and may not deliberate outside of a public meeting. If not at an initial budget committee meeting, the public must be allowed to offer testimony at a subsequent meeting during this process. All meetings are open to the public.

- E. Budget Committee Amends and/or "Approves" Proposed Budget.** The proposed budget is "approved" when the Budget Committee is satisfied with the document after making any amendments. An "approved" budget is not yet "adopted," but still a work in progress. If the budget includes income from a new or increased "ad valorem" tax, usually a property tax, the Committee must approve an amount or rate to be certified by a public assessor.
- F. Publish a Budget Summary and Notice of Budget Hearing.** Once the proposed budget is approved by the Budget Committee, a budget hearing must be held by the governing body. Notice of the hearing, and a summary of the budget must be published thirty days or more before the hearing. This information must be provided in the newspaper, by mail, or by hand delivery. If no area newspaper exists and estimated expenses in the budget do not exceed \$100,000, the information may be posted in three conspicuous places at least twenty days before the hearing.
- G. A Public Hearing Must be Held on the Approved Budget.** More than one hearing may be held. All hearings are open to the public. These hearings are to hear public testimony.
- H. The Budget is Adopted, Appropriations are Made, and Tax Levies are Declared.** The governing board finally "adopts" the budget. It may make changes before or, within narrow constraints, after it is adopted, but no changes can be made after the beginning of the next fiscal year, which generally begins on July 1. The governing body must enact resolutions to formally adopt the budget, make appropriations and, if needed, levy and categorize any tax.
- I. Budget is Filed and Any Levies are Certified.** Districts levying a property tax must submit to the county assessor's office on or before July 15. Districts not levying a property tax must send a copy of its adopting resolutions to the Department of Revenue before July 15. Property taxes must be approved by voters. The time and scope of such elections are regulated.

④ Here's How to Have an Impact on the Local Budget Process!

- A. Get on a Budget Committee!** If we are going to keep our republic, we need to take personal responsibility for its governance, yes? See if you can get appointed to a Budget Committee or elected to a local office on a body that automatically serves on a budget committee. There is no better way to be involved than to be one of the decision makers! Also, it is fascinating work!
- B. Get Involved EARLY IN THE PROCESS!** If you can't get on the Budget Committee, do what you can to get involved EARLY. You will have the best chance to influence a budget if you get involved BEFORE the Budget Committee approves the proposed budget. While it is still possible to effect change after that by lobbying Budget Committee members, it is harder. All too often, people show up at the final budget meeting where budgets are adopted. While it is technically possible to lobby for changes at this point, in reality the die is already cast. Get involved EARLY!
- C. Do Your Homework!** Go to the governing body you are interested in. Ask for past budgets. Ask for the minutes of recent Budget Committee hearings. Study the materials. If you find items you are interested or have questions about, make appointments to see members of the Budget Committee including members of the governing board. You might also be able to meet with staff. It is best to do this BEFORE the proposed budget is approved, but the earlier the better!
- D. Find the Timelines and Make Your Plan.** Go to your governing body and find out what their timeline is to accomplish the nine steps outlined above. Based on the timeline, make your plan. Include fellow activists. Plan Letters to the Editor in your local newspaper. Plan phone campaigns. If you make your voice heard, you CAN have an impact, particularly if you start early!
- E. Get More Training!** Go to the WLN website and get companion training documents on How to Lobby Public Officials, Testify Before Public Boards, Write Letters to the Editor, and more. Learning these skills will not guarantee success, but they will make success much more likely! Even if you fail the first time, acquiring and sharpening these skills will help you and your friends build reputations as competent activists and equip you for future battles and projects!

Conclusion. This offers a basic introduction and some rules of thumb relating to Oregon's local budget processes. Speak to an attorney or contact the Oregon Department of Revenue if you have questions. While the above provides good rules of thumb, there are exceptions and requirements associated with particular circumstances. You are encouraged to learn more by visiting the website of the Oregon Department of Revenue and reading "Budgeting in Oregon Manual" and "Local Budgeting Manual." You can also refer to ORS Chapter 294 online.