

**COMMUNICATIONS
AND
MEDIA RELATIONS MANUAL**

YOUNG PEOPLE FOR



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ABOUT THIS MANUAL	3
B. STARTING OUT AND SETTING GOALS.....	4
C. DEFINING TARGETS.....	5
D. YOUR MESSAGE	6
E. USING YOUR MESSAGE	8
F. ORGANIZING A MEDIA PLAN.....	10
G. TOOLS FOR REACHING THE MEDIA.....	11
H. COMMUNICATING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA	12
I. BUILDING MEDIA CONTACTS.....	13
J. EVENTS.....	14
K. TIPS FOR HOLDING MEDIA EVENTS	15
L. RAPID RESPONSE	17
M. THE CAMPUS MEDIA	18
N. TRACKING COVERAGE	20

APPENDICES

A. SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE	21
B. DOS AND DON'TS OF PRESS RELEASE WRITING.....	22
C. GUIDE TO PRESS EVENT	24
D. SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY	26
E. WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR	27
F. SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR.....	28
G. SAMPLE OP-ED	29
H. SAMPLE TALKING POINTS	31
I. USING SOCIAL MEDIA	32

A. ABOUT THIS MANUAL

In order to persuade people and promote progressive change, you must communicate effectively. When it comes to politics and issue advocacy, effective communication usually involves the media.

This manual is intended to give you a basic overview of proven, effective communications tactics and strategies, including media relations strategies that you can use to build support for progressive policies and causes. After reading this manual, you should have the knowledge you need to craft and implement a communications plan. You will also be able to take specific communications tactics from this manual and use them on a piecemeal, as-needed basis.

The most important part of any communications effort is the message, and messaging is a key focus of this manual. The message is a clear, concise summary of the rationale for your position. The best messages are usually no more than a few sentences long, and they are employed and expanded on at every opportunity—in posters and written materials, in conversations with activists, in interviews with members of the media, with online contacts, and elsewhere.

Here is a more specific overview of what you will find in this manual:

Sections B and C pose two key questions you should consider before developing your message. First, what are your goals? And second, what are your target audiences?

Developing your message is the focus of **Sections D and E**.

Section F goes over how to put together a media plan.

Specific tactics that you can use while implementing a media plan are the subject of **Sections G, H, I, J, K, L and M**.

The various **appendices** at the end of this manual contain tips and samples of effective communications tools: press release, media advisory, letter-to-the-editor, talking points and op-ed.

Remember that while this document gives you tools to get started, those who work with the media almost inevitably run into unanticipated challenges. The People For the American Way Foundation communications staff is on hand to assist you if you have questions or would like advice. You can call us at 202-467-4999 (ask for someone in the

communications department and identify yourself as a YP4 fellow).

B. STARTING OUT AND SETTING GOALS

Before developing a message and making a communications plan, you need to know what you are trying to accomplish. Be specific, and lay out achievable goals with clear measures for success. Do the best you can to make sure that all members of your organization or coalition have the same understanding of your goals. Your message should reflect and your media plan should include the goals you plan to achieve. They, and you, should be able to answer the following two questions:

- a. What do we want to accomplish?
- b. What constitutes success?

EXAMPLE: SETTING GOALS AND MEASURING SUCCESS

LET'S SUPPOSE THAT YOU'RE FIGHTING FOR A LIVING WAGE BILL IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE. YOUR GOAL AND YOUR ULTIMATE MEASURE OF SUCCESS ARE THE SAME: GETTING THE BILL PASSED AND SIGNED INTO LAW. ALONG THE WAY, YOU MAY SET INTERMEDIATE GOALS -- SUCH AS GETTING A FAVORABLE EDITORIAL IN AN INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER, BUILDING A COALITION OF ALLIES, OR SIGNING UP LEGISLATORS WHO ENDORSE THE BILL.

C. DEFINING TARGETS

Once your goals are clear, it's time to start determining how you can achieve them. A good first step from a communications perspective is to determine your target audiences. Who must you persuade to support your goals if you are to succeed? These are the people you should have in mind when crafting your message.

Once your targets are clear, you must determine what methods of communication will be most effective with each of these targets. These may include:

- ▶ Newspapers (both news and opinion sections)
 - ▶ College papers
 - ▶ Local papers
 - ▶ Alternative weeklies
 - ▶ Newsletters
 - ▶ Church bulletins
- ▶ Magazines
 - ▶ National
 - ▶ Local
- ▶ Radio
- ▶ Television
- ▶ Internet
 - ▶ Political blogs
 - ▶ Community blogs (religious, special interest, etc.)
 - ▶ Social mediaList serves
- ▶ Ads, posters and flyers

You can make your message heard in a wide variety of ways — just be sure that when you do, you're doing it in ways that will reach your target audiences.

An important note: If you're in an area where Spanish speakers would be interested in your campaign, think about spreading your message through Spanish-language news media, Hispanic churches and service clubs.

EXAMPLE: TARGETS AND METHODS

▶ **TARGET 1: IN THE LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN, THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL AUDIENCES ARE THE STATE LEGISLATORS AND THE GOVERNOR, AS THEY'RE THE ONES WHO CAN VOTE FOR AND SIGN LEGISLATION.**

▶ **METHOD 1: OFFICIALS USUALLY READ ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT'S WRITTEN ABOUT THEM, SO A GOOD WAY TO TARGET THESE PEOPLE WOULD BE THROUGH NEWSPAPERS**

▶ **TARGET 2: TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE, YOU'LL HAVE OTHER TARGETS, TOO, SUCH AS PEOPLE WHO CAN INFLUENCE LEGISLATORS AND THE GOVERNOR. IF YOU CAN PERSUADE THE GOVERNOR'S STAFF, HER FRIENDS, HER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS, OR MORE IMPORTANTLY, HER CONSTITUENTS, YOUR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS INCREASE. ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO WANT TO BE REELECTED MUST PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT VOTERS THINK.**

▶ **METHOD 2: IN ADDITION TO NEWSPAPERS, VOTERS GET A LOT OF THEIR NEWS FROM TELEVISION NEWS. THE GOVERNOR'S STAFF AND SUPPORTERS ARE LIKELY TO READ POLITICAL BLOGS AS WELL.**

D. YOUR MESSAGE

You must reach your target audiences with a compelling and convincing message that supports your campaign, brings in partners and allies, and helps you achieve your goals. Having a good message is one of the most important parts of any campaign.

THE MESSAGE: A DEFINITION

EXAMPLE: MESSAGE

FOR THE LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN, A GOOD MESSAGE WOULD BE: THE LEGISLATURE SHOULD PASS A LIVING WAGE LAW. ANYONE WHO WORKS HARD SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIVE AND SUPPORT A FAMILY IN OUR COMMUNITY -- IT'S A QUESTION OF FAIRNESS.

PEOPLE LIKE FAIRNESS IN GOVERNMENT, AND MOST PEOPLE SUPPORT LAWS THAT ARE FAIR. IT'S HARD TO ARGUE THAT PEOPLE WHO WORK HARD SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SUPPORT A FAMILY. AND YOU PROPOSE A POSITIVE SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEM.

A message is a clear, concise summary of the rationale for your position. The best messages are usually no more than a sentence or two long. They are repeated and amplified at every opportunity—in posters and written materials, in conversations with activists, in interviews with members of the media and elsewhere.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

- ▶ Remember, you're already convinced. You're trying to reach your target audiences. Put yourself in their shoes. Think about the messages that will resonate. Why should your target audiences care about this issue? Why should they take your side?
- ▶ Think about possible opposition or resistance to your campaign. If there are people and groups you know will oppose your campaign, think about their arguments. Does your message effectively counter theirs?
- ▶ It's fine to criticize opponents, but you must have a positive element to your message. If you think the status quo is not working, say it and offer a plan for positive change. Say what you'd do differently and how.
- ▶ If you are working with other people or organizations, your whole team needs to be involved in message development. Gather your team for a brainstorming session to come up with words and phrases that describe the campaign and its goals. Produce a concise, written summary of your position designed to persuade your target audiences. It should be short, clear, direct, and easy to understand.
- ▶ Frame the issue powerfully. Don't just convey the facts that are important -- convey the feeling that's important. How you frame the issue can make a major difference in how your message is received. Framing is inherent in any kind of messaging, although lately it's been getting even more attention in progressive politics. For more information on framing, check out George Lakoff's book *Don't Think of An Elephant*.

EXAMPLE: FRAMING

HOW YOU FRAME AN ISSUE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN HOW YOUR ISSUE IS PERCEIVED. CONSERVATIVE ACTIVISTS WANTED TO REPEAL THE ESTATE TAX, BUT HAD TROUBLE GAINING MOMENTUM. AFTER INTENSIVE POLLING, THEY REALIZED THAT IF THEY CALLED IT A "DEATH TAX" INSTEAD, A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VOTERS WOULD INSTANTLY CHANGE THEIR STANCE ON THE ISSUE.

E. USING YOUR MESSAGE

EXAMPLE: TALKING POINTS

SEE SAMPLE TALKING POINTS ABOUT VOTING RIGHTS ON PAGE 33.

Talking points are brief bits of language you and your allies can use to talk about your issue. You should come up with some basic talking points that communicate and support your message. Your talking points should be brief—a page or less. You will update the talking points as news develops so that they remain relevant and so all of your spokespeople remain on the same page. Talking points should always serve to communicate your message.

REPETITION AND STAYING “ON MESSAGE”

It is important to stay “on message,” meaning that once your message and talking points are set, you should try to communicate them consistently. It may feel boring and redundant to say the same things over and over, but since different people will hear you every time you talk, you should do your best to make sure that all of those people are exposed to your best arguments — your message.

SLOGANS, LOGOS AND EXPANDING YOUR MESSAGE

Develop a campaign theme or slogan, a name for your organization or campaign if you need one, and a list of positive words and phrases that convey your message and fit your goals. Think about real world examples and people who exemplify your campaign.

Think about visuals, symbols, events, acronyms or mascots that can communicate and amplify your message. The simple “ = ” that identifies the Human Rights Campaign’s focus on equality is a great example. Naming a campaign or a piece of legislation to commemorate a person or event can also convey information and emotion. Everyone understands what an “Amber Alert” is. Everyone gets why the Matthew Shepard Hate Crime Act is needed. And everyone knows that if you call a bill “The Clear Skies Initiative,” it’s supposed to be about air quality.

Don’t overload your message. You don’t need a symbol, an acronym, a mascot and a clever name. Keep it simple. Choose only the elements that best communicate your message and integrate them into every aspect of your campaign. Incorporate them into press releases, speeches, logos, posters, flyers, quotes, ads, anything your campaign releases, and any interviews or statements you give to the press. Make sure the entire campaign team keeps the message in mind as they carry out every aspect of the campaign.

Stay with your message, but remain flexible. Your message brands your campaign and, over time, will create an identity with your target audiences. Tweak it to respond to events as necessary, but maintain your identity. Change your message only if it’s not working, or worse, having a negative effect.

EXAMPLE: STAYING ON MESSAGE

LOOK BACK AT THE MESSAGING FOR THE LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN. THE MESSAGE WE CHOSE IS ONE ABOUT “FAIRNESS.”

THIS MEANS YOU WON’T BE TALKING ABOUT THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HIGHER WAGES, THE WAYS LOW WAGES REINFORCE RACIAL DIVISION, OR MARXIST CRITICISMS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM. YOU WILL BE TALKING ABOUT FAIRNESS. COMPETING MESSAGES MAKE YOUR POSITION UNCLEAR.

Sometimes slogans work well to convey a message — of course they can't convey all the information about what you're doing, but they can say a lot. The worlds of politics, advocacy and advertising are full of great examples:

- ▶ “Equal Pay for Equal Work”
- ▶ “Take a Bite Out of Crime”
- ▶ “Choose or Lose”
- ▶ “Where's the Beef?”
- ▶ “Save the Children”

EXAMPLE: SLOGAN

FOR YOUR LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN, A GOOD SLOGAN COULD BE “AN HONEST DAY'S WORK DESERVES AN HONEST DAY'S PAY.”

F. ORGANIZING A MEDIA PLAN

A media plan will help you focus your efforts and follow through. Elements of a media plan include:

- ▶ A statement of your goals
- ▶ A statement of your message
- ▶ Identification of your target audiences and target media
- ▶ A list of the documents and campaign items you need to produce, such as press kits, T-shirts, brochures, reports, fact sheets, flyers, ads, etc.
- ▶ A calendar with a schedule of timelines, deadlines and milestones
- ▶ Plans for creative media-targeted events, including launches, rallies, news conferences, visual events, photo ops and message events
- ▶ A list of media contacts including the beat reporters and publications that cover your issue

The plan should include specific assignments and deadlines. Set a date for achieving your ultimate goal, and work backwards to determine the steps along the way — what you need to accomplish and when. Include milestones that may affect your campaign: a primary election, a legislative recess, the anniversary of a key historic event, etc.

Decide which elements are right for your campaign and put them together:

- ▶ Will there be a launch event announcing your campaign?
- ▶ What will be in your press kit, the folder you pass out to members of the media that contains material describing your campaign and your goals?
- ▶ Will you have visual or message events to raise awareness of your campaign, such as symbols or mascots (for example, "Dogs against Romney")?
- ▶ Will you invite the news media to campaign events such as volunteer trainings, phone banks, etc.?
Are there locally or nationally known experts or celebrities who can headline a campaign event for you?
- ▶ Will you write letters to the editor and opinion articles to submit to newspapers?
- ▶ Can you meet with editorial boards at newspapers to make your case and try for a positive editorial?
- ▶ Are there reporters at local newspapers, TV and radio stations who are assigned to cover your college or the topic your campaign is addressing? (For example, many newspapers have education reporters and most have business reporters. In cities with large universities, reporters are often assigned to cover the institution itself.)
- ▶ Are there local talk radio shows that will cover your campaign?
- ▶ Do you have a budget for paid advertising in newspapers, radio or TV?
- ▶ Are there events already scheduled where your campaign can have a presence (e.g., board meetings, job fairs, candidate debates, or other places where people with an interest in your campaign will gather)?
- ▶ Are there popular websites and blogs that might be interested in your campaign?

You can't attract the news media unless you give them real news to cover. They're not obliged to cover you because you call a news conference. Think about why they should cover your campaign, and be prepared to tell them why the local TV, radio or newspaper customer will want to know about your campaign. In the example of the living wage campaign, give them real people who would benefit and are ready to be interviewed. Make sure you have the compelling visuals that TV and still photographers need, and where possible, real people affected by the issue.

Always have material that you can send to reporters and editors that describes the news event you are planning and includes concise information about your campaign. Make sure that at least one member of your team serves as a consistent, responsive contact for the news media.

G. TOOLS FOR REACHING THE MEDIA

Some of the standard formats for reaching the news media are described below. Use them, but don't be afraid to be creative and try nontraditional means for reaching the media.

▶ **PRESS RELEASE** – News releases are an easy way to disseminate information, and the most common form of media outreach. They are written to give the reporters the information they need to write a story on an event. They go out after an event takes place.

▶ **MEDIA ADVISORY** – Media advisories inform reporters, news directors, editors, etc. of upcoming events. They should have all the information a reporter needs to plan to cover your event. They go out before an event takes place (the earlier, the better.)

▶ **PHOTOS** – Take your own high-resolution photos, and post them on your website or Facebook page. News agencies may ask to use them. Have photos of your campaign leaders ready for news outlets who request them.

▶ **PRESS PACKETS** – Create folders that include a summary of your campaign, information about the campaign principals and their biographies, and other information such as brochures, fact sheets, studies, reports, clips of news coverage, lists of partner organizations, and quotes from supporters and allies. Give each member of the media covering your campaign a folder, and have them available at all events.

▶ **OP-EDS** – Op-eds are guest opinion articles in newspapers and other publications. They allow you to make your case on your terms and in your words. Submit the article to the appropriate editor (rules are usually listed on the publication's Web site) and follow up with a phone call. Offer your op-ed exclusively to one paper at a time. If your first choice rejects it, then go to your next priority.

▶ **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** – Your campaign team and supporters should be encouraged to send letters to the editor to bring attention to your issue and demonstrate support. Each letter should be individual. Form letters or mass mailings will not be printed. Provide key policy and message points to your supporters, and urge them to write letters in their own words. For tips, see the appendix item "Writing a Letter to the Editor."

▶ **E-MAIL AND NEWSLETTERS** – Consider sending out regular, brief e-mails or newsletters updating reporters and others on the progress of your campaign. These are designed not to engender immediate news coverage, but to keep journalists apprised of your progress and engaged with your issue.

▶ **WEBSITES** – Your organization's website will often be the first stop for interested reporters. Be sure to keep it up to date with useful information.

▶ **BE THE MEDIA** – New technologies are blurring the lines between reporters and the general public and sometimes reaching a reporter means becoming one yourself. If you have the technical expertise and sufficient need, you may consider starting an organization blog where you can keep members and the general public up-to-date about your organization or campaign. You can also use social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to reach your audience directly.

EXAMPLE: PRESS RELEASE
SEE A SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE
ON PAGE 25.

EXAMPLE: MEDIA ADVISORY
SEE A SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY
ON PAGE 29.

EXAMPLE: OP-ED
SEE A SAMPLE OP-ED ON PAGE
32.

**EXAMPLE: LETTER TO THE
EDITOR**
SEE A SAMPLE LETTER TO THE
EDITOR ON PAGE 31.

H. COMMUNICATING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Reporters are busy and deluged with information. It's important to help them understand your campaign in the most direct, helpful, efficient way possible. Here are some tips:

- ▶ **DO THE RESEARCH AND PRESENT IT CLEARLY.** Provide the reporters with accurate, well-researched information that conveys your message. Don't make a reporter wade through news stories, reports, studies and other information stories. Do that yourself, and present statistics and information in concise nuggets of information. For example, don't make the reporter find out how many people are living under the poverty level in your state – find that information for him and provide the source.
- ▶ **GET TO THE POINT.** Be ready to make your case to reporters and editors quickly over the phone. Tell them why you're calling, and give them the key information up front. If it is not an urgent call, ask if this is a good time to talk, and offer to call back if it is not.
- ▶ **STAY ON MESSAGE.** Before you go into an interview, make sure you know the points you want to make, and make them clearly. Try not to be drawn into tangential topics or long, wandering answers. Answer questions directly and positively, and always bring your answer to the point you want to make. Signal your intent to the reporter with words like, "If I leave you with only one thought today, I want it to be this:" and stay on message. If you need some time to think about the question, find out what deadline the reporter is working on, and offer to call back.
- ▶ **DON'T GUESS AND NEVER LIE.** If you do not know the answer to a question a reporter asks, never speculate, guess or invent an answer. It's okay to say, "I don't know." Tell the reporter you will call back when you have accurate information.
- ▶ **GIVE YOURSELF TIME.** You don't have to answer immediately. Ask a reporter when his or her deadline is, and arrange a time to call back when you've had a chance to think about what you want to say.
- ▶ **ON THE RECORD.** Assume that any time you are speaking to a reporter you are speaking for the campaign and not for yourself. Never say anything you would not want to see in a news story. The rules for speaking off the record or on background can be murky. Avoid speaking off the record, and seek advice from the PFAWF communications staff on how to navigate such interviews.
- ▶ **TIMING IS EVERYTHING.** Respect reporters' time limitations and deadlines. Call them back in a timely fashion. If you have an interview scheduled, show up on time and be prepared. If you do not feel you are the right person to speak on an issue, tell the reporter and suggest alternatives.
- ▶ **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.** Before an interview, editorial board or media event, make sure your principals are prepared. Be ready with a succinct opening presentation that sets out your message. Compile a list of likely questions and practice responding. If you anticipate hostile questions, organize a "murder board," with friends throwing tough questions at you. Practice will help you organize your thoughts and give you greater confidence.
- ▶ **STAY IN TOUCH WITH KEY REPORTERS.** You can send reporters less formal notes and useful tips to keep the lines of communication open. After a story runs about your cause, you can write a note thanking the reporter. If you have information that you think a reporter might find interesting, you can put it in a short e-mail.

I. CONTACTING THE MEDIA

Build a complete list of media contacts in your region (the PFAWF office can help.) Include wire services, newspapers, television, radio stations, magazines, Web publications, trade publications and newsletters, as well as individual reporters. List phone numbers, fax numbers, a general e-mail address for the newsroom, and e-mails and direct phone numbers for specific reporters. Remember that major news organizations and wire services often have bureaus in different cities throughout a state, including reporters in the state capital.

The best indicator that a reporter is interested in your issue is that he or she has written about it before. When you find stories written on your topic, be sure to include that reporter in your list.

- ▶ **NEWSWIRES:** Wire services such as the Associated Press are largely invisible to news consumers, but play a key role. The AP serves most print and broadcast outlets in a state, and an AP story guarantees statewide and sometimes national attention. The AP also publishes week-ahead schedules and a daybook listing local events/press conferences for the next day that is closely read by all media. Include all local newswires in your contacts – AP, Reuters, Knight-Ridder, Gannett, Scripps-Howard, Dow Jones, Bloomberg, UPI, etc. Some states have news services organized to serve specific outlets, such as the Capital News TV service in Tallahassee, which prepares TV news reports for markets throughout Florida.
- ▶ **NEWSPAPERS:** Contact assignment editors with advisories and announcements. Establish relationships with reporters and columnists who cover your issues, and with the editorial or opinion editors in charge of op-eds, letters to the editor and editorial board meetings. Don't neglect weeklies, alternative papers and minority papers.
- ▶ **TELEVISION:** Contact news directors, assignment editors and weekend assignment editors with events and announcements, and establish relationships with local TV reporters and personalities who may cover your issue. Pitch your campaign to local news and talk shows that bring on guests to discuss local issues. For example, if you're holding a big rally, offer a spokesperson the day before to discuss the event on a 5:00 news interview segment.
- ▶ **RADIO:** Contact assignment editors and bureau reporters for all-news radio stations, news directors for music-and-news format stations, and producers/bookers for talk radio shows. Pay particular attention to those contacts from stations that target the audiences you want to reach, including Spanish language stations and public radio.
- ▶ **MAGAZINES:** News stories should go to the editors in charge of specific departments. Look for features editors, political editors, minority outreach editors, columnists, etc. Be sure to allow for long lead times on magazines which appear only weekly, monthly or quarterly.
- ▶ **BLOGS:** Although they can be a bit harder to identify and contact than your local newspaper or radio station, your campus and region likely has a number of local blogs. Spend a few minutes searching to see if there are local bloggers writing about politics or the issue you are working on. Be sure to send them information about your group as well as invitations events and press releases.

J. EVENTS

Media events are another powerful way to reach the media and help them tell your story. Events are often far more effective than traditional news conferences.

Creative, funny or dramatic events are an excellent way to attract media coverage. Create your own events, and scour campus and community calendars for events or activities that you can play off to create a campaign event. Make sure the event has strong visuals and conveys your message.

A few very basic media events are listed below, but more creative events tailored to your message are almost always better. See the next section for tips on how to create a powerful media event.

- ▶ **NEWS CONFERENCES** – News conferences and briefings should be called only when there is significant news — the press won't show up just because you ask them to. When possible, hold news conferences between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in a location convenient for reporters. It helps to hold a news conference in a place that supports your message visually — a park, a hospital, a factory, but make sure it is not hard to reach or too far from the reporter's home base. Always make sure you have permission before holding an event in a public or private space; the story should be about the event itself or even about the fact that you were denied permission to use the space you wanted, not your failure to obtain needed permits.
- ▶ **NEWS BRIEFINGS** – Briefings are informal events designed to give reporters detailed background information about your issue. Have your experts and spokespeople available to make presentations, and have all the information available in written form for the reporters to take with them.
- ▶ **EDITORIAL BOARD MEETINGS** – Special briefings for the editorial boards of local newspapers can introduce your campaign and your campaign leaders, and give you the opportunity to demonstrate why the newspaper should write an editorial supporting your issue. Research past editorials in the newspaper related to your issue, and send your press packet to the appropriate editor before your meeting.

K. TIPS FOR HOLDING MEDIA EVENTS

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGES

It may be a cliché, but “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Images transmitted by the mass media often have a greater impact than words. Make sure that the images you present communicate your message.

When setting up events, always ask yourself, “What’s the picture?” Figure out where still photographers and TV cameramen will be and what the shots they’re taking will look like. Make sure those shots emphasize the message of your event, and will be easy for television and still photographers to cover. Be creative and provocative, but make sure your images can pass both the giggle test and the taste test—you want your pictures to amplify your message, not become a controversy that won’t help your cause

RESOURCE: MEDIA EVENTS
SEE THE MEDIA EVENTS CHECKLIST ON PAGE 28.

EXAMPLE: VISUALS

IF YOU ARE DOING AN EVENT ON EDUCATION FUNDING IN YOUR STATE, THEN YOU MIGHT WANT TO HOLD THE EVENT IN FRONT OF A SCHOOL SCHOOL, SO THAT THE BACKDROP ADDS TO THE MESSAGE. BRING SUPPORTERS WITH BRIGHTLY COLORED T-SHIRTS OR INEXPENSIVE STICKERS AND POSTERS THAT AMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGE. THINK OF OBJECTS YOUR SPEAKERS CAN HOLD UP TO EMPHASIZE YOUR MESSAGE — SAY, NOTEBOOKS, PENCILS, CHILDREN’S BOOKS.

SHOW THAT YOUR SUPPORTERS ARE DIVERSE AND PATRIOTIC

Consider demonstrating the diversity of your coalition by bringing supporters from every walk of life to your event. Parents can bring their children — it’s a great experience for the kids who like seeing themselves on TV. Don’t be afraid to demonstrate your patriotism. There’s nothing more patriotic than political activism, especially in defense of social justice, democracy, and the Constitution. Don’t hesitate to respectfully use the American flag, or copies of the Constitution or Bill of Rights to show what you’re fighting for.

EXAMPLE: USING SUPPORTERS WELL

WHEN HISPANIC GROUPS LAUNCHED MASSIVE MARCHES IN 2006, ORGANIZERS WANTED TO PUT THEIR BEST FOOT FORWARD. THEY ASKED MARCHERS TO WEAR CLEAN WHITE SHIRTS AND BRING AMERICAN FLAGS. THE MESSAGE WAS UNMISTAKABLE: HISPANICS ARE PROUD, HARDWORKING AMERICANS AND ARE HERE TO STAY.

WORK TO GET SMALL MEDIA OUTLETS AS WELL AS BIG ONES TO YOUR EVENTS

It’s great to get TV and radio coverage or a story in a major newspaper, but you may not always attract the major media. There are plenty of news outlets and ways to get your message out. Don’t neglect smaller newspapers, school publications, Internet outlets, and advocacy, union, and community newsletters. You should be sure to pitch stories to smaller outlets when it’s appropriate (for example, when you’re doing events outside of your state’s biggest cities).

Make sure that you’re including specialty media — for example, newspapers and radio targeted toward African Americans, Latinos, or gays and lesbians and other groups. Don’t forget blogs, community billboards (like Craig’s List), and other influential nontraditional media.

PITCHING AND COMMUNICATING ABOUT YOUR EVENTS

1. Always try to send an advisory to the media at least one day before an event takes place. Try to send it before 2 p.m., and make sure you send it the daybook editors for the AP and other wires services in your area. If you have sufficient advance notice, send your advisory the Friday before the event, so it can be listed in the AP's week-ahead daybook for state media.
2. Preview your event on local TV and radio shows. Many local radio and TV stations cut in to shows like "Today" and national radio broadcasts for local news, and often discuss the scheduled events of the day. Noon or early local TV newscasts are also good venues. Offer a pre-interview with someone who will be speaking at the event.
3. Make follow-up calls the afternoon before or the morning of an event to make sure that members of the media received (and read) your advisory. You should also use these calls to get a sense of what your press turnout will be like. Don't be too shy to ask whether the outlet plans on sending a reporter and/or photographer.
4. Have handouts or full press packets at events. Press packets are folders with information reporters might find useful, such as biographies of event participants, the prepared statements of participants, and other materials that illustrate the message of the event, such as recent news clips and editorials.
5. After the event, send out a release with quotes from event participants that reinforce your message. Follow up with news outlets that did not attend the event to make sure they got the information, and offer follow-up interviews if they're interested. It's a good idea to have this release drafted prior to the event – but never release it until after the event is concluded, and make sure it reflects what actually happened at the event.
6. Make sure to take your own photos at the event and post them to your Web site. Reporters may use them in their stories and your supporters will be able to see what you're up to.

L. RAPID RESPONSE

While most of your contact with the news media will be pro-active, you will often need to respond to news developments, or attacks from opponents. Monitor the news to be sure that you are aware of developments that affect your campaign. If something happens on the national level that has repercussions for your campaign, call the reporters who cover the issue and suggest your campaign's local angle.

If your opposition makes a statement or holds an event, be ready with a response that will appear in the same news story. Reporters want to write a balanced story, but need quick, smart statements in time for their broadcast and print deadlines.

Political opponents will sometimes issue an outrageous statement late in the day, betting that you will not be agile enough to respond. Don't let them get away with it, especially if they're twisting the truth or trying to change the terms of the debate. A simple, factual and competent response will help you earn a place in the story and build your credibility with the news media.

If you're not sure how or when to respond to fast-breaking news, remember that the PFAWF communications team will be happy to advise you.

EXAMPLE: RAPID RESPONSE

IN OUR LIVING WAGE EXAMPLE, IF CONGRESS DEFEATS A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, YOU COULD SEND A STATEMENT TO REPORTERS ARGUMENT THAT LIVING WAGE REQUIREMENTS ARE NEEDED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. BY RESPONDING QUICKLY AND PROACTIVELY GETTING IN TOUCH WITH REPORTERS, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ABOUT THE NEED FOR A LOCAL LIVING WAGE INTO THE NATIONAL STORY ABOUT THE VOTE IN CONGRESS.

M. THE CAMPUS MEDIA

The media on your campus (college radio, student newspapers and publications, and TV, if you have it) should be prime targets for your campaign. It is, of course, important to generate coverage in outside media when possible, but the easiest and most frequent coverage you'll obtain is going to come from within your campus.

- ▶ Build relationships with campus media outlets. Relationship building should start as soon as (or before) your campaign begins. You might want to begin with a campus newspaper, for example, by inviting the news editor to join you and other leaders of your campaign for coffee or lunch, and then explain what your campaign is about and what you hope to accomplish. Tell him or her why your campaign is newsworthy, and ask for coverage.
- ▶ Talk with the newspaper's opinion editor and ask if she or he will consider accepting an op-ed submission from people within your campaign. Write letters to the editor. See if you can meet the editorial board and persuade them to write an editorial supporting your efforts.
- ▶ If your campus radio station has a news show, ask the show's producers if they will have you on to talk about your campaign. Also make use of friends' shows on the station. Better yet, see if you and others involved in your campaign can get your own radio show.
- ▶ Campus websites (whether for organizations on campus or networking sites like Facebook or Twitter) can be easy, powerful media for spreading your message in the campus community.
- ▶ Use the coverage you generate on campus to create coverage elsewhere. Send stories that appear in the campus newspaper to other media outlets in your area. One of the best ways to convince outside reporters that something students are doing is newsworthy is to show them that this activity is being covered in campus publications.

WAYS TO REINFORCE YOUR MESSAGE ON CAMPUS

Once you've determined what your message is, and once you've started working to generate coverage of your message in the media, you may consider employing some of the following message reinforcement techniques. Be sure you employ a consistent message throughout, regardless of the medium.

TV, RADIO AND PRINT ADS: Often too expensive, but may be a good idea if you can afford them.

POSTERS: Learn what the rules are for putting up posters on your campus and in your community. The most affordable option is to copy a design on 8.5x11 paper, but bigger posters attract more attention.

LEAFLETING: You might want to consider producing a flyer that communicates your message and provides information about your issue and how to get involved. You can distribute this flyer through dorms, as well as to houses and apartments in your community. Please note: it's illegal to put flyers inside of mail boxes. It's better to leave flyers inside of people's screen doors.

TABLING: Many campuses allow student groups to set up tables in highly trafficked areas. If you do this, make sure to have posters or visuals that clearly communicate your message to those walking by, as well as more detailed materials for people who stop and ask about your campaign.

DINING HALL INFO CARDS: Some campuses allow student groups to place informational cards on tables in their dining halls.

CHALKING: Sidewalk chalk can be a fun and creative way to reinforce your campaign message. If a group of people are chalking, make sure they know what the key points that you want them to convey are so that they can remain on message.

K. TRACKING COVERAGE

Keep good records of media coverage, including copies of print and Web coverage and recordings of radio and TV stories. Good records will allow you to assess which strategies were most effective, and remind you of the ways key reporters, columnists and editorial writers view your issue. Good records will also give you good materials to show to funders, allies and new reporters.

The easiest and cheapest way to monitor coverage of your campaign is to track it online through daily searches — something you should be doing anyway to keep yourself informed. Some news-tracking services are free. Others charge fees for media monitoring. A good place to start is by searching Google News. As college students, you may also have access to campus library services such as Lexis-Nexis and other subscription services.

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

A PRESS RELEASE GIVES REPORTERS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO WRITE ABOUT AN ISSUE GOING ON IN YOUR COMMUNITY: THE FACTS, GOOD QUOTES FOR THEIR STORY, AND A PERSON TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2006

ALWAYS INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION.

Contact: Miranda Blue
202-555-5555

USE A SHORT, CLEAR HEADLINE THAT CONVEYS THE MAIN POINT OF YOUR RELEASE

EARLY VOTING RESTRICTIONS COULD HURT OVER HALF OF OHIO'S AFRICAN AMERICANS, SAYS MINISTERS' GROUP

Members of the African American Ministers Leadership Council (AAMLC), a program of People For the American Way Foundation, spoke out today against efforts to restrict early voting opportunities in four Ohio counties that are **home to 56 percent of the state's African American population.**

STATE THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE AND WHY IN YOUR FIRST PARAGRAPH

ADD A STRONG QUOTE THAT REPORTERS CAN USE IN THEIR STORIES

"Jim Crow is alive in the 21st century and evident in the struggles we still face for equal access to the ballot box," **said Rev. Dr. Tony Minor of Cleveland, Ohio.** "There are politicians doing the unthinkable: they are making it harder for their constituents to exercise our constitutionally guaranteed right to vote. And once again, these suppression efforts are aimed directly at African Americans in swing states."

GIVE STATISTICS AND LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFO TO HELP FRAME THE ISSUE

Officials in **four Ohio counties**—Cuyahoga, Franklin, Summit and Lucas—are set to deny night and weekend early voting to their citizens. Those four counties are home to some of Ohio's largest cities and over half its African American population. The state has already ended early voting for most residents in the final three days before the election. Last year, **nearly 20 percent** of early voters in Cuyahoga and Franklin counties went to the polls during that final time period.

The African American Ministers Leadership Council, founded in 1997, has been working nationwide to help bring African Americans to the polls in every election, most recently through the newly-launched non-partisan "I Am A VESSEL and I Vote!" program. The new early voting restrictions in Ohio are a setback to efforts to increase turnout and ensure that every vote counts.

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR GROUP AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISSUE

"These efforts are intended to discourage and distract voters in the state of Ohio, but they will not succeed," **added Rev. Minor.** "We have strengthened our efforts to educate our congregations and our communities about their rights and their civic responsibilities. Believe me, no matter how hard they try to stop us, we will fight back against these restrictions and we will show up at the polls and vote."

A SECOND QUOTE IS OPTIONAL

###

THREE POUND SIGNS MARK THE END OF THE DOCUMENT.

APPENDIX B: DOS AND DON'TS OF PRESS RELEASE WRITING

DO

- ▶ Make your headline and first paragraph tell the story in a compelling fashion. Your lead grabs readers' attention and tells them why the release is important. If you don't have a good lead, reporters will not keep reading. The best leads are only one or two lines long. Leave details, explanations and quotes for the body of the release.
- ▶ Anticipate reporters' questions and answer them. The proverbial "who, what, where, when and why" should be included. Provide the necessary background and contact information regarding you, your issue, your organization or your service.
- ▶ Develop a news hook. You may be excited about your story, but reporters may not feel it is relevant or exciting enough to write about. Put yourself in the reporter's shoes and focus the press release on what makes your news item important for the audience the reporter serves – readers, listeners, viewers.
- ▶ Use real-life examples and stories to illustrate your point. Demonstrate the effect that the issue you are addressing has on real people. A 20 percent cut in child care funding may not move anyone, but the fact that a local woman, Delores Johnson, will have to quit her job to take care of her kids and go on welfare is compelling. Give details about how your issue will directly affect the audience you are targeting.
- ▶ Tell the truth. The news media expect you to convey your ideas honestly; they will never forget if you misrepresent the facts. Once credibility is lost, it is almost impossible to regain.
- ▶ Be timely. Respond to breaking news as quickly as possible, and relate your story to current issues in the news. Don't issue press releases late in the day or on Fridays or weekends if you can avoid it.
- ▶ Use active verbs and strong adjectives.
- ▶ Be brief. Journalists are busy, and get inundated with news releases. Send them short, provocative materials – they'll ask for more details when you've got them interested.
- ▶ Get permission before using quotes or information from other organizations or affiliates. This is most important for press releases that are coming from a coalition of organizations.
- ▶ Proofread, proofread, proofread. Check your grammar, your spelling, the date and all contact information. If your release has obvious errors, you won't be taken seriously.
- ▶ Include a phone number that will be answered by a live person, and make sure any e-mail addresses and Web links you include are working.
- ▶ E-mail and fax your release to reporters, and follow up with targeted phone calls to the reporters you think are most likely to cover your story.

DON'T

- ▶ Embellish or over-exaggerate. Avoid fluff.
- ▶ Use a lot of jargon. Explain your issues in clear language that anyone can understand.
- ▶ Use exclamation points. The language and issues should be strong enough on their own. We're not kidding!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- ▶ Write your press release like an advertisement. The press release is meant to relay information, not sell something.
- ▶ Use acronyms without spelling them out the first time (e.g. Young People For = YP4). Don't assume your audience knows what you are referring to.
- ▶ Submit a press release in all uppercase letters. The body of your press release should be in sentence case.

APPENDIX C: GUIDE TO PRESS EVENTS

PRESS EVENT

BEFORE YOUR EVENT – ONE TO TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE OR BEFORE

▶ LOCATION

Choose a convenient location. Make sure you have permission to be there and to get there ahead of time to set up.

▶ TIME

Choose a time that's convenient for the media and fits in well with the news cycle.

▶ CREATE A MEDIA ADVISORY

The media advisory should give bare-bones information about an event: the who, what, why, where, and when of the press conference. This allows reporters and assignment editors to schedule time to cover the event. Make sure to correctly spell names and titles.

▶ PITCH THE EVENT

Make sure relevant reporters are aware of your event. Don't forget to alert assignment editors and daybooks, if appropriate. E-mail first, then call any reporter you actually want to show up.

▶ SCRIPT AND MATERIALS

Have remarks, Q&A, and press release ready as far in advance as possible.

▶ GUESTS AND SPEAKERS

Confirm their attendance. Ask them to show up early.

▶ VISUALS

Think of what you want the cameras to see and what message you want to send.

BEFORE YOUR EVENT – SET UP

▶ SOUND

Have a place for TV crews to place microphones or have a mult box for them to plug into.

▶ PRESS KITS

Include a release with usable quotes and correctly spelled names and titles. Statistics and details should also be distributed in writing.

▶ SIGN-IN TABLE

Get name, phone number, e-mail and outlet for every reporter or crew.

DURING YOUR EVENT

▶ DOCUMENT THE EVENT

Take (or have a volunteer take) plenty of pictures of the event. If you can, take a video.

▶ TALK TO REPORTERS

Chat. This is how contacts are made.

DURING YOUR EVENT

▶ SEND RELEASE

Send out the release widely via e-mail and post to Web site.

▶ FOLLOW UP WITH REPORTERS

Make sure to answer any lingering questions. Contact reporters who didn't come as appropriate.

▶ MONITOR THE COVERAGE

Don't forget to see what the media reports.

REMEMBER - GIVE REPORTERS WHAT THEY NEED TO COVER THE STORY EXACTLY AS YOU WANT THEM TO: A GOOD QUOTE, A GOOD PICTURE, GOOD SOUND AND ALL THE DETAILS AT HAND.

WRITING A MEDIA ADVISORY

A MEDIA ADVISORY LETS REPORTERS KNOW ABOUT YOUR EVENT AND GIVES THEM THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO COVER IT. E-MAIL THIS DOCUMENT OUT IN ADVANCE OF YOUR EVENT, AND BE SURE TO CALL REPORTERS TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY GOT IT.

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES
September 3, 2012

ALWAYS INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION.

Contact: Jane Jones
503-555-5555

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA STUDENTS TO HOLD 'STAND UP AND BE COUNTED' VOTER REGISTRATION RALLY

USE A SHORT, CLEAR HEADLINE TELLING WHAT WILL HAPPEN.

Students at the University of Iowa will hold a rally this Saturday, Sept. 8, with the goal of registering 200 students to vote. The rally will feature performances by student bands and food provided by Jill's Deli.

KEEP IT SHORT. YOU CAN PUT MORE INFORMATION IN A RELEASE LATER ON.

ALSO, REMEMBER TO WRITE IN THE FUTURE TENSE. YOUR EVENT HASN'T HAPPENED YET.

WHAT: 'Stand Up and Be Counted' Voter Registration Rally, featuring performances by University of Iowa student bands

WHEN: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Saturday, September 3

WHERE: Iowa Memorial Union, 125 N. Madison St., Iowa City

SPEAKERS: City Councilwoman Linda James, Student Body President Sam Jackson

SPONSORS: Young People For, Students for Civic Engagement

CLEARLY LIST THE WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE, WHEN OF THE EVENT.

###

THREE POUND SIGNS MARK THE END OF THE DOCUMENT.

APPENDIX E:

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

1. Keep your letter brief. A letter is most likely to get printed if it is 200 words or less.
2. Make one point, or at the most two, in your letter. State your point clearly, ideally in the first or second sentence.
3. Your letter must be timely. Address a recent article, editorial or letter that appeared in the paper to which you are writing. If you are not addressing a recent article, then tie the issue you want to write about to a recent event.
4. Familiarize yourself with the coverage and editorial position of the paper to which you are writing. It is acceptable to refute or support specific statements or address relevant facts that may have been ignored by an article or editorial, but do not attack the media in general or the newspaper in particular.
5. Check the letter specifications of the newspaper to which you are writing. Length and format requirements vary from paper to paper. This information is usually available online or on the editorial page of the newspaper. You usually must include your name, signature, address and phone number.
6. Support your statements with facts. You may consider sending documentation along with your letter or citing the information you are quoting in the letter. But do not overload the editors with too much information.
7. Recruit others to write letters when possible. If the newspaper receives a variety of letters on one issue, it will demonstrate to the paper, and to the public, that other individuals in the community are concerned about the issue. Sending a variety of letters will increase the chances of one getting published. Do not send form letters. It's important to be original – multiple form letters to the same paper will only annoy the newspaper to which you are writing.
8. Monitor the paper to see if your letter runs. If your letter has not appeared within a week or two, follow up with a call or e-mail to the editorial department of the newspaper.

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

[Published in The Stanford Daily]

May 26, 2006

Dear Editor,

As a black student, I am concerned by the blatantly anti-ethnic community position that the Editorial Board has taken this year.

No, it doesn't make a person racist to say that they don't approve of theme dorms. However, if that person has never visited or lived in a theme dorm, has never supported programming from a theme dorm or has never visited a community center, then it certainly is ignorant to be against theme dorms.

I suggest that the Daily hold a community hall forum, co-hosted by the staff of all six community centers, the ASSU and the Office of Multicultural Education. If the Editorial Board insists on continuing to attack institutions at Stanford that have contributed to a greater level of cultural awareness and support networks for students of color, then the Daily must make an effort to actually educate the Stanford community with unbiased information.

Nneka Chike-Obi
Senior, International Relations

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OP-ED

The Black Voter Turnout “Machine” is No Secret – It’s a Civil Rights Achievement

By Rev. Dr. Tony Minor and Rev. Larry Harris

Published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer

August 26, 2012

COMMUNITY LEADERS ARE GREAT SPOKESPEOPLE

EXPLAIN WHO YOU ARE AND YOUR STAKE IN THE ISSUE. LAY OUT THE CONFLICT AND YOUR RESPONSE

In our 30 years as pastors in Cleveland, we have helped thousands of our parishioners to vote. We help them understand the importance of voting. We make sure they know where to vote and when. And we help to get them to their polling places. We work with hundreds of African-American ministers across the country who are doing exactly the same thing. We see our work as a continuation of the Civil Rights Movement. We have greater access to the polls than ever before and we will not be denied full use of it.

But according to Franklin County Board of Elections member Doug Priesse in an interview with the Columbus Dispatch this week, churches who are driving our congregations to the polls are a sinister “urban -- read African-American – voter-turnout machine” and should not be “accommodated” by election officials.

What Priesse calls the “African-American voter turnout machine,” we call a tremendous success story for civil rights and civic participation. In 2008, 43 years after the Voting Rights Act banned racial discrimination at the ballot box, African Americans for the first time voted at the same rate as white Americans. That is a huge achievement. And that is what Priesse and his allies want to undo in 2012.

Around the country, four years after African American voter turnout reached its highest point in U.S. history, election officials in swing states are targeting the African American vote. In Pennsylvania, a judge recently let stand a voter ID law that could make it harder for as many as 700,000 Pennsylvanians to vote this November – a disproportionate number of whom are African Americans in the state’s largest cities. In Florida, the Secretary of State is planning to conduct a voter purge reminiscent of the one that cut thousands of African Americans from the state’s voter rolls in 2000. And the swing state of Virginia just this week got the go-ahead for its own suppressive voter ID law. If you want to know why a machine exists to get African Americans to the polls, just look at the effort that’s still being made to keep us away. When you’re faced with suppression, you unify, mobilize and organize to fight back. And that’s what the Black Church, civil rights groups, and community leaders have done.

BACK UP YOUR POINTS WITH STRONG DATA

In the years leading up to the 2008 election, Ohio made a number of advances that made it easier for more people to cast ballots. Early voting was expanded to help eliminate the long lines that deterred some from voting in 2004. Entire congregations drove from the church to the polls the Sunday before Election Day. In just the three days before the election, 93,000 Ohioans cast their ballots. A disproportionate number of those who took advantage of early voting were African Americans. On Election Day, the long lines that many had feared did not materialize.

RECAP IN A CLEAR CONCLUSION

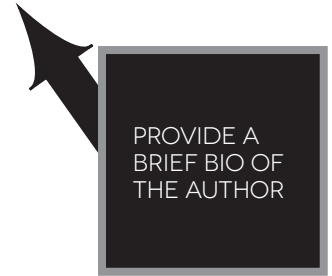
But this year, Gov. Kasich and the legislature eliminated early voting in the three days before the election. And then officials in the four urban counties that are home to 56 percent of Ohio’s black population moved to eliminate night and weekend voting as well, even as a handful of rural counties expanded their early voting hours. Faced with criticism and a possible legal challenge, Secretary of State Jon Husted then tried to equalize the

situation...by cutting back everyone's early voting rights to the lowest common denominator rather than expanding them.

The goal of a democracy is to ensure that as many people as possible who can vote do vote, not to construct arcane rules meant to keep certain groups of people from the polls. We're proud to be part of the "machine" that is fighting these restrictions and getting Americans to the polls despite them. It saddens us that some of our elected officials won't join us.

Rev. Dr. Tony Minor and Rev. Larry Harris are members of People For the American Way Foundation's African American Ministers Leadership Council. Rev. Harris is President of the United Pastors of Cleveland and Rev. Dr. Minor is Advocacy Director of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry.

###



APPENDIX H: SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

WRITING TALKING POINTS

WELL-PREPARED TALKING POINTS CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR ALLIES STAY ON MESSAGE WHEN TALKING OR WRITING ABOUT AN ISSUE. TALKING POINTS SHOULD BE CLEAR, CONCISE, AND EASY TO REMEMBER.

TALKING POINTS: ATTACKS ON VOTING RIGHTS

THE PROBLEM

- ▶ The right to vote is one of the most basic rights we have as Americans. Throughout our history, we have fought hard to expand the right to vote to all Americans.
- ▶ Today, the right to vote is under unprecedented attack from those who want to make it harder for young people, minorities, seniors and low-income people to vote.
- ▶ At least thirty-four states introduced legislation that would require voters to show photo identification in order to vote. These efforts often disproportionately affect college students and low-income people, who are less likely to have the proper government-issued IDs. Other states have cut back on early voting hours and made it harder to hold voter registration drives.
- ▶ These new laws could make it significantly harder for more than five million eligible voters to cast ballots in 2012.
- ▶ These voter suppression laws are being pushed by corporate-funded groups, like the American Legislative Exchange Council. They are clearly partisan efforts to keep progressive-leaning groups of people away from the polls.

THE RESPONSE

- ▶ These attacks on voting rights must be met with increased education and organization.
- ▶ Across the country, Young People For campus activists are working to make sure their fellow students know their rights, register to vote, and go to the polls.
- ▶ At Imaginary University, we'll be holding four campus-wide voter registration drives leading up to the election, and promoting our effort through our "Stand Up and Be Counted" campaign. Our goal is to reach every student by Election Day.
- ▶ Our efforts are non-partisan. The important thing is that every American, no matter his or her political beliefs, is able to cast a vote that counts.

APPENDIX I: USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT

Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr and other social media platforms can be a great way to get your message out to your friends, their friends, and your campus community. Chances are you already use one or more of these tools. Here are some tips to up your social media game.

FACEBOOK

- ▶ Start a Facebook page. Start a Facebook page for your group, and encourage your friends to “like” it. Keep it updated with news of what your group is up to, relevant news stories, and photos.
- ▶ Encourage interaction. Encourage your page’s followers to interact with you and with each other by posting discussion questions, asking their opinion, and encouraging them to share and like posts.
- ▶ Start a meme! Is there a funny image or great picture that you think will resonate with people on your campus? Share it on your Facebook page and urge your friends to do the same.
- ▶ Make sure people know you have a Facebook page. When you have an event or distribute a flyer, make sure to tell people how they can find you on Facebook.

TWITTER

- ▶ Recruit followers. Once you’ve set up a Twitter account for your group, work on getting people on campus to follow you. Promote it from your personal Twitter account, if you have one, by mentioning and re-tweeting it. Follow people on campus who you think should follow you. If you know anybody with a lot of Twitter followers, ask them to re-tweet you and help get the word out.
- ▶ Tweet frequently. Be sure to tweet about events your holding, relevant things in the news, or issues you think are important.
- ▶ Interact. Interact with other users by tweeting @ their handles. Ask them questions, respond to their tweets, or tell them if there’s something you think they should know. You can even try tweeting at celebrities or elected officials...they might respond!
- ▶ Use hashtags. See if there are certain hashtags that people who are interested in the same things that you are use. When you’re tweeting about those things, use those hashtags so that people can find you. If you have an event or are launching a campaign, you can try to promote your own hashtag and get people to use it.
- ▶ Make sure people know you’re on Twitter. When you have an event or distribute a flyer, make sure to tell people your Twitter handle and ask them to follow you.

“Public sentiment is everything – he who molds public sentiment is greater than he who makes statutes.”

Abraham Lincoln

YOUNG PEOPLE FOR



1101 15TH STREET, NW 6TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

WWW.PFAW.ORG
WWW.YOUNGPEOPLEFOR.ORG