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GUIDELINE TO POLITICAL ACTION

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In Political Action

It has long been recognized that one of our basic responsibilities has been to educate ourselves and of fellow citizens about political issues which affect our lives and our welfare... To meet this challenge, effective political activity has of necessity become a vital part of each community, state and Nation. The job of good citizenship and political education must be done in each community.

There is no one perfect way to, carry on a voter registration campaign, but there are certain basic rules that should be followed. These should be divided into three categories; namely, ORGANIZATION, REGISTRATION AND EDUCATION.

## I. ORGANIZATION

- A. Select a political action committee
- B. Find out the facts on voting and requirements on voting in your community
- C. Inform your chapter and member of the community of the facts that pertain to political activity.
- D. Keep in touch with other organizations who have similar interest in political activity in your community.
- E. Appoint a registration Director for your chapter
- F. Use your local chapter office as headquarters if possible for registration drive
- G. Recruit volunteers to carry out varied assignments if possible (Church groups, etc.)
- H. Have definite work schedule for all workers
- I. Get voting list if possible
- J. Street index, telephone and city directory
- K. Maps of wards and precincts of the Negro areas
- L. Transportation
- M. Plan for a financial drive by forming committee for same
- N. Careful planning is essential, Don't rush: pick the right time
- O. Try to get local registration officials to extend time for registration

## II. REGISTRATION

- A. Get information out through the news media and other channels on the time, place and hour of registration
- B. Use the door-to-door method of canvassing for new voters
- C. Contact churches, civic leaders to encourage non-voters to register
- D. Neighborhood registration days
- E. Window displays in business on registration
- F. Use the telephones
- G. Use all literature on registration you can get
- H. Get names of those who register so they may be contacted later
- I. Use high school and college students to help with canvassing
- J. Ask other organizations to assist in helping you with your registration drive
- K. Urge registration boards to open on evenings and Saturdays to aid working people

- L. Know the precinct you are working
- M. Keep up-to-date card file on each resident
- N. Keep in touch with precinct leaders
- O. Registration is a job for 365 days a year
- P. Canvassers should know the election laws
- Q. Have meeting with your block leaders before canvassing
- R. Don't take on more than you can handle
- S. Have your registration file with you. Check it before you approach a house to be sure the right persons live there
- T. Always identify yourself and state your purpose
- U. Be prepared to answer questions
- V. Always leave literature if available
- W. Don't ever argue with people
- X. Don't get angry with anyone
- Y. Don't ask people right off about their political convictions

### III EDUCATION

- A. Hold precinct meetings for this purpose
- B. Acquaint people with the voting procedure in your community
- C. Use sample ballots for experimentation if ballots are used.
- D. If voting machines are used, try and borrow one to train people in the use of it
- E. Call your precinct meeting to discuss the candidates and their platform
- F. Invite candidates to speak to the voters. Have question and answer period
- G. Let people know that one of the best ways of helping themselves is through taking an active role in political activity in their community, state and nation
- H. Teach voters to vote their own convictions, rather than being told who to or not to vote for
- I. Educate Negroes to run and vote for their own candidates (those who are qualified)

#### HOW TO PLAN YOUR MEETINGS:

1. Careful planning is essential. Don't rush - Pick the right time
2. Know your audience
3. Pick the right place
4. How to get people to come (good publicity, personal invitation, personal letter, etc.
5. Ways to tell your story: Speaker or speakers; film and filmstrips etc.
6. Tell them what to do; make assignments; appoint chairmen, etc.

#### HOW TO CONDUCT A FINANCIAL DRIVE:

1. Do plan all steps of your drive carefully in advance  
Don't get started before you have appointed collectors in every section of your community with all information, literature, etc.

2. Do train your collectors so that they are prepared to answer all questions about the campaign and CORE  
Don't embarrass your collectors and lose contributions because he isn't quite sure how the money will be used
3. Do approach people positively, appealing simply and directly to them as good citizens  
Don't give people an easy way out by asking them half-heartedly or by annoying them with high pressure sales tactics
4. Do continue your drive until you are satisfied every member is well informed about CORE and the drive and has been personally asked for his contribution
5. Do time your drive so it doesn't compete with other appeals for funds  
Don't launch your fund drive on the heels of another drive on the pocket-books of your members
6. Don't just send off your collectors with a pep-talk and then leave them to shift for themselves

HOW TO KNOW AND BE ACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY: Know the Law

1. Learn how your local government works; (visit city hall; sit in on your city or community council, etc.)
2. Where to get your community's vital statistics; (get a map, mark off precincts, where to get the facts, State Capitol or Washington)
3. Political party organization: (Precinct meetings, where delegates are elected to the County Convention to the State Convention to the National Convention)

HOW TO ORGANIZE A PRECINCT:

1. A precinct is a small district or portion of a city or county
2. Organize your membership file (Information, as age, death those who have moved in or out. File membership cards)
3. Start with some personal visits: get a handful of people talk registration - appeal to the womanpower in the community, etc.
4. Tips for Blockworkers:
  - a. Be cheerful and friendly
  - b. Time your blockwork in the precinct for the same days
  - c. Have a meeting of all blockworkers before canvassing
  - d. Go out in teams of two. Man and wife or man and a woman
  - e. Don't take on more than you can handle
  - f. Plan your work ahead of time
  - g. Be neatly dressed
  - h. Go out when you are most likely to meet the whole family
  - i. Take a flashlight
  - j. Before you approach a door, take out your file and be sure the right person lives there

- k . Always identify yourself
- l . Always state your purpose
- m . Always leave literature if available
- n . Don't ever, ever argue with people
- o . Don't get angry with anyone
- p . Don't ask people right off about their political convictions

5. What to mark on cards:

- a. Names of all persons of voting age; registered or not
- b. Telephone number
- c. Attitude
- d. Help needed to register or vote (babysitter; transportation, etc.)
- e. Don't talk of business over a cup of tea, etc.

HOW TO REGISTER VOTERS:

1. Every Vote Counts
2. Get the Registration Facts (County Courthouse)
3. Use your precinct organization
4. Use your filing cards
5. Ring doorbells
6. Radio and T.V.
7. Newspapers and weeklies
8. Business, advertising agencies
9. Put out Posters
10. Theaters
11. Clergy (church)
12. Organizations
13. Handbills
14. Buttons
15. Porch light campaign
16. Door Knob Hangers
17. Sound truck
18. Sample Ballots
19. Bumper tags and stickers

AN INTERVIEW WITH A POTENTIAL REGISTRANT: WITH A SMILE

"Good evening, Mrs. Stucky."

"Yes"

"Mrs. Stucky, my name is James McCain of CORE registration team in this community working on voter registration."

"Oh, I'm already registered."

"Yes, I know you are, Mrs. Stucky. Your name is on the precinct record, so is Mr. Stucky. I was wondering if there might be anyone in your household eligible to register."

"Eligible?"

"I mean twenty-one years of age or older, a citizen, etc."

"Oh, I nearly forgot -- my son or daughter just turned twenty-one. They can vote now, can't they?"

"They certainly can--that is, if they register. Do you know where to go down town?"

This gives you an opportunity to give explicit information and offer other services that you and your group can give.