



everylibrary

Building voter support for libraries

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Walk Your Precinct

Using tips from the best political campaigns to activate citizen support for library funding

About EveryLibrary

Set up as a 501c4 Social Welfare Organization chartered to support local library ballot measures like bonds, referendum, levies and mills.

Includes support for legislation that impacts the ability of libraries to function as districts.

About EveryLibrary

We cannot work with libraries themselves.

Must work with local ballot committees and PACs set up by citizens to support the measure.

Why Talk Politics and Libraries?

About a third of New Hampshire residents live in a town with a traditional town meeting, another third under SB2 rule, and the remaining third in communities with a city council.

Union Leader

16 Feb 2013

<http://www.newhampshire.com/article/20130217/NEWS0612/130219241/0/news01>

Why Talk Politics and Libraries?

- Only 37% of likely voters say they will definitely support libraries at the ballot box.¹

1. OCLC From Awareness to Funding, 2008

Voter Education Challenge

“The [New Hampshire] state municipal association examined 27 towns and found that an average of 2.4% of registered voters attended the deliberative sessions in 2010 and 25.5% of registered voters voted on the budget at the polls.”

Union Leader

16 Feb 2013

<http://www.newhampshire.com/article/20130217/NEWS0612/130219241/0/news01>

Voter Education Challenge

This voter awareness challenge extends to “voter influence” as well.

- Town Councils
- State Legislators
- Federal Funding Issues

Voter Attitudes

What do we know about voter perception of libraries?

- Users vs. Non-Users
- Progressives vs. Conservatives
- Family Demographics

- Any Tax is a Bad Tax

Why Talk Politics and Libraries?

- 94% of Parents say libraries are important for their children. 79% say “very important”.²
- 58% of Americans have a library card.³
- 62% of card holders have visited the library in the last year at least once.⁴

2. Pew, May 2013

3 and 4. Harris Interactive | ALA, January 2011

Voter Attitudes

Nothing Impacts Voter Attitude about Libraries More than their Perception of the Librarian and the Library as an Institution

Voter Attitudes

Of all voters:

37% will Definitely vote yes

37% will Probably vote yes

26% will Probably or Definitely vote no or
may vote either way.

Voter Attitudes

To influence enough of the other 37%, introduce them to the library and the librarian

Running a Campaign

1.Types of Campaigns

2.Messaging That Works

3.Techniques That Work

Challenges to Library Campaigns

EveryLibrary was founded on the fact that libraries, as public entities, cannot expend their own funds to do electioneering.

501c3 organizations like associations and friends groups cannot engage in political speech.

Types of Campaigns

Informational Campaign

- Planning
- Know your limits
- Marketing and Awareness

Vote Yes Campaign

- Planning
- Filing
- Awareness and GOTV

Messaging That Works

The Library as:

- Educational Partner
 - Economic Development Engine
 - Social Leveler
-
- Connect with Changing Technology
 - Legitimacy as Institution
 - Trust in the Librarian

What Doesn't Work

- × Demands for Services
- × Entreaties from Patrons/Customers
- × Appeals about Effectiveness
- × Perceptions of Service
- × Whining

Techniques That Work

“Info-Only” or “Vote Yes” Campaigns:

- Walking
- Phoning
- Events
- Social and Web
- Signs
- Mailers

Techniques That Work

Nothing Impacts Voter Attitude about Libraries More than their Perception of the Librarian and the Library as an Institution

Direct contact with “the librarian” or “the library” is the most significant motivator for a YES vote.

Techniques That Work

How to “Walk a Precinct”? Go door-to-door:

- Community Surveys
- Library Card Sign Up
- Strategic Planning Assessments
- Info Drops

Techniques That Work

How to “Walk a Precinct”? Go door-to-door:

- Target parts of the community that need to hear from you
- Voters can be found and should be targeted

Techniques That Work

Who should “walk”?

- Staff
- Trustees
- Friends

In Every Case...

- Walk your precinct
- Actively engage about the library
- Answer challenges with legitimacy

What Else for Advocacy?

1. What's Working Around the Country
2. Surviving and Thriving in New Hampshire
3. Your Personal Leadership

Around the Country

New York and Oregon PACs

- Candidate focused
- Highly targeted

Wyoming Foundation Initiative

- Infrastructure for funding and advocacy
- Long term civic development

Around the Country

California SCA7 and the 55% Solution

- Game Changer
- Union Interest
- Coalition Opportunities

Calls to Action for Advocates

Survive and Thrive

New Hampshire Calls to Action

- HB 436 - Governance
- HB 561 – DCA and State Library
- NHLTA Legislative Advocacy Guide

Your Own Leadership

Why are you here?

Why are you involved in libraries?

Why should they continue to exist?

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