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Running for Local Office



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Road Map



1. Introduction: Why Do You Want to Run?
2. Critical Considerations
3. Understanding Policy Issues and Demographics
4. The Importance of Fundraising
5. **Q&A + 10-Minute Break**
6. Campaign Needs and Limitations
7. Building Your Campaign Infrastructure
8. The Art of Campaigning
8. Final Q&A



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Poll



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Introduction

Why Do You Want to Run?





Why Do You Want to Run?

- *This is a question that only YOU can answer, but there are other questions that may help you develop an answer*
- *What is your motivation?*
- *What do you hope to accomplish?*
- *Why should people vote for you?*
- *Your “why” is not just for you, but important for those considering supporting you*
- *It is your responsibility to earn votes, which begins with a compelling message that people can rally behind*



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Critical Considerations





Initial Considerations

- *Running for office is a BIG commitment that involves more than just you*
 - *Family*
 - *Friends*
 - *Volunteers*
 - *Campaign Staff*
 - *Supporters*
- *It takes time, money, and energy—a lot of it*
- *There are many things to evaluate before filing to run, including:*
 - *Qualifications*
 - *Viability*
 - *Fundraising Capability*



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Qualifications

- *One of the most valuable traits in a candidate is previous public experience*
- *In certain cases, candidates must meet certain professional/certified criteria*
- *Under most circumstances, a candidate must be a registered voter residing in the district*
- *A well-tempered candidate is demonstrably advantaged*
 - *Ability to listen*
 - *Cool temper + patience*
 - *Accessible*
- *Never be afraid to consider running in another cycle if necessary*



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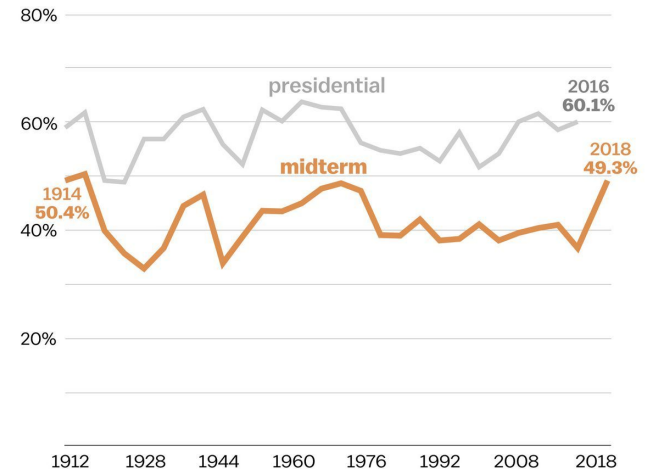


Winning Probability

- *Review your district's voter registration makeup + past turnout*
 - *Compare presidential vs. midterm years, since turnout tends to fluctuate*
- *How have candidates for the same office performed?*
- *Do you already have name ID in the district?*
- *What will your ballot title be?*
- *If polling is possible, it will inform your decision on your viability*
- *Do you have access to funding if necessary?*
- *Identify a winning message for your district*
- *How does your opposition compare on all these points?*

Voter turnout in US elections

Share of voting eligible population. 2018 figures are preliminary



Source: US Election Project

Vox



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Candidate Requirements

- *Although most districts require that you be a resident within the given district, there are a couple exceptions*
- *Certain criminal offenses can disqualify an individual from running for public office*
- *There is plenty of work to ensure proper filing is executed*
 - *Filing fees, signatures*
 - *Ballot designation*
 - *Candidate statement*
- *Be aware whether the office for which you are considering to run has any specific professional qualifications or required credentials*



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Understanding Policy Issues and Demographics





Issues Critical to the Race

- *Determine what issues are important for the race, for the constituents, and for you*
- *Carefully consider your positions and platform*
 - *The best campaigns are consistent on their positions and messaging*
- *How have these issues fared before with this constituency?*
- *What are the state and national issue narratives on this?*
 - *Sometimes national narratives bleed into local narratives*
- *Do you truly believe your positions, or are you just saying it to win?*
- *Can your policies be accomplished in one term, or do you anticipate that they might require multiple terms?*



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Demographics and Area Culture

- *The key to any campaign's success is knowledge of their potential constituents*
- *Identify which district you live in, if applicable, of the office for which you are running*
 - *Since you live in the school district, city, or county that you are planning to make changes in, it personalizes it since you will be affected by your decisions*
- *Census data + voter registration data are good places to start*
- *"Know the neighborhood", understand the local culture and issues*
- *Canvass your own neighborhood and visit local restaurants and shops*
- *Compare & contrast the issues you think are important vs. what is important to constituents*



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The Importance of Fundraising

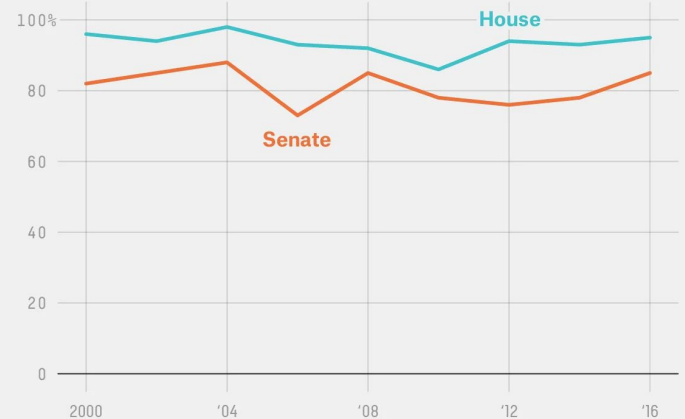


Fundraising is Key

- *Any and every campaign requires funds to make it happen*
- *Small races get their funding from the candidate*
- *Larger races require strategic fundraising that begins early*
- *The amount you raise can also be equated with your campaign's success*
 - *How many times have we seen headlines about a candidate's fundraising numbers?*

The candidate who spends the most usually wins

Percentage of races won by top-spending candidate



Excludes races with no opponent, but does include races where opponent spent nothing

FiveThirtyEight

SOURCE: CENTER FOR RESPONSIVE POLITICS



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Fundraising - Getting Started

- *Research what candidates have historically needed in this race*
- *Assess what you need in terms of supplies and staff*
- *Create a minimum budget to just “make it happen”*
- *Determine how more funding can help your campaign*
 - *What would that extra \$1,000 translate to? Another event? More signs?*
- *Create a list of potential donors & hold onto that list, you will need post-campaign*



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Questions ?



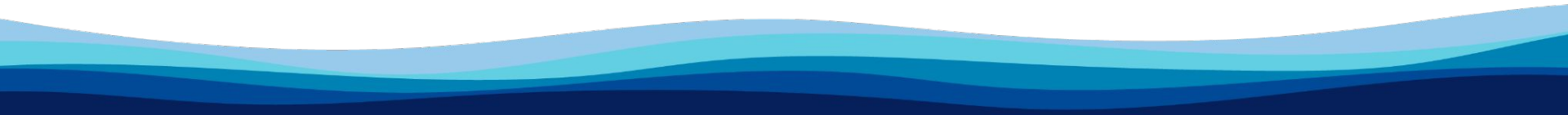
10 Minute Break!

Stretch & Hydrate



You Have Decided to Run

Building and Leading a Campaign



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You are Running for Office

- *Earlier we focused on everything you need to know before you commit to running for public office*
 - *Finding your why*
 - *Qualifications and winning probability*
 - *Candidate requirements*
 - *Policy issues and culture/demographics*
 - *Fundraising*
- *Now we will explore how you actually build and lead a successful campaign*



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Campaign Needs and Limitations





Campaign Needs

- *Every campaign needs support on multiple fronts*
 - *Funding*
 - *Staff/Volunteers*
 - *Strategy*
- *You must also address two questions and structure your campaign accordingly*
- *How much will you need to fundraise to be competitive?*
 - *Past elections are a good guide*
- *What groups and areas will you need to target?*
 - *Must know your city/county/district*



CAMPAIGN ADS	\$\$\$\$
POSTERS	\$\$\$\$
SOCIAL MEDIA	\$\$\$\$
CAMPAIGN RALLY	\$\$\$\$



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Campaign Limitations

- Identifying the potential weaknesses, barriers, and limitations of your campaign is also vital
- These are shaped by the specific office for which you are running but are mostly determined by your background+experience
 - Time
 - Money
 - People
 - Staff versus Volunteers
 - Name ID
 - Credibility
- Address any weaknesses as much as you can, but build on your strengths as a candidate



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Building Your Campaign Infrastructure

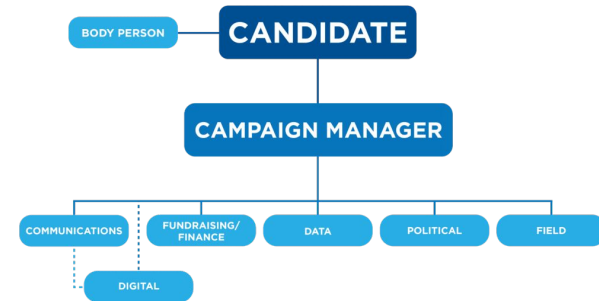




Campaign Infrastructure

- Once you have diagnosed your needs and limitations, you can intelligently build your campaign infrastructure
 - Establish and grow your team of staff, volunteers, interns, and consultants (if necessary)
 - Create your online/digital presence with a website, social media, and email outreach
 - Simple, clear messaging
 - Information about you, your campaign, events, how to sign-up/get involved
 - *Do not* bombard people with texts and emails asking for money

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC
TRAINING COMMITTEE



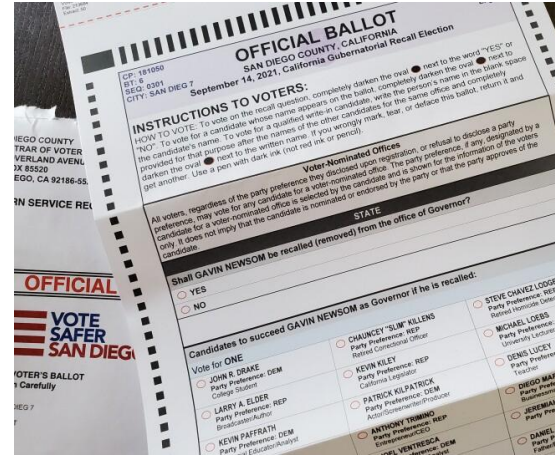
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Campaign Infrastructure

- Determine your ballot title (this is how most voters will associate you)
 - Taxpayer advocate, business owner, public defender, city councilman, etc.
- Establish your key campaign issues, which should reflect the following
 - *Your values*
 - The district in which you are running
 - The needs, concerns, and priorities of voters
- Your title and campaign priorities will also be how your staff and supporters advocate for you



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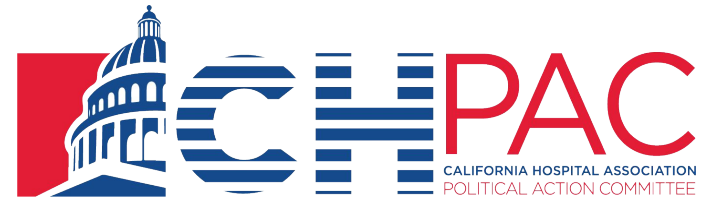
Fundraising

- All campaigns need funding to get off the ground and maintain momentum
- Campaign materials simply do not pay for themselves
 - Website
 - Staff
- Signs, buttons, stickers, etc.
- Major sources of funding:
 - Your own rolodex
 - Procuring donor lists
 - Other financial conduits
 - Political Action Committees (PACs)
 - Independent Expenditures (IEs)



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Endorsements

- Securing endorsements will help you fundraise, gain name recognition and legitimacy
- Consider your existing relationships and associations as building blocks for support
- Identify which endorsements would help your campaign the most
 - Political parties
 - Elected officials
 - Community leaders
 - Highly-trusted organizations



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The Art of Campaigning





The Art of Campaigning

- We have spent a lot of time discussing the needs and limitations of campaigns, building your campaign infrastructure, fundraising, and endorsements
- All of this lays the foundation for the street-level grassroots campaigning that is indispensable
- This is where you connect most directly with those whose support you are seeking
- Grassroots campaigning is necessary to:
 - Build name recognition
 - Win hearts and minds
 - Recruit new supporters and volunteers
 - Develop trust with the community, which will serve you beyond the campaign



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The Art of Campaigning

- There are numerous ways to directly connect with potential voters, including
 - Meet and greets
 - Community walks
 - Campaign events/fundraisers
 - Special projects/initiatives
 - Cold calling
 - Digital outreach
- Each strategy has its pros and cons, but an all-of-the-above approach will allow you to maximize your campaign exposure



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The Post-Election Autopsy

- Win or lose, there is always much to take away from a campaign that will guide you moving forward—whether you run again or not
- Recognize the trust, relationships, and name recognition you have built over the course of your campaign
- An honest assessment of the following questions is a great place to start:
 - What went well and what did not?
 - What are the lessons learned and key takeaways that can prepare you if you decide to run for office again?
 - What are your obligations to those who supported you—as an elected official or fellow community member?



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Thank You

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