The 50-State Strategy

As you probably know, the Democratic Party is gearing up in every precinct in the country in an unprecedented 50-state organizing strategy.

This 50-state strategy represents a commitment to building a sense of community everywhere and leveraging the power of that community to achieve permanent change. That change is going to start this year in every single state, in elections for every level of office from city councils to the U.S. Senate.

Together we are changing the way politics gets done in this country - but we can’t ignore reality. Like a business, politics requires long-range strategic planning.

In the past, too often our party made real efforts in only a few select states. And too often that operation disintegrated after each campaign cycle, only to have to be rebuilt from scratch next time.

We’re putting everything on the line with our new strategy, and we’re already seeing the benefits across the country -- in unexpected places from Wyoming to Missouri, races that weren’t “supposed to be” competitive have become within reach thanks to our party-building work together.

This extraordinary new commitment is only possible with an equally unprecedented drive to change the way we finance our party. We cannot afford to have a boom-and-bust organization that only gears up a few months before an election. That means a stable financial plan to fund this 50-state organizing plan. When people get their Democracy Bonds, they are committing to make a monthly contribution to the Democratic Party to sustain that plan.

People join a community of over 35,000 other Democrats committed to building everywhere. And for as little as $20 a month -- less than a dollar a day -- they’re building for the future of our party.

There is also a broader context to the Democracy Bonds program. Every month Republicans raise nearly $10 million from special interests -- a stream of money that fuels the Republican culture of corruption and cronyism.

We can do things a different way. A community of just half a million people giving $20 per month would match their total, grow our organization everywhere, and build a political party beholden only to the people.
The 50-State Strategy

How Democrats can and will win in every state, every county, and every precinct

The Democratic Party is committed to winning elections at every level, in every region of the country. The ultimate goal? An active, effective group of Democrats organized in every single precinct in the nation. Here’s what we’re doing to get there:

1. The Democratic Party is hiring organizers chosen by the state parties in every state -- experienced local activists who know their communities.

2. We bring those organizers together for summits where they can learn from each other the best practices for getting organized to win elections.

3. Armed with the knowledge they’ve shared with each other, Democratic organizers return to the states and recruit and train leaders at the local level.

4. Those local leaders recruit more leaders and volunteers until every single precinct in their area has a trained, effective organization of Democrats dedicated to winning votes for Democrats.

In less than a year, the DNC has hired and trained over 176 field organizers, communication directors and researchers and placed them in state parties to build election teams, launch coordinated campaigns, and move on the Democratic message. Under Governor Dean, the DNC has also held political organizer trainings for 40 state party teams and sponsored in-state trainings around the country for Democratic leaders and activists. This allows state parties to begin early voter ID and voter persuasion, recruit volunteers, and run neighbor-to-neighbor canvasses, phone banks and get-out-the-vote efforts.

Democrats will win in 2006 and beyond because the DNC put feet on the street early -- an unprecedented move that has made marginal races competitive, drilled the Democratic message down to the grassroots, and built a ground team unmatched in the history of the Democratic Party.

“Election by election, state by state, precinct by precinct, door by door, vote by vote... we’re going to lift our Party up and take this country back for the people who built it.”

Governor Howard Dean
Chair, Democratic National Committee
Tips for Effective Canvassing

Information generously provided by the Arizona Democratic Party. For more information visit http://www.azdem.org

Effective Canvassing
As a neighborhood Democratic Volunteer, you know your neighborhood best. You are a local "opinion maker." This means your neighbors may come to rely on you for information about the Democratic Party, candidates from your area, and local issues.

Your canvass will prove invaluable in your role as a neighborhood Democratic volunteer. You will learn about the make-up of your area, what issues are important, what messages people are receiving from our candidates, and how the voters feel about the Party.

Why is Canvassing Important?
Face-to-face voter contact is the most effective way to meet people, exchange information, and talk about the Democratic Party and candidates. If you have a walking list from your state or local party, it will contain house-by-house information in terms of registered voters, party affiliation, and whether or not they have voted in the last four elections (including local elections). This will tell you who the registered Democrats in your precinct are – and which houses may not have any registered voters. If you don’t have a walk list, distribute the doorhanger to people in your neighborhood. Make sure you follow through on all requests for help. If you don’t know the answers to questions, say, "I don’t know, but I will find out and get back to you."

Recruiting Volunteers
While you are canvassing, you will meet people who want to participate in the Democratic Party. Keep them in mind for the following jobs and volunteer opportunities:

- Neighborhood Leaders/ Precinct Committeeperson / Block Captains
- Volunteers: Precinct / Headquarters
- Voter Registration volunteer
- Election Day volunteer

Canvassing Defined
Canvass Definition:
To solicit political support or to determine opinions or sentiments. To seek votes. A personal solicitation of votes or survey the public opinion.

-- Webster’s Dictionary

Be prepared when you canvass with:

- Precinct map (if available)
- Walking list (if available)
- Pencils and pens
- Literature (Democratic Doorhangers)
- Voter registration forms
- Something to carry your materials in (i.e. clipboard or folder)
Canvass Techniques

"Service" is the key word to remember in neighborhood canvassing. The voters in your area will come to rely on you and the Democratic Party for answers to their questions about the Party, where we stand on the issues, and information about candidates and local issues.

1. Meet everyone. Start a relationship.
2. Let them know “they are not alone,” that there are Democrats and others in the area that agree with them.
3. Find out what issues are most important to them and share the Democratic Vision with them.
4. Make sure everyone in the house who is eligible is registered to vote.
5. Recruit volunteers.
6. NEVER try to convince someone you are right and they are wrong. We’ll never gain support trying to convince people they are wrong.
7. Listen to the feedback.

Let them know you’re a Democratic resource for them, and there are Democratic activities they can take part in and candidates they can vote for who share their values.

Discuss the issues which are important to your neighbors. You can get an idea of what those issues are by looking for the following to give you more insight:

1. Bumper stickers or window decals: What issues are brought up? Do they indicate issue preferences?
2. Family: What type of family do they have? For example, if they have small children, child care, education, and the future of our economy may be important to them. If they are an older couple, health care issues may be important, etc.
3. Job: What does the person do for a living? For example, if they are a teacher, what might that tell you about the issues that are important to them? What about a tradesman or laborer?

Reading the Voters

Things to think about while you are out talking with your neighbors: Take a quick look around. What do you see and what might it tell you about the person whose home you are visiting?

Tips for when you canvass

- Work in pairs when possible for safety, support, and fun
- Determine optimal time of day to visit
- Be prepared with a script: what will you say?
- Wear comfortable shoes!
- Bring water
- Don’t leave any information in someone’s mailbox
- If you aren’t comfortable walking up to a particular house, skip it. Remember, safety first!

Reading the Voters

Surroundings
- Toys in sight
- Football, basketball, or soccer ball
- Union insignia

License plate
- Out-of-state
- Collegiate
- Environmental
- Child abuse prevention
- Veteran
- Disabled

Bumper stickers
- Hate is Not a Family Value
- Rainbow flag
- My child is an honor student at...
- NRA
- Buy American
- Support Our Troops
- Active Duty Military
- Veteran
- Union
- Police or Fire Department
- Religious

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“Election by election, state by state, precinct by precinct, door by door, vote by vote… we’re going to lift our Party up and take this country back for the people who built it.”

Governor Howard Dean
Chair, Democratic National Committee

Sample Script

See if your state or local party has a specific script to use.

Hello my name is _______________ and I’m a local volunteer with the Democratic Party. (If you have a walk list) Is ___________ home?

Today people all across America are talking with their neighbors about the Democratic Vision for rebuilding America.

Here is some information about the Democratic Party and what we are fighting for.

Democrats are working on the following issues:

Which issues are the most important to you?

☐ Honest Leadership & Open Government?
☐ Real Security
☐ Energy Independence
☐ Economic Prosperity & Educational Excellence
☐ A Healthcare System that Works for Everyone
☐ Retirement Security
☐ Other Issues ________________________________

Thank you for your time. I hope to talk with you again soon. Like you I know together America can do better.

(If you receive positive feedback ask the voter if they would like to volunteer locally. Instruct them to sign the post card at the bottom of the door hanger. If they don’t fill it out on the spot, ask if you can pick it up later or if they will need to mail it.)

This communication is not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee.
Hello, May I speak with _________________?

Hi ___________, my name is ___________. I’m your neighbor and a volunteer with the (State/Local Party or Democratic Club). With the November 7th elections under 100 days away, I’m calling to share the Democratic Party’s “Vision for America” with you.

**Honest Leadership and Open Government**
We will end the Republican culture of corruption and restore a government as good at the people it serves.

**Real Security**
We will protect Americans at home at home and lead the world by telling the truth to our troops, our citizens and our allies.

**Energy Independence**
We will create a cleaner and stronger America by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

**Economic Prosperity & Educational Excellence**
We will create jobs that will stay in America by restoring opportunity and driving innovation.

**A healthcare system that works for everyone**
We will join 36 other industrialized nations by making sure everyone has access to affordable health care.

**Retirement Security**
We will ensure that retirement with dignity is the right and expectation of every single American.

Can I count on you to join with other voters in the neighborhood to vote for the Democrats this November?

(If you receive positive feedback ask the voter if they would like to receive additional information from the state or local party about candidates and upcoming events. If the voter is very enthusiastic, ask the voter to volunteer.)

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**Tips for Phone Calls with Voters - DO**

- Introduce yourself as a volunteer for the Democratic Party
- Keep your contacts concise and to the point
- Thank for voter for their time
- Be positive about the qualities of the Democratic Party and our candidates
- Ask if you can count on them to support the Democratic candidate or ticket

**Tips for Phone Calls with Voters - DONT’S**

- Argue with the voters or try to convince them they are wrong
- Push the voter if he/she is not interested or seems annoyed

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Sign-in Sheet

Name: ____________________________________________
Email address: _____________________________________    Phone Number: _________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________________________________    State: _________    ZIP: ___________________

Name: ____________________________________________
Email address: _____________________________________    Phone Number: _________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________________________________    State: _________    ZIP: ___________________

Name: ____________________________________________
Email address: _____________________________________    Phone Number: _________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________________________________    State: _________    ZIP: ___________________

Name: ____________________________________________
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Name: ____________________________________________
Email address: _____________________________________    Phone Number: _________________________
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City: ______________________________________________________    State: _________    ZIP: ___________________

Name: ____________________________________________
Email address: _____________________________________    Phone Number: _________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________________________________    State: _________    ZIP: ___________________
## 100 Voters Progress Report

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