



Door-to-Door Campaigning:

*Everything I know
about politics I learned
going door-to-door*

By Alex X. Mooney



Leadership
Institute



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INTRODUCTION:

My thanks and advice

A nearly unlimited number of books are available about political topics. Most teach you how to take the right positions on issues, frame the debate, or understand political theory.

This book is not like that.

But if you are a candidate who wants to get elected -- or if you want to help to get a candidate elected -- this book is for you.

This book is a training manual for going door-to-door, so you should be prepared to start door-knocking as soon as you are finished reading it.

If you are serious about winning, you must speak directly with the voters in the neighborhoods that you hope to represent. There is no better way to know what is on the minds of your voters than by speaking with them personally at their doorsteps.

The advice within this book is based on my many years of experience -- not theory.

I did not re-invent the wheel with this book or in my campaigns. I did follow the wise advice of those who were conservative activists before me. In turn, I hope my story benefits you in your quest to promote and defend conservative principles.

First, thank you to Morton Blackwell, president of the Leadership Institute. I received all of my campaign training at the Leadership Institute, both before I ran for office and after I was elected to continue improving my skills.

Thank you to Ron Robinson of Young America's Foundation for his many years of advice and support. Thank you to former Maryland State Senate Minority Leader Marty Madden, who gave me the door-to-door pitch that I used at least 10,000 times in my first campaign in 1998. Marty says he got that pitch from the late Lee Atwater, so thanks to him too.

Thank you to Pat Nolan, who advised me in grassroots and legislative strategy in several of my campaigns. Thank you to my brother Pat Mooney, who has always been there for me, and to my mother Lala (Suarez-Gaston) Mooney, who is every

politician's dream come true for a mother. She knocks on doors, works the polls, and can get just about anyone to vote for her son.

And last, but not least, thank you to my beautiful wife Grace and my two wonderful children, Lucas and Camille, for supporting me in all my political endeavors.

The families of candidates pay the greatest price for a choice to run for office. But we candidates do it for our families and for their children and for their children's children, so that they may enjoy the same freedoms, opportunities, and security from which we benefit as Americans.

Congressman Alex X. Mooney
West Virginia's 2nd District

CHAPTER ONE:

Before you knock

In my first campaign in 1998, I planned to start knocking on doors in March in advance of the crucial September primary.

But I never made it out that month.

In April 1998, I was attending an event at which Maryland's beloved gubernatorial candidate Ellen Sauerbrey was the guest of honor. Ellen had been a 16-year member of the Maryland House of Delegates and a Maryland House Minority Leader. She had come within 5,000 votes of being elected governor in 1994.

Like me, Ellen is a conservative. I was running against a liberal Republican incumbent who was a long-time state senator -- not a popular thing to do. But I hoped that Ellen would be supportive, at least privately, because of our shared principles. I was anxious to tell her that I was running.

So I told her. What do you think the first words out of her mouth were?

If you guessed, "Have you started knocking on doors yet?" then I think you will get the idea behind this book.

It was the first and only thing she said to me.

I was embarrassed that I could not answer "yes" to Ellen's question. But at least I was smart enough to figure out that she was telling me that it must be really important to mount a serious door-to-door campaign to win my race.

Ellen is a believer in grassroots organizing, and she is a successful politician, so I am passing her advice on to you now and asking you to take it as seriously as I did. Later that week in 1998, I started going door-to-door, the most important thing I needed to do to win the race.

Here are the first steps for planning your door-to-door efforts.

SCHEDULING

Start from Election Day and schedule backwards to the day you plan to knock on your first door. (Hint: that should be today.)

Realistically estimate how many doors you plan to knock and how long it will take. Make sure to include driving time to and from each neighborhood. I recommend door-knocking for at least five days a week for at least two hours each day. Your goal should be four to five hours a day and more on Saturdays, when it could be up to all day.

It is hardly worth door-knocking for only 30 minutes or so. But if that is all the time you have, do it for that short time so that you stay in the rhythm of going. Every bit adds up.

Use one calendar for your schedule. This should include time for your campaign as well as dedicated family days, medical appointments, and time required for other work. Make sure you have a staff member or dedicated volunteer who knows your schedule.

Set a time every week to review your schedule. If you are not an elected official now, you will not have many political requests for your schedule. This is to your advantage because it leaves more time for you to knock on doors.

If there is an event you feel obligated to attend (e.g. a political party event), drop by toward the end of the event after knocking on doors. If the event is held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., knock on doors as usual and arrive at the event around 7:30 p.m.

I recommend door-knocking for at least five days a week for at least two hours each day.

FLYERS AND PALM CARDS

Most voters will not be home when you knock on their doors, so you need printed materials to leave behind so they know that you were there personally.

When I prepared to door-knock for my first campaign, I encountered a “problem” that slowed my progress: I did not have nicely printed palm cards. All I had was language drafted on my computer.

A good friend of mine told me to stop delaying, print out the flyer at home, and just get going. That was good advice. I took it, and I am passing it along to you now.

Conservative friend, do not delay! Print out your flyer and get going. Your nicely printed palm cards will come in soon enough, just like mine did.


Keep your palm cards simple. Most people will give them a quick glance and then

Senator
Alex X. Mooney



**Lower Taxes.
Less Spending.
More Jobs.**

Alex X. Mooney
for State Senate




Alex Mooney's first priority as our State Senator is job creation. He opposes job-killing government regulations and high taxes. He supports growing private sector jobs, not more government.

Alex Mooney:

- Leading the fight to repeal O'Malley's 20% sales tax increase
- Only candidate to oppose raising the gas tax
- Has never voted for a single tax increase and signed a pledge to oppose any and all tax increases
- Led the fight and introduced the bill to oppose pay increases for state legislators (SJ 11, 2002)
- Opposed every one of O'Malley's tax-and-spend budgets

www.alexmooney.com • (301) 620-0200
Authorized by Mooney for Senate, Kay Dallavalle, Treasurer.

Democrat Ron Young's tax-and-spend record:



- Supports O'Malley's 20% sales tax increase (*Frederick News Post* 10/6/10)
- Supported raising the gas tax (*FNP* 2/6/87, 6/24/09, 9/17/10)
- Supported job-killing tax increases that drove jobs out of Frederick (*Frederick City Budget/Minutes*, 1974-1990)
- Repeatedly raised his own pay as Mayor, tripling his salary (*FNP* 4/27/77, 6/28/89)
- Ran up \$45 million in debt as Mayor, which took almost 20 years to pay off (*City Financial Overview*, 1989)
- Raised property taxes (*City Budget*, 1974, 1975, 1988)


Senator Alex X.
Mooney



**Less taxes.
More jobs.**


Senator Alex X.
Mooney

Republican Senator Alex Mooney is a fiscal conservative who knows that Maryland families are over taxed. He is working hard every day to stop the growth of government, cut taxes and reduce wasteful spending.



Job Creation
Alex Mooney's first priority is job creation. He supports getting the government out of the way of businesses so they can grow and hire more workers.

Lower Taxes
It is unfair that our state government spends more every year and then raises our taxes. Senator Mooney is working to lower taxes on Maryland families so they can keep more of what they earn. He supports rolling back the O'Malley Administration's 20% increase in Maryland's sales tax.



Cut Wasteful Spending
Wasteful spending has plunged Maryland into its largest budget shortfall in years. Senator Mooney is standing up for Maryland families by demanding spending cuts and a balanced budget without raising taxes.

www.AlexMooney.com
Paid for by: Mooney for Senate. Authority, Kay Dallavalle, Treasurer

The left palm card was from my first campaign and showed the difference between my positions and my opponent's. The right palm card was from my re-election campaign and highlighted my record.

throw them away. So do not fill up yours with too many items; a position on three to five key issues is plenty.

Add a handwritten note on the front with the date and time you were on the voter's doorstep. This note differentiates you from other candidates who have volunteers dropping off the literature for them. The note should be simple, like this: "Sorry I missed you. Saturday, 1:48 p.m. Alex."

Most candidates fail to set aside enough time to meet voters at their doors. You want to show you are not one of them.

Some candidates with whom I have spoken said that they write these notes in advance and add the time while they stand at voters' doors. But I always wrote the note while at the doorstep, waiting to see if someone would answer. Do whatever works best for you.

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

Registering voters is not the primary goal of your campaign. **But if you happen upon an unregistered conservative voter while you are going door-to-door, you should register him or her.**

I always carried several voter registration forms with me on the back of my clipboard. By the end of my first campaign, I newly registered or switched to the Republican Party more than 350 voters just in the primary -- all within a six-month period. In a close race, that could be your margin of victory.

DOOR-TO-DOOR LISTS

Before you start, have a list of doors to knock on for the day.

If you are running in a strongly contested primary, as I was the first time I ran, you must target proven voters in your party's primary election. This crucial information is easily known through peoples' voter history.

Do not spend your time talking to voters who have not proven their reliability to vote in your upcoming election. There are too many others in your area who are certain to vote -- and you must prioritize communicating with them.

I targeted voters who had voted in at least one of the two primary elections similar to my year.

My races for the State Senate were in election cycles without a presidential race: 1998, 2002, 2006, and 2010. In Maryland, those are referred to as "governor's years" because the gubernatorial candidates appear at the top of the voting ballots.

Not as many people vote in elections held in years where there is no presidential candidate at the top of the ticket. In my experience, it is about 25 percent less. This means fewer doors for you to target.

In my case, I had about six months and 10,000 people whom I thought would vote in my primary election for Maryland State Senate. In a race for Congress, you must move even more quickly through the doors.

Some people will tell you to knock on every door. This advice is well-intentioned, but it is wrong. Do not follow it.

There is a single exception: if you are running in a small, local election, with only a few hundred to a few thousand voters, go ahead and knock on every door. You have the time to do so.

But even in this case, it is still wise to prioritize your time and start with those who have voted before in elections like yours.

Ward 01 Precinct 001

				Party	Age	Yrs Reg.	Vote History				
							08	06	04	02	00
SMITH	123	PINE AVE	123-456-7890								
JANE				D	47	22	g		g		g
JOHN				R	52	19	gp	g	g	g	g
JONES	125	PINE AVE	123-456-7891								
KELLY				U	18	New					
ROBERT				R	49	17	g		g		g
SUSAN				R	50	17	gp	gp	gp	gp	gp
GREEN	127	PINE AVE	123-456-7892								
DAVID				D	46	10		g		g	
KELLY				D	19	1	p				
LISA				U	46	10	gp		g		g

*The (fictional) voter data above demonstrates what your door-to-door list may look like.
You want a list, street by street, with names of the registered voters, their ages, and voter history.*

The more information you possess before knocking on that first door, the better off you will be. You want a list, street by street, with names of the registered voters, their ages, and voter history.

Understand that your list will be as accurate as the data available to you from your local Board of Elections. In many cases, it will simply not be accurate.

New laws make it more difficult to purge old voter data. Liberals falsely accuse any Secretary of State of voter suppression for responsibly trying to remove names from registered voter lists of people who no longer live there.

I have knocked on the doors of houses with the names of three different families on my list -- a clear sign of the problems with purging voters from the rolls. The people on your list who voted or registered to vote most recently are usually from the family currently in the home, but you never know for sure. Just ask the person who answers the door.

YOUR DOOR-TO-DOOR PITCH

Below is the standard door-to-door opening pitch that I adapted from Maryland State Senator Marty Madden, who in turn learned it from campaign strategist Lee Atwater. While holding up your palm card with your name and picture, you say:

“Hi, Ms. Smith. My name is Alex Mooney, and I am running for the State Senate here in the Frederick area. I just wanted thirty seconds of your time to stop by, put a face behind the name, and let you know that if you give me a chance to do this job, I’ll give it everything I’ve got, and I’ll always be available to you and your family if you need me.

“Thanks. My thirty seconds are up, but if you have any questions or issues you’d like to discuss I’d be happy to do so. Otherwise I’m heading next door to see your neighbor.”

Answer any questions and/or thank the voter again for the time. Then hand out your palm card or flyer and move along to the next door.

NAME TAG AND DRESS CODE

Since I was only 27 years old in my first campaign, I dressed in long-sleeved shirts and khaki pants all the time. It was hot, but I knew that I needed to look professional -- and older.

By the time my fourth election arrived 12 years later, I relaxed a bit on my dress code. But no matter your age, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of wearing a name tag. Wear a big, easy-to-read name tag. It is OK if it is ridiculously big. Remember, it is voters’ comfort in answering the door and talking to you that you are interested in, not your own.

People are on guard -- and for good reason -- when there is a stranger at their doors. A name tag with “Alex Mooney, Candidate for State Senate” on it helps to put voters at ease. A shirt with your campaign logo on it also serves this purpose. You will not go wrong using both at the same time.

DOOR-KNOCKING FOR OTHER CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES

If you want to ease into the world of knocking on doors in advance of your own election, a very good way is to door-knock for other conservative candidates.

Many city and municipality elections are held in odd-numbered years (e.g. 2017 or 2019), which could be one or three years before your election. In my case, the City of Frederick was about half of the population of my State Senate district and held elections the year before mine.

This provides the perfect opportunity to help your conservative friends running for office while simultaneously meeting your future voters. It never hurts to knock on a couple thousand doors for other people before your own election year.

Be sure to wear a very big name tag on your shirt so people will remember you when it comes time to vote for you later.

Whether the candidates you help win or lose, you make political allies of them. Those candidates and their volunteers should be expected to help you out in return the following year for your grassroots efforts. Let them know it is a two-way street.

DOOR-KNOCKING FOR CONSERVATIVE CAUSES

You also may go door-to-door for a local, statewide, or national issue. Find something you support and get out there in advance of your election to meet your voters.

Most states have propositions or initiatives that need grassroots volunteers going door-to-door or working events. You can help them while promoting your own campaign. It is a win-win situation.

Petition or signature-gathering drives are usually on issues of principle, such as pro-life or pro-Second Amendment issues. It could also be something liberty-related, like opposition to government spying and surveillance.

Some states, like California, have huge operations in which signature collection drives are well-funded and well-organized. But many states, counties, and towns are far behind modern political technology in this area.

Find something you support and get out there in advance of your election to meet your voters.

In my last election for State Senate, and the only one I lost, the precinct where I most significantly improved my results was an area where voters were very upset about a massive, planned electric substation in their neighborhood.

Since I opposed a substation for that location, I let residents know with literature I

handed out door-to-door and also mailed a special letter about it to that precinct.

I won by 500 votes in that one precinct alone. Two more precincts like that and I would have won the election.

In my second year in the State Senate, the unions pushed through a bill forcing school construction projects to pay higher union wages. I found it hypocritical that liberals talked a good game about supporting education, but were more than willing to increase school construction costs by 15 percent for an ideological goal.


As a new state senator, I decided to try something that had not been tried in about 10 years: petition the bill to referendum. The number of petitions required in Maryland was actually relatively small.

I had the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) on my side -- a group that's not a normal ally of conservatives. But no one else stepped forward to help me.

Even though some business leaders spent significant funds running radio ads to defeat the bill during the legislative session, they refused to assist my petition drive.

Although we failed to get enough signatures to force a referendum, I was proud to champion the issue of supporting education by fighting for lower school construction costs.

Having led a petition effort in 2000, and helped others in 2011 and 2012, I can assure you that your help for any such effort will be remembered and appreciated.



Having led a petition effort, I can assure you that your help for any such effort will be remembered and appreciated.

KNOCKING ON YOUR FIRST DOOR

Whether you are working for your own campaign or on behalf of others, the hardest door to knock on is that very first one.

I will never forget the very first day I went door-to-door. I chose a townhouse area near an event that I had to attend later in the evening.

After only one hour of knocking on doors, it began to rain. So I stopped. People do not like answering the door in the rain as everyone gets wet.

It was hardly a strong start to a serious door-to-door effort. But I broke the ice and it felt good, even fun. People were nice, and I enjoyed talking with them. I compare it to walking in the park, only you stop and say “hello” to people.

In the second week of my daily door-knocking, Colonel Robert Tansey, one of the earliest supporters of my campaign, happened to see me out there by myself ringing doorbells and talking to people on their doorsteps.

Later he told me that when he saw that, he said to himself, “Wow! That young man really is working hard.”

Colonel Tansey, who ran the local Christian Coalition, made a decision at that moment to triple-down on his efforts to help me. His strong commitment to my campaign made all the difference.

I had not realized that when I started to do the right things to win my campaign -- like knocking on doors every day for six months straight -- that I would end up inspiring those who were in my corner already. Good things come from knocking on doors.

CHAPTER TWO:

Spending your money

You must know how to spend your money on a door-to-door, grassroots-focused campaign.

In 1998, my entire budget for my Republican primary was less than \$70,000. A well-intentioned supporter who had a background in media asked me a simple question.

“In order to defeat Senator Jack Derr,” the supporter said, “you are going to need \$70,000 to purchase TV ads. Do you have \$70,000 in your budget for that?”

As a new candidate with my heart completely in the campaign, I was too easily put on the defensive. I took the “advice” as the supporter telling me that there was no way I could win my race since my strategy did not include TV ads.

Thanks to my campaign training, I knew the unsolicited advice was wrong. But many good candidates who lack proper training may have been scared away from running thanks to uninformed comments like these. Do not become one of them. Get proper training from grassroots-focused organizations, like the Leadership Institute.

SETTING YOUR BUDGET GOAL

In my first race, my brother Pat sat me down to discuss a budget. Since I was a long-shot challenger running against an entrenched incumbent, we had to be realistic about how much money I could raise.

He showed me what I could do with a budget of \$20,000 -- and then what more I could do with a budget of \$40,000. My brother’s goal was to convince me to raise the extra amount to hit the \$40,000.

Once I saw the difference that an additional \$20,000 could make for the campaign, I was motivated to raise the higher amount. When he was done, I said, “What if I could raise more than \$40,000?”

He looked at me, surprised, and said, “Then I would ask you how much you thought you could raise.”

“I think I could raise \$60,000,” I replied.

“If you think you can raise \$60,000, then I would tell you to raise \$60,000,” he said.

I believed I would win with the \$40,000, but I was much more confident of victory with the \$60,000. And I raised exactly \$60,000.

If not for a goal and a deadline, I would never have raised that much money. The deadline is already set for you; it is Election Day. Now you need to set your budget goal.

SAMPLE BUDGETS

The costs of palm cards, yard signs, and office expenses are an absolute must and remain the same no matter how much or how little money you raise. All the additional funds you raise beyond that must go to voter contact: phone calls, direct mail, and door-to-door efforts.

Many, perhaps even most, people cringe at the thought of asking others for money. **But what you must remember is that you are not asking for money for yourself, but for the conservative cause in which you believe.**

You will be much more motivated to raise the campaign funds necessary to win when you have your budget firmly planted in your mind.

Sample \$20,000 Budget

Yard signs	\$3,000
Palm cards	\$2,000
Office supplies, stamps for fundraising letters	\$2,000
Bumper stickers	\$1,000
Three direct mail pieces (10,000 recipients each)	<u>\$12,000</u>
	\$20,000

Sample \$40,000 Budget

Yard signs	\$3,000
Palm cards	\$2,000
Office supplies, stamps for fundraising letters	\$2,000
Bumper stickers	\$1,000
Eight direct mail pieces (10,000 recipients each)	<u>\$32,000</u>
	\$40,000

Sample \$60,000 Budget

Yard signs	\$3,000
Palm cards	\$2,000
Office supplies, stamps for fundraising letters	\$2,000
Bumper stickers	\$1,000
Radio ads	\$12,000
10 direct mail pieces (10,000 recipients each)	<u>\$40,000</u>
	\$60,000

SPENDING YOUR MONEY

If you are not careful, money can fly away from your campaign as quickly as you bring it in.

There is no shortage of consultants, web developers, pollsters, and other political professionals who will be more than happy to receive large sums of money from your campaign for their services. Many of these services are certainly needed, but take your time to consider what is essential and what volunteers may be able to contribute.

When you order items like bumper stickers, yard signs, palm cards, and lapel stickers, you are able to save significant funds by ordering larger amounts. For example, in 2013, I could order 2,500 bumper stickers for \$950 or 5,000 bumper stickers for \$1,400.

Why not spend the extra \$450 to double your amount for less than half the cost? Then hand out those bumper stickers all over the place.

In the same way, order as many palm cards as you possibly think you can use. You can use them for door-knocking as well as other campaign activities. Larger events like county fairs and parades use up palm cards quickly.

When it comes to spending money, spend it like your own personal money. I always did.

You can include palm cards in thank you notes to new donors who may not live in your district and therefore have never seen one. You can leave them at the front tables of other events you attend or someone attends on your behalf. Often you are permitted to put one on every chair at an event.

At the very end of your campaign, if you have lots of leftover palm cards, you can instruct a few volunteers to target key precincts and literature drop (not door-knock) every house. In big and bright letters, write “please vote Tuesday” on them when you do this.

Bottom line: when it comes to spending your money, spend it like it is your own personal money. I always did.

CAMPAIGNING AS A SLATE

If you can join a slate in your campaign, strongly consider it.

Normally you slate with candidates running for office at the same level of government as you. In my case, it was State Senate together with State House of Delegates. In other cases, it may be mayor and city council. This makes sense because you are running on many of the same issues.

Having a slate in a primary election has several positive effects:

- It saves you scarce campaign funds.
- It discourages other people from running and increases your chances of not even having a primary. That would be a great result as you may then focus entirely on your general election.
- It builds enthusiasm for your team from local activists and volunteers.

Basic math also dictates why a slate makes sense.

When I ran for the State Senate in my four elections, there were three House of Delegates seats fully contained within my legislative district.

Suppose the cost of a mailing to our targeted voter list is \$5,000 per each mailing. For \$20,000 of my campaign money, I could pay for four mailings.

Now suppose the same is true for each of the three candidates running for the House of Delegates in my slate. They each get four mailings for their \$20,000. But if we pool our money together, we have \$80,000 to do 16 mailings. Would you rather get four mailings for your \$20,000 or 16 mailings? I hope you know the answer to that! **You owe it to your donors to maximize the impact of their donation.**

Anything you raise above and beyond the \$20,000 you dedicated to the slate effort you have every right to use just for yourself. You might as well; after all, you already have 16 mailings going out and that should be enough.

You can slide this scale of funds up and down depending on the universe of your mailings and the number of people on your slate -- and how much your weakest link is willing to contribute for you to match. Of course, it is the candidates with the least money who need the slate the most, so do not let them off the hook for contributions.

HOW TO WORK TOGETHER AS A SLATE

Most important, make sure you have a legal expert check the confusing and varying election laws to make sure you do not run afoul of them.

Our team for less taxes and more jobs

Alex X. Mooney & Michael Hough

Lower Taxes
 Alex Mooney voted against each of Governor O'Malley's tax-and-spend budgets in the State Senate. As our next Delegate, Michael Hough will join him to lead the fight to repeal O'Malley's \$1.4 billion tax increases. Both Mooney and Hough signed a pledge to **oppose any and all tax increases.**

Less Spending
 Alex Mooney and Michael Hough will force the big government politicians to **cut spending and balance the budget without raising taxes.** Hough will help Mooney continue the fight to pass a Taxpayers Bill of Rights to limit spending.

More jobs
 High taxes and needless regulations are driving employers out of Maryland and into neighboring states. Alex Mooney and Michael Hough will lead the fight to **reduce the tax burden, cut red tape and make Maryland a business-friendly state to attract more jobs.**

Michael Hough
 for House of Delegates

Alex X. Mooney
 for State Senate

www.AlexMooney.com
www.HoughForDelegate.com

Authorized by Mooney for Senate, Kay Dallavalle, Treasurer, and Hough for Delegate, Authority Joseph Craw, Treasurer

BOB EHRlich
GOVERNOR

ALEX MOONEY
SENATE

MICHAEL HOUGH
DELEGATE

This palm card (left) and these yard signs (right) show a slate I joined with another conservative for the State House of Delegates.

Each of you may still run your campaign in your own way; all you must agree upon is the issues you list in your joint mailings. If you disagree on some issues, limit your literature to the issues on which you all agree. There is no rule that you have to agree on every issue. But, since you are in the same party, hopefully you agree on enough things or just one big thing for use in a mailing.

With that said, if you do get along well with one or more of your “teammates” on the slate, you can also merge campaign office locations to save money and share volunteer manpower. I have done this before and it worked out well.

Some candidates work harder and put more time into the campaign than others. You have to live with that reality, knowing that working together as a team makes you all stronger. I am certain that I personally knocked on many more doors than any of the other candidates on my slate.

Nonetheless, I wanted them to win, and I was happy to do it.

HOW VOTERS REACT TO SLATES

The biggest objection you will hear from your supporters is their opinion that being aligned with one or all of the other candidates in the slate will hurt you. It has been my experience that this is not true.

If voters made any comment about the slate, it would normally be something like, "I'll vote for you, Alex, but I am not sure about some of the others on this palm card."

Take what you can get. Let voters think about it and maybe they will change their minds and vote for other candidates in the slate. But if not, at least they are voting for you.

Very rarely you may hear a comment like, "Since you are on the same team with them, I will not vote for you."

Do not let this comment bother you. When that person goes to vote, he or she will notice you are all on the same team on the ballot anyway. So you have very little to lose.

CHAPTER THREE:

Honing your skills

Your door-to-door campaign skills will increase with every experience you have. **By the time you knock on 1,000 doors, you will be an expert, and you will have experienced nearly every variation of activity you may encounter.**

I give you examples in this book to show you how it worked for me and to give you an idea of what could work for you. Personalize your approach and always be willing to learn from your own experiences.

YOUR CELL PHONE

Your cell phone gives you the flexibility to be door-knocking while still being available for an important phone call or checking in with your spouse.

Do not check email on your phone frequently. Your primary goal is knocking on doors.

Do not let your phone distract you while you are going door to door. Leave it on vibrate to avoid the embarrassment of it ringing while you are talking to someone. Save the non-time-sensitive calls for after you knock on your last door for the day.

WALKING TO THE DOOR

Walk right by the houses where there are no registered voters on your list. If someone is in the yard, wave politely and go to the next house.

When you reach a home where you will door-knock, start by smiling. I practice smiling to get my face ready as I walk up to the house. After a long day, your face may need the reminder. You want to make a good impression, and that begins with a smile.

After knocking on a door, I always take a step back to provide some comfort space between me and the person answering. This sometimes requires taking a step down off the porch.

You do not want to seem to people like you are crowding them or could rush into their homes. This is especially true for large men.

And remember: some people take their personal space very seriously.

TALKING WITH VOTERS

Your goal is to deliver your door-to-door pitch, answer any questions, thank the voter for the time, and then move on to the next house.

Too many candidates and volunteers, especially new ones, allow themselves to spend too much time with one voter at the expense of meeting many other undecided voters. So keep going.

Some people you meet want to argue. Others are happy to have someone to talk with for as long as you are willing. Just say, “I have to get over and see what your neighbors think about the issues.” Or, “I have to finish this street and get home to my family.” Come up with an honest reason why you have to move along -- and then do it.

In one neighborhood where I went door-to-door, I saw a volunteer for a local mayoral candidate.


In the time my campaign volunteer and I knocked the entire neighborhood, about 60 doors, the volunteer for the mayoral candidate remained at the same door, talking to the same woman.

Later, I asked the volunteer if he at least got the woman’s vote, but he responded that he was unable to convince her.

What a waste of time!

Even if he had convinced her to vote for his candidate, he still lost the opportunity to speak with dozens of other undecided voters during that time.

Unsurprisingly, that candidate for mayor lost.



Deliver your door-to-door pitch, answer any questions, thank the voter for the time, and then move on.

YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY

The best way to avoid danger is to stay away from it. **If you feel unsafe for any reason when approaching a house, move on to the next house or another neighborhood.**

One time I was door-knocking in a new development in a formerly rural area of my

district. As I was walking up the sidewalk, I saw what appeared to be large black snake just a few feet from the porch.

I stopped and stared at it for a few minutes. The snake did not move one bit. I saw kids' toys in the yard, so I figured it must be a rubber snake that one of the children left out, probably as a joke to some person like me.

I said to myself, "I think I'll just go over there and nudge that rubber snake off the sidewalk into the grass to show that kid that I can't be fooled."

But then, just as quickly, I decided against it, just in case it was a snake.

No one was home, so I wrote a note and left it at the door as I always did -- while checking on the snake about every two seconds.

As I walked back down the porch to leave, I took one more look back at the snake. That's when I saw the head move and the tongue come out.

It was a real snake. And to think I almost grabbed it.

What a mistake that would have been.

I share the story as a reminder: keep far away from the slightest sign of danger. It is not worth it; there are too many other doors to get to where there is no danger at all.

DOGS

Although I never encountered another snake, dogs are everywhere. I was surprised to learn how little control some people have over their dogs.

I would ring a doorbell and hear barking and banging as a dog hurled himself against the door. Since many dog owners are unable to arrive in time to control their dogs, and since some front doors are not well-closed, the door would occasionally fly open when the dog rammed it. This would create problems for everyone -- me, the owner, and the dog.

So I learned to place my foot at the outside corner of the door so that it would not come open. Problem solved.

When you see dogs in a yard, approach them cautiously (if at all) to be sure they will not bite. Most dogs are nice and will greet you happily.

But if a dog barks aggressively, shows his teeth, or for any reason makes you feel



When you see dogs at a house, approach them cautiously (if at all) to be sure they will not bite. Most dogs are nice and will greet you happily. But if not, just skip the door. It is not worth the risk.

uncomfortable, just skip the door. It is not worth the risk.

The closest I ever came to a dog bite was from a little dog that was very friendly when I walked up the sidewalk toward the house.

But the moment I took one step onto the porch, the dog went wild. That porch was his territory and, in his mind, I was not allowed to be there.

I had my clipboard ready to put in the dog's mouth if it tried to bite me, but the owner of the house -- who fortunately knew me from high school -- came outside at just that moment and calmed him down.

Crisis avoided.

From that point on, I always took a closer look at friendly dogs when I stepped on the porch of their homes. If I was not sure of the dog's attitude, I would skip the house.

VOTERS WHO DO NOT WANT TO SPEAK WITH YOU

Some people refuse to answer the door no matter what. You know they are there because you see or hear them, but they do not answer. After two attempts at

knocking on the door or ringing the doorbell, place your literature at the doorstep and leave.

They know you were there.

One time, a young volunteer went to knock on doors in a cul-de-sac while I was on the other side of the street. After a few minutes, he came to me upset and dejected, and he said, "That guy was a real jerk."

"What happened?" I asked.

"The man over there was working in his yard with the Jeep parked in the driveway with a Bush for President sticker on it," the volunteer explained. "There were also lots of military stickers on the cars. When I walked up to the man he looked at me and said, 'Extract yourself from the perimeter of my property immediately.'"

My young volunteer chose not to leave the man's property as clearly instructed.

Instead, the volunteer countered, "But we are Republicans and I want to give you this flyer for the upcoming election for--"

"You better leave right now or I will get you for trespassing!" the man yelled, interrupting my volunteer.

The volunteer got off his property. The man was rude, but he took his property rights very seriously and did not wish to have a discussion. He especially did not like it that my volunteer did not leave after he told him to do so.

This is why I always say to leave immediately when told to or at the very first sign of conflict. There are far too many other voters' doors to knock on, and it is not worth the chance of a confrontation.

And whatever you do, do not touch the snake!

CHAPTER FOUR:

Handling the negative

One of the biggest obstacles to door-knocking is the fear of confrontation.

In 1998, when I was a challenger candidate, I personally knocked on more than 10,000 doors. I can recall only about 10 rude incidents. Most were no more than slammed doors.

But in 2002, the ratio increased ten-fold. That is, in the more than 15,000 doors on which I knocked for that election, I encountered more than 100 rude people.

Some of those people would have been rude to anyone at their doors for any reason; it was not particular to me. But many comments were personal to me -- and they came from liberals.

I had led the fight in our state legislature for Second Amendment rights, for lower taxes, for pro-life policies, and against excessive government spending. Liberal voters knew who I was, and they knew that I was a solid conservative.

So, if you are running as a challenger candidate, use this to your advantage. You at least have a chance to win support from a voter more liberal than you if you can find some common ground.

TALKING WITH LIBERAL VOTERS

You have zero chance of ever getting a vote from adamantly liberal voters. You must fully realize this, accept it, and know it will not change. A liberal will disagree with you most issues. It would not be normal for him or her to vote for you.

When you meet these liberal voters at their doors, you will receive one of three types of responses.

They say, "No thanks, but have a nice day."

They say, "I do not agree with you on the issues and will not be voting for you. But it is nice to see you out here working hard."

They say, "Yes, I know who you are. I disagree with your voting record, but I appreciate the fact that you come to our neighborhood to talk to us. I will not vote

for you, but it was nice of you to come by.”

In other words, the majority of liberals whom you meet when you knock on their doors will be nice to you. They may even offer you a compliment or a glass of water. Of course, we conservatives should treat liberals with the same kindness when they knock on our doors.

When you do meet the rare liberals who are rude, know that there is something wrong with them, not you.

One evening, just after sunset, I walked back to my car through a neighborhood where I had been door-knocking.

I passed a middle-aged man holding a baby at his mailbox by the sidewalk. I took a quick look at my voter list and saw that both he and his wife were registered for the opposite party and had perfect voting records.

Normally I would have skipped that door, but since I was walking right by him, I delivered my normal pitch after complimenting him on his beautiful baby.

His response was blunt. He said, “I will not vote for you because you voted against education funding.”

This was a frequent but untrue attack leveled against me by my liberal opponents.

I explained that I had not voted specifically against education funding, but that I had voted against the overall state budget because it spent too much money.

Once I voted against the state budget, I was attacked as if I opposed each and every item in the entire budget.

Normally this explanation was sufficient for voters and we would move on to discuss other issues. But not for this man. He just said, “Yeah, it’s not like I believe you,” and he turned away from me and walked back up his sidewalk.

There is nothing I could say that would sway him because he simply refused to believe the truth. I guess that is why he is liberal anyway. I went home.

TALKING WITH CONFRONTATIONAL PEOPLE

When you do meet that rare jerk, remember these two important rules.

First, never argue. There is no point. You will just give the person an opportunity to become even more upset and rude than he or she already is. Second, get off his or her property as quickly as you can.

You have not done anything wrong by knocking on the door, just like salesmen, missionaries, Boy and Girl Scouts, and others do. But once a person tells you to leave or it is obvious that you are not welcome, you are essentially trespassing. Get out!

Your only response should be something like, "Sorry to bother you. Have a nice day."

Say these words as you are walking away. Retreat quickly down the sidewalk so it is clear you are not threatening the person in any way. Then move on to more productive activities, like knocking on the next door.

On several occasions, people who yelled at me on their doorsteps found me later while I was walking through their neighborhoods and apologized. It was impressive that they had the decency to do that; they are human and make mistakes just like the rest of us.

I still doubt they voted for me, as the apologies went something like this, "Just because I disagree with you does not mean I should have been rude to you earlier, and I apologize."

But of course I accepted the apologies and nothing more was said.

Unfortunately, most rude people do not apologize.

One time a new volunteer from a local college group was out door-knocking with me. On the very first door she knocked on, the man yelled, "Mooney, no way!" and slammed the door. Thankfully this volunteer was persistent and continued to help -- and it did not happen again.

TALKING WITH NEGATIVE CONSERVATIVES

Sometimes you will encounter negativity from your own side.

Since I was only 27 years old (and looked 22 years old) during my first campaign for the State Senate, many voters thought I was too young. One elderly woman on whose door I knocked during the primary told me just that. I had my standard response ready.

"I will put my youth and energy to work for you," I said. Then I changed the topic to

the differences between me and my liberal primary opponent on the issues -- which were conveniently listed on my palm card.

This approach almost always worked as people would say something like, "I guess we could use some new ideas in government," and go on to discuss issues with me. But not with this woman.

"What issue is most important to you?" I asked.
"The issue to me is that you are too young," she replied.

I cut my losses and moved on to winning her vote for the next election. So I asked, "If I win the primary, would you vote for me in the general election?"

"Yes, I will not vote for a Democrat," she responded. At least I knew I was safe there.

Four years later, I knocked on her door again and she happened to be home again. She verified that she had done just as she promised: she voted against me in the primary but for me in the general election. I asked her if she would vote for me now in the primary for my first re-election, and she said she would.

I could not help but admire her bluntness and honesty, traits of a true conservative.

At other times, you can use humor to deflect negativity.

I was once asked at a large forum if I felt that I was old enough to do the job.

At other times, you can use humor to deflect negativity.

"I know that politicians do not like to make promises," I said, "but I am going to make my first campaign promise to you right here and right now. If you vote for me, I will get older."

After the laughing stopped, I pivoted back to talking about the issues.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Handling tough questions

It is important that you address the tough questions that are appropriate to the office for which you are running.

If you say one thing to voters at their doorsteps, then something different publicly, you will lose their trust and votes permanently. If you stand your ground, however, they will respect you -- and they may vote for you, even if they disagree with some of your positions.

After all, they may disagree with your opponent on some issues too.

NATIONAL ISSUES

Do not get bogged down in discussions that focus on issues outside the scope of the office that you are seeking.

It is hard enough to stay well-informed about the issues for which you will have to cast votes if you succeed in your election. It is unreasonable of you to expect yourself -- or of anyone else to expect of you -- to have a position on every issue in the world.

“Do you agree with the war in Iraq?” asked a voter while I stood in his driveway.

Do not get bogged down in discussions that focus on issues outside the scope of the office that you are seeking.

This was the number one question I was asked in my 2002 election. Since I was not running for a federal office, I found it counterproductive.

In response, I would say, “As a state senator, I only make laws affecting the state of Maryland. I do not vote on foreign policy.”

That usually succeeded in moving the conversation to issues relevant to the State Senate. But this man persisted.

“I just want to know what you think of the war in Iraq,” he said again.

He was a registered Republican and had already told me that he would vote for me. I had nothing to gain by answering his question -- and it was not relevant to the office that I was seeking.

"I have not sat through the hearings like a Member of Congress would, I have not studied the geopolitics of Middle East, and I do not have the information available to me that the President of the United States does, so I would really rather not take a position," I explained.

But he would not accept that as answer. He persisted with his question.

Seeing no way out of the conversation without offending the man by dodging his direct question, I made a mistake and relented.

"If you really want to know, I think we should remove Saddam Hussein from power," I said.

A look of horror came over the man's face.

Now I had done it.

I had lost a vote and made a voter angry with me. Why couldn't I just keep my mouth shut?

"How could you say that?" the man exclaimed. "I do not know anyone who supports the Iraq invasion."

Given his strong opinion, I could understand why no one would want to disagree with him.

But I had entered this non-germane conversation, so I could not back out now.

"Saddam Hussain invaded Kuwait. Now he refuses to comply with the terms given to him and to Iraq after the United States and other countries went in there to kick him out," I said. "As far as I am concerned, this is a continuation of the 1991 Gulf War. It is not about oil money or democracy-building, though the latter is a noble goal. I support President Bush's decision to go into Iraq because I think the peace terms from the 1991 Kuwait invasion should be enforced."

This answer seemed to calm him, and we parted on good terms. He said he would still vote for me. I hope he did, but I sure did nothing to help myself through that conversation.

LOCAL ISSUES

Some local issues become irrelevant quickly, so do not spend too much time or effort dwelling on them. Just listen and move on.

In the summer of 2002, I heard one question from voters again and again: “What are you going to do about the water problem?”

Some local issues become irrelevant quickly, so do not spend too much time or effort dwelling on them.

Many voters wanted my answer to that question when a short-lived water shortage in my area affected many of them.

Fortunately, the problem solved itself when it rained for several weeks toward the end of summer. But until then, it was tough to answer because there were a number of possible partial solutions.

Our city mayor imposed a moratorium on all construction -- an overreaction. Other potential solutions included more water storage, better access to rivers, and increased water conservation. But mainly we just needed to wait for the rain. Sure enough, when the rain hit, people stopped asking that question.

RESPONDING TO LIES

Some tough questions are personal attacks based on false information.

Do not be surprised or upset when it happens. **Every candidate -- and, I would believe, every person -- has had to deal with false rumors before.**

In my last campaign for State Senate, a rumor that I did not live where I said I did was spread. It was false. I had moved from a townhouse in one part of my district to a single-family home in another part of my district, but I still resided in my district.

The rumor proved to be persistent, which surprised me. I even heard it from a random person at a Fourth of July festival -- when it came in the form of an accusation. I told him, as I told others, that my opponents made up lies since they were unwilling to debate me on the issues. He just stared back at me and said OK, not knowing how to react to my direct response.

Since this rumor was a lie and I knew it for sure, I firmly denied it to many other



Some tough questions are personal attacks based on false information. I even had to invite one liberal reporter to my home to prove that a rumor about where I lived was false. The reporter agreed and never did a story.

people, including several reporters who were being urged to attack me. No responsible reporter would do so without evidence -- and there was none.

I even invited one liberal reporter to my home to see me, my wife, and my two small children. Clearly we lived in the home where I said that we did. This reporter then agreed the rumor was false and never did a story.

You can blunt the vicious attacks from the campaigns of your opponents as you meet face-to-face with voters at their doors. Voters are less likely to believe personal attacks hurled against people they have met.

I tested this theory with one woman, a self-described moderate, whom I met at her door with her more conservative son. I said to her, "When the election gets closer, my opponents will attack me by calling me a radical."

"You don't seem like radical," she responded -- and I knew at that moment I was protected from losing her vote when the nasty smears came.

The hypocrisy that liberals get away with on political campaigns never ceases to amaze me. The mainstream media gives them a pass, even though they see clearly that liberals are saying one thing and doing another.

Know that attacks will come at you, especially when it looks as if you might win. Do not let it get you away from your campaign plan. Stand your ground and move forward knocking on doors.

CHAPTER SIX:

Maximize your time

There is more information and support available from a door-to-door encounter than you may have imagined.

RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

As you go door-to-door, you will meet many conservatives who say they will volunteer for you. Take them up on their offers.

Since you are a hard-working candidate fighting for conservative principles, you will inspire other conservatives. When you are at their doorsteps, people feel excited to jump into the fray and help out. But often, after you leave, their enthusiasm fades.

In one of my first elections, it was disappointing to me that, after months of meeting new people door-to-door who said they would volunteer, I did not see the new volunteers coming through the door. How could that be? They told me to my face on their doorsteps that they wanted to help. I came back to the office every evening and gave their information to my campaign team. Why were they not showing up?

Certainly some people would never have made good on their offers to help. But most seemed sincere when I spoke with them, and the sheer volume of people who said they would help should have produced a notable increase in volunteer numbers. I concluded that effective follow-up from my campaign was lacking.

HOW TO MANAGE VOLUNTEERS

Whoever you put in charge of recruiting volunteers must be convincing and polite, but pushy. It could be your campaign manager, volunteer director, relative, or even you, the candidate.

At least two to three personal phone calls from your campaign manager or volunteer director should be made to each volunteer. **Email should be used to pass on information, but it should not replace an enthusiastic, personal phone call.**

Describe to potential volunteers a variety of activities with which they could help. This reduces the chance of them never showing up for fear of being asked to do something with which they are uncomfortable.

Some volunteers will not make phone calls, but will knock on doors. Some will not want to knock on doors, but will make phone calls. Some will want only to stuff envelopes. It is always helpful for a volunteer with a truck to be willing to put up yard signs.

They are volunteers, and while you could encourage them to help with whatever is most needed at the time, give them the freedom to help how they choose and appreciate it.

Assure the volunteers whom you are recruiting that any time they can spare would be helpful. Even if they come in for one hour a week, it will help. And after doing it once or twice, they might find it so rewarding that they come back more often or for a longer time.

One of my most regular volunteers came from a split party household, and it was the mother, not registered with my party, who suggested that her daughter volunteer.

The mother said something to the effect of, “We are not very partisan here, but I think political experience would be good for my daughter.” The teenage girl, too young to vote, just stood there.

I never thought I would see them again, but I was pleasantly surprised just a few days later when the mother and daughter walked into our phone bank center in the 2006 election. And the daughter returned about a dozen times before the election; she enjoyed the camaraderie with the other young volunteers. I would bet they are all even more conservative now.

REGISTER VOTERS

Registering voters is the job of your local political party or one of the many other politically-related groups. Leftist groups do a very good job of this. They target areas where people tend to be reliably liberal, and then they make sure they get registered and to the polls.

In states where liberals control the legislature, they likely have worked to remove laws that require advance voter registration and an identification requirement to vote -- even though those measures provide safeguards against voter fraud.

Conservative individuals and groups -- not you alone! -- must target our areas of strength. Your local club or central committees, if well-organized, should initiate voter registration drives at events in your area or through door-to-door.

If you are fortunate enough to know of a group that is targeting areas of opportunity

Voter Registration Application

Completing this form, review the General, Application, and State

This space for office use only.

United States of America? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did on or before election day? ☐ Yes ☐ No

In response to either of these questions, do not complete form.

ic instructions for rules regarding eligibility to register prior to age 18.)

First Name

Apt. or Lot #

City/Town

City/Town

Miss Last Name

Middle Name(s)

ID Number -

Registering voters is not your top priority, but you must do it. If you know of a group targeting areas of opportunity to register conservative voters, send your volunteers to support the effort.

to register conservative voters, you should be very appreciative and send your volunteers to support the effort.

But you cannot count on this kind of support for your campaign. The bottom line for your campaign is that, although registering voters is not your top priority, you must do it.

Use the voter registration forms that you have on your clipboard to register more conservatives. Always have a pile of registration forms in your car and carry five to 10 forms with you when you are out knocking doors.

You have to turn the form in no matter which political party the voter chooses. It slows you down to wait for people to fill out their forms, but since you are already there it is a good use of your time. This is also true for people who are willing to switch parties.

Having a volunteer nearby to help with this process will save you much time. But if you are out there by yourself, as I very often was, just do it yourself. You will get very good at it very quickly. I certainly did.

Once a young woman answered the door of a home that I was certain was a strong Republican household. It was obvious from the voter list: a man and a woman, both Republicans in their 50s, and four young women aged 25 to 19, all registered Republicans.

When I asked her which of the names on the voter list was hers, she surprised me and said, “None. Those are my sisters.”

When I asked her how old she was, she replied that she had recently turned 18. So I registered her to vote -- and I hope that you are as certain as I was that she would register as a Republican, because she did.

Not all opportunities to register a new voter are as easy and obvious as that one, but it would have been crazy to walk away from that door without getting that young woman registered.

Another time, a woman who answered the door was a registered Democrat, but she quickly said she had never voted that way and wanted to switch her registration. As I handed her a form to switch her party, she mentioned that her husband, a police officer and a conservative, had never registered to vote.

“Why not?” I asked.

“I have tried and have not been able to get him to do it. But I know if he registered he would vote and would vote conservative,” she said. “Maybe he’ll register if you ask him since you are the candidate.”

When he came to the door, I said to him, “Sir, I am in a very tough election this year against a real liberal. I have forms right here to register you to vote. It will only take a minute, and I would personally appreciate your vote.”

“Okay. I’ll do it,” he said without the least bit of hesitation. Here was a man who was more than 40 years old and a solid conservative, but who had never voted in his life. If not for my door-knock, he may still have never voted. He was a police officer and very civic-minded, but politics was not important to him.

All it took was a look in the eye and a simple personal appeal from me, the candidate. He was a new vote for me and every other conservative on the ballot not just for that election, but for future elections as well.

When I had walked up to the door, there was one person registered as a Democrat. When I walked away five minutes later, the house had two registered Republicans.

DISTRIBUTE CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

You will have many yard signs and bumper stickers to hand out, so ask people while



EHRlich
for Governor
MOONEY
STATE SENATE

Mooney for Senate, Auth: Eric Dellavalle, Treas.

Win
With
MOONEY!

Mooney for Senate, Auth: Eric Dellavalle, Treas.

Above are yard signs from one of my campaigns. You will have many yard signs and bumper stickers to hand out, so ask people while you are at their doors if they would like them.

you are at their doors if they would like them.

Bumper stickers cost only pennies per sticker when you order a large amount. I offered one to anyone who would take it -- whether or not I ever expected them to put it to end up on a car. If you are “feeling lucky” (i.e. getting along well with the person at the door), then offer to place the bumper sticker on the car on your way to the next door. This ensures that it actually gets on the car.

With yard signs, you should be more judicious, but not too much. Use your own judgment based on several factors, including the frequency the sign will be seen, the time left until Election Day, the number of signs you have left, and the enthusiasm of the homeowner. The more traveled the street, the more you should encourage supporters to take the yard signs.

Far down a dead-end street where few cars ever go is clearly not a priority. But if a supporter wants a yard sign and asks for it for his or yard, give it gladly.

RAISE FUNDS

One thing I never expected when I knocked on a voter’s door was to be offered a donation. It did not happen in my first campaign, but it did a few times in my re-elections.

In 2002, I knocked on the door of a solidly conservative household. The man who answered the door knew who I was, and he invited me in to meet his wife and children. His daughter had just turned 18 and was not registered to vote, so I registered her on the spot.

Then he asked, “May I make a donation now?”

“Sure!” I happily and quickly answered. I do not know if he could tell I was surprised, as it had never occurred to me before that people would be willing to do that.

“Can you accept business checks?” he asked.

Unlike candidates for federal office or state candidates in other states, Maryland state legislative candidates are allowed to accept corporate checks. Be very certain of your local and state laws for campaign donations. I recommend that you consult an attorney.

He wrote me a \$100 check from his small home business right then.

That experience changed my mentality. When I met an enthusiastic supporter, I considered asking for a donation.

The campaign address is on your literature, and it is a “soft” ask to mention that the supporter may send in a donation and it would be appreciated.

It is even more effective to send a letter requesting a donation to someone you met at his or her doorstep.

Many people sent in donations from letters I mailed like that. There is something about looking people in their faces at their doorsteps, telling them that you must have contributions to finance your campaign that makes a big difference in their follow-through.

You will spend a lot of time and money finding new donors, so keep open to the opportunity to solicit donors during or after the time that you knock on their doors.

LEARN ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Asking a supportive voter about their neighbors is one way to save yourself time and pain when knocking on doors.

Neighbors love to know each other’s business. You will be surprised at what you will find out.

In one of the most conservative parts of my State Senate district, I was door-

Be very certain of your local and state laws for campaign donations. I recommend that you consult an attorney.



Ask a supportive voter about their neighbors to save time and pain when knocking on doors. You will be surprised what you will find out.

knocking with my brave mother on a scorching hot day. We were on opposite sides of the street. It was more than 100 degrees outside, up to 110 degrees with humidity.

Just about everyone who answered invited us inside immediately and offered us a glass of water. Most told us we should not be outside. Frankly, we didn't last too long that day.

Toward the end of the street, a kind conservative woman took it upon herself to tell me about all of her neighbors.

"Republicans there, there too, there too, there too, and then there is the house on the corner there. Now that is a funny one," she said as she pointed at the other homes on her street.

"Why is that?" I replied, unable to quell my curiosity.

"Well, one day the liberal Democrat wife put up a Gore for President yard sign. The conservative Republican husband came home and tried to take it down, but his wife would not let him.

"So the next day a Bush for President yard sign appeared right next to it. Both signs stayed up side by side for months until the election was over," she explained, adding that it was a joke around the neighborhood.

I door-knocked that same street four years later, and I discovered that the couple in question had divorced.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Volunteers and family doing doors

Volunteers -- whether they are family, friends, or conservative activists -- are worth their weight in gold. Cherish them.

When people choose to volunteer, you must let them know how much you appreciate them. If your volunteers feel personally appreciated, you will have all the volunteers you need.

This could mean nothing more than taking the time to shake their hands and talk with them for a few minutes. It could mean sending them a handwritten note of thanks after they have volunteered a few times.

Buy lunch or dinner for your volunteers when they're spending time on your campaign. You must create a positive environment so they want to return to volunteer again.

Let them know your campaign can be successful only with their help.

VOLUNTEERS GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR

Volunteers going door-to-door for your campaign should make it clear up front that they are volunteering. **Most voters mistakenly assume that your campaign workers are all getting paid.** The fact that people are volunteering their time lets voters know that people really believe in you.

When the voter answers the door, your volunteer should say, "Hi, my name is Julie, and I am a volunteer for the Alex Mooney for State Senate campaign."

Then he or she should proceed with the standard door-to-door pitch.

FAMILY MEMBERS GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR

The best person to knock on a door -- other than you -- is a member of your family.

In my case, my mother is so good at it that I often wonder if she is even more effective than I am. Hardly a day goes by that I do not run into someone who

tells me, usually with a big smile, how he or she met my mother when my mother knocked on the door.

In the heat of the campaign, I would go with a volunteer to one precinct and send my mother with another volunteer to a different area.

If my mother had door-knocked a neighborhood, then I did not go there personally. I had too many other voters (and doors) to reach.

The effectiveness of door-to-door support holds true for any family member. Your family members may not share your political party or positions on many issues. They may just believe in you. That is reason enough.

When a family member is helping you, he or she should be sure to state right away how he or she is related to you.

It should start simply like this: “Hi, my name is Margarita Mooney, and I am Alex Mooney’s sister. He is running for the State Senate here in the Jefferson area, and I am handing out his literature today.”

Or you could use: “Hello, my name is Andrew Robreno, and I am handing out literature for Alex Mooney for the State Senate. I am his nephew and can assure you he is a good person. I hope you will give him every consideration for your vote.”

When a family member is helping you, he or she should be sure to state right away how he or she is related to you.

If you are blessed with a large family, you may have some great campaigners right there.

The closer the relative, the more the potential voter will appreciate meeting him or her, but distant relatives work fine too. Cousins, nephews, in-laws, second cousins, third cousins in-law -- ask for and take help from anyone who is willing!

If you have a liberal relative or friend who is an avid supporter, I encourage you to send him or her to doors of liberal voters. That way if a voter objects to your party affiliation, the friend or relative can explain that he or she too is a liberal -- but still supports you and explain why. That is your best shot at getting that vote.

One State House candidate I mentored had an aunt who loved him dearly. She was his top donor and grassroots supporter. She knocked on doors, worked the polls, and helped at every event. No one really knew she was a liberal, but she was.



With the help of your two best volunteers, you can cover doors rapidly while minimizing the loss of your personal touch.

Perhaps she could have communicated better with fellow liberals at their doors and convinced them to vote for him.

GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR EFFICIENTLY WITH VOLUNTEERS

With the help of your two best volunteers, you can cover doors rapidly while minimizing the loss of your personal touch.

Have one volunteer start on the left side of the street and one start on the right side of the street to knock on the targeted doors. You walk down the middle of the street.

When you see a voter come to the door, walk as quickly as you can to that door. The goal is to arrive at the door in time to say hello, just after your volunteer has told the voter who you are and given your campaign literature to him or her.

As soon as you walk up to the door, your volunteer leaves and goes to the next door. At the door with the voter, you make your pitch as you normally would.

When the conversation ends, leave to catch up to your volunteers. More often than not, you will be hustling across the street or up a few houses to visit with the next voter who answers the door. You will get quite a workout this way.

One long Saturday, two volunteers and I did doors like this. We managed to knock on more than 300 doors -- and 100 percent of my time was spent talking to people.

I was extremely satisfied to see how we three could cover entire neighborhoods in a single day. It would take almost a week for me to door-knock the same houses alone.

After that experience, I remarked to my volunteers how rare it was that so many people were home that day.

My volunteer responded in shock, "What are you talking about? Hardly anyone was home!"

With such a strategy, you will miss speaking with a few voters in-person, but that is okay. They know you were there and, if your district is small enough, you can go back to their doors.

PERFORMING A "RESCUE"

If a volunteer sees you are delayed significantly at a door with someone who is talking incessantly, he or she can perform a "rescue."

Most people understand you have other doors to knock and will not abuse your time. But, on rare occasions, some people will; it would happen to me once a week on average.

At these times, I would ask my volunteer to walk up and say, "Mr. Mooney, a voter three doors up would like to speak with you. I am sorry to interrupt, but we have to go."

The volunteer must be the person to insist that you leave. That way, if the voter gets upset, it will be at your volunteer -- not you.

A volunteer should only perform this rescue when sure of the need and after some experience going door-to-door. You should be able to manage the length of the conversation with most people yourself. But if a volunteer encounters someone who talks his or her ears off, you do not have to rescue him or her. Just go to the next door and wait for your volunteer to catch up later.

In many cases, when I find people who need to register to vote, I call over one of my volunteers and have him or her take the time to register everyone at that house while I go to knock on more doors. This is a great time-saver, even if you only have one other volunteer with you.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Lessons from other candidates

KEN CUCCINELLI

Ken is a former State Senator and Attorney General of Virginia. He is the current president of the Senate Conservatives Fund. Ken won in a State Senate district that was liberal-leaning by small margins.

What is the most memorable experience you had knocking on a door?

One day, when door-knocking near my own neighborhood, I went to a door that wasn't on my list. The middle screen of the screen door was out, and I thought, "Hmm, that's odd." And I reached through the hole in the screen to knock on the main door. I immediately heard what sounded like the biggest dog I'd ever heard -- and that's after more than 10 years of door-knocking.

The door was answered, and in fact, it was the biggest dog I'd ever seen. Its owner was holding the dog back like a bridled horse. I stepped back and put my foot up in its face, reasoning that, if it was going to eat something, eat something with a cover (my shoe)!

Well, it turned out that Tasha the dog was very friendly indeed, and it further turned out that the Garbarino family was a fellow home-schooling family like our family. Mike Garbarino and I became fast friends. He was a local police officer of over 20 years' experience, and in the summer of 2005, he took me along for a "ride-along." I was amazed how much I learned!

Tragically, the following May, Mike was killed along with another police officer behind our local police station by a mentally ill young man. Like so many of Mike's many friends, I was saddened to a degree I cannot put into words -- for Mike's loss and for his beautiful family, still our friends today.

As sadly as Mike's story ended, the only way I got the high privilege of spending a few years of friendship with him was by knocking on his door. I still pray for him every day, and he is still a shining example for me of personal faith.

What is the worst experience you ever had knocking on a door?

I was door-knocking in a more liberal part of my State Senate district one day in 2003, and I encountered an older lady who barely let me introduce myself before

she started irrationally screaming at me about what a horrid person then-President George W. Bush was. After her rant, and without waiting for me to say anything, she literally slammed her door in my face.

Her sheepish-looking husband was down the walk raking up grass. He was clearly mortified and shocked by his wife's behavior. In shy, embarrassed tones, he said, "Well, uh, [stammering a bit] I... I'll vote for you."

One out of two ain't bad. Especially at that house!

What one thing would you most like to say to a potential candidate about door-knocking?

If you're not ready to do a lot of door-knocking, you shouldn't be a candidate. There is no substitute for live, personal interaction. You will learn enormous amounts of information about your district, and if you are thorough enough, you won't need polling, as you'll have talked to folks in every part of your district.

Your most important piece of election equipment should be a pair of good walking shoes!

MARTY MADDEN

Marty Madden represented one of the most liberal districts in Maryland as a State Senator and served as State Senate Minority Leader.

What is the most memorable experience you had knocking on a door?

It was the collective knowledge that my door-to-door efforts were the determining factors in each of my elections. The importance of taking the time to briefly visit with the people who would be voting for me or against me on Election Day became clearer and clearer the more elections I ran in. I did very well in neighborhoods I visited and much worse in those I did not.

My first election I knocked on half the doors in the district and lost by 528 votes. The following election I was able to get to all of the district and had the honor of becoming a member of the Maryland House of Delegates.

What is the worst experience you ever had knocking on a door?

One very hot summer afternoon, a typical DC-area scorcher with high humidity and temperatures in the mid-nineties, I had door-knocked far from my car, was sweating profusely, and was desperately hoping that someone would offer me a glass of water,

but many people were not at home and those that were never volunteered.

Finally, while walking from one home to the next, there was my oasis! A running hose, gushing water, was next to a car I assumed the owner was getting ready to wash. Picking it up, I gulped and gulped for a full two minutes, filling myself with much-needed hydration.

After knocking on the owner's door and giving my standard 30-second talk, I mentioned to him, "I hope you don't mind, but I just used your hose to get a drink."

His face took on a look of concern and he said, "I hope you really didn't do that. That hose is connected to my sump pump and it's draining my basement which flooded last weekend!"

I left convinced that I would come down with some dreaded ailment that would knock me off the campaign trail and cost me the election. But the fates were kind to me and I never became ill.

What one thing would you most like to say to a potential candidate about door-knocking?

It takes much time and effort to plan and implement a successful door-knocking campaign, but it is by far the best and most effective way to be elected. It helps in so many ways.

No other way will put you in front of the individuals who are going to vote for you or against you. It also creates positive buzz for your campaign as people see you in their neighborhood and talk to each other.

The first 500 doors are the hardest. You won't understand the value until you have knocked on your first 500 doors. Then you will understand and you won't want to stop.

CHAPTER NINE

Independent or unaffiliated voters

If you are in a competitive general election, as I was in three of my four campaigns, the independent or unaffiliated voter is key to your campaign. In my area, independent voters were about 12 to 15 percent of the vote.

Fortunately, independent voters are more likely to vote for you because they see you going door-to-door.

They want a candidate who is accessible to the people, open-minded, and not controlled by either political party. The fact that you are out meeting voters door-to-door will influence their vote even more than that of people in your own party.

Most independent voters understand that you must run in one of the major political parties in order to win an election. They will not hold that against you, even though they do not like it. Therefore, there is no need to get into justifying your party affiliation with them.

A good comment to make to an independent voter, as long as it is true, is, “I am running as part of a political party, but I am independent-minded on the issues.”

Opening up with an assertion of your independent-mindedness encourages the skeptical independent voter with whom you are speaking to keep an open mind.

You will discover, as I have, that many independent voters pledge their votes to you simply because you came to their doors and asked. It is also good for you, upon your election, to keep in mind the concerns of these voters, as it is reflective of many of your constituents.

INDEPENDENT VOTERS

Most people register as independent voters to avoid either major political party taking credit for them. Many prefer not to be too bothered with politics. But as long as they vote, they have made themselves a big target for political parties. All the attention they will get is just the opposite of what they wanted.

Your main goal for independent voters is to have brief, positive interactions with



Your main goal for independent voters is to have brief, positive interactions. Do this by knocking on their doors and giving them your standard pitch.

them. This can almost always be achieved by knocking on their doors and giving them your standard 20-second pitch with a strong follow-up in the mail.

In my State Senate election in 2010, I knocked on a door in a townhouse development just outside the major city in my district.

The more transient the area (e.g. one with townhomes, apartments, and/or college students), the less reliable the data on your voter sheet will be.

The first house on this street indicated a single, middle-aged, male voter unaffiliated with any party. Regrettably, he was not home. So I left my usual note and kept going.

When I was only a few doors away, I saw a car pull up and a middle-aged man walk into that townhouse.

So I did something I rarely do: I went back. He answered the door and I gave my standard pitch.

He then said, "Elections do not matter. All politicians are corrupt. Both political parties are the same. Nothing ever changes after an election. Incumbents just do whatever they want once they get in office."

He continued on with more in the same vein in a matter-of-fact tone.

Since I was an incumbent State Senator at the time, he had effectively just called me

“corrupt” -- among other things. He did not know who I was before I came to his door, but he looked right at me and said these negative things. Of course, I did not argue with him and neither should you.

I stood there and listened to his diatribe against the entire political process and every person who had ever served in elected office. But I knew, according to the voter list in front of me, that he had never missed a general election vote over the past decade.

Finally, he concluded, saying, “I do not even know why I vote. But I always do.”

Now that is the point. His actions (i.e. his voting record) betrayed his words.

My goal in being at that door was not to change his mind about the world of politics (it would take far too long -- maybe years). **My goal was to get his vote in the election a few months away.**

“Here is the information about the issues I am working on. It was nice meeting you. Have a great day,” I said. And I promptly left.

Additional time spent with this man would have done no good. The fact that I came to his house and met him gave me a greater chance of winning his vote than my opponent.

Sadly, you will meet this type of voter more frequently than you would imagine.

In my first election, I ran into an unaffiliated voter who lived in a row of homes on top of a small mountain. The neighborhood was part of a small precinct that inexplicably gave me a hard time in all four of my elections.

It was about 8:00 p.m., and the sun went down at that time of the year around 8:45 p.m. With only 10 houses left to go, I was excited about the prospect of finishing that street after a long day.

The woman I met was about 50 years old and very nice. She invited me in for a cup of tea and she made it hard to say no. As I sat in her living room, she started asking good questions. The problem was that her views, as is typical of the views of many independents, kept jumping from one side to the other of the political spectrum.

First, it was education reform. We saw eye-to-eye on that issue and she said she'd vote for me. Victory! I should have run out the door right then and there. But due to my inexperience, I stayed a little longer.

She asked me about abortion. Once that discussion was over, she said she could no longer vote for me. I felt I had just lost something and needed to win it back.

So we went on to spending and taxes. We agreed! She then said maybe she would vote for me after all.

Then she asked me about gun control. My pro-Second Amendment response lost her vote again. Back and forth this stressful conversation went for more than half an hour. By the time I left, the sun had gone down -- and I think I did more to lose her vote than win it.

Keep your guard up against having long, unproductive conversations. Your time is your most precious commodity.

I never denied that I was a conservative. Any review of my positions and voting record would clearly demonstrate this.

The point is to let independent or unaffiliated voters know you make up your own mind.

Of course, this is true. After only a few years in the State Senate, I learned that my views on liberty and personal privacy were often at odds with some of my party, falling more in line with a libertarian philosophy.

My conversation with this woman was a tough lesson that I urge you to learn from me rather than experience for yourself. Keep your guard up against having long, unproductive (or counter-productive) conversations. Your time is your most precious commodity.

INDEPENDENT VOTERS WHO ARE LIBERALS

Some independent voters are actually liberals who do not, for whatever reason, feel like registering with the Democrat Party. They normally make this clear right up front.

Since they will almost certainly not support a conservative like you, you should be polite and move on to the next house as quickly as you can.

Other independents voters are former Democrats who left the party as it moved too far to the left. While they may not be as conservative as you, you will have much in common with them, and you have a good chance of getting their votes.

INDEPENDENT VOTERS WHO ARE CONSERVATIVES

There are independent voters who are actually quite conservative, but they became upset with the Republican Party for any number of reasons.

Once you assure them that you are a solid conservative, like them, they will happily vote for you and put up a yard sign. You may want to offer them the chance to switch back to the Republican Party so they may again participate in the primary selection process in order to nominate a conservative candidate and to work to promote their conservative values within the party.

You are welcome to tell them this; it will not offend them. But do not dwell on it too much. Ultimately, it is the political party's job to recruit them, not yours.

INDEPENDENT VOTERS WHO DON'T LIKE POLITICS

Some independent voters do not understand the political process or have not thought it through. They do not live and breathe politics like we do. Some voters are even unsure how the different levels of government interact.

There was a period of several years during which a handful of conservative activists in Maryland were upset with the Republican Party becoming too moderate for them. The process for starting a political party in Maryland, as in many states, is not very hard.

So they went out and got the minimum number of signatures and officially began the Independent Party of Maryland. This Independent Party had a platform that was clearly to the right of the Republican Party, closer to the platform of the Constitution Party.

When a new voter received the official voter registration form, the name "Independent" was right there alongside all the other party choices. Many checked that box, especially younger voters.

The Independent Party of Maryland was so ineffective and received so few votes in future elections that they lost their certification. But during this period of time, I met at least 30 or so voters at their doorsteps who had chosen this party. Most were moderates, young, and came from households where the parents were not partisan.

I couldn't help but find it entertaining to explain to these uninformed voters what they had done.

I would say, "Why did you pick the Independent Party?"

They would reply, "I do not want to be part of a political party."

"You are, in fact, a member of the Independent Party. They have a platform and everything. It is far more conservative than the Republican Party," I would reply, trying to hold my grin.

I enjoyed watching their facial expressions as I delivered this news to them. They simply did not know what to do with this information. I got blank stares, looks of surprise, or looks of shock. They thought they were being responsible, informed, and free from political affiliation -- when in fact they had done just the opposite.

"You must have meant to check the 'unaffiliated' box," I would continue, letting them out of their embarrassment. If I could spare a registration form, I'd leave one with them on my way out.

CHAPTER TEN:

Swing voter households

Swing households refer to homes where the residents are registered in different parties. With that said, many areas have conservative Democrats who function similarly to swing voters. You will know this more from the voting patterns of the precinct than their party registrations.

You must have it firmly planted in your mind that anything can happen at a swing household.

In a competitive general election, these are higher targets for you than a household where everyone is registered the same party. It is about the same priority as households where there are two unaffiliated voters with regular voting patterns -- only you have a little more information from which to base your approach.

When you knock on this type of door, take comfort in knowing it is very unlikely the liberal in question here will be rude to you. After all, he or she has chosen to marry and stay married to someone registered the exact same way as you.

TALKING WITH THE CONSERVATIVE

You have two goals here: first, confirm that conservative vote. Second, take your best shot at getting the liberal to vote for you as well.

“Well, Alex, at least you will get one vote out of this household,” would be a frequent comment made to me by the conservative at this type of home.

But do not take anything for granted. After all, the conservative has not managed to switch his or her spouse over to the same political party. So it is possible, even likely, that the conservative is not all that partisan.

Be sure to ask the conservative in this swing household if you may count on his or her vote. You might be surprised by hesitation, so be sure to ask about issues important to the voter and engage him or her in a brief conversation if he or she is willing.

TALKING WITH THE LIBERAL

If the conservative at this house tells you that his or her spouse will not vote for you, I advise you to take that as confirmed. Who would know the spouse's political views

better than the person to whom he or she is married?

But unless you are told not to bother by the conservative at the door, be sure to specifically ask to speak with the liberal spouse.

The voter's one most important issue is what you are looking for.

I learned to preface this request by simply asking, "Do you think there is a chance I could convince your spouse to vote for me also?"

Base your request to speak to the liberal spouse on the response you get. Again, unless you are told it is a waste of your time, go ahead and give it a shot. The worst that could happen is the liberal voter in this swing household says "no," which you were counting on already.

A more frequent response is, "My spouse is a liberal, but you could try."

Observe carefully as the conservative goes to find his or her spouse. If the liberal spouse does not care to give you a chance to ask for the vote, he or she simply will not come to the door. This saves you both time.

If the liberal spouse does come to the door, put on your best smile and say thanks to him or her for giving you a chance to meet. Give your standard 20-second pitch, followed by, "I know I am a conservative, but I hope you will give me a chance to earn your vote anyway."

Wait for a response. Usually it is a nod with a comment like, "I will read over your information." If so, consider that a success. Be sure to send a personal follow-up note.

Another frequent response is something along the lines of, "I am not registered in your party, but that does not affect how I vote. I vote for the best person."

That is a huge opening for you.

This would be a great time to ask what issue or issues are most important to this voter. You will likely find much common ground and you simply need to emphasize your points of agreement.

The voter's one most important issue is what you are looking for. He or she may give you more than one, but try to figure out which one is really the most important so you may follow up properly.

It is for you to decide what sets you and your campaign apart from politics as usual. Talking with this type of swing household voter is the perfect time to bring up your unique issues.

In my case, it worked well for me to point out that our state government was effectively ruled by one party and that my voice provided much-needed balance to the legislative process. Very few people, except for the extreme partisans on both sides, want a one-party political system.

The only time there was any political balance during my 12 years in the Maryland State Senate was during the wonderful four years of Governor Bob Ehrlich, who was highly popular in my area. Yet the imbalance in the State Senate and House of Delegates was still a big problem for achieving good reforms which the Republican governor supported.

In one swing household I went to, both the husband and wife were upfront about their willingness to vote across party lines. As I discussed this with them, I found it to be more true than I had imagined and a most interesting case study of a swing household.

He was Republican and she was Democrat, but both had voted for the Republican candidate for governor in the past two elections. She had voted for George W. Bush in 2004, but Al Gore in 2000. Yet they both voted for Barack Obama in 2008 (I never went back to find out about 2012). He was more conservative fiscally than her, but only slightly.

I was a bit surprised when the Republican husband told me he had voted for Obama, as I had wrongly pegged him as a reliable conservative voter. It was a reminder never to take anything for granted at this type of household.

Fortunately, they both agreed to vote for me, and they even let me put up a yard sign. Good thing I knocked on that door.

Another couple I met both quickly agreed to vote for me. Yet when I asked them to officially switch to the Republican Party, she enthusiastically agreed while he refused. In fact, she said she had gone to a Republican booth at a community gathering looking for a form to change parties but they did not have one.

While I switched her political party affiliation, the husband made a comment about still voting Democrat sometimes at the local level and that he believed unions played an important role.

Why do I tell you this story? To remind you that there is a reason why people are registered the way that they are. The party any American chooses to remain affiliated with means something.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

Managing the data and proper follow-up

The information you collect from voters at their doors is precious. This is true whether they are home or not, though of course the best information comes from a conversation with the voter.

Some standard notes on a voter sheet from a house where nobody answered the door could include whether there is:

- an American flag flying;
- an NFL team sticker on a car;
- an education- or other issue-related sticker on car;
- a religious statue or ornament in the yard; and/or
- a military sticker on door.

Notes on issues after speaking with a voter could include concerns about crowded roads, education, pro-life issues, Second Amendment issues, jobs and the economy, and government spending.

DATA MANAGEMENT

It is important that you invest time and money on your database. A volunteer dedicated to this task will be your best asset.

The major political parties have large databases normally made available for free to qualified candidates. This is a good start. Frequently they are the only game in town when it comes to databases, so use theirs and do not complain.

Many major data companies charge a substantial price of \$10,000 or more. They usually offer far more options than you require for a local election. For local campaigns, like town council, create your own database. Ask around and you may find someone active with your party who is good at this. Pay a fair amount for their time.

Toward the end of your campaign, you will have a database full of voters and the issue or issues most important to them. This important database will grow over multiple campaigns.

Dear

I'm sorry I missed you when I was campaigning door-to-door in your neighborhood recently. I hope I can count on your vote in the upcoming election. If I may be of assistance to you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Place
Stamp
Here

Sincerely,
Alyx N. Mooney

Mooney for Senate Authority Kay Dallavalle
PO Box 669, Frederick MD 21705
(301) 620-0200

This is a sample postcard that I would send to a voter after I missed meeting him or her at the door. A personal note will be the most memorable mailing a voter will receive about you.

Keep any paper voter lists forever and keep back-ups of your files.

In my fourth campaign in 2010, I had data on my lists for the first time when I was out knocking on doors. I felt like I had entered a new age of campaigning.

One out of about every seven doors had a special note about an issue important to the voter to guide me, and it was very helpful. It also will be helpful to future candidates whom you support in the same area.

FOLLOW-UP MAILINGS

When you know the issue most important to the voter, you can send a follow-up letter that explains how you are an effective champion for the cause about which he or she is most concerned.

If you are an incumbent, highlight your key votes. On education, for example, I mentioned my vote for a teacher pay raise bill and for a fair share of state taxpayer dollars to come back to our county.

If you are a challenger, develop a position paper on the issue and mail it to the voter. Remember, fact that you followed up at all will impress the voter as much as what you say.

In my 1998 race, when I had no voting record, I benefited from my position in support of locally electing our county board of education. Up until that year, this important local education board was appointed by our distant liberal governor in Annapolis.

The chance to change the law and allow our county voters to elect their own school board was finally placed on the county ballot that year. It passed by more than 70 percent of the vote. I was on the right side of that issue; my opponent was not.

Prepare the follow-up letter immediately, while it is still fresh in your mind. Then put it in a special box to be mailed in about two weeks. That way the mailing is a new and separate form of contact with the voter.

February 22, 2014

Dear _____,

I am writing to you because a volunteer from my congressional campaign spoke with you about the upcoming primary in West Virginia's second congressional district.

My volunteer mentioned that you are particularly concerned with national security issues. I want to let you know that this issue is very important to me. As the son of a Cuban refugee and a Vietnam War veteran, I will never stop fighting for our freedom and security against those who want to destroy our way of life.

I hope you will consider supporting me on the May 13th primary, or you can vote early between April 30th and May 10th. Please contact my campaign office for more information at 304-702-5009.

Sincerely,

Alex X. Mooney
Conservative Republican for U.S. Congress

This is a sample issue paper mailing that I would send to voters identified as most concerned about national security in my Congressional election.

In most cases, your mailing will simply be a postcard saying, "Sorry I missed you." You can also send non-issue-specific "nice meeting you" postcards to the many contacts for whom you were unable to identify their main issue of interest. Then there are the letters you will send with issue papers on them.

This follow-up contact with information specific to the voters tops any other sort of mailing they will receive for or against you. It will remind each voter who you are and that you came to his or her door.

CHAPTER TWELVE:

Get out the vote (GOTV)

Your door-knocking efforts lose great value if your supporters do not show up to vote on Election Day.

Pollsters and pundits often miscalculate the number of voters from each campaign's groups of supporters, leading to incorrect predictions as to who will win. These so-called "experts" are not close enough to your campaign to know how strong of a grassroots effort you are waging, the top measurement of which is how many doors you personally have knocked on.

I outperformed my own polls in each of my four elections. These successes I credit to a strong door-to-door, grassroots campaign.

GET-OUT-THE-VOTE BY PHONE

In my first election, I had personally registered or changed the party registration of approximately 350 voters over the six months I was knocking on doors. Since these were not yet proven voters, they needed a special get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort. Phone calls were the most efficient way to do this.

I asked my most reliable volunteer to call them all on the Sunday night and the Monday before the election. In this election, it was an at-home mom, who was active in my church and a regular campaign donor and volunteer, with whom I entrusted this phone list. No other campaign had this list. It was my secret weapon.

Since I had personally registered these people, I knew that they would vote for me. I also knew that my top volunteer would not let me down, and she did not.

In future campaigns, I had a larger staff and a campaign office, so we made these calls from within our office. My campaign also called people who were registered but not reliable voters in the election that I was targeting: a party primary and a non-presidential general election.

When you are at peoples' doors you may ask for their phone numbers to add to your GOTV list. Simply say, "May I have your phone number so that a volunteer can call you the day before the election just to remind you to vote?"

This is very disarming and, in my experience, people almost always gave me their phone numbers.

EARLY VOTING

In my last State Senate election, which I barely lost, I ran into some supporters at a local restaurant. They were all very sad that I had lost, and one lady went on to tell me how she had planned to vote for me but had to leave town unexpectedly to visit a sick relative.


She could have gone to the Board of Elections and voted on the spot before she left town, but she did not bother. So she did not vote.

This reminded me of the importance of getting people to vote early whenever possible. It is an especially good idea to encourage early voting for people who are not reliable voters, which sadly is a large number of people.

AUTOMATED PHONE CALLS

Now to a sensitive topic: automated phone calls.

If you do them, as I always did and recommend that you do, some people will complain. But remember that for every one person who complains about the phone calls, there are hundreds more whom you have a chance to persuade to vote for you or against your opponent.



I urge you not to pull back from phone banks and robocalls; it may make the difference in victory for you.

Computer-generated automated calls, or robocalls, are a cheap and quick way to remind voters to get to the polls.

Unlike other forms of telemarketing, robocalls all stop after the election. So the voter knows the calls will stop for at least two years after that point. I urge you not to pull back from phone banks and robocalls; it may make the difference in victory for you.

WORKING THE POLLS

You will hear from many self-declared experts in politics that working the polls on Election Day is pointless. (In fact, I have been laughed at.) They will tell you that everyone walking in to vote already has their minds made up.



You will hear from many self-declared experts that working the polls on Election Day is pointless. That statement is false. It is a comment made by people with no grassroots experience.

That statement is false. It is a comment made by people with no grassroots experience, people who have certainly never spent a day working the polls. People have stronger opinions and more information about candidates for president and governor than state representative or school board.

The lower down the ballot, the less likely voters are to have their minds made up about the race. Likewise, the lower down the ballot, the more likely it is that a personal appeal makes a difference or that moderates cross party lines to vote for you.

I have heard this before from voters who recognized me: "Wait, you are Alex Mooney! Hey, what can you tell me about these candidates running for County Commissioner and Board of Education?"

They are asking me to tell them for whom to vote because they have not, in fact, made up their minds. What they do know is that they are voting for me and they believe in the same political philosophy as I do.

Since time is tight at this point -- as other potential undecided voters could be walking by -- I just say, "These are the candidates who believe as I do," and I provide their names. Voters are appreciative, and I am happy to help my conservative friends running for office.

Many people you approach on Election Day will tell you that they have their minds made up. You should not push yourself on them at that time. You risk upsetting them -- and losing their votes as punishment -- as they already told you to back off. Voters have a right to go vote without being bothered if they do not want to talk.

Likewise, if you see someone refuse campaign literature from someone else, you are better off letting that person walk by you.

On the other hand, many times when I have worked the polls on Election Day, something like this happens: a voter walks by and refuses literature from everyone, but when he or she gets to me, he or she does a double-take after recognizing me or reading my name tag.

"You're Alex Mooney?" asked a young woman at a local polling location. She politely ignored all the other poll workers and looked at me with a smile.

"Yes, I am," I responded, not quite sure where this conversation was going. I handed her my palm card, an automatic reaction at this point in the campaign.

"A while ago, you came by my house and knocked on my door. I was not home, but I got your literature with a note on it which you left for me," she explained. "Then two weeks later I got a personal postcard from you. Then I got a bunch of mailings. Yesterday, I got a phone call from your campaign, and now here you are in person."

"Can I count on your vote?" I asked, again an automatic reaction for a candidate.

"Yes, you absolutely can," she said, and then she walked into the polling location.

I never saw her again, but I will never forget the good feeling I had after our encounter.

I felt a great sense of satisfaction that all my hard work was paying off and that all the training I received at the Leadership Institute and from other experts in grassroots campaigns was indeed working.

Another woman at a polling location was not so friendly -- at least to the poll workers other than me. She was a middle-aged mother whom I had met a few months earlier while knocking on doors in her neighborhood. She was a moderate Republican, skeptical of politics. The fact that I went to her door meant everything to her; it meant that I cared.

While I was at her door, she made a point of introducing me to her husband, who was more conservative than her. She was as friendly as could be, and we had a very

pleasant, short conversation.

I said goodbye and assured her I would be available if she ever needed anything. Since I had taken the time to come to her door, she had good reason to believe me.

About an hour later that day, she was bike-riding with one of her kids several streets away from her house, and we smiled and waved at each other. This simple hello reassured her that I was truly interested in knowing about her neighborhood. I didn't just drop in and out quickly.

When I saw her at the polls, I knew that I did not have to pester her for her vote.

I smiled and waited for her to arrive to where I was standing. By the time she saw me, many other candidates and poll workers had handed her their literature and asked for her vote. And there were still more candidates after me waiting for her.

She looked up at me, then turned to them all and loudly barked, "I do not know about any of you, but I am voting for him." She pointed right at me. "The rest of you just leave me alone! Alex Mooney came to my door and he cares about my neighborhood. I came to vote for him!"

Then she walked up to me and nicely said hello again. The other poll workers parted and no one bothered her as she walked to go vote.

You, too, will have these positive experiences on Election Day if you put in the hard work beforehand.

CONCLUSION:

When good things happen

Good things happen when you knock on doors.

During my 1998 and 2002 elections, I frequently would meet World War II veterans as I went door-to-door. Sadly, many young people today only hear about WWII veterans from history books.

One veteran, a tall, slender man named Howard Murphy, showed me where a German bullet had gone through his calf.

“I was 18 years old staring across the line from the Germans,” he said.

I was speechless.

He had conservative talk radio on in the background, and his wife was home. They were both registered Democrats, yet they very much opposed their party’s liberal agenda. Naturally, I asked them if they would like to switch to the Republican Party, and they said they would.

I accepted their gracious invitation to sit down for a cup of tea while they filled out the forms to switch their registration. I spent about 15 minutes with them, mesmerized by Mr. Murphy’s war story. He was a humble man and he loved his country.

I didn’t forget our meeting, and I noted to myself that I wanted him to come to the Maryland State Senate to accept a resolution honoring him for his service. Calls and letters from me asking him to come to the state capital went unanswered. He told my assistant he was not interested. I think his wife liked the idea though.

After about six years of this back and forth between us, I’d had enough. I drove over to his house and knocked on his door.

He answered and kindly invited me in again.

“Mr. Murphy, I am here to ask you for a personal favor to me,” I said. “I would like you to come to the Maryland Senate and let me present you a resolution thanking you for your service to this country. I know you do not wish for the attention, but please do it so that other Americans understand the real sacrifices you and others

made so that we may be free. I will take care of all the arrangements; you just have to show up. I am really counting on you to agree to do this for me.”

He was an honorable man and a strong supporter of mine, so I was certain he would not turn me down to my face. He looked at me for a full minute or two, his wife watching on anxiously a few feet away. Finally, he relented.

“Okay, I’ll do it,” he said.

I knew he would.

As we were making arrangements, he told me how his various children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews would not be able to attend due to work schedules, school, and distance.

“Right,” I thought to myself. “We’ll see about that.”

They all showed up. None of them were going to miss his overdue recognition.

On the floor of the Senate, as I stood up to read the resolution, tears came to my eyes and I could barely speak. But I got myself together and pushed through.

All 47 senators and all those in the gallery stood and clapped loudly for a long time. It was one of the most satisfying things I did as a state senator, and I felt all my hard work knocking on doors meeting voters meant something. It gave me the chance to do more for others than I would have imagined.

Stories like this will develop for you too if you put the work in going door-to-door.

People you never knew, who share your concerns about the future of our great country, will be there for you when they see your commitment through regular door-to-door campaigning.

I hope that you have learned from the examples I shared with you in this book that fellow conservatives will come to your assistance once they see you take that brave first step.

Now go knock on that first door!

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