

GETTING INVOLVED IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

There is a no more effective way to cement a good relationship with a legislator than to participate in his or her election or re-election campaign. Most candidates take a very personal view of their election efforts, because it is their careers that are at stake. If you make a financial investment in their campaigns or, better yet, volunteer your services, you will have an excellent chance of becoming one of their valued constituents and friends.

One of the easiest forms of involvement is to make a personal contribution to the candidate's campaign. In addition, you may be able to utilize contributions from the American Society of Anesthesiologists Political Action Committee – ASAPAC -- to demonstrate the profession's support of your candidate. To really maximize the impact of your financial involvement, however, you may decide to host a fundraiser in your home on behalf of your candidate.

HOSTING A CANDIDATE FUNDRAISER IN YOUR HOME

A very effective and simple way to develop a personal relationship with a legislator, or a potential legislator, is to host a candidate fundraiser in your home. As an ASA Key Contact, this is a logical extension of your responsibilities. Further, hosting a fundraiser will help to establish you as a key player in the politics of your district or state. There are a wide variety of fundraisers that you could sponsor or host, such as small coffees, lunches, small and large dinners, special events in large rented halls, theme parties, etc.

As a Key Contact, the best approach, at least initially, is to conduct a fundraiser in your home. There are two good reasons why this approach is recommended. First, you have an opportunity to make the fundraiser more personal and intimate, and thus foster a closer relationship with the candidate. Second, a fundraiser in your home will have more of an impact on the candidate. He or she will have been a guest in your home and had the opportunity to meet and speak with dozens of potential voters. You can be sure the candidate will remember you for making this effort.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

If you hold a fundraiser on behalf of a candidate for federal office, you should be aware of certain provisions in the federal election law. You and your spouse are permitted to each spend certain sums for the costs of invitations, food, and beverages when you hold a fundraiser, or any other event in your home on behalf of a candidate without it being counted as a campaign contribution.

Further, you may make these expenditures in any single election, which means that you may host a fundraiser during the primary and again during the general election on behalf of a federal candidate. These expenditures do not count against the individual contribution limit of \$2,100 per candidate per election, which you also are permitted to make.

GETTING STARTED

Obviously, the first step you should take is to let the candidate know you are interested in hosting a fundraiser in your home. On some occasions the campaign staff may approach you and ask you to take on this assignment. More often, you must take the initiative and contact the candidate and his / her campaign to let them know of your interest.

To arrange a fundraiser with the candidate, you should contact the candidate, the campaign manager, the fundraising chairperson, and/or the campaign scheduler depending upon how the campaign is organized. Together, you should set a date, time, and place for the fundraiser.

(Remember all of this work must be performed through the candidate's campaign office with the candidate's campaign staff. It is illegal for a candidate and/or their staff to engage in campaign related activities while serving in their capacity as a legislator or legislative staff. That means that communications with a legislator or their staff must be performed through the campaign office.)

As you begin to make the plans for the event, make sure that the candidate can attend rather than a surrogate representative for the campaign. After you have set the date, follow-up with a letter to the campaign to confirm your event. In setting the date, you will need to allow for an appropriate planning period.

You may decide to host an informal coffee, a cocktail reception, or a reception and dinner in your home. A coffee or reception will require a shorter time frame than a dinner. The type of fundraiser you host may be dictated by the candidate's schedule. Your choice also may depend on whether the candidate

wants a small intimate fundraiser with high level contributors, or one that attracts more voters. For example, you will be able to host more guests at a reception than at a dinner, but at a lower ticket price. Try to have a realistic expectation of how much money you can expect to raise. Often ticket prices are determined by several factors, including the kind of event, the nature of the office being sought, whether the candidate is an incumbent, and the leadership positions he / she may hold.

Generally, the admission price for a coffee or reception is \$100 - \$150 per person. If your event is for a federal candidate, the price is may more than \$200 - \$1000 per person, say in the case of a more expensive fundraising dinner, the reply card must comply with certain federal reporting requirements. Ask the campaign staff for assistance in developing the card to be certain it meets state and federal legal requirements.

The most important step in organizing and planning a fundraiser in your home is to develop a Steering Committee to assist in selling tickets. Your colleagues in anesthesiology and related health fields, friends, neighbors, local politicians, and party activists are good choices. Remember, the larger you make the Steering Committee, the better the odds that you'll have a good turn-out at the fundraiser.

(Note: Fundraisers are all about advancing your personal political interests and presumably, your professional interests as anesthesiologists. Don't dilute your work by inviting nurse anesthetists, trial lawyers, health insurance company executives, and others whose views on important health policy issues are different from yours.)

Finally, as in planning any successful event you will need to develop a time line for the fundraiser that details and sets deadlines for every activity to be completed.

FUNDRAISER TIME LINE

The following time line is suggested and based on a lead-time of two months. You will want to adapt this to your own specific needs.

A. EIGHT WEEKS FROM FUNDRAISER

- Determine the date, time, and location for the event in conjunction with the candidate/campaign staff. Ask the campaign staff what type of goal is appropriate for the amount of money to be raised.

- ❑ Confirm the event and date in writing with candidate/campaign staff
- ❑ Determine and recruit individuals to serve as members of the Steering Committee. Committee members are expected to help attract contributions.
- ❑ Seek approval from the Committee members to include their names in the fundraising invitation, and advise them to schedule the event on their calendars.
- ❑ Draft an invitation letter and seek approval from the campaign.
- ❑ Determine a key individual who should sign the letter. Work with the campaign staff to ensure that the response card meets all legal requirements.
- ❑ Get cost estimates from printers for producing the invitations.
- ❑ Compile invitation list. It should include, past contributors, physicians from your group, local physicians from the State Component, targeted lists available from campaign, neighbors and friends. (Don't invite nurse anesthetists, trial lawyers, insurance company executives and others who interests may conflict with yours.)
- ❑ Determine date and location of first Steering Committee meeting.
- ❑ Send out meeting notices and call Steering Committee members.

B. SEVEN WEEKS

- ❑ Print invitations.
- ❑ Purchase postage for invitations.
- ❑ Recruit volunteers to address, stuff, stamp, and seal invitations.
- ❑ Draft and approve follow-up letter.

C. SIX WEEKS

- ❑ Address, stuff, stamp, seal and mail invitations.

- ❑ Conduct first Steering Committee meeting. -- give each member five - ten invitations for personal recruitment and thank them for agreeing to assist
- ❑ Print follow-up letter.
- ❑ Determine location for phone banks.
- ❑ Begin recruiting volunteers for phone banks.

D. FIVE WEEKS

- ❑ Follow-up with Steering Committee (phone calls and personal letters).
- ❑ Recruit photographer and entertainment (if desired).
- ❑ Stuff, stamp, seal and mail follow-up letter.
- ❑ Determine date and location for second Steering Committee meeting.

E. FOUR WEEKS

- ❑ Write script, get materials and information sheets for volunteers to use in telephone calls to invitees.
- ❑ Continue Steering Committee follow-up.

F. THREE WEEKS

- ❑ Conduct second Steering Committee meeting. Evaluate status of ticket sales, and what plan of action must be undertaken to meet fundraising goal.
- ❑ Determine menu, physical requirements.
- ❑ Phone calls to invitees and Steering Committee.
- ❑ Recruit volunteers for evening of reception.

G. TWO WEEKS

- ❑ Determine which VIPs, if any, will attend.
- ❑ Follow-up Steering Committee progress.

H. ONE WEEK

- ❑ Continue to follow-up with Steering Committee.
- ❑ Call campaign to confirm candidate's attendance.

I. DAY OF FUNDRAISER

- ❑ Check physical arrangements and logistics.
- ❑ Secure materials for volunteers.
- ❑ Secure microphone (if needed).
- ❑ Secure name tags (a must).
- ❑ Have a master list of invitees.
- ❑ Secure campaign material for candidate from campaign staff. Material such as bumper stickers and pins may be distributed at the reception.

J. FUNDRAISING EVENT

- ❑ Allow the candidate to mingle freely with the guests and protect the candidate from attendees who will dominate the candidate's time.
- ❑ Have someone at a table near the entrance of your home to take personal checks and distribute campaign literature.
- ❑ Make sure no one contributes more than the \$2,000 legal limit to a federal candidate's campaign.
- ❑ Host should make remarks to attendees midway through fundraiser -- introduce and thank all Steering Committee members and VIPs and thank all attendees.
- ❑ Host should introduce candidate for remarks to attendees.

K. POST FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

- ❑ Send all checks to the candidate's treasurer as soon as possible.
- ❑ Follow-up with a note of thanks to candidate for making the fundraiser a success, and reiterating your support for the candidate.
- ❑ Send thank you notes to members of the Steering Committee and volunteers.
- ❑ Follow up all pledges.
- ❑ Put together financial report.
- ❑ Write up a summary of events with any recommendations for future fundraisers held by anesthesiologists.
- ❑ Refine master list for next fundraiser.