

## GETTING OUT THE VOTE

with Robby Mook, Maryland Democratic Coordinated Campaign Director

ARSHAD HASAN: If you just joined the call and you're wondering where to view or download the presentation, you can go to [www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool](http://www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool). You can view the presentation with your web browser or you can download it as a PDF. So if we're all ready I'd like to get started. The first slide, of course, as always is just a cover slide. Let's move to slide 2. Robby, are you on the line?

RM: I am, yes.

AH: Great. Well my name is Arshad. You've all heard me before. Robby's coming to us from Maryland where he's the state director of the Maryland Democratic Coordinated Campaign. And how's it going over there in Maryland?

RM: It's a busy night. We've got a lot of folks on the phone.

AH: That's always good to hear. Let's move right into it. Let's get to slide 3. During this presentation we'll accomplish three things. First we'll understand what it takes to prepare for election day. Second we'll discuss some of the most effective tactics to maximize the number of supporters voting on election day. And third we'll get into the details and the timelines on how to execute a successful election day, which is what Robby's doing right now. The presentation will help campaign staffers plan a GOTV program as well as helping active volunteers execute a piece of that program. And it will hopefully give everyone a little context as to what everyone else's roles are.

So let's go to slide 4. There are a few key principles in really understanding election day and the entire period in which we get to vote. And, of course, campaigns can get chaotic. And they can, of course, get increasingly chaotic as election day approaches. But if we keep a few things in mind it will keep everything in perspective. The first is the vote goal: (1) You want to understand the vote goal. (2) You want to take responsibility over your part of the vote goal. (3) We want to figure out how we can hold ourselves accountable to that vote goal. As we go through this presentation think to yourself, "Well, okay, what's my piece of the puzzle? What do I need to do, and by when do I need to have that finished?" We'll turn to slide 5 as we explain each of the components principles of the campaign.

First, what is GOTV? Most of us on the call probably know GOTV stands for Get Out the Vote. But we're not just getting out THE vote. GOTV is a targeted program. When we think of election day, many of us think of a bunch of people holding signs or maybe you see people passing out literature at the polls. In reality, the visibility tactics are a very small component of a good GOTV program. There's actually a lot involved, and many of us who have volunteered have been one piece or another of that program.

Well first, a good GOTV program is targeted, like I just said. We're only getting certain people out to vote. It's not so much getting out THE vote as it is getting OUR vote. Really, a

campaign doesn't want to spend its resources doing too much blanket Get Out The Vote stuff, too much untargeted stuff. Keeping our program targeted, make sure that we're only reaching out only to the people who are going to vote for us. We can let the Republicans reach out to the people who are going to vote for them. We don't need to do their work for them. Also, GOTV starts well before election day itself. All states allow at least some voters to cast their ballots before election day. It's often worth it for campaigns in most states to start GOTV with some sort of early voting program.

Now we covered this in last week's night school presentation, so we're only going to briefly mention it tonight. But in addition to early voting, there are a number of things that need to fall into place before the final GOTV phase. A well-run campaign starts with a number, the vote goal. The vote goal is simply the number of people the campaign needs to win an election, with a little extra added in, a little cushion. The campaign spends much of its time finding and persuading enough people to meet that vote goal. That if all of those people or most of those people actually make it to the polls, the campaign will win.

By the time GOVT rolls around, the campaign must have already done all the leg work of calculating the vote goal of identifying the supportive voters and of persuading undecided voters, eventually narrowing down that list to people to just the people it needs to get out the vote. Robby's on the line, so what we're going to do actually, I'm going to hand over the next few slides to Robby. Let's go to slide 6 and we'll talk about our campaign goals.

RM: Thanks Arshad and thanks everybody for being on the line tonight. I apologize if I'm sounding a little tired, but it was a very long day. We're getting ready to turn out the vote here in Maryland, so thanks for bearing with me. And I've also never done a training over the phone lines like this, so if I do things like ask for questions when I know you guys can't, I apologize.

Arshad's absolutely right. Any good GOTV program starts with having a very good understanding of exactly how many votes you need to turn out. I think that the points that were made were exactly right. Everything that you do in your GOTV program—needs to be numbers focused. You need to be able to count it, because that will force you to have the discipline to get your work done and not just sort of rely on theories or ideas. It's really on how many votes am I getting out to actually win.

So if you look through on slide 6, they've done a great job here with this state senate district 17, this imaginary district, where they have said that their vote goal is 27,110 votes, which is 52% of the vote. The way this campaign plan got that number was by saying, "Okay, we're estimating that 52,134 voters are going to turn out." Now to win, to technically legally win, we need only 26,068 votes, that's 50% plus 1. But most campaigns, including my campaign this year here in Maryland, try to get 52% of the vote. They plan for that, so that if you make some errors, make some mistakes, you've got some padding there and you're not winning by just one vote, you're maybe winning by one to two percent of the vote. So that's how you get your vote goal for your entire state, district, town—wherever you're running.

The next key point which Arshad covered is you've got to push responsibility out. Everybody in the organization on GOTV on election day, before election day, needs to own a piece of the program. That not only gets people to work harder because they realize that they're accountable for a piece of the program. So instead of just saying, "Well, you know, work for two hours," rather you're saying, "In these two hours, you need to accomplish X so that we can win. It gets people to put in that extra little bit of effort that's needed to win.

It also builds leadership. When people are held accountable for something, they're forced to become a leader in the organization whether it's a leader of some voters that they need to turn out or a leader of some volunteers in their precinct that they've organized to meet their votes on their precincts. So one thing I always say to my organizers here is, "We're not just about winning this year, we're also about empowering the communities we organize in."

So the way to push your vote goal out and push responsibility out, is to break it down. So you can see within the state senate district, within Smith Township they said 52% of the vote there is 11,496 votes. So maybe you have a township captain who's in charge of that. And then within that each precinct has their vote goal. And you can see here precinct 8-02 it's 52% of the vote, which is 487 votes. And what's really great is when you break it down by precinct, and sometimes you're going to break precincts in half, it really becomes manageable. 487 votes is a fairly small number. I mean, you still need more than one person to turn out those votes, but it's a very manageable number.

So let's go to slide 7 and talk about how we get to those vote goals. When we said in any given precinct there are 487 votes that we need to get, how do we get those out? Voters break into three groups very generally. Again, I'm on slide 7. There are those voters that support you. And those are the ones that you want to turn out to vote. There are voters that are undecided. And then there are your opponents.

Now any good campaign divides their entire electorate into these three groups. And early on in the campaign—and I'm sure you've discussed this on other trainings—you first want to identify who your undecided voters are so that you can start a program to persuade them and then go back and reidentify them and either move them into your supporter column or move them into your opponent column. And the key reason you do that is that so you can run a smart GOTV campaign.

If you don't know who your supporters are, you're not running a real GOTV campaign. And the smaller your race is, or the smaller piece of the campaign that you have responsibility for, the more important this becomes, and the more you're able to do it. For instance, I ran a very small campaign in northern Virginia last year. And I believe our supporter goal was 11,476, if I remember that correctly. Everything we did until election day was focused around finding those 11,476 supporters, and then turning them out to vote.

Here in Maryland things are a little different this year because we actually have quite a few Democrats here. The question is finding which ones support us and which ones don't. So here in Maryland, rather than finding all of our supporters—all 982,000 supporters we need—we're actually taking a bunch of voters and saying, "Well, we know these folks are for us.

They're in very high performing areas. We're isolating a certain group and identifying them and moving them into our supporter column or our opposition column. And then on election day we're going to turn out all the supporters we've found.

So without doing this work ahead of time, you cannot run a good program. And, again, just to sort of review this, with supporters your goal is to motivate them and turn them out to vote. Undecided voters, again you want to find out who they're with. If they're with you put them in your [column]. And your opponents, don't even talk to them. Don't waste your time.

So if you go to slide 8, early voting. I know you guys talked about this last week, so I'm not going to go into this too much. But early voting of any kind, whether it's what they call no-fault absentees where anybody can request an absentee mail-in ballot, or actually early vote where you show up in person to vote, should be exploited to its fullest. If you have five days of early vote, which they were actually going to have here in Maryland but it was found unconstitutional, which we're very, very upset about. Or in Vermont, where I'm originally from, where they have 30 days for early voting—that's how many days you have to turn people out.

Sometimes we forget that when you have early voting election day is no different than those other 30 days or six days that you have for early voting. So you want to get as many people to turn out as possible. And the biggest thing is this helps you narrow down the number of voters you need to worry about on election day. Because your scarcest resource on election day is time. It often comes down to 12 hours that you have to turn people out. Where, as with early voting, if you've already turned out 25% or 10% of your supporters, you don't need to worry about them any more on election day. And it gives you that much more time and resources to turn those folks out on election day. So that's all I will say about early voting.

If you go to slide 9, targeting. I know that you guys have done this in some other trainings as well, so I won't go into this too much. But targeting is very important, again, for a good GOTV program. Because, as we said before, it's all about counting and making sure you're getting a winning number of people who will actually support you to the polls. Now where this becomes a little interesting, and you'll see on here what we call blind pull precincts.

Okay, when you do the math out, in precincts that have 65% or more Democrats, you can just pull everybody out blind. The reason for this is that for every three votes that are being cast you're getting two of them. So numerically you're winning. And sometimes it's a lot easier just to pull out everybody than doing the extra preparation and training that's needed to be targeted, to just knock on certain doors. It's easier to just go out, knock on every door, and just turn people out.

In the past I'd say two years, this has gotten a little bit more sophisticated. In fact, here in Maryland rather than just going to traditional Democratic performance, what we're doing is saying, "Who are the target voters we have?" And then trying to figure out how many of those target voters are in each precinct. So I'll give you an example. Our focus this year in Maryland, because we have so many Democrats, is on turning out Democrats who don't always vote; sometimes they're called "drop-off" Democrats.

So what we've done is instead of saying, "Which precincts have 65% or more Democratic performance?" we're saying, "Which precincts have the highest concentrations of these special Democrats who don't always vote, who we're going to use that extra push for?" Because people who always vote, there's not a whole lot that you can do to change their behavior, right?

If I always vote and I don't show up on election day, it's usually because something happens that I got sick or something came up. You're not necessarily going to change my behavior. However, if I sometimes vote—let's say I voted in an off-year election in 1998 but not in 2002—I clearly have an ability to turn out and vote, but for some reason sometimes I just don't do it. So this year, we're focusing our targeting on the people who don't always vote, and that's who we're going after.

And again, this second bullet gets to the point that you only want to turn out, especially in these smaller races, people who are supporters. You don't want to just be going and knocking on every door in a Republican neighborhood, for instance. We all know that's because you're turning out folks for the other side.

What most campaigns do to identify supporters is use a one through five system. One's are strong supporters; five are strong opponents. Two is leaning towards you; four is leaning against you, and three is undecided. So, again, the whole process you're going through before election day is figuring out for every voter who's a one, who's a two, who's a three, who's a four, who's a five? Taking those three's who are undecided and getting them out of that undecided column into either supporter or opponent, and then on election day focusing on turning out those one's and two's. And then again, if a precinct is really high Democratic performing, you can just push everyone out.

Let's go to slide 10, which talks about which tactics work best for turning your supporters out. I just want to pause here for a second. As all of you are familiar with, it's very hard on campaigns to always know what works and what doesn't. You know, voters answer questions on polls; they'll tell you things at the door. It's really hard to understand exactly what turns people out.

The best part about campaigns is you can see at the end of the day whether you won or whether you lost. And there are a lot of myths out there about what tactics work and what tactics don't. In the past few years, there's been a lot of good academic work done to identify what tactics actually work. And what these people have done is identify control precincts and then done tests in other precincts with different tactics to see which tactics increased turnout more than others.

I believe the graph you see in front of you on slide 10 comes from research done by Grover and Green at Yale. What you'll see here is that door knocking by far exceeds other tactics. That's because the more personal and direct the contact is the more effective it is. You'll see at the bottom is direct mail. Now that doesn't mean we don't use direct mail. And that doesn't mean we only do door knocking and we don't do phone calling.

Voter contact is like investing. You have a portfolio and you're sort of lower risk and higher risk. You want your voter contact program to be a similar portfolio where you're doing some direct mail because some people don't have phone numbers. You're doing some door knocking because not everybody always home, right? And you're not always going to be able to reach them when you get to their door. You want to do this portfolio, but in general you want to invest more of your time, money and energy into the higher value, more personal targeted contact methods.

A couple of methods you don't see on this graph that are worth mentioning, the first is robo calls. The last study I saw showed that for every 2,000 robo calls you deploy, you turn out one extra vote. So I personally try to avoid using robo calls. A lot of people find them annoying. I try to use them to maybe let people know that canvassers are coming by to remind them to vote. I use them to let them know a direct mail piece is coming. That I've found to be useful, and I've found a much higher response rate when mail pieces come or people come to the door if they've received that robo call. But robo calls are not a good way to just turn people out.

The other ones you don't see on there are things like passing out literature, visibility, things like that. Those are all untargeted, right? You're not talking directly to your supporters. When you're doing direct mail, when you're doing a lit drop, when you're doing a phone call, or when you're doing a door knock, you're going to a specific person. And that person should be a supporter. And so that's why these are listed here. Things like visibility, waving signs, you know they might sort of remind people there's an election. Some volunteers really enjoy doing it. But it's not going to pull out those special targeted people you need to pull out. So I think that's really worth noting, and I'm sure there'll be some questions about that. But I think that's the most important thing to point out here.

The other thing you'll see here is there's a direct correlation between the effectiveness of a tactic and how hard it is to accomplish. Door knocking is the hardest to organize; it's the slowest; it's the least efficient, and so it takes more energy. And so what you all need to do in these last four weeks is remember if you need to have a huge door knocking operation on election day, that's going to take some time to plan and coordinate. And you're going to need to get those volunteers door knocking right away so that by election day they're well trained.

With that, I will move on to slide 11 as we start to wrap this up. Roles for election day. We could spend three hours on a conference call talking about your organizational structure on election day. Here in Maryland, we're running an organization that's going to have probably about 2,000 to 3,000 people involved on election day. It's a very big organization. And that doesn't include the 150 staff that are going to be involved. So an organization like that takes months of preparation and a lot of technical planning and drill -downs and run-throughs.

The one thing I've learned through the years from doing small programs of 50 people to doing big programs with thousands of people, is there are a couple fundamentals. The first is you have to have a plan. And, again, that plan needs to be connected to that vote goal. So your plan needs to have a direct strategy to turn out the number of votes you need. And ideally that is a strategy that turns out those targeted special people you've identified as your supporters.

The second thing is you've got to start planning early. We had our first draft of GOTV written months ago in the summer. We had our final plan written six weeks out. And now we're executing that plan. So you've got to start early. The third part is leadership. You cannot get GOTV done without leaders. And you've got to be very deliberate when you go into this about understanding the leaders you're going to need to turn out your vote and what it's going to take to get those leaders trained and engaged and showing up even on election day.

So if you need to knock doors or do phone calls or run phone banks, you need to have leaders. You need to have phone bank leaders and canvas leaders. And it's not just good enough to have people show up the night before and train them and then expect it to work. People have got to be doing this stuff for weeks ahead of time. So always be deliberate in the work you're doing now to identify your supporters before you turn them out, that those folks are getting the skills they need to run GOTV successfully.

And I think the last thing is just reminding and training. You've got to train people. Even if someone's coming in to make phone calls on election day. It's not good enough just for them to show up and be trained that morning. They have to have come to the site they're supposed to phone in on election day beforehand. They should have driven to that place, they should know where it is, they should have been shown around, they should have been given a training in that site about what they're doing on election day.

I can't emphasize this enough. I've seen too many GOTV operations and I've volunteered for too many where you show up and nobody's done the task ahead of time and there's all kinds of questions and all kinds of confusion. So again, good training, reminding people when they're supposed to show up and what they're supposed to do, and having a good plan and getting that plan done early. So that's on the roles.

And then I think just finally—I think this is a really important point that's made on here: pick one or two things and do them really well. If you have a good door knocking organization but your phone program is probably going to be weak or it's not going to be very good, just focus on doors. Do doors really well. If you can do everything, do everything. But I think sometimes people try to have a really sophisticated rides program and a really sophisticated poll visibility, and a really sophisticated door knocking. You know, if you have a really great poll checking program but you don't have a good door program to use your poll checking data, it was sort of a waste. So pick a few things and do them really well, and you'll be really glad you did.

On my race last year in Virginia, we told the coordinated campaign to focus on phones and we just did doors. And we had incredible results from our door program. We had a significant increase in drop-off voters that were turning out. And, in fact, I remember at the end of the day one of the volunteers he'd crossed everybody off on his list and he was just sitting on a stoop in front of somebody's house waiting for that voter because he had nothing left to do except make sure that one voter turned out. And I was told when she came home she had in fact voted, so he had done his job that day. I think that's why our program worked there, because with the limited resources we had we focused on the doors. We did a really good job and it was successful. Arshad, I'll just turn it over to you at this point.

QUESTION from Sean in Arizona: On slide 10, Robby, you said it took 2,000 robo calls to get one more voter. What are the numbers for the other tactics like canvassing or phone banking or direct mail?

RM: That's a really good question. There's actually a book called Get out the Vote and it's by Gerber and Green [two professors from Yale]. And I'm sure you can find this on Amazon. You guys should all read it. It's very good research. These are not campaign hacks like myself. These are academics who did really solid research, and it's research that I use in my work. If I'm remembering correctly—and please don't quote me on this—I think it was for every 10 door knocks you did you got one extra vote. And something like every 25 phone calls. I can't remember.

AH: I actually have the numbers. It's in our training manual, so I'm actually cheating. But it's for every 14 door knocks it's one additional voter. So just pausing for a second: 2,000 robo calls equals the same as 14 door knocks. So obviously the face-to-face conversation is more powerful. And then I think I have the rest of the numbers figured out: 35 phone calls gets out an additional voter you would not have otherwise. 66 pieces of literature left at a door, and I think it's 166 pieces of direct mail. Which is interesting that a piece of literature that's just left by hand at a door is twice as effective almost—just about the same thing—mailed to a voter. Well it's really not just about the same thing, but it might as well be.

So each of those four tactics, the ones that are listed on slide 10, are enormously more effective than the sort of impersonal robo calls or infinitely more effective than standing on the street corner and waving a sign. Robby, you said there are places for robo calls. Many of our trainers do use robo calls, and many of the people who I've seen on campaigns. But, like you said, they're for specific reasons. So one of our trainers swears by robo calls only as a reminder follow-up. The minute the absentee ballots arrive in people's mailboxes she sends out a bunch of robo calls just telling people, "Hey, by the way, your absentee ballot has arrived." And then follows those up by personal phone calls. So she uses them, and she still also uses personal outreach.

RM: That's exactly what we're doing here in Maryland. We're doing a robo call the day we're expecting people to get their ballot. Then we're following up with personal calls. So yeah, I couldn't agree more with that. The one thing I think Gerber and Green also found, which I think is pretty intuitive, is the difference between a well-trained volunteer and a paid canvasser is real. It's not incredibly significant, but volunteers who are there because they believe in what they're doing and not just there for the money, do make a difference. What we're trying to do with our paid canvas right now here in Maryland, and we have a pretty big one, is to work with our paid canvassers so that they're just as good as anybody else. But that's something to point out is just throwing this together with money doesn't get you the same as taking the time to build your organization.

AH: Just as a quick personal story, in Connecticut when we were supporting Ned Lamont, Joe Lieberman had a number of "paid" volunteers, a whole bunch of people who were paid to go to rallies and sort of upset the normal flow of things. And talking to them, just right out, without any hesitation, they'd admit it. "Oh, I'm voting for Ned Lamont, but I get \$50

bucks today for doing this.” They’re not particularly good volunteers. Let’s get the next question.

QUESTION from Holly in California: How effective is it to stand at the polls on election day and pass out literature? Does that kind of last-minute contact make a difference?

RM: My short answer is “No.” And I’ll start with an anecdote. Again, I’ll go back to the race I did last year in Virginia. There are a couple things we won in our race and a couple things we lost. We won the election by 20 points. There had actually been 49% of our district that had been Republican for 20 years. We won by 20 points. We lost the visibility war on the campaign. We also lost the polling place visibility war. I think our opponent probably had at least five or six people at every polling place. They were handing out tons of lit, tons of stickers, tons of signs. The streets were just plastered with lawn signs.

And I even had friends who came in to help me in our last weekend said, “Oh, this doesn’t feel right. The other guy’s got all these lawn signs up.” But we really decided to be disciplined. We focused exclusively on the doors and going to our people, going to our targeted supporters, reminding them to vote, and showing them where their polling place was. And, like I said, we had outstanding results in a district that had not performed that highly.

So I’m a big believer in going to the voters and turning them out. Because they won’t vote for you unless they get to the polling place. And just intercepting them before they into the polls, you know, a ballot or something with names on it, is nowhere near as valuable as having worked on them beforehand and then turning them out to vote. Because your three to four months of contact beforehand will be much stronger than a sample ballot or a flyer could ever be. And I think that’s been proven again and again. That said, I know when people are running for office it’s really hard because the other people are there and they’re handing that stuff out. It feels really awful in your stomach to see that happening, but I’m a believer, and I’ve seen it work again and again.

QUESTION from Greg in Indiana: On slide six, you guys talk about doing the math you need to calculate how many votes you need to win. What’s a viable Plan B if you’re campaign hasn’t actually done the vote counting arithmetic?

RM: Do it now! You’ve got to have that vote goal going into election day. So I think the first step is how many people are going to turn out in the district you’re working in. And then, once you know that, how many votes do you need to win. And then based on that, you need to figure out where those votes are going to come from. And again, the first step you can take is to say... Let’s say you need 100 votes. The first step is to say what are the highest performing areas? Where do Democrats do the best around here? And then focus your efforts there.

In a year like this that’s not a presidential year, the best voters to go after sometimes are the voters that don’t always vote. So those reliable Democrats who support you, let’s say they’re in a precinct that votes 90% Democratic, but they don’t turn out in non-presidential years, those are great people to go after this year. I will warn you, however, that it takes a lot of work to turn

those people out. We are spending millions of dollars here in Maryland this year, literally millions, and we are hoping to get a 4% increase in expected turnout from these folks.

So you've got to talk to them a bunch of bunch of times. Otherwise, if you can't talk to them a bunch of times, don't even bother. Just focus on finding those regular voters, persuading them to support you in these last few weeks, and then turning out the folks who said they'll vote for you.

QUESTION from Melissa in Philadelphia: If a voter is contacted too many times, will that prevent them from voting for your candidate?

AH: That's a great question. I'm going to give that one to you, Robby.

RM: The short answer is, "No." Look, I think if you're absolutely bombarding people and the campaign is particularly really negative, it may start to have a detrimental effect. But I've seen again and again studies—I just saw another one the other day—where the difference between two reminder phone calls and four reminder phone calls the four days before election day, there was a pretty significant difference.

The example I always give to folks is do people stop buying Tide because Tide has so many commercials during the super bowl? No, they buy more of it. Or rather, when they go to the supermarket and they see Tide, they feel a connection to it and are more likely to buy it. So, again, if you're reminding people four, five or six times before election day that it's election day, and they're driving into work and they see the "vote here" signs, they'll be that much more likely to say, "Oh, man, yeah. I know it's election day. I really got to go do that."

Part of it, too, especially in these off-year elections, it's not just about letting people know where to vote, it's reminding them why it's important that they do vote. And we're particularly working on this here in Maryland, part of it's really inspiring these people to go cast their vote and reminding them that their vote does count and that there is a lot at stake. And so you have to say that a lot of times before it will sink in with folks.

And so my recommendation is to do at least seven touches in those last few days, that last five days before election day between the phones, the doors, the lit drops and the mail. Some people think that sounds like a lot, but I'll tell you in Virginia last year they increased turnout among drop-off voters there by I think it was 20%, and they talked to those folks 30 times before election day. Now that was over a period of a few months, but in those last five days it was like 10, 15 touches. So we're doing a similar thing here. If people are starting to complain about you calling them and knocking them, you're doing a good job. If you're not hearing them complain, you're probably not.

AH: Yeah, I agree. The bottom line is that people are voting because they're sick of the war in Iraq, or they don't like the way the Republicans are managing stuff. You know, your fresh-faced bright, happy, cheery, and well-trained volunteer at the door isn't going to screw that up. Hopefully they are noticing your presence over and over and over again. And maybe they're

thinking about your election more than they're thinking about Tide brand detergent. And I think that in itself is a bit of a victory.

So let's go on. We have a few more questions and we'll answer them in a few more slides. But I want to make sure that we go over some of this critical material. So let's turn to slide 12. We keep talking about "we've got to do the math." And we keep talking about, "Well gosh, this is a volunteer-intensive kind of way of running a campaign." Well, of course it is. A grassroots campaigns are powered by volunteers. So let's look at exactly what we need in terms of those volunteers.

So we're going to go back to the same example, the fictional senate district 17. And a piece of that senate district has been broken down. It's called Smith Township. Within that township we have a vote goal of 11,496 voters. That's the number that we need to win to make sure that we are doing a good job in Smith Township, that we can deliver the victory for our state senate candidate.

We did a good job with our early vote program. 25%, fully a quarter of those people who we knew needed to vote have already voted. This saved us literally hundreds of volunteer hours on election day. Those 12 hours on election day we can use more effectively. So we have 8,622 voters left. Now let's say you're in charge of that piece. We found in our previous calling—again, we're just sort of estimating here—we found from our previous months of calling and door knocking that we can make just about 25 phone contacts an hour by our good trained volunteers on the phones. Or eight door contacts an hour by good trained canvassers at the door. And there are volunteers who will help us out for about three hours at a time.

Now the numbers are going to be different in your precincts very likely. You might not be able to make quite as many contacts. And that's probably the way it is, but we're just making up some convenient numbers here. One important thing to note is that in the end we're not asking ourselves the number of volunteer hours we need, or even the number of volunteers we need. The basic unit for measuring here is going to be the volunteer shift, because many of our volunteers are going to be doing multiple shifts. On election day, the ideal is to get a fulltime volunteer. A person who's taken the day off of work or who doesn't have work that day, and can give you three or four shifts...three shifts, I suppose.

So if you took out your calculator, you can do math in all kinds of different ways. It's all going to equal a set number. You could decide that you're going to do it all on phones, in which case you're going to need 115 volunteer shifts to contact everyone by phone. You could decide you're going to do it all at the door, in which case you'll need 360 volunteer shifts. Or you could do a mix. In this case, we just said 90 phone shifts and 78 canvas shifts.

If our numbers hold right, if our rates are correct and we have the people on our lists, then we should be able to contact every single voter. Now not all campaigns contact every single person that they need to all the time. People are sometimes not home; they're often not home. That's why keep calling. And that's why we want to get as many volunteers as possible. And that's also why we want to have a good idea of what our rates are.

These rates don't magically sort of come to us. It's something that because we've been calling for so long and we've been keeping track of how our volunteers have been progressing, we can continue to estimate for the future how many shifts we need. And that goes back to being accountable. To be accountable to yourself and to be accountable to the rest of the campaign, you need to figure out exactly what you can do and what your volunteers can deliver for you, what you as a volunteer can deliver for your campaign, and let them know.

So let's move on to slide 13. There are a number of things that you're going to need for the election day itself. And I've seen a number of campaigns, some of which I've worked on, some of which are my fault. They've done amazing work up until the election, only to be consumed by chaos around about the night before the election. Think through all the things that you're going to need. Not just think of every thing that you need, but also how long it takes to produce them or how long it takes to accomplish that particular task. If your office, for example, only has one working printer in the last days before the election, you probably have a problem, because of all the material you have to print up.

You've got to print up walk lists, and they've got to be updated walk lists, so you've identified people, you've ID'd them, you've persuaded people—these are up-to-date walk lists. Everyone who's on the list actually exists; everyone on the list is a targeted voter. Print these all out. You can print them out precinct by precinct for example, if you've got walk lists. You have phone lists, maps for your volunteers of their precincts when they're set out there. This is going to take awhile.

I was helping out with a great campaign in Philadelphia. And it was just a small statehouse primary in an off year, so it should be a really small campaign, but they had so many volunteers; they're doing a really amazing and really excellent job. But that's where I got the "they had only one working printer" example from. It was into the night and they were printing out all of these sheets and all of these forms. It was literally around 5 a.m. when they finished, which is the absolute last minute that they could.

So figure out some of this stuff before. If you're printing out the materials; if you've got a date by which all of your literature, your mailings will be delivered, make sure you're checking in with your vendor making sure that they've got all their stuff. If you're sending volunteers to various staging areas, make sure that those places are okay. A little bit of scouting can save you all kinds of hassle and trouble at the end of the day. If you're a volunteer just in charge of your precincts, walk yourself through the day. What are you going to need to do in the morning, the afternoon, the evening, including eating, including going to the bathroom. What's your plan for that?

And is the campaign providing food? If so, when? A good idea for campaigns is to make sure that you've got your food delivered to your volunteers, that your volunteers aren't going and getting the food. Otherwise they're leaving their posts, they might be leaving their precincts, or they might be leaving their phone banking stations. You might try to give them food at 1 o'clock so that they're still working through the lunch hour rush if they're actually at the polls or if they're actually canvassing or on the phones.

Let's move to the next page. We're on slide 14 now. Elections can be pretty chaotic. So here's my tip for reigning in some of that chaos. You've got a lot of moving pieces during a campaign, and you want to keep track of it all at once. As the election draws nearer, it's important to touch base not only with our voters over and over, but also your volunteers. If you're a volunteer, it's important to understand just sort of explicitly what the campaign needs and where you fit in.

One good way of doing this is a pre-election day volunteer meeting. It's one of your best tools to get everything and everyone straightened out. I call it a pre-election day huddle because meetings are boring/huddles are exciting. But this is where you let your volunteers in on your plan for the election: where people should be, what people will need to do. It gives people an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment, and also highlights the impact the volunteers are going to make on the campaign.

This is where we tell them the truth. "Hey, look, it's election day. It's very exciting. There's a lot of stuff that happens. It's going to be crazy in the morning, and then there's going to be this ridiculous lull a few hours later. And then there's going to be people at lunch. And then there's going to be whatever. You're going to know your precinct better than I am." But let them know what they can expect. Let them know who they can get in contact with if they've got a problem.

And this is really important: Let them see each other. It's one thing for you to be on the phone and tell them all this stuff: "Okay, you ready for tomorrow? Great! See you never." But if you get everyone in the room at the same time, and you've got 50 volunteers huddled around, everyone's looking at each other thinking, "Oh, my goodness, this is such a big deal. We're part of something really big," it's something that will last for them for beyond election day. "Hey, look, if a bunch of people are really motivated about one thing, we can really get together and work together at this." And that's something that hopefully can stay with them not through this election but in between elections and all through the next election.

So you want to motivate; you want to review the plan; and you want to reaffirm their commitment. One thing that's often useful, particularly if you're running a really good grassroots campaign and you've got a lot of volunteers is to set up election day staging areas. This is where your volunteers can come instead of everyone flooding the office. You set out areas that maybe are closer to where they're supposed to be. It's going to be off-site phonebanking places. This could be off-site just sort of large areas where you can get people together.

The largest staging area I've ever seen in my life was in 2004 I was working for \_\_\_\_\_, and we had 2,000 people volunteering for us in one city in one day. You can imagine it was humongous. And we couldn't let 2,000 people into an office that couldn't fit 19 people. So we had them go off in different locations and right off from there. Those staging areas are the places where we had the precinct maps and all the lists, where you could get your questions answered, where you could get a bagel and some coffee or a donut and some coffee. You know, whatever you prefer. So that's another place where you can let people know, "This is the plan. If you have a question, come here or call here." You can set up volunteers.

Also, it's a good way to figure out who didn't show up. Obviously if you have 2,000 people, you have no idea what's going on. But if you've got 15 people who are supposed to come in or a dozen people are supposed to come into this staging area so you can send them off or get them on the phones, you can figure out, "Hmmm, let's see. Only ten people showed up, so we're short a couple. I need to make sure that I call them. I need to make sure that I can get a couple other volunteers. Or I need to make sure that I can farm out the rest of this list to other parts of the campaign."

The bottom line, like Robby said, is this is a numbers game. We make all this contact, we make all these connections, we talk about these issues all so that we can get enough voters at the polls on election day. Also so that we can reach that win number—50% plus 1, or ideally 52% or higher. So your staging areas are an opportunity for you to be able to do that.

QUESTION from Maria in Texas: How many requests for rides to the polls on election day should we expect in a typical race?

RM: Not very many. I have rarely... In fact, if I'm running a campaign, or if I'm the field director or the GOTV director, I often just put myself in charge of that because basically the machine's working and I have nothing left to do. But in all seriousness, in Maryland, which has eight congressional districts, we'll probably do 200 rides on election day. What I suggest you do to accommodate rides—because they are important and some people will ask for them—is have a ride line, make sure that line is staffed. And when people call in just pull someone out of a phonebank and have them go. Most people drive to your phonebank. They'll have a car. Most people are more than happy to give someone a ride to the polls.

And it's much more efficient with your time and your resources to just pull someone off the phone for a while to go run and do that than have—and I've seen this before—15 people idling in a parking lot just waiting to be sent to give someone a ride. Because you'll really find not that many people will ask. If you have huge urban areas and senior centers, I make exceptions to that rule, because then there's a very clear demonstrated need to provide some van service. But unless we're talking about I know that I have 20 or more people in a certain location that need a ride, then I'll have some sort of van thing set up. But really, if you guys are working on smaller races, you know, statewide, even a congressional, you're really going to be shocked by how few requests you get. So just pull folks off the phonebank and send them out to do that. Much, much more efficient.

QUESTION from Bill in Missouri: Some campaigns mark too many voters as strong supporters. How do we avoid overestimating that count?

RM: I think re-IDing is really important. Whenever I have an ID campaign, to identify supporters, I always build in time in the schedule to re-ID voters. So you should give yourself one or two weeks, however many shifts of volunteers it's going to take to get through and re-ID everybody; you need to build that in. I think that's the best way.

AH: Another thing that I would do is to make sure your volunteers are well trained. I've definitely seen those campaigns that people get really enthusiastic. And because volunteers catch a lot of enthusiasm, which is always a good thing, they'll also start enthusiastically marking down ones that should be twos, twos that should be threes, because it's what they really want to see. A good training for your volunteers is one say to make sure that people really understand and use a little bit more conservative estimates as far as who are the ones and who are the twos.

I think that's one reason why we use a five point system through almost every campaign I've seen. I did see one campaign with a three-point system—one, two and three; two is undecided. Well a lot of people are thinking, "Well I guess they're leaning a certain way," and group them in as a one. Which then on election day they overestimated the support that they had, which is always sad.

QUESTION from George in Florida: If I'm planning to take election day off, should I also try to take Monday off, the day before?

RM: Yes, absolutely. We've actually been doing this for a few weeks now. We have a commitment card, and it has a bunch of check boxes. The first one is "take Tuesday off," the next one is "take Monday off," and the next one's "commit to the weekend." So absolutely.

AH: Awesome. That's a great suggestion. George, thanks for giving the 500 people on the line right now an even better idea.

QUESTION from Kim in New Hampshire: If I can only volunteer for a few hours on election day, should I still show up?

RM: Yes, absolutely. Always show up, absolutely. And use your time to do direct voter contact. Use your time to canvass. Use your time to get on the phone. Those are always the most high value things you can do. And the note I'll end on is one of the best things I ever was told was, in GOTV and in organizing in general, "the harder way is always the better way." And it's hard to get out and knock on doors. It's hard to get on the phones and remind people, because people are cranky, they've gotten a bunch of phone calls. You know, it's hard to get them motivated to go out and vote.

But the harder way is the better way. Campaigns that accept the challenge and step up to it and are organized and are tight and get it done are the campaigns that win. So when you guys do go out and volunteer—and I hope some of you are in Maryland who are going to come help us out—choose to go talk to the voters, because that's what's going to win or lose the election.

AH: And this question is just a fantastic segue into our homework for tonight. So let's turn to the next slide. Before we get into the homework I want to give people the online resources they can go and get more of this stuff. A couple of questions have come in that we haven't answered: "So what does your election day look like?" and "What are you doing in the days before, specifically?"

We have two timelines that we've posted online. They're found at [www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool](http://www.democracyforamerica.com/nightschool). These timelines are really just samples, but give you an idea of the feel and the flow of the day for election day. And also a feel of the flow of the few days before. The few days before is really just kind of a sample, because it will vary depending on the size of your campaign and what you're capable of doing or what you need to do. But just to give you an idea of some of the things, and some of the things that campaigns do, you can take a look at those. They're both available at our web site, the same place that you found the web presentation and the PDF. So you can download those if you like.

So let's go and talk about our homework. Every night school we give you an assignment. It's not just enough to be on the phone and listen to a great trainer like Robby help us out and fill out our knowledge about this kind of stuff. It's more important to actually get out there and start doing this stuff.

So the first thing that we can do for all of our campaigns... If you are not on a campaign, and you are donating your time, the first thing you can do is take election day off. I guess that's second on the slide here. But contact your employer and ask to take Tuesday off. Ask to take Monday off if you can. It's something that's obviously easy for me, since I work at DFA. But for many of the people out there on the call, maybe it's something that you should go and have a conversation right away with your employer. "Listen, hey look, is there a way I can take this day off? Great; I'll just take a paid vacation day."

It's important. I know that you don't have a whole lot of vacation days in your schedule for many of us on the call, but there's a whole lot of stuff that's going on. And having a Democratic congress and Democratic state houses and Democratic governors is really the way that we can change the direction of this country. It's worth a day.

Vote early if you can. That's going to make it a lot easier on election day for you to give your time. I know a lot of volunteers who are thinking, "Well this is great. I'll volunteer on election day so it will be so easy for me to vote. I'll just volunteer at my poll." Well what happens if the campaign doesn't send you to your poll, which is not necessarily likely for them to do. You want to make sure that you voted as early as you can. If you're volunteering in the morning, plan to vote as the first thing you do when you get there. If you're volunteering in the afternoon, still plan to vote in the morning. See what you can do to make sure you vote as early as you can. If you can't vote before the day of the election, see what else you can do to make sure you get that out of the way. You don't want to be the person who's standing in line when there's this huge crush of people. Find a time like at 10 o'clock or at 2 o'clock, when no one else is really voting, to get out there.

And third—and this is important. A lot of people on the call are new to DFALink or have only used it for RSVPing to this event. Well the other nifty thing that you can do with DFALink is find campaigns and organizations near to you which are utilizing volunteers. If you want to get plugged in, there are 33,000 other people on this site that are all actively volunteering. Everyone on DFALink has done something; otherwise, they wouldn't be on DFALink. And it may be the thousands of you who have been on this call. It might be the thousands of people who are working on the campaigns in your area.

So go ahead and explore it. Search around a little bit. If you go to the tab that says “groups,” you can actually do a search for groups in our area. If you go to the tab that says, “Events,” you can do a search for events in your area. Just put in your zip code. For those of us who are familiar with DFALink, who are on the call right now sort of rolling your eyes saying, “Yeah, yeah, I know all this stuff,” how about setting up an event for the hundreds of people who are new to DFALink, and letting them know that there’s something they can do right here, right nearby.

And then I want to go to the final slide and talk to you a little bit about what we’re going to be doing for night school in the future. This is my last major project before the election. I’m going to be spending most of my time either testing out a new project that I’m actually going to start, and we’ll announce it to some people. But mostly I’m going to be getting out there and actually starting to work. I’m a trainer, so most of my training is done. It’s so close to the election that it’s just time to do the work.

But what we need when I get back doing all this work are suggestions from you. We’re going to be doing a winter night school. DFA is an organization that stays around. We’re here the day after the election. I know that campaigns aren’t because they can’t be, but we’re here. And you’re still there, wherever you are, hoping for a better country and working toward a better country.

The DFA winter night school sessions are going to be centered around organization-building and organizing between elections. We’ve got our representatives elected, now how do we hold them accountable? That kind of stuff. So I’m looking to take your suggestions. You can give them to be at the same place that you can contact me at [training@democracyforamerica.com](mailto:training@democracyforamerica.com). What should we train on between elections?

On a similar note, the DFA Training Academy itself, the weekend trainings, are going all over the country. This year we went to I believe it’s 15 cities, trained thousands of people—red states, blue states, red counties, blue counties—we really do honor that 50-state strategy. We were founded on Governor Dean’s vision, and this is what we continue to keep doing. We want to go to a training near you.

So if you’d like a two-day session with a bunch of trainers—people like Robby, people like the trainers that you’ve seen on other calls—we’d like to bring them to you. Let me know if you’d like one. Email me at [training@democracyforamerica.com](mailto:training@democracyforamerica.com). It’s not enough for you to say, “Hey, I want one here.” I need to know that you and 50 other people are interested. I need to know that your and your DFA group or your local organization or maybe the local party want to host a training, and that you’re going to do something with that training. So email me at [training@democracyforamerica.com](mailto:training@democracyforamerica.com).

We make all of these into DVD’s, all of these presentations into DVD’s. We’re going to be making this presentation, the four night schools that we’ve done, into a DVD format where you can actually take a look at this. So you’ll get that and you’ll get a notice about that shortly. Our previous presentations, if you missed summer, are available on DVD. And we have a

special guest on right now to talk to us a little bit about the number one way you can continue to support this program into the future. Plug it away, Jim.

JIM DEAN: Okay, Arshad, thanks a lot. I first thank all of you for being on the call. It's a busy time out there; it's the fall. But this is really, really important, and I really appreciate your being on it. And also, Robby, thank you for being on the call as well. I really appreciate your availing us of your expertise and experience for something that is really one of the most important months that we've had in a long time. Americans want change. Everybody knows that. But getting them to do that at the polls depends on us contacting them. And this is really the most critical thing. You know, they can have 150 Mark Foley scandals in the House between now and election day. It is not going to matter, we will not win, if we don't go out and reach out to the voters and get them to the polls and also try to get them to vote either early or absentee, depending on the district that's in there.

This is very, very critically important. And I really appreciate all of your being on here to find out and hopefully get smarter. And hopefully we can all get a little bit smarter about going out there and getting out the vote in the next three to four weeks. It is very, very important, and it will be critical to how we get the House back, getting the Senate back, and in many cases getting our states back. So again, my thanks for that.

I also wanted to simply remind everybody that isn't a free service that we're doing. We pick up the tab for the phone call and all the stuff that goes into the presentations and a lot of the other staff time and everything that goes in it. And if any of you are able to help out with that, that would be extremely appreciated. Any contribution you can make to help us continue that we will be very, very grateful for. And you can do that simply by going to our home page, [www.democracyforamerica.com](http://www.democracyforamerica.com) and clicking on the "contribute" link there.

We're going to continue to do these night school sessions. The training program is something that we are extremely committed to, particularly next year going into a set of very interesting elections, and try to position ourselves the best way we can so that we can get a Democrat back in the white house in '08. But right now, we've got to get the Congress and the Senate back, and we've got to get our states back and our communities back. So please, let's get out there. Let's get on the campaign. And let's try to make this thing happen in the next three weeks until November 7<sup>th</sup>. And thanks so much again for being on. Let's go make something happen, folks, and take this country back.

AH: All right, guys and girls—ladies—everyone out there. Visit DFALink. See what's happening around you, and take the election off, because it's going to be another day on, not a day off, for us. And I'll see you when I see you. Bye!