



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Basics of Democracy in the United States

Governmental Awareness

Get Out the Vote Campaign

- Voter Registration
- Election Education
- Election Day Activities

Promoting Your Get Out the Vote Campaign

Additional Resources

America was created as a representative republic, not a democracy. In a democracy, every citizen votes on every issue. Instead, we vote for individuals to represent us in these issues that face our country. In their hands lies our fate. It is important that they understand our needs and our visions for the nation.

There are several ways that we can communicate with our elected officials. One of the most important is our vote. In 2000, an average of only 44% of 21 to 39 year olds voted. In contrast, 70.5% voted in the 50 to 68 age range (with the lowest at 61.6% and high was 73.3%). These statistics cause the vicious cycle of low voter participation and low communication from our elected officials to young people. We don't vote because they don't listen. They don't listen because we don't vote.

The United States Junior Chamber is the perfect organization to lead the charge for being the voice of young people in the government. More and more young people want to be involved, but they don't want to join one of the major parties. Where can they get involved and get the information in a factual, non-partisan fashion? Through the Jaycees, of course! We are the only group focusing on young people that have been around long enough to have a history with elected officials. They trust the Jaycees and will be more willing to work with us than a brand new group. We also give young people an outlet to serve the community.

In this manual, we have assembled some background information about our form of government, a listing of projects that local chapters — regardless of size — can run to improve the communication between young voters and elected officials and to increase voter turnout among this age group, and how to get directly involved in the governing process.

We hope that this information is useful and that your chapter can dramatically impact your community through increased governmental involvement.

— Mindy Fernandes
2004 U.S. Junior Chamber
Governmental Involvement Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln stated that government is "of the people, by the people, for the people." Today, it is still our privilege to live in a nation where the government is of, by, and for the people. Nevertheless, an increasing number of Americans do not get involved in the processes that shape our nation's future.

The basis of the United States system of government is the ability or willingness of its citizens to take an active role in governing their community, state, or nation. Involvement can range from encouraging elected leaders to make informed decisions concerning particular issues, to informing the electorate about the issues and candidates. Involvement can also mean investing time, energy, and financial resources in support of candidates and/or issues important to your philosophies and beliefs.

The United States Junior Chamber, since its inception in 1920, has a long tradition in influencing governmental policies. Jaycees can be found in many levels of government. Leaders such as past President Bill Clinton and past President Gerald Ford. U.S. Senator Wendell Ford of Kentucky was President of the U.S. Jaycees in 1956-1957 before making his climb in the national political ranks.

But merely pursuing elected positions is not all the Jaycees have accomplished. The "Get Out the Vote" program was first established in 1923. Various key issues interested the young leaders of the organization over the years and prompted an active role in bringing them to the forefront of voters and elected officials. In 1959, Jaycees worked hard to ensure statehood for both Alaska and Hawaii.

Since being welcomed to the first Governmental Affairs Leadership Seminar (GALS) in 1962 by then-Representative Gerald Ford, the leaders of The United States Junior Chamber have met annually in the nation's capital to hear from White House officials, Cabinet secretaries, and Members of Congress about issues of importance to America's young people. In the mid-1990s, the organization launched a cross-country tour titled "Wake Up America!" This tour encouraged young Americans to make their voice heard both in the voting booth and on important issues such as Social Security reform.

The Ten Outstanding Young Americans (TOYA) program has also featured many local, state, and

national leaders who have made substantial gains for the goals of the organization. National leaders such as John F. Kennedy, Dan Quayle, Richard Cheney, and Richard Santorum have been honored. Other leaders in shaping public opinion have also been honored for their work in governmental action. Individuals such as Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, Richard Tafel founder of the Log Cabin Republicans, and Adam Werbach of the Sierra Club have been recognized for their work - although many times, on different sides of the issues.

Greater involvement in the affairs of government serves to promote the Jaycees as "America's Voice for Young America," thus providing a platform for chapter marketing and promotions and the opportunity to involve more young adults into the chapter membership. Increased chapter involvement in local government:

- Provides a platform for addressing issues important to members.
- Builds relationships with elected officials.
- Showcases the chapter to other organizations and community leaders.
- Increases media and public relations coverage.
- Exercises our rights as Americans.

There are many ways in which your chapter can make a positive impact on government in your community. In this guide, you will be given information about conducting projects to gain increased involvement in the governing process. The ideas in this section are not meant to be the end-all to governmental involvement. Read the material in this guide and develop a plan for your chapter that will help your voice be heard in your community.

This manual is intended to help local chapters effectively run Governmental Involvement programs, which are designed to help Americans take a more active role in governmental affairs. Governmental Involvement encompasses all areas of involvement with the local, state, and national governmental process, and fits within the Community Area of Opportunity. This involvement could be chapter members attending local city council meetings to running community-wide voter registration drives.

While The United States Junior Chamber is a non-partisan organization, (USJC Bylaw 2-2, which states "The Corporation shall not engage in partisan political activities by supporting candidates for public office or

assisting political parties") chapters and individual members are encouraged to become involved in issues that affect their communities, states, and nation.

The purpose of the United States Junior Chamber is "...to promote and foster the growth and development of young person's civic organizations in the United States, designed to inculcate in the individual membership of such organization a spirit of genuine Americanism and civic interest..." (USJC Bylaw 2-1)

BASICS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES

In the beginning, a group of religiously oppressed men and women made their way from England to the shores of the New World. As they began to taste the freedom from monarchy, they began to envision a new nation. However, the King of England did not share that vision and a war for independence swept the areas colonized by the settlers. This was the first time that governmental involvement manifested itself in America. Democracy, with all of its positives and negatives, became the rule of government and soon a nation - the United States of America - was formed. This much we learned in school and have accepted as they way it was, but how many of us actually understand democracy? The following are some notes gathered on the subject to help you understand just exactly what you're getting involved with!

A Definition

Democracy (Greek demos, "the people"; krates, "to rule"), political system in which the people of a country rule through any form of government they choose to establish.

The word autocracy comes from the Greek words kratos meaning power, and autos meaning self, the sense being that one leader holds power for himself solely and exclusively. This term can apply to the absolute monarchs of early England or to the more recent dictatorships of Africa and Latin America.

In modern democracies, supreme authority is exercised for the most part by representatives elected by popular suffrage. The representatives may be supplanted by the electorate according to the legal procedures of recall and referendum, and they are, at least in principle, responsible to the electorate. In many democracies, such as the United States, both the executive head of government and the legislature are elect-

ed. In typical constitutional monarchies such as the United Kingdom and Norway, only the legislators are elected, and from their ranks a cabinet and a prime minister are chosen.

Although often used interchangeably, the terms democracy and republic are not synonymous. Both systems delegate the power to govern to their elected representatives. In a republic, however, these officials are expected to act on their own best judgment of the needs and interests of the country. The officials in a democracy more generally and directly reflect the known or ascertained views of their constituents, sometimes subordinating their own judgment.

Simply put, democracy is a form of government where citizens can freely debate, deliberate, and engage in collective democratic will formation.

Democracy in History

Beginning with the first popular rebellion against monarchy in England (1642), which was brought to a climax by the execution of King Charles I, political and revolutionary action against autocratic European governments resulted in the establishment of democratic governments. Such action was inspired and guided largely by political philosophers, notably the French philosophers Montesquieu and Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the American statesmen Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Before the end of the 19th century, every important Western European monarchy had adopted a constitution limiting the power of the Crown and giving a considerable share of political power to the people. In many of these countries, a representative legislature modeled on the British Parliament was instituted. British politics was then possibly the greatest single influence on the organization of world democracies, although the French Revolution also exerted a powerful influence. Later, the success of democratic institutions in the United States served as a model for many peoples.

The major features of modern democracy include individual freedom, which entitles citizens to the liberty and responsibility of shaping their own careers and conducting their own affairs; equality before the law; and universal suffrage and education. Such features have been proclaimed in great historic documents, for example, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, which asserted the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; the French Declaration

of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which affirmed the principles of civil liberty and of equality before the law; and the Atlantic Charter, which formulated the four basic freedoms.

By the middle of the 20th century, every independent country in the world, with only a few exceptions, had a government that, in form if not in practice, embodied some of the principles of democracy. Although the ideals of democracy have been widely professed, the practice and fulfillment have been different in many countries.

Democracy Today

Democracy today, especially in America, holds a place of near-sanctity in our political thinking; yet its voters are increasingly dissatisfied and disillusioned. Is democracy at fault?

Democracy's first and perhaps main attribute is that it is clearly an improvement over autocracy or dictatorship. This simple fact alone will readily explain why so many of the world's nations still laboring under often brutal dictatorships dream of democracy and its imagined ability to cure all their ills.

In order to ascertain the will of the people, the democratic system provides for periodic elections. Democracy is essentially a framework, a process whereby the people, rather than an autocratic monarch or dictator, can peaceably present and review options, then select the policy of their choice.

The importance and stability of orderly electoral procedure should not be underrated. The alternative is a bullet in the President's head or a full-scale civil war. We should not forget that many countries, far too many, still change their presidents and their governments in this way.

But democracy has its imperfections, and its limitations.

Majority Rule, or the Power of Numbers

Democracy means power to the people. But this remains an ideal, and does not reflect the way democracy works in practical reality. It is a matter of simple definition that we cannot have real and genuine power to the people unless all of the people are of one mind. And in practice, they never are.

Democracy, or power to the people, we do not have. What we practice today is majocracy, or power to the majority of the people. In this sense we still give

power to the powerful; but now "the powerful" are those in the numerical majority, or increasingly in the United States, those with the greatest financial support.

Thus democracy can be defined as "a process whereby the will of the majority can be ascertained, influenced, or even created". Some people will make up their own minds. Others will be influenced by the opinion-makers. But whatever their choices, it is unlikely that the motivation either of the voters or of their "influencers" will be anything other than self-interest.

True, some interest-groups are fighting for principles. But most political decisions are based on the simple criterion "what's good for me".

Many "future-seers" have visualized a democracy in which interested citizens follow political debates on tv in realtime, then vote electronically, the results of the voting being displayed again in realtime. This would indeed be true "government by people".

But whether people are influenced by political or economic expertise, or by the personalities of media icons, whether they vote every few years or vote electronically on each debate... the motivation has not changed. We are still, in the main, voting for "what's good for me". Never mind if others suffer as a result of unjust laws, or whether others (including the next generation) must pay for what we demand now but cannot afford. The Will of the Majority is Law.

Where did our current Political System Come From?

During America's formative years, many of the founding fathers hoped that government would be made up of persons of superior intellect who would rise above political parties. However, because of issues of foreign policy and rhetoric of leaders such as Alexander Hamilton, political parties emerged shortly after the birth of this nation.

Alexander Hamilton was appointed the first Secretary of the Treasury by President George Washington. He was one of the founding fathers who argued against political parties, and equated them with disorder and instability. However, as he began to propose finance programs to Congress during his term as Secretary, he found he lacked a base for support. Hamilton became the leader of the Federalist Party, a political organization largely dedicated to the support

of his own policies. To oppose the Federalists, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson formed the Democratic Party, thus giving birth to the two-party system of government.

The Democratic Party began in 1792. It was not until the presidency of Andrew Jackson in 1828 that the party became known by its present name. In accord with the Jeffersonian philosophy, a party was established which adopted the principles of popular control of government; wide extension of suffrage; strict interpretation of the Constitution; preservation of the rights of the states; and opposition to centralized power in the Federal government.

The Republican Party originated in 1854, when various small group meetings were held in a half dozen states. A mass meeting at Jackson, Michigan, attended by former Whigs, Democrats, and Free Soilers on July 6, 1854, adopted the name Republican. The party was formed from a strong anti-slavery movement, established on the principles of nationalism, and emphasized national interest over sectional interests, opposing state's rights.

Despite criticism of parties, they are essential to a democratic government, because they perform several functions important for popular rule. These include:

- nominating candidates for public office.
- proposing broad policies on major public issues.
- crystallizing public opinion.
- providing at least a measure of responsibility for the conduct of the government.

Regardless of how direct or indirect it may be, it is through the organization of political parties that public opinion becomes policy, and local, state, and national leaders are elected to office.

Today, there are other political parties besides the Democratic and Republican. These include the Reform Party, the Libertarian Party, and several others. However, the Republican and Democratic remain the largest.

For more information about the Republican or Democratic parties and their current platform, please refer to the resources section at the end of this manual.

GOVERNMENTAL AWARENESS

In this section of the USJC Governmental Involvement Manual, you will find a listing of projects that local chapters can run to improve the commu-

nication between elected officials and to increase voter turnout among young people.

Model Legislature

This is a fun project that involves your members in the process as they play legislators for a day. Some groups use the capitol building — while this is preferable, it is not necessary. This project can be as involved or as basic as you like. Members can write their own bills or you can use actual bills that are in the legislature right now. Every state used to run this project, now only about a dozen or fewer run it. If you are interested in starting it again or learning more, contact your states JCI Senate. They will remember how they did it and they might have some great contacts to get you started again.

General Membership Meeting Speakers

Ask your local elected officials to come in and speak to your chapter. Local and state officials, you can probably invite 1 - 2 months in advance. For federal officials, you should probably invite them closer to six months in advance. Work with their staff on press releases and possible newspaper/radio interviews.

Town Hall Meeting

Find a hot issue in your community and provide a forum for all sides to discuss the issue. You will need to find a tough moderator who can handle things if they get out of hand. These are always a great way to get public relations exposure and media coverage of your chapter.

Surveys

Make sure that you do community surveys with your elected officials and community officials.

Ask!

Every community has a wish list of things they need, but cannot afford. Usually, this list has items in all price ranges. Pick one that would be of emotional value to the community or the Jaycees. It could range from defibrillators for the Public Library, thermal imagers for the local Fire Department, to an all-access playground for the children. Raise the money, purchase the item through the city and have a big press conference with the Mayor and the Jaycees presenting

the new equipment to the city. This makes a great photo opportunity and publicity for your chapter!

Membership

Every elected official who is Jaycee age should be a Jaycee. You should also have at least one representative from the Fire Department, Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department. If they are over Jaycee age, then find a staff person.

State of the City Meetings

Most cities and counties have a public forum where the Mayor or county official will talk about all of the things that they have accomplished over the year. This is a great place to be seen. You could offer to host a reception afterwards to celebrate those accomplishments and to promote the community development projects of your chapter.

Tour the Capitol

Work with your state elected officials to get a group tour scheduled. Many state capitols are undergoing major renovations. They are being returned to their original splendor. It really makes history come alive. This project would be an ideal opportunity to involve the kids of your members and have a family-centered project.

Proclamations

Ask your state elected official to proclaim the third week of January as Jaycee Week. It will be read into the state journal and be signed by the elected officials and possibly the Governor. Also, if you have a special anniversary, like the 50th anniversary of a local chapter, that is also worthy to receive a special proclamation. If you can make it to the capitol, it can be presented to you.

Elected Official Visits

Just like at the annual Governmental Affairs Leadership Seminar (GALS), you can visit your state and local officials to discuss with them the important things that the local chapters are doing.

Provide Citizen Guides to Your Membership

Call your state representative and ask for enough to hand out at your general membership meetings. These

booklets can include all contact information for all parts of state government, state history, how a bill becomes a law, and other valuable information.

GET OUT THE VOTE CAMPAIGN (GOTV)

In 1923, the Get Out the Vote campaign was the first program conducted by The U.S. Junior Chamber to receive national endorsement. In this section of this manual you can learn about projects designed to get people to the polls on Election Day.

There are three main phases of a GOTV effort:

1. Organize a voter registration drive.
2. Organize voter services on Election Day.
3. Educate voters on key issues and candidates.

Elections are always important, but this year's elections are crucial to America's future. The decisions which voters will make at all levels of government will set the tone of leadership and direction for our nation into the 21st century.

Therefore, it is important that as many Americans as possible go to the polls and express their opinions about the direction of their government. Jaycees can make a tremendous contribution in making this happen. Before citizens can vote though, they must be registered. If they can't vote, their opinion won't count.

There are a variety of different opportunities your chapter may consider. These might include candidate debates or meet-the-candidate night.

Organizing and Managing the GOTV Campaign

Start with a nucleus, such as the GOTV general chairman and a management team. Assign basic responsibilities at the beginning. Here are some guidelines on organization and management:

General Chairman - Supervises and coordinates entire effort, guided by plan of action and timetable set up by the committee.

Secretary - Records minutes of all committee meetings, sends notices, and maintains files on all activities.

Finance Chairman - Supervises all financial matters including fundraising/donation activities, if needed.

Research Chairman - Gathers facts and assembles lists so that efforts can be used to help pinpoint selected "targets" as previously discussed.

Canvassing Chairman - Handles manpower for contacting citizens door-to-door, by phone, mail, and other selected methods of "getting the message across."

Speakers' Chairman - Schedules committee members and other community leaders and celebrities to appear before various groups on behalf of the GOTV voter registration drive.

Transportation Chairman - Sets up transportation pools to carry citizens to and from registration locations. Includes babysitting service, if necessary.

Promotion/Public Relations Chairman - Handles news releases; spot announcements (PSAs); and promotion in newspapers, radio, and television, as outlined in the Public Relations section. In addition, he or she develops gimmicks and promotions such as contests, buttons, bumper signs, fliers, and postcards to make citizens more registration-conscious.

Other points that will be helpful for organizing and managing the campaign include:

Establish a Steering Committee - If you have joint projects with other groups, give each group a voice in the overall planning. Keep all officers informed through regular reports.

Identify prospective volunteers - Individuals known to Jaycee members.

Develop a specific recruitment message - What you're doing and when it will be done. Then ask people! Most volunteer recruitment efforts actually ask very few people to help.

Give volunteers exact assignments, precise instructions, and fixed deadlines - Leave no room for doubt. Conduct training sessions, prepare instruction sheets, check with volunteers regularly by phone, and recognize good performers with pins, certificates, and thank-you letters. You cannot pay too much attention to the human needs of your volunteers.

Develop a Time Table

Put everything on a timetable - The best way is to plan backward from the registration deadline. Envision where you want to be on that day, then think back through the steps required to get there. For example, if you use "branch registration," think in terms of a cycle of activities for each area, ending with your registration activity.

In order to help you develop a plan of action, here

is a model timetable incorporating the various elements of the GOTV program. It is intended only as a guide for timing and priority.

Timing

60 Days

50 Days

45 Days

40 Days

30 Days

28 Days

26 Days

20 Days

16 Days

10 Days

7 Days

5 Days

Election Day

Activity

Secure GOTV general chairman and committee. Study election laws.

Plan specific programs such as voter registration.

Conduct targeting process.

Secure absentee voting chair.

Begin absentee program.

Locate general and area headquarters.

Begin preparing materials.

Begin preparing mailing.

Assign personnel.

Send GOTV Mailing.

Conduct training session.

Begin phone campaign.

Election Day activities.

GOTV Phase 1:

The Voter Registration Drive

Studies have shown that people do not register to vote because no one encourages them or helps them to do so.

Most Americans want to vote, but many need that extra nudge which encourages them to take the time to register. More than 70 percent of those people who are registered actually vote. Registration thus appears to be the key to higher voter participation. The effect of higher voter turnout could be as far-reaching as the Presidential election or as close to home as helping to elect a member of your city council.

When organizing a voter registration drive, you must determine what the needs of your community are. Find out what voter registration efforts are being organized by other community organizations, and then decide what need Jaycees can fulfill.

Getting Started: Know the facts about voter registration in your community. Although voter registration is required in all states except North Dakota, registration restrictions and accessibility differ dramatically by state.

Types of Registration: Election laws in each state specify which of the following five registrations are used in a state. These laws also indicate how much flexibility, if any, local officials have in implementing

their systems. Many communities use a combination of systems. It is imperative you know which one(s) are used in your state in order to develop a proper plan of action.

The five systems are:

1. Centralized Registration - Voters register at a specific location, usually the registrar's office, the county clerk's office, or city hall. In those states that allow only this system, a voter registration program is more complicated since it involves persuading the potential voter to make the effort to leave work or home and go to the registrar's office to register. Transportation or baby-sitting services may need to be provided to make it easier for voters to register.

2. Deputy Registration - Deputy registrars may help register voters. If your state permits this, you may be able to persuade your local officials to appoint certain club members as deputy registrars. In some areas, you may have to arrange for existing deputy registrars to assist in your program.

3. Branch Registration - Of the states which allow appointments of deputy registrars, some limit the deputies to conducting registration at advertised "satellite locations." Other states allow open, multiple registration sites. If our state allows deputy registrars, and most do, it is important you clarify what limitations, if any, are placed on the flexibility of the deputy registrar's right to register voters.

4. Registration by Mail - Many states allow voters to register by simply filling out a form and mailing it to the registrar's office. If your state allows registration by mail, take advantage of it. This is by far the easiest and least expensive way to register voters. All you have to do is obtain a supply of cards from the appropriate government office in your county, make them available to non-registered citizens and return them to the registrar's office once they are filled out.

5. Election by Registration - Voters are allowed to both register and vote on election day.

Regardless of which one, or combination of the above methods, you use, it is imperative that you heavily publicize your voter registration drive in that particular "market area."

The Next Step: Now that you are familiar with your state and community laws on voter registration, it is time to develop a plan of action.

One of the most important decisions to make is determining what "target" area(s) or group(s) your voter registration drive should serve. As great as the need is to register all eligible voters and get them involved, no one group can do it all. A well-developed and implemented plan is more effective than just "scatter-shooting" and hoping for the best.

In order to help determine answers to many of the following questions, you should discuss them with the local registrar, county Democratic and Republican chairmen, and other groups who are involved in voter registration efforts.

Four important considerations in your decision process should be:

1. What is the voter registration in your community?
2. What voter registration needs are being met by other groups? Do they need assistance?
3. To what extent do Jaycees and other community groups wish to combine efforts to accomplish a specific goal? Sometimes this is warranted because of the scope of the undertaking.
4. What is your chapter's level of commitment?

What resources are available: This includes, but is not limited to: the level of interest on the part of the members; manpower available; finances available, if needed; and time available with other activities. You may need to reprioritize other projects and take inventory of community contacts and resources available to assist you in your voter registration drive.

Regardless of what level of involvement you decide to take in your efforts, ALWAYS make sure the drive is designed so the public understands it is a NON-PARTISAN effort.

Target Areas and Activities: The list of possible target areas and/or groups for your voter registration campaign is really as limitless as your imagination. One good way to develop such a list is to have a "brainstorming" session with your chapter. Factors that enter into your thought process might include:

Can a deputy registrar be used and/or is registration-by-mail allowed in your state? Either one of these make your options much more flexible.

A word of caution; when "brainstorming," don't discount any idea and don't take time to analyze ideas until you are through listing them. What may at first

seem to be an unworkable idea may be modified to fit your state's guidelines and available resources.

The following is a sample of "target" areas and groups that you might consider:

- Jaycee members, families, friends, and business associates
- Highly concentrated residential areas, e.g., apartment complexes, senior citizen communities, condominium developments
- "Mobile areas" of your community, including new housing developments (You may want to work with the local Realtors Association in establishing your list.)
- Newcomer groups
- High traffic business areas including shopping malls, large department stores, a major grocery store, banks, and large office complexes (Concentrate on both shoppers and workers. When considering business areas, be sure to obtain permission well in advance.)
- Major plants or large employers (Be sure to obtain permission in advance. Work out a schedule that does not include after work. People on their way home tend not to take time to stoop and register.)
- Special assistance programs for nursing homes, handicapped facilities, inner-city residents, the elderly, blind, deaf, or otherwise handicapped citizens
- First-time voters, including not only newcomers but also high school seniors who have or will be turning of legal voting age.
- College campuses
- High school and college sporting events
- Welfare and employment offices
- Libraries
- Churches, PTAs, other civic groups and organizations

GOTV Phase 2:

Projects Designed to Educate Voters

This section of the manual contains projects to inform your members about candidates who are running for office, ballot initiatives, and the actual voting process.

Candidate's Night

This project is easy to put together and gets your chapter a ton of publicity. You pick the race that you want to highlight. Only pick one, this way you can

focus the issues. If you live in a high Republican/Democrat area, the real race may be the primary. Contact the candidates and find a date that works for as many as possible. Do this early, their calendars fill up fast. You also want to make sure that you are not too close to another organization's candidate night. Find a good location to hold the event. A possibility is your City Hall which usually has a large meeting space, plus everybody knows where it is.

Next, find a moderator — preferably someone who is neutral and high profile. A local media personality makes a good choice. They are comfortable being in front of large crowds and know the issues being discussed.

Write your questions ahead of time. Make sure they are appropriate to the race. (i.e. do not ask federal issues to a state representative.) If you are not sure, ask for assistance. Possible resources for developing questions are other elected officials, the City Manager, or newspaper editor.

Send out press releases and put it on local cable access. Do not let the audience ask questions. If you must take questions from the audience, have them write them on note cards and turn them into you to decide if they are appropriate.

General Membership Meeting Speakers

Ask your local elected officials to come in and speak to your group. Local and state officials, you can probably invite 1 - 2 months in advance. For federal officials, you should probably invite them closer to 6 months in advance. Work with their staff on press releases and possible media interviews.

Provide a list of campaign volunteer opportunities. Just make sure you provide information for all parties and all candidates. You can also provide your members with information about local candidates, political parties, and issues campaigns.

Voting Machines and Local Elections Clerk

Ask your local clerk to bring a voting machine to your general membership meeting. The clerk will walk your members through the process once they enter the polling site. The purpose is to make people feel more comfortable with the voting process. Also, your clerk can use the machine to tabulate the totals of your local chapter elections.

Sample Ballots

Acquire some sample ballots from your local city clerk and pass them out to your members at the general membership meeting before the election. They can take them home, decide whom they are going to vote for and mark the sample ballot. On election day, they can take their sample ballot with them to the poll to assist them in marking the official ballot.

Sponsor an Essay Contest

Get permission from local schools to involve the students in writing an essay on the importance of voting. Your chapter can provide a prize to the winner(s). Good ideas include: a gift certificate to a local restaurant, small gifts from local retailers, savings bonds, or tickets to an amusement park. Ask an elected official to announce the winner and remember to invite the press! You may also want to place an ad in your local newspaper to make the announcement and to thank the prize donors. If you run this project prior to Election Day, use the ad to promote going to the polls.

Business Signs

Encourage local businesses to change their signs in front of their business to a GOTV message.

GOTV Phase 3: Projects for Election Day

First Time Voters Only Party

Provide a social with a band and munchies for all 18 - 20 year olds who can prove that they voted that day. Promote the event at your local college or university through the school's newspaper and radio stations. Additional promotion can be made by speaking to campus organizations such as fraternities and sororities.

Not only will this encourage younger voters to turn out on Election Day, but it will also provide a prime vehicle for your chapter to meet potential members.

Promote the Election

- Put reminder notes in your newsletter, on your chapter's website, through e-mails, etc. Include the election date and where they can find information on where to vote (the city clerk).

- Write articles or letters to the editor of local newspaper about the upcoming election and the importance of every vote.

- Send out postcards to your membership a week before the election.

- Put out signs encouraging people to vote.

Sponsor a "Take Your Kid to the Polls" Event

Produce postcards to give out at the local schools. Work with your local clerk to find out voter turnout at the different polling locations. This project shows the child the importance of voting, decreases the scariness of it all and now you have the kid reminding the parent to vote.

Chapter Fundraiser

Many areas pay their poll workers. These are the people that check your identification, help with the machines and report the vote totals at the end of the day. If you have members who have a flexible schedule and can give you a day, they can donate their "pay-check" for the day to the chapter.

Babysitting

Provide babysitting at a nearby location to allow parents to vote without the distraction of keeping track of the kids. You can promote this at the local elementary schools, preschools and day care facilities.

Other GOTV Project Ideas

- Request the telephone company to add a voting reminder to time and weather information lines.

- Request local newspapers to print ads urging people to vote. If cost is a consideration, approach merchant associations and other such groups to see if they will underwrite the cost.

- Urge community officials to "play up" an upcoming election (signs on city hall, parking meters and/or street light decorations, reminders or printed notices about city activities, schedules, municipal calendars and so on).

- Pass out eye-catching tokens on Election Day to people who have voted. Give a flower to the first 100 female voters. Give a button reading "I Voted" to voters as they leave the polls. The idea is to encourage others to vote that day.

- Conduct a chapter "Voter Verification Raffle." Design a voter verification form. Reproduce the form in the chapter newsletter or send a special mailing to your membership. When a club or chapter member goes to vote, request the "Ward Clerk" or "Poll

Checklist Personnel" to verify that he or she voted by signing the form. The member then brings or sends his or her form to the next chapter meeting. All forms are put in a box and a winner is drawn for a grand prize.

PROMOTING YOUR CHAPTER'S GOTV CAMPAIGN

Nationally, The U.S. Junior Chamber will be promoting the month of September as "Voter Registration Month." Plan your major public relations efforts during this month. You can and should do something prior to September.

If your club or chapter's efforts are to be successful, it will require good communication. People need to be aware of your projects and events in order to participate. They should also be aware of the importance of registering. This is accomplished through a strong public relations campaign. Think about publicity and ways to reach your audience effectively from the very start of the planning process.

The who, what, when, where, and why of registration are crucial. To help make voters aware, consider using promotional items such as fliers, stuffers, postcards, posters, fact sheets, news releases, meetings, radio and television spots, newspaper ads, editorials, phone calls, door-to-door canvassing, booths, mobile vans, merchant signs, or billboards.

Don't assume anything. Potential registrants may need the most basic registration information. Be sure your promotional materials provide it. Not every flier or five-second TV spot can contain all the relevant information. Use a variety of different media to get the message across.

If you have money available or can obtain donations, some possibilities might include:

- Devise newspaper attention-grabbers with the minimum essentials (dates, times, places) and where-to-call numbers in large boldface type. Maybe implement a "countdown" approach that illustrates the message such as "Only 10, 9, 8 . . . more days to register - or you lose your voice."
- Keep radio and TV spots short and snappy, with just the essentials. Check the possibilities of using free public service announcement (PSA) time for these spots. Ask about appearing on a community affairs program to promote your Get Out the Vote efforts.
- Place posters and fliers on community bulletin boards, buses, in office buildings, high schools, and

colleges. Nursing homes or other institutions can be targets for in-house registration to increase your success. Fliers can be distributed anywhere people congregate.

The News Release

News releases are the best way to keep the media in a community informed about your chapter's activities. Releases also establish the organization's credibility as a news source. Before sending out any news releases, develop a media list of all newspapers and radio and television stations in your community. Also find out who the appropriate contact person is to send the news release to.

There are a number of general rules to follow when writing news releases. First, try to put all of the most pertinent information in the first few sentences. Answer the questions "who, what, where, when, why, and how" in the first paragraph.

Other information should be included in the next few paragraphs while the least important information should be used in the last paragraph. The reasoning behind this is if an editor or newsperson has to cut a story short, the important information included in the first few paragraphs will not be lost.

- News releases should be brief, accurate, and complete. Keep them to two pages; one page is preferred. Check for any spelling errors or typing mistakes.
- Type and double-space the release on a sheet of letterhead, leaving ample margins and using only one side of the paper.
- Include the release date, your name, title, organization, and telephone number in the upper left-hand corner of the first page.
- If the release is longer than one page, type "-more-" at the bottom of the first page.
- At the end of the release type "-30-" or "-###-" to signify the end.
- Submit your release well in advance of your event. Follow up with a polite reminder of when your event is taking place and ask if the newspaper or station has assigned someone to cover the story.

Sample News Release

Note: This is a sample news release that can be adapted to fit your local media. Please transfer this onto your chapter's letterhead.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: (Name), (Title), (Organization), (Phone Number)

GET OUT THE VOTE CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

(Sampletown, USA) - The NAME Junior Chamber (Jaycees) are joining forces to help citizens of the Sampletown community "Get Out the Vote." This campaign is designed to increase voter participation in this year's elections.

Jaycees will arrange for various voter registration sites around the city. The goal of the program is to encourage citizens to take part in the election process.

Add a few lines of details of where and when voter registration booths will be set up. If the release is to announce voter services provided on Election Day, list all services and how individuals can get in touch with GOTV volunteers.

The Jaycees have asked the Mayor to proclaim September as "Register to Vote Month" in Sampletown.

The United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees) is an organization of men and women volunteers who are dedicated to providing young people the opportunity to develop personal and leadership skills through local community service and organizational involvement.

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Public Service Announcements

Many television and radio stations, as well as cable and public television stations, have set aside a part of their broadcasting day for public affairs or public service programming. This is an effort by the stations to help nonprofit organizations get their message to citizens. Utilize PSAs to more effectively promote your Get Out the Vote campaign.

Preparing PSAs takes some time and effort. To get an idea of what a local television or radio station looks for in a PSA, visit with the station's public service director. Here are a few questions to ask:

- Does the station prefer written PSAs or will they write them from a fact sheet that you can provide?
- What is the preferred length of the PSAs (10, 20, 30, or 60 seconds)?
- What is the deadline for delivering the PSA script or fact sheet for use by the station?
- Can you produce your own PSA? If the station produces the PSA, what are the costs involved?
- What are the restrictions to follow when submitting a PSA?

When preparing a PSA for radio, keep in mind that it is written for the "ear." Use descriptive words and active verbs to give the public service announcement life. A radio PSA usually consists of a fact sheet or a 10-, 15-, 20-, 30-, or 60-second script.

Television PSAs are slightly more complex to prepare and the amount of people asking for airtime with the local stations is larger. To produce the PSA, the station may need to be provided with visuals or slides to be used with your script.

Here are some guidelines for writing PSAs:

- Include as much information as possible in the script or on the fact sheet. If this is not possible, be sure to include a name and phone number where more information can be obtained.
- For radio PSAs, two to two-and-one-half lines of written copy (25 words) equals 10 seconds. Thirty seconds of copy is eight lines (75 words) and 60 seconds of copy is 16 lines (150 words).
- Generally, television PSA copy should contain fewer lines or words. Ten seconds of written copy contains 20 words, thirty seconds-60 words, and 60 seconds-120 words.

- Be sure to include the place, name, organization, contact, title, and phone number in the upper left-hand corner.

- Put the PSA topic and the dates the PSA should be used in the upper right hand corner.

- For television PSAs, place the audio script on the right side of the page and a description of the slide or visual to be used on the left.

- Before taking the PSA to the station, time it to make sure it is the correct length.

Public service announcements are most effective when used to announce local events, programs, and projects. It is an opportunity to use the stations' resources to get a message to the public.

Sample Public Service Announcements

Note: These are sample PSAs that can be adapted to fit your local media.

10 seconds

In the voting booth, "X" marks the spot. Register to vote this weekend at the Sample Shopping Mall. For more information contact the Sampletown Jaycees at (999.9999).

20 seconds

Democracy is not a spectator sport - register to vote in the next election. The Sampletown Jaycees will help you register at the community center during the month of September. For more information, call (999.9999).

30 seconds

When you pull down a lever in a voting booth, you are exercising your right to vote. Unfortunately some feel that voting isn't necessary. One vote - your vote - can make a difference. The Sampletown Jaycees want to help you get involved in the election process. During the month of September, you can register to vote at City Hall or at the Sample Shopping Mall. For more information, call the Sampletown Jaycees at (999.9999).

60 seconds

Being able to vote in elections is both a right and a privilege - one that is very important. One vote - your vote - can make a difference. However, before you can vote, you must be registered. If you turned 18, changed your address, or changed your name since the last election, you must register to vote. You can make a difference in the next election. The Samletown Jaycees want to help you become more involved in the election process. They are hosting a voter registration booth at the Sample Shopping Mall the entire month of September. Or you can register at City Hall. For more information, call (999.9999). Exercise your right to vote. Make sure you're registered for the next election.

Additional Public Relations Avenues

Here are a few ideas that will help you increase your club or chapter's exposure:

- Go to the local utility company, bank, or any other business that sends monthly statements. Ask to place fliers in the envelope with their next billing statement.
- Ask a store manager about placing fliers in bags at the grocery store. Put up a display near the checkout stands where everyone needs to pass. Utilize the store's message board.
- Use posters, billboards, bumper stickers, lapel buttons, window stickers, and other means to publicize your Get Out the Vote activities to residents of the community.

An important point to remember is that not all of the people in your town can be reached via one medium. Use several public relations tactics to inform them to become involved and to register to vote.

Smaller Scale Efforts

If you're short of funds but long on enthusiastic volunteers, you might consider these ideas:

- A phone campaign - Solicit voters to register. This should be designed to include a follow-up phone call or postcard.
- Jaycee Family Night promotion - Set aside a special event, perhaps a social, where Jaycee family members and friends come to register. Publicize it in club or chapter mailings and include a phone campaign. Use this event to kick off the campaign or solicit help on other events.

- Registration sundae - Contact a local fast food chain or similar establishment and make arrangements to conduct a voter registration drive at their location on a set day. Voters registering receive a free sundae or soft drink, compliments of the restaurant.

- Do door-to-door canvassing - Target large numbers of unregistered people that live in certain neighborhoods. You might also go office-to-office or factory-to-factory, talking to people, leaving fliers or registration-by-mail cards, if allowed in your state.

- Major employers in your community - Explore the possibility of conducting a voter registration drive at businesses during working hours, before work, at lunch, or at break periods. In addition, request the employer to promote voter registration through company newsletters, announcements, and other methods.

- Booths or tables in public places - Spread out your manpower and catch people at work or at leisure in shopping malls, apartment complexes, factories, banks, department stores, grocery stores, and libraries. If your state law permits, attempt to register voters on the spot. If this is not possible, pass out materials that inform them how to register.

- Other organizations' meetings - Ask for five or 10 minutes to promote Get Out the Vote. Have voter registration materials with you. Any type of meeting is a possibility.

- Gimmicks - Conduct a go-register-yourself rally with a "bus-in" to the board of elections. Give a slogan button to newly registered high school and college students. Invite the first 50 people who show up on the first day of registration to a coffee-and-donuts celebration. Transform a car, van, or truck into a "vote mobile" and drive it in parades, around the city, to sporting events, shopping centers, factories, or schools.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.rnc.com (Republican Party)

www.democrats.org (Democrat Party)

www.greens.org (Green Party)

www.fec.gov (Federal Election Commission)

www.yeswill.org

www.vote-smart.org

www.rockthevote.org