



you can
be part
of the
solution
CIVIC PARTICIPATION
HANDBOOK



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“A democratic society depends upon an informed and educated citizenry.”
-THOMAS JEFFERSON

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BEING A PART OF THE SOLUTION

SECTION 1

“There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor political, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him that it is right.”

- MARTIN LUTHER KING

WELCOME

Distrust of unchecked authority is a cornerstone of American civil liberties built into the Constitution by the Founding Fathers. They knew that informed and educated citizens – people who stand firmly for justice by not staying silent – are the ultimate check on government power.

Since the early days of Islam, Muslims have known a similar system of checks and balances.

Umar, caliph and companion of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), once made a legal ruling regarding dowries. As he left the assembly where this occurred, a woman sharply challenged his position on the issue. After hearing her, Umar quickly changed his position.

This handbook is intended to aid your stand for justice by sharing best practices and insights from professionals who are working each day to empower America’s Muslims.

As we seek to empower you, we wish to share one thought: our greatest strength comes from acting together.

After signing the Declaration of Independence, reflecting on the probable response from England’s King George, Benjamin Franklin summed up the need to use this strength by saying, “Well gentlemen, we must now hang together, or we shall most assuredly hang separately.”

Thanks to God Almighty, CAIR’s track record of unified action is one of results.

“Already fighting on behalf of American Muslims is the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, as it is commonly known. The organization...has developed a reputation for being some thing of a pit bull in protecting the civil rights of Muslims.”

(Source: The Indianapolis Star, 9/04/2005)

“It was overwhelming, their support.”

-Host Gator Co. President Brent Oxley after CAIR supporters “swamped” the Web host with “literally thousands” of complaints about Right Wing Howler, a blog whose author expressed support for the sentiment “...we need to kill all Muslim kids. Starting now.” The Web site was shut down.

(Source: St. Petersburg Times, 12/20/2006)

We ask you to join your efforts with those of CAIR. It is simple and takes only a few minutes.

Please visit www.cair.com and become a member today.



SECTION 1

BENEFITS OF AMERICAN MUSLIM PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SERVING THE INTERESTS OF FAITH AND NATION

MAJOR POINTS:

- Your participation in public affairs protects Muslims and promotes a better society – reducing discrimination, poverty, helping to make quality medical care easily accessible, and defending everyone’s civil liberties.
- America was built on a set of principles. This contrasts with many nations that are centered on one ethnic group or faith. Making the effort to engage your neighbors in defending these principles ensures that our nation projects to the world the best of its values not the worst of its fears.
- If you are not present to give your opinions, your ideas will never be heard.
- Bringing your Islamic character to civic life supports such universal ideals as strong families, protection of the weak, and the promotion of justice.
- You live here. You pay taxes here. It is reasonable to work to ensure that these taxes are spent for the public good.
- CAIR’s research reveals that people who know Muslims personally tend to have better views of Islam. By participating, not only do you aid your cause but you also allow others to interact with you and put a human face on a faith that many people in America do not understand.
- Muslims have many friends who similarly wish to reform things we see as harming society—drugs, gambling,, disintegration of the family, questionable use of our super-power status. Choosing to disengage from the process abandons these friends and the Islamic principle of promoting what is good.
- It is our duty to give our leaders sincere advice. We should support public figures who prove themselves trustworthy and a benefit to the nation. We should vote to remove them from public office when they do not.
- Criticism without action toward improving a situation does not produce respect or results.
- CAIR’s activism model ensures that the time you have available can be put to productive use. Most action alerts take less than five minutes of your time. Your contribution is then magnified because it is joined with similar efforts by thousands of other people of conscience.



SECTION 1

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION

THE BIG PICTURE

MAJOR POINTS:

- Do not compromise your ideals. Hold fast to your values. Good civic works involves compromise, but know and adhere to your “red lines.”
- Be patient and persistent.
- Disagree without being disagreeable. Always maintain your composure and basic courtesy.
- The basic currencies of civic work are your connections, votes, volunteers, and money.
- Scrutinize your relationships. Friendships are welcome and beneficial. However, your bottom line must be a track record of action—votes, hearings, public statements—in support of your issues. Substantive support for your issues is more important than face time, number of visits to a mosque or something done a long time ago. Civic work is about making things better for you and your neighbors. That can range from negotiating a less expensive trash collection contract to opposing warrantless eavesdropping. If everyone is smiling at the meetings, but the trash still sits uncollected on the corner, you have not achieved your purpose.
- It is a general principle that you cannot change a person’s mind the day you meet them.
- Watch and learn from those who do things well.
- There is a misperception that elected officials do not want to meet with Muslims. This is simply not true.
- You cannot be ignored if you are organized and asking for something positive.

↓ THE BOTTOM LINE:

Civic work is endless legwork punctuated by opportunities. As your legwork gives you experience, you will learn to see and take advantage of those opportunities.

SECTION 2



“The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, pay zakat and obey God and His messenger. On them will God pour His mercy: for God Exalted in power, Wise.”
- QURAN 9:71

KNOWING YOUR ISSUE

DISCUSSION:

YOUR OWN COMMUNITY, PROFESSIONAL OR ISSUE NETWORKS. At www.cair.com you can sign up for e-mails giving the latest news impacting American Muslims. Stay connected with others in your area who are working on your issue. They are usually your best source of advance information about important developments.

COMMITTEE WEB PAGES


Once you know the committees (See Appendix I) that have jurisdiction over your issues, communicate with committee staff frequently. They can often provide advance information on bills and hearings.

CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (CRS) REPORTS

One source for CRS reports is here: <http://www.open-crs.com/>. CRS reports are often illuminating, quick overviews of an issue and its policy implications. According to the Library of Congress' Web site, the CRS is "the public policy research arm of the United States Congress." CRS "works exclusively and directly for Members of Congress, their Committees and staff on a confidential, nonpartisan basis."

THOMAS

THOMAS, located at thomas.loc.gov, is a Web site maintained by the Library of Congress to make "federal legislative information freely available to the public." Here you can search and read current bills and resolutions that are before Congress. Click on the Congressional Record link to search floor speeches and other items. Teachers can find information for classroom use here as well.



MAJOR POINTS:

- Having current, accurate, complete, and factual information about your issue is central to winning allies and advancing your cause.
- Learning to "triage" or prioritize the incoming deluge of information takes practice. Be patient with yourself.

NEWS ALERTS

Many major news Web sites allow you to sign-up for breaking news or daily news alerts. Visit <http://news.google.com/> and sign-up for personalized keyword specific news alerts from the line in the left-hand column. Google will send you immediate or daily updates based on your keywords from news sources or the Web.

DAILY NEWS SWEEPS

Scan your local paper and community papers for references to your issue and to keep current on the local political landscape. Look at the Web sites of major newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune and LA Times.

E-MAIL LISTS

Visit the web sites of the elected officials that represent your area. Most offer e-mail lists to update you on their activities. Govtrack.us (<http://www.govtrack.us/>) allows you to sign-up for customized e-mails that track legislation and legislators that interest you. The system will let you know that a vote has occurred, but not when it is scheduled. Use other means for advance notice of events.



continued...

THINK TANKS

These organizations produce analysis of issues and recommendations for resolving such issues. Most have some kind of ideological leaning and it is wise to inform yourself about this before reading their material.

CONSERVATIVE:
<http://www.heritage.org/>
<http://www.aei.org/>
<http://www.cato.org/>

LIBERAL:
<http://www.brookings.edu/>
<http://www.americanprogress.org/>
<http://www.urban.org/>

OTHER:
<http://www.ispu.us/>
 (Many Muslim-Focused Reports)

WHIP NOTICES

Whips are members of Congress responsible for persuading their party members to vote in line with the party leadership's wishes. Whips keep Members informed of upcoming votes.

U.S. House: Go to www.house.gov and look in the left hand column for the link titled "Leadership." Click this link. On the resulting page find the "Whips." There will be one for each party, with the majority party Whip called, reasonably, the Majority Whip. Follow those

links. On the resulting pages you can sign up for e-mails titled The Whipline, The Whipping Post or the Whip Notice. These are sent out to keep you informed of upcoming votes.

U.S. Senate: Go to www.senate.gov and click on "Senators" along the top toolbar. On the resulting page click on "Leadership in the left-hand column. As in the House, the whips for both parties will be listed.

NOTES

SECTION 2

DEVELOPING TALKING POINTS

PERSUADING YOUR AUDIENCE

MAJOR POINTS:

- Talking points are brief ideas designed to support your policy positions or message. They aid an organization in maintaining a consistent message among numerous spokespeople speaking at varying public events or in the media.
- Talking points are commonplace in civic life. Watch any professional spokesperson on C-Span, White House or State Department briefings are a good example, and see how they repeat the same basic message multiple times. Similarly, during debate in the House or Senate you will note members of each party making the same points, often using the same words, as others in their party. This is because both parties issue talking points to their members.
- A good talking point is both persuasive and factual. It persuades on an emotional level first and then on the intellectual level. This takes practice.
- Good talking points are about saying things in a manner that people are receptive to hearing; they are not about tricking people. "...[A] smart Republican, in [Republican pollster Frank] Luntz's view, never advocates 'drilling for oil'; he prefers 'exploring for energy.'" (*New York Times*, 7/17/2005)
- While it is fine to emphasize certain components of your message over others to different audiences, it is



never acceptable to have different, contradictory—or worse, untrue—messages just to win a certain audience's support. The goal is to persuade people, not manipulate them.

- One formula for crafting a talking point is 29-9-3. The talking point should contain up to 29 words, should take no more than 9 seconds to say and can contain up to three key points. The key is to make your point clearly and quickly. It is fine if you can do that without following this formula.

29-9-3 FORMULA

The Talking Point Should:

- Contain up to 29 words
- Take no longer than 9 seconds to say
- Contain up to 3 key points



SECTION 2
TALKING POINT CHECKLIST

STEPS TO FOLLOW

1 PARALLEL YOUR MESSAGE WITH CAIR'S
Contact your local chapter for assistance.
See: <http://www.cair.com/Chapters.aspx>

2 RESEARCH YOUR ISSUE
See the "Knowing Your Issue" section. Observe what others who speak about the issue are saying that is convincing. Know and be able to counter the arguments your opposition will use.

3 DETERMINE YOUR AUDIENCE
There will always be people who agree with you, no matter what. Equally, there will always be people you cannot convince. Do not target your talking points to these audiences- worry about the people who are not committed either way.

4 CLEARLY DEFINE THE ISSUE & WHY YOUR AUDIENCE SHOULD CARE ABOUT IT
The ability to quickly sum up your issue and the impact it has on the lives of your audience is important in the current "sound bite" environment. Welcome venues where you have more time to discuss your issue, but be prepared to make your points quickly.

5 DETERMINE YOUR MESSAGE
What core theme is going to run throughout your talking points? When a person hears your message for the first time it should be short, easy to remember and emotionally appealing. Anything long or complex will be ineffective. During the 2004 Presidential election, Senator Kerry was hard pressed because his opponent's message "He voted for the war and against the funding" whereas his response was lengthy and complicated. Democratic and Republican strategists often rely on societal icons

such as freedom, justice, rule of law, the Constitution, or the Declaration of Independence when crafting their messages.

6 CRAFT YOUR TALKING POINTS
Write out various broad assertions that support your message. Have up to three specific supporting facts to support your broad assertions.

7 TEST YOUR TALKING POINTS
Something that makes perfect sense to you may not convince someone else. Run your talking points by people who are outside of your viewpoint and normal social circles, preferably people who are in your target audience. If they do not find what you are saying convincing, continue until you find what does work. When time and resources allow, focus groups are a common practice among political groups. If not, use your personal network of contacts.

8 REFINE YOUR TALKING POINTS
Refine your language so the talking point can be said in 29 words or less and in sound bite fashion.

9 COMMIT YOUR POINTS TO MEMORY
Worry less about a word for word recital of the talking point than being able to make the point. One trick is to focus on retaining the key words in the talking point over a verbatim memorization of the talking point.

10 REPEAT AND RECYCLE YOUR TALKING POINTS
Practice saying your talking points in different ways. You may have to reuse the same point several times in the course of one discussion. This is your message, stick to it.



SECTION 2
SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

POINTS USED BY CAIR

(Note: CAIR developed these talking points to support legislation relieving applicants for citizenship of unreasonably lengthy delays waiting for completion of their application process. When these points were written many applicants were suing the government in order to obtain decisions regarding their applications.)

- 1** If there are real security concerns about these people, lengthy background checks do not serve the public good.
- If it is a national security issue, an expedited process or a properly funded program would more quickly identify and remove threats.
 - Background checks taking more than 120 days are neither efficient nor good for security.
 - People applying for citizenship have already been in the country for at least five years.

POINTS TO CONSIDER: Threats to the personal security are a concern for all Americans. The appeal of this point is mainstream and will strike any listener as reasonable, regardless of their ideology. This broad appeal, even to people normally opposed to immigrants, coupled with its honest logic makes this point highly effective.

- 2** Lawsuits waste tax dollars and divert the attention of U.S. Attorneys away from criminal prosecutions.
- "U.S. Attorney for Colorado Troy Eid estimated that for the amount of time his staff has devoted this year to defending the FBI, it could "be putting 50 or more bad guys behind bars." (Denver Post, 12/10/2006)
 - "Hundreds of lawsuits against the FBI and Department of Homeland Security are pending in federal courts nationwide, including class-action cases in California, Illinois and New York, according to judicial records and

- attorneys." (Denver Post, 12/10/2006)
- Applicants are seeing that lawsuits get results, encouraging more litigation. A Department of Homeland Security memo reveals that the FBI now considers a "lawsuit pending in Federal Court" as grounds for speeding up stalled background checks." (Denver Post, 12/10/2006)

POINTS TO CONSIDER: Again, all reasonable Americans want law enforcement focused on preventing crime and ensuring their safety, not defending the government from lawsuits dealing with easily fixed issues. This is another point that is universal in its appeal.

- 3** Applicants for citizenship have followed the rules and done everything that was asked of them; the government is failing them.
- Leaving people in a legal limbo for years is a sad return for the immigrant's patriotism and belief in America's democratic values.
 - Leaving them in limbo and then putting them in a position where suing is the only way to get resolution is bad management, penalizes them for the government's failure to address citizenship delays and is expensive for both the new citizens and the government.

POINTS TO CONSIDER: Playing by the rules and rule of law are core themes in America. This point appeals to the listener's sense of fair play and justice.

SECTION 2

TALKING POINT WORKSHEET

STEPS TO FOLLOW

Your core message in a nine second sound bite is: _____

1 YOUR **FIRST** BROAD ASSERTION FOR THIS MESSAGE: _____

• Your first specific supporting fact: _____

• Your second specific supporting fact: _____

• Your third specific supporting fact: _____

2 YOUR **SECOND** BROAD ASSERTION FOR THIS MESSAGE: _____

• Your first specific supporting fact: _____

• Your second specific supporting fact: _____

• Your third specific supporting fact: _____

3 YOUR **THIRD** BROAD ASSERTION FOR THIS MESSAGE: _____

• Your first specific supporting fact: _____

• Your second specific supporting fact: _____

• Your third specific supporting fact: _____

SECTION 2

PRODUCING EFFECTIVE DOCUMENTS

KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT

MAJOR POINTS:

- Members of Congress and their staff are inundated with print material. Keep yours short and to the point.
- For congressional consumption, materials supporting your issue should be no more than five pages in length. Your first paragraph should clearly state what you are concerned about and what can be done. Research indicates that you have approximately 15 seconds, or 150 words, before the reader decides to continue with what you have written or move on to something else.
- Boil your arguments down to their most basic components, bullet point key information and requests. Write using short sentences and paragraphs. Massive blocks of text discourage reading by those who already have too much to read.
- There is a good formula to follow in laying out your materials: outline the need for change, propose a specific change, address how workable the change is, review the positive and negative consequences of the change and rebut any arguments those who hold views different from you might present.
- Even if you give the material in print, send it in an electronic fashion that the office can cut and paste as needed. Congressional offices are always seeking good material to help them push issues forward. Be willing to provide it to them.
- Facts and numbers are important, but do not be afraid to include a personal story that puts a human face on your issue.
- Place contact information in an easy to find place. Ensure that any phone numbers or e-mail addresses you provide are constantly monitored. Respond promptly to any requests.
- Always have a second person proof-read your material. This is standard practice at all major news organizations. Spelling and grammar errors reduce the impact of your document.



THE BOTTOM LINE

- Tell the reader up front what you want from them.
- Put the most important information early
- Keep it concise





SECTION 2

LETTER TO THE EDITOR AND EDITORIALS

GETTING PUBLISHED

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Letters to the editor section is one of the most-read sections of any newspaper. It is a quick and easy way to respond to negative coverage. Letters to the editor are designed to express just one idea and should be no more than 150-250 words. Given this brief amount of text you should pick one main thought and resist the temptation to include other points. Address the letter to “The Letters Editor.” Most newspapers have websites that include instructions for submitting your letter electronically.

There are several ways in which to use letters to the editor: reacting to negative coverage, reacting to a negative editorial, providing a different angle on news of the day, and offering a viewpoint from a particular segment of the local community.

EDITORIALS

Editorials give you more room to discuss your issue, but are harder to get published. Always check with the publication’s editors on newspaper editorial submission policy. Often, the publication’s website will contain this information. Keep your piece short, no more than 800 words. Stick to one issue. Think about the headline of your piece first. Make your first line a “zinger.” State your conclusion first and summarize at end with call to action. Express a unique opinion then base it on facts or first-hand information. Don’t skimp on facts. Include brief bio and contact information with your submission. Answer any calls quickly.

TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF PUBLICATION

- React quickly to news of the day or negative coverage. If possible, have the letter in the hands of an editor on the same day in which the news or negative editorial appears.
- Be authoritative. Speak on behalf of an organization, when possible.



MAJOR POINTS

- All congressional offices pay close attention to the news from back home.
- A published letter to the editor or editorial reaches a much larger audience than many other possible avenues for getting out your message.
- Be passionate or even controversial, but avoid rhetoric and defamation.
- Select the publication you will submit to with an eye on your audience. If you want the local mosque to increase its parking, then a Muslim community publication would be a good choice.
- Submit your piece to only one publication at a time. Consistently submitting to several at once will hurt your reputation among editors.
- Send any published pieces to the specific person in your elected officials’ offices who is responsible for the issue you covered. This helps build your reputation as a source on the issue.



MAJOR POINTS

- Being well networked among the interfaith, law enforcement and political leadership in your area allows you to be informed of many events before they happen. Additionally, in times of trouble you are reaching out to people who already know you, as opposed to making cold calls.
- Networking is about building quality relationships with people who know you as a person and trust you. It is not about filling you desk drawers with business cards.
- A coalition is not a new organization, it is simply a means to coordinate the efforts of everyone working on the issue.

SECTION 2

NETWORKING AND COALITION WORK

EXPANDING YOUR REACH AND OPPORTUNITIES

BE PRESENT

Have someone from your organization attend every relevant local function possible. Put yourself into situations where you have to interact with people.

VOLUNTEER

Offering your time to help with events or projects gives you visibility and is always appreciated. For less outgoing people it also gives you a reason to interact with others, rather than having to make small talk.

SCAN THE REGISTRATION TABLE

Look for names of people you would like to meet, maybe you have heard about them through other contacts. Ask the people doing registration if you can clip a small note to the name tag. In the note, ask the person if they would kindly come find you as you would like to introduce yourself.

GET TO KNOW PEOPLE ON A PERSONAL LEVEL

Be open to learning more about each new person you meet. What are their interests?

GET INTRODUCTIONS

If you are already friendly with someone who knows a person with whom you want to make contact, ask them to introduce the two of you. Follow-up on the introduction quickly.

LOOK TO HELP OTHERS

People will quickly sense when your relationships are about “What is in this for me?” Offer to help other groups achieve their own goals if they are compatible with yours. When working in coalitions be willing to do the work for others.

LISTEN

This is the best way to learn about the other person’s needs and interests.

TOOLS

Carry business cards with your up-to-date contact information. Provide as many ways to reach you as possible. Have a professional sounding e-mail address (example of a poor choice: sweetiepie31230000@aol.com). You may also want to list your personal blog or Web site.

COALITIONS

Learn who engages on work on your issue, such as pre-existing organizations and coalitions and approach them. If a coalition does not already exist consider taking the lead on forming one. As with any relationship you will disagree on some things and agree on others, rare is the relationship where there is total agreement on all things. Do your homework on other groups and consider how your coalition partners will impact your alliances with other organizations. Seek mainstream players from other communities; don’t waste time with people who are irrelevant to their own community. Know when to pull out of a coalition, particularly if it is proving ineffective or not taking action.

BUILDING TRUST

You will win trust as others see that you are sincerely working with them on common causes. Send people to your partners rallies and defend them in their time of need. Go to meetings in person. Include your partners in your meetings with elected officials and others. If possible, connect your partners with donors who are interested in supporting them.



SECTION 2

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES (PACS)

ELECT OR DEFEAT PUBLIC OFFICIALS

STARTING A PAC

Contact the FEC's Information Division at 800-424-9530 or info@fec.gov for guidance. It is always preferable to call. It is recommended that you retain the services of an accounting firm that specializes in political accounting.

FEC FORM 1

<http://www.fec.gov/pdf/forms/fecfrm1.pdf>

FEC Campaign Guide for Non-connected Committees (PACs that are not affiliated with a corporation, trade association or labor organization)

<http://www.fec.gov/pdf/nongui.pdf>

GET A PROFESSIONAL TO DO YOUR ACCOUNTING

PACs must file detailed reports on a quarterly basis. It is easy for people involved in the persistent demands of civic work to miss crucial deadlines. A few moments on the internet or talking to friends can provide a list of accounting firms that manage PAC funds.

SOLICITING DONATIONS

Create a mailing list of donors and utilize it to solicit donations. At events you can also set a target amount to contribute to a candidate and ask additional donors to instead write their checks to the PAC so the funds can be given out to other candidates.

MAKE DELIBERATE CHOICES WHEN SUPPORTING CANDIDATES

Do your homework. Do not donate until you know a candidate's positions and evaluate these positions carefully. A particular ethnicity or faith should not be your sole criteria for supporting a candidate. Resist donor pressure to endorse candidates who are not consistent with the PACs mission.

HOW TO DONATE

Elected officials have two types of staff: political and campaign. Campaign staff can discuss contributions with you. Talk to them. Political staff are generally employees of the state or federal government and are prohibited from dealing with such issues. Hosting a fundraiser in your home is a good option. For members of the House of Representatives \$5,000 is a good target donation.

CONSIDER BEING INVOLVED IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

Positions such as being on the school board, in the state legislature, mayor, judge or county supervisor can impact everything to how your garbage is picked up to whether zoning laws are applied fairly to your local Islamic institution. Schools boards also decide which religious holidays are recognized by the local school system. Local elections are a method of testing out voter acceptance ideas on a small scale. The best people to look for are the ones who are looking to progress politically. Find ambitious types on your local councils who might want to seek higher office and help them grow.



MAJOR POINTS

- A Political Action Committee is a group organized to elect or defeat public officials or to oppose legislation or policy. According to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) "a group that raises or spends over \$1,000 per year to influence Federal elections must register, keep records on financial transactions and file reports on the committee's activities."
- PACs may endorse candidates for public office and disseminate their endorsements to voters.



SECTION 2

PARTICIPATION LIMITS FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

MOST MOSQUES AND ISLAMIC CENTERS

MAJOR POINTS:

- Most mosques and Islamic centers are incorporated as 501(c)(3) tax-exempt institutions. Many organizations that serve the community also register as 501(c)(3) entities.
- It is essential that you do not do anything that would favor one candidate over another or have the effect of favoring a candidate or oppose any candidate.
- This information should not substitute for the advice of a qualified lawyer.

DISCUSSION

IN A NONPARTISAN FASHION, YOU MAY DO THE FOLLOWING THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH ELECTIONS:

Register voters and conduct get-out-the-vote drives. You may issue voter education guides and publish legislator's voting records; however, there are many restrictions on this, see the end of this document.

YOU MAY NOT DO THE FOLLOWING THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH ELECTIONS:

Support or oppose any candidate for public office, contribute or solicit contributions for a political campaign, issue verbal or written statements on behalf of the organization supporting one candidate or another, create a PAC, or rate candidates.

CAN WE INVITE CANDIDATES TO SPEAK AT OUR MOSQUE OR ISLAMIC CENTER?

Yes. You must provide an equal opportunity to all candidates seeking the same office. You may not indicate any support for or opposition of the candidate. Also, no political fundraising may occur.

CAN WE TALK ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES?

Yes. You may prepare and distribute material and host seminars to educate the public about policy issues. To ensure this is done without violating your tax status, show no preference for any specific solution. For example, you can say "We support gun control," but cannot say "We support gun control legislation X." You may discuss a variety of solutions from differing viewpoints if this discussion does not favor any particular solution.

CAN WE SUPPORT SPECIFIC LEGISLATION?

Yes. IRS publication 1828 says you may engage in lobbying if it is not a substantial part of your work. The IRS does not clearly define what constitutes a substantial part of your work, but court cases have indicated that 5 percent of the organization's total activity is acceptable and 16-20 percent is too much. Your organization



501(C)(3)

- 501(c)(3) is one part of the tax law that provides for tax exemption for certain religious and educational institutions. In exchange for tax-exempt status, these institutions agree to abide by some limitations on their activities. (IRS Publication 557)



SECTION 2

PARTICIPATION LIMITS FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

continued...

is considered to be attempting to influence legislation (lobbying) if “it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.”

WHAT CAN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF A 501(C)(3) DO OUTSIDE OF THE ORGANIZATION?

Individuals who lead or work for 501(c)(3) organizations may freely express themselves on political matters outside of their role with the organization. They may not be on the clock or using organization resources when so doing. Additionally, they must clearly state that they are acting in their individual capacity.

PUBLISHING VOTER EDUCATION GUIDES AND LEGISLATOR VOTING RECORDS

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life recommends the following steps to insure that such publications are unbiased, and therefore acceptable 501(c)(3) publications: “include all candidates for a particular office; cover a broad range of issues of interest to voters that would be faced by candidates for the particular office sought; evidence no bias in the selection of questions posed or issues presented; present all candidates’ responses; and contain no editorial comment or other indication of approval or disapproval of any candidate’s positions.” You cannot compare the candidate’s stand on issues with the stand of the organization. The timing and manner of distribution of such publications is also important. For instance, you cannot distribute such a publication in a limited area where it may influence the elections outcome.

Voter Education Guides can also include such information as poll opening and closing times, what is needed to vote (e.g. photo identification) and a list of voter rights. This information changes from state to state and can usually be obtained from the state Secretary of State.



501(C)(3)

- A 501(c)(3) organization may opt for an H exemption, allowing it to engage in lobbying activities beyond an insubstantial amount, by filing IRS Form 5768.




SECTION 3 ELECTIONS

“We could and would have freely and accurately characterized CAIR as a responsible and highly-esteemed force for reconciliation and sanity, both in international affairs and in deepening interfaith understanding here in the United States.”
 -JANUARY 2007 LETTER OF SUPPORT SIGNED BY 203 CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM, JEWISH AND OTHER INTERFAITH LEADERS, PROFESSORS AND CONCERNED CITIZENS

ONE VOTE COUNTS

MAJOR POINTS:

- In 1645, one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.
- In 1649, one vote literally cost King Charles I of England his head. The vote to behead him was 67 against and 68 for -- the ax fell thanks to one vote.
- In 1800, the electoral college met in the respective states to cast their two votes for president. At that time, the U.S. Constitution provided the candidate receiving the most electoral votes would become President and the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes would become Vice President. When the results of the electoral college votes were opened by both houses of Congress, there was a tie vote for President between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. That threw the election of President into the House of Representatives where Thomas Jefferson was elected our third president by a one vote margin.
- In 1845 Texas was admitted to the Union as a state by one vote.
- In 1867, the Alaska Purchase was ratified by just one vote, paving the way for the eventual admission of America’s largest state in 1958.
- In 1868, one vote in the U.S. Senate saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- In 1876, no presidential contender received a majority of electoral votes so the determination of the country’s president was again thrown into the U.S. House of Representatives. By a one vote margin, Rutherford

 **THE BOTTOM LINE:**

The actions of one committed individual can have a significant impact. Never underestimate the power of one.

B. Hayes became the new U.S. president. When Tilden’s party protested the tabulation and demanded a recount, Congress established a 15-member electoral commission to again count the electoral votes and declare the result. By an eight to seven margin - again, one vote -- the commission affirmed the count and gave the election and presidency to Hayes.

- In 1948, a Texas convention voted for Lyndon B. Johnson over ex-Governor Coke Stevens in a contested Senatorial election. Lyndon Johnson because U.S. Senator by a one vote margin.
- In 1948, if Thomas E. Dewey had gotten one vote more per precinct in Ohio and California, the presidential election would have been thrown into the U.S. House of Representatives where Dewey enjoyed more support than his rival -- incumbent Harry Truman. As it was, Dewey was expected to win the general election by a landslide so most Republicans stayed home. Only 51.5 percent of the electorate voted. Truman defeated Dewey.




SECTION 3 REGISTERING TO VOTE

REGISTERING TO VOTE

MAJOR POINTS:

- You must be a United States citizen and 18 years old on election day in order to register to vote.
- Each state has its own guidelines about who can register, how to register and what information you need to provide. Additionally, each state sets its own registration deadline for voters who wish to participate in the next election.
- You can register by downloading a copy of the National Mail Voter Registration form from the internet (see link below). You can also visit the office of the local election official in your city or county.
- According to the US Election Assistance Commission, you can also register to vote “when applying for a driver’s license or identity card at State DMV or driver’s licensing offices, State offices providing public assistance, State offices providing State-funded programs for the disabled, and at armed forces recruitment offices.”

 **DISCUSSION**

Obtain a copy of the National Mail Voter Registration Form here:
http://www.eac.gov/register_vote_forms.asp

Specific Information about registering to vote in your state can be found at:
http://www.vote-smart.org/voter_registration_resources.php



SECTION 3 YOUR RIGHTS AS A VOTER

A CITIZEN’S MOST BASIC DUTY

MAJOR POINTS:


- You cannot be denied the right to vote if you are eligible to do so.
- Generally, each state decides its own voter eligibility, rights and responsibilities. This information is often located on the web site of your state board of elections.
- Federal law clearly states that no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color.

DISCUSSION

Some General Rights Found in Many States

- To have assistance casting your ballot in the polling place because of a physical disability or an inability to read the English language.
- To take children who are in your care into the voting booth with you provided they do not cause a disruption or interfere with normal voting procedures.
- To take any written or printed material into the polling place that will assist with marking or preparing the ballot.
- To have your employer make time for you to vote, if necessary. For instance, in Maryland for every election, every employer must permit any registered voter employee a period not to exceed two hours absence from work on Election Day if the employee does not have two hours of continuous off-duty during the time that the polls are open.

- To receive help from the election officials if you are unsure about anything relating to the voting process. Anyone who helps you may not try to influence your vote in any way.

 **THE BOTTOM LINE**

If you are eligible and don't vote, don't complain.



SECTION 3

CONDUCTING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

STEPS TO FOLLOW

1 JOIN YOUR EFFORTS WITH CAIR'S LOCAL CHAPTER

See: <http://www.cair.com/Chapters.aspx>

2 GATHER A RELIABLE CORE TEAM

If CAIR does not have a chapter in your area, gather members of the community to help coordinate the drive.

3 CHOOSE THE DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF THE EVENT

Eid festivals and Jumah prayers are excellent opportunities. Clear your event with those in charge of the location. Make sure that the timing is convenient and fits into the normal schedule of the community. It is always recommended that you keep in mind that you are serving your community: make registering to vote easy for them. Do not expect them to come to you.

4 CALL OR VISIT YOUR STATE ELECTION OFFICE FOR MATERIALS TO BE USED IN YOUR VOTER DRIVES

The rules change from state to state. In many states the Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for overseeing elections and information can be found on his or her Web site. Perform an Internet search for "state board of elections" along with your state's name, or simply look up the phone number. Many states will give you forms to have filled out (make sure you ask for the proper method of returning the completed forms), others require attending a short, simple certification course. Make sure that you request enough registration materials. Alternatively call CAIR and ask for assistance. Also, ask CAIR for free copies of the wallet-sized "American Muslim Civic Pocket Guide." These can be given away during your drive.

5 GET THE ANSWERS TO SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

The following questions are common from people registering to vote, ask the Elections Board representative for the answers: Who can register to vote in the state?

Do I have to register by political party? Do I have to re-register if I move? When is the latest I can register for the next election? Do I have to re-register for each election? Where do I vote? When can I expect my voter registration card to arrive?

6 INFORM THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE DRIVE

Announce it in advance, perhaps by hanging fliers in local mosques. Ask mosques to announce the drive at Jumah prayers. Call everyone you have in your e-mail and cell phone contact lists and ask them to commit to calling five other people to invite them to register during your drive.

7 CONTACT THE MEDIA

Send a "media advisory" to your local media outlets. Include the answers to what you are doing, when you are doing it, exact street address of where it will occur and a contact name and phone number. Events of this nature are an excellent opportunity to obtain positive media coverage for the community.

8 CONDUCT THE DRIVE

Make sure you have read all the form's instructions carefully, and help people in filling out the form. Do not be shy. Approach people and ask if they are registered to vote. Call attention to your effort. At the very least you will need: pens, clipboards and signs announcing that people can register to vote.

9 KEEP TRACK OF HOW MANY VOTERS YOU HAVE REGISTERED

Please e-mail info@cair.com and tell us how your drive went (What worked? What did not? What advice would you give others? Your experience will benefit future drives.) and how many voters you registered.

10 RETURN THE COMPLETED FORMS

To your state election office.

SECTION 3

CREATING VOTER GUIDES

STEPS TO FOLLOW

1 JOIN YOUR EFFORTS WITH CAIR'S LOCAL CHAPTER

See: <http://www.cair.com/Chapters.aspx>

2 GATHER A RELIABLE CORE TEAM

It is a lot easier to do all the research necessary to create a voter guide when you are not working alone. If CAIR does not have a chapter in your area, gather two to four members of the community to help you.

3 GATHER INFORMATION FOR THE VOTER GUIDE

At the beginning of the Voter Guide it is a good idea to briefly elaborate on why it is helpful for all members of the Muslim community to vote.

• BASIC VOTER GUIDE

Provide information on the following topics related to voting, most can be answered at your State Board of Elections Web site (Google: "[your state]" and "board of elections"). Try to keep the material to no more than two pages so your final hand-out is only one sheet.

- o When to vote (date and times polls are open)
- o How to find addresses of polling places
- o What form of identification, if any, is required
- o How the user can verify if he or she is registered (usually a phone number or Web site)
- o Brief outline of voter rights (each state generally lists your rights at the polls)
- o An avenue to address problems, such as discrimination (usually a phone number and ask them to also contact CAIR)
- o Who do I vote for? In the most basic voter guide, the answer is: "[Your Organization] does not endorse campaigns or candidates. Major newspapers may produce a guide to candidate positions."
- o Who is eligible for and how to cast an Absentee Ballot
- o Does your state allow early voting? How can someone vote early?

• ADVANCED VOTER GUIDE

Provide information on the following topics:

- o A brief description of every candidate running for election and their priorities. Separate the candidates first by what office they are running for and second by party. List all candidates for a particular office.
- o List candidate stances on issues of concern to the general population (Note: Do not try to pick and choose issues that will bias voter's candidate choice.) This information can be obtained by going to the candidates' Web sites, looking in the paper, or performing a google search. Find out what political action committees have supported each candidate and who has endorsed each candidate.

Some good issues to focus on include: education, civil rights, homeland security, the deficit, and health care.

• COMPREHENSIVE VOTER GUIDE

Provide information on the following topic:

- o Ballot Measures: include a list of all the propositions that will be on the ballot along with a description of each. These are usually on the State Board of Elections Web site or the Web site of major local papers. You may also want to include arguments for and against supporting each proposition. (Note: Be aware that many ballot measures involve voters approving interest bearing financial transactions.)

• EXTRAS Include a sample ballot.

• **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ALWAYS** Include a disclaimer stating "[your organization] does not endorse campaigns or candidates."

4 DISTRIBUTE THE VOTER GUIDE

Distribute your guide free-of-charge to the entire Muslim community. Two excellent ways to do this are through local mosques and the Internet.



REMEMBER...

If you will be presenting your guide as the work of a non-profit organization it must be non-partisan. It is imperative to be impartial when describing all candidates and proposals.



SECTION 3

ORGANIZING A CANDIDATE FORUM

STEPS TO FOLLOW

1 JOIN YOUR EFFORTS WITH CAIR'S LOCAL CHAPTER

See: <http://www.cair.com/Chapters.aspx>

2 GATHER A RELIABLE CORE TEAM

If CAIR does not have a chapter in your state, gather several members of the community to help you.

3 ASSESS ON YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION

Can you afford to rent a hall? Can you afford to print advertisements? Can you afford catering or just simple refreshments? What is your budget for these items? Who can help you finance the event?

4 INVITE COSPONSORS

This step and step 5 can be reversed, decide based on your specific circumstances. A broad selection of groups makes an event more appealing to candidates. Some possible cosponsors to invite include the following: interfaith groups, ethnic groups or student groups. Plan for this process to take two weeks as groups make internal decisions about participating in the event. Ask them upfront what they can provide by way of help with the event: just their name, financial resources, time resources or volunteers at the event.

5 DECIDE ON A LOCATION, DATE AND TIME

Location: Select a place that will be convenient for candidates and your guests. Many mosques and Islamic centers have large halls. Student groups can reserve space on a college campus. Often local recreation centers or hotels will provide space for a charge.

Date: Select a date a month to two months away. The date should be far enough away that candidates can fit it into their schedules. That will also allow you ample time for preparation and advertising.

Time: Evenings or daytime during the weekend are best. The event should run an hour and a half to two hours.

Longer gets hard on your guests; shorter may not provide enough time for all candidates.

6 DECIDE ON A FORMAT

Will you host a debate? If yes, who will ask questions and who will decide on the questions? Will candidates speak as they arrive or answer questions from the audience for a fixed, equal amount of time. Will the candidates appear sequentially making their stump speeches? Will you simply host a meet and greet announcing candidates as they arrive and allowing your guests to interact with them at leisure?

7 ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES

Candidate Hospitality Committee: Form a committee to oversee inviting candidates and assisting them at the event.

Guest Hospitality Committee: Form a committee to oversee setting up the event (including acquiring any needed equipment such a microphones, stage and cameras). This committee is also responsible for obtaining refreshments for your guests as well as volunteers to set up and break down the event.

Advertising Committee: Form a committee to prepare and distribute fliers as well as make announcements in appropriate venues. One component of this committee's work should include inviting local media, if you decide that will enhance your event. This committee should designate spokespeople who permitted to speak with press on behalf of your event. Only spokespeople should speak to the press. This committee should provide spokespeople with talking points so that their message to news outlets is consistent.

8 INVITE CANDIDATES

Send invitation letters to the campaigns. Generally it is advised to call in advance and find out the specific



SECTION 3

ORGANIZING A CANDIDATE FORUM

continued...

individual in the campaign to whom the invitation should be sent. Often this is the candidate's scheduler. Fax and e-mail the invitation then call to confirm its receipt. Follow-up with them. Make sure you include the who, what, where, and when of the event in the first lines of the invitation. Tell them how many people you expect and list the sponsoring groups. If you are a non-profit organization, you must invite all candidates for a specific office and treat them without any favoritism.

9 INFORM THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE EVENT

Print fliers that answer the who, what, where and when of the event. If seating is limited, be sure to note this on the flier. Include contact information, a phone number and an e-mail address, for inquiries. Make sure the people assigned to receive inquiries reply quickly.

Hang fliers in local places of worship and bookstores. Many grocery stores and other public places have community notice boards. Most colleges also post community announcements, generally a student group such as the local MSA must get the announcement approved for posting. Ask imams to announce the event at Jumah prayers. Give fliers to other Muslims to pass out to their friends and colleagues. Call everyone you have in your e-mail and cell phone contact lists and ask them to commit to bringing five other people.

10 SECURE VIDEO AND EQUIPMENT

Many locations will rent you equipment. In either case test your equipment in advance, quality of picture and sound is very important.

11 CONTACT THE MEDIA

Send a media advisory to your local media outlets. Include the answers to what you are doing, when you are doing it, exact street address of where it will occur and

a contact name and phone number. The person who is assigned the job of receiving calls from the media must be prompt in answering calls or e-mails and comfortable with answering any questions news outlets may have. Call CAIR at (202) 488-8787 and ask for assistance.

12 SETTING UP

Ensure volunteers and key committee persons are at the event an hour and a half before it starts. Arrange seating as appropriate to your event format. Set up and test equipment in the location of the event as early as possible.

13 DURING THE EVENT

Have someone present who can deal with any equipment issues, such as your sound system shutting off. Assign someone to keep things clean at places like the refreshment stand. Try to start on time and end on time. Candidates frequently have very tight schedules and can only allot you a certain amount of their day.

14 AFTER THE EVENT

Thank you notes often overlooked; however, they are an excellent reflection of your professional event and community. Send them to the people who helped make your event a success. It is also recommended that if various groups contributed funds, they receive an accounting of how their money was used.



SECTION 3
**GET OUT THE VOTE
 (GOTV)**

STEPS TO FOLLOW

SETTING AND PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION

1 JOIN YOUR EFFORTS WITH CAIR'S LOCAL CHAPTER
 See: <http://www.cair.com/Chapters.aspx>

2 SET UP A GOOD, CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS
 Your headquarters location is a crucial component of community organizing. This location will be your nerve center. It should provide your campaign's leaders with the communications infrastructure they need to manage your mobilization. This does not necessarily mean renting an office. You can set up your headquarters in an area mosque that constituents frequent or in the office of a partner organization.

3 GET OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED
 Build partnerships with like-minded organizations in your area. If they are a 501(c)(3) they will understand the importance of making sure that your campaign stays neutral. If it is a business or partisan organization, you should set down clear, preferably written, guidelines on what you as partners can or cannot do. As one example, the IRS very specifically prohibits not-for-profit groups such as most mosques and schools from displaying literature that supports a candidate. For-profit businesses do not have this restriction. Define the resources each partner group brings to the table. Be sure to clarify who pays for any expenses.

4 GATHER A RELIABLE TEAM
 It is a lot easier to do all the necessary work if you are not alone. If CAIR does not have a chapter in your area, gather members of the community to help you. One possible source is area schools and colleges (if you have Islamic full time school, approach them first because they are normally more receptive). You may be able to work something out with the school where the school is

willing to give community service credit or class credit to students who volunteer to help your effort. Make sure you follow all school guidelines and stay non-partisan. Most schools are not-for-profit entities so they will normally not participate in anything that supports a specific candidate. In addition, make sure you get it permission for the students to participate from their parents or legal guardians. If a particular language dominates in your area, be sure you have volunteers that speak that language.

5 PLAN
 Have a calendar handy, you will want to consult it when scheduling your activities. Plan backwards from election day what milestones or events need to occur by what deadlines. Among those activities you can consider are the following: (Note: most of the below activities are dealt with in detail elsewhere in this guide.)

SETTING AND PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION

ACTIVITY	TIME TO CONDUCT
Voter Registration Drive	One year prior to election up until your state's cut off for participation in this election
Candidate Forums	Six months prior to the election up until election day
Creating and Distributing Voter Guides	Write & Print: From six months until one month before election Distribute: Two months prior to election day up until election is over
Phone Banking	Three weeks before Election Day up until the election is over
Door-to-Door Canvassing	Election Day



SECTION 3
**GET OUT THE VOTE
 (GOTV)**

STEPS TO FOLLOW *continued...*

ACTIVITY	TIME TO CONDUCT
Ask local religious leaders to use sermons and prayer services to remind their congregations to vote.	Three months prior to the election until election day
Issue an election advisory via your fax and e-mail lists.	One month to one week prior to election day; issue a reminder in the morning of Election Day
Have Mosques or other Islamic Institutes designated as polling places.	One-year to six months in advance of election day

6 POLLING PLACES
 Contact local Islamic schools or larger mosques and see if their leadership is willing to set aside space on Election Day for their neighbors to come and vote. Be sure the leaders realize they will lose use of that space for the entire day. Contact your State Board of Elections for information on getting the site officially designated.

7 SET UP A TRAINING DAY FOR VOLUNTEERS
 Pick a central location, possibly a mosque, to hold a volunteer training. This is your chance to energize your volunteers and get them excited about the upcoming campaign. Show them how to make phone calls, register people to vote, knock on doors, and look through databases. Provide them with talking points and ensure that they will adhere to your message. Make sure that volunteers understand the importance of remaining non-partisan and engaging potential voters on that level.

8 DEVELOP MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE TO VOTERS
 Developing literature early on in a campaign can save a lot of time later on. Take some time to develop materials that you might need during the course of your campaign.

Creating voter guides is covered in another section of this guide. Most of these materials have already been produced; check with your local CAIR office to see if they can provide them to you.

9 OBTAIN A LIST OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY
 Lists of registrants can be obtained from city, county or state boards of election. Some provide phone numbers; some do not. For a price some services, such as Aristotle (<http://www.voterlistsonline.com>) will provide lists with phone numbers. Maintain a list of people you have registered to vote recently.

10 KEEP THE VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED
 Many GOTV campaigns fall apart because volunteers feel uninvolved, uninspired and unnecessary. Make sure the volunteers help with developing distribution materials. In addition, make sure that you keep in regular contact with them and keep them updated on the status of your campaign. Ask them to come in several hours a week and make some phone calls. Give volunteers interesting jobs, listen to their opinions and implement good ideas wherever their source. Do not use volunteers to do all the jobs that no one wants to do. You will lose them as members and participants in the community.

NOTE...

While this guide is aimed at mobilizing a community for Election Day the model can be applied to mobilizing for any event. Simply extract the points that apply to your mobilizing needs and leave aside the rest. These steps need not be done in numerical order.



SECTION 3

GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)

STEPS TO FOLLOW *continued...*

GETTING READY FOR ELECTION DAY

11 PHONE BANKING

No sooner than three weeks before the upcoming election, have volunteers place nightly calls to constituents who are registered to vote. You should already have this information if you gathered it before from the voter list you acquired from your State Board of Elections.

You will need to consider the following:

- How many days, hours per day and locations do you have? You will need to acquire locations. Recommendations: four hour shifts for callers; weekend cell phone minutes are often free, can call from home if you trust them with your list.
- How many phone lines and people do you need? You will need to acquire phone lines and volunteers. Approximate 20 calls per hour per phone line (Thus 2,000 calls will take 100 hours. This is 25 four-hour shifts.) Find volunteers to work by approaching your local mosque, youth group, and MSA.
- Write a script for those making the calls. This should include greeting, why they are calling (We just want to remind you to go vote on [insert election day].) If you are going to do an exit poll, ask if you can call on election day to confirm that they voted and who they voted for. You may also ask them for their e-mail address to use for other mobilization campaigns.
- Create tracking sheets: have callers track how many contacts made, how many said they planned to vote, how many said do not call (Mark these and remove them from your list.) These tracking sheets can be used later to show elected officials and others your ability to mobilize voters in their districts.
- Calling is best done when voters are likely to be at home, in the evenings or on weekends. Evening calling should start around 7 p.m. and the last

phone call should be made no later than 9 p.m., as most people will generally not be receptive to calls after this time.

- Automated calling is another option. Agree to pay only for calls that go through and do not pay up front. Started any recorded message with “Salaam Alaykum.” This will get the attention of Muslims.

12 BUILDING TEAM SPIRIT

If your budget allows for it, look into getting matching Election Day t-shirts for your team so they feel a sense of partnership and camaraderie. If you do not have a very large budget, ask your volunteers to bring in a plain white t-shirt a few days before the election and make your own logo together and have them personalize their t-shirts. Especially with younger volunteers, this goes a long way in getting them energized for the upcoming days.

13 REMIND THE COMMUNITY TO VOTE

Consider placing volunteers outside mosques in advance of the election with signs that read “Remember to vote on [election day.] Provide a helpful Web site if possible.

ELECTION DAY

14 ENERGIZE YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Develop a pep talk for your volunteers before they leave in the morning, afternoon and evening. Volunteers need to feel the energy before they leave the room and they need to believe that they are doing something worthwhile with their time. Make sure you tell them how important their help is to your campaign and encourage them to ask questions.

15 DISPERSE YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Get all the volunteers together and go over last

SECTION 3

GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)

STEPS TO FOLLOW *continued...*

minute rules with them. Some of them may have forgotten what their job is already, so patiently remind them in five minutes what they are expected to do while they are make phone calls, knocking on doors or poll watching. Answer all last minute questions and make sure you give them the pep talk you developed! Check in with group leaders every hour or so to see how they are doing; sometimes volunteers will get discouraged if they knock on doors and no one answers; when they come back to the headquarters, remind them that they are doing a fantastic job and encourage them to keep going. Same principle should be applied for the volunteers who are making phone calls that day!

- Divide your volunteers into teams, depending on how many you have. Each group should have an adult (someone over the age of 18) group leader. Assign each group a name based on a theme you pick, such as animals or famous leaders. Be creative with this. An adult should accompany any minors at all times. The schools you are working with may have different requirements; make sure you check with them.
- Create packets of distribution materials for each group. Each group should have a master list of who is in the group, emergency contact information for the headquarters, a cell phone (if an adult does not already have one), a master list of names and addresses of potential voters, and door hangers reminding individuals who do not answer their doors to vote.
- Make sure you have arrangements for food set up as well. You will be expected to provide breakfast, lunch, and if you work late, dinner for your volunteers. You do not want volunteers who are cranky and hungry! Ask local businesses to donate some food from their stores to alleviate the cost of your campaign.



16 GETTING OUT THE VOTE

- Phone: Re-call your targets in the afternoon to ask if they voted and who they voted for.
- Place volunteers in mosques or other places where Muslims congregate and ask people if they have voted yet. If they have not then encourage them to go immediately.
- Have volunteers go door-to-door asking people to go vote.
- Provide transportation to and from polling stations. Arranging free rides through local cab drivers with a centralized number provided on the voter guide for persons to call and request a ride is one possible method. Renting buses is another option.

AFTER ELECTION DAY

17 PRESERVE ALL THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE GATHERED; SAY THANK YOU

Create a new database of the volunteers you had during your GOTV campaign and make sure that they hear back from you often. Chances are, they are interested in doing more work so keep them motivated and keep them abreast of any activities in the area. At this point, you should also do some number crunching to see how many constituents you reached. You can also get information at the polling sites of who voted that day. Compare and see if they were voters you contacted of if they were voters you registered. Lastly, do not forget to send thank you cards to all your volunteers!



ELECTED OFFICIALS

SECTION 4

“Already fighting on behalf of American Muslims is the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, as it is commonly known. The organization...has developed a reputation for being something of a pit bull in protecting the civil rights of Muslims.”
 - THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR, 9/04/2005

ADVOCACY BLUNDERS TO AVOID

DISCUSSION:

LYING

Be honest about what you can and cannot do. Never make promises you cannot keep and keep the ones you make. In making a presentation, do not omit information that harms your case but is critical to the issue.

TURNING A DISAGREEMENT INTO A PERSONAL ATTACK

Your elected officials may hold contrary views on a number of issues. This may even extend to the point at which your only option is to work to find a better person for the job. Whatever the cause, attack the idea or statement but not the person. Name-calling gets your more press, but ultimately turns potential supporters off.

OVER PROMISING


If you promise to deliver 1,000 volunteers on Election Day and ten show up you will immediately lose all credibility. Give a realistic number, achieve it and then spend time expanding your base so that next time you can promise and deliver more.

WEARING OUT YOUR WELCOME

Constant visits and letters will strain even the best of friendships. You must balance your need to keep your issue “top of mind” with the reality that a congressional office is inundated with people and issues.

THREATS

Many members of Congress routinely hear the “If you do not do this I will see you lose the next election” threat. Don’t bother making it. If you actually have that level


MAJOR POINTS:

- Lying
- Turning a disagreement into a personal attack
- Over promising
- Wearing out your welcome
- Threats, blatantly throwing your weight around
- Surprises
- Failing to praise positive actions or acknowledge areas of agreement
- Overuse of rhetoric

of power you should be able to demonstrate it without needing to resort to making such statements.

SURPRISES

If you asked for a meeting on the issue of religious profiling, then that should be the topic of your meeting. Do not walk in and ambush the person with some other, more controversial, topic.

FAILING TO PRAISE POSITIVE ACTIONS OR ACKNOWLEDGE AREAS OF AGREEMENT

You may disagree with an official on one issue, but agree on several others. Acknowledge this agreement. Praise them when they vote in ways you favor. This may be a personal comment or a letter, but it should be done. If all people ever hear from you is criticism, they will eventually tune you out.

OVERUSE OF RHETORIC

Also known as hot air, big talk or the more antiquated balderdash. You know it when you hear it. Avoid repeating it.



SECTION 4

CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE ORGANIZATION & SERVICES

SHOULD YOU CONTACT THE DISTRICT OR THE DC OFFICE?

DISCUSSION:

POSITIONS IN A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

Each member is free to organize their office in a way they feel best serves their constituents. However, the below positions are found in most, if not all, offices.

CHIEF OF STAFF (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

This person is most senior staffer in a congressional office. The position's responsibilities include overseeing operations of the office and being a top policy and issue advisor to the member.

SCHEDULER (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

Oversees the member's appointments.

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

Supervises legislative staff, monitors legislation as it progresses through Congress, implements the Member's legislative priorities.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

Communicates the member's views to the news media, writes press releases and speeches, acts as a spokesperson.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR (DISTRICT OFFICE)

Oversees operations of offices in the member's district or state.

LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

Tracks a particular set of legislative and policy issues and keeps the office up to date regarding those issues.

LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENT (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

Main responsibility is to respond to constituent inquiries.

MAJOR POINTS

- Think of a congressional office as the customer service department of the federal government. It helps constituents who have problems with federal departments and agencies.
- In most instances, the district office leads on directly helping constituents, a process called casework.
- Generally, the Capitol Hill office leads on crafting law and shaping public policy.
- These tasks are not mutually exclusive.
- The chief of staff is the most senior employee on the congressperson's professional staff. The district director is the most senior employee in the congressperson's district.
- Talk to the right person, knowing who is responsible for what in the office can save you from giving a technical presentation on the benefits of universal healthcare to the staff person responsible for veteran's affairs.

CASE WORKER (DISTRICT OFFICE)

Assists constituents with resolving problems with federal agencies.

STAFF ASSISTANT (CAPITOL HILL OFFICE)

Generally, this is the entry level position in congressional offices. The position's responsibilities include answering phones, greeting visitors, routing mail, data entry, and responding to some constituent requests for tours of the Capitol.



SECTION 4

CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE ORGANIZATION & SERVICES

continued...

WHAT CAN A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE DO?

Crafting law and shaping policy are among the primary responsibilities of members of congress. Article I of the U.S. Constitution grants congress "all legislative powers" in government. Among these powers are coining money, maintaining the military and regulating commerce. In general, legislative and policy work is handled by the congressperson's office in Washington, D.C.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE DC OFFICE

Call here to give your thoughts on the issue of the day or to support or oppose a particular piece of legislation or policy.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE DISTRICT OFFICE

Another important task for congressional offices is constituent service. This entails everything from helping constituents address major issues with government agencies to sending birthday greetings and flags that have flown over the U.S. Capitol. Congressional offices can also: assist constituents with appointments to U.S. military academies; aid the immigration process; facilitate access to housing assistance and subsidies; help in acquiring information in federal prison cases; and can point entrepreneurs toward government programs that can help their business. In general, this work is handled by the congressperson's office or offices in the district or state he or she represents.

Contact this office to request a representative or a congratulatory letter for your event, such as a mosque opening or fund raising dinner.



SECTION 4

SETTING UP A MEETING WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

STEPS TO FOLLOW

(Note: While this discussion presents a method for arranging a meeting with a member of Congress, it can also be used to invite a member to come and speak at your civic picnic, Ramadan iftar, mosque function or other event. Simply modify the request to your needs.)

1 KNOW WHO REPRESENTS YOU

To find out who represents you in the U.S. Congress and how to contact them visit www.congress.org (type in your zip code), call the Capitol Hill Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 (have your zip code ready) or call CAIR at (202) 488-8787.

2 GET CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE MEMBER'S SCHEDULER

Call the member's office and ask for the proper spelling of the scheduler's name and their fax number and e-mail address.

3 PREPARE A WRITTEN REQUEST FOR A MEETING

Include the following information: the topic you wish to discuss at the meeting; names of those who will attend, if possible limit your group to no more than five; when you would like to meet and your contact information. Include your address so they can verify that you are a constituent. Members are generally in the district weekends and during Congressional recess periods. Members are generally in Washington, D.C. on weekdays.

4 SEND YOUR REQUEST

Send the request to the Congressperson's scheduler by fax and e-mail.

5 CONFIRM THE REQUEST'S RECEIPT


Wait two business days and then call the scheduler to confirm that your request was received.

6 BE POLITELY PERSISTENT

Be patient and flexible, it may take several calls to get a firm meeting time.

7 CALL THE DAY BEFORE

Call the day before your appointment to reconfirm it.

 **MAJOR POINTS:**

- Research shows that only about 7 percent of voters contact their elected officials.
- Congresspersons maintain easy-to-reach in-district offices to serve their constituents.
- You are not expected to be an expert, just a concerned citizen who has an opinion and maybe a story to go along with it.



SECTION 4

ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE MEETING WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

GO WITH A GAMEPLAN

DISCUSSION:

WHO WILL ATTEND AND WHAT IS THEIR ROLE?


In general, avoid delegations larger than five. Select people who will stay on message and not let their emotions get away from them. Know in advance of the meeting the job you want each member of your team to perform. Who will make introductions and start the discussion? Who will make your key points? Who will make your ask? Does anyone have a personal story to tell that will help make your case? Does anyone have the professional expertise or community position that their presenting certain information will strengthen your case.

WHAT IS YOUR OUTCOME?

It is important to have a clear cut and obvious "ask." Be specific in your requests and create the opportunity to follow up. For instance asking, "Will you vote in favor of legislation X" or "Will you bring this point up during debate on the House floor" or requesting that the Member ask a particular question of a witness at an upcoming hearing are examples of specific asks. If you are in a position to organize a town hall with Muslim constituents, this is a good time to invite the congressperson to visit with the community.

PITCHING YOUR ISSUE

As you frame your arguments to elicit support for your concerns, think about how the congressperson adopting the issue will help you both, and how it will impact their district. Make adopting your position appealing to their interests. Try to mix a brief personal story in with your facts and figures.

 **MAJOR POINTS:**

- Ensure that everyone in your group knows and concurs with the desired outcome of the meeting.
- Ensure that everyone in your group knows the main arguments you will use to support your request.
- Keep written materials brief, with the main points easy to find and quick to read.
- Be sure you have contact information for the staff with whom you will follow-up after the meeting.

BEST PRACTICES

Be punctual. Plan on meeting for no more than 15 minutes; however, be willing to stay longer if the congressperson is receptive. Know the congressperson's views and priorities before your meeting, this will help you frame the most convincing argument. Information on the congressperson's positions can be obtained through a visit to his or her website, searching the internet, or reading articles about him or her in the local paper. On issues where you cannot come to a mutually agreeable conclusion, always maintain basic courtesy. Be factual and honest. Summarize your three most important points at the beginning and end of the meeting. Never argue motivations, only the merits of the issues.

In Washington, D.C., particularly on the House side of Capitol Hill, space can be limited. Be prepared to meet in the congressperson's foyer, in the hallway or even in a cafeteria. This is not an insult to you.



SECTION 4

ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE MEETING WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

continued...

You can see how your Congresspersons voted on various issues, searchable by keyword, here: <http://www3.capwiz.com/c-span/dbq/issuesdbq/votesearch.dbq>

THINGS TO AVOID

Do not make commitments you cannot keep. Do not tell the congressperson or their staff that you want to “make them aware of” an issue. Once they find you are not asking for anything specific, their attention may drift.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Materials supporting your issue should be no more than five pages in length. Your first paragraph should clearly state what you are concerned about and what can be done.

TEMPER YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Be realistic about what the official can and cannot do. Members of Congress are most effective when your issue is under the jurisdiction of a committee on which they sit. (See Appendix I) Be willing to ask, “Tell me honestly, what are the possibilities of getting this done?”

AFTER THE MEETING

Fill out a copy of CAIR’s Elected Official Meeting Report (in this handbook) and send it to us. Send a thank you note to everyone with whom you met. Promptly send any material you promised and take any action to which you committed. Call in two weeks and ask what action has been taken.



NOTES

SECTION 4

ELECTED OFFICIAL MEETING PLANNING SHEET

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

Use this sheet in conjunction with the information provided on the “Ensuring an Effective Meeting with a Member of Congress” page.

1 WHAT TOPIC DO YOU PLAN TO DISCUSS? (KEEP A NARROW TOPIC FOCUS. AVOID HAVING A LARGE LAUNDRY LIST OF ITEMS.)

2 WHAT IS YOUR SPECIFIC “ASK?”

3 WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE TALKING POINTS? TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY, ENSURE THAT THESE POINTS WILL APPEAL TO YOUR CONGRESSPERSON.

4 WHO IS PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETING? WHAT ARE THEIR ROLES?

SECTION 4

ELECTED OFFICIAL MEETING REPORT

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

NAME _____ DATE _____

SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE _____

STAFF MEMBERS MET WITH AND POSITION, IF APPLICABLE _____

MEETING LOCATION: DC DISTRICT

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER/STAFFER:

WHAT COMMITMENTS OR PROMISES DID THIS OFFICE MAKE?

WHAT FOLLOW UP IS NEEDED:
BY YOU: _____

BY THE CAIR-NATIONAL OFFICE: _____

ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:



SECTION 4

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

KNOW YOUR NEEDS, UNDERSTAND THEIR NEEDS


DISCUSSION:

First and foremost, members of Congress are responsible to the voters in their district. Voters are the boss and elections are the annual review. You may have the best issue in the world, but if it does not find support in the district it may be hard to convince the congressperson. (Being able to provide money, votes and volunteers to candidates helps.)

Elected officials are always campaigning. There is an old joke that the re-election campaign starts the day after the election. Members of Congress rely on constituents to help them shape their positions regarding the issues of the day. They seek the insights of community leaders and highly-regarded constituents. Contact from a person who represents many constituents is powerful.

When approaching a member of Congress, it is important to be clear about your purpose. As a community leader, you may be looking to foster a long-term relationship. As a concerned citizen, you may want to see action on a particular issue or get your legislator to vote a certain way on an important piece of legislation.

Regardless of your intent or purpose, be specific in your requests and allow yourself the opportunity to follow up. This will ensure that you are building toward a relationship rather than a one-time interaction. For instance asking, "Will you vote in favor of legislation X" or "Will you bring this point up during debate on the House floor" are examples of specific requests. If you are in a position to organize a town hall, inviting the congressperson to visit with the community is another good strategy. Do not tell the congressperson or their staff that you

 **MAJOR POINTS:**

- It is fun to share our opinions with our friends and at the dinner table. It is vital that we share these same opinions with those in policymaking positions who pass the laws that impact our daily lives, from the taxes we pay to the civil rights we are obliged to protect.
- Public officials are elected to serve the interests of their constituents.
- You are represented in the U.S. Congress by one representative, who represents a limited geographic area of your state, and two senators, who represent everyone in your state.

want to "make them aware of" an issue. Your issue may be fascinating, but their schedules are overloaded. Once they find you are not asking for anything specific, their attention may drift.

It is recommended that you do some reading about the congressperson's views and priorities before your meeting. Information about the congressperson can be found through a visit to his or her Web site, searching for information about him or her on the internet, or reading articles about him or her in the local paper.

Congressional offices are generally inundated. They appreciate your ability to be specific, concise and willing to do legwork.



SECTION 4

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

continued...

GIFTS

Giving a Quran or other gift is never unwelcome. However, Congressional ethics rules limit such gifts. Generally, the limit for citizen volunteers or non-profit organizations is \$50 per gift, no more than \$100 per calendar year. This does not apply to meals at free attendance events that are expected to have more than 25 non-Hill staff in attendance. If you are not sure, ask.

YOUR REPUTATION

Building a reputation is important. When you call an office, your reputation can result in your phone call going to a decision maker or being transferred into “our convenient general complaint voicemail box that is reviewed daily.”

Be honest about what you can and cannot do. Never make promises you cannot keep and keep the ones you make. In making a presentation, do not omit information that harms your case but is critical to the issue.

Do not wear out your welcome. Constant visits and letters will strain even the best of friendships. You must balance your need to keep your issue “top of mind” with the reality that a congressional office is inundated with people and issues.

PITCHING YOUR ISSUE

As you frame your arguments to elicit support for your concerns, think about how the congressperson adopting the issue will help you both, and how it will impact their district.

Equally, always be able to compromise. On issues where you cannot come to a mutually agreeable conclusion, always maintain basic courtesy. Venting your frustration may be immediately fulfilling, but in the long-term it can

lead to a closed door.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Even if you give the material in print, send it in an electronic fashion that the office can cut and paste at need. Congressional offices are always seeking good material to help them push issues forward, be willing to provide it to them.

“Add Value” to print materials in your follow-up calls. Be prepared to give the staffer something new.

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

Working with staff is important. Frequently, staffers are the office experts on their particular issues. They are also far more accessible than the typical member of congress. Quickly respond to any requests that staffers make; remember, they are trying to act on your behalf.

COALITIONS

Always be willing to build coalitions around issues. Lending your support to the concerns of other communities can bring them on board with your issues. It is sometimes politically easy to turn away from one group, but a coalition representing varied interest groups is harder to ignore.



SECTION 4

TIPS FOR CALLING A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

MAKE YOUR POINT; GET A NAME

DISCUSSION:

SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE TIPS FOR PHONE CALLS

- If it makes you feel more comfortable or helps you organize your thoughts, write your key points on a piece of paper before you call.
- Ask the person you speak to for their name and title. Write it down.
- Express how you feel, but avoid being confrontational or argumentative. Always remain polite and professional even if the person you are speaking with seems disinterested or hostile.
- Present your message clearly and simply.
- Get to the point quickly.
- Know what you want the member to do and ask them to do it. (I want the congressperson to vote in favor of Legislation X.)
- Ask again for the congressperson to take action.
- Using the person’s name, tell the staffer you will be calling them back to track the congressperson’s actions on the issue or legislation. (This will create greater responsibility for that particular staffer and will generate more of your comments going directly to the congressperson.)
- If the Congressperson or the staffer expresses something with which you agree, thank them.



MAJOR POINTS:

- Your elected official’s job is to represent your viewpoints. In order for them to do this, you must communicate with them. A phone call takes less than five minutes.
- Expect to speak to a staff person. This is standard procedure.
- They will generally ask for your name and contact information, primarily your zip code. This is how the office identifies that you live in the area their boss represents. They cannot ask your citizenship status.
- Many offices keep a running tally of calls for or against an issue. The outcome of this tally can have an impact on the member’s decision when it comes time to take a position.
- Lastly, be sure to follow up on your phone call. It is important for the congressperson to know that they will be held accountable.



SECTION 4

TIPS FOR WRITING OR E-MAILING A CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

MAKE IT PERSONAL AND CONCISE

ADDRESSING LETTERS

REPRESENTATIVES

The Honorable (insert name here)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (insert name here):

SENATORS

The Honorable (insert name here)
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (insert name here):

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND FAXES

Most every Member of Congress has a Web site that can be quickly found by searching the Internet with their name. A few moments on the Web site will provide an e-mail address or web form for sending messages to the Member. Additionally, most provide their fax numbers. Hill staffers recommend keeping e-mails short, no more than 3-4 concise paragraphs with a clear request included. Formality can be set aside in favor of being succinct.

Do not send unsolicited bulk e-mails (such as subscribing a staffer to your e-list) without first asking permission. Remove them promptly if they request.



MAJOR POINTS:

- A personalized message is always more effective than simply signing a form letter or postcard.
- It is recommended that you limit each letter or e-mail you send to a single issue. If possible, refer to specific legislation.
- Always include your name, address and zip code. This is used by the member's staff to verify that you are a constituent.
- Discuss your support or opposition for a particular issue or piece of legislation. Discuss what impact it has on the district.
- While the letter can be any length you feel necessary to communicate your thoughts, always use the first paragraph to define the issue and what you are asking the member to do. (See also: Producing Effective Documents)

U.S. GOVERNMENT REFRESHER

APPENDIX I

"I remember my uncle telling me 'Muslims are dangerous, they don't care about their own lives... they just want to fight...' After a visit to CAIR, I found out Muslims practice peace."
 -JESSICA DINKINS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, CITING ONE OF THE PROGRAM'S 2006 PARTICIPANTS

U.S GOVERNMENT REFRESHER

ROLLS AND POWERS OF THE THREE BRANCHES:

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

(President, Vice-President and Administration)
 Executes and enforces laws. The president can veto legislation passed by Congress. The president appoints justices and can grant pardons.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (U.S. CONGRESS)

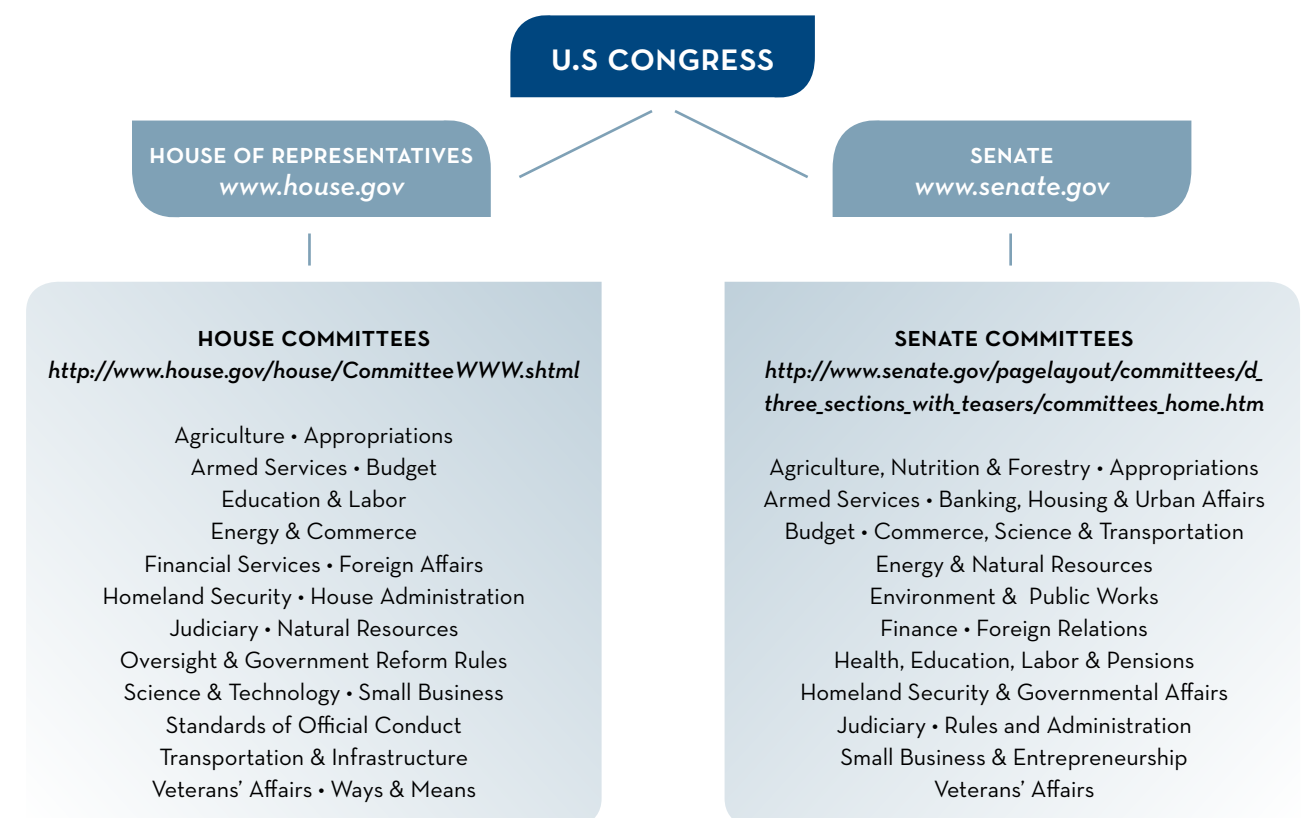
Makes laws. The House of Representatives controls the budget. The Senate has the power to confirm Presiden-

tial appointments and ratify treaties. Congress can override a presidential veto. House can bring Impeachment charges against president; the Senate holds the trial.

JUDICIARY BRANCH (COURTS)

Interprets laws. Justices of the Supreme Court are appointed for life. The courts can decide a law or Executive Order is unconstitutional.

U.S CONGRESS ORGANIZATION:



U.S. GOVERNMENT REFRESHER

SUBHEADLINE *continued...*

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW:

A proposed law, or bill, can be introduced into either the House of Representatives or the Senate. For purposes of clarity this example assumes the bill was introduced into the House.

BILL INTRODUCED

A member of Congress must introduce a proposed law. Often members will seek someone from the other party to join them in introducing the bill. The bill is assigned a number, in the House it will also bear the designation H.R., in the Senate it will also bear the designation S. Co-sponsors are members who have elected to lend their support to the bill.

ASSIGNED TO APPROPRIATE HOUSE COMMITTEE

The bill is then sent to the committee that has jurisdiction over the area the bill will impact. For instance, bills impacting civil liberties generally go to the Judiciary Committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee may choose to do nothing with the bill “killing” it. Expert witnesses may be brought in to discuss a bill’s merits. The committee will schedule a mark-up of the bill during which additions or revisions to the bill may occur. The full committee will vote on the bill, if it passes it will be “ordered to be reported” to the House.

BILL IS PLACED ON HOUSE CALENDAR

The Speaker of the House decides what legislation will be placed on the House calendar and when. The Rules Committee may restrict debate or amendments.

BILL’S MERITS ARE DEBATED ON HOUSE FLOOR

Time is split equally between proponents and opponents of the bill.

HOUSE VOTE

If passed, the bill is then sent to the Senate

BILL IS ASSIGNED TO APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE

The bill is then sent to the committee that has jurisdiction over the area the bill will impact.

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee may choose to do nothing with the bill “killing” it. Expert witnesses may be brought in to discuss a bill’s merits. The committee will schedule a mark-up of the bill during which additions or revisions to the bill may occur. The full committee will vote on the bill, if it passes

it will be “ordered to be reported” to the Senate.

BILL IS PLACED ON SENATE CALENDAR

The Senate Majority leader or a majority of the Senate can decide when a bill is brought to the floor for debate.

BILL’S MERITS ARE DEBATED ON SENATE FLOOR

Debate in the Senate is unlimited unless 60 Senators invoke cloture. If cloture is invoked, further debate is limited to 30 hours.

SENATE VOTES

If the bill passes both chambers in different forms it is sent to a conference committee.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

A committee comprised of members of both chambers. Usually these members have some expertise relevant to the issue at hand.

RECONCILED VERSION IS VOTED ON BY BOTH CHAMBERS

If the conference committee can agree to a compromise bill this version is sent to both chambers and again subjected to a vote.

IF PASSED, BILL GOES TO PRESIDENT TO BE SIGNED INTO LAW

The president may veto, reject, the bill or sign it into law. In the case of a veto a two-thirds vote in each chamber will make the bill a law without the president’s signature.



SHEETS AND SAMPLES

APPENDIX II

SHEET AND SAMPLES

SAMPLE ELECTION ADVISORY

Note: This advisory, informing the local community of an impending election day, is best issued 72 hours prior to election day.

Election Day is [insert day of week], [insert month and day of month].

Here is what you do:

1. FIND YOUR POLLING STATION!

Find out where to vote through the Democratic National Committee here: [Visit <http://www.democrats.org/> to locate and link to the page where voters can enter their address or zip code to find their polling place,]

Find out where to vote through the Republican National Committee here: [Visit <http://www.gop.com/> to locate and link to the page where voters can enter their address or zip code to find their polling place,]

(Remember, as a U.S. citizen, it is your right to vote! Most states have laws guaranteeing you the right to take time off work to vote!)

2. BRING IDENTIFICATION, such as a driver’s license or passport. Most states require it.

3. IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PAPER BALLOT, request it! You do not have to use the electronic ballot if you don’t want to!

4. WHEN YOU ARE DONE voting...grab an “I Voted” sticker and sport it! Wear it with pride!

5. DRIVE HOME SAFELY, and congratulations on voting!

6. CALL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS and make sure they went to vote. Help them to find their polling place.

7. REMEMBER, if you don’t vote, don’t complain.

SAMPLE GOTV CALLING SCRIPT

Salaam Alaykum, I’m [name] calling from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation’s largest American Muslim civil liberties group.

We are calling Muslims in [state] to urge them to vote on [day of week, month, day]

Are you planning to go vote? Anyone else in your home planning to vote?

If yes: That’s great. We’d like to call you after the election to ask who you voted for. May we do so?

If no: I hope you’ll consider going to vote. Voting is an important step toward helping organizations like CAIR protect your civil liberties.

Thank you.

Do you receive e-mails from CAIR?

If yes: That’s great. Thanks for your time and support. Please remember to vote on [day of week, month, day].

If no: May I get your e-mail address and sign you up?

If yes get address and then: Thanks for your time and support. Please remember to vote on [day of week, month, day].

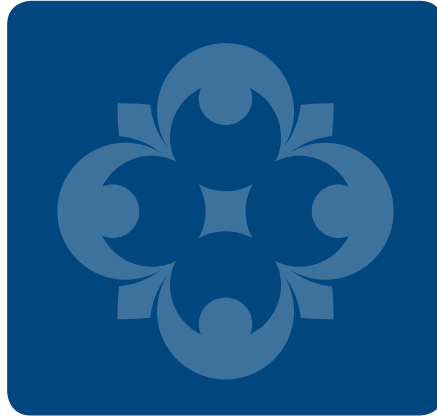
If no: Thanks for your time and support. Please remember to vote on [day of week, month, day].

TIPS:

- 1) Always remain polite.
- 2) Do not debate with people.
- 3) If the person is asking a lot of questions, allow one of CAIR’s professional staff to answer the questions.

“I remember meeting some of you in 2004 at the voting station when CAIR mobilized community members and provided busses to transport voters to the polls after Friday prayer. CAIR’s partnership in the Get Out The Vote campaign shows its commitment to being a voice to the American-Muslim community and should be applauded.”

- BUDDY JOHNSON, SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS,
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA



The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is a non-profit civil rights and advocacy organization. With regional offices nationwide and in Canada, CAIR is America's largest Islamic civil liberties group.

CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding

*To obtain copies of this report, contact:
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 453 New Jersey Ave. S.E.
 Washington, D.C. 20003
 Tel: 202-488-8787
 Fax: 202-488-0833
 E-mail: info@cair.com
 URL: <http://www.cair.com>*

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