

Messaging to Our Voters

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Presented by:

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Chair, SCDP Communications Committee

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SCDP Mission

Simply put,

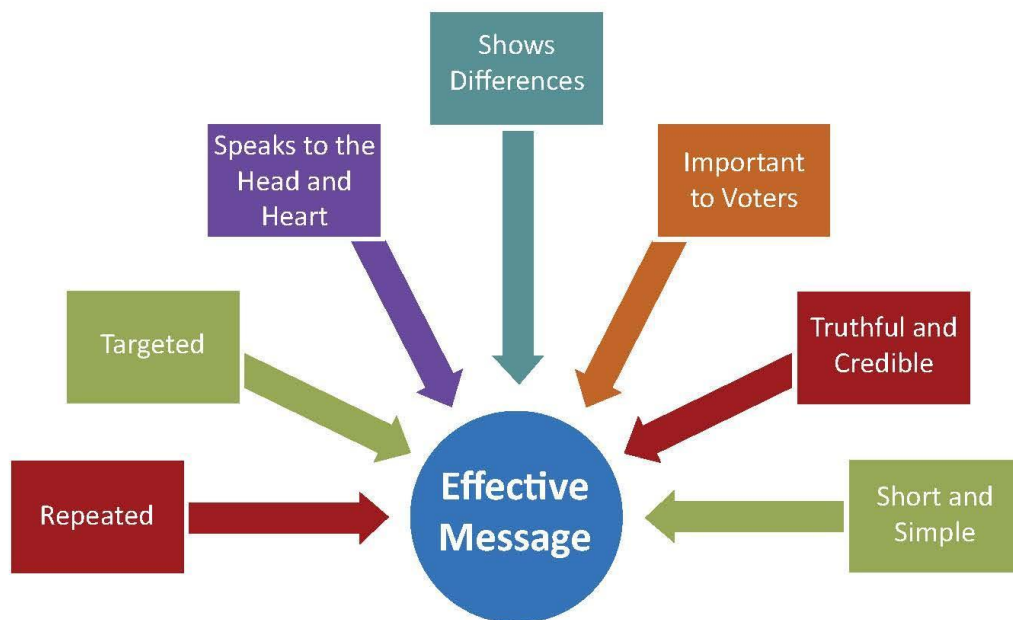
To elect more Democrats to public office in and from Sarasota County

- Everything we do – communicate around, promote, etc. should support the election of Democratic candidates to office in and from Sarasota County
- All strategy and initiatives must answer the questions:
 - What is our objective?
 - Does this action support that objective?

How does the Communications Committee support our Mission? What do we actually DO about it?

- Communicate with the community on an ongoing basis, not just around elections
- Build and maintain a professional communication structure and presence
 - SCDP brand identity – consistency of look & feel around our website, social media channels, printed materials, newsletters, press releases, etc.
 - Consistency of messaging
- Demonstrate leadership in the community
 - Participate in and support events and issues that:
 - Improve conditions for Sarasota County residents
 - Support Democratic causes that further our mission, including
 - Voter registration/enfranchisement
 - The environment
 - Equality and equal opportunity
 - Healthcare
 - Education
- Empower our precinct captains, clubs and caucuses, leadership, etc. to more easily, efficiently, and effectively communicate with the community by assisting with the creation, design, content, and distribution of communication materials
- Understand that as the SCDP, we are an arm of the Democratic Party. While we may address specific local concerns, we still must represent the platform of the party; individual clubs, caucuses (and candidates) may take a different approach

Strategic Political Messaging



Criteria for Effective Messages

Short and Simple

- Concise
- Use language voters use and understand
 - Don't patronize, don't pontificate
 - Be concrete, not abstract
 - Illustrate with real-life examples

Truthful and Credible

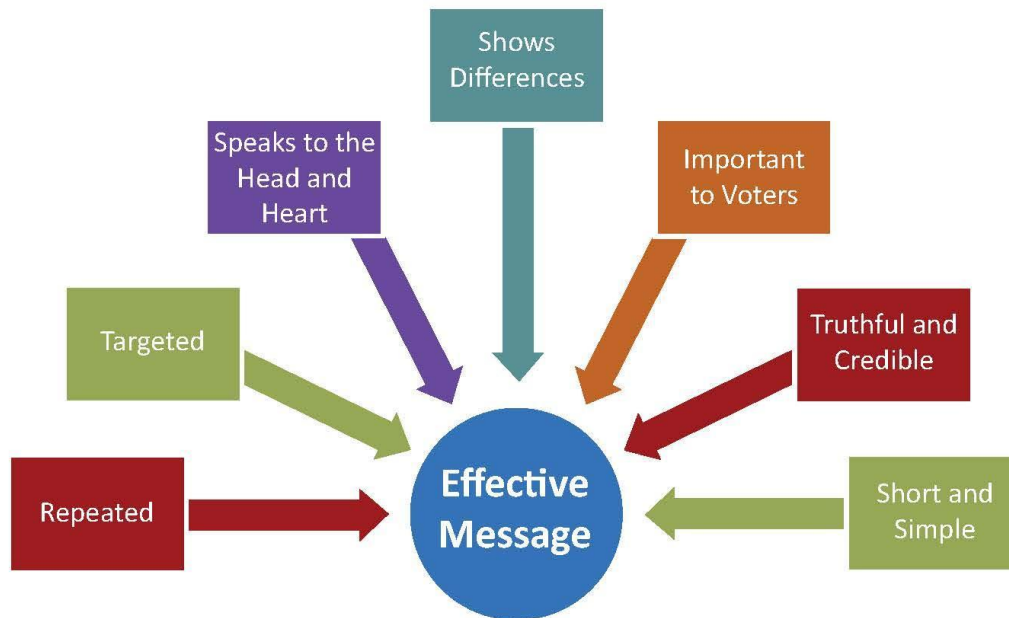
- Authentically reflect the values and policies of the party
- Consistent with the facts
- Realistic and believable – support with past results or experience

Important to Voters

- Reflect and address the values and concerns of your audience
- Connect to issues and challenges in their everyday life

Shows Differences

- Draw clear distinction with alternatives, the "other side"
 - How are we better?
 - What will that mean to/for them?



Criteria for Effective Messages

Speaks to the Head and Heart

- Don't abandon the head, but don't ignore the heart
- "I/We feel you"
- "I/We understand you"
- "I/We care about you"

Targeted

- The right message to the right audience
- Focus on supporters for help
- Focus on persuadables to win

Repeated

- Same message many times, in different ways
- Repetition helps messages register, resonate, and persuade

Core Messaging Elements – use to guide your communications

- Lead with SHARED VALUES
- NAME – the villains, the goal, the issue
- HIGHLIGHT/ASCRIBE MOTIVATIONS – Why (the good and the bad)? Why are they (the villains) doing this? Why do we need to take an action?
- Shift to FUTURE OUTCOMES – What do we need to do about it (Call to Action)? What will success look like?

AVOID

- Abstractions – be concrete, clear, and concise
- Hyperbole – in most instances, the truth is motivation enough; in all instances exaggeration and hyperbole diminish the credibility of your communication
- The other side's framing and lingo – repeating their argument only gives them oxygen and credence
 - NOT: “Dems don’t hate the police,” “Dems aren’t advocating for socialism,” even to refute them

LEAD WITH SHARED VALUES

- *No matter our color, background or party, most of us believe that people who commit treason against our nation and endanger our lives have no business governing in our name.*

NAME – the villains, the goal, the issue

- *On January 6, some Republicans in office betrayed America by inciting MAGA militants to attack our Capitol and then tried to cover up their role in this violence by blocking investigation of these crimes.*

HIGHLIGHT/ASCRIBE MOTIVATIONS

- *Mounting evidence shows these elected leaders helped plan, promote and excuse January 6th. They spread daily lies about our elections and our government to keep their supporters engaged and enraged, exposing Americans from election administrators to school superintendents to death threats and violence.*
- *They're using their deliberate disinformation campaign to attack our freedom to vote and introduce hundreds of election sabotage bills to control election outcomes, criminalize election officials for doing their jobs, and give partisan poll watchers the ability to harass and intimidate voters.*

Shift to FUTURE OUTCOMES

- *In 2020, we turned out in record numbers, made sure our votes were counted and that the will of the people prevailed.*
- *This January 6th, Americans across race, place, party, and background are coming together to say: in America, **the voters decide** the outcome of our elections.*
- *Coming together, we have the power to demand that our Senators exercise their majority and pass the Freedom to Vote Act and John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to create national standards that protect our rights, ensure that trusted local election officials count every vote, and prevent partisan politicians from sabotaging the results of our elections.*

LEAD WITH SHARED VALUES

- *As Americans, we believe in representative democracy and the principle of one person, one vote. That is why, in 2018 in Sarasota County, voters resoundingly supported the establishment of single-member districts for our County Commissioners – so that voters could choose who they feel would best represent them in our large and diverse county.*

NAME – the villains, the goal, the issue

- *Now, the incumbent county commissioners are trying to reverse your vote and have put a resolution on the March 8 ballot to remove single-member districts and revert back to countywide elections.*

HIGHLIGHT/ASCRIBE MOTIVATIONS

- *These commissioners are trying to say they know better what is good for the citizens of Sarasota County, when, in fact, they are protecting their own interests and those of their big-money donors and trying to steal power from citizens. Large, county-wide elections are less democratic and less representative than representation that must be responsive to each district. They are also much more expensive, favoring candidates backed by big-money interests and dark-money PACs. Single-member districts puts power where it belongs – in the hands of the people.*

Shift to FUTURE OUTCOMES

- *Make sure your voice is heard – and continues to be heard – by voting “NO” on the Sarasota County Charter Amendment March 8.*

Positive

- We must offer an alternative that makes things BETTER
- Focus on the positive impact Democrats and Democratic policies have had / are having / will have on people's everyday lives

Correct

- Of course, our position is correct, but is the grammar? Spelling?
 - Don't rely on spellcheck
 - Think beyond spelling to punctuation, capitalization (consistency and correctness), style, and more
 - Read it backwards, read it later, have others review

Consider the Channel

- Tailor your communications (design, length, etc.) based on where and how they will be shared
 - Social media – brevity, singular focus
 - Email mail – longer, but not too long; link to more detailed content if needed
 - Postcards – large graphics, light on words, 1 or 2-item focus
 - Letters – more conversational

Make Appealing/Attention Grabbing

- Snappy, catchy text
- Appealing graphics
- Photos
- Use colors, but not too many

Messaging to Sarasota County Voters

Sarasota County voters are not all the same. How we speak to them – what we emphasize and focus on, the language we use, the channels we utilize, also cannot be the same. There are many different audiences, but for simplicity, we can put voters into four groups.

- Democrats/Left-leaning voters
- Republicans
- NPAs (non-party affiliated), other parties
- Non-voters/Infrequent voters

**As of December 31, 2021, there were 348,166
registered voters in Sarasota County**

Party	# of Registered Voters	% of Registered Voters
Democrat	103,540	29.7%
Republican	148,937	42.8%
NPA	89,184	25.6%
Other	6,505	1.9%

Democrats/Left-leaning voters

- These are the voters who agree with us and support us
- Messaging to this group should motivate them to:
 - Volunteer and get involved to support our candidates and causes
 - Talk to their family, friends, and neighbors to spread our message
 - Donate financially to support the SCDP and local Democratic candidates
 - Help us get out the vote and VOTE themselves for Democrats up and down the ballot
- Communication to this group can be more partisan
- A key goal here is building a communications network and database (and utilizing those that already exist, such as VoteBuilder), with regular, relevant outreach
 - Keeping them informed keeps them engaged
 - Show them we are “doing things”

NPAs

Non-party affiliated voters (NPAs) are not any one thing. Ideologically, they may range from far-left to far-right. The one thing most have in common: they generally are not fans of the two main parties and don't wish to align themselves to a political party.

- Communication to this group should NOT be partisan
 - “Vote Blue” is not a message for this group, nor for any public-facing message in Sarasota County
 - Mudslinging and partisan positioning will also be ineffective, and in fact, likely counterproductive
- Focus should be on specific issues with broad appeal, including
 - Environment
 - Education
 - Healthcare
 - Responsible growth
- Messaging may be different where more specific targeting is possible, as in Facebook advertising or via more detailed data from VoteBuilder, for example:
 - Environmental messages for those with an interest in the outdoors, camping, fishing, etc.
 - Education-related messages for parents of school-aged children
- Utilize VoteBuilder, other tools where available to target Dem-leaning NPAs separately from more conservative NPAs

Republicans

Many Republicans will not vote for Democratic candidates or support us, no matter what we do. A small number may be swayed. This is most likely to be accomplished at the candidate, rather than party, level. Still, there are some things we can do.

- Call out existing office-holders and Republican candidates for actions (votes, statements, activities, etc.) that run counter to the interests of SRQ County voters
 - Monitor their association with groups and events – alert voters to actions that are counter to the interests of their constituents
 - Lobby/publicly advocate them for our issues – including helping and supporting voters to reach out to them directly
- Don't let them drag us in the mud (but don't roll over)
 - “When they go low, we go high”
 - Don't become overly defensive or reactionary, or adopt or use their language back at them, this only gives them oxygen
- Message to them around issues that cross party lines
 - Some areas are (or may be) minimum wage, cannabis, healthcare reform/expansion, reproductive freedom, middle-class taxes, single-member districts(?)

Non-voters/Infrequent voters

Non-voters and infrequent voters can represent untapped potential. Like NPAs, these people span the spectrum from left to right. With the right messaging, some may be motivated to vote ... many never will.

- Identify issues and initiatives that may motivate them – based on specific interests (small business owners, outdoorsmen/women) and/or demographics (age, gender, race)
 - Plan targeted communications to infrequent voters using VoteBuilder to raise awareness of issue that may affect them
- Use earned media (news) to promote issues, events and initiatives, reaching all SRQ County residents
- Reach them through community involvement and events – meet them where they are
- BUT, understand that many of these people will never vote no matter what we do – utilize time and resources accordingly

Other groups and audiences

Sometimes, it makes sense to target based on other criteria, particularly around certain issues, where those who would not typically be “on our side” may be receptive

- Demographic
 - Seniors – healthcare, public health, Medicare, Social Security, community services
 - Youth – education, tuition assistance, student loan programs, jobs, affordable housing
 - Women – reproductive freedom, public safety, economic policies, equality of opportunity
 - Racial/Ethnic minorities – equality of opportunity, social justice, education
- Geographic – residents living in different areas have varied priorities
 - Coastal – beach erosion, unchecked growth, red tide
 - Rural – unchecked growth, land use, access to services (healthcare, etc.)
 - Urban – land use, traffic, infrastructure
- Lifestyle/Occupational
 - Small business owners – taxes, regulation, infrastructure, employment policy
 - Parents – education, public safety, childcare, healthcare, recreational opportunities
 - Sports/Outdoors enthusiasts – environmental issues, recreational opportunities, land use
 - Front-line, blue-collar workers – wage and hour policies, healthcare, equality of opportunity, educational opportunities, jobs, affordable housing

Message Delivery

Delivering our Message – Marketing and Branding

- Messaging and political communications is marketing
- The Democratic Party and SCDP are brands
 - Everything we do relates to and reflects upon our brand
- Keys to strong branding
 - MESSAGING
 - Consistent Look and Feel
 - Colors
 - Fonts
 - Logos
 - Other design elements
 - Clean, modern, and professional
 - Reflects quality
 - Error-free
 - Crisp, quality images
 - Legally compliant (copyright, etc.)



Energy Industry's 'Frontier' Award Wins Energy the
News/Info/Action News/Info from Your Ballot/Political/Political/Political



Dear Sarasota County Voters,

The Biden Administration, supported by a bipartisan coalition in Congress, has signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law. This historic legislation will ensure good jobs for our community and support energy production and transportation.

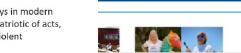
Just some of what Sarasota County is eligible to see:

- \$550 million for the construction of thousands of homes and energy storage projects. This will reduce the electricity and propane bills for businesses and homes, make homes more energy efficient, and ensure energy jobs for all.
- \$500 million to build Sarasota County's new transit system (SCAT) that will provide a high-quality and comfortable transit system for all.
- \$500 million to build a new airport terminal, in addition, there will be \$500 million to build a new airport terminal.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act focuses on the problems of crumbling roads, bridges, water, ports, and airports and builds a strong energy infrastructure.

In fact, when it comes to infrastructure, which is currently facing a crisis, the Biden Administration has the most comprehensive plan in history.

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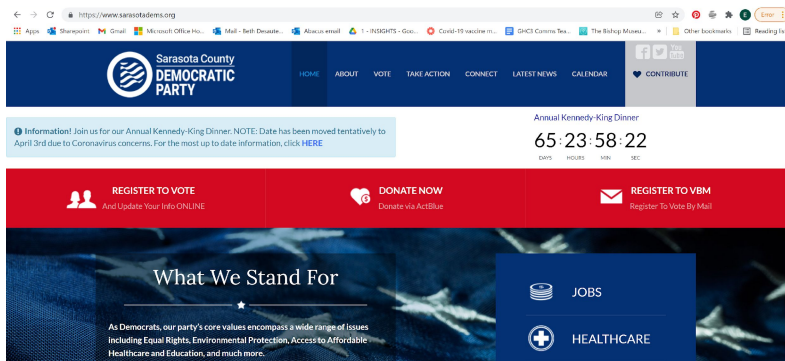
Sarasota County Democratic Party
Press Advisory – For Immediate Release
January 5, 2021

SCDP Stands with Real Patriots on January 6 Anniversary

This Thursday, January 6, marks the one-year anniversary of one of the saddest and darkest days in modern American history – when those who would call themselves “patriots” committed the most unpatriotic of acts, attempting to subvert the will of American voters and overturn a legitimate election through violent insurrection.

Standing with all good citizens – and real patriots – the Sarasota County Democratic Party (SCDP) urges everyone, of all political parties and ideologies, to remember those killed and injured one year ago. In their honor, and in the honor of all those who serve and fight to protect us, we support the actions of the U.S. House Select Committee investigating the January 6, 2021, attack to expose the truth and hold those responsible accountable for their actions. We will continue to fight to ensure all our people can live in a nation committed to the ideals of democracy, human rights, and freedom.

Contact Information: JoAnne DeVries, Sarasota County Democratic Party Chair, (941) 320-8825, jdv.devs8@gmail.com



Q&A