

**\*\*\*What follows is a sample County Party Plan to be used for educational purposes only. Every county is different and there is no “one-size-fits-all” program. This document is just one example of how one county organizes its efforts.\*\*\***

## **SAMPLE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY VICTORY PLAN**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

What follows is a summary of the program that we have put in place for our County Democratic Party GOTV program. It is designed to be a complete blueprint for running a countywide Democratic campaign from beginning to a victorious conclusion in the general election.

### **II. STEP ONE - BEGIN EARLY**

- A. Organize precinct chairs, local democratic clubs, labor and every form of party campaign activist into one group. Months before the primary election, deliver a positive message that emphasizes the necessity to maintain unity within the party and to develop and implement a victory plan for the general election. Install a winning attitude by asking all of your Democratic Party activists to support the party and the parties' candidates. From this day forward, Democrats are required to say only good things about other Democrats and about the general election victory we are going to WIN!

### **B. CANDIDATES**

Recruit good candidates to challenge local Republican incumbents. Consider forming a committee to identify candidates that will compliment and run with local Democrat incumbents. Once the primary is concluded implement the following:

- a. Begin a series of regular unity meetings among all of the local Democratic Party nominees immediately after the primary elections.
- b. Insist all Democratic Party nominees run as a team with each candidate supporting and publicly complimenting every other Democratic candidate.

- c. Require candidates to share information, schedules, resources and support each other's events.
- d. Distribute and discuss the entire countywide GOTV plan and each candidate's role in the plan.

### C. FINANCING G.O.T.V.

- a. Begin a series of regular fund raising events as soon as possible. These events accomplish two purposes:
  - (1) Put needed funds away for the party's upcoming GOTV general election campaign; and
  - (2) Keeps party activists motivated and enthusiastic.
- b. Various methods can be effectively used to raise funds for the local party. Some ideas include:
  - i. Appreciation dinners for local popular Democratic incumbents with the funds going into party coffers,
  - ii. Local barbeques,
  - iii. cocktail party with visiting Democratic party official as guest speaker,
  - iv. barbeques honoring local Democratic law enforcement,
  - v. Miscellaneous - skeet shoots, golf tournaments, etc., etc., etc.
- c. Candidate contribution to GOTV effort.
  - i. After all of the local party fundraising is concluded the candidates need to be asked to contribute a reasonable proportional share of the total cost of the county GOTV effort. This prorata contribution can be partially based on ability to pay and ability to raise funds. Countywide candidates should be required to pay a larger portion of the GOTV budget than lower echelon office seekers such as JPs

and constables. These people will pay if they understand these funds are to be effectively spent to get out the votes to support their candidacy.

## II. IMPLEMENTING THE GOTV PLAN

### A. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

Ideally the County Democratic party should have several campaign headquarters to serve as meeting places for the numerous different groups that will be working on the election.

1. Democratic clubs provide an excellent resource to locate, fund and supply the manpower for local campaign headquarters.
2. Most counties has several individual Democratic Clubs. Each has its own membership of party activists and a treasury. Each of the clubs principle membership are generally located in a different area of the County.
3. The County is divided into regions. (In one area 2 smaller clubs can be paired.) Each headquarters in the County can be located, manned and financed by the various local Democratic Clubs. Each headquarters has regular functions and activities that included openings, telephone banks, sign crews, block walking efforts, fund raising events, etc., etc.
4. Each headquarters is responsible for the campaign activity in its assigned area. The local precinct chairs in each area and other activist and/or club members all worked out of their area headquarters. (The County Party helps supplement the costs for each headquarters.)
5. The County Coalition of Black Democrats can operate a headquarters in the heart of the minority precincts. This group is primarily responsible for the Party's GOTV efforts in the black community. In addition to all of the above, this group

effectively organizes the local black ministers and received help from activists in each local church.

B. SENIOR MAIL IN BALLOT

Seniors are entitled to vote early by mail. Seniors can be identified through the state party database operated by VAN. The County Clerk will begin to accept applications for senior ballots about two months before early voting begins. The senior mail in ballot plan is a labor intensive way to get an early lead in the election. The plan requires the full attention of all party machinery to identify and mail a senior ballot application to every senior in the county who is likely to vote Democrat including all seniors with a Democratic primary voting history, all seniors who live in GOTV precincts and if funds permit all seniors who live in swing precincts and do not have a Republican primary voting history. Once the ballot applications have been mailed the party must focus on calling and in some areas block walking to assist the seniors with completing the ballot application and returning it to the county clerk. The party must track the seniors so that they can follow up to make sure that they mail in their ballot in a timely fashion. Although, the senior program is labor intensive it is a relatively inexpensive way of generating a significant number of additional early votes for the Democratic Party candidates.

SENIOR BALLOT PROGRAM

- (1) Every senior receives an auto dial message from a popular elected Democratic official announcing they are about to receive a mail ballot application in the mail and giving instructions.
- (2) The Party sends a mail ballot application with a senior issue orientation to every senior in the County targeted as follows:
  - a. Seniors with a Democratic voting history;
  - b. Seniors who resides in a heavy Democratic or minority precincts;

- c. If funds permit Seniors who reside in a swing precinct and do not have Republican primary voting history.
- (3) Again accurate targeting can be accomplished by use of a database such as the VAN program. Applications arrive already filled out, have Democratic information and only requires the senior to sign, stamp, and mail.
- (4) Senior receives second auto dial message reminding him or her to send in their application to the County Clerk.
- (5) Party volunteers make live calls to the seniors particularly in the heavy GOTV areas to remind seniors to mail in their ballot applications before the deadline.
- (6) Party checks with County Clerk to see how many applications to vote were received and when actual ballots were returned to seniors for voting.
- (7) Party headquarters tries to determine when seniors will receive ballots from County Clerk. A second mailer arrives at senior's residence on why to vote for Democrats.
- (8) Party volunteers make a personal telephone call from local party headquarters reminding seniors to mail in their ballots before the deadline for receipt. Under this plan if properly implemented, Democrats can have several thousand votes already cast well before early voting even begins.

#### C. EARLY VOTING

- (1) A similar step by step process as described above is repeated to encourage the Democratic Base to get out and vote early.
- (2) Targeting mailings are sent to the seniors who did not utilize the mail in ballot, black voters, Hispanic voters and the overall Democratic population. Early auto dial calls come from popular Democrats and personal telephone. Personal calls follow from the headquarters asking Democrats to vote early.

(3) Prior to the last day of early voting, there is always a weekend Saturday and Sunday where the polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. on a Saturday and Sunday. The weekend of early vote is the critical time to improve your early vote turnout. Sunday is the day to put on a huge rally for GOTV in minority precincts. A big rally and barbeque is organized in a black precinct in a park across the street from a temporary minority full day voting location.

Invitations are received through the mail, by telephone, leaving church, and door to door to attend the rally, have bbq, and cross the street to vote. A big effort is made to get out the entire community. All candidates participate. Many of the minority ministers help with a pews to the polls appeal. High level minority politicians attend (Cong. Sheila Jackson Lee). This is a very effective campaign tool that can add hundreds of Democrat votes to your effort.

(4) One of the most important components of the early vote and Election Day GOTV effort requires utilization of a computerized database such as the VAN program. It is essential that the party obtain the voter certificate numbers of each voter who has voted so that they can be removed from the list of potential voters to be contacted. This information must be provided and our voter information is sent by email in a format that can be merged into our database. Update voter lists after every day of early vote so you do not spend any time contacting people who have already voted. There is usually a two-day window between the end of early vote and Election Day. Your campaign should use that time to make sure that all of the voters who have voted early are removed from the lists utilized by our block walkers and phone bankers on Election Day.

#### D. ELECTION DAY GOTV

1. Every person with a Democratic voting history has received a mailing, auto dial message and personal telephone message immediately prior to and on Election Day.
2. A full page color GOTV advertisement appears in the local newspaper with a photo of every Democratic candidate and a message to vote the straight Party ticket.
3. The party holds a giant organizational meeting the night before the Election. Candidate and local Democratic activist attendance is mandatory. Updated block walking and phone banking lists with everyone who has already voted deleted are provided. Each candidate and/or club is assigned a specific area of the county to walk and/or phone.
4. The candidates and volunteers are assigned to the places where they have the most familiarity or recognition. Paid block walker and phone bankers are utilized to cover the heavy GOTV precincts.
5. Every candidate on the Party ballot plus hundreds of the Party faithful participates in a door to door GOTV effort in every Democratic precinct. The plan is to knock on the door of every Democratic household and urge them to vote on Election Day.

## CONCLUSION

Elections are won by the party that does the best job of turning out its base. Voters are busy and for the most part find voting an inconvenience. The Democratic Party believes in starting the GOTV process as early as possible and continuing it until the last voting location closes on Election Day. The Democratic Party believes in utilizing every legal means to turn out the base Democratic vote. The programs discussed here include the old and the new. Modern technology such as a computerized database can make an old program such as the senior mail ballot program much more effective than ever before. The most important aspect of the Democratic Party GOTV program is the team concept. We have found that when we work together we win.