

Student Network Tip-Sheet

Bird-dogging

In the 2000 elections, 60 students followed Senator McCain during his presidential bid and asked him at every chance what his plan was to stop global warming. In response, Senator McCain pledged to sponsor the first major global warming bill in the Senate. Now it's your turn. This year, your Congress member will be home to meet with constituents. The only way to overpower corporate money is to show our people power; call your representative's office to find out where he or she will be, show up and confront them with questions about their stance on global warming!

How To: Bird-dogging

Overview

Bird-dogging is a term that describes an event that targets a decision-maker by being present at their public appearances and using those appearances to generate attention for a campaign. By showing up at the target's event, we can influence our target directly, demonstrate public support for our position, and attract the media. To bird-dog effectively, you should appear at nearly every public event the target is holding, have consistent signs and appearance (wear campaign shirts), and ask them a consistent message every time. Your continued presence and the widespread support of the issue will be an important part of getting the target to commit to action on global warming.

Bird-dogging Tips

- 1) Stay away from personally attacking your target. We want to show how much support we have for the issue, not make it an us-versus-them event.
- 2) Make a list of every public event your target will attend. If your target is an elected official, it is as simple as calling the local representative's office, saying that you're a constituent, and asking if the representative will be at any public events in the near future. You can also do online research.
- 3) Be prepared to talk to the press. Have a spokesperson ready with campaign materials.
- 4) Have a designated spokesperson who will ask the candidates questions about global warming.
- 5) Bring consistent signs or other props that the representative will see at every event.

Roles

- **Volunteer Manager** – calls key students and allies as soon as you discover the event. Places follow up calls the night before the event to confirm attendance, provides directions and the meeting spot, brings signs and fliers for volunteers. At the event prepares volunteers by reviewing the goal and message of the campaign and the specific goal of the event (i.e. asking two questions and talking to one reporter). Provides the volunteers with specific activities (i.e. hold banner, pass out fliers)
- **Media Manager** – prepares press packets, has a clear message ready (one sentence) to introduce campaign to the media (i.e. Hi, I'm from [organization] and we're here asking that [target] address global warming). At the event greets the media with a clear message, offers a press packet, answers questions, and collects business cards.