

CANVASS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AS A CONSTITUTION VOTER

Going to people where they live is a very personal way to educate and provide information about the Constitution Voter campaign. For some people, this may be the only time they have the opportunity to engage in a discussion about civil liberties issues with someone who is passionate and knowledgeable.

Whether you are going door-to-door in your own neighborhood by yourself or you have other civil libertarians who plan to join you, there are some basic things to keep in mind as you prepare to get the word out about the Constitution Voter Pledge.

A first-time canvasser may find the prospect of visiting unsuspecting neighbors at their homes very intimidating. However, with a little bit of preparation and the right materials, you can be an effective ambassador to your friends and neighbors, and educate them about constitutional issues affecting every American this election season.

The Script. To properly prepare yourself for canvassing, review the basic script below, which is designed to help you talk about why it is important for citizens to stand up for the Constitution and sign the pledge to be a Constitution Voter.

Role Play. Nothing else is as effective as role playing when preparing to head out into your neighborhood. You may feel nervous about going door-to-door, but putting in a few minutes of practice time will help you smooth out your delivery and become comfortable talking about why the Constitution Voter pledge is so important. Practice with a fellow volunteer, a friend, your child or even in front of a mirror. Even seasoned canvassers can benefit from a couple of practice role playing sessions to get the bugs out of their presentation.

Pair Up then Go Solo. You may feel more comfortable with a fellow civil libertarian at your side as you visit the first few houses. Once you feel comfortable, divide up while staying in sight of your partner.

Report Back and Follow Up. After what is sure to be a successful afternoon of collecting signatures to the Constitution Voter pledge, make sure you return the pledges to the ACLU Washington Legislative Office. Don't forget to report back regarding any individuals who may have requested more information about the ACLU or the Constitution Voter campaign. We are always happy to assist with materials and follow up information.

ESSENTIAL MATERIALS

The Pledge. Download pledge sheets at www.aclu.org.

Leave behinds. The ACLU has created a variety of concise, attractive materials for you to leave behind with your neighbors to help them understand the importance of joining together as Constitution Voters. Visit our website at www.aclu.org to download door hangers, brochures, stickers and other helpful materials.

Script. Include the script each canvasser used during the training so they can refer back to it once they get into the field.

CANVASSING TIPS

You don't have to be an expert on every issue! Do not be afraid to admit you don't know the answer to a question. This is a great opportunity for the campaign to follow up and provide an answer to his or her question. Make sure to get the person's contact information so that someone can follow up with an answer.

Pause briefly between visits. Take a moment before proceeding to the next home to reflect on the discussion you just had—being careful to note any follow up that is necessary.

Tote it. Carry your materials, water, snack bar, cell phone and clipboard with your script in a tote bag to keep yourself organized.

Wear comfortable walking shoes.

You don't have to visit EVERY house. When in doubt about a scary dog, a no solicitor's sign or bothering a busy, harried mother, just leave the materials and move on to the next house.

Be courteous. Use sidewalks and don't trample the lawn, smile and greet homeowners by their first name and use the script but listen carefully to the people you are visiting.

RETURN PLEDGE FORMS TO THE ACLU.

**National Field Department, ACLU
915 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005**

SAMPLE SCRIPT

Hello my name is _____. I'm out in the neighborhood today talking to my neighbors about signing a pledge to become a Constitution Voter. I live right down the street on _____; it's very nice to meet you today.

I'm sure you've heard a lot in the media these days about Hockey Moms, National Security voters, so-called "ethnic" voters and even NASCAR voters.

I've decided that one of the most important issues in this election season is that our elected officials live up to their commitment of protecting and defending our basic constitutional rights. That's why I've signed the pledge to become a Constitution Voter.

Being a Constitution Voter means that:

- I believe that no one—including the president—is above the law.
- I oppose all forms of torture, and I support both closing the Guantánamo Bay prison and ending indefinite detention.
- I oppose warrantless spying.
- I believe that government officials, no matter how high-ranking, should be held accountable for breaking the law and violating the Constitution.
- I believe that the Constitution protects every person's rights equally—no matter what they believe, how they live, where or if they worship, and whom they love.
- I reject the notion that we have to tolerate violations of our most fundamental rights in the name of fighting terrorism.
- I am deeply committed to the Constitution and expect our country's leaders to share and act on that commitment—every day, without fail.

I hope you'll join me in signing the pledge and become a Constitution Voter. These pledges will be delivered to all of our local, state and national candidates running for office this year to demonstrate how strongly Americans everywhere feel about protecting and defending the Constitution.