

AAP ADVOCACY TRAINING



VOTING WITH CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND A PEDIATRICIAN'S SCHEDULE IN MIND

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



INTRODUCTION

- Elections take place at every level of government and all elections can help advance children's health issues.
- Elections—especially those at the local level—are often overlooked and provide crucial opportunities for pediatricians to advocate on behalf of children and children's health issues.



KEEPING THE RULES IN MIND

- You can engage in almost any political campaign or election activity as a public citizen, but political and election activity on behalf of the AAP, AAP chapter, or your place of residency has some restrictions.
- Certain political and election activities are restricted or prohibited due to your AAP chapter or organization's tax status.
- If you are acting as a public citizen, don't use your AAP, hospital/clinic, or academic title, as that can imply endorsement of those organizations.
- The AAP Division of State Government Affairs and the Department of Federal Affairs can provide more information about permissible nonpartisan political campaign and election activities.



WHY ELECTIONS MATTER

- Provide opportunity to demonstrate to decision-makers that pediatricians and others are voting with children's health in mind.
- Electing people who are willing to make children's health a priority results in better public policies and initiatives for children's health at all levels of government.
- Offers another way to educate elected officials, candidates and voters about children's health.
- Pediatricians can establish themselves as a constituency that deserves the attention of those running for office.



TYPES OF PUBLIC ELECTIONS

- There are many different types of public elections that take place, including:
 - school board
 - park board
 - city council or mayor
 - county government
 - judicial elections
 - state government (state legislators and state executive branch)
 - federal government (federal legislators and federal executive branch)



HOW TO USE NONPARTISAN ELECTION WORK TO ADVANCE YOUR ISSUE

- Voter registration
- Voter education
- Voter mobilization, eg “Get-Out-The-Vote” (GOTV)
- Town Hall or candidate forums



VOTER REGISTRATION

- Involves registering new or lapsed voters so that they can legally vote on Election Day.
- Helps assure that people who care about children's health issues are able to demonstrate their care and concern at the polls.
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- Voter registration laws are different in every state, so please consult your secretary of state's office or state or local election commission for specifics about registering voters in your area.
- A helpful resource for voter registration is: www.vote411.org



VOTER EDUCATION

- Involves providing voters with the tools they need to learn about candidate's positions on issues that matter to them, such as children's health or pediatric practice issues.
- Great way to raise public awareness about your issue and assure that children's health concerns are included in the public debates that occur during the political campaign and election process.



VOTER MOBILIZATION (GET OUT THE VOTE)

- Help ensure that voters get to the polls on Election Day so they can cast their ballots on behalf of children's health and well-being.



TOWN HALL OR CANDIDATE FORUMS

- Invite candidates to address community about children's health and well-being related issues.
- A great opportunity to educate candidates on issues you care about and demonstrate how many other people share your interests.
- Can also bring media coverage to your issue.
- Forums can be big or small, but do require planning.



TIPS FOR PLANNING TOWN HALL OR CANDIDATE FORUMS

- Partner with other organizations. This will allow you to draw upon additional resources and divide the work load.
- Important to follow IRS guidelines.
- Talk to your hospital's government affairs or public relations office—they may be able to help set up these forums.
- AAP has resources and planning guide, with templates and sample agenda. (<http://aap.grassroots.com/resources.dyn/TownHallGuide.pdf>)
- Invite academic experts or representatives from children advocacy groups to present information about the candidates' positions at Grand Rounds or at a noon conference or morning report.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- Elected officials have the power to make decisions on children's health issues at all levels of government.
- Pediatricians have the power to vote, as well as engage others who care about children's health and well-being, to get involved in nonpartisan election activities on behalf of the issues that are important to them.
- Don't forget about the rules!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & INFORMATION

- AAP Advocacy Guide (www.aap.org/moc/advocacyguide)
- AAP Chapters (www.aap.org/member/chapters/chapters.htm)
- AAP Division of State Government Affairs
(www.aap.org/moc/stgovaffairs)
- AAP Department of Federal Affairs (<http://federaladvocacy.aap.org>)
- AAP Community Pediatrics Training Initiative
(www.aap.org/commpeds/CPTI)