



*Presents*

# **The Next Hurdle: Running for Office**

March 25, 2025  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Presenter: Abigail Martin  
Moderator: Michele S. Mirman, Esq.



## **Bio - Abigail Martin**

### **Political Director - Eleanor's Legacy**

**Abigail Martin**, Eleanor's Legacy's Political Director, began her career in advocacy social work in the Bronx Family Court, where she witnessed the impact governmental policy has on families. Martin also taught social work at Columbia University, Fordham University, and Montclair State University. Inspired by the governmental response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in her neighborhood, Martin began a career transition that led her to run for New York City Council in 2021 and District Leader in 2022. At The New Majority NYC, Abigail drove the candidate endorsement process and founded its Young Leadership Council. Most recently, Abigail served as the organization's Interim Director. A working mom of three, Martin is committed to preserving democracy and the reproductive freedoms of future generations of women. Originally from Maine, Abigail has lived in New York since 1999, when she enrolled at Skidmore College. Abigail currently resides in the northwest Bronx, with her children and spouse.



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#### Biography

Michele S. Mirman, Esq., has been a practicing trial attorney for 47 years and is the founder and head of her own seven-attorney plaintiff's medical malpractice, personal injury and construction firm, Mirman, Markovits & Landau, P.C., which she established in 1991. She has represented over 10,000 New Yorkers in all manner of cases, including bullying, failure to protect from assaults and rapes, road design, subway, bus and car accidents, and general liability cases.

Ms. Mirman is a former President of the Brooklyn Women's Bar Association and the New York State Trial Lawyers Association and is the current President of the Brooklyn Women's Bar Association Foundation, which she helped found. She has lectured on trial tactics, running a firm, prosecuting personal injury cases, and women's medical malpractice cases.



Ms. Mirman has helped create scholarships for law school students through the Brooklyn Women's Bar Association Foundation and for college students through the Mirman Family Foundation. As a member of *AllinBklyn*, a Brooklyn women's giving circle, Ms. Mirman supports Brooklyn charities that provide training and jobs for Brooklynites, and for the past ten years, Ms. Mirman has been a trustee of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, which celebrates the achievements and contributions that immigrants have made to our country. She is also the President of Bear Givers, Org., a non-profit that seeks to empower disabled children through art shows that they contribute to and through kindness programs that they participate in.

She is admitted to the bars of New York, New Jersey, California, Connecticut, Florida, Washington D.C., and the Federal Court of New Jersey, the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, and the Supreme Court of the State of New York.



# **ELEANOR'S LEGACY ACTION FUND**

**Women's Bar Association of  
the State of NY**

**The Next Hurdle: Running for Office**

# Code of Conduct

Eleanor's Legacy and the Eleanor's Legacy Action Fund are committed to providing a safe and accessible environment free from discrimination and harassment, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, ability, gender identity or expression.

Eleanor's Legacy and the Eleanor's Legacy Action Fund expect everyone who participates in any of its activities, events, or meetings, whether in-person or online, to abide by this standard of conduct.



# Welcome



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# Who are we?

**Eleanor's Legacy** was founded in 2001 to recruit, train, and support pro-choice Democratic women running for state and local office in New York.

**The Eleanor's Legacy Action Fund** is a sister organization to Eleanor's Legacy, providing campaign training and voter education opportunities to the pro-choice women of New York.

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# Today's Agenda

**1:00 Introduction**

**1:05 Campaign Preparation and Timeline**

**1:15 Fundraising Strategies**

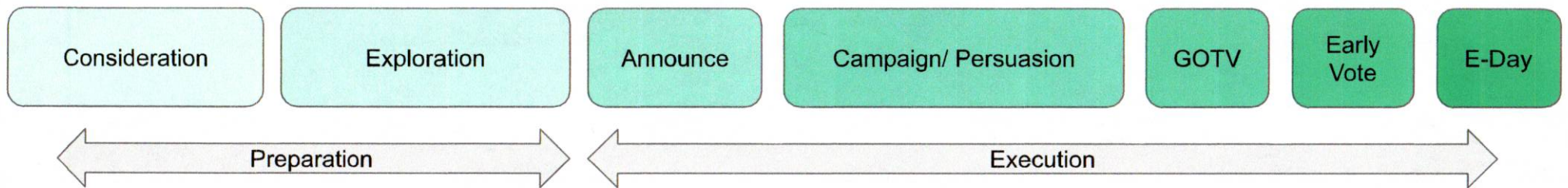
**1:30 Opposition and Personal Research**

**1:35 Campaign Communications**

**1:45 Volunteer Recruitment and Endorsement  
Acquisition**

**1:50 Recap and Questions**

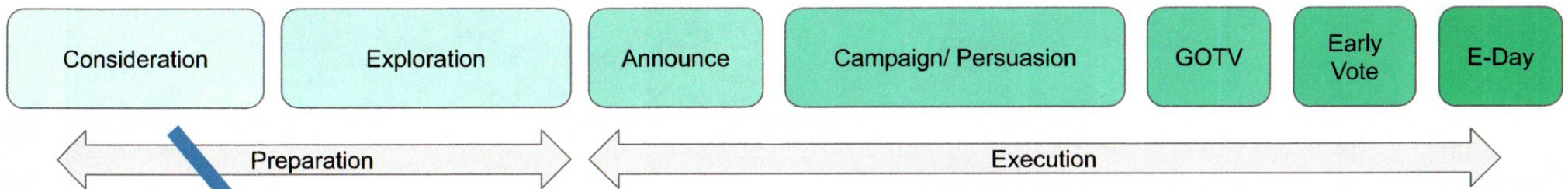
# Campaign Timeline



**There is a finite amount of time before Election Day**



# Campaign Timeline



What kind of support will you need to run?  
Have you discussed with your core network?  
Does everyone understand the time commitment?  
Are your finances ready?  
Who will handle your responsibilities at work/at home?  
Are you ready to be in the public eye?

# Know the Elected Positions where you live and who holds them

## **Federal**

U.S. Senate  
U.S. House of Representatives

## **State**

Governor  
Lieutenant Governor  
Attorney General  
Comptroller  
State Senate  
State Assembly  
State Supreme Court

## **Municipal**

Mayor  
Public Advocate  
Comptroller  
Borough President  
City Council Member  
Town Supervisor  
Town Council or Board Member  
Village Council or Board Member  
Coroner  
Town or Village Justice

## **County**

County Executive  
District Attorney  
County Comptroller  
County Clerk  
County Legislator  
County/Family/Surrogate Court Judges

## **Political Party**

Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the Judicial Convention  
State Committee Member (two people of different genders)  
District Leader (two people of different genders)  
County Committee Member

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# Get Involved

- Volunteer on a campaign.
- Join (or at least meet) your town or county committee or other political organization.
- Join organizations in your community.
- Learn about your state and local elected officials.
- Follow, read, and subscribe to your local media outlets.

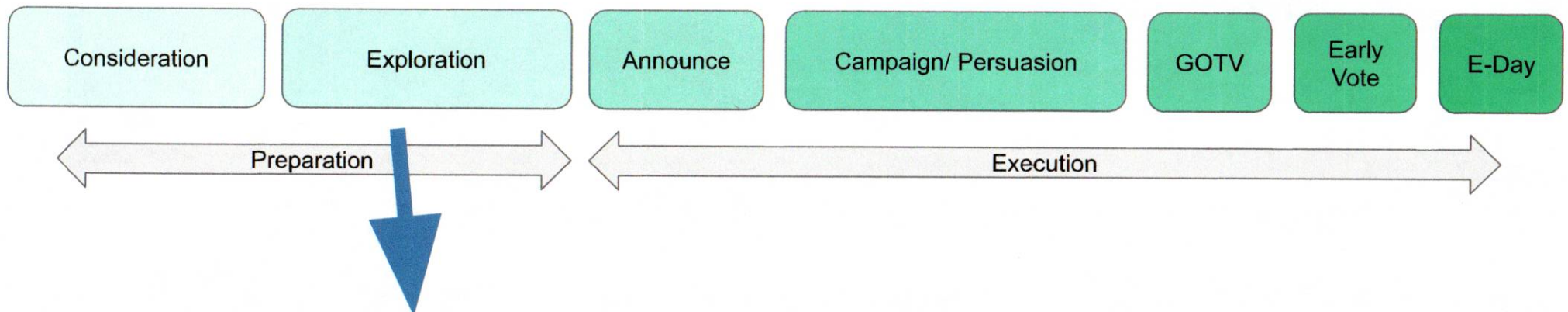
**Vote!**



# Community Events

- Show up as your best self
- Work the room - no wallflowers!
- If possible, bring a volunteer who can write down people's contact information so you don't have to
- Emails are okay but phone numbers and business cards are the gold standard
- Understand when it's appropriate to be in campaign mode and when you should tone it down

# Campaign Timeline



## Exploration Tasks

- ☐ Complete a district profile
- ☐ Write a campaign plan
- ☐ Assemble a campaign team
- ☐ Campaign finance prep

- ☐ Put campaign infrastructure in place
- ☐ Survey your online presence
- ☐ Identify top campaign issues
- ☐ Workshop your why



# Exploration



# Do Your Homework

- Complete a District Profile - What are the population demographics? Political enrollment?
- What was turnout like in the last election?
- Are there any big races happening that might impact your election?
- What are the demographics?
- Are there any hot button issues you should be aware of?

Sign up for the NY political blogs:

- City & State
- Gothamist
- Politico NY

Follow local leaders and elected officials on social media and sign up for their newsletters

# Researching the Political Landscape

## *Resources to Start Your Research:*

### **Voter Files**

- You can request access to Voter Files on your county Board of Elections website; certain races may include more than one county
- VAN, GOP Data Center, Aristotle, or a voter database of your choice - these are paid resources

### **District Information**

- Statistical Atlas shows what other districts, municipalities, unincorporated areas, and zip codes intersect with your district, as well as demographic information. Note this tool has not been updated with new legislative districts.
- Ballotpedia tracks the outcomes, candidates, and context from previous election cycles.
- Dave's Redistricting includes new districts redistricting resources and allows you to analyze new districts for the State House and State Senate.
- Legislative Coordinating Commission: interactive maps, files, and reports to understand recent changes to districts.

### **Finding Top Issues**

- Look at past candidates who ran for office in your district, both for the seat you're running for and overlapping races
- Who are the movers and shakers in your district, the leaders or figures whose voice and opinion carry weight?

**Adapted from *Vote Run Lead***

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# Write a Campaign Plan

1. Campaign Team
2. Timeline
3. Budget
4. Fundraising Plan
5. Message
6. Field Plan

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# Writing a winning campaign plan

- Write it down. If it's not written down, it won't happen
- Know your win number. This is the number of votes you need to win. Everything in your plan should aim toward achieving that number.
- Manage your resources. Time, volunteers, and money are LIMITED



# Timeline

Work backwards!

Start with Election Day and include:

- Petitioning deadlines
- Campaign finance filing deadlines
- Election dates
  - Voter registration and absentee ballot deadlines
  - Primary date
- Other important dates
  - Conventions, holidays, personal/family time, theme days

# Assemble a Campaign Team

## **Mandatory**

- Candidate
- Treasurer
- Kitchen Cabinet

## **Optimal**

- Campaign Manager
  - Comms Director
  - Field Director
  - Fundraiser

## **Gravy**

- Consultants
- Field Coordinators
- Social Media Coordinator
- Scheduler

# Building Your Kitchen Cabinet

**ONLY include people who make your life easier!**

<i><b>Your Friend the...</b></i>	<i><b>Potential Role</b></i>
PTO Parent/Social Butterfly	Volunteer Coordinator
Corporate Leader	Fundraiser
Savvy College Student	Social Media Coordinator
Marketing Professional	Communications Director
Active Member of the Local Community Board/Political Club	Political Director



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# Who should NOT be in your Kitchen Cabinet

- The “Policy” Advisor
- The Monopolizer
- The Activist
- The Flake
- The “Yes” Guy

# Campaign Finance Prep

- Pick a simple-to-remember name for your campaign committee and register with the State Board of Elections
- Find a treasurer
- Request an EIN Number from the IRS
- Open a bank account with your treasurer
- Put systems in place with your treasurer to ensure your campaign is compliant with campaign finance law
- Find out the typical budget for your race
- Set 3 fundraising goals: shoestring, likely, reach

# Setting up Your Campaign Infrastructure

- Register your website domain name—plus a few more depending
- Set up an account with ActBlue, Ane-dot, or another online donation processor
- Create a database for volunteers and voters
- Create a database for press, local leaders, aligned campaign
- Set up your campaign's social media accounts
- Establish how you'll be communicating with your campaign team when things get crazy—because they will!!



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# Assess Your Online Presence

- Scrub your social media accounts
- Review posts and [yes] comments you've made to any Facebook groups –even if you think they're private or secure
- Any other online forums

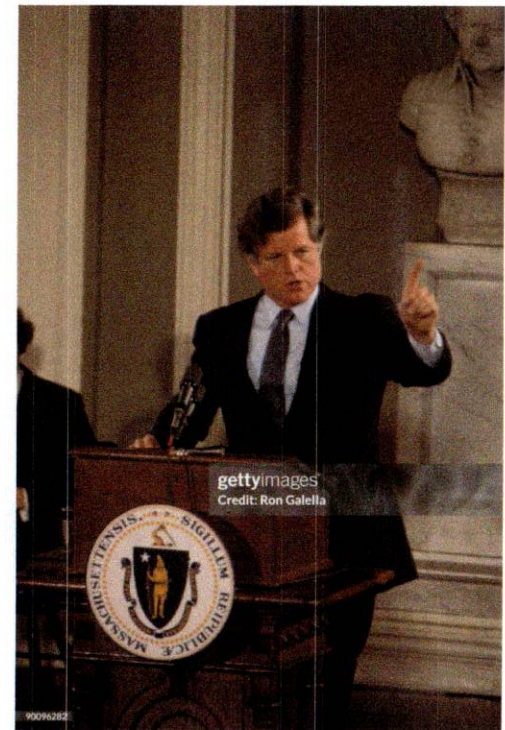
# Identify Your Top Platform Issues

- Consider what is important to your district and what is important to you
- Choose no more than 5 core campaign issues
- Make sure they don't all fall under the same umbrella (e.g. the environment or affordable healthcare)
- Think about how you would talk about each issue with someone who vehemently opposes (hint: highlighting the economic benefits is a surefire strategy)
- Have specific, easy-to-understand examples to illustrate your position

# Workshop Your Why

Can you answer the question: Why are you running for office?

Seems like a no-brainer, but...





# Get to Work

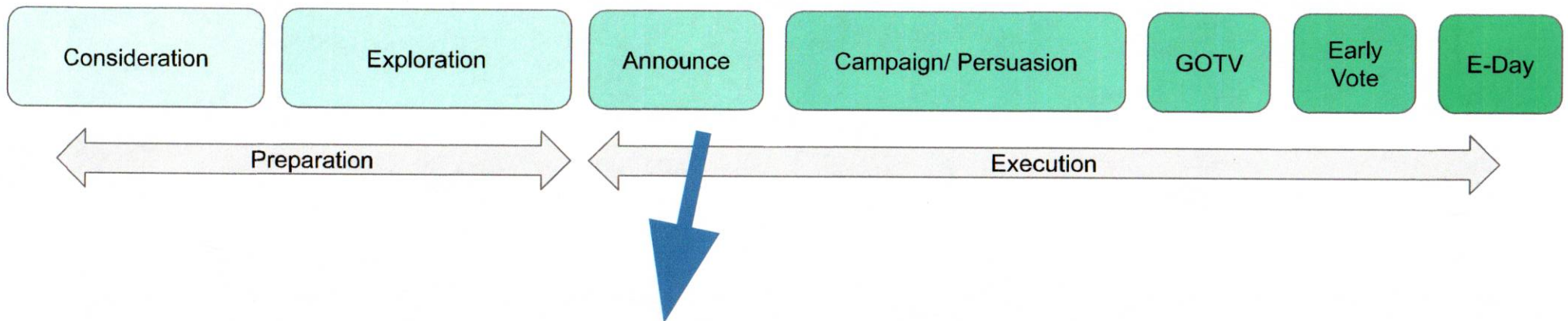
- Raise \$\$\$, and raise it early
- Build your brand on social media + your campaign announcement
- Voter contact- even if you aren't personally collecting petition signatures, go door-to-door with those who are so you can introduce yourself
- Figure out who gives endorsements and the process for getting them

***If you don't ask, you don't get.***

# Announcement



# Campaign Timeline



## Announcement Tasks

- ☐ Prepare a launch event/ campaign kick off
- ☐ Decide on your tagline
- ☐ Prepare your stump speech
- ☐ Have a press toolkit ready, including a great headshot!
- ☐ Write your announcement press release
- ☐ Draft your announcement email



# Campaign Launch Event

- Pick a central location and a time that works for most people
- Invite your friends, local community leaders, elected officials, labor organizations, and local press
- Prepare your stump speech—and practice, practice, practice!
- Include a call to action (i.e. donating and volunteering)



# Come up with a Tagline/Slogan

- Short, easy to remember, resonate with your voters, be on brand
- Examples:
  - New leadership, fighting for all of us
  - Fix the damn roads!
  - Ready for change, ready to lead
  - Experience counts
  - Honest leadership, real results

# A Great Stump Speech has 4 key components



- **Personal anecdote:** Relate to listeners
- **Platform:** Demonstrate that you understand and have ideas on 2-3 key issues
- **Call to action:** What do you want people to do after this speech? (Vote! Donate! Volunteer! etc)
- **ENERGY!!!!**



# Announcement Email and Socials

A strong announcement email should include:

- Your campaign headshot or other photos of you
- Your tagline
- What position you are running for and why
- Contain a link to your website
- Contain a link to donate
- Contain a link to join your mailing list
- Have a call to action- (donate!)

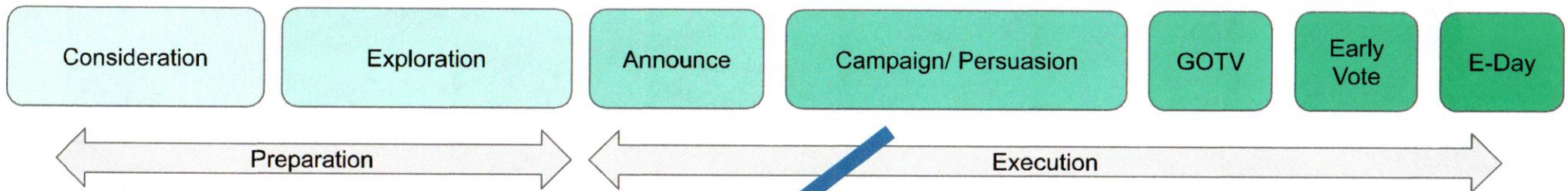
Post across socials at the same time:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- X or Bluesky
- TikTok ect...

# **The Campaign: Capacity Building & Persuasion**



# Campaign Timeline



## The Campaign

- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Opposition Research
- ☐ Campaign Communications
- ☐ Endorsement Acquisition
- ☐ Field

- ☐ Volunteer Recruitment and Management
- ☐ Engaging with Labor



# Fundraising 101

# The Fear of Fundraising

The awkward truth: Fundraising is harder for women.

- Practice Practice Practice!
- You can't run a campaign without money
- You're not asking for yourself
  - People want to support your ideas and future
  - Donors are investing in your vision for your community

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# Early money is the first domino in a successful campaign

You will not be taken seriously if you cannot raise money



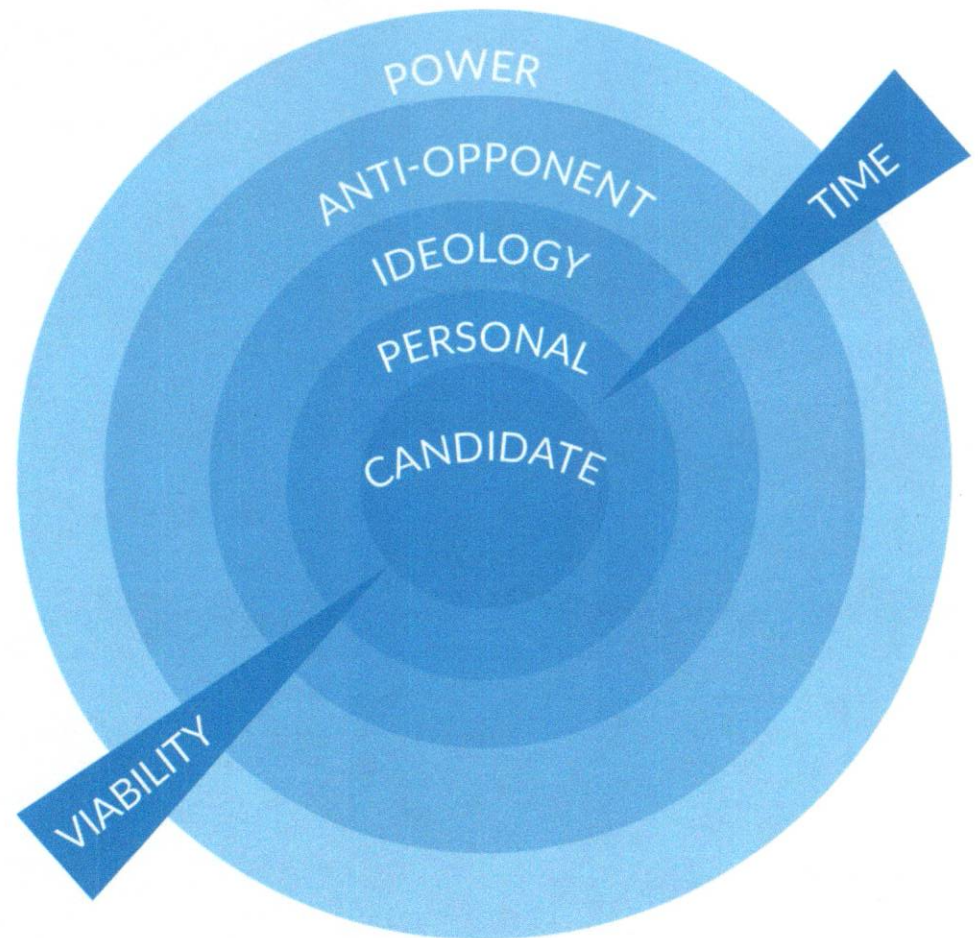
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# Before You Get Started

- Get organized
- Do a life inventory
- Gather all of your lists of people, with or without contact information.
- Who can help you with fundraising?
- Asking for money is free, fundraisers are not
- Set up your fundraising platform- ActBlue, Square, Anedot
  - Do you have your site or donation platform clearly linked in socials?
- Know your who, what, when, where and WHY

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## Donors to Target (Where your lists come in!)



# INDEX YOUR LIFE

## Rolodex Your Life

Everyone in your cell phone  
Family  
Every friend from every class  
Holiday card list  
Alumni networks  
Professional associations  
Faith communities  
Sororities  
PTA, Libraries, Block assoc.  
Carpool (your own & your kids')  
Gym friends  
Religious institutions

## Put Them In Their Circles

Friend? Ideological? Anti-opponent?  
One Circle? Or several Circles?  
Determine their capacity to give (AKA Research and Google It)  
Collect and update contact information  
Start a Rolodex. Spreadsheet is fine.  
Use Google Docs to share with vols

## Rolodex Your Rolodex

Everybody knows someone  
Ask the same questions of your Donor Prospects  
Who are their family members?  
Where are the alumni from?  
Do they have professional associations?  
This will help grow your network

**\* Also useful tool for volunteer recruiters and coordinators.**



# START YOUR ROLODEX

All the people you know and have known

Basics				Contact Info							
First Name	Last Name	Relationship	Contacted Yet?	Phone #	E-mail Address	Street Address	Address Line 2	City	State	Zip Code	Local?

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# Ways to Raise Money

1. Call Time
2. Fundraisers
3. Digital Campaigns



# Before you Ask, Be Ready to Answer

- **Who?**
  - Who are you?
- **What?**
  - What are you running for?
- **When?**
  - When is the primary/election?
- **Where?**
  - Where are you running? Where are you doing the majority of your fundraising?
- **WHY?**
  - Why are you running for this office?
  - Why are you the right person to hold this office?



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# Call Time

Calling people and asking them to contribute to your campaign.

- What's your ask? Go for the highest amount.
- Can I count on your support with a \$250 contribution today?

# Keys to successful fundraising

## Set Goals

- Ex: 100 days until E-Day, 50 until your next filling day
- You want to raise \$10,000 before the filling = \$200 per day
- General rule- create goals using call time only, fundraisers are just the icing on the cake

## Be Disciplined

- Schedule call time EVERY DAY
- Track your conversations in your spreadsheet
- Follow up, follow up, follow up

# Stages of an Ask

1. Chat
2. Share exciting news
3. Highlight indicators of success
4. Ask!
5. Follow up, follow up, follow up
6. Thank you/relationship management

*Remember - some people will say no and that's ok!!  
It doesn't mean they don't like you, or that you're not a good candidate.  
It could be the timing, or any other reason under the sun!*



# Fundraisers

- Types of fundraisers
  - House parties vs venues
  - Self-planned vs host-planned
- Factors to consider
  - Cost, location, time to build the event
  - Who's on your host committee

**Every campaign should have at least one fundraiser but fundraisers alone are not a smart strategy**

# Fundraising Through Digital

- Email campaigns- be strategic, do not spam people!
  - Show an accomplishment or you working hard, inspire people to give
  - Use email as a tool in your toolbox
    - call time- “not sure if you saw my email but...”
- Having an institution or group share out your Act Blue page
- Split send with another campaign or org
- In kind or donate a list from a group

# A Few Easy Digital Asks

- Ask your friends to share out about your campaign!
- Email via CRM to your friends + family list. Link to donate!
- Social post announcing your run + asking to be an initial donor



# Matching Funds and Compliance

- Matching Funds = Lower Dollar contributions have more impact!
- Matching funds programs make it much easier to raise if you don't come from a wealthy background or have many wealthy connections.
- Compliance is always important but becomes even more important with matching funds

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# Things to Watch Out For

- Illegal Contributions
- “Pledges” to not take money from certain types of donors
- Fundraising consultants who promise the impossible!
- Taking cash

# Opposition Research



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# What is opposition research?

The collection of information on the background, activities, social media, financial contributions, etc., of one's opponent or opponents in an effort to uncover damaging details that will undermine their campaigns.

You'll want to keep an 'Oppo Book,' meaning a document where you store all opposition research material you find. If you find anything \*spicy\* make sure to screenshot and save it asap.

# How to Conduct Opposition Research

## Step 1: Google!

1. Google your opponent's name - scroll through top results
2. Click on News after you Google their name



steve behar



News

Images

Videos

Shopping

Maps

Books

Flights

Finance

# How to Conduct Opposition Research

## Step 2: Social Media

1. Find all of your opponent's social media pages (LinkedIn, Reddit, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)
2. Take time and carefully comb through *everything* they have ever posted
3. If anything seems slightly spicy, screenshot and save!



# How to Conduct Opposition Research

## Step 3: Finance Disclosure (example for State-level races)

1. Go to: <https://publicreporting.elections.ny.gov/>
2. Under Campaign Disclosure, click on Candidate/Committee Disclosures

### Available Searches:

Campaign Disclosure	Campaign Disclosure : Independent Expenditure	Campaign Disclosure : Contributions	Campaign Disclosure : Expenditures	Other :
<p>Search:</p> <p>List of Filers</p> <p>Public Campaign Finance Candidate List</p> <p>Candidate / Committee Disclosures</p> <p>24 Hour Notification</p> <p>Bulk Download</p>	<p>Search:</p> <p>24 Hour / Weekly Notices:</p> <p>Contributions and Loans</p> <p>Expenditures / Payments</p> <p>Liabilities Incurred</p> <p>Expenditure - PIDA</p> <p>Details of Individuals for IE Committee</p>	<p>Search:</p> <p>Contributions by Contributor</p> <p>Contributions by Recipient</p>	<p>Search:</p> <p>Expenditures</p> <p>Aggregated Contributions and Expenditures by Office and District</p>	<p>Search:</p> <p>Ballot Access: Who Filed</p> <p>County Board Roster</p> <p>Elected Officials</p> <p>Contact us</p> <p>Release Notes</p>

# How to Conduct Opposition Research

## Step 3: Finance Disclosure (example for State-level races)

1. Go to: <https://publicreporting.elections.ny.gov/>
2. Under Campaign Disclosure, click on Candidate/Committee Disclosures
3. Under filter, look for your opponent's campaign

Filter

\* marks required fields

Filer Type

All

Status

Active

\* Search By

Candidate

\* Candidate Name

Lee Michael Zeldin - Governor - 165216

\* Disclosure Reported By

Zeldin for New York - Governor - 165217

Search Clear



# How to Conduct Opposition Research

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1. Go to: <https://publicreporting.elections.ny.gov/>
2. Under Campaign Disclosure, click on Candidate/Committee Disclosures
3. Under filter, look for your opponent's campaign
4. You'll then have access to itemized CSVs with all campaign disclosures

Home » **Candidate/Committee Disclosures Search**

## Candidate/Committee Disclosures Search

**Zeldin for New York - Governor - 165217**

**2022 July Periodic 07/15/2022 10:32:03 PM**



CSV Full Period



CSV Final Summary

Final Summary



# Prepare for Oppo on You

Just like we can conduct opposition research against our opponents, our opponents can conduct opposition research against us. How to prepare:

1. Scrape through and vet all publicly available social media profiles on yourself and your team (do this before you announce!)
2. Be selective about your campaign donors and expenditures
3. Know what opposition talking points against you will be, and have a response ready to go

# Campaign Communications

# Communication is Key

*Your goal is to have clear and consistent messaging throughout your campaign. You want to be easy to find, be everywhere, be responsive, and be the solution to problems your district is facing.*

## Internal Communication

- Communicate with your team
- keep supporters/vols informed and excited

## External Communication

- Media
  - Owned
  - Earned
  - Paid
- Speaking Directly with Voters
  - Public Speaking
  - Field



# Internal Communication

Decide how are you going to communicate with your Kitchen Cabinet, team, and volunteers

- WhatsApp, Signal, SMS thread
- Slack or other communication channels
- Email platform
- Campaign calendar sync

# External Communication

# 3 Types of Media

**Owned** : Social Media, Email Platform, Letters to the Editor/Op Eds

- Tell your story, in your words, on your channels
  - Pros: Keeps current followers engaged and get you “on the record” on a topic
  - Cons: Limited Audience, shrinking local press

**Earned** : Journalist outreach/pitch, organic

- Tell the story objectively through a reporter’s eyes
  - Pros: street cred, authenticity, credibility, increased reach
  - Cons: Less control over story and timeline
  - Caveat: Mind the blogs

**Paid** : Direct mail, TV, Digital Ads

- Media you buy to tell your story
  - Pros: Your message and visuals, delivered to whom you want, when you want, where you want
  - Cons: Less likely to capture credibility/authenticity and costs \$\$\$



# Endorsement Acquisition

# Types of Endorsements

## Issue Advocacy

**ELEANOR'S  
LEGACY**



**SIERRA  
CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892



**VOTERS FOR  
ANIMAL RIGHTS**



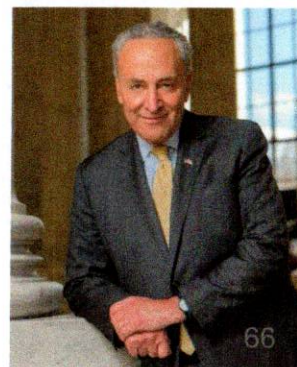
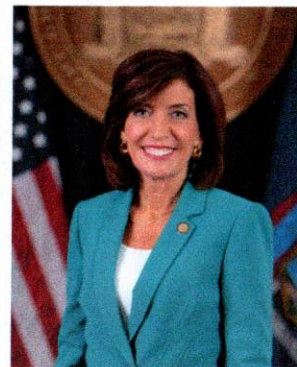
## Organized Labor

**wysut**  
*A Union of Professionals*



**LiUNA! NY**

## Individuals





# Endorsements from Organizations

1. Identify aligned organizations
2. Request the endorsement questionnaire
3. Complete questionnaire
4. Interview with their screening panel





# **Volunteer Management and Recruitment**

# Building and Managing a Field Team

Recruiting, Training, Motivating





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# Volunteers are Essential

Ways that you will be interacting with volunteers:

- Canvasses
- Phone banks
- Events



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# Always Be Recruiting

- Get the contact info back to the campaign ASAP
- Follow up immediately
- Momentum is key
- Ask volunteers to bring friends!

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# Culture Setting

**Culture doesn't  
come from  
results.**

**Results come  
from culture.**

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# Culture Setting

- As manager, you set the tone & tenor from the top down
  - Your tone as candidate/manager affects your staff and volunteers more than you think!
- Schedule and honor time off for yourself + others
- Identify big rocks and little rocks
- Campaigns are professional environments, not family
- Culture should be created collaboratively, continuously, and reflectively



# Campaign Timeline- Recap The Day

