

Book: **Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout**

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2 Qs to evaluate how cost-effective **12 GOTV tactics** are:
What steps needed & How many votes/dollar spent will it produce?
Primary and municipal elections are often decided by < **500 votes**,
e.g. **Fla. 2000**, 537?; **Va. 2020** coin toss gave Gen. Ass. control to GOP;
Sanders won mayor by 11 (*after recount!*) It can decide close elections,
which occur at least once every 6 years where 90% of Americans live.

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State & Local elec. are most critical: David Pepper's books emphasize right-wing strategy's taken over about 30 states + councils, school bds...
Has led to massive voter suppression, gerrymandered districts...
Campaign "**experts**" rely on conjecture, habit, profits and convenience.
Often misrep. correlation as causation: "*Lies, damned lies & statistics.*"
Better research: *randomized experiments w/ treatment & control groups.*

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THE MORE PERSONAL THE BETTER:

Most cost-effective are door-to-door canvassing & volunteer phoning. Deep canvassing (unhurried, empathetic, two-way) is more difficult, costly, but long-term more influential and memorable (p.4). Mass direct mail has little effect, but unconventional messages can, e.g. if they apply social pressure.^{*} Multiple contacts increase turnout, esp. reminders close to Election Day, though with diminishing return. Conversation quality matters more than the message!

Events: Face-to-face festivals, rallies, processions, parties can increase turnout about 2% among the number attending.

Postcards: get 2% more voters (2020, 1/70 sent) if in-state-postmarked + hand-written short GOTV script (1.3 if out-of-state). Personal letters, ditto.

Social Media: 70% of US adults use Facebook c 1 hour/day avg., but ineffective unless “primed” with “news showing *which friends have voted.”

Texts increase turnout if from officials or grassroots orgs., but still only about ¼ % “or 1 in 380 targetted numbers.”

Registration: Campaigns by Rock the Vote, Acorn et al. Tend to boost turnout 1 new vote/3 or 4 newly registered, esp. students and youth.

Table 12-1. Cost-Effectiveness of Get-Out-the-Vote Tactics^a

GOTV effort	Start-up and overhead costs	Ongoing management	Effectiveness per contact ^b	Is effect statistically reliable?	Dollar cost per vote (excluding start-up and management costs)
Door-to-door	Recruit, prepare walk lists	Substantial ongoing training and supervision	One vote per 17 contacts, plus effects of spillover on housemates	Yes, large number of studies	At \$24 per hour and six contacts per hour, one vote costs \$57
Leafleting	Recruit, prepare walk lists and leaflets	Monitor walkers, check work	One vote per 189 voters reached by leaflets	Not significantly greater than zero	*
Direct mail, advocacy	Design, print, distribute	Intensive during start-up, then postal service takes over	No detectable effect	Yes, large number of studies	*
Direct mail, nonpartisan (conventional message) ^c	Design, print, distribute	Intensive during start-up, then postal service takes over	One vote per 260 recipients (unconventional messages tend to be more productive)	Yes, large number of studies	At \$0.75 per piece and 1.5 recipients per household, one vote costs \$130
Phone, volunteer	Recruit enthusiastic callers	Ongoing training and supervision	One vote per 36 contacts	Yes, large number of studies	At \$20 an hour and 16 contacts per hour, one vote costs \$45
Commercial live calls	Obtain phone list	Requires monitoring to ensure quality	One vote per 106 contacts	Yes, large number of studies	At \$1 per contact, one vote costs \$106
Robocalls	Obtain phone list, recording talent	Due diligence to check legal requirements	One vote per 425 landlines targeted, without social pressure messages	Yes, large number of studies	At \$0.15 per targeted number for a series of three calls, one vote costs \$64
E-mail	Amass e-mail list, compose message(s), distribute	Most of the work is in the start-up	Few detectable effects, except when sent by registrar	Large number of studies show average effect cannot be large	*

GOTV effort	Start-up and overhead costs	Ongoing management	Effectiveness per contact ^b	Is effect statistically reliable?	Dollar cost per vote (excluding start-up and management costs)
Text messages	Amass target list, compose message(s), distribute	One-to-one messaging requires large staff of volunteers	One vote per 381 voters targeted	Yes, several large studies, including five in presidential elections	Lists and texting services average \$0.35 per target number, implying \$133 per vote
Election festivals	Find site, organize event, advertise	Requires staff on hand to host and supervise events	Raises precinct-wide turnout by 1 percentage point, more for early voting sites	Results vary widely across seven studies, two of which focus on early voting sites	Assuming precincts of 2,700 voters and \$2,300 per festival, cost per vote is \$85 for festivals on Election Day and roughly \$40 for festivals at early voting sites
Television GOTV	Produce and place ads	None	Raises turnout by 0.5 percentage points	Not significantly greater than zero	*
Radio GOTV	Produce and place ads	None	Raises turnout by 1 percentage point	Not significantly greater than zero	*

a. Costs may vary due to local circumstances and market conditions.

b. “Contact” is defined as follows: for door-to-door canvassing, talking to target voter; for commercial and volunteer phone calls, talking to target voter; for robocalls, attempting to reach a target voter (since robocalls typically leave voicemail); for mail, mail sent; for leaflets, leaflet dropped at door. For direct mail, leafleting, and door-to-door canvassing, calculations assume that the average household has 1.5 voters. No further within-household spillover effects are assumed to apply to direct mail. For canvassing, it is assumed that nonpartisan messaging is directed at voters whose baseline probability of voting is between 30 and 50 percent and that 40 percent of the effect on the directly contacted spills over to housemates. Across all canvassing studies, the average cost per vote is approximately \$83, including spillovers. See appendix A. For festivals, TV, and radio, contact means targeting a precinct or media market.

c. Unconventional messages, such as those that apply social pressure, are often substantially more effective. See chapter 11.

* Cost-effectiveness is not calculated for tactics that are not proven to raise turnout.

Best two GOTV webinar videos:

[A Quaker Call to Action 1/30](#) & [Postcards to Swing States](#)
(1 hr. from 2/7) by [Progressive Turnout Project](#) (3,000 attended!)

[ChooseDemocracy.us](#): Vital if election deniers attempt coup again.

Best Election Info and Action Resources:

- [Deep Canvass Institute](#) & [PeoplesAction.org](#)
- [Indivisible.org](#): tactics and talking points
- [VoteRiders.org](#): ID and registration help
- [League of Women Voters](#)
- [Common Ground](#)
- [FairVote.org](#) on systemic reforms
- [ActivateAmerica](#)
- [MoveOn.org](#)
- [Progressive Democrats of America](#)
- [Polls | FiveThirtyEight](#)
- [Full 2024 Election Calendar](#)
- [GregPalast.com](#): top investigative reporter on voting protection and suppression since 2000
- **[Friends Committee on National Legislation](#)**
Nonpartisan Quaker lobbying organization. Among other issues, they work on voting and election protection.
- **[Protect Our Election](#)** Supports nonpartisan local election officials; developing a zip-code searchable national database to help block partisan, anti-democratic candidates for election posts.
- **[Protect Democracy](#)** A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting efforts, at home and abroad, to undermine our right to free, fair, and fully informed self-government.
- **[Represent.us](#)** National coalition movement to fix our broken elections, stop political bribery, and end secret money.
- **[Faiths United to Save Democracy](#)** An inter-generational, multiracial, interfaith voter protection campaign led by black clergy and national allies like *Sojourners*. **[Voter Toolkit](#)**.

Also two 2023 books and videos by David Pepper:

[Laboratories of Autocracy](#) & [Saving Democracy: User's Manual for Every American](#) [with 30 Steps]

From Paul Roden, MNSer & Yardley, PA. Dem Committeeman:
3 tools GOTV he recommends any one can use anywhere in the USA to help Biden and Democrats win, up and down the ballot.

1. Votes.org This is the one stop shopping for registering to vote, finding your Polling Place, Obtaining your Mail-In Ballot, What your deadlines are for returning your ballot and Election Dates. Also if there is any Election Suppression, Voter Intimidation, Election Tampering, Election Vigilantism. This is the Website that Taylor Swift referred her fans to from her Instagram page, 35,000 plus fans have registered to vote because of this.

2. Bluevoterguide.org To obtain a sample Ballot of all the Democrats in your area, go to this site, type in you address to get your sample Democratic Party Ballot in any one of the 50 States.

3. Mobilize.us This is the site to sign up to volunteer to be a Voter Registration Volunteer, Canvasser, Text Banker, Phone Banker, Poll Watcher, Poll Greeter or be an Election Protection Volunteer ("Friendly Presence"). This is also the site to organize any demonstration, vigil, march, non-violent intervention, campaign, lobbying or other action. Individuals and groups, not necessarily with the Democratic Party. Stand Up, Indivisible, Rise Up, Left Action Working Families USA and other groups have used this for all types of nonviolent action, not just election protection, Get Out The Vote, (GOTV) etc.

These sites are free. Activists can use Mobilize.us/ and with their cell or telephone and a computer can make calls or send messages to register people to vote and get them to vote in person or return their mail-in ballots. I have been doing that now for four years. The software and the lists just get better, faster and more accurate. I have also observed recounts and been a part of Early Voting Election Protection Teams ("Friendly Presence") for the last 4 years.

Election Day Workers at the Polls and at the Board of Elections in Arizona are being trained in the use of tourniquets and bullet wound battlefield dressings as well as de-escalation and active shooter drill protocols. Luckily, the state has funding to pay Poll workers, buy new voter scanning machines, postage to mail ballots and voter registration forms, pay overtime to Election Day Workers, pay for alarms, CCTV security for the Board of Elections and Ballot Warehouses, pay Sherriff's to pick up the Ballots and Deliver to the Warehouses

We in PA survived over 60 lawsuits to overturn our Election Results, recounts, audits and "forensic audits." The only one they won was allowing out of state Republicans to observe the count, recount and audits of the ballots.

From **Fred Cook (fredcookla at gmail.com):**

Try **People's Action Institute's** one-hour **Introduction to Deep Canvassing: The proven method to change hearts and minds.** **March 19**, to discover what deep canvassing is and how it works and learn more about next steps in the Organizing Revival.

How Deep Canvass Conversations Can Transform America

I'm offering this article as a contribution to our Zoom about elections.

The two corporate-controlled parties of war and empire have proven incapable of offering what we need. The road out of oligarchy and fascism may be long and brutal, but there are proven methods.

This "deep canvassing" is one of them.

Our colleagues, George Lakey and Bill Moyer, have surveyed many of the strategies in their books and workshops.

I am not saying that we shouldn't vote, or otherwise participate in the electoral process. I think we need to keep a balance in our "budget" of all resources devoted to social change and building inclusive democracy.

Participating in electoral processes CAN help people wake up to the failure of established institutions and the need to undertake campaigns that can outflank entrenched corruption.

Building popular movements for STRUCTURAL change and improving public knowledge and participation helps tilt the playing field favorably for ALL political parties and electoral processes.

My deeper question is "How, with the relatively limited resources of the poor and working classes, can we sustain societal learning, empowerment, including some healing, through the storms of

ensorship, propaganda, overt repression by state and non-state entities, scapegoating, and 'false flag' attacks?"

Clarity, community, and communication seem like important watchwords to me. Inclusive and accountable forms of organization are required. We might look at the history of non-capitalist parties and revolutionary movements in the USA as well as overseas, such as Lavalas in Haiti, for example. See also, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_V._Debs

How to keep our collective "eyes on the prize" when our leaders get jailed, assassinated, and possibly "turned" to mislead us?

In my view, the "two party system" is theater that distracts the majority from the actual operation of the bankster/imperial system that has been secretly running the show, while doing its own learning and evolving, for more than a century now.

In addition to the excellent resources created by people associated with MNS, we need to find ways of sharing the hidden history of the "deep state" (how the oligarchy attempts to stay in control - unchanged by elections) and our clever, sociopathic, authoritarian opponents.

Best wishes,
Fred

& Response From Joan Nikelsky

Fred, Hear, hear - agreed. I've been reading Noam Chomsky and he has the same analysis.

We could ask the speakers to talk about the deep canvassing idea. I've heard of it and I believe the Working Families Party has promoted this practice and has won some local elections in various places, including in Philadelphia.