

Notes and thought from Political Activist Training¹

Manchester NH, April 16, 2021

Overview: Bob Hatcher and Bonnie Gorbaty attended this full-day training that informs and educates political activists on how to navigate the political process to get politicians to do what you want them to do. While the mission of PARC is to get conservatives elected to office, we shouldn't stop there. We need to understand how they vote and to hold them accountable. For Bob, this training brought out the question as to whether our charter also includes pressure campaigns to influence policy. This is food for thought.

Key Lessons from the Training: While there were many important ideas shared, there were a few ideas that were key to the value of the overall training. If you find these intriguing, then the additional details provide further insight as to how you make these ideas a reality.

- *You need to be politically feared to be heard and politically respected. You do this by building pressure, doubling down when you lose or are ignored to gain attention. Learn what gives politicians pain and how to inflict that pain. Connecting the legislative season to the election season builds pressure and inflicts pain.*
 - *I'm not kidding, I'm backed by numbers, I will inflict pain, and I will keep returning.*
- *To be feared you need angry citizens in large numbers.*
- *Politics is a numbers game not an ideas game. You need "3% +1" of the Independent voters to win.*
- *Be efficient in how you spend your political capital. You do this by picking the best fights (i.e don't try to fight them all) to both educate and mobilize people. Don't do it without a plan for developing and implementing the efforts of yourself and others.*
- *People lose when they fail to plan, build pressure and stay focused on a cause to the finish.*

Goals of the Training: There were three goals shared at the outset on what the instructor, [Patrick McGrady](#) (Mayor of Aberdeen, MD and business owner) taught us, including:

1. How the political process actually works, and it's not the way you think
2. How much power we have and how to put it to work; Make politicians afraid of us
3. How to create a favorable political environment that drives success

Key Points on Each Goal: There were so many great points. The Foundation is making the power point available to all participants. But here are some of the key points to support each goal above:

Political Process at Work:

1. Politics is NOT "the art of compromise" but "the art of confrontation."
2. Politicians don't care what **you** think, they care what **they** think.
3. Force politicians to act the way you want or replace them.
4. We lose because we don't work hard or smart enough. We get beat by small amounts.

¹ Training conducted by [Foundation for Applied Conservative Leadership](#) and sponsored by www.rebuildnh.com

5. Don't confuse power with access. Many times politicians will give us access to shut us down. When given access they will tell us we don't understand the issue or the time is not right. Whenever we get that we must ask ourselves this: **IF WE GIVE IN TO THEM, HOW DO THEY WIN?**
6. Don't hold voter registration drives. This will only register those who really don't care.
7. Know this, public policy is not made by public opinion. It's made by conflict (and trying to avoid it).
8. Never underestimate people in large numbers (large numbers are important).
9. Don't confuse someone who votes the way you want with being your ally, voting correctly only shows that *for that issue* they are not your enemy.
10. A good politician will stick with losing causes to make a point and point out the enemy.² Don't fully trust any politician until they have stuck with a good cause that wasn't working.
11. Politicians want to give you as little as possible and avoid doing anything. They want to get you off your game as it causes them pain. They want you to go away. They claim action but do nothing and use key words such as "resolutions", "task force" when asked how they are responding to issues.
12. There is no safe haven in politics. Threats and lawsuits work – Judicial Watch, for example.
13. Politicians don't like being put on the record; they will do as little as possible to avoid pain. They will claim action when they've done nothing. When taking action they know that half their constituents will be angry. **Therefore, we must force politicians to go on the record. In doing so we connect the legislative season to the election season.**
14. If politicians don't see a connection between their actions and their election, they will be happy. They must understand there are consequences to their actions and this makes them unhappy.
15. Don't forget, politicians are ambitious.

Things that please politicians	Things that are painful for politicians
Positive press	Bad press
Public praise	Public embarrassment
Volunteers	Being ignored
Manipulating the rules	Being challenged in primaries
Money and donations	Proof of angry voters in the form of emails, letters, demonstrations
Other people's money spent on their behalf	Money being spent for their challengers

Power we Have over Politicians:

1. We must move from PREY to PREDATOR.
2. Unless you are politically feared you will be ignored and not respected. Get their attention and be respected. **You must become an agent of conflict.**
3. Politicians get away with doing nothing when we don't force them to.
4. If you can't say something mean about a politician, don't say anything.
5. Don't take something that is better than nothing as you eventually get nothing.

² See Morton Blackwell, <https://www.leadershipinstitute.org/img/writings/LILawsofthePublicPolicyProcess.pdf>

6. You want working relationships not personal ones with politicians with the exception of those who bleed for the cause.
7. It is time for politicians to be intimidated by citizens, not the other way around.
8. It requires courage to force changes and get out of your comfort zone.
9. Do political good by doing political harm to politicians.
10. Conservatives tend to not have “teeth” and don’t plan for the long-term. These are two traits that the Liberals use against us.
11. Go after bad incumbents and find good candidates.
12. Stop voting for reps who don’t vote the way you want³.
13. Be feared, be respected, have large numbers on your side (or the illusion of).
14. Letters to the Editor and carefully worded letters to politicians have little value. They are an attempt to educate. You’re not going to change their mind. The reason is that there must appear to be a movement. One-offs don’t work. So, we must pick our fights and plan how to get 10 – 100+ people to act⁴. **Education without mobilization and confrontation doesn’t work.**
15. Look always at what politicians say in terms of how it benefits them. Politics is not for the common good; it is for the good of the politician. Ask the question: What is in this for them?

Create a Favorable Political Environment for Success:

1. Because we can’t fight EVERY fight, we’ve got to pick the best fights and go after them HARD.
2. The Red Fox Four scorecard is used to evaluate and compare fights. Ask “if we fight this fight” then score each of these on a scale of -10 to +10
 - a. Will it attract more money or people?
 - b. Will it help our friends and allies?
 - c. Will it hurt our enemies in terms of money or their ability to win elections?
 - d. If we win, will it help our cause?
 - e. If we lose, will it hurt our cause? (Example, gun control – if we fight and lose this battle and there is a mass shooting, the enemy can and will blame us and that will hurt our cause and our ability to attract people and raise money).
3. Make it easy for people to join the fight and do what we need them to do. For example
 - a. Write/print a short note on a postcard and print out a hundred.
 - b. Hand them out at our meetings.
 - c. Ask people to take two,
 - i. sign one (and put their address), put a stamp on it and mail it;
 - ii. give the other to a friend (or just have them sign/address) and mail.
4. Naming the issue is especially important and you must be FOR something not against something. So rather than say “Critical Race Theory is bad, frame our argument as “Let teachers teach equality”. (Who would vote against the “Teach Equality Act”?)
5. The leadership task is to set the goals then plan and implement. PLANNING is essential. The lack of a plan is the #1 reason we lose. You don’t have time NOT to PLAN. Here are the steps:
 - a. Set the goal
 - b. Create and document your plan

³ Specbowers@gmail.com – Provides updates on voting record for each rep in NH

⁴ He cited studies that proved this point.

- c. Prepare and gather resources to execute the plan
 - d. Execute the plan
 - e. Evaluate the results
6. Pick smaller fights, plan it and see it through for a year. Pick fights that grow the movement over time.
 7. The greatest force in politics is inertia. So things have to be pushed. Force politicians to go on record with roll call votes. Connect the legislative season to the election season as the politicians want to separate them and not be held accountable.
 8. Extremes define the middle which is why the dems keep moving left so the middle is now much more left than it was ten years ago.
 9. Worry about your back yard. Know your enemies at the local level before you pursue the federal level.

Resources:

1. Foundation for Applied Conservative Leadership <https://facl-training.org>
2. Leadership Institute <https://www.leadershipinstitute.org> – Morton Blackwell is the founder. See his “Rules of the Public Policy Process” cited on page 2
3. 603 Alliance – <https://603alliance.org>
4. Election Integrity Project - <https://www.protectourelection.com/newhampshire>
5. Book called [**“Confrontational Politics”**](#) by H.L. Richardson
6. Specbowers@gmail.com – Provides updates on voting record for each rep in NH