

# How 2 run 4 office

Massachusetts Pirate Party  
Draft 1 - Fall 2011

# What We Will Cover

- What is your goal?
- What office to choose?
- Preparing yourself
- Getting started
- The campaign
- Useful books

# What is Your Goal?

- To win and govern
- To identify supporters and volunteers for future efforts
- To educate voters about issues that matter to you
- It is best if you do all three!

# What Are You Facing?

- Over half of the candidates for contested elections lose
- The better connected and financed candidate often wins
- As a result, many offices have only one person running for them

# What Office to Choose?

- Town & city
- State House & Senate
- County
- US House of Representatives
- Governor's Council
- US Senate & Mass. constitutional offices

# Town Elections

- Town elections held in first half of every year. Check your town. Offices are:
  - Selectboard
  - Town Moderator, Treasurer, etc.
  - School Committee
  - Town Meeting Member - Not all towns

# City Elections

- City elections held in November of even years. Offices are:
  - Mayor
  - City Council / Board of Aldermen
  - School Committee

# State House & Senate

- Massachusetts General Court is made up:
  - House: 160 members
  - Senate: 40 members
- Elections held in November of even years
- Both overwhelmingly Democratic



# State House & Senate (cont.)

- Getting on the ballot:
  - Signatures from at least:
    - 150 valid voters (House)
    - 300 valid voters (Senate)
  - Papers available - Feb '12
  - Papers due - Apr '12

# County Elections

- County Commissioner
- District Attorney
- County Treasurer
- Registrar of Probate
- Registrar of Deeds
- Sheriff & Clerk of Courts

# US House Elections

- District based: Ten - 2010 & Nine - 2012
- All held by Democrats with large \$\$\$
- Getting on the ballot:
  - Signatures from at least 2000 valid voters
  - Papers available - Feb '12
  - Papers due - Apr '12 (D/R/G), Aug '12 oth

**Other Offices**

**Good luck!**

# Preparing Yourself

- Be honest with yourself: Are you ready?
  - No - Try another approach
  - Yes - Lets get started

# Be Honest With Yourself

- Do you really want the job?
- Are you prepared for the pressures of campaigning?
- Is your partner on board?
- Are you prepared for the impact on your work and family life?
- Are you known in your community?

# Not ready? Try Another Approach Instead

- Try a less demanding office or a lower goal
- Start an issue campaign
- Join (or start) local party chapter
- Volunteer or get appointed to a local board or commission
- Join a community activist group

# Ready!

## Lay the Ground Work

- Attend and speak up at town meetings, public hearings, etc.
- Get involved in local organizations
- Volunteer for local boards and commissions
- Support other candidates
- Write letters to the editor



# Getting Started

- Find people to help
- Roles that need filling
- Know your district & constituencies
- Find your issues & core message
- Plan logistics

# Find People to Help

- For most offices, you cannot run alone
- Identify people who will help you:
  - Fellow party members
  - Friends
  - Family

# Roles That Need Filling

- Treasurer (cannot be the candidate)
- Campaign Manager
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Field Operation Manager
- Website / Social Media Organizer(s)
- Data Manager

# Roles That Need Filling (cont.)

- May not be able to find someone for each role
- Some of your campaign organizers may wear more than one hat
- Cannot do without a Treasurer
- Having a campaign manager helps
- Delegate!

# Know Your District

- Who and where are the voters?
  - Get voter lists from city/town (has address, DOB, gender, party info.)
  - Get demographics (US Census data)
  - Find out if voters are owner / renters
- What are local issues of concern?

# Your Constituencies

- Identify your constituencies, i.e. the voters most likely to support you
- From the district data you have, see if you can identify who they are individually
- If you have to limit your efforts, knowing who is most likely to support you will help

# Find Your Issues

- Identify the key issues to focus on:
  - Two or three max for local campaigns
  - More for state campaigns (but still a small number)
- The issues you choose must resonate with the voters who you want to support you

# Develop a Core Message

- Once you know your key issues, you then need to develop a core message
- It should be short & simple ...
- ... but should tie in with your key issues



# Test Your Core Message / Issues

- Test it first with a friendly audience then with other audience
- Refine your message
- If you can find a way to bring all questions back to your core message, Bonus!

# Plan Logistics

- Volunteers - How many and when?
- Write a focused budget and fundraising plan with an eye to what do we buy with the first \$500, the next \$1000, etc.
- Need someone to design fliers & signs
- Need someone to take professional pictures of the candidate for fliers / media

# The Campaign

- Initial Activities
- Get on the Ballot
- Fundraise and Follow Up
- Message, Media & Publicity
- Go Door-to-Door & GOTV
- Election Day & The Days After

# Initial Activities

- Identify initial contributors
- Obtain and file committee-to-elect papers
- Get checks from initial contributors
- Open bank account and make first deposit
- Open web site / social media accts.

# Get on the Ballot

- Make sure you know all of the requirements to get on the ballot
- Pick up nomination papers
- Gather signatures
- File nomination papers
- Mail thank letter anyone who helped gather signatures

# Fundraise

- Make a list of potential contributors from family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.
- Write a phone fundraising script that talks about your issues
- Call your contributors list
- Mail reminder letter with return envelope
- Mail thank you letter to all contributors

# Follow Up

- Ask contributors whether they would:
  - endorse you in writing
  - volunteer
  - hold a house party for you
- Follow up on all offers of assistance
- Send thank you letters promptly

# Message and Media

- Develop and print initial literature:
  - If you are strapped for cash, try 1/3 of a page fliers, double sided
  - If you have the money, try mailable fliers
- Identify local media and setup meetings
- Meet with media to talk about your issues



# Publicity

- If you have enough support, hold a kick-off event. Invite all of your supporters and media. Make sure turn out is good
- Ask supporters to put up yard signs
- Hold stand-outs/visibilities in last month

# Go Door-to-Door

- Purpose of Door-to-Door effort is to:
  - meet voters & tell them about you
  - identify which voters will support you
- From the voter list, you should develop a walk list. Divide streets into even and odd sides to make record keeping easier

# Go Door-to-Door (cont.)

- Mark a voters level of support with 1 as will vote for you and 5 as will not vote for you.
- If a voter isn't supportive, move on quickly but politely. Find someone who is
- When someone isn't home, be sure to leave a flier hanging on their door handle

# Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

- All your efforts must lead to the GOTV effort
- Through the Door-to-Door effort you have hopefully identified a lot of voters who will support you
- Now you have to make sure they will be at the polls on election day

# GOTV (cont.)

- Call all supporters to remind them that you need their vote. Tell them where their polling place is & when it is open. Ask if they need a ride to the polls
- As close to the election as you can, drop off notices to all supporters telling them where to vote and when their polling place is open

# Election Day Tasks

- Have a poll watcher at every polling place recording which of your supporters voted
- Have volunteers to call supporters to remind them to vote, preferably from the checklist listed above
- Have volunteers hold signs outside polling places. Know the state/city/town rules!

# Election Day Tasks (cont.)

- Have volunteers:
  - bring coffee, hot chocolate and snacks to volunteers at polling places,
  - pick up supporter checklists from poll watchers and
  - drive supporters to the polls

# Once the Polls Close

- Have poll watchers get the preliminary vote count from their polling place
- Hold election night party to thank volunteers and supporters



# The Days After

- Update Website/Facebook/Twitter with thank you and election results
- Distribute “Thank You” stickers to all yard signs and mail remaining thank you cards
- Write a thank you supporters letter to send as a letter to the editor
- Fundraise to clear away any campaign debt

# Useful Books

- How to Win Your 1st Election - Susan Guber
- The Campaign Manager - Catherine Shaw
- How to Run for Local Office - Robert J. Thomas
- Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter Turnout - Donald P. Green & Alan S. Gerber