LOCAL CANDIDATE LITERATURE GUIDE

When putting together campaign literature, it's important to put the best foot forward. Campaign Lit may be the first, last, and only time you will reach a voter. Here are some tips to creating an effective election piece that will make a good impression on your target voter.

There are several key steps to consider when designing campaign literature.

1. Write out content, while keeping in mind the amount of space you have to work with. Odds are you will start with way too much text, and you'll need to cull down the material. You'll want the final copy to be as lean and to-the-point as possible. Generally speaking, keep the content to about 100 words.
2. Keep in mind the overall design as this will affect the amount of content placed on the piece—there are many different types of campaign lit—brochures, palm cards, post-cards, door hangers, and more.
   a. Brochures offer more room for lengthier content, but cost more
   b. Palm Cards are great for short to-the-point content
   c. Post-cards are great for event invites, punchy comments, and reminders to vote
   d. Door-hangers are good for canvassing, but many candidates find palm cards just as effective
3. When designing political campaign brochures, keep the layout simple. A cramped brochure looks bad and is less likely to be read.
   a. Be sure the main colors of the brochure match your other campaign materials, yard signs, and website. Script fonts should be generally avoided for readability.
   b. Make sure the front of the piece is attention-getting and communicates the candidates' main points clearly and succinctly
      i. Asking a question or placing a powerful statement on the front of the piece is usually effective
   c. Speak highly of the community where the candidate is running. It's surprising how often this is left out.
4. Photographs provide powerful visual elements
   a. Political brochures should include at least one photo of the candidate—typically a professionally shot photo.
   b. Pictures of the candidate's family may also be used
   c. Graphics should be simple in design and clearly illustrate a point.
   d. Images for the sake of taking up space only serve to distract from your piece.
5. If the piece is to convince voters why the candidate should be elected, it should be spelled out for them.
   a. List your experience and offices you previously held as a candidate.
   b. Briefly include your accomplishments and activities.
   c. Keep your message short and to the point.
   d. Balance out the copy with additional testimonials or endorsements.
6. If the lit is about a particular issue, keep points bulleted and short. Include relevant quotes from others who have a stake in the issue or legislation.
7. Include additional campaign information.
   a. Campaign website
   b. Contact information
   c. Email address
   d. Social media channels

8. Check printing requirements and be sure to provide everything needed for print. Often a particular format is used when uploading to a site. Images and design elements should be at least 300 dpi.
    a. Tip: Web images are 72 dpi, so don't use graphic elements from your website in a print piece.
        i. If it's unknown what the dpi is, and professional programs are not available, download and use paint.net to change the dpi to 300. A brief how-to on this option can be shown upon request.
9. The post office can inform about requirements that must be met for mailers. For example, are there are specific size or bulk mail requirements? The USPS considers election mail as any item mailed to or from authorized election officials or organizations.
10. Finally, upload a digital version of the election brochure to the campaign website so that it is available for others to download, share and print.

Tip: It's better to limit the number of people involved in writing and editing the brochure. Campaign material created by committee tends to be unfocused, as the brochure, flyer or pamphlet ends up trying to cover too many points in a single piece.

Check out some of the great design, layout, and content of the pieces below! Local printers are a great resource for these. Reach out to your local County Party for more tips and ideas!

Running a slate of candidates