

CANVASSING GUIDELINES

What is Canvassing?

Canvassing is the systematic contacting of individuals or organizations we want to “sway” to our side – to vote for MMP!

A "canvass" can be organized with various desired goals:

- Identifying supporters
- Distributing information
- Persuasion
- Encouraging people to vote

Canvassing will help us achieve our goal of informing people about the referendum and why we feel that they should vote for MMP.

Field canvasses are done by going door to door to every home and apartment in a riding. They have the advantage that people are generally more open to talking to someone in person and literature can be delivered.

Some basic instructions re: canvassing

1. Keep your message short (more on this later!) and move quickly, you have a lot of doors to knock on. Don't enter a house – your safety is the most important thing.
2. If you ever get stopped by the police, or community watchdogs, know your rights: this is protected by the Charter.
3. If you encounter an anti-MMP advocate, try and answer any questions that they may have, thank them for their time and move on. Don't let them become hostile or aggressive towards you. Remember people can have differing opinions – respect their viewpoints and ask them to do the same with yours.

Canvassing preparations

1. You need to have confidence in the issues.
2. You need to have confidence in yourself.
3. You need to have confidence in your message.

If you are canvassing for MMP then you obviously are supportive of it – have you done some reading up on it? Have you visited the Citizen’s Assembly website and the Elections Ontario website? (<http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/en/default.asp> and www.yourbigdecision.ca). Do you know that the ballot question is? Are you sure of your stance on the issue – ask yourself why you think this issue is important. Be sure that this is the right thing for Ontario. People will expect you to be confident and sure of your message.

Canvassing Script

Here's a suggested script:

I'm with Electoral Reform for Women. I'm going door-to-door and I'm just here to make sure that you are aware that a referendum is taking place on October 10th about changing our electoral system. I'm here to talk about the change and answer any questions you may have.

Some further ideas of how to engage in a conversation when canvassing:

Do you know when you're voting?

And do you know that there's a referendum on the ballot?

Most will say no. Others will say:

"Yes."

"Yes, and I'm not going to tell you what I'm voting for."

"Why are you asking me this; I don't even know who you are."

"Yes, and I believe in a secret ballot!"

At this point you say: "Great! I just wanted to let you know that I support MMP because _____.

Thanks for your time today!"

Canvassing Challenges:

Who are you working for?

Tell them you're a volunteer with Electoral Reform for Women, a group of multi-partisan women that believe MMP will help get more women elected. Give them our website address and highlight how you're a volunteer because you feel that this is an important issue for them to know about.

Where are you from?

Highlight that you're a member of the community and that you care about MMP because you care about its impact in your neighbourhood.

What are you selling?

I'm just here to tell you about the upcoming referendum. If they are agitated or bothered, just leave a brochure with them and move on to the next house.

Who are you looking for?

I'm here to let voters know about the upcoming referendum on October 10th.

Who are you supporting?

Tell them you are voting for MMP.

Somebody else visited this place before!

That's possibly true, and tell them that you're glad that they heard about the referendum already, and hope that they will be voting for MMP on October 10th.

Canvassing may seem daunting or intimidating, but it's actually quite easy and can be a lot of fun. Remember you are standing up for something very important here!

If you have any more questions or concerns please email Michelle at: mdagnino@equalvoice.ca