

HOW TO BE A CITIZEN ACTIVIST

Cliff's Notes from *Becoming a Citizen Activist* by Nick Lacata

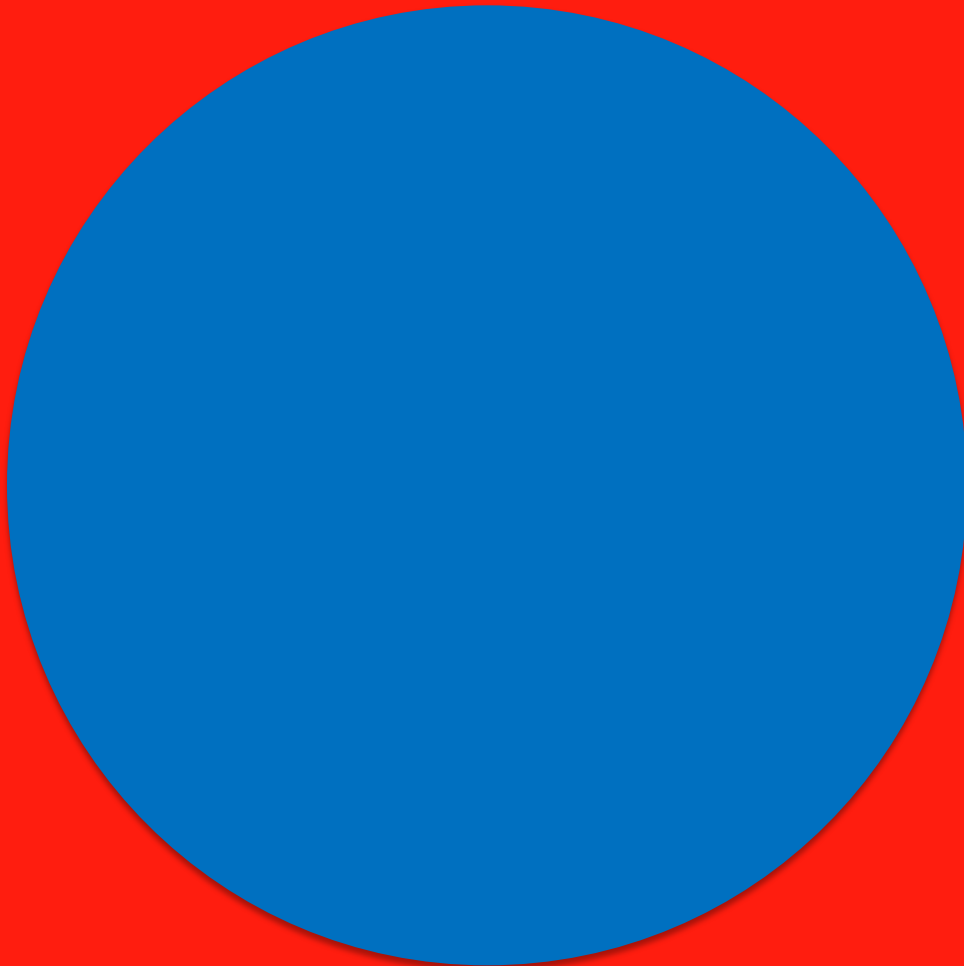
A step-by-step guide
to becoming
politically active



The magic recipe to
overcoming government
inertia is opposing parties
agreeing to a common
course of action.

6 TIPS

- 1) Vote and help increase voter turnout
- 2) Get informed
- 3) Win A Politician To Champion Your Cause
- 4) Media Attention
- 5) Create a Citizen Commission
- 6) Petition



#1

Vote and help
increase voter
turnout



4 ways to
increase voter
turnout:

ONE

Same-day
registration

TWO

Mail-in Ballots

THREE

Public Funding of
Campaigns

FOUR

Public Spending on
the Ballot.

TIP
#2

Get informed





A, B&C of getting good information

A. for good information

Seek reports, data and other information from organizations in other areas that have been successful in your cause.

B. for good information

National or International Organizations

Find out if there is a national or international organization that supports the cause.

Seek information and data from the organization.

Ask staff at the organization for advice for gathering data and information.

C. for good information

Gather data for your area.

Search online.

Get public records from government agencies.

Go to the library to get help in gathering data and information.

TIP
#3

Win A Politician To
Champion Your Cause





The A-F of gaining a political champion

A. winning a champion

Have a clear message &
plan. Broadcast it.

B. winning a champion

Go to public hearings
and speak about your
issue.

C. winning a champion

Volunteer & donate
to their campaign.

D. winning a champion

Organize with
other activists.

E. winning a champion

Ask other politicians
to join your champion
in support, especially
when they are running
for office.

F. winning a champion

Once you gain your champion offer them a leadership role and Give them credit when credit is due.

5 Trouble shooting tips

for gaining a politician champion

1. Always get a specific commitment each time you meet.
2. Bring the draft legislation with you (in addition to providing in advance of your meeting).
3. If they need time to review, review the legislation with them or ask to another appointment to review together.
4. Do not settle for a statement of support. Ask them to sponsor, second, or co-sponsor.
5. If they refuse to meet with you or to negotiate, picket or protest them to get their attention.

TIP
#4

Media Attention





7 aspects

for media attention

ASPECT 1

Develop a short but broad mission statement that clearly identifies what needs to be done.

ASPECT 2

Have a great slogan

ASPECT 3

Have a clear plan of what should be done ready to go, including draft legislation.

ASPECT 4

Use social media widely:
website with a blog. you
tube, twitter,
newsletters, facebook,
Instagram etc.

ASPECT 5

Get published widely:
journal articles,
newspaper opinion
pieces, radio, TV,
newspaper & magazine
interviews, publish a
book.

ASPECT 6

Speak: create speaking events – invite a keynote speaker, ask to speak at events, go to public hearings, get invited to speak at events.

ASPECT 7

Spread the word, ensure the media is about your cause, not personality or ego. Make it easy for allies to advocate for the cause. Never lecture! Listen carefully for other's interests. Frame the cause to their interests

3 Trouble shooting tips

for dealing with bad press

1. Fully understand opponent's position, interests & values.
2. Reply or write letter to the editor (or similar body) framing your cause.
3. Ask allies to respond as well.

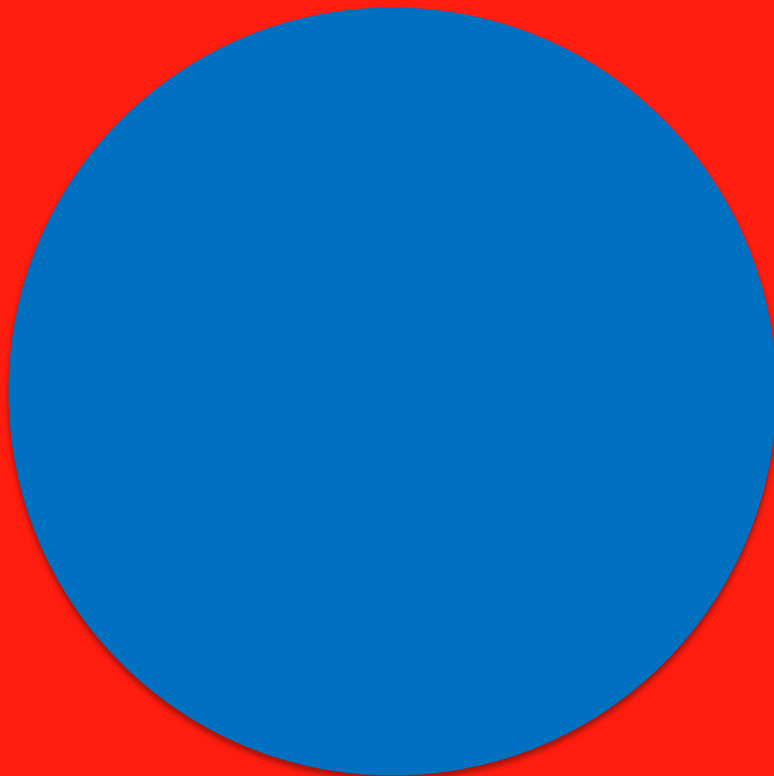
TIP
#5

Create a Citizen
Commission



8 steps

to creating a citizen commission



STEP 1

Have a clear plan of what should be done, including draft legislation, ready to go.



STEP 2

Learn from similar efforts. Get and share the reports, data and other information from other areas that have accomplished the goal of your cause.

STEP 3

Join with the other individual advocates (like you) who are advocating for the cause.

STEP 4

Create a group and give your group a name like Ad-hoc Commission on _____.



STEP 5

Invite organizations that are natural allies to join.

STEP 6

Issue advisory statements to legislators and the media.





STEP 7

Hold public forums.

STEP 8

Ask a politician to recognize the citizen commission and officially ask the commission for recommendations on programs, policies, appointments etc.

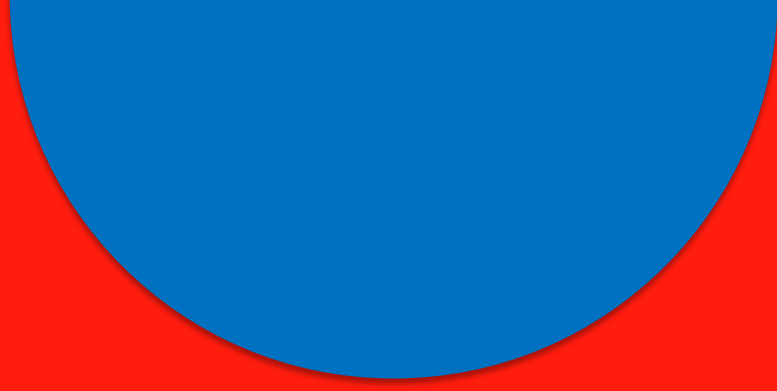




2 Trouble shooting tips

for creating a commission

1. If a citizen commission or task force will not listen or is off-course, point to its shortcomings through the media or use the threat of public criticism to get their attention regarding your recommendations.
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Caveat on a citizen commission

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TIP
#6

Petition





10 points

for petitions & initiatives

Point #1

Specific Language –
Have Model Legislation

Point #2

If your goal is to get on the ballot, have the correct forms and follow the correct procedure for signatures.

Point #3

Hold regular (weekly)
organizing meetings open
to all

Point #4

Continually gather community-based support from businesses, nonprofits and other community organizations, authors, artists, faith-based organizations and schools.

Point #5

Hold a rally. Invite politicians and other great speakers. Ask all who attend to:

1. Sign the petition
2. Come to the next rally
3. Engage their friends
4. Come to a community organizing meeting

Point #6

Once you have media attention, invite people to specific places to sign the petition (online or on the ground).

Point #7

March, sit In &
demonstrate, and find
other creative ways to
exercise 1st amendment
rights to assembly.

Point #8

Have fun at the protests & rallies: marathon games, dancing, singing, poetry slams, contests with prizes from supporting businesses

Point #9

Hold a public hearing. The citizen's commission can request the cause's champion politician to spearhead the hearing. Ensure the purpose, venue, time, process are clear and that there is an experienced facilitator.


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Point #10

Introduce legislation to body of law or get it on the ballot, and then continue to raise awareness and gain support.

Once your legislation is adopted. Advocate for an office or cabinet with full time paid employees and a budget.

Advocate for advisory role in appointing officials and determining program, policies and projects.

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Celebrate successes
little ones and big ones