

Organizing for a Local Option Election



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INTRODUCTION

The first and most important step for anyone to take when a Local Option Election is threatened in an area is to know and clearly understand what the real issue is.

There will be an attempt by the “wets” to focus the voters’ attention on something other than the real issue. For instance, they will talk about greater tax revenues, bootlegging, drunken driving, people are going to drink anyway, and so the list grows.

Sometimes the citizen fails to think about the real or important aspects involved if the town goes “wet.” He fails to think about what so-called “legal” alcohol may do for his own business, to members of his own family, to the weaker members of his own society, etc.

The primary question is “What is best for all the people in our area?”

The phrase “Legal Control” is misleading. “Control” regulates conditions of sale and nothing else. It does not control drunkenness. It does not control bootlegging and it does not control disastrous consequences of overindulgence. When we grant a person license for any other activity under the sun, we insist upon his being responsible, but when we license liquor sales, we throw caution to the winds, sow the seeds of bitter tragedy, and contribute to the degradation and death of millions of unfortunate people. Alcohol is as uncontrollable as quicksilver and as deadly.

This issue is clearly drawn between the Christian groups which are out for a clean, free state where men, women and youth will not have to bear the terrible weight of failure and misery which the alcohol traffic entails, and the brewing industry fighting for only one thing, profits!

CHAIRMAN

YOU ARE A KEY PERSON IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION.

You have been chosen as Chairman because of your reputation, integrity and leadership in community affairs. Your name will be used in the public interest. Be proud of that fact, and don't let the spiteful accusations or ugly phone calls from the "wets" tarnish your determined efforts.

Your duties are those of any organizational head. Call necessary meetings of the Executive Committee, consult with the various committee chairmen and generally oversee the entire operation of the election. You should study the suggestion sheet for every committee so as to know the full program you are heading up. Secure legal counsel in the total election campaign.

You will be responsible for setting the "tone" of the election campaign. By all means, avoid the degrading and defeating practice of name-calling. Keep the public image in high respect, even among the drinkers in the community. Remember, the question is not that of drinking - it is the question of legal sales in the community.

A tactfully written letter from you to all the participating pastors would do much to insure that their zeal be directed toward winning the election rather than in denouncing those who may drink. Remind them that the "dry" cause can best be served during the campaign by sticking to the election issue and saying nothing to offend those who might drink and yet vote dry. (Many folks may like ham and bacon, but very few want a hog-pen in their front yard.) In like manner, you can expect some of the drinkers to oppose the legal sales in your community. Give them plenty of reasons to vote "dry," and don't cast reflections on their drinking - not during the campaign.

Keep in close contact with your Vice-Chairman and each committee chairman. Keep them encouraged and working hard. Also, see that none of your group falls into the pitfall of panic. Keep yourself calm in the face of even the most damaging and hurtful practices of the "wets," and pass that cool courage along to your workers.

DON'T HESITATE TO CALL ON ALCAP FOR ANY PROBLEM YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND OR KNOW HOW TO COPE WITH. If you have a special resource person from ALCAP working with you, work closely with him. Just remember that he is not there to dictate - he is there to work with you to win the election. GOOD HUNTING!

CLARIFY - PUBLICIZE - EDUCATE the voters concerning the working and location on the ballot and explain how to vote "Dry."

VICE-CHAIRMAN

YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO BE A BACK-UP TO THE CHAIRMAN. STUDY HIS DUTIES AND SUGGESTION SHEET.

Next in your line of duties is the job of detail arrangements whenever necessary. Keep in daily contact with each committee chairman. Whenever these chairmen have need of detailed arrangements, you are the one to help them work them out. Examples of these details that will be needed from time to time are:

1. Securing envelope addressers and stuffers.
2. Making arrangements for copying documents.
3. Arranging for baby-sitters or nursery for children of envelope addressers.
4. Clearing parade permit for youth.

A thorough study of each committee's suggestion sheet will prepare you for the possible needs they will have. The more of the detailed arrangements you can have prepared ahead of time, the better off the campaign will be.

SECRETARY-TREASURER

YOUR MAIN JOB IS ONE OF RECORD KEEPING.

You probably will have a method of your own to use, and it would be presumptuous for us to try to offer another method.

You will keep notes on all meetings of the Executive Committee. You will make deposits in the bank and write all checks for the entire organization. In setting up the bank account you should use the full name of the organization with yourself as Treasurer signing. Ask the Executive Committee for detailed instructions for writing checks and whether or not any counter-signatures should be on the checks. Work with the Finance Committee to facilitate their assignment.

After the campaign is over, send a detailed account sheet to all church groups making donations to the organization. Also, publish in the newspaper(s) a full accounting record.

Do not destroy any notes or records after the election. Either keep them yourself or turn them over to the Chairman or whomever the Executive Committee designates.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Your committee has at least one person from each denomination participating in the election campaign. Let the entire appeal for funds be handled by each denomination's representative, i.e. Methodist member to all Methodist churches, Baptist to Baptists, etc.

You will need to decide the best method to use in your local situation. You may want to develop a goal to aim for. In most instances you will need to shoot for approximately 50 cents per qualified voter in the election area. Some cases will be different, so don't use this as a hard and fast rule.

Take your appeal to the churches, but don't by-pass the Pastors or the local-church finance committees. These will be your best help in securing the necessary funds.

Set up your program so that individuals will have the opportunity to contribute to the cause. Though the churches will be the chief source of support, there will be some persons who will help out who are not in a participating church. Leave no stone unturned.

To set a realistic financial goal, ask each committee chairman to prepare a proposed budget for his committee. Have them submit these proposals to you as soon after the campaign gets underway as possible. Discuss these proposals with your Chairman and Executive Committee in order to arrive at a proposed election budget. Work with the Secretary-Treasurer concerning the budget, income, expenditures, accounting and/or reporting. A security bond for all who handle the funds may be advisable.

Publicity Committee

The work of the Publicity Committee will require more money than all the other Committees combined. For this reason, it is important that the Executive Committee make an early commitment to you as to the minimum you can count on for buying news space in papers, radio, television and in mailings and posters. With the minimum pledge set up your overall campaign. You will need price quotations from all advertising media. Seek cooperation in coordinating all news releases and advertising. Research and document all materials used in publicity.

Some points to keep in mind:

1. Keep the "wets" off balance.
2. Stay on the offensive.
3. Don't throw your big punches until just before the election day.
4. Aggravate the "wets" with short ads scattered through the paper. Make them think these early ads are your sole attacks. (Samples from a successful campaign are available.)
5. Keep alert to the main argument to be used by the "wets."
6. Use Mothers and Youth in every way possible. Young people are especially imaginative in planning parades, etc.
7. Plan your mailings to every voter, as part of your publicity campaign, on a personal basis.
8. Be careful in the use of statistics. When used be sure to quote the reliable source from which they came.
9. In appeals to the voters, don't make them choose between issues. Try to get them to chose between groups of people (churches, preachers, teachers, etc. vs. beer joint operators, liquor dealers, gamblers, prostitutes, etc.).
10. Use humor and drama. A one-minute skit can be carried all over the County and repeated many times, especially by young people, and in many public places. A puppet show would be excellent.
11. Stick to the election issue. Don't get off on the question of whether or not a person should drink. Don't cast reflections on the drinker.
12. Make a schedule of deadlines for all ad releases.
13. Go all out in ads of length on last two days.
14. Use youth in handing out leaflets produced by them.
15. Reproduce a sample ballot and send it in a letter (fully marked).
16. Use church signboards, church TV and/or radio programs and church newspaper ads.

The semantics of the Local Option Election strategy, of “use the right word.” Words convey information and express feeling about a thing, a person, or an idea. Using the right word will help make the job we are trying to do easier and maybe even more fun!

THEY SAY

Licensed beverages

Package store

Bar, lounge private club

Restaurant where alcoholic beverages are served with meals

Tax revenue derived from the sale of licensed beverages

WE SAY

Drinking alcohol

A man who sells alcoholic drinks by the bottle

Saloon

A place where people eat steak, drink alcohol, walk out and get behind the wheel of an automobile and “try” to drive home without hitting anything

The small money paid by the people who sell drinking alcohol for the privilege of making big money with as little work as possible. It never pays the police, medical or mortuary bills!

VOTING COMMITTEE

Determine the total number of votes needed to win your county or city election. Suggested committee membership is one person for each ten (10) votes needed to win the election. Each person on this committee will be responsible for ten (10) qualified voters.

(Note: Secure enough votes for the maximum margin of victory.)

THE FIRST STEP IS TO ORGANIZE A VOTING COMMITTEE

- A. You will need a Chairman and a Co-Chairman
- B. As a very minimum, for every ten (10) votes you need "to win," appoint one (1) committee member.
- C. Secure three (3) Poll Watchers to be at each voting box at all times on voting day. One should be designated as supervisor. Check your voting totals with the final tally at each box. Be alert concerning needs and/or problems concerning the election process.
- D. Emphasize absentee voting, especially for shut-ins.

II. How to determine the number of votes needed to win an election.

- A. Secure an official Voter Registration List from your County or City Clerk, Tax Assessor, Democratic or Republican Chairman and/or Probate Judge.
- B. Now, take 50% + 1 of the total qualified voters. You will need this many votes "to win."

III. NOW, "get the voters to the polls on election day."

- A. Divide your total Voter Registration List into groups of ten (10). Appoint committee members to contact these groups.
- B. It will be the responsibility of this committee member to:
 1. Contact each one in each group to find out those who are "wet" or "dry." Educational material may be available for these contacts. Also, helpful materials should be left for the person to read and study.
 2. Eliminate the ones who are definitely "wet."
 3. Give special attention to the "undecided" responses.
 4. Secure the names of another group of ten (10) people. Continue to eliminate the "wets" until each committee member has a group of ten "dry" voters.
 5. To the "drys" - explain and encourage absentee voting procedures where necessary.
 6. On voting day each committee member will:
 - (a) Contact each person in your group and request they go vote.

- (b) Contact them again to find out if they HAVE ALREADY VOTED. If anyone has not voted, urge that person to vote. Be sure that as many as possible have voted by early afternoon.
- (c) Phone or give an updated report to the Chairman and Co-Chairman throughout the voting day.

IV. Committee Leadership Responsibility: The Chairman and Co-Chairman will supervise the activity of the Voting Committee. It will be their responsibility to:

- A. Call the planning meetings for the voting committee throughout the campaign.
- B. Secure the official registration list.
- C. Be sure that each committee member has a workable group of ten voters.
- D. Coordinate the activities of the voting committee on voting day. They should receive all reports and make sure all necessary arrangements are made for the following:
 - 1. Car-pools to take voters to the polls when transportation is needed.
 - 2. Secure baby sitters and have nurseries open for mothers who need this service.
 - 3. Keep a running total on how many "Dry" votes have been cast. *
 - 4. Prepare for "extra help" starting at 5:00 P.M. This extra help will make phone calls, personal contacts, furnish transportation if needed, etc. It may well be that this fresh group of extra helpers could secure sufficient votes to win the election.

V. The Final Step:

6:00 P.M. - and only one hour left. The full Voting Committee will meet any emergency that has come up and will make any last minute move which will guarantee that ALL "Dry" voters have cast their votes.

* An accurate number of "Dry" votes can be made by:

- 1. Poll Watchers for each voting box will keep an accurate record of the voting.
- 2. Each Supervisor should take two Registration Lists with him to the voting box. Be sure there are no marks on the roll.
- 3. As each voter votes, mark an "X" by his name.
- 4. At 12 o'clock Noon, take this marked list to the Voting Committee Chairman. Keep a new list at the voting place.
- 5. Two hours before the polls close, take this new list to the Chairman of the Voting Committee.
- 6. The Poll Watchers should remain until the final count is made at each box.

VISITATION AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The primary job of this committee is in sitting down with voters in their homes and discussing the election issues. For this reason there must be an open and continuous line of communication between this committee, the Telephone Committee, and the Voting Committee. The "undecided" and absentee voters need careful and personal attention. The elderly people and the welfare recipients will need personal attention. The "wets" will try to mislead these people about their old age and /or welfare assistance and retirement payments, none of which will be altered because of this election. Be sure to leave helpful educational material at each home where a visit is made. Giving guidance and providing educational materials at senior citizens' meetings would be most helpful.

Keep an accurate record of names, addresses, phone numbers and time of pick-up for those needing transportation. Also, work with other committees in providing nursery facilities.

The Youth Committee will be very helpful in forming your car and driver lists. Also, the young people can be of service as babysitters for workers and/or voters.

Recruit as many visitors as you need. Instruct them in the importance of refraining from argument. Also, keep to the election issue. Stick to the facts of the issue. Refrain from snide remarks and name-calling.

PRAYER COMMITTEE

You should have members on the committee representing each participating church. These are the contact persons to use in setting up a prayer program in each congregation.

Your member who is in charge of women's work can make use of the contacts with each congregation to set up a full program of women's activities. (Prayer is active as well as passive.) This might include a well-organized "Mothers March" or other activity which the women would be effective in doing.

Try to set up at least one prayer circle in each congregation. If possible, organize cottage prayer meetings just ahead of the election day. An all-night prayer vigil the night before election day would be helpful.

Turn in regular news reports of all prayer activities that are newsworthy.

Be sure to check with the Publicity Committee for helps in determining exactly what your groups are praying for. Be sure this information is passed along to every prayer participant in every group.

Have special prayer for the election:

1. Sunday School meetings
2. All worship services
3. Women, men and youth group meetings
4. Arrange for a Prayer Watch throughout election day. Publicize the place and time of Prayer Watches.

One thing to remember. The Christian forces have this prayer source of power that the "wets" do not have.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Chairman and one other adult member. Three to five teenagers may serve on this committee.

This committee represents students and other teenagers to the public and the media. They seek to organize and coordinate all the youth in cooperation with the total organization concerning the wet/dry election.

This committee should work in close cooperation with the Publicity Committee. The various youth organizations in different churches can sponsor some of the ad releases for the newspapers. The youth can make short talks on the radio, in churches and at other public gatherings.

A petition signed by a number of young people can be helpful. If the petition has enough signatures, it may be used as an ad in the papers.

The young people can provide nursery and/or baby sitting service for campaign workers and for voters on election day. This should be coordinated with the Vice-Chairman of the general organization.

The young people will come up with additional and meaningful ideas.

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Helps for Radio Speeches:

1. Begin by identifying yourself.
2. Ask for voters to vote against legal sales of alcoholic drinks.
3. Clarify the date of the election.
4. State your reasons for asking them to vote "dry."
5. Close with another request for a vote in favor of youth.

Suggested Reason for Voting Dry:

(Write out the selected reason in your own words.)

1. Consumption of alcoholic drinks increases when alcoholic drinks are more available.
2. We like the clean climate of our county and want to keep it that way.
3. A few beer drinkers ruin a party.
4. The voters' approval of beer, wine and liquor sales puts the stamp of approval on it for teenagers.
5. Those with the beer drinking habit will drive to another town to get it. Those who don't have the habit won't. Many young people don't have the habit. Put beer in front of us every time we go to the grocery store and more will learn to drink it.
6. Today's youth have been criticized for "wildness." Add beer to the "accepted" list and you make more of us in headlines of "wildness."

TELEPHONE COMMITTEE

This is a very important and hard working committee. Much of the follow-up to the initial contact work of the Voting Committee will be done by this committee.

This committee should work with the pastors in recruiting enough workers in each congregation to call every qualified voter in the congregation and encourage them to vote "dry." You will need callers to phone voters who are not active in any participating church. Don't overload your callers. The first call should be two or three days before the election to every voter committed to vote "dry" or to those who are yet "undecided." A second call should be made on the morning of the election. (Adjust the timing of your call to those voting absentee.)

Set up a method of communication between callers and the Visitation and Transportation Committee. Whenever a caller finds someone who needs transportation to the polls, this information should be passed on to the Visitation and Transportation Committee. There may be some that might benefit from a visit by the Visitation and Transportation Committee. This information should be passed on.

Following is a suggested Guide for the Telephone Committee. Of course, you will adapt it to fit your own situation.

First Call (Two or three days before Election Day)

1. Speak clearly and distinctly. Don't rush your message as if you are giving a sales pitch.
2. Identify your listener on the other end of the line. Be sure you are talking to a responsible voter. Call back if necessary. A good method to use in identifying the other person is to respond to his "hello" with "Mr. Jones?" People like for you to use their name, so use it as much as possible during the conversation.
3. Identify yourself. Give your full name. You have nothing to hide, so let the other person know who you are.
4. State the purpose of your call. Example: "I am calling for ALCAP. We are encouraging all the voters to go to the polls Tuesday and vote "dry." May we count on you to vote, Mr. Jones?"
5. Play it cool. Whatever the response, there is nothing to gain by losing your wits. Here are some suggestions to help play it by ear: (A.) Answer questions courteously, using the person's name. (B.) Do not argue. (C.) Remain cheerful and radiate confidence in our cause. (D.) Keep it positive.
6. Be sure to ask if the voter will need transportation or a sitter.
7. Give a sincere "thank you" for the person's time and interest.

Telephone Committee

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Second Call (Morning of the election.)

Follow the same procedure as on the first calls when identifying your party and yourself. If the person answering is the husband, and you talked to the wife before (or the other way around) refer to the previous call and review your purpose.

1. Ask if he has voted yet.
2. If he has not voted, ask if he is getting ready to go vote. Ask your question in such a way as to suggest a "yes" answer.
3. Ask if transportation is needed.
4. Close with a "Thank you ever so much - we'll see you at the polls."

By 4 P.M. be sure every dry voter on your list has voted - even if it means another telephone call or a personal visit. Many elections are lost by one vote. Don't let that one vote be someone you have agreed to get to the polls.