

Winning Edge #35 – Handwritten Victory: The 90-Second Postcard



This is Trevor Bragdon with Commonwealth Partners' *The Winning Edge*: Tips to help conservatives persuade and win.

In 2018, a tied Virginia legislative race was decided by an unusual method. The election official said "...the election remains a tie, 11,607 votes a piece. Today, this board will draw the winner of the race." Then, they placed each candidate's name in a bowl and randomly drew one. This method resulted in Republican David Yancey winning re-election and gave Republicans the majority in the Virginia House of Delegates.

Most elections are not that dramatic, but dozens of legislative races come down to one or two votes every year. In 2022, legislative races in Alaska, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Massachusetts, and Minnesota were all decided by 1 or 2 votes.

Your Secret Weapon: Door-to-Door

As a candidate, you never know how close your race will be. But going door-to-door gives you a secret weapon: direct contact with undecided voters. While most voters have decided how they'll vote in the presidential race, legislative races often have 10-20% of the electorate undecided or persuadable.

The Power of Personal Follow-Up

How do you leave a lasting impression beyond a good conversation? With follow-up. One simple strategy is to write a short postcard to every undecided voter you meet.

A three-sentence postcard takes just 90 seconds to write but could be the personal touch that wins their vote. Plus, it gives voters a clear reason to support you: "I'm voting for Jane Smith because she came to my door this summer and then sent me a note about it."

Implementing the Strategy

1. Order postcards with your campaign logo or picture on one side, leaving the back primarily blank.
2. Write three lines:
 - Line 1: Friendly Reminder
 - Line 2: Personal Connection or Issue Focus
 - Line 3: Clear Ask for Their Vote

Postcard Templates

1. Personal Connection:
 - "It was a pleasure meeting you in [month]! I really enjoyed our chat.
 - "Your new puppy Oscar stole the show—hope his training is going well!
 - "I'd be honored to have your vote on November 5th."
2. Issue-Focused Connection:
 - "It was great meeting you in [month]! I've been thinking about our chat.
 - "You're right about the crime rate—we've got to keep our community safe, and I'm committed to making sure that happens.
 - "I'd appreciate your vote on November 5th so we can work together to protect our neighborhood."
3. Generic Connection:
 - "It was nice meeting you in [month]! Thanks for taking the time to chat.
 - "As your state rep, I'll work to reduce crime, increase law enforcement, and bring more jobs to [town].
 - "I'd be honored to have your vote on November 5th as we work together for a better future."

Making It Happen

You don't need to do this for every voter, just the undecided ones—likely only 5-8 cards per door-to-door session.

1. Set up a writing station with all the necessary materials to make the process easier.
2. Write the cards that night or the following day while the conversations are fresh in your mind.

3. Hold onto these postcards and mail them all out 10-14 days before the election for maximum impact.

Bottom Line

In close races, personal follow-up can make all the difference. By sending handwritten postcards to undecided voters, you create a lasting impression that could mean the extra votes you need for victory.