

A historical illustration of the Boston Tea Party. In the foreground, a group of men dressed as Native Americans are on a wooden pier, some holding up crates of tea. In the background, several large wooden sailing ships are docked at a harbor. The scene is set in a coastal town with buildings visible on the left.

Tea Party Activism

The basic who? what? why?
when? where? & how?

Another "Grassroots: 101" e-book brought to you by

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Welcome to the party

Are you frustrated? Upset with what you see going on in our country today? Don't recognize the country you grew up in? Or worry that your kids won't? Concerned with the fact that our country's about to go bankrupt? Or that our government seems at war with our values?

If so, then welcome to the party! Or perhaps I should say the "Tea Party".

For these and so many other reasons, conservative patriots are joining together to let their voices be heard. But being heard is not enough. In our system of self-government you get what you pay for – or work for. No victory or defeat is permanent, and the battles always rage.

As Ronald Reagan once said, "Freedom is never more than one generation from extinction" – which means we need to get busy

All of which brings us to the basic who?, what?, why?, when?, where? and how? of Tea Party activism.

Who? – You, and everyone else you know who thinks like you do.

Politics is all about people. People agreeing, disagreeing and advocating on behalf of the things they believe in. And that includes you – or it should.

Beyond "you", if conservatives are to be successful, we need more conservatives getting involved. Lots more. Which means it's also your job to find as many other people who think like you do and get them involved as well.

Your country depends on it.



What? – Having an impact on the political system

There is no great mystery about how to be effective politically. But there are some time tested basics to successfully impacting the system. Again, it comes down to organization. And effective political organization has some fundamentals.

Generally speaking, there are three keys to grassroots political success:

1. Identify and organize your supporters
2. Inform them
3. Mobilize them



Without *identified* people that are willing to help, you have no organization – and won't have much impact.

Without *information*, people will not know how to proceed, let alone why, when where or how.

And without *mobilization* towards a given objective, an organization lacks a reason to exist and will quickly fade away.

These three simple steps constitute the fundamentals of successful grassroots politics at every level and can help you build a successful local organization from the ground up. Embrace them and you'll soon have a greater impact on the things you care about.

So how do you get started?

Your first order of business is to identify a small core group of people who share your views and a vision for what you want to do.

Think of it as a sort of "steering committee". When small groups come together and direct their energies in pursuit of a common goal, leverage and synergies are achieved. They begin to feed from one another and keep each other enthused.

Get together and discuss the different areas each of you would like to focus on and what you believe is important. Develop a consensus and then decide who will do what.

Then pool your resources.

This applies to all political activity, (whether organizing, campaigns or lobbying).

Why? - Three reasons why conservatives should focus on grassroots politics

Why should we as conservatives focus on the grassroots when it comes to politics? Because that's where the opportunities are.

Remember Willie Sutton's response to why he robbed banks? "Because that's where the money is". It's the same in politics. The grassroots is where the votes are.

Ask almost anyone what they think of politics and the usual response is: "It's a dirty business. I don't want anything to do with it."

Yes, politics can be a dirty business, but it's only as dirty as the people that are involved in it.

It gets dirty when far too many good people don't roll up their sleeves and spend the time and effort necessary to clean it up.

Whether you're washing your car, changing a diaper, or doing the dishes, you're doing a job that must be done to keep things from getting too far gone. It's maintenance. And it's the same way with politics.



Working a little bit at a time, maintaining a democratic political system is easy, but when we ignore it for long periods of time the dirty work of politics piles up. Then, when we can't stand to look at the mess any longer, it takes a massive effort to clean it up.

Voting, educating yourself and others about the legislative and political process, and getting personally involved in the affairs of your city, state, and nation is maintenance.

The best way to go about that "maintenance" is with good grassroots organization, for three reasons:

1) It Gets Better Results

Given that so few people participate in the political process, those who do have a disproportionate influence on the country as a whole.

Liberals have taken advantage of this fact for years. Politicians tend to pay attention to those who participate - especially those who are organized and can have an impact on future political campaigns. There's an old saying, "*politicians may be stupid, but they can count*".

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You want to make a difference? Show up – *and organize!*

Help spread the word about this e-book to other conservative activist!

[Post a message on Twitter!](#) - [Post a message on Facebook!](#)

2) It Leads to More Informed Conservative Voters

Better organization keeps individuals informed on important issues and can better involve them in the political process. Given that people have so much competing for their time and attention in today's world, an effective grassroots organization is better able to cut through the clutter and reach individuals with actionable political information.

An effective grassroots organization provides an efficient and reliable vehicle to disseminate critical information to voters.

The more politically informed that people become, the more likely they are to get involved and go to the polls on Election Day.

3) It Builds More Conservative Political Experience

By getting conservatives involved in the political process a grassroots organization can serve as a training ground for higher levels of political involvement.

Just as major league baseball has its minor leagues and farm teams, local political organizations tend to be the proving grounds where those who rise up the ladder first got involved, gained experience and were noticed by those at higher levels.

For conservatives to continue to grow in influence and effectiveness, it's important that new people are continually educated, activated and brought into the system.

So get out there and get involved – and bring others with you!



When? – Now!

Obviously, the quicker you get started, the sooner your efforts will pay off and you'll have an impact on the things you care about. That aside, there are some times that are better for engaging in certain activities than others.

For example, you don't focus on trying to turn out voters a year before Election Day. You do it starting just a few weeks before. Likewise, you don't work on voter registration the week of an election.



Generally, focus on things like identifying fellow conservatives earlier in the year, then on registration, then on voter turnout just before an election. Timing for lobbying efforts depend on the schedules of the elected bodies you're trying to influence, (whether school board, city/county council, legislature or Congress).

Where? - Three venues for conservative grassroots organization

Whether you're organizing for a campaign, a group or just an issue you care about, there are three areas that it pays for conservatives to focus their time. And each area has different benefits as well as challenges.

Organizing by precinct

Organizing by precinct is more geographically focused and as a result it can have a more direct and greater potential impact on a specific area. Plus, the American political system is built around the precinct. Meaning that elections are held in counties and districts which are built on different combinations of precincts, and if you're organized in the precincts you can influence an election - or an elected official who wants to run for re-election.

Organizing in churches

Organizing in churches allows you to work with people you're probably more familiar with, and who you are likely to have more in common with. It also has the benefit of involving people across multiple neighborhoods (or precincts), which can "sow seeds" of activism in more than one area. Plus, when it comes to registering and voting, church members are just as lazy as the average American. And if conservatives are going to be successful in the long term, we can't let church members sit on the sidelines.

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Online organization

Online organization can exist on its own or as a compliment to church and/or precinct organization, (ex. online "groups" via [Yahoo](#), [Google](#), [Ning](#) or [Facebook](#); or online petitions and campaigns at [AktNow](#) - or a combination). And when you organize online, you make it easier to share information with others and for others to find you.



Where to focus your time?

In order to determine where you should focus your time and efforts, ask yourself the following questions:

- What specifically do I want to impact or accomplish? (If it's more education, a church focus might be best. If political, focus on the precinct.)
- Where do I know the most people who think like I do, and who are willing to help? (Hunt where the ducks are!)

Whichever type of organization you plan to focus on, remember that it all comes down to people. You get enough people together with a common purpose, and you've got grassroots organization. **And grassroots organization leads to political impact.**

Shameless self-promotion alert...

You can get involved in our online conservative community at [Conservative Outpost](#).

Members can create and host their own **user journals** (blogs) within the site, add **comments**, be a part of [forum discussions](#), submit **news items**, create [user groups](#) (public or private), as well as create and participate in [online campaigns](#).

Join up – and speak out for the things you care about!

How? - A menu of effective grassroots activities

So now that you know “what”, “when” and “where”, how do you go about it? There are a lot of answers to that question, and it can depend on the resources you have handy, as well as what you’re trying to have an impact on.

The point of this section is to review a relatively easy “to do list” of grassroots activities that have been proven successful in giving citizens a greater voice in their government. These items are purposely easy to implement and, when coupled with similar activities in surrounding other precincts or churches, they can greatly strengthen the political impact of conservatives in your community.



While this is by no means a comprehensive list, the purpose here is to relay the basics, because, if you don’t do the basics, you’ll greatly reduce the chances of having any long term impact.

So with that, here’s the list...

Build a conservative contact database.

Create a database of identified, registered conservative voters (for your church or precinct) with as complete contact information as possible, (names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, precinct and church names). An Excel spreadsheet will work fine. Use this list for distributing key information on all your projects. A good database is critical to making other projects easier and more effective in the future. Make use of any church directories if possible.

Hold a voter registration drive.

As shocking as it might seem, almost half of all potential voters aren’t even registered to vote. Worse, that tends to hold true for conservatives as well. The purpose of a voter registration drive is to make sure that every identified conservative in a church or precinct is registered and able to exercise their right to vote. Get registration forms from your county registration office and set up a registration table in your church, and encourage others to do the same in other churches or other places you’re more likely to find conservatives. You can even cross-reference the names in church directories or on conservative petitions with the county voter registration list to find out who needs to be registered.

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Again, given low average registration and election turnout percentages, this one effort alone can have a tremendous impact. If you're not registered, you can't vote. *And if you don't vote, you don't count.*

Attend the next meeting of your local Republican Party.

Going to political party meetings and getting involved will help you keep up to date with important political information, but it can also provide you with good opportunities for political activism on issues you care about. Volunteer for activities or even run for local party offices, (such as precinct president or committeeman and delegate to county or state conventions). Introduce conservative resolutions. Identify, organize and support fellow conservatives who do the same.

Contact your state or local party chairman to get information about meeting dates and times. Then invite others. *The more conservatives that get involved in the grassroots of the Republican Party, the better off the conservative agenda will be.*



Set up a citizenship bulletin board or table.

To be effective in our political system, people need information, so make sure that they get it. A bulletin board or table can easily be set up at a church so you can post or distribute timely information about issues or upcoming events, (such as local council/school board meetings, elections, etc.). Just be sure to ask your pastor for permission first.

Conduct a petition drive.

Petitions are a great way to demonstrate a strong, unified voice on a given issue, as well as to show politicians the breadth of support it enjoys. If politicians understand one thing, it's numbers. They know that numbers equal power – and petitions demonstrate numbers. They're also a great way to build a database of supporters that you can go back to for further action on related projects in the future.

Find an issue that your community is concerned about, (and that will help identify fellow conservatives), circulate a petition, and make a difference by forwarding it to the proper elected officials, (especially when working in coordination with other local grassroots leaders). You can conduct petition drives "off-line" in printed form and/or create an [online petition](#), (with sites such as [AktNow](#)).

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Be sure to eventually cross-reference petition signatures with your local voter registration list to make sure that your petition supporters are registered to vote.



Lobby your elected officials.

Generally some form of lobbying is the most common type of grassroots effort that local groups engage in. In fact, many groups are formed specifically because of a local issue and the desire to be heard by elected officials. Once you've identified an issue to pursue you can mobilize your group to flood elected officials with emails, post cards, personal letters, faxes, phone calls and personal visits, (again, websites such as [AktNow](#) can help you coordinate such activities online).

Remember, the number one goal of most elected officials is to get re-elected – and an organized group of registered voters with a particular point of view will have considerable influence with most any politician.

Distribute legislative scorecards.

A legislative scorecard is a listing of key votes cast by elected officials indicating how they voted on bills that are important to specific groups, (usually giving them a numerical "score" based on their record). These can be for any federal, state and/or local elected officials that have a voting record.

Contact other conservative organizations that may have scorecards and order enough for your church. If you're in charge of organizing your precinct, order enough for precinct volunteers to be able to effectively distribute them in their churches, as well as to identified conservative voters in your precinct.

The more people know about how elected officials actually vote, the better they can hold them to account and put officials on notice that they're being "watched".

Distribute non-partisan voter guides.

These are guides that demonstrate to voters where candidates stand on issues that are important to conservatives. They are usually based on a public official's voting records

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and/or candidate questionnaires or public statements and will represent positions in easy to understand terms on each issue, (such as Candidate Smith “Supports” or “Opposes” tax increases).

Voter guides help cut through the clutter of campaign advertising that may or may not discuss the issues that are most important to conservatives, and “bottom-line” the candidate’s positions. For the best impact they should be distributed just a few weeks prior to primaries and/or general elections. If you’re working as a precinct organizer, you should acquire enough to enable precinct volunteers to distribute in their churches. You should also consider mailing them to identified conservatives in your precinct.

Make Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) phone calls.

GOTV calls are essential to turning out a large conservative voting-bloc in any election. A registered voter that doesn’t vote doesn’t count. You can create a telephone bank with other church members (or precinct volunteers if you’re organizing your precinct) to make calls from lists of identified conservative voters just prior to and on Election Day.

You can do this as a group from a central location or individually from home from a common (but distributed) list. You can also use new online tools such as Google’s online spreadsheets to allow all callers access to a centralized list of voters.

This is where the work of identifying and registering conservatives pays off. Work with your local or state grassroots leadership (if any) to determine how you can best organize making these important calls.

This is only a partial list of the things you can do. The more involved you become, the more ideas and opportunities you’ll have. Using these time tested principles and techniques you can have an impact on the things you care about by working just a few hours a month.

The bottom line is to do something. Remember, if you don’t do anything, nothing happens, (or at least nothing that you would want to happen).



Be Patient: Patience and diligence are political virtues

Over two thousand years ago a Roman general wanted to prove to his soldiers that perseverance in combat was more important than strength. He had two horses brought before his men, one a healthy stallion and the other an old nag.

He then ordered one of his strongest men to pull off the weak horse's tail. When the soldier failed, the general ordered one of the weakest men in his command to pull the tail off of the stronger horse, but to do it one hair at a time. Soon the horse's tail was gone.



Success in politics often requires the same patience and perseverance.

Don't be discouraged over everything that needs to be done or could be done, but rather focus on what you "can" do – or even "like" to do. As a result, you'll be more likely to stick with it.

In order to truly have an impact on our culture and our political system, the conservative movement needs volunteers that are diligent and have the patience to stay involved and finish the job.

Whether it's someone running a church voter registration drive who only registers one fellow church member to vote, a precinct captain who identifies only one like-minded voter, or someone who joins an online campaign and forwards messages to their friends, each contribution adds to the overall effort to give conservatives a greater voice in their government.

The key isn't that a few do a lot, but rather that many do at least a little. People like you that are willing to do the little things to collectively accomplish the great things.

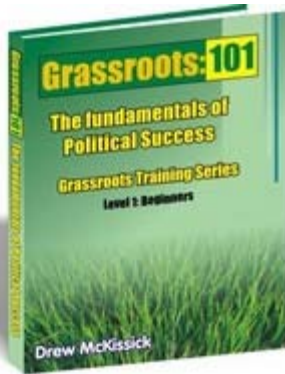
Our country didn't get screwed up over night. And we won't fix it overnight. But it does require that we be patient...and diligent.

Remember, many hands make light work. **So get started!**

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You can get more ideas and tips on how to be effective in the political system from my "Grassroots 101 Training Series" which covers the fundamentals of political success

"In a democracy, he who does not take an active interest and participate in public affairs is worthless". - Pericles



Are you "worthless"? How important are you to the success of the things that you believe?

Today our country needs conservatives to be willing to get involved and play an active role in our political system like never before.

The purpose of the [Grassroots Training Series](#) is to cover the highlights and break down the complexities of the political system and give a basic understanding of the fundamental techniques that can help you achieve success.

The Beginner's Guide provides 50 pages of basic "how to" guidance for activity relating to:

- *Grassroots Opportunities*
- *Precinct Organization*
- *Church Organization*
- *Online Organization*
- *Being an Effective Volunteer*

[CLICK HERE](#) to purchase and download "The Beginner's Guide" now. Or [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more!

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- *The Legislative Process*
- *Basic Lobbying*
- *Effective Confrontation*
- *Election Voter Guides*
- *Newsletters*
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The Advanced Guide has 83 pages covering activity relating to:

- *Advanced Lobbying*
- *Campaigns and elections*
- *Communications*
- *Parliamentary procedure*
- *Volunteer management*

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So what are you waiting for? Get more useful tips and guidelines for having an impact on the things you care about today.

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