

Birddogging Tips & Event Questions

The logo for RESULTS, featuring the word "results" in white lowercase letters on a red speech bubble background.

During election season, candidates are eager to listen to constituents who will be going to the polls soon to decide their fate as an elected official. Many candidates hold townhall (in-person and virtual) to put themselves in front of as many voters as possible. This is an excellent moment to show up powerfully at candidate events, make requests, and educate the public on our issues. And there are ways to increase the odds that you'll be heard during these events below. [Find more details in this blog post](#). You'll also find draft questions below.

Getting Connected to Candidates

1. **Visit the congressional calendars** (www.house.gov and www.senate.gov) to find out when your legislators are home for "District Work Periods."
2. **Subscribe to email newsletters** of your elected officials and candidates.
3. **Call local campaign and district offices** and ask about townhalls and forums.
4. **Visit townhallproject.com.**
5. **Check your local paper** and other media to stay informed of campaign activities.

Prepare questions ahead of time

1. Start with the questions below. Personalize them with your experience, something your community can relate to, and powerful images.
2. Make them concise and make sure they require a yes or no answer.

Work in teams

1. **Work in a group.** For online or in-person events, the more people you have, the better. Work with your RESULTS group and action network, plus use the opportunity to engage new people. If required, make sure everyone is registered for the event.
2. **Plan questions.** Everyone should have same list of questions to ask in the order you want to ask them. If candidate fails to fully answer a question, the next person can ask for better answer to the question and ask the next question on your list.
3. **Arrive early (in-Person).** Arrive early to scope out the venue for highly-visible seats and procedures for asking questions. Some events will have sign-up sheets for asking questions—be sure everyone signs up. Introduce yourself to the candidate, staff and event organizers. For online events, be ready to log on as soon as allowed.
4. **Location, location, location (in-person).** Have group members sit in different areas of the room as close to the front as possible for maximum visibility. Sit near microphones and aisles so you can be first in line when questions are allowed.

Get picked for a question

1. **Look like a fan (in-person).** Wear campaign stickers and gear, a bright shirt, nod in agreement, make eye contact. These will increase chances of getting called on.
2. **Be first (in-person)!** Raise your hand first, fast, and high, even before they ask for hands (anticipate). Keep your hand up! For online events, get in the queue or submit questions as soon as possible. Be prepared to quickly copy and paste your question.

Stay polite and on message.

1. **Impact.** Decide if you identify as a RESULTS volunteer. Getting a bunch of questions from RESULTS advocates vs everyday constituents may have less impact. If in a group, perhaps the first person identifies as part of RESULTS and the rest do not.
2. **Begin with a brief thank you** or acknowledgement, if possible.
3. **Be polite, respectful, assertive, and concise.**
4. **Remain focused and cordial** even if your question is blown over. Be firm in repeating the question and asking for an appropriate response.
5. **Don't embarrass the member of Congress/candidate.** You want a relationship.

Do your follow-up.

1. **Get a handshake (in-person).** Join the handshake line after events to ask a question and get a photo. Respectfully hold onto their hand until you get an answer.
2. **Seek out staff (in-person).** Introduce yourselves and your issue. Provide them with contact information and leave behinds. Leave the event with a clear follow up plan.
3. **Find the media.** For in-person events, seek out media after the meeting to talk about our issues. For online events, write a letter to the editor thanking the candidate for publicly committing to a specific position or action.
4. **Send written follow-up.** Within a few days, e-mail a letter to the candidate/lawmaker and the staff. Mention that you were at the event and recap your issue, question, or request. Send questions you weren't able to ask.
5. **Share your information.** Share information you learned from the gathering with your group and action network. Give them ideas on how they might follow up.
6. **Report to RESULTS staff.** Let us know what happened! How did it go and what can we learn about the member for the future? [Report online.](#)

Note that COVID1-9 may affect whether events. For in-person event, only attend if you feel safe doing so. For online events, be sure to note instructions to join and submit questions.

Election Engagement Questions

Child Tax Credit Question (for progressive audiences)

Engage: In 2021, the expanded Child Tax Credit (or “CTC”) helped millions of families pay the bills and cut child poverty by more than one-third.

Problem: Now, as families are facing higher costs for rent, food, and fuel, the CTC monthly payments have ended. As a result, [monthly child poverty increased 41 percent after CTC payments stopped](#).

Inform: The 2021 CTC expansion is the most significant investment in reducing child poverty in a generation. It lifted 4 million children from poverty each month payments went out. [Share your own experience and/or [state data](#) on the impact of expanding the CTC]. Now, as Congress considers prioritizing tax breaks for big corporations later this year, they should prioritize families first by expanding the CTC.

Call to Action: Will you make including an expanded CTC for lower-income families a top priority for any tax legislation later this year?

Child Tax Credit Question (for conservative audiences)

Engage: In 2021, the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) helped millions of American families weather tough economic times, while also cutting child poverty by more than one-third.

Problem: These gains have now been erased since the CTC payments stopped last December, despite the CTC proving itself to be an effective and efficient way to strengthen families and reduce child poverty.

Inform: The 2021 CTC expansion is the most pro-family policy in a generation. [Share your own experience and/or [state data](#) on the impact of expanding the CTC]. It helped families stay housed, put healthy food on the table, and [stay employed](#). Two reasons for this success were that families with low- or no incomes got the full CTC, and that payments were made monthly. The monthly payments put money back into the hands of families. And they know best how to use it, whether it was for monthly bills, their child’s education, or for one parent to stay home to care for their children.

Call to Action: Congress must prioritize effective policies that strengthen families and fight child poverty. Will you work to expand the CTC — prioritizing families with the lowest incomes — in any tax legislation this year?

Global Bills – All-in-One

Engage: When it comes to effective programs, it's not just the money that counts, but how the money is used.

Problem: RESULTS, the organization I volunteer with, is working to pass three bipartisan foreign policy bills before the end of 2022 that will address extreme poverty and make the best use of U.S. resources,

Inform: The three bills focus on global education, tuberculosis, and child malnutrition. All three bills call for clear, measurable goals, using best practices, and accountability. The bills also focus on reaching the most marginalized and lowest income populations in partner countries.

Call to Action: What we do around the world matters—it affects our image, our partnerships, and millions of lives. Can I count on you to look at these bills and take action to get them passed? I can provide you background information on each.

TB Bills

Engage: COVID has taken a huge toll on global health programs in low-income partner countries.

Problem: For example, progress on tuberculosis has tumbled backward over the past two years. TB is preventable, treatable, and curable, yet millions of people in poverty are denied care. And this disease still kills over 1.5 million people each year. We must tackle this age-old pandemic while protecting against pandemics of the future.

Inform: Congress can do something this year to fight TB – you can pass the End TB Now Act. This bipartisan legislation is in both the House and Senate. The End TB Now Act will ensure greater access to TB testing and treatment to the most vulnerable by making the best use of U.S. resources.

Call to Action: Can I count on you to look at [H.R. 7420 or S.3938], cosponsor it, and help get it passed? I can provide you with background information.

READ Act

Engage: It's been devastating watching our kids here in XXXX fall behind in their learning during COVID-19. But this is a global problem as well. More than 616 million students around the world had their learning disrupted during COVID.

Problem: Girls, low-income children, and children with disabilities are affected the most.

Inform: But access to quality basic education has the power to change and save lives. U.S. global education programs support basic literacy and numeracy and build the foundations

necessary for good health and economic growth for poor communities. This strengthens our trading partners and even saves lives. For example, children of mothers with at least 12 years of education are 30% less likely to die before age 5.

Call to Action: Right now, Congress can reauthorize the READ Act, to enhance U.S. leadership in supporting access to quality education around the world. Will you please cosponsor S.3938 (Senators) or speak to leadership about getting H.R.7240 to the floor for a vote (House).

Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act (Senators only)

Engage: No matter where they live, I believe all children deserve a strong start in life. But we are failing to address even the most basic nutritional needs of millions of children around the world.

State Problem: Malnutrition is an underlying cause of nearly 50% of preventable child deaths and a staggering 22% of the world's children under age 5 are permanently stunted because of malnutrition. We must do better.

Inform: Fortunately, Congress is close to passing a bipartisan bill, the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act, H.R.4693. The bill calls for a coordinated USAID strategy, clear targets, and solid interventions so that assistance reaches the most vulnerable children.

Call to Action: The bill has passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Will you please call on leadership to bring it to the floor and vote in favor of the bill? I have background information for you.