

**Volunteer Opportunities to Support Campaigns**  
**Series of Articles for Weekly Updates**  
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Article #1:

## **Antidotes to Political Depression**

Following the news and feeling helpless to change things? You might be suffering from Political Depression. We are offering a series of articles on ways you can combat Political Depression by volunteering your time and talents to a political campaign. We will offer a guide to ways you can help with campaigns and make a difference in who and how they represent you.

### Host a House Party for a Candidate

Invite friends, neighbors, and family to an informal gathering at your home to meet a candidate. This gives invited guests an opportunity to meet and talk with a candidate without the dynamics of a public gathering. Your invitation would set the expectation that this is a conversation to foster learning about a candidate, not a “sales job” to secure his/her vote. Schedule the event with the candidate’s campaign team and prepare them with information about how many guests and what topics are likely to be most important to them. Then plan your party. This can be as simple as coffee and cake, or as elaborate as a dinner party. You choose!

### Postcard and Letter Writing

Would you like to receive a hand-written note or letter describing a candidate and his/her views on an important topic? How about encouragement to go out and vote on election day? Personal appeals have impact and you can contribute by writing these kinds of notes. The campaign may have sample scripts to use, or they may encourage you to “put it into your own words”. You might join an organized event to write notes, or do them at home as you have time. All you need is good penmanship!

### IT Skills at All Levels

Are you a user of software as basic as Microsoft Office or a sophisticated software developer? Do you know how to be a system administrator or the “owner” of an account using free-ware? Campaigns need databases of supporters to be built and maintained, mailings of newsletters to go out via internet, webpages to be established and updated, and communications within the team to be supported. Learning how to use a new tool like Mailchimp or Googlegroup is easier than you think! On-line tutorials are available for these tools and can be completed in less than an hour. Many support efforts can be done entirely from home during hours that you define. If you have a laptop and a phone...you have a job!

More ideas will be posted in future weekly updates. To volunteer, contact the candidates’ campaigns at the webpage links below. Doing something constructive can lift your spirits and combat Political Depression!

(insert the list of candidates who have announced)

Article #2

## **Antidotes to Political Depression**

Political Depression might not be a clinical diagnosis, but for some of us anger and frustration can cause real health impacts. Channeling your energy into constructive activities shows that you are not a helpless victim. Here are some things you can do to help elect candidates who think the way you do or promote awareness of issues you care deeply about.

### Facebook and Twitter

Social media is a powerful tool for sharing information and reaching audiences that may not be watching broadcast or print media. If you like to create messages or comment on messages created by others, you have a skill that is much in demand. Most issue-focused groups and candidate campaigns have Facebook sites and Twitter feeds. You can assist those groups/candidates with creative writing by submitting suggested posts. Posting their information on your Facebook site or re-tweeting comments that you receive to your network helps to spread the word in a positive way. Coordinate your efforts with the group/candidate so that the intended message is preserved and presents the perspective that helps the cause.

### Creative Writing and Graphic Arts

Are you good at designing eye-catching webpages, ads, newsletter mastheads, posters, and banners? Do you have creative writing skills that can transform information into language that inspires and impresses? Issue-focused groups and candidate campaigns need help with designing and producing communications that grab your attention and convey messages rapidly. Volunteer to help by understanding the key messages and helping to create the products that get those messages out to others!

### Event Planning

If you know how to plan and organize events, your volunteer skills are needed by every campaign. Events need to be fun, in locations that people can get to easily, and provide attendees ways to connect with each other. The purpose of the event might be to raise awareness of the candidate/issue, meet and train other volunteers, raise funds, plan strategies, or just celebrate a milestone accomplishment. Scheduling, reserving the venue, issuing invitations, collecting RSVPs, event set-up and take-down, and assessing the results are some of the things that need to be done. Bring your skills and create some fun!

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(insert the list of candidates who have announced)

Article #3:

## **Antidotes to Political Depression**

Have you resorted to limiting your exposure to political news in order to avoid another round of Political Depression? Why not show the country that you care enough about the future to get personally involved? Your talents and availability will help to define what you can do and when. The important thing is to volunteer! Democracy does not happen in a vacuum – it needs people to make it work.

### Media/Press Relations

Can you be a point of contact that media/press can rely on to ensure that questions are answered, interviews are scheduled, and appointments kept? Can you talk to reporters and arrange for press coverage of key events? Can you write or organize press releases to garner attention by broadcast or print media? This is a role that needs strong organizational skills and the ability to respond in real time so that deadlines are met and news gets out.

### Fund Raising

We've all done it from time-to-time, for the school band, the soccer league, or your favorite charity. Campaigns need money, too. For advertising, for research, for supplies, and to cover volunteers' expenses. Use your experiences and creativity to find ways to ask friends, neighbors, family, and even strangers to contribute money to a very good cause! House parties, golf tournaments, personal letters, car washes, anything you think would attract donors!

### Administration

Ok – this is the unglamorous part. It is answering emails, maintaining the membership list, organizing meetings, updating webpages, tracking expenses, sending out newsletters, running errands – you know, all that stuff you have to do to manage your own household. It is the key enabling infrastructure that helps every other volunteer do a great job! There are lots of things to do that need to be done by reliable people who will accept an assignment, no matter how small it seems.

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(insert the list of candidates who have announced)

Article #4:

## **Antidotes to Political Depression**

When does the frustrating barrage of bad news stop? If you are losing sleep at night over the day's events, you may be suffering from Political Depression. You can change the world a little bit at a time by getting personally involved. You can volunteer a lot or a little, but becoming active is essential to sustained political change. Here are some more ideas on what you could do.

### Canvassing

Canvassing can be door-to-door or based in a high traffic area like a shopping center. It is based on informed volunteers engaging in conversations with people who might be willing to discuss an issue or a candidate. It is time consuming but campaign research shows that person-to-person interactions are the most effective way to persuade people to change their minds or take an action. For candidates, it is important to establish that you are listening to voters and that their opinions matter. For getting out the vote, it is important to establish that every vote counts and participation in elections is key to making democracy work for all of us. The campaign or issue-focused group organizes the canvassing event, provides the materials, and coaches you on how to do it. It is a great way to get some exercise and meet new people!

### Phone Banking

Are you good at talking with people but don't want to go door-to-door? Making phone calls to targeted audiences can be an effective way to raise awareness of a candidate or an issue. The organizing group provides a script, a list of people to contact, and may even provide a gathering place to do this as a group activity. There is usually an on-line tool to record the results of each call, e.g. no answer, great discussion, rejection... Either way, it is a form of personal outreach and that is more effective than sending a flyer through the mail.

### Volunteer Coordinator

Be the liaison between your candidate/issue group and the volunteers eager for assignments. You may be recruiting volunteers at events or in response to emails. Connect these people with other organizers who have jobs to be done and make sure that they receive meaningful assignments and complete them. Keep those volunteers connected by regular outreach and listening to their comments on ways the campaign/issue group can be more effective. All it takes is good people skills and the time to regularly stay in touch. And you will make new friends in the process!

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(insert the list of candidates who have announced)

Article #5:

## **Antidotes to Political Depression**

Being depressed is no fun and worrying about the future of the country is hard to deal with. There are ways to counter the bad feelings with constructive, positive actions that you plan and fit into your already busy schedule. These range from long-term volunteer work or bite-sized pieces of activity that are once-and-done. Pick one, do it, and we guarantee that you will not be crippled by on-going Political Depression!

### Arrange for a Candidate to Appear at a Community Event

All of us belong to one or more community organizations who would welcome having a candidate come to talk about issues of concern. This helps the candidate get to know a small number of his/her constituents in a setting that fosters discussion and mutual learning. You can help by suggesting to your group that a candidate be invited and arrange for that candidate to come to the meeting. Help the candidate by advising what issues are of concern to the group so that he/she can be thinking about his/her positions on those topics. You will become known as a community influencer by arranging these small group sessions!

### Research on Issues/Policy Questions

Ever wondered how candidates know so much (or so little on a topic of concern)? There are people who gather information and prepare summaries for the candidate to review so that they can be efficiently educated on key topics. It does not require a policy expert to do this, simply a person with an inquiring mind and a willingness to do the homework. Candidates with small campaign staffs really need volunteer help to do this. You too can become a policy wonk!

### Monitor of State and Local News on Events of Interest

The news media follows the President around and spends a lot of time on endless analysis of the latest policy atrocity. But state and local news items get little coverage, and candidates can miss out on key events that make a difference at the state and local level. The news monitor checks web pages, local news outlets, press releases of key organizations, and attends meetings in your community to identify and highlight the important things your candidate needs to know. It is sort of like a mini-intelligence officer gathering information and sending an intel brief to the campaign. Join the cloak-and-dagger community and have some fun!

Over the past 5 weeks we've described 12 different ways that you can contribute your talents and energy to make a difference in our political environment. Whether it is an issue or a candidate that you support, your personal involvement can and will make a difference. Now get out there and change the world!

(insert the list of candidates who have announced)