



ONLINE PETITION DO'S AND DON'TS:

Grow Your Army of Grassroots Supporters – and Make Them Care

Online petitions are an essential tool in any modern advocacy campaign's toolbox. Why do we say that?

- 1. They're an ideal entry point for people new to grassroots advocacy.** Not everyone spends all day every day contacting lawmakers or dreaming up civic campaign strategy (that's what [Denny Civic Solutions](#) is for!). That's why petitions are among the easiest actions for advocacy newbies to take – most can be completed in 30 seconds or less.
- 2. They're a built-in way to grow your network of supporters.** People are moved to sign a petition because they're passionate about your cause, and doing so makes it simple for them to opt-in to your contact list. Which then means...
- 3. It's easier to engage advocates down the line.** Signing a petition creates a sense of “buy in” for your supporters. And once they've taken that initial action, it's far easier to ask them to take on heavier lifts down the road (such as writing a letter of support, or calling a legislative office).

That said, we've seen a lot of petitions gone wrong in our line of work.

Below are some top Do's and Don'ts from our own experience:

Do: Make it meaningful.

Of course, petitions are about more than simply building a mailing list. They demonstrate to lawmakers how widespread support for your cause is. Trust us: telling any legislator that you have 800+ constituents in their district who support your issue is a good way to get them to take notice).

Don't: Treat a petition as the end-all-be-all of your campaign.

Online petitions are a tool, but they're not the only tool. As mentioned above, they're best used as a stepping stone to engage advocates in ongoing actions down the line.



Do: Make it easy for them to share.

Your thank-you message should also include a link to share on social media – spreading your message without any additional leg work on your part and minimal work for your advocate.

Don't: Forget about your advocates after they sign.

The first step is to make sure you set an automated thank-you message (usually via email or, even better, text) to let advocates know their signature makes a difference. But after that, you should have an ongoing cadence for following up with your advocates – providing regular email updates on campaign progress, or texting future action items at critical legislative moments, for example.

Tell Lawmakers: Secure a Better Future for Pennsylvania Infants



Postpartum depression can impact any new parent. Research shows that approximately 15 percent of new mothers suffer from postpartum depression. In Pennsylvania, this means about 20,000 infants and moms are affected each year.

#StrongMomStrongBaby is a statewide effort to amend the existing early intervention law (Act 212 of 1990) to add postpartum depression as an at-risk condition allowing infants to undergo assessments, parents to receive assistance in bonding with their babies, and if needed, connect them Early Intervention services to ensure moms and babies have the best start together.

Do: Hook them in, fast.

Whether it be on social media or your petition, put your call to action right at the top. Use an eye-catching image below that. Once they see your petition landing page, you've only got a matter of seconds for potential advocates to decide if they're going to take action on your issue or not.

Don't: Get too wordy.

People are busy. In your petition's text, make it clear why they should care – and then get out (we're going to take our own advice and end this list now, we promise!).

Services to Consider: We're big believers in Capitol Canary (formerly Phone2Action) which also offers targeted contact-your-legislator campaigns and mass text functionality (which have an open rate of 90+ percent compared to emails' 20 percent). That said, we've worked with clients who use VoterVoice, NationBuilder, Salsa Engage, Change.org, and more. The platform itself matters far less than how you use it!

Want to learn more? Schedule a 15-minute discovery fit call with the Denny Civic Solutions team to see how you can put online petitions to work for you!



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