

NUTS & BOLTS SIGNATURE GATHERING DOs and DON'Ts

DOs for signature gathering:

- 1. Always be courteous and friendly while assertive. Say “Good morning or Good afternoon” but get to the pitch right away...Would you sign our Pro-Life petition.**
- 2. Be familiar with the wording of the amendment and the []For and [] Against statements. Encourage signers to read and understand the language. This prevents opposition from charging that you coerced them into signing, that they didn't know what they were signing.**
- 3. Be familiar with the arguments for and against state personhood initiatives, and if someone has a question you can't or don't have time to answer, refer them to our personhood website.**
- 4. Distill answers to basic questions that will come up over and over, repetitively. Keep your talking points honest, short, sweet, and to the point**
- 5. Make certain people place the right information in the right space on the petition. If one places them in the wrong spot, chances are the next 5-10 signature gatherers will do the same thing. Before handing the petition clip board over, say, “your printed name goes here, signature here, your phone number here,” etc. Point out where they sign, date, place address, and emphasize that the last column the last name is to be printed legibly, then first and middle initial.**
- 6. That last column for the printed name is how the elections worker identifies the person, then they check the signature to see if it matches what they have on file. Without explicit instruction, many signers print where they should sign and vice versa. That could potentially invalidate the signature, and if the printed name is illegible, the elections worker has no way to determine who it is, and it will be invalidated. Leave the last two columns blank. If a person can't write small enough for the space, it is better to use two lines and it be legible.**
- 7. In the space for address or phone number, phone number is preferred in case we need to contact them.**
- 8. Come up with a short phrase to attract the potential signer. Something like, “Would you like to sign a prolife petition?” Then if they are interested, tell them more, such as, “We are working toward passing an amendment to the Montana Constitution that states that personhood begins at conception...If we can get close to 50,000 signatures, Montanan's will have the opportunity to vote for or against it in November 2010**
- 9. Clip the signatures you yourself gathered to an affidavit that has your name on it. It will need to be notarized.**
- 10. In addition to gathering signatures, grow the prolife network. Ask petition signers if they would like to receive Montana ProLife Coalition's newsletter and if so, have them sign the contact sheet available for downloading on the MPLC website. Remember that it is not enough to just collect enough signatures. The harder part will be getting people to the polls November 2010. Growing the network will allow us to contact those people and remind them to vote!**
- 11. Have at least one signature on the page in blue ink. That way the county signature counters can't tell you what you have given them is a copy and throw it out.**
- 12. Signatures on one sheet must all be from the same county since you will be handing in the sheets to the respective county departments. For church signature gathering, this is not much of an issue. For large state fairs, big parades, where**

there will be people from different counties, it is a big issue. Make sure you have enough petitions to cover different counties.

DON'Ts for signature gathering:

1. Don't argue with people that oppose what you are doing. Avoid lengthy discussions of any kind. Say, "I'm sorry. I would like to discuss this with you at length but this is my day to gather signatures." It takes up time that could be spent gathering signatures. Just be friendly, be a good witness, don't let yourself get diverted. If someone gets ugly about it, is obstructing your ability to gather signatures, and is otherwise making you uncomfortable, feel free to call the police.
2. Never leave signed petitions unattended.

RECOMMENDATIONS for signature gathering:

1. Whenever possible, have two clip boards with sign up sheets per signature gatherer.
2. When collecting in churches or other large gatherings, try to have two signature gatherers per 10 people. If there are not enough signature gatherers, many will walk by. It is useful to have at least two signature gatherers at any one station. One can field questions while the other concentrates on proper signature gathering.
3. If you are talking to a "prochoice" person who is friendly and seems reasonable, you can point out to them that getting enough signatures to get this on the ballot gives people a choice." If any hesitate to sign, remind them it is not an endorsement of the amendment but simply puts the amendment on the November ballot for people to vote for or against. Even some prochoice folks have signed it because they think Montanan's should have the right to choose for or against supporting it.

DOs for petition sheets:

1. Make sure the sheet carries the language of the amendment and the For and Against language—one or both should be on both sides of the petition
2. Make sure the sheet has two sides, the second page continuous with the numbers on the first page, Do not staple two pages together for the front and back. Take the time to print on both sides of the petition or use a printer that does duplex printing automatically. Petitions will not be accepted if the front and back are stapled together.

DON'Ts for petition sheets

1. Don't place a mark in the For or Against boxes or the sheet may be disqualified.

CHECKLIST for SIGNATURE GATHERER

1. plenty of petitions
2. membership sign up form
3. MPLC and Personhood brochures
4. at least 2 clipboards per signature gatherer
5. at least one blue pen; bring plenty of pens in case ink runs out
6. copy of signature gatherers do's and don'ts to reference
7. turn in notarized affidavit with each bundle of signatures; different affidavit for each county