



# Advocacy Initiative HANDBOOK

May - **August 15**, 2020

Strategies developed by Common Power - Seattle.  
Adopted by the Steering Committee  
of Olympia Indivisible April 27, 2020.

**Updated on July 25, 2020. Updates will occur frequently.**

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If you need help with any of these instructions, please send a short message about your issue to a volunteer at Olympia Indivisible

[advocacynow2020@gmail.com](mailto:advocacynow2020@gmail.com)

# 1. Introduction

## *The Advocacy Initiative: Voting Justice*

**Advocacy is still a high priority now extended through August 15.**

The work can be done from your home - making phone calls, sending emails, or tweeting. The message to elected officials in key states is simple: voters need **BOTH** mail-in voting opportunities **AND** more early in-person voting opportunities. If we keep pushing hard with contacts, states will have time to make the necessary changes to their elections process before November.

In this Handbook, you'll find step by step easy-to-follow instructions from our partner organization Common Power, previously named Common Purpose. You'll find everything you need, including contact information and scripts.

### **Get started here:**

1. Under **Instructions** (below), at Step 1: find the link to sign up at the Common Power website. You'll be asked how many of the **14 states** will you commit to contacting. Five states are the minimum.
2. Make your calls, send emails or Tweets - whichever platform you prefer. Do this as often as you can. You'll be contacting the Governors, State Officials in charge of voting and US Senators. The most efficient plan is to contact the Governors one day, State Officials on another, and the US Senators on another day.
3. After you finish your work for the day, go to Step 4 (below) to record your activity. Be sure to **request that a copy of your actions be emailed to you before you submit your activity**. Step 5 (below) asks you to forward that email to Olympia Indivisible so we can tally your accomplishments.

## **Background on the Advocacy Initiative**

Common Power, a progressive organization in Seattle, developed the strategy behind the **Advocacy Initiative**. The rationale is that if more people are able to vote without the fear of contracting COVID-19, more Americans will participate in the 2020 elections. At highest risk for low voter turnout in November are states that do not provide safe voting systems. Currently, there are 14 states key to the 2020 elections that do not provide safe voting systems.

## 2. Instructions- *from Common Power*

Thank you for signing up to participate in Common Power's advocacy work for voting justice. We believe our mission to amplify, foster, and support a just and inclusive democracy aligns entirely with the present need for mail-in ballot elections during COVID-19. Please use these instructions to guide your work.

### Items needed:

- A computer device of some kind (desktop, laptop, tablet, phone)
- A phone
- A determined mentality
- A belief that civic action can produce positive outcomes

### Step by Step Instructions:

**Step 1:** This takes you to the Common Power website ([cpnow.org](http://cpnow.org)). Please fill out the [Sign Up Form](#) here. After you fill it out and submit the form, **come back to this Handbook for the next steps.**

**Step 2:** Open the [Elected Officials Contact Information](#) .

We've cataloged the contact information for four officials in each of **14 states**: the state's two US Senators, the state's Governor, and the state's chief elections official (this latter office varies by state). The document is organized alphabetically by state, and contains these pieces of contact information for each contact:

- a. The Washington D.C. office phone number (for U.S. Senators)
- b. The Local office phone number
- c. The Email portal or email address
- d. The Twitter handle

### Updates from Common Power as of July 24:

- **No longer contact these 14 states:** Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Iowa\*, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Wisconsin.
- **The 5 PRIORITY states to contact now are: GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, MAINE, and NEVADA.** Also - **\*Big Push for IOWA-** contact only the Governor to push her to fulfil her promise that felons who are no longer in the corrective system be able to vote.

**Step 3:** Open the [Scripts and Templates](#) document. Here you'll find sample scripts for phone calls and emails, and these scripts can be made more concise for tweets. **You do NOT need to use these Scripts;** they're just a place to get started. *The most important thing is that you convey your personal desire that the officials provide mail-in balloting for all voters.*

**For all Senate communication,** please specifically mention **“The Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020”** and the **SafeVote Act of 2020** and ask the Senator to support it. For the other officials, it's enough to simply ask them to guarantee mail-in balloting for all voters.

- Begin calling, emailing, and tweeting -- either all of these, or simply the formats with which you are most comfortable.

**Step 4:** When you're done for the day, open the [CP Activity Contact Log Form](#). Mark which types of communications you completed with each Elected Officials Office and submit the form.

- Repeat that process each time you advocate so we can effectively track our efforts.
- Press the button (at the bottom of the page) **requesting a copy of your responses be emailed to you**, then press SUBMIT.

**Step 5:** **Please FORWARD the email copy you received from Common Power to [advocacynow2020@gmail.com](mailto:advocacynow2020@gmail.com)** so that your important work can be collected by the GOTV field team. **No personal information recorded!** Only the data from the contacts you made to states and officials will be captured and tallied by date.

If you're having trouble with any of these steps, please send a short message about your issue to a volunteer at Olympia Indivisible

[advocacynow2020@gmail.com](mailto:advocacynow2020@gmail.com)

or send an email to Common Purpose, [volunteerhelp@cpnow.org](mailto:volunteerhelp@cpnow.org)

## Things To Keep In Mind:

Whether you've been making calls for years, or this is your first opportunity for advocacy, here are some helpful things to keep in mind.

### ● When phone calling:

- ❖ You're reaching two phone numbers for the U.S. Senators: their Washington D.C. office and home state office. It's important to try both numbers. **Be sure to mention the SafeVote Act of 2020.**
- ❖ Some offices will require you to provide a ZIP Code to ensure you're calling from that state, but some do not. If they kick you out of the system because you don't have their desired zip codes, don't let that stop you from other methods. And if they don't take your communications the first time, try the following day because different staffers answer at different times and ask for different information.
- ❖ **Tip:** Stay positive! Yes, we support that everyone votes, and we're just calling to make our opinions heard. The staffer on the line will note your interest in a spreadsheet that's then reported to the elected official. We're not calling to argue and insist. The most important thing is that we communicate a lot .
- ❖ **Tip:** Have the **Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020** and the **synopsis of the SafeVote Act 2020** open while you call. If you're asked a question or feel like expanding on the bill, use this as your guide and keep it top of mind to remind you of the importance of your phone call.

### ● Emailing

- ❖ Most links in the [Elected Officials Contact Information](#) document will send you to an online email portal. You'll provide your information and copy and paste the provided email script.
- ❖ However, some officials simply have an email address. Open your email inbox and compose individual emails, being sure to use the provided email script.
- ❖ Again, some offices will require you to provide a ZIP Code to ensure you're a constituent. If they do not accept your address, that's okay. Other offices will allow anyone, regardless of location, to fill out the email form.

● **Don't be discouraged!**

It's easy to think that you're not making progress, but that is simply not true. When times get tough, remember, you have hundreds of other Common Power (and Olympia Indivisible) volunteers doing this at the same time. Each of us doing a little bit each day makes a large impact over time.

# 3. Scripts & Templates

(Updated June 19, 2020)

## **EMAILS**

### **Senators**

Hello INSERT OFFICIAL NAME HERE. My name is INSERT YOUR NAME HERE and I'm writing to urge you to support both expanded mail in voting and expanded early voting. In particular, please sponsor and support The Resilient Elections During Quarantine and Natural Disasters Act of 2020 proposed by Senator Ron Wyden, D-OR. In addition, please sponsor and support The VoteSafe Act proposed by Senator Kamala Harris, D-CA. Both bills ensure federal funding to states for expanded access to elections systems, including voting by mail. Support for both bills must be resoundingly bipartisan in support of the American people. Thank you.

### **Governors**

Hello, INSERT OFFICIAL NAME HERE. My name is INSERT YOUR NAME HERE and I'm writing to urge you to work with state elections officials to ensure the state of INSERT STATE NAME HERE is prepared during the COVID-19 outbreak. You must take necessary action with state elections officials and the state legislature to ensure that your constituents can safely participate in our democracy during this election year health crisis. Please work with your federal delegation for increased federal funding in order to establish mail in ballot systems and expand early voting in time for November elections. Thank you.

### **State Elections Officials**

Hello, INSERT OFFICIAL NAME HERE. My name is INSERT YOUR NAME HERE and I'm writing to urge you to work with state elections officials to ensure the state of INSERT STATE NAME HERE is prepared during the COVID-19 outbreak. You must take necessary action with state elections officials to ensure that your constituents can safely participate in our democracy during this election year health crisis. Please work with your federal delegation for increased federal funding in order to establish mail in ballot systems and expand early voting in time for November elections. Thank you.

## **PHONE CALLS**

### **Senators**

Hello. My name is INSERT YOUR NAME HERE and I'm calling to urge you to support both expanded mail in voting and expanded early voting. In particular, please sponsor and support The Resilient Elections During Quarantine and Natural Disasters Act of 2020 proposed by Senator Ron Wyden, D-OR. In addition, please sponsor and support The VoteSafe Act proposed by Senator Kamala Harris, D-CA. Both bills ensure federal funding to states for expanded access to elections systems, including voting by mail. Support for both bills must be resoundingly bipartisan in support of the American people. Thank you.

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## **TWEETS**

### **Senators**

@INSERT USERNAME HERE support Sen. Harris's #VoteSafeAct America's elections must continue during COVID-19 #VoteByMail

### **Governors**

@INSERT USERNAME HERE act now to transition INSERT STATE HERE to complete mail in voting and expand early voting. Pandemics must count for absentee voting so everyone can safely vote #VoteByMail

### **Election Officials**

@INSERT USERNAME HERE act now to transition INSERT STATE HERE to complete mail in voting and expand early voting. Pandemics must count for absentee voting so everyone can safely vote #VoteByMail

## 4. The Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020

[S. 3440](#), [HR 6202](#)

Unless Congress acts quickly, the novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”) has the potential to significantly disrupt the 2020 primaries and general elections. The virus will likely impact voters who cannot leave their homes, while possible large-scale quarantines, whether mandatory or self-imposed, at the recommendation of health experts, may also disrupt elections. According to the Election Assistance Commission, **58% of all poll workers in 2018 were over 60** , the prime at-risk population for COVID-19.

The Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020 addresses the serious threat to our democracy posed by COVID-19 by requiring states and localities, within 30 days, to create and publish a plan to operate their elections in the event that large numbers of voters or poll workers have been subjected to a mandatory quarantine or a self-quarantine at the advice of government officials or health experts. In the event that 25% of states declare an emergency related to COVID-19, another infectious disease, or a natural disaster, this act requires all states to:

- Offer all registered voters the ability to vote by absentee ballot. Currently, 34 states and Washington D.C. either allow any voter to request an absentee ballot or vote entirely by mail. However, 16 states still have restrictions on who can request an absentee ballot.
- Offer voters the ability to submit electronically a request for an absentee ballot rather than having to do so in person or with a paper form.
- Offer voters the choice of receiving their blank absentee ballot electronically to print at home and return by postal mail. Currently, print-at-home ballots are only offered to overseas and military voters.

- Accept absentee ballot requests up until 5 days before an election (for blank ballots sent to the voter by mail) and 1 day before the election (for electronic print-at-home ballots)
- Accept ballots that have been postmarked by election day - which will be important in the event that mail is delayed due to large numbers of postal workers being quarantined.

Even if the 25% threshold has not been met, the provisions of the act can be triggered within a state at the discretion of a governor by declaring a state of emergency. The provisions of this act will apply to all federal elections held until 180 days after states declare that the emergency has ended.

The act also requires all states to offer postage prepaid self-sealing envelopes to voters who vote absentee in order to reduce the risk associated with infection at post offices, and provides \$500 million in grants to states to cover the cost of postage and for high-speed scanners necessary to process large numbers of absentee ballots.

# 5. The VoteSafe Act of 2020

[S. 3725](#), [HR 6807](#)

Excerpted from an April 16, 2020 News Release

from the office of Senator Kamala D. Harris

The bill:

- **Authorizes a total of \$5 billion to expand vote-by-mail and early voting and to improve the safety of in-person voting during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- Requires states to **permit no-excuse mail-in absentee voting**.
- Requires states to maintain an **early voting period of at least 20 days**.
- **Provide grants for states to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of polling places.**
  - Permitted uses of funding include:
    - Funding to ensure that elections are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
    - Funding to ensure adequate protections for language minority voters.
    - Funding to ensure voting access for American Indian, Alaska Native, and rural voters.
    - Implementing and promoting curbside voting.
    - Implementing and meeting a maximum wait time standard or publishing current wait times for voters.
    - Allowing voters to make advance reservations at their polling places.
    - Providing for the training and recruitment of poll workers.
    - Improving access to voter registration.

## 6. Twitter



### What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that people use to send updates (“tweets”). Tweets are text-based posts up to 140 characters long.

Once you have a Twitter account, you can send your tweets using your smartphone, instant messaging, or from your computer.

Some use Twitter to tell followers/friend updates or to post interesting links or to comment on an issue or event.

First, you’ll need a **Twitter account**.

1. [Sign up and create your Twitter account.](#)
2. You’ll need a username and a password.  
A Twitter username is @theusernameyoucreate
3. Download the Twitter app from the [App Store](#)

[Tutorial on how to Tweet.](#) A beginners guide.

[Twitter Help.](#)

If you’re having trouble with any of these steps, please send a short message about your issue to a volunteer at Olympia Indivisible

[advocacynow2020@gmail.com](mailto:advocacynow2020@gmail.com)