



Precinct Leadership and Volunteer Guide

Getting the Most Out of Your Time and Effort
as a Democratic Grassroots Leader

Prepared for the use of precinct, county, congressional and
statewide activists by the Oklahoma Democratic Party

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Benefits of being a precinct leader or volunteer:

1. Direct impact on local, statewide, and national elections.
2. Invitations to special events.
3. Being a precinct committeeperson allows you to personally meet elected officials and highly motivated and professional individuals in your area.
4. You can help Oklahoma and America become a better place by electing Democrats.

The Oklahoma Democratic Party asks all precinct volunteers to pledge to complete the following tasks:

1. Communicate with county and state party leaders and attend local party activities.
2. At the direction and guidance of county and state party leaders, canvass their precinct for information on constituencies and issues, and return that information to the county and state party leadership.
3. Encourage other Democrats in your precinct to become more involved.
4. Canvass their precinct for GOTV purposes, or assist or support others in doing so, in the final days of each General Election.
5. Assist by organizing and attending precinct organization activities, meetings, voter registration efforts, and neighborhood events to increase party visibility and solidarity.
6. Communicate with county and state party leaders and attend county party meetings (and recruit other Democrats to do the same!).
7. When possible, perform other tasks as requested by local parties and candidates.
8. Assist with fundraising for the party and party nominees for public office.
9. Have fun (it's contagious!)

Chapter 1: How to use this guide

Although the Oklahoma Democratic Party as an institution has many goals and responsibilities, a primary function for its survival is to assist in the election of Democrats to public office. Keeping in mind the general assumption that "all politics is local," the party's founders organized the party from a ground-up approach. Just as hydrogen is a basic element needed for many essential compounds, precinct leaders and volunteers are the building blocks for our party's combined growth and success.

This guide is designed as a primer to instruct political novices -- and longtime activists -- on the elements of a strong, modern campaign. No precinct, campaign or volunteer will fit into a cookie cutter mold; each has its own goals, strengths, and abilities that when combined correctly and cohesively can add up to big gains for our party.

The materials contained herein were compiled by longtime grassroots activists, first-time campaign volunteers, party officers, elected public officials, and political professionals to communicate a realistic vision and approach for organizing effectively and efficiently at the precinct level.

There are different ways to accomplish the recommended tasks at hand. This handbook covers techniques proven most effective in most precincts. We urge you to consult your local Democratic leaders and the State Democratic Party for additional ideas for difficult precincts – additional help and instruction is as close as your telephone or computer.

Never underestimate the power of the precinct worker! It is the grassroots volunteer, actively participating in the party at the precinct level, who wins elections for the Democratic Party at the local, state and national levels. The precinct is the most important voting and organizational unit within the Democratic Party.

Have patience with yourself, your fellow volunteers, and your party leadership – remember; we can only accomplish our greater goals by working together. Thank you for committing to educate yourself on how to become an effective precinct leader. We'll see you on the campaign trail.

Please remember that in politics, and elections, timing is everything. As elections draw closer, tactics and targets change to produce the most beneficial Democratic turnout. Communicate with party leadership and staff before conducting any activity in your precinct to insure you are talking to the right people at the right time.

As a final note, keep in mind that the ideal goal of a campaign is to create the "perfect list." Look at an election as a big party – it's your job to make sure the right people in your precinct are invited to the party to vote. Much of your efforts will involve collecting information about voters. When you finish a *Voter contact* activity, *we need your*

information back. Please communicate and work with your county and state leadership to help us build the "perfect list."

- *Editors*

Chapter 2: Some Minimum Expectations for precinct committee officers

Although the offices of precinct chair, co-chair and secretary do exist in each precinct with obvious responsibilities (chairing a meeting, taking notes, etc.), it may be more appropriate to view a precinct committee as a group working together to establish a few common goals regardless of title. Since each county has different goals for each precinct, it would be most appropriate for your committee to reach a decision with county party leadership on how to organize and delegate responsibility with deference to Party Constitution and By-laws (see pages 29-30).

Working alongside county leaders and elected officials, the State Democratic Party also sets generic expectations, so precinct officers have an idea of job requirements about campaign activities. Below are the minimum expectations for a precinct officer of any level:

1. **Support your county party.** County party leaders receive constant updates on the goals and strategies of our elected officials and state party. Most county parties hold regular meetings to relay communications and enjoy the company of local Democrats.
2. **Canvass your precinct twice.** Depending on the makeup of your precinct, you will be asked to organize a precinct walk or phone bank in your area. This doesn't mean you have to knock every door yourself. Instead, it means you should recruit volunteers, plan the logistics and obtain appropriate materials (voter lists, literature, etc.) from your county party officers and staff. While you may work, and walk for other candidates in primary elections, we do ask you to support the Democratic ticket – and walk or call on its behalf – in the four weeks before the General Election.

Although each precinct is different, in most cases one of your canvasses will be to "ID" voters and one of them will be for GOTV ("Get out the Vote") purposes.

3. **Register Democrats.** Door-to-door voter registration drives can be extremely helpful in some targeted precincts. In other places, precinct officers can simply assist their county parties in accomplishing this goal at county fairs, community events, etc.

4. **Collect voter data.** Most of your duties associated with being a precinct officer revolve around contacting voters in your neighborhood about upcoming elections. Since it would be a waste of time to talk to unregistered voters after the registration cutoff date before an election, and you probably aren't going to persuade very many Republicans, most of your activities will revolve around communicating with registered Democrats and independents. These are the voters most likely to decide the outcome of the upcoming election for Democratic candidates.

One of the most important jobs of the state party is maintaining accurate information, or data, on voters. The party spends a great deal of money every year on obtaining a list of voters from the State Board of Elections, enhancing it with phone numbers and other information, and providing it to our candidates and activists, including precinct volunteers like yourself.

This information is used for every mail piece, phone call and precinct walk in *almost every campaign* statewide. However, the reality is that the data is bad as soon as you get it – people constantly move, change phone numbers or pass away. Every entry that we can update on our overall file saves our candidates valuable dollars by not contacting voters who don't exist, don't reside in the district, etc. To correct our data, we must make a habit out of retrieving information from precinct leaders after they have walked, called, etc. and entering the appropriate information in our files. Remember, you know your neighborhood better than anyone else in the Democratic Party!

It is very important to forward information as soon as you have completed a canvass because there are still several steps that have to be taken to add the information to the *voter file* for our "perfect list."

Chapter 3: Getting Your Precinct Organized

To become a prepared and competent precinct leader you should first get acquainted with your precinct.

1. Learn the boundaries of your precinct
2. Develop a precinct plan with county officers (ongoing process as the election evolves)
3. Recruit precinct captains and other volunteers to help.

Good planning is the key to attaining any worthwhile goal. This holds true in business, family life, civic activities and, especially, politics. Your overall goal is to ensure that every voter in your precinct who supports Democratic candidates gets to the polls on Election Day. To accomplish this, you must first accomplish the tasks mentioned above.

Accomplishing these tasks will be much less challenging if you develop a calendar and timetable along with your county party leadership.

Chapter 4: Getting to know the geography of your precinct

The first and most obvious step in organizing your precinct is to become acquainted with the boundaries of your precinct. To do that, you will need a map of your precinct. If your county officers don't have a map for you, County Election Boards usually maintain precinct maps available to the public for little or no charge. The internet, Chamber of Commerce, and City Hall are also usually good places to find excellent maps.

The ideal map should be printed on a regular piece of paper (8.5 x 11), so you can carry it while canvassing. It should have clearly marked street names, contain landmarks (such as hospitals, rivers, railroad tracks, schools, etc.), have a direction compass and include clearly marked precinct lines. Remember that other campaigns and volunteers might be using your map also, so a good rule of thumb to follow is to try to find a map that would even be easy enough for your mother-in-law to use. Some precincts are very large and require a map to be spread out on several pages to have clearly marked streets. After finding an acceptable map, make copies, and keep the original for your future use.

Voting Districts. Every precinct leader should be intimately aware of what elected officials represent your voting precinct. Your county officers or the County Election Board should be able to provide this information to you easily. We've included two pages in the back of this handbook for you to fill in what elected officials in what offices represent your precinct, as well as contact information for statewide officials.

Potential Sign Locations. *Visibility* is an important, but overrated part of every campaign in Oklahoma. Most candidates use yard signs because they are an easy way to tell voters that they are running and that people support them. Although yard signs and *Visibility* are important, they are a passive and therefore "low impact" method of voter contact. Precinct walking, phone banking, and lit-dropping are much more effective measures of voter contact because they allow campaigns an affordable means of direct dialogue with voters. They make the campaign *personal*.

Since yard signs are a passive form of contact, yet an important part of an Oklahoma election, campaigns should not waste too much time putting out yard signs when they could be performing more effective campaign tasks. Precinct leaders who keep a reliable list of sign locations are very valuable to campaigns. We've attached a sample list for you to use to identify good sign locations, or you can create your own. As you get to know the geography of your precinct, keep in mind good locations for signs – busy streets, yards close to polling locations, etc. This task becomes much easier as

you get to know the people in your precinct because you'll know who will put up a sign in their yard for Democratic candidates. If they agree to have a sign placed in their yard, they are more likely to vote on Election Day and to vote for that Democratic candidate.

Potential problems. Several details can complicate an efficient precinct program without proper planning. One of the most common problems is the difficulty of canvassing high density dwellings such as retirement centers and apartment complexes. Many of these structures have either "closed door" security or are not properly listed on our voter file information. Identify these high-density dwellings and develop an appropriate way of getting the Democratic message to them. For example, retirement and assisted living dwellings often make good absentee ballot program targets for Democrats because of residents' identification of the Democratic Party as the party most committed to reducing the cost of health care and protecting Social Security.

Although not common, unfortunate circumstances sometimes arise where a County Election Board has chosen an unacceptable polling place. The most obvious instance of this occurrence would be the selection of a polling place that is not readily handicap accessible or may provide a difficulty for physically challenged seniors to access. If you decide your polling place may have access problems, speak with your county chairman about how to determine the best solution to the problem. Try to do so early enough that the solution can be implemented before Election Day.

Keep in mind that if you decide your polling place is not acceptable and wish to communicate that feeling to Election Board officials, you may have the opportunity to suggest another polling place. When doing so, consider the makeup of your precinct and what polling place would be the best location for Democrats – for example, is there a community center in a low-income neighborhood that might be a better polling place than the local country club? If you use a reasonable amount of planning, which might even include a petition from voters in your precinct, you could significantly sway turnout figures in your precinct by simply changing the polling location!

Chapter 5: Getting to Know the People in Your Precinct

Now that you know where your precinct is, the next logical step is to know who lives in it. The first task you should complete is to determine the political makeup of your precinct and how they vote. By finding out how many Democrats live in your precinct and how they vote, you can determine the most effective method of squeezing out more votes for our candidates.

Talk to key people including your county chairman, elected officials, and County Election Board officers about the voting history of your precinct to develop a subjective analysis of your precinct. Early in the campaign cycle, voter data (called "NCEC data") should be available for you to make a more objective analysis of your precinct and develop a good plan to squeeze every Democratic vote from your area. Feel free to work with your county party leadership and precinct leaders in neighboring precincts to maximize your strategy for success.

Precinct Demographics. It is just as important for a precinct officer to be familiar with the political and cultural landscape of their precinct as it is to know a precinct's geographical boundaries. Why? The political views and ethnic diversity of your precinct will explicitly determine what kind of activity to use, who to talk to, and how to communicate effectively in your precinct. There is no cookie-cutter solution, but there are proven strategies based on given constituencies.

Ethnically speaking, people tend to respond more openly to a political messenger who shares their background. Non-English speaking voters are engaged and encouraged by candidates with literature in their language and supporters who share common cultural experiences and an outspoken investment in a specific political party.

Economically speaking, low-income neighborhoods generally support Democratic candidates overwhelmingly; however, they tend to have low voter turnout. In these cases, it is essential to double *GOTV* efforts and boost voter turnout to assist Democratic candidates.

Your precinct's voting tendencies can be reasonably well predicted based on the precinct's returns in past elections and calculating them mathematically. The National Committee for an Effective Congress (*NCEC*) is a progressive organization which computes precinct performance using proven formulas and then donates the research to state parties exclusively. *NCEC* data and similar objective calculations should be the cornerstone of your precinct philosophy and will be made available to counties early in the campaign cycle.

Chapter 6: Glossary of the modern campaign vocabulary

The following terms are important concepts and vocabulary in the realm of political campaigns. While each term has volumes of associated theory and strategy attached to them, we've tried to simplify and present them to you in how they relate to a grassroots activist. Throughout the manual, we've *italicized* glossary terms so you can flip back through these pages if you forget a concept or two.

Base Voter: Voter likely to support the entire Democratic Ticket. *Base Voters* are largely concentrated in precincts with high minority or low income populations. Such precincts are known as "base precincts." Base precincts generally carry a *Democratic Performance* percentage of 65% or higher.

Coordinated Campaign: The campaign arm of the Democratic Party. Although a long-standing program in other successful Democratic states, the Oklahoma Democratic Party initiated its first statewide *Coordinated Campaign* in the 2002 cycle. The primary goal of the *Coordinated Campaign* is to identify Democrats likely to support the entire Democratic Ticket and then move those voters to the polls on Election Day for the benefit of all Democratic candidates. The Coordinated Campaign serves as the communication link between Democratic candidates and Democratic activists – candidates tell the Coordinated Campaign what they want done, and the Coordinated recruits, trains, directs and supplies volunteers to meet their assigned goals.

Democratic Performance: The average percentage in a precinct achieved by competitive Democratic candidates for office in previous general election years. High Democratic, low persuasion areas can be considered solid Democratic enclaves. Conversely, Low Democratic, low persuasion areas can be considered solid Republican bastions. *Democratic Performance* is not a fixed prediction of what a candidate can expect to garner from an area. It is simply a historical average and can change over time. The vote one can expect to achieve from an area is more directly tied to persuasion and *GOTV* programs. Moderate performance and higher persuasion areas are ripe for conversion.

GOTV: Abbreviation for "Get Out The Vote." *GOTV* includes all aspects of boosting turnout, including absentee voting, rides to the polls, early voting efforts and Election Day canvasses, automated calls, and mail programs. All precinct leaders are asked to participate in or recruit replacements for, *GOTV* activities in their precincts (usually by canvassing).

NCEC: The National Committee for an Effective Congress. Research organization which analyzes precinct history in regards to voter performance and tendencies.

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NCEC then provides the information to state Democratic parties which use the data to make *targeting* decisions.

Message: A political campaign has three goals in voter contact: defining the candidate, defining the opposition, and defining crucial issues to voters and why a candidate is best prepared to deliver on those issues. These three goals combined are known as a campaign's "message." In today's sound bite society, a brief and strong message is often the key to a winning campaign. Documents included in the appendix explain the concept of the Oklahoma Democratic message at greater length.

Phone bank: A *phone bank* is a form of *voter contact* by telephone. *Phone banking* is most commonly used for *voter identification* and *GOTV*, and less frequently for persuasion. *Phone bank* lists are usually divided by precinct. *Phone banks* can be done from an individual's home or from a central location with several phone lines. For many reasons a central location is the most reliable and efficient method for *phone banking* and should be the method preferred by counties.

Precinct canvass: In-person *voter contact* by precinct. A precinct can be canvassed either by phone or by precinct walking depending on the makeup of the precinct and the desired effect of the canvass. Canvasses can be used for volunteer recruitment, voter ID, voter registration, or simply distributing literature to households.

Persuadable voter: Commonly referred to as a "ticket splitter" or "swing voter." Voters who are likely to vote for candidates of all parties. Registered Independents are commonly *persuadable voters*. *Persuadable voters* are much more open to the policies of an individual candidate, rather than the global policies of a particular party. Persuadables are much more likely to "vote the person and not the party."

Targeting: An analysis of how a campaign can best allocate resources to maximize Democratic turnout and persuasion. *Targeting* estimates are drawn from voting trends from past elections -- a reliable predictor for how precincts will perform in future elections. Depending on the past performance of a precinct, campaigns then make decisions on which voters and methods are the best to communicate with.

Universe: A list of people for campaigns to communicate with. *Universes* are selected based upon *targeting* which voters are most likely to respond to your *message*. Most precinct and volunteer *voter contacts* are focused on *universes* entirely made up of Democrats.

Visibility: The public appearance of a candidate in his or her district. This can be accomplished through in-person visits by the candidate, volunteer canvassing or through distributing yard signs. Yard sign *visibility* is a passive form of *voter contact*.

Voter contact: Any form of communication from a campaign to a voter, including advertising, phone calls, public appearances by a candidate, news stories and *precinct canvassing*.

Voter identification: Reliable method of determining how to allocate campaign resources effectively. Commonly referred to as "ID's." A voter ID is a method of determining whether a voter supports a particular candidate. Depending on a voter's level of support, campaigns can then determine what resources to dedicate to a particular level. For instance, if a voter supports your candidate, you can remove them from your persuasive mailing list and use the money and time you saved to contact an undecided voter while keeping your supporter on the list of people you definitely want to get to the polls. The concept behind ID's is to know who your voters are, where they are at, what they think, and how best to communicate to them.

Voter file: Centralized list of information about voters maintained by the Oklahoma Democratic Party. Starting with the annual purchase of voter information from the State Election Board, the ODP then vends out the list to enhance it with phone numbers and other information, and "cleans" it by purging deceased voters, bad addresses, etc. The *voter file* is the first source of information for candidates, staff, and counties when producing mail, phone and walk *universes*. *Voter identification* information is appended to the *voter file* for the use of all campaigns. The goal of a campaign is to turn their voter file into the "Perfect List," or at least as perfect as possible.

Yellow Dog: *Yellow Dog Democrats* are staunch supporters of the Democratic Party. They are the sustaining donors of financial and manpower support for the Oklahoma Democratic Party.

Chapter 7: Developing a Precinct Plan

Since no two precincts are identical, you must determine – with the help of your county officers -- the best way to manage your precinct given its voting tendencies and geographical makeup. Start by gathering and analyzing the following information:

1. Is the precinct mainly rural, urban, or both?
2. What is the *NCEC* analysis of your precinct?
3. Is your precinct a *Base Vote* precinct?
4. When is the best time to complete your precinct responsibilities?

Communicate constantly with party leadership!

Precinct leaders should work directly with county party officers, affiliated campaigns, and party staff to determine the best course of action when working within their precinct. Maintaining a constant level of communication with county officers and party staff ensures that we do not unnecessarily duplicate efforts at the precinct level and makes sure we remain on the same page strategically.

Very often the required work within a precinct shifts depending on the time of the year and the proximity of an election, and just as often the group -- or "*universe*" -- of people you need to contact within your precinct shifts as well. It is important that you maintain contact with your county party leaders, either through attending meetings or periodic phone calls, to make sure your hard work dovetails with the overarching strategy of local and statewide campaigns.

The geographical makeup of your precinct determines the most effective way for you to canvass it. If the precinct is urban, you should make every effort to canvass it by precinct walking. If your precinct is rural, you're probably best off canvassing by phone. If the precinct contains roughly proportional rural and urban areas, you may want to determine a game plan that involves both walking and *phone banking* to maximize *voter contact*.

Keep in mind that a precinct leader's goal is not just to win or lose a precinct – there are many precincts that Democrats will never win in Oklahoma, and there are many in which Republicans don't stand a chance. Your most important goals as precinct leader are to communicate the Democratic *message* to voters in your precinct and to increase the turnout of likely pro-Democratic voters in your precinct. Even if Democratic candidates do not carry your precinct, a strong showing will offset Republican strengths in other locations.

You will meet people who are unregistered. They may be new to the neighborhood, newly eligible, or simply have never taken the time to register. In many cases, people will register to vote as a Democrat if a Democrat enables their registration. Even if they register as an Independent, they may be more likely to vote Democratic if a Democrat helped them register in the first place. But don't twist their arm. As the "big tent" party, we should always be willing to help our fellow citizens exercise their right to vote. Often, the new voter will appreciate Democrats for making the effort.

In nearly all cases of precinct work, you will be communicating with other Democrats. There is no need for you to talk to or attempt to convert Republicans. Registered Republicans support their party nearly 85 percent of the time in Oklahoma – there is no need to make them aware of an election where they will most likely vote against us. After all, that's the Republican precinct leader's job! Remember, in 99% of all cases there is no need to speak to Republicans because you will probably be galvanizing the opposition and doing more harm than good.

Registered Independents in Oklahoma are also treated differently. In most cases, Independents are treated as "swing" voters by campaigns because they tend to split tickets and vote for candidates from all parties. Independents are *persuadable voters* and can be communicated with much better through mail, radio, and other mediums since they are likely turned off by "politics as usual" which they see as driven by the straight party train of thought.

When it comes closer to election time, many campaigns will have reliable ID data which will point them to Independents supportive of their campaign. Most of the work Democratic Party precinct leaders do with Independent voters will only come late in the campaign, during the GOTV process.

Now let's look at registered Democrats.

The number one place for you to find likely Democratic turnout targets is in a group known as "underperforming Democrats." These are registered Democrats who are not the most reliable individuals when it comes to showing up to the polls on Election Day.

Why don't they vote? There are many reasons.

- They don't feel informed about candidates.
- They don't know there's an election going on, or where their polling location is.
- They don't feel their vote matters.

Precinct leaders are the best solution for reaching underperforming Democrats and turning them out to vote. Many voters like to feel they are "informed," before they vote

in an election. Many times, an intelligent conversation with someone in their neighborhood will get them over this barrier, especially for local candidates.

It's important to remember that many people "undervote" in elections, particularly during presidential elections. Undervoting is the practice of not voting in every race on the ballot. For example, someone may vote for President, the Senate, and Congress but not for the state house and county treasurer. The most common reason for undervoting is people don't know the other candidates. That's where you come in!

In close elections for "down-ballot" races, particularly during presidential elections, candidates can win or lose in the number of undervotes in their district. An alarming trend in Oklahoma is the fact that many Democrats support the top of the ticket, but undervote on local and legislative races. Republicans have done a good job of educating their voters to vote straight ticket, which eliminates much of the undervote margin for their candidates.

Chapter 8: Know when local, state, and national elections are scheduled

Most elections are set by law or ordinance and are held on a certain day of the week of a specified month. An elected body may call other elections, such as a tax or bond vote. In Oklahoma, the 2nd Tuesday of every month is designated as special election days by the State Election Board. If an elected body wishes to have a special election, they must notify the State Election Board sixty days in advance. Although a calendar of common election dates is included here, your County Election Board is the best place to call for election dates.

Election	When held
Federal and state primaries	4th Tuesday in August
Federal and state primary runoffs	3rd Tuesday in September
Federal and state general elections	1st Tuesday after the first Monday in November
School board	2nd Tuesday in February
County Commissioner	Same as state and Federal
Municipal (mayor, council)	Varies, but generally on second Tuesday of the month

Chapter 9: How do volunteers fit into the overall Oklahoma Democratic Party electoral strategy?

The Oklahoma Democratic Party exists as a grassroots organizational structure designed to aid Democratic candidates and issues in elections. While we also have programs in place for outreach, social gatherings, and education our primary function is simple: ***Elect Democrats!***

Precinct leaders and volunteers in the Oklahoma Democratic Party are a network of activists statewide with the electoral goal of boosting turnout of likely Democratic voters in their neighborhood, cities, and counties. Precinct leaders achieve their goals with the backing, resources, and direction from candidates and state and local party organizations.

The precinct is the smallest political unit in Oklahoma politics. There are 2,108 precincts in Oklahoma dividing up 77 counties. The size of precincts range from fewer than 100 registered voters to well over 2,000. They cover both urban and rural areas. In a close election, whether statewide or local, a strong precinct operation may likely decide the outcome.

Money may buy expensive media, but precinct organizers get the votes out. Votes, not money, win elections. Active volunteers in precincts are the real currency of successful campaigns.

Precinct organizations drive the success of the Oklahoma Democratic Party and its candidates. County party officers are responsible for providing direct support to the precinct leader and localizing goals to meet candidates' needs. Each Congressional District also has an organization to coordinate regional efforts. On a statewide level, the Oklahoma Democratic Party provides campaign resources, tactical help, communication, and leadership to support and guide the entire statewide organizational effort.

According to our Constitution and By-laws, the Oklahoma Democratic Party only involves itself in General Elections and remains neutral in all other elections. While many campaign organizations must begin grassroots work much earlier, the party usually only requests support from its precinct leaders in the crucial final weeks between Primary or Runoff Elections and the General Election to spread the word about our candidates and *GOTV*.

As a precinct leader of the Oklahoma Democratic Party, we will normally provide your name and contact information to candidates in your area inquiring about party leaders. Do not be surprised if a candidate attempts to recruit you into their own grassroots

effort, and don't hesitate to join a candidate if you believe in either him or her. However, if your candidate doesn't win, you must please remember that you signed on to support the ideals of the party and its nominees in the General Election, even if you did not personally support that candidate in the primary or runoff election.

While the task and importance of being a precinct leader is priceless, it really only requires about 10-20 hours of an individual's time over the course of many months of an election cycle to meet the minimal obligations of a precinct leader.

To be an ideal precinct leader, an individual should stay in touch with county party leadership, assist the county party and canvass his or her precinct at least once for Democratic candidates before an election, and try to donate a little time in the last 72 hours of a General Election. Of course, there are many other valuable tasks an ambitious precinct leader can complete, such as voter registration, but the activities specifically mentioned above are the ones *most essential* to meeting our goals and program requirements.

Chapter 10: Recruiting Other Democrats to Help

Any political strategist will tell you that the more people involved in a campaign, the more likely the campaign will be successful. There is one fundamental reason for involving as many of your neighbors as possible in your Democratic precinct work – it makes your job easier!

To make things easier on yourself and to ensure your precinct is covered thoroughly, you should recruit like-minded Democrats to help in your efforts. One standard method of recruiting other volunteers is to contact active Primary Democrats -- Democrats who vote in the primary consistently (4 out of 5 elections). We suggest organizing a phone bank like this with the county party, working with the top priority, or top target, precincts first.

From your list of active Democrats in your precinct, identify several individuals you will ask to serve as zone captains. Remember that zone captains don't necessarily have to live in the precinct – your county's priority is to organize the most Democratic precincts first.

Here's a general way you might approach voters during a volunteer phone drive:

Hello, may I speak with Mr. /Mrs. Voter? Good evening, my name is _____, and I'm a volunteer with the local county Democratic Party.

"We're organizing our precinct to get more Democrats active in this community. The coming election will determine the future of education and health care in our county, and we're working to elect Democrats who agree with our issues. Would you be open to hearing about our plans for getting this done? We're having a meeting at (DATE, TIME, and LOCATION). There's no obligation at this time other than to be interested. Will you join us?"

Some people respond better when there is an issue of concern at stake.

Hello, may I speak with Mr. /Mrs. Voter? Good evening, my name is _____, and I'm a volunteer with the local county Democratic Party.

"We're organizing our precinct to get more Democrats active in this community. We stand to lose a lot of support for people in our community unless we turn out in mass to vote. Many Democrats and other concerned citizens in this precinct need to know the facts about this issue. Would you be open to hearing about our plans for getting this done? We're having a meeting at (DATE, TIME, and LOCATION). There's no obligation at this time other than to be interested. Can we count on you to attend?"

Keep the duties of the zone captain simple.

- Watch over a portion of the precinct and know it intimately.
- Know your neighbors and neighborhoods.
- Be connected to any neighborhood watch groups.
- Look for locations to place signs, and remember to get permission.
- Be available to canvass.

Tips for recruiting volunteers in the precinct

- Get acquainted. Hold social events in conjunction with your county party, such as pancake breakfasts, chili feeds, pie auctions, watermelon feeds, ice cream socials, meet the candidate coffees, etc.
- Identify activists who are already living in the precinct, e.g., Union members, teachers, environmentalists, social issues, special interest groups, retired citizens, and other core groups usually aligned with Democratic Party positions.
- Obtain a list of supporters from elected officials or past candidates.
- Give volunteers specific duties and expectations, but don't overwhelm them.
- Ask for people to be involved. People like to be asked, and unless they are self-directed, they usually will wait until they are asked before they get involved.

Chapter 11: How to canvass

Now that you've volunteered, made your maps, worked with your county officers to develop a precinct plan, recruited other volunteers, and know who you're working for, it's time to get down to the real business: canvassing.

Canvassing Strategies (Phone banking and Precinct Walking)

Remember, the party asks you to canvass your precinct two times: once to either ID or distribute information and once for GOTV.

Phone banks

Phone banks are usually coordinated by a candidate or by the county party. Your primary role is to work with your candidate or party to cover your precinct and return the appropriate information to the *phone bank* coordinator.

A *phone bank* can be either a group of phones in one location with multiple lines, such as an office with three or more lines to accommodate multiple callers, or a network of individual callers working in a coordinated effort to get a *message* out. The most effective method is to work in one place because callers can get help and support from other callers when they need answers or when a rude contact confronts them. It's also a more reliable method of collecting voters' information and getting it to the appropriate people – such as candidates' or party staff. Regardless of whether you can work in one location or call from various locations, there are certain fundamentals.

Have a calling strategy.

- Know **why** you want to call. Are you ID'ing voters or making GOTV calls?
- Know **who** you want to call: all voters, active party voters only, identified swing voters, etc.
- Know **when** you want to call, such as within 72 hours of an election. Call in the evening no earlier than 6:30 p.m. and no later than 9 p.m. You also need to know when you want to finish your precinct – remember, there is still a lot of work to be done with the data you collect, so you should try to take no more than three days to finish your phone canvass.
- Know **what** you want to say. Have your *Message* scripted. Have a specific script for leaving a *Message* on voice mail or answering machine. Although you don't have to follow the script word-for-word, you should be consistent in your conversations, so data is not corrupted. Never call without a prepared script, and never take more than 4 minutes maximum of a voter's time.

Know how many callers you need.

Think in terms of how many calls you can make in one hour. It's challenging to get individuals to make calls for more than one hour at a time. If they can make a call every three minutes, that limits them to about 20 calls per hour. So, don't give someone 200 names to call. The assignments should vary depending on the caller's commitment, but tell them they can probably make about 20 calls per hour. A list of 500 names will take 25 caller-hours.

Centralized *Phone banks* can be a little more productive since there aren't as many distractions, and it's more of a "work" environment. You can use multiple offices to increase the number of lines available. Three offices with three lines each give you nine lines. At an average of 20 calls per hour, that's 180 calls per hour. If you have 500 calls to make, you could accomplish it in one evening. You may want to allow a follow-up evening for voters who were not home the first evening. You can have lists of names that callers keep working. This keeps the lists in one location, and the effort isn't compromised if one or two callers don't get to their individual lists. Work callers in two to three-hour shifts.

Precinct walking strategies

Many candidates like to walk door-to-door in targeted neighborhoods where there is a significant swing vote potential. On other occasions, such as rumor control or election eve GOTV, it's necessary to drop information door to door as quickly as possible.

Precinct walking provides two essential aspects in *Voter contact*. First, you serve as direct personal contact between the candidate or organization and the voter – people who see a campaign have supporters, and the direct communication is more personal than a piece of mail or phone call. Second, you have the opportunity to ID supporters.

Have a plan.

Using your precinct map, plan a systematic sweep of the neighborhoods. Also, know if you are calling on every house or only selected houses. You are looking for households where you have the potential to win votes. You don't need to call on the faithful supporters or the staunch opponents; their minds are set. You are looking for the swing voter, the uncommitted, or the underperforming voter. An essential tool is a

walk list of the houses as you walk the streets. A walk list is organized by street and house number with information about the residents. You should only get your walk list from a campaign, the county party, or the state party (an example of a walk list has been included in the back of this handbook).

Door-to-door, two-by-two: Work in pairs for both safety and support. Partners can work out an approach that makes them comfortable. While one is delivering the *Message*, the other takes notes. WARNING: NEVER LEAVE CAMPAIGN LITERATURE IN THE MAIL BOX. IT IS AGAINST THE LAW.

Keep other workers in sight. Most neighborhoods are safe, but there is security in numbers. Keep an eye out for other workers; they will do the same for you. Distribute a phone number people can call on their cell phones if they get lost or cannot finish their precinct.

Who is that strange person at the door? In most cases, people won't know who you are when you approach their door. Try to have some campaign materials immediately available, such as a palm-card or lapel sticker. Knock solidly, and then *take two steps back* from the door so you're not intimidating.

Work when most people are home and when they are most receptive. Canvass no earlier than 4 p.m. and conclude by 9 p.m. on weekdays, unless you happen to be *targeting* senior citizens who are likely retired and at home. On Saturday, begin no earlier than 9 a.m. On Sunday start work at 2 p.m.

Have the materials you need. Keep handouts to one or two small pieces. See the checklist at the end of this chapter.

Have a script. Know how you want to greet people at the door, what you want to say about the information you have to present, and what action you want the voter to take. Speak softly, slowly, and confidently.

"Hello. My name is _____. We're volunteers with the Jill Smith for State Senate campaign. Jill is vitally concerned about the continual cuts in educational funding and in programs that benefit senior citizens by the current legislature. We would like to give you some information about Jill and ask for your support to elect her to the State Senate. Thank you for your time, and please vote for Jill on November 7."

Know something about the issues and candidates you are supporting. People will have questions. Make sure you have reviewed the information you are handing out. Ask the candidate for a sheet of talking points—bullet points of their main *Message*.

“Our state is now last in the nation in the amount of money it spends per student to support education. We’re also ranked 47th on the list of states to raise your family because of the poor support for low-income families. We also have lagged in bringing in new jobs to the state that pay a living wage.”

NEVER, NEVER ARGUE, OR GET INTO A DISAGREEMENT.

If someone wants to debate you, say:

“I respect your point of view. I hope you will consider (candidate’s name) as a candidate who will represent you with honesty and integrity. (Candidate’s name) would appreciate your vote. I’ve got a lot more houses to visit, have a nice day.”

Checklist for canvassing (Be prepared!)

- Precinct map for every pair
- Walking lists
- Clipboards
- Pencils or pens for volunteers
- Supply of voter registration forms
- Talking points and polling location information
- Campaign or issue information
- Phone numbers of election board or party leaders
- Information about absentee voting
- Buttons or name tags or business cards with contact information for precinct leaders and the address of the precinct polling place.
- Other party or candidate information

Chapter 12: Get out the vote (GOTV)

All efforts culminate in getting voters to the polls on Election Day. In the final analysis, the only thing that gets counted is votes. The ballot box is the great equalizer. Everyone gets one and only one vote, and we know how important a single vote can be.

By Election Day, you may have a good idea of which voters in your precinct are most likely to vote Democratic if they make it to the polls. Your job is to make it as easy as possible for their vote to get cast and counted. Here are some ideas about getting the highest voter turnout possible in your precinct.

Encourage early voting and absentee voting if you know they are voting Democrat

Early Voting. Before the election on Tuesday, all county election boards are open Friday and Monday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for early voting. Voters must sign a form that qualifies them to vote.

If your precinct contains the county election board, an Early Voting Drive is perfect for you! Contact the Oklahoma Democratic Party two weeks before an election to learn how easy and effective an Early Voting Drive can be.

Absentee Voting. Any registered voter in Oklahoma may vote by absentee ballot for any reason. You must apply in writing. Either you can get a form from the county or the state election boards, or you may write a letter which must include the following information:

- your name
- your date of birth
- the address at which you are registered to vote
- the election or elections for which you are requesting ballots
- the address to which of the ballots are to be mailed
- your signature

Mail, fax, or personally deliver your own application to the county election board. However, the law prohibits you from delivering anyone else's application, and no one else can hand deliver your application.

NOTE: You can get a list of persons from the County Election Board who have applied for an absentee ballot. You can contact them and offer to help them fill out the application and get it in the mail or find someone to notarize it for them. Do not contact Republicans or Independents!

The deadline to apply to have an absentee ballot mailed to you is always 5 p.m. on the Wednesday before the election.

You must return your absentee ballot to the county election board via U.S. MAIL ONLY. All overnight delivery services such as FedEx are not “by mail,” and they will not be opened. Ballots must be in the hands of the county election board by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.

There are some special conditions allowed by law to make it easier for some voters to vote absentee. These include persons living in nursing homes, physically incapacitated persons, and military members living overseas, and their dependents and spouses residing with them.

Rides to the poll

- Many counties have a “ride to the poll” program in place, so make sure you aren’t duplicating efforts.
- Verify the name and address. Schedule the time they want to vote.
- Call the day before the election to remind and confirm.
- Have volunteers available to give rides. Make sure the cars used are clean and as accessible as possible for senior citizens.
- Identify a contact person living at the senior citizen center or retirement village to coordinate rides from their location. Some may provide transportation for their residents.

Phone calls

These efforts are driven by candidates or issue groups. Your responsibility is to supply volunteers. You will want to concentrate on your swing voters in the final hours before the election. These include all newly registered voters and those who you helped fill out the absentee ballot application.

You might have a separate group of callers calling your core supporters to remind them to vote. These are simple reminder calls. Those who might be reluctant to make candidate calls might feel more comfortable with the reminder calls since they are to friendlies.

Chapter 13. Your Precinct Action Guide

Your Precinct Action Guide is your best friend to help you organize your precinct. It is a compilation of information, instructions, and quick reference pages to keep you organized and effective. You can make it what you choose. We recommend the following items as a minimum. Work pages and templates for many of them are included in the rest of this guide. Feel free to copy and adapt them to make them work for you.

Suggested format: 3 ring loose-leaf notebook, 1" or 1½" size. (D-ring works best)

Suggested Contents:

1. Quick reference of party contacts
2. List of elected officials
3. Volunteer contact list
4. Canvass Checklist
5. Calendar of meetings, elections, and events
6. Precinct boundaries
7. City precinct maps
8. County precinct maps
9. Map of house district boundaries and precincts
10. Map of senate district boundaries and precincts
11. List of polling places
12. Sign locations and contacts
13. Registration statistics
14. Voting history statistics
15. Why I'm a Democrat?
16. Talking points or other information, such as:
 - Candidate information and literature
 - Issue information
 - Historical differences between Democratic and Republican positions
 - Current differences between positions advocated by Democrats and Republicans
17. Sample registration form

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18. Copies of information brochures on voting rights, absentee voting, etc., from the County Election Board.

Party Contacts – Quick Reference

This book belongs to:	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
Precinct Chair	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
Precinct Co-chair	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
Precinct Secretary	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
County Chair	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
County Co-chair	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
County Secretary	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
Congressional District Chair	Address	Home Ph: Work Ph: Email:
State Democratic Party	Address	Phone: Fax: Email:
County Election Board Secretary	Address	Work Ph:

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Elected Officials Who Represent This Precinct

Office/Incumbent (Party)	District Number	Contact Information
State House of Representatives		
State Senate		
County Commissioner		
City Council Ward		
Mayor		
Public School Board		
Vo-Tech School Board		

U.S. Congressional District		
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Elected Officials Who Represent This Precinct (Continued)

Office/Incumbent (Party)	Contact Information
Sheriff	
County Clerk	
Court Clerk	
County Assessor	
County Treasurer	
District Judge	

Associate District Judge	
District Attorney	
Governor	212 State Capitol Bldg. 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105 (405) 521-2342
Lt. Governor	State Capitol Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-2161
Attorney General	State Capitol Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-3921
Treasurer	State Capitol Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-3191
Insurance Commissioner	Insurance Department 3814 N. Santa Fe Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-2828
Labor Commissioner	Labor Department 4001 Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-528-1500
Superintendent of Public Instruction	Department of Education 2500 Oliver Hodge Bldg. Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-3301
Auditor and Inspector	State Capitol, Room 100 Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-3495
Corporation Commissioner	Jim Thorpe Building 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-2264
Corporation Commissioner	Jim Thorpe Building 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-2267

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Corporation Commissioner	Jim Thorpe Building 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105 405-521-2261
U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R)	Washington, D.C. 202-224-4721
U.S. Senator James Lankford (R)	Washington, D.C. 202-224-5754
U.S. Representatives: 1. Kevin Hern (202.225.2211) 2. Markwayne Mullins (202.225.2701) 3. Frank Lucas (202.225.5565) 4. Tom Cole (202.225.6165) 5. Stephanie Bice (202.225.2132)	Washington, D.C.

Official Documents of the Oklahoma Democratic Party

Constitution, Article II: Organization

Section 1: Delegates—only voters who are registered as Democrats shall be delegates of the Oklahoma Democratic Party.

Section 2: Precinct Committees—there shall be a Precinct Committee for each precinct in the State of Oklahoma. Every delegate of the Oklahoma Democratic Party shall be a delegate of the Precinct Committee in the precinct in which he or she is registered to vote.

Section 3: County Conventions—

- A) There shall be a County Convention for each county in the State of Oklahoma.
- B) The County Convention shall be composed of:
 - 1. The Chair, Co-Chair, and secretary of each Precinct Committee in the county,
 - 2. Any state delegates to which that county may be entitled,
 - 3. The Chair, Co-Chair, and secretary of the County Convention,
 - 4. Members of the state affirmative action committee who are registered to vote in the county,
 - 5. The Democratic elected officials (or their personal representatives) who are designated to be delegates in Article III and are registered to vote in the county,
 - 6. Members of the Democratic National Committee who are registered to vote in the county,
 - 7. The Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary of the Congressional District Convention in the county where they are registered to vote,
 - 8. The Secretary and Treasurer of the State Convention in the county where they are registered to vote.

Constitution, Article IV: Party Officials

Section 1: Precinct Committee Officials—

- A) Each Precinct Committee shall elect a precinct chair, co-chair (who shall be of the opposite sex of the chair) and secretary to serve as its officers.
- B) Each Precinct Committee may elect two precinct committeewomen and two precinct committeemen, who shall not be delegates of the County Convention under Article II above.

Constitution, Article VII: Committee Powers and Duties

Section 1: Precinct Committees—The Precinct Committee shall:

- A) Be the governing body of the Democratic Party within the precinct.
- B) Conduct and direct all Democratic Party activities within the precinct.
- C) Provide leadership and direction for the Democrats within the precinct.

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- D) Operate under the direction of the County Convention and Central Committee.
- E) Propose resolutions to the County Convention and Central Committee.
- F) Raise funds for the county party, but may not retain or disburse any funds.

By-laws Article VI: Duties of Officials

Section 1: General Duties—all officials of the Democratic Party shall:

- A) Support the Democratic Party by attending meetings and workshops, Party and candidate fundraising events, and other related events.
- B) Know the Democratic candidates who are running for elective office in their area and actively campaign for their election.
- C) Encourage unregistered citizens to register Democratic.
- D) Actively encourage Democrats to vote in elections.
- E) Be familiar with the rules, procedures, and deadlines governing absentee voting.
- F) Be informed about the positions of the Democratic Party and its candidate on contemporary issues.
- G) Know the dates of upcoming partisan elections.
- H) Support the Party through financial contributions.

Section 2: Precinct Officers and Officials-

- A) The precinct chair shall:
 1. Preside over meetings of the Precinct Committee,
 2. Represent the Democrats of the precinct at meetings of the County Convention,
 3. Be responsible for seeing that the results of Precinct Committee elections are timely sent to the county secretary,
 4. Know the current boundaries of the precinct,
 5. Know the location of the precinct polling place,
 6. Know who the members of the precinct election board are and help the County Central Committee in finding and recruiting replacements,
 7. Know of voter registrars in or near the precinct. (Registrars are no longer needed with the Motor-Voter Bill.)
 8. Maintain contact with the Democrats of the precinct by holding Precinct Committee meetings and workshops and by canvassing them on local races and issues,
 9. Maintain contact with the County Central Committee,
 10. Recruit and train precinct workers,
 11. Maintain a list of locations in the precinct where Democratic candidates may post campaign signs,
 12. Read and become familiar with the Democratic Party handbook,
 13. Maintain a current list of registered Democrats in the precinct with telephone numbers.
- B) The precinct co-chair shall:

1. Preside over meetings of the Precinct Committee when the chair is absent or is otherwise unable to preside,
 2. Assist the precinct chair in fulfilling the duties of the chair as the precinct chair may direct,
 3. Collect contributions to the Democratic Party and be responsible for forwarding them to the county co-chair.
- C) The precinct secretary shall:
1. Take minutes at Precinct Committee meetings and forward a copy to the county secretary,
 2. Tally votes for Precinct Committee elections and forward the results to the county secretary,
 3. Record any resolutions the Precinct Committee may adopt and forward them to the county secretary,
 4. Be responsible with the precinct chair for notifying the Democrats in the precinct of precinct Committee meetings and of other information as the chair may instruct,
 5. Perform such other duties as the precinct chair may direct,
 6. Record the name, address and telephone number of all Democrats who attend Precinct Committee meetings and forward a copy of the list to the county secretary.
- D) If precinct committeemen or committeewomen are elected, they shall assist the precinct officers as the precinct chair shall direct.

Oklahoma Democratic Party Message -- 101

A political campaign has three goals in voter contact and voter communication:

1. Defining yourself as a candidate
2. Defining your opponent as a candidate
3. Defining crucial issues important to voters, and then communicating to voters why you are the best choice as a candidate to deliver on those issues while contrasting why your opponent is not the best choice.

These three goals are referred to as “*message*” in the political community. Aside from having a quality candidate for office, the most important requirement for a campaign is to communicate their message to voters. This is done through interviews, forums, advertising, and mail, and grassroots/volunteer activity.

As volunteers for the state party, we greatly appreciate your time and service. However, it is essential that we do not disrupt our candidates’ message in our activities – if this happens, we lose campaigns. Democrats statewide have come to the table and agreed on a generic message to communicate to voters beneficial to all campaigns. Our message was not pulled out of a hat – thorough research and negotiation went into every discussion and decision.

Our Democratic message is this: **By voting for Democrats, you vote to improve education, deliver affordable, accessible health care to those who need it most, and attract quality jobs to bring a 21st Century economy to Oklahoma.**

These are issues voters want to see happen, and the good news for us is they trust Democrats more than Republicans to deliver them. Now we must reinforce these issues with voters (and our identification with them) throughout the campaign season since our Republican opponents are desperately trying to seize them for themselves – because Republicans know these three issues are key to a November victory.

The Dangers of Being “Off” Message

If a candidate or volunteer strays from the agreed-upon message, campaigns begin to self-destruct. It is vitally important that you communicate to voters the Democratic message of *improved education, accessible health care, and attracting quality jobs*.

Just as we are defining ourselves through our message, our opponents will try to define us as extreme East Coast liberals out of touch with Oklahomans. They know our candidates are moderate folks who believe in a “big tent” mentality and acceptance, and

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they know their selfish arguments won't hold up. But if we allow them to distract us from communicating our message by defending against theirs, we have lost.

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In your volunteer activity, **DO NOT ALLOW** conversations with voters to drift to distractions such as gun control or abortion. These are issues candidates **LOSE** on in many parts of Oklahoma, and in many cases, we disagree on them even among ourselves. Focus on the issues we all agree upon, and we can allow the debate on other topics to progress once we are elected. Remember, you may be particularly strong for one candidate – but in activities for the party, you represent all Democrats. Please help our candidates win by staying on the message they have entrusted to us.

Oklahoma Democrats Message Points

Remember – Campaigns and Volunteers who stray from issues important to voters **LOSE ELECTIONS**

Summary

Oklahoma Democrats will focus on common-sense solutions to improve our economy, expand access to health care and protect local schools. We are determined to improve our state’s education system, attract quality jobs, and make health care accessible to those who need it most – our seniors.

Oklahoma Democrats share Oklahomans’ values – simple things like honesty, hard work, personal responsibility, equal opportunity, and the value of a hard-earned dollar.

Oklahoma Democrats want to give all people the tools to help them succeed on their own by improving education

- Oklahoma Democrats will ensure that we get the best bang out of each educational dollar, directing financial resources to the classroom and reducing the flow of funds to administration overhead
- To attract quality teachers and keep them here, Oklahoma Democrats will make the right decisions when it comes to paying our educators what they deserve and cutting the bureaucratic rules and red tape that hamper classroom instruction, allowing teachers to focus on teaching
- Oklahoma Democrats will protect the integrity, independence, and success of the Career Tech (formerly Vo-Tech) System from Republican efforts to control, dismantle and weaken the system.

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Oklahoma Democrats want to secure a 21st Century economy for EVERYONE

- Oklahoma Democrats understand the success of our schools and hospitals is connected hand in hand with the success of our economy
- Oklahoma Democrats will work together with businesses to attract quality jobs that pay living wages
- Oklahoma Democrats will fight to protect the economic security of Oklahomans, including punishing those who misuse our citizen's hard-earned investment dollars
- (Rural areas only) Our rural communities and small towns cannot "go it alone." Oklahoma Democrats know that and want to help small communities survive by attracting jobs and improving local government

Oklahoma Democrats will responsibly work to provide affordable health care access

- The Oklahoma Democratic leadership has important goals to provide access for all Oklahomans to affordable prescription drugs, especially our elders on fixed incomes
- Oklahoma Democrats want to place medical decisions in the hands of our doctors, not HMO accountants in other states
- (Rural areas only) Small towns are fighting to keep both their hospital and Main Street doors open, and Oklahoma Democrats will work to keep our rural health network strong

Oklahoma Democrats are not focused on a liberal agenda

Oklahoma Democrats are focused on common-sense solutions to our problems. We respect the right to bear arms and believe in morals based on personal ideals rather than government mandates. Oklahoma Democrats believe security in all areas – economic security, personal security, and national security. Oklahoma Democrats are committed to providing an opportunity for Oklahomans to succeed and keeping the government focused on education, health care, and attracting quality jobs.

What Oklahoma Democrats Stand For

The Democratic Party of Oklahoma reflects the solid values of the state it represents -- honesty, hard work, and compassion for those who are less fortunate.

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We firmly believe that government at every level has an absolute responsibility to guarantee the opportunity for success to all its citizens. However, the government has no responsibility to ensure success itself.

We believe in public education as the oldest and best method to improve the quality of life for all Oklahomans. We support improved funding for education at all levels, coupled with meaningful reforms to ensure taxpayers get the most from every education dollar. We oppose any effort to provide taxpayer funding for private schools.

The record of Oklahoma Democrats in elective office is a prudent and moderate one, recognizing that economic development is business development. We seek to provide incentives for business and to free it from needless regulation. At the same time, we are vocal advocates for the rights of working men and women and the protection of our environment.

Oklahoma Democrats advocate responsible and fair justice for everyone and the need for criminal justice reform that unfairly impacts marginalized communities.

The Oklahoma Democratic Party will never join Republicans in advocating the destruction of the social progress made over the last 60 years. However, we are, as always, ready to examine every solution government has attempted to see if it is working -- and to take a different course when reason dictates one.

Oklahoma Democrats are progressive and sensible. We are optimistic about the future, and we are determined to see Oklahoma's traditional values upheld!

ODP Officers

In May or June of every odd-numbered year, the Oklahoma Democratic Party meets in convention to elect a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. These officers serve a two-year term. We also elect four Affirmative Action Committee members for the state. Also, the Party elects two delegates to the Democratic National Committee, one male and one female, every four (4) years in a Presidential election year.

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Each Congressional District also meets every two years before the State Convention. Each Congressional District elects a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary. These three serve as the Congressional District Central Committee and serve on the State Central Committee.

Each county meets between the precinct meetings and the Congressional District Convention and elects a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary as well. They serve as the County Central Committee.

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