

Senate or Congressional Recess: A Guide to Shadowing

Whenever the Senate or House goes on recess, they provide a critical window of opportunity for grassroots and grasstops mobilizing. Our goals for shadowing are:

- To show senators that there is a broad and diverse base of support for bold climate legislation in 2010 – and if they vote against it, they will lose a base of activist voters in the 2010 elections.
- To continue adding to the ranks of the Climate Precinct Captain program and engage existing CPCs in actions.

Shadowing during the Recess: Organizers will recruit CPCs to shadow senators or representatives to town hall meetings, appearances, and fundraisers to ask hard-hitting climate questions and also hand them a gimmick (like a card) in front of the public eye/media. In most cases you will be focusing on one senator/representative. In a few cases, you will have a couple targets and be encouraged to divide energy between their events. Let's use this opportunity to show elected officials that we have the groundswell of support to mobilize voters around climate. Aim to turn volunteers out to as many events as possible.

I. Recruit 10 Shadow Volunteers (at least half of them being CPCs)

- Recruit 10 volunteers from a variety of locations throughout the state to cover potential event locations. Check in with your staff person about the recruitment process and obtaining lists from other parts of the state if needed.
- Prepare volunteers in advance with a briefing call.
- The gimmick: make sure your team has enough copies of the gimmick (like a print-out card or oily oversized foam hand) to your senator or representative.
- Bring signs!

II. Find Events

- **Check your elected officials' websites:** Check to see if there's a calendar of events on the website. Often, they'll have the biggest events featured. Some offices blog and will mention upcoming events in their commentary. You can find their website by typing Senator/Representative + their name into a search on www.google.com
- **E-mail alerts:** Sign up for your senators' or representatives' e-mail alerts if you don't already receive them. You can also do this through their websites.
- **Local newspapers:** Often reporters will mention any big events coming up in the local news, so read anything that mentions your senators/representatives.

- **Identify reporters** who report on Congressional events, and ask them if they know events coming up.
- **Campaign listserv:** If an official is up for re-election, get on the campaign's media list!
- **State/local blogs:** Blogs are an incredible resource for staying abreast of what's happening locally. Ask around or do a Google search to find blogs specifically covering the towns and cities in your state.
- **Volunteer on their campaign:** If the Senator or Representative is up for re-election, sign up to volunteer on their campaign. Often times, they'll have specific fundraisers or events to focus on re-election.

III. Event Outline

Leaflet before event: Organize an hour of leafleting your gimmick and sign holding. For example, if the candidate is speaking at a high school at 2:00 pm, your team may want to leaflet from 1:30-2:30 at a busy intersection near the school.

Have “scouts”: Scouts are placed away from the rest of your volunteers (who may be holding signs or appearing more obvious) and are set up to address/give the gimmick to the elected official. Make sure they aren't wearing any environmental t-shirts or anything that gives them away before the event begins.

Ask the right questions: Set up your scouts with a set of questions that they've practiced in advance (questions coming soon).

Photos/video: Make sure that you have volunteers set up to take photos/video of your scouts giving the gimmick to senator or representative and of volunteers/signs.