



PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS
THROUGH ORGANIZED ENGAGEMENT

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I. Attending or Organizing a Public Meeting With An Elected Official

Meeting with your Congressional representatives (two senators and the member of the House of Representatives elected in your congressional district), local, or state elected officials can seem intimidating, but it is actually quite a simple process. Some elected officials are approachable and accessible; others are not. Some might make you feel unimportant or powerless. Those who do that should suffer political consequences for it. You should bring to the attention of the press any instances of inaccessibility. One good means of doing this is through letters to the editor.

Always keep in mind that you actually have tremendous power, if you utilize it. Also remember that your elected representatives work for you—not the other way around! That means they should make time to meet with you, and if they don't, they're not doing their job.

Advocating for your elected representatives to take action, especially in public during face-to-face meetings, is a powerful means of achieving change. Remember that silence is the greatest ally the status quo has – and that you are most likely to achieve change through persistent pressure. The squeaky wheel really does get the grease.

The following steps outline how to set up, participate in, and share the results of meetings with your representatives.

1. FIND OUT WHO REPRESENTS YOU

To find and contact your Congressional representatives, go to www.congress.org and search by zip code. State and local elected representatives generally can be found by simple Internet searches, through state government webpages, or in the phone book under the government section. Once you have found their contact information, call or send an email to their office and ask when they will be holding their next public meeting. For members of Congress, it might be easier to start with their local offices (since they have a smaller staff and know more about the representatives' local schedule), but if that is not successful, you can call or send an email to their national office. It is a good idea, even when your initial conversation is verbal, to always have a written record of your request for a meeting and of any response (or non-response). After you have called to request a meeting, you can send off a quick email or letter simply saying, "This is to confirm my request today that ____ hold or attend a public meeting about _____. Thank you for taking the time to discuss that request. I look forward to hearing back from you soon."

2. CHECK THEIR SCHEDULE

Many elected representatives hold public meetings regularly. Check to see if your elected official is scheduled to hold a public meeting in the near future.

3. SCHEDULE A MEETING

Some elected officials are very accessible and hold meetings regularly. Others neglect their obligations to be open and communicative with their constituents. If the representative or staff members are not forthcoming about your representative's schedule, ask to speak to the scheduler. Ask when your representative last held a public meeting and when he/she will hold a meeting in the future. If it has been a long time since the elected official has had a public meeting, chances are you have a very inaccessible representative and you will need to apply extra pressure to arrange for one.

Ask when the elected official will be in town next, and ask if you can schedule a meeting then. They might say that they don't know the elected official's schedule. That, of course, would be a strange thing for a scheduler to say. Some congressional representatives come home from Washington every Thursday and stay until Monday. (Ever wonder why they don't get more done?) When they are home, they should be meeting with local constituents. Some congressional representatives hold phone meetings. These are generally ineffective, since they are randomized calls and do not allow a group of people to express their opinions en masse and face to face, with the media present. Be persistent about the need for face-to-face public meetings.

If your elected representative is not planning to hold a meeting, tell the staff person that you represent High Road for Human Rights. Ask when a public meeting can be arranged. If, after speaking with the staff, a meeting is not arranged, insist on a meeting in the near future. If they still refuse, go to the press and tell them that your elected representative has consistently refused to meet with a group of constituents. Then, follow through and contact the media. The public deserves to know when their elected representatives are inaccessible.

4. ALERT THE MEDIA!

Contact your local news media outlets (newspapers, television news departments, and radio stations) about the request for a meeting and what the response from your elected representative has been. You should be able to identify the reporter on the relevant assignment ("beat"). For instance, if you are dealing with a city mayor, it should be easy to identify who covers the city beat. If you can't find out who covers the relevant beat, you can call the newsroom or visit the outlet's website. Newspapers and some broadcast news outlets often have dedicated reporters for covering their state's congressional representatives.

Contact the reporter and his assignment editor as early as possible before the event. Explain that you represent High Road for Human Rights, that you are organizing or attending a scheduled meeting with an elected official, and that you are addressing important human rights issues. Make a case for how news coverage of the event is valuable to the public, and, whenever possible, relate the issues you are addressing to local events and circumstances (e.g., local problems with human trafficking), which may make the issue more attractive to a news organization. Send reminder emails the week before, the day before, and the day of the event. If the editor and reporter decide not to cover the event, send a polite follow-up email that thanks them for their consideration and that gently but persuasively reiterates the importance of the issue. Also, invite them to contact you if they have any questions or need information about the issue in the future. Continue to politely but insistently solicit coverage from every relevant local news organization, no matter how many times they decline to cover a High Road-related event.

Socializing or developing friendships with reporters and editors can often ensure greater success in attracting news coverage. Even a brief meeting over coffee to talk about High Road's mission and focus issues, as well as the activities of the local chapter, would likely pay great dividends for awareness and coverage of the organization.

5. SCRIPT YOUR MEETING

If there is a meeting already coming up—or if you arrange one—ask about the format and make sure there will be time for public questions and comment. Gather together as many chapter members and others supportive of High Road's solutions as possible, and prepare two-minute scripts covering High Road's talking points on the specific issue(s) you want to cover. Contact other organizations sharing High Road's positions and ask them to join you. Build up the numbers of people who will attend the public meetings. Assign people to research the representative's voting record or stated positions on the issue(s), and write specific questions and comments that are geared toward pinning him/her down on the issues. For instance, will the representative support the appointment of an independent commission to investigate and disclose illegal conduct by former high-ranking government officials? Don't let the representative avoid the questions by saying, "I'll look into it." Ask for a "Yes" or "No". If you can't get it, ask what it is the representative needs to know before deciding his/her position and disclose it to his/her constituents. Also, ask when you can expect a decision to be made and if he/she will publicly disclose the decision when it is made.

There are many sites that provide information about the votes and positions of members of Congress. Roll Call, www.congress.org/congressorg/home and <http://www.maplight.org/> are probably the most user-friendly, offering alerts about bills and in-depth histories on specific topics. You can also try *The Washington Post*, www.projects.washingtonpost.com/congress, for reports on voting and

analysis by category. www.thomas.gov provides short descriptions of bills and straight reporting of votes. On the issue of the genocide in Darfur, www.darfurscores.org, grades every member of Congress. Your state legislature and city council should have similar search functions. Call the state legislature or city council office and ask where they record that information. Oftentimes it is available online.

6. Q & A OPPORTUNITIES DURING PUBLIC MEETINGS

Go to the meeting and get as many people as possible to attend with you. When the public comment session or Q&A begins, have High Road members and others in attendance line up together and ask the elected official clear, direct questions that you have prepared beforehand about voting records, positions, commitments, and information about the issues. If your elected official tries to wriggle out of the questions or whitewash his/her record, respond with counterpoints and insist that he/she answers the question. If you are relentless, you will usually get results – and if answers are not ultimately provided, it will be clear to everyone present (and perhaps to the news media) that the elected official is not being candid. Don't be afraid to press him/her on a topic. Remember, once again, your elected officials work for you. They don't have to agree with you on any issues – but you are entitled to know what they have done and what they will or won't commit to do. Don't ever be shy about insisting on answers to your questions.

7. WRAP IT UP

Be sure to request effective action, utilizing High Road's specific recommendations for solutions, and tell your elected official that they are specific policy reforms that will help achieve a solution to the human rights problem under discussion. (Remember to say that you represent a certain number of constituents, and that you consider this one of your primary deciding voting issues. Also, mention that you will do everything you can to publicize the representative's responses, whether they are consistent or inconsistent with High Road's positions.)

As you point out each of the High Road solutions, pin the elected official down: Does he/she support each solution or not? What is his/her record regarding the suggested solutions? Ask your elected official directly if he/she will support these policies. If your representative agrees, ask him/her what specific actions he/she will take to start implementing them. If your representative says no, you have to decide whether to play hardball or not (considering how egregious the representative's voting record has been, how long he/she has voted that way, how urgent the issue is, and how you want to frame your meetings in the future). If you decide to play hardball (and many times you should), stay at the meeting until consensus is reached, or inform your representative that you will go to the media and let them know about the decision and indicate (if you feel it is appropriate) that

he/she has refused to pursue a step toward solving an important human rights problem.

8. COVER YOUR BASES

Use all the persuasive tools at your disposal: Tell personal stories. Speak from a moral and ethical standpoint. Give statistics, quote experts, and offer alternatives.

Hold the representative to past promises, thank him/her for good votes in the past, and give praise for any pledge to pursue High Road's solutions. Speak from the heart and explain why the issue matters to you. Be respectful and dignified, but tough.

9. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Please write a summary of what occurred at the meeting and forward it to the High Road national office. Some summaries will be posted on the High Road web site and all of them will be maintained in High Road's files. It is important that this information be compiled in one place so that the grassroots efforts of High Road's members and chapters can be assessed and so that a clear picture can be established as to the commitments and positions of elected representatives around the country.

EXAMPLE #1 – SCRIPT OF MEETING WITH CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

This script is based on a 15 minute meeting held with an assistant to Representative Jim Matheson, from Utah’s Second Congressional District, on the subject of climate change. The meeting was held in Washington, D.C. and was attended by a few members of the Salt Lake City chapter of High Road for Human Rights, along with 20+ members of Peaceful Uprising. The majority of the group were constituents of Jim Matheson. The actual video of the meeting is available on YouTube at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MxG_CJucl0.

I. Personal Introductions

“My name is Speaker #1, I’m a junior at the University of Utah and a member of High Road for Human Rights.” “I’m Speaker #2, and a constituent in Representative Matheson’s district.” Etc.

II. Who we are and why we’re here

SPEAKER #1: (2 min) “Thank you for having us today. We are all here in your office today after attending Power Shift 2009, a national youth summit attended by over 12,000 students from all over the nation, which focused on climate change and mobilized us to lobby for substantial, sustainable policies that we feel are necessary to make a difference on climate change this year. We have worked extremely hard over the last few months fundraising and planning, so that we could get the 30+ students from Utah to Power Shift, because, the way we see it, our generation is fighting for a livable future. We’ve researched and found that Utah gets 95% of its power from coal, and we can see direct results of that in our daily lives. We feel that fossil fuels are contributing to our state’s pollution, current economic situation, our health, and the overall worsening condition of global warming. But we also believe that these are all things that we can change by instituting the right legislation, and that’s why we’re here.”

Assistant: “That’s great to see so many of you here from Utah. Thank you for coming. It’s my pleasure to talk with you today.”

SPEAKER #2: (Personal Story#1 – 2 min) “I didn’t really get involved in this movement until I felt that my own life was personally affected. I cannot emphasize to you enough the severity of what is going on. I was recently diagnosed with asthma and cannot make it from one of my classes to another, and my diagnosis has been largely attributed to the air quality that is continually deteriorating in the Salt Lake valley. We need to do something to address this issue immediately. We have one of the highest rates of asthma in the country and this is in a large part due to our burning of fossil fuels and generating them through our transportation systems. As a mother, I worry about my children. Our air quality has now become a major concern for many parents in the area.”

SPEAKER #3: (Personal Story #2 – 1 min.) “I work in the pediatrics section of Primary Children’s Hospital, and in recent months we’ve had three families who have left our care after many years because they felt the health risk of the air quality overshadowed the treatment they were receiving. They have relocated to another state where the medical attention they are receiving is not as good, but they feel that their children will have a better chance of living out a healthy and dignified life there. Their suffering is a constant reminder of our impact not only on our generation, but on future generations as well.”

SPEAKER #4: (Personal Story #3 – 1 min.) “On that note, I am an Environmental Science teacher at a local elementary school and for the past few months we’ve been talking about climate change, its history, and the impact that we as humans have on it. The children, who ranging from 4th grade to 6th grade, are concerned and frankly terrified for their future. They have no idea what to expect. We’re here in the hope that we can work with Congressman Matheson to take necessary steps to secure a better future. We’d like to work with him on the necessary transition away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy.”

SPEAKER #1: (1 min.) “We know that Jim Matheson is on the House Committee for Energy and Commerce as well as on the Subcommittee for Energy and the Environment, and we recognize and are excited for his potential to be a leader for us on this issue. Most of us are constituents of Matheson’s district, and are representing many others that wanted to be here as well. We are here because we want to open a dialogue with you about these particular issues so that we know how we can best work with Representative Matheson to achieve our goals. Can you explain his position on climate change to us?”

Assistant: “I know that he wants a balanced energy portfolio. We have such great resources at our disposal in Utah such as solar, wind, and oil shale. He feels that we must look into all of our options.”

SPEAKER #5: (facts/research – 2 min) “We need to transition out of the coal industry and fast, and we have economic facts to support this transition. For example, in the year 2008 there were more people employed by the wind power industry nationwide than by coal mining. Like you mentioned earlier, Utah is in a very unique place where we have access to resources such as solar and wind, and we should be investing in these renewable resources for obvious environmental reasons, but also because it is a solid monetary investment. There’s a University of Massachusetts study that states that for every \$100 billion dollars spent on clean energy, it creates around 2 million new jobs, and if that same amount of money were spent on fossil fuel energy, it would only create 1/3 of that number of jobs, and, right now, I think we can all agree that job creation is crucial. Especially with many of us looking to graduate in the next two months to two years, we are concerned about our future in the job market.”

SPEAKER #5: (solutions/ requests 2 min) “We are looking towards Representative Matheson to be a leader for us in this area, especially with his experience in the energy field, and his position on the Subcommittee of Energy and the Environment. We feel that continuing to burn fossil fuels, and most importantly, continuing to burn coal, is a direct threat to our future. We are asking Representative Matheson to support a moratorium on all newly proposed coal-burning power plants, and dissolve those underway. Do you know his position on this?”

Assistant: “Well, I know that Representative Matheson has been working very hard to support and provide a sustainable future, and has been working and investing much time into clean coal – and carbon sequestration, as well as looking into alternatives like oil shale, solar and wind.”

SPEAKER #6 (Solutions/requests): “We are here because we feel that climate change has become a life or death situation. It has become a human rights issue because it is directly threatening our lives, and the lives of future generations. We feel enough conviction on the necessity to place a moratorium on coal-fired power plants and immediately transition away from fossil fuel energy that later this afternoon, we will be joining with other students that attended Power Shift 2009, local leaders and celebrities from all over the country, and the local communities that are being directly affected by the Capitol Power Plant to take part in the Capitol Climate Action, the largest mass act of civil disobedience in the climate movement’s history. The threat of climate change has become real enough to us that we are willing to put our bodies and our freedoms on the line and risk arrest in the hope and driving necessity to change climate policy.”

III. Wrapping it up

SPEAKER #7 (Wrapping it up - 2 min): We will be sending Representative Matheson materials and this video so that even though he wasn’t able to be here today, he can watch our message and hear what we have to say. We’d like to leave you with two things: 1) We’re excited to work with our Representative, to achieve great things. We have as much enthusiasm as anyone could have, because we feel that our lives are on the line. We feel that our lives are in jeopardy; we completely believe that, and that is the place we’re coming from – it is a place of strength and conviction and like Speaker #6 said, we will do what we must to preserve our future, and we hope that Representative Matheson will work with us to put in place these solutions such as the suggested moratorium on coal. 2) Besides the excitement, please convey our urgency to him. We’re not trying to make an impression and come back next year and rehash these issues. We need legislation this year. I think it’s relevant to say that this year the youth of the United States proved that it could make or break an election. We are relevant, and our voices are relevant, and Representative Matheson should listen to those voices. Thank you for your time.”

II. Drafting a Letter to Your Congressperson or Other Elected Representatives

One letter to a congressperson might not make a big difference, but if you organize your chapter and wage a consistent letter-writing campaign, particularly if it is coordinated with similar High Road campaigns around the country, it can lead to positive changes.

Senator Paul Simon believed that public pressure, reflected by letters to members of Congress, could have altered the U.S. response when the Clinton administration sat on its hands during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. He said, *“If every member of the House and Senate had received 100 letters from people back home saying we have to do something about Rwanda, when the crisis was first developing, then I think the response would have been different.”*

Let’s make sure that no one ever again believes that, because of public silence, the “people back home” don’t care about human rights atrocities.

1. CHOOSE AN ISSUE

Select the High Road focus area you want to address, and learn about the solutions High Road has developed, often in collaboration with other organizations.

2. GET EDUCATED ON THE ISSUE

Gather and draft talking points that people can use in their letters. (In many instances, the national office will have prepared speaking points it can provide, or which might be on High Road’s website. Other information on High Road’s issues and suggested solutions, including multi-media pieces, are available on the web site as well.)

3. TO WHOM DO I WRITE?

Once you have found your representative’s contact information, write a letter or email to him/her. Letters are usually taken more seriously and can have a bigger impact if they arrive around the same time, especially if they are not the same form letter. **DON’T** capitalize or bold whole words – or use a lot of **EXCLAMATION POINTS!!!** (See how crazy you look when you do that?) Be dignified, informative, respectful, and firm in your writing.

4. HOW SHOULD I IDENTIFY MYSELF?

You can choose whether to identify yourself as a member of High Road for Human Rights. It's good for our elected representatives to know that High Road is involved and that many people are organizing together. It is also good for elected representatives to know that ordinary citizens are concerned. If you are a constituent, mention that fact as well. Also, if you have volunteered or contributed to a representative's campaign, mention it.

5. WRITE USING A CONCISE AND CONSCIENTIOUS VOICE

Keep to your talking points. You can criticize or applaud your representative's past voting record on the issue. You can also tell a compelling story. Write whatever you think would be most moving. Provide a citation for any facts to which you refer, and make sure they are accurate and up-to-date.

6. SUGGEST SOLUTIONS

Be sure to include the solutions that High Road has specified for the issue you are addressing, and urge your representative to start implementing those solutions. Ask him/her to advise you precisely as to each suggested solution: Will he/she support it or not?

7. KEEP THE LETTERS COMING

Make the letter writing campaign a sustained one. Keep the letters flowing, day after day, week after week. Your Chapter Chair or designated volunteer in charge of drafting letters should be setting monthly or weekly goals, monitoring the progress of the letter writing campaigns, and checking in with volunteers to make sure goals are reached.

8. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Keep a copy of your letter. Provide a copy, along with a Proof of Performance report, to the High Road national office so it can be maintained in the High Road files (and perhaps posted on the High Road web site). When you receive a reply to your letter, please make a copy of it and send it to High Road's national office, too.

Example #1 – A Letter To Your Congressperson

February 13, 2009

Dear President Obama and Members of Congress:

I am among millions of Americans concerned about the undermining of the rule of law, violations of our Constitution, domestic laws, and treaty obligations, and the damage inflicted these past several years on our nation's system of checks and balances.

Please make it a priority, within the first six months of the Obama Administration, to:

1. Limit the application of the "state secrets" doctrine in order that the courts will once again provide a meaningful check on abuses of power and violations of law by members of the Executive Branch.
2. Make clear what process must be followed before any US treaty obligations are violated or terminated by any member of the Executive branch or by Congress. Congress should also reaffirm its commitment to treaty obligations forbidding aggressive war and torture and repeal the Military Commissions Act.
3. Limit the effect of "signing statements" by enacting legislation that (1) instructs the courts they are not to consider signing statements when determining legislative history; (2) prohibits the President from issuing any statement that purports to limit any part of the legislation as being advisory or that purports to assert any authority by the President to determine the scope or applicability of the legislation; and (3) provides that no one can rely upon signing statements as a defense for a violation of the law.
4. Authorize, designate, and assign special prosecutors to investigate and prosecute violations of the law for involvement in felonious warrantless wiretapping, torture, and kidnappings of people in the so-called "extraordinary rendition" program.
5. Reassert Congress's vital constitutional role and forbid, by a criminal statute with severe penalties, any attack against another nation, except in cases of actual or imminent attack of the US by that nation or as permitted under the United Nations Charter and the Constitution, absent explicit authorization by Congress.
6. Appoint a select committee, similar to the Church and Ervin Committees, or a non-partisan Truth Commission, charged with investigating illegal conduct or other abuses of power by the Bush Administration, disclosing such misconduct to the American people, and making recommendations concerning reforms that will prevent or deter similar misconduct in the future.

7. Repeal the Military Commissions Act.

Taking these steps will be a vital contribution to the restoration of the rule of law, our constitutional democracy, and the system of checks and balances essential to protect against abuses of Executive power.

Sincerely,

{Attached were over 7,100 names of people who signed the petition supporting the call for a restoration of the rule of law.}

III. Meet with Editors or Editorial Boards

Meeting with editors or editorial boards can effectively influence what gets included in the news cycle and in editorials. Local editors and editorial boards at radio stations, television stations, and newspapers are sensitive to the concerns of local citizens who meet with them to articulate their concerns and suggest ways to improve coverage of important issues.

When High Road's Executive Director Rocky Anderson and a few other local residents met with editorial boards in the 1980s about the poor reporting about Central America and US policy toward Central America, the city's major daily newspaper sent its editorial editor, and a local television station sent a three-person news team, to Nicaragua on fact-finding trips with groups organized by Anderson. Those trips resulted in the publication of multi-part newspaper and television specials about the situation in Nicaragua – unprecedented in the local news coverage.

1. WITH WHOM DO I MEET?

Go to the website of your local newspaper. You can choose to meet with the editorial board—the group that writes opinion articles on various issues – or the editor and his/her staff—the people who decide what news topics to cover and what perspective to take on the topic at hand. Ideally, you should meet with both. If you are dealing with a local television station, you will most likely be pushing for better coverage rather than editorializing, unless that station features editorial segments. When you change the way in which an issue is reported – or even if it is reported at all – you can substantially improve your community's level of understanding about issues and potential solutions.

2. SET UP AN APPOINTMENT

Your newspaper's website should have a number and email for both the news editor and the editorial editor. Call or email them to make an appointment. Introduce yourself as a member of High Road for Human Rights and tell them what you want to discuss with them. They should be able to meet with you within a couple of weeks.

3. ORGANIZE A TEAM TO ATTEND THE MEETING

Once you have your appointment, select at least two other knowledgeable people from your chapter to represent High Road at the meeting.

4. BE PREPARED

Prepare a fact sheet for the meeting with salient facts and High Road's suggested steps toward solutions. (These materials are often available from High Road's national office or are on the High Road website.) You can also bring other media (such as photos, documentaries, or one of High Road's multimedia presentations) to give to those with whom you are meeting. Read the newspaper/watch the news station in the days leading up to the meeting and mark how often and how well they have covered the issue you will be discussing with them.

5. HOW LONG SHOULD I PLAN ON BEING IN THE MEETING?

Your meeting will probably last 30-45 minutes. After you have presented your facts and solutions, the staff might want to ask you questions. Remember to stress High Road's **solutions** to the problems. You can leave with them the materials provided by High Road's national office. Also, if you can, provide information about the stated positions or voting records of your elected representatives.

6. WRAP IT UP

If you have met with the editorial board, end the meeting by asking if they plan on running an editorial piece on your topic. If you are meeting with the editors, ask them what kind of news coverage you can expect from them in the future. As in other forums, be respectful and dignified, but firm. Remember that the impression you leave with the media will influence how they respond to you (and High Road) in the future. Creating a good relationship with the media can open many doors, just as getting off on the wrong foot with can limit future collaborations and opportunities. Before you leave, be sure to let them know you will be pleased to provide further information to them about the issue and the proposed steps toward solutions. Ask them to refer to High Road's website.

7. RESULTS/ RESPONSES

Watch for any upcoming editorials or articles. If the results are positive, email the news editor or editorial board and thank them. If the newspaper continues to neglect the issue, follow up with an email or phone call and ask why. If necessary, schedule another meeting. It is often helpful to write a letter to the editor about improving coverage of important human rights issues and potential solutions, in the interests of the public. Below is a copy of an editorial that was published in the Salt Lake Tribune on March 29th, 2009, which demonstrates the power of the press to react to current issues when provided the correct information and perspective.

8. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Please send all news coverage or editorials generated by your meeting(s), along with a Proof of Performance report, to High Road's national office so it can be posted on the High Road website and maintained in High Road's files.

EXAMPLE #1 – EDITORIAL ON TORTURE

Tracking torture

We need a presidential commission

Tribune Editorial

Salt Lake Tribune Editorial - 03/29/2009

President Barack Obama must, for the sake of the country and its standing in the world, appoint an independent commission to fully investigate the Bush administration's secret use of torture and other breaches of the laws and principles embodied in America's founding documents.

It is not enough, as the new president has done, to condemn and to renounce policies that compromised the United States' long commitment to basic human rights, and to international standards of humane treatment of prisoners of war.

We need a bipartisan commission to determine precisely how and why this happened, and to identify all the people responsible for it. But the commission should not be charged with undertaking a criminal investigation. That is the responsibility of the Justice Department and, ultimately, the courts.

President Obama's inaugural pledge to govern in a spirit of bipartisanship can have no bearing on his duty to the country in this matter. Government-sanctioned torture is not a partisan political issue. It defines who we are as a country.

Like it or not, the places and terms that the word invokes -- Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Guantanamo, CIA black sites, extraordinary rendition, waterboarding, sensory deprivation, stress positions, torture memos, all of it -- are now part of our story. So, too, will be what we, and the president, do to address the issue head-on, once and for all.

Much information about U.S. treatment of hundreds of suspected terrorists since 9/11 emerged before President Bush left office. More has come to light since, from congressional hearings and other sources, prompting the chairmen of the House and Senate Judiciary committees to urge the president to appoint what would amount to a truth commission.

The latest spur to action is a confidential report by the International Committee of the Red Cross that meticulously details the brutal treatment of 14 high-value detainees interrogated at CIA black sites.

The document, based on interviews with each of the 14, reveals a consistent pattern of abuse that meshes with what already has been reported. The Red Cross found that "in many cases, the ill treatment to which they were subjected while held in the CIA program, either singly or in combination, constituted torture. In addition, many other elements of the mistreatment, either singly or in combination, constituted cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

It is time for us, Mr. President, to learn and to deal with the truth -- all of it. Nothing less will do.

III. Write An Op-Ed Piece

Almost all papers have an op-ed section—a place where readers can write compelling, timely, and persuasive essays about important issues. While you might think that op-eds are only written by experts and pundits who have a close relationship with editors, many op-ed editors are actually eager to publish your work—provided it is well written. Writing an op-ed is an ideal way to make a stronger and more developed case for or against an issue than you could in a letter to the editor. Plus, government officials and policy-makers frequently gauge public opinion by reading the opinion section of the newspaper, which makes op-eds powerful education and advocacy tools.

1. GET THE GUIDELINES

Consult your newspaper or its website for the rules and submission guidelines for submitting an op-ed. Most op-eds are between 400 and 750 words, and normally must include a name, address, telephone number and short blurb about the writer. They usually can be submitted via email or mail, and are usually due midday Wednesday for publication in the Sunday newspaper.

2. FORMATTING YOUR OP-ED

Begin your op-ed with a hook to draw in readers: a startling fact, an anecdote, or a statistic. Use that hook to introduce the problem. In the **second** paragraph, make your first point and back it up with facts, anecdotes, and reasoning. Do this again in a **third** and **fourth** paragraph, and finish up with a conclusion that summarizes the problem and a call to action. This is where you can include High Road's steps towards solutions—one or all of them.

3. WRITING STYLE

When writing an op-ed, you can use a conversational style. Be engaging and stay on topic. Make your arguments lean and compelling, and finish with a bang—your call to arms, your plea, your solutions, or a final story.

4. SEND IT IN

Submit your op-ed. Call the editor and let hi m/her know you sent it and ask what the turnaround time is for accepting op-eds. If your piece is not accepted, you likely won't get a call. If it is, the editor will probably contact you and may edit the piece. Even if an editor declines to publish your piece, he may accept a new version of it in the future, if you revise it to address new information, additional news coverage, or subsequent editorials the paper publishes on the issue.

5. RESULTS / RESPONSES

When it is published, there will likely be a flurry of comments online or perhaps a counterpoint piece in the next Sunday edition. This is your chance to keep the conversation going, providing additional facts and arguments, correcting misinformation, and urging for High Road's policy solutions. You can take advantage of the increased interest by getting others to post comments online or to submit their own letters to the editor or op-ed pieces. If the editor liked your piece, he /she will likely keep your name on hand for op-eds in the future.

6. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Please send all submitted and published op-ed pieces to High Road's national office so they can be posted on the High Road website and maintained in High Road's files. Also, please send a copy of all comments about the op-ed piece that are posted online, as well as any responsive letters to the editor.

EXAMPLE #1 – OP-ED PIECE

Dylan Rose Schneider
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Dylan Schneider holds a BA in International Studies and is currently the Chapter Coordinator for High Road for Human Rights.

There are still 241 detainees awaiting trial or release at Guantanamo Bay. While the previous administration tarnished our international reputation in a variety of ways, perhaps the most shocking part of his legacy is the continued acceptance of torture through the refusal to hold those responsible for it accountable.

High school history courses have taught us the infamous names of ruthless dictators such as Pinochet, Lenin, Mao, Stalin, and Pol Pot, who inflicted terror and oppression on people without regard to international or domestic law. Those who chose to stand up and oppose their abuses of power were disappeared and systematically murdered or tortured.

We who claim to recognize the injustice and inhumanity of such regimes fail to recognize that we have been living under such a regime for nearly eight years. Citizens of the US and other countries have been kidnapped, disappeared, and imprisoned without cause, trial, or notice - to be interrogated, tortured, and detained without providing any information about their whereabouts or condition to their loved ones. Some have been released without any evidence of wrongdoing, without apology or explanation, and then refused justice in the courts of the United States after the perpetrators – the administration – asserted the “state secrets” doctrine.

These tales of abuse and tragically altered lives are seldom mentioned on the nightly news. And now the Obama administration continues to invoke the “state secrets” doctrine to deny torture victims justice and to hide the facts about torture and warrantless wiretapping from the public.

People continue to suffer, the truth still has not been disclosed, and we the people, and our elected representatives, mostly remain silent. In these circumstances, silence is a dangerous thing to our democracy. Silence implies acquiescence in the wrongdoing. Until we citizens take an active role and raise our voices as one, hope of the truth and of reform will diminish. We shall not be the agents of change so many of us imagined, but rather the generation and nation that stood silent and left it to one man, President Obama, to fix a system that has been corroded by corruption for decades. He cannot – and will not – do it alone. We all need to do our part.

By uniting our voices, we will be heard when we call for Congress and President Obama to restore the rule of law. High Road for Human Rights (www.highroadforhumanrights.org), advocates for seven concrete solutions to begin the process of restoring the rule of law. One solution is to appoint a non-partisan commission charged with investigating illegal conduct and other abuses of power by former high-ranking government officials. The commission would let the American people know the truth and make recommendations concerning reforms to prevent or deter similar misconduct in the future.

It is deeply disquieting that such an obvious solution has not been embraced by a Congress that continues to be complicit in the wrongdoing by allowing it to remain covered up. Those who embrace the rule of law and the values behind our system of checks and balances now have an opportunity to make a difference by speaking up – initiating and taking an active role in the ongoing dialogue of democracy.

We have awakened from our apathetic nap by the jarring reality that we allowed the prior administration to commit its crimes because we were not organized and we did not speak up. Now, we can take effective action as engaged citizens so our representatives and President Obama will have the courage to finally act

Through citizen participation, joining our voices for a return to the rule of law, we can, together, create a better world. It is our responsibility, and opportunity, as American citizens and as human beings.

IV. Write a Letter to the Editor

A letter to the editor is a good way to respond to an issue or opinion that is already in the news cycle. It is a short, easy way to correct misinformation and argue for solutions. Letters to the editor are one of the most-read parts of the newspaper.

1. SELECT A TOPIC

Select the large topic on which you want to focus and narrow it down. For example, if you want to respond to an article or argument about genocide in Darfur, you can narrow it down to the need for the US to make certain there is full implementation of the UN-approved 26,000 person peacekeeping force and that they are well equipped.

2. MAKE A CLEAR AND CONCISE ARGUMENT

You usually are allowed only about 200 words, so make your point clear at the beginning. If you are disagreeing with a previous letter to the editor or article, say so. If you are introducing your own topic, situate it within the larger news cycle. Make your point quickly, provide supporting data, and then close with a solution or a call to action. Letters to the editor are also a good opportunity to put pressure on elected representatives, pointing out what they are doing or not doing to help achieve a solution.

3. WHAT TO INCLUDE

Be sure to include your full name, postal address, and telephone number. If you are emailing your letter, most newspapers require you to paste your letter in the body of the email rather than attaching it.

4. RESULTS / RESPONSES

If your letter is printed, newspaper staff might contact you to edit it, or they might simply edit it themselves (which can be irritating, but is within their purview). If you want to bring attention to a topic, have your chapter members take turns writing two letters a week for several weeks. Keep up a sustained, tenacious effort. You can use the ongoing letters to address counterarguments made in response to your initial letter and propose more of High Road's concrete solutions or keep the pressure up on elected officials who are not helping achieve a solution.

5. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Please send all submitted and published letters to the editor to High Road's national office so they can be posted on the High Road website and maintained in High Road's files. Also, please send hard copies or links to articles and/or comments posted online about the letters, and any published responsive letters to the editor.

EXAMPLE #1 – LETTER TO THE EDITOR

This letter to the editor, published in the Salt Lake Tribune on Saturday, April 4th, 2009, was submitted by a student of Brighton High School after High Road Executive Director Rocky Anderson presented a multimedia presentation on genocide to his class.

*Scott Johnson
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Rocky's lesson

When I learned that former Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson would be speaking to my high school English class, I was enthralled. He did not come to explain his controversial politics but to talk about High Road for Human Rights, a nonprofit group that he helped found that is dedicated to stopping genocide.

As Rocky lectured about pressuring elected officials in Washington, D.C., on matters of genocide, I couldn't believe my ears. Why would we need to pressure our Jim Mathesons and Orrin Hatches? Is the idea of stopping genocide controversial? When a mass of humans cry out in a foreign tongue and on a distant continent is it not the same emotion that we may feel here in our own land?

Is it because the dollar figure to stop the atrocity has too many zeroes behind it? Could it be that we just don't care? History shows that politicians certainly don't. By staying silent we are at best lazy and at worst accessories to murder.

Thousands are dying for nothing. Does anyone care?

Scott Johnson
Sandy

VI. How to Write a Press Release/Press Alert

If you want to stage a demonstration, organize a large event, or get High Road members on a local television or radio show or in the newspaper, you will probably need to promote High Road, an issue, or an event in the media. This requires writing a press release or press advisory so the media knows who you are, what you are doing, and why you think it is newsworthy. A press release is information that is not associated with an actual event—e.g., the fact that your group is taking a specific stand on an issue—while a press alert informs the media about something that is going to happen. Press releases are good for simply relaying information to the media, and can result in interviews or appearances on local shows. A press alert can help you get media representatives to your event so that your group and your issues get into the news cycle. Not all press releases look alike, so you can adapt yours to what works best. It's usually best to call someone at the assignment desk as well. Just sending a press alert or press release is often insufficient to get anyone's attention.

1. THE OBJECTIVE OF A PRESS RELEASE / ALERT

Basically, you are trying to write an article that you would want published about your event or your position on an issue. Many reporters are busy and might lift substantial parts of their articles from your press release, so keep that in mind as you write.

2. FORMATTING YOUR PRESS RELEASE / ADVISORY

The first line should say "For Immediate Release." (Or if you don't want something out until some time in the future, you can write "Embargoed until ____." This lets the media know either that they can start reporting on your issue, or that they need to hold off until a stated time. In the 2nd line, write the date. In the 3rd line, write "Contact" followed by the name, phone number, and email address of the spokesperson for your group. The following line is the dateline. Write the date of your event and the location followed by your headline. Your headline and subheadlines should provide the most important key points and be catchy—something that will draw the reporter in and get her to open your email. Reporters get dozens or even hundreds of press releases or advisories every day, so you want to make yours noticeable.

3. THE LEDE

The first sentence (or two) of the press release/alert is called the lede. It should grab the reader's attention and include what, when, where and why the event is taking place, why the group is taking some sort of action, or what position is being advocated and why. The second and third paragraphs can elaborate on the lede and provide a context for the action: situating it within the larger news cycle or in response to a prior event/legislation/news article, and explaining the motivation. The language of the press release should be objective, engaging, and free from value-laden words. You can state your opinions in the quotes section of the press release.

End with quotes from one or two people, ideally organizers of the event or activists/experts and opinion leaders in the field. Make the quotes clear, concise and memorable. Include a one-sentence description of High Road and what it does, and finish the press release/alert with three hash marks (###) to let the reader know they can stop reading.

4. FIND YOUR CONTACTS

You can get emails and phone numbers for press contacts from the websites of most newspapers and television stations. If they have contact information, find the reporters that cover the beats most relevant to your event/issue and send them the press release with the headline in the subject field. If the website doesn't provide contact info, you can call the newsroom and ask to be connected to the office of a relevant editor (e.g. national news, city beat, politics, metro) or to the assignment desk.

5. FOLLOW UP

Call the reporters who cover the issue you are discussing. When you call a reporter, you have about a minute to make your case. State your name and the organization you represent and then launch into a brief description of your event/news item. If it is an event with visuals, be sure to describe it—the media wants to cover something that will give them good images. End by reminding them that you sent them a press release or advisory (or offering to send one), and then ask if you can expect to see them at your event or if they are interested in covering the issue.

6. SELECT MEDIA 'GO TO' PEOPLE FOR THE EVENT

Make sure you select one or two people from High Road to act as spokespeople. Direct all media queries to your spokespeople. Have them prepare a few brief talking points. Make sure they stick to those points when interviewed, but always portray an attitude of openness and responsiveness to media representatives. (Speaking points or other useful information can be obtained from the High Road national office or from the High Road website.)

7. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Look for the story on the evening news or in the morning paper. If it makes it, congrats! Send copies of all press releases or press advisories, along with a Proof of Performance report, to the High Road national office for posting on the High Road website. Also, if any news coverage results, please send dated copies to the High Road national office.

EXAMPLE #1: PRESS RELEASE / ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

February 19, 2009

CONTACT:

Dylan Schneider

801.364.3560 ext 118

Americans Call on President Obama and Congress to Restore Rule of Law, End Ongoing Misuse of State Secrets Doctrine

Thousands Sign Letter Calling For Seven Steps To Reaffirm The Constitution, Ensure Accountability, And Prevent Future Abuses Of Executive Power

The High Road for Human Rights Education Project (High Road), a nonprofit educational and advocacy organization based in Salt Lake City, today submitted a letter to President Obama and all 535 members of Congress urging the restoration of the rule of law and a reaffirmation of the checks and balances so crucial to our constitutional system of government. Over 7,100 Americans signed the petition, which calls for crucial, urgent action to end Executive Branch abuses of power, hold accountable those who have committed abuses of power and human rights violations, and restore a proper balance of power between the three branches of government.

“The election of a new president provides some hope, but it is only a beginning,” writes High Road Executive Director and former Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson in a letter accompanying the petition. “The real work still needs to be done to (1) disclose the truth to the American people about illegal conduct and other abuses of power by government officials and those working in concert with them, and (2) make certain such abuses are never again repeated.”

Moreover, Anderson notes, some practices contrary to a principled commitment to human rights and the rule of law remain under the Obama Administration. “The Obama Administration is continuing the Bush Administration policy of hiding evidence in order to prevent torture victims from seeking justice and to prevent public disclosure of government wrongdoing,” Anderson stated. The Obama Administration has renewed the assertion of the “state secrets” doctrine to deny reinstatement of a lawsuit filed by five victims of torture against a Boeing subsidiary alleged to have transported them to secret, barbaric prisons on behalf of the U.S. government. It has also renewed the assertion of the “state secrets” doctrine to deny access to information about warrantless wiretapping during the prior administration.

The petition asks Congress and the Obama Administration to take the following actions:

- Provide accountability for violations of the law by the previous Administration
- Limit the application of the “state secrets” doctrine
- Adhere to treaty obligations and clarify the process by which treaty obligations may be legally terminated
- Limit the effect of signing statements
- Reassert Congress’s role in declaring war
- Appoint a select committee or independent commission to investigate and disclose the truth about the illegal misconduct and other abuses of power by government officials and to prevent future abuses
- Repeal the Military Commissions Act, which, among other heinous provisions, allows the President to hold American citizens without trial as “enemy combatants.”

“The thousands of names on the enclosed letter calling for the seven steps toward restoring the rule of law represent millions of people throughout our nation and around the world who are committed to the preservation of our republic and the rule of law. Those who have exercised their responsibility as citizens to let you know of their expectations urge you to now meet *your* responsibility,” Anderson wrote in the letter addressed to every member of Congress and to the President.

Another letter, dated January 4, 2008, respecting these matters was signed by George McGovern, Ralph Nader, Robert A. Feuer, Rocky Anderson, Blase Bonpane, Theresa Bonpane, Ramsey Clark, Mimi Kennedy, Andy Jacobs, Jr., James Abourezk, Daniel Ellsberg, Noam Chomsky, Paul Findley, Kevin Zeese, John Nichols, Tim Carpenter, Marcus Raskin, Jonathan Kozol, and Harry Belafonte. That letter was addressed and delivered to Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Chair of the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Since the delivery of that letter, it was posted at www.restoreruleoflaw.com and 3,627 people from throughout the United States have added their names as signatories to the letter.

High Road for Human Rights is a unique nonpartisan education and advocacy organization that recognizes, honors, and promotes the right of every person to a life lived with dignity and justice. Working through a widespread grassroots network of local chapters across the country, in concert with leading U.S. human rights organizations, High Road targets precise issues and concrete solutions; educates the public about urgent issues and effective remedies; creates a widespread base of informed, motivated, and organized members; and empowers members to pressure the media to report on the issues responsibly and push government officials to take effective action toward meaningful policy changes. High Road’s focus issues, which share the need for a coordinated, educated, and mobilized grassroots response, are genocide, torture, climate change, and human trafficking. For more information, visit www.highroadforhumanrights.org.

VII. Present Multimedia Productions

High Road for Human Rights seeks to educate people about the issues of global warming, human trafficking, genocide, torture and the rule of law so that they are galvanized to join High Road's grassroots efforts. Organizing a multimedia presentation for your church, civic, or neighborhood group, or for school classes, is a perfect way to introduce people to the mission of High Road, the issues it addresses, and the steps toward solutions for major human rights problems, while simultaneously growing the chapter and building camaraderie.

1. ORGANIZE A PRESENTATION, INVITE YOUR FRIENDS

Chances are you already have a group of friends, associates, or colleagues you could gather together for a multimedia presentation. If you have a group already in mind, select a day of the week and send out invitations, then call each person individually to see if they can come. Or, if you don't belong to a group already, or if you want to branch out and present at the local school, community center, civic group, religious organizations, or coffee house, contact the appropriate people and set something up.

2. PRESENTING IN SCHOOLS

If you are contacting a school, there might be a specific teacher who teaches a relevant class and could invite you to present, or you could organize an assembly or speak to a club. You could also contact the principal or head of the PTA and ask how you can get High Road's issues into the curriculum. If there is a service learning center at your local university, contact them and see if you can present to one of their groups and get their students involved with volunteer work for High Road. If the students are interested in starting a High Road chapter/school club, make sure to check on their policies regarding student group advisors, and see if your contact teacher would be willing to assume the responsibility.

3. PRESENTING IN COMMUNITY CENTERS

If you are contacting a church, civic group, library or coffee shop, call an official or manager and schedule a time to do a screening or a presentation. Many coffee shops are eager to have people hold events at their stores to attract customers, increase sales, and enhance their community presence. As a High Road chapter, meet and make lists of people and organizations that you can invite. Divvy up the list and have people email their contacts. Make a flier and post it around town, after learning about any relevant local government restrictions. Send an email out to the High Road contacts in your area. Get the event on community calendars. If it is a large event (a panel, movie screening, speech or presentation at a larger venue), write a press release and try to get it publicized in the newspaper and on radio programs.

4. WHAT SHOULD YOU PRESENT?

The content of the actual presentation is up to you. You can contact the High Road main office to get a copy of our multimedia presentations on climate change, human trafficking, genocide, and torture and the rule of law. If you want to present, we can send you a script that accompanies the presentation and you can read from it while the images play. You can also screen a relevant film (we can provide you with suggestions and even with DVDs of certain films) or host a panel of experts, activists, and community members to talk about the issue.

5. WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR PRESENTATION

Whatever format you select, make sure you bring sign-up sheets and High Road literature (volunteer forms and pamphlets) so that people can learn about the organization and sign up for specific actions – or simply receive further information from High Road. We try in every way possible to expand our email contact list. Networking is crucial for the success of High Road’s grassroots strategies. Please send all contact information to the High Road Chapter Coordinator.

Remember to emphasize the specific solutions that High Road is proposing, and explain what specific goals your chapter is working on in the next month. Also, make sure to check if you need to bring your own projector, microphone, converter, or whatever else is required for your presentation.

6. PROMOTE HIGH ROAD

Before and after the main portion of the event, have a High Road chapter member introduce the organization and invite people to join the chapter and sign up for grassroots actions. As people walk into the event, have a volunteer hand them a pamphlet and the volunteer card and ask them to sign up. Also, ask people to sign on a High Road sign-up sheet so, even if they haven’t decided to join, they will receive information from High Road. As the event is ending, give everyone time to fill out the cards and tell them to hand them in to a specific person as they leave. At the end of the event, announce the date and time of your next High Road meeting. Invite everyone to attend and let them know what you will be working on. Again, please send all contact information to High Road’s Chapter Coordinator.

7. MAKE IT A FUNDRAISER

If you want to combine this event with fundraising, tell people that they can write checks to either High Road for Human Rights Advocacy Project (non tax deductible) or High Road for Human Rights Education Project (tax deductible). (Checks can be made payable to “HRHR Advocacy Project” or “HRHR Education Project.”) They can also fill out their credit card information on the volunteer cards. Please mail these contributions right away to High Road’s main office so they can be tracked, deposited and distributed between National Headquarters and the Chapter.

8. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Please fill out a Proof of Performance report of each event and send it, along with photos of the event, to the High Road national office. Many of those kinds of materials will be posted on the High Road web site and will be maintained in the national office’s files. Photos are a terrific way to communicate to people what High Road chapters and members are doing all over the country.

EXAMPLE #1 – MULTI-MEDIA PRESENTATIONS

Proof of Performance

Event Name: *Brighton High School Presentations on Genocide*

Event Date: Thursday March 26th, 2009

Event Description: JoAnn Wells, a Language Arts teacher at Brighton High School, invited Executive Director of High Road for Human Rights, Rocky Anderson, to present on the topic of genocide to her classes. JoAnn's classes had been studying the history, prevention, and current political action concerning genocide for the past few weeks and were interested in learning what more they could do to get involved in implementing the necessary policies to put an end to the current genocide in Darfur.

Rocky presented High Road for Human Rights' multi-media presentation on genocide for both of JoAnn's periods (other classes combined with JoAnn's for a total of some 70 students in each period), and concluded the presentation with an opportunity for questions and answers. Dylan Schneider, the Chapter Coordinator of High Road for Human Rights, accompanied Rocky and collected over 80 signatures from students interested in becoming volunteers/members of High Road for Human Rights, as well as making contacts with a few students who were interested in starting a High Road for Human Rights Club at Brighton High School. JoAnn Wells offered to be the faculty advisor for the High Road for Human Rights Club at Brighton High School, and we have plans to begin working and organizing High Road's first high school chapter in April 2009.

Dylan and Rocky also asked JoAnn to assign a writing exercise to her classes that asks the students to respond to the presentation by answering the following questions: "What did you learn? How were you impacted? How do you feel that this presentation has influenced you to act or to get involved in a different capacity in the future? How could this presentation have been improved?" The students were asked to complete the assignment over the course of week, and were able to use different forms of creative expression to create the end product. By allowing students to choose their own form of personal expression, we hope to end up with a multitude of responses expressed through poetry, prose, essays, raps, rhymes, visual art, and other means, some of which we can display on the High Road for Human Rights website illustrating the inspiration and impact High Road is able to offer young students. The varying forms in which the responses are formatted aim to show that human rights is an important issue to people of all interests, backgrounds, and ages.

VIII. Fundraising

Many people think fundraising is terrifying, but it is actually not that bad, especially if it is organized in conjunction with an education event. You can also fundraise by calling people who have signed up for High Road in your area, inviting them to your chapter meetings, and asking if they would be willing to donate. Just always keep in mind: ***Fundraising is essential to getting the important work done.*** Some people are contributing their time and efforts every day to this work. Others are asked to contribute money, or volunteer some grassroots efforts, to get the job done.

1. HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

Whenever possible, combine your fundraising with the educational events listed above. People are more likely to contribute if they have a clear idea of what the organization does and feel like they are an important part of it. If you decide to go this route, make time during your event for a person to speak briefly about the importance of contributing to High Road, and explain to people that they can write checks, fill out credit card forms, or go online (but stress the first two, since most people will not donate once they leave). It is best to set out a table at the entrance to your event, and have volunteers sign people in, pass out literature, and ask people if they are interested in donating. A bowl with a sign “Donations” is a good way to communicate the “ask”. Doing all of this is a good way to accomplish everything at once.

2. HIT THE PAVEMENT!

If you are going door to door for a campaign (say, gathering signatures to get your city to ban coal-fired power plants), then you can also combine that with asking for donations. Let people know that High Road’s Education Project is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means donations are tax deductible, while the Advocacy Project is a 501(c)(4) organization, which means donations are not tax deductible and will support the lobbying efforts of the organization.

3. MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS

You can also fundraise as people join your chapter. Simply give a recommended donation for people who are signing up. They are not obligated to contribute money to become a High Road member, but they should understand how crucial financial support is to the organization.

4. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US!

Please fill out of Proof of Performance report of each event and send, along with photos of the event, to the High Road national office.

EXAMPLE #1: FUNDRAISING

Proof of Performance

Event Name: *New Yorker Fundraiser for High Road for Human Rights*

Event Date: Wednesday March 25th, 2009

Event Description: The National Headquarters of High Road for Human Rights hosted a fundraiser at the New Yorker Restaurant with a suggested donation of \$100 per guest. Gastronomy, the property owner, donated the café area of the restaurant along with an appetizer and dessert buffet. We encouraged guests to mingle, eat, converse, sign up themselves or their guests as High Road members/volunteers, talk to High Road volunteers about the organization as well as the current projects and goals, and enjoy themselves.

The attendees were those who had responded to a mass mailing sent to every High Road member in Utah. High Road for Human Rights netted close to \$2,000 at the actual event and is still receiving donations from those who were unable to attend. Approximately ten new members/volunteers were recruited. We are presently implementing or exploring many new ideas, issues, and possible actions that were brainstormed at the fundraiser.

The fundraiser encouraged further conversation about the mission of High Road, and generated a dialogue that raised awareness about the issues that High Road is tackling, as well as the solutions to these issues that we can and must take on a personal and political level. The more knowledge people have about High Road, the quicker they come to recognize its unique agenda of critical importance: creating and maintaining a nation-wide grassroots network that provides a unified voice for advocacy and democracy.