

Bird-dogging: A Tactic That Gets Candidates Talking

bird-dog (bûrd'-dôg), v. To follow, monitor and/or seek out a subject of interest, such as a public official, with persistent attention to get answers to questions or influence the subject

WHAT IS BIRD-DOGGING?

It has nothing to do with animals and everything to do with grassroots power! To bird-dog is to observe, follow, monitor and/or seek out public officials with persistent attention. It's an effective tactic that activists use to get public officials and politicians to talk publicly about the issues activists care about. Basically, you show up at the candidates' events repeatedly, ask them to commit to the specific policy you are advocating, and ask them questions they may have avoided or don't want to answer in order to get them on the record and to educate those present about your issue.

The logistics of attending a political event and bird-dogging a politician takes a little bit of thought. However, once you practice a bit, it quickly becomes easy.

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PROVEN SUCCESS STORIES

SOA Watch activists have effectively used a strategy of bird-dogging to acquire statements of support from candidates and elected officials regarding their position on closing and/or investigating the SOA/ WHINSEC.

Activists have bird-dogged officials ranging from candidates for the President of the United States, U.S. Senators and House Representatives, as well as state and local officials. In the case of presidential candidates, the SOA/ WHINSEC issue has been covered by the national media when candidates have made statements of support (or opposition) to closing the school in venues such as the Iowa Caucuses on the campaign trail.



Members of the House of Representatives have been targets of SOA Watch bird-doggers in their home districts and in Washington DC

as activists press them for a public statement on their position. Getting a politician on the record is a valuable educational tool for your community to be aware of where they stand on a particular issue.

You too can generate a positive success story! Use the tips and tools in this packet to put together an effective bird-dogging strategy in your community or beyond and share your stories with the SOA Watch DC office. We may feature your story on our website as part of our education campaign!

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SOA Watch is a non-partisan organization that does not make candidate or party endorsements. The purpose of providing this information is not to tell voters whom to support or oppose, but to inform the public, educate the candidates, and shift the terms of debate.