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Elevate

Campaign Training
for People with Disabilities

The National Council on Independent Living presents –
Introduction to Campaigns

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Guest Speaker: Rebecca Lamorte

Growing up in a politically active family on Long Island, Rebecca learned early on how deliberate, bold action can change people's lives for the better. After a subway accident left her partially disabled, she saw an intimate portrait of how New York can work better for all communities, and was inspired to grow her involvement in efforts to make New York City a place where everyone can thrive.

In 2013 Rebecca was pushed on the New York City subway, resulting in lifelong mobility impairment and a degenerative pain syndrome in her left leg. The accident changed Rebecca's life and made her want to fight not just for herself, but all disabled and vulnerable New Yorkers ignored and purposefully left out of planning and policy conversations. In 2021, Rebecca ran for New York City Council in Manhattan's on a platform rooted in disability, economic, housing, and racial justice. She placed third in a competitive 7-person primary election and through her campaign elevated disability justice to become a citywide issue for all Mayoral and Council candidates.



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Setting Up the Campaign



Secretary of State/Commonwealth website has state and local rules for running

- How many signatures you need to get on the ballot
- Fundraising limits and rules on contributions (varies by state) Paperwork to form a legal campaign entity

Federal Election Commission (FEC) for US Congress & US Senate include your Secretary of State/Commonwealth for supplemental paperwork

Have Plan To Get On The Ballot

- When is the deadline to get on the ballot?
- Who will get your signatures?
- Turn in signatures to get on ballot ahead of deadline!

Source: [Elevate's Campaign 101 - An Intro to Running for Office](#), Presented in 2019 by Neal Carter and Atima Omara

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Setting Up The Campaign: Continued

Open a campaign bank account

Identify a campaign treasurer and a deputy treasurer

Hire a compliance firm

- Campaign finance experts who understand the constant changes to campaign finance and law you do not want an ethics complaint, extensive fines or jail time

If you are on Social Security or Medicaid: talk to a local certified benefits planner. According to the Social Security Administration, this [may result in a reduction or loss of benefits](#). However, you may be able to use a trial work period to campaign.

- Find a local certified benefits planner through your [local center for independent living](#)

Source: [Elevate's Campaign 101 - An Intro to Running for Office](#), Presented in 2019 by Neal Carter and Atima Omara

Preparing Family, Friends, Work

Set Expectations with Family & Friends

- Assess hours a day that you need to be focused on the campaign
- If you are a family caregiver or parent, have you worked out roles with family while campaigning?
- Have you spoken to immediate family members about what a campaign will mean to their lives?
- Assess your attendant care needs and how they could change based on a long campaign schedule

Employment & Finances

- Have you figured out how you'll navigate your job (if you work full time)?
- If you own a business, have you figured out how to put it on hold?

Source: [Elevate's Campaign 101 - An Intro to Running for Office](#), Presented in 2019 by Neal Carter and Atima Omara

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Presenter: Allen Nesbitt

Allen Nesbitt is the founder and CEO of Nesbitt & Parrinello, Inc. Allen advises labor campaigns, climate causes, their allies, and senior government officials globally on risks in volatile public campaign environments. From the fight for better health care that is more affordable to the fight to save our planet, Allen's teams have won some of the most meaningful campaigns of our day. Allen has advised the only Indian American in the 113th Congress; the first openly gay U.S. Representative from New York; the first openly gay mayor of Lexington, Kentucky; the first Black U.S. Representative from Nevada; and the first Black U.S. Senate nominee in Florida history.



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Elevate

Campaign Training

for People with Disabilities

The National Council on Independent Living presents –

Introduction to Opposition & Self Research for Candidate Campaigns

Presented by: Allen Nesbitt (he/him)

Founder and CEO, Nesbitt and Parrinello, Inc

What is research?

Research is the complete public profile of a candidate, yourself or your opponents, crafted in a manner that supports political communications.



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Dispelling Myths: Opposition Research is Not...

Digging up “dirt”

- Opposition research deals with facts and we do not use shovels.
- We deal as much with positive messages as not.

Looking in the trash

- Opposition research involves matters of public record, not matters of waste management.

Physically tracking a target

- Opposition researchers are not private investigators.



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Why Opposition Research

- The public's right to know. 'Democracy is dependent on a collective understanding of facts as a public good.'
- Effective communications requires complete information.
- Your opponent will research you.



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Elements of Opposition Research

1. Financial
2. Statements
3. Professional
4. Political



Investigating Financial Records

Land records & tax liens

- Always check land records in person
- County Clerk, Recorder or land records office
- Assessor's office
- Ask how to complete a "federal and state tax lien search"

Legal Records

- Local & state courts
- PACER federal court database
- Special courts: tax and bankruptcy courts
- Traffic courts
- Police reports

Financial Disclosure Records

- State offices file with Secretary of State, campaign finance office or state ethics office
- Local candidates may file with local clerk or state officials
- Freedom of Information Act



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Investigating Public Statements

News clips

- Lexisnexis
- NewsLibrary
- Internet
- Ask local librarians/reference for “clip files” or hanging files

Statements with legislative bodies

- Lexisnexis
- State legislative library/archive
- State archives
- Local legislatures vary, county and city clerks may require FOIA
- Internet

Old campaign material

- Lexisnexis
- State legislative library
- State archives
- Clip files or hanging files
- Internet



Investigating Professional Records

Regulatory and licensing records

- Medical licensing board
- State bar
- Other authority like contractors' license, business license or professional board

Board and commission records

- Votes, transcripts, minutes and agenda item detail
- Check with the Board
- Freedom of Information Act request is often required

Corporate records

- Securities Exchange Commission for public companies
- State Secretary of State where company is headquartered
- Dunn & Bradstreet (\$)
- Check in court records & databases
- Better Business Bureau

Legal Career (attorneys)

- Check in court records & databases
- Search court database by attorney of record where possible
- State bar



Investigating Political Records

Key votes & sponsorships

- Congressional Quarterly (Local Library/State legislative library)
- Washington Post votes database.
- Thomas (Library of Congress)

Advocacy group scores/key votes

- Individual Groups (Planned Parenthood, Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, Right to Life, Chamber or Commerce)
- Congressional Report Cards . org by Voter Information Systems (www.vis.org/)

Executive actions

- Office Press releases & statements
- Freedom of Information Act

Office budgets and spending

- Freedom of Information Act or Web site for the clerk of the body.
- Official budget documents for executive offices (mayor, governor, county exec)

Salary, travel, perks

- Freedom of Information Act or website for the clerk of the body



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Research In Your Campaign



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Research and the Message Cycle

1. Candidate research
2. Polling
 - Polling is fact checked
3. Message development
 - Message is fact checked
4. Paid and earned communications
 - Communications is fact checked

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Example of Candidate Research

“Congressional Pay and the Minimum Wage” Highlights:

- According to The Sun-Sentinel, Diaz-Balart has supported 5 Congressional pay increases, 2 of which he sponsored. These votes account for a total pay raise of \$32,600 between 1999 and 2008 from \$136,000 to \$169,300. [Sun-Sentinel; House Vote 261 and 327]
- In 2004, Diaz-Balart opposed a 2.2% pay increase that was included in the FY 2004 Transportation and Treasury Appropriations bill [House Vote 489]
- In 2007, Diaz-Balart flip-flopped on legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$7.25. At first he voted to raise the minimum wage, but then when another bill coupled the minimum wage with the \$124.3 billion Iraq emergency supplemental funding measure in HR 1591 he voted against it. [House Vote 18, 186, 265]
- In 2007, Diaz-Balart voted four times with GOP to strip prevailing wage requirements from federal spending bills. [House Vote 807, 712, 488, 133]



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Example of Fact Checking

Claims

Audio: After 26 years, Springfield will have a new District Attorney

Visual: B roll of Springfield Courthouse

Supporting Facts

Suggested cites: Springfield Public Media, 10/15/2018

Springfield DA retiring after 26 years, Flanders and Simpson compete to replace him. In October 2018, Springfield Public Media reported that “Voters in Springfield County will soon choose a new district attorney.” Springfield County District Attorney Mr. Burns is retiring after 26 years in office, and Republican Ned Flanders and Democrat Bart Simpson are competing to replace him. [Springfield Public Media, 10/15/2018]



Research Tips for First-time Candidates

1. Conduct a court, legal, and land records searches of yourself and your immediate family in any county where you have owned property.
2. Make your tax returns ready for release.
3. Prepare your online profiles and email breaches for public scrutiny.
 - a. <https://leak-lookup.com/search>
 - b. <https://haveibeenpwned.com/>

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Thank You

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