



Petitioning Pointers

- 1. Pick your audience.** What official or agency do you want to address your petition to and who will be most influenced by its presentation?
- 2. Clearly state your purpose.** At the top of your petition should be a short but powerful statement about the problem you are addressing, what you are proposing to do about it and your reasons for taking action. It should not be more than a few sentences so people will be more likely to read it and easily understand your position.
- 3. Look official.** Print the petition on professional-looking paper that identifies your group, including your address and phone number so that supporters who return completed petitions can get in contact with you for more information.
- 4. Provide space for names and more names.** Provide blank lines after the statement where people can sign their names, addresses, and/or organization or group affiliation. You also may want to consider space for e-mails or phone numbers so you can contact new supporters of your cause in the future for recruitment efforts.
- 5. Circulate, motivate, activate.** Your petition must be visible, accessible and appealing to get the signatures you need. Strategize how you can get the petition out to the most people—door-to-door solicitations, tabling in a public place, standing on a street corner, etc. Have plenty of copies, pens and papers ready at all times.
- 6. Devise a follow-up plan to share your success.** Set a deadline for signature collection and decide what you are going to do with all the petitions once they are collected. **BE SURE TO USE YOUR RESULTS!** You won't score any points with your position if you don't let others know what you've got in your hand. Some super follow-up ideas are:
 - 7. Write a news release** announcing your results.
 - 8. Hold a press conference** and invite the public official to attend so you can publicly deliver your petitions and make a public appeal for action.

You can also create action pledge cards. Though it requires a little more effort, sending off multiple copies of signed pledge cards from individuals can also deliver a strong message that you mean business. Pledge cards can send a simple and serious message stating a person supports an issue and promises to do something if action is not taken by the person being addressed. Presented in a powerful way, stacks or bags full of several hundred pledge cards can potentially be much more impressive than five or six pieces of paper with signatures.