Town Hall Meetings
A New Model for Conducting Effective Exchanges with Constituents

First Report: Online Town Hall Meetings

A report by:
David Lazer
The Harvard Kennedy School and Northeastern University;
Michael Neblo
The Ohio State University;
Kevin Esterling
University of California-Riverside;
Kathy Goldschmidt
Congressional Management Foundation

www.cmfweb.org
The Madisonian Feedback Cycle

Constituents provide input into current public policy issues

Legislators explain their decisions to their constituents and try to generate support for them

Using constituent input and their own knowledge and judgment, legislators deliberate among themselves and make decisions about law and public policy
AmericaSpeaks’ mission is to reinvigorate American democracy by engaging citizens in the public decisions that most impact their lives.

Purpose of Today’s Session

- Provide Congressional offices with simple principles and additional tools to better engage constituents
- Consider the use of more deliberative formats for engaging constituents
- Learn about how national deliberations could add value to the nation’s policy making process
So, what is a Town Meeting…

The New England Town Meeting
Modern Campaign Town Meetings

A New Image of the Town Meeting?
Town Meeting for the 21st Century

Agenda

- Who is participating in the webinar?
- Challenges to Engaging Constituents
- Strategies for More Effectively Engaging Constituents
- Q & A
Who’s in on the Webinar?

Past Forums

Through the chat room, answer these two questions:

- Briefly describe the best forum or town hall your office has organized
- Briefly describe the most challenging forum or town hall your office has organized
Strategies for More Effectively Engaging Constituents

Goals for Engagement
- Inform constituents about issues
- Solicit input and feedback from constituents about priorities
- Identify areas of common ground
- Strengthen relationships and trust
Engagement Strategies

- Use a professional third-party moderator
- Seat participants in small groups
- Introduce ground rules/norms of behavior
- Make time for participant dialogue beginning with values
- Identify collective priorities
- Encourage diverse groups to participate

Strategy: Use a Professional Third-Party Moderator
Strategy: Seat Participants in Small Groups

Strategy: Introduce Ground Rules / Norms of Behavior

- Listen Respectfully
- One at a time
- Keep comments brief
- No Personal Attacks
- Turn off cell phones
Strategy: Participant Dialogue that Begins with Common Values

Strategy: Identify Collective Priorities
Strategy: Encourage diverse groups to participate

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Questions?

Thank You!