

Tips and Tools for Organizing to Pass Civil Liberties Resolutions

These pages describe how community members in hundreds of communities around the country planned and implemented successful resolution efforts and provide a list of the documents and tools they used, which can be accessed at www.bordc.org/Tools.htm. We invite you to use these steps and documents and adapt them to your needs.

If you are working on a resolution in your community, please contact us via email at info@bordc.org, or by phone at 413-582-0110.



Initial Planning:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Initial Meeting:</p> <p>Invite a group of people in your community that might be interested in defending civil liberties to an initial meeting. This can be a small or large group of people, formed as a subcommittee of a larger organization, a new group, or a coalition.</p> <p>Next, create a strategy that will help you accomplish your goals of educating your community, building an activist base, passing a resolution, and ultimately working with other people in different cities and towns that have passed resolutions to amend or repeal the unconstitutional provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act and other antiterrorism legislation that threatens civil liberties. The most effective tactics we've seen to accomplish these goals consist of building a coalition of diverse groups and elected officials, circulating a petition, hosting a forum/educational event, and lobbying elected officials.</p>	<p>Press release and flyer announcing first meeting</p>
<p>Networking and Outreach with Other Organizations:</p> <p>After the first meeting, members of the group can agree to call other local organizations and people that might be interested in helping organize locally against antiterrorism legislation that threatens civil liberties. Members can split up local contacts and let people in other organizations know about the next coalition meeting. Your local ACLU chapter will likely be interested and might have a mailing list that they will be willing to share.</p>	
<p>Community Outreach and Fundraising:</p> <p>Set dates for a forum and next meeting to plan the forum, then send out an invitation letter to individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and ACLU members in your community. The letter can ask people to endorse the forum and to make a donation to cover expenses such as copying and postage. Benefits of this effort include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some endorsers will join the committee; • An endorser list creates a network to which you can distribute a petition and public forum poster, and for rallying community members to speak in favor of the resolution at the City Council meeting; • A list of endorsers from the community on you poster and program will give your effort credibility and show that it has broad support and appeal. 	<p>Invitation letter (HTML or Word document)</p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</p>

Public Forum and Community Education:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Committees:</p> <p>In preparation for the public forum, consider forming subcommittees.</p>	<p><u>List of possible subcommittees</u> with descriptions of their responsibilities</p>
<p>City Government Contacts, Program Participation:</p> <p>Contact and meet with sympathetic elected officials and the Police Chief about your group's concerns and plans. Ask one of the elected officials to sponsor the resolution. Involve these people in your forum. Invite City/Town/County Councilors and the Police Chief to participate in the forum as panelists.</p>	<p>Flyer, "<u>Police Opposition to Local Law Enforcement of Immigration Laws (As Allowed by the USAPA)</u>"</p> <p><u>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</u></p> <p><u>Conservatives Against the Patriot Act</u></p>
<p>Other Program Participants:</p> <p>The Program Committee can choose other participants to cover topics of the new laws and their impact on civil liberties, immigrants, and students.</p>	<p><u>Poster and Program Sample Topics</u></p> <p><u>Sample Forum Questions</u></p>
<p>Spreading Effort to Nearby Towns:</p> <p>Contact people in surrounding towns about your effort, and invite them to the forum. They might be inspired to organize in their towns.</p>	<p><u>Local Efforts</u></p>
<p>Promoting the Forum:</p> <p>To promote the forum, send a press release to media, put up posters, and use your local activist network to spread the word. Send the release and poster to endorsers. You can also create a website.</p>	<p><u>Press release</u></p> <p><u>Links to local groups' websites</u></p>
<p>Showing Community Support for a Resolution Through Petition Drive:</p> <p>Write a petition, which you may introduce and circulate at the forum.</p>	<p><u>Printable Petition</u></p>
<p>Distributing Educational Materials:</p> <p>At tables at the forum, place fact sheets, literature and articles, petitions, buttons for sale (see our catalogue of merchandise at www.bordc.org/catalogue.htm), and collection cans.</p>	<p><u>Links</u></p> <p><u>Articles about this Movement</u></p>
<p>Postcard Campaign:</p> <p>As part of your lobbying effort, consider a postcard campaign. At your forum, you can have a table with pre-printed postcards to legislators and stamps. Attendees can write their return address on the cards and sign them. If you can, provide the stamps.</p>	<p>Sample 2-sided postcard (<u>Word doc</u>)</p>
<p>Videotaping the Event:</p> <p>Consider videotaping your forum. Your community access station will likely air it. If you decide to videotape the event, be sure to inform participants in advance.</p>	

Public Forum and Community Education (continued)

Continuing to Educate and Gather Support:

After the forum, continue petitioning:

Table (with literature), put petitions in stores and offices (including those of your endorsers), give committee members and forum attendees petitions to circulate, and place an online petition and a printable petition on our web site. The process is useful not only for gaining signatures to demonstrate support for the resolution, but for educating people who are not aware of the USA PATRIOT Act and other antiterrorism that threatens civil liberties.

Online petitions: [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

[Printable petition](#)

The Resolution:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Draft Resolution:</p> <p>Meet with your resolution sponsor to draft a resolution. The Mayor, Police Chief, and other Council members should review the draft in ongoing negotiations to create a document everyone can support.</p>	<p><u>NEW: Sample Resolution</u></p> <p><u>NEW: Library of Sample Clauses</u></p> <p><u>NEW: Guide to Writing an Effective Resolution</u></p>
<p>Lobbying Efforts:</p> <p>Make sure each Councilor is contacted by a committee member.</p> <p>Send postcards, emails, and press releases asking community members to call their Councilors and urge them to attend the Council meeting when the resolution will be voted on and to speak in favor of the resolution in the "public comment" period. (Don't overlook high school and college students as speakers!) Make previous arrangements with potential speakers to offer the perspectives of diverse community members.</p> <p>Be prepared for opposition from your U.S. Attorney's office.</p>	<p>Sample <u>postcard</u> for lobbying City Councilors; same content can also be sent as an email via local listserves.</p> <p>Sample <u>press release</u> prior to meeting.</p> <p><u>Conservatives opposed to Patriot Act and related legislation</u></p> <p><u>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</u></p> <p><u>Sample speech made to local governing body (PDF)</u> Source: Acton, MA BORDC</p> <p><u>Tools for debating the DOJ and U.S. Attorneys</u></p>
<p>Demonstration of Community Support:</p> <p>Gather all the completed petitions. At the Council meeting, deliver the signed petitions. It's effective if you have a significant number of signatures.</p>	<p><u>Printable petition</u></p> <p><u>Sample Signature Ad (PDF)</u> Source: Acton, MA BORDC</p>

The Resolution (continued)

PR:

After your council's vote, send out a press release to local and national media outlets.

[Final press release](#)

Follow Up and Ongoing Outreach:

Chronology	Tools
<p>Press Release and Emails:</p> <p>Continue to spread the word about your resolution effort so that news of your success will spread to surrounding communities.</p>	<p><u>Final press release</u></p>
<p>Follow up on resolution</p> <p>Make sure final resolution document is sent to all parties specified in the resolution and that all the "Therefore" of your petition are implemented, including reporting components, which requires a mechanism in place to receive and disseminate the reported information. You can form a statewide coalition by networking with elected leaders and community members of other cities and towns in the state that have passed resolutions. As a coalition, visit all members of state's congressional delegation, and lobby them for what you want.</p>	<p>Follow up Checklist (<u>PDF</u> or <u>MS Word</u>)</p>
<p>Continue organizing efforts</p> <p>It's great that you've organized a successful resolution campaign and that you're working on following up on the implementation of your effort.</p> <p>Now it's important to continue your outreach and educational efforts.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing Outreach Suggestions</u></p>
<p>It's Up to You!</p> <p>The groundwork has been laid, and we encourage people to borrow any documents from this web site that you find helpful. Help us make this web site a clearinghouse of information on Bill of Rights defense efforts nationwide. Contact us about efforts you are working on, or others that you know about.</p>	<p><u>www.bordc.org</u></p>