



DR. JAMES VELTMEYER, CHAIRMAN

TIPS FOR PETITION GATHERING

- ★ **Be Unflinchingly Polite**, no matter what kind of individuals you run into.
- ★ **Carry Multiple Clipboards** – While one person is signing, you can get others to sign. You will also need separate petitions for any people from a different county. Experienced petition gathers may carry 6 or more clipboards!
- ★ **Other Supplies to Have** – You also want to bring a notebook, lots of pens, some light literature (we have a flyer in the download section of the website), and some voter registration forms.
- ★ **Keep It Simple** – Have one or two very fast “stopper” lines – lines you can use to get people to stop. For example: “Hi! Sign a petition to recall Gavin Newsom?”
- ★ **30 Second Rule** – Once a person stops you have about 30 seconds to make your pitch. You show her (or him) the petition while you give an extremely brief presentation. You give your practiced pitch, and then hold a pen out to them, at about chest level, inviting them to take the pen.
- ★ **Affirmation** – Once he (or she) takes the pen, you say something confirming, like “Terrific!” or “Great!” Then ask if they are registered to vote – if the answer is “No,” then you say, “Well, that’s OK, I can register you to vote right now.” You register them, then get their signature on the petition.
- ★ **Clear Instructions** – This is important. When they are ready to sign, you need to give them clear instructions on what to do – you’d be shocked at how many signatures are lost if the petitioner doesn’t do this. For example: “First sign here, then carefully print your name above your signature just like you are registered to vote. Then put your residence address over here, and your city and zip code on the line underneath that. Spell out the words – don’t abbreviate.” Then, while they are signing, you solicit other people to sign.
- ★ **Verify** – When the person is done signing, they’ll typically want to give you the petition and pen and be on their way. Take only the clipboard, and leave them with the pen for the moment. Check to make sure they signed correctly – you’ll be quite surprised to see how many people screw up. For example, they forget to put their address, or forget to print their name. When this happens, say something like, “Hmmm... looks like you forgot your address.” Then have them write it in.
- ★ **Thank Them** – Once you’ve verified the sig, take the pen back and politely thank them.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Don't be distressed when you get a lot of refusals. These things tend to run in streaks. You'll probably get a whole bunch of signatures in a row pretty soon. On the other hand, if you regularly feel like you could be doing much better, try some practice with the petition coordinator or another petitioner. Maybe your wording or your technique could be improved.

You should be prepared to briefly answer common questions – do some role playing and practicing before you actually go out petitioning.

On the back of each clipboard, have a more detailed explanation that curious people can read. (We have provided one in our download section.)

Don't get caught up in long conversations or arguments. You need to get 100 or 200 sigs a day in a normal petition campaign. You just don't have time to spend like that. If he (or she) wants to argue, or ask questions forever, you show him the back of the clipboard and say, "Well, this explains the recall process much better than I can." Then you leave him there with a pen attached to the clipboard, in case he actually decides to sign.

For enthusiastic people, ask them if they'd like to help gather signatures or make a donation. If so, take their contact information, and give them a flyer with the campaigns' contact information. **DO NOT TAKE CASH CONTRIBUTIONS.**

Try to find spots where is a lot of foot traffic. Going door-to-door is way too slow!

Be aware of the laws in California and your county. In most of California, one can petition outside stores as long as you don't block traffic, you are not harassing people, etc.

Excerpted from a post by Jim Lindsay, a professional petitioner, who also managed a petition campaign.