



The Warren Way

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What is the key to winning an election when you are running for office? Some say integrity. Others say ingenuity. But the most important ingredient to winning any campaign is name recognition - and the challenge to any candidate has always been to find a way to let the masses know who he/she is. Only when the voters know your name can you convince them that you are the right person for the job. But how do you do that? Quite simply – do it the Warren Way.

So what is the Warren Way? To find out we must look back to California in 1934. On the ballot that year were four initiatives that would revamp the state's law enforcement and criminal justice systems. Every one of these proposed constitutional amendments were sponsored by the Alameda County District Attorney – a DA who felt strongly that the most important way to fight crime in California was to alter the way in which judges were selected and retained, and by giving more power to the state's Attorney General. All four of these amendments were adopted by the voters and the campaign associated with their passage greatly enhanced the reputation and statewide name recognition of this simple county district attorney.

Once he had strengthened the powers of the Attorney General's office through the initiatives that he had sponsored, he decided in 1938 to run for AG - and won. From there he became Governor in 1942 and in 1953 became the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court – his name was Earl Warren. Now I am not saying that Justice Warren sponsored those initiatives solely for political gain – but it certainly didn't hurt.

So that is the Warren Way – using a statewide initiative to increase a candidate's name recognition as well as show the voters a clear example of what the candidate believes in.

The Warren Way is not isolated to 1934 or to California. It has been the *modus operandi* for years in political campaigns. Numerous examples abound at all levels of government. Richard Lamm, before running for governor of Colorado in 1974, gained prominence for sponsoring an initiative to stop the Olympics from coming to Denver. Governor Pete Wilson of California used the initiative process extensively to gain support for reforms he couldn't get through the state legislature and used it as the 800 pound gorilla to get his way on certain crime and education issues that the legislature refused to address. Ron Unz used his campaign on ending bilingual education as a way to increase his name ID before running for statewide office in California. He has since taken this issue to numerous other states. In Oregon, Bill Sizemore has been an initiative machine – ginning out issue after issue that would appeal to conservative voters and increase his statewide name recognition. This notoriety helped him when he chose to run for governor. He may have lost the election but his foray into initiatives caused the Governor to complain that Sizemore had become more powerful than him.

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In Washington State a gentleman by the name of Tim Eyman has used the initiative process numerous times to pass reforms strongly desired by the voters. Although all of his efforts have eventually been struck down by the state courts on technicalities, his efforts have made him a household name and have set the stage for HIS entrance into the political arena if he were to choose.

This last presidential election was no exception to the Warren Way. Senator John McCain supported initiatives in California and Michigan on school choice, and initiatives in Oregon and Colorado on gun control to prove his support for those issues.

But the Warren Way is not just confined to using the initiative process or to supporting specific initiatives that are on the ballot – it also includes support OF the process. George W. Bush (TX), George Pataki (NY), Tom Ridge (PA) and Jesse Ventura (MN) all campaigned in support of the I&R process when running for governor and won. This support undoubtedly helped them with the voters since voters overwhelmingly support the I&R process – however, unfortunately it seems as though each of these individuals have forgotten their campaign rhetoric and have done nothing to further the cause – but regardless, the issue helped with the voters.

So there you have it – the Warren Way. It may be simple but it has proven itself time and again as a tool to help candidates gain name recognition and reach future constituents. So consultants beware, don't overlook the Warren Way as a primary tool in helping your candidates get elected.