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HOW TO SET UP A STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT CARD

Why Do a State Legislative Report Card:

A state legislative report card is an excellent tool to educate NAACP members and the general public on how their state legislators voted on issues of concern to the State Conference and local NAACP Branches. It helps us keep our elected officials accountable, and our membership in touch with what is going on.

What's In a State Legislative Report Card:

The State legislative agenda should consider the national legislative agenda/Report Card. It should also reflect the NAACP's mandate to secure the enhancement and protection of civil rights for all Americans.

A Legislative Report Card is an important tool used by the media, advocacy groups, Legislators themselves and of course state citizens wishing to be informed on their state representatives civil rights voting record.

What are the Steps for Assembling a State Legislative Report Card:

1. Branches should submit to the State Conference Political Action Committee suggestions on what legislative issues they want to advocate during the state legislative session. Branches should consider issues that they both want to advocate For and Against.
2. A review of the issues introduced in the previous state legislature can be helpful and important in deciding which issues to address or to redress. In many instances, a piece of legislation can take more than one session to pass into law, particularly budget issues. There are many legislative concerns, which must be revisited frequently.

Familiarize yourself with how your state legislature works and how legislation becomes law in your state. Identify a reliable source to stay informed as to what issues are before both bodies of the state legislature and when the legislatures are in session. Sources can be:

- . newspaper
- . the internet
- . the clerk for the state legislature
- . members of the state legislature

How Do You Relay Issues to State Legislators

1. Send letters and visit members of the state legislature with written documentation identifying and explaining what legislative issues the State Conference and Branches will endorse or oppose and why. Include bill number, title and original co-sponsor as often as possible.
2. Inform them that at the end of the legislative session, a report card will be issued on how they voted on issues of concern to the NAACP. Further, let the legislators know that a percentage and grade will be assigned based on their voting pattern.
3. On issues of special importance to the NAACP, you may want to send an individual letter on a particular vote that is upcoming which clearly states the NAACP's position. For example, if a weakening amendment will be voted on, a letter should be sent to the legislators advocating that the NAACP is in favor or against the weakening amendment. The letter should inform the member that their vote will be relayed to NAACP members and other interested parties. Always have the letter signed by the State Conference President and/or the Political Action Chair.
4. It is always a nice gesture to send a thank you letter to members when they vote in favor of an issue that the NAACP is advocating.

Set-Up Items

1. Identify members of the state legislature and their party affiliation: A list can be obtained from the state capitol in the office of the clerk or secretary and with members themselves.
- 2 List the title and number of all bills: Every piece of legislation introduced on the floor or in committee will have a title, bill number, and original sponsor assigned to it. This is very helpful for tracking and identification.

3. Create a listing of each bill with the NAACP's position:
List the title of the bill and number with a brief narrative describing what the bill does, along with the NAACP's position in endorsing or opposing the legislation.
4. List how each member voted with a score:
Use symbols such as: ▽ or ▲ to denote if a legislator voted in favor of or against the NAACP's position. Tally up the score and give a percentage of how many times the member voted in favor of the NAACP's position. For example, if there were ten issues on the report card, and a member supported the NAACP position every time, he or she will receive 100%. If he or she supported the NAACP 5 out of 10 times, then he or she will receive a score of 50%.
5. Grading Scale based on a percentage:
Once the percentage is totaled you may want to apply a grade which can range from "A" to "F", depending on the percentage earned. For example, 90% to 100% will be a grade of A, 89% to 80% will be a grade of B, 79% to 70% will equal a grade of C, and so on.
6. Key:
Be sure to include a key telling people what the symbols mean (i.e., a "▽" means the legislator did not support the NAACP position). If you distinguish between party affiliation, you should also let people know.

Releasing a Report Card

A report card should be issued in a timely fashion, such as at the half way point or just after the end of a legislative session. The easiest way to ensure that your report card is timely is to keep a running tally during the legislative session. *Before a report card is released, approval by the State Conference President, or Political Action Chair is necessary.*

Schedule an event around the release of the state report card to showcase the work of the NAACP.

- press conference
- a luncheon
- public forum, etc.

For an example of the NAACP Legislative Report Card,
see the next page

CLOTURE VOTE on the confirmation of President Bush's nominee to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, Mr. Miguel Estrada. The vote was held on March 18, 2003. The motion to invoke cloture (and this end or limit debate) failed by a margin of 55 yeas to 45 nays, (three-fifths of the total Senate, or 60 Senators, must vote yea for cloture to be invoked.)

THE NAACP WAS OPPOSED TO INVOKING CLOTURE AND WANTED A "NAY" VOTE.

ALABAMA

Shelby ▽
Sessions ▽

ALASKA

Stevens ▽
Murkowski, L. ▽

ARIZONA

McCain ▽
Kyl ▽

ARKANSAS

Pryor ▲
Lincoln ▲

CALIFORNIA

Feinstein ▲
Boxer ▲

COLORADO

Campbell ▽
Allard ▽

CONNECTICUT

Dodd ▲
Lieberman ▲

DELAWARE

Carper ▲
Biden ▲

FLORIDA

Graham, Bob ▲
Nelson, Bill ▽

GEORGIA

Miller ▽
Chambliss ▽

HAWAII

Inouye ▲
Akaka ▲

IDAHO

Craig ▽
Crapo ▽

ILLINOIS

Durbin ▲
Fitzgerald ▽

INDIANA

Lugar ▽
Bayh ▲

IOWA

Grassley ▽
Harkin ▲

KANSAS

Brownback ▽
Roberts ▽

KENTUCKY

McConnell ▽
Bunning ▽

LOUISIANA

Breaux ▽
Landrieu ▲

MAINE

Snowe ▽
Collins ▽

MARYLAND

Sarbanes ▽
Mikulski ▽

MASSACHUSETTS

Kennedy ▲
Wicker, J. ▲

MICHIGAN

Conrad, Carl ▲
Stabenow ▲

MINNESOTA

Coleman ▽
Dayton ▲

MISSISSIPPI

Cochran ▽
Lott ▽

MISSOURI

Bond ▽
Talent ▽

MONTANA

Baucus ▲
Burns ▽

NEBRASKA

Nelson, Ben ▽
Hagel ▽

NEVADA

Reid, Harry ▲
Ensign ▽

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sununu ▽
Gregg ▽

NEW JERSEY

Corzine ▲
Lautenberg ▲

NEW MEXICO

Domenici ▽
Bingaman ▲

NEW YORK

Clinton ▲
Schumer ▲

NORTH CAROLINA

Wasserscheidt ▲
Cochran, J. ▲

NORTH DAKOTA

Conrad ▲
Burgum ▲

OHIO

DeWine ▽
Voinovich ▽

OKLAHOMA

Nickles ▽
Inhofe ▽

OREGON

Wyden ▲
Smith, Gordon ▽

PENNSYLVANIA

Specter ▽
Santorum ▽

RHODE ISLAND

Reed, Jack ▲
Chafee, Lincoln ▽

SOUTH CAROLINA

Graham, Lindsey ▽
Hollings ▲

SOUTH DAKOTA

Daschle ▲
Johnson ▲

TENNESSEE

Alexander ▽
Frist ▽

TEXAS

Cornyn ▽
Hutchison ▽

UTAH

Hatch ▽
Bennett ▽

VERMONT

Leahy ▲
Jeffords (I) ▲

VIRGINIA

Warner ▽
Allen ▽

WASHINGTON

Cantwell ▲
Murray ▲

WEST VIRGINIA

Byrd ▲
Rockefeller ▲

WISCONSIN

Kohl ▲
Feingold ▲

WYOMING

Thomas ▽
Enzi ▽

VOTE KEY

▽ = voted against
NAACP position

▲ = voted in support
of NAACP position

(I) = Independent

*Republican Senators
are in Italics*