

WAR ROOM

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

To: HRC

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Einstein said, "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds."

So, I turned on the TV last night, and there you were telling a radio audience the Dole factoid that I had unearthed. Someday, I'll tell my great-grandchildren that I was a writer for the POTUS and FLOTUS in the great health care debate. But first, we have to win. So, here are my suggestions for fine tuning the War Room:

1. There is little understanding of legislative process, especially among the junior members. The guy I found the Dole quote for did not know what a vote to recommit was! Too few have seen how conflicting bills (not a treaty) merge to become one law.
2. There is a limited understanding of the state by state nature of the vote. Targeted states should be assigned to individuals to overlay the groups. They need a rolodex of friends in each state to call for fact-checking and resource help.
3. There is extremely limited knowledge of health care reform information resources. As the only hybrid health policy wonk/politico in the room, I know you are weak in this area. How can they do the strongest talking points if no one there knows that community rating is an old idea whose time has returned?
4. The Editorial Board Issue. This is an area which needs professional help, fast. These people spend a lot of time scheduling cabinet secretaries with Editorial Boards. This may work in a multi-faceted campaign, BUT any editor who has done his/her homework for the past three years doesn't want to talk to the Secretary of Energy about health care. The editor knows more than the Secretary.

Furthermore, the media markets are being selected by size, not by any likelihood of impacting the congressional debate. For example, the Dallas Morning News is courted rather than the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. The likelihood of generating an unfavorable editorial in

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the Dallas Morning News is not even considered.

You have, I believe, a million letters sorted by state with thousands vetted for release. You need a small market approach, quietly but aggressively getting those people who wrote to you to write or contact their news directors and editors. Small newspapers may also accept canned pieces (although the National Society of Newspaper Ethics code forbids this). My sources say give them local news stories, a John Cox for every town.

5. You need a seasoned volunteer manager who actually supervises the interns and gets the highest and best work out of them. The interns return home with tales of their experiences. Too many are unimpressed. Because I consider this a critical area, where loose lips can really sink ships, I have taken the liberty of finding a recruit for this job. Carolyn White attended college with me. She worked for Robert and Ted Kennedy on Capitol Hill, and she supervised Ted Kennedy's office staff. Tim Chorba also knows her. She is home with kids, available September 1, and willing to do the job. Her number is (301) 530-9349. I do not wish to put in writing why I think this is necessary, but I will elaborate if asked.
6. You need to be prepared for the Stealth Tactics of the Religious Right. For example, the Texas Christian Coalition is connected to the National Policy Forum which IS the Republican Party. I could not make the persons in the War Room working on the bus trip understand the connection between the religious right and the Republican Party. They seemed to think that non-partisan meant the Republicans would not get involved. I told them people in Fort Worth were getting letters from Republicans, and there was going to be trouble, but they discounted my warnings. Even after your experience in Seattle, it was hard to get them to believe it was orchestrated terrorism. Or, that by putting cabinet officers on the bus, we now had a responsibility to protect the well-meaning organizers from their naivete.
7. Last but not least, you need to come to the War Room now and then to inspire the troops. It is important that they understand that this is not just a political game, a notch for their guns. REAL PEOPLE WILL DIE IF WE FAIL and the country will go broke. A revolution needs leaders for whom this is their passion, and while you have workers for whom winning is everything, I didn't meet anyone for whom universal health care is their holy grail.

Imagine the civil rights movement with no blacks in it. You have a War Room full of white people in perfect

health. It just doesn't create the same sense of urgency that John Cox feels. They need a Gipper to win one for, a poster child. They need to feel the pain to sense the grass roots urgency.

I hope these thoughts are helpful. I have some annual leave left and can return next month, if you wish. Mike will come also, if you need him. As we say in Texas politics - We are with you, Money, Marbles and Chalk.