

POLICY ADVOCACY IN THE TAR HEEL STATE: FRAMING THE MESSAGE IN A NEW DECADE

Overview



- Who we are
- The morning of November 3
- The two parties
- Grassroots politics
- The issues
- Framing
- Next Steps



Who are you people?



AND, what have you
done?

November 3rd 2010

- North Carolinians wake up to a new political landscape
 - ▣ Republicans control the NC House and Senate for the first time in over a century
 - ▣ There are now 15 new members in the Senate (11 Republicans), out of 50 total members
 - ▣ There are now 27 new members in the House, out of a total of 120

So What!?!

- Little happened for this issue with Democrats in control, what if anything will be truly different in 2011?

North Carolina Republican Party Platform

- Ten articles
- Justice, Education, Economy, Family and Individual Liberty are especially relevant to preventing underage drinking.

North Carolina Democratic Party Platform

- 20 detailed articles, including education, family, justice and the economy

Activity: Who am I?

- Is the following statement from the Republican or Democratic platform?

Throw out Assumptions, they don't help

- Unless we know something for a fact we should only use additional information to investigate further, not to make assumptions or rule things out

Lesson

- The two parties want the world to believe they are polar opposites of each other, otherwise how could they convince voters not to vote for “the other guy.”
- The reality is that while the means are often different the ends are, more often than not, the same.
- BUT, as with any cultural competency, you must understand your audience and how to frame your message to achieve your ends through their means.



Grassroots Politics

The Representation Concept

- We are a Republic meaning our government makes laws or rules based on the decisions of those we elect.
- Once the election is over it doesn't matter what party your representative is, they represent you, not just the people who voted for them. **Don't ever forget that.**

Representation cont/

- You are the boss
- Don't confuse methods with goals:
 - ▣ You don't make allies just to make allies you make them to achieve something
 - ▣ don't be soft: unconditional applies to children, not politicians
- 10 calls=staff meeting

The Ava Rule

- Don't make a public spectacle of your personal politics.
- You have every right to believe what you believe, vote for whom and what you wish.
- Just don't alienate your issue because of it.
- Remember, you are not a Republican or Democrat, you are a constituent. Act like one.

The Beautiful thing...

- About this issue is that nearly everyone agrees it shouldn't be happening. People just have different levels of passion and ideas on how to stop it.
- It's your job to communicate why this problem is so important and to educate your representatives about the possible solutions

Identifying Self Interest

- Find out what makes your Representative and Senator tick
 - ▣ Go to their website, gather information
 - ▣ Schedule an exploratory “get to know you” meeting. Tell them who you are, what you care about and why.
 - ▣ But most of all listen. If you can figure out why they ran and what they are there to do or change it will help you and your issue.

So what are the issues?



- Alcohol Control
- Malt Beverage Tax Increase



Alcohol Control

Alcohol Beverage Control

- An effective state alcohol control system limits the physical and social damage caused by the misuse of alcohol and reduces the costs borne by citizens that result from abusive alcohol consumption.
- Control over alcohol sales provides the means to limit the availability of alcohol beverages in ways that can reduce consumption and other problem behaviors.

Alcohol Beverage Control in North Carolina

- A state/county system:
 - ▣ The state Alcohol Beverage Control Commission purchases the spirits from distributors
 - ▣ Counties then sell the spirits locally distributing revenue back to the state and local community based on state law (GS. 18b)
 - ▣ **Seven percent of revenue generated at the local level is mandated to go towards alcohol prevention and education**

Control and Outlet Density

- In the six States surrounding and including North Carolina, three of which are control states and three of which are license states **Control states average 7 outlets** per 100k residents whereas **License States average 44 outlets** per 100k residents. **That is over 6 times as many outlets (per capita) in license states as are in control states!**
- **North Carolina has 6 outlets per 100k people and Kentucky has 105.** And higher outlet density (more outlets per 100k) is correlated with violence, crime, homicide, underage drinking traffic crashes and other such unhealthy and socially disruptive behaviors.

Control and State Revenue

- In the six States surrounding and including North Carolina, 3 of which are control states and 3 of which are license states, ***control states average \$140,000 per 100k citizens in state liquor revenue compared to an average of only \$52,000 per 100k citizens in state liquor revenue for license states.***
- That equates to control states like North Carolina making nearly 3 times as much state revenue from liquor sales.

Control and Alcohol Consumption

- **North Carolina ranks 48th per capita in consumption per gallon and 6th in revenue per gallon.**
- **South Carolina (a privatized state) by comparison, ranks 30th in consumption per gallon and 26th in revenue per gallon.**

Overall



- Control states consume **14% less spirits and 7% less alcohol per person aged 15 and older** while bringing in more than three times as much state revenue per gallon of alcohol sold as spirits.

What Privatization Proponents Say

- Alcohol control in North Carolina is antiquated and falling apart:
 - ▣ New Hanover: The ABC Board Chairman was making more than the Governor and his son was making almost as much
 - ▣ Mecklenburg: The Board staff was taken out to a lavish dinner by alcohol representatives
- Through the sale of alcohol outlet permits/licenses the state could generate significant revenue.
- Control is bad, private competition is good and drives innovation

The Other Side of The Story

- Although the current system may have flaws the value of control is undeniable. Science supports improving the current system, not privatization.
- While the sale of off premise permits would generate revenue, that revenue would largely be one time, while alcohol control generates three times more revenue on average than private sales.
- Government is often our last line of defense and in the case of alcohol the public good, not profit, should be our motivating force.
 - ▣ Control = support for the public good
 - ▣ Private alcohol sales = motivated by profit



Malt Beverage Tax

Recent Meta-Analysis

- **Review of 73 peer reviewed scientific journal articles; the analysis found that:**

- **Higher alcohol prices or taxes were consistently related to:**
 - Fewer motor vehicle crashes and deaths,
 - Less alcohol-impaired driving,
 - Lower levels of underage drinking, and
 - Lower rates of violent crime, including homicide, assault, robbery, and rape.
 - The review found that **raising the price of alcoholic beverages by 10 percent would reduce consumption by about 7 percent.**

(AJPM, February 2010)

Why Beer?

- **Beer is commonly consumed in a destructive fashion:**
 - ▣ 60% of all beer is consumed in amounts of five or more drinks per day (Rogers, 1999).
 - ▣ Beer is the drink of choice in most cases of heavy drinking, binge drinking, drunk driving and underage drinking (Rogers, 1999).
 - ▣ Beer is the drink most commonly consumed by people stopped for alcohol-impaired driving or involved in alcohol-related crashes (NHII, 2003).
 - ▣ Beer is the underage drink of choice (Wechsler, 2000).

Malt Beverage Tax

- Simple formula: As price increases consumption decreases
- Revenue generator: potential prevention/treatment funding source
- Effects two populations the most: alcohol dependent and underage drinkers

Beer Tax in North Carolina

- Last raised significantly in 1969
- The value today represents an erosion of over 80% in real dollar value
- Once again our state faces record budget shortfalls and program cuts to critical mental health and SA services, Medicaid, public works etc.

What the Beer Industry Says

- North Carolina is the 4th highest taxed state in the country
- The malt beverage tax will hurt micro breweries
- Increases in the tax will lead to job losses
- The beer tax is a regressive tax placing an unfair burden on the poor
- The tax was increased by more than 15% in 2009

The Other Side of The Story

- Fourth!! Fourth!! RELATIVE TO WHAT?!?
 - Wyoming: 2 cents
 - Wisconsin: 6 cents
 - Colorado: 8 cents
- No it won't. Micro breweries sell higher end beers and beer is taxed based on quantity (per gallon) not price. The brands taxed the most per dollar are cheap beers consumed primarily by underage and alcohol dependent individuals.

The Other Side of The Story, Continued

- Nope. A dollar not spent on alcohol goes to... bread, milk, coffee, mortgage, cars, etc.
- Regressive? Technically, sure. But the impact is very limited unless a person consumes mass quantities of beer.
- Fifteen percent OF WHAT?! Less than a penny per can. Leaving how much on the table?

Communicating the same Issues to Different People

You're still you, but who are they?

Framing the Message

- Once you know:
 - ▣ what they care about and why
 - ▣ what the Republican and Democratic Party platforms are
 - ▣ What your issues are
 - ▣ **how will you communicate your message?**

Framing Activity 1: The Substance

- Frame it: Lets match substantive issues to planks in the platforms
 - Hint: think self interest

Framing: Know your Audience

- Bumper stickers: we all use 'em, but do we use the right ones with the right people?
- If someone is running for office and they have a speech in the morning at the VFW and in the afternoon at RTP do they deliver the same speech at both? No! And the reverse has to be true as well.
- If an advocate has a meeting with a family values Republican in the morning and a “Chapel Hill liberal” in the afternoon do they say the same exact things? No!

Framing Activity 2: Wording and Presentation

- Based on what you know about your district and representative give me
 1. a one sentence description of those values
 2. choose one of the two issues and give me one talking point in a style that works for your district

Now What?

- Set up a meeting between now and the holidays
- Set up a follow up policy briefing before the long session begins in late January
- Blitz the press: Create a popular perception that people really care about your solutions
- Blitz your Representative and Senator: organize letter writing and phone bank meetings