

★ STEP THREE: PASSING PASS A STUDENT RESOLUTION

**“Many of life’s failures
are people who did not realize
how close they were to success
when they gave up.”**

— THOMAS A. EDISON

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Note: If for any reason it looks like the resolution does not have enough support to pass, it’s better to not bring it up for a vote than to have it voted down. You may be able to have your sponsor withdraw the resolution and bring it up another time, if you think you will be able to gather the needed support in the near future. If it is voted down, you can try to persuade those who voted against or abstained to change their minds and then bring it up again, but this is less likely to succeed.

A. CONTINUE RECRUITMENT AND EDUCATION

See Parts B, C, and D in Step One.

B. CONSOLIDATE SUPPORT FOR THE RESOLUTION

Follow the resolution through the legislative process. Go to meetings to voice your support for the resolution and address questions or concerns. Remain in communication with your representative(s) in student government as well as your own sponsors and supporters. If you encounter a difficulty, regroup with everyone to brainstorm a solution.

As the resolution heads to the final vote:

- Continue to gather and consolidate support from the potential allies. Tell them of the upcoming vote and request that they send emails to their representatives and turn out for the vote. Just like your meetings, you want to know who will be there in advance.
- Continue to collect letters of support from faculty members and coalition partners that you can present and share with sponsor(s) and opposition.
- Continue to gather petitions and present them at the meeting.

- Make sure your supporters are aware that the resolution is coming to a vote. Try to ensure your sponsor(s) will be present at the meeting.
- Write a letter to the editor for the student paper to be published before the meeting.

C. INVITE THE MEDIA

I. DETERMINE YOUR MESSAGE AND ITS FRAMING

“Catchy” is the name of the game. The media should be aware of the issue and the resolution well before the vote. By the time you are calling media asking them to cover the vote, ideally they would have:

- 1) Met you in person or spoken on the phone with you about your efforts.
- 2) Covered an event you organized or published opinion editorials or letters to the editor by campaign supporters.

If you want the resolution vote to make it into the media, you’re going to need eye-catching visuals and a clear, compelling message.

If you’ve already done everything outlined in the preceding pages, you can structure your message around these key points:

- Students are concerned about *Citizens United* and corporate personhood.
- You have done a lot so far to push for a student government resolution.
- This is part of a national effort to pass a constitutional amendment (latest facts at www.DemocracysForPeople.org).

2. PREPARE HANDOUTS, POSTERS, AND BANNERS

Make some banners; they are an easy and effective way to have a strong and clear visual.

Bring handouts and posters; see the APPENDIX for samples. Try to gauge how many people will attend so you’ll know how many handouts to bring. Remember, it’s better to have too many than too few.

3. INVITE THE MEDIA

Write a media advisory and send it to your school newspaper’s news desk, photo desk, and any local media outlets at least a week before the vote. Follow up with a phone call at least two days before, and on the day of the vote to remind them. Here’s a sample advisory:

Media Advisory

To: School Newspaper Editors

From: Name of Organization

Contact: Your Name, Cell Phone and Email (list a second person if possible)

Event: Student Council to Vote on Resolution to Overturn *Citizens United* and Restore Democracy

Where: (Location of vote/event)

When: (Day, date, and time)

What: (Name of organization) will celebrate the passage of a student government resolution that calls for a constitutional amendment to overturn the dangerous *Citizens United* decision and declares that constitutional rights are for people, and our elections are not for sale.



Here are some resources for how to plan such an event and get media coverage for it:

- Planning a Meeting or Event: http://www.resolutionsweek.org/?page_id=334
- Working With the Media Guide: <http://www.citizen.org/documents/Media-Working-with-the-Media.pdf>

4. PREPARE YOUR TEAM

Determine who your spokespeople will be and ensure they not only have rehearsed their main points, but they are familiar with all of the campaign's details. Make sure their message is clear and concise. Practice pivoting from a distracting question from a reporter to your main message you want to appear in the paper.

For example:

Reporter: "What does this have to do with the drinking age?"

You: "That's a great question. We're really here to talk about the corporate corruption in our political system and the need for a constitutional amendment to fix the problem."

Know the reporters who are coming and approach them with copies of the resolution.

D. PASS A STUDENT RESOLUTION

- If possible, speak during the resolution's presentation, or talk during a "public comment" period. If appropriate, prepare slides to accompany your presentation.
- Bring copies of a fact sheet on why this issue is important (Make your own or use these: <http://democracyisforpeople.org/factsheets-polls>) to distribute to the elected representatives themselves or those attending.
- Bring letters from supporters, big stacks of signed petitions, photos from well-attended events or actions, posters, buttons, and stickers.
- Have your supporters wear the same color or have some other symbol to create a stronger visual so the members of the student council know that all of you are there in support of your resolution.

If the Resolution Passes:

- Thank the student government and your representative.
- Thank your sponsors and supporters.
- Host a party to celebrate. It helps to put one person in charge of the after party, so that others can focus on making sure the resolution gets passed and people and the media attend the vote.
- Contact us so we can share your victory with others!

