

HOW TO HANDLE THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

For canvassers and candidates!

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HOW TO REDIRECT THE CONVERSATION

Voters are hit with so much disinformation that they often open a conversation from a conservative perspective. Don't try to prove them wrong. **Engage them in a conversation from our point of view.** Even if they don't engage, you will plant a seed that could lead to a change of heart later on!

We do this by making a **strong empathy-based value statement**: something that expresses what we believe to be right and wrong.

Make a space for that statement. Deflect their claim with something like, "Hmm, I don't think I have ever heard that." Redirect with something like, "All I know is..." then add your statement.

Before you follow up with a supporting fact, **wait a moment and listen**. Give them space to agree with you or ask a question about what you just said.

Here are some samples of values-based statements. Speak for yourself or insert your candidate's name.

IMMIGRATION

"Immigrants have always been essential to our culture and our economy. Americans come from everywhere. That's what makes us great."

"Most of us are descended from immigrants, people who took the initiative to find a better life for their families. They're just the latest round of us."

"Immigrants are a godsend to towns that have been losing population. They make it possible for local

economies to grow so they can hire a lot more people, both immigrants and native-born people."

INFLATION

"We need to bring down the cost of living and increase wages."

"We're dealing with out-of-control corporate greed. Huge corporations are colluding to hike prices and suppress wages."

"The Biden-Harris administration is standing up to corporations and cracking down on price gouging and wage suppression, but Republicans in Congress and corporate judges are fighting them all the way."

ECONOMIC FAIRNESS

"Democrats believe in economic fairness. There has always been this deal in America: You work hard, and they pay you enough to support your family on. That's the deal, and Democrats are making corporations hold up their end of the deal."

"When we talk about an opportunity economy, we don't just mean having a chance to compete. We mean creating enough opportunity for everyone to have a decent life. We need to build a middle class with room enough for everybody."

"We all know that trickle-down Reaganomics is a total failure. Harris and Walz understand that, if you want to build a healthy, stable and fair economy, you have to increase the wages of working people."

"Workers create the profits, but they're not getting to keep their fair share. That's why we need unions. Workers should be able to negotiate as equals."

"Corporations and the rich have benefitted the most from government resources (like infrastructure, education, technology and medical research,) all of which are paid for by the American people. The least they can do is pay their fair share."

Follow up:

“Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are fighting like hell for you right now, against the mega-corporations that are squeezing the life out of all of us. They are fighting wide-scale wage suppression – the non-compete agreements that stop millions of people from switching to better paying jobs. They’re suing massive corporate landlords for colluding to raise your rent. They’re stopping the predatory investors that outcompete families who are just trying to buy a home to live in. They’re cracking down on price fixing by the food and drug monopolies who are putting family farms and local pharmacies out of business. And they’re doing everything they can to support your right to organize and negotiate for better wages.”

HOUSING

“Everyone should be able to afford a home for themselves and their family.”

“We need to increase the supply of homes, but we also have to stop market speculators from buying up all the houses and stop corporate landlords from colluding to hike rents.”

“Houses are for people to live in and build wealth for the next generations, not for banks to gamble on. They crashed the housing market in 2008. Now they want to turn us all into renters and keep all the benefits for themselves.”

Follow up:

“When the housing market crashed in 2008, Kamala Harris was Attorney General of California. She fought big banks that committed mortgage fraud and got billions of dollars in compensation for homeowners.”

CRIME

“Everybody deserves to be free to walk through their neighborhood and feel safe, to not have to live in fear of crime or gun violence.”

“If we want safe communities, we have to rebuild trust between the police and the people they serve. The best way to prevent crime is to make sure that people know they will get

“Democrats are serious about making our communities safe, and that means investing in crime prevention, which is exactly what they have been doing. That’s why violent crime has dropped to its lowest levels since 1969.”

"I am not saying it's Trump's fault (by which I mean, it was Trump's fault) that crime spiked during the pandemic, but now it's coming down to even lower than it was before."

Follow-up:

If they disagree, just say, "let's look it up" and then show them this from CNN: [New FBI statistics show continued drop in US crime in first six months of 2024.](#)

[Here's the actual FBI press release.](#)

Or this from the White House: [Statement from President Joe Biden on Historic Declines in Crime in 2024](#) "According to the FBI, in the first half of 2024, the homicide rate continued to fall at record speed, declining by 22.7%, while the violent crime rate fell by 10.3% to its lowest level since 1969."

THE BORDER

“It’s time to stop playing politics and get serious about our security, and that means modernizing our immigration system. The bipartisan bill would have helped a lot.”

“We all want a border that is secure and orderly, but it can’t just be sealed. It actually has to work. We need to let trade and tourism flow AND stop the drugs, terrorists and traffickers.”

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Public funds are for public schools, because we have an obligation to educate *every* child.”

“Education is how our kids learn the options that are available to them in life, and get prepared to succeed in whichever path they choose.”

“Everyone should be able to get the education or training they need to live a successful and fulfilling life.”

(Re “CRT” or attacks on transgender kids.) “No child should ever be told that there’s something wrong with them because of who they are.”

“People come from everywhere, but public school is what makes us all Americans. It’s where we learn common American values like cooperation, respect, equality, and responsibility. It’s where we learn the truth about our shared history – good and bad.”

ABORTION

“Physical liberty is our first and most fundamental freedom.” (They may not have heard the term before, but it will make them think. Follow with:)

“To be free, you have to have the right to control your own body according to your own beliefs. Women do not have that freedom without access to reproductive health care.”

“This is supposed to be a free country. We don’t use other people’s bodies against their will.”

CLIMATE

“We have to stop the weather from becoming even more dangerous than it already is, and make this world safe for all of us, and for our children and our grandchildren. That’s why we need to convert to unlimited clean energy as fast as humanly possible and stabilize our climate.”

“This isn’t about the ‘planet.’ The planet will be fine without us! This is about people and what we need.”

“If we expect to keep living on this planet, we need to keep it in that Goldilocks zone. You know, not too hot, not too cold.”

“We know that the conversion to unlimited clean energy will create jobs and reduce energy costs. But *even if it didn’t*, even if it *cost every penny we had*, we’d still have to do it. Our lives depend on this very delicate balance of conditions. We have to do whatever it takes to protect that.”

“We can do this. We’re already doing it! We just need to keep pushing forward.”

VOTING AND DEMOCRACY

“If you can’t vote, you aren’t free.”

“To be free, you have to have an equal say in who represents you in making the decisions that impact your life. That’s why we fight for your right to vote and to have your vote counted.”

“Suppressing the votes of eligible voters hurts more than just those whose votes were suppressed. When the election results do not accurately express the will of all the people, it violates the freedom of the whole community. It robs people of their right to self-government, their right to be represented by the person preferred by the majority of the people.”

UKRAINE AND NATO

“The people of Ukraine are fighting for their freedom and their democracy, against an invasion by Russia whose citizens have neither.”

“The Ukrainian people are fighting Russian aggression so that we don’t have to. Making sure they win is a great investment in our national security. Plus, it’s the right thing to do.”

“NATO is the number one thing preventing our enemies from attacking Europe and America. It is an agreement among countries that if you attack one of us, you attack all of us and it has only been used once. When we were attacked on 9-11, every other country fought beside us. What would it say about us if we did not honor that agreement?”

ISRAEL AND GAZA

“The people of both Israel and Gaza have the right to be safe and the right to political self-determination. The hard part is figuring out how to make that happen.”

“It is the *leaders* of both Israel and Gaza who are keeping this going for their own political reasons.”

“The suffering is horrific. Even the people of Israel believe that it is time for a cease fire, and nobody is doing more than the Biden-Harris administration to make that happen.”

Learn more at:

[How to Handle the Tough Questions](#)

And on specific topics at:

[The Reframing America Archives](#)