



MEMORANDUM

TO: REPUBLICAN HOUSE MEMBERS
FROM: TOM EMMER
DATE: MARCH 14, 2020
RE: CAMPAIGNING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

The coronavirus is presenting a unique challenge for congressional campaigns nationwide. As President Trump and our leading health experts are fighting to defeat this virus, every campaign must exercise increased sensitivity on what is politically appropriate.

The Democrats are shamelessly politicizing this pandemic and it has gone largely unchecked by the cable news talking heads. The DCCC is running paid attack ads against Republican incumbents tying the cost of the non-existent coronavirus vaccine to their partisan prescription drug pricing bill. Individual campaigns are fundraising off the pandemic. Joe Biden is delivering speeches making the case that this deadly virus is why he needs to be elected president.

While Republicans should expect to be far more scrutinized in the press than the Democrats have been during this global pandemic, it is important to continue with your political campaigns as you deem appropriate. Below are some topline best practices to keep in mind.

FUNDRAISING – Elections will still take place in November and you must keep up on fundraising. However, you should not fundraise off coronavirus directly as the Democrats have done. Be sensitive that your donors may have suffered financial losses during this pandemic. While large gathering fundraisers may be impractical or illegal depending on your location, you can still sit down and make fundraising calls and touch base with donors asking how they are and how they are handling this crisis. At some point if things continue to escalate, large gathering fundraisers, email solicitations and mail solicitations may need to be paused.

PUBLIC EVENTS – In some localities, large public gatherings are now illegal. Consider proactively pulling field teams and having them make phone calls instead. Limit grassroots events and switch to events like tele-town halls, which are a great way to reach a large number of constituents and keep them apprised of the work you and Congress are doing. Call constituents and donors and check in with them individually. You can also call donors instead of hosting in-person fundraisers.

COMMUNICATIONS – At times like this you need to ask yourself if your press release or snarky comment are in poor taste. If you share information on the coronavirus, do it from trusted sources like the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Health and Human Services. Do not spread misinformation from politicized news stories.

Be aware of the backdrop from which you are running your campaign. This is a global epidemic and people are fearful. You must remain sensitive to this while continuing to move your campaign closer to victory in November. Do not get complacent. Use common sense, but put the health of yourself, your campaign staff and volunteers, and constituents at the forefront of every decision.

Do not let up and remember that we are here to provide individual guidance to you and your campaigns.