Pre-election Party Toolkit

Event Goal:
To inform and engage voters in meaningful discussion about candidates – how they align with CARE’s mission to save lives, overcome poverty, and achieve social justice.
Why This Party is Important

2018 is going to be a big year. We can’t stay on the sidelines of this mid-term election. It’s on all of us to educate ourselves and our communities about the candidates and where they stand on global poverty issues. We need to be leaders in our communities, fostering important conversations. And we can have some fun too.

—RACHAEL LEMAN, Executive Director of CARE Action

Thank you again for all you’re doing to help CARE deliver lasting change. We want to make hosting your pre-election party as easy as possible, from beginning to end. That’s why we’ve prepared this event guide, including a to-do list that will take you through every step of the way to a fun and impactful event.

This party is an opportunity to engage friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors. Hosting or attending a pre-election party is an opportunity to take concrete actions to educate yourself and your community on the importance of electing leaders in Washington who are champions for women and girls around the world.

CARE is seen as a credible voice on Capitol Hill because our policy positions are grounded in our 70+ years of experience in the field. Now we need to take our message, backed with this tremendous expertise, to the campaign trail, to make sure that voters are informed and that candidates know that voters are paying attention.

Educating ourselves before Election Day is both our duty and a way to honor our foremothers who fought to give us the right to vote!

—JESSICA STEED, CARE Action Advocate
Guest List:

It is important to invite a diverse group of people with different viewpoints, backgrounds, and political beliefs. Anyone and everyone can and should get involved in the conversation regarding global poverty issues. This could include your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. You can also encourage everyone to bring a friend – you’ll engage more people and maybe make some new friends in the process.

Event Ideas:

There are lots of ways to make this party as fun as it is informative. You can host:

- Debate Watch Party
- Brunch
- Potluck
- Wine & cheese party
- Drinks & appetizers
- Happy hour

Sending Invitations:

Any event offline needs to be online too. If you’re hosting a pre-election party, create a Facebook event page (or the online tool of your choice) and invite all your friends. Then share the event via Facebook, Twitter, and email.

There are online tools to help you create customizable event invitations. Invitations are more effective if they are personalized for each guest.

See the next page for a sample invitation.
Hi [GUEST NAME]–

I’m an advocate for CARE, a leading humanitarian organization working around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice. I’m hosting a pre-election brunch to have an open and positive conversation about the candidates running for [SENATE/HOUSE]. The best way to make a positive impact on ending poverty is by working within our community to raise awareness and take action. We want our candidates to know that global poverty issues matter to their constituents.

This party is an opportunity for us to network and to educate ourselves on the importance of electing leaders in Washington who are champions for women and girls around the world.

Will you join us?

**[EVENT NAME]** CARE Pre-Election Brunch

**[EVENT DATE]** Saturday, September 8

**[EVENT TIME]** 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**[EVENT LOCATION]** Kellen’s House, 123 Main Street, Anytown, NY

RSVP by **[DATE]** on the Facebook event page and feel free to bring a friend! [LINK].

I hope to see you there!

**[YOUR NAME]**
Social Media To-Do List

Before the Party:

1. Tag three friends to join you by sharing the event on Facebook Messenger or posting on the event page.

2. Send reminders! If you’re organizing an event, send reminders a week before, and a day before the event by sharing the event. You can send reminders via email, Facebook, and within the Paperless Post and Evite sites.

During the Party:

Post and tweet photos from the party. Remember to tag @CareActionNow and all advocates who participated in the event. (e.g. "Watching the debate with @A @B @C! @CareActionNow #voteifyoucare" [+ clear, non-blurry photo from the event])

Photos: Make sure to get a group photo during your event. Be mindful of good lighting, and what’s in the background. Take multiple photos. Post a clear group photo, tag advocates. If you are holding signs in the photos, make sure they are appropriate (If in doubt, leave it out). Do not post 3+ similar photos -- variety is the spice of life! And remember to smile!

After the party:

Give other advocates a shout out online for showing up. (e.g. Thanks @A @B and @C for coming to/hosting the pre-election party! @CareActionNow #voteifyoucare [+ photos from the party]) Giving shout outs on social is a great way to bridge offline and online interactions, and really important to retain advocates who showed up for the first time. This is easy to do on Twitter but it would require you to become friends with them on Facebook. Friend your fellow advocates on Facebook and follow them on Twitter.

For people who show up without an RSVP, make sure you get their email (and social media handles) before they leave the event and invite them to upcoming events via email or social media.

Follow up with people who RSVP’d but did not show. Make sure to invite them to the next event.
Assigning and Doing the Research

Just because you’re the host, doesn’t mean you should do all the work. In fact, the best way to get everyone involved and personally invested is to invite other guests to take the lead on researching the candidates and presenting what they learn to the rest of the group at the party. Think about who would tackle this opportunity with enthusiasm. Which of your friends are avid newsies or politicos? Or who is really conscientious? Ask these special guests to join you in making this an interactive discussion. Decide who will research which candidates, and share this tool kit with them so they know how to get started. On party day, you’ll invite them to share with the group what they learned, and help lead the discussion about the candidates and issues at hand. It is important to emphasize that they take an unbiased look and conduct their research with credible sources. They are helping to contribute to a fair, open and honest discussion, and that means they have a responsibility to come to this project with an open mind and a commitment to be thorough and fair.

Research Tips:

1. Start with the basics with these key sites:

2. Search online news sites and set up a Google news alert for the candidate’s name so you stay on top of the latest news.

3. Search political sites like:

4. Review candidate’s campaign site – what issues are they highlighting? What do they focus on in their press releases?

5. If the candidate is an incumbent, search their voting record at Govtrack.us

6. Look into who the candidate’s big donors are at opensecrets.org

Keep track of all of the sources that you use. It is important to be able to cite where your information comes from. Create a simple, clear format to share your findings with other people at the party. You can be ambitious and create a PowerPoint presentation, or simply make notes on the key points. It’s up to you – but make sure to be clear and concise.
Use this checklist to help guide your research.

**What is the candidate’s experience and qualifications?**

Source:

**What are the major issues the candidate is known for?**

Source:

**What issues do they highlight on their campaign site or in their public remarks?**

Source:

**Do they have policy positions on or talk about global issues generally?**

Source:

**Do they have specific positions or a voting record on foreign assistance? Women’s empowerment? Maternal health? Food and nutrition security? Humanitarian crises?**

Source:

**Who has endorsed them?**

Source:

**Who is opposing them?**

Source:

**Who are their major donors?**

Source:

**What is their position in the polls?**

Source:

NOTES:
Leading the Discussion:

Introduce CARE:

Begin your program by giving a brief overview of CARE and why you’re hosting this event. You may want to show this video, CARE: 70 Years of Delivering Lasting Change.

CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. Founded in 1945, CARE has more than seven decades of experience helping people prepare for disasters, providing lifesaving assistance when a crisis hits, and helping communities recover after an emergency has passed. CARE places special focus on women and children, who are often disproportionately affected by disasters. Last year CARE worked in 94 countries and reached more than 80 million people around the world. You can learn more by visiting: www.care.org.

CARE has launched CARE Action to ignite a movement to end global poverty and make positive change happen for those facing injustice.

Important points to highlight:

• This should be an open and positive conversation about the candidates, where everyone feels safe about voicing their opinions and asking their questions.
• Everyone should have the chance to speak and be treated with respect. A healthy debate is good – but let’s keep things respectful!
• Thank the researchers for their work in helping to inform the whole group.

Make sure to have some questions prepared that you can pose to keep the discussion going if things hit a lull. Some examples:

• If a candidate doesn’t have a clear position on issues related to global poverty, is there anything about their background or public statements that hint at where they might stand?
• Are there national trends and issues that are having an impact on this race?
• What can we do as a community to help ensure that the candidates know that global poverty issues matter to us?
# Party Countdown Checklist

| 6 Weeks |  ○  | Set a time and date for the party |
|         |  ○  | Pick your theme and format |
|         |  ○  | Create a guest list, a Facebook event webpage, and send invitations |
|         |  ○  | Ask select guests to lead on candidate research |
|         |  ○  | Let your [regional advocacy coordinator](#) know about your plans – they’re here to help! |
| 4 Weeks |  ○  | Request absentee ballot |
|         |  ○  | Check in with your researchers and make sure they have the resources they need |
|         |  ○  | Post on the Facebook event page and encourage guests to share information and breaking news about CARE’s work, the candidates and the election |
| 2 Weeks |  ○  | Make your party shopping list |
|         |  ○  | Ask your researchers what kind of presentation they plan to do and if they need any supplies or equipment |
|         |  ○  | Continue sharing information and news articles with guests |
| 1 Week  |  ○  | Send an event reminder to your guests |
|         |  ○  | confirm that your researchers are prepared to present at the party |
|         |  ○  | Print out [CARE Action issue briefs](#) and materials to share with your guests |
|         |  ○  | Prepare some discussion questions that can help facilitate meaningful dialogue at the party |
### Day of the Party Checklist

#### Before the Party

- Set up a display table with CARE Action materials
- Create a sign-up sheet so that you capture the names, emails and phone numbers of attendees

#### During the Party

- Welcome your guests and provide an overview of CARE and why you are a CARE Action advocate
- Share why you are passionate about the elections and why you want to foster meaningful dialogue on the candidates
- Invite your researchers to present what they have learned and any reflections they have on the candidates they researched
- Lead discussion, ask questions, and act as a mediator
- Take pictures throughout the event and share on social media and tag @CAREActionNow with the hashtag #voteifyoucare. Remember to tag your guests!

#### After the Party

- Keep the discussion going – continue to share information and thoughts about the election and the candidates, and help to foster an ongoing dialogue
- Let your [regional advocacy coordinator](mailto:RegionalAdvocacyCoordinators@care.org) know how things went – we'd love to hear about your party, any lessons learned, and how we can keep working together

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CARE has a team of dedicated Regional Advocacy Coordinators (RACs) who are eager to hear from you. Your RAC can also provide strategic guidance and support throughout the process.

- **West:** Jonathan Young – jonathan.young@care.org
- **Midwest:** Katie Kraft – katie.kraft@care.org
- **Northeast:** Savannah Fox – savannah.fox@care.org
- **Southeast:** Whitney Griggs – whitney.griggs@care.org
- **Texas:** Mimi Lee – mimi.lee@care.org