



At a time when our nation is facing unprecedented division, we remain steadfast in our shared commitment to the safety, dignity, and well-being of our community. As we work to oppose signature gathering for two anti-student initiatives, we remain committed to doing so while upholding the rights of all. We acknowledge that it can be incredibly challenging to stay calm and respectful with an issue so personal and emotional, especially when countering initiatives that we know would hurt students and families across Washington state. Our goal first and foremost is to educate the public on the true impacts of these initiatives and protect the fairness, privacy, and freedom that every student needs to succeed.

Here are some best practices for effectively opposing signature gathering:

**Do:**

1. **Print out educational materials** and share them with people who are considering signing the ballot measure.
2. **Prepare 3 to 5 short talking points** about why it's personally important to you that people **decline to sign** these measures. Remember to keep your points brief, based on facts, and respectfully answer any follow up questions with honesty and candor.
3. **Remember to use "I" statements:** "I think..." "I feel..." "I believe..." when explaining your point of view.
4. **Remember to listen and engage respectfully:** Be prepared to answer questions, ask follow up questions with genuine curiosity, and be prepared to listen intently to understand people's concerns.
5. **Stand a respectful distance away** from the signature gatherers.
6. **Do not engage directly with signature gatherers.** While some gatherers may be volunteers, many of the people you will encounter are paid gatherers who rely on this job for income in a very difficult economy.
7. We're fighting for freedom for kids and families, not against signature gatherers.
8. **Respect people's right to engage in the political process.** Both the signature gatherers and signers of petitions have a First Amendment right to sign their name and express their political viewpoint.
9. **Know and respect the law and our neighbors:** It is illegal to disrupt signature gathering, to destroy signature sheets or any personal property. Just as we want to create safety for youth in our schools, we want all of our neighbors and community members to feel safe to express their political point of view, even if we disagree.
10. If necessary, **de-escalate conflict:** Gauge the level of conflict and take a few deep breaths. If you are emotionally escalated, remove yourself from the situation. If you are feeling emotionally calm, de-escalate others. If you can, remove people from the area. Maintain a safe distance, and avoid directly engaging with the escalated person. Get help from a source of authority.



**Do not:**

1. **Do not shout, scold or judge:** The science is clear, people's minds do not change when they feel afraid. Shouting, scolding, judging, condemning, or being condescending may feel good sometimes - but it has never changed anyone's mind. Just as we would like to be respected and allowed to hold our beliefs, we should respect other people's rights to peacefully participate in the political process.
2. **Don't engage with signature gatherers directly:** We are not going to change signature gatherer's minds, there is not a point in engaging with them directly. Our efforts are best spent educating and answering the questions of our neighbors & community members.