



LETTERS TO SC – a grassroots campaign

Thank you for participating in a truly grassroots effort. I am a South Carolina resident who believes that many South Carolinians are ready to vote for “Anyone But Bush,” and I feel a letter campaign to South Carolina will directly influence voters. My name is Jennifer Gaddy. I am 31, a graphic designer, and a lifelong South Carolina resident and voter.

Directions:

Please read this packet carefully, as it contains information to help you write effective letters to South Carolina voters. The content of your letters is ultimately up to you; I have simply provided background and resources that may make the process easy and effective.

The point of the campaign is simple: write letters to registered voters in South Carolina, introducing them to Howard Dean, his record, and his vision for America. Similar campaigns have been conducted by Dean for America at “Meetups,” but this one is independent of (though inspired by) those.

The steps are also simple:

- 1) **Read this packet before writing your letters.** You will write better letters if you are informed about South Carolina.
- 2) **Obtain enough stationery and postage to complete your letters.** Bear in mind that the South Carolina primary is **Feb. 3**, and the sooner you are able to reach voters, the more likely they are to discuss the letters with others. Each recipient could become a Dean volunteer!
- 3) **A handwritten letter makes a stronger impression than a typed one.** If a handicap prevents you from handwriting letters, perhaps mention that so the recipient does not think they are simply reading a form letter.
- 4) **Mail the letters, and KEEP the names and addresses where you can find them later.** We might repeat this campaign in the fall. When Dean gets the nomination, we can send a second batch of letters, urging people we have already contacted to vote for Dean

in the 2004 election. A personal letter will stand apart from all the usual pre-printed campaign propaganda.

- 5) **If you wish to provide feedback about your letter-writing experience,** you can do so at www.scvolunteersfordean.com.

Thanks for participating! Your contribution will make a difference in South Carolina.

Things to Consider

I have lived in South Carolina all of my life. A wide variety of people live here, with distinct points of view, outlooks on life, and ways of doing things. That said, I feel comfortable bringing some things to your attention that may help you better understand many South Carolinians.

Here is a short list.

- 1) **The majority of South Carolinians are Christians.** Religion plays a strong role in the lives of many residents here, and it is common to hear phrases like “God bless you” or “I’m praying for you” said in total sincerity. There is a high certainty that you are writing a person who believes in a higher power, but refrain from making assumptions beyond that.

- 2) **South Carolinians tend to have an independent spirit.** They don’t like to be told things in concrete terms like “You need to do this” or “You should do that,” except perhaps by a preacher. But they respond to personal overtures, and by and large are polite and will listen to what you have to say, even if they don’t totally agree.

3) **Many South Carolinians have family members in the military.** South Carolina has a number of military bases and military retirees. The Air Force, Marine Corps, Army, Coast Guard, and Air National Guard are all represented here. A strong anti-Iraq-war message may not be well-received, and may sound like Dean wants to cut military jobs or be soft on defense, which is not the case. So please choose your words with care.

4) **Some people that you are writing may not have ever used the Internet and/or may not have access to a computer at home.** While Dean has made enormous progress in the online community, this is not the best audience for that message. List Web sites, but realize that it may not be accessible to some. In 2002, 14.7% of South Carolinians lived below the U.S. poverty level (\$18,500 for a family of 4). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 20% of houses in SC are “manufactured housing” (mostly mobile homes). More than 335,000 SC families live in mobile homes.

5) **Some people you will write to will be poor, elderly, single parents, and some may be barely literate.** While you *cannot assume* any or all of this is true, please don’t aim for the comprehension level of a college senior. Sincere and plain writing will be the most effective.

6) **South Carolinians tend to be conservative** – and this means “morally conservative” and “fiscally conservative.” Fortunately, Dean has strong messages that will hold appeal for both groups.

7) **Political parties.** It is difficult to determine the exact sway each party has in the state. South Carolinians do not register by party and voters are in fact free to vote in whichever primary they choose. For that reason, we are hard to pigeonhole. You can probably estimate South Carolina to be roughly 1/3 Republican, 1/3 Democrat and 1/3 Independent/swing voter/other. Republicans enjoy a lead in many races because of the conservative bent of many voters. However, given the right candidate, any voter can shed their self-appointed label and vote for that candidate.

8) **Above all, try to keep your letters positive.** It is fine to express sympathy for the ongoing loss of jobs in South Carolina, support for the military people serving overseas, and the tough times in general that the country is experiencing. But **please don’t turn your letter into a page-long attack on Bush or the Republicans.** Not everyone you will be writing to is a Democrat! Some people vote across party lines; others are conservative Democrats. Negative attacks tend to turn off SC voters. Remember the Southern saying, “You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.” **Beware also of criticizing other Democratic candidates too harshly** (if at all): there are no guarantees that Dean will be the eventual Democratic nominee, and a turned-off voter may not turn out on Election Day.

What Should I Write?

1) **The Democratic Primary is February 3.** We have NOT had a Democratic Primary for over a decade, and have held caucuses instead. So MANY VOTERS are not even aware that there will be a primary. **This is extremely important to mention in your letter.** Any registered voter can vote in the South Carolina primary, as long as they were registered 30 days prior to the election.

2) **Don’t be afraid to talk about yourself, to say whether you have visited or considered visiting South Carolina, to describe the scenery and climate where you live.** “The weather” is considered standard opening conversation here. People discuss family, weather, and even personal details before they ever discuss politics. You should be careful about giving out contact information, since you do not know the person you are writing.

3) **Issues that will resonate with the majority of South Carolinians, regardless of party:**

- Dean’s fiscal record (conservative), balanced budgets, and creation of rainy-day fund
- His progress with education
- His support of states’ rights in matters like gun control
- His record with domestic violence (SC has a high rate)

- His healthcare plans/successes, and prescription drug plan
- His support of farm families, the working class, and minimum-wage workers

Issues to not stress:

- Dean’s Vermont civil unions bill would not be of interest to most South Carolinians. Homosexuals are not very vocal or visible in rural South Carolina.
- Dean opposed the war in Iraq, but saying this could be misinterpreted unless you go on to explain his full position on the war, reconstruction of Iraq, and homeland security. Dean is not “soft” on security and we don’t want him to be misrepresented.
- Only 4% of South Carolina’s workforce is unionized, but many workers are low-wage. While his union record may not resonate with SC residents, support of the working-class and family farms is welcomed.

4) In your letter or on the envelope, be sure to note that your letter “was produced entirely by volunteer labor and not paid for or endorsed by Howard Dean or the Dean for America campaign.”

Get to Know South Carolina!

South Carolina has 46 counties. It is bordered by North Carolina, Georgia, and the Atlantic Ocean. The leading agricultural products are forestry, poultry, tobacco, cotton, and soybeans. There is a wealth of information here:

<http://www.sciway.net/facts>.

Voting in SC

In order to vote, South Carolina law requires that one register at least 30 days prior to the election.

More info here:

<http://www.state.sc.us/scsec/vr.html>

Residents can download and print a voter registration form here:

<http://www.state.sc.us/scsec/vr/index.html>

2003 phone poll of 400 registered SC voters:

Education cuts. A majority of South Carolinians (52 percent) think proposed [SC] budget cuts will

hurt public education. Only 16 percent said cuts would have no impact and 12 percent said they would help public education. One in five voters said they didn't know how cuts would affect education.

Confederate flag. South Carolinians remain divided over the Confederate flag, the SC Index said. Some 42 percent of voters said they favored the flag flying on the Statehouse grounds; 37 percent were opposed.

Views on the flag remain polarized by party and race. Three in five Democrats and 82 percent of blacks and 18 percent of Republicans oppose the flag on the Statehouse grounds. Just over half of Republicans and 25 percent of Democrats support flying the flag near the Capitol. Only 4 percent of blacks do.

Direction. With the economy on many people's minds, the SC Index found almost half of those asked felt the state was headed in the right direction. One in four said the state had gotten off track. Some 29 percent said they weren't sure.

Sanford’s rating. Gov. Mark Sanford has a 64 percent favorability rating, the SC Index said. Only 8 percent of respondents said they had an unfavorable impression of his job performance; 21 percent were neutral. Interestingly, he got high marks from men and women, but fewer black voters (33 percent) gave him a high rating, compared to 74 percent of white voters.

South Carolina Voter Registration and Turnout

	VAP* TURNOUT	REG %TO/REG	%REG of VAP %TO/VAP
2000P	2,977,000 1,386,331	2,157,006 64%	72.5 46.6%
1998	2,886,000 1,068,367	2,021,763 --	70 37
1996P	2,771,000 1,151,689	1,814,777 41%	65% 41%

*Voting Age Population - all persons over 18 regardless of eligibility