

**THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF VIRGINIA**  
**VOTER PROTECTION COUNCIL**  
**CANVASSING GUIDELINES**



**Is going door-to-door to talk to voters legal?**

**YES. The Supreme Court has repeatedly reaffirmed the right of individuals to go door-to-door for political activity.** *Watchtower*

*Bible and Tract Society of New York v. Village of Stratton* (2002), 536 U.S. 150; *Martin v. City of Struthers* (1943), 319 U.S. 141; *Thomas v. Collins* (1945), 323 U.S. 516, 540-41; *Hynes v. Mayor and Council of Oradell* (1976), 425 U.S. 610; *Murdock v. Pennsylvania* (1943), 319 U.S. 105; *Jamison v. Texas* (1943), 318 U.S. 413; *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940), 310 U.S. 296; *Schneider v. State (Town of Irvington)*(1939), 308 U.S. 147; *Lovell v. City of Griffin* (1938), 303 U.S. 444.

**As a canvasser you have the right:**

- to be on public property
- to knock on doors, even ones with “no soliciting” signs
- to encourage voters to learn more about the issues
- to offer literature about a candidate
- if you live in a private gated community, housing complex or apartment building, you usually have the right to knock on doors in your own community – consult your community bylaws

**As a canvasser you have the responsibility:**

- to walk on public walkways, not through private lawns
- to leave literature on doorknobs – never in mailboxes
- to get permission before canvassing on private property
- to be patient and courteous at all times
- **to respect “no trespassing” signs (it’s the law)**
- to conduct the canvass in accordance with all applicable law