

SwingLeft

It starts with the House.



Key Messages and Tone of Voice Guide

How to Use This Guide

We are a large, dispersed, grassroots organization, yet it's important for us to speak with a unified voice to achieve our goal.

We suggest you use the below as guidelines when writing or speaking about Swing Left. A good rule of thumb is to keep the key messages front and center.

Key Messages

What is Swing Left?

Swing Left is a national grassroots network of over 300,000 volunteers supporting Democratic candidates in Swing Districts, with the goal of flipping the House in 2018.

Our Mission

To swing our country left, starting with the House, by informing, connecting, and empowering a new grassroots army to mobilize where votes count the most.

What We Do

- **Connect:** We connect organizations, activists, and candidates in Swing Districts, which typically receive fewer resources and attention, with those living in "safe" districts who are eager to share their energy, resources, and time.
- **Empower:** We empower volunteers with simple tools and actionable opportunities to make a difference where it matters most.
- **Inform:** We keep attention focused on the 2018 elections by organizing and sharing information about Swing Districts, incumbents, and the critical role of the House.

Why We Do It

- The 2018 midterm elections are the next best chance for progressives to regain power in our government--by putting a check on the Trump and Republican agenda.

- Although we may not agree on every issue, our common goal is to restore checks and balances in our government so that our voices are better represented in Congress for the duration of the Trump administration.

Our Voice

1. We are optimistic realists.

The world around us may be dire, but we choose to focus our energy on the future.

Tips for How to Achieve This Style:

- We can and should acknowledge our deep concerns about the current administration's agenda, but only to give context to our call to action. Pair messaging about the actions and policies of Republican incumbents with action-oriented messaging about the work and goals of Swing Left.
- Avoid overly reactionary, dramatic, or alarmist messaging. Instead, take a matter-of-fact tone by factually citing the issues and then moving on to how to how we can make a difference.
- Use positive, motivational language when talking about opportunities for organizing and fighting back.
- It's okay to address how much difficult work there is to be done, as long we support that message with clear, bite-sized tasks that anyone can help with so they feel that the work is doable.

2. We get to the point.

We have a big goal to reach and we have no time to waste.

Tips for How to Achieve This Style:

- When writing, after you've created a brain-dump-style first draft, take a step back and identify your target audience and the top 3 questions they want answered. Then go back and re-organize the document in such a way that it answers those questions clearly and logically for your audience, in order of what's most important to them.
- After you've received input from others on your content, challenge yourself to cut the word count down by 30% by removing any unnecessary language or rewording phrases to be as tight as possible.
- When speaking, think about the top 3 things the person, or people, you are speaking with wants to hear and just say those. If you aren't sure, focus on the Swing Left key messages above.
- When you're in conversation, ask pointed questions. Say "what are the main questions you have about Swing Left so that I make sure I'm answering them." Refer to our [FAQ page](#), and don't be afraid to say "I'm not sure, let me get back to you."

3. We take action.

From protests and rallies to social media and town halls, many outlets exist for voicing our discontent. At Swing Left, we are focused on taking tangible actions that will make real political change -- as soon as possible.

Tips for How to Achieve This Style:

- Be sure there's a clear call to action (CTA) in each piece of communication. The fewer CTAs, the better.
- Although things are moving fast and there's much to be done, slow down before hitting "send" and check that your thoughts are organized and lead up to an opportunity for others to join in.
- Acknowledge the time-sensitive work to be done in order to take back the House in 2018, in order to help evoke a sense of urgency in your reader.

- Remind people how easy it is to take real actions no matter where they live or their level of experience. Direct them to sign up at Swingleft.org and to check their district calendars for events happening all over the country, all the time.

4. We are in this together.

We're a collection of newly-awakened activists and seasoned organizers; of folks living outside of Swing Districts supporting those within them. Our magic is in this mix.

Tips for How to Achieve This Style:

- Use "us" and "we" whenever possible, and take care that when you use the word "you," it doesn't imply separation (i.e. between the national team and district volunteers, or between volunteers and voters.)
- Keep your language simple, casual and jargon-free. If you aren't sure if everyone out there will be familiar with a term you're using (for example, political or technical terms), define it simply, or find an alternative word that mostly everyone would know.
- Be open to feedback and share it with the Swing Left team if you think we could do something better. Remember we're all working together to create something new together.
- Respect and acknowledge the contributions of both new activists and those who have been politically active for years - we all have something meaningful to contribute.