

Interview With Eric Loeb of GoodWorks PAC

By Seth Baum 11.7.2005

Somewhere in the deep recesses of online political writing, I stumbled on a political action committee (PAC) called GoodWorks-PAC.org which supports candidates running "Public Service Campaigns" in which, according to the organization's website, "candidates and their volunteers [engage] in public service projects that focus on key issues". Candidates benefit from the positive publicity, the community benefits from the service work, and awareness of the underlying issue is raised. For example, candidates could outline their health care positions as they raise money for local hospitals. Eric Loeb, the organization's founder, took the time to answer some questions about the group.

and cross-verification, especially now that we are entering an era where convincing digital evidence of nearly anything can be simply created. The "action-oriented campaign," as I called it then, seemed like a possible way to bring the correcting force of the real world back into play in our national political dialogue.

What does it take for a candidate to earn your support?

We support Democratic congressional candidates who are willing to use public service in their primary campaigns. If they have any Democratic competitors, they must be willing to work together on the service events with their Democratic opponents. Our candidates must also allow us to keep a copy of the data they use when they turn their supporters out at the service events. This is important because getting people out to vote is a lot like getting people to a place where a service project is happening. We need every candidate's organizational data for the service events so that the eventual primary winner can have the full benefit of their competitors' efforts.

Why do you exclusively support Democrats?

Several of the Republican operatives I've worked with have been racist thugs who profess and aspire to a complete indifference to the common good. The pigs of society will bully their way into a niche no matter where they go, but in the Republican Party they

have been established as role models for us all. I like and admire most of the Republicans I meet, but I will not work to strengthen their party.

Would you like to see similar PACs and campaigns from other parties' candidates?

The basic goal of GoodWorks-PAC.org is to pioneer a positive and cooperative style of campaign that out-competes the negative and destructive style that currently dominates. If we succeed at that, then positive campaigns should over time become the norm in both/any party.

What does it take to set up and run a PAC?

It's not hard to set up (see <http://www.fec.gov/info/forms.shtml>). After you set it up you have to be willing to ask people to contribute their time and money. So, please visit <http://www.goodworks-pac.org/donate> and join the GoodWorks-PAC.org team today.

Does running a PAC require political experience or is this something any interested citizen could do?

One thing I love about politics is that everything about you matters. There are no requirements, but all of the earned and lucky advantages you have will help. You use what you have and compensate for the rest with passion and hard work.

Don't PACs use money to unfairly influence politics?

Most PACs do not seem intrinsi-

How did you come up with the idea for GoodWorks-PAC.org?

In 1994 I was completing my PhD work at MIT in the brain sciences while also doing internet work for political offices at every level from the Clinton White House to the City of Cambridge. It was an exciting time and there were a lot of ideas in the air. I was very interested in how we might really build the National Town Meeting that Perot had talked about in the previous Presidential election. Unfortunately, the National Town Meeting can never work if we just continue to shout catch-phrases at each other. Our political dialogue needs a healthy dose of reality