



A GUIDE TO
TUESDAYS
WITH TOOMEY



A B R I E F H I S T O R Y :

After the election of Donald Trump, civic-minded activists connected through facebook and started to direct calls to action to their local senators. One of those was the infamous U.S. Senator Patrick Toomey.

One phone call, answered by a disgruntled staffer, prompted an activist to visit the senator's Philadelphia office personally. She posted on facebook to see if anyone else wanted to meet her there with letters for the senator. On that fateful Tuesday, seven others joined in, and a progressive citizen movement was born. In just a few short weeks, what began as a small group has mushroomed to over 100 citizen activists and counting, who are working together to make their voices heard. Using this model, Tuesdays with Toomey sister organizations have also joined the movement, meeting with Senator Toomey's offices throughout the state.

S U C C E S S :

As Tuesdays with Toomey has grown, so have our victories.

In Philadelphia, success has been measured in Senator Toomey's office's growing opposition to our efforts. These roadblocks, eg: building doors being locked, office phones disconnected, and refusal to accept our correspondence without police intervention are important signs that Tuesdays with Toomey is becoming a force to be reckoned with.

It is important to acknowledge these successes regularly both in communications within and outside of the group.

The group has gained media attention through a multitude of local publications: Philly.com, Philadelphia Metro, Philadelphia Inquirer, Local Television stations CBS and NBC, Telemundo, and more. Equally as important, shy or latent activists have been inspired by the group's dedication and consistency to: attend events, call their representatives, write letters to the senator and to the local newspapers, and pitch in for group organizing. Acknowledging success is essential to the group's continued growth and cohesion. It is also important to remember that from small seeds, or in our case, seven fired up women, great things are born. Together, we can form alliances, take action and make our representatives work for us.

Each week, a group of like-minded citizen activists visit the Philadelphia office of Senator Toomey.

OUR GOALS ARE TWOFOLD

- To ask the senator to hold a Town Hall meeting in Philadelphia.
- To present a topic each week on which Senator Toomey needs to take action.

PROCESS:

The process for the engagement changes weekly. We roll with the punches and need to be ready for change mostly to the whims of the senator's staff, as well as the political climate. While we are currently making "office visits," we have no idea where this may lead for future events. Some weeks we have been able to meet with staff, and one week we were locked out in the rain!

REMINDER:

The first week, we started with just a handful of folks who showed up and insisted on being heard. That is really all you need: a few people with opinions our elected officials need to hear!



photo credit: Jo Johnson

Below are the steps we currently take each week to ensure that TWT goes smoothly and our group continues to grow and build power. (NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT WILL LIKELY EVOLVE AS TWT DOES).

BEFORE THE EVENT

OFFICE LIAISON:

- The Thursday or Friday before each TWT event, an email is sent to Toomey's office requesting a visit.
- The email will attach a formal request for a meeting. (Request forms are obtained through the senator's office staff). Although we request meetings, we show up each week regardless of their availability to meet. Senator Toomey must be held accountable for listening to his constituents, and by continuing to visit on our terms we remind the senator that our concerns are serious and we are not going to fade away.
- The email also frames the topic for the week and why we want to talk to the Senator. Every email also contains the request for a Town Hall Meeting. When our requests for meetings were honored, we followed up with a thank you note after each event (either Tuesday or Wednesday).

TOPIC:

- A topic is selected each week. This topic could be a broad concern (e.g., The Environment, Women's Reproductive Rights etc.). If a broad topic is chosen we will bring it down to a specific ask—or it can be specific and topical such as a cabinet appointment.
- It's best to have topics planned at least 2 - 4 weeks out to allow time for research and finding speakers.

WRITE - UP:

- The write up is the most critical piece. This is a well researched piece that is used as the call to action for the event.
- The write-up is used as a basis for: the Facebook Event & Sign-up Genius invitation, Call In script, and Press Release.
- While there may be multiple people actually writing / researching, the write-up should be led by one person for consistency.
- The write-up is completed on Tuesday after our "visit" for the coming week.

INVITES :

- There are two methods for invites: TWT Facebook Event and an email invitation for non-facebook users (we have used Sign Up Genius or mail chimp).
- The Signup Genius is used to reach people for whom we have email addresses but are not on Facebook (but most of our invitees seem to be using Facebook).
- The invite looks the same each week and will contain: Meeting information time/location, Background on the topic, Goal, Any action (e.g., Bring a letter with you to give to the Senator's staff). Encouraging letters is important because even if you are denied a meeting, you have a reason to be there, ie: delivering letters.

CALL IN SCRIPT :

- A call in script is also created for those who can't attend. This script, which can be drawn from your researched write-up piece, is posted on the TWT FB page as well as the PSN Philadelphia FB page, and emailed to our mailing list of supporters.
- Be sure to include the correct phone numbers.

SPEAKERS :

- Each week 3 - 5 people are identified as "speakers" for the event. Speakers may have a personal story to share in connection with the topic, or they may be an expert in the field.

PRESS RELEASE :

- The press release serves as an alert to the media and invitation to cover an event. It contains: event meeting information (what, who, when, where) as well as the topic to be covered.
- On the Monday before the event a press release is emailed to our press list. Follow up phone calls can be made to assignment desks, editors, and select reporters on Tuesday morning. Twitter is another good way to reach reporters, and you may find that some are more responsive to tweets.
- Specific beat reporters may be researched and contacted to coincide with the week's topic (e.g., education, or the environment).



SOCIAL MEDIA:

- TWT uses Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to get the word out post-event.
- Handheld signs are created for the day of the event: “How I feel about <X>”
- Attendees can fill in the blank and have their photo taken.
- These images are then used in social media: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
- Videos can also be hosted on Vimeo or YouTube.
- You must inform attendees that photos taken will be used on social media.
- Decide on a hashtag and have all of your members and attendees use that hashtag in relevant social media posts. Ours is #TuesdayswithToomey. Do yourself a favor and triple check that your hashtag isn't 1. Already in use or 2. Accidentally profane.



DAY OF THE EVENT:

DESIGNATED WRANGLER / MC:

- A person with the biggest voice to give instructions to the crowd. Biggest instruction is, “We never know what is going to happen inside so everyone be prepared to roll with it.” We have also started asking new people to raise their hand. While hands are raised, ask a “TWT veteran” to introduce themselves to become a buddy for the day.

LIAISON:

This person will go to the security desk and call up to the office to announce we are there. This is also the person who may need to put some additional pressure on the office to make sure someone from the senator's staff either comes down to meet us and receive our letters OR allows us upstairs for a meeting.

SPEAKERS:

- The MC** To wrangle everyone and announce any logistics that are necessary.
- The Starter** This is the person to get the crowd fired up on the day's topic.
- The Experts** These are the folks who are designated to speak on the day's topics. As stated above, these people can be everyday folks who are telling a personal story, or they can be subject matter experts.
- The Closer** This is the person to do a wrap up of the topic and get people fired up for further action and to come back next week.

SECURITY CONTACT:

If there are police or additional security, this person is the contact for them. This person will communicate our purpose to the security/law enforcement officials and reiterate our right to peaceably assemble and our right to petition our elected officials. In the event that the group is asked to leave, this person will attempt to de-escalate the situation while still allowing the group to complete its visit. This person must be confident and assertive, but cool-headed, in dealing with authority figures.

PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER:

Each week someone is designated as a photographer and/or videographer to get images ready for social media posts and the media. Others may take photos or videos and those files should then be sent to the photo liason. We use dropbox to collect the photos, which are then transferred to our flickr account.

PRESS LIAISON:

It is good practice to have at least one, if not two or three, press savvy folks ready to speak to the press if asked. They should also be "camera ready." (Tiaras not required.) Be prepared with what TWT is all about, what is the ask of the day, and what is the ask overall.



photo credit: Jo Johnson

SIGN IN SHEETS:

A sign in sheet is passed around each week so we can get names / email from everyone who has attended and maintain communication. Clipboards with pens come in very handy!

LETTERS:

Most importantly, there is a designated person to gather all of the letters that attendees bring. Those letters will then be brought in and handed off to the senator's staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA SIGNS:

Each week we print signs that attendees can write on for social media posts. This also provides an opportunity for those who aren't able to speak to express themselves. Large/Dark sharpies or markers work best for the signs.

Our strategy and approach evolves as circumstances change. Each of these suggestions is born from experience. Each week is different, exciting, and inspiring. Every Tuesday, we meet great new people, discover new aspects of our own strength and power, and step by step, we are making our voices heard. We sincerely hope this guide helps you to do the same.

This is democracy in action. With persistent efforts, we can all affect change.

C O N T A C T

tuesdayswithtoomey@gmail.com

tuesdayswithtoomey.com



[@tuesdaystoomey](https://twitter.com/tuesdaystoomey)



[@tuesdayswithtoomey](https://www.instagram.com/tuesdayswithtoomey)