

CASE STUDIES

Ballot Initiative

- 1 Defeating Burdensome and Expensive Energy Mandates
- 2 Preventing an Unprecedented Gambling Expansion
- 3 Keeping Commodity Transportation Routes Open

1 Defeating Burdensome and Expensive Energy Mandates

CHALLENGE:

In 2018 a California-based activist spent more than \$30 million promoting a ballot measure that would have imposed burdensome mandates on utilities in Arizona. Early surveys showed the measure was popular, with support from voters at 58% “yes” and opposition at 27% “no.”

RESULTS:

The result was a total reversal of early polling, and Prop 127 went down in flames by a 31% to 69% margin. It was one of the more spectacular reversals on a ballot measure in Arizona state history.

STRATEGY:

We were retained by the “No on Prop 127” campaign to handle strategy, message development, and direct contact (mail and phones). We helped build a team with our client, their pollster, and a media firm to change the emphasis away from so-called green energy and focus it on higher utility bills and the impact on small business and consumers.

2 Preventing an Unprecedented Gambling Expansion

CHALLENGE:


The Idaho Legislature revoked legislation that had allowed race tracks and simulcast locations to operate gambling machines known as historical horse racing (HHR) terminals. With no realistic method to legalize the machines through the legislature, proponents of the machines filed paperwork for a “Save Idaho Horse Racing” ballot initiative as a final attempt to get Idaho voters to legalize the machines.

STRATEGY:

DCI Group rapidly established a robust “no” campaign to educate voters on the dangers of the unprecedented expansion of gambling in Idaho. We defined the proposition as defective and deceptive and provided a platform for credible voices to question the motives of proponents. Our strategic plan included earned media outreach, digital targeting, television and radio advertising, and a direct mail and phone program.

RESULTS:

DCI Group successfully drove a wholesale shift in the narrative around the issue of HHR terminals, defeating the measure at the polls. We identified and recruited voices to help move the debate away from a seemingly unwinnable battle over horse racing to a discussion about gambling and slot machines.



3 Keeping Commodity Transportation Routes Open

CHALLENGE:

In the fall of 2016, environmentalist activists in Spokane submitted an initiative to make it illegal to move uncovered coal and oil by rail through the city's downtown area. Designated as Proposition 2, this initiative – which the city's hearing examiner had called potentially illegal and unenforceable – was problematic for numerous reasons. Spokane is a major rail route for many commodities, including coal and oil from states like Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas, destined for West Coast ports and refineries. Prop 2 would have essentially made this primary railway a “no transport” zone. It would also have set a terrible precedent for business development, investment, and for shippers of all commodities, while risking attention from extremist outside groups that could use this proposition as both an opportunity to infuse resources and as a model for them to escalate the fight in other communities throughout the state, region, and nation.

STRATEGY:

We launched and ran all facets of the citizen's ballot initiative called the Committee to Protect Spokane's Economy. We centered the campaign on protecting the city's jobs, economy, and tax dollars in urging a “no” vote on the initiative.

RESULTS:

After a rigorous 12-week campaign, Proposition 2 was successfully defeated. The “yes” vote received 42.54% with 18,530 votes and the “no” vote received 57.46% with 25,033 votes.