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For further information, please contact
Debra Girvin, (804) 393-1000 or
debi@KNOWCampaign.org

The KnowCampaign Launches with an Effort to
Increase Voter Turnout in Virginia.

(Washington, D.C.) The KnowCampaign believes voter turnout in Virginia is too small. The Voting Age Population (VAP) in Virginia is approximately 5.5 million. The national average of registered voter turnout in any election is less than 50.00%* (45.66 % is the 1976-2008 average taken from http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781453.html.)

In the Commonwealth of Virginia the average voter turnout is higher at 57.97%* (http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Statistics_Polling_Places/Registration_Statistics/voting_statistics.html. 1976-2008,) which is due in part to the fact that Virginia holds elections for office every year. The KnowCampaign believes Virginia can be among those states with the highest levels of voter turnout in any election cycle. To that end, The KnowCampaign is working to increase voter turnout in Virginia in the upcoming November third election.

The KnowCampaign, a 501-(c)(4) organization, applied for and received a grant which has enabled them to mail to 350,000 households in the Commonwealth, encouraging their participation in the upcoming election, as well as encouraging them to support the voting behavior of their neighbors. A completely random sample of Virginia residents who are registered to vote are targeted to receive the mailing this week.

This type of mailing is not entirely new. In 2006 a group in Michigan conducted much the same campaign, in a primary race, with an increase in voter turnout of more than 8%.

Spokesperson and Executive Director, Debra Girvin said, “This is brand new for us. It’s our first effort. Our goal is to not only increase voter turnout, but to also increase the number of Virginians who become interested in the issues and interested in the positions that candidates that come before us take.
Our efforts are totally nonpartisan. We believe that many people don’t vote because they don’t feel informed. Thus, we are encouraging them to become more engaged, more informed, and vote. We believe that democracy only works well when our citizenry votes."

Based on the Michigan project, The KnowCampaign is attempting to utilize peer pressure to encourage residents to vote by including voting histories of their neighbors as a part of the mailing. The first sentence of the mailing reads, “Below is a partial list of your neighbors and their recent voting history - public information obtained from the Virginia State Board of Elections. As you can see, several of your neighbors vote during every election, while others in your area are not voting as regularly as they could be.”

This is only the first effort of this group. They have established a website (www.knowcampaign.org) and if some level of success is realized in this initial effort, they are planning follow up mailings and other activities. Girvin continued, “right now we are conducting this effort as a test. We would ultimately like to have our website serve as a portal of unbiased information for voters. It should be a place where they can find the resources to help them become more informed, enabling them to vote as well as enable them to engage in civil discourse with their communities. So many people talk about issues, complain about issues, and complain about their candidates, yet clearly if less than 60.00% on average of Virginians are voting, many of these same people aren’t exercising their responsibility to be informed or their right to vote.”

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