



DC REALTORS® Make “Heavy Lift” to Help Elect Champion to City Council – June 2014

The District of Columbia Association of REALTORS® (DCAR) had long been at odds with the City Council member from Ward 1, a 16-year incumbent and a staunch advocate for higher real estate taxes, more rent control, and the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act. "Not so property-rights friendly," states Ed Krauze, CEO of the 2,400-member state association, with palpable restraint. In past elections, the incumbent had always won against a divided opposition. Early this year, however, it appeared that the opposition might finally have a chance to topple him.

"We interviewed all the opposition candidates, and Brianne Nadeau really impressed us," says Krauze. "She's fairly new on the political scene, and more than any political platform, we were impressed by her willingness to listen. She was a recent first-time homebuyer, and understood the challenges and red tape involved in the process. What she didn't know about property rights issues, she was incredibly open to learning and exploring."

DCAR knew it would be a difficult race, but its trustees were willing to endorse the newcomer. It reached out to the Campaign Services department at the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, which responded immediately with some quick polling, confirming that Nadeau was down by 25 percentage points, with very low name recognition. Krauze knew that seeking a grant for an independent expenditure campaign would be a tough sell: "25 points -- that's a pretty heavy lift!" Working with NAR staff, he put together a campaign plan involving highly targeted live phone calls, targeted internet advertising, and a door-to-door canvassing program; DCAR would be putting significant 'skin in the game,' contributing over 50 percent of the proposed budget.

NAR approved the plan, and with a sigh of relief, DCAR's campaign for Nadeau sprang to action: the phone calls and internet banners targeted so-called 'super-voters,' those identified as most likely to vote. Krauze notes that NAR's increasing ability to connect its callers with cell phones was key in Ward 1, a relatively youthful and tech-savvy area. Within just a week or two, an impressive field team was on the ground creating a presence for Nadeau at Metrorail stops, and fanning out door-to-door to drum up support. The back of their distinctive t-shirts read "A Fresh New Voice." As the campaign gained traction, another pro-Nadeau trade association in town approached DCAR with a sizable contribution of cash and goodwill. "They saw that we were really rolling," says Krauze, "and rather than mount a parallel campaign, they added their backing to what we were doing. It was great support."

Nadeau's own campaign had also noticed, although strict rules prohibit any communication or cooperation between the candidate and an independent expenditure campaign. Apparently, explains Krauze, as DCAR rolled out tactic after tactic during the campaign, the joke around the Nadeau for City Council office was "What are the REALTORS® going to do today?!.."

Beyond the independent expenditures campaign, DCAR threw its full weight allowable by law behind Nadeau's candidacy. It blanketed its general membership with news of its support, and thanks to the technology of the REALTOR® Party Hub (an online grassroots communication tool), it was able to target members in Ward 1 with a series of hard-hitting get-out-the-vote emails. Changing the planned venue of its quarterly happy hour to a bar in Ward 1, DCAR attracted a big crowd of members -- and Nadeau showed up to work it.

On April 1st, Nadeau won by 17 percentage points. "We're so grateful to the DCAR and NAR trustees for taking a chance on this race, and for backing the cause, even when the numbers didn't look good," says Krauze. "We couldn't have pulled off this victory without the REALTOR® Party funding, or without the hard work and expertise of the Campaign Services team." He goes on to point out a deeper advantage the experience has given his association: "We've been working hard to instill a culture of advocacy in our membership, showing them that getting involved in campaigns can make a difference in shaping public policy. This effort shows that in a big way. Not so long ago," he continues, "we needed support fighting the policy of the old guard, reactively. With the help of the REALTOR® Party, now we're electing the next



generation of leaders who are talking to us, and listening to our concerns, at the outset of their careers. It's an exciting shift."

To learn more about how the REALTORS® of the nation's capital were able to turn a critical City Council election around in short order, contact Ed Krauze, CEO of the DC Association of REALTORS®, at EKrauze@gcaar.com or (202)626-0099.

Canvassing for Nadeau

