

## Bird-Dogging for Net Neutrality

To save Net Neutrality we need to make elected officials believe they have no choice but to sign on to the CRA discharge petition, which would restore the FCC's open-internet protections. With members of Congress attending lots of local events during their August recess and a camera in everyone's pocket, capturing a rep's commitment (or lack thereof) to saving Net Neutrality couldn't be easier.

Shadowing a decision-maker and asking them tough questions is a long-standing and effective political tactic and it even has a name: bird-dogging. This guide will walk you through the basics of bird-dogging, including tips on how to find events and a few sample questions to get you started.

### ***What do I do?***

Attend public events an elected official or political candidate is planning to attend (or is likely to attend) and ask them a question.

### ***Why am I doing this?***

The goal is to push the rep to take a public stance (or to question the stance they've already taken) on the fight to pass the Net Neutrality CRA. This puts them on record in public and keeps the Net Neutrality fight on the front burner.

### ***Where do I do it?***

Most bird-dogging takes place at public events like town-hall meetings, community picnics and meet-and-greets, though you can bird-dog at small private events as well. See "find an event" below.

### ***OK, OK ... but how?***

1. **Find an event.** Sign up for candidates' email lists to find out about upcoming events near you. Look for other popular events where politicians are likely to show up like community BBQs, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, fairs, town-hall meetings, fundraisers, etc.
2. **Invite a couple of friends to join you.** It's always more fun to partner with friends and having multiple people prepared to ask questions increases the likelihood that you'll get called on (especially if you split up once you arrive).
3. **Do some research.** [Find out if the candidate has signed the discharge petition and supports the CRA.](#) Look up whether they've said anything positive or negative about Net Neutrality. Finally, find out if there are instructions for asking questions at the particular event you're attending.
4. **Pick a question.** Be concise and ask for a specific response. Make sure your question is easy to remember and practice asking it out loud. Check out our sample questions below.
5. **Tell us about your plans.** We'll let you know if we can invite people in your community to join you. We can also provide feedback on your questions. Email us at [organizing@freepress.net](mailto:organizing@freepress.net).

6. **Arrive early.** Get to the event early so you're in a position where the presenter can see you and potentially call on you.
7. **Ask your question.** Ask your question early, and be prepared to follow up if needed. Stand up so you can be seen and heard. If there's a microphone, use it. If not, be sure to project. If there's an opportunity to speak with the lawmaker one on one, get in line and ask your question.
8. **Be polite, clear and concise.** Keep your tone positive.
9. **Document.** Ask a friend to take photos and video of the exchange between you and the lawmaker or candidate so you can share it later. If you get the interaction on camera, tweet it out with the #NetNeutrality hashtag and send it to us at [organizing@freepress.net](mailto:organizing@freepress.net). If you're unable to use photos or video, write down your question and the response and send both to us.
10. **Talk to the media.** If members of the media are present, aim to share your question with them. Tell them why you wanted to ask it and what you want the rep or candidate to do.
11. **Follow up.** Follow up with the politician's staff after the event by calling, emailing or visiting their office. Each situation will be different, but you might want to thank them for responding, press them for a more specific answer, repeat the question or tell the staffer you have a question that you didn't get to ask. (Don't forget to thank your friends for joining you.)
12. **Determine your next steps.** Promote the photos and video via social media. Make plans to ask the same question or a related one at the next event.

*If you need help or have any questions, please feel free to email us at [organizing@freepress.net](mailto:organizing@freepress.net). We're happy to help out!*

#### **Sample questions for lawmakers:**

- Net Neutrality is a bipartisan issue that every member of Congress should support. Do you plan to sign on to the discharge petition and vote for the Net Neutrality CRA?
- When Republican Senator John Kennedy of Louisiana voted for the Net Neutrality CRA, he said "You either trust your cable company or you don't." Are you going to sign the discharge petition and support the Net Neutrality CRA, or are you going to side with cable companies?
- Thousands of small businesses have signed on in support Net Neutrality. How do you justify your refusal to sign the discharge petition and support the CRA to business owners who are afraid they won't be able to compete in the absence of Net Neutrality rules?
- Thousands of veterans across the country have signed a letter to voice their support for Net Neutrality. How do you justify your refusal to sign the discharge petition and support the CRA to service members who rely on an internet free of blocking, throttling and paid prioritization to stay in touch with their loved ones back home?

**Sample question for candidates:**

- If you were in office right now, would you sign the discharge petition, support the Net Neutrality CRA and work to get all of your colleagues to do the same?

*Don't see a question you like? Reach out to our organizers at [organizing@freepress.net](mailto:organizing@freepress.net) and we'll help you develop your own.*