

# how to talk about WYOMING ISSUES

(WHEN YOU WANT TO WIN)



Here's a basic truth when it comes to creating change:  
**IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE RIGHT.**

You might have all the facts and figures in the world, and the moral high ground, but those don't get people to act. **What matters is whether you're able to persuade someone, using language, values, and messages that resonate with *them*.**

If our movement wants to win state-level policies that improve life for the people of Wyoming, we're going to need to get on the same page in the way we talk about it.

## Start with SHARED VALUES

Build your arguments on these shared Wyoming values: **freedom, hard work, and community**. Research shows this works!

These values resonate with our target audiences—especially legislators and the people who elect them. In contrast, using messages based in values that our target audiences don't share **will alienate them and encourage them to disagree**.

## Messaging DOs and DON'Ts: An overview

**DON'T** repeat the opposition's messaging. This just amplifies their points.

**DON'T** fixate on crisis messaging or depressing stories. This de-motivates people.

**DON'T** *just* tell stories. This reduces interest in collective solutions.

**DON'T** depend on facts and figures. By themselves, these do not help.

**DON'T** use jargon.

**DO** "pre-bunk" opposition messaging: know your opposition's messaging, and deflate it in advance.

**DO** tie policy solutions to serious problems.

**DO** use stories to *illustrate* collective or policy solutions

**DO** tie facts and figures to shared values, narrative, and solutions.

**DO** use strong, clear, direct communication.

topic:

HEALTHCARE



## SHARED VALUES

### FREEDOM



Better healthcare access gives individuals and families the freedom to find the care that they need.

When people have reliable access to healthcare, they have the freedom to be self-sufficient.

Many hard-working Wyoming families don't have the freedom to live healthy lives because of the obstacles they face accessing care.



### HARD WORK

When hardworking Wyomingites have access to healthcare, they can build stronger families and communities.

Hardworking Wyomingites shouldn't be denied healthcare just because they have to work several jobs. This isn't the kind of fairness Wyomingites believe in.



Wyoming used to be a state where you could work hard to pursue your dreams. Rising healthcare costs make this impossible for too many.

### COMMUNITY

Better access to healthcare makes for stronger families and communities we can take pride in.

Wyoming communities want to be more self-sufficient. Improving healthcare access helps make this happen.

Better healthcare is an investment in our families, and in our kids' future families. It means we can ensure that younger generations can stay in our communities.

Communities where people can't access healthcare are communities without opportunities.

## SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS



### Lack of Quality Providers

Wyoming struggles to attract and keep quality healthcare providers. As a result, many Wyomingites don't have the freedom to choose when it comes to their own healthcare decisions.



### Distance to care/ Transportation

Too many Wyomingites have to travel great distances, sometimes on dangerous roads, to receive basic healthcare. We need fewer obstacles and difficulties when trying to care for ourselves and their families.



### Lack of Mental Healthcare

We need to do better addressing our suicide rate, substance abuse, and mental health issues in general. Our communities deserve mental healthcare that keeps them healthy and strong.



### Affordability

Healthcare is too expensive. Whether because of high insurance premiums, costs of treatment, or expenses from having to travel to a doctor, too many hardworking Wyomingites struggle to afford the care they need.

## TAPPING INTO EMOTIONS

- Healthcare we can feel secure in...
- Determined to build a better healthcare future...
- Take pride in our state and communities...

## ACKNOWLEDGING PAIN POINTS

- Healthcare to create jobs...
- More healthcare education & training...
- Healthcare is more important than extreme partisanship.
- Healthcare that helps everyone contribute.

## PURSuing ASPIRATIONS

- Investing in our communities and kids...
- Support honest work...
- Build strong, self-sufficient communities



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topic:

## SCHOOL VOUCHERS



### EXPLAIN & INOCULATE

Unlike many other issues, school vouchers are not widely understood. Make sure your audience understands them. First, call them what they are: names like “education savings accounts” and “scholarship tax credits” (etc.) are misleading. Call them vouchers, even if other names are used.

#### **Explain what they do to “inoculate” against opposition talking points:**

Vouchers take money away from children in the public schools. They violate our constitution by sending public dollars to unaccountable, often online schools. They force families to choose between an underfunded public education system and schools that are usually *still* too expensive, even with vouchers, for most families.

#### **There is a clear “villain” here:**

Self-interested politicians, dictated by an out-of-state agenda, use vouchers to take money away from hardworking Wyoming families to support unaccountable, inequitable schools.

### SHARED VALUES



#### **FREEDOM**

Children should have the freedom to pursue their dreams. We need to strengthen our public schools to ensure every child has a fair shot at a quality education, not let politicians take money from public schools to pay for private school vouchers.

Wyoming families should be free to choose the best education for their children; vouchers force them to choose between an underfunded public system and schools that, even with vouchers, are typically still too expensive.



#### **HONESTY (and HARD WORK)**

Dishonest politicians, dictated by an out-of-state agenda, use vouchers to take money away from hardworking Wyoming families.

*Honesty, continued...*

Vouchers promise easy solutions but often deny families access to the quality education their children deserve. By making false promises to working families, they divert critical funds from public schools and take away resources that ensure every child has what they need to succeed.



## COMMUNITY

Strong public schools are the heart of Wyoming's communities, especially in rural areas where they provide jobs and resources like libraries and community spaces that aren't otherwise available. We strengthen Wyoming when we keep public dollars in public schools.

### TAPPING INTO EMOTIONS

- Wyoming is proud of our schools...
- We are determined to build our own future by giving Wyoming children opportunities...
- Vouchers will hurt rural communities and Kentucky and could force rural public schools to close

### PURSUING ASPIRATIONS

- Investing in our communities and kids...
- Support honest work...
- Build strong, self-sufficient communities...
- Vouchers are wildly expensive, and present runaway government spending and overreach.

### ACKNOWLEDGING PAIN POINTS

- Wyoming is anxious about the underfunded education system in our communities. Vouchers just make this problem worse.
- Vouchers are supported by out-of-state interests and extreme partisanship, not by true commitment to our communities.
- Public education creates jobs...

