



YES on 5 Campaign Taps Creativity, Energy of Young Adults

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COLUMBUS - In increasing numbers, young voters in Ohio are saying NO to corporate greed and YES to Issue 5, putting talent and energy behind their support.

Efforts by young people include organized activities on 11 Ohio college campuses, student-made videos, and a band of young Facebook subscribers who flock to a repentant loan shark named "Shady," and call themselves "Shady's Ladies."

"Young people are particularly offended by the impact predatory payday lending has on our communities," said Bill Faith, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio and a leader of the Yes on Issue 5 campaign. "It's gratifying to watch their activism take shape."

The Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) endorsed Yes on Issue 5 efforts in early October.

Rachel Yoder, a senior in social work at Cedarville University and an intern with the state NASW office in Columbus, is coordinating advocacy efforts among student groups on 11 campuses, including Wright State University, Case Western Reserve University, Cedarville University, Ohio Dominican University, Ohio University, Ashland University, University of Akron, Kent State University, Cleveland State University, Capital University and Defiance College. Activities include handing out flyers, manning booths and writing opinion pieces for local papers.

"This issue affects our state's most vulnerable," said Yoder. "High interest payday loans take advantage of those who can least afford it. This is our chance to have a positive impact for generations."

Hearing his father discuss Issue 5 at home, Thomas Worthington high school senior Jordan Sommerlad produced a 30-second video ad. "It was fun to do something that I enjoy and have it be used for something important," said Sommerlad. The result can be seen on the VOTE YES on 5 campaign website, www.yesonissue5.org.

Student Zachary Mekelburg, a senior at Columbus College of Art and Design, enlisted the help of 17 others to make the video, "Fishtopia." Their lavish undersea animation features "Sand Dollar Payday Loans" and a bully shark, whose greed is squashed by YES on Issue 5. "Fishtopia" also is posted on the campaign website. Mekelburg said, "this was a great opportunity to get real-world experience." CCAD remains neutral on Issue 5.

CCAD Assistant professor and Cap City Studios founder Tom Richner also produced a video for the campaign ("Get the 391% Monkey off your Back") and advised Mekelburg and the CCAD student team.

Shady's Ladies started when Shady launched a Facebook page to explain his transformation from payday lender to YES on Issue 5 crusader. Shady made a name for himself visiting payday lenders' press events. Young women christened themselves "Shady's Ladies" and began inviting their friends to join the online group.

A majority YES vote on Issue 5 would limit cap interest rates at 28 percent annually. A majority NO vote on Issue 5 would allow payday lenders to continue charging 391 APR on a typical two-week loan.

YES on Issue 5 has been endorsed by 17 newspapers across the state, including the eight largest. The campaign's diverse coalition of supporters include Gov. Ted Strickland, Senate President Bill Harris, House Speaker Jon Husted, Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, Dayton Mayor Rhine McLin, Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory, Akron Mayor Don Plusquelic, AARP, Ohio Municipal League, United Way of Central Ohio, Summit County United Way, Ohio Farm Bureau, NASW, Ohio Chapter, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks, Ohio Habitat for Humanity, Ohio Manufacturers' Association, Ohio Coalition for Responsible Lending, The Center for Responsible Lending, Ohio AFL-CIO, Ohio Roundtable, Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, Cleveland NAACP, the Catholic Conference of Ohio, East and West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, Ohio Council of Churches and World Harvest Church.

Young adult contacts:

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=azPp-CC76kw

Zachary Mekelburg, student animator, 614-282-7018, video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieGOByDzMF8&eurl

Shady Shark, repentant loan shark (aka Nick Bates, seminary student): 614-216-6306

Shady's Ladies: <<<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/pages/Shady-Shark/28788474666?ref=ts>>>

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