Understanding Rules for Advocacy and Social Media

Advocacy and Social Media

- Social media, e.g. Facebook, twitter, blogs, websites, are “communications,” but rules/limits are unclear and evolving
- “Personal” use of center resources will be attributed to the center
- Social Media and Lobbying
  - Generally subject to rules/limits on lobbying communications
  - Distinguish direct and grassroots
  - Consider “political” content

Advocacy and Social Media

- Social Media and Campaign Intervention
  - Websites
    - Generally treated like any other communication
    - Neutral links to outside websites likely OK, but consider content as a whole
    - Organization is responsible for content of linked website
      - Proximity is important – “facts and circumstances” control
      - Monitoring is essential
Advocacy and Social Media

- Blogs
  - Content is attributed to the organization
  - User comments likely not attributed to organization, if access is provided (but include a disclaimer)
  - "Guest" post likely OK (but include a disclaimer)

- Facebook, Twitter
  - "Friending" may signal approval
    - Distinguish "official" capacity from campaign
  - "Following" likely not an endorsement, but caution warranted
  - Accepting a candidate as a "friend" or "follower" likely OK if unbiased
  - Delete or at minimum disclaim a political posting to Facebook page