

Caitlan McCafferty
Assignment 4

MEMORANDUM

TO: States United to Prevent Gun Violence and Campaign Unload

RE: Unload Your 401k Campaign

FROM: McCafferty Communications

Landscape (Situation Analysis)

When the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) discovered that their retirement plans invested money in the gun industry, they realized they had a huge problem on their hands. How could a teachers' union, one of the most affected groups when it comes to gun violence, support a gun company? CalSTRS quickly divested the money from the gun company and searched their investments for any other investments in the gun industry. This happened days after the tragedy at Sandy Hook. People started to realize that they do not want to be associated with firearms or the firearms industry anymore, financially or otherwise.

The United States public was shocked in 2012 when a man walked into an elementary school and killed 20 children and 6 adults. The Sandy Hook tragedy reignited the gun control debate in America. Many realized that the amount of deaths that occur in the United States are at the hands of guns and compared to most countries the United States far exceeds any other country. 1.4 million Americans have died due to gun violence since Columbine, another watershed moment in the gun control debate. And since Sandy Hook, the country has been divided. Gun companies and the gun lobby have scared the public into thinking that their rights are being taken away. However, the other side of this debate is seeing a prime time to continue their work with great success.

Clearly, the American public is questioning why there is increased gun violence in this country. It is the headline too often. A distraught parent is on the news too often. This is the time in American history to change the public's engagement with firearms. It seems that things are just getting worse. The FBI released a report about active shooter incidents from 2000 -2013 and the results were inconclusive. Active shooter incidents can happen anywhere. Gun control activists have noticed this as helpful data to start working towards background check laws and other gun control legislation.

States United to Prevent Gun Violence and *Campaign Unload* has positioned themselves to lead the fight for gun control. With the start of the *Unload Your 401k* campaign, the organizations have surprised the American public with an interesting and new way to fight gun companies and gun lobbies. The gun lobby and gun industry are a powerful force in American politics. And attempting to stop them politically doesn't seem to have that much of an affect. Politicians need their money. With your *Unload Your 401k* campaign, you have started to cut off the gun industry at the source of their money. Gun company stocks are already down. In the winter of 2014, Cabela's, a major hunting retailer, stock fell from \$64.26 to \$69.81. The change in gun industry stocks clearly shows that people no longer want to invest in something that is hurting the country.

If gun control activists also target the investment from mutual funds, great success could be had in stopping the gun industry. The American public could create their own control and bypass the bureaucratic nonsense created by politics in Washington. This is a weak spot in the gun lobby's funding. If *States United* and

Campaign Unload can continue the conversation about divestment, they can cut off a supply line for the gun industry. Hurting them economically will prove more efficient than only focusing on lobbying against them on Capitol Hill.

Objectives

The situation analysis for this campaign shows that this is prime time to begin more work towards a divestment campaign. The goal for this campaign is to act as a Phase 2 of the *Unload Your 401k* Campaign. Also, we will achieve 500,000 new 401k searches on the Unload Your 401k microsite as a quantifiable objective for this campaign. We need to use the success of the first campaign and continue a divestment movement in the United States. You laid the groundwork for the divestment movement, and achieved quick success in Winter 2014 with the launch of this campaign. The American media took hold of the story and told the public that they need to check their 401k providers. The movement started, but more work needs to be done to continue the conversation. In this phase of the campaign, the organization will be aggressive in communicating the need for a divestment movement. We will increase awareness for this divestment movement through strategic communications to our core audience.

Our goal is to reach everyone with a 401k. We need to remind Americans that they have a say in where their money goes. Does a mother of a small child want to help manufacture the gun that helped kill a 6 year old in Newtown, CT? Does a father want to help manufacture the gun that might show up on his son's college in Santa Barbara, CA? Does anyone want to help manufacture something that may

harm someone? These are difficult questions to ask, but those are the answers that will drive this campaign.

The audience for this campaign is wide. This affects any full-time working American with a retirement account. We will need to reach them effectively. This includes digital media, traditional advertisement, and press coverage. Our campaign will optimize the opportunities that this certain point of time has awarded us. People are ready to stop supporting violence and we need to identify this as a simple way to do just that.

Strategy

The simple core message of this campaign is that American money is going to the gun industry every time someone invests in a 401k account and to combat gun violence every American must begin divesting from these accounts. Consistency and credibility is key when it comes to the strategy of this campaign. With the continued support of States United to Prevent Gun Violence and Campaign Unload, McCafferty Communications would like to continue with similar themes and messaging. The call to action will stay the same. Every communication will include the prompt calling the audience to visit the microsite to check the 401k provider and divest funds if their provider supports the gun industry. Also, the Unload Your 401k logo would stay the same and the website would continue to be the same point of contact for the audience. The overarching theme of this campaign will be “building a movement”. This theme will encourage excitement in the audience and will make people involved feel like they are included in a group of people that is making great strides in making positive changes in American lives.

However, the communications will also follow other themes. The graphics of the campaign will reflect the seriousness of the situation. Keeping with the graphic already created for the logo depicting the number one as a bullet, other graphics will reflect that darker mood consistent with the seriousness of the situation. We will use darker colors and strong fonts to create an impact on the viewer. These elements will also encourage urgency in the audience. The strong, serious graphics will tell the audience that this campaign is important. Truth will also come across in the images that are provided along with our verbal or written communications. The truth isn't always forgiving when it comes to this subject matter. It is a violent, ugly truth. Photos of shootings and victims are difficult to for people to look at, however it is important to include them in an appropriate way in order to deliver a powerful message. It will create a credibility that the viewer will trust even before we start giving them the important information. The truth of the situation will also affect the audience emotionally. They will have to question themselves as to why they aren't doing more to help stop this violence. The theme communicated via the graphics and images will help communicate the core message and create credibility for the campaign resulting in an emotional response from the audience.

The last theme that we would like to evoke during this campaign is one for the American economic sensibility. Americans envision themselves as individualists. The country's citizens enjoy control over their own finances. This is seen constantly in every discussion about taxes or any entitlement program. American people only use their money for what they want to use it for, and they don't believe they should need to use it for anything else. At the very least, it needs to be the person's choice

where their money is used. This campaign is exposing a great missed opportunity by American's to check where their money is going. Some Americans may join this movement because they are offended not only by the investment in the gun industry, but also the lack of communication from their 401K provider. The campaign must capitalize on this feeling. Coupled with the other themes of the campaign, this theme will be extremely effective in getting people to divest their money from their 401k providers.

The overarching theme of this campaign will be "building a movement" and will be coupled with the themes communicated via the visual elements and the theme of the American economic sensibilities. These themes together will create a full strategy to achieve our objectives.

Tactics

For this campaign, we will have three major points of entry for the audience. The points of entry will be the *States United to Prevent Gun Violence* website, *Campaign Unload* website, and the Unload Your 401k microsite. To decrease confusion, the States United and Campaign Unload website will feature a graphic and a link to the Unload Your 401k microsite. The microsite will be the place to get all the information for the campaign and movement. In this phase, there will also be social media platforms created separate from the two parent organizations. The goal is to create a communication platform, with support from the parent organizations, for the movement and the people active in the movement. We will deploy all of our communications from these outlets. Most importantly, any and all updates will be found on the Unload Your 401k microsite and Twitter page.

The first major tactic of the campaign will be a white paper commissioned by the campaign in order to get a full picture of the divestment movement. The white paper will be created by NERA, a research firm specializing in financial consulting. This white paper will outline the amount of money that goes to 401k accounts each year and where that money goes after it is invested with a 401k provider. NERA is the ideal provider of this research because it is a leader in consulting in financial and legal affairs. NERA is a credible source of information. It will be difficult to poke holes into their research and this will create stickiness for our message. They will be able to aptly deduce the facts of the situation and communicate them effectively. NERA's white paper will tell people about a concrete and credible problem that has been created by 401K providers and the gun industry. It will highlight a corrupt control that corporations have taken over the American public. It will also highlight some progress achieved by the first phase of the campaign. The release of the white paper will spark the second phase of the campaign. It will be the basis of the next round of communications about this issue.

The release of the white paper will be communicated via the microsite and social media networks. In order to create more excitement over the white paper, we will take the most shocking facts from the paper and focus on communicating them. They will be the subject of the social media posts and the media we earn from the release of the white paper. A video will also be released with the white paper. It will feature the people featured in the past videos reacting to the facts detailed in the white paper. Their interviews will focus on their shock and dismay at the fact that so many American retirement dollars go to the gun industry. They also will be asking

the American people to do something to help this movement. We need to focus on the unexpected aspects of this situation in order to capitalize on the feelings of the American public. Shock causes change, and this white paper will shock people and encourage them to log on to the microsite to check where their 401k funds are being invested.

After reigniting the conversation about divestment with the white paper, McCafferty Communications proposes using the gun violence timeline featured in the first video series in pop-up exhibits around the country. This will be a chance to expose every American to this problem. At these pop-up exhibits, we will provide information about the white paper and divestment campaign with the timeline. We will ask people to react to the facts. The video series will be done in a “people on the street” style. Ideally, we would do these exhibits in every region of the nation. The exhibits could be installed in small towns and big cities. For example, there could be an exhibit on a small town main street and an exhibit in the middle of Times Square. This will be an unexpected way to give people this information. It also is a great way to use more antiheroes that are not in the media as much as the people found for the previous video series. This tactic would find everyday Americans to explain the importance of divestment. This video series could find unexpected, emotional, relatable stories that the first phase the campaign did not feature. This emotion and shock stemming from the pop – up exhibit will add a stickiness to our overall message and will help convince Americans to join the campaign.

Another tactic that will provide constant communication with our audience will be a newsletter created monthly. People could provide their email after they

use the microsite to search their 401k provider. The newsletter will feature a story from a gun violence survivor or someone affected by gun violence. It will also feature another story about a person active with the divestment movement. This will provide another emotional story for the audience to use as motivation for joining the divestment movement. These stories will create relatable antiheroes that the public can use as motivation to divest their 401k. The newsletter will also feature any major news happening in relation to the campaign. This is an important tactic to use because it will keep people informed and attached to the campaign. It will also keep them apprised of any events happening in relation to the campaign. Overall, the newsletter will help keep the messages of the campaign sticky.

To summarize the tactics, McCafferty Communications is proposing two major events: the white paper and pop – up exhibits. The release of the white paper will be the source of our earned media. It will reignite the conversation about the divestment movement. The pop-up exhibits will be an unexpected event used to communicate the core message of the campaign. They will communicate the need for awareness of the divestment movement. At the pop- up exhibits, we will create “people on the street” videos to obtain emotional stories from people at the exhibits. We will use these videos in their long format on the microsite and create advertisements for television. This will be the source of our paid media. Lastly, we will release a monthly newsletter featuring two stories. One of the stories will be from a gun violence survivor or someone closely affected by gun violence. The other story will be from someone active in the divestment movement. In addition to the three major tactics of the campaign, there will be strategic placing of Internet

advertisements for the microsite, along with strategic social media posting daily. All of these tactics will feature the themes of the campaign and support the core message.

Timeline and Budget

With the budget to be decided at a later date, this is our suggestion of a timeline for this campaign. We plan to keep costs low with a focus on earned media. Most of the budget will go towards production with some set aside for advertisements.

Fall 2014

Commission NERA for the white paper
Launch Unload Your 401k own social media platforms and advertise them via parent organizations and microsite

Jan 2015

Release of white paper and press release about white paper
Release of reaction video about white paper on the YouTube Channel
Begin social media posts focusing on facts from white paper
Begin newsletter

Winter 2015

Find 5-7 places to place pop-up exhibits

Spring 2015

Launch pop-up exhibits in American cities and film video series
Use social media and newsletters to create conversation about exhibits
Publish press release to earn media about the exhibits
Create ads and long form videos from the exhibits

Summer 2015

Launch advertisements on national television and Internet
Launch long form videos on Youtube channel
Continue newsletter

Fall 2015

Evaluation of campaign

Conclusion

McCafferty Communications would be honored in assisting *States United* and *Campaign Unload* help spread the word about divestment. It is an important cause in the USA today, and we believe that with the above strategic communication plan we would enhance your message and achieve all objectives. A strategy that is based on a simple, consistent message that utilizes unexpected tactics will create a fire around this campaign that will cause a great movement in American public towards divestment.

Resources

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Ogg, Jon C. "The Death of Gun Stocks, For Now". 2/26/2014.
<http://247wallst.com/aerospace-defense/2014/02/26/the-death-of-the-gun-stocks-for-now/>

Unload Your 401k. <http://unloadyour401k.com/>