

Focus on the Family targets eight states: Voter registration drives mounted for key Senate races

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The conservative evangelical group Focus on the Family will mount a voter registration drive in eight battleground states this fall to “combat voter apathy and encourage Christians to go to the polls,” according to an e-mail sent to supporters. The drive, announced in an August 11 e-mail, solicits volunteer “county coordinators” to “recruit key evangelical churches, friends and family.”

The Colorado Springs-based ministry is also soliciting “church coordinators” whose “duties include encouraging pastors to speak about Christian citizenship, conducting a voter-registration drive and distributing voter guides.” In the past, the Christian Coalition conducted similar campaigns.

Each of the targeted states—Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Tennessee—has a race for a U.S. Senate seat.

Polls show a growing dissatisfaction with Republican leadership in the White House and Congress, making liberals optimistic about their prospects in fall elections.

As a nonprofit organization, Focus on the Family, founded by influential radio host James Dobson, is not allowed to directly endorse candidates. But critics, such as Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, accused Dobson of trying to build a “shameless partisan scheme” to support GOP candidates. “Dobson wants to be a major political boss, and this is his way to get there,” Lynn contended.

Ministry staffers say the voter drives are nonpartisan and legal. Focus on the Family Action, the political arm of the ministry, will host “arena events” in Nashville, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh with other conservative church leaders this fall. *-Religion News Service*