

# SCENARIO PLANNING FOR POST-ELECTION SUCCESS

Effective advocacy post-election with a new legislature or executive branch requires adapting to a new political landscape, whether you find yourself working with policymakers who support, oppose, or have mixed positions on your issues.

**REGARDLESS OF WHO IS ELECTED AND THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR YOUR ISSUES, ADVOCATES MUST CONTINUE TO DRIVE THE POLICY AGENDA FORWARD.**



Planning your strategy *ahead of time* according to the dynamics of the new political environment helps ensure your organization can hit the ground running to advance its priority issues.

## Issue-Specific Scenario Planning

Crucially, advocates should adopt an issue-specific mindset when scenario planning. PN-3 issues are widely popular across the political spectrum, so determining whether a branch of government is “red” or “blue” is not enough insight to predict whether your PN-3 policy will succeed. There is a big difference between someone indicating they “support” early childhood education and someone willing to take action to create a path forward for legislation. Advocates need to assess which elected officials are willing to spend their political capital to prioritize advancing strong PN-3 legislation.

**Some questions to consider when taking an issue-specific approach to scenario planning include:**

- What are the possible electoral outcomes for each branch of government?
- Which of your organization’s policy priorities has the clearest path forward in each possible election scenario?
- Are your advocacy partners and coalition members aligned on which policy priority your movement will push forward in each scenario?
- What could victory look like regardless of the electoral outcome? Can you get more granular by looking at the executive branch for possible regulatory wins or local government to identify potential policy victories?
- How can communications and mobilization strategies support your advocacy efforts in each scenario?
- What do polls tell us about constituent support for various PN-3 policies from voters in key districts?

Below, we've included a sample table outlining key strategies, tactics, and timelines to consider in any given political scenario. Your organization can create its own issue-specific version of this chart by referencing the [blank chart for your use in the appendix](#). Regardless of the election outcome, you can and should seek ways to move the needle on your issues!

Political Scenario	Key Strategy	Tactic	Timeline Priority
<b>Supportive Executive &amp; Legislature</b>	Keep the pressure up: Advance bold policy agenda.	Prioritize ambitious legislative, regulatory, and appropriations goals.	Engage immediately; aim for action in the first 90 days for the greatest chance at success.
<i>Use this optimal environment to push forward your boldest policy priorities. Time is critical, so ensure your proposals are introduced early and aligned with the legislature's agenda.</i>			
<b>Supportive Legislature, Opposed Executive</b>	Build public support and pressure for policy change with legislative action.	Advance legislation to force an executive veto; build coalition and media support.	Early introduction; plan for post-veto advocacy.
<i>Even if the executive is likely to veto your bill, moving it forward in the legislature can force a public stance and garner media attention, which builds pressure for future negotiations or public accountability.</i>			
<b>Opposed Legislature, Supportive Executive</b>	Pursue executive action.	Be prepared with executive orders, administrative rules, and budget allocations.	Identify opportunities in advance and make the most of the first 90 days.
<i>When legislative paths are blocked, focus on executive powers. Use the executive branch's authority to enact regulatory reforms, administrative actions, or budget recommendations.</i>			

 **FIND A BLANK CHART IN THE APPENDIX!**

Political Scenario	Key Strategy	Tactic	Timeline Priority
<b>Opposed Legislature, Opposed Executive</b>	Pursue a Build public support and demonstrate what an alternative approach looks like through a combination of aggressive defense against bad policy and an ambitious message bill.	Shift focus to public engagement and message campaigns; seek victories outside the legislature (e.g., judicial branch, narrative, and culture change).	Focus on coalition-building and media in the first 6 months.
<i>With opposition across the board, this scenario calls for shifting your focus to public engagement, demonstrating an alternative vision for your issue, looking for incremental wins, and laying the groundwork for future legislative victories.</i>			
<b>Opposed Executive, Mixed Legislature (One Chamber Supportive)</b>	Leverage action in the supportive chamber to demonstrate your vision, focus on possible bipartisan action, and seek victories outside the legislature.	Build coalitions across party lines, focus on pragmatic goals, and build public support for future action.	Engage early and focus on long-term relationship-building.
<i>This is where coalition-building comes into play. Make the most of actions in the supportive chamber and target sympathetic legislators for incremental or bipartisan measures that could advance.</i>			
<b>Supportive Executive, Mixed Legislature (One Chamber Supportive)</b>	Build public support and pressure for policy change with legislative action.	Advance smaller, bipartisan initiatives and test the waters for bigger proposals.	Introduce bills gradually; focus on incremental wins.
<i>Identify which of your priorities has the likeliest path forward, define that path, and then work toward it. In the absence of a path forward, work to advance smaller, pragmatic goals (e.g., looking at the judiciary branch or a lower level of government) while preparing for larger initiatives when the political dynamics shift.</i>			