



Tea Party rally in Greensburg issues call to action for Nov. 6 election

By [Kari Andren](#)

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The Tea Party faithful must get involved in politics to oppose policies — such as President Obama’s health care law — that erode individual freedoms, conservative activists said during a rally on Saturday.

“You have communism, and you have America. There is no middle ground,” said Darin Donnelly of the Southwest PA TEA Party, which organized the rally in Greensburg’s St. Clair Park. “Get involved. It’s about you understanding what is at stake.”

About 300 people braved sweltering heat and humidity, many clad in red-white-and-blue clothing or toting “Don’t Tread on Me” flags, for the 11th Southwest PA TEA Party rally in three years.

Rally speakers peppered their remarks with biblical stories, political gibes at Obama and a call to action for the Nov. 6 general election.

“America, we need to rise up and be counted, not wait for someone else,” said Derek Baker, a minister from Kentucky. “Stand your ground.”

Ben Kinchlow, an evangelist known for co-hosting “The 700 Club,” told the rally crowd that they must remember that members of Congress and other elected officials work for them and there is the opportunity every few years to fire them.

“If you’re not voting, ain’t got nobody to blame but you,” Kinchlow said.

That’s advice Pat Dickun of Washington Township in Westmoreland County took to heart.

She said she had been “very asleep” when it came to being politically involved but saw signs for the rally and decided to attend.

“I’ve become involved by becoming informed. I’m getting alternative news. ... The national media does not give you the whole picture,” Dickun said.

While federal issues, such as the Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision to uphold Obama’s health care law, garner a lot of attention, education reform is the most important state and local issue and one that individuals can really affect, said Adam Schaeffer, an education policy analyst with the Washington-based Cato Institute.

He implored the crowd to fight for programs that provide more educational options for families and greater control of curriculum for schools and communities.

Schaeffer praised Pennsylvania lawmakers for doubling the Educational Improvement Tax Credit in the budget adopted on June 30.