

FRANTIC VOTERS: HOW CONTEXT AFFECTS VOTER INFORMATION SEARCHES

by

Jerod Drew Seib

B.A, Westminster College, 2003
M.A., Southern Illinois University, 2006

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Approved by:

Dr. Scott McClurg, Chair

Dr. Tobin Grant

Dr. Phillip Habel

Dr. Ken Mulligan

Dr. Michael Young

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Scott D. McClurg

Scholars have researched how voters make decisions for well over a half a century, but these studies are limited in what they are able to say about how voters make decisions because they have focused on the choice rather than the process. Most of these studies have focused on the choice that voters reach or the way their memories are structured, overlooking the importance of the search and acquisition of information. Specifically, scholars in political science have paid little attention to how contextual variations in the information environment affect how voters make decisions.

This dissertation investigate's how changes in context affect how voters search for information. I explore three specific contexts: the number of offices on the ballot, the availability of partisan information about the candidates, and the presence or absence of campaign dialogue between two candidates. Indeed, one of the prominent features of American elections is the variation in the number of elections across jurisdictions, the availability of partisan information about candidates, and the amount of campaign dialogue between candidates—the three contexts that I examine in this study.

I conduct three experiments that manipulate each of these contexts, using a dynamic information board that simulates the campaign environment and process tracing methods to track the information subjects chose to view and in what order they chose to view it. Results indicate that context shapes the way voters search for and acquire information. When faced with long ballots, subjects examined information less closely, they compared more information between

candidates, and they searched for information less systematically. When subjects were unable to use the partisan cue, they compared less information between candidates and searched for information less systematically. Finally, when there was no dialogue between candidates, subjects searched for less information and had a less systematic search for it. These findings suggest that there are better ways to design elections.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The paradox of the modern democracy is that democracy in the United States has managed to survive even though most citizens of the United States are uninformed (Carpini and Keeter, 1996). “The democratic citizen is expected to be well informed about political affairs. He is supposed to know what the issues are, what their history is, what the relevant facts are, what alternatives are proposed, what the party stands for, and what the likely consequences are. By such standards the voter falls short” (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954). Berelson and his coauthors are not alone in their lament of the democrat citizen. Since the writing of Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee’s (1954) seminal work, other scholars have concluded that the average voter is not well informed on political matters.

Political information is a means to an end. People acquire information so that they can cast a reasoned vote. Indeed, this sentiment is reflected in major models of voting behavior, including Michigan’s social-psychological model and Columbia’s sociological model. The architects of the Michigan model in their classical work describe a *funnel of causality* (Campbell et al., 1960). At the tip of the cone is voting, the focus of the model. At the mouth of the funnel are sociological factors, socio-economic factors, and parental influences. Slightly further into the funnel are party identification and issue- specific information. These eventually lead to the tip of the funnel, the vote.

Research on political knowledge has tended to focus on the sociological factors, socio-economic factors, parental influences, and party identification. Scholars want to explain who is knowledgeable and how knowledge affects voting. Indeed, this is reflected in scholarly works, such as Bartels (1996) and Carpini and Keeter (1996). These scholars seek to understand who is politically educated, and how political knowledge translates into political consequences. Higher levels of political knowledge led voters to vote more consistently with their personal preferences (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Furthermore, political knowledge’s effect on the vote is

not random and thus does not cancel itself out at the aggregate level (Bartels, 1996).

However, the ends may not justify the means—that is to say that just because a vote is cast, does not mean it is an informed decision. Scholars have long lamented the lack of knowledge that voters in the American electorate possess. Early works such as *The American Voter* were shocked to find that ideology was not constrained by issues. More recent works, such as Carpini and Keeter (1996), have demonstrated the general lack of knowledge that voters have. Moreover, political knowledge has been relatively stable over time, even though there has been greater access to education and information (Carpini and Keeter, 1996).

What is more, most of the blame has been placed on the individual, calling them inattentive (Graber, 1988; Campbell et al., 1960) or ill-equipped (Simon, 1956). While these accusations may be true to some extent, it is also worthy to consider that the design of the very system in which voters are asked to learn about political matters and make choices is also part of the problem. This leads to the overarching question of this dissertation—how does context affect how voters gather information?

Context (discussed in Chapter 2) refers to the social, political, and structural components of an environment surrounding a person. There are a number of contexts that political science scholars have studied, the most notable of which is the social context. However, there are a number of other contexts that are equally important to understand. For the purposes of this study, I focus on three specific contexts: the length of the ballot, the availability of partisan information, and the amount of candidate dialogue. These three contexts are prevalent features of American elections.

1.1 WHY WE NEED POLITICAL ORIENTED RESEARCH

Political science has been slow to examine the importance of context to how people gather information. To the extent that context has been studied, most of the literature is from psychology (D’Rozario and Douglas, 1999; Hu, Huhmann and Hyman, 2007) and marketing (Jacoby et al., 1976; Srinivasan and Ratchford, 1991; Beatty and Smith, 1987; Brucks, 1985; Furse, Punj and

Stewart, 1984) with few examples in political science (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Redlawsk, 2004; Huang, 2000; Huang and Price, 2001; Wolak, 2009, see).

In Lau and Redlawsk's groundbreaking work on how voters make decisions, the authors built in a manipulation to the primary campaign that explored how the number of candidates running for an office affects how voters search for information. The authors found that when voters have more candidates to learn about, they search for more information, compare less information, and have a more random search. Moreover, Huang and Price (2001) found that in low-effort environments, voters are more likely to compare information across candidates.

Studies in psychology and marketing have demonstrated that context matters for consumer information searches (Payne, Bettman and Johnson, 1992; Bettman, 1979; Moore and Lehmann, 1980), but the information environment where voters learn is different from other information environments, such as a consumer environment. The type of choice that voters and consumers make is different. As Popkin (1991) explains, consumers and voters make a decision about different types of goods. Voters make a decision about a public good, while a consumer makes a decision about a private good. Unlike the consumer, "the voter is an investor and the vote [is] a reasoned investment in collective goods, made with costly and imperfect information under conditions of uncertainty...The voter expends time and effort in the expectation of some later return, a return that will depend in large part on what others do" (Popkin, 1991, page 10). Consumers, however, expect an immediate return on their investment, and their investment does not depend on the actions of others.

Not only are the choices different, but the environments in which voters and consumers learn about products/candidates are different. First, the consumer information environment is static. The attributes of a television, for example, will not change between the time the consumer starts learning about the television and the time they make a choice. This is not true for voters. Over the course of a campaign, the information available changes, and even the content of attributes changes. For example, in the 2008 election Republican candidate, John McCain, changed his position on the economy from "the fundamentals of the economy are strong" to the

economy is in a “total crisis” (Cooper, Michael. McCain on U.S. Economy: From Strong to Total Crisis in 36 Hours. *New York Times*, September 17, 2008, accessed April 7, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/17/world/americas/17iht-mccain.4.16251777.htm>).

Similarly, the type of information that voters and consumers deal with are different. Following Johnson (1984), we can think of choice environments falling from an abstract to concrete continuum. Consumer products tend to have concrete attributes. Take a television, for example. It has a length, width, height, and specific programming features, all of which are concrete attributes. However a television also has abstract attributes, such as enjoyment. With the television, even its abstract attributes are driven by its concrete attributes. A political candidate, however, has mostly abstract attributes. A candidate has positions on policy areas, an affiliation with a party, and a level of viability, all of which are abstract attributes. While the candidate’s appearance may provide a concrete attribute, this is likely not the driving force of the decision.

1.2 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In Chapter 2, I present an overarching theory for how context affects how voters acquire information. The chapter begins with a discussion of how voters search for information and the concepts used by scholars to describe voter information searches. The chapter also explains what context is, which contexts are examined within this dissertation, and how context is expected to affect how voters gather information.

Chapter 3 provides a basic methodological overview of the dissertation, with more specific information provided in the individual empirical chapters that follow. This chapter explains how subjects were recruited, how campaigns were simulated with a dynamic information board, and how information was chosen for the mock campaigns in this dissertation. The chapter describes how each of the dependent variables was measured and how they are analyzed in the empirical chapters that follow.

Chapter 4 is the first empirical chapter in this dissertation. It explores the effect of lengthy ballots on how voters collect campaign information. In the experiment used for this chapter,

subjects were assigned to learn about two candidates running for president, or two candidates for each of 7 different offices ranging from the national to the local level and 3 state-wide propositions. The results indicate that voters spend less time learning about any given piece of information, but compare more information between candidates. Moreover, the results stress the importance of party identification as the ballot gets longer.

Chapter 5 examines the effects of partisan and nonpartisan elections on how voters gather information. In this experiment, subjects were randomly assigned to either a partisan or non-partisan mock campaign. Subjects searched for information more systematically and compared more information between candidates in the partisan election. However, in nonpartisan elections, strong partisans searched for less information. Given the results in the chapter, there is evidence that partisanship plays a role in both partisan and non-partisan campaigns.

Chapter 6 explores the importance of campaign dialogue to information searches. For this study, subjects were assigned to either a mock campaign where the candidates engaged in complete dialogue and addressed the same set of issues or a mock campaign where there was no dialogue between candidates and addressed a different set of issues. Here, the absence of dialogue between candidates led voters to search for less information and also have a less systematic search.

The dissertation concludes by reviewing the empirical findings in chapters four through six and it draws some conclusions about the role of context in information acquisition. At the most basic level, this dissertation provides evidence that context matters. The conclusion also considers the implications of the findings in this dissertation and offers some prescriptions for better campaigns and elections. The concluding chapter also outlines some of the limitations of the evidence presented in this dissertation, and suggests future avenues of research that scholars should consider.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND LITERATURE

Despite the high costs associated with gathering information about candidates (Downs, 1957) and the lack of motivation and interest by voters (Graber, 1988; Huang and Price, 2001), it appears voters learn during political campaigns (Alvarez, 1998). In the words of one prominent scholar, “learning takes place in an often chaotic environment where information flows at an overwhelming pace. To tame this tide, voters can adopt information search and acquisition strategies based on both their own abilities and the complexity of the particular political environment” (Redlawsk, 2004). This need to adapt search and acquisition strategies comes from voters’ limited cognitive abilities, and these strategies provide useful tools that aid in the decision-making process. Yet, we still do not fully understand how and why voters use different types of search and acquisition strategies, and what implications this has for voter decision-making.

2.1 THE SEARCH FOR INFORMATION

Much of the literature on how people search for information comes from psychology (e.g., Hu, Huhmann and Hyman, 2007; Weenig and Maarleveld, 2002) and marketing (e.g., Jacoby et al., 1976; Srinivasan and Ratchford, 1991; Beatty and Smith, 1987; Brucks, 1985; Furse, Punj and Stewart, 1984) with few examples in political science (see Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Redlawsk, 2004; Huang and Price, 2001, for exceptions). The first study to examine how people search for and acquire information was Jacoby et al. (1976), although their focus was explaining consumer decision-making.

According to Jacoby et al., there are four important parts of an information search to consider: depth, comparability, sequence, and content of the search. Subsequent literature in political science, psychology, and marketing has followed this method of operationalizing information search, and it has become the standard in the literature (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006;

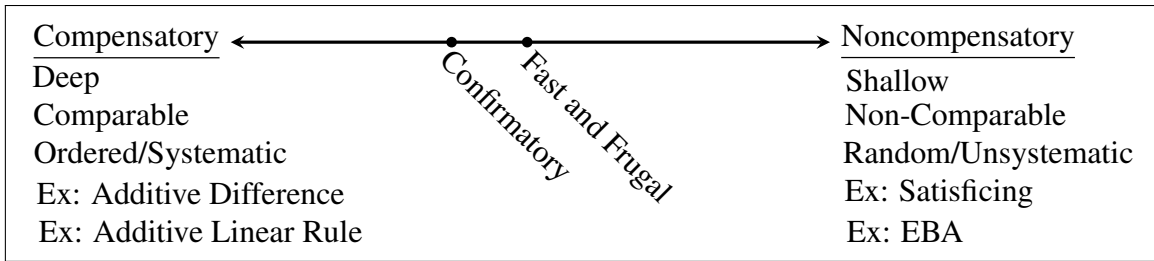


Figure 2.1. Information Search Strategies

Redlawsk, 2004; Huang and Price, 2001). These concepts provide clear guidance for measuring how voters search for information. The depth of a search refers to the volume of information considered. This can range from examining little or no information (a shallow search) to examining all available information (a deep search). Search comparability refers to the variance of search criteria across alternatives, in this case candidates. For example, if a voter examines Candidate A's position on abortion, then he would also need to examine Candidate B's position on abortion for it to be a comparable search. Third, sequence of a search describes how a voter moves from one piece of information to another. In other words, when the voter searches for information, does the voter transition from one candidate to another candidate or from one issues to another issue?

The content of the search refers to the specific type of information considered. Lau and Redlawsk (2006) break campaign information down into five categories: person information, horserace and hoopla, issues, party, and endorsements. Person information includes information such as the candidate's background, physical characteristics, personality and employment. Horserace and hoopla information describes how the candidate is doing in the polls, debate performance, slogans and campaign appearances. Issues describe the candidate's stance on a policy. Endorsements are the announcement of support from a person or group. Party information is the candidate's party affiliation.

2.1.1 Information Search Strategies

As Lau and Redlawsk (2006) note, each of these components of the information search also tells us a great deal about how voters search for information and make choices. There are a number of strategies available to voters, but at the most basic level these strategies can be categorized as compensatory or noncompensatory (Billings and Marcus, 1983; Sundstrm, 1987; Paquette and Kida, 1988; Ford et al., 1989; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Compensatory and non-compensatory strategies are distinguished by the ability of a high value on an attribute¹ being able to compensate for a low value on another attribute.

Under a compensatory strategy, a high value on one attribute *can* compensate for a low value on another attribute. For example, take a voter who learns about the Democrat and Republican candidates' positions on abortion and taxes. If a voter rates the Democratic candidate's position on abortion lower than the Republican candidate's position on the issue, but then rates the Democratic candidate higher than the Republican on taxes, the lower value assigned to the Democratic candidate on abortion is cancelled out by the Democrat's higher rating on taxes.

The left side of Figure 2.1 depicts ideal type compensatory strategies. In their purest form, a compensatory strategy is reflective of a deep search, examining all available information. This also means that all information is compared (a high degree of comparability). Since every piece of information is examined and compared, compensatory searches are not concerned with the content of the search. No one piece of information or type of information is given more attention than others. As an ideal type, a compensatory search only has ordered transitions.

Two strategies that meet the criteria of compensatory strategies are the additive linear rule and the additive difference model. Under both of these strategies, the decision-maker examines as much information as possible and compares as much information as possible. There should be no difference between the type of content that the decision-maker examined. The only difference between these two decision strategies is the order in which information is examined. The additive

¹An alternative is an option under consideration for a choice or judgement. An attribute is a descriptor of an alternative. In voting, the candidates are the alternatives and issues, endorsements, candidate information, party information, and hors race and hoopla are the attributes.

difference model is an attribute-based search. The decision-maker examines an attribute for all alternatives before moving onto the next attribute. In contrast, the additive linear rule is an alternative based search. The decision-maker examines every attribute for an alternative and then examines each piece of information for the next alternative.

In contrast, a person could adopt a non-compensatory strategy. Under a non-compensatory strategy a high value on one attribute *cannot* compensate for a low on another attribute. Take a voter who learns about the Democratic candidate's position on abortion and the Republican's position on taxes. Furthermore, the Democrat is rated poorly by the voter on abortion. Since the voter did not learn about the Democratic's position on taxes, the low value the Democrat received on abortion cannot be averaged out with a possible higher value on taxes.

Typical characteristics of a non-compensatory search are shown in Figure 2.1. The prototypical non-compensatory search is shallow. As such, the decision-maker compares very little of the available information. In its purest form, a non-compensatory search will be random and does not care about the content examined.

Two common search strategies that approach the ideals of a non-compensatory are satisficing and elimination by aspect (EBA). With satisficing, the decision-maker sets a cut-off value that an alternative must meet or exceed in order to remain in the choice set (Sundstrm, 1987; Paquette and Kida, 1988; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Redlawsk, 2004). As Lau and Redlawsk (2006) note, voters in this group typically consider only a subset of the information available, that which is most important to the voter. The decision-maker chooses the first alternative that is acceptable on all attributes within the set of attributes under consideration. This might mean that the decision-maker has to lower his/her threshold if there is no acceptable candidate based on the current set of cut-off values. If a decision-maker adopts an EBA strategy, then the decision-maker starts by ordering the attributes from most important to least important and setting a cut-off value. The decision-maker then considers each alternative on the attributes, starting with the most important attribute. As alternatives do not meet the cut-off value on an attribute, they are eliminated, with the last alternative remaining chosen. In contrast to satisficing,

EBA is an alternative-based search.

However, decision-makers do not have to follow either a compensatory or a non-compensatory rule. They can choose to follow a rule that falls between these two extremes as demonstrated in Figure 2.1. Most notably, voters may follow a fast and frugal (or take the few best as Lau and Redlawsk (2006) call it)² or a confirmatory model. Under the fast and frugal model, voters select a subset of information to examine, usually the attributes that the decision-maker sees as most important, and then engages in a compensatory-like search. This means that the decision-maker will have a shallow search, with a high degree of comparability (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Redlawsk, 2004). Lau and Redlawsk (2006) note that the fast and frugal model is indifferent to the sequence of search.

The second mixed model is the confirmatory model,³ which is characteristic to what the Michigan model describes (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Here, the decision-maker engages in a relatively deep, although incomplete, search with a low degree of comparability. The decision-maker's goal is to confirm that the alternative contains an expected set of information—that a Democrat, for example, actually takes on Democratic positions on issues. According to Lau and Redlawsk (2006), the decision-maker should seek out the party affiliations of the candidates early in the information search process.

2.2 DO DECISION STRATEGIES AFFECT THE OUTCOME?

Decision strategies do affect the choices that people make (Payne, Bettman and Johnson, 1992; Dhar, 1996). Feldman and Zaller (1992) and Barker and Hansen (2005) both demonstrate that the type of strategy that people use helps to shape the choice. Interestingly, inducing a more complex strategy led to choices that were less consistent with prior beliefs. Barker and Hansen (2005) used a method called Analytic Hierarchy Processing (AHP) to expand the relevant criteria

²Lau and Redlawsk (2006) label the fast and frugal strategy as a compensatory strategy. However, Redlawsk (2004) does not count the fast and frugal search as a compensatory search but rather an unstructured or mixed search. Most decision-making literature classifies this as a mixed search and this paper will follow in suit.

³As Lau and Redlawsk (2006) note, this strategy is unique to the political science literature and voters and it has largely been ignored in other decision-making environments like marketing and psychology

under consideration for a choice. Their results show that AHP helps those who are least informed behave consistently than those who did not receive the AHP treatment, but among the most informed the inducement of AHP led to less consistent choices than those who did not receive the AHP treatment. Similarly, Feldman and Zaller (1992) use a “stop-and-think” method to increase the number of relevant criteria under consideration for a choice. Their results also reveal that the more complex decision tool of “stop-and-think” leads to less consistent preferences than retrospective decision-making.

Not only can changes in decision strategies lead people to alter their choices and judgments, but it can even lead people to defer their decision or, in other words, to not make a choice and reject the decision set (Dhar, 1996). Dhar’s (1996) study is unique because subjects were forced to use different decision strategies. The author found that subjects were most likely to defer their choice when they were forced to use the additive difference strategy. As Dhar (1996) explains, this is because as subjects become more uncertain in their choice they attempt to balance the pros and cons across alternatives. Subjects were least likely to defer their choice when subjects only had to make a few select comparisons (lexicographic)⁴ or could avoid them altogether (additive difference).

In Lau and Redlawsk’s (2006) extensive work on how voters make decisions, the authors find that the decision strategies themselves do not predict which candidate a person will vote for, which is not all that surprising. However, they do find that the decision strategy that a voter uses can predict whether the voter will defect from his/her party. Voters categorized as using a compensatory decision strategy were most likely to defect from their party, closely followed by the “bounded rationality/intuitive decision-making” model (EBA and satisfying). Being classified as using “the early socialization/cognitive consistency” (confirmatory) model was not predictive of party defection. This is intuitive, given the importance of partisanship to the confirmatory

⁴Lexicographic is a similar strategy to EBA, which is the strategy references in this study. It is non-compensatory and attribute based. In addition, both strategies start with the most important attribute. The difference is that lexicographic merely looks for the highest score on the most important attribute and selects that alternative. While EBA sets an acceptable cut-off point for the most important attribute and eliminates those that do not meet the cut-off. In both cases, if there are ties, then the person should move on to the next most important attribute.

model. However, voters who were classified as using the “fast and frugal” model of decision-making were less likely to defect, which emphasizes the importance of partisan information to users of this strategy. These results show that the more reflective a voter’s search is of a compensatory model, the more likely they are to defect from their party. This set of findings is consistent with those of Feldman and Zaller (1992) and Barker and Hansen (2005).

Lau and Redlawsk (2006) also evaluated how well each of the four decisions strategies performed. In other words, do some decision strategies help voters make better decisions (vote correctly)?⁵ In general, each of the three noncompensatory models improves the quality of voters’ decisions. Only when political expertise is taken into account does the compensatory model outperform the non-compensatory models. In fact, unsophisticated voters seem to struggle to use a compensatory model.

Lau and Redlawsk (2006) also examined the relationship between each of the search variables and correct voting. The only significant variable was depth of search, which has a negative relationship with correct voting. This is especially interesting, given normative theories of democracy. One would expect that the more information that one has, the better the decision. This is consistent with Barker and Hansen (1992) and Zaller and Feldman’s (1992) findings that as people increase the number of relevant criteria under consideration, their choices and judgments become less consistent with their preferences. More importantly, it shows that not only does the information under consideration matter for choices and judgments at the moment the choice is made, but it also matters as information is acquired.

2.3 EXAMINING CONTEXT

2.3.1 What is Context?

When studying the choices that people make, social scientists tend to either study individual level variables or contextual variables (Druckman and Lupia, 2006).

⁵The authors analyzed data for both the primary and general election. Since this project focuses on a general election, I only discuss the authors results from the general election, which are only slightly different from they primary election results.

“‘Individual-level’ variables are variables whose values are determined solely by the characteristics of individual respondents” (Tate, 1974). Examples of individual level variables include socioeconomic status, party identification, ideology, age and race. Researchers examining individual level variables tend to answer “who makes what choice?”

On the other hand, examining contextual variables answer questions such as “under what circumstances?” or “when?” However, a closer examination of what scholars mean by context reveals that there is no agreed upon definition. As Books and Prysby (1988) note, conceptual definitions of context range from narrow to broad. Narrow definitions tend to aggregate individuals over contextual units (Books and Prysby, 1988). For example, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1993, page 281) proposed that “contextual theories of politics are built on an assertion of behavioral interdependence: the actions of individual citizens are to be understood as the intersection between individually defined circumstances.” This narrow definition of context focuses on the aggregation of individual traits.

Other scholars have taken a much broader approach to defining context. Books and Prysby (1988, page 214) note that broad definitions of context “[include] characteristics and variables without individual-level counterparts....” Broad definitions of context take into account the social, political and structural components of a person’s environment (Prysby and Books, 1987). Books and Prysby (1988) note that broader definitions of context are preferable to narrow definitions due to common theoretical concerns across different contexts and similarities in methodological approaches used to understand contextual effects.

There is one other important characteristic of context to consider—geography (Books and Prysby, 1988). Context can be defined in terms of geography—a local context, a neighborhood, or a community—or it can be conceived of as borderless, and not bound by geographical constructs. Social contexts, family, and group memberships are examples of non-geographical contexts. While some scholars have found it useful to limit the scope of their inquiry to either geographical or non-geographical units, this dissertation makes no such distinction.

For the purposes of this study, context is defined as the social, political, and structural

components of an environment surrounding a person. This conceptualization gets to the heart of the puzzle, that there are components of the information environment outside of the individual's control that may affect the way people acquire information.

2.3.2 Context and Political Learning

As Jerit, Barabas and Bolsen (2006) note, the opportunity and the availability of information affect the acquisition of political knowledge. This is precisely why it is important to study how contextual factors affect the decision making process for voters. Depending on the context, the opportunity to learn about a topic or the availability of information may increase or decrease. Consider the three contexts proposed for this study—the length of the ballot, availability of partisan information, and dialogue between candidates. As the ballot length increases, the opportunity to learn about concurrent offices up for election decreases. The presidential candidates must compete for voters' attention with gubernatorial candidates, senatorial candidates, local races, and hot ballot propositions, such as Propositions 8 in the 2008 California election. The opportunity for voters to learn about any of these offices decreases because voters only have so much time that they can potentially devote to learning about candidates.

Likewise, the availability of partisan information changes depending on the election. There are a number of combinations used to select state supreme court justices, ranging from partisan elections, to semi-partisan elections, to non-partisan elections. In each of these electoral contexts, the availability of partisan information is different, with partisan information being most readily available in partisan elections and least readily available in non-partisan elections. The last context studied here, candidate dialogue, is more obvious. When candidates do not engage in dialogue with each other, then some information simply does not exist, meaning that information is not available, and there is no opportunity to learn about the candidates.

2.3.3 Context and Information Search

Ideally, the decision-making process would not change based on the context. Regardless of the context, normative theorists would hope that voters acquire as much information as possible (a deep search) and compare the attributes across alternatives (a highly comparable search). But as scholars have noted, there is little incentive for voters to gather all the information available (Downs, 1957), and voters are limited by their cognitive abilities (Simon, 1956). Indeed, there is evidence to support these deficiencies in voters (Carpini and Keeter, 1996). And while these deficiencies in voters are well documented in the literature, scholars have only started to understand the role that context plays in how voters gather information.

Research in other fields is littered with evidence that context matters to the decision-making process. Previous literature in marketing, psychology, and business has demonstrated that context affects how people search for information (Payne, Bettman and Johnson, 1992; Bettman, 1979; Moore and Lehmann, 1980) and, ultimately, their decisions (Klein and Yadav, 1989). Bettman (1979) examines what he calls choice environments, which include information availability, task difficulty, and time pressures. He argues that as information becomes less available, the task of searching for information in order to make a decision becomes more difficult, and as the pressure of time builds, it will likely lead to a decrease in information search. Moore and Lehmann (1980) built on Bettman's theory. The authors further divide Bettman's typology into the market environment, which includes the availability of information and task difficulty, and situational variables, such as time. The authors find that the market environment (task difficulty and availability of information) affects how people search for information. Given these results, especially those regarding the availability of information, there is reason to believe that context will also influence how voters search for information.

Research by Lau and Redlawsk (2006) supports these findings from psychology and marketing. The authors manipulate task difficulty in their study by randomly varying the number of candidates in the primary campaign from two to four. The authors find that subjects who learned about two candidates in a primary election were much more likely to use a compensatory

search strategy than subjects who had to learn about four candidates.

As Lau (2003, p. 40) notes, one of the most important factors influencing the decision strategy that a person uses is complexity or size of the task. Research has consistently demonstrated that as complexity increases, people are more likely to rely on simplifying or non-compensatory strategies (Redlawsk, 2004). People change their strategy in order to cope with the complexity of the information environment, but in doing so give up comparing attributes or having a deep level of knowledge about the alternatives.

When the decision environment is simple, subjects are able to carefully sort through the information. They are more able to evaluate whether they want to examine a particular piece of information, rather than examining a piece of information just because it is in front of them. Moreover, as they read the information associated with an attribute or candidates, people can evaluate the value of that information and whether they need to read it carefully or can skim it. In contrast, in more complex contexts, it may be more difficult to decide how much time to spend on any bit of information.

At the most basic level, variations in each of the three contexts explored in this project can be thought of on a simple to complex spectrum. Learning about candidates for a single office is much easier than learning about candidates for a long list of offices; learning about candidates is easier in partisan elections than nonpartisan elections; and learning about candidates is easier when the candidates engage in dialogue than when they avoid topics. In each of these three examples, which reflect some of the variation in American elections, the context varies from easy to hard. As mentioned above, this is due to the availability of information and the opportunity to learn about information. Thus, given other research on task complexity and decision-making, we should find that changes in these environments affect how people search for information.

But the importance of the context to information acquisition is not only about the complexity of the environment, it is about the structure of the environment. As Wolak (2009) notes, the context shapes the opportunities that are available to learn about candidates and it shapes the availability of information. This is true even of complex environments. As task

complexity increases, the opportunity to learn about information decreases. For example, in Lau and Redlawsk's (2006) two versus four candidate manipulation, the opportunity to gather information about candidates was much greater when there were only two candidates running.

The same is also true of the contexts examined in this study. When elections are added to the ballot, it means there is more information for voters to sift through. There is less of an opportunity to learn about candidates for any given office than if voters only had to worry about one office. Likewise, nonpartisan elections eliminate the availability of the party cue, and the absence of candidate dialogue means that some information is not available for both candidates.

I expect that decreasing the opportunity to learn about candidates, or decreasing the availability of information, will lead voters to be more likely to adopt a non-compensatory search strategy. This means that they should have a shallower search and compare less information than when information is not readily available. Likewise, voters' search for information should be less systematic when information is not readily available or there is less of an opportunity to learn about candidates.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

How voters gather information is difficult to study, especially in the real world. Campaigns are dynamic. The amount and type of information available during a campaign varies throughout the campaign cycle (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). The dynamic nature of campaigns gives rise to two problems in studying how voters gather information. First, it is not feasible to monitor voters during a campaign and record all of the campaign information that they encounter (Beatty and Smith, 1987). A cross-sectional survey is intrusive enough, as evidenced by low response rates (Krosnick, 1999). But even a cross-sectional survey is insufficient to capture the dynamic nature of the flow of information during a campaign cycle. Second, some scholars have turned to panel surveys, examining the same set of participants at several points in time during the campaign cycle (Andersen, Tilley and Heath, 2005), but even this method is insufficient. Asking voters what kinds of campaign information they encountered during the campaign or what pieces of information they considered as they voted is a better reflection of a person's working memory than what they searched for.

3.1 INFORMATION BOARDS

Scholars in marketing and psychology were the first to seek alternative methods for studying information acquisition. Jacoby et al.'s (1976) pioneering work was the first to use a static information board. The static information board is a matrix of information. Alternatives are organized by column, so that, for example, all of candidate A's information would be in the first column and all of candidate B's information would be in the second column. Going down the rows are attributes. Each piece of information in the matrix is available throughout the entire study. As a participant interacts with the information board, a computer keeps track of which pieces of information the participant accessed and the order that the information was accessed.

For many choice environments, the static information board is sufficient. However, as

mentioned in Chapter 1, campaigns and consumer market environments are different. The relevant attributes of a television, for example do not change over time. In contrast, the relevant attributes of candidates during a campaign change over the cycle of a campaign. Not only can candidates' positions change over time, but the availability of candidate information also changes. A candidate may even choose to wait to reveal his or her policy on a given subject. This makes the use of a static information board problematic.

Lau and Redlawsk's (2006) seminal work on how voters make decisions provides a solution. The authors alter the static information board so that only a subset of information is available at any one point in time. Moreover, the type of information that is available on the dynamic information board changes throughout the campaign, and it reflects the availability of candidate information during a typical campaign cycle.

Following in the vein of Lau and Redlawsk (2006), this study also uses a dynamic information board. The information board used in this study has two main areas: a set of scrolling boxes in the middle of the screen, and a timer that counts down to "Election Day" (see Figure 3.1). At any given time, there are five boxes on the screen. Each box is labeled to describe the information behind it. For example, a box labeled "David Bass' Judicial Experience" would contain information about the candidate's judicial experience. If a participant clicks on a box, a new window opens that takes up the entire computer screen (see Figure 3.2). The participant reads the information and then clicks on the "Finished" button to close the window. The computer records which pieces of information were accessed, the order of access, which pieces of information were available (not hidden by the pop-up window while the participant read the more detailed content) and how long the participant spent reading the information. Meanwhile, the boxes on the information board continue to scroll in the background. This means that by choosing to view one piece of information, a participant must give up the opportunity to view other information that may or may not show up again later in the campaign.

Content for the information board was gathered from actual candidate websites and news articles (Appendix A), although names were fabricated. Following Lau and Redlawsk (2006), the



Figure 3.1. Screen Shot of the Dynamic Information Board

John Mallory's Position on Poverty

Welfare and anti-poverty assistance is a shared responsibility among federal, state and local government; the private sector; community and faith-based organizations. Welfare policy must provide a strong safety net, while promoting work, responsibility, self sufficiency and dignity. I propose that we place time limits on welfare benefits; require able-bodied welfare recipients to get a job, attend school or train for work; require participating mothers to identify the fathers of their children so they could contribute to their support; and emphasize personal responsibility by requiring welfare recipients to sign an independence contract pledging to stay drug-free and keep their kids immunized in school.

FINISHED

Figure 3.2. Screen Shot of the Dynamic Information Board

dynamic information board used for this study also varied the availability of information throughout the campaign. In Lau and Redlawsk's (2006) content analysis of a presidential campaign, the authors found differences in the type of information that is available throughout the campaign cycle. During the early stages of a campaign, candidate traits are most prevalent, followed by issue positions and group endorsements. At this stage in a campaign, horserace and hoopla (campaign events and polls) are popular, but become spotlights of the campaigns as election day approaches. Also, as the campaign progresses, candidate traits become less important and issues positions take a slightly more important role. Party information is less prevalent than any of these types of information, but its frequency is consistent throughout the campaign. This study uses this same scheme to vary the availability of information throughout the campaign cycle. However, it is important to note that even though some pieces of information are more likely to appear, because of the type of information or the timing in the campaign, the selection of information is random within these constraints and is not predetermined.

3.2 RECRUITMENT

Several scholars have noted that university students think differently than the average voter (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Sears, 1986). As Lau and Redlawsk note, college students are appropriate where there is no reason to think that the basic perceptual processes of college students operate differently from any other group (p. 65). However, as the authors note, college students are not suitable for voter decision-making because of a lack of variance in important demographics, including age and education, which have strong impacts on voter attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, many students in introductory courses have never voted and have little experience with political matters, making their voting behavior atypical.

Therefore, participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk, which is an online crowd sourcing website. Amazon Mechanical Turk is a website that coordinates “workers” who are willing to perform tasks for money and “requestors” who are willing to pay a person to complete the task. Prior research on internal and external validity shows that Amazon Mechanical Turk is a reliable recruitment tool (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz, 2010; Paolacci, Chandler and Ipeirotis, 2010). Amazon Mechanical Turk provides a better representative sample than convenience or student samples and only slightly worse than a national probability sample. Following other scholars (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz, 2010), I limited my sample to Amazon Mechanical Turk “workers” who had an approval rating of 95% or higher, demonstrating that they take the task seriously. Since I am interested in how voters make decisions, there were several other requirements that participants had to meet. Participants had to be at least 18 years old, a United States citizen, eligible to vote, and not a full-time student. While eligibility was determined by participants’ self-reported answers to these questions, Amazon Mechanical Turk did permit me to limit my sample to the United States.

The advertisement on Amazon Mechanical Turk (Appendix C) asked participants to take part in a political science study where they would take a survey, participate in a mock campaign, and then take a second survey. Participants were told that the study would take approximately one hour and in return for their time, they would be paid \$18.00, which is significantly more than what

most “requestors” on Amazon Mechanical Turk offer. The high pay rate is beneficial because participants are less likely to select out of the study, which should help produce a better sample.

3.3 EXPERIMENTAL OVERVIEW

In order to study how voters search for information, this study used a computer-based, dynamic information board and the process tracing methods described above. The dynamic information board simulates a campaign by presenting participants with information about the candidates and keeps track of how participants interact with the dynamic information board. Participants began by reading a consent form (Appendix C). Next, participants took a short survey in order to gather demographic information (Appendix B). Then, participants had a chance to acclimate to the dynamic information board. They spent time interacting with a practice information board that contained information unrelated to the mock campaign. This is especially important, because it demonstrates to participants how to use the information board and how fast information flows.

Next, participants read some additional instructions about how the dynamic information board was set up for the mock campaign, and they were presented with a plausible scenario that set the stage for the mock campaign. After reading the scenario, participants proceeded to the mock campaign, which presented participants with information via the dynamic information board. Finally, participants voted and took a post survey, which included a manipulation check. On average, it took participants forty five minutes to complete the study, depending on the experimental condition.

3.4 MEASUREMENT

There are four key dependent variables. The first variable is the depth of search. Depth of search is measured in two different ways, each of which tells us something different. First, it is measured as a count of the number of boxes the participants accessed. Second, depth of search can be measured as the average amount of time in seconds spent reading about any given piece of

information. It describes how closely the participant examined the campaign information.

The second dependent variable is the comparability of search. It measures the proportion of information that was considered for both candidates. For example, if a participant views the party identification for Candidate A and Candidate B at least one time each, then this is coded as a comparable search on that attribute. The variable is measured as the number of attributes considered at least once for both candidates. The third dependent variable is the content of the search, which is a count of the number of times an attribute is accessed.

The final dependent variable is the sequence of search, which corresponds to how the participant transitions from one piece of information to another. As demonstrated in Table 3.1, there are four possible transitions that a participant can make: intra-candidate, inter-attribute; intra-attribute, inter-candidate; intra-candidate, intra-attribute; and inter-candidate, inter-attribute. The first two are considered ordered or systematic searches, while the second two are considered random searches (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Although the authors do not explicitly state the reasoning for this classification, it goes back to the expectations for sequence of search for compensatory strategies. For example, with the additive linear rule a person focuses on one candidate at a time. When finished examining the first candidate, the decision-maker sums up the utility of the first candidate and then moves on a repeats the process for the remaining candidates one at a time. An intra-candidate, inter-attribute transition, where the participant examines the same piece of information for both candidates, sequentially is indicative of this systematic strategy. Likewise, with the additive difference rule, a person examines one attribute at a time for all candidates so that the decision-maker can compute the difference in utility for each attribute across candidates. Thus, an intra-candidate, inter-attribute transition, where a participant moves from one piece of information to another piece of information for the same candidate, is evidence of this systematic strategy.

The two remaining strategies are considered haphazard or random transitions because they indicate that the decision-maker is searching for information in an unsystematic way. In an intra-candidate, intra-attribute transition, a participant reexamines a piece of information for a

candidate. In an inter-candidate, inter-attribute transition, a participant examines an attribute of one candidate and then examines a different attribute for a different candidate. Each transition is coded into one of the four categories. For example, if a participant clicks on David Bass’s position on access to the courts, reads about the candidate’s position, returns to the information board, and clicks on Jeffrey Mills’s judicial experience, then this is counted as an inter-candidate, inter-attribute transition.

Table 3.1. Sequence of Search

	Inter-Candidate	Intra-Candidate
Inter-Attribute	New Candidate, New Attribute	Same Candidate, New Attribute
Intra-Attribute	New Candidate, Same Attribute	Same Candidate, Same Attribute

Lau and Redlawsk use two measures of sequence of search, one that captures the ratio of alternative to attribute-based searches and one that captures the amount of systematic searches. As Lau and Redlawsk (2006) note, examining the amount of alternative-based transitions is only useful in specifying the specific strategy (e.g. additive linear rule versus additive difference) and does nothing to distinguish between compensatory and noncompensatory strategies, which is of more concern here. The additive linear rule and the additive difference are both compensatory strategies. People who use either of these strategies have a deep search, compare as much information as possible and transition from one piece of information to another in an orderly fashion. The only thing that distinguishes these two searches is the amount of alternative-based transitions (search for information one candidate at time) versus the amount of attribute-based transitions (search for one attribute at a time for all candidates). The additive linear rule is an alternative-based strategy, while the additive difference is an attribute-based strategy. However, examining the amount of alternative-based search is a better measure of how information is organized in people’s minds (Rahn 1996), which is not the focus of this study.

This study examined how people adapt to information environments and thus Lau and Redlawsk’s (2006) second measure of sequence of search is more important. Lau and Redlawsk (2006) measured the amount of systematic search as the sum of the amount of intra-attribute and

intra-candidate transitions. However, to be clear, they only considered the intra-candidate, inter-attribute transitions and inter-candidate, intra-attribute transitions to be systematic. Thus, I measured the amount of systematic search as the percentage of intra-candidate, inter-attribute and inter-candidate, intra-attribute transitions. To do this, I took the sum of the number of intra-candidate, inter-attribute and inter-candidate, intra-attribute transitions and divided it by the number of possible transitions (See Equation 3.1 below).¹

$$\frac{(\textit{intra} - \textit{candidate}, \textit{inter} - \textit{attribute}) + (\textit{inter} - \textit{candidate}, \textit{intra} - \textit{attribute})}{\textit{total number of transitions}} \quad (3.1)$$

3.5 CONTROL VARIABLES

While my primary focus was the three contexts (ballot length, availability of partisan information, and the presence of campaign dialogue), I also controlled for other possible factors.² First, I controlled for the strength of a participant’s partisanship on a scale from 0 to 3, with 0 corresponding to independents, and 3 corresponding to strong partisans. Strength of partisanship will help to demonstrate the role of partisanship in each condition. Second, I controlled for participants’ interest in politics. Participants were asked “*How interested are you in information about whats going on in government and politics?*” with responses ranging from “not at all interested” (1) to “extremely interested” (5). Finally, I controlled for participants’ level of political knowledge using the standard 5-item knowledge test. This variable is the percentage of questions that the participant answered correctly on a scale from 0 to 1.

3.6 ANALYSIS

Depth of search, comparability of search, content of search, in-party search, and out-party search are all count variables and require a regression analysis that can handle the characteristics

¹The total number of transitions is equal to depth of search minus one.

²The variance inflation factors (VIFs) for the control variables range between 1.0 and 1.15. Since the VIFs are so small, there is little reason to be concerned with multicollinearity.

of the data. A Poisson distribution assumes that the conditional mean is equal to the conditional variance and that events are independent of each other. However, as many scholars note (King, 1998), this is rarely the case, especially in the social sciences. Thinking about how voters gather information, it is likely that the information that voters view is dependent on what they have already learned. When the conditional variance is greater than the conditional mean the data are overdispersed. Conversely, when the conditional variance is less than the conditional mean the data are underdispersed.

A negative binomial regression is a potential solution for data that are overdispersed, and it is a common default for scholars who handle count data. The negative binomial regression adds an additional parameter to the Poisson regression such that the conditional mean and conditional variance are modeled separately. Should the conditional variance and conditional mean be equal, the negative binomial regression collapses to a Poisson regression. However, the model assumes the data are overdispersed and the conditional variance is greater than the conditional mean. Thus, a negative binomial regression model cannot be used if the data are underdispersed. Some scholars will turn to a restricted generalized Poisson regression (see Famoye, 1993) to model data that are underdispersed and, like the negative binomial, will collapse to a Poisson when the dispersion parameter equals zero. However, as Sellers and Shmueli (2010) note, the restricted generalized Poisson regression is limited in the amount of underdispersion that it is able to capture.

An alternative to these models is the Conway Maxwell-Poisson regression (COM-Poisson). The COM-Poisson regression is less restrictive than other models for count data. It allows for a range of dispersion (over or under dispersion) and is also able to model data with a large degree of underdispersion. What is more, the COM-Poisson regression tends to have a better model fit than other models, even to the point of some models leading to incorrect interpretations (Sellers and Shmueli, 2010).

Even though the COM-Poisson can model over, under, and equal dispersion, the dispersion parameter is still useful for interpretation. If the dispersion parameter shows the data is

equally dispersed (the conditional mean equals the conditional variance), then there is evidence that the search was random. However, if the conditional mean does not equal the conditional variance (data are over or underdispersed), then there are clumps of data either at the mean or extremities of the distribution, implying that it was not a random process that generated the data (King, 1998). In other words, this parameter provides additional insight into how the data was generated and thus how voters chose to search for information.

The remaining dependent variables, depth in terms of time and sequence of search, are continuous variables. Therefore, an OLS regression was used to examining the effects of context on these two variables.

CHAPTER 4

BALLOT LENGTH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Lost in the large number of elections America uses for public office are significant variations in the number of choices, salience, and information that citizens must consider when they make a decision. From one election to the next and one jurisdiction to another, voters can face substantially different learning environments, which may affect the ability of voters to gather enough information to make reasoned decisions. Normative theories expect voters to make well reasoned decisions—to gather as much information as possible and compare information across alternatives. Political scientists have long complained about the lack of information that voters have and its consequences for elections.

Yet, it is possible that the design of our electoral system is too demanding, given the cognitive limitations of voters, and the ability of voters to gather information in a rational manner is compromised by the context of the learning environment. Consider the 2008 elections in Brunswick, Maine, and Boulder, Colorado. Boulder had a total of 49 items on the ballot (22 offices, 13 amendments, 4 referendums, 3 county issues and 7 city issues). In contrast, Brunswick had a total of 12 items on the ballot (9 offices and 3 referendums). The only thing that the two ballots had in common was both ballots included the office of the President on the United States.

Given the drastic difference in the number of choices voters are asked to make in Brunswick and Boulder, do voters gather information differently for presidential candidates? One can imagine a voter in Boulder behaving quite frantically as he/she tries to gather enough information to make a reasoned decision for each office on the ballot. Voters in Boulder potentially had less time than voters in Brunswick to devote to learning about the president, unless they decide to forgo learning about other items on the ballot. Even if voters in Boulder wanted to focus on just the presidential candidates, they still have more information to sift through in order to find information about the presidential candidates.

The number of offices on the ballot has largely been overlooked in the decision-making and information search literature. Most of the emphasis on ballot length has examined the consequences for down ballot elections (Selb, 2008; Bowler, Donovan and Happ, 1992; Brockington, 2003), ignoring the consequences for the top of the ballot when voters become overwhelmed with choices. Being such a prominent characteristic of American elections, we need to understand what implications ballot length has for the decision-making process.

This chapter examines the consequences of lengthy ballots on the ability of voters to learn about candidates. Results suggest that the length of the ballot affects the way voters search for and gather information. To examine the effects of ballot length on how voters acquire information, participants were randomly assigned to one of two campaigns. Participants in the first group were assigned to a campaign where they only had to learn about two candidates running for president. Participants in the second group, learned about two candidates for each of seven offices and three state-wide propositions. The results show that as the length of the ballot increases, voters become frantic, searching for more information but in a less orderly fashion with a focus on the in-party candidate.

4.2 BALLOT LENGTH

Much of the literature on ballot length focuses on awareness (knowledge) and vote choice with little concern for how voters acquire information. However, if ballot length does affect awareness and choice, then it is likely that it affects other parts of the decision-making process. As Jerit, Barabas and Bolsen (2006) note, the context of the campaign affects the knowledge that voters possess. With concurrent campaigns, the opportunity to learn about candidates decreases as campaigns vie for voters' attention. In choosing to learn about a piece of information for a candidate in one election, a voter may be giving up the opportunity to learn information about a candidate for another election. After all, a voter cannot watch two campaign commercials at once or attend two campaign rallies at the same time. If this is the case, then there should be differences in acquisition, retention, and choice.

One of the most pertinent studies is Wolak (2009). Unlike much of the literature, Wolak does not focus on the bottom of the ballot or low salience elections. Rather she examines voters' knowledge of candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, given possible concurrent elections for the president, the U.S. Senate, and governors' offices. Wolak (2009) finds mixed results for the effects of concurrent elections on knowledge about the candidates. Her results indicate the the presence of a presidential race does not affect the ability of voters to recall the names of candidates for races for the House of Representatives. However, in non-presidential election years, the results are much more nuanced. Concurrent Senate races help voters recall the names of House candidates and increase the ability of voters to place the candidates ideologically. However, the presence of a gubernatorial race in a non-presidential election year does not affect the ability of voters to recall the names of House candidates but does decrease the ability of voters to identify the ideological direction of House candidates. What is more, an intense gubernatorial campaign leads voters to mention fewer things they like (another proxy for knowledge) about a House incumbent and mention more things they like about a House challenger. Taken as a whole, Wolak's (2009) work suggests that in the presences of concurrent campaigns, voters gather information differently. The presence of concurrent campaigns alters the opportunities that voters have to learn about information, leading to a shallower search in some instances, as reflected in the low levels of knowledge about the candidates during concurrent campaigns.

However, this study is still limited in what it is able to say about how concurrent elections affect knowledge levels, as it does not examine the possibility of a lower salience office affecting knowledge levels of a higher salience office. As Nicholson (2003) finds, ballot propositions can prime issues in elections at the top of the ballot. This implies that the bottom of the ballot may be just as important for voter knowledge as the top of the ballot.

4.3 SHOULD BALLOT LENGTH MATTER TO INFORMATION SEARCHES?

The small literature on ballot length and voter awareness and knowledge suggests that ballot length may alter the way voters gather information, but scholars have yet to examine this

relationship in a political setting. Most studies on information searches focus on how a voter behaves in a single election or how a consumer searches for information about a single product class (Jacoby et al., 1976; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Redlawsk, 2004; Lau, 1995; Moore and Lehmann, 1980). Yet one of the distinct features of American elections is the variation in the number of elections, indeed competitive elections, across jurisdictional lines. While scholars have varied the number of products or candidates available to understand how increasing the complexity of the information environment alters the information search (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006), scholars have yet to consider how the number of product classes or electoral offices that people are asked to learn about might affect the way people search for information. During the typical campaign season, there are multiple offices on the ballot that span from the local to national level. This means that voters need to gather information for each decision that is to be made on Election Day if they are to make a well reasoned decision for each item on the ballot. Yet, voters have limited resources, both in terms of time and cognitive abilities. These limitations may lead voters to forgo learning about some information.

While scholars have yet to explore how the number of decisions to be made affects how voters make decisions, increasing the number of candidates running for an office and the number of offices on the ballot are both examples of increased task complexity. These two examples can be distinguished as horizontal task complexity (adding candidates) or vertical task complexity (adding offices). As Payne, Bettman and Johnson (1992, p. 90) note, “characteristics of the decision problem...can evoke different [decision] strategies that at least partially determine the preferences and beliefs we observe.” The literature on task complexity is consistent. As task complexity increases, people are more likely to rely on noncompensatory strategies (Einhorn, 1971; Tversky, 1972). In fact, “a major determinant of which strategy will be used in a task is task complexity” (Payne, 1982, p. 386).

In political science, scholars have demonstrated that the number of candidates running for an office affects the decision strategies that voters use (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006) and the evaluation of candidates (Riggle, 1992; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Lau and Redlawsk (2006) find

that voters in a primary election who have four candidates to learn about have a deeper, less comparable, and less ordered search than voters who only have to learn about two candidates. Riggle (1992) also demonstrates that as the number of candidates on the ballot increases, voters tend to rely more heavily on the party identification of the candidates for their evaluations. This suggests that as the environment or task becomes more complex, voters rely more heavily on simplifying strategies rather than using compensatory strategies. It also indicates that their search is likely not as deep, and voters are not comparing as much information and instead relying on the simple comparison of Democrat versus Republican.

However, the number of candidates running for an office and the number of the offices on the ballot are distinct phenomena. When an additional candidate is added to a race, the choice set is changed. The voter must now evaluate and compare an additional candidate, which may change judgements and decisions about the original set of candidates. For example, in 1992 voters had three candidates to consider: Ross Perot, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. By contrast, voters only had to learn about John McCain or Barack Obama in 2008. A voter had an additional candidate to learn about in 1992. In either 1992 or 2008, the process of searching for information is relatively easy. The voter must only ask which candidate and which piece of information or attribute he/she wants to learn about.

In contrast, when more offices are added to a ballot, the choice set for offices on the original ballot does not change, but an additional layer is added to the choice set. Using the 2008 contest between John McCain and Barack Obama again, no matter how many contests there are on a ballot in a given precinct, there are no additional candidates to learn about for president. The choice between Barack Obama and John McCain remains the same no matter where a person lives in the United States. What does change is the number of other offices that a voter must consider in addition to the president. Thus, a person must now decide which contest, candidate, and piece of information or attribute to learn about.

Moreover, prior research has demonstrated the inability of people to handle complex sets of information (Miller, 1956; Cowan, 2001). Cowan (2001, pages 88-89) even goes on to layout

some conditions under which people reach their cognitive limits to process information. These include when there is an information overload that prevents a person from committing information to long-term memory and when the information environment prevents a person from organizing or categorizing information. The multi-layered process of gathering information about candidates limits voters' ability to group information and organize it, and voters are often left with individual stimulus items. Moreover, the amount and fast flow of information during a campaign can lead to an information overload.

The multilayered process inherently makes it more difficult for voters to process information, given their limited cognitive capacities. A voter may choose to examine one piece of information about a presidential candidate, but then when offered the chance to learn about candidates for other offices can no longer manage the information. Imagine a scenario where there 7 offices on the ballot. If a person is only able to handle seven plus or minus two chunks of information at a given time (Miller, 1956), then seven elections, which is on the low end in ballot length in the United States, is already maxing out a voter's cognitive capacity. More over, bouncing between elections makes it more difficult for voters to group information into larger chunks of information. A voter is not able to focus on a single election and group that information together, but rather gathers individual chunks of information for each election. One could now imagine a voter becoming quite frantic as they attempt to adapt to the complex environment. *Ceterus paribus*, the addition of another layer to the decision task (additional offices) may alter the way voters gather information about candidates for a given office.

There is some evidence that vertical task complexity matters. Early research on ballot length examined the role of ballot length on vote outcomes. One of the electoral policy concerns that came out of these studies was the finding that the order of the candidates on the ballot matters, especially when the candidates are not well known and the race is toward the bottom of the ballot (Taebel 1975). Taebel's (1975) finding is consistent with research on direct legislation elections where ballots are known to be lengthy. As the ballot gets longer, voters are less likely to be aware of propositions on the ballot (Nicholson, 2003) and, even more so, they are less likely to

cast a “yes” vote in support of the proposition and instead vote to retain the status quo (Selb, 2008). In addition, McDermott (1995) finds that in low information elections, voters tend to rely more heavily on simplifying cues.

These findings suggest that by simply increasing the length of the ballot we can change how much information a voter has about a particular item on the ballot and possibly affect the voter’s choice. However, it is difficult to distinguish task complexity from fatigue in this particular case—that is how do we know if voters are becoming tired of learning about items on the ballot or if they are consciously choosing to not to learn about some items and focus on the ones they find most important? Moreover, just because voters are less informed as ballot length increases does not mean that they cannot cope and adapt their search behavior to the environment.

4.4 EXPECTATIONS

There are several expectations regarding the relationship between ballot length and voter information searches. First, as task complexity increases, there is a greater need to simplify the decision environment. This implies that as the length of the ballot increases voters will be less likely to use a compensatory strategy and more likely to use a noncompensatory strategy. Compensatory strategies are a way of simplifying the decision-making process. As soon as voters have the added layer of also deciding which office to learn about, in addition to which candidate and piece of information, the environment will become overly complex, making it more difficult to make value trade-offs.

Second, because of voters’ need to simplify the environment when there are many offices on the ballot, they will rely on pieces of information that have the greatest benefit with the smallest cost—the candidates’ party affiliation. Thus, as the number of offices on the ballot increases, voters should access the party affiliations of the candidates more frequently.

Third, an increase in task complexity should also lead to greater uncertainty surrounding the decision (Dhar, 1996). This means that as the number of offices on the ballot increases, voters will need to search for more information about the candidates in order to have a sufficient level of

certainty to make the decision—or in other words sacrifice. Thus, the number of pieces of information examined should increase as the number of contests on the ballot increases. However, as voters struggle to handle the more complex environment that lengthy ballots present, the average amount of time voters spend examining individual pieces of information will decrease.

Fourth, since voters are expected to examine more pieces of information, but compare less information, the search must be directed more toward one of the candidates. Given the importance of partisanship, voters should direct their search toward the in-party candidate. This means that as ballot length increases, voters will examine more pieces of information for the in-party candidate.

Fifth, since an increase in the number of offices on the ballot increases the complexity of the environment, voters will struggle to manage their search for information. Even though voters will adapt their search strategies to help manage the environment, a voter's search for information about candidates will be less systematic as the number of offices on the ballot increases. Voters will be more likely to skip around and transition from one candidate on an issue to a different candidate on a different issue, rather than comparing the two candidates in a systematic fashion. This means that as task complexity increases, the search for information about the candidates should become more random. Voters who face longer ballots should have a higher proportion of intra-candidate, intra-alternative and inter-candidate, inter-alternative searches than voters who face shorter ballots

Finally, while searching for more party content is preliminary evidence of using the confirmatory model, there are also different expectations for strong and weak partisans. If voters are resorting to the confirmatory model when they are faced with learning about more elections, then strong partisans should search for less information than weak partisans and compare less information than weak partisans when faced with longer ballots. Additionally, strong partisans subjected to longer ballots should access party content more frequently. Moreover, since partisans should focus on the in-party candidate more, their search should also be more ordered than nonpartisans who face lengthy ballots.

4.5 METHODS

4.5.1 Experimental Manipulation

In order to test how the number of elections on the ballot affects voter information searches, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the first condition, participants only had to learn about two candidates running for president. In the second condition, participants had the opportunity to learn about two candidates for each of the seven offices on the ballot (president, senate, United States representative, governor, state legislator, state supreme court judge, and mayor) and three state-wide propositions (deceased candidate procedure, term limits for Congress, and redistricting procedures).

In trying to keep the campaign as realistic as possible, all information available on the information board was gathered from real campaign materials and news articles for each office and the amount of information available for each campaign varied by election. In other words, there was more information available for the presidential campaign than the senatorial campaign and so forth down to the mayoral campaign. 40% of the information was about the presidential candidates. 19% of the information was about the senatorial candidates. 18% was about the congressional candidates. 8% focused on the gubernatorial candidates. 6% of the information was about the candidates for the state legislature and another 6% for the state supreme court candidates. 4% of the information was devoted to the mayoral candidates and 1% was devoted to state-wide propositions. However, it is important to note that the same amount (230 boxes) and type of information was available for the presidential candidates in both conditions. In order to give a real value to each of the offices beyond the label, participants were asked to rank order each of the offices. They were then told that following the mock campaign they may be tested and that the probability of getting a question about any one candidate or office is based on their ranking of the offices.

4.5.2 Changes to the Information Board

The information board used in this part of the study is just like the one depicted in Figure 3.1 with two important changes. In Figure 3.1 all of the boxes are the same color. In the condition in which there were multiple offices for participants to learn about, the boxes were color-coded by office. In other words, each office had its own color to correspond to boxes about that office. Participants still had to figure which color of box corresponded to which office on their own. No key was provided to participants. The color coding of boxes was simply meant to help participants distinguish between offices on the information board. Also, since overall there was more information available in the condition with multiple offices up for election, participants were given the same amount of time per box that scrolled down the information board, thus holding time constant.

4.6 RESULTS

There were a total of 206 participants who completed the study. Table 4.1 shows that there were not any significant differences in demographics across the two conditions. According to the results in Table 4.1, the sample is almost evenly split between men and women. Most of the sample was white, and has as at least started college or has a college degree. Politically, the sample tends to be slightly Democratic and liberal. The average participant reports to be moderately interested in politics. Finally, the average participant scored about a 75% on a standard political knowledge test.

Table 4.1. Demographics

	Short Ballot	Long Ballot	p-value
Female	0.54	0.48	0.41
White	0.80	0.80	0.92
Education	3.31	3.47	0.14
Interest	3.35	3.45	0.52
Party Id	3.37	3.37	0.92
Ideology	3.46	3.36	0.65
Political Knowledge	73.68	75.58	0.39

4.6.1 Manipulation Check

Based on a t-test of the manipulation check, participants perceived a difference in the two conditions, as shown in Figure 4.1. When participants were asked to rank how difficult it was to gather information, participants reported that it was more difficult to gather information about candidates when there were more offices on the ballot. On a scale from one (very easy) to five (very difficult) participants in the condition with more offices on the ballot reported that gathering information was between somewhat difficult and in between, while participants who only had to learn about the president reported that gathering information about candidates was between somewhat easy and in between. Thus, as ballot length increases, participants report to find it more difficult to search for and gather information. This initial finding, based on participants self-reported assessment of the environment, suggests that concurrent elections make it more difficult for voters to handle the information environment.

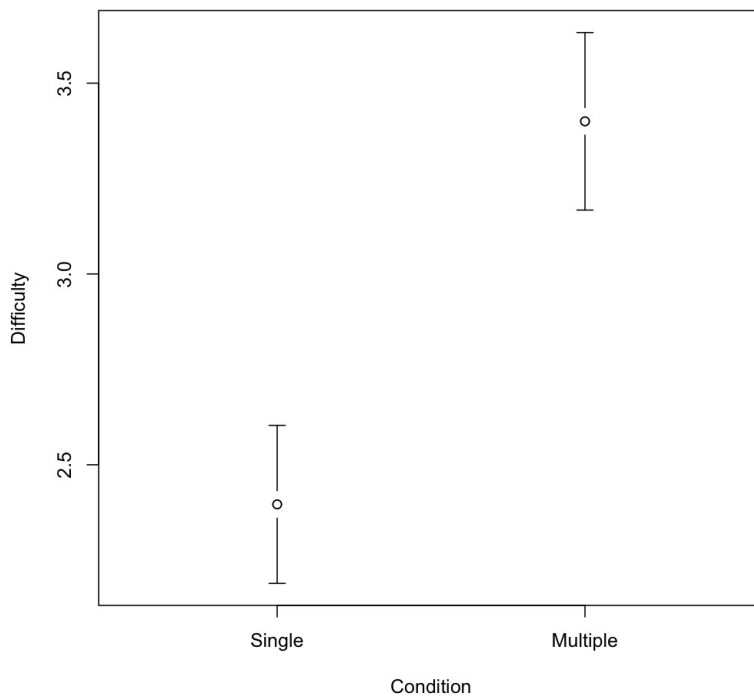


Figure 4.1. Manipulation Check

4.6.2 Differences in the Search for Information

Table 4.2. T-Test of Condition and Dependent Variables

	Short Ballot	Long Ballot	p-value
Depth (Number Items)	48.89	51.17	0.48
Time	12.97	8.22	0.001
Comparability	7.01	14.34	0.001
Content(Party)	3.55	3.27	0.47
Sequence	0.38	0.41	0.09
In-Party	18.60	20.00	0.35
Out-Party	19.98	21.62	0.26

Table 4.6.2 presents the results of a series of t-tests for each of the dependent variables by condition. There are several interesting, significant findings in Table 4.6.2. First participants spent significantly less time, on average, examining information. Participants with the short ballot spent about 13 seconds on any given piece of information, while participants with the long ballot only spent about 8 seconds per item they examined. Second, participants assigned to the condition with the long ballot compared more information. In fact, they compare twice as much information as participants in the condition with the short ballot. Finally, although slightly insignificant, participants with the long ballot appear to have a more systematic search.

A more detailed examination of voters' ability to handle the information environment in the two contexts at hand is presented in Tables 4.3 through 4.8. There are two models in each table. Model 1 shows the independent effect of ballot length on the dependent variables and Model 2 shows the conditional effect of the length of the ballot and the strength of partisanship on the dependent variables. Starting with depth of search in Table 4.3, there was no statistical difference for participants in the two contexts for the total number of items they accessed under Model 1. However, looking at Model 2, there are some nuances. Strong partisans examined more information in the condition with only a single presidential election and thus appear to engage in a relatively deep search. As expected, strong partisans examined fewer pieces of information about the candidates. Although this variable is slightly insignificant, the results suggest that strong partisans examine about 50% more information (coefficient/ ν or 0.004/0.08).

Also important to note is the α parameter, which is a measure of the amount of dispersion¹ in count data. When α is greater than 1 it means that the data are overdispersed, which would indicate a dependence between observations. Moreover, overdispersion indicates that early search about the candidates induces more search later on. When α is less than 1 it means the data are under dispersed and again there is a dependence between observations. In contrast to overdispersion, underdispersion indicates that early search about the candidates generates less search later on. However, when α is equal to 1, the data are equally dispersed and indicates an independence of observations. In other words, the search for information at any given point in time does not induce or inhibit search later on in the search process. When α is equal to one, the data fit a Poisson distribution (King, 1998).

Put more simply, when alpha is greater than one (overdispersed) it means that accessing a piece of information increases the amount of search later in the campaign. When alpha is less than one (under dispersed) it means that accessing a piece of information decreases that amount of search later in the campaign. When alpha is equal to one (equal dispersion) accessing one piece of information is independent of accessing any subsequent pieces of information.

In both Models 1 and 2 in Table 4.3, α is greater than one and statistically different from one. In Model 1, the α parameter is 10.23 and in Model 2 it is 10.09. High alpha coefficients, such as these, indicate a strong dependence between observations. Moreover, overdispersion in this instance implies that searching for pieces of information early in the search process induced participants to access more pieces of information later in campaign. This is significant, since it is evidence that participants were not just randomly clicking through boxes to view information, as would be the case if α equaled one, but rather it shows that participant chose to learn about a piece of informations based on what they had already learned.

Interestingly, if we look at depth of search as how closely people examine information, there are differences. In Table 4.4 under Model 1, the coefficient for long ballot is negative and

¹Dispersion is the ratio of the conditional variance to the conditional mean. When the conditional variance is greater than the conditional mean, then the data are overdispersed. When the conditional variance is less than the conditional mean, then the data are under disperse. If the conditional mean is equal to the conditional variance, then the data are equally dispersed. (King, 1998)

Table 4.3. COM-Poisson Regression for Depth of Search (Items Accessed)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.270* (0.044)	0.268* (0.044)
Long Ballot	0.004 (0.007)	0.017 (0.011)
Partisan Strength	0.004 (0.003)	0.009* (0.005)
Political Knowledge	0.012 (0.015)	0.011 (0.015)
Interest in Politics	0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)
Long Ballot*Partisan Strength		-0.010 (0.007)
N	206	206
Log-Likelihood	-907.97	-906.76
ν	0.08	0.08
α	10.23*	10.09*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Long Ballot=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for the condition with the short ballot.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

ν is the conditional variance.

α is the dispersion parameter.

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.4. OLS Regression for Depth of Search (Time)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	12.874* (1.873)	13.214* (1.973)
Long Ballot	-4.563* (0.927)	-5.219* (1.504)
Partisan Strength	-0.174 (0.481)	0.424 (0.659)
Political Knowledge	0.023 (0.021)	0.023 (0.021)
Interest in Politics	-0.613 (0.447)	-0.637 (0.450)
Long Ballot*Partisan Strength		0.517 (0.932)
N	206	206

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
 Long Ballot=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for the condition with the short ballot.
 A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at p=0.05
 * p < 0.05

significant, which is consistent with the hypothesis for time. Longer ballots lead participant to spend less time learning, on average. When faced with learning about additional elections, participants spent 4.5 seconds less than participants who only had to learn about presidential candidates. This is substantively significant, given that the average amount of time spent learning about any given piece of information is 10.07 seconds. This represents almost a 50% reduction in the amount of time spent learning about any given item. Interestingly, in Model 2 this finding only holds for independents, implying that weak partisans have a more difficult time managing concurrent elections.

Turning to comparability of search in Table 4.5, participants actually compared more information when they had more offices to learn about. The condition variable is positive and more than twice its corresponding standard error. Participants assigned to the condition with the longer ballot compared 97% more information than participants with the shorter ballot. This is counter intuitive and contrary to expectations for comparability of search, but it might indicate a need to organize information in more complex environments. Interest in politics is also

significant. Participants who reported being extremely interested in politics compared 20% more information between candidates than participants who are not interested in politics. Interestingly, under Model 2, it is only independents who were more likely to compare information when faced with concurrent elections. Independents assigned to the condition with the longer ballot compared 127% more information. Likewise, strong partisans were less likely to compare information when faced with concurrent elections. Although the interaction term is slightly insignificant, the results indicate that strong partisans assigned to the long ballot compared about 23% more information. This is consistent with the conditional expectation of the length of the ballot and strength of partisanship. Since independent voters are unable to rely on party identification, there is no in-party candidate for an independent voter to focus on and therefore there should be a greater variance of search for independents as evidenced in Table 4.5.

The α parameter in both Model 1 and Model 2 demonstrates that the data are overdispersed. Given the dependence of observations, this shows that a participant who previously compared information was more likely to compare information in the future. This suggests that participants who compare information do so as a strategy. They do it intentionally and not randomly.

Table 4.6 presents the results for the sequence of search, specially focusing on the amount of search that was ordered. In both Model 1 and Model 2, there is nothing that predicts how ordered of a search a person will have, although the experimental manipulation comes close to achieving statistical significance in Model 1.

Finally, the analysis of the search for party content is presented in Table 4.7. In neither Model 1 or Model 2 does the experimental manipulation, long ballot, lead participants to access the party identification of the candidates more frequently. Under Model 1, strong partisans accessed the party affiliations of the candidates more frequently than weak partisans and independents. Also, political sophisticates were less likely to repeatedly access the party affiliations of the candidates while the politically uninformed were more likely to seek out the party affiliations multiple times though out the campaign.

Table 4.5. COM-Poisson Regression for Comparability of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.165* (0.067)	0.137* (0.069)
Long Ballot	0.165* (0.028)	0.216* (0.043)
Partisan Strength	-0.007 (0.011)	0.020 (0.019)
Political Knowledge	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.007* (0.001)	0.009 (0.010)
Long Ballot*Partisan Strength		-0.039 (0.023)
N	206	206
Log-Likelihood	-648.49	-647.03
ν	0.17	0.17
α	3.98*	3.89*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Long Ballot=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for the condition with the short ballot.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

ν is the conditional variance.

α is the dispersion parameter.

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.6. OLS Regression for Sequence of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.369* (0.026)	0.379* (0.027)
Long Ballot	0.022 (0.013)	0.003 (0.021)
Partisan Strength	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.013 (0.009)
Political Knowledge	0.014 (0.008)	0.015 (0.028)
Interest	0.004 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
Long Ballot*Partisan Strength		0.015 (0.013)
N	206	206

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
 Long Ballot=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for the condition with the short ballot.
 A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at p=0.05
 * p < 0.05

The dispersion parameter, alpha, in both Models 1 and 2 indicates there is some overdispersion. This implies that if a participant looked for party content early on in their search, they were also likely to look for it again later on. However, this parameter is fairly close to one, indicating that the influence of the early search for party content only weakly induced participants to examine party content later on in the campaign.

4.6.3 In-Party and Out-Party Search

Given the differences in the two conditions in comparability of search, it is possible that participants are directing their search toward the in-party or out-party candidate. Table 4.8 presents the analysis of the depth of search for the in-party and out-party candidates. The dependent variable in this instance is the number of pieces of information the participant accessed for the in-party or out-party candidate. As demonstrated in Table 4.8, there were no differences between the two conditions. Participants, regardless of how many concurrent elections there were, were no more or less likely to search for information about the in-party candidate. It is

Table 4.7. COM-Poisson Regression for Content (Party) of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.544* (0.162)	0.540* (0.168)
Long Ballot	-0.053 (0.058)	-0.064 (0.099)
Partisan Strength	0.064* (0.030)	0.061 (0.040)
Political Knowledge	-0.004* (0.001)	-0.004* (0.001)
Interest	0.046 (0.029)	0.045 (0.029)
Long Ballot*Partisan Strength		0.008 (0.058)
N	206	206
Log-Likelihood	-448.25	-448.24
ν	0.48	0.18
α	1.92*	1.92*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Long Ballot=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for the condition with the short ballot.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

ν is the conditional variance.

α is the dispersion parameter.

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4.8. COM-Poisson Regression for In-Party and Out-Party Search

	In-Party		Out-Party	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.379* (0.061)	0.371* (0.061)	0.466* (0.066)	0.457* (0.067)
Long Ballot	0.012 (0.014)	0.036 (0.022)	0.012 (0.014)	0.036 (0.024)
Partisan Strength	-0.003 (0.007)	0.007 (0.010)	0.015* (0.007)	0.024* (0.010)
Political Knowledge	0.023 (0.031)	0.025 (0.031)	0.017 (0.032)	0.016 (0.032)
Interest in Politics	0.004 (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)	0.006 (0.007)	0.007 (0.007)
Long Ballot*Partisan Strength		0.019 (0.014)		0.017 (0.014)
N	206	206	206	206
Log-Likelihood	-755.96	-755.02	752.54	751.80
ν	0.15	0.151	0.180	0.182
α	5.87*	4.88*	5.82*	4.85*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Long Ballot=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for the condition with the short ballot.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

ν is the conditional variance.

α is the dispersion parameter.

* $p < 0.05$

possible that this is due to participants focusing on the in-party candidate regardless how many elections there are.

However, turning to out-party search in Table 4.8 there is some evidence that the number of elections on the ballot matters. Under Model 1, the experimental condition is insignificant. However, turning to Model 2, which examines out-party search, strong partisans who only had to learn about presidential candidates examined more information for the out-party candidates. This is interesting, especially since the research shows that voters tend to focus on the in-party candidate (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006).

The alpha parameter measuring dispersion indicates the data are overdispersed. This also implies that how much information a person seeks about the in-party and out-party candidate is dependent on how much information they already have. It's also interesting to note that the dispersion parameter for the over all depth of search in Table 4.3 is almost twice that of the alpha parameter for in-party or out-party search. This indicates that while participants may consider how much information they have about the in-party and out-party candidate, they are more concerned with the overall amount of information they have and not the balance of information between Democratic and Republican candidates.

4.7 DISCUSSION

The results are somewhat mixed. In thinking about the results, there is some indication that participants had a more difficult time handling the more complex environment. While there is no difference in the amount of information that participants viewed in the two conditions, participants spent considerably less time on average learning about any given piece of information when faced with learning about multiple elections. This implies that they were making more trade offs—that they were giving up the opportunity to learn more in-depth about the presidential candidates, so that they could learn about down ballot candidates.

While the results for context of search do not support the hypothesis for the role of party identification, there is still other evidence that party identification matters. Strong partisans

searched for more information, when they could focus on just the two candidates running for president. Independents and weak partisans examined information less closely and compared more information when they had to learn about additional elections. Taken together, this suggests that the role of partisanship depends on the context.

Given these findings there is evidence that when participants were faced with the prospect of voting for more offices, their strategies became less compensatory-like. Their search was shallower (less time spent learning) and because their search was shallower it was easier for them to compare more information. These findings are consistent with several non-compensatory strategies, most notably the confirmatory model and elimination by aspect (EBA). Depth of search can vary greatly under an EBA strategy, while a confirmatory model predicts a moderately deep search. EBA predicts a high degree of comparability, since the decision-maker compares each attribute across alternatives until an alternative does not meet a set standard for the attribute at hand. Under a confirmatory strategy, the decision-maker should focus on confirming that the in-party candidate actually takes on the positions of that party, leading to a low degree of comparability between candidates.

EBA, however, would not expect strength of partisanship to play a role in depth or comparability of search. Weak partisans and independents compared more information when faced with a single election and strong partisans compared less information when facing multiple elections. Moreover, strong partisans examined less information within faced when they faced a longer ballot. This evidence provides support that as the length of the ballot increases, participants relied more heavily on the party affiliations of the candidates and less on the attributes of the candidates. It is evident that participants moved from a compensatory-like model toward a confirmatory model. Normative democratic theory would expect a compensatory search, regardless of whether the ballot was short or long. Based on the findings in this chapter, this is not the case.

At the most basic level, these results indicate that participants adjust their information and acquisition strategies to the environment. This is consistent with prior literature on task

complexity (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Einhorn, 1971; Tversky, 1972; Payne, Bettman and Johnson, 1992; Payne, 1982). What is more, the results suggest that voters' understanding of politics and their depth of knowledge about candidates is dependent on the number of elections they have to learn about. While they might examine the same amount of information, voters do not examine information as closely when the ballot is long. This is consistent with Wolak's (2009) work on candidate awareness and concurrent elections that show that the presence of concurrent elections can decrease voters' awareness of candidates.

These results also suggests that depending on the length of the ballot, voters acquire different information. Moreover, information acquisition is shaped by partisanship. Thus, thinking back to the example above of Boulder, Colorado, and Brunswick, Maine, voters in these two environments may have a different knowledge base—not because they are learning about two different elections, but rather because of the influence of concurrent elections. Given the results from previous literature (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006), it is also possible that the same voter in Boulder could make a different decision if he/she lived in Brunswick. This is contrary to the expectations of normative democratic theory.

While this experiment is able to say that the number of concurrent elections matters to how voters gather information, it is not able to say what type of relationship there is. Future research may wish to take a closer look at this relationship to see if this relationship is linear or exponential, or if there is a cut-off point at which strategies change. Moreover, this project is unable to discern if learning about two candidates for two elections requires similar strategies for four candidates in one election. It is only able to say that ballot length shapes the information that voters acquire and the strategies that they use in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 5

PARTISAN VERSUS NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most consistent findings in the literature on voter decision-making is that party identification influences voting (Markus and Converse, 1979). Even when a voter defects to the out-party candidate in an election, they often keep their old partisan ties. Of all the information considered by voters, the party identification of the candidate appears to play the biggest role in the decision-making process (Niemi and Weisberg, 1993). However, in nonpartisan elections, party labels are not readily available, making the decision-making process more difficult than in partisan elections. Yet, we still have high expectations for voters to make a well-reasoned decision.

Nonpartisan elections were established to insulate offices from national partisan politics and put the focus on local issues (Williams and Adrian, 1959). The idea is that voters should enter the voting booth with knowledge of the candidates' beliefs and qualifications and without the influence of parties. Essentially, nonpartisan elections are designed to compel voters to make more reasoned decisions, although this may not necessarily be the case. Existing literature (Squire and Smith, 1988) indicates that voters have some partisan information about candidates in nonpartisan elections, yet we do not know where this partisan information comes from. Given the importance of partisanship in the vote choice and the cognitive savings party identification offers, it is important to understand how voters cope with the lack of party cues and how they potentially come to behave like partisans.

This chapter examines how the availability of partisan information affects the way voters search for and acquire information. Specifically, it examines how voters behave in a nonpartisan versus a partisan judicial election and tests whether the differences in these electoral contexts affects how voters search for and acquire information. Scholars have long complained about the lack of knowledge voters possess (Carpini and Keeter, 1996), especially in low salience elections

such as judicial elections (Johnson, Shaefer and McKnight, 1978). Given the importance of partisan information in voter decision-making, it is important to understand how voters can adapt their search and acquisition strategies to make up for the lack of partisan information in nonpartisan campaigns.

In order to assess how the availability of partisan information affects how voters search for information, participants were assigned to one of two mock campaigns. In the first mock campaign participants had access to the candidates' party affiliation. In the second mock campaign, the candidates' party affiliation was unavailable to participants. Results in this chapter suggest that voters search for information differently when the candidates' party affiliations are not available and that people adapt their search and acquisition strategies to the given context.

5.2 SHOULD PARTISANSHIP MATTER?

Party identification is the most useful piece of information that a voter has at their disposal in partisan elections (Rahn, 1993). A voter does not need to know all of the specific policy stances of the candidates in order to cast a reasoned vote. All the voter needs to do is learn whether the candidate is a Democrat or Republican, which is available on most ballots. But how can a voter get away with knowing nothing more than the party affiliations of the candidates?

Party cues are not arbitrary labels (Druckman, 2001, page 239). Party cues contain contextual information including information about policy preferences, group alliances, trait judgements, specific examples of group members, and performance assessments (Rahn, 1993; Bastedo and Lodge, N.d.). Moreover, the Democrat and Republican cues are opposites or antonyms. The relevant traits of the Democratic cue are least characteristic traits of the Republican cue and vice versa (Bastedo and Lodge, N.d.). For example, when a voter sees the Democratic cue, he or she may assume that the candidate prefers to not regulate the legality of abortion, generally speaking, and at the same time assume that the Republican opponent favors regulating or outlawing abortion. To be clear, just because a person has access to a party cue does not mean that they consider every piece of information associated with the cue. Rather, as many

scholars have argued, voters rely on heuristic or gut level decision-making (Popkin, 1991). Heuristics (discussed in more detail below) serve as a summary of the specific information.

However, the party cue and the contextual information that comes with it is only useful if it is stable over time for both the individual and the party organization. At the party organization level, the content of the party platforms have been relatively stable. Geer (1992) found that many aspects of the parties from the New Deal era are still intact. At the individual level, party identification has been found to be highly stable (Converse 1964, Converse and Markus 1979). Some scholars even see party identification as such a stable long term force that there is little need to understand the short term forces that affect party identification (Fiorina, 1981). However, scholars have found short-term changes in party identification over the course of campaign cycles (Allsop and Weisberg, 1988).

The stability of the party cue and the possible information that it contains makes party identification a useful short-cut for voters. Ever since the early works, such as *The American Voter*, found that voters possess little issue-specific knowledge, scholars have turned to party identification as the saving grace of the American democracy. Indeed, it is difficult to find a study that examines voting that does not include party identification as an explanatory variable. However, party identification is only useful to voters if party cues are available in the campaign. Non-partisan elections, then, pose a challenge for voters.

Interestingly, much of the research thus far has focused on comparing the vote decision in partisan and nonpartisan elections, and the research indicates that partisanship matters in both contexts. Early research comparing voters in partisan and nonpartisan elections tended to conclude that Republican candidates fared better than Democrats in nonpartisan elections, especially at the local level, which some scholars attributed to a difference in resources between Democrat and Republican candidates (Hawley, 1973). However, more recent research has found that the difference in partisan votes is not a Republican advantage, but rather a minority party advantage (Schaffner, Streb and Wright, 2007).

Other research has focused on comparing top of the ballot, partisan races to nonpartisan

racers at the bottom of the ballot. Studies have found that there are high correlations between the top of the ticket and votes for the judicial candidate of the same party (Kiel, Funk and Champagne, 1993) and election outcomes tend to reflect the partisan make-up of the state or district (Converse, 1966). Looking at judicial elections in Texas, Kiel, Funk and Champagne (1993) even found that coattails of top ballot candidates are more important than incumbency in predicting the vote.

In nonpartisan elections, the effects are less pronounced, but they are still there. Looking at local elections, Salisbury and Black (1963) used precinct level data and found that partisanship is only somewhat less predictive of the vote in nonpartisan elections than partisan elections. However, there is more variability from in the results across precincts for the nonpartisan elections than partisan elections, demonstrating that even though partisanship plays a role in nonpartisan elections, it has less explanatory power. The authors attributed this difference to the amount of intensity or controversy associated with the election. Similarly, Conway (1969) found that partisanship explains the direction of the vote in nonpartisan local elections.

State supreme courts, which vary widely from state to state as to whether they use partisan or nonpartisan elections, provide a ripe area for exploring differences in voting behavior in partisan and nonpartisan elections. Looking at state supreme court elections, there is also some evidence that partisan cues are important to a person's vote, but the evidence is more mixed. Squire and Smith (1988) looked at retention elections for state supreme court judges. The authors used a survey experiment whereby part of the sample was told which governor appointed the state supreme court judge, which was meant to serve as a partisan cue. The authors found that the number of people who abstain decreased when they were told who the appointing governor was and furthermore there was a greater number of people who opposed retaining the judge. Based on this finding the authors concluded that the injection of the partisan cue helps to crystalize choices. Moreover, the scholars found that respondents' evaluations of the appointing governor consistently predicted the vote for retention even in two of the four cases where the respondents were not told who the appointing governor was by the interviewer. This, in part, may explain why

the authors found a relationship between approval of the appointing governor and voting to confirm the judge in nonpartisan elections when respondents were not informed who the appointing governor was, but no relationship between partisanship and confirming the judge. It is possible that these two variables were measuring the same thing. In addition to the conclusions drawn by Squire and Smith (1988), it is also worthy to consider that informing voters who the appointing governor was does not serve as a partisan cue. Rather, it serves as an endorsement.

Barber (1971) explored the correlation between nonpartisan state supreme court elections in Ohio and top state races. Here, just like Kiel, Funk and Champagne (1993), the author found there was a correlation between the nonpartisan state supreme court races and partisan race at the top of the ballot, but it is smaller than correlations between other state races. This shows that even though the election is nonpartisan, many voters still behave like partisan voters.

Similarly, Baum (1987) examined semi-partisan state supreme court elections in Ohio. Here, the author compared party defection rates in state supreme court races to those in the presidential election. While the presidential race had fewer party defectors, the gap in the number of defectors in state supreme court races and the presidential race was not very substantial. Moreover, the authors examined the role that information played in party-line voting. In comparing two state supreme court races, the authors found that more information does not necessarily lead to more party-line voting but rather it depends on the form of the ballot (partisan or nonpartisan) and content of the information available.

In contrast to these findings, there is some literature that indicates that voters may not be as capable at deciphering possible partisan cues in nonpartisan elections. Bonneau (2007) found that judicial challengers fair better in partisan elections (see Bonneau, 2005). Given this, voters must be accessing different types of information in the two elections. For challengers to do better in nonpartisan elections than partisan elections, it indicates that voters must be making an effort to learn more about both candidates, since they do not know whether the candidates are Democrats or Republicans. Moreover, it suggests that voters are not merely relying on partisan information.

This research suggests that voters acquire information differently in partisan and

nonpartisan elections. Moreover, the research demonstrates that voters may be able to handle the search for information in partisan and nonpartisan campaigns equally. This chapter builds on these works and explores how voters acquire information in partisan and nonpartisan elections.

5.2.1 Schema Theory

Although schema theory's application to political behavior is debated (see Lodge et al., 1991; Kuklinski, Luskin and Bolland, 1991), most political psychologists would agree that party identification is a cognitive schemata. Schemas, at their most basic level, are a "richly-connected network of information relevant to a given concept" (Fiske and Linville, 1980, page 552). Furthermore, they are based on experience, and they are hierarchically structured (Lau, 1986). One could imagine a partisan schema, such as the crude one in Figure 5.1, which represents the typical Democrat for a hypothetical voter. At the center of the network is Democrat, the primary concept for the schema. Attached to Democrat is more specific information, such as issues, exemplars, endorsements, and character traits, with more detailed information attached to each of these nodes. Furthermore, pieces of specific information are also connected across the network, such as NARAL being connected to abortion. This network provides the voter with a rich source of information as the voter moves from the general concept of Democrat out into the network when the Democratic cue is primed.

When a candidate claims to be a Democrat, the voter can access the schema and estimate the likelihood that the candidate matches their notion of a Democrat. Likewise the voter can summarily accept the candidate's claim to being a Democrat and assume that there is a high likelihood that the candidate will possess the same traits as those contained in their cognitive schema for Democrat. Both of these are examples of how a voter can use the party schema as a heuristic. The use of a heuristic denotes the process by which people estimate the likelihood that an event will occur, such as the likelihood that the candidate will behave like a Democrat, given that the candidate is affiliated with the party (Kuklinski, Luskin and Bolland, 1991, page 1347). Heuristics, however, are not rationally calculated risks, but rather a gut feeling (Popkin, 1991).

When it comes to voting, as with any decision, information is often missing, such as the party affiliations of candidates in nonpartisan elections. Cognitive schemata can be used to fill in gaps. Conover and Feldman (1989) have demonstrated the ability of people to make inferences based on the information they already possess. Using panel data, the authors showed that people, especially early in campaigns when they have not had a chance to become informed about a candidate's policy stances, infer issue positions from party cues, which is consistent with schema theory. Given that people make inferences from party cues to issue positions, it is not much of a stretch that people can also make inferences from issue positions to party labels. Party labels, after all, are still the most valuable piece of information that a voter has at their disposal.

However, inferring issue positions from party cues requires a much different type of information search than inferring party affiliations from issue positions. To infer issue positions from party cues, the voter only needs to search for the party affiliations of the candidates. From here, if the heuristic value of the party cue is high enough (i.e. the voter believes that there is a high likelihood that the candidate will behave like a typical party member), the voter can stop searching or continue searching for confirmatory information until the heuristic value of the cue is sufficient to the voter. In other words, the party cue may allow voters to side-step the search for some information or even give voters the confidence to make a decision with little information other than the candidates' party affiliations. On the other hand, to make inferences about party affiliations from issue positions requires that the voter learns the about a variety of issue stances to ensure, for example, that they do not classify a pro-gun Democrat as a Republican. The voter should search for information until the partisan cue is primed and then continue to confirm that their assessment is accurate.

5.2.2 Endorsements

One particular cluster of information that may prove useful and help to prime the partisan cue are endorsements. Endorsements serve “as a summary of all of the difficult candidate-and issue-specific information processing” (Lau and Redlawsk, 2001). “Previous research

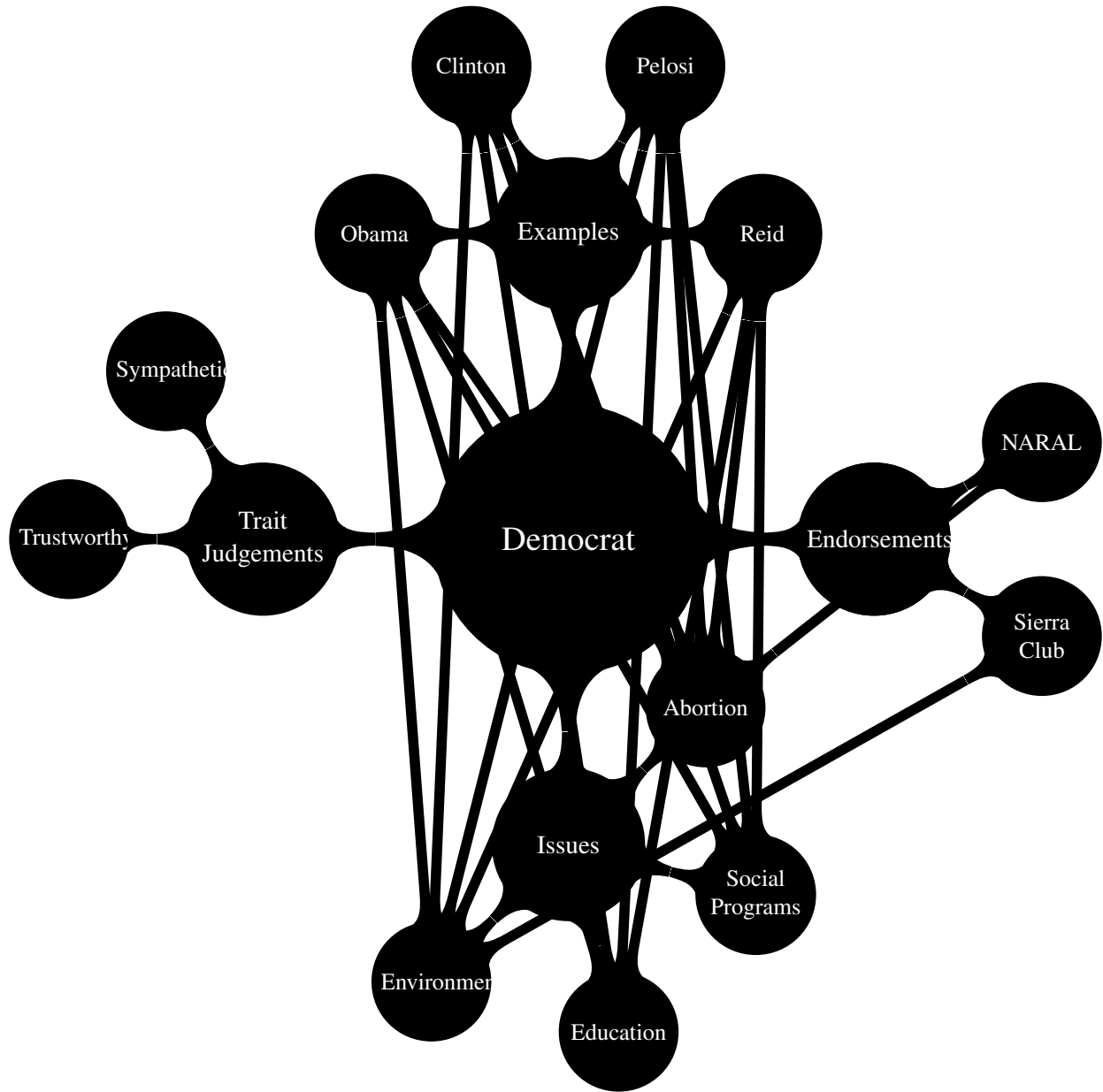


Figure 5.1. Democratic Party Schema

reveals...that groups are one of the major foci people use in organizing their general political cognitions” (Miller, Wlezien and Hildreth, 1991, page 1135). However, endorsements are not as stable as partisan cues (Miller, Wlezien and Hildreth, 1991) which makes them less reliable than party cues.

For an endorsement to be useful, the voter must know whether they like or dislike the group (Lau and Redlawsk, 2001). This in turn requires some cursory knowledge of the organization (the NRA is pro-gun), political figures (Scooter Libby is conservative), elected officials (Obama is a Democrat), and news commentators (Glen Beck is conservative). In other words, there must be some context surrounding the endorsement, whether it is a preexisting knowledge structure (Lau, 1986) or information provided by the endorsing group at the time of the endorsement (Arceneaux and Kolodny, 2009).

Research on the effects of endorsements indicates that an endorsement for a candidate has a larger, negative effect for the opposing party (Arceneaux and Kolodny, 2009; St Dizier, 1985; McDermott, 2006). For example, Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009) found that a pro-choice group who endorses the Democratic candidate makes Republican voters more likely to support the Republican candidate, even among pro-choice Republican voters. Moreover, the authors found that the endorsement is the most valuable to low knowledge voters (Arceneaux and Kolodny, 2009). This implies that in low information or low salience elections, endorsements are even more important. Moreover scholars have demonstrated that endorsements can have substantial effect in both partisan (McDermott, 2006) and nonpartisan (St Dizier, 1985) elections.

In St Dizier’s (1985) study, he demonstrated the importance of endorsements and how endorsements can have substantial effects when learning about candidates. Given the information initially provided to participants, the study started off as a nonpartisan campaign. One treatment group was presented with a candidate endorsement, which caused a substantial number of participants to change their vote. In a subsequent stage of the study, the same treatment group was provided the party affiliations of the two candidates. This only caused a small proportion of participants to change their vote. This indicates that not only are people capable of using

endorsements, but that the information provided by endorsements in nonpartisan election may help voters to make a decision they otherwise would have made in a partisan campaign.

Moreover, research suggests that endorsements may be a source of partisan information. Squire and Smith (1988) found evidence that the appointing governor (the endorser) helps voters make up for their lack of partisan knowledge about candidates. The results demonstrate that knowledge of the appointing governor of the judge significantly correlates with the party affiliations of the voters. Similarly, McDermott (2006) found evidence that an endorsement provides a useable cue to voters about the partisan or ideological direction of the candidate, for example that a candidate endorsed by the AFL-CIO is likely to be a liberal candidate.

The connections that voters make between an endorser and a candidate's party affiliation likely go back to schema theory. However, instead of the voter working from the center of the schema (party identification) to the outside (the network of information associated with the party), the voter works from the outside to the center to determine the party affiliation of the candidates. For example, In Figure 5.1, when the voter knows that a candidate has been endorsed by NARAL, the voter can then start moving inward in the schema and associating the candidate with the Democratic Party. Once the voter is satisfied that the candidate is a Democrat, then the voter has access to the Democratic schema and the rich network of information that comes with it.

5.2.3 Expectations

There several competing models that explain how voters should search for information in partisan and nonpartisan elections—the confirmatory model and compensatory models. The confirmatory model recognizes the importance of party identification to voters. Under the confirmatory model, voters learn the party identification of the candidates and then turn to confirming that the candidates possess the prerequisite characteristics of their party. A voter using the confirmatory model is frugal, and as Downs (1957) notes, it is not rational for voters to spend much time learning about candidates.

But what do voters do when party identification is not available? They must turn to other

strategies for learning about candidates. Nonpartisan campaigns were set up with the hope that voters would make a more informed decision, a more rational decision. Designers of nonpartisan campaigns expect that voters will use a compensatory strategy or at least more so than voters in partisan campaigns. Thus, in partisan campaigns, participants' search for information should more closely resemble a confirmatory search while participants in the nonpartisan campaign should have information searches that resemble a compensatory search.

Given these two expectations about voters' information search in partisan and nonpartisan campaigns, there are several more specific expectations for differences in how voters search for information. First, the confirmatory model predicts that voters will seek out the party identification of the candidates and then gather enough information to confirm a candidate is actually a Democrat or Republican. The confirmatory model predicts a relatively deep search. In contrast, compensatory models expect voters to learn as much information as possible and not merely satiffice. Therefore, voters in nonpartisan elections should have a deeper search.

The confirmatory model also expects voters in partisan elections to focus on the in-party candidate. In contrast, compensatory models expect voters to compare information between candidates and not just focus on one candidate. This means that voters in nonpartisan elections should have a more comparable search than voters in partisan elections.

Given that voters in the partisan election will most likely focus on the in-party candidate, their search should be relatively ordered. They should stay focused on searching for information about one candidate and transition from one piece of information to another about that candidate. If voters, in the absence of the candidates' party affiliations, actually do behave according to compensatory models, then their search should also appear ordered, either focusing on one candidate and then the other or comparing candidates issue by issue. However, given the vast network of information that the candidates' party affiliations provide, it is likely that voters in partisan campaigns will better be able to handle the environment, and therefore, have a more ordered search than participants in the nonpartisan campaign.

The literature consistently finds that voters in nonpartisan elections behave like partisans,

but where do voters get the partisan information? One of the easiest sources of partisan information is through endorsements. Voters are relatively good at making inferences about candidates (Conover and Feldman, 1989). Therefore, inferring a candidate's party affiliation from endorsements should not be much of a stretch. Given that endorsements are one of the most readily available sources for partisan information in nonpartisan campaigns, it is expected that voters in nonpartisan campaigns will rely more heavily on endorsements, exhibited by accessing candidate endorsements more frequently. However, endorsements are a tool of the politically sophisticated (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006, 2001). They require knowledge beyond the cue in order for endorsements to be useful. Therefore, endorsements should be used more frequently by those with higher levels of political knowledge.

Finally, if the confirmatory model is used more frequently in partisan elections, then there should be differences across the dependent variables for strong and weak partisans. It is strong partisans who should be most readily able to use the confirmatory strategy. Independents, who have no real attachment to either party, are likely to have a less robust partisan schema. Therefore, strong partisans should have a shallower and less comparable search in partisan elections than weak partisans and independents, while there should be no difference between strong and weak partisans in their depth of search and comparability of search in nonpartisan elections.

5.3 METHODS

5.3.1 Experimental Manipulation

To study how voters search for information in partisan and nonpartisan campaigns, participants were randomly assigned to either a partisan or nonpartisan campaign. The only difference between the two conditions was that participants in the partisan campaign had the ability to learn the party affiliations of the two candidates, while participants in the nonpartisan campaign could not. While I could have used a presidential campaign for this study, presidential campaigns are highly partisan, and the party affiliations of the candidates are readily available. Therefore, in order to make the nonpartisan campaign as realistic as possible, I used the state

supreme court for the mock campaign, and I gathered information from actual campaign information from state supreme court elections. Eight states use partisan elections to select state supreme court justices, while 15 states hold nonpartisan elections to elect state supreme court justices. Thus, this contextual variation is representative of a real variation in partisan and nonpartisan elections.

5.3.2 Changes to Information Board

The dynamic information board works just like the one shown in Figure 3.1. However, there were a few cosmetic alterations made for the nonpartisan condition. First, in the partisan condition, the boxes on the screen were either blue or red, reflective of the candidates' political party. However, participants had to figure out on their own which color was associated with which party. In the nonpartisan condition, boxes were either green or yellow, and this was only to help participants distinguish between candidates. Second, the heading at the top of the information board reflected the type of election. In the partisan condition, the heading simply read "2012 State Supreme Court Election," while in the nonpartisan condition the heading was "2012 State Supreme Court Election (Non-Partisan)." This helps remind participants in the nonpartisan condition that they are participating in a nonpartisan campaign.

5.4 RESULTS

There were 143 participants who completed the study. The distribution of important demographic characteristics across the two experimental conditions is presented in Table 5.1. Based on the t-tests in Table 5.1, there were no differences between the two groups on any important demographic variable. There were slightly more females than males who completed the study and most of the sample was white. On average, participants reported having at least some level of college and being moderately interested in politics. Participants tended to lean to the Democratic side and reported being slightly liberal. On the standard 5-item knowledge test, participants averaged just over a 75%.

Table 5.1. Demographics

	Non-Partisan	Partisan	p-value
Female	0.56	0.45	0.24
White	0.77	0.71	0.44
Education	3.37	3.41	0.72
Interest	3.40	3.52	0.52
Party Id	3.41	3.70	0.30
Ideology	3.30	3.72	0.13
Political Knowledge	77.08	76.76	0.93

5.4.1 Manipulation Check

Based on a t-test of the manipulation check, participants perceived a difference in the two conditions, as shown in Figure 5.2. When asked to identify whether the candidate was a Democrat or Republican, participants in the nonpartisan campaign were not able to correctly identify the party affiliations of the two candidates as frequently as those in the partisan campaign. Figure 5.2 shows the average for the two conditions with 95% confidence intervals surrounding the point estimates. In the nonpartisan group, participants correctly identified the candidates' party affiliations about 50% of the time while in the partisan condition, participants correctly identified the party affiliations of the candidates about 85% of the time.

5.4.2 Differences in the Search for Information

Table 5.2. T-Test of Condition and Dependent Variables

	Non-Partisan	Partisan	p-value
Depth (Number Items)	50.50	55.69	0.20
Time	7.41	7.14	0.86
Comparability	16.72	17.64	0.03
Content(Endorsements)	7.32	7.54	0.73
Sequence	0.45	0.50	0.08
In-Party	15.88	20.87	0.06
Out-Party	15.46	21.04	0.03

Tables 5.2 through 5.8 present the results for how the availability of the candidates' party

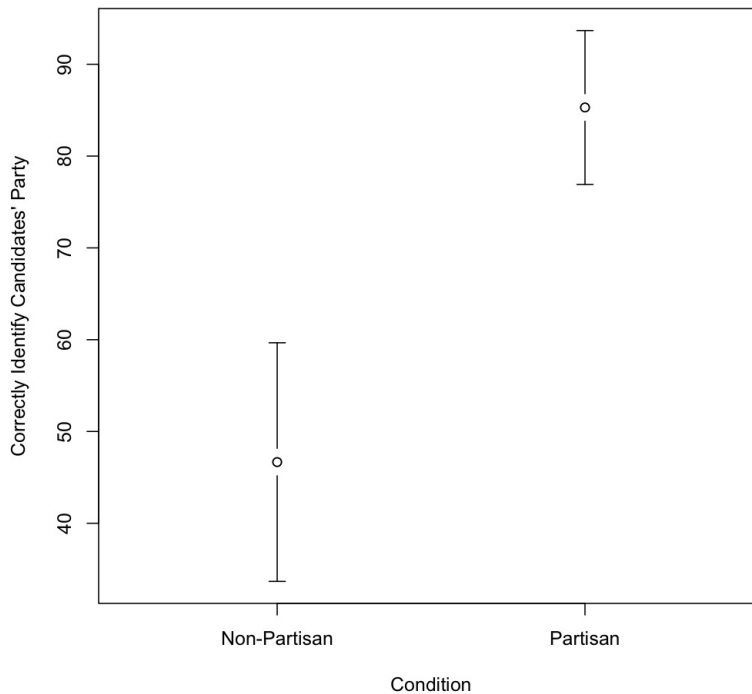


Figure 5.2. Manipulation Check

affiliations affect how participants search for information. The study variable, *condition*, is the condition that participants are assigned to, with 1 corresponding to the partisan campaign, and 0 the nonpartisan campaign. Table 5.2 presents the results of a series of t-tests for each dependent variable. First, contrary to expectations, participants in who were exposed to the partisan campaign compared more information. Participants in the partisan condition compared about 18 pieces of information, while participants in the nonpartisan condition compared about 17 pieces of information. Participants in the partisan condition also had a more systematic search. In the nonpartisan campaign, approximately 50% of participants' transitions in the partisan campaign were systematic, while only 45% of transitions were systemic in the nonpartisan campaign. Finally, there appear to be significant differences across conditions for in-party and out-party search. However, the differences between in-party and out-party search are not significant.

In the remaining tables, there are two models, one model without an interaction which

shows the overall impact of the campaign context on the search for information and a model with an interaction that presents a more nuanced examination of the role of partisanship and tests for differences between strong and weak partisans. Starting with Table 5.3, first it is important to note that the dispersion parameter, α , is greater than one indicating that the data are over dispersed. This implies that the observations are not independent (King, 1998) and in fact it shows that learning about one piece of information is dependent upon what participants previously learned. In other words, the decision to learn more information is determined by what the participant has already learned. This is important because it shows that participants were not just randomly learning about the candidates.

Looking at the regression coefficients and standard errors in Model 1, it appears that there are no differences between partisan and nonpartisan campaigns, and that the amount of information that participants searched for is only driven by their level of political sophistication. However, this is not the case in Model 2. In Model 2, strong partisans are less likely to search for information in nonpartisan campaigns, but are no more likely to search information in partisan campaigns. Strong partisans, in nonpartisan campaign examine 15% (-0.012/0.08) less information. What is interesting here is that partisanship matters, even in nonpartisan campaigns, and it drives strong partisans in nonpartisan campaigns to search for less information. This is consistent with the expectation for strong partisans. It also suggests that the highly developed schemas that strong partisans have help in the decision-making process in nonpartisan campaigns. Political knowledge continues to be important in Model 2, but it is no longer the only important predictor of depth of search.

The results for the second measure of depth of search are presented in Table 5.4. In neither Model 1 or Model 2 does the presence or absence of partisan information impact how long participants spent on average learning about any given piece of information. Likewise, none of the control variables explain who is spending more or less time learning about campaign information.

Table 5.5 presents the results for comparability of search. Starting with the dispersion parameter, it is important to note that α is less than one, indicating that the data are

Table 5.3. COM-Poisson Regression for Depth of Search (Items Accessed)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.278* (0.059)	0.295* (0.061)
Partisan Campaign	0.012 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.013)
Partisan Strength	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.012* (0.006)
Political Knowledge	0.004 (0.019)	0.048* (0.020)
Interest in Politics	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength		0.014 (0.009)
N	143	143
Log-Likelihood	-569.13	-567.85
ν	.08	0.08
α	8.97*	9.01*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Partisan Campaign=1 for the condition with the partisan campaign, and 0 for the nonpartisan campaign.
A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$
 ν is the conditional variance.
 α is the dispersion parameter.
* $p < 0.05$

Table 5.4. OLS Regression for Depth of Search (Time)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	8.292* (3.161)	6.836* (3.306)
Partisan Campaign	-0.287 (1.463)	2.369 (2.349)
Partisan Strength	0.543 (0.743)	1.507 (0.998)
Political Knowledge	-0.027 (0.033)	-0.033 (0.033)
Interest in Politics	0.142 (0.680)	0.356 (0.693)
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength		-2.109 (1.464)
N	143	143

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Partisan Campaign=1 for the condition with the partisan campaign, and 0 for the nonpartisan campaign.
A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at p=0.05
* p < 0.05

underdispersed and that the decision to not compare information is dependent on previously compared information.

The two models presented in Table 5.5 reveal an interesting dynamic between the availability of partisan information and comparability of search. In Model 1, it appears that participants who had partisan information available to them compared 207% more information. The coefficient for condition is positive and more than twice its corresponding standard error. This is counter-intuitive and contrary to expectations. Participants in the partisan campaign were expected to compare less information than participants in the nonpartisan campaign. However, a closer look in Model 2 provides some clarity. Independents in the partisan conditions did compare more information in the partisan campaign as was expected. The coefficient for partisan campaign in Model 2, which corresponds to independents in the partisan campaign, is positive indicating an increase in the amount of information they compared. As the strength of a participant's partisanship increased, they compared less information in the nonpartisan campaign

Table 5.5. COM-Poisson Regression for Comparability of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	8.886* (1.133)	8.921* (1.138)
Partisan Campaign	0.166* (0.078)	0.126 (0.122)
Partisan Strength	0.020 (0.038)	0.006 (0.052)
Political Knowledge	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Interest in Politics	-0.006 (0.035)	-0.009 (0.036)
Partisan Campaign*Political Knowledge		0.032 (0.075)
N	143	143
Log-Likelihood	-292.21	-292.12
ν	3.11	3.11
α	0.31*	0.30*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Partisan Campaign=1 for the condition with the partisan campaign, and 0 for the nonpartisan campaign.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

ν is the conditional variance.

α is the dispersion parameter.

* $p < 0.05$

Table 5.6. COM-Poisson Regression for Content (Endorsements) of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.832* (0.176)	0.769* (0.196)
Partisan Campaign	0.018 (0.048)	0.146 (0.185)
Partisan Strength	-0.018 (0.024)	-0.020 (0.025)
Political Knowledge	0.002* (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)
Interest in Politics	-0.006 (0.022)	-0.006 (0.022)
Partisan Campaign*Political Knowledge		-0.002 (0.002)
N	143	143
Log-Likelihood	-343.84	-343.58
ν	0.51	0.51
α	1.76*	1.75*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
 Partisan Campaign=1 for the condition with the partisan campaign, and 0 for the nonpartisan campaign.
 A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 2 is insignificant at p=0.05
 ν is the conditional variance.
 α is the dispersion parameter.
 * p < 0.05

as evidenced by the negative coefficient for strength of partisanship.

Table 5.6 presents the results for searching for endorsements (content of search). The dispersion parameter, α , in both Model 1 and Model 2 is greater than 1 indicating that the data are over dispersed. It also indicates the decision to learn about an endorsement is dependent upon leaning about previous endorsements.

The results of Model 1 in Table 5.6 show that political knowledge is an important predictor of whether someone will rely on endorsements and indicates that the absence of partisan information is not, in and of itself, sufficient to get people to rely on endorsements. The results hold in Model 2, which demonstrates the importance of political knowledge to the use of endorsement, regardless of the context.

Table 5.7. OLS Regression for Sequence of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.472* (0.057)	0.464* (0.060)
Partisan Campaign	0.045 (0.026)	0.060 (0.043)
Partisan Strength	-0.007 (0.013)	-0.002 (0.018)
Political Knowledge	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.023* (0.012)	-0.025* (0.013)
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength		-0.012 (0.026)
N	143	143

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
 Partisan Campaign=1 for the condition with the partisan campaign, and 0 for the nonpartisan campaign.
 A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at p=0.05
 * p < 0.05

The results for sequence of search are presented in Table 5.7. The results indicate that participants in the partisan condition had a more ordered search. On average, participants in the partisan campaign has 4.5% more systematic transitions. This is likely due to the partisan campaign being easier to manage, since it is what voters are used to and is consistent with expectations. However, a closer look at Model 2 reveals that it is only the knowledgeable in the nonpartisan campaign whose search was more ordered. This is evidence that having a more developed schema is important, especially in nonpartisan campaigns. Interest in politics was a significant predictor of the order of a participant’s search across both Model 1 and Model 2 and, like political knowledge, may have to do with the development of a schema to handle the campaign environment.

The results for the depth of in-party and out-party search are presented in Table 5.8. First, note that all of the α coefficients are greater than one indicating the presence of overdispersion. This indicates that, like depth of search, choosing to view information about the in-party or

Table 5.8. COM-Poisson Regression for In-Party and Out-Party Search

	In-Party		Out-Party	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.009 (0.047)	-0.007 (0.049)	0.015 (0.048)	0.002 (0.050)
Partisan Campaign	0.031* (0.013)	0.058* (0.030)	0.035* (0.014)	0.063* (0.031)
Partisan Strength	0.045* (0.009)	0.053* (0.012)	0.047* (0.009)	0.056* (0.013)
Political Knowledge	-0.001 (0.030)	-0.006 (0.031)	-0.013 (0.030)	-0.017 (0.030)
Interest in Politics	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.009 0.006	-0.008 (0.006)
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength		-0.014 (0.014)		-0.014 (0.014)
N	143	143	143	143
Log-Likelihood	-481.73	-481.21	480.06	479.50
ν	0.039	0.040	0.38	0.386
α	9.92*	9.94*	10.20*	10.23*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Partisan Campaign=1 for the condition with the partisan campaign, and 0 for the nonpartisan campaign.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

ν is the conditional variance.

α is the dispersion parameter.

* $p < 0.05$

out-party candidate is dependent on prior information viewed about the in-party or out-party candidate, respectively.

The results in Table 5.8 show there are differences in the search for information about the in-party and out-party candidate. In Model 1, participants in the partisan campaign searched for more information about both the in-party and out-party candidate. The differences in how much information participants search for about the in-party and out-party candidate are not statistically significant. However, in Model 2 there are some important differences. Independents were more likely to search for more information about the out-party candidate in the nonpartisan campaign, but the effect of being an independent in the partisan campaign has no effect on search for information about the in-party candidate. Strong partisans in nonpartisan campaigns search for more information about the in-party and out-party candidate. However, strong partisans in a partisan campaign did not search for more information than expected for the in-party or out-party candidate.

5.5 DISCUSSION

The results indicate that voters search for information differently in partisan and nonpartisan elections. Participants in nonpartisan campaigns were less likely to compare information and strong partisans in nonpartisan campaigns were less likely to search for information. What is more, it is only political sophisticates in nonpartisan elections who were able to make use of endorsements. Scholars such as Carpini and Keeter (1996) have lamented the lack of knowledge that the average voter has, meaning that endorsements are of little use to most voters.

In addition, participants in the partisan campaign had a more ordered search. Although the evidence is not strong, it appears to be due to partisans focusing on the in-party candidate and engaging in a confirmatory search as expected. This also suggests that that partisanship still plays a role in nonpartisan elections. Moreover, strong partisans actually searched for less information in the nonpartisan condition, contrary to the hopes that partisanship would not influence voters

nonpartisan elections.

The results are also mixed as to whether nonpartisan elections encourage voters to make a more reasoned decision. While participants may have considered more information on average in nonpartisan campaigns, they also compared less information in nonpartisan campaigns. One would hope that voters would not only gather more information nonpartisan campaigns, but also compare more information.

There is also some evidence that participants may be schematically processing information. Participants searched for more information, especially strong partisans, in the condition with the nonpartisan campaign, which is suggestive of a confirmatory search. Likewise, political sophisticates made greater use of endorsements in the nonpartisan campaign. This provides mixed results for those who designed elections to isolate partisan politics.

CHAPTER 6

DIALOGUE

6.1 THEORY

Candidate dialogue is essential for democracy (Kelley, 1960; Kaplan, Park and Ridout, 2006). It is the foundation of democratic ideas, whereby the citizens come together to discuss problems, and through dialogue, reach a better outcome than an individual acting alone. Not only does dialogue help to inform the citizenry, but it also helps to flesh out ideas. Classical democratic theory expects citizens to engage in dialogue and the same should be true today of candidates in representative democracies. Citizens need candidates to engage in dialogue so that they have a full set of information on the candidates and can make informed decisions.

Rational decision-making requires a person to weigh the pros against the cons. Yet, in our society, voters are deprived of the very information that makes this possible. Dialogue between candidates is a rarity in American elections. For over a century, scholars have observed the lack of dialogue in presidential elections. James Bryce, an early observer of American politics, wrote in 1895:

The object of each party naturally is to put forward as many good political issues as it can, claiming for itself the merit of having always been on the popular side. Anyone who should read the campaign literature of the Republicans would fancy that they were opposed to the Democrats on many important points. When he took up the Democratic speeches and pamphlets he would be again struck by the serious divergences between the parties, which, however, would seem to arise, not on the points raised by the Republicans, but on other points which the Republicans had not referred to. In other words, the aim of each party is to force on its antagonist certain issues which the antagonist rarely accepts, so that although there is a vast deal of discussion and declamation on political topics, there are few on which either party directly traverses the doctrines of the other. Each pummels, not his true enemy, but a

stuffed figure set up to represent that enemy.

Almost forty years later, Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954, page 236) drew similar conclusions noting that “opposing candidates tended to ‘talk past each other,’ almost as though they were participating in two different elections.” These sentiment are noted in subsequent research including Kelley (1960), Page (1976), and Simon (2002). While the internet was thought to be the savior of political communication, like all advancements in technology (see Sotirovic and McLeod, 2004), it has proven to be a disappointment. Xenos and Foot’s (2005) content analysis of political campaign websites from the 2002 election shows that only a small portion of candidate websites actually engage in dialogue (directly or indirectly). Most of the candidate websites are focused on position taking.

How, then, given the lack of information available to voters, are voters supposed to become informed and make a rational decision? That is precisely the question that this study seeks to answer. This study examines how the presence or absence of dialogue between candidate affects the way voters search for and acquire information. One can imagine a voter going out in search for information, attempting to weigh the pros and cons, only to find out that comparable information is not available for the candidates. This makes the decision-making process more difficult for voters and they must adapt their strategies to the more complex decision-making environment.

In order to access the effects of candidate dialogue on voter information searches, this chapter used a dynamic information board to mimic the campaign environment and an experimental design to manipulate the amount of dialogue between candidates. Participants were assigned to learn about candidates in one of two campaign environments, one with complete dialogue and one with no dialogue. Results demonstrate that the absence of dialogue affects the way voters search for information. Given prior work in the field on campaign dialogue (Simon, 2002) and research on changes in decision strategies, this may explain the differences in electoral outcomes, and explain why this is such a popular strategy among political candidates.

6.2 SHOULD CANDIDATE DIALOGUE MATTER?

Dialogue requires at least two willing participants (Simon, 2002). In order for dialogue to occur, both candidates must address the same subject (Simon, 2002, page 3). In other words, if candidate A decides to talk about taxes, then for dialogue to occur, candidate B must also talk about taxes. Moreover, Simon (2002) and Bohman (2000) describe dialogue as a process that involves uptake of the opponents point of view. However, the decision to dialogue is a strategic one. Downs (1957) and many other scholars have noted, the primary goal of candidates is to win elections and as Simon (2002) demonstrates, dialogue may not always be a winning strategy for candidates.

The competition of the election also encourages candidates to take vague positions (Downs, 1957; Shepsle, 1972). Vague positions prevent candidates from marginalizing voters and losing votes (Downs, 1957; Page, 1976, 1978), but this makes it more difficult for voters to gather information about the candidates (Page, 1978). In reality, dialogue is not really occurring when candidates provide vague issues positions that often times merely restate the problem and do not provide any specific information about how they will deal with the problem (Page, 1978). Dialogue is meant to be an exchange of ideas, and vague issue positions that merely restate the problem do not bring any new ideas to the table.

What is more, candidates tend to focus on issues in which they ‘own’ (Simon, 2002; Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit and Hansen, 2003). This is the idea behind issue ownership theory, which states candidates only discuss issues in which they are perceived as being strong. According to issue ownership theory, the Democrats and the Republicans each have a different set of issues that they own. For example, Republicans are seen as being strong on foreign policy, while Democrats are seen as being strong on healthcare (see Pope and Woon, 2009; Petrocik, 1996).

This notion of issue ownership is consistent with prior works in the field that suggests candidates emphasize topics that are most beneficial to them (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; Petrocik, 1996; Sellers, 1998) or are ambiguous on issues in which they are perceived as

weak (Downs, 1957). This means that a Democratic candidate and a Republican candidate should have a different set of issues that they talk about. In other words, dialogue between competing candidates is not likely to occur.

Cases where dialogue does not exist is analogous with noncomparable alternatives. Johnson (1984) gives the example of buying a television or a vacation to Hawaii. These goods are not directly comparable. For example, the relevant attributes of the vacation to Hawaii may be tropical location, a \$2000 price tag, food, and hotel. In contrast, the relevant attributes of a television may be a 52 inch screen, 5 HDMI outputs, an optical output, a universal remote control, 1080p resolution, and a \$400 price tag. While the cost of the two alternatives may be comparable—\$2000 versus \$400—the defining attributes of each product are not. Similarly, imagine two candidates running for office. One candidate only makes speeches about education and welfare benefits and the other candidate only makes speeches about war and taxes. How are voters to compare these candidates?

Yet, when faced with a choice between the television or vacation to Hawaii consumers are able to decide between the two. Therefore, consumers must be making some kind of comparison. Lau (2003) distinguishes between comparable and noncomparable alternatives. He notes that with noncomparable alternatives, some of the attributes are unique to each alternative (See Johnson 1984, 1986). Furthermore, “alternatives can be *inherently* noncomparable— guns versus butter, say— or *defacto* noncomparable because of information about the alternatives exists but is unknown to the decision-maker” (Lau, 2003, page 39).

Thinking about campaigns, there is likely a mix of defacto and inherent noncomparability. However, for this study I am not interested in information that exists, but not encountered by the voter (defacto noncomparability). Rather, I am interested in what happens when information about an attribute simply does not exist for an alternative (inherent noncomparability). Thinking about the campaign described by James Bryce, there were many issues the candidates had addressed that the opposing party had not addressed. This is precisely what is meant by inherent noncomparability in the context of campaigns, and thus, the focus of this chapter.

Unlike consumer products, candidates can be much more difficult to compare. In thinking about a choice between two televisions, a consumer is readily able to consider information such as size, price, brand name, and picture quality. These are concrete attributes that do not change. Making a choice between two candidates, however, poses a different challenge. While the ideas and issue positions proposed by candidates might be equally as concrete as those of a television, it is up to the candidate to choose to reveal his or her position on any given issue. Moreover, candidates are purposely vague or change their message to suit their strategy (Downs, 1957). This means that unlike consumer products, political candidates operate in a unique market of information whereby products in the same class (candidates) can actually be non-comparable. These challenges lead us to ask how the lack of campaign dialogue affects how voters make decisions.

Johnson (1986) proposes that when products are not comparable, there are two main strategies that consumers can use—the additive linear rule or a process of abstraction. Using the additive linear rule, a consumer will add up the expected utility for each attribute that is available for a product or, in the case of this study, a candidate (Johnson, 1986). Alternatively, a decision-maker could use a process of abstraction to compare the choices. Here, the decision-maker translates the attributes into more abstract attributes (Johnson, 1984; Boyd and Lawson, 2001). This strategy is similar to the additive difference strategy, but using abstract attributes. For example, Johnson notes that a television and a stereo can be compared at an intermediate level of abstraction—their entertainment value. However, comparing the television and stereo to a refrigerator require a higher level of abstraction, such as necessity.

Voting can function in a similar way. When voters are not able to compare the issue positions of candidates due to a lack of dialogue, they can rely on a more abstract attribute, such as party identification. However, there are several important differences between the consumer choice environment and the political campaign environment. First, unlike the consumer choice environment, voters have several ready-made process of abstraction including party identification and ideology. Second, voters have a vast network of knowledge at their disposal that may not be

readily available in a consumer choice environment. While party identification may be an abstract representation of party-specific issue positions, prior work has demonstrated the ability of voters to use their vast network of prior knowledge, such as a partisan schema, to schematically process campaign information. This means that voters may be able to infer a candidate's party identification and other positions likely held by the candidate based on little information (Rahn, 1993; Conover and Feldman, 1989). This makes the process of abstraction quite different from that of the consumer.

Research in psychology and marketing suggests that non-comparable alternatives affect judgements and decisions. Yet, even here the literature is sparse, especially with regards to decision strategies. Johnson and Levin (1985) find that the more missing information there is, the lower the satisfaction a consumer reports to be with a purchase. However, when two attributes are negatively related, as is often the case with candidate positions, then it decreases the importance of the attributes that are present. In the context of a political campaign, this should mean that when there is no dialogue between candidates, issues weigh less heavily on the choice and judgement of the voter. This is consistent with other findings in psychology and marketing, such as Slovic and MacPhillamy (1974) and Nowlis and Simonson (1997). Slovic and MacPhillamy (1974) find that attributes that are common among the alternatives received greater weight than non-comparable attributes. Similarly, Nowlis and Simonson (1997) find that comparable alternatives weigh more heavily in comparison-based tasks. However, when options are evaluated separately, the non-comparable attributes weigh more heavily.

While there are no comparable studies in political science or political communication, there are some inferences that can be drawn from research of voters' viewing of presidential debates. While not pure dialogue, presidential debates are as close as political scientists can get to examining dialogue between presidential candidates in a natural setting. As Benoit, Hansen and Verser (2003, page 335) note, "debates present the leading candidates side by side, discussing more or less the same topics, which helps voters compare the options available to them and assists them in making their vote choice." Debates allow for a direct comparison of the candidates. This,

however, does not mean that candidates in debates will provide clear policy alternatives.

Based on research from presidential debates, there are several reasons to believe that candidate dialogue is important. While many studies have found that debates do not alter voting preferences, research indicates that this is not necessarily true for everyone. Voters who are undecided, conflicted, and weakly committed have a change in voting preference (Geer, 1988; Kaid, 2004). This suggests that weak partisans and independents have a different utility for debates. Furthermore, given that debates are the closest approximation to candidate dialogue, it seems likely that the lack of dialogue will have the strongest effect on weak partisans and independents who depend on dialogue to make their decisions.

Moreover, there is evidence that people do learn during presidential debates and that learning is equal between candidates. Chaffee (1978) surveyed participants prior to the start of the debates and following each debate. Chaffee demonstrated that following each debate, the number of “don’t knows” declined on the issues that were discussed during the debate. While Chaffee (1978) did not specifically tackle whether people correctly identified the positions of candidates on the issues discussed during the debate, his results indicate that debates helped to clarify candidates’ issue positions. Miller and MacKuen (1979) compared participants’ responses to candidates policy positions in years with and without presidential debate. In the years in which there was a presidential debate, National Election Study (NES) respondents were more informed about the candidates’ issues positions. Holbrook (1999) also found that voters learn from political debates. However, he found that most of the learning takes place in the early debates, when voters are still undecided or least knowledgeable about the candidates. This might explain why Geer (1988) found that the people who are most likely to be change their voting preference following debates are the undecided or weakly committed.

Research by Tomz and Van Houweling (2009) also suggests that partisanship may play a moderating role when there is dialogue between candidates versus no dialogue. The authors found that in non-partisan elections, voters do not punish or reward candidates for ambiguity. Participants were equally likely to select the ambiguous candidates in a non-partisan election as

they were to select the candidate who took a clear position on an issue. However, in partisan elections, the results indicate candidate ambiguity can help garner the support of co-partisans without costing them the support of voters in the opposing party.

This body of literature, taken as a whole, suggests that the absence of dialogue between candidates has consequences for the decision-making process. To this point though, research has yet to understand how dialogue between candidates or the lack thereof affects how voters acquire their information base. Moreover, prior work does not consider if voters are able to make up for this missing information or what strategies voters might use to deal with missing information.

6.3 EXPECTATIONS

The absence of dialogue should have real consequences for how voters search for information. The most obvious expectation, given the structure of the information board, is there should be a sizable difference in the amount of information that participants compare. Participants assigned to the condition with no candidate dialogue do not have a chance to compare the candidates' issue positions, only the candidates' characteristics, while participants in the condition with dialogue are able to compare issue positions.

Research suggests that participants still take into account non-comparable information. However, it is not weighted as heavily in the decision-making process. If people weigh non-comparable information less, then it is more likely that they will ignore it. This means that participants in the condition without candidate dialogue should search for less information than participants in the condition with candidate dialogue.

However, as Johnson (1986) suggests, when comparable information does not exist, then people should turn to an additive linear strategy or a process of abstraction. In a campaign where candidates address two different sets of issues, we might expect voters to use a similar strategy. An additive linear strategy would be indicative of an intra-candidate, inter-attribute search where the participant focuses on one candidate at a time. If it is the case that people turn to an additive linear strategy, when comparable information does not exist, then it is expected that participants

in the campaign without dialogue will have a higher rate of intra-candidate, inter-attribute transitions than participants in the condition with dialogue and thus exhibit a more ordered search.

Johnson (1986) also suggests that some people may turn to a process of abstraction. In this case, party affiliations are a ready made abstract piece of information that voters can use in the absence of comparable information. Thus, it is expected that participants in the campaign without dialogue will rely on the party affiliations of the candidates and will access the party affiliations of the candidates more frequently. Moreover, it is expected that participants' strength of partisanship will influence search patterns (depth, comparability, sequence, and the search for the candidates' party affiliations).

Since, partisanship should play a greater role when there is no dialogue, then voters should be more likely to use a confirmatory model. Strong partisans should have a shallower search when there is no dialogue. This also means that in the absence of candidate dialogue, participants should focus more on the in-party candidate.

6.4 METHODS

6.4.1 Experimental Manipulation

In order to simulate the presence or absence of candidate dialogue, the issues that were available for each candidate were manipulated. Participants were randomly assigned to either a campaign with candidate dialogue or a condition without candidate dialogue. In the dialogue condition, both candidates addressed all of the issues, meaning that the participants in this condition were exposed to full dialogue. In the condition without candidate dialogue, candidates did not address the same issues. If candidate A discussed the environment, then candidate B did not discuss the environment. However, on non-issue items, such as campaign events and candidate characteristics, all information was available for both candidates.

In order to determine which issues were discussed by which candidate, I relied on issue ownership theory. The idea behind issue ownership theory is that each of the two major parties "own" a set of issues in which they are perceived as being strong. Following Petrocik (1996), the

issues were divided between the Democratic and Republican candidates and information was only available on issues in which the party “owns.” Nine issues were assigned to the Republican candidate: abortion, drugs, the death penalty, gun control, immigration, marriage, taxes and trade. Eight issues were assigned to the Democratic candidate: environment, education, poverty, social security, healthcare, energy, and unemployment.

6.4.2 Dependent Variables

Usually, there are four possible transitions: intra-candidate, intra-attribute; intra-candidate, inter-attribute; inter-candidate, intra-attribute; and inter-candidate, inter-attribute (see Table 3.1). However, when there is no dialogue, candidates have a different set of issues (attributes) that they address. This means that inter-candidate, intra-attribute transitions are not possible. Likewise, it also means that there is a greater number of inter-candidate, inter-attribute transitions. However the remaining transitions (intra-candidate, intra-attribute and intra-candidate, inter-attribute) are still available and in equal amounts in the presence or absence of candidate dialogue. If the absence of dialogue affects the way participants search for information, then there should be differences between the two conditions.

For the sequence of search, instead of using a single variable that measures the percentage of ordered transitions, I used two variables that measured the number of times that a participant had an intra-candidate, inter-attribute search and the number of times that the participant had an intra-candidate, intra-attribute search. Following other count models in this project, the results were modeled with a Conway-Maxwell Poisson regression.

6.5 RESULTS

In total there were 128 participants who participated in the study on Amazon mechanical Turk. Across the two experimental conditions, there were no statistical differences between the two groups, although being female approached statistical significance. On average, there were slightly more females than males and the sample was mostly white. On average participants had

at least some college experience. In terms of political beliefs, the sample tended to be slightly liberal and leaned to the Democratic side. On average, participants reported being moderately interested in politics and scored about a 75% on a standard political knowledge test.

Table 6.1. Demographics

	No Dialogue	Dialogue	p-value
Female	0.63	0.47	0.08
White	0.63	0.76	0.11
Education	3.47	3.36	0.40
Interest	3.42	3.59	0.33
Party Id	3.29	3.22	0.78
Ideology	3.33	3.32	0.95
Political Knowledge	73.82	74.92	0.82

Following the mock campaign, participants proceeded to a manipulation check to ensure that the two groups perceived differences in the two campaigns. Since dialogue makes it easier for voters to compare candidates' issues positions, participants were asked whether it was easy or hard to compare information. If the campaign manipulation worked, participants in the condition without campaign dialogue should have found it more difficult to compare information. As Figure 6.1 shows, participants did perceive a difference between the two conditions. Participants in the condition without candidate dialogue were about 20% more likely to report that they were unable to find comparable information between candidates.

Tables 6.2 through 6.8 present the results for how the absence of dialogue between the two candidates affected the way participants gathered information. Table 6.2 takes a first cut at the results by presenting a series of t-tests. The remaining tables contain two models. Model 1 is a basic model that test the direct effect of the presence of dialogue on the search for information. Model 2 is a conditional model that contains an interaction for partisanship and the experimental condition.

In Table 6.2 there are several significant findings. First, it is important to note that when there was more dialogue present, participants examined more information than when there was no dialogue between candidates. This its important, given that the experiment is designed so that

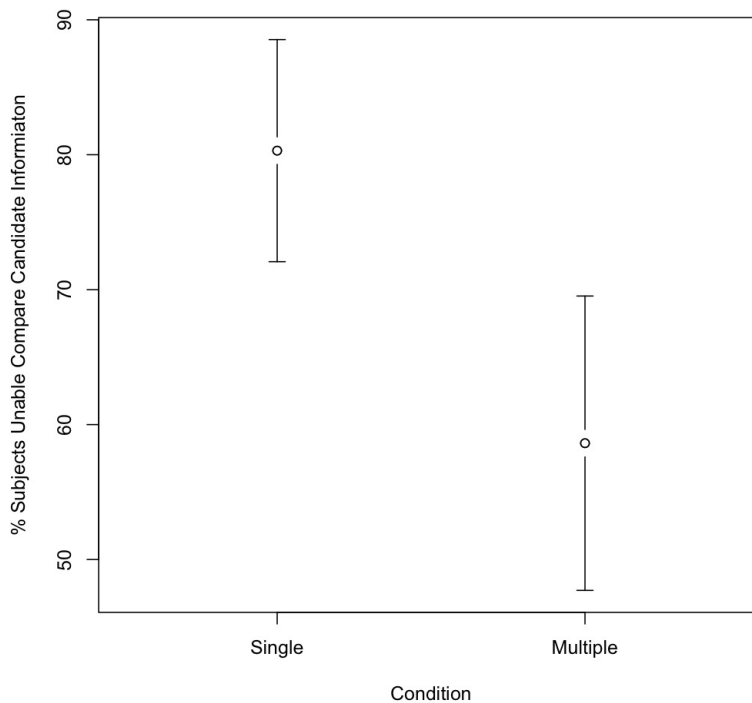


Figure 6.1. Manipulation Check

there is a greater opportunity to compare more information in the condition with dialogue. Second, participants examined more pieces of information when the candidates engaged in dialogue. When there was no dialogue between the candidates, participants examined about 37 pieces of information, while participants examined about 45 pieces of information when there was dialogue. Finally, participants searches were more systematic when there was dialogue between candidates. Participants made approximately 18 inter-attribute transitions in the condition with dialogue but only 14 intra-attribute transitions in the condition without dialogue.

Tables 6.3 through 6.8 provide a more in-depth examination of the relationship between campaign dialogue and information acquisition. In Table 6.3, one can quickly see in Model 1 that the presence of dialogue between the two candidates led participants to search for more information. The variable, dialogue, is positive and its corresponding standard error is sufficiently small. On average, the presence of dialogue led participants to examine 24% more information.

Table 6.2. T-Test of Condition and Dependent Variables

	No Dialogue	Dialogue	p-value
Depth (Number Items)	37.41	44.91	0.04
Time	11.11	10.71	0.74
Comparability	10.09	12.75	0.001
Content(Party)	1.71	1.07	0.56
Inter-Attribute	14.27	17.61	0.01
Intra-Attribute	0.70	0.92	0.33
In-Party	12.51	14.27	0.37
Out-Party	11.22	13.14	0.32

This is consistent with the hypothesis for depth of search. Looking at Model 2, the conditional effect of strength of partisanship on the presence or absence of candidate dialogue, provides mixed results. Strong partisans, when faced with a campaign without candidate dialogue, searched for less information, while the positive coefficient for strong partisans in a campaign with candidate dialogue is statistically insignificant. Similarly, weak partisans are no more likely to look for more information in campaigns with or without dialogue.

In addition, the results in Table 6.3 show that participants with higher levels of political knowledge searched for more information. It is also important to note that the dispersion parameter, α , is greater than one, which means that there is a dependence in observations. This means that participants were not just randomly clicking through information as would be the case if the dispersion test showed that α was indistinguishable from 1. Rather, overdispersed data here implies that the decision to learn about an additional piece of information is dependent on what the participant had already learned.

The second variable for depth of search, the average amount of time spent learning about any given piece of information, is examined in Table 6.4. The presence of candidate dialogue had no effect on the amount of time participants spent reading information. The only variable that has a significant effect is political knowledge. The more politically sophisticated a person was, the less time they spent learning about any given piece of information. Thus while participants may have searched for information when there was dialogue between candidates, they did not spend

Table 6.3. COM-Poisson Regression for Depth of Search (Items Accessed)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.302* (0.059)	0.303* (0.062)
Dialogue	0.027* (0.010)	0.026 (0.017)
Partisan Strength	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.016)
Political Knowledge	0.001* (0.000)	0.001* (0.000)
Interest in Politics	0.002 (0.006)	0.002 (0.006)
Dialogue*Partisan Strength		0.001 (0.010)
N	128	128
Log-Likelihood	-546.52	-546.35
ν	0.111	0.11
α	7.32*	7.32*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Dialogue=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for no dialogue.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 2 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

* $p < 0.05$

Table 6.4. OLS Regression for Depth of Search (Time)

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	16.079* (3.103)	17.259* (3.767)
Dialogue	-0.307 (1.204)	-1.160 (1.952)
Partisan Strength	0.181 (0.617)	-0.835 (1.928)
Political Knowledge	-0.069* (0.023)	-0.067* (0.023)
Interest in Politics	0.064 (0.181)	0.066 (0.661)
Dialogue*Partisan Strength		0.678* (1.219)
N	128	128

Entries are unstandardized OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Dialogue=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for no dialogue.
A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at p=0.05
* p < 0.05

any less time actually learning about any given piece of information. This implies, that while voters faced with non-comparable searches may discount information, they still take the time to learn about the information that they do encounter.

As expected, comparability of search is largely driven by the condition that participants were assigned to, but again this was due to the structure of the environment, where there was no opportunity for participants in one condition to compare issues. In fact, one should be concerned if there was no difference, given the experimental design. Also, important to note is that the dispersion parameter, α , is just barely significant and fairly close to 1. This implies, while the process of comparing information is not random, the comparisons made early on in the search process do little to drive voters to make more comparisons between candidates later on in the campaign.

It was hypothesized that party information might be able to supplement the lack of comparable information. However, there were no differences in how many times participants accessed the party affiliations of the candidates in either condition. Contrary to the hypothesis,

Table 6.5. COM-Poisson Regression for Comparability of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	1.508* (0.217)	1.559* (0.263)
Dialogue	0.184* (0.053)	0.152* (0.080)
Partisan Strength	0.0002 (0.024)	-0.040 (0.079)
Political Knowledge	0.083 (0.093)	0.001 (0.001)
Interest in Politics	0.025 (0.026)	0.025 (0.026)
Dialogue*Partisan Strength		0.026 (0.049)
N	128	128
Log-Likelihood	-345.90	-345.76
ν	0.80	0.80
α	1.22*	1.22*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Dialogue=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for no dialogue.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 2 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

* $p < 0.05$

Table 6.6. COM-Poisson Regression for Content (Party) of Search

	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-0.415 (0.491)	-0.013 (0.584)
Dialogue	-0.127 (0.181)	-0.424 (0.298)
Partisan Strength	-0.029 (0.094)	-0.374 (0.287)
Political Knowledge	0.013* (0.004)	0.014* (0.004)
Interest in Politics	-0.026 (0.099)	-0.021* (0.010)
Dialogue*Partisan Strength		0.236 (0.185)
N	128	128
Log-Likelihood	-167.62.-166.80	
ν	1.22	1.25
α	0.93	0.95

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Dialogue=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for no dialogue.
A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$
* $p < 0.05$

participants in the condition without campaign dialogue did not rely more heavily on the party affiliations of the candidates. However, political sophisticates did. Participants with higher levels of political knowledge accessed the the party affiliations of the candidates more frequently than the less politically knowledgable. Also of special interest here is the α parameter. In both Model 1 and Model 2, the dispersion parameter is indistinguishable from one. This means that the data conforms to a Poisson distribution and the decision to view the partisan information is not determined by previously viewing the party affiliations of the candidates.

Table 6.7 presents the results for in-party and out-party search. The results for the dialogue variable are significant and positive for both the in-party and out-party candidate. However, the differences in depth of search for the in-party and out-party candidate models were not statistically significant. This is also true of political knowledge, which is consistent with the results from depth of search in 6.3. These results are consistent with prior work that suggests that

Table 6.7. In-Party and Out-Party Depth of Search

	In-Party		Out-Party	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	1.220* (0.218)	1.300* (0.261)	0.733* (0.183)	0.728* (0.225)
Dialogue	0.229* (0.057)	0.173 (0.106)	0.241* (0.060)	0.245* (0.110)
Partisan Strength	0.520* (0.070)	0.468* (0.104)	0.445* (0.062)	0.449* (0.106)
Political Knowledge	0.009* (0.002)	0.009* (0.002)	0.012* (0.002)	0.012* (0.002)
Interest in Politics	-0.123* (0.031)	-0.123* (0.031)	-0.057* (0.029)	-0.057* (0.029)
Dialogue*Partisan Strength		0.033 (0.053)		-0.002 (0.055)
N	128	128	128	128
Log-Likelihood	-422.35	-422.76	-424.93	-423.17
ν	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
α	7.25*	7.25*	7.56*	7.56*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Dialogue=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for no dialogue.
A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at p=0.05
* p < 0.05

the presence of dialogue does not lead voters to focus on the in-party candidate (Chaffee, 1978).

Table 6.8 presents the results of a Conway-Maxwell Poisson regression for the sequence of participants' search. The first thing to note is that in each model the dispersion parameter, α , is both greater than one and significant in each model. This indicates that the sequence or order of the search is not a random process, and in fact, is driven by prior transitions. This indicates that a participants may be consistently using a strategy throughout the search process.

In Table 6.8 one can readily see in Model 1 for intra-candidate, inter-attribute search that the presence of dialogue led participants to have a more ordered search. The coefficient for dialogue is both positive and more than twice its corresponding standard error. Participants, who were assigned to the campaign with dialogue, had 20% more systematic transitions. This is consistent with Johnson's (1986) suggestion that in the absence of comparable information,

people will use an additive linear rule. A closer look at Model 2 shows that the effect of dialogue on intra-candidate, inter-attribute searches was conditioned on the strength of a person's party affiliations. This was especially true of weak partisans. Strong partisans were unaffected by the presence or absence of dialogue in their ability to organize their search. These findings are consistent with prior work that suggests that weak partisans are more affected by debates (Geer, 1988; Kaid, 2004). However, this is not true of intra-candidate, intra-attribute search. There are no differences in the intra-candidate, intra-attribute searches for participants in either condition which would indicate that their search is no more random in either condition.

Other things that affect the order searches are participants' level of political knowledge and interest. Higher levels of political knowledge leads to more intra-candidate, inter-attribute transitions as denoted by the positive coefficient for political knowledge and the small standard error in both Model 1 and Model 2. However, political knowledge is not a significant predictor of intra-candidate-intra-attribute searches. The coefficient for political knowledge and its corresponding standard error are almost equal.

Also noteworthy in Table 6.8 is the variable for interest in politics. The variable is significant in each model. However, participants who were interested in politics were more likely to have an inter-candidate, inter-attribute search, but less likely to have an intra-candidate, intra-attribute search. In other words, the more interested one is in politics, the more likely they are to have an ordered search or be able to organize campaign information. This would seem to reinforce the idea of abstraction.

6.6 DISCUSSION

The results here are consistent with what we should expect given findings in political communication, psychology and marketing. The absence of dialogue between political candidates leads voters to have a more shallow search, implying that they are not weighing issues positions as heavily. There is some evidence that abstraction might be taking place. Party identification is a readily available abstract piece of information for voters to use. If voters are resorting to making

Table 6.8. COM-Poisson Regression for Sequence of Search

	Intra-Cand., Inter-Att.		Intra-Can., Intra-Att.	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	1.979* (0.287)	1.873* (0.289)	-0.159* (0.558)	0.017* (0.656)
Dialogue	0.200* (0.052)	0.274* (0.082)	0.287* (0.204)	0.164 (0.315)
Partisan Strength	0.026 (0.023)	0.112 (0.076)	-0.067 (0.106)	-0.232 (0.342)
Political Knowledge	0.003* (0.001)	0.003* (0.001)	0.006 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)
Interest in Politics	0.058* (0.026)	0.057* (0.026)	-0.245* (0.112)	-0.246* (0.112)
Dialogue*Partisan Strength		-0.056 (0.046)		0.106 (0.209)
N	128	128	128	128
Log-Likelihood	-423.62	-423.41	-153.17	-152.98
ν	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
α	3.10*	3.10*	1.69*	1.71*

Entries are unstandardized Conway-Maxwell Poisson coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Dialogue=1 for the condition with the long ballot, and 0 for no dialogue.

A likelihood ratio test between Model 1 and Model 1 is insignificant at $p=0.05$

* $p < 0.05$

comparisons between parties, rather than on issues positions, then strong partisans in the campaign without dialogue should have a shallower search than strong partisans in campaigns with dialogue. The findings presented above support this notion of abstraction. Strong partisans in the condition without campaign dialogue did in fact search for less information. However, it seems more likely that participants are resorting to an additive linear strategy, given the clear differences in participants sequence of search in campaigns with and without dialogue.

These results suggests that the absence of dialogue has consequence for how voters search for and acquire information. In the absence of dialogue between candidates, voters search for less information and alter the sequence by which they transition from one piece of information to another. This implies that the absence of dialogue may in part explain voters low levels of political knowledge.

This study focused on the effects of dialogue on voter decision-making. To date, this line of research has focused on one of two areas: the amount of dialogue between candidates or the effects of presidential debates (a limited instance of potential candidate dialogue) on voters with little work that explicitly examines the relationship between dialogue and voter decisions (See Simon 2002 for exceptions). This study has shed some light on one major feature of American political campaigns.

By not engaging in candidate dialogue, candidates can turn voters off from learning. This is especially true of strong partisans, which implies that they may simply be relying on party affiliations. Simon (2002) argues that candidate dialogue is not a winning strategy. His study would seem to imply that this has to do with priming, but this may not be the case. It might be that voters, especially strong partisans, are frustrated by the difficulty of learning about candidates and fall back on a much easier strategy by relying on the candidates party affiliation. These results also imply that participants want to learn. They want to make an informed decision, but the lack of campaign dialogue discourages voters.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Normative democratic theories expect voters to be well versed on candidates running for elections. Voters, in the ideal world, would learn everything there is to know about the candidates running and weigh the positives against the negatives for each candidate. Unfortunately, based on the results from the three studies in this project, this may not always be possible or easy.

A summary of hypotheses, findings, and a comparison of the findings to hypotheses are presented in Tables 7.1 through 7.3. The results from the three studies conducted in this project indicate that context matters to the information that voters acquire. In chapter 4 the number of elections on the ballot altered how closely subjects examined information, how much information they compared, and the role of partisanship. In chapter 5, subjects in non-partisan campaigns searched for less information and compared less information. Moreover, subjects in partisan campaigns had a more ordered search and there were differences in who searched for information about the in-party and out party candidate. In chapter 6 dialogue between candidates led subjects to search for more information and have a more ordered search.

In addition to the findings of this dissertation Lau and Redlawsk (2006) offer some additional evidence on the importance of context to how voters acquire information. In their mock primary election, subjects were assigned to learn about either two or four candidates. Subjects in the four candidate condition had a deeper, less comparable, and less ordered search. Moreover, subjects in the four candidate condition were less likely to use a confirmatory strategy than subjects who only had to learn about two candidates.

Consistent with prior work on task complexity, these findings suggest that voters turn to simplifying strategies, such as the confirmatory model and other non-compensatory strategies. When faced with a longer ballot, subjects had a more shallow search and less ordered search. In non-partisan campaigns, subjects, compared less information. Searches were more ordered and

shallower in the absence of dialogue.

What is more, throughout each of the three contexts examined in this study, partisanship played a role in shaping how voters search for information. However the role of partisanship changed depending on the variation within the context (length of the ballot, availability of partisan information, and dialogue between candidates). It appears to play the strongest role in the more complex environments. This suggest that a confirmatory search, as described under the Michigan model, is as work.

Overall, the findings in these chapters and evidence from Lau and Redlawsk (2006) suggests that when information is not readily available voters become frantic and their search is less systematic. Moreover, the findings in these chapters are consistent with the expectations laid out at the end of Chapter 2. On average, contexts where information was less readily available or there was less of an opportunity to learn about information led subjects search for less information and compared less information.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS

The context in which voters make decisions matters. The findings in this dissertation suggest that how we design our elections affects how voters become informed and make decisions. What is more, the findings suggest that there are better ways to hold elections. Most notable, elections should be designed to encourage voters to both learn about the candidates and make use of partisan information to supplement their knowledge base.

7.2.1 Ballot Length

One of the most predominant features of American elections is the variations in the number of contests on the ballot. We should consider designing elections so that there are fewer contests on the ballot. With fewer contests on the ballot, voters would examine information more closely. Furthermore, long ballots encourage voters to rely more heavily on their partisan affiliation, rather than learning about the candidates with any depth or analysis. Strong partisan

lose any incentive to compare information between candidates.

These findings also suggests there are strategies that candidates can use to get their message out. Most importantly, when candidates are competing with long ballots, the candidates need to keep their messages short and to the point. This also suggests that if candidates are indeed being strategic in getting their message across, dialogue between the candidates is not a good strategy. Candidates should focus their message on the most important points of their campaign—the themes and topics that they want voters to hear about the most. While scholars may complain about the lack of dialog between candidates, if candidates focus their message on the most important points, then voters are most likely to absorb the most valuable pieces of information.

These findings, then, may help explain why candidates do not have detailed positions on topics. Voters are only willing to devote so much attention to any given pice of information. Candidates have to get the most out of that attention, which comes at the expense of detailed information.

7.2.2 Partisan Elections

While many people advocate for nonpartisan elections, it appears that the party labels of candidates help voters organize their political world. Partisan elections help voters become more informed than they otherwise would be. This may in part be due to nonpartisan elections being more taxing, and, as such, voters become less willing to put additional effort into learning about candidates.

Non-partisan campaigns were instituted for several reasons, including keeping national politics out of local politics and encouraging voters to become informed, rather than simply relying on party identification. The findings in this dissertation suggest that non-partisan campaigns may not be serving their purpose. Strong partisans in non-partisans campaigns examine less information and compare less information between candidates. Moreover, voters compare more information between candidates in partisan elections and are more willing to

examine information about the out-party candidate. This suggests that non-partisan elections have the opposite effect intended by their supporters.

7.2.3 Campaign Dialogue

One of the critiques of campaigns in America is the lack of dialogue between candidates. Scholar worry that voters cannot get the information that they need to make a well reasoned decisions. As it turns out, they are right, especially among strong partisans. When candidates do not engage in dialogue, strong partisans forgo learning about the candidates. This implies that they are falling back on party identification. Moreover, dialogue between candidates help voters organize information more efficiently. The results in this dissertation show that dialogue led participants to have a more ordered search when the candidates engaged in dialogue. Ideally, voters would rely on more than just the party affiliations of candidates, and elections would be designed in a way that encourages dialogue between candidates.

7.3 SHORTCOMINGS

While every effort was made to make the campaign environment as realistic as possible, there are still shortcomings that must be recognized. The most obvious limitation of this project is that the campaign was simulated in an artificial environment. While the mock campaigns used in this project may have presented subjects with information that is typical for the context at hand, the way in which they encountered information is not exactly the same as in real life. Voters do not learn about candidates in a matter of minutes, but rather they get to know the candidates over the course of months. However, the environment for the mock campaign mimics the way in which people acquire information. Information flows fast. Subjects were bombarded with information so as to overwhelm them much like actual campaigns. Moreover, Lau and Redlawsk (2006, 1997) demonstrate that the results from the dynamic information board reasonably approximate findings in survey research, using national probability samples.

The sample from this study, while not a national probability sample, also performs

reasonably well and most likely better than the convenience/community sample. As scholars such as Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2010) have demonstrated, Mechanical Turk does a reasonable job of sampling, though not as perfect as a national probability sample. Thus, while the sample may be better than a community or convenience sample, we must still keep in mind the limitations of applying these results to the broader population.

Beyond the use of an information board, there are also limitations in the design of the information board for each of the experimental manipulations from the individual chapters. In chapter 4 the information board manipulates the number of office that subjects have to learn about. One possible concern is that there is more of an opportunity to access information about the presidential candidates in the condition with concurrent elections since boxes containing information about the president become more spread out as more offices are introduced. However, given that there are no differences in how much information subjects access and that subjects actually examined presidential information less closely, it appears that subjects did not take advantage of the design of the environment. If subjects had taken advantage of the environment, their depth of search should have been significantly greater under the longer ballot for both the number of items accessed and the amount of time spent learning.

In chapter 5, which examines the availability of partisan information, the campaign was modeled after state supreme court elections. State supreme court elections are lower salience elections than many elections, but they are still a state-wide election. The issues addressed in state supreme court elections are different from those addressed by presidential and congressional candidates. This means that although there are differences in how partisan and nonpartisan election shape the way voters gather information, we must keep in mind, that state supreme court elections represent a particular office. Other offices that use both partisan and nonpartisan elections may have similar results, but we must be careful extrapolating these results to other offices.

In chapter 6, the campaign simulated two conditions: perfect dialogue and no dialogue. These are ideal types and in reality, election in the United States fall somewhere in the middle.

However, the results to tell us something about how the range in variation in dialogue can affect how voters acquire information.

Finally, the experimental manipulation in each of these chapters compared two contexts: one election versus 7 elections, no partisan information versus lots of partisan information, and no candidate dialogue versus complete candidate dialogue. The the results only tells that there are differences between the to conditions in each chapter. The results cannot delineate if there is relationship between the variations in contexts is linear or curve linear.

7.4 FUTURE WORK

This project has only started to scratch the surface in explaining the importance of context to the decision-making process. While this project has demonstrated the how variations in three context–length of the ballot, availability of partisan information, and dialogue between the candidates– affects how voter gather information, there is still more to explore, even within these context. First, scholars should explore how individual variations interact with each of these context. For example, we know that men an women behave differently under risk/uncertainty (Eckel and Grossman, 2008). Thus, it is possible that men and women behave differently when there are more elections to learn about, no partisan information available, or no dialogue between candidates.

While the social context is one of the most studied context, it is still worth examining how variations in social networks affect how voters acquire information. In addition, there are number of other contexts that scholars should explore, both within U.S. politics and comparatively. One particularly interesting context to explore is how learning varies in winner-take-all elections versus proportional representation. U.S. political campaigns are limited to two major parties. This is not the case in other democracies that use proportional presentation. Votes cast for the smallest of parties can impact who is seated in government and therefore provides an incentive to learn about candidates from smaller parties.

Also, scholars should consider how the role of the internet might alter how voters gather

information. The internet makes information more readily available and increases the opportunity to learn about candidates. The internet decreases the opportunity costs associated with gathering information about candidates and alters the time constraints that voters face.

This study focused explicitly on the acquisition of information and provided some evidence that context shapes how people acquire information. Yet, this is only one part of the decision-making process. It is also fruitful for scholars to trace how context affects the decision-making process in its entirety. It is possible that context can have different effects through out the decision-making process.

Finally, while experiments are great for controlling the environment, we have to be careful generalizing the results to the broader population. Scholars should work with surveys using national probability samples and find ways to explore the role of context in voter decision-making in order to validate and extend the results from experimental work. This was one of the major contributions of Lau and Redlawsk (1997, 2006). The authors replicated their experimental findings in survey research. While it may be difficult to do so with information search explicitly, if scholars think of voting as a process that starts with the gathering of information, and then move toward the retention, recall, and choice, then it may be possible to model expectations in experimental findings in survey research.

Table 7.1. Summary of Expectations

	Number Items	Time	Comparability	Content	Sequence	In-Party	Out-Party
<i>Model 1</i>							
Ballot Length	+	-	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Model 2</i>							
Ballot Length	+	+	+	-	-	-	+
Partisan Strength	+	+	+	-	-	-	+
Ballot Length*Partisan Strength	-	-	-	+	+	+	-
<i>Model 1</i>							
Partisan Campaign	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Model 2</i>							
Partisan Campaign	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Partisan Strength	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Model 1</i>							
Dialogue	+	+	+	-	-	+	-
<i>Model 2</i>							
Dialogue	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
Partisan Strength	-	-	-	+	-	+	-
Dialogue*Partisan Strength	+	+	+	-	+	-	+

Content of search refers to seeking our party information in the models with Ballot Length and Dialogue, and seeking out endorsements in the models Partisan Campaign.

In the Dialogue models, sequence of search referees to the number of inter-attribute searches, while in all other models, it sequence of search is the percentage of systemic search.

Cell entries denote significant relationships.

Table 7.2. Summary of Findings

	Number Items	Time	Comparability	Content	Sequence	In-Party	Out-Party
<i>Model 1</i>							
Ballot Length		–	+				
<i>Model 2</i>							
Ballot Length		–	+				
Partisan Strength	+						+
Ballot Length*Partisan Strength	–		–				
<i>Model 1</i>							
Partisan Campaign		–	+		+	+	+
<i>Model 2</i>							
Partisan Campaign			+				+
Partisan Strength	–		–			+	+
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength							
<i>Model 1</i>							
Dialogue	+		+		+	+	+
<i>Model 2</i>							
Dialogue			+		+		
Partisan Strength	+						+
Dialogue*Partisan Strength	–						
Content of search refers to seeking our party information in the models with Ballot Length and Dialogue, and seeking out endorsements in the models Partisan Campaign.							
In the Dialogue models, sequence of search referees to the number of inter-attribute searches, while in all other models, it sequence of search is the percentage of systemic search.							
Cell entries denote significant relationships.							

Table 7.3. Comparison of Expectations and Findings

	Number Items	Time	Comparability	Content	Sequence	In-Party	Out-Party
<i>Model 1</i>		consistent	opposite				
Ballot Length							
<i>Model 2</i>		opposite	consistent				
Ballot Length							
Partisan Strength	consistent						consistent
Ballot Length*Partisan Strength	consistent		consistent				
<i>Model 1</i>		consistent	opposite		opposite	consistent	opposite
Partisan Campaign							
<i>Model 2</i>			consistent				consistent
Partisan Campaign							
Partisan Strength	opposite		opposite			consistent	opposite
Partisan Campaign*Partisan Strength							
<i>Model 1</i>		consistent	consistent		opposite	consistent	opposite
Dialogue							
<i>Model 2</i>			consistent		consistent		consistent
Dialogue							
Partisan Strength	opposite						
Dialogue*Partisan Strength	opposite						

Content of search refers to seeking our party information in the models with Ballot Length and Dialogue, and seeking out endorsements in the models Partisan Campaign.

In the Dialogue models, sequence of search refers to the number of inter-attribute searches, while in all other models, it sequence of search is the percentage of systemic search.

Cell entries denote significant relationships and whether the results were consistent or in the opposite direction of the hypothesis.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Presidential Campaign Content

Label	Content
John Mallory's Position on Abortion	When it comes to each woman's ability to make the most personal of life decisions, I stand firm as an advocate for a woman's right to choose. I believe that the government needs to expand access to family planning services, including for low-income women. I have spoken out forcefully against the Supreme Court's April 2007 decision that – for the first time in decades – failed to recognize the importance of women's health. Women's rights are human rights.
Bill Strak's Position on Abortion	I stand firmly for the sanctity of life and the preservation of traditional family values. I believe in 24-hour waiting periods for women seeking an abortion, requiring parental notification for minors seeking an abortion and banning partial birth abortion. To be part of this cause is to believe that every mother carrying a life, that every child waiting to be born deserves understanding. It doesn't matter if you're Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, male or female, black or white, ... north or south, east or west, all that matters is your respect for the claim of every life.
John Mallory's Position on Drugs	I believe we've got to decrease the disparity that exists. It is really unconscionable that someone who uses five grams of crack cocaine, compared to 500 grams of powder cocaine would face such disparate sentencing. And it's further compounded because the possession of crack cocaine really is unique in the way that it leads directly to prison for so many people. So I am going to tackle the disparity. I think it definitely needs to be prospective on principle. I have problems with retroactivity. I think that it's something that a lot of communities will be concerned about as well, so let's tackle this disparity, let's take it on.

<p>Bill Strak's Position on Drugs</p>	<p>Drug abuse and addiction ruin lives. There can be no debate about it. Every adult has a responsibility to teach children about the dangers of drugs - in terms of both physical harm and potential death, as well as lost opportunities for success. We must ensure that jail time is used as an effective deterrent to drug use and support the continued funding of grants to assist schools in drug testing. At the same time, we should make drug treatment available to people willing to take the courageous step of admitting they have a problem and working hard to overcome it. With that said, the Department of Justice needs to require all federal prosecutors to aggressively pursue drug dealers, from the kingpins to the lackeys. I also renew my support for capital punishment for drug traffickers who take innocent life.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on the Death Penalty</p>	<p>I oppose the death penalty other than in cases of real international and domestic terrorism. We know we have put innocent people to death; 111 innocent people have already been released from death row. Who knows how many innocent people have been executed. I'll believe we need to enforce existing laws. However, I also believe we need to have a national moratorium on federal executions until we use DNA evidence to make sure those on death row are guilty.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Drugs</p>	<p>I support the death penalty because it sets a standard that says that we will not tolerate ghastly murders that not only kill people, but destroy families forever. Efforts to undermine the rule of law threaten the destruction of civilization itself. At the same time, we must ensure that capital punishment is applied equally, without regard for race or economic status, and we must work to apply DNA testing to make sure only the guilty are executed.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Education Policy</p>	<p>Education has to start in the families. This is what I've done for 35 years. We've got to do more to give families the tools and the support that they should have so that they can be the best parents. They are a child's first teachers. I also support school-based merit pay. We need to get more teachers to go into hard-to-serve areas. We've got to get them into underserved urban areas, underserved rural areas. The school is a team, and it's important that we reward that collaboration. A child who moves from kindergarten to sixth grade in the same school, every one of those teachers is going to affect that child. You need to weed out the teachers not doing a good job. That's the bottom line. They should not be teaching our children.</p>

<p>Bill Strak's Position on Education Policy</p>	<p>Over the years, Americans have heard a lot of "tired rhetoric" about education. We've heard it in the endless excuses of people who seem more concerned about their own position than about our children. We've heard it from politicians who accept the status quo rather than stand up for real change in our public schools. Parents ask only for schools that are safe, teachers who are competent, and diplomas that open doors of opportunity. When a public system fails, repeatedly, to meet these minimal objectives, parents ask only for a choice in the education of their children. Some parents may choose a better public school. Some may choose a private school. Many will choose a charter school. No entrenched bureaucracy or union should deny parents that choice and children that opportunity. When I am elected, school choice for all who want it, an expansion of Opportunity Scholarships, and alternative certification for teachers will all be part of a serious agenda of education reform</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Energy Policy</p>	<p>The oil used in the U.S transportation sector accounts for one-third of our nations emissions of greenhouse gases. I want to reduce carbon in our fuel supply by establishing a National Low Carbon Fuel Standard. The standard would require that all transportation fuels sold in the U.S. contain five percent less carbon by 2015 and 10 percent less carbon by 2020. This plan would let the market forces decide the most efficient way to reduce emissions and would spur significant investment in renewable fuels, such as corn and cellulosic ethanol, and biodiesel made from plant oils such as soybeans. According to one estimate, this plan would reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by about 180 million metric tons in 2020. This is the equivalent of taking 30 million cars off the road by 2020.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Energy Policy</p>	<p>It is in our vital interest to diversify America's energy supply—and the way forward is through technology. Dramatic advances are within reach. Let us build on the work we have done and reduce gasoline usage in the United States by 20% in the next ten years—thereby cutting our total imports by the equivalent of 3/4 of all the oil we now import from the Middle East. To reach this goal, we must increase the supply of alternative fuels, by setting a mandatory fuels standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2018—this is nearly five times the current target. At the same time, we need to reform and modernize fuel economy standards for cars the way we did for light trucks—and conserve up to eight and a half billion more gallons of gasoline by 2018.</p>

<p>John Mallory's Position on Environmental Policy</p>	<p>I am committed to environmental protection. My commitment is driven by the belief that we can safeguard the environment and grow our economy. I advocate the immediate cessation of commercial logging on US public lands and the protection from road-building of all 60 million acres of large forest tracts remaining in the National Forest system. National Forests produce less than 5% of total volume of timber consumed in the US. I would not support any bills that might include provisions to dismantle any aspect of this National Forest protection policy. I have fought hard to reduce the threat of global warming and support renewable energy and increased funding for climate change research. The government must stop blocking progress and engage in international efforts to mitigate the threat of climate change.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Environmental Policy</p>	<p>When it comes to the environment I believe in these basic principles: *Economic prosperity and environmental protection must advance together. *Environmental regulations should be based on science. *The governments role should be to provide market-based incentives to develop the technologies to meet environmental standards. *We should ensure that environmental policy meets the needs of localities. *Environmental policy should focus on achieving results.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Guns</p>	<p>John Mallory is a gun owner and hunter, and believes that law-abiding American adults have the right to own guns. But like all of our rights, gun rights come with responsibilities, and those rights allow for reasonable restrictions to keep guns out of the wrong hands. John Mallory strongly supports all of the federal gun laws on the books, and he would take steps to ensure that they are vigorously enforced, cracking down hard on the gun runners, corrupt dealers, straw buyers, and thieves that are putting guns into the hands of criminals in the first place. John Mallory will also close the gun show loophole, which is allowing criminals to get access to guns at gun shows without background checks, fix the background check system, which is in a serious state of disrepair, and require that all handguns be sold with a child safety lock.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Guns</p>	<p>Law-abiding citizens ought to be allowed to protect their families. We ought to keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldnt have them. Thats why Im for instant background checks at gun shows. Im for trigger locks. I think we ought to raise the age at which juveniles can have a gun. I also believe that the best way to make sure that we keep our society safe is to hold people accountable for breaking the law. If we catch somebody illegally selling a gun, there needs to be a consequence. The federal government can help.</p>

<p>John Mallory on Healthcare Policy</p>	<p>In the richest country on Earth, no American should die because of a lack of health insurance. John Mallory strongly supports President Obamas landmark health insurance reform legislation that will ensure insurance companies can no longer use caps or pre-existing conditions to deny coverage to those who pay their premiums, or ration care to those who offer the most profit. Small businesses can earn tax credits, prescription drugs will be more affordable, and the federal deficit will be reduced by more than a trillion dollars over the next two decades. John Mallory believes we must build upon this historic bill with a renewed effort to fully protect consumers from insurance company abuses and to continue to enact policies that decrease premiums and enhance coverage for families. John Mallory believes that future health care reforms should bring down health care costs, protect consumers, continue to expand coverage in underserved communities and reduce the federal deficit.</p>
<p>Bill Strak on Healthcare Policy</p>	<p>Our healthcare system is becoming a system in which the government, not doctors and patients, make medical decisions. When elected, I will pass legislation would repeal the government takeover of health care and replace it with the commonsense solutions that would keep Washington out of the doctors office and, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, would lower health care premiums by up to 20% compared to the Democrats' law. It would also repeal the one-half trillion dollars in tax increases and one-half trillion dollars in Medicare cuts that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' actuaries said could jeopardize access to care for Medicare beneficiaries.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>John Mallory supports efforts to protect the integrity of our borders by adding personnel, infrastructure and technology at our ports and borders. The federal government must increase its enforcement of existing immigration laws and hold accountable the companies that employ undocumented immigrants. John Mallory believes we should place the nations undocumented immigrants on a responsible path to citizenship. He supports a plan that requires undocumented workers to pay a fine for entering the country illegally, learn English, pay taxes and wait in line to become citizens. In addition, Children who have grown up in the United States and are upstanding citizens should not be punished for their parents illegal immigration. John Mallory supports the bipartisan DREAM Act to provide certain undocumented immigrant students the opportunity to earn conditional permanent residency if they have graduated from U.S. high schools, are of good moral character, and have been in the country continuously for at least five years</p>

<p>Bill Strak's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>Immigration reform is one of those major issues which has become captive to the gridlock in Washington with both political parties being paralyzed on moving reform forward. Congress must get beyond the politics of this issue and seek a sensible, real solution for the long haul. I recognize that our strength as a nation is built on the immigrant experience in America. I welcome legal immigration to this country. However, we are also a nation of laws and government should not adopt policies that encourage illegal immigration. Providing drivers licenses and in-state tuition to illegal immigrant families will act as a magnet in drawing more people here in violation of the law and it will impose new costs on taxpayers. I oppose amnesty, and I believe we ought to strengthen our border enforcement and institute an employment verification system with penalties for companies that hire illegal immigrants.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Afghanistan</p>	<p>The United States must have an exit strategy to achieve our political objectives in Afghanistan and to draw down our troops in a timely fashion. President Obama has announced a timetable for increased troop strength and other strategies in Afghanistan, and I support his decision. In this course of action, we must support our troops who serve there. Our political and military objectives in Afghanistan must be informed by the lessons of the 1980s. Ultimately, our military presence alone will not accomplish our objectives. We must also infuse Afghanistan with humanitarian assistance in order to win hearts and minds. The United States, along with the international community, should provide funding and other support for nation building that emphasizes education and infrastructure. We should also support the evolution of a democratic political system in Afghanistan within a framework that is appropriate for the country based on its history and its tribal and ethnic diversity.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Afghanistan</p>	<p>Afghanistan served as the cradle for the most devastating attack on American soil in our long history. Bill Strak will seek to strengthen our efforts to ensure that Afghanistan never serves as a safe haven for terror again. Bill Strak advocates a sustained commitment to success in Afghanistan with additional resources and a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy and will work to guide our nations recommitment to win the peace in Afghanistan. Bill Strak knows that our new strategy will demand close cooperation with our Pakistani partners, and that we must remain committed to assisting them in their own struggles with the forces of violent Islamic extremism that threaten their legitimate government.</p>

<p>John Mallory's Position on Jobs</p>	<p>It's time to turn the page for all those Americans who want nothing more than to have a job that can pay the bills and raise a family. Let's finally make the minimum wage a living wage. Let's tie it to the cost of living so we don't have to wait another 10 years to see it rise. Let's put the jobless back to work in transitional jobs that can give them a paycheck and a sense of pride. Let's help our workers advance with job training and lifelong education. Let's invest in infrastructure, broadband lines, and rural communities and in inner cities. Let's give jobs to ex-offenders—because we believe in giving a second chance to people. And let's finally allow our unions to do what they do best and lift up the middle class in this country once more.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Jobs</p>	<p>Sometimes you have to tell people things they don't want to hear. There are jobs—let's have a little straight talk—there are some jobs that aren't coming back to Michigan. There are some jobs that won't come back to South Carolina or Colorado and other states. But we're going to take care of them. That's our goal; that's our obligation as a nation. We need to go to the community colleges and design education and training programs so that these workers get a second chance. That's our obligation as a nation.</p> <p>When elected, I will overhaul unemployment insurance and make it a program for retraining, relocating and assisting workers who have lost a job. The unemployment insurance system needs to be modernized to meet the goals of helping displaced workers make ends meet between jobs and moving people quickly on to the next opportunity. I will reform the half-dozen training programs to approaches that can be used to meet the bills, pay for training, and get back to work.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Marriage</p>	<p>I am a great admirer of our founding charter and its resolve to prevent theocracies from forming and its resolve to prevent disruptive strains of fundamentalism from taking root in this country. I think there is an enormous danger on the part of public figures to rationalize or justify their actions by claiming God's mandate. I don't think it's healthy for public figures to wear religion on their sleeve as a means to insulate themselves from criticism, or dialogue with people who disagree with them. I do, however, believe that marriage is between a man and a woman but I detest the bashing and vilifying of gays and lesbians. Most gays and lesbians are seeking basic recognition of their rights so they're not discriminated against in employment or renting a house, so they can see their partner in a hospital. These are rights for everybody, not just some people.</p>

<p>Bill Strak's Position on Marriage</p>	<p>As we respect someone's rights and profess tolerance, we shouldn't change-or have to change-our basic views on the sanctity of marriage. I believe in the sanctity of marriage. It's very important that we protect marriage as an institution, between a man and a woman. I recommend a constitutional amendment. I worry that activist judges are defining the definition of marriage, and the surest way to protect marriage between a man and woman is to amend the Constitution. It has also the benefit of allowing citizens to participate in the process. When you amend the Constitution, state legislatures must participate in the Constitution ratification. I'm deeply concerned that judges are making those decisions and not the citizenry.</p>
<p>John Mallory's Position on Poverty</p>	<p>To battle poverty we need to look to communities for help. I propose that we should create what I am calling promise neighborhoods. These neighborhoods would be created in cities across the nation that have high levels of poverty and crime and low levels of student academic achievement. The promise neighborhoods will be modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, which provides a full network of services, including early childhood education, youth violence prevention efforts and after-school activities, to an entire neighborhood from birth to college.</p>
<p>Bill Strak's Position on Poverty</p>	<p>Welfare and anti-poverty assistance is a shared responsibility among federal, state and local government; the private sector; community and faith-based organizations. Welfare policy must provide a strong safety net, while promoting work, responsibility, self sufficiency and dignity. I propose that we place time limits on welfare benefits; require able-bodied welfare recipients to get a job, attend school or train for work; require participating mothers to identify the fathers of their children so they could contribute to their support; and emphasize personal responsibility by requiring welfare recipients to sign an independence contract pledging to stay drug-free and keep their kids immunized and in school.</p>

John Mallory's Position on Social Security	I am totally committed to making sure Social Security is solvent. You've got to begin to reign in the budget, pay as you go, to try to replenish our Social Security Trust Fund. And with all due respect, the last time we had a crisis in Social Security was 1983. Pres. Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill came up with a commission. That was the best and smartest way, because you've got to get Republicans and Democrats together. That's what I will do. And I will say, #1, don't cut benefits on current beneficiaries they're already having a hard enough time. And #2, do not impose additional tax burdens on middle-class families. What I have proposed is that we raise the cap on the payroll tax, because right now millionaires and billionaires don't have to pay beyond \$97,000 a year. Now most firefighters & teachers, they're not making over \$100,000 a year. In fact, only 6% of the population does. And I've also said that I'd be willing to look at exempting people who are making slightly above that.
Bill Strak's Position on Social Security	There is no question that the system is broken. Projections show that by 2020, the only way to avert its collapse will be deep cuts in benefits, heavy borrowing, or substantial tax hikes. The best suggestion I have heard is to switch from a defined benefits approach to a defined contribution approach with payroll tax funded private investment accounts. These accounts would be made available to young workers and function similarly to 401Ks.
John Mallory's Position on Taxes	We are currently looking at a \$13 trillion deficit. I will get us back to fiscal responsibility. I will make it clear that the tax cuts of previous administrations on the upper income, those making more than \$250,000 a year, will be allowed to expire. My priorities are middle-class tax cuts and support for the middle class, to make college affordable, retirement security possible, health insurance affordable. Our economy was booming prior to Bush and will grow again when I am elected president.
Bill Strak's Position on Taxes	I support the Fair Tax. Our massive deficit is not due to Americans' being under-taxed, but to the government's over-spending. I believe in free trade, but it has to be fair trade. Globalization, done right, done fairly, can be the equivalent of a big pay raise by allowing us to buy things more cheaply. A growing chorus of economists and experts argue, and I agree, that the current income tax system is complex and unfair and should be replaced by a flat tax or national sales tax. Simplifying the process would dramatically reduce the costs of compliance, make American companies more competitive, and put billions back into the economy by encouraging investment.

John Mallory's Position on Trade	We need to rid the tax code of loopholes and giveaways. We need to stop giving a penny of your money to anybody who ships a job out to another country. We're going to begin to get the tax code to reflect what the needs of middle class families are so we can rebuild a strong & prosperous middle class. The wealthy & the well-connected have too much influence in our government, and it's time for that to change. We will have a different approach toward trade. We're going to start having trade agreements that not only have strong environmental and labor standards, but also a trade time-out. We're going to look and see what's working & what's not working. I'd like to have a trade prosecutor to actually enforce the trade agreements that we have before we enter into any others.
Bill Strak's Position on Trade	Keeping America competitive requires us to open more markets for all that Americans make and grow. One out of every five factory jobs in America is related to global trade, and we want people everywhere to buy American products. With open markets and a level playing field, no one can out produce or outcompete the American worker. One of my first priorities would be to expand NAFTA throughout the Americas.
Machinists & Aerospace Workers Endorsement	The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), one of the nation's largest and most politically active trade unions, is endorsing John Mallory. John Mallory earned the IAM's endorsement by focusing on jobs, health care, education and trade – the bread and butter issues of the American middle class. John Mallory is the only candidate of either party to come forward with a comprehensive manufacturing policy and the only candidate to connect with millions of Americans who feel invisible to the current administration.
Gun Owners of America Endorsement	Gun Owners of America announces its endorsement of Bill Strak. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has finally recognized that the Second Amendment protects an individuals right, many leaders in Washington, D.C. are still attempting to regulate the right to keep and bear arms out of existence. We need people in Washington who will fight to defend the Second Amendment against the radical anti-gun leadership in government and Bill Strak is that person.
National Organization for Women Endorsement	John Mallory is a leader. John Mallory has a long history of support for women's empowerment, and the candidates public record is a testimony to leadership on issues important to women in the U.S. and around the globe. John Mallory has eloquently articulated the need for full economic, political and social equality for women in every institution of society. That is why I am proud, on behalf of over 500,000 contributing members of the National Organization for Women, to announce the NOW PAC's enthusiastic endorsement of John Mallory.

Institute for American Values Endorsement	Bill Strak received an endorsement from the Institute for American Values. The institutes president stated that Bill Strak has been dedicated to defending human rights around the world, including the rights of the unborn. The institute would like to recognize consistent pro-life stance and demonstrated commitment to the values that keep our families and communities strong. Bill Strak alone has the experience and character to defeat the transcendent threat of our time. The Institute for American Values is proud to support Bill Strak.
American Federation of Teachers Endorsement	Acting on behalf of its more than 1.4 million members, the executive council of the American Federation of Teachers today endorsed John Mallory, citing the candidates proven ability to advance our nation’s key priorities and bold plans for a stronger America. ”Our members have told us that they want a leader they can trust to strengthen public education, increase access to healthcare, promote commonsense economic priorities and secure America’s place in the world,” said AFT President Edward J. McElroy. John Mallory is that leader.
Fraternal Order of Police Endorsement	National President of the Fraternal Order of Police today announced the organization’s endorsement of Bill Strak. The FOP carefully considered the records and the responses of both candidates and, in our evaluation, Bill Strak will provide greater support for our nation’s police officers. We will be proud to stand behind Bill Strak during the election and for the next few years. Bill Strak is a proven leader with a clear record of support for the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our communities and our nation.
National Farmers Union Endorsement	John Mallory was endorsed by the National Farmers Union. The president of the union states that John Mallory is the type of person farmers can count on. He knows the important role agriculture plays in the economy, but he also understands what it means to make a living off the land. And Im confident that the candidate has what it takes to keep the rural economy strong for generations to come, working to build roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals and helping to keep our young people in our communities. Family farmers need a reliable and strong advocate in Washington, and I can tell you thats exactly what theyll get in John Mallory.
Endorsement from John Boehner	House Majority Leader, John A. Boehner, announced his endorsement of Bill Strak, noting that Bill Strak will work his hardest to get this nation back on tract. Bill Strak has a solid conservative record as one of the most vocal opponents of wasteful spending, a staunch defender of America’s national security, and a strong believer in the sanctity of human life. He is uniquely suited to lead our country forward as we take on the many opportunities and challenges of the years ahead.

Human Rights Campaign Endorsement	The Human Rights Campaign, the nations largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender civil rights group, announced that the organization will endorse John Mallory. The decision was made by the HRC Board of Directors based on support for GLBT equality, his demonstrated leadership, and his unwavering commitment to civil rights. HRC is proud to throw our full support behind campaign. John Mallory has consistently shown an understanding, as we do, that, GLBT rights are civil rights, and human rights. HRC knows that vision is one of equality, fairness, and justice for all.
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Endorsement	The U.S. Chamber of Commerce today announced its endorsement of Bill Strak. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce praises Bill Strak for strong support of businesses, both large and small. Bill Strak has bee has been a champion for the people and an invaluable leader on important issues. On issues ranging from economic competitiveness programs to fiscal responsibility, businesses have no better friend than Bill Strak.
Endorsement from Steny Hoyer	House Minority Whip, Steny Hoyer, announced his endorsement for John Mallory, saying he believes the candidate is our nation’s best hope for a prosperous future. John Mallory brings a new vision for our future and new voters to our cause. John Mallory has created levels of energy and excitement that I have not witnessed since the 1960s. There is one person that knows and understands that this is a time for bold leadership ... there is one person who knows that it is time to create one America – not two, and this person is John Mallory.
New York Post Endorsement	The New York Post today enthusiastically urged the election of Bill Strak. Bill Strak is committed to serving America, has an unshakable devotion to principle, and has a clear grasp of the dangers and opportunities now facing the nation. On all counts and issues, Bill Strak understands what America needs- and thats why we are in corner to the finish.
John Mallory’s Age	56 Years old
Bill Strak’s Age	59 Years old
John Mallory’s Educational Background	B.A. Economics and Pre-Law from Princeton University J.D. Yale School of Law
Bill Strak’s Educational Background	B.A. Political Science from Harvard University Minor: Psychology J.D. Harvard School of Law
John Mallory’s Family Background	Married Three children: two sons and a daughter

Bill Strak's Family Background	Married Two children: one daughter and one son
John Mallory's Political Experience	Mayor Lieutenant Governor
Bill Strak's Political Experience	Representative, State Legislature Governor
John Mallory's Work History	Associate Attorney, Johnson, Lindblum, and Coch Ltd. Prosecuting Attorney
Bill Strak's Work History	Associate Attorney, Bond and Associates Partner, Bond and Associates
John Mallory's Religion	John Mallory is a Methodist and regularly attends the local United Methodist Church
Bill Strak's Religion	Bill Strak is a Baptist and regularly attends First Baptist Church in the candidate's home town.
John Mallory's Slogan	Prosperity for American Families
Bill Strak's Slogan	The Better Man for a Better America
John Mallory's Political Party	John Mallory is a member of the Democratic Party
Bill Strak's Political Party	Bill Strak is a member of the Republican Party
Campaign Event for John Mallory	John Mallory spoke to factory workers and a small-business owner during his visit to Cole County yesterday. John Mallory began his talk at a hydro-power equipment factory by focusing on the economic pain many Americans feel. The fact is, people are working harder for less," John Mallory told about 60 employees at a power plant. John Mallory attacked what he said were tax breaks for big companies, but he sympathized with the plight of small businesses .

Campaign Event for Bill Strak	Amid giant metal stamp machines that produce metal car parts, Bill Strak sought to convince undecided voters that Bill Strak is their candidate. The event was held in a manufacturing facility in Fairview, Bayloff Stamped Products. Many of the approximately 200 participants were employees of Bayloff. In addition, there was a contingent of parts manufacturers from around the state who expressed concern about enforcing international trade pacts that allow economic competitors like China to manipulate their currencies. Bill Strak attacked his opponent, John Mallory, repeatedly as Dr. No, calling him an opponent of cap-and-trade and expanded nuclear power who will raise taxes and make government bigger.
Campaign Event for John Mallory	campaign is in full swing and financially intact. John Mallory made a stop in Oal Grove where the candidate raised more than \$1 million at a campaign fund-raiser, which was held on yesterday. The star-studded event was held at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. The fundraiser event began with a \$28,500-per-person "VIP dinner" benefiting the partys National Committee and was followed by a \$2,300-per-person general reception. The ritzy fundraiser was organized for a crowd of about 700 and began at 5 p.m. The money was raised for a victory fund via the national committee, meaning that donors can contribute up to \$28,500 apiece-the maximum allowable contributions to national committees and individual candidates.
Campaign Event for Bill Strak	Yesterday Bill Strak came through Casper County as part of a multi-day road trip. It is first visit to Casper County since clinching the nomination. The event was held at the posh Island Hotel (formerly the Four Seasons) in the heart of Newport Beach. There were at least 500 attendees there. According to Bill Strak's campaing website, the Casper County event raised over \$600,000 for the campaign. The entire roadtrip generated over \$1.2 million.
Campaign Event for John Mallory	Tens of thousands of supporters surrounded John Mallory at outdoor rallies in Franklins and Salem yesterday as the candidate spoke about plans to revive the economy and urged people to register to vote. During the speech, John Mallory spoke about economics, the ongoing battle in Afghanistan, health care reform, education and jobs. John Mallory would like to create alternative energy jobs for hard-hit citizens and to have U.S. workers build the cars of the future.
Campaign Event for Bill Strak	Bill Strak spoke in Georgetown, a city that might well be the start of some momemtum for the campaign, on two topics that might be the most important topics of the election: the economy and the Middle East. Bill Strak spoke yesterday afternoon at a rally on the steps of the county court house. The candidate was joined by a slew of senators and supporters.

Campaign Event for John Mallory	John Mallory held his biggest rally to date in Greenwood on Saturday. John Mallory attracted a crowd of 5,000 according to Duane Bray, battalion chief with Fire and Rescue. John Mallory held the rally on a grassy mall along side of the river as hordes of people packed onto the lawn and gathered near the stage to listen to the speech. Most of message was focused on the war in Afghanistan and the need for social security reform.
Campaign Event for Bill Strak	Bill Strak greeted more than 6,000 onlookers today inside a hanger at the Springfield Airport. Many of the overflow crowd had to stand outside the hanger in the warm sunlight. The crowd stood for nearly one and a half hours while they waited for the guests of honor to arrive. With many local politicians in attendance, the crowd was clearly there to see Bill Strak. As the motorcade arrived flags waved in the air to greet the candidate. speech mostly focused on Afghanistan and immigration reform.
CNN/New York Times Poll	If the election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1063 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The poll indicates that there are still are large number of undecided voters. While John Mallory appears to have the lead with 37% of support, the difference between John Mallory and Bill Strak is still within the margin of error.
Gallop Poll	If the election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1092 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. Just like in other polls, John Mallory appears to have the lead with 41% , leading Bill Strak by 1%. The difference between John Mallory and Bill Strak is well within the margin of error and this poll must be interpreted with caution.

<p>ABC Washington Post Poll</p>	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1033 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The poll indicates that the number of undecided voters is decreasing. John Mallory has not gained any ground since the last poll, but Bill Strak appears to have taken the lead with support of 43% of the sample. The difference between John Mallory and Bill Strak is still within the margin of error.</p>
<p>Pew Research Poll</p>	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1042 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The poll indicates that the Bill Strak has a slight lead over John Mallory, but the race remains close. This lead is greater than the sampling error of +/-3%.</p>
<p>Gallop Poll</p>	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1104 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The poll indicates that John Mallory has made up some ground, now only behind Bill Strak by 1%, which is well within the margin of error for this poll.</p>
<p>CNN/New York Times Poll</p>	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1051 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The race still remains in a virtual tie, with John Mallory having 45% of support and Bill Strak having 44% of support. The difference between John Mallory and Bill Strak is still within the margin of error.</p>

U.S.A. Today Poll	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote?</p> <p>This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1021 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. For the first time in the campaign, John Mallory has a lead. John Mallory leads by 4%, which is just outside of the margin of error.</p>
Pew Research Poll	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote?</p> <p>This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1039 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. Based on the newest poll, John Mallory appears to be in the lead, but the difference between the two candidates is within the margin of error for this poll.</p>
Fox News Poll	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote?</p> <p>This poll was conducted over a two day period. 1086 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. Bill Strak has made up a little bit of ground, but John Mallory remains in the lead. However, since Bill Strak only trails by 2% this poll falls within the margin of error.</p>
Pew Research Poll	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote?</p> <p>This poll was conducted over a two day period. 1022 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The results indicate that Bill Strak may be gaining a little bit of momentum. However, the candidates are still in a virtual tie, but with Bill Strak having a slight lead.</p>
USA Today Poll	<p>If the election were held today, for whom would you vote?</p> <p>This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1017 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. With the campaign winding down and election day quickly approaching the candidates are tied. There are still some undecided voters, who will be important over the coming days. The candidates must make an effort to reach these undecided voters.</p>

<p>CNN/ New York Times Poll</p>	<p>If the presidential election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1086 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. The poll shows that little has changed over the past few days. Bill Strak leads by 1%, which is well within the margin of error for this poll.</p>
<p>ABC/Washington Post Poll</p>	<p>If the presidential election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a two day period. 1086 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. Bill Strak again appears to have a lead, but the results are still within the margin of error for this poll. With the election only days away, the last poll leading into the election will be interesting.</p>
<p>Gallop Poll</p>	<p>If the presidential election were held today, for whom would you vote? This poll was conducted over a three day period. 1086 people from across the U.S. were randomly selected for the telephone interview. With this sample, the margin of error is +/-3%. In the last poll leading into the election, the candidates are in a dead tie. Every vote will be important for this election.</p>
<p>Presidential Debate</p>	<p>Last night, millions of Americans tuned in for the presidential debate held at Stanford University, which focused on foreign policy. Analysis of the debate shows that it was a draw. Among registered voters who watched the debate, 42 percent called John Mallory the winner, 41 percent said Bill Strak won and 17 percent called it a tie. As it enters its final month, the presidential campaign is essentially where it began: too close to call. This is an even-up race that's going to be decided by everything that happens in the coming days," says one Gallop pollster. Both candidates now head out on the campaign trail for two weeks before they debate again.</p>
<p>Presidential Debate</p>	<p>For Americans who tuned into last night's presidential debate waiting for one of the candidates to catch the other in a fatal error, or leave him stammering, the event was obviously a draw. Last night's debate at Columbia University featured questions about the economy and other domestic issues. While neither candidate performed well, both performed credibly enough to keep voters attention.</p>

Senatorial Campaign Content

<p>Carl Sampson's Position on Abortion</p>	<p>I believe it is critically important that privacy rights involving reproduction and contraception be preserved under the law. On the issue of abortion, which has so divided our country, I support a woman's right to make her own decisions when it comes to her reproductive health. I believe that it would be a terrible mistake for our country if we turned the clock back to a time when all abortions were illegal, thereby turning women and their doctors into criminals. What makes sense to me is that we ensure that abortions in our country are safe, legal, and rare - meaning that we ought to preserve the right of women to make this difficult choice, but can surely do more to provide better reproductive health services to families so that unwanted pregnancies are rarer and abortions rarer still.</p>
<p>Kevin Bell's Position on Abortion</p>	<p>Human life is a gift and we, as a nation, should work to preserve it, rather than take it. In 1973, the United States Supreme Court ruled in Roe v. Wade that a woman's right to have an abortion is constitutionally protected. I strongly disagree with this ruling and unfortunately, since that time, many innocent lives have been lost. While Congress cannot outlaw abortion, we can certainly try to make it rare – an objective that most Americans support. As a United States Senator, I will work to reduce abortions and the unwanted pregnancies that make abortions so prevalent in our society. In addition, I am a proponent of funding for abstinence education, because I feel that it is clearly the best way to prevent unwanted pregnancies.</p>
<p>Carl Sampson's Position on Agriculture</p>	<p>Agriculture is at the heart of American life, affecting our economy, our energy supply, our environment, and the nutritional needs of every citizen on a daily basis. I believe we must take a comprehensive approach to supporting our farmers. Federal agriculture policy should encourage farmers to farm sustainably and promote the development of alternative uses for their crops. We ought to move in the direction of limiting commodity subsidies, but not in a way that breaks family farms. At the federal level, we must provide aid to farmers in the wake of natural disasters, and we should promote our products with trade agreements that are fair and enforceable. I am also a strong supporter of "origin of food" labeling.</p>

Kevin Bell's Position on Agriculture	We rely on our farmers for more than just food. Agriculture means more than \$44 billion to our states economy each year and even more to our national economy. When elected senator, I plan to increase agriculture funding. This plan will fund agriculture research programs in our state to ensure that farmers continue to play an important role in the state and national economy, while helping protect the environment at the same time.
Carl Sampson's Position on Crime	Some 650,000 men and women are leaving the Federal and State prisons each year. While the vast majority of the prisoners are committed to abiding by the law and becoming productive members of society, they often encounter the same pressures & temptations that they faced before prison. More than two-thirds of them are arrested for new crimes within 3 years of their release. This exacts a terrible cost in financial terms as well as in human terms. The Second Chance Act, one of my many plans to help alleviate the crime, will help provide these men and women with the training, counseling and other support needed to help them obtain & hold steady jobs; to kick their drug and alcohol habits; rebuild their families; and deal with the many other challenges that they face in their efforts to successfully rejoin society.
Kevin Bell's Position on Crime	<p>Keeping our streets safe and our communities drug-free has never been more important. Every American has a right to live, work, and raise a family in a safe, crime-free neighborhood. And every child has the right to go to a safe, drug-free school. As your senator, I will be committed to making our streets and schools as safe as possible, and will take concrete actions to do so, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Leading the fight for an increase in COPS funding for local law enforcement agencies to put more police officers on our streets. Fighting the emerging threats of methamphetamine labs and OxyContin abuse in our rural communities. Funding a \$1 million statewide DNA initiative to help our state's crime labs process their DNS backlog. * Helping expand the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, which gives local law enforcement more tools for combating drugs.

<p>Carl Sampson's Education Policy</p>	<p>A sound public education system is the cornerstone for a strong, modern society, and our children deserve the very best we can provide in order to secure their successful future. The world is changing before our eyes, and the demands of an increasingly globalized economy are higher than ever before, with new competition coming from China and India. Our students must have the tools to be innovative and competitive if we want our economy to remain the strongest in the world. I believe that we can meet and exceed these demands, but we need to continually renew our commitment to education. We must set high standards for our schools while giving teachers and students the resources necessary to meet them. We must increase rigor in our science and math curriculum so that students are prepared for a 21st century economy.</p>
<p>Kevin Bell's Education Policy</p>	<p>No Child Left Behind did what it was supposed to do improve test scores in reading and math, but that doesn't mean that our work is done. Improvement can still be made. As your senator, I will work on reducing confusion about the law among educators and citizens and institute more flexibility in its programs. Most of the frustration about the law in its early years was because of confusion about the act, which is more than 1,000 pages long. Also, new measures for honoring schools that are making progress to complement the current penalties for underperforming schools should be added. In addition, new standards for measuring the progress of students who are not proficient in English should be developed.</p>
<p>Carl Sampson's Energy Policy</p>	<p>I am very pleased to see that energy independence and climate change have been pushed to the top of the national agenda in recent years. Reducing our dependence on foreign oil and curbing the effects of climate change have been a concern of mine for a number of years, and I will work hard to see that these important values are reflected in public policy. Promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency is about much more than being good stewards of our natural resources, although that aim is noble enough. We can no longer place our economic livelihoods at the mercy of unstable and unfriendly governments. Americans have the ingenuity and drive to create a diverse energy portfolio and to find new sources of energy, and I believe that we can harness these talents to usher in a new era of energy independence.</p>

Kevin Bell's Energy Policy	The United States should launch a new five-year Manhattan Project to put America firmly on the path to clean energy independence. This is the real way to deal with gasoline and electricity prices, clean air, climate change and national security- do more of what we already know how to do, starting with exploration for more American oil and gas. We should permit more states to do what Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama do: explore offshore, keep three-eighths of the revenues and put one-eighth into the nations Land and Water Conservation Fund. For electricity, we should build five or six new nuclear power plants a year for the next 40 years which is the only near-term way both to meet our need for large amounts of carbon-free energy and to deal with climate change. Ahead of both oil and gas exploration and nuclear power should come even more aggressive fuel efficiency and conservation.
Carl Sampson's Position on the Environment	As your senator, I will promote laws that safeguard our families and communities from toxic substances and other harmful chemicals, promoting open space conservation, protecting our nation's wildlife, and supporting efforts to restore lakes and rivers in our state. To stem the tide of global climate change, I will work to relieve America's dependence on carbon-based energy and invest in clean, homegrown energy sources. Those investments will not only address global climate change, but will spur economic growth, create green collar jobs and move America forward on a path to energy independence. I also support aggressive action aimed at reducing carbon emissions by 80 percent by the year 2050. Capping emissions and investing in green technologies is one of my strategies to stem the effects of climate change and drive private-sector investment in clean and efficient energy sources.
Kevin Bell's Position on the Environment	I believe that it is necessary to conserve our natural resources, and I believe that we can protect our environment while still providing for economic opportunity. In fact, the two must be linked. We have made great progress in developing time-tested, environmentally sound technologies for harvesting the resources of our lands, without degrading the environment. I support efforts to ensure the natural beauty of our state is enjoyed by generations to come. Our state offers many unique and distinct characteristics that add to its great quality of life and interest as a tourist destination. I am committed to protecting our natural resources in a balanced way that preserves our resources for sportsmen, outdoor enthusiasts, and our agriculture community.

<p>Carl Sampson's Position on Guns</p>	<p>It is a tragedy when lives are suddenly and violently cut short by gun violence. While Americans are entitled to own and use guns in a responsible fashion, we must ensure that our laws are working effectively to keep guns out of the hands of those prohibited by law from using them. I support tough crime control and prevention initiatives, and I support efforts to address illegal possession and use of firearms, such as efforts to enhance the federal crime gun tracing system and strengthen the federal criminal background check system. I will continue to support measures that will reduce gun violence and help ensure that our nation's gun laws are vigorously enforced.</p>
<p>Kevin Bell's Position on Guns</p>	<p>I believe that gun control legislation violates both the letter and the spirit of the United States Constitution. The Second Amendment of the Constitution reads: A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed. To combat crime in our communities, we need stronger penalties. I will vote against all attempts to infringe upon the rights of law abiding citizens. It is a foremost right of all American citizens to be free from the fear of violent crime in our homes, our streets and our communities. We cannot demonstrate any tolerance for crime in our society. Individuals who commit crimes with firearms should be dealt with quickly and effectively.</p>
<p>Carl Sampson's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>While we shouldn't be surprised that millions of people wish to come to the United States in order to pursue a better life for themselves and their families –immigration is, in fact, a central feature of our history and our success as a nation – we need to distinguish between legal and illegal immigration. It is estimated that there are at least 12-15 million illegal immigrants working and raising families in the United States. Their status, and the need for procedures to prevent more illegal immigration, must be a top policy priority. I propose a visa program designed to allow highly-skilled workers to come to the United States to help high-tech industries grow and attract top talent.</p>

Kevin Bell's Position on Immigration	Let me be clear at the outset - lawful immigration and legal immigrants are not the issues. America has always been a nation of immigrants. The issues are unlawful immigration and illegal immigrants. The concern is that today in America we have a major problem with illegal immigrants crossing our borders, taking up residence in America, overcrowding our schools, hospitals and so very often, our jails. First, If we don't secure our borders, then nothing else we do relative to immigration reform will really matter. Second, I want you to know that I am absolutely opposed to any amnesty for illegal immigrants. We have to solve this problem for two basics reasons: you future and your freedom.
Carl Sampson's Position on Jobs	Americans are right to be worried. Key economic indicators suggest that our economy has yet to fully recover from the recession. Behind these statistics are real people who are having a harder time making ends meet, finding it more difficult to save for college or retirement, and who rightly ask why politicians in Washington can't seem to put aside partisan bickering long enough to focus on reviving our economy. We need more tax cuts and credits for lower and middle income families. Unlike tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, tax cuts and credits for lower and middle income families are effective in helping those most impacted by the slowing economy get back on their feet. They also help to stimulate a slowing economy because families in need are likely to immediately use the money to pay for things they otherwise may not afford.
Kevin Bell's Position on Jobs	The role of the government is not to create wealth, but to foster an environment where America's entrepreneurial spirit can thrive and achieve great things. We must help the economy grow, encourage the creation of jobs and opportunities, and help Americans keep more of their hard-earned money to save and spend as they see fit. It is my goal to create an environment that fosters economic production, job growth, and an increase in real wages. The key to economic prosperity is to reduce the high level of taxation on American citizens and businesses that stunts economic growth and limits job creation. By using tax relief to help Americans keep more of what they earn, the economy will grow, resulting in new jobs to increase our tax base.

<p>Carl Sampson's Position on Marriage</p>	<p>Among my core convictions is an unshakable belief in the right of every human being to be treated equally regardless of race, ethnic background, religious faith, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. I have consistently opposed efforts to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage. Our Constitution is a solemn compact that is the foundation for the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans, and historically has been amended to expand rights, not restrict them. When it comes to the adoption of children in need of loving, stable homes, I believe the best interest of the child must be the only consideration. With so many children in need, it's plainly not right to prevent a child from being adopted by loving, nurturing parents simply because of their sexual orientation.</p>
<p>Kevin Bell's Position on Marriage</p>	<p>I believe my values are shared with most Mississippians. As a Southern Baptist, I am a strong supporter of Christian family values. I do not support gay marriage and believe in the traditional definition of marriage. As your senator I will introduce an amendment to the Constitution to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman and lobby other senators to make sure the amendment passes. Unelected judges in some states have taken action to change this traditional role of marriage in our country. It is important that those states do not impose their laws on our state and other states that have rejected attempts to redefine marriage. I also oppose efforts to carve-out privileges for special groups or enact "hate crimes" legislation, which seeks to punish offenders for their thoughts instead of their actions.</p>
<p>Carl Sampson's Position on Social Security</p>	<p>Social Security is our most important and most successful retirement-security program, and its long-term financial stability is important to everyone, not just senior citizens. To address long-term solvency, I support creation of a bipartisan solvency commission. Let's put all options on the table. I believe Social Security has worked well for our country, but that will not continue unless every American has a stake in the program. That is why I have always opposed attempts to privatize Social Security. Some have advocated solving the long-term Social Security short-fall through the diversion of some Social Security funds into private retirement accounts. Diverting Trust Fund dollars out of Social Security will weaken the program and, worse yet, subject an otherwise stable social insurance system to one that is even more.</p>

Kevin Bell's Position on Social Security	Social Security is vital to the quality of life of our senior citizens. More than 60 percent of America's seniors depend on Social Security for a majority of their income. Current and future retirees, after years of hard work, deserve financial security and the assurance of a viable Social Security system far into the future. While Social Security is safe and solvent today, increasing life expectancies and other demographic and employment factors will eventually bankrupt the program unless we enact significant reform. I believe that Congress, the President, and the American people must carefully examine alternatives to put Social Security on a path to long-term viability, and quickly act to ensure the retirement security of today's and tomorrow's retirees.
Carl Sampson's Position on Taxes	It is immoral to burden future generations with the obligation to repay our debt, especially when the accumulation of debt is unnecessary. It is possible to eliminate the budget deficit through a bipartisan commitment to balancing the budget with tax and expenditure policies that are fair to American families and workers, but it will not be easy or painless. I believe our tax policy should be simplified and fairer to Middle-income Americans. That is why I have long supported eliminating the so-called "Alternative Minimum tax" that punishes middle-income wage earners.
Kevin Bell's Position on Taxes	I have supported the elimination of the marriage penalty and the death tax. Allowing working families to keep more of their hard-earned money just makes sense. It allows the American consumer to buy more products, which in turn, creates jobs and boosts our economy. We need to balance the budget without raising taxes. We need to reform our budget process. We need to make the tax cut permanent and implement additional tax cuts. I, like many Republicans already in Congress support a "Fair Tax." The "Fair Tax" would simply replace our current system with a national consumption tax. The individual income tax, the corporate income tax, capital gains taxes, all payroll taxes, the self-employment tax, and the federal estate and gift taxes would no longer exist. And Social Security and Medicare benefits would remain untouched under the "Fair Tax" bill.
Carl Sampson's Position on Trade	Part of the American promise is the idea that through hard work and ingenuity every American can get ahead in life. American workers, companies and farmers will never reap the benefits of the global marketplace if other countries are allowed to engage in unfair trade practices like illegal subsidization, currency manipulation and intellectual property theft. I strongly believe U.S. trading partners should be held accountable for violating fair trade rules.

Kevin Bell's Position on Trade	I am a supporter of free but fair trade. The ability to trade provides American manufacturers and suppliers more opportunities to sell their products and gives consumers more options at better prices. Free trade agreements are negotiated to remove economic barriers to international trade and provide economic benefits. America has a great tradition of reliance on and belief in the free market; however, we must also be aware of the possible negative effects that could result from certain aspects of free trade agreements. A delicate balance between free trade and meeting the needs of working Americans must be a top priority and I will continue to review any such agreements with this in mind.
Endorsement from United Mine Workers of America	The United Mine Workers of America announced today that it will endorse Carl Sampson for US Senate in 2012. The union represents nearly 20,000 members across the state. The state director, William J. Pienta said Carl Sampson has established a strong working relationship with the union during his years in the state legislature and he has continued to impress us with his hard work and fresh ideas. Carl Sampson is an important ally for miners across state and across the country," Pienta said. "He understands the pressures that our members experience on and off the job and he has consistently worked with us. At a time when our state and nation face extraordinary challenges, we need extraordinary individuals representing our citizens in the US Senate. We are proud to make this announcement now and without any reservation because we know Carl Sampson will continue to serve our state well."
Endorsement from the Deputy Secretary of Defense	Former Deputy Secretary of Defense and United States Secretary of the Navy, Gordon England today endorsed Kevin Bell for United States Senator. I am proud to support Kevin Bell, said England. The United States faces challenges to our national security from all over the world. America needs a Senator like Kevin Bell who has the knowledge and commitment in both economics and national security to help see our nation through this difficult time. This state and all of America will be fortunate to have Kevin Bell as Senator.

National Organization for Women Endorsement	The National Organization for Women Political Action Committee (NOW PAC) is proud to endorse U.S. Senate candidate Carl Sampson, who is a strong supporter of NOW's primary goal to achieve equality for all women. "I am honored to have the support of the National Organization for Women," said Carl Sampson. "NOW stands for many of the values that need greater attention from our government and in our society." NOW President Kim Gandy had strong words of support for Carl Sampson. "Women's rights are being challenged in every arena, from equal pay at work to the right to use contraception at home," said Gandy. "We are endorsing Carl Sampson because he is a passionate, articulate and effective advocate for change, and this Congress is in desperate need of change.
Family Research Council Endorsement	FRC Action, the legislative advocacy arm of the Family Research Council founded by Dr. James Dobson in 1983 to promote marriage and family and the sanctity of human life in national policy, on Tuesday endorsed for U.S. Senate. Kevin Bell is the conservative candidate in this race, Connie Mackey, FRC Actions senior vice president said in a statement released from its headquarters in Washington, D.C. There is a clear and significant difference between Kevin Bell claim to family values and his opponents.
Endorsement from the Rev. Jessie Jackson, Sr.	The Rev. Jessie Jackson, Sr. announced his endorsement of Carl Sampson. In his statement Jackson said that The U.S. Senate more than needs Carl Sampson. Carl Sampson has the courage to fight for the right issues. He will step up when needed to meet the challenge. He stood with us when many others disappeared." Hes a good friend to have. Keep hope alive, vote for the passion.
National Republican Senatorial Committee Endorsement	Kevin Bell today received the endorsement of the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) and of U.S. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). The endorsement is only the second open-seat endorsement by the Senate Committee in the 2012 U.S. Senate elections. "Kevin Bell has demonstrated that he understands the difficult issues facing the people of his state," said U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), National Republican Senatorial Committee Chairman. "He is traveling the state, engaging voters, and offering solutions to the economic, health care, and education needs facing voters. While the likely Democrat nominee prefers to remain silent or undecided on the challenges confronting our country, Kevin Bell is - as he always has - providing critical leadership at home and in Washington. We are fortunate to have him as a candidate for the U.S. Senate."

Sierra Club Endorsement	The Sierra Club and its 10,000 members in this state today endorsed Carl Sampson for U.S. Senate, touting his commitment to tackling global warming, protecting public lands, and making our state a leader in renewable energy. The Sierra Club, one of the state's largest and most progressive environmental organizations, thoroughly examined candidates' overall environmental records and platforms, involving volunteers across the state as well as the organization's statewide and national political committees.
National Rifle Association Endorsement	The National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund (NRA-PVF) is endorsing Kevin Bell for U.S. Senate. Kevin Bell, an NRA-PVF A rated candidate, is a friend of freedom. He believes that the Constitution protects law-abiding citizens fundamental right to keep and bear arms, said Chris W. Cox. He is also a friend of law enforcement and knows that the key to reducing crime is to enforce existing laws and ensure that the full burden of our laws fall on the criminal. Im honored to have the endorsement of the National Rifle Association, said Kevin Bell. I have been an avid hunter all of my life, and like an overwhelming majority of this state, I strongly support the right to keep and bear arms. I will continue to defend the Second Amendment from those in Congress who wish to infringe upon our rights. Elections matter and this years election offers all Americans another opportunity to reaffirm our strong support for the Second Amendment.
Carl Sampson's Age	44 years old
Kevin Bell's Age	Carl Sampson's Age
Carl Sampson's Educational Background	B.A. Sociology from Georgetown University, May 1981 J.D. University of Chicago School of Law, May 1984
Kevin Bell's Educational Background	B.A. Business and Economics from The Ohio State University, May 1983 MBA Boston College, May 1985
Carl Sampson's Family Background	Married with three children
Kevin Bell's Family Background	Married with two children
Carl Sampson's Political Experience	State Representative ,2000-2004 State Senator, 2004-present

Kevin Bell's Political Experience	Mayor, 1998-2006 State Treasurer, 2006-present
Carl Sampson's Work History	Associate, Briggs, Clark, and Mueller, LLC., 1984-1990 Partner, Briggs, Clark, and Mueller, LLC, 1990-present
Kevin Bell's Work History	Financial Advisor, Edward Jones Investments, 1985-1991 Regional Manager, Edward Jones Investments, 1991-1998
Carl Sampson's Religion	Carl Sampson is a Non-Denominational Christian
Kevin Bell's Religion	Kevin Bell is a Southern Baptist
Carl Sampson's Slogan	Go Forward With Carl Sampson
Kevin Bell's Slogan	People Before Politics
Carl Sampson's Political Party	Carl Sampson is a member of the Democratic Party
Kevin Bell's Political Party	Kevin Bell is a member of the Republican Party
Campaign Event for Carl Sampson	Its the dog days of August, and any prospect of a tough Senatorial election is heating up. Carl Sampson is as dogged as ever, interrupting a three-day swing through northern part of the state Thursday to travel to the south side. There, he greeted 360 senior citizens who were bused in from around the area for a picnic sponsored by state Democratic state assemblymen. Its a very important event, Carl Sampson said, sitting at a rickety picnic table after 90 minutes of shaking hands. I thought it would be a great way to introduce myself to all the seniors.
Campaign Event for Kevin Bell	U.S. Senatorial Candidate, Kevin Bell, is traveling to two towns on the western side of the state tomorrow for "meet & greets." Each meet and great will begin with a short speech by Kevin Bell about his commitment to education and fiscal responsibility, followed by an opportunity to meet Kevin Bell and talk about the issues that matter to you.
Campaign Event for Carl Sampson	Just two days after Carl Sampson, Democratic candidate for the open Senate seat, announced his Tour of 100 Towns, he arrived at the southern tip of the state to discuss economic development with local citizens. Carl Sampson began his tour this past Saturday, in a small town where he was born, continued to and spent his early childhood years. There he discussed the importance of education, met with small business owners to talk about high gas prices and spoke about global warming and energy independence.

Campaign Event for Kevin Bell	U.S. Senate Candidate, Kevin Bell, is on a tour of the state this weekend. Kevin Bell says one of his main platforms is fiscal responsibility and the need to restore faith in government officials both in our state and around the U.S.. Kevin Bell says, "Too much clout, too many cozy relationships and problems with our corrupt politics. I will work to fight for the accountability of the government, and we need more of that in Washington, whether it's protecting our tax dollars where there's too much fraud and waste..."
Campaign Event for Carl Sampson	After weeks of hearing Republicans savage him as a liberal bent on taxing and spending, Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Carl Sampson said Saturday he's not deterred from his original campaign strategy. "I'm going to be talking about what I want to do for the people of this state, and this country, he said in an interview. Let's talk about solutions to problems we have, in education, in energy, in fiscal responsibility."
Campaign Event for Kevin Bell	New jobs for hard workers in our state, reinvestment in agriculture and better federal spending were part of the message U.S. Senate candidate Kevin Bell shared during a visit to a cattle farm. "We've got to be sure that we have farmers who continue to farm," Kevin Bell said to the handful of farmers from the central-east side of the state. He also said that because the area has seen a huge loss of jobs during the past couple of years, particularly in the manufacturing sector, there is a need for retooling workers particularly when it comes to education. And while community colleges are doing a good job with workforce training and development, he said that more is needed at the federal level.
Campaign Event for Carl Sampson	As is usually the case, politicians made sure to stop by the 2009 Farm Progress Show as it often proves to be a fertile ground attracting voter and media attention. Most of the notable politicians showed up on the show's first day, with only a handful trickling through the final two days. Senatorial candidate, Carl Sampson, a Democrat, made this his final stop on a month long tour of 100 towns across the state. "It's going to be tough, but we're ready," Carl Sampson said when asked about his road to Election Day. Carl Sampson, who has roots in the center of the state was visiting the Farm Progress Show for the first time on Wednesday and marveled at its magnitude. "It's the No. 1 show of its kind," Carl Sampson said. "We need to be staying ahead on the innovation side and dominate the market."

Campaign Event for Kevin Bell	The race for US Senate took the forefront Saturday afternoon at the St. Johns Picnic, an annual picnic held in the northwest corner of the state. Carl Sampson said America has become the greatest debtor nation known to man, spending money at \$53,000 a second. Interest on the national debt is \$30 billion a month. He suggests that the nation needs a balanced budget amendment, much like what our own state has. He said to Contrast that with the federal government which simply has a printing press. Kevin Bell vowed that he would not vote for any budget that is not balanced.
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Congressional Campaign Content

Jason Bowey's Position on Abortion	While doing everything we can to promote responsible behavior and reduce unplanned pregnancies, Jason Bowey understands that the decision to have an abortion is one of the most emotional and private dilemmas a woman can face. Jason Bowey believes this is a decision should be made by the woman herself, not by the government. There is much that can be done to reduce abortions and improve the health and care of women and children, but government should not intrude on the bodies and the most important personal decisions women make. That is why Jason Bowey believes abortions should be safe, legal, and as rare as possible.
Ryan Phillips's Position on Abortion	I wholeheartedly believe that we should look for ways to curb and stop abortions in the United States. The rights of the unborn continue to be of the utmost concern to me. All life is precious. When people discuss abortion there is a tendency to couch the argument in terms of it being simply a choice or decision. That's not what it's about. It's about protecting the innocent lives of the most vulnerable among us.
Jason Bowey's Position on Agriculture	Agriculture remains one of the most important industries in this state- employing 9 percent of the workforce and generating over \$5 billion in economic activity each year. I will fight to protect the interests all our farmers in the Farm Bill reauthorization process, which is due to be taken up by Congress next year. Additionally, I would support the Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act, which was introduced in the current Congress but never made it out of committee. This act would double the working lands conservation fund, provide grants and loans for farmers and cooperatives to build biorefineries, expand farmers market programs, and make the Conservation Security Program available to more farmers.
Ryan Phillips's Position on Agriculture	Historically, agriculture has always been a major part of this states culture and industry. Today it continues to drive the states economy, contributing \$5 billion each year. Our congressional district, which produces the largest number of row crops of any congressional district in the United States, is not only a major contributor to the states agricultural industry but also to the nations. I look forward to serving you in Congress and ensuring our farmers have the necessary resources they need to prosper.

Jason Bowey's Position on Drugs	Throughout our state, the leading cause of crime is methamphetamine. This illegal drug destroys lives and families, while leaving toxic waste in our communities. Meth use is involved in over half of the cases of burglary, identity theft, and violent crime in our region. In Congress, I plan to lead the fight to stop this ruinous drug by joining the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine, where I will bring funding home to help local law enforcement catch and prosecute drug traffickers, and fight for special assistance for the southern part of the state through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. I will also support legislation to help individuals receive adequate and effective addiction treatment services and access to prevention programs.
Ryan Phillips's Position on Drugs	This state has seen a rise in drug trafficking in and out of the state in recent years. Cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin and marijuana are all abused in our state. We are also suffering from the introduction of club drugs and OxyContin in recent years. Ive done my research. I know that the biggest illegal drug problem in this state is the production, distribution and abuse of methamphetamine. An informal survey of district law enforcement and public officials found that 70% of all crime in the district is somehow connected to methamphetamine. This is likely to continue to rise if we don't act. We need a three-prong approach to solve this problem education or demand reduction, strong punishments for offenders and rehabilitation of addicts. This three-pronged approach reflects a balanced, proactive policy that encourages people not to use drugs and gives addicts a chance to change their lives.
Jason Bowey's Education Policy	Education is a central component to keeping America's economy the best in the world. The education of our children is the first step to strengthening the middle class and becoming more competitive around the world. Jason Bowey applauds the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act; however, he feels the federal government has underfunded this program forcing states to increase property taxes in order to meet federal government standards. Furthermore, Jason Bowey feels that the No Child Left Behind Act focuses too much on standardized testing. As someone who went to college on student loans, Jason Bowey will work hard to make college more affordable for all families. Jason Bowey supports the expansion of the new GI Bill for the 21st Century, efforts to lower interest rates on student loans, and increases in financial aid to help student who want to attend college afford it.

<p>Ryan Phillips's Education Policy</p>	<p>There are many who believe that the federal government should be more involved in determining what happens in our nation's schools. I disagree. While the federal government can certainly play a role in funding educational opportunities for students and determining national priorities, it shouldn't be involved in determining a day-to-day classroom curriculum or where a local community spends its educational dollars. I firmly believe parents and local and state officials are in the best position to determine what is needed in their school system. While educational reform is needed, it needs to begin at the local and state level. Schools need qualified teachers in the classroom. They need the financial resources for computers and other teaching aids that will be critical to our children's development. I'm committed to doing my part in Washington to provide the necessary support while protecting the rights of local communities and leaders in determining their educational future.</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Energy</p>	<p>Jason Bowey believes that it is vital to our national security to curb our dependence on foreign oil by investing in self-sufficient renewable energy programs. Finding and implementing new sources of energy is not only important for our country, but will save energy costs for middle class families, seniors and small businesses. Investing in alternative energy will create "green-collar" jobs and bring down the price of gas and electricity. Jason Bowey will work to incentivize more efficient and environmentally sound energy policy.</p>
<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Energy</p>	<p>Energy reform is perhaps one of the most critical issues facing Congress as Americans pay high prices at the pump day after day, and our dependence on foreign oil continues to threaten our national security. I believe it is imperative we look for real solutions to lower gas prices for American families and increase domestic energy production to break our dependency on foreign sources of oil. We can achieve these goals by cutting federal regulations that drive up energy production and processing costs, increasing U.S. capacity to refine crude oil and exploring areas that are currently off limits to domestic production like the Alaskan Energy Slope, the oil shale areas of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, and the outer-continental shelf.</p>

<p>Jason Bowey's Position on the Environment</p>	<p>Our environment is a precious commodity and we must work to preserve and protect our shared natural resources. I support measures that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, slow the rate of global warming and protect our environment. There are essentially three ways to achieve these goals: use less energy, use clean energy, capture and store carbon from dirty energy. It sounds so easy, but in reality, it is quite difficult. We must invest in renewable energy sources and impose stricter emission standards if we are to reduce the harmful greenhouse gases that increase the earth's temperature. We also must find ways to promote research, development and deployment of emerging technologies like plug-in hybrids, carbon capture and sequestration, and smart grid technologies. There is a long road ahead, but I believe we are finally moving in the right direction.</p>
<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on the Environment</p>	<p>Much research has been conducted by various organizations and universities on the subject of climate change, resulting in a wide range of conflicting conclusions. It is my belief that for the best possible policy to be written, all known facts must be considered as well as the impact of legislation. When formulating, debating or voting on environmentally-related policy, I ask several questions. Does the policy contribute to our energy security; does the policy create or destroy American jobs; does the policy have a measurable environmental benefit; and does the policy require more than is technologically possible?</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Guns</p>	<p>I am not opposed to law-abiding citizens owning guns. I am, however, opposed to the ease with which criminals seem to be able to obtain guns and the inability to track the use of weapons in crimes. I believe there are ways to address and reduce crimes committed with firearms that do not excessively restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens to own and use firearms for recreational purpose. Gun safety can and should be taught and enhanced without encroaching on our rights. People, not guns, commit crimes, but finding and prosecuting such criminals can be difficult. We can facilitate the catching of criminals through identification and tracing of the firearms used. And true to my approach to government, I would keep an open mind and listen to the concerns of gun owners, law enforcement officials, and other concerned citizens before voting on any legislation in this area.</p>

<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Guns</p>	<p>Gun ownership is a tradition in the United States, a tradition supported by the Constitution. While we do have a problem with gun violence in this country, we should not restrict individual rights of people who have not done anything wrong. We should focus on finding solutions to violence, not by restricting individual rights. We should take practical steps to reduce gun violence. Such as closing the Gun Show loophole to make sure criminals do not gain access to weapons, registering weapons to provide law enforcement with the information they need to track weapons used in crime, and focusing on effective law enforcement on violent criminals. But we should not restrict the rights of people who have done nothing wrong. Some people want to focus on gun ownership for the purpose of hunting. Hunting is an important part of the cultural tradition in this state for gun ownership. Some people own firearms for self-defense or even just as collectors.</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>Like you, I believe that comprehensive immigration reform is needed. In this post September 11, 2001 world, we must be concerned about border security and do more to ensure that we know who is entering the country, including taking practical steps to prevent people from illegally entering the country. This desire to strengthen our borders, however, should not disrupt the lives of people who legally came to the United States and are productive, taxpaying members of our communities. Additionally, we need to provide a path for the estimated 10 million undocumented workers currently in the U.S. to become documented through a legal process of applying for permanent residency or citizenship. It is clearly in the best interest of our country to identify these undocumented individuals and provide them with the necessary incentive to come out of the shadows and regularize their status.</p>

<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>The United States is a nation of immigrants. We've always welcomed those who chose to come to our shores in search of freedom and opportunity, but today we have a problem. Our entire immigration process is broken and thousands cross our borders illegally, threatening the very safety and security of our nation. To effectively deal with the immigration concerns in the United States we must control our borders. Otherwise anything else we might do would simply be ineffective. Today, we've lost control of our borders. I believe the American people will only deal with reform if they are convinced that the borders are secure first. In some quarters, discussions on illegal immigration have included talk of amnesty for those who entered the country illegally. I feel very strongly that amnesty should not be automatically granted to those who are here illegally. We are a nation of laws and we would send the wrong message if we were to merely give amnesty to those who openly disregard our laws.</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Jobs</p>	<p>I am committed to promoting economic growth in our district, helping middle class families and small businesses get the head start they need to create jobs and opportunity. Our region has seen job loss for decades and there is no one-step panacea to help ensure good jobs for ourselves and our children. However, I am working to help create an environment that will foster economic development in the region. We must look to our agricultural resources, amazing educational institutions, alternative energy capability, and the creative and committed workforce we have in the district, all of which are very closely interrelated. By working together as a region, we can harness the power of local communities and federal resources to create jobs and grow our economy right where we need it most.</p>
<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Jobs</p>	<p>At a time when job creation and economic growth are more important than ever, it is important to remember the fundamentals of what really increases economic opportunity for our citizens. Because high taxes stifle economic growth, burdening families and job-creating businesses, I proudly support tax relief. International investment has greatly benefited our state. Thousands of jobs have been created by international companies who have located automobile factories, steel plants, and other facilities here. Trade and investment that benefits the people of this state will continue to have my support. By keeping taxes low, reducing wasteful spending, supporting our entrepreneurs, and marketing this states many competitive advantages including our schools and universities, we can continue to create good job opportunities for citizens our district and our state.</p>

Jason Bowey's Position on Marriage	I believe that loving and committed same-sex couples should have the right to get married, receive legal recognition of their marriage in the eyes of the government, and exercise all the legal benefits associated with their marriage. I am opposed to any effort that seeks to create a narrowly defined legal definition of marriage that excludes the right of same-sex couples to marry, or to have their existing marriage recognized. In line with that, I also do not believe that any same-sex couples should be denied the opportunity to adopt children and provide a loving home to children who may otherwise be left in foster care systems. I believe that current federal benefits for individuals, which exclude LGBT couples from receiving equal treatment under the law, are unfair and discriminatory. That is why I am a strong supporter of legislation that would extend benefits to domestic partners.
Ryan Phillips's Position on Marriage	It is my belief that marriage is a sacred commitment between a man and a woman, and is the foundation of the traditional family. Therefore, I support an amendment to the Constitution that would define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. An amendment to the Constitution is not to be undertaken lightly. By way of background, in 1996, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Defense of Marriage Act to define marriage under federal law as a legal union between a man and a woman as husband and wife and Clinton signed it into law only to have it declared unconstitutional. Since then, 38 states have passed similar laws or constitutional amendments, demonstrating a strong consensus for protecting the institution of marriage, many of these laws also being declared unconstitutional. More than 200 years of American law and thousands of years of human experience should not be arbitrarily changed by a handful of judges and local authorities.
Jason Bowey's Position on Poverty	Like all government initiatives, welfare should be subject to strict observation and review. Though welfare success has previously been measured by how many people are currently recipients of AFDC, food stamps, and Medicaid, this analysis is flawed. Instead, welfare should be evaluated by a different measure of success - how many people no longer need AFDC, Food Stamps and Medicaid and are moved into a life of self-sufficiency, dignity and hope. Welfare assistance should be a hand-up not a hand-out. While this program has been proven to be an overall success, what is really needed is a cultural shift in our society to address the problems of welfare dependency.

<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Poverty</p>	<p>Primary indications are that the Republican led welfare reform of only a few years ago has been extremely successful. Welfare rolls have been reduced dramatically, and recent research shows that the poverty rates have also fallen significantly. However, there remains much work to be done. Our Founding Fathers warned us of the danger of allowing government to waste the substance of its citizens under the pretense of taking care of them. It is time for government to join with the private business sector in requiring and providing opportunity to work. I look forward to personally working towards that goal when elected to Congress. A job still represents the greatest social program in America, and helping the disadvantaged find independence from government is the truly compassionate thing to do.</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Social Security</p>	<p>Social Security is a contract between generations, which is why Jason Bowey opposes decreasing benefits for future retirees. In Congress, he will work to keep Social Security solvent for future generations. Jason Bowey opposes the privatization of Social Security benefits. Social Security does not need to be dismantled - the future funding shortfall is fixable. Bipartisanship is needed to solve the problem, and Jason Bowey supports a bipartisan commission to find solutions to fix the Social Security system.</p>
<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Social Security</p>	<p>Nothing is more important than ensuring that our senior citizens are taken care of. For many years now, Social Security has helped to do just that. I want you to know that no matter what challenges face our Social Security system, I'm committed to doing everything to ensure that it will be available to you, your children, and your grandchildren. That includes opposing efforts that would weaken the system. Americans have paid into the system and earned every penny they receive back. Congress must not take any action that would ultimately harm the people Social Security is intended to protect. Securing Social Security for today and tomorrow is about doing what's right. It's as simple as that. My job is to make sure that continues.</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Taxes</p>	<p>Jason Bowey strongly support tax relief for middle class families, seniors and small businesses. Jason Bowey understands that households in our state pay too much in taxes. When elected to Congress, he will strongly advocate for lower taxes. Jason Bowey will also do everything he can on the federal level to help lower property taxes. He supports allowing homeowners to deduct their property taxes. Jason Bowey will work working to bring back federal funding to the district for infrastructure and school projects, which will ease the strain of local budgets. Finally, he opposes all unfunded mandates, which force local governments and school districts to raise taxes.</p>

<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Taxes</p>	<p>While taxes are a necessary to fund such critical priorities as the national defense and other programs, it doesn't change the fact that you've worked hard for your money and should be allowed to decide where that money should be spent. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that we're spending your money wisely and returning it to you when it has taken too much. In general, the United States tax code is overly complicated. What we need is a system that the average taxpayer can understand and comply with. We need to ensure that taxes are equitable and don't place an undue burden on individuals or businesses. To do this, we must control spending and ensure that the money we're spending is being spent wisely. While there are any number of worthwhile programs that deserve federal government spending, we don't have unlimited resources. We have to establish priorities by budgeting responsibly and then living within that budget.</p>
<p>Jason Bowey's Position on Trade</p>	<p>In this part the state, we have been particularly hard hit by the flawed trade policies of the past. Since 2000, our region has lost over 90,000 jobs. Jason Bowey is committed to rebuilding our nations manufacturing industry and improving benefits for American workers. He has pledged to support only trade policies that put American workers first and benefit our districts economy and families.</p>
<p>Ryan Phillips's Position on Trade</p>	<p>Ryan Phillips supports an international economic system that is based on open markets and free trade. I am a firm adherent of the adage that "political friendships follow the trade lanes." As such, I believe that one of our most important foreign policy challenges is in fact the preservation and promotion of economic stability throughout the world. While we face challenges, including a war on terrorism, we are entering an age that will be defined by free people, free ideas, and free trade. Free trade brings prosperity to both partners by lowering the taxes or the tariffs placed on goods and eliminating the barriers to selling American goods abroad. The US must continue to encourage an international economic system that is based on open markets and free trade.</p>
<p>Sierra Club Endorsement</p>	<p>Representatives of the Sierra Club gathered Wednesday to announce the endorsement of for Congress. Jason Bowey is committed to protecting our natural recourses and the Sierra Club strongly backs this candidate, said Richard Isaac, Political Chair of the state chapter of the Sierra Club. He has made a commitment to make environmental protection one of the key issues of his campaign. If elected he will be an environmental champion that the district can be proud of, he added.</p>

National Rifle Association Endorsement	The National Rifle Association has endorsed for Congress. Ryan Phillips received an "AQ" rating, which indicates a "solidly pro-gun candidate," according to the NRA Web site. Ryan Phillips's rating was based solely on answers to a questionnaire because he did not have a voting history, the NRA Web site said.
Labor Federation Endorsement	Labor federation voted to endorse Democratic nominee Jason Bowey for Congress. Jason Bowey made the following statement in response to the endorsement: "I am so proud to have won the endorsement of the AFL-CIO, which represents over two hundred thousand workers who know that we desperately need a change in Washington," said Jason Bowey. "AFL-CIO members know that I will be there for them on the issues that matter, like creating new jobs, strengthening our schools, and working to save the environment so that their children can enjoy the same beautiful country that we grew up in." "Jason Bowey really understands the issues facing working families," said James Parent, AFL-CIO Vice President. "Jason Bowey knows that we need to create good jobs and fight for the manufacturing jobs that we still have and to find real answers on the environment and education. I'm convinced Jason Bowey will be a tremendous ally for working families, and we look forward to doing all we can to get him elected."
Republican National Coalition for Life Endorsement	Ryan Phillips, Republican candidate for Congress, has won the endorsement of one of the nations largest conservative political action committees Republican National Coalition for Life. I am honored to have the endorsement of the Republican National Coalition for Life (RNCL). I am proudly both a social and fiscal conservative, said Ryan Phillips. In Congress, I will stand-up for our states strong sense of family and community. I will work closely with the other Congressional conservatives from the state to protect our taxpayers and stop the liberal agenda of redefining family values, said Ryan Phillips. This endorsement is a testament for those who are truly conservative on all fronts and I am honored to have been recognized by the leadership of the RNCL as such, concluded Ryan Phillips.

<p>Progressive Democrats of America Endorsement</p>	<p>The state chapter of Progressive Democrats of America voted overwhelmingly Monday, to endorse Jason Bowey for Congress. The main reason cited for the endorsement was Jason Bowey’s vision for the reform of the US economy. opponent has suggested band-aid approaches, which would leave our basic economic structures unchanged. But Jason Bowey expressed a progressive vision that would restore economic security to middle class working people. Jason Bowey anchors his campaign around basic changes that will directly benefit America’s distressed middle class, working people, and students.</p>
<p>Republican Liberty Caucus Endorsement</p>	<p>The Republican Liberty Caucus has officially endorsed his race for US Congress. In official statement regarding his endorsement by the Republican Liberty Caucus, he said, I am deeply honored to learn that the RLC has officially endorsed my candidacy for seeking the office of U.S. Representative for the 2012 election. I pursued the endorsement of the RLC when discovering that the statement of principles and positions of the RLC were directly in line with my political philosophy on individual rights, limited government, free enterprise, and most of all, upholding the true integrity of the U.S. Constitution. My commitment to the RLC plans to be longstanding, and if elected to office, I will promote the principles of the RLC. My commitment, compassion, and absolute patriotism towards the United States of America are paramount, and my determination to uphold the basic platform of the U.S. Constitution is considered vital for our countrys successful future.</p>
<p>Vetrans of Foreign War Endorsement</p>	<p>The Veterans of Foreign Wars Political Action Committee (VFW-PAC) is the latest organization to give their backing to election campaign. In addition to comments received from VFW leaders in your state, this endorsement is based on your strong support for veterans, national security/defense, and military personnel issues, said Larry W. Rivers, the Director of the VFW-PAC, the VFWs only endorsement body. In response to the endorsement, Jason Bowey said, I consider it one of my greatest duties in Congress to ensure we keep our promises to our veterans of today and tomorrow. I am both humbled and honored to receive such strong support from the millions of veterans the VFW-PAC represents. We must never forget the sacrifice made by our veterans, and we have a solemn obligation to fulfill our promises to them.</p>

Central and Downstate Business PAC Endorsement	The Central and Downstate Business Political Action Committee, today announced their 2012 candidate endorsements in the states southern Congressional Districts. CDBPAC is comprised of members from The Manufacturers Association the State Chamber of Commerce. This is the first Congressional race CDBPAC has weighed in on, since its inception in 2008. Ryan Phillips brings to this election a solid background in business, roots to the region, and a strong business agenda that is desperately needed in this state. His opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act, his support in diversifying energy consumption, and strong opinions on holding foreign trade partners accountable to the same standards our nation abides by in foreign trade practices serves as what CDBPAC believes to be a solid business agenda. Ryan Phillips is who CDBPAC was most aligned with, and believes he will serve as the best candidate to represent our agenda in Washington. CDBPAC announces its endorsement of Ryan Phillips for Congress.
Jason Bowey's Age	49 years old
Ryan Phillips's Age	46 years old
Jason Bowey's Educational Background	B.A. History and Political Science from Florida State University, 1992 MPA, Jacksonville State University School of Public Policy, 1994 JD, Birmingham School of Law, 2000
Ryan Phillips's Educational Background	B.A. Marketing from Wartburg College, 1989
Jason Bowey's family Background	Married Four Children
Ryan Phillips's Family Background	Married Two Children
Jason Bowey's Political Experience	Member, County Commission Assemblyman, State House of Representatives
Ryan Phillips's Political Experience	Precinct Committeeman Republican National Committeeman
Jason Bowey's Work History	Director, Dislocated Worker's Project, United Way of Etowah County, 1994-1997 Attorney, Bolt, Isom, Jackson and Bailey 2000-2002 Attorney, Rogers, Young, Wollstein and Hughes, 2002-2008 Partner, Rogers, Young, Wollstein and Hughes, 2008-present

Ryan Phillips's Work History	Bookkeeper/Teller, Farmers State Bank 1989-1994 Marketing Representative, Atena Insurance Company, 1994-2003 Manager, State Farm Field Office, 2003-present
Jason Bowey's Religion	Ryan Phillips is Catholic
Ryan Phillips's Religion	Jason Bowey is Lutheran
Jason Bowey's Slogan	For the future
Ryan Phillips's Slogan	Make us proud again
Jason Bowey's Political Party	Jason Bowey is a member of the Democratic Party
Ryan Phillips's Political Party	Ryan Phillips is a member of the Republican Party
Campaign Event for Jason Bowey	Last night Congressional candidate Jason Bowey told more than 125 supporters that he looks forward to serving as the next United State Representative from our district and working to making the district a better place. Area Democrats came out in force to join Jason Bowey and supporters for his first official campaign rally. Jason Bowey will continue traveling the district over the coming weeks, meeting with local residents and talking about their concerns. The rally was hosted by Young Democrats. Jason Bowey was introduced by county chair of the Democratic Party.
Campaign Event for Ryan Phillips	This Sunday, Ryan Phillips for Congress is holding an campaign rally in the state park. The event will run between 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Included will be a BBQ party and fundraiser (any donations will be accepted off grounds only in keeping with election law). During the event, a simultaneous pro-life rally will include a speech by Ryan Phillips, the candidate for Congress, on the state abortions and abortion law in the country. Ryan Phillips feels strongly that this is also an important health issue and quite frankly, a family values issue. Any media personality wishing to attend the rally and speech should contact the campaign director at campaign headquarters for further details.

Campaign Event for Jason Bowey	Jason Bowey today reported that he has raised more than \$500,000 during the first six weeks of his campaign to represent our congressional district. More than 300 donors have contributed to the campaign so far in support of message of reviving the district. We can make a real difference in peoples lives, Jason Bowey said. All it takes is hard work, the willingness to make tough choices, and the kind of leadership that cant be bought. Jason Bowey said the funds are helping him reach out to residents of the district and share with them his commitment to work on the issues that affect middle-class families, small business owners, senior citizens and others struggling to pay for everyday expenses or save for their childrens college.
Campaign Event for Ryan Phillips	Republican candidate for Congress, Ryan Phillips, has raised \$475,000 over the last five weeks. My wife and I are elated that so many people from all across the district have dug into their own pockets to support this campaign, Ryan Phillips stated. Our donor list is full of long-time personal friends, party activists, and many others who share my view that our federal government continues to tax, borrow and spend too much. Filed with the Federal Election Commission today, the report shows that Ryan Phillips had donations from over 260 contributors, more than 92% of them from our state. All of the money raised was from contributions and does not include any loans from the candidate or any other source.
Campaign Event for Jason Bowey	This Sunday Jason Bowey is on the road traveling throughout the district with local supporters of his campaign. Reminiscent of past presidential bus and train tours, Jason Bowey intends to take to the road in a 1969 Chinook Mobilodge owned by one of her most ardent supporters and drive a route from east to west. The RV (recreational vehicle) will be hard to miss. It's plastered, top to bottom, with Jason Bowey. Jason Bowey will make several stops throughout the district for candidate forums, which will give people a chance to express their concerns and ask Jason Bowey questions. The district RV tour, will end at the western district campaign headquarters, where there will be a private fundraiser and dinner hosted by the Countys Democratic Party.
Campaign Event for Ryan Phillips	The Campaign to Elect Ryan Phillips to Congress will sponsor a "Meet the Candidate" Event for the Conservative Congressional candidate next Wednesday from 7:30-8:30PM at the local Elks club. Ryan Phillips will present his background, elements of his platform, and answer other related questions regarding the campaign. Additionally, attendees will have an opportunity show their support for the candidate through donations. Coney's will be offered for 99 to support the event. Due to limited seating, those interested in attending are encouraged to call the Ryan Phillips campaign headquarters and indicate the anticipated number to arrive.

Gubernatorial Campaign Content

<p>Dan Gibson's Education Policy</p>	<p>Continuous learning starts early - with a fully funded quality pre-kindergarten program for ALL three-and-four year-olds in families earning less than 200% of the poverty level. Pre-k is vital for future learning, school readiness, and success in the job market. Children who attend pre-k are three times more likely to make better grades and are significantly more likely to graduate from high school on time than those who do not attend pre-k. In addition to pre-K we need to help foster an environment where parents are able to get involved in their child's education. When I am elected governor, I will work on creating partnerships with industries to expand opportunities for parents or guardians to be able to attend parent-teacher conferences and volunteer at their children's schools with paid leave. As the for state I will sponsor a program for the state government that will allow state employees one day of paid leave to volunteer in their children's school and attend their children's parent-teacher conferences.</p>
<p>Tony Owens's Education Policy</p>	<p>Parents, business leaders and educators have lost faith in our public schools. For example, the number of parents sending their kids to private school has increased by more than 10% in the last ten years. There is no more telling statistic than this. Ironically, our public schools were once the standard by which other state systems were measured. Over the past 20 years the control of public schools has shifted from the local level to the states level. Teachers and administrators today have almost zero control over the facilities, the classroom and the budget. This must change. The control of our public schools must be returned to the local level. Parents, teachers and locally-elected school boards have a far greater understanding of the unique needs of their schools than do politicians sitting in the state capital. Returning control to the local level will improve accountability, better ensure that students achieve grade-level proficiency in core subjects, and see that school facilities are adequately constructed and maintained.</p>

<p>Dan Gibson on Fiscal Responsibility and Budgeting</p>	<p>My plan is based on the principle that government must live within its means and that every tax dollar must be spent wisely. To ensure accountability in the spending of our tax dollars, my plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Require regular performance audits of all state agencies and cross-functions in state government; -Transition to zero-based budgeting to ensure that every agency and government program continually justifies its existence; -Expand the school review program to put more of our education dollars in the classroom; -Expand and promote energy efficiency in state buildings and fleet vehicles to reduce energy costs; -Aggressively pursue bulk purchasing opportunities to save taxpayer dollars;
<p>Tony Owens on Fiscal Responsibility and Budgeting</p>	<p>Government spending has grown eighty percent in the last ten years, but as the latest budget crisis proves, state government is as unresponsive and dysfunctional as it has ever been. The people deserve better. As Governor, I would institute a series of reforms to make government more efficient and effective, such as committing to at least \$15 billion in savings and efficiencies within 4 years, ending runaway spending by implementing a sustained government spending freeze, and reducing the size of government while making it more responsive and productive.</p>
<p>Dan Gibson on Energy Policy</p>	<p>Our state attracts more investment in green and clean technology than almost any other state in the nation. Harnessing the power of clean, renewable energy and improving energy efficiency will create thousands of new jobs, introduce a new green-collar economy and help free us from dependence on foreign oil while protecting the environment and reducing energy costs in the long run. As Governor, I want to bring the power of a clean energy revolution to our state by expanding partnerships with the private sector, attracting clean tech industries and establishing aggressive incentives to generate clean, renewable energy while creating new jobs and economic opportunity.</p>

<p>Tony Owens on Energy Policy</p>	<p>Energy is a key industry for our state, but we have only tapped the possibilities. Further development of both our traditional and renewable resources will help our state lead the way to becoming an energy-independent nation. I am a major proponent of using value-added agriculture to complement our renewable energy industry. Producers in our state have a new market for their crops in the development of ethanol and biodiesel facilities. But this is just one area where we can improve. We can also utilize wind resources within our state by developing wind farms throughout the state which will produce more than 1500 megawatts of wind power. Finally, our state is leading the way forward in the development of clean coal technology including carbon dioxide capture and sequestration, as well as new production of oil and gas. As governor, I will use our natural resources to our advantage, which will enable our state to produce more energy and create quality jobs with good environmental stewardship.</p>
<p>Dan Gibson on the Environment</p>	<p>I have been a leader in preserving the environment. I believe that we all have a responsibility to be good stewards of our natural resources and that we need to address the fundamental moral issue of our generation: the pollution of our air and water and destruction of our climate. My environmental priorities are clear: preserve our environment, provide incentives for home and business owners who conserve energy, and invest in a greener future. Our state can lead the way to an energy independent America, but only if our next Governor has the experience and vision to deliver results.</p>
<p>Tony Owens on the Environment</p>	<p>I am committed to doing what is right for the environment of our state. But that doesnt mean we have to harm employers or the economy - quite the opposite. Common sense will lead the way with enforcement of current laws and a commitment to the development of alternative energy solutions. We should be the incubator of research for the environment and energy; we should be the center of the global green economy. This will encourage research and development investments and jobs, strengthening the states economy. As governor, I will apply balance and common sense to make regulations pay the biggest dividends for our environment and our people and use tax incentives and favorable regulations to make our state the undisputed leader in alternative energy and clean-technology jobs.</p>

Dan Gibson on Crime	<p>Central to the long-term safety of our communities is fundamental reform of our prison system. Between 1990 and 2005, the prison population increased by 73% nearly three times faster than the general adult population. Of the 120,000 individuals released from state prisons annually, 70% return. When we consider the fact that 49% of inmates are locked-up for non-violent offenses its clear our system is not working. While we have a very serious issue of prison overcrowding, we must recognize that that alone is not the problem. Our rehabilitation, community re-entry and parolee programs must improve. And a fresh approach to juvenile justice, working toward community-based and rehabilitative options to keep our youth out of jail and with their families is needed.</p>
Tony Owens on Crime	<p>As with other areas of government, Public Safety is in crisis. Our courts and volunteer firefighters continue to excel, but the rest of our public safety system is in a state of turmoil created by a lack of leadership and commitment. In our largest cities, where there are daily shootings, we must find a way to dramatically increase the number of police to retake areas of the city largely abandoned, especially at night. Whether by designating independent revenue sources dedicated to the city or by multi-jurisdictional intervention, we must make our largest city safe for all its citizens. Crime, generally, is on the rise, and police and other first responders must be strengthened and increased in number. This means renewed recruitment, training and retention efforts. I also continue to believe that performance audits will allow us to make state government more efficient and produce substantive revenues to attack the problems caused by a lack of leadership. We must establish priorities for applying part of those savings to public safety needs.</p>
Dan Gibson on Guns	<p>Violent crime and the proliferation of handguns is an epidemic being fought in every state in our nation. While we are winning some important battles against violent crime, we must remain aggressive in combating illegal possession, use and trafficking of firearms. When I am elected governor, I will make it my mission to limit the number of handguns that may be purchased at onetime within a calendar month period. Under this policy, a buyer or seller who violates the "one-gun-a-month" rule would be guilty of a crime of the fourth degree, punishable by imprisonment of up to 18 months, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both. This is not about penalizing law abiding gun owners. It's about stemming the flow of illegal guns on our streets, keeping them out of the hands of gang members and drug dealers, and protecting innocent children and families.</p>

Tony Owens on Guns	<p>The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America states, A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed. The Supreme Court has ruled that the Second Amendment bestows an individual the right to own guns. The right of law abiding citizens to keep and bear arms is a fundamental, individual Constitutional right. We have a responsibility to ensure that criminals who violate the law are prosecuted to the fullest, rather than restricting the rights of law abiding citizens. Law abiding citizens should not be asked to give up their rights because of criminals– criminals who ignore gun control laws anyway. I learned to appreciate gun ownership while growing up in a rural town. I saw the positive use of guns for hunting and recreation. I have also spent time in large cities and comprehend the need of guns for self defense and protection of ones life and liberty.</p>
Dan Gibson on Jobs	<p>At its core, the mission of our next administration must be to recruit, develop and protect jobs. With our states record unemployment over the last few years we can no longer afford inaction. Our next administration must create a business environment in our state that creates jobs. When existing jobs disappear, we cant just sit back and hope for the best. We must help people when their jobs vanish whether its assistance with finding a new job, or retraining to start over again. While we protect the jobs we have, we must also be looking to the future. This great state of ours is already the home of innovative software, drug, research and other hi-tech companies. Our research universities are home to cutting edge developments and innovations that can build new industries and create new jobs.</p>
Tony Owens on Jobs	<p>Everyone in our state deserves the opportunity to have a good, high-paying, stable job. Over the last few years, those opportunities have evaporated due to a lack of real effort from the government. Economic development has been an unmitigated failure, and the people of this state have suffered long enough. To get our economy back to where it was prior to the depression it will take investment in the right areas; a driven, focused effort and a full overhaul of our state government. Our focus must first be on small businesses, our leading employers, and particularly those struggling to survive.</p>

<p>Dan Gibson on the Economy</p>	<p>Our state is in the bottom 10 states in growth of family income. The gap between rich and poor is widening and our most talented and promising young people are leaving the state at an alarming rate. We have lost between 20,000 and 25,000 jobs. For far too long, we've focused too much on creating corporate and individual wealth at the expense the hard working families that are the soul of this state. We can no longer neglect or ignore the small businesses and farms that were the original source for this states wealth. Wealth is created from the bottom up, and its time we had a governor that represents the people who create this wealthnot the large corporations who profit from it.</p>
<p>Tony Owens on the Economy</p>	<p>I have an economic plan to restore our state as a national and global leader in growth, competitiveness, and innovation. Under my plan, I will cut taxes to fuel job creation and jumpstart the economy, regulatory and legal reforms that make our state competitive in the modern economy, and a more innovative and responsive state government that unleashes Californias entrepreneurial spirit. My plan would cut taxes for every taxpayer and every business in our state to help speed up the economy. It would streamline government to unleash innovation and increase job creation. It would reform tort law for an economy focused on growth and expansion. It would reform labor law to make our state competitive again and empower employees. This plan directly addresses basic flaws in the states economy and makes the real changes proven to create jobs and bring people back to our state: Lower taxes and streamlined government.</p>
<p>Dan Gibson's Position on Marriage</p>	<p>Marriage is personal, spiritual and economic relationship, one of the most important building blocks in cementing commitment and stability between two people. On a personal level, hundreds of thousands of couples in this state think of themselves as 'married', without outside endorsement. On a spiritual level, your church or other group of like-minded people are free to extend or withhold the sanction of marriage. But only the state can extend, or forbid, the economic components of marriage by granting its endorsement to marriage's contractual elements. Access to insurance, to family benefits, power of attorney, next-of-kin relations in time of illness or death: all these have to do only with the contract of marriage. I would support legislation that allows legal civil unions between same sex couples, under the same conditions that this contract is offered to female/male couples.</p>

<p>Tony Owens's Position on Marriage</p>	<p>The definition of the family as one man, one woman, married with children is a 6,000 year old practice. This unit has proven to be the best fundamental entity upon which to build and maintain a society. I will support the traditional family. In the 30 states that the people have voted on redefining marriage-the traditional definition of marriage has won each time. Any changes to the definition of marriage should not come from the judiciary or the legislature. If any changes to marriage are adopted, these changes should result from citizen initiative and non-binding referendum.</p>
<p>Dan Gibson's Position on Abortion</p>	<p>Recent events in this state show very clearly that a woman's right to make her own health care decisions is under attack. Despite what some might say, the threat to women's rights is real – whether it's on the state level, where other states are ready to follow in our neighbor's footsteps; or on the federal level, where past presidents have stacked the Supreme court with judges bent on overturning Roe v. Wade. Voters in this state deserve straight answers on where I stand on these important issues. Let me be clear – as Governor, I would not just veto a bill that limits a woman's right to choose, I would work against it in the legislature to keep it from ever passing. I believe in a woman's right to make her own health care decisions, and there never has been any question about where I stand – nor will there ever be.</p>
<p>Tony Owens's Position on Abortion</p>	<p>The Supreme Court has limited the states role regarding abortion. However, the state legislature can require parental notification and consent, as well as prohibit any and all public financing of abortion. I believe that all of us have a role to play in unconditionally loving life and recognizing that there is a purpose for each child. Decisions are difficult, but all of us are called to bring out the best in our fellow human beings and by doing so, the best in each of us becomes evident. Showing this love, recognizing purpose and potential in every child is not simple. Emotional, financial, and many other factors can influence our decisions and prompt us to question our principles. Therefore, government has a duty to help support, through good public policies, the development of children at all stages. Illinois will be the beneficiary of this. Abortion not only ends a human life, but also denies the importance and purpose for each life. A life is a terrible thing to waste.</p>

<p>Dan Gibson on Government Reform</p>	<p>As governor, I will provide open, transparent, and accountable government. Taxpayers and voters are the owners of our government agencies and their assets. It is imperative that we provide citizens in this state with the opportunity to participate more in how their government operates, and have a greater ability to monitor the activities of their elected and appointed officials. For democracy to work effectively citizens must have a high level of confidence and trust in their government and those elected to represent them. I am also committed to dramatically reducing any waste or inefficiencies when it comes to spending taxpayer dollars. An effective state government is essential to providing excellent services to our families while ensuring that they keep more of the money they earn.</p>
<p>Tony Owens on Government Reform</p>	<p>Our state government is broken, and the guilty are those entrenched, status-quo politicians who focus only on the next election and not on the long-term. As a result, our budget has exploded beyond anyone’s definition of acceptable, yet we still can not afford to build schools or roads. It is shameful and the people of this great state deserve better. My first act as your next Governor will be an Executive Order to put all state spending online effective upon the launch of the state’s new accounting software in 2013. People deserve to see where their tax dollars are being spent. Next, we will order outside performance audits of our state government, starting with the Departments of Transportation, Education, Natural Resources and Health & Human Services. It’s time to rid ourselves of the bloat and waste. My administration will bring the change that others only talk about.</p>
<p>Dan Gibson on Transportation and Infrastructure</p>	<p>For too long, the state has not met its basic responsibility to maintain and update Minnesotas state infrastructure. Numerous bridges have been deemed unsafe, and we have failed to build mass transportation systems that sufficiently support our growing population. Fortunately, the next Governor has the opportunity to change the course of our infrastructure policy and make the investments our citizens deserve. Improvements to public transportation in our major cities must be a priority, but we must also remember that transit is a benefit to be enjoyed statewide, and will be increasingly needed as our population ages. The next Governor must promote and actively pursue the construction of a commuter train between major cities and regions in our state.</p>

<p>Tony Owens on Transportation and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Transportation is a key issue for everyone in our state. Residents in major cities are most concerned about congestion, while those who live in rural areas need the economic development and safety that comes with more paved roads. We are one state, and I believe we need a statewide solution to our transportation challenges. When it comes to funding transportation projects, I support a comprehensive statewide approach rather than a piecemeal regional approach. I believe this should be a collaborative effort with legislators and local governments. The goal needs to be providing a foundation for our states future, and we have to get started immediately.</p>
<p>Dan Gibson's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>Half a million illegal immigrants come across our nations borders each year, many of whom end up in our state. Illegal immigration is compromising our national security, impacting our state and national economy and is the single biggest source of illegal drugs coming into this state. We must be tough to restore the order of law, fair to the American taxpayer and practical in our approach given the size and scope of this problem. Illegal immigration is an issue that requires a practical approach to over 20 million illegal immigrants already in America. Many of these illegal immigrants have been here for years paying taxes and have children who are now American citizens. We need to make sure illegal immigrants learn English, pay any back taxes and a fine, plus pass a criminal background check before they can get in the back of the line to be considered for legal status in our country.</p>
<p>Tony Owens's Position on Immigration</p>	<p>Illegal immigration is a grave problem for our state. It costs us a fortune, and it facilitates smuggling illegal substances, such as drugs and guns, into our state and country. One major issue that must be addressed is the problems caused by those whose parents brought them into our country illegally. Those children, many who are now adults, are not the ones who broke the law, and in some cases, they have no other home. I could see a different approach for them than for their parents, who did knowingly break our laws, and who do have another place that is their legal home. I believe that those who broke our laws to enter our country should not be permitted to stay. Amnesty programs only invite future illegal entry. Furthermore, we should impose serious employee sanctions for those who hire those illegally here.</p>

Dan Gibson's Position on Vetrans	More than 1,000 military personnel return home to our state each month. Many return home with symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, traumatic brain injuries or other serious injuries. And many find it almost impossible to find permanent housing, good jobs and the support services they require. As the grandson of a veteran who survived the infamous I understand the needs of our veterans and will work diligently to make sure another generation of service veterans are not victims of addiction, despair and homelessness and are instead provided the benefits they have earned.
Tony Owens's Position on Vetrans	After serving our country we have an obligation to ensure that our veterans are taken care of when they return home. Our first obligation is to provide world-class medical care for our veterans. As Governor, I would support reforming the system to attach dollars to veterans to use for care at a VA hospital, or any private practitioner. This will create proper incentives for physicians to deliver the same quality of care to veterans that civilians using private health insurance and private practitioners are receiving. Our second obligation to returning veterans is to provide them with one of the most important steps of successfully returning home: access to robust counseling and therapy for veterans who are transitioning from active duty combat to civilian life. Our third obligation to our veterans is to provide world-class educational and job training benefits to complete the transition to civilian life. I realize that there are debts we owe to our veterans, and addressing these three areas is the first real step to honoring the service of our veterans.
Dan Gibson's Political Party	Dan Gibson is a member of the Democratic Party
Tony Owens's Political Party	Tony Owens is a member of the Republican Party
Dan Gibson's Age	Dan Gibson is 51 years old
Tony Owens's Age	Tony Owens is 53 years old
Dan Gibson's Family Background	Married One Child
Tony Owens's Family Background	Married Two children
Dan Gibson's Religion	Dan Gibson is Christian: Non-Denominational
Tony Owens's Religion	Tony Owens is Lutheran

Dan Gibson's Educational Background	B.A., Business Administration from Oregon State University, 1981 M.B.A., University of Colorado at Boulder, 1984
Tony Owens's Educational Background	B.A., Political Science from the University of Kansas, 1978 M.P.A., University of Missouri, 1980
Dan Gibson's Work History	Business and Accounts Manager, Greenwood Publishing, 1984-1992 City Manager, 1992-1996 State Comptroller, 1996-2004 Lieutenant Governor, 2004-present
Tony Owens's Work History	Neighborhood Stabilization Officer, 1980-1983 Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1983-1992 State Representative, 1992-2000 State Senate, 2000-present
Campaign Event for Dan Gibson	Dan Gibson will host a Twitter Talk in partnership with Change Candidate Wanted next Tuesday at 12:45pm. With Twitter as the platform, Dan Gibson will participate in a conversation about issues facing our state and the 2012 gubernatorial race.
Campaign Event for Tony Owens	Competition for the 2012 gubernatorial election, like the 90-degree weather, was hot at a Young Democrats barbecue at a nearby park on Saturday. "If you think this is hot, this is nothing like what we're going to put the Republicans on Election Day," Tony Owens told the crowd. The event was organized by several Young Republican organizations in the area and attracted about 200 people.
Campaign Event for Dan Gibson	This Wednesday, Dan Gibson will hold his first online town hall at 6:00pm. Raven Brooks, the executive director of Netroots Nation, will moderate the event. Via UStream, voters can chat or tweet their questions to the gubernatorial candidate in real time. Additional online town halls will be announced in the coming weeks.
Campaign Event for Tony Owens	Gubernatorial Candidate, Tony Owens, paid a visit to the region yesterday. He addressed the County Republican Central Committee yesterday morning at the County Courthouse. Today he has plans to address an audience during a "coffee" at a local coffee shop. As yesterdays address to the County Republican Central Committee Tony Owens said The only way to change the climate in Springfield is to elect non-professional politicians. We need fresh voices, new ideas, and new people to lead our great state that can rekindle the true spirit of public service. That's why I'm running for Governor."

Campaign Event for Dan Gibson	Democratic candidate Dan Gibson told a gathering at a coffeehouse Friday that if he is elected as governor in November, he will push for progress on numerous state issues, including education, transportation and jobs. During his appearance at the coffee house, Dan Gibson took questions on energy, the environment, and the states ability to attract more business.
Campaign Event for Tony Owens	Tony Owens was speaking to the Rotary Club when the heater in meeting room suddenly stopped operating. Tony Owens joked that his speech could keep the room warm since he's a politician. Rotarian Johnny Floyd introduced Tony Owens. As part of his speech to the Rotary Club, Tony Owens noted how inaccessible public official in this state are. He said public officials should be more accessible to people across the state and not just in the state capital. On current issues, Tony Owens said he is truly concerned about jobs and family values.
State League of Municipalities Endorsement	Jack Wilson, President of the State League of Municipalities, today endorsed Dan Gibson, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, in his run for Governor, saying he is the candidate who is speaking plainly and truthfully about whats at stake in our state and what needs to be done. Wilson called Dan Gibson the best and right person to be the next Governor. He listens to people, he understands government and business, and hes a bulldog when it comes to getting things done, Wilson said. Hes a skillful problem solver, a consensus builder, a leader.
Chamber of Commerce Endorsement	Tony Owens was endorsed today by the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is the voice of business in our state and is widely regarded as the premier business organization. Members of the Chambers PAC interviewed Tony Owens and his opponent and attended last weeks Chamber of Commerce Debate prior to making the endorsement. Speaking about the endorsement, Tony Owens remarked, I understand the issues facing this state. As the major economic driver, it is essential that residents and businesses in this region are able to grow and prosper. As Governor I will ensure that our great state remains a great place to live and open a business.
Fraternal Order of Police Endorsement	Democratic gubernatorial nominee Dan Gibson has received an endorsement from the Fraternal Order of Police, which has 2,300 members in the state. In the Fraternal Order of Polices announcement, they state that "Dan Gibson has a shown a true commitment to our men and women in uniform and in retirement. Now we are going to make our voices heard in support of Dan Gibson."

Concerned Women PAC Endorsement	Concerned Women Political Action Committee (CWPAC) announced its endorsement of Tony Owens. Tony Owens was already well known to Concerned Women PAC long before he decided to run for governor. Not only has he been a solid vote on pro-life and pro-family issues, he has been a leader, said Beverly LaHaye, State Chairman of Concerned Women PAC. Concerned Women PAC is affiliated with Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee, the nations largest public policy womens organization with more than 500,000 grassroots members nationwide and over 20,000 in this state. Concerned Women Political Action Committee was started in 2002 to help elect solid pro-family, pro-life conservatives to governors offices.
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State Legislative Campaign Content

<p>Scott Bailey's Education Policy</p>	<p>From crowded classrooms to having to make tough choices about what programs they can afford to offer, our school districts are really struggling. Study after study shows the importance of education to our future as an economic power in the world and yet we cant seem to agree on how much to spend or even what is important to teach. Some politicians tell us that spending more money on testing and accountability will improve our system without having to increase funding, but it just doesnt seem to be working that way. At the same time schools are dealing with the same inflationary cost of living increases the rest of us are. Double digit insurance increases, rising fuel prices, and the rising cost of materials. Demands and expectations are high and yet still there are complaints about spending too much on our children.</p>
<p>Phillip Young's Education Policy</p>	<p>It is my belief that a strong economy supports family choices and the ability to send students to school ready to learn, or to home school successfully. Families bear the first responsibility for the education of their children. Local school boards and communities have a local responsibility to support public education for the sake of the future and to shape that education to the needs and desires of the local community. The state has a constitutional responsibility to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Meeting this paramount duty is a struggle each fiscal year, made more difficult by layers of regulation and unfunded mandates to local districts. We need to bring common sense back into the discussion of what our schools should be, including re-examination of the state-wide testing process.</p>
<p>Scott Bailey's Position on the Environment</p>	<p>Industrial waste, septic and sewage, medical waste and dumping affect our waterways and the quality of our natural environment. Many of the rivers that run through our towns are vital natural resources that enhance our quality of life. Poor environmental planning threatens our quality of life. Rivers run through all of our towns, yet there is no plan to protect them. Smart growth projects that create jobs, reduce property taxes and clean up contaminated properties are held back by bureaucracy and a lack of urgency. Scott Bailey has seen the damage firsthand – volunteering with environmental groups and trying to help preserve the beautiful environment this state has to offer. To protect our quality of life, we need a leader committed to clean air and water - someone who understands the effects on our community. We need smart change.</p>

<p>Phillip Young's Position on the Environment</p>	<p>Phillip Young is committed to the environment and the investment of alternative/renewable energy solutions; such as solar and wind but while we explore these alternative solutions, we need to invest in those current and existing natural resources that are found throughout the state; most specifically coal. We need to invest in cleaner coal through the investment of coal gasification plants. We should be using more of what we have and making it more efficient. We should also continue the use of Nuclear Power. We have the advanced technology now to store Spent Nuclear fuel. Through advanced technology and smart policy we can create a GREENER state for all generations to come.</p>
<p>Scott Bailey on Jobs</p>	<p>Scott Bailey will pursue targeted efforts to encourage research and innovation in growth industries, such as technology and life sciences that lead to improved global competitiveness and new job creation in the state. He will also work to strengthen education, training, and workforce development. Scott Bailey would also like to see the state support new, green energy jobs. Citizens of this great state are hard working, and we need good paying jobs in order to take care of our families. Scott Bailey also supports programs which help people get back on their feet so they can better take care of themselves.</p>
<p>Phillip Young on Jobs</p>	<p>This state enjoys the benefits of a well-qualified work force, great cultural and natural amenities as well as a heritage of job creators with a civic commitment. However, we cannot continue to allow family supporting jobs to be relocated or created in other states, because those states are more welcoming to job creators. The state must reverse the trend toward job-killing tax increases and unnecessary red tape and restrictions that make doing business in the state too expensive. Our workers are competing with Europe, China and India as well as other states. If we pretend we are not, we will continue to lose private sector jobs to states and countries that do.</p>
<p>Scott Bailey on Transportation</p>	<p>The campaign promises of past officials have been to improve the transportation problems affecting the district. Yet, we still see many areas where it just isn't safe to walk across the street. Improving pedestrian safety as well as alleviating traffic around schools and on the areas main thoroughfares is a key issue that I plan on personally handling as your State Representative.</p>

Phillip Young on Transportation	First, let me say that I am against raising any type of taxes, let alone raising taxes to pay for roads. Most of us are struggling to fill up our tank with gas to go back and forth to work. Adding more money to the price of gas via the gas tax is an all around bad idea. What we need is our state politicians to stop dipping into the road fund and using that money for other projects. We need to examine the budgets of other areas of government and transfer some of those funds to help repair and maintain our roads.
Scott Bailey's Position on Crime	Currently prison spending takes up around 10% of the states general budget. There needs to be cost cutting that can be found through greater government efficiencies and reducing the number of state employees. One of the most basic services of state government is protecting the general population. I am not opposed to tethering certain Scott Bailey will push for laws requiring sex offenders to wear electronic tracking bracelets and will push to require life sentences for child rapists.
Phillip Young's Position on Crime	Phillip Young is committed to making his district safer and creating a community that is safe for everyone to enjoy. Phillip Young is a supporter of the proposed Officers Act that will provide the dedicated long term funding for new officers throughout the state and more specifically, The bill would require all inmates who committed a violent or firearm-related crime and is eligible for release on parole, be required to sign a waiver as a condition of their parole subjecting them to search and seizure by an officer at any time, with or without a search warrant or cause.
Scott Bailey's Position on Taxes	Scott Bailey supports efforts to close corporate tax loopholes that cost us hundreds of millions of dollars each year in lost tax revenues. These tax loopholes drain funds from our cities and towns, schools, healthcare programs, public safety and other important public needs. They also result in a higher tax burden on families and residential property owners. Scott Bailey knows the middle class shoulders an unfair tax burden. Scott Bailey supports the largest middle class income tax cut in state history and will push to expand property tax relief for all homeowners, and provide extra help for senior citizens and returning veterans.
Phillip Young's Position on Taxes	We have enough taxes already. I do not support adding new types of taxes, replacing existing taxes with different types of taxes (most notably, a sales, income, or other broad based tax), nor appreciably raising the rates of taxation for existing taxes. I also do not support increasing government funding with additional borrowing. The best method for ensuring long-term funding of state services is frugal and responsible state spending.

<p>Scott Bailey's Position on Energy</p>	<p>We deserve an energy plan that secures success not only for the next 10 years, but for the 100 that follow. To accomplish this, we need a comprehensive energy plan that guides us from fossil fuels to renewable, safe, and economical sources. Developing renewable energy will strengthen the states rural economy by allowing landowners to be energy independent, and it will create jobs in cities as they become the hub for the manufacturing, design, and transportation jobs these renewable energy resources require. My energy plan is not a mishmash of policies created for the next 10 years, rather it is a blueprint for short term success in job and energy creation while providing for tremendous long term growth in those same areas. This state can become a national leader in exporting its own tremendous energy resources without exporting any of the jobs that go along with them.</p>
<p>Phillip Young's Position on Energy</p>	<p>Phillip Young supported conservation measures aimed at bringing down the amount of energy consumed by public buildings. As your state representative, I will propose legislation that will help make public and private buildings more energy efficient. Phillip Young also supports efforts to remove the ban on improving and expanding the states ability to produce low cost clean nuclear energy. If we think in terms of yesif rather than nobecause we can meet our energy needs while protecting the environment. Phillip Young will also help protect citizens by opposing mandates that will drive up the cost of their energy bills. Current statistics predict a 25% to 50% cost of energy increase depending on how you get your energy.</p>
<p>Scott Bailey on the Economy</p>	<p>For years our state legislature has been cutting revenue streams while refusing to curtail spending. Now we currently are facing a budget crisis along with an overwhelming need for services. This has become a vicious cycle of balancing give and take. We need leaders who can cut down on wasteful spending while continuing to provide much needed services to our people. I will work in the legislature to promote economic justice and encourage responsible business and investment in that provides good sustainable jobs. I am a friend of labor, unions & workers, small & local businesses, and will continue to be at the capitol. We must build a fair and prosperous economy that rewards hard work, not just wealth.</p>

Phillip Young on the Economy	When it comes to economic development and government, less is more. We need to approach rural economic development on two main fronts. First, we need to reduce taxes for businesses and organizations, increase access to health insurance, reform Workers Comp insurance system, use common sense and expect personal responsibility in considering ergonomics legislation and work rules, remove regulatory roadblocks to small business start up and expansion, finish the job on tort reform. Second we need to reform agriculture policy by removing roadblocks to the development of locally produced value added products, improve marketing of state products overseas, resolve water rights issues fairly and quickly, invest in transportation infrastructure for farm to market.
Scott Bailey's Political Party	Scott Bailey is a member of the Republican Party
Phillip Young's Political Party	Phillip Young is a member of the Republican Party
Scott Bailey's Age	Scott Bailey is 32 years old
Phillip Young's Age	Phillip Young is 34 years old
Scott Bailey's Family Background	Married One Child
Phillip Young's Family Background	Married Three Children
Scott Bailey's Religion	Scott Bailey is a Non-Denominational Christian
Phillip Young's Religion	Phillip Young is Presbyterian
Scott Bailey's Educational Background	B.A. Business from Greenville College, 2002
Phillip Young's Educational Background	B.A. Finance from Westminster College, 2000
Scott Bailey's Work Experience	Insurance Agent, State Farm Insurance, 2002-present

Phillip Young's Work Experience	Financial Advisor, McCafferty Enterprise, 2000-2006 Fiscal Manager, McCafferty Enterprise, 2006-present
Scott Bailey's Political Experience	Alderman, County Board, 2008-present
Phillip Young's Political Experience	Member, Planning Commission Board, 2007-present
State Teacher Federation Endorsement	The State Teacher Federation endorsed Scott Bailey today. In their letter of endorsement, the federation states that Scott Bailey is seeking public office to make a difference in how government affects the lives of ordinary people. He is dedicated to the rights and well-being of ordinary families. Scott Bailey feels public schools have been systematically starved of funding and that deficiencies in schools are directly related to underfunding. He believes that the punitive approach of No Child Left Behind robs teachers of their joy and enthusiasm for teaching. Scott Bailey has indicated that he supports any available or possible funding source. He will vote for legislation that significantly increases hourly wages for classified school employees, believing that every working person deserves a living wage for a days work. Finally, Scott Bailey believes that teacher unions empower their members to work toward job advancement and excellence in their field. This is the kind of friend we need in the legislature to ensure that our educational system is second to none.
National Rifle Association Endorsement	The National Rifle Association (NRA) announced its endorsement of Candidate Phillip Young as State Legislator. unwavering pro-sportsmen, pro-Second Amendment, pro-freedom record has earned him our endorsement and gratitude, said Marion Hammer, state chair of the NRA. We urge our members and all citizens of this state, who support the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, to put Freedom first and vote for Phillip Young. I thank the NRA for their endorsement of my candidacy and for their continued commitment to the gun owners and sportsmen, said Phillip Young. I am a strong supporter of our Second Amendment rights and I will continue to fight for these rights if given the privilege of serving the great citizens of this state.

National Association of Social Responsibility Organization Endorsement	Scott Bailey, candidate for State Legislator in the upcoming general election this November, has received the endorsement of the National Association of Socially Responsible Organizations (NASRO). NASRO is a business association of small businesses, artists and self employed people, The number top issue for NASRO members in local elections this year is community revitalization and economic stability and Scott Bailey is the candidate who is best prepared to accomplish these goals.
County Association of Realtors	At the strong recommendation of County Association of Realtors, the State Association of Realtors (SAR) on Wednesday announced its endorsement of campaign for the State House of Representatives. Phillip Young believes strongly in the policies that create jobs, improve education and keep our economy strong. When put together, those elements help our citizens achieve the dream of buying a home for their family, local realtor and former SAR state president Bob McMillan said. I know Phillip Young to be a man of great faith and strong conservative convictions who will work to change the way this state does business, Moody said. Because of his honesty, hard work and commitment to the citizens of this district and this state, the State Association of Realtors is proud to endorse campaign.
Campaign Event for Scott Bailey	This Thursday from 6:30- 9:00 PM, Scott Bailey will be attending the Young Democrats Fundraiser. This will be an excellent opportunity to sit down and discuss the issues important to you in this election. The Young Democrats are working hard to engage the young voters of our community and to bring training programs to our area so that we are prepared to get the next generation of young Democratic leaders elected. Come join them!
Campaign Event for Phillip Young	Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Tetlow will be hosting a campaign fundraiser for Phillip Young this Saturday. Phillip Young is a rising star and will be one of those in the State Legislature who puts government back to work for you. Please come out to show your support and appreciation by donating to his campaign for State Representative. Come out and enjoy food, music, and good conversation with Phillip Young as well as other elected officials. The event starts at 5:00PM and go until 9:00 PM.

<p>Campaign Event for Scott Bailey</p>	<p>About 45 people gathered at the home of Bob and Betsy Thompson on Sunday to help raise money for Democratic State legislative candidate Scott Bailey. Scott Bailey is financing his campaign under the provisions of the new public financing law that was passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor in 2011. Under this law, in order to get matching funds from the State, he said he must first raise at least \$15,000 from at least 300 people in towns in and around his district, with maximum contributions of \$100 each.</p>
<p>Campaign Event for Phillip Young</p>	<p>You are cordially invited to attend a casual gathering to meet and support our Republican legislative candidate for the district, Phillip Young. Phillip Young is knowledgeable on the issues impacting all our lives and he is a personable individual who listens to his constituency. The event will be at my home, Sunday, from 2:00 4:00 P.M., with refreshments being served. So please come and visit awhile and get to know Phillip Young and take this opportunity to ask questions and show your support for the efforts he is making to represent us at the state capital. It would be helpful if you could let the Phillip Young Campaign Headquarters know of your attendance. Their number is 453-4278. This event is not a fund raiser, just a chance to meet and get to know Phillip Young and where he stands on the issues. That being said, campaign signs and bumper stickers will available, and your donation to offset the cost of printing is always helpful and appreciated.</p>

State Supreme Court Campaign Content

<p>David Bass on the Role of the Courts</p>	<p>Past member of the state Supreme Court have routinely taken the side of powerful corporations over the interests of everyday citizens of this state. Judges should be fair to all those who appear before them. As a judge, I will be guided by the law. I will not make decisions based on who my friends or my supporters are.</p> <p>David Bass believes: All people should be able to seek justice from the courts, regardless of their position in life. Judges should rule based on the law, not based on their political philosophies or the political philosophies of their financial supporters. The rights of individuals should be protected against the desires of large corporations and insurance companies. Juries, not politicians, should decide to how much a wronged person is entitled.</p> <p>Being fair and impartial should be the aim of every judge, and it will be my aim as a Supreme Court justice. I will not consider politics or personal preferences when it comes to making a decision. I will consider only the rule of law.</p>
<p>Jeffery Mills on the Role of the Courts</p>	<p>Jeffery Mills knows that not everyone who appears before a judge accused of a crime is guilty. He knows that in America, every defendant regardless of their guilt or innocence is entitled to a fair defense. Jeffery Mills believes in: Every defendants having competent representation so that justice may be properly decided. Victims of violent crimes having certain rights as their cases are investigated and prosecuted. Defendants being treated fairly and presumed innocent until proven guilty, at which time their punishment should be equal to the crime they committed. Similar punishments for similar crimes, regardless of a persons race, financial standing, family ties or political connections. I wont do favors for the guilty, Jeffery Mills said. At the same time, I wont presume someones guilt or innocence without first hearing both sides of the case. Ill treat everyone fairly, and Ill ensure to the best of my ability that everyone is given a fair shake.</p>
<p>David Bass's Candidate Statement</p>	<p>I believe that justice is a process, not just a result. How you are treated in court is just as important as the eventual verdict. Justice is only achieved when decisions are made free from bias or favoritism. A judge should be firm when necessary, compassionate where appropriate, and always ready and willing to follow the law.</p>

Jeffery Mills's Candidate Statement	When it comes to running for the Supreme Court, Jeffery Mills is not afraid to speak her mind. Like clearly expressing criticism of activist judges who make up the law rather than strictly following it or stating his concern that liberal judges all too often seem willing to ignore the rule of law and instead try to impose their personal agendas on us.
David Bass on Fair Courts	A judge must be fair and impartial, but he or she must also have the courage to rule based upon the laws and the Constitution. Knowing that the strength of the judiciary depends on the public's trust and confidence, David Bass has spoken to thousands of citizens and visited more than 100 schools, colleges and universities across the state to explain the judicial system. He believes judges must be accountable to the needs of the people and has worked diligently to promote respect for the law and the rights of all.
Jeffery Mills on Fair Courts	Jeffery Mills knows that not everyone who appears before a judge accused of a crime is guilty. He knows that in America, every defendant regardless of their guilt or innocence is entitled to a fair defense. I also believe that it is critically important that our justices must decide cases in a fair and unbiased manner and that our constitution and laws be applied fairly and impartially, without a personal agenda based on extreme personal beliefs.
David Bass on Rights	David Bass is committed to protecting the rights of the people of this state. He knows the state Constitution protects our rights more than federal law. As a practicing attorney, I fought to protect the rights of citizens and soon I hope to be defending those rights from the states highest court.
Jeffery Mills on Rights	Jeffery Mills believes the court must protect all the legal rights of all the citizens who come before it all the time. We have no second class citizens, he says. Governments . . . are established to protect and maintain individual rights.
David Bass on Judicial Activism	When a case comes before a judge, they must adjudicate it, and they must give priority to the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, the state constitution, and state laws (in that order). When conservative judges find gun control laws unconstitutional and when liberal judges find abortion laws unconstitutional, they're both simply doing what judges must do – assessing whether majoritarian laws infringe upon fundamental constitutional rights, as they see them.
Jeffery Mills on Judicial Activism	We the people can trust Jeffery Mills to be a fair Supreme Court Justice, committed to defending our constitution and the freedoms it guarantees. Johnson will not legislate from the bench.
David Bass on Partisan Courts	There are no Republican or Democratic caucuses in the jury room and there must be none on the bench. I wear a black robenot a blue or red one.

Jeffery Mills on Partisan Courts	There is no room for political parties and interest groups in our court system. Judges must decide cases based on the constitution and law and not on partisan values.
David Bass's Religion	David Bass and all his family are members of St. Annes Episcopal Church, which they have attended since relocating to the state following his graduation from law school.
Jeffery Mills's Religion	Jeffery Mills is active in First Baptist Church of Crystal Springs, where he teaches Sunday School.
David Bass on Access to Courts	Access to the courts for civil purposes has long been denied for many. To remedy this problem I suggest both adequately funded legal aid programs and pro bono incentives for lawyers. I also suggest bold experiments of nontraditional pre-trial rules (e.g. lay down the cards discovery) and nontraditional tribunals to resolve modest disputes more quickly and cheaply.
Jeffery Mills on Access to Courts	Without a doubt, the cost of legal services is going through the ceiling; it is much beyond what many can afford. But as a result many low-income people cannot afford even the most basic legal services. I didn't always believe this, but I have come to the conclusion that just as the public has a responsibility to pay for court houses and judges, and staff through their tax dollars, there must be a similar commitment to provide lawyers in some instances to low income people in civil cases. I do, however, strongly believe that this burden is one to be born by all of society, not just lawyers and clients.
David Bass on Judicial Selection	We can do this better! By no means am I suggesting that we do away with judicial elections, but it is imperative that we help voters become informed about the judicial candidates. In addition to the uniform judicial evaluations I believe we need an improved Voters Pamphlet, a public website that provides specific information about each candidate, and greater access to the public airwaves so that candidates do not have to depend on raising large amounts of money to run for office-keeping special interests out of the process.
Jeffery Mills on Judicial Selection	One of the most important issues in this race will be whether or not we continue to elect our judges. I am a stout supporter of an elected judiciary, a system in which the people of Mississippi, not politicians, choose our judges. Opponents of electing judges say that federal investigations into a small number of attorneys who are accused of bribing judges points to the need for a change in our system. These same people say to rid the judicial system of politics we must appoint, not elect, our judges.
David Bass's Political Party	David Bass is a member of the Democratic Party

Jeffery Mills's Political Party	Jeffery Mills is a member of the Republican Party
David Bass's Age	David Bass is 52 years old.
Jeffery Mills's Age	Jeffery Mills is 48 years old.
David Bass's Family Background	Married One Child
Jeffery Mills's Family Background	Married Two Children
David Bass's Educational Background	B.S. Chemistry from Auburn University, 1983 J.D. Samford University's Cumberland School of Law, 1986
Jeffery Mills's Educational Background	B.A. Philosophy from Hillsdale College, 1987 Minor: Mathematical Sciences J.D. The Ohio State School of Law, 1990
David Bass's Legal Experience	Attourney, Liskow & Lewis LLP, 1986-1990 Staff Attorney to Justice James Gorman Houston, 1990-2002
Jeffery Mills's Legal Experience	Law Clerk to Judge Grant Jack Day of the Illinois Second District Court of Appeals, 1990-1992 Associate, Rice McDavid Graff & Love LLP, -1992-1998 Partner, Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love LLP, 1998-present
David Bass's Judicial Experience	Judge, Circuit Court, 2002-present
Jeffery Mills's Judicial Experience	Local Administrative District Judge, 2002-present
David Bass's Work Experience	County Alderman Adjunct Instructor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Criminal Justice Department
Jeffery Mills's Work Experience	United States Naval Reserve Insurance Department, Crowley Maritime Manager, Sports Authority
David Bass's Civic/Community Activities	Safe Haven Adoptive Family Network Big Brothers and Big Sisters Coach for Little League Sports

Jeffery Mills's Civic/Community Activities	Boy Scouts of America (Troop Committee Chair) Intiman Theatre Board of Trustees Mercer Island Civil Service Commission Second Chance Board of Trustees Senate candidate, State Legislature
David Bass's Judicial Evaluations	County Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Joint Asian Judicial Evaluations Committee: Well Qualified Q Law (GLBT Bar): Exceptionally Well Qualified Latina/o Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Women Lawyers League: Exceptionally Well Qualified Loren Miller Bar Association: Well Qualified Municipal League: Outstanding Women in Unity rating: "A"
Jeffery Mills's Judicial Evaluations	County Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Joint Asian Judicial Evaluations Committee: Exceptionally Well Qualified Q Law (GLBT Bar): Well Qualified Latina/o Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Women Lawyers League: Well Qualified Loren Miller Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Municipal League: Exceptionally Well Qualified Women in Unity rating: "B"
Coalition for Progress Endorsement	Join the Coalition for Progress in supporting, David Bass, candidate for the Supreme Court. This November, we can return accountability and common sense to the Supreme Court by electing Judge David Bass. Judge David Bass will review cases honestly, fairly and impartially while standing up to insurance companies, corporations and special interests. Together, we can make our Supreme Court accountable again!
National Rifle Association Endorsement	NRA-PVF, the political action committee of the National Rifle Association of America, has announced its sole endorsement of Jeffery Mills for Justice of the Supreme Court. "I am honored to have the endorsement of the National Rifle Association," the candidate said. "Our state has a rich tradition of responsible gun ownership recognized in our state constitution. In a letter to the Jeffery Mills campaign, Jordan Austin, the state liaison, stated, "On behalf of the NRA Political Victory Fund and all NRA members in our state, I am pleased to inform Jeffery Mills of his endorsement for the 2010 General Election for State Supreme Court Justice."

National Organization for Women Endorsement	On behalf of our states chapter of the National Organization for Women PAC, I'm writing to inform you that NOW PAC has extended its endorsement to your campaign for Supreme Court Justice in 2012. Your concern for the issues facing women in this state makes you someone that we believe will serve us well. We appreciate your stated desire to improve the quality of life and we invite you to list our endorsement on your campaign materials. We will include your campaign in our upcoming announcement to our members and supporters. If there is any way in which we could further support your campaign please feel free to contact us. The NOW PAC is committed to electing progressive candidates who work for womens rights, reproductive freedoms, economic justice, eliminating racism, ending violence against women and lesbian, gay, and transgender rights.
State Family Foundation	The SFF PAC, the political action committee of the State Family Foundation, has announced its endorsement of Jeffery Mills for Justice of the Supreme Court. The SFF-PAC is a state level pro-family organization and affiliate of the American Family Association. I am proud to have the support of the State Family Foundation, Jeffery Mills said. Judicial activism has no place in our court system. The last thing we need are more liberal activist judges who all too often seem willing to ignore the law, and instead try to impose their values on us. In a letter to the Jeffery Mills campaign, Kevin McCoy, Chairman of SFF-PAC, stated Jeffery Mills will bring integrity, fairness, and transparency when deciding cases brought before the Court. commitment to applying the law proves she will protect our traditional family values.
Campaign Event for David Bass	Bowles, Rice, McDavid, Graff, Love and Associates cordially invite you to attend a cocktail reception in support of the candidacy of Judge David Bass for State Supreme Court next Wednesday from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. The event is to be held outside at the country club. In the event of rain, the event will be move inside. Cocktails and appetizers will be served. Donations are appreciated.
Campaign Event for Jeffery Mills	Administrative District Judge, Jeffery Mills, kicked off the final two months of his candidacy for a seat on the state Supreme Court with a rally Tuesday afternoon on the steps of the County Courthouse. "I am currently interviewing for this job with over 500,000 voters in this judicial district" Jeffery Mills told about 75 supporters. After giving a welcoming speech, Jeffery Mills mingled with supporters and answered questions.

State Supreme Court Campaign Content

<p>David Bass on the Role of the Courts</p>	<p>Past member of the state Supreme Court have routinely taken the side of powerful corporations over the interests of everyday citizens of this state. Judges should be fair to all those who appear before them. As a judge, I will be guided by the law. I will not make decisions based on who my friends or my supporters are.</p> <p>David Bass believes: All people should be able to seek justice from the courts, regardless of their position in life. Judges should rule based on the law, not based on their political philosophies or the political philosophies of their financial supporters. The rights of individuals should be protected against the desires of large corporations and insurance companies. Juries, not politicians, should decide to how much a wronged person is entitled.</p> <p>Being fair and impartial should be the aim of every judge, and it will be my aim as a Supreme Court justice. I will not consider politics or personal preferences when it comes to making a decision. I will consider only the rule of law.</p>
<p>Jeffery Mills on the Role of the Courts</p>	<p>Jeffery Mills knows that not everyone who appears before a judge accused of a crime is guilty. He knows that in America, every defendant regardless of their guilt or innocence is entitled to a fair defense. Jeffery Mills believes in: Every defendants having competent representation so that justice may be properly decided. Victims of violent crimes having certain rights as their cases are investigated and prosecuted. Defendants being treated fairly and presumed innocent until proven guilty, at which time their punishment should be equal to the crime they committed. Similar punishments for similar crimes, regardless of a persons race, financial standing, family ties or political connections. I wont do favors for the guilty, Jeffery Mills said. At the same time, I wont presume someones guilt or innocence without first hearing both sides of the case. Ill treat everyone fairly, and Ill ensure to the best of my ability that everyone is given a fair shake.</p>
<p>David Bass's Candidate Statement</p>	<p>I believe that justice is a process, not just a result. How you are treated in court is just as important as the eventual verdict. Justice is only achieved when decisions are made free from bias or favoritism. A judge should be firm when necessary, compassionate where appropriate, and always ready and willing to follow the law.</p>

Jeffery Mills's Candidate Statement	When it comes to running for the Supreme Court, Jeffery Mills is not afraid to speak her mind. Like clearly expressing criticism of activist judges who make up the law rather than strictly following it or stating his concern that liberal judges all too often seem willing to ignore the rule of law and instead try to impose their personal agendas on us.
David Bass on Fair Courts	A judge must be fair and impartial, but he or she must also have the courage to rule based upon the laws and the Constitution. Knowing that the strength of the judiciary depends on the public's trust and confidence, David Bass has spoken to thousands of citizens and visited more than 100 schools, colleges and universities across the state to explain the judicial system. He believes judges must be accountable to the needs of the people and has worked diligently to promote respect for the law and the rights of all.
Jeffery Mills on Fair Courts	Jeffery Mills knows that not everyone who appears before a judge accused of a crime is guilty. He knows that in America, every defendant regardless of their guilt or innocence is entitled to a fair defense. I also believe that it is critically important that our justices must decide cases in a fair and unbiased manner and that our constitution and laws be applied fairly and impartially, without a personal agenda based on extreme personal beliefs.
David Bass on Rights	David Bass is committed to protecting the rights of the people of this state. He knows the state Constitution protects our rights more than federal law. As a practicing attorney, I fought to protect the rights of citizens and soon I hope to be defending those rights from the states highest court.
Jeffery Mills on Rights	Jeffery Mills believes the court must protect all the legal rights of all the citizens who come before it all the time. We have no second class citizens, he says. Governments . . . are established to protect and maintain individual rights.
David Bass on Judicial Activism	When a case comes before a judge, they must adjudicate it, and they must give priority to the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, the state constitution, and state laws (in that order). When conservative judges find gun control laws unconstitutional and when liberal judges find abortion laws unconstitutional, they're both simply doing what judges must do – assessing whether majoritarian laws infringe upon fundamental constitutional rights, as they see them.
Jeffery Mills on Judicial Activism	We the people can trust Jeffery Mills to be a fair Supreme Court Justice, committed to defending our constitution and the freedoms it guarantees. Johnson will not legislate from the bench.
David Bass on Partisan Courts	There are no Republican or Democratic caucuses in the jury room and there must be none on the bench. I wear a black robenot a blue or red one.

Jeffery Mills on Partisan Courts	There is no room for political parties and interest groups in our court system. Judges must decide cases based on the constitution and law and not on partisan values.
David Bass's Religion	David Bass and all his family are members of St. Annes Episcopal Church, which they have attended since relocating to the state following his graduation from law school.
Jeffery Mills's Religion	Jeffery Mills is active in First Baptist Church of Crystal Springs, where he teaches Sunday School.
David Bass on Access to Courts	Access to the courts for civil purposes has long been denied for many. To remedy this problem I suggest both adequately funded legal aid programs and pro bono incentives for lawyers. I also suggest bold experiments of nontraditional pre-trial rules (e.g. lay down the cards discovery) and nontraditional tribunals to resolve modest disputes more quickly and cheaply.
Jeffery Mills on Access to Courts	Without a doubt, the cost of legal services is going through the ceiling; it is much beyond what many can afford. But as a result many low-income people cannot afford even the most basic legal services. I didn't always believe this, but I have come to the conclusion that just as the public has a responsibility to pay for court houses and judges, and staff through their tax dollars, there must be a similar commitment to provide lawyers in some instances to low income people in civil cases. I do, however, strongly believe that this burden is one to be born by all of society, not just lawyers and clients.
David Bass on Judicial Selection	We can do this better! By no means am I suggesting that we do away with judicial elections, but it is imperative that we help voters become informed about the judicial candidates. In addition to the uniform judicial evaluations I believe we need an improved Voters Pamphlet, a public website that provides specific information about each candidate, and greater access to the public airwaves so that candidates do not have to depend on raising large amounts of money to run for office-keeping special interests out of the process.
Jeffery Mills on Judicial Selection	One of the most important issues in this race will be whether or not we continue to elect our judges. I am a stout supporter of an elected judiciary, a system in which the people of Mississippi, not politicians, choose our judges. Opponents of electing judges say that federal investigations into a small number of attorneys who are accused of bribing judges points to the need for a change in our system. These same people say to rid the judicial system of politics we must appoint, not elect, our judges.
David Bass's Political Party	David Bass is a member of the Democratic Party

Jeffery Mills's Political Party	Jeffery Mills is a member of the Republican Party
David Bass's Age	David Bass is 52 years old.
Jeffery Mills's Age	Jeffery Mills is 48 years old.
David Bass's Family Background	Married One Child
Jeffery Mills's Family Background	Married Two Children
David Bass's Educational Background	B.S. Chemistry from Auburn University, 1983 J.D. Samford University's Cumberland School of Law, 1986
Jeffery Mills's Educational Background	B.A. Philosophy from Hillsdale College, 1987 Minor: Mathematical Sciences J.D. The Ohio State School of Law, 1990
David Bass's Legal Experience	Attourney, Liskow & Lewis LLP, 1986-1990 Staff Attorney to Justice James Gorman Houston, 1990-2002
Jeffery Mills's Legal Experience	Law Clerk to Judge Grant Jack Day of the Illinois Second District Court of Appeals, 1990-1992 Associate, Rice McDavid Graff & Love LLP, -1992-1998 Partner, Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love LLP, 1998-present
David Bass's Judicial Experience	Judge, Circuit Court, 2002-present
Jeffery Mills's Judicial Experience	Local Administrative District Judge, 2002-present
David Bass's Work Experience	County Alderman Adjunct Instructor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Criminal Justice Department
Jeffery Mills's Work Experience	United States Naval Reserve Insurance Department, Crowley Maritime Manager, Sports Authority
David Bass's Civic/Community Activities	Safe Haven Adoptive Family Network Big Brothers and Big Sisters Coach for Little League Sports

Jeffery Mills's Civic/Community Activities	Boy Scouts of America (Troop Committee Chair) Intiman Theatre Board of Trustees Mercer Island Civil Service Commission Second Chance Board of Trustees Senate candidate, State Legislature
David Bass's Judicial Evaluations	County Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Joint Asian Judicial Evaluations Committee: Well Qualified Q Law (GLBT Bar): Exceptionally Well Qualified Latina/o Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Women Lawyers League: Exceptionally Well Qualified Loren Miller Bar Association: Well Qualified Municipal League: Outstanding Women in Unity rating: "A"
Jeffery Mills's Judicial Evaluations	County Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Joint Asian Judicial Evaluations Committee: Exceptionally Well Qualified Q Law (GLBT Bar): Well Qualified Latina/o Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Women Lawyers League: Well Qualified Loren Miller Bar Association: Exceptionally Well Qualified Municipal League: Exceptionally Well Qualified Women in Unity rating: "B"
Coalition for Progress Endorsement	Join the Coalition for Progress in supporting, David Bass, candidate for the Supreme Court. This November, we can return accountability and common sense to the Supreme Court by electing Judge David Bass. Judge David Bass will review cases honestly, fairly and impartially while standing up to insurance companies, corporations and special interests. Together, we can make our Supreme Court accountable again!
National Rifle Association Endorsement	NRA-PVF, the political action committee of the National Rifle Association of America, has announced its sole endorsement of Jeffery Mills for Justice of the Supreme Court. "I am honored to have the endorsement of the National Rifle Association," the candidate said. "Our state has a rich tradition of responsible gun ownership recognized in our state constitution. In a letter to the Jeffery Mills campaign, Jordan Austin, the state liaison, stated, "On behalf of the NRA Political Victory Fund and all NRA members in our state, I am pleased to inform Jeffery Mills of his endorsement for the 2010 General Election for State Supreme Court Justice."

National Organization for Women Endorsement	On behalf of our states chapter of the National Organization for Women PAC, I'm writing to inform you that NOW PAC has extended its endorsement to your campaign for Supreme Court Justice in 2012. Your concern for the issues facing women in this state makes you someone that we believe will serve us well. We appreciate your stated desire to improve the quality of life and we invite you to list our endorsement on your campaign materials. We will include your campaign in our upcoming announcement to our members and supporters. If there is any way in which we could further support your campaign please feel free to contact us. The NOW PAC is committed to electing progressive candidates who work for womens rights, reproductive freedoms, economic justice, eliminating racism, ending violence against women and lesbian, gay, and transgender rights.
State Family Foundation	The SFF PAC, the political action committee of the State Family Foundation, has announced its endorsement of Jeffery Mills for Justice of the Supreme Court. The SFF-PAC is a state level pro-family organization and affiliate of the American Family Association. I am proud to have the support of the State Family Foundation, Jeffery Mills said. Judicial activism has no place in our court system. The last thing we need are more liberal activist judges who all too often seem willing to ignore the law, and instead try to impose their values on us. In a letter to the Jeffery Mills campaign, Kevin McCoy, Chairman of SFF-PAC, stated Jeffery Mills will bring integrity, fairness, and transparency when deciding cases brought before the Court. commitment to applying the law proves she will protect our traditional family values.
Campaign Event for David Bass	Bowles, Rice, McDavid, Graff, Love and Associates cordially invite you to attend a cocktail reception in support of the candidacy of Judge David Bass for State Supreme Court next Wednesday from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. The event is to be held outside at the country club. In the event of rain, the event will be move inside. Cocktails and appetizers will be served. Donations are appreciated.
Campaign Event for Jeffery Mills	Administrative District Judge, Jeffery Mills, kicked off the final two months of his candidacy for a seat on the state Supreme Court with a rally Tuesday afternoon on the steps of the County Courthouse. "I am currently interviewing for this job with over 500,000 voters in this judicial district" Jeffery Mills told about 75 supporters. After giving a welcoming speech, Jeffery Mills mingled with supporters and answered questions.

State-Wide Propositions

<p>Ballot Text: Term Limits</p>	<p>Amends Constitution: Limits State Legislators: Six years as Representative and Eight Years as Senator, Fourteen years in Legislature. Result of "Yes" vote: "Yes" vote limits state legislators to six years as a representative and eight years as a senator, total for fourteen years in the Legislative Assembly. Does not include previous legislative Service. Result of "No" vote: "No" vote retains the current state law, which does not limit length of service as state representative, as senator, or in the State Legislature overall. ESTIMATE OF FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no financial effect on state or local government expenditures or revenues.</p>
<p>Argument in Favor of Term Limits</p>	<p>1) "It prevents incumbents from using the benefits of office to remain in power indefinitely." In some situations, merely being in office provides an elected official with a distinct advantage in further elections. Supporters of term limits argue that this advantage is undemocratic, and means that incumbents no longer fear losing their offices and cease to be concerned with the needs of their constituents. Term limits ensure that all officials are eventually removed from power. 2) "It makes room for fresh candidates, and encourages participation." Imposing term limits on an office ensures that there will always be vacancies for new candidates to pursue. This may encourage citizens who would normally not consider running for office to do so, as they will not be challenging an established, entrenched opponent. Many proponents claim that term limits will increase diversity in a legislature, bringing the law-making body's demographics more in line with those of the general population.</p>

<p>Argument Term Limits</p>	<p>Against</p>	<p>1) "It is undemocratic." The most common argument against the use of term limits is that it takes away the right of voters to be represented by the politician of their choice. It is argued that if the public wish to re-elect their representative, it is undemocratic to prevent them from doing so. Allow the electorate to do its job, argue opponents, and non-responsive legislators can still be held accountable.</p> <p>2) "It results in a lack of experienced politicians." Term limit opponents argue that, with experience, comes greater skill. The very use of the term freshman representative is indicative of the fact that the first-term legislator is less likely to be able to get things done in the legislature. It is further argued that inexperienced politicians will be more reliant on advice and guidance from un-elected officials and lobbyists. Permanent committee staffers, who ostensibly work for the representatives, would become more knowledgeable and powerful than the members themselves. Moreover, lobbyists in the employ of special interests might tend to grow more powerful, as they can offer to help inexperienced members gain a foothold. Because both staffers and lobbyists are unelected, opponents argue, term limits are undemocratic because it places more power in the hands of the unelected.</p>
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<p>Ballot Constitutional Amendment-Redistricting</p>	<p>Text: AMENDS CONSTITUTION: Establishes new procedures for redrawing district boundaries. RESULT OF YES VOTE: Yes amends the constitution and state law, giving the authority to redraw district boundaries to a 14 member commission, who are chose from an applicant pool, 8 of which are picked through a lottery, and 6 which are picked by the first 8 chosen. New district boundaries would require the approval of a minimum of 3 registered Democrats, 3 registered Republican and 3 Independent for a total of 9 out of 14. RESULT OF A NO VOTE: No vote retains existing law, which gives elected representatives the authority to redraw district boundaries. SUMMARY: (1) Changes authority for establishing Legislature, Senate, and Board of Equalization district boundaries from elected representatives to a 14 member commission; (2) Requires government auditors to select 60 registered voters from applicant pool; (3) Permits legislative leaders to reduce pool, then the auditors pick eight commission members by lottery, and those commissioners pick six additional members for 14 total; (4) Requires commission of five Democrats, five Republicans and four of neither party. Commission shall hire lawyers and consultants as needed; (5) For approval, district boundaries need votes from three Democratic commissioners, three Republican commissioners and three commissioners from neither party. ESTIMATE OF FINANCIAL IMPACT: Potential increase in state redistricting costs once every ten years due to two entities performing redistricting. Any increase in costs probably would not be significant.</p>
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<p>Ballot Constitutional Amendment-Deceased Candidate</p>	<p>Text: AMENDS CONSTITUTION: Authorizes law permitting postponement of election for particular public office when nominee for office dies. RESULT OF YES VOTE: Yes vote amends constitution to authorize law providing that an election for a particular public office may be postponed when nominee for that office dies. RESULT OF NO VOTE: No vote retains existing law, which contains no provision permitting postponement of an election for a particular public office when nominee for that office dies. SUMMARY: Amends constitution. Current law does not provide for the enactment of a law postponing an election for a particular public office when a nominee for that office dies. Measure authorizes the legislature to enact a law permitting postponement of an election for a particular public office when a candidate nominated for that office dies; in that circumstance, the legislature may enact a law: (1) allowing the postponement of the regularly scheduled election for the office in question; (2) allowing the office in question to be filled at a subsequent election; and (3) prohibiting the votes cast for candidates at the regularly scheduled election for the office in question from being considered. Measure does not affect election process for other candidates or measures on the ballot. ESTIMATE OF FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no financial effect on state or local government expenditures or revenues</p>
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APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. **strength:** Strength of partisanship

- (0) Independent
- (1) Weak Partisan
- (2) Moderate Partisan
- (3) Strong Partisan

2. **party_id:** Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a

- (1) Strong Democrat
- (2) Democrat
- (3) Weak Democrat
- (4) Moderate or Inbetween
- (5) Weak Republican
- (6) Republican
- (7) Strong Republican

3. **ideology:** We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, or extremely conservative?

- (1) Extremely Liberal
- (2) Liberal
- (3) Slightly Liberal
- (4) Moderate or Middle of the Road

- (5) Slightly Conservative
- (6) Conservative
- (7) Extremely Conservative

4. **age:** How many years old are you?

5. **female:** What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

- (0) Male
- (1) Female

6. **race:** What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

- (1) White
- (2) Black
- (3) Asian
- (4) Native American
- (5) Hispanic
- (6) Other

7. **registered:** Are you registered and eligible to vote so that you could vote in the next election if you wanted to?

- (1) No
- (2) Yes

8. **vote_last:** In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time.

Which of the following statements best describes you in the November 2008 election:

- (1) I did not vote

(2) I thought about voting this time, but didn't

(3) I usually vote, but didn't this time

(4) I am sure I voted

9. **education:** What is the highest degree that you have earned?;

(1) Grade school or less (0-8 grades)

(2) High school (12 grades or fewer, incl. non-college training if applicable)

(3) Some college (13 grades or more but no degree)

(4) College or advanced degree

10. **employed:** We would like to know a little bit about your employment status. Which of the follow best describes your employment status?

(1) I have a full-time job

(2) I have a part-time job

(3) Unemployed/I do not work

11. **income:** What was your total HOUSEHOLD income in the past 12 months? Please include your income PLUS income of all members living in your household (including cohabiting partners and armed forces members living at home). Please count income BEFORE TAXES, including income from all sources (such as wages, salaries, tips, net income from a business, interest, dividends, child support, alimony, and Social Security, public assistance, pensions, or retirement benefits).

(1) Less than \$5,000

(2) \$5,000 to \$7,499

(3) \$7,500 to \$9,999

(4) \$10,000 to \$12,499

- (5) \$12,500 to \$14,999
- (6) \$15,000 to \$19,999
- (7) \$20,000 to \$24,999
- (8) \$25,000 to \$29,999
- (9) \$30,000 to \$34,999
- (10) \$35,000 to \$39,999
- (11) \$40,000 to \$49,999
- (12) \$50,000 to \$59,999
- (13) \$60,000 to \$74,999
- (14) \$75,000 to \$84,999
- (15) \$85,000 to \$99,999
- (16) \$100,000 to \$124,999
- (17) \$125,000 to \$149,999
- (18) \$150,000 to \$174,999
- (19) \$175,000 or more

12. **interest:** How interested are you in information about whats going on in government and politics?

- (1) Not interested at all
- (2) Slightly interested
- (3) Moderately interested
- (4) Very interested
- (5) Extremely interested

13. **tv_news:** During a typical week, how many days do you watch news on TV, not including sports?

(0) 0 days

(1) 1 day

(2) 2 days

(3) 3 days

(4) 4 days

(5) 5 days

(6) 6 days

(7) 7 days

14. **radio_news:** During a typical week, how many days do you listen to news on the radio, not including sports?

(0) 0 days

(1) 1 day

(2) 2 days

(3) 3 days

(4) 4 days

(5) 5 days

(6) 6 days

(7) 7 days

15. **internet_news:** During a typical week, how many days do you watch or read news on the Internet, not including sports?

(0) 0 days

- (1) 1 day
- (2) 2 days
- (3) 3 days
- (4) 4 days
- (5) 5 days
- (6) 6 days
- (7) 7 days

16. **print news:** During a typical week, how many days do you read news in a printed newspaper, not including sports?

- (0) 0 days
- (1) 1 day
- (2) 2 days
- (3) 3 days
- (4) 4 days
- (5) 5 days
- (6) 6 days
- (7) 7 days

17. **veto:** How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?

- (0) Incorrect Response
- (1) Correct Response

18. **majority:** Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?

- (0) Incorrect Response
- (1) Correct Response
19. **constitutional**: Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?
- (0) Incorrect Response
- (1) Correct Response
20. **vp**: Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Joe Biden?
- (0) Incorrect Response
- (1) Correct Response
21. **conservative**: Would you say that one of the parties is more conservative than the other at the national level?
- (0) Incorrect Response
- (1) Correct Response
22. **pk**: An index of the average number of correct answers to the five item political knowledge questions (veto, majority, constitutional, vp, and conservative).
23. **vote**: Designates whether the subject cast their ballot for the Democrat or Republican candidate.
- (0) Democrat
- (1) Republican
24. **vtime**: The amount of time in seconds the subject took to vote.
25. **economy**: Would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as—excellent, good, not so good, or poor?
- (1) Excellent

(2) Good

(3) Not So Good

(4) Poor

26. **pres_approv**: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

(1) Approve

(2) Disapprove

APPENDIX C

Amazon Mechanical Turk Advertisement

45-60 Minute Survey and Mock Election

Requester: Drew Seib Reward: \$18.0 per HIT HITs available: 0 Duration: 90 Minutes

Qualifications Required: Location is US

HIT Preview

Complete a political science study.

To be paid for this Human Interface Task (HIT), you must meet the following qualifications:

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be a United States citizen
- Must be eligible to vote
- May NOT be enrolled as a full-time student
- May NOT be an employee of Southern Illinois University

To complete your HIT, please go to the website below (the website is only compatible with Firefox and Chrome browsers and you must use one of these). Once on the website, you will take a survey, participate in a mock campaign, vote, and then take a second survey. At the end of the study, you will be given an 11 digit code. Example: 123ABCDE456 (not case sensitive)

The study should take approximately one hour to complete.

Link to study: <http://www.drewseib.com/votingstudy>

To be paid for your HIT, please enter the confirmation code you received at the end of the study in the box below. For example, if your confirmation code is 123ABCDE456, like in the example above, you would enter it into the box below hit the submit button. Once I have checked your confirmation code, I will approve your HIT.

Drew Seib
Department of Political Science
Southern Illinois University
Mail Code 4501
Carbondale, IL 62901

Prospective Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of how voters make decisions. You will begin with a survey followed by a practice session that allows you to get used to the program that is used for the mock campaign. Next, you will participate in a mock campaign. You will then vote and take a second survey. In total, this study will take between 30 and 60 minutes to complete. In exchange for your participation I will pay you \$18.00.

In order to participate in this study, you must be a U.S. citizen, be at least 18 years old, not be enrolled as a full-time student, and may not be employed or associated with Southern Illinois University.

All your responses will be kept confidential within reasonable limits. Only people directly involved with this project will have access to the data. Should I be required to share the data, all identifying information would be removed.

Completion of this study indicates voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Questions about this study can be directed to me (Drew Seib) or to my supervising professor, Dr. Scott McClurg, Department of Political Science, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4501. E-mail : seibjd@siu.edu Phone : 573-587-1561

By checking this box, I acknowledge that completion of this study indicates my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

submit

This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office of Research Development and Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail siuhsc@siu.edu

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Jerod Drew Seib

drewseib@gmail.com

Westminster College
Bachelor of Arts, May 2003

Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Master of Arts, December 2006

Special Honors and Awards:

Dissertation Assistantship Award, 2009-2010

Seib, Drew. 2010-2011. Frantic Voters: How Context Affects the Way Voters Search for Information. National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant. Amount: \$12,000.

Dissertation Title:

FRANTIC VOTERS: HOW CONTEXT AFFECTS VOTER INFORMATION SEARCHES

Major Professor: Dr. Scott McClurg