

# **WAR GAMES**

ISSUES AND RESOURCES IN THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF CONGRESS

Edited by David B. Magleby and Kelly D. Patterson



**War Games:**  
**Issues and Resources in the Battle for Control of Congress**

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David B. Magleby  
Kelly D. Patterson

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## War Games: Issues and Resources in the Battle for Control of Congress

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### Executive Summary

For only the fifth time in U.S. history, the 2006 midterm election resulted in the president's party losing control of both houses of Congress, something that few anticipated as likely early in the election cycle. Public opinion about the Iraq war, the government's mismanagement of Hurricane Katrina, and scandal created an environment that some described as "toxic" for Republicans. In a departure from the recent norm, the field of competitive House races expanded as Election Day approached. The Democratic Party positioned itself well to ride the wave of discontent. It had few incumbent retirements, strong candidate recruitment, and aggressive fundraising. The dynamic alliances between candidates, party committees, and outside groups were also again evident in 2006.

The 2006 midterm election cycle was the first midterm cycle conducted under the rules of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), which largely banned party soft money and redefined issue advocacy. In the 2002 midterm cycle, the political parties were allowed to raise unlimited amounts of soft money, including corporate and union general funds, money otherwise not allowed to be spent on elections. In the aggregate the party committees raised and spent close to \$500 million, or essentially the same amount they had spent in the highly contested 2000 presidential election cycle.<sup>1</sup> In 2000, 40 percent and in 2002, 44 percent of funds raised by the six national party committees consisted of soft money. In 2004, much to the surprise of BCRA critics, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Republican National Committee (RNC) raised and spent more hard money than they had in hard and soft money combined in 2000 or 2002. The congressional campaign committees, on the other hand, raised much more hard money than they had previously, with the exception of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), which had fewer total resources available to them than in the pre-BCRA period. For example, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) had combined hard and soft money receipts in 2002 of \$143 million. In 2004 with soft money banned, their total receipts were \$86.5 million and in 2006 they raised nearly \$119 million in hard money.

#### *Candidates*

Candidate recruitment and fundraising were important elements in the Democratic success in 2006. BCRA doubled the contribution limit for individuals, and in 2006 as in 2004, candidates in both parties aggressively raised money for their own campaigns. Candidates not involved in competitive races also played a role in helping fund their parties' efforts. U.S. House candidates in 2006 gave their party campaign committees in excess of \$62 million, with the DCCC getting \$32 million from its candidates and the NRCC getting \$30 million. This same parity did not exist in Senate candidates giving to their party committees. Democratic candidates were more inclined to give to their party committee (\$9.9 million) than Republicans (\$2.1 million). Senate Democrats who gave \$1 million or more to the DSCC included Hillary Rodham Clinton, Diane Feinstein, Ted Kennedy, and Richard Durbin.

#### *Parties*

All six party committees set new records for hard money receipts in a midterm election cycle, and the congressional campaign committees all raised more hard money than in any previous cycle (midterm or

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<sup>1</sup> David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson eds., *The Last Hurrah?: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 40, 45.

presidential).<sup>2</sup> With unlimited soft money banned, parties have turned to individuals and, to a much lesser extent, political action committees (PACs) for money. The surge in individual contributions to all national party committees in 2004 was remarkable. As our prior work documented, individual contributions came in both small and large amounts, and the Internet is playing an increasing role in party committee finance. In 2006, the DSCC and DCCC saw further growth in individual contributions over 2004 and a more than four-fold increase over 2002. The NRSC saw a modest increase in money raised from individuals, up from \$59 million in 2004 to \$64 million in 2006. This figure was well below the DSCC total contributions from individuals of \$86.5 million in 2006. The growth in individual contributions is both among donors giving under \$200 and those who give the maximum amount under BCRA. The DSCC and DCCC saw growth particularly among those who give \$25,000 or more to a party committee. The NRCC continues to lead all congressional campaign committees in receipts from individuals but saw a drop in total receipts from individuals in 2006. In 2006 the NRCC raised \$109 million from individuals, down from \$135 million in 2004.

Much of the money raised by the party committees was targeted into the competitive races. The exception to this was the DNC's "50-State Program," which invested more broadly. The parties focused their efforts on competitive contests in their contributions, coordinated expenditures, and especially in independent expenditures. The growth in aggregate independent expenditures by the four congressional campaign committees has been dramatic. In the last soft money election cycle, the party congressional campaign committees combined spent \$2.3 million independently. In 2004 that figure rose to \$121.8 million, and in 2006 it hit \$206.4 million. The parties were at near-parity in independent expenditures in 2006, \$105.4 million for the Democrats and \$101 million for the Republicans. If the independent expenditures by the RNC are included in the GOP tally, the party independent expenditures in 2006 climb to \$115 million. The DNC did not make independent expenditures in 2006. The amount spent independently in particular races was often substantial. As explored in the case studies in this volume, independent expenditures were substantial.

### *Groups*

Interest groups through a variety of mechanisms have also been key participants in federal elections. Prior to 2004, they did this through PAC contributions, which went heavily to incumbents, through independent expenditures and through issue advocacy where they ran ads typically opposing particular candidates under the pretext that the ad was about issues and not candidates. BCRA changed the ways groups could do "electioneering communications" but left intact the ways PACs and independent expenditures work. Independent expenditures by groups in 2006 hit \$35 million, up from \$18.8 million in the last midterm election. Groups spending in the aggregate at the near \$2 million level and above included National Education Association (NEA), National Right to Life, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Club for Growth, MoveOn, EMILY's List, National Association of Realtors, and Affiliated Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

In the 2004 election cycle interest groups mounted large-scale operations under Sections 527 and 501(c) of the IRS Code, with Democrats doing more of the 527 organizing, and Republicans doing both 527 and 501(c) organizing. Democratic groups like America Coming Together (ACT) and America Votes were active on the ground in voter registration and mobilization. Democrats also mounted a 527-funded air war with groups like the Media Fund especially active. For Republican groups, which formed much later in the 2004 cycle, the investment was largely in the air war. But ads by Swift Boat Veterans for Truth and Progress for America were widely seen as taking Kerry off message and damaging his credibility.

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<sup>2</sup> The NRSC 2006 hard money receipts were only about \$500,000 higher than in 2004.

In 2006, 501(c) and 527 groups were in the aggregate much less active and less visible than in 2004. On the Democratic side this was true in large part because of a “donor pause,” where several of the largest donors to 527s on the Democratic side in 2004 gave much less to 527 organizations in 2006. George Soros, who gave \$23,450,000 to 527 groups in 2004,<sup>3</sup> gave \$3,542,500 in 2006.<sup>4</sup> But the general decline in spending by 527s and 501(c) organizations does not mean they were absent or unimportant in 2006. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a 501(c)(6) organization, spent in excess of \$20 million in 2006, and one Republican donor, Bob Perry, gave just under \$10 million to Republican-leaning 527s.

Outside groups operating through 527, 501(c), or independent expenditures built on tactics we saw in 2004 and earlier cycles. They targeted their congressional campaign spending to particular races and even created some state-specific groups.

Spending on behalf of Senate candidates by party committees and outside groups resembled a game of chess with Republicans developing what came to be called a firewall to protect their Senate majority. This meant that contests which early in the cycle promised to see substantial party and interest group spending like Minnesota and Pennsylvania saw money and personnel shifted to longstanding competitive races like Missouri, Tennessee, or Montana or to newly competitive contests like Virginia. In some cases groups redeployed resources from what had once been a competitive Senate race to competitive House races in the same state. Examples of this phenomenon include Ohio and Pennsylvania.

FEC rulings after the election cycle about the ways 527s can be funded and innovations by groups and parties with regard to voter mobilization mean 2008 and beyond could have groups attempting to influence elections in different ways than they have previously. The 2006 cycle thus presents a fascinating aggregation of candidate, party committee, and interest group alliances all competing in battleground states. This volume examines this interplay of alliances and the implications of new rules and shifting terrain from the perspective of the contests themselves as well as more broadly.

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<sup>3</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, “Top Individual Contributors to 527 Committees 2004 Election Cycle,” *OpenSecrets.org*, 2004. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527indivs.asp?cycle=2004>>, January 19, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, “Top Individual Contributors to 527 Committees 2006 Election Cycle,” *OpenSecrets.org*, 2006. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527indivs.asp?cycle=2006>>, January 19, 2006.



## War Games: Issues and Resources in the Battle for Control of Congress

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### Politics as War

Politics in the United States is frequently compared to war.<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of politics in press and academic accounts rely on a vocabulary appropriated from military activities. Presidential and congressional “campaigns” are “fought” in “battleground” states. Candidates and parties “deploy” a series of “strategies” to increase their chances of “victory.” Resources are “marshaled” and the “troops” are sent out into the field to “mobilize” voters. The reliance on such a vocabulary seems even more appropriate because of the competitiveness of the current political era. Since Republicans won control of the House of Representatives in 1994, the two parties and their allied groups have “waged” intense “battles” to secure or maintain control of Congress. With soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and the general war on terror being waged, the vocabulary of war was also not far from the thoughts of voters. Politicians and parties, who perhaps previously had only used the vocabulary to discuss their races and tactics, found themselves using the vocabulary to explain their foreign policy positions to voters. The title of this monograph reflects the dual meaning. The 2006 cycle contained the intense conflicts that have become a significant part of every election cycle since 1994 as parties and groups have battled to secure control of Congress. The parties, interest groups, and candidates in the 2006 cycle also encountered a political landscape shaped significantly by the war in Iraq. Few of the participants in these competitive contests could ignore the conduct of the war and its consequences.

By using this metaphor we do not intend in any way to diminish the gravity of war or the sacrifices of those currently engaged in the conflict. Their efforts remind us all of the importance of the democratic process and its real worth. Political campaigns are serious affairs as well, where candidates, parties, and interest groups vie for the responsibility of governing. Voters select the leaders who make decisions which can lead to war or peace. The contest to persuade voters often has the look and feel of a strategic game. In the 2006 cycle, that game was shaped in large measure by the serious and deadly conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. This monograph attempts to help describe and explain how the candidates, parties, and groups involved in this cycle played that strategic game in the context of a very real war.

### The Terrain

The best military strategists always seem to have an eye for what they call “good ground.” Good ground can significantly increase an army’s chance of winning a battle. Political scientists have identified several features of the campaign environment which provide advantages to one set of candidates or party. In the early days of the 2006 cycle, few observers expected Democrats to take control of the Senate. Most observers believed Democrats had a better opportunity to gain a majority in the House of Representatives.

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<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge the assistance of John Baxter Oliphant, Nisha Riggs, and Dustin Nephi Slade who have worked as research associates on this project. Their work in arranging for interviews, managing data, and assisting the academics whose work is presented in this volume is greatly appreciated. Stephanie Curtis again showed her mastery of statistics and FEC data in her work on this volume. We express appreciation to Paul Clark and Bob Biersack of the FEC for their assistance. Scott C. Cameron provided editorial assistance. A superb group of undergraduate students also assisted along the way: Virginia Janette Maynes, Jacob F. Wirth, David M. Trichler, David Spencer Lassen, Marcus Anderson, Aaron Anderson, Lindsay Nielson, and graduate student Kara Lanette Chatterton. Finally, this project was made possible by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, John J. Pitney, Jr. *The Art of Political Warfare* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

Democrats' winning Senate seats in Virginia, Missouri, Tennessee, Montana, and Rhode Island seemed like too much for even quality candidates in a favorable issue environment. As early as May 2006, Democrats' potential to win even five competitive Senate seats held by Republicans was termed a "problematic prospect."<sup>3</sup> However, as the cycle progressed, the Democratic candidates, party, and interest groups sensed a historic opportunity to win both chambers. The context in which the battle for Congress would be waged became good ground for the Democratic Party.

The fact that the midterm followed a Republican-won presidential election fueled the hopes of Democrats. Historically, midterm elections favor the president's opposing party. As described by James Campbell,<sup>4</sup> the theory of surge and decline explains this historic pattern. Surge and decline theory divides voters into two groups: core and peripheral. Core voters generally vote in each election and are usually aligned with a party. Peripheral voters go only when the forces pushing them to the polls are unusually strong. Highly publicized presidential elections are one such force. Resting on the premise that the winning parties in presidential elections must win the peripheral vote, surge and decline explains that peripheral voters usually disappear in the midterms following a presidential election. This disappearance does greater harm, proportionally, to the party that won the presidential election because a greater portion of the voters that disappear are those that voted for the president. In addition the winning party of the presidential contest probably received more votes from defecting party members than that of the winner's opponent. According to surge and decline, these defectors usually go back to their party in the midterm, and again, this return proportionally hurts the president's party more than the opposition party. According to this theory, the 2006 cycle would have been difficult for Republicans even without the controversy caused by the war in Iraq and other issues.

One key element of the terrain of midterm elections is presidential popularity as measured in standard public opinion questions (see figure 1-1). Presidential popularity and the state of the economy have often been included in models predicting the number of seats the president's party will lose in a midterm election.<sup>5</sup> President Bush's approval rating never rose above 43 percent over the fifteen months before the election. Those relative highs came early in the cycle. The president's numbers were low when the cycle began, and they were low when the cycle ended. By Election Day, they were hovering around 38 percent. Such low approval numbers portended Republican losses based on historical models. Both parties understood the importance of low presidential popularity for President Bush in 2006. Democrats repeatedly made reference to President Bush in their campaign themes, and as National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) executive director Mark Stephens said, "If it is a referendum on Bush, we lose."<sup>6</sup>

The public also held Congress in low regard during the 2005–06 election cycle. This disapproval increased as the year progressed (see figure 1-2). Discontent with Congress was significant in late 2005; over 50 percent of respondents disapproved of Congress's performance. But by late 2006, over 60 percent of the public was unhappy. Disapproval hit its highest point in October when nearly 66 percent of the public expressed dissatisfaction; however, the public's discontent lessened slightly in the first week of November. Disapproval never dipped below 60 percent after March 2006, and it was frequently higher.

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald Brownstein and Janet Hook, "GOP Can Win by Limiting Losses," *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 2006, p. A01.

<sup>4</sup> James Campbell, *The Presidential Pulse of Congressional Elections* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 7-11.

<sup>5</sup> See Carl Klarner and Stan Buchanan, "Forecasting the 2006 Elections for the United States Senate," *Political Science and Politics* 39 (2006): 849-55; Carl Klarner and Stan Buchanan, "Forecasting the 2006 Elections for the U.S. House of Representatives," *Political Science and Politics* 39 (2006): 857-61.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Stephens, executive director, National Republican Senatorial Committee, interview by David B. Magleby, Washington, D.C., March 22, 2006.

Faced with such unpopularity, congressional Republicans struggled to find a message that could offset public discontent with their job performance. Two millstones weighed heavily on GOP incumbents: an unpopular president and an unpopular Congress.

The “generic vote” question is another indicator of how each party will fare in the election. Pollsters ask “likely voters” if they intend to vote for the Republican or the Democratic candidate in the upcoming congressional election. Candidates are not named, hence the notion of a generic vote. Democrats held a considerable advantage over Republicans in generic House vote questions (see figure 1-3). The Democrats’ advantage never fell below eight points and peaked at nearly fifteen in October 2006. Polling the week before Election Day gave the Democrats a twelve-point lead. The Democrats’ advantage on the generic ballot resembled the Republicans’ advantage going into the 1994 elections.

The consistently bad poll numbers for Republicans could be attributed to the war in Iraq, the emergence of scandals, and problems of governance. This pervasive negative mood towards President Bush and the federal government meant that more localized themes and messages that consultants told us had worked in recent election cycles did not work in 2006. After the election, Mark Stephens said, “We were like Velcro and they were like Teflon.”<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Duffy of the *Cook Political Report* points to the Minnesota Senate race as a good example of the pervasive focus on the national agenda and the Republicans’ “inability to define [Democratic candidate] Klobuchar.” “Republicans,” Duffy reports, “put up some good ads at the end of August, but voters were not listening. They were impatient. In a normal year [Republicans] would have had a chance of winning”<sup>8</sup> (see chapter 4 for an in-depth analysis of the Minnesota Senate race).

### *The War in Iraq*

Throughout the summer and fall, the public received news about the insurgency in Iraq and the rising number of troop casualties. President Bush and Republicans faced serious questioning about the conduct of the war and future policy directions. High numbers of U.S. fatalities in Iraq became a major issue in the weeks leading up to the 2006 election. October’s 106 U.S. military fatalities marked the highest U.S. death toll in Iraq since November 2004, when the toll reached 137. The fact that the death toll was significantly higher than the previous months meant the war became an even more important issue in the November elections. In the weeks preceding the election, newspapers were filled with stories regarding Iraq’s increasing sectarian division and U.S. fatalities, which put the issue at the forefront of voters’ minds despite Republican efforts to focus on decreasing gas prices and the economy.<sup>9</sup> The public’s support for the war continued to erode. Polls taken in the days before the election showed a growing number of voters who believed the war was the issue most likely to affect their ballot choices on Election Day.<sup>10</sup>

Those who committed resources during the cycle recognized the salience of the war. Change to Win executive director Greg Tarpinian reported that private polls showed Iraq was consistently at the top of

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Stephens, executive director, National Republican Senatorial Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 30, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Jennifer Duffy, managing editor, *Cook Political Report*, telephone interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, November 21, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Freeman, “Iraq Threatens to Derail Republicans,” *Globe and Mail*, October 10, 2006. At <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20061020.wxiraq-election20/BNSStory/International/home>>, January 10, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Guillermo X. Garcia and Gary Martin, “War to Play a Key Role at the Polls,” *San Antonio Express News*, October 29, 2006, p. A01.

the list of issue concerns.<sup>11</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce vice president and national political director Bill Miller agreed, seeing the biggest dynamic in the cycle as Iraq.<sup>12</sup> Linda Lipson of the American Association for Justice (AAJ) (formerly the Association of Trial Lawyers of America or ATLA) saw events in the general election phase as keeping the focus on the war. The release of the Iraq Study Group report,<sup>13</sup> Bob Woodward's book *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III*,<sup>14</sup> and the mounting death count, especially in the month of October, all reminded voters of the conflict. The clearest evidence for the salience of the war, however, came from the Republicans who jettisoned strategies focused on local issues and local candidates to address the need to "stay the course in Iraq." Moreover, as Business Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC) senior vice president Bernadette Budde said, "It is hard to say that [the Iraq war] wasn't local. The funerals were local, the troop deployments were local.... This was a local issue."<sup>15</sup>

### *Scandal and Its Mismanagement*

The terrain of the 2006 election was also influenced by scandal. This theme was frequently raised by House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi when she criticized Republicans as having a "culture of corruption" that had flourished under their watch.<sup>16</sup> In ways reminiscent of the House banking scandal of the 1990s, the scandal involving lobbyist Jack Abramoff and his illegal payments to members of Congress hurt the governing party. Ohio congressman Bob Ney resigned just four days before the election after his conviction on corruption charges. Other candidates, including former House majority leader Tom Delay, had also been hurt by their dealings with Abramoff. Tiffany Adams, vice president and deputy director of corporate affairs for the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), saw the impact of the Abramoff scandal as distancing some interest groups from supporting Republican incumbent Conrad Burns or from spending on his behalf in the Montana Senate race.<sup>17</sup> Beyond Abramoff, there also were controversies involving former Republican congressman Randy Cunningham in California and Democrat William Jefferson of Louisiana.

Another potent scandal of the 2006 cycle emerged in late September when ABC News disclosed that Rep. Mark Foley (R-FL 16) had exchanged suggestive emails and sexually explicit instant messages with House pages.<sup>18</sup> The scandal's epicenter quickly shifted from Rep. Foley's actions to the question of whether the House Republican leadership had known about the problem earlier and done nothing to stop it. The Foley scandal and bad news from Iraq eroded the marginal gains the Republicans made in September, when the President's approval rating had edged up and they had made gains on the generic ballot.<sup>19</sup> House Speaker Dennis Hastert and Rep. Tom Reynolds, chairman of the National Republican

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<sup>11</sup> Greg Tarpinian, executive director, Change to Win, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Bill Miller, vice president, public affairs and national political director, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, Co-Chairs, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Bernadette Budde, senior vice president, Business Industry Political Action Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 13, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Al Kamen, "The Democrats, Keeping a Civil Tongue," *Washington Post*, 12 June 2006, A19, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/>.

<sup>17</sup> Tiffany Adams, vice president and deputy director, corporate affairs, National Association of Manufacturers, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 30, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Babington and Jonathan Weisman, "Rep. Foley Quits in Page Scandal; Explicit Online Notes Sent to Boy, 16," *Washington Post*, September 30, 2006, A01.

<sup>19</sup> David S. Broder and Dan Balz, "Poll Shows Strong Shift of Support to Democrats," *Washington Post*, October 10, 2006, A01.

Congressional Committee (NRCC), came under scrutiny for their handling of the scandal. Both were accused of being aware of the problem but doing nothing to stop it. One Washington interest group representative described the way the Republicans handled the Foley scandal as a “circular firing squad.” The scandal also hampered Rep. Reynolds’ effectiveness by helping to make his own race competitive, thereby diverting his focus from national races to defending his own seat.

The Foley scandal played into the Democrats’ hands as they tried to paint the GOP-controlled Congress as corrupt, greedy, and out of touch. Exit polling data found 42 percent of voters saying corruption and ethics were extremely important to their vote, while 37 percent said Iraq was extremely important to their vote.<sup>20</sup> Outside groups, including Common Cause and Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), spoke out early and often on the theme of corruption in government.<sup>21</sup> Progressive strategist Mike Lux formed “Campaign for a Cleaner Congress” as a 501(c)(4) organization in part to generate public attention to this issue and to drive media stories about it. Employees of Campaign for a Cleaner Congress started doing research early in the cycle. They also organized pickets at local events or otherwise highlighted the corruption issue by having a person show up at a Bob Ney event in Ohio dressed in a kilt and carrying a golf bag to call attention to the Abramoff-funded golf trip Ney had taken to St. Andrews in Scotland. The Abramoff scandal also dogged Montana Senator Conrad Burns. His challenger made ethics a consistent theme during the entire election cycle. When the scandal involving Representative Foley’s text messages hit the media, Campaign for a Cleaner Congress did phone calls to voters in fifty Republican districts calling for Speaker Dennis Hastert and NRCC Chair Tom Reynolds to resign.

Political analysts differ on how many seats were directly affected by Republican-connected scandals in 2006. *Congressional Quarterly*’s Bob Benenson and Greg Giroux attribute the loss of eight GOP seats to scandals.<sup>22</sup> NAM’s Adams sees the impact as much more widespread, as having “a full cycle effect.”<sup>23</sup> Several of the case studies in this volume discuss the impact of scandals on their races. In Indiana’s Ninth District, Democrat Baron Hill ran ads about the contributions Cunningham and DeLay made to Republican Mike Sodrel’s campaign. Hill also ran an ad on how Speaker Hastert should have handled the Foley scandal (see chapter 3). In the Minnesota Sixth District, Patty Wetterling’s background as a child safety advocate positioned her to speak credibly about the Foley scandal. She raised the issue in her district and received national attention when she delivered the Democrats’ response following the President’s Saturday radio broadcast in early October.

Republicans in Ohio faced additional pressure from scandals in their own state. Republican Governor Bob Taft and Republican fundraiser Thomas Noe had been involved in scandals at the state level. As documented in the Ohio case studies (see chapter 7), the series of scandals at the state level clearly hurt Republicans in Ohio who were seeking federal office. NAM’s Adams saw “Taft as responsible for every [Republican loss] in Ohio” in 2006.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> CNN, “Corruption Named as Key Issue by Voters in Exit Polls,” November 8, 2006. At <<http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/11/07/election.exitpolls/>>, 17 January 2007.

<sup>21</sup> According to CREW’s website, they are a nonpartisan organization committed to investigate and litigate against government officials who lack integrity. At <<http://www.citizensforethics.org/about/index.php>>.

<sup>22</sup> Bob Benenson, politics editor, and Greg Giroux, senior political reporter, *Congressional Quarterly*, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Adams, interview.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

## *Problems of Governance*

The Republican Party held Congress and the White House for four straight years leading up to the 2006 elections. During that period, Republicans in general, and the president in particular, experienced several challenges and generated a few controversies by wading into particular policy areas. Terry Schiavo, a brain-damaged Florida woman kept alive by a feeding tube, became the center of a national debate on the meaning of life when her husband sought to remove the tube. Congressional Republicans pushed legislation to prevent the act. The federal courts ultimately decided in favor of the husband, but the debate made the Republicans look heavy-handed.

Internal divisions also wracked the Republican Party. Intense intra-party debates erupted over illegal immigration and what policies to pursue. Proponents of tougher laws on immigration funded primary challenges to Republican incumbents and attacked the policy proposals of President Bush. The divisions impeded passage of comprehensive immigration reform. They also sent a negative signal to Hispanic voters, a group President Bush and Republicans courted in 2004. The immigration debate had an effect on fundraising too. Mike McElwain, political director of the NRCC for the 2006 election cycle, recounts receiving “mock pesos” with “nasty notes written on them saying, ‘once you secure our borders we’ll start sending you money again.’” McElwain believes “the cross-pressure on immigration policy had a big impact on a lot of our smaller donors.”<sup>25</sup>

In the fall of 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed ashore and devastated the Gulf Coast region. The slow response of the federal government to the tragedy and the subsequent scandals during the cleanup led to accusations of mismanagement and incompetence. The impact of Katrina was not lost on GOP party professionals. As Mark Stephens of the NRSC told us, “By Katrina I was saying can it get worse and then it did. It was a nightmarish environment.”<sup>26</sup> For those running against Republicans there was a connection between Katrina mismanagement and the scandals: Republicans “were out of touch” and “more concerned about perpetuating their own power than the concerns of normal human beings,”<sup>27</sup> or as a frequent Republican ally put it, “the public viewed Congress as clueless, lazy and greedy.”<sup>28</sup>

Scandals, controversies, mismanagement, and the poor approval ratings they brought undermined some of the Republicans’ fundraising advantages. During the 2002 elections, President Bush and other prominent Republicans campaigned extensively for GOP candidates.<sup>29</sup> President Bush and the national Republican committees used the President’s post-9/11 image as a war-time president and his popularity to boost GOP candidates’ fundraising efforts and media profiles. A presidential visit is a major news item in many markets, and they offer candidates unparalleled amounts of “earned media.”<sup>30</sup> The President is a potent fundraiser, routinely bringing in \$1 million in one event. However, in 2006, President Bush made fewer trips to campaign for GOP candidates, and the trips that he did make were primarily to solidly Republican districts. Other national Republican figures campaigned actively, most prominently among them was Laura Bush. Both Speaker Hastert and NRCC Chair Reynolds became less effective fundraisers in the

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<sup>25</sup> Mike McElwain, political director, National Republican Congressional Committee, telephone interview by David B. Magleby and Dustin Nephi Slade, February 9, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Mike Podhorzer, deputy director, political department, AFL-CIO, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and Nisha Riggs, November 22, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Budde, interview, November 13, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, “The Last Hurrah? Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections,” *The Last Hurrah? Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections*. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2003), p. 7–8.

<sup>30</sup> “Earned media” is a term used to refer to media coverage, especially television that candidates receive without paying, such as getting on the evening news or on the front page of a newspaper.

wake of the Foley scandal; fundraising events featuring Speaker Hastert were cancelled in Ohio<sup>31</sup> and Pennsylvania<sup>32</sup> as the scandal's fallout damaged his image even in Republican circles.

One party's struggle is normally another party's opportunity. The situation in Iraq and the congressional scandals provided Democrats with a golden opportunity to make gains in both chambers. Political environments such as the one in which Democrats found themselves have a snowball effect because they attract quality candidates and funds to support those candidates.<sup>33</sup> The Democratic Party, by most accounts, took advantage of the political climate and worked hard to recruit and fund candidates who would be competitive. For example, in New York's Twenty-sixth District the Democratic challenger Jack Davis was a former Republican with a strong populist message against globalization that resonated in the economically-depressed district. Davis had the right message for the district, and when Reynolds ran into trouble with the Foley scandal, many voters in the largely conservative constituency felt comfortable enough with Davis's views to consider supporting him. In the Ohio Fifteenth District, New Mexico First District, and Pennsylvania Sixth District, the Democrats recruited strong candidates with the name recognition and experience needed to run viable campaigns. In Pennsylvania's Sixth District, Lois Murphy returned for a rematch with Representative Jim Gerlach after narrowly losing to him in 2004. She entered the race with experience and high name recognition in the district, which helped her mount a very competitive campaign. Perhaps the Democrats' greatest success in recruitment was Bob Casey in Pennsylvania (see chapter 8). Very early on, Democrats saw the race for Rick Santorum's seat not only as their best chance of a pickup but also as a moral crusade comparable to the GOP's unseating of then-Senate minority leader Tom Daschle in 2004. Democrats argued that Santorum was too conservative for Pennsylvania and out of touch with the state. Casey's conservative positions on key issues—he is pro-life and pro-gun—probably eroded Santorum's base by depriving him of wedge issues he had successfully used in the past.<sup>34</sup> Santorum was unable to counter Casey's strengths with socially conservative issues, thus he was exposed to and ultimately taken down by Casey's attacks focused on economic and trade issues. In a testament to the onslaught Republicans faced in 2006, Santorum lost by eighteen points, whereas Daschle lost by just two points in 2004.

One congressional campaign observer gives the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) a "B" or "B-" for recruiting in 2006. She reports that "some big names said 'no.'"<sup>35</sup> Michael Meyers of TargetPoint Communications said that, although he would not attribute the success of the Democrats to good recruitment, they did recruit candidates that met a social conservative threshold that helped them gain some seats.<sup>36</sup> Others give higher marks to the Democrats for recruiting. In some cases the candidates thought to not have been preferred by the Democratic Party establishment won the nomination and eventually the general election. Examples include Jerry McNerney who defeated Steve Filson, the party's chosen candidate in the primary, and then went on to defeat Richard Pombo in California's Eleventh Congressional District.<sup>37</sup> More neutral observers Charlie Cook, Jennifer Duffy, and

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<sup>31</sup> Jim VandeHei and Chris Cillizza, "GOP Officials Brace for Loss of Seven to 30 House Seats," *Washington Post*, October 10, 2006, A1.

<sup>32</sup> Kimberly Hefling, "Hastert Backs Out of Pa. Fundraiser," *Associated Press*, October 9, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> See Gary C. Jacobson and Samuel Kernell, *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>34</sup> Robin Toner, "Running Hard in Pennsylvania, Senate Power Seeks a New Image," *New York Times*, July 10, 2006, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Charlie Cook, founder and partner, Jennifer Duffy, managing editor, and Amy Walter, senior editor, *Cook Political Report*, telephone interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, November 21, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Meyers, partner and vice-president, TargetPoint Consulting, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Lux, CEO and co-founder, Progressive Strategies, interview by David B. Magleby, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2006.

Amy Walter agree that the DCCC had written off defeating Pombo after the primary.<sup>38</sup> Another example of the Democratic establishment's apparently preferred candidate losing the primary was in the Montana U.S. Senate primary where John Morrison lost to Jon Tester.<sup>39</sup>

If a cycle favors recruitment for one party, it generally hampers recruitment activities for the other party.<sup>40</sup> The Republicans suffered numerous recruitment setbacks during the cycle. In recent cycles Republican leaders, including President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Karl Rove helped clear the field for the strongest candidates and in other cases persuaded promising but uncertain candidates to run.<sup>41</sup> They were less successful in 2006. The GOP made repeated efforts to persuade Florida U.S. Representative Katherine Harris (formerly Florida Secretary of State) not to run for the Senate; she ran anyway. The NRSC's Mark Stephens reports that NRSC chair Senator Elizabeth Dole and White House political operatives Karl Rove and Sara Taylor all tried unsuccessfully to talk Harris out of the race.<sup>42</sup> Efforts to persuade North Dakota Republican Governor John Hoeven to run for the U.S. Senate from that state were also unsuccessful. The early disappointments in recruiting set the tone for the Republicans. Of reluctant GOP recruits, Mike McElwain of the NRCC said, "it wasn't a good environment for anybody to run in, and they knew it."<sup>43</sup> Because of this, Republicans lacked strong candidates to challenge Democratic incumbents, and were faced by strong Democratic challengers to their own seats. They were forced to assume a defensive posture before many states even held primaries. To compound the disadvantages of the cycle, National Rifle Association (NRA) federal affairs director Chuck Cunningham pointed to Republican "injuries caused by self-infliction, particularly on the House side." According to Cunningham, there were also a handful of seats that would have been safe Republican if the incumbent had run for re-election, but they decided to run for governor and the seat became vulnerable to Democratic takeover.<sup>44</sup>

The issue environment and the slate of stronger candidates meant that Democrats were motivated to vote this cycle and Republicans were not.<sup>45</sup> According to pollster Geoff Garin, the Democrats were pushing a rock down a hill this election cycle, while Republicans were attempting to push the rock back up.<sup>46</sup> In an October New York Times/CBS News poll, "46 percent of Democrats said they were more enthusiastic about voting this year than in previous congressional elections, compared with 33 percent of Republicans."<sup>47</sup> Even as early as July, polls predicted that the Democrats had an "advantage in the level of interest in the midterm elections comparable to what the Republicans enjoyed in 1994."<sup>48</sup> Enthusiasm cropped up frequently in the interviews. As J.B. Poersch at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign

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<sup>38</sup> Cook, Duffy, and Walter, telephone interview.

<sup>39</sup> Lux, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> See for example Gary C. Jacobson, "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of House Elections, 1946–1986," *American Political Science Review* 83 (1989): 773–93.

<sup>41</sup> David B. Magleby, "Outside Money in the 2002 Congressional Elections," *The Last Hurrah*, eds. David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 18.

<sup>42</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> McElwain, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Cunningham, federal affairs director, National Rifle Association, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Chris Cillizza and Jim VandeHei, "In R.I., a Model for Voter Turnout," *Washington Post*, September 14, 2006, p. A23.

<sup>46</sup> Geoff Garin, president, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, Nisha Riggs, John Baxter Oliphant, and Dustin Nephi Slade, July 28 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Robin Toner, "Democrats Have Intensity, but GOP has Machine" *New York Times*, October 14, 2006. At <[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/15/us/politics/15base.html?\\_r=1&oref=login](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/15/us/politics/15base.html?_r=1&oref=login)>, October 14, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Mann, "For Democrats, Wave Is Building" *Washington Post*, July 16, 2006, B01, At <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/14/AR2006071401391.html>>, 16 October 2006.

Committee (DSCC) put it, “I think it’s an engaged Democratic base. It’s a base that wants to win.”<sup>49</sup> Wes Boyd, president and co-founder of MoveOn.org, confirmed Poersch’s observation, saying his organization hoped to get 60,000 volunteers to make 5 million phone calls this cycle; they got 100,000 volunteers who made 7 million calls.<sup>50</sup> The view that the Republicans were demoralized and the Democrats energized was a recurrent theme in interviews with pollsters and other campaign professionals.

### **The Shifting Terrain**

Battles are rarely fought in a fixed location. The terrain shifts as troops engage or as strategists reassess their goals and resources. As noted, early on in the cycle the conventional wisdom was that the Democrats were unlikely to be able to regain control of both chambers of Congress. Sierra Club’s Cathy Duvall states, “If you’d said in May-June 2005 that the Democrats would take both houses you would be a laughingstock.”<sup>51</sup> The states with Senate seats up for election in 2006, sometimes called “the map,” were disproportionately Republican or at least states where Republicans should have been able to force a competitive race on the Democratic incumbent like North Dakota, Nebraska, and Florida. The AAJ’s Linda Lipson saw the “Senate map as not good for Democrats.”<sup>52</sup> Similarly, EMILY’s List’s Maren Helsa reports that early in the election cycle her organization worried about having to help defend Democratic Senate incumbents in expensive states like California, New York, Washington, and Michigan: “The early thinking was that two of these four could be in trouble and these are expensive states.” Her group was also concerned about reelecting pro-choice women governors in Michigan, Kansas, and Arizona. She commented that consequently “We began with the expectation that we would play defense.”<sup>53</sup> In the end, EMILY’s List played offense in Minnesota and Missouri instead.

More broadly, in the House the widely shared view was that the 2000 redistricting and subsequent 2003 redistricting in Texas had given the Republicans what White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove labeled “structural advantages.”<sup>54</sup> The sense that Democrats would pick up seats in both chambers but were unlikely to regain majorities was widely shared in Washington through the summer of 2006. Progressive strategist Lux said, “Early on there was a strong sense that the Democrats could not win back control. There were too many structural advantages.”<sup>55</sup> In July 2006, while more optimistic about her party’s chances in the House, DCCC’s Karin Johanson said “those [redistricting numbers] are still against us.”<sup>56</sup> Several interest groups had decided to pursue a state office strategy because of the sense that the odds against the Democrats were too great. Examples of such groups include the National Education Association (NEA) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Dennis Friel of the NEA said that

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<sup>49</sup> J.B. Poersch, executive director, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., July 19, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Wes Boyd, president and co-founder, MoveOn.org, telephone interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, January 19, 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Cathy Duvall, national political director, Sierra Club, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Linda Lipson, legislative liaison, American Association for Justice, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and Nisha Riggs, November 17, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Maren Helsa, voter outreach manager, EMILY’s List, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Reported by Claire Shipman, “Bush Comes Out Swinging; Says Dems Will Lose War on Terror,” *Good Morning America*, October 31, 2006. Transcript from [www.lexis-nexis.com](http://www.lexis-nexis.com).

<sup>55</sup> Lux, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Karin Johanson, executive director, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington D.C., July 19, 2006.

his association assumed that “the Senate and House were not at play.”<sup>57</sup> Cathy Duvall also told us in March 2006 that “the House is not seriously at play,”<sup>58</sup> a view shared during the same period by the League of Conservation Voters’ senior vice president Tony Massaro.<sup>59</sup> As the summer came, the NEA saw first the U.S. Senate and then the U.S. House as competitive. Originally the NEA had planned on involvement in only six Senate and ten House races. Those numbers rose to fifteen and twenty-seven, respectively.<sup>60</sup> The change in perception for Lipson of the AAJ also came in summer 2006, but her optimism grew first for the House and later for the Senate.<sup>61</sup>

The number of “toss up” House races expanded dramatically as Election Day neared (see figure 1-4). When the 90 day electioneering window closed for interest groups to do non-hard money broadcast electioneering in mid-August, the *Cook Political Report* ranked seventeen races as toss ups; they ranked another seventeen as leaning one way but still very competitive. However, even those early rankings foreshadowed GOP troubles. All seventeen toss ups in August were GOP seats. By Election Day, thirty-nine seats, all but one held by Republicans, were rated as toss ups. Democrats won twenty-five or 64 percent; Republicans could win only fourteen of the toss up seats. The Republicans lost a number of seats that were considered toss ups early on. Of the ten GOP toss ups in early February, Democrats won eight or 80 percent. Of fourteen Republican toss up seats in mid-July, Democrats won nine or 64 percent. *Cook* rated eighteen Republican-held seats as toss ups in the first week of October, and Democrats won ten of them or 55 percent. One week before the election, there were thirty-three toss ups; Democrats won seventeen or 51 percent. Despite, the high number of “toss up” seats in 2006, the overall number of competitive seats remained low. As of early October, the *Cook Political Report* rated 35 races as either toss ups or leaning toward one party (see figure 1-5). That number has fallen drastically in recent cycles. At the same point in 1992, *Cook* considered 151 seats competitive.

What explains the expanded field of competitive races in 2006? Clearly much of the explanation is the mood of the public and the factors we have been discussing. Bernadette Budde of BIPAC put it succinctly, “The list of competitive races expanded because nothing got fixed.”<sup>62</sup> But did party committees or interest groups have a strategy to expand the field of competition? Political professionals on both sides give a lot of credit to the chairs of the Democratic campaign committees, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) at the DSCC and Representative Rahm Emanuel (D-IL 5) at the DCCC, who were consistently optimistic about their chances to win majorities. As Bernadette Budde put it, “Credit needs to go to Emanuel who believed districts were more playable, raised plenty of money, and recruited candidates who were in the game. He did not put too much stock in the redistricting argument of the red/blue state idea.”<sup>63</sup> Budde continued that Schumer also deserved credit, he “did not believe some places were off the list—Virginia, Montana, Tennessee.”<sup>64</sup>

Some observers are more inclined to praise outside groups for the expanded field. Progressive strategist Mike Lux asserted that allied groups were critical to the expanded field. He said:

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<sup>57</sup> Dennis Friel, government relations and eastern states manager, NEA, telephone interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, November 14, 2006, and Thad Daise, national government relations field manager, NEA, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., August 8, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Cathy Duvall, national political director, Sierra Club, interview by David B. Magleby, Washington, D.C., March 24, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Tony Massaro, senior vice president for political affairs and public education, League of Conservation Voters, interview by David B. Magleby, Washington, D.C., March 23, 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Dennis Friel, telephone interview.

<sup>61</sup> Lipson, interview, November 17, 2006.

<sup>62</sup> Budde, interview, November 13, 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

At the beginning of the cycle there was a real strong sense among the punditry, conventionalist wisdom in the town that there was no way in hell that the Democrats could win the House or the Senate. That there was too much, as Rove likes to call it, structural advantages. I think what helped to change that wasn't only Republican screw ups, and obviously they had a lot of them between social security and Katrina and Iraq, and just sort of the general wave of corruption. They gave themselves huge problems. But I think what created the wave was only partly that. I think it was some very good strategic thinking early on in the cycle. Very, very early, 2005, even in late November, early December of 2004 I remember these discussions, and everybody said we have no chance and what can we do to change the issue dialogue. There were some very thoughtful and strategic discussions created to help advance on what can we do to increase the wave.<sup>65</sup>

Lux characterized the mood of progressive interest groups and donors as having “lost confidence in the strategic judgment of the party establishment.”<sup>66</sup> According to Lux and other sources this led to experimentation in new ways of campaigning, including an expanded role for bloggers and groups like MoveOn.org.<sup>67</sup> Entering the cycle, MoveOn.org had a three-pronged strategy to expand the field of competitive races, help Democrats have a consistent message on Iraq, and, if a wave did come, tip late-breaking races to the Democrats.<sup>68</sup> MoveOn.org openly touted its efforts to bring more districts into play. It knew relatively few seats were considered competitive, so it “searched for a way to...identify some seats that were thought to be securely in the hands of Republican incumbents but that [it] thought could be made competitive.”<sup>69</sup> MoveOn.org stated in a press release that its “Caught Red-Handed” ad campaign emphasizing corruption and ethics issues in second and third tier races showed that Democrats could win in long-shot areas. Democrats won five of the nine races they targeted with the ad.<sup>70</sup> DCCC leaders Johansen and John Lapp give MoveOn credit for getting some races into play like the Connecticut Fifth District between Chris Murphy (D) and Nancy Johnson (R) or the Ohio Eighteenth District between Joy Padgett (R) and Zack Space (D), as well as a few others.<sup>71</sup> Even former NRCC political director McElwain gave MoveOn credit, “those MoveOn.org ads weren't particularly going to win any awards, but they were very effective.”<sup>72</sup> There are some dissenters from the view that MoveOn was a major factor in expanding the field. The National Federation of Independent Business's (NFIB) Andrew Fimka concludes “they weren't very successful for the amount of money they dumped in.”<sup>73</sup> In the end, so many more districts were in play, including many that MoveOn had not campaigned in, that it is hard to attribute cause and effect to their efforts more generally. What is clear is that their early investment in broadening the field signaled to donors and other players that an expanded field might be possible.

The expanded political terrain came fairly late in the cycle. The relatively high number of competitive House races and the seemingly ever-growing number of endangered Republican incumbents bucked recent trends. Indeed it was a rare occurrence when a Democrat was seriously threatened. As Republican microtargeting consultant Alex Gage said in October, “we're not on offense in as many places as we

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<sup>65</sup> Lux, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Boyd, telephone interview.

<sup>69</sup> MoveOn.org Political Action, “Election 2006: People Powered Politics,” *MoveOn.org*, November 8, 2006. At <<http://pol.moveon.org/2006report/>>, 18 January 2007.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Karin Johanson, executive director, DCCC, and John Lapp, executive director of DCCC's independent expenditure program, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> McElwain, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew Fimka, political programs manager, National Federation of Independent Business, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., October 10, 2006.

thought we would be.”<sup>74</sup> Over the last few cycles the number of competitive House districts has remained low.<sup>75</sup> Partisan redistricting in 2002 after the most recent census drastically reduced the number of consistently competitive districts; whereas, in the past, election years falling after a census had seen increased competitiveness.<sup>76</sup> The narrowing of competition coupled with the explosion of outside money has funneled huge amounts of money into select races that the parties and other groups consider to be the most competitive. The elite group of targeted races sees a deluge of air and ground communications, intensifying as Election Day draws near, as other races are abandoned for those deemed most competitive. This cycle saw the opposite effect. As Election Day neared, additional races became competitive. The expanding field forced the Republicans to spread their forces thin to defend more seats; consequently, the Democrats had more opportunities for gain than resources.

The Ohio Sixth District is an example of a lost opportunity for the Republicans. Early in the 2006 cycle, national Republicans saw the Sixth District as an excellent opportunity to gain a seat. It is a politically marginal district that has elected a Democrat to the House since 1992 but is culturally conservative and supported President Bush in the 2004 election. The long-time incumbent, Ted Strickland, left the seat open to run for governor. In mid-February 2006, the *Cook Political Report* predicted “that Republicans are going to put...money and firepower into this contest.”<sup>77</sup> And the district garnered considerable attention early, especially after the Democratic frontrunner, Charlie Wilson, botched his application to get on the primary ballot and had to campaign as a write-in. Money poured into the district, and its Republican candidate, Chuck Blasdel, seemed poised for national prominence. The NRCC even took the unusual step of running ads against Wilson before he had even won his party’s nomination.<sup>78</sup> The district was in the Republicans’ sights, and its Democratic nominee appeared to be in for a fight. In early January, a NRCC spokesman stated, “We believe that’s going to be the most competitive open seat in the country....”<sup>79</sup> However, after Wilson won an improbable and impressive write-in victory in the primary and surged ahead in the polls, national attention, and more importantly money, began to go elsewhere. The race dropped off the radar. By Election Day, the national party committees had abandoned the race. Wilson cruised to an easy victory, winning 62 percent of the vote.

While the Ohio Sixth District represented a lost opportunity for the GOP, the Ohio Fifteenth District became an unexpected opportunity for the Democrats (see chapter 7 for an in-depth analysis). The Fifteenth District steadily grew more competitive as the cycle advanced. Republican congresswoman Deborah Pryce won 60 percent of the vote in 2004 compared to Bush’s 51 percent in the district, but a souring national environment and a strong challenger landed her in a more competitive race in 2006.<sup>80</sup> It was a close race throughout, but it narrowed considerably when the Mark Foley scandal broke and brought with it details of how Republican leadership had mishandled earlier reports about the congressman’s misbehavior with House pages. By Pryce’s own admission, she and Foley were close friends, and her opponent Mary Jo Kilroy took advantage of that link to tie Pryce to other Ohio Republicans’ ethical woes. Congresswoman Pryce was “totally convinced” that the Foley scandal led to

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<sup>74</sup> Alex Gage, president, TargetPoint Consulting, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., October 12, 2006.

<sup>75</sup> David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, *Electing Congress: New Rules for an Old Game* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, Prentice Hall, 2007), 1-3.

<sup>76</sup> David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, *The Last Hurrah? Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections*, p. 19-20.

<sup>77</sup> *Cook Political Report*, “2006 House Open Seat Rundown,” February 10, 2006.

<sup>78</sup> Greg Giroux, “OH 6: NRCC Flexes Early Muscle Against Wilson,” *CQPolitics.com*, 31 March 31, 2006. At <[http://www.cqpolitics.com/2006/03/oh\\_6\\_nrcc\\_flexes\\_early\\_muscle.html](http://www.cqpolitics.com/2006/03/oh_6_nrcc_flexes_early_muscle.html)>, 15 January 2006.

<sup>79</sup> As quoted in Greg Giroux, “OH 6: Open Seat Spurs One of GOP’s Few Takeover Bids,” *CQPolitics.com*, January 13, 2006. At <[http://www.cqpolitics.com/2006/01/ohio\\_6\\_open\\_seat\\_spurs\\_one\\_of.html](http://www.cqpolitics.com/2006/01/ohio_6_open_seat_spurs_one_of.html)>, 15 January 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Greg Giroux, “Pryce’s Role in GOP Leadership Contributes to Race’s Tossup Status,” *CQPolitics.com*, October 13, 2006. At <[http://www.cqpolitics.com/2006/10/pryces\\_role\\_in\\_gop\\_leadership.html](http://www.cqpolitics.com/2006/10/pryces_role_in_gop_leadership.html)>, 15 January 2006.

the competitiveness of her race.<sup>81</sup> But even before the scandal broke, Kilroy was running a competitive race. As of October 18th, Kilroy had raised \$2.4 million compared to Pryce's \$3.9 million, but the campaigns were on more equal footing in cash on hand. Pryce had \$900,000 to \$700,000 for Kilroy.<sup>82</sup> On top of Kilroy's personal campaign funds, the DCCC and outside groups spent heavily in independent expenditures on her behalf. The NRCC had to spend \$1,786,074 defending the seat and its occupant, while the DCCC spent \$1,636,240, again in independent expenditures, trying to take it over.<sup>83</sup> The Fifteenth District garnered lots of attention and money in the closing days of the election and was a prominent race in a late-widening field. Pryce's position in House GOP leadership made her a tempting target for Democrats who wanted to pick up a seat and send a message. Congresswoman Pryce's and the GOP's financial advantage was decisive in the end. Despite a very favorable political environment for Democratic candidates, Kilroy was unable to capitalize on the opportunity. Kilroy was well funded for a challenger, but she still lacked the resources to overcome the slight Republican advantage in the district.

Many liberal outside groups began the cycle focused on defending vulnerable Democratic congressional seats or on picking up governor seats. However, as the campaign battlefield shifted and the Democrats' outlook continued to improve, many groups had the unique challenge of balancing and reallocating resources between supporting early commitments and taking advantage of new opportunities. The NEA and Change to Win labor unions focused their initial efforts on governors' races. They thought that the House and Senate were not competitive battlefields, so they decided that their best opportunity to win was on the state level. Thad Daise of the NEA said, "When we started to put together the campaign plan, the political climate looked as if the only game in town would be gubernatorial elections."<sup>84</sup> The NEA's early assessment led it to shift its strategic allocation of resources to include governors' races "for the first time in a long time."<sup>85</sup> EMILY's List was very concerned about protecting pro-choice Democratic women senators in Washington and Michigan.

The expanding field of competitive districts had implications for other interest groups as well. Some, like the Sierra Club, doubled what they planned on doing from between twelve and fifteen races to a total of thirty-one.<sup>86</sup> The U.S. Chamber of Commerce planned on being in between thirty-three and thirty-nine federal races and ended up spending in sixty-two, or more than double its original number. The Chamber's Bill Miller reports that "we were forced to engage because people who were supportive of our agenda, who were not particularly vulnerable at the beginning of the cycle, became vulnerable."<sup>87</sup>

### **Rules of Engagement: BCRA and Unanswered Questions**

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) largely banned soft money contributions to the political parties, leading many to predict that the new law spelled the demise of the national party apparatuses as they had existed through the late twentieth century.<sup>88</sup> Leading up to the 2002 campaign cycle, soft money had become the lifeblood of the parties. They depended on these contributions to run many of their GOTV and outside advertising efforts. The Democratic Party was particularly dependent on soft money. In 2002, 53 percent of the Democratic Party's funds came through soft money channels (see table 1-1).

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<sup>81</sup> Adam Nagourney, "Foley Case Snags House Incumbent in Ohio," *New York Times*, 12 October 2006.

<sup>82</sup> Federal Election Commission data. At <[http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?\\_06+H6OH15104](http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?_06+H6OH15104)> and <[http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?\\_06+H2OH15046](http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?_06+H2OH15046)>, 2 November 2006.

<sup>83</sup> Federal Election Commission, "2006 Independent Expenditure Summaries," press release, November 2006. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006iesummaries.html>>, 18 January 2007.

<sup>84</sup> Daise, interview.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Duvall, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>87</sup> Miller, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>88</sup> Ruth Marcus and Juliet Eilperin, "Campaign Bill Could Shift Power Away From Parties," *Washington Post*, April 1, 2001, A1.

With soft money out of the equation, the Democratic Party was predicted to be in dire straits, robbed of an important supply channel.<sup>89</sup> Many expected it to be unable to support its candidates and get out the vote as it had in the past. Critics of BCRA and party insiders complained that the new regulations severely limited the parties' fundraising abilities and would lead to less accountable and responsible political behavior because money would go to shadowy and unaccountable groups instead of the parties.<sup>90</sup> Predictions of the parties' demise were rash and premature. The Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) raised more in disclosed and limited hard money in 2004 than they had in either of the two previous cycles.<sup>91</sup> Much of the increase in hard money donations was attributable to small donors who gave less than \$200; large donors gave more as well.

Entering the 2006 cycle the largest unanswered question about the effectiveness of BCRA dealt with whether the parties would be able to continue to raise large amounts of hard money from individuals, and from small donors in particular. In 2004, "party committees at all levels raised more hard money than ever before, even if they did not all completely make up for the loss of soft money."<sup>92</sup> The committees were not the only benefactors during the cycle. In addition, "presidential and congressional candidates in both parties also experienced a surge in receipts in 2004 compared with past election cycles. Most of that surge came from individuals."<sup>93</sup> Armed with fattened donor lists, the parties entered 2006 with an expanded target list for obtaining funds. In 2006 the parties continued to be very successful in raising hard money from individuals.

## Fundraising

### *Candidates*

Under BCRA, individuals are allowed to contribute twice as much to individual candidates than they were under Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA). BCRA restricted the sources from which candidates can receive help; it does not limit how much they can raise in total funds. Democratic challengers put together well-funded campaigns. Karin Johansen of the DCCC put it simply: "Our candidates [managed] to raise a ton of money."<sup>94</sup> Many Democratic challengers were surprisingly successful in their fundraising efforts, exceeding what challengers had done in the past. Forty<sup>95</sup> Democratic challengers exceeded \$1 million dollars in total receipts, compared to twenty in 2004<sup>96</sup> and seventeen in 2002.<sup>97</sup> Comparatively,

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<sup>89</sup> Ruth Marcus and Dan Balz, "Democrats Have Fresh Doubts on 'Soft Money' Ban," *Washington Post*, March 5, 2001, A1.

<sup>90</sup> Glen Justice, "Despite New Financing Rules, Parties Collect Record \$1 Billion," *New York Times*, 26 October 2004, A22. Glen Justice, "Despite Loss of Soft Money, Parties are Collecting More Cash," *New York Times*, August 10, 2004, A18.

<sup>91</sup> Paul S. Herrnson, "Financing the 2004 Congressional Elections," in *Financing the 2004 Election*, eds. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 155.

<sup>92</sup> Robin Kolodny and Diana Dwyre, "A New Rule Book: Party Money after BCRA," in *Financing the 2004 Election*, eds. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 203.

<sup>93</sup> David B. Magleby, "Change and Continuity in the Financing of Federal Elections," in *Financing the 2004 Election*, eds. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 10.

<sup>94</sup> Johansen, interview, July 19, 2006.

<sup>95</sup> Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 16, 2007.

<sup>96</sup> Federal Election Commission, "Congressional Campaigns Spend \$912 Million Throughout Late November," press release, January 3, 2005. At <[www.fec.gov/press/press2004/20050103canstat/20050103canstat.html](http://www.fec.gov/press/press2004/20050103canstat/20050103canstat.html)>, 13 January 2007.

Republican House challengers' fundraising has plateaued over the last three cycles. Eleven<sup>98</sup> Republican challengers raised more than \$1 million in 2006, which is the exact same number as in 2004 and 2002.<sup>99</sup>

House Democratic challengers as a group more than doubled the amount raised in the 2006 cycle compared to 2002 and 2004. House Republican incumbents in 2006 raised in the aggregate nearly \$58 million more than in 2004 and more than \$100 million more than in 2002. Democratic fundraising was enhanced by constant pressure from DCCC chair Emanuel and by assistance from party luminaries. In Colorado's Seventh Congressional District for example, Ken Salazar, John Edwards, Barack Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Steny Hoyer and Nancy Pelosi all helped with fundraising.<sup>100</sup>

In the 2002 midterm election, President and Mrs. Bush, as well as several other administration officials, made many campaign appearances, not only as fundraisers but to motivate the 72 Hour Task Force volunteers.<sup>101</sup> RNC political director Mike DuHaime explained the much less visible and frequent campaign appearances of administration officials in 2006 by saying, "the president was not a candidate in 2006."<sup>102</sup> As noted previously, the Foley scandal effectively removed Speaker Hastert and NRCC chair Reynolds from campaigning for others in the last weeks of the campaign.

### *Parties*

The four congressional campaign committees set new records in 2005–06 in hard money fundraising, and in the case of the DSCC, DCCC, and NRSC there were significant increases over 2004 (see table 1-1). If the benchmark is 2002, the last election before BCRA became effective, the DCCC raised nearly \$89 million more in 2006 than in 2002 in hard dollars, a surge of 185 percent. The DSCC saw a 148 percent increase between 2002 and 2006. The NRSC, while lagging significantly behind the DSCC and DCCC, also saw a growth of \$30 million in hard money in 2006 over 2002, an increase of 52 percent. And the NRCC increased its receipts by nearly 60 percent (\$65.7 million) over their 2002 levels. The NRCC raised the same amount in 2006 as in 2004 and remained the congressional campaign committee raising the most money. The relative parity between the two parties' congressional campaign committees in 2006 does not extend to the DNC and RNC (see figure 1-6). In 2004, the DNC raised more money than the RNC. Both the DNC and RNC raised less money in 2006 than in 2004, something that has been a regularity of midterm election cycles, but the drop in receipts by the DNC was much more precipitous than the drop for the RNC. The DNC raised \$262 million less in 2006 than in 2004; in contrast the RNC receipts fell by \$146 million. Defenders of the DNC would be quick to point out that the DNC raised \$63 million more in hard money in 2006 than it raised in the last midterm election cycle. But the contrast with the RNC is not flattering for the DNC, as the RNC raised \$75 million more in 2006 than in 2002.

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<sup>97</sup> Federal Election Commission, "Congressional Campaign Expenditures Total \$772 Million," press release, January 2, 2003. At <[www.fec.gov/press/press2003/20030103can\\_exp/20030103can\\_exp.html](http://www.fec.gov/press/press2003/20030103can_exp/20030103can_exp.html)>, 13 January 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Biersack, email communication, January 16, 2007.

<sup>99</sup> Federal Election Commission, "Congressional Candidates Spend \$1.16 Billion During 2003-2004," press release, June 9, 2005. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2005/20050609candidate/20050609candidate.html>>, 20 January 2007. and Federal Election Commission, "Congressional Campaign Expenditures Total \$772 Million," press release, January 2, 2003. At <[www.fec.gov/press/press2003/20030103can\\_exp/20030103can\\_exp.html](http://www.fec.gov/press/press2003/20030103can_exp/20030103can_exp.html)>, 20 January 2006.

<sup>100</sup> Kyle L. Saunders and Robert J. Duffy, "Volatility and Volition: The Pendulum Swings High and Hard in Colorado's Seventh District," *War Games: Issues and Resources in the Battle for the Control of Congress*, eds. David B. Magleby and Kelly D. Patterson (Brigham Young University Press: Provo, UT, 2007), 73.

<sup>101</sup> David B. Magleby, "Outside Money in the 2002 Congressional Elections," *Last Hurrah*, eds. David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 8.

<sup>102</sup> Mike DuHaime, political director, Republican National Committee, phone interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, November 21, 2006.

In total receipts the Republicans raised about \$125 million more than the Democrats in 2006, but the biggest advantage for the Republicans came in the differential between the RNC (\$238 million) compared to the DNC (\$129 million). The DSCC raised \$30 million more than the NRSC, a substantial advantage and a continuation of a trend that began in 2004. Prior to that the NRSC had a substantial fundraising advantage over the DSCC. The DCCC narrowed the NRCC total receipts advantage to \$38 million in 2006. In 2004, the NRCC's advantage had been more than double that at \$84 million.

Figures 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9 and table 1-1 allows us to compare party funding in 2004 and 2006 with the period when the parties also had soft money. In 2006 the DCCC raised more in hard money than it had raised in hard and soft money combined in any earlier cycle. The NRCC was at near parity with its peak fundraising in the soft money era, raising \$179 million in 2002 and \$175 million in 2006. For the DSCC, the committee raised more in hard money in 2006 than in any earlier cycle except 2002 when it raised about \$25 million more in soft and hard money combined.

Contributions from individuals have taken on new significance since the enactment of BCRA. Evidence of the surge in individual contributions can be seen in table 1-2, which lists party committee receipts by source. Noting again the fact that in midterm years the DNC and RNC show declines in receipts from all sources and that the RNC substantially outperformed the DNC in 2006, that the data show that for the two Democratic congressional campaign committees the 2006 cycle saw substantial growth over 2004 in total dollars raised from individuals. The 2004 cycle was the prior historic high for the DCCC and DSCC in hard money raised from individuals. The DSCC saw more than a four-fold increase in individual contributions compared to 2002 and raised \$29 million more from individuals in 2006 than it did in 2004. The DCCC had a similar four-fold increase over 2002 and nearly a \$32 million surge over 2004 in individual giving in 2006. In contrast the NRSC raised only about \$6 million more from individuals in 2006 than in 2004 and lagged behind the DSCC in total receipts from individuals by more than \$22 million. The NRCC has long been the leader of the congressional campaign committees in hard money raised from individuals, and it continued to raise more than any other congressional campaign committee in 2006; however, its lead over the DCCC in individual contributions dropped from \$85 million in 2004 to about \$27 million in 2006. The NRCC was the only congressional campaign committee that raised less from individuals in 2006 (\$109 million) than in 2004 (\$135 million).

The sources of the surge in individual contributions for the DSCC and DCCC include small donors or what is labeled as "unitemized donations" by the Federal Election Commission (FEC). These contributions come in amounts of \$200 or less and have grown steadily at the DSCC and DCCC. In contrast contributions of this kind were flat between 2004 and 2006 at the NRSC and declined at the NRCC. Mark Stephens of the NRSC provided one interpretation for this phenomenon at his committee when he said, "Low dollar donors are not as important now. The expense in compliance makes these donors less valuable. Take away Iraq and we have not found a way to engage small donors."<sup>103</sup> Some of the growth in small donors on the Democratic side has come from people contributing through the Internet, and part of the explanation for these donors likely is the war in Iraq. But for Internet donors the compliance costs are relatively low as are the fundraising costs. This may be evidence of a growing contrast in fundraising style between the NRSC and the Democratic committees, which are more attuned to Internet fundraising. Part of the Democrats' success in 2004 grew out of the success Howard Dean and MoveOn had with Internet fundraising earlier in the 2004 election cycle. Wes Boyd, founder of MoveOn, referred to growth of Internet donations in 2004 saying he was "shocked at how fast it happened."<sup>104</sup> One Republican lawyer stated that "the way the Democrats raised money will be the model for both parties in

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<sup>103</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>104</sup> Kelly D. Patterson. "Spending in the 2004 Election," in *Financing the 2004 Election*, ed. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 81.

2008.”<sup>105</sup> Both parties see the Internet as a growing means of raising money. It is especially effective when accompanied by donor passion. Long-time Democratic direct-mail fundraiser Hal Malchow draws this comparison between mail and Internet fundraising: “You think of the mail as fundraisers as chasing donors. The Internet, when it works, is donors chasing fundraisers, which is a truly unnatural act.”<sup>106</sup> In terms of Internet fundraising in 2006, the DCCC raised \$5 million in the cycle via the Internet. NRSC’s political director Blaise Hazelwood reported that her committee raised about \$1.5 million via the Internet over the course of the 2005-06 cycle.<sup>107</sup> Still, mail solicitations outperformed the Internet at the DCCC and elsewhere.

Another distinction between the parties is the much larger amount of money from donors giving the maximum permitted. Under BCRA, individuals who want to contribute the maximum allowable under law to federal candidates and party committees must give a minimum of \$26,700 to a party committee.<sup>108</sup> For party committees this source of funds has low overhead and if raised early can help establish needed party infrastructure. Both Democratic congressional campaign committees, the DSCC and DCCC, raised much more from individual donors giving \$25,000 or more than did their counterpart Republican committees (see table 1-3). As DSCC political director Guy Cecil told us, the committee raised a lot in large amounts, “\$26,000 checks.”<sup>109</sup> Republicans in the aggregate raised more from donors giving \$25,000 or more with roughly \$65 million raised by the GOP from “max-out” donors compared to roughly \$57 million for Democrats. But most Republican large donors gave to the RNC (\$39 million) compared to only \$8.7 million in large contributions to the DNC. The DSCC raised \$26 million in large contributions, \$10 million more than the NRSC. Stephens, when comparing the donors above \$25,000 to his committee with the larger number at the RNC, said, “Those are Bush dollars. It is hard to match his [Bush’s] impact at the RNC.”<sup>110</sup> The DCCC was not far behind the DSCC, raising \$21 million in large contributions, compared to \$9.1 million for the NRCC. All four congressional campaign committees raised more in large amounts in 2006 compared to 2004, but the growth at the DCCC was the greatest, more than three-fold.

A major difference between the parties was in the extent to which incumbent members of Congress contributed to their party’s congressional campaign committee. Table 1-2 also shows the relative parity in contributions from federal candidates to the DCCC and NRCC. The NRCC raised \$30 million from its candidates and the DCCC \$32 million. The DSCC significantly outperformed the NRSC in candidate contributions. The DSCC raised \$11 million from candidates compared to \$4.7 million at the NRSC. On the Democratic side the biggest donation from a Senator came from Hillary Clinton at \$2,000,000, while Diane Feinstein, Ted Kennedy, and Richard Durbin each donated \$1,000,000 to the DSCC. NRSC Chair Elizabeth Dole also asked all but one of the members of her party caucus for money. The largest member contributions to the NRSC were from Mitch McConnell at \$1,000,000, John Ensign (\$250,000), Thad Cochran (\$225,000), and Ted Stevens (\$200,635). NRSC executive director Stephens, when asked why so few gave so little, relative to what Democratic Senators gave, responded, “There has never been an expectation to [make personal contributions] in our party.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Hal Malchow, president, MSHC Partners, Inc., interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, July 18, 2006.

<sup>107</sup> Blaise Hazelwood, political director, National Republican Senatorial Committee, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, January 19, 2007.

<sup>108</sup> Federal Election Commission, “New Federal Contribution Limits Announced,” press release, 3 February 2005. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2005/20050203limits1.html>>, 14 January 2007.

<sup>109</sup> Guy Cecil, political director, DSCC, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>110</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

The DCCC exceeded its own fundraising projections, raising far more money than expected. This increase allowed the DCCC to enter more races than it had originally budgeted for, which helped expand competition in the House. The DCCC raised an additional \$10 million after Labor Day over original projections. Pennsylvania congressman Murtha's signature performed best in DCCC mail fundraising appeals.<sup>112</sup>

### *Interest Groups*

The 2004 election saw unprecedented amounts of money flow into various outside groups. Money was particularly forthcoming on the left. Funds poured into groups such as the Media Fund, America Coming Together (ACT), and America Votes. Donors gave to Democratic-leaning groups with high expectations for immediate returns on their contributions. However, Democrats failed to regain the White House and lost seats in the House and Senate. After giving so much money, Democratic donors were understandably disappointed. Because many mega-donors in 2004 gave much less in 2006, it is no surprise that many Democratic outside groups struggled to raise funds this cycle. Explanations vary, but donor fatigue is the most common. One person described it as "donor pause."

Erik Smith, who worked with the Media Fund in 2004 and with the September Fund in 2006, attributed some of the drop-off in large donor contributions on the Democratic side in 2006 to some donors being uncomfortable with the high profile of their contributions in 2004.<sup>113</sup> George Soros, for example, was a major contributor to the Media Fund in 2004 but did not contribute anything to the September Fund in 2006.<sup>114</sup> Interestingly, groups more allied with the Republicans also had less spending in the aggregate, but one large donor, Bob Perry, spent more of his own money, \$9,750,000 more than any single Democratic donor.

Many of the largest donors on the left formed the Democracy Alliance to pool their resources for 2006 and beyond. The Democracy Alliance was formed in 2005 to try to counter the influence and power it felt that groups on the right had long possessed. By funding particular kinds of groups for longer periods of time, the Democracy Alliance hoped to build a set of institutions to supply the progressive agenda with consistent support.<sup>115</sup> Democracy Alliance essentially acts as an accrediting agency for left-leaning organizations. Individual donors support Democracy Alliance and pledge to support those groups screened and certified by it. Its emergence has complicated fundraising for some groups. Beth Shipp, political director at NARAL Pro-Choice America, states:

[Major donors on the left] all decided they were going to work together and decide where to put their money and what organizations to invest in, and their process was nightmarish. You had to jump through 20 million hoops and still might not get their money. And they did not give out the money that they did in 2004. And the worst part of it is, since they all decided collectively to work as a group, you had people that were really big "enviro" givers before, or really big choice givers who sat in this room with Democracy Alliance and all agreed, we're all going to

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<sup>112</sup> Johanson and Lapp, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>113</sup> Erik Smith, president, September Fund, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2006.

<sup>114</sup> Political Money Line, "527 Donor: Soros, George," *fecinfo.com*, January 2007. At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/irs\\_ef\\_inter.exe?DoFn=&sText=44919&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/irs_ef_inter.exe?DoFn=&sText=44919&sYR=2006)>, 18 January 2007.

<sup>115</sup> Jim VandeHei and Chris Cillizza, "A New Alliance of Democrats Spreads Funding," *Washington Post*, July 17, 2006, A1.

collectively pool our money and give it out, and we're not going to give as much out to organizations individually this time around.<sup>116</sup>

What has been the response of business interests to the BCRA soft money ban? Corporations, once large soft money donors, were not major donors to 527 organizations in 2004 or 2006.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, much of the activity of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce goes through a 501(c)(6) organization. Bill Miller reported that the Chamber would spend "north of \$20 million" in 2006.<sup>118</sup> Miller continued that with a 501(c)(6) organization disclosure of individual or corporate donors is not required as it is with Section 527 organizations. Miller explained why the surge in money coming into the Chamber as follows:

If you're pharmaceutical guys or the energy guys, if you're the people that...believed somehow that there is a difference between having Henry Waxman be chairman or [John] Conyers. If you believe those things, then you have a vested interest in making sure that there are pro-business majorities. And it's the reason that I'll have more money than I've ever had.<sup>119</sup>

While the activity by the U.S. Chamber is a substantial response to the spending by labor and trial lawyers, it appears that much of what once was the corporate soft money contributions to help Republicans have not continued. Republican Party lawyer Ben Ginsberg in response to a question about why this is the case, responds that "corporations are basically risk averse."<sup>120</sup>

Environmental interest groups experienced a substantial increase in funding in 2004, in large part because of the presidential election cycle. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV), for example, had total revenues of \$17 million according to former LCV executive director Mark Longabaugh. Even the funds the LCV had in 2002 Longabaugh attributed to the looming 2004 presidential election. Further evidence of the impact of 2004 on priorities is the fact that the LCV shifted from a group that focused most of its attention on congressional races to one that focused 80 percent or more of its attention on the presidential election. In 2006, the LCV returned to an emphasis on Congress but with a much smaller budget.

A longstanding role some interest groups play is suggesting to members where they might productively contribute to particular candidates. One of the most important groups that uses this approach is AAJ. In 2006, Linda Lipson of AAJ attempted to overcome the tendency of trial lawyers to contribute to the more high profile Senate candidates and overlook the competitive House candidates with a creative tool. AAJ "instituted a web site for members only called 'Justice Insider' where AAJ could communicate with members." The site would highlight a race and "rotated who was highlighted every day in hopes of spreading the money around." AAJ reports raising "a lot of money this way in all six House races" in our study. Overall about forty candidates were on the list. AAJ raised \$800,000 in three weeks through this mechanism,<sup>121</sup> and, as noted, was also active in Senate races. In Ohio, for example, they spent \$1 million, with \$200,000 directed to the minimum wage ballot initiative.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Elizabeth Shipp, political director, NARAL Pro-Choice America, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2006.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas E. Mann, "Lessons for Reformers," *Financing the 2004 Election* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 248-249.

<sup>118</sup> Bill Miller, vice president, public affairs and national political director, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., July 18, 2006; the number was given again in Miller, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>119</sup> Miller, interview, July 18, 2006.

<sup>120</sup> Ben Ginsberg, Republican Party lawyer, interview by David Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., September 21, 2006.

<sup>121</sup> Linda Lipson, legislative liaison, American Association for Justice, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and Nisha Riggs, November 17, 2006.

<sup>122</sup> Lipson, telephone interview, November 17, 2006.

As lengthy as this list of 527 and 501(c) organizations is, it is the case that none of them came close to the size and impact of the groups active in 2004: America Votes, ACT, Media Fund, Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (SBVT), and Progress for America. A frequent theme of our interviews was how hard it was to raise money for these groups in 2006. Harold Ickes, who has been a leader in this effort in 2004 and 2006, related that he anticipated it would be relatively easy to raise the \$20 million for September Fund in 2006. He employed two full-time fundraisers to help him raise money. He describes the task of raising the money as “brutal.” Among those not contributing were Soros, Peter Lewis, Steven Bing, and Herbert and Marion Sandler. Ickes ended up raising just under \$7 million from other sources.<sup>123</sup>

## Expenditures

The two most longstanding ways party committees spent money on congressional campaigns is by making contributions to candidates, which in 2006 were limited to a maximum of \$5,000,<sup>124</sup> or in spending money in a way that is coordinated with the candidates called coordinated expenditures. The amount a party can spend on this activity varies; limits vary by state for the Senate and by type of House seat. Table 1-4 provides the party contributions to federal candidates by party committee since 1994. At one point most candidates expected their committee to provide the maximum allowable. But as party committees have targeted more of their money on the competitive contests, the amount expended on contributions and coordinated expenditures dropped substantially. The NRSC, for example, spent half as much on candidate contributions in the years between 1998 and 2002 as it had before then. In 2006 the DSCC and DCCC contributed in the aggregate more than the NRSC and NRCC. As table 1-5 shows party coordinated expenditures also dropped as soft money became more important during the period between 1998 and 2002. On this dimension there was very little difference between the DCCC and NRCC, and the NRSC expended more in this way than the DSCC. But, this activity in 2006 pales in comparison to what the party committees spent in independent expenditures.

Before 1996, parties were not permitted to make independent expenditures. The NRSC challenged the prohibition, and the Supreme Court ruled that parties may make independent expenditures.<sup>125</sup> A central component of party committee strategy in the soft money days before BCRA was to target soft money expenditures in large amounts into a relatively small number of competitive congressional districts. In some instances the spending was extraordinary. In the California Twenty-seventh District in 2000 the parties spent approximately \$5.5 million, outside groups another \$2 million and the candidates \$11.5 million for a total of \$19 million.<sup>126</sup> While the amounts allocated to particular races fall below what was allocated in the soft money days, the party committees continue to target substantial resources into the most competitive contests, but now they are targeting hard dollars and the mode of expenditure is independent expenditures. As FEC commissioner Michael Toner said, “Basically what these political parties are looking to do is replace the old soft money issue advertising with hard money independent expenditures . . . the only limit is the amount of hard money they can raise.”<sup>127</sup> In 2006 the congressional

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<sup>123</sup> Harold Ickes, founder, September Fund, and partner, Ickes & Enright, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, November 13, 2006.

<sup>124</sup> There are some exceptions. Party committees may give more to Senate candidates, for example. See Trevor Potter, “The Current State of Campaign Finance Law,” *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*, ed. Anthony Corrado, Thomas E. Mann, Daniel R. Ortiz, and Trevor Potter (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 51 and 53.

<sup>125</sup> *Colorado Federal Campaign Committee et al. v. Federal Election Commission*, 518 U.S. 604 (1996).

<sup>126</sup> Drew Linzer and David Menefee-Libey, “Opening the Floodgate: Campaigning Without Scarcity in the 2000 California 27<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Race,” *The Other Campaign*, ed. David B. Magleby (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), p. 149.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Toner, 2006 chairman and commissioner, Federal Election Commission, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., August 9, 2006.

campaign committees took independent expenditures to unprecedented highs (see figure 1-10). In the aggregate the DCCC and DSCC spent over \$105 million in independent expenditure, and the NRCC and NRSC were not far behind at \$101 million (see table 1-6). For the Democrats the DNC did not make independent expenditures and in fact had a deficit in this area, while the RNC spent \$14 million independently, targeting specific races. The RNC involvement thus gave all GOP committees combined about a \$10 million advantage in independent expenditures in 2006.

As recently as 2002, congressional campaign committees on both sides spent in the aggregate under \$1.2 million independently. In 2004, that rose to \$54 million for the DSCC and DCCC and to \$67 million for the NRSC and NRCC. But the surge in party independent expenditures was not present in all party congressional committees. The NRSC, for example, spent slightly less in independent expenditures in 2006 than in 2004. In contrast the DSCC, which was at near parity with the NRSC in 2004, spent more than twice as much independently in 2006. Independent expenditures by the DCCC also more than doubled between 2004 and 2006. For the NRCC the growth was not quite this much.

In the contests included in this monograph, the party independent expenditures, with one exception on the House side, were substantial, and they were in two of the four Senate contests we monitored. (see table 1-7) The DSCC significantly outspent the NRSC in Montana Senate (\$4.5 million compared to \$1.1 million), and in Ohio the same would have been true had the RNC not spent \$3.2 million allowing the GOP to match the DSCC at \$6.2 million.<sup>128</sup>

All of the House races in this monograph, with the exception of the Ohio Thirteenth District, saw significant independent expenditures. However, in the Indiana Ninth, New Mexico First, and Ohio Fifteenth Districts the independent expenditures were within \$150,000 of each other. In the Colorado Seventh District the DCCC outspent the NRCC, and in the Minnesota Sixth, Ohio Eighteenth, and Pennsylvania Sixth Districts, the NRCC outspent the DCCC, but both parties were heavily involved.

What difference did the party independent expenditures make in 2006? Guy Cecil, DSCC political director stated that “independent expenditures leveled the playing field. [Republican] incumbent advantages in fundraising were a challenge for us. We spent our independent expenditures mostly on television.” Cecil continues, “independent expenditures allows two or three tracks of television to run, one by candidates, one by the party, and one by groups.”<sup>129</sup> In the case of the Missouri DSCC independent expenditure, it was substantial at \$12 million.<sup>130</sup> In Montana the party was “up on TV for over a year,”<sup>131</sup> and spent a total of \$3.8 million on television.<sup>132</sup> The executive director of the opposing congressional campaign committee, the NRSC, praised the DSCC independent expenditures in 2006. Mark Stephens said “the DSCC independent expenditures had simple messages. They were smart to keep it simple. If it gets complicated, IE will screw it up. Discipline is important here.”<sup>133</sup> The NRSC spent \$1 million independently against Tester in Montana to “try and define Tester in tax and spend terms. We did not see a bump for Burns.”<sup>134</sup> This was part of a pattern observed by NRSC’s Stephens. Speaking of his party’s independent expenditures in Missouri and Ohio, he stated, “People saw the message, believed the message, but said, ‘I don’t care.’”<sup>135</sup> For party committees, as for interest groups, independent

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<sup>128</sup> Federal Election Commission, “2006 Independent Expenditure Summaries - Reports Received at the FEC Through Approximately 7 p.m. November 8, 2006,” data release, November 2006. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006iesummaries.html>>, 18 January 2007.

<sup>129</sup> Cecil, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Guy Cecil, personal email communication with author, January 17, 2007.

<sup>133</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

expenditures can be shifted as campaign dynamics change. The DSCC was able to shift independent expenditure money once planned for Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Ohio to Arizona, New Jersey and Virginia.<sup>136</sup> In an unusual move the RNC stepped in and made its own independent expenditures in Senate races in Ohio, Missouri, and Tennessee.<sup>137</sup>

Both parties had similar voters in the cross hairs of their respective targeting efforts. Whether they were called “medium propensity voters,” as the Republicans labeled them, or “drop-off” voters, as the Democrats and their allies labeled them, they were the voters who tend to vote in presidential years but became less likely to vote in midterm years. Cathy Duvall of the Sierra Club said that her organization defined drop-off voters as “people who voted in 2004 and didn’t vote in 2002.”<sup>138</sup> This appears to have been the common definition used by the party committees and a wide range of interest groups. Research done by Women’s Voices. Women Vote. found that the overall drop-off rate among female voters is 20 percent, for married women it is 18 percent and for unmarried women it is 24 percent. This is an example of how a key variable like this can influence microtargeting strategies.<sup>139</sup>

Republicans focused some attention on high propensity voters, giving them two contacts in battleground states in 2006, while contacting mid-propensity voters seven to ten times.<sup>140</sup> Republicans tout the success of their 2006 efforts, pointing to a net gain in registration nationally and that in the nineteen districts decided by 5,000 votes or less the GOP won thirteen.<sup>141</sup> Multiple observers agree that Republican voter mobilization was important in such races as the Ohio Fifteenth and Pennsylvania Sixth Districts. EMILY’s List’s Hesla stated that Democrats in the Ohio Fifteenth District “just got swamped in the last 72 hours, Pryce had a ton of people on the ground.”<sup>142</sup> One criticism of the big push in voter mobilization in the final days of the campaign is it misses the large numbers of people now casting ballots before that period by absentee or early voting. Bernadette Budde summarizes the argument, “72 hours is way too late to be doing this.... [You] need a longer sale period.”<sup>143</sup>

Competitive races in 2006 had similarly high amounts of mail in 2006 as they saw in 2004 and 2002. Another indicator of sustained activity in 2006 comes from one of the leading direct mail vendors, Dan Hazelwood of Targeted Creative Communications. Hazelwood reports doing more mail in 2006 than in 2004: “In 2000 the average targeted campaign had about \$200,000-\$250,000 spent on mail. That rose to \$300,000 in 2004 and stayed at \$300,000 in 2006. Independent expenditure mail rose on average from \$200,000 a race in 2000 and 2002 to \$300,000 in 2006.”<sup>144</sup>

### **Allied Efforts**

Major 527 groups from 2004 that continued to spend high amounts in 2006 include SEIU, AFSCME, America Votes, Club for Growth, and Progress for America. Other groups that ramped up their efforts from 2004 to join the top spenders in 2006 include EMILY’s List, International Brotherhood of Electrical

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<sup>136</sup> Cecil, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>137</sup> Cook, Walter, and Duffy, interview, November 21, 2006.

<sup>138</sup> Duvall, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>139</sup> Page Gardner, president, Women’s Voices Women Vote, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., October 11, 2006.

<sup>140</sup> Adrian Gray, director of strategic information, Republican National Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>141</sup> Gray, interview.

<sup>142</sup> Maren Hesla, voter outreach manager, EMILY’s List, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>143</sup> Budde, interview, November 13, 2006.

<sup>144</sup> Dan Hazelwood, president, Targeted Creative Communications, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 13, 2006.

Workers, and the newly formed Economic Freedom Fund. In 2006 the largest 527 in expenditures was the Service Employees International Union at \$27.7 million. A list of the largest federal 527 organizations active in the 2006 election cycle organized by their party alliances is found in table 1-8.

While the activity of these groups is substantial in the aggregate, spending by 527 organizations decreased in 2006. Overall, 527 spending decreased by \$260.7 million between 2004 and 2006. Federal 527s spent \$478.8 million in 2004; that figure dropped to \$218.2 million in 2006.<sup>145</sup> A number of prominent 527s from 2004 significantly reduced their spending in 2006. For example, ACT spent \$76,270,931 in the 2004 elections, but the Committee spent far less (\$6,997,999) in the 2006 midterm elections. A major Republican ally in 2004, the Progress for America Voter Fund spent \$35,437,204 in the 2004 elections, and in 2006 they spent \$12,383,561.<sup>146</sup>

Those who fund 527 organizations generated controversy in 2004 as some individuals invested a lot in them. In 2004 on the Democratic side, George Soros (\$23,450,000), Peter Lewis (\$22,997,220), Steven Bing (\$13,852,031), and Herb and Marion Sandler (\$13,008,459) all gave more than 2006's largest individual donor, Bill Perry (\$9,750,000).<sup>147</sup> Perry gives to GOP-allied groups as does Jerry Perenchio, who gave \$5 million to Progress for America, a GOP-leaning 527, in 2006. In 2006, only Soros and Lewis remained among the top givers. Soros decreased his 527 giving by nearly \$20 million. Table 1-9 lists the top 25 individual contributors to 527 organizations in 2006 and the organizations to which they gave. Explanations for donors' decrease vary. Erik Smith of the September Fund offered the explanation that 2004's big donors saw themselves as a temporary solution to "fill the breach" for one cycle until the Democratic Party adapted to new BCRA regulations.<sup>148</sup> Beth Shipp of NARAL put it more bluntly, "[Big donors] thought that they put a lot of money into things that just didn't work."<sup>149</sup> So they stopped giving. Shipp also pointed to the Democracy Alliance's capturing funds that might have otherwise gone to 527s. Whatever the reason, in 2006 527s were not the resource-rich dreadnaughts they were in 2004; however, they still remained formidable foes and allies.

One longstanding activity by interest groups left untouched by BCRA was independent expenditures. Groups may spend unlimited amounts for or against candidates as long as those expenditures are not "coordinated with any candidate or campaign committee."<sup>150</sup> In 2004 independent expenditures reached \$35.5 million, up from \$20.3 million in 2002.<sup>151</sup> In 2006, independent expenditures nearly rivaled in total amount what was spent in 2004 even though there was not a presidential election in 2006. Table 1-10 provides the independent expenditures by the top twenty-seven groups in total expenditures.

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<sup>145</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, "Total 527 Receipts and Expenditures, 2005-2006," *OpenSecrets.org*, January 9, 2007. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/index.asp?cycle=2006>>, 19 January 2007. and Center for Responsive Politics, "Total 527 Receipts and Expenditures, 2003-2004," *OpenSecrets.org*, January 9, 2007. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/index.asp?cycle=2004>>, 19 January 2007.

<sup>146</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, "527 Committee Activity - Top 50 Federally Focused Organizations," *OpenSecrets.org*, January 9, 2007. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527cmtes.asp?level=C&cycle=2006>>, 20 January 2007.

<sup>147</sup> David B. Magleby, "Change and Continuity in the Financing of Federal Elections," in *Financing the 2004 Elections*, ed. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>148</sup> Smith, interview.

<sup>149</sup> Shipp, interview.

<sup>150</sup> Trevor Potter and Kirk L. Jowers, "Speech Governed by Federal Election Laws," in *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*, ed. Anthony Corrado, Thomas E. Mann, Daniel R. Ortiz, and Trevor Potter (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 219.

<sup>151</sup> From data in David B. Magleby and Jonathan Tanner, "Interest-Group Electioneering in the 2002 Congressional Elections," in *The Last Hurrah: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections*, ed. David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 67.

Outside groups who spent money largely in support of Democratic candidates or against Republican candidates included the September Fund (group launched by Harold Ickes to provide money to purchase ads to counter Republican fundraising advantages), Majority Action (group that focused on House races), Campaign Money Watch (group that highlighted campaign contribution and corruption issues), Fresh Start America (group that focused on Senate races), Change for America Now (Montana group identified with Governor Schweitzer), Change America Now (a group affiliated with USAction), Women's Voices. Women Vote. (an organization that targets unmarried women for voter mobilization and registration), Vote Vets (an organization founded by Iraq war veterans to oppose the president's Iraq policies and put like-minded veterans in Congress). Outside groups who spent money largely in support of Republican candidates or against Democratic candidates included Americans for Job Security, Economic Freedom Fund, and Americans for Honesty on Issues.

Groups allied with both parties make substantial independent expenditures. Some groups prefer to spend money on congressional elections through independent expenditures. One group that makes extensive use of independent expenditures is EMILY's List. In four of the races included in this monograph, EMILY's List spent \$250,000 each, and in the Missouri Senate race and Michigan Governor's race, it spent \$1 million each. How it spent the money varied by contest. In the Minnesota Sixth District it focused on "persuadable Klobuchar voters to get them to vote for Wetterling and emphasized Wetterling's positives." In the New Mexico First District, EMILY's List emphasized early voters and did seven unique mail pieces. In the Ohio Fifteenth District, it used microtargeting of persuadable voters as it did in the Pennsylvania Sixth District. The targets in the Pennsylvania Sixth District included Republican women who supported Rendell and were pro-choice. Those who declined to state their party and supported Rendell were also targeted.<sup>152</sup> These examples show how one major interest group adapted its strategy to the different environments.

Yet another way groups seek to influence elections is through 501(c) organizations. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce spent a record \$20 million on the 2006 campaign, up from \$3 or \$4 million in 2004 and 2002.<sup>153</sup> One of its new tactics this year included a bus that made a twelve-state trek to register voters and engage the business community. The scale of the Chamber's campaign was massive with 413 unique pieces of mail sent to 13.5 million people and 12.5 million phone calls made. The budget for television and mail/phone were each about \$10 million. The scale of the Chamber's campaign grew five-fold between 2004 and 2006.<sup>154</sup>

An example of how interest groups can focus on particular races is found in the New Mexico First Congressional District where Republican incumbent Heather Wilson was challenged by Democratic state Attorney General Patricia Madrid. As Bill Miller of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said,

We spent more money in that race because that was a clear demarcation of good and evil in my mind. Patsy Madrid is a tool of the trial bar and she is a hostile anti-corporate interest attorney general who wants to come to Congress. We're going to spend a lot of money to make sure she doesn't get there. We ran TV there. We had people on the ground there. We sent tons of mail down there. We labeled Patsy Madrid for what she was, which was a tool of the trial bar and hostile to the interests of the corporate community.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Hesla, interview.

<sup>153</sup> Miller, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

Americans for Job Security is a long standing 501(c) organization. J.B. Poersch, executive director of the DSCC, estimated that Americans for Job Security had spent \$3 million in Pennsylvania alone, and “nobody knows where their money comes from.”<sup>156</sup> The Center for Responsive Politics describes Americans for Job Security as follows, “A pro-Republican, pro-business organization, Virginia-based [Americans for Job Security] was established to directly counter labor's influence. It has run issue ads in key states for four cycles, and projected expanded activity in 2004. Its ads support ‘pro-market, pro-paycheck issues and candidates.’”<sup>157</sup> Because it only has limited disclosure requirements, little more is known about this group.

There appeared in 2006 to be a proliferation of smaller 527 organizations. An example on the Democratic side is Campaign Money Watch, which is a 527 organization connected to Public Campaign Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization. Campaign Money Watch spent money largely on cable television in places like the Montana Senate and Ohio Fifteenth District races. In Ohio, it spent fairly early with \$125,000 on cable television in Columbus against Deborah Pryce, and in Montana they spent \$235,000 in total with \$125,000 in the last week. In Montana “their goal was to shape the corruption issue more broadly than [Burns had with] Abramoff.”<sup>158</sup> On the Republican side there were new 527 organizations active in several races, with two more prominent ones funded by Texas homebuilder Bob Perry, who was a major funder of SBVT in 2004. Perry almost single-handedly financed Americans for Honesty on Issues and the Economic Freedom Fund. The Economic Freedom Fund, according to its website, sent direct mail in at least the West Virginia First, Georgia Third, Georgia Twelfth, Iowa Third, Oregon Fifth, Colorado Seventh, Idaho First, and Nevada Third districts. It also ran television ads in West Virginia, Georgia, and Iowa, as well as radio in Georgia and Iowa.<sup>159</sup> Americans for Honesty on Issues campaigned in at least nine House races against Democratic candidates “from North Carolina to Arizona.”<sup>160</sup> Both groups attacked Democratic candidates for raising taxes, being soft on illegal immigration, not supporting our troops, and being liberals too extreme for their districts.

PACs varied little from their typical strategies, giving mostly to incumbents. However, a few PACs adjusted their strategies as this cycle’s contours unfolded. Foreseeing the looming possibility of heavy Republican losses, some groups, especially business groups, shifted to give more money to Democrats while still supporting a number of Republicans. BIPAC took a different approach to the cycle. It gave money to considerably fewer candidates than it has in the past. The group sensed a “tectonic shift” in the political environment and tried to protect the interests of its members should a new Democratic majority control the 110th Congress. Bernadette Budde of BIPAC said, “There were a lot of people we couldn’t save and some we shouldn’t save.”<sup>161</sup> Other business related PACs contributed about the same amount to candidates in 2006 as they had previously. Included in this group are the NFIB and the Associated Builders and Contractors.<sup>162</sup>

Several of the interest groups we interviewed increased the proportion of money they gave to Democrats. Sharon Wolff-Sussin of NFIB reported a three-fold increase in Democrats getting money from her

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<sup>156</sup> Poersch, interview.

<sup>157</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, “Americans for Job Security, 2006 Election Cycle,” OpenSecrets.org, 2006. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527events.asp?orgid=24>>, 20 January 2007.

<sup>158</sup> David Donnelly, director, Campaign Money Watch, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, Nisha Riggs, and John Baxter Oliphant, December 5, 2006.

<sup>159</sup> Economic Freedom Fund, “View Latest Ad,” *economicfreedomfund.com*. At <<http://www.economicfreedomfund.com/viewads.html>>, 19 January 2007.

<sup>160</sup> John Broder, “As Election Nears, Groups Plan Negative Ads,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2006, A24, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>161</sup> Budde, interview, November 13, 2006.

<sup>162</sup> Sharon Wolff Sussin, national political director, NFIB, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2006.

organization, twelve in 2006 compared to four before. Moreover, “NFIB stayed out of some races in 2006 where in past years we might have gotten involved.”<sup>163</sup> The Beer Wholesalers increased their support of Democrats by 36 percent.<sup>164</sup>

As we have argued in previous election cycles, competitive federal elections are a team sport or to use the analogy of war, an allied effort. Table 1-11 provides a summary of all campaign communications across all of the ten races monitored in 2006.

The 2006 data collected by the reconnaissance networks share many similarities with data gathered in previous cycles (For a discussion of our methodology, see appendix A). First, political parties rival, and in some cases surpass, the candidates for the amount of unique campaign pieces disseminated. In the sample, Democratic House candidates generated 192 unique ads and Democratic Senate candidates 138. National, state, and local Democratic parties contributed over 400 unique pieces. Republican House and Senate candidates in the sample sent out over 250 unique pieces while the national, state, and local arms of the Republican Party produced over 430 unique pieces (see table 1-11). The political parties, mainly the national organizations, continue to share a strong need to shoulder much of the burden for campaign activity.

Another similarity with previous cycles is that interest groups continue to display an impressive amount of activity in congressional elections. While no single interest group comes close to the overall amount of activity of a party or a candidate, the aggregate amount of activity from several interest groups produces notable results. In the aggregate, we found 642 unique campaign ads (mail, billboards, newspaper ads, etc.) in the contests we monitored in 2006. Of these, Democratic allies outperformed Republican allies about two to one (402 vs. 204). Furthermore, several national interest groups account for the bulk of the activity. In the races we monitored, the NEA and the Chamber of Commerce produced the most unique ads of any interest groups. Most of these unique ads came in the form of mail. These were followed closely by the LCV and The Seniors Coalition, both of whom also created more unique mail pieces than television ads.

It has become part of the dynamic in congressional elections for interest groups to pick sides and to stay with them. In previous cycles, labor groups worked for Democratic candidates and business worked for Republican candidates. Nothing on this score has changed. The total amount of unique ads generated by labor groups provides significant support to Democratic causes. The total amount of all activity for all of the labor groups amounts to at least 83 unique ads. Republican candidates receive even more support from aggregated business interests. Business allies for the Republicans communicated 88 unique ads, most of it in the form of mail.

BCRA established boundaries by which 527 groups could participate in the election cycle. These rules in some way encourage the formation of new groups in each election cycle to take advantage of distinctive issues and dynamics. For example, SBVT came into existence during the 2004 presidential cycle to raise concerns about Senator Kerry’s military record. Race-specific 527 organizations also formed to participate in congressional races. This trend continued in 2006. Groups designed to help the Democrats win control of Congress or to assist the Republicans in maintaining control sprung up in several of the races. One such group was Americans for Honesty on Issues, which participated in nine races<sup>165</sup> and spent

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Linda Auglis, political affairs director, and Craig Purser, president, National Beer Wholesalers Association, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 21, 2006.

<sup>165</sup> John Broder, “As Election Nears, Groups Plan Negative Ads,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2006, A24, <http://www.proquest.com>.

\$2.7 million.<sup>166</sup> Other groups in this list included Conservatives Against Bush, the September Fund, and Common Sense 2006.

It is difficult to judge in a real campaign environment the effectiveness of particular types of media. While television dominates the overall budgets of campaigns, elements of the ground war continue to play a significant role in the campaign strategies of the candidates, parties, and groups. The development of microtargeting provides any campaign with an opportunity to focus its message on a distinctive segment of the electorate. Furthermore, BCRA encourages groups and parties to engage in ground war activity because they can spend money they can not spend on television or radio in the sixty days before the election.<sup>167</sup>

### **The Air War**

Candidates and their political party and interest group allies have long made the air war a central component of their battle plan. Television and radio can reach broad audiences but also can be used to reach targeted audiences, especially on cable television and radio. Steve Rosenthal who helped direct the AFL-CIO ground efforts in 1998-2002, America Coming Together in 2004, and was a consultant in 2006 told us “you cannot just do broadcast TV and expect your candidate to win. You need to target [TV ad buys] carefully.”<sup>168</sup> Both sides of the air war have become more sophisticated in this targeting. It is also the case that in competitive battlegrounds in the past demand for air time exceeds supply and so the price of the air war escalates. That was again the case in 2006. Some groups reported large increases in the cost of advertising in states like Montana as Election Day approached.

Table 1-12, using data provided by the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG), compares total spending on television by House and Senate candidates as well as by outside groups in 2002, 2004, and 2006 (see table 1-12). Spending on television by House candidates in the aggregate in 2006 more than doubled what House candidates spent in 2002 and was substantially higher than 2004 as well. The same was true for Senate candidates, although the surge in spending on television was even greater for Senate candidates. Television spending by House party committees more than tripled between 2002 and 2006 and rose by \$70 million over 2004 (up from \$50 million in 2004 to \$120 million in 2006). Senate party committees also spent more in 2006 than in 2004 or 2002. Spending by groups in House and Senate races was also higher in 2006 than in 2002 or 2004 according to the CMAG data.

Looking at our sample of races in 2006 we see evidence of this surge in spending by candidates, political parties and groups (see table 1-13). There was near parity between Democratic and Republican candidates and their allies in our sample races, with Republican candidates and party committees generally outspending the Democrats. Interest groups allied with Republicans also in the aggregate spent more than groups allied with Democrats. Eight groups allied with the GOP spent \$500,000 or more in our races as estimated by CMAG or from data academics gathered from stations. No groups allied with the Democrats reached this threshold in our races.

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<sup>166</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, "527 Committee Activity," *OpenSecrets.org*, based on IRS data as of January 9, 2007. At <<http://opensecrets.org/527s/527cmtes.asp?level=C&cycle=2006>>, 18 January 2007.

<sup>167</sup> David B. Magleby, "Change and Continuity in the Financing of Federal Elections," in *Financing the 2004 Election*, ed. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 19.

<sup>168</sup> Steve Rosenthal, president, The Organizing Group, telephone interview by David B. Magleby, Nisha Riggs, and John Baxter Oliphant, July 13, 2006.

The RNC according to NRSC's Mark Stephens "wanted to get into the messaging in Senate races" in Ohio, Missouri and Tennessee in 2006.<sup>169</sup> The RNC spent independently, using the same vendors as the NRSC. One of the big spending GOP allies was the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who reported spending \$10 million on television.<sup>170</sup> Democratic allies included labor unions and 527s, including the September Fund, which spent \$5.5 million on television.<sup>171</sup>

### **Escalation of the Ground War**

The party apparatus on the right has recently had the advantage over the left in terms of microtargeting. Democrats have relied more on allied interest groups to keep up with voter registration and mobilization. The RNC has done such a good job of it that there are few conservative interest groups involved in mobilization to the same extent that groups on the left are involved. On the other hand, this effort has been done on the left by progressive interest groups like the AFL-CIO and pro-choice and environmental interests groups. With the creation of America Votes in 2004, the progressive groups have steadily centralized their efforts and were able to deploy a much more sophisticated strategy in 2006. Both sides have increased the size and abilities of their databases. Because get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts played such an important role in the 2000, 2002, and 2004 election cycles, many projected that GOTV efforts would again influence the 2006 midterm elections. As the elections neared, it appeared that the Republicans' well-oiled GOTV machine was again expected to express its political prowess by turning out Republican voters on Election Day. What GOTV efforts would yield on the Democratic side seemed much less clear as the cycle unfolded.

Both parties funded voter registration and GOTV with soft money until 2004. The Democrats were especially soft money dependent in their voter mobilization efforts. As discussed below, the BCRA ban of soft money prompted some Democratic donors to fund voter registration and voter mobilization by interest groups in 2004.

The Republican Party retained its voter registration and mobilization activities as parts of the Republican National Committee, and after passage of BCRA, funded these programs with hard money.<sup>172</sup> The Republicans made no secret of their plan to again fund the 72 Hour Program for voter registration and mobilization with hard money and through the RNC. The GOP effort is now more accurately referred to as "96 Hours" or in the words of one person a "72 week task force."<sup>173</sup> The difference between the parties in how they organize the ground operation is interesting. NRSC executive director Mark Stephens puts it as follows: "The NRSC never turns out the vote. We turn to the RNC to do that. It would be silly for us to spend resources on something they have down."<sup>174</sup>

A major unanswered question for much of the 2006 election cycle was who would do the Democratic Party voter mobilization. Howard Dean's lack of emphasis on the ground war in competitive districts frustrated House and Senate party committee leaders. Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) criticized Dean for not spending enough money on GOTV efforts in competitive races.<sup>175</sup> Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) complained that the GOP "is pouring tens of millions of dollars into races, and we're not

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<sup>169</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>170</sup> Miller, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>171</sup> Smith, interview.

<sup>172</sup> See David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, "Introduction," in *Dancing Without Partners: How Candidates, Parties, and Interest Groups Interact in the Presidential Campaign*, ed. David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 21-23.

<sup>173</sup> Gray, interview.

<sup>174</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>175</sup> VandeHei, "Democrats Scrambling to Organize Voter Turnout."

matching that.”<sup>176</sup> In the 2004 cycle the DNC had built large scale data files for fundraising and mobilization. The fundraising dataset was called “Demzilla” and the voter file was called “Data Mart.” Most appear to agree that the fundraising list was valuable, but Howard Dean and his new leadership at the DNC waited until less than a year before the 2006 election to launch a new voter file project. Critics of the old DNC voter file say it lacked phone numbers for voters in many cases and addresses were also not consistently accurate. The DSCC and DCCC stepped up their voter mobilization in the face of DNC inactivity. The interpersonal tension between the two campaign committees and their chairs and the DNC and Howard Dean became public. Near the end of the election cycle, the DNC pledged \$12 million for voter mobilization efforts, and \$2.4 million for competitive races to the DCCC and roughly \$5 million to the DSCC. The resolution of this internal squabble was reportedly negotiated by Representative James Clyburn.<sup>177</sup> But the core Democratic voter mobilization work was not done by the DNC in 2006. The distrust of the DNC was evident in a statement made by Karin Johanson: “It will be a long time before the DCCC or DSCC cedes management of the field to the DNC.”<sup>178</sup>

Defenders of the DNC are quick to point to the “50-State Strategy” of Chairman Dean as an example of a fully deployed field operation. Wes Boyd, co-founder and president of MoveOn, said, “[MoveOn’s a] big supporter of the DNC’s approach to building a party and actually having people on the ground everywhere.... You cannot have a party unless you have presence everywhere. You cannot have a movement unless you have presence everywhere.”<sup>179</sup> Pam Womack, political director at the DNC, pointed to the presence of a DNC-funded field operative in Minnesota for 1.5 years as evidence of the committee’s commitment to voter mobilization. Moreover, she claimed the DNC put more money into campaigns than ever before in a midterm cycle.<sup>180</sup> There is some evidence that the 50-State Strategy worked. Districts with DNC field organizers received a higher share of Democratic votes.<sup>181</sup>

In part because of the concern about a lack of a DNC ground war, the DSCC also expended substantial amounts on “field operations.” The DSCC’s Guy Cecil reported that his committee spent \$27 million on field operations with \$5 million on the ground in Missouri Senate, \$3 million on field operation in Montana, \$2.4 million on the ground in Ohio, and \$1.5 million on the ground in Pennsylvania.<sup>182</sup> The DSCC ground operation in Montana is revealing because Montana, like Missouri, does not have party registration, and so the party must gather that information on voters through expensive canvas operations. The DSCC effort lasted more than a year, built a data file on the candidate and issue preferences of 230,000 Montana voters, and identified targets for GOTV efforts. The party made personal contacts at homes, on the phone, and through the mail. The party flew in fifteen people to assist the large number of Montana volunteers in this effort. DSCC political director Cecil had “no doubt that the field made the difference.”<sup>183</sup>

The DCCC field had an \$11 million budget and was run by teams of experienced people.<sup>184</sup> Evidence of the seriousness of the DCCC effort was their retaining Michael Whouley, field director for Clinton’s first presidential run, to direct their field operations. The DCCC spent about \$300,000 per race on field

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<sup>176</sup> Allen and Carney, “The GOP’s Secret Weapon.”

<sup>177</sup> “Dean, Emanuel Reach Deal,” The Hotline, September 12, 2006. At <[http://hotlineblog.nationaljournal.com/archives/2006/09/post\\_65.html](http://hotlineblog.nationaljournal.com/archives/2006/09/post_65.html)>, 18 January 2006.

<sup>178</sup> Johanson and Lapp, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>179</sup> Boyd, telephone interview.

<sup>180</sup> Pam Womack, political director, Democratic National Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., December 1, 2006.

<sup>181</sup> Elaine C. Karmack, “Assessing Howard Dean’s Fifty State Strategy and the 2006 Midterm Elections,” *The Forum*, Volume 4, Issue 3, article 5, 2006. At <<http://www.bepress.com/forum/>>, 19 January 2007.

<sup>182</sup> Cecil, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Johanson and Lapp, interview, November 14, 2006.

operations in each of the six House races examined in this monograph.<sup>185</sup> The DCCC used microtargeting and found it “most important in places where there’s no party ID.”<sup>186</sup> Mike Lux of Progressive Strategies saw getting Michael Whouley and giving him \$10 million as a masterstroke by Emanuel. Lux contended that if the DCCC had been given \$20 million by the DNC an additional five to ten seats would have gone Democratic.<sup>187</sup>

Despite criticism, however, Dean had a plan for the Democrats’ GOTV efforts. In August, Dean asked Democratic donors for \$25 a month to fund nationwide GOTV efforts stating, “We’ve got a big secret...and it is going to help us win.”<sup>188</sup> Despite further criticism that “a last minute, throw-money-at-it approach does not solve the fundamental failure to organize,” the Democratic Party’s homepage had a link that allowed readers to follow what the Democratic Party is doing to get out the vote in all fifty states.<sup>189</sup>

Mike DuHaime, who oversaw the RNC 72 Hour Task Force in 2006, reports that in total the GOP effort “spent \$30 million” in GOTV efforts. The RNC reported expenditure thus was lower than the combined reported expenditures by the DSCC and DCCC at \$38 million. The 2006 GOP 72 Hour Task Force “had 35 million live calls and door knocks with one-third of that (13 million) in the last 96 hours, more calls and door knocks than in 2004. In 2004, [72 Hour Task Force made] 19 million live calls and door knocks with 16 million in last 96 hours.”<sup>190</sup> The 72 Hour Task Force was active in twice as many target states in 2006 (thirty-five) as in 2004. But only eleven of the thirty-five states in the 2006 program had statewide efforts.<sup>191</sup>

### Interest Group Ground War

The biggest change in the interest group landscape in 2006 was the absence of ACT, which had mounted an unprecedented voter registration and mobilization effort in 2004. In Ohio alone, ACT opened fifteen offices, employing paid and volunteer canvassers who knocked on 3.7 million doors, had 1.1 million conversations, and registered 85,000 new voters.<sup>192</sup> Given the heavy investment in ACT in 2003–04 its discontinuance surprised political operatives. As noted, the reasons for its demise were that those who funded it were “unhappy. They withdrew.”<sup>193</sup> Working closely with America Votes, which helped allied Democratic-leaning interest groups coordinate polling, voter registration, and get out the vote efforts, ACT expended an estimated \$78,040,480 in 2004.<sup>194</sup> The understood objective of America Votes and ACT was to fill the gap in voter registration and mobilization created by BCRA’s soft money ban. Jim Jordan, who was at the DSCC during the last hurrah of soft money in 2002 and at ACT in 2004, told us,

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Lux, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>188</sup> VandeHei, “Democrats Scrambling to Organize Voter Turnout.”

<sup>189</sup> VandeHei, “Democrats Scrambling to Organize Voter Turnout.” See also <[http://www.democrats.org/a/party/a\\_50\\_state\\_strategy/50\\_state\\_turnout/](http://www.democrats.org/a/party/a_50_state_strategy/50_state_turnout/)>, 17 January 2007.

<sup>190</sup> DuHaime, telephone interview, November 21, 2006.

<sup>191</sup> Statewide efforts in 2006 were RI, NJ, PA, OH, TN, FL, MO, MT, AZ, HA, and MI. DuHaime, telephone interview, November 21, 2006.

<sup>192</sup> David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson. “Dancing Without Partners: How Candidates, Parties and Interest Groups Interact in the New Campaign Finance Environment,” *Dancing Without Partners: How Candidates, Parties and Interest Groups Interact in the New Campaign Finance Environment*. (CSED: Brigham Young University, 2004), p. 28.

<sup>193</sup> Simon Rosenberg, president, NDN, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., September 13, 2006.

<sup>194</sup> Allan J. Cigler, “Interest Groups and Financing,” in *Financing the 2004 Election*, eds. David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 229.

“the one place where McCain-Feingold [BCRA] is really being felt with a vengeance is that federal candidates can’t go in and raise big checks for turnout operations.”<sup>195</sup> In 2006, with the divisions in the Democratic Party and the reduced funding from donors on the left, there was widespread uncertainty among political professionals about who would fund the Democratic GOTV campaign in the absence of ACT and with a much less active America Votes.

An additional concern for progressives going into 2006 was how much activity labor unions would muster. Labor has always been a staunch ally of progressive causes. In 2006, progressives continued to place their faith in labor. However, following the 2004 election, a major rift in the labor movement resulted in several major unions, including SEIU, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, UNITE HERE, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, United Farmer Workers of America, and Laborer’s International Union of North America, leaving the AFL-CIO and forming a new labor federation named the Change to Win Coalition. The Change to Win Coalition included the Teamsters Union, which disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO in 2005. One reason for the division between the union confederations had to do with how much emphasis to put on recruiting new members versus other activities like trying to influence the outcome of elections and re-energizing the labor movement. Initially, it was not clear what impact this division would have on union involvement. Union activity, especially voter mobilization, has long been seen as important in elections. The 1998 project talked about the importance of the union efforts in that midterm. The results showed that “Labor spent approximately \$18 million on the ground war in what has been called the ‘best kept secret’ of the 1998 election. Labor coordinated a state/national get-out-the-vote (GOTV), including over 13 million targeted members.”<sup>196</sup> Republican strategists Karl Rove and Matthew Dowd were quick to praise the success of labor in mobilizing voters in the 2000 election. Dowd said, “I have to give the Democrats a lot of credit for what they did in the final four days – what they did among African Americans and union members...these groups exceeded the normal percentage they contribute on Election Day. They did an unbelievable job. Turnout was part of the reason this race went from one we thought we were going to win by 3 points a week out to one that was roughly even.”<sup>197</sup>

All indications are that the AFL-CIO and Change to Win division did not lessen the overall labor union involvement in the 2006 midterm election, rather it might have expanded it. The AFL-CIO spent \$40 million on its program in 2006. This was \$5 million more than it spent in 2002 according to Mike Podhorzer, deputy director of the AFL-CIO’s political department.<sup>198</sup> Mike Lux of Progressive Strategies tallies the aggregate union effort of the AFL-CIO, Change to Win, and NEA as “more than in any earlier year.”<sup>199</sup> Change to Win, which initially had planned to focus primarily on state and local races, invested heavily. The mechanism unions created to manage the joint efforts of AFL-CIO and Change to Win was the National Labor Coordinating Council.<sup>200</sup> Political professionals on both sides see the labor involvement in 2006 as not diminished over the past and quite effective. There is some evidence that it was greater than expected. The fact that the AFL-CIO spent the same in 2006 as it did in 2004, despite reduced membership as a result of the Change to Win unions leaving, is one indicator. Including the Teamsters under the National Labor Coordinating Council is another. Greg Tarpinian, executive director

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<sup>195</sup> Jim Jordan, communications consultant, Fresh Start America, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., August 9, 2006.

<sup>196</sup> David B. Magleby, “Interest-Group Election Ads,” in *Outside Money*, David B. Magleby ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 50.

<sup>197</sup> Matthew Dowd, qtd. in *Electing the President 2000: The Insider’s View*, ed. Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Paul Waldman, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 23.

<sup>198</sup> Podhorzer, telephone interview, November 22, 2006.

<sup>199</sup> Lux, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>200</sup> This council was comprised of John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO, Anna Berger of SEIU, Edgar Romney of UNITE HERE and Gerald McEntree of AFSCME.

of Change to Win, points to Pennsylvania as a place where the Teamsters were particularly active.<sup>201</sup> In some states like Montana, Minnesota, and New York the NEA joined with Change to Win and AFL-CIO. Dennis Friel of the NEA identified Minnesota as a place where “labor walks” included all unions, including the NEA.<sup>202</sup> Direct mail consultant Hal Malchow did labor mail in 2006, and he reports no reduction in activity over previous cycles. The AFL’s Podhorzer reports his federation spent more on mail and made significant strides in microtargeting with the “mail more surgical and intense.”<sup>203</sup> The unions did both live and recorded telephone calls with the recorded calls personalized. Calls began with the typical, “This is (give name) from your union...” and followed with content that were as relevant as possible, for example, on the issue of pensions and the 2006 election. Change to Win also did ground operations in competitive federal elections, sometimes through the AFL-CIO, as in Pennsylvania, and sometimes on their own, as in Ohio.<sup>204</sup>

The new player in 2006 voter mobilization was Catalist, a corporation founded by Harold Ickes with shareholders who invested in the enterprise of building a large database for microtargeting purposes. Earlier in the 2005–06 cycle it was called Data Warehouse. Central to its operation were computer programmers and political professionals, including Mark Steitz (Copernicus Analytics), Ben Yuhas (Copernicus Analytics), Laura Quinn, and Lina Brunton (both of Catalist). The scope of Catalist’s involvement in 2006 was twenty-four states (with twenty-two to twenty-three getting serious use), fifty races, and more than eighty models.<sup>205</sup> There were nineteen clients of Catalist including the AFL-CIO, EMILY’s List, Planned Parenthood, Sierra Club, and LCV. By the end of the first quarter of 2007, Catalist will have all fifty states in the database.<sup>206</sup> Ickes states that he has raised “\$9 million for Catalist and needs \$7 million more.”<sup>207</sup>

Interest groups are often quick to claim success in mobilizing their voters as was the case in 2006 with organized labor, which found in its internal survey that 74 percent voted Democratic in 2006 compared to 70 percent in 2000 and 68 percent in 2002.<sup>208</sup> Union households held constant at 24 percent of the sample in exit polls, but with a diminishing share of the public unionized, the AFL-CIO’s Podhorzer saw that figure as a success.<sup>209</sup> Simon Rosenberg of NDN, a group which seeks to foster Hispanic political participation, pointed to an increase in Hispanic voters of one percent in the 2006 exit polls, up from 7 percent to 8 percent.<sup>210</sup>

### *Internal Communications*

Organizations may also communicate with their members about politics, and if the primary purpose of the communication is not about an election, the expenditure is not required to be reported to the Federal

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<sup>201</sup> Tarpinian, interview.

<sup>202</sup> Friel, telephone interview.

<sup>203</sup> Podhorzer, telephone interview, November 22, 2006.

<sup>204</sup> Tarpinian, interview.

<sup>205</sup> Mark Steitz, senior principal, and Ben Yuhas, chief scientist, Copernicus Analytics, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2006.

<sup>206</sup> Lina Brunton, director of data acquisition, and Laura Quinn, CEO, Catalist, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington D.C., November 13, 2006.

<sup>207</sup> Ickes, interview, November 13, 2006.

<sup>208</sup> Podhorzer, telephone interview, November 22, 2006.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Simon Rosenberg, president, NDN, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., December 1, 2006.

Election Commission (FEC).<sup>211</sup> As in past cycles, there is therefore reason to believe that a large proportion of the internal communications is not reported. Table 1-14 provides the internal communications reported in 2005–06. Reported internal communications declined from a total of over \$28.9 million (\$4.6 million on congressional candidates) in 2004<sup>212</sup> and \$10.7 million in 2002.<sup>213</sup> The level of internal communications in 2006, however, did not diminish to this extent, so it is probably safe to infer that groups determined they did not have to disclose their internal communications in 2006. Another possible explanation might be that the use of the Web is less expensive than mail and telephone, and thus groups are able to accomplish their internal communications purposes at lower cost.

The internal communications of labor unions, teachers associations, and business groups has grown in size and sophistication. BIPAC and the Chamber of Commerce have created innovative websites which include information on voter registration, voter registration forms for each state, and information on whether absentee or early voting is permitted and how to use these mechanisms to participate. BIPAC named its website the Prosperity Project and saw growth in 2006 by participating companies and associations of 169 percent over 2004 and a more than 100 percent increase in voter registration and early voting ballot downloads.<sup>214</sup>

Mail remains a staple of internal communications. The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), for example, sent mail to members in all ten of our sample races. Overall, the NFIB sent 2.2 million pieces of mail in 2006, more mail than they sent out in 2004. In 2006 the standard approach was three phone calls per member, up from two in 2004. Overall members got on average six pieces of mail, an early vote reminder call, an early vote postcard, a GOTV reminder call, and email communications. NFIB has 2 million email addresses and did a total of about 30 million messages.<sup>215</sup> The NEA also used mail extensively in 2006, sending as many as five mail pieces to NEA members.<sup>216</sup> The NEA has expanded its definition of members to include education support personnel (ESP) like bus drivers, school lunch workers, etc. Thad Daise of the NEA reports that the budget for internal communications at the NEA is \$7 million.<sup>217</sup> In a similar move to expand their “membership class,” the AFL-CIO created “Working America” as a group of non-union workers who agree to receive union communications. In 2006 there were 7.8 million AFL-CIO members, 4.6 million families of union members, and one million members of Working America.<sup>218</sup>

### *Ballot Initiative Use*

Democrats and their allies believe that ballot initiatives on same-sex marriage or other socially conservative topics have hurt them in past elections and have mounted a significant new strategy to foster progressive ballot initiatives to help mobilize their supporters. A group called the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center has been founded “to reinvigorate the initiative process among state and national

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<sup>211</sup> Trevor Potter, “The Current State of Campaign Finance Law,” *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*, ed. Anthony Corrado, Thomas E. Mann, Daniel R. Ortiz, and Trevor Potter (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 58.

<sup>212</sup> Kelly D. Patterson, “Spending in the 2004 Election,” in *Financing the 2004 Election*, David B. Magleby, Anthony Corrado, and Kelly D. Patterson, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 85.

<sup>213</sup> David B. Magleby and Jonathan Tanner, “Interest-Group Electioneering in the 2002 Congressional Elections,” in *The Last Hurrah: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections*, ed. David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 69.

<sup>214</sup> Budde, interview, November 13, 2006.

<sup>215</sup> Wolff Sussin, interview, November 15, 2006.

<sup>216</sup> Friel, telephone interview.

<sup>217</sup> Daise, interview.

<sup>218</sup> Podhorzer, telephone interview.

progressive organizations by providing education, training, and research.”<sup>219</sup> In 2006, progressives placed minimum wage initiatives on the ballot in six states. Some long-time fundraisers, like Harold Ickes, found raising money for ballot initiatives difficult.<sup>220</sup> But the shift to grassroots and ballot initiatives clearly reflected the desires of key groups and some major funders.<sup>221</sup> Mike Lux of Progressive Strategies sees the ballot initiatives as having been “really important.” Ironically the ballot initiative that generated the greatest attention nationally was the one on stem-cell research in Missouri where ads by Michael J. Fox and subsequent criticism of those ads by Rush Limbaugh helped make stem-cell research a more salient topic in Missouri and elsewhere.<sup>222</sup> Ironically, the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center had nothing to do with this measure. It was sponsored by “bio-tech Republicans.”<sup>223</sup>

### **The Battle Ahead: Looking toward 2008**

The 2006 congressional elections made history. It was only the fifth time since 1900 in which both chambers of Congress switched control in a midterm election. It also was unusual because the number of competitive races in the House of Representatives kept expanding as Election Day approached. Included in the list of competitive races were such unlikely districts as the Idaho First, Wyoming At-large, and Nevada Third districts. The expanded playing field had implications for party committees making independent expenditures and for interest groups as they faced strategic opportunities or challenges late in the cycle. The dynamic in the U.S. Senate was similar in that some races like the contest in Virginia that had not been thought to be competitive early on became competitive. In other cases, the party committees and interest groups retreated from races that had once been thought to be battlegrounds like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota to invest more in Montana, Missouri, Tennessee, or Virginia. This strategy as deployed by the NRSC was even called a “firewall” by some in “off the record” interviews.<sup>224</sup> In other cases, groups or parties shifted funds to advertise in the same media markets but for other races, as happened in Philadelphia with ads shifting to the New Jersey Senate race and in Ohio where the focus shifted from the Senate race and House contests like the Ohio Sixth District to Ohio congressional contests like the Fifteenth District.

#### *Candidates*

Despite their victories, House Democrats already face imminent challenges. House Republicans are likely to strongly challenge the 2006 class of Democratic freshmen in the 2008 elections. In districts where events such as scandal helped propel a Democrat to victory in 2006 despite a party advantage for the Republicans, the battle in 2008 is likely to be even more intense. But 2006 also exposed a set of potentially vulnerable Republicans who won by less than 55 percent of the vote and, depending on the

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<sup>219</sup> Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, “About Us,” At <[http://www.ballot.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={CBOEA67B-1DDB-4B66-A077-AA0943B0727D}](http://www.ballot.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={CBOEA67B-1DDB-4B66-A077-AA0943B0727D})>, 15 November 2006.

<sup>220</sup> Harold Ickes, founder, September Fund, interview by David B. Magleby and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 13, 2006.

<sup>221</sup> Smith, interview.

<sup>222</sup> Katherine Shaver, “A Star Says He Finds Validation in Public Interest on Stem Cells,” *The Washington Post*, November 3, 2006, B4. Zachary A. Goldfarb and David S. Broder, “This Time, Ballot Issues Could Rally Liberal Base; Wage Initiatives Seen As Favoring Democrats,” *The Washington Post*, October 28, 2006, A1.

<sup>223</sup> Kristina Wilfore, executive director, Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, interview by Kelly D. Patterson and Nisha Riggs, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>224</sup> David Espo, “Republicans Target 3 Senate Races,” *Associated Press*, 9 October 2006. At <<http://www.breitbart.com/news/2006/10/09/D8KCLR6G0.html>>, October 11, 2006.

<sup>225</sup> Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007. Figure includes IEs from the DSCC, DCCC, RNC, NRSC, and NRCC.

electoral climate in 2008, could be vulnerable again. Democrats will thus play defense to hold their majority, but they and their allies have a set of promising new targets that were exposed in the 2006 election.

The success of many unheralded candidates in the 2006 cycle as well as the ability of some groups to help propel them to viability will be a phenomenon that will be tested again in 2008. The success of John Tester in Montana Senate, and Jerry McNerney in the California Eleventh District are but two examples of candidates who entered the primaries as underdogs but ended up winning the primary and general elections.

This study of the 2006 cycle demonstrated, as many other studies have previously, that the quality of the candidates matters. The gaffes by Conrad Burns in Montana and George Allen in Virginia did their campaigns serious damage. With respect to candidate popularity, the absence of a primary can often help. In Minnesota Senate, for example, the success of group and party leaders in reducing the field by getting Wetterling to run for the House in Minnesota's Sixth District meant Klobuchar entered the general election with fewer negatives and more resources.

### *Party Committees*

Looking ahead, the razor thin party majority in the U.S. Senate will intensify the battle for control of that chamber in 2008. Candidate recruitment, minimizing retirements, and fundraising by candidates and party committees will all remain high priorities in 2007 and 2008. The expectations that members help by contributing to their party committee will likely continue at the DSCC, and we assume they will become more important at the NRSC.

A major change for Republicans going into 2008 will be the lessening of their fundraising advantage among PACs. As noted in this chapter, some PACs started to hedge their bets in 2006 by contributing more to Democrats than they had in recent election cycles. With Democrats in the majority, they are likely to increase their fundraising among PACs. Whether PAC pragmatism among business PACs reaches the level it did during the long period of Democratic control of Congress in one election cycle is unclear, but what had been a clear advantage for Republicans in 2006 is not going to be such an advantage in 2008.

Both parties have become skilled in targeting independent expenditures into competitive House and Senate contests. In 2006, \$220,400,185<sup>225</sup> was spent independently by the party committees in particular races. This compares to a high of \$121,901,666<sup>226</sup> spent independently in House and Senate races in 2004. In some races the party committees rival and may exceed what is spent by the candidates. One of the unanswered questions that came with passage of BCRA was whether party committees would be able to continue to expend substantial resources in battleground contests. The data from 2004 and 2006 demonstrate that they are using hard dollars to do what they previously had done with soft dollars.

One reason why the party committees continue to play a major independent role in highly contested congressional races is the surge in individual contributions they have received in 2004 and 2006. All four congressional campaign committees saw dramatic growth in individual contributions over 2002, and the DSCC, DCCC, and NRSC raised more from individuals in 2006 than in 2004. The growth in individual giving was greatest at the DSCC and DCCC.

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<sup>226</sup> Federal Election Commission, "Party Financial Activity Summarized," press release, 14 December 2004. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2004/20041214party/20041214party.html>>, 14 January 2007. Figure includes IEs from DSCC, DCCC, NRSC, and NRCC.

What was unclear after 2004 was whether the surge in individual contributions to political parties in that presidential year was driven by the contest for the presidency, concerns with the war in Iraq, or other election-specific concerns. The continued growth in individual giving in 2006 demonstrates that this was not a single election phenomenon. A lot of the passion among donors appears to have carried over into 2006, at least to the DCCC.

Looking ahead to 2008, both parties have compelling cases to take to individual donors. The Democrats can point to their success in 2006 and the difference it made to the agenda of 2007 and 2008. The narrow Democratic majorities will reinforce the urgency of contributing to the party to help it retain a majority. The Republicans who long had a fundraising advantage among individual donors can point to the policy impact of their defeat in 2006 and the reality that they are within striking distance of a majority again. The congressional campaign committees will be in competition with the presidential candidates and national party committees, but their pitch for funds was strengthened in all cases by the 2006 outcome.

### *Groups*

Interest groups played important roles in the 2006 elections. They were again a major source of campaign contributions for candidates, especially House incumbents (see table 1-15). They made significant independent expenditures, spending about \$3.5 million less than in 2004.<sup>227</sup> These independent expenditures were aimed at a small set of competitive districts. For example, Jerry McNerney, who many considered a long-shot candidate, won in California's Eleventh District, benefiting from strong support from outside groups.

Interest groups also were involved in electioneering communications through Section 527 and 501(c) organizations. While not as visible as the groups that campaigned in the 2004 presidential election, they still made substantial expenditures in particular 2006 contests. After the 2006 election the FEC issued a ruling on the activities of some of the most prominent Section 527 organizations who campaigned in 2004, including the SBVT and MoveOn.org Voter Fund. The FEC fined SBVT \$299,500 and MoveOn \$150,000.<sup>228</sup> It is unclear what impact the FEC ruling will have on 527 groups running ads in 2008. One view is that the FEC fines, relative to total amounts expended, are so low that "many political operatives will see them as no more than the cost of doing business."<sup>229</sup> Interest groups that have not taken money from corporations or unions have exemptions from some limits due to a 1986 Supreme Court decision.<sup>230</sup> Groups that only take money from individuals are called MCFL groups, named after the Massachusetts Citizens for Life (MCFL) decision. If the FEC were to become more aggressive in fining 527s in the future, we will likely see growth in number and expenditures of MCFL groups. Examples of MCFL groups are LCV, NARAL Pro-Choice America, Planned Parenthood's Action Fund, and Women's Voices. Women Vote.

As in the past, much of the interest group activity in competitive races happened through the mail, email, and in other ways not easily scrutinized by the media or opposition. Much of the voter registration and mobilization activity by interest groups in 2006 fits this description.

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<sup>227</sup> David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and J. Quin Monson, ed. *Dancing Without Partners: How Candidates, Parties and Interest Groups Interact in the New Campaign Finance Environment* (Provo, Utah: Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2005), 48.

<sup>228</sup> Federal Election Commission, "FEC Collects \$630,000 in Civil Penalties from Three 527 Organizations," press release, 13 December 2006. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/20061213murs.html>>, 5 January 2007.

<sup>229</sup> Campaign Legal Center, "FEC Fines Swift Boat and Other '527' Groups," press release, 15 December 2006. At <<http://www.campaignlegalcenter.org/press-2298.html>>, 5 January 2007.

<sup>230</sup> *FEC vs. Massachusetts Citizens for Life*, 479 U.S. 238 (1986).

Some groups also emphasize communication with their members. Examples of these kinds of groups include the AFL-CIO, the NEA, Sierra Club, the NRA, BIPAC, and the NFIB. Groups have become sophisticated in targeting their members with information about voter registration, early and absentee voting, and where to vote on Election Day. Examples of groups with such websites include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, BIPAC, and the AFL-CIO. As more states liberalize early and absentee voting provisions or allow voter registration forms to be submitted by mail, these websites will become even more important. As group members become more comfortable with the Internet as a means of informing themselves about the candidates, the Internet promises to be an even more important means through which groups will influence elections in the future.

One of the most visible and important parts of group activity in 2004 was ACT which mounted a massive GOTV campaign that included over 4,000 employees working in 86 offices nationwide the last three weeks before the election and a goal of over 70,000 canvassers in battleground states on Election Day. Major donors to ACT included Victory Campaign 2004 (\$25,654,391), George Soros (\$7,500,000), SEIU (\$6,760,000), Terry and Susan Ragon (\$3,000,000), and Peter Lewis (\$2,995,000). While ACT exceeded its turnout targets in most states,<sup>231</sup> it disbanded by September 2005. The demise of ACT left a major gap in the voter mobilization strategy of Democrats/Progressives in 2006. That gap was partly filled by organized labor, other groups, and the party committees. The coordination of some of these efforts was undertaken by America Votes, another of the groups that became prominent in 2004.

One new group in 2006 that has a focus on building lists for targeted communications and GOTV efforts is Catalist (previously called Data Warehouse, LLC). It aims “to help progressive organizations realize measurable increases in civic participation and electoral success by building and operating a robust national voter database of every voting-age American; by offering tools and expertise that allow clients to use that data to improve fundraising, organizing, and communications; and by updating and refining that data on a continuous basis.”<sup>232</sup> Clients of Catalist can use the list in their microtargeting.

The Catalist database is designed to be used in microtargeting. As discussed earlier in the monograph, the Republicans manage their own database in-house at the RNC and partner with TargetPoint Consulting to do their microtargeting. Given the success of microtargeting efforts in 2004 and 2006, this will likely remain a major emphasis of candidate, party, and group campaigns going forward. What is unclear is what role the DNC will play in building large-scale voter files, whether the business model of Catalist is sustainable, and if those pursuing this strategy have the commitment and resources to keep their lists current.

### **The Past as Prologue**

Our 2006 research again demonstrates the importance of both the air war and the ground war. Candidates and their allies took to the air early in battleground states. They tested different themes and messages. The tone of the communications by party committees and outside groups was generally negative, as it was in 2004 and in the era of soft money and issue advocacy before that. Republicans found that attacks that had worked for them in the past did not get traction with voters to the same degree in 2006.<sup>233</sup> Outside groups like MoveOn did early advertising on issues like the war in Iraq, in part to demonstrate to Democrats that opposition to the war was safe ground.<sup>234</sup> Ads about the war in Iraq became a common theme and Democratic allies like Vote Vets, a 527 organization, anticipating a charge that they were soft on

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<sup>231</sup> Harold Meyerson, “Whither the Ward Heelers?” *The American Prospect Online*, January 4, 2005. At <<http://www.prospect.org/web/page.wv?section=root&name=ViewPrint&articleId=8964>>, 19 January 2007.

<sup>232</sup> Catalist, “About Us: Our Mission,” *Catalist.us*, 2006. At <<http://catalist.us/aboutus.html>>, 19 January 2007.

<sup>233</sup> Stephens, interview, November 30, 2006.

<sup>234</sup> Boyd, telephone interview, January 19, 2007.

terrorism, produced spots that had Retired General Wesley Clark saying “Because of Iraq, America is less secure,” and ending with the message “if you see commercials telling you to be afraid of terrorism, remember it is because of Iraq.”<sup>235</sup> Republican ads focused on more local issues and attacked Democratic candidates, a theme found in several of the case studies in this volume.

The ground war in 2006 was again critical. Candidates, parties, and interest groups again targeted their communications to particular voters and strategically tailored their communications with them. Voters in contested races received scores of pieces of mail. As in the past, live and recorded phone calls were timed to reinforce broadcast and mail messages. Personal contact was also very much a part of campaigns in competitive contests. In the last four days before the election, the AFL-CIO volunteers knocked on 3.5 million doors and leafleted 6,130 work sites, making contact with 2 million workers. The doors knocked the last four days made up over 42 percent of the total number of doors knocked by AFL-CIO canvassers in 2006.<sup>236</sup>

The 2006 cycle, for all its historic implications, confirmed several longstanding rules pertaining to American politics. First, money continues to play perhaps the most important role in campaigns and elections. The strategic environment for candidates changes as issues move on and off the political agenda. However, candidates, parties, and interest groups still need campaign resources to disseminate their messages and to mobilize voters to the polls. There can be no waves without the instruments to give them shape and force. Second, participants find ways to raise and expend funds even as the campaign finance regulatory environment changes. BCRA banned soft money. Parties and groups responded by raising more hard money and expending those funds on independent expenditures. This occurred in both 2004 and 2006. The amount of money finding its way into politics seems almost limitless. Third, parties and groups continue to innovate. In older times, parties used torchlight parades to encourage voters to go to the polls. Today, they continue to refine the techniques and technology surrounding microtargeting in order to reach and motivate voters. They experiment with different treatments and in some cases do extensive research on the best methods and means for mobilizing and persuading voters. They continue to invest funds, sometimes public and sometimes private, in the efforts to develop and improve their lists. Finally, parties and interest groups, like the candidates, want to win. Parties seek to win as many seats as possible. In 2006, just as in previous cycles, they allocated their resources toward those races where they thought they had the best chance to win or retain a seat. The ever-expanding set of races taxed their resources and strategies, but it did not make them switch goals. As in previous cycles, the most competitive races continue to receive the most attention. Therefore, while the 2006 election cycle brought new majorities to the House and Senate and placed the first female Speaker of the House in the Speaker’s chair, both historic occurrences, the cycle reaffirmed how much we already know about American politics.

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<sup>235</sup> Vote Vets Action Fund, “Because of Iraq” TV commercial, 2006. At <[http://www.ifilms.tv/votevets2/VV\\_Because\\_NATL.mov](http://www.ifilms.tv/votevets2/VV_Because_NATL.mov)>, 20 January 2007.

<sup>236</sup> Steve Smith, media outreach specialist, AFL-CIO, personal communication with David B. Magleby, December 6, 2006.

**Table 1-1  
Hard Money, Soft Money, and Combined Receipts of  
National Party Committees, 1994-2006**

**Hard Money Receipts**

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
<b>DNC</b>	\$39,836,135	\$108,135,858	\$61,399,950	\$122,482,228	\$66,876,940	\$391,197,124	\$129,315,826
<b>DSCC</b>	\$26,254,634	\$30,522,517	\$35,144,864	\$40,185,874	\$48,057,848	\$86,502,289	\$118,962,557
<b>DCCC</b>	\$19,049,859	\$26,296,925	\$24,792,843	\$44,253,868	\$48,024,511	\$91,885,941	\$137,022,474
<b>RNC</b>	\$81,898,629	\$187,193,833	\$99,902,705	\$205,332,462	\$163,921,250	\$384,308,768	\$238,221,669
<b>NRSC</b>	\$64,132,776	\$62,370,930	\$51,717,256	\$49,361,505	\$58,142,326	\$74,934,260	\$88,301,827
<b>NRCC</b>	\$25,229,212	\$71,583,048	\$69,735,200	\$90,393,036	\$109,935,592	\$175,072,842	\$175,647,095
<b>Total D</b>	\$121,113,416	\$210,001,640	\$153,390,448	\$269,934,401	\$220,244,544	\$683,646,699	\$478,075,886
<b>Total R</b>	\$223,692,585	\$407,479,599	\$273,558,440	\$447,363,945	\$402,065,392	\$755,348,466	\$593,711,920

**Soft Money Receipts**

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
<b>DNC</b>	\$43,923,516	\$99,425,356	\$56,531,122	\$136,579,176	\$94,443,180
<b>DSCC</b>	\$372,448	\$14,070,414	\$25,828,526	\$63,082,850	\$95,048,722
<b>DCCC</b>	\$5,113,343	\$10,913,256	\$16,643,432	\$56,557,303	\$56,358,809
<b>RNC</b>	\$44,870,758	\$110,335,869	\$74,003,933	\$158,913,506	\$113,928,997
<b>NRSC</b>	\$5,582,013	\$26,700,877	\$37,112,175	\$43,462,745	\$66,426,117
<b>NRCC</b>	\$7,371,097	\$18,263,969	\$27,769,473	\$50,576,459	\$69,677,506
<b>Total D</b>	\$49,143,460	\$122,347,119	\$91,507,706	\$243,124,802	\$245,850,711
<b>Total R</b>	\$52,522,763	\$141,166,366	\$131,014,507	\$244,440,154	\$250,032,620

**Total of Hard and Soft Money Receipts**

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004 (Hard only)	2006 (Hard only)
<b>DNC</b>	\$83,759,651	\$207,561,214	\$117,931,072	\$259,061,404	\$161,320,120	\$391,197,124	\$129,315,826
<b>DSCC</b>	\$26,627,082	\$44,592,931	\$60,973,390	\$103,268,724	\$143,106,570	\$86,502,289	\$118,962,557
<b>DCCC</b>	\$24,163,202	\$37,210,181	\$41,436,275	\$100,811,171	\$104,383,320	\$91,885,941	\$137,022,474
<b>RNC</b>	\$126,769,387	\$297,529,702	\$173,906,638	\$364,245,968	\$277,850,247	\$384,308,768	\$238,221,669
<b>NRSC</b>	\$69,714,789	\$89,071,807	\$88,829,431	\$92,824,250	\$124,568,443	\$74,934,260	\$88,301,827
<b>NRCC</b>	\$32,600,309	\$89,847,017	\$97,504,673	\$140,969,495	\$179,613,098	\$175,072,842	\$175,647,095
<b>Total D</b>	\$170,256,876	\$332,348,759	\$244,898,154	\$513,059,203	\$466,095,255	\$683,646,699	\$478,075,886
<b>Total R</b>	\$276,215,348	\$548,645,965	\$404,572,947	\$691,804,099	\$652,098,012	\$755,348,466	\$593,711,920

*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Notes:* The totals for each party do not equal the sum of the party committee receipts because the numbers provided by the FEC have been adjusted to account for transfers between party committees so as not to double count money in the total receipts. The totals also include state and local hard money receipts which are not shown. Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Table 1-2  
Sources of Receipts for National Party Committees, 2000–06**

	DNC			RNC		
	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004	2006
Total Receipts	\$66,876,940	\$391,197,124	\$129,315,826	\$163,921,250	\$384,308,768	\$238,221,669
Total Contributions from Individuals	\$55,276,516	\$355,563,060	\$116,598,471	\$151,760,336	\$344,314,110	\$209,344,248
Unitemized*	\$37,586,867	\$165,239,792	\$72,671,454	\$99,682,917	\$153,937,161	110867699
Unitemized as % of Total from Individuals	68.00%	46.47%	62.33%	65.68%	44.71%	52.96%
Contributions at the maximum permitted**	\$680,000	\$43,475,000	\$3,729,500	\$2,980,000	\$60,825,000	\$801,000
Maximum as % of Individual Total	1.23%	12.23%	3.20%	1.96%	17.67%	0.38%
Contributions from Federal Candidates	\$21,172	\$27,978,293	\$1,099,873	\$450	\$24,038,568	\$1,274,385
Contributions from PACs	\$1,121,514	\$2,994,736	\$1,623,032	\$703,084	\$2,781,815	\$1,038,849
Transfers from State or other National Parties	\$6,560,050	\$299,764	\$1,075,917	\$3,522,399	\$4,625,827	\$4,377,109

	DSCC			NRSC		
	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004	2006
Total Receipts	\$48,057,848	\$86,502,289	\$118,962,557	\$58,142,326	\$74,934,260	\$88,301,827
Total Contributions from Individuals	\$20,052,428	\$57,455,879	\$86,542,075	\$40,846,898	\$59,036,309	\$64,938,699
Unitemized*	\$9,611,894	\$19,333,785	\$24,395,472	\$17,591,328	\$24,739,104	\$24,442,021
Unitemized as % of Total from Individuals	47.93%	33.65%	28.19%	43.07%	41.90%	37.64%
Contributions at the maximum permitted**	\$2,900,000	\$12,600,000	\$9,936,600	\$760,000	\$6,250,000	\$2,132,600
Maximum as % of Individual Total	14.46%	21.93%	11.48%	1.86%	10.59%	3.28%
Contributions from Federal Candidates	\$1,821,625	\$7,737,308	\$11,367,188	\$1,621,321	\$1,877,619	\$4,657,000
Contributions from PACs	\$4,712,156	\$6,174,971	\$7,869,481	\$4,205,108	\$7,886,946	\$9,085,911
Transfers from State or other National Parties	\$7,100,082	\$4,625,827	\$1,016,159	\$6,580,615	\$501,961	\$5,042,400

	DCCC			NRCC		
	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004	2006
Total Receipts	\$48,024,511	\$91,885,941	\$137,022,474	\$109,935,592	\$175,072,042	\$175,647,095
Total Contributions from Individuals	\$19,152,203	\$50,153,913	\$81,897,088	\$73,278,578	\$135,352,300	\$109,241,087
Unitemized*	\$11,043,440	\$24,873,474	\$31,699,853	\$37,415,436	\$48,021,394	\$41,118,923
Unitemized as % of Total from Individuals	57.66%	49.59%	38.71%	51.06%	35.48%	37.64%
Contributions at the maximum permitted**	\$800,000	\$6,675,000	\$5,185,850	\$180,000	\$3,800,000	\$213,600
Maximum as % of Individual Total	4.18%	13.31%	6.33%	0.25%	2.81%	0.20%
Contributions from Federal Candidates	\$12,079,777	\$23,907,760	\$32,024,998	\$14,035,180	\$18,576,771	\$30,138,806
Contributions from PACs	\$4,051,585	\$6,302,094	\$11,613,217	\$4,185,549	\$8,067,368	\$11,316,187
Transfers from State or other National Parties	\$3,764,636	\$447,638	\$824,500	\$2,873,229	\$1,157,620	\$19,117,000

Source: Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

Notes: Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election. This table includes federal or “hard” money only.

\*Unitemized contributions from individuals aggregate to \$200 or less in a calendar year from a single person.

\*\*The maximum contribution from individuals was changed from \$20,000 per year to \$25,000 per year for the 2004 election cycle. The maximum is \$26,700 per cycle (from FEC, “New Federal Contribution Limits Announced,” press release, 3 February 2005. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2005/20050203limits1.html>>, 14 January 2007.

**Table 1-3  
Large Party Committee Donors, 2004-06**

	Total \$ from Donors Giving \$25K+		# of Donors Giving \$25K+	
	2004	2006	2004	2006
<b>DNC</b>	\$31,508,000	\$8,739,000	1132	283
<b>DSCC</b>	\$15,937,000	\$26,684,000	544	870
<b>DCCC</b>	\$7,285,000	\$21,204,000	282	693
<b>RNC</b>	\$69,343,000	\$39,014,000	2441	1134
<b>NRSC</b>	\$9,284,000	\$16,802,000	307	546
<b>NRCC</b>	\$5,188,000	\$9,135,000	182	303

*Source:* Federal Election Committee (<ftp://ftp.fec.gov/FEC>) (January 13, 2007).

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Table 1-4**  
**Hard Money Contributions to Candidates by Party Committee, 1994–2006**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>DNC</b>	\$81,577	\$23,175	\$6,894	\$10,558	\$10,000	\$7,000	\$12,000
<b>DSCC</b>	\$570,000	\$540,000	\$307,500	\$328,530	\$409,900	\$694,500	\$1,333,448
<b>DCCC</b>	\$993,081	\$783,789	\$464,219	\$581,686	\$640,126	\$438,053	\$2,414,074
<b>RNC</b>	\$557,039	\$491,518	\$444,986	\$412,500	\$353,836	\$242,992	\$456,880
<b>NRSC</b>	\$676,888	\$965,050	\$457,844	\$430,834	\$455,977	\$812,897	\$346,782
<b>NRCC</b>	\$799,860	\$1,266,095	\$786,712	\$712,764	\$757,157	\$534,268	\$368,547

*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from the beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Table 1-5**  
**Coordinated Expenditures by Party Committee, 1994–2006**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>DNC</b>	\$245,011	\$5,897,953	\$5,849,422	\$12,583,941	\$346,216	\$16,017,785	\$361,557
<b>DSCC</b>	\$12,550,478	\$8,476,258	\$8,424	\$127,157	\$181,789	\$4,380,996	\$5,544,056
<b>DCCC</b>	\$7,716,974	\$5,991,829	\$2,963,994	\$2,597,340	\$1,719,582	\$2,423,002	\$2,307,642
<b>RNC</b>	\$4,974,399	\$23,470,692	\$3,876,051	\$22,994,436	\$14,126,279	\$16,146,972	\$2,836,126
<b>NRSC</b>	\$8,448,136	\$586,197	\$28,513	\$172	\$553,206	\$8,449,049	\$8,784,685
<b>NRCC</b>	\$3,957,837	\$7,398,792	\$5,179,901	\$3,681,845	\$439,231	\$3,144,016	\$1,611,478

*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Table 1-6  
Independent Expenditures by Party Committee, 1994–2006**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>DNC</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$120,449,777	-\$23,104
<b>DSCC</b>	\$0	\$1,386,022	\$1,359,000	\$133,000	\$0	\$18,694,679	\$41,990,526
<b>DCCC</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,916,489	\$1,106,113	\$36,126,345	\$63,399,473
<b>RNC</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$18,253,659	\$14,022,675
<b>NRSC</b>	\$0	\$9,875,130	\$194,573	\$267,600	\$0	\$20,179,155	\$19,159,901
<b>NRCC</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$548,800	\$1,203,854	\$46,901,487	\$81,827,610
<b>Total</b>	\$0	\$11,261,152	\$1,553,573	\$2,865,889	\$2,809,967	\$260,605,102	\$220,377,081

*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Table 1-7  
Independent Expenditures by Party Committee for Our Sample Races, 2005-06**

<b>Race</b>	<b>DCCC</b>	<b>NRCC</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
CO 7	\$1,966,702	\$556,029	\$2,522,731
IN 9	\$3,084,770	\$3,190,284	\$6,275,054
MN 6	\$1,119,617	\$2,447,893	\$3,567,510
NM 1	\$2,009,557	\$2,019,189	\$4,028,746
OH 13	\$0	\$21,074	\$21,074
OH 15	\$1,636,240	\$1,786,074	\$3,422,314
OH 18	\$2,478,089	\$3,370,783	\$5,848,872
PA 6	\$2,986,145	\$3,858,782	\$6,844,927

<b>Race</b>	<b>DSCC</b>	<b>NRSC</b>	<b>DNC</b>	<b>RNC</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
MN Sen	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
MT Sen	\$4,548,770	\$1,157,812	\$0	\$0	\$5,706,582
OH Sen	\$6,233,576	\$3,019,658	\$0	\$3,910,469	\$13,163,703
PA Sen	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Source:* Federal Election Commission. At <ftp://ftp.fec.gov/FEC>, 10 January 2007.

**Table 1-8  
Top 527 Organization Expenditures, 2005-06**

Committee	Expenditures	Federal PAC
Service Employees International Union	\$27,677,372	X
AFSCME	\$18,814,522	X
Progress for America	\$12,383,561	
America Votes	\$11,692,297	
EMILY's List	\$10,630,893	X
College Republican National Committee	\$9,749,396	
Club for Growth	\$7,774,079	X
GOPAC	\$7,575,050	X
America Coming Together	\$6,997,999	X
Intl Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	\$5,663,617	X
Economic Freedom Fund	\$4,807,059	X
September Fund	\$4,442,590	
Laborers Union	\$3,762,110	X
Main Street Colorado	\$2,859,485	
Americans for Honesty on Issues	\$2,671,362	
National Federation of Republican Women	\$2,667,155	X
Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund	\$2,612,586	X
Grassroots Democrats	\$2,511,837	
Sheet Metal Workers Union	\$2,131,197	X
Majority Action	\$1,987,783	
AFL-CIO	\$1,977,318	X
Media Fund	\$1,976,778	
United Food & Commercial Workers Union	\$1,908,676	X
Operating Engineers Union	\$1,666,965	X
Illinois Hospital & Health Systems Assn	\$1,662,579	
Lantern Project	\$1,610,461	
Coloradans For Life	\$1,524,654	
Floridians for a Better/Brighter Future	\$1,411,000	
New Democrat Network	\$1,256,434	X
New West Fellowship Group	\$1,246,049	
Softer Voices	\$1,245,638	
Free Enterprise Fund Committee	\$1,231,582	X
League of Conservation Voters	\$1,196,598	X
Patriot Majority Fund	\$1,143,547	
Colorado Leadership Fund	\$1,096,087	
Ironworkers Union	\$1,089,693	X

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, "527 Committee Activity: Top 50 Federally Focused Organizations," *OpenSecrets.org*, January 9, 2007. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/527s/527cmtes.asp?level=C&cycle=2006>>, 14 January 2007.

**Table 1-9**  
**Top Twenty-Five Individual Contributors to 527 Organizations in 2005–06**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>527 Recipients (donations greater than \$100,000)</b>
<b>Democratic Allies</b>		
George Soros	\$3,542,500	America Votes 2006, America Votes, EMILY's List, Majority Action, NDN
Linda Pritzker	\$2,101,000	America Votes, America Votes 2006, September Fund, NDN, EMILY's List, Campaign Money Watch
John R. Hunting	\$1,647,000	League of Conservation Voters, NDN, State Conservation Voters Fund, America Votes 2006, America Votes
Peter Lewis	\$1,624,375	America Votes 2006, Young Democrats of America, Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund
Pat Stryker	\$1,609,293	Coloradans for Life, Main Street Colorado, America Votes 2006, New West Fellowship Group
Timothy Gill	\$1,571,355	New West Fellowship Group, Coloradans for Life, Main Street Colorado, Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund
Jon L. Stryker	\$1,446,313	Main Street Colorado, Coloradans for Life, Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund
John A. & Lawrie Harris	\$1,058,000	League of Conservation Voters, State Conservation Voters Action Fund
Alida R. Messinger	\$1,053,000	Main Street Colorado, League of Conservation Voters, America Votes 2006, EMILY's List
Lewis B. Cullman	\$975,000	September Fund, Mainstreet USA, Inc.
Arthur Lipson	\$598,000	America Votes 2006, EMILY's List, Campaign Money Watch
Anne G. Earhart	\$535,000	September Fund, Ocean Champions Vote Fund
Adam Rose	\$505,000	Majority Action
Lilo Leeds	\$495,000	League of Education Voters of America
Frank Brunckhorst	\$495,000	September Fund, EMILY's List
<b>Republican Allies</b>		
Bob Perry	\$9,750,000	Economic Freedom Fund, Americans for Honesty on Issues, Free Enterprise Fund, College Republican National Committee, Club for Growth
Jerry Perenchio	\$5,000,000	Progress for America
John Templeton	\$1,296,979	Softer Voices, College Republican National Committee, GOPAC
Sheldon G. & Miriam Adelson	\$1,000,000	America Solutions Winning the Future
Virginia Manheimer	\$871,090	Club for Growth
Carl H. Lindner	\$621,321	College Republican National Committee, Softer Voices
Richard Gilder	\$600,195	Club for Growth
B. Wayne Hughes, Sr.	\$500,000	Progress for America
Greg W. Eagle	\$500,000	Floridians for a Better/Brighter Future
John W. Childs	\$450,000	Club for Growth.net, Club for Growth

Source: Political Money Line, "Large 527 Donors for Election Cycle 2006," *FecInfo.com*, 2006. At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/irs\\_ef\\_top.exe?DoFn=DONOR&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/irs_ef_top.exe?DoFn=DONOR&sYR=2006)>, 18 January 2007.

**Table 1-10  
Independent Expenditures by Top Groups, 2005–06**

<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Ind Exp FOR</b>	<b>Ind Exp AGAINST</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
AFSCME - P E O P L E, Qualified	\$421,620	\$4,115,450	\$4,537,070
National Association of Realtors PAC	\$3,566,477	...	\$3,566,477
EMILY'S List	\$2,217,782	\$1,251,133	\$3,468,915
MoveOn.org PAC	\$296,936	\$2,560,707	\$2,857,643
Club for Grown, Inc. PAC	\$764,408	\$1,988,830	\$2,753,238
Service Employees International Union Committee on Political Education (SEIU COPE)	\$1,945,638	\$398,246	\$2,343,884
National Right to Life PAC	\$2,241,721	\$48,550	\$2,290,271
NEA Fund for Children and Public Education	\$771,078	\$1,186,072	\$1,957,150
American Medical Association PAC	\$1,434,453	...	\$1,434,453
National Rifle Association of America Political Victory Fund	\$1,125,074	\$250,846	\$1,375,920
VoteVets	\$2,834	\$839,262	\$842,096
League of Conservation Voters Action Fund	\$585,518	\$223,736	\$809,254
Sierra Club PAC	\$537,253	\$209,511	\$746,764
International Association of Firefighters Interested in Registration and Education PAC	\$584,761	\$112,586	\$697,347
NARAL Pro-Choice America PAC	\$8,758	\$631,868	\$640,626
PAC of the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons	\$600,000	...	\$600,000
Human Rights Campaign PAC	\$57,538	\$265,697	\$323,235
Credit Union Legislative Action Council of CUNA	\$310,397	...	\$310,397
Minuteman PAC Inc.	\$221,058	...	\$221,058
Safari Club International PAC	\$212,861	...	\$212,861
National Restaurant Association PAC	\$200,000	...	\$200,000
Trust in Small Business PAC (TISB PAC)	\$164,497	...	\$164,497
Cooperative of American Physicians- Mutual Protection Trust (CAP-MPT) Federal PAC	\$143,011	...	\$143,011
Stop Union Political Abuse (SUPA)	...	\$142,626	\$142,626
Unite Here Tip Campaign Committee	\$78,262	\$59,446	\$137,708
Republican Mainstreet Partnership PAC	\$120,948	...	\$120,948
Susan B. Anthony List Inc. Candidate Fund	\$118,438	...	\$118,438
Other Groups	\$1,592,370	\$501,140	\$2,093,510
<b>TOTAL FOR ALL GROUPS</b>	<b>\$20,323,691</b>	<b>\$14,785,706</b>	<b>\$35,109,397</b>

Source: Federal Election Committee. At <ftp://ftp.fec.gov/FEC>, 10 January 2007.

Note: We combined expenditures for all national affiliates of an organization but excluded expenditures for the state affiliates.

**Table 1-11**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Sample Races, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>c</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Democratic House Candidates	...	86	36	1	5	9	10	48	<b>195</b>
Democratic Senate Candidates	...	39	10	3	6	7	20	53	<b>138</b>
<i>Political parties</i>									
State Democratic Parties	...	10	137	1	6	22	3	8	<b>187</b>
DCCC	...	11	49	...	...	2	4	31	<b>97</b>
Local Democratic Parties	...	48	9	1	5	2	...	...	<b>65</b>
DSCC	...	5	2	...	...	...	1	32	<b>40</b>
Minnesota DFL Party	...	...	18	...	...	1	...	...	<b>19</b>
DNC	...	4	2	...	...	2	1	...	<b>9</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
National Education Association	...	...	54	...	...	2	1	2	<b>59</b>
League of Conservation Voters	...	10	16	...	5	2	2	1	<b>36</b>
American Federation of Teachers	...	...	24	...	2	2	...	...	<b>28</b>
AFL-CIO	...	...	24	...	...	1	...	...	<b>25</b>
MoveOn.org	...	18	...	...	...	3	...	2	<b>23</b>
Working America	...	...	15	...	2	1	...	...	<b>18</b>
NARAL	...	4	9	...	...	3	1	...	<b>17</b>
EMILY's List	...	1	13	...	...	1	1	...	<b>16</b>
AFSCME	...	...	8	...	...	1	2	4	<b>15</b>
Change To Win	...	...	14	...	...	...	...	...	<b>14</b>
Sierra Club	...	...	9	...	1	2	...	...	<b>12</b>
American Family Voices	...	...	...	...	...	9	...	...	<b>9</b>
SEIU	...	...	7	...	...	1	1	...	<b>9</b>
Lantern Project	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	5	<b>8</b>
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	2	...	...	3	...	3	<b>8</b>
Campaign for the Moderate Majority	...	...	7	...	...	...	...	...	<b>7</b>
New Mexico Women Vote!	...	...	7	...	...	...	...	...	<b>7</b>
Human Rights Campaign	...	...	5	...	...	1	...	...	<b>6</b>
Pennsylvania Women Vote!	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	<b>6</b>
Planned Parenthood	...	...	5	...	1	...	...	...	<b>6</b>
International Assn of Fire Fighters	...	...	4	...	...	1	...	...	<b>5</b>
Labor 2006	...	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
Alliance for Retired Americans	...	...	3	...	...	1	...	...	<b>4</b>
Americans United for Change	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	<b>4</b>
Communities United to Strengthen America	...	...	2	...	1	1	...	...	<b>4</b>
Communities Voting Together	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
Nat'l Jewish Democratic Council	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
America Votes	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
American Trial Lawyers Assn.	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	<b>3</b>
Humane Society of the U.S.	...	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	<b>3</b>
Intl. Brotherhood of Teamsters	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
National Organization for Women	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	<b>3</b>
American Postal Workers Union	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	<b>2</b>
Campaign Money Watch	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	<b>2</b>
Change America Now	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	<b>2</b>
Clean Water Action	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>2</b>
Defenders of Wildlife Action	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
Fund									
Democracy For America	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
NM Attorney General's Office	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Ohio Women Vote!	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
People's Convention PAC	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Public Citizen	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
September Fund	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
True Majority Action	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
United Auto Workers	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	2
Upper Arlington Progressive Action	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
<b>Republican allies<sup>c</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Republican House Candidates	...	39	42	...	7	6	5	49	148
Republican Senate Candidates	...	18	8	7	2	8	20	61	124
<i>Political parties</i>									
State Republican Parties	...	26	201	...	6	23	1	...	257
NRSC	...	8	71	...	...	11	5	41	136
RNC	...	5	6	...	...	10	...	5	26
Local Republican Parties	...	10	3	...	3	1	...	...	17
RNC / Republican House Candidates	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	...	40	1	...	2	...	21	64
Seniors Coalition, The	...	...	31	5	...	1	...	...	37
National Federation of Independent Business	...	1	8	2	...	2	1	...	14
National Rifle Association	2	...	5	3	2	...	1	1	14
National Right to Life	...	...	7	...	1	2	3	...	13
Common Sense 2006	...	...	2	1	...	5	3	...	11
Americans for Honesty on Issues	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	5	6
National Assn. of Realtors	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	1	6
American Medical Assn. PAC	...	...	3	...	...	...	1	...	4
Americans for Job Security	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	2	4
America's Majority	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	3
Progress for America Org	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Softer Voices PA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Alliance for Quality Nursing and Home Care	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
American College of Gastroenterology	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
DaVita	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	2
Focus on the Family	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	2
Free Enterprise Fund Committee	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2
MN Citizens Concerned for Life	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
National Assn. of Home Builders	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
OH Effective Government Project	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Set It Straight	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Susan B. Anthony List	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Trailhead Group	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2
<b>Nonpartisan</b>									
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
AARP	...	1	6	4	2	...	2	1	16
Women's Voices. Women Vote.	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	6
People for the American Way	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	5
Progressive Policy Council	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	4
American Civil Liberties Union	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	3

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
Quality of Life PAC	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 1-13.

<sup>b</sup> All state and local chapters or affiliates have been combined with their national affiliate to better render the picture of the organization's activity. For instance, Montana Education Association, Education Minnesota, and Indiana State Teachers Association data have been included in the National Education Association totals, SEIU COPE data have been included in the SEIU totals, Colorado Labor 2006 data have been included in the Labor 2006 totals, and the Pennsylvania Alliance for Retired Americans data have been included in the Alliance for Retired Americans totals.

<sup>c</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "... " only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 1-12**  
**Television Spending by Candidates, Parties, and Outside Groups in**  
**Congressional Elections, 2002-06**  
**(in millions of dollars)**

	House		Senate		House & Senate
	Candidates	Party	Candidates	Party	Groups
<b>2002</b>	84.7	35.2	69.8	44.7	19.3
<b>2004</b>	126.3	50.1	175.1	20	16.4
<b>2006</b>	208.8	120.7	244.1	61.8	35

*Source:* Sean Prewer, TNSMI-CMAG, email communication with David B. Magleby, January 19, 2007.

*Notes:* The “Groups” is independent expenditures. The column includes 527, 501(c)(3), and various other organizational spending (non-party) that occurred throughout the election. All figures are in millions of dollars.

**Table 1-13**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Sample Races, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Democratic Senate Candidates	\$13,538,644	\$860,591	<b>\$14,399,235</b>	\$18,178,239
Democratic House Candidates	\$7,908,501	\$240,087	<b>\$8,148,588</b>	\$9,638,309
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$12,583,389	\$49,153	<b>\$12,632,542</b>	\$10,769,941
DSCC	\$7,328,569	\$174,451	<b>\$7,503,020</b>	\$6,501,694
State Democratic Parties	\$2,107,305	\$186,750	<b>\$2,294,055</b>	\$3,366,044
DSCC / Democratic Senate Candidates	\$581,258	...	<b>\$581,258</b>	...
DNC	...	\$4,000	<b>\$4,000</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
September Fund	\$376,640	...	<b>\$376,640</b>	...
National Education Association	\$186,935	\$74,464	<b>\$261,399</b>	\$113,520
American Trial Lawyers Association	\$172,308	\$6,820	<b>\$179,128</b>	\$223,082
Lantern Project	...	\$149,925	<b>\$149,925</b>	\$386,011
Too Extreme for Colorado	\$140,810	...	<b>\$140,810</b>	\$132,541
Vote Vets	\$128,255	...	<b>\$128,255</b>	\$12,005
Americans United for Change	\$119,685	...	<b>\$119,685</b>	\$434,754
League of Conservation Voters	\$100,000	\$8,800	<b>\$108,800</b>	...
Campaign Money Watch	\$100,000	\$1,320	<b>\$101,320</b>	\$26,557
AFSCME	\$6,350	\$85,345	<b>\$91,695</b>	\$263,952
EMILY's List	...	\$35,400	<b>\$35,400</b>	...
American Postal Workers Union	\$34,000	\$575	<b>\$34,575</b>	\$50,838
United Steelworkers	...	\$29,080	<b>\$29,080</b>	...
Stand Up For Steel	...	\$24,750	<b>\$24,750</b>	...
Humane Society of the United States	...	\$8,830	<b>\$8,830</b>	...
NARAL	...	\$8,269	<b>\$8,269</b>	...
Service Employees International Union	...	\$4,500	<b>\$4,500</b>	...
Democratic Ladies League	...	\$438	<b>\$438</b>	...
MoveOn.org	...	...	...	\$341,999
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	...	\$97,118
Majority Action	...	...	...	\$682
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Republican Senate Candidate	\$17,345,118	\$1,463,021	<b>\$18,808,139</b>	\$21,357,829
Republican House Candidate	\$8,749,641	\$267,969	<b>\$9,017,610</b>	\$10,888,858
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	\$12,383,757	...	<b>\$12,383,757</b>	\$12,401,344
NRSC	\$4,874,309	\$256,000	<b>\$5,130,309</b>	\$3,688,841
RNC	\$2,693,276	...	<b>\$2,693,276</b>	\$1,543,538
NRSC / Republican Senate Candidates	\$131,055	...	<b>\$131,055</b>	\$1,228,236
RNC / Republican House Candidates	\$42,880	...	<b>\$42,880</b>	\$603,440
Republican Party of Minnesota	...	\$8,450	<b>\$8,450</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Progress for America	\$1,321,296	...	<b>\$1,321,296</b>	\$1,411,800
Common Sense 2006	\$508,707	\$359,165	<b>\$867,872</b>	...
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$865,719	...	<b>\$865,719</b>	\$2,380,898

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
Softer Voices	\$769,075	...	<b>\$769,075</b>	\$821,344
Americans for Honesty on Issues	\$646,344	...	<b>\$646,344</b>	\$375,400
American Taxpayer's Alliance	\$566,087	...	<b>\$566,087</b>	\$987,260
National Association of Realtors	\$525,455	...	<b>\$525,455</b>	\$189,699
Alliance for Quality Nursing and Home Care	\$261,764	...	<b>\$261,764</b>	\$316,553
Americans for Job Security	\$245,083	...	<b>\$245,083</b>	\$687,185
Free Enterprise Fund Committee	\$124,000	...	<b>\$124,000</b>	...
America's PAC	...	\$86,292	<b>\$86,292</b>	...
Trailhead Group	\$33,375	\$49,020	<b>\$82,395</b>	...
Realtors PAC	\$47,500	...	<b>\$47,500</b>	...
American Medical Association PAC	...	\$32,200	<b>\$32,200</b>	...
National Rifle Association	\$19,200	...	<b>\$19,200</b>	...
National Right to Life	...	\$14,108	<b>\$14,108</b>	...
Republican Governors Association	\$11,305	...	<b>\$11,305</b>	...
Black Republican Freedom Fund	...	\$10,855	<b>\$10,855</b>	...
Real Alternatives	\$10,500	...	<b>\$10,500</b>	...
America's Majority	...	\$10,146	<b>\$10,146</b>	...
National Black Republican Association	...	\$1,000	<b>\$1,000</b>	...
<b>Nonpartisan</b>				
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
American Hospital Association	...	\$49,616	<b>\$49,616</b>	...
AARP	\$29,125	...	<b>\$29,125</b>	...
Center For Union Facts	\$20,000	...	<b>\$20,000</b>	\$38,787
Coalition for America's Priorities	...	\$18,600	<b>\$18,600</b>	\$84,650
All Children Matter	...	\$8,978	<b>\$8,978</b>	...
New Mexico Citizens for Change	...	\$2,760	<b>\$2,760</b>	...
American Heart Association	...	\$2,400	<b>\$2,400</b>	...
Institute for Social Policies Studies	...	\$1,600	<b>\$1,600</b>	...
Center for Security Policy	\$1,500	...	<b>\$1,500</b>	...
National Air Traffic Controllers Association	...	...	...	\$670,184

Source: Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 1-11.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "... " only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 1-14**  
**Internal Communications by Top Groups, 2005-06**

Committee Name	Int Comm FOR	Int Comm AGAINST	TOTAL
National Association of Realtors	\$1,699,982	...	\$1,699,982
AFL-CIO COPE Political Contributions Committee	\$890,914	...	\$890,914
National Education Association	\$227,381	...	\$227,381
Change to Win	\$175,356	\$19,037	\$194,393
New York's Health and Human Service Union 1199/SEIU	\$168,207	...	\$168,207
American Medical Association	\$167,548	...	\$167,548
NARAL Pro-Choice America	\$98,803	\$47,034	\$145,837
International Association of Fire Fighters	\$138,527	...	\$138,527
Association of Trial Lawyers of America Political Action Management List	\$90,886	...	\$90,886
National Federation of Independent Business Save America's Free Enterprise Trust	\$89,047	...	\$89,047
National Right to Life Committee	\$39,905	\$48,492	\$88,397
National Rifle Association (Institute for Legislative Action)	\$62,877	\$1,888	\$64,765
AFSCME, AFL-CIO (D.C.)	\$64,624	...	\$64,624
PSEA/PACE For Federal Elections	\$54,255	...	\$54,255
Hawaii Government Employees Association	\$53,823	...	\$53,823
Sierra Club	\$50,316	...	\$50,316
Straight Talk	...	\$43,900	\$43,900
Other Groups	\$160,748	\$150,275	\$311,023
<b>TOTAL FOR ALL GROUPS</b>	<b>\$4,233,199</b>	<b>\$310,626</b>	<b>\$4,543,825</b>

*Source:* Federal Election Committee. At <ftp://ftp.fec.gov/FEC>, 10 January 2007.

*Note:* We combined expenditures for all national affiliates of an organization but excluded expenditures for the state affiliates.

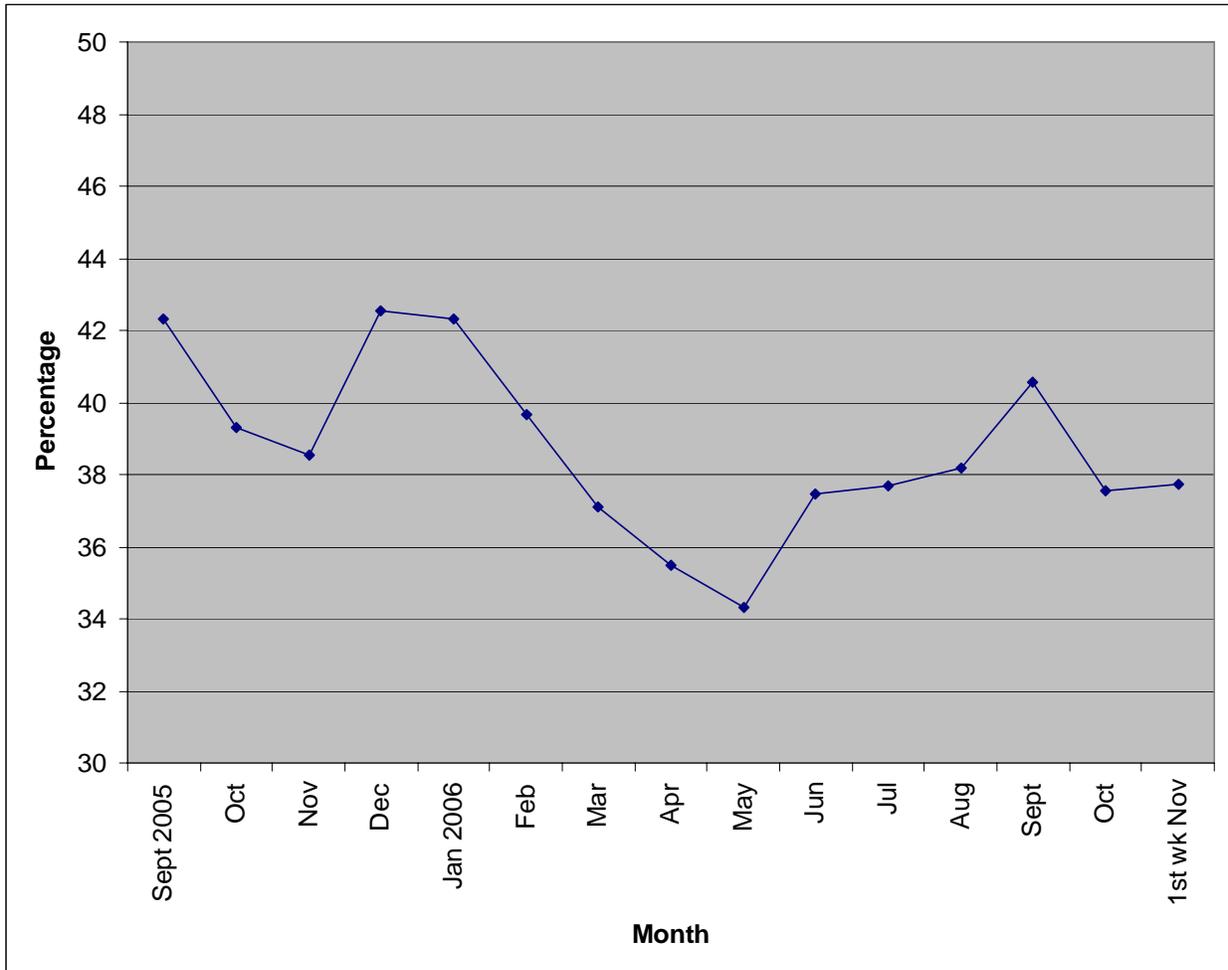
**Table 1-15**  
**Congressional Candidate Contributions from PACs, 2005-06**

<b>Senate</b>		\$67,081,982
	<b>Democrats</b>	\$29,217,809
	<b>Incumbents</b>	\$17,222,999
	<b>Challengers</b>	\$5,964,410
	<b>Open Seats</b>	\$6,030,400
	<b>Republicans</b>	\$37,317,026
	<b>Incumbents</b>	\$28,915,979
	<b>Challengers</b>	\$2,358,556
	<b>Open Seats</b>	\$6,042,491
<b>House</b>		\$283,246,419
	<b>Democrats</b>	\$127,503,729
	<b>Incumbents</b>	\$95,823,855
	<b>Challengers</b>	\$19,772,410
	<b>Open Seats</b>	\$11,907,464
	<b>Republicans</b>	\$155,740,090
	<b>Incumbents</b>	\$140,316,717
	<b>Challengers</b>	\$3,823,380
	<b>Open Seats</b>	\$11,599,993
<b>Overall</b>		
	<b>Republicans</b>	\$193,057,116
	<b>Democrats</b>	\$156,721,538
	<b>Incumbents</b>	\$282,279,550
	<b>Challengers</b>	\$31,919,356
	<b>Open Seats</b>	\$36,129,495
<b>Total</b>		\$350,328,401

*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, December 19, 2006.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Figure 1-1**  
**Average Monthly Presidential Approval, September 2005 to November 2006**

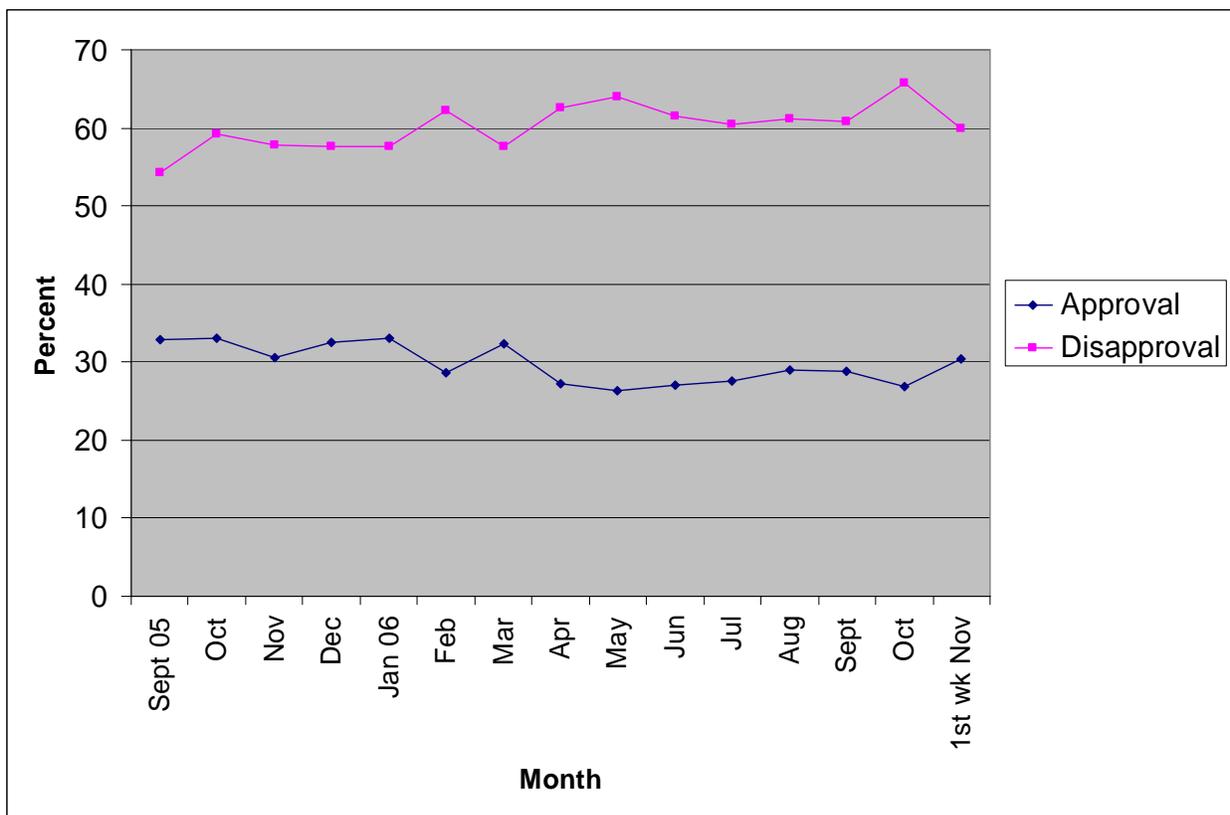


Source: "PRESIDENT BUSH – Overall Job Rating," *PollingReport.com*, 2007. At <<http://pollingreport.com/BushJob.htm>>, 9 January 2007.

Notes:

- \* Data presented are monthly averages for all polls conducted in that month.
- \*\* Data consists of 216 polls taken between 7 September 2005 and 5 November 2006.
- \*\*\* Polls included had samples of likely voters (5 polls), registered voters (50 polls), and national adults (161 polls).
- \*\*\*\* Polls included are from ABC, ABC/Washington Post, AP-AOL, AP-Ipsos, CBS, CBS/New York Times, CNN, CNN/USA Today/Gallup, Cook/RT Strategies, Diageo/Hotline, Fox/Opinion Dynamics, Gallup, LA Times/Bloomberg, NBC/Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, NPR, Pew, Quinnipiac, Time, and USA Today/Gallup, and WNBC/Marist.

**Figure 1-2**  
**Average Monthly Congressional Approval**  
**and Disapproval, September 2005 to November 2006**

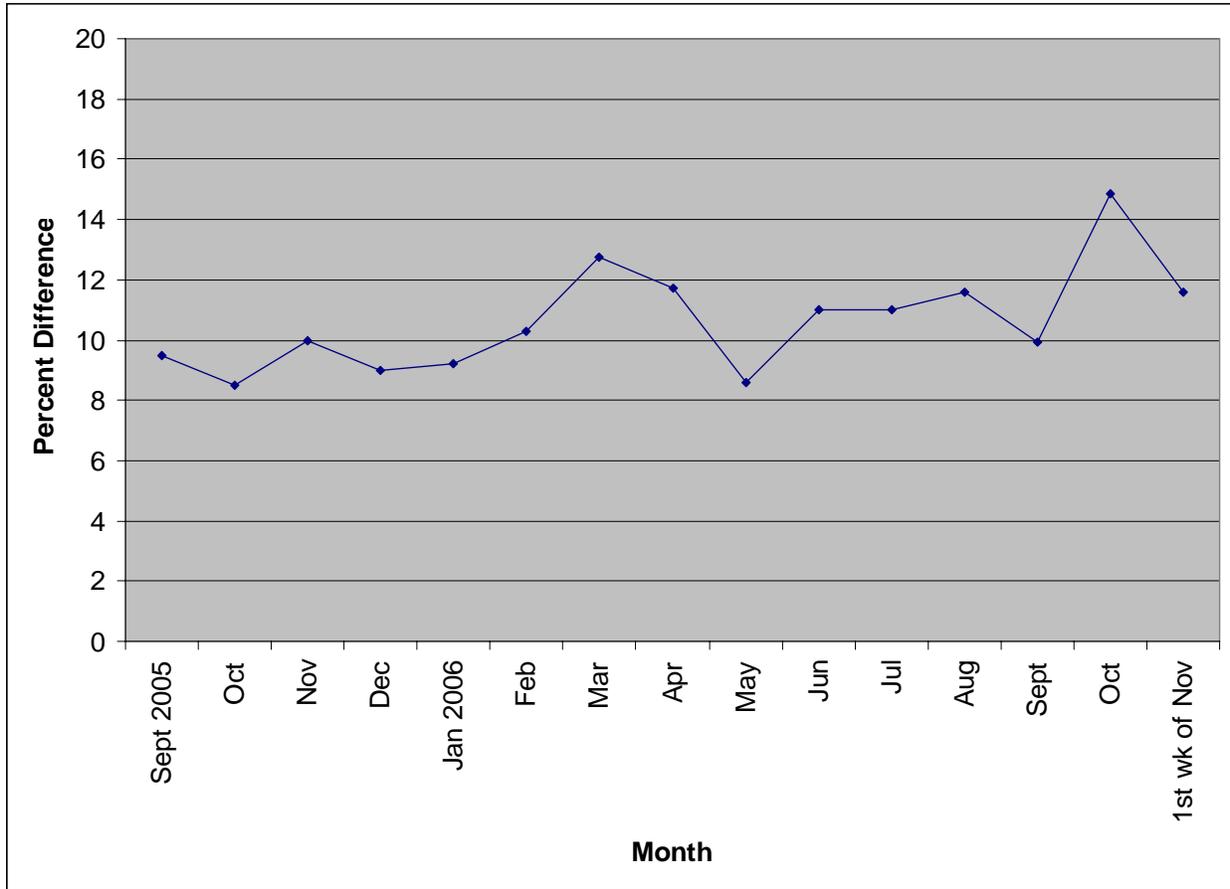


Source: "CONGRESS – Job Rating," *PollingReport.com*, 2006. At <<http://pollingreport.com/CongJob.htm>>, 4 January 2007.

Notes:

- \* Data presented are monthly averages for all polls conducted in that month.
- \*\* Data consists of 110 polls taken between 9 September 2005 and 5 November 2006.
- \*\*\* Polls included had samples of likely voters (4 polls), registered voters (29 polls), and national adults (77 polls).
- \*\*\*\* Polls included are ABC, ABC/Washington Post, AP-AOL, AP-Ipsos, CBS, CBS/New York Times, CNN, Today/Gallup, Cook/RT Strategies, Diageo/Hotline, Fox/Opinion Dynamics, Gallup, LA Times/Bloomberg, NBC/Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, NPR, Quinnipiac, Time, and USA Today/Gallup.

**Figure 1-3**  
**Average Monthly Democratic Advantage in Generic**  
**Congressional Vote Questions, September 2005 to November 2006**

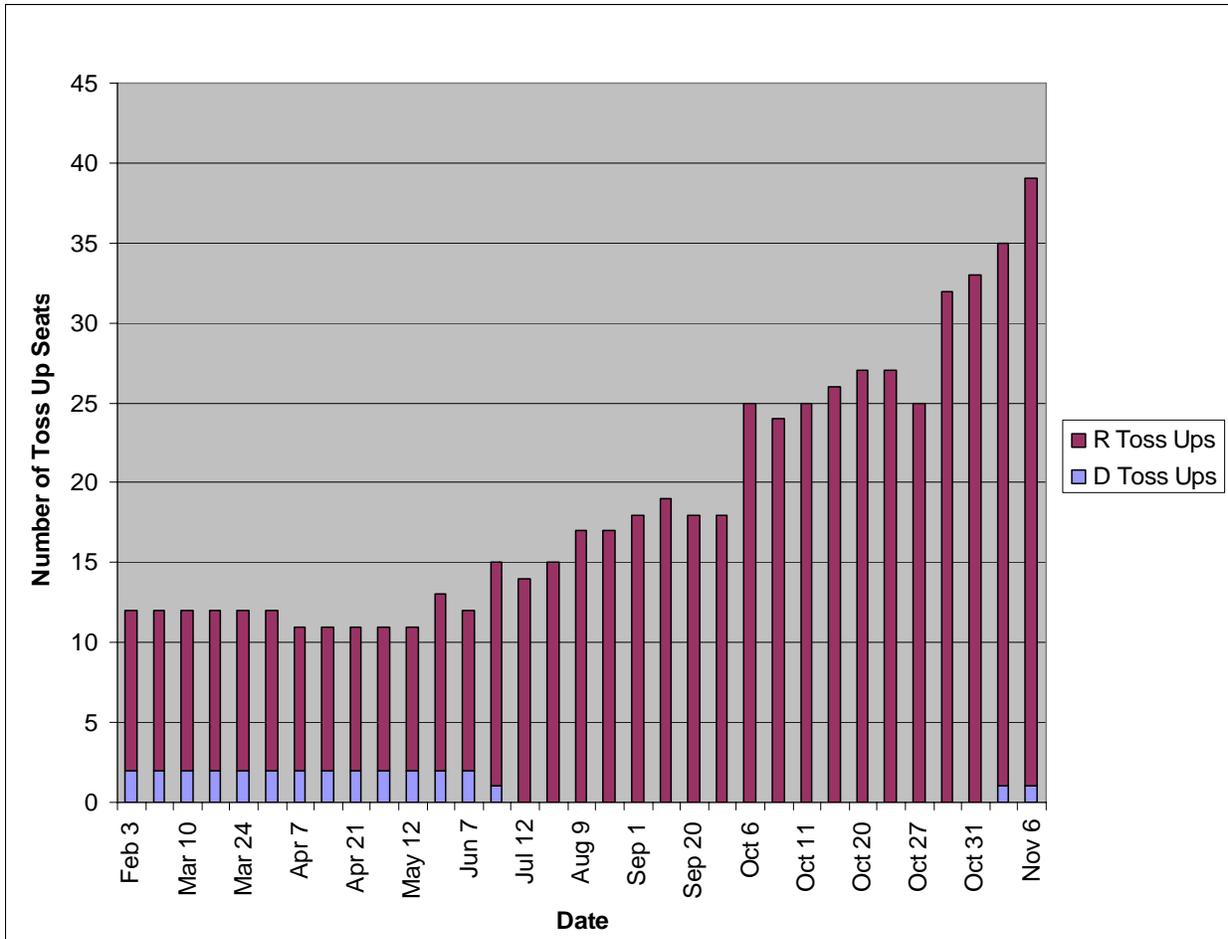


Source: "GENERIC BALLOT – U.S. House of Representatives," *PollingReport.com*, 2006. At <<http://pollingreport.com/2006.htm>>, 4 January 2007.

*Notes:*

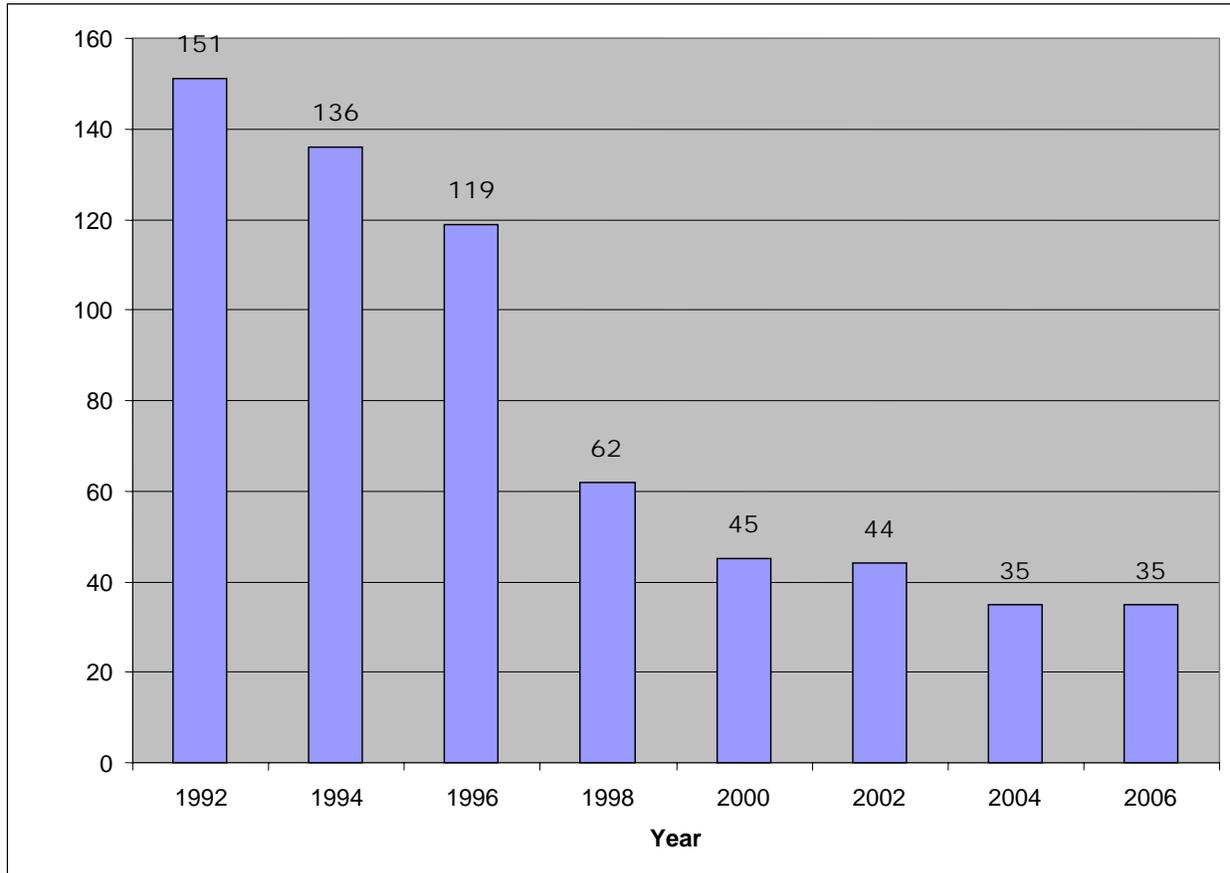
- \* Data presented are monthly averages for all polls conducted in that month.
- \*\* Democratic advantage calculated by subtracting percent for Republicans from percent for Democrats in generic House vote questions.
- \*\*\* Data consists of 121 polls taken between 8 September 2005 and 5 November 2006.
- \*\*\*\* Polls included had samples of likely voters (43 polls), registered voters (74 polls), and active voters (classified as respondents who usually vote/voted in recent elections) (3 polls).
- \*\*\*\*\* Polls included are ABC/Washington Post, AP-AOL, AP-Ipsos, CBS, CBS/New York Times, CNN, CNN/USA, Today/Gallup, Cook/RT Strategies, Democracy Corps, Diageo/Hotline, Fabrizio McLaughlin, Fox/Opinion Dynamics, Gallup, GWU Battleground, Newsweek, NPR, Pew, Time, and USA Today/Gallup.

**Figure 1-4**  
**Cook Political Report “Toss Up” House Races,**  
**February 2006 to November 2006**



Source: “2006 Competitive House Race Chart,” The Cook Political Report, 2006. At <<http://www.cookpolitical.com/races/house/chart.php>>, 9 January 2007.

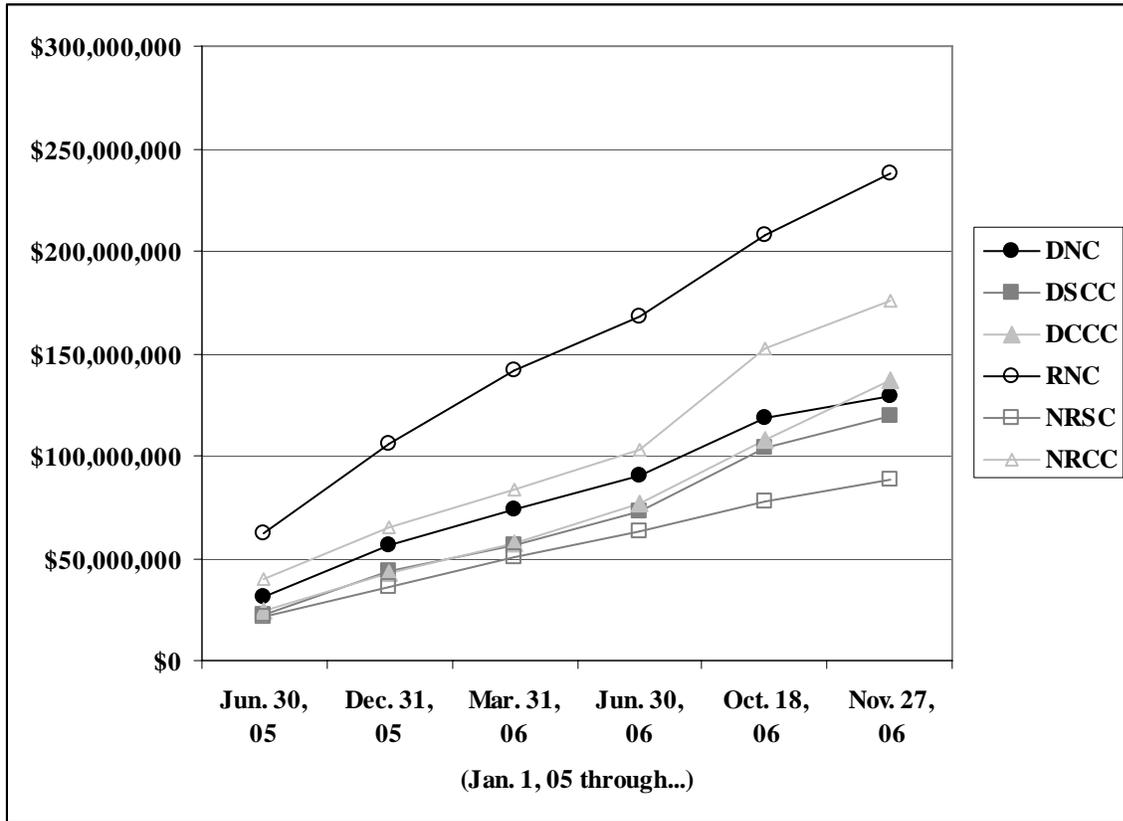
**Figure 1-5**  
**Competitive U.S. House Races Over Time, 1992-2006**



Source: Charlie Cook, "National Overview." *The Cook Political Report*, 4 October 2002, 2. Charlie Cook, "2004 Competitive House Race Chart." *The Cook Political Report*, 8 October 2004. At <[http://cookpolitical.com/races/report\\_pdfs/2004\\_house\\_competitive\\_oct8.pdf](http://cookpolitical.com/races/report_pdfs/2004_house_competitive_oct8.pdf)>, 20 January 2007. Charlie Cook, "2006 Competitive House Race Chart." *The Cook Political Report*, 7 October 2006. At <[http://cookpolitical.com/races/report\\_pdfs/2006\\_house\\_comp\\_oct8.pdf](http://cookpolitical.com/races/report_pdfs/2006_house_comp_oct8.pdf)>, 20 January 2007.

Notes: The numbers of competitive races were as of early October each year and are those classified as "toss ups" or leaning toward one party.

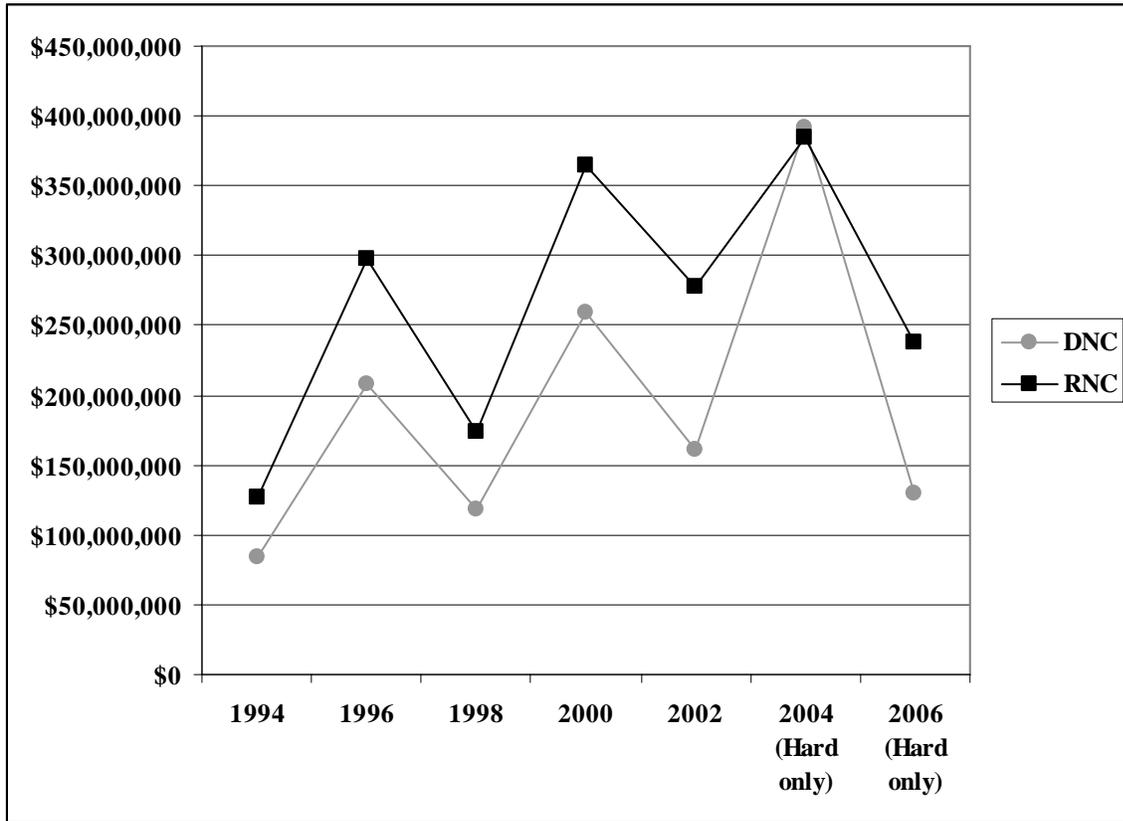
**Figure 1-6**  
**Hard-money (Federal) Receipts Throughout the 2006 Election Cycle**



*Source:* Federal Election Commission. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006News.shtml>>, 11 January 2007. November 27, 2006 data from Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Notes:* Total receipts do not include monies transferred among the listed committees. Data from January 1, 2005 through each date listed.

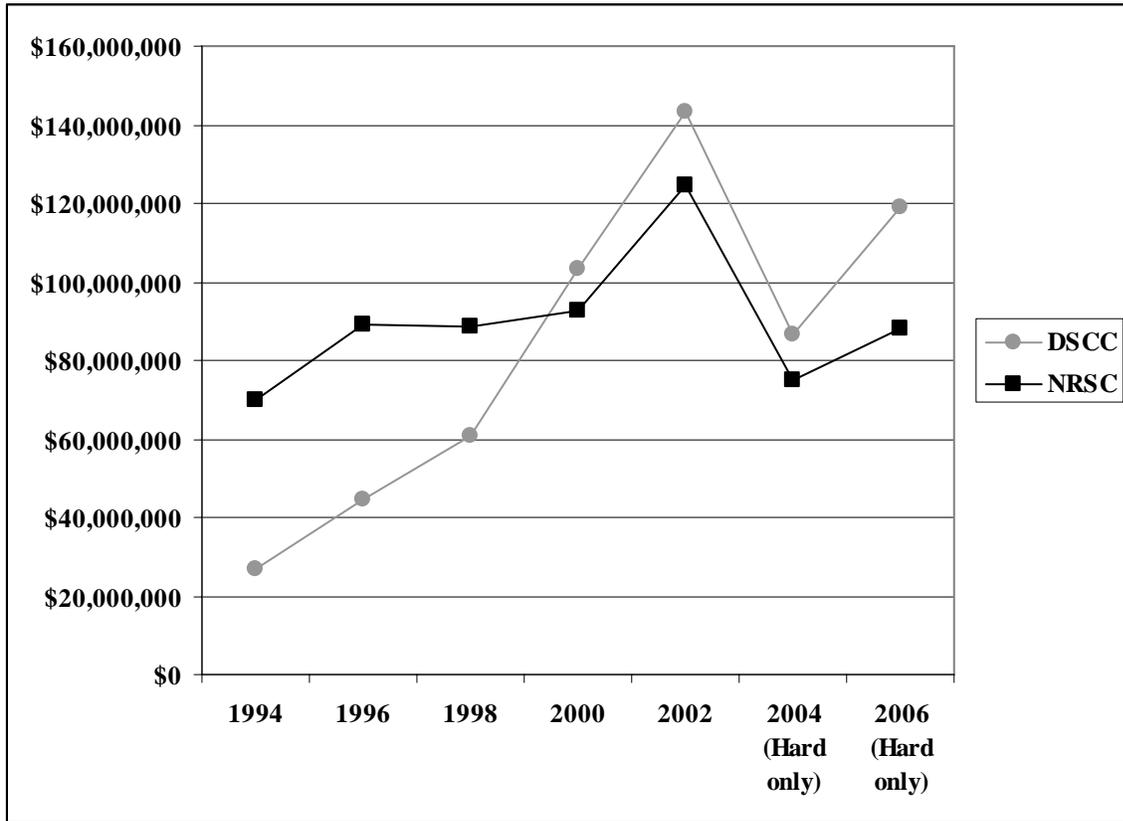
**Figure 1-7**  
**DNC and RNC Total Receipts, 1994-2006**



*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

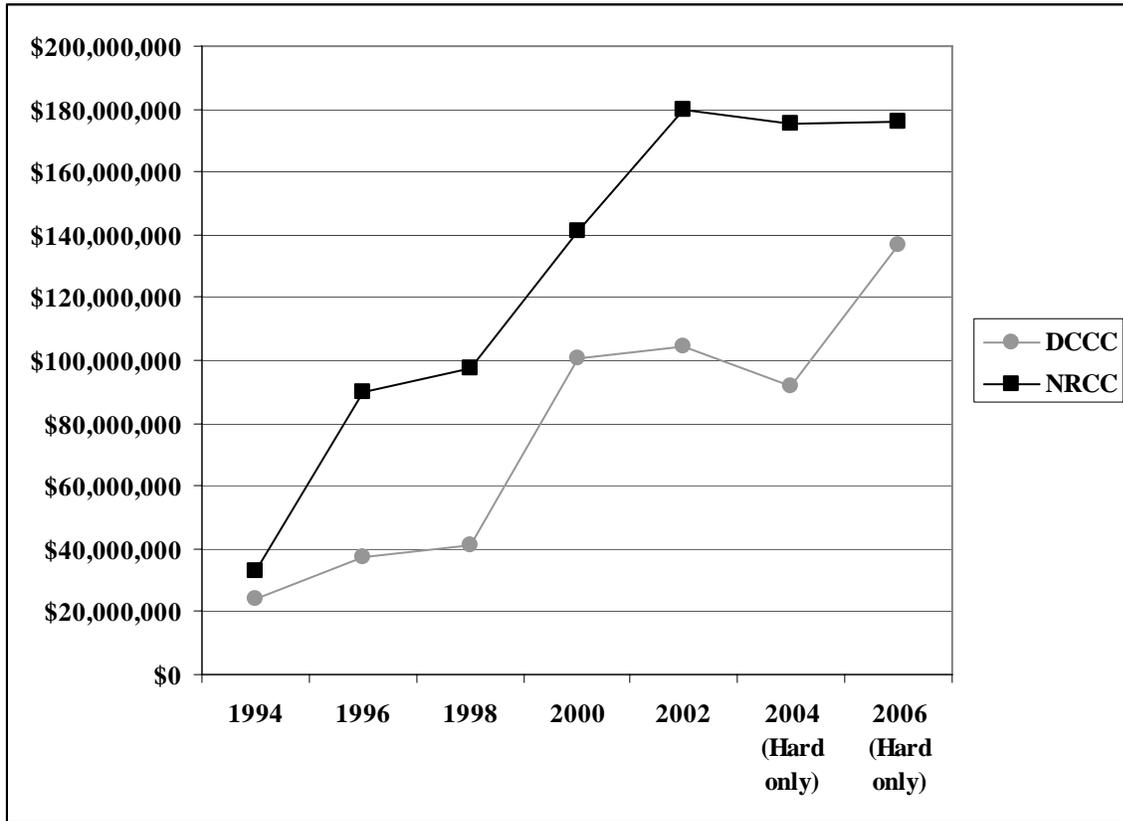
**Figure 1-8**  
**DSCC and NRSC Total Receipts, 1994-2006**



*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

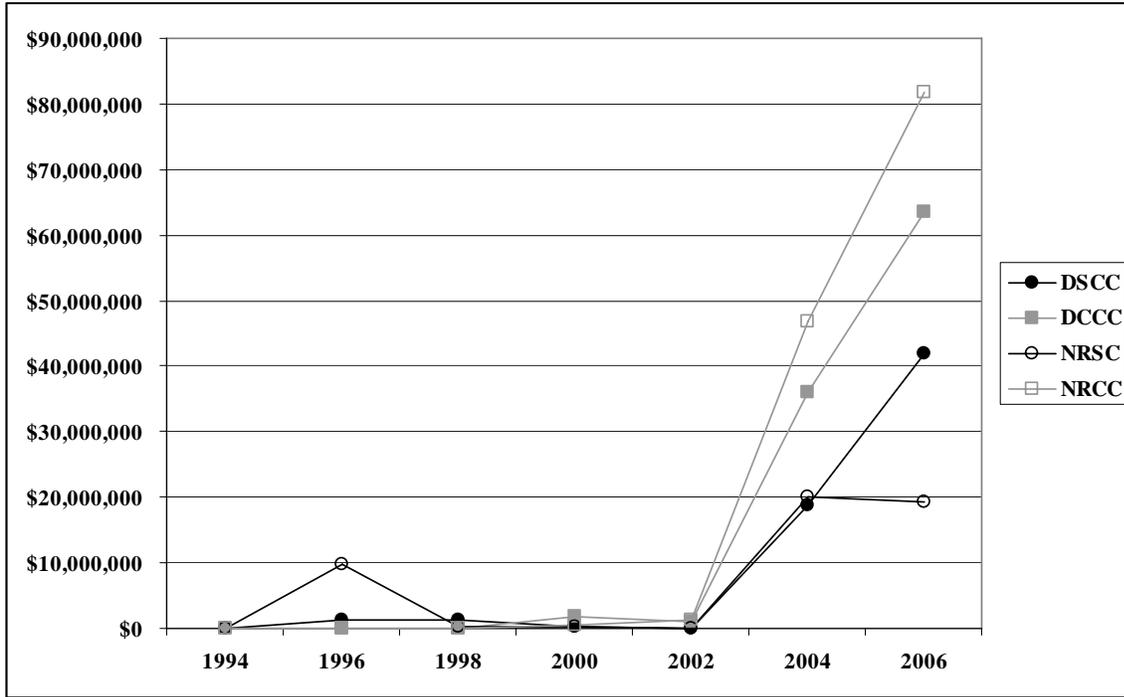
**Figure 1-9**  
**DCCC and NRCC Total Receipts, 1994-2006**



*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

**Figure 1-10**  
**Independent Expenditures by Congressional Party Committees, 1994-2006**



*Source:* Bob Biersack, deputy press officer, Federal Election Commission, email communication with Stephanie Curtis, January 11, 2007.

*Note:* Data from beginning of each election cycle through twenty days after the general election.

## **Volatility and Volition: The Pendulum Swings High and Hard in Colorado's Seventh District**

Kyle L. Saunders and Robert J. Duffy  
Colorado State University

By any measure, the 2002 Colorado Seventh Congressional District race was a squeaker, with Republican Bob Beauprez defeating Democrat Mike Feeley by only 121 votes.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, this slimmest of margins for Republican Beauprez led many observers to believe that this “truly competitive swing district” would be a national bellwether in subsequent election cycles. The 2004 race was not close, however, as then-incumbent Beauprez won by a margin of thirteen points over Democratic challenger Dave Thomas, even though John Kerry carried the district. Beauprez’s victory could be traced to the many advantages of incumbency—most notably fundraising—and to Thomas’s substandard performance.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, it came as a bit of a surprise when, just months later, Beauprez announced that he would run for governor. Beauprez’s decision created an open seat in the Seventh District and renewed expectations of a highly competitive contest. These expectations were dashed as Democrat Ed Perlmutter easily defeated Republican Rick O’Donnell, whom Beauprez had beaten in the 2002 Republican primary. Perlmutter won, despite being outspent by a fairly wide margin, in large part because of a national tide of discontent and a campaign that effectively tied O’Donnell to an unpopular President Bush.

### **The Electoral Context**

The Seventh District is considered highly competitive and is located in the western and northern suburbs of Denver. Going into the 2006 election, voter registration figures in the Seventh District showed that registered Democrats (122,855) outnumbered registered Republicans (113,591) by about 9,000, a comparative gain of 2,000 for Democrats compared to the 2004 cycle. A plurality of voters (125,460) in the district was unaffiliated.<sup>3</sup> This stands in contrast with the slight, 110-voter edge Democrats enjoyed in 2002.<sup>4</sup>

The district now appeared to lean even more Democratic than it had in the previous two cycles. In 2004, the Republicans held a statewide advantage of almost 180,000 registrants over the Democrats. However, the Democrats cut into that margin by the 2006 election by over 15,000 voters statewide; as noted above, 7,000 of that gain was in the Seventh District.<sup>5</sup> This could be attributable to many different variables, including an increasingly urbanized district, a weakened state Republican Party (and a concurrently stronger state Democratic Party), or even negative feelings towards the Bush administration in the district.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the 2002 race, see Daniel A. Smith, “Strings Attached: Outside Money in Colorado’s Seventh Congressional District” in *The Last Hurrah: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections*, edited by David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institutional Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the 2004 race, see Kyle Saunders and Robert Duffy, “The 2004 Colorado 7th District Congressional Race” in *Dancing without Partners: How Candidates, Parties, and Interests Groups Interact in the New Campaign Finance Environment* by David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and J. Quin Monson (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2005)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel A. Smith, “Strings Attached: Outside Money in Colorado’s Seventh Congressional District.” p. 191.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed account of the statewide trends in the 2004 race, see Kyle Saunders and Robert Duffy, “Money, Moderation, and Mobilization in the 2004 Colorado Senate Race: A Blueprint for Democratic Success in Red States” in *Electing Congress: New Rules for an Old Game*, edited by David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly Patterson (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2006).

Still, the large number of independents seemed to ensure that the race would remain competitive, especially as an open-seat race.

Prior electoral contexts also pointed to extant advantages for the Democrats. Al Gore carried the district by approximately two percent in the 2000 election cycle and Democratic candidate John Kerry had won the district by over three percentage points in 2004. With public opinion polls showing Bob Beauprez well behind in the governor's race throughout the campaign, there was no competitive statewide contest to generate enthusiasm for the Republicans or O'Donnell. Polls cited by both campaigns, as well as those publicly available, indicated a very sour mood towards President Bush in the district among likely voters.<sup>6</sup> This left the O'Donnell campaign essentially on its own to mobilize voters.<sup>7</sup>

Demographic factors also favored the Democrats in the Seventh District. The district, for example, is overwhelmingly urban (about 98 percent) with a median income (\$46,149) that is below the state median (\$47,203). Moreover, by Colorado standards the district is racially and ethnically diverse, with Latinos making up 19.6 percent of the population, African Americans 5.8 percent, and Asian Americans 2.9 percent.<sup>8</sup> Post-election research has pointed toward a Democratic trend among Hispanics in 2006, presumably a reaction to the Republican Party's perceived anti-immigrant stance; thus, the large proportion of Hispanics in the district could have contributed to Perlmutter's victory.<sup>9</sup> However, other demographic traits suggest that the district could be receptive to Republican candidates: nearly 63 percent of the working-age population is employed in white-collar occupations, and one out of every seven residents is a military veteran.<sup>10</sup>

Many Colorado voters take advantage of the state's early voting period and no-excuse absentee voting.<sup>11</sup> There is little doubt that early and absentee voting affected the tactics of the candidates, political parties, and interest groups in this race. With voters able to cast their ballots over an extended period, the old rules about advertising and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts no longer applied. Voters had to be identified and targeted earlier, campaign messages that once might have been saved until a few days before Election Day were now used earlier to reach those voters who are "persuadable," and more resources had to be expended in tracking which voters had cast ballots and which had not.<sup>12</sup> Despite Perlmutter's large winning margin, turnout in the Seventh District was higher in 2006 than in the 2002 midterm. Just over 182,000 voters turned out, representing 50.3 percent of registered voters; this compares to a rate of 46.9 percent of registered voters in the highly contested 2002 election and a 62.1 percent rate in 2004, which was a presidential election year.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> K.C. Jones, campaign manager, Coloradans for Rick O'Donnell, interview by Kyle Saunders, Wheat Ridge, Colorado, November 16, 2006; and Danielle Radovich Piper, campaign manager, Perlmutter for Change, interview by Robert J. Duffy, Golden, Colorado, November 30, 2006. Publicly available polls can be found at Real Clear Politics at <[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/writeup/colorado\\_7-23.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/writeup/colorado_7-23.html)>, 4 January 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, interview.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics, 2006* (Washington, D.C.: National Journal Group, 2003), 340.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Aguilera, "Dems Won over Latino Voters, Study Says," *Denver Post*, November 28, 2006, A1.

<sup>10</sup> Barone and Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics, 2006*, 340.

<sup>11</sup> John M. Broder, "Growing Absentee Voting Is Reshaping Campaigns," *New York Times*, October 22, 2006, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Beage Atwater, coordinator, Colorado Victory 2006, telephone interview by Robert J. Duffy, December 1, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> CNN, "U.S. House of Representatives / Colorado 07," November 8, 2006. At <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/CO/H/07/index.html>>, 4 January 2007; CNN, "Colorado 7," November 8, 2004. At <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/CO/index.html>>, 4 January 2007; CNN, "Election 2002-House of Representatives," November 4, 2002. At <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2002/pages/house/index.html>>, 4 January 2007; Colorado Secretary of State, "Colorado Cumulative Report," November 8, 2006. At <<http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/electionresults2006G/>>, 4 January 2007.

## The Candidates and the Campaign

Thirty-seven-year-old Rick O'Donnell, a lifelong resident of Jefferson County, was most recently the chairman of the Colorado Committee on Higher Education. Prior to that, O'Donnell worked in Washington, D.C. think tanks and served in positions in Republican Governor Bill Owens's cabinet. As noted above, O'Donnell ran unsuccessfully for the Republican nomination in 2002, losing to Beauprez by eight percentage points. O'Donnell ran unopposed in the 2006 primary, which did not help his low name recognition, something his campaign had to work to overcome.<sup>14</sup>

Democrat Ed Perlmutter won his party's nomination by defeating former State Representative Peggy Lamm and college professor Herb Rubenstein, with 53 percent of the vote in the primary. Prior to the election, Perlmutter worked as the director of a law firm and specialized in business reorganizations and commercial litigation. Perlmutter had previously been elected to two four-year terms in the State Senate, representing central Jefferson; he was the first Democrat elected in that district in 30 years. While in the state Senate, he served on numerous committees and was that body's president *pro tem* during the 2001-02 sessions. Perlmutter had also assisted in numerous campaigns and most recently was co-chair of the Kerry campaign in Colorado.

Although Perlmutter's margin of victory in the primary was substantial, the race was actually quite competitive; his campaign was forced to spend more than \$1.1 million to win the nomination. With less than \$100,000 remaining, the Perlmutter campaign's first task was to resume fundraising.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, with more than \$1 million in the bank, O'Donnell appeared to enjoy an advantage entering the general election. But the contested primary had made Perlmutter and his campaign more nimble; from the outset, the Perlmutter camp took the offensive and never relented. Early on, for example, Perlmutter criticized O'Donnell for supporting a low-level radioactive waste site in Adams County. The charge forced O'Donnell to react and explain his position, but the pattern was set. Perlmutter and his allies would attack, and O'Donnell would be forced to defend himself. Most importantly, the Perlmutter campaign and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) were remarkably effective in nationalizing this race by linking O'Donnell to George Bush and depicting him as just "another vote for Bush's agenda" on Iraq, Social Security privatization, and stem cell research.

Perlmutter also succeeded in portraying O'Donnell as being out of the mainstream. In direct mail, television ads, and public events, O'Donnell was assailed for his "radical ideas," most notably on Social Security. O'Donnell's vulnerability on the issue stemmed from an essay he had written in 1995 for a Washington think tank. In the essay, O'Donnell claimed that it was "time to slay" Social Security, a program that sent "the un-American message that it is not your responsibility to take care of yourself."<sup>16</sup> O'Donnell spent most of the next three months disavowing those remarks and asking voters for forgiveness. His efforts to change the subject to immigration, taxes, and Perlmutter's ethics were largely unsuccessful.

Perlmutter emerged from the primary with a double-digit lead in the polls over O'Donnell and never looked back. Indeed, most public polls as well as Perlmutter's internal polls showed him with a comfortable lead throughout. As a result, the influx of independent expenditures by organized interests that many had expected never materialized. With O'Donnell's prospects looking bleak several weeks before Election Day, the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) canceled a planned ad buy and shifted the resources to other districts in an attempt to protect incumbents and candidates in other

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<sup>14</sup> Jones, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Piper, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Rick O'Donnell, "For Freedom's Sake, Eliminate Social Security," *American Civilization*, February 1995.

competitive races.<sup>17</sup> In the last two weeks of the campaign, the Seventh District was taken off the final NRCC target list.<sup>18</sup>

## Money

With Beauprez's decision to vacate the seat to run for governor, the Seventh District was immediately targeted by both parties as critical to control of the House of Representatives. Accordingly, it was expected that the race would be costly.

### *Candidates*

As it turns out, the race for the Seventh District was still the most expensive race for an open House seat in state history.<sup>19</sup> Together, Federal Elections Commission (FEC) records indicate that the two candidates raised and spent more than \$5 million, a considerable sum to be sure, but a figure that paled in comparison to the amounts spent elsewhere in 2006.<sup>20</sup>

As indicated in table 2-1, Perlmutter raised just under \$3 million for the cycle, slightly less than O'Donnell. Of course, Perlmutter had a contested primary in August and spent \$1.1 million to win his party's nomination. As noted, after winning the primary, Perlmutter had less than \$100,000. One of the campaign's first steps was to reach out to Peggy Lamm and her donors. Party leaders also helped by sponsoring fundraisers and by directing donors to the campaign. The DCCC helped with leadership political action committee (PAC) contributions, including \$10,000 each from PACs affiliated with Rahm Emmanuel, Steny Hoyer, and Nancy Pelosi. In addition, minority leader Nancy Pelosi held two fundraisers—one in the district after the primary and another in San Francisco. Others who helped raise money included Ken Salazar, John Edwards, Barack Obama, and former President Bill Clinton, who helped raise about \$125,000 for Perlmutter.<sup>21</sup>

In the end, the Perlmutter campaign raised an additional \$1.9 million for the general election. Approximately 72 percent of Perlmutter's money came from individual donors, with PACs contributing just over 25 percent. Labor PACs were by far the largest source of PAC money, accounting for 43 percent of the total. Business PACs contributed 18 percent of the PAC total, and 39 percent came from ideological/single issue PACs.<sup>22</sup>

With no primary opponent, the O'Donnell camp had \$1.2 million in cash on hand on July 19.<sup>23</sup> A fundraising visit by President Bush just two days later netted the campaign an additional \$600,000. All told, O'Donnell raised just over \$2.8 million, 69 percent from individual donors and 23 percent from

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<sup>17</sup> Jim VandeHei and Chris Cillizza, "As Elections Near, Dueling with Dollars," *Washington Post*, October 29, 2006, A01.

<sup>18</sup> Bob Cusack, "NRCC Targets 33 Districts," *The Hill*, October 25, 2006, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Chris Barge, "Money Gap in Race for the 7<sup>th</sup>," *Rocky Mountain News*, 14 October 2006, A10.

<sup>20</sup> M.E. Sprengelmeyer, "7th District Not Big on Donations, Crucial Race in Middle of Pack on Independent Expenditures," *Rocky Mountain News*, 24 October 2006, A6.

<sup>21</sup> Piper, interview.

<sup>22</sup> The Center for Responsive Politics, "Ed Perlmutter," 9 January 2007. At <[http://www.opensecrets.org/politicians/summary\\_newmems.asp?CID=N00027510&cycle=2006](http://www.opensecrets.org/politicians/summary_newmems.asp?CID=N00027510&cycle=2006)>, 9 January 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Greg Giroux, "Perlmutter, O'Donnell Advance in Colorado, Lamborn Is on His Way," *CQPolitics.com*, 9 August 2006. At <<http://www.political-news.org/breaking/27348/perlmutter-odonnell-advance-in-colo-lamborn-is-on-his-way.html>>, 4 December 2006.

PACs. The PAC money was almost evenly split between business PACs and ideological/single issue PACs.<sup>24</sup> Although O'Donnell lost, lack of resources was not the reason.

### *Parties*

As mentioned above, the Seventh District race was targeted by both political parties early on. According to FEC records, the DCCC made \$2 million in independent expenditures in the contest, an amount that far eclipsed spending by its Republican counterpart (see table 2-2). The bulk of DCCC spending was for television advertising attacking O'Donnell, but the organization also sent mail and helped Perlmutter with fundraising and provided money to the state party's coordinated campaign.

The NRCC ended up spending about \$560,000 in the race, virtually all of it going to negative ads attacking Perlmutter (see below). The NRCC also paid for two public opinion surveys and invested about \$25,000 in phone banks to help with the GOTV effort.<sup>25</sup> The NRCC had initially reserved more time in the Denver television market, but pulled out less than three weeks before Election Day when it became clear that O'Donnell was struggling.<sup>26</sup>

The Republican National Committee (RNC) helped with the ground war effort, providing three field directors and many field staffers. Many of the field staffers, however, were redeployed for incumbent protection in the highly competitive Fourth District race when national party leaders realized just how vulnerable Republicans were this cycle. The RNC also contributed to the state party's coordinated campaign, including direct mail.<sup>27</sup>

### *Interest Groups*

As table 2-3 indicates, interest groups spent money in the race, but far less than most observers had initially predicted. Perceptions that the race was never really close, fueled by public and private polling, contributed to this outcome. As discussed below, a number of organizations were involved on the ground – sending mail, communicating with members, and getting out the vote – but only three groups ran television ads. The biggest spender was Americans for Honesty on Issues (AHI), a 527 organization financed entirely by Texan Bob Perry, who also provided much of the funding for the better known Swift Boat Veterans for Truth in the 2004 presidential race.<sup>28</sup> The group spent just over \$250,000 on television ads attacking Perlmutter. The other group that spent heavily was Too Extreme for Colorado, a 527 organization funded by Pat Stryker and Tim Gill, two wealthy Coloradans who also financed several 527s that were involved in other state and federal races in the state, including the Fourth Congressional District.<sup>29</sup> Too Extreme for Colorado spent about \$200,000 on television ads attacking O'Donnell on Social Security. Of the remaining groups, only the National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund, Service Employees International Union, COPE, and the Trust in Small Business PAC spent more than \$20,000 in the Seventh District.

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<sup>24</sup>The Center for Responsive Politics, "2006 Race: Colorado District 7," *Opensecrets.org*, 18 December 2006. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/summary.asp?ID=CO07&Cycle=2006>>, 18 December 2006.

<sup>25</sup>"Money in Politics Database: Independent Expenditures, Edwin Perlmutter," *Political Money Line*, 27 November 2006. At <[http://www.fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_indepexp.exe?DoFm=06h6co07027](http://www.fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_indepexp.exe?DoFm=06h6co07027)>, 3 December 2006.

<sup>26</sup>Jim VandeHei and Chris Cillizza, "As Elections Near, Dueling with Dollars," *Washington Post*, October 29, 2006, A01.

<sup>27</sup>Jones, interview.

<sup>28</sup>Chris Barge, "Swift Boat Ad Backer Paying for Colorado Spot," *Rocky Mountain News*, 17 October 2006, A5.

<sup>29</sup>In the 4<sup>th</sup> District, Stryker and Gill financed Coloradans for Life, a 527 which spent more than \$2 million in an unsuccessful effort to defeat Republican incumbent Marilyn Musgrave.

## Effects of Money

### *The Ground War*

Although the vast majority of Perlmutter's spending was for broadcast television, the campaign produced two mail pieces that reflected its efforts to attract unaffiliated women voters and to capitalize on the desire for change. One emphasized that Perlmutter "supports our families' rights to make our own health care decisions" and contrasted his commitment to stem cell research, his belief that choices of life and death should not involve government, and his support for abortion rights with O'Donnell's stance on the same issues. The second mail piece declared that Perlmutter is "The Choice for Change," and featured quotes from newspaper endorsements mostly citing his accomplishments and mainstream values.

The DCCC sent two pieces of mail linking O'Donnell to Bush and criticizing his stance on Social Security. Both pieces of mail, timed to arrive at the same time the DCCC's similarly themed television ads aired, featured the same photo of O'Donnell and Bush, arm in arm, leaving Air Force One. One ad claims the *Denver Post* uncovered some "radical" facts about O'Donnell's memo to eliminate Social Security. The mail piece also claimed that O'Donnell's "radical" record on Social Security is "Bush Approved" and directed voters to a DCCC website, [www.RadicalRick.org](http://www.RadicalRick.org). The words "Radical Rick" appeared at the top of the site, which invited visitors to "meet the candidate George Bush wants you to send to Congress." Just below that was the same photo of Bush and O'Donnell from the mail piece, altered to animate their hands waving. The photo caption read, "Wave Social Security GOODBYE!!!" And just in case voters did not get this subtle message, further down the page read, "On the issues that matter the most for Colorado, O'Donnell marches in lockstep with Bush."<sup>30</sup>

The Colorado Democratic Party did seven unique pieces of mail as part of its coordinated campaign. One focused on illegal immigration and repeated Perlmutter's claim that O'Donnell advocated seventeen-year-old boys skipping their final semester of high school so they could guard the U.S.-Mexico border. The mail piece also mentioned O'Donnell's desire to eliminate Social Security and his support for President Bush's veto of stem cell research legislation. In addition, the mail piece included a tag line common to other pieces: "Rick O'Donnell: Extremist Ideas, Wrong Direction." Two pieces of mail challenged O'Donnell on ethics, citing a controversial trip O'Donnell took to Panama with his girlfriend, paid for by a local television station while he was a government employee. Perhaps the most memorable piece of mail in the campaign resembled a postcard with the words "Greetings from Panama" superimposed on a picture of a smiling O'Donnell wearing a Hawaiian shirt. The punch line appeared at the bottom: "Rick O'Donnell. Not even in Congress. Already breaking the ethics rules."

The Democrats' federal coordinated campaign in the Seventh District was conducted by Colorado Victory 2006 (CV06), with a budget of \$495,000. In addition to the DNC and DCCC, CV06 solicited funds from labor PACs and women's organizations. The field program in the Seventh was organized along state senate district lines, and was carried out by both paid staff and volunteers. CV06 initially employed fifteen to twenty paid staffers, a number that increased as the campaign progressed and exceeded the effort in previous cycles.<sup>31</sup>

CV06 conducted an aggressive and sophisticated absentee ballot and early voting GOTV program featuring considerable voter contact and targeting. One official with CV06 estimated that the average contact was eight to ten times per person.<sup>32</sup> The decision to focus on early and absentee voting was based on prior elections, when 60 percent of registered Democrats had voted early or absentee, a rate higher

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<sup>30</sup> Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, "www.RadicalRick.org," December 3, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Atwater, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

than other districts in the state. The Democrats' goal in this race was to exceed that figure and to only have about a third of the vote still out by Election Day.<sup>33</sup> Starting in September, CV06 utilized parties in parks in targeted neighborhoods, live phones, robocalls, mail, door-to-door canvasses, and other techniques to encourage people to vote early and absentee. Absentee ballot applications were handed out at every event; staffers would track who received them and then "chased them" through Election Day. County clerks in the Seventh mailed out the absentee ballots between October 10 and 15. By that time, about one-third of Democrats had already received a robocall telling them an absentee ballot was on the way, a message from Ed Perlmutter asking for their vote, and a follow-up robocall urging them to complete their ballot. By October 19, party officials were confident the program was working and asked the DNC and DCCC for additional money to "nail it down."<sup>34</sup> In the end, 67 percent of Democrats voted early.<sup>35</sup>

CV06 targeted unaffiliated voters and drop-off Democrats, with an emphasis on women. As noted above, women voters greatly outnumber men in the Seventh, and because Perlmutter had defeated a woman in the Democratic primary, a special effort was made to appeal to women. Democratic women who had voted in just one of three prior elections were targeted, as were Republican women who lived with Democratic men. In one example of how this targeting was executed, twenty thousand women received a postcard focusing on stem cell research. Many of those featured handwritten notes from other women inviting them to events in the district: fundraisers, phone banks, and so-called "Yappy hours."<sup>36</sup> CV06 also recruited many female surrogates in the campaign with any eye toward attracting moderate women.

CV06 also targeted Latino and African-American voters. Spanish language mail pieces were sent to Latino voters exhorting them to vote absentee and noting "This is a very important election. Make your voice heard." Events were held in Latino neighborhoods to publicize the absentee and early voting options. In another effort aimed at Latino voters, Senator Ken Salazar campaigned for Perlmutter and urged a vote for "his friend." African Americans in Adams County were approached through churches where, beginning in September, volunteers distributed absentee ballot applications.

The O'Donnell campaign sent two pieces of direct mail, including a large, green, thirty-eight-page pamphlet explaining the candidates' positions on a host of issues. The pamphlet, along with an endorsement letter from Senator John McCain, was sent to 20,000 independents and Democrats thought to be persuadable. The mailing cost more than \$30,000, an unusually high cost for a mailing, but understandable given its heft.<sup>37</sup> The second piece of mail, sent out close to Election Day, was a standard "billboard" mail piece titled "Rick O'Donnell: The New Voice Coloradoans Need." The mail piece emphasized O'Donnell's support for securing the borders, stopping deficit spending, and supporting the troops.

The Colorado Republican Party sent sixteen pieces of mail as part of its coordinated campaign. As one would expect, the mail was timed to reinforce the messages the O'Donnell camp was emphasizing in its television ads. All told, five of the mail pieces addressed immigration, four touched on taxes and Social Security, and three on crime and ethics. Several referred to Perlmutter as either "bankruptcy lawyer Ed Perlmutter" or "politician Ed Perlmutter." Some of the early mail was designed to stem the fallout from Democratic attacks on the Social Security issue. One piece, "Rick O'Donnell 1994," featured a photo of the candidate as a twenty-four-year old "know-it-all kid" who wrote that Social Security should be abolished. In a transparent effort to inoculate himself from these attacks, O'Donnell asked voters to

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Carl Hulse, "Democrats Discover New Political Frontier," *New York Times*, 1 November 2006, A19.

“forgive...and to listen.” A letter from O’Donnell on the flip side of the mail piece explains his current thinking on the issue and contains a promise that he “would never abolish Social Security. Period.” Those mail pieces were followed by several focusing on illegal immigration that tried to link Perlmutter to Senator Ted Kennedy’s so-called “amnesty plan.” One claimed that Perlmutter “would hand out nearly \$50 billion in your tax dollars to illegals.” Another stated that Perlmutter’s plan would “require employers to pay foreign workers a higher wage than American workers.” In the campaign’s final weeks, the mail shifted to the issue of crime, focusing in particular on the threat sex offenders posed to children. One, printed in black and white, seems designed to resemble an official law enforcement document. One side reads, in large bold print, “Sex Offender Notification: A convicted sex offender has moved to” and concludes with the name of the recipient’s street. It then explains what to do if “you see someone acting suspicious...” The flip side notes that “This notification is not real” then attacks Perlmutter for not protecting kids from sex offenders and claims that Perlmutter “is so soft on crime it’s downright scary.”<sup>38</sup>

According to O’Donnell’s campaign manager K.C. Jones, the volunteer structure inside the Republican ground effort was “well-coordinated and seamless;” and the campaign never found itself wanting for resources or staff.<sup>39</sup> The O’Donnell side used a lot of technology, including the use of scannable call sheets, email, online databases and cell phones. Coordination was all done in house: every time a volunteer came into the office, they were staged and given a coordinated activity sheet for that shift so as not to duplicate efforts. At shift’s end, workers turned in a report of their efforts, which was then updated in the campaign’s database. The information included the number and quality of contacts, the reported propensity and disposition of their contacts, as well as any successful volunteer recruitment that had occurred on that shift.<sup>40</sup>

Voter targeting was not done on the basis of demography *per se*, but women and seniors were noted as important groups in the microtargeting strategy. The goal of the Republican microtargeting effort was to find persuadable high-propensity voters based on market research and the Voter Vault database. The aim was to find voters who could be persuaded on core issues such as immigration, the war on terror, and others. For example, especially later in the campaign, the walkers would take copies of the aforementioned “big green book” left over from the mailing and ask the person who answered the door what issues mattered most. They would then turn to the relevant section of the book and discuss those issues with the voter.<sup>41</sup>

The O’Donnell campaign also targeted Hispanics using the Hispanic Voter Vault, and attempted to contact 3,500 individuals in the district in the final four days with a Hispanic volunteer face-to-face. The O’Donnell campaign also “adopted” Colorado Senate District Twenty-four, which is a primarily Hispanic district mostly outside of the Seventh, and helped with Republican recruitment and GOTV there as well.<sup>42</sup>

Republican GOTV efforts for the “Final Four” days of the campaign involved approximately five hundred volunteers who worked one thousand shifts of four hours duration. The O’Donnell camp’s goal was to call every unaffiliated voter at least once and to also try to arrange a face-to-face contact with the microtargeted universe of voters that had been provided by the RNC, which then updated their voter list

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<sup>38</sup> In response, the Perlmutter camp noted that his votes to table the legislation in question had been at the request of Republican legislators who favored a stronger bill. Chris Barge, “Ad for O’Donnell misfires, Perlmutter ‘killed’ bill about sex offenders at GOP request,” *Rocky Mountain News*, October 24, 2006, 12A.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

to remove early voters.<sup>43</sup> Over the entire campaign, the O'Donnell campaign estimates that it contacted persuadable voters four to five times.

The Republicans easily met their GOTV goals. The campaign had set a target of 76,000 contacts, either by phone or in person. They hit 125 percent of their goals.<sup>44</sup> On Saturday before the election, Colorado's Seventh Congressional District was first in the country among Republican House races in terms of voter contact, reaching 48,564 voters by phone or by door. The O'Donnell total voter contact for the GOTV seventy-two hour push was 103,573.<sup>45</sup>

Interest groups were more active on the ground than on the air, especially on the Democratic side (see table 2-3). Labor organizations were particularly active sending mail and working the district. In the words of Beage Atwater, who managed CV06 Colorado Victory 2006, "Labor is just huge in the Seventh."<sup>46</sup> Colorado Labor 2006 sent two pieces of mail focusing on health care. One featured a photo of a mother and a sick child and stated that Perlmutter will "fight for affordable health care" while O'Donnell "will increase health care costs." SEIU COPE also focused on health care in its two mail pieces. The front side of one mail piece resembled a band aid, and stated that "Our health care system needs major surgery, but all Congress has given us are band-aid solutions." The back side claimed that "Ed Perlmutter will work to find a real cure to solve our health care crisis." Another union affiliated organization, the Alliance for Retired Americans, paid for two pieces of direct mail on Social Security and prescription drugs. The Colorado Fund for Children and Public Education, an affiliate of the Colorado Education Association, also sent mail and made phone calls.<sup>47</sup>

Labor unions were quite active in other ways, too, with Perlmutter, who actively courted union support, drawing the endorsements of many national and local organizations, including the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the Communications Workers of America, and the International Association of Firefighters. A number of local union organizations held fundraisers, others engaged in web advocacy and internal member-to-member communications. Those unions were also part of a larger effort by the Colorado AFL-CIO, which conducted a large-scale voter identification, education, and mobilization campaign in the district. In addition to supporting Perlmutter, the labor groups were working a number of state legislative races as well as a minimum wage ballot measure. As in 2004, hundreds of union volunteers canvassed neighborhoods, put up yard signs, and knocked on doors, talking to union members.<sup>48</sup>

On the Republican side, the National Association of Home Builders sent two pieces of mail focusing on taxes. The front side of one read, "The only certainties in life are death and taxes. Why does Ed Perlmutter believe they should happen at the same time?" The U.S. Chamber of Commerce endorsed O'Donnell and sent one mail piece noting his support for lower taxes, a stronger economy, and creating jobs. The National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund also endorsed O'Donnell and paid for a plastic bag containing the Sunday *Denver Post* one weekend. Other groups, including the National Right to Life PAC and the Club for Growth sent at least one piece of mail and engaged in web advocacy supporting O'Donnell.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Chris Barge, "GOP Voting Machine Keeps Dems on Toes," *Rocky Mountain News*, October 27, 2006, A4; and Jones, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Jones, interview.

<sup>45</sup> Jones, interview; and K.C. Jones email blast, "O'Donnell Team #1 in Nation," November 7, 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Atwater, interview.

<sup>47</sup> Piper, interview.

<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of union activity in 2004, see Saunders and Duffy, "Money, Moderation, and Mobilization in the 2004 Colorado Senate Race."

<sup>49</sup> "Money in Politics database: Independent Expenditures, Rick O'Donnell," *Political Money Line*, 27 November 2006. At < [http://www.fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_indepexp.exe?DoFm=06h2co07055](http://www.fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_indepexp.exe?DoFm=06h2co07055)>, 3 December 2006.

The most noteworthy and controversial action by a conservative group involved Focus on the Family head James Dobson, who sent members in the district an email urging recipients not to “let the abortion industry and advocates of homosexual marriage have their way” and praised O’Donnell for supporting a federal marriage protection amendment.<sup>50</sup> Although Dobson stopped short of endorsing O’Donnell, critics suggested the email was clearly intended to influence the election. Charitable organizations like Focus on the Family are prohibited from engaging in overt political activity.

### *The Air War*

Neither campaign advertised on radio, opting to focus instead on broadcast television. The Perlmutter campaign used the bulk of its cash for television commercials, spending about \$1.4 million to air five commercials at an average cost of \$250 per ratings point.<sup>51</sup> The issues addressed in the commercials reflected the campaign’s focus on unaffiliated voters, especially women, as well as the need for change. The ads sought to portray Perlmutter as moderate, pragmatic, and in touch with the district. “Dad,” the first ad, aired in mid-September and featured Perlmutter’s three daughters introducing him, saying, “he’s always there for us. Now Dad’s running for Congress to change things. Like fighting the dumping of nuclear waste in Adams County, pushing to develop renewable energy, and investing in stem cell research. He’d be a great congressman, and he’s a great dad.” The ad concludes with Perlmutter saying, “I approve this ad,” with his daughters adding, “And so do we!”

In a bit of luck, the campaign’s second ad, “Protect,” hit the airwaves four days before the Mark Foley scandal broke. As a result, the campaign extended the ad’s run for several days to take advantage of their good fortune.<sup>52</sup> In the ad, Perlmutter says, “I have three daughters, and I want to protect them. In Congress, I’ll fight to protect kids from online predators....” In the ad, Perlmutter also says, “My faith teaches that family comes first, and that’s how I live my life. I’m Ed Perlmutter and I approved this message, because Congress needs to start protecting our children for a change.”

The next two ads criticized O’Donnell and included footage of O’Donnell and President Bush arm in arm in front of Air Force One, a clear effort to link O’Donnell to a president with a 38 percent approval rating in the district.<sup>53</sup> As noted, one commercial claimed that O’Donnell wanted to require every seventeen-year-old boy to skip the final semester of high school to patrol the Mexican border, with the voiceover saying, “Now O’Donnell wants to take his reckless and dangerous ideas to Congress.” The other ad claimed that O’Donnell’s “latest idea” was to send an additional 75,000 troops to Iraq, a plan that “goes even further than George Bush. Another bad idea from Rick O’Donnell.” The ad concludes with Perlmutter saying, “I approved this message, because Iraq is a mess, and something has got to change.”

Perlmutter’s final ad noted his many newspaper endorsements, as well as that of the Fraternal Order of Police. According to Danielle Radovich Piper, Perlmutter’s campaign manager, the law and order elements were included in the ad as a precaution against the “soft on crime” ads being aired by the NRCC and mail from the Colorado Republican Party stressing the same theme. The ad notes that Perlmutter, who has three children, “will always protect our children” and is in touch with “mainstream values.”

For its part, the O’Donnell campaign spent even more on television advertising than Perlmutter, airing six spots at a total cost of \$1.9 million.<sup>54</sup> This was about \$600,000 more than the campaign had initially

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<sup>50</sup> Chris Barge, “Dobson E-mail Painful,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 1 November 2006, A4.

<sup>51</sup> Piper, interview.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Jones, interview.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

budgeted; according to K.C. Jones, O'Donnell's campaign manager, "I decided to go with the Cadillac media plan. We started with the Pinto."<sup>55</sup> Unlike Perlmutter, O'Donnell had no primary opponent and was able to conserve his cash for the general election. As a result, however, nearly half the voters in the district did not know who he was when the campaign began in earnest.<sup>56</sup> His first ad, therefore, was designed to introduce him to the district. In the humorous, self-deprecating ad, O'Donnell speaks of how he grew up in a large Irish family, overcame dyslexia, and was a "bit of a nerd" who worked bagging groceries. He promises that if elected he will "clean up Congress," just like he did at the end of the day at the grocery store.

His second ad, called "The Truth Matters," was designed to inoculate him from the attacks that he once suggested eliminating Social Security and now wanted to privatize it. Speaking directly to the camera, O'Donnell says "When I was twenty-four, I thought I knew it all. I said Social Security was a failure. My mom depends on it. I was wrong years ago. Social Security is a promise we must keep." He then goes on to say that "Ed Perlmutter is trying to scare you" and has proposed cutting benefits and raising taxes.

When polling showed that the ad did not stop the bleeding on the Social Security issue, the campaign opted to try to raise Perlmutter's negatives by attacking him on immigration, taxes, and ethics.<sup>57</sup> One ad, featuring footage of illegal immigrants climbing a wall, claimed that Perlmutter supported Ted Kennedy's plan of "amnesty and handouts." Another ad noted that "Politician Ed Perlmutter makes government work...for himself." The ad charged that, as a state senator, Perlmutter had voted to "raise our taxes then voted himself a pay raise." A third ad claimed that Perlmutter would raise taxes, give illegal aliens "billions in government benefits," and cut defense spending. That ad featured images of missiles launching while the narration claims that "Ed Perlmutter would put us all in danger." O'Donnell's final ad was positive, focusing on favorable comments and endorsements from newspapers noting, among other things, that he was the one candidate well-versed in the issues and was an "independent thinker."

The DCCC spent heavily in the Seventh District race, with virtually all of the money going to television advertising. In all, the DCCC aired four different ads over the last month of the campaign. As noted above, the DCCC sought to link O'Donnell with an unpopular president, and all four ads featured images of O'Donnell and President Bush in front of Air Force One. In addition, all contained the phrase "Rick O'Donnell: another vote for George Bush's agenda." The DCCC also tried to portray the Republican as out of the mainstream, with three of the ads pointing to O'Donnell's "radical ideas." The first two ads focused exclusively on O'Donnell, with the first criticizing him for once writing that Social Security should be eliminated, and the second attacking O'Donnell's views on embryonic stem cell research. The latter two ads were comparative, with each beginning with an attack on O'Donnell and concluding with praise for Perlmutter, saying that he was "the right change for Colorado." The final ad, titled "Bush Agenda," repeated the Social Security attack but noted that O'Donnell wanted to send 75,000 more troops to Iraq and would be "another vote for George Bush's agenda."

In stark contrast to its earlier involvement in the Seventh, when it spent heavily on behalf of Bob Beauprez, the NRCC ran only two ads at a cost of approximately \$500,000. The first ad, which aired in mid-October, sought to humorously portray Perlmutter as a hypocrite on the issue of renewable energy. The ad contrasted "candidate Ed," who claimed to support renewable energy, with "legislator Ed" who had sponsored legislation favored by the gas industry. The ad went on to note that Perlmutter had significant investments in the oil industry and asked "Ed Perlmutter—renewable energy or big oil? Which do you believe?" Photos of Perlmutter's head were superimposed on two smaller bodies, holding money in one hand and smiling. The second ad was darker, focusing on the issue of sex offenders. Against the

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<sup>55</sup> Chris Barge, "Money Gap in the Race for the 7<sup>th</sup>," *Rocky Mountain News* 14 October 2006, A10.

<sup>56</sup> Jones, interview.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

backdrop of a small child on a swing, the narrator says Ed Perlmutter promises to support laws that will keep our kids safe. But he killed a plan for informing sexual assault victims that a sex offender lived in their neighborhoods.” At the ad’s conclusion, the narrator says, “We can’t keep our children safe with false promises,” with the words “Ed Perlmutter, False Promises” superimposed over the image of a now empty swing.

Despite predictions that the Seventh District race would attract considerable attention and money from organized interests, in the end only three groups aired television ads. The first to hit the airwaves was from Too Extreme for Colorado, which spent about \$200,000 for a television ad in early September, which, like several of the DCCC ads, attacked O’Donnell’s position on Social Security. The ad, titled “Dating,” opened with an image of a woman sitting in front of computer browsing an Internet dating site. The announcer states that “some things look good at first, but then you find out the truth is quite different—like Rick O’Donnell on Social Security. O’Donnell wanted to eliminate Social Security. Now O’Donnell wants to privatize Social Security, putting our guaranteed benefits at risk.”<sup>58</sup>

The largest and most controversial ad buy by an interest group was by Americans for Honesty on Issues (AHI) which spent \$256,875 to air two ads in the Denver market. Ironically, the group was forced to pull its first ad because of criticism that it was inaccurate. The ad, titled “Amnesty,” claimed that when Perlmutter was in the state legislature he sponsored a bill that would have given “taxpayer money to illegal immigrants.” In fact, the bill cited in the ad actually provided benefits to “legal” immigrants—the ad simply changed the word “legal” to “illegal.” The Perlmutter campaign reacted immediately by filing a complaint with the Denver District Attorney’s office, claiming the ad knowingly made false accusations. The Perlmutter campaign also asked local television stations to pull the ad.<sup>59</sup> After a number of television and newspaper reporters labeled the ad as false, the group pulled the ad and began airing a variant, which dropped the specific claim that had been challenged but continuing to attack Perlmutter for supporting amnesty for illegal immigrants. Like its predecessor, the second opened with grainy footage of what were presumably illegal immigrants climbing under a fence. The voiceover notes that Perlmutter supports an earned path to citizenship for illegal immigrants and asks, “Is this the path to earning citizenship?” The other group to advertise on television was the Trust in Small Business PAC, which spent just over \$29,000 for an ad that aired on cable television. The ad noted that “small business trusts Rick O’Donnell,” and stated that he would work to reduce taxes and regulations that stifle business growth.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite early expectations of a competitive race, Ed Perlmutter easily won the Seventh Congressional District seat, using an advantage in voter registration, an effective campaign, and a national Democratic wave to win by a much larger margin than anticipated.

The outcome was not preordained, however. O’Donnell raised more money than his opponent and did not have to endure a primary challenge. Perlmutter benefited from winning a contested primary—which enhanced his name recognition—as well as a big infusion of resources from the DCCC, which outspent its Republican counterpart by a 4-1 margin.

Both parties conducted extensive voter mobilization efforts aimed at unaffiliated voters. Mirroring the national trend, these unaffiliated voters broke decidedly for the Democrat Perlmutter, explaining much of

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<sup>58</sup> Chris Barge, “Ad: O’Donnell Wants to Privatize Social Security,” *Rocky Mountain News* 9 September 2006, A23.

<sup>59</sup> John C. Ensslin, “Perlmutter Campirate over ‘527’ Immigration Ad,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 11 October 2006, 17A.

<sup>60</sup> “Television Ads: Rick O’Donnell,” *Trust in Small Business PAC*, 25 September 2006. At <[http://www.trustinsmallbusiness.com/ads\\_odonnell.asp](http://www.trustinsmallbusiness.com/ads_odonnell.asp)>, 3 December 2006.

his margin of victory. The expected onslaught of broadcast advertising by outside groups never materialized, although a number of organizations did spend modest amounts on mail and other ground war activities. Labor unions in particular made significant GOTV efforts on Perlmutter's behalf.

Perlmutter and his allies effectively linked O'Donnell to President Bush and forced the Republican to play defense for the duration of the campaign. The attacks on Social Security were especially damaging to O'Donnell; he was never really able to turn the conversation to issues of his own choosing. Instead Perlmutter set the agenda on the issues of Social Security, health care, stem cell research, and Iraq, all issues that seemed to work for the Democrat. No matter how much O'Donnell tried, he was unable to convince voters that he was not just "another vote for Bush's agenda."

In the end, Colorado's Seventh District did prove to be a national bellwether of sorts, as Democrats picked up thirty seats to win control of the House of Representatives. Democratic candidates did especially well in open-seat contests, like the Seventh. Moreover, Democrats continued to do well in Colorado. In addition to Perlmutter, a Democrat won the Colorado governorship and the Democratic Party increased its majorities in the Colorado state legislature. Whether the Democratic gains are enduring or ephemeral remains to be seen, but it seems clear that the Seventh District will be critical in determining the balance of power in future electoral cycles.

**Table 2-1  
Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Colorado Seventh Congressional District Race, 2005-06**

	<b>Ed Perlmutter (D)</b>	<b>Rick O'Donnell (R)</b>
From PACs	\$740,933	\$661,882
From individuals	\$2,110,502	\$1,946,220
From party	\$0	\$25,000
From candidate	\$66,000	\$0
Other contributions	\$7,665	\$183,684
Total receipts	\$2,925,100	\$2,816,786
Total expenditures	\$2,845,323	\$2,757,641
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$80,998	\$59,860

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006.  
At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 2-2**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Colorado Seventh Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Perlmutter for Congress	\$1,398,119	...	<b>\$1,398,119</b>	\$1,908,032
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$2,679,923	...	<b>\$2,679,923</b>	\$1,490,776
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Too Extreme for Colorado	\$140,810	...	<b>\$140,810</b>	\$132,541
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Coloradans for Rick O'Donnell 2006	\$1,600,465	...	<b>\$1,600,465</b>	\$1,852,978
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	...	...	...	\$145,754
RNC / Rick O'Donnell	...	...	...	\$282,527
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Americans for Honesty on Issues	\$227,949	...	<b>\$227,949</b>	\$184,818
Trailhead Group	\$33,375	\$49,020	<b>\$82,395</b>	...

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 2-3.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "... " only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 2-3  
Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,  
Colorado Seventh Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>								
<i>Candidates</i>								
Perlmutter for Congress	19	2	...	2	1	...	5	<b>29</b>
<i>Political parties</i>								
Colorado Democratic Party	...	7	...	3	18	2	...	<b>30</b>
DCCC	...	2	...	...	...	...	4	<b>6</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>								
Alliance for Retired Americans	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Colorado Labor 2006	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
SEIU COPE	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Colorado Families for Change in Congress	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Colorado Fund for Children and Public Education	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
MoveOn.org	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
Sierra Club State Committee on Civic Education	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Too Extreme for Colorado	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>								
<i>Candidates</i>								
Coloradans for Rick O'Donnell 06	27	2	...	1	1	...	6	<b>37</b>
<i>Political parties</i>								
Colorado Republican Committee	...	16	...	1	...	...	...	<b>17</b>
NRCC	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	<b>2</b>
RNC / Rick O'Donnell	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>								
Americans for Honesty on Issues	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	<b>2</b>
National Assn. of Home Builders	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Trailhead Group	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	1 <sup>c</sup>	<b>2</b>
Focus on the Family	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Rifle Association	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Trust in Small Business PAC	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>								
<i>Interest Groups</i>								
AARP	...	1	1 <sup>d</sup>	1 <sup>d</sup>	...	1 <sup>d</sup>	...	<b>4</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 2-2.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> Although no specific ads were seen or heard, this organization was active in this race because television and radio ad-buy data were obtained from stations.

<sup>d</sup> Nancy K. George, National Coordinator of Voter Education, AARP, email communication with Nisha Riggs, December 7, 2006.

In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Independent Actors and Coordinated Campaigns**  
**The Indiana Ninth Congressional District**  
Marjorie Randon Hershey and Nicholas J. Clark  
Indiana University

When the small towns and scenic farms of southeastern Indiana became the site of one of the most high-spending congressional races in the nation, it was clear that 2006 was not going to be a typical election year. Indiana's electoral votes have gone to the Republican presidential candidate in every election since 1964, and the Ninth Congressional District has been represented by moderate to conservative Democrats for all but two of those years. Because of that relative stability, district residents were accustomed to quiet political campaigns. Presidential candidates rarely run ads in the state, and even midterm elections have attracted little attention from non-Hoosiers.

All this changed in 2006—big time. Early in the year, reflecting the decline in President Bush's approval ratings and the increasing public dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq, three of Indiana's nine U.S. House seats were among the three dozen races targeted as "competitive" by the national parties. As the year progressed, two other normally safe seats, one Republican and one Democratic, also slipped into the competitive column.<sup>1</sup> The political unrest in the state quickly drew a constellation of national party money, national media coverage, and national organized interests eager to use these congressional districts to gain national power.

The Ninth District is well described as being "ancestrally Democratic and culturally conservative,"<sup>2</sup> but it is in the process of change. The district ranges over twenty counties that are more rural, more heavily Caucasian, and less Latino than most congressional districts represented by Democrats. The fastest population growth has been on the southern and eastern edges of the district, which comprise suburbs of Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio. These demographic changes offer Republicans an enticing opportunity for electoral gain.

Lee Hamilton, the Democrat who had represented the district from 1964 to 1998, experienced its increasing competitiveness. His first campaign for Congress had cost about \$30,000; his last, in 1996, required a million-dollar campaign budget.<sup>3</sup> His replacement in 1998 was Democrat Baron Hill, a local high school basketball legend who had served in the Indiana state legislature. Sensitive to the conservative cast of his district, Hill joined the "Blue Dog" coalition in the U.S. House, a group of moderate and conservative Democrats, and the moderate New Democrat Coalition. He supported the proposed ban on so-called "partial birth abortion" and voted for free trade, to the disappointment of organized labor.

His second re-election race, in 2002, looked initially like a typical incumbent campaign. Hill's opponent, a trucking company owner and self-made millionaire named Mike Sodrel, was considered to have no real chance of winning. When the national Republican Party gave Sodrel only token support, Sodrel drew on his personal wealth to provide the overwhelming majority of his own campaign funds (more than \$1 million). But with the help of President Bush's popularity, Sodrel won a respectable 46 percent of the vote to Hill's 51 percent.

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<sup>1</sup> Indiana's Third and Seventh Districts, according to the Cook Political Report, "2006 Competitive House Race Chart," 20 October 2006. At <<http://www.cookpolitical.com/races/house/chart.php>>, 4 January 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics 2006* (Washington, D. C.: National Journal, 2005), 645.

<sup>3</sup> See Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 12<sup>th</sup> Ed. (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2007), 244.

Leaders of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) were impressed; they encouraged Sodrel to run again in 2004. Sodrel was reluctant; he “blamed his [2002] defeat in part on the national party’s refusal to provide him with adequate support.”<sup>4</sup> When he balked at making the race a second time, the national Republicans promised him more money and services. Although Sodrel was running far behind Hill in September of 2004, the NRCC came through for their candidate, putting almost \$2 million into independent expenditures in the Ninth District, almost exclusively in the form of negative ads against Baron Hill. Sodrel pulled out a narrow victory. Again with the help of Bush, who won the district with 59 percent of the vote, Sodrel edged Hill by fewer than 1,500 votes, 49.5 percent to 49 percent.<sup>5</sup>

It had been a genuinely bitter campaign. Sodrel attacked Hill as a liberal whose values and voting record were alien to southern Indiana. Television and radio ads, mail pieces and billboards accused Hill of favoring flag burning, abortion, gay marriage, and court actions to strip the words “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance. The strains between the two candidates went beyond the political. As a local television newsman put it, “These two guys don’t like each other and Sodrel told supporters that Hill sucker punched him on the way off stage following a debate.”<sup>6</sup> When Sodrel unseated him on election night, Hill was shocked by the defeat; even in late September 2006, long after he had decided to run to reclaim his seat, Hill said he was “still trying to figure out” how he could have been defeated two years earlier.<sup>7</sup>

Several other groups spent much of 2005 and 2006 trying to figure out how to defeat him again. Presidential adviser Karl Rove and Republican National Committee (RNC) Chair Ken Mehlman picked Indiana as one of the half-dozen states on which to focus the national party’s resources, to protect the party’s House majority against an expected Democratic tide. The plan had several main themes, according to *Washington Post* analysts Dan Balz and David Broder. There would be massive national party spending and organizational activity and an overwhelmingly negative advertising campaign. The advertising would start much earlier than usual, in order to plant doubts about little-known challengers before they had a chance to define themselves to the voters. The aim was to keep the campaign from becoming a referendum on President Bush’s record and the scandals that had dogged congressional Republicans and to focus voters’ attention instead on the argument that Democrats would raise taxes and show weakness in the face of terrorist threats. Balz and Broder wrote, “All predict one of the most negative midterm elections in memory, with virtually no positive advertising from the national GOP committees or individual GOP candidates.”<sup>8</sup> Democrats were determined to respond quickly and in kind to the negative ads and to keep the president and the scandals in the spotlight.

From the beginning, the Ninth District race generated an unusual amount of national media attention. By mid-October, not only had reporters from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other major media outlets spent time in the district, but so had a number of both parties’ “stars” on fundraising trips. Former President Bill Clinton visited in July to campaign for Hill, as did Senator Barack Obama in mid-October. The president made an appearance on Sodrel’s behalf early in the year and returned ten days before Election Day, in his first public campaign appearance of the fall.<sup>9</sup> Three fundraisers featuring

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<sup>4</sup> Barone and Cohen, 645.

<sup>5</sup> A Libertarian candidate received 1.6 percent of the vote.

<sup>6</sup> Jim Shella, “Political Blog with Jim Shella,” *WISH-TV*, 31 August 2006. At <<http://www.wishtv.com/Global/story.asp?S=3008730>>, 5 December 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Chris Cillizza and Jim VandeHei, “Basketball Legend’s Campaign Gets an Assist From His Fame,” *Washington Post*, September 24, 2006, A4.

<sup>8</sup> Dan Balz and David S. Broder, “More GOP Districts Counted as Vulnerable,” *Washington Post*, September 3, 2006, A1.

<sup>9</sup> Newspaper coverage of the president’s visit shows how great an impact such trips can have on smaller, more rural areas: *The Banner-Gazette* (whose circulation covers four largely rural counties) carried a three-page story on the

Laura Bush or the president's mother, Barbara Bush, brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars for Sodrel.

The two candidates differed in their stands on taxes and the economy, health care, energy policy, the war in Iraq, and other major issues. Sodrel stated in interviews that the most important issues to his constituents were values and the improving economy, and Hill cited the war in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> A major focus of Hill's campaign was the rise in gas prices and the energy legislation passed by Congress in 2005. He characterized it as containing \$2.6 billion in tax breaks for big oil, whereas Hill favored increasing use of ethanol and other alternative (and agriculture-based) fuels. Sodrel defended the legislation for helping to keep energy prices affordable.

Hill argued for an increase in the minimum wage and universal health care, saying, "We're seeing a rich man's economic recovery" that's squeezing the middle class. Sodrel claimed in contrast that "The economy in the Ninth is doing good, and the outlook is good," and that the main threat to economic growth was tax increases, which the district could expect if Hill and the Democrats were elected.<sup>11</sup> In reality, however, all these issue stands were filtered through the lens of trust: was Baron Hill, as Sodrel claimed, a Washington insider who didn't understand small-town values, or was "Millionaire Mike," as Hill claimed, too privileged and self-serving to be "one of us"?<sup>12</sup>

### The Polls

Early in 2006, internal polls showed Hill in the lead; Republicans blamed the low approval ratings of President Bush and Indiana's Republican governor, Mitch Daniels.<sup>13</sup> But the race tightened during the summer. By late August, Republican officials in Washington saw Sodrel's numbers improving. As *Washington Post* political expert Chris Cillizza wrote just before Labor Day, "Republicans are feeling better and better about Rep. Mike Sodrel's (R) chances to win another term against former Rep. Baron Hill (D). They believe the attacks they used to defeat Hill two years ago remain potent, and Sodrel is better financed this time around."<sup>14</sup> Hill's own campaign was facing criticism; Cillizza reported ten days later that "Former Rep. Baron Hill (D) seems to believe his 2004 loss to Sodrel was a fluke and is largely unwilling to admit the efficacy of any of Republican attacks on him."<sup>15</sup>

One reason for the perception that Sodrel's chances were improving was that journalists and national party leaders tended to see the three competitive Indiana House seats as a unit—after all, in a state so unaccustomed to the national political limelight, the prospect of three competitive races was a real

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visit; the news story reported that "the 4,000-plus spectators will treasure the memories of hearing the President speak, while the truly lucky ones, who met the President, shook hands with the President, or even captured a once in a lifetime photograph will have stories to tell their great-grandchildren on how they were involved in a history making visit of President George W. Bush to Clark County." Janna Ross, "President Bush Visits Clark County," *The Banner-Gazette*, November 1, 2006, 1, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Reported by Melissa Swan, "Too Close to Call Is Understating the Ninth District Race," on WHAS-TV Channel 11 (Louisville, KY), 5:58 pm EDT October 9, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Dan Gilgoff, "Sparks in the Heartland," *U.S. News & World Report*, October 9, 2006, 44.

<sup>12</sup> On the importance of trust in congressional campaigning, see Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Home Style* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 55-60.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Hinnefeld, "Race One of Nation's Most Competitive," *Hoosier Times* (Bloomington, Indiana), September 3, 2006, A6.

<sup>14</sup> Chris Cillizza, "The Fix: The Friday Line: U.S. House Races," *Washington Post*, September 1, 2006. At <<http://www.washingtonpost.com>>, 1 September 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Chris Cillizza, "The Fix: The House Line: Potential Surprise Wins for the GOP," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2006. At <<http://www.washingtonpost.com>>, 11 September 2006.

attention-getter—and as Republican incumbents John Hostettler and Chris Chocola’s chances faded, Sodrel became the focus of Republican Party hopes and funds.

### **Effects of Money**

#### *The Ground War*

The Republicans’ voter ID programs were used in Indiana for the first time in 2006. Applying these programs developed by the national party, designed to identify “lazy Republicans” who had not voted in recent elections as well as conservative-leaning independents, was not an easy task. Although Sodrel’s campaign manager saw “a good base of [conservative] voters down here,” Republicans had built very little organizational infrastructure in most of the southern counties.<sup>16</sup> Because many district conservatives vote in Democratic primaries, where they find more competitive contests, primary election records are not as useful for identifying likely Republican voters as is the case in states with more polarized electorates.<sup>17</sup> But by July, the Republicans had begun their ground game in the Ninth District by coordinating their staffs and offices, recruiting volunteers, and running their Voter ID. Focusing on door-to-door canvassing, mail pieces, and phone calls, the Voter ID continued through the third week in September. In all, the campaign reported having made 200,000 contacts.<sup>18</sup>

At that point, the Republicans switched to contacting the people identified by the Voter ID to make sure they were registered, offer them absentee ballot applications, and urge them to vote early. Changes in Indiana’s voting procedures allowed any registered voter to cast a ballot in person, for any reason, during the month prior to Election Day. That offered campaigners and party organizations a valuable opportunity; getting the less-committed voters to cast their ballots early or absentee permitted the party to focus on its base voters in the closing days of the campaign. In the Sodrel race, this final get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drive began an unprecedented eleven days before the election. In previous years, this calling and canvassing blitz was termed the “72 Hour Project” or the “96 Hour Project,” because it took place largely on the weekend before Election Day. The expanded window for early voting in Indiana, however, meant that the party’s GOTV efforts could be spread out over the six or seven-week period prior to the election.

The campaign’s volunteer base was enlarged, not only with local activists but also with staffers sent by the national party, college students from universities such as Brigham Young University in Utah and Idaho, and home schoolers from around the nation.<sup>19</sup> The field staff kept the RNC informed about its activities through daily conference calls, in which the number of daily voter contacts and other metrics were “sent up the food chain.” “Coordination in the Ninth District was the best I’ve ever seen in terms of people buying in” to the coordinated campaign, according to Andy Hahn, political director of the Indiana State Republican Committee.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, the Democrats were still catching up to the Republicans’ ground game in 2006. Baron Hill had never had much of a ground game in his previous campaigns. In 2004, the Hill campaign, the Democratic candidate for governor, and the local Democratic Party all had separate offices in many cities in the district, and coordination among them was haphazard. The results of the 2004 elections—in which, according to the field director, “every Democrat in the country hit their ‘win number’ (the number of

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<sup>16</sup> Cam Savage, campaign manager, Friends of Mike Sodrel, phone interview by Marjorie Hershey, November 22, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Andy Hahn, political director, Indiana Republican Party, phone interview by Marjorie Hershey, November 21, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Hahn, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Drew McCuiston, field staffer for the Ninth District, Indiana Republican State Committee, interview by Marjorie Hershey, Bloomington, Indiana, November 9, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Hahn, interview.

votes they had estimated they'd need to win) and lost" because the Republican ground game was so effective at increasing Republican turnout<sup>21</sup>—convinced the national Democratic Party that its own ground game needed to be better coordinated.

With the arrival of a Democratic National Committee (DNC) district field director funded by Howard Dean's 50-State Program, the Democrats worked to catch up to the Republican coordinated campaign. Many local Democratic activists had been accustomed to distancing themselves from their national brethren and focused largely on winning county races. The new field director spent much of his time working to convince suspicious local party leaders that most of the new votes a coordinated campaign would bring in would help not only the congressional candidate and the national party, but also Democratic candidates for sheriff and county council. "Field programs create the momentum in a campaign," said field director Dave Bond. "We created a lot of energy."<sup>22</sup> Canvassers from the Hill campaign, local party organizations, and College Democrats knocked on an estimated 60,000 doors on the weekend before the election alone, using and supplementing the voter file maintained by the state Democratic Party.

Both sides felt confident that their grassroots efforts succeeded in getting out their base vote. Sodrel's manager pointed out, "we drastically improved on 2002 in a lot of our targeted counties. If we hadn't put so much time and effort into that, the election wouldn't have even been close."<sup>23</sup>

### *The Air War*

The campaigns themselves were responsible for most of the air war -- the television and radio advertising, the candidate's own activities, and other messages directed at encouraging a vote for the candidate. Their efforts were augmented by advertising run as independent expenditures by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and the NRCC. This air war began soon after Labor Day. The national parties had held their fire during the summer, checking with television stations in Louisville and Indianapolis with increasing frequency to find out whether the other party had begun to buy advertising time. Only a few outside groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, aired ads during the summer.

In early September, both campaigns launched the first volleys of ferociously negative television advertising that would characterize the rest of the campaign. Remembering the blistering attacks of the 2004 congressional race, an interfaith religious group, Monroe County Religious Leaders, attempted to ward off the mud in 2006 by promoting a revised version of the League of Women Voters's Clean Campaign Pledge. In August, both candidates signed the pledge, in which they promised to run a clean, respectful, and issue-based campaign and to repudiate support from any group that violated this promise.<sup>24</sup>

The pledge was quickly broken. The religious group blamed Sodrel for having violated the pledge first, but also expressed disappointment with Hill's having "inevitably found it necessary to respond in kind, albeit with less ferocity than his opponent."<sup>25</sup> In return, the NRCC sent out an email to supporters calling the religious group's leader "a tool of the liberal left," and claiming that "Baron Hill's partisan preacher

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<sup>21</sup> Dave Bond, Indiana Ninth Congressional District field director, Democratic National Committee, interview by Marjorie Hershey, Seymour, Indiana, November 13, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Bond, interview.

<sup>23</sup> Savage, interview.

<sup>24</sup> Dann Denny, "Hill, Sodrel Pledge to Play Fair," *The Herald Times* (Bloomington, Indiana), August 19, 2006, A1.

<sup>25</sup> News release from Monroe County Religious Leaders, quoted in Steve Hinnefeld, "Clergy Group Calls Sodrel on Negative Ad," *The Herald Times* (Bloomington, Indiana), October 18, 2006, A4.

spends Sundays in church and weekdays spewing partisan venom on Internet blogs,” a charge that the minister in question vehemently rejected.<sup>26</sup>

That was just the beginning. An NRCC mail piece claimed that “Baron Hill has lost his moral compass,” and a Republican State Committee mail piece carried a photo of Osama bin Laden and asked who benefits from Hill’s alleged votes to weaken national defense. On the Democratic side, the DCCC headlined “Sodrel’s Dirty Money from Convicted Congressmen,” and the Hill campaign sent a mail piece with a picture of a bleeding American soldier, concluding, “Millionaire Mike Sodrel’s shameful votes against troops and veterans are a disgrace.” Nonpartisan groups such as the Annenberg Political Fact Check and ad watches run by the *Louisville Courier-Journal* confirmed that claims on both sides were seriously misleading. The Sodrel organization maintained a blog called “Baron vs. the Truth,” detailing charges against Hill, but never identified its affiliation with the Sodrel campaign. The DCCC had a Web site up in late summer titled “GOPauctionhouse.org,” claiming that Sodrel had put the public interest on the auction block by voting tax cuts for oil and other energy companies. Fully 98 percent of the NRCC’s expenditures in the race were for negative ads, as was more than 75 percent of the DCCC’s spending.<sup>27</sup>

The two coordinated campaigns took different approaches to their advertising. Content analysis showed that the various Republican groups divided the salient issues among them, each stressing different aspects of the campaign’s themes.<sup>28</sup> The Sodrel campaign’s television ads devoted greatest attention to the claim that Sodrel had created jobs in Indiana but that Hill had voted for bills that resulted in Indiana jobs being “shipped overseas” (by normalizing trade relations with China). The other most frequent Sodrel themes were attacks on Hill himself: that he was a career politician, a dirty campaigner, and a liberal who didn’t share the district’s values. The NRCC’s television ads and mail pieces referred most often to Hill as a tax-raiser, while the Chamber of Commerce stressed Sodrel’s support for small business and health care, and Americans for Honesty on Issues, a 527 group bankrolled by a Texas developer, criticized Hill for failing to support American troops in Iraq.

The Indiana Republican State Committee was responsible for all the Sodrel campaign’s mail pieces. It produced a whopping thirty unique full-color brochures and mailed copies widely throughout the district, to Democrats and Republicans alike, spending an estimated \$1 million in the process. The state committee’s mail pieces echoed the Sodrel campaign’s share of the themes, characterizing Hill as a “Washington politician” (calling him “Baron ‘Capitol’ Hill”), stating that he had worked as a lobbyist after being defeated for re-election and claiming that Hill was “too liberal for Indiana.” In support of the charge that Hill “doesn’t share our values,” the mail pieces often repeated the contention that Hill had voted against banning gay marriage, against bills to prohibit flag desecration and protect the inclusion of “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, and against “prohibiting the sale of sexually explicit and violent material to juveniles.”

Advertising in support of Hill did not show as clear a division of labor. Both the Hill campaign’s and the DCCC’s television ads referred to Sodrel as “Millionaire Mike,” criticized Washington, and called for change. Hill’s mail pieces stressed his values and faith as well as his commitment to troops and veterans, as did the Indiana Democratic Party’s mail pieces. The most prominent theme in the DCCC’s mail pieces was tax relief.

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<sup>26</sup> Byron Bangert, minister member-at-large, Presbytery of Ohio Valley, interview by Marjorie Hershey, Bloomington, Indiana, November 7, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> FEC data reported by Congressional Quarterly’s *PoliticalMoneyLine*, November 27, 2006. At <[http://tray.com/cgi-win/x\\_IndepExp\\_SQL\\_By\\_State\\_Date.exe?DoFn=&Count=20060901&sYR=2006](http://tray.com/cgi-win/x_IndepExp_SQL_By_State_Date.exe?DoFn=&Count=20060901&sYR=2006)>, 1 December 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Data available from the author.

Hill's advertising hit the national news in early October, when he became the first congressional candidate to run a television ad tying his opponent to Rep. Mark Foley (R-FL), a six-term House member who resigned in late September after admitting that he had sent sexually suggestive emails and instant messages to underage male pages. Hill's ad linked the Foley scandal to campaign contributions Sodrel had received from other disgraced former members of the House—Duke Cunningham (R-CA) and Tom DeLay (R-TX)—and from current House Republican leaders including Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL). Hill charged that Hastert should have followed up on warnings about Foley and stopped the behavior rather than trying to cover it up. Calling the contributions “immoral,” Hill called on Sodrel to return the money; Sodrel refused. Although the Sodrel campaign protested that the advertising was unfair, the DCCC judged that the issue was resonating with voters and recommended its use in many other Democratic House campaigns.<sup>29</sup>

To try to counteract the charges that Hill did not share the district's values, his campaign committee sent out three brochures, primarily to women in rural areas, heralding Hill as a community volunteer with strong Christian values, spreading God's message through his political work. They pointed out Hill's opposition to late-term abortions and gay marriage, his support for veterans, and his stand against the privatization of Social Security.

Throughout September and October, Hill and his allies were outspent by the Sodrel campaign and the Republican committees. The NRCC had sent a field staffer to the Ninth District whose sole responsibility was to raise money for the Sodrel campaign.<sup>30</sup> Through the third week in October, the national Democratic Party committees had spent only 43 percent as much for Hill as the Republicans had for Sodrel. The Democratic Party committees had less money available to spend and were putting much of their scarce funds into the other two competitive races in Indiana, where the polls looked more favorable to Democrats. But toward the end of the race, as it became clear that these other two races were trending Democratic, the Democrats re-directed party funds to the Ninth District. On a single day—November 1—the DCCC reported having put \$1.2 million in independent spending into ads supporting Hill and/or attacking Sodrel, to run during the closing week of the campaign.

In all, the DCCC spent \$3.1 million on the Ninth District race and the NRCC put in \$3.2 million—substantially more than the amount spent by the candidates themselves to communicate with voters (see table 3-1). It has been characteristic of highly competitive congressional races in recent elections that the candidates have been outspent by their parties and other outside groups.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the candidates in these vital races are not in control of the majority of messages directed at their own constituents about their races, a serious challenge to the need for accountability in a democratic election.

### **The Deluge: Outside Groups' Efforts to Influence Election Results**

Major players from the interest group world were also attracted to the Ninth District because of the closeness of the race and the fact that it was at least initially one of a remarkably small number of truly competitive House races. Because the district had not been on their radar screen in previous elections, however, many of these groups were unfamiliar with the politics of the area.

Postal employees sagged under the weight of the mail pieces from outside groups. Many of these mail pieces were aimed at senior citizens, who are a prime target in campaigns because they are more likely to

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<sup>29</sup> Carl Hulse and Jeff Zeleny, “Pressure Grows for Republicans Over Foley Scandal,” *New York Times*, October 3, 2006, A1.

<sup>30</sup> McCuiston, interview.

<sup>31</sup> David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, *Dancing without Partners* (Provo, UT: Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2005), 39.

vote than are people in other age groups.<sup>32</sup> Their appeal was even greater in 2006 because Congress had passed a Medicare prescription drug benefit in 2003, from which pharmaceutical companies had profited greatly; these corporations worked intensely to keep Congress from modifying the benefit by giving the government the authority to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs.

One such group was The Seniors Coalition (TSC), a 501(c)(4) group funded by individual donors related to the pharmaceuticals industry. TSC sent five glossy mail pieces to a large portion of the district, combining a pro-Sodrel message with a grassroots lobbying effort, asking voters to oppose the effort to “weaken” the prescription drug plan by limiting drug prices. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AARP, the Indiana State Teachers Association, the Indiana Senior Voter Action (a group funded by the Service Employees International Union COPE, a labor union PAC), the Indiana State AFL-CIO, and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) all sent mail pieces addressing health care costs, Social Security, energy prices, and other concerns of senior citizens.

Several of these groups used a wide variety of means to get their definition of these issues communicated. The NFIB, for instance, considered Mike Sodrel to be a “top target” for re-election, because Sodrel not only supported the group’s agenda from top to bottom but had been a small businessman himself and was a twenty-five-year member of the NFIB. So although the group was dealing with what its political programs manager termed a “pretty large landscape” of targeted congressional races, it began a series of radio ads in August, followed up with two rounds of phone calls, a large number of emails, and four sets of mail pieces to NFIB members. In addition, a list of 7,000 non-member businesses was sent three mail pieces with issue advocacy messages. In all, the group spent about \$100,000 on its issue advocacy communications in the race, as well as providing Sodrel with \$10,000 from its political action committee.<sup>33</sup>

These communications to group members, called “internal communications,” were widespread in 2006. They have a number of advantages over other types of campaign communications; groups can direct unlimited mail pieces and phone communications to their members without running afoul of campaign finance laws, and can use the “magic words” (vote for, vote against, elect, defeat, support, reject, \_\_\_\_ for Congress) freely. Television ads were costly in the district because its residents were in four different media markets: Louisville, Indianapolis, Evansville, and, to a lesser extent, Cincinnati. Mail pieces, phone calls, canvassing, and emails, all ideal as means of communication with a group’s members, were more cost-effective. The labor unions active in the race, including the Indiana AFL-CIO; SEIU-COPE; the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and the Indiana State Teachers Association, all invested mainly in member-to-member internal communications, as did the Sierra Club, the National Right to Life Committee PAC, and the National Organization for Women.

Organized labor made more public efforts as well. AFSCME ran an extensive series of radio ads in the Louisville area, and American Family Voices, a group primarily funded by labor, made automated calls to households all over the district. When these groups reached outside their members, however, they (and the campaigns and political parties) were hit in the pocketbook by an unlikely series of events. In mid-September, Ninth District voters were inundated with automated calls from a California group called the Economic Freedom Fund (EFF). The EFF, a 527 organization, was bankrolled entirely by a Texas home-builder, Bob J. Perry, who had been a major funder of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, a group that attacked Sen. John Kerry in his 2004 presidential campaign.

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<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Table 405,” *The 2006 Statistical Abstract*. At <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/elections/>>, 13 December 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew P. Fimka, manager of political programs, National Federation of Independent Business, telephone interview by Marjorie Hershey, November 17, 2006.

In 2006, Perry gave \$5 million to set up the EFF, which hired a survey company to make automated “robocalls” throughout the Ninth District and elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> The EFF’s calls were a “push poll,” a call intended to sound like a survey but instead meant to provide negative information about a candidate. The call progressed quickly to statements such as this: “Would it make you less likely to vote for Baron Hill if you knew that he voted to make violent and sexually explicit materials available to minors?”

The national Republicans had invested extensively in micro-targeting (see chapter 1), directing carefully designed appeals to people who had been identified through market research as inclined favorably toward those appeals. The EFF hadn’t gotten the message. Its push poll calls were received not just by conservative-leaning independents and “lazy Republicans” but also by large numbers of liberals and ardent Democrats. In fact, one of the recipients was Hill himself, who was on the phone with his campaign manager discussing the calls when his call-waiting service interrupted with the EFF’s anti-Hill message.<sup>35</sup> Dozens of recipients complained to the Indiana attorney general, under the mistaken belief that the state’s do-not-call list should have protected them from these calls. (The Indiana law exempts live political calls.) But the attorney general, a Republican, ruled that the calls violated a 1998 state law prohibiting prerecorded phone calls unless a live caller first asks for permission to play the recorded message.

Sodrel campaign manager Cam Savage pointed out that another 501(c)(4) group called American Family Voices, much of whose funding came from AFSCME, had made about two dozen rounds of robocalls beginning in 2005; the group spent almost \$53,000 attacking Sodrel for favoring tax breaks for big oil companies and for failing to act on high gas prices and cuts in student loans.<sup>36</sup> The attorney general then filed suit against American Family Voices as well as EFF, and both groups withdrew from the field.

The legacy of the EFF, however, was that any groups using phone banks in Indiana would have to use live callers, which drove up the cost substantially. As Abby Curran, Hill’s campaign manager, pointed out, a round of automated calls in the district cost about \$3,000; using live callers raised the price to \$10,000.<sup>37</sup> The Sodrel campaign estimated that after the attorney general’s ruling, it had to pay thirty-five to thirty-six cents per call for live callers, compared with only five to six cents for automated calls.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to their increased cost, live callers turned out to pose another challenge for the Sodrel campaign. A firm contracted to make phone calls in the Second and Ninth Districts outsourced the job to a company whose call centers employed callers of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. As a result, startled Republicans in southern Indiana listened to phone callers with Hispanic accents denouncing illegal immigration and claiming that Hill would not protect American borders from illegal immigrants.<sup>39</sup>

A number of pro-Hill groups came into the district in October. MoveOn.org spent \$11,000 on a round of phone calls that month. The Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund used mail pieces and phone calls to support Hill, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars PAC also ran radio ads as well on Hill’s behalf. For Sodrel, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which had run pro-Sodrel television ads in Louisville during the summer, also sent five mail pieces on Sodrel’s behalf, all part of a \$20 million advertising and GOTV

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<sup>34</sup> Steve Hinnefeld, “‘Swift Boat’ Donor Behind Phone Polls,” *The Herald-Times* (Bloomington, Indiana), September 17, 2006, A1.

<sup>35</sup> Abby Curran, campaign manager, Baron Hill campaign, interview by Marjorie Hershey, Seymour, Indiana, November 13, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Steve Hinnefeld, “Sodrel Campaign Fires Back on Calls,” *The Herald-Times* (Bloomington, Indiana), September 21, 2006, A1.

<sup>37</sup> Curran, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Hahn, interview.

<sup>39</sup> McCuiston and Savage, interview.

effort. The National Rifle Association did two mail pieces and person-to-person campaigning for Sodrel, and placed several billboards in the district. Another 527 group called Citizens for Truth, run by a Bloomington realtor, generally confined its efforts to placing anti-Hill billboards near Hill's home and campaign headquarters and bringing someone dressed in a chicken suit to heckle his personal appearances.

The national focus on the race was so intense that many groups became active not so much because of the individual candidates and their voting records but because a Hill victory could lead to a change in party control of the House. Several labor unions, for instance, were more pragmatic than passionate about Baron Hill. His stand in favor of free trade had not endeared him to organized labor, and in 2000, prior to the Hill-Sodrel battles, business PAC contributions had accounted for a larger proportion (43 percent) of Hill's total PAC funding than did labor PACs (41 percent). But the prospect of a Democratic takeover of Congress increased union PACs' enthusiasm for Baron Hill, though not to the same degree as for Democrats with a more pro-labor voting record.

Similarly, the National Right to Life Committee (NRL) PAC had to decide between two candidates who called themselves pro-life. NRL-PAC gave Sodrel a 100 percent rating, yet Hill had also voted against so-called "partial birth abortion" and for parental notification when a minor sought an abortion. NRL-PAC sided with Sodrel; it spent \$18,000 on radio ads placed in small, largely rural stations, completed a round of phone calls to supporters, and conducted its signature literature drop at churches prior to Election Day. An NRL-PAC mail piece carried the message, "Vote like life depends on it... it does." In addition to the fact that Sodrel was rated as more pro-life, even Hill's partial support for the NRL-PAC agenda was outweighed by the prospect of a Democratic majority, largely pro-choice, controlling the House and chairing the committees.

The funding and the volume of outside group communications increased markedly at the end of the race. Once it had become clear that Hostettler was going down to defeat in the Eighth District and Chocola was likely to follow in the Second, some groups such as AFSCME as well as the parties' congressional campaign committees pulled money out of those races and put it into the Ninth District, which remained too close to call until Election Day. In all, Hill accumulated the most PAC money of all the winning Democratic challengers,<sup>40</sup> a total of \$754,000, and Sodrel received \$1.3 million.

### Conclusion

Through September and October several media and internal campaign polls showed Hill to be slightly ahead of Sodrel, but almost all were within the margin of error. Hill's advantage derived from a slightly higher percentage of support from his own partisans and a clear edge among independents. On the weekend before the voting, when national polls showed a movement back toward Republicans, a television station poll showed Sodrel 2 percentage points ahead of Hill for the first time.

On Election Day the tide turned in Hill's favor; he won, 50 percent to Sodrel's 45.5 percent. (Eric Schansberg, the Libertarian candidate, won enough votes, 4.5 percent, to equal Hill's margin of victory). Both parties felt they had run effective ground games for the first time in southern Indiana. Turnout was up sharply; after only a slight increase from 1998 to 2002, turnout jumped almost 17 percent from 2002 to 2006. In six of the district's twenty counties, increases in turnout were more than ten percentage points over the state average.<sup>41</sup> This realization was bittersweet for the Republicans, however; several party

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<sup>40</sup> Zachary A. Goldfarb, "Election Battles Are over; Let the Infighting Begin," *Washington Post*, November 19, 2006, A5.

<sup>41</sup> Turnout in 1998 was 183,176; in a slightly redrawn district in 2002, 188,957, and in 2006, 220,849. Figures are from the Indiana Secretary of State, January 4, 2007. At <<http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/>>, 5 January 2007.

activists suspected that a portion of the base voters and “lazy Republicans” mobilized by their canvassing and phoning ended up voting for Democrats instead, motivated by their disgust with President Bush and the Iraq war.<sup>42</sup>

Was the jump in turnout produced by the parties’ voter mobilization efforts? Note also the remarkable increase in overall campaign spending, most of which went into broadcast media ads. Spending by the two campaigns and the DCCC and NRCC rose from \$2.5 million in 2002 to \$10.8 million in 2006; the increase was due largely to the national party committees’ massive independent expenditures in 2006. Together, the campaigns and congressional parties spent \$49 per vote cast in 2006, compared with \$13.48 per vote cast in 2002. This spending increase could also have affected turnout.

Yet although the Democratic forces spent almost as much as their Republican counterparts in 2006, Baron Hill’s vote totals still lagged slightly behind the normal Democratic base vote in the counties of the Ninth District.<sup>43</sup> Even a much-enhanced ground war and almost \$5 million in Democratic spending were not enough to bring a relatively conservative Democratic House candidate the same level of support as was received by many Democratic state and local candidates. Without the canvassing, phoning, and the DCCC’s sizable independent spending effort, Hill might have gone down to defeat. So the district is likely to remain a battleground, requiring the extensive organizing and funding of both campaigns and parties, at least until the next congressional redistricting.

The involvement of outside groups in the election was a serious challenge to both campaigns. In most cases, the independent spenders, the 527s, and the 501(c)s followed the lead of their candidate’s campaign. Although communication with the campaign was prohibited, as Hill’s lead consultant noted, “we all look at the same numbers,” so it isn’t surprising that groups and campaigns anticipate one another’s choices.<sup>44</sup> Yet the problem remained that, as the Republicans’ state political director noted, “when these groups do something that we don’t think is helpful, we’re barred by law from doing anything to stop them.”<sup>45</sup> The Hill campaign, for example, could not correct the DCCC when three mail pieces referred to Hill’s wife by the wrong name.

Perhaps the most profound impact of the outside groups, and the national and state parties as well, was the negativity of their campaigning. But the television and radio attack ads and mail pieces from the parties and many other outside founders left Hoosiers reeling. And as one consultant mentioned, shaking his head: “When the tone of a campaign becomes overwhelmingly negative, it becomes more and more difficult to find good people to run for office.”<sup>46</sup>

The national party committees and a variety of organized interests faced a tantalizing and risky set of choices in the 2006 congressional campaigns. As the national mood soured on the war in Iraq and scandals beset the House Republicans, the number of competitive races, initially small, grew dramatically. For a time, that increase hindered the Hill campaign’s ability to attract money and other support from the DCCC and other groups. But by Election Day, the energy, the grassroots effort, and the sheer venom of the Ninth District race attracted a level of campaign spending and national media attention that southern Indiana had never before seen. The Democratic candidate won the right to return to

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<sup>42</sup> Savage, interview.

<sup>43</sup> The baseline Democratic vote per county is defined as the mean of the Democratic percentage of the vote for three “minor” state offices: state auditor, secretary of state, and state treasurer. See “Graphic Anatomy of Victory: Indiana,” November 19, 2006. At <<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/11/19/71610/712>>, 5 January 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Mike O’Connor, principal, Bose Treacy Associates, lead consultant, Baron Hill campaign, interview by Marjorie Hershey, Indianapolis, Indiana, November 21, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Hahn, interview.

<sup>46</sup> O’Connor, interview.

Washington. As in several other districts that gave the party its House majority, however, local Democrats in the Ninth District have not yet given the federal candidates of their party the same loyalty that they extend to local and state candidates – a challenge the national Democrats will have to work hard to overcome.

**Table 3-1**  
**Sources of Funding in the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Hill-Sodrel Races**

	2002		2004		2006	
	Hill	Sodrel	Hill	Sodrel	Hill	Sodrel
Vote %	51	46	49	49	50	46
Spending*	1,145	1,403	1,635	1,287	1,856	2,658
% raised from PACs	55	3	54	24	41	46
<i>Business</i>	251	28	342	110	81	614
<i>Labor</i>	178	0	255	0	258	1
<i>Single-issue</i>	155		244		193	483
<i>Own Funds</i>	0	1,008	0	255	0	1
Party direct contributions	15	10	28	49	24	25
Party coordinated spending	39	0	40	73	79	77
Party Independent spending						
DCCC for Hill	0	...	406	...	734	
DCCC against Sodrel	0	...	373	...	2,342	
NRCC for Sodrel	...	0	...	143		45
NRCC against Hill	...	0	...	1,810		3,189

\* Monetary figures are in thousands of dollars

Sources: FEC press releases March 20, 2003 (for 2002 party money); March 14, 2005 (for 2004 party money); and Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006. See also <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, (last checked 5 January 2007), for candidate spending data.

**Table 3-2**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Indiana Ninth Congressional District Race, 2005-06**

	<b>Baron Hill (D)</b>	<b>Michael Sodrel (R)</b>
From PACs	\$754,229	\$1,264,105
From individuals	\$924,054	\$1,073,622
From party	\$24,267	\$25,499
From candidate	\$0	\$1,000
Other contributions	\$147,231	\$362,312
Total receipts	\$1,849,781	\$2,726,538
Total expenditures	\$1,856,237	\$2,658,400
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/06)	\$3,353	\$107,207

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006.  
 At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 3-3  
Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,  
Indiana Ninth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Baron Hill	...	19	12	...	2	2	2	7	<b>44</b>
<i>Political parties</i>									
DCCC	...	1	11	...	...	1	3	6	<b>22</b>
Indiana Democratic Party	...	1	8	...	1	...	...	...	<b>10</b>
Local Democratic Parties	...	...	3	1	2	1	...	...	<b>7</b>
Indiana House Victory Fund	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
Indiana State Teachers Assoc.	...	...	5	...	...	1	...	...	<b>6</b>
Communities United to Strengthen America	...	...	2	...	1	1	...	...	<b>4</b>
AFSCME	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	1 <sup>c</sup>	<b>3</b>
League of Conservation Voters	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
SEIU COPE	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	<b>3</b>
American Postal Workers Union	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	1 <sup>c</sup>	<b>2</b>
Nat'l Organization for Women	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	<b>2</b>
Public Citizen	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Sierra Club	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	<b>2</b>
United Auto Workers	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	<b>2</b>
Alliance for Retired Americans	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
American Family Voices	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Democratic Ladies League	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Indiana State AFL-CIO	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
MoveOn.org	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
September Fund	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
Veterans of Foreign Wars	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	<b>1</b>
Working Families e-Activist Network	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Friends of Mike Sodrel	...	12	1	...	4	5	2	8	<b>32</b>
Congressman Mike Sodrel Congressional Office	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
<i>Political parties</i>									
Indiana Republican State Cmte	...	2	30	...	2	1	...	...	<b>35</b>

Type and Organization	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
NRCC	...	1	15	...	...	4	1	6	27
Monroe County Republican Party	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	2
RNC	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2
RNC / Friends of Mike Sodrel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
National Federation of Independent Business	...	1	7	1	...	2	1	...	12
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	...	5	...	...	1	...	3	9
Seniors Coalition, The	...	...	5	1	...	...	...	...	6
National Rifle Association	2	...	2	...	1	...	...	...	5
National Right to Life	...	...	1	...	1	1	1	...	4
Americans for Honesty on Issues	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2
Set it Straight	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Alliance for Quality Nursing and Home Care	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
America's Majority	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Citizens for Truth	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Economic Freedom Fund	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Realtors PAC	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	1
<b>Nonpartisan</b>									
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
AARP	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
All Children Matter	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1

Source: Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 3-4.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> Although no specific ads were seen or heard, this organization was active in this race because television and/or radio ad-buy data was/were obtained from stations.

In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 3-4**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Indiana Ninth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Baron Hill	\$629,215	\$39,028	<b>\$668,243</b>	\$1,007,227
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$2,416,968	...	<b>\$2,416,968</b>	\$2,978,021
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
American Postal Worker Union	\$10,425	\$575	<b>\$11,000</b>	\$50,838
AFSCME	\$6,350	\$1,200	<b>\$7,550</b>	...
Democratic Ladies League	...	\$438	<b>\$438</b>	...
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Friends of Mike Sodrel	\$1,027,290	\$27,600	<b>\$1,054,890</b>	\$1,820,760
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	\$1,055,532	...	<b>\$1,055,532</b>	\$3,174,441
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$165,535	...	<b>\$165,535</b>	\$150,620
Realtors PAC	\$47,500	...	<b>\$47,500</b>	...
Alliance for Quality Nursing and Home Care	\$28,154	...	<b>\$28,154</b>	\$161,036
America's Majority	...	\$10,146	<b>\$10,146</b>	...
National Right to Life PAC	...	\$2,988	<b>\$2,988</b>	...
Americans for Honesty on Issues	...	...	...	\$141,945
Americans for Job Security	...	...	...	\$16,193
<b>Nonpartisan</b>				
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
All Children Matter	...	\$8,978	<b>\$8,978</b>	...

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. These data do not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 3-3.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "..." reflects only the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

## **The Minnesota U. S. Senate Race and the Sixth Congressional District Race<sup>1</sup>**

William H. Flanigan and Kathryn Pearson, University of Minnesota, and Nancy H. Zingale, University of St. Thomas

Like much of the rest of the country, the election of 2006 in Minnesota turned on disenchantment with the Bush Administration over Iraq. In this environment, the Senate contest, where Republicans had once hoped to pick up an open seat, turned into a rout for the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) candidate. In southern Minnesota, a traditionally Republican congressional seat fell to a political neophyte. The State House of Representatives changed from a slight Republican majority to 85-49 DFL control. The incumbent Republican governor eked out a 1 percent victory only because of a third-party entrant and a last minute flame-out by the DFL candidate. Remarkably, in this pro-Democratic environment, the Republican candidate in the Sixth Congressional District managed to hold a Republican seat against a well-known and well-financed DFL opponent.

### **The 2006 Minnesota Senate Race**

The Senate contest in Minnesota in 2006 pitted Sixth District Representative Mark Kennedy (Republican) against Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar (DFL). Running for Congress for the first time in 2000, Kennedy beat the DFL incumbent in Minnesota's Second District. Having been re-districted out of the Second District in 2002, Kennedy ran in the new Sixth District, another suburban district that matched his profile, but included very few of his old constituents. He won handily in an aggressively fought, negative campaign, a pattern that would be repeated in 2004. In 2006, with a vulnerable Democratic U.S. Senate seat in the offing, Kennedy quickly frightened off the competition and was never seriously opposed for the Republican Party's endorsement and nomination. An accountant, Kennedy highlighted his future potential as "the only CPA in the Senate," while distancing himself from the president he had supported 97 percent of the time in voting in the House of Representatives in 2004 and 87 percent in 2005.<sup>2</sup>

Amy Klobuchar was elected in 1998, and re-elected in 2002, as the chief prosecutor in Hennepin County, Minnesota's most populous county which also includes its largest city, Minneapolis, and most of its wealthiest suburbs. The daughter of a long-time newspaperman, she has a well-known name and family roots in the Iron Range, whose lumbering and mining past make it a DFL stronghold. Klobuchar was challenged for the Senate nomination by missing-child advocate Patty Wetterling and veterinarian/philanthropist Ford Bell. Wetterling dropped out of the race before the precinct caucuses when it became clear Klobuchar had the support of the party leadership. Klobuchar went on to clinch the party endorsement before the June state convention, and her nomination in the September primary was never in doubt. Nevertheless, throughout the spring, Bell pressured her from the left with his strong anti-war position.

Klobuchar won the general election 58-38 percent over Kennedy, with Independence Party candidate, Robert Fitzgerald, picking up 3 percent of the vote. Klobuchar led the DFL ticket, bringing several DFL challengers for statewide constitutional positions into office on her coattails. Klobuchar led Kennedy in all eight of Minnesota's congressional districts. As has been the case in many recent elections, Minnesota led the nation in turnout in 2006, with an official turnout estimate of close to 60 percent. Although high by

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<sup>1</sup> We want to thank Adam Engelman, Steve Hainlen, and Heather Norrbohm for their research assistance on this project.

<sup>2</sup> Within the Minnesota delegation Kennedy, had the highest support score in 2004 and the second highest in 2005 and 2006. See <library.cqpress.com/cqweekly>, 3 January 2007.

national standards for a mid-term election, statewide turnout was actually less than in 2002, an election with its own unique set of circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

### *Minnesota's Political History and Geography*

Minnesota is a state of about five million people, over half of them in the metropolitan area of the Twin Cities and its suburbs. The population is 88 percent Caucasian. Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics are about 3 percent each, and American Indians 2 percent. Significant numbers of Hmong and other Southeast Asians immigrated to Minnesota in the decades following the Vietnam War and in the last decade, a large number of Somalis have come to the Twin Cities. Agriculture remains an important economic activity in the state, in spite of increasing migration of the younger generation to the urban areas. Technology, especially medical technology, is a significant element of the “new” economy. Minnesota touts its well-educated workforce (88 percent high school graduates; 27 percent college graduates), but policy analysts worry about a projected paucity of well-educated workers for the economy of the future.

After a long period residing in the Democratic column in presidential elections, Minnesota was cited as an example of a “purple” state in 2004. Having written this traditionally blue state off in 2000, George W. Bush came close to carrying it anyway, leading to speculation that it might be ripe for a Republican victory if a little effort were expended. Fuel was added to this view in 2002, when Norm Coleman won a Senate seat over former Vice President Walter Mondale in the aftermath of incumbent DFL Senator Paul Wellstone’s death in an airplane crash. Despite the unique circumstances of that election, and despite John Kerry’s carrying the state in 2004, Republicans were looking forward to making further inroads in 2006. DFL incumbent Senator Mark Dayton’s decision not to seek re-election after one term “because he doubted he could win,” seemed to confirm Republican prospects. Since 2002 the parties have been quite even in strength according to various statewide surveys.<sup>4</sup>

Minnesota’s Scandinavian and German heritage and Midwestern agricultural economy has given its politics a progressive cast and its political culture the label “moralistic.”<sup>5</sup> Agrarian populists and radical labor elements on the Iron Range supported the Farmer-Labor Party in the 1920s and 1930s, allowing it to eclipse the Democratic Party and be, for a time, the leading party in Minnesota. In 1944, the Farmer-Labor Party merged with the Democrats to form the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL), providing its distinctive name. The merger was the occasion for a bruising battle between Communist and anti-communist elements in the newly-formed party, testament to the radicalism of some of its forebears, particularly in the mining communities of the Iron Range.

The Republican Party in Minnesota also has a progressive past, contributing several leaders to the internationalist wing of the national party. However, when abortion became an issue in the 1970s, pro-life and pro-choice factions wrestled for control of both parties, with social conservatives taking control of the Republican Party organization and social liberals dominating the DFL. Although the rank and file of both parties does not always follow their leadership—for example, by occasionally rejecting the endorsed candidates of their party for more moderate choices in a primary—the activists of the two parties are generally polarized on the social issues of abortion and gay rights. Lack of moderation in both parties led

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<sup>3</sup> See William H. Flanagan, Joanne M. Miller, Jennifer L. Williams, and Nancy H. Zingale, “From Intensity to Tragedy: The Minnesota U. S. Senate Race,” in *The Last Hurrah*, eds. David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> See Eric Black, “Once Strongly Pro-DFL,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 10, 2002, for the initial evidence that the Republicans had pulled even with the DFL for the first time in decades. In 2005 and 2006 SurveyUSA regularly found the parties to be roughly even. At the end of the 2006, several polls showed a DFL edge, but this appears to be a vote choice effect.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Elazar, *American Federalism: A View From the States* (New York: Crowell, 1966).

to the formation of the Independence Party, promising fiscal good sense combined with respect for individual rights on social issues. The Independence Party's only notable success was the election of Jesse Ventura as Governor in 1998; however, the presence of a third-party alternative draws votes from both DFL and Republican candidates in varying degrees.

Despite its progressive history, Minnesota has not been kind to women candidates in major races. Until Betty McCollum won election to the U.S. House in 2000, only one other Minnesota woman had been elected to the national legislature. In the 1950s, the hapless Coya Knutson served one term but was defeated for re-election when her husband publicly—and probably drunkenly—called “Coya, come home!” Two female Senate candidates ran and lost, largely because they were unable to build the kind of majorities in the Iron Range that DFL candidates need to carry the state. The Iron Range is a place where pro-life Democrats still exist in significant numbers. Iron Rangers love their guns and see environmental concerns as impinging on the development of the tourist industry, the Range's major economic opportunity after the demise of lumber and mining. DFL candidates from the Twin Cities always have a difficult time holding the coalition of metro and Iron Range DFLers together, and it is especially difficult for women. It is understandable, then, that Amy Klobuchar chose a strategy of downplaying women's issues in her campaign and worked to establish her image as a “tough prosecutor.”

### **Campaign Themes**

Many of the campaign themes were dictated by the context framing the 2006 election cycle; both candidates grappled with defining their positions on the war in Iraq, President Bush's handling of the war and other issues, and Republican leadership in Congress. In the end, Klobuchar was defined by her positive, issue-oriented campaign, Kennedy by his negative attacks against Klobuchar.

The political context clearly worked to Klobuchar's advantage and put Kennedy on the defensive. Early on, Kennedy stressed his independence from President Bush on issues such as “No Child Left Behind” and his ability to work with Democrats in Congress. Klobuchar repeatedly vowed to end the “culture of corruption” in Washington, DC. Their approaches were hardly original; Republican candidates across the country were distancing themselves from an unpopular president, and Democratic challengers were running as outsiders, attacking an unethical Congress.

Kennedy defended the war in Iraq, although his strategy in doing so changed course as his poll numbers sank. He consistently defended his vote to authorize the president to go to war and attacked Klobuchar for wanting to “negotiate with terrorists.” By late October, Kennedy responded to growing criticism by running a television ad that admitted “We've made some mistakes in Iraq.” Kennedy gained national attention with this strategy; commentators pointed out that it was an unusual approach but “worth a try.”<sup>6</sup> In the ad, he criticized Klobuchar for her approach, saying that “leaving Iraq now will create a breeding ground for new attacks against America” and concluded by stating “I approve this message, even though I know it may not be what you want to hear.”

For her part, Klobuchar's concerns about addressing the war emanated from the left. With the initial presence, albeit limited, of a vocal anti-war primary challenger, Klobuchar was somewhat concerned about her strategy on the war alienating anti-war activists, but she felt that “as long as she was honest it

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Patrick Condon, “In Minnesota Senate Race, GOP's Kennedy Holds to Iraq Message,” *Associated Press*, October 24, 2006.

would be okay.”<sup>7</sup> Klobuchar criticized the president’s handling of the war and called for a “tough, smart” gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops after Iraqis demonstrate they can establish and control a government.<sup>8</sup>

Klobuchar’s campaign strategy highlighted her experience as Hennepin County attorney and her moderate policy positions, particularly on economic issues. She appealed to voters with positive ads. She focused on cutting the deficit and fiscal responsibility, campaigning on a platform to roll back tax cuts on the upper one percent of wage earners, allow re-importation of drugs from Canada, and return to “pay-as-you-go” budgeting. She shied away from being labeled as a liberal by fellow partisans, although this did not stop Kennedy from attempting to do so. “I don’t like labels,” she said. “If people believe focusing on fiscal issues makes you moderate, then I’d be more moderate. I’m my own kind of Democrat.”<sup>9</sup>

Klobuchar consciously avoided making gender-based appeals. Indeed, she was well aware of gender stereotypes that work against women candidates when it comes to evaluations of competence and electoral success.<sup>10</sup> Klobuchar therefore consistently emphasized her professional experience and policy positions on issues that matter to middle class workers, such as the economy and health care. She appeared in all of her campaign’s television ads as an explicit strategy to connect with voters and reinforce her competence and confidence.

At the start of the campaign, Kennedy had greater name recognition than Klobuchar, but also higher negative ratings after what were perceived as negative campaigns for the House in 2002 and 2004. His early ads therefore focused on his family life, his bipartisanship in Congress, and his experience as a CPA. A consistent theme, however, never emerged from the campaign. As the gap between Kennedy and Klobuchar widened, Kennedy began attacking Klobuchar on many—perhaps too many—fronts: for being soft on crime, “saying one thing and doing another,” “negotiating with terrorists,” lobbying for big oil and other clients, getting money from ultra-liberal groups, favoring Social Security for illegal immigrants, and raising taxes. These “scattershot” attempts to discredit Klobuchar lacked credibility and never resonated with voters according to Klobuchar’s campaign manager, Ben Goldfarb.<sup>11</sup>

### Effects of Money

Despite early expectations, the surprisingly uncompetitive race did not come close to the \$25 million record set in 2002 for spending in a U.S. Senate race in Minnesota. Klobuchar raised roughly \$9 million; Kennedy raised roughly \$10 million. Given the twenty-point vote margin between the two candidates, it is surprising that Kennedy and Klobuchar spent as much money as they did and were so close to financial parity.

Six months before the election, the Kennedy-Klobuchar race was poised to be the most competitive Senate race in the nation. Indeed, the *Cook Political Report* rated Minnesota’s race as a “toss-up” as late as September 7, 2006. By September 20, 2006, it had changed the rating to “leans Democratic.”<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, it was widely assumed that resources would flow continuously to both candidates from strategic individual donors and parties alike. As Klobuchar’s lead widened, however, contributions to both

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<sup>7</sup> Ben Goldfarb, campaign manager, Amy Klobuchar for U.S. Senate, interview by William Flanigan and Kathryn Pearson, November 16, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Bill McAuliffe and Patricia Lopez, “Senate Candidates Air Differences on Taxes, Iraq War,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 11, 2006, B1.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Lopez, “The Record of Amy Klobuchar : Her Performance is Both Asset and Deficit,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 9, 2006, A1.

<sup>10</sup> Goldfarb, interview.

<sup>11</sup> Goldfarb, interview.

<sup>12</sup> The Cook Political Report, at <<http://www.cookpolitical.com/races/senate/ratings.php>>, 3 January, 2007.

candidates decreased, and both campaigns received fewer contributions than they had anticipated. Indeed, with Klobuchar's early, large lead, individuals on both sides of the aisle were told "not to give" in Minnesota.<sup>13</sup> The implications were far more problematic for Kennedy's campaign than for Klobuchar's, despite the fact that Kennedy out-raised Klobuchar overall. By September, Klobuchar had more cash on hand than Kennedy did, an advantage that persisted for the remainder of the election. According to Ben Goldfarb, the Klobuchar campaign pursued a "prudent" financial strategy, keeping overhead low and adjusting to signals as early as June that they would be "going it alone."<sup>14</sup>

As shown in table 4-1, the Klobuchar campaign raised roughly \$9 million, ending with a balance of \$50,000.<sup>15</sup> Most of the money came from individuals, totaling around \$7.5 million. EMILY's List was responsible for about \$800,000 of Klobuchar's individual contributions, with contributions averaging \$50. EMILY's List also spent \$61, 221 in independent expenditures on Klobuchar's behalf. Around ten percent of Klobuchar's money came from PACs—\$904,375.

The state and national parties did not contribute directly to Klobuchar's campaign or make independent expenditures to buy ads.<sup>16</sup> Klobuchar had good reason to think that they would: the DSCC had purchased time on Twin Cities' television stations from October 10-23. The DSCC, however, cancelled these spots at the end of September. Executives at Twin Cities' television stations interviewed for a story in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* told reporters that Senate race ad buys were almost twenty percent less than they had anticipated because of the decision of national Democratic and Republican groups to pull ads due to Klobuchar's lead. One executive estimated that it "cost the market between \$1 million and \$2 million."<sup>17</sup> The Klobuchar campaign spent nearly \$5,000,000 on television advertising and around \$250,000 on radio ads.

Despite the lack of party fundraising support for her campaign, Klobuchar helped the party's fundraising efforts by establishing the Amy Klobuchar Victory Committee. Once Klobuchar's contributors reached the contribution limit to her, they could then direct their contributions to the party.

Mark Kennedy out-raised Klobuchar by around \$1 million. As of the October 18 Federal Election Commission report, he had raised over \$9 million, but he only had \$562,000 on hand. By contrast, Klobuchar had raised \$8,620,388 at that point, but she had \$1,236,405 remaining. Nearly a quarter of the money Kennedy raised came from PACs, predominately business PACs.<sup>18</sup> More groups made independent expenditures on Kennedy's behalf than on Klobuchar's. In total, groups spent \$265,995 to help Kennedy. In order of magnitude, this support came from the National Rifle Association of America Political Victory Fund, Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life PAC, the Susan B. Anthony List Candidate Fund, National Right to Life PAC, and the Associated General Contractors of America PAC.<sup>19</sup>

As noted above, Kennedy spent more money early in the campaign than did Klobuchar. As such, when money stopped flowing to Minnesota, Kennedy was at a significant disadvantage. He did not significantly increase his campaign coffers after mid-October, and as a result, he was forced to pare back his ad buys in the final three weeks of the campaign, allowing Klobuchar to run many more ads in the Twin Cities and

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<sup>13</sup> Goldfarb, interview.

<sup>14</sup> Goldfarb, interview.

<sup>15</sup> The financial data in this section came from our interview with Ben Goldfarb, November 16, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> The DNC and DSCC contributed money early on to the state party's field operation.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Patricia Lopez, "Attack of the Attack Ads," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 21, 2006, A1.

<sup>18</sup> Data from Center for Responsive Politics. At <<http://www.crp.org/races/summary.asp?cycle=2006&id=MNS2>>, 3 January, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Data on independent expenditures from "2006 Independent Expenditure Summaries, Reports Received at the FEC through Approximately 7 p.m. November 8, 2006." At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006iesummaries.html>>, 3 January, 2007.

out-state. Kennedy would have benefited from money from the national party at every stage, but the NRSC allocated their resources to candidates with better chances of winning elsewhere in the country.

### *The Air War*

Television advertising started early in the Senate campaign with the first Klobuchar ad on July 10<sup>th</sup>, nearly five months before the election. For two weeks Klobuchar was alone on television running positive, biographical ads. The better-known Kennedy began running biographical ads on July 25<sup>th</sup>, and the ads remained positive on both sides until the middle of September. These biographical ads worked on the candidates' real or perceived weaknesses; Klobuchar's ads presented her as strong and competent, a tough prosecutor while Kennedy's ads showed him to be bipartisan and a "nice guy" to counter the main negative qualities in his image as a mean, intense partisan. The Kennedy campaign had the more difficult task since a majority of the state's population had watched him wage aggressive, unpleasant television ad campaigns in 2002 and 2004.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless the positive ads were partially successful. During the summer Kennedy's image began to improve; however, the desired increase in his poll numbers did not occur.<sup>21</sup>

The Kennedy campaign not only faced an image problem, but by the middle of the summer, there were rumors that national party money would not be forthcoming as long as the candidate appeared so far behind in trial heat polling. The Kennedy campaign was also falling behind Klobuchar in raising money locally. The Kennedy campaign took the obvious course; it spent heavily on ads for a month and half. But Kennedy could not sustain the ad war, and after Labor Day Klobuchar was airing three times as many ads as Kennedy in the Twin Cities market.<sup>22</sup>

The Kennedy campaign faced a dilemma—his negative image was based mainly on his negative ads from his two previous congressional races, so he remained positive for two months without much to show for it. In mid-September the Kennedy campaign stopped running positive ads and for one month ran nothing but negative ads. This hurt the candidate's image, but again did not change expected vote choice. In the last weeks of the campaign Kennedy aired no purely negative ads, relying on comparison ads to attack Klobuchar. Kennedy ran his comparative, "We have made some mistakes" Iraq ad more frequently than any other single ad. Klobuchar had the luxury of airing mainly positive ads along with a small set of ads comparing Klobuchar favorably to Kennedy.<sup>23</sup>

With political parties and interest groups on both sides abandoning the race for other parts of the country, the overall number of ads did not approach the volume of advertising in the 2002 Coleman-Wellstone-Mondale Senate race. Without the political parties contributing ads, the overall tone of the campaign was relatively positive. To not-so-casual observers, like the three authors, however, the race seemed more negative than the ad data show. Perhaps this is because other campaigns produced so much negativity. (See below.) Or perhaps it is because Kennedy ran no purely positive ads after the middle of September.

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<sup>20</sup> In the 2002 race Kennedy was opposed by Janet Robert in a newly created district. They both ran extremely negative advertising, probably the most vicious in Minnesota history. In 2004 Wetterling opposed Kennedy and while less vicious than in 2002, Kennedy was criticized for being too negative.

<sup>21</sup> These observations are based on polling conducted by the Klobuchar campaign and relayed to us in an interview with Ben Goldfarb.

<sup>22</sup> Toward the end of the campaign there was a comparable edge out-state. Goldfarb, interview.

<sup>23</sup> Overall Kennedy ran 2,656 ad spots in the Twin Cities market; about one third were positive, one third were negative, and one third were comparison ads. Klobuchar aired 3,459 spots with over four fifths positive and the rest comparative.

## *The Ground War*

The ground war in the Senate race was similar to the air war; the mail pieces supporting Klobuchar were overwhelmingly positive; the literature on Kennedy's side was half positive and half negative or comparative. Both campaign organizations left the mail pieces to the state parties. The DFL sent out ten mail pieces mostly positive, the Minnesota Republican Party sent out five pieces, all either comparative or negative. A scattering of interest groups accounted for the rest of the mail pieces, almost entirely positive. The pieces of literature were of high quality, but overall the race did not generate a huge amount of mail.

Voter mobilization was a central component of the ground war in Minnesota in 2006. On the DFL side, the state party waged an unprecedented midterm election get-out-the vote (GOTV) effort—the “most robust off-year that Minnesota has ever seen.”<sup>24</sup> All DFL candidates in Minnesota relied on the state party's massive field operation for individually contacting, persuading, and mobilizing voters to go to the polls. The Klobuchar campaign did not have its own GOTV effort. It did help with hiring and planning, but all field efforts were run through the state party.

The entire DFL operation spent around \$12.8 million for the election cycle. The money came from a mix of federal and non-federal funds, including the Democratic National Committee (DNC), Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), and the state party; and it was spent on operational expenses and staff, the field program, the state convention, the coordinated campaign, independent expenditures on behalf of the DFL statewide, and legislative candidates. Of that nearly \$13 million, around \$5 million was spent on the field program. The field program included the paid staff (around 150 people), the office and infrastructure that housed and supported the volunteers, the specific field mail pieces, and the persuasion and GOTV door knocks and phone calls.

Minnesota was one of six pilot states that the DNC assisted in creating models to identify individuals according to their likelihood of voting and vote choice as part of the “50 State” national voter database project. The models used past voter history, voter information collected by volunteers, and demographic and consumer data to identify and classify voters.

The Democratic ground war to mobilize voters began in February. It consisted of three stages: volunteer mobilization, voter identification and persuasion, and the GOTV drive. April marked the beginning of “non-stop” phoning and door knocking to identify persuadable and unlikely voters.

As a result of these efforts and the modeling provided by the DNC, the DFL built a data base with over two million unique identifications, massively expanding their files from previous cycles. This file, which identified people by party identification—categorized as Republicans, Independents, Democrats, or “no data,”—and by voting history, included 215,000 identifiable “drop off” Democratic voters, i.e., people identified as Democrats who do not always vote in off-year elections. The DFL database allowed the state party and DFL volunteers to devote their energy to persuading uncommitted voters and turning out partisans who were unlikely voters. As a result of the modeling, Goldfarb described the DFL's voter identification project as highly sophisticated. Using these data, volunteers knocked on specific doors, targeting non-regular voting, but likely Democrats.

The final week focused on two goals: 300,000 attempts to persuade voters with calls and knocks from Wednesday through Saturday and another 450,000 attempts to mobilize infrequent DFL voters in the last

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<sup>24</sup> Information about Minnesota's state DFL's GOTV efforts comes from an interview with Andrew J. O'Leary, executive director, Democratic Farmer Labor Party, interview by William Flanigan and Kathryn Pearson, November 9, 2006.

couple of days before the election. Klobuchar was at the top of the script, followed by gubernatorial candidate Hatch, the appropriate U.S. House candidate, and the appropriate state legislative candidates.

The state Republican Party also provided grassroots support for its candidates and employed micro-targeted strategies.<sup>25</sup> For the first time, the state and national parties worked together to run the Republicans' typically impressive 72 Hour Task Force. Early difficulty in recruiting volunteers, however, foreshadowed Republicans' electoral problems in Minnesota.

Republicans identified party identifiers and individuals who support Republicans on certain issues, distinguishing between fiscally conservative voters, socially conservative voters, and voters concerned about national security. Depending on the categorization, the Republican Party microtargeted mail to individuals and followed up with a phone call about the same topic.

For the first time Republicans divided their GOTV file into three tiers. Tier A voters—those with the highest propensity to vote—only received one contact. Those in tier B were contacted three times, and the least likely to vote individuals in tier C were contacted five times. Ben Golnik estimates that volunteers made 800,000 voter contacts. Phone calls began in the spring and voters were identified according to the issues they cared about.

## Discussion

In the spring of 2006, a month or so before the endorsing conventions for statewide office but after it was clear that the candidates would be Mark Kennedy and Amy Klobuchar, a poll was conducted for Klobuchar by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. The trial heat question showed Klobuchar leading Kennedy 50 to 42 with 8 percent undecided.<sup>26</sup> At this point Klobuchar had a favorability rating of 29 percent favorable 15 percent unfavorable with 56 percent unable to make a judgment. Apparently just knowing she was a Democrat was enough for many people. For Kennedy the picture was not so bright with 24 percent favorable and 33 percent unfavorable and 43 percent unable to say. This asymmetry in candidate images would survive the campaign in various forms.

In July the Minnesota Poll surveyed all adults and found Klobuchar leading 50 to 31 percent over Kennedy with 19 percent undecided.<sup>27</sup> In this survey after the endorsing conventions Klobuchar's favorability ratings were 46 percent positive and 12 percent negative. Kennedy was 37 percent positive and 27 percent negative. By July the candidates were about equally well-known to the public.

During the months prior to the election, public and private polls showed results mainly with a single digit lead for Klobuchar. As they have in previous years, the Republicans complained mightily about the Minnesota Poll, but potential contributors and national political party leaders apparently believed the results. The Minnesota Poll consistently found leads of 20 percent or more and quite accurately predicted the actual election outcome.

Toward the end of the campaign, a Humphrey Institute poll asked respondents which candidate they thought would do a better job of handling six issues. Klobuchar led Kennedy on each of the six.<sup>28</sup> The findings on candidate images in the same survey were equally discouraging for Kennedy. The large

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<sup>25</sup> Information about Republicans' GOTV efforts comes from an interview with Ben Golnik, executive director, Minnesota Republican Party, interview by William Flanigan and Kathryn Pearson, November 13, 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Available on "Poll Track" for the Minnesota Senate race at <nationaljournal.com>, 3 January 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Minnesota Poll, July 6-11, at <www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/cspg/elections\_projects/polling\_archives.html>, 3 January, 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Humphrey Institute poll, October 23-8. See fn. 2.

Minnesota Poll conducted in the last days of the campaign showed a high degree of party loyalty in expected vote, especially among Democrats.<sup>29</sup> Ninety-five percent of self-identified Democrats planned to vote for Klobuchar. Independents supported Klobuchar over Kennedy by a ratio of two to one. Republicans were not quite as loyal as Democrats with 15 percent defecting to Klobuchar or Fitzgerald, the Independence Party candidate.

### **The Sixth Congressional District Race in Minnesota**

Incumbent Republican Congressman Mark Kennedy's run for the U.S. Senate in 2006 created an open seat and an opportunity for a potential pick-up for the Democrats. As the race in Minnesota's Sixth District developed, it took on an *Alice in Wonderland* quality. Michele Bachmann, the very conservative Republican candidate, was portrayed as soft on crime, while DFLer Patty Wetterling, whose principal weakness was an inability to focus on issues, was portrayed as a doctrinaire liberal extremist. It perhaps fits this inverted reality that, in a year when Democrats were beating moderate Republicans across the country, progressive Minnesota elected a Republican who will be among the most conservative in the new House.

#### *The Sixth District*

The Sixth District is suburban and ex-urban, forming an arc around the northern part of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and extending to the northwest to include the mid-sized city of St. Cloud and the eastern part of Stearns County. The northwest corridor from the Twin Cities to St. Cloud is filling in with rapidly growing suburbs, where young families are finding affordable housing in new sub-divisions. Evangelical churches are a strong presence in these new suburbs, while the German-Catholic influence in St. Cloud and Stearns County remains significant.

The Sixth District is historically a marginal district, politically. With the exception of one term, it was represented by DFL congressmen throughout the 1980s and 1990s, but victory margins were often close; and both the DFL and Republicans viewed the district as an opportunity for the Republicans. Redistricting after the 2000 census, together with new migrants into the district, made it markedly more conservative, enough so that its incumbent DFL congressman chose to run in the new Second District, leaving Second District incumbent Republican Mark Kennedy to run in and win the new Sixth. George W. Bush carried the Sixth District 52 – 42 percent in 2000 and 57 – 42 percent in 2004. Of all the congressional districts, Amy Klobuchar had her smallest margin of victory in the Sixth. It is now arguably the most conservative congressional district in Minnesota, especially on social issues.

DFL candidate Patty Wetterling built a national reputation as an advocate for missing children after her own son, Jacob, was abducted in 1989 and never found. She made her first foray into electoral politics in 2004 when she ran against Mark Kennedy for the Sixth District seat. Although she lost that race, her relatively narrow loss (54-46 percent) in a tough and negative campaign, led her to believe she might fare better in a statewide race than in the socially conservative Sixth. She entered the field for the Senate nomination, assuring her fellow DFLers in the Sixth that she would stay out of that race. When she dropped out of the Senate race and re-entered the contest in the Sixth, her broken promise angered some DFL activists and provided fuel for her Republican opponent.

Michele Bachmann, a tax attorney, began her political career in 1999 as a school board candidate opposing the Profiles of Learning standards in the public school. As a founder and board member of a charter school, she had earlier tangled with the district School Board over the charter school's teaching of

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<sup>29</sup> Minnesota Poll, October 31 to November 3. Data made available by Rob Daves, Research Director, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

creationism and “12 Christian principles.” She lost that school board election, but the next year won the Republican endorsement for a State Senate seat over a moderate Republican and twenty-eight-year incumbent. She went on to beat him handily in the Republican primary, as well as the seat in the general election. As a State Senator, she gained notoriety as the leading opponent of gay marriage and made headlines when seen lurking in the bushes in front of the State Capitol to spy on a gay-rights rally.

### Campaign Themes

In the high-profile Sixth Congressional District race, neither Wetterling nor Bachmann could avoid the most prominent national issues, including the war in Iraq, an unpopular president, and Republican congressional scandals. The district demographics are such, however, that Bachmann was more insulated than most Republicans in competitive races from the fallout over the war and an unpopular president. The main advantage Wetterling derived from national political problems for Republicans in 2006 came from the scandal involving Congressman Mark Foley’s (R-FL) inappropriate email messages to congressional pages. Her background as a child safety advocate positioned her to criticize Republicans credibly and press for increased safety for the pages. Wetterling ran two ads about the Foley scandal, and the DCCC ran another. Wetterling’s attacks received national press, and shortly after the Foley scandal broke, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi asked Wetterling to present the weekly Democratic radio address.

Patty Wetterling’s campaign focused on her credentials as a child safety advocate, even before the Foley scandal broke. Her personal story—turning personal tragedy into advocacy for child safety after her son Jacob was abducted seventeen years earlier—was very compelling. The centrality her campaign gave her advocacy and experience with the Jacob Wetterling foundation, however, opened her up to criticism that she was not a well-rounded candidate or expert in other policy issues. An August article in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* asked, “Is Patty Wetterling too unclear?”<sup>30</sup> She downplayed her support for abortion rights and emphasized her support for health care and other mainstream Democratic policy issues.

Michele Bachmann was well known in the Minnesota legislature for her conservative positions, particularly on social issues. For three years, she led the fight for a state constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. In her campaign, however, Bachmann emphasized cutting taxes, national security, and building roads as her top priorities, downplaying her conservative positions. Indeed, her victory speech started by saying: “We want to secure our national borders, protect our country, and can anyone say, ‘cut taxes?’ We also want to protect our great Minnesota family values, life, marriage, and family life.”<sup>31</sup>

Wetterling tried to make the “extreme and divisive” label stick. In a televised debate, Wetterling asked her how someone so “extreme and divisive” could get anything done in Washington. While it frustrated Democrats that Bachmann downplayed her conservative positions, there were many issues that presented difficulties for Wetterling in the Sixth District. Bachmann’s strong position against abortion rights, for example, was popular in the district, whereas Wetterling rarely mentioned her pro-choice position. Bachmann and her supporters, of course, were quick to remind voters of Wetterling’s support for abortion rights and also portrayed Wetterling as a “blame America first” liberal, even accusing her of supporting terrorists.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Eric Black, “It’s What They Say and How They Say It,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 20, 2006, B1.

<sup>31</sup> Eric Black, “How Michele Bachmann Achieved Victory,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, November 9, 2006, A14.

<sup>32</sup> Eric Black, “Bachmann, Wetterling Joust in TV Debate,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 28, 2006, 1A.

## Effects of Money

The race was the most expensive congressional race in Minnesota's history and among the most expensive in the nation in 2006.<sup>33</sup> Neither candidate lacked resources from their own campaign coffers or from their parties'. In the Sixth District race, Wetterling raised \$3,151,859, and Bachmann raised \$2,723,912.<sup>34</sup>

PAC contributions comprised nearly one-third of Bachmann's funds, \$830,214 in total.<sup>35</sup> This is not surprising, even for an open-seat candidate, given that ideological PACs gave more to her than business PACs. Bachmann's pronounced conservative policy positions attracted many conservative PACs to her cause.<sup>36</sup> PAC contributions totaling \$502,777 accounted for around 12 percent of Wetterling's fundraising total. Wetterling also received more PAC contributions from ideological groups—the liberal groups diametrically opposed to the groups supporting Bachmann—than business groups, which is unusual, even for Democrats.

Given the fierce competition and high stakes of the race, national political figures contributed time and money in the Sixth. The highlight was, perhaps, the August 22<sup>nd</sup> visit of President Bush which raised \$ 500,000 for the Bachmann campaign. Late in October, Laura Bush raised \$ 100,000 at a breakfast fundraiser for Bachmann. Vice President Dick Cheney, Speaker Dennis Hastert, and White House strategist Karl Rove also appeared on her behalf. On the Democratic side, Wetterling attracted fewer big names, but former Senator John Edwards and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi appeared on her behalf in the district. Not surprisingly, high-profile visits for one candidate also had the unintended consequence of mobilizing the other side's partisans to support their candidate.

Both parties' congressional campaign committees played a very active role in the Sixth District. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) spent \$1,123,022 on independent expenditures against Michele Bachmann.<sup>37</sup> The DCCC also designated the Sixth District as part of its "red to blue" program to steer national donors to Democrats who could flip GOP-held districts. The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) made independent expenditures to help Bachmann totaling \$2,485,283; this includes \$61,760 spent on behalf of Bachmann and \$2,423,523 spent against Wetterling. Most of the party campaign committees' independent expenditures funded television and radio ads in the Twin Cities. In addition to the parties' independent expenditures, outside groups in support of Wetterling or opposed to Bachmann made independent expenditures totaling \$645,724. These groups included: the Service Employees International Union Committee on Political Education, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, EMILY's List, and the Human Rights Campaign PAC. Groups spent \$65,353 independently in support of Bachmann, including the National Rifle Association Victory Fund, the National Right to Life PAC, Safari Club International, the Club for Growth PAC, the Trust in Small Business PAC, and Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life PAC.

It is puzzling why both parties' campaign committees and groups spent so much more money in the Sixth District than in the First District, or in other more competitive races across the country. In Minnesota's

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<sup>33</sup> According to the Center for Responsive Politics, it was the tenth most expensive race in terms of money raised by the candidates, \$6,854,447 in total, but this includes the money Wetterling raised as a U.S. Senate candidate. Total Raised and Spent 2006 Race: Minnesota District 6. At <<http://www.crp.org/overview/topraces.asp>>, 3 January, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Data the FEC through 11/27/2006.

<sup>35</sup> Data in this paragraph come from the Center for Responsive Politics and the FEC through 11/27/2006. At <<http://www.crp.org/races/summary.asp?cycle=2006&id=MN06>>, 3 January, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Examples include the Conservative Victory Fund, Eagle Forum PAC, National Pro-Life Alliance PAC, and National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund, among many others.

<sup>37</sup> 2006 Independent Expenditure Summaries, reports received at the FEC through approximately 7 p.m. November 8, 2006. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006iesummaries.html>>, 3 January, 2007.

First District, Democrat Tim Walz defeated incumbent Gil Gutknecht (R-MN) by six points. Yet, the NRCC and DCCC spent only \$408,564 and \$370,882 to help their candidates in this race, respectively.<sup>38</sup> Early on, the open seat in the Sixth District must have seemed more competitive than a race with a neophyte challenger running against a seemingly popular incumbent. Indeed, Gutknecht had won by 24 points in 2004. The Sixth District, however, is more conservative than the First. In 2004, Bush won 51 percent of the vote in the First and 57 percent in the Sixth.

### *The Air War*

The Sixth District race not only broke the previous Minnesota record for spending by several million dollars, the race aired 50 percent more television spots than any previous House race. In 2006 the Sixth District race was responsible for more spots on open air television in the Twin Cities than the Senate race.<sup>39</sup> And unlike the Senate race, the Sixth District television campaign was decidedly negative. The Bachmann campaign aired about twice as many negative spots as positive in the total of 1,483. The Wetterling campaign was just the reverse—two to one positive—although if the comparative ads are considered negative, they are more evenly balanced among the 2,062 spots. The national party campaign committees brought nothing but negative ads, 1,661 spots by the NRCC and 925 by the DCCC. The RNC aired one ad for Bachmann early in September which was positive.

Both campaign organizations began airing positive ads in September steadily increasing the number of spots to Election Day. The Wetterling campaign started airing a negative ad toward the end of September, and the Bachmann campaign held off until mid-October. The first negative ad was aired by the NRCC in late September with an attack on Wetterling as favoring all manner of taxes. The Wetterling campaign responded almost immediately with an attack on Bachmann for supporting a national sales tax. This ad was criticized for implying that this represented additional taxes, not a replacement of other taxes.<sup>40</sup>

The unbelievable ads did not stop here. In mid-October the Bachmann campaign ran an ad that accused Wetterling of favoring cuts in military spending and negotiating with the Taliban because she had accepted funds from PeacePAC, which was formed by the Council for a Livable World. The Council had favored cuts in 1999 but not more recently, and only one member of the Council board had urged talking directly with the Taliban in 2001 as a way of getting tough with them.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the most misleading ad was aired by the DCCC in the last month of the campaign. The ad portrayed Bachmann as soft on crime. The content of the ad was based on her vote against an omnibus bill that did include, among other provisions, some tougher action against sex offenders. Bachmann had, in fact, voted for even stronger steps against sex offenders on other occasions.<sup>42</sup>

The focus of Wetterling's television ads changed abruptly with the news of the Foley scandal. Within a few days the Wetterling campaign was running an ad attacking the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives and drawing attention to her long, well-known career in working to protect children. Eventually a second ad along the same lines replaced the first. Possibly as a result of the scandal and the ads, Wetterling's position in the trial-heats surveys improved in early October. She led Bachmann in two surveys taken in mid-October, but this advantage disappeared in another week.

### *The Ground War*

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> These and other ad buy data are based on Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) data.

<sup>40</sup> See Eric Black, "Is That a Fact?: A Campaign Truth Squad," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 28, 2006, 1B.

<sup>41</sup> See Eric Black, "Is That a Fact?: A Campaign Truth Squad," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 20, 2006, 5B.

<sup>42</sup> See Eric Black, "Is That a Fact?: A Campaign Truth Squad," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 27, 2006, 4B.

Although more money was spent in the air war, by Minnesota standards the ground war was just as awesome. By our count (which can only underestimate the total) there were sixty mail pieces directed at the Sixth District race and most of these appear to have gone to all households. In the last five or six weeks of the campaign, the average household must have received more than one piece of literature a day. These mail pieces favored Bachmann two to one. There were roughly equal numbers of positive and comparative mail pieces for both candidates, but twenty-four mail pieces attacked Wetterling, and six attacked Bachmann. The political parties accounted for almost all of the negative literature.

As with the television ads, much of the literature dealt with claims and counter claims about taxes, but the printed material, particularly in pieces attacking Wetterling, raised a wide range of social issues which both campaign organizations thought played well for Bachmann in the relatively conservative Sixth District. For example, one ad alleged Wetterling had “San Francisco values” which meant supporting gay marriage, gay rights, etc. and not “our hometown values.”

The interest groups confined themselves to the ground war. EMILY's List mailed eight pieces of literature for Wetterling, six positive and two comparative. The U. S. Chamber of Commerce sent out eight pieces for Bachmann, all positive. The Chamber literature emphasized taxes, but the positive literature in general raised many more issues than the television ads.

As discussed in the context of the U.S. Senate race, GOTV activities for federal and state office were coordinated by the state parties. Thus, the congressional candidates were in the middle of the parties' scripts. Given the competitiveness of the campaign, some extra efforts were made in the Sixth District. In conjunction with the massive GOTV effort on the part of the DFL, the DCCC spent \$100,000 in the Sixth District to help contact voters. On the Republican side, the Bachmann campaign had one paid field staff member in each of the five counties in the Sixth District, adding ten to twelve paid staffers by the end of the campaign. This effort had some impact. While turnout was down in comparison with 2002 throughout the state, in the Sixth District turnout was up.

### **Conclusion**

In the spring of 2005 EMILY's List commissioned a survey of the Sixth District.<sup>43</sup> A year and a half before the election Wetterling led Bachmann 49 percent to 38 percent. Wetterling had run in the district in 2004 while Bachmann represented only a State Senate District within the Sixth. At that time the knowledge that Wetterling was pro-choice and Bachmann pro-life did not benefit either candidate. That may have changed by the end of the campaign.

During the fall of 2006, both candidates campaigned actively throughout the district. By Minnesota standards there were a large number of debates which were well attended. Television and radio coverage of the debates, of course, greatly expanded the exposure to the candidates. And anyone who missed the campaign appearances was likely exposed to numerous television ads and many of campaign mail pieces.

Toward the end of the campaign, the opening question of a televised debate revealed that Bachmann was a member of the Salem Lutheran Church in Stillwater, Minnesota, which is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod that holds to the belief that “the papacy is the Antichrist.”<sup>44</sup> She was asked why a Catholic voter should support her. Bachmann appeared ready for the question and said her pastor

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<sup>43</sup> The survey was conducted by Grove Insight of Portland, Oregon. At <nationaljournal.com>, 3 January, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> This had been reported earlier in the day in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, October 28, 2008. The question was asked by Pat Kessler on a debate on WCCO-TV, October 28, 2006. This debate can be viewed at <wcco.com/video/?id=20927@wcco.dayport.com>, 3 January, 2007.

had assured her the assertion was untrue.<sup>45</sup> To distant observers this appeared to be an issue that could hurt Bachmann especially in the heavily Catholic western part of the Sixth District. The bloggers went wild, but the matter seemed to have no impact on the electorate.<sup>46</sup>

Wetterling received national attention, personally, in several ways. In late July President Bush invited her to the White House for the signing of the sex offenders bill. After the Foley scandal broke, Wetterling gave the Democratic Party response to President Bush's radio address on Saturday, October 7. In retrospect these activities may have promoted Wetterling's connection to an issue area that already was well known in the district without improving her overall candidate image.

By the end of the campaign, the likely voters were fairly evenly divided among Democrats, Republicans, and independents. In a Minnesota Poll taken in October at the height of the Foley scandal, Wetterling appeared to be ahead of Bachmann. With extremely high levels of party loyalty among partisan Democrats and Republicans, the balance of power was held by the independents, and they favored Wetterling. Presumably this group shifted toward Bachmann by Election Day. In-depth interviewing of respondents in the Minnesota Poll indicated more voters were making their choices based on dislike for a particular candidate rather than on the positive attributes of their choice.

However, regardless of the how voters finally selected a candidate, the race was noteworthy for a number of reasons. Unlike most House races in Minnesota and around the country, the Sixth District race was prominently discussed nationally and in Minnesota. In the Twin Cities and in the Sixth District the expensive television ad campaign was as prominent as either the Senate race or the gubernatorial contest. Other than the eight point margin of victory at the end, the Sixth District race had all of the characteristics of a high profile, competitive election.

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<sup>45</sup> It is hard to know what this denial was based on. See "Doctrinal Statements" on the Antichrist under "Beliefs" at <[www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)>, 14 December 2006.

<sup>46</sup> For a long list of blogs see [dumbachmann.blogspot.com](http://dumbachmann.blogspot.com).

**Table 4-1**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Minnesota Senate Race, 2005-06**

	<b>Amy Klobuchar (D)</b>	<b>Mark Kennedy (R)</b>
From PACs	\$904,375	\$2,245,413
From individuals	\$7,566,121	\$7,014,614
From party	\$37,800	\$40,191
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$672,202	\$876,214
Total receipts	\$9,180,498	\$10,176,432
Total expenditures	\$9,020,059	\$10,138,523
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$160,438	\$184,861

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006. At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 4-2**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Minnesota Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Amy Klobuchar for U.S. Senate	\$4.5-5,000,000	\$250,000	<b>\$4.5-5,250,000</b>	\$3,794,587
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Mark Kennedy for U.S. Senate 06	\$3.5-4,000,000 <sup>c</sup>	\$137,801 <sup>d</sup>	<b>\$3.5-4,137,801</b>	\$3,440,969
<i>Political parties</i>				
Republican Party of Minnesota	...	\$42,000 <sup>e</sup>	<b>\$42,000</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	...	...	\$70,967

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 4-3.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> This is a guess based on ad buys. The Kennedy campaign did not provide the information.

<sup>d</sup> This is a low estimate presumably, but we do not have a better one.

<sup>e</sup> This estimate for radio came from Ben Golnik of the state GOP.

In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 4-3**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Minnesota Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>							
<i>Candidates</i>							
Amy Klobuchar for US Senate	<sup>c</sup>	4 <sup>d</sup>	...	1	10 <sup>e</sup>	14	<b>19</b>
<i>Political parties</i>							
Minnesota DFL Party	...	11 <sup>f</sup>	...	1 <sup>g</sup>	...	...	<b>12</b>
DSCC	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
Education Minnesota	...	4	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
AFSCME	...	3	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
EMILY's List	...	2	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	...	...	...	2	<b>2</b>
Minnesota AFL-CIO	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Women's Voices. Women Vote.	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>							
<i>Candidates</i>							
Mark Kennedy for US Senate 06	...	3	...	2 <sup>h</sup>	1 <sup>i</sup>	14	<b>20</b>
<i>Political parties</i>							
Republican Party of Minnesota	...	13	...	3	1	...	<b>17</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
Seniors Coalition, The	...	3	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
MN Citizens Concerned for Life	...	2	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
National Rifle Association	...	2	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Associated Builders and Contractors	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Federation of Independent Business	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>							
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
AARP	...	1	1 <sup>j</sup>	...	1 <sup>j</sup>	1 <sup>j</sup>	<b>4</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 4-2.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> Their distribution list was 100,000. They used subsets for volunteers and to announce local campaign events.

<sup>d</sup> The campaign printed a limited amount of literature for events but did no mailings.

<sup>e</sup> One ad was for Latino stations, another for African-American stations, and two for outstate stations.

<sup>f</sup> Three mailings were statewide, one was targeted to seniors and another to sportsmen. Two mailings were statewide GOTV.

<sup>g</sup> There was one continuous statewide telephone and door knocking campaign. They hired staff in March, 2006, and started volunteer telephoning and door knocking in April. This campaign supported the entire ticket.

<sup>h</sup> There was one continuous microtargeted campaign to the three lists of fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, and national security in the last ten days of the campaign. An outside vendor was paid \$ 350,000 for more than 900,000 such calls. Volunteers made about 800,000 GOTV calls and door knocks in the last four days of the campaign. From Saturday to Monday there were 494,000 calls and 75,000 households door knocked. The ratio of calls to door knocks was about seven to one.

<sup>i</sup> Although no specific ads were heard, this organization was active in this race because radio ad-buy data was obtained from stations.

<sup>j</sup> Nancy K. George, National Coordinator of Voter Education, AARP, email communication with Nisha Riggs, December 7, 2006.

In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 4-4**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Minnesota Sixth Congressional District Race,**  
**2005-06**

	<b>Patty Wetterling (D)</b>	<b>Michele Bachmann (R)</b>
From PACs	\$502,777	\$830,214
From individuals	\$2,568,786	\$1,492,323
From party	\$6,550	\$26,570
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$73,746	\$374,805
Total receipts	\$3,151,859	\$2,723,912
Total expenditures	\$3,137,844	\$2,589,077
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$51,061	\$134,836

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, “2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info,” November 27, 2006.  
 At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 4-5**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Minnesota Sixth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Wetterling 06	\$1,500,000	\$65,000 <sup>c</sup>	<b>\$1,565,000<sup>d</sup></b>	\$2,357,478
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$1,500,000	...	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	\$1,358,523
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Bachmann for Congress	\$1,700,000 <sup>e</sup>	\$15,000	<b>\$1,715,000</b>	\$1,653,252
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	\$2,500,000 <sup>f</sup>	...	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	\$2,460,583
RNC / Bachmann	...	...	...	\$320,913

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 4-6.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> All the radio ads were on rural radio stations.

<sup>d</sup> This estimate provided by Corey Day, campaign manager of Wetterling 06.

<sup>e</sup> This estimate provided by Andy Parrish, campaign manager for Bachmann for Congress.

<sup>f</sup> This estimate provided by Corey Day includes both the NRCC expenditures and a modest amount from the RNC.

In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 4-6**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Minnesota Sixth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Phone Call	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>					
<i>Candidates</i>					
Wetterling 06	<sup>c</sup>	2 <sup>d</sup>	2 <sup>e</sup>	7	<b>11</b>
<i>Political parties</i>					
Minnesota DFL Party	...	10 <sup>f</sup>	1 <sup>g</sup>	...	<b>11</b>
DCCC	...	...	...	3	<b>3</b>
DNC	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>					
EMILY's List	...	9	...	...	<b>9</b>
Education Minnesota	...	4	...	...	<b>4</b>
Service Employees International Union	...	2	...	...	<b>2</b>
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	...	2	<b>2</b>
Women's Voices. Women Vote.	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>					
<i>Candidates</i>					
Bachmann for Congress	<sup>h</sup>	...	<sup>i</sup>	5	<b>5</b>
<i>Political parties</i>					
Republican Party of Minnesota	...	27 <sup>j</sup>	2 <sup>k</sup>	...	<b>29</b>
NRCC	...	13	...	5	<b>18</b>
RNC	...	5	...	1	<b>6</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>					
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	9	...	...	<b>9</b>
Americans for Job Security	...	2	...	...	<b>2</b>
Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Rifle Association	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>					
<i>Interest Groups</i>					
AARP	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 4-5.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> The campaign distribution list was 20,000.

<sup>d</sup> There was really only one mail campaign and it cost \$ 5,000.

<sup>e</sup> \$40,000 was spent on telephoning.

<sup>f</sup> Six were persuasive mailings, mainly anti-Bachmann and two were GOTV.

<sup>g</sup> The campaigns shown under Klobuchar included Wetterling when the telephoning or door knocking was in the Sixth District.

<sup>h</sup> The campaign sent routine emails to a distribution list of 6,000.

<sup>i</sup> The only phone activity was the GOTV effort.

<sup>j</sup> The state party paid \$ 300,000 for printing and postage. In the last ten days of the campaign the mailings went to targeted lists of fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, or national security voters.

<sup>k</sup> There was one continuous microtargeted campaign to the three lists (See fn j above) in the last ten days of the campaign. Volunteers made GOTV calls and door knocks in the last four days of the campaign. The ratio of calls to door knocks was about seven to one. In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**The 2006 Montana Senate Race**  
Craig Wilson  
Montana State University-Billings

In Montana's 2006 U.S. Senate race, three-term incumbent Conrad Burns, the state's second popularly elected Republican senator, was defeated by Democratic State Senator Jon Tester. Tester won the contest with a plurality vote of 49.2 percent, compared to 48.3 percent for Burns and 2.5 percent for Libertarian Stan Jones.

Spending by the candidates, party committees and interest groups on the campaign were important factors in shaping the race. Significant funds were expended on the issue of campaign financing, specifically the money Conrad Burns took from convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff and his associates. The Burns-Abramoff relationship had been debated for months in Montana prior to the election and indirectly impacted the results of the Democratic Senate primary.

In the April 2006 issue of *Vanity Fair*, Abramoff made a statement about Burns' role on a Department of the Interior subcommittee, which was repeated in various forms during the campaign: "[E]very appropriation we wanted [from Burns' subcommittee] we got. Our staffs are as close as they could be. They particularly used Signatures [Abramoff's restaurant] as their cafeteria. I mean it's a little difficult to run from that record."<sup>1</sup> Burns' response to these allegations also became a rhetorical mainstay of his campaign. He told a reporter he wished Abramoff "had never been born" and produced advertisements stating Abramoff "lied to anybody and everybody" and "ripped off his Indian clients, but he never influenced me."<sup>2</sup>

Like other congressional contests, Montana's Senate race was also shaped by national political forces. President Bush's approval rating, the war in Iraq and on terrorism, and perceptions about the direction of the U.S. all played a role in the contest, but proved less important in Montana than the Burns-Abramoff issue. The 2006 "MSU-Billings Poll" found that 47 percent of the likely voters interviewed disapproved of the president's job performance and a majority opposed the war in Iraq. And 73 percent of those polled had a negative opinion of Burns' ties to Abramoff. However, the poll found the respondents felt Burns would be better than Tester at handling international terrorism and obtaining federal funds for Montana, while Tester would be more likely to raise taxes.<sup>3</sup> The national exit poll done in Montana on Election Day confirmed the findings of this and other objective surveys conducted during the campaign. While 11 percent of Tester's voters were Republican, only 7 percent of Burns' backers were Democrats. A majority of voters disapproved of President Bush's job performance and the war in Iraq. And while 52 percent of the electorate polled concluded Tester had "high ethical standards," only 39 percent felt the same about Burns. Finally, 59 percent of those surveyed said Burns had served too long in the Senate.<sup>4</sup>

### **Montana Politics**

The 1980's and 1990's were largely a period of Republican dominance in Montana. During this era the voters elected Republican governors four consecutive times and GOP legislative majorities for five consecutive biennial sessions. Montana appeared to be veering from its traditional two-party competitive status to becoming a modified one-party Republican state. But in 2004, moderate Democrat Brian

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<sup>1</sup> David Margolick, "Washington's Invisible Man," *Vanity Fair*, April 2006, 200.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Craig Wilson and Joe Floyd, co-directors, "The MSU-Billings Poll," (Montana: Montana State University-Billings, October 2006), 4-8,11-15.

<sup>4</sup> National Exit Poll. *CNN.com*, 28 November 2006. At <[www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006pages/results/states/MT/S/01/epolls.0.html](http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006pages/results/states/MT/S/01/epolls.0.html)>, 28 November 2006.

Schweitzer, who ran unsuccessfully against Conrad Burns in 2000,<sup>5</sup> won the statehouse and his party captured all but one of the minor statewide offices and a majority in the Montana State Senate, while the House was evenly divided between the major parties. But in supporting President Bush, the states' voters again proved to be a political weathervane in presidential politics. In only four instances in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have Montanans not backed the winning presidential candidate.

In the 2006 election the state shifted back to its post-World War II tendency of having a Governor of one party, with at least one legislative chamber controlled by the opposite party. Further, Montana again has two Democratic U.S. Senators, which has been the case during most of the post-1945 era. Finally, in 2006 Montana demonstrated its traditional pattern of high voter turnout as 63 percent of the eligible electorate voted. The results of the 2006 general election will lead to continued dialogue about the state's partisan tendencies.

### **The Candidates**

Senator Conrad Burns, seventy-one, was born in rural Missouri and raised on a farm. He attended the University of Missouri for two years before joining the Marine Corps and moving to Montana in the early 1960's to begin reporting on agricultural issues. In 1975 he formed the Northern Agricultural Network, which by the mid-1980's had expanded into a statewide radio and television news service. Burns agricultural reporting gave him statewide name recognition and strong ties to rural Montana. His first political office was a two-year term on the Yellowstone County Commission.

In 1988, the year Burns defeated incumbent Democratic Senator John Melcher, he utilized some of the same campaign rhetoric he would employ against Jon Tester, branding his opponent a "liberal" who favored government spending. But other comments Burns made about Melcher, particularly that Melcher had served too long in Washington, D.C., would be turned against Burns by Tester in 2006. Burns easily won re-election in 1994, but in 2000 he faced an effective campaigner in future Democratic Governor Brian Schweitzer, whom he barely defeated.

Senator Burns established a conservative voting record and received low evaluations from liberal organizations. He was pro-life on abortion, pro-NRA, and strongly disliked by most environmental groups, but he was embraced by agricultural interests and energy companies. He was appointed to the Senate Appropriations Committee and became skilled at getting financial earmarks benefiting Montana attached to legislation. His most repeated campaign theme in 2006 was that his seniority mattered and that he had brought more than two billion dollars in appropriations back to the state. Although Burns was the only U.S. Senator without a college degree, he established credentials as a leader on telecommunications issues. But while his accomplishments in this area could have been employed to blunt attacks against him as a "good old boy," these issues were hardly discussed during the 2006 race. In a final interview Burns returned to touting his achievements in improving Montana's technology, "When we started to plow in a lot of glass, a lot of fiber optics, man, I tell you what, you just seen that state come alive."<sup>6</sup>

News articles about Burns' links to Jack Abramoff began to be reported in early 2005. As the story unfolded, Burns and several of his staffers came under increased scrutiny. National pundits also labeled Burns a vulnerable incumbent. In late 2005 Burns launched an unusual re-election campaign by defending his relationship with Abramoff, while attacking other activities the lobbyist engaged in. Despite trying to move to an offensive position, over time negative perceptions of Burns appeared to grow. For example, in

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<sup>5</sup> See Craig Wilson, "The Montana 2000 Senate and House Race," in David B. Magleby, ed., *The Other Campaign: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2000 Congressional Elections* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 129-148.

<sup>6</sup> Noelle Straub, "Burns: 'I'm Happy with What We Did,'" *Billings Gazette*, December 10, 2006, All.

April 2006 *Time* magazine listed him as one of the five worst Senators, labeling him “serially offensive” for several of his past comments and in referring to Jack Abramoff noted that, “Burns’ real problem is not with making law, but with staying on the right side of it.”<sup>7</sup>

Republican State Senator Bob Keenan challenged Burns in the 2006 primary. An unintended consequence of the contest was to allow the Senator to concentrate on issues other than ethics and lobbying. Keenan, a competent politician, debated the Senator on policy issues but only elliptically mentioned Abramoff. Burns won an easy primary victory, 72 percent to 22 percent, over Keenan and Bob Kelleher, a perennial candidate who did little campaigning.

Jon Tester, fifty, a native Montanan was raised on a farm near Big Sandy in north central Montana. He earned a bachelor’s degree in music from the University of Great Falls. In the late 1980’s he moved back to his family’s dry-land farm where he developed an organic grain operation and became a custom butcher. Tester served on a variety of local government bodies. After being angered by state utility deregulation in the late 1990’s, he ran a successful campaign for a Montana Senate seat where he served for four years becoming Senate President in 2005. Tester filed for the U.S. Senate race in late March, joining other Democrats already in the contest. In announcing his candidacy, rather than jabbing his Democratic opponents, Tester attacked Burns saying his “reign of corruption is coming to an end.”<sup>8</sup>

John Morrison, the State Auditor, was the early favorite to win the Democratic primary. But one campaign-changing development propelled Tester to primary victory. In early April, a newspaper state bureau revealed that Morrison had had an extramarital affair with a woman in 1998, and that in 2001-2002 the woman’s boyfriend was investigated by Morrison’s office for securities fraud. While Morrison hired an outside attorney to deal with the case, he did not recuse himself from it and admitted talking to the woman during the investigation. Tester did not directly confront Morrison about this issue, but at one point stated that only he could go “belly to belly and toe to toe” with Burns on ethical matters. This issue became embroiled in the Abramoff-Burns debate as many Democrats wondered how Morrison, now confronting his own ethical problem, could effectively attack Burns on this issue. On Election Day, Tester won a landslide primary victory, defeating Morrison and several other candidates 61 percent to 35 percent.

During the primary Tester honed the “down-home made in Montana” theme of his campaign. This was best epitomized by the “Creating a Buzz” television advertisement showing Tester getting his signature \$8 flat-top haircut from a Great Falls barber and stating he wanted to, “put an end to Senator Burns kind of corruption and make the U.S. Senate look more like Montana.”<sup>9</sup> Almost all of Tester’s media commercials contained a western element or referenced his status as a national political outsider.

In an interview following the general election, Guy Cecil, political director of the DSCC, said, of the national party’s early involvement in the race, “From the very beginning, from before a lot of people thought we had a chance, we were committed....Our intention was to win Montana [regardless of who won the nomination].... Montana is one of the states where we were completely neutral in the primary.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Massimo Calabresi and Perry Bacon, Jr., “America’s 10 Best Senators,” *Time*, April 24, 2006, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Charles S. Johnson, “Tester Files For Senate,” *Missoulian (Mont.)*, 3 March 2006. At <[www.missoulian.com/articles/2006/03/22/news/mtregional/news04.txt](http://www.missoulian.com/articles/2006/03/22/news/mtregional/news04.txt)>, 22 March 2006.

<sup>9</sup> “Jon Tester-Creating a Buzz,” *youtube.com*, 9 December 2006. At <[youtube.com/watch?v=joQi27QG7Cs&mode=related&search=](http://youtube.com/watch?v=joQi27QG7Cs&mode=related&search=)>, 2 December 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Guy Cecil, political director, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

Libertarian Stan Jones was the third candidate in the Senate race. Jones, sixty-three, is a native Montanan. Previously he had run unsuccessfully for both the U.S. Senate and the governorship in Montana. He spent only several thousand dollars campaigning, but by winning 2.5 percent of the vote (the exit poll found that two-thirds of his voters were independents, but included twice as many Democrats as Republicans),<sup>11</sup> Tester earned only a plurality victory.

### Money

The 2006 Montana Senate race was the most expensive in state history. Tester raised more than \$5.5 million in campaign money. Of this amount, \$4.8 million (90 percent) came from individuals and almost \$527,000 (10 percent) from PACs. In comparison, Conrad Burns reported raising slightly more than \$8 million, but spent \$8.5 million. He received \$4.87 million (61 percent) of his funding from individuals and \$2.6 million (32 percent) from PACs (see table 5-1). The two candidates spent almost \$13.9 million on the race, a record amount for Montana, which amounted to more than \$34 for every vote cast in the contest.

The Burns campaign was not as successful as hoped for in raising campaign funds. When the Senator filed for re-election in February 2006, he had raised \$6 million, but never achieved his announced goal of collecting \$10 million.<sup>12</sup> And he spent \$3 million during the primary defending his record and attacking Democratic opponents. In the second quarter of the year, Tester's contributions almost matched Burns, and in the third quarter Tester collected more money, \$2.1 compared to \$1.5 million for Burns. In the final September 30 FEC filing prior to the election Tester had \$571,000 left to spend and Burns \$1.7 million.<sup>13</sup>

Burns, however, continued pursuing high visibility fundraising. In March, President Bush held a campaign function for him, and throughout the general election period a steady stream of Republican Party luminaries traveled to Montana seeking contributions for Burns. In contrast, Tester, possibly to help maintain his image as the outside populist and real Montana candidate, hosted few high-profile visitors but made multiple bicoastal trips to attend fundraisers for his campaign. The perceived closeness of the race coupled with Tester's image attracted a great deal of national publicity. Mid-December FEC data on individual contributions reported that Tester raised almost as much money from Montanans as Burns. But Burns maintained an advantage over Tester in out-of-state contributions. In comparison, the \$1.5 million Tester raised from non-Montanans was \$756,253 (102 percent) more than fellow Democrat Brian Schweitzer collected from out-of-staters in the 2000 Senate race.<sup>14</sup>

Burns advantage in campaign donations was reduced considerably when political party spending for the candidates is factored in. At the time this study was written Burns' 31 percent advantage in campaign money became 14.3 percent when party contributions are included. Democratic Party organizations spent more than \$2 million to assist Tester and the Republicans significantly less, about \$700,000, aiding Burns.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> National Exit Poll, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "Burns Files, Touts Record of Helping State," *Billings Gazette*, 22 February 2006. At <<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/02/22/news/state/25-burns-campaign.prf>>, 22 February 2006.

<sup>13</sup> "Tester Picks Up Funding Pace," *Billings Gazette*, 15 October 2006. At <<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/14/news/state/55-tester.txt>>, 14 October 2006.

<sup>14</sup> FEC data as cited at [opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org). "Montana 2006" and "2000 Race: Montana Senate." At <<http://www.opensecrets.org>>, 2 January 2007 and <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/instate.asp?ID=MTS1&Cycle=20...>>, 2 January 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Federal Election Commission, "National Republican Senatorial Committee," 3 January 2007 and "Democratic National Senatorial Committee," 4 January 2007. At <[http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/com\\_supopp/C00027466](http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/com_supopp/C00027466)>, 3 January 2007 and, <<http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-in/fecimg/?C00042366>>, 4 January 2007.

With the exception of campaign-sponsored letters seeking contributions, almost all of the campaign-associated glossy mail pieces were paid for by political party groups. The Montana Democratic Party mailed at least sixteen pieces of literature supporting Tester and fellow Democratic candidates, while twenty similar mail pieces were sent out by the Montana Republican Central Committee and five from the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC). A Montana Democratic official estimated that the state party mailed two million pieces of literature at a cost of \$650,000.<sup>16</sup> A Republican Party executive said his party sent out about 1.1 million pieces of targeted mail at a cost of \$400,000.<sup>17</sup>

Both parties established call centers. The Montana Democratic Party made about two million phone calls, almost five for every person voting in the Senate race. A state party executive confirmed that the national party made an early commitment to defeat Burns, which allowed the early hiring of staff and field organizers. The estimated Democratic GOTV costs in the Senate race were placed at \$650,000.<sup>18</sup> The Republicans largely employed more traditional phone banks and made four to five hundred thousand targeted calls.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of electronic media, Burns' campaign spent about \$2.4 million running television and radio ads, which was 57 percent more than the \$1.8 million spent by the Tester campaign. But Burns' monetary advantage was reversed when the spending by Democratic Party groups is factored in. They purchased almost 1.6 times more media time for Tester than his campaign did. In contrast, the NRSC bought less electronic media for Burns than his campaign did (see table 5-2). In contrast, in the 2000 Senate race the two major candidates and their respective political parties spent about \$761,000 on television and radio commercials. Conrad Burns and the Republican Party bought about \$390,000 in electronic media, about 5 percent more than the almost \$372,000 purchased by Brian Schweitzer and the Democratic Party.<sup>20</sup>

In June, the NRSC placed its first radio and television advertisements for Burns, which parodied Tester's "Haircut" ad and accused him of wanting that to look like a conservative. But the ad was criticized because the actor portraying the barber had a non-Montanian accent. The NRSC downgraded Burns' chances of winning and bought their last television time for him on August 1 and did not return to the Montana airways until the middle of October. In contrast, in early August the DSCC said it had reserved \$1.65 million in television commercials for Tester.

A variety of interest groups participated in the Senate, but the spending by outside groups was less significant than candidate and political party campaign expenditures.

In terms of groups supporting Burns, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spent \$75,000 buying electronic media ads, while the NRA Political Victory Fund spent about \$120,000 in total support for him. Several pro-choice groups sent mail pieces backing Burns; the Susan B. Anthony Fund spending \$9,478, while the National Right to Life PAC spent \$11,406. Harder hitting television commercials were sponsored by the Free Enterprise Committee, which spent \$125,000 attacking Tester as a taxer and Americans for

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<sup>16</sup> Democratic State Official #1, telephone interview done on the basis of background, by Craig Wilson, December 11, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Republican State Official, telephone interview, done on the basis of background, by Craig Wilson, December 13, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Democratic State Official #2, telephone interview, done on the basis of background, by Craig Wilson, December 12, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Republican State Official, interview done on the basis of background by Craig Wilson, December 14, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Craig Wilson, "The Montana 2000 Senate and House Race," 135.

Honesty on Issues committed \$175,000 for television ads blasting the Democratic candidate for his weak international issues.<sup>21</sup>

Groups supporting Tester included the League of Conservation Voters, which spent more than \$100,000 in conducting an extensive ground and air war campaign against Burns. Campaign Money Watch bought \$100,000 of television commercials attacking Burns for his ties to “big oil.” And the International Association of Firefighters PAC, possibly the outside group with the most impact on the campaign, entered the campaign following Burns’ negative remarks to a group of fire fighters, spending about \$97,000 in ground game activities calling upon voters to “fire Burns.”<sup>22</sup>

Total independent expenditures by interest groups reported to the FEC amounted to \$829,274. Of this amount \$601,101 (72.5 percent) was spent assisting Tester and \$228,179 (27.5 percent) aiding Burns.<sup>23</sup>

### **Effects of Money**

#### *Air War*

Because of its relatively small population, Montana’s radio and television markets are known for providing good value for money. In 2006 this reality encouraged the national parties, as well as other interest groups, to participate to varying degrees in Montana’s Senate race. Media advertisements laid the groundwork for and buttressed the major campaign themes of the candidates.

One of the most controversial spots, paid for by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), used the words Burns employed in attacking forest fire fighters at the Billings airport in July for having done a, “p--- p--- job” fighting Montana fires and pointing at one of them said “he hasn’t done a G---d---thing.”<sup>24</sup> When stations refused to show the ad because of its graphic language, it led to another negative news story for Burns. The ad was later played after hyphens replaced most of the profanity.

During the general election period, national and state Democratic political party entities sponsored at least a dozen television ads for Tester, while his campaign paid for about seven. In contrast, eight television spots were tracked for Burns’ campaign, while the NRSC paid for two. Ten other advertisements were funded by outside groups, which were about equally divided in supporting Tester or Burns (see table 5-3).

Some of the television advertisements, like those sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the NRA, supported Burns without degrading Tester. Others addressed general issues but not specific candidates. Americans United for Change, for instance, ran anti-Bush statements, while the Center for Union Facts backed anti-union rhetoric.

But some groups sponsored hard-hitting negative messages. For example, Campaign Money Watch attacked Burns by showing a stereotypical Texas oil man with slicked back hair praising Burns because he “voted for our energy bill, \$3.8 billion in tax breaks and subsidies for us....carry on Montanians (Cha Ching!)...thank you for giving it up at the pump.”<sup>25</sup> Another group named Vote Vets sponsored a

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<sup>21</sup> See tables 5-2 and 5-3 and Federal Election Commission, “2006 Independent Expenditure Summaries,” 8 November 2006. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006iesummaries.html>>, 29 December 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> “Ad: Conrad Burns and Firefighters,” *youtube.com*, At <[youtube.com/results?search\\_query=conrad+burns+++ad&search=Search](http://youtube.com/results?search_query=conrad+burns+++ad&search=Search)>, 7 December 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Public Campaign Action Fund, “Big Oil and Conrad Burns,” *campaignmoney.org*. At <[www.campaignmoney.org/node/71693/print](http://www.campaignmoney.org/node/71693/print)>, 6 December 2006.

commercial showing an Iraq veteran shooting an AK-47 rifle bullet through body armor and then demonstrating that improved body armor, the funding for which Burns supposedly opposed, could stop the bullets and the difference “is life...or death.”<sup>26</sup>

Late in the campaign several anti-Tester groups ran negative television commercials. The Free Enterprise Fund Committee ran an ad, which was a caricature of the movie *Brokeback Mountain*, accusing “Jon ‘The Taxer’ Tester,” of “being another Brokeback Democrat...they just can’t fight their nature.”<sup>27</sup> Another group, Americans for Honesty on Issues, attacked him for being soft on terrorism and the Patriot Act.<sup>28</sup>

The personal nature of the attacks led both campaigns to bring out character witnesses to shore up the candidates’ images. At the end of the campaign, prominent Republicans including ex-Governor Marc Racicot appeared in commercials for Burns. And Governor Brian Schweitzer did a pro-Tester ad in which he said, “Senator Burns and his crooked pals from Washington are lying about my friend Jon Tester.”<sup>29</sup>

Especially in the major markets, a great deal of radio advertising was employed throughout the campaign. A senior radio executive said that there was “two to three times more radio sold” in his area than for the previous general election.<sup>30</sup> Twenty-eight distinct radio spots were identified. Of these twelve were paid for by the Burns’ campaign or the Republican Party, while Tester or the Democratic Party paid for eight. Another three ads sponsored by outside issue groups supported Burns or Republican issues, with three others backing Tester or Democratic concerns (see table 5-3). Many of the radio advertisements were spin-offs of the themes identified in television commercials. A Republican official said that the airways were so saturated that they could not buy any more radio spots for Burns in the final ten days of the campaign.<sup>31</sup>

The 2006 Senate race ground game in Montana differed somewhat from recent general elections. Direct mail by the candidates, political parties, and interest groups continued to be the most prevalent tactic. More emails were tracked than in previous elections, but most of them were appeals to partisans to donate money and turn out for rallies, rather than being employed as campaign propaganda. But despite the national Republican Party’s reported advantage over Democrats in sophisticated GOTV efforts, in Montana the Democrats appeared to come close to matching the Republican effort. Overall, there was a significant increase in the number of phone calls utilized for a variety of purposes; general appeals to support candidates and parties, reminders to return absentee ballots, informative calls from groups providing positive or negative information about candidates, brief voter identification surveys, and push polls (see table 5-3). The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) sent a trailer to Montana with computerized telephone capabilities from which 1.1 million phone calls were made.<sup>32</sup> Quite a few of the messages were robocalls. Common Sense Ohio conducted robo-push polls against Tester, apparently using a voice recognition system that altered responses based upon how a question was answered. And after several mail pieces portrayed Tester in hunting gear, just prior to the election, an unknown group made robocalls stating: “Jon Tester hasn’t had a hunting license in Montana in fifteen years.”

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<sup>26</sup> “Iraq Veterans Call for Defeat of Conrad Burns in New TV Ad Campaign,” *Votevets.org*, 28 September 2006. At <[www.votevets.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogsection&id=7&Itemid...](http://www.votevets.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=7&Itemid...)>, 6 December 2006.

<sup>27</sup> “Brokeback Democrats,” *youtube.com*. At <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ai6430IjjUI&search=Vonagepercent20advertisementpercent20a...](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ai6430IjjUI&search=Vonagepercent20advertisementpercent20a...)>, 7 December 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Jennifer McKee, “Texan’s Donation Buys Last-minute Anti-Tester Ad,” *Billings Gazette*, 2 November 2006. At <[www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/11/02/news/state/60-donation.txt](http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/11/02/news/state/60-donation.txt)>, 28 December 2006.

<sup>29</sup> “Betting Jag,” *youtube.com*. At: <[www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=schweitzer+ad&search=Search](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=schweitzer+ad&search=Search)>, 7 December 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Manager of radio station consortium, telephone interview done on the basis of background by Craig Wilson, 27 November 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Republican State Official.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Democratic State Official #2.

Of the seventy pieces of direct mail tracked, almost 40 percent of it came from the two political parties, with almost two-thirds of this being sent by Republican groups. While some was GOTV material, the glossy mail pieces bore the imprimatur of the Montana Republican State Central Committee, the NRSC or the Montana Democratic Party. The Republican mail pieces mirrored Burns' campaign themes. Tester was most often flogged for favoring higher "taxes," followed by being a "liberal" and holding "extreme" positions. Other recurring themes attacked him for being "pro-abortion," "anti-gun," "soft on illegal immigration" and a "tumbleweed" on Iraq and terror. In return, Democratic mail pieces most often branded Burns as beholdng to "lobbyists" and "special interests," "not delivering for Montana," backing a "national sales tax," not representing Montana values, and having served too long in Washington, D.C.<sup>33</sup>

The third-party mail pieces contained a potpourri of information and allegations. U.S. Chamber of Commerce mail pieces praised Burns' positions on economic issues and said Tester favored increased taxation. Five pieces of mail sent by the Seniors Coalition were benign and praised Burns for supporting senior citizen issues. NRA material praised Burns, without attacking Tester. In contrast, the League of Conservative Voters chastised Burns for backing "big oil" and supporting "special interests."<sup>34</sup> And four mail pieces from the International Association of Fire Fighter PAC, which became active in the race as the result of Burns accosting the forest fire personnel, stressed the need to "fire Burns" and elect Tester so Montana would be adequately protected by emergency services. This organization sent out 236,000 pieces of mail directed to women between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five, whom they hoped to influence on the issue of security. Following the mail pieces, phone calls were made to residences receiving the mail.<sup>35</sup>

Some political phone calls were integrated with other ground game strategies. The Montana Republican Party mailed out a card stating that an application for an absentee ballot would be arriving in a few days then, after the application arrived, a follow-up call came reminding the voter to return the card. Both major parties conducted mini voter identification-phone surveys and GOTV pleas. And a variety of interest groups made calls for or against Burns and Tester.

### **Unique Circumstances**

The 2006 Montana Senate race was unusual because Republican incumbent Conrad Burns began the campaign on the defensive due to his alleged ties to lobbyist Jack Abramoff. Thrown into this campaign mix was a Democratic primary, which was decided by a different ethical issue that helped Jon Tester win. Further, Senator Burns' historic tendency to misspeak culminated in the major verbal campaign gaffe, in which he attacked the fire fighters for not doing their job. The end result was a volatile group of issues producing a highly contentious and negative campaign ending in Burns' defeat.

The Burns-Abramoff issue provided the Senator's Democratic opponents with free political ammunition and became the seminal issue of the campaign. While some felt the story might run its course and become old news by the time of the general election, this failed to happen. Conrad Burns and Jon Tester undoubtedly spent more time and money addressing ethics, the Abramoff-Burns relationship, and how Burns' seniority played into this political equation than any other issue. The specific details of the Senator's ties to the lobbyist were discussed throughout the campaign. Thus Burns' strongest issue, his seniority, was inextricably linked with his weakest, his relationship with Abramoff.

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<sup>33</sup> Quotations from mail pieces delineated in table 5-3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> International Association of Firefighters Official, telephone interview done on the basis of background by Craig Wilson, 14 December 2006.

Conrad Burns and his staff began interacting with Jack Abramoff his associates and clients as early as 2001. In that year it was alleged that Burns switched his vote on a labor issue involving the Northern Mariana Islands in return for a campaign donation from an Abramoff client. And Burns' detractors said that in 2002 he worked to secure a \$3 million appropriation for a Michigan Tribal School after receiving additional donations from Abramoff's clients. In total, Burns received \$150,000 from Abramoff and his associates, more than any other member of Congress. Further, two of the Senator's staff attended the 2001 Super Bowl at Abramoff's expense. Burns argued that the Abramoff associated contributions he received, and eventually returned or donated to charity, were legal and that the size of this political largesse was irrelevant: "What's the difference between one dollar and one thousand? It's all dollars. Just like you rob a bank down here. If you get a thousand you go to jail, and if you get a million you go to jail."<sup>36</sup>

The Montana Democratic Party ran its first media advertisements about this issue in August, 2005. Burns responded in November with a strongly worded television commercial attacking Abramoff and using a barnyard analogy to charge that the Democratic ads were "just a bunch of you know what," and stating the lobbyist "never influenced me."<sup>37</sup>

The strongly worded ad played into the image Burns had developed in Congress, but eventually weakened his credibility. During his years in the Senate, Burns' "good old boy" image fit his tendencies to mangle his grammar and make politically incorrect statements. Sometimes Burns also misspoke about policy issues. During an October campaign debate he implied President Bush had a plan for Iraq, challenged Tester because he says "our president don't have a plan," and concluded "[W]e're not going to tell you what our plan is, Jon, because you're just going to go out and blow it."<sup>38</sup>

Burns' most damaging statements, however, were the angry comments he made to the fire fighter crew in Billings on July 23. A statewide reporter wrote that Burns' "latest outbreak of foot-in-mouth disease," meant he "can't afford many more mistakes if he wants to win....The one constant in all polls is Burns' plummeting job-approval marks."<sup>39</sup> And a *Missoulian* editorial stated: "Burns' remarks were characteristic of the kind of know-nothing blather you sometimes hear from the local malcontent.... It won't be surprising if this incident proves to be the self-inflicted knockout blow."<sup>40</sup>

Although Burns offered a boiler-plate apology for his remarks, in retrospect it appears that he had damaged his campaign in several ways. First, in casual conversation many individuals expressed anger about Burns' remarks. Second, his statements were associated with political party campaign spending. The National Republican Senatorial Committee had produced and run media advertising for Burns following the primary, but analysis of ad buy data found that the NRSC suspended purchasing television advertisements on August 1. Shortly after making the remarks, Burns was filmed by a Democratic operative at a campaign gathering saying: "I can self-destruct in one sentence. Sometimes in one word."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bob Herbert, "Always Having to Say He's Sorry," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2006, A27.

<sup>37</sup> Jennifer McKee, "Burns Goes on the Offensive Television Ad Campaign", *Missoulian.com*, 21 January 2006. At <[www.missoulian.com/articles/2006/01/24/news/mtregional/news06.txt](http://www.missoulian.com/articles/2006/01/24/news/mtregional/news06.txt)>, 12 February 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "Iraq Plan Ignites Burns-Tester Debate," *Billings Gazette*, 18 October 2006. At <[www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/18/news/state/20-debate\\_a.txt](http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/18/news/state/20-debate_a.txt)>, 20 November 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "Criticism of Fire Crew Could Be Especially Costly for Burns," *Billings Gazette*, 30 July 2006, A3.

<sup>40</sup> Editorial, "Sen. Burns Misrepresented Montanans," *Missoulian (Mont.)*, 4 August 2006. At <[www.missoulian.com/articles/2006/08/04/opinion/opinion2.prt](http://www.missoulian.com/articles/2006/08/04/opinion/opinion2.prt)>, 4 August 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Jim VandeHei, "Comments Haunt Another Senator," *Washington Post*, 23 August 2006. At <[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/22/AR2006082201082\\_p...](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/22/AR2006082201082_p...)>, 15 November 2006.

## Conclusion

Conrad Burns changed campaign managers in early September, and by mid-October the race appeared to be tightening. Under new campaign leadership, the Senator refocused his message by going on the offensive regarding the value of his seniority and Tester's penchant for supporting higher taxes, which drove his opponents' "negatives" up. The perception that the race was narrowing led to a successful appeal by Burns to the NRSC to spend several hundred thousand dollars in the last three weeks of the campaign trying to salvage a Republican victory. And during the final week of the campaign, Vice President Cheney visited Kalispell and President Bush stopped in Billings to again endorse the Senator.

But in mid-October, Democratic U.S. Senator Max Baucus made a surprise announcement that then-Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid had agreed that, if he won, Tester would be put on the Senate Appropriations Committee "as soon as possible." Baucus stated: "This is big news," "Jon's the man...[he] will be on the Appropriations Committee."<sup>42</sup>

All of the major Montana daily newspapers that made endorsements supported Tester. The state's largest daily, the *Billings Gazette*, called upon readers "appalled" by national problems and "fed up with business as usual in Washington, D.C." to vote for Tester because he "is a fresh alternative."<sup>43</sup>

After the polls closed on Election Day, vote counting glitches in several counties postponed knowing the winner until the next morning. Tester commented of the delay: "It's kind of like cutting a field of wheat... You gotta let it dry before you pull the combines in."<sup>44</sup> Tester won a plurality victory of less than three thousand votes. In losing, Conrad Burns joined at least nine other defeated congressional incumbents who had accepted campaign contributions from Jack Abramoff.<sup>45</sup>

Much of the national press seemed enamored with Tester's victory. *The New York Times* concluded that he "will most likely be the only person in the world's most exclusive body who knows how to butcher a cow or grease a combine."<sup>46</sup> And when asked on "Meet the Press" to explain his victory, Tester said, "In the end we have to have people in Washington, D. C. who are honest and can't be bought."<sup>47</sup>

In an interview following his defeat, Burns characterized the last year and one-half as "the most brutal of my life." He lamented that throughout the campaign he "couldn't get a positive story" and felt that the way his campaign and his relationship to Jack Abramoff had been portrayed by the press caused him to "be hung in the court of public opinion."<sup>48</sup>

While the Burns-Abramoff relationship was not the only campaign issue that mattered, its importance eclipsed that of the Iraq war and tax and spend issues. The ethics question created a vortex of controversy

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<sup>42</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "Dems Promise Tester Seat on Appropriations Panel" *Billings Gazette*, 20 October 2006. At <[www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/20/news/state/45-dems.prt](http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/20/news/state/45-dems.prt)>, 20 October 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Editorial, "Tester Would Bring Welcome Change in U. S. Senate," *Billings Gazette*, 1 November 2006, 10C.

<sup>44</sup> Charles S. Johnson and Jennifer McKee, "Tester's Supporters Rocking as Early Voting Results Roll in," *Billings Gazette*, 8 November 2006. At <[www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/11/08/news/state/22-electday\\_z.txt](http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/11/08/news/state/22-electday_z.txt)>, 8 November 2006.

<sup>45</sup> The Center for Responsive Politics, "2006 Election Analysis: Incumbents Linked to Corruption Lose, but Money Still Wins," press release, 8 November 2006. At <[www.opensecrets.org/pressreleases/2006/PostElection.11.8.asp](http://www.opensecrets.org/pressreleases/2006/PostElection.11.8.asp)>, 28 November 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Timothy Egan, "Fresh off the Farm in Montana, a Senator-to-Be," *The New York Times*, 13 November 2006. At <[www.nytimes.com/2006/11/13/us/politics/13tester.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/13/us/politics/13tester.html)>, 14 November 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Clare Jalonick, "Tester Champions Ethics Reform on News Story," *Missoulian (Mont.)*, 20 November 2006, B3.

<sup>48</sup> Noelle Straub, "Burns: 'I'm Happy with What We Did,'" *Billings Gazette*, December 10, 2006, All.

and mirrored the thesis of this study about the importance of candidate, party, and group influence in elections. During the primary election ethical issues helped propel Tester to victory in the Democratic race, while weakening Burns by forcing him to spend significant amounts of money to try to regain the political offensive. During the general election period, Burns' perceived vulnerability attracted national media attention, helped Tester launch an aggressive national fund raising effort, and appeared to be a factor in preventing Burns from reaching his campaign goal of raising \$10 million. The ethics question was also a major factor in the national Democratic Party making an early monetary commitment to the race and contributing to Tester far in excess of what the national Republican Party spent supporting Burns. This party money significantly decreased the 31 percent advantage Burns had in campaign contributions. Finally, interest groups were undoubtedly attracted to the race because of the publicity associated with it, and their efforts were directed more at assisting Tester rather than Burns.

In the end, Conrad Burns' campaign "ran out of daylight." His repeated misspeaks and alleged involvement with the sleazier side of Washington, D.C. insider politics, coupled with Jon Tester's "down-home, real Montana" persona, led to a narrow Tester victory.

**Table 5-1**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Montana Senate Race, 2005-06**

	Jon Tester (D)	Conrad Burns (R)
From PACs	\$527,440	\$2,584,797
From individuals	\$4,812,106	\$4,875,815
From party	\$40,195	\$42,550
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$164,533	\$548,747
Total receipts	\$5,544,274	\$8,051,909
Total expenditures	\$5,395,513	\$8,499,041
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$148,759	\$292,969

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, “2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info,” November 27, 2006 at <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 14 2006.

**Table 5-2**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Montana Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>			
<i>Candidates</i>			
Montanans for Tester	\$1,307,239	\$470,674	<b>\$1,777,913</b>
<i>Political parties</i>			
DSCC	\$1,919,847	\$882,000	<b>\$2,801,847</b>
Montana Democratic Party	\$481,196	\$176,000	<b>\$657,196</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Radio Totals for Democratic Interest Groups	...	\$120,520	<b>\$120,520</b>
Campaign Money Watch	\$100,000	...	<b>\$100,000</b>
League of Conservation Voters	\$100,000	...	<b>\$100,000</b>
Americans United for Change	\$98,000	...	<b>\$98,000</b>
Vote Vets	\$44,890	...	<b>\$44,890</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>			
<i>Candidates</i>			
Friends of Conrad Burns	\$1,626,991	\$773,052	<b>\$2,400,043</b>
<i>Political parties</i>			
NRSC	\$608,027	\$256,000	<b>\$864,027</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Americans for Honesty on Issues	\$170,000	...	<b>\$170,000</b>
Radio Totals for Republican Interest Groups	...	\$141,580	<b>\$141,580</b>
Free Enterprise Fund Committee	\$124,000	...	<b>\$124,000</b>
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$75,000	...	<b>\$75,000</b>
National Rifle Association	\$19,200	...	<b>\$19,200</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>			
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Center For Union Facts	\$20,000	...	<b>\$20,000</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 5-3.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 5-3  
Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,  
Montana Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>c</sup></b>							
<i>Candidates</i>							
Montanans for Tester	6	3	2	...	6	7	<b>24</b>
<i>Political parties</i>							
Montana Democratic Party	...	16	...	1	1 <sup>d</sup>	2	<b>20</b>
DSCC	...	...	...	...	1	4	<b>5</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
League of Conservation Voters	3	6	...	2	1	1 <sup>d</sup>	<b>13</b>
International Association of Fire Fighters PAC	...	4	...	1	...	...	<b>5</b>
Change America Now	...	1	...	...	1	...	<b>2</b>
MoveOn.org	1	...	...	1	...	...	<b>2</b>
AFL-CIO Montana	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Americans United for Change	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>d</sup>	<b>1</b>
Campaign Money Watch	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
Montana Education Association- Montana Federation Teachers	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
NARAL	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
Nat'l Horse Protection Coalition	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Service Employees International Union	...	...	...	...	1	...	<b>1</b>
Society for Animal Protection Legislation	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Vote Vets	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>c</sup></b>							
<i>Candidates</i>							
Friends of Conrad Burns	2	...	5	...	8	9	<b>24</b>
<i>Political parties</i>							
Montana Republican Central Committee	...	20	...	5	...	...	<b>25</b>
NRSC	...	5	...	...	4	2	<b>11</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
Seniors Coalition, The	...	5	2	1	...	...	<b>8</b>
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	5	...	...	...	2	<b>7</b>
Common Sense Ohio	...	2	...	3	1	...	<b>6</b>
National Rifle Association	...	1	1	...	1	1 <sup>d</sup>	<b>4</b>
Free Enterprise Fund Committee	...	...	...	1	...	1 <sup>d</sup>	<b>2</b>
National Right to Life PAC	...	1	...	...	1	...	<b>2</b>
American Medical Assn. PAC	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Americans for Honesty on Issues	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
DaVita	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Hunting and Shooting Sports Heritage Fund	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Federation of Independent Business	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Susan B. Anthony List	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Nonpartisan</b>							
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
America's Majority	...	...	...	...	2	...	<b>2</b>
AARP	...	...	1 <sup>e</sup>	...	...	1	<b>2</b>
Center for Union Facts	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>d</sup>	<b>1</b>
Northern Plains Resource Organization	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 5-2.

<sup>b</sup> All state and local chapters or affiliates have been combined with their national affiliate to better render the picture of the organization's activity. For instance, Montana Conservation Voters data have been included in the League of Conservation Voters totals.

<sup>c</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>d</sup> Although no specific ads were seen or heard, this organization was active in this race because television and/or radio ad-buy data was/were obtained from stations.

<sup>e</sup> Nancy K. George, national coordinator of voter education, AARP, email communication with Nisha Riggs, December 7, 2006.

In blank cells, "... " only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

## **Close, but Not Close Enough: Democrats Lose Again by the Slimmest of Margins in New Mexico's First Congressional District**

Lonna Rae Atkeson and Lorraine Tafoya  
University of New Mexico

The Republican Party has held the New Mexico First Congressional District seat since 1969 despite the urban character of the district and party registration figures that favor the Democrats with Democratic registration at 45.4 percent (189,642) and GOP registration at 35.2 percent (146,941) and the remainder in a third party or declining to state.<sup>1</sup> At the state and local level Democrats in Bernalillo County, which encompasses 77 percent of New Mexico's First District, generally win non-federal races easily. For example, in 2004, Democratic candidates won twelve out of thirteen contested races in the county. Voting patterns at the presidential level in the district, however, are very competitive. For example, in 2004 Senator John Kerry won the district with 51 percent of the vote. Interestingly, the district is unique in its ethnic composition as not simply a minority-majority district, but a place where Anglos and Hispanics represent nearly equal proportions of the population and both groups dominate both the local and state political culture. Given these characteristics and the fact that very few House seats are in swing districts, New Mexico's First District is an on-going battleground as a target for a Democratic takeover. The situation generates strong, competitive Democratic candidates who can raise lots of money and the activity of a variety of group interests on both sides of the aisle. In the 2006 cycle, these factors along with the Democratic wave that was building due to a poor national political environment, including the worsening situation in Iraq, gas prices hitting over \$3.00 a gallon, and the president's plummeting approval rating, made the race look even more promising for Democrats and their allies.

The current Republican incumbent Representative Heather Wilson won the seat in 1998 in a special election when GOP Representative Steve Schiff died in office. In that race, the Green Party played a spoiler role taking 14 percent of the vote, leaving the Democratic candidate with 39 percent and Wilson with a plurality win at 44 percent (see figure 6-1). In 2000, with a relatively weak Democratic challenger and a still active Green Party, Wilson received half the votes. By 2002 the Democrats were focused on the race and nominated whom they believed would be a stronger candidate, State Senate Pro Tem Leader Richard Romero. But, in 2002 Wilson's numbers surged to 55 percent, and in a repeat race with Romero in 2004, which was the fifth most expensive race in the country and the most expensive House race in New Mexico history, she repeated her strong showing with 54 percent of the vote.<sup>2</sup> In 2006, in an uncontested primary the Democrats selected state Attorney General Patricia "Patsy" Madrid, a Hispanic woman, for their nominee. She was a strong candidate with experience and name recognition from her successful statewide campaigns and had won in the district in both of her bids for attorney general, and as an incumbent she won with 57 percent of the vote. Though Wilson held on to her seat in 2006, it was a nail biter in which provisional balloting, a Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requirement, meant the race outcome was unknown until ten days after Election Day. In the end, the incumbent won her seat by an extremely slim margin of 861 votes, making it her closest race to date.

### **Candidate and Party Strategy**

The campaign started early in New Mexico. In October 2005, Patricia Madrid announced her plans to run as the Democratic challenger to Heather Wilson. By January of 2006, the first public poll was released, taken by Democratic firm Lake Research, showing a statistical dead heat in a Madrid-Wilson line-up with

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<sup>1</sup> Data calculated by authors based upon data from the New Mexico Secretary of State's office, October 13, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> See Lonna Atkeson and Nancy Carrillo "2004 New Mexico First Congressional District Race: Déjà Vu 2002 Heather Wilson Versus Richard Romero," in *Dancing without Partners: How Candidates, Parties and Groups Interact in the New Campaign Finance Environment*, ed. by David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson and Kelly D. Patterson (Provo: Brigham Young University, 2005).

a one point margin for Wilson (44 percent to 43 percent).<sup>3</sup> This helped to create early interest and enthusiasm in the race and put it on the national map as a possible takeover in Democratic efforts to win the fifteen seats needed to take control of the US House. Poll numbers throughout the race would show a tight race with neither candidate breaking outside of the margin of error.

In June, both candidates easily won their respective and non-competitive primaries and in July the race started with a bang. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) kicked it off July 6 with radio ads blasting Wilson for skipping a congressional vote on the Iraq war to attend a campaign fundraiser in Albuquerque at which President Bush was the star attraction. Wilson's response was rapid. She began softly with a positive ad. She was an "honest, independent-minded Republican."<sup>4</sup> In the ad she says, "My job is to work for New Mexicans, to represent New Mexico back in Washington. Sometimes I'm working with people who are in my party. Sometimes they're not in my party. But that's OK. People sent us to Washington to get things done on problems that matter to them." But, it was the first negative television ad of the campaign aired a week later that got all of the attention and provided an early surprise to the Madrid campaign.<sup>5</sup> The ad's theme focused on a state issue attempting to connect Madrid to former state treasurer Robert Vigil, charging that Attorney General Madrid turned a blind eye to state corruption.<sup>6</sup> Despite the surprise, the Madrid campaign responded quickly with their own ad one week later denying Wilson's corruption claims and questioning her ethics for taking campaign money from then indicted and former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay. With the early start of the air war, New Mexicans were exposed to a long and negative race with both campaigns attacking and defending and neither candidate gaining a clear edge over the other.

The themes raised by Wilson in the two July ads were repeated throughout the race and focused on her independence from President Bush and the White House and the character of her opponent. The latter being an attempt by Wilson to localize the race away from Washington and the national parties and focus it on the two candidates as individuals. This meant on several occasions that Wilson took clear and distinct views different from the White House. For example, before the campaign kickoff she was one of the first Republicans to openly question the National Security Agency's wiretapping of domestic telephone calls.<sup>7</sup> She also voted against a weak ethics reform bill,<sup>8</sup> publicly supported talks with North Korea, and argued that popular New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson should possibly participate in any US negotiations;<sup>9</sup> and in a television ad she said she would vote to override Bush's veto of stem cell research legislation.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, President Bush even defined her as independent during a June fundraising event for her in Albuquerque saying, "Heather is an independent soul and that's what you want."<sup>11</sup> To

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<sup>3</sup> Cook Political Report, "2006 House General Election Polls, November 8, 2006." At <[http://www.cookpolitical.com/members\\_content/house/poll.php](http://www.cookpolitical.com/members_content/house/poll.php)>, 7 January 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Jeff Jones, "TV Spots Take to the Air," *Albuquerque Journal*, July 13 2006, A1.

<sup>5</sup> Jeff Jones, "Wilson, Madrid Are Just Getting Started; Negative Ads Will Continue until Election Day, Albuquerque Pollster Says," *Albuquerque Journal*, July 20, 2006, C1; Jeff Jones, "Wilson Ad Is Called Untrue AG Madrid Never Got Warning Letter," *Albuquerque Journal*, August 3, 2006, A1; Heather Brewer, political communications director, Madrid for Congress, interview by Lonna Atkeson, Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 20, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> State treasurer Robert Vigil was arrested in October 2005 on federal charges of extortion, racketeering, and money laundering related to a kickback scheme in which he would demand money, including campaign contributions, in exchange for state business. See, Andy Lenderman, "New Mexico State Treasurer Indicted in Kickback scheme," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 17, 2005, A1.

<sup>7</sup> James Brosnan, "Wilson Criticizes Wiretap," *Albuquerque Journal*, February 7, 2006, A2.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Coleman, "Wilson's Vote on Ethics Bill Quiets Critics," *Albuquerque Journal*, May 5, 2006, B3.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Coleman, "Governor Willing To Talk to North," *Albuquerque Journal*, October 10, 2006, A1.

<sup>10</sup> Kate Nash, "Wilson Asserts Independence with Ads," *Albuquerque Tribune*, September 27, 2006, A1.

<sup>11</sup> Tania Soussan and Leslie Linthicum, "Bush Pit Stop Nets \$375,000 for Wilson; 300 Attend Fundraiser While 200 Protest Outside," *Albuquerque Journal*, June 16, 2006, A1.

keep her race local, Wilson generally refused to discuss her campaign itinerary with national reporters, not wanting them on her campaign trail.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the early nature of the first candidate attack ad was, no doubt, recognition of the race's very competitive nature and Wilson's attempt to define the race, put Madrid on the defensive, and force Madrid to respond, which consequently began draining her resources. As pollster and state political pundit Brian Sanderoff noted, "one tactic among incumbent politicians in recent years is it to go for the early political kill with advertising attacks."<sup>13</sup>

Madrid's emphasis, however, was national, linking Wilson to Bush, the war in Iraq, and political scandals in the House, including those scandals surrounding Mark Foley and Tom Delay. Wilson had served on the U.S. House Page Board Committee, which oversees House pages, which made for a clearer link between Wilson and House mismanagement. The nationalization of the race was important for Madrid because national issues were important to her base, and if she could mobilize her base, she could win the election.<sup>14</sup> Post election poll data suggest that this was an accurate characteristic of the district.<sup>15</sup> More than half of all voters identified national issues as most important, with roughly one-in-five voters (22 percent) indicating that a change of power in Congress was most important to them, another one-in-five (23 percent) indicated it was the Iraq war, and roughly one-in-seven (14 percent) voters indicated it was ethics and corruption.

The Democratic Party's strategy is straight forward given the partisan characteristics of the district. As Matt Farrauto, executive director of the Democratic Party of New Mexico (DPNM) explained, "In New Mexico politics, it is Campaign Politics 101 for us, we just turnout Democrats."<sup>16</sup> But according to the Executive Director, for the Republican Party of New Mexico (GOPNM), "life is much harder for Republicans."<sup>17</sup> While Wilson can count on "near universal" support from her GOP base, to win she has to attract crossover Democratic voters. Therefore, for Republicans the strategy is turning out the base and then searching for and mobilizing those independent and Democratic crossover voters.

## Money

An extraordinary amount of money was raised and spent by the candidates in this race, making it the most expensive U.S. House race in New Mexico's history. Together, Federal Election Commission (FEC) records show that the two candidates raised and spent almost \$8 million, increasing candidate spending in the race by a substantial 50 percent over 2004 and about twice as much as 2002. Moreover, all of this money was spent on the general election campaign as both candidates had no primary competition. Wilson, with large donations from PACs and the party, out-raised and outspent her opponent by a little over 40 percent. In terms of real dollars this is a large sum of money with Wilson spending \$1,230,727 more than challenger Madrid. The Madrid Campaign felt that this money gap, in the end, was important to her slim defeat.<sup>18</sup>

As shown in table 6-1 incumbent Wilson raised almost \$4.8 million with over half (\$2.6 million) of her support coming from individual donors and another 38 percent (\$1.8 million) coming from PACs. Madrid

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<sup>12</sup> Mary Jo Brooks, producer, *News Hour*, telephone interview by Lonna Atkeson, October 10, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Jeff Jones, "Wilson-Madrid race tight; 45% in District 1 Back Incumbent; 42% Favor AG," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 3, 2006, A1.

<sup>14</sup> Brewer, interview; Matt Farrauto, executive director, Democratic Party of New Mexico, interview by Lonna Atkeson, Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 27, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Poll data come from a post election survey of registered voters in New Mexico's First District by Lonna Atkeson and Kyle Saunders.

<sup>16</sup> Farrauto, interview.

<sup>17</sup> Marta Kramer, executive director, Republican Party of New Mexico, telephone interview by Lonna Atkeson, Albuquerque, New Mexico, December 6, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Brewer, interview.

had to rely more heavily on individual donors with nearly 81 percent (\$2.7 million) of her total receipts raised in this way, out raising Wilson on this dimension. For Wilson, a little over four out of five (81 percent) individual donations came from within the state. Madrid, however, had to rely on donations both in and outside of the state with a majority (53 percent) coming from outside New Mexico.<sup>19</sup> Heather Brewer noted that the race garnered national media including articles in *The Nation*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *New York Times*, as well as coverage on *National Public Radio* and *The News Hour*. She reports that this attention “made it possible for us to tap into a national donor constituency, which we needed to compete with Wilson.”<sup>20</sup>

Other contributors gave much more heavily to the incumbent. PACs, for example, which overwhelmingly give to incumbents, gave Wilson almost three times as much money as they gave Madrid.<sup>21</sup> A closer look at these numbers reveals both how incumbency and ideology work to increase candidate coffers. Wilson’s PAC contributions stem largely from her committee assignments in the House with donations coming from the finance, insurance, real estate, energy and natural resources, health care, real estate construction, communications, and electronics sectors.<sup>22</sup> She also received many donations from a variety of single-issue, Republican leadership, and business PACs including the National Rifle Association (NRA) Political Victory Fund, Leadership PAC 2004, Independent Insurance Agents of America Associated General Contractors of America, National Cable and Telecommunications Association PAC, etc.<sup>23</sup> Madrid received her largest PAC donations from organized labor (e.g. Machinists Non-Partisan Political League, United Steelworkers of America, etc.) and a variety of Democratic Single Issue Groups including: the National Abortion Rights Actions League (NARAL), EMILY’s List, Sierra Club, Feminist Majority, etc.<sup>24</sup> All in all, business groups gave Wilson 70 percent of her PAC contributions, while labor donated a mere \$36,500. Single issue groups gave the majority (53 percent) of Madrid’s PAC contributions, followed closely by labor groups, which represented 38 percent of her PAC contributions, while business PACs gave a token \$40,999.<sup>25</sup>

The national parties spent heavily in the race. Table 6-2 shows the groups that filed independent expenditures for and against each candidate. The DCCC spent nearly \$2 million, while the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) spent slightly more at \$2.1 million. On the Democratic side, this money purchased media time to run negative attack ads that began in July 2006. On the GOP side, 96 percent of the money against Madrid went for negative media buys that began Labor Day weekend. The remaining four percent went to phone banks for GOTV efforts. There were four independent expenditures in support of Wilson included. Three expenditures were for the purchase of a survey and the other supported a canvassing efforts.

Both state parties lamented the relatively little money they had to spend on their coordinated campaigns.<sup>26</sup> Coffers had been exceptionally high in 2004 with a very active presidential campaign making both parties feel like paupers in this midterm race. The DPNM had only about half of a million dollars to spend

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<sup>19</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, at <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/sector.asp?ID=NM01&cycle=2--6&special=N>>, 15 December 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Brewer, interview.

<sup>21</sup> This is approximately the same ratio between the incumbent and challenger that we observed in the 2004 New Mexico First District race, see *Dancing without Partners*, ed. Magleby et al.

<sup>22</sup> Political Money Line, at <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candpg.exe?DoFn=H8NM01174\\*2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candpg.exe?DoFn=H8NM01174*2006)>, 15 December 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Political Money Line, at <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candpg.exe?DoFn=H8NM01117\\*2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candpg.exe?DoFn=H8NM01117*2006)>, 7 January 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Center for Responsive Politics, at <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/blio.asp?ID=NM01&cycle=2006&special=N>>, 7 January 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Kramer, interview; and Farrauto, interview.

statewide on their GOTV efforts and most of that went into the First District race.<sup>27</sup> The GOPNM interestingly had a half-time Help America Vote Act Director to monitor election law, monitor the Secretary of State's office on election irregularities, and prepare lawyers to send to precincts statewide on a moments notice.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the parties, a variety of groups participated in independent expenditures for and against the candidates, and some 527s were also active in the race (see tables 6-3 and 6-4). Groups supporting Madrid were EMILY's List, the National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of State, City and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the National Humane Society. Interestingly, EMILY's List, the National Humane Society, and NEA are new players in this race. Support for Wilson came from the National Association of Realtors PAC (NAR), the Right to Life PAC, and the American's PAC. In terms of other interest groups spending, the Alliance for Quality Nursing Care, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (USCOC), and 527 Americans for Honesty on Issues, were also pro-Wilson or anti Madrid. Interestingly, the Realtors' group, who was very active in this race in terms of television buys and direct mail, was not involved in previous races.

All in all when we consider total spending for the race in terms of the parties, the candidates, and interest groups, we see that those supporting Wilson outspent Madrid supporters by \$1,377,240. Total GOP and ally spending amounted to \$6,577,180 and Democratic and ally spending amounted to \$5,199,940.

### **The Effects of Money: The Air War**

Roughly two-thirds of the candidates' war chests went to the air war, which was characterized by an early and enduring negative campaign that began in early summer. There were a total of fifty-five television ads produced, with 62 percent of those coming from the candidates (see table 6-4). Both the DCCC and the NRCC produced five negative ads each. We highlight the themes below.

#### *Madrid and Allies*

Madrid produced fifteen different television ads over the course of her campaign, eleven ads (73 percent) were negative, either contrast ads or attack ads defining Wilson and connecting her to Bush. Four ads were positive. The first Madrid television ad was mostly positive and interestingly contrasted Madrid with President Bush. In it, she is applauded as a tough attorney general who is determined to take on the special interests in Washington; the ad concluded with, "I approve this message but the special interests won't approve of me." It placed her squarely against Bush. The remaining three positive ads, praised Madrid's efforts as New Mexico Attorney General in strengthening criminal enforcement, especially in the area of Internet sex crimes against children. One of these was a direct endorsement from Albuquerque Mayor Chavez saying, "I'm Marty Chavez and I've worked with Patricia Madrid, especially on fighting crime. So, I know Heather Wilson's attacks on Patricia Madrid just aren't true."

One major theme of both campaigns was an attempt to raise doubt about the trustworthiness of the other candidate. The most common attacks on Wilson linked her to corrupt politicians, special interests, and President Bush. Two of the attack ads from the Madrid campaign were direct responses to attacks from Wilson. One begins, "Heather Wilson said this year she'd be nice but now she's falsely attacking Patricia Madrid." It went on to say Madrid demonstrated ethical behavior in dealing with a local political scandal while Wilson "took forty-six thousand dollars from indicted Republican leader Tom Delay then voted to make it harder to investigate him." Madrid also attempted to link Wilson, a member of the House Page Committee, to the Mark Foley scandal for failing to protect Congressional pages from sexual predators.

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<sup>27</sup> Farrauto, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Kramer, interview.

The DCCC produced five television ads. They were all attack ads against Wilson. Their ads focused on the role of special interests, the war in Iraq, veterans' benefits and Wilson's close connection to George Bush. But, the larger and more general message was, "it's time to make a change." Thus, the national party and Madrid ads were very complimentary. One of the early ads showed highway billboard signs. The first billboard had a picture of Bush and Wilson together. As the camera went past, the announcer said, "They just keep driving in the same lane." Additional billboards in the ad attacked Wilson (and Bush) for taking money from "Big Oil and Gas, and energy special interests." One problem with this ad was that it included images of saguaro cactus, which do not grow in New Mexico, making it a hey-day for the GOP to point out how un-New Mexican these outsiders are.<sup>29</sup> The DCCC quickly altered the ad though and removed the thorny problem. Two of the other DCCC ads focused on veterans. They criticized Wilson because she voted to give herself a raise while she voted against bonuses and benefits for the men and women serving in Iraq. Two of the ads emphasized Heather Wilson had changed and no longer represented the interests of New Mexicans. One of these ads showed footage of Wilson defining part of her job as representative as "showing up to vote" and then accusing Wilson of missing "a critical vote on the war in Iraq to hold a fundraiser with George Bush."

None of the interest groups supporting Madrid produced strictly positive television ads for her. They were all anti-Wilson attack ads that had themes very similar to other pro-Madrid players. For example, an early ad from the Association of Trial Lawyers attacked Wilson for taking money from pharmaceutical companies and failing to "put people first." An ad from AFSCME on Spanish television said Wilson "came to Washington to work, but she acts like a tourist doesn't she?" The NEA produced two negative ads. The ads were very similar to each other. One was in English and the other in Spanish. Both criticized Wilson because she "followed President Bush and voted to cut education by billions of dollars." Both ended with a strong endorsement for Madrid.

### *Wilson and Allies*

Wilson produced nineteen unique ads, four more than Madrid, with most (58 percent) of those being negative. There were eight strictly positive ads. Four of the eight positive ads were endorsement ads. Senators John McCain and Pete Domenici praised Wilson, highlighting her military experience. Two endorsement ads were done in Spanish—one by local celebrity Al Hurricane and one by a popular senior New Mexico politician, Manuel Lujan. Both emphasized the dangerous times and called for reelecting veteran Heather Wilson. The remaining positive ads by the Wilson campaign worked to reinforce her campaign motto—Heather Wilson is "Independent. Honest. Effective,"—and attract crossover Democratic voters. One ad discussed the key role Wilson played in keeping Kirkland Air Force Base open. This is a large base providing many jobs in the Albuquerque area and has been targeted for closure twice in the past few years. Two positive ads also discussed her role in improving Medicare benefits and prescription drug coverage. In one positive ad, Wilson contrasted herself with the president explaining that she supports stem cell research.

The anti-Madrid attack ads produced by the Wilson campaign covered a number of topics, but the overriding theme was to raise doubts about Madrid's competence and integrity and focus on the differences between them as individuals. These ads were largely about the character of Patricia Madrid. Ads attacked Madrid for freeing an Internet child predator during her administration as Attorney General, for taking money from local special interests, for being soft on terrorism, for failing to investigate local corruption, and for incompetence. The incompetence attacks were particularly effective. In one powerful ad at the close of the campaign, Wilson used footage from the debates to demonstrate Madrid's incompetence. The Wilson ad presented an edited clip from the Wilson-Madrid debate where Madrid

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<sup>29</sup> Jeff Jones, "Where Have All the N.M. Saguaro Gone?" *Albuquerque Journal*, September 23, 2006, E1.

appears unprepared to answer a question about raising taxes. Wilson asks, “Can you cite something that would give people of New Mexico some kind of reassurance that you will prevent a tax increase?” The rest of the clip shows Madrid pausing and fumbling in her attempt to respond to the question. Many political pundits believed this ad was Madrid’s downfall, helping to redefine the race for voters away from the national message of change and instead focus on the character of the candidates and the competition between them as individuals.

The NRCC ads reinforced the negative flavor of the campaign and the focus on Madrid’s character. All five NRCC ads were attack ads against Madrid and leveraged the same attacks as those used by the Wilson for Congress organization. The NRCC ads had a distinctly stronger negative flavor than the Wilson Campaign ads. For instance, they directly accused Madrid of providing “access for money” as New Mexico’s Attorney General. One ad explicitly accused Madrid of being “weak on prosecuting corruption” and provided a quote from the *Albuquerque Journal* that there were “serious legitimate questions about Madrid and the Vigil-Montoya corruption scandal.” Three of the attack ads focused on Madrid’s incompetence and her ethics. One said, “a poll of district court attorneys gave Madrid the lowest marks of any judge in integrity, impartiality, knowledge of the law, and rules of evidence.” This was a very powerful negative ad, using damaging facts about Madrid’s years on the bench. These ads ran towards the end of the campaign and, in tandem with the Wilson-Madrid debate ad, raised questions about Madrid’s ability to handle the job of First District Representative.

Several interest groups generally allied with the GOP participated in the air war. The interest group ads supporting Wilson were positive with the exception of one ad paid for by Americans for Honesty of Issues, which criticized Madrid for wanting “taxes super sized.” The Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care produced an early positive ad thanking Wilson for her support on health care issues, especially important to seniors. The USCOC ran three positive ads early in the campaign that supported Wilson for her efforts in bringing gas prices down and finding renewable energy sources, for her support of small business health plans, and for her work to provide Medicare prescription drug coverage. These groups indicated they developed their ads well before the negative campaigning started and that their approach in New Mexico was similar to their efforts across the nation.<sup>30</sup> Their direct mail, however, included both positive and negative ads, so they did not conduct a 100 percent positive campaign.<sup>31</sup> The NAR also endorsed Wilson for her support of small business health plans. They were an active player in the air and ground war and focused on the small business health plan legislation in both the television and direct mail ads. As an organization, NAR has a membership of more than 1.2 million members from all areas of the real estate industry. Most of their members are affiliated with small real estate businesses. NAR identified thirteen key national issues and initiated a “50-state campaign” to lobby for action on these items.<sup>32</sup> Small business health plan legislation was identified as one of their top priorities. The Small Business Health Fairness Act supported by NAR and Wilson passed a House vote (263-165) in July 2006. NAR targeted New Mexico’s First District because it might be a close race and so they wanted to show their support for Wilson.

### **Money: The Effect of the Ground War**

Nearly all the groups, parties, and the candidates had an aggressive get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort that included vote early and/or absentee efforts. Governor Richardson, for example, with his huge \$13 million war chest engaged in an active GOTV absentee voter drive for the party generally, which no doubt helped

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<sup>30</sup> Mark Reynolds, public affairs officer, United States Chamber of Commerce, telephone interview by Loraine Tafoya, December 1, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Monty Newman, government affairs liaison, National Association of Realtors, telephone interview by Lorraine Tafoya, November 29, 2006.

Madrid. Early in the campaign season, he sent out a large mail piece that included an absentee ballot request. Early voting in New Mexico began three Saturdays prior to Election Day, on October 14. The advantage of early and absentee voting is that parties, candidate campaigns, and groups can purchase daily information from the county clerks on who has voted so they know when they have succeeded in getting someone to the polls and when they need to make another phone call or visit. Early and absentee voting has become increasingly popular, with just over half of all voters choosing to cast their vote in this way in 2004 and three-fifths of those casting their vote early. But early voting in Bernalillo County in 2006 was complicated by long lines, with some voters waiting several hours to vote, which may have reduced its popularity as it saw a substantial decline to only 21 percent of voters with an additional 25 percent voting absentee. Additionally, the paucity of other competitive statewide races in 2006 may have meant voters were more inclined to vote in a traditional precinct format on Election Day.

Mobilization efforts by both candidates included a number of visits by prominent political party insiders. These visits occurred early and late in the campaign, raised needed cash, and mobilized the base for both parties. Madrid's visits included Democratic political strategist James Carville on June 8, retired military General Wesley Clark on April 7, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on October 10, House Democratic Minority leader Nancy Pelosi on August 18 and October 29, Democratic House member Representative Raul Grijalva on November 1, and former President Bill Clinton on November 3. Wilson's visits included first lady Laura Bush on April 1 and November 3, President Bush on June 16, Senator John McCain on September 10 and former National Security Advisor Brent Skowcroft on October 16.

The candidates both used similar slogans in their direct mail ads. For Wilson it was "Independent. Honest. Effective," while Madrid's motto was "Always Independent... Always on Our Side." However, Madrid's slogan was primarily a direct mail strategy whereas Wilson integrated it throughout her campaign message. The candidates both appeared to employ a similar strategy—let their parties drive the bulk of the direct mail efforts. Both candidates sent emails to people who had made contact with their campaign (either by phone or through their websites). The emails were generally informational, providing, for example, the date and time of the candidates' original debate along with rebroadcast times. The Madrid for Congress team also used phone calls to remind people to attend a celebrity fundraiser for the Madrid campaign.

The Madrid campaign sent two pieces of direct mail. The first was an invitation to a \$1000 per person benefit featuring comedian Paul Rodriguez.<sup>33</sup> Paul Rodriguez also did several robocalls for Madrid, encouraging voters to support her campaign. Given that the seat already has a woman in it, one odd message said "Señor Martin Chavez (Albuquerque's mayor) asked me to come to Albuquerque to do a show for Patricia Madrid. We need a woman in Congress."<sup>34</sup> The second piece was a small folded sheet that included casual photos of Madrid with New Mexicans and with her dogs. This piece used traditional New Mexico colors and briefly outlined her positions on the prescription drug program, energy independence, the environment, tax fairness, and establishing a timetable for bringing the troops home from Iraq.

The Wilson for Congress team used their slogan and campaign colors consistently on their positive ads. There was a slight modification for one positive ad that translated the slogan into Spanish—"Independiente. Sincera. Efectiva." Interestingly, the Spanish positive ads focused on different issues than the English ads. The Spanish ad mentioned Wilson's work to increase minority homeownership, the increase in Pell Grants, Wilson's role in co-sponsoring the Kidney Care Quality and Improvement Act of

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<sup>33</sup> There was also a \$300 option for the benefit that excluded the before and after gathering.

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by Nancy Carrillo, who received two robocalls from Rodriguez.

2005,<sup>35</sup> and her work to increase bilingual funding. The English ads focused on personal integrity, education, the war on terror, and job growth. The one piece of negative direct mail from the Wilson campaign team attacked Madrid for letting a sexual predator walk without jail time. Many of the negative ads used by the Wilson campaign and the GOPNM against Madrid had a similar look and feel. Most included at least one photo of a grumpy Madrid, calling her Patsy Madrid instead of Patricia Madrid.

The NRCC focused on television advertising in the New Mexico race and by our counts did not produce any direct mail, though the state party did. On the other hand, the DCCC produced five pieces of direct mail. All were negative attacks on President Bush and his role in the war in Iraq. Each had a small section asking voters to use their vote to send a message. One typical ad said, “Tell Heather Wilson and the Republicans in Congress that if they won’t ask Bush for a plan in Iraq, you’ll find someone who will.” The Democratic National Committee (DNC) also sent out letters with campaign materials to targeted voters. The letters encouraged the recipient to take a few steps to help the Democrats take control of Congress. The recommendations were: adopt five voters, display an enclosed campaign sign, and contribute generously to the DNC.

Both state parties were very active in the ground war. The DPNM produced fifteen direct mail pieces that were a mixture of GOTV, positive ads for Madrid, and negative ads against Wilson. The DPNM produced one positive brochure for Madrid that looked very similar to the one produced by the Madrid for Congress organization. It used the same colors, highlighted the same issue positions, and used Madrid’s slogan, “Always Independent...Always on Our Side.” Of the remaining ads, six were GOTV efforts. Three of these ads also included lists of the Democratic candidates. One GOTV ad was specifically for Madrid. It was a door hanger that said, “Vote Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>” on one side and had a photo of Madrid on the other side with the message “Vote for Change.” The remaining six DPNM ads were attack ads aimed at linking Wilson with President Bush. A repeated theme on these ads showed Wilson and Bush together. The negative ads focused on the war in Iraq and special interests. Interestingly, one ad attacked Wilson for neglecting veterans by failing to support legislation that would improve veterans’ benefits, echoing a DCCC television ad on the same subject.

The GOPNM produced the most direct mail in the campaign with thirty-three unique ads. Four of the ads were GOTV efforts. Similar to the Democrats, early on the GOPNM GOTV effort included applications for absentee ballots. The Republican ad attached to the applications was about the war on terror and included photos of troops in action. The language differences between the two sides are striking in this area. Democrats called for an end to the “war in Iraq” while the Republicans called for winning the “war on terror.” One Republican ad said, “Liberal Democrats want to Surrender in the War on Terror.” This ad as well as other war ads showed pictures of American troops and black-masked terrorists with guns and knives. Positive party ads supporting Wilson focused on her experience as a veteran, her work “protecting America from terrorists,” and her work on several issues important to seniors (prescription drugs, Medicare, taxes, and Social Security). The positive ads repeated the Wilson campaign slogan of “Independent. Honest. Effective” and used the Wilson campaign colors.

The attack ads hit a variety of topics—Madrid’s ties to special interests, Democrats desire to raise taxes, Madrid’s pro-abortion stance, Madrid’s incompetence as a judge and as Attorney General, and Madrid’s questionable ethics in taking money from special interests and failing to pursue corruption. Questions were also raised about Madrid’s use of public funds as Attorney General. Early in the campaign cycle, the Attorney General’s Office produced several brochures and a television ad about child protection efforts and detecting methamphetamine labs. The television ad and the brochures prominently featured Madrid and looked very much like campaign materials. Several of the negative ads warned about Madrid’s “ultra-

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<sup>35</sup> DaVita ran a quarter page newspaper ad early in the campaign thanking Wilson for her work on this bill. Davita is a national, non partisan PAC and company that specializes in Kidney disease and dialysis.

liberal values.” Two ads linked Madrid to Nancy Pelosi, Ted Kennedy, and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Two of the ads focused on health care.

### *Interest Groups*

America Votes, which was in nine states in 2006 and was in New Mexico in 2004, was a key player in the ground war. The coalition’s mission is to, “coordinate efforts of the progressive community.”<sup>36</sup> In 2006 the New Mexico America Votes coalition included the NEA, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO, AFSCME, ACORN, EMILY’s List, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), NARAL, Sierra Club, and Moveon.org.<sup>37</sup> Their main goal in working as a team is to assist members in sharing programs, strategies, information, and to minimize duplication efforts. Members share a centralized voter file and build relationships with other team members for success. While each member had their own program and unique tax status within which they must work, the broader goals of the America Votes coalition was to ensure broader voter participation with a special focus on voters who usually pass on midterm elections.<sup>38</sup> Despite Madrid’s loss, the coalition believed that its efforts were successful, noting that 28,000 voters who did not vote in 2002 voted in 2006.<sup>39</sup> The governor also took credit for the increase in voter turnout among these so-called soft voters, noting that his campaign “spent months and months canvassing voters to find the elusive 20 percent of voters who tend to vote in presidential elections, but not in midterm or state elections like the one this year.”<sup>40</sup>

One of the groups especially active in New Mexico in 2006 was EMILY’s List and its New Mexico Women Vote! branch. This was the first time EMILY’s List was active in this race, no doubt due to the gender of the Democratic candidate. In 2006, New Mexico WOMEN VOTE! conducted an extensive direct mail, phone, and radio campaign.<sup>41</sup> They targeted more than 60,000 New Mexico registered voters, focusing on potential early voters. The phone campaign focused on getting out the vote, while the radio ads attempted to persuade voters to cast their ballots for Madrid. Two of the six pieces of mail from New Mexico WOMEN VOTE! were positive, while the other four were attacks on Wilson. One positive ad focused on Madrid’s work as Attorney General to keep children safer through “tougher laws...more cooperation and better technology” and the other focused on values and Madrid’s ties to New Mexico. The negative ads attacked Wilson for her special interest and Washington connections, for her willingness to blindly follow Bush in the war in Iraq, and for her questionable ethics. New Mexico WOMEN VOTE! also produced a door hanger providing polling information and encouraging people to vote.

The LCV had the most sophisticated campaign. In part, because they are a Massachusetts Citizens for Life (MCFL) group they are able to bundle their pro and anti messages together in their persuasion campaign. MCFL represents a court case that clarified that corporate and labor political groups are different from groups that are sponsored by individual donors. In these latter groups political speech is protected under the first amendment and, therefore, they are allowed to function under different political rules in their political activities. LCV New Mexico spent about \$250,000 on their local campaign, which included a door-to-door canvass, direct mail, a phone bank the last two weeks of the campaign, and radio

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<sup>36</sup> Jennifer Ford, executive director, American Votes of New Mexico, telephone interview by Lonna Atkeson, December 10, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Micheal Coleman “Going Down to the Wire; Candidates Work Phone, Press Flesh to Get Out the Vote,” *Albuquerque Journal*, November 3, 2006, A1.

<sup>41</sup> Ramona Oliver, public affairs, EMILY’s List, telephone interview by Lorraine Tafoya, December 4, 2006.

ads the last three weeks that cost about \$40,000.<sup>42</sup> Their canvas consisted of identifying the one hundred precincts in the First District where Senator Kerry and Representative Wilson won or where State Senator Richard Romero won in his bid for the seat in 2004. They hired two to five paid canvassers and also relied on over two hundred volunteers. Their campaign was completely persuasive. First, their message focused on the need for a change in Congress, that the country was on the wrong track, and that Wilson was a rubber stamp for George Bush and part of the problem. Second, they identified the voters' most important issues, which included many different issues (e.g. Iraq, terrorism, education, health care, and energy) and explained to them why Wilson was not performing well on their most important issues. Third, they used a positive persuasive message for supporting Madrid and why she would be strong on their most important issue. This three-prong strategy was essential because as Margaret Toulouse, executive director of LCV New Mexico, said, "It's just not good enough to vote against somebody they have to have a reason to vote for somebody, especially when they've voted for Wilson before."<sup>43</sup>

The LCV produced five direct mail ads calling for change. Its ads focused on trusting LCV and the information it provided about the candidates. Because of its three-prong persuasive message, it wanted to establish itself as a go-to organization for information.<sup>44</sup> For example, one ad concluded, "Who can you trust when the mud starts flying? Trust LCV." The ads focused on energy and environment issues and tied Wilson to Bush administration policies. One ad took the form of a door hanger and praised Madrid because she "sued the Bush Administration to protect our land and water and to stop Big Oil price gouging." Starting on October 10, the LCV began its absentee voter drive, collecting and processing absentee requests for committed Madrid voters, and the last two weeks the organization made phone calls to Madrid supporters urging them to vote early.<sup>45</sup> In addition, LCV volunteers handed out campaign materials supporting Madrid at a local book signing for noted journalists and activists Amy and David Goodman.

Labor's mobilization efforts were strictly member-to-member, but that gave Labor a pool of 16,000 members and their families.<sup>46</sup> Its focus was strictly on the First Congressional District race. Labor did person-to-person contacts, direct mail, and phone banking to reach their membership.<sup>47</sup> It was the only group that did not encourage early or absentee voting. Labor relied predominantly on volunteers for their canvass, but also hired paid canvassers averaging about ten people knocking on doors a day during the campaign.<sup>48</sup> Their message was to discuss the issues that were important to them and compare the candidates on those issues. The AFL-CIO produced two pieces of mail. One was a negative attack against Wilson, linking her to Bush. On one side it had a photo of Bush and said, "If you want to stop George Bush's agenda, you have to replace Heather Wilson." On the other side there is a photo of Wilson and a photo of Bush with the message, "Send George Bush a message. Send Heather Wilson home!" Their other ad supported Madrid with a focus on the future for children. The AFT produced one direct mail ad that compared Wilson and Madrid's positions on education, retirement security, and health care issues and concluded by recommending Patricia Madrid for Congress."

Other organizations ran smaller campaigns supporting Madrid. The U.S. Humane Society ran radio ads and produced two direct mail ads supporting Madrid and attacking Wilson. One was a detailed letter that

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<sup>42</sup> Margaret "Maggie" Toulouse, executive director, League of Conservation Voters of New Mexico, telephone interview by Lonna Atkeson, November 16, 2006. The \$250,000 represents all their spending on the race, while table 6-1 only includes that money used specifically for the independent expenditure for Madrid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Chris Chaves, executive director, New Mexico Federation of Labor, telephone interview by Lonna Atkeson, December 18, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

outlined several ways in which Wilson had failed to support animal rights. The other was a color ad that featured photos of animals and outlined issues important to the Humane Society. The New Mexico ad was similar to others produced in other states.<sup>49</sup> It was customized to include voter information with a website listed for local information. The ad and the letter were sent to “friends of the Humane Society.” Friends were identified as people who had contributed to the Humane Society or who had volunteered for local Humane Societies.<sup>50</sup>

The other Democratic supporters (Conservation Voters of New Mexico, Defender of Wildlife Action Fund, Taxpayers for Changing Congress, Human Rights Campaign, Communities Voting Together and New Mexico Families for Change in Congress) produced primarily direct mail negative ads attacking Wilson. The Democratic allies were mostly negative, unlike the GOP allies discussed below. The Human Rights Campaign had five direct mail ads with a mixture of both positive and negative messages. One ad encouraged early voting and provided polling place information and one ad was 100 percent positive. The other three ads said, “Vote No on Heather Wilson.” Each negative ad picked a different issue. Two focused on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) issues. The third attacked Wilson for attending a fundraiser with Bush when “our troops needed her.” Communities Voting Together produced four attack ads. The purpose of the group is to educate and mobilize low-income voters, especially Latinos and African Americans.<sup>51</sup> Three attack ads connected Wilson to Bush and the fourth attacked Wilson for raising her own pay while refusing to raise the minimum wage.

Direct mail from Republican allies was smaller in scope than for Democratic allied groups. Only four GOP related groups actively participated in the First Congressional District race including: the USCOC, the NAR, the Seniors Coalition, and the American Medical Association’s PAC (AMPAC). The AMPAC ads encouraged members to get out and vote for Wilson in order to protect Medicare payments to physicians. A representative from AMPAC said the New Mexico ad was part of a national campaign to protect Medicare.<sup>52</sup> They produced radio and television ads in four states (Arizona, Connecticut, Maryland and Tennessee) and sent direct mail to members in “most states.”<sup>53</sup>

The USCOC and NAR direct mail ads focused on small business health plans. One of these included the saguaro cactus, which does not grow in New Mexico, giving the laugh to the Democrats this time.<sup>54</sup> The USCOC produced five pieces of mail. One ad attacked Madrid’s alliance with trial lawyers. Four ads were positive ads supporting Wilson and focused on different policy areas including: low-cost renewable energy, the prescription drug plan for seniors, and for job creation in New Mexico. The NAR direct mail ads were entirely positive in their support of Wilson. All five ads were consistent with the group’s air war and focused on small business health plans and applauded Wilson’s work “to expand health care coverage for small businesses and the self-employed.”

The Seniors Coalition produced four solely positive ads. All four focused on Medicare and the prescription drug benefit. In addition, one ad identified other issues facing seniors, including Social Security, border security, and immigration reform. The ad argued that “the retirement security of seniors will be jeopardized” if border and immigration reform is not enacted. It directly endorses Wilson by

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<sup>49</sup> Rachel McQuery, legislative liaison, U.S. Humane Society, telephone interview by Lorraine Tafoya, November 29, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Campaignmoney.com, 2006, At <[http://www.campaignmoney.com/political/527/communities\\_voting\\_together.asp](http://www.campaignmoney.com/political/527/communities_voting_together.asp)>, 5 January 2007.

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Stevens, public affairs representative, AMPAC, telephone interview by Lorraine Tafoya, December 1, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Kate Nash, “Ghost Cacti Haunt House Race,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, October 3, 2006, A1.

giving her the Seniors Coalition 2006 Senior Guardian Medal of Honor. All the ads ask seniors to call Wilson and thank her for her support.

The NRA also produced a unique ad supporting Wilson. The ad was the newspaper wrapper for the *Albuquerque Journal* and was used on Election Day. It had a large photo of Wilson and said, "Vote Heather Wilson. Congress." The wrapper colors were red, white, and blue, and the NRA logo was prominently featured on the bag.

### *Nonpartisan Groups*

The one piece of direct mail that appeared to be neutral was a voters' guide produced by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). It compared the AARP, Wilson and Madrid's position on eight issues. The candidates agreed on all but one of them. Wilson opposed negotiating lower Medicare drug prices, while Madrid and AARP supported it. The guide, however, did not endorse either candidate.

### **Election Day and After**

As the votes rolled in over the course of the election night, Madrid's supporters were extremely happy. Bernalillo County showed her continuously, if marginally, in the lead. It was not until about midnight that the few non-Bernalillo precincts came in and switched the vote, giving Wilson her lead. Unfortunately for Madrid, Wilson never gave up her lead. At the close of Election Day, Wilson had 1,487 more votes than Madrid.<sup>55</sup> But, there were 3,756 provisional ballots, a requirement of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and Madrid believed that upwards of 80 percent of those were for her, which could change the race's outcome.<sup>56</sup> The process of counting provisional ballots, however, is extremely slow because each provisional voter must first qualify, and the rules for qualification were not straightforward due to a lack of good training. One attorney noted that "not only [were] different counties using different rules, but different counting tables within Bernalillo County [were] using different qualifying rules."<sup>57</sup>

The heart of the issue, which required a response from the Attorney General and Secretary of State's offices and created a potential conflict of interest, was which signature lines on the provisional ballot had to be completed. This is because there are two sides to the New Mexico provisional ballot envelopes. The first side asks voters to write their name and birthday and has them sign an affidavit attesting that this is the only ballot they cast. On the second side of the envelope, there is a detachable voter registration form, to update the voter's records, and there is also a signature required here. State law says, "A provisional paper ballot cannot be counted if the registered voter did not sign either the signature roster (at the polling places) or the ballot's envelope."<sup>58</sup> The legal question is whether or not the detachable form constitutes part of the envelope, and if so, does a signature there in the absence of one on the flip side constitute conformity with the law.<sup>59</sup> The attorney general's office ruled that a signature anywhere on the envelope, including the detachable registration form, or on the precinct roster would meet the legal requirements for a qualified ballot.<sup>60</sup> This decision favored qualifying more ballots than disqualifying them and increased hope for Madrid.

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<sup>55</sup> Trip Jennings and Jeff Jones, "Madrid Draws GOP's Fire; Assistant AG Gave Vote Count Advice," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 14, 2006; Trip Jennings and Jeff Jones, "Parts of Envelope At Heart of Vote Battle," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 15, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Brewer, interview.

<sup>57</sup> Paul Kienzle III, private attorney working for Republican Party of New Mexico, telephone interview by Lonna Atkeson, December 19, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Jennings and Jones, "Parts of Envelope At Heart of Vote Battle."

<sup>59</sup> Attorney Paul Kienzle III said that the detachable form was not HAVA compliant because HAVA requires that the ballot and the registration form remain together.

<sup>60</sup> Jennings and Jones, "Madrid Draws GOPs Fire."

On November 17 counting ended. Madrid could only cut the vote gap between her and Wilson by nearly half. And, while many people complained about the long and drawn out provisional vote count process, given the hand count and the need for voter qualification there is no way to speed up the process. Attorney Paul Kienzle III, who participated in this process in 2004 and 2006 (in both Bernalillo and Lea Counties) said, “counting provisional ballots is slow and tedious; its takes a long time and it’s a partially unfunded mandate. There’s nothing we can do to speed up the process.”

### Conclusion

The scope of conflict in the First District was expanded from previous years. We saw new groups participating in the election contest and, as appears to be increasingly the case, voters saw a very long and negative campaign that lasted over 4 months. Additionally, the communication between interest groups on the left through America Votes is becoming increasingly organized and productive and appears to be very helpful to its members. As this organizational approach expands to other states it is likely to promote greater, more effective, and more efficient mobilization efforts among these groups. In addition, parties and candidates messages were extremely complimentary, often using identical language and even the same colors in their ads.

It is also very clear that both national and local factors were important in this race. Changing power in Congress, the Iraq war, the war on terror, and ethics and corruption were all important issues to voters in this contest according to post election polls. Ethics and corruption, however, due to the unique events in the state, had both national and local angles making it a potential negative for both Wilson and Madrid. The national Democratic wave, no doubt, helped to make this an extremely close race, which Wilson, now a 5th term incumbent, held on to by the skin of her teeth.

Many local and national political pundits argued the race turned against Madrid immediately following her only debate with Wilson on October 24 in which she performed badly. Madrid stumbled over words and on one particular question about taxes appeared silent for the first seven seconds and then an additional four seconds, a long time for silence in broadcast media. Wilson quickly capitalized on the gaffe by using debate footage in her television commercials incessantly up to Election Day as a demonstration of Madrid’s incompetence and inability to provide leadership. Washington Post blogger Chris Cillizza named the ad one of the top ten ads for 2006, noting, “Actors in ads are great, but actual footage of your opponent stumbling is political gold.”<sup>61</sup> And, New Mexico pundit Brian Sanderoff said, “This is going to become a classic, textbook example of one defining moment affecting the outcome of an election.”<sup>62</sup>

Though the pundits might be right, there are other important factors to consider in a race that was decided by a mere 861 votes. First, Wilson had more money than Madrid and spent that money aggressively on advertising in the last few weeks of the campaign. Second, two polls done just before the election, showed flip results with Research and Polling Inc, giving Madrid the lead and Public Opinion Strategy giving Wilson the lead, but both within the statistical margin of error.<sup>63</sup> And, polls throughout the race generally showed a tight race within the margin of error, though often Madrid was on top. Thus, neither candidate ever really broke out of the pack with a clear a lead. Third, Madrid won the two largest counties and Democratic strongholds encompassing the First Congressional District—Bernalillo and Sandoval

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<sup>61</sup> Jeff Jones and Michael Coleman, “Wilson Hangs on Despite Trends,” *Albuquerque Journal*, November 19, 2006, A1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Cook Political Report*, “2006 House General Election Polls, November 8, 2006.” At <[http://www.cookpolitical.com/members\\_content/house/poll.php](http://www.cookpolitical.com/members_content/house/poll.php)>, 7 January 2007.

Counties— but just barely with 1,230 votes out of 189,392 votes cast in Bernalillo and by 164 votes with 7,834 votes cast in Sandoval. But Madrid had some very large losses in the small portions of the three other counties that encompass the district. In Santa Fe County, Wilson received 727 more votes than Madrid out of 1,949 votes cast. In Tarrant County, Wilson won 1,173 more votes than Madrid out of 5,401 votes cast. And, in Valencia County, Wilson won 373 more votes than Madrid out of 6,377 votes cast. The latter counties' precincts being more Republican and small meant little Democratic mobilization activity was centered there since the Democratic strategy was largely focused on Bernalillo and turning out Democratic voters. This suggests a possible alternative reason. Democrats did not mobilize enough Democratic voters who vote Democratic.<sup>64</sup> In part, this analysis suggests that the Democratic strategy is problematic because the parties and the groups tend to focus on aggregate areas and not individual voters, and in doing so concede some areas to the GOP. While a strategy of areas is one key ingredient for success, a focus on individual Democratic voters within GOP areas may be essential to win the First Congressional District. Thus, instead of relying on Campaign Politics 101, they need to modify their strategy and learn from the Republicans to not concede any area and think instead of Democratic voters in GOP areas of strength as voters that need mobilization.

The same mistake was made in New Mexico in the presidential election of 2004. Democrats focused on a conventional and normally successful strategy: win in the largest population areas of the state and win the state.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile Republicans were doing their best to compete in the largest populated areas, not conceding them, and also focus their attention on more rural areas of the state where Democrats had not focused. Increasing their turnout in those outer areas was the key to their 2004 success. This suggests that in close elections, where every vote counts, party, candidate, and interest group strategy needs to leave no voter unattended.

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<sup>64</sup> Farrauto, DPNM executive director, lamented this fact. Farrauto, interview.

<sup>65</sup> Lonna Rae Atkeson, Nancy Carrillo and Mekoce Walker, "New Mexico Presidential Race 2004: The Battle for Five Electoral Votes," in *Dancing without Partners*, ed. Magleby et al.

**Table 6-1**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, New Mexico First Congressional District Race, 2005-06**

	Patricia Madrid (D)	Heather Wilson (R)
From PACs	\$641,367	\$1,826,077
From individuals	\$2,730,382	\$2,599,424
From party	\$3,318	\$135,172
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$1,925	\$231,622
Total receipts	\$3,376,992	\$4,792,295
Total expenditures	\$3,318,638	\$4,659,365
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$62,571	\$201,258

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006.  
 At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 6-2**  
**Independent Expenditures for and against Wilson and Madrid, New Mexico's First Congressional District 2006**

	<b>Heather Wilson</b>		<b>Patricia Madrid</b>	
	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>
<b>Democratic Allies</b>				
DCCC		1,994,378	2,780	
NEA		277,120	210,704	
EMILY's List		138,260	142,859	
AFSCME		50,000	200,000	
Human Rights Campaign PAC		24,052		8,775
NARAL Pro-Choice America		4,022	1,502	
Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund		2,707	2,337	
Machinists			83	
Peace Action West Voter Fund			27	
MoveOn.org			1,187	
LCV (Inc. and Action Fund)			241,655	
<b>Republican Allies</b>				
NRCC	61,238			1,971,569
Realtors PAC	761,734			
American Hospital Association PAC	29,000			
NRA Political Victory Fund	21,946			
National Right To Life Pac	17,372			
Associated General Contractors of America PAC	1,046			
<b>Total</b>	<b>892,698</b>	<b>2,490,539</b>	<b>803,134</b>	<b>1,980,344</b>

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2006 Independent Expenditure Summaries - Reports Received at the FEC Through Approximately 7 p.m. November 8, 2006," data release, November 2006. At <<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2006/2006iesummaries.html>>, 16 January 2007.

**Table 6-3**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**New Mexico First Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Madrid For Congress	\$1,540,012	\$19,636	<b>\$1,559,648</b>	\$1,511,396
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$1,800,200	\$26,720	<b>\$1,826,920</b>	\$985,517
DNC	...	\$4,000	<b>\$4,000</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
September Fund	\$376,640	...	<b>\$376,640</b>	...
National Education Association	\$186,935	\$74,464	<b>\$261,399</b>	\$113,520
American Trial Lawyers Association	\$147,340	\$6,820	<b>\$154,160</b>	\$67,784
AFSCME	...	\$44,945	<b>\$44,945</b>	\$81,164
EMILY's List	...	\$18,350	<b>\$18,350</b>	...
Humane Society of the United States	...	\$8,830	<b>\$8,830</b>	...
League of Conservation Voters	...	\$8,800	<b>\$8,800</b>	...
NARAL	...	\$8,269	<b>\$8,269</b>	...
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Heather Wilson for Congress	\$2,456,158	\$114,081	<b>\$2,570,239</b>	\$2,610,976
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	...	...	...	\$819,580
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
National Association of Realtors	\$525,455	...	<b>\$525,455</b>	\$189,699
Americans for Honesty on Issues	\$248,395	...	<b>\$248,395</b>	\$48,637
Alliance for Quality Nursing and Home Care	\$233,610	...	<b>\$233,610</b>	\$155,517
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$176,775	...	<b>\$176,775</b>	\$91,769
American Medical Association PAC	...	\$32,200	<b>\$32,200</b>	...
America's PAC	...	\$15,532	<b>\$15,532</b>	...
<b>Nonpartisan</b>				
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
New Mexico Citizens for Change	...	\$2,760	<b>\$2,760</b>	...
American Heart Association	...	\$2,400	<b>\$2,400</b>	...
Institute for Social Policies Studies	...	\$1,600	<b>\$1,600</b>	...

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 6-4.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 6-4  
Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,  
New Mexico First Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>								
<i>Candidates</i>								
Madrid For Congress	11	2	1	1	4	1 <sup>c</sup>	15	<b>35</b>
<i>Political parties</i>								
Democratic Party of New Mexico	...	15	...	...	...	...	...	<b>15</b>
DCCC	...	5	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	5	<b>11</b>
DNC	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>								
League of Conservation Voters	...	5	...	2	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>8</b>
New Mexico Women Vote!	...	7	...	...	...	...	...	<b>7</b>
Human Rights Campaign	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
National Education Association	...	2	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	2	<b>5</b>
Communities Voting Together	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
Humane Society of the United States	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	<b>3</b>
Sierra Club State Committee on Civic Education	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
AFSCME	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	1	<b>2</b>
American Trial Lawyers Association	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	1	<b>2</b>
Conservation Voters New Mexico	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
NM Attorney General's Office	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
NM Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
NARAL	...	1	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>2</b>
AFT New Mexico	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
EMILY's List	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
League of Independent Voters	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
NM Families for Change in Congress	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
September Fund	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	<b>1</b>
Taxpayers for Change in Congress	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
We The People	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>								
<i>Candidates</i>								
Heather Wilson for Congress	...	9	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	19	<b>29</b>
Wilson - House of Representatives	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Political parties</i>								
Republican Party of New Mexico	...	33	...	...	...	...	...	<b>33</b>
NRCC	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	<b>5</b>
RNC	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>								
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	6	...	...	...	...	3	<b>9</b>
National Association of Realtors	...	5	...	...	...	...	1	<b>6</b>
Seniors Coalition, The	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
American Medical Association PAC	...	2	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>3</b>
Alliance for Quality Nursing and Home Care	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
Americans for Honesty on Issues	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
America's PAC	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
DaVita	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
Kenneth Klement	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Rifle Association	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>								
<i>Interest Groups</i>								
Quality of Life PAC	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
AARP	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
American Heart Association	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
Institute for Social Political Studies	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
New Mexico Citizens for Change	...	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	...	<b>1</b>
Venture Data	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

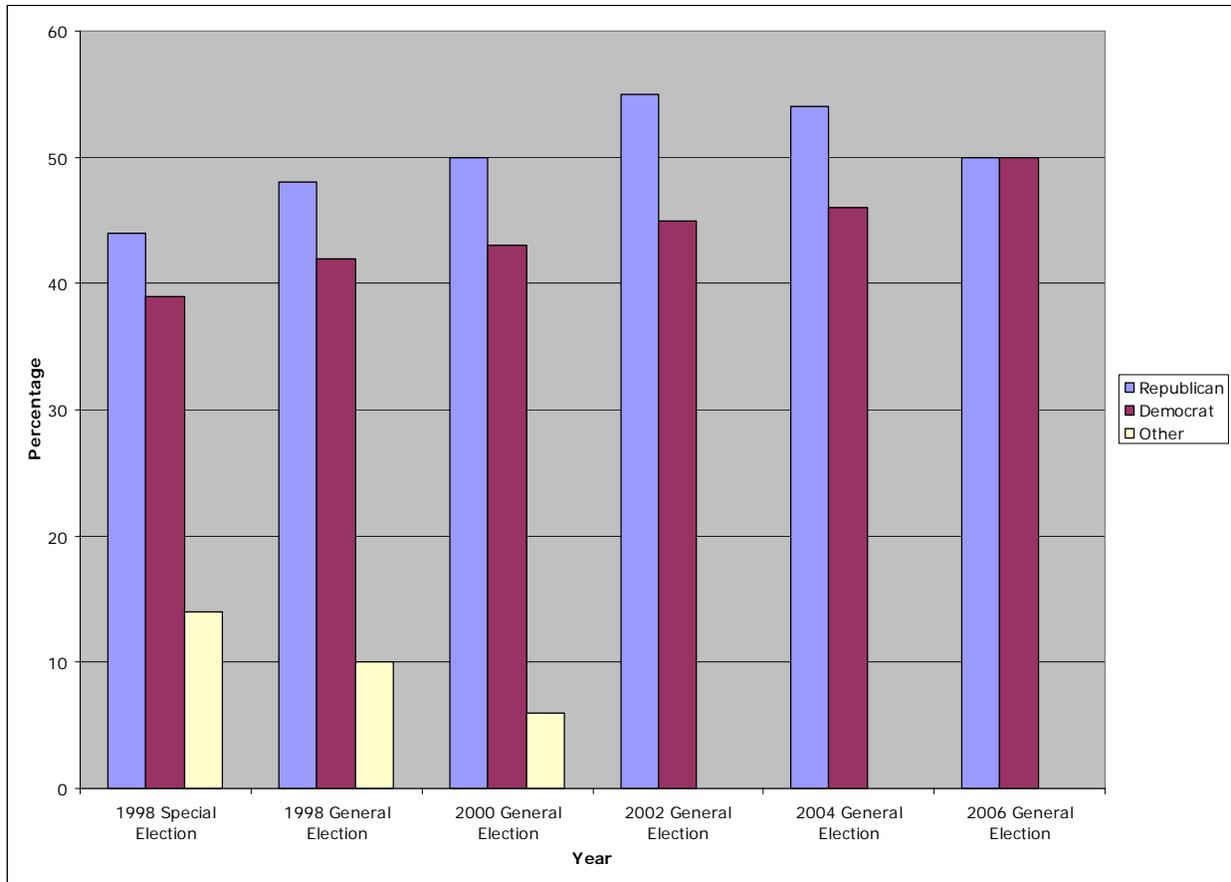
<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 6-3.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> Although no specific ads were seen or heard, this organization was active in this race because television and/or radio ad-buy data was/were obtained from stations.

In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Figure 6-1**  
**1998-2006 Election Outcomes in New Mexico's First Congressional District**



## **The Battle for Ohio 2006: The Democrats Strike Back<sup>1</sup>**

Stephen Brooks,<sup>a</sup> Michael John Burton,<sup>b</sup> David B. Cohen,<sup>a</sup> Daniel Coffey,<sup>a</sup> Anne C. Hanson,<sup>a</sup>

Stephen T. Mockabee,<sup>c</sup> and John C. Green<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Akron, <sup>b</sup>Ohio University, <sup>c</sup>University of Cincinnati

Based on the 2006 election, one would never know that Ohio has long been considered a battleground state. Just two years after President Bush eked out a narrow victory—and re-election<sup>2</sup>—the Democrats made impressive gains, electing a governor, other state officials, and a U.S. senator. In addition, they picked up one congressional seat, held their open districts, and came within an eyelash of defeating several Republican incumbents. These victories gave the Democrats control of the state executive branch after sixteen years of Republican rule and helped them take control of the U.S. Congress for the first time in twelve years.

Beset by scandals as well as domestic and foreign policy troubles, the Republicans faced skillful Democratic challengers with abundant financial resources. Although the ample Republican resources could not completely offset these liabilities, they may have prevented the 2006 defeat from becoming a complete debacle. In this regard, independent expenditures by Democratic and Republican Party committees were especially important. Spending by interest group allies was also significant though not as large as the party expenditures. In sum, the 2006 election produced some of the most expensive congressional campaigns in Ohio history.

This chapter reviews four federal campaigns that illustrate the role of campaign resources in the 2006 battle for the Buckeye State: the U.S. Senate campaign (where an incumbent GOP senator was defeated), the House races in the Eighteenth District (where the Democrats won an open Republican seat formerly held by a disgraced incumbent), the Fifteenth District (where an embattled Republican incumbent barely won re-election), and the Thirteenth District (where the Democrats retained a potentially competitive open seat). True to Ohio's status as a bellwether state, these races are good examples of what transpired across the nation in 2006.

### **The Buckeye Battlefield**

As in 2004, the battle for Ohio was waged across a complex terrain. A microcosm of the nation as a whole, the Buckeye state has five distinct regions with unique political profiles.<sup>3</sup> *Northeastern Ohio* contains the metropolitan areas of Cleveland, Akron, Canton, and Youngstown. Democratic and liberal, it is the most populous region of the state. *Central Ohio* contains the state capitol, Columbus, and its rapidly growing suburbs, an area that is on balance Republican but which has been trending Democratic in recent presidential elections. *Southwestern Ohio* is the most Republican and ideologically conservative region and includes the cities of Cincinnati and Dayton plus their suburban and rural hinterlands. *Northwestern Ohio* is on balance Republican, containing the Toledo metropolitan area, but also small cities and farming areas. *Southeastern Ohio* is a swing region in partisan terms: largely rural, economically depressed, and culturally traditional.

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<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to acknowledge the research assistance of Kevin Saarie, Daniel Birdsong, and students at the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen T. Mockabee, Michael Margolis, Stephen Brooks, Rick Farmer, and John C. Green, "The Battle for Ohio: The 2004 Presidential Campaign," in *Dancing without Partners*, ed. David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 135-162.

<sup>3</sup> "The Five Ohios," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 4-December 10, 2004. At <[www.cleveland.com/fiveohios](http://www.cleveland.com/fiveohios)>, December 2006.

This diversity means that statewide candidates, such as those for U.S. Senate, face the challenge of campaigning in each of the five regions; it also means that congressional campaigns vary greatly within the state. In fact, the three congressional races covered here are located in three different regions.

The Eighteenth District is located in Southeastern Ohio, where it sprawls across nearly 7,000 square miles, stretching from the outskirts of Canton and Youngstown inward toward central Ohio and south along the foothills of Appalachia.<sup>4</sup> More than one-half of the population lives in small towns or rural areas and nearly one-third are blue-collar workers. In recent times, the district's cultural traditionalism has tended to trump its economic populism, with President Bush winning solid majorities in 2000 and 2004.

The Fifteenth District is located in Central Ohio. It encompasses the western half of Columbus, including trendy downtown neighborhoods and the Ohio State University campus, and reaches outward through upper middle-class suburbs into exurban and farming communities of the nearby counties. Economic conservatism helped produce slight majorities for President Bush in 2000 and 2004, but its highly educated, urban constituency has been voting more Democratic over the last decade.

The Thirteenth District is located in Northeastern Ohio, starting at Lake Erie and the industrial city of Lorain, it covers the western suburbs of Cleveland and reaches south to the western part of the Akron metropolitan area. It is largely urban, ethnic and industrial, but with pockets of cosmopolitan suburbs and exurbs. Here the economic and cultural concerns tend to reinforce each other, rendering the Thirteenth District on balance Democratic, illustrated by its majority support for Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004.

One result of Ohio's political diversity is a complex issue agenda, in which economic, foreign policy, and social issues all play a role. In 2006, the issue agenda was even more complex because of a new issue: corruption.

In 2005, a series of scandals erupted around Tom Noe, a Toledo businessman and top GOP fundraiser with close ties to President Bush, Republican Governor Taft, and most prominent Republican officeholders in the state. These scandals were dubbed "Coingate" because Noe had invested \$50 million of Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation funds in rare coins.<sup>5</sup> The subsequent investigations found that several aides to Governor Taft had illegally accepted loans and other gifts from Noe and that the governor himself had failed to properly report golf outings and other political gifts. Taft ultimately pleaded no contest to four misdemeanors for violating state ethics laws, becoming the first sitting Ohio governor to be convicted of a crime.<sup>6</sup> After two years of nearly daily news coverage, Noe was found guilty of some thirty charges and sentenced to twenty years in prison.<sup>7</sup> The public reaction to Coingate was intensified by other scandals involving Republican congressional leaders, including Ohio congressman Bob Ney (see below).

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<sup>4</sup> These district profiles come from Michael Barone with Richard E. Cohen and Grant Ujifusa, *The Almanac of American Politics* (Washington, DC: National Journal, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Associated Press, "Timeline of Ohio Government Scandal," *Springfield News-Sun*, November 20, 2006. At <[www.springfieldnewssun.com/n/content/gen/ap/OH\\_Investment\\_Scandal\\_Timeline.html](http://www.springfieldnewssun.com/n/content/gen/ap/OH_Investment_Scandal_Timeline.html)>, 15 January 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Niquette, Alan Johnson, and Randy Ludlow, "'I Have Failed'; Governor Fined \$4,000 for Ethics Violations, Ordered to Issue Apology," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 19, 2005, A1.

<sup>7</sup> "Noe's Legacy," *The Toledo Blade*, November 22, 2006, A10. Also see "Fall of a Party Man: Tom Noe Has Been Convicted on Federal and State Corruption Charges. His Story Continues to Say Much about Republican Rule," *Akron Beacon Journal*, November 15, 2006. At <<http://www.topix.net/content/kri/2693871862417434644723209401340077736330>>, 10 December 2006.

Prior to the scandals, Governor Taft was already quite unpopular, registering one of the lowest approval ratings ever measured in Ohio—and perhaps in the nation as a whole.<sup>8</sup> Taft was perceived as a poor leader and was blamed for Ohio’s lagging economy.<sup>9</sup> In 2006, President Bush’s approval rating was also on the decline in the Buckeye State, paralleling the national figures. In part, Bush suffered from the same kinds of domestic problems as Taft, but also was hurt by discontent with the Iraq war. Thus both economic and foreign policy issues were prominent on the agenda in 2006, with social issues present but less important than in 2004.<sup>10</sup>

These troubles directly affected the gubernatorial race. The Democrats nominated Ted Strickland, a moderate congressman from the Sixth District in southeastern Ohio, who won an easy primary. Meanwhile, the GOP experienced a bitter gubernatorial primary, resulting in the nomination of Secretary of State Ken Blackwell. A staunch conservative on economic as well as social issues with a controversial record in office, Blackwell would have faced a tough electoral challenge in any event, but his problems were worsened by the anti-Republican climate of the state. By mid-summer, Strickland had built a huge lead over Blackwell in the polls and went on to win with 60 percent of the vote. Strickland had strong coattails with other statewide races, where the Democrats elected an attorney general, secretary of state, state treasurer, and U.S. senator. However, he had only modest coattails in the congressional, judicial, and state legislative races. This environment for local politics shaped the federal campaigns.

### **The U.S. Senate Race: An Anti-Republican Wave**

Minutes after the polls closed on the evening of November 7, 2006, news organizations declared Sherrod Brown the senator-elect from Ohio. Brown captured nearly 56 percent of the vote, unseating two-term incumbent Mike DeWine. Just two years earlier, a solid victory for a Democratic challenger seemed unlikely. This race was an example of a national phenomenon in 2006: normally safe incumbents swept away by the combination of an anti-Republican wave and the ability of challengers to ride the wave to victory.

#### *The Candidates*

Following the 2004 election, it appeared that Mike DeWine had mastered the complexity of Ohio politics and was well positioned to win reelection to a third term in the U.S. Senate. But events damaged DeWine’s re-election prospects in 2005. For one thing, DeWine’s moderate temperament and occasional departures from the GOP policy line angered Ohio conservatives. For instance, DeWine was one of the “gang of fourteen” who brokered a bi-partisan compromise regarding the approval of judicial nominees in the Senate, thereby preventing changes in the rule governing the filibuster. Evidence of his constituency’s

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<sup>8</sup> A Zogby International Online Poll showed Taft’s approval at 6.5 percent, which according to John Zogby, was the lowest approval rating for any politician ever measured by Zogby. Jim Tankersley, “Taft’s Approval Ratings Sink into Single Digits: Only 6.5 percent Back Governor, Poll Says,” *Toledo Blade*, November 29, 2005, A1. In addition, polls by Quinnipiac two weeks before the midterm election showed Taft’s approval at 11 percent. Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, October 18, 2006. At <<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1322.xml?ReleaseID=971>>, 10 December 2006.

<sup>9</sup> A poll in the early fall of 2006 found that 74 percent of Ohioans believed the state’s economy was on the “wrong track.” “Bliss Institute 2006 General Election Survey,” Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron, 2006. At <[http://www.uakron.edu/bliss/docs/FallPollReportFall2006draft2\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.uakron.edu/bliss/docs/FallPollReportFall2006draft2_2_.pdf)>, 12 January 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Social issues were quite important for the Blackwell campaign and a potential source of strength for the Republicans. However, the Democrats effectively countered this appeal, especially Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ted Strickland, who is an ordained Methodist minister. See “Religious Voters and the Midterm Elections,” November 13, 2006. At <<http://pewforum.org/events/index.php?EventID=132>>, 15 January 2007. Some analysts believed that the corruption issue was also a social issue to some voters, so that “integrity voters” of 2006 overlapped with the “moral values” voters of 2004.

discontent came in the 2006 Republican primary where two unknown conservative challengers received nearly thirty percent of the vote against DeWine. Meanwhile, Coingate and other scandals did much to undermine the usual advantages of a Republican incumbent in a Republican-controlled state, and declining support for the Iraq war made DeWine's conservative record on national security a less valuable electoral asset.

It was against this changing political backdrop that two high-profile Democratic candidates considered challenging DeWine: Sherrod Brown, former Ohio Secretary of State and seven-term congressman from Ohio's Thirteenth District, and Paul Hackett, a lawyer, Iraq war veteran, and a nearly successful candidate in a spring 2005 special election in the heavily Republican Second Congressional District.<sup>11</sup> In the summer of 2005, Brown announced that, despite strong poll numbers, he would not seek DeWine's Senate seat.<sup>12</sup> Partly as a consequence, Hackett pursued the Senate nomination, apparently believing he had the blessing of Democratic Party leaders.<sup>13</sup> Then in October 2005, Brown reversed his earlier decision, announcing his intention to challenge DeWine.<sup>14</sup> Following months of behind-the-scenes discussion, maneuvering, and pressure from party leaders, an embittered Hackett withdrew from the Senate contest.<sup>15</sup> Hackett's exit assured that Brown would win the Democratic nomination, but it raised the possibility of dissension among Democrats.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the stage was set for a clash between two formidable candidates, one a conservative Republican and the other a liberal Democrat. Under normal circumstances, DeWine, the GOP incumbent, would have had an edge over Brown. But 2006 was not a normal year. The campaign took on special meaning when it became clear that its outcome could help determine the control of the U.S. Senate.

### *Campaign Resources*

Both the DeWine and Brown campaigns were well financed. As table 7-1 shows, the Brown campaign spent \$10.6 million – a significant sum for a Senate challenger – but the DeWine campaign spent even more, \$14 million. The 2006 Senate campaign turned out to be the most expensive in Ohio history, not counting spending by other organizations.<sup>17</sup> The candidates raised the bulk of these funds from individual donations (two-thirds for DeWine and four-fifths for Brown). A slew of prominent political personalities headlined the candidates' fundraising events. For DeWine, these included multiple visits by President

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<sup>11</sup> Hackett lost by just 3.5 percent in a special election held in the Ohio 2nd District in the summer of 2005. Jonathan Riskind, "Narrow Victory Underscores GOP's Rocky Road in Ohio," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 7, 2005, B5.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Provance, "Sherrod Brown's Advocates Saddened," *Toledo Blade*, August 19, 2005. At <<http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050819/NEWS09/508190396>>, 20 December 2006.

<sup>13</sup> James Dao, "A Veteran of Iraq Running in Ohio Is Harsh On Bush," *New York Times*, July 27, 2005, A1.

<sup>14</sup> Jim Tankersley, "Brown Confirms He Will Challenge DeWine for Senate Seat," *Toledo Blade*, October 6, 2005. At <<http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051006/NEWS09/510060428>>, 20 December 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Ian Urbina, "Popular Ohio Democrat Drops Out of Race, and Perhaps Politics," *New York Times*, February 14, 2006. At <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/14/politics/14ohio.html?ex=1297573200&en=b6a1de4c7a6fe658&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>>, 15 January 2007. For more on the behind-the-scenes effort to persuade Hackett to withdraw, see David Goodman, "Backroom Battles," *MotherJones.com*, 16 February 2006. At <[http://motherjones.com/news/update/2006/02/hackett\\_drops\\_out.html](http://motherjones.com/news/update/2006/02/hackett_drops_out.html)>, 23 December 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Jack Torry and Jonathan Riskind, "Senate Candidates Must Rebuild Their Bases," *Columbus Dispatch*, May 7, 2006, B1.

<sup>17</sup> The gubernatorial campaign and the Fifteenth District congressional race also established state records for spending. See Darrel Rowland, Mark Niquette, and James Nash, "Election Spending a Record," *Columbus Dispatch*, December 16, 2006, A1.

Bush and appearances by Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani.<sup>18</sup> For Brown, visits to Ohio came from Senators Barack Obama (D-IL), Joseph Biden (D-DE), and Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), as well as former President Bill Clinton.<sup>19</sup> DeWine had more access to PAC donations than Brown and thus depended less on individual donations.

Television advertising accounted for most of the campaign expenditures. Table 7-2 provides estimates of the size of this effort, drawing on data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) and the Ohio Reconnaissance Network (ORN).<sup>20</sup> The CMAG data reveal at least \$29.4 million in television spending; while the ORN data show \$26.5 million in television and radio ads. According to the CMAG data, the DeWine campaign spent more than the Brown campaign (\$7.8 million to \$5.7 million),<sup>21</sup> but this disparity shrinks greatly when party committees' expenditures are included (\$13.8 million to \$13 million). The involvement of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) was critical in leveling the playing field for Brown, spending \$6.5 million (\$4.4 million in the ORN data). DeWine benefited from \$3.6 million in National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) spending and an additional \$1.5 million from the Republican National Committee (RNC) (\$3.4 million and \$2.6 million, respectively in the ORN data). Both candidates benefited from joint expenditures with their party committees as well. The bulk of these funds came in the form of independent expenditures, the largest portion of which was in the form of ads run against the opposition candidate.<sup>22</sup>

Interest group allies also contributed to the air war. Among the pro-DeWine groups was Progress for America (PFA), which spent over \$1 million on three hard-hitting ads emphasizing the threat of terrorism. For example, PFA ran ads on cable television stations nationwide, claiming in one graphic and controversial ad that "these people want to kill us," and featuring in another David Beamer, whose son Todd, a passenger on United Flight 93, had been lionized in the public mind. Both ads argued that the Democrats were weak on national security.<sup>23</sup> According to the ORN data, an Ohio 527 committee, Common Sense 2006, weighed in with \$0.5 million in television ads and \$0.2 million in radio spots. The CMAG data show that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spent \$0.9 million on television ads, while the ORN data show some activity by the National Right to Life Committee.<sup>24</sup> On the Democratic side, organized labor spent some \$77,000 on media, according to the ORN data, and the CMAG data show

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Riskind, "Heavy Hitters Due Up for Ohio Fundraising," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 22, 2006. Mark Niquette and James Nash, "Presidents to Headline Local Fundraisers," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 23, 2006, B3.

<sup>19</sup> Joe Hallett, "Obama, Biden in Town to Help Fire Up Democrats," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 4, 2006, C1. Riskind, "Heavy Hitters Due Up For Ohio Fundraising."

<sup>20</sup> The ORN data are based on information obtained from public files at stations in Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown as well as reports of ads and other campaign contacts collected by 321 volunteers recruited from across the state by the authors.

<sup>21</sup> Brown campaign officials claim they spent \$6.5 million on the air war campaign between the last week of August and Election Day. John Ryan, campaign manager, Brown for Senate Campaign, telephone interview by Anne Hanson, November 14, 2006. This figure may include the Brown campaign's share of joint expenditures with party committees.

<sup>22</sup> FEC data reveal that Republican committees spent some \$11.1 million dollars on behalf of DeWine, and \$6.2 million was spent against Brown. Comparable figures on the Democratic side were \$6.2 million in total and \$4.9 million against DeWine. See Federal Election Commission "Committees and Candidates Supported/Opposed," November 27, 2006. At <[http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/com\\_supopp/C00193433/](http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/com_supopp/C00193433/)>, 10 December 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Jim Kuhnenn, "Conservative Group Campaigning With Ads, E-Mails And 'United 93,'" *Associated Press State and Local Wire*, October 6, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> FEC data show some \$224,000 in independent expenditures for DeWine by the National Right to Life Committee and \$25,000 by the Susan B. Anthony List. See FEC "Committees who gave to this candidate." At <[http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/can\\_give/S2OH00113](http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/can_give/S2OH00113)>, 15 January 2007.

nearly \$0.6 million in television spending by liberal 527 committees, including some labor unions.<sup>25</sup> These data suggest that outside money may have totaled \$16 million in this race.

Table 7-3 reports on the number of unique campaign communications deployed in the Senate contest. A total of 298 unique communications were identified, with 191 by or on behalf of the Brown campaign and 106 by or on behalf of the DeWine campaign. The campaigns themselves had about the same number of unique communications: Brown had 39 compared to 38 for DeWine. There was more of a discrepancy between the parties: Democratic committees had 65 unique communications compared to 44 for the Republican committees. But the largest difference was in terms of interest group activity, where the Democratic allies had 87 unique communications and the Republican allies had 24.

The candidate and party committees produced the bulk of the television and radio ads, accounting for more than four-fifths of 94 unique ads. In contrast, the staples of the ground war, direct mail, email, and phone calls were more evenly spread across organizations. At least eight mail pieces were detected for the Brown campaign, the Democratic Party committees produced 30 unique pieces, and interest group allies produced 58 (the bulk of which came from labor). On the Democratic side, Brown appeared along with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ted Strickland in most of each others' campaign material.<sup>26</sup> The Democrats were especially active in email, with 28 unique communications (led by the Brown campaign), and produced 12 unique phone calls. Here the Democrats emulated the GOP effort in the 2004 presidential campaign, recruiting volunteers that made more than 62,000 calls.<sup>27</sup>

On the Republican side, fewer communications were identified with regard to mail (28 unique pieces led by the Ohio Republican Party) and email (six, led by the RNC). Only in phone calls did the Republicans seem to have an edge, with 25 unique calls (also led by the Ohio GOP). The DeWine campaign produced three mail pieces, five phone calls, and two emails. So, although the DeWine campaign and its allies had an edge in money spent, the Democrats had a greater number of unique communications from a larger number of groups. This disparity suggests that the ground war may have been more evenly balanced in 2006 than in the 2004 presidential campaign.

The DeWine campaign also suffered from ineffective advertising. As one observer put it, "DeWine looks like an incumbent in search of a message."<sup>28</sup> A high-profile blunder occurred in mid-July, 2006, when DeWine's campaign began airing a television spot using footage from the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York, including a picture of the World Trade Center towers. A *U.S. News* reporter noted that the smoke emanating from the Twin Towers was blowing in the wrong direction, and the DeWine camp had to acknowledge that the image had been digitally altered for use in the ad.<sup>29</sup> The questions raised about this ad were especially problematic given the prominence of the corruption issue in Ohio. In the wake of this controversy, the incumbent shied away from frontal assaults on Brown and his record, thus failing to define Brown for the voters early on. Other analysts noted that DeWine failed to fire up the GOP base by talking about conservative issues.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> FEC data show \$272,000 in independent expenditures for Brown by the Service Employees International Union, \$32,000 by the Sierra Club, and nearly \$23,000 by MoveOn.org. See FEC "Committees who gave to this candidate." At <[http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/can\\_give/S2OH00113](http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/can_give/S2OH00113)>, 15 January 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Ryan, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Ryan, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Jennifer Duffy, "And Now There Are Seven," Cook Political Report, *National Journal*. <<http://election.nationaljournal.com/features/110106njpolitics.htm>>, 23 December 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Bret Schulte, "DeWine Blunder adds Fuel to Controversial September 11 Ad," *US News and World Report*, 19 July 2006. At <<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/060719/19dewinead.htm>>, 24 December 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Jack Torry, Jim Siegel and Jonathan Riskind, "Laid-back DeWine Failing to Inspire Conservatives This Year," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 29, 2006, A1.

In contrast, Brown's ads sought to assert a link between free trade agreements and the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ohio. They also focused on the needs of the "middle class." The DSCC ran ads that implied links between DeWine, Coingate and the Ney scandal. The Democratic interest group allies amplified these attacks. Although DeWine was never implicated in any of the legal difficulties these Republican officeholders faced, these ads made him appear guilty by association. By mid-October, it was clear that DeWine faced an increasingly uphill struggle.<sup>31</sup> Seeking to close the growing poll gap, the DeWine campaign ratcheted up the negative attacks on Brown in the final days of the campaign. Among those ads were accusations made by DeWine in a candidate debate concerning drug use by past Brown staffers.<sup>32</sup> The Brown campaign reacted quickly, condemning the ads as "dirty campaigning," claiming the DeWine attacks amounted to further evidence that the incumbent was in trouble. One observer summed up the failed DeWine tactics as follows: "From the very beginning there was a lack of discipline and a hint of desperation in what they were saying about Sherrod. They couldn't understand why he would be winning. There was some overconfidence there about who they were running against."<sup>33</sup>

In the end, Mike DeWine was swept out of office by an anti-Republican wave that washed millions of campaign dollars into Ohio on behalf of Sherrod Brown. Extensive GOP spending could neither stem the wave nor neutralize Brown's appeals to the voters. Ohio Senator George Voinovich aptly summed up the forces that defeated DeWine: "It's the economy of the state of Ohio and the situation in Iraq that have cast kind of a crepe over the state. Everything being equal, Sherrod wouldn't even have run against him."<sup>34</sup> Other analysts would have added corruption as an important contributing factor. In any event, Brown did get into the race and his campaign rode the wave to victory.

### **Ohio Eighteenth Congressional District Race: The Ghost of Bob Ney**

From the moment that incumbent Congressman Bob Ney was identified in news reports as the infamous "Representative #1" listed in court papers in the Jack Abramoff scandal,<sup>35</sup> Ohio's Eighteenth Congressional District became a competitive race. Under the cloud of suspicion, Ney pursued re-election until late in the campaign, when he suddenly withdrew. A hastily chosen successor, State Senator Joy Padgett, was haunted by what one observer called "the ghost of Bob Ney,"<sup>36</sup> losing to Democrat Zack Space 38 to 62 percent. This race represents a crucial feature of the 2006 election nationally: seats made vulnerable by the misconduct of Republican leaders.

#### *The Candidates*

Bob Ney was first elected to Congress in 1994 and did not face a serious challenge thereafter. Known as the "Mayor of Capitol Hill" because he chaired the House Administration Committee, Ney was popular in his Southeastern Ohio district.<sup>37</sup> Thus there was every expectation that he would be re-elected to another term. However, an unexpected dynamic appeared in the race on January 3, 2006, when GOP lobbyist Jack

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<sup>31</sup> Adam Nagourney, "In Final Weeks, G.O.P. Focuses on Best Bets," *New York Times*, October 16, 2006, A1.

<sup>32</sup> Jack Torry, "Respect a No-show at Final Senate Showdown," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 28, 2006, A1.

<sup>33</sup> Guy Cecil, political director, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, interview by David B. Magleby and John Baxter Oliphant, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Torry, Siegel, and Riskind, "Laid-back DeWine Failing to Inspire Conservatives This Year."

<sup>35</sup> See Karen Tumulty and Massimo Clabresi, "The Plot Thickens," *Time*, December 5, 2005. At <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1134750,00.html>>, 15 January 2007. Also see Karen Tumulty, "The Man Who Bought Washington," *Time*, January 16, 2006. At <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1147156,00.html>>, 15 January 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Jackie Kucinich, "'Ghost of Bob Ney'—and Democrats in Person—Haunt Padgett in Ohio-18," *The Hill*, October 25, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Jill Lawrence, "Ohio's Rep. Ney Stuck in Wait-and-See Game," *USA Today*, July 3, 2006. At <[http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-07-02-ohio-ney\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-07-02-ohio-ney_x.htm)>, 15 January 2007.

Abramoff pleaded guilty to federal corruption charges, alleging that he had given Ney gifts in exchange for legislative favors and Ney set up a legal defense fund.<sup>38</sup> Ney insisted on his innocence and vigorously sought re-election, eliminating any challengers in the Republican primary.

Ney's vulnerability became evident when four contenders vied for the Democratic Party nomination to challenge the accused Congressman. Zack Space, law director for the city of Dover, won the contest with 39 percent of the vote and immediately began campaigning on an anti-corruption platform.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the summer of 2006, details of Ney's relationship with Abramoff came to light, followed by the resignation of three members of Ney's staff and the indictment of another.<sup>40</sup> In early August, facing certain charges and probable conviction as well as a shortfall in campaign funds and escalating legal bills, Ney announced that he was quitting his re-election campaign for the sake of his family.<sup>41</sup> He asked Joy Padgett, a popular Republican state senator, to take his place on the ballot.<sup>42</sup> Following a legal controversy over how to replace Ney, Padgett found herself in a special last-minute primary with five opponents, where she received two-thirds of the vote.<sup>43</sup>

Then, just a day after Padgett's victory, Ney announced he would plead guilty to federal corruption charges.<sup>44</sup> However, he refused to resign his seat vowing to stay in office until his term ended,<sup>45</sup> despite Ohio Republican Party Chairman Bob Bennett's demand that he "resign immediately and begin paying the price for his arrogance and greed."<sup>46</sup> Ney eventually did resign—four days before the general election in November.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Campaign Resources*

As table 7-4 shows, Zack Space spent \$1.5 million in the campaign, almost twice as much as Padgett's \$0.8 million. This disparity largely reflects Padgett's late entry into the race. In fact, Ney had raised and spent over \$1.3 million until he withdrew in August.<sup>48</sup> But during this time Space was rapidly catching up financially, raising twice as much as Ney between April and June.<sup>49</sup> Once Padgett won the primary she

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<sup>38</sup> David Hammer, "Ney's Legal-Defense Fund Lagging as Campaign Begins," *Canton Repository*, May 3, 2006. At <<http://www.cantonrep.com/archive/index.php?ID=283977&Category=13>>, 15 January 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Riskind and Jim Siegel, "Democrats Like Ney's Pick," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 9, 2006, 01B.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Krawzak, "Three top Ney Aides Quitting; Another Subpoenaed," *Canton Repository*, June 29, 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Philip Shenon, "Ohio Republican Tied to Abramoff Abandons Re-election Bid," *New York Times*, August 8, 2006, A15. Jack Torry and Jonathan Riskind, "As Allies Stood Aside, Ney's Options Shriveled," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 8, 2006, 04A.

<sup>42</sup> Jim Siegel, Jonathan Riskind, Mark Niquette, and James Nash, "Ney's Exit Shakes Up GOP Ticket," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 8, 2006, 01A. John McCarthy, "Bob Ney Quits Race Amid Funds Scandal," *Akron Beacon Journal*, August 8, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> James Nash, "Padgett Wins Special Election; State Senator Endorsed by Ney Tops Five-way Race to Run for Congress on Nov. 7 Ballot," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 15, 2006, 01B.

<sup>44</sup> Jonathan Riskind and Jack Torry, "Ney Admits Taking Bribes; Congressman Not Saying Whether He Will Resign Seat; Federal Sentencing Guidelines Call for 27-Month Term," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 16, 2006, 01A. Jonathan Weisman, "Ney to Plead Guilty in Scandal," *Washington Post*, September 15, 2006, A04.

<sup>45</sup> Philip Shenon, "Ohio Lawmaker Who Took Illegal Gifts Rebuffs Calls to Resign," *New York Times*, September 19, 2006, A18.

<sup>46</sup> Jonathan Riskind and Jack Torry, "Ney Admits Taking Bribes," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 16, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Jack Torry and James Nash, "Ney Quits, 'Seven Weeks Too Late,'" *Columbus Dispatch*, November 4, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House Candidate Info," November 27, 2006. At <[http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?\\_06+H4OH18079](http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?_06+H4OH18079)>, 4 January 2007.

<sup>49</sup> David Hammer, "Competitive Democrats Closing Money Gap On GOP Incumbents," *Associated Press State & Local Wire*, July 14, 2006.

made some progress, out-raising Space in the last stretch of the campaign.<sup>50</sup> But the lack of time prevented Padgett from obtaining a larger war chest, a factor evident in the source of funds raised: Space had the time to garner \$1 million from individual donors, while Padgett obtained just \$0.3 million. Both candidates received roughly \$0.5 million from PACs.

Table 7-5 reports the ORN data estimates for the air war in this race. Space outspent Padgett on television advertising almost two-to-one (\$366,000 to \$200,000), and Space's campaign manager stated, "Our number one spending priority was television."<sup>51</sup> But most of the spending in the race came from the candidates' allies, some \$5.8 million, more than doubling the amount spent by the candidates themselves.<sup>52</sup> The major party committees were the key players. For example, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) spent \$2.5 million on behalf of Space as part of its "Red to Blue" program. The Republicans spent even more to preserve the seat: \$3.3 million by the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC). The Republican advantage reflects an attempt to salvage the race and support Padgett. However, the NRCC reduced advertising late in the campaign.<sup>53</sup>

Interest group allies were much less of a factor in this race and the ORN data detected no spending. However, there is other evidence that labor unions provided some modest support for Space, while the NRA and the NRL-PAC gave some help to Padgett.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Padgett may have benefited from generic advertising in Ohio by Republican allies, such as Progress for America, and Space may have benefited from spending by Democratic allies statewide.<sup>55</sup>

Table 7-6 reports the number of unique campaign communications in this race. Overall, 112 were identified, 52 for the Democratic side and 60 for the GOP. The candidates played a modest role: Space had one television ad, two pieces of mail and an email, while the Padgett campaign had one television ad and four pieces of mail. Most of the communications came from the major party committees. The Democratic and Republican committees each made two unique television ads. In addition, the Democratic committees had 23 unique pieces of mail, four emails, and two phone calls, while the Republicans produced 34 pieces of mail, two emails, and 16 phone calls. Space benefited from six unique pieces of mail from labor unions and one from America Votes, plus seven emails from liberal interest groups. Focus on the Family sent one mail piece on behalf of Padgett. These figures suggest a vigorous ground war on behalf of both candidates.

The overwhelming focus of Space's television ads was corruption.<sup>56</sup> In one contrast ad, a black and white image of Padgett is shown next to images of Taft and Ney while she is described as a member of the Taft

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<sup>50</sup> James Nash, "First Lady Gives a Boost to Padgett," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 27, 2006, B1.

<sup>51</sup> Joe Schafer, campaign manager, Zach Space for Congress, Anne Hanson, telephone interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> FEC data show that the DCCC spent almost \$2.5 million in independent expenditures, of which \$2.4 million was against Padgett. Similarly, the NRCC spent \$3.3 million in total and \$3.2 against Space. See FEC "Committees and Candidates Supported/Opposed."

<sup>53</sup> David Espo, "Republicans Scale Back Spending on House Races In Three States," *Associated Press State & Local Wire*, November 1, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> FEC data show that the NRA spent \$22,000 and the National Right to Life Committee \$13,000 in independent expenditures for Padgett. See FEC "Committees and Candidates Supported/Opposed".

<sup>55</sup> An interview with MoveOn.org indicated that some \$170,000 had been spent in the Eighteenth District race. It is possible that these funds were spent against Ney. FEC reports show independent expenditures by MoveOn.org of \$990 against Ney, and \$1066 for Space. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/indexpend.asp?strID=C00341396&Cycle=2006>>, 16 January 2007.

<sup>56</sup> Joe Schafer, campaign manager, Zack Space for Congress, telephone interview by Anne Hanson, November 14, 2006.

administration and its “handpicked” candidate.<sup>57</sup> In contrast, Padgett’s television ad was a positive commercial calling her a “good neighbor” and detailing her roots in the district, growing up on a local farm, and working to bring jobs into the area as director of the Office of Appalachia and state legislator. However, Padgett’s positive message was undercut by the news that she and her husband had recently declared bankruptcy, news that was especially troubling given the prominence of the corruption issue in Ohio.<sup>58</sup>

The party ads were negative. One DCCC commercial followed the corruption theme: it showed a cartoon tree with Taft and Ney faces on apples and stated, “When it comes to Ohio politicians, the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” One NRCC ad linked Space to a “radical” organization, the liberal disarmament group the Council for a Livable World, which gave the Space campaign a \$5,000 donation. The ad’s high-tech graphics evoked images of a CIA operation, showing a quasi-infrared satellite map as the narrator described the group’s political positions, including calling for withdrawing from Iraq, cutting defense spending, and opposing a missile defense system as the map moved across the Middle East and then showed images of North Korean president Kim Jong Il and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.<sup>59</sup>

In the end, Joy Padgett could not escape the ghost of Bob Ney. Ney’s misbehavior and the broader issue of corruption in Ohio would have presented Padgett with a huge hurdle in any event, but Ney’s erratic behavior—staying in the race early on, withdrawing late, and resigning just four days before the election—made Padgett’s task nearly impossible. Extensive spending by GOP committees could not prevent this election from becoming a referendum on Ney, Taft, and the Republican Party.<sup>60</sup> Zack Space effectively used the corruption issue and received extensive help from the Democratic Party to win the race.

### **Ohio Fifteenth Congressional District: The Costs of Leadership**

By the fall of 2006, Ohio’s Fifteenth District was prime evidence of the depth of Republican troubles: Deborah Pryce, the fourth ranking GOP leader in the House of Representatives, was in a razor-close race against a well-funded Democratic challenger, Mary Jo Kilroy. This situation surprised analysts because Pryce enjoyed all the typical benefits of incumbency and had not been marred by allegations of personal misconduct. Instead, her problems were her party connections: she was a Republican congressional leader in a difficult Republican year. Unlike many of her colleagues, Pryce survived the challenge, securing reelection, but only by about a thousand votes. This race provides a good example of another feature of the 2006 election nationally: the costs of Republican Party leadership.

#### *The Candidates*

Deborah Pryce was first elected to Congress in 1992 and had never faced a strong challenge in her Columbus district. After the GOP took control of the House in 1994, Pryce began a steady rise to become the chair of the House Republican Conference. Generally viewed as a moderate on social issues – she is pro-choice, supports expanded stem cell research, and does not share her party’s staunch opposition to gay rights—Pryce attended to the material needs of her district, supporting moderately conservative economic policies and bringing home a variety of federal projects. In this respect, her prominence in the

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<sup>57</sup> Jonathan Riskind and Jim Siegel, “Democrats Like Ney’s Pick,” *Columbus Dispatch*, August 9, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Stephen Koff, “Ney’s Withdrawal Fails to Stop Controversies in 18<sup>th</sup> District Race,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 19, 2006; James Nash, “Bankruptcy May Haunt Padgett,” *Columbus Dispatch*, September 29, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Mark Naymik, Stephen Koff and Thomas Ott, “Political TV Ads Fudge the Truth,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 7, 2006, A1.

<sup>60</sup> James Nash, “Padgett, Space Blast Each Other,” *Columbus Dispatch*, November 5, 2006.

Republican congressional caucus had been a political asset. This formula for electoral safety was severely tested in 2006.

Pryce's challenger was Franklin County Commissioner Mary Jo Kilroy. The two candidates had much in common. Kilroy, like Pryce, had studied political science and law, and both women had successful political careers before the 2006 election: Pryce made her way to Congress as a judge and prosecutor, while Kilroy served as an attorney, a member of the city school board, and county commissioner. Each candidate presented herself as a moderate while each described her opponent as an extremist on a wide range of issues. Neither of the candidates had trouble winning her party's primary, and the race began early.

Although Kilroy was a good candidate who might have given Pryce a closer than usual contest in any event, the political climate rendered her campaign very competitive, becoming, by one account, "the most pivotal under-the-radar election in the nation."<sup>61</sup> To Pryce's detriment, the congresswoman had publicly declared her friendship with Mark Foley in a local magazine just a month before stories about Foley's electronic messages to underage male pages made headlines.<sup>62</sup> Pryce had also accepted a \$5,000 contribution from Foley's leadership PAC. These associations linked Pryce to the corruption issue despite her strong criticism of Foley and other Republican congressional leaders.

### *Campaign Resources*

As table 7-7 reports, the Fifteenth District race was quite expensive: the candidates together spent some \$7.3 million. Pryce outspent Kilroy \$4.6 million to \$2.6 million. Much of Pryce's financial advantage came from PAC contributions, where Pryce out-raised Kilroy by almost five to one. But Kilroy edged Pryce in individual donations (\$2.1 million to \$1.5 million). National luminaries from both parties, including Laura Bush and Bill Clinton, visited the district to help raise funds and boost enthusiasm.

Much of the candidates' money was spent on television advertising, as shown in table 7-8. The CMAG data found that Pryce spent \$2.2 million on television ads compared to \$1.3 million for Kilroy; the ORN data found \$1.6 million and \$1.0 million, respectively. However, these sums were overshadowed by outside spending. The party committees were very active in the race. Here the CMAG data found that the DCCC spent \$1.0 million and the NRCC \$1.2 million; the ORN data found \$1.6 million from the DCCC and \$1.8 million from the NRCC.<sup>63</sup> Pryce also benefited from some joint spending with the RNC. Thus, total party spending was comparable to the amounts spent by the candidates directly.

The CMAG data show that Democratic interest group allies, such as MoveOn.org, Americans United for Change, the American Trial Lawyers Association and labor unions, spent more than \$0.9 million on television ads. And GOP allies, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Hospital Association, also bought television and race ads. However, the figures in table 7-8 may understate the actual interest group spending.<sup>64</sup> In any event, such spending illustrates the national importance of the Fifteenth District race.

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<sup>61</sup> Dan Williamson, "Fight for the 15th," *Columbus Monthly*, September 2006, p. 43.

<sup>62</sup> Williamson, 47.

<sup>63</sup> The ORN data was corrected using FEC independent expenditure data. This correction was necessary because the records of television stations did not indicate the candidate for whom the spending was allocated and there were other congressional candidates in the Columbus media market. Here, too, the party spending was largely negative: about 96 percent of the DCCC and NRCC spending was against the rival candidate. See FEC "Committees and Candidates Supported/Opposed".

<sup>64</sup> FEC data reveal additional independent expenditures. Kilroy benefited from \$530,000 from ASFCME (against Pryce), \$417,000 from MoveOn.org (against Pryce); \$321,000 from Emily's List (\$225,000 for Kilroy and \$96,000 against Pryce), \$39,000 from SEIU (against Pryce); \$24,000 from Environmental Alliance (for Kilroy). Pryce

Table 7-9 reports the unique campaign communications in the race, with a total of 131 identified, with 58 for Democratic side and 73 for the Republicans. The television ads were produced mostly by the candidates (8 for Kilroy and 6 for Pryce) and the DCCC (which produced one ad). Democratic interest group allies produced at least seven television ads in this tight race, while Republican allies aired at least three. Direct mail was heavily weighted toward the party committees, with the Democratic committees producing 16 unique pieces and the Republicans 32 (including two jointly paid for by the NRCC and Pryce). In contrast, the candidates themselves appear to have produced less mail (two unique pieces for Kilroy and one for Pryce). In this regard, the Republican allies also seemed to produce a greater number of unique mail pieces (11 to 6); the Democrats appeared to have advantage in emails (13 to 2). These figures suggest that although both sides waged effective ground wars, the Republican may have had a slight advantage.

As these numbers suggest, outside interests were early and important players in the election. Pre-primary salvos included a barrage of automated phone calls from liberal 527s. Some of the efforts, like calls from American Family Voices, were above-board, while others originated from a shadowy group called “We the People” that “produced altered caller ID numbers to make it look as though the calls [were] coming from the lawmakers they were attacking.”<sup>65</sup> MoveOn.org joined the fray with a string of television ads that attempted to link Pryce to corporate wrongdoing. The first of these ads said Pryce had been “caught red-handed” taking money from energy interests while voting in their favor. Some stations declined to run the ads, including NBC-affiliate WCMH, which a MoveOn.org press release accused of hypocrisy, saying the station had run disputed commercials for Swift Boat Veterans for Truth during the 2004 presidential election.<sup>66</sup>

As the campaign got underway, much of the political talking was done by outside interests. The *Columbus Dispatch* reported that AFSCME was attempting to “take a page from the GOP and develop partnerships with faith- and community-based organizations” in support of candidates like Kilroy.<sup>67</sup> The Association of Trial Lawyers of America ran ads charging that Pryce was beholden to drug companies. Majority Action tied Pryce to failures in the Iraq war and government corruption. AFSCME highlighted Pryce’s opposition to minimum wage increases, as did the DCCC, which also hammered Pryce on a wide variety of issues.

Much of the campaign was framed by the tension between the parties and the candidates. From the beginning, Kilroy was calling Pryce a “rubber stamp” for Bush administration policies. Pryce “is about as moderate as Tom DeLay,” said Kilroy.<sup>68</sup> Kilroy and her supporters linked Pryce to the GOP, Coingate, and the Ney scandal. In response to this line of attack, Pryce allied herself with the moderate wing of the GOP, running an ad that featured maverick Senator John McCain. Indeed, Pryce spent much of the campaign distancing herself from the president and from conservatives in her party. In a widely broadcast television ad, Pryce broke with the GOP line on stem cell research: “Some in my own party disagree with me about this, but I think it’s the right thing to do.”<sup>69</sup>

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benefited from \$14,000 from the NRA, \$3,000 from the National Right to Life Committee, and \$63,000 from the American Hospital Association (all for Pryce). See FEC “Committees and Candidates Supported/Opposed”.

<sup>65</sup> Jonathan Riskind, “GOP on Defensive from Call Campaign; Interest Groups Target Lawmakers Early by Phoning Constituents,” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 19, 2006, C1.

<sup>66</sup> Jonathan Riskind, “Local Stations Won’t Run Anti-Pryce Ad; GOP Lawmaker Disputes TV Spots Use of Vote Record,” *Columbus Dispatch*, April 4, 2006, D4.

<sup>67</sup> Jonathan Riskind, “Unions Take Cure from GOP on Push for Voters,” *Columbus Dispatch*, April 23, 2006, B7.

<sup>68</sup> “Kilroy Enlists Emily’s List in Bid to Unseat Pryce,” *Columbus Dispatch*, May 13, 2006, D3.

<sup>69</sup> Rushing to the center was a dangerous shift for Pryce. A conservative businessman who objected to the congresswoman’s moderate politics attempted to enter the race as an independent, a move that threatened to draw

On the other side, the Republicans accused Kilroy of raising taxes and mismanaging public funds. Some of the Republican mail was very tough: an NRCC piece of mail charged that Kilroy had supported the Ku Klux Klan by defending their right to march at the Statehouse a dozen years earlier and had supported terrorists by opposing a pro-Israeli resolution in 2002. “Mary Jo Kilroy is Such a Liberal Extremist,” declared the NRCC flyer, “She Didn’t Vote against the KKK and Suicide Bombers.” However, some of the most memorable advertising in the Fifteenth District was not specific to any candidate, such as the powerful ads run by Progress for America (see description of ads in the Brown-DeWine Senate race).

After the polls closed on Election Day, Pryce led Kilroy 51 percent to 49 percent, with all precincts reporting. But the race was still considered too close to call because approximately 20,000 absentee and provisional ballots were yet to be counted. The provisional ballots pushed the campaign into overtime, including continuing campaign activism. Pryce declared victory immediately after Election Day, whereas Kilroy sought to ensure that provisional ballots were counted, even buying additional television advertising to press this message. The provisional ballot count received national attention when Franklin County officials announced they would delay work until after the highly anticipated football match-up between Ohio State and its archrival Michigan. Kilroy gained ground against Pryce in the final count, but Pryce won the race by just over a thousand votes.

Before the recount was completed, the Republican caucus in Congress held its own elections. Having survived a close and bitter election, Pryce decided to give up her party leadership position. She had found a “perception in the district that I had become someone different”; “It was important to me to help folks recognize that I had not. The district wants an independent voice, not someone who is spouting to the party faithful and that’s what my job had become.”<sup>70</sup> This episode was a fitting end to Ohio’s most expensive congressional campaign. In a toxic political environment, Pryce’s GOP leadership ties made the Fifteenth District race extremely competitive, which in turn, opened the floodgates to outside interests and campaign funds. Consequently, Kilroy and her allies had the wherewithal to mount a serious challenge, but ultimately Pryce and her allies had the means to defend the GOP seat. It may well be that the Republican advantage in the air war, and perhaps a slight edge in the ground war, produced the narrow victory Pryce enjoyed in an otherwise dismal election for Republicans.<sup>71</sup>

### **Ohio Thirteenth Congressional District: The Weight of Partisanship**

For the first time since 1992, Ohio’s Thirteenth Congressional District was an open seat, vacated when the incumbent, Democrat Sherrod Brown, decided to run for the U.S. Senate. Brown’s announcement set off a free-for-all in both parties. Both parties nominated strong contenders from large candidate fields: Democrat Betty Sutton, a former state legislator, and Republican Craig Foltin, the mayor of Lorain. Although the race originally looked competitive, the weight of Democratic partisanship in a good Democratic year allowed Sutton to defeat Foltin by 61 to 39 percent. This race is also an example of a national phenomenon: the Democrats were able to hold all of their open seats on their way to taking control of the Congress.<sup>72</sup>

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GOP votes away from the GOP candidate. Pryce’s problem was resolved in July, when the Republican Secretary of State (and gubernatorial candidate) Ken Blackwell determined that the seemingly independent candidate was in fact a Republican and therefore could not join the ballot.

<sup>70</sup> Jonathan Riskind, “Pryce Says She’ll Now Be Able to More Closely Represent Voter’s Views,” *Columbus Dispatch*, December 3, 2006, G5.

<sup>71</sup> Republican incumbents also won close races in the First and Second Districts.

<sup>72</sup> Observers had expected the open seat in the Sixth District to be competitive, but it also failed to materialize.

## *The Candidates*

The 2006 primary election in the Thirteenth District did not lack for candidates. Eight Democrats and five Republicans ran for their party's nomination. Following Brown's announcement of his U.S. Senate campaign, national and Ohio Republicans viewed the Thirteenth District as a chance to paint a blue district red, thus offsetting the loss of seats elsewhere. The Democrats took this threat seriously and sought to defend the open seat.

Republican efforts focused on thirty-eight-year-old Craig Foltin, who had been twice elected mayor of Lorain, a working-class and strongly Democratic city. He was just the kind of moderate Republican that GOP leaders felt could win the district. Following a very public courting, Foltin agreed to run amid promises of support from national and local party leaders, including the unusual step of publicly endorsing him in the primary.<sup>73</sup> In the five-way race, Foltin won with 37 percent of the vote.

The Democratic primary was a much livelier affair, attracting eight candidates, including former Congressman Tom Sawyer (a fourteen-year veteran who had represented Akron until redistricting cost him his seat); shopping-mall heiress Capri Cafaro (who had run unsuccessfully against Republican Congressman Steve LaTourette in 2004); lawyer Betty Sutton (who had represented part of the Akron area in the state legislature until term-limited out of office); and Gary Kucinich (brother of Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich).

Betty Sutton won the primary with 31 percent of the vote. A crucial factor was the strong support of Sutton by EMILY's List. Though one of two women in the race, EMILY's List endorsed and backed Sutton with a methodical campaign against Sutton's two strongest opponents, Cafaro and Sawyer.<sup>74</sup> During the primary, EMILY's List spent nearly \$174,000, sent fourteen different mail pieces and nearly 470,000 pieces total, made close to 80,000 phone calls on behalf of Sutton,<sup>75</sup> and spent \$37,337 against Cafaro and \$27,120 against Sawyer.<sup>76</sup>

EMILY's List thought Sutton was the strongest candidate to hold a competitive Democratic seat, and this perception was based in part on the issue of corruption. Cafaro had been granted immunity from prosecution during a previous corruption trial of a former employer,<sup>77</sup> and EMILY's List spokesman Chris Esposito noted that a Cafaro victory would knock Democrats off message in November, stating, "You want to have an exclusive debate about corruption, ethics and scandal that is all about Republicans. [Cafaro] as nominee allows [it] to become a two-party issue instead of a one-party issue."<sup>78</sup>

Although Sawyer did not have Cafaro's political problems, Sutton and EMILY's List applied the corruption issue to him as well. A month before the primary, Sutton attacked Sawyer by pointing to a newspaper study which found that Sawyer had taken more trips than any member of the Ohio congressional delegation in the late 1990s.<sup>79</sup> The corruption issue ended up serving Sutton well, but it also

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<sup>73</sup> Steve Luttner, "GOP Sees What It Needs," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 16, 2006

<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, EMILY's List supported Cafaro in her failed 2004 congressional campaign.

<sup>75</sup> EMILY's List, "Women Vote! Activities," At <[http://www.emilyslist.org/do/women-vote/doing\\_now.html](http://www.emilyslist.org/do/women-vote/doing_now.html)>, 10 December 2006.

<sup>76</sup> EMILY's List figures come the FEC Disclosure Report "Independent Expenditure on Behalf of the Candidate," and "Committees and Candidates Supported/Opposed." At <[http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/can\\_give/2005\\_H6OH13133](http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/can_give/2005_H6OH13133)>, 10 December 2006.

<sup>77</sup> Steve Luttner, "The Difficult Question that Still Dogs Cafaro," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 19, 2006.

<sup>78</sup> Steve Luttner, "Women's Political Network Opposes Cafaro for Congress," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 27, 2006.

<sup>79</sup> Steve Luttner, "Rival Targets Ex-Legislator's Travel," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 7, 2006.

created considerable ill-will among Democrats,<sup>80</sup> which might have been problematic in a competitive general election race.

### *Campaign Resources*

As table 7-10 reveals, Sutton outspent Foltin nearly two-to-one, \$1.2 million to \$.6 million. Sutton's advantage over Foltin extended to both PAC and individual donations. As table 7-11 shows, Sutton spent about a quarter of a million dollars on television ads. The Foltin campaign did not have the funds to buy television time.<sup>81</sup> Because the race was not deemed competitive in the fall, the party committees were not active. Both election candidates benefited from a small level of spending by interest group allies (such as the support for Foltin from the National Right to Life Committee). As table 7-12 shows, there was much less campaign communication in this race than in the Eighteenth or Fifteenth Districts. Foltin tried to make up for a lack of media spending with 9 mail pieces. The party committees were active in the ground war, but this effort was largely in support of statewide candidates.

The campaign debate followed predictable lines in the general election. Sutton continued to stress the corruption issue. As she had done in the primary, Sutton and her allies applied this theme to Foltin, pointing to the recent trials and convictions of two Lorain city officials for theft and obstruction.<sup>82</sup> For his part, Foltin criticized Sutton for being a "puppet" of EMILY's List, which he described as a "radical leftist group." Along these lines, he attacked Sutton's stance on abortion. Foltin also offered a positive message, claiming he was a different kind of Republican, who would work across the aisle and bring federal projects back to the district. This kind of message might have been effective in a different political environment.

In the end, the Democrats were able to hold the Thirteenth District open seat by choosing a strong candidate in a year when the weight of partisanship was particularly heavy. Extensive spending by EMILY's List was decisive in Sutton's nomination, a result that set the course for the rest of the campaign. It is worth noting that an interest group sought the most "electable" candidate, a goal traditionally stressed by party committees. In addition, the Democrats had the additional resources to defend the district had the need materialized. Although the Republicans recruited a strong candidate, the broader political climate made it impossible for the GOP to supply the necessary resources to make the race competitive. Thus, the Thirteenth District illustrates an important reason the Democrats were able to take control of Congress: they were able to hold their most vulnerable seats.

### **The Democrats Strike Back**

In 2004, Ohio was at the center of the presidential campaign and the Republicans eked out a narrow victory to maintain their control of the federal government. This campaign was dispiriting for Ohio Democrats because it capped a sixteen year period of political losses. In 2006, the Democrats struck back, taking control of the Ohio executive, winning a crucial U.S. Senate seat, and picking up a congressional seat as well.

Here the Buckeye State was a microcosm of the national election results, and these four contests illustrate the kinds of races that determined the national outcome, including the defeat of an incumbent thought to be safe (Mike DeWine in the U.S. Senate race); the pick up of a seat formerly held by a disgraced incumbent (Bob Ney's Eighteenth District); the near defeat of an otherwise unblemished GOP leader

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<sup>80</sup> *Akron Beacon Journal*, "Betty Sutton Wins Very Ugly in the 13<sup>th</sup> District, May 4, 2006.

<sup>81</sup> Amy Sabbath, campaign manager, Foltin for Congress, interview with Anne Hanson, November 13, 2006.

<sup>82</sup> Carl Chancellor, "Insult Trading Continues at Sutton-Foltin Debate," *Akron Beacon Journal*, October 26, 2006.

(Deborah Pryce in the Fifteenth District); and the holding of a potentially competitive Democratic seat (the Thirteenth District). Not coincidentally, these races reflect the political diversity of Ohio.

Without doubt the crucial factor in these races was the unpopularity of the party in power. Scandals at the state and federal levels were central to this anti-Republican sentiment, which affected even candidates untouched by misconduct. Unpopular domestic and foreign policies compounded the Republican woes. The Democrats effectively took advantage of these opportunities, recruiting strong challengers and providing them with ample resources.

The Democratic candidates studied here were all able to raise sufficient funds to adequately communicate their messages to the voters. However, the party committees were major players, often spending more than the candidates themselves, usually by means of independent expenditures. Interest group allies were prominent, but did not spend as much as the parties. Some of these resources were crucial, such as EMILY's List in the Thirteenth District Democratic primary. Such efforts were markedly less than in the 2004 presidential campaign.

Republican incumbents were also well funded; the GOP party committees spent aggressively; GOP interest group allies were also active. But even strong incumbents found it hard to cope with the anti-Republican wave that swept across the Buckeye State. In this environment, Republican challengers were left without the resources to compete, further worsening the situation. It is worth noting, however, that Republican spending did produce some positive results, such as Pryce's close re-election in the Fifteenth District. Without these campaign resources, the Republican defeat would have been a complete debacle.

**Table 7-1**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Ohio Senate Race, 2005-06**

	Sherrod Brown (D)	Mike DeWine (R)
From PACs	\$1,306,060	\$2,902,942
From individuals	\$6,955,151	\$8,168,721
From party	\$38,778	\$6,975
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$386,049	\$964,767
Total receipts	\$8,686,038	\$12,043,405
Total expenditures	\$10,599,233	\$14,012,837
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/06)	\$189,641	\$165,204

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006.  
 At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 7-2**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Ohio Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Friends of Sherrod Brown	\$4,676,106	\$44,621	<b>\$4,720,727</b>	\$5,704,771
<i>Political parties</i>				
DSCC	\$4,474,527	...	<b>\$4,474,527</b>	\$6,501,694
Ohio Democratic Party	\$642,109	\$9,290	<b>\$651,399</b>	\$808,390
DSCC/ Sherrod Brown	\$530,768	...	<b>\$530,768</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
United Steelworkers	...	\$29,080	<b>\$29,080</b>	...
Stand Up For Steel	...	\$24,750	<b>\$24,750</b>	...
American Postal Workers Union	\$23,575	...	<b>\$23,575</b>	...
Campaign Money Watch	...	\$1,320	<b>\$1,320</b>	...
National Air Traffic Controllers Association	...	...	...	\$351,358
Americans United for Change	...	...	...	\$204,009
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	...	\$21,810
MoveOn.org	...	...	...	\$14,175
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
DeWine for Senate	\$7,556,778	\$92,998	<b>\$7,649,776</b>	\$7,829,069
<i>Political parties</i>				
RNC	\$2,693,276	...	<b>\$2,693,276</b>	\$1,543,538
NRSC	\$3,443,785	...	<b>\$3,443,785</b>	\$3,688,841
NRSC / Mike DeWine	\$131,055	...	<b>\$131,055</b>	\$860,296
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Progress for America	\$1,321,296	...	<b>\$1,321,296</b>	\$1,017,864
Common Sense 2006	\$478,707	\$213,720	<b>\$692,427</b>	...
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$77,450	...	<b>\$77,450</b>	\$902,365
National Right to Life	...	\$11,120	<b>\$11,120</b>	...
<b>Nonpartisan</b>				
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
AARP	\$29,125	...	<b>\$29,125</b>	...
Coalition for America's Priorities	...	\$18,600	<b>\$18,600</b>	\$63,447

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 7-3.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "... " only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-3  
Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,  
Ohio Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>c</sup></b>							
<i>Candidates</i>							
Friends of Sherrod Brown	11	8	...	5	2	13	<b>39</b>
<i>Political parties</i>							
DSCC	...	1	...	...	...	27	<b>28</b>
Ohio Democratic Party	1	26	...	...	...	1	<b>28</b>
Local Democratic Parties	3	2	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
DNC	2	1	...	1	...	...	<b>4</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
Working America	...	10	...	...	...	...	<b>10</b>
Ohio AFL-CIO	...	8	...	1	...	...	<b>9</b>
Ohio Federation of Teachers	...	7	...	...	...	...	<b>7</b>
MoveOn.org	5	...	...	...	...	1	<b>6</b>
Change To Win	...	5	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
Ohio Education Association	...	5	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
People for the American Way	...	5	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
AFSCME	...	4	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
NARAL	2	2	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
National Jewish Democratic Council	...	...	4	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	1	...	2	...	1	<b>4</b>
Americans United for Change	...	...	...	...	...	3	<b>3</b>
Sierra Club	...	2	...	1	...	...	<b>3</b>
America Votes	...	2	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
International Brotherhood of Teamsters	...	2	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
True Majority Action	2	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
American Civil Liberties Union	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
American Federation of Government Employees	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
American Federation of Teachers	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
Black Women's PAC	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Committee for a Democratic Majority	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Democracy in Action	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Human Rights Campaign	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
Midwest Values PAC	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Air Traffic Controllers	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
People's Convention PAC	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Progressive Patriots Fun	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Upper Arlington Progressive Action	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>c</sup></b>							
<i>Candidates</i>							
DeWine for Senate	2	3	1	5	8	18	<b>38</b>

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<i>Political parties</i>							
Ohio Republican Party	...	13	...	10	...	...	<b>23</b>
RNC	4	...	...	7	...	2	<b>13</b>
NRSC	...	...	...	...	...	8	<b>8</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	4	1	...	...	4	<b>9</b>
National Right to Life	...	4	...	1	1	...	<b>6</b>
Progress for America Org	...	...	...	...	...	3	<b>3</b>
Common Sense Ohio	...	...	...	2	...	...	<b>2</b>
Focus on the Family	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
International Union of Operating Engineers	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
SBA List	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Seniors Coalition, The	...	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>							
<i>Interest Groups</i>							
Coalition for America's Priorities	...	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 7-2.

<sup>b</sup> All state and local chapters or affiliates have been combined with their national affiliate to better render the picture of the organization's activity. For instance, Working America Ohio data have been included in the Working America totals and National Right to Life PAC, Cincinnati Right to Life PAC, and Ohio Right to Life have been included in the National Right to Life totals.

<sup>c</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "... " only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-4**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Ohio Eighteenth Congressional District Race, 2005-06**

	Zachary Space (D)	Joy Padgett (R)
From PACs	\$468,709	\$532,826
From individuals	\$1,083,173	\$302,696
From party	\$4,285	\$15,125
From candidate	\$39,870	\$0
Other contributions	\$3,790	\$1,941
Total receipts	\$1,599,827	\$852,588
Total expenditures	\$1,583,081	\$845,287
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/06)	\$16,745	\$7,300

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006.  
 At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 7-5**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Ohio Eighteenth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>			
<i>Candidates</i>			
Zack Space for Congress	\$366,925	...	<b>\$366,925</b>
<i>Political parties</i>			
DCCC	\$2,503,949	\$18,200	<b>\$2,522,149</b>
Ohio Democratic Party	\$642,109	\$9,290	<b>\$651,399</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Stand Up For Steel	...	\$24,750	<b>\$24,750</b>
American Postal Workers Union	\$23,575	...	<b>\$23,575</b>
United Steelworkers	...	\$13,090	<b>\$13,090</b>
Campaign Money Watch	...	\$1,320	<b>\$1,320</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>			
<i>Candidates</i>			
Joy Padgett for Congress	\$206,225	...	<b>\$206,225</b>
<i>Political parties</i>			
NRCC	\$3,299,037	...	<b>\$3,299,037</b>
RNC	\$2,010,321	...	<b>\$2,010,321</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Progress for America	\$1,122,021	...	<b>\$1,122,021</b>
Common Sense 2006	\$478,707	\$191,400	<b>\$670,107</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>			
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
AARP	\$29,125	...	<b>\$29,125</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 7-6.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-6**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Ohio Eighteenth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Phone Call	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>					
<i>Candidates</i>					
Zack Space for Congress	1	2	...	1	<b>4</b>
<i>Political parties</i>					
DCCC	1	10	...	2	<b>13</b>
Ohio Democratic Party	1	12	...	...	<b>13</b>
DNC	2	1	2	...	<b>5</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>					
MoveOn.org	4	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
Ohio Education Association	...	4	...	...	<b>4</b>
NARAL	2	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Ohio AFL-CIO	...	2	...	...	<b>2</b>
Women's Voices. Women Vote.	...	2	...	...	<b>2</b>
America Votes	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Air Traffic Controllers	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
True Majority Action	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>					
<i>Candidates</i>					
Joy Padgett for Congress	...	4	...	1	<b>5</b>
<i>Political parties</i>					
NRCC	...	22	...	2	<b>24</b>
Ohio Republican Party	...	12	8	...	<b>20</b>
RNC	2	...	8	...	<b>10</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>					
Focus on the Family	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 7-5.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-7**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Ohio Fifteenth Congressional District Race,**  
**2005-06**

	Mary Jo Kilroy (D)	Deborah Pryce (R)
From PACs	\$523,345	\$2,437,080
From individuals	\$2,182,976	\$1,555,121
From party	\$2,000	\$12,885
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$2,302	\$260,956
Total receipts	\$2,710,623	\$4,266,042
Total expenditures	\$2,684,121	\$4,648,191
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/06)	\$26,500	\$106,413

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, “2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info,” November 27, 2006 ([http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006) [December 14, 2006]).

**Table 7-8**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Ohio Fifteenth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Kilroy for Congress	\$1,024,240	\$41,902	<b>\$1,066,142</b>	\$1,309,134
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$2,503,949	\$22,433	<b>\$2,526,382</b>	\$1,019,822
Ohio Democratic Party	\$642,109	\$9,290	<b>\$651,399</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Stand Up For Steel	...	\$24,750	<b>\$24,750</b>	...
American Postal Workers Union	\$23,575	...	<b>\$23,575</b>	...
EMILY's List	...	\$17,050	<b>\$17,050</b>	...
United Steelworkers	...	\$13,090	<b>\$13,090</b>	...
Campaign Money Watch	...	\$1,320	<b>\$1,320</b>	\$26,557
MoveOn.org	...	...	...	\$327,824
Americans United for Change	...	...	...	\$204,009
AFSCME	...	...	...	\$182,788
American Trial Lawyers Association	...	...	...	\$101,589
National Air Traffic Controllers Association	...	...	...	\$92,028
United Food and Commercial Workers	...	...	...	\$4,520
Majority Action	...	...	...	\$682
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Pryce for Congress	\$1,589,350	\$34,280	<b>\$1,623,630</b>	\$2,246,289
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	\$3,299,037	...	<b>\$3,299,037</b>	\$1,260,243
RNC	\$2,180,621	...	<b>\$2,180,621</b>	...
RNC / Pryce	\$42,880	...	<b>\$42,880</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Progress for America	\$1,122,021	...	<b>\$1,122,021</b>	\$393,936
Common Sense 2006	\$478,707	\$191,400	<b>\$670,107</b>	...
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$77,450	...	<b>\$77,450</b>	\$173,493
<b>Nonpartisan</b>				
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
American Hospital Association	...	\$49,616	<b>\$49,616</b>	...
AARP	\$29,125	...	<b>\$29,125</b>	...
Coalition for America's Priorities	...	...	...	\$21,203

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 7-9.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-9**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Ohio Fifteenth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>						
<i>Candidates</i>						
Kilroy for Congress	...	2	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	8	<b>11</b>
<i>Political parties</i>						
Ohio Democratic Party	2	11	...	...	...	<b>13</b>
DCCC	1	4	...	...	1	<b>6</b>
DNC	2	1	2	...	...	<b>5</b>
Summit County Democrats	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>						
MoveOn.org	4	...	...	...	1	<b>5</b>
AFSCME	...	...	...	...	2	<b>2</b>
American Family Voices	...	...	2	...	...	<b>2</b>
NARAL	2	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Ohio Women Vote	...	2	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
America Votes	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
American Trial Lawyers Association	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
Americans for Shared Sacrifice	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Campaign Money Watch	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
Majority Action	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
National Air Traffic Controllers	...	...	...	...	1	<b>1</b>
Ohio AFL-CIO	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
True Majority Action	1	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Upper Arlington Progressive Action	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>						
<i>Candidates</i>						
Pryce for Congress	...	1	...	1 <sup>c</sup>	6	<b>8</b>
US HOR/ Deborah Pryce	...	2	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
<i>Political parties</i>						
Ohio Republican Party	...	24	8	...	...	<b>32</b>
RNC	2	...	8	...	...	<b>10</b>
NRCC	...	6	...	...	...	<b>6</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>						
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	4	1	...	3	<b>8</b>
Seniors Coalition, The	...	4	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
Ohio Effective Government Project	...	2	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
Focus on the Family	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 7-8.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>c</sup> Although no specific ads were heard, this organization was active in this race because radio ad-buy data was obtained from stations. In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-10**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Ohio Thirteenth Congressional District Race, 2005-06**

	Betty Sue Sutton (D)	Craig Foltin (R)
From PACs	\$463,815	\$222,259
From individuals	\$806,709	\$339,186
From party	\$835	\$5,000
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$4,312	\$84,674
Total receipts	\$1,275,671	\$651,119
Total expenditures	\$1,252,438	\$650,521
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$22,778	\$597

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, “2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info,” November 27, 2006 ([http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006) [December 14, 2006]).

**Table 7-11**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Ohio Thirteenth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>			
<i>Candidates</i>			
Betty Sutton for Congress	\$246,075	...	<b>\$246,075</b>
<i>Political parties</i>			
DCCC	\$1,388,624	\$18,200	<b>\$1,406,824</b>
Ohio Democratic Party	\$642,109	\$9,290	<b>\$651,399</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Stand Up For Steel	...	\$24,750	<b>\$24,750</b>
American Postal Workers Union	\$23,575	...	<b>\$23,575</b>
United Steelworkers	...	\$13,090	<b>\$13,090</b>
Campaign Money Watch	...	\$1,320	<b>\$1,320</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>			
<i>Political parties</i>			
NRCC	\$2,227,587	...	<b>\$2,227,587</b>
RNC	\$2,010,321	...	<b>\$2,010,321</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
Progress for America	\$1,122,021	...	<b>\$1,122,021</b>
Common Sense 2006	\$478,707	\$191,400	<b>\$670,107</b>
National Right to Life	...	\$10,640	<b>\$10,640</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>			
<i>Interest Groups</i>			
AARP	\$29,125	...	<b>\$29,125</b>

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 7-12.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 7-12**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Ohio Thirteenth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	Email	Mail	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>						
<i>Candidates</i>						
Sutton for Congress	...	1	...	...	1	2
<i>Political parties</i>						
Ohio Democratic Party	1	10	...	...	...	11
DNC	2	1	2	...	...	5
DCCC	1	...	...	...	...	1
Summit County Democrats	1					1
<i>Interest Groups</i>						
MoveOn.org	4	...	...	...	...	4
NARAL	2	...	...	...	...	2
People's Convention PAC	...	2	...	...	...	2
America Votes	...	1	...	...	...	1
EMILY's List	...	...	1	...	...	1
National Air Traffic Controllers	...	...	...	...	1	1
Ohio AFL-CIO	...	1	...	...	...	1
People for the American Way	...	1	...	...	...	1
True Majority Action	1	...	...	...	...	1
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>						
<i>Candidates</i>						
Foltin for Congress	...	9	...	...	...	9
<i>Political parties</i>						
Ohio Republican Party	...	12	8	...	...	20
RNC	2	...	8	...	...	10
<i>Interest Groups</i>						
National Right to Life PAC	...	1	...	1	...	2
Focus on the Family	...	1	...	...	...	1

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 7-11.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, “...” only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

## **The 2006 Pennsylvania Senate Race**

Robin Kolodny, Temple University

Kyle Kreider, Wilkes University

Stephen Medvic, Franklin & Marshall College

Daniel Shea, Allegheny College

### **Introduction**

The Pennsylvania Senate contest between Republican incumbent Rick Santorum and Democratic challenger Bob Casey, Jr. was one of the most closely watched Senate races of the 2006 election cycle. As the chair of the Republican Conference, Senator Santorum was the third-highest Republican Party leader. He was closely aligned with the Bush administration's policies, especially on the war in Iraq. Could Santorum weather the storm of low presidential popularity and concern about Iraq and pull out a victory against a well-financed, moderate, and popular Democrat? The general election was marked by record highs in money raised and spent by the candidates, but the parties and interest groups remained relatively quiet. Santorum's money advantage, however, was not enough to overcome the overwhelming negativity surrounding President Bush and the Republican Party in 2006. The end result was a 58.7 percent to 41.3 percent victory for Robert Casey, Jr.

### **The Demographic and Political Context**

In some respects the perception of Pennsylvania as a stagnant, perhaps dying, rust-belt state would seem on the mark. Prior to World War II, the state's population grew by roughly 25 percent every decade. Since that time, growth has been anemic—the slowest of any major state. The Keystone State cast thirty-six electoral votes for Franklin Roosevelt in 1940, but only twenty-three for Al Gore in 2000. Yet, the state's economy is robust in some respects, especially in certain parts of the state. Its gross state product (GSP) ranks sixth in the nation—which is consistent with its population ranking. Philadelphia is home to ten Fortune 500 companies; Pittsburgh boasts eight. In all, some 49 Fortune 500 companies now reside in the Keystone State. While it is true that the state's coal and steel industry have languished in recent years, many high-tech companies have found a home in Pennsylvania. Moreover, even though many of the smaller towns in the rural parts of the state have withered, suburban areas, especially in the northeastern parts of the state, have experienced tremendous growth. In short, Pennsylvania is in a period of transition.

Politically, Pennsylvania also seems stuck in an identity crisis. The urban, industrial corners of the state—namely Pittsburgh to the southwest and Philadelphia to the southeast—tend to vote solidly Democratic, while the center and top corners of the state, known as the “rural T,” is some of the most conservative terrain in the Northeast. Democratic strategist James Carville's oft-cited observation that Pennsylvania is “Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, with Alabama in the middle”<sup>1</sup> seems quite apt, but Pittsburgh has drifted a bit toward the GOP in recent elections. For example, George W. Bush netted 40 percent in Allegheny County in 2000. This figure climbed to 42 percent four years later. Mike Fisher, the Republican gubernatorial candidate received 44 percent there in 2004 (precisely the statewide percentage), and Arlen Specter received 53 percent of the vote in 2004.<sup>2</sup> Most observers believe the true battlegrounds are the suburban areas encircling the major cities—especially in the Philadelphia metropolitan region.

Statewide voter registration numbers suggest Pennsylvania is closely divided between the two parties. In

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<sup>1</sup> “The 2000 Elections, State by State; Northeast,” *The New York Times*, 9 November 2000. At <<http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F20B15F7345D0C7A8CDDA80994D8404482>>, 15 December 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Pennsylvania Department of State, Division of Elections Data. At <<http://www.dos.state.pa.us/elections/default.asp?bcelNav=>>>, 3 January 2007.

the fall of 2006, there was less than a fifteen percent difference in registered voters between the parties, with Democrats (3,900,000) narrowly edging Republicans (3,300,000). Only about 10 percent of Pennsylvanians do not enroll with a political party. Not surprisingly, the parity between the parties has led to generally competitive statewide elections and to shifting control of offices between the parties. The Governor's mansion in Pennsylvania has switched often between Republicans and Democrats, with neither party winning more than two consecutive terms since the 1950s. Pennsylvania's senior Senator is Republican Arlen Specter. A Democrat during his early years, Specter switched to the GOP in the mid 1960s. He is considered a moderate, at times a rogue Republican, but that seems to suit Pennsylvania's general election voters.

In 2000, Al Gore had a surprisingly easy time beating George Bush in Pennsylvania and Democrat Ed Rendell, the current governor, walked into the Governor's Mansion two years later with little effort and won reelection in 2006 with 60 percent of the vote. Though the presidential race in Pennsylvania was a bit closer in 2004, President Bush once again lost the state. Whether or not Pennsylvania has become reliably Democratic in statewide elections, it is certainly centrist ideologically. That fact loomed large as the state's most conservative statewide office holder in recent history sought reelection in 2006.

### **The Candidates**

Senator Rick Santorum was seeking his third term in 2006. He had first won a seat in the Senate in the Republican wave election of 1994, when he defeated incumbent Democrat Harris Wofford with 49 percent of the vote to Wofford's 47 percent. In 2000, Santorum was reelected, but with only 52 percent of the vote, despite outspending his Democratic opponent, Ron Klink, by seven million dollars.

Senator Santorum is well-known for his conservative views, and his voting record matches those views; his 2004 rating from the American Conservative Union was a ninety-six. Though he has occasionally expressed those views in controversial statements, he is an effective communicator. His Republican Senate colleagues elected him chair of the Republican Conference in 2000, the leadership position responsible for communicating the Senate GOP message.<sup>3</sup> He retained the position through the 2006 election. Given his leadership position, his conservatism, and his electoral vulnerability, Democrats made him a top target in this election cycle.

The challenger, State Treasurer Robert Casey Jr., enjoyed significant name recognition as the race began. Not only had he been elected to statewide office three times, twice as state auditor general in 1996 and 2000 and once as treasurer in 2004, Casey ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2002, losing the primary to current governor Ed Rendell. In addition, he is the son of former Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey. As was his father, Casey is often considered a moderate Democrat. He is in step with the party's economic and foreign policy positions, but tends to be conservative on social issues. He is, for example, opposed to abortion and gun control and favors capital punishment.

At least in part as a result of his social conservatism, Casey initially faced a threat from his left in Green Party nominee, Carl Romanelli. Republicans funded most of the \$100,000 Romanelli spent on the petition drive to obtain the 67,070 signatures required for a third party candidate to qualify for the fall ballot.<sup>4</sup> Republicans also provided volunteers for the effort. The Casey campaign seemed distracted that several of Senator Santorum's key donors supported Romanelli, and the Democrats responded by sending attorneys and most of Casey's Philadelphia staff to Harrisburg to challenge the Green candidate's

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<sup>3</sup> See Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics 2006* (Washington, D.C.: National Journal Group, 2005), 1420.

<sup>4</sup> Martha Raffaele, "GOP help might not pay off for Green Party U.S. Senate candidate," *The Associated Press State and Local Wire*, September 26, 2006. At <[www.lexis-nexis.com](http://www.lexis-nexis.com)>, 3 January 2007.

signatures. Indeed, state Capitol police had to be called to break up a fistfight between Green Party and Democratic Party volunteers while scrutinizing petition signatures.<sup>5</sup> In the end, a Commonwealth Court judge ruled that Romanelli was nearly 9,000 signatures short of the required number and, after losing an appeal to the state Supreme Court, Romanelli was dropped from the ballot. There were no other third party candidates in the race.

## Money

### *Candidates*

Most observers expected this to be a very expensive race, and the candidates did not disappoint. The candidates raised and spent over \$40 million. By contrast, the 2004 contest between Senator Arlen Specter and Congressman Joe Hoeffel cost \$25 million, half of that spent by Specter in a contested Republican primary. There was a lopsided money advantage in this race as well, but this time it did not work to the incumbent Senator's advantage.

Senator Santorum raised over \$26 million dollars, 77 percent from individuals and 18 percent from PACs.<sup>6</sup> Santorum had a large early money advantage. This was the major reason so many pundits believed this race would be competitive—Santorum had an ample war chest and his challenger's early fundraising seemed slow. By the end of 2004, Santorum raised \$3 million, and by the end of 2005 he raised almost \$13 million. He raised an additional \$15 million in 2006.<sup>7</sup> Santorum's early money advantage allowed him to make substantial television ad buys throughout the summer months, especially on cable in the Philadelphia area. However, as donors became more focused on the race and national trends, Santorum's money advantage began to vanish. Between July 1, 2006 and October 18, 2006, Santorum raised \$4,628,236 which was \$590,350 less than his challenger.<sup>8</sup> Santorum also had slightly less cash on hand than Casey did going into the final two-week stretch before Election Day. Although Santorum dominated the early money game, he was unable to sustain that momentum against his increasingly popular challenger.

Though Casey was the fundraising underdog, he still managed to raise nearly \$18 million. Compare that to 2004's Democratic Senate challenger Joe Hoeffel's \$4.3 million total, and it is clear that Casey performed extremely well. Individuals gave Casey 90 percent of his money, with only 7 percent coming from PACs. The campaign filed with the FEC in March of 2005, raising \$5.8 million by year's end. The remaining \$12 million was raised in 2006.<sup>9</sup> Casey's momentum in fundraising was demonstrated by the \$5.2 million he raised between July 1, 2006 and October 18, 2006. At that point, the candidates were essentially even, with Casey having a little more cash on hand than Santorum in the final two weeks.

### *Political Parties*

Although this was one of the most discussed Senate races in 2005, by the early summer of 2006, it was becoming clearer that Senator Santorum was in very serious danger of losing. As a result, the national parties demurred from making independent expenditures in this race, although both parties' senatorial

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<sup>5</sup> Josh Drobnyk, "Campaign Workers Get Physical in Petition Dispute," *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pennsylvania), August 19, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> "Total Raised and Spent," *Center for Responsive Politics*, 2006. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/summary.asp?cycle=2006&id=PAS2>>, 11 December 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Data compiled by Robin Kolodny from Federal Election Commission reports. 8 January 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Federal Election Commission, "Report of Receipts and Disbursements," 7 December 2006. At <<http://query.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/dcdev/forms/C00424309/264634/>>, 11 December 2006 and author's calculations.

<sup>9</sup> Data compiled by Robin Kolodny from Federal Election Commission reports. January 8, 2007.

committees seemed to plan to do so at first. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) reserved television time early in the campaign in the Philadelphia market but when Casey still maintained double-digit leads in October they diverted the funds to other Senate races, in particular New Jersey. The time the DSCC had initially reserved was switched to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), as the Pennsylvania Fourth District race became competitive. Both the DSCC and the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) spent coordinated expenditure money on behalf of their candidates to help pay for media buys (between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000 for each side), but they did not make a major investment as expected in independent expenditures.

State and local party organizations contributed a fair amount. The Pennsylvania Democratic Party paid for nearly a million dollars worth of television advertising, though the ads were produced and approved by Bob Casey's campaign. The PA Democrats sent a significant number of mail pieces (eleven) while the Republican Federal Committee sent twenty pieces. Both state parties helped with their coordinated campaigns and turnout efforts significantly.

### *Interest Groups*

Interest groups had an unexpectedly limited role in this race. Nine groups made expenditures for television advertising (see table 8-2). The most significant buys were made by three groups supporting Senator Santorum: Softer Voices, the American Taxpayer's Alliance, and Americans for Job Security. Softer Voices was a 527 group that sought to increase Senator Santorum's support among women. In particular, they ran a television advertisement highlighting the Senator's hiring of a former welfare recipient and support for welfare-to-work programs. Softer Voices spent the most, using \$769,075 for electioneering; they were also the only group that bought advertising inside the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act's (BCRA) sixty-day window, and even then they concluded advertising by the third week of September.

## **Effects of Money**

### *Ground War*

During much of American history, "ground war" electioneering has been critical. Legions of volunteers, generally party activists, rallied, canvassed, made phone calls, and as an election neared turned out the vote for their candidates. By the 1970s, with the rapidly expanding role of electronic communications, many had assumed that grassroots campaigning would soon fade into the history books. In recent years, however, there has been a dramatic resurgence in this type of voter outreach because it still works, especially when voters are saturated with electronic communications. For example, many point to the powerful voter mobilization drive by the GOP in Ohio in 2004 as helping send George W. Bush back to the White House.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, the nature of ground war activities has changed; gone are the days of broad, untargeted efforts. Instead, parties, campaign operatives, and interest groups have found that while these efforts can prove essential, they are difficult and costly.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the ground war in the Casey/Santorum contest proved to be less than most had expected early in the race. As for direct mail, 52 different pieces were sent on Bob Casey's

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen T. Mockabee, Michael Margolis, Stephen Brooks, Rick Farmer, and John C. Green, "The Battle for Ohio: The 2004 Presidential Campaign," in David B. Magleby, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, eds., *Dancing without Partners: How Candidates, Parties, and Interest Groups Interact in the Presidential Campaign* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).

behalf, as noted in table 8-3. Party committees sent out 16 unique mail pieces, the largest share coming from the PA Democratic State Committee, which sent 10 pieces. The Casey Committee only sent out three distinct pieces of mail. Combined, labor organizations sent 21 different mail pieces, the largest number coming from the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO (6). As for direct mail in support of Senator Santorum, the overall number of distinct pieces was a bit lower at 30, and the pattern of sources was quite different: A vast majority of the mail pieces (23) were sent by the party committees, with the lion's share coming from the Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania.

If direct mail was more modest than expected, the use of email communications was higher. All told, 112 email messages were sent for either Casey or Santorum—with nearly twice as many (71) supporting the Democratic challenger. A vast majority of messages sent for both candidates were from the campaigns themselves, or from one of the party committees. The most active interest group in this area was MoveOn.org. While some of Casey's positions may not have squared well with many MoveOn.org rank-and-file members, especially his opposition to abortion rights, he did receive an official endorsement from the group. Likely, DNC Chair Howard Dean's enthusiastic endorsement of Casey helped cement MoveOn's assistance. Also, many MoveOn members understood that Casey had a good chance of beating Santorum, and that the Pennsylvania contest would be critical in helping the Democrats retake the Senate. That is to say, many were simply pragmatic.

Perhaps the most noteworthy finding with regard to email, other than the hefty number, was the large number sent by Democratic county committees. These were primarily announcements of coming Casey events (rallies, dinners, etc). This suggests email communications were likely more important for organization building than for persuading voters.

Finally, and perhaps most surprisingly, interpersonal communications (telephone calls or contacts at voter homes) were very limited in the Casey/Santorum contest, as suggested in table 8-3. Observers expected a close and hard-fought race, with phone calls, personal contact, and aggressive GOTV efforts from both sides in the final days and weeks of the campaign. However, by all accounts it was an extremely quiet campaign, with little involvement by activists on either side. Labor organizations did a bit of calling on Casey's behalf, and the National Rifle Association (NRA) members offered Senator Santorum grassroots help, but the hoards of activists "hitting the streets" and "flooding the phone banks" expected in 2006 did not materialize. We believe that this stems from the difficulty and costs of extensive ground war efforts and the fact that the race never tightened. Again, contemporary grassroots activities are costly and only extolled when truly necessary—that did not seem to be the case in Pennsylvania in 2006.

Both parties had active (and similarly named) coordinated campaigns—"PA Victory '06" for the Democrats and "Victory 2006" for the Republicans. Ed Rendell's gubernatorial campaign established a segregated account that paid for most of the Democrats' coordinated efforts. Interestingly, the Casey campaign relied almost entirely on the coordinated campaign for field operations,<sup>11</sup> devoting only minimal staff to do their own field work. That is the result of the campaign's belief that it was strategically necessary to keep pace with Santorum on television, which left little money to devote to other activities.

### *Air War*

There are at least six media markets in Pennsylvania and three of these are in the top fifty largest markets in the United States, including Philadelphia (fourth largest), Pittsburgh (twenty-second) and

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<sup>11</sup> Jay Reiff, campaign manager, Bob Casey for United States Senate, telephone interview with Stephen Medvic, October 5, 2006.

Harrisburg/Lancaster/Lebanon/York (forty-first).<sup>12</sup> The Philadelphia market is clearly critical to any successful campaign media operation in the state. There are nearly three million homes in that market, and many of these are in the highly competitive suburbs. Needless to say, most of the advertising activity was in the Philadelphia market, though there was significant activity in Pittsburgh and in central and northeastern Pennsylvania as well. As noted, the Philadelphia market also covers a large section of New Jersey and all of Delaware. This makes advertising in this market challenging as often more than one major race is attempting to buy time in this market. In 2006, the New Jersey Senate race also advertised heavily in the Philadelphia market.

The ad war began as early as April, when Americans for Job Security began airing a television spot criticizing Casey's alleged absenteeism as the state's treasurer. Santorum began airing commercials in May, with a radio ad in Pittsburgh that portrayed Casey as a candidate who would not debate and would likely run a negative campaign. Other early radio spots for Santorum included one that touted the Senator's record on issues of relevance to African-American voters and another in which Casey was criticized for supporting the Senate immigration bill that Santorum argued granted "amnesty" to illegal immigrants.

In late June, Santorum began airing television ads statewide, and Casey followed within a week. Because he trailed Santorum significantly in cash-on-hand during the summer, Casey's initial ad buys were limited, and for a few weeks, he ran ads predominantly in the Pittsburgh market. In fact, it was not until late August that Casey would air his first statewide television ad. By then, polls indicated that Santorum had begun closing what had been a double-digit lead for Casey. It was unclear whether this was the result of Santorum's larger advertising presence to that point or simply the gains Republicans made nationally as their circumstances improved in late summer.

In September, both campaigns aired ads that garnered some media attention. Casey used Santorum's words against him when he took quotes from the Senator's book *It Takes a Family* that implied that Santorum believed families can survive with only one parent working. The ad also pointed out, as the Casey campaign did throughout the fall, that Santorum had voted three times to raise senators' pay, including his own. At the same time, Santorum began running an ad claiming that Casey's "campaign team" included a number of individuals who were either under investigation for corruption or had been convicted of crimes. That allegation, according to the Allentown *Morning Call*, was "false." Later in the campaign, Santorum aired another controversial ad. That time, Casey was accused of being weak on national security. The ad included a mushroom cloud and juxtaposed Casey's picture next to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il.

While outside groups did run independent ads, none appeared to have a significant impact. In interviews conducted by the authors, the media consultants for both Santorum and Casey, as well as their campaign managers, downplayed the influence of interest groups' advertising on television.<sup>13</sup> The general consensus appeared to be that if the ads aired outside the sixty-day pre-election window, they could simply be ignored because voters were not yet paying close attention.

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<sup>12</sup> "Nielsen Media Research Local Market Universe Estimates (US)," Nielsen Media Research, September 24, 2005. At <<http://www.nielsenmedia.com/DMA.html>>, 11 December 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Jay Reiff, campaign manager, Bob Casey for United States Senate, telephone interviews by Stephen Medvic, October 5, 2006 and November 17, 2006; Vince Gallo, campaign manager, Santorum Campaign, telephone interviews by Kyle Kreider, October 31 and November 22, 2006.

## Unique Circumstances or Results During The Campaign

Perhaps the biggest story of the 2006 Pennsylvania Senate race was its anticlimactic conclusion. At the outset, the story had it all: a high-ranking incumbent, conservative with a national following, but also controversial senator running against a moderate, well-funded politician who, while the son of popular Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey, Sr. had not been in a race as visible as this one. While all observers expected a close election, it turned out to be a seventeen-point drubbing by Bob Casey.<sup>14</sup> When Casey first entered the race in 2005, polls showed him leading Santorum by seven to eleven percentage points.<sup>15</sup> However, observers expected that with Santorum's national stature, skills in speaking and debating, proven track-record of winning close elections in a Democratic-leaning state, and family-guy persona, coupled with the possibility that Casey's moderate to conservative stances on issues like abortion and gun control would depress liberal voters' interest and the polls would tighten. That did not happen. In fact, public opinion polls leading up to the election consistently showed low job approval ratings for Santorum and high single digit or double digit leads for Casey. The Republicans' superior get-out-the-vote operation was unable to turn back the national anti-incumbent, anti-Republican, anti-Bush tide. The fuel that drives grassroots campaign activities, such as get-out-the-vote drives, is the enthusiasm of rank-and-file activists. We suspect that many would-be GOP workers lacked fervor in 2006 and thus quietly sat out the election.

Normally, being in the third-highest leadership position in the Senate would be a positive feature when running for reelection, as the candidate would champion what he or she has accomplished for his or her state while in office. While Santorum's campaign attempted to make the election about state and local concerns, national issues were on the voters' minds. For example, an October poll showed Iraq to be the "dominant issue" (33 percent) with the economy and terrorism taking distant second and third places, respectively. The focus on national issues, specifically the declining situation in Iraq, hurt Santorum tremendously. Furthermore, when Santorum shifted his focus to national issues in the late stages of the campaign, it appears as if he picked the wrong ones. Rather than trying to separate himself from President Bush on Iraq, Santorum stressed terrorism in the final weeks of the campaign, an issue that had declined in significance from previous months.<sup>16</sup> In short, Pennsylvania has turned increasingly blue in recent elections, giving its support to Gore in 2000 and Kerry in 2004, and ending the Republican control of the state legislature in 2006. Furthermore, President Bush has experienced declining popularity ratings in the state, which may have hurt Senator Santorum's appeal among moderate, swing voters.<sup>17</sup> Exit poll data indicate that Santorum did worse in every region of the state compared to 2000.<sup>18</sup>

While Santorum's defeat may not have come as a surprise, the biggest puzzle was why Santorum was unable to climb above the low forties in public opinion polls throughout the campaign and then in the election results (41.3 percent). We submit that the conditions in 2006 made for the "perfect storm" that

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<sup>14</sup> "Elections Information," Pennsylvania Department of State, 2006. At <<http://www.electionreturns.state.pa.us/ElectionsInformation.aspx?FunctionID=13&ElectionID=24&OfficeID=2>>, 13 December 2006.

<sup>15</sup> "June 2005 Statewide Keystone Poll," At <[http://edisk.fandm.edu/FLI/keystone/pdf/keyjun05\\_1.pdf](http://edisk.fandm.edu/FLI/keystone/pdf/keyjun05_1.pdf)>, 13 December 2006.; "Casey Tops Santorum in Pennsylvania Senate Race, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds; Two-Thirds of Voters Say Keep *Roe v. Wade*," At <<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1284.xml?ReleaseID=810&What=&strArea=5;&strTime=24>>, 13 December 2006.

<sup>16</sup> "October 2006 Statewide Keystone Poll: Summary of Findings," At <[http://edisk.fandm.edu/FLI/keystone/pdf/KeyOct06\\_sum.pdf](http://edisk.fandm.edu/FLI/keystone/pdf/KeyOct06_sum.pdf)>, 13 December 2006.

<sup>17</sup> "AmericaVotes2006, Exit Polls," CNN. At <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/PA/S/01/epolls.0.html>>, 4 January 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Berwood Yost, research director, Floyd Institute Center for Opinion, email interview by Kyle Kreider, 5 January 2007.

Santorum could not weather. Though Santorum may have been able to soften his hard-core conservative persona and appeal to moderate voters in past elections, this campaign was different. Santorum's leadership position, his controversial statements, and the publication of his book meant that he had become a high-profile member of Senate. As a result, most Pennsylvania voters knew enough about him to come to judgment at the beginning of the race, and they were not likely to learn much that would change their opinions as the campaign unfolded. Another factor that hurt Santorum's popularity in western portions of the state was the controversy surrounding his residency in Washington, D.C. In 1990, Santorum won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in a Democratic-leaning district by attacking the incumbent, Doug Walgren, for living outside of the district. In 2006, Santorum lost some support among generally supportive western voters for establishing residency in Leesburg, Virginia and continuing to bill the Penn Hills School District (Pennsylvania) for the cost of enrolling five of their children in the Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School. Indeed the Allegheny County Democratic Committee launched a website, [www.payitbackrick.com](http://www.payitbackrick.com), detailing the billing controversy between Santorum and the school district using the tag line "He lives in Virginia, We Pay in Pennsylvania."<sup>19</sup> In response to this and other like attacks, Santorum used valuable resources on television commercials in the Pittsburgh market in attempts to explain his Washington, D.C. residence and lessen the public's disapproval of his move.

Simply put, the much-discussed and anticipated contest between Casey and Santorum turned out to be exactly that, a contest between the challenger Casey and the incumbent Santorum. While the race garnered interest among the national parties initially, both the DSCC and the NRSC pulled their independent expenditure buys and shifted them to more competitive Senate races (New Jersey, in particular). Interest groups also remained relatively quiet. A handful of groups for each side sent out emails, mail pieces, and/or phone calls but only five bought any kind of television time (one group for Casey, four groups for Santorum), with only one (Softer Voices) buying time in the sixty-day BCRA window. Rather than respond to those group advertisements and, thereby, lend them some credibility, the campaigns chose to ignore them and focus on the opposing campaign.<sup>20</sup> We believe the low profile of interest groups in the Pennsylvania Senate race was not due to BCRA restrictions but rather the lack of competition in the race.

### Conclusion

Just as the 1994 Republican Revolution swung Rick Santorum into the Senate so too did the 2006 Democrat tide knock Santorum out. In addition to the unfavorable national conditions for Santorum, what made the 2006 election especially different from the 2000 race was that this time he was faced with a well-financed, popular candidate with broad appeal. Republicans and Independents could support Casey because of his anti-Democratic establishment positions on gun control and abortion, while liberal Democrats could support him because he would replace one of the leading supporters of President Bush and the Iraq war. Santorum has long been viewed as a divisive figure, an image which he was able to overcome in previous elections with favorable national conditions in 1994 and weak opposition in 2000. However, by 2006, Senator Santorum was unable to rally swing and moderate voters to his side, due in part to his staunch conservatism in an increasingly blue state, but also because he was tied to a very unpopular president and an unpopular war in Iraq.<sup>21</sup> With an unfavorable national environment and a popular Democratic opponent, Senator Santorum's defeat followed the trend of the 2006 elections.

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<sup>19</sup> At <<http://www.payitbackrick.com/>>, 8 January 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Andrea Johnson, Murphy Putnam Shorr Media, interview by Robin Kolodny, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 6, 2006; John Brabender, Brabender Cox, telephone interview by Robin Kolodny, 11 December 2006.

<sup>21</sup> "AmericaVotes2006, Exit Polls," At <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/states/PA/S/01/epolls.0.html>>, 4 January 2007.

**Table 8-1**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Pennsylvania Senate Race, 2005-06**

	<b>Robert Casey, Jr. (D)</b>	<b>Rick Santorum (R)</b>
From PACs	\$1,297,861	\$1,716,641
From individuals	\$16,071,470	\$19,076,412
From party	\$1,000	\$130,835
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$476,754	\$1,408,620
Total receipts	\$17,847,085	\$24,616,371
Total expenditures	\$17,464,678	\$25,345,459
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$382,534	\$634,217

*Source:* Santorum data from Federal Election Commission, "Presented by the Federal Election Commission - 2005-2006 Cycle." At < [http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?\\_06+S4PA00063](http://herndon1.sdrdc.com/cgi-bin/cancomsrs/?_06+S4PA00063)>, 13 January 2006. Casey data from Open Secrets, "2006 Race: Pennsylvania Senate," At <<http://opensecrets.org/races/summary.asp?ID=PAS2&Cycle=2006>>, 13 January 2006.

**Table 8-2**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Pennsylvania Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>c</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Bob Casey for Pennsylvania Committee	\$6,185,047	\$289,530	<b>\$6,474,577</b>	\$8,678,881
<i>Political parties</i>				
Pennsylvania Democratic Party	\$984,000	...	<b>\$984,000</b>	\$2,557,654
DSCC	\$934,195	...	<b>\$934,195</b>	...
DSCC / Bob Casey	\$50,490	...	<b>\$50,490</b>	...
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Lantern Project	...	\$149,925	<b>\$149,925</b>	\$386,011
Vote Vets	\$83,365	...	<b>\$83,365</b>	\$12,005
American Trial Lawyers Association	\$24,968	...	<b>\$24,968</b>	\$53,709
Americans United for Change	\$21,685	...	<b>\$21,685</b>	\$26,736
<b>Republican allies<sup>c</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Rick Santorum 2006	\$6,241,764	\$459,170	<b>\$6,700,934</b>	\$10,087,791
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRSC	\$822,497	...	<b>\$822,497</b>	...
NRSC / Rick Santorum	...	...	...	\$367,940
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Softer Voices	\$769,075	...	<b>\$769,075</b>	\$821,344
American Taxpayer's Alliance	\$566,087	...	<b>\$566,087</b>	\$987,260
Americans for Job Security	\$245,083	...	<b>\$245,083</b>	\$670,992
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$50,385	...	<b>\$50,385</b>	\$645,312
Real Alternatives	\$10,500	...	<b>\$10,500</b>	...
<b>Nonpartisan</b>				
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
Center for Security Policy	\$1,500	...	<b>\$1,500</b>	...

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 8-3.

<sup>b</sup> All state and local chapters or affiliates have been combined with their national affiliate to better render the picture of the organization's activity. For instance, Softer Voices PA data have been included in the Softer Voices totals.

<sup>c</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 8-3**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Pennsylvania Senate Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>c</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Bob Casey for PA Committee	...	22	3	1	6	1	2	19	52
Rendell For Governor	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	4
<i>Political parties</i>									
County Democratic Parties	...	23	4	...	3	...	...	...	30
Pennsylvania Democratic Party	...	7	10	...	1	...	...	5	23
DSCC	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>d</sup>	6
PA Democratic State Committee	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	2
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
League of Conservation Voters	...	4	3	...	3	...	...	...	10
Lantern Project	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	5	8
MoveOn.org	...	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
AFT Pennsylvania	...	...	5	...	...	1	...	...	6
Pennsylvania AFL-CIO	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	6
Change To Win	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	4
Working America	...	...	3	...	...	1	...	...	4
Clean Water Action	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	2
PA State Education Assn.	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Planned Parenthood of PA	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	2
America Votes	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
American Family Voices	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Dollars for Democrats	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
International Brotherhood of Teamsters	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Labor Coalition for Community Action	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
National Organization for Women	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Women's Voices. Women Vote.	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
WomenVote PA Initiative	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Working America PA	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Young Democrats of America	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
<b>Republican allies<sup>c</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Rick Santorum 2006	...	14	2	1	2	1	3	20	47
<i>Political parties</i>									
Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania	...	...	20	...	2	1	...	...	23
Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania	...	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	23
Local Republican Parties	...	2	2	...	1	...	...	...	5
NRSC	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	4
RNC	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	2
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	4
Seniors Coalition, The	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	3
Softer Voices PA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
American College of Gastroenterology	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
Americans for Job Security	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
American Association of Neurological Surgeons PAC	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons PAC	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
American Taxpayer's Alliance	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Independent Senatorial Committee of PA	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
National Rifle Association	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
National Right to Life Committee	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1
Pro-Life PAC for SE PA	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Philadelphia Building Trades Council	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
<b>Nonpartisan</b>									
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
Progressive Policy Council	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	4
AARP	...	1 <sup>e</sup>	...	1 <sup>e</sup>	1	...	...	...	3

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 8-2.

<sup>b</sup> All state and local chapters or affiliates have been combined with their national affiliate to better render the picture of the organization's activity. For instance, Pennsylvania Conservation Voters Education League data have been included in the League of Conservation Voters totals and AARP Pennsylvania data have been included in the AARP totals.

<sup>c</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>d</sup> Although no specific ads were seen, this organization was active in this race because television ad-buy data was obtained from stations.

<sup>e</sup> Nancy K. George, national coordinator of voter education, AARP, email communication with Nisha Riggs, December 7, 2006.

In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

## **Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District**

Robin Kolodny, Temple University

Stephen Medvic, Franklin and Marshall College

Republican Jim Gerlach has proven to be a puzzling candidate in a district whose boundaries were drawn for him. Despite every political advantage (party registration, overlay of the state legislative district he once represented with the congressional district, experience in office and name recognition), Gerlach has not received more than 51 percent of the vote in his three elections. His seeming vulnerability put this race—a rematch from 2004—near the top of everyone's list of incumbents most likely to lose their seats. Money poured into the district through both candidates and the national party organizations. Voters and the press described the race as especially negative, though the candidates' appeals were less so than those of the parties. Ultimately, Democratic attorney Lois Murphy performed better than she had in 2004, coming within 3,001 votes of Gerlach (compared to 6,371 in 2004). Murphy did not benefit from the national Democratic tide as much as she had hoped and found that appeals that played well in the suburban Philadelphia parts of the district had less resonance in the more conservative, rural areas around Reading where she trailed Gerlach most.

### **Demographics and the District**

The Sixth Congressional District of Pennsylvania is an oddly-shaped, geographically diverse area to the West North West of Philadelphia. None of the district is in the city of Philadelphia itself, but it contains parts of the wealthy inner suburbs (known as the "Main Line") as well as less affluent rural areas nearly a two hour drive from the city. There are portions of four counties in the district: Montgomery, Chester, Berks and Lehigh. The bulk of the district lives in Montgomery (40 percent) and Chester (40 percent) counties, with Berks accounting for a small but significant chunk (20 percent) and Lehigh having a tiny proportion of the district. Drawn with Gerlach in mind after the last census, the Sixth was meant to be a safe Republican seat.<sup>1</sup> As the state lost population in the urban areas and the state legislature (including Gerlach in the State Senate) was controlled by Republicans, most thought the Sixth would not be especially competitive. The Republicans had the registration advantage, and the median district income was \$55,611. White collar workers comprise 68 percent of those employed, and the district is not at all diverse, with 86 percent white residents.<sup>2</sup>

The district is frequently described in the press as being part of suburban Philadelphia. However, Lois Murphy rejects this characterization, pointing out that less than 40 percent of the population resides in the Montgomery County portion which is the Philadelphia suburbs. The rest of the district has a distinctly rural cast, especially the western parts of Chester county and Berks county. Those areas of the district do not have a strong urban orientation and proved to be the parts of the district most resistant to 2006's national Democratic tides.

#### *Candidates*

Representative Jim Gerlach (R) was first elected to Congress in 2002, garnering 51.4 percent of the vote against Dan Wofford (D), the son of former U.S. Senator Harris Wofford. Prior to entering the House of Representatives, Gerlach had served two terms in the Pennsylvania State House and two more in the State Senate. In the state legislature Gerlach was best known for his work to preserve open spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Peterson, "Jim Gerlach slips past the Democrats: Even in a district created just for him and packed with Republicans, he won by a very slim margin," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. 9 November 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "Pennsylvania: Sixth District," *Almanac of American Politics, 2006*, 22 June 2005. At <nationaljournal.com/pubs/almanac/2006/people/pa/rep\_pa06.htm>, 29 December 2006.

In 2004, Gerlach faced stiff competition in his first campaign for reelection. His opponent, Lois Murphy, was an attorney and former associate legal counsel for NARAL Pro-Choice America. Her fundraising success made her a competitive challenger, and though Gerlach won, he did so with only 51 percent of the vote.

In Congress, Gerlach has not been one of the more conservative Republicans, and his voting record has become increasingly moderate over his time in the House. The American Conservative Union (ACU) gave Gerlach scores of 76, 68, and 56 (out of 100) in 2003, 2004, and 2005 respectively. He is a member of the centrist Republican Main Street Partnership as well as Republicans for Environmental Protection. His self-proclaimed priorities include “increasing access to affordable healthcare, reducing or minimizing the impact of suburban sprawl, improving regional transportation infrastructure, conserving environmental treasures and stimulating economic growth.”<sup>3</sup>

The 2004 campaign in Pennsylvania’s Sixth District was bruising, and Lois Murphy’s decision to challenge Gerlach again in 2006 was not an easy one. She did so, she said, to set an “example for my daughters that you stand up for what you believe in and you don’t let falsehoods go unchallenged.”<sup>4</sup> Having narrowly lost in 2004, not a particularly good year for Democrats, Murphy was well positioned this time around, with national conditions stacked against Republicans, to defeat Gerlach.

A graduate of Harvard University and Harvard Law School, Murphy worked for the Justice Department in the administration of George H. W. Bush. As noted above, she was later an attorney for NARAL Pro-Choice America and served on the board and as president of NARAL Pro-Choice Pennsylvania. The latter associations would be fodder for the Gerlach campaign’s attempt to paint Murphy as a liberal. But she calls herself a centrist and a pragmatist, and the Allentown *Morning Call*, which endorsed Murphy in 2006 after having endorsed Gerlach in 2004, referred to her as “reform-minded” and a “deficit hawk.”<sup>5</sup>

Murphy supported funding for stem-cell research, as did Gerlach, and would have allowed the federal government to negotiate lower drug prices for Medicare recipients. She proposed an ethics reform package that includes the creation of a database of meetings between lobbyists and members of Congress to be kept on the Internet and a two-year waiting period before former members of Congress could become lobbyists. Like most Democratic candidates this year, Murphy was also a critic of the war in Iraq and portrayed her Republican opponent as a staunch supporter of President Bush.

## Money

### *Candidates*

Jim Gerlach knew that he would need to raise a significant amount of money to campaign in this district, but it is unlikely he knew how much it would end up costing. Gerlach raised \$1.2 million in 2002, \$2.2 million in 2004, and \$3.4 million in 2006! Nearly half of Gerlach’s receipts came from PACs and 40 percent came from individuals (see table 9-1). Gerlach sits on the Financial Services and Transportation and Infrastructure committees, so it is not surprising that the Center for Responsive Politics found that the Financial/Insurance/Real Estate Sector was responsible for about \$460,000 of Gerlach’s receipts

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<sup>3</sup> “Biography,” *Jim Gerlach for Congress*. At <<http://www.jimgerlachforcongress.com/biography/default.aspx>>, 13 December 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Peterson, “Murphy in Another Rough Sixth District Race,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 October, 2006. At <[www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/15802102.htm](http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/15802102.htm)>, 13 December 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Editorial, “Reform-minded Lois Murphy Has the Edge in 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District,” *The Morning Call* (Allentown, PA), 19 October 2006. LexisNexis Academic, 13 December 2006.

(individual and PAC money combined).<sup>6</sup> Gerlach was also funded by a number of health care professionals, lawyers, business owners and unspecified single-issue groups. Furthermore, the top metropolitan areas from which he garnered receipts were Philadelphia and Reading, PA; Washington, DC; New York; and Lancaster, PA.<sup>7</sup>

Lois Murphy exhibited extraordinary fundraising prowess for a challenger both in 2004 and 2006. Murphy raised \$1.9 million to run against Gerlach in 2004 in only ten months of campaigning (she only set up a campaign office in February of that year). In this cycle, she raised a whopping \$4.1 million, about \$785,000 more than Gerlach. Even more impressive, Murphy raised 83 percent of this money from individuals and only 16 percent from PACs.<sup>8</sup> Despite the impressive fundraising on Murphy's side, the candidate herself believed that her fundraising was inadequate because of the value of incumbency advantage. According to Murphy, she needed to identify herself to the voters *and* criticize her opponent even though she didn't "have two times the resources."<sup>9</sup> Since both Murphy and her husband are attorneys in Philadelphia, it is no surprise that attorneys and single-issue/ideology groups topped her list of sector contributors.<sup>10</sup> The top metropolitan areas for Murphy's fundraising were Philadelphia, New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, and Boston.<sup>11</sup> The geography of Murphy's fundraising demonstrates the role of national groups such as EMILY's List and of national politicians such as then Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi in this campaign. Indeed, a litany of Democratic political "stars" came to the district to fundraise on Murphy's behalf or, in the case of Pelosi and EMILY's list, hosted events far from Philadelphia.

### *Parties*

The political party investment in this race was highly significant. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) spent nearly \$3 million in independent expenditures, mostly in media buys and direct mail pieces. The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) spent just under \$3.9 million on television advertising.<sup>12</sup> As this race was listed in most top ten competitive race lists, it is not surprising that the parties made this kind of commitment to the race. The state party organizations also contributed a fair amount, mostly in the form of mail pieces. Combined, the state and local parties on both sides sent ninety-four unique appeals (emails, direct mail, phone calls, and television ads).

### *Interest Groups*

The money spent by groups was far more modest than expected. One reason for this was that the number of groups involved was small. The most significant players were the AFL-CIO and Working America, EMILY's List, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and The Seniors Coalition (this year's Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) political group).

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<sup>6</sup> "Sector Total, 2006 Race: Pennsylvania District 6," *Center for Responsive Politics*, 10 October 2006. At <[www.opensecrets.org/races/sector.asp?ID=PA06&cycle=2006&special=N](http://www.opensecrets.org/races/sector.asp?ID=PA06&cycle=2006&special=N)>, accessed 12 December 2006.

<sup>7</sup> "Top Metro Areas, 2006 Race: Pennsylvania District 6," *Center for Responsive Politics*, At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/metro.asp?ID=PA06&cycle=2006&special=N>>, accessed 12 December 2006.

<sup>8</sup> "Total Raised and Spent: 2006 Race: Pennsylvania District 6," *Center for Responsive Politics*, At <http://www.opensecrets.org/races/summary.asp?ID=PA06&Cycle=2006>, accessed 3 January 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Lois Murphy, Democratic candidate for Congress, interview by Robin Kolodny, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 22, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> "Sector Total, 2006 Race: Pennsylvania District 6," *Center for Responsive Politics*, 10 October 2006. At <<http://www.opensecrets.org/races/sector.asp?ID=PA06&cycle=2006&special=N>>, accessed 12 December 2006.

<sup>11</sup> "Top Metro Areas, 2006 Race: Pennsylvania District 6," *Center for Responsive Politics*, 11 October 2006. At <[www.opensecrets.org/races/metro.asp?ID=PA06&cycle=2006&special=N](http://www.opensecrets.org/races/metro.asp?ID=PA06&cycle=2006&special=N)>, accessed 12 December 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Curcio, Stevens Reed Curcio & Potholm Partner, personal correspondence by Stephen Medvic, December 12, 2006.

Absent from any significant activity were environmental groups<sup>13</sup> and pro-choice or pro-life groups. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) had awarded Gerlach a 55/100 rating. While that was not an especially strong rating, it was stronger than most of Pennsylvania's delegation, including a good number of the state's Democrats. Therefore, the LCV declined to support either candidate. The Sierra Club did the same. More perplexing was the virtual absence of abortion groups given the candidates' differences on the issue.<sup>14</sup> Gerlach voted mostly pro-life while Murphy used to work for NARAL Pro-Choice America. While one mail piece sent against Murphy in Berks County did get a response from NARAL in a small mailing close to the end of the campaign, Murphy was at a loss to explain why NARAL did not take a more active role in the race, especially given her personal employment history with the organization.<sup>15</sup> NARAL's political director said that this district was not a target because there were not enough pro-choice voters to mobilize, an extremely pragmatic approach.<sup>16</sup>

### **Effects of Money**

#### *The Ground War*

On the Democratic side, the important actors in the ground war were organized labor, the DCCC, EMILY's List, and the campaign itself. First, Murphy had eighteen full time paid field staffers in the last two months of the campaign. Some of those staffers worked with the coordinated campaign (between the state Democratic Party and Ed Rendell for Governor) and some wholly for the Murphy campaign. They had three field offices, one in each of the three major counties in the district that had been open since the summer. After the campaign itself, all sides acknowledged the significant contribution of organized labor to the ground war. Both the AFL-CIO and its new relative Working America<sup>17</sup> sent a number of mail pieces (at least six between them) and lent canvassers to help turn out the vote in this district. Working America in particular hired additional canvassers to send to Pennsylvania's Sixth and Seventh District races in the days leading up to and on Election Day. Working America's presence was especially apparent here, as the organization concentrated its efforts in just thirty-two races in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Minnesota.<sup>18</sup> No other organizations besides these two labor umbrellas and the coordinated campaign were cited by either of the campaigns or their consultants as having a measurable impact in door-to-door canvassing.

The mail ground war was a different story. Here, in addition to labor, EMILY's List and its affiliate Pennsylvania Women Vote! sent at least nine mail pieces. However, Lois Murphy believed that EMILY's List planned to send a total of fifteen mail pieces to the district, about two-thirds directed to Democratic women and one-third directed to Republican women.<sup>19</sup> The DCCC, state and local Democratic Party affiliates sent about forty-three mail pieces. We found single mail pieces from groups like the National Organization for Women, PA Conservation Voters Education League, Planned Parenthood of PA PAC, and Young Democrats of America. On the Republican side, the party organizations—channeled almost

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<sup>13</sup> However both Clean Water Action and PA Conservation Voters Education League participated with the former making one set of phone calls and the latter sending one mail piece.

<sup>14</sup> Three pieces of mail were sent, however, from EMILY's List, NARAL, and Pro Life PAC for Southeast PA; NARAL also sent a few emails.

<sup>15</sup> Murphy, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Shipp, political director, NARAL Pro-Choice America, interview by Kelly D. Patterson, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Working America describes itself as a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO for nonunion members sympathetic with its issues. Membership brings certain selective benefits to members and allows the AFL-CIO to expand its class of electioneering targets. See [www.workingamerica.org](http://www.workingamerica.org), accessed 3 January 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Kevin Paris, "Working America: Fighting for the Future," manuscript, Temple University, November 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Murphy, interview.

exclusively through the Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania—sent at least thirty-nine mail pieces. The significant interest group mail was generated by The Seniors Coalition (five pieces), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (four pieces) and single pieces were sent by the National Education Association and Republicans Who Care. Murphy’s campaign sent out thirteen mail pieces; Gerlach’s campaign sent out nine pieces (see table 9-2).

Murphy and her media consultants believed that mail efforts, especially by the campaigns and by the DCCC and the Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania were crucial to the race. Because television time is so expensive in the Philadelphia metropolitan region, the campaigns needed mail to establish their campaign messages. Often, these messages were coordinated with what was being communicated in the air war. Gerlach and the state’s federal committee also used mail effectively, as did the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Seniors Coalition. These groups were active in different parts of the district.

Both the NRCC and DCCC reportedly used recorded calls or “robocalls” heavily, to the point where it became a significant issue to voters in the district. According to Murphy, twenty-five complaints have been filed with the Federal Communications Commission about calls inappropriately identified and using misleading information. The NRCC spent \$61,000 on “phones,” but we do not know how much of this was used for robocalls.<sup>20</sup>

One tactical development that garnered considerable attention in this election season was the use of microtargeting. The process involved back-filling a survey with consumer data to find important attitudinal correlations and then using consumer data on a larger number of voters to target them with specific appeals or for get-out-the-vote efforts. According to the Gerlach campaign manager, the Republican Party provided their campaign with microtargeting data, and he believed they were one of only three or four House races in the country to get such data.<sup>21</sup> This is yet another indication of the importance the parties placed on this race.

### *The Air War*

The final totals indicated that the DCCC and NRCC spent more on this race than on any other in the country. The party committees spent between six and seven million dollars between them on this race on television alone. The campaigns spent nearly \$3 million on television between them. This is about twice the amount spent on this race by the candidates and parties in 2004 (see table 9-3).

The district’s distinct geography provides an important backstory to the air war. Both campaigns’ media consultants spoke of two distinct media strategies employed: one for the Philadelphia suburbs and one for rural Berks County. According to Andrea Johnson, national issues like the war in Iraq were very important to the suburban Philadelphia electorate, while localized issues such as whether Jim Gerlach voted for a pay raise for himself and whether we should have a higher minimum wage were targeted to Berks voters.<sup>22</sup> John Brabender echoed this by saying that their Berks message emphasized how little Lois Murphy was like them.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Curcio, personal correspondence.

<sup>21</sup> Brandon Moody, campaign manager, Jim Gerlach for Congress, telephone interview by Stephen Medvic, October 14, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Andrea Johnson, Murphy Putnam Shorr, interview by Robin Kolodny, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 6, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> John Brabender, Brabender Cox, telephone interview by Robin Kolodny, December 11, 2006.

While the suburban Philadelphia portion of the district is served by the Philadelphia media market (the nation's fourth costliest), Berks County is not. There, the campaigns had two major advertising options: WFMZ—an independent Allentown station and the local Comcast cable “head end” serving all of Berks County. These two media outlets were so inexpensive that both campaigns started advertising there in the early summer, as did the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Nancy Peterson reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in July that the campaigns had started television advertising and that party-backed mail pieces were flooding the district.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, this story contained exactly the arguments echoed by all parties as explaining the ultimate outcome of the race. Gerlach ran one ad there claiming, “When I believe President Bush is right, I’m behind him. When I think he’s wrong, I let him know that too.” Murphy responded with “Oh, Really,” an ad-within-an ad, attacking Gerlach for not being independent of the president. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce ran an ad up to the sixty-day window (interest groups may spend soft money on issue advocacy advertising until 60 days before the election, after which time they may only spend hard money independent expenditures, which are fully disclosed, to influence the race) thanking Gerlach for his support of the new Medicare Part D plan, emphasizing how it helps seniors.

Back in Montgomery and Chester Counties, voters saw a different set of appeals. Murphy ran two major ads: “What’s Going On Down There?” emphasizing an anti-Washington theme and an ad responding to all the negative advertising against her, saying that the campaign was “Worth It,” despite the negative attacks. Jim Gerlach ran a number of attack ads against Murphy and a positive ad defending himself at the end of the race that may have given him the edge. Known as the “sweater” ad, Gerlach talked calmly into the camera about how untrue Murphy’s attacks were and assured voters of his “honesty and integrity.” Gerlach looked positive in that ad, and his media consultant John Brabender acknowledged that anecdotal evidence suggested it was important for reinforcing a positive, likable image of Gerlach at the very end.<sup>25</sup>

The NRCC and DCCC ads were relentlessly negative and played earlier and longer than the candidate ads. Indeed, the NRCC ran *only* negative spots, with the strategic purpose of defining Murphy before she could define herself. However, because she lacked a public record, the NRCC had only “thin gruel” on Murphy.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, NRCC ads said that Murphy would raise taxes, had the “wrong” friends (e.g., MoveOn.org and the Council for a Livable World), doesn’t “share our values,” and was too extreme. The DCCC tied Gerlach as closely to Bush as they could, saying he “had Bush’s back,” was “behind Bush,” that he won’t speak up on Iraq, and that he voted for a pay raise while denying body armor to the troops.

An interesting element in the air war was the dynamic between a challenger that never held office and an incumbent with previous state level elective experience. One of Gerlach’s early and effective attacks was the charge that Lois Murphy did not have any record of previous service and a (reportedly) misused quote from a Montgomery County local newspaper saying the only thing people knew about Lois Murphy was that she “hated Jim Gerlach.” Murphy responded comically by sending flowers to Gerlach with a note saying:

“Dear Jim: Over the past few months you’ve seemed somewhat preoccupied with what I think of you. I just wanted you to know I think you’re probably a pretty nice guy. It’s just that I can’t figure out why, if you claim to be a fiscal conservative, you voted to increase the debt limit by nearly \$2.5 trillion and voted in favor of a \$223 million Bridge to Nowhere. That seems pretty wasteful. Thanks and enjoy the flowers. Best, Lois.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Nancy Peterson, “In the 6<sup>th</sup>, the Battle Is in Berks,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 13, 2006, B1.

<sup>25</sup> Brabender, interview.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Curcio, partner, Stevens Reed Curcio & Potholm, telephone interview by Stephen Medvic, December 15, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Nancy Peterson, “Say It with Flowers,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 9, 2006, B3.

Though this exchange received “fun” press coverage, Murphy was not able to effectively counter the negative images attributed to her. Both Murphy and her media team said they chose to promote a positive image of Murphy in their advertising instead of going overly negative toward the competition.

During the 2006 election cycle, cable advertising in the Philadelphia region hit a record with Comcast selling \$4.3 million in political advertising. This race accounted for over half a million dollars of that total with Gerlach spending \$295,681 and Murphy spending \$223,935. The decision to spend on cable had more to do with the importance of targeting Berks voters than reaching Philadelphia voters, so Gerlach’s larger investment is understandable.

Murphy used more radio advertising in this race than Gerlach, though it was still substantially less than what was spent on network broadcasts. Most radio advertising was concentrated on news talk/radio stations in Philadelphia and surrounding areas. Murphy indicated that rather than make negative television ads to attack Gerlach’s positive arguments, they used radio for negative advertising. For instance, Murphy attacked Gerlach on radio for contributing money to Tom Delay’s legal defense fund and taking money from other scandal-plagued Republican congressmen. She also attacked him for wanting to abolish the minimum wage. Gerlach, on the other hand, attacked Murphy for being anti-Semitic because of some blog entries found on MoveOn.org’s website. The problem with saying Murphy is an anti-Semite is that her husband is Jewish, and they are raising their children as Jews, a fact which explained extensive coverage of the race by papers like *The Jewish Exponent* a major weekly Philadelphia paper. Overall, Gerlach spent \$85,000 on radio while Murphy spent \$119,000 (see table 9-3).

### **Unique Circumstances**

The Sixth sits between two other competitive congressional districts in the Philadelphia suburbs. The races in the Seventh and Eighth Districts were also closely watched in 2006 as two veterans—former Navy Vice Admiral Joe Sestak in the Seventh and Iraq war vet and Army Captain Patrick Murphy in the Eighth—turned out to be serious challengers. Indeed, those candidates both won, raising the question of why Murphy was unable to do so.

The Seventh District Race had a direct influence on the Sixth as incumbent Curt Weldon’s daughter was the target of an FBI investigation. Karen Weldon is alleged to have gained lobbying clients due to her father’s position in the U.S. House. While Weldon’s seat in the Seventh had been considered highly competitive, the raid proved to be a serious problem for Weldon. He ultimately lost his seat, winning only 43 percent of the vote, but long before Election Day, the NRCC and DCCC decided not to invest further in the Seventh, freeing up more resources for the Sixth and the Eighth. Changes to media contracts and our interviews indicate that when the parties cancelled their ads for the Seventh, they kept and redeployed the time. Lois Murphy didn’t find this to be a net positive; she thought the additional spending simply increased the already negative tone pervading the race.<sup>28</sup> On the other side, Gerlach’s campaign manager pointed to the infusion of money from the Seventh as a critical factor in Gerlach’s win.<sup>29</sup> The NRCC’s media consultant for the independent expenditure campaign in Sixth suggested that this was because the extra money helped “break through the clutter” in a market (Philadelphia) with ad activity in a gubernatorial and Senate race as well as two additional competitive House races (the Seventh and Eighth).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Murphy, interview.

<sup>29</sup> Brandon Moody, campaign manager, Jim Gerlach for Congress, telephone interview by Stephen Medvic, November 14, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Curcio, interview.

Indeed, there was something of a spillover effect of so many other races happening at the same time. It was often difficult for voters to distinguish between the messages, especially since the Democratic challenger in the Eighth was also named Murphy. Though the two were not confused in their advertising, the press and voters often believed they were related, a comical but inconsequential mix-up. One benefit to having so many competitive races was an economy of scale for fundraisers and marquis talent. For example, Bill Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barack Obama, Mark Warner, and James Carville came through and did fundraisers with most of the Democratic candidates either *ad seriatim* or jointly.

One additional point worth mentioning is that both Lois Murphy and Andrea Johnson thought this election cycle was particularly difficult for female candidates. Murphy cited a number of female challengers in highly competitive races that did not do well this cycle as evidence (e.g., Diane Farrell in Connecticut's Fourth District; Tammy Duckworth in Illinois' Sixth District; Christine Jennings in Florida's Thirteenth District).<sup>31</sup> Johnson thought that Pennsylvania in particular was not friendly to women candidates and that they had more trouble establishing themselves as strong on the war.<sup>32</sup> Murphy ultimately thinks a Democrat will beat Gerlach, but that person will be male.

### Conclusion

Despite raising twice as much money as she had in 2004 and more than three-quarters of a million dollars more than her incumbent opponent, Lois Murphy once again came up short. Jim Gerlach won reelection with 50.6 percent of the vote. How was it that Gerlach was able to hang on when Republican incumbents in neighboring districts could not?

Part of the answer lies in the help that Gerlach got from his party. The state federal committee provided crucial mail for him throughout the race, and the NRCC ran a relentlessly negative campaign against Murphy, including advertising in the expensive Philadelphia market. Republican efforts were Herculean, and with a margin of roughly 3,000 votes, they were surely an indispensable factor in Gerlach's victory.

In the end, however, the answer may be the one Gerlach's campaign manager gave us. Though it sounds self-serving, it may well be correct—Gerlach's staff simply ran an excellent campaign. "We knew we were in trouble," admitted Brandon Moody, and that motivated the Gerlach team to start early, both in terms of raising resources and defining his opponent.<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that 2006 was a strong Democratic year and his opponent was the same one who came within a razor's edge of defeating him in 2004, Gerlach was able to learn from his mistakes. Indeed, Paul Curcio, who handled independent expenditure advertising for the NRCC maintained, "If Gerlach had run the race in '06 that he ran in '04, he would have lost."<sup>34</sup> One lesson to be taken from this race, then, is that campaigns can matter; Gerlach's certainly did so in 2006.

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<sup>31</sup> Murphy, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Johnson, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Moody, interview, November 14, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Curcio, interview.

**Table 9-1**  
**Candidate Receipts and Expenditures, Pennsylvania Sixth Congressional District Race, 2005-06**

	<b>Lois Murphy (D)</b>	<b>Jim Gerlach (R)</b>
From PACs	\$648,088	\$1,716,641
From individuals	\$3,405,492	\$1,325,234
From party	\$1,200	\$14,555
From candidate	\$0	\$0
Other contributions	\$70,569	\$283,759
Total receipts	\$4,125,349	\$3,340,189
Total expenditures	\$4,036,362	\$3,460,446
Cash on hand (as of 11/27/04)	\$125,631	\$29,642

*Source:* Federal Election Commission, "2005-06 U.S. House and U.S. Senate Candidate Info," November 27, 2006.  
 At <[http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x\\_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006](http://fecinfo.com/cgi-win/x_candidate.exe?DoFn=&sYR=2006)>, 14 December 2006.

**Table 9-2**  
**Number of Unique Campaign Communications by Organizations,**  
**Pennsylvania Sixth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<b>Democratic allies<sup>c</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Lois Murphy for Congress	...	39	13	...	...	...	6 <sup>d</sup>	4 <sup>e</sup>	<b>62</b>
<i>Political parties</i>									
Pennsylvania Democratic State Committee	...	...	23	...	...	...	...	...	<b>23</b>
DCCC	...	6	11	...	...	1	...	4	<b>22</b>
Local Democratic Parties	...	14	4	...	...	...	...	...	<b>18</b>
Pennsylvania Democratic Party	...	...	5	...	...	3	...	...	<b>8</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
MoveOn.org	...	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>12</b>
Pennsylvania Women Vote!	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	<b>6</b>
AFL-CIO	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
American Family Voices	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	<b>4</b>
EMILY's List	...	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	<b>4</b>
AFT Pennsylvania	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	<b>3</b>
Working America	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...	<b>3</b>
Democracy For America	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
NARAL	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
America Votes	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Clean Water Action	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	<b>1</b>
Forward Together PAC	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Labor 2006	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Labor Coalition for Community Action	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
National Organization for Women	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Pennsylvania Conservation Voters Education League	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Planned Parenthood of PA PAC	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
StartChange PAC	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Women's Voices. Women Vote.	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
WomenVote PA Initiative	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Young Democrats of America	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Republican allies<sup>c</sup></b>									
<i>Candidates</i>									
Jim Gerlach for Congress	...	...	9	...	2	...	1 <sup>f</sup>	4	<b>16</b>
<i>Political parties</i>									
Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania	...	...	36	...	...	1	...	...	<b>37</b>
NRCC	...	6	...	...	...	2	...	5	<b>13</b>
Local Republican Parties	...	4	2	...	2	...	...	...	<b>8</b>
RNC	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>2</b>
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
Seniors Coalition, The	...	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	<b>5</b>
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	1	<b>5</b>
National Education Association	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Pro-Life PAC for SE PA	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
Republicans Who Care Individual Fund	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	<b>1</b>
<b>Nonpartisan</b>									

Type and Organization <sup>b</sup>	Billboard	Email	Mail	Newspaper/ Magazine	Personal Contact	Phone Call	Radio	TV	Total Unique Ads
<i>Interest Groups</i>									
AARP	...	...	1 <sup>g</sup>	...	1	...	...	...	2

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006).

<sup>a</sup> See appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. Data represent the number of unique or distinct pieces or ads by the group and do not represent a count of total items sent or made. This table is not intended to portray comprehensive organization activity within the sample races. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table together with table 9-3.

<sup>b</sup> All state and local chapters or affiliates have been combined with their national affiliate to better render the picture of the organization's activity. For instance, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO data have been included in the AFL-CIO totals and AARP Pennsylvania data have been included in the AARP totals.

<sup>c</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal.

<sup>d</sup> One ad was heard on radio by reconnaissance network and the other five ads were found on candidate website, <http://www.loismurphy.org/index.asp?p=12>.

<sup>e</sup> Two ads were tracked by CMAG and seen on TV by reconnaissance network. The other two TV ads were found on candidate website, <http://www.loismurphy.org/index.asp?p=12>.

<sup>f</sup> Although no specific ads were heard, this organization was active in this race because radio ad-buy data was obtained from stations.

<sup>g</sup> Nancy K. George, national coordinator of voter education, AARP, email communication with Nisha Riggs, December 7, 2006.

In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

**Table 9-3**  
**The Air War: Television and Radio Advertising Expenditures,**  
**Pennsylvania Sixth Congressional District Race, 2006<sup>a</sup>**

Type and Organization	TV	Radio	Total \$ Spent	CMAG TV
<b>Democratic allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Lois Murphy for Congress	\$1,588,390	\$119,307	<b>\$1,707,697</b>	\$1,545,042
<i>Political parties</i>				
DCCC	\$2,872,384	...	<b>\$2,872,384</b>	\$2,937,282
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
<b>Republican allies<sup>b</sup></b>				
<i>Candidates</i>				
Jim Gerlach for Congress	\$912,568	\$85,508	<b>\$998,076</b>	\$704,603
<i>Political parties</i>				
NRCC	\$3,817,414	...	<b>\$3,817,414</b>	\$4,540,743
<i>Interest Groups</i>				
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	\$320,574	...	<b>\$320,574</b>	\$346,372

*Source:* Data compiled from David B. Magleby, Kelly D. Patterson, and the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, 2006 Monitoring Campaign Spending and Trends in Electioneering Database (Brigham Young University, 2006); and Campaign Media Analysis Group data.

<sup>a</sup> Please see appendix A for a more detailed data explanation. The ad-buy data collected for this study may contain extraneous data because of the difficulty in determining the content of the ads. The parties or interest groups that purchased the ad buys possibly ran some ads promoting House or Senatorial candidates or ballot propositions not in the study's sample but still within that media market. Unless the participating academics were able to determine the exact content of the ad buy from the limited information given by the station, the data may contain observations that do not pertain to the study's relevant House or Senate battleground races. For comparison purposes the CMAG data is included in the table. Because of the sheer volume of television and radio stations and varying degrees of compliance in providing ad-buy information, data on spending by various groups might be incomplete. This data does not include every station in the state. This table is not intended to represent comprehensive organization spending or activity within the sample races. Television ads purchased from national cable stations that aired in this state are not reflected in this table. A more complete picture can be obtained by examining this table with table 9-2.

<sup>b</sup> Certain organizations that maintained neutrality were categorized according to which candidates their ads supported or attacked or whether the organization was openly anti- or pro- conservative or liberal. In blank cells, "..." only reflects the absence of collected data and does not imply the organization was inactive in that medium.

## Appendix A Methodology

American campaigns are typically candidate centered.<sup>35</sup> Candidates hire strategists, raise funds, take polls, and generally conduct the campaign with relative freedom. This is true more for congressional races than it often is for presidential races.<sup>36</sup> However, it is increasingly difficult to ignore the role that noncandidate entities—interest groups, individuals, and political parties—play in congressional and presidential elections. They devote large amounts of money to the campaigns, often receive extensive media coverage, and in some cases assume responsibility for a significant portion of a campaign such as mobilizing voters.<sup>37</sup>

Studying campaigns and elections presents researchers with a wide variety of challenges. Campaigns are extraordinarily multidimensional events that consist of different actors, institutions, and dynamics. Researchers must choose between different methods when deciding how to examine the various processes at work within a campaign. Our research draws upon a number of different approaches, including case studies and surveys. Case studies of competitive congressional races are the core of this monograph. This appendix details the rationale behind the case study methodology as well as a description of case selection, elite interviewing, and our campaign communication database. Other aspects of the overall project are also briefly described, especially the national surveys conducted as part of the larger research program. The case studies enable us to examine the richness and diversity of campaign events. This project has studied enough cases, especially over several election cycles beginning with 1998, that we are also able to make useful comparisons across election cycles and generalizations that go beyond our set of cases to include the overall presidential and congressional campaign environment.

Students of elections have sought ways to study local differences and the ways in which those differences may influence the choices voters make. Context is the term often used to describe the conditions unique to a locale that may affect an individual's choice or reaction to an election. Context also has two important dimensions. First, context can differ over time. An election conducted in one cycle often has different properties from elections in another cycle. The 2006 cycle, as conveyed by the title, unfolded in the context of a controversial war being waged by the United States. Scandals and questions about Republican management also emerged. The features unique to a particular election will help researchers understand why a voter made the choice she did or felt the way she did. In any case, all voters in a specific election are subject to the unique circumstances, so the context has “global effects.”<sup>38</sup> Second, context can have “compositional effects.” These effects derive from differences between different locales within the same election. The differences may be due to strength of party organization, socioeconomic composition, or some other independent variable normally associated with vote choice or attitudes. Whether testing for global or compositional effects, it is important that the study have enough cases in each context to make comparisons across the contexts possible.<sup>39</sup> With enough cases in each particular

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<sup>35</sup> Martin P. Wattenberg, *The Rise of Candidate Centered Politics: Presidential Elections in the 1980s* (Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Paul Herrnson, *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2004). Gary C. Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York, N.Y.: Pearson Longman, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> See David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, eds., *The Last Hurrah? Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004); David B. Magleby, ed. *The Other Campaign: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2000 Congressional Elections* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); David B. Magleby, ed. *Outside Money: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 1998 Congressional Elections* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of these different sorts of contexts please see Michael Marsh “Electoral Context,” in *The Future of Election Studies*, edited by Mark N. Franklin and Christopher Wlezien (Oxford: Pergamon, 2002).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

context, it is possible to assess the extent to which a particular variable unique to that context may affect attitudes toward the candidates, information about the elections, and ultimately voting choice.

For the most part, students of campaign effects seem to have placed more emphasis on global contextual effects, with an emphasis on survey research and a reliance on social-psychological factors. There are sound reasons for doing so, and we conduct surveys as a part of our overall research. However, in recent years students of elections have also started to look at the compositional effects with their focus on differences across jurisdictions. There are good reasons the two types of studies could be profitably merged. Foremost among those reasons is that the nature of the questions being asked about campaigns really demands some sort of innovative methods and data sets that more completely capture the complex character of context.

### Overview of Methodology

It is in the spirit of trying to measure and include some of these “compositional effects” that the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy (CSED) at Brigham Young University organized and implemented a national study of the most competitive contests, where outside group spending was most probable, during the 2006 election cycle.<sup>40</sup> The research design in 2006 is similar to previous work in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004. Using a case-study methodology, the research aims to document the largely undocumented aspects of candidate and noncandidate campaigns. Our methodology relies on academic field researchers. By the end of the 2006 cycle, this ongoing research sponsored by CSED will have monitored 115 contests with the help of 113 academics at seventy-one colleges and universities across the nation. These contests are summarized in table A-1. The participation of these academics has helped CSED obtain data on the involvement of outside groups in some of the nation’s most competitive electoral contests.

The CSED research design is based on three assumptions. First, noncandidate campaign activity is most likely to occur in competitive races. In 2002 CSED studied seventeen noncompetitive races as a control group, in part, to test this assumption. We found overwhelming evidence that the vast majority of outside money is spent in competitive races.<sup>41</sup> Second, because much of noncandidate campaign activity is not disclosed, it is best uncovered and understood by someone with knowledge of the local context. To understand the full impact and reach of noncandidate activity, academics knowledgeable about the competitive race are recruited to systematically monitor each campaign. The academics in each competitive race oversee the collection of campaign communications, including the extent of mail, telephone, email, and personal contact; they also collect as much information as possible on broadcast advertising. Each academic is also provided with broadcast advertising data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) for any of the top 100 media markets in the country that are in the district or state they are studying. The CMAG data allows us to compare what we learn from the ad-buy data from stations with data gathered by CMAG independently. The academics monitor voter mobilization efforts conducted by candidates, parties, and interest groups. Data on campaign communications in the contests are enhanced by a network of informants organized by the local academics. The informants agree to collect their political mail and keep a record of other campaign communications they view or receive.<sup>42</sup> The third assumption is that political professionals would be willing to be interviewed and discuss their decision making and funding allocation strategies. Elite interviewing helps “connect the dots” of our data

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<sup>40</sup> The generous support of the Pew Charitable Trusts funded the 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 projects.

<sup>41</sup> David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, eds., *The Last Hurrah?: Soft Money and Issue Advocacy in the 2002 Congressional Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 8–10.

<sup>42</sup> We gratefully acknowledge the participation in this data collection effort of local members of the League of Women Voters and Common Cause, Brigham Young University alumni, as well as many others recruited by the local academics.

collection efforts—both by validating what is discovered in the data collection efforts of the academics as well as by providing new information. With few exceptions interviews for the study are conducted on the record and with few exceptions the information from those interviews is fully attributed.<sup>43</sup>

As mentioned the CSED methodology relies on academic fieldwork and reconnaissance networks. The academics in each sample race observe the contest and retrieve data on noncandidate campaign communications with voters. They also monitor television and radio advertising buys, direct mail, and telephone contacts, print advertising, and Internet communications where possible. The academics supplement these efforts with the standard Federal Election Commission (FEC) data on the candidate campaigns, party, and PAC expenditures and in 2004 and 2006 with data from the Internal Revenue Service on 527 organizations. They also conduct post-election interviews with campaign managers, consultants, and political reporters involved with the interest groups or parties invested in these races. Using a set of case studies that employ multiple methods of data collection, the CSED methodology seeks to systematically investigate the causes and consequences of campaign spending “within its real-life context.”<sup>44</sup> This provides the richest, most feasible, and most accurate method of understanding the phenomenon of campaign spending by noncandidate entities in congressional elections.<sup>45</sup>

### Case Selection

The sampling pool of competitive races CSED monitored in 2006 and other years was developed based on a combination of lists of competitive races published in early spring by the *Cook Political Report*, the *Rothenberg Political Report*, and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. This list was enhanced by interviews with current and former party and interest group professionals, reporters, and other political experts who helped identify contests in which outside money was most likely to be present.<sup>46</sup> In 2002 early in the election cycle the number of potentially competitive races was high enough that we quantified the input from the contacts and published sources by computing an additive score for each race during the final stages of case selection. Each score was comprised of a combination of the ratings in the published reports together with the likely competitive races named by the Republicans and key allied groups as well those named by the Democrats and key allied groups. Once scored, the list was sorted in rank order, and we used the ranking to aid our selection of competitive races. In 2006 there was broad consensus on the competitive congressional races early in the cycle. One contest that changed substantially was the Ohio Sixth Congressional District that became much less competitive after the primary while a proximate district, the Ohio Fifteenth District became much more competitive. In this rare instance we switched these two districts and this volume has a case study on the Ohio Fifteenth District.

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<sup>43</sup> Only five organizations refused our repeated requests for interviews. They include Americans for Job Security, the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), America Votes, Club for Growth, and the National Right to Life Committee.

<sup>44</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003). Using multiple methods of data collection helps to enhance the validity of our conclusions. See Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>45</sup> Our methodology is similar to that followed by other research in congressional elections that uses case studies. See James A. Thurber, “Case Study Framework and Methodology,” in *The Battle for Congress: Consultants, Candidates, and Voters*, edited by James A. Thurber (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), pp. 239-246. For another recent example of case-study based research, see L. Sandy Maisel and Darrell M. West, *Running on Empty: Political Discourse in Congressional Elections* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> Among others, we acknowledge the assistance in this effort of David Boundy, Bernadette Budde, Martin Burns, Guy Cecil, Charlie Cook, Chuck Cunningham, Jennifer Duffy, Mike DuHaime, Cathy Duvall, Greg Giroux, Chris Hull, Harold Ickes, Karen Johanson, Jim Jordan, Linda Lipson, Mike Lux, Tony Massaro, Tom McMahon, Bill Miller, J.B. Poersch, Matt Rhoades, Steve Rosenthal, Stuart Rothenberg, Mark Steitz, Andy Stern, Mark Stephens, Amy Walter, Karen White, and Pam Womack.

While largely based on the potential for a competitive race, the case selections take other considerations into account as well in order to assure a broad range in the number and type of noncandidate groups observed. We make an effort to stratify the sample in terms of incumbent and open-seat races and for contests which would permit us to capture a wide variety of interest group and party communications and strategies. We also select cases so that we have variation in geographic location, level of minority population, and the number and type of interest groups likely to become involved. The last step of the case selection involves finding academics willing to participate in the project. The academics recruited to monitor the contests are selected based on their scholarly reputations and knowledge of state electoral politics.

In 2002 we added seventeen noncompetitive control races to test some of the assumptions about where noncandidate money is spent, thus establishing a baseline against which to compare the competitive races.<sup>47</sup> Many of the control races were selected because they were adjacent to the competitive races already sampled, as it would be difficult to convince academics to study a race where we expect little if any serious campaign activity. The most cost effective way to add some control races was to ask the academics studying our competitive races to identify an adjacent district to cover in addition to the competitive race. These control races were in the same media markets as the competitive races and thus did not require additional trips to television and radio stations to obtain ad buy data. They also involve elite interviews with many of the same people at the state level. We also selected some control races in states that had competitive races in the 2000 election in order to contrast the role of outside money in the same state or district over time.<sup>48</sup>

In sum the procedures followed to select the cases for this study achieve an appropriate balance between maximizing the observable variance and minimizing bias while at the same time keeping the research costs at an acceptable level. In addition non-random case selection in a small-n study helps to ensure that one does not exclude an important case.<sup>49</sup>

### **Voter Reaction to the Campaigns**

The project also sought to connect the activities of the candidate and noncandidate groups to the voters targeted by those activities. In both the 2002 and 2004 election cycles, CSED, in cooperation with Washington State University and the University of Wisconsin, developed and executed surveys that seek to measure the reaction of voters to federal campaigns.

The public opinion research in 2004 consisted of a three-wave national panel survey that sought to measure the impact of the immense ground and air-war activities. The survey results in 2004, as in 2002, showed that voters felt overwhelmed by the deluge of information received from candidate and

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<sup>47</sup> On this point we are especially indebted to Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Richard Fenno, and other panel participants who provided feedback on our methodology as part of a panel titled, "Getting Inside the Outside Campaign: Using Collaborative Fieldwork to Study Soft Money and Issue Advocacy" at the 2002 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

<sup>48</sup> Because the differences between competitive and control races were so clear in 2002 and because of budget constraints, we did not select control cases in our 2004 study.

<sup>49</sup> See Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton University Press, 1994), especially chapter 4, for a comprehensive discussion of the issues involved in qualitative case selection. They provide an especially good discussion of why a random sample is not always an acceptable method of case selection in small n case study research. Our non-random case selection method uses a key explanatory variable (competitiveness) to drive our case selection of our focus and control races while also using other available prior information to increase the range of values across our dependent variable (noncandidate campaign activity).

noncandidate groups in an attempt to persuade them to vote a particular way.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the 2004 survey placed an emphasis on media markets that will be linked to ad-buy information such as the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) data coded by Professor Ken Goldstein and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin. The ad-buy data and the ground war data can then be linked with the individual level data to assess the different effects of the campaigns on the choices and attitudes of voters.

In 2002, 2004, and 2006, the project also asked a sample of voters in different states to fill out a log survey documenting the various forms of contact that they received from the candidate and noncandidate campaigns in the three weeks leading up to Election Day. The project then surveyed these voters to register their opinions on the nature of the campaign and the information they were able to glean from the different activities that they observed.

In 2004, in addition to the panel survey, the research team used Knowledge Networks to examine voter reactions to the new disclaimer provisions of BCRA. The “Stand by Your Ad” provisions require candidates, parties, and interest groups to include both an oral and written disclaimer statement with radio and television ads, thereby taking responsibility for the content of the ad.<sup>51</sup> By requiring the candidates, parties, and interest groups to place “Stand by Your Ad” disclaimers in political advertising, legislators hoped to reduce negativity in political campaigns and increase voters’ confidence in the political system. CSED conducted an experiment by which a sample of over 800 voters was shown ads with and without the disclaimers. We will then test reactions to the ads on dimensions of negativity and confidence.

CSED also conducted a disclosure audit of TV and radio broadcast stations located in competitive races across the country in 2004. Under BCRA broadcast stations are required to maintain public political files that document all BCRA-defined electioneering communications purchased and aired by candidates, groups, and individuals. CSED researchers evaluated to what extent these groups chose to run electioneering issue ads before the time periods covered by BCRA in addition to the quality of disclosure of purchased political advertising. Furthermore, researchers assessed how accessible this information is to citizens and what, if any, difficulties prevent full disclosure of information required by law.

Together, the public opinion, log, and “Stand by Your Ad” surveys make it possible to connect what the academics learn in the field with what the voters experience in the campaigns. In this manner, researchers can more fully grapple with the different global and compositional variables that may produce changes in the dependent variables selected for examination.

### **Challenges**

This research design tries to address several of the obstacles currently encountered by students of political campaigns and these obstacles’ effects. It cannot overcome all of these obstacles—no research project reasonably can. However, it is helpful to elaborate on these obstacles in order to develop strategies to overcome them.

The first obstacle is the increasing difficulty of gathering some of the more important contextual data. For example, it is getting increasingly difficult to survey those individuals who can describe, compare, and contrast specific campaigns. Some congressional candidates, mostly members of Congress, now routinely refuse to answer any surveys. Academics situated in those particular races, however, can provide much of the data that surveys used to provide.

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<sup>50</sup> David B. Magleby and J. Quin Monson, “Campaign 2002: ‘The Perfect Storm’” (Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy, Brigham Young University, November 13, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> Federal Election Commission, *Federal Register*, Vol. 67, No. 205. (October 23, 2002), pp. 65190-65212.

Second, there is an increasingly high financial cost of gathering enough information on important institutional variables from the different actors in the various campaigns. Researchers from different projects should explore ways to pool resources to create large, rich data sets. These data sets could include variables from the campaigns, such as the tone, strategies, and electoral procedures in the various races. It is often too difficult or too costly for one research project to perform all of these data gathering tasks, but collaborating scholars can create very useful data by monitoring particular races, interviewing elites, and sharing their results.

Finally, it will also be difficult to assemble these large data sets over time. The grants that have funded many of the studies prominent in the field today are unique in because they have often been funded over multiple cycles. However, if we theorize that time is an important dynamic and that many of the factors may shift over time, researchers will need to come to terms with the question of what is an acceptable time horizon. Collaboration across institutions could clearly help alleviate some of the burdens discussed above. But what types of institutions, research and otherwise, would the field need to create in order to facilitate collaboration and the construction of the larger, more useful data sets? We firmly believe that this can be an important innovation in the field and that ways should be constructed to facilitate more cross-institutional collaboration, particularly between the excellent research centers at different universities and colleges. The eventual placement of these research efforts in data archives such as ICPSR should always be a goal.

### **Conclusion**

We hope that this research encourages innovations in gathering data about the factors that affect the dynamics and outcomes of congressional and presidential elections and in constructing data sets sufficient for the types of questions the discipline needs to examine. The research design discussed above has specific weaknesses but also holds out the hope of gathering data that can help scholars more fully understand campaigns and their effects. It can also help answer the more popular questions such as why a particular candidate may have won.<sup>52</sup> With further data gathering and more collaboration, efforts like those outlined above should result in more complete data sets and more refined knowledge about the dynamics of campaign effects.

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<sup>52</sup> See for example Adam Nagourney, "So What Happened in That Election, Anyway?" *New York Times*, January 2, 2004, sec. 4, p. 3. The article examines some of the different explanations for the outcome in 2004 and discusses some of the confusion surrounding the conventional explanations.

**Table A-1, Case Studies Sponsored by CSED, 1998-2006**

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
<b>Presidential General</b>					
Florida				x	
Iowa				x	
Missouri				x	
New Mexico				x	
Ohio				x	
<b>Presidential Primary/Caucus</b>					
California		x			
Iowa		x		x	
Missouri		x			
New Hampshire		x		x	
South Carolina		x		x	
<b>Senate General</b>					
Alaska				x	
Arkansas			x		
Colorado				x	
Delaware		x	c		
Florida				x	
Iowa			x		
Kentucky	x				
Michigan		x	c		
Minnesota			x		x
Missouri		x	x		
Montana		x	c		x
Nevada	x				
New Hampshire			x		
New Mexico			c		
North Carolina	x			x	
Ohio					x
Oklahoma				x	
Pennsylvania					x
South Carolina	x				
South Dakota			x	x	
Virginia		x			
<b>House General</b>					
Arizona 1			x	x	
Arkansas 1			c		
Arkansas 4		x	x		
California 27		x			
California 29			c		
Colorado 1			c		
Colorado 7			x	x	x
Connecticut 1			c		
Connecticut 5	x	x	x		
Georgia 12				x	

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
Idaho 2	x				
Illinois 10		x			
Illinois 17	x				
Indiana 2			x		
Indiana 9					x
Iowa 1			x		
Iowa 2			x		
Iowa 3			x		
Iowa 3	x				
Iowa 4			x		
Kansas 3	x			x	
Kentucky 6	x	x			
Maryland 5			c		
Maryland 8		x	x		
Minnesota 2			x		
Minnesota 6					x
Mississippi 2			c		
Mississippi 3			x		
Montana AL		x	c		
New Hampshire 1			x		
New Hampshire 2			c		
New Jersey 12		x			
New Mexico 1			x	x	x
New Mexico 2			x		
New Mexico 3	x				
North Carolina 8			x		
North Carolina 9			c		
Ohio 6	x				
Ohio 13					x
Ohio 15					x
Ohio 18					x
Oklahoma 2		x			
Oregon 1	x				
Pennsylvania 4		x	c		
Pennsylvania 6			c		x
Pennsylvania 13	x	x		x	
Pennsylvania 17			x		
South Dakota AL			x	x	
Texas 32				x	
Utah 1			c		
Utah 2	x		x	x	
Utah 3			c		
Washington 2		x			
Wisconsin 1	x				

Note: An “x” indicates that the race was considered competitive. A “c” indicates a “control” race (only included in the 2002 study).

**Appendix B**  
**List of Interviews Conducted by CSED Researchers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date Interviewed</b>
John Killpack	Director, Advocacy Resources	AARP	10/10/2006, 11/15/2006
Nancy George	Voter Education	AARP	10/10/2006, 11/15/2006
Susan Forrester	Director of Political Affairs	Associated Builders and Contractors	12/1/2006
Steve Kest	National Executive Director	ACORN	10/12/2006
Judith Freeman	Research Analyst, Political Department	AFL-CIO	10/11/2006
Mike Podhorzer	Deputy Director, Political Department	AFL-CIO	10/13/2006, 11/21/2006
Linda Lipson	Legislative Liaison	AAJ	9/6/2006, 11/17/2006
Bernadette Budde	Senior Vice President	BIPAC	3/23/2006, 8/8/2006, 11/13/2006
Kristina Wilfore	Executive Director	Ballot Initiative Strategy Center	8/9/2006, 11/14/2006
David Donnelly	Director	Campaign Money Watch	12/5/2006
Trevor Potter	Campaigns and Election lawyer	Caplin and Drysdale	9/13/2006
Lina Brunton	Director of Data Acquisition	Catalist	8/9/2006, 11/13/2006
Laura Quinn	Chief Executive Officer; Founding Principal	Catalist; Copernicus Analytics	8/9/2006, 11/13/2006
Kara Ryan	Intern	Campaign Finance Institute	10/11/2006
Stephen Weissman	Associate Director for Policy	Campaign Finance Institute	10/11/2006
Greg Tarpinian	Executive Director	Change to Win	11/16/2006
Edwin Davis	Vice President of Policy and Research	Common Cause	7/18/2006
Bob Benenson	Politics Editor	Congressional Quarterly	11/14/2006
Greg Giroux	Senior Political Reporter	Congressional Quarterly	7/17/2006, 11/14/2006
Amy Walter	Senior Editor	Cook Political Report	2/17/2006, 11/21/2006
Jennifer Duffy	Managing Editor	Cook Political Report	12/7/2005, 11/21/2006
Charlie Cook	Founder, Partner	Cook Political Report	11/21/2006
Ben Yuhas	Chief Scientist	Copernicus Analytics	11/16/2006
Karin Johanson	Executive Director	DCCC	2/15/2006, 7/19/2006, 11/14/2006
John Lapp	Executive Director of DCCC's Independent Expenditure Program	DCCC	11/14/2006
Christopher Hull	Partner	DCI Group	3/22/2006, 11/14/2006
Josh Hender	Voter File Project Manager	DNC	12/1/2006
Katie Allen	Voter File Analyst	DNC	12/1/2006
Mike Conlow	Voter File Analyst	DNC	12/1/2006

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date Interviewed</b>
Pam Womack	Political Director	DNC	3/22/2006, 12/1/2006
Tom McMahon	Executive Director	DNC	3/22/2006
Guy Cecil	Political Director	DSCC	2/16/2006, 11/14/2006
J. B. Poersch	Executive Director	DSCC	7/19/2006
Donnetta Davidson	Commissioner	U.S. Election Assistance Commission	10/12/2006
Karen White	Political Director	EMILY's List	7/18/2006
Maren Hesla	Voter Outreach Manager	EMILY's List	11/16/2006
Michael Toner	2006 Chairman, Commissioner	Federal Election Commission	8/9/2006
Tom Minnery	Senior Vice President of Government and Public Policy	Focus on the Family	10/5/2006
Jim Jordan	Communications Consultant	Fresh Start America	8/9/2006
David Boundy	Consultant	Grassroots Solutions	3/24/2006
Tony Massaro	Senior Vice President for Political Affairs and Public Education	League of Conservation Voters	3/23/2006, 11/29/06
Lloyd Leonard	Senior Director Advocacy	League of Women Voters	7/17/2006
Mark Longabaugh	Executive Director; Political Director	Majority Action; Defenders of Wildlife	9/13/2006, 11/14/2006
Wes Boyd	Co-founder, President	MoveOn.org	1/19/2007
Hal Malchow	President	MSHC Partners, Inc.	7/18/2006, 12/01/2006
Tiffany Adams	Vice President & Deputy Director, Corporate Affairs	National Association of Manufacturers	11/30/2006
Elizabeth Shipp	Political Director	NARAL Pro-Choice America	11/15/2006
Julie Stitzel	Deputy Political Director	NARAL Pro-Choice America	11/15/2006
Craig Purser	President	National Beer Wholesalers Association	10/11/2006, 11/21/2006
Linda Auglis	Political Affairs Director	National Beer Wholesalers Association	10/11/2006, 11/21/2006
Simon Rosenberg	President	NDN	9/13/2006, 12/01/2006
Dennis Friel	Eastern States Manager of NEA Government Relations	NEA	11/14/2006
Thad Daise	Government Relations	NEA	8/8/2006
Andrew Fimka	Manager, Political Programs	National Federation of Independent Business	10/10/2006
Sharon Wolff Sussin	National Political Director	National Federation of Independent Business	10/10/2006, 11/15/2006
Charles Cunningham	Federal Affairs Director	NRA	3/23/2006, 11/15/2006
Glen Caroline	Director Grassroots Division	NRA	11/21/2006
Mike McElwain	Political Director	NRCC	2/9/2007
Blaise Hazelwood	Political Director	NRSC	1/19/2007
Mark Stephens	Executive Director	NRSC	3/22/2006, 11/30/2006
Benjamin Ginsberg	Partner	Patton Boggs	9/21/2006
Geoff Garin	President	Peter D. Hart Research Associates	7/28/2006

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date Interviewed</b>
Elliott Minberg	Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Legal Director	People for the American Way	8/8/2006
Mary Jean Collins	Senior Vice President and National Field Director	People for the American Way	8/8/2006
Stephanie Foster	Vice President for Public Policy	Planned Parenthood	8/9/2006
Michael Lux	CEO, Co-founder	Progressive Strategies	7/18/2006, 11/15/2006
Adrian Gray	Director of Strategic Information	RNC	11/14/2006
Matt Rhoades	Research Director and Deputy Communications Director	RNC	2/16/2006
Mike DuHaime	Political Director	RNC	7/19/2006, 11/21/2006
Andy Stern	President	SEIU	7/20/2006
Anna Burger	Secretary-Treasurer; Chair	SEIU; Change to Win	10/10/2006
Ellen Golombek	Director of Government Affairs	SEIU	10/10/2006
Mike Gehrke	Executive Director	Senate Majority Project	9/13/2006
Erik Smith	President	September Fund	11/16/2006
Harold Ickes	Founder, Partner	September Fund, Ickes & Enright	2/16/2006, 11/13/2006
Cathy Duvall	National Political Director	Sierra Club	3/24/2006, 11/16/2006
Larry Noble	Counsel	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP	8/8/2006
Dan Hazelwood	President	Targeted Creative Communications	9/13/2006, 11/13/2006
Alex Lundry	Senior Research Director	TargetPoint Consulting	10/12/2006
Alexander Gage	President	TargetPoint Consulting	10/12/2006
Michael Meyers	Partner and Vice President	TargetPoint Consulting	10/12/2006, 11/16/2006
Diane Feldman	President	The Feldman Group	9/22/2006
Mark Mellman	President and CEO	The Mellman Group	8/9/2006
Steve Rosenthal	President	The Organizing Group	7/13/2006
Ed Goeas	President and CEO	The Tarrance Group	9/13/2006
Evan Tracey	COO	TNS Media Intelligence/CMAG	7/17/2006
Mark Steitz	Co-founder and President, Senior Principal	TSD Communications, Copernicus Analytics	3/26/2006, 11/16/2006
Bill Miller	Vice President, Public Affairs and National Political Director	U.S. Chamber of Commerce	7/18/2006, 11/14/2006
Bob Bennett	U.S. Senator	U.S. Senate, Utah	10/11/2006
Joe Goode	Executive Director	Women's Voices. Women Vote.	10/11/2006
Page Gardner	President	Women's Voices. Women Vote.	10/11/2006