N.J. Congressional Campaigns in 1998:
Not Bad but Not Enough

A Report of a Research Project

by

Ingrid W. Reed
Director, Eagleton New Jersey Project

and

Gerald M. Pomper
Board of Governors Professor of Political Science and
Eagleton Institute of Politics Faculty Member

Eagleton Institute of Politics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
191 Ryders Lane
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901
732-932-9384, x232

November, 1999
# Table of Contents

Summary ................................................................. 1  
Findings ................................................................. 1  
Background .............................................................. 1  
Recommendations ....................................................... 1  

Evaluation ............................................................... 2  
  Standards of a Useful Campaign: The Political Science View .................... 2  
  Suggestions for Better Campaigns: The Eagleton Campaign Forum ............... 3  
  Recommendations ................................................... 5  

The 1998 Congressional Campaign Study .................................... 7  
  How the Study Was Conducted ........................................ 7  
Findings of the Campaign Study ......................................... 8  
  1. Identification of Party and Source of Funds ................................... 8  
  2. Nature of Campaign Material .............................................. 9  
  3. Style of Campaign Material ............................................... 10  
  4. Discussion of Issues .................................................... 11  
  5. Frequency of Newspaper Coverage ....................................... 12  
  6. Television coverage .................................................... 12  
  7. Debates ................................................................. 12  
  8. Internet ........................................................................ 13  
  9. Accessibility of Information ............................................... 13  
  10. Voter Turnout ........................................................... 13  
  11. Campaign Finances .................................................... 15  

Appendix I: New Jersey Congressional Districts, 1999 ...................... 16  

Appendix II: Results of 1998 Elections - New Jersey Congressional Districts ..... 17  

Acknowledgments .......................................................... 18
Summary

Findings

A study of the 1998 New Jersey congressional races by the Eagleton Institute of Politics finds that competitive campaigns were mainly issue-oriented, free of nasty attacks and reasonably well-covered by the media. However, such active campaigns took place in fewer than half of the state’s 13 districts, 12 of which returned incumbents to Congress.

The good news is that campaign conduct in 1998 was generally free of the negative qualities often associated with election campaigns.

The bad news is that campaigning did not occur often enough to produce real “democratic discussion.” In districts without competitive races, citizens had little or no opportunity to learn about the candidates or their positions on issues, either through campaigns or the media. These non-competitive districts include more than 60 percent of the state’s voters.

Even in those districts where campaigns took place, voters were not treated to lively debates and easily accessible information. Only rarely did campaign activity provide the opportunity to see an incumbent defend a record or a challenger present the case for an alternative.

Background

The premise of this study is that selecting our representatives is fundamental to maintaining a democratic society. Therefore, information and impressions received through campaigns are critical resources for citizens — in the voting booth and, more broadly, in influencing their understanding of government. The extent and the quality of campaigns are vitally important and deserve to be examined.

Carried out with the assistance of student teams from six academic institutions in New Jersey, the study attempts to capture the nature of the state’s campaign experience when campaigns take place in districts, rather than through the more visible statewide activity of a gubernatorial or senate race. It was designed to evaluate how well the 1998 Congressional campaigns contributed to “democratic discussion” in New Jersey and how they measured up to suggestions for achieving better campaigns made at the 1997 Eagleton Campaign Forum, a gathering where state leaders addressed campaign conduct following the contentious 1996 Senate race.

The study showed that active campaigns incorporated the kinds of suggestions made at the Eagleton Campaign Forum, but all campaigns fell short to some degree of meeting the standards commonly discussed by the political science community and the good government advocates for campaigns considered useful to citizens.

Recommendations

The evaluation of the 1998 congressional campaigns suggests ways to improve future campaigns. They include:

- continue support for the 1997 Eagleton Campaign Forum’s suggestions that candidates, the media and the people take responsibility for campaigns.
- promote debates; encourage ad watches; recognize helpful media efforts.
- assist candidates to use the Internet in their campaigns.
- address the nature, causes and consequences of non-competitive campaigns and related issues such as campaign financing, redistricting, and media access.
Evaluation

The Eagleton congressional campaign research project was designed to assess the 1998 congressional campaigns against two standards: First, in a broad sense, how did the campaigns meet the characteristics of a “good” or “useful” campaign described by political scientists.1 Second, more specifically, how did the campaigns measure up to suggestions for achieving better campaigns in New Jersey made at the Eagleton Campaign Forum held in February, 1997 after a widely criticized 1996 senatorial campaign.2

Standards of a Useful Campaign: The Political Science View

The following standards are among those commonly discussed in political science literature on the role and characteristics of campaigns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useful campaigns present information about important personal characteristics of the candidates, such as their parties, backgrounds and political experience.</td>
<td>Only about half of the materials produced by the campaigns included party affiliations, but nearly all of the newspaper stories on the campaigns incorporated this basic fact. Information about the candidates’ background and experience was included in campaign material. However, these descriptions often emphasized characteristics difficult to substantiate, such as “hard working.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful campaigns provide comparisons of the qualifications and issue positions of the candidates.</td>
<td>Only 20 percent of campaign materials compared one candidate with another. The dominant style (60 percent) of the campaign material promoted the candidate with no reference to the opponent. Newspaper articles typically referred to both major party candidates, and often candidates of other parties were mentioned as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful campaigns demonstrate a match between issues important to voters and those emphasized by the candidates.</td>
<td>There was a strong correlation among the candidates’ discussions of issues in their campaign materials, newspaper reports about the campaigns, and citizens’ interests as determined by an Eagleton poll conducted in September, 1998.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Standard | Evaluation
---|---
*Useful campaigns refrain from personal attacks.* | Only 20 percent of campaign ads were attack-type ads, and only a few of them (6%) could be categorized as personal attacks. Critical ads can be helpful if they set out the differences between candidates and opponents. If not respectful, they also can be viewed by voters as demeaning or as “negative” ads, but nastiness of that kind was not common in the 1998 campaigns.

*Useful campaigns reflect effective competition, including opposing candidates with a base of voter support and significant campaign funds.* | Overall, the 1998 New Jersey congressional campaigns failed on this standard. Four campaigns might be seen as effectively competitive: Districts 6, 8, 9 and 12. Two other districts had some competitive activity: 4 and 7. Seven failed this test: 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13; these districts represent well over half the state’s population.

**Suggestions for Better Campaigns: The Eagleton Campaign Forum**
In February 1997, state leaders participated in a roundtable discussion on campaign conduct and agreed that there were ways that New Jersey could achieve better campaigns.

**Suggestion** | **Evaluation**
---|---
*Candidates appear and speak in ads in which opponents are mentioned; follow the rule, “say it yourself.”* | The suggestion that candidates appear in ads attacking their opponents was heeded in half of the attack ads. However, attack ads were a small percentage of those observed (20 percent).

*Candidates’ ads avoid distorting the voice or image of their opponent in their ads.* | Little distortion was found. Only six cases of some kind of a distorted photographic image were identified.
**Suggestion**

Candidates take responsibility for ads presented by independent groups to help their campaigns, and independent groups disclose information about who they are, and the source of their funds.

**Evaluation**

One congressional race included very visible newspaper and TV ads produced by an independent group that did not disclose its affiliation or membership. These ads received considerable attention by the press in news stories and editorials that questioned their source and the connections with the candidate they indirectly favored. They also were criticized by the targeted candidate.

**Debates are frequent, well-advertised, conveniently scheduled, and have a format that encourages discussion among the candidates.**

**Evaluation**

Debates played a very small role in these 1998 congressional campaigns. Where they occurred, they were neither well publicized nor easily accessible. One cable television system conducted campaign discussions of a debate type for candidates in about half the districts.

**News media coverage presents information about the candidates themselves, the issues and the accuracy of the ads.**

**Evaluation**

Newspaper coverage focused mainly on issues. Cable systems typically gave candidates opportunities to talk to the voters and to participate in discussion of issues with opponents. One cable television system also prepared news reports on the campaigns and presented analyses of selected campaign television ads.

**All three major players in campaigns – the candidates, the media and the public – take responsibility for better campaigns.**

**Evaluation**

In those districts where active campaigns took place, candidates communicated with the public through ads, the media provided coverage, and voter turnout was slightly higher than in most districts without competitive races. This activity could be described as “taking responsibility,” a concept that deserves further discussion and definition.
Recommendations

The following recommendations, drawn from what was learned in this study, may help to achieve campaigns that better meet the needs of voters.

1. **Continue support for 1997 Eagleton Campaign Forum suggestions.**
   The findings of this study suggest that the 1997 Forum suggestions, made at a time when New Jersey was recovering from the “negative” campaign of 1996, seem to resonate with candidates and campaign staffs. While not comprehensive, the simplicity and directness of the suggestions for candidates, the media and the people to take responsibility for campaigns make them serviceable and worthy of continued use in guiding New Jersey campaigns.

2. **Promote debates.**
   Debate formats should be more like discussions as opposed to confrontations, and they should be made available on television. (Cable systems are the most realistic outlets.) Candidates, both incumbents and challengers, should be held responsible for participating in debates and asked to provide dates early in the campaign when they are available to participate in candidate forums. Equally important, media and public interest groups make plans for debates early in the campaign season. Moreover, the times and dates of debate broadcasts should be widely advertised where citizens are likely to see the information. Notices should appear on the television pages of newspapers, and public affairs announcements should alert citizens in a particular area to local cable debate programs. Further, any public support of candidates — including any public financing, use of government sites for campaign activities, or possibly even ballot access — should be made dependent on an enforceable agreement to engage in debates. The emphasis on debates reinforces the principle that the purpose of campaigns is to enlighten voters, not to serve the self-interests of candidates.

3. **Encourage ad watches and evaluate campaign materials, with attention to advocacy ads.**
   Ads that promote a candidate rather than criticize an opponent, that are “positive” and respectful rather than nasty, deserve evaluation as much as “negative” attack ads. Citizens need help in analyzing what candidates are saying about themselves, particularly when campaigns are non-competitive and challengers are not available to play a watchdog role. The media should continue to expand their “ad watch” coverage. Citizen organizations should be encouraged to learn how to conduct ad watches. More broadly, such citizen organizations or appropriate government agencies could serve as “complaint bureaus” where campaign activity citizens find questionable could be evaluated.

4. **Recognize helpful media efforts.**
   Citizens depend on the media to learn about campaigns and to provide perspectives on the materials produced by candidates. Media reporting that contributes to informing citizens in systematic, routine ways about candidates’ backgrounds and positions rather than focusing on “horse race” stories deserve recognition. Such useful television, radio and newspaper efforts should be cited by appropriate citizens organizations when, for example, they provide sustained coverage of campaigns, develop human interest stories about candidates, give candidates a chance to speak for themselves, rebroadcast programs, and produce citizens guides before election day.

---

3. In research conducted by Eagleton on the 1997 gubernatorial campaign, debates required by the public funding legislation were not advertised and were not listed on the television pages of the major daily newspapers. See Eagleton Institute of Politics testimony to N.J. Election Law Enforcement Commission. See Eagleton web site at www.eagleton.rutgers.edu.

5. Encourage and assist candidates to use the Internet in their campaigns.
Computer technology opens opportunities for candidates and citizens. Having an active web page cannot be required of a candidate, but certainly expectations can be raised that every candidate should have one, that it should be up-to-date with useful information such as the candidate's schedule, positions on issues, ads that have been aired or mailed, and endorsements received. Assistance is available to candidates through non-profit organizations. For example, in the 1999 campaigns, the Eagleton Institute began a collaboration with the NJ League of Women Voters to provide an interactive web site for New Jersey General Assembly candidates through Democracy Net 5.

6. Address the nature, causes and consequences of non-competitive campaigns for elective office.
While less than half the people in New Jersey had an opportunity to access significant campaign activity in 1998, those who did were exposed to campaign activity that provided some relevant, useful information and did so in a manner that was not likely to turn voters away from the political process. However, effective campaign discourse and conduct depend not only on an improved campaign environment, but also on effective competition. Achieving this effective competition, as well as better campaigns, involves broader issues. These include: assessing the redistricting process and who speaks for the public interest in this post-census effort; highlighting the role of campaign finance and the potential of public funding; examining the role of political parties and their interests in supporting challengers and not just perceived winners; improving the frequency and regularity of coverage by the media, and opening opportunities for candidates to speak on television and radio. Civic and political leaders, members of the media and citizens would provide a critical public service if attention were devoted to these larger questions.

The 1998 Congressional Campaign Study

How the Study Was Conducted

This research project is part of the Eagleton Institute's efforts to conduct innovative and practical research to inform policymakers and the public about the nature of politics and civic life.

In order to conduct the study, the Eagleton New Jersey Project organized student research teams, each headed by a faculty member, from six academic institutions to follow the campaigns in the four weeks before election day, November 3, 1998. In ten of the 13 districts, they collected campaign-produced material from campaign offices and clipped stories from major newspapers. (Districts 1, 2 and 3 were dropped from the study when lack of campaign activity discouraged the student researchers.)

The Eagleton New Jersey Project also collected information about the coverage of candidates on cable television systems, debate activities and Internet use by the candidates.

In mid-September 1998, the Eagleton Institute conducted a statewide survey to determine issues important to voters. Poll results were distributed to the media and to the candidates. These results provided a comparison with the issues addressed by the campaigns and covered by the newspapers.

About a third of the 400 items collected for this study came from campaigns, and two-thirds were drawn from newspapers. Although the research teams often found it was difficult to make contact with the campaign staffs, eventually most cooperated. Only one campaign was unwilling to make available ads and campaign materials.

Figure 1
Sources of Study Data

![Data Sources Chart]

(Districts 1, 2, and 3 were not included due to lack of available data.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Newspaper Reports</th>
<th>Campaign Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total items = 257)

(Total items = 105)

Findings of the Campaign Study

Below are data for evaluating the campaigns against the standards for useful campaigns and the suggestions made for better campaigns by the Eagleton Campaign Forum.

1. *Identification of Party and Source of Funds.*
   Party affiliation is often cited by voters as an important factor in their decisions about how to vote. Newspaper accounts included party identification when mentioning candidates in more than 90 percent of the stories reviewed by the study. On the other hand, campaign material provided this information in only about half of items.

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2**

*Party Identification Shown in Study Data*

By law, information about funding sources is required to be shown on campaign materials. However, this information offered little help in identifying party affiliation, since about 85 percent of the sources were the candidates' own campaign committees.

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 3**

*Funding Source Shown in Campaign Materials*
Numerous studies show that candidates’ campaign ads, brochures and mailers are a major source of information for voters. The materials collected by the student teams were categorized by their focus on issue positions, qualifications, professional record, and personal character. Nearly 50 percent of the campaign materials discussed issues and gave the candidates’ positions. Slightly more than 25 percent discussed the candidates’ professional record, and a little more than 10 percent dealt with personal characteristics. Aside from experience, candidates emphasized that they were honest and hard-working, but those admirable qualities can be hard for voters to confirm.

**Figure 4**
Nature of Campaign Materials by political party

**Figure 5**
Focus of Personal Characteristics in Campaign Materials
3. **Style of Campaign Material.**

Campaigns in recent years have been characterized often as nasty or “negative.” In fact, the February 1997 Eagleton Campaign Forum grew out of the view that New Jersey’s campaigns had become too negative to be helpful to citizens and might be turning them away from the political process.

In order to assess the extent of this type of campaigning, campaign materials were sorted into three categories:

- advocacy – where candidates make the case for themselves.
- attack – where reasons are given why the opponent is unworthy to hold the position.
- comparative – where candidates present both the case against opponents and the case for themselves.\(^7\)

The majority of campaign materials (60 percent) were presented in the one-sided advocacy style which many would view as positive campaigning. However, campaign expert and dean of the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School for Communications Kathleen Hall Jamieson has pointed out that “advocacy” ads, common in uncontested races, are often as misleading as attack ads.\(^8\) Voters may gain more useful information from “comparative” ads, which in this study represented only 20 percent of the material. In this style, candidates present their own cases contrasted with their opponents.

![Figure 6: Style of Campaign Materials](image)

The other 20 percent of the material featured “attacks,” where the opponent was described as unworthy to hold the office. These descriptions can provide important information for voters, but this style also is often considered “negative” and associated with nasty and demeaning statements, especially when leveled by anonymous voices. In about half of the attack ads in this study, candidates appeared in the ad, thereby taking the advice to “say it yourself.” Only a third of these were considered personal in nature, and only six included distortions of an opponent’s photographic image. Overall, the campaigns in the study were relatively “positive” and not “negative” or nasty.

---


8. Alliance for Better Campaigns material, “Issue Brief #1, Attack Ads.”
4. Discussion of Issues.
Campaign materials and newspaper accounts tended to address the same issues – issues that also were on the minds of the respondents to an Eagleton poll in September 1998.

However, there were some differences in the issues emphasized in these various sources. Both parties gave similar attention to education and Social Security, but Republicans tended to stress taxes and Democrats education policy. Newspapers gave more attention early in the campaign to President Clinton’s impeachment than the candidates did. While consistency in addressing a similar set of issues from different perspectives may provide more opportunity for “democratic discussion,” the media can play a helpful role by raising substantive issues that are on the governmental agenda, such as environmental issues, even if the candidates and the public do not consider these issues among the most important to be discussed.

Figure 7 depicts the relative importance of issues, determined by the frequency of mention, in four ways – the Eagleton Poll, newspaper coverage and candidate mentions by party affiliation. Although the rankings are slightly different, overall there was considerable compatibility in issue discussion with citizen interest expressed in the poll.

**Figure 7**

**Ranking of Issues**
*(number of mentions in Eagleton Poll, Campaign Material, and Newspapers)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Eagleton Poll</th>
<th>All Campaigns</th>
<th>Democratic Campaigns</th>
<th>Republican Campaigns</th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*tie
5. Frequency of Newspaper Coverage.
New Jersey has a reputation for paying attention to its campaigns late in the campaign season. As would be expected, the number of stories the research team picked up began increasing about three weeks before election day and did so dramatically about ten days before the election.

In the early weeks of the campaign season after Labor Day, some newspapers ran human interest stories about challengers facing daunting races that served to introduce the challengers to the public. The feature-story approach was not used in the stories written closer to election day.

Informal discussions with reporters confirmed that districts without contests weren't given attention. At the same time, in non-competitive districts both incumbents and challengers described the difficulties they had in attracting newspaper attention to their campaigns.

On the Sunday before election day, major daily newspapers provided detailed information about the candidates running in districts they covered, describing their positions and background and including a head-shot photo of the candidate. This coverage included Independents and candidates from other than the two major parties.

6. Television coverage.
The student research teams did not have the capacity to monitor television programs. (They also did not monitor radio programs.) Reports from individual campaigns and anecdotal evidence indicate there was little coverage of the campaigns by television network outlets in New York and Philadelphia. The Holt-Pappas race in District 12 attracted some attention, even in the national news, for the Holt commercial known as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Starr.”

The Eagleton New Jersey Project contacted the public affairs programming staff at cable systems and New Jersey Network to find out about how campaigns were covered. News 12 and ComcastCN8 regularly produced political programming on the races. Comcast CN8 provided a free five-minute spot to each candidate and ran each spot on ten occasions at different times of the broadcast day during a given week and posted the times on its home page. For the five weeks before the election, News 12 produced debate/discussion programs among the candidates running within their franchise area. The programs were advertised in the Star-Ledger, News12's corporate partner. New Jersey Network produced several programs on selected races and provided periodic coverage on its regular program, On the Record. While this coverage of campaigns is to be applauded, it was a small part of news programs and a minuscule part of all television programs. The chances of a voter getting information about a candidate or even an impression of the candidate from these programs, usually not well advertised if at all, is not very likely.9

7. Debates.
Based on newspaper reports and inquiries to campaign staff, debates were a rare occurrence. When they did happen — for example in the Holt-Pappas race — they were not shown on television outlets widely available in the district. However, even if the arrangements had been made, the programming would have reached only a small percentage of the voters because no single cable system served all, or even most, of the district. News 12 programming often took the form of two candidates discussing the issues, a type of debate activity. Some campaign staff members volunteered that incumbents declined debate opportunities, not because they gave unwanted exposure to their opponents, but because their

---

appearances, when untelevised, were a waste of time with a small audience probably committed to one
or the other candidate. The implication was that if debates were well-organized, publicized and
televised, incumbents would be more likely to participate.

8. Internet.
Most candidates were on the Internet, providing some information about themselves and how to contact
them. Incumbents were likely to use the home pages available to them through the House of
Representatives. However, with very few exceptions, the web pages observed were not interactive, were
usually not updated, and contained little more than brief biographical material and a photograph.

9. Accessibility of Information.
Although the assumption is that citizens who want information about a candidate can get it and that they
often get more information than they want, this actually was not the case in this study. The student
research teams reported difficulty and frustration in contacting campaign staffs and getting materials.
There may be many reasons. In 1998, the impeachment activities before the House of Representatives
kept incumbents in Washington when they might ordinarily have been available for campaigning. Some
candidates did not set up campaign offices until about four weeks before the election. Incumbents with a
very high probability of retaining their seats seemed to convey that they did not need to be active.
Challengers new to campaigning had few resources to organize campaign offices.

Obtaining copies of radio and television ads proved to be a challenge, because they are not available in
campaign headquarters. Produced by consultants remote from campaigns, their offices had to be
contacted separately from the candidate’s staff. Campaign flyers mailed to households also were not
readily available, because they too are produced and mailed professionally and distributed from a
 mailing house, and not handed out in campaign offices.

The difficulties described in collecting materials for this study provide a perspective on hurdles before
ordinary citizens. People may anticipate that campaigns are prepared to provide information about the
candidates’ backgrounds and positions on the issues, or that they could easily receive access to
campaign materials, or effortlessly view an ad produced for television. However, the experience of the
student research teams demonstrated that obtaining what a voter might want from campaigns is likely to
be daunting, even if the campaign material has been aired or distributed.

Contrary to the stereotypical image of a potential voter being inundated with campaign material and
news, the experiences connected with this study lead to the conclusion that it is not easy to be an
informed citizen. Campaigns are far from user-friendly.

10. Voter Turnout.
As is now well-known, turnout nationally in the 1998 congressional election was the lowest to date. In
New Jersey, the percentage of registered voters who went to the polls decreased in each of the districts
compared to 1994. However, in that year a statewide race for Senate may have heightened interest in the
election. Although voter turnout is a complex matter, the level of campaign activity may have influenced
turnout. It is interesting to note that when the 13 congressional districts are ranked from 1 to 13 based on
highest to lowest percentage turnout in 1994 and in 1998, the four most competitive districts showed
increased voter turnout over 1994. Non-competitive districts either showed no change in rank or
declined when compared to 1994.
### Figure 8

Turnout of Registered Voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>604,167</td>
<td>336,684</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>35.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>622,752</td>
<td>348,339</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>39.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>626,717</td>
<td>373,230</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>41.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>628,032</td>
<td>362,945</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>40.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>621,091</td>
<td>361,922</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>45.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>614,670</td>
<td>342,140</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>39.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>614,540</td>
<td>352,036</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>41.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>599,237</td>
<td>317,022</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>40.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>602,893</td>
<td>317,928</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>44.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>594,630</td>
<td>271,068</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>34.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>631,804</td>
<td>379,191</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>38.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>654,169</td>
<td>401,160</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>44.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>589,981</td>
<td>271,553</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>31.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 8,004,683  4,435,218


### Figure 9

Ranking of Districts by Percentage of Voter Turnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat competitive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-competitive</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14
11. Campaign Finances.

Reports filed by the candidates with the Federal Elections Commissions provide information about money raised and spent in the 1998 campaign season. In the four competitive districts, candidates each raised and spent around a million dollars. Among the incumbents, campaign finances varied greatly. Some incumbents raised considerable sums of money but did not report spending it on the 1998 campaigns, while others both raised and spent modest sums in 1998. Challengers who seemed to have difficulty producing active campaigns may have been constrained by their apparent lack of funds as indicated by the modest or non-existent sums shown in their reports.

Figure 10

Financial Activity in New Jersey Congressional Races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Incumbent/Challenger</th>
<th>Net Receipts</th>
<th>Net Disbursement</th>
<th>Cash in Hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richards</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LoBiondo</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunsberger</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Saxton</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polansky</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. Schneider</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Roukema</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Schneider</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pallone</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferguson</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Franks</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connelly</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pascrell</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1207</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kirnan</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rothman</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lonegan</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Payne</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wnuck</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Frelinghuysen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scollo</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pappas</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holt</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Menendez</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1449</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>deLeon</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Selected information from Federal Election Commission reports, 2/1/99. Numbers in thousands of dollars, rounded to the nearest thousand.
Appendix I

New Jersey Congressional Districts, 1999

First:
Includes parts of Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties along the Delaware, including city of Camden. It has a heavy Democratic voter registration and has voted Democratic in all recent elections. Congressman Robert E. Andrews (D); 5th term.

Second:
Covers all of Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, and parts of Burlington and Gloucester. Largest in area and lowest population density. It has voted Democratic for statewide candidates but Republican for Congress and for legislative offices. Congressman Frank A. LoBiondo (R); 3rd term.

Third:
Extends from Delaware River in parts of Burlington County to Atlantic seashore in parts of Ocean County, and includes a few Camden County municipalities. Democratic candidates are favored for national office, but Republicans do well for Congress and Legislature. Congressman Jim Saxton (R); 8th term.

Fourth:
Stretches from the Delaware River in parts of Burlington and Mercer counties to the Atlantic Ocean in parts of Monmouth and Ocean counties. It has a high voter turnout in state election years and generally supports Republican candidates except at the national level. Congressman Christopher H. Smith (R); 10th term.

Fifth:
Stretches around the northwest corner of the state including all of Warren and parts of Sussex, Passaic and Bergen counties. The District voted solidly Republican in all recent elections and frequently has the highest voter turnout in the state. Congresswoman Marge Roukema (R); 10th term.

Sixth:
Includes communities in the Middlesex and coastal communities in Monmouth along the Raritan Bay. It is competitive politically, but has been leaning toward Democratic candidates. Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D); 7th term.

Seventh:
Covers communities in older suburban areas of western Essex and Union counties and northern Middlesex and Somerset. Although Democrats outnumber Republicans, the District has leaned toward Republican candidates in recent elections. Congressman Robert D. Franks (R); 4th term.

Eighth:
Includes municipalities in southern Passaic and northern Essex counties. Registration is weighted toward Democrats, however the district is very competitive, favoring Democrats slightly in recent elections. Congressman William J. Pascrell, Jr. (D); 2nd term.

Ninth:
Covers a number of communities in southern Bergen County and a few in Hudson including part of Jersey City. While the district has lower percentage of registered voters, it has voter turnout and favors Democratic candidates. Congressman Steven R. Rothman (D); 2nd term.

Tenth:
Includes communities and parts of communities (Newark is the largest) in eastern Essex, southern Hudson and northeastern Union counties. Voter registration is low and the District votes heavily for Democratic candidates in every election. Congressman Donald M. Payne (D); 6th term.

Eleventh:
Covers Morris County and a few municipalities in Essex, Sussex and Somerset. Voter registration is high, turnout is generally very high and strongly Republican. Congressman Rodney P. Frelinghuysen (R); 3rd term.

Twelfth:
Extends from Delaware River in Hunterdon County to almost the Atlantic Ocean in Monmouth, and includes parts of Somerset, Mercer and Monmouth. It has the largest and fastest-growing population. Registered voters outnumber those in any other district and generally support Republicans. Congressman Rush Holt (D); 1st term.

Thirteenth:
Stretches along the Hudson River and includes parts of Hudson, Essex, Union and Middlesex counties. It is the most heavily Hispanic district. Democratic candidates win by substantial margins but registered voters and turnout is low. Congressman Robert Menendez (D) 4th term

## Appendix II

### Results of 1998 Elections

#### New Jersey Congressional Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>% of vote</th>
<th>Loser</th>
<th>% of vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Robert Andrews (D)*</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Ronald Richards (R)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Frank LoBiondo (R)*</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Derek Hunsberger (D)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jim Saxton (R)*</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Steven Polansky (D)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Christopher Smith (R)*</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Larry Schneider (D)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Marge Roukema (R)*</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Mike Schneider (D)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Frank Pallone (D)*</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Michael Ferguson (R)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bob Franks (R)*</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Maryanne Connelly (D)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>William Pascrell (D)*</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Matthew Kirnan (R)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Steven Rothman (D)*</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Steve Lonegan (R)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Donald Payne (D)*</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>William Wnuck (R)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rodney Frelinghuysen (R)*</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>John Scolo (D)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rush Holt (D)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mike Pappas (R)*</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Robert Menendez (D)*</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Theresa de Leon (D)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Incumbent

---

Acknowledgments

Research collaborators

★ The 1998 congressional campaign study was conducted with the cooperation of faculty-student teams from six academic institutions. We are grateful for their diligent and patient efforts as well as their keen interest and enthusiasm for this project. They are:

Bloomfield College. Douglas Hedli, Assistant Director of the Center for Adult Learning. Students: Sean Hughes, Janelle Ryan, Nadia Tyus, Julia G. DeBose, David Harris, Madelynn Walker, Marcus Santos, Stephanie McGugan. President Jack Noonan provided essential endorsement.

Kean University. Susan Lederman, professor and director of the Gateway Institute; Tanya Poteat, Associate Director, Gateway Institute; and Professor Morgan Laury.


Rider University. David Rebovich, Professor of Political Science. Students: Richard Czyz, Roona Korde, Jacqueline Van Cleef, Aaron Ellenport.

Rowan University. Bruce Caswell, Professor of Political Science. Students: Joe McCarthy and Amad Samman.

Rutgers University, New Brunswick. Faculty member: Janice Ballou, Director, Center for Public Interest Polling. Students: William Gibson, Felipa Garcia, Valerie Jewitt, Joe Mancuso, Coleen Schulz.

★ Marc Weiner, graduate student in political science, Rutgers University, was an invaluable partner in this research project, providing advice on the study design, directing the data collection and input by undergraduate and graduate students at Rutgers, and conducting the statistical analysis of the collected data.

★ Colleagues at the Eagleton Institute of Politics provided very useful, insightful advice and assistance in the preparation of the report. Particular thanks go to Kathy Kleeman and Linda Phillips.

Related studies

★ Earlier research efforts informed the conception and implementation of this study. In 1996, eighteen students in an independent study course directed by Reed and Pomer observed and analyzed campaign activity in the freeholders races in Somerset, Middlesex and Mercer Counties based on the students' participation in the campaigns.

★ In 1997, in a more ambitious experiment, campaign activity was tracked in about two-thirds of the N.J. legislative districts with the help of an extremely diligent corps of citizen volunteers who had difficulty finding sufficient campaign material to make it possible to draw conclusions about the campaigns observed. We want to acknowledge them and the two Rutgers students, Michael Shapiro and Andrea Lubin, who served as our research assistants on this effort.

Related Public Service Activities

Previous public service activities on behalf of better campaigns in New Jersey proved useful in conducting the 1998 congressional campaign study and analyzing the results.

★ The Eagleton Campaign Forum held February 14, 1997 on the Rutgers -New Brunswick campus was given significant impetus by the leadership of Governor Christine Todd Whitman, who called for
statewide attention to better campaigns, and by the support of the Republican Party chair, Chuck Haytaian, and the then-chair of the Democratic Party, Tom Byrne. Their cooperation and that of political, civic and academic leaders who participated in a roundtable discussion at the Forum is greatly appreciated. New Jersey Network broadcast the discussion in its entirety three times during prime time.

★ In 1997, the Eagleton New Jersey Project was invited by Paul Taylor, then director of the Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition, to collaborate in obtaining free time on New York and Philadelphia network stations for the candidates in the gubernatorial campaign. While not as extensive as initially planned, a series of five issue spots in which all three candidates for governor cooperated represented the first successful free TV effort at the state level. This effort was endorsed by more than 20 corporate heads and 40 civic and political leaders. Albert Gamper, Chairman and CEO, The CIT Group, Inc., and Joseph Semrod, Chairman and CEO, Summit Bancorp, co-chaired the endorsement group. Their corporations underwrote production of the issue spots on New Jersey Network. The guidance and interest of Tom O’Neill, president of the Partnership for New Jersey, was essential for the success of this effort.

★ Subsequently, this New Jersey issue-spot initiative provided a prototype for a new national organization organized by Paul Taylor to improve elections, the Alliance for Better Campaigns. In 1998, the Alliance partnered with organizations in ten states holding gubernatorial elections to encourage better campaign practices. The reports and conferences produced by the Alliance have been uniquely helpful in shaping and analyzing this study.

★ The Leadership NJ Alumni Organization, under the chairmanship of Judy Shaw and Bill Pascrell, Jr., created the Leadership NJ Issues Index to monitor campaign discourse in the 1997 gubernatorial election, bringing to public attention different styles of campaign ads (advocacy, attack and comparison). The five issues were addressed by the gubernatorial candidates in the issue spots.

Financial Support
The exploratory research conducted in 1997 and in this project were underwritten by a grant from David Rockefeller, whose associate, Peter Johnson, provided wise counsel, and the Rockefeller Philanthropic Fund. Student research on county campaigns in 1996 was funded by three individual donors whose early encouragement is appreciated.

The Eagleton Campaign Forum was underwritten in part by a grant from the Fund for New Jersey made possible by the encouragement and interest of its executive director, Mark Murphy.

The Eagleton congressional campaign research project was supported in part with funds received from the 1997 collaboration with the Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition.