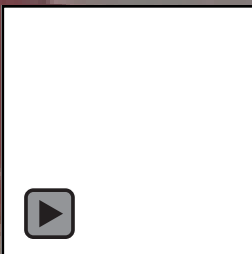


UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN

PARKSIDE

THE ELECTION EXPERIENCE
DISCUSSION SERIES WILL
BEGIN SHORTLY



The background of the entire image is a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in a draped, wavy pattern. The colors are muted, with a dark blue field for the stars and deep red and white stripes.

THE 2020 ELECTION ~~2020~~ EXPERIENCE

DO CAMPAIGNS IMPACT
VOTING BEHAVIOR
DISCUSSION SERIES

WEEK 7 – OCTOBER 21, 2020

The background of the entire image is a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in a draped, wavy pattern. The colors are muted, with a dark blue field for the stars and deep red and white stripes.

THE 20 ELECTION ~~20 ELECTION~~ EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION BY:
Dr. Christopher Hudspeth

PRESENTATION BY:
Dr. Michael Hansen

UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

THIRD (well second) PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

8 PM | Virtual through Discord

Join us along with sponsors AASCU & ADP for a virtual debate watch party.



MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

VOTER SUPPRESSION: COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

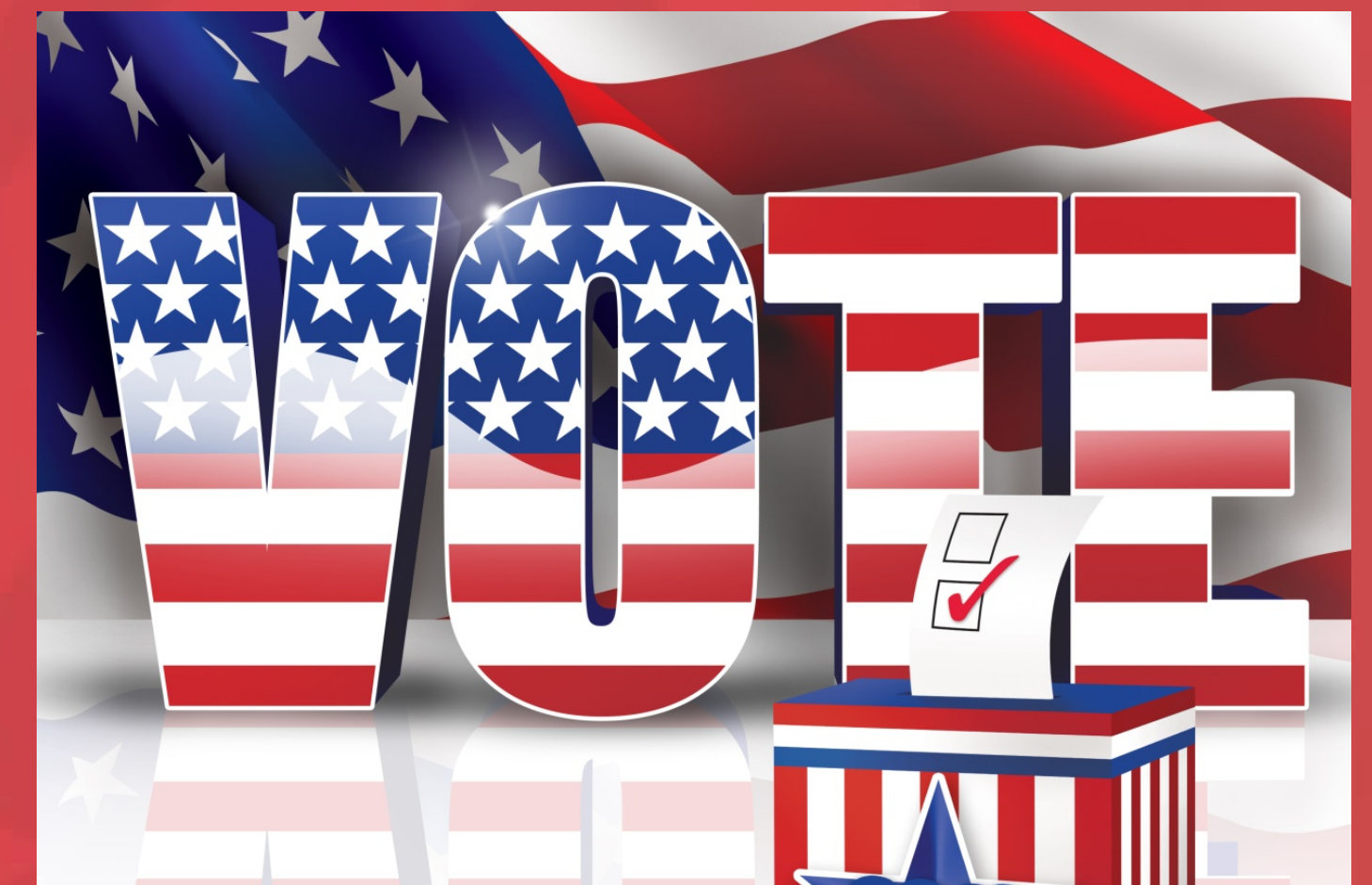
7 PM | Virtual

The Alan E. Guskin Center for Community and Business Engagement partners with the Kenosha Coalition for Dismantling Racism in presenting COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS: Voter Suppression.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

IMMIGRATION, EDUCATION, AND ELECTION 2020

Noon | Virtual Live Streaming



Register for Events at: www.uwp.edu/eeevents

Do Campaigns Impact Voting Behavior?

The Election Experience

Dr. Michael A. Hansen



Campaigns

Total spending in the 2020 Presidential Election could top nearly \$11 billion dollars.

- Half the amount needed to completely eliminate homelessness in U.S. (Department of Housing and Urban Development).
- The presidential candidates alone have already spent over \$700 million combined, with a combined \$230 million cash-on-hand left to spend.

What about legislative seats?

- House of Reps: \$1.8-\$3 million
- Senate: \$10-\$16 million
- South Carolina Senate Race - Challenger Jaime Harrison raised \$57 million from July to September.



Do campaigns impact voting behavior?

Given this fact, we should be asking ourselves, do campaigns actually impact voting behavior?

Answer(s):

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

The answer is dependent on the response to three questions:

1. Is there a disparity between competitor candidates?
2. What do we mean by “impact”?
 - Choice vs. Turnout
3. What office/position is being filled?



Israel Ramon

Candidate for:

Milwaukee County Register of Deeds

2020 Partisan Primary
Tuesday, August 11, 2020

ENDORSED BY: BLOC



Answer: No.

When do campaigns have no impact?

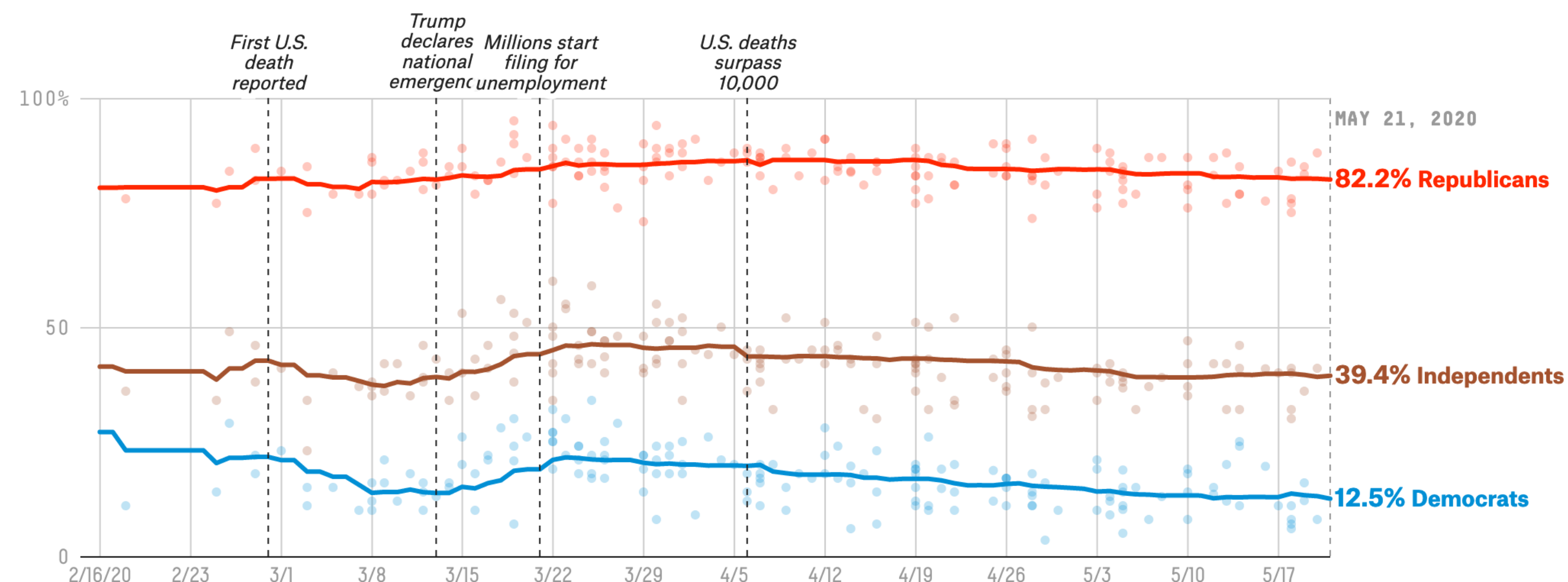
- Campaigns have limited impact on vote choice in presidential elections.
- Nominating conventions, debates, and other major events have some impact on aggregate public opinion (Holbrook 1992, Holbrook et al. 2012).
- Almost no evidence that campaigns have an impact on individual-level vote choice at the presidential level.

Has anyone ever had their mind changed from a yard sign?



Why do presidential campaigns not impact vote choice?

1. High profile, central nature of the presidential election.
 - Vote decision is made relatively early in the process.
2. The increasing role of partisanship.
 - Voters are increasingly less likely to evaluate an incumbent's performance objectively.
 - Voters view the success of an incumbent through the lens of partisanship and confirmation bias.
 - The importance of partisanship holds even when exploring the favorite indicator of presidential success for pollsters - economic indicators.



Trump - A case study in partisanship

Trump economic metrics (pre-pandemic):

- Average job gains smaller under Trump than Obama.
- Average unemployment rate declined slower under Trump than Obama.
- Stock market gains were larger in Obama's first term than Trump's.
- Government debt exploded under Trump due to his business tax cut (CRS 2019)

Trump economic metrics (post-pandemic):

- Gross Domestic product has decreased almost 40% in 2020 - largest loss in modern history.
- Personal income has decreased 2.7% in 2020.
- Unemployment reached over 15% in 2020 - (October 1st, over 12.5 million people = > 8%).

OUTCOME: Trump currently holds an > 95% approval among Republicans on the economy.

Trump - A case study

- Republican partisanship is the largest predictor of voting for, and supporting, Trump.
- Study after study demonstrate that secondary predictors of voting for Trump are **attitudes on race and sex** (Abramowitz et al. 2019; Bäck et al. 2020; Bartels 2020; Hansen and Dolan 2020; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Georgeac et al. 2018; Rhodes et al. 2020; Shook et al. 2020; Schaffner 2020; Tien 2017).
 - The most important of which being **racial resentment attitudes** (Abramowitz et al. 2019; Georgeac et al. 2018; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Rhodes et al. 2020; Shook et al. 2020; Schaffner 2020; Tien 2017).

Racial resentment attitudes are deeply ingrained attitudes that individuals acquire throughout their socialization.

- The predominant agents of socialization impacting racist attitudes are family members and social groups (Goldman and Hopkins 2019).
- Obviously, the origins of these attitudes makes it highly unlikely that a 30 second campaign advertisement eliminates these attitudes.... or any other campaign activities for that matter.

Answer: Maybe

- For presidential campaigns, the tactic with the most potential to impact an election is through increasing, or depressing, voter turnout.
 - **Democratic campaigns - increase voter turnout.**
 - Before election day, inform voters on how to register, request an absentee ballot, fill out the ballot, return the ballot.
 - On election day, inform people of their polling location and help people get to the polls.
 - **Republican campaigns - depress voter turnout.**
 - Before election day, spread misinformation regarding voting early and by mail, and put up fake ballot boxes.
 - On election day, lobby local governments to limit the number of polling locations.
- The presidential election could potentially be won or lost based on turnout.

**GET
OUT
THE
VOTE**

Voter turnout

How can campaigns increase voter turnout?

- Telephone calls have almost no impact on increasing voter turnout (Gerber and Green 2000).
- Direct mail has only a slight positive impact of 2.5% on increasing voter turnout (Gerber and Green 2000)
- Door-to-Door canvassing has the largest impact on voter turnout - 9.8-12.8% (Gerber and Green 2000).
- Reminder calls - After making initial contact with a voter, reminder calls increase voter turnout by an additional 1.2% (Gerber et al. 2020).

Canvassing in the time of COVID-19

- Schein et al. (2020) find that friend-to-friend text messages (OUTVOTE) encouraging people to vote increases voter turnout around 12%.



Answer: Yes.

Campaigns have the largest potential impact on state-wide and local-level elections.

- Voters know relatively little about state and local level governmental institutions in general.
- Voters know relatively little about state-wide and local-level elections in particular.
 - An overwhelming majority of voters cannot identify a member of their local level legislative body (city council, county board, village board, etc).
- Therefore, campaigns could play a crucial role in disseminating information to voters about these elections and candidates.

<u>Wisconsin</u> <u>Local</u> <u>Governments</u>	
Local Government	Number
Counties	72
Towns	1,269
Villages	402
Cities	190

Campaign Advertisements

- Gerber et al. (2011) - campaign advertisements
 - In 2006, incumbent Governor of Texas - Rick Perry - allowed political scientists to direct \$2 million dollars worth of campaign spending.
 - The spending was used on radio and television ads in 18 out of 20 media markets in Texas - randomized.
 - Experimental design - the ads were displayed across programming stations and during a range of shows.
 - Then, the scholars conducted brief telephone interviews with over 1,000 registered voters.



Campaign Advertisements

Gerber et al. (2011) Findings:

- Radio ads had no impact.
- Television campaign ads have a large and statistically significant effect on voter preferences.
 - The effects of television advertisements dissipate rapidly - last less than a week.

Sides et al. (2020) - impact of television advertisements.

- Down ballot races (local level).
- Labour day - only have an effect closer to the election for these lower level offices.



Campaign appearances

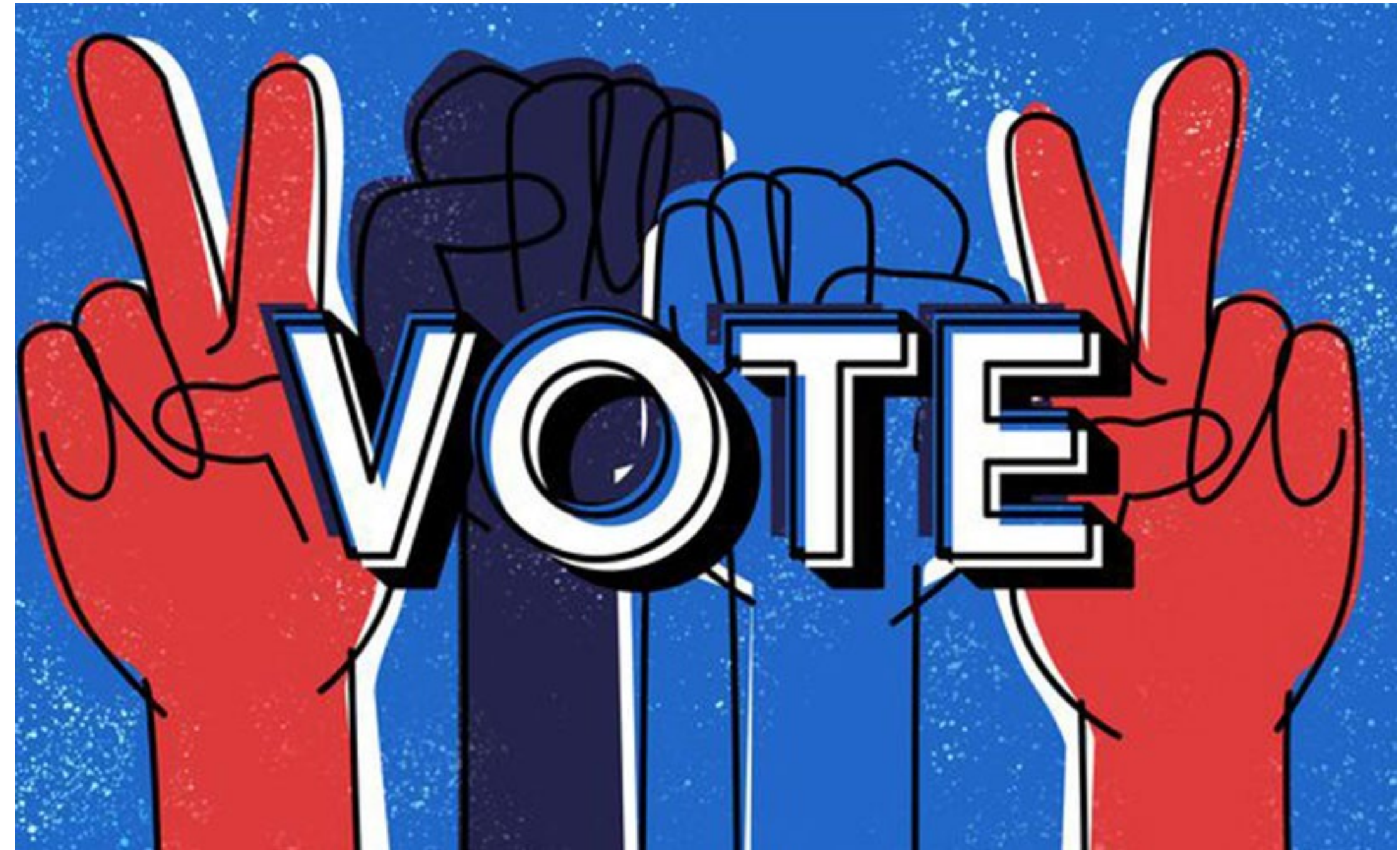
- Governor Rick Perry during his 2016 Governor's race allowed two different political scientists to conduct a study using his campaign.
 - Shaw and Gimpel (2014) - randomize the governor's campaign appearance schedule.
 - After the appearance - public opinion, media coverage, and volunteer data.

Findings:

- Appearances increased public support for Perry, but also dramatically increased support for the opposition.
- Appearance effect persisted for only 1 week.
- Tone of media coverage of the appearance has no impact on voters.
- The appearances were most helpful for generating contributions and volunteers.

Summary

- Presidential campaigns have relatively little impact on individual level vote choice.
- However, presidential campaigns can impact the overall result by **slightly** increasing or depressing voter turnout.
- At the local level, campaigns could play a potentially greater role by providing voters with crucial information.
- Only when there is **massive disparity** in the spending of candidates, does campaign spending have a large impact.



Net Impact - Aggregate

Given the amount of money spent in all elections during an election season, is the amount of money worth it?


Answer: No!

- Kalla and Broockman (2017) analyze 49 field experiments on campaign effects and find that the net effect of campaigns, across office levels, is zero.

Conclusion: The U.S. would benefit greatly from election spending restrictions.

- Amount of money spent is astronomical and widely wasted - net zero effect.
- Limited job creation since an overwhelming amount of money is spent on advertisement platform.
 - Example: Michael Bloomberg spent almost \$2.3 million dollars airing one ad nationally 164 times.
- The bulk of campaign workers are volunteers.

Questions - Thank you!



[Military & Overseas Voters](#)

My Voter Info

Find My Polling Place


What's On My Ballot

Update My Name or Address

Register To Vote

Vote Absentee

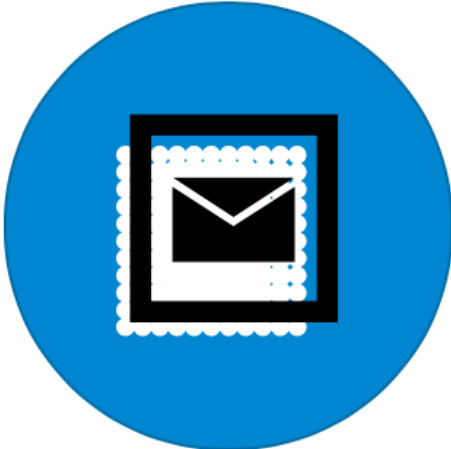
Track My Ballot





NEXT STATEWIDE ELECTION


2020 General Election


Tuesday, November 3, 2020

[Vote Absentee](#)

[Where Do I Vote?](#)

[What's On My Ballot?](#)

[Register To Vote](#)

[Track My Ballot](#)