

**The Effect of Tea Party Activity on the
2010 United States Senate Elections**

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ABSTRACT

The tea party movement began in early 2009 in reaction to the stimulus bill. Throughout 2009 local and national tea party groups formed and held rallies around the country. A Republican won Ted Kennedy's Massachusetts U.S. Senate seat with the help of the tea party movement in early 2010. Several GOP establishment candidates lost their primaries to tea party candidates. So, what was the overall effect of tea party activity on the 2010 U.S. Senate elections? Did voter enthusiasm lead to more wins by Republican candidates? Or did the movement push the candidates too far to the right and prevent Republicans from winning?

Each of the 37 U.S. Senate races were coded in terms of level of tea party activity, expected lean of the race, and percentage of the vote won by the GOP candidate. The level of tea party activity was based off of tea party movement related endorsements and campaign contributions received by each candidate. A regression analysis produced statistically significant results suggesting that states with high levels of tea party activity earned significantly lower vote shares for Republican candidates, after controlling for races leaning toward the Republican candidate.

In order to further explain these results, nine case studies of different races explored the organizing at the grassroots level of the tea party movement. Several patterns emerged through the story behind each race and the local level of tea party movement organizing. These results imply that tea party activity had little effect on the U.S. Senate elections in 2010 and that social movements cannot transfer their momentum into electoral power.

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I began working in Professor Heaney's Research Lab Group during the 2010 Winter Semester. In late March 2010 I traveled with Professor Heaney to Washington, D.C. for the 7th Anniversary of the Iraq War protests. While in D.C., I attended events held by Code Pink and ANSWER and got to meet some of the leaders of the Anti-Iraq War Movement. The night before the protests, I saw some of the rally planning occurring first hand. While administering surveys, I talked to many activists about their experiences in the Anti-War Movement.

The same weekend of the Anti-Iraq War rallies, the tea party movement was in D.C. protesting the healthcare bill. Professor Heaney asked me if I would like to accompany him to one of their rallies to do more survey research and I accepted. I did not know much about the tea party movement aside from its fiscal conservative policies and was interested in speaking with some of the movement's members. As a liberal college student and political activist, I associated grassroots activism with the left side of the political spectrum. I was astonished that this conservative movement was utilizing Facebook, Meetup, Twitter, and other social networking sites to coordinate protests of thousands in cities nationwide and build electoral power. And I thought grassroots activism was only for the liberals! In that moment, I knew that I wanted to know more about how the tea party movement worked and if it would have an effect on the 2010 elections.

I would like to thank my Mom and Dad for pushing me to be the best student I can, believing in me, and for tolerating my attitude during the past couple of weeks. And to my sister Kathleen, I love you and I am jealous that you are just starting your undergraduate career. I would like to thank my roommate and best friend Jeannie Lieder for listening to me talk, supporting me through my last few weeks of work, and for taking the time to read and critique

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Anchorage Tea Party
AIB	Anger is Brewing (AIB)
CCRP	Clark County Republican Party
CPG	Conservative Patriot's Group
DTP	Delaware Tea Party
GOTV	get-out-the-vote
DSCC	Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
NRSC	National Republican Senatorial Committee
OCDB	Our Country Deserves Better PAC
OTP	Oregon Tea Party
TARP	Troubled Asset Relief Program
TPB	Tea Party Boise
TPE	Tea Party Express
TPP	Tea Party Patriots
TPM	tea party movement

INTRODUCTION

On January 19, 2010 a surprising thing happened. Republican Massachusetts State Senator Scott Brown won the late Ted Kennedy's U.S. Senate Seat over prominent Attorney General Martha Coakley. The national and state Democratic parties thought their candidate would easily win this race, but in early January polling numbers showed Brown ahead of Coakley.¹ Throughout his campaign, Brown presented himself as an outsider of the state Democratic Party, a normal, everyday kind of guy—he drove his pickup truck to all of his events—and painted Coakley as a liberal spender who would continue to hurt Massachusetts' citizens with heavy tax burdens.² In a time of extreme voter anger toward government taxing and spending, how did a little-known Republican state Senator come from a 19-point deficit to win a U.S. Senate seat that had been held by a Democrat for 57 years?

Several reasons can explain why Brown won Massachusetts' U.S. Senate seat over Coakley. Coakley had committed several political gaffes (such as saying suggesting Catholics cannot work in emergency rooms or that there are no more terrorists in Afghanistan), held almost no meet-and-greets with voters around the state, and was perceived as acting “entitled to her votes.”³ Meanwhile, Brown had been driving his pick-up truck from one end of Massachusetts to the other trying to sway independent voters and Democrats in a state where Democrats outnumbered Republicans 3-1. In addition, Coakley did not start running an ad campaign until

¹ Abby Goodnough, “Democrats Fight to Hold Crucial Seat: Kennedy's,” *The New York Times*, January 14, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/14/us/politics/14massachusetts.html>.

² Michael Cooper, “GOP Senate Victory Stuns Democrats,” *The New York Times*, January 19, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/us/politics/20election.html>.

³ Adam Nagourney, Jeff Zeleny, Kate Zernike, and Michael Cooper, “G.O.P. Used Energy and Stealth to Win Seat,” *The New York Times*, January 20, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/21/us/politics/21reconstruct.html?pagewanted=all>.

the last week of the race, which allowed Brown's campaign, which had started immediately after the primary, to frame her however it wanted.⁴

The tea party movement (TPM) was another factor in Brown's campaign strategy and high levels of campaign contributions (\$1 million a day in the last week through internet contributions).⁵ FreedomWorks, one of the founding organizations of the tea party, claimed that it had received several emails from Massachusetts' residents about the race and decided, although a long shot, to send its best organizers to work on the race. Brown's attack ads defined Coakley as a blind follower of Obama's policies, while in opposition, he, "pledged to vote against the health care bill, and opposed a cap-and-trade program to reduce carbon emissions."⁶ These ideas appealed to angry voters that were upset with the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), stimulus spending, and matched up with tea party platform points.

So why, and how, did liberal Ted Kennedy's U.S. Senate seat get captured by a Republican who had said, "he supports waterboarding as an interrogation technique for terrorism suspects, opposes a federal cap-and-trade program to reduce carbon emissions and opposes a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants unless they leave the country"?⁷ Was it the lack of attention paid to the race by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC)? Was it Coakley's awkward public appearances or her own lack of attention to the race? Was it the small voter turnout for a special election? Or was it the enthusiastic anger of a small group of bi-partisan and independent voters bolstered by a non-profit experienced in campaign efforts?

The TPM and FreedomWorks would go on to take ownership of Brown's win in Massachusetts. He would become the poster boy of the movement's goals in 2010. The 2010

⁴ *The New York Times*, January 20, 2010.

⁵ Jim Geraghty, "A \$4 Million Week for Brown? \$5 Million?" National Review Online, January 14, 2010, <http://www.nationalreview.com/campaign-spot/5337/4-million-week-brown-5-million>.

⁶ *The New York Times*, January 20, 2010.

⁷ *The New York Times*, January 19, 2010.

primaries saw incumbents lose to political newcomers and extremely conservative candidates in the states of Delaware, Alaska, Florida, Kentucky, and Utah. The winners of these primaries held views such as eliminating the Department of Education and privatizing Social Security. They ran as political outsiders who would uphold fiscally conservative values. This was in comparison to their predecessors who had fed into the Washington culture of earmarks and bailouts at the expense of their constituents. They touted support from the grassroots, everyday people who were tired of an ever-expanding federal government that was taking away their freedom and taxing them at every turn.

The TPM began in early 2009. First, a stocks trader posted on market-ticker.org about the government bailouts and urged readers to mail a tea bag to their Congressmen. Next, financial expert, Dave Ramsey, criticized TARP on a FOX news show while waving around a tea bag. And then Rick Santelli brought up the idea of a Chicago Tea Party on CNBC.⁸ Groups around the country began organizing. On April 15, 2009, “Tax Day Tea Parties” were held in over 750 cities across the United States. Local groups sprung up on Facebook and Meetup. National coalition groups brought organizers from around the country in contact with one another. The national media took hold of the TPM’s passion, extreme values, and provocative, entertaining leaders, such as Sarah Palin and Glenn Beck. It kept the movement and voter anger in the forefront of everyone’s political mind during late 2009 and 2010. Surprise primary winners, such as Christine O’Donnell in Delaware and Joe Miller in Alaska, were constantly discussed and picked apart in newspapers and on television. The role of the TPM in American politics was constantly questioned and analyzed.

⁸ Douglas A. Blackman, Jennifer Levitz, Alexandra Berzon, and Lauren Etter, “Birth of a Movement,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October, 29, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304173704575578332725182228.html>.

Starting with Scott Brown's win in Massachusetts, it was anticipated that the voter anger motivating the TPM would have an impact on the 2010 election cycle.⁹ 2010 was supposed to be Newt Gingrich's 1994 all over again. But did this happen? Did a successful social movement based off of fiscally conservative values and limited government organize well enough to take credit for GOP takeovers in the U.S. Senate? Through statistical analysis and nine case studies, my thesis examines TPM activity in different U.S. Senate races in order to determine its effect on the 2010 U.S. Senate elections.

Chapter 1 gives a historical overview of the TPM from its inception in early 2009. Chapter 2 explains two hypotheses regarding the effect of the TPM on the 2010 U.S. Senate elections. It further discusses the methodology used to determine the effect of the TPM on the 2010 U.S. Senate Elections. My statistical analysis is explained in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 contains nine case studies of U.S. Senate races that describe the workings in each state and elaborate upon the results of the statistical analysis. Chapter 5 will discuss the results and trends found in the case studies. The conclusion will summarize the findings and give the implications of this thesis on the TPM and American democracy.

⁹ Nate Silver, "Assessing the G.O.P and the Tea Party," *The New York Times*, September 20, 2010, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/20/assessing-the-g-o-p-and-the-tea-party/>

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND ON THE TEA PARTY MOVEMENT

The TPM is loosely based off of the same political principles expressed during the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Contemporary tea partiers feel they are being over taxed by the federal government and have lost their voices as American citizens to an elitist bureaucracy. The movement began in response to TARP, the government auto bailouts, the stimulus bill, and earmarks. Keli Carender organized one of the first rallies against the stimulus on February 16, 2009 in Seattle.¹⁰ A few days later, the movement was given its name by reporter Rick Santelli during a CNBC broadcast from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.¹¹ In the broadcast, he called on citizens to “tea party” in response to Obama’s plan to refinance mortgages. On February 27, 2009, a few days after his call, nationwide protests occurred.

Many different organizations and local tea party groups arose from these early protests. A number of these groups work together under the coalition called the Tea Party Patriots (TPP). The mission of TPP is to “to attract, educate, organize, and mobilize our fellow citizens to secure public policy consistent with our three core values of Fiscal Responsibility, Constitutionally Limited Government and Free Markets.”¹² These are the values that all tea party organizations and coalitions share. The TPM has shied away from social issues.¹³ In the words of Frank Anderson, a founder of the Independence Caucus, “every social issue you bring in, you’re adding planks to your mission and planks become splinters.”¹⁴ In addition to remaining mute on social

¹⁰ Kate Zernike, “A Young and Unlikely Activist Who Got to the Tea Party Early,” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2010, accessed April 10, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/us/politics/28keli.html>.

¹¹ Karl Rove, “Republicans and the Tea Parties,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009, accessed January 18, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123984928625323721.html>.

¹² Tea Party Patriots – Mission Statement and Core Values. April 29. <<http://www.teaparty patriots.org/mission.aspx>>.

¹³ Adam Liptak, “Tea-ing Up the Constitution,” *The New York Times*. March 14, 2010, accessed April 15, 2010, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9404E7DF143DF937A25750C0A9669D8B63>

¹⁴ Kate Zernike, “Seeking a Big Tent, Tea Party Avoids Divisive Social Issues,” *The New York Times*, March 13, 2010, accessed April 15, 2010, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9406EFDB143DF930A25750C0A9669D8B63>.

issues, the movement expressed that it has no desire to create a third party. It would rather remove incumbents who have proven in their voting record that they do not uphold fiscally conservative values. These elected officials are known as RINOs, Republicans in name only.

In addition to the TPP, there are other organizations that have partnered with the TPM. These include The Minute Patriots, SurgeUSA.org, and Tea Party Nation. These groups provide up-to-date information about Congress and they provide forums for people to organize their own events. Glenn Beck began an organization called the 9/12 Project on his Fox News Channel talk show. Beck's intent was to bring Americans citizens back to the day after September 11, 2001 in order to make them remember the sense of togetherness during that time. The Project is based on nine principles and twelve values extracted from the U.S. Constitution.¹⁵ The 9/12 Project has partnered and participated in events alongside the TPM such as the TaxPayer March on Washington in September of 2009.

Americans for Prosperity is a political advocacy group created in 2004 that shares the same interests as the tea partiers. FreedomWorks, a non-profit that trains volunteers and runs political issue campaigns, was a big part of organizing tea partiers to attend healthcare town hall meetings. Americans for Prosperity and FreedomWorks used to be united in one group called Citizens for a Sound Economy. Another important group is the Our Country Deserves Better PAC (OCDB) that organized four bus tours around the country, endorsed candidates, and contributed money to many high profile tea party candidates. The Tea Party Express (TPE) bus tours traveled to numerous cities around the country holding rallies. Tour stops were in cities and states that had candidates supported by the TPM. For example, TPE III began in Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's hometown¹⁶. Public figures such as "Joe the Plumber" and Anne Coulter

¹⁵ "Our Principles and Values," <http://the912-project.com/test/about/the-9-principles-12-values>.

¹⁶ "Tea Party Express III: Just Vote Them Out," <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=230814665785>.

attended rallies in support of the TPE tours. The relationship between TPM and organizations like FreedomWorks and OCDB caused many political pundits and citizens to question whether the TPM is truly a grassroots movement.¹⁷ This accusation of fake grassroots organizing, or “astro-turfing,” and has been vehemently denied by former House Majority Leader Dick Armey, a FreedomWorks co-chairman.

The TPM has been able to utilize internet communication effectively to support and promote its movement. Carender utilized e-mail lists to contact people to show up to future rallies. Radio station publicity and conservative bloggers have been able to grow the movement on a local and national level. Many TPM organizations have Twitter pages to keep their followers updated. When entering websites like leadershipteaparty.com you are prompted to give your email address and on Tea Party Nation’s website you have to sign up and make an account in order to access certain tabs and information. Facebook is also used to recruit newcomers to the movement.¹⁸

As the TPM gained momentum it has become popular with several politicians. Some of these supporters, like Sarah Palin, spoke at an event sponsored by Tea Party Nation called the National Tea Party Convention. Throughout the 2010 election cycle Palin endorsed fiscally conservative candidates on behalf of the TPM. Rep. Michele Bachmann also endorsed candidates and began the “Tea Party Caucus” within the U.S. House of Representatives. Very few incumbent Congressmen received endorsements from Palin and Bachmann, or attention from FreedomWorks and TPE. As a whole, the movement tends to oppose incumbents, especially those who voted for TARP, the stimulus bill, Cap & Trade, and the healthcare.

¹⁷ Zachary Roth, “FreedomWorks Says Jump Tea Parties Say How High.” TPMuckraker, accessed April 29, 2010, http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2009/08/freedomworks_says_jump_tea_partiers_ask_how_high.php

¹⁸ Kate Zernike, “With No Jobs, Plenty of Time For Tea Party,” *The New York Times*, March 28, 2010, accessed April 12, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/28/us/politics/28teaparty.html>.

In addition to the TPE tours there have been hundreds of local and nationwide events since the movement's beginnings in February of 2009. Many of them have been centered around tax day in mid-April and government spending bills, such as the healthcare bill. The tea party protests are not void of colorful slogans and satire. The TPM renamed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan as the Generational Theft Act of 2009. Keli Carender dressed up as Liberty Bell during her first protest and also helped to plan a "funeral for healthcare" during a rally for healthcare reform. There are often a few protestors who will dress up in the colonial style dress that would have been worn during the original Boston Tea Party. Early on in the movement, tea partiers mailed pork rinds to Senator Chuck E. Schumer's D.C. Office in response to a comment he had made about "chattering classes" being the only ones who cared about pork spending.¹⁹ It is not uncommon for protestors at tea party rallies to roast pigs or serve pulled pork. Many protestors carry a "Flag of the Second American Revolution," which has the Roman numeral two surrounded by 13 stars along with the usual red and white stripes. This flag is said to represent both the Last Supper and the original 13 colonies when the U.S. Constitution was written.²⁰ Many protestors also carry the Gadsden Flag, which has been used historically to represent liberty and goes along with the movement's idealization of individual rights and choice.²¹

Almost half of the members of the TPM were not involved with politics before the movement began.²² A NYTimes/CBS poll of TPM movement members from April 14, 2010

¹⁹ Michelle Malkin, "A Tax Day Tea Party cheat sheet: How it all started," April 15, 2009, <http://michellemalkin.com/2009/04/15/a-tax-day-tea-party-cheat-sheet-how-it-all-started/>.

²⁰ USRevolution2.com

²¹ "Don't Tread On Me," <http://www.foundingfathers.info/stories/gadsden.html>.

²² Gary Fields, "Tea-Party Drive Steeped in Political Novices," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704511304575075331410704288.html>.

showed that TPM members “tend to be Republican, white, male, married and older than 45.”²³ This poll also showed that TPM are similar to the average American in terms of how they feel about taxes and feeling that Sarah Palin is not equipped to run the country. TPM members did feel stronger feelings of anger towards the Obama Administration than the average American.²⁴

The TPM’s short history has not been without controversy. Congressmen reported hearing the “n-word” and gay slurs being yelled during Washington D.C. rallies in March 2010.²⁵ In October 2010 the N.A.A.C.P released a report that had investigated groups such as FreedomWorks and connected them to birther organizations.²⁶ A FreedomWorks responded to this report by saying it was a tactic to get people not to vote this election and that the TPM’s focus is on fiscal issues and “all the rest of this is just noise.”

Increased government taxation and spending initiated the TPM. National and local groups arose to help tea party activists organize protests. Political figures began endorsing candidates and the movement’s action was turned towards eliminating RINOs in 2010. Did tea party activity have an effect on the U.S. Senate races in 2010? The next chapter will explain the two hypotheses being tested in this thesis and the research methodology.

²³ Kate Zernike and Megan Thee-Brenan, “Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated,” *The New York Times*, April 14, 2010, accessed October 13, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/15/us/politics/15poll.html?_r=2.

²⁴ *The New York Times*, April 14, 2010.

²⁵ “Rep.: Protests Yelled Racial Slurs,” CBS/Associated Press, March 20, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/03/20/politics/main6318517.shtml>.

²⁶ Kate Zernike, “N.A.A.C.P. Report Raises Concerns About Racism Within Tea Party Groups,” *The New York Times*, October 20, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/21/us/politics/21naacp.html>.

CHAPTER 2: HYPOTHESES & METHODOLOGY

Since the 19th century, the state has become the main target of social movements within a society.²⁷ Citizens in a democracy directly affect their government through the electoral process. It is important to understand the relationship between social movements and elections because they both engage with the government. The TPM is a good case through which to examine this relationship because it attempted to turn social movement power into electoral power. In order to determine the effect of the TPM on the 2010 U.S. Senate elections this thesis will test two hypotheses: the enthusiasm hypothesis and the spatial positions hypothesis.

Social movements arise and mobilize in response to political opportunities.²⁸ In the case of the TPM, the political opportunity was the increased voter anger over the expanding size of the federal government. Social movements provide the basis of the struggle for power between the citizens and the state. What is “started in the streets is resolved in the halls of government.”²⁹ Social movements are based off of intensity, which can produce rallies of thousands of people. But, the power used to trigger the movement is not the same as the power needed to sustain the movement or to mobilize that movement to vote.³⁰ Even highly organized groups, like labor unions, are unable to turn the majority of their members into votes.³¹

The emotions that motivate people to participate in social movements are related to the enthusiasm voters feel in elections. Candidates must generate enthusiasm in order to gain support from the electorate. This enthusiasm is based off of shared ideals and increases campaign

²⁷ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 73.

²⁸ Tarrow, 18.

²⁹ Tarrow, 26.

³⁰ Tarrow, 23.

³¹ E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1975), 48.

involvement.³² Fiscally conservative candidates tapped into the enthusiasm surrounding the TPM and attempted to turn this into electoral power. The enthusiasm hypothesis is based off of the idea that candidates and parties use excitement about issues to get like-minded citizens to vote. If the enthusiasm hypothesis is correct, then the TPM generated enough enthusiasm for conservative candidates that it led to Republicans winning elections.

In opposition to the enthusiasm hypothesis is the spatial positions hypothesis. Anthony Downs in *An Economic Theory of Democracy* states that a political party's number one objective is to maintain power by winning elections.³³ Downs continues by stating his fundamental hypothesis, "parties formulate policies to win elections, rather than win elections to formulate policies."³⁴ In order to win elections parties must win the majority of possible votes. The best way to do this is to move from the extreme end of your party's ideologies towards the other extreme and capture the largest amount of voters.³⁵ A two party system creates a bell curve with a small percentage of voters at each end of the political ideological spectrum and the majority of the voters maintaining moderate political attitudes and resting in the middle.³⁶ It is the extreme fringes of the party that prevent the two parties from becoming too similar.³⁷ The spatial positions hypothesis is that the TPM moved the platforms of Republican candidates too far to the extreme right that the Republican Party was unable to appeal to the median voter. As a result, tea party activity did not result in Republican candidates winning elections.

When considering which of these hypotheses is correct it is important to remember that this research focuses specifically on the U.S. Senate. America's bicameral system is set up so

³² George E. Marcus and Michael B. Mackuen, "Anxiety, Enthusiasms, and the Vote: the Emotional Underpinnings of learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns," *American Political Science Review* 87 (Sept. 1993): 680.

³³ Anthony Downs, *Economic Theory of Democracy*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957), 30.

³⁴ Downs, 28.

³⁵ Downs, 116.

³⁶ Downs, 118.

³⁷ Downs, 118.

that the House, with its shorter terms and smaller pool of voters, is more sensitive to changes in voter attitudes and opinions and more likely to be affected by ideas that are more radical on either side of the spectrum.³⁸ On the other hand, the U.S. Senate is less sensitive to change. The data on Senate elections is much more readily available because these races are covered more often in the national media. House of Representatives races, except for very specific ones, are not often covered in the same amount at a national level. In addition, voters are more knowledgeable about U.S. Senate elections.³⁹

The first step in determining the effect of tea party activity on U.S. Senate elections in 2010 was to collect all of the articles mentioning the TPM from four newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*. These four newspapers were used because of their national scope and to represent liberal, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and conservative, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Times*, biases. Articles from these newspapers were used to learn the names of national leaders of the movement and nationwide actions. In addition, these articles were used to track campaign activities that occurred in the nine races used as case studies. Articles about the TPM and the U.S. Senate races were collected from newspapers in each of the 36 states where there was a U.S. Senate election occurring. These articles discussed what was occurring at the local level of the TPM and the 2010 elections.

Next, I used these articles to compile information about the candidates' endorsements and contributions from TPM related groups. Each U.S. Senate race was coded in terms of tea party activity. The categories used to determine tea party activity were endorsement of candidates by

³⁸ Mark Mellman, "Senate vs. House Politics," *The Hill*, July 27, 2010, accessed January 4, 2011, <http://thehill.com/opinion/columnists/mark-mellman/111263-senate-vs-house-politics>.

³⁹ Alan Abramowitz. "A Comparison of Voting for U.S. Senator and Representatives in 1978." *American Political Science Review* (74): 638.

Sarah Palin, endorsement of the candidate by Michelle Bachmann, endorsements by the TPE, campaign contributions from Sarah Palin's PAC, campaign contributions from Michelle Bachmann's PAC, TPE Endorsement, TPE Tours, FreedomWorks Endorsement and FreedomWorks campaign contributions. High tea party activity races had all but one or two of the factors while low tea party activity races had between zero and two of the factors occurring in their race and medium tea party activity races fell in between ranging from 3 – 5 of the categories. This chart and the results of this coding can be seen in Appendix 1.

After having coded each of the 37 races in terms of the level of tea party activity, a map from Realclearpolitics.com was used in order to determine the predicted partisan lean of each race: Republican, Democratic, or Toss-up. This map can be seen in Appendix 2. With this data a regression analysis was performed. The independent variable when performing this test was the percentage of the popular vote received by the GOP in each Senate race. The results suggested that states with high levels of tea party activity earned significantly lower vote shares for Republican candidates, after controlling for races leaning toward the Republican candidate.

To further explain these results, nine case studies were chosen. From each level tea party activity (high, medium, or low) a Democratic, Republican, and Toss-up case was chosen. For the high tea party activity category Alaska was chosen for the Republican leaning race, Delaware was chosen for the Democratic leaning race, and Nevada was chosen for the toss-up race. For the medium tea party activity category, Oklahoma was chosen for the Republican leaning race, Oregon was chosen for the Democratic leaning race, and Washington was chosen for the toss-up race. For the low tea party activity category Idaho was chosen for the Republican leaning race, Maryland was chosen for the Democratic leaning race, and Connecticut was chosen for the toss-up race. It was hard to choose a low tea party activity, toss-up race because these races are the

ones that the TPM had specifically targeted. Therefore, the level of activity in Linda McMahon's race was slightly elevated over other low tea party activity races.

In order to study the TPM at the grassroots level for each of these nine races, the TPP website was used to find the names and websites of TPM groups. Each of the groups that had their own website, Facebook, or Meetup had their events tracked in order to follow the goings on of the local TPM movement. Other information about each group, such as number of members, was noted if available.

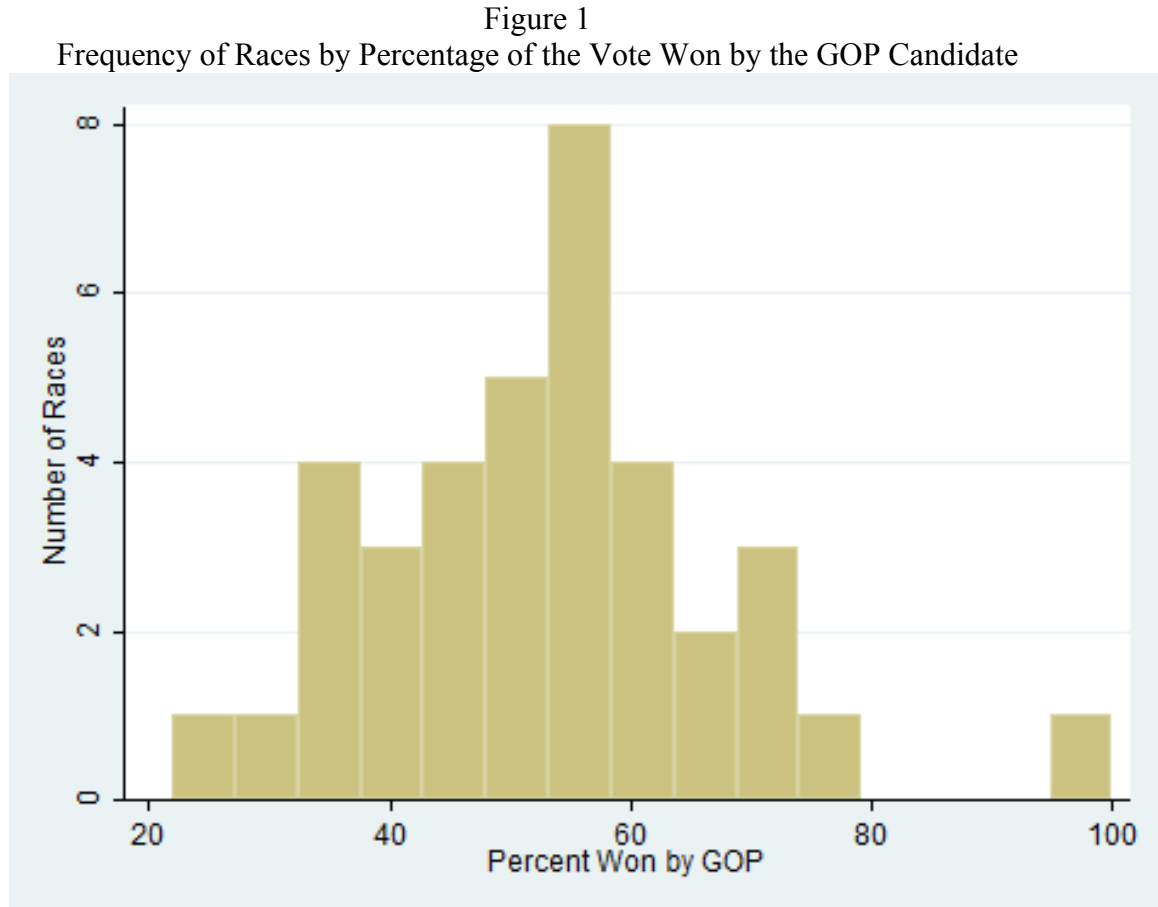
Each case study begins with background information about the incumbent U.S. Senator, information about all of the candidates, endorsements, platforms, and ad campaigns. All nine cases also contain a tea party activity section that compiles the information gathered from local groups' websites. The combination of the story of the race and the tea party activity is told in order to see if any patterns emerge that explain the results from the statistical analysis. In terms of the grassroots organizing, I focused specifically on the events section of each groups website, Facebook, or Meetup group. Focusing on types of events helped to see how the groups mobilized their movement's members to effect electoral results. Events consisted of rallies, candidate's forums, general meetings, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities. GOTV activities include helping with mailings for specific candidates, canvassing, or phone banking.

This thesis will determine the effect of the TPM on the 2010 U.S. Senate elections by testing the enthusiasm hypothesis and the spatial positions hypothesis. These hypotheses are first tested through a regression analysis and then further explained through nine case studies. The next chapter will discuss the results of the statistical analysis and its implications on the case study research.

CHAPTER 3: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A statistical analysis was performed in order to see if the relationship between the lean of the race, the level of tea party activity, and the percentage of the vote won by the GOP candidate pointed to either the enthusiasm hypothesis or the spatial positions hypothesis. If the statistical analysis supported the enthusiasm hypothesis we would expect to see a positive and significant relationship between the level of tea party activity and the percentage of the vote won by the GOP. A negative or neutral result would suggest that the spatial positions hypothesis was correct. This result would mean that the level of tea party activity either had no effect on Republicans winning elections or had a negative effect on Republicans winning elections.

The majority of the 2010 U.S. Senate races leaned towards the Republican Party, as defined by the RealClearPolitics Map found in Appendix 2. Out of the 37 races, 24 were likely to go to the GOP, nine were likely to go Democratic, and four were considered toss-up races. In terms of levels of tea party activity, 17 out of 37 races were low-level races, 12 were medium-level, and eight were high-level. The average percentage of the vote won by the GOP candidate was 52.7568 percent with the lowest being 22% in Hawaii and the highest being 100% in South Dakota where the opponent ran unopposed. The graph below shows the number of races by the percentage won by the GOP, creating an approximately normally distributed curve.



Four ordinary least squares regressions were run in order to examine the relationship between the percent won by the GOP, level of tea party activity, and lean of the race. In Model 1, the dependent variable was compared to all three levels of tea party activity. This regression would determine whether there was a distinction between the levels of tea party activity and their effect on the GOP vote share. The result of the first regression was not statistically significant and it was negative, so different levels of tea party activity did not have a significant effect on the percentage of the vote won by the GOP candidate. Model 2 compared the dependent variable to only the races with high tea party activity. Again, the results were negative and not statistically significant. The third regression compared the dependent variable to all three levels of tea party activity while controlling for races leaning towards the Republican candidate. This regression

shows the nonsurprising result that races that were leaning toward the Republican Party gained significantly higher vote shares for the Republican candidate, with no statistically significant effect of tea party activity. The final regression compared the dependent variable to high tea party activity while still controlling for races leaning towards the Republican candidate. The results show that states with high levels of tea party activity earned significantly lower vote shares for Republican candidates, after controlling for races leaning toward the Republican candidate (also statistically significant).

Table 2. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Effect of Tea Party Activity on 2010 U. S. Senate Electoral Outcomes

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable:			
	<i>Percent Vote Share of Republican Candidate</i>			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Level of Tea Party Activity</i>	-1.3235 (3.1330)		-1.1720 (2.2740)	
<i>Tea Party has High Activity</i>		-8.9397 (5.7973)		-8.3018* (4.1162)
<i>Race leaned toward Republicans = 1</i>			21.3044*** (3.7402)	21.1407*** (3.5494)
<i>Constant</i>	55.0818*** (6.0287)	54.6897*** (2.6957)	40.9966*** (5.0259)	40.8388*** (3.0114)
N	37	37	37	37
F Statistic	0.18	2.38	16.39	20.10
F Degrees of Freedom	36	36	36	36

Note: * $p \leq 0.050$, ** $p \leq 0.010$, *** $p \leq 0.001$

The results of Model 4 are consistent with the spatial positions hypothesis. This result suggests that high levels of tea party activity in Republican leaning races did not result in wins for Republican candidates. Although this data cannot fully conclude that tea party activity had a negative effect on the candidates, the negative trend does suggest that tea party activity did not have a positive effect for the GOP candidates. In order to further understand this result the next

chapter provides an in-depth analysis of nine different races. Each case gives an explanation of different factors in the race during the primary and general elections and an explanation of the TPM at the grassroots level.

CHAPTER 4: NINE CASE STUDIES

Statistical analysis from the last chapter suggested that the spatial hypothesis explains the effect of tea party activity on 2010 U.S. Senate elections. The spatial positions hypothesis posits that the TPM pushed republican candidates too far to the right for them to get the number of votes needed to win elections. In this chapter these results will be further explained through nine case studies. Several patterns were found in the stories behind the races and in the tea party activity at the grassroots level. Candidates in all three high tea party level activity races tried to make their platforms more moderate after the primary. Candidates in Connecticut and Washington, a toss-up and democratic leaning race, respectively, appealed to the tea party after the primary. Social issues were relevant in the Alaska and Washington races even though the TPM focused on fiscal issues. Many tea party groups held rallies and candidates' forums but very few held GOTV on behalf of specific candidates.

The Case of the Alaska Election: High Tea Party Activity, Republican Leaning Race

Incumbent Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski was up for re-election during the 2010 election cycle. In 2002 Murkowski was appointed to the U.S. Senate by her father, the governor at the time, and won reelection in 2004.⁴⁰ Murkowski was one of the five-member Republican leadership group, the most senior Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and a part of the Appropriations Committee.⁴¹ Elements of right wing Alaska have always disliked Murkowski because of her socially liberal stances. Other Alaskans considered

⁴⁰ Sean Cockerham, "Sitka mayor files to challenge Murkowski," *Anchorage Daily News*, June 2, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/06/01/1303528/sitka-mayor-files-to-challenge.html>.

⁴¹ *Anchorage Daily News*, June 2, 2010.

her family a political dynasty and had not gotten past her father appointing her to the U.S. Senate.⁴²

Primary Election Race

On April 19, 2010, Joe Miller announced that he would be running for U.S. Senate in order to stop the country from a “headlong plunge into socialism.”⁴³ Miller’s resume included a Yale law degree, West Point officer’s commission, Veteran of the First Gulf War, former state District Court judge and a U.S. magistrate judge. Miller won the Republican nomination for state legislature from Fairbanks in 2004 but lost the election to the incumbent Democrat.⁴⁴ Palin and Miller made headlines in Alaska in 2008 when they tried to unseat the Alaska Republican Party Chairman at Alaska’s state GOP party convention.⁴⁵

On June 2, 2010 Sarah Palin endorsed Miller on her Facebook page—about a month after her husband, Todd Palin, attended one of Miller’s fundraisers.⁴⁶ Two weeks later, TPE endorsed Miller.⁴⁷ Levi Russell, a spokesman for TPE, said, “Miller is the kind of candidate the group wants to support—someone who shares its perspective but needs star power to become known to voters.”⁴⁸

Throughout the primary season, Miller portrayed himself as more conservative than Murkowski. Miller wanted to eliminate the Department of Education, Social Security, and

⁴² Sean Cockerham and Kyle Hopkins, “Miller on verge of toppling Murkowski,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August, 25, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011 <http://www.adn.com/2010/08/25/1423423/miller-holds-slim-lead-in-early.html>.

⁴³ “Fairbanks lawyer challenging Murkowski for Senate seat; PRIMARY: Candidacy is based on stopping government ‘headlong plunge into socialism,’” *Anchorage Daily News*, April 21, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/04/21/1244607/fairbanks-lawyer-challenging-murkowski.html>.

⁴⁴ Pat Forgey, “Conservative star Miller ran as a moderate before,” *Juneau Empire*, October, 8, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, http://www.juneauempire.com/stories/100810/loc_717574213.shtml.

⁴⁵ Sean Cockerham, “Fairbanks Republican seeks support from conservatives,” *Anchorage Daily News*, May 3, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/05/03/1261898/fairbanks-republican-seeks-support.html>.

⁴⁶ Sean Cockerham, “Palin backs Murkowski opponent in Senate GOP primary,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 2, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/06/02/1305149/palin-backs-murkowski-opponent.html>.

⁴⁷ Sean Cockerham, “Tea Party Express follows Palin’s lead, backs Miller,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/06/16/1327235/tea-party-express-follows-palins.html>.

⁴⁸ *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 2010.

Medicare, and stood firmly against cap-and-trade, calling global warming a “dubious science at best.”⁴⁹ The Miller campaign pointed out that Murkowski “is for abortion rights, supported a Wall Street bailout and is not in favor of repealing the “Obamacare” federal health law.”⁵⁰ Murkowski’s campaign responded to this by touting her votes against the stimulus package and the federal health-care bill.⁵¹

Murkowski supports abortion rights, making her unpopular with the socially conservative wing of Alaska’s Republican Party. This was important during the primary because there was a ballot measure to be voted that dealt with abortion. Ballot Measure 2: Abortion for Minor Requires Notice to or Consent “would require doctors to notify parents before girls 17 and under get an abortion.”⁵² One journalist noted, “as a measure of the issue’s ability to bring out the vote, there were 10,000 votes cast just for the ballot measure alone, with no senate candidate even selected.”⁵³ It is likely that this ballot measure had an effect on the results of the primary, arguably in Miller’s favor. Although Murkowski said she was in favor of the ballot measure, she did not come out and campaign for it as strongly as Miller.⁵⁴

During the week leading up the August 24th primary, Alaskan voters were inundated with ads. Robocalls from Sarah Palin, Mike Huckabee, and former Alaska Lieutenant Governor Loren Lemmon urged voters to support Miller.⁵⁵ Miller, with the help of over half a million dollars in

⁴⁹ Alaska's far-right looks for misstep by Murkowski over energy policy,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 29, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/06/29/1346384/alaskas-far-right-looks-for-misstep.html>.

⁵⁰ Sean Cockerham, “Tea Party Express fuels Miller-Murkowski fight,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 24, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/06/23/1338089/tea-party-on-murkowski-time-to.html>.

⁵¹ *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 2010.

⁵² Sean Cockerham, “Campaigns clash down to the wire; VOTE TODAY: Primary candidates unleash barrage of 11th-hour ads,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 24, 2010, accessed January 11, 2010, <http://www.adn.com/2010/08/23/1421771/campaigns-clash-down-to-the-wire.html>.

⁵³ John Goodman, “In Alaska, Proof that Ballot Measures Can Drive Turnout,” *Governing*, August 25, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.governing.com/blogs/politics/Alaska-Ballot-Measures-Turnout.html>.

⁵⁴ Sean Cockerham, “Murkowski concedes; Incumbent couldn't catch up in bitter Republican primary race,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 1, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/08/31/v-printer/1433454/murkowski-concedes-senate-race.html>.

⁵⁵ *Anchorage Daily News*, August 24, 2010.

funding from TPE, aired three TV ads: two of the ads talked about Miller's background and resume, focusing on "his West Point degree and Bronze Star in the First Gulf War" and the third ad said, "at a time when our nation is sliding toward socialism, we know we can count on Joe Miller to stand up for We the People."⁵⁶ Murkowski also ran several TV ads that accused Miller of lying about her platform and voting record and criticizing the Obama administration.⁵⁷

On the night after the primary, Miller led Murkowski by 1,668 votes.⁵⁸ On August 31 Murkowski conceded to Miller.⁵⁹ During the counting Miller alleged that the Murkowski campaign was tampering with votes. After counting the absentee ballots, Miller led Murkowski by 1,630 votes with 52,988 to her 51,358. Murkowski won in Anchorage, where there was a high voter turnout (cancelling out certain enthusiasm gaps), where she is well known, and where the majority of the voters are employed and satisfied with the status quo. Given Sarah and Todd Palin's support, Miller did very well in the Valley where there were a lot of "committed volunteers...getting businesses to put up huge Miller signs, walking in parades and making personal pitches by phone."⁶⁰ One Alaskan journalist commented that, "Miller ran the kind of campaign that's never before been successful for an Alaskan running for U.S. Senate. He called for slashing federal spending while running for office in a state where federal money plays a huge role in driving the economy."⁶¹ In the same vein, a University of Alaska Professor Steve Haycox said, "On the face of it, it puts Alaska in a desperate economic situation because it will

⁵⁶ *Anchorage Daily News*, August 24, 2010.

⁵⁷ *Anchorage Daily News*, August 24, 2010.

⁵⁸ Sean Cockerham, "Miller's lead slims; Murkowski awaits absentees," *Anchorage Daily News*, August 25, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/08/25/1425005/millers-lead-slims-as-murkowski.html>.

⁵⁹ *Anchorage Daily News*, September 1, 2010.

⁶⁰ Lisa Demer, "Miller dominated Valley, Interior vote," *Anchorage Daily News*, August 31, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/08/30/1431878/miller-dominated-valley-interior.html>.

⁶¹ Cockerham, Sean, "Murkowski concedes; Incumbent couldn't catch up in bitter Republican primary race." *Anchorage Daily News*, September 1, 2010.

have two junior senators. That's a big, big problem when one-third of our economic base is federal spending.”⁶²

General Election Race

The GOP establishment lined up behind Miller after his win in the Alaskan primary.⁶³ The National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) pledged Miller over \$200,000 even though “Miller complained when the NRSC sent a lawyer to Alaska to advise Murkowski in the count, and his campaign suggested the group was behind what it called “nefarious” phone calls asking absentee voters how they voted.”⁶⁴ Mitch McConnell’s PAC and Senator Jim Demint contributed money to Miller’s campaign. FreedomWorks and Club for Growth both endorsed Miller.⁶⁵

On September 19 Murkowski announced a write in campaign with the tagline “Lets Make History.”⁶⁶ In response to Murkowski, the DSCC said the Republican Party was “cannibalizing itself.” The National GOP seemed unhappy with her write-in campaign and said that Murkowski would have to leave her position of seniority “rather than force an embarrassing showdown.” Scott McAdams, the Democratic candidate, and Murkowski tried to paint Miller as too extreme and out of touch with Alaskan voters. In addition, Miller was accused of being the “male Sarah Palin” and just wanting media attention. During the primary Miller boosted a

⁶² Lisa Demer, “Murkowski fall ends an era; CLOUT: With junior senators and Young losing leadership role, state faces tighter times,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 2, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/09/01/1435678/murkowski-defeat-costs-state-seniority.html>.

⁶³ Sean Cockerham and Erika Bolstad, “Murkowski to announce campaign plans Friday; BALLOT: Senator seriously weighs write-in option as GOP moves on with Miller,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 15, 2010, accessed January 15, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/09/14/1454693/murkowski-to-reveal-her-intentions.html>.

⁶⁴ Kyle Hopkins, “Senate candidates Miller, McAdams take off the gloves,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 6, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/09/06/1441876/senate-candidates-taking-off-the.html>.

⁶⁵ Erika Bolstad and Sean Cockerham, “GOP puts its money on Miller; NATIONAL SUPPORT: Still no word if Murkowski, who is flush with cash, will enter as a write-in,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 9, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/09/07/1496862/GOP-puts-its-money-on.html>.

⁶⁶ Sean Cockerham and Erika Bolstad, “Murkowski says 'Let's Make History,’” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 18, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/09/17/1459578/murkowski-expected-to-say-yes.html>.

platform of extremely conservative views, but during the general election it became clear that Miller was “working hard to convince voters he’s not as extreme as he’s been made out to be. Miller wants to move slowly and has no intention of turning off the federal money spigot or moving to end Social Security right away.”⁶⁷

Questionable aspects from Miller’s past began to come out in the media. In 2008, Miller used his coworkers’ computers to vote in a poll against Alaska’s Republican Party Chairman.⁶⁸ Miller’s private security guards handcuffed an Alaska Dispatch journalist during a town hall meeting at a Middle School in Anchorage.⁶⁹ Murkowski questioned Miller’s integrity during a debate in late October because of “disclosures that his family had received federal government benefits including Medicaid, unemployment and farm subsidies—benefits the fiscal conservative has raised concerns with as a candidate.”⁷⁰

Polls showed Miller winning the general election. However, on the morning of November 3, 41% of voters from 432 of 438 precincts had filled in the “write-in” bubble on their ballot, compared to 34.3 percent for Miller and 23.6 for McAdams.⁷¹ On November 17, Murkowski claimed victory after Alaska’s Republican Party called the race in her favor.⁷² But Miller did not concede and called the voting system “suspect” requesting videos from the ballot machines. On December 28, Miller challenged the election results in federal court. While this continued,

⁶⁷ Lisa Demer, “Candidates stumping to show differences,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 27, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/09/26/1472879/candidates-stumping-to-show-differences.html>.

⁶⁸ William Yardley, “Palin Renews Support for Miller in Alaska Race,” *The New York Times*, October 29, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/30/us/politics/30alaska.html>.

⁶⁹ Yereth Rosen, “For Joe Miller, handcuff incident adds to mounting troubles,” *Alaska Dispatch*, October 19, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/joe-miller-handcuff-incident-adds-mounting-troubles?page=full>.

⁷⁰ Becky Bohrer, “Ethics at center of debate,” Associated Press, September, 27, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/10/24/1517072/parnell-holds-judgment-on-pebble.html>.

⁷¹ Sean Cockerham, “Write-ins favor Murkowski; Miller won't quit,” *Anchorage Daily News*, November 3, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/11/02/1532963/senate-drama-could-just-be-beginning.html>.

⁷² Kyle Hopkins, “Senator proclaims herself the victor,” *Anchorage Daily News*, November 17, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/11/17/1560285/murkowski-proclaims-herself-the.html>.

Murkowski was certified as the winner of Alaska's U.S. Senate race by Gov. Sean Parnell and Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell on December 30. Miller gave up his legal challenge on December 31.⁷³

On December 30, 2010, Lisa Murkowski became the second politician to pull off a write-in campaign in the U.S. Senate. Although Alaska's conservative base was enticed by Miller's early campaign and came to the primary for the abortion-related ballot measure, his character flaws and paranoia came out in the national media. Murkowski appealed to the independents and Democrats during her write-in campaign, attacked the Obama Administration, and framed her incumbency as a way to work more powerfully in Washington on behalf of Alaska's voter interests leading to her second successful reelection.

Tea Party Activity

The U.S. Senate race in Alaska was coded as a high level of tea party activity because Joe Miller received endorsements from Sarah Palin, Michele Bachman, and TPE. Miller received contributions from Palin's PAC, TPE, and FreedomWorks. None of the four TPE tours stopped in Alaska due to its distance from the Lower 48. However, TPE's contribution of over \$600,000 to Miller's campaign demonstrates a high level of interest. During the first round of Tax Day Tea Party protests in April 2009, 1200 people rallied in Anchorage and several hundred rallied in Wasilla.⁷⁴ There were also said to be protests in Fairbanks, Haines, Homer, Ketchikan, Kodiak, and Soldotna. In 2010, there was a demonstration in Anchorage for the second Tax Day Tea Party made up of 200 people.⁷⁵

Although the TPP lists Alaska as having 19 different TPM related groups only two have evidence of doing any local organizing. The first of the two groups is the Conservative Patriot's

⁷³ Becky Bohrer, "Murkowski officially victor," *Anchorage Daily News*, December 31, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/12/30/1625216/state-set-to-certify-alaska-senate.html>.

⁷⁴ Kyle Hopkins and Zaz Hollander, "Alaska Protestors Gather for tax 'Tea Parties'," *Anchorage Daily News*, April 15, 2009, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2009/04/15/760515/alaska-protesters-gather-for-tax.html>.

⁷⁵ Kyle Hopkins and Rindi White, "Tea party protests targets taxes, health insurance overhaul," *Anchorage Daily News*, April 15, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/04/15/1228142/tea-party-rails-against-health.html>.

Group (CPG). CPG became incorporated in July of 2009. Unlike other tea party groups, their webpage says that they are committed to getting conservative officials elected.⁷⁶ At the time of the CPG had 301 members listed on their website. CPG has leaders who are elected to 3-year terms and one earns a vote by donating to their group⁷⁷. The group also has a Facebook page but it only lists three events: a rally, movie screening, and general meeting.⁷⁸ CPG endorsed Joe Miller at a 200-person rally held in Anchorage at the end of June 2010.⁷⁹ Because their web page does not have an events page, nor does it have any newsletters for the time leading up the election it is unclear what CPG did to help boost Miller's campaign after their endorsement.

The other active Alaskan group was the Anchorage Tea Party (ATP). Their website had events from October – November 2010. ATP held three candidates' forums, one with Murkowski and McAdams and two with gubernatorial candidates. One of the candidates' forums had Murkowski and McAdams present and the other two were for the gubernatorial candidates. ATP listed no rallies during this period of time but it did have one general meeting and nine other events that included a BBQ, movie showing, and a "Founding Fathers Discussion Group." The majority of the events listed on their calendar were mailings for Joe Miller, sign waving for Joe Miller, or phone banking. There was a total of 51 of these GOTV events. Sign waving events took place at different overpasses around Anchorage. This was organized through a different site entitled "Joe Miller's Sign Waving Militia" (<http://freedomnews.us/MillerSignWaiving.html>.) Phone banking events had the following explanation:

"Let's Get Out The Vote at the Victory Office! We are officially announcing special nights for Joe Miller volunteers and Tea Party folks to make phone calls. Making voter

⁷⁶ "Conservative Patriots Group – Who We Are," <http://www.conservativepatriotsgroup.org/>.

⁷⁷ "Membership Dues Application," <http://www.conservativepatriotsgroup.org/membershipduesapplication.htm>.

⁷⁸ "Conservative Patriots Group – Events," http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=335980200202&v=app_2344061033.

⁷⁹ Kyle Hopkins, "Tea partiers rally in Anchorage, set to endorse candidates," *Anchorage Daily News*, June 25, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.adn.com/2010/06/24/1340078/tea-party-rally-draws-more-than.html>.

ID calls is one of the most critically important things we can do to help Joe cross the finish line this year. By micro targeting undecided voters, we can ensure we are making the best impact we can among those to turn them into solid votes for Joe.”

This is the most direct GOTV activity exhibited in any of the nine cases. Although these events were advertised on the group’s website it is unknown how many people participated.

Miller ran on a very conservative platform and defeated Murkowski in the Alaskan Republican primary. After the election, Miller tried to appear more moderate, exhibiting pattern A. Both the CPG and ATP endorsed Miller but it is unclear if CPG did anything to get voters out on his behalf. ATP posted a large amount of GOTV activity in the last month before the general election but it remains unclear how many tea party activists participated in these activities.

The Case of the Delaware Election: High Tea Party Activity, Democratic Leaning Race

In January 2010, Vice President Biden's son, Joseph "Beau" Biden III, said he would not run for his father's seat. The state Democratic Party replaced him with New Castle County Executive Chris Coons. Pundits and pollsters thought that Delaware's open U.S. Senate seat could switch from Democratic to Republican.⁸⁰ Then, tea party darling Christine O'Donnell won the Republican candidacy in the First State's primary. Delaware's Republican Party and the national Republican Party opposed O'Donnell's primary victory because they were afraid that it would hurt their chances at taking control of the U.S. Senate. Coons defeated the extremely conservative O'Donnell in the general election and Delaware maintained two Democratic U.S. Senators.

Primary Election Race

Christine O'Donnell ran for U.S. Senate in 2006 and 2008.⁸¹ In both elections O'Donnell focused more on social issues than the fiscally conservative issues she touted as a tea party candidate. Her other past endeavors include working for the Republican National Committee as a marketing coordinator, a press secretary for Concerned Woman for America, founding Saviors Alliance for Lifting the Truth, and a job with a conservative think tank based in Wilmington, Delaware⁸². O'Donnell has not held a job in years and her past campaign finance filings show that she has lived off of her campaign contributions.

O'Donnell's ran on a platform of fiscally and socially conservative views. She opposed all earmarks and wanted a balanced budget amendment. O'Donnell was against the stimulus bill,

⁸⁰ Jonathan Weisman, "Tea Party Backs O'Donnell in Delaware," *The Wall Street Journal*, August, 30, 2010, accessed October 30, 2010, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2010/08/30/tea-party-endorses-odonnell-in-delaware/>

⁸¹ Jessica Eisenbrey, "Oh my! O'Donnell beats Castle - Stunning GOP primary gives tea-party favorite U.S. Senate nomination," *Delaware State News*, September 15, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010.

⁸² Randall Chase, "Upset puts O'Donnell in spotlight - She remains mystery among Delawareans after stunning Castle," *Delaware State News*, September 16, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010.

cap-and-trade, and the healthcare bill. Although O'Donnell did not want to eliminate the Department of Education and Social Security, O'Donnell did favor more local control of schools and raising the retirement age of Social Security. She called for a fence on the border between the U.S. and Mexico and wanted to bring more troops home to protect our borders. O'Donnell signed the "Defund It" pledge that called for the defunding and eventual repeal of the healthcare bill.

In late August 2010 O'Donnell received an endorsement from the TPE and a promise of over half a million dollars for her primary campaign.⁸³ O'Donnell was endorsed by Sarah Palin on Palin's Facebook page on September 9, 2010, days before the mid-September primary. She also received an endorsement from Senator Jim DeMint. Both the GOP establishment in Washington and the state Republican Party reacted strongly in response to these endorsements and campaign contribution promises. State GOP Chairman Tom Ross stated that O'Donnell was "unfit to be elected as a dogcatcher."⁸⁴ The GOP establishment had backed O'Donnell in the 2006 and 2008 elections. They now attacked her for "lying to voters" and manipulating her own history" making her unelectable.⁸⁵ FreedomWorks did not support O'Donnell because she was viewed as unelectable.⁸⁶ At this point in the primary season the NRSC had seen seven of its supported candidates lose to "insurgents" in Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Nevada, and Alaska—several of whom were aided by the TPE.⁸⁷

Polls from early September showed Castle and O'Donnell in a close race for the nomination. O'Donnell used her ad campaign to attack Castle on some of his more liberal

⁸³ Weisman, Jonathan. "Tea Party Backs O'Donnell in Delaware." *The Wall Street Journal*, August, 30, 2010.

⁸⁴ Jessica Eisenbrey, "O'Donnell blasts Castle, state GOP," *Delaware State News*, September 10, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010.

⁸⁵ Kate Zernike, "For G.O.P., Fervor of Tea Party Holds Promise, and Problems," *The New York Times*, September 6, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/06/us/politics/06teaparty.html>.

⁸⁶ Jeff Zeleny, "G.O.P. Braces for More Discontent in Primaries," *The New York Times*, September, 13, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/14/us/politics/14memo.html>.

⁸⁷ *The New York Times*, September, 13, 2010.

stances, such as his views on abortion, his vote in favor of 2008's bank bailout, and his vote in favor of cap-and-trade.⁸⁸ This was the first competitive GOP Senate race in a decade, with less than 8% voting in 2006's Republican primary.⁸⁹

On the night of September 14 the Associated Press called the race in O'Donnell's favor. O'Donnell received 53 percent of the vote to Castle's 46 percent, with large margins in the more conservative downstate counties of Kent and Sussex.⁹⁰ In order to win the general election, O'Donnell needed to garner votes from Delaware's 146,000 registered independents in a state that has 292,000 registered Democrats and only 182,000 registered Republicans.⁹¹

General Election Race

On the night of O'Donnell's primary victory, the NRSC came out saying that they would not fund her campaign since most polls had her losing to Coons.⁹² Karl Rove went on a FOX talk show and asserted that O'Donnell's character flaws would prevent her from getting into office and also prevent the GOP from taking over the Senate. The next day, though, the NRSC would send the largest amount allotted to O'Donnell's campaign, \$42,000, and Rove would eventually backtrack on his statements from primary night.⁹³

The state GOP maintained its opposition against O'Donnell. In the week following the primary, the Delaware Republican party filed a complaint with the Federal Elections

⁸⁸ John Fund, "When Christine O'Donnell Talks, Mike Castle Breathes Easier," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 4, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703946504575470221240928594.html>.

⁸⁹ John Fund, "Down to the Wire in Delaware," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 14, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703466704575489832996983808.html>.

⁹⁰ *Delaware State News*, September 10, 2010.

⁹¹ Neil King, Jr., "Odds Are Tough, but Not Hopeless, for GOP in Delaware," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 16, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703743504575494252317649106.html>.

⁹² Danny Yadron, "NRSC: No Plans to Fund O'Donnell," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 14, 2010, accessed November 4, 2010, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2010/09/14/nrsc-no-plans-to-fund-odonnell/>.

⁹³ Mary Lu Carnevale, "Cornyn: O'Donnell Gets NRSC Money," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 16, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2010/09/15/cornyn-odonnell-gets-nrsc-money/>.

Commission saying that the collaboration between O'Donnell and the TPE was illegal.⁹⁴

Additionally, Congressman Mike Castle briefly considered a write-in campaign after his loss to O'Donnell (9).⁹⁵ At this point the polls had Coons beating out O'Donnell by 19 points.⁹⁶

O'Donnell's campaign ran a television ad and launched a website calling Coons "the tax man." This ad focused on his policies during his time as New Castle County Executive, saying he raised taxes 50% and brought New Castle County close bankruptcy.⁹⁷ Another ad tried to paint Coons as a socialist by focusing on a paper that Coons wrote during college entitled "The Bearded Marxist."⁹⁸ In a third ad, Coons was called a "Rubber Stamp Man," who would blindly follow President Barack Obama's policies.

Throughout the election cycle, the national media constantly repeated O'Donnell's numerous political gaffes. The most notable of these include O'Donnell living off of campaign contributions, equating masturbation to adultery, saying she dabbled in witchcraft, and her inability to answer questions dealing with the U.S. Constitution. In early October, O'Donnell released the "I am not a Witch" ad, which contained the following monologue by O'Donnell:

"I am not a witch. I am nothing you've heard. I'm you. None of us are perfect, but none of us can be happy with what we see all around us. Politicians who think spending, trading favors and back-room deals are the ways to stay in office. I'll go to Washington and do what you'd do. I am Christine O'Donnell and I approve this message. I'm you."⁹⁹ One group of pundits felt that the ad humanized O'Donnell. Others felt it was over the

top and Bill Maher said, "if you start your ad campaign with, "I'm not a witch," the battle has

⁹⁴ Peter Wallsten and Danny Yadron, "At Group's Helm, a Seasoned Hand," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 17, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704394704575496220307859404.html>.

⁹⁵ Jessica Eisenbrey; "Castle mulls run as write-in candidate - After losing primary, longtime congressman weighing options," *Delaware State News*, September 24, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010.

⁹⁶ Jessica Eisenbrey; "Coons, O'Donnell debate tonight," *Delaware State News*, October 13, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010.

⁹⁷ *Delaware State News*, October 13, 2010.

⁹⁸ King, Jr., Neil. "Odds Are Tough, but Not Hopeless, for GOP in Delaware." *The Wall Street Journal*, September 16, 2010.

⁹⁹ "Christine O'Donnell: I'm You," Christine4Senate, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGGAgIjengs>.

been lost.”¹⁰⁰ The biggest political gaffe in the three Coons-O’Donnell debates occurred on October 19 at Widener Law School in Wilmington. When discussing whether evolution or creationism should be taught in schools, O’Donnell apparently did not know that the separation of church and state was in the Constitution and claimed, “Fortunately, senators don’t have to memorize the Constitution.”¹⁰¹

Delaware’s commissioner of elections predicted that a larger number of absentee ballots would lead to higher overall voting numbers on Election Day. Of these statistics Samuel Hoff, a political science professor at Delaware State University, said, “Normally, these (midterms) track 20-30 percent less than presidential election years...The 32 percent turnout of Republicans [during the primary] is double what we had in 2008 and quadruple what it has been in midterm elections before that. And even though it was low for the Democratic Party, (12 percent) was slightly above their average.”¹⁰² On election night, Democrat Chris Coons came out the victor in Delaware, defeating O’Donnell by almost 50,000 votes, or 16%, with 49% of registered voters going to the polls.¹⁰³

Tea Party Activity

Delaware is a high level tea party activity race because Christine O’Donnell received endorsements from Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, and TPE. O’Donnell also received campaign contributions from Palin’s PAC, Bachmann’s PAC, TPE, and FreedomWorks. Additionally, TPE IV stopped in Wilmington, Delaware and had a crowd of over a thousand

¹⁰⁰ Rob Quinn, “O’Donnell Ad: ‘I’m Not a Witch’,” October 5, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, <http://www.newser.com/story/102154/odonnell-ad-im-not-a-witch.html>.

¹⁰¹ Jess Bravin, “Coons, O’Donnell Debate Constitution,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 19, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2010/10/19/coons-odonnell-debate-the-constitution/>.

¹⁰² Andrew West, “Voter interest appears higher this midterm,” *Delaware State News*, October 31, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010.

¹⁰³ Jessica Eisenbrey, “Democratic dominance - Coons tops O’Donnell in testy race,” *Delaware State News*, November 3, 2010, accessed January 10, 2010.

people with Christine O'Donnell guest speaking.¹⁰⁴ During the Tax Day Tea Party 2009 “hundreds of people” rallied in front of the Capitol Building in Dover.¹⁰⁵ Although the Delaware race received a lot of attention from national groups—enough to bring O'Donnell to a primary victory—there is not a lot of evidence of grassroots organizing.

Delaware's TPP website lists ten different groups but only three have a separate website and only one has an active website. The Delaware Tea Party (DTP) has both its own page and a Facebook group. Its own page does not have any events but there are several events listed on their Facebook. DTP had two candidates' forums, 11 rallies, one general meeting, and seven other events.¹⁰⁶ At the time of the election there were 427 members of the Facebook group. Several of the events listed under “Other” were requests of members to call their elected officials about different legislative action, such as the passing of “The American Clean Energy & Security Act” and the healthcare bill. Although this is not stated anywhere on their website, one of DTP's organizers has said that they are not trying to endorse or campaign on the behalf of candidates but instead are trying to educate the public to make up their own minds.¹⁰⁷

National media attention and campaign contributions helped O'Donnell to win Delaware's Republican primary. After the primary, O'Donnell toned down her conservative views in order to appeal to a broader base of voters. It is not known whether Delaware's most active local group endorsed her candidacy. As evidenced by their lack of events, it seems that DTP did not greatly affect the outcome of the Delaware election by mobilizing people to vote.

¹⁰⁴ “O'Donnell Speaks At Delaware Tea Party Rally,” October 31, 2010, <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2010/10/31/odonnell-speaks-at-delaware-tea-party-rally/>

¹⁰⁵ Leah Burcat, “Tea Party event draws hundreds,” *Delaware State News*, April 16, 2009

¹⁰⁶ “Delaware Tea Party – Events,” http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=80384942920&v=app_2344061033.

¹⁰⁷ Randall Chase, “Tea party kept low-key in First State - Sussex organizer says 'education' is group's goal”, *Delaware State News*, April 6, 2010, accessed January 3, 2010.

O'Donnell's attention from national tea party leaders and groups did not transfer to a Republican win.

The Case of the Nevada Election: High Tea Party Activity, Toss-up Race

Many experts considered Nevada's Senate race to be leaning strongly Republican in early 2009. With an increasing number of foreclosures, the highest unemployment rate in the United States, and no end to the recession in sight, it seemed Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid was going to have to pay for broken campaign promises made by Obama in 2008. Sue Lowden, a former State Senator, led Sharron Angle by 40 points in polls during April 2010. Two months later Lowden lost the Republican candidacy to Angle by 14%. In the end, Reid defeated Angle's national TPM endorsements, expensive ad campaign, and statewide grassroots organizing.

Primary Election Race

Angle entered the GOP primary race in mid-July 2009 with \$35,000. Lowden officially entered the race in October of 2009 after stepping down from her position as Chairwoman of the Nevada Republican Party.¹⁰⁸ Throughout the campaign period, Lowden, Angle, and Danny Tarkanian would compete for the top spot in voter polls for the Republican nomination.

In mid-July, the NRSC said they wanted either Heller or Lowden to win the Republican nomination. Angle lost a primary for U.S. Congress in 2006 and lost a general election to Nevada Senate Minority Leader Bill Raggio in 2008.¹⁰⁹ In both races Angle was the more conservative candidate. Although the NRSC said it would support whoever won the primary, the Nevada state GOP was very clear on who the Republican candidate for United States Senate should not be—Sharron Angle. The Mayor of Sparks, Nevada and Sig Rogich, a Republican campaign consultant, started the “Republicans for Reid” Campaign in June 2009. Many of the

¹⁰⁸Benjamin Spillman, “Lowden unveils Senate bid,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 1, 2009, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/lowden-unveils-senate-bid-63058102.html>.

¹⁰⁹Molly Ball, “Angle weighs run against Reid in '10,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 11, 2009, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/42844127.html>.

members of this group were Reid's former rivals. They supported Reid because the power he yielded in the United States Senate was important for Nevada.

In early 2010, polls showed Lowden and Tarkanian as the leaders in the race for the Republican nomination. In March 2010 Las Vegas Businessman Scott Ashjian filed to create a third party, the Tea Party of Nevada.¹¹⁰ Two national umbrella groups Tea Party Nation and TPP quickly responded to this news saying that they had no intentions of creating a third party. Ashjian also came under speculation for attempting to help the Democratic incumbent Harry Reid given that his campaign aide was a registered Democrat.¹¹¹ Polls showed that if there was a third Tea Party of Nevada party in the race it would take 18% of the vote, leaving Reid with 36% and the Republican candidate with 32%.¹¹²

On April 15, 2010, Angle received an endorsement from the TPE during its Washington, D.C. Tax Day Rally.¹¹³ Lowden, Tarkanian, and Angle were vying for endorsements and campaign contributions to give themselves an edge over the other candidates.¹¹⁴ Angle, who had been trailing Lowden and Tarkanian for months, now trailed Lowden by 5 points.¹¹⁵ This polling jump was caused by Angle's endorsement by the TPE and its \$300,000 ad campaign on her behalf.¹¹⁶ Lowden's campaign was hurt at a town hall event in Mesquite when she said that people should barter with their doctors in order to lower healthcare costs. This video made it all the way to Jay Leno's "Tonight Show," and became known as the "Chickens for Checkups"

¹¹⁰ Kristi Jourdan, "Skeptics question Tea Party of Nevada," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, February 22, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/skeptics-question-tea-party-of-nevada-84939927.html>.

¹¹¹ *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, February 22, 2010.

¹¹² Steve Tetreault, "Lowden leads GOP Senate field," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, February 28, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/lowden-leads-gop-senate-field-85760137.html>.

¹¹³ Laura Myers, "Angle wins Tea Party endorsement," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, April 15, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/angle-gets-tea-party-nod-90911139.html>.

¹¹⁴ Laura Myers, "Senate candidates seek edge," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, May 9, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/senate-candidates-seek-edge-93223929.html>.

¹¹⁵ Laura Myers, "Tea Party power fuels Angle," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, May 13, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/tea-party-power-fuels-angle-93662969.html>.

¹¹⁶ Laura Myers, "Outside funding keys race," *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, May 15, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/outside-funding-crucial-to-race-93839599.html>.

clip.¹¹⁷ Lowden was running her primary campaign in conjunction with the regular election campaign. This may have hurt her in the primary because she was catering to a more moderate audience. Both Lowden and Tarkanian claimed that they would be the only candidate that would be able to beat Reid, while Angle was too extreme to capture independent voters.¹¹⁸ On June 6, 2010 the Las Vegas Review Journal revealed the results of a poll that showed Angle as the clear front-runner in the Republican primary, followed by Tarkanian and then Lowden. On the night of June 8th Angle was declared the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate winning 40% of the vote to Lowden's 26% and Tarkanian's 23%.¹¹⁹

General Election Race

After winning the primary, Angle's website shutdown for almost three weeks, showing only a page asking for campaign donations. Angle's views were very extreme and the Reid campaign began right away to try to "paint her as a fringe candidate."¹²⁰ There were major changes to her positions from her old to new website. During the primary, Angle's website discussed "abolishing the Department of Education, having Social Security 'transitioned out' to the private sector, and repealing legislation that prohibited offshore drilling," had endorsements by the controversial anti-immigration Minutemen PAC and by the birther organization the Declaration Alliance PAC, called the cap and trade proposal "unscientific hysteria over the man-caused global warming hoax," referred to the United Nations as "an institution captured by the far left," called for abolishing the "67,000-pages of IRS code," making the "death tax cuts permanent" and proposed that a "supermajority two-thirds requirement" should be instituted for

¹¹⁷ Laura Myers, "Reid backers try to get Lowden's goat," *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, April 19, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/reid-backers-try-to-get-lowden-s-goat-91450064.html>.

¹¹⁸ Laura Myers, "Brewing for a fight," *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 9, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/brewing-for-a-fight-95937634.html>.

¹¹⁹ "Election Results – Primary," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, June 9, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/2010-primary-election-results-95938314.html>.

¹²⁰ Laura Myers, "Angle quiet after win," *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 10, 2010, accessed November 10, 2010, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/angle-quiet-after-win-96035839.html>.

passing tax increases. Moreover, her original website expressed the extreme view of turning Nevada's Yucca Mountain into a reprocessing site for spent nuclear fuel and she made a comment on a radio show saying "the public would bring down an out-of-control Congress with 'Second Amendment remedies'."¹²¹ Angle's new website exhibited a more moderate, but still fiscally conservative, candidate.

A Mason-Dixon poll from July 12-14 showed Reid with a strong lead over Angle. Reid's "aggressive strategy of attacking Angle's staunch conservative views from the moment she won the June 8 primary has cost her support among every voter group—from men and women to both political parties and independents."¹²² Angle's campaign struggled to get off the ground and resisted help from the state and national GOP.¹²³ In a smart move, Angle hired The Prosper Group Corporation to run her website, the same group that worked on Scott Brown's website in Massachusetts. Reid's campaign continuously brought up Angle's extreme views on Social Security and Yucca Mountain, and her unfavorable rating grew larger among the general population.¹²⁴ Still, Angle continued to poll better among nonpartisans throughout the summer of 2010.

Angle was blasted for two more comments, one proclaiming that it is better for one parent to stay home and raise the children and another radio clip when she said there are "domestic enemies" in Congress.¹²⁵ Her campaign continued to run ads that tried to paint the

¹²¹ Laura Myers, "Angle gets a makeover with website," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, July 2, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/angle-gets-a-makeover-with-website-97652059.html>.

¹²² Laura Myers, "Reid takes lead on Angle," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, July 16, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/reid-takes-lead-on-angle-98587704.html>.

¹²³ Laura Myers, "Poll Sends Angle wake-up call," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, July 18, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/poll-sends-a-wake-up-call-to-struggling-angle-98695644.html>.

¹²⁴ Laura Myers, "Reid and Angle neck and neck," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, July 30, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/poll--reid--angle-neck-and-neck-99611324.html>.

¹²⁵ Steve Tetreault, "Angle stance draws Reid fire," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, August 26, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/angle-stance-draws-reid-fire-101544518.html>.

election as a referendum on Reid. In late August, a Las-Vegas Review Journal poll showed that Nevada voters were becoming less favorable towards the Republican candidate.¹²⁶

Angle met with the Tea Party of Nevada's candidate Scott Ashjian in late September to ask him if he would leave the race.¹²⁷ Although this meeting was called for by Ashjian's campaign, the third party candidate announced after the meeting that he would remain in the race. Not long after, a tape was released to the media with Angle "questioning Republican Party principles" during her discussions with Ashjian. Reid's campaign jumped on this gaffe "promoting the audio of her saying, 'The Republicans have lost their standards.'"¹²⁸

Early voting opened on October 16 throughout the state of Nevada, which continued daily until the Friday before the election in November. In the first two days of early voting Republicans made up 48% of the total vote with the Democrats making up 39%.¹²⁹ This "early energy advantage" or "enthusiasm gap" may have seemed like a good sign for the Republican candidate. But, early voters in general have already made up their minds, and in a toss-up race it is those on the fence that can make a difference. Reid picked up another Republican endorsement by Ace Robison, the former chairman of the Nevada Republican Party, former chief of staff to Paul Laxalt, and the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Moapa Valley.¹³⁰ Angle took part in the third TPE tour headlined by Sarah Palin and a rally with Senator

¹²⁶ Laura Myers, "Poll: Voters wish for other choices," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, August 27, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/poll--voters-wish-for-other-choices-101631283.html>.

¹²⁷ Laura Myers, "Ashjian not leaving race," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, October 1, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/ashjian-not-leaving-race-101249587.html>.

¹²⁸ Laura Myers, "Angle blasts GOP on tape," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, October 5, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/angle-blasts-gop-on-tape-104328509.html>.

¹²⁹ Benjamin Spillman, "Early voting trends suggest good news for GOP candidates," *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, October 19, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/early-voting-trends-suggest-good-news-for-gop-candidates-105239493.html>.

¹³⁰ John L. Smith, "Reid's latest Republican endorsement might be his greatest," *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 22, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/reid-s-latest-republican-endorsement-might-be-his-greatest-105510788.html>.

McCain on October 29 in Las Vegas.¹³¹ Michelle Obama came to Las Vegas the night before Election Day to rally for the Senate Majority Leader.

After the election season in Nevada, incumbent Senator Harry Reid defeated Sharron Angle by just over forty-thousand votes. It seemed as if no amount of enthusiasm could help Angle and her “passionate but disorganized following of conservatives and Tea Party supporters” go up against “the traditional Democrats, minorities, unions and ‘Republicans for Reid’ power brokers the incumbent aligned for victory.”¹³² Reid ran a campaign that he had been building for years to get his voters out while the “Republicans were deeply divided at the state and national levels as Tea Party-backed conservatives took on the establishment.” In figures that came out about a month after the election, it was shown that only around 2,000 more Democrats than Republicans voted in Nevada’s general election. Given that at the time of the election “there were 60,000 more registered Democrats than Republicans, the figures are a clear indication that many Republicans cast votes for Democrat U.S. Sen. Harry Reid rather than for his Republican opponent, Sharron Angle, a secretary of state spokeswoman said.”¹³³ This GOP crossover for Reid was further shown when he won more votes in several counties that had more registered Republicans voting than Democrats.

Tea Party Activity

Nevada was a high tea party activity race because Sarah Palin, Michele Bachman, the TPE, and FreedomWorks endorsed Sharron Angle. Angle’s campaign received campaign contributions from Palin’s PAC, Michele Bachmann’s PAC, and OCDB. TPE I, II, III, and IV all

¹³¹ Laura Myers, “Angle, Reid rally supporters,” *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 30, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/mccain-energizes-republicans-at-rally-for-angle--boxer-pacquoio-stumps-for-reid-106362698.html>.

¹³² Laura Myers, “Reid Holds Off Challenger Angle,” *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 3, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/reid-holds-off-challenger-angle-106597348.html>.

¹³³ Ed Vogel, “Figures show GOP crossover for Harry Reid,” *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, December 6, 2010, accessed January 12, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/figures-indicate-many-registered-republicans-voted-for-reid-111399529.html>.

stopped in multiple cities in Nevada. TPE III: Just Vote Them Out and TPE IV: Liberty at the Ballot Box both began their tour in Nevada as a mark of the movement's strong desire to oust Harry Reid. There were "Tax Day Tea Party" rallies in Nevada during April 2009, one in Carson City that had a reported 1000 people and another in Las Vegas had over 1000. In April 2010 there were 500-700 people rallying for Tax Day in Carson City, 300 in Las Vegas, and others planned for Elko, Fernley, Fallon, and Mesquite.

TPE I was in Nevada from August 28th – August 31st, 2009 and went to Reno/Sparks, Winnemucca, Elko, Ely, and Las Vegas. Both Sharron Angle and Tarkanian attended the Las Vegas event that had an estimated 700-900 people at the rally.¹³⁴ During late October 2009 TPE II stopped in Tonopah, Hawthorne, Fallon, and Carson City. The Carson City rally had between 100 and 200 people.¹³⁵ The third TPE Tour, "Just Vote Them Out," took special aim at Harry Reid by starting their tour in Searchlight, Nevada, his hometown on March 27, 2010. This small town accommodated 8000 people and Sarah Palin was in attendance.¹³⁶ 5000 people followed the caravan to Henderson, NV and there were 1200 people at Phoenix and there was a last stop in Flagstaff before the tour went on to Utah. Sarah Palin began the TPE IV with a rally in Reno and the bus tour went on to Elko, Ely, and Las Vegas.

On Nevada's TPP website there are 17 different tea party groups listed. Only three of the groups have websites that were maintained throughout the election cycle. The 501(c)(4) organization Anger is Brewing (AIB) provides a lot of information about the grassroots workings of the TPM in Nevada. At either angerisbrewing.com or actionisbrewing.com you will learn that

¹³⁴ Richard Lake, "Rally Shrink Government," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, September 1, 2009, accessed November 2, 2010.

¹³⁵ "Tea Party Express II stops in Carson City," My News 4, October 28, 2009, accessed February 3, 2011, <http://www.mynews4.com/story.php?id=6306>.

¹³⁶ Laura Myers and Benjamin Spillman, "Palin energizes thousands, declares 'we're not going to sit down and shut up,'" *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 27, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/palin-issues-call-to-oust-reid--take-country-back-from-democrats---89332822.html>.

the goal of the group is to “bring together the different groups in Nevada that are working towards the same goal of speak out against the fiscal burden being placed on the American people by out of control government spending and misappropriations.” In order to accomplish this they “host candidate forums, events, debates, rallies, and demonstrations. We send out information on legislation, action alerts, events, and information important to our subscribers.”¹³⁷ In addition, the website has a collection of different conservative, libertarian, republican party affiliated, and tea party groups listed for each of the state’s counties.

The group sent out a weekly newsletter that began April 21, 2009 and stopped October 16, 2010. The newsletters contained information about candidates, bills being passed at the federal and state level, and event announcements. In another section of their website AIB tells its visitors what ballot issue to vote for and lists the candidates endorsements. The “Tea Party” section of the website outlines different ways federal money has been spent in the stimulus package and bailout and provides a “How To” start your own tea party group or host a tea party event.

A Las Vegas Sun article pinned the amount of members of AIB at 6,000 people.¹³⁸ AIB’s Meetup group lists only eight events total with none of them having attendance over five members. One of AIB’s main organizers Debbie Landis has organized events such as a candidate’s debate in Reno and a rally in Carson City.¹³⁹ AIB endorsed John Chachas, in opposition to the national group that had given so much name recognition and money to Sharron Angle. AIB’s endorsement was based off of “AIB Subscriber and grassroots polls, voting record

¹³⁷ “Action Is Brewing,” <http://www.actionisbrewing.com/index.html>.

¹³⁸ David McGrath Schwartz, “Nevada tea party group endorses Jim Gibbons, John Chachas,” *Las Vegas Sun*, May 28, 2010, accessed January 6, 2011, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2010/may/28/nevada-tea-party-group-endorses-gibbons-chachas/>.

¹³⁹ Ed Vogel, “Too late to change machines, official tells Senate candidate,” *Las Vegas Review Journal*, October 13, 2010, accessed December 10, 2010.

when applicable, issue stances, prior endorsements, and interaction with the candidates themselves... These candidates were selected based entirely on their skill-sets, credibility and grassroots ratings as they apply to Transparency, Accountability, and Fiscal Responsibility.”¹⁴⁰ After Chachas did not win the primary, AIB’s July 22, 2010 newsletter came out for Angle claiming, “Sharron Angle is not the “lesser of two evils” on Election Day, she is absolutely the best candidate against Harry Reid.”¹⁴¹ AIB also organized against the Tea Party of Nevada beginning in July 2010.

Between AIB’s Facebook, Meetup, and Newsletters they advertised four candidates’ forums, over 50 rallies, and one general meeting. The candidates’ forum held before the primary had Angle, Lowden, Tarkanian, and Chachas in attendance.¹⁴² There were no GOTV events on behalf of any candidates. Although AIB seems highly organized it does not appear that they were mobilized to get people out to vote even though they endorsed candidates.

The Reno Tea Party, another active tea party group in Nevada, organizes completely out of their Meetup.com and Facebook groups and does not have a third party website. Their Meetup group boasted 438 members as of the November elections and 51 past events dating from March 7, 2009 to the election on November 2, 2010. These events include three candidates’ forums, 27 rallies, 15 general meetings, and 6 other events.¹⁴³

Another active group was The Nevada Patriots. Their Meetup group had almost 400 members before the election and held 60 events up until and including Election Day 2010.¹⁴⁴ The former director of the Nevada Patriots, Frank Ricotta, was elected chairman of the Clark County

¹⁴⁰ “AIB Newsletter, Vol 49,”

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs040/1102554993831/archive/1103411800800.html>.

¹⁴¹ “AIB Newsletter, Vol 53,”

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs040/1102554993831/archive/1103569809259.html>

¹⁴² “April 23, 2010: Candidate Forum, Debate and Reception,”

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs040/1102554993831/archive/1103336200566.html>.

¹⁴³ “Reno Tea Party – Meetup.com,” <http://www.meetup.com/Reno-Tea-Party/events/past/#initialized>.

¹⁴⁴ “Nevada Patriots – Meetup.com,” <http://www.meetup.com/NEVADA-PATRIOTS/>.

Republican Party (CCRP).¹⁴⁵ The Nevada Patriots also have a Facebook group, which had around 200 members before the election but listed only six events total from February to July, 2010. The two websites shared the same events but it was hard to understand the workings of the group within Nevada from their calendar postings. Ricotta also seemed to co-opt the Meetup group for the CCRP since all of the CCRP's general meetings were listed in the calendar. The CCRP did have 19 GOTV events listed on their Meetup group. These events were comprised of three canvassing events and the rest phone banking on behalf of the Republican Party.

Angle received a lot of attention from national TPM groups because of her conservative views and her ability to take down Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. This enthusiasm may have carried Angle to a primary win but her website changes indicated she was appealing to a broader base of voters for the general election. At the grassroots level, AIB connected groups from all around the state of Nevada and did not originally endorse Angle. The CCRP had GOTV activity but none of it was specific to Angle's election.

¹⁴⁵ Laura Myers, "Tea Partyer new county GOP leader," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, September 25, 2010, accessed December 13, 2010.

The Case of the Oklahoma Election: Medium Tea Party Activity, Republican Leaning Race

Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn is a businessman, deacon, and obstetrician who came onto the political scene during 1994's Republican Party take-over, winning Oklahoma's 2nd congressional district as the first Republican since the 1920s.¹⁴⁶ He won reelection in 1996 and 1998. Coburn did not run for reelection in 2000, citing the Contract from America's term limits, but he did challenge a favored GOP establishment candidate in Oklahoma's 2004 U.S. Senate race and win the primary and general election. During his time in the U.S. House and Senate, Coburn has earned the nickname Dr. No for his fiscally conservative votes that have caused him to block dozens of bills.¹⁴⁷

Primary Race

Coburn announced in June 2009 that he would run for reelection, saying, "America's identity 'is under attack from within.'" During his time in the U.S. Senate, Coburn voted against the stimulus plan, the healthcare bill, and never requested earmarks for Oklahoma.¹⁴⁸ Coburn came under fire in October of 2009 when it was discovered that he communicated between Senator Ensign and his mistress about a possible pay out.¹⁴⁹ State party leaders thought this might increase the level of Coburn's Democratic competition in the Senate race, but as of April 2010 he had no Republican opponents or Democratic opponents.¹⁵⁰ The first day of candidate

¹⁴⁶ "About Senator Coburn," <http://coburn.senate.gov/public/?p=Biography>.

¹⁴⁷ George F. Will, "The Senate's Dr. No," *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2006, accessed February 1, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/11/AR2006021101024.html>.

¹⁴⁸ Micheal McNutt, "Senator Defends Seeking Funds for Projects in States, Faults Calling Process Earmarks," *The Oklahoman*, August 27, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

¹⁴⁹ Chris Casteel, "Coburn confirms he was go-between," *The Oklahoman*, October 3, 2009, accessed February 1, 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Chris Casteel, "Senator's Race Could be his Last," *The Oklahoman*, April 10, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

filing brought two Republican challengers, Lewis Spring and Evelyn Rogers.¹⁵¹ By early June there were also two Democrats running in the July 27 primary.¹⁵² During the primary season Coburn did not do a lot of campaigning, but he did have a website and collected campaign contributions. He defeated his opponents with 90% of the vote in the primary. Jim Rogers, who runs for some elected office almost every year, won the Democratic primary with 65% of the vote.

General election

In past races, Rogers had not attended debates or forums and the Chairman of the state Democratic Party did not expect the nominee to have a large campaign against Coburn.¹⁵³ As a result of Coburn's "perennial" opposition, Coburn donated \$1 million from his campaign fund and traveled to several states to help Republican candidates. Coburn took a special interest in Vermont's Senate race and also offered to help O'Donnell in Delaware.¹⁵⁴ On the ballot in November were Jim Rogers (D), Ronald Dwyer (Ind), Stephen Walla (Ind), and Tom Coburn (R). Coburn easily won reelection with 70% of the vote, although Rogers put up over 20% without campaigning.

Tea Party Activity

Oklahoma's race was designated medium tea party activity because incumbent Senator Tom Coburn received an endorsement from the TPE and money from Sarah Palin's PAC. TPE II

¹⁵¹ Michael McNutt and Julie Bisbee, "State Capitol Abuzz with Political Candidates," *The Oklahoman*, June 8, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

¹⁵² Michael McNutt, "Coburn, Kern Among Those Getting Opponents as Filing Period Continues at State Capitol," *The Oklahoman*, June 9, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

¹⁵³ Julie Bisbee, "Unconventional candidate faces Coburn," *The Oklahoman*, August 1, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

¹⁵⁴ Chris Casteel, "3 GOP lawmakers help fund national campaigns," *The Oklahoman*, October 8, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

stopped in Oklahoma City on November 4, 2009 and arrived to a crowd of 3000.¹⁵⁵ Coburn was a favorite among tea partiers nationally for his strong stance on fiscal conservative values and he spoke openly of his support of the movement and their shared anti-Washington values.¹⁵⁶ In April 2009 5000 people rallied at Oklahoma's state Capitol building and the next year brought between 800 and 1200 people for the second Tax Day Tea Party.¹⁵⁷

Oklahoma's TPP website had almost 30 groups listed at the time of the election. Only the Muskogee Tea Party and the Oklahoma City Tea Party maintained active websites throughout the election season. The Muskogee Tea Party began with the first round of Tax Day Tea Party protests in 2009 where it organized a group of 250 people.¹⁵⁸ The group endorsed candidates both in and outside of Oklahoma. In races outside of Oklahoma the group endorsed Joe Miller, Rand Paul, Sharron Angle, and Ron Johnson. Within Oklahoma the Muskogee Tea Party endorsed Tom Coburn, Charles Thompson, and Mary Fallin.¹⁵⁹ Although it is unclear when this transition happened, the Muskogee Tea Party became a PAC and accepted donations and annual dues for voting members. They used funds from the PAC to host a "radio ad blitz" for Senator Coburn, Mary Fallin, and Charles Thompson.¹⁶⁰ The group also held a voter education event with many Lewis Spring, Evelyn Rogers, and a representative from Coburn's office in attendance. There other events were luncheons, movie showings, and general holidays

Another group in Oklahoma was the Oklahoma City Tea Party. They have their own website but events are only listed on their Facebook page, which had 2743 members at the time

¹⁵⁵ Michael McNutt, "Tea Party Express sees 3,000 at Oklahoma City rally," NewsOK.com, November 5, 2009, accessed January 5, 2011, <http://newsok.com/tea-party-express-sees-3000-at-oklahoma-city-rally/article/3414746>.

¹⁵⁶ Michael McNutt, "Tea Party brews Republican vote," *The Oklahoman*, February 8, 2010,

¹⁵⁷ Michael McNutt, "Oklahoma Capitol tea party draws smaller crowd this year," *The Oklahoman*, April 16, 2010

¹⁵⁸ "About," <http://www.muskogeeteparty.com/about/>.

¹⁵⁹ "Muskogee Party PAC Announces 2010 Endorsements," <http://www.muskogeeteparty.com/>.

¹⁶⁰ "Muskogee Tea Party PAC Ad Blitz Money Bomb," <http://www.muskogeeteparty.com/>.

of the election. Their Facebook page had several rallies listed such as a Tax Day Tea Party protests rally, Independence Day rally, and the TPE event.¹⁶¹ They had a GOTV rally in late October and this was their only GOTV related activity. Like the Muskogee Tea Party, the Oklahoma City Tea Party has an area for donations on their website but does not seem to have membership.

One factor in the Oklahoma race that was not a factor in any of the other cases was the desire of one group of tea party activists to combine the fiscal conservative values with a volunteer state militia campaign.¹⁶² A state Senator who was running in the Republican primary for governor supported the idea, but he would not go on to win the primary and the state militia idea never took hold in other tea party groups.

Senator Coburn was one of the few incumbent Senators that the TPM did not target for removal from office. Coburn's fiscally conservative values aligned perfectly with the movement and he recognized their ability to reenergize the GOP. Although Coburn received attention from the movement he chose to focus on helping other Republicans win their races. At the grassroots level, one of Oklahoma's tea party groups endorsed Coburn.

¹⁶¹ "OKLAHOMA CITY Tea Party," <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=54921936051>.

¹⁶² "Tea totaled: Militia idea good way to lose support," *The Oklahoman*, April 15, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011.

The Case of the Oregon Election: Medium Tea Party Activity, Democratic Leaning Race

In Oregon, Democrats hold every statewide office and occupy four of five congressional seats.¹⁶³ Incumbent Senator Tom Wyden first joined the U.S. Senate when he won a special election in 1996. Since then he was elected to two full terms in 1998 and 2004 and looked to win his 4th U.S. Senatorial election in 2010. Wyden has been labeled as a “hard-core” liberal for his stances on abortion, stem cell research, gay rights, global warming, and his work on the 2009 “Healthy Americans Act.” Wyden has support in the rural and more Republican parts of Oregon where he has maintained federal funding for a dying timber industry.¹⁶⁴ In a midterm season with many vulnerable Democrats, Wyden maintained one of the highest ratings from his constituents.¹⁶⁵

Primary Election Race

Rasmussen polls in early February showed Wyden leading Huffman by 14 percentage points.¹⁶⁶ Huffman officially entered the race by announcing it on his Facebook page at the end of February. Wyden’s campaign put up a mock website at meetjimhuffman.com, which contained links to some of the many articles Huffman had written as a law professor and also contained lambasting commentary against his conservative views.¹⁶⁷ The website tried to make Huffman seem like he supported rich Wall Street bankers, wanted to privatize Social Security, and denied global warming. Huffman responded by saying, “I am not anti-government, I am not anti-tax, I’m pro-good government and pro-reasonable taxation to fund those things that

¹⁶³ Jeff Mapes, “Tea party on margins in Oregon,” *The Oregonian*, May 16, 2010, accessed October 25, 2010.

¹⁶⁴ “A race, not a breeze, for the U.S. Senate,” *The Oregonian*, April 19, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2010/04/election_2010_a_race_not_a_bre.html.

¹⁶⁵ Bill Graves, “Challenger Jim Huffman champions limited government in quest to unseat Ron Wyden,” *The Oregonian*, October 8, 2010, accessed October 28, 2010, http://blog.oregonlive.com/politics_impact/print.html?entry=/2010/10/challenger_jim_huffman_champio.html.

¹⁶⁶ Jeff Mapes, “Wyden gets warning sign in Rasmussen poll,” *The Oregonian*, February 17, 2010, accessed December 3, 2010, http://blog.oregonlive.com/mapesonpolitics/2010/02/wyden_gets_warning_sign_in_ras.html.

¹⁶⁷ Jeff Mapes, “Jim Huffman’s record: No votes, but lots of words,” *The Oregonian*, March 4, 2010, accessed December 3, 2010, http://blog.oregonlive.com/mapesonpolitics/2010/03/jim_huffmans_record_no_votes_b.html.

government can effectively fund” and called himself a “strong environmentalist.”¹⁶⁸ The state GOP chairman felt that Wyden had a strong opponent in Huffman, who is socially liberal on issues like abortion, gay rights, and the death penalty.¹⁶⁹

Oregon’s closed primary was held on May 18, 2010 and about one-third of the Oregon electorate voted.¹⁷⁰ Wyden defeated “token opposition” in Pavel Goberman and Loren Hooker, who ran as a Democrat but boosted tea party support for his conservative Constitutionalist viewpoints.¹⁷¹ There were eight candidates in the Republican primary but none of them had statewide name recognition or had held political office before.¹⁷² Huffman supported private Social Security accounts, wanted to repeal the federal healthcare bill, and was against cap-and-trade. He supported a balanced budget amendment, ending earmarks, and extending Bush tax cuts, and wanted more protection of U.S. borders. Huffman defeated his opponents receiving 42% of the vote, while Wyden received 90% of the vote on the Democratic ballot.

General Election Race

Huffman attacked Wyden on an agreement over Oregon’s eastside forests. Huffman claimed it would hurt jobs, but 70% of rural Oregonians agreed with the measure.”¹⁷³ About a month after the primary, Huffman came under fire by state Democrats for saying that the federal

¹⁶⁸ Jeff Mapes, “Lewis & Clark law professor Jim Huffman announces run against Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden,” *The Oregonian*, March 4, 2010, accessed December 3, 2010, http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/03/lewis_clark_law_professor_jim.html.

¹⁶⁹ Elizabeth Hovde, “Jim Huffman: A credible and serious challenger for a Senate seat,” *The Oregonian*, March 6, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, http://www.oregonlive.com/hovde/index.ssf/2010/03/jim_huffman_a_credible_and_ser.html.

¹⁷⁰ “Let’s move on: Oregon’s forgettable primary,” *The Oregonian*, May 19, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2010/05/lets_move_on_oregons_forgettab.html.

¹⁷¹ Michelle Cole, “Incumbents fare well in Oregon legislative races,” *The Oregonian*, May 19, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/05/final_oregon_legislature_prima.html.

¹⁷² Bill Graves, “Jim Huffman front-runner in Republican primary race to challenge Sen. Ron Wyden,” *The Oregonian*, May 20, 2010, accessed January 3, 2010, http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/05/jim_huffman_frontrunner_in_rep.html.

¹⁷³ John Day, “The wrong place to drive a wedge,” *The Oregonian*, June 9, 2010, accessed January 10, 2011, http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2010/06/the_wrong_place_to_drive_a_wed.html.

government went too far to ask BP to create a compensation fund.¹⁷⁴ Democrats felt that the creation of this fund protected their interests. Throughout July, Wyden continued to lead Huffman in polls.¹⁷⁵ Huffman's campaign manager left the campaign in early August, only a few weeks before ballots were to be mailed.¹⁷⁶ During the month of September, Huffman received an endorsement from former presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Huffman, who had worked as an advisor for Romney's campaign, also received \$5000 from Romney's PAC.¹⁷⁷ The state Republican Party continued to back Huffman and created a website, RetireRon.com, that stressed Wyden's votes on the Wall Street Bank bailout and how often he travels to New York to be with his wife.¹⁷⁸ Huffman also received endorsements from Newt Gingrich, Steve Forbes, and FreedomWorks. In early October Jim Moore, a political science professor at Pacific University in Forest Grove noted that "best hope of toppling Wyden lies in an anti-Democrat tide that rises high enough to float him to victory" but "he hasn't done much that has really grabbed the attention of voters."¹⁷⁹

Wyden defeated Huffman with 57% of the vote to Huffman's 39%. Oregon's Secretary of State reported a growing number of independent voters but there were still more registered Democrats in the state and more registered Democrats submitting ballots.¹⁸⁰ Although Huffman did receive endorsements from FreedomWorks and Mitt Romney and attended many tea party

¹⁷⁴ Jeff Mapes, "Democrats attack Huffman for BP oil spill comments," *The Oregonian*, June 18, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011, http://blog.oregonlive.com/mapesonpolitics/2010/06/democrats_attack_huffman_for_b.html.

¹⁷⁵ Jeff Mapes, "Wyden holds strong lead in two polls over Huffman," *The Oregonian*, June 28, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011, http://blog.oregonlive.com/mapesonpolitics/2010/07/wyden_holds_strong_lead_in_two.html.

¹⁷⁶ Mapes, Jeff. "Wyden holds strong lead in two polls over Huffman." *The Oregonian*, June 28, 2010.

¹⁷⁷ Jeff Mapes, "Huffman, campaign manager part ways," *The Oregonian*, August 18, 2010.

¹⁷⁸ "ORP Press Release: Website Exposing the REAL Ron Wyden Launched: www.RetireRon.com - 9.30.2010," September 30, 2010, <http://www.oregonrepublicanparty.org/node/3282>.

¹⁷⁹ Graves, Bill. "Challenger Jim Huffman champions limited government in quest to unseat Ron Wyden." *The Oregonian*, October 8, 2010.

¹⁸⁰ Jeff Mapes, "'Other' turnout rising in Oregon ballot returns," *The Oregonian*, November 2, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011, http://blog.oregonlive.com/mapesonpolitics/2010/11/other_turnout_rising_in_oregon.html.

events within the state of Oregon he did not garner enough national support and money to wage a big enough fight against the incumbent Wyden.

Tea Party Activity

Oregon's race was defined as medium tea party activity because Jim Huffman received an endorsement from FreedomWorks and TPE II stopped in two of Oregon's cities. When TPE stopped in Medford there were about 400 people present.¹⁸¹ In Portland CNN reported that TPE II was met with "several hundred supporters."¹⁸² There were a couple dozen counter protestors at the event and it took several tries for the group to find a permit because many businesses thought the event would be "bad for business" in such a liberal city.

Oregon's TPP website had over 30 groups listed at the time of the election. Like in the other cases, only a few of these groups had evidence of any organizing. There was one group that endorsed Jim Huffman from their website, "We The People—Umatilla County", but there is nothing on their group's website that indicates past events, a mailing list, or membership.¹⁸³ Other groups like Bend Tea Party have websites but are inactive. Their website claims that 1,500 rallied in downtown Bend during the first Tax Day Tea Party protests.¹⁸⁴

The Oregon Tea Party (OTP) was the biggest group organizing in Oregon. It began in late February 2009 when its organizer Geoffrey Ludt protested with 100 others in Portland.¹⁸⁵ Just a few days later during the first Tax Day Tea Party protests 1,000 people protested in front of the Pioneer Courthouse in Portland. On that same day there were 3,000 protesting at Oregon's state

¹⁸¹ "Tea Party Express rolls through Medford," KDRV News, October 29, 2009, <http://kdrv.com/news/local/147090>.

¹⁸² Patrick Oppmann, "Tea Party Express takes on Oregon," CNN, October 31, 2009, accessed January 15, 2011, <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2009/10/31/tea-party-express-takes-on-oregon/>.

¹⁸³ "We The People—Umatilla County," <http://www.wtpc-uc-or.org/>.

¹⁸⁴ "History: About Bend Tea Party," <http://bendteaparty.org/history>.

¹⁸⁵ "Oregon Tea Party," <http://oregonteaparty.org/>.

Capitol in Salem.¹⁸⁶ The next year's Tax Day Tea Party rallies held on April 16, 2010. Salem again had around 1000 activists present and in Portland the OTP planned multiple rallies on overpasses. OTP advertised these smaller demonstrations through their Facebook page and at one point during the day it was reported that "Oregon Department of Transportation officials shut down Oregon 99W briefly to let about 250 activists cross the highway near the juncture with Oregon 217 to get to a rally at the post office in Tigard."¹⁸⁷ OTP's Facebook page had over 2000 "Likes" at the time of the election. Jim Huffman attended the Oregon Tea Party PAC's first statewide meeting on October 30, 2010.¹⁸⁸

OTP said it would not endorse candidates but it was a part of the "Oregon Victory Pledge" which read:

"Take the pledge to volunteer once a week, each week through Election Day to help deliver a victory for conservatives this November! You can make calls in a phone bank, go door to door, distribute signs or take advantage of many other fun volunteer opportunities. Every action makes a big difference.

Sign up below to take the pledge and to receive a weekly volunteer update listing various volunteer opportunities for conservative candidates across the state."¹⁸⁹

Aside from Alaska, the organizing done by the OTP is the most apparent GOTV activity in the nine cases.

Because of his fiscally conservative values Huffman received mild attention from the TPM. It was highly unlikely that Huffman would win this race in the strongly Democratic state or Oregon with a highly liked incumbent Senator. Even so, the grassroots organizing in Oregon highly endorsed Huffman and organized GOTV activities on his behalf.

¹⁸⁶ Janie Har, "Tax day turns into anti-tax day in Oregon," *The Oregonian*, April 16, 2009, accessed January 15, 2011, http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2009/04/two_thousand_crowd_capitol_tea.html

¹⁸⁷ Harry Esteve, "Tea party brews array of protestors," *The Oregonian*, April 16, 2010, accessed January 15, 2011, http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2009/04/two_thousand_crowd_capitol_tea.html.

¹⁸⁸ "1st Oregon Tea Party Statewide Meeting | Guest Speaker: Jim Huffman!" <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=102676966466043>.

¹⁸⁹ "Oregon Victory Pledge," <http://www.oregonvictorypledge.com>.

The Case of the Washington Election: Medium Tea Party Activity, Toss-up Race

Incumbent Senator Patty Murray won her first U.S. Senate election in 1992's Year of the Woman.¹⁹⁰ Murray is on the important Appropriations and Budget committees and has been given the nickname "pork Patty" for all of the federal funds and projects she has brought back for the state of Washington.¹⁹¹ While the state of Washington holds one third of its registered voters in the liberal leaning King County that contains the city of Seattle, Washington also has several conservative voting districts that have strong agricultural lobbying interests.

Primary Election Race

Murray's campaign was aware of voter anger being a factor in the 2010 midterm elections. Her earmark projects and seniority in the Senate, once seen as advantages, could have worked against her. The state GOP committee took more decisive action than in the past to get viable candidates into the race.¹⁹² In part because of his inspiration over Brown's election, State Senator Don Benton entered the race in early February and "retained the same consulting team behind Brown's candidacy."¹⁹³ Two-time Republican gubernatorial candidate Dino Rossi was neck and neck with Murray in a poll conducted in late January.¹⁹⁴ Rossi's inability to state

¹⁹⁰ Liz Sidoti and Rachel La Corte, "GOP Source: Rossi to Challenge Murray," *The Seattle Times*, May 24, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011943932_apuswashingtonstatesenate1stldwritethru.html.

¹⁹¹ Laura Onstot, "Patty Murray: The Naked Truth; Could Washington go pork-free?" *Seattle Weekly*, October 13, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, <http://www.seattleweekly.com/2010-10-13/news/patty-murray-the-naked-truth/>.

¹⁹² Joni Balter, "Dino Rossi and the Scott Brown effect in Washington," *The Seattle Times*, January 29, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/edcetera/2010926833_dino_rossi_and_the_scott_brown.html.

¹⁹³ Katherine Long, "Don Benton, veteran state senator, seeks to take on Patty Murray in November," *The Seattle Times*, February 7, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011011450_benton08m.html.

¹⁹⁴ Balter, Joni. "Dino Rossi and the Scott Brown effect in Washington." *The Seattle Times*, January 29, 2010.

whether or not he would enter the race was upsetting to other official candidates. Benton felt that fundraisers were unwilling to commit money to his campaign in case Rossi entered.¹⁹⁵

Clint Dieder, who actively campaigned for votes from the TPM, stood on a platform of repealing the healthcare bill and eliminating the Department of Education. In opposition to the TPM's fiscal conservatism, it was released in May that Dieder took hundreds of thousands of dollars in farm subsidies since the mid '90s.¹⁹⁶ As this story unfolded, Dieder responded by saying that he thinks the government should get out of the agriculture market and eliminate the farm bill. This past indiscretion did not stop Palin from endorsing Dieder on May 20 on her Facebook and Twitter pages.¹⁹⁷

Rossi announced on his website via video that he would enter the race on May 26. Rossi's video expressed his desire to return to a more limited government and to lower taxes, similar to his platform during his runs for governor. In his past campaigns Rossi touted fiscally conservative platforms but remained relatively silent on social issues.¹⁹⁸ Through early interviews Rossi expressed his discontent over earmarks, "support[ed] a temporary ban on offshore oil drilling, called for a 'tall fence with a high gate' to secure the nation's southern border, and voiced his opposition to the health-care law recently passed by Congress." Although he alluded to being pro-choice Rossi said, "I never sponsored such legislation when in the

¹⁹⁵ Kyung M. Song, "Will Rossi run against Murray? Other Senate hopefuls want to know," *The Seattle Times*, April 19, 2010, accessed February 3, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011642218_senaterace19m.html.

¹⁹⁶ "Washington Senate hopeful Dieder took farm aid," *The Seattle Times*, May 18, 2010, accessed February 3, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011893644_apwasenatedidier3rdldwritethru.html.

¹⁹⁷ Jim Brunner, "Palin's Dieder endorsement: a big problem for Rossi?" *The Seattle Times*, May 20, 2010, accessed February 3, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2011912093_palin_tweets_for_didier.html.

¹⁹⁸ Rachel La Corte, "Repub. Rossi announces challenge to Sen. Murray," *The Seattle Times*, May 26, 2010, accessed February 3, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011956976_apuswashingtonsenate4thldwritethru.html.

Legislature and [don't] intend to in the Senate.”¹⁹⁹ Benton left the race in early June and endorsed Rossi. As of late May, Rossi was polling relatively well against Murray.²⁰⁰

Although Rossi was the supposed frontrunner for the Republicans, Didier received much more fanfare at the state GOP Convention in mid June. Neither candidate spoke of the other, but both attacked Murray and discussed their conservative platforms. Organizers said that more than double the amount of people came to the convention as did during the last midterm election and attributed it to the TPM.²⁰¹ Even though Elway polls showed Didier far behind Rossi, he continued to fight for GOP establishment support by requesting meetings with the NRSC.²⁰²

At the end of June, Rossi held a fundraiser in D.C. with several powerful Republican Senators including Orrin Hatch, Lamar Alexander, Jim DeMint, Tom Coburn, and Bob Corker.²⁰³ While the Washington GOP establishment was courting Rossi, he continued to snub the tea party in Washington State. Regardless, polls and interviews with tea party activists showed that if Rossi did not cater to the tea party's wants before the August primary, he could count on their support against Murray in the general election.²⁰⁴ Although trailing far behind Rossi and Murray, Didier breached a half a million dollars, crediting his endorsement from Sarah Palin for the small donations he received from regular citizens.²⁰⁵ Didier received donations from

¹⁹⁹ Jim Brunner, “Rossi stakes out his positions in first interviews,” *The Seattle Times*, May 27, 2010, accessed February 3, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011972484_rossi28m.html.

²⁰⁰ Rick Anderson, “Duck, Dino, It's going to get nasty out there,” *Seattle Weekly*, May 26, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011.

²⁰¹ Andrew Garber, “Tea party shows its strength at state GOP convention,” *The Seattle Times*, June 12, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012102443_gop13m.html.

²⁰² Jim Brunner, “Didier in D.C. making play for GOP endorsements,” *The Seattle Times*, June 16, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012130986_didier_in_dc_making_play_for_g.html.

²⁰³ Kyung M. Song, “Key GOP senators host Rossi fundraiser,” *The Seattle Times*, June 29, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2012239764_rossifundraiser30m.html.

²⁰⁴ Jim Brunner, “Why Dino Rossi isn't courting the tea party,” *The Seattle Times*, July 10, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012327319_rossi11m.html.

²⁰⁵ Jim Brunner, “Didier campaign tops \$570,000, credits Palin boost,” *The Seattle Times*, July 15, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012369013_didier_campaign_tops_570000_cr.html.

only two PACs, Palin's PAC and Freedom's Defense Fund, contrary to other "tea party candidates" who received money from PACs like Our Country Deserves Better and FreedomWorks.

Leading up to the August primary, Rossi's platform and actions indicated that he was moving further to the right. One example was his signing of the Contract from America, which contains several policy points including repealing Obamacare, and standing against cap-and-trade legislation.²⁰⁶ He continued to receive endorsements from conservative PACs like the Family Research Council, FreedomWorks, and Gun Owners Action League of Washington along with an endorsement from Senator Jim DeMint and later from Senator Coburn (both favorites of the Tea Party movement).²⁰⁷

Didier released an ad attacking Rossi and his part in the 2003 state budget during his time as a state senator. The ad catered to tea party interests and painted Rossi as a "free spending liberal," though the ad was factually inaccurate.²⁰⁸ While Didier was doing this, Rossi continued to ignore his Republican competition and used his ad campaign to attack Murray. In the lead up to the primary, Didier was unable to get Palin to attend one of his events but she did give her voice for robocalls that were sent out the night before the primary.²⁰⁹

Washington has an open ballot primary with the top two candidates moving on to the general election in November. This type of primary helped Rossi because he had much higher name recognition than other candidates. The system generally favors candidates with broad name recognition who can appeal to moderate or independent voters, and polls have placed Murray

²⁰⁶ Curt Woodward, "GOP puts Murray on defensive for federal projects," *The Seattle Times*, July 26, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2012449936_apuswashingtonsenate.html.

²⁰⁷ "WA Senate: OK Sen. Coburn endorses Rossi," *The Seattle Times*, August 9, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012580329_apwarossicoburnendorsement.html.

²⁰⁸ Jim Brunner, "Didier video attacks Rossi's record," *The Seattle Times*, August 7, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012565955_didier_video_attacks_rossis_re.html.

²⁰⁹ Jim Brunner, "Palin lends Didier her voice," *The Seattle Times*, August 15, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012629286_palin_lends_didier_her_voice.html.

and Rossi easily in the top two slots for November.²¹⁰ The system was proved right again when it came in the night of the primary that Murray, with 47% of the vote, and Rossi, with 34% of the vote, were the top two finishers.²¹¹ Didier did receive 10% of the vote, and 50% of the vote from Franklin County, which is a more conservative part of Washington State.²¹²

General Election Race

Following the primary, Rossi received endorsements from state tea party activists.²¹³ Didier said that his endorsement of Rossi would depend on Rossi proclaiming his “unequivocal stand against abortion, take a no-new-taxes pledge and promise not to increase federal spending.”²¹⁴ Although Rossi left his stance on abortions off of his campaign website, during his time as a Washington State Senator there were two instances when his voting record indicated to a pro-life stance.²¹⁵ Pollsters and pundits questioned whether Murray would capture the more conservative agricultural areas in Washington State. A farmer from Franklin County said he would vote for Murray because “the earmarks she sends home from the other Washington (D.C.) are the only thing keeping the state’s once-thriving asparagus industry alive, according to Schreiber.”²¹⁶

²¹⁰ Curt Woodward, “WA Sen: Rossi moves right ahead of primary,” *The Seattle Times*, August 12, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012608562_apuswashingtonsenate1stldwritethru.html.

²¹¹ Jack Broom, “Murray, Rossi will face off in November,” *The Seattle Times*, August 17, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012649393_rossi_advances_to_challenge_mu.html.

²¹² *Seattle Weekly*, October 13, 2010.

²¹³ Jim Brunner, “Akers endorses Rossi, no strings attached,” *The Seattle Times*, August 24, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012709027_akers_endorses_rossi_no_string.html.

²¹⁴ “Didier holds off Rossi endorsement,” *The Seattle Times*, August 20, 2010, accessed March 1, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012678549_apwawashingtonsenatedidier2ndld.html.

²¹⁵ Laura Onstot, “Rossi Soft on Abortion? Not by the Record,” *Seattle Weekly*, August 25, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011.

²¹⁶ *Seattle Weekly*, October 13, 2010.

In early September both Rossi and Murray began large ad campaigns after the NRSC and DSCC gave their respective candidates \$2 million in campaign contributions.²¹⁷ Rossi's ads attacked Murray for the stimulus package, which he claimed was ineffective, the "wall street bailout," "trillion dollar deficits," and "hasty healthcare plan," claiming Murray is part of "the problem in Washington."²¹⁸ Murray's ad attacked Rossi on his stance that the recent Wall Street bill should be repealed. It was shown that these Wall Street ads helped Murray, and the same occurred for Democratic candidates in Missouri and Pennsylvania.²¹⁹ Following this flurry of ads, Murray's campaign was boosted by a gaffe committed by Rossi. Rossi suggested that Boeing should not be favored in its bid for a \$30 billion government contract that could create thousands of new jobs and was attacked by union leaders for being uninformed.²²⁰ Murray ran an ad attacking Rossi for his mistake. Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, former President Bill Clinton, and President Barack Obama would attend events in the state of Washington on Murray's behalf.²²¹ During the fall it was announced in Seattle, a Democratic stronghold, that Washington would receive \$30 million dollars to "help unclog a notoriously snarled interchange downtown."²²²

²¹⁷ Jim Brunner, "Parties send cash to Murray-Rossi race," *The Seattle Times*, September 10, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012860721_partiessendcashtomurrayrossirace.html.

²¹⁸ Jim Brunner, "Latest Dino Rossi and Patty Murray attack ads," *The Seattle Times*, September 9, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012850944_latest_rossi_murray_attack_ads.html.

²¹⁹ Curt Woodward, "Dems try to deflect voter anger toward Wall Street," *The Seattle Times*, September 24, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012985654_apussenateblamewallstreet1stldwritethru.html.

²²⁰ Kyung M. Song, "Dems flay Rossi for Boeing tanker comment," *The Seattle Times*, September 21, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2012958497_demsflayrossiforboeingtankercomment.html.

²²¹ Jim Brunner, "Obama to headline Murray rally at UW next week," *The Seattle Times*, October 11, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2013134734_obama_to_headline_murray_rally.html.

²²² Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Federal help boosts vulnerable Democrats," *The Seattle Times*, September 23, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2012971985_apusdemocratsperksofpower.htm.

Murray's campaign targeted liberal women voters by airing ads attacking Rossi's pro-life stance. Rossi had recently come out against Plan B and the ads referenced a speech he made where he suggested that pro-choice activists should support "homes for unwed mothers."²²³ Rossi continued to attack Murray over earmarks and equated the large amount of Democratic establishment presence in Washington supporting Murray throughout October to Murray blindly following Obama as opposed to focusing on Washington State.²²⁴

Polls held before the election and Associated Press preliminary exit polls had several important findings: "Murray did well among women and older voters, while Rossi found support among men and middle-aged voters. Voters who said their family's financial situation is better or the same than two years ago went for Murray, while those who felt they were doing worse went for Rossi."²²⁵ On November 3 Murray led by only 1%, but her lead was brought up to 2% when King County began reporting their ballot totals.²²⁶ Rossi's wins in smaller counties were greatly overshadowed by King County, which contains almost one third of Washington's population.

It was announced on November 4th that incumbent Senator Patty Murray won her third U.S. Senate term by a 4% margin.²²⁷ The women of King County helped bolster Murray's win as polls showed they are more often for healthcare legislation and also had distaste for Rossi

²²³ Jonathan Martin, "Democrats' delight in attacking Rossi on abortion," *The Seattle Times*, October 13, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2013153958_democrats_attacking_rossi_on_a.html.

²²⁴ Nicole Tsong, "Rossi pounds Murray about earmarks," *The Seattle Times*, October 21, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2013225979_rossi22m.html.

²²⁵ Phuong Le, "Wash. voters: Obama not factor in US Senate race," *The Seattle Times*, November 2, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2013328794_apwaexitpollwa.html.

²²⁶ Jonathan Martin, "Sen. Patty Murray wins fourth term," *The Seattle Times*, November 4, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2013349339_murrays_lead_widens_on_new_vot.html.

²²⁷ Jim Brunner, "Patty Murray's Seattle stronghold: Senate race by geography," *The Seattle Times*, November 30, 2010, accessed November 3, 2010,

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politicsnorthwest/2013555798_patty_murrays_urban_stronghold.html.

specifically.²²⁸ Even independents that favored some of his views seemed turned off by his candidacy after the long drawn out events from his past gubernatorial race. Rossi's NRSC and eventual tea party backing did not lead to a Republican Party victory in Washington.

Tea Party Activity

Washington's U.S. Senate race was medium tea party activity because Rossi received an endorsement from the TPE and some campaign money from FreedomWorks. Palin endorsed Clint Didier who was on the ballot for the Republican primary. In addition, TPE II stopped in Tacoma, Tri-Cities, and Spokane, WA.

Washington's TPP website had over 40 groups listed but only three of them had active websites. The Bellingham Tea Party's website had a place to sign up for their newsletter and also had its own Facebook page. The Facebook Page had 48 "Likes" but listed no events.²²⁹ Akers, Burr, Didier, Mercer, Murray, and Rossi attended the Bellingham Tea Party's candidates' forum. Their rallies included the "Constitution Day Rally," "First Anniversary Tea Party," "Health Care Liberty Rally," and "The First Bellingham Tea Party." Their other activities included two Flag Day celebrations, two parades, and a theatre program they hosted involving sing and dancing acts revolving around the Constitution.

Another website that was active was "We the People – Vancouver." Their website, www.wepeeps.org, shows that the group has created committees and a "Core Team." We the People's held a candidates' forum that was attended by Clint Didier and several Congressional District 3 candidates. Their one protest was to support Washington's Attorney General in repealing the healthcare bill and they had eight different rallies protesting the healthcare bill and the July 4th holiday. Other activities included three movie nights, an election celebration, four

²²⁸ Danny Westneat, "It was the women of King County who pushed Patty Murray over the top," *The Seattle Times*, November 9, 2010, accessed January 4, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/dannywestneat/2013389389_danny10.html.

²²⁹ "Bellingham Tea Party," <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Bellingham-Tea-Party/160709543977251>.

Constitutional Classes, and a parade. It also included weekly “Republican Parleys” which were weekly trips to the GOP headquarters in Vancouver to have roundtable discussions. The general meetings were split between weekly prayer groups and weekly planning meetings. Their group also has a Facebook Page “We The People Washington – Vancouver” that at the time of the election had 271 “Likes” and posted no events prior to the election.

A third group with a website was the Moses Lake Grant County TEA Party Coalition. This group had a Meetup page with 92 members. The Moses Lake Grant County TEA Party Coalition had three protests at City Council meetings protesting a bill prohibiting political signs on public property. Rallies included going to TriCities for TPE and an Independence Day Tea Party. Their other events included an election night celebration event, a picnic, and a constitution study.

Other groups of note include the South Sound Patriots, the Prosser Patriots, and the Mount Vernon Tea party. The South Sound Patriots had pictures from large events and claims to have a newsletter but does not have them archived on their site. This group also has a Facebook group with less than 20 “Likes” and no events section. The Prosser Patriots has 22 members and no events page so it seems that the site has not been used for organizing events. The Mount Vernon Tea Party has no events listed but does claim to have committees and has a donations section and newsletter section.

Even though there is not a lot of evidence of organizing through the observation of several groups’ websites there were several well-attended rallies held in the state of Washington during 2009 and 2010. On the original day of the “Tax Day Tea Party” in April 2009 several cities around Washington held rallies. In Olympia there were 5,000 on the state capitol and in Seattle there were 1,000 in attendance. The next year at the 2nd Tax Day Tea Party Rally there were several hundred protestors in Bellevue, “a large contingent” in Everett, 3,000 in Olympia,

and several hundred in Seattle—down from the year before. TPE II stopped in Tacoma, TriCities, and Spokane but I was unable to find numbers for attendance of their three stops.

Candidates in the state of Washington received attention from both the national GOP establishment and the TPM. Although one of the original tea party activists is from Washington there was not a large amount of evidence supporting strong grassroots activity. Local TPM events were comprised mainly of rallies. Unlike in other cases when the candidate became more moderate after the primary, Rossi attempted to become more conservative.

The Case of the Idaho Election: Low Tea Party Activity, Republican Leaning Race

Senator Mike Crapo first jumped from the Idaho State Senate to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1993. In 1998 Crapo was elected to the U.S. Senate and was reelected in 2004.²³⁰ Although he is not the chairman of any committee, Crapo is on the Senate Finance and Budget committees and is part of a group of 18 congressmen that are working closely with Obama to specifically lower the deficit.²³¹ Crapo has a very conservative voting history and tied with Senators Jim DeMint and Coburn in a National Journal rating as the most conservative senators.²³² While Crapo was in the U.S. House of Representatives he was “among a group of lawmakers that threw a ceremonial copy of the U.S. tax code into the Boston Harbor, to protest federal spending.²³³ Crapo has voted against the stimulus and the bank bailouts, and voted for repealing the healthcare bill and extending Bush tax cuts.²³⁴ Crapo was elected to his last term unopposed by a Democratic candidate in a very Republican state.

Primary Election Race

Crapo had one opponent in Idaho’s Republican primary that was held on May 25, 2010. Claude “Skip” Davis is a Real Estate Broker who moved to Idaho in 1977. His important issues were setting term limits, campaign finance reform, freezing salaries and benefits of federal elected officials, strict repatriation of illegal immigrants, and creating more manufacturing jobs. Davis campaigned mostly through the Internet and canvassed in Ada and Washington

²³⁰ Amanda Erickson, “Path to Power,” website,

²³¹ “Election 2010 Endorsements: The ‘other’ races: Crapo, Simpson are solid picks,” *Idaho Statesman*, October 17, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2010/10/17/1382234/the-other-races-crapo-simpson.html>.

²³² Carrie Mihalcik, “Most Conservative Members Of Congress,” *National Journal*, February 24, 2011, http://nationaljournal.com/magazine/most-conservative-members-of-congress-20110224?mrefid=site_search&page=1.

²³³ Susan Wheeler, “News Release: Crapo to Meet With Tea Party Organizers,” May 22, 2009, http://crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release_full.cfm?id=313482.

²³⁴ Dan Popkey, “Idaho Democratic Senate candidate faces big tax bills,” *The Idaho Statesman*, June 2, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2010/06/02/1214075/democrat-faces-big-tax-bills.html>.

counties.²³⁵ Crapo denied Davis the opportunity to debate him on Idaho Public Television before the primary. Crapo defeated Davis in the primary with almost 80% of the vote.

On the Democratic ticket were Tom Sullivan and William Byrk. Byrk had actually never been to Idaho but entered the race to provide an alternative to Crapo.²³⁶ Once Sullivan entered the race Byrk stopped his campaign and endorsed Sullivan, even though his name stayed on the ballot. Sullivan defeated Byrk in the primary for the Democratic nomination with almost 75% of the vote. The Secretary of State in Idaho expected more voting than average in the primary because of the TPM and posted the biggest primary numbers since 2000.²³⁷

General Election Race

Sullivan's campaign attacked Crapo for being an incumbent, claiming specifically that the deficit has grown during his 20 years in Congress. On his campaign site, Sullivan was pro-choice, pro 2nd amendment rights, and in favor the healthcare bill. In early June it came out that Sullivan owed the IRS and the Idaho Tax Commission a combined amount of between \$685,000 and \$745,000.²³⁸ At this point in the race Sullivan had raised \$16,000 for his campaign in comparison to Crapo's \$3.6 million.

On October 12, the League of Women Voters and the Idaho Press Club sponsored a debate between Sullivan and Crapo that was televised on Idaho Public Television.²³⁹ Crapo was forced to be defensive over his business and tax interests when he was questioned by Sullivan

²³⁵ "Richert: Twelve years, no debates: Crapo ducks out," *Idaho Statesman*, April 22, 2010, accessed January 11, 2011. <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2010/04/22/1163458/twelve-years-no-debates-crapo.html>.

²³⁶ "No Hard Feelings, Says Losing Dem Senate Primary Candidate in Idaho Who's Never Been to the State," FOXNews.com, May 26, 2010, accessed January 14, 2011, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/05/26/losing-candidate-idaho-senate-primary-says-hes-state/>.

²³⁷ "Primary turnout best in decade - But it was average in Ada County and lower than average in Canyon County," *The Idaho Statesman*, May 27, 2010, accessed January 15, 2011, <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2010/05/27/1207881/primary-turnout-best-in-decade.html>.

²³⁸ *The Idaho Statesman*, June 2, 2010.

²³⁹ Betsy Z. Russell, "Crapo, Sullivan debate taxes, federal spending," *The Spokesman-Review*, October 13, 2010, accessed January 15, 2011, <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2010/oct/13/crapo-sullivan-debate-taxes-federal-spending/>.

about voting to extend Bush Tax cuts. Crapo responded by saying that even though he was supported by banks and big business, he voted against TARP, the Wall Street bailout, and against the stimulus.²⁴⁰ When given the opportunity, Crapo did not comment on Sullivan's faulty tax history saying, "I have not made it an issue in my campaign."²⁴¹ Sullivan continued to point out that the 18 years Crapo has been in Congress has led us to the our current debt issues. Crapo tried to indicate that Sullivan would blindly follow Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's "team" that wants the government to continue to spend.²⁴² The two disagreed on repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the Dream Act, and single-payer healthcare, with Sullivan in support of all three and Crapo in opposition. In the last few weeks leading up to the general election, Sullivan and Crapo met several more times for debates and candidates forums. Sullivan held a TV interview on KXLY-TV Ch. 4 and attended a Restore to Sanity Rally at Boise City Hall. Crapo maintained his low profile campaign and used his over \$3 million in campaign money to run television advertisements.

Crapo easily defeated Sullivan with 71.2 percent of the vote to Sullivan's 24.9%. Although the primary brought a large number of voters, the general election only had 58.1 percent, which was the lowest for a midterm election in 32 years.²⁴³ Crapo won reelection after maintaining a low profile campaign during the race and Sullivan failed to turn the national wave of anti-incumbent anger towards a fiscally conservative incumbent Republican Senator in a very Republican state.

²⁴⁰ Brad Iverson-Long, "Crapo, Sullivan reveal more difference in TV debate," Idaho reporter.com, October 20, 2010, accessed January 28, 2011, <http://www.idahoreporter.com/2010/crapo-sullivan-reveal-more-differences-in-tv-debate/>.

²⁴¹ Russell, Betsy Z. "Crapo, Sullivan debate taxes, federal spending." *The Spokesman-Review*, October 13, 2010.

²⁴² Idaho reporter.com, October 20, 2010.

²⁴³ Kevin Richert, "Idahoans felt little motivation to visit the polls," *The Idaho Statesman*, November 20, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011, <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2010/11/20/1425481/idahoans-felt-little-motivation.html>.

Tea Party Activity

Idaho's race was defined as having low tea party activity because the incumbent Republican Senator Mike Crapo did not receive contributions from any tea party related PACs nor did any of the TPE stop in Idaho. Although the Idaho race did not receive national media attention or attention from national TPM related leaders and groups, state officials did think that the TPM motivated voters to come out. The state officials were half right because the primary brought the biggest primary numbers in a decade while the general election had the lowest voting turnout during a midterm election in the past three decades. In a state where the incumbent senator is known for his fiscally conservative views there was no observed attempt by the tea party in Idaho to vote out Sen. Crapo. To illustrate the level of conservativeness in the state of Idaho, the TPE endorsed Rep. Walt Minnick (D-Idaho), the only Democrat it would endorse throughout the election season for his "firm stance on fiscal accountability." Minnick has refused earmarks and co-sponsored a bill to ban them outright, helped enact the Pay-As-You-Go Act, co-sponsored a constitutional amendment to balance the budget and authored a bill allowing a modified line-item veto.

TPP's webpage for Idaho had 24 groups listed at the time of the election. Major rallies and events were organized by the Tea Party Boise, LLC. TPB group first became organized in march 2009, prior to the Tax Day protests.²⁴⁴ Their April 2009 Tax Day protest, occurring in conjunction with similar protests around the country, brought an estimated 2,500 people from around the state to Capitol Park, Boise (located across the street from the state Capitol).²⁴⁵ In September 2009 TPB organized another rally in Capitol Park that brought 1,500 to protest the healthcare bill. Like the rally on "Tax Day" there were rallies held this day around the country

²⁴⁴ "August 14, 2009 – Current Events," http://www.teapartyboise.com/newsletter_8-14-2009.pdf.

²⁴⁵ Dan Popkey, "Boise 'tea party' draws 2,500 protesters," *Idaho Statesman*, April 16, 2009, accessed January 3, 2011.

against the healthcare bill.²⁴⁶ Several hundred protestors gathered on the steps of Idaho's state capitol on January 18, 2010 to celebrate the opening day of their state legislature.²⁴⁷ At the time of the election, TPB's Facebook group had 679 people. Their Facebook group did not have a section for events but their own page had four candidates' forums, two rallies, three general meetings, and 10 other events listed.

TPB puts out newsletters for its members monthly or bi-monthly. These newsletters told the members about future events and include educational pieces like "The Meaning of Liberty" and information about the healthcare bill. Newsletters also included book recommendations, like *How Capitalism Will Save Us* by Steve Forbes, and information about bills Idaho's state legislature was working on. During the last week of October 2010 TPB released a "Special Edition" Election Newsletter in which it discussed candidates for House Districts 1 & 2 but made no mention of Senator Crapo. A few months earlier TPB also held a candidate's forum but only included those running for House Districts 1 and 2 and were not intended by both incumbent Congressmen. Although earlier news reports had said TPB would not endorse candidates, their special edition newsletter opened with an article dedicated to why you should vote for Raul Labrador in District 1.²⁴⁸ Labrador would go on to defeat the incumbent Democrat Walt Minnick, who had also upset the TPB in an earlier town hall meeting claiming that it was the Supreme Court's job to protect the Constitution and not his.

While the TPM within Idaho did not seem to effect Crapo's reelection, he did have a semi-cordial relationship with the TPB group. Crapo met with leaders of TPB in May of 2009

²⁴⁶ Anna Webb, "Signs, solidarity and anti-tax fervor - At least 1,500 protest big government during Boise rally," *The Idaho Statesman*, September 13, 2009, accessed January 11, 2011, <http://www.allvoices.com/news/4141605/s/38531097-signs-solidarity-and-anti-tax-fervor-at-least-1-500-protest-big-government-during-boise-rally>.

²⁴⁷ Dan Popkey, "First Amendment on parade Monday," *Idaho Statesman*, January 18, 2010, accessed January 14, 2011.

²⁴⁸ Dan Popkey, "Candidates adopt tea party line," *Idaho Statesman*, April 18, 2010, accessed January 23, 2010.

after he could not attend their first Tax Day rally in April. He also phoned in to a town hall meeting of 300 people in late August 2009 and responded to their candidate questionnaire. The TPM related organizing in Idaho was mostly contained around large rallies and influencing House votes rather than targeting Sen. Crapo.

The Case of the Maryland Election: Low Tea Party Activity, Democratic Leaning Race

Incumbent Senator Barbara Mikulski was poised to make history as the longest serving woman senator when she announced on February 22 that she would be seeking reelection.²⁴⁹ During her tenure Mikulski helped pass legislation that required equal pay for women and also consistently ranked as Maryland's most popular politician by her constituents.²⁵⁰ In a state as blue as Maryland it seemed that the anti-incumbent movement that was present in many other states would not be able to take down Mikulski, even though TPM leaders like Sarah Palin entered the Maryland races by endorsing a GOP candidate for the gubernatorial primary.

Primary Election Race

One of the first to enter the race against Mikulski was Queen Anne County Commissioner Dr. Eric Wargotz. Wargotz described himself and his views as “constitutionally conservative” and campaigned for tax cuts, reducing the deficit, and balancing the budget.²⁵¹ Later in his campaign, Wargotz would come out for stricter enforcement of immigration laws, a more limited government, Second Amendment rights, and a strong pro-life stance. Wargotz also signed the “No Climate Tax Pledge” that said he would “oppose legislation relating to climate change that includes a net increase in government revenue.”²⁵²

Wargotz's closest opponent in the primary was Maryland lawyer Jim Rutledge. Like Wargotz, Rutledge supported stronger enforcement of immigration laws, Second Amendment rights, and lower taxes. Rutledge received endorsements from Maryland's Right to Life group

²⁴⁹ John Wagner, “Mikulski 'not retiring,' announces campaign team,” Washingtonpost.com, February 22, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011,

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/annapolis/2010/02/mikulski_not_retiring_announce.html.

²⁵⁰ “Annie Linskey, “Mikulski makes run official, pledges to ‘keep on fighting,’” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 24, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011.

²⁵¹ Bobby McMahon, “Wargotz faces tough odds with Mikulski challenge,” *Bay Times*, March 31, 2010.

²⁵² “Americans for Prosperity Applauds U.S. Senate Candidate Eric Wargotz,” February 22, 2010, http://wargotz.com/press/americans_for_prosperity_applauds_u.s._senate_candidate_eric_wargotz.

and Baltimore County Republicans.²⁵³ Both Wargotz and Rutledge said that they were the tea party candidate, but neither received endorsements from anyone on a national level who was affiliated with the movement nor were there any tea party endorsements from Maryland's local level tea party groups.

In early September Wargotz aired a television ad that eventually garnered national attention. Throughout his campaign Wargotz discussed the anti-incumbent feeling that was occurring all over the country and this was the basis for his ad called "Insidersaurus."²⁵⁴ This television clip puts Mikulski's face onto the body of a dinosaur that is friendly with other "insidersauruses" Majority Leader Harry Ried and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. The majority of Wargotz's campaign was personally funded and he greatly outspent Rutledge.

In the closed primary that was held on September 15, Mikulski won 82% of the vote with none of her opponents winning more than 8%. Wargotz defeated Rutledge 38% to 31% with none of the other nine candidates winning more than 6%.

General Election Race

As the general election approached, polls showed Mikulski as one of the safest of the Senate's Democrats.²⁵⁵ Wargotz was consistently behind Mikulski in the polls by at least 15%, and polls showed that 4 out of 5 Maryland residents did not know who he was.²⁵⁶ Experts thought that the only way Wargotz could beat Mikulski was if he staged a big ad campaign but

²⁵³ "Maryland Right to Life 2010 Endorsements," August 10, 2010, <http://www.redstate.com/mrnewman/2010/08/10/maryland-right-to-life-2010-endorsements/>.

²⁵⁴ Chris Knauss, "Wargotz will face Mikulski for Senate," *Bay Times*, September 22, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011.

²⁵⁵ Paul West, "Mikulski Renominated," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 15, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-09-14/news/bs-md-congress-primary-results-20100913_1_kratovil-mikulski-andy-harris.

²⁵⁶ Paul West, "GOP's Senate Nominee is Fighting for Attention," *The Baltimore Sun*, October 18, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011.

he continued to be outspent by Mikulski almost 20 to 1.²⁵⁷ The NRSC did not contribute any money to Wargotz's campaign because they did not see the race as at all competitive. Less than two months from the general election, it appeared that the TPM was having trouble affecting elections in Maryland.²⁵⁸ A Washington Post poll showed Maryland as having a much smaller percentage of tea party supporters in comparison to the rest of the nation.²⁵⁹

In Maryland's first time using an early voting system, the first three days of ballots were made up of 63% registered Democrats and 27% registered Republicans²⁶⁰. Mikulski won the race with 62% of the vote and became the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Senate. Wargotz self-funded the majority of his campaign with half a million dollars and ran some striking ads that got national attention but was still only predicted to win this race by 1%. Maryland's Senator Barb was not another casualty of the country's anti-incumbent wave nor did the state have much interest in the tea party's fiscally conservative platform.

Tea Party Activity

Maryland is listed as a low tea party activity race because none of the candidates received endorsements from Sarah Palin, Michelle Bachmann, the TPE, or FreedomWorks nor did they receive any campaign financing from any tea party related PACs. None of the four TPE tours made stops in Maryland. Sarah Palin did endorse Brian Murphy, a candidate for Governor but that did not prevent him from being easily defeated by Former Governor Robert Ehrlich.

Although both Wargotz and Rutledge claimed they had support from the TPM within Maryland

²⁵⁷ West, Paul. "GOP's Senate Nominee is Fighting for Attention." *The Baltimore Sun*, October 18, 2010.

²⁵⁸ "Maryland is No Delaware: The Tea Party Produces a Weak Brew in the Free State," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 16, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011.

²⁵⁹ Aaron C. Davis, "Empty chairs at Maryland Tea Party?" *Washingtonpost.com*, October 1, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011, http://voices.washingtonpost.com/annapolis/2010/10/first_click_marylandempty_chai.html.

²⁶⁰ Annie Linskey, "Democratic Voters Hit the Polls Early," *The Baltimore Sun*, October 26, 2010, accessed March 3, 2011, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2010-10-26/news/bs-md-early-voting-20101026_1_early-voting-early-ballots-sun-poll.

there is no proof of endorsements from any groups. But, both Rutledge and Wargotz did attend candidates' forums run by tea party groups.

During the first round of Tax Day Tea Party protests in 2009 a Baltimore radio station reported protests in Annapolis, Baltimore, Bel Air, Cecil County, Chestertown, Cumberland, Frederick, Havre de Grace, Salisbury, and Westminster.²⁶¹ Baltimore had a reported 60 and 100 protestors and although I was unable to find numbers for the other locations there were reports of rallies in Annapolis and Salisbury.²⁶² A year later there were several hundred protestors in Towson.²⁶³

One active group in Maryland was the Cecil County Patriots (CCP) which had a 269 person membership on their website at the time of the election. Their homepage has a place to donate to the group and explicitly states that they stand for a platform and do not endorse candidates. CCP held monthly meetings and had five candidates' forums featuring Andy Harris, Jim Rutledge, a joint forum with Andy Harris and Frank Kratovil, and one forum each for Democratic and Republican candidates for Cecil County Commissioner. Their rallies included two counter rallies against President Obama's Town Hall at the University of Maryland and a rally by Code Pink. Four of the rallies listed were actually in D.C. including Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor Rally. Other meetings included Board of Education meetings, County Commissioner Budget meetings and two occasions that CCP were asked to flier for their events. This group also has a Facebook with the same events and had 157 members at the time of the election.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ "Maryland Tax Day Tea Parties," wbal.com, <http://www.wbal.com/taxdayteaparty/>.

²⁶² John Ligan, "Baltimore: A Mob of Coincidences on Tax Day," Splice Today, April 17, 2009, accessed March 5, 2011, <http://www.splicetoday.com/politics-and-media/baltimore-a-mob-of-coincidences-on-tax-day>.

²⁶³ Mary Gail Hare, "Tea Party Protesters Join National Rally," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 16, 2010, accessed March 7, 2011.

²⁶⁴ "Cecil County Patriots," <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=180426786853>.

Another group in Maryland was the Maryland Society of Patriots. At the time of the election their Facebook page had 1509 members. The townhall events listed on their webpage were one with Congressman Steny Hoyer from Maryland's 5th District (D) and another that President Obama held at the University of Maryland. Although they did not specifically hold their own candidates' forums the Maryland Society of Patriots had candidates at their general meetings. Jim Rutledge attended two of their meetings and Wargotz attended one. There may have been some possible GOTV activity at two of the group's general meetings, both before the primary election and general election. Explanations of the primary event read: "MSOP Primary Preparation Meeting. Now is the time to take back the Republican Party and the State of Maryland. Please join MSOP for an instructional meeting on the best ways to help your candidate win his/her primary race. Led by Monti Montalto, an expert on Maryland Politics and a true conservative who managed Ellen Sauerbrey's underdog primary win in 1994." And the event explanation for the general election read: "We will be recapping the primary, organizing support for the general, speaking with candidates and planning upcoming tea parties. Please come out to show your support for Maryland's growing conservative movement."

In a state that was very likely to go Democratic, the two leading Republican candidates looked for TPM support. The candidate who received local tea party support lost to the candidate who self-funded a state-wide ad campaign. Even though Wargotz's views matched those of the TPM, the national movement exhibited no desire to go up against Mikulski's war chest. This case has shown that in states like Maryland, and Oregon, that are very Democratic it is unlikely that any amount of campaigning or voter anger will overthrow a well-liked incumbent.

The Case of the Connecticut Election: Low Tea Party Activity, Toss-up Race

When Senator Chris Dodd announced in early January 2010 that he would not seek reelection, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal quickly announced his intention of running.²⁶⁵ The state and national Republican Party thought they could win the U.S. Senate seat with a candidate running against Dodd. Against Blumenthal, the GOP was less confident. The GOP in Washington originally supported former Congressman Rob Simmons to run for their party, but the national Republican Party backed off when co-founder of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Linda McMahon began an aggressive, and extremely expensive and self-funded, campaign in late 2009.²⁶⁶

Primary Election Race

Linda McMahon began considering her run for the U.S. Senate in August of 2009.²⁶⁷ In the same month, Peter Schiff, a stockbroker from Fairfield County, who was Ron Paul's economic advisor when he ran for president, opened up a campaign office. Schiff predicted the recession on MSNBC in 2006 and was made popular by a YouTube video called "Peter Schiff was Right."²⁶⁸ Tom Foley (who would leave the race to enter Connecticut's gubernatorial race) and State Senator Sam Caligiuri would also enter the race for the Republican nomination.

²⁶⁵ Sarah Wheaton, "Connecticut's Attorney General Will Seek Dodd's Senate Seat," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2010, accessed January 3, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/07/nyregion/07conn.html>.

²⁶⁶ Raymond Hernandez, "Newcomer Stirs Up Connecticut Senate Race," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2009, accessed January 6, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/31/nyregion/31mcmahon.html>.

²⁶⁷ Daniela Altimari, "Wrestling With an Idea," *The Hartford Courant*, August 15, 2009, accessed February 3, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2009-08-15/news/ww-e-mcmahon-dodd-web.art_1_vince-mcmahon-ww-e-world-wrestling-entertainment-ceo.

²⁶⁸ Daniela Altimari, "Newest Candidate Promises Good Fight," *The Hartford Courant*, September 16, 2009, accessed February 3, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2009-09-16/news/hc-mcmahon-senate-announcement-0916.artsep16_1_linda-e-mcmahon-vincent-moscardelli-world-wrestling-entertainment-empire.

In early October 2009, Simmons' campaign began to attack McMahon because she had donated to Democrats in the past.²⁶⁹ Although this was true, and some of her donations went directly to defeat Simmons, McMahon had donated at least double the amount to Republicans. This early on in the race McMahon had already spent a little over \$2 million on campaign ads, while Simmons had raised a little over \$1 million with more small contributions than his opponents. McMahon combined her large ad campaign with appearances all around the state.²⁷⁰ The GOP establishment decided to stay out of the primary allowing the candidates to fight for the nomination. This hurt Simmons who had expected their support and their campaign funding.

A November Quinnipiac University poll showed Simmons with 28% of the Republican vote to McMahon's 17%, a 15 point drop for Simmons since McMahon entered the race.²⁷¹ Blumenthal was very popular in the state of Connecticut and "his poll approval ratings have hovered around 80%," but he had not been part of a competitive race for many years. As Attorney General he has fought against big tobacco and pollution violators and many voters felt that he deserved their vote as repayment for his dedication to the people's interests.²⁷²

McMahon's platform was big on deregulation of markets in order to help small businesses. Her campaign site shared her fiscally conservative views of cutting taxes, decreasing spending, and ending the culture of bailouts. McMahon supported Second Amendment rights, abortion rights, capital punishment, charter schools, and opposed cap-and-trade.²⁷³ McMahon

²⁶⁹ Christopher Keating, "McMahon Strikes at GOP Opponents," *The Hartford Courant*, October 14, 2009, accessed January 3, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2009-10-14/news/senate-campaign-1014.art_1_contributions-senate-race-gop-opponents.

²⁷⁰ Kevin Ronnie, "Why McMahon Will Go The Distance," *The Hartford Courant*, October 18, 2009, accessed January 4, 2011.

²⁷¹ Daniela Altimari, "Disapproval Ratings Persistent for Dodd," *The Hartford Courant*, November 13, 2009, January 4, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2009-11-13/news/qpoll-senate1113_1_chris-dodd-health-care-quinnipiac-poll.

²⁷² Jon Lender, "Blumenthal, At Long Last, Leaving His Comfort Zone," *The Hartford Courant*, January 7, 2010, http://articles.courant.com/2010-01-07/news/10010712530844_1_blumenthal-senate-race-appeals-judge/2.

²⁷³ "Linda McMahon for Senate: Issues," <http://www.linda2010.com/issues/>.

often told her resilient rags-to-riches story, which consisted of going from bankruptcy and home foreclosure to being the CEO of a multi-millionaire dollar industry.²⁷⁴ As the anti-incumbent tide continued to have influence nationally, McMahon highlighted the fact that she was a political outsider.

Simmons spent the majority of the primary campaign talking about his military career, time as a U.S. Congressman, and attacking McMahon's character.²⁷⁵ In comparison to Schiff, Simmons was a moderate Republican as evidenced by his platform and past voting record.²⁷⁶ Schiff was very extreme in his cutting of government size and spending and his platform called for eliminating the Departments of Labor, Energy, and Education. In his run for Senate, Schiff also supported cutting Social Security and Medicaid and abolishing income and payroll taxes.²⁷⁷

McMahon led Simmons in a poll for the first time in mid-March, a jump that was credited to Republican women.²⁷⁸ An article released in May of 2010 by the New York Times brought national media attention to Richard Blumenthal. The article uncovered Blumenthal's lies about his Vietnam veteran status. Blumenthal had actually deferred his service five times, and eventually got a spot in the Marine Reserve, which meant he would never go to Vietnam. Blumenthal blatantly lied to constituents during his time as Attorney General and during the 2010

²⁷⁴ Wheaton, Sarah. "Connecticut's Attorney General Will Seek Dodd's Senate Seat." *The New York Times*, January 6, 2010, accessed January 4, 2011.

²⁷⁵ Daniel Altamari, "In Her Corner: GOP Women – McMahon Overtakes Simmons," *The Hartford Courant*, March 18, 2010, accessed January 5, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2010-03-18/news/hc-linda-mcmahon-women-0318.artmar18_1_linda-mcmahon-world-wrestling-entertainment-ceo-republican-women.

²⁷⁶ "Rob Simmons for GOP Senate nomination," *The Stamford Advocate*, August 5, 2010, accessed January 4, 2011, <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Rob-Simmons-for-GOP-Senate-nomination-6117.php>.

²⁷⁷ Dagny Taggart, "Schiff Outlines His Campaign Platform," March 10, 2009, <http://www.schiff2010.com/blog/2009/march/schiff-outlines-his-campaign-platform>.

²⁷⁸ *The Hartford Courant*, March 18, 2010.

campaign.²⁷⁹ Although Blumenthal would apologize, his campaign took a hit, and the event would be brought up throughout the rest of the election.

At the May GOP convention McMahon won 737 delegates, Simmons won 632, and Schiff won 44.²⁸⁰ Against the wish of party leaders, Simmons declared he would enter the primary.²⁸¹ Schiff petitioned to be on the primary ballot, but polls showed that 67% of Republicans had never heard of him.²⁸²

Simmons announced in late May that he would be suspending his campaign but leaving his name on the ballot. Oddly, two months later he aired a 30-second ad and then confirmed he was back in the running at a debate.²⁸³ McMahon had turned her campaign focus to Blumenthal ever since the GOP convention. Meanwhile, Schiff and Simmons continued to attack McMahon over WWE related deaths and steroid usage and used clips from her WWE performances to make her look ridiculous. McMahon's won the primary with 49% of the vote.²⁸⁴

General Election Race

McMahon increased her television ad campaign and mailings after the general election. The number of advertisements ran by her campaign caused one Hartford Courant writer to jokingly state "I arrive home, kiss my wife, pet the dog and check the mail from Linda."²⁸⁵ Blumenthal conducted a relatively conservative ad campaign. One of his main ads showed "a

²⁷⁹ Raymond Hernandez, "Candidate's Words on Vietnam Service Differ from History," *The New York Times*, May 17, 2010, accessed February 14, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/18/nyregion/18blumenthal.html>.

²⁸⁰ Daniel Altimari, "Republicans: Vote Switching Gives Political Outsider Nod Over Simmons," *The Hartford Courant*, May 22, 2010

²⁸¹ Raymond Hernandez, "Simmons Suspends Campaign for Connecticut Senate," *The New York Times*, May 25, 2010, accessed January 23, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/26/nyregion/26simmons.html>.

²⁸² Daniela Altimari, "Schiff Qualifies for Primary," *The Hartford Courant*, June 22, 2010, accessed February 23, 2011, http://blogs.courant.com/capitol_watch/2010/06/schiff-happens-peter-schiff-qu.html.

²⁸³ Daniela Altimari, "Simmons: 'I'm Running'," *The Hartford Courant*, July 28, 2010, accessed February 23, 2011.

²⁸⁴ Daniela Altimari, "McMahon's Spending Pays Off In Big Victory," *The Hartford Courant*, August 11, 2010, accessed February 17, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2010-08-10/news/hc-sen-results-0811-20100810_1_mcmahon-rob-simmons-tea-party-movement.

²⁸⁵ Rick Green, "McMahon's Ubiquitous, But She's Saying Little," *The Hartford Courant*, October 19, 2010, accessed February 17, 2011.

quick montage of anti-Blumenthal ads, followed by three women proclaiming they are “sick of McMahon’s ads”. The ad went on to state “Linda McMahon does not get it. She laid off 10 percent of her work force and still took home \$46 million a year,” and ended with “Linda McMahon: profits before people.”²⁸⁶ Blumenthal’s campaign also utilized a comment McMahon made during an October press conference, when she said “We need to review how much it ought to be and whether or not we ought to have increases in the minimum wage.”²⁸⁷ Blumenthal claimed this meant McMahon is “out of touch” with the voters and pointed to his achievements on behalf of the voters during his time as Attorney General.

After a long campaign season in Connecticut, Blumenthal took Dodd’s spot in the U.S. Senate, winning 55% of the vote over McMahon’s 43%. The Connecticut race focused a lot more on character flaws and political gaffes than actual issues. McMahon attempted to ride the anti-incumbent wave and called herself a “political outsider,” but Blumenthal’s good record in Connecticut could not be broken by lies about his service record or her constant barrage of advertisements.

Tea Party Activity

The race in Connecticut is designated as low tea party activity but it does have slightly more activity than the others in its tea party activity level because McMahon received endorsements by FreedomWorks and the TPE. None of the “toss-up” races were true low tea party activity since their being a toss-up made them attractive for national groups who thought candidates had a chance at winning in the general election. In addition, endorsements were more of a factor in races other than Connecticut because they came with monetary contributions.

²⁸⁶ Matthew Kauffman, “Television ad from Democrat Richard Blumenthal's Senate campaign,” *The Hartford Courant*, September 26, 2010, accessed March 15, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2010-10-15/news/hc-claimcheck-blumenthal-lobbyists-1020101014_1_lobbyist-disclosure-linda-mcmahon-blumenthal-campaign.

²⁸⁷ Daniel Altimari, “Minimum Wage Comment Criticized,” *The Hartford Courant*, October 1, 2010, accessed January 16, 2011.

McMahon majorly funded her own campaign and did not need assistance with running an ad campaign or GOTV activities. Her endorsements from the TPE and FreedomWorks occurred after she won the Republican primary, very different from other cases like in Alaska whose candidates got endorsements prior to primaries and over other Republican candidates.²⁸⁸ Because of their timing these endorsements seemed more token than genuine and McMahon essentially asked not be endorsed by these groups for fear of losing votes from possible Democrat and Independent crossovers. When asked if McMahon wanted an endorsement from Sarah Palin she dodged the question saying she has not been seeking any outside endorsements.²⁸⁹

McMahon was not seeking endorsements from tea party groups inside Connecticut either, at least not until after the primary. During the month of August, McMahon said that she did not feel that the tea party was having any effect in her state.²⁹⁰ The Connecticut Grassroots Alliance, a group made up of 25 organizations, originally endorsed Peter Schiff as the Republican nominee in late May of 2010.²⁹¹ In September, McMahon attended a fundraiser of 200 people for a tea party candidate who was running for state Senate and attended another tea party rally in Hartford on October 2 entitled “Drain the Swamp” that had 300 people.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Rick Green, “WaPo: Freedomworks Will Endorse McMahon In Connecticut,” *The Hartford Courant*, September 21, 2010, accessed January 17, 2011, http://blogs.courant.com/rick_green/2010/09/wapo-freedworks-will-endorse-m.html.

²⁸⁹ Mark Pazniokas, “McMahon campaign shrugs at possible backing of national Tea Party group,” *The Connecticut Mirror*, September 22, 2010, accessed January 28, 2011, <http://www.ctmirror.org/story/7758/mcmahon-campaign-shrugs-possible-tea-party-endorsement>.

²⁹⁰ Joni Lambert, “Senatorial candidate Linda McMahon says Connecticut Tea Party not working,” *Hartford Conservative Examiner*, August 2, 2010, <http://www.examiner.com/conservative-in-hartford/senatorial-candidat...da-mcmahon-says-connecticut-tea-party-not-working?>

²⁹¹ Daniela Altimari, “Schiff wins the Tea Party endorsement,” *The Hartford Courant*, May 19, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011, http://blogs.courant.com/capitol_watch/2010/05/schiff-wins-the-tea-party-endo.html.

²⁹² Mark Pazniokas, “McMahon embraced by Tea Party,” *The Connecticut Mirror*, September 1, 2010, accessed February 1, 2011, <http://www.ctmirror.org/story/7520/mcmahon-embraced-tea-party>.

On the original day of anti-tax protests, April 15, 2009, there was a rally in Hartford that was estimated at 3000 people.²⁹³ A year later on the second round of national Tax Day Tea Parties, New Haven had around 1000 people and Republican Senate Candidate Peter Schiff was in attendance.²⁹⁴ There were also rallies in New Milford, Greenwich, Norwich, and Hartford. This year's Hartford rally only had 1200 people, Greenwich had "several hundred," and Norwich had 200.²⁹⁵

TPE I and TPE IV both stopped in Connecticut. TPE I stopped in Hartford, CT and Bridgeport, CT on September 11, 2009. In Hartford about 1,500 people attended the event that called for former Senator Dodd to step down and was headlined by conservative writer and pundit Ann Coulter (in an article about this event a journalist called them "teabaggers"). The second stop only brought out about 100 people. When the fourth installment of the TPE: Liberty at the Ballot Box came to CT it stopped in Waterbury on November 3, 2010 and had 200 in attendance.

Although the TPP Connecticut Groups page lists 60 different groups only six of them have active websites of which only 2 seem to actually organize any events. The New Boston Tea Party's website just has blog posts.²⁹⁶ The Hartford Tea Party Patriots has a newsletter sign up and only lists only lists major rallies, some of them taking place in Washington, D.C.²⁹⁷ The New Milford Tea Party Patriots have events listed from June till October 2010 and also had a

²⁹³ Christopher Keating, "Tea Party Rally Outside State Capitol Draws Big Crowd," *The Hartford Courant*, April 15, 2009, accessed February 18, 2011, http://blogs.courant.com/capitol_watch/2009/04/tea-party-at-capitol-draws-an.html.

²⁹⁴ Genevieve Reilly, "Anger at Obama, taxes brews at tea party rally," *The Connecticut Post*, April 16, 2010, accessed February 18, 2011, <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Anger-at-Obama-taxes-brews-at-tea-party-rally-449848.php>.

²⁹⁵ Amanda Falcone, "Tea Party Supporters Rally At Capitol And 4 Other State Sites," *The Hartford Courant*, April 16, 2010, accessed February 18, 2011, http://articles.courant.com/2010-04-16/news/hc-ct-tea-party-0417.artapr16_1_hartford-rally-state-sites-capitol.

²⁹⁶ "The New Boston Tea Party," <http://www.thenewbostonteaparty.com/>.

²⁹⁷ "The Hartford Tea Party Patriots," <http://www.thehartfordteapartypatriots.com/>.

newsletter sign up. Westport Tea began in May 2010 and asks for a \$20 dollar membership fee on their website. They have four events listed and say that 90 people were at their first planning meeting.²⁹⁸ The CT Grassroots Alliance is made up of 25 different groups around Connecticut.²⁹⁹ This was the group that endorsed Schiff for the primary but it is unclear when they did this or how it was announced. It is also unclear how this group came to be and if it has meetings with representatives from each group.

While there were several large TPM rallies within Connecticut it is unclear how they were organized and what kind of impact they had on voting. Although she first denied their power, McMahon began to attend TPM events towards the end of the general election. McMahon's views matched up with the TPM but she still did not receive attention from many of the national groups. Although the Connecticut race did get a lot of media attention it was in large part due to the large cost of the campaigns, the semi-famous WWE CEO, and the Blumenthal debacle and not the TPM.

²⁹⁸ "Westport Tea." <http://westporttea.com/>.

²⁹⁹ CT Grassroots Alliance, "<http://www.ctgrassrootsalliance.com/>"

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The story of each of the nine races shows trends within the TPM and factors outside of the TPM affecting the outcome of each election. Although nationwide TPM PACs and groups made it their mission to elect conservative candidates, there was very little GOTV activity at the local and grassroots level. Most groups held candidates' forums, but did not endorse candidates. Miller, O'Donnell, and Angle's fiscally conservative platforms and large campaign contributions may have helped them win their state primaries. However, changes in O'Donnell and Angle's campaign rhetoric after the primary showed them attempting to appeal to a broader base of voters. In Alaska, Murkowski's appeal to independents and Democrats may have been the key to her defeating Miller. Miller, O'Donnell, and McMahon's character flaws and personal issues may also have hurt their chances at winning in the general election. Fiscally conservative incumbents in the red states of Idaho and Oklahoma easily won this election season, as did popular Democratic incumbents in the blue states of Oregon and Maryland. Abortion-related issues played a role in both Alaska and Washington.

Only three of the nine cases had any TPM based GOTV activities. Although Alaska's CPG endorsed Miller at a public event with 200 people, there was no proof of GOTV activity on their website. Even so, this public endorsement is relevant because not all TPM groups endorsed candidates this election cycle. ATP, on the other hand, had 51 total GOTV activities on behalf of Joe Miller. These activities included phone banking, sign waving (that was organized by another group), and several mailing events.

In Nevada, the Nevada Patriots Meetup showed evidence of GOTV activity hosted by the CCRP. The GOTV activities included canvassing and making calls at the CCRP center. One of the canvassing activities was directly related to a candidate, who was running as a State Senator,

though other similar activities had no specific candidate distinction. The phone banking events discussed electing Republican candidates over Democratic candidates generally, but listed no specific people running for office.

Oregon also had evidence of GOTV activity. OTP listed two occasions for calling voters on their Facebook events page. Both event explanations referenced overturning Democrats, but neither mentioned specific candidates. The OTP was one of the organizations that took part in the Oregon Victory Pledge. The pledge called on Oregon residents to “phone bank, go door to door, distribute signs” on behalf of conservative candidates. Like Nevada, the OTP events did not discuss specific races or candidates. In contrast, Alaska’s CPG had specific GOTV activities for Joe Miller. One of the TPM groups in Connecticut did have two voter registration drives, but the explanation of the event specifically noted that no tea party signs or other paraphernalia were allowed.

The lack of GOTV activity speaks to the difference between the local grassroots TPM and the goals of the larger, national umbrella groups like TPE and FreedomWorks. The majority of websites for local groups claim to be nonpartisan and solely for education purposes (as opposed to endorsing candidates). Their claim is indicative of the lack of GOTV activity for specific candidates on their event pages. It is unclear why there was such a large amount of GOTV activity for Joe Miller. It is possible that it was in reaction to Murkowski’s write-in campaign. Another explanation could be a stronger connection with the candidate due to Palin’s relationship to the TPM and the state. Regardless, the presence (or lack thereof) of GOTV events says something about the relationship between the tea party as a social movement and the tea party as a political actor. Although the TPM is based in fiscally conservative values, it is not yet effective at organizing to get officials into office. Rallies numbering in the thousands illustrate

the voter anger that was present in 2009 and 2010, but the TPM was unable, for the most part, to turn that anger into votes.

Although the TPM did not seem to be doing much groundwork in terms of GOTV activity, their existence could help to explain candidates' platforms becoming more conservative in some cases. When Miller ran for office in past elections he ran on moderate platforms. But, this election he moved to the far right in calling for the abolishment of the Department of Education and the privatization of Social Security. In O'Donnell's past races, she had emphasized her socially conservative values, as opposed to the fiscally conservative ones she spoke so strongly of this election cycle. In Washington State, Rossi decided to sign the Contract From America after he won the GOP primary against tea-party-favorite Didier in a possible attempt to attract the more conservative voters. After both Angle and O'Donnell won primary elections, their campaign websites went offline for a few days, and reappeared with some of their more conservative views toned down. In accordance with the enthusiasm hypothesis, their extreme views may have helped them to win their primaries. But in order to win the general elections in in a toss-up race and a democratic leaning race, respectively, they would have to appeal to a more moderate electorate.

In addition to pushing candidates to the right, the TPM rewarded incumbents who had made fiscally conservative promises to their voters and maintained those agreements in Idaho and Oklahoma. The opposite happened in states like Utah, where the incumbent senator, who had promised to be fiscally conservative, ended up voting for bills like TARP and had to answer to his conservative base. Coburn and Crapo, on the other hand, were rewarded in a time of extreme voter anger. In Connecticut, Maryland, and Washington, the candidate more in line with

the tea party lost in the GOP primary, and in the general election the Democrat would go on to take the Senate seat.

Candidates had different approaches and relationships with the TPM. Miller, Angle, and O'Donnell embraced the movement wholeheartedly, while Crapo and Coburn met with tea partiers, but maintained their GOP establishment status (in comparison to Senator Jim DeMint who wanted to be on the TPM bandwagon). Wargtoz claimed throughout his election that he had Tea Party support, even though local groups wanted Rutledge. In Connecticut, McMahon originally said that she felt that the TPM was weak in her state, not relevant to her race, and that she did not want recognition as a "Mama Grizzly" from Palin. This perceived weakness was validated when the Tea-Party-supported candidate Schiff lost to her in the primary. But a few weeks later McMahon changed her attitude toward the TPM, started attending TPM events, and received support from groups within her state. As discussed earlier, Rossi catered more to his conservative base after the primary and Huffman had a good relationship with the TPM in his state. Candidates, like the rest of America, were unsure of how the TPM would affect elections. But as the general election approached candidates appealed to the movement for votes.

Other than the effects of the TPM, abortion-related issues were relevant in the Alaska and Washington races. In Alaska, an abortion-related ballot measure may have brought out a more conservative electorate during the primary and hurt Murkowski, who supports abortion rights. During the general election, Murkowski appealed to the more socially liberal and moderate voters with her moderate stances on social issues, while essentially ignoring the extremely conservative base that has always taken issue with these same platforms. In Washington, Murray's campaign appealed to independents and specifically women by pointing out Rossi's pro-life stances.

In addition to social issues, character flaws and past mishaps played a large role in the several of the elections. In Alaska, events during the general election made Miller look power hungry and paranoid, in addition to information being leaked about his family taking federal funds in the past. O'Donnell had her own financial problems dealing with campaign contributions from past elections. She said several outrageous things in the past (like comparing masturbation to adultery) and during a debate said she did not know the separation of church and state was in the Constitution. Sharron Angle told a group of Latino Nevadans that they looked "a little like Asians." All of these issues were related to the lack of professionalism exhibited by these candidates. In Connecticut it was discovered that Democrat candidate Blumenthal had lied about his record as a Vietnam Veteran. But Connecticut voters seemed to get past this falsehood, as opposed to being able to get past McMahon's controversial WWE past. The past had a role in the Washington state election where voters reported a general distaste for Rossi after a drawn out lawsuit during his most recent gubernatorial race.

The nine case studies support the statistical analysis results suggesting that the TPM had no or a slight negative effect on Republican candidates during the U.S. Senate elections. Several patterns emerged through the case studies. First, all three high tea party activity level candidates defeated more moderate opponents in their primaries but lost in the general election. All three high tea party level activity candidates also tried to make their platforms seem less extreme after the primary. Incumbents of both parties in Oklahoma, Idaho, Oregon, and Maryland were easily reelected. What kind of implications does this research have on the TPM and American Democracy?

CONCLUSION

In February of 2009, a series of protests occurred around the United States in response to TARP and the stimulus bill.³⁰⁰ Two months later, on April 15, the last day to file taxes, protests erupted again in cities around the country. This pair of protests was the origin of the TPM, a loosely affiliated network of grassroots activists who value fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free markets. Numerous local tea party groups began organizing around the country, along with several umbrella groups and PACs. In early 2010, Massachusetts Republican state Senator Scott Brown defeated Democratic Attorney General Martha Coakley for the late Ted Kennedy's U.S. Senate seat. Brown gave the TPM some of the credit for motivating voters and, with that, the movement's focus turned more toward putting conservative leaders into office during the 2010 election cycle.³⁰¹

Throughout 2010, TPM leaders Sarah Palin and Rep. Michele Bachmann endorsed candidates that they felt fit the goals of the TPM. National TPM groups like FreedomWorks and the TPE/OCDB PAC began to endorse candidates and contribute heavily to campaign efforts. The movement vetted candidates and targeted incumbents who had gone against the movement's fiscally conservative values. TPM candidates in Delaware, Nevada, Alaska, Utah, Kentucky, and Florida began winning primaries over GOP-establishment candidates and incumbents, which motivated the movement further.

As voter enthusiasm and anti-incumbent anger helped far-right Republican candidates win statewide primaries, the American public and national media began to speculate about the TPM's impact on the results of the general election. Would these extremely conservative, largely inexperienced, and characteristically flawed candidates actually be elected to the U.S. Senate?

³⁰⁰ Douglas A. Blackman, Jennifer Levitz, Alexandra Berzon, and Lauren Etter, "Birth of a Movement," - FIX

³⁰¹ Kate Zernike, "Tea Party Organizers Eye the 2010 Elections," *The New York Times*, February 6, 2010, <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/06/tea-party-organizers-eye-the-2010-elections/>

Would the TPM be able to mobilize enough voters during a midterm election season? How would results differ between races in different states? Would 2010 be the year of the Scott Browns and the second 1994 Republican takeover?

After performing a statistical analysis my results suggested that the TPM had a neutral or negative effect on the outcome of U.S. Senate races for Republican candidates. This result supported the spatial positions hypothesis—the TPM moved Republican candidates so far to the right that the GOP was unable to capture enough moderate voters to turn the TPM momentum into winning elections. In order to better explain these results I chose nine cases to perform an in-depth study of the race and the workings of the TPM at the grassroots.

Although there were many factors at play in each race, the results of my case studies supported the second hypothesis. While analyzing the TPM at its grassroots, I found that a lot of groups did not specifically endorse candidates and, even when they did endorse candidates, they did not hold GOTV events to help their candidates win. Only three cases had GOTV-related events and only Alaska's GOTV events were focused directly on the U.S. Senate candidate. In addition, O'Donnell and Angle tried to tone down their conservative platforms for the general election, showing that they were attempting to appeal to a broader base of voters. Not only were many of the candidates' views too extreme to attract a majority of voters, but the base did not take decisive action to get people to the polls on behalf of the candidates.

So, what do the results of my research mean for the TPM? With its rallies of thousands of people and ample national media attention the TPM is a powerful social movement. But what happens when a social movement tries to influence elections? It is a lot easier to get people to come together for one day of intense rallying than it is to maintain the motivation necessary to

work alongside a political campaign.³⁰² The power and the actions of the TPM, along with its members, are unpredictable, and this does not mesh well with the GOP establishment from which they have tried to steal power. Although the GOP establishment eventually backed the majority of the TPM candidates in the general election, they expressed resentment over races they thought they could have won (like Nevada, Delaware, and possibly Connecticut).

Whether or not the national Republican Party is happy with tea party candidates, recent news makes it appear like the TPM will continue to try to exert their power through the electoral process and within the GOP. Republican candidate and tea partier Sharron Angle lost to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid by a margin of 6 percentage points in the general election. In early March, Nevada Sen. John Ensign declared that he would not seek reelection in 2012, and political pundits began to speculate about whether or not Angle would try again for the U.S. Senate.³⁰³ During the following weeks, Rep Dean Heller from Nevada's 2nd Congressional District announced that he would run for Ensign's seat, prompting Angle to join the race for Heller's vacated position.³⁰⁴ Angle's extremely conservative views may work better in a House of Representatives race in comparison to a U.S. Senate race in which moderate candidates are more often rewarded.

Although less likely than Angle taking Heller's Congressional seat, Bachmann has travelled to Iowa several times this year and seems to be considering a bid for the 2012 presidency. She hosted a fundraiser in late January and since then has had meetings with state GOP leaders to discuss her possible run.³⁰⁵ Could the TPM as a national group field a

³⁰² Tarrow, 26.

³⁰³ Chris Cillizza and Rachel Weiner, "What Will Sharron Angle Do?" *Washington Post*, March 8, 2011, <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/thefix/senate/what-will-sharron-angle-do.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

³⁰⁴ Laura Myers, "Angle in race for Heller's House seat," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 16, 2011, <http://www.lvrj.com/news/angle-in-race-for-heller-s-house-seat-118089544.html>

³⁰⁵ Nick Wing, "Michele Bachmann Weighing 2012 Presidential Run: ABC News," *The Huffington Post*, January 5, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/05/michele-bachmann-president-2012_n_804584.html

conservative candidate for President of the United States? If the TPM wants to be more effective in the election process they need to get more of the local groups to endorse candidates and work on GOTV activities. Although citizens may vote with TPM values in mind, there is a much larger contingent of the TPM that values non-partisanship and education over endorsing and stumping for candidates.

What implications does the TPM have on American democracy? In the current moment, House and Senate members seem to be catering to voter anger over taxes by proposing extreme budget-cutting measures. Whether or not the TPM got all of its proposed candidates elected, it seems that their fiscally conservative values are at least making some headway into the 112th Congress. In addition to the budget cutting occurring in the U.S. House and Senate, Obama created an 18-member bi-partisan deficit-cutting commission during 2010, called the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. To date, the commission approved a report with a vote of 11-7 that included “a three-year pay freeze for federal employees, reducing the size of the federal work force through attrition, and cutting travel, printing and vehicle budget” but in order for immediate Congressional and legislative action the report needed to get 14 out of 18 votes.³⁰⁶ Still, the President of the United States has heard the principles of the TPM and is at least making it appear as if the federal government is doing something about the large deficit. These actions by elected officials show that a social movement can effect government by holding rallies and protests and expressing their discontent through all possible media and social networking outlets, not only by electing officials who share their beliefs.

In Nevada, a TPM member tried to create his own third party. If the TPM grows unhappy with its place within the GOP would it consider making itself a third party? This possibility

³⁰⁶ Sean Reilly, “Deficit commission chairmen launch new effort to cut nation's debt,” *Federal Times*, March 8, 2001, <http://www.federaltimes.com/article/20110308/AGENCY01/103080306/>

seems highly unlikely given the TPM's electoral activity so far and the American two-party system. The GOP establishment does not want to cater to the movement because they are afraid it will prevent them from winning elections by pushing them too far to the right, but they must work with the TPM for the very same reason. If the GOP's conservative base, represented by the TPM, formed its own party, it would be unlikely that either party would win very many elections because the Republican Party vote would have been divided between two parties. A growing number of independents and voters do not register with a party and, while they may be swayed to vote with the TPM in some elections, it is unlikely that they will vote for candidates that are extreme on either side of the spectrum.

In addition to affecting legislative decisions, federal government action, and creating third parties, the TPM may have helped to increase democratic participation. A large number of TPM members have said that the TPM was their first experience with political activism or engaging with politics in any capacity (even voting).³⁰⁷ The increased level of participation was not entirely fruitful for tea partiers, the strong emotions that fueled the TPM and pushed people to participate is good for a democracy in which slightly more than half of the population votes in elections. The TPM was not only good for getting its conservative participants to vote, but it also may have mobilized voters who had not thought they would be voting this season but strongly opposed TPM values and TPM candidates.

There might be good news on the horizon for the TPM as states begin to consider cancelling primaries in order to cut budgets. Arthur Lupia, a University of Michigan professor, argues that this would be good for people with extreme views and may hurt more moderate

³⁰⁷ Gary Fields, "Tea-Party Drive Steeped in Political Novices," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704511304575075331410704288.html>

Republicans.³⁰⁸ By pushing back or completely eliminating primaries another political analyst said, “the candidates are going to be falling all over themselves to appeal to the Republican base, which is very, very conservative, and the tea party people, and they could paint themselves into a corner there, taking positions that are far to the right of the swing voters.”³⁰⁹ Again, this action may please TPM members who will vote for a candidate who they are confident stands for their values but because the candidate is so far to the right they may be unable to capture enough independent voters to win an election.

Although my research has shown that the TPM has not positively affected the outcome of 2010’s U.S. Senate elections for the Republican Party, the movement has had some other effects on the federal government and participatory democracy. Even though not all of the TPM candidates won U.S. Senate elections, Congress and by the President have taken action to lower the deficit and cut federal spending. While it is unlikely that the TPM will become a third party the movement’s ability to get people excited got conservative and liberal voters alike to come to the polls during the midterm elections in 2010. It already seems as if one of the original TPM candidates is in trouble with the movement. The group has attacked Scott Brown for his voting for Harry Reid’s job creation bill in early 2010 (which cost \$15 billion) and a regulatory reform bill in May.³¹⁰ Brown originally attended fundraisers for the TPM but now seems to be distancing himself from the movement. Luckily for the TPM Brown is up for reelection in 2012.

³⁰⁸ Mary Wisniewski and James B. Kelleher, “Some states consider cutting 2012 primaries to save money,” *Reuters*, March 20, 2011 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/20/us-primaries-idUSTRE72J2B120110320>

³⁰⁹ Mary Wisniewski and James B. Kelleher, “Some states consider cutting 2012 primaries to save money,”

³¹⁰ “Scott Brown Under Fire for Going Rogue on Jobs Bill”, *AolNews*, February 23, 2010, <http://www.aolnews.com/2010/02/23/scott-brown-under-fire-for-going-rogue-on-jobs-bill/>

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APPENDIX 1

Table 1. Coding for Tea Party Activity Level

Case	State	PalinEndorsement	SarahPAC	BachmannEndorse	MichelePAC
1	AL	0	0	0	0
2	AK	1	15	1	0
3	AZ	1	5	0	0
4	AR	1	0	0	0
5	CA	1	0	0	0
6	CO	0	0	0	0
7	CT	0	0	0	0
8	DE	1	10	1	1
9	FL	1	5	0	1
10	GA	0	0	0	0
11	HI	0	0	0	0
12	ID	0	0	0	0
13	IL	0	0	0	0
14	IN	0	0	0	0
15	IA	0	7.5	0	0
16	KS	0	0	0	0
17	KY	1	7	0	1
18	LA	0	0	0	0
19	MD	0	0	0	0
20	MO	0	2.5	0	1
21	NV	1	5	0	0
22	NH	1	10	0	0
23	NY	0	0	0	0
24	NY	0	0	0	0
25	NC	0	2.5	0	0
26	ND	0	5	0	0
27	OH	0	8.5	0	0
28	OK	0	2.5	0	0
29	OR	0	0	0	0
30	PA	1	5	0	1
31	SC	0	7.5	0	0
32	SD	0	2.5	0	0
33	UT	0	0	0	0
34	VT	0	0	0	0
35	WA	1	0	0	0
36	WI	0	0	0	0
37	WV	1	0	0	0

Table 1. Coding for Tea Party Activity Level (Continued)

Case	State	ExpressEndorsement	Express PAC	ExpressIndependent	FreedomWorksPAC
1	AL	0	0	0	0
2	AK	1	0	616,543	2,316
3	AZ	0	0	0	0
4	AR	0	0	0	0
5	CA	1	1	0	60,170
6	CO	1	0	0	13,362
7	CT	1	0	0	0
8	DE	1	0	140,367	5,359
9	FL	1	2.5	0	12,428
10	GA	0	0	0	0
11	HI	0	0	0	00
12	ID	1	0	0	0
13	IL	0	0	0	0
14	IN	0	0	0	0
15	IA	0	0	0	0
16	KS	1	0	0	0
17	KY	1	0	0	1,678
18	LA	0	0	0	0
19	MD	0	0	0	0
20	MO	0	0	0	0
21	NV	1	5	641,337	11,402
22	NH	1	0	0	0
23	NY	0	0	0	0
24	NY	0	0	0	0
25	NC	0	0	0	536
26	ND	1	0	0	0
27	OH	1	0	0	0
28	OK	1	0	0	0
29	OR	0	0	0	1,875
30	PA	1	0	350	6,180
31	SC	1	0	0	0
32	SD	1	0	0	0
33	UT	1	0	17,500	2,775
34	VT	0	0	0	0
35	WA	1	0	0	917
36	WI	0	0	0	1,230
37	WV	1	0	0	33417

Table 1. Coding for Tea Party Activity Level (Continued)

Case	State	FreedomWorksEndorsement	TPETours	Total
1	AL	0	2	2
2	AK	0	0	6
3	AZ	0	3	5
4	AR	0	3	4
5	CA	1	3	8
6	CO	1	2	5
7	CT	0	1	2
8	DE	0	1	8
9	FL	0	1	7
10	GA	0	1	1
11	HI	0	0	0
12	ID	0	0	1
13	IL	0	3	3
14	IN	0	2	2
15	IA	0	1	2
16	KS	0	2	3
17	KY	0	2	7
18	LA	0	1	1
19	MD	0	0	0
20	MO	0	2	4
21	NV	1	4	10
22	NH	0	2	5
23	NY	0	2	2
24	NY	0	2	2
25	NC	0	0	2
26	ND	0	0	2
27	OH	0	3	5
28	OK	0	2	4
29	OR	1	1	3
30	PA	0	3	9
31	SC	0	0	2
32	SD	0	1	3
33	UT	0	1	4
34	VT	0	0	0
35	WA	0	1	3
36	WI	0	1	2
37	WV	0	0	3

APPENDIX 2

BATTLE FOR THE SENATE

Current Senate: 59* Democrats | 41 Republicans

U.S. SENATE · SENATE NO TOSS UPS · U.S. HOUSE · GOVERNOR RACES · GOVS NO TOSS UPS

48 Democrats* Toss Ups **5** Republicans **47**

44 Safe or Not Up 2 2 5 6 6 35 Safe or Not Up

51 Seats Needed For Majority (Recent Race Changes)

