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## The Iowa caucuses: Effects of presidential campaigns on state politicians

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THE IOWA CAUCUSES:  
EFFECTS OF PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS ON STATE POLITICIANS

A Thesis  
Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Designation  
University Honors with Distinction

Amy Kathleen Meyers  
University of Northern Iowa  
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This Study by: Amy Kathleen Meyers

Entitled: The Iowa Caucuses: Effects of Presidential Campaigns on Local Politicians

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation  
University Honors with Distinction.

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Date Donna Hoffman, Honors Thesis Advisor, Department of Political Science

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Date Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

## PURPOSE

The Iowa caucuses have been a topic of fascination for many political scientists, the media, and political junkies. Their prominent nature attracts media from all over the United States and can significantly impact the day-to-day lives of Iowans. In studying this topic, close attention must be paid to how campaigns necessarily treat elected state officials differently than ordinary Iowans. More specifically, legislators are treated differently in the processes by which campaigns lobby state legislators for support, the benefits officials receive, and the ways in which such lobbying can detract from their roles as state legislators. All of these factors are necessary to understanding how state politicians are affected by the Iowa caucuses. Also of note are the varying levels of influence constituents have on their legislator's decision to support a particular candidate.

The unusually prominent role of the Iowa caucuses in the presidential election season draws much attention to the state. Politicians are essentially required to use retail politicking in order to gain favor among voters and thus secure themselves a positive outcome on the night of the caucuses. Although there is extensive research in this area, little has been done to note the effects of caucus campaigning on local and state politicians. The purpose of this thesis is to develop awareness for how Democratic state politicians are affected, influenced, and possibly hindered by caucus campaigns in Iowa.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *History of the Iowa Caucuses*

In developing an awareness of how the caucus system impacts state politicians, it is first necessary to understand the caucus process itself. A caucus system has been in

place in Iowa since the state was admitted into the Union in 1846, and caucuses (or councils) in general were a part of the American political system since before the foundation of the country (Squire, 1989, p. 1). The prominent role of the caucuses came into being in Iowa after a state law in 1969 mandated that both parties hold their caucuses and subsequent events before the second Monday in May (Squire, 1989, p. 1). In 1972 the Democratic National Committee moved up the date of the national convention. The Iowa state Democratic party, in following a rule to hold events at least 30 days before events like the convention, also moved up their caucus date. This rule was established in order to complete the necessary paperwork before the national convention. Beginning at this point, the Iowa caucuses started to gain national attention and increasing amounts of notice from the media (Squire, 1989, pp. 1-2).

Iowa Democrats noted the increased attention brought to their state and made an effort in 1976 to keep their caucus as the first event in the presidential election season. Iowa Republicans noticed the positive outcomes for the Democrats in 1972, and they followed suit in 1976, holding their caucus on the same early night in January (Squire, 2008). While Jimmy Carter's success in Iowa garnered a lot of attention in 1976, he was not the first politician to realize the importance of the Iowa caucuses. Gary Hart, the campaign manager for George McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign, "grasped the potential lift he could achieve in Iowa" (Hull, 2008, p. 17). George McGovern was a Senator from South Dakota and Hart sent campaign staff in South Dakota over to Iowa in the weeks preceding the caucuses to establish support for Senator McGovern. Hart's work in Iowa gave McGovern a better-than-expected 22.5% of the delegates. Even though Harold Hughes and his powerful organization in Iowa won the caucus,

McGovern's performance was still of note. Hart's attention to the caucuses and their beneficial effect for McGovern influenced Carter's style of campaigning in 1976 (Hull, 2008, pp. 17-18).

The importance and prominence of the Iowa caucuses was solidified in 1976 with the Carter campaign. Jimmy Carter was a relative unknown and his chances for winning the presidency seemed slight. The campaign strategy of focusing on Iowa and spending a significant amount of time in the state paid off for him. Increased media attention in the weeks leading up to the race made note of Carter as the favored candidate. This forced other Democratic nominees to re-strategize and acknowledge Iowa's role in the process. The contenders for the 1976 Democratic nomination who spent less time in Iowa fared worse on caucus night (Squire, 1989, p. 3).

The success of the Carter campaign in 1976 led to the perception of Iowa as a "king-maker" or perhaps more accurately a "peasant-maker." Carter came from nowhere and used his success in Iowa to propel him onto win the Democratic nomination and the presidency. From the perspective of many after 1976, Iowa was Carter's saving grace and responsible for making him the "king" of the country. Squire (2008, p. 2) wrote "the caucuses had a pretty good record for backing the eventual nominee in each party." The eventual Democratic nominee won five out of the last six caucuses in Iowa. (Michael Dukakis was the exception, finishing third in 1988.) The eventual Republican nominee won the 1976, 1996, and 2000 Iowa caucuses (Squire, 2008). One recent exception was the McCain campaign for the 2008 GOP nomination. McCain captured the nomination after finishing fourth in the Iowa caucuses. "Nobody who finished below third in the Iowa caucuses ever went on to win the nomination" (Squire, 2008, p. 2). The top three

candidates from the caucuses receive increased media attention and, therefore, immense benefits when campaigning in other states after the caucuses. Squire referred less to Iowa's ability to make a king, but more so to the state's ability to make peasants or quickly narrow down the options for nominees (Squire, 2008).

By 1984, Gary Hart was a Senator from Colorado and running for president. As before, he employed the strategy of spending time and meeting people in Iowa. Senator Hart was third in the polls, but (as McGovern before him) managed to come in second on the night of the caucus. Hart's surprising outcome generated huge amounts of national exposure and led him to a win in New Hampshire only eight days later (Hull, 2008, p. 19).

Since the days of Hart, McGovern, and Carter, presidential nominees and the press view the Iowa caucus as the starting point on the campaign trail. While spending time in the state is undoubtedly the most important determiner in how a candidate will do on caucus night, candidates from neighboring states tend to have a natural lead in Iowa polls. In 1992, Iowa's Senator Tom Harkin, won the Democratic Iowa caucus by a large margin. Despite his expected win in Iowa, Harkin did not capture enough media and public attention to poll well nationally. Representative Dick Gephardt of Missouri and Senator Paul Simon of Illinois also did well in the 1988 Democratic caucus; out-shining the front-runner Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts (Hull, 2008, pp. 21-23). Gephardt did not fare as well in the 2004 caucus because of the strong presence and momentum of Governor Dean and Senator Kerry (Squire, 2008, p. 4). Senator Barack Obama, another Midwesterner won the 2008 Democratic caucus.

### *Criticisms and Praise of the Caucuses*

There is a plethora of research on how to succeed in the Iowa caucuses, but many pundits spend time writing about why Iowa should be first in the nation. In spite of the narrowing affect of the caucuses, scholars such as Winebrenner (1998) question the political wherewithal of average Iowans. Specifically in the Democratic caucus, these political novices contribute and influence the party platform. Winebrenner (1998, p. 257) mentioned the likelihood of amateurs to become involved during years where publicity and candidate excitement is heightened. Winebrenner's argument is somewhat deceptive here by calling attention to the contributions of political novices to the party platform since oftentimes the platform is not discussed until the end of the night when only the party loyal are still present at the caucus site. It is also contradictory to criticize Iowa's caucuses for giving voice to those without much political knowledge yet claim they cater to the more extreme ideologs of the party. Also of note is the lack of diversity in Iowa and the state's inability to be representative of the nation as a whole. The media focus on Iowa is also criticized as over-zealous with little reason. Winebrenner (1998, p. 262) believed that Iowa has "trivialized the nominating process." He stated, "The American public deserves better. The public interest is not well served when manipulated and distorted nominating events like the Iowa precinct caucuses determine the viability of presidential candidacies" (Winebrenner, 1998, p. 262).

While criticism is almost inevitable because of Iowa's role as first in the nation, some scholars feel that Iowa is a good place to kick off the presidential election season (Polsby & Wildavsky, 2000). Iowa has long been a competitive two-party state, where a candidate, regardless of political affiliation, has a chance to win the state in the general



election. The media market in Iowa is significantly less expensive when compared to states like California and New York; an attractive quality for candidates on a tight budget. Iowa is also known for its “good government” philosophy. This is specifically exemplified in the state’s non-partisan district realignment after each census. Citizens of Iowa promote themselves as hardworking individuals who value honesty and duty and expect the same values to be promoted during presidential campaigns (Winebrener, 1998, p. 11).

The Democratic caucuses, in particular, are often criticized for their complexity (especially when compared to the simple vote in the Republican caucuses), tendency to cater to political activists, and relatively low turnout (Norrande, 1993, p. 344). When registered Democrats make the decision to attend their precinct caucus, they sit through many speeches, debates, and negotiations in a school gym, town library, or even a living room or two. The group first votes on a committee chair, then they debate and vote on issues deemed important for the convention platform. Next, attendees listen to speeches made by local community members to represent the positions of each candidate and an undecided category. This is followed by forming groups based upon which candidate each citizen supports. Each group must gain 15% of the attendees to be considered viable; those without 15% are disbanded, leading to negotiations and persuasion of the supporters of the unviable to join another candidate’s group. These negotiations last approximately 30 minutes. At this point, a complex mathematical formula is used to determine the percentage of delegates each candidate will receive to move onto the county convention. In theory each caucus site will discuss platform issues, separate into groups based on candidate loyalty, and choose delegates, but the process does not always

go as planned. This long process can take several hours and tends to be dominated by ideologists. On occasion, in an effort to speed along the process and keep voters at the caucus, the chair will decide to forego all speeches or hold platform discussion until the end of the night. Furthermore, critics of the Iowa caucuses' place as first in the nation note that the caucuses receive relatively low turnout, only 61,000 of registered Democrats in 2000 (Stein, 2004). However, turnout varies from year to year; in 2008, an estimated 220,588 Democrats attended the caucuses (AP, 2008).

#### *Tools for success in Iowa*

As Carter, Hart, and Obama know first hand, momentum is the most significant benefit that goes along with placing in the top three in the Iowa caucuses. Referred to as the “Big Mo” by former President George H.W. Bush during his 1980 campaign for the presidency, momentum is thought to energize a campaign and draw in support unlike any other political strategy. After Carter’s success in 1976, other campaigns modeled their early strategies off of showing well in Iowa and utilizing those results and increased attention to build a following nationally (Bartels, 1989, pp. 122-123). “By 1980 it was widely recognized that Iowa would be a crucial launching pad for any relatively unknown candidate hoping to emerge as Carter had in 1976” (Bartels, 1989, p. 122). By doing “better than expected” in Iowa, unfamiliar candidates can increase their familiarity to the public and provide more information about themselves and their candidacy (Bartels, 1989, p. 124). In exceeding expectations and doing well in Iowa, a candidate can prove to the nation that he or she has a real chance of winning the nomination. The candidate is no longer a long-shot, but a possibility deserving attention from voters nation-wide.

Christopher Hull (2008) argued that a new kind of momentum has developed as a result of the technology boom. Hull described “e-mentum” as using the internet, email, and blogs to generate supporters and money very quickly into a candidate’s campaign. Senator John Kerry’s caucus win in 2004 and Senator Barack Obama’s win in 2008 provided prime examples of the power of “e-mentum” in building a vast network without spending the dollars necessary for TV ads (Hull, 2008, pp. 57-59). While the momentum factor does lead the media to create somewhat of a horse-race, constantly monitoring who is ahead and who is behind, those candidates fortunate enough to become a part of the race will reap benefits in fund-raising and number of supporters (Bartels, 1989, p. 129).

Momentum alone cannot get a candidate from announcement day to the White House. Other tactics are necessary to achieving success along the campaign trail. Campaign organization is touted as one of the best ways to ensure success in the Iowa caucuses. Scholars, such as Barbara Trish (1999), point out that good organization can help a candidate overcome other obstacles when facing the caucuses and early primaries in states like New Hampshire. Politics is often a demonstration of the power of money, yet this does not always ring true in Iowa. A well-organized campaign, focused on voter turnout, can make an impact in the caucus results. Grassroots and retail politics involve more than money. In Iowa, these forms of campaigning are highly valued. In many instances it means more to a voter to meet a candidate at a local diner than to see 10 advertisements on television. (The best organized and well-funded campaigns will, of course, use both avenues to reach voters.) (Trish, 1999)

The importance of money in a campaign is irrefutable, and there is no denying the amount of money the caucuses bring to the state of Iowa. In 2008, an estimated total of

\$51,593,849 was spent in Iowa; between \$37,750,000 and \$43,000,000 was spent of TV advertisements alone (Iowa Caucus, 2008). Demonstrating one's ability to fund-raise and buy more TV spots shows voters that the candidate is strong and capable of attracting enough supporters to fund such endeavors. The more money a candidate raises, the more attention he or she can receive from the national media, which in turn influences voters' opinions. This is a two-way cycle: money can attract supporters and supporters can attract more monetary donations.

In Iowa, however, money cannot take the place of personal contact. Grassroots or retail politics refers to meeting people in the state, going to local events, and spending time connecting with a local population. When a campaign director was asked about grassroots organization he replied, "That's the Iowa Caucus" (Hull, 2008, p. 71).

Personal contact stimulates the voters' interest in the election process, making them more likely to go vote for the candidate with whom they had a personal conversation. A better organized campaign has the advantage of spreading the word about their candidate and arranging structured opportunities to introduce the candidate to the public. David Yepsen, an influential political columnist for the *Des Moines Register* frequently wrote about "time on task" during the campaigns leading up to caucus night. He was referring to a candidate's ability to spend time meeting people in Iowa: one-on-one or at large rallies (Hull, 2008, p. 76). In his research, Hull (2008, p. 97) determined retail politics, including time spent in Iowa and personal contact with voters, mattered most in the Iowa caucuses.

Campaigns also try to gain support from powerful citizens in key districts. The process of building name recognition is often costly when utilizing the media, but in Iowa another path can foster support. By reaching out to community and political leaders and

gaining their support, candidates can build the trust of the local population. These powerful citizens may host events to talk about the favorable qualities of a candidate or even bring in the candidate to speak to a small group. Networking in politics is a necessity, and many interesting conclusions may be drawn from alliances between the power elite of a community and presidential candidates (Nagourney, 2003). No matter how candidates' campaign in Iowa, one thing has proven true over the years, ignoring the Iowa caucuses can be extremely damaging to a candidate's presidential campaign. It may not be necessary to win the Iowa caucus in order to win the general election, but the increasing amount of media given to the caucuses will cast a serious shadow of doubt on a campaign's ability to survive to the national convention (Polsby & Wildavsky, 2000, p. 109). Powerful citizens in the community are important; the following research will explore the role of one particular group of powerful citizens, state legislators.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Previous scholars of the Iowa caucuses have studied its development and evolution, its impact on the general election, and the role of the mass media (Polsby, 2000; Squire, 1989; Trish, 1999; Winebrenner, 1998; Hull, 2008). These topics provide insight into the caucus' influence on Iowans and the nation, as well as the resentment felt by other states for Iowa's position as "first in the nation." In order to properly explore how the caucuses impact state politicians several specific questions will be addressed. How do the presidential campaigns surrounding the Iowa caucuses affect state politicians? More specifically, how did the Democrats competing in the 2008 caucus impact Iowa's state politicians? In what ways are these state legislators lobbied by the

presidential campaigns for support? What, if any, benefits do state legislators gain from the lobbying? What, if any, distractions from their jobs as legislators can come from the lobbying of these state politicians? How does the lobbying for the caucuses help or hinder the politicians' ability to serve their constituents?

## METHODOLOGY

In order to find more comprehensive answers to the aforementioned questions, one needs to approach the topic from several angles. I prepared a survey to send to all of the 83 Democrats in the Iowa state legislature. The survey asked the respondent to fill out some demographic information including, but not limited to, age, occupation, years in the legislature, and place of birth. Next, the survey included a section asking the respondents to answer open-ended questions about the specific ways in which they personally were or were not affected by lobbying efforts. This section asked the legislators to include any benefits or harms they perceived during the caucus campaigning. Finally, the survey featured a Likert Scale requiring the respondents to rate the degree of influence the presidential lobbying has had on them and their practices as legislators. The survey was sent to all 83 of the Democratic legislators in mid-December, and the results were calculated by the end of January.

I also utilized six select interviews with state Democratic legislators to develop a more complete, in depth knowledge of how legislators are impacted by the caucus campaigning. The interviews sought to find answers to more specific questions about the legislator's experience during the 2008 caucus season. These questions also addressed the legislator's opinion of the Iowa caucus system as a whole and its role as "first in the

nation.” These interviews were conducted in January at various times depending on the schedule of the legislators.

In both the surveys and the interviews the respondents’ anonymity was made a priority. In my letter to the legislators, I stressed the importance of leaving one’s name and district off of the survey. In both the survey and the interviews I did not ask any identifying questions about where the legislator was from, and I only asked general questions about the legislators’ backgrounds. The names of the legislators who were interviewed were kept confidential. During my interviews, I met with the legislators at a location of their choosing to insure their comfort during the interview process. Each of these methodologies required close cooperation with the University of Northern Iowa’s Institutional Review Board to ensure all the proper ethical considerations were followed.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

Iowans frequently articulate their close ties to local issues and involvement during the caucuses, so it seemed highly probable that state legislators will be affected by campaigning surrounding the 2008 caucuses. I expected legislators would receive a variety of benefits from lobbying efforts from the various Democratic campaigns hoping to gain endorsements in Iowa. Some legislators may receive monetary benefits in the form of new supplies or resources for their offices. Others may see benefits in the way of campaign donations from their constituents who pay to come to events where presidential candidates are featured guests. Still other legislators may observe harmful side-effects from such lobbying. This could include the constant phone calls from campaign

organizations, the loss of support from constituents who back a different presidential candidate than the legislator, or the general distractions from the job of legislating that are innate during the caucus season.

## SURVEY AND INTERVIEW RESULTS

The legislators' surveys and interviews provided much insight into the involvement of state politicians in the caucus process. Of the 83 surveys sent in mid-December to all of the Democratic members of the Iowa legislature, 25 were completed and returned, for a response rate of 30%. I completed interviews with five legislators from both the House and Senate during the month of January. Three of the interviews were completed in person and two over the phone. Most were very willing to share their experiences during the months leading up to the Iowa caucuses. However, several legislators mentioned their concerns with sharing their experiences and having such personal information made public. Legislators B, C, and D were especially cautious in sharing information and needed increased assurance that every effort would be made to protect their identities.

### *Endorsements*

All but one legislator from the survey results endorsed a candidate. (See Table 1) I expected more hesitation to endorse a candidate because of a fear that it would negatively impact some of their constituents. I was also interested to discover that one legislator endorsed Senator Dodd in spite of his low status in the polls – nationally and in Iowa. There were no endorsements for Governor Gravel or Representative Kucinich, and after further investigation it was an obvious result because neither put an emphasis on the



Iowa caucus or securing the endorsements of Iowa's legislators. Senator Edwards received three endorsements, and both Senators Biden and Obama received six endorsements. Senator Clinton garnered the most support in my sample with a total of eight endorsements.

In my interview results, Legislators A and C endorsed Senator Biden, Legislator B endorsed Senator Obama, Legislator D endorsed Senator Edwards, and Legislator E endorsed Senator Dodd. (See Table 2) Most endorsements were made in late summer and early fall of 2007. Many legislators mentioned their desire to wait until later in the year to endorse to allow them more time to meet the candidates. The interviews served as a useful tool, allowing me to learn more about each legislator and their reasons for endorsing a particular candidate.

#### *Reasons for Endorsing a Candidate*

Overall, the legislators endorsed their candidate because of the issues they represented. Legislators A and C chose to endorse Senator Biden because of this experience with foreign affairs and his stances on the economy and health care. Legislator C said his tenacity and honesty stood out among the rest and he was the least "politician" type of the potential candidates. Legislator B endorsed Senator Obama for many reasons, but indicated that it would cut down on the calls from various campaigns seeking an endorsement. Legislator B felt Obama was a different kind of candidate whose message was full of hope. Legislator B said their campaign styles were similar and stated, "I heard my voice in his voice." Legislator D endorsed Senator Edwards because their personal conversations led the legislator to believe he could be trusted. Also, Edwards' priorities of making college and health care affordable were important. Legislator D also

built a relationship with Edward's local staff. Legislator E endorsed Senator Dodd because of "his breadth and depth of personal and professional experience." Legislator E admired Dodd's National Guard and Peace Corps experience, and felt that Dodd "understood the 'boots on the ground perspective.'"

### *Patterns in Lobbying*

The respondents were from a variety of backgrounds and various years of experience in the political realm. The interviewees explained a kind of understanding of the candidates because they understood what it takes to run a campaign. The respondents described the need to rely on one's party in order to be successful and the importance of grassroots organization, even at the local level.

Respondents were asked to quantify the times they were contacted by each campaign and each candidate personally. Every survey and interview mentioned five campaigns as most organized and influential in their local communities, the campaigns were for Senators Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, and Obama. Most legislators indicated they had been contacted by all of the campaigns (with the exception of the Gravel and Kucinich campaigns). Most legislators had the opportunity to meet the candidates personally; all interview respondents mentioned an event for all state House and Senate members to meet the candidates personally in Des Moines. Some described personal phone calls and emails from the candidates themselves. Senators Biden, Clinton, Edwards, and Obama were among those who made it a priority to stay in touch with state legislators. Over 70% of the respondents believed they were influenced in their decision to endorse a candidate by the personal contact with that person.

Another trend in the data was the importance of participating in community events involving the candidates. Legislators felt it important to make themselves visible in the community during the caucus process as well as to learn more about the candidates for their own benefit. The respondents continued to go to such events even after endorsing a different candidate. 96% of the respondents participated in community events, and more than 50% participated in fundraisers for a wide variety of candidates.

Almost half, 48% of the respondents had no candidates fundraiser for their own campaigns. Many suggested that it would be immoral to endorse a candidate only if they contributed to one's personal campaign fund. Senator Biden did fundraisers for eight of the respondents, Senators Dodd and Edwards participated in four fundraisers, Senator Clinton in three, Senator Obama in two, and Governor Richardson in one fundraiser.

The surveys and interviews also asked the legislators opinions on the date of the 2008 Iowa Caucus. While 80% felt the date of January 3<sup>rd</sup> was too early, more than 50% felt it likely to very likely for Iowa to maintain its "first in the nation" status.

Personal contact and alignment of personal views were by far the most important factors in endorsing a candidate. The legislators felt their own constituents' opinions were not a top priority in determining who to endorse. Most felt their constituents may have differing opinions, but would understand that the endorsement is a personal decision. Approximately 92% of the legislators felt somewhat to slightly influenced by their constituents in how they presented their endorsement to the community. Over 75% of the respondents felt little to no impact on their jobs as legislators during the campaigning preceding the Iowa caucuses.

### *Benefits of Caucuses*

The experience of the caucus, as a whole, was perceived positively by the legislators; 21 said they were positively affected and four felt neither positively nor negatively affected. Several benefits were mentioned, for Iowa and for the legislators personally. Every respondent mentioned the money and exposure Iowa receives from the caucuses. Legislator A said the caucus system is “exactly the way government was designed to work.”

Apart from the benefits received by every Iowan, state legislators have more personal contact with the candidates. The respondents described this as an opportunity to get to know what kind of a person the candidate was, not just the type of politician he or she would be to the public. The respondents also felt the exposure they received for being at local events, endorsing a candidate, and actively recruiting supporters for a candidate was a benefit of the caucuses. Several respondents noted their pictures were in local papers and articles were written about their endorsements. The legislators also mentioned the occasion to learn more about national issues. Legislator C said the candidates’ campaigns offered ideas for how to raise money and learn about the process of campaigning. All of the legislators were adamant to state that no promises were made between themselves and the candidates; however, Legislator A did receive a check from Unite Our State, Senator Biden’s PAC. All interviewed legislators agreed that the candidates’ presence in Iowa brought attention to Iowa issues.

### *Harms of Caucuses*

Just as most Iowans feel the caucus process is too long, legislators also felt it takes up too much time, especially with the current front-loading in the nomination

process. Several legislators also mentioned the cost of campaigning in today's society. Legislator D estimated \$250,000 was spent on their local campaign and commented that it was outrageous. A few legislators noted the potential risk of endorsing a candidate because it could possibly offend their constituents, but most thought endorsing a candidate was worth the risk. Lastly, respondents felt that the frequent contact was irritating, but necessary. They did not feel it distracted them from their jobs as legislators, but added to their responsibilities.

### IMPLICATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this thesis has been to provide a better understanding of the caucus system as a whole by developing awareness for how state politicians are affected, influenced, and possibly hindered by caucus campaigns in Iowa. The results gained from this research provide insight into the larger fields of Iowa politics and presidential elections. The results could potentially be utilized by campaigns to find the best ways to target local politicians and gain their support. This thesis also may show the ways in which campaigning for the Iowa caucuses is more intricate than a strictly grassroots model where meeting citizens is the only concern. Gaining support for the Iowa caucuses involves shaking a lot of hands, going to many local events, and gaining the support of state politicians. While an endorsement from a state politician can only help a candidate, meeting constituents from themselves is more important. Legislator B indicated that his constituents would rather meet a candidate for themselves than read about his endorsement. Legislator E said, "My influence only goes so far; we all have the freedom to decide which is healthy."

APPENDIX A

**Presidential Campaigns during the 2008 Iowa Caucuses**

Please respond to the following basic demographic information.

1. Where were you born?

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2. How many years have you lived in Iowa?

- 0-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- More than 30 years

3. How many years have you been a registered Democrat?

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- More than 30 years

4. Are you a member of the Iowa House or the Iowa Senate legislature?

- Iowa House member
- Iowa Senate member

5. Besides being a state legislator, do you have another occupation? If so, please indicate your other occupation.

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6. What was the year of your first election to the state legislature?

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7. At what age did you first run for political office, including, but not limited to, the state legislature?

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8. Were you politically active before you ran for political office? (This includes, but is not limited to, attending political functions, contacting political officials, working for campaigns/local referendums, or volunteering for campaigns/interest groups.)

- Yes
- No

9. How often do you read a national daily newspaper for political information?

- Daily
- Frequently (2-3 times a week)
- Occasionally (about once a week)
- Rarely
- Never

10. Have you participated in the Iowa caucuses during presidential elections before?  
If so, how many times?

- Yes
- No

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of times

11. Have you been lobbied by any presidential candidates or their campaigns to endorse them as a candidate?

- Yes
- No

**If you answered “yes” to Question 11, please answer Questions 12-15.**

12. Please mark which of the following candidates' *campaigns* have asked for your support in their Iowa campaigns. Check all that apply.

- Joe Biden
- Hillary Clinton
- Chris Dodd
- John Edwards
- Mike Gravel
- Dennis Kucinich
- Barack Obama
- Bill Richardson

13. Please indicate the approximate number of times you have been contacted by each of the following candidates' *campaigns*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Joe Biden
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hillary Clinton
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Dodd
- \_\_\_\_\_ John Edwards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mike Gravel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dennis Kucinich
- \_\_\_\_\_ Barack Obama
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bill Richardson

14. Have you been personally contacted by any of the following *candidates*? Check all that apply.

- Joe Biden
- Hillary Clinton
- Chris Dodd
- John Edwards
- Mike Gravel
- Dennis Kucinich
- Barack Obama
- Bill Richardson

15. Please indicate the approximate number of times you have been personally contacted by each of the following *candidates*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Joe Biden
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hillary Clinton
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Dodd
- \_\_\_\_\_ John Edwards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mike Gravel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dennis Kucinich
- \_\_\_\_\_ Barack Obama
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bill Richardson

16. Have you chosen to endorse any candidate yet? If so, which candidate?

- Yes
  - Joe Biden
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Chris Dodd
  - John Edwards
  - Mike Gravel
  - Dennis Kucinich
  - Barack Obama
  - Bill Richardson
- No



**If you answered “yes” to Question 16, please go on to Question 17 and skip Questions 20 and 21.**

**If you answered “no” to Question 16, please go on to Question 20.**

17. If you answered “yes” to Question 16, please describe why you chose to endorse that particular candidate.

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18. If you did endorse a particular candidate, when did you give your endorsement?

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19. If you did endorse a particular candidate, was your decision impacted by any personal contact to you by the candidate? If so, please explain.

- Yes
- No

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20. If you answered “no” to Question 16, please describe why you have chosen not to endorse any candidate thus far?

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21. If you have not endorsed any candidate, do you plan to do so in the future? Why or why not?

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22. Have you participated in any fundraisers for a candidate? Please indicate in which candidates' fundraisers you have participated. Check all that apply.

- Yes
  - Joe Biden
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Chris Dodd
  - John Edwards
  - Mike Gravel
  - Dennis Kucinich
  - Barack Obama
  - Bill Richardson
- No

23. Have any of the following presidential candidates participated in fundraisers for you? Please check all that apply.

- Yes
  - Joe Biden
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Chris Dodd
  - John Edwards
  - Mike Gravel
  - Dennis Kucinich
  - Barack Obama
  - Bill Richardson
- No

24. Have you participated in any community events/appearances for a candidate?  
Please indicate in which candidates' events/appearances you have participated.  
Check all that apply.

- Yes
  - Joe Biden
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Chris Dodd
  - John Edwards
  - Mike Gravel
  - Dennis Kucinich
  - Barack Obama
  - Bill Richardson
- No

25. Have you organized any fundraisers or events for a particular candidate? Please indicate for which candidates you have taken on an organizational role.

- Yes
  - Joe Biden
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Chris Dodd
  - John Edwards
  - Mike Gravel
  - Dennis Kucinich
  - Barack Obama
  - Bill Richardson
- No

26. Overall, do you believe you, as a legislator, have been positively or negatively affected by the presidential campaigns?

- Positively
- Negatively
- Neither positively nor negatively

27. Overall, do you believe Iowa as been positively or negatively affected by the presidential campaigns?

- Positively
- Negatively
- Neither positively nor negatively

28. What kind of advantages do Iowans receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure voters for the caucuses?

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29. What kind of harms/distractions do Iowans receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure voters for the caucuses?

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30. What kind of advantages/benefits do you, as a legislator, receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure your endorsement? How are these advantages different from those seen by ordinary Iowans?

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31. Have you received any specific benefits from specific candidate's campaigns? If so, please explain.

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32. What kind of harms/distractions do you, as a legislator, receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure your endorsement? How are these harms/distractions different from those seen by ordinary Iowans?

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33. Have you received any specific harms/distractions from specific candidate's campaigns? If so, please explain.

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Please rate the following questions on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being not impacted/affected and 5 being greatly impacted/affected.

34. To what extent have the presidential campaigns during the Iowa caucuses affected you, personally, as an Iowa legislator?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not Affected		Somewhat Affected		Very Affected

35. To what extent have the presidential campaigns during the Iowa caucuses impacted your job as an Iowa legislator?

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<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not Impacted		Somewhat Impacted		Greatly Impacted

36. To what extent do the opinions and candidate preferences of your constituents influence who you endorse during the Iowa caucuses?

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<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
No Influence		Some Influence		Significant Influence

37. Do you believe the caucus date of January 3, 2008, is too early?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

38. Do you believe Iowa will maintain its status as “first in the nation” holding the first caucus/primary event?

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<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not Likely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely

Please write any additional comments below:

Thank you!

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Questions

1. What led you to a career in politics?
2. Describe your involvement with the Democratic Party.
  - a. Do you attend or host fundraisers?
  - b. How has the party helped you personally and in your campaigns?
3. Describe your first campaign.
4. Did you win? If not, what made you decide to run for office again?
5. What made you decide to run for the state legislature?
6. What are your feelings on the election process in general? On the Iowa caucuses?
7. Have you participated in the Iowa caucuses before? If so, please describe.
8. Have the current campaigns contacted you at all? Have they asked for your support?
9. Which campaigns have contacted you and how frequently?
10. Have any current candidates personally contacted you? Have they asked for your support?

11. Which candidates have contacted you and how frequently?
12. Have you chosen to endorse any candidate yet? Why or why not?
13. If yes, when did you endorse your candidate?
14. If no, will you endorse a candidate in the future?
15. How do the opinions of your constituency on the Democratic candidates influence your endorsement?
16. Do you think by tying yourself to a particular candidate you can mobilize more of your constituents to vote for you in the election as well?
17. Have you participated in any fundraisers or events for any of the candidates? If yes, which candidates?
18. Do you think Iowa has been positively or negatively affected by the presidential campaigns during the caucuses?
19. Do you believe you, as a legislator, have been positively or negatively affected by the presidential campaigns during the caucuses?
20. What benefits/advantages do Iowans receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure voters for the caucuses?



21. What harms/distractions do Iowans receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure voters for the caucuses?

22. What kind of advantages/benefits do you, as a legislator, receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure your endorsement?

a. Have you ever done an event with a candidate?

b. How has your personal campaign fundraising been affected by the campaigns?

c. Do candidates ever make promises to you, indicating how they can help you if they are elected?

d. Have you received any specific benefits from any specific campaign?

23. What kind of harms/distractions do you, as a legislator, receive from the campaigns in their efforts to secure your endorsement?

a. How frequently do the campaigns call your office?

b. Have you ever been called at home or on your cell phone?

c. How do the campaigns affect your ability to do your job as a legislator, if at all?

d. Do the campaigns distract from other important Iowa-issues.

24. What are your feelings about the caucus date of January 3, 2008?

25. Do you think it is important for the candidates to support Iowa's first in the nation status?

a. Is it important to you for the candidate you endorse to pledge their support of keeping Iowa's first in the nation status?

b. Have you asked any of the candidates their thoughts on the Iowa caucuses and the first in the nation status?

26. Do you have any additional comments?

TABLE 1

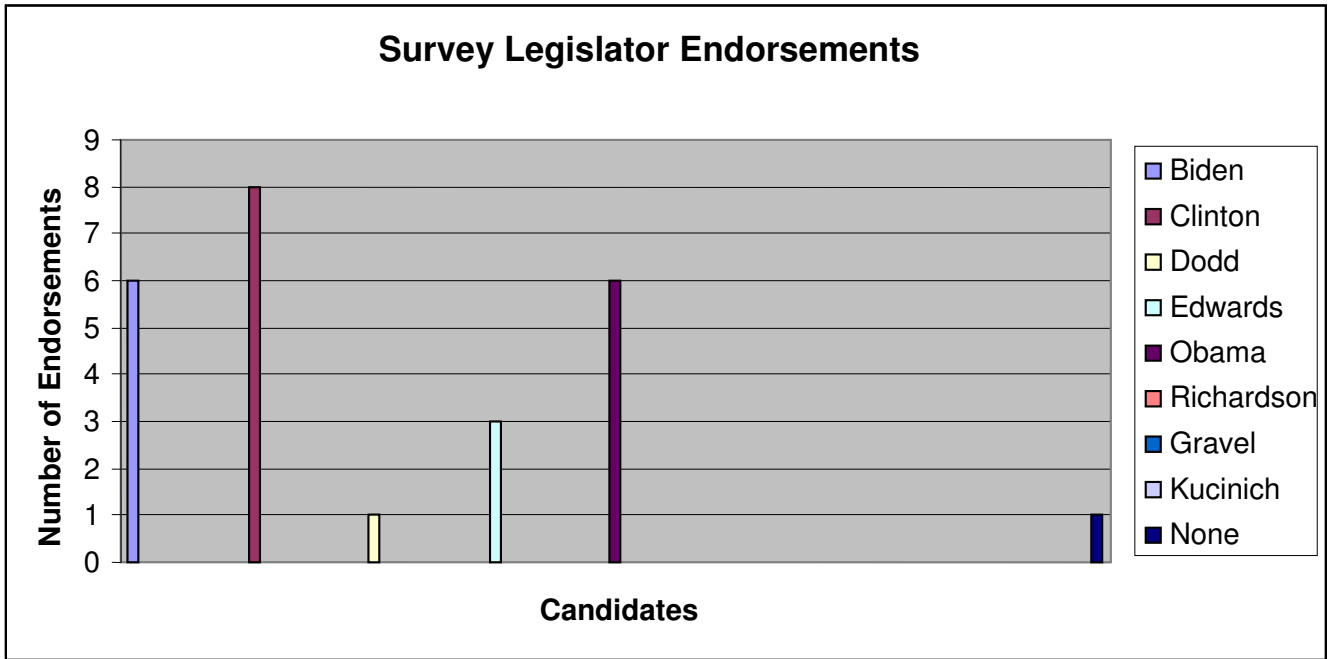
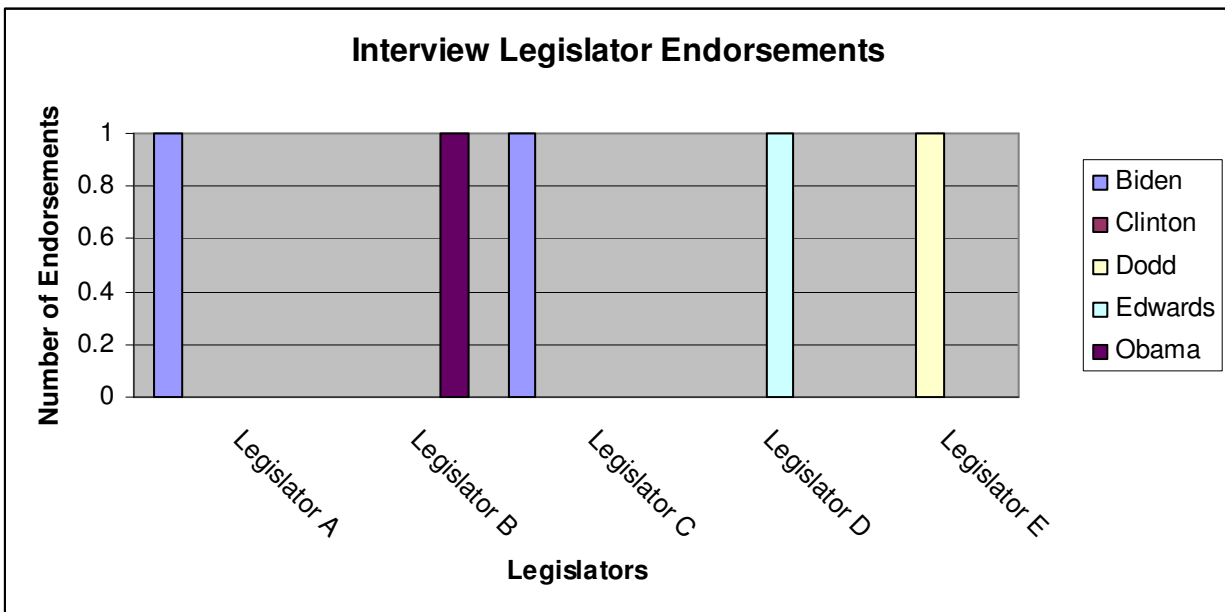


TABLE 2



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