

# *More May Not Always Be Better: Republican Recruiting Strategies in Southern Legislative Elections*

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This study considers the recruiting strategies of six southern Republican parties. The study relies on state legislative election data, as well as interviews with party leaders, to identify and examine apparent strategies. There are two unique strategies observed. One strategy focuses on increasing the number of races that are contested by the party. The other strategy focuses heavily on recruiting for districts which are "targeted" as winnable. Both strategies have apparently been successful; however, Republican parties using a fairly sophisticated technique for targeting have enjoyed the greatest success in recent elections.

The South provides a unique and interesting arena for those interested in the development of two party competition. For decades the South was a one party system dominated by the Democrats. During this era, the focus of the scholarly community was on understanding the nature and impact of single party politics. Key's (1949) classic work described in great detail a system of competition between factions rather than parties. However, this era appears to be coming to an end. While factions may well still exist within southern Democratic parties, the Republicans are making competitive inroads. The Republicans have become the dominant party in presidential elections in the South (Black and Black 1992; Sabato 1988; Hadley 1993) and have won at least one statewide race for Governor or U.S. Senate in each of the southern states (Sabato 1988). Republican presidential successes in the South have led some to suggest that the once "Solid (Democrat) South" is now the "Solid (Republican) South" (Black and Black 1992).

Although Republican inroads in the South are clearly evident, Republican progress in southern congressional, and particularly state legislative, elections has been slower to evolve (Bibby 1992). While the Democrats continue to dominate southern state legislatures, it is important to note that the Republicans are making gains. Hadley (1985) reported that in 1980 the Democrats held 85 percent of all southern legislative seats. However, by 1992 the Democrats were down to 69.6 percent of the seats (calculated from figures in Barone and Ujifusa 1993). More recently, Bibby (1992) reported that as of 1989 the Democrats controlled 77 percent of southern state senate

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seats. In just three years the Republicans have cut this down to just under 70 percent (Barone and Ujifusa 1993).

Gibson and Scarrow (1993, 243) contend that at least part of the Republican success in the South is attributable to the efforts of the Republican state party organizations. It is important for us as scholars and students of political parties to seek to *understand* the development of Republican competition in the South and not just passively report its occurrence. Certainly many scholars are searching for this understanding and using various approaches to do so. In an effort to add to our understanding of the developments in the South, this research will focus on Gibson and Scarrow's (1993) suggestion that Republican organizations are partially responsible for the party's electoral fortunes. Specifically, this research considers the Republican party's efforts in recruiting and targeting for state legislative elections.

Obviously there are other activities that the organizations may be doing, such as providing services to candidates, financial assistance, and mobilizing voters (Cotter et al. 1984). But at the most basic level, a party can not compete unless it has candidates on the ballot. Therefore, recruiting may be one of the most important functions of a political party (Maisel et al. 1990). This may be particularly true for a minority party that is struggling to achieve a competitive status.

### The Literature

Until just recently, the literature on political parties appeared to be dominated by discussions of the party in the electorate and the decline of parties in America. However, there is now a rejuvenated interest in party organizations. These recent studies consider party organizations at the national, state, and local levels.

Herrnson (1990; 1988; 1986) has discussed in great detail the development and activities of the national party organizations. Herrnson (1990) contends that the national parties have become institutionalized due to their stability, financial position, and developed staff. This institutionalization assists the parties' electoral efforts. The national parties are very active in recruiting candidates, raising money, providing information and assistance to candidates, and providing a linkage to political action committees and their funding (Herrnson 1990; 1988; 1986). The national parties are also active in aiding their state counterparts (Herrnson 1990).

The state parties have also experienced an increase in organizational strength. Cotter et al. (1984) report that many state parties have upgraded their organizations to permanent year round offices with permanent staffs. The state parties are also becoming increasingly active in the types of

activities noted above (Cotter et al. 1984; Bibby 1990; Gibson and Scarrow 1993). Possibly the greatest growth in state party organizations is found among the southern Republican parties (Cotter et al. 1984). It has been suggested that state party organizations may have an impact on electoral results (Gibson and Scarrow 1993). State parties appear to be particularly interested in candidate recruitment. Almost 80 percent of state organizations report being active in recruiting for state legislative elections (Cotter et al. 1984).

Finally, the local party organizations are also found to be more developed and active than might have previously been suggested (Gibson et al. 1989; Frendreis et al. 1990; Gibson and Scarrow 1993). Several authors have suggested that the strength of local party organizations has an impact on the ability of parties to compete in elections (Gibson and Scarrow 1993; Frendreis et al. 1990; Patterson and Caldeira 1984; Crotty 1971). Taken collectively, these studies suggest that, while parties may be stratarchical organizations (Gibson and Scarrow 1993), each of the strata (national, state, and local) are becoming more organized and potentially relevant to electoral politics.

Party organizations are apparently focusing a great deal of attention upon races that are "targeted" as winnable (Herrnson 1988; Bullock and Shafer 1993). The idea is to identify which races the party might have a reasonable chance of winning, and then focus a great deal of effort and resources on these races. This process is apparently much more than an educated guess. Bullock and Shafer (1993) discuss a sophisticated technique for targeting that was developed by Texas Republicans. This technique, called ORViS (Optimal Republican Voting Strength), uses weighted averages from statewide elections to determine where the party might be successful in legislative races. This technique proves to be a significant predictor of future legislative results (Bullock and Shafer 1993).

Given the nature of this research, it is pertinent to make a closer examination of the literature regarding recruitment. The decision to run for office is generally an individual decision in today's candidate-centered politics (Maisel et al. 1990). However, political parties still play a role in candidate recruitment. Given the nature of the strategic politician and the factors that go into the calculus of "should I run or not," the political party may well help tip the scales toward one or the other choices (Maisel et al. 1990).

One way in which the party can affect the selection of candidates is via preprimary endorsements. Party leaders and activists in some states meet prior to primary elections and endorse their preferred slate of candidates (Jewell 1984; Bibby 1992). This practice of endorsement appears to lower competition in primaries, thus helping to avoid a divisive primary battle that may weaken the party's chances in the general election. More importantly,

endorsed candidates tend to win the primary election, which suggests that the party organization may have a greater role in candidate selection than may be the case in states with no endorsement practice (Bibby 1992; Jewell 1984). It may be the case that in states that use preprimary endorsements, the promise of an endorsement (or the promise that no endorsement will come) may affect individual decisions to run for office.

An endorsement is not the only thing a party has to bargain with concerning potential candidates. The literature on party organizations suggests that both national and state organizations have increased their ability to offer campaign services and money to potential candidates (Herrnson 1988; Cotter et al. 1984; Gibson and Scarrow 1993). Herrnson (1988) reports that the national parties are very active in recruiting for congressional races, particularly where the party appears to have a good chance of being competitive. Party resources (and one would expect recruiting efforts) are heavily targeted to potentially competitive races (Herrnson 1993). State parties have increased their efforts in candidate recruitment, and the greatest portion of these efforts is in recruiting for state legislative races (Cotter et al. 1984). Much of the recruiting efforts by parties at all levels seems to be geared toward finding quality candidates for districts which are likely to be competitive (Herrnson 1990).

Party organizations may not always recruit to get candidates to enter races, but may also engage in negative recruiting. Negative recruiting consists of trying to dissuade possible candidates from running in a primary race that already has a strong candidate (Herrnson 1990; 1988; Maisel et al. 1990). The purpose of negative recruitment would be to avoid a divisive primary and possibly recruit the candidate to run for another office, thus strengthening the party's overall slate of candidates. It is not clear, however, how much negative recruiting takes place in state legislative races where the number of uncontested elections is quite high (Maisel et al. 1990).

Candidate recruitment is a subject that is difficult to study, and consequently there are not a large number of studies that deal specifically with the topic. Maisel et al. (1990) have suggested that one way to consider a party's efforts at recruiting is to examine the number of races being contested. Obviously, a party can not compete if it does not run candidates. Similarly, Freundreis et al. (1990) argue that a party's potential gains in the state legislature may be compromised by high frequencies of uncontested races. This raises an interesting question: if political parties must operate in a system where resources are at a premium, not only for recruiting but for campaigning as well, should the party attempt to recruit for all races or should it be more selective and target those races where it can be competitive? Obviously, in a perfect world a party would like to contest every seat and provide

a complement of services and finances to every candidate, but in an imperfect world this is not possible. Jewell and Breaux (1990) noted that Texas Republicans were gaining seats in the state legislature without increasing the number of seats the party contested. This study will consider the southern Republican efforts to contest seats, recruit candidates, and compete in those races contested.

### **Approach**

The purpose of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the role of southern Republican parties in state legislative elections, particularly in the area of candidate recruitment. The questions that will be addressed deal with the competitive trends in each state, the state party's role in recruiting candidates, party strategy, what the party looks for in a recruit, and, finally, the success of the party. The answers to these questions should provide valuable insight into the development of party competition in the South, as well as a greater understanding of recruiting in general.

This study considers information drawn from six southern and border states: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. With the exception of Georgia, deep South states are excluded due to the traditional absence of Republican competition for state legislative races. Georgia is included, however, to see how the deep South states may compare with southern states that have a higher level of Republican competition.

The data that are utilized in this research consist of state legislative elections to the lower state house for each state covering the period 1974-1988.<sup>1</sup> The election data are important because they reveal interesting patterns in terms of party competition. The more important information for this study is obtained from interviews with state party leaders in each of the states.<sup>2</sup> These interviews provide the information necessary to draw some conclusions about party efforts in legislative elections and possible implications for the future of two party competition in the South. Specifically, it is these interviews that provide more intensive information about party efforts to recruit candidates and party strategy concerning recruitment and competition for state legislative races.

### **Electoral Competition**

The results presented in Table 1 reveal both similarities and differences among the states concerning the competition for state legislative elections. The first row for each state is an indication of how successful the party is at winning those seats it contests. With the exception of Texas and North

**Table 1. Republican Competition for State Houses**

Year	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88
<b>Florida</b>								
%win contested*	52	44	44	65	45	60	54	59
% contested	55	51	58	50	67	60	69	67
% total seats	28	23	26	33	30	36	38	39
<b>Georgia</b>								
%win contested	47	51	50	49	45	46	44	56
% contested	26	26	23	26	29	32	34	36
% total seats	12	13	12	13	13	14	15	20
<b>N. Carolina<sup>1</sup></b>								
%win contested	11	12	22	28	28	51	36	55
% contested	71	42	56	72	53	53	75	75
% total seats	8	5	13	20	15	32	30	38
<b>Texas</b>								
%win contested	25	35	32	41	45	78	72	66
% contested	39	37	46	57	53	45	52	57
% total seats	10	13	15	23	24	35	37	38
<b>Kentucky</b>								
%win contested		39	41	49	46	48	55	67
% contested		57	54	51	52	54	53	42
% total seats		22	22	25	24	26	29	28
<b>Tennessee</b>								
%win contested	55	67	61	54	66	76	63	80
% contested	67	48	63	73	57	49	61	51
% total seats	36	32	38	39	37	37	38	40

\*" %win contested" is the percentage of races won by Republicans out of all those in which they ran candidates.

" % contested" is the percentage of total seats in which the Republicans ran a candidate.

" % total seats" is the percentage of total seats held by Republicans.

<sup>1</sup>For North Carolina, the 1986-88 figures are based on results from 97 of the 120 districts. Other results were not available.

Carolina, the Republicans have always done quite well in those seats they contest, generally winning at least 40 percent of these races or more. Tennessee Republicans are the most impressive in this category, having always won a majority of the seats they contest. It is also apparent that the Republicans in each of the states have improved their winning percentage

during the period in question. North Carolina and especially Texas Republicans have seen their electoral fortunes rise considerably in recent years. Texas, more than any other state considered, has seen a fairly consistent trend toward increasing Republican success.

Since the Republicans, particularly in recent elections, have been very successful in winning seats they contest, it is obvious that many seats must go uncontested. The second row for each state in Table 1 indicates that very often 40 percent or more of the seats go uncontested by the Republicans. Georgia, consistent with the deep South stereotype, has had the lowest proportion of contested seats by Republicans. It is worth noting, however, that there is evidence of an increasing trend in contested seats in both Georgia and Florida. The most striking finding concerning contested seats is that these are the only two examples of clear upward trends in contested races. Given the success of the Republican party in other elections, and the increasing success of Republicans in winning those legislative elections they contest, one might expect a more extensive trend toward contesting more seats. This is certainly not the case.

Tennessee and Kentucky have experienced a decrease in contested seats by Republicans. The rate of contested seats in North Carolina has fluctuated quite a bit, with very noticeable ups and downs.<sup>3</sup> Texas experienced an increase in contested seats during the 1978 and 1980 elections, but not in the later years when the party's electoral successes were the greatest. In fact, the Republicans' best year (1984) saw a considerable *decrease* in contested races. Freundreis et al. (1990) suggest the Republicans' success was compromised in this particular election by their failure to contest more races.

The bottom line for political parties is almost certainly winning elections. This is certainly critical for a party that, like the southern Republican parties, is struggling to advance from near non-existence to a position of being able to seriously compete for governmental power. The Republicans have been successful at winning additional legislative seats, but this success varies. In each state considered, the Republicans had a greater proportion of the legislative seats in 1988 than they did at the beginning of the period in question (see Table 1). North Carolina and Texas experienced the biggest gains, increasing their representation by 30 and 28 percent, respectively.<sup>4</sup> Tennessee Republicans held only 4 percent more of the seats in 1988 than they had at the beginning of the period, and there was almost no net change between 1980 and 1988. This is quite interesting since these were the years when most of the other states seemed to be taking advantage of Republican presidential strength and were gaining seats. The presidential election years of 1980, 1984, and 1988 were generally very good years for Republican legislative candidates in the other states; yet Tennessee Republicans picked

up just one seat in 1980, two in 1988, and none in 1984. It is worth noting that North Carolina exhibits a clear pattern of the President's party winning seats in presidential years and then losing seats during the midterm elections.<sup>5</sup> Florida has a similar pattern through 1984, but in 1986 the Republicans were able to win additional seats despite the Republican midterm. This pattern was not clearly observable in the other states considered.

Having considered the variables in Table 1 individually, it is useful to consider the combined results for each state because they suggest various formulas for success, and suggest potential recruitment strategies employed by the Republican parties. The optimal formula for success would be to have winning percentage increase while contesting a greater number of seats. This should produce the greatest increase in net seats. However, this formula for success is not observed in any of the states. Two formulas for success are observed. One formula is to maintain a winning percentage and contest more seats. This is seen in Florida and Georgia. If this is related to party strategy then this suggests a strategy of recruiting candidates for as many races as possible.

The other formula is to increase winning percentage and let contested seats remain steady or even decrease. This seems to be what has occurred in the other four states. This suggests a strategy of targeting potentially winnable districts and then concentrating recruiting efforts on these races rather than trying to produce a full slate of candidates. The figures presented do not suggest conclusively that one or the other formula (or strategy) is superior.

Previous research suggests that letting large numbers of seats go uncontested compromises the party's gains in seats (Frendreis et al. 1990), and is a sign of low party competition (Maisel et al. 1990). Certainly, one could point to Kentucky and Tennessee and suggest that their slow increase in Republican seats is at least partially due to their decreasing number of contested seats. However, this line of reasoning would also suggest that Texas and North Carolina, the states with the greatest number of Republican gains, would have had even greater Republican gains if they had contested more seats. This type of discussion is purely hypothetical; therefore greater understanding of party strategy and its potential impact on party success can be obtained from information provided by party officials in the states.

### **Party Strategy and Candidate Recruitment**

The results of the interviews with party officials in the states suggest very strongly that the possible strategies suggested by the patterns of electoral competition were in fact indicative of actual party strategy. Party



officials from Georgia and Florida both indicated that they had undertaken a strategy of trying to recruit for as many races as possible. According to Georgia Republican officials, the party does target districts but their main objective has been to recruit candidates for every statewide election and as many legislative seats as possible. Officials in both states were of the opinion that running more candidates was important to the party's goal of winning additional seats in the legislature. This was not the case in the other states.

Republican party officials from each of the other states indicated that recruiting efforts were geared primarily (if not exclusively) toward districts targeted as winnable. This is particularly true for North Carolina, Texas, and Kentucky. In each of these states the party officials felt that the party's efforts to win seats was much better served by focusing on targeted districts than it would be by recruiting for a larger slate of candidates. Kentucky Republican officials indicated that ideally the party would like to field a full slate of candidates, but they did not operate in an ideal world and the party's goal of winning legislative seats was maximized by focusing on a much smaller number of districts. The former political coordinator of the Texas Republican party was very adamant that the party's success in recent legislative races was due to the party's strategy of targeting races and then focusing recruiting efforts (as well as campaign resources) in these districts. The Republican official pointed to the 1984 election as a perfect example of this strategy working effectively, and stated emphatically that the notion that their potential success was compromised by the high rate of uncontested seats was simply wrong.<sup>6</sup>

There was one consistent reason offered by Republican officials for their party's strategy of recruiting primarily for targeted districts—*resources*. North Carolina Republicans claim that by looking at previous legislative elections where the party should be strong but was losing, the one common factor was inadequate funding for the Republican candidate. This is apparently what motivated the party to switch its strategy to one of targeting and limited recruiting. Similarly, Kentucky Republicans indicated that they did not have the resources to focus on a broader number of races. Texas Republicans claim that by targeting a limited number of districts that they can overcome any resources problem. The party apparently can fund the campaigns itself without great concerns about outside contributors.

While the strategy of focusing most recruiting and campaign efforts into targeted districts tends to be motivated by a desire to maximize the utility of party resources and therefore maximize party success, Texas Republicans offered another reason for employing this strategy, which was both unexpected and fascinating. The party apparently has employed a

hybrid form of negative recruiting in order to leave strong Democrats in the legislature uncontested.<sup>7</sup> The reason given for this activity was that in contesting legislative elections that the party had no chance of winning, the party was actually hurting its candidates in statewide contests (including the presidential candidate). Leaving legislative races uncontested in strong Democratic districts apparently keeps the voter turnout down and thus reduces the number of Democrats voting in other elections. This reasoning stemmed from the party's analysis of voting returns which indicated that Republican presidential and senatorial candidates were getting a larger share of the vote in districts where strong legislative Democrats ran unopposed than in those where the Republicans had a candidate but were losing soundly.

### Targeting

All of the states, regardless of their recruiting strategy, reported that they did actively target districts. Generally, the Republicans felt that this was beneficial, and that they were relatively successful in targeted races.<sup>8</sup> As might be expected, the party examines previous election results (legislative and statewide) to evaluate where they might be more competitive. Open seats are also generally targeted by the Republicans.

Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina each use what they call ORViS (Optimal Republican Voting Strength) to calculate which districts should be targeted. This technique, apparently developed in Texas, uses weighted averages from previous statewide elections to predict future results. Texas officials claim that ORViS is accurate to within 4 percentage points and that the previous results have a correlation of .92 with predicted results. Texas and North Carolina party officials were clearly the most confident in their ability to successfully target districts. Coincidentally (or perhaps not) these are also the two states that have seen the greatest gains in Republican legislative seats during the period considered.

Georgia Republicans began using ORViS in 1988 (Bullock and Shafer 1993). In this election, Georgia Republicans experienced a noticeable increase in their success. The party has since won an additional 16 seats in the lower chamber, giving it control of nearly 30 percent of the total seats (Barone and Ujifusa 1993). These gains may be in part attributable to successful targeting using ORViS. Bullock and Shafer (1993) find that ORViS ratings are in fact a significant predictor of legislative election results in Georgia.

## **What Do Parties Look for in a Recruit?**

Previous research concerning congressional elections has suggested that quality candidates are those with previous electoral experience, and/or some degree of public name recognition (e.g. Jacobson 1980; Green and Krasno 1988). It is not clear, however, what the appropriate measure for candidate quality should be for state legislative elections, since these candidates may often be "first time" candidates.

The Republican party officials were asked what they looked for in a quality recruit. Their responses were very similar. Interestingly, previous electoral experience was not suggested as being very important in any of the states. It seems that previous experience may be helpful, but it is not what the party is focusing on. It was suggested that many of the recruited candidates were, in fact, first time candidates. The parties were fairly consistent with regard to what they were looking for in a potential recruit.

With the exception of Texas, one of the first things the party looks for in a candidate is the ability to raise money.<sup>9</sup> It was not totally clear how the parties could tell whether a candidate could successfully raise money. However, there was some insight into this. The parties were all looking for candidates who were committed to working hard on their campaign, and one of the things mentioned was commitment to raising money. The Republicans in each state mentioned commitment to hard work as being a desired quality, and added that many potential candidates lacked this quality. Georgia Republicans added that they looked for people who had strong support (time and money) from their family and close friends.

In addition to being able to raise money and work hard, the parties looked for candidates who were active and known in their communities. It is not surprising that name recognition is seen as a positive quality for potential candidates. Kentucky Republicans noted that the ideal candidate varies from district to district. Apparently, it was important for the candidate to mirror somewhat the characteristics of the constituency. "You would not want a lawyer to necessarily run in a district made up of farmers." The final desirable quality mentioned by the parties was being articulate or possessing good communication skills. It is interesting to note that the parties not only mentioned the same set of desirable qualities for potential recruits, they also ranked them similarly in priority: money, hard work, name recognition, and communication skills.

## Discussion

The findings from this study reveal two distinct recruiting strategies employed by southern Republicans. One strategy is geared toward maximizing the number of Republicans running for office. The other focuses recruiting efforts almost exclusively on targeted districts. Both strategies show signs of being effective. The two states where the Republicans have experienced the greatest success (Texas and North Carolina) focus most of their recruiting efforts on targeted districts, but Florida has demonstrated a pattern of steady Republican increases using a strategy of increasing the number of candidates running for office. The key to the effectiveness of either strategy lies in the party's winning percentage in those seats it contests. If a party is to be successful focusing on targeted districts, its winning percentage must increase. Similarly, if a party is going to focus on contesting more races it must maintain its winning percentage if it is going to experience an overall increase in seats.

These findings indicate that a party does not necessarily have to increase the number of seats it contests in order to become more competitive in the legislature. In fact, Texas Republicans claim that by not contesting seats that show little sign of being competitive, the party's candidates in other races actually perform better. This is based on the notion that leaving seats uncontested in districts held strongly by the opposition will help to deflate turnout and thus reduce opposition support in statewide races. Certainly this is a topic for future research to consider.

Money seems to play a major role in determining the party's recruiting strategy as well as whom the party recruits. The states using the targeting strategy contended that this was the best way that the party could maximize the use of its resources. A concern for campaign resources also enters into the actual recruiting process. The parties seemed quite concerned with the ability of a candidate to raise campaign funds when considering what were the optimal qualities of a potential recruit. This is an interesting finding because discussions of campaign finance often suggest that some non-incumbents are able to raise money *because* they are a quality candidate, but this suggests that being able to raise money is an *indicator* of candidate quality.

What does all this mean for the future of southern Republican efforts and the role of state party organizations? First, there is evidence suggesting that the party organizations are playing an important role in electoral politics. The parties are confident of this, and the figures discussed above suggest that party strategy is proving effective. Provided that Republican organizations can continue to increase their resources, there is reason to suspect that they may continue to find success in legislative elections.

However, party organizations are not the only factors at work in these elections. Republicans still must contend with the advantages held by Democratic incumbents and the traditional voting tendencies of "yellow dog Democrats." Southern Republicans have been successful while the party held the White House, but now they must contend with a Democrat in office. If Bill Clinton proves popular in the South this could slow Republican efforts, while an unpopular Clinton could add fuel to the growing Republican flame.

While southern politics certainly has changed over the course of several decades, the region remains a unique and interesting area for studying political parties and elections. Future research should continue to investigate the changing nature of party competition in the South as well as the activities of the party organizations. While this research has focused on recruiting in the South, future research should consider whether the strategies found here are applicable elsewhere.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The election data were made available by ICPSR. These data make comparative studies of legislative elections much more feasible but neither the consortium nor the original collectors of the data bear any responsibility for the presentation or interpretation of results in this study. The years selected begin after Watergate to include most recent Republican efforts, particularly those with a Republican president. Since Kentucky held state legislative elections in odd years prior to 1984, the years included are actually 1975-1981, then 1984-1988.

<sup>2</sup>I would like to recognize and thank the Republican party officials who graciously provided information concerning their party's efforts in state legislative elections. They are as follows: Florida—Stuart Brown (Press Secretary) and Rich Heffley (Campaign Director); Georgia—John Griffin (Political Coordinator); North Carolina—Tres Glenn (Political Director); Texas—Royal Masset (Director of Education and Training and former Political Director); Kentucky—John McCarthy (Political Director); Tennessee—Bob Davis (Field Director).

<sup>3</sup>Since the data for the 1986-1988 elections in North Carolina are incomplete, it may not be wise to make too much of the apparent rise in contested seats noted for these elections. It is unknown if the districts excluded were largely Democratic districts or not.

<sup>4</sup>While North Carolina has demonstrated the greatest increase in proportion of seats held by Republicans, it should be noted that this would not be the case if the figures from 1972 were included. Republicans had held 28 percent of the lower house seats in 1972 but lost the vast majority of these in 1974. While Watergate was generally a negative for Republicans, it appears that it was most damaging in North Carolina.

<sup>5</sup>North Carolina Republicans attribute their loss in midterm elections to the traditional view that the president's party loses seats at midterm.

<sup>6</sup>It is worth noting that the party officials were generally very open about their party's strategy. In every case but one, the party officials revealed their strategy of either targeting or widespread recruiting in response to a very general question: "Tell me about your party's efforts in state legislative elections." The field director for the Tennessee Republican party is the one exception to this. He did not want to discuss targeting other than to say that the party did do this. When asked about targeting he replied "now you're getting down to the nitty gritty" and did not want to comment

further on the subject. This apparent fear of divulging trade secrets suggests strongly that targeting is in fact a very important part of the party's strategy.

<sup>7</sup>Each of the party officials were asked if the party ever utilizes negative recruiting. With the exception of Texas, party officials claimed that the party did not try to dissuade candidates from running for office. Texas Republicans, however, engage in negative recruitment to avoid divisive primaries and to leave some districts in the state legislature uncontested.

<sup>8</sup>Tennessee is again an exception. The Field Director did not appear to be very confident in the party's ability to identify where they had a good chance to win. He cited two examples in a recent election where Republicans won in districts which had not been targeted and the party was apparently uninvolved in the campaign.

<sup>9</sup>Texas officials noted that being able to raise money was a positive, but it was not extremely important because the party felt it could fund all of its targeted races.

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