

CLASS #2

THE MOTHER OF ALL MIDTERMS: THE GAME-CHANGING AMERICAN ELECTIONS OF 2026

OLLI + POLS 484, Fall 2026

Sonoma State

13 October 2026



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1

Our Sessions & “Schedule”

• Week #1, 06 OCT 2026:

Overview of class, topics, & how Midterms “work”;
 Key ideas & measures in Midterms — the case of
 polling & assessment of what We “know.”

• Week #2, 13 OCT 2026:

The case of down ballot races and non-candidate
 campaigns;
 How ballot measure campaigns work – and the
 curious case of CA as “The Great Exception”

• Week #3, 20 OCT 2026:

The Battlefield of Elections: The VRA, VBM, & CF,
 CFR (Voting Rights Act; Vote-by-Mail; & Campaign
 Finance / Campaign Finance Reform

• Week #4, 27 OCT 2026:

How information works in Elections? Mis-, Dis-, and
 Mal-Information in Today’s Environment

• Week #5, 03 NOV 2026:

Election Day – What to expect?
 What to watch for?
 Where to get information & have your own analysis?

• Week #6, 10 NOV 2026

Post-Midterm Elections analysis;
 What did We expect? What did We learn?
 What comes next – the “Lame Duck” & DEC 11th

2



It Matters!

Engage. Participate. Vote.



INITIATIVE WARS: THE BACKSTORY & FINANCING OF BALLOT MEASURES, NOVEMBER 2026

October 13th | 12-1pm
Stevenson classroom 1300
OR – remote

What exactly is going on with all the ballot measures on the California ballot? What is the deal with all of the advertising?
Who is behind these measures, and who is financing what is on the ballot?
How do voters prepare themselves to make informed choices? Come learn the “behind the scenes” story about what is on the ballot this November.

SSU students move beyond the pro-con of ballot measures and examine the groups and interests behind the ten statewide measures and the two local ballot measures on the Sonoma County ballot. Fast-paced and informative, our students present information about what is really going on as voters face the deluge of advertising on the November ballot. This event is hyflex – attend in person or attend on Zoom.

Attend It Matters! Voting Engagement Events

The SSU Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and the SSU OLLI program sponsor a dynamic series of non-partisan, election-related events designed to foster civic participation and education across the SSU campus and the wider community. Watch for our next event on Thursday, October 29, in the Stevenson Lobby. The community is encouraged to attend and participate in these events. These sessions will offer valuable insights and foster meaningful dialogue on electoral issues.

3

Redux – Meeting #1

How Do We Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes?

- Referendum on the president vs. “Backlash” on the president?
- Reversion to Party ID (PID) and/or ideology
- Response to economy & job approval
- Response to other issues (war/peace, etc.) / “October Surprise”
- Action of strategic politicians (such as “strategic retirements”)
- Money and / or turnout races
- Reliable pattern of the 19th AND 20th centuries save 4 elections
- *What is “average” midterm presidential seat loss?*
- What “variables” determine the depth of seat loss?

4

Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes, cont'd

- Referendum on the president vs. “Backlash” on the president?
- What does a “Backlash” mean – and why does that matter?
- Growth in the S&P 500 — and economic conditions more broadly — do not exactly predict Midterm election outcomes. There’s no correlation between GDP change and seats won/lost, for example;
- This doesn’t mean the economy *doesn’t matter* (poor English!) — yet to the extent it does, it is more closely proxied by things like the Index of Consumer Sentiment (think, “what do voters perceive their personal economic future to be...?”) and presidential approval than annual change in \$SPY.

5

Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes, cont'd

- Referendum on the president vs. “Backlash” on the president?
- What does a “Backlash” mean – and why does that matter?
- THEREFORE....THE CALENDAR for perceptions matters a TON;
- In Political Science papers this leads to an embrace of the “pocketbook” theory of voting - the window for the effect is strongest between July 1 of an election year Labor Day; then from Labor Day to Election day.
- THINK, THEN, of this calendar, the variables, and if the implications of both the language AND the meaning of:
- Referendum vs. “Backlash” on the president and the party in power?

6

What to Consider With All of These Polls?

First Polling Questions - for General Elections:

1. **Who** conducted the poll?
2. **Where, how, and when** was the poll conducted? REGION MATTERS!!
3. This close (21 days out to E-Day), **LVs** or **RVs**?
4. Outlier poll? **Or consistent results with others?**
5. National polling sample? **Or state-level poll?**
6. **Track-record operation?** Or candidate – or campaign operation conducting the poll?
7. Leading questions? **Or can You actually see / find / examine the questions asked?**

Additional Polling Resources:

- <https://fiftyplusone.news/latest-polls>
- <https://www.natesilver.net/p/trump-approval-ratings-nate-silver-bulletin>
- <https://morningconsult.com/articles/tag/political>
- <https://www.thegreenpapers.com/>
- <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/latest-us-opinion-polls>
- <http://www.ppic.org/survey/>
- <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/u-s-surveys/>
- <https://ssrs.com/ssrs-solutions/voter-poll/>

How to Read Polls, in general, some guidelines:

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/here-are-five-questions-ask-when-analyzing-political-polls-n1053401>

7

Poll, NBC News / Telemundo, Two Weekends Ago



NBC News/Telemundo poll: Trump approval

27%

APPROVE

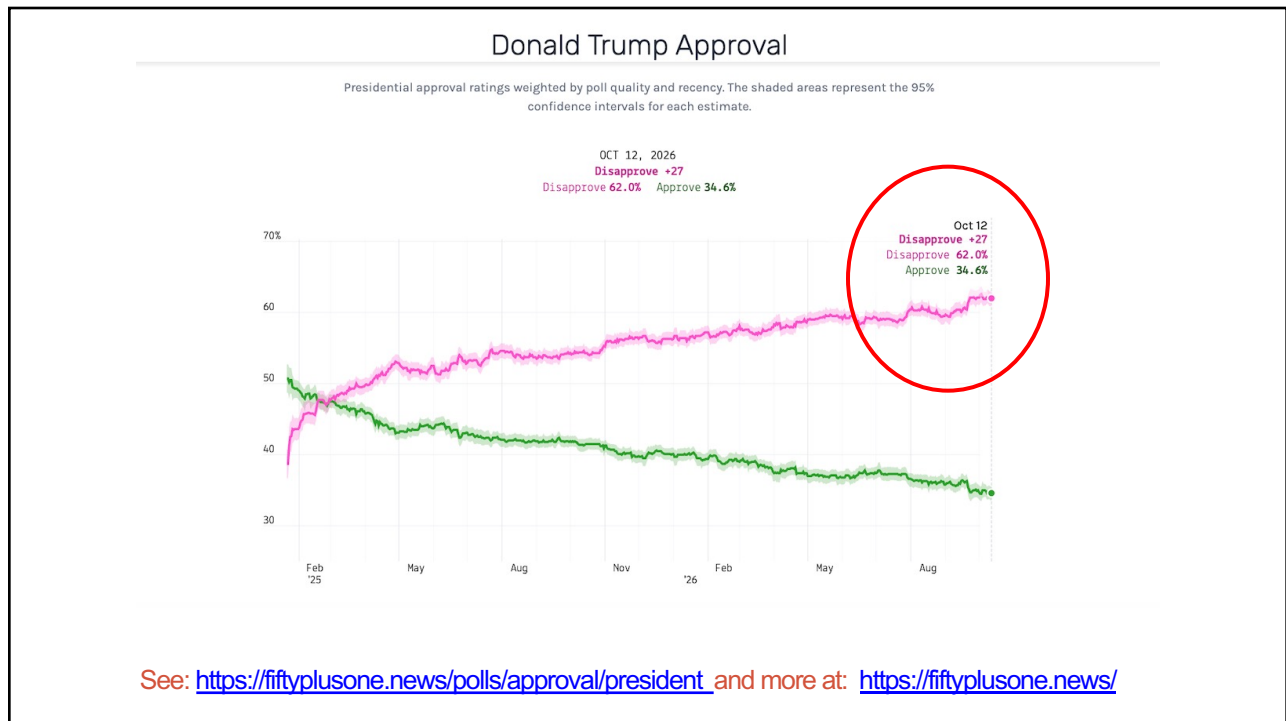


69%

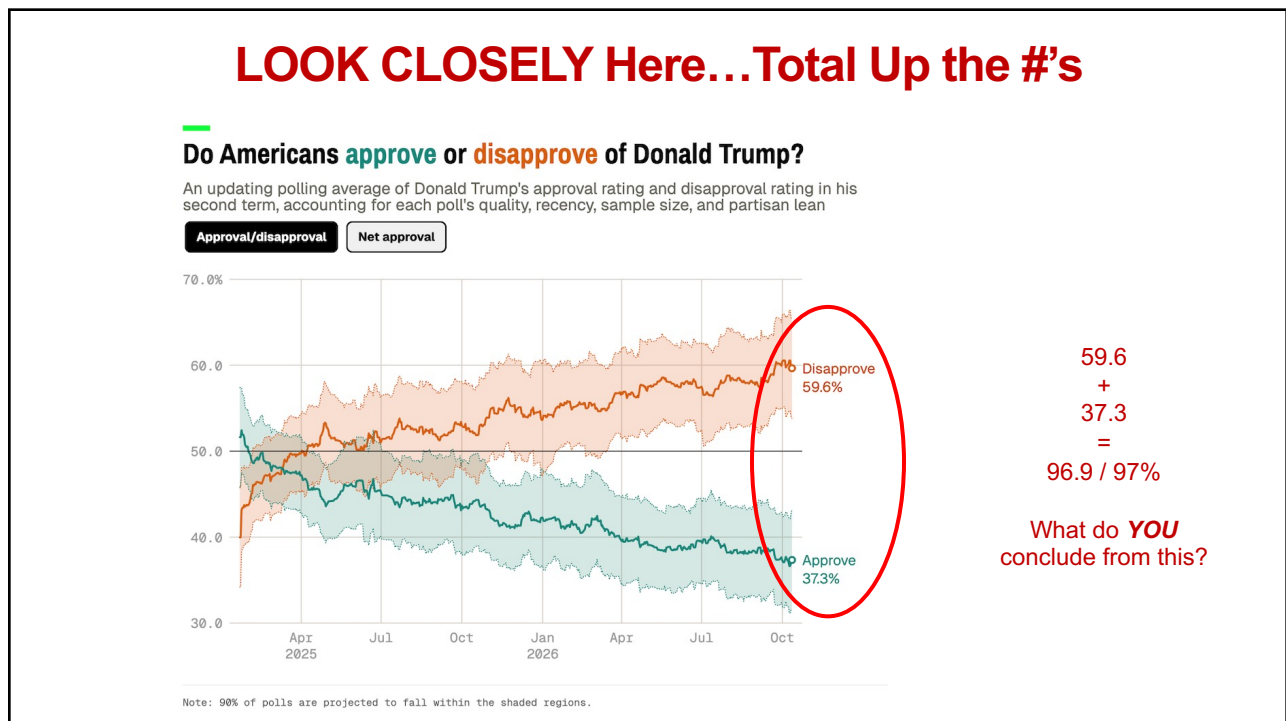
DISAPPROVE

The NBC News/Telemundo poll was conducted Sept. 21-28 and surveyed 800 registered Latino voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points.

8

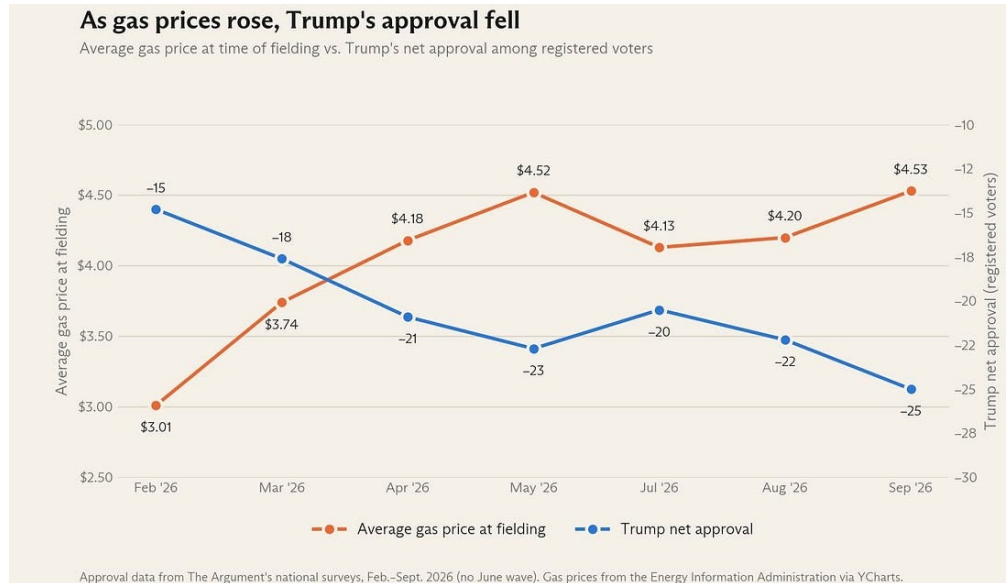


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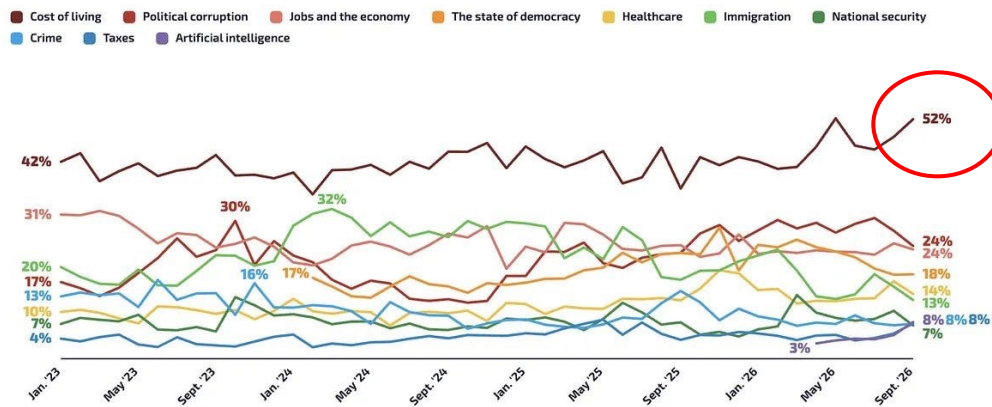
The Patrick Ruffini Take...



11

The Patrick Ruffini Take TWO...

Cost of living continues to dominate the list of issues for voters



Q. If you had to choose just one, which would you say is the biggest issue facing the country today?
Note: Values are combined with follow-up question for second most important, not showing Unsure (2%), Something else (7%), or items 5% and lower.
Registered Voters in the Likely Electorate Nationwide, January 2023 through September 2026. Verified Voter Omnibus, see EchelonInsights.com for monthly methodology.

12

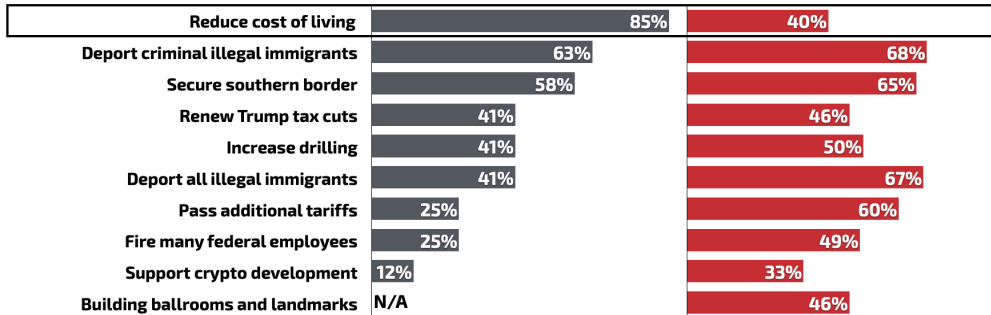
Does This Explain “the Shed” of Support?

In January 2025, **85%** thought Trump should prioritize the cost of living, but only **40%** by September 2026 thought he had

-THE FIRST PRIORITY/ONE OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES

What voters in **January 2025** thought Trump *should* prioritize

What voters in **September 2026** think Trump *had* prioritized



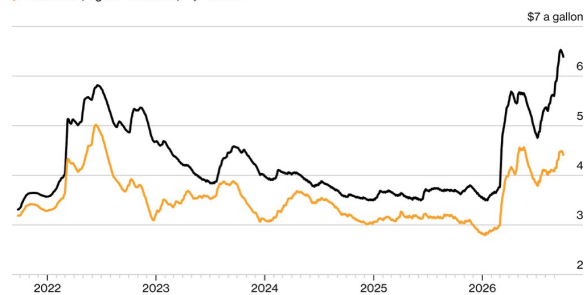
Q. How big of a priority do you consider each of the following for Donald Trump to tackle as he assumes the presidency?
Q. To what extent do you believe Trump has prioritized each of the following items? It has been...
Note: Answer options abbreviated, see topline for full text. "N/A" denotes levels that were not included in that month's question.
Registered Voters in the Likely Electorate Nationwide, January 2025 through September 2026, Verified Voter Omnibus, see Echeloninsights.com for monthly methodology.

13

Voters Face Higher Gasoline and Diesel Costs as Midterms Near

Daily national average US fuel prices

Gasoline (regular unleaded) Diesel



Source: American Automobile Association

Bloomberg

Price, \$/bbl



Source: FRED • Created with Datawrapper



14

Recall Wild Card #1 – U. of MI Consumer Surveys

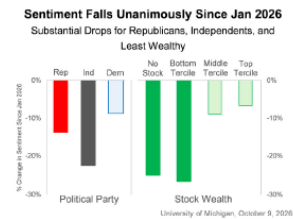
surveys of consumers UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

HOME TABLES CHARTS REPORTS CONTACT DATA SITE

Preliminary Results for October 2026

	Oct 2026	Sep 2026	Oct 2025	M-M Change	Y-Y Change
Index of Consumer Sentiment	46.3	48.1	53.6	-3.7%	-13.6%
Current Economic Conditions	44.7	50.9	58.6	-12.2%	-23.7%
Index of Consumer Expectations	47.3	46.3	50.3	+2.2%	-6.0%

Featured Chart (Image | PDF | Excel)



<https://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/>

15

Economic Datapoints to Come This Election Season

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) releases the [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\)](#) and the [Producer Price Index \(PPI\)](#) at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time each month. +1

Remaining 2026 Release Schedule

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- **September 2026 Data:** Wednesday, October 14, 2026
- **October 2026 Data:** Tuesday, November 10, 2026
- **November 2026 Data:** Thursday, December 10, 2026 +1

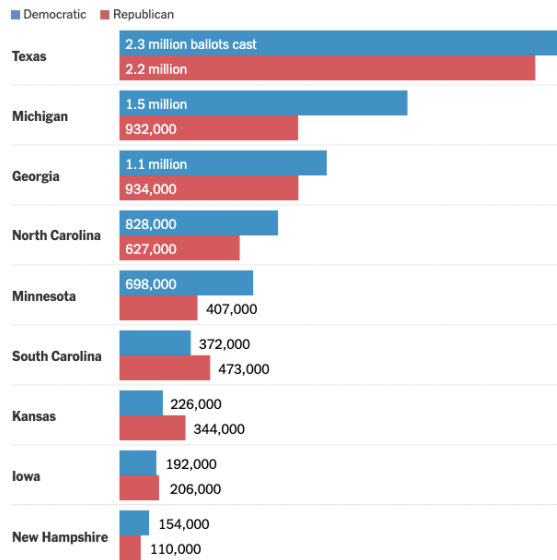
Producer Price Index (PPI)

- **September 2026 Data:** Wednesday, October 15, 2026
- **October 2026 Data:** Friday, November 13, 2026
- **November 2026 Data:** Tuesday, December 15, 2026 +1

16

Primary ballots cast in 2026 in Senate battleground states

Includes battleground states with contested partisan primaries across a single race



Notes: Figures are rounded and exclude write-in votes. In states with contested Senate and governor primaries, the contest with the most total votes is shown. Sources: The Associated Press; state election websites. The New York Times

**Let's Check for an Update
on the Early Vote, to This
Week**

Navigate [here](https://election.lab.ufl.edu/early-vote/2026-early-voting/):

<https://election.lab.ufl.edu/early-vote/2026-early-voting/>

17

**Ok....Are YOU
Ready??**



18

California – The Great Exception: How the Politics of the Nation are Driven by the Golden State

Part I: How California Matters Today?



3

19

Part I: How CA Matters...as the “Great Exception”

- Carey McWilliams, 1949, in his book *California: The Great Exception*, noted that:

“Californians are more like the Americans than the Americans themselves...For California has always occupied, in relation to other regions, much the same relation that America has occupied toward Europe: it is the great catch-all, the vortex at the continent’s end into which elements of America’s diverse population have been drawn, whirled around” (83-84).

- Joan Didion, in her work, *We Tell Ourselves Stories In Order To Live* (2006), added,

“California is a place in which a boom mentality and a sense of Chekhovian loss meet in uneasy suspension; in which the mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things better work here, because here, beneath the immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent.”

- Wallace Stegner, in 1959, famously observed that,

“California was America only more so ... the national culture at its most energetic end.”

3

20

The Rise of “Permanent Campaigns” & Impact of Elections on Governing

- Elections are about *contrast*, defining differences
- Governing is about consensus
- Politics, therefore, is the act / art / task of what?
- How do these variables workout in our system given various constraints?
- **KEY ?:** What to do about “sticky problems?;” Problems that seem to elude solutions? These suffer under these assumptions & the erosion of confidence and trust.

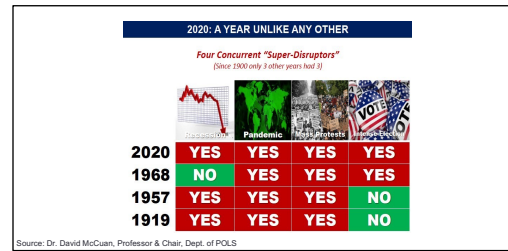
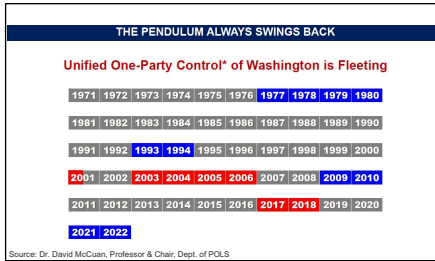
21

Conditions Affecting Our Politics



Source: Dr. David McCuan, Professor & Chair, Dept. of POLS

22



A Permanent, "Anti- / Protest Politics" Era?



23

Part II: How CA Deals With the Backlash During Midterms: The Changing Politics of the Golden State

Terminators, Meatheads, and Pop Stars: The Politics of Direct Democracy in California

24

The Good News? CA Politics is Fun!



25

CA's Political Context Today: The Rise of "Initiative Politics"

- Demographic change / explosion + a much more "Democratic" state
- Fiscal governance challenges
- Structural governance challenges
- Economic, industrial challenges
- The threat (or is it liberator?) that is the "parallel legislature"
- Continuous elections & implications for the future

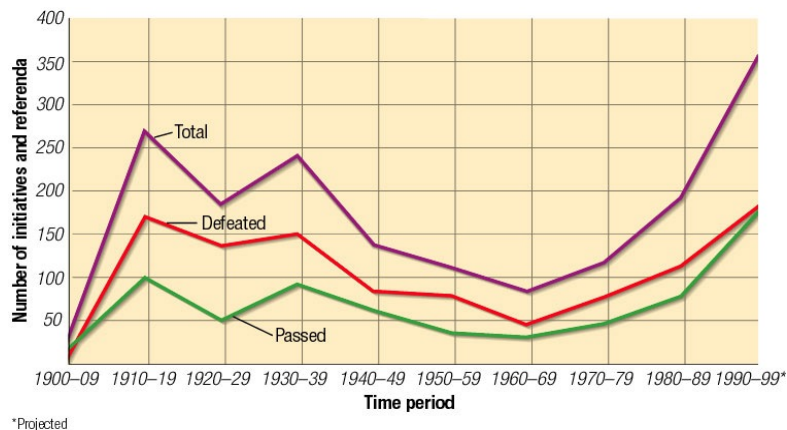
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How Have Californians Answered These Conditions, Context? By Heading to the Ballot Box!



27

What Evidence do Nattering Naybob of Negativism (Scholars!) Point to?



28

Ballot Measure Activity, CA, 1912 - 2020

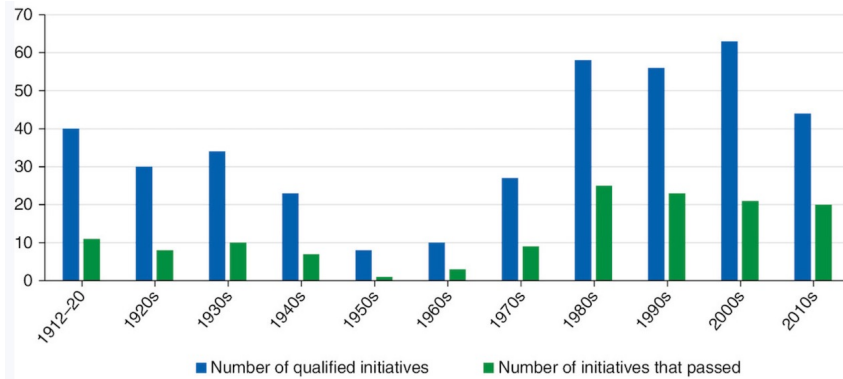


Figure 3.1 Number of Statewide Initiatives that Qualified and Voters Approved in California, 1912–2020

Source: "Initiative Totals by Summary Year, 1912–2022," Office of the Secretary of State, State of California, <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ballot-measures/pdf/initiative-totals-summary-year.pdf>.

Notes: Each decade begins with the odd numbered year (e.g., 1921). Excludes referenda and measures referred by the legislature.

Citizens can propose laws or money-raising measures at the city, county, and state levels in California. Any registered voter may propose a state law (an *initiative statute*) or a change to the state constitution (a *constitutional amendment*), and majority approval. However, because the average person lacks the money and time to gather hundreds of thousands of valid voter signatures for statewide propositions, well-funded interest groups now dominate a system that was intended to practice, nearly anyone who can spend between \$3 million and \$7 million to hire a signature-gathering firm can qualify a measure for the ballot, and the average cost typically exceeds \$7 per valid signature because so many names are disqualifying.

29

History & Passage Rates of CA Ballot Measures, 1912 - 2010

Era of Initiatives:	# Submitted:	# Qualified:	# Passed:	% Submit/Qualified:	% Qual/Passed:	% Passed Overall:
Early Consulting Era: (1912 - 1929)	97	65	18	67.0%	27.7%	18.6%
Childhood of Consulting: (1930 - 1959)	126	69	18	54.8%	26.1%	14.3%
Wild, Wild Adolescence: (1960 - 1979)	227	34	10	15.0%	29.4%	4.4%
Coming of Age: (1980 - 2002)	737	122	52	16.6%	42.6%	7.1%
Recent Past: (2003-2009)	87	52	20	59.8%	38.5%	23.0%
Totals/Average: (1912 - 2010)	1274	332	118	26.1%	35.5%	9.3%

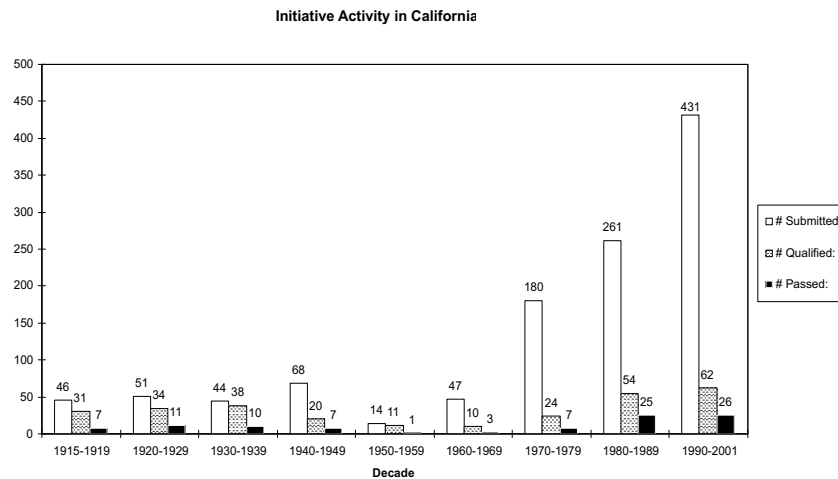
30

More Nuance Needed Here: The Process of Direct Democracy as a 5-Stage Game

- Stage #1: Drafting Stage (“Title and Summary”)
- Stage #2: Signature Qualification Stage
- Stage #3: Campaign Stage
- Stage #4: Adjudication Stage
- Stage #5: Implementation Stage
- What does this look like in reality?

31

A Three-Stage Game with Mixed Results?



32

Direct Democracy in the USA

- Approximately 70% of Americans live in states with the initiative process.
- But around 60% of initiatives fail nationwide
- In CA, about 2 out of 3 measures that appear on the ballot fail (last ten years or so, this has changed, however).
- Why?

33

DD & Its Policy Effects

- We know that DD has important palliative effects on electoral turnout, increases information about politics, and civic engagement.
- And, we know that the Progressives believed that DD would lessen the impact of partisan politics on the political process.
- Now, we need to place these changes within the broader the political context of CA politics & changes here.
- What has happened in CA in the "modern era" to affect the politics of "direct democracy?"

34

The Move to the “Parallel Legislature”

- There is general agreement that Direct Democracy (DD) alters the political environment of California in dramatic fashion.
- And, this shift is important to assess where the state is headed and the implications for the future of direct democracy not only in this state, but across the nation.
- These dramatic changes lend critics much ammunition in pointing to the “bad” things about what the “tools of the Progressives” have given the state.
- But, like much of the political conventional wisdom, the true story is a bit more nuanced here.

35

YES vs. NO Arguments on Ballot Measures

- Ballot initiatives are easier to defeat than to pass
 - Over 60% of ballot initiatives fail; Why?
- It is possible that it is easier to argue against a proposal rather than in support of one
- Thus, the “easy money” is on opposing ballot measures, not supporting them;
- Or, by moving “second” and not “first”

36

Top eight most expensive ballot measures in California

Between 1999 and 2020

	Measure	Year	Total	Support	Opposition	Outcome
1	Proposition 22	2020	\$224,253,017.57	\$205,369,249.18	\$18,883,768.39	Approved
2	Propositions 94, 95, 96, and 97	2008	\$154,554,073	\$115,063,876	\$39,490,197	Approved
3	Proposition 87	2006	\$150,770,683	\$58,130,783	\$92,639,900	Defeated
4	Proposition 15	2020	\$144,006,081.62	\$69,208,909.46	\$74,735,622.16	Defeated
5	Proposition 8	2018	\$130,426,208	\$18,943,228	\$111,482,980	Defeated
6	Proposition 61	2016	\$128,276,770	\$19,170,610	\$109,106,160	Defeated
7	Proposition 21	2020	\$124,424,013.58	\$40,852,356.62	\$83,571,656.96	Defeated
8	Proposition 79	2005	\$121,826,243	\$40,516,352	\$81,309,891	Defeated

Table: Ballotpedia • Source: Cal-Access

BALLOT PEDIA

37

Four Years Ago, in Another Midterm, Props. 26 & 27, Early Oct 2022

OCTOBER 8, 2022									
\$128,506,339	YES ON 26, NO ON 27								
	Coalition for Safe, Responsible Gaming, Sponsored by California Indian Tribes								
	Committee: 1424396								
\$116,225,873	NO ON 27								
	Californians for Tribal Sovereignty and Safe Gaming, Sponsored by Tribal Organizations								
	Committee: 1443032								
\$169,350,040	YES ON 27								
	Californians For Solutions To Homelessness And Mental Health Support								
	A Coalition Of Housing And Mental Health Experts, Concerned Taxpayers And								
	Digital Sports Entertainment And Gaming								
	Committee: 1440682								
\$42,069,001	NO ON 26								
	Taxpayers Against Special Interest Monopolies, Sponsored by Licensed Card Clubs								
	Committee: 1439178								
\$456,151,253									

38

WHAT DD LOOKED LIKE IN NOVEMBER 2020? +\$755 MILLION JUST IN THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD ALONE...

Prop 14 – Stem Cell Research

Prop 15 – Commercial/Industrial Property Tax

Prop 16 – Diversity in Public Employment

Prop 17 – Voting Rights for Parolees

Prop 18 – Voting Rights for 17-Year-Olds

Prop 19 – Residential Property Tax

Prop 20 – Restricts Parole for Non-Violent Offenses

Prop 21 – Rent Control

Prop 22 – Classification of App-Based Drivers

Prop 23 – Kidney Dialysis Clinics

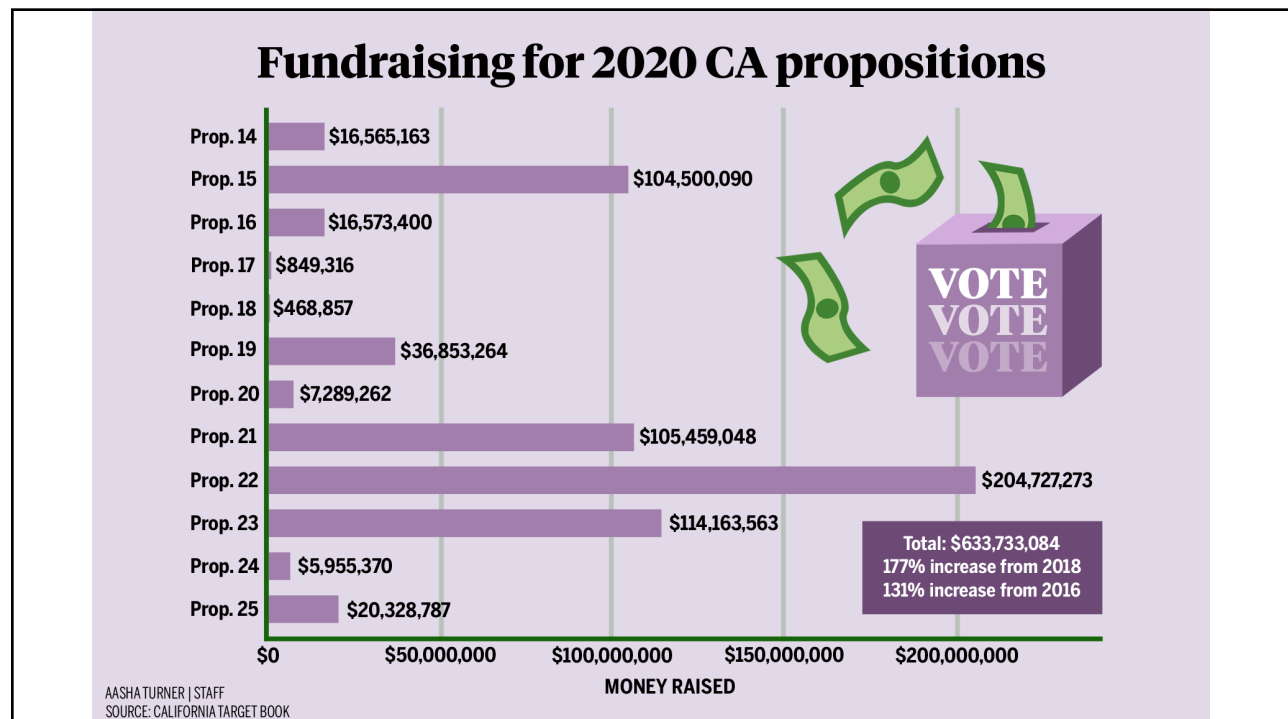
Prop 24 – Consumer Privacy Laws

Prop 25 – Zero Bail

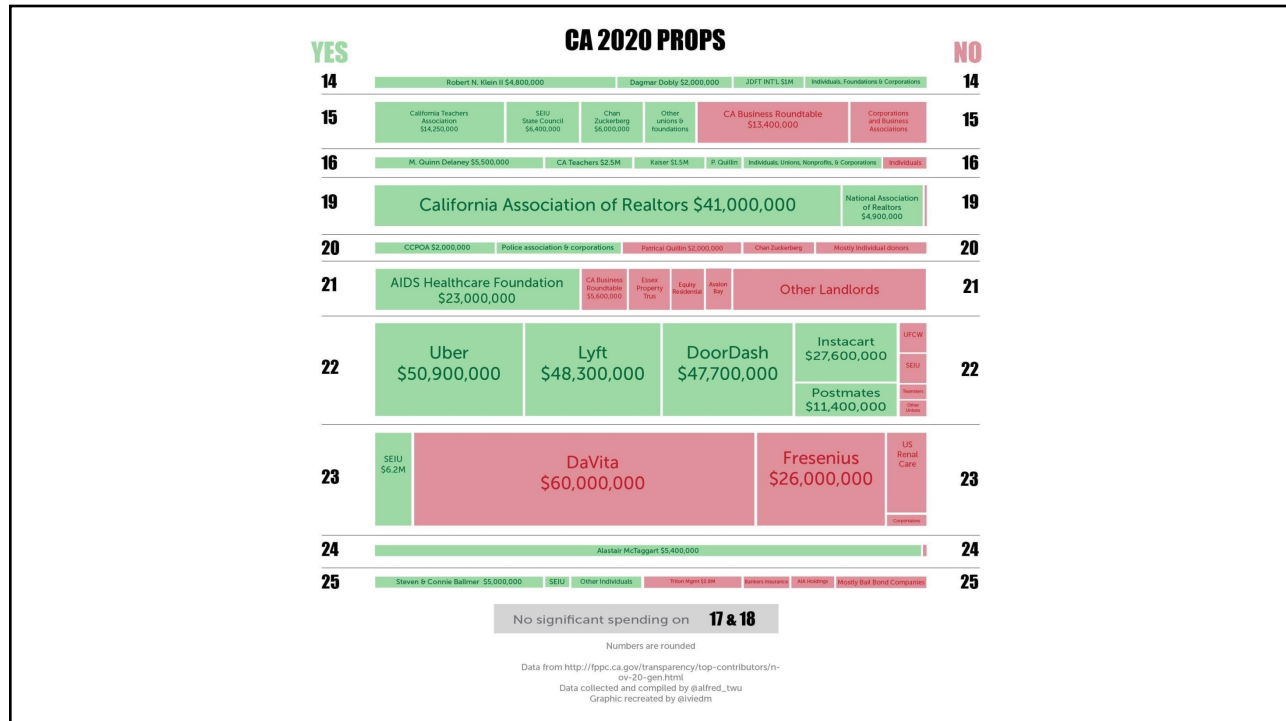
Ballot Measures & Direct Democracy in CA:

The SECOND MOST EXPENSIVE POLITICAL
EXERCISE in the Free World!

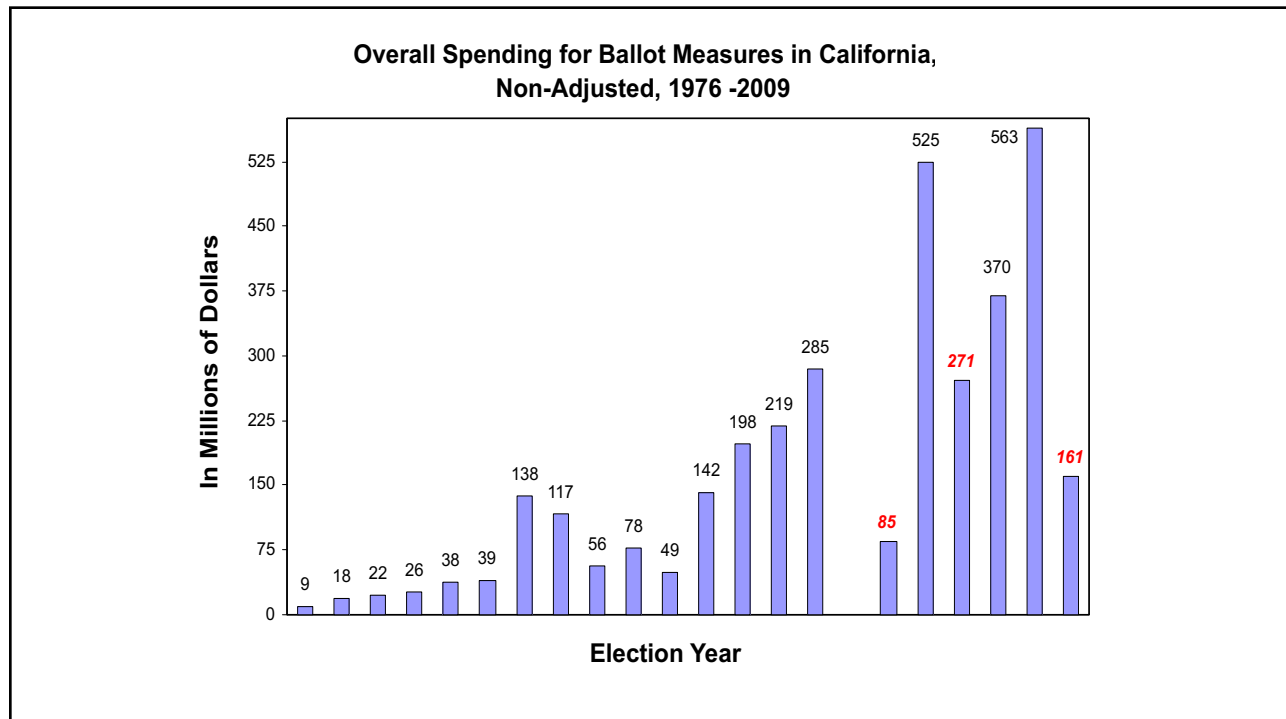
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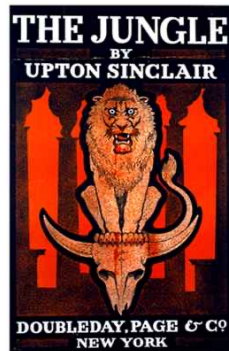


41



42

THE BIRTH OF POLITICAL CONSULTING: WHITAKER BAXTER AS PIONEERS OF POLITICAL MARKETING



43

Overview of Book & Research

- Manuscript-length book project detailing the rise & contributions of the first true political consulting firm, Whitaker Baxter, aka *Campaigns, Inc.*
- WB serves as both a tipping point & as a hallmark.
- The firm symbolizes a “spillover effect” and forever altered & blurred the lines between campaigning & governing.
- What the book is not:
 - Strictly disciplinary-specific to one field;
 - ‘Soak and poke’ of many fields, many disciplines.

44

Overall Picture of *Campaigns, Inc.* & Whitaker Baxter

- Whitaker & Baxter / *Campaigns Inc.*, was the country's first political campaign management firm.
- Founded in 1933 by business partners (and later husband and wife) Clem Whitaker, Sr. and Leone Baxter.
- Operated under the name *Campaigns Inc.*, yet the company was not actually incorporated until 1950. Corporate filings at that time show Clem Whitaker, Sr., Leone Baxter and Howard Hassard (the firm's attorney) as Directors of the Company.
- Firm's principal office was located in San Francisco but temporary offices were opened in other cities as required including Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.

45

WB, *Campaigns, Inc.* 1949, *Time* magazine



46

Overall Picture of *Campaigns, Inc.* & Whitaker Baxter, cont' d

- Based in California, the firm worked on a variety of political issues, though mostly centered within the core of the Republican Party.
- *Campaigns, Inc.* engaged in campaign management organization and activities including political public relations work (public affairs) under the guise of two entities, *Campaigns, Inc.* (1934 – 1986) and the California Feature Service (1933-1944).
- Campaigns include those of Earl Warren, Goodwin Knight, Richard Nixon, Robert Griffin; with special emphasis on campaigns for California ballot measures on teachers' salaries, railroad crews, air pollution, utilities, and coastal protection.
- Public affairs and political activities included California and national health insurance plans, legislative reapportionment, medical malpractice, unitization of oil fields, and power plant placement/sites.

47

Sources & Methodology

- What we know about the firm is piecemeal, scattered, and lacks a cohesive structure and even analysis.
- For example, many journalists have written about WB (McWilliams, Ross, Mitchell) as have many academics (Kelley, Pritchell, White, Sharma, Sabato, Baker, Bowler, et al., Kotler, and Starr).
- Facts of campaigns, roles, and how they operated are unclear and therefore our analysis is lacking.
- The general conclusion is that *Campaigns, Inc.* and Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter are important. But how? Why? What has changed with this firm and its operations?
- What I am doing in the text: Making the argument that WB was the first to offer complete, comprehensive, media-directed modern campaign & political services. They were, in the words of the principals, "A complete shop for politics, A to Z."

48

Research Strategy: WB & Campaigns, Inc.

- Where Political Science Meets Political Marketing Meets Political History Meets Journalism
- This project is enormous in scope:
 - CA & US political histories, recollections, and use of primary and secondary sources
- Data collection efforts of ‘soak and poke.’
 - Include “unprocessed collections” located at two State of CA official archives;
 - The oral histories of major political actors & media figures for the time period covered (1933 – 2009);
 - Digital copies of portions of the WB personal diaries kept by Leone Baxter;
 - Secondary source documents including campaign guidelines, strategy documents, and California Feature Service (CFS) documents.
 - Primary records from gubernatorial archives of several CA Governors & politicians (Earl Warren, Goodwin Knight, Joseph Knowland, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan as just a few examples).
 - Media accounts of campaigns and, in some cases, actual reporter’s notes and story notebooks.
- The topics covered are vast, overarching, and yet linked in many ways.
- Questions arise: Where to begin? Where to draw any lines or distinctions?

49

Campaigns, Inc.: Key Developments, Before

- Thomas Jefferson, Key Founder of The Republic, 1796 (John Beckley)
- Party Change Period for US politics: 1824-1828 (Senator Martin Van Buren)
- 1840 – 1876 Political party-centered operations (William E. Chandler & Thomas L. Tullock, esp. in 1868 – 1880)
- 1880s (Period of rising influence – 1888, 1891, 1893, 1896 & the \$3.5 campaign)
- Post-1904 return & turn away from ‘ward, patronage-based party politics of the Hall’ as part of Progressive Era.
- By the late 1920s, the stage is set.
- GOP domination of CA Governors (1899-1930) & state prominence through the 1950s.
- CA as the, “Land of Loony Schemes & Political Extremes”

50



Senator Marcus
'Mark' A.
Hanna (Rep-
OH)

Born: Sept 1837

Died: Feb 1904



51

The Campaigns, Inc. Model: What is the Shift? Bringing Order to Chaos

- The "Critical Tipping Point" for today's political professionals and consultants;
- W & B is the firm that joins Mark Hanna's "modern professional candidate politics" with
- Bernays and Lippmann's notions of marketing politics as the "marriage" of propaganda and public relations to alter public opinion.
- Firm creates "precepts" for waging campaigns.
- Joins the political with public relations forming an approach centered around "public affairs" for the first time.

52

Campaigns, Inc.: Bios of the Principals, Clem Whitaker, Sr.; Leone Baxter; Clem, Jr.

- Clem Whitaker's background
- Leone Baxter's background
- Clem, Jr.'s background
- Masters at self-promotion – a hallmark of political professionals throughout their history.
- See Clem Whitaker, "Professional Political Campaign Management," *Public Relations Journal*. Number 6 (January 1950), pp. 19, 21.

53

Size & Scope – Ushering in a New Era

- *Campaigns, Inc.*: The Revolution of Technique
- Let's place the revolution of campaign technique into some perspective:
 - Services offered by the firm of WB
 - Budgets for Campaigns & Spending: Breadth, scope, and depth
 - Spending & Spillovers: Increased professionalization of politics and the explosion of political marketing techniques into a new area, "public affairs"
 - How many campaigns did they run? Dozens? 100? 75? Less? More?
 - Growing role in party organizations and among interest groups as "Public Affairs" specialists advising both politicians & organizations

54

Campaigns, Inc.: Notable Campaigns

- Where to begin?
- Most literature in the fields of Political Science, Marketing, History, and Journalism ascribes one campaign or another as the “first to do X.” Or, the “first use of technique Y.”
- For example, an early, critical campaign in the success and lore of *Campaigns, Inc.* was the negative campaign run against Upton Sinclair and his EPIC campaign in 1934.
- Also ran a hotly contested 1938 ballot proposition against picketing, "Proposition #1," which became a huge political struggle marked by widespread strikes related to the campaign against the measure. Prop #1 failed at the polls. California unions began to admit non-white members and labor surged as political force.

55

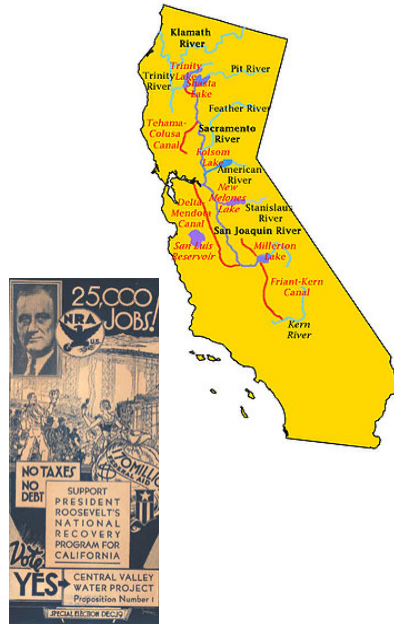
Campaigns, Inc.: Key Developments

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Period of cross-filing in CA from 1913 – 1959 | • 1945, 1946 |
| • 1925 - 1929 | • 1948 - 1952 |
| • 1933 & 1934 | • 1956 / 1958: |
| • 1936 | • 1960, 1961 |
| • 1938 & 1939 | • Twilight Years / Links to Reagan, Nixon, Bush I & II, Schwarzenegger |

56

Campaigns, Inc.: Notable First Campaign

- **Central Valley Project Association, Proposition 1 (WB ran the 'Yes on 1' campaign)**
- Began as 'sub-contractors' retained by the Los Angeles-based public relations firm of Lord and Thames to handle political affairs in the 1933 Statewide Special Election working against the interests of Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) the state's large electric and power company. Later worked on behalf of PG&E.
- Whitaker & Baxter were retained to help pass Proposition 1, in this Dec. 1933 Special Election. This election featured a PG&E - sponsored referendum aimed at striking down recent legislation that would establish the Central Valley Project (CVP). This was the firm's first campaign. Measure passes but languishes due to Depression. Later, WB works to pass a follow-up measure in 1940 with PG&E!
- Records analyzed include finance reports of campaign receipts and expenditures, background information regarding the Central Valley Project, Central Valley Project Association, and California Water Project Authority, setup of Speaker's Bureau, news clippings.



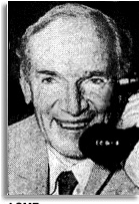
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Campaigns, Inc. Model: 6 Maxims & Manner

1. "Never wage a campaign defensively! The only successful defense is a spectacular, hard-hitting, crushing offensive."
2. "Attempt to create actual news instead of merely sending out publicity."
3. "More Americans like corn than caviar."
4. "Most every American loves contest. He likes a good hot battle, with no punches pulled. He likes the clash of arms."
5. "No matter what you fight for, *fight for something*, in our business, and very soon the voters will be turning out to hear you, providing you make the fight interesting."
6. "The average American doesn't want to be educated; he doesn't want to improve his mind; he doesn't even want to work, consciously, at being a good citizen. [But] most every American likes to be entertained. He likes the movies; he likes mysteries; he likes fireworks and parades...so if you can't fight PUT ON A SHOW!"

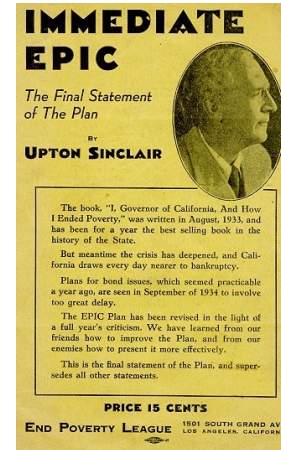
58

Early Campaigns: CVP; EPIC



ACME
Upton Sinclair

Most literature places the firm as starting in 1934 *against* Upton Sinclair's EPIC ('End Poverty In CA'). Actually began working as sub-contractors earlier in early 1933 on water issues & proposed ballot measures.



59



'Pink Right Down to Her Underwear'



- A brutal 1950 Senate campaign waged by Republican Congressman Richard Nixon ended Douglas' career as an elected official—Nixon and his henchmen tagged actress and Representative Helen Gaghan Douglas "The Pink Lady" and, with the help of the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover, made her victim to the same McCarthyist anti-Red hysteria that was sweeping Hollywood. Nixon's savage campaign was the prototype of negative attack campaign tactics which we see with later models.



60

1950 U.S. Senate Race in California



61

Campaigns, Inc.: Agenda Control & Campaign Mgmt – Modus Operandi

- WB focused on campaigns that stimulated a fight:
 - Developing and using modern “hit” pieces blending multiple media formats reinforcing a common message or talking points.
 - “Hit” pieces became a hallmark early on with their campaigns by using opponent’s words against them – first example is Upton Sinclair in the 1934 EPIC campaign. Others abound.
 - Ran negative as a trademark “style.”
 - Often were hired by victims of their previous campaigns to run against folks they actually elected (1946 Earl Warren; Nixon & Chotiner, 1950s; Goodwin Knight, 1956; others as well).

62

Campaigns, Inc.: Healthcare Reform, 1946 - 1952

- Worked to elect CA Attorney General Earl Warren to Governorship in 1944 gubernatorial campaign.
- In 1945, Governor Warren proposes a “comprehensive health insurance plan” modeled on social insurance legislation of the previous decade.
- Fervently opposed by CA Medical Association (CMA) which retains WB.
- November 1945: Truman proposed comprehensive health insurance plan
- Minor, but growing issue in 1946 midterm election campaigns.
- Truman wins re-election in 1948
- Push begins in DC for reform.
- AMA forms “Nat’l Education Cmte.,” 1948
- AMA retains WB early in 1949.
- According to past research:
 - WB retained at \$100,000 / year by AMA
 - Woefully understated & inaccurate.



Slogan: “Keep Politics Out of the Picture” –The AMA, 1949

63

WB, AMA & The Truman Plan, 1945 - 1952



64

WB, AMA & The Truman Plan, continued

- WB established an extensive network and comprehensive, strategic campaign plan.
- In the first SIX months, WB had:
 - Est' d office at 1 North La Salle Street, Chicago.
 - Organized a "Committee of 53" comprised of AMA members advising the AMA "Coordinating Committee" of actions and progress.
 - Enlisted more than 1000 organizations against HC reform.
 - Sent out 25 million pieces of literature to doctors, their offices, interest groups, and service organizations.
 - 2.5 million pieces mailed directly from WB offices to doctors' home addresses.
 - 163,000 doctors on the WB mailing list / database.

65

WB, AMA & The Truman Plan, continued

- WB claimed that a 'typical' AMA work week consisted of contacting:
 - 12000 Trade associations (including state medical associations);
 - 2700 Chambers of commerce;
 - 500 Civic clubs;
 - 120 Advertising clubs;
 - 1500 Kiwanis clubs;
 - 4500 Lion' s clubs;
 - 2300 Rotary clubs;
 - 1300 Carnegie libraries;
 - 900 College libraries;
 - 8000 Public libraries
 - 14000 School principals & superintendents;
 - 9000 YMCA city associations;
 - 200 YWCA city associations;
 - 130000 dentists and druggists.

66

“The Doctor” by Sir Luke Fildes (1891)



WB offered this painting in poster form with the slogan, “Keep Politics Out of the Picture”

After offering this poster to doctors, 40,000 orders were received in five weeks. Follow-up requests came out at the rate of 1,000 / week. Each doctor's office also received a minimum of 50 AMA pamphlets against the Truman plan. 7600 medical interns also placed on mailing list.

67

Add' I AMA Campaign Details

- 10 million envelope & stationary stickers given out to doctors that read:

*“As Your Personal Physician
I Oppose Compulsory Health Insurance Because –
It would bring you inferior medical care at high cost –
Invade your medical privacy – Put both of us under political
control.
If you agree, please write your U.S. Senators and
Representatives.
For more information, ask me.”*

68

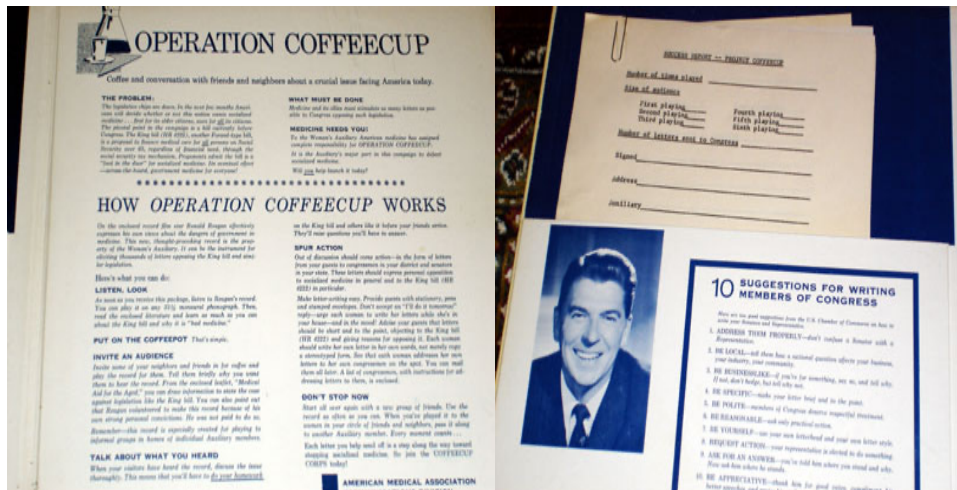
AMA Campaign – Heat Is Turned Up

- Beginning in early 1950, plans were made for the rollout of a nationwide advertising campaign AND a congressional push against Truman's plan.
- Four principal targets:
 - Members of Congress;
 - National magazines;
 - Radio;
 - Newspapers;
- 11000 daily & weekly newspapers contacted by October 1950.
- 300 radio stations blitzed with 30-second and 1-minute spot ads.
- 30 national magazines targeted.
- ALL Members of the U.S. House received a detailed copy of the national advertising plan and letters from WB outlining the nationwide goal that had one objective (see next slide):

"This expanded program has one specific objective – to crystalize public opinion into a public mandate on this issue. We want an articulate public opinion, speaking with a voice that the socializers in Washington cannot defy or ignore."

69

Operation Coffee Cup



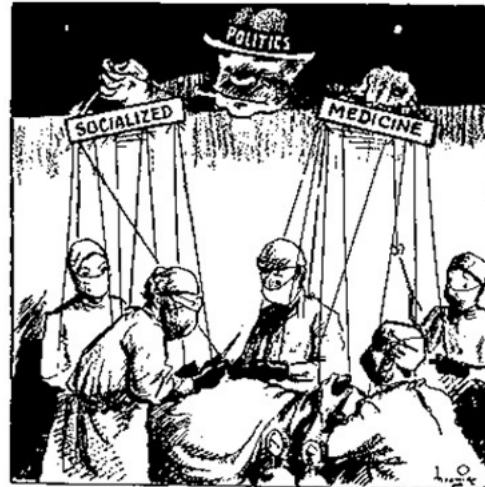
Carey McWilliams, former editor of *The Nation*, writing in 1949 about the firm WB: "Its slogans are works of art, and its manipulation of public opinion is something to excite wonder and amazement."

70

WB: What's New is Old Again



COMMUNIST SYSTEM



Reprinted by Permission - The Polish Daily News - Chicago

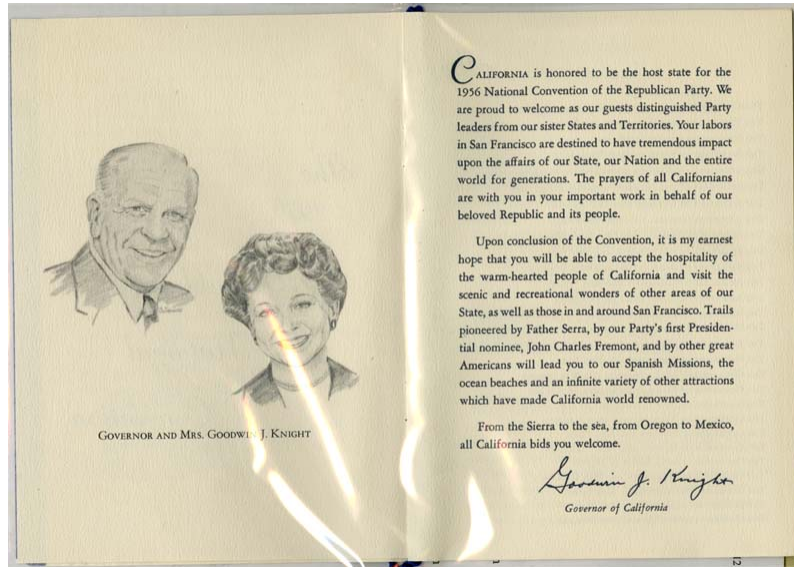
71

From Campaigns, Inc. to Obama's Healthcare Reform Efforts

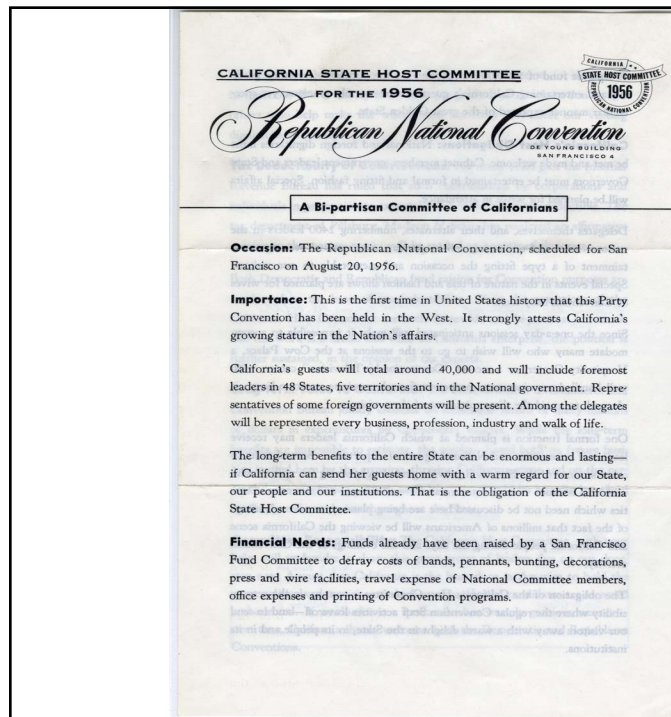


72

1956 GOP Conventioneer's Welcome Book

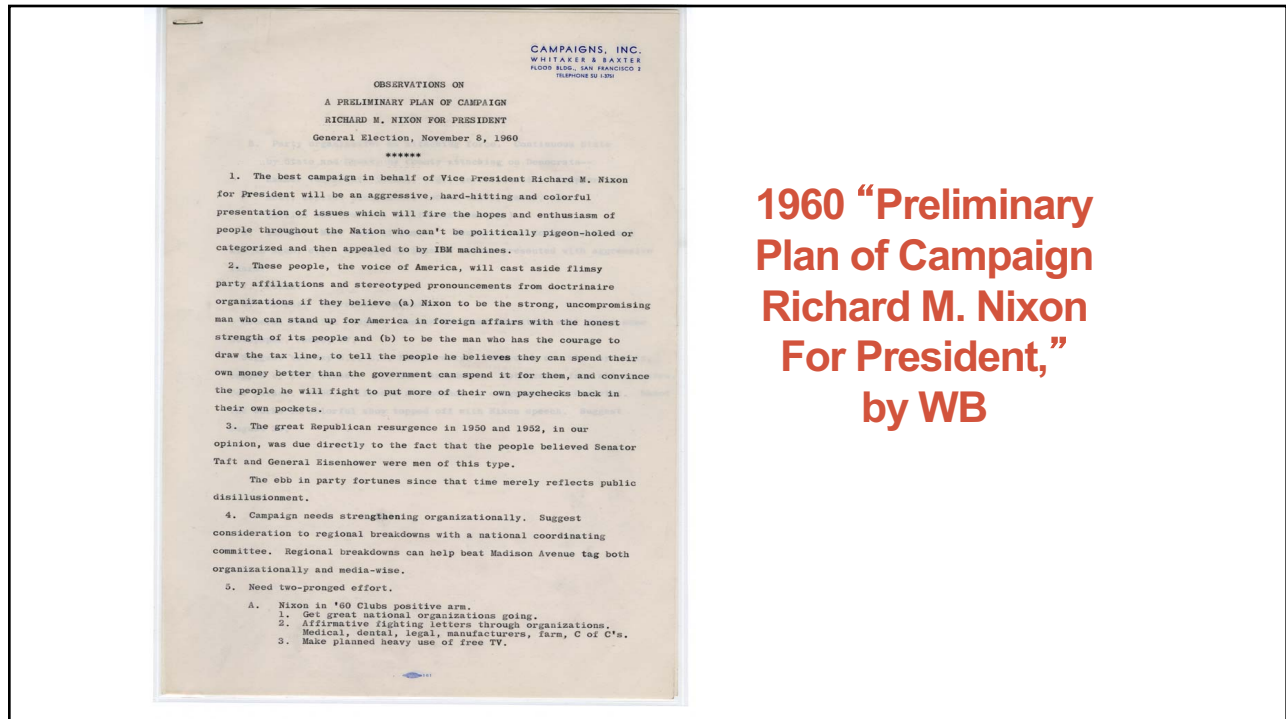


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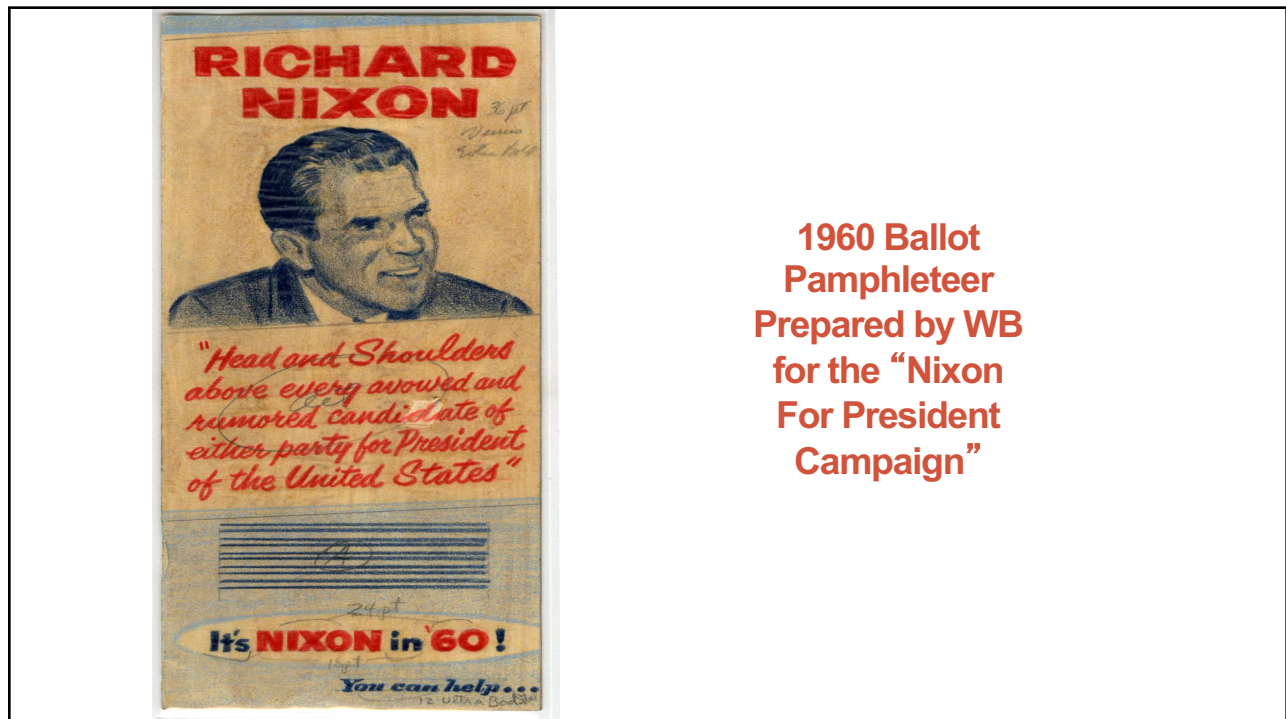
74

1956 RNC Convention Game Plan & Strategy Document, by WB



**1960 "Preliminary
Plan of Campaign
Richard M. Nixon
For President,"
by WB**

75



**1960 Ballot
Pamphleteer
Prepared by WB
for the "Nixon
For President
Campaign"**

76

Campaigns, Inc.: The Legacy - Creation of the 'Guild System' Among Political Professionals

- Whitaker and Baxter:
 - Adoption and surge of a sub-contracting “guild system” whereby political operatives and specialists in signature gathering were contracted by the firm or placed on retainer.
 - Symbiotic relationship, cultivation with the press. Informative guides, stories, and features, with a strictly non-partisan slant.
 - Three notable examples of this “guild system” & press relationship include Mary Leary and Carey McWilliams as well as Joe Robinson.

77

Campaigns, Inc.: The Common 'Birth Mother' of Today's Political Professionals

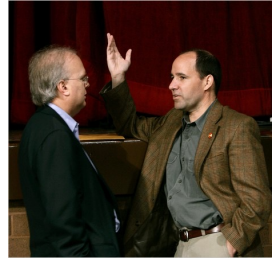
- Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin paraphrasing Ronald Reagan from the 1961 album during the 2008 Vice-Presidential debate:
 - "It was Ronald Reagan who said that freedom is always just one generation away from extinction. We don't pass it to our children in the bloodstream; we have to fight for it and protect it, and then hand it to them so that they shall do the same, or we're going to find ourselves spending our sunset years telling our children and our children's children about a time in America, back in the day, when men and women were free."



Harold Ngan, Robyn Beck, AFP/Getty Images

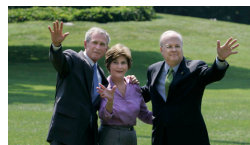
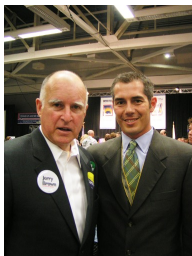
78

Birth Mother: Roots & Networked Connections of WB



79

Birth Mother: Roots & Networks of WB



80

Campaigns, Inc.: Conclusions – “Reality Ain’ t What It Used to Be”

- WB established a new paradigm in politics, campaigns, and elections.
- Professional, complete campaign management, public affairs campaigns and the merging of candidate and ballot measure / issue politics.
- Carved out the “political universe” and began the guild system of sub-contracting specialists and “temporary partnerships.”
- “My father created, in effect, an ongoing business, the business of which was government and campaigns for the first time in the history of this country.” –Clem Whitaker, Jr.
- ***Advice is judged by results, not by intentions.***

- Cicero

81

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS?

Thanks for Your Time Today!

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82