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The Political Potential of Americans with Disabilities: A Study of Political Engagement and Preferences

DISSERTATION

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for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Political Science

by

Sierra Joelle Powell

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Martin P. Wattenberg, Chair
Chancellor's Professor Richard L. Hasen
Associate Professor Matthew N. Beckmann

2015

DEDICATION

TO

People with disabilities.
My family.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Sierra Joelle Powell

2009	B.A. in Government and Philosophy, University of Redlands
2011	M.A. in Political Science, University of California, Irvine
2015	Ph.D. in Political Science, University of California, Irvine

FIELD OF STUDY

American Politics, Political Behavior

PUBLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Political Potential of Americans with Disabilities:
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This dissertation examines whether, commensurate with the pattern of low voter turnout, people with disabilities also exhibit low levels of engagement across many types of political involvement. Then, given the engagement levels of people with disabilities, the dissertation explores the political implications for party politics in the United States. To do so, I conduct statistical analyses of data from the 2006 General Social Survey and the 2012 American National Election Study. In chapter 2, I show that having a disability is associated with an increased likelihood of being generally interested in politics and that people with disabilities are just as likely as people without a disability to follow the national news. I also show disability to be negatively associated with levels of political knowledge. In chapter 3, I find that, relative to people without disabilities, people with disabilities are similarly likely to feel politically efficacious and to engage in participatory activities aside from voting. In fact, having a disability is positively associated with contacting government officials. In chapter 4, I test hypotheses about people with disabilities identifying with the Democratic Party, having a liberal ideological orientation, and voting as such in recent general elections. I find support for these hypotheses and I also find that within the population of people with disabilities, Democratic Party identification is strongest among people with mobility-related disabilities. I conclude first by offering directions for future research. I also suggest that election administration officials could do more in terms of educational outreach to people with disabilities. Democratic

Party officials would also find it in their interest to increase their outreach efforts to this segment of the population.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The 2010 Census estimates that 56.7 million Americans, or 18.7% of the non-institutionalized population, lives with a disability (Brault 2012). This population is important for the study and practice of American politics, particularly as the ranks of people with disabilities rise due to aging and improved measures of disability. Because of its population growth, the political status of people with disabilities is in flux not only in the United States, but also in other countries around the world. In fact, the United Nations Website (accessed Feb. 2014) notes that about 10% of the global population lives with a disability, making them members of the "world's largest minority."

One of the most significant moments in American political history for people with disabilities was the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. The ADA aims to protect the rights and prohibit the discrimination of people with disabilities through five main titles that outline provisions relating to employment, government services, public accommodations, telecommunications, and other miscellaneous provisions. The political context of the passing of the law was one of broad bipartisanship. The Act was passed by a majority of both parties in Congress and subsequently signed into law by Republican President George H.W. Bush. The Senate passed the ADA by a vote of 76 to 8, with 16 abstentions. While each of the 8 Senators who voted against the Act were Republican, 32 Republican Senators supported the Act. Later, the House agreed to the Conference Report by a vote of 377 to 28, with 27 abstentions. Among Republicans in the House, 145 voted in support, 23 voted against, and 8 abstained.

Years later, in a similar bipartisan context, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act was passed in 2008 to "restore the intent and protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990." These significant pieces of legislation regarding the rights and protections of citizens with disabilities demonstrate the potential of a bipartisan coalition around the policy interests of the

people with disabilities. However, recent policy debates suggest that disability protections are now more contested in the American political sphere.

In 2012, for example, the Senate considered ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Signing onto the treaty would have sent a signal to the international community about the extent to which the United States is committed to the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. In the end, despite the personal appeal from former Republican Presidential Nominee and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, the Senate did not obtain the two-thirds majority needed to ratify the treaty. Further, after the House of Representatives moved back into Republican control in January 2015, the House passed a new rule prohibiting the transfer of Social Security funds to the State Disability Insurance (SDI) program, cutting reallocation funding for people with disabilities on SDI. Continuing on this path, in February 2015, Republicans from the House introduced a bill (H.R. 918, S. 499) to prevent people from "double dipping" by receiving both SDI and unemployment benefits at the same time. A letter released by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) shows the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and 70 other national organizations strongly opposed these changes (Lewis 2015).

With each nay vote on the UN disability treaty coming from Republican Senators and a Republican-led House pushing for changes to SDI, a key question in American politics is whether people with disabilities will hold these lawmakers accountable. Although previous research has demonstrated that people with disabilities experience low levels of voter turnout, in this dissertation I argue that people with disabilities are not a wholly un-engaged segment of the American population. Rather, people with disabilities are engaged in politics in many ways similar to people without disabilities, and their political preferences show they are a potentially great resource of the Democratic Party. In the next section I review the existing literature on the voter turnout of people with disabilities.

1.1: The Low Voter Turnout of People with Disabilities

Scholars have documented sizable voter turnout gaps between people with disabilities and those without them. Schur and Kruse (2000) focused on voters with spinal cord injury (SCI) in New Jersey and found people with disabilities were 10% less likely to vote in 1992. Years later, in an analysis of data from the 1998 election, Schur et al. (2002) found a 20% voter turnout gap between those with disabilities and those without them. More recently, using data from the Currently Population Survey (CPS), Hall and Alvarez (2012) report that, relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities were 7% less likely to vote in 2008 and 3% less likely in 2010. Also drawing on data from the CPS and other surveys, including the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS), Schur and Adya (2013) and Schur and Kruse (2014) presented similar findings.

The present project draws on some of the same data that extant research used to establish the disability voter turnout gap and these previously published findings are not reproduced here. However, analysis of the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES) shows people without disabilities reported voting at a rate of 79%, while people with a disability reported a voter turnout rate of 67%, thus resulting in about an 11% voter turnout gap that year. Yet, these data are self-reported and the voter turnout rates are likely exaggerated. Overall, the empirical evidence in the literature on voting behavior suggests people with disabilities to be a group with untapped political potential. Given the gap between the voter turnout of people with disabilities and people without a disability, scholars have examined the relationship between having a disability and a lower likelihood of turning out to vote.

Earlier research identified self-sufficiency as a mechanism behind the lower voting levels of people with disabilities, emphasizing the types of employment and mobility barriers that people with disabilities face (Schur and Kruse 2000). Potential policy solutions that might help with a self-sufficiency problem are, as they suggest, ones that increase the employment of people with

disabilities. This is because "along with enhancing economic self-sufficiency and social integration, employment may also help this important segment of the population become more active citizens" (Schur and Kruse 2000, 586). Subsequent research from Schur et al. (2002) pointed toward a similar direction and, related to self-sufficiency, also called for more research into how "major life-transitions" affect people with disabilities differently than people without disabilities.

In addition to suggesting ways to increase the employment of people with disabilities as well as other aspects of one's life that contribute to self-sufficiency, scholars have also focused on election administration solutions. Schur et al. (2002) revealed that voter turnout might be depressed by actual and expected problems with polling place accessibility. Subsequently, in response to problems with voting technology in 2000, the Help America Vote Act was passed in 2002 to update voting machines. Notably, the Help America Vote Act contains a number of provisions relating to polling place accessibility for people with disabilities, but it needs better enforcement (Schur and Adya 2013). Further, independent of voting accessibility on Election Day, previous research has recommended better options for people with disabilities in terms of convenience voting, convenience registration, and ballot simplification (Hall and Alvarez 2012; Miller and Powell Forthcoming; Schur and Adya 2013; Schur and Kruse 2014).

1.2: Dissertation Contribution

The wealth of literature describing the low voter turnout among people with disabilities has placed a much-needed spotlight on people with disabilities in American politics. Also, the focus of the literature on potential institutional solutions has been constructive and I agree with many of the suggestions that have been offered. However, these policy solutions are not enough and they also tend to focus explicitly on voting. Turnout is just one measure of political engagement and people can and do engage with the political system in many ways beyond voting. In order to reveal other

ways to ensure people with disabilities are fully included in American democracy, I ask a two-fold research question in this dissertation. First I ask whether, commensurate with the pattern of low voter turnout, people with disabilities also exhibit low levels of political engagement across many types of engagement. Second, given the findings regarding the first inquiry, what are the implications for party politics in the United States?

My approach to studying how people with disabilities engage with the political system beyond voting contributes to existing research in three primary ways. First, and directly following from the research question, this project adds perspective to the low voter turnout of people with disabilities by focusing on a variety of other ways people with disabilities might be engaging with American politics. Uncovering whether people with disabilities exhibit low political engagement across the board or whether low engagement is unique to voting should be constructive for efforts to ensure people with disabilities are fully incorporated into American democracy. As will be described in greater detail in the chapter outline section, this dissertation examines some measures of engagement as they relate to disability for the first time, such as political knowledge, for example. Other types of engagement are analyzed with new data or a new empirical approach.

Second, throughout this project I explore the relationship between the resources people with disabilities have and their engagement a bit differently than much of the previous disability political behavior literature. Specifically, rather than drawing on employment status as a key indicator of one's resources, I follow the direction of the literature on American political participation more generally and use household income as a main indicator of the economic resources one has at their disposal. I had intended to conduct mirrored alternate analyses using samples of just respondents who are unemployed, but such analyses are not statistically reliable as only 18 respondents from the 2012 ANES identified as having a disability and being unemployed and 41 respondents in the 2006 GSS identified as similarly situated.

Finally, another primary contribution of this project is analysis of the implications of the political preferences of people with disabilities. As Hall and Alvarez (2012, 9) noted of studies of the political participation of people with disabilities, "such studies can be difficult because there are few studies that examine both disability status and political variables such as party identification and ideology." I consider the partisanship and ideology of people with disabilities in substance and I also account for these important political variables in analyses of other elements of political engagement. The measurement details of all of the variables used in the dissertation are outlined and discussed in each chapter as they are analyzed.

1.3: Importance of the Study

The goal of this research is to tell a comprehensive story of how Americans with disabilities engage with their political system, and the results contribute to the study of American democracy, political behavior, minority political incorporation, and identity politics. Theoretically, by offering more evidence about the engagement of the large, diverse, minority population of persons with disabilities, this research further refines theories of political behavior. Empirically, this project tests how disability interacts with a variety of traditional predictors of behavior and preferences in the United States. As I demonstrate, the results of this project present implications for close elections, where voter turnout matters most, partisan coalition building, and for disability representation and policy in government.

The level of inclusion of people with disabilities reveals the vitality of democracy in any country as it shows whether or not individuals who may have an extraordinarily difficult time functioning in basic daily activities are still able to engage with the political system that governs their society. Scholars have identified disability as a particularly appropriate topic to explore tensions in democracy. Clifford (2012, 211), for example, noted "[d]eliberative democracy harbors a recurrent

tension between full inclusion and intelligible speech. People with profound cognitive disabilities often signify this tension." Further, Emily Russell (2011) advanced a similar argument with regard to the competing values of individualism and equality. She wrote:

> "The paradox of individualism emerges, however, when considered alongside democracy's foundational principle of equality. This equality is centered on the notion of a standardized body among citizens, a concept encapsulated by the Declaration of Independence's proclamation that 'all men are created equal.' The contradiction in the promise of simultaneous equality and individuality reaches its height with disability" (Russell 2011, 179).

Other extant literature about disability identity juxtaposes disability studies and minority politics, bringing together critical theory perspectives from the humanities and empirical perspectives from the social sciences. Research about people who identify as having a disability is important because it contributes to a better understanding of both the identity of people with disabilities and of other identities. Darling (2013, 7), for example, focused on "that part of the self-concept that emerges from the disability-related self definitions that exist within an individual," and found that more severe impairment is associated with a stronger sense of disability identity. The strength of disability identity matters for political incorporation. In their analysis of disability rights Engel and Munger (2003, 241-242) argued that, not unlike the experiences of other minority groups, "the relationship between identity and rights is…*recursive* in the sense that not only does identity determine how and when rights become active, but rights can also shape identity." Identity mediates rights claiming. As I will argue in the subsequent chapters, the present account of disability identity in terms of political engagement and preferences has great consequences for the realization of the rights of people with disabilities.

As a minority, disability is functionally distinct from other types of minorities in that one could, in theory, acquire a disability at any moment due to accident or aging. The consequence of

this is that the potential coalition around people with disabilities is more malleable relative to that of other politically underrepresented minority groups. As Siebers (2008, 5), explained:

> "the presence of disability creates a different picture of identity—one less stable than identities associated with gender, race, sexuality, nation, and class—and therefore presenting the opportunity to rethink how human identity works. I know as a white man that I will not wake up in the morning as a black woman, but I could wake up a quadriplegic."

On the other hand, the experience of having a disability might also be thought of as similar to the experience of other minority identities because of experiences of prejudice and discrimination. In her volume on the semantics of disability, Simi Linton (1998) considered whether ableism parallels racism, sexism, and heterosexualism. Along these lines, Siebers (2008, 81) said "[t]he number-one objective for disability studies, then, is to make disability an object of general knowledge and thereby to awaken political consciousness to the distasteful prejudice called 'ableism.'" This dissertation aims to contribute to that goal insofar as it identifies scenarios of political engagement where there are real differences between people with disabilities and those without them.

1.4: Measuring Disability and Sources of Data

There is no consensus about how to define who has a disability. However, in her seminal work *The Disabled State* (1984), Stone noted that pressures for expanding the concept of disability have come for years from the citizens who seek aid, the workers who make eligibility decisions, and the policy-makers and judges, etc., who set policy about disability programs. Legal definitions in the United States vary by state and also between state law and federal law. Further, international organizations, such as the United Nations, have still other ways of defining the population of people with disabilities. Laws that require a definition of the population of people with disabilities share one commonality; the definition presents disability as a binary concept. That is, either one has a disability

(and is perhaps eligible for benefits under the law) or they are not. In attempts to measure the population of people with disabilities, surveys present a multitude of indicators of disability. Such indicators could be objective or subjective. To measure the population eligible for reasonable accommodation under the ADA, for example, one could ask a question about whether or not the respondent has a record of a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." Responses to this question would yield an objective, binary measure of disability. Disability measures of this sort are not useful for the purposes of this project.

Here I am interested in measuring disability subjectively. A person may have a disability according to their doctor[1] or according to the law, but they may not identify themselves as such. In one study, Watson (2002) found that "[f]or the vast majority of the participants in the study, impairment was not seen as important to their sense of identity or self." Alternatively, a person who identifies as having a disability could fall short of the legal or medical requirements to receive benefits or care. For examining how disability influences political engagement, I define the population of people with disabilities as a group of people that subjectively self-identify as having a disability on a survey and, then, may or may not also identify with communities of people with disabilities.

Some survey questions yield binary, subjective definitions of disability. For instance, many surveys ask just one question to measure disability, often a follow-up question to a response about employment or labor status. Other surveys have questions that allow respondents to specify disability type and severity of disability. An additional contribution of this dissertation is that, when possible, I conceptualize disability continuously. To do so, I present separate analyses of a binary measure of disability and a summary measure of disability, as an indication of severity.

[1]There is a vast literature on subjective and objective definitions of disability in the medical community. A full review of the medical literature on this topic is out the scope of this project.

Because the data required to answer the research questions presented above is unavailable in one dataset, I draw on two random, nationally representative, cross-sectional datasets: the General Social Survey from 2006 and the American National Election Study from 2012. Throughout the dissertation I refer to them as the GSS and the ANES respectively. Further, when each of these datasets contributes to analysis of the same question, I use all relevant data.

A primary reason for relying on two sources of data is that each of the surveys provides different measures of disability. The earlier survey, the GSS, had a disability module in 2006 that asked a series of seven questions about types of impairments:

> Do you have a hearing problem that prevents you from hearing what is said in normal conversation even with a hearing aid?
>
> Do you have a vision problem that prevents you from reading a newspaper even when wearing glasses or contacts?
>
> Do you have any condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying?
>
> Do you have any other physical disability?
>
> Do you have any emotional or mental disability?
>
> Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 3 months or longer, do you have difficulty doing any of the following...learning, remembering or concentrating?
>
> Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 3 months or longer, do you have difficulty doing any of the following…Participating fully in school, housework, or other daily activities?

Using these questions from the GSS I derive a binary operationalization, a summary operationalization, and an operationalization that disaggregates different types of disabilities. For the binary operationalization, each respondent is coded as either having answered yes to any one of the disability type questions or answering yes to none of them. The summary operationalization of disability sums the yes responses and codes respondents as having zero, one, two, or three or more

disabilities. The binary operationalization of disability from the 2006 GSS shows people with disabilities to comprise about 30% of the population (Disability N = 815), suggesting that people with disabilities are a fertile group for study.

Alternatively, the 2012 ANES provides a more recent measure of disability, but questions about disability types were not asked. The ANES provides one binary measure of disability, only capturing respondents who report being permanently disabled in response to a question about employment status. That is, the ANES disability measure does not include any person that might be less than permanently disabled. The disability operationalization from the ANES finds about 7% of the sample to have a disability (Disability N = 387), which is surely an underestimate of the population of people with disabilities as a whole. Given that the response rate for each of the surveys is high, the variation of frequency of disability across the datasets is likely a function of question wording.

1.5: Chapter Outline

In this introductory chapter, I have described how my approach to the study of people with disabilities' political engagement and preferences contributes to existing literature. I have also articulated why this research is important. In the following chapters, I empirically examine how having a disability affects a variety of factors of political engagement aside from voting.

In the next chapter, I begin the empirical analysis by exploring whether, commensurate with the pattern of low voting levels among people with disabilities, people with disabilities are also uninterested in politics, disengaged from news media, and similarly lacking political knowledge. I show that having a disability is associated with an increased likelihood of being generally interested in politics and that people with disabilities are just as likely as people without a disability to follow the national news. I also show disability to be negatively associated with political knowledge.

In chapter 3, I ask whether people with disabilities exhibit feelings of political efficacy and engage in political activities other than voting. I find that relative to people without disabilities, people with disabilities are similarly likely to feel politically efficacious and to engage in participatory activities aside from voting. In fact, as compared to people without a disability, people with disabilities are significantly more inclined to contact government officials.

In chapter 4, I turn to examine the political preferences of people with disabilities by assessing their partisanship, ideology, and vote choice. I test hypotheses about people with disabilities identifying with the Democratic Party, having a liberal ideological orientation, and voting as such in recent general elections. I find support for these hypotheses and I also find that within the population of people with disabilities, Democratic Party identification is strongest among people with mobility-related disabilities.

Finally, I conclude in chapter 5 by discussing the implications of this project, both for future political science research and for disability politics in practice. As I have foreshadowed above, a key finding of this project is that people with disabilities are a very large constituency of the Democratic Party that is not voting at high rates, perhaps due to their low levels of political knowledge. While in past decades legislative efforts to support people with disabilities have had strong bipartisan support, the political context of disability is different now. Despite their low voter turnout, people with disabilities are a large and growing group of engaged citizens that the Democratic Party would find in its interest to seriously organize.

CHAPTER 2: POLITICAL INTEREST, NEWS, AND KNOWLEDGE

As described in chapter 1, previous research has shown people with disabilities differ from those without disabilities in that they have an impairment and are less likely to vote. However, research about other types of political engagement by people with disabilities is limited. In this chapter I ask whether, commensurate with their pattern of low voter turnout, people with disabilities are similarly uninterested in politics, disengaged from news media, and similarly lacking political knowledge. To answer this question I draw on data from the 2012 ANES. The findings from this chapter shed light on how disability affects what we might think of as the first steps of political engagement: interest, attentiveness, and information.

2.1: Political Interest Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

Early political engagement research found interest in politics to play a key role in a person's psychological attachment to politics (Campbell et al. 1960). Lewis-Beck et al. (2008,92) replicated this finding using data from 2004 and found voter turnout among those very interested in the campaign to be over 40% higher than those not much interested in the campaign. In another canonical study of American political participation, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) extended existing research with their model of civic voluntarism. The civic voluntarism model relies on resources, psychological engagement with politics, and recruitment networks to predict participation and this model does so very well. As one component of psychological engagement with politics, they also find political interest to be a significant indicator of political participation. That is, people with higher political interest are more likely to participate. However, as they note, political interest as a measure of "*wanting* to take part…is also related to *being able* to take part" (Verba, Schlozman, and

Brady 1995, 494, emphasis in original). I use political interest in this project to examine whether people with disabilities *want* to take part.

Existing research about the political interest of people with disabilities is sparse. In one recent study, Schur and Adya (2013) examined the effect of disability on three measures of political interest. Drawing on data from 2006 and 2007, they found people with disabilities to be significantly less likely than people without a disability to follow public affairs regularly (Schur and Adya 2013). They also found disability to have a negative relationship with general political interest, but this relationship is not statistically significant. Finally, they analyzed data from the 2008 and 2010 Voting Supplement to Current Population Survey and found people with disabilities to be significantly less likely to discuss politics than people without a disability. Taken together, these results suggest people with disabilities are less interested in politics than people without a disability. The funnel model from Campbell et al. (1960) and supported later by Lewis-Beck et al. (2008) suggested strength of partisanship to be the most important factor determining whether or not people are interested in politics. Yet, the analysis from Schur and Adya (2013) does not include partisanship and ideological factors known to influence interest in politics, so it is useful to examine both together.

Bivariate Data

Here I measure political interest by using responses to three questions from the ANES. The first question asks whether people have been paying attention to what is going on in politics. Another question asks specifically about whether people have been paying attention to campaigns. The third question asks about whether people discuss politics with their friends and family. All question wording and coding information is available in Appendix A. Because existing research about the level of political interest of people with disabilities did not account for political party identification, a factor known to significantly influence whether or not people are interested in politics, I offer hypotheses for the data that depart from Schur and Adya (2013).

First, the bivariate relationships between disability and the three measures of interest in politics used in this study are not strong. As can be seen in Table 2.1, I find people with disabilities are not significantly less likely than people without a disability to display political interest generally or campaign interest specifically. I also find that people with a disability are relatively *more* likely than people without a disability to discuss politics with their friends and family. Although the finding about discussing politics is statistically significant at the bivariate level, the differences between people with a disability and people without a disability are small, with only about a 6% gap. Thus, contrary to previous literature, I hypothesize that people with disabilities exhibit interest in politics at levels that correspond with their other individual-level characteristics. Using the most recent data available and accounting for previously omitted factors related to political interest, I offer a new assessment of whether having a disability significantly deters one from being interested in politics. To do so I test the following hypothesis:

H2.1: People with disabilities are interested in politics at levels commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics.

Table 2.1: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and Interest in Politics

Political Interest	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N**
No Disability	31	22	48	5524
Has Disability	27	22	51	387
Campaign Interest	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N**
No Disability	17	42	41	5524
Has Disability	14	47	38	387
Discussed Campaign	**Yes**	**No**		**N**
No Disability*	30	70		5116
Has Disability	36	64		362

Source: American National Election Study, 2012

Notes: Cells report weighted percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

Statistically significance differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted: * $p<0.05$

2.2: News Attentiveness Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

Interest in politics and news media exposure are related concepts of political engagement that we should expect to function similarly. However, being interested in politics and following through on such interest by paying attention to the national news regularly are distinct behaviors. Previous research has demonstrated attentiveness to news media to be positively related to political participation. When people are exposed to news media, they tend to take in information through a partisan perceptual filter (Iyengar and Kinder 1987), discounting dissonant views (Zaller 1992). Through this cognitive process, existing views are re-enforced. Thus, as Prior (2007) has found, news followers have stable preferences and are increasingly more likely to vote than people who prefer to disengage from political news.

Given the low voter turnout of people with disabilities, I analyze the first steps of engagement here and examine whether people with disabilities are following the news. Regarding access to media, people with disabilities experience many barriers and some disabilities are more prohibitive for news access than others. Consider, for instance, that people with a hearing disability are unable to listen to the news on the radio and people with a vision disability are unable see the news on television.[2] In terms of Internet access, Vicente and Lopez (2010) showed a wide digital divide between people with disabilities and people without a disability, which they explained by the expense of, and problems with, adaptive technology. They also showed that once people with disabilities do gain access they "use pretty much the same online applications as others" (Vicente and Lopez, 2010, 60). Schur and Adya (2013) supported this finding and showed people with disabilities to be just as likely as people without a disability to join an Internet political group. In this

[2] There are many types of disabilities and a variety of corresponding options for assisted access to media. The American National Election Study does not ask survey questions about the specific assisted options people with disabilities might use. A full discussion of types of assisted access here is beyond the scope of this project.

chapter, I first examine whether people with disabilities are interested in politics and then, I assess the extent to which people with disabilities follow the national news through four mediums

Bivariate Data

Extant research has not focused extensively on the relationship between disability and news attentiveness. I treat interest in politics as a precursor to following national news and, consistent with existing literature, I expect the relationship between disability and these behaviors to be similar. To measure the degree to which people with disabilities engage with the news media I draw on four responses to questions about whether respondents pay attention to national politics on the Internet, television, the radio, and in newspapers. Table 2.2 displays the bivariate relationship between disability and news attentiveness. As can be seen, I find the relationship between disability status and following national news to be weak. Table 2.2 shows people with disabilities are not significantly different from people without a disability in terms of their attentiveness to national news using the Internet, television, or the newspaper. I also find that having a disability decreases one's likelihood of listening to the radio for national news. This relationship is statistically significant, but an attentiveness gap of only about 5% is not likely to remain after controlling for other factors. Therefore, because bivariate data suggests news attentiveness differences between people with disabilities and people without a disability are small, I test the following hypothesis:

H2.2: People with disabilities follow national news at levels commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics.

Table 2.2: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and News Attentiveness

National News Attentiveness	Low	Medium	High	N
Follows Internet News				
No Disability	42	32	26	4093
Has Disability	42	33	25	229
Follows Television News				
No Disability	27	35	38	4529
Has Disability	26	34	40	353
Follows Radio News				
No Disability*	37	32	31	3365
Has Disability	42	32	26	194
Follows Newspaper News				
No Disability	40	34	26	3183
Has Disability	37	33	30	214

Source: American National Election Study, 2012

Notes: Cells report weighted percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

Statistically significance differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted: * $p<0.05$

2.3: Political Knowledge Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

The functioning of democracy is premised on the ability of the citizenry to offer opinions that shape the direction of society. It is not surprising that, similar to political interest and news attentiveness, political knowledge has been found to play an important role in political engagement. In their civic voluntarism model, Verba et al. (1995) treated political knowledge as the information one requires in order to become engaged in politics and then to participate in politics. The authors also explained that political engagement factors are dependent upon the resources one has, which are not evenly dispersed throughout the electorate. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) showed people with more resources have more knowledge. They also showed more politically knowledgeable people to be more likely to participate in ways consistent with their beliefs than people who have less political knowledge. When considering political knowledge differences among sub-groups of the population, existing literature has not examined people with disabilities directly.

Above I explained that some types of disabilities are more prohibitive for access to news media than others and the same is the case for acquiring political knowledge. We should expect people with learning disabilities, for instance, to experience great barriers to knowledge about politics that are independent of access to news. Although there is vast literature about disability and education generally, only one study considers the dynamic between disability and political knowledge. Schur et al. (2002) used data from 1998 to analyze the voter turnout of people with disabilities and they found the low levels of voting among people with disabilities that year to be concentrated among the elderly. As a mechanism driving voter turnout, they suggest: "[d]isability may, in a sense, 'rob' age of some of its positive effects on voter turnout by restricting increases in social contact, political knowledge, skills, and/or psychological involvement" (Schur et al. 2002, 185). In this chapter I assess whether people with disabilities do indeed have low political knowledge

by analyzing an index of political knowledge based on seven political knowledge items asked in the ANES.

Bivariate Data

Table 2.3 presents results of a bivariate analysis of disability and political knowledge. For viewing ease, political knowledge levels are presented as low, medium, or high. However, the statistical test conducted was on political knowledge as a continuous variable. As can be seen, the contrast between people with disabilities and people without a disability is stark and statistically significant. People without a disability are about 10% more likely to exhibit high political knowledge than people with a disability. Accordingly, I hypothesize that:

H2.3: Relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities exhibit low levels of political knowledge.

Table 2.3: Bivariate Relationship Between Disability and Political Knowledge

Political Knowledge	Low	Medium	High	N
No Disability*	12	39	36	5109
Has Disability	25	43	26	361

Source: American National Election Study, 2012
Notes: Cells report weighted percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage.
Statistically significance differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted: * $p<0.05$

2.4: Model Specification

I include a set of the same control variables in each of the regression models that evaluate the hypotheses analyzed in this chapter, *H2.1*, *H2.2*, and *H2.3*. The variables relate to demographics and political engagement. It is noted, though, that political interest, news attentiveness, and political knowledge are related measures of political engagement. Therefore, although multicollinearity is not a concern,[3] for comparison purposes I also include alternate models that omit the political engagement factors. In this section I describe why it is necessary to account for each of the controls I use in order to determine how having a disability influences one's interest in politics, news media attentiveness, and level of political knowledge.

Demographic factors have consistently been shown to influence many elements of political engagement. In the models predicting levels of political interest, news attentiveness, and political knowledge I control for age, gender, marital status, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

People of different ages vary among many factors in life, partly due to generational differences, and people grow and change over time. Being engaged in politics is no exception. Research has shown younger generations have lower political interest, news media attentiveness, and political knowledge, than older generations. As described above, Prior (2007) attributed voter turnout and political knowledge gaps to differences in media preferences. Wattenberg (2012) analyzed age and voting explicitly and found young adults (people 18-30 years old) to be significantly more politically apathetic than older adults. In most advanced, industrial democracies, he found, young people have failed to develop a news-attentiveness habit, choosing instead to follow topics relating to sports, science, and the arts. When young adults choose to tune out from politics they exhibit low levels of political knowledge and an accompanying low likelihood of other types of political engagement (Wattenberg 2012). Thus, I expect age to be positively related to political

[3] The highest mean variance inflation factor among the models estimated in this chapter is 1.26, for the first model predicting political knowledge.

interest, media attentiveness, and to political knowledge.[4]

As with age, research has shown one's gender to influence one's relationship with politics. Bennett and Bennett (1989) showed women to be less interested in politics than men, which they largely attribute to sex role socialization. Years later, Verba et al. (1997) supported this finding with regard to interest in national politics and they found no significant differences between men and women in terms of interest in local politics. Verba et al. (1997) also found men to experience a greater likelihood of following the news and to exhibit higher levels of political knowledge than women. Relatedly, research shows marital status influences political engagement. Verba et al. (1997), for example, found married people to be more interested in politics relative to unmarried people. Other scholars have shown married people tend to engage with politics together (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 2014). When considered alongside disability, I expect both being male and being married to exert positive effects on the elements of political engagement analyzed in this chapter.

In addition to age, gender, and marital status, I also account for one's race and ethnicity in the models analyzing the relationship between disability, political interest, news attentiveness, and political knowledge. To do so, I include two variables: one measures whether or not the respondent identified as Black and the other measures whether or not the respondent identified as Hispanic.[5]

Regarding the political interest of Blacks relative to Non-Blacks, previous research shows the political interest of Blacks to peak when there is a Black candidate on the ballot. In her analysis of the 1984 elections, when Jesse Jackson ran for President in the Democratic primary for the first time, Tate (1991, 1166) found "[t]he overwhelming majority of Blacks (82%) expressed moderate-to strong interest in 1984 political campaigns." Further, Coulter et al. (2014) found African American

[4] Age and disability are not strongly related in the datasets used in this project; their correlation is .1003 using the 2012 ANES and 0.271 using the 2006 GSS.

[5] I use the term "Hispanic" here, rather than "Latino," because the surveys used in this project used the term "Hispanic" in its question wording.

political interest to grow at a higher rate relative to that of Caucasians during the course of the 2008 presidential campaign, when Barack Obama was running for the first time. However, scholarship about the political knowledge of Blacks is thin. Using data from 1996 and 2000, Prior (2005) found African Americans to exhibit significantly low levels of political knowledge relative to people who did not identify as African American. Recent literature has also shown the digital divide between African-Americans and Whites, particularly with regard to Internet access, is still quite large (Prieger and Hu 2008) As a whole, existing literature indicates that although Black political interest may peak when Black candidates are running, the political interest gain may not necessarily translate into long-term psychological attachments to politics due to limitations in media access. Because the data used in chapter is from 2012 when a Black candidate was on the ballot, I control for whether or not the respondent identifies as Black.

I also account for how one's levels of political interest, news media attentiveness, and political knowledge may vary according to their Hispanic status. Extant research has shown Latinos experience low levels of political engagement (Uhlaner et al. 1989) and, similar to Blacks, are mobilized by co-ethnic candidates (Barreto 2007). Concerning political knowledge specifically, Prior (2005) shows Latinos exhibit low levels of political knowledge relative to Non-Latinos, but this relationship is not statistically significant. Furthermore, other research has shown Mexican Americans specifically and Hispanics generally experience a similar digital divide with regard to Internet access as Blacks (Fairlie 2004; Prieger and Hu 2008). Thus in the analyses conducted here, I expect being Hispanic to be associated with a negative effect on each of the measures of engagement analyzed in this chapter.

The last demographic factor I control for in the models of disability political engagement conducted here is socioeconomic status. In a political system based on conflict of interests, scholars have repeatedly shown that most political deliberation and participation takes place among those

with higher socioeconomic status and is about their interests (Schattschneider 1960; Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Schlozman et al. 2012; Leighley and Nagler 2014). I use two indicators of socioeconomic status here: levels of education and household income. Relative to people with lower levels of income and education, I expect people with higher levels to possess the resources required to be interested in politics, to have access and then be attentive to the news, and finally as result, to accumulate higher levels of political knowledge.

In addition to demographic factors, I expect measures of political engagement to be related to one another and I offer models that control for several such measures in each analysis in order to isolate the effect of disability and, as mentioned above, I also display results without measures of engagement. The models predicting political interest, news media attentiveness, and political knowledge have two measures of political engagement in common: strength of partisanship and strength of ideology. Because people with stronger views care more about political outcomes, we should expect stronger partisans and stronger ideologues to exhibit more interest in politics. partisanship or moderate ideology Further, as choices for entertainment have increased, the news-watching audience has gotten less moderate, exacerbating existing inequalities in both political involvement and political knowledge (Prior 2007). For these reasons, I account for both partisanship and ideology in the present analysis of the political engagement of people with disabilities. Also, as noted previously, the dependent variables of interest in this project build on one another. Hence, in the models predicting news media attentiveness, I also include political interest as a control variable. Likewise, in the models predicting political knowledge I include the measures of political interest and news media attentiveness.

2.5: Multiple Regression Results

Table 2.4 displays the results of the analysis regarding *H2.1,* that people with disabilities experience interest in politics at levels commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics. Each panel in Table 2.4 presents the results for three differing measures of political interest. In the first model, which predicts general interest in politics, I find *H2.1* is not supported. As can be seen, I find people with disabilities to be significantly *more* interested in politics than people without a disability. This finding is even stronger in the alternate specification where partisanship and ideological strength are removed. However, the results from Models 2 and 3 (as well as their alternate specifications) show support for *H2.1*. I find disability status is not a significant predictor of campaign interest or whether or not people discuss politics with those closest to them.

Table 2.4: Interest in Politics

	Political Interest (1)	Political Interest (1a)	Campaign Interest (2)	Campaign Interest (2a)	Discuss With Family (3)	Discuss With Family (3a)
Disability	0.126*	0.159**	0.003	0.004	0.030	0.018
	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Age	0.073***	0.080***	0.046***	0.050***	0.011***	0.013***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Female	-0.300***	-0.289***	-0.078***	-0.085***	-0.020	-0.020
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Married	0.105***	0.120***	0.035	0.046*	0.005	-0.000
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Black	0.138**		0.237***	0.273***	0.064**	0.086***
	(0.046)	0.160)***	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.020)	(0.019)
		(0.044)				
Hispanic	-0.017	-0.035	0.054	0.034	-0.052**	-0.048*
	(0.047)	(0.046)	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Education	0.146***	0.183***	0.077***	0.100***	0.058***	0.073***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Household Income	0.004	0.004	0.004**	0.003*	0.008***	0.007***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Partisanship Strength	0.082***	--	0.091***	--	0.030***	--
	(0.015)		(0.009)		(0.006)	
Ideology Strength	0.018***	--	0.127***	--	0.065***	--
	(0.016)		(0.010)		(0.007)	
Constant	1.830***	2.230***	1.128***	1.536***		
	(0.069)	(0.571)	(0.044)	(0.037)		
R^2/ Pseudo R^2	0.155	0.124	0.169	0.099	0.096	0.066
Log Likelihood					-2367.452	-3007.073
N	5140	5595	5139	5594	4720	5245

Source: 2012 American National Election Study

Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses except those for Model 3 and 3a, which report marginal effects and standard errors in parentheses. Weighted by weight_full variable.

Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Turning to news media attentiveness, Table 2.5 shows the results of eight models predicting the extent to which respondents follow national news in the newspaper, on the Internet, on television, and on the radio. The second hypothesis (*H2.2*) tested in this chapter suggests people with disabilities follow national news at levels commensurate with other individual-level factors that typically determine political engagement. In each of the analyses of national news attentiveness, I find strong support for *H2.2*. That is, people with disabilities are just as likely to follow the national news as people without a disability.

Table 2.5: National News Attentiveness

	Newspaper News (1)	Newspaper News (1a)	Internet News (2)	Internet News (2a)	TV News (3)	TV News (3a)	Radio News (4a)	Radio News (4a)
Disability	0.020	0.100	-0.081	0.019	-0.033	-0.002	-0.108	-0.105
	(0.072)	(0.078)	(0.068)	(0.079)	(0.049)	(0.060)	(0.079)	(0.086)
Age	0.040***	0.075***	-0.011*	0.035***	0.050***	0.089***	0.012*	0.051***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Female	-0.048	-0.162***	-0.099***	-0.268***	0.041	-0.120***	-0.065	-0.215***
	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.037)
Married	-0.045	-0.002	0.046	0.100**	-0.074**	0.003	0.029	0.105*
	(0.037)	(0.41)	(0.033)	(0.038)	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.037)	(0.041)
Black	0.104	0.208***	0.078	0.133*	0.141***	0.198***	0.151**	0.183**
	(0.055)	(0.058)	(0.047)	(0.054)	(0.038)	(0.045)	(0.054)	(0.058)
Hispanic	0.032	0.134*	0.135**	0.082	0.037	-0.033	0.093	0.067
	(0.059)	(0.065)	(0.048)	(0.056)	(0.039)	(0.048)	(0.055)	(0.062)
Education	0.049**	0.157***	0.086***	0.192***	0.003	0.123***	0.057***	0.152***
	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.018)
Household Income	-0.004	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.001	-0.000	-0.004	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.063)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Partisanship Strength	0.040*	--	0.029	--	0.067***	--	0.014	--
	(0.017)		(0.015)		(0.013)		(0.018)	
Ideology Strength	0.016	--	0.061***	--	0.029*	--	0.121***	--
	(0.018)		(0.017)		(0.014)		(0.019)	
Political Interest	0.493***	--	0.591***	--	0.629***	--	0.500***	--
	(0.017)		(0.015)		(0.012)		(0.017)	
Constant	0.659***	1.923***	0.453***	2.118***	0.065***	2.277***	0.725***	2.248***
	(0.090)	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.071)	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.091)	(0.077)
R^2	0.296	0.081	0.355	0.064	0.468	0.097	0.295	0.059
N	2998	3221	3898	4108	4250	4613	3156	3372

Source: American National Election Study 2012

Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors.
Weighted by weight_full variable.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Finally, regarding political knowledge, I hypothesized at the outset that people with disabilities would exhibit low levels of political knowledge relative to people without a disability (*H2.3*). As Table 2.6 shows, after controlling for demographic and other factors relating to political engagement, *H2.3* is strongly supported. In the alternate model specification, without political engagement factors, *H2.3* is also strongly supported. Having a disability does have a significant, negative effect on knowledge about politics.

Table 2.6: Political Knowledge

	M1	M2
Disability	-0.368*** (0.082)	-0.427*** (0.080)
Age	0.083*** (0.006)	0.114*** (0.006)
Female	-0.314*** 0.039	-0.444*** 0.036
Married	-0.076 (0.042)	-0.013 (0.042)
Black	-0.456*** (0.063)	-0.412*** (0.060)
Hispanic	-0.329*** (0.065)	-0.349*** (0.063)
Education	0.289*** (0.018)	0.386*** (0.019)
Household Income	0.033*** (0.003)	0.033*** (0.003)
Strength of Partisanship	-0.026 (0.020)	--
Strength of Ideology	0.125*** 0.022)	--
Political Interest	0.233*** 0.023)	--
Follows News	0.021*** (0.006)	--
Constant	1.769*** (0.102)	2.363*** (0.078)
R^2	0.293	0.264
N	4659	5204

Source: American National Election Study 2012
Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses. Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

2.6: Discussion

With the aim of analyzing how people with disabilities engage with the American political system, in this chapter I assessed whether corresponding to their low voter turnout, people with disabilities are also uninterested in politics, disengaged from news media, and similarly lacking political knowledge. Analysis of data from the 2012 American National Election Study reveals that, as we might expect given the low levels of voting, people with disabilities experience low levels of political knowledge. However, political interest and news media attentiveness as indicators of political engagement do not present similar results.

Bivariate relationships between disability and indicators of political interest suggested just small differences between people with disabilities and people without a disability. After conducting regression analyses, I find people with disabilities were just as interested in the 2012 campaign and just as likely to discuss politics with their friends and family as people without a disability. The analysis also shows having a disability to be associated with a positive likelihood of being interested in politics. Schur and Adya (2013) found no significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability with regard to political interest and the present study indicates a positive relationship. This finding may be explained by differences in disability measures. Here I use a measure that is based on employment status, and people who experience permanent disability may display political interest that stems from a more specific interest in disability unemployment benefits. Future research should work to disentangle the political interest of people with different types of disabilities as well people with work-precluding disabilities as opposed to people with disabilities that are working.

Corresponding to the bivariate finding regarding political interest and disability, the bivariate data regarding national news attentiveness also suggests small differences between those with a disability and those without a disability. Regression analysis of this relationship finds people with

disabilities to be just as likely to follow the national news as people without a disability. Past research has illuminated a rather wide disability digital divide. The findings from this project do not suggest the presence of a similar divide regarding news media attentiveness after controlling for factors that may influence access, such as socioeconomic status. I find disability does not determine whether or not one is up to date on the American political scene, whether using the radio, television, newspapers, or the Internet. This finding is encouraging for the future as it indicates people with disabilities can engage (or be motivated to engage) with American politics through the news media.

Turning to the analysis of political knowledge, the findings are less encouraging. Bivariate data shows people with disabilities to exhibit significantly low levels of political knowledge than people without disabilities, and this relationship is supported after controlling for demographic and other political engagement factors. As in the case of political interest, this finding may be a result of the way disability was measured in this project. It is likely that people with permanent disabilities that respond as such to an employment question are especially less likely than other people with disabilities to exhibit high levels of political and other types of knowledge. Hence, this barrier may contribute to their employment status. My hope is that future studies with more detailed measures of disability will be able to show whether the low political knowledge of people with disabilities uncovered here is an accurate reflection of the general population of people with disabilities or not. If it is not, as I suspect, there may be some hope that educational media campaigns targeted to people with disabilities and their caregivers could encourage more people with disabilities to exercise the franchise. Such an educational campaign might also focus on how people with disabilities might take advantage of new developments in election administration of the sort Schur and Kruse (2014) suggest.

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL EFFICACY AND PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

In the previous chapter, I presented the first set of evidence that the political engagement of people with disabilities is not low among all types of engagement as it is in the case of voting. Rather, people with disabilities are just as interested in politics and just as likely to follow the national news as people without a disability. In this chapter, I analyze how having a disability affects another psychological aspect of engagement: political efficacy, and I also examine disability and the likelihood of engaging in participatory activities aside from voting.

3.1: Political Efficacy Expectations

Previous Literature

In an early study, Campbell et al. (1954, 187) identified efficacy as "the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, i.e. that it is worthwhile to perform one's civic duties. It is the feeling that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about change." Political efficacy then evolved as conceptually two-dimensional: internal and external. Lane (1959, 149) referred to internal efficacy as "the image of the self as effective" and external efficacy as "the image of democratic government as responsive to the people." Scholars have since presented empirical evidence supporting a two-dimensional notion of efficacy (Converse 1972; Coleman and Davis 1972; Balch 1974). The more politically efficacious one feels, the more likely they are to engage with politics. Both dimensions of efficacy are analyzed in this study.

While political efficacy has been studied extensively in political science, psychology, and other related disciplines, research about the efficacy of people with disabilities is sparse. Using evidence from interviews of people with SCI, Schur (1998) found the most politically active people to report higher levels of both personal control over their lives and external efficacy, but the

majority of those interviewed did not report being highly politically active. This finding suggests that feeling efficacious is related to a sense of personal control. In a related study about blindness and locus of control, Papadopoulos et al. (2010) found blindness to contribute to a low sense of self-esteem. While people with disabilities vary in terms of the severity of their disability, achieving a high sense of personal control and high self-esteem is an unquestionably more difficult task for them relative to people without disabilities. We should expect people with disabilities to feel a lower sense of control because disability is not the result of choice and people with disabilities often rely on others for aspects of daily functioning. Yet, the conclusions we can draw from Schur (1998) are tentative for a few reasons. First, the study was limited to disabled people with SCI using a relatively small sample size. Second, Schur did not use a statistical model of differences in political involvement that controlled for some key factors known to influence levels of political involvement.

Later, Schur et al. (2003) analyzed both internal and external efficacy using a nationally representative survey, stratified to include a large sample of people with various types of disabilities. In this article, the researchers hypothesized that:

> "people with disabilities may have lower levels of political efficacy because of discrimination, prejudice, and negative social constructions. They may perceive themselves as less able to perform various politically relevant skills…and they may believe that they have less influence in politics and do not receive equal treatment from public officials."

Indeed, they found that people with disabilities have significantly lower levels of both external and internal political efficacy. Additionally, the binary measure of disability they test is found to be a significant, negative predictor of external efficacy, but not a significant predictor of internal efficacy. Schur et al. (2003) also tested which disability types best explained the efficacy levels of people with disabilities. They found people who "consider themselves to have a disability" and those with mobility disability in particular to be significant predictors of the internal efficacy levels of people

with disabilities. They report no significant findings with regard to external political efficacy. While controlling for some factors relating to political participation, which they call "social recruitment networks," these findings omit other important measures likely to predict levels of political efficacy such as interest in politics, strength of partisanship, and strength of political ideology.

Bivariate Data

Because previous studies have omitted key engagement variables, which I would expect to explain feelings of political efficacy, I offer different hypotheses for the data. As Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show, the bivariate relationships between disability and feelings of efficacy show differences between people with a disability and people without a disability to be quite minimal, though statistically significant in some cases. These differences are not nearly as vast as, for example, differences observed between those with higher versus lower education attainment. Relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities experience about an 8% gap in achieving high levels of political efficacy as compared to about a 24% gap between people with less than a high school education and people with a graduate degree. Thus, contrary to existing literature, I hypothesize that people with disabilities exhibit efficacy levels that are actually commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics. Using the most recent data available, alternative operationalizations of disability, and accounting for other relevant factors related to feeling efficacious, I re-evaluate whether having a disability influences a person's level of political efficacy. Specifically, I test the following series of hypotheses:

H3.1: People with disabilities exhibit levels of internal efficacy commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics.

H3.2: People with disabilities exhibit levels of external efficacy commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics.

To reveal more about the political engagement of people with disabilities, I test *H3.1* and *H3.2* in three ways, corresponding to alternative operationalizations of disability. I test the relationship

between having a disability and feelings of both internal and external efficacy using binary measures of disability from the GSS and the ANES, a summary measure of disability from the GSS, and using the GSS I disaggregate the disability into to the seven types of disabilities discussed in chapter 1.

Table 3.1: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and Internal Efficacy

From 2012 ANES	Low	Medium	High	N
No Disability*	13	61	26	5491
Has Disability	16	66	18	385
From 2006 GSS	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N**
No Disability*	14	46	40	931
Has Disability	20	44	36	446
No Vision Disability*	15	46	39	1307
Has Vision Disability	26	46	28	69
No Hearing Disability	15	46	39	1293
Has Hearing Disability	25	43	33	83
No Physical Disability*	15	46	39	1131
Has Physical Disability	20	44	36	246
No Other Physical Disability	15	46	39	1234
Has Other Physical Disability	20	42	38	142
No Emotional Disability*	15	46	39	1297
Has Emotional Disability	24	44	32	77
No Learning Disability*	15	46	40	1243
Has Learning Disability	26	46	28	132
No Difficulty Daily Activities*	15	46	39	1230
Has Difficulty Daily Activities	22	44	33	144

Notes:
Cells report weighed percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage
Statistically significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted: *$p<0.05$

Table 3.2: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and External Efficacy

From 2012 ANES	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N**
No Disability	46	44	10	5113
Has Disability	48	42	10	362
From 2006 GSS	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N**
	42	15	43	930
Has Disability	52	13	35	449
No Vision Disability	45	14	41	1309
Has Vision Disability	49	14	37	69
No Hearing Disability	44	15	41	1295
Has Hearing Disability	58	10	32	83
No Physical Disability*	43	14	43	1130
Has Physical Disability	54	15	31	249
No Other Physical Disability	45	14	41	1235
Has Other Physical Disability	46	15	39	143
No Emotional Disability	45	15	41	1300
Has Emotional Disability	50	12	38	76
No Learning Disability*	45	14	41	1244
Has Learning Disability	47	18	34	133
No Difficulty Daily Activities*	44	14	42	1232
Has Difficulty Daily Activities	55	16	30	144

Notes:
Cells report weighed percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage
Statistically significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted: * $p<0.05$

3.2: Participation Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

Canonical rational choice theory (Downs 1957) posited that citizens decide whether or not to engage in political participation after reviewing perceived costs and benefits. The basic Downsian (1957) model of voting, refined later by Riker and Ordeshook (1968), is denoted as: $R = pB - C + D$, where

R: the return one receives on voting

p: the probability one's vote is pivotal for the result of the election

B: the utility one gets when their vote is pivotal

C: the costs one experiences in order to vote

D: the benefits one receives from voting

Other models of political participation have revealed psychological factors to be a crucial part of D, the benefits one receives from voting. As described in chapter 2, Campbell et al. (1960) incorporated psychological elements such as interest in politics in their funnel model of Americans' voting behavior and Verba et al. (1995) considered psychological engagement with politics a vital component of their model of civic voluntarism explaining the participatory inequities within the American public. Neither of these seminal works on participation in America evaluated disability explicitly.

However, even after considering one's psychological engagement with politics, including feelings of external and internal efficacy, existing theories of political participation do not adequately explain the engagement of people with disabilities. This is because the calculus for people with disabilities is fundamentally different; they experience a higher C term, and not just for the specific activity of voting. Consider, for example, the case of a person with a severe mental disability. This person may not even be able to reach the point of deciding whether or not to engage with the American political system because their capacity to reason is impaired. In cases such as this, a

person's lack of engagement is a result of personal circumstance with over-burdensome costs to participating, rather than a result of choice. But, a person in such a circumstance is also not likely to be able to answer survey questions. Let us turn, then, to the case of a person with a disability that exhibits a higher level of functioning. Still this person experiences higher costs to voting than a person without a disability at all. Particularly, a person with a disability is more likely to require an accommodation in order to engage in a whole host of daily activities. Because these types of barriers, which cannot be described with great detail here for all types of disabilities, increase people with disabilities' cost (*C*) of political participation, we should expect a person with a disability to require something more than the person without a disability in order to achieve the same rates of engaging in participatory activities. Expressed in terms of the Downsian model of voting, in order to participate, people with disabilities should require a greater probability of being a pivotal voter or they should require greater benefits from voting, e.g. a greater mobilization effort in order to motivate people with disabilities to participate. In chapter 1, I described the low voter turnout of people with disabilities. In this chapter I examine four other types of participatory activities alongside disability in order to examine the degree to which members of this minority group are mobilized to some extent.

There is some existing research about the political participation of Americans with disabilities. Schur et al (2005) used a dependent variable for political participation that includes eight types of political activities. The authors found low participation among people with disabilities to be concentrated among the elderly. However, as with previous studies examining feelings of efficacy, the authors omit key explanatory factors. Exposure to political news, strength of partisanship and strength of ideology all tend to be stronger and better developed with age. These factors are also all highly related to choosing to participate in political activities. The most current scholarship to date on the topic is from Schur and Adya (2013). They examined different datasets, as I do here, to

analyze the political participation of Americans with disabilities and found people with a disability to be significantly less likely to vote. They also showed that differences between people with disabilities and people without a disability diminish once controlling for education (Schur and Adya 2013). However, as in Schur et al. (2005), the Schur and Adya (2013) study omitted news exposure, partisanship, and ideology as key control variables. In their report to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, Hall and Alvarez (2012) also provided recent data showing people with disabilities to be less likely to participate in politics relative to those without a disability, though they did not provide regression analysis in their report.

Using this literature as a point of departure, I examine whether people with disabilities are engaged in politics by analyzing participation in four types of political activities and presenting analyses that include variables omitted from previous studies.

Bivariate Data

As in the case of feeling politically efficacious, I offer a re-examination of existing theory about the political engagement of people with disabilities. As Table 3.3 shows, people with disabilities are not always significantly less engaged than people without disabilities. When the bivariate relationships do show statistically significant differences, as for community involvement and organizational membership, the differences are not as large as what we might expect from other known explanatory factors such as socio-economic status. Of course, this finding is expected given the similarly small differences observed in the bivariate analyses of disability and feelings of political efficacy. Therefore, because basic bivariate data suggests participatory differences between people with disabilities and people without disabilities are small and because previous studies have omitted key factors known to explain American political engagement, I test the following hypothesis:

H3.3: *People with disabilities engage in participatory activities aside from voting at levels commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics.*

Table 3.3: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and Participatory Activities

Community Involvement	**0 Activities**	**1 Activity**	**2 Activities**	**N**	
No Disability*	62	20	18	5130	
Has a Disability	64	19	16	363	
Membership in Organizations	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3+**	**N**
No Disability*	50	24	15	11	5135
Has a Disability	60	24	13	4	362
Contacted Government Official	**Did Not Contact**	**Contacted**	**N**		
No Disability	80	20	5139		
Has a Disability	77	23	363		
Campaign Participation	**0 Activities**	**1 Activity**	**2+ Activities**	**N**	
No Disability	52	30	7	5129	
Has a Disability	53	31	6	362	

Notes:
Cells report weighed percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage
Statistically significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted:
* $p<0.05$

3.3: Model Specification

To ensure consistent comparisons between the measures of disability and the measures of efficacy employed in this study, to the degree that it is possible, I include the same individual-level characteristics in each of the models that evaluate hypotheses *H3.1* and *H3.2*. I include the same standard controls in the models to evaluate *H3.3* and I add three other variables known to influence involvement in participatory activities. As for the aspects of political engagement analyzed in chapter 2, the characteristics I account for in the analyses for this chapter relate to demographics and political engagement. In what follows, I outline why including these variables in the analysis is necessary in order to uncover the effect, if any, that disability has on levels efficacy and participating in political activities aside from voting.

As noted in chapter 2, demographic characteristics are widely known to influence levels of political engagement. In the models predicting how efficacious one feels, I control for age, gender, marital status, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In the models predicting participation, I include the same variables and I also control for whether or not the respondent lives in the South.

Age is widely known to be an important predictor of political behavior. Concerning political participation, Verba and Nie (1972) described the effect of age in terms of a life-cycle effect, noting specific problems of "start-up," when one first enters voting age, and "slow-down," as old age onsets. They wrote, "[o]ld age brings with it sociological withdrawal as individuals retire from active employment. And it brings as well physical infirmities and fatigue that lower the rate of political activity" Verba and Nie (1972, 139). While not completely correlated, disability specifically addresses some of the reasons why an elderly person may be less likely to participate; Schur and Adya (2013) found age a significant predictor of participation in their study of the political participation levels of people with disabilities. Further, a great sense of political efficacy takes time to develop, and is re-enforced as one participates more (Pateman 1970; Finkel 1985; Stenner-Day and Fischel 1992;

Ikeda, Kobayashi, Hoshimoto 2008). That is, the feeling that one can understand and influence the workings of government is likely to be weakest among those who have most recently encountered opportunities for political engagement. Some have referred to this phenomenon as "life experience" (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 137). Thus, I expect age to be positively related to both internal and external efficacy and also to political participation.

With regard to gender, Verba et al. (1997) showed men and women to have different levels of political efficacy, with men displaying significantly higher levels. Schur et al. (2003) supported this finding with regard to internal efficacy. Men and women also participate in politics in different ways, and at different levels (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010). Additionally, marital status is an important mediating factor for predicting participation because people adjust the activities they participate in to be more like their partner (Stoker and Jennings 1995). Marriage is also largely theorized to exert a positive effect on political participation because married people participate together (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 2014). I have the same expectations for the data used in this project, when gender and marital status are considered alongside disability.

Finally, research about American politics has widely documented disparities between people of different races and ethnicities. Accordingly, in the models predicting feelings of efficacy and involvement in participatory activities, I consider Blacks relative to Non-Blacks and Hispanics relative to Non-Hispanics. Regarding Black political efficacy, Bobo and Gilliam (1990) argued that greater levels of Black political empowerment — "the extent to which a group has achieved significant representation and influence in political decision making"— increase Black feelings of political efficacy and the likelihood to participate in politics. The data used in this project offers a unique opportunity to consider Black political engagement before and after the historic election of Barack Obama to the presidency in 2008. In line with the black empowerment thesis, I expect being Black to be negatively associated with levels of both internal and external efficacy prior to 2008 and

I expect being Black to be positively associated with both types of political efficacy after 2008. Further, because the participation data in this project is from 2012, I anticipate Blacks to be associated with higher levels of participation.

I turn now to expectations of how being a member of the Hispanic population influences levels of efficacy and participation. We might expect Hispanic or Latino identifiers to exhibit feelings of low political efficacy due to their status as a minority group. However, Michelson (2000, 145) found that Latinos experience higher levels of efficacy than Blacks, which she attributes to "evidence that Chicago Latinos may feel that their political reality is one of relatively high representation and empowerment." Additionally, some research has shown Latinos to vote at significantly lower rates than Non-Latinos (Uhlaner et al. 1989), and other research analyzing non-voting forms of political participation has revealed a more complex relationship (Hero and Campbell 1996). In their study of disability and political participation, Schur and Adya (2013) found Hispanic people to be less likely to vote and also less likely to participate in other political activities relative to Non-Hispanic people. Likewise, I expect being Hispanic to be associated with low involvement in participatory activities.

In addition, I expect one's socioeconomic status to influence their efficacy and participation levels. American government has been known for decades to "sing with an upper-class accent" (Schattschneider 1960). This is because people with higher levels of socioeconomic status have long been more politically active than those with lower socioeconomic status (Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Schlozman et al. 2012; Leighley and Nagler 2014). I use two indicators of socio-economic status: level of achieved education and household income. With higher education one is more likely to understand the issues and have developed the skills necessary to effectively navigate the political system. And, as one's income rises so does one's ability to devote resources toward political influence. I expect both

measures of socioeconomic status to display a positive relationship with internal efficacy, external efficacy, and each of the four types of participatory activities.

The last demographic factor I consider in this chapter is whether or not the respondent lives in the South, which I include as a control variable in the models predicting participation.[6] Data from the 2012 ANES shows that 46% of people with disabilities live in the South as compared to 37% of people without disabilities. Further, of the population of people with disabilities, about 18% live in the Northeast, 21% live in the North Central, and 16% live in the Western region. I control for whether or not the respondent lives in the South not only because of the plurality of citizens with disabilities living there, but also because of history of voting discrimination in the South necessitating special coverage under the Voting Rights Act (Overton 2006; Hasen 2012; Wang 2012). Thus, to ensure the findings presented here about the relationship between disability and political participation are not a result of political-environmental factors, I control for living in the South.

Finally, aspects of political engagement are related to one another and in the analyses of feelings of efficacy, I include three measures of political engagement: political interest, strength of partisanship and strength of ideology. To explain the various modes of political participation analyzed in this chapter, I include these measures and I also include measures internal and external efficacy and national news attentiveness.[7]

Political interest and feelings of efficacy are mutually reinforcing. That is, in order to feel

[6] The General Social Survey does not record the specific state the respondent lives in, but instead record geography by region. And, unfortunately, there are three Southern regions (South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central) that include some and do not include some of the variables traditionally analyzed as in the South for the purposes of political science. Using the General Social Survey, 36% of the disabled live in the three Southern regions while 4% live in New England, 13% live in the Middle Atlantic, 18.82% live in the East North Central, 5% live in the West North Central, 8% live in the Mountain, and 16% live in the Pacific region.

[7] Attention to national news is not included as a control variable in the models explaining levels of political efficacy because in 2006 the General Social Survey had only one question about newspaper readership, and including that measure significantly decreased the sample size.

confident that one understands the issues, one must also be interested enough to get informed. Further, we should expect one's interest in politics to increase if one is participating and sense government is responding to their needs. Accordingly, I expect political interest to be positively related to internal and external efficacy, and also to participation.[8] Another political engagement control I add is strength of partisanship. I expect stronger partisans to exhibit higher levels of efficacy and I expect they will be more engaged in participatory activities (i.e. support their group) than those with weak party identification. This is because partisanship conveys a "person's affective orientation to the group" (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, 112). Likewise, I expect ideology to perform in a similar manner. Specifically, stronger ideologues are more likely to feel confident that they recognize and understand important issues than people with weak ideological preferences. When making such an attitudinal or participatory investment, people hope their voice will matter. Thus, I expect strength of ideology to be positively related to both feelings of political efficacy and participatory activities.

Additionally, I expect one's sense of political efficacy to influence the extent to which one participates in political activities. In order to investigate the mechanisms driving the political participation levels of people with disabilities, I account for the psychological feeling of efficacy in the models explaining community involvement, organizational membership, likelihood to contact government officials, and campaign involvement. Also in these analyses, I account for the degree to which one follows national politics—whether on television, in the newspaper, on the radio, or on the Internet. As discussed in chapter 2, research (Prior 2007; Wattenberg 2012) has shown national news attentiveness to be associated with a greater likelihood to participate, and I expect to observe the same in this analysis of the participatory activities of people with disabilities.

[8] Political efficacy and political interest are related concepts. For the data used in this project, I find removing political interest from the analysis does not alter the direction or statistical significance of the disability coefficients (or marginal effects) in any instance.

3.4: Multiple Regression Results

Table 3.4 displays the results of four models predicting levels of political efficacy using a binary operationalization of disability. Models 1 and 2 offer evidence to support *H3.1*, that people with disabilities do not feel significantly different levels of internal efficacy than those without a disability. The findings with regard to *H3.2* are mixed, which may be a function of how disability is measured in the GSS versus in the ANES. Data from the GSS (based on disability types) show people with disabilities to be significantly less likely to exhibit feelings of external efficacy relative to people without a disability. Conversely, data from the ANES (based on employment status), suggest the relationship I hypothesized at the outset.

Table 3.4: Feelings of Political Efficacy Using Binary Operationalizations of Disability

	Internal Efficacy (1)	Internal Efficacy (2)	External Efficacy (3)	External Efficacy (4)
Disability	-0.155 (0.106)	-0.041 (0.089)	-0.222 (0.090)*	0.019 (0.110)
Age	0.008 (0.003)**	-0.023 (0.006)***	-0.002 (0.003)	0.009 (0.008)
Female	-0.380 (0.090)***	-0.282 (0.042)***	0.016 (0.078)	0.011 (0.052)
Married	-0.138 (0.101)	-0.071 (0.045)	-0.150 (0.086)	-0.209 (0.056)***
Black	-0.111 (0.133)	0.253 (0.067)***	0.030 (0.112)	0.458 (0.083)***
Hispanic	-0.005 (0.166)	0.017 (0.068)	0.253 (0.141)	0.594 (0.854)***
Education	0.099 (0.184)***	0.190 (0.020)***	0.066 (0.016)***	0.206 (0.025)***
Household Income	0.048 (0.011)***	0.010 (0.003)***	0.023 (0.009)*	0.012 (0.004)**
Political Interest	0.681 (0.040)***	0.702 (0.020)***	0.066 (0.034)	0.097 (0.025)***
Partisanship Strength	-0.034 (0.045)	0.048 (0.021)*	0.151 (0.038)***	0.019 (0.027)***
Ideological Strength	0.187 (0.045)***	0.205 (0.023)***	0.109 (0.042)*	0.000 (0.029)
Constant	1.927 (0.311)***	3.139 (0.106)***	0.972 (0.263)***	3.207 (0.133)***
R^2	0.359	0.299	0.095	0.056
N	1121	5135	1122	4794

Notes:
Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.
GSS data (Models 1 &3) weighted by the wtssnr variable; ANES data (Models 2 & 4) weighted by weight_full
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 3.5 presents the findings with which to evaluate *H3.1* and *H3.2* using a summary operationalization of disability. These data show whether the relationship between disability and efficacy changes as disabilities mount. Table 3.5 presents mixed results. In the case of internal efficacy people with disabilities are significantly less likely to feel efficacious, thus providing evidence against *H3.1*. On the contrary, disability is not found to be a statistically significant predictor of external political efficacy, providing support for *H3.2*, that people with disabilities do not have significantly different levels of external political efficacy than people without a disability. When compared with the finding from the binary operationalization, where disability was a significant predictor of external efficacy, this finding suggests severity of disability to matter more for feelings of internal political efficacy than external political efficacy.

Table 3.5: Feelings of Efficacy Using Summary Operationalization of Disability

	Internal Efficacy (1)	External Efficacy (2)
Disability	-0.111 (0.054)*	-0.077 (0.046)
Age	0.009 (0.003)**	-0.002 (0.003)
Female	-0.367 (0.091)***	0.014 (0.078)
Married	-0.138 (0.101)	-0.148 (0.086)
Black	-0.110 (0.133)	0.031 (0.113)
Hispanic	-0.009 (0.166)	0.256 (0.141)
Education	0.099 (0.018)***	0.065 (0.016)***
Household Income	0.046 (0.011)***	0.024 (0.009)**
Political Interest	0.679 (0.040)***	0.066 (0.034)
Partisanship Strength	-0.032 (0.045)	0.150 (0.038)***
Ideological Strength	0.189 (0.050)***	0.108 (0.042)*
Constant	1.966 (0.312)***	0.954 (0.264)***
R^2	0.360	0.084
N	1121	1122

Source: General Social Survey 2006, weighted by wtssnr variable.
Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 3.6 displays findings regarding the disability types operationalization and an alternative way to assess *H3.1* and *H3.2* about the influence of disability on feelings of political efficacy. I find that once the operationalization of disability is disaggregated into types of disabilities, disability does not perform as a significant predictor of either internal or external political efficacy, with one exception. Having a vision disability is positively and significantly associated with feelings of external political efficacy. These findings indicate that there are generally not noteworthy differences across disability types with regard to internal or external political efficacy.

Table 3.6: Feelings of Efficacy Using Disability Type Operationalizations

	Internal Efficacy (1)	**External Efficacy (2)**
Vision Disability	-0.095 (0.246)	0.446 (0.209)*
Hearing Disability	0.011 (0.209)	-0.258 (0.176)
Physical Disability	0.082 (0.148)	-0.211 (0.126)
Other Physical Disability	-0.039 (0.172)	0.133 (0.146)
Learning Disability	-0.258 (0.187)	-0.112 (0.159)
Emotional Disability	-0.249 (0.228)	0.142 (0.194)
Difficulty Daily Activities	-0.262 (0.185)	-0.206 (0.157)
Age	0.008 (0.003)*	-0.002 (0.003)
Female	-0.352 (0.092)***	0.013 (0.078)
Married	-0.161 (0.102)	-0.135 (0.087)
Black	-0.111 (0.133)	0.034 (0.114)
Hispanic	-0.042 (0.168)	0.236 (0.142)
Education	0.097 (0.018)***	0.063 (0.016)***
Household Income	0.046 (0.011)***	0.026 (0.009)**
Political Interest	0.686 (0.040)***	0.069 (0.033)*
Partisanship Strength	-0.029 (0.046)	0.150 (039)***
Ideological Strength	0.194 (0.050)***	0.111 (0.043)**
Constant	1.980 (0.314)***	0.923 (0.266)***
R^2	0.365	0.088

Source: General Social Survey 2006 (N= 1116), weighted by the wtssnr variable.
Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 3.7 presents the findings with which I assess *H3.3*— that people with disabilities are expected to engage in participatory activities at levels commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics. Overall, after controlling for demographics and related factors of political engagement, I do find support for this hypothesis. For three of the four types of participatory activities analyzed here, people with disabilities are not engaging with politics at levels significantly different than similarly situated people without disabilities. As Table 3.7 shows, disability is found to be statistically significant regarding the likelihood that one has contacted a government official. I find people with disabilities are actually *more* likely than people with disabilities to contact their elected representatives. For comparison purposes, Table 3.7 also presents the results of Model 5, predicting whether or not the respondent voted in the 2012 general election. As can be seen, the strongest relationship between disability and participatory activities is the negative relationship between disability and voting. The findings of this project show that, unlike their low voter turnout, people with disabilities do not also exhibit exorbitantly low levels of political efficacy or low likelihoods of participating in other types of political activities relative to people without disabilities.

Table 3.7: Disability and Participatory Activities

	Community Activity (1)	Membership in Organizations (2)	Contact Govt. Official (3)	Campaign Activity (4)	Voted (5)
Disability	0.068 (0.047)	0.027 (0.060)	0.070 (0.024)**	-0.133 (0.074)	-0.076 (0.019)***
Demographics					
Age	-0.027 (0.003)***	0.007 (0.004)	0.001 (0.002)	0.028 (0.005)***	0.022 (0.002)***
Female	0.045 (0.022)*	0.022 (0.029)	0.018 (0.012)	0.001 (0.035)	0.039 (0.011)***
Married	0.074 (0.024)**	-0.040 (0.031)	0.000 (0.013)	0.007 (0.038)	-0.001 (0.011)
Black	0.166 (0.036)***	-0.062 (0.046)	0.016 (0.019)	0.337 (0.057)***	0.049 (0.017)**
Hispanic	-0.079 (0.037)*	-0.152 (0.048)**	-0.034 (0.021)	-0.036 (0.059)	-0.018 (0.016)
South	-0.063 (0.023)**	-0.116 (0.029)***	-0.034 (0.012)**	-0.098 (0.036)**	-0.046 (0.011)***
Socioeconomic Status					
Education	0.074 (0.011)***	0.189 (0.014)***	0.029 (0.006)***	0.009 (0.017)	0.040 (0.005)***
Income	-0.001 (0.002)	0.013 (0.002)***	0.000 (0.001)	0.004 (0.003)	0.005 (0.001)***
Political Engagement					
Follows National News	0.042 (0.003)***	0.050 (0.004)***	0.019 (0.002)***	0.058 (0.005)***	0.006 (0.002)***
Political Interest	0.078 (0.014)***	0.012 (0.018)	0.026 (0.008)***	0.156 (0.022)***	0.022 (0.006)***
Partisanship Strength	-0.011 (0.012)	0.002 (0.015)	-0.015 (0.006)*	0.116 (0.018)***	0.059 (0.002)***
Ideological Strength	-0.018 (0.013)	0.005 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.007)	0.102 (0.020)***	0.005 (0.006)
Internal Efficacy	-0.017 (0.008)*	-0.011 (0.010)	0.016 (0.004)***	0.050 (0.012)***	0.022 (0.004)***
External Efficacy	0.026 (0.006)***	0.048 (0.008)***	0.006 (0.003)	0.061 (0.010)***	0.009 (0.003)**
Constant	-0.053 (0.066)	-0.472 (0.084)***		-1.570 (0.010)***	
R^2/Pseudo R^2	0.117	0.156	0.106	0.194	.207
Log Likelihood			-2205.558		-1852.709
N	4664	4668	4607	4661	4602

Source: 2012 American National Election Study, weighted by the weight_full variable
Notes: All cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses, except those for Models 3 and 5, where marginal effects and respective standard errors in parentheses from a logistic model are reported.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

3.5: Discussion

People with disabilities do not turn out to vote at the same rate as those who do not have a disability, even considering their other demographic characteristics. This is concerning at many levels for the inclusion and representation of people with disabilities in American democracy. This chapter presents data from the 2006 GSS and the 2012 ANES showing that people with disabilities do not also experience low political efficacy and a low likelihood of participating in political activities aside from voting. *Ceteris peribus*, people with disabilities are just as likely to feel efficacious and are just as engaged to participate in political activities aside from voting as people without a disability.

Bivariate relationships between disability and levels of political efficacy might show people with disabilities to be associated with significantly low levels of political efficacy. Yet, after taking into account demographic and political engagement factors, I find that this relationship does not always hold. While the results presented using binary, summary, and type operationalizations of disability are mixed, they generally suggest support for the first hypothesis— that people with disabilities experience levels of political efficacy commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics. Further, this is the first study to consider interest in politics, strength of partisanship, and ideological strength when analyzing the efficacy of people with disabilities, and I find these measures of political engagement to surface as significant predictors of efficacy.

After establishing that people with disabilities do not experience low feelings of political efficacy relative to people without disabilities, I assessed whether having a disability contributes to lower engagement in political activities and I included efficacy in these analyses. While at the bivariate level some statistically significant differences are observed, turning to the multiple regression results I find support for the hypothesis that disability is not a significant predictor of participation in community activities, membership in organizations or campaign participation. People with disabilities are not significantly less likely to participate in any of the types of political

activities analyzed in this chapter. In fact, as compared to people without a disability, people with disabilities are significantly *more* inclined to contact government officials.[9] The data used in this project does not allow for an analysis of why people opted to contact government officials, but future research would surely benefit from such data. Overall, these findings suggest that people with disabilities largely participate in non-voting political activities at levels commensurate with their other characteristics. Yet, the findings presented here about participation are limited to people with permanent disabilities in response to a question about employment, and this group might be contacting government officials with concerns about government benefits or casework that are not explicitly political. In terms of political participation, it appears there is some aspect about the activity of voting in particular that inhibits people with disabilities, and more research is needed to explain the puzzle of why the disabled might participate in the activities analyzed in this chapter, but then might not participate come Election Day in November. In the next chapter I examine data that speaks to the second part of the research question of this dissertation: the political implications of how people with disabilities are engagement with politics in the United States.

[9] The data used in this project does not allow for an analysis of why people opted to contact government officials, but future research would surely benefit from such data.

CHAPTER 4: PARTISANSHIP, IDEOLOGY, AND VOTE CHOICE

In chapters 2 and 3 I argued that, unlike what we might expect given the research about voter turnout, disability is not always related to low political engagement. Commensurate with other characteristics, having a disability is not negatively related to being interested in politics, following the news, feeling efficacious, or participating in political activities aside from voting. This chapter examines the second part of the research question of the dissertation: given the findings about political engagement, what are the implications for party politics in America? Here I explore the relationship between disability and three indicators of political preferences: party identification, ideology, and vote choice.

4.1: Partisanship Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

Green et al. (2002) liken strong partisans during an election to fans of sports teams on game day. As they say, "elections represent more than simply a competition between candidates and rival platforms. Elections are also forums for intergroup competition"(Green et al 2002, 206). I examine the partisanship of people with disabilities as a group in order to reveal how their political engagement may (or may not) influence the dynamics of American party coalitions.

The literature about the political party identification of Americans with disabilities is divided and also is lacking a multivariate analysis of nationally representative data. On one hand, there is some evidence that suggests we should expect people with disabilities to identify with the Democratic Party. Drawing on data from a phone survey conducted in New Mexico, Gastil (2000) found people with disabilities to be more likely to identify with the Democratic Party, more likely to exhibit egalitarian beliefs, and more likely to rank public healthcare as a priority relative to people

without a disability. Further, another study analyzed how states implemented the Social Security Disability Program and found that "[s]tates that have more Democrats among their legislators grant more disability claims than states that have more Republicans" (Keiser, 1999, 100). However, with data from 2007, one bivariate[10] analysis of people with disabilities (disabled N= 135) found no significant differences between people with disabilities and people without disabilities in terms of their likelihood to identify with the Democratic or Republican political parties (Schur and Adya 2013).

For the analyses conducted in this chapter, the measures I use from the GSS and the ANES for partisanship, ideology, and vote choice are straightforward and are derived from very similar question wordings and response options between the two surveys. All measures are top-coded Republican or conservative. For partisanship, both the GSS and the ANES asked a question about party identification, where respondents could choose one of seven response options moving from strong Democrat through Independent to strong Republican.

Bivariate Data

Because the data from existing research is limited and offers disparate findings, I turn to other data in order to derive expectations for the multivariate analyses conducted in this project. Consistent with Gastil (2000) and contrary to Schur and Adya (2013), Table 4.1 shows the bivariate relationship between disability and party identification to be strong. As can be seen in Table 4.1, data from the 2006 GSS and the 2012 ANES show people with disabilities to be more likely to identify with the Democratic Party rather than the Republican Party, with the ANES data showing about a 20% difference in support for the parties. Also presented in Table 4.1, analysis at the bivariate level suggests differences in party identification between people with a disability and people without one may be driven by the preferences of people with mobility disabilities. Thus, to resolve an

[10] In unreported findings, Schur and Adya (2013, 834) explain that "[w]hen these comparisons are probed with regressions, there are no significant differences between people with and without disabilities."

inconsistency in the literature about disability and party identification, and in line with the bivariate data presented here, I test the following hypothesis:

H4.1: Relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities are more likely to identify as Democrats.

Table 4.1: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and Partisanship

From 2012 ANES	Democrat	Independent	Republican	N
No Disability*	45	14	41	5508
Has a Disability	62	17	22	386
From 2006 GSS				
No Disability*	42	20	38	1890
Has a Disability	47	23	31	798
No Vision Disability	43	21	36	2541
Has Vision Disability	47	21	32	143
No Hearing Disability	43	21	36	2533
Has Hearing Disability	49	19	31	153
No Physical Disability*	42	21	37	2249
Has Physical Disability	51	20	28	435
No Other Physical Disability*	42	21	37	2423
Has Other Physical Disability	52	21	26	260
No Emotional Disability	43	21	36	2557
Has Emotional Disability	48	25	27	123
No Learning Disability	43	21	36	2440
Has Learning Disability	44	25	31	241
No Difficulty Daily Activities*	43	21	36	2421
Has Difficulty Daily Activities	45	25	30	256

Notes:
Cells report weighted percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage
Statistically significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted * $p<.05$
Data classifies Independents that lean Democratic or Republican as Democratic or Republican respectively

4.2: Ideology Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

As the authors of *The American Voter Revisited* noted, "ideology summarizes a person's overall stance toward the political world…An ideology can also give political meaning to an enormous variety of observations, events, and experiences that fall outside the immediate realm of politics" (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, 207). Here I analyze the ideological orientations of people with disabilities in order to gauge the types of political preferences that are included or excluded from the American political system depending on the levels of political engagement that people with disabilities exhibit.

Corresponding to the literature discussed above about the partisanship of people with disabilities, a multivariate analysis of nationally representative data is also absent from existing research about their political ideology. As mentioned previously, Gastil (2000) found people with disabilities placed public healthcare as a high priority. On one hand this finding may suggest people with disabilities to generally prefer liberal ideology to conservative ideology, as liberals tend to be supportive of social welfare programs such as State Disability Insurance. On the other hand, people with disabilities may be focused on issues relating to healthcare, but may have an otherwise conservative ideological orientation. In his analysis of residents of New Mexico, Gastil (2000) did not find significant ideological differences between people with disabilities and people without a disability. He wrote, "[s]tronger Democratic identification, however, does not necessarily mean that respondents with disabilities are also more liberal in their abstract political beliefs" (Gastil 2000, 597). Schur and Adya (2013) presented similar results for this relationship using data from the 2006 GSS, but their regression analysis is not reported.

Bivariate Data

Although the general political science literature on political attitudes and ideology suggests that we should expect people with disabilities to identify as liberal, previous studies on this topic have found

contrary evidence. Table 4.2 presents bivariate data on this question from the ANES and replicates the analysis found in Schur and Adya (2013) drawn from the GSS. The measures for ideology from both surveys also ask respondents to identify themselves along a seven-point spectrum, moving from liberal, to moderate, to conservative. Contrary to Gastil (2000) and Schur and Adya (2013), as can be seen, the ANES data shows people with disabilities to be significantly more likely to identify as liberal relative to people without a disability. Hence, to uncover the ideology of people with disabilities further, I test the following hypothesis:

H4.2: Relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities are more likely to identify as liberal.

Table 4.2: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and Ideology

From 2012 ANES	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	N
No Disability*	26	34	40	5069
Has a Disability	31	36	33	331
From 2006 GSS				
No Disability	27	38	35	1879
Has a Disability	26	40	34	771
No Vision Disability	27	39	35	2514
Has Vision Disability	24	39	37	133
No Hearing Disability	27	39	35	2505
Has Hearing Disability	25	38	37	144
No Physical Disability	27	38	35	2222
Has Physical Disability	24	40	36	425
No Other Physical Disability	27	38	35	2401
Has Other Physical Disability	27	42	31	246
No Emotional Disability	26	39	35	2526
Has Emotional Disability	31	39	30	118
No Learning Disability	27	39	35	2412
Has Learning Disability	27	37	37	234
No Difficulty Daily Activities	26	39	35	2392
Has Difficulty Daily Activities	29	40	31	250

Notes:
Cells report weighted percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage
Statistically significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted * $p<.05$

4.3: Vote Choice Expectations and Measures

Previous Literature

Existing political science research about vote choice tries to predict who will vote for whom at the individual level and also the result of elections as a whole at the aggregate level. At the individual level, that which the present project focuses on, party identification is widely considered a strong predictor of vote choice (Campbell et al. 1960; Miller and Shanks 1996; Bartels 2000; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). People with a particular ideological perspective are also most likely to exhibit consistency (predictability) in their vote choice by voting for members of the same political party over time (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996).

If people with disabilities were to identify with the Democratic Party, with liberal ideology, and were then to vote consistently we should expect for them to vote for Democratic candidates. Previous research about the vote choice of people with disabilities is scant, but Schur and Adya (2013) present some bivariate data from the GSS in 2006 showing people with disabilities were more likely to vote for the Democratic nominee, John Kerry, as compared to the Republican nominee George W. Bush, in 2004 relative to people without a disability. However, the authors explain that after controlling for demographic characteristics known to influence vote choice in a regression analysis, the effect of disability on vote choice dissipated. Yet, self-reported voting data is always susceptible to a number of validity problems and these types of issues are likely amplified when respondents are asked about behavior during an election two years prior. To examine vote choice in this project, I draw on data from the 2012 ANES, which asked respondents about who they voted for in the 2012 general election.

Bivariate Data

Table 4.3 displays the bivariate relationship between disability and vote choice using data from the 2012 ANES. As can be seen, relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities were

significantly more likely to vote for Barack Obama, the Democratic nominee, than Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee. The difference in vote choice between the people with disabilities and people without a disability is about 15%. This difference is substantial and thus I conduct a multivariate test of the following hypothesis to test if differences in vote choice still hold after accounting for other factors:

H4.3: Relative to people without a disability, people with disabilities are more likely to vote for the Democratic nominee for president.

Table 4.3: Bivariate Relationships Between Disability and Vote Choice

From 2012 ANES	Obama	Romney	N
No Disability*	53	47	3822
Has a Disability	69	31	234

Notes:
Cells report weighted percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentage
Statistically significant differences between people with a disability and people without a disability denoted *p<.05

4.4: Model Specification

In the regression analyses that I conduct to evaluate *H4.1*, *H4.2*, and *H4.3*, I include the same set of control variables. Below I describe the rationale behind the model specifications. To isolate the effect of disability, in each model I account for one's age, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region of residence, and religiosity. All question wording and coding information is available in Appendix A.

First, as described in earlier chapters, a person's age is widely known to affect many aspects of political behavior and attitudes, including party identification, ideology, and vote choice. Consider, for example, that one's partisanship commitment becomes stronger and also less responsive to current events with age (Green et al. 2002; Dalton 2013). People with stronger ideology are also understood to have higher political knowledge relative to those with more moderate ideology and research has found an increasingly wide knowledge gap between older and younger cohorts (Wattenberg 2012). Additionally, it is especially imperative to account for age in this analysis as one's likelihood of encountering the challenges of disability generally increases with the natural aging process.

Another demographic characteristic I expect to affect the dynamics of party identification, ideology, and vote choice is gender. Conventional wisdom shows a wide gender gap between men and women with regard to political preferences, uncovering an important political cleavage in American politics. Women are more likely than men to identify with the Democratic Party (Kauffmann and Petrocik 1999; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004). Women are also more likely than men to adhere to a liberal ideology, especially with regard to social issues (Feldman and Johnston 2014). Further, women have been found to vote for the Democratic nominee for president more often than men (Seltzer et al. 1997; Stanley and Niemi 2006; Carroll and Fox 2013). Consistent with

previous research, I expect gender to have similar effects in the present analysis of the political preferences of people with disabilities.

As in the cases of age and gender, race and ethnicity have been known for decades to influence a person's political partisanship, ideology, and vote choice. As noted in previous chapters, in this project I account for the effect of race and ethnicity by including binary variables that measure whether or not the respondent identified as Black and whether or not the respondent identified as Hispanic. Previous research has shown Blacks tend to identify with the Democratic Party and with liberal ideology (Tate 1993; Black 2004; Tate 2010). Also, in recent elections, Blacks have turned out to vote at unprecedented rates for co-ethnic candidate Barack Obama (Philpot et al. 2009). Research about Hispanic political behavior uncovers a similar pattern. Many Hispanic Americans identify as Democratic, liberal, and vote along these lines (Lopez and Taylor 2012). Hence, as is done conventionally, I include measures of race and ethnicity in order to isolate the effect of disability on partisanship, ideology, and vote choice.

Also typical of political behavior analyses, I account for one's socioeconomic status. Here I consider the role socioeconomic status might play in party identification, ideological preference, and vote choice by including two measures in each model: education and household income. Previous literature has found a positive relationship between class and support for the Republican Party and conservative ideology (McCarty et al. 2006; Peterson 2015). Lewis-Beck et al. (2008, 343), for example, showed over a period of four decades that "the working class without exception is more likely to favor the Democratic candidate, the middle class the Republican candidate." Additionally, Verba et al. (1995, 480) noted of political contributions, "although the partisans have very different views on economic issues, the effect of income for both Republicans and Democrats is to skew to the right."

Related to income, research has shown education to be positively related to strong political beliefs (Abramowitz 2010). Likewise, as discussed earlier, higher educated people are also more likely to vote (Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Schlozman et al. 2012; Leighley and Nagler 2014). It is also known that people with disabilities tend to experience lower levels of both household income and education (Disability Status Report 2012). Thus, I analyze these socioeconomic factors to separate the effect of disability from other known predictors of partisanship, ideology, and vote choice.

Finally, I include two other controls that tend to exert similar effects on Americans' political preferences: region of residence and religiosity. Although a significant amount of research has focused on party re-alignment in American politics (Sundquist 1983; Kras and Polborn 2014; Campbell and Trilling 2015) as well as party de-alignment (Wattenberg 1991b; Wattenberg 2009; Dalton 2013), in the present political climate, citizens residing in the Southern region of the United States identify as Republican and conservative, and also tend to vote for the Republican nominee for President (Hayes and McKee 2007). Relatedly, those with strong religious beliefs are concentrated in the South (Newport 2015) and also have exhibited Republican and conservative political preferences (Miller and Wattenberg 1984; Wattenberg 1991a; Layman 1997). As the effects of region and religiosity on political attitudes are strong, they are included as controls in this study. The multiple regression results are presented in the next section.

4.5: Multiple Regression Results

Table 4.4 displays the results of four OLS Regression analyses predicting party identification to assess *H4.1*, that people with disabilities are more likely than people without a disability to identify as Democrats. As can be seen, the binary operationalizations of disability from the ANES and the GSS both show having a disability to exert a significant, negative effect on identifying as Republican.

However, Model 3 shows this finding is not borne out when the same specification is analyzed using the summary measure of disability. Additionally, Model 4 examines the effect of having six types of disabilities on partisanship. These data show the strongest partisanship, an inclination away from Republican identification and toward Democratic identification, to be among people with physical disabilities. Together these findings support the first hypothesis (*H4.1*).

Table 4.4: Party Identification

Party Identification	(1) ANES	(2) GSS	(3) GSS	(4) GSS
Disability	-0.730*** (0.106)	-0.251** (0.093)	--	--
Disability Summary	--	--	-0.088 (0.047)	--
Hearing Disability	--	--	--	-0.101 (0.187)
Vision Disability	--	--	--	0.349 (0.199)
Physical Disability	--	--	--	-0.382** (0.135)
Other Physical Disability	--	--	--	-0.364* (0.153)
Emotional Disability	--	--	--	-0.199 (0.211)
Learning Disability	--	--	--	0.063 (0.166)
Difficulty Daily Activities	--	--	--	0.438** (0.164)
Age	-0.015* (0.008)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.006* (0.003)
Female	-0.321*** (0.051)	-0.223** (0.079)	-0.222** (0.079)	-0.218** (0.079)
Black	-2.372*** (0.080)	-1.835*** (0.123)	-1.837*** (0.123)	-1.841*** (0.123)
Hispanic	-1.054*** (0.083)	-0.618*** (0.146)	-0.619*** (0.146)	-0.632*** (0.147)
Education	-0.046 (0.025)	-0.037* (0.015)	-0.036* (0.015)	-0.036* (0.015)
Household Income	0.016*** (0.004)	0.038*** (0.008)	0.039*** (0.009)	0.041*** (0.009)
South	0.258*** (0.054)	0.232** (0.084)	0.231** (0.084)	0.235** (0.084)
Religiosity	0.858*** (0.056)	0.245*** (0.038)	0.244*** (0.038)	0.255*** (0.038)
Constant	3.799*** (0.108)	2.685*** (0.268)	2.652*** (0.269)	2.557*** (0.271)
R^2	0.189	0.134	0.132	0.141
N	5573	2265	2265	2255

Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.
Data from the ANES and the GSS is weighted by the weight_full and wtssnr variables respectively.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

The findings regarding the relationship between disability and ideology are presented in Table 4.5. *H4.2* posited that people with disabilities would be more likely to identify as liberal relative to people without a disability. Table 4.5 presents the results of four regression analyses predicting political ideology and the findings regarding *H4.2* are mixed. On one hand, consistent with *H4.2*, the data from the 2012 ANES displayed in the first model shows people with disabilities to be significantly less likely to identify as conservative as compared to people without a disability. On the other hand, the three models analyzing data from the GSS fail to support *H4.2*, showing no noteworthy ideological differences between people with a disability and people without a disability.

Table 4.5: Ideology

Ideology	(1) ANES	(2) GSS	(3) GSS	(4) GSS
Disability	-0.395*** (0.082)	-0.031 (0.068)	--	--
Disability Summary	--	--	-0.021 (0.034)	--
Hearing Disability	--	--	--	0.025 (0.136)
Vision Disability	--	--	--	0.189 (0.150)
Physical Disability	--	--	--	0.070 (0.099)
Other Physical Disability	--	--	--	-0.108 (0.112)
Emotional Disability	--	--	--	-0.004 (0.154)
Learning Disability	--	--	--	-0.028 (0.121)
Difficulty Daily Activities	--	--	--	-0.108 (0.121)
Age	0.034*** (0.006)	0.004* (0.002)	0.005* (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)
Female	-0.235*** (0.039)	-0.204*** (0.057)	-0.205*** (0.057)	-0.199*** (0.058)
Black	-0.765*** (0.062)	-0.540*** (0.089)	-0.541*** (0.089)	-0.544*** (0.090)
Hispanic	-0.453*** (0.063)	-0.326** (0.106)	-0.328** (0.106)	-0.337** (0.107)
Education	-0.123*** (0.018)	-0.042*** (0.011)	-0.043*** (0.011)	-0.042*** (0.011)
Household Income	0.008** (0.003)	0.024*** (0.006)	0.024*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.006)
South	0.157*** (0.040)	0.306*** (0.061)	0.307*** (0.061)	0.305*** (0.061)
Religiosity	0.839*** (0.042)	0.278*** (0.027)	0.278*** (0.027)	0.279*** (0.197)
Constant	3.918*** (0.083)	3.360*** (0.195)	3.367*** (0.195)	3.354*** (0.197)
R^2	0.125	0.099	0.099	0.101
N	5134	2262	2262	2252

Notes: Cells report OLS regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.
Data from the ANES and the GSS is weighted by the weight_full and wtssnr variables respectively.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Concerning vote choice, Table 4.6 displays vote choice findings from the most recent presidential election year. The third hypothesis *(H4.3)* was that having a disability would be positively associated with voting the Democratic nominee for President. Table 4.6 presents evidence supporting *H4.3*, showing people with disabilities were less likely to vote for the Republican Nominee in 2012, Mitt Romney, relative to people without a disability. In the next section I discuss the implications of these findings and offer a few directions for future research.

Table 4.6: Vote Choice

Vote Choice (ANES)	ME	SE
Disability	-0.125***	(0.033)
Age	0.004	(0.002)
Female	-0.073***	(0.014)
Black	-0.742***	(0.041)
Hispanic	-0.278***	(0.023)
Education	-0.030***	(0.007)
Household Income	0.005***	(0.001)
South	0.064***	(0.015)
Religiosity	0.261***	(0.013)
Pseudo R^2	0.203	
Log Likelihood	-2127.219	
N	4005	

Notes: Cells report logistic model marginal effects and standard errors in parentheses
Data is ANES weighted by the weight_full variable.
Statistical significance denoted: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

4.6 Discussion

The object of this chapter was to examine the kinds of political preferences that are expressed or not given how people with disabilities engage with the political system. After conducting a series of regression analyses, I find that people with disabilities identify with the Democratic Party, with liberal ideology, and that in 2012 they were inclined to vote for Democratic nominee, Barack Obama.

With regard to party identification, previous research was divided about the effect of having a disability on one's political partisanship. Bivariate results from the 2012 ANES show a significant partisan difference between people with a disability and people without a disability, with 62% of people with disabilities identifying as Democratic as compared to 45% of people without a disability. The multivariate analysis from this project adds evidence to the literature by showing the disability partisan gap to remain after accounting for other factors known to influence one's partisan leanings. Data from both the ANES and the GSS show people with disabilities to be more likely than people without a disability to identify as a Democrat. Data from the GSS indicates the strongest partisanship among people with disabilities is concentrated among people with physical disabilities. However, new data allowing for analysis of the different types of disabilities is needed to confirm these findings in the era of Obamacare.

Another measure of political preferences is ideology, whether one identifies as liberal or conservative. I hypothesized that people with disabilities would identify as liberal relative to people without a disability. Overall, the data presents mixed results. As found in Schur and Adya (2013), the sample from the GSS in 2006 shows no significant ideological differences between people with a disability and people without a disability. However, the data from the 2012 ANES shows the opposite, confirming the initial hypothesis that people with disabilities would identify as liberal. These disparate findings present a conundrum for two reasons. First, the General Social Survey in

2006 asked more detailed questions about disability and thus the samples of people with disabilities between the two surveys are very different. Yet, despite more informative questions about disability, the GSS asked about politics during a low-political awareness year without a general election. Thus, people with disabilities identified as liberal at a time when information about politics and elections is salient and readily available (in 2012). It would be especially constructive for future research to compare the ideology of people with disabilities during an election year and during a mid-term election year by drawing on data with disability question wording comparable to that of the GSS.

Finally, a critical question is how people with disabilities might vote if they do make it to the polls. Here I have shown that people with disabilities voted for the Democratic nominee for President in 2012. This finding is consistent with what we would expect if people with disabilities are also Democrats and liberals, which I have argued in this chapter they are. One caveat to this particular finding is that the data presented is from just one election year. It may be that 2012 was a unique election for people with disabilities, for example, with the prominence of Obamacare repeal attempts by the Republicans. People with disabilities are a growing population and because of this growth their political attitudes and preferences as a group are in flux. People with disabilities are not entirely disengaged, nor are they largely political moderates. Instead, they are a significant minority group with distinct political leanings. In the next chapter, I conclude the dissertation by summarizing the argument and discussing implications for party coalitions and future research.

CHAPTER 5: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The motivation for this dissertation started with concern for the consistently documented low voter turnout of people with disabilities in American elections. However, exercising the franchise is not the only way one might engage with the polity. Analysis of other types of political engagement, as I have argued, shows people with disabilities often engage with politics at levels similar to people without a disability. I have also argued that people with disabilities exhibit distinct political preferences. As such, this understudied, growing segment of the population is a group with great political potential that might be further organized in the years and decades to come.

5.1: Summary of Findings

The empirical analysis began in chapter 2 by examining factors often considered at the beginning of political engagement processes: interest, attentiveness, and information. Regarding political interest, I find people with disabilities were no less interested in politics, no less interested in the 2012 campaign, and also no less likely to discuss politics with family and friends. Instead, in results from two alternate model specifications, I find people with disabilities to be positively associated with having a general interest in politics. Corresponding to the political interest result, I also find people with disabilities to be just as likely to follow the national news as people without disabilities. However, the last factor of engagement analyzed in chapter 2, political knowledge, presented a different pattern. Also from alternate model results, I show having a disability is associated with having a significantly lower level of knowledge about politics. People with disabilities are not a completely disengaged segment of the American population. Having a disability is associated with higher political interest and a similar likelihood of news attentiveness as people without a disability with commensurate other characteristics.

In chapter 3, I turned first to another psychological aspect of engagement: political efficacy. Considering mixed results between data from the GSS and the ANES, and between different operationalizations of disability, I have argued that people with disabilities do not generally experience lower levels of political efficacy relative to people without a disability. This is an important finding as efficacy provides a measure of whether people feel 1) that they understand what is going on in government and 2) that the government is responsive to them. Also in chapter 3, I tested hypotheses about disability and the likelihood of participating in four types of political activities alongside voting. In all instances, participating in a community activity, organizational membership, contacting a government official, and participating in a campaign, I find people with disabilities do not experience significantly lower engagement than people without a disability. In one case, that of contacting a government official, having a disability is positively associated with the likelihood of engagement.

Collectively the findings from chapters 2 and 3 show that, unlike what their voter turnout would suggest, and perhaps despite their low levels of political knowledge, people with disabilities are not entirely disengaged from American politics. These findings give rise to another line of inquiry, then, which can start to delve deeper into the potential political consequences of the engagement of people with disabilities. Chapter 4 focused on this line of inquiry by testing hypotheses about the political preferences of people with disabilities. The results are consistent and clear. As I have argued, having a disability is positively associated with identifying as a Democrat, adhering to a liberal political ideology, and with voting for Barack Obama in 2012.

At the outset of the dissertation I explained people with disabilities constitute a significant proportion of the American population. They are a unique, growing group and their interests have attracted bipartisan appeal in the past. The present state of disability politics is in flux, and bipartisan support for policies advantageous to people with disabilities is being challenged. The present

partisan context may be resulting from concerns about the federal deficit and the proportion of federal spending going to entitlement programs. From this dissertation we have learned that, in the post-ADA era, people with disabilities do appear to be interested in political engagement and they also appear to exhibit a cohesive set of political preferences. These conclusions have many implications for both future research and American politics in practice.

5.2: Future Research

As noted in the beginning of the dissertation, data availability is a primary limitation of research about the behavior and attitudes of people with disabilities. In this project I sought to address this limitation by drawing on two datasets, allowing for a greater repertoire of measures of both the independent and dependent variables of interest. However, there are many ways that future surveys might offer improved measures.

First, the 2006 GSS used in this study is somewhat dated, but it is the most recent GSS survey that included the module on disability. It would be especially helpful for research in this area if the GSS included the disability module in future surveys. One main reason the GSS was used in this study is that the disability module asked questions about types of disability. Along these lines, if the ANES adopted disability type questions, then researchers would be able to untangle which types of disabilities are driving the findings revealed here. Disability is similar conceptually to the notion of pan-ethnicity in race and ethnic studies— all disabilities are not the same. People with disabilities also differ from each other in two other important ways: time since the onset of disability and severity of disability. We should expect each of these factors to influence the extent to which one identifies as a person with a disability and also their ability to respond to surveys. Neither the 2006 GSS or the 2012 ANES included these kinds of measures and thus this project is unable to parse out such differences among the population of people with disabilities. The findings from this project are

confined to people that do not have the most severe of disabilities. Thus, although this research shows people with disabilities to engage with politics in many ways similar to people without disabilities, we should interpret the results with caution.

In addition to improved measures of disability, future research may also consider alternative political variables. At the broadest level, political science research about people with disabilities would benefit from time series analysis as opposed to analyses of cross-sectional data. Future studies of the political engagement and preferences of Americans with disabilities in a time series context would allow for analysis of disability, an identity related to health, in an era after the most heated debates about Obamacare have died down. Moreover, the 2006 GSS asked respondents political questions in a year without a general election, and the 2012 ANES offers data from only one presidential election year. It would be most useful to conduct similar analyses with data from elections years other than 2012. Further, this project shows people with disabilities to identify with the Democratic Party and with liberal ideology. Another possibility for future research is to go back in time, using the ANES.

Another direction of future research would focus on delving deeper into the mechanisms behind some of the substantive findings uncovered from this project. Consider, for example, that we should expect the 50 states to differ in terms of the population of people with disabilities, the population of people that receive state disability benefits, and the opportunities for political engagement. Likewise, though probably tricky in terms of sample size, future research might also examine whether people with disabilities who receive benefits engage with the political system differently than those who do not. One of the findings from this project is that having a disability was positively associated with contacting a government official in 2012. Yet, the data does not allow for analysis of *why* one might be contacting the government. People with disabilities may be contacting the government about state disability insurance or perhaps about other issues.

Related to political preferences, it was out of the scope of this project to perform a detailed analysis of the public opinion of people with disabilities on specific policy issues or to include a study of the role that disability interest groups play. Such research may be able to explain more precisely what drives people with disabilities' political preferences. More research about the public opinion of people with disabilities may also be able to shed light on my finding that having a disability is associated with a lower level of political knowledge. The political knowledge questions asked by the ANES are broad and the results uncovered here do not show that people with disabilities have low knowledge about all aspects of politics. Instead, people with disabilities may focus their political engagement on the issue(s) that matter most to them, such as the politics of health, which could be analyzed in future research.

For American politics research generally, it has not typically been the case that canonical models of political engagement and preferences include disability as demographic variable that matters for politics. The dissertation has demonstrated cases when disability surfaces as political predictor, and the ranks of people with disabilities are expected to rise. Such a large group is also certainly significant for American politics in practice (see below). Hence, I urge political science research to move in the direction of including disability status among the standard set of demographic control variables when working to explain politics.

5.3 Party Politics in the United States

Finally, the results from the dissertation yield some implications for party politics in the U.S. First of these is the finding that people with disabilities are interested in politics and are attentive to national news at levels commensurate with their other individual-level characteristics. The primary implication of this finding is that it means, politically speaking, people with disabilities are interested to be reached and they can be reached. If this is accurate, then, who might consider reaching out to

this population? First, because their voter turnout is low, but other factors of engagement are not, people with disabilities may be responsive to educational media campaigns about election administration policies and procedures. I mentioned above that people with disabilities may not be voting due to actual *and expected* difficulties at the polling place. Given people with disabilities' attentiveness to news, it is conceivable that information for understanding existing and new procedures for engagement could be disseminated to people with disabilities through the media, alleviating some concern about expected difficulties.

Suppose for a moment that such election administration outreach efforts are successful. This project has also sought to illuminate the potential political implications of the engagement of people with disabilities. The results from this study show that people with disabilities identify with the Democratic Party and with liberal ideology. I suggest, then, that it would be in the interest of the Democratic Party to explicitly target people with disabilities for their support. I noted in chapter 4 that many other minority groups in the U.S. identify as Democrats and as liberal. Also, in recent months, Republicans in Congress have been introducing legislation that people with disabilities oppose. If the Democratic Party started to organize the very large minority of people with disabilities, then there is great potential for the Party to increase its resources and for people with disabilities to gain a very serious advocate. Alternatively, people with disabilities are a malleable population, with a broad coalition of supportive caregivers including parents, children, and other family members. Such an alignment of people with disabilities under the Democratic Party coalition would be a significant move away from the days of the bipartisan legislation of the ADA and the ADA Amendments Act. Such a change could result in political backlash from the Republican Party, as the Party shifts to opposing the agenda of people with disabilities when Republicans once had supported it.

Yet, the political potential of people with disabilities is not only political in the sense that the engagement of this group would be advantageous to the Democratic Party or to certain ideas. Rather, efforts made to galvanize and organize people with disabilities, whether from election administration or party officials, will certainly move the United States toward a society that is more politically inclusive and representative. That is, the political potential of Americans with disabilities is also democratic potential. As I have argued in this dissertation, people with disabilities are not a disengaged segment of the population; their political potential is present.

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APPENDIX A: VARIABLE QUESTION WORDING AND CODING

2006 General Social Survey

Disability (Types Operationalization): 6 Types of Disabilities, coded 0 = No; 1 = Yes to the following questions:

> "Do you have a hearing problem that prevents you from hearing what is said in normal conversation even with a hearing aid?" (Yes/No)
>
> "Do you have a vision problem that prevents you from reading a newspaper even when wearing glasses or contacts?" (Yes/No)
>
> "Do you have any condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying?" (Yes/No)
>
> "Do you have any other physical disability?" (Yes/No)
>
> "Do you have any emotional or mental disability?" (Yes/No)
>
> "Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 3 months or longer, do you have difficulty doing any of the following...learning, remembering or concentrating?" (Yes/No)
>
> "Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 3 months or longer, do you have difficulty doing any of the following…Participating fully in school, housework, or other daily activities?" (Yes/No)

Disability Binary Operationalization: Respondents coded as disabled by responding yes accordingly to the above disability type questions.[11] coded 0 = Does Not Have a Disability; 1 = Has a Disability

Disability Summary Operationalization: Sum of the number of disabilities respondent indicates from above disability type questions. coded 0 = Does Not Have a Disability; 1 = Has a Disability; 2 = Has 2 Disabilities; 3 = Has 3 or More Disabilities

Party Identification: Question wording: Generally speaking do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what? coded 0 = Strong Democrat; 1 = Not Strong Democrat; 2 = Independent Leans Democratic; 3 = Independent; 4 = Independent Leans Republican; 5 = Not Strong Republican; 6 = Strong Republican

Ideology: Question wording: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged. Where would you place yourself on this scale? coded 1 = Extremely Liberal; 2 = Liberal; 3 = Slightly Liberal; 4 = Moderate; 5 = Slightly Conservative; 6 = Conservative; 7 = Extremely Conservative

[11] The General Social Survey question about labor force status does not include a response option for disability.

Internal Efficacy: Index combines two questions, values range 2-10, 10 being higher efficacy

> Question wording: "Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country?" coded 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree
>
> Question wording: "Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that I feel that I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am?" coded 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree

External Efficacy: Question wording: "Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that I feel that people like me don't have any say about what government does?" coded 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree

Age: Respondent age in years, values range 18-89.

Female: Gender of the respondent coded 0 = male; 1 = female

Married: Question wording: "Are you currently—married, windowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?" coded 0 = Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never Married; 1 = Married

Black: Question wording: "What race do you consider yourself?" coded 0 = White; Other (specified); 1 = Black

Hispanic: Question wording: "What race do you consider yourself?" coded 0 = White; Black; Other (specified); 1 = Hispanic/Latino

Education: Respondent's highest year of school completed coded 0 = No Formal Schooling; 1 = first grade; 2 = second grade; 3 = third grade; 4 = fourth grade; 5 = fifth grade; 6 = sixth grade; 7 = seventh grade; 8 = eighth grade; 9 = ninth grade; 10 = tenth grade; 11 = eleventh grade; 12 = high school graduate; 13 = 1 year of college; 14 = two years of college; 15 = 3 years of college; 16 = 4 years of college; 17 = 5 years of college; 18 = 6 years of college; 19 = 7 years of college; 20 = 8 years of college

Household Income: Question wording: "In which of these groups did your total family income, from all sources, fall last year before taxes, that is? coded 1 = Under $1,000; 2 = $1,000-$2,999; 3 = $3,000-$3,999; 4 = $4,000-$4,999; 5 = $5,000-$5,999; 6 = $6,000-$6,999; 7 = $7,000-$7,999; 8 = $8,000-$8,999; 9 = $10,000-$14,999; 10 = $15,000-$19,999; 11 = $20,000-$24,999; 12 = $25,000 +

South: Respondent region of interview coded 0 = New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, Mountain, Pacific; 1 = South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central

Religiosity: Question wording: Asked of everyone with a religious preference- Would you call yourself a strong <Preference> or a not very strong <Preference>? coded 1 = no religion; 2 = somewhat strong; 3 = not very strong; 4 = strong

2012 American National Election Study

Disability: Permanent disability mentioned in response to employment status of respondent coded 0 = Permanent Disability Not Mentioned; 1 = Permanent Disability Mentioned

Political Interest: Question wording: "How often do you pay attention to what's going on in government and politics?" coded 1 = Never; 2 = Some of the Time; 3 = About Half the Time; 4 = Most of the Time; 5 = Always

Campaign Interest: Question wording: "Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you have been very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in the political campaigns so far this year? coded 1= Not much interested; 2 = Somewhat interested; 3 = Very much interested

Discuss with Family: Question wording: "Do you ever discuss politics with your family or friends?" coded 0 = No; 1 = Yes

Political News Attentiveness: Index of four questions about following national politics, values range 1-20, 20 being most attentive. Each question respondent coded 1 = None at all; 2 = A Little; 3 = A Moderate Amount; 4 = A lot; 5 = A Great Deal. Question wordings below:

> *Internet News* "How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on the Internet?"
> *Television News* "How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on TV?"
> *Newspaper News* "How much attention do you pay to news about national politics in printed newspapers?"
> *Radio News* "How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on the radio?"

Political Knowledge: Index of responses to 7 questions about American politics, values range 0-7, 7 being most knowledgeable. Each question coded 1 = correct; 0 = incorrect question wordings: =

> "Do you happen to know how many times an individual can be elected President of the United States under current laws?"
> "Is the U.S. federal budget deficit, the amount by which the government's spending exceeds the amount of money it collects, now bigger, about the same, or smaller than it was during most of the 1990's?"
> "For how many years is a United States Senator elected, that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. Senator?"
> "What is Medicare?"
> "On which of the following does the U.S. federal government currently spend the least?"
> "Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington BEFORE the election [this/last] month?"
> "Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the U.S. Senate BEFORE the election [this/last] month?"

Party Identification: coded 1 = Strong Democrat; 2 = Not Very Strong Democrat; 3 = Independent Leans Democrat; 4 = Independent; 5 = Independent Leans Republican; 6 = Not Very Strong Republican; 7 = Strong Republican. Question wordings:

> "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican an Independent, or what?"
>
> If responded Democrat or Republican- "Would you call yourself a strong Democrat/Republican?"
>
> If responded Independent, No Preferences or Don't Know- Do you think of yourself as close to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

Strength of Party Identification: coded 1 = Independent; 2 = Independent Leaner; 3 = Not Very Strong Democrat, Not Very Strong Republican; 4 = Strong Democrat, Strong Republican. Question wording same as *party identification*.

Ideology: Question wording: "Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?" coded 1 = Extremely; 2 = Liberal; 3 = Slightly Liberal; 4 = Moderate (middle of the road); 5=Slightly Conservative; 6 = Conservative; 7 = Very Conservative

Strength of Ideology: coded 1 = Moderate; 2 = Slightly Liberal, Slightly Conservative; 3 = Liberal, Conservative 4 = Extremely Liberal, Extremely Conservative. Question wording same as *ideology*.

Vote Choice: Question wording: How about the election for President? Did you vote for a candidate for President? If yes, asked: Who did you vote for? coded 0= Obama; 1 = Romney

Internal Efficacy: Index combines four questions, each asked to half the sample has values 2- 10, 10 being most internally efficacious. Question wordings:

> "Sometimes, politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on. Do you agree strongly; agree somewhat; neither agree nor disagree; disagree somewhat; disagree strongly with this statement?" coded 1 = Agree Strongly; 2 = Agree Somewhat; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Disagree Somewhat; 5 = Disagree Strongly
>
> "How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you can't really understand what's going on?" coded 1 = Always; 2 = Most of the Time; 3; About Half of the Time 4; Some of the Time; 5 = Never
>
> "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country. Do you agree strongly; agree somewhat; neither agree nor disagree; disagree somewhat; disagree strongly with this statement?" coded 1 = Disagree strongly; 2 = Disagree Somewhat; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree Somewhat; 5 = Agree Strongly
>
> "How well do you understand the important political issues facing our country?" coded 1 = Not Well at All; 2 = Slightly Well; 3 = Moderately Well; 4 = Very Well; 5 = Extremely Well

External Efficacy: Index combines responses to four questions, each asked to half the sample has values 2-10, 10 being most externally efficacious. Question wordings:

> "Public officials don't care much what people like me think. Do you agree strongly; agree somewhat; neither agree nor disagree; disagree somewhat; disagree strongly with this statement?" coded 1 = Agree Strongly; 2 = Agree Somewhat; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Disagree Somewhat; 5 = Disagree Strongly
>
> "How much do public officials care what people like you think?" coded 1 = Not at All; 2 = A Little; 3 = A Moderate Amount; 4 = A Lot; 5 = A Great Deal
>
> "People like me don't have any say about what the government does. Do you agree strongly; agree somewhat; neither agree nor disagree; disagree somewhat; disagree strongly with this statement?" coded 1 = Agree Strongly; 2 = Agree Somewhat; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Disagree Somewhat; 5 = Disagree Strongly
>
> "How much can people like you affect what the government does?" coded 1 = Not at All; 2 = A Little; 3 = A Moderate Amount; 4 = A Lot; 5 = A Great Deal

Community Activity: Combines responses to two questions. coded 0 = No to both; 1 = Yes to one; 2 = Yes to both. Question wordings:

> "During the past 12 months, did you attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?" (Yes/No)
>
> "During the past 12 months, have you worked with other people to deal with some issue facing your community?" (Yes/No)

Membership in Organizations: Question wording: "How many organizations are you currently a member of?" coded 0 = 0; 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3 or more

Contact Government Official: Question wording: "During the past 12 months, have you telephoned, written a letter to, or visited a government official to express your views on a public issue?" coded 0 = No; 1 = Yes

Campaign Activity: Index combines "Yes" responses to seven questions, values range 0-7, 7 being most involved. Question wordings:

> "We would like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates?" (Yes, No)
>
> "Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate?" (Yes, No)
>
> "Did you wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or place a sign in your window or in front of your house?" (Yes, No)

"Did you do any (other) work for one of the parties or candidates?" (Yes/No)

"During an election year people are often asked to make a contribution to support campaigns. Did you give money to an individual candidate running for public office?" (Yes/No)

"Did you give money to a political party during this election year?" (Yes/No)

"Did you give money to any other group that supported or opposed candidates?" (Yes/No)

Voted: Summary variable of whether or not R voted in the November general election coded 0 = did not vote; 1 = voted

Age: Respondent age in categories of years. coded 1 = 17-20; 2 = 21-24; 3 = 25-29; 4 = 30-34; 5 = 35-39; 6 = 40-44; 7 = 45-49; 8 = 50-54; 9 = 55-59; 10 = 60-64; 11 = 65-69; 12 = 70-74; 13 = 75+

Female: Gender of the respondent coded 0 = Male; 1 = Female

Married: Question wording: *"*Are you now married, widowed, divorced, separated or never married?" coded 0 = Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married; 1 = Married

Black: Respondent race and ethnicity coded 0 = Non-Black; 1 = Black

Hispanic: Respondent race and ethnicity coded 0 = Non-Hispanic; 1 = Hispanic

Education: Respondents highest level of education coded 1= less than high school; 2= graduated high school; 3= some college; 4= graduated college; 5 = graduate degree

Household Income: Family income coded 1 = Under $5,000; 2 = $5,000-$9,999; 3 $10,000-$12,499; 4 = $12,500-$14,999; 5 = "$15,000-$17,499; 6 = $17,500-$19,999; 7 = $20,000-$22,499; 8 = $22,500-$24,999; 9 = $25,000-$27,499; 10 = $27,500-$29,999; 11 = 30,000-$34,999; 12 = "$35,000-$39,999; 13 = $40,000-$44,999; 14 = $45,000-$49,999; 15 = $50,000-$54,999; 16 = $55,000-$59,999; 17 = 60,000-64,999; 18 = $65,000-$69,999; 19 = $70,000-$74,999; 20 = $75,000-$79,999; 21 = $80,000-$89,999; 22 = $90,000-$99,000; 23 = $100,000-$109,999; 24 = $110,000-$124,999; 25 = $125,000-$149,999; 26 = $150,000-$174,999; 27 $175,000-$249,999; 28 = $250,000 or more

South: Respondent sample region coded 0 = Northeast, Northcentral, West; 1 = South

Religiosity: Question wording: Do you consider religion to be an important part of your life, or not? Coded 0= Not Important; 1 = Important