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**Self-Financing Candidates
in the 1996 Congressional Elections**

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the behavior of self-financed candidates for the 105th U.S. House of Representatives (1995-96 election cycle). In the first section I evaluate self-financers as strategic politicians and examine their decisions to run for office. In the second section I consider the presumed electoral advantage held by wealthy candidates. I use 1996 primary and general election results for self-financed and "regular" candidates to test whether self-financing is as valuable to a campaign as fundraising and to measure the marginal effects of self-investment.

INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF THE SELF-FINANCED CANDIDATES

In 1971, Congress passed the first campaign finance reform law since the Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1925. The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) limited campaign expenditures, including a candidate's personal expenditures on his own behalf. The Supreme Court invalidated these provisions in *Buckley v. Valeo* (424 U.S. 1, 12-59 (1976)), ruling that campaign expenditures are tantamount to political speech, and to restrict them violates the First Amendment. The Court applied this interpretation to the overall limits on spending as well as to the limits on candidates' personal funding of campaigns, or self-financing.

In the 1996 federal election cycle, 724 House candidates took advantage of the *Buckley* decision on self-financing. These candidates gave their own campaigns net loans and contributions in excess of \$1,000 per election (the contribution limit that applies to other individuals giving to federal campaigns) totaling \$39,948,696 (FEC no date). The number of candidates self-financing \$100,000 or more has increased steadily in recent years, from 44 in 1988 to 93 in 1994 to 109 in 1996 (Walsh 1996, Sheffner 1996, FEC no date). Table 1 presents the distribution of self-financing activity among all major-party House candidates in 1996.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

Self-financers have populated the American political landscape since the birth of the Republic. Mutch reports, “Politics in the eighteenth century was a gentleman’s pursuit, and candidates paid their own expenses” (1988, xv). The recent resurgence of wealthy candidates has been greeted by criticism and concern. For example, Governor Don Sundquist (R-Tennessee) complains that “people who founded this country intended for people to serve in public office from all walks of life, and unless we can figure out some way to change it, we’re heading toward a government of millionaires who in effect will buy seats” (Sher, LaPolt and Woods 1996). (The governor’s words may be motivated by personal experience — his 1994 opponent invested \$6.5 million in his campaign.) A *New York Times* editorial echoes this warning: “Congress has no more urgent task than to clean up a campaign financing system that gives undue advantage to rich candidates.” The *Times* calls for “a fight now on principle to reclaim the political system from the clutches of wealthy candidates. . .” (*New York Times* 1996).

These commentators and many others sound a common theme, that contests involving deep-pocketed candidates are inherently unfair. The normative concern about unfairness rests on an assumption that self-financers enjoy an electoral advantage. Whether they do or not is a matter of empirical fact that remains to be established — political scientists have paid surprisingly little attention to self-financed candidates. A notable exception is Clyde Wilcox, whose study of the 1984 congressional elections describes the distribution of self-financers in the candidate population and proposes measures of candidate self-investment. Wilcox finds that personal funds are an important campaign resource, especially when invested as “seed money,” and concludes:

These candidate investments do not seem to be having a major impact on electoral outcomes, but when the indirect effects of early investments are taken into account, the median investment accounts for about 1% of the vote of some credible non-incumbents. (1988, 278)

In a subsequent study Wilcox and his co-authors further explore the use of self-investment as seed money. Biersack, Herrnson and Wilcox (1993) examine the timing of campaign receipts and conclude that early money, whether self-financed or raised, is indeed like yeast, but individual contributions make the dough rise more than self-investment does.¹ Self-financed seed money is especially important for inexperienced challengers. The authors argue;

Self-financing may be a viable strategy early in a campaign for [inexperienced] candidates. Presumably, such a candidate needs to acquire name recognition in the district rapidly in order to collect individual contributions and to do well enough in benchmark polls to convince institutional actors that the candidate can mount a viable campaign. Early money from whatever source can help the candidate acquire the visibility to meet these ends (545).

Other authors refer to self-financers in wider-reaching studies. I shall catalog such references, but note that they do not build on one another, nor do most of them include more than cursory descriptions. Crotty offers anecdotal evidence of “the positioning advantages ready wealth allows a candidate” in the U.S. Senate elections of 1970 (1977, 128). In his analysis of money in the 1974 and 1976 congressional elections, Jacobson (1980) notes that non-incumbents contributed much more to their own campaigns than did incumbents, and non-incumbents in competitive districts contributed much more, on average, than did non-incumbents in long-shot districts. Alexander makes a similar finding: his tabulation of self-investment by House and Senate candidates in elections from 1974 through 1984 reveals that non-incumbents self-finance much more frequently than incumbents (U.S. Senate 1986, 332). Herrnson finds a similar pattern for the 1992 cycle (1995, 147, see Table 6-3). Ornstein, Mann and Malbin cite two examples of

¹ The motto of EMILY's List, the fundraising network for pro-choice Democratic women candidates, is “Early

self-financers as evidence that “having money means having the ability to be heard; it does not mean the voters will like what they hear” (1996, 76). (Of course, this can apply to any candidate, not just a self-financer.) Jacobson (1997) reports that candidates prefer to self-finance with loans, which can be repaid with raised contributions if the candidate wins, rather than contributions. He also notes self-financers’ tendency to lose elections.

This body of literature offers a very preliminary, incomplete description of self-financers behavior. The question of electoral advantage remains to be rigorously addressed. Do self-financed candidates enjoy an advantage over rivals who must collect contributions? Table 2 suggests that they do not: self-financers win primary and general elections less frequently than non-self-financers. Candidates who self-financed more than \$2,000 won 50.1% of their nominating contests and 12.5% of general elections. Among non-self-financers 60.1% won nomination and 40.2% won the general election.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

Table 2 does not answer the question definitively. Many factors affect election outcomes, such as partisan composition of the district, whether the seat is open or defended by an incumbent and the candidates’ relative quality. These factors may covary with self-investment and mask the true relationship between self-financing and election outcomes. I thus turn first to a consideration of the seats sought by self-financers. Are they relatively “easier” or “harder”? I then examine election outcomes with controls for other important variables. My purpose is twofold: first, to

Money Is Like Yeast – it makes the dough rise.”

determine whether self-financers act as strategic politicians, and second, to measure the marginal advantage of self-financing, if one indeed exists.

DATA AND MEASURES

The data for this study combine detailed campaign finance information and the political history of each candidate and district. Campaign finance information, election results and seat status (defended or open) came from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) data files HSTAP1 and BYREPT96. Candidate officeholding experience was compiled from periodic election round-ups in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. If CQ never mentioned a candidate's officeholding experience, that candidate was presumed to have none. Election results from previous cycles used to compute the party performance score for each district were compiled from the 1996 and 1998 editions of the *Almanac of American Politics*.

The foundation of the dataset is the FEC file HSTAP1 which includes records for 2142 candidates.² The analysis in this paper is based on a subset of 493 of the 1163 major-party non-incumbents. My purpose in eliminating 1649 cases is to focus on a pool of comparable, competitive candidates and reduce "noise" that may obfuscate patterns related to self-investment. Incumbents and "hopeless" candidates (from major or minor parties) are so distinct that they cannot be analyzed together with the base category of credible non-incumbents. For example, only 34 of 384 incumbents (8.8%) running in 1996 invested in their own campaigns and 361 (94.0%) won re-election. Only two incumbents were in the top category, self-financing \$100,000 or more. These figures stand in stark contrast with the non-incumbent self-investment rate of

49.9% and election rate of 7.5%. Including the incumbents would clearly have confused the findings, and there are too few cases to consider self-financing incumbents separately. Members of minor parties lack “face credibility” – only two independents won in 1996, and both had strong party ties. Incumbent Bernie Sanders caucuses with the Democrats and was supported by their congressional campaign committee; congressional widow Jo Ann Emerson ran with support from the local Republican party when her husband died after the Republican filing deadline had passed. I thus omitted all incumbents and minor-party candidates from the study. For a discussion of how I winnowed the field of major-party non-incumbents, please see the Appendix.

“Self-financing,” sometimes called “self-investment” or “personal investment,” is measured both continuously and categorically. The continuous measure used in the logistic regressions presented later is the cumulative total of net loans and contributions received (and reported) through the disclosure period closing 12 days before an election. Since I am primarily interested in the effect of self-financing on election outcomes, I did not count activity that occurred after the election, as reported in the post-general and year-end FEC filings. I also adjusted each candidate’s self-financing measures to exclude loan repayments that exceeded cumulative loans through any given period as such repayments must have been applied to self-debt from previous election cycles.³ The categorical measure of self-financing, based on the continuous measure, includes three levels: the upper group who self-financed more than \$100,000, a middle group whose net investments totalled more than \$2,000 but less than \$100,000, and “non-self-financers,” who provided \$2,000 or less to their own campaigns. (I reasoned that a candidate

² This figure does not count candidates in special elections and candidates for non-voting delegate from American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

³ Table 1 is the exception to this coding rule. There I use the simple sum of loans and contributions reported during the entire cycle to render the figures comparable to summaries from other years cited above.

who contributes \$1,000 per election to his own campaign does not exploit *Buckley's* exemption for personal expenditures, and thus should be classified as a "non-self-financer.")

SELF-FINANCERS AS STRATEGIC POLITICIANS

Gordon Black (1972) theorizes that prospective candidates use a strategic decision calculus to decide whether or not to run for a particular office:

$$U_O = P*B - R.$$

P is the estimated probability of winning office O , B is the benefit accrued by winning O , and R is the cost (or risk) of running for O . If a candidate's net expected benefit (or utility) of running for O , U_O , is greater than zero, he will throw his hat into the ring.

In their landmark work *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections*, Jacobson and Kernell (1983) focus on the R term, arguing that an elected official who contemplates climbing the political ladder counts the opportunity cost of giving up his current office in his calculation of R . For officeholders, then, the expected benefit of a campaign, $P*B$, must be large enough to offset the higher cost of running. Jacobson and Kernell predict and confirm that political veterans would thus be observed running for House in more favorable climates, that is, with higher values of P .

I assume that candidates prefer spending their supporters' money to spending their own. Those familiar with Hubert Humphrey's assessment of fundraising as a "disgusting, degrading, demeaning" experience might question this assumption, but the behavior of incumbents backs it up. The group that can most easily raise money does. The assumption about candidates' spending preferences implies that the cost of seeking office (R) is higher for self-financers than for

others, *ceteris paribus*. Like officeholders, then, self-financers should seek higher values of P to offset the increased costs. In other words, they should run for “easier” seats.

The dataset includes two objective, district-based indicators of probable success, both available as “tea leaves” for all candidates to read: party performance in recent elections and incumbent status of the district. Table 3 presents the mean value of party performance, measured as the average share of the two-party vote in recent elections, for three categories of self-financer. As expected, larger self-investment is associated with a stronger party performance. That is to say, the candidates who self-financed the most ran in the most hospitable districts. The differences are especially striking among politically inexperienced candidates. Those with no self-investment ran more often in districts where their own party tended to lose. The average party score for those inexperienced non-self-financers was 47.9%. Inexperienced candidates who invested \$100,000 or more ran where their party tended to win, with an average party performance of 52.8%.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

Table 4 tells a similar story. Each cell represents the percent of candidates in the row category running for open seats. In both experience categories, the \$100,000-plus self-financers were about twice as likely as non-self-financers to seek open seats. Overall, 60.5% of the biggest self-financers ran in open districts and only 33.9% of non-self-financers did.

[TABLE 4 HERE]

Note that for both measures of P the difference between \$100,000 self-financers and non-self-financers appears slightly smaller when experience is not held constant. The party score “gap” is 3.6% without controls for experience; with experience controlled, the gap is 4.9% among amateurs and 4.2% among previous officeholders. With the second measure, percent of candidates seeking open seats, the \$100,000 self-financers were 1.8 times as likely as non-self-financers to run for an open seat. Controlling for previous experience, that factor is also 1.8 for inexperienced candidates but rises to 2.1 for political veterans.

Self-financers in 1996 thus appear to be strategic politicians. They choose their battles carefully, putting personal investment at risk when they are likely to be successful on Election Day. This finding validates Jacobson and Kernell’s theory of strategic politicians with a new classification of candidates, and it is an important piece of prior information for the second part of this study. As one considers election outcomes, one must note that self-financed candidates tend to run in seemingly “easier” districts.

AN ELECTORAL ADVANTAGE FOR SELF-FINANCERS?

The question of electoral fairness can be conceptualized in various ways. Is it “unfair” that self-financers do not have to spend time raising money? Is it unfair that they often outspend their opponents? That they can jumpstart their campaigns and be deemed “viable” at the outset? That they don’t have to conserve resources early on because they can write another check in the final weeks? These concerns are implicit in the complaints of commentators cited above. For this study I will defer on the normative question of fairness and focus on the empirical question of electoral advantage.

One should certainly expect that self-investment spent enhances a candidate's prospects for victory.⁴ Several authors have found that challenger spending is an important determinant of challenger vote share (Abramowitz 1991; Green and Krasno 1988, 1990; Jacobson 1978, 1985, 1990; Kenny and McBurnett 1994). However, the value of campaign receipts entails more than their purchasing power. Contributions can serve to signal a candidate's strength to other players – potential opponents, opinion leaders, reporters, strategic campaign contributors. In this respect, remarks by Herrnson are suggestive: “Symbolically, [small contributors] are often viewed as an indicator of grass-roots support” (1995, 131). Furthermore, “[Fundraising events] are also helpful in generating favorable press coverage and building goodwill among voters” (135). These fringe benefits of low-dollar events do not accrue to candidates who forego fundraising.

The process of fundraising also adds value to a campaign. To raise campaign funds, a candidate must reach out to local groups⁵ and individuals. In the course of soliciting a contribution, a candidate forges ties, engages communities and learns about the issues his constituents favor. For individual or organizational supporters making a contribution is a larger commitment than offering an endorsement. The bond between candidate and electoral constituency is thus stronger when cemented by fundraising than when borne of other political activity. Consequently I expect that self-investment does offer an electoral advantage — it allows a candidate to spend more — but it is not as advantageous as additional raised contributions of the same amount.

⁴ I have not yet determined whether any candidates fail to spend self-financed amounts during the election period.

⁵ Most federal PAC's only contribute to candidates at the request or with the approval of a local affiliate. The member unions of the AFL-CIO are the best example of this rule. Before a national union will contribute federal PAC funds to a congressional candidate, a local affiliate in the candidate's district must formally request the contribution.

Table 5 presents the success rates of the 493 candidates in the filtered pool. Self-financers still have less success than non-self-financers in both primary and general elections. But once nominated, they now seem to have a slight edge in November contests. This may be due to their strategic behavior – they run for easier seats and thus should be expected to win more often. I use multivariate analysis with a logistic regression model to scrutinize these success rates more closely.

[TABLE 5 HERE]

Primary elections. First I consider self-financers' success in nominating contests. (The analysis excludes candidates chosen by party conventions.) I model primary election outcomes as dependent on three factors, the competitiveness of the primary, the relative quality of the candidates and the candidate's funding for the primary election. I estimate the model with a logistic regression. I measure competitiveness with the number of candidates in the party primary (labeled NOPRICAN in the output). I also include a dummy variable for open seat races (OPEN) because they attract interest from strong (i.e., experienced) candidates, as shown in Table 4. Party performance should also indicate a competitive field but was omitted from the final model because it was statistically insignificant in all variations of the model and aggravated concerns about multicollinearity. A more competitive primary should be harder to win so the two competitiveness measures are expected to have negative coefficients. To operationalize relative quality I compare the candidate's officeholding experience, measured on a three-point scale (none, local, legislative/state), to that of his most experienced primary opponent. The resulting measure (EXPGAP) ranges from -2 to +2. An advantage in experience should enhance a

candidate's prospects, so this variable is expected to have a positive coefficient. Finally, spending power should increase the probability of winning, but under my theory a dollar raised is worth more than a dollar self-financed, so I include net self-investment through the pre-primary FEC report (PRISELF) and receipts from all other sources (PRICONT) separately. Both are expected to have positive coefficients, and PRICONT should have a larger coefficient than PRISELF. Both variables are rescaled as multiples of \$100,000.

Logistic regression results are presented in Table 6. The model fares well, predicting wins and losses equally well with 76% correct predictions. This represents a marked improvement over the best "naïve" model, which would always predict a loss and would do so correctly for 51.1% of the cases. All coefficients have the expected signs and are statistically significant at $p < .001$ except primary self-investment. PRISELF has a very small, negative, statistically insignificant coefficient. This result suggests, somewhat surprisingly, that not only is self-investment less important than fundraising, it adds no value whatsoever to a nomination campaign!

[TABLE 6 HERE]

Logit coefficients cannot be interpreted as marginal effects on the dependent variable as easily as can linear model coefficients. In logistic regression the dependent variable is the predicted probability of a binary outcome, in this case of primary election victory, and the marginal effect of any one variable depends on its own value as well as the values of the other variables in the equation. I have thus included as the third column of Table 6 the marginal effect of a one-unit increase in each variable, when all variables are set at their mean values. Note how

small the marginal effect of primary self-investment is — an increase from \$31,208 (the mean of primary self-investment) to \$131,208 (recall that campaign finance variables are scaled in hundred-thousand-dollars) reduces a candidate's probability of winning the nomination by -.015. This is a negligible amount, and since the coefficient comes nowhere close to meeting conventional tests of statistical significant, one cannot reject the claim that self-financing has no effect at all in primary elections.

This finding is remarkably counter-intuitive and seems to be driven in part by outliers. One candidate, Republican Harry Eggleston of Missouri's 9th district, invested \$556,769 in his unsuccessful quest for the nomination to oppose Democratic Rep. Harold Volkmer. Eggleston's self-investment topped the next-largest self-financer by \$80,000 and was more than 7 standard deviations above the mean primary self-investment. Dropping Eggleston and re-running the analysis produces a positive but still statistically insignificant coefficient for PRISELF. Dropping the second-, third- and fifth-largest self-financers, who also lost their primaries, yields a positive coefficient for PRISELF, statistically significant at the $p < .10$ level and about half as large as the coefficient for PRICONT. The other coefficients change just slightly. For information purposes Table 7 presents the updated coefficients side-by-side with the original results; however, because the outliers were dropped *post hoc* I will refrain from claiming vindication of my theory, that self-financing is beneficial but not as much so as campaign contributions.

[TABLE 7 HERE]

General elections. I constructed a similar model for general election outcomes. Note that the model only includes general election participants — candidates who were not party nominees

were excluded rather than coded as general election losers. The field now has only two candidates in each district, so there are no “competitiveness” measures *per se*. I include party performance (NORMVOTE) to gauge the size of the candidate’s electoral base, or his advantage due to external political factors. I have already demonstrated in Table 4 that this variable covaries positively with self-investment, so omitting it from the equation might unduly inflate the measure of electoral advantage. In measuring the candidates’ relative quality I do not want to compare incumbent and non-incumbent opponents directly, so I include a dummy variable for challengers (CHAL) and an interaction term measuring the experience of open seat opponents on the three-point scale (OSOPPEXP). I also use the three-point scale to measure the candidate’s officeholding experience. Finally, I include measures of self-investment (SELFFIN) and non-self-financed receipts (CONTRIB), again measured in hundred-thousand dollar increments. The candidate strength variables (SELFFIN, NONSFREC, NORMVOTE and EXPSCALE) should increase the candidate’s chances of winning and thus are expected to have positive coefficients. The measures of opponent’s strength (CHAL and OSOPPSC) should indicate tougher battles and are expected to have negative coefficients. As in the nomination contests, I expect self-investment to have a smaller effect than contributions.

[TABLE 8 HERE]

Table 8 presents the logit results for general elections. Again, the model performs well, correctly predicting 84.5% of the outcomes (69.1% of wins and 90.4% of losses), though this is not much of an improvement over a simple model that always predicts a loss. The “always-lose” model would be correct 72.2% of the time. All coefficients have the expected signs and all but

the experience measures are statistically significant. In general elections, receipts from all sources have a positive effect on the candidate's probability of winning, but the self-financing coefficient is about one-third as large as the contributions coefficient. Marginal effects are presented in the third column as they were with the primary elections findings. When all variables are set at their means, a \$100,000 self-investment increases the candidate's predicted probability of winning by just .01. Raising another \$100,000 instead of self-financing it would increase probability of winning by .05.

I anticipate that this model may be critiqued for overlooking endogeneity in the self-financing variables. Perhaps self-financing is an indicator, not a cause, of diminished prospects. A candidate may resort to spending his own money when his campaign is in trouble and cannot attract contributions. This does not seem to be a problem, however, because self-financers run in "easier" districts. Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate that high self-investment is associated with good prospects, as indicated by open seats and higher party performance scores, not bleak ones. To be sure, I ran O.L.S. regressions with self-investment as the dependent variable and various indicators of probable success as independent variables. I found no evidence that self-financing occurs in response to a difficult campaign environment.

DISCUSSION

This study offers two important findings. The first is that self-financers behave strategically. On average a self-financer tends more often to run under promising circumstances, when his party is favored or when an incumbent has left a seat open. This finding is interesting because so many self-financers run as "outsiders" or "new voices," one would intuitively expect them not to resemble strategic politicians.

The second conclusion is that all campaign money is not created equal. The source of campaign funds appears to affect the extent to which those funds contribute to a candidate's success. The finding that self-financing is not as helpful as raised contributions has interesting implications. One cannot argue that a dollar raised buys more than a dollar self-invested — television stations, offset printers, the U.S. Postal Service and other vendors charge all candidates the same rates for campaign goods and services. I propose three alternative explanations for my findings: 1) Self-financers allocate their resources less effectively. 2) Contributions are an important signal to other political actors. 3) The process of raising money has political value. The third explanation is especially intriguing because it suggests that fundraising, so often decried as a corrupting influence on the political system, may actually serve an important non-financial purpose. Fundraising creates a meaningful link between candidate and constituency groups.

The results of this study should calm those who fear that self-financed candidates are on the verge of taking over the American government. I conclude that campaign finance and specifically fundraising be considered in a new way, not just as a means to the end of campaign spending but also as an important organizing and outreach tool.

APPENDIX. EXCLUDED CANDIDATES

In his work on political amateurs, David Canon (1990, 1993) distinguishes between “ambitious” amateurs, who run to win, and “experience-seeking” amateurs, who derive consumptive or expressive benefits from their campaigns but neither expect nor try to win. Including the “experience-seekers” would have biased the findings, as it is doubtful that such candidates would invest personal funds in campaigns they do not expect to win. It also seemed silly to consider the “fairness” of an election outcome if one candidate was not targeting victory. I was also concerned with the 283 major-party candidates in the FEC file who reported zero receipts. These candidates obviously could not have made serious runs for office. I thus separated the major-party candidates into two categories, the hopefuls and the hopeless.

Determining the criteria by which I differentiated competitive and uncompetitive candidates was admittedly an arbitrary process. As stated in the text, my purpose was to focus on the effects of self-financing without getting distracted by noise from incumbents or non-serious candidates. Of course I could not read candidates’ minds and code them “real candidate,” “sacrificial lamb,” “self-promoter” or any other label ascribing motivations, so I tried to use objective criteria. The criteria were meant to operationalize the notion that the candidate must have had some reasonable probability of winning and they were as follows:

1. The candidate’s district had either given an average of 45% (of the two-party vote) to the candidate’s party in four recent elections, or it had given a winning majority to the candidate’s party in at least one of those elections.
2. If the candidate challenged an incumbent for his party’s nomination, the incumbent received less than 60% of the vote in the 1994 general election.
3. The candidate reported at least \$10,000 in total receipts.

The elections considered for the first condition were House of Representatives in 1992 and 1994 and President in 1988 and 1992. The election results were compiled from the 1998 and 1996 editions of the *Almanac of American Politics*.

After this cut there were only 14 primary challengers left in the pool. I had already wondered whether primary challengers, like incumbents, would involve such unique dynamics that they should be dropped from consideration. With only 14 cases left I had no alternative – there was virtually no chance of having statistically significant findings with respect to primary challengers, given so few degrees of freedom.

I was reluctant to use receipts as the third criterion. It was not hard to imagine a candidate who might have had a realistic shot at winning as he first contemplated the race, but who perhaps ran a very weak campaign and was thus never able to attract contributions. I finally decided on \$10,000 as the threshold, judging that any candidate should be able to raise at least that much, no matter how bad his chances or his early campaign.

For informational purposes Table A-1 depicts the differences between the excluded and included candidates. Presented are mean values of contributions, self-investment, party performance and incumbent performance in 1994; also included are the percentage of nominees, winners and experienced officeholders in each group.

[TABLE A-1 HERE]

That there are 239 primary election winners among the “non-competitive” candidates does not trouble me. Those nominees ran in districts where their own parties fared poorly, with an

average party performance score of 34.05. Many of them ran impossible races in overwhelmingly partisan districts. There are also five general election winners in the non-competitive pool. Two were primary challengers (Carolyn Kilpatrick, who defeated Barbara-Rose Collins, and Ronald Paul, who defeated Steve Stockman) and so I am comfortable with their exclusion. The other three were Loretta Sanchez, who defeated Bob Dornan, and open seat candidates John Cooksey and Jay Johnson. The success of these three suggests that my filter was not perfect – obviously, these three actually were competitive candidates. But a *post hoc* determination of who had a chance and who did not would have been even more subjective than setting pre-election criteria. I can thus live with three winners in my pool of “non-competitive” candidates.

**Table 1. Net Self-Financing Activity Among Major-Party
Candidates for U.S. House of Representatives, 1996**

	Frequency (Percent)
0 - \$2,000	881 (57.0%)
\$2,000 - \$20,000	328 (21.2%)
\$20,000 - \$50,000	154 (10.0%)
\$50,000 - \$100,000	80 (5.2%)
\$100,000 - \$250,000	64 (4.1%)
\$250,000 or more	39 (2.5%)
N	1546

Table 2. Self-Financing and Electoral Success Among All Major-Party Candidates

Amount of self-investment		Won Nomination	Won General Election	Won General, as % of Nominees	N
0 to \$2,000	Count	549	367		913
	% within self-investment category	60.1%	40.2%	66.8%	
More than \$2,000	Count	317	79		633
	% within self-investment category	50.1%	12.5%	24.9%	
Total	Count	866	446		1546
	% within self-investment category	56.0%	28.8%	51.5%	

Table 3. Average Party Performance Score for Competitive Non-Incumbents

Experience in Elective Office	Self-Investment	Average Party Performance	Std. Err.	N
No experience	0 to \$2,000	47.91	.91	68
	\$2,000 to \$100,000	49.91	.62	190
	\$100,000 or more	52.80	1.22	54
	Total	49.97	.48	312
Some experience	0 to \$2,000	54.26	1.17	59
	\$2,000 to \$100,000	54.54	.96	100
	\$100,000 or more	58.43	2.10	22
	Total	54.92	.71	181
Total	0 to \$2,000	50.86	.78	127
	\$2,000 to \$100,000	51.50	.54	290
	\$100,000 or more	54.43	1.09	76
	Total	51.79	.41	493

F = 3.982, p<.05

Table 4. Percent of Candidates Seeking Open Seats Among Competitive Non-Incumbents

Experience in Elective Office	Self-Investment	Percent Open Seat Candidates	Std. Err.	N
No experience	0 to \$2,000	27.94	5.48	68
	\$2,000 to \$100,000	47.37	3.63	190
	\$100,000 or more	50.00	6.87	54
	Total	43.59	2.81	312
Some experience	0 to \$2,000	40.68	6.45	59
	\$2,000 to \$100,000	66.00	4.76	100
	\$100,000 or more	86.36	7.49	22
	Total	60.22	3.65	181
Total	0 to \$2,000	33.86	4.22	127
	\$2,000 to \$100,000	53.79	2.93	290
	\$100,000 or more	60.53	5.64	76
	Total	49.70	2.25	493

F = 12.956, p<.001

Table 5. Self-Financing and Electoral Success Among Competitive Non-Incumbents

Amount of self-investment		Won Nomination	Won General Election	Won General, as % of Nominees	N
0 to \$2,000	Count	86	27		127
	% within self-investment category	67.7%	21.2%	31.4%	
\$2,000 to \$100,000	Count	119	37		290
	% within self-investment category	41.0%	12.8%	31.1%	
More than \$100,000	Count	40	15		76
	% within self-investment category	52.6%	19.7%	37.5%	
Total	Count	245	79		493
	% within self-investment category	49.7%	16.0%	32.2%	

Table 6. Logistic Regression Results for Primary Elections Model

Variable	B	S.E.(B)	Est. Marginal Effect
Constant	.8964***	.2601	
PRISELF	-.0591	.1696	-.015
PRICONT	.6405***	.1332	.157
NOPRICAN	-.2559***	.0593	-.063
EXPGAP	.5395***	.1146	.133
OPEN	-.9935***	.2658	-.243

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

**Table 7. Logistic Regression Results for
Modified and Original Primary Elections Model**

Variable	B from Original Model	B* with outliers excluded	S.E.(B*)
Constant	.8964***	.8835***	.2627
PRISELF	-.0591	.3103 ⁺	.2168
PRICONT	.6405***	.6492***	.1359
NOPRICAN	-.2559***	-.2645***	.0604
EXPGAP	.5395***	.5595***	.1155
OPEN	-.9935***	-1.0578***	.2691

⁺p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 8. Logistic Regression Results for General Elections Model

Variable	B	S.E.(B)	Est. Marginal Effect
Constant	-7.197***	1.8561	
SELFFIN	.1717*	.0874	.01
CONTRIB	.5331***	.0922	.05
NORMVOTE	.0862**	.0312	.01
CHAL	-2.0169***	.5269	-.15
EXPSCALE	.3298 ⁺	.2468	.03
OSOPPEXP	-.1309	.3273	-.01

⁺p<.05, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table A-1. Comparison of Excluded and Included Candidates

	Out-Party Challengers				Primary Challengers	
	<u>Excluded</u>		<u>Included</u>		<u>All Excluded</u>	
	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Mean	Std. Error of Mean
Total Receipts	62,630.23	9,682.62	342,541.14	24,361.67	58,646.39	18,567.27
General Self-Investment	15,036.35	5,913.46	59,572.79	11,800.71	13,825.78	2,783.48
Percent with Experience in Elective Office	2.8	.8	29.3	2.9	9.7	2.6
Party Performance Score	37.41	.49	48.13	.33	63.40	.92
Incumbent's % of 1994 Vote	66.82	.64	53.72	.59	66.60	1.17
Percent Nominated	48.60	2.42	67.34	2.98	6.14	2.26
Percent General Winners	.23	.23	8.06	1.73	1.75	1.24
N	428		248		114	

	Incumbents		Open Seat Candidates			
	<u>All Excluded</u>		<u>Excluded</u>		<u>Included</u>	
	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Mean	Std. Error of Mean
Total Receipts	731,978.55	27,408.43	66,808.65	14,132.75	349,568.29	21,913.67
General Self-Investment	2,763.55	707.49	14,351.21	3,648.34	74,330.78	9,829.69
Percent with Experience in Elective Office			9.4	2.6	44.5	3.2
Party Performance Score	61.37	.54	46.74	1.20	55.49	.68
Incumbent's % of 1994 Vote	65.43	.80	63.99	.85	62.45	.99
Percent Nominated	99.48	.37	18.90	3.49	31.43	2.97
Percent General Winners	93.99	1.22	1.57	1.11	19.59	2.54
N	383		127		245	

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