The Missing 3,847 Voters: Strategic Voting in a Congressional Primary

Michael R. Wolf ▪ Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
Andrew Downs ▪ Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics, IPFW

Research on strategic voting has focused on presidential and gubernatorial primary elections. We expand this literature to congressional primaries through an explanation of a voting anomaly in an Indiana Republican congressional primary. To identify strategic voting on the part of Democrats, we ask 1) if apparent crossover voting occurred in precincts that generally support Democrat candidates and 2) whether those precincts tended to support the Democrat candidate in the general election. Lacking individual-level data, we employ an innovative research design and numerous measures to demonstrate that Democrats did crossover to support the more moderate Republican candidate. We present a counterfactual case from Georgia to support our findings that the strategic voting was a case of "second-best voting" rather than "raiding."

Party leaders often fear that an opposing party's voters may raid their primary in order to better their own their own party's chance in the general election. Despite such concerns, the political science literature on strategic voting generally concludes that crossover strategic voting (Hedlund, 1978; Abramowitz et al., 1981; Southwell, 1991; Alvarez & Nagler, 1997) is infrequent and largely not very consequential. These studies most often observe the dynamics of presidential nomination primaries, but just as congressional election dynamics differ from presidential elections, the conclusions from presidential primary studies may not fit the nature of congressional primary elections.

We argue that strategic voting explains a primary voting anomaly in Indiana's third congressional district in 2002. In 2002, a well-known moderate Republican challenged the more conservative incumbent Republican. While the incumbent won both the primary and general elections, there were 3,847 fewer votes cast for the incumbent in the general election than had voted in the Republican House primary. This means that either the Republicans sat out in the general election after being especially participatory in their primary, or Democrats crossed-over into the primary despite restrictive Indiana primary laws. While we lack individual level data, we provide numerous precinct-level measures across time and elections to illustrate a phenomenon that political science has tested with mixed success in different elections, but has as yet to empirically demonstrate for congressional elections. Democrats did indeed crossover into the Republican House primary in the attempt to elect a more moderate candidate in a conservative district. The results provide more than just an interesting case study. Rather, due to gerrymandering producing unprecedented numbers of safe House seats and more lax primary laws than those under study here, our study may foreshadow increasing crossover voting in safe House districts around the United States.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is generally assumed that American voters act "sincerely" and vote following their rational (often partisan) preferences no matter the conditions. However, the fear of crossover voting continues among party leaders and occasional evidence of its occurrence exists. While political practitioners may worry about crossover voting, the reasons for crossover voting vary and are not necessarily a result of the pernicious pursuit to raid another party to support their weakest candidate.

Some voters may tend toward using a more "sophisticated" voting calculus that takes into consideration preference and the chance or viability of different candidates (Abramson et al., 1992). Specifically, some voters not only consider their favorite candidate, but also judge the viability of that choice in both the primary and general election. Indeed, some voters may know that their candidate comfortably leads opponents within their own party, so they may employ a "positive strategic" vote, or "second-best vote" for the most acceptable candidate of the other party to insure that even if their party should lose the general election, the winner will be at least the second-ranked candidate (Southwell, 1991; Abramson et al., 1992; Alvarez & Nagler, 1997).

However, the psychological attachment most Americans have for their political party weighs against the likelihood of strategic voting. Party loyalty filters

one's views of issues and candidates (Campbell et al., 1960), which makes it difficult for most American voters to "sincerely" crossover to support another party's candidate. Raiding another party's primary also requires that an opposing party has the unlikely combination of a candidate sufficiently outside the norm of that party who has a chance of defeating the party's mainstream candidate. Finally, the level of gamesmanship involved in raiding or second-choice voting requires significant sophistication for an American voter who often does not even participate in primary elections.

Results from strategic crossover research generally support the notion that crossover voting occurs infrequently and is typically inconsequential when it does (Hedlund, 1978; Abramowitz et al., 1981; Southwell, 1991; Alvarez & Nagler, 1997). Furthermore, when strategic crossover occurs, it is typically positive strategic voting, such as second-best voting rather than raiding (Southwell, 1991). Some scholars disagree and point out that crossover voting is typically a "one-way street" whose influence tends to get watered down by looking at the overall vote and not the dissimilar and unequal benefit it has for one party at the expense of the other party (Wekkin, 1988).

Conventional wisdom also assumes that compared to closed primaries, open primaries provide a much greater opportunity for opposing parties to crossover, but often empirical research has not supported this. Hedlund's (1978) study of the 1976 Wisconsin presidential primary found that despite the fact that it was an open primary, crossover voting was not widespread. Additionally, Alvarez and Nagler (1997) used an impressive assortment of data to conclude that no substantial difference in crossover voting existed between open and closed primaries.

Presidential primaries provide the largest source of studies concerning strategic primary voting for numerous reasons. Many behavioral scholars already study presidential elections and individual-level data that vary over time, rules, context, and candidates typically exist more than they do for other types of primary elections.[1] While presidential primaries typically have provided the means of testing strategic primary voting, other offices' elections provide insight into strategic voting. In their study of the 1977 Virginia gubernatorial primary, Abramowitz, et al., (1981) suggested that primary elections in areas of one-party dominance may be more important than general elections. For U.S. House elections, this may be especially the case considering the preponderance of safe districts, the power of incumbency, and the infrequency of primary challenges. If strategic voting would occur in such circumstances, it would illustrate that voters may indeed act strategically given the opportunity.

Our case study attempts to expand the strategic voting literature to congressional primaries by positing in-depth explanation of a voting anomaly in Indiana's third congressional district in 2002. Republicans have typically dominated the third district. In 2002, Paul Helmke challenged the incumbent Republican member of Congress, Mark Souder (first elected to Congress in 1994). Helmke had served as mayor of the district's largest city (Fort Wayne, population over 220,000) from 1988 to 2000. He had broader experience as a candidate including an unsuccessful bid in 1998 for an open Indiana U.S. Senate seat against a popular former governor and current Indiana junior senator Evan Bayh. Helmke, though a Republican, was seen to be a more moderate candidate against the more conservative House incumbent Souder. Furthermore, his experience raising funds and campaigning for the Senate along with his broad name recognition provided a rare challenge against an incumbent and even more uncommon primary challenge. Local media quoted both candidates as saying they expected Democrats to register as Republicans to support Helmke, and one of the nation's top conservative magazines the *National Review* warned of the impending crossover threat to Souder (Smith, 3/10/2002; Miller, 2002). Discussion of Democrats crossing over were so pervasive that the county election board provided poll workers with additional training dealing with challenging the legitimacy of voters' partisan affiliation.

The incumbent Souder defeated the challenger Helmke; therefore, we do not undertake an effort to explain the election outcome by crossover strategic voting. Rather, as noted by the Washington correspondent for the Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette*, Allen County, which houses Fort Wayne and is the largest county in the district, actually had 3,847 fewer GOP voters support the Republican incumbent House candidate in the general election than had participated in the Republican House primary (Smith, 12/6/2002). It is not that the Democratic challenger did particularly well; Souder easily defeated his Democratic challenger and Republicans did well across the board in the general election in Allen County. What explains this atypical outcome?

Significant numbers of Democrats crossing-over to vote strategically in the primary election presents the most likely explanation. Anecdotally, many Democrats discussed the opportunity to displace the conservative incumbent Souder. This is not unprecedented within crossover strategic voting studies. For example, Abramowitz et al. (1981) found that in the 1977 Virginia Democratic Gubernatorial primary election, approximately ten percent of Republican voters crossed over to support the more conservative of the Democratic candidates in the primary. In two recent examples in Alabama gubernatorial run-off primaries, voters crossed over to support a more moderate ideological candidate.[2] While the Indiana primary laws

do not provide the incentive to crossover that Alabama's run-off primary system may, the Indiana 3rd District Republican primary likely presented an opportunity for Democrats either to play mischief in the Republican primary, or more likely to crossover in support of the more moderate Republican challenger Paul Helmke as their "second-best" candidate. Crossing over in Indiana is not a particularly easy task; to receive a party's primary ballot, Hoosiers must declare their party allegiance the day of the primary, which then becomes public record. As a further disincentive, these Republicans in name only forfeit any chance to help select Democratic candidates for any office in the primary.

HYPOTHESES, DATA AND METHODS

We posit that the reason for the excess Allen County Republican voters in the primary, who then did not vote for the Republican incumbent in the general election, was largely that Democrats crossed over to participate in the Republican primary, but then returned to support their candidate in the fall. We also hypothesize that Democrats were not raiding the Republican primary, but were trying to choose their second-best option – a moderate Republican.

Both Republicans were quality candidates with much more experience and name recognition than the would-be Democratic general election challenger. If strategic voting means accounting for viability, it is difficult to suggest that Democratic voters could not surmise that their neophyte Democrat could defeat either of the more experienced and higher quality Republican candidates just by raiding the primary. It is more likely that Democrats crossed over to support the more moderate Helmke, hoping to insure that the next representative from the district would be more liberal.

It is likely that Republicans partially explain this discrepancy as well. Some Republicans may have been unhappy with the incumbent and chose to support the Republican primary challenger. Since Republicans tend to dominate the district politically, the "real" race may take place in primary rather than general elections. With two quality candidates vying for the nomination, many Republicans were likely to have been mobilized beyond normal levels.[3] Additionally, a very contentious Republican primary was under way for Allen County Prosecutor. Republicans likely played a part in this inflated primary turnout given these rare conditions. Our measures consider these alternative hypotheses in conjunction with the main hypothesis that Democrats crossed-over.

Strategic voting implies that people behave in ways that may not be sincere and act in ways that do not typically fit with our main theories of voting behavior. Unfortunately, as is often the case with sub-presidential primary elections, no surveys or exit polls exist for either the primary election or the general election that allow for direct tests of individual-level behavior. Consequently, absent such superior data, we rely on past precinct-level data from Allen County to make cautious inferences (albeit cross-level) about which of the above hypotheses held. We realize the pitfalls of cross-level inference but draw conclusions cautiously by triangulation and a counterfactual case.[4]

To support our hypotheses that Democrats crossed-over, we must be able to answer yes to the following three sets of questions. First, was there evidence of crossover voting? Specifically, we use numerous years of voting trends to answer the question: were the results of the 2002 Republican and Democratic primaries sufficiently different from other elections in a way that would provide evidence of crossover voting? Second, was the discrepancy between Republican primary turnout and support for the Republican incumbent largest in typically Democratic precincts? That is, was the turnout in the Republican primary much greater than support for the Republican candidate in the general election in typically Democratic precincts than in typically Republican precincts? Third, did Democratic precincts illustrate a propensity to support the moderate challenger in the primary, and then strongly support their own candidate in the general election? If these Democrats were strategic, one would expect that a correlation between support for the moderate challenger in the primary and the Democrat in the general election would be high.

Beyond explaining whether strategic voting occurred, we also attempt to uncover why it may have happened. Specifically, was the crossover voting a demonstration of raiding or second-best voting options? Again, our data limits our ability to confirm tests about individual motivation, but by using a counterfactual comparison to isolate the key feature of why this particular congressional primary – with one moderate Republican challenging a conservative Republican – may have attracted Democrats whereas another Republican primary with similar primary election laws, but between two conservative Republicans did not.

Our dataset[5] compiles precinct-by-precinct participation and vote results from numerous recent primary and general elections for multiple offices.[6] Specifically, the years for these elections are 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 and the different electoral offices include Indiana Third District congressional, Presidential, and Indiana Secretary of State.[7] This provides for comparison across both time and offices. Precincts are used only if they remain generally consistent throughout the time period.[8] Finally, for counterfactual tests, we also use similar data from precincts in Gwinnett County, Georgia, for the 2002 Republican House primary and general elections, the 2000 Presidential general election, and the 2002 Georgia Secretary of State race. Gwinnett County was

chosen for three reasons. The first is that the primary election registration laws are similar. The second is that there were two quality candidates in the race. The third is that the two quality candidates were similar ideologically unlike the primary election in Allen County.

FINDINGS

Upon reading the newspaper article questioning why 3,847 votes went "missing," it was clear to the casual reader that something remarkable happened in the Allen County precincts of the 2002 Indiana Third District House primary election (Smith, December 2002). Indeed, the columnist laid out many of the hypotheses and counter-hypotheses listed above. A closer look at the precinct data suggests that the burst of participation in the Republican primary did not happen by accident nor did it happen randomly. The first illustration of possible crossover among Democrats in the Allen County precincts stems from the comparison of participation in the 1998 and 2002 non-presidential year (midterm) primaries. The number of voters who requested a Republican primary ballot increased by 86.5 percent in 2002 over 1998. For the same two elections, participation in the Democratic House primary decreased by 37.5 percent.[9]

While this difference is remarkable, what is more staggering is the sheer surge of participation in the Republican House primary relative to votes for the Republican candidate in the general election in 2002 when compared to all other years. Again, the incumbent Mark Souder dominated every primary and general election under study here. Nevertheless, compared to every other recent Republican House primary participation rate and support for the Republican House candidate in the general election, 2002 is entirely unique. In only one other instance prior to 2002 had more Republican voters (or Democrats for that matter) participated in the primary than had voted for the Republican in the general election in an Allen County precinct.[10] In 2002, however, over three-quarters of all precincts (172 of 229 precincts) had higher Republican House primary participation than support for the Republican incumbent Souder in the general election.

While impressive, these results are limited by the different sizes of the precincts. Therefore, we create a measure that attempts to standardize the impact of this unique occurrence across differently sized precincts. We refer to this measure as the "Turnout Score" to reflect the difference between those who officially turned out in the Republican House primary and those who supported the Republican in the general election. The measure is simply the votes for the Republican candidate in the general election (*Repgenvotes*) minus the number of votes cast in the Republican House

TABLE 1. Republican Turnout Score, Means & Standard Deviations, Allen County, IN, 1996 - 2002

Republican Primaries	Mean Turnout Score for Allen County Precincts	Turnout Score Standard Deviation
1996	0.5706	0.1040
1998	0.5973	0.0938
2000	0.6811	0.0983
2002	-0.1431	0.2735
2004	0.6968	0.0648

primary election (*Repprimvotes*), which is then divided by the votes for the Republican candidate in the general election.[11]

This is a rather simple measure, but it provides the relative difference in magnitude of the precinct participation no matter the size of the precinct. The resultant Turnout Score also can be interpreted easily. If the Turnout Score is negative, then the Republican primary turnout was greater than the number of votes cast for the Republican candidate in the general election and vice-versa. The further that the Turnout Score is from zero toward negative one (-1), the greater the relative primary turnout to general election support for the Republican, and the closer to positive one (+1) than zero, the greater the votes in the general election compared to participation in the Republican House primary.

Table 1 presents the summary statistics for the Republican House Turnout Score in the most recent elections. As one would expect, for 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2004, the Republican House Turnout Score is positive and rather large. In those years, votes for the Republican House candidate in the general election strongly outpaced the participation in the Republican House primary election. In 2002, however, the average Turnout Score was negative (-.1431). The participation in the Republican House primary election on average was greater in Allen County precincts than the support for the Republican candidate in the general election in those same precincts.

Taken together, the trends above provide evidence that help us to answer positively both of our first questions. The fact that more people voted in the primary than supported the Republican in the general election, and the distinctive pattern of precinct results in both the Republican and Democratic 2002 primary elections compared to recent primary and general election trends provides clear evidence that crossover voting occurred.

The trends also begin to answer our second question: was the discrepancy between Republican primary turnout and support for the Republican in the general

election highest within Democratic precincts? Table 1 illustrates that the standard deviation of the Turnout Score is nearly three times higher in 2002 than in other election years; the discrepancy between the primary and general election occurred much more frequently in particular precincts than in others and perhaps this dispersion is systematic rather than random. To test this, we use different measures to compare Turnout Scores for Democratic and Republican precincts. If Democrats strategically crossed over in the primary, the mean Democratic Turnout Score should increase and the mean Republican Turnout should decrease.

To look further for systematic differences, we first examined the differences in Turnout Scores for both parties in the 1998 and 2002 elections. First we compare the means of the Republican Turnout Score in 1998 to 2002, and do the same for the Democratic Turnout Scores in these years. The difference of means tests end up being statistically significant for both Republicans and Democrats.[12] As Table 1 suggested, Republicans supported the Republican candidate in the general election in 1998 much more than they showed up in the 1998 House Republican primary, while the participation level in the 2002 House primary outpaced the support for the Republican candidate in the general election.

The same pattern did not hold for Democrats, however. The Turnout Score was relatively high compared to any Republican Turnout Score, but instead of decreasing in 2002 as the Republican Turnout Score had, the Turnout Score for Democrats increased. This should not be surprising given the much higher participation in the Democratic House primary of 1998 than 2002 as discussed above. Still, Democrats supported their candidate in the general election despite not participating as frequently in the Democratic House primary in 2002. This can be seen in the statistically significant difference in means between the 2002 Turnout Score and the 1998 Turnout Score. As expected, the mean Democratic Turnout Score increased while the mean Republican Turnout Score decreased.

To further indicate that Democratic precincts were likely to have not supported the Republican in the general election after participating in the primary, we separately analyze Turnout Scores for precincts where Democrats and Republicans each won a majority of the House vote in the 2002 general election. In normal election cycles, one would not expect that differences between participation in a party primary and support for the eventual candidate would follow any systematic pattern. Therefore, following the conventions of typical hypotheses tests, the distribution of the Republican Turnout Score for the precincts where either the Republican or Democratic candidates scored a majority

of the general election vote would both approximate a normal curve. A random effect (which one would expect) would produce a Turnout Score distribution of precincts that clumped largely around the mean value for precincts that Democrats won as well as precincts that Republicans won in the 2002 House general election. To test this, we separate the precincts where the Democratic House candidate received 50.01 percent of the two-party vote from precincts where the Republican House candidate won 50.01 percent of the two-party vote in the 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 House general election. We then plot the distribution of the Turnout Score for each precinct.

Figure 1 presents the results of the Republican Turnout Score distribution for each election where the Democrat or the Republican won the precinct. As expected, no systematic trend emerges for the Republican Turnout Score among either the precincts that Democrats won or Republicans won in 1998, 2000, and 2004. Further, as expected, the data largely clump closer to the positive Turnout Score mean for both parties' precincts in 1998, 2000, and 2004.[13] For the 2002 cases, however, the results are quite different. First, both distributions' means are negative (primary turnout was greater than support for the Republican in the general election). However, the mean of the Turnout Score in precincts that the Democrat House candidate won in the general election is more severely negative than the Turnout Score in precincts where the Republican incumbent candidate won in the general election.

As expected, the distributions are typically normal; the Republican Turnout Score is not typically influenced by a party's power within a precinct. Indeed, Republican-won precincts show a normal distribution in all elections and Democratic precincts are normal in 1998, 2000, and 2004. The standard deviation of the Turnout Score in Democrat-won precincts in 2002 is much greater in magnitude than the deviations in 1998, 2000, and 2004. Beyond the Turnout Score mean being dramatically lower in Democrat precincts compared to Republican precincts, the distribution is skewed dramatically negative. This means that the Turnout Score was most negative in those precincts that the Democrat House candidate won in the general election. The largest surge in participation in the Republican primary that does not display relatively similar support for the Republican candidate in the general election took place in those precincts that the Democrat House candidate won. In Democratic precincts, voters registered to vote in the Republican primary, but then did not support the Republican in the general election. The latter is to be expected, but the former likely demonstrates crossover voting.

FIGURE 1. Distribution of Turnout Scores in Allen County Precincts Won By Each Party: 1998, 2000, and 2002
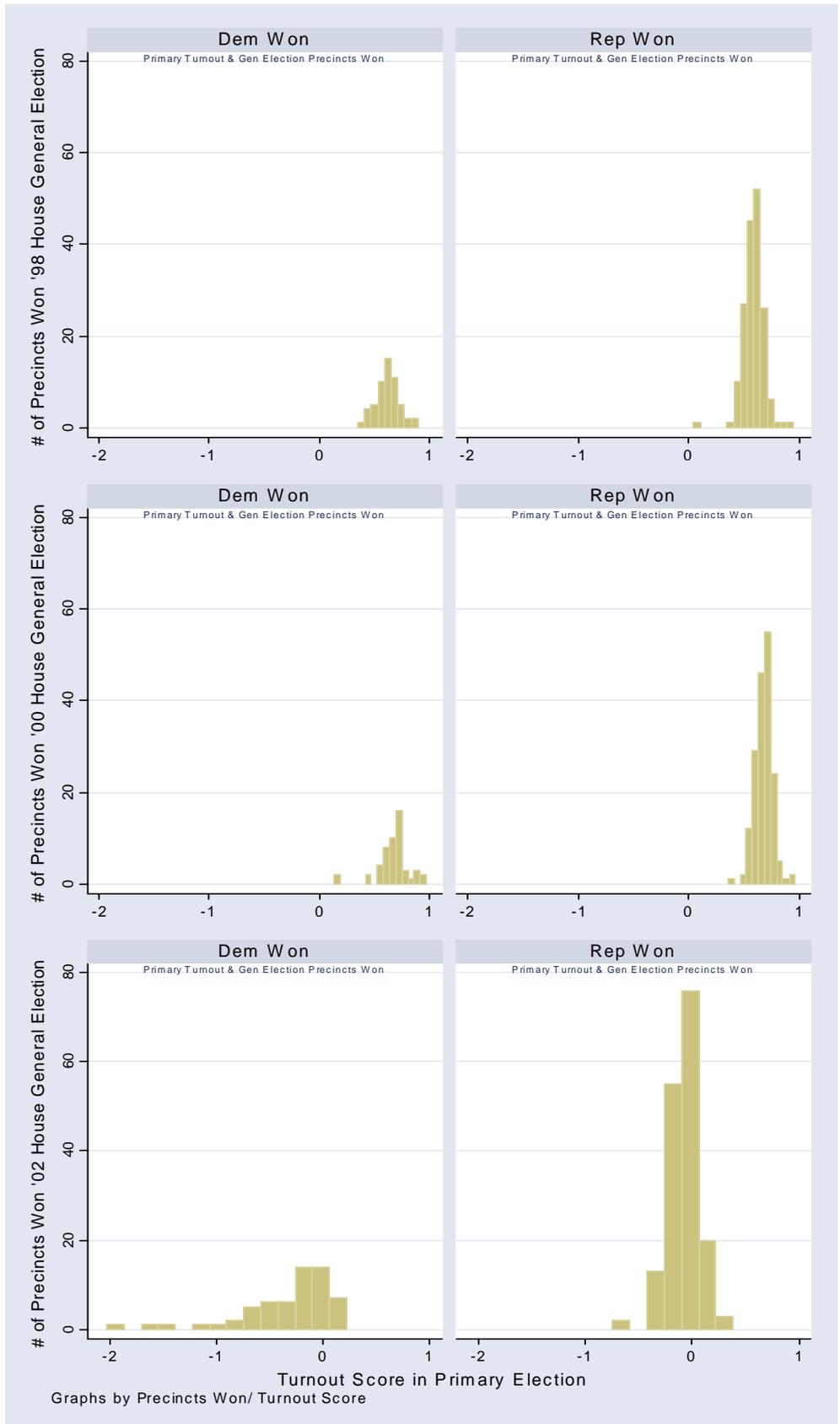
Besides the visual evidence in Figure 1, we more rigorously test the crossover hypothesis as well as evidence that these Democratic precincts with high Turnout Scores are consistently Democratic. To do so, we regressed the following by our Republican Turnout 2002 score: the percentage of two-party vote received by the Democrat House candidate in the 2002 general election; the percentage of two-party vote received by Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election, the percentage of two-party vote received by the Democrat candidate for Indiana Secretary of State in 2002, and the percentage of the two-party vote received by John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election.

One must be careful with the interpretation of these models. After all, it would be absurd to suggest that the 2000 presidential election results in these precincts could somehow be predicted by the 2002 Republican Turnout Score. What we are trying to establish, however, is whether the Republican Turnout Score in 2002 was significantly related to how well Democrats did in the specific election under study (*2002 House election*), as well as a statewide race that is independent of the 2002 House race (*2002 Secretary of State*), and in precincts in which they have historically performed well (*2000 presidential election*).[14]

Table 2 contains the regression results. As hypothesized, the coefficients are negative and statistically significant. The more a precinct tended to have people who participated in the 2002 Republican House primary but did not vote for the Republican candidate in the general election, the better the Democratic candidate did in the general election. The specific unit measure of the Turnout Score is not intuitively interpretable, but the coefficients range from -.222 for the percentage of votes received by the Democratic House candidate in 2002 to -.147 for the percentage of votes received by Gore in the 2000 presidential election. This suggests that the greatest discrepancy between participation in the Republican primary and voting for the Republican candidate occurred in precincts that were largely Democratic. These precincts supported Democrats at different levels of the ballot in 2000 (presidential election), 2002 (House and Secretary of State), and 2004 (presidential election). The relationship between the Turnout Score and Democratic precincts is systematic (Refer to Figure 1 and Table 2) and strong. All of this evidence allows us to answer affirmatively our second question. Traditionally Democratic precincts tended to be the precincts where the turnout in the Republican primary was much higher than support for the Republican candidate in the general election.

The evidence above answers our second question: typically, Democratic-supporting precincts tended to have the largest differential between their level of turnout in the Republican House primary and their support for the Republican candidate in the House gen-

TABLE 2. Percentage of Democratic Votes Received in Recent Elections in Allen County, IN Precincts Correlated with Republican 2002 Turnout Score in Precincts

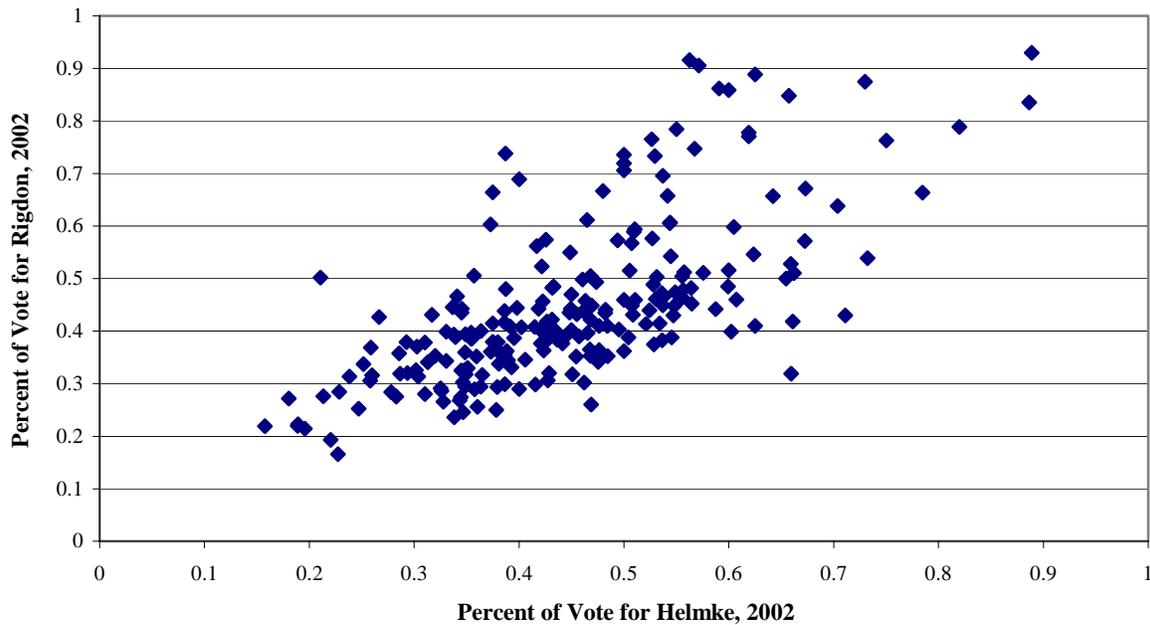|	Regression Coefficient (Std. Error)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2002 Dem House General Election	-.222 *** (.034)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2000 Dem Presidential General Election	-.147 *** (.041)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2002 Dem Sec of State General Election	-.186 *** (.039)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2004 Dem Presidential General Election	-.172 *** (.056)

* p < .05   ** p < .01   *** p < .001, one-tailed tests

Note: N = 229 for 2000, 2002 and N = 209 for 2004. Regression coefficients are unstandardized.

eral election. The results are more than just bricks in a wall. What they demonstrated was that the strange case of the "missing 3,847 voters" was likely due to Democrats voting strategically. Certainly the largest groups of "missing" voters were in Democrat precincts. To fully illustrate strategic crossover voting, however, we must provide evidence that these voters were not really missing at all. Rather, they returned home to their party in the general election. We must show that this was a calculated choice to support the moderate challenger in the primary, and then return to the Democrat in the fall.

The test used to answer our third hypothetical question is the clearest of all of our measures. In Figure 2, we plot the percentage of the vote received by the moderate Republican challenger (Helmke) in the primary by the percentage of vote for the Democrat (Rigdon) in the general election in each precinct. If Democrats crossed over, one would expect that Helmke's support would have been high in precincts where the support for the Democrat was high in the general election. This was the case according to the scatterplot in Figure 2. Where the moderate challenger Helmke did well or poorly in the primary tends to match where the Democrat did well or poorly in the general election. Visually, the relationship, minus

FIGURE 2. Scatterplot of Percent of General Election Vote for Democrat Congressional Candidate (Rigdon, 2002) and Percent of Vote for Republican Challenger in 2002 Congressional Primary Election (Helmke)

a few outliers, is clear. Statistically it is impressive. The regression coefficient is both statistically and substantively very significant. Precincts where Helmke received higher percentages of the vote were also precincts where the Democrat received a high percentage; likewise, the inverse is true. Furthermore, this was not unique to the House race; high percentages of support for Helmke were also matched by high percentages of support for Gore in 2000, the Democratic candidate for Indiana Secretary of State in 2002, and Kerry in 2004.[15]

Thus, the answer to our third question is that Democratic precincts supported the moderate challenger in the primary and then strongly supported the Democrat in the general election. Putting the answers to the questions together, we can conclude that Democratic crossover voting occurred. To an unprecedented degree, a surge of voters in Democratic precincts participated in the Republican primary. The success of the moderate challenger matched the success of the Democratic house candidate in the general election. While we know that crossover voting among Democrats occurred, we still do not fully know why. The evidence suggests that it was strategic second-best voting, but without a comparative case that shows differently, we cannot affirm this hypothesis.

THE GWINNETT CO. COUNTERFACTUAL

Even more difficult than making inferences about who voted strategically is trying to explain why such

voters would have done so. Gwinnett County, Georgia, provides an excellent comparison to Allen County because it has numerous similar features that act as controls in our comparison and help to explain whether Allen County Democrats were trying to raid the Republican primary or trying to choose their second-best candidate. Both Allen County, Indiana, and Gwinnett County, Georgia, are conservative districts with veteran conservative incumbents who typically do not face quality challengers. They also share similar restrictive primary election rules; citizens must declare a party to vote in its primary and that ends up being public record.

Due to redistricting, two rather long-serving and well-known incumbent Republican members of the House of Representatives had to run against each other in a primary election in Gwinnett County, which had remained a part of Representative John Linder's congressional district since he was first elected in 1992. Linder's challenger was Representative Bob Barr who had served since 1994 in an adjacent district.[16] Gwinnett County Democrats had, as had Allen County Democrats, an opportunity to crossover and raid the other party's primary.

The results in Gwinnett County, however, do not match those found in the Allen County case. First, unlike Allen County where 75 percent of precincts did so, in none of the Gwinnett County precincts did voters participate in the primary at higher levels than those found in support the Republican candidate (Linder) in the general election; consequently, the Republican

Turnout Score for Gwinnett County was always positive. We cannot even compare some of the outcomes in ways similar to Allen County because Linder carried every single precinct with a majority against his Democratic opponent in the 2002 general election. Nevertheless, a lack of negative scores on the Republican Turnout Score does not mean Democrats did not attempt to crossover. As we did in Allen County case, we regressed the two-party percent of the vote received in Gwinnett County precincts by the Democratic House candidate in the 2002 general election, the percentage of vote received by Al Gore in the 2000 presidential election, the percentage of votes receive by the Democrat in the 2002 Georgia Secretary of State race, and the percentage of votes received by John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election, each by the Republican Turnout Score for Gwinnett County precincts.[17]

Table 3 presents the findings for these models. Unlike Allen County, there is no statistically significant relationship between the Republican Turnout Score and higher support for Democratic candidates. This means that precincts that tend to be more supportive of Democrats did not exemplify any pattern of having higher Republican primary participation and lower support for the Republican House incumbent candidate in the general election. Furthermore, in Gwinnett County there was absolutely no relationship between precincts that supported the challenger (Barr) in the Republican primary and the Democratic candidate in the general election as had been the case in Allen County.[18] These data provide no evidence at all that any strategic crossover voting occurred in Gwinnett County.

Why, given the multiple similarities between the two counties did one (Allen) show likely crossover strategic voting and the other (Gwinnett) show no signs of strategic voting? Again, it is impossible to say without individual-level data, but one can surmise that the presence of two very conservative, quality candidates in Gwinnett County did not provide Democrats with an ideological incentive to crossover. If they had raided the primary to defeat their conservative incumbent, they would still have had no real opportunity to have a Democrat win in the general election. Therefore, they would have gone through great effort to replace one very conservative incumbent with an equally conservative and experienced member of Congress. The incentive to act in a strategic and sophisticated way was minimal for Gwinnett County Democrats. The single significant distinction between the two counties is the substantial ideological difference between the incumbent and the challenger in Allen County that did not exist between the candidates in Gwinnett County. Unlike Gwinnett County Democrats, Allen County Democrats could choose between a very conservative incumbent and a more moderate challenger who likely would have beaten the Democrat in the general elec-

TABLE 3. Percentage of Democratic Votes Received in Recent Elections in Gwinnet County, GA Precincts Correlated with Republican 2002 Precinct Turnout Score

	Regression Coefficient (Std. Error)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2002 Dem House General Election	-.017 (.135)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2000 Dem Presidential General Election	-.037 (.139)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2002 Dem Sec of State General Election	-.108 (.119)
2002 Rep Turnout Score correlated with % 2004 Dem Presidential General Election	.058 (.169)

$* p < .05$ $** p < .01$ $*** p < .001$, one-tailed tests

Note: N = 58 for 2000, 2002 and N = 54 for 2004. Regression coefficients are unstandardized.

tion. Consequently, Democrats likely viewed the crossover opportunity as a chance to have their "second-best vote."

DISCUSSION

Relatively few strategic crossover voting studies have looked at congressional primary elections. Often, this is due to the relative safety of most House elections and the limitations faced by a study conducted using aggregate level data. Despite this significant difficulty, we have demonstrated with numerous measures that, given the unique conditions of a quality moderate challenger facing an ideologue incumbent, crossover strategic voting occurred even though the primary rules were not hospitable to crossover voting. Anecdotal stories from Democrats who crossed-over into the Republican House primary in 2002 paint an interesting picture. Some had little compunction of doing so and desperately wanted a chance to replace a very conservative incumbent with a moderate. However, one colleague suggested that it was not at all easy for her to crossover. First, she had trouble betraying her affection for her party and pretending to support a party with which she strongly disagreed. Furthermore, she now felt embarrassed that public records listed her as a member of the party she disliked and expressed a lingering guilt for interfering in the other party's primary. Her testimonial demonstrates the struggles

partisans have crossing-over in a system with strict primary rules. These are the types of motivations that we wish that we had been able to tap further in this research.

While limited by ecological inference, our results illustrate that presidential primaries are not the only arena in which voters behave strategically. Given particular scenarios, voters will crossover. Indeed, in 75 percent of the precincts within Allen County, Indiana, more voters participated in the Republican primary election than voted for the Republican House candidate in the general election. This anomaly occurred most frequently in traditionally Democratic precincts. Democrats sprung at the chance to support a moderate challenger in the primary and returned to support their own candidate in the general election – thus creating a mystery of "missing" voters for an observant newspaper columnist. By comparing Allen County's results to Gwinnett County, Georgia, we illustrated that the likely reason for the strategic voting was not to raid the other party's primary. If so, one would have expected some similarity in the voting patterns between the two counties in the primary and general elections that never materialized. With caution, we surmise that this is due to the ideological distinction between the incumbent and challenger in Allen County, whereas the equally conservative challenger in Gwinnett County did not provide Democrat voters with a "second-best vote" incentive.

As far as how consequential the crossover voting was, we would have to conclude that it was inconsequential in the primary and general election outcomes. Indeed, participation skyrocketed in the 2002 House primary election beyond what Democrats alone could have provided by crossing over. The incumbent also played up the ideological distinctions by railing against his "liberal" opponent who was "friends" with Bill Clinton.[19] In a generally conservative district, for every Democrat the challenger may have gained, the conservative incumbent likely mobilized a very conservative voter who typically may not have participated in a primary. The average Turnout Score among precincts that Republicans won in the general election was also negative, so it is likely that numerous Republicans participated who may not have without the moderate interloper in the primary. Regardless, the remarkable patterns that emerged from the 2002 House primary in Allen County, Indiana, suggest that voters, given the proper set of incentives, are likely to act strategically even in sub-presidential elections. Democrats, given a unique opportunity, crossed over despite the institutional and personal hurdles involved. While this case had an inconsequential effect on the electoral outcome, the dynamics that occurred presage what might very well happen in another district where similar conditions exist. Indeed, one can imagine that the greater the chance the moderate challenger has of winning, the greater the incentive would be for people to crossover.

NOTES

[1] Many scholars have used the *American National Election Study, 1988: the Presidential Nomination Process [Super Tuesday]* study, which provided individual-level data across different states, types of primaries, and both major parties.

[2] In 1986, the more conservative Democrat Charles Graddick was stripped of the party's nomination by a three-judge Federal court panel. The judges argued that Republicans had illegally crossed over in the Democratic run-off primary and chosen the more conservative Graddick over the more liberal Bill Baxley. In 1998, the more moderate Republican Roy Blount received crossover support from Democrats in his run-off primary against the eventual culturally conservative winner Fob James.

[3] We use the "quality challenger" operationalization from Jacobson and Kernell (1983) meaning that the challenger has held previous office, and therefore is familiar with successful electioneering strategy.

[4] There are individual-level methodological debates as well, such as whether survey results are biased by respondent misperceptions as the length of time between an interview and election grows (Alvarez & Nagler, 1997; Evans, 2002), or whether independent leaners should be considered crossover voters (Wekkin, 1988) or not (Hedlund, 1978). None rivals the cross-level inference challenge we face.

[5] The data for this article was collected from three sources. (1) Election results for 1996 to 2002 primary and general elections from Allen County, Indiana, were collected from the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics website located at: http://www.mikedownscenter.org/. [Last accessed on October 28, 2007.] (2) Election results for 2004 general election from Allen County, Indiana were obtained from the Allen County Board of Elections, located at: http://www.co.allen.in.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=130&Itemid=153 [Last accessed on November 27, 2007] (3) Election results for Gwinnett County, Georgia are from the Gwinnett County Board of Registration and Elections Statement(s) of Votes Cast, Gwinnett Co., Georgia; General Elections 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and Primary Elections 1998, 2000, 2002, located at: http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/election_results/default.htm [Last accessed on November 27, 2007]

[6] Participation is the summing of all vote totals for all Republican candidates in the House primary.

[7] In Indiana, the candidates for Secretary of State are chosen at the state convention, not in a primary election.

[8] A number of southern Allen County precincts were redistricted from the Third Congressional District to the Sixth Congressional District. This geographical block of precincts does not snake through the county in a way that would undermine the analyses. Their removal is necessary as they are not part of the primary under study. Additionally, due to redistricting in 2002, twenty precincts were removed from the analysis of the 2004 data. There were 229 consistent precincts for 1996 through 2002 and 209 precincts for 2004.

[9] The number of Republican votes cast in 1998 was 15,469 and 28,855 in 2002. For Democrats, 5,406 voted in 1998 and 3,378 participated in the Democratic primary in 2002.

[10] That occurred when 10 voters appeared in a precinct's 1996 Republican House primary but only 9 voters in that precinct supported the Republican candidate in the 1996 House general election.

[11] The Turnout score formula: Turnout Score YR = (*Repgenvotes-Repprimvotes*)/*Repgenvotes.*

[12] The difference in means for Republican Turnout Scores (.5973 in 1998 and -.1431 in 2002) was .7404 (standard error of .0192). The different in means for Democratic Turnout Scores (.7858 in 1998 and .8430 in 2002) was .0572 (standard error of .0049). Both differences in means are significant: $p > t = 0.0000$.

[13] The Republican distributions are tighter due to the higher number of precincts they won.

[14] Secretary of State elections provide an excellent proxy for party voting. Indeed, Indiana uses the outcome of this election to decide which party gets the top position on ballots.

[15] Appendix Figures 1 through 3 present the graphical and regression results for these races.

[16] Linder and Barr are very conservative Republicans, each typically scoring from the mid-90 percent to 100 percent in congressional voting scores by American Conservative Union according to *CQ Politics in America, 2000*. Mark Souder, the Republican incumbent in Indiana's 3rd district also frequently received a perfect score from the American Conservative Union. The districts (and specific counties) are both generally very conservative. 70 percent of Georgia's seventh district and 66 percent of Indiana's third district supported Bush in the 2000 presidential election (27 percent and 33 percent supported Gore respectively).

[17] Due to redistricting, four precincts were removed from the analysis of the 2004 data. There were 58 consistent precincts for 2000 and 2002 and 54 precincts for 2004.

[18] β Coeff = .0197; Std Err = .2060; P>|t| = .9240

[19] Helmke and Clinton went to law school together.

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FIGURE 1. Scatterplot of Percent of General Election Vote for Democrat Presidential Candidate (Gore, 2002) and Percent of Vote for Republican Challenger in 2002 Congressional Primary Election (Helmke)
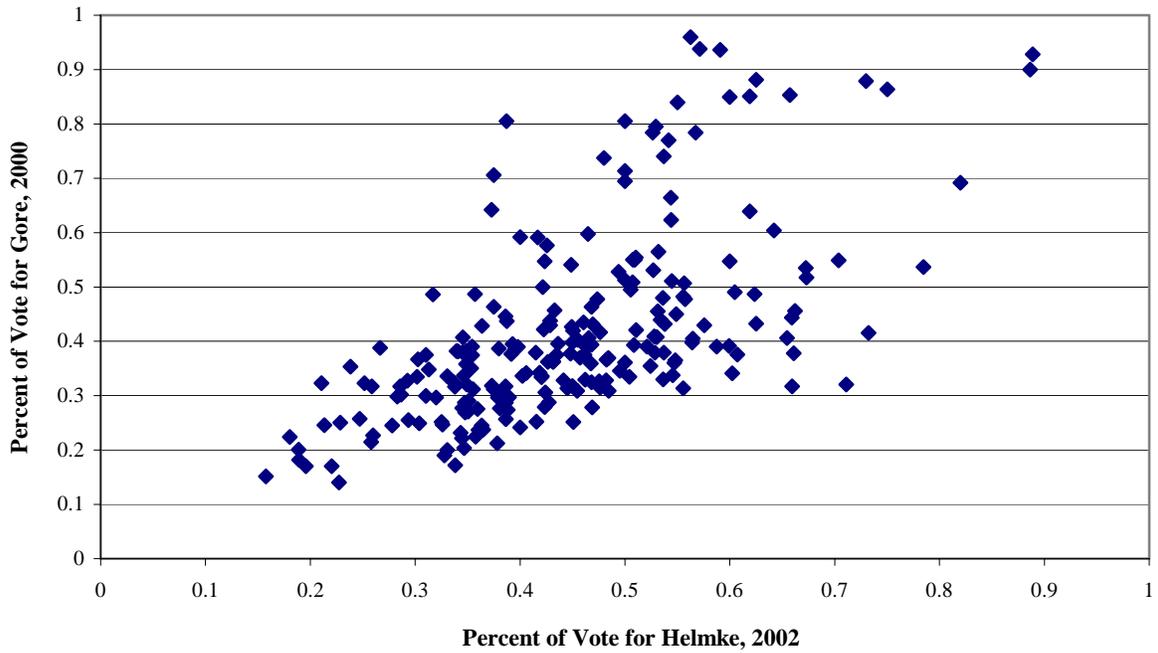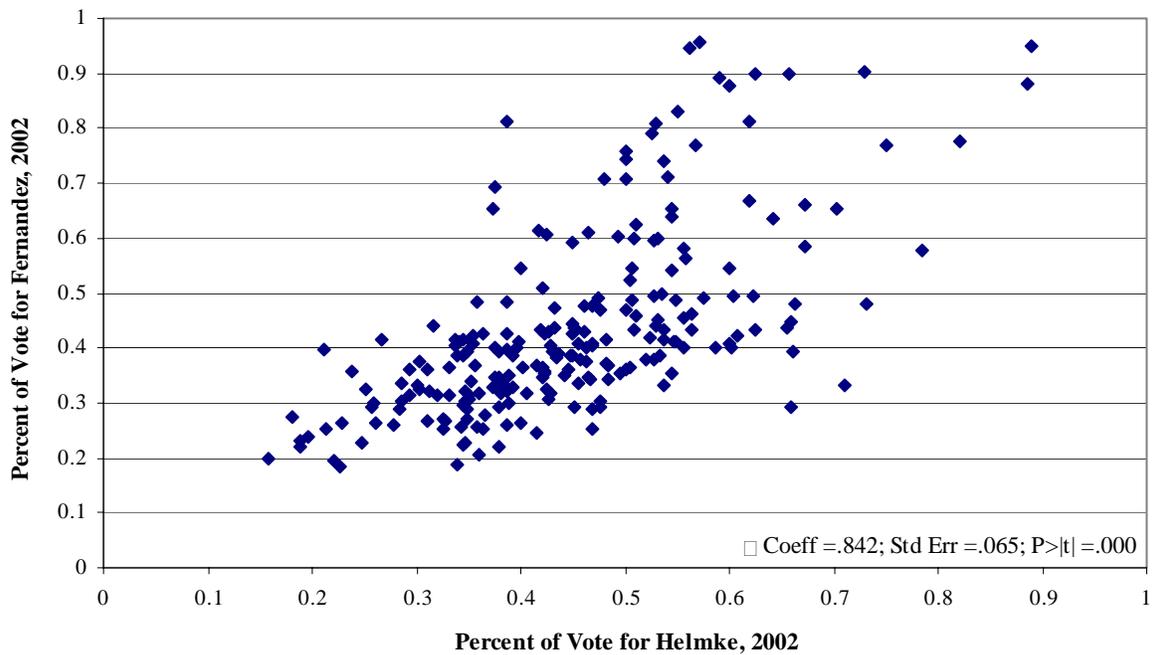

FIGURE 2. Scatterplot of Percent of General Election Vote for Democrat Secretary of State Candidate (Fernandez, 2002) and Percent of Vote for Republican Challenger in 2002 Congressional Primary (Helmke)

Coeff =.842; Std Err =.065; P>|t| =.000

FIGURE 3. Scatterplot of Percent of General Election Vote for Democrat Presidential Candidate (Kerry, 2004) and Percent of Vote for Republican Challenger in 2002 Congressional Primary Election

Coeff =.906; Std Err =.080; P>|t| =.000