Blacks Who Run for Governor and the U.S. Senate: An Examination of their Candidacies

Judson L. Jeffries[1]
The Ohio State University

Charles E. Jones
Georgia State University

Abstract

Campaigns of Blacks who have run for high profile statewide office from 1966 to 2006 were examined in this systematic study. Every Black high profile statewide candidate who has advanced to the general election was examined to ascertain what Blacks can do to be elected governor and to the U.S. senate. To do this, we conducted a content analysis of the flagship newspapers for each state where elections were held. Additionally, we reviewed data derived from in-depth interviews with two former high profile statewide office holders and results of voters. We submit that because Whites are reluctant to vote for Blacks, especially Black high profile statewide candidates, Blacks will need to serve an appropriate apprenticeship, garner strong party backing, and implement an effective deracialized campaign strategy if they hope to offset White voter hostility.

Introduction

To say that Blacks have not enjoyed the same kind of success at winning high profile[2] statewide elections as they have at the local level is an understatement. Only five Blacks have ever been elected to high profile statewide office—recently elected Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, Senators Barack Obama (elected to serve 2004 to present) and Carol Mosely Braun of Illinois (elected to serve 1992-1998), Governor L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia (elected to serve 1989-1993), and Massachusetts Senator Edward W. Brooke III (elected to serve 1966-1979). By contrast, hundreds and thousands of Blacks have won congressional, mayoral, assembly, and city council seats; and approximately 50 Blacks have been elected to lower statewide offices. High profile statewide offices seem to present Black office seekers with a more formidable challenge than do other elected offices.

In Sonenshein's (1990) trailblazing article he notes the difficulty Blacks have had winning statewide offices. By comparing Edward W. Brooke's 1966 Massachusetts United States Senate campaign with that of Tom Bradley's 1982 California gubernatorial campaign and L. Douglas Wilder's 1985 lieutenant governor's race, Sonenshein maintains that despite Blacks' lack of success they can win statewide elections if they pay their political dues, run in states where Whites have liberal attitudes, and develop a campaign strategy that appeals to White voters

[1] Address correspondence to Judson L. Jeffries, Department of African American and African Studies, The Ohio State University, Community Extension Center, 905 Mount Vernon Avenue, Columbus, OH 43203-1413 or jeffries.70@osu.edu.

[2] High profile statewide office is a term coined by the first author in an earlier work to describe the offices of governor and U.S. Senator.

(Sonenshein, 1990). To that end, Black candidates are obliged to craft campaigns that enable them to garner tremendous support from White voters in order to capture high profile statewide offices. Sonenshein's other points are problematic; he suggested that Blacks should identify states where Whites have liberal attitudes and run there. Liberal attitudes are apparently measured by Whites' willingness to vote for Black candidates in the past. However, Whites' voting for Blacks in lower-level offices such as mayor and the state legislature has not translated into voting for a Black gubernatorial or U.S. Senatorial hopeful. Also, while we agree that Black candidates have to pay their political dues, Sonenshein errs by putting the lieutenant governor's office on par with that of the governor's and U.S. Senator's. Although the office of lieutenant governor is a statewide post, it is not commensurate with that of the governor's or the U.S. Senate.

High profile statewide offices differ from lower statewide posts in the following ways: (a) they are substantively more powerful, (b) they have more responsibility, (c) they elicit greater media and voter interest, (d) their campaigns are significantly more costly, and (e) candidates for high profile statewide office are expected to possess stronger political resumes than lower statewide office seekers. Consequently, for Blacks, winning high profile statewide offices has proven more daunting than winning lower statewide posts (e.g., lieutenant governor and state Supreme Court judge). Black politicians with whom we have spoken concur with this assessment. Judge Robert Benham, of the Georgia Appeals Court, acknowledged Whites' reluctance to vote for Blacks in high profile statewide contests, saying he believes that many White Georgians were delighted to vote for a Black judicial candidate. But he added that a Black running for governor or United States Senator would not be elected. "I'm sure he would pick up tremendous support, but not enough to prevail. I'm sure race would rear its ugly head" (as cited in Edds, 1987, p. 232).

At least one study has shown that the more powerful Whites perceive the office to be, the less they are willing to vote for a Black candidate. When Whites were asked whether they would support a qualified Black for city council, 2.5% reported they would not; 5.2% would not support a Black for mayor; 5.6% would not support a Black for U.S. senator; and 7.5% said they would not support a Black for governor (Williams, 1989). Given the unreliability of public opinion polls when race is involved, these findings may indeed be underreported.

Building on the work of Sonenshein (1990) and Strickland and Whicker (1992), we compared the 1989 gubernatorial and 1990 U.S. senatorial campaigns of Wilder and Harvey Gantt (former mayor of Charlotte, NC). Agreeing with Sonenshein that Black candidates have to be savvy campaigners and have impressive resumes, Strickland and Whicker offer an interesting twist; they say that Black candidates need to "look White." According to them, Gantt looked darker and "more Black." Furthermore they argued that looking "more White" in appearance might help Blacks in their quest for statewide office. As evidence, they point to Wilder and Brooke (two light complexioned Black men) as the only Blacks to be elected to high profile statewide office. With an *N* of two, Strickland and Whickers' conclusions hardly seem convincing. They obviously did not expect Carol Moseley Braun to fare well in the Illinois Senate race of 1992. Braun nevertheless won the election, defeating Alan Dixon, a longtime incumbent, and becoming the first Black American female ever elected to the U.S. senate. Braun managed this feat with her dark brown complexion. Suffice it to say, Braun's victory weakens the argument that Black candidates need to "look White" in order to win high profile statewide office. With the exception of Brooke, Wilder, Bradley, and Gantt, few studies have been written about the campaigns of Black statewide office seekers. To that end we sought to examine the importance of high profile office and the extent to which Black candidates have fought to minimize White voter hostility to win office.

Importance of High Profile Statewide Office

High profile statewide office is important for several reasons. First, policies concerning healthcare, education, housing, and welfare reform are increasingly made at the state level. Statewide office holders are able to influence legislation that may be especially beneficial to members of their constituency, but also to change society in ways that can improve conditions for Blacks. Second, high profile statewide office holders have the ability and power to diversify government by bringing other non-Whites into government by way of appointments and hiring (Jeffries, 2000). For example, the governor of Virginia is afforded the opportunity to make between 3,000 and 4,000 appointments (Jeffries, 2000). High profile statewide office holders can also influence state public contracts and are able to reduce discrimination within the halls of government. Third, high profile statewide office is especially important if one has U.S. presidential oval office aspirations. High profile statewide office is a traditional stepping stone to the presidency. Typically candidates who are fortunate enough to win their party's nomination for president are former governors or U.S. Senators (Schlesinger, 1991). In fact, those who have gone on to serve as vice president have been former high profile statewide office holders. Finally, for Blacks, winning high profile statewide office has been a deep and long-standing aspiration. It has considerable symbolic value. More importantly, it offers especially valuable opportunities to influence public policy and distribute benefits in a manner that is more equitable to Blacks.

The recent losses of five[3] Black high profile statewide candidates has resurrected the debate around what Blacks have to do in order to capture the elusive title of governor and United States senator. The following is a discussion of political apprenticeship, party support and a campaign strategy that builds on—and yet moves beyond—the works of Sonenshein (1990) and Strickland and Whicker (1992).

Political Apprenticeship, Strong Party Support, and Campaign Strategy

Both L. Douglas Wilder (personal interview, July 1, 1995) and Edward W. Brooke (telephone interview, April 6, 1995) argue that in order for Black candidates to win high profile statewide office it is imperative that they serve an appropriate political apprenticeship. Edds (1990) argues that Black candidates need superior qualifications to even have a legitimate shot at defeating a White candidate. Edds' remarks echo that of older generation Blacks who are fond of saying, "you have to be twice as good." The race factor in elections accentuates the need for Black candidates to have prior experience in an elected office and a record of extended service. Political Scientist Andrew Hacker (1992) says that Whites often complain that Black voters settle for Black candidates with less-than-adequate credentials. Hence, the absence of an appropriate apprenticeship gives many White voters a convenient excuse to withhold their support from Black candidates who seek high profile office.

An appropriate political apprenticeship for Black gubernatorial and U.S. Senate hopefuls entails having prior elected office experience, preferably a lower statewide office (Jones & Clemons, 1993), to show that Black candidates can govern Whites as well as White representatives. Black politicians who hold offices in majority-Black districts are at a greater disadvantage than Blacks who represent White jurisdictions. The former are easier to stereotype

[3] Gubernatorial candidates Ken Blackwell of Ohio and Lynn Swann of Pennsylvania and U.S. Senatorial candidates Harold Ford (Tennessee), Michael Steele (Maryland), and Eric Fleming (Mississippi) all lost in 2006.

as too race-oriented to represent Whites adequately. An apprenticeship also includes having a track record of public service as an elected official over a number of years; also, having run for and won the last statewide election. Additionally, Blacks who run for high profile statewide office after having lost the prior election are relegated to underdog status from the outset (E.W. Brooke, telephone interview, April 6, 1995; L. D. Wilder, personal interview, July 1, 1995). Consequently, those candidates often are not perceived as strong challengers by the media or the voters (Patterson, 1993; 1989). Barone and Grant (1998) indicated that 78% of all then high profile statewide office holders held elected office prior to their statewide bids.

Admittedly, the majority of Blacks who have aspired to high profile statewide office have not had an appropriate political apprenticeship. Nonetheless, it should be noted that many White candidates have not had the apprenticeship either. However, it is not uncommon for poorly qualified White candidates to win high profile statewide office. Even so, serving an appropriate apprenticeship gives Black candidates a perceived political legitimacy in the eyes of the media and the electorate. This point should be underscored. It is imperative that Black candidates are perceived as being qualified to hold high profile statewide office. Black candidates who are deemed unqualified are vulnerable to criticism throughout the campaign. Under these conditions victory is virtually impossible. Therefore, it is not only important for a Black candidate to be as qualified as the White counterpart, but again, as older Blacks contend, in most cases a Black candidate has to be twice as good as the White counterpart in hopes of winning elections. In addition to making the candidate legitimate, an apprenticeship also gives the White electorate a chance to get acquainted with the Black candidate. Black candidates who serve for lengthy periods have more opportunities to interact with Whites; this affords an opportunity to dispel any myths that Whites have about Black candidates (L. D. Wilder, personal interview, July 1, 1995). Historically, Whites have not supported Black candidates at the same rate that Blacks have supported White candidates (Bullock, 1984). Whites often perceive Black candidates as confrontational and strident. These perceptions may be minimized as Black candidates interact with Whites. It is not unreasonable to assume that interaction among different individuals and ethnic groups increases tolerance and decreases preconceived stereotypical notions. It is also reasonable to assume that the more Black candidates interact with White voters, the more comfortable Whites will feel around them and vice versa. The more comfortable Whites feel in the presence of Black candidates, the more likely it is that they will vote for them. Robert Scott, a Black congressman from Virginia, says Whites must have an opportunity to know the Black candidate as an individual. "If the community knows the candidate, then race become less of a factor" (as cited in Edds, 1987, p. 233).

An apprenticeship also gives a Black candidate an opportunity to acquire valuable legislative expertise and be in position to serve on prestigious committees. Equally important is the prospect of chairing a committee; such experience gives an individual an opportunity to work with others, which in turn allows him or her to hone administrative and leadership skills (L. D. Wilder, personal interview, July 1, 1995). These skills are essential to governors and United States Senators, whose success in office is largely dependent upon compromise and their ability to forge coalitions across party and racial lines. Finally, an apprenticeship provides a candidate with the opportunity to make key contacts that are important to ascent to high profile statewide office.

Another factor key to winning high profile statewide office is strong major party support; without it Black candidates face an uphill battle. In order to get needed party support, Black candidates have to become party insiders (McCormick & Jones, 1993). Despite arguments made by scholars (Wattenburg, 1984) and politicians who cite the declining significance of

political parties, for Black candidates functioning within the party is crucial if they are to get the nomination and win the election. Strong party support includes a plethora of resources for candidates (e.g., key endorsements from party bosses, money, unification of the electorate, and media exposure).

Endorsements from key party leaders can lend credibility to Black candidates' campaigns. Party support of a Black candidate helps to make his candidacy more palatable to White voters (E.W. Brooke, telephone interview, April 6, 1995; McCormick & Jones, 1993). In addition, White party leaders provide critical assistance in shielding Black candidates from negative campaign tactics. Parties also perform services such as fund-raising and voter registration. Thus, the Black candidate who operates within the party apparatus is privy to these indispensable resources. This is particularly important, since historically Black statewide campaigns have often been less well financed than White statewide campaigns. The rate of Political Action Committee (PAC) funding received by Black candidates typically does not match the contributions received by White candidates (Wilhite & Theilman, 1986).

The statewide candidacy of a Black who has the benefit of strong party backing is in a position to get considerable media exposure. In the past, Black candidates who have run for governor and U.S. Senate as independents or minor party candidates were relegated to underdog status from the outset; hence the media devoted little or no attention to their campaigns. Patterson (1993) says candidates who have a demonstrable chance of winning, who have won themselves status in the horse race, are likely to receive the greatest amount of media coverage. Because minor and third party candidates rarely win and are normally perceived as long shots, the media has little reason to cover them.

Traditional party support can also help unify the electorate. Although there has been a decrease in the number of people who identify themselves as Republicans and Democrats, the party label remains an important voting cue which helps to offset the potential effects of a Black candidate's race (Jones & Clemons, 1993). This does not mean that defection or abstention among White voters will not occur, but rather that strong party identification will help to minimize this phenomenon.

A Black candidate who runs for high profile statewide office is faced with the difficult task of garnering enough White support to win. Jones and Clemons (1993) maintain that Black high profile statewide candidates should employ a deracialized political strategy. McCormick and Jones' (1993) definition of the strategy entails style, issues, and mobilization tactics. It attempts to defuse the divisive effects of race by avoiding references to ethnic or racially construed issues, while at the same time emphasizing those issues that appeal to a wide community, thus mobilizing a large portion of the electorate. A Black candidate's platform, then, plays an important role in building the biracial or multiethnic coalition needed to succeed in high profile statewide contests which are held in majority White jurisdictions (Jeffries, 2000). As Blacks do not make up a majority in any state in the U.S., they alone cannot vote a Black high profile statewide candidate into office. Consequently, Black candidates are heavily dependent upon White support. In the past, Black office-seekers sought to identify with the poor, particularly the Black poor, espousing Black empowerment as a campaign theme. This strategy mobilized the Black community but alienated the White electorate. On the other hand, ignoring Black voters could be equally damaging, since that could result in low Black voter turnout.

A Black candidate's success in attracting support from the White electorate seems to require projecting a conciliatory image (Pettigrew & Alston, 1988). For this reason, a Black candidate cannot solicit the assistance of local or national Black politicians whom White voters consider

controversial or polarizing. Even so, it is customary for Black office-seekers to invite prominent Black figures who usually possess a spell-binding oratory, and who specialize in stimulating political participation among Blacks. For example, the Reverends Jesse Jackson Sr. and Al Sharpton are popular within the Black community but are not embraced by many Whites. Given the racial composition of many states, these types may constitute a serious impediment to Black high profile statewide success.

In addition, Black candidates should emphasize those issues that transcend race—issues that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate (e.g., the economy, education, transportation, abortion, health care, and the environment). Issues such as Affirmative Action and welfare are racially charged and have a tendency to polarize the electorate. Furthermore, Black candidates cannot be viewed as weak on crime, an issue deeply intertwined with racial sentiment (Pettigrew & Alston, 1988). Black candidates who are opposed to capital punishment typically do not get widespread White support.

Method

Newspapers

Newspapers were chosen as the print media, as they provide quality information on statewide contests. The following newspapers were read: the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Birmingham News*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Clarion Ledger* (Jackson, MS), the *Post and Courier* (Columbia, SC), the *Charlotte Observer*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Columbus Dispatch*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, the *New Orleans Times Picayune*, the *Seattle Times*, the *Tennessean, the Virginian Pilot & Ledger Star* and the *Washington Post*. The *Post* was chosen for its reputation as an outstanding newspaper and its policy of assigning several reporters to cover politics in both Maryland and Virginia. Only the last month of newspaper coverage of each election was selected and examined for data that were used in this study.

Interviews

Face-to-face interviews[4] were conducted with two Black former high profile statewide officeholders, adding a unique dimension that other works lack. Lengthy interviews with former U. S. Senator Edward W. Brooke and former Governor L. Douglas Wilder were conducted by the first author. These interviews were helpful in trying to understand what Black candidates need to do in order to position themselves for high profile statewide races.

Procedures

We gathered our data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data consisted of raw voting data by precinct and county for all elections except 2006. These data were obtained from each respective state's board of election. Secondary sources included a content analysis of newspapers, which were collected for each state where a Black candidate ran for high profile statewide office from 1966 to 2006. Our period of investigation begins with 1966; that was the year that Edward W. Brooke became the first[5] Black elected to a high profile statewide office.

---

[4] The interviews with Brooke and Wilder were free-flowing in nature. Each gentleman was asked what he thought Blacks needed to do in order to position themselves for high profile statewide office.

[5] Many believe that Brooke was the first Black elected to the United States Senate since Reconstruction. Blacks who served in the U.S. Senate during Reconstruction were not elected, but nominated and confirmed by the state legislature. U.S. Senators were not elected until 1913.

A total of 28 elections are analyzed (see Appendix). Only those Black candidates who were considered serious[6] were included in this study.

Analysis

Successful Black High Profile Statewide Candidates

Among successful Black candidates for high profile statewide office, three can be identified as having served an appropriate apprenticeship (with the exception of Obama) and implemented an effective deracialized campaign strategy with strong party backing. All except Deval Patrick won their last election prior to launching their high profile statewide campaigns. Prior to Brooke's election to the U.S. Senate, he proved his ability to win White votes statewide when he was elected Attorney General in 1962. He won reelection in 1964. Also, fortunately for Brooke, he ran against Endicott Peabody, a former governor, who many considered vulnerable. Brooke, a Republican with strong party support, captured a large segment of the White electorate as a result of a pragmatic deracialized campaign strategy. As part of his strategy, Brooke focused his campaign on law and order. His investigation and indictment of 100 public officials as Attorney General and his opponent's opposition to the death penalty gave him credibility on this issue (Cutler, 1972). Also, Brooke's noteworthy military career (he received the bronze star for valor during World War II) probably advanced his cause.

Brooke wanted to be perceived as a qualified candidate. He insisted that he was not a civil rights leader but rather a candidate for the U.S. Senate who happened to be Black, not a Black candidate for the U.S. Senate (E.W. Brooke, telephone interview, April 6, 1995). Brooke distanced himself from matters that could be racially construed. For example, during the campaign he remarked that government handouts were not the way to uplift the country's poverty-stricken areas. Brooke was also shrewd enough to understand that it was important to denounce both Black Power advocates such as Stokely Carmichael and White extremists such as Georgia Governor Lester Maddox. Brooke won handily (61% to 39%) (Becker & Heaton, 1967).

Before the historic election that made Wilder the first elected Black governor in U.S. history, he had been a fixture in Virginia politics. In 1985 he was elected lieutenant governor, making him the first Black elected to such a post since Reconstruction. Before that, Wilder served in the state senate for 16 years, during which time he served on several powerful committees, including chairing the Democratic Steering Committee and senate Transportation Committee (Jones, 1991). At the conclusion of Wilder's senate career the *Virginia Pilot & Ledger Star*, a well-respected news daily that serves the Tidewater area, rated Wilder as one of the five most effective members of the senate (Yancey, 1990). In addition to being a highly regarded public servant, Wilder also had the strong support of the Democratic Party. He received the endorsement of outgoing Governor Gerald Baliles and U.S. Senator Chuck Robb (a former governor and popular political figure in the state). Wilder also received the campaign assistance of two of the most widely known former segregationists in the state (Watkins M. Abbitt and A. L. Philpott). The party provided the Wilder campaign with a fair amount of indispensable resources, not the least of which included substantial monetary contributions.

Wilder galvanized support across a broad spectrum of voters, mobilizing the Black electorate while at the same time appealing to certain segments of the White electorate. A close look at

[6] Serious Black candidates are those Black candidates who advanced to the general election in the past forty years, with the exception of Andrew Young, who because of his stature merits inclusion in this study.

Wilder's voter demographics reveals that he was able to garner votes from some of the most reputedly racist crevices of the state. Wilder was careful to avoid issues that could be racially construed (e.g., Affirmative Action and welfare); instead he highlighted education, taxes, the environment, and jobs. Wilder also positioned himself as pro-choice, which turned out to be a wise move in light of the United State Supreme Court's ruling on Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services *(Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, 1989)* that summer.

Wilder, similar to Brooke, also highlighted his military background. Wilder's experience as a decorated veteran helped combat charges by his opponent that he was soft on crime. Careers in law enforcement and the military carry conservative images—images that bode well for Black candidates, who are often charged with being soft on crime and too liberal (Strickland & Whicker, 1992). Even with all these advantages Wilder won by less than one percent of the total vote.

Carol Moseley Braun, the only woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate, was a seasoned politician who served in the Illinois General Assembly from 1978 to 1988. In 1988, she ran for the office of Cook County Recorder of Deeds and won, making her the county's highest ranking Black elected official. While the Recorder of Deeds office has never been a stepping stone to the U.S. Senate, the office required Braun to campaign across vast areas that included a majority of White voters. By the time she ran for the U.S. Senate, Braun was versed in how to appeal to White voters when she faced off against the incumbent Alan Dixon in the Democratic primary. Braun appealed to those women who were offended by the Senate Judiciary's harsh treatment of Anita Hill during the Clarence Thomas U.S. Supreme Court hearings. Dixon's support of Thomas was featured prominently in Braun's campaign, a tactic which paid huge dividends as most women opposed Thomas' confirmation. After emerging victorious, the Democratic Party rallied around her. With the party behind her, Braun waged an effective and savvy campaign. Similar to Wilder, she did not make race an issue, instead choosing to feature abortion much the same way Wilder had done in 1989 (Hardy, 1992). This enabled Braun to attract a large female following, which was key to her victory. Braun won the general election by 10 percentage points (53% - 43%) (Hardy, 1992).

The Wilder, Brooke, and Braun candidacies fit neatly within the criteria presented earlier. However Barack Obama, a younger Black politician, deviated from his precursors. In 2004, Americans witnessed history when two Blacks squared off in the Illinois U.S. Senate race. Obama, a Democrat and state senator, was pitted against Republican and Maryland resident turned Illinois resident (during the last few months of the campaign) Alan Keyes. If nothing else, this election assured a Black victory. Obama trounced his opponent, garnering 70% of the vote to Keyes' 27%. While Obama's victory was impressive, it was also somewhat of a fluke, as his original opponent was Jack Ryan, the winner of the Republican Primary. In the early stages of the campaign, Obama was leading Ryan in the polls by a small margin. Then Ryan assigned Justin Warfel, one of his campaign workers, to track Obama's every move. Warfel followed Obama 24 hours a day, recording everything he did in public on videotape. Warfel also heckled Obama by pelting him with questions at various venues. The tactic backfired when many people, including Ryan's supporters, criticized this activity. Support for Ryan soon eroded (Jeffries, 2004).

As the fall season progressed, a lawsuit brought by the *Chicago Tribune* and ABC-owned station (WLS-TV) led to a California court's opening child custody files from Ryan's divorce. In those files, Ryan's wife alleged that he had taken her to sex clubs in several cities, intending for them to have sex in public. Although their torrid nature made the revelations fodder for tabloid and television programs specializing in such muck, the files were also newsworthy

because Ryan had insisted to Republican leaders that there was nothing damaging in them. In late June Ryan dropped out of the race, leaving Obama without an opponent. Over the next several weeks the Republican Party scrambled to find a candidate. A number of potential candidates declined, including former Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka. Finally, Keyes was contacted and persuaded to accept the nomination. Keyes is a rather well-known figure in American politics, but for many of the wrong reasons. He has never held elected office; however, he is not without a political resume. He held several government posts during the Reagan years; chief among them was ambassador to the United Nations Economic and Social Council between 1983 and 1985 (Keyes, 1989).

That Keyes was a Maryland resident and not a resident of Illinois did not deter him from accepting the Republican nomination. This decision is interesting in view of his comments about Hilary Clinton four years earlier. On Fox News Channel in March of 2000, Keyes commented that he resented the destruction of federalism represented by Hilary Clinton's willingness to go into a state she does not live in and pretend to represent people there, so "I certainly wouldn't imitate it" (Bush, 2004, p. 1). Little wonder that some Illinoisans saw Keyes as a carpetbagger and others were miffed that the Republicans did not offer Jim Oberweis the opportunity to face Obama; after all, Oberweis did finish second in the primary (Bush, 2004, p. 1).

In addition to Keyes' weak candidacy, during the campaign he made one too many gaffes, some of which included outrageous statements that did not endear him to many voters, Republicans included. He compared doctors who perform abortions and women who receive them to terrorists who committed the September 11, 2001 attacks. Later he denied making the remark. He also said that hate crime legislation was inappropriate because it inappropriately punishes attitudes; he commented that homosexuality was "selfish hedonism" and that a vote for Obama "was a mortal sin" (Bush, 2004, p. 1). Suffice it to say that Obama benefited from running against a right-wing Black African American with a light or meager political resume. Obama himself was not a highly qualified candidate, certainly not on par with Wilder, Brooke, and Braun. Although, like Wilder and Braun, Obama was a state senator, albeit for a much shorter time. Wilder served in the Virginia senate for 16 years while Braun served Illinois for ten years. Like both Wilder and Brooke, Obama ran for an open seat. Equally important, Obama had strong party backing, as did Braun, Wilder, and Brooke. In the final analysis, though, Obama was presented a gift in Keyes. Keyes had all the characteristics of a sacrificial lamb. Had the Republicans produced a more qualified or different candidate, such as Ditka, or had Ryan's candidacy had not fallen apart, the outcome may have been very different.

Recently elected Governor Deval Patrick had nothing in the way of elected office experience, yet he crushed both of his opponents in the primary and went on to defeat Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey by more than twenty percentage points. Serving as assistant attorney general for civil rights under President Clinton, what Patrick did have was a wealth of business management experience that he maintained had equipped him to effectively manage state government. Apparently, Patrick also had the enthusiastic support of the Democratic Party and a campaign style that White voters found palatable. On more than one occasion Patrick appeared in public flanked by Senator Ted Kennedy, John Kerry, and Bill Clinton. When his opponent's campaign tried to portray him in an unflattering manner, Patrick remained stately and above the fray. Patrick was also fortunate that the governor's office was an open seat election. Why White Democratic voters overlooked Patrick's weak political resume is difficult to ascertain. Concluding that the state of Massachusetts has reached a point where race is no longer an issue would be a bit premature. Clearly, many Whites overlooked Patrick's race in their support of him. Mike Hurley, owner of the local Minuteman Press franchise, joked, "I don't even see him

because Ryan had insisted to Republican leaders that there was nothing damaging in them. In late June Ryan dropped out of the race, leaving Obama without an opponent. Over the next several weeks the Republican Party scrambled to find a candidate. A number of potential candidates declined, including former Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka. Finally, Keyes was contacted and persuaded to accept the nomination. Keyes is a rather well-known figure in American politics, but for many of the wrong reasons. He has never held elected office; however, he is not without a political resume. He held several government posts during the Reagan years; chief among them was ambassador to the United Nations Economic and Social Council between 1983 and 1985 (Keyes, 1989).

That Keyes was a Maryland resident and not a resident of Illinois did not deter him from accepting the Republican nomination. This decision is interesting in view of his comments about Hilary Clinton four years earlier. On Fox News Channel in March of 2000, Keyes commented that he resented the destruction of federalism represented by Hilary Clinton's willingness to go into a state she does not live in and pretend to represent people there, so "I certainly wouldn't imitate it" (Bush, 2004, p. 1). Little wonder that some Illinoisans saw Keyes as a carpetbagger and others were miffed that the Republicans did not offer Jim Oberweis the opportunity to face Obama; after all, Oberweis did finish second in the primary (Bush, 2004, p. 1).

In addition to Keyes' weak candidacy, during the campaign he made one too many gaffes, some of which included outrageous statements that did not endear him to many voters, Republicans included. He compared doctors who perform abortions and women who receive them to terrorists who committed the September 11, 2001 attacks. Later he denied making the remark. He also said that hate crime legislation was inappropriate because it inappropriately punishes attitudes; he commented that homosexuality was "selfish hedonism" and that a vote for Obama "was a mortal sin" (Bush, 2004, p. 1). Suffice it to say that Obama benefited from running against a right-wing Black African American with a light or meager political resume. Obama himself was not a highly qualified candidate, certainly not on par with Wilder, Brooke, and Braun. Although, like Wilder and Braun, Obama was a state senator, albeit for a much shorter time. Wilder served in the Virginia senate for 16 years while Braun served Illinois for ten years. Like both Wilder and Brooke, Obama ran for an open seat. Equally important, Obama had strong party backing, as did Braun, Wilder, and Brooke. In the final analysis, though, Obama was presented a gift in Keyes. Keyes had all the characteristics of a sacrificial lamb. Had the Republicans produced a more qualified or different candidate, such as Ditka, or had Ryan's candidacy had not fallen apart, the outcome may have been very different.

Recently elected Governor Deval Patrick had nothing in the way of elected office experience, yet he crushed both of his opponents in the primary and went on to defeat Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey by more than twenty percentage points. Serving as assistant attorney general for civil rights under President Clinton, what Patrick did have was a wealth of business management experience that he maintained had equipped him to effectively manage state government. Apparently, Patrick also had the enthusiastic support of the Democratic Party and a campaign style that White voters found palatable. On more than one occasion Patrick appeared in public flanked by Senator Ted Kennedy, John Kerry, and Bill Clinton. When his opponent's campaign tried to portray him in an unflattering manner, Patrick remained stately and above the fray. Patrick was also fortunate that the governor's office was an open seat election. Why White Democratic voters overlooked Patrick's weak political resume is difficult to ascertain. Concluding that the state of Massachusetts has reached a point where race is no longer an issue would be a bit premature. Clearly, many Whites overlooked Patrick's race in their support of him. Mike Hurley, owner of the local Minuteman Press franchise, joked, "I don't even see him

as Black. . . it looks like to me that he has a deep tan" (Page, 2006, p. 1). The extent to which the majority of White voters felt the same is unknown.

Patrick's win will undoubtedly give some the illusion that Whites no longer hold Blacks to a higher standard when it comes to qualifications. Concluding that Black candidates no longer have to be twice as good as their White counterparts in order to win high profile statewide office, because of Patrick's success, is suspect. No doubt, Patrick will be the exception to the rule rather than the rule. What was clear is that Healey conducted a somewhat negative campaign, giving her the image of a bitter divorcee. Given this, one wonders if some voters opted for Patrick not because of any deep sense of affection for his candidacy or message, but rather as a way of voting against Healey. The other possibility is that gender trumped race; given the choice between a Black male and a White woman, some voters may have felt more uncomfortable supporting a woman, who in this case would have been the state's first female governor.

Unsuccessful Black High Profile Statewide Candidates

Black high profile statewide candidates who were unsuccessful present a different pattern. None of the losing Black gubernatorial candidates possessed the kind of credentials that would constitute an appropriate political apprenticeship. Accordingly Thomas Bradley, former city councilman and Los Angeles Police officer, sought the governorship of California in 1982 when Jerry Brown, the outgoing and unpopular governor, vacated the position, creating an open seat. In addition to serving on city council, Bradley had also been mayor of Los Angeles for nine years. As a city councilman, he represented a diverse but primarily White district. In the 1982 governor's race, Bradley faced a White candidate with superb credentials, George Deukmejian, a 15-year veteran of the California state senate, who had also held the office of attorney general for four years and possessed a record consistent with the qualifications outlined earlier. Aside from Bradley's credentials, he was not able to effectively implement a deracialized campaign strategy. Bradley was able to garner a moderate share of the White vote (45%), because Whites viewed Bradley as a conciliating candidate (Pettigrew & Alston, 1988). Ironically, many argue that it was the Black electorate that Bradley failed to mobilize (Pettigrew & Alston, 1988). Bradley did not make any public overtures to the Black community; thus Blacks did not feel motivated to go to the polls en masse to support him. When Bradley began reaching out to the Black community, fewer than two weeks remained to campaign; by then it was too late. Taking the Black vote for granted proved devastating to the Bradley campaign, but taught future Black high profile statewide hopefuls a valuable lesson. Indeed, many Blacks who have run for statewide office since have gone to great lengths to avoid making the same mistake. In a high profile statewide contest, Black candidates can ill afford mistakes, especially when the opponent is a highly qualified candidate like Deukmejian. Bradley lost the election by a heart wrenching one percent of the total vote. He ran again in 1986 and lost by a landslide. This time George Deukmejian was the incumbent governor and Bradley's candidacy, due in part to a lost election, was not taken seriously (Pettigrew & Alston, 1988).

William Lucas, a converted Republican, also ran for governor of Michigan in 1986. He lost in a landslide (31%-68%) to James Blanchard, the Democratic incumbent governor (Jeffries, 1997). Lucas' conversion and his opposition to Affirmative Action caused him to lose the Black support he had garnered when he was elected sheriff of Wayne County, Michigan, as a Democrat. To compound matters, Lucas received little money and virtually no support from upstate (mainly White) Michigan, the stronghold of the party (Jeffries, 1997).

In 1990, three Black candidates launched high profile statewide campaigns. Andrew Young earned the opportunity to face Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller in the Democratic run-off when

he emerged from a primary campaign against six other candidates. Young stumbled in the Democratic run-off, however, garnering just 38% of the vote. Although Young boasted impressive credentials, they were not on par with Miller's. Young was elected in 1971, to congress where he represented an Atlanta district that was 62% White. From there he was elected mayor of predominantly Black Atlanta, where he served two terms. His opponent, Zell Miller, had an even more impressive resume. He was a staple in Georgia's statewide politics, having served as the lieutenant governor for 16 years; that office that has traditionally served as a stepping stone to the governorship (L.D. Wilder, personal interview, July1, 1995).

The Democratic establishment did not support Young; even some Black party officials were skeptical of Young's campaign. With little party support and having to face Miller (a highly qualified candidate), Young had a difficult time attracting White support. He attempted to appeal to a broad electorate, to no avail. Interestingly, Young was not inexperienced when it came to appealing to White voters. In 1971, when Young ran for Congress, he appealed to Whites with environmental conservation and good government issues. In 1990 though, many Whites were simply uncomfortable with the idea of having a former civil rights leader as their governor (May, 1990). Former Governor Douglas Wilder admitted that Young might have been better served had he run for lieutenant governor instead of governor. Wilder argues that Young would have had a better chance of being elected lieutenant governor (L. D. Wilder, personal interview, July 1, 1995). He was not going to beat the longtime lieutenant governor Zell Miller. As the lieutenant governor, "Andy could have used that post as a launching pad to the governor's mansion eight years later, after Miller had vacated the office" (L. D. Wilder, personal interview, July 1, 1995).

Also in 1990, Theo Mitchell, a Black state senator, lost the South Carolina governor's race to Carol Campbell, the popular incumbent governor who had served 16 years in the South Carolina legislature before becoming the state's chief executive. Months before the election 70% of South Carolinians rated Campbell's performance as governor as good. Despite Mitchell's presence in the race, Campbell, a White Republican, still captured 25% of the Black vote and 69% of the total vote compared to 27% for Mitchell (Jeffries & Wavro, 2004).

Five years would go by before another Black candidate would run for governor. In 1995, Cleo Fields lost the Louisiana governorship (36.5% to 63.5%) to State Senator Mike Foster. Fields had been a state senator for several years but was not an especially highly qualified candidate. In 1992 Fields was elected to Congress, where he represented a predominantly Black district. While Fields' political resume was more highly regarded than Foster's, he still did not possess the kind of credentials that Black candidates need in order to be taken seriously. Fields was able to garner extensive Black support, but unable to attract White voters. Fields attempted to appeal to White voters, but his perceived liberal voting record was his major undoing as Foster tapped into the conservative wave that swept the state and much of the country (Jeffries & Wavro, 2004).

As the new millennium approached, it appeared that White sentiment toward Black high profile statewide candidates hardened. In 2002, Nevada State Senator Joe Neal tossed his hat into the gubernatorial ring at the behest of his party, but his candidacy was doomed from the outset. Ironically, it was a lack of party support that prevented him from getting his campaign off the ground. Neal said in a news article in October of that year, "I am the Democratic nominee. I won the primary, and I am not getting any support from the party. Some individual members of the party have given me checks, but nothing from the party. . ." (Vogel, 2002, p. 1). Neal's lack of party support did not go unnoticed as a University of Nevada, Reno political science professor commented that "party leaders are making a major mistake by not supporting Neal. .

. . minority voters are among the most loyal Democrats, and you are turning your back on the first minority governor candidate." (Vogel, 2002, p. 1). Some party stalwarts claimed that support for Neal waned when he publicly endorsed a Republican for a Congressional seat.

Aside from the lack of party support, Neal did not pose a serious challenge to the Republican incumbent Kenny Guinn. Although the Democratic Party did not back Neal as it had other Democratic candidates, the fact remains that Neal was tapped at the eleventh hour to run for governor, primarily because Deputy Attorney General Dushoff dropped out of the race. The alternative candidate was Barbara Scott, a Las Vegas exotic dancer, who placed second in the primary (Vogel, 2002). Under these conditions Neal's chances of unseating Guinn were nil.

That same year H. Carl McCall ran for governor of New York. Although highly qualified, the former state legislator and New York State comptroller was trounced by incumbent Governor George Pataki. Pataki out-raised McCall by more than 50%. Moreover, McCall ran a bland campaign that excited few voters. Even many Blacks failed to get excited about the opportunity to make history. Given the popularity of Pataki, it is possible that no Democrat could have beaten him (Turner & Jeffries, 2007).

Blacks who have made senatorial bids have performed even more poorly than their gubernatorial counterparts. On the whole, they have also had fairly weak records. In 1988 Alan Keyes and Maurice Dawkins, candidates for the U.S. senate in Maryland and Virginia, respectively, faced popular and qualified White incumbents. Charles Robb was the former governor of Virginia, while Senator Paul Sarbanes was a staple in Maryland politics. Neither Keyes nor Dawkins had ever held an elected office. Keyes had been a Reagan appointee; however, he lacked strong party backing from an already fractured Republican party. Some political insiders argued that Keyes' nomination was merely a token gesture by the White Republican establishment who knew Keyes had no chance at winning the election (Keyes, 1989). Keyes faced a popular incumbent Democrat in a state where Democrats outnumber Republicans 2 to 1. Still, against all these odds, Keyes did manage to get 38% of the vote compared to Sarbanes' 62% (Keyes, 1989).

Dawkins is the more interesting of the two. Dawkins, a sixty-seven-year-old Baptist minister who had once been a civil rights activist in California, easily won a first ballot victory over the pre-convention favorite, Andrew Wahlquist, former administrative assistant to U.S. Senator John W. Warner of Virginia. Dawkins triumphed after he electrified the convention with a stem-winding speech extolling the virtues of conservative philosophy. Dawkins, however, had little party backing and thus received meager financial support, raising and spending less than $300,000 (Sabato, 1991). By contrast the Robb campaign raised $3.2 million.

Not surprisingly, Black support for Dawkins was poor. He received a paltry 16.3% of the Black vote and nearly 30% of the total vote (Sabato, 1991). In addition to these pitfalls, Dawkins had never been elected to political office. Hence, his candidacy was never taken seriously by the voters, and he never gave them a reason to support a poorly qualified neophyte over the popular incumbent Chuck Robb, who received 71% of the total vote (Sabato, 1991).

In 1994 Ron Sims, known by few outside of the city of Seattle, challenged incumbent Republican Slade Gorton, a lifetime politician, for the United States Senate seat representing the state of Washington. Sims had been involved in local politics, serving three terms on the King County Council. Gorton boasted impressive credentials. He began his political career by serving in the Washington House of Representatives for 10 years. From 1968 to 1980 he was the state's Attorney General, and in 1980 Gorton was elected to the United States Senate, where he served for eight years. After a two-year hiatus, Gorton was again elected to the United States

Senate in 1990. Despite having a significantly weaker record than Gorton and lower name recognition, Sims put up a strong showing, losing by only twelve percentage points (44% to 56%) (Barone & Grant, 1998). Sims made another feeble attempt at high profile statewide office in 2004, this time for governor, losing handily in the Democratic primary. Also in 1994, the man who was once called "a rising star" by *Newsweek* magazine, Alan Wheat, launched a senate campaign of his own in the state of Missouri. Wheat had good credentials, serving in the Missouri General Assembly for five years and then winning a congressional seat in 1982. Wheat was the youngest member of the U.S. House of Representatives ever appointed to the Rules Committee and was the first Black Congressman to represent a majority White district. After U.S. Senator John Danforth said he would not run for re-election in 1994, Wheat chose to give up his congressional post and run for Danforth's seat. Wheat made history when his Democratic primary win gave him the distinction of becoming the first Black African American nominated by either major party. He went on to lose the general election to former governor John Ashcroft by twenty percentage points (Barone & Grant, 1998).

The most notable high profile statewide bid by a Black candidate during the 1990s was made by Harvey Gantt. One year after Wilder's historic election, Gantt took on ultraconservative 18-year incumbent Jesse Helms and lost a fairly close senate race (47% to 53%) in North Carolina (Congressional Quarterly, 2001/2002). Gantt was elected twice as mayor of Charlotte, a city with an overwhelmingly White (75%) population. Prior to that he served on the Charlotte city council, winning reelection three times; he also served as mayor pro tem for one term. Six years earlier, Governor Jim Hunt tried to unseat Helms and was unsuccessful. Some argued that if Hunt, a highly qualified candidate, could not succeed, what chance would Gantt have with fewer resources and no statewide political base? Gantt's loss weakens Pettigrew and Alston's (1988) argument that it is far easier for a Black liberal to defeat a White opponent who is perceived as extremely conservative or even reactionary than to defeat a White candidate who appears moderate or liberal. Helms was one of the nation's longest serving United States senators. Gantt had never held any statewide office and was not widely known within the state's rural areas. Still, many considered him a formidable challenger. After leading the way in a six-man primary, he won a landslide victory in a two-way Democratic runoff.

What has often gone unacknowledged is that Gantt lost his last election (a reelection bid for mayor) to Sue Myrick, a political neophyte. And he had not held political office since 1987. Not surprisingly, party support for Gantt was moderately strong, more moderate than strong. By Gantt's own admission, the White Democratic establishment did not seek him out to say, "Harvey, you are the guy who ought to run for this office" (Varley, 1992, p. 16). One indication of the type of party support that accompanied Gantt's campaign was the amount of money raised. In June, Helms had raised $8 million while Gantt had raised a mere $800,000, a ten-to one-ratio (Leland, 1990). Gantt also dug himself into a hole by positioning himself on the unpopular side of some key issues (Morrill, 1990). In the end, Gantt fell victim to the race card, played masterfully by Helms. In the final weeks of the campaign Helms aired a television ad that played on White voters' opposition to preferential treatment programs (e.g., affirmative action and welfare). In 1996, Gantt again lost to Helms. This time Gantt entered the contest having lost his last two elections; thus his credibility was severely weakened.

In 2002 Ron Kirk, the former mayor of Dallas and Secretary of State, squared off against Jim Cornyn for the United State Senate in the state of Texas. Although Kirk's campaign was not mistake-free, overall he campaigned well, appealing to myriad racial and ethnic groups. However, few can deny that Kirk was undoubtedly the victim of some racial voting. Racist voting aside, Kirk's opponent raised and spent significantly more money than Kirk. Also, given

the conservative nature of the state and the popularity of President George Bush following the September 11th attacks, a Democratic senate hopeful had little chance of defeating any Republican, let alone a highly qualified candidate such as Attorney General Jim Cornyn. Kirk lost with 44% of the vote to Cornyn's 56% (Jeffries & Wavro, 2004).

In 2004, two Blacks ran for the United States Senate (Denise Majette in Georgia and Wayne Sowell in Alabama). Majette, a former judge, caught the eye of many Georgians when she resigned her judgeship in 2002 to run for the U.S. House of Representatives 4th Congressional district seat, which was held by 10-year incumbent Cynthia McKinney. Majette pummeled McKinney by 16 points (Jeffries & Wavro, 2004). After only one term Majette ran for a Senate seat being vacated by Zell Miller, who had been appointed to the position in 2000 to replace the late Paul Coverdell. Miller's decision not to seek a full term caught many Georgia Democrats off guard. Majette entered the race at the behest of some who ostensibly believed she had a realistic chance of keeping the seat in Democratic hands. With this, Majette became the first Black and the first woman to be nominated for the U.S. Senate in Georgia. She finished just short of winning the nomination outright, but sailed through the runoff. Majette faced Republican 6th District Congressman Johnny Isakson in the general election and was defeated handily by 16 points. A number of factors led to her defeat, none of which include race. First, Majette had to spend valuable resources in the runoff, leaving little for the general election. Second, due to her late entry into the contest, she had little time to make up ground on Isakson. And third, a proposed constitutional amendment (which Majette opposed) banning same-sex marriages boosted Republican turnout (Jeffries & Wavro, 2004).

Sowell's race in Alabama was even less impressive than Majette's. With no elected office experience, Sowell was seen by many as a sacrificial lamb. His opponent Richard Shelby, who had won three consecutive terms as senator, trounced Sowell (67% to 33%). In addition to Shelby's being a highly qualified and well-financed candidate, it did not hurt the Shelby campaign that Sowell held a number of odd and unpopular positions that most Alabamans did not approve of. One such position was his stance that marijuana should be legalized (Jeffries & Wavro, 2004).

The 2006 Elections

Until 2006, no Black candidate would come within five percentage points of winning a high-profile statewide office. Congressman Harold Ford ran a masterful campaign for the U.S. Senate in Tennessee. His middle-of-the-road campaign message, which included countless references to Ronald Reagan, strangely enough, attracted both liberal and conservative voters. Among other things, Ford campaigned on reforming the education system, providing universal affordable health care coverage, and balancing the federal budget. Several of the state's major newspapers endorsed Ford, including *The Tennessean*, the largest circulating newspaper in the state. With the full support of the Democratic Party, Ford's campaign was upbeat and forward-looking. Ford's opponent, Bob Corker, a small-town mayor, was to some extent nondescript in personality and his campaign was not especially inspiring. Although Ford did not have the kind of credentials that Wilder, Brooke, and Braun possessed, his resume compared favorably with Corker's. Again though for Blacks, it is not about comparing favorably, but about being twice as good or twice as qualified. This was not the case with Ford. In the end, Ford lost by three percentage points. Heading into the closing weeks of the campaign, polls indicated that the race was too close to call—and then something happened. Corker's campaign unleashed a television ad that attempted to portray the Democratic bachelor as a playboy. In one clip a young White blonde, acting flirtatiously and seemingly dressed in a low-cut dress, looks into the camera and says, "I met Harold at the Playboy mansion." Then pointing her thumb to her

ear and her pinky finger toward her mouth, the woman winks and says, "Harold, call me" (Wickham, 2006, p. 13A). To what extent this ad influenced White vote choice is indeterminable at this point. What is clear is that the intent was to play on the fears that some White Southerners have of Black men cavorting with White women. Although the Republicans denied that there was any racial intent, and despite the fact that Corker distanced himself from the ad, it was clear that the Corker campaign had imitated Senator Helms' campaign tactics of 1990.

Other Black candidates who lost high profile statewide elections in 2006 were Ken Blackwell for governor of Ohio, Eric Fleming for the U.S. Senate in Mississippi, Michael Steele for the U.S. Senate in Maryland, and Lynn Swann for governor of Pennsylvania. Trent Lott easily defeated state senator Eric Fleming. Not even the most cavalier student of politics expected Fleming to unseat Lott. Blackwell, Steele, and Swann all faced the same challenge as Keyes, Lucas, and Dawkins faced in the late 1980s. As Black Republicans they were in the unenviable position of having to overcome both race and party affiliation. Again, typically Blacks do not vote for Republican candidates regardless of race; Whites typically do not vote for Black candidates of any party. Although many political pundits believed that both Steele and Blackwell had a realistic chance of winning, neither election was close. In fact, the highly qualified Blackwell (former state treasurer and secretary of state) lost by nearly 30 percentage points (Governors races across the USA, 2006). Steele lost by 10 percentage points (Jeffries, 2006). Despite getting endorsements from rap mogul Russell Simmons and boxing promoter Don King, Steele was unable to make the kind of inroads into the Black community that is essential to the candidacy of a Black Republican. Swann, a political neophyte, lost to the incumbent Ed Rendell by a landslide. With no unique ideas Swann ran on traditional Republican issues (pro-business and lower taxes) (Dingle, 2006). When Swann first announced his intentions to run, Pennsylvania State Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Jubelirer laughably called Swann the best communicator since Ronald Reagan and Ed Rendell's worst nightmare (Dingle, 2006). Jubelirer was proven wrong on both counts.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our contention is that racist voting on the part of Whites is not the primary reason why most of the Black candidates lost their respective elections. Nonetheless, did race impact these elections? We conclude that some White voters will consistently refuse to vote for a Black candidate no matter the circumstances. However, in most of the elections observed, race was not the determining factor. Several of the candidates were underqualified, others lacked strong party support, and some campaigned poorly. Furthermore, we would be remiss if we did not point out that several of the candidates (e.g., Alan Keyes, Wayne Sowell, Eric Fleming, and William Lucas) were nothing more than cannon fodder for the opposition. In other words, neither those within the party nor anyone else (save the candidate) believed that they had a realistic chance of winning. Suffice it to say, there are some who believe it is better to run a candidate, any candidate, than to leave an office unopposed. Some reason that doing so allows the party to save face. Still, it is important to understand that we have not reached a point where Whites are no longer reluctant to vote for Black high profile statewide candidates. White voter hostility probably cost Bradley in 1982, Gantt in 1990, and Ford in 2006 their respective elections. However, we have attempted here to account for factors that could help minimize the impact of race in high profile statewide elections. Having stellar credentials and strong party backing and crafting a campaign that appeals to a broad electorate will not prevent crossover voting or voter abstention among Whites, but will help to offset those tendencies. Black candidates who have not held elected office have little chance of being elected to high profile statewide office. Having strong credentials puts Black candidates in a position to be nominated and thus get the support

of a major party. By and large, political parties are reluctant to nominate and support candidates with weak credentials, irrespective of the candidate's race. Such candidates are not perceived as serious and viable contenders. Strong party support gives a Black candidate access to a segment of White voters which the candidate otherwise would not be in a position to address. And the skillful implementation of a deracialized campaign strategy gives the Black candidate a tool with which to effectively tap into this segment of the White electorate.

For the most part, Black candidates who have lost high profile statewide contests have been less qualified, have been less adept at appealing to White voters, have had weak to moderate party support, and have been in the unfortunate position of having to run against an incumbent. With the exceptions of Bradley, Ford, and Gantt, all lost by pretty sizable margins. It deserves mentioning that four of these candidates (Bradley, Kirk, Young, and Gantt) were former mayors. The mayor's role, at least in this century, has not been an established part of any clear-cut and viable career path to higher office. In a study of mayors, Kotter and Lawrence (1974) found that none of them were subsequently elected to higher office despite the fact that a number of them wanted to move on to the U.S. Senate or the governor's mansion. While Kotter and Lawrence's findings may be true, there have been a number of exceptions to this rule, all of whom were White.

With the exception of Bradley and Kirk, party support for these candidates has also been questionable. In addition to the issue of party support and lightly regarded resumes, six of the losing candidates (Blackwell, Steele, Swann, Lucas, Dawkins, and Keyes) were Republicans. The election of several Black Republicans (e.g., Joe Rogers as Lieutenant Governor of Colorado, Ken Blackwell as state treasurer and comptroller, and Gary Franks and J.C. Watts to Congress) over the past 15 years has given some a false hope about the electoral prospects of Black Republicans. This hope is based on the fact that these candidates demonstrated that they were able to garner substantial White support. Frank and Watts won election in districts that were 90% White or better. The operative word here, though, is district. As mentioned earlier, Black Republicans who run for high-profile statewide office are at a severe disadvantage. First, Black Republicans are perceived within the Black community as being more conservative than they actually are (Keyes, 1989). Second, for more than half a century the overwhelming majority of Black voters have been loyal Democrats. Simply put, Blacks vote monolithically Democratic in most elections, and they rarely vote for conservative candidates. And again, Whites normally vote against Black candidates regardless of party affiliation. Hence, not only can Black Republicans expect to receive minimal support from the White electorate (based on the traditional voting patterns of Whites when a Black candidate is present); in many cases they can also expect to receive even less support from Blacks. These factors are particularly important when one considers that running for a statewide office requires a candidate to campaign throughout an entire state rather than a district, which is obviously a much smaller jurisdiction.

While there is little indication that the number of Black high profile statewide office-holders will swell anytime soon, at the very least, the fairly recent success of Wilder, Braun, Obama, and Patrick should inspire other Blacks to run for such offices. This is important; indeed one Black elected official commented anonymously that for a long time Blacks chose not to pursue high profile statewide office because it was futile to do so. The fact that no Black ran for a high profile statewide office in the 1970s does little to undermine that mindset. Braun, Wilder, Obama, and Patrick's success should make party bosses feel less uneasy about nominating Black high profile statewide hopefuls. In order to get nominated, though, Blacks have to pay their political dues. On the other hand, Whites were not restrained by political dues; a weak resume would not prevent them from competing for a high profile statewide office. Of those who currently

hold the office of governor, 34%[7] have not held elected office prior to being elected to the state house. In sum, while no formula can guarantee high profile statewide success, Black candidates who have not served an appropriate political apprenticeship, lack strong party backing, and are unable to implement an effective deracialized campaign strategy have little chance of being elected to high profile statewide office.

References

Congressional Quarterly. (2001/2002). *America Votes*. Washington, DC: Government Affairs Institute.

Barone, M., & Grant, U. (1998) *The almanac of American politics: The senators, the representatives, and the governors—their records and elections results, their states, and districts 1972-1998.* Washington, DC: National Journal.

Becker, J., & Heaton, E. (1967/68). The Election of Senator Edward W. Brooke. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31, 346-358.

Bullock, C. S. (1984). Racial crossover voting and the election of Black officials. *Journal of Politics, 46*, 238-257.

Bush, R. (2004, August 29). Keyes hits Obama's gay marriage stance. *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 1.

Cutler, J. (1972). *Ed Brooke; Biography of a Senator*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Dingle, D. (2006, November). Rise of the Black Republicans? *Black Enterprise*, p.112.

Edds, M. (1987). *Free at last: What really happened when civil rights came to southern politics.* Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler.

Edds, M. (1990). *Claiming the dream: The victorious campaign of Douglas Wilder of Virginia.* Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

Governors races across the USA. (2006, November 8). *USA Today*, p. 13A.

Hacker, A. (1992). *Two Nations: Black and Whites separate, hostile, unequal.* New York: Maxwell Macmillan.

Hardy, T. (1992, November 8). Braun Rode colorblind coalition. *The Chicago Tribune*, p. C1.

Hardy, M., & Schapiro, J. E. (1989, October 10). Wilder remains mass of contradictions. *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, p. A8.

Jeffries, J. L. (1997). Douglas Wilder and the Politics of Race (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California). *Dissertation Abstract International*, 58/11, 4427.

Jeffries, J. L. (2000). *Virginia's Native Son: The Election and Administration of Governor L. Douglas Wilder*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Jeffries, J. L. (2004, November 6). Race and high-profile bids, Obama and the rare wild card. *Journal and Courier*, p. A6.

Jeffries, J. L. (2006, November 14). Blacks and high-profile offices: A tough road to hoe. *Journal and Courier*, p. A4.

Jeffries, J. L. & Wavro, M. (2004, April 22). *Blacks and high profile statewide office in the south.* Paper presented at the Midwestern Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. 1993. *Black elected officials: A National Roster, 1970-1993*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

[7] We arrived at this figure simply by reading the bios of all the current governors and making the appropriate calculations.

Jones, C. E. (1991). The election of L. Douglas Wilder: The first Black lieutenant governor of Virginia. *The Western Journal of Black Studies, 15*, 105-113.

Jones, C. E., & Clemons. M.L. (1993). A model of racial crossover voting: An assessment of the Wilder victory. In G. Persons (Ed.), *Dilemmas of Black Politics*. (pp.128-147). New York: Harper-Collins.

Keyes, A. (1989). My race for the senate. *Policy Review. 48*, 2-8.

Kotter, J., & Lawrence, P. (1974). *Mayors in action*. New York: Wiley.

Leland, E. (1990, October 7). Campaign teams help call shots. *Charlotte Observer*, p. 1A.

May, A. L. (1990, June 26). How respondents view Young; Jackson. *Atlanta Constitution*, p. D3.

McCormick, J., & Jones, C. E. (1993). The conceptualization of deracialization: Thinking through the dilemma. In G. Persons (Ed.), *Dilemmas of Black Politics*. (pp.66-85). New York: Harper-Collins.

Morrill, J. (1990, September 22). Voters split over Gantt-Helms race. *Charlotte Observer*, p. 1A.

Page, S. (2006, November 11). Election tests how much race matters. *USA Today*, p.1

Patterson, T. (1989). The press and candidates' images. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 1*,123-135.

Patterson, T. (1993). *Out of order*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

Pettigrew, T. F., & Alston, D. (1988). *Tom Bradley's campaigns for governor: The dilemma of race and political strategies*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political Studies.

Sabato, L. (1991). A Republican encore in the Old Dominion. In L. W. Moreland, R. P. Steed & T. A. Baker (Eds.), *The 1988 Presidential Election in the South*. (pp.235-253). New York: Praeger.

Schlesinger, J. A. (1991). *Political Parties and the Winning of Office*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Sonenshein, R. J. (1990). Can Black candidates win statewide elections? *Political Science Quarterly, 105*, 219-241.

Strickland, R. A., & Whicker, M.L. (1992). Comparing the Wilder and Gantt campaigns: A model for Black statewide success in statewide elections. *Political Science & Politics, 25*, 204-212.

Turner, T., & Jeffries, J. L. (2007). *H Carl McCALL and his 2002 campaign for governor: A lesson to all Black Statewide Candidates*. Unpublished paper.

Varley, P. (1992). *Jesse Helms vs. Harvey Gantt: Race, culture and campaign strategy in the 1990 senate battle*. Cambridge, MA: Kennedy School of Government. Case Program.

Vogel, E. (2002, October 13). Gubernatorial Candidate: Democratic brass not aiding Neal. *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, p. 1.

Wattenberg, M. P. (1984). *The Decline of American parties. 1952-1984*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, 492 U.S. 490 (1989)

Whickham, D. (2006, October 31). Ad echoes GOP's "Southern strategy." *USA Today*, p. 13A.

Wilhite, A., & Theilman, J. (1986). Women, Blacks and PAC discrimination. *Social Science Quarterly, 67*, 283-98.

Williams, L. F. (1989). White/Black perceptions of the electability of Black political candidates. *National Political Science Review, 1*, 45.

Yancey, D. (1990). *When hell froze over*. Roanoke, VA: Taylor Publishing Co.

Appendix
Black High Profile Statewide Candidates

Candidate	Apprenticeship	Party Support	Campaign Strategy	Open Seat
Edward Brooke – R 1966	Y	Ys	Y	Y
Tom Bradley 1982, 1986	N, N	Ys, Ym	N, N	Y, N
William Lucas – R 1986	N	Ym	N	N
Maurice Dawkins – R 1988	N	Yw	N	N
Alan Keyes – R 1988, 1992	N, N	Ym, Yw	N, N	Y, N
Douglas Wilder 1989	Y	Ys	Y	Y
Andrew Young 1990	N	N	N	Y
Theo Mitchell 1990	N	Ym	N	N
Carol Mosely Braun 1992	Y	Ys	Y	N
Alan Wheat 1994	N	Ym	N	Y
Barack Obama 1994	N	Ys	Y	Y
Ron Sims 1994	N	Yw	N	N
Cleo Fields 1995	N	N	N	Y
Harvey Gantt 1990, 1996	N, N	Ym, Yw	Y, N	N, N
H. Carl McCall 2002	Y	Ym	N	N
Ron Kirk 2002	Y	Ys	N	Y
Joe Neal 2002	N	Yw	N	N
Denise Majette 2004	N	Ym	N	Y
Wayne Sowell 2004	N	Yw	N	N
Harold Ford 2006	N	Ys	Y	Y
Deval Patrick 2006	N	Ys	Y	Y
Michael Steele – R 2006	Y	Ys	Y	Y
Ken Blackwell - R 2006	Y	Ys	N	Y
Eric Fleming 2006	N	Yw	N	N
Lynn Swann – R 2006	N	Ys	N	N

R = Republican Y = Yes N = No s = strong support m= moderate support w = weak support