
***ABORTION POLITICS IN
STATE ELECTIONS:
COMPARISONS ACROSS STATES***

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INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Court's decision in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* gave the states an open invitation to enact restrictions on abortion access. In so doing, the court set off a war between pro-choice and pro-life forces that is being waged across the nation in statehouses and at the ballot box. The conflict over reproductive issues will only intensify if *Roe v. Wade*, the case which guarantees the right to abortion, is overturned. With several cases which could be the vehicles to overturn *Roe v. Wade* headed toward the Supreme Court, electoral politics probably will have an even more important role in affecting the direction of policy in this area. Therefore, a critical question is whether and how the electoral process has become a significant force for shaping abortion policy. A comparison of the 1989 and 1990 races may provide us with some answers to this question.

States have thus far responded to their new powers at a slow, but steady, rate, and more pro-life than pro-choice bills have been passed. The Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act of 1989, the most restrictive law of the fifty states at the time of the 1990 elections, included a number of restrictions that made abortion access more difficult: 1) prohibition of all abortions after twenty-four weeks except those to save the life of the mother or to avoid substantial and irreversible impairment of major bodily functions; 2) ban on "sex selection" abortions; 3) requirement of spousal notification prior to an abortion; and 4) requirement of a twenty-four-hour waiting period. Louisiana, Utah, and Guam have enacted virtual bans on abortion, while a similar bill in Idaho was vetoed by the governor. Among the states that have enacted parental consent following *Webster* are South Carolina, Nebraska, and Michigan. Mississippi, Ohio, and North Dakota have passed waiting periods which also required informed consent of the woman seeking an abortion. West Virginia banned public funding of abortions. Pro-choice legislation which virtually codified *Roe* was adopted in Connecticut and Maryland, but was vetoed by the governor in New Hampshire. Oregon and Nevada passed pro-choice legislation in referenda. A 1991 Washington state referendum measure which would codify *Roe* appears to have passed, but a recount is underway.

Clearly, *Webster* has given governors and legislators much more influence over abortion policy. Given their important role, this report focuses on four gubernatorial elections following *Webster* — the 1989 New Jersey and Virginia elections and the 1990 Michigan and Pennsylvania elections.¹ The gubernatorial races in these states shared one common characteristic: the candidates sharply differed over abortion policy — at least initially. Nevertheless, these four states' elections were very different in several respects: 1) the pro-choice candidates won in two of the states and the pro-life candidates won in the other two; 2) in three of the states, the Democratic candidates were pro-choice and the Republicans pro-life, and in a fourth the Republican was pro-choice and the Democrat was pro-life; 3) two of the elections occurred four months after *Webster* and two occurred a year and four months following that decision; 4) two of the races were for open seats and two of the races pitted an incumbent against a challenger; 5) two of the states had not passed restrictive legislation

¹For a more detailed look at the 1989 New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial and legislative races, see Debra L. Dodson and Lauren D. Burnbauer, *Election 1989: The Abortion Issue in New Jersey and Virginia*, New Brunswick, NJ: Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1990. Portions of this report dealing with Virginia and New Jersey are drawn, in some cases, from *Election 1989*.

in the months between *Webster* and the gubernatorial election, while one had passed (over the governor's veto) parental consent and another had enacted what was at the time of the election the most restrictive abortion bill in the nation; and 6) in two states the pro-choice side was more effective and in two states the pro-life organizations were strong, with grassroots networks in place throughout the states.

This report examines whether and when the abortion issue affected gubernatorial elections in these four states and assesses the implications of this for representative government now that elected representatives will have a greater role than previously in setting abortion policy. The New Jersey, Virginia, Michigan, and Pennsylvania elections can give us important clues about the future of abortion politics in the United States; however, no suggestion is made that these four states "represent" what happened in the United States as a whole, nor is there a suggestion that all possible scenarios of abortion politics are captured by these four states' elections. Nevertheless, a comparison across these four states provides insight into the conditions which may affect the issue's importance in future gubernatorial elections. It can shed light on why abortion policy may seem more important in one state than another, and it can demonstrate why abortion policy's importance may vary from one election year to the next.

This report weaves together information provided by statewide samples of registered voters in each of the states and by gubernatorial campaign activists and others close to the candidates or campaigns, legislative candidates (primarily in New Jersey and Virginia), party activists, and issue activists. To gather our data we surveyed representative samples of registered voters in each of these states prior to their election (800 in New Jersey, 800 in Virginia, 700 in Michigan and 700 in Pennsylvania), and following the election we interviewed those involved in the campaigns.²

There are three chapters to this study. The first chapter examines the political context — the candidates's actions and campaign messages, the political issues vying with the abortion issue for attention of the voters, and the attitudes of the voters about abortion policy. The second chapter looks at the effect of the abortion issue on the dynamics of the campaign and on voting decisions. In particular, we examine the impact of the abortion issue on the campaign agenda, level of support by party elites, and level of resources available from issue groups. The chapter also assesses issue voting and the potential for it to occur within each state. Attention is given to: 1) the importance of the issue to the voter in the gubernatorial race; 2) the extent to which voters with particular views see a difference between the candidates; and 3) whether voters who meet these conditions for issue voting actually vote for the candidate they see as closer to themselves on the issue. The final chapter of this study examines the implications of these findings for future general elections and for the future of reproductive policymaking in this new post-*Webster* era.

²For more detailed methodological information, see Appendix.

CHAPTER 1: ***THE POLITICAL SETTING***

Each of these four states' gubernatorial elections initially promised to pit a pro-life candidate against a pro-choice candidate. In Pennsylvania, the pro-choice candidate was the Republican (Hafer) and the pro-life candidate was the Democrat (Casey). In Michigan, New Jersey, and Virginia, the Democratic candidates (Blanchard, Florio, and Wilder) were associated with the pro-choice position and the Republican candidates (Engler, Courter, and Coleman) with the pro-life position. Nevertheless, the states also differed in several important ways.

CANDIDATES' STANDS ON ABORTION

THE 1989 VIRGINIA RACE FOR GOVERNOR

Pro-choice Democrat L. Douglas Wilder defeated pro-life Republican Marshall Coleman by 7,000 votes.

In the pre-*Webster* Republican primary Marshall Coleman's position was that he opposed abortion except in cases of threat to the life of the mother. However, after the primary, the *Webster* decision was handed down, creating a more complicated situation for the Coleman campaign:

If at the end of the primary we had been in a position which was, "He opposes abortion except for rape, incest, and life of the mother" — if that had been our position at the end of the primary, I believe we could have weathered the storm of the Webster decision. Our problem was that we were very vocal publicly about what Marshall's personal position is, which is that it's only life of the mother. And because we had done that and done it strongly in the primary, there were just lots and lots and lots of quotes that people could use in a general election against us. And they would not have been effective except for the Webster decision. That would not have been a decisive issue. (Coleman campaign activist)

For Coleman, the effort to adjust to the new environment meant softening his previous pledges to outlaw abortion in all cases except when the life of the mother was in danger. As one Coleman activist explained: "We made the one change which was that we were not going to pursue changing the law in regard to rape and incest." This created a great deal of controversy among pro-life supporters and in the media. And according to some, it became a character issue:

Coleman changed positions. Coleman's position back in the seventies was basically pro-choice and he acknowledged a change in position.... If he was someone who had a reputation for holding fast in principle, then the voters would certainly forgive him on one position when he's held steady on the other fifteen. But Coleman had a reputation, deserved or otherwise, he had a reputation of being an opportunist, of

swishing with the wind, of being a moderate turned conservative turned whatever was necessary to win that week, so one more shift and that just would have led to another round of stories of you can't trust Coleman. (Virginia Republican activist)

What we found in some of our follow-up polling...was not only did pro-choice people disagree with Marshall Coleman's position on the issue, but it became an integrity issue and an honesty issue as well. When Coleman started to try and dance around a little bit, people just felt like he could not be trusted. (Pro-choice activist)

Wilder, the pro-choice candidate, frequently sounded the theme of "I trust the women of Virginia." However, Wilder also wrapped his position in the mantle of Virginia's political tradition, emphasizing libertarian themes. As one pro-life legislative candidate observed:

... a kind of Jeffersonian, libertarian, almost conservative issue, I thought was really great. When they did that I thought it was damn persuasive.... It was a good argument to keep the government out of your lives. When you look over to a Republican who says, "I'm going to impose more government," but here's the Democrat saying, "I'm going to impose less".... It was a darn good handling of the issue. I don't think they could have handled it better.

The Wilder campaign attempted to link its message to Virginia heritage to broaden Wilder's appeal to the voters. His pro-choice message was integrated into campaign themes such as "the new mainstream" and "Let's take Virginia forward." And indeed it appears that it was quite successful. A Wilder activist made the following observations:

I think Doug [Wilder] basically figured out how to talk about this issue. And it wasn't a matter of whether or not you were in favor of abortion.... The whole issue is whether or not politicians should be making the decision or whether it should be an individual decision made by the woman and her doctor or her minister.... You can make the debate individual rights and liberties in the best tradition of the Founding Fathers, going back to Thomas Jefferson.

The Coleman campaign wanted to keep the issue off of the campaign agenda and focus attention on other issues. However, their attempts failed:

At first they ignored the issue and opted not to engage on the issue at all for, I would bet, three to four weeks. Then after realizing that in fact it was costing them votes, they tried to engage the issue. And they did it in the first televised debate where Coleman used it as the basis of the focus of his opening statement.... He said that Wilder was trying to flame people's fears on the issue. And that also proved ineffective. And then in the third step, they tried to make a case that in fact Wilder's record on women's issues was not particularly good. And I think that strategy failed as well.... It was their inability to make a decision about how to handle the issue that had much more effect on us than the right-to-life groups. (Wilder campaign activist)

The proximity of the *Webster* decision, Coleman's original position, and his modification all helped Wilder make abortion a central issue in the campaign. However, Wilder could only do this because he had convinced the voters he was competent to govern:

There has grown up an argument that says Doug Wilder won in Virginia because of the abortion issue. That's not accurate. In fact, it's really a two-step process which, first Doug Wilder won in the state of Virginia because he had over the course of his career come to convince voters he was qualified and able to be governor. And then as a second step on the way to victory, he was able to...focus the campaign on a very hot political issue which was partly a factor of time with the Webster decision and partly a factor of his opponent's positioning on the issue.... He [Wilder] put his opponent on the defensive. He kept him there. He made a gutsy call on using the issue in conjunction with the new mainstream...arguments. He took a gutsy issue and an early call to do the TV in September when people were saying, "Wait." He didn't answer on the charges from Coleman on crime because he knew it wouldn't stick. And he put his money into the abortion thing. And then at the first debate he turned Coleman's opening around on him and hammered him with it, and dominated that debate in the news coverage for weeks afterwards. (Wilder campaign activist)

THE 1989 NEW JERSEY RACE FOR GOVERNOR

Pro-choice Democrat Jim Florio defeated Republican Jim Courter with a 24 point margin of victory.

Although New Jersey's race started out as one between two diametrically opposed candidates, as far as abortion policy was concerned, it ended up offering a less clear cut choice to the voters on election day. In New Jersey, Florio, the pro-choice Democratic candidate, issued a strongly worded pro-choice statement immediately following the *Webster* decision:

Today's ruling turns back the clock in a way that is disappointing to me and fundamentally contrary to the notion of personal privacy. Abortion is a terribly difficult decision, but it should be up to a woman to decide, not the state legislature of New Jersey or other state legislatures. (Home News, 7/4/89, p. A-2)

Florio felt comfortable with his pro-choice position, which emphasized the importance of individual freedom, but this was not the case with his opponent. Courter, who had unsuccessfully sought the endorsement of a pro-life PAC in the primary and signed the *amicus curiae* brief submitted to the Supreme Court by members of Congress endorsing the pro-life position in the *Webster* case, now found himself on the "wrong" side of an emerging issue. Prior to *Webster*, he had been very clearly pro-life:

During the past 11 years since I have been a member of Congress, I've taken the pro-life position. I don't apologize. I have very strong beliefs with respect to that, and if I am handed a piece of legislation and it is consistent with my position which is well-known and has been very consistent for the past 11 years, I will sign it. If it is inconsistent with that pro-life position, obviously I will not. (League of Women Voters Republican Primary Debate, Rutgers University, May, 1989)

Nevertheless, Courter's initial statement after Webster declared no substantive response:

I will withhold comment until I have had adequate time to review completely this decision. This is a complicated and emotional issue that should be addressed without heated rhetoric. (Home News, 7/4/89, p. A-2)

While the media actively pursued his reaction, Courter waited two days before issuing his first substantive statement on the issue, saying:

I am not going to be pro-active on this issue. If [pro-choice] advocates roll up their sleeves to try to defeat me, so be it.... Most New Jerseyans are comfortable with the status quo. (Home News, 7/6/89, pp. A-1, A-2)

Subsequent Courter statements included the following:

My feeling is there should be no modification in the law in New Jersey.... It is not one of my priorities.... I imagine there are a number of people in New Jersey who take the position that I do that abortion should be permitted only under certain circumstances. (Star Ledger, 7/6/89, p. 14)

With respect to abortion, there is not yet consensus in the state.... [I would wait] to find out what comes out of the debate [in the legislature]. (Home News, 7/8/89, p. A-2)

Courter was viewed as waffling over the course of the next few weeks, and indeed throughout the entire campaign, based on such seemingly contradictory statements as:

I'm not going to be an advocate for changing the law of the state of New Jersey because there is no consensus that I see whatever to change what we have. (The Record, 7/21/89, p. A-3)

I would only sign a law if it was consistent with the constitution, and the constitution in New Jersey protects a woman's right to access to abortion. (The Record, 7/21/89, p. A-3)

I am personally opposed to abortion except in the cases of rape, incest, or when the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother. (The [Trenton] Times, 8/24/89, p. A-1)

The New Jersey Constitution has been interpreted by the New Jersey Supreme Court to guarantee a woman's unrestricted access to abortion. As governor I will uphold the Constitution and not simply impose my personal views on the women of New Jersey. As Governor, I will sign legislation put forward by the state legislature that would require parental notification prior to a minor receiving an abortion. As a matter of common sense, I fundamentally disagree with Jim Florio, Molly Yard, and the National Abortion Rights Action League that minors under the age of 18 should simply be able to receive an abortion without their parents' or legal guardians' knowledge. (The [Trenton] Times, 8/24/89, p. A-1)

People know what my position is over the years — I have been quite consistent. (News Tribune, 10/23/89, p. A-3)

My personal position has been consistent for years. I've said abortion should be permitted under some circumstances — not all circumstances. (The Record, 10/26/89, p. A-3)

Courter was criticized by the pro-life groups (and also by many observers and party activists) for shifting positions on the issue. While some believed he would have been much better off maintaining a clear pro-life stance, other campaign and party activists' remarks indicate the politically difficult position in which the abortion issue seemed to place Courter, given his pre-Webster pro-life stance.

He [Courter] couldn't have done things differently, or much differently than he did. Maybe be firm so there was no perception of waffling, but he had an opinion that he believed in. He got attacked for changing his stance a little bit. Florio had changed his stance just a little bit further down the line. So, I'm not sure anything could have been done differently. (New Jersey Republican activist)

It seemed that the new post-Webster environment had forced Courter to re-evaluate his pro-life views, resulting in a redefinition of his position toward the pro-choice side in the middle of the campaign. If the Courter campaign could convince the voters that he did not differ sharply from Florio and had truly changed, then abortion would not be an issue. If this effort was unsuccessful (and it was), voters might either continue to presume Courter was pro-life or begin to doubt his integrity.

The abortion issue became not only a substantive policy question but a character issue as well, and it received a great deal of attention. As one Florio activist observed:

We were at times surprised at the amount of attention that the media was giving to the issue.... You wonder if Congressman Courter had staked out a position early and stuck to that position, whether the news media would have put the kind of attention that they put on it. I think what really piqued their continued interest in this was not just it was an issue nationally and something that the electorate was interested in. But it became more of a character issue, with, "What does this guy really believe? Is

what he's saying today going to be in fact what he says when he gets in office?" And the inconsistencies in his filing in the amicus brief on the Webster case, and then starting to try and move away from that very quickly within a period of just a few weeks. And the fact that he insisted on a couple of occasions to the press that he had not changed his position, when as they aptly pointed out they had news reels that showed that he had changed his position...we had no way of clearly planning for that happening. And we were as fascinated I think as anyone else was in watching this drama play out. (Florio campaign activist)

Meanwhile, Florio was subtly modifying his position in a way that would minimize the probability of being painted as a "left wing liberal." He issued a statement in July implying that he might consider legislation mandating parental notification for a minor's abortion, were it to come to his desk during his administration.

The Florio campaign was also careful in discussing the issue, talking about it as "choice." As one Florio campaign activist explained:

I would call it the issue of choice... The way the issue is getting framed nationally it's not about whether or not you are pro-abortion or anti-abortion. Because Governor Florio is not in favor of people having abortions. He would prefer they don't, certainly not as a form of birth control.... The issue is what's the government's role in regulating a woman's right to whether or not she has an abortion. And so it's an issue of government involvement in a personal decision. And that's why it's much better framed as a right-to-choose.... I don't accept that it is a "women's rights" issue. It's an issue having to do with the whole attitude towards personal privacy, of which the decision on choice is an aspect.

The Florio campaign neither emphasized the issue as much as the Wilder campaign, nor sought to deal with the issue as part of a more general theme in the campaign. To be sure, the emphasis was on choice, but it was not used as often and it seemed that the campaign wanted to use it only enough to acknowledge a pro-choice position for the benefit of those who would base their decisions on this issue. One knowledgeable Republican observer compared the way that Florio and Wilder used the issue.

Florio didn't advance that [libertarian] argument [like Wilder did]. What he did is he simply allowed the Courter campaign to flounder on the issue.

Abortion became an issue in the New Jersey campaign not so much because the pro-choice candidate pursued it, but because others — the activist groups and the media — kept the issue in the public eye and kept their activities centered around the gubernatorial candidates. The low profile the Florio campaign gave the issue is clear from this discussion with an activist from the Florio camp:

Q: Did you use the abortion issue in your campaign literature?

A: No, I don't think we did.

Q: Did you run any commercials?

A: Yes. One of our commercials I believe mentioned it, but did not highlight it. But [it] did...mention the right-to-choose issue.

While they were active in both states, the pro-choice activists filled what might be considered a void in campaign messages transmitted by the Florio campaign (as least relative to the messages that Wilder sent and that were being sent by others about Courter and Coleman).

THE 1990 MICHIGAN RACE FOR GOVERNOR

Pro-life Republican John Engler defeated pro-choice incumbent Democrat Jim Blanchard by about 17,000 votes.

Jim Blanchard had been characterized by some as the most pro-choice governor in the nation and he had a very consistent pro-choice record as governor. Blanchard had repeatedly vetoed bans on public funding and in 1990 had vetoed a parental consent measure. Both of his vetoes were ultimately overridden through grassroots petition drives. His veto of parental consent was overridden in September 1990, only weeks prior to the election.³ His pro-choice supporters saw his election year veto of the popular parental consent bill as an act of courage; his opponents saw it as a chance to frame the issue as parental consent. However, Blanchard saw a political risk in emphasizing the abortion issue and did not want abortion policy to be on the top of his own or his opponent's issue agenda.

The pro-choice groups supported his record on abortion policy, but were dismayed by what they saw as Blanchard's failure to acknowledge the legitimacy of their issue:

In the first debate, he [Blanchard] started out beautifully, "I trust the women of Michigan to make their own decisions...but you know the real issue is jobs." And he went on for about 3 minutes talking about jobs and God only knows what else. And he ended it about the time the buzzer was going to go off with, "And I trust the women of Michigan to make this decision".... His whole campaign was designed to attract the white macho guys in Macomb County and just ignore everybody else.
(Michigan pro-choice activist)

John Engler shared Blanchard's desire to avoid talking about the abortion issue, but his situation was more complicated. His position during the campaign was that he was opposed

³Michigan's state constitution allows the voters to override the governor's veto of a bill. If a governor vetoes a bill, then petitioners may return the bill to the legislature for reconsideration provided that they collect a given number of signatures during a 180 day period. (In this instance, 191,726 signatures were required.) If it passes both houses of the legislature, the bill then becomes law without the governor having the power to veto the bill. (*Right-to-Life of Michigan News*, July/August 1990)

to abortion except in the cases of rape, incest, and threat to life of the mother. However, he had apparently modified his position somewhat on the issue early in the campaign, quietly, with little fanfare, little notice, and little political fallout.

Most of Engler's campaign supporters who were interviewed did not feel comfortable discussing the modification. Some would not even acknowledge that Governor Engler's position had ever changed, and others reluctantly admitted that there had been "some sort of controversy." However, some were more willing to discuss what had happened. One Engler campaign activist marvelled at the fact that the shift from opposing abortion except in cases of threat to the life of the mother to opposing abortion except in cases of rape, incest, and threat to the life of the mother had received very little attention:

He did make a slight change early in the campaign...when he...changed to allow abortion in the cases of rape and incest.... When he said he was going to do this I remember thinking..., "Wait, you can't skip over this fast. This is a pretty drastic change." And yet he did it.... It was done very quietly. It was done very succinctly. It became part of his speech that I oppose abortion except for saving the [life of the] mother, rape, and incest. He just added those two words on and [virtually] nobody took him on.... He did it at a candidates' meeting down in Oakland County and there were a couple of right-to-lifers there who went after him on it.... He got 48 hours of press and that was it. (Engler campaign activist)

This apparent change had been a source of concern to the pro-life movement in Michigan, which has a stated policy of not endorsing candidates who support these exceptions; however, the pro-life movement was convinced that he would sign legislation if the only exception allowed was threat to the life of the mother.

Mr. Engler committed to us in person that he would sign legislation without the rape and incest exception. For 20 years he had been supportive of legislation without the rape and incest exception.... I know that he had never been for rape and incest exceptions, and then all of a sudden he was quoted as being for. I think he felt he had been trapped into answering before he had time to think about it.... So we spent many hours with him to be sure that if we worked hard for him, he would embody the goals that we had. We did not endorse him quickly, but we did it thoughtfully and carefully. He did sign our questionnaire without the rape and incest exception. He did indicate that it was a troubled area for him, but that he would sign our legislation. (Pro-life activist)

Engler succeeded where Coleman had failed in Virginia. Unlike Coleman who had run in a pre-Webster primary and had emphasized his opposition to abortion except in cases of threat to the life of the mother, Engler was able to modify his position early to avoid criticism for opposing rape and incest exceptions. As will be discussed later, this was partially because the pro-choice groups did not see the apparent shift as something that was important to pursue, it was partially because the Blanchard campaign was not successful focusing the media's attention on the question of whether Engler had changed his position,

and it was partially due to the Blanchard campaign's reluctance to make the abortion issue a priority issue in the campaign. The difference in Engler's fate and Coleman's may have also been due to declining media interest in the abortion issue.

Indeed, there was great concern about raising the abortion issue in public dialogue by both those involved in the Blanchard campaign and those involved in the Engler campaign. According to several sources, the fact that the parental consent issue had been the last controversy over abortion prior to hitting the campaign trail caused the Blanchard campaign to fear that the abortion issue would be framed as a referendum on parental consent. Some thought that attention to parental consent would hurt Blanchard among pro-choice voters:

Parental consent had framed it in a way that made it more dangerous for us to use the issue.... Our pollster kept telling us that if we can frame it on a woman's right to choose, it can be a marginal winner for us. His [Blanchard's] position [on abortion] was pretty well known.... If we raised the issue in hot, emotional TV ads we might have alienated some of our friends... That was one of the reasons we held back.
(Democratic party activist)

In addition, reframing the issue through paid media would have been a very expensive strategy — not ideal given the limits on campaign spending in the Michigan race. According to one Democratic activist, when you must operate within these spending limits:

You have to do a very finite number of ads and stick to them. To chose to do this issue, which probably would have taken two or three ads, would have diverted us from our main game plan.

The Engler campaign was set to frame the discussion as an issue of parental rights and taxpayer funding of abortions if Blanchard raised the issue; but they saw a focus on abortion policy as a high-risk strategy as well and preferred to focus the campaign on more traditional political issues which they were more confident of controlling and which they saw as less divisive:

It [raising the abortion issue] was a high-risk strategy and I don't think anyone was very comfortable with that.... We did coach John for the debates because we knew it would come up.... If there was ever a question on abortion, we coached John to go right to parental consent and taxpayer funding of abortion.... State the position on rape and incest so that Blanchard couldn't go after that since that is the weak link that pro-choice people use against pro-life Republicans. (Engler campaign activist)

The Engler campaign was fairly confident that Right-to-Life of Michigan would mobilize all those whose votes were to be gained from a pro-life position. The feeling of one Democratic activist was that the pro-life forces had mobilized on behalf of Engler, the pro-choice forces had not mobilized as effectively as pro-lifers, and that Blanchard should have talked about it more:

In retrospect, they capitalized and we didn't. So I might give them what they got and...by us raising the abortion issue we probably won't lose any of those [pro-life] voters.... They are going to get a phone call, so if they see an ad that offends them, it's not going to make that much difference.... Let's go after some of those suburban Oakland County pro-choice Republican women and let's start motivating them more than they've been motivated because ultimately they didn't get motivated that much.

Both Blanchard and Engler were seen as competent by the voters, although Blanchard, as the two-term incumbent governor, initially had a name recognition advantage over his state senate majority leader opponent.

Although Jim Blanchard had been governor for eight years, many felt that the voters had never really gotten a sense of what he stood for, what he had accomplished, and why they should vote him back into office. Some felt the very negative tenor of Blanchard's campaign commercials failed to remind them what he had done for the state as governor, while Engler's commercials reminded the voters what Blanchard had *not* done as governor — lower property taxes. One Republican activist observed:

Jim Blanchard spent eight years cultivating the middle ground of the electorate.... Even if you go back to spring 1990... people really thought that he was doing a good job — he had really built up a lot of political capital. Then he basically just forgot about it and started his campaign from day one on the attack. I think that in the long run it exposed the fact that his popularity was about an inch thick and a mile wide.

THE 1990 PENNSYLVANIA RACE FOR GOVERNOR

Pro-life incumbent Democratic Governor Robert Casey defeated pro-choice Republican Auditor General Barbara Hafer by a two to one margin.

If Jim Blanchard's vetoing public funding bans and vetoing parental consent legislation had earned him the reputation of being the most pro-choice governor in the United States, Bob Casey's signing of what was at that time the most restrictive abortion bill in the nation would at least have put him in contention for being the most pro-life governor in the country. (However, Casey had also surprised and angered his pro-life supporters when he vetoed a pro-life bill early in his term because he believed it to be unconstitutional.) Casey's pro-life position was summed up this way by one member of his administration:

If there was a bill to flat out outlaw abortion, he would do that. But because of the guidelines set down by the Supreme Court, as governor he is compelled to live by that constitutional standard.

During an October debate with Barbara Hafer, Casey was asked if he would sign a law (presuming it was constitutional) that banned all abortions and provided criminal penalties for doctors and hospitals that violated the law, Casey replied:

If the legislature passed such a law, and if it had an exception for the health of the mother, I will sign it. (New York Times 10/11/90)

One Hafer campaign activist acknowledged Casey's sincerity and thought that his sincerity might have made it more difficult to attack him over opposing an exception for rape and incest:

Maybe part of it [how he escaped getting attacked over the no exception for rape and incest] is that Bob Casey believes it.... There is a sincerity about him on the issue that comes from a lifetime of religious conviction. For that I would say that Barbara is a perfect match because she is about as committed the other way.

Barbara Hafer in the October debate characterized Casey's signing of the 1989 Abortion Control Act as "condemning a generation and a gender to back alley abortions" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10/10/90). "I was a public health nurse," she added, "I have held women in my arms that have died from botched abortions (*New York Times*, 10/11/90)."

One of two Hafer ads aired near the end of her campaign addressed the abortion issue and attempted to focus attention on Casey's opposition to the rape and incest exceptions. Dramatizing a rape in a dark alley and reminding the viewers that Casey opposed abortion in the cases of rape and incest, the ad ended with Barbara Hafer in front of the Liberty Bell vowing to make sure that women's lives are never threatened by outlawing abortion as it once was.

While Hafer focused on a mixture of feminist and libertarian themes in her messages to the voters, Casey's strategy was to emphasize other issues if possible, and if not, to refocus the issue to Hafer's opposition to the provisions of the 1989 Abortion Control Act.

The debate over abortion policy in Pennsylvania, more so than in New Jersey and much more than in Virginia, has focused on specific provisions of bills rather than dealing with a more general philosophical issue regarding the role of government. One Democratic activist agreed:

Sure. That's partly a genius of Mr. Freind [the pro-life leader in the legislature]. He got people debating specific laws rather than principles. We [in Pennsylvania] are not for the most part talking about the rightness or the wrongness, or the civil liberties aspect. We are talking about under what conditions it is reasonable to control.

This may well have had an impact on the types of messages that candidates could most readily convey to the voters in elections.

The abortion issue was a major issue in the Hafer campaign, but it may have received a bit more attention earlier in the campaign than some involved in Republican politics would have preferred. Some interviewed thought she emphasized it too much, others in the party thought it was the only issue which brought her attention, and still others saw it as one of the few issues she could use against the popular incumbent opponent. Indeed, an early poll showed that when voters were told where Hafer and Casey stood on abortion policy (i.e., he personally opposed abortion and had signed legislation restricting abortion while Hafer

thought it was a private decision), Casey's 30 point lead over Hafer in the preference question evaporated.⁴ This, however, did not occur in November.

The Hafer campaign attempted to refocus the discussion on the appropriate role of government, to some extent. However, limited resources for paid media hampered any effective strategy, particularly given the years of debate over specifics of abortion policy in the Pennsylvania legislature. More than any of the other campaigns examined in this study, Hafer also emphasized women's rights — a theme which made some Republicans (particularly some of the men interviewed) uncomfortable and which some saw as helping to alienate the Republican base. One Republican activist assessed it as follows:

If you get into the individual items, the average Pennsylvanian will not be troubled at all by a provision that says you can't do sex selection abortions. The average Pennsylvanian is not going to be troubled by a parental consent provision. And probably the average Pennsylvanian is not going to be offended by a spousal notification provision. Some kind of a waiting period is not going to appear to be difficult. So if you are pro-life in Pennsylvania, the wisest course is to try to target on the specifics. What the Hafer candidacy never got done was to raise the profile of the issue into a philosophical issue.... [Wilder's way] was my recommended model for trying to deal with it in Pennsylvania. Taking and using that particular approach I thought would be comfortable for the relatively conservative Republican constituency in Pennsylvania that would have to provide 80 percent of her votes if her campaign were to have a success. In retrospect I don't know why it got dealt with by specifics.

Casey did not want to make abortion an issue in his campaign. And some knowledgeable insiders explained that to offset possible negative effects of his pro-life position among pro-choice Democratic women, he emphasize other issues:

During the campaign some of the commercials were geared to show what the governor had done for life after birth.... [Some] women...felt the governor may not be concerned about them given his position on abortion.... Where the governor was in favor of other things that advanced their interests, prenatal care, postnatal care, women's infants and children's program (WIC funding), all kinds of other things that were to help women who found themselves in situations where they needed help, he made certain his record in those areas was well known.

Casey not only had a strong record of success during his four-year tenure as governor which could help deflect inquiries about abortion policy, but his opponent's campaign never came together in the view of many, and (as we will see later in the report) this made it more difficult for Hafer to convince even pro-choice voters to support her.

Hafer was still getting the auditor general's office organized when a Pittsburgh newspaper ran a series of stories about backlogs and about improper use of funds in the office. In

⁴For more information see, *The Polling Report*, April 9, 1990.

addition, her off-the-cuff remarks, such as describing her opponent Casey as a "red-necked Irishman from Scranton" became headlines and painted her in a negative light to a state that really did not yet know her. Underfunded, without party support, late out of the gate, and plagued by gaffs, the campaign was never seen as viable by many. And for this reason, it became difficult for her to ever threaten Casey on election day.

Often those interviewed stressed the conservative nature of Pennsylvania as the reason for its being a leader in pro-life legislation following *Webster*. Many said, again and again, "The most important thing to keep in mind is this is a very conservative state." Our analysis of the voters' attitudes (presented later in the report) will show that Pennsylvania voters are somewhat more supportive of pro-life views than the other three states in this study. However, the most important factors in understanding Pennsylvania's political context as it relates to abortion policy may be something else: the framing of the issue and the many years the pro-life forces have devoted to building an organizational structure.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ABORTION POLICY RELATIVE TO OTHER ISSUES

Abortion policy has to compete with other issues for the voters' attention on election day. Whether or not voters choose to focus on abortion policy will be affected by not only the prominence given to abortion policy by the candidates and activists during the campaign, but also by the extent to which other issues in the voters' daily lives take precedence over the abortion issue *and* by staying power of the abortion issue as important to voters.

THE STAYING POWER OF THE ABORTION ISSUE

In assessing the staying power of the abortion issue, the time-lag between *Webster* and the elections as well as the legislative history of abortion policy in the four states must be considered.

The 1989 New Jersey and Virginia elections occurred four months after *Webster* and the Pennsylvania and Michigan elections one year and four months after that decision was handed down. In one sense, the political environment was the same in all four states — *Webster* was still the law of the land which meant that abortion policy could be set (to an undetermined extent) by the states. Thus, abortion policy could be affected by election results. In another sense, the environment was very different by the time of the 1990 Michigan and Pennsylvania elections: "a year and a half is a long time."

Many in New Jersey and Virginia felt that the *Webster* decision had changed the political landscape, raising the level of interest in the abortion issue on the part of voters, pro-choice activists and sympathizers, and the media, and forcing candidates to address the issue.

Abortion was likely to be an issue regardless of whether the Webster decision had come up or not, but it...probably would have been a much less effective campaign strategy without Webster. (Wilder campaign activist)

Had Webster not happened, I think the big difference would have been that the issue would not have been as visible. It would not have been as much in the forefront of the voters' minds in Virginia. (Virginia pro-choice activist)

Choice would not have been a predominant issue in the campaign were it not for the Webster decision. I think that over the years people had become very complacent about the right to choice. That complacency by virtue of Roe v. Wade had become an expected freedom, as the right to speak and vote and all of the other rights that we enjoy in this country [are]. I think when Webster was handed down, that people for the first time in fifteen, sixteen years really felt threatened with losing a right that they had come to expect. And that fear really brought out in a lot of people a deeper thinking about that issue than they had previously done. (Florio campaign activist)

By redefining the legal status of abortion, the decision galvanized pro-choice activists and sympathizers, which, in turn, affected issue groups' campaign resources, the types of pressures the candidates felt, the information that voters received, and the way the issue was covered by the media. This point of view was supported by comments from both the pro-choice and pro-life sides in New Jersey as well as in Virginia:

The political landscape in this country...changed pretty much 180 degrees. The...sleeping pro-choice giant woke up during that time. It became much easier to mobilize people. People were more likely to give money to NARAL [the National Abortion Rights Action League] and our affiliates and actually join. And what we saw during last year is that the national membership base doubled. All of our affiliate members, which is a separate membership base, doubled. Our national budget increased 300 percent over the last year. (NARAL activist, Virginia)

For years it had been such a quiet movement that there was not that kind of energy in the pro-choice movement for so long. And I think that people probably questioned whether one could have that kind of energy again. So it was a surprise in a sense that almost overnight you were able, it was just like someone flipped on the light and there was all of this activity. (Florio campaign activist)

When Webster occurred...a lot of people out there who regard this as a right to abortion, a defensible right or an important thing in their life, decided to say, hey, wow, we've got to get active.... And there was very definitely an awakening of pro-abortion people.... No question about it.... It's a real thing, the mobilization [of pro-abortion groups].... We [organized pro-life groups] picked up support [following Webster]. We picked up a lot of people who were on the fence or quiet and inactive

and it made some people active who were not active, supportive who were not supportive.
(New Jersey pro-life activist)

I think Webster was a great motivating factor for the pro-abortion side.... I really believe that prior to Webster, that the pro-aborts believed this issue was dead, it was over, they had won and the battle was over, and they didn't have to do anything. And this decision came down and they realized that it wasn't over. It was moving away and not in their direction. So they were able to motivate the people that support their position through that. They were afraid...our people were harder to motivate because...they saw this [Webster decision] as a victory and they didn't think we had to really work on it that much. (Virginia pro-life activist)

Webster made the issue "newsworthy," thereby generating media attention not only about the substantive stands, but also about how the issue was being handled. This media coverage helped prime the voters to think about the connection between the race for governor and state policy on abortion. This view was shared by activists in both states but was expressed more adamantly by those involved in the campaign in Virginia. As one Coleman activist noted:

[After Webster] I'm absolutely clear that it was the national media attention which was the decisive key.... Any issue that is on the evening news two or three times a week becomes a major issue in the minds of the people.... Every time you had a press story, it always revolved around abortion, it focused on it. They were continually questioning him [Coleman] about it. It became the big issue, it became the thing that people discussed over cocktails. It became the thing that you talked about at the lunch break at work. And that created a focus of, well there's an election going on, where do these candidates stand?

On the other hand, a considerable amount of time had passed by November 1990 — time for pro-choice sympathizers to possibly reevaluate whether they felt there was a "threat" to their rights, potentially time for pro-life activists to respond to a re-energized pro-choice movement, and perhaps time for the media to lose interest in abortion politics as a breaking news story. In both Michigan and Pennsylvania, the observations were similar: the time lag since *Webster* decreased the intensity of mobilization around the issue. And this was true despite the fact that: the Supreme Court had handed down decisions in 1990 supporting parental consent legislation; a grassroots petition drive in Michigan had helped override the governor's veto of a parental consent law; and after *Webster* Pennsylvania had enacted restrictions on abortion access.

In Michigan, most saw the intensity of pro-choice concern declining with the passage of time since *Webster* and thus affecting the mobilization of the pro-choice side:

[If Webster had happened in 1990] I sense that it would have been as big of an issue in our race and others as it was in the Virginia and New Jersey races. (Republican party activist)

[If Webster had been in 1990] I think there would have been just an incredible outpouring of concern about the issues and far more support.... Webster came along and shook some people out of their complacency, alarmed them a little bit — not enough to really turn the tide — but enough so that there is some momentum that began building as a result of Webster. [However] that [post-Webster momentum] ebbed. People sort of slid back into their old familiar patterns. They saw that after Webster there wasn't this onslaught of legislation, it wasn't that horrible. (Michigan pro-choice activist)

Pennsylvania campaign and issue activists reached similar conclusions:

I think that on any political issue, and this issue [abortion] is no exception, when the threat is raised for people that is when they are going to become more politically active. And even though we have had more Supreme Court decisions and legislation has been passed across the states, because the immediate threat has ebbed away, you don't have as many people spontaneously calling you up. (Pro-choice activist)

And some pro-choice activists believed this decline in intensity of concern had occurred in part due to the spin put on the bills and the fact that many hadn't been personally affected:

It [the intensity of concern] was sustained for quite some time, but not as long as the general election.... "It doesn't seem so bad" is certainly part of it. The abortion control act passed after Webster is still under injunction, so the direct impact has not been felt by women seeking abortions.... We still don't have the 24 hour waiting period, the spousal notice and all those other things that the abortion control act requires. So by the time that the gubernatorial race came into view there were so many other issues related to that race that abortion really took a back seat. (Pennsylvania pro-choice activist)

Pro-life activists in Michigan reported that Webster did not affect their organization. However, their counterparts in Pennsylvania saw Webster as ultimately strengthening their efforts because their sympathizers mobilized and because it facilitated passage of the 1989 Abortion Control Act.

One of the things that the media said was going to happen post-Webster and the pro-abortion people said was going to happen post-Webster — and it did — was that they galvanized their forces. But...when our people saw the opposition getting more coverage in the newspaper, getting more active, it pulled people out who had never been active before. As their support increased, so did ours...the language in Webster gave us the edge for going to the legislature, going to the governor and saying we can do more than we have done — these are the kinds of things we think we can uphold constitutionally....Webster laid the ground work for the 1989 Abortion Control Act. (Pennsylvania pro-life activist)

But those who thought the intensity of concern had declined since *Webster*, also often thought that future court decisions could return the level of interest to at least the height of concern following *Webster*:

If Roe is overturned four months before the next election in Michigan, it is going to have a real big impact. New Jersey and Virginia were lucky, but you can't keep people angry for a year and a half. (Democratic party activist)

COMPETITION WITH OTHER ISSUES

The political environments of the four states differed to some extent. If the abortion issue was going to become important in any of these states, it would have to compete with other issues that appeared to have a direct impact on daily life. In New Jersey, the crisis of extremely high automobile insurance rates, high taxes, the condition of the state's economy, and concerns about the environment — particularly in light of the periodic pollution which had ravaged the Jersey shore in recent years — gave voters plenty to be concerned about in addition to abortion.

In Virginia, issues competing with abortion for voter attention included: transportation, taxes, crime, family life education and the seldom mentioned but ubiquitous race issue brought to the fore by the presence of a black gubernatorial candidate. But none of these competing issues seemed to be burning issues on the minds of the voters (in contrast to the automobile insurance issue in New Jersey). Nor did these issues shape the agenda of the state.

In Michigan pocket book issues were of great concern to the residents. Concern with the economy, taxes, and unemployment would have made it difficult for anyone to make abortion policy the number one issue.

You have a state here with double digit unemployment, property taxes through the roof, you can't find a job. The last thing on peoples' minds was abortion.... Property taxes in Michigan are the 4th highest in the country. John Engler gave people a reason to vote against Blanchard — property taxes. (Republican party activist)

Pennsylvania was a somewhat different story. To many, the incumbent Democratic governor seemed unbeatable. In fact, the Republicans most likely to run for office had chosen to sit out the 1990 election and perhaps run some time in the future. Not only was Casey's popularity high, but few big problems seemed to have remained unaddressed during his administration. As one Democrat explained:

He had a truly commendable record in his first term. He was a very prudent manager of state revenues. He didn't go on wild spending sprees. Secondly he took on some issues that needed to be addressed.... He established himself very early as a strong enforcer of environmental laws.... He closed down landfills.... He put a halt to the unrestricted importation of out-of-state trash. He worked on hazardous waste

legislation, low level nuclear waste legislation, he took on questions such as tax reform.... He instituted a program to rehabilitate and renovate dilapidated water and sewer systems throughout the state, particularly in smaller communities. He took on auto insurance reform and he did it all without raising taxes.... He demonstrated that he not only had the commitment to tackle these issues, but also the ability to follow through on them and get them done.

Indeed, this view was shared by many who recounted the search for a candidate which had led to Barbara Hafer being encouraged to run for governor:

It became clear that the expected candidates were not going to run for governor. There was a concern that Casey was strong, perhaps not unbeatable, but was a strong favorite and a lot of people decided to wait until 1994.... The other view, which particularly I held, was that Casey couldn't be beaten with a traditional Republican candidate — a fifty year old male with gray hair who was pro-life and moderately conservative..... A female running for governor for the first time in Pennsylvania would be that nontraditional candidacy. (Republican party activist)

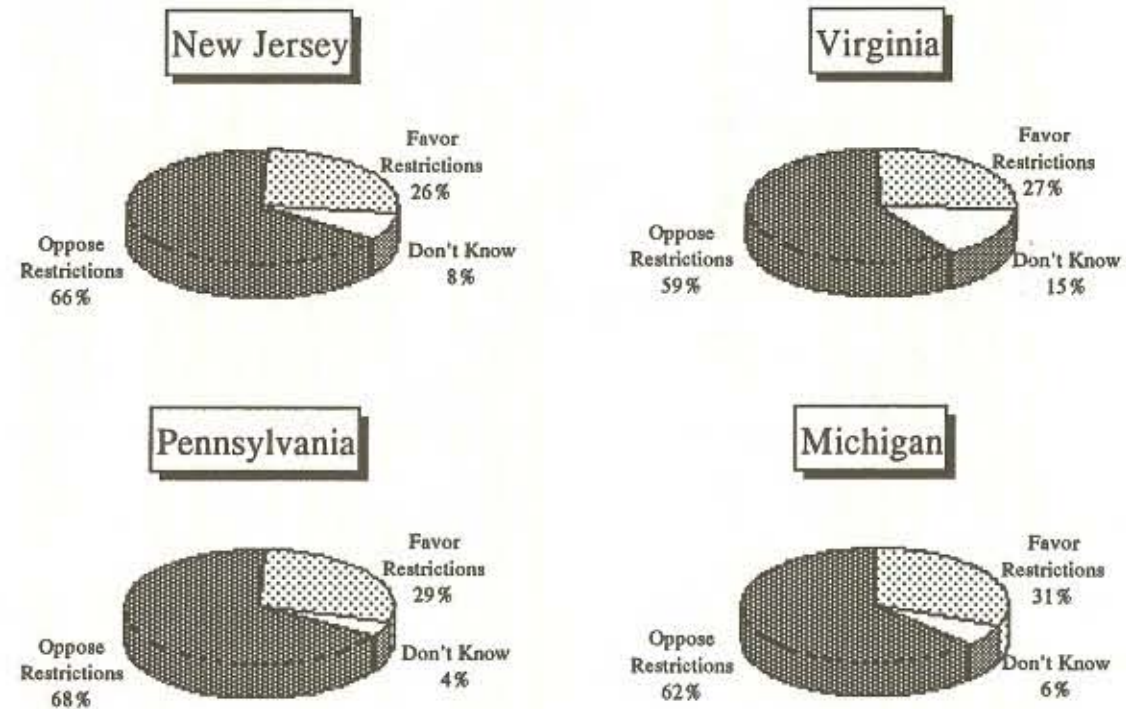
On the one hand, the lack of other pressing issues could have facilitated efforts to make abortion policy an issue; on the other hand, the fact that a struggling pro-choice challenger wanted to use the issue against the very popular pro-life incumbent could have rendered the abortion issue irrelevant to pro-choice voters.

VOTER ATTITUDES ABOUT ABORTION POLICY

Whether the abortion issue can potentially help pro-choice or pro-life candidates more depends in part on the attitudes of voters in the states. When asked about their attitudes on additional restrictions on abortion, voters in each of these four states tended to express pro-choice views more frequently than pro-life views (Figure 1).⁵ While majorities of voters in all four states were opposed to additional government restrictions, their responses to other questions about abortion policy suggested they were not comfortable with the idea of abortion in all situations.

⁵ The 1989 survey question was: "Would you say you favor or oppose new government restrictions on abortion?" Because Michigan and Pennsylvania had recently enacted new restrictions, the 1990 question wording was slightly modified to avoid the possibility of confusion: "Would you say you favor or oppose additional government restrictions on abortion?"

Figure 1:
Attitudes Toward New Restrictions on Abortion



Voters answered a battery of seven additional questions to tap various attitudes toward abortion per se and toward "choice."⁶ Based on their responses, we constructed a pro-life/pro-choice index. The index ranges from zero (no pro-choice responses and all pro-life responses) to seven (all pro-choice responses and no pro-life responses). Comparing the proportions in each state that gave five or more pro-choice responses to the proportion that gave two or fewer pro-choice responses, it is clear that among these four states, New Jersey is the most pro-choice and Pennsylvania is the least pro-choice (Figure 2).⁷ Nevertheless, these states' voters were much more similar in views than might be expected given their different legislative histories about abortion policymaking. Indeed, the next chapter will show that what was more different across the states was the political environment — the campaign cues and the other relevant political conditions — not the voters.

Voters in all four states showed similar patterns of conflict about abortion restrictions. Even among voters who gave few pro-choice responses on the index, substantial numbers opposed new restrictions on abortion (Figure 3). This suggested that despite significant reservations, they hesitated to support a narrowing of women's choices. New Jersey voters scoring greater than 3 on the index, and Virginia and Michigan voters scoring greater than 2 on the index, and Pennsylvania voters scoring greater than 1 on the index were more likely to oppose than to favor additional restrictions. This suggests that "ambivalent" voters in the middle range of the scale were likely to be swayed by the issue framing in campaign messages. Based on their replies, many in the "mushy middle" did not seem very comfortable with abortion per se, yet they did not feel comfortable with government limiting individual rights either. Thus, if the issue was defined in terms of "choice" or "individual rights," they might be more inclined to support a pro-choice view; if framed as "abortion," specific unpopular instances where abortion might be chosen, or in terms of specific "reasonable restrictions" (e.g., parental consent, spousal notification), they might move away from that position.⁸

⁶The issues addressed were: parental consent; public funding of abortions; the balance of rights that should be afforded to the pregnant woman and the fetus/unborn; government intervention; morality of abortion; circumstances under which abortion should be prohibited; and allowing abortion under economic hardship. See the Appendix for complete question wording.

⁷Similarly, 1990 exit polling found that New Jersey voters were somewhat more likely than Michigan or Pennsylvania voters to say that abortion should always be legal with 39%, 34%, and 32% respectively choosing this option when asked it should always be legal, sometimes be legal, or never be legal (*Abortion Report* 11/91).

⁸The recent attention of pro-choice groups to emphasizing the importance of contraceptive availability to prevent unplanned pregnancies could add an interesting twist to this debate. When asked if government should make contraceptives more widely available, majorities of all groups on the pro-life/pro-choice index agreed. However, such a program was substantially more divisive among consistent pro-life voters than among consistent pro-choice voters (with 61% of consistent pro-life voters compared with 93% of consistent pro-choice voters supporting it in Pennsylvania; the support in Michigan among these groups was 68% vs. 95%).

Figure 2:
Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Scores

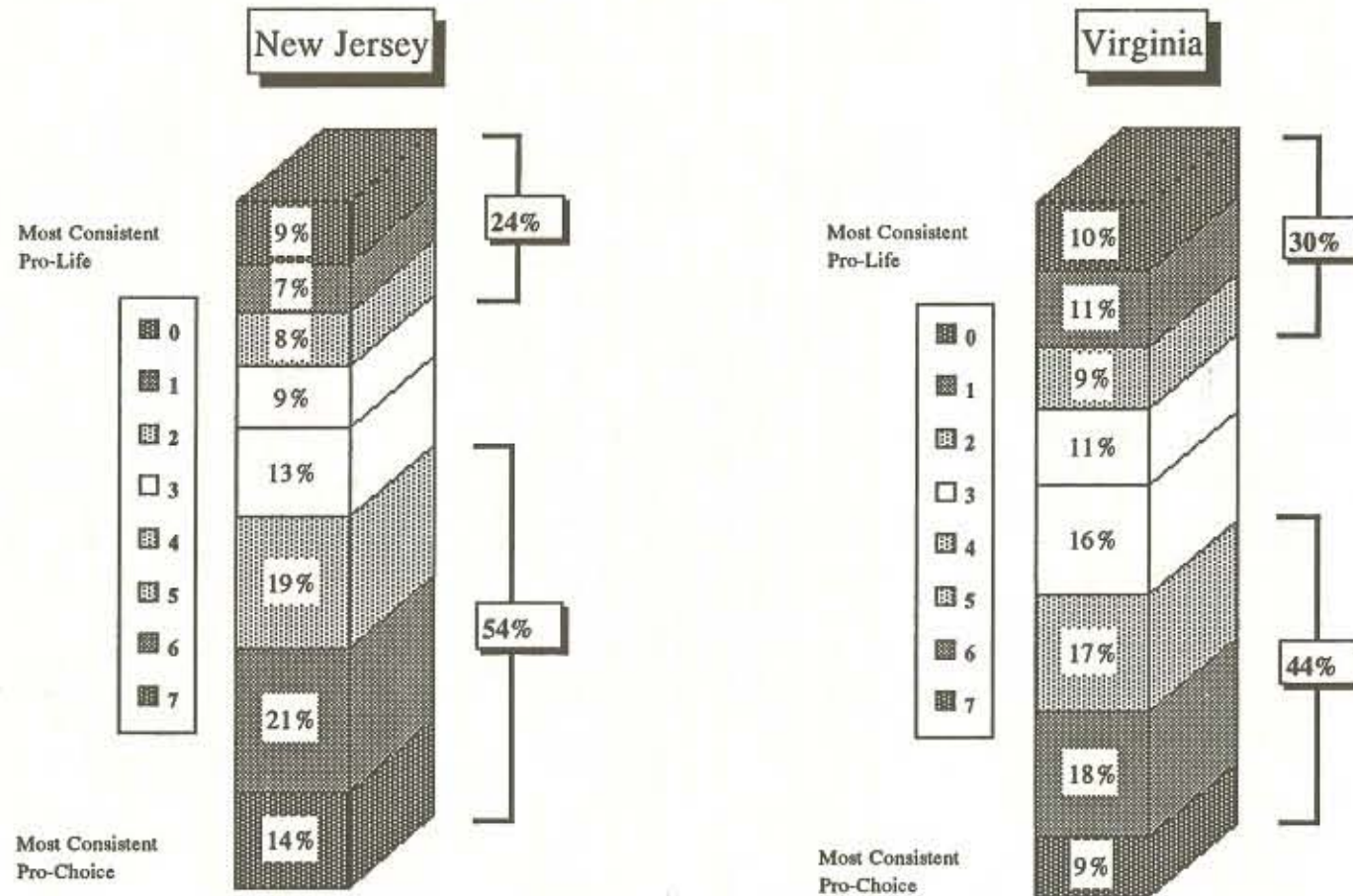


Figure 2 (cont.):
Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Scores

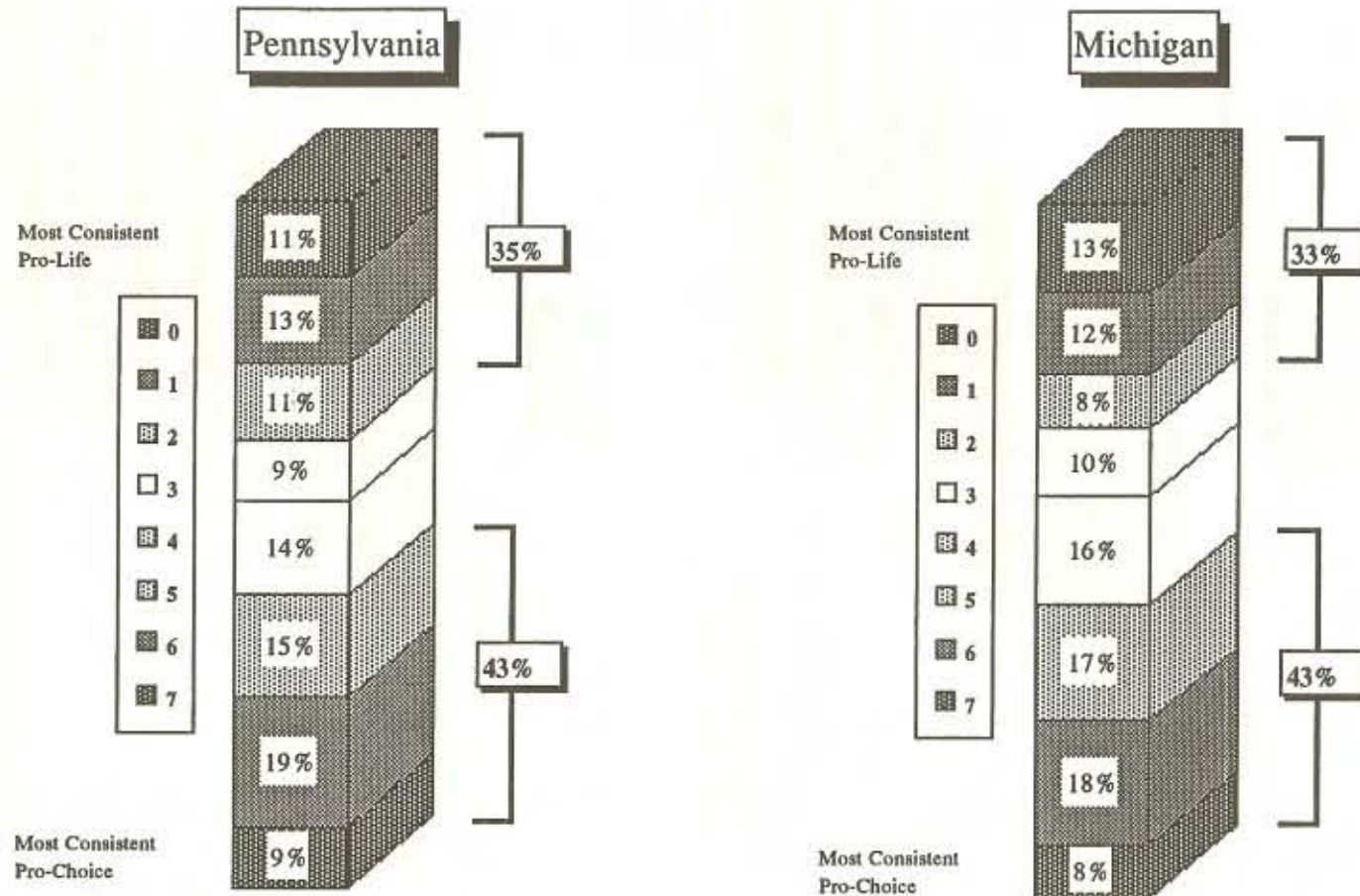


Figure 3:
Attitudes Toward New Restrictions
Given Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Score

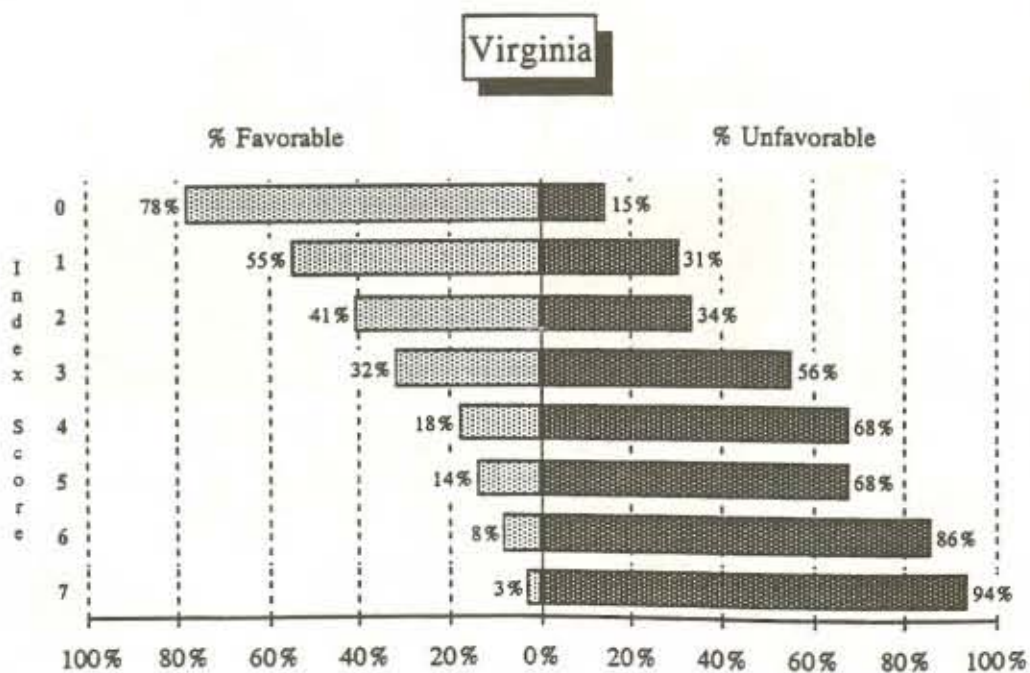
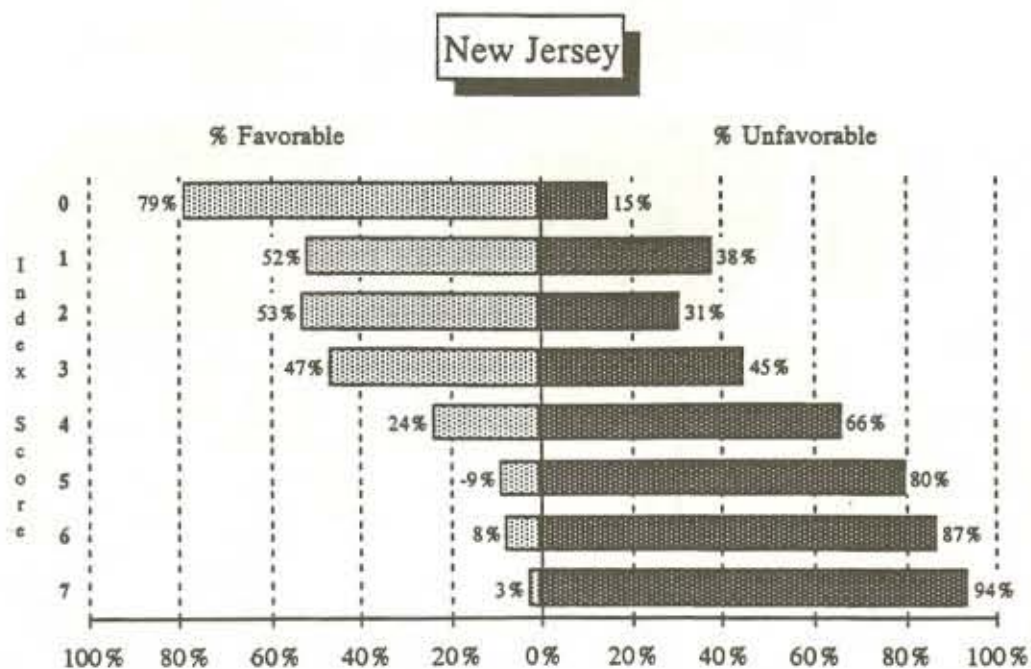
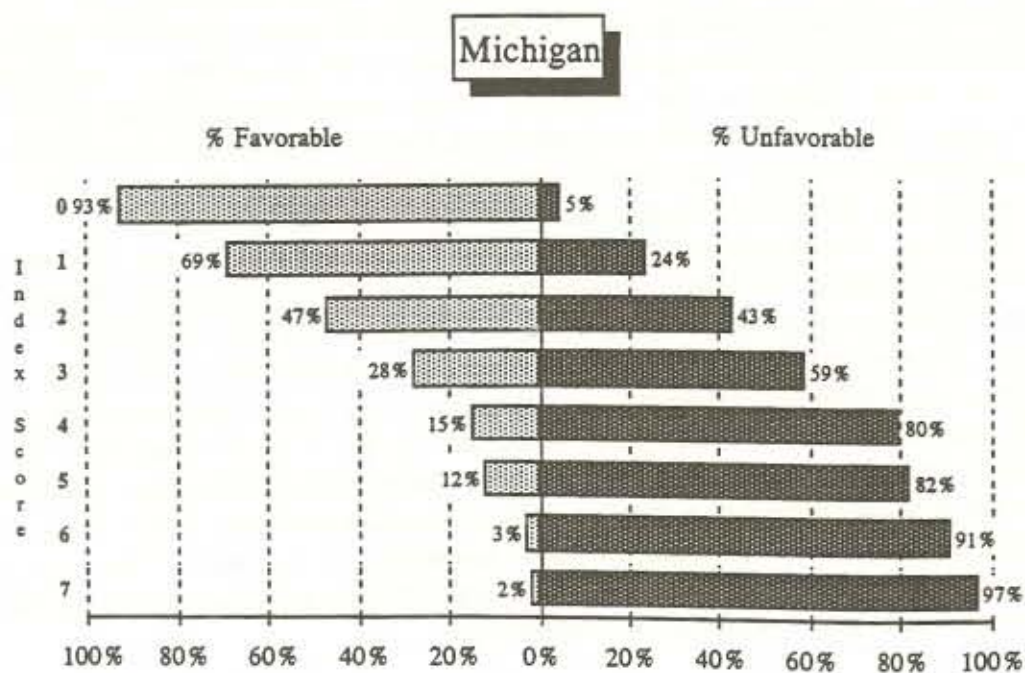
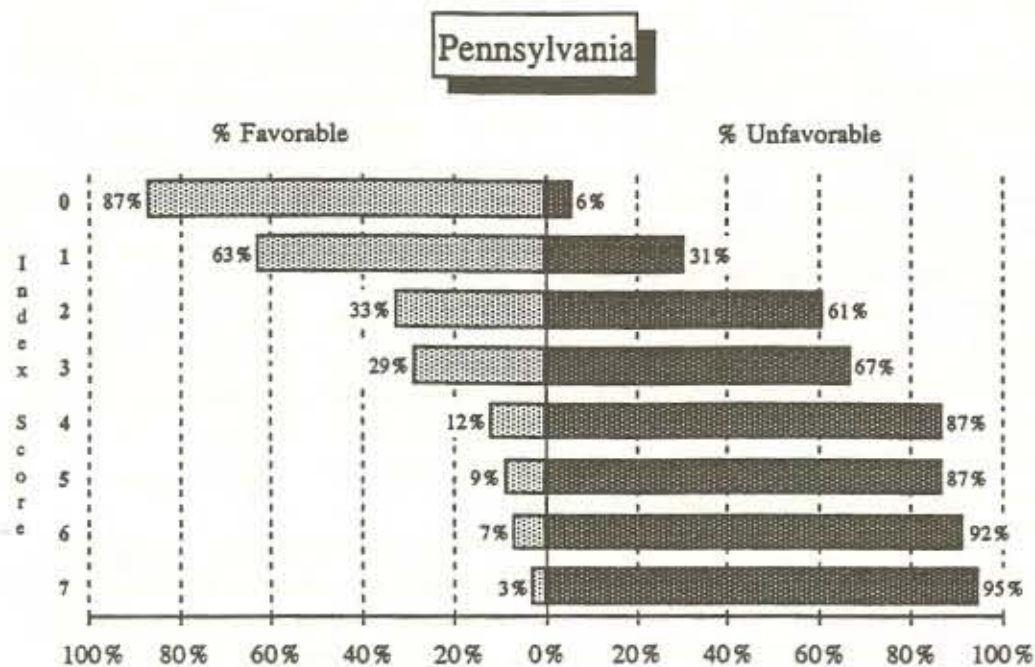


Figure 3 (cont.):
Attitudes Toward New Restrictions
Given Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Score



CONCLUSION

Clearly there were a number of differences among the states: the candidates' approaches to reproductive issues, the strength of the campaigns, the involvement of pro-choice and pro-life groups, the framing of the issue, legislative actions that influenced the framing, and media interest in the abortion issue varied across these states. In addition, voter concerns differed among the states. For one thing, Michigan had economic problems and high tax rates that were of great concern to voters, while in other states such as Virginia and Pennsylvania the feeling was that things were going well. Furthermore, the states' elections differed in their proximity to *Webster*. New Jersey and Virginia's elections were only four months after the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision while the Pennsylvania and Michigan elections were a year and four months after it. The passage of time seemed to have had the most impact on the pro-choice side. There were several reasons cited by those interviewed for this change: pro-choicers did not have the religious zeal for their cause that the pro-life rank and file supporters had; injunctions had prevented people from feeling the full effects of restrictions that had been passed; the restrictions passed "didn't seem all that bad" or the restrictions didn't seem to affect them personally; or simply that it was difficult for people to sustain a sense of outrage and anger for a year.

Despite the diversity among the states, one common pattern emerged: voters showed mixed feelings about abortion policy. This conflict within the minds of the voters shows just how important it is to control the way the issue is framed. On the one hand, majorities in each of the states opposed additional restrictions; this was true in New Jersey which continues to have medicaid funding of abortion and it is true in Pennsylvania which has the most restrictive abortion laws of the four states examined. On the other hand, voters in both of these states were conflicted about abortion. In each of these states, many who opposed additional restrictions on abortion also felt uncomfortable with the choices that some people would make under current law. The consistency of these patterns across the states is clear: if it is discussed as individual freedom and government intervention in private decisions, the pro-choice side is favored; if the discussion concentrates on particular instances in which abortion is chosen, the climate becomes less favorable for pro-choice arguments.

In the current climate of post-*Webster* legislative action, keeping the focus on themes of "choice" and the appropriate role of government in private decisions is going to be more difficult for pro-choice groups. In the aftermath of *Webster*, it was clear that pro-life candidates if forced to talk about abortion policy were talking more about "reasonable restrictions" rather than banning abortion; alternatively, if those new restrictions were popular, the pro-choice candidate might be uncomfortable (and if not the candidate, the candidate's supporters) talking about the issue. To the extent that specific pieces of legislation become the focus of debate (rather than questions about government intervention in private decisions), this may discourage some pro-choice candidates from talking about the issue as it discouraged Blanchard in Michigan, and it may encourage some pro-life candidates to talk about it more than might otherwise have been the case.

CHAPTER 2: ***THE GUBERNATORIAL RACES***

The political attitudes of the voters, the issues competing with abortion for the voters' attention, and the climate created by *Webster* and by the passage of more restrictive legislation in Pennsylvania and Michigan set the stage for what was to happen next. As we will show, there were at least three different ways that abortion policy could have affected the election outcomes: by influencing the campaign agenda that was (or could be) conveyed to the voters; by affecting the level of activist support received; and by affecting what the voters did on election day. Each of these occurred in at least one of these states, and all three occurred in some.

IMPACT ON DYNAMICS OF THE CAMPAIGN

INFLUENCING THE AGENDA

By returning more power to the states to set abortion policy, *Webster* made abortion more relevant as a political issue in campaigns, particularly for pro-choice candidates whose target audience had relied on *Roe* for protection. However, some candidates would prefer to limit any talk at all about abortion policy in their elections. As one Pennsylvania Democratic activist advised, not every candidate wants to make it an issue:

Just be consistent. Then if you have anything else in your public life going for you...that's what you have to emphasize.

But in some cases, candidates cannot control the agenda. Based on a comparison among these four states' elections, the abortion issue was most likely to capture the agenda when at least some of the following conditions were met: 1) the media saw abortion policy as "newsworthy;" 2) the opposing candidate or issue group was making abortion policy an issue and was doing so effectively; 3) the media, other candidate, or issue groups saw a candidate as "waffling" and made it an issue; and 4) the candidate who sought to deemphasize it was not an incumbent who could talk about other policy accomplishments.

In New Jersey, Courter's campaign was haunted by the abortion issue, despite the fact that Florio did not make it a centerpiece of his campaign agenda. This attention probably was focused on him because of his changing views about abortion policy, his frequent denials of change, the recency of the *Webster* decision, and because his credibility had been attacked on a number of fronts:

We thought it was critically important to move the debate from social issues such as abortion and AIDS and those kinds of things to issues like taxes, government spending, auto insurance...the environment. Even though we thought that Florio had better credentials on the environment, we would still rather talk about the environment than we would about abortion. And so we tried at every turn. I mean I

don't think Jim Courter ever called a press conference, at least when I was there, to talk about abortion. We tried to focus on taxes.... But the press corps, again mostly here in Trenton, said...that's not an issue. (Courter campaign activist)

You'd go out and have another agenda to be covered. For example, we'd go out and have a news conference on crime, which we did quite often. And the media, of course, would show up. However, they would cover your event but they were there to ask other questions, on abortion. And more or less not only a national press corps but the state press corps was clamoring on the abortion issue. And I have to say that NARAL...was very effective in keeping media interest high on the issue.... The continuous piles of press releases attacking Courter and allowing other various angles of the argument to be put forward.... They were very effective. The right-to-life people were alienated by the new Courter position. So, in effect, the right-to-life people ended up sitting on their hands while NARAL folks...had a field day. (Courter campaign activist)

Coleman's campaign in Virginia was haunted by the abortion issue as well. Attacked for opposing abortion in cases of rape and incest, he then said that he would not pursue changing the law in regards to rape and incest. This shift (which was neither as dramatic nor as lengthy in its evolution as Courter's), combined with the well-funded Wilder campaign's emphasis on abortion policy as an issue in the aftermath of *Webster*, made it difficult to refocus the agenda on the issues they wanted to discuss:

Every time you had a press story...[it] led with abortion, it revolved around abortion, it focused on it, they were continually questioning him on it, when in fact there was no change in his position.... I think that we would have not been successful in painting him [Wilder] as an extremist on the issue. And I think what we tried to do, which was undermine his basic trustworthiness...was more effective. And I think it did succeed in about two-thirds of the state. In northern Virginia it didn't. That's where I think the media was decisive, in fact, was in northern Virginia. Because in other parts of the state we had alternative methods of getting our message across. In northern Virginia there was almost no alternative.... You have one dominant newspaper which is The Washington Post. The small weeklies, suburban dailies...they're not read for news coverage basically.... You had the TV stations in northern Virginia which didn't cover the election...until the last two weeks. And what stories they did, played off of abortion. And part of that is because the Washington TV stations are responsible for Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. news. And they play more D.C. news than anything else. (Coleman campaign activist)

Many of the same conditions were in place in Michigan, yet abortion policy did not dominate the campaign agenda. For example, Engler had reportedly modified his position on abortion early in the campaign adding the rape and incest exception. And despite the fact that a year and four months had passed since *Webster* had been handed down, Blanchard's veto of the popular parental consent provision had been overridden just weeks before the election and

thus certainly could have raised the importance of the issue to voters. Nevertheless, as one Democratic activist explained, it did not become a major issue:

Neither side [Blanchard or Engler] raised the issue very visibly in the public debate and in public media. There were some statements made in the debate, there were some press statements made and there were some statements made in speeches. Neither... put it in TV ads.

Another observed, "Both candidates when asked about it basically brushed it away."

The pro-life groups were willing not to have this issue dominate the public debate. They used carefully targeted strategies to mobilize a committed following and to minimize mobilization of the opposition. However, their pro-choice opponents felt differently.

Some pro-choice activists noted that they felt deserted by the Blanchard campaign, and basically discounted Engler's change on the rape and incest exceptions. But there was a strong feeling on the part of some that the failure of the Blanchard campaign to make abortion policy an issue for public debate made it more difficult to motivate activists and recruit volunteers. The pro-choice groups were undertaking efforts to mobilize pro-choice voters in an upscale moderate Republican county and to keep the issue in the media through press releases and other events. Some saw the pro-choicers as effective in only the one county they had targeted, while others discounted their efforts entirely. However, the pro-choice groups were expecting the candidates to lead on the issue and the Blanchard campaign was expecting the pro-choice groups who were far less organized than their pro-life opposition to carry the issue rather than the party or the candidate. Blanchard's campaign was also counting on the press to help make it an issue.

We were counting on them [the media] pointing out the difference.... They did describe the differences between the candidates, but they treated it more as a campaign tactic issue, strategy issue. There was some coverage, so I wouldn't say it was zero or non-existent, but it wasn't as much as we would have expected.
(Democratic campaign activist)

The accounts vary as to how actively Blanchard's campaign worked to label Engler a "waffler." Blanchard raised it in a televised debate, and others reported there had been some efforts to encourage the press to pursue a "waffling" angle in covering the Engler campaign. However, the Engler campaign produced a letter Blanchard had written to a pro-life constituent during his years in Congress. The letter expressed support for the pro-life position. (The Blanchard campaign acknowledged that Blanchard had supported bans on public funding while in Congress during the seventies, but no one questioned the stability of his pro-choice position as governor.) Whether this counter-attack had any impact on the campaign's decision not to aggressively label Engler as "waffling" is unclear; it seems likely that other considerations were much more important.

Part of the difference between the states may have been that abortion had become somewhat less newsworthy with the passage of time since *Webster*; the fact that the abortion issue had been so vigorously debated in Michigan that it was an old story; the Michigan

press was less aggressive in pushing this issue (or perhaps other issues in general) than the Washington, D.C. and New Jersey media; and part of it may have been a reflection of journalist ethics. One journalist explained:

My guess is that there has been a pattern of candidates not pushing for depth on issues, and the press not feeling comfortable in creating a new confrontation where a confrontation is supposed to exist already. Once the campaign has started, if you do that piece [on parental consent], absent the candidate raising it, it is somehow violating the morals of objectivity.... Editors would say, "Why are you bringing that up? If Blanchard brings it up, fine, we'll cover it."

Just as in Michigan, the abortion issue did not dominate the Pennsylvania campaign agenda. Casey in particular, seemed very free to talk about issues other than abortion and attempted to change the subject or at least deflect the questions. Hafer wanted to talk about abortion policies — but whether she wanted so much attention on this and so little attention on the other issues she wished to discuss is less clear. But just as she was never able to make charges of an impending budget crisis stick to Casey, she also had difficulty painting him as an extremist on the abortion issue. There are a number of factors that contributed to this: 1) the Hafer campaign (according to most interviewed) was plagued by problems that never allowed her to establish herself as a strong viable candidate; 2) the Hafer campaign could not afford an extensive paid media strategy that could in turn reframe the abortion issue as "choice" rather than "reasonable restrictions," influence voters, and force Casey (as Wilder had forced Coleman) to engage in a debate over the issue; 3) the Casey campaign was running on a strong record of accomplishments from the past four years and was directing the discussion away from abortion policy and toward those accomplishments; and 4) pro-choice activists were directing their energies in large part toward the legislative races, putting few resources into the gubernatorial race which seemed to many of them a lost cause. As one Hafer activist observed:

I think they [the media] started out very interested in it, but once the primary was over with, the feeling on the part of a lot of the media was, who cares, it doesn't matter. It's over with.

But this was undoubtedly aided by the Casey campaign's deft handling of the issue:

For a story to be a current story, you have to understand what makes news — that is conflict today. Something unusual today, not yesterday, but preferably conflict today. If you don't give it a handle, the reporter can't grab it. If you say I have always been against abortion, I have been against abortion since the first time I ran for office, I think it is wrong.... Where is the handle? (Democratic party activist)

Whether the abortion issue would have shaped the campaign agenda of Pennsylvania if the Hafer campaign had been stronger will never be known. Whether this would have benefitted her or further aggravated the rebellion against her by some pro-life party activists

is unclear, as will be discussed in the next section. But considering she did want abortion policy to be an important issue, the Pennsylvania campaign suggests the following: incumbents viewed positively by voters are more immune (although not completely immune) than are non-incumbents to having the campaign agenda refocused on abortion against their will. Their immunity is greatly strengthened if they are challenged by an underfunded, struggling challenger whose viability as a candidate is in question.

THE IMPACT OF THE ABORTION ISSUE ON ELITES' SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN

The Party Organization

The abortion issue might affect the level of party support, the availability of additional volunteers or financial resources, or the availability of alternative channels through which to quietly mobilize voters around a particular issue. The abortion issue and activists had a profound effect on support for Hafer.

Barbara Hafer's campaign was inexperienced ("We were babies," as one Hafer campaign staffer explained) and plagued by self-inflicted wounds and some in Republican politics who disliked her. But Barbara Hafer also paid a heavy price for being pro-choice. The toll it took on her campaign effort was the product of two factors: 1) pro-life Republicans within the party opposed her candidacy much more than pro-choice Republican party organization members had opposed pro-life Republican candidates in the other states; and 2) a little known pro-life activist, Peg Lutsik, working through Pennsylvania's pro-life/pro-family network, mounted a near successful challenge of Hafer in the Republican primary, winning 46 percent of the vote.

The Republican party in Pennsylvania had long had a reputation for being moderate, "Rockefeller Republicans," as one Republican activist explained:

The leadership tends to be more moderate and relatively pro-choice. The more rank and file workers tend to be more conservative and they probably are people (not anywhere near exclusively) who are more pro-life.

Prior to Hafer's campaign, the abortion issue had been a non-issue within the party. In fact, the 1986 Republican nominee, William Scranton, as pro-choice as Hafer according to Republican party activists, was enthusiastically supported by the party organization. Hafer was not so lucky. Hafer was ultimately endorsed by the party, although there were unprecedented and unsuccessful attempts to reverse that endorsement.

At the state committee meeting where they were to endorse Barbara Hafer, there were men who had buttons on that said "Not Hafer, Not NOW, Not ever." So you would know National Organization for Women. There was nothing like that when [pro-choice William] Scranton was being endorsed. These were old party people who had

been involved for many years, but I'm sure a lot of them were just not ready to have a woman be the Republican candidate. (Republican party activist)

Hafer continually encountered problems from within her own party which affected her resources, as a Hafer campaign activist explained:

I have been doing this stuff for a long time, and I have never seen the kind of negative response to a direct mail campaign that we received to our first mailing that we sent out to "Republican" lists in Pennsylvania. It was just vicious. If we had made a dime for every picture of an aborted fetus that was returned, we would have covered the cost of the mailing. Dozens and dozens every day, hundreds and hundreds every week from people who were historic contributors to the Republican party. On the other hand, I've never seen any piece of mail liquidate itself so quickly as the NOW list that we used across the country. The net effect, however, was that we lost more than we gained. Republicans traditionally raise a lot of money through direct mail and that just did not exist for us.

And her problems with raising money were compounded by the fact that she also could not rely on the traditional sources of Republican campaign volunteers:

A lot of statewide campaigns in Pennsylvania...go to Young Republican groups.... As conservative as the Pennsylvania electorate is, the leadership of the Pennsylvania Young Republicans is even more conservative. So those pools of volunteers...did not exist in 1990 because they were not about to help Barbara Hafer.... There were other contributory factors, but I think abortion had an awful lot to do with it. (Hafer campaign activist)

These were serious impediments to her ability to convey her message and build credibility. However, a number of activists interviewed felt the mortal blow to her campaign was inflicted long before the general election campaign season began, when she won a relatively narrow victory in the primary against a little known, pro-life activist who had worked quietly through the pro-life/pro-family network built across the state during the years following *Roe*.

The issue component, right-to-life, served to weaken her credibility, not so much because the issue was so strong, but because it served to show that she was not strong, in strength of the campaign. It demonstrated that she did not have the support of her party completely. That they were even considering after the primary that she would not be endorsed just hurt. And I think that [move not to endorse] was issue based. (Republican party activist)

A number of Republicans interviewed suggested that this close call in the primary was in part due to the strength of the pro-life movement in the Republican party and was in part due to the anti-Hafer feeling within the Republican party, among those who saw her as abrasive,

difficult to work with, and too aggressive. But a number of Republican women (and some of the men as well) felt that the fact that Hafer was female, pro-choice, and tied to NOW was a source of her problems and that a man would not have been treated that way by the party. One Hafer activist commented,

I hear the women in the Republican party telling me, "I didn't know I was a feminist but I am. I'm damn mad at what they did to Barbara Hafer." A lot of the people not only blame it on the pro-life people, but on the men.

Some felt that Hafer's being constantly linked with the abortion issue, and using more feminist themes rather than libertarian themes, only compounded her difficulty in keeping her Republican base together. Others thought her pro-choice position had at least given her something to distinguish herself from Casey. One knowledgeable observer of Republican politics commented:

There was a lot of reporting at the time that she was picked because she was a pro-choice contrast to Bob Casey. That's nonsense. She was picked because there was no one else. Remember the timing [of the search for a candidate], this was shortly after the Webster decision and people were abuzz about the abortion issue. And the feeling was this would give Barbara something to hang her hat on, some cause for her to campaign to rally around.... The whole abortion angle was more an effect than a cause.

And others saw her connection with the pro-choice position and NOW as something that was emphasized *because* she was deserted by her natural Republican base and many (although not all) in the party organization.

Based on the picture painted by Republican activists in Pennsylvania, the following conclusion can be drawn: Barbara Hafer's campaign effort paid a dear price in party support because of her pro-choice position — a price none of the pro-life Republican candidates had been forced to pay by pro-choice party members in the other states studied and a price that her pro-life opponent never had to pay within the Democratic Party. This inability to unify the party and to raise adequate resources probably hurt her more generally among all voters because she was unable to establish herself as a credible opponent to Casey or to shape the campaign messages through extensive paid media.

Issue Group Activity

The extent to which pro-choice and pro-life groups were involved in these gubernatorial campaigns varied across these four states. The ability of a group to work on behalf of a candidate, supplementing candidate efforts, could be an enormous help to a candidate. Furthermore, the ability of the groups to tolerate the downplaying or even "muddying of the waters" on the issue could work to the advantage of the recipient of their assistance (e.g., in Michigan especially, but also Virginia and New Jersey). If this help was given to one candidate, while the other candidate failed to receive benefits from the opposing group, this worked even more to the advantage of the recipient.

Right-to-Life of Michigan undertook a massive independent effort on behalf of Engler. Their messages were not only aimed at pro-life voters, but also at other voters who might support Engler because of his position on taxes and education. One Democratic activist recalled:

Right-to-Life ran some radio ads that downplayed the issue [abortion] and that basically talked about property taxes, it's time for a change, and jobs. They touched on the issue and went on to other things.... Ideological groups can normally not get their act together like that.... I've not known Right-to-Life to be that pragmatic before this.... Their [Right-to-Life's] job was basically to call their people, get them out to vote, supply volunteers, supply organizational support. The most effective thing the pro-life groups did was probably the phone banks. They were very quiet up until the end.... We saw thousands and thousands of lawn signs and every one was paid for by Right-to-Life — but it wasn't clear unless you read the fine print. Otherwise, it just looked like your neighbor was supporting John Engler. The cost of doing lawn signs and getting them put up...was a phenomenal effort.... The fact they did lawn signs and did it well was a tribute to them. (Blanchard campaign activist)

An Engler campaign activist concurred:

One of the best organized political organizations I have seen...was the Right-to-Life of Michigan.... They made...both candidates' positions known to their members..... For their members this was an overriding issue. They are single issue voters and they could make it known through direct mail, phone banks. Theirs was highly targeted.

This meant that Engler did not need to talk about the abortion issue in his public speeches — he could rely on the Right-to-Life movement to educate and mobilize their people using targeted strategies that would minimize chances of mobilizing the opposition.

The nascent pro-choice movement in Michigan used paid media as well and began a voter identification program that some see as useful for the future. When asked to describe the efforts, one activist noted that the governor had been leading by twenty-nine points at the time they got involved, and thus there seemed little reason to undertake more expansive efforts:

We carved out a very specific role in this election. We carved out for ourselves the role of identifying, educating, activating, and getting out pro-choice voters in Oakland County. We staked out for ourselves women between the ages of 25 and 45 who had higher income levels and higher education levels because they are the most pro-choice voters on the planet. We then identified them and called them to get out the vote for Governor Blanchard. It was our goal to deliver a very specific constituency to Governor Blanchard: women who would vote for Governor Blanchard regardless of their party affiliation because he was pro-choice. We believe we were

successful, and believe that had the governor won, we would have gotten a lot of credit for doing that.

MARAL [Michigan Abortion Rights Action League] and NARAL [PACS] spent about \$100,000 on Governor Blanchard's re-election. We identified 30,000 pro-choice voters in Oakland County who would vote on the issue, we made more than 100,000 calls. We had more than 200 volunteers put in more than 5000 person hours from late September to the actual election. (Pro-choice activist)

Thus, both pro-choice and pro-life activists mobilized. But over all, the consensus among virtually all interviewed was that the pro-life group was more effective in reaching their sympathizers in the state.

Despite the fact that Blanchard had vetoed parental consent, the pro-choice activists felt that Blanchard's desire to avoid talking about abortion policy in his campaign made it very difficult to educate and mobilize people. On the other hand, many Democrats involved in the Blanchard campaign were blaming the pro-choice activists for not carrying the issue for the governor in the campaign, for being too dependent on elected officials for direction, and for closing off channels of communication that by election law could have remained open.

The situation was somewhat different in New Jersey. Pro-choice activists were more involved there and played a key role in keeping the issue in front of the public. Florio stated his position on abortion clearly, mentioned it in one campaign commercial, and emphasized other issues. The important role that pro-choice activists' phone banks, distribution of literature, house parties, paid media, and press conferences played in the campaign is clear from the relatively low profile the Florio campaign gave the issue. The Florio campaign had to distance itself from the groups' activities in light of the public funding requirements, but almost certainly benefitted from their independent efforts.

We were very, very careful to maintain maximum distance between our campaign and what the pro-choice movement was doing. So that our only exposure to what they were doing was what we would hear on the radio or see on the news coverage. I think that the efforts they made to communicate with the electorate in terms of mass media with radio and TV were probably very helpful. Because there are people who don't...take the time to study this issue with any depth, but if they're in their car on their way to work and they hear a 30-second spot that says "Do you realize that ... [Congressman] Florio wants to protect your right to choice and that Congressman Courter wants to take away that right?" then that thirty seconds for a lot of people can make the difference.... So I think that was probably very helpful.... But again, it was clearly up to the different organizations that were working on both sides to decide their own agenda and we did not pass judgement on any of that. (Florio campaign activist)

So even though Florio was not making abortion an issue, pro-choice activists were.

Their efforts were probably even more effective because Courter's change of positions had alienated the pro-life groups without demobilizing his pro-choice opposition. When the

New Jersey Pro-Life PAC announced its endorsements, Courter's name was not on the list. They withheld their endorsement from Courter, initially citing his failure to return the Pro-Life PAC questionnaire. It was clear they were displeased with his retreat from the pro-life position he had long held and their displeasure grew stronger as the election drew nearer. One Courter activist observed:

[The pro-life groups were not involved in the general election campaign] in any way that anybody could see. Not post-primary. There was a lot of organized pro-life activity during the primary on behalf of either Courter, Cardinale or Hardwick, but not after the primary.... On election day, the organized, and I emphasize the organized, pro-life forces in the state opposed Jim Courter. Does that mean they went out and voted for Jim Florio? No. They stayed home or they didn't vote because they felt that they had been betrayed. They thought that Jim Courter was their candidate...despite the fact that Jim Courter said from July on that he would not impose his personal convictions, which were pro-life, on the people of the state of New Jersey. Unfortunately, the organized pro-life forces didn't come to that realization until I believe it was early October.

Pro-life activists were more active in the Virginia race on behalf of Coleman than their counterparts were in New Jersey. It is not at all clear these were the messages the Coleman campaign would have preferred. In an unusual move, the Virginia Society for Human Life (VSHL), the National Right-to-Life affiliate in Virginia, publicly endorsed Coleman. They undertook a variety of public activities, some of which apparently diverged from their traditional, behind the scenes, targeted tactics and others which they more traditionally used:

We did a lot of media, a lot of TV, a lot of distribution of literature, a lot of phone calling, a lot of get out the vote, radio ads, newspaper ads, for Marshall Coleman. Really a blitz in the last ten days.... I think we changed some of those polls now.
(Virginia pro-life activist)

Churches were also a critical component in their strategies to reach voters.

Many of the people, in fact, most of the people that are pro-lifers are involved in churches. The church of course cannot endorse candidates. So we have a situation where we don't do that. We do mostly our education through them. We do put a user comparison piece in churches that will compare candidates, and we did this for the past election in the churches that would take it. Some wouldn't.... It was just for the gubernatorial. (Virginia pro-life activist)

For all their work, the Coleman campaign seemed rather uncomfortable with the organized pro-life forces. The Virginia Society for Human Life's activities seemed more distant from Coleman's campaign than was true of the pro-choicers working for his opponent. As one pro-life activist explained:

We had very little contact with the Coleman campaign. They did not ask for our endorsement and we didn't ask them if they wanted it, we gave it to them.... This campaign frankly I believe would have asked us to be quiet, to say nothing. In fact they told us so.... They wanted the support. They would have loved for us to pour money in and let them use it as they saw fit. But it would not have motivated the pro-life voter. And that's a big problem. We were running into pro-life voters in big segments, close to the election saying, where is Marshall Coleman on the issue?

A NOW activist saw differences in the approaches of pro-choice groups but by working in their own ways they were able to accomplish their goals in Virginia:

[NOW's purpose for the election was] grass roots organizing, visibility of the issue. We had several rallies and freedom caravan stops.... NARAL is structured differently, so they are able to...come in at the top and spend a lot of money for the high profile advertising and for the professionally run phone banks.... Planned Parenthood did a lot of education.... They did the rulers campaign which was successful.... These...rulers...said, "Make Choice the Rule. Keep abortion safe and legal in Virginia." And the other side said, "I'm pro-choice and I vote." And it has a signature and address space. And thousands and thousands of those were delivered to Coleman and Wilder.

The least amount of activity by the pro-choice and pro-life groups in the four gubernatorial races examined here occurred in the Pennsylvania general election. The pro-life movement in Pennsylvania is noted for its strength, but diverting resources from legislative races to the gubernatorial race in November seemed unnecessary according to one pro-life activist:

The Hafer-Casey thing initially seemed like it was going to be important. But after the primary, she suffered such an embarrassment in the primary, we weren't worried at all about the governor's race in the general.

And that embarrassment was due in large part to the fact that an unknown, pro-life activist had almost defeated Hafer in the primary. That insurgent candidacy had been successfully executed through the pro-life network in the state and the churches which play an integral role in that network. (There was disagreement among sources about the extent to which this was a formal or an informal effort on the part of pro-life supporters). While the major pro-life organization was focusing its efforts toward other races in the general election, Hafer campaign activists reported that pro-lifers frequently protested her appearances at various stops along the campaign trail.

Meanwhile, the Hafer campaign felt almost completely deserted by the pro-choice movement. Many within the campaign felt that partisanship — an anti-Republican bias on the part of the primarily Democratic leadership of the pro-choice movement in the state — prevented her from obtaining widespread support from the pro-choice organizations. The pro-choice activists interviewed tended to downplay partisanship and cite the lack of viability as

the reason so little effort was made on her behalf. Most, but not all, Republicans interviewed felt the pro-choice groups would have given her money had she been a Democrat:

The argument was consistently made Hafer isn't viable, she's not going to win, why shouldn't we put our money in a state house race?... The counter argument was that she couldn't get viable until she got some money. And they weren't about to give the money until she got viable. Chicken or egg, who knows? (Republican party activist)

Hafer's campaign did get limited support from some pro-choice organizations, although there was an air of dissatisfaction with the support obtained from pro-choice groups overall. Among the most helpful groups, NOW seemed to be particularly strong in the minds of those associated with the campaign. But there were pluses and minuses to this connection:

NOW supported us 100%, but that was not always a plus for us because the Republican party tends to think that NOW people are crazy - that they have this way out agenda. Now some of it is way out, but most of it is not way out. (Hafer campaign activist)

And while Hafer's pro-choice volunteers were lauded for their commitment and at least one involved in the campaign marvelled at the return they had received from a direct mail to NOW members, the fact remained that the unexpectedly low level of support they received from the pro-choice community as a whole could not compensate for Republican party organization support lost due to a rebellion against Hafer and her pro-choice stand.

THE IMPACT OF THE ABORTION ISSUE ON VOTING PREFERENCES IN THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

Voters may bring particular issue concerns to elections and seek out information relevant to those concerns. Alternatively, voters may be swayed by the messages of campaigns as they decide which issues or concerns should be of particular importance and which candidates will get their votes on election day. The *Webster* decision undoubtedly encouraged some voters to seek out information and others to be more responsive to abortion policy messages from candidates. *Webster* affected voters indirectly by influencing what the candidates would choose to discuss, and it also influenced the concerns the candidates would be forced to discuss by the media, activists, and voters. It also affected the messages by galvanizing the pro-choice movement and increasing its resources and involvement in electoral politics.

As noted earlier, issues such as auto insurance (in New Jersey), the environment, the economy, taxes, education, transportation, and crime — issues touching the voters' daily lives more often than the abortion issue — were competing with the abortion issue for the voters' attention. (In Virginia, some feared that racial prejudice — a ubiquitous but unspoken

issue — would dominate.) The question was whether the abortion issue could affect the election outcomes in view of the powerful attraction of the other issues.

For the abortion issue to have a direct impact on voting decisions in the gubernatorial races, we would expect that three conditions be met:

- Voters should consider the abortion issue important in a specific gubernatorial election.
- Voters should perceive a difference between the candidates' positions on the issue.
- Voters should choose the candidate closer to their own position on the issue.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE TO THE VOTERS IN THE ELECTION

To see whether voters saw this issue as important in the gubernatorial races, we asked:

*Lots of issues have been talked about during this campaign. We are interested in knowing which issues are most important to you. First, are there any issues in the election for governor that are particularly important to you? (IF YES): What are the most important issues to you in the campaign for governor of New Jersey/ Virginia/ Michigan/Pennsylvania?**

Abortion policy was most frequently mentioned as important by Virginia voters, followed by Pennsylvania and New Jersey voters. Michigan voters were the least likely to cite abortion as an important issue in our pre-election poll (Figure 4).

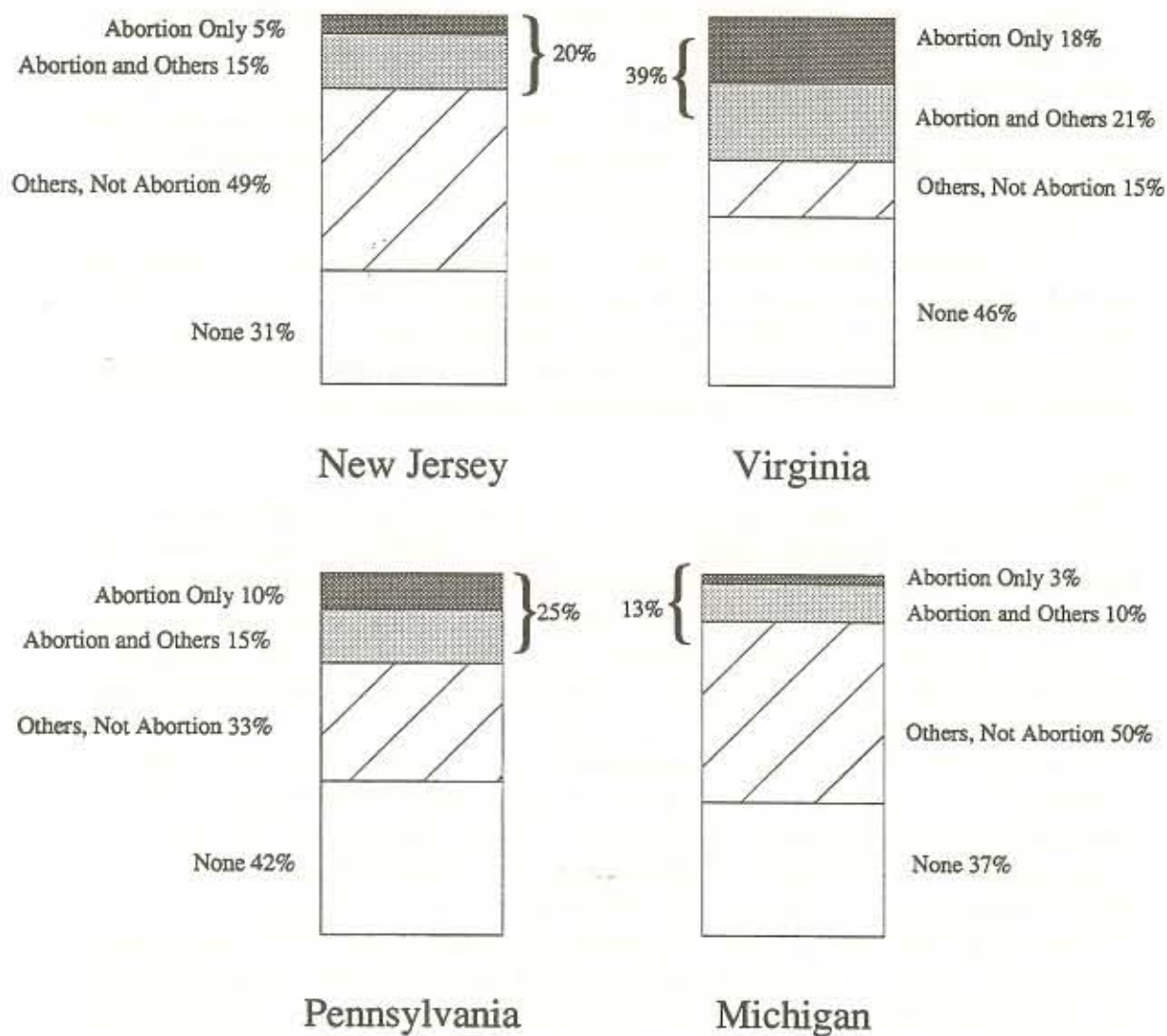
The abortion issue was by far the issue cited most frequently by voters in Virginia and it was also mentioned most frequently by voters in Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, it was followed by taxes (19% mentioned) and the economy (15% mentioned). Among both New Jersey and Michigan voters it was the third most frequently mentioned issue. In New Jersey, abortion policy followed auto insurance (35% mentioned) and the environment (28% mentioned). In Michigan, it followed taxes (36% mentioned) and education (20% mentioned) in the rankings.

This variation across states suggests that campaigns have a lot to do with just how important abortion policy seems to voters on election day. Voters respond to what they hear during the campaign season. The abortion issue was the most likely to be important to larger numbers of voters where campaign messages sent by candidates and by issue activists emphasized abortion policy and where there were fewer pressing issues competing with it on the issue agenda.

Which voters cast issue votes on abortion policy is perhaps more important to election outcomes than how many think abortion is an important issue. The relative ability of the

*Up to five responses were accepted.

Figure 4:
Percent Citing Abortion Issue As
Important in Gubernatorial Races



pro-choice and pro-life candidates and activists to mobilize their voters will affect who wins and who loses on this issue.

In the 1989 elections, the pro-life and pro-choice voters in New Jersey and Virginia were about equally likely to cite the abortion issue as important; however, in Michigan and in Pennsylvania, the two states where post-*Webster* restrictions had been enacted and where there was a well established pro-life movement, pro-life voters were more likely than pro-choice voters to say the abortion issue was important to them in the gubernatorial race (Figure 5).

However, in three of the four states, the majority of mentioners¹⁰ opposed additional government restrictions, simply because those who opposed additional restrictions were a much larger group to begin with (Figure 6). The exception was Michigan, where the pro-choice candidate had not emphasized the issue and where the efforts of the pro-choice movement to make it an issue had been relatively limited compared to the better organized, more fully established, and very active pro-life movement. Obviously, the mere fact that candidates have a track record on an issue does not mean that voters will automatically think of it as relevant to their election day decision.

Women, frequent church attenders, those who do not experience a conflict between party and abortion issue position, and those with more consistent pro-choice or pro-life positions were the most likely, all other things being equal, to cite this issue as important. But, as we will see, any group's level of concern varied in part due to what candidates, activists, and their own daily lives conveyed as important issues in gubernatorial politics.

Gender

Within each state, women were more likely than men to mention the abortion as a particular concern in the gubernatorial election (Figure 7). However, women's concern with this issue varied across the states depending on the extent to which abortion policy was emphasized in the campaign. Although court decisions and legislation may raise the concern of many and activate a few to cast issue votes, it is up to the candidates and activists to provide information which enables larger numbers of voters to connect their issue concern with the appropriate candidate.

In each of these states, pro-choice women outnumbered pro-life women among the mentioners (Figure 8). However, the pro-choice margin among women narrowed considerably in Michigan where the pro-life side was well organized. Therefore, *which* women are mobilized will depend on whether or not the campaigns direct messages to them about the importance of the abortion issue. (Figure 8).

Abortion is often assumed to be predominantly a "women's issue." But it also concerns many men. A sizeable group of men cited the issue as important to them (Figure 7). Indeed, that Virginia men were significantly more likely than Michigan women, to mention this issue as important in the pre-election survey suggests that the Wilder campaign's heavy and carefully designed emphasis on this issue raised the awareness of *both* women and men.

¹⁰Those who cited the abortion issue as important are referred to as "mentioners."

Figure 5:
Percent Citing Abortion as Important
In Gubernatorial Races:
By Attitudes Toward New Restrictions

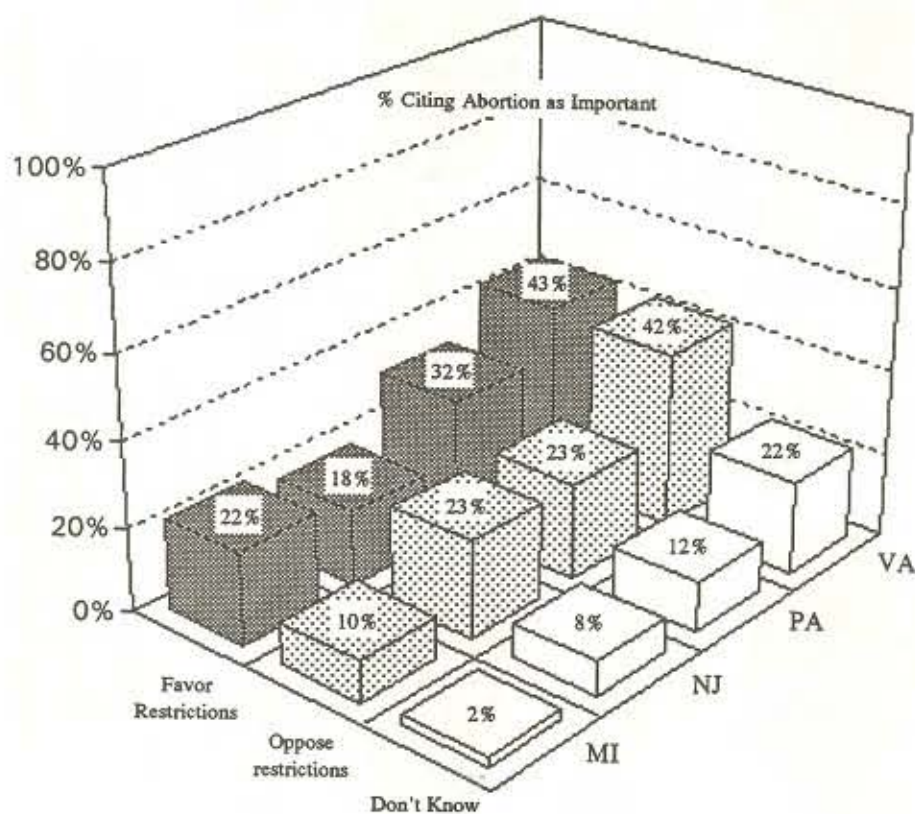


Figure 6:
Attitudes Toward New Restrictions among Voters
Citing Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial Races

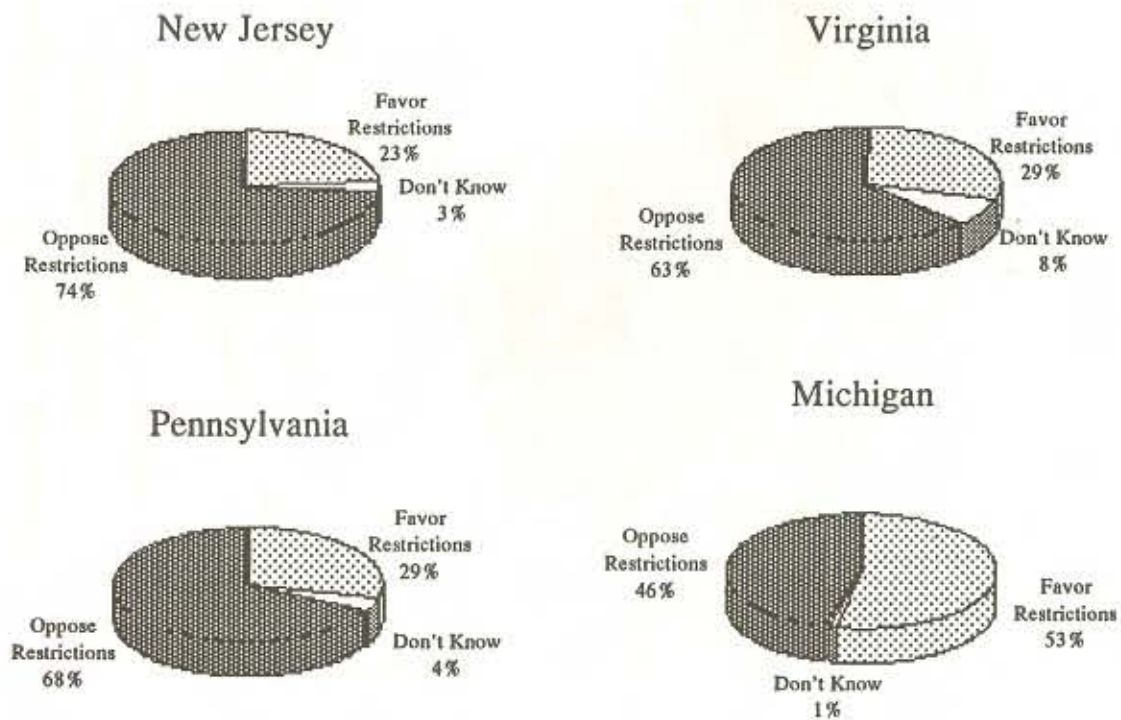


Figure 7:
% of Men and Women Citing Abortion
As Important in Gubernatorial Races

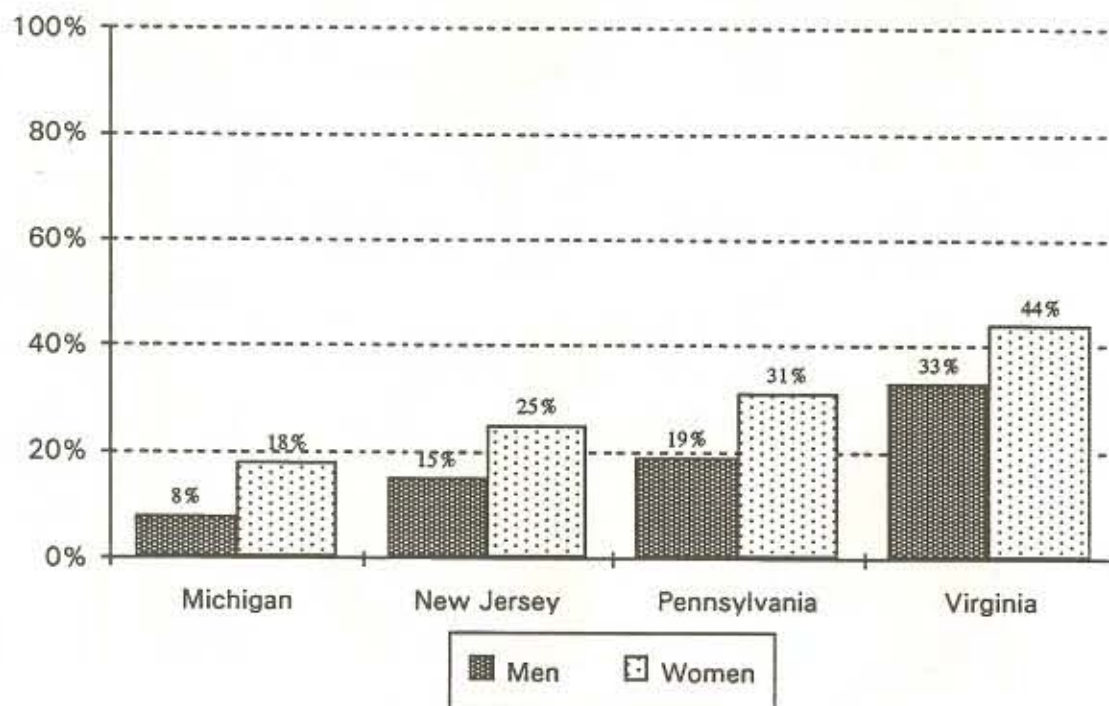
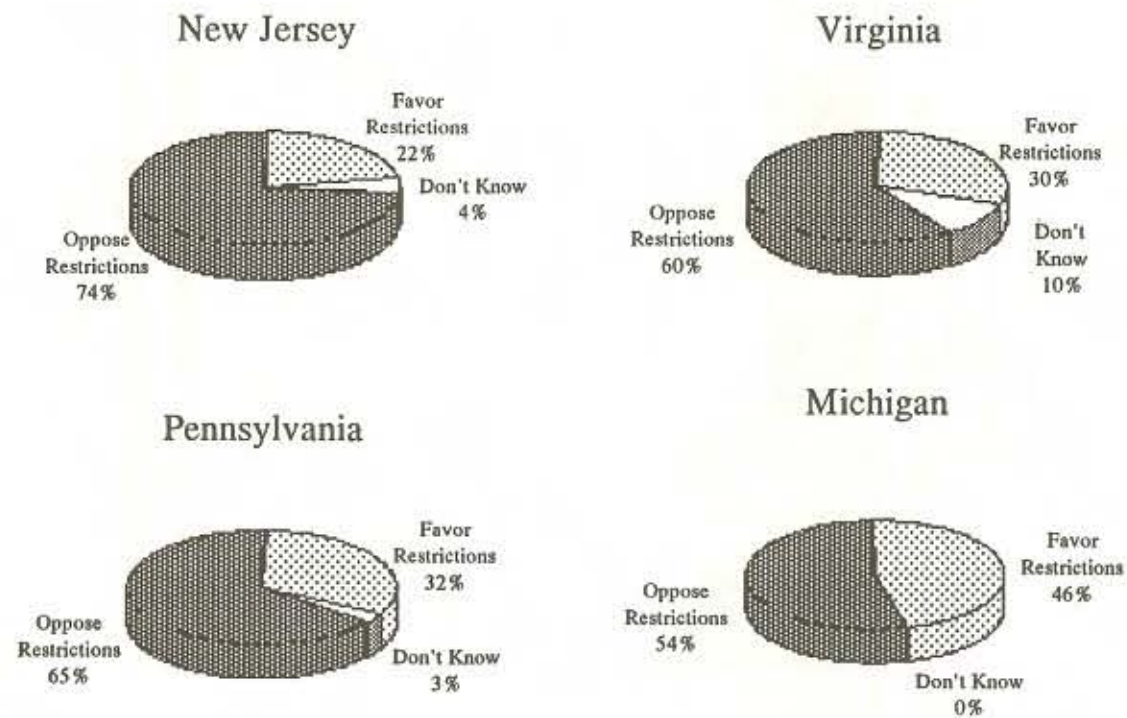


Figure 8:
Attitudes Toward New Restrictions among Women
Citing Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial Races



Religion

The conventional wisdom is that Catholic voters will not support a pro-choice candidate and that they see abortion as an important issue. While Catholic voters in three of the states were somewhat more likely than Protestant or Jewish voters to favor new restrictions, majorities of all three groups — Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish voters — opposed new restrictions. In one state — Michigan — there was no difference between Catholic and Protestant views.

The most substantial differences seem not to be from denominational affiliation, but rather from frequency of attendance at religious services. Frequent attenders — Catholic and Protestant — were more supportive of restrictions than less frequent attenders. Furthermore, among pro-life voters who favored additional restrictions, those who attended religious services almost every week were far more likely than less frequent attenders to mention the abortion issue as important to them in the gubernatorial contest (Figure 9). Among pro-choicers who opposed new restrictions, weekly attenders and less frequent attenders were about equally likely to connect their attitudes about the issue to the gubernatorial race in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Overall, frequent religious service attendance seems to provide pro-life voters with the reinforcement of their beliefs and the messages or incentives to translate their views on this issue into political action; but it has relatively little effect on pro-choice voters' willingness to connect their concerns with the abortion issue to political action.

Numerous campaign and issue activists spoke of the important role that churches — both Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant — play in the structuring of the pro-life network in these states. One Michigan pro-life activist noted:

We have educational materials for churches, so we reach out to churches with these.... But we do not do political things in churches.... Church members came and got petitions [to override the parental consent veto] and took them to their churches.

One pro-choice activist in Pennsylvania echoed the feeling of many pro-choicers in Michigan and Pennsylvania when she observed:

They [the Right-to-Life movement] have an infrastructure in place and their infrastructure is based on a network of Catholic Churches and fundamentalist churches. They have the ability to have a priest and fundamentalist ministers preach from the pulpit.... We simply do not have that tool and we will never have that tool.... Because of the religious component of their movement, it infuses a sense of zealotry that you don't have in this [the pro-choice] movement.

And, it was in Michigan, where the candidates did not make much effort to place abortion on the public agenda, but where the pro-life organization worked to mobilize voters quietly in the gubernatorial race, that the pro-life frequent church attenders were particularly concerned about this issue.

Figure 9:
% Citing Abortion Issue as Important In Gubernatorial Races
By Religious Service attendance
and Attitudes Toward New Restrictions

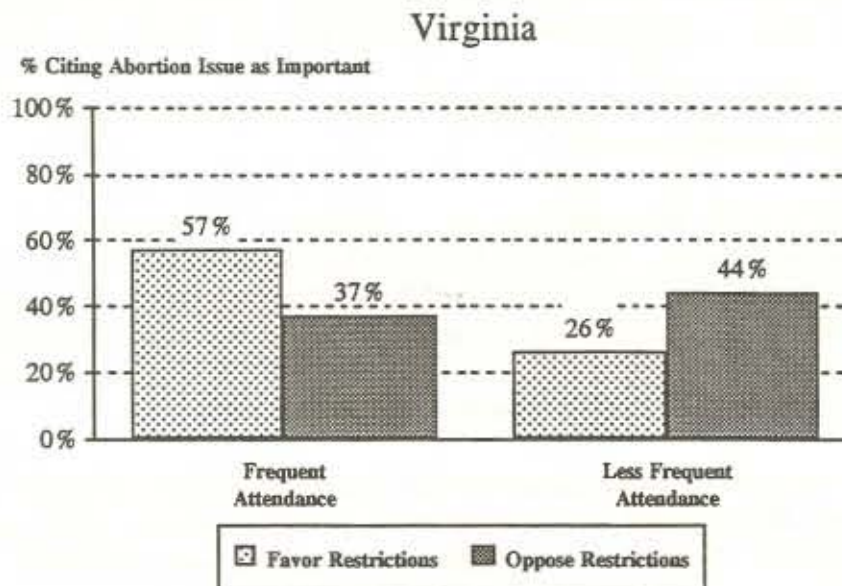
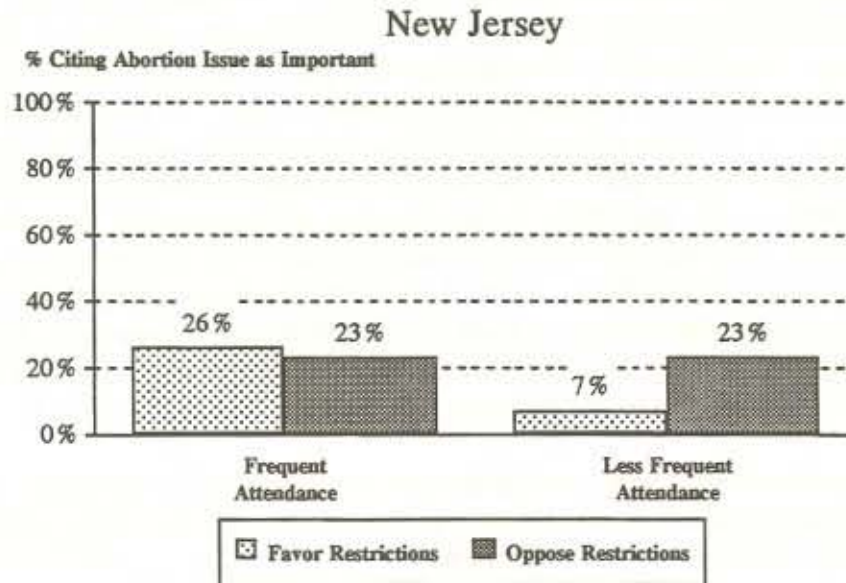


Figure 9 (cont.):
% Citing Abortion Issue as Important In Gubernatorial Races
By Religious Service attendance
and Attitudes Toward New Restrictions

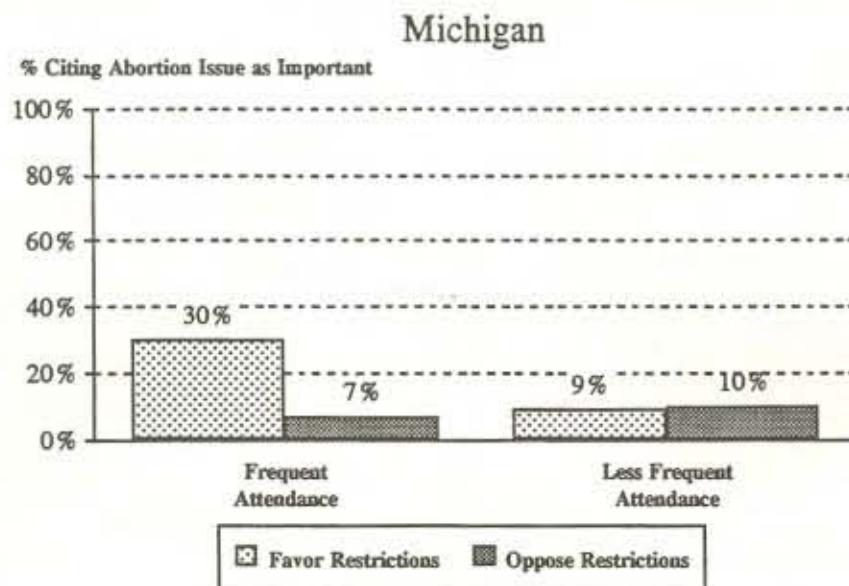
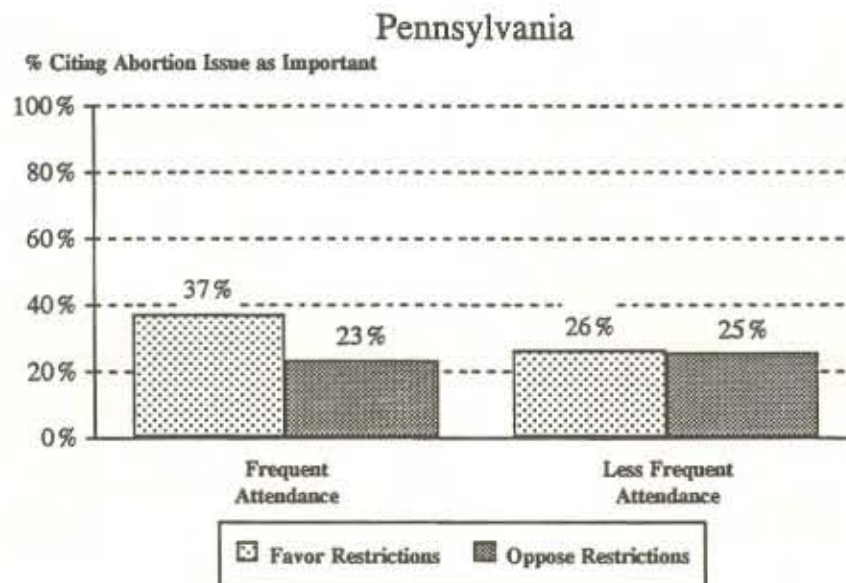
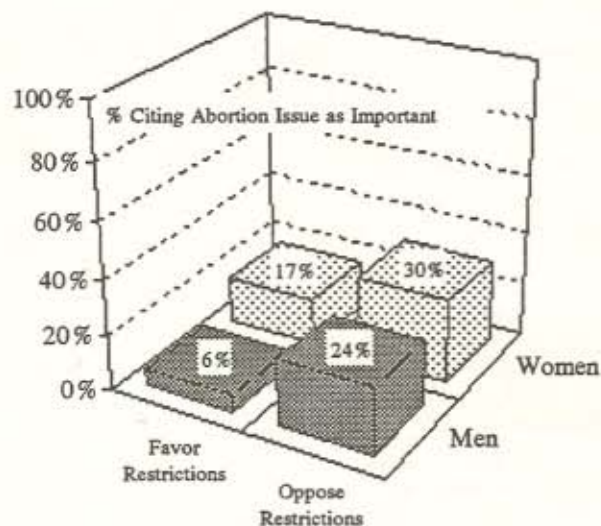
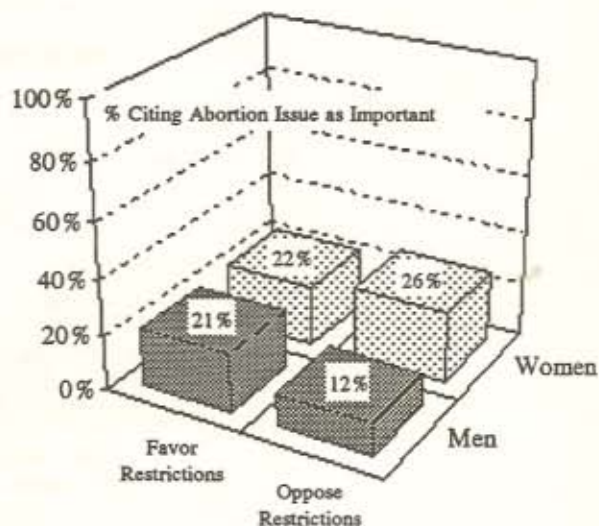


Figure 10:
Percent Citing Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial Races
By Attitudes Toward New Restrictions
By Party for Men and Women

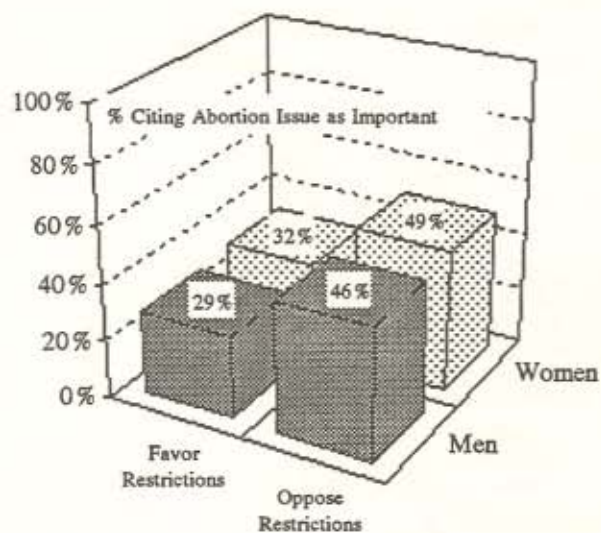
New Jersey Democrats



New Jersey Republicans



Virginia Democrats



Virginia Republicans

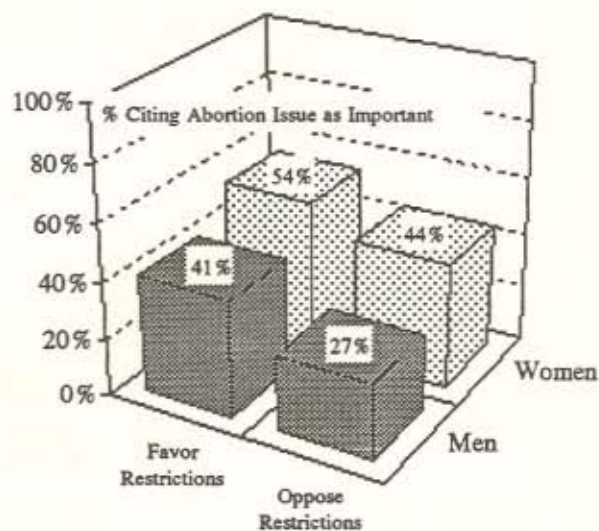
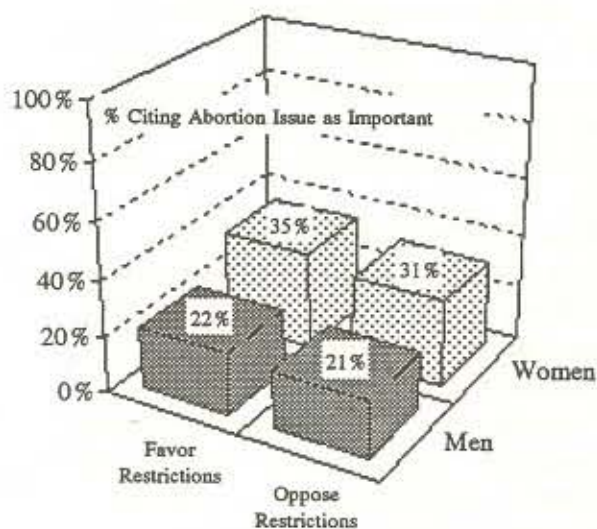
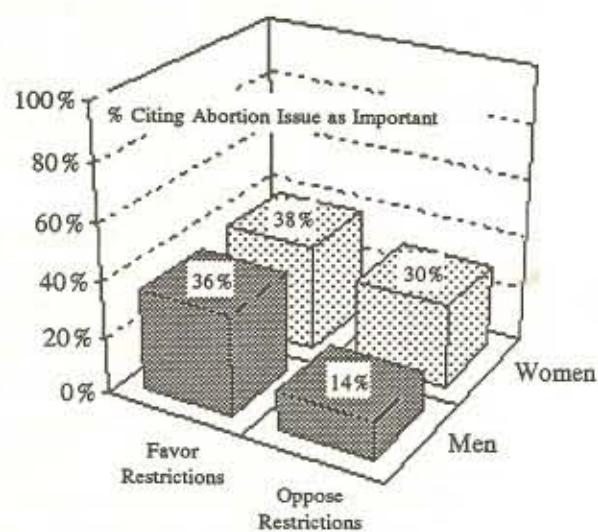


Figure 10 (cont.):
 Percent Citing Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial Races
 By Attitudes Toward New Restrictions
 By Party for Men and Women

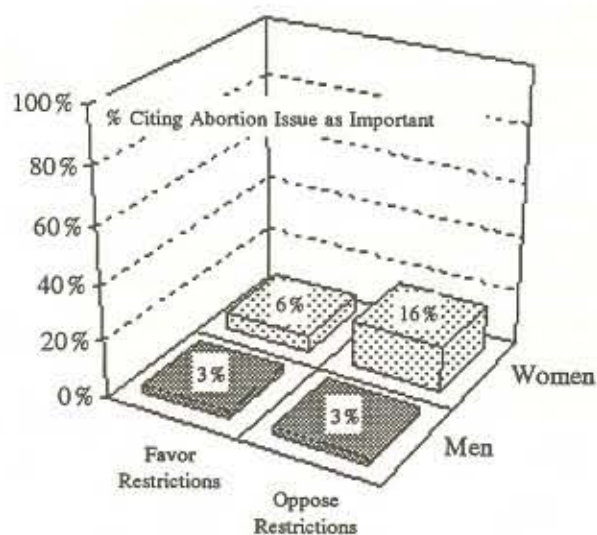
Pennsylvania Democrats



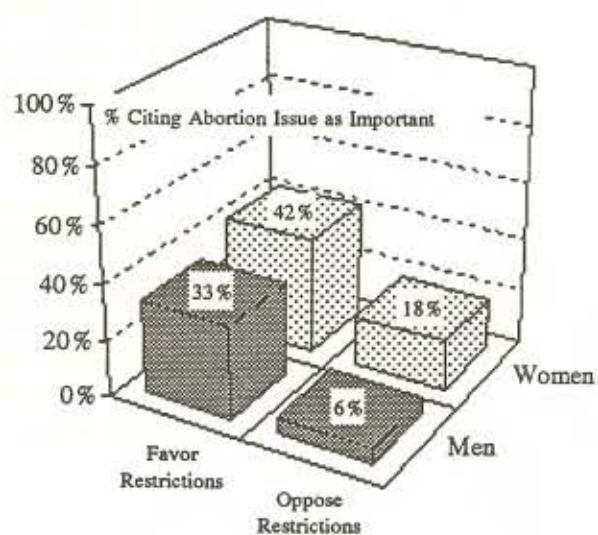
Pennsylvania Republicans



Michigan Democrats



Michigan Republicans



Party Identification

Pro-life Democrats and pro-choice Republicans were usually less likely to mention the abortion issue as important to them in the gubernatorial race than were pro-choice Democrats and pro-life Republicans. Nevertheless, there were some exceptions. First, pro-choice Republican women in New Jersey were slightly more likely than other Republicans to mention the abortion issue (Figure 10). This may have been the result of Courter alienating pro-life supporters with his evolving position, while failing to give pro-choice groups a reason to demobilize and cease targeting him and defining him as pro-life.

Second, pro-life Democrats mentioned abortion most frequently in Pennsylvania where their own party's standard bearer agreed with them on the issue; however, the pro-choice Pennsylvania Democrats were about as likely to mention the abortion issue as their pro-life counterparts. Since pro-choice Democrats outnumber pro-life Democrats among self-identified Democrats, if their concern had resulted in defection, this could have been a serious drain on the party in the election.

Majorities of Republican voters in each of the four states opposed new government restrictions on abortion (Figure 11). However, pro-life Republicans in three of the four states (New Jersey is the exception) compensated for their lesser numbers with greater intensity of feeling: pro-life Republicans were more likely to mention abortion as an important issue in the gubernatorial race. The result was that among those who saw abortion as important to them in the gubernatorial campaign, the numerical advantage that pro-choice Republicans had eroded considerably in Pennsylvania, virtually disappeared in Virginia, and in Michigan pro-choice Republicans actually became a minority. In general, this increased the potential for divisiveness on that issue in elections because those within the party's base who were concerned with the issue were fairly evenly divided over restrictions.

These results raise at least two possible implications for Republican parties in states where the issue threatens to divide the party:

- The success of the "big tent" strategy¹¹ may be critical in keeping the party together and strong, now that *Webster* has made abortion policy relevant in the electoral arena. However, it remains to be seen whether the "big tent" is big enough for both pro-choice and pro-life Republicans.
- The organizations that pro-choice Republicans have formed since *Webster* may have an impact on the party to the extent that they: 1) create a visible symbol of pro-choice supporters among Republicans; 2) create a resource base that pro-choice Republicans can tap particularly if they lose party support because of their position; and 3) provide a channel through which a potentially divisive pro-choice message can be communicated to a targeted audience.

¹¹The "big tent" approach advocated by former National Republican Party chair Lee Atwater deems both pro-choice and pro-life views as acceptable within the GOP.

Since the 1970s, the Democrats have battled over the issue of abortion; many pointed to the Democratic party's pro-choice position as divisive and as contributing to the decline of the New Deal coalition. For all the conflict the Democrats may have experienced regarding the pro-choice plank in their platform, the Democrats in these states do not appear to face the problems that the Republicans do. In the four states, Democrats are fairly united in opposition to new restrictions on abortion, and the unity is at least as great among Democratic mentioners as it is among Democrats as a whole (Figure 12). This pattern even prevailed in Pennsylvania where the Democratic nominee was pro-life.

Attitude Consistency

Voters with more consistent views — either in the pro-life or the pro-choice direction — are the most likely to mention the abortion issue as important to them in the gubernatorial primary (Figure 13). However, there is no guarantee that even voters with strong, consistent positions will see this issue as important. A comparison across states suggests that: 1) among those with similar attitudes, the importance attached to the abortion issue in their voting decision will depend on the attention given to the issue by the campaign or the issue group activists; 2) if one side of the issue gives greater attention to the abortion issue than their opponents, this will give them an advantage in mobilizing even their committed adherents (e.g., New Jersey and Michigan); and 3) an increased emphasis on the issue combined with a framing of the issue which emphasizes libertarian themes (as was the case in Virginia) may raise the interest of conflicted voters in the state.

PERCEPTION OF CANDIDATE DIFFERENCE

Awareness of Candidate Positions

If voters are to cast "issue votes" based on the abortion issue, they should not only see the issue as important in the election, but also know where the candidates stand on the issue and see a difference between them. Determining whether voters know where candidates stand is a difficult endeavor. To assess voter knowledge of candidate stance, for each candidate, voters were asked, "Do you know whether the Democratic/Republican candidate for governor, [candidate name], favors or opposes new/additional government restrictions on abortion?"

Most New Jerseyans and Michiganders did not know where either of their candidates stood (Figure 14) and the same was true for a plurality of Pennsylvanians. Of those willing to place the candidates, most guessed correctly, seeing Florio, Blanchard, and Hafer as opposing additional restrictions and Courter, Engler, and Casey as favoring additional restrictions. (Courter was obviously unsuccessful in convincing the voters he had changed on the issue.) However, approximately two out of every seven voters who placed the

Figure 11:
Republicans' Attitudes Toward New Restrictions:
All Versus Those Citing the Issue

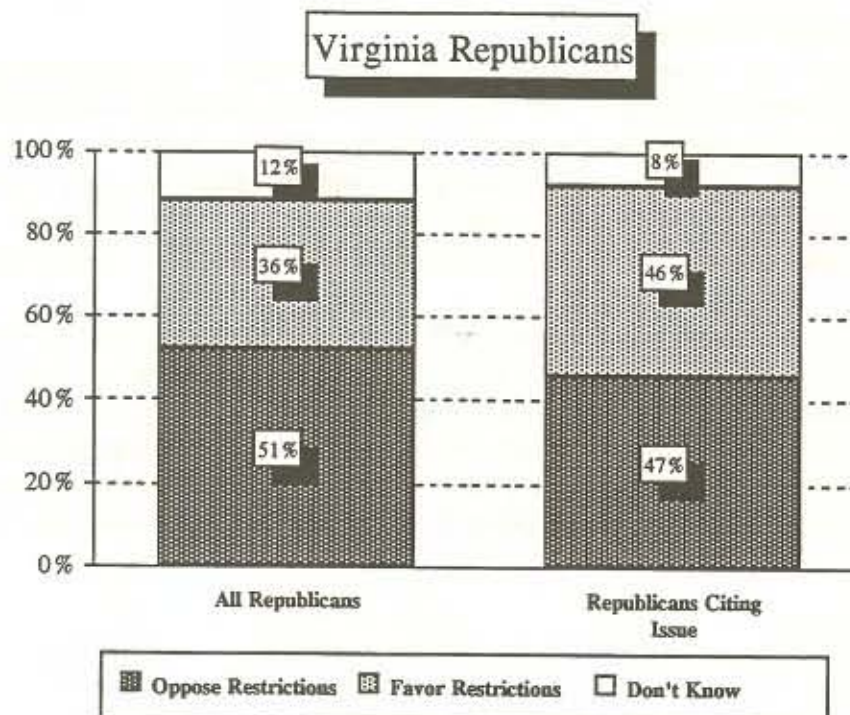
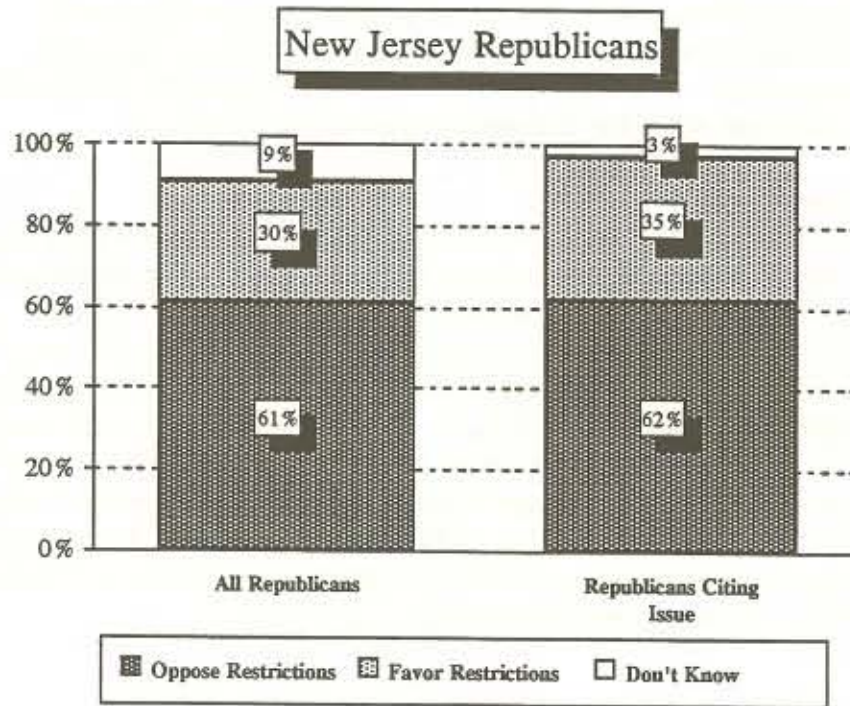


Figure 11(cont.):
Republicans' Attitudes Toward New Restrictions:
All Versus Those Citing the Issue

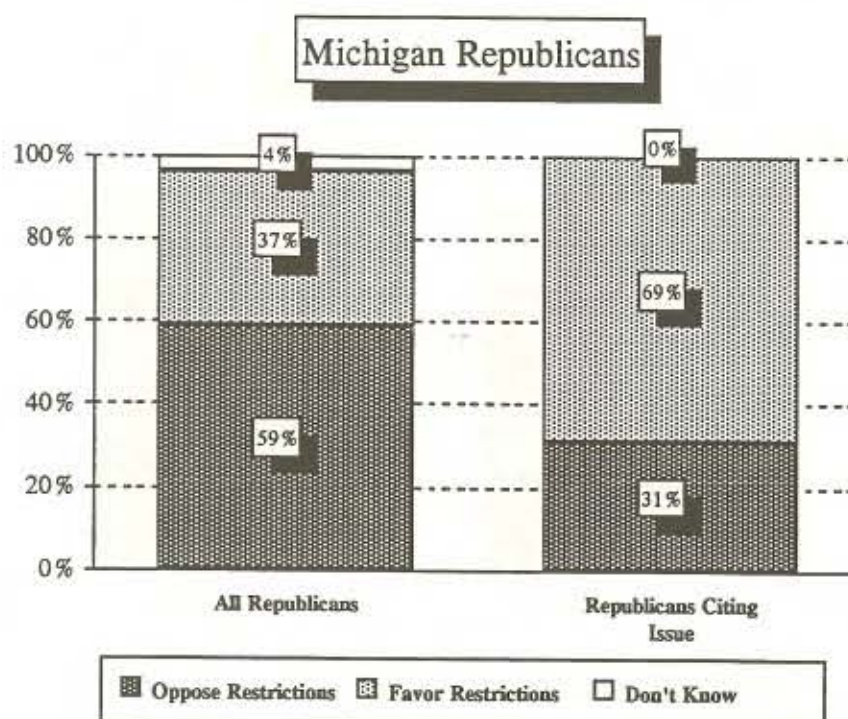
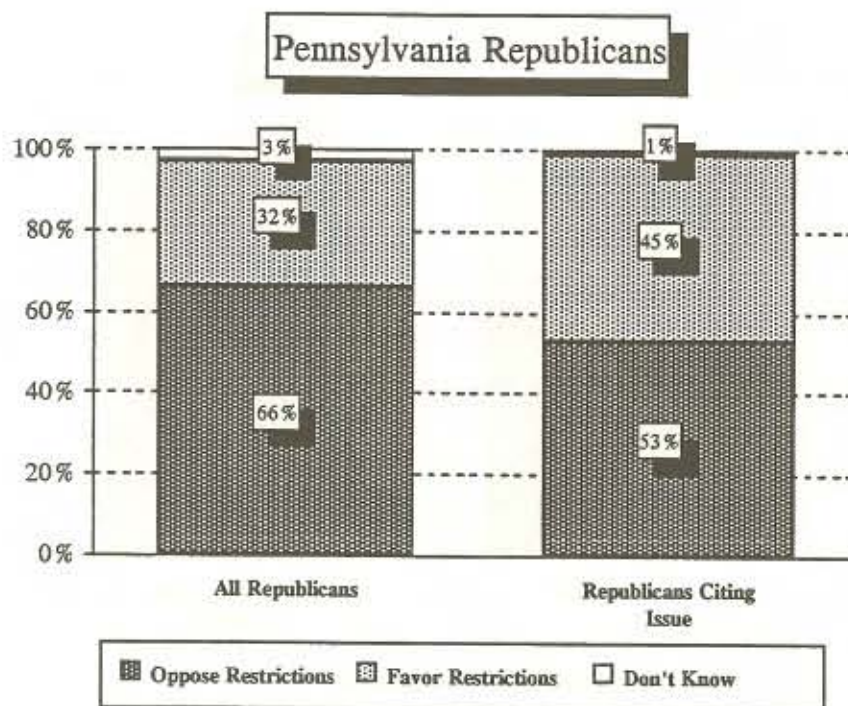


Figure 12:
Democrats' Attitudes Toward New Restrictions:
All Versus Those Citing the Issue

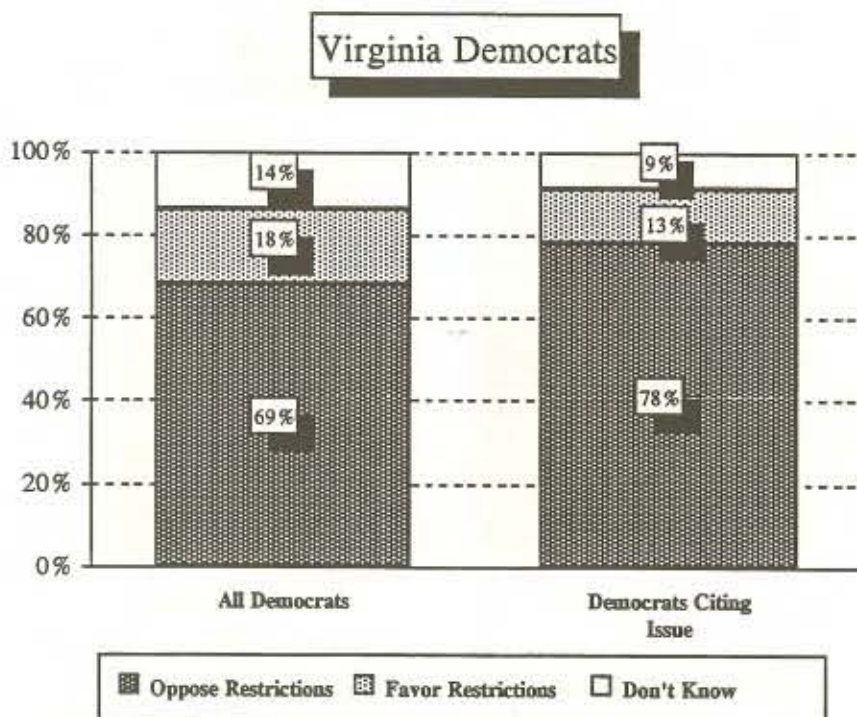
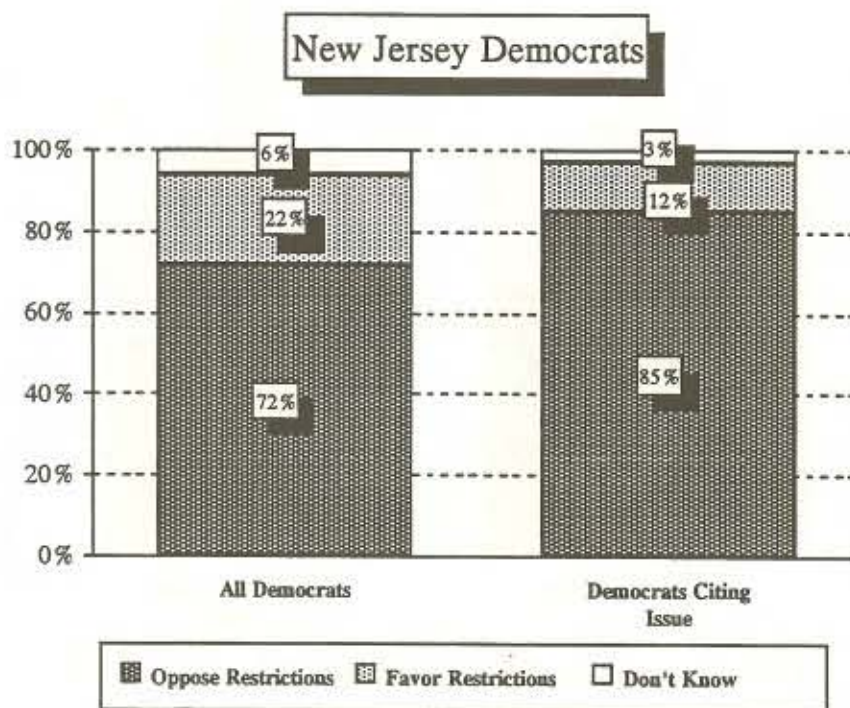


Figure 12 (cont.):
Democrats' Attitudes Toward New Restrictions:
All Versus Those Citing the Issue

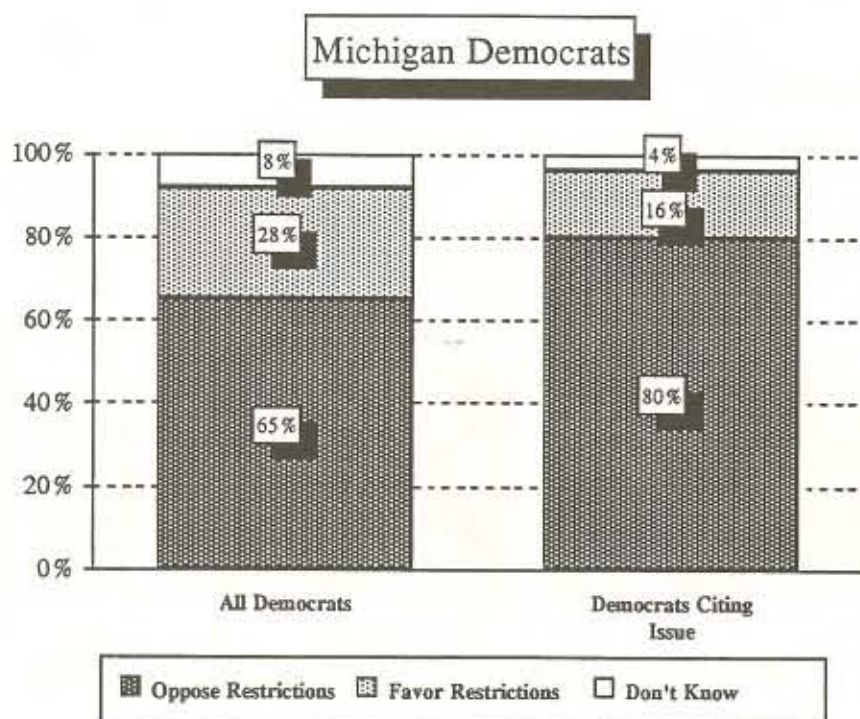
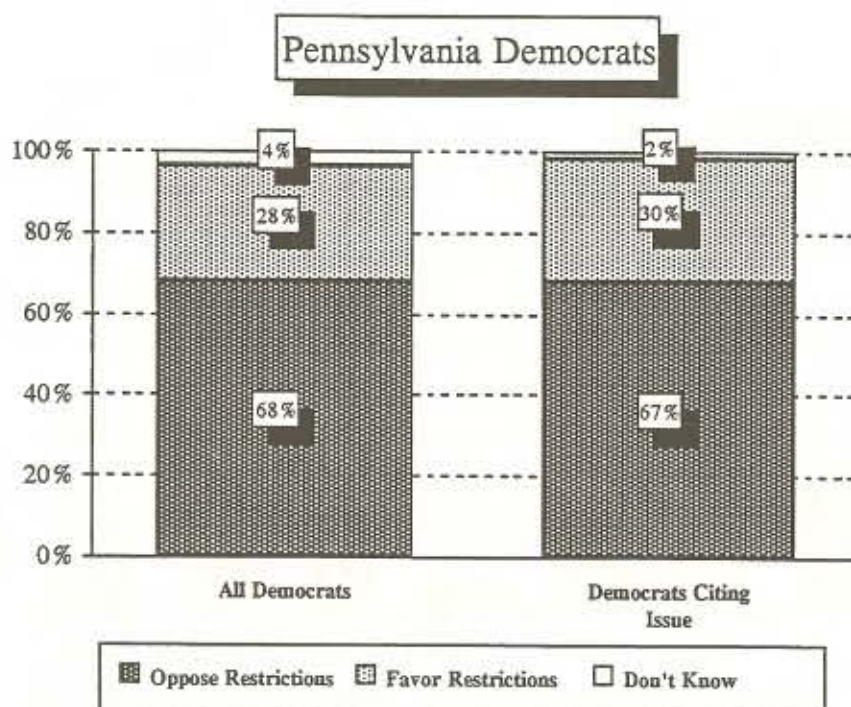


Figure 13:
% Citing Abortion Issue Given Consistency
of Attitudes on Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index

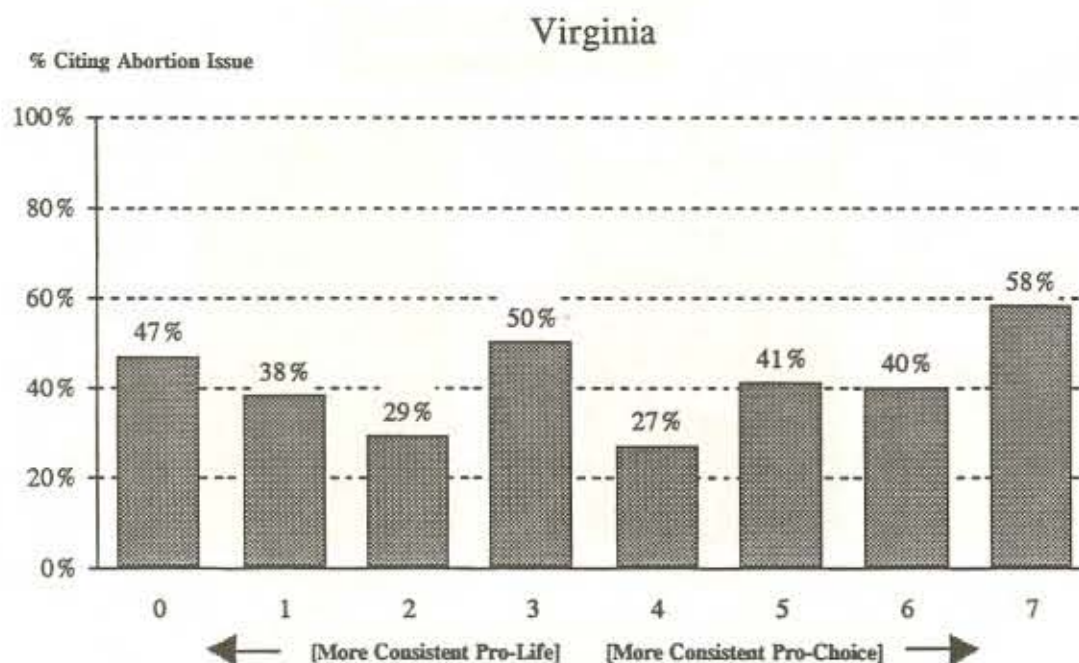
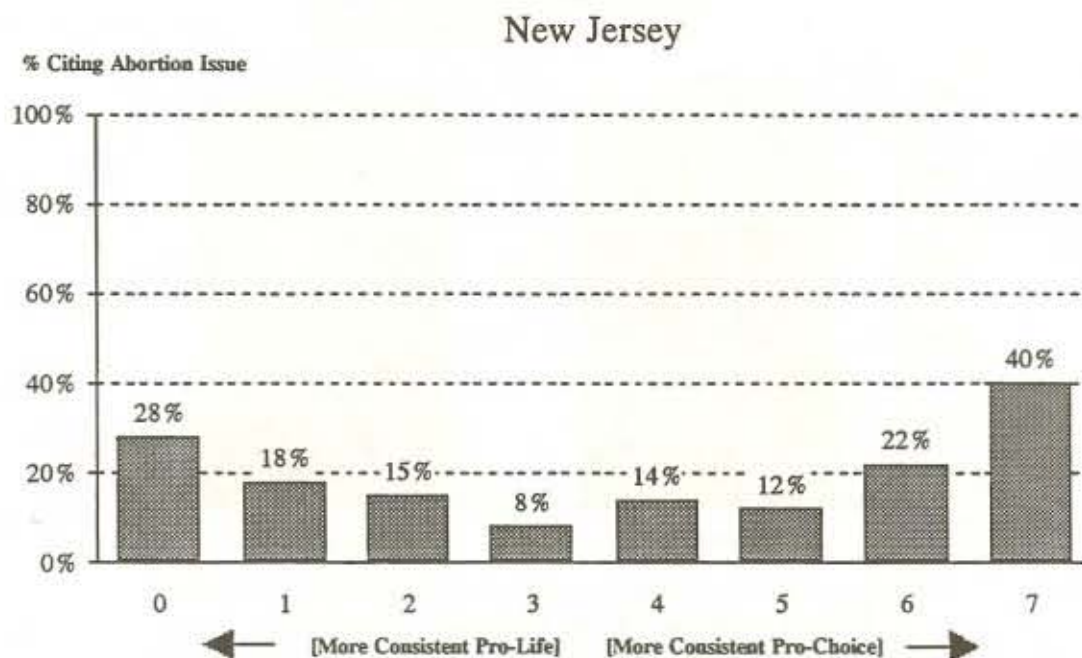


Figure 13 (cont.):
% Citing Abortion Issue Given Consistency
of Attitudes on Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index

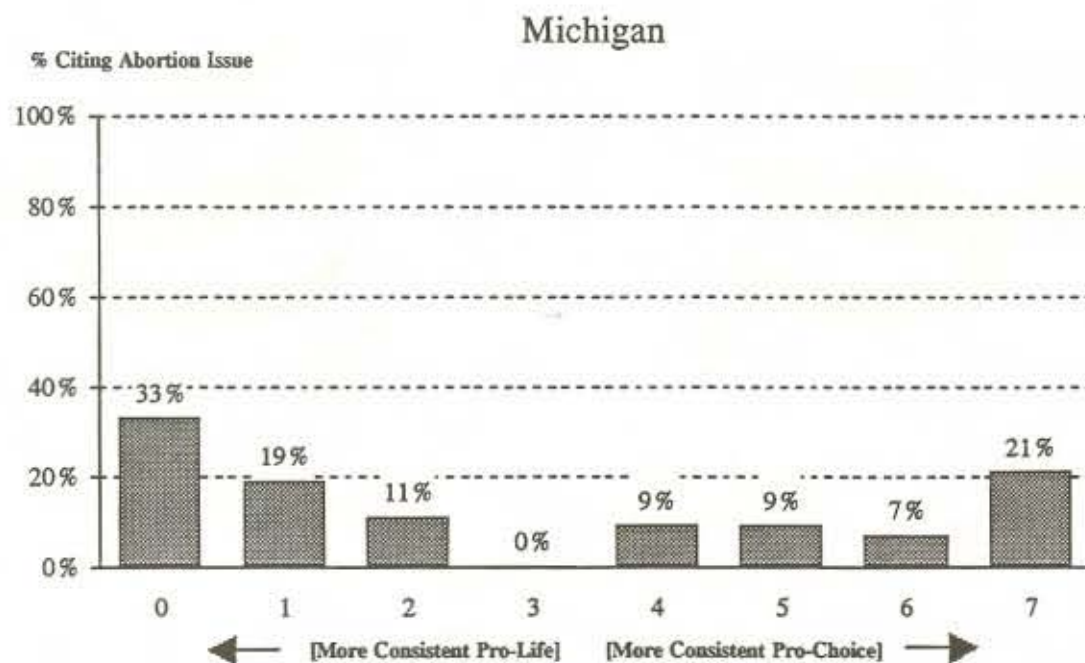
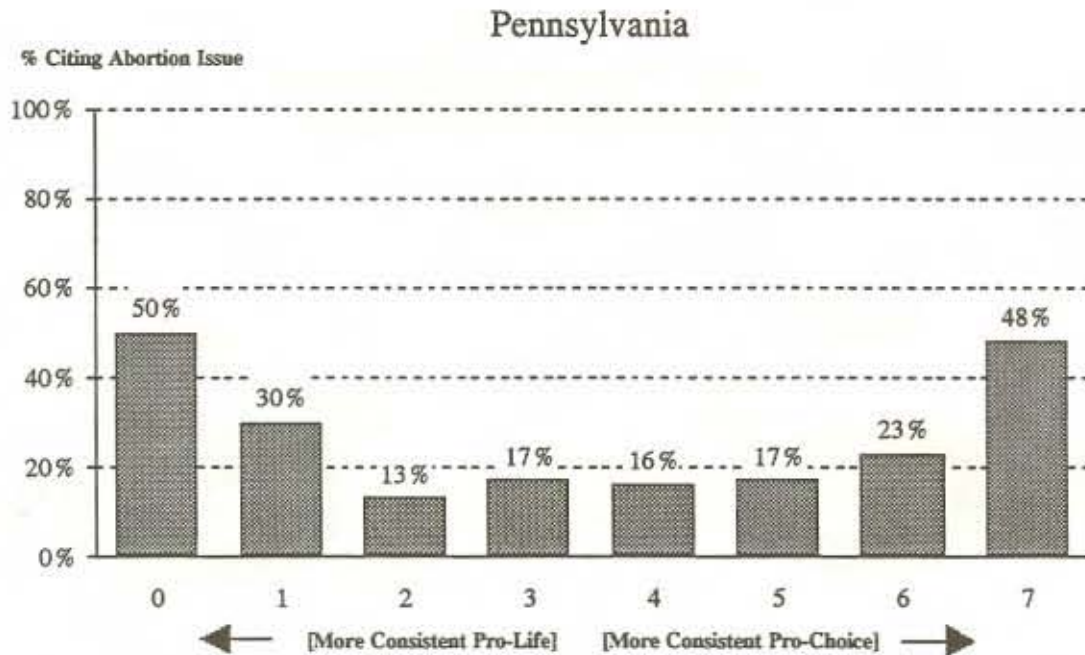
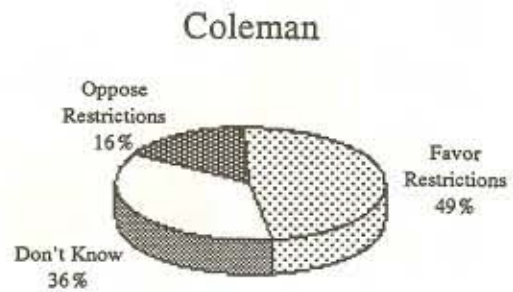
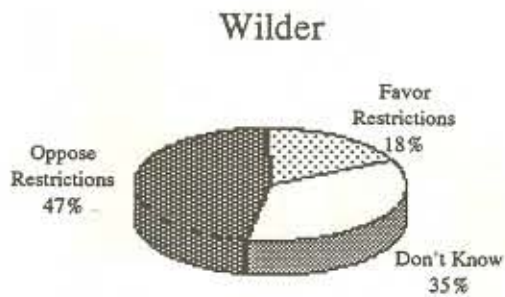


Figure 14:
Voters' Perceptions of Candidates'
Positions on Abortion Issue

Virginia



New Jersey

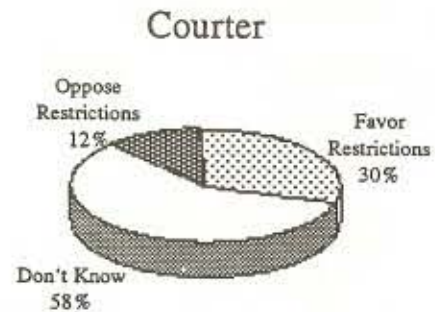
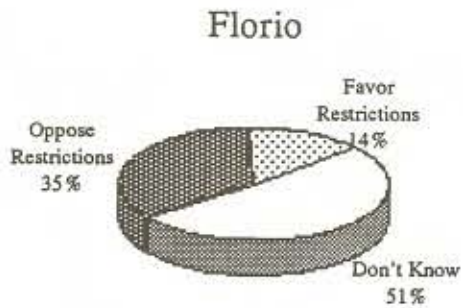
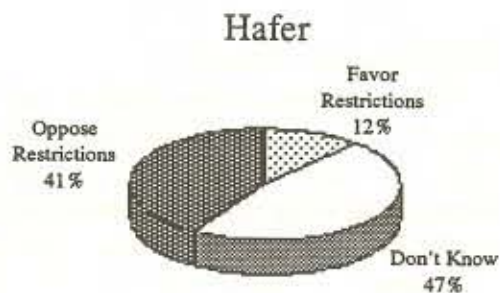
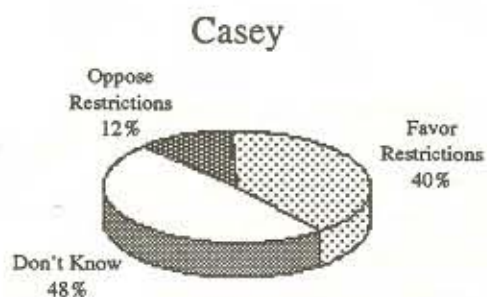
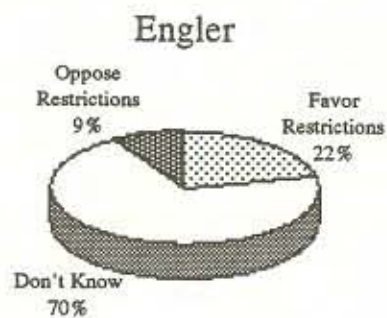
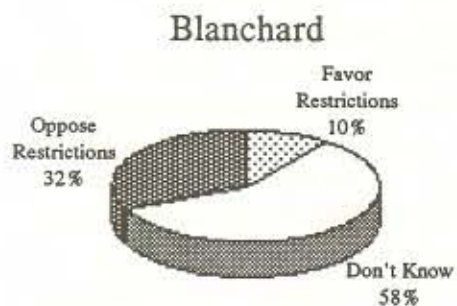


Figure 14 (cont.):
Voters' Perceptions of Candidates'
Positions on Abortion Issue

Pennsylvania



Michigan



candidates saw Florio, Blanchard and Hafer as favoring additional restrictions and comparable proportions of voters saw Courter, Engler and Casey as opposing new restrictions.

Campaigns affect the ease with which voters can become differentiators. In Virginia, where the Wilder campaign took the lead in emphasizing the abortion issue and educating voters about the differences between him and his opponent, voters were better informed. Indeed, in Virginia a plurality of voters said that Wilder opposed restrictions and that Coleman favored restrictions. Only about one third could not place Wilder or Coleman. These differences may be the product of the greater visibility of the issue in Virginia, as described earlier. While there may be few issues on which the entire electorate knows where candidates stand, when a campaign emphasized the abortion issue, more voters saw a difference between the candidates. And candidates who took for granted that voters knew where the candidates stood, often overestimated how much the voters did know.

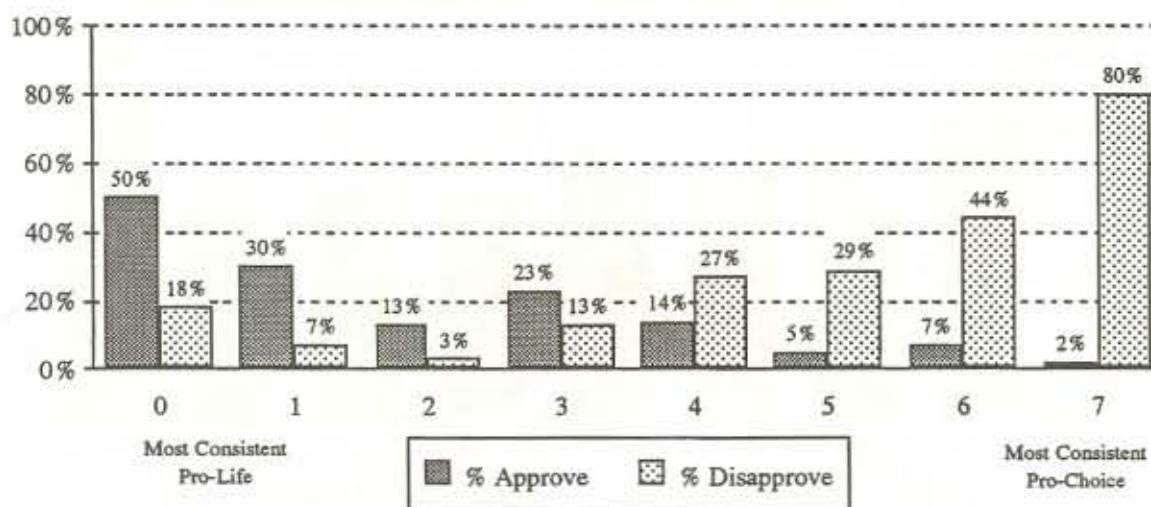
The Candidate's Record

There was good reason to think that voters in both Pennsylvania and Michigan would know (at least at a very general level) where their governors stood on abortion policy. Bob Casey had received national attention for having signed what at that time was the most restrictive abortion bill in the nation and Jim Blanchard's veto of parental consent was overridden by a statewide petition drive spearheaded by the Right-to-Life movement.

However, voters were not as well informed as one might expect about the newly enacted restrictions in their state or their governor's views of these restrictions. First, about three out of ten voters in each of the states were unable to pick the alternative which described at a very general level the legislation Casey had signed or the legislation enacted over Blanchard's veto. Consistently pro-choice and consistently pro-life voters on the pro-life/pro-choice index were the most aware of the purpose of the recent legislation. Second, many who were aware of the new law had not formed an opinion about it. This was particularly true in Pennsylvania (Figure 15). Those with less consistent views on the pro-life/pro-choice index were less likely than those with less consistent views to have an opinion about the new legislation. Finally, among voters aware of the legislation's purpose and having an opinion about the legislation, only about 1/3 of Michigan voters and 2/3 of Pennsylvania voters accurately guessed whether their governor had supported or opposed the legislation. Once again, it was the consistently pro-choice and the consistently pro-life voters who more frequently knew where the governor stood. But still, even many of these voters did not know their governor's stand on the legislation; the proportions were even smaller among those in the mushy middle (Figure 16).

Figure 15:
Voters' Views About Recently Enacted Laws
Given Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Score

PA Voters' Views About 1989 Abortion Control
Act - Only Voters with Knowledge of Act



MI Voters' Views About Parental Consent
Law - Only Voters with Knowledge of Law

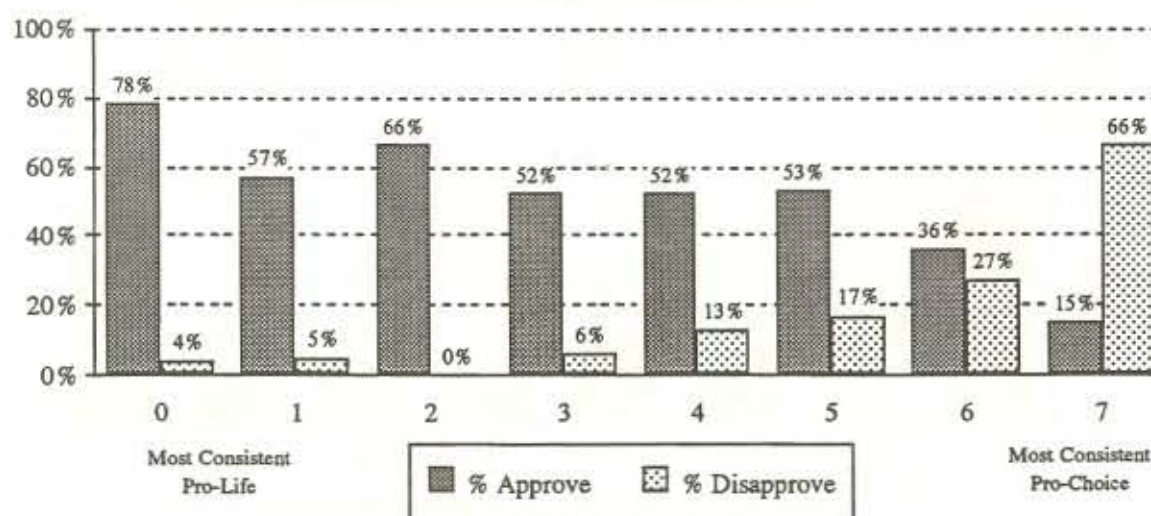
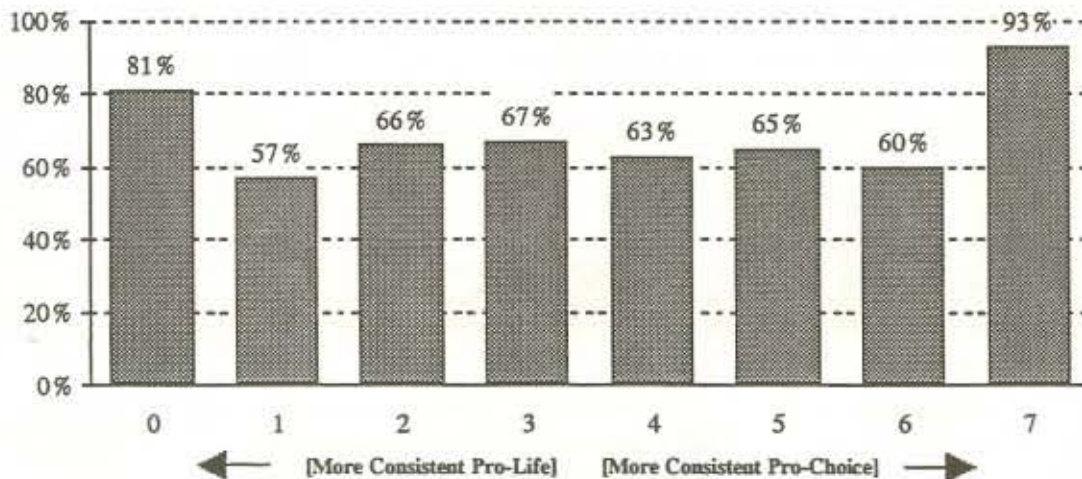
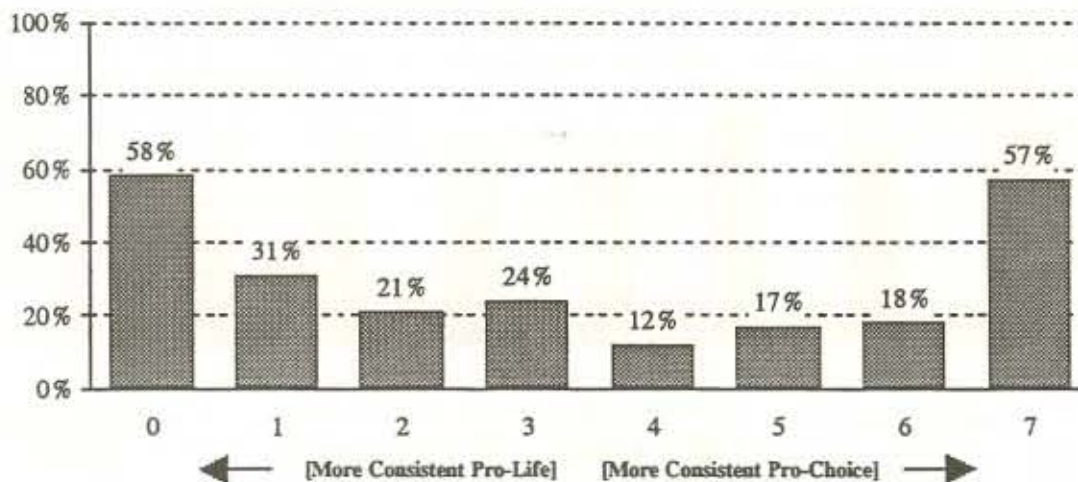


Figure 16:
Voters' Perceptions of Their Governor's
View of Recently Enacted Laws

Pennsylvania Voters Who Believe Casey Favored the
1989 Abortion Control Act - Among Voters With Personal
Opinion About, and Knowledge of, the Act



Michigan Voters Who Believe Blanchard Opposed the
Parental Consent Law - Among Voters With Personal
Opinion About, and Knowledge of, the Law



PERCEPTION OF MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CANDIDATES

If a voter has no personal position on the issue, seeing a difference between the candidates is meaningless. Therefore, we require that voters not only differentiate between the candidates, but also have personal stands on the issue that would allow them to see one candidate as closer to themselves. We call these voters "differentiators."¹³

Virginia voters were most likely to be differentiators, fulfilling both prerequisites for perceiving a meaningful difference and thus for potential issue voting. Michigan voters were the least likely to be differentiators (Figure 17).¹⁴ While these are far from majorities of voters, in close races such voters can have a profound impact on election outcomes:

The Wilder campaign put essentially all of its eggs in the abortion basket. And it was rightfully so. They made exactly the right tactical decision. If they had made any other decision, we would have won the election. (Coleman campaign activist)

In each of the four states, consistently pro-choice voters were somewhat more likely than consistently pro-life voters to see a difference between the candidates (Figure 18).¹⁵ Furthermore, higher proportions of consistently pro-choice voters were differentiators in the two states where one of the candidates emphasized the issue (Virginia and Pennsylvania), than in the two states where the candidates gave less attention to the topic.

However, once we move one step in toward the middle of the scale, the proportion of differentiators is (in three out of four states) roughly equal for those leaning toward the pro-life perspective and those leaning toward the pro-choice perspective. The exception is Virginia, where Wilder's emphasis on libertarian themes may have convinced pro-choice leaning voters of a difference between him and his opponent and brought these somewhat

¹³In New Jersey and Virginia, we asked a two part question. Due to the problem of distinguishing between a restriction such as parental consent and restrictions like viability testing or an outright ban on abortion, we asked voters seeing a candidate as favoring restrictions whether they thought that candidate favored major or minor ones. Therefore, if a voter saw both candidates as favoring restrictions but saw Florio or Wilder as favoring minor restrictions, and Courter or Coleman as favoring major restrictions, they were considered as differentiating between the candidates. The same question was used to determine where voters stood and where the voters thought the candidates stood. In Pennsylvania and Michigan where the choices between candidates were more clear cut, we simply asked voters whether each candidate favored or opposed additional government restrictions.

¹⁴Those who differentiated between the candidates by defining Courter or Coleman as *opposing* new restrictions and Florio or Wilder as *favoring* new restrictions are not considered as having issue vote potential. These voters appear to have projected their own views onto their preferred candidate. We label this small group of voters "confused" in the next section.

¹⁵Some would attribute the lower level of pro-life mobilization in New Jersey to Courter's shift on the issue, which may have alienated pro-lifers without affecting the pro-choicers' image of him as being pro-life.

Figure 17:
Voters Who Are Differentiators

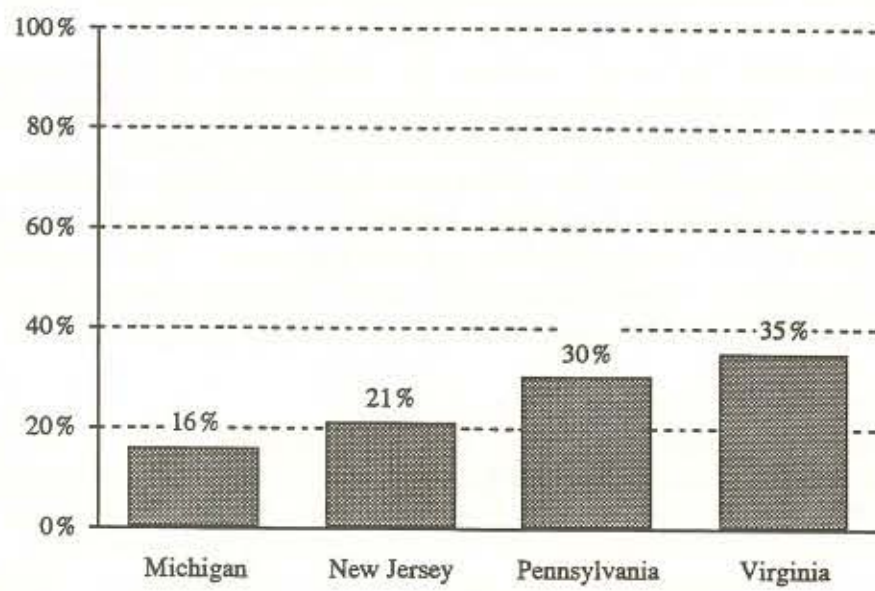
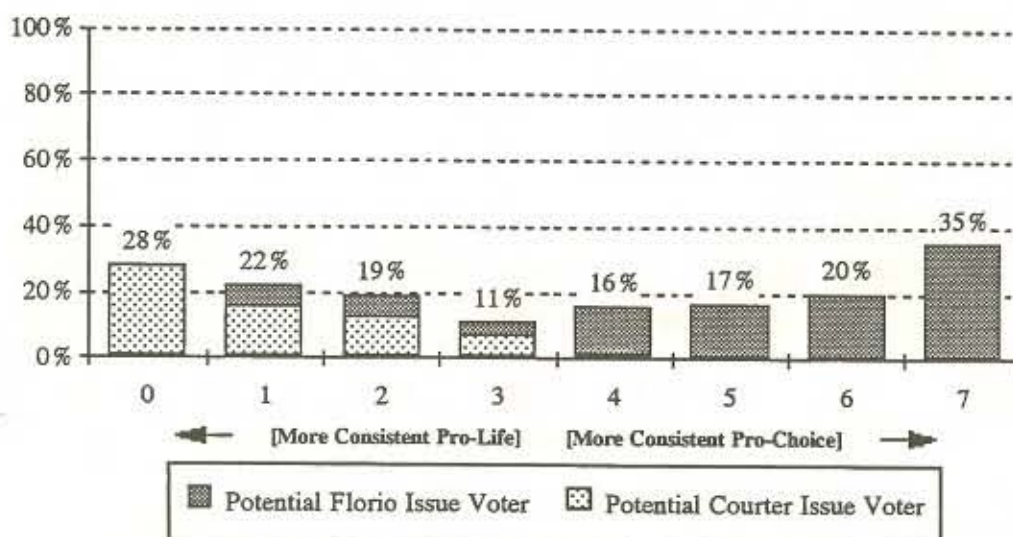


Figure 18:
Percent of Voters Who are Differentiators
Given Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Score

New Jersey



Virginia

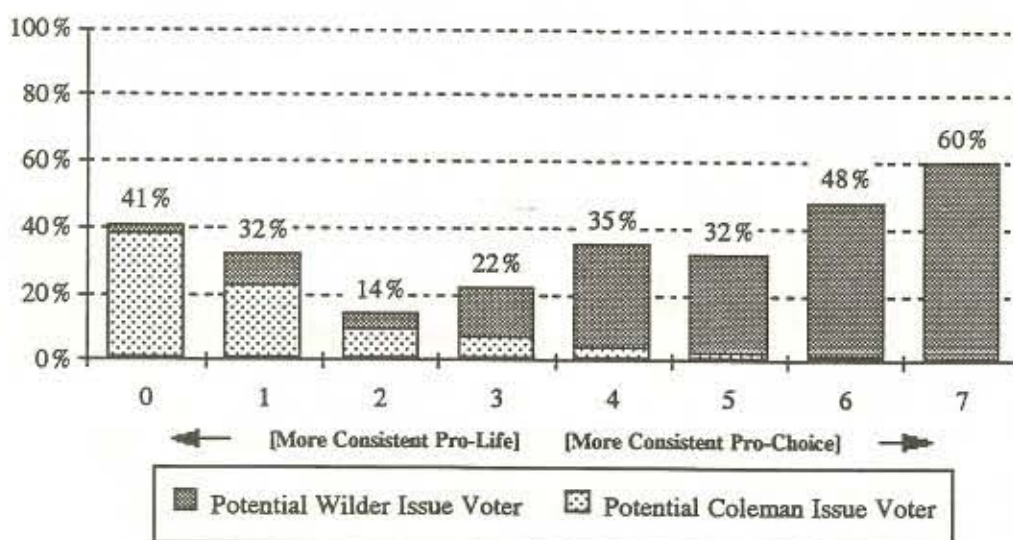
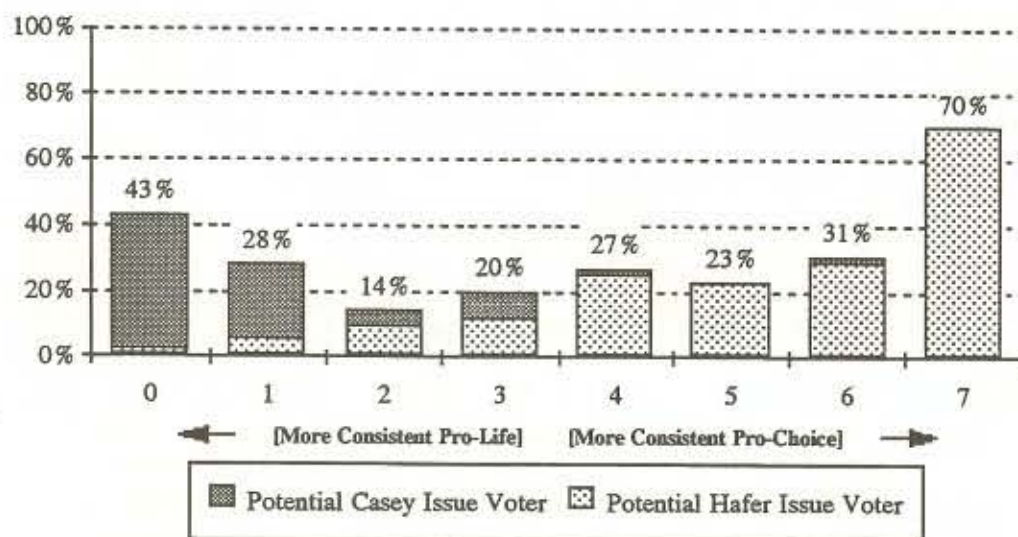
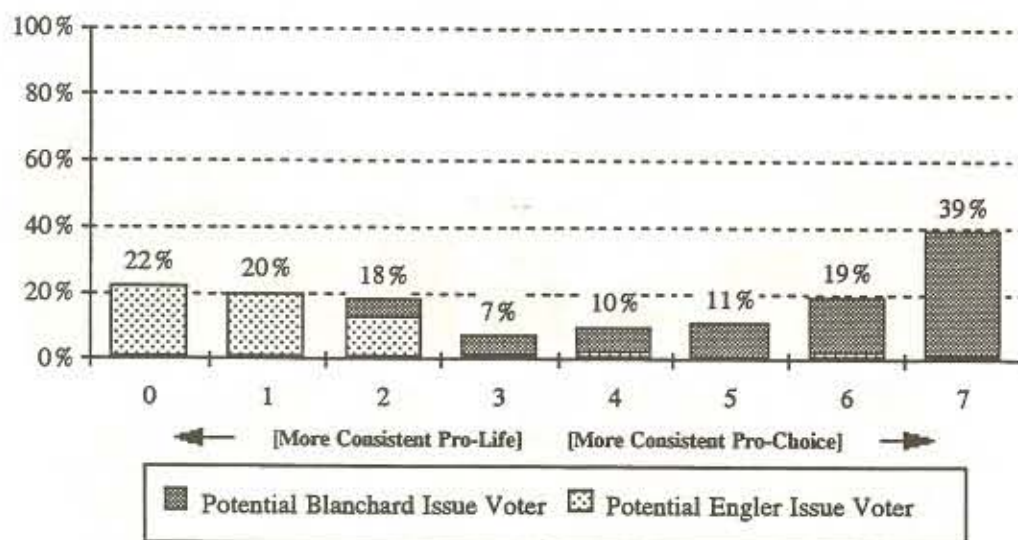


Figure 18 (cont.):
Percent of Voters Who are Differentiators
Given Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Index Score

Pennsylvania



Michigan



conflicted pro-choice leaning voters into his camp without simultaneously mobilizing an equal number of similarly conflicted pro-life leaners against him.

CONVERTING ISSUE VOTE POTENTIAL INTO ISSUE VOTES: CHOOSING THE CLOSER CANDIDATE

In the post-*Webster* era, a critical question is whether voters who meet our criteria as potential issue voters do actually cast their ballots based on the issue. To address this question, we consider how each candidate was advantaged or disadvantaged among voters with different personal views about restrictions, perceptions of the candidates' stands, and attitudes about the importance of the issue in the gubernatorial race.

We classified the voters into groups based on their positions on the issue and their perceptions of candidates' stands. (The percentages in parentheses indicate the proportion of Virginia, New Jersey, Michigan, and Pennsylvania voters, respectively, in each group.)

- *Differentiating Pro-Life*: Voter favors additional government restrictions on abortion and views Coleman, Courter, Engler, or Casey as more favorable toward restrictions than Wilder, Florio, Blanchard, or Hafer (9%; 5%; 7%; 8%).
- *Non-Differentiating Pro-Life*: Voter favors additional government restrictions on abortion, but is either unable to place both candidates on this issue or sees no difference between the candidates (15%; 19%; 24%; 19%). Most are uninformed rather than unconvinced of difference.
- *Differentiating Pro-Choice*: Voter opposes additional government restrictions on abortion and places Coleman, Courter, Engler, or Casey as more in favor of restrictions than Wilder, Florio, Blanchard, or Hafer (27%; 15%; 10%; 22%).
- *Non-Differentiating Pro-Choice*: Voter opposes additional government restrictions on abortion, but is either unable to place both candidates on this issue or sees no difference between the candidates (28%; 49%; 50%; 42%). Again, most are uninformed rather than unconvinced of difference.
- *Uncertain*: Voter is unable to say whether he or she personally favors or opposes additional government restrictions (14%; 8%; 7%; 4%).
- *Confused Pro-Life*: Voter favors additional government restrictions, but sees Coleman, Courter, Engler, or Casey as opposing additional government restrictions and Wilder, Florio, Blanchard, or Hafer as favoring additional government restrictions (2%; 1%; 1%; 2%).
- *Confused Pro-Choice*: Voter opposes new government restrictions on abortion, but sees Coleman, Courter, Engler, or Casey as opposing and Wilder, Florio, Blanchard, or Hafer as favoring new government restrictions (5%; 3%; 2%; 4%).

The analysis focuses on the first five of these seven groups.

We also classified voters into electoral coalitions based on their stated voting intentions expressed in our pre-election surveys. Those who did not know who they would support or who refused to respond to the question were classified based on responses to other relevant questions aimed at indirectly measuring affect toward candidates. The results of our allocation procedures mirrored closely the actual election results.¹⁶

Effect of Issue Vote Potential on Candidate Support

Figures 19 through 27 illustrate the impact of voters' issue positions, perceptions of candidates' stands, and importance of the issue to voters, by showing the electoral advantage — the margin by which a particular candidate is preferred over the opponent — in each of our five basic groups of voters.¹⁷ If voters have similar views about the issue, but have different perceptions of candidates' stands or if they differ in how important the issue is, and choose different candidates, then the issue may have influenced their votes.¹⁸

Patterns of Support Statewide

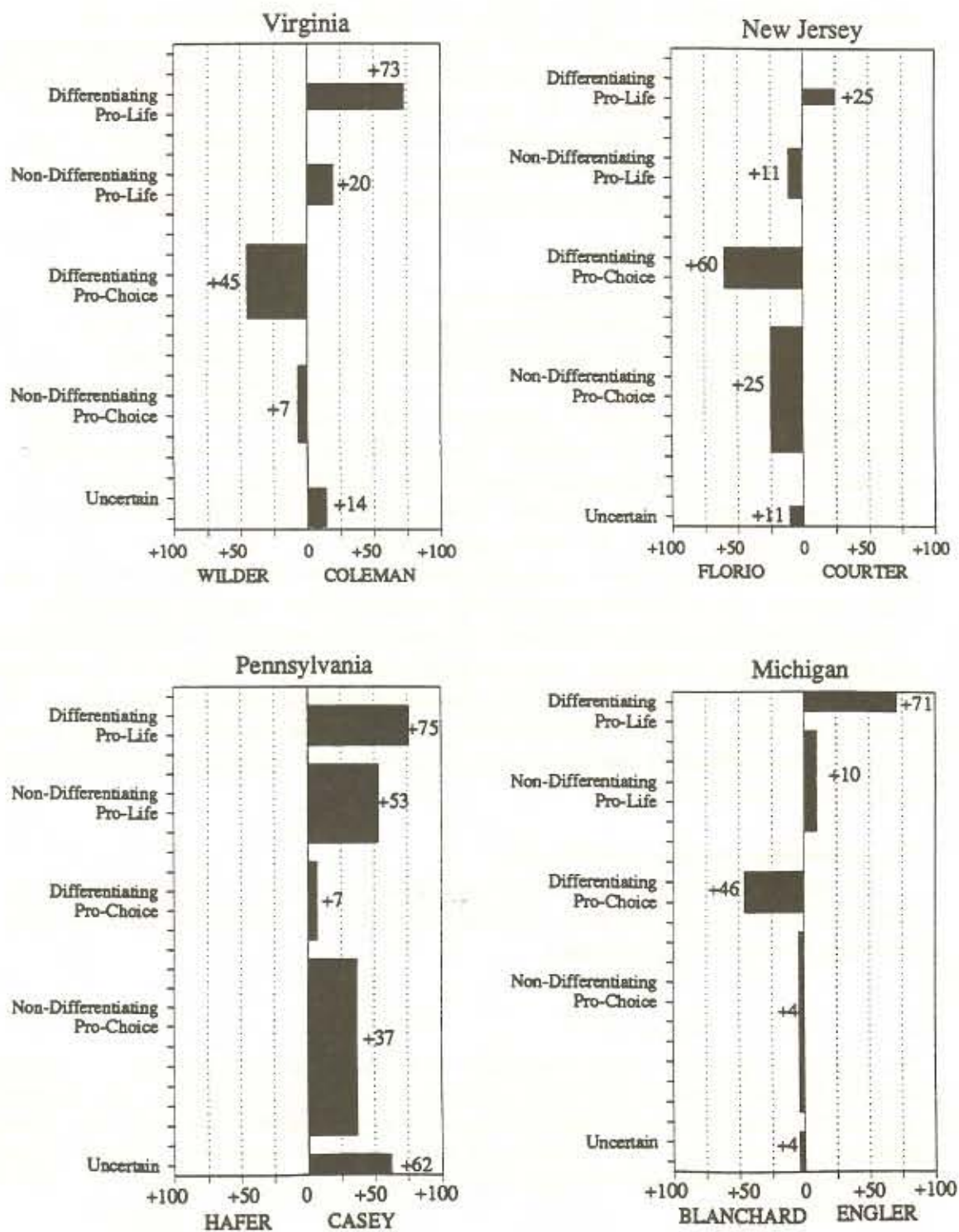
Voters have to see differences between candidates on abortion policy if the abortion issue is to influence their votes on election day. Not all voters see this difference, but when they do, they respond. Pro-choice Wilder, Florio, and Blanchard carried both pro-choice groups — pro-choice differentiators and pro-choice non-differentiators — but they carried the differentiators by a larger margin than the non-differentiators (Figure 19). Hafer, too, had her best showing among pro-choice differentiators. Similarly, the candidates associated with the pro-life position had their greatest margin of victory among differentiating pro-life voters. The different patterns of support among these groups strongly suggests that voters not only care whether candidates take a stand, but they also care what stand the candidates take. Seeing a difference between candidates is no guarantee of issue voting. Differentiators' votes are most likely to be affected by perceived differences when the candidates closest to them on the issue are perceived as a strong, credible candidates more generally and when the issue is deemed an important concern to the voter in the election.

¹⁶For more details, see Appendix.

¹⁷If one candidate had won 50% and another candidate had won 50%, there would have been no advantage to either candidate and the score would be zero. Similarly, if Coleman had received 75% of the support of one group and Wilder had gotten 25%, there would have been a 50 point advantage for Coleman. If Wilder garnered 75% of the votes in one group and Coleman received 25% of the group's support, there would be a 50 point electoral advantage for Wilder.

¹⁸The size of the bars reflects the size of the group relative to others displayed in each boxed area. For example, in New Jersey (Figure 19) there are three times as many non-differentiating pro-choice voters as differentiating pro-choice voters. Therefore, the bar for the non-differentiating group is three times as wide as that for their differentiating counterparts.

Figure 19:
Electoral Advantage For Gubernatorial Candidates
Among Voter Groups



A comparison of New Jersey and Pennsylvania with Michigan and Virginia voters illustrates how very important credibility and viability are. Pro-life differentiators by definition saw Courter as closer to them on the issue. But Courter's margin of victory within this group was much smaller than the margin of victory they gave to Coleman, Engler, or Casey. Similarly, Pennsylvania pro-choice differentiators were the voter group most favorably predisposed toward Hafer, just as pro-choice differentiators in other states viewed the pro-choice candidates more favorably. But the weakness of the Hafer campaign is clear from this graph as well. Pro-choice differentiators in Pennsylvania actually gave the pro-life candidate more of their votes than they gave to the pro-choice candidate. Casey garnered a 7 percentage point margin of victory even within this group. This was due in part to Hafer's inability to convince some that the abortion issue was important; however, questions about her qualifications to govern more generally eroded her support across all groups.

Importance of the Issue

Regardless of whether they are pro-choice or pro-life, seeing a difference between the candidates *and* viewing the abortion issue as important affect the margin of victory for the candidates. In most cases differentiators who see the abortion issue as important in the gubernatorial race give a larger margin of victory to the candidate who shares their views about additional restrictions than do differentiators not mentioning the issue as important (Figures 20 through 23).¹⁹ For example, differentiating pro-choice voters in Pennsylvania who mentioned the abortion issue as important in the gubernatorial race gave Hafer a 27 point margin of victory, while pro-choice differentiators who did not see abortion as an important issue gave Casey a 30 point margin of victory.

Viewing the abortion issue as important, however, is not sufficient for it to affect votes. Voters must also see a difference between the candidates. They must be differentiators. Among those who say abortion is an important issue, those who know where candidates stand and see a difference between the candidates give a larger margin of victory to the candidate closer to them than do non-differentiators. The extent to which election results mirror voter attitudes about abortion policy will depend in part on the extent to which voters are educated about candidate differences and the extent to which they are convinced that abortion policy is an important consideration.

The Importance of Party Identification

The patterns of support and defection across the states are not an artifact of partisanship. Even after taking into account party identification, voters who see a difference between the candidates respond to that difference.

¹⁹In contrast to the other states, importance of the issue had little influence on candidates' electoral advantages among the voter groups in New Jersey (Figure 21). This is probably because of Courter's general image problems arising from his handling of the issue. Seeing a difference between Florio and Courter could be interpreted as questioning Courter's integrity, given his often awkward and seemingly unsuccessful attempts at conveying his new, more pro-choice message.

Figure 20:
Electoral Advantage For Candidates
Among Virginia Voter Groups
Given Importance of Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial groups

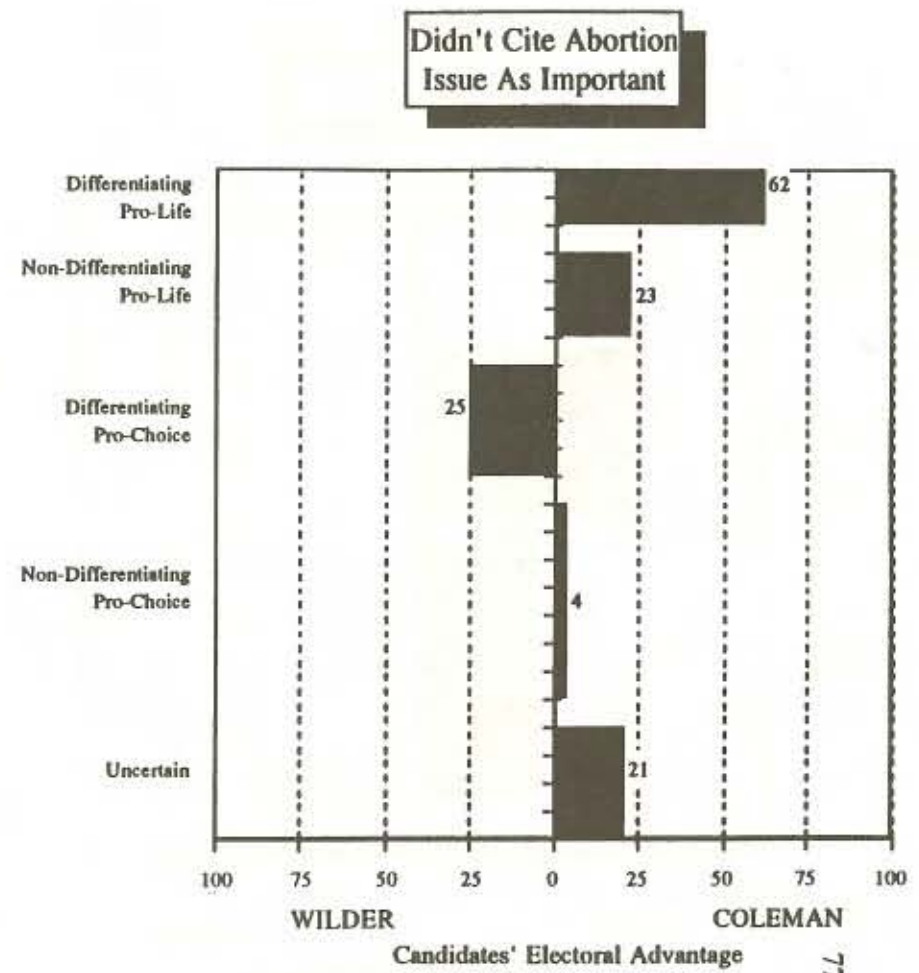
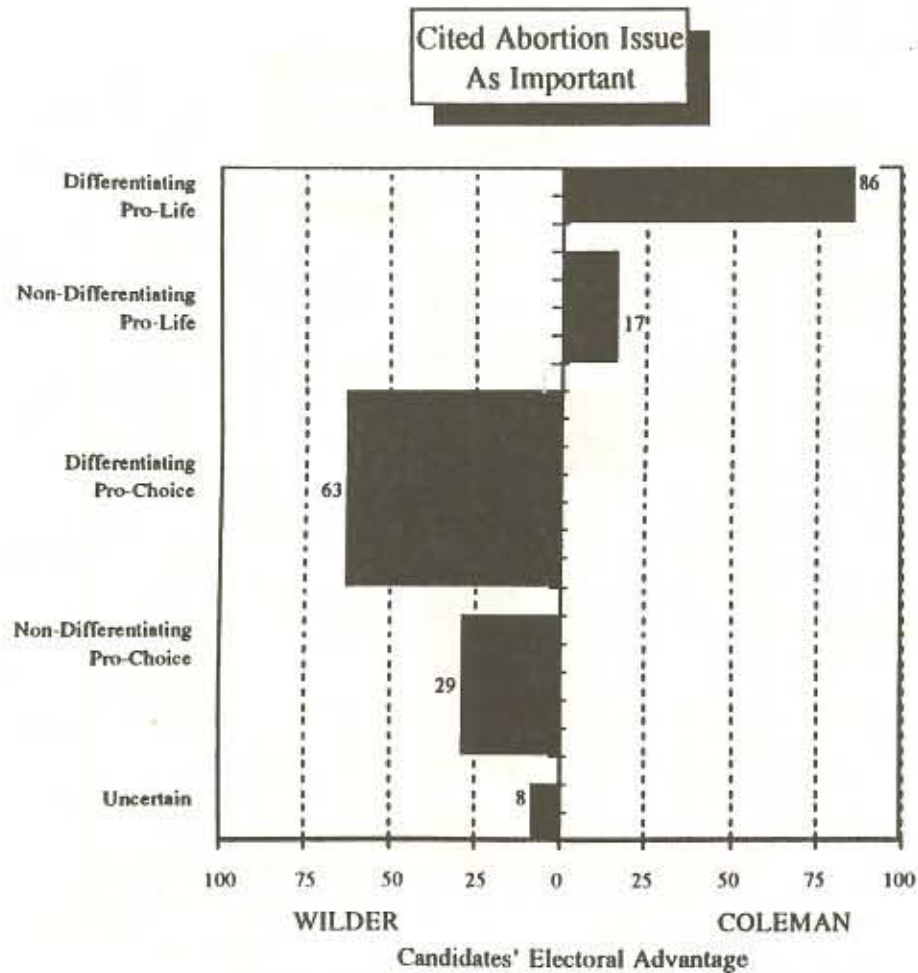


Figure 21:
Electoral Advantage For Candidates
Among New Jersey Voter Groups
Given Importance of Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial groups

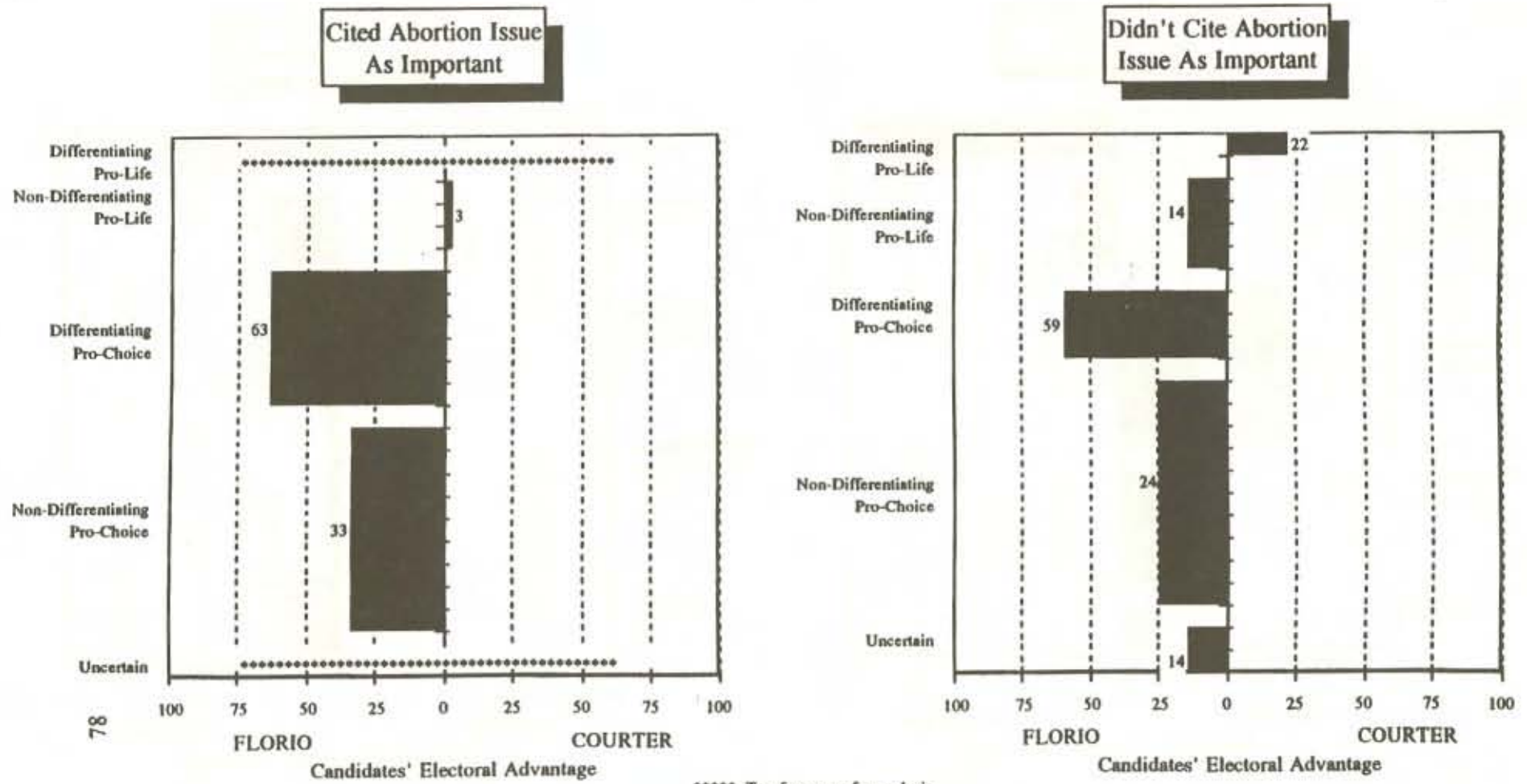


Figure 22:
Electoral Advantage For Candidates
Among Pennsylvania Voter Groups
Given Importance of Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial groups

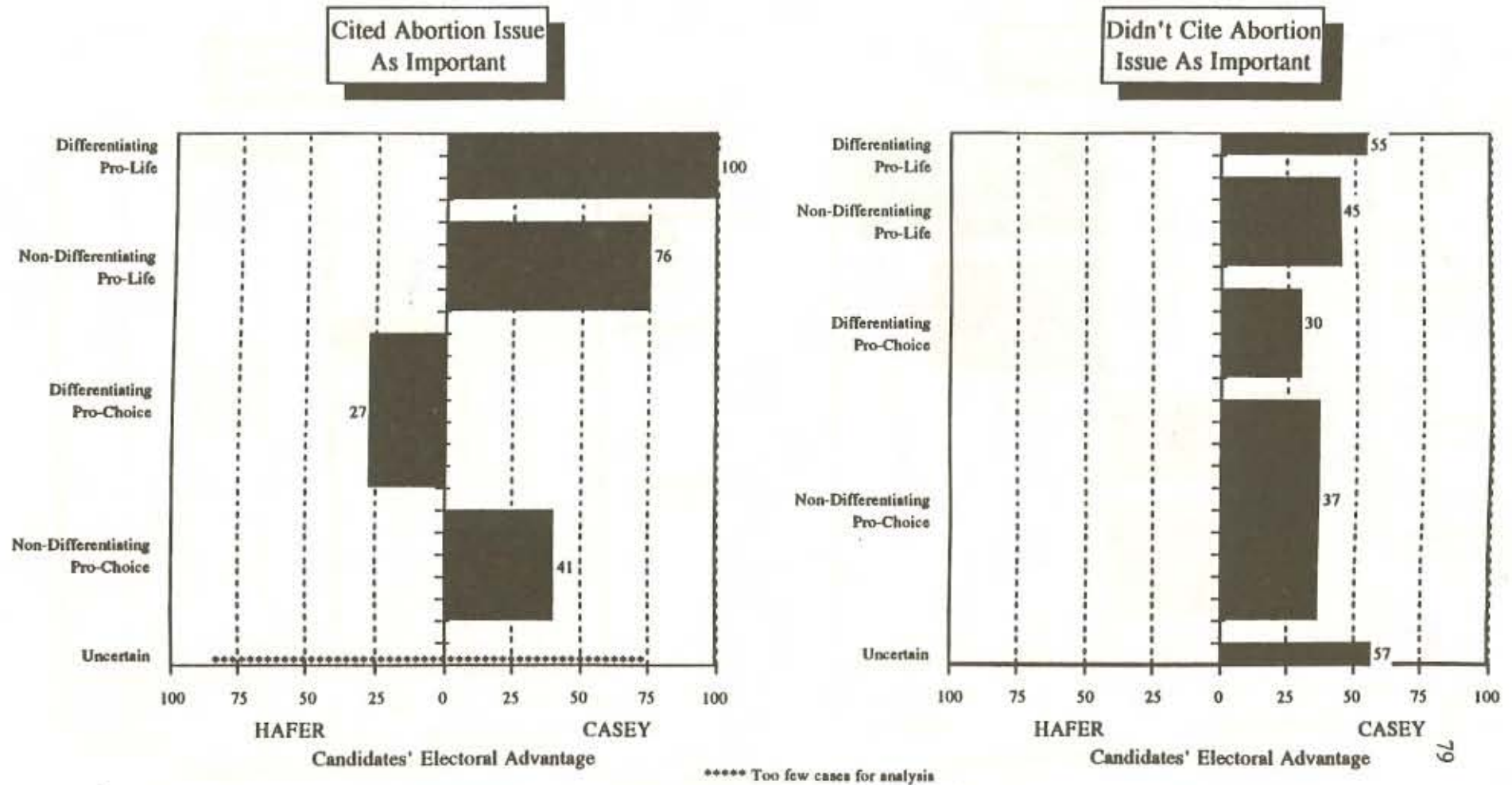
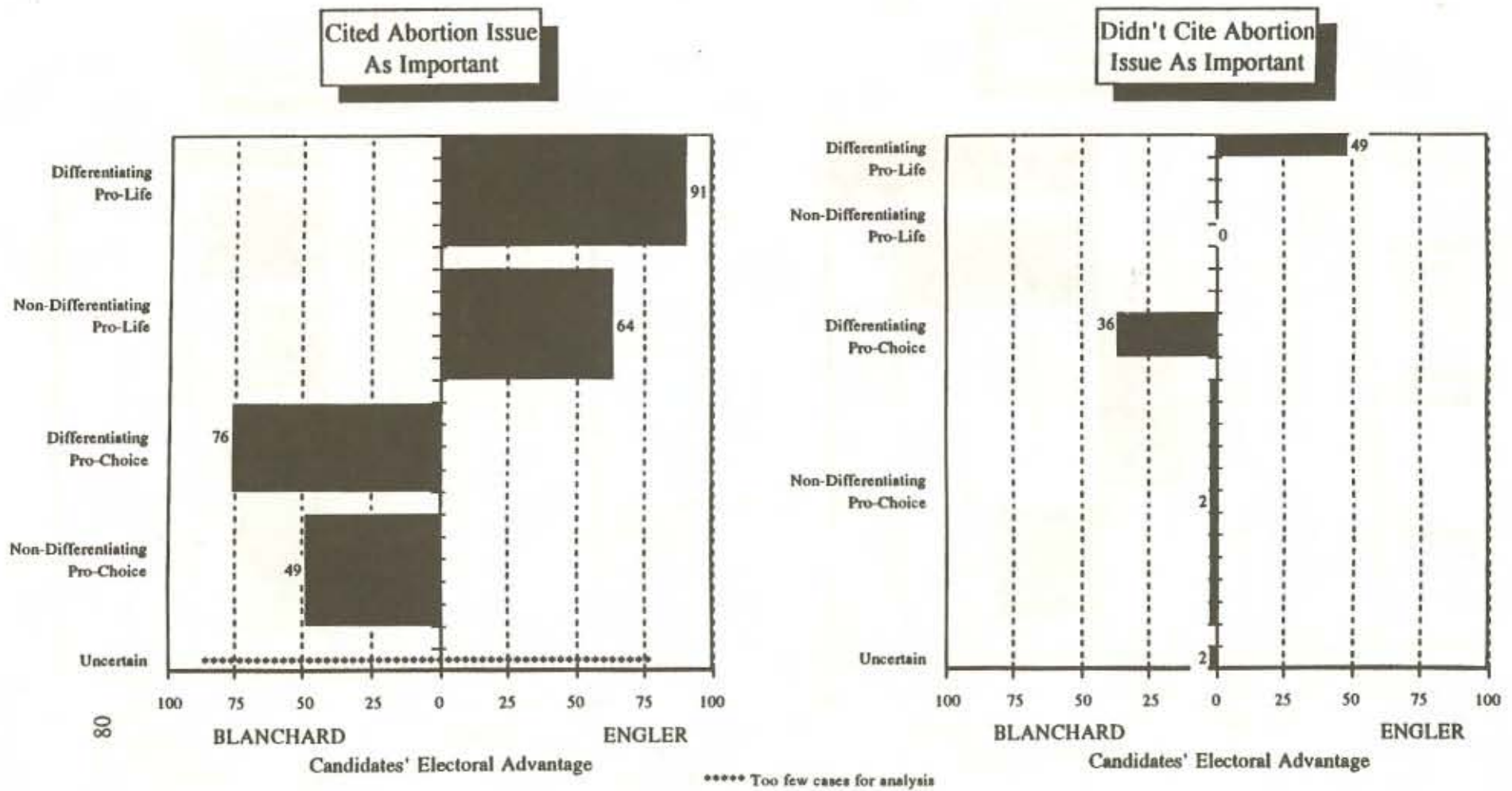


Figure 23:
Electoral Advantage For Candidates
Among Michigan Voter Groups
Given Importance of Abortion Issue in Gubernatorial groups



In the three states where Democratic pro-choice candidates ran, the number of pro-life differentiating Democrats was so small that analysis could not be attempted. However, these pro-choice Democratic candidates usually had their greatest margin of victory among these pro-choice Democratic voters who saw a difference between the candidates, with (in most cases) only slightly lower margins of victory among non-differentiating pro-choice and pro-life Democrats (Figures 24 through 27). Where the Republican was pro-choice, her best showing within her party was among the pro-choice differentiators. Hafer's biggest problem, however, probably was that her image had been so tarnished by the campaign blunders, the near loss in the primary, and the inability to afford paid media to define herself to the voters, that she only had an 18 percentage point margin of victory among pro-choice Republican differentiators. And furthermore, Casey had the margin of victory among the other groups of Republicans in this pre-election poll. Hafer had to contend with the fact that there were more pro-life differentiators in her party than is the case for pro-choice Democrats who ran in the other states. Her greatest margin of defeat was among differentiating pro-life Republicans.

Among Democrats, pro-life Democrat Casey had his weakest showing among pro-choice differentiating voters. His strong showing among Democratic pro-lifers — regardless of whether they could or could not differentiate between the candidates' stands on the abortion issue — suggests that partisanship was a strong factor in their support — not simply his abortion policy stand.

Similarly, pro-life Republicans had their strongest electoral advantage within their party among differentiating pro-life voters. Among Republican voters, pro-life Republican candidates in the other states had their weakest showing, barely breaking even among pro-choice differentiating Republican voters. (It was indeed, Engler's good fortune that this group was so small in Michigan).

In summary, voters who are educated about candidates respond to the candidates' stands on the issue. It is not simply a question of whether a candidate takes a stand on the abortion issue that matters. What does matter is the stand that the candidate takes, the ability of voters to differentiate between the candidates' stands on the issue, the importance of the issue to the voters and the ability of the candidate closest to the voter to convince the voter of her or his ability to govern if elected.

CONCLUSION

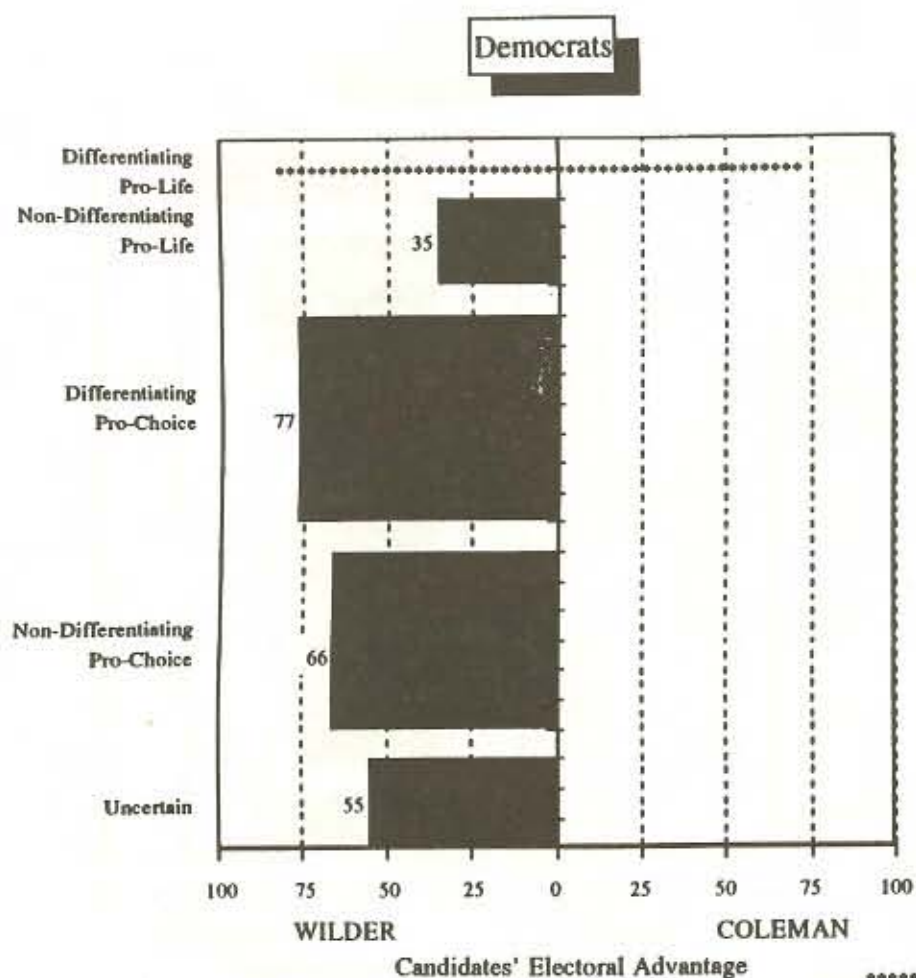
In these four states, the abortion issue affected the gubernatorial elections in two general ways: The issue affected the dynamics of the campaign and the issue affected what voters did on election day.

- The abortion issue shaped the agenda in some of the elections, but not in all. The *Webster* decision raised the relevance of the abortion issue for candidates and for pro-choice groups. However, candidates who did not want to talk about it felt more pressure to discuss it: 1) if an opponent worked to make abortion an issue in the election; 2) if the opponent was sufficiently well-funded to employ paid

media in the attempt to reshape the agenda; 3) if the candidate was perceived as "waffling"; and 4) if the media considered the abortion issue "newsworthy."

- **The abortion issue affected the pool of activist support available to the candidates.** But which side it worked for depended on the relative degree of organization and financial resources that the activists could muster. In New Jersey and Virginia, the pro-choice candidates benefited the most; in Michigan and Pennsylvania, the pro-life candidates benefited more. In both of those states, the pro-life groups had well established networks through which they could work quietly and mobilize their own supporters without risking mobilization of the opposition. In Pennsylvania, pro-life supporters were a vocal and active opposition group to the Hafer candidacy within the Republican party. For the pro-choice groups, the key to success seemed to be money, volunteers and the ability to keep the issue in the public eye by focusing media attention on the issue.
- **The abortion issue affected the level of party organization support for pro-choice Republican candidate, which may be a harbinger of the problems that pro-choice Republicans will encounter in other states.** To the extent that Pennsylvania's experience is transferrable to other settings, it seems that pro-life Republicans in general are more willing to sacrifice party unity for issue purity. Based on her patterns of support from voters and the observations of those involved in her campaign, Barbara Hafer's troubled campaign paid a dear price in party organization support due to a rebellion against her and her pro-choice position. The alternative resources available to this pro-choice Republican were inadequate to compensate for the loss of financial and volunteer support. The result was she could not convince voters — regardless of their stands on abortion — that she was a viable candidate.
- **The abortion issue affected patterns of voter support for the candidates; but for it to do so, voters had to see a difference between the candidates on the issue and they had to see the issue as important.** Neither of these occurred automatically. The extent to which voters saw a difference between the candidates and the extent to which this difference was seen as important depended on what candidates did, what activists did, and what the media did. Voters were more likely to see abortion as important and see a difference between the candidates in the two states where the candidates made it a part of their campaign. But in each of these states, when voters saw a difference between the candidates, they tended to vote for that candidate who was closer to them. However, other factors — questions about the sincerity of those beliefs, reservations about the qualifications of a candidate — could lower levels of voter support among all groups of voters.

Figure 24:
Electoral Advantage For Gubernatorial Candidates
Among Virginia Voter Groups By Party



***** Too few cases for analysis

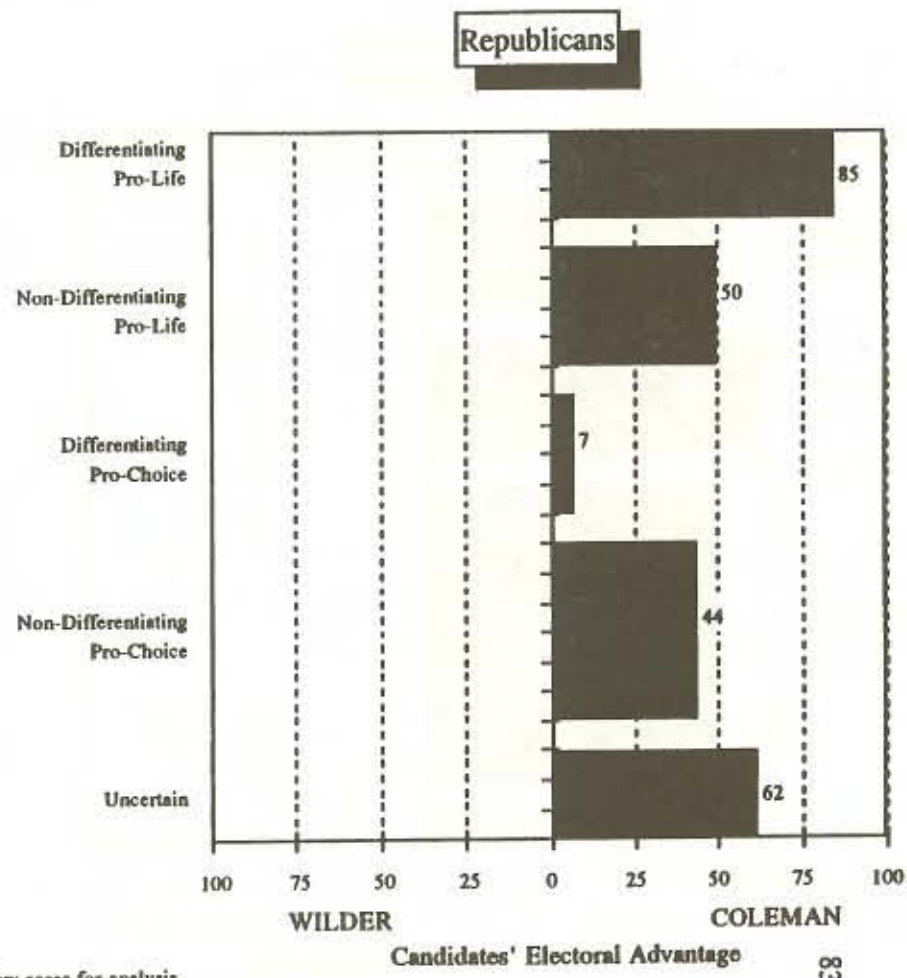


Figure 25:
Electoral Advantage For Gubernatorial Candidates
Among New Jersey Voter Groups By Party

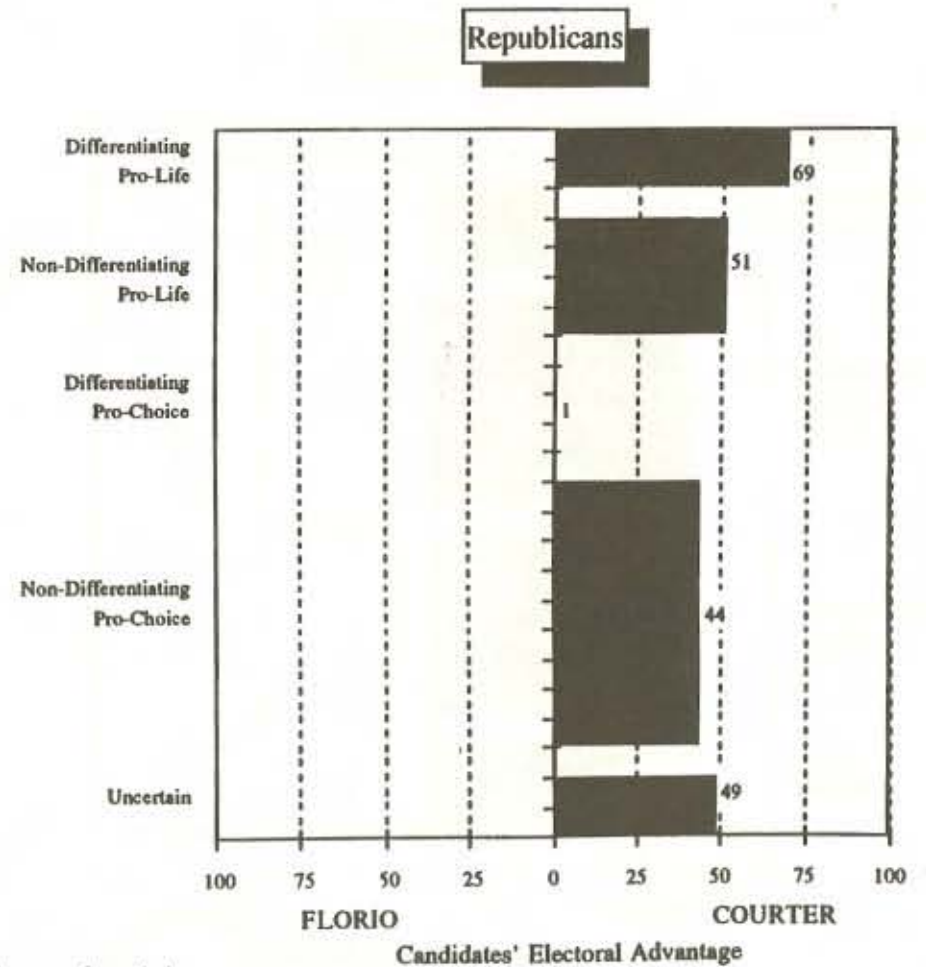
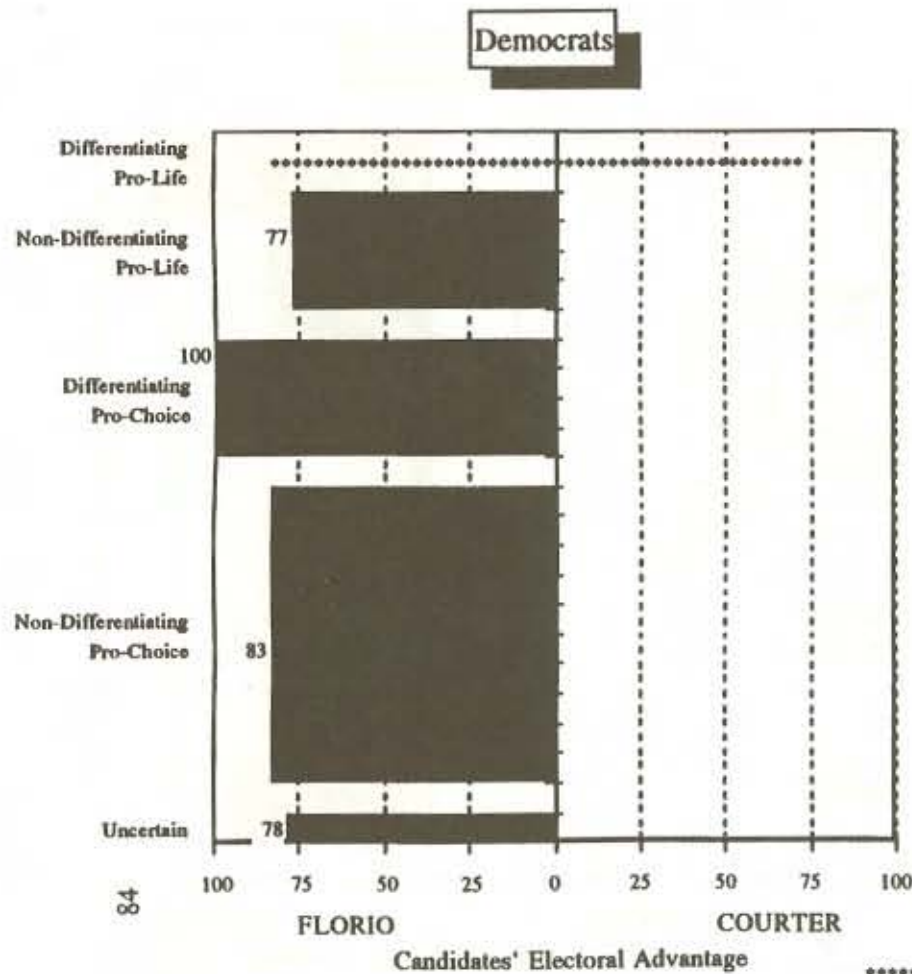


Figure 26:
Electoral Advantage For Gubernatorial Candidates
Among Pennsylvania Voter Groups By Party

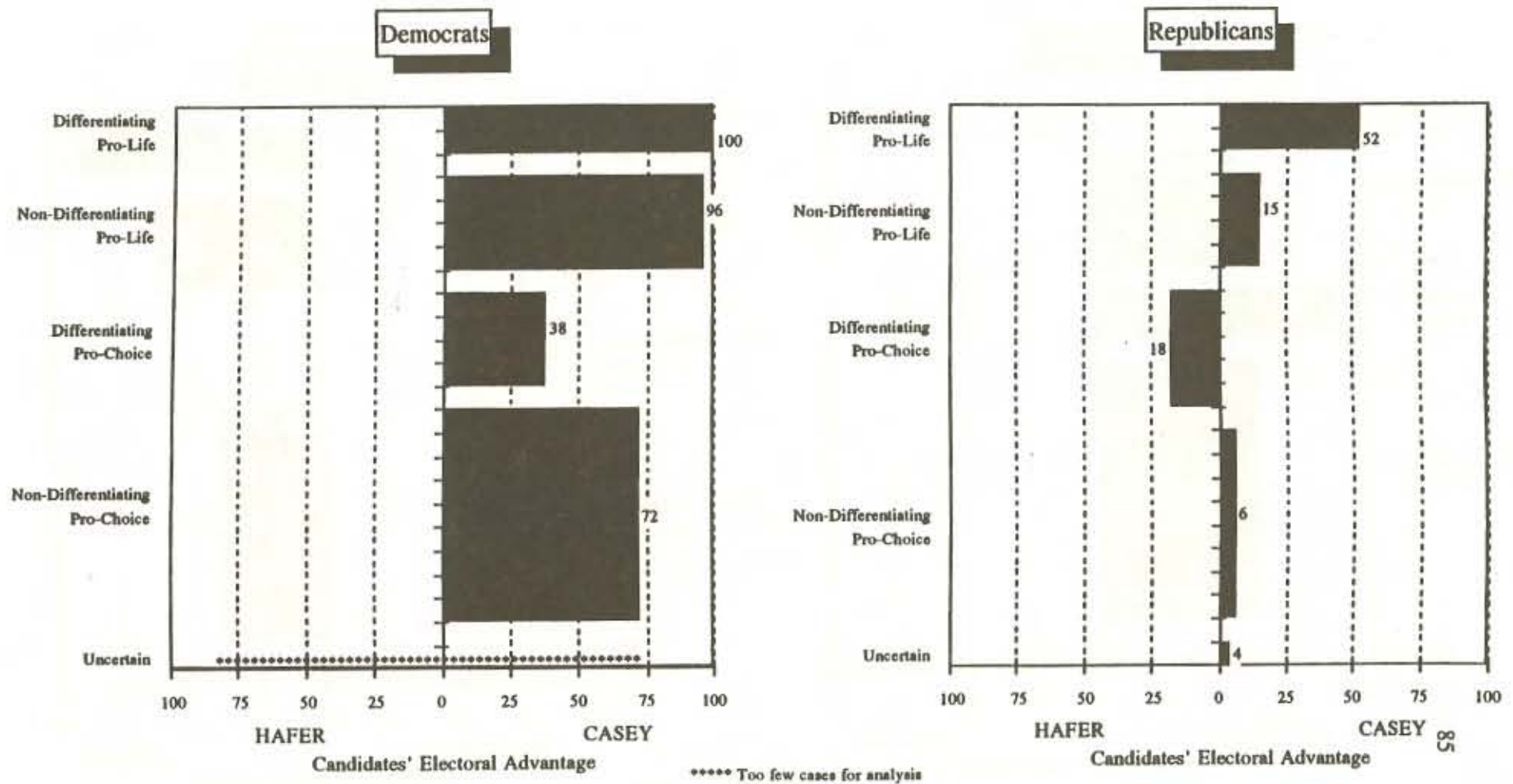
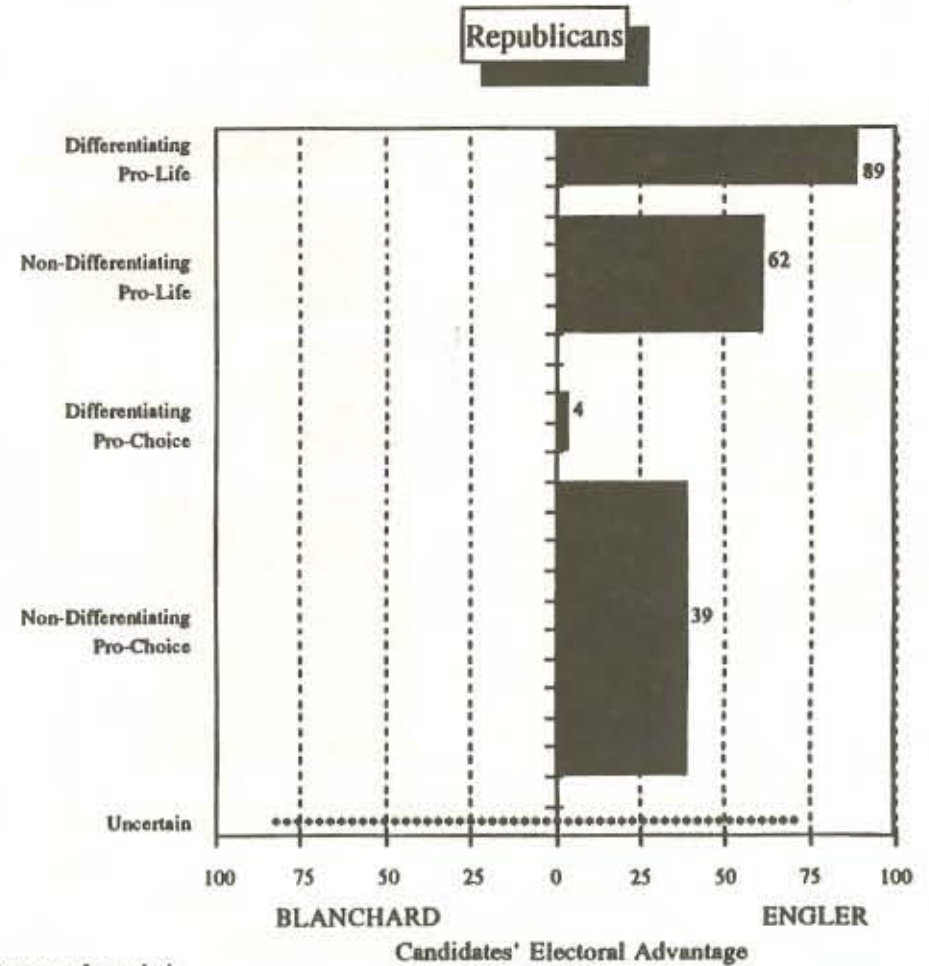
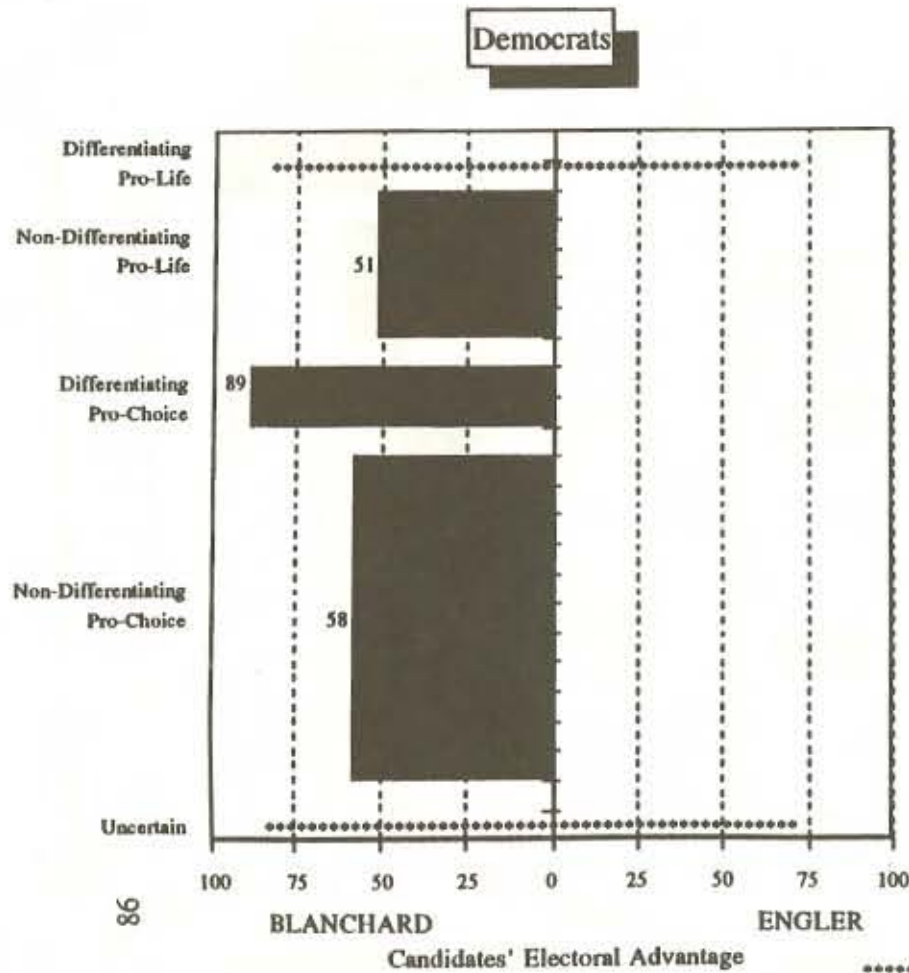


Figure 27:
Electoral Advantage For Gubernatorial Candidates
Among Michigan Voter Groups By Party



***** Too few cases for analysis

CHAPTER 3: ***CONCLUSIONS***

Webster changed the political terrain regarding abortion rights in the United States and expanded the battlefield in the war over abortion policy. Pro-choice leaders' recent announcement to ask the increasingly conservative Supreme Court to rule on the question of whether there is a fundamental right to abortion (as guaranteed in *Roe v. Wade*) may take this political battle into a new phase — a phase which increasingly emphasizes electoral politics and deemphasizes judicial strategies. In looking toward the future, this comparative analysis of four post-*Webster* gubernatorial elections suggests at least eight conditions which will be critical in determining how the abortion issue affects elections in 1992 and beyond:

- **The willingness of at least one candidate to educate voters about candidate differences on the issue and convince voters that it should be important to them on election day.** Our comparison of the importance of the abortion issue across these four states showed that the issue was more important to voters in those states where at least one candidate emphasized it. Indeed, it was important to slightly more voters in Pennsylvania in 1990 than it was to New Jersey voters in 1989. That is particularly remarkable given that it was being emphasized by an underfunded candidate whose viability as a candidate was constantly in question and that she was doing this one year and four months following *Webster*. Candidates play a critical role in mobilizing voters around abortion policy, and candidates who assume that everyone knows where they and their opponent stand on the abortion issue are often mistaken. Even some consistently pro-choice or consistently pro-life voters were not "differentiators" (i.e., able to see a difference between the candidates' stands); the proportion of voters who were differentiators appeared to be influenced by information available to them during the campaign season. The abortion issue cannot be the only factor working for a winning candidate, but it won't work for a candidate on election day unless the voters are educated.
- **The staying power of abortion as an important issue.** The extent to which the abortion issue remains important to the media, voters, and potential volunteers and contributors to the pro-choice and pro-life groups will influence its importance in future elections. First, when the media is interested in the abortion issue voters have access to more information and they ask questions that some candidates might be reluctant to ask their opponents. A lack of media interest also makes it easier for a candidate to avoid the issue. Second, this analysis showed that voters continued to be concerned about the abortion issue when it was raised by the candidates; however, it is unclear whether that concern among the voters was as intense as had been the case in the 1990 elections. Third, the intensity of concern that increased volunteers and contributions was not as great in the two states with 1990 elections as it was in New Jersey and Virginia in 1989. Even in Michigan and Pennsylvania — states that had passed restrictions between *Webster* and the election, there was a feeling among pro-choice activists that the intensity of concern had declined from its peak in the aftermath of the decision. The decline in pro-choice activist intensity was attributed to the difficulty of keeping people angry forever, court injunctions, and the fact that many of the provisions were not "personally affecting" as one activist noted meant

that it was harder for the pro-choice groups to maintain the intensity of interest evoked by *Webster*. At the same time, the pro-life groups seemed influenced to a lesser extent by the vicissitudes of the political environment, working slowly and steadily toward passing new laws to limit the number of abortions. However, what this does suggest is that the response of pro-choicers may be greatly influenced by the extent to which there is a perceived threat to their rights. If the Court overturns *Roe*, there is good reason to expect renewed intensity of concern.

- **The extent to which there are issues that are closer to the problems that voters face in their daily lives take precedence over the abortion issue.** This will depend in part on the economic and political developments within the states and across the nation. The two states where the abortion issue was more frequently mentioned by the voters (Virginia and Pennsylvania) were also the two states in which there were fewer pressing issues competing with abortion for the voters' attention. Even if Blanchard or Engler had stressed abortion policy as an important issue in the public debate, it is not clear Michigan voters would have responded to it as readily as Virginia voters did in view of their economic concerns — taxes, unemployment, etc. Similarly, even if Florio had stressed the abortion issue as much as Wilder did in Virginia, it is not clear that the voters would have been as receptive to it given their anger over automobile insurance rates and their concern with the pollution that was wrecking havoc on their shores.
- **The strength of candidates.** Candidates who are not seen as viable (as was the case with Hafer) or whose credibility has been tarnished (as with Courter) will have difficulty attracting even those differentiating voters who agree with them on the issue. It may also be difficult for challengers to use the issue effectively against popular incumbents with many policy accomplishments while governor. This may be particularly true if the challenger is unknown, underfunded, and unable to use paid media to shape the campaign agenda.
- **The relative success of the pro-life and pro-choice sides in framing the issue and in defining their opposition's position.** Pro-choicers are emphasizing "choice" and "keeping government out of private decisions," while the pro-lifers emphasize "reasonable restrictions," "using abortion for birth control," and "parental rights." How this battle of the sound bite plays itself out ultimately may determine who wins the legislative battle. For example, libertarian themes seem to engage more conflicted pro-choice leaning voters and to be more acceptable to even pro-life leaners. These themes also appeared to make pro-choice candidates more comfortable acknowledging their pro-choice position and to make pro-life candidates less comfortable with their position. The side who wins this framing battle has a much better chance of winning over the minds, if not the hearts, of the voters and of ultimately winning the political battle.
- **The relative ability of pro-choice and pro-life activists to mobilize their supporters and educate the public.** If one side is better than the other side in targeting information to their supporters and in turning them out to vote, then that will be critical —

particularly in close elections as was the case in Michigan and Virginia. Neither side can be sure that its sympathizers are fully mobilized in any election campaign, and issue groups play a critical role in this.

- **The ability of pro-life and pro-choice groups to have a wider impact on the electorate.** This can take at least three forms: First, they can pursue a strategy which diminishes the credibility of a candidate they oppose (as seems to have been the case in New Jersey with Courter and in Pennsylvania with Hafer). But this works better when the candidate has a tendency to shoot himself or herself in the foot. Second, they may mobilize voters around their candidate, for reasons other than abortion. This was the case with Michigan Right to Life whose ads included taxes and education and whose lawn signs went to people who may have supported Engler for reasons other than his right to life views. Finally, the ability of the issue groups to mobilize those who express inconsistent views about abortion policy, the "mushy middle," may be critical for building political power. But the greatest challenge in reaching this conflicted group of voters is that they seem to screen out most information pertaining to the abortion issue. They are less likely to see it as important, less informed about legislation that has passed, less likely to have opinions about the legislation, less likely to know how the incumbent governor felt about it, and less likely to see a difference between the candidates' stands on the issue. Why they are so inattentive is unclear, but certainly conflicting values may be a reason. Wilder's success may indicate that when messages are designed to minimize value conflict, voters may at least be more attentive to what is being said.
- **The attitudes of the voters in the state.** The attitudes of the voters will determine which side starts out with an advantage. However, it will not necessarily determine who ultimately wins the battle. That will be influenced by: 1) the extent to which voters show conflict over the abortion issue; and 2) the relative ability of the sides to mobilize support in elections. Voters who express inconsistent feelings about abortion policy will be less likely to act politically to ensure their views are translated into policy. But even if all voters in a state had perfectly consistent views about abortion policy, there would be no guarantee that majority opinion would prevail. Indeed, these four states had very different legislative histories regarding abortion policy; however, their voters' attitudes were more similar than expected. Public opinion is important, but intensity of that opinion and the ability to organize it to affect election outcomes will also influence the way that public opinion plays out on election day.

APPENDIX: NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

Data used in this report are primarily from two sources: 1) pre-election telephone surveys of registered voters in New Jersey, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Michigan and 2) unstructured (usually in-person) interviews with gubernatorial campaign activists, party activists, legislative candidates and legislators, and pro-choice and pro-life activists after the elections.

The interviews with registered voters in New Jersey and Virginia were conducted between October 23 and November 6, 1989. In both New Jersey and Virginia, interviews were completed with statewide samples of 800 registered voters, using random-digit dialing. The margin of error was $\pm 3.5\%$.

The interviews with registered voters in Michigan and Pennsylvania were conducted between October 20 and November 5, 1989. In both of these states, interviews were completed with statewide samples of 700 registered voters, using random-digit dialing. The margin of error was $\pm 3.8\%$.

While the data reflect the actual election results, these are pre-election surveys, not exit polls. The New Jersey statewide data have been weighted using guidelines of Eagleton's Center for Public Interest Polling. Weighting does not alter the number of cases and has virtually no impact on the relationships observed. Similarly, the Michigan data were weighted to reflect the partisan composition of the voters who turned out on election day. The Virginia data and the Pennsylvania data are not weighted because we did not have a tested weighting scheme available to us. At first glance our Virginia survey seemed to have the same problems of other pre-election polls and the exit polls — overestimating Governor Wilder's lead. However, when we allocated the "don't know" voters to the candidate they seemed more likely to support, based on their answers to a series of relevant questions, the results corresponded closely to the actual election results. Details of the allocation procedure will be discussed below.

The interviews with political elites — campaign activists and other close to the campaign or the candidate, legislative candidates, legislators, political party insiders, and issue activists — averaged between 45 minutes and one hour in length and were normally conducted in-person, although a few were conducted by phone. This report focuses primarily on the gubernatorial races. Seventeen New Jersey, 14 Virginia, 13 Pennsylvania, and 18 Michigan high-level gubernatorial campaign activists, party activists, legislators, and activists from the pro-choice and pro-life groups completed interviews. In addition, 43 New Jersey General Assembly and 47 Virginia House of Delegates interviews were completed.

All of these Virginia and New Jersey interviews were completed between December 1989 and April 1990. The Michigan interviews were conducted primarily in April 1991 and the Pennsylvania interviews in August and September 1991. For the most part, they were conducted as conversations, touching on the required topics as they arose. Most interviews were taped with the permission of the respondents. In New Jersey and Virginia were "on the record" unless the respondent requested that they not be. The Michigan and Pennsylvania interviews were taped, but the participant was told that blocks of text would be used in the report rather than their names. The interviews were unstructured.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, we decided neither to reveal the names of

interviewees nor to attach names to their on the record comments. Relevant descriptors are attached, however, to the quotes.

PRO-LIFE/PRO-CHOICE INDEX

Voters were asked the following questions, which we used to construct this index:

I'm going to read you several statements. After each statement, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the statement:

(New Jersey and Virginia only): The [New Jersey/Virginia] legislature should pass a law requiring minors to obtain parental consent before they can have an abortion.

(Michigan and Pennsylvania only): The law should require minors to obtain parental consent before they can have an abortion.

The state should fund abortions for women who otherwise cannot afford them.

The government should pass laws giving more rights to the [unborn/fetus] and fewer rights to the pregnant women.

The decision to have an abortion is a private matter that should be left to the woman to decide without government intervention.

Abortion is morally wrong.

Abortion should be prohibited under all or almost all circumstances.

Abortion should be allowed if another child would be a severe economic hardship for the family.

ALLOCATION OF VOTERS

The polling problems that plagued the Virginia gubernatorial race have received so much attention that they require a special mention here. Many observers believe that voters claimed they would vote for Wilder when speaking to pollsters, but chose in the privacy of the voting

booth not to cast a ballot for a Black candidate. As previously stated, our survey initially seemed to have the same problems of other pre-election polls, that of overestimating Governor Wilder's lead. However, when we used relevant political questions to allocate to Wilder and Coleman the voters who declined to express a candidate preference (either responding "don't know" or refusing to answer the question), the results corresponded closely to the actual election outcome. Nineteen percent of Virginia voters interviewed either replied that they did not know for whom they would vote and that they were not leaning toward either candidate, or they refused to indicate which candidate they would support.

Among respondents expressing vote intentions, one of the stronger correlates of vote choice was the respondent's attitudes about the Martin Luther King holiday. Only about one in five who strongly agreed that the holiday was a good idea expressed an intention to vote for Marshall Coleman, while only about one in five who disagreed with the holiday planned to vote for Wilder. Hence, those who expressed no candidate preference and who disagreed with the statement that the holiday was a good idea were assigned to Coleman.

Given the observations of Black interviewers during de-briefings, white respondents who were interviewed by Black interviewers and agreed only somewhat that the Martin Luther King holiday was a good idea, were assigned to Coleman. Remaining respondents expressing an unfavorable impression of civil rights groups were assigned to Coleman.

Remaining non-allocated respondents were assigned to the candidate they saw as closer to them on more issues they deemed important. Those still remaining were assigned by political ideology, with liberals and leaning liberals going to Wilder and conservatives and leaning conservatives going to Coleman. Those voters not yet allocated who named only abortion as an important issue in the gubernatorial race were assigned to the candidate they perceived to be closer to their own stand on the issue. Then Republican respondents went to Coleman and Democratic respondents went to Wilder.

Only 19 "don't knows" or "refusals" (or 2% of the Virginia sample) could not be assigned to one of the candidates using this allocation method. About three out of every four voters allocated went to Coleman. The profile of voter preferences (50.6% for Wilder and 49.4% for Coleman) resulting from this *a priori* assignment was almost identical to the actual outcome of the election (50.1% for Wilder and 49.7% for Coleman), giving us confidence in the quality of our polling in this very enigmatic race.

The New Jersey allocation procedure was identical with the exception being that the race questions were excluded. About half of the allocated voters went to Courter and about half to Florio. As in the case of Virginia, our allocated results (62.3% for Florio and 37.7% for Courter) were quite similar to the election outcome (61.2% for Florio and 37.2% for Courter).

A similar process was used to allocate the undecided voters to the candidates in Michigan and Pennsylvania. In both states, voters who stated an intention to vote for one candidate, they were allocated to that candidate. Next, among those who indicated that only one issue was important to them in the gubernatorial election were assigned to the candidate who they reported seeing as more likely to do what they wanted done on the issue. Among those remaining undecided, voters were allocated to candidates on the basis of their party identification. The results of the allocation procedure mirrored the election outcomes in each state.

ABORTION POLITICS IN STATE ELECTIONS: COMPARISONS ACROSS STATES

The Supreme Court's decision in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* gave the states greater authority to define "abortion rights." What state legislators and governors decide to do about abortion policy will depend in large part on what happens in elections. In a new report, *Abortion Politics in State Elections: Comparisons Across States*, researchers at the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics, at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey examine how the abortion issue affects elections after *Webster* using survey and interview information from voters, candidates, and activists. This new report analyzes the role of the abortion issue in four states' gubernatorial elections: the 1989 New Jersey and Virginia races (the first two states to hold elections following *Webster*) and the 1990 Michigan and Pennsylvania races (two states which passed new restrictions prior to their 1990 elections).

Abortion Politics in State Elections: Comparisons Across States provides evidence that the abortion issue affected campaign dynamics and voting decisions in each of these post-*Webster* gubernatorial races. The report compares the similarities and differences among these states and discusses the lessons that can be learned from these elections. For example, in each of these states, the findings suggest that the actual stand a candidate takes on the abortion issue matters - not simply whether the candidate takes a stand. Findings from these 1989 and 1990 elections have important implications for other states holding elections in 1992 and beyond.

Abortion Politics in State Elections: Comparisons Across States (94 pages) is now available from CAWP at the Eagleton Institute of Politics. For an in-depth look at state legislative elections, as well, consult the first volume in this series, *Election 1989: The Abortion Issue in New Jersey and Virginia* (183 pages). Use the form below to order both of these reports.

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