

**The Effect of Political Reforms on Minority Attitudes
toward the Political System**

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Minority citizens in the United States have long differed from white citizens in their attitudes toward the political system. These differences stem, in part, from the systematic methods whites have used throughout history to exclude African Americans from the political process. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act, concrete steps were taken to protect the Constitutional rights of African Americans to register and cast a vote in federal elections. As a result, the opportunities for ethnic minorities to participate in the political process were greatly expanded. However, the effects of centuries of social, economic, and political repression continue to linger. Members of ethnic minority groups in general and African Americans in particular demonstrate higher levels of distrust of the political system than do whites (Shingles 1981; Abramson 1983; Bobo and Gilliam 1990), lower levels of efficacy (Campbell et al. 1960; Pollock 1983), and lower rates of political participation (Verba and Nie 1972; Piven and Cloward 1988; Tate 1994). In the decades after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the political system continues to be dominated by whites both at the level of citizen participation rates¹ and in the makeup of public officials elected at federal, state, and local levels (Guinier 1995).²

Recent political reforms have centered on the nexus between citizen participation and the composition of representative elected bodies. Amendments to the Voting Rights Act in 1982 pressured state legislatures to design voting districts to maximize the voting power of ethnic minorities after the 1990 Census in order to facilitate an environment where ethnic minorities could translate their voting numbers into electoral gains at the ballot box. The primary objective of majority-minority districts has been to secure numerical representation of ethnic minorities in legislative bodies (Kousser 1993).³ Whether the use of majority-minority districts has been a success or failure is not at all clear—scholarly research is rife with mixed opinions and findings, in part due to differences over what is meant by the term “representation” (Rush 1993; McClain and Stewart 1995; Bullock 1997; Whitby 1997; Swain 1995; Guinier 1995; Lublin 1997; Thernstrom 1987).

Effects of Black Representatives on Political Representation

A major question of political research in the years following the creation of majority-minority districts is whether they have been successful in improving both the quality and quantity of representation of ethnic minority citizens in the United States. Most research has focused on the qualitative aspect of representation, seeking to evaluate whether policy responsiveness to the concerns of minority voters tends to increase when the influence of such voters is more concentrated (Whitby 1997; Swain 1995; Gilliam 1996). Others have opted to focus on the numerical representation of minority voters in an effort to determine the effects of majority-minority districting on descriptive representation (Lublin 1997).

¹ Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) note that since the 1970s, mobilization of minority voters has decreased, and thus most elements of minority participation in politics have been on the decline as well.

² While King, Bruce, and Gelman (1995) note that the number of African Americans in state legislatures nearly doubled between 1970 and 1990, they also note that in states with large black populations, and in the South in particular, the proportion of blacks in the population in no way resembles the proportion of blacks in the legislature.

³ See Whitby (1997) and Lublin (1997) for additional motives, such as the concentration of minority votes in a small number of areas in order to dilute their potential influence across a larger number of districts.

Swain (1995) argues that representation can be viewed on a more subjective level as well—how well an individual feels that their concerns are being addressed by their elected representative. Such subjective feelings of being well-represented may be based on substantive policy issues reflected in the legislator's voting behavior or political platform, feelings of group identity, or more idiosyncratic reasons. Determining the extent of subjective representation can only be accomplished by examining the political attitudes and behaviors of voters in the legislative district. It is this notion of subjective representation that will be the focus of this study. Specifically, I will attempt to answer the question: do minority citizens feel better represented as a result of residing in a majority-minority district?

Elements of subjective feelings of representation examined in this study will include the political efficacy of the citizen, whether citizens claim to have been contacted by political candidates at election time, knowledge about the congressional race in the citizen's district, satisfaction with one's current elected representative and with Congress in general, and the amount of engagement in the political process (utilizing measures of political interest and involvement). If the existence of majority-minority districts and the opportunity to be represented by an African American legislator have provided citizens better representation, then these subjective indicators of the quality of representation should all indicate clear differences between citizens who reside in such districts and citizens elsewhere.

While it is rarely studied, the importance of subjective perceptions of representation by minorities residing in majority-minority districts underlies much of the current research on descriptive and policy representation. For example, studies on the effect of majority-minority districts such as those done by Whitby (1997) and Lublin (1997) suggest that there are differences in both descriptive and policy representation when black legislators are elected, and when African American citizens reside in districts where they constitute a majority. Yet, even if we can demonstrate that in objective terms, black Americans are better represented by legislators when they are more highly concentrated in congressional districts, this does not guarantee that citizens will feel better represented.

Tate (1994) also suggests that there are good reasons why the presence of a black office seeker should lead to greater engagement of black citizens in the political process. She notes that traditionally African American candidates make greater efforts to get out the vote in African American communities. She hypothesizes that this expenditure of resources in targeting black voters should, all other things being equal, encourage racial pride and group identity, and generate heightened levels of interest and involvement in elections by black citizens. However, there is little evidence to support these hypotheses outside of the context of local elections. Congressional districts may stretch far beyond or cut across neighborhood boundaries, issues may be of less interest to citizens, and candidates may be less well-known. It may be more difficult for the average voter to determine whether a member of Congress has been effective in keeping promises than it is to assess the local mayor. For a variety of reasons, congressional elections may be more remote for citizens, and thus we cannot simply assume that the dynamics of local elections match those at the congressional level. Local elections may give us valuable insight about the potential effects of black politicians on voter attitudes, but in order to determine the effectiveness of majority-minority districts on perceptions of representation, the political attitudes of citizens residing in such districts must be compared with the attitudes of citizens in majority-white districts.

“Political Reality” and Theories of Minority Empowerment

The preponderance of research on race and public opinion has shown that African Americans are less trusting of the political system and its leaders, and are less likely to believe that they can influence political events, than are whites (Rodgers 1974; Pierce and Carey 1971; Jackson 1973; Abney and Hutcheson 1981; Shingles 1981; Abramson 1983; Flanigan and Zingale 1998). Abramson (1972) finds that this relationship is even evident among schoolchildren. The studies of students in the 1970s that he reviewed showed that black students were less likely to feel that they could influence political officials, and less trusting of government than were white students.

Abramson (1983) suggests two reasons for this pattern. First, because African Americans live in an environment with limited social and economic opportunities, they may be more likely to experience a sense of being unable to control events. This “lack of self confidence” should lead to low feelings of political empowerment and low levels of trust in political officials (see also Lane 1959). Hughes and Demo (1989) find that racial inequality is strongly associated with low levels of personal efficacy among African Americans.⁴ Limited social and economic opportunities lead to perceptions of limited control over one’s environment. Tate (1994) provides ample evidence that economic opportunities of African Americans continue to be limited: one third of African Americans still live below the poverty line, and African Americans are three times as likely as whites to live in a state of poverty.⁵ She notes that survey data suggest that for African Americans, unemployment is viewed as a much more pressing issue than civil rights in the current political climate. Thus, feelings of external efficacy (responsiveness of the political system) should be lower among African Americans than among whites.

Abramson (1983) also suggests a “political reality” explanation for race-based differences in political attitudes. Given the real differences in the distribution of power in the current system, African Americans who perceive such differences should feel less politically effective. Given the absence of African Americans in the U.S. Senate, at the gubernatorial level, and in the executive branch of government, African American citizens do not have to look far to realize that they lack power at the highest levels in the political system.⁶ Even in the private sector, there are few highly visible black CEOs or owners or managers of professional sports teams (even though such teams may have large numbers of black players).

If the political reality of powerlessness leads to lower affect toward the political system among African Americans, then the presence of political opportunities should have the opposite effect. The empirical evidence to date provides strong support for the predictions of Abramson’s political reality theory. When African Americans are given an opportunity to choose a member of their ethnic group for political office, they become more engaged in the political process. Studies have found that the presence of an African American candidate for local office leads to increased levels of voter participation among African Americans, compared to scenarios where only whites are

⁴ Personal efficacy is independent of self-esteem. Thus, they find it is possible to have a high opinion of one’s self-worth and yet lack feelings of power and control over one’s environment. Thus, personal efficacy may be more related to external political efficacy, while self-esteem may tap elements of internal political efficacy.

⁵ Dawson (1994) suggests that mean and median incomes of the black middle class are also substantially below the white middle class.

⁶ The current presidential administration is unique in its selection of an African American Secretary of State. At the beginning of the Clinton administration, the highest ranking African Americans in the executive branch were the Secretary of Commerce and the Surgeon General.

competing for office (Cavanagh and Foster 1984; Atkins, DeZee, and Eckert 1985; Kleppner 1985; Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Moreover, the presence of a tangible symbol of minority opportunity in the form of an elected political official does seem to lead to increased perceptions of political effectiveness. When African Americans hold positions of power in local government, African American constituents exhibit higher levels of trust in local political institutions and are more knowledgeable about local political issues and candidates (Abney and Hutcheson 1981; Howell and Fagan 1988; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Gilliam 1996; Emig, Hesse, and Fisher 1996).⁷ Thus, both the limited opportunities and the political reality theories provide explanations for why African Americans should demonstrate lower overall affect toward the political system. Changes in political reality suggest a mechanism for attitudinal and behavioral changes.

Local versus National Differences in Knowledge, Satisfaction, and Efficacy

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) find that levels of knowledge about and satisfaction with local government tend to be distinct from attitudes and state and national government. Horner (2000) comes to similar conclusions in her study of political interest and apathy. Thus, positive feelings about local government induced by the presence of an elected official perceived to be sympathetic to a voter's interests will not lead to more positive feelings about officials at other levels of government. Rather, Bobo and Gilliam find that increased political awareness, interest, and satisfaction tend to be localized to the area of government represented by the minority official in question.

In evaluating citizen attitudes about congressional representation, the effects, if any, of residing in a majority-minority district should be most evident in orientations toward the national government in general and Congress in particular. This is complicated by the lack of direction in measures of attitudes such as political efficacy. Presumably, feelings of government responsiveness and the effectiveness of elections can tap underlying feelings about Congress, the White House, or both simultaneously. This interferes with the objective of this study because we are only interested in how majority-minority districts influence feelings about the representative and the legislature. However, it may still be possible to disentangle the effects of the presidential administration from the effects of congressional evaluations because the former should be similar for all African American respondents regardless of the composition of their electoral district, whereas the latter should not be.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To measure citizen attitudes, I will be using the 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 (advance version) American National Election Studies. There are several good reasons for not reaching farther back into time. First, as Abramson (1983) notes, some measures of trust in government (and, presumably, some measures of satisfaction with government) will be affected by affect toward the incumbent presidential administration. The years studied here are all elections where the Clinton administration was the incumbent presidential administration, making the effects of presidential administration a constant in this study. Second, as Tate (1994) and others point out, the number of majority-minority districts was fairly small prior to the early 1990s, leading to few useful cases in a study designed to measure the benefits of residing in a majority-minority district.

⁷ Emig et al. (1996) emphasize that racial effects are only correlated with rises in internal efficacy and trust, and not with any improvement in external efficacy.

Types of Measures Used

Dependent variables will include measures of internal and external political efficacy, satisfaction with government in general and one's own elected officials in particular, citizens' knowledge of the House race in their district, and measures of political interest and involvement. Independent variables will include respondent's race, income, education, and age, measures of whether the incumbent House member shares a party label and racial identity with the respondent, and measures of the racial composition of the electoral district and geographic region. Data on district composition will come from the Congressional Quarterly Almanac and the U.S. Census. The primary objective of this analysis will be to compare the attitudes and behaviors of African-Americans in majority-minority and majority-white districts in order to ascertain whether the creation of majority-minority districts have led to greater feelings of empowerment (efficacy) and satisfaction with government.

District Composition

In addition to attitudinal and socio-demographic information about respondents, demographic information about their legislative district was also collected. Specifically, the percentage of the voting age population that is African American was used to create a measure of district composition.⁸ Swain (1995) finds that as the percentage of the district that is African American increases, so, too, does legislator support for civil rights legislation. Given this correlation between district composition and constituents' objective interests, it seems likely that there will also be a positive correlation between the number of African Americans in a district and their subjective feelings of satisfaction with the political system and legislator responsiveness. Lublin (1997) finds that once a district population is at least 40 percent African American, increases in the proportion of minorities should lead to improvements in the quality of African American representation.⁹ In this analysis, district composition will be measured by a dummy variable indicating whether the African American component of the district is less than 40 percent, or greater than or equal to 40 percent.

An alternative theory, which Lublin explicitly rejects, is that a rising percentage of African Americans in majority-white districts in the South creates increased hostility toward minority interests, and thus diminishes the quality of representation for African American citizens. While Lublin does not find statistical support for the backlash theory, it is possible that African Americans perceive the existence of backlash nonetheless. This will be tested with a dummy variable where values of one indicate an African American respondent who resides in the South, and values of zero will be used for all other respondents.

Recent research demonstrates that in addition to the composition of the district affecting the quality of minority representation in Congress, the race of the legislator matters as well (Whitby 1997; Lublin 1997). Thus, a variable for the effects of both having a black representative (that is, an incumbent member of the House) and being African American will be used to test whether African Americans are positively affected by being represented by a member of their own ethnic group.

⁸ In years where voting age population data was not available, percentage of African Americans as part of the overall population of the district were used. These numbers rarely differ from each other by more than a percentage point or two, and thus should have little effect on the findings reported here.

⁹ With the exception of Democratic districts in the North.

The Problem of an Adequate Sample

The study of minority political attitudes has been complicated by the small numbers of minority respondents in most academic public opinion surveys. Despite recent attempts to redress these problems through surveys designed to target minority populations, the problems persist nonetheless. While the Black Election Studies replicate many of the National Election Study items and therefore enable in-depth analyses of African American attitudes, they are only available for 1984 and 1988. Since much of the racial redistricting began after the 1990 Census, the Black Election Studies have limited utility for the purposes of this study. More extensive problems exist when examining Latino political attitudes. In this case, the existence of the Latino National Political Survey of 1990 suffers from the same timeliness issues that plague the Black Election Studies. Additionally, due to the small numbers of individuals sampled within any given legislative district, information on congressional districts is not available for respondents in this survey. Thus, it is impossible to evaluate the effects of district composition on either political attitudes or legislative behavior.

The only data source which is both timely and contains congressional district information is the National Election Studies. In order to work around the problem of small sample size, datasets were pooled to generate a sufficient number of minority respondents. Even with pooling, the overall number of minorities in the sample is not large. Latinos in particular are scarce, and thus will not be included in this analysis. African American respondents who live in majority-minority districts (operationally defined here as districts where at least 40% of the members are African American) constitute 42.3 percent of African Americans in the pooled sample, with African Americans residing in majority-white districts being the remaining 57.7 percent.

MODELING THE EFFECTS OF RACE AND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ON POLITICAL ATTITUDES

The attitudes examined in this project will be based on the general model shown in Equation 1 below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{citizen attitude} = & \text{income} + \text{education} + \text{age} + \\ & \text{Northeast} + \text{South} + \text{West} + \\ & \text{Black respondent} + \text{Black respondent} * \text{South} + \\ & \text{40\% of district Black} + \text{Black respondent} * \text{40\% of district Black} + \\ & \text{Black legislator/Black respondent} + \\ & \text{legislator/respondent share party identification} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

Income, education, and age are the standard summary variables from the National Election Study (NES). Northeast, South, and West are dummy variables based on the census region variable included in the NES. The respondent's race is generally measured by the interviewer's assessment,

as reported in the NES. The only complication appears in the 2000 study, where some of the interviews were conducted by telephone and the standard interviewer assessment measure was not available for all respondents. In this instance, the respondent's race was determined by the series of questions on racial identity. If the respondent answered black/African American for any of the three probes, they were coded as African American (black) for the purposes of this project. The black/South variable measures the combined effect of being an African American Southerner. The 40 percent variable is a dummy variable representing the proportion of the district that is African American, as explained above. The 40 percent*black variable measures the conditional effect of being African American and living in a majority-minority district. Coefficients for this variable should be positive if such districts lead to positive effects, as is hypothesized. The black legislator/black respondent variable is a dummy variable coded as one when both the legislator and the survey respondent were identified as being African American, and zero otherwise. The shared party identification variable is a dummy variable coded as one when either the incumbent legislator and the respondent are both Democrats, or when the incumbent legislator and the respondent are both Republicans. All other combinations (legislator and respondent are different parties, respondent identifies no party) are coded as zeros. A complete list of National Election Study variables used is provided in the Appendix. Dependent variables were generally coded such that positive values indicated more positive attitudes toward government (i.e., more knowledge, greater affect toward the incumbent, or greater efficacy).

The Effects of Race and District on Political Efficacy

To test the hypothesis that the creation of majority-minority districts generates greater levels of political efficacy among minority citizens, the general model in Equation 1 was estimated with the following dependent variables: beliefs that politicians don't care about people; feeling that people have no say in government; opinions on whether the government pays attention to people; beliefs that elections make government pay attention to people; opinions about how many government officials are crooked; the belief that the government wastes money; feeling that voting makes a difference; beliefs that it matters who is in power; feeling that politics is too complicated; and whether a citizen feels well-qualified to participate in politics. Unstandardized OLS regression estimates for these variables are shown in Table 1.

Wealthier individuals are more likely than other citizens to feel that politicians care about them, that they have a say in government, that it matters who's in power, and to believe that government is not wasteful with money. Wealthier individuals are also less likely than other citizens to feel that politics is too complicated to understand. At the same time, wealth has no effect on feeling qualified to participate in politics, feeling that government pays attention to people or that elections can make government pay attention, that voting makes a difference, or whether government officials are crooked. Thus, while income seems to affect whether individuals feel that political officials listen to them and thus may give them a voice in the political system, this does not appear to translate into feelings that government in general is responsive or that elections matter.

Education consistently has a positive and significant effect on political efficacy in all cases except for the items on beliefs about whether elections make the government pay attention to people, whether it matters who is in power, and whether government wastes money.

Age has mixed effects as well. Older people are not more or less likely to believe government does

not pay attention to people, and yet they are more likely to believe that elections are an instrument for making the government pay attention to people's interests and that voting makes a difference. Older people are also more likely to feel that government wastes money, less likely to feel that people in government are crooked, and more likely to feel that politics is too complicated for them to understand. At the same time, older Americans are more likely than other citizens to feel that they are qualified to participate in politics. Age has no significant effect on whether citizens feel that politicians care, that people have a say in government, or that it matters who is in power.

The regional dummy variables rarely attain statistical significance. Northeasterners are somewhat more likely than other groups (Midwesterners constituting the baseline) to feel that politicians don't care about them. Southerners are somewhat less likely than other citizens to feel that politics is too complicated for them to understand, are more likely to feel qualified to participate in politics, and somewhat more likely to believe that political officials are crooked.

The dummy variable for race (that is, whether the respondent is African American) is only significant in one case: whether elections make government pay attention. The effect is positive, meaning that African Americans are more likely to perceive elections as a means of focusing attention on societal problems. This is consistent with the extant research that finds that while white voters tend to participate under conditions of both high internal efficacy (feelings of competence) and high external efficacy (system responsiveness), African Americans tend to participate in politics when their internal efficacy is high but their external efficacy is low (Pollock 1983; Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Low external efficacy appears to be the norm for African Americans.

The combined effect of being African American and residing in the South is only significant in one instance. African Americans who reside in the South are more likely than other citizens to view politics as too complicated to understand. In general, these findings suggest that African American Southerners do not feel particularly powerless in the political system, all other things being equal. This lends some support to Lublin's (1997) conclusion that politicians in the South do not tend to respond to fairly conservative white constituents at the expense of their black constituents. While this analysis does not demonstrate that conservative white backlash is not a feature in elections in the South, it does show that African Americans in the South do not appear to perceive such a backlash; that is, they do not feel any measurable sense of powerlessness relative to other citizens.

Whether a district has an African American population of 40 percent or more has a discernible effect in only two instances, and in both cases, the effect was negative. Blacks living in congressional districts where there are a large number of African Americans are more likely than other citizens to believe that politicians don't care about them and that people have no say in government.

The conditional effect of being African American and living in a congressional district with a large number of African Americans is only significant in three cases, and in each instance, the overall effect is positive. While living in a predominately African American congressional district tends to have a negative effect on whether citizens feel like they have a say in government and that politicians care about them, the conditional effect of living in such a district and being African American has a positive, counteracting effect in both of these cases. This suggests a desirable effect of majority-minority districts: minorities who reside in them may feel like politicians are somewhat

more responsive to their needs. Minorities who live in such districts are also less likely than other citizens to feel like the government wastes money.

When a citizen is African American and their incumbent House member is also African American, research on political empowerment suggests that citizens should feel better represented. Yet, there is no evidence that such a scenario has any positive effect on political efficacy. Rather, black citizens represented by a black legislator are *more* likely than other citizens to believe that the government wastes a large amount of money. That minority citizens tend to view government as being more wasteful as a function of being represented by a minority is an unusual finding, but the data yields no clues about why this relationship should occur. It may be that minority legislators themselves are viewed as being associated with wastefulness, or it may be a function of the type of campaign that minority candidates run in order to get elected.

Sharing the same political party as one's legislator has an effect on political efficacy in only two cases: the voting makes a difference scale and the item addressing whether it matters who's in power. In both cases, citizens who share the party of their legislator tend to feel more politically empowered than other citizens.

The Effects of Race and District on Candidate Contact

In order to investigate why African Americans in majority-minority districts are more likely to feel that they have a say in government and that politicians care about them, types of House candidate contact with citizens will be evaluated. The working hypothesis is that African Americans in majority-minority districts are more likely to be approached by political candidates, and thus may be more likely to feel that politicians are concerned about their needs. Measures of citizen contact come from the 1994 National Election Study and include whether citizens met a House candidate, attended a candidate rally, received mail from a candidate, or talked to the staff of a House candidate. In each case, respondents who were contacted by a member of either (or both) political party were assigned values of one, and citizens who received no contact at all were coded as zeros. Because the dependent variables are dichotomous, logistic regression was used to estimate coefficients for Equation 1; these are shown in Table 2. Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients and standard errors.¹⁰

As Table 2 indicates, wealthier individuals are more likely to meet a House candidate, receive mail from a House candidate, and talk to a staff member of a candidate's campaign. Income had no effect on the likelihood of attending a candidate rally. This is consistent with the resource model of participation developed by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995). They find that acts such as working for a candidate or attending a rally are time intensive, and thus are affected more by political interest than by factors such as income. Given that time does not vary by income level, wealthier citizens should not have an advantage in time-intensive activities. The other forms of candidate contact examined in Table 2 are more passive and less time-intensive, and thus may constitute better measures of candidate outreach.

As education goes up, the likelihood of candidate contact through all four activities increased. The same positive relationship across all forms of candidate contact occurs for age-older Americans are

¹⁰ OLS coefficients are reported with t-values instead of standard errors. While this creates some inconsistency in reporting across tables, the author hopes that her strong preference for the use of t-values will cause readers to overlook this discrepancy.

more likely to be reached by a political campaign.

None of the regional variables, however, are significant. The dummy variable for race is not significant, either. This suggests that while African Americans are not more likely to come into contact with a political candidate, all other things being equal, neither are they less likely to come into contact with a political candidate. African Americans in the South do not appear to be uniquely disadvantaged, either; the dummy variable fails to attain significance in every case. However, residing in a district with a large number of black residents does have an effect, and in both cases, the effect is negative. Citizens living in a district where at least 40 percent of the residents are African American are less likely to have met a candidate or to have received mail from a candidate.

Living in a majority-minority district and being a minority does not make a respondent more or less likely to be contacted by a candidate; although most of the coefficients are in the correct direction, all fail to attain statistical significance.

Black citizens represented by black incumbent House members do not seem to receive any favorable treatment in terms of candidate contact. This variable is only significant in one case: receipt of mail from a House candidate. Black citizens who live in majority-minority districts are more likely to be contacted by one or both candidates by mail, relative to other citizens.

Citizens who share the same party as their House incumbent are more likely to attend a political rally (the most citizen-initiated form of contact), but are not more likely to come into contact with a candidate in any other way.

The portrait of citizen contact painted by this data is not one that favors the creation of majority-minority districts. Candidates continue to focus their resources on the wealthy, the well-educated, and older individuals. Districts with large numbers of African Americans are often ignored by political campaigns, and African American voters are not particularly likely to find this problem ameliorated by residing in a majority-minority district or by having a House incumbent who shares their ethnic identity. Black legislators are not reaching out to black citizens more than any other legislators, and blacks who live in districts where they have theoretically more voting power are not more likely to be targeted by House candidates than blacks who live in majority-white districts. This may explain, in part, the small effects on political efficacy that come from being an African American and residing in a majority-minority district.

This lack of citizen outreach may be a perverse effect of the majority-minority district. Because black candidates (Democrats in particular) have such a high likelihood of winning a political campaign in such a district, it may be that black legislators are comfortable enough with their reelection prospects that they feel contact with voters is unnecessary.¹¹ Such practices do little to change the advantages held by wealthier and better educated voters in the electoral system, and thus may be viewed as a way in which the quality of African American representation is diminished by majority-minority districts.

¹¹ Swain (1995) notes that black incumbents from historically and newly created majority-minority districts have higher re-election rates than do incumbents generally.

Effects of Race and District on Political Knowledge

Regardless of whether House candidates seek out minority voters in majority-minority districts, it would be helpful to know if such districts facilitate the same kind of learning environment for black voters as Bobo and Gilliam (1990) find in “minority empowerment zones” at the local level. Thus, Equation 1 will be estimated using several measures of political knowledge as the dependent variables. Measures of political knowledge include whether the respondent recalls the names of any House candidates (self-reported), the accuracy of their first two candidate recalls, knowledge of how many years the House incumbent has served (self-reported), and knowledge of how frequently the House incumbent voted with President Clinton.¹² Each variable is a dichotomy where respondents who claim to recall information, or who gave a recall deemed accurate, were assigned values of one. Respondents who claimed to have no recall or where unable to provide an accurate recall were coded as zeros. Because the dependent variables were dichotomies, logistic regression was performed, and the unstandardized coefficients are shown in Table 3.

Income, education, and age were all positively associated with each form of political knowledge shown in Table 3. Wealthier, better educated, and older Americans were all more likely to both profess to recall information about House candidates in general and the incumbent in particular, and to be accurate about their candidate recalls.

Northeasterners, Westerners, and Southerners were all less likely than Midwesterners to claim to recall who the House candidates were, and were less likely to be accurate about their first two candidate recalls (although Southerners were only inaccurate about the second recall; the variable was not significant for the first recall). Southerners were somewhat more likely than other citizens to claim to know how often their incumbent House member voted with President Clinton.

African Americans in general tended to demonstrate lower levels of information about candidates than other voters. The race variable was statistically significant and negative for self-reports about candidate recall, as well as the accuracy of the first and second substantive recalls about the candidates. Race had no effect on a citizen’s knowledge of how long the incumbent had served or how frequently the incumbent had voted with President Clinton.

Being an African American in the South had no effect whatsoever on political knowledge. Southern blacks do not appear to know more or less than other citizens. However, the type of district the respondent lived in did contribute to political knowledge. Citizens who lived in districts where the African American population was 40 percent or more were less likely to claim to recall anything about House candidates, and more likely to be incorrect about both of their candidate recollections. Given that such districts are also less likely to be targeted by political candidates, as discussed in the previous section, this finding makes sense. If candidates are not making an effort to contact voters in majority-minority districts (and, in fact, are making less of an effort than are candidates elsewhere), it makes sense that citizens living in such districts would know less about the House campaign.

Being an African American and residing in a majority-minority district had a small positive effect on political knowledge in that such citizens were somewhat more likely than other citizens to be accurate about their first recollection of a House candidate. However, such citizens were not any

¹² While respondents are asked to recall candidate names, the accuracy of recall measures only pertain to a candidate’s political party.

more likely to be accurate in recalling information about a second candidate. Given that majority-minority districts are likely to be strongly Democratic and are also very likely to elect minority legislators, it may be the case that voters simply do not feel the need to learn much about the other candidate; simple information shortcuts utilizing race and party may provide all of the information needed to form a political evaluation (or cast a ballot). This same general pattern is evident among citizens who share the same party as the incumbent—such individuals are more likely than most to claim recall who the House candidates were and better able to accurately recall a first candidate. However, they performed worse than most in the accuracy of their second recall. Like African Americans in majority-minority districts, it is likely that such citizens were most knowledgeable about members of their own group (in this case, a political party), and were substantially less interested in learning about candidates outside of their group.

African Americans in majority-minority districts were somewhat less likely than other citizens to know how long the House incumbent had served, suggesting that the effects of majority-minority districts on political knowledge are not all positive.

However, the negative coefficient for district composition and knowledge of years served is offset by the positive effect of being African American and having an African American legislator in the House. Black citizens represented by black legislators are more likely to claim to recall House candidates, and more likely to claim to know how many years the incumbent legislator has served in the House. In general, the effect of being black and living in a majority-minority district and/or having a black representative in the House seem to counterbalance many of the negative effects that being black has on political knowledge.

The Effects of Race and District on Satisfaction with Congress

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) suggest that an overall greater level of satisfaction with government may exist among African Americans who reside in areas where they have been able to elect African Americans to local political office. An important element of the subjective component of representation is whether citizens feel that they are being well-represented. If majority-minority districts are providing African Americans with greater access to government (or, at least, the perception of greater access), African Americans who live in such districts should be more positive in their assessments of their elected representatives, and may also be expected to express higher levels of approval for Congress in general and less support for term limits. To test these assumptions, Equation 1 will be estimated using several dependent variables: approval of the House incumbent; feeling that the incumbent is in touch with the district; approval of Congress; and, support for term limits. OLS regression estimates for these variables are provided in Table 4.1 and the logit estimates for the term limit variable are provided in Table 4.2. In each case, higher values indicate *less* approval or the perception that the incumbent is not in touch with the district. Support for term limits is a dichotomy where higher values indicate greater support for term limits.

As Table 4 illustrates, wealthier Americans approve of their House incumbent less, are less likely to believe that their representative has been in touch with the district, are less likely to approve of Congress in general, and consequently are also more likely to approve of term limits.

Better educated people do not differ from other citizens in their evaluations of the incumbent, but are more positive of their assessments of Congress in general. They are also less likely than other

citizens to favor term limits.

Only some of the regional variables were consequential. The dummy variable for the Northeast failed to attain statistical significance in all cases. Southerners expressed higher approval levels for their incumbent House member relative to other citizens, and were also less likely to favor term limits than other citizens. Westerners expressed lower levels of approval of their House incumbent than other citizens, and were also less likely than other citizens to believe that the incumbent had kept in touch with the district. Thus, it is somewhat surprising that Westerners are also less likely than other citizens to favor term limits.

The dummy variable for race was rarely significant. African Americans in general did not demonstrate higher or lower levels of approval for their House member (in terms of approval ratings or feeling that the incumbent had been in touch with the district). However, African Americans are more likely than other Americans to approve of Congress. Given their ambivalent feelings about their incumbent legislators and their general approval for Congress, it is perhaps predictable that the African American community in general does not show greater or less support for term limits than the general public—the variable fails to attain statistical significance.

The combined effect of being black and residing in the South has no measurable effect on feelings about the incumbent or about Congress in general. Again, the theory that Southern legislators appease conservative white voters at the expense of their black constituents receives no support here.

However, residing in a predominately African American district does have measurable negative effects on evaluations of the incumbent legislator. Citizens residing in a congressional district where 40 percent or more of the population is black have lower approval ratings of House incumbents and stronger feelings that legislators are out of touch with the district.

In both of these cases, the condition of being black and residing in a predominately black district serves to counteract these negative effects. African American citizens who reside in districts where they constitute 40 percent or more of the population do express greater levels of approval of their incumbent and are more likely than other citizens to feel that their member of Congress has been in touch with the district (despite the lack of evidence in Table 2 of any increased candidate contact with citizens as a consequence of residing in such a district). District composition does not appear to affect general support of Congress or support (or opposition) to term limits. Again, there do appear to be some benefits to having majority-minority districts. At the level of perceptions, there is some evidence that black citizens who inhabit majority-minority districts feel better represented by their legislators, and are more satisfied with the quality of their representation than are other citizens.

Being black and having a black legislator has no discernible effect on citizens' attitudes toward incumbents or Congress in general once district composition is taken into account. However, sharing the same political party identification as one's incumbent legislator leads to higher levels of incumbent approval, feeling that the incumbent has been in touch with the district, and less support for term limits. Shared partisanship has no effect on approval of Congress in general.

The Effects of Race and District on Political Interest and Involvement

In order to assess the effects of race and district composition on political behavior, Equation 1 was estimated using several dependent variables, including: the respondent's interest in campaigns, frequency of newspaper reading, frequency of political discussion, and whether the respondent cared about the results of the House election. The OLS regression estimates for these variables appear in Table 5.

In each case, education has a positive and statistically significant effect on interest and involvement. Better educated individuals are more interested in the campaign, care more about the outcome of the House election, and are more likely than other citizens to read a newspaper regularly and engage in frequent political discussions. Income is only significant in one case—the frequency of newspaper reading. Higher income generally leads to more newspaper frequent newspaper reading and the effect is positive.

Age has a positive and statistically significant effect on a respondent's interest in the campaign, tendency to read a newspaper, and level of concern about House elections. Age had no discernible effect on the frequency with which the respondent engaged in political discussions.

These are all fairly predictable effects. Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) suggest that political participation is affected by a citizen's access to resources such as time, civics skills, and money. For activities that do not require much time or money (i.e., interest, concern, discussion), they find education to be the major predictor of citizen activity. Since the frequency of newspaper reading may involve some financial expenditure, it is no surprise that this variable is affected by income.

Regional effects were almost never significant. Westerners were slightly more likely than citizens residing elsewhere to be interested in politics. Southerners were somewhat more likely than other Americans to care about the results of the House election. Being an African American Southerner led to lower levels of political discussion relative to most Americans, but did not otherwise affect political interest, and had no effect on newspaper reading.

The race dummy variable has only a slight effect—African Americans were somewhat more likely to indicate an interest in the campaign.

Living in a district with a high percentage of African Americans had no measurable effect on interest in the campaign or political involvement. Contrary to theoretical expectations, the condition of being African American and residing in a district with a high African American population led to somewhat lower levels of interest in the campaign, relative to other Americans. Given that African Americans in general demonstrate greater levels of interest in politics, this outcome is somewhat puzzling.

However, black citizens represented by black legislators do show significantly higher levels of interest in the campaign than other citizens, which seems to counteract the otherwise negative effect of living in a minority district. While this provides some support for the hypothesis that African American citizens who live in districts where they have enhanced opportunities to advance their political agenda will be more engaged in the political process, in general these findings are not consistent with Bobo's and Gilliam's research on local politics. While Bobo and Gilliam (1990)

find greater levels of interest, concern, and involvement as a result of living in a numerically advantageous district and having an African American mayor, black citizens in this study don't seek out more information or care more about the House election regardless of their political opportunities.

When the respondent and the incumbent legislator share the same party identification, citizens demonstrate significantly higher levels of interest in the campaign and care more about the results of the House election. Shared partisanship does not lead to more political discussions or greater levels of newspaper reading.

CONCLUSIONS

Do black citizens perceive themselves to be better represented when they live in a congressional district structured to generate greater opportunities for them to exercise political power? The simple answer is yes, but at the same time there is a clear need for greater efforts on the part of candidates and elected officials in such districts to foster a better learning environment for citizens and to engage in more outreach efforts at election time.

In most cases, income, wealth, and age are the primary determinants of whether citizens feel the political system is responsive to their needs, knowledge of congressional candidates, contact by congressional candidates, satisfaction with the quality of congressional representation, and interest and involvement in politics. Given that African American citizens are less likely to be wealthy or well-educated than are white citizens, they start out at a distinct disadvantage.

There is some evidence to suggest that majority-minority districts ameliorate some of these inequities for African American citizens. Being a black resident of a majority-minority district encourages citizens to feel that they have a say in government, and that politicians care. African Americans residing in such districts are also more likely to feel that the incumbent is doing a better job and has kept in touch with their district, indicating some greater amount of satisfaction with the quality of their representation.

However, majority-minority districts do not seem to lead to greater levels of approval of Congress in general, or greater feelings that the political system as a whole is responsive to their needs. Rather, positive feelings tend to be particularized toward their personal representative and the perception of greater access.

There is also limited evidence of improvements in political knowledge and interest as a result of residing in such a district. Being black and living in a majority-minority district seems to make citizens better able to recollect information on one House candidate accurately, but does not lead to more knowledge about the race overall. Citizens are not more likely to know about the other candidate in the race, and are less likely to know how many years the incumbent has served. The presence of a black legislator improves information about the incumbent's term, but does not increase knowledge about other candidates. Black citizens in majority-minority districts are actually less interested in political campaigns than are other citizens, although having a black legislator seems to counteract this effect. However, in no instance does sharing a racial identity with a legislator or living in a majority-minority district generate more concern about the election or political discussion among black respondents. As was the case with congressional approval and

efficacy, the effects of such districts tend to be particularized. That is, citizens learn about one candidate (most likely the incumbent), yet do not manage to learn about the race in general, or to care more about the election in their district.

This greater level of satisfaction with the incumbent and improvement in particularized knowledge about the campaign appears to come about with little effort on part of the voter, and less effort on the part of the candidates. Given that black citizens do not read papers more or talk about politics more when they reside in a majority-minority district and/or when they have a black representative in Congress, it is not clear that such satisfaction and knowledge are derived from any tangible information about their representative's behavior while in Congress. The data examined here clearly demonstrate that such information is probably not coming from the congressional representative. Citizens in districts with large African American populations generally receive lower levels of candidate contact and less mail than citizens elsewhere. There is almost no evidence to suggest that being a black citizen in such a district or having a black legislator makes a citizen more likely to be targeted by political candidates at reelection time.

This is the underlying negative aspect of majority-minority districts. Given that black citizens in general are less likely to be targeted than citizens who are wealthier or better educated, being numerically concentrated into a single legislative district seems to be the one opportunity for such citizens to receive greater attention from congressional candidates. Certainly, we would expect black legislators to be particularly attuned to their black constituents, relative to other legislators. Yet, Lani Guinier (1995) notes that one of the problems with single-member majority-minority districts is that voters experience a one-time increase in mobilization when an African American candidate first runs for office, but mobilization will tend to decrease with future elections. She explains: "The incumbent's core constituency may then become alienated, given the absence of local, alternative community organizations to educate and mobilize citizen participation outside of elections. Indeed, once elected, incumbents may demobilize constituents by not maintaining a genuine, community-based political organization to provide feedback, ideas, and reinforcement to the elected official while in office" (p.35).

African American voters consistently exhibit high levels of loyalty to the Democratic party, and Democratic candidates in majority-minority districts are likely to be African American. For most voters, then, the choice is simple: they can vote on the basis of their party identity or their racial identity. Both cues lead to the same vote choice. Thus, there is little incentive for the Democratic candidate to work hard for such votes. Consequently, potential voters learn less about the race, and are less engaged. Citizens may feel better about their own representative (and, thus, demonstrate greater feelings of subjective representation), but this does not translate into feeling that the system is more responsive to their needs. Absent greater efforts by political candidates and officeholders in majority-minority districts to engage in outreach efforts with citizens in their districts, African Americans may not reap the full benefits that such districts were designed to provide.

APPENDIX 1. NATIONAL ELECTION STUDY VARIABLES

District Background

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

V940016 94PO: ICPSR State & Congressional District
V960106 Pre. State code and congressional district
V980088 1996 STATE ABBREV AND CONG DISTR
V000081 Pre.Sample.3. 2000 state abbr and CD

REGION

V940017 Pre. 1994 Census region
V960115 Pre. 1996 Census region of Interview Location
V980098 CENSUS R
V000092 Pre.Sample.15. Census region (unavailable in the advance version, simulated with state variable)

Political Interest & Involvement

CARE ABOUT ELECTION

V960256 Pre. Does R care about result of House election
V980222 DID R CARE ABOUT RESULT OF HOUSE ELECTION
V000342 DID R CARE ABOUT HOUSE ELECTION

INTEREST IN CAMPAIGN

V960201 Pre. How interested has R been in campaigns this year
V961001 Post. R's interest in the political campaign
V980201 HOW INTERESTED WAS R IN THE CAMPAIGNS THIS YEAR
V001201 R INTEREST IN CAMPAIGNS (post)

READ NEWSPAPER

V960246 Pre. How many days in past week R read the newspaper
V980202 HOW MANY DAYS IN PAST WEEK DID R READ THE NEWSPAPER
V000335 DAYS R READ A DAILY NEWSPAPER

DISCUSS POLITICS

V940129 94PO: Frequency of political discussion
V961005 Post. Frequency of political discussion w/ friends/family
V980212 FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS
V001205 HOW OFTEN DOES R DISCUSS POLITICS (post)

MET A HOUSE CANDIDATE (EITHER)

V940503 94PO: Met Democratic House candidate
V940514 94PO: Met Republican House candidate

ATTEND A CANDIDATE EVENT (EITHER)

V940504 94PO: Attended meeting where Democratic House candidate spoke
V940515 94PO: Attended meeting where Republican House candidate spoke

TALK TO A CANDIDATE'S STAFF (EITHER)

V940505 94PO: Talked to staff of Democratic House candidate
V940516 94PO: Talked to staff of Republican House candidate

GET MAIL FROM A CANDIDATE (EITHER)

V940506 94PO: Received mail from Democratic House candidate
V940517 94PO: Recieved mail from Republican House candidate

Political Efficacy

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

V941033 94PO: How often R trusts government
V960566 Pre. How much of the time does R trust the fed govt to do right
V961251 Post. How much of the time R trusts the govt to do what is right
V980528 HOW MUCH OF THE TIME R TRUSTS GOVT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT
V001534 HOW MUCH CAN GOVT BE TRUSTED

GOVERNMENT WASTES MONEY

V941034 94PO: How much government wastes tax money
V961252 Post. How much of tax money does R think the govt wastes
V980527 HOW MUCH OF TAX MONEY DOES R THINK THE GOVT WASTES?
V001535 HOW MUCH TAX DOES GOVT WASTE

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE CROOKED

V941036 94PO: How many people in government are crooked?
V961254 Post. How many of the people in govt are crooked
V980526 HOW MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN GOVT ARE CROOKED?
V001537 HOW MANY IN GOVT ARE CROOKED

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DON'T CARE

V941037 94PO: R agrees/disagrees: Public officials dont care
V961244 Post. R opinion: pub officials don't care what people like R think
V980524 OPINION: PUBL OFFICIALS DON'T CARE WHAT PEOPLE THINK
V001527 PUBLIC OFFICIALS DON'T CARE

PEOPLE HAVE NO SAY IN GOVERNMENT

V941038 94PO: R agrees/disagrees: People like R have no say
V961245 Post. R opinion: People like R don't have much say in govt
V980525 R OPINION: PEOPLE LIKE R DON'T HAVE MUCH SAY IN GOVT
V001528 PEOPLE DONT HAVE SAY IN GOVT

VOTING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

V961482 Post. R's placement on 'voting makes a difference' scale
V980520 R PLACMENT- VOTING MAKES DIFF SCALE

GOVERNMENT PAYS ATTENTION TO PEOPLE

V961256 Post. How much attention does govt pay to people in decisions
V980521 HOW MUCH ATTENTION DOES GOVT PAY TO PEOPLE IN DECISIONS
V001539 HOW MUCH ATTEN DOES GOVT PAY PEOPLE

ELECTIONS MATTER

V961255 Post. How much does R think elections make govt pay attention
V980522 HOW MUCH DOES R THINK ELECTIONS MAKE GOVT PAY ATTENTION
V001538 ELECTIONS MAKE GOVT PAY ATTENTION

POLITICS IS TOO COMPLICATED

V941039 94PO: R agrees/disagrees: Politcs/government is too complicated
V961246 Post. R opinion: Politics and govt are too complicated
V980523 OPINION: POLITICS AND GOVT ARE TOO COMPLICATED
V001529 POLITICS TOO COMPLICATED

INTERNAL EFFICACY

V001517 WELL-QLFD TO PARTICIPATE IN P

Political Knowledge of Congressional Elections

RECALL CANDIDATE NAME

V940210 94PO: Does R recall names of House candidates?
V960257 Pre. Does R remember names of House candidates in R's district
V961006 Post. Does R recall names of congressional candidates
V980223 DOES R REMEMBER NAMES OF HOUSE CANDS IN R'S DISTRICT
V000343 DOES R REMEMBER NAMES OF HOUSE CANDS

ACCURACY OF CANDIDATE RECALL

V940214 94PO: #1 recall house - Accuracy
V940218 94PO: #2 recall house - Accuracy
V961010 Post. #1 recall - summary
V961014 Post. #2 recall - summary
V980227 #1 HOUSE CAND RECALL- ACCURACY
V980231 #2 HOUSE CAND RECALL- ACCURACY
V001208 HSE PARTY RECALL 1
V001209 ACTUAL PARTY OF RECALL 1
V001212 HSE PARTY RECALL 2
V001213 ACTUAL PARTY OF RECALL 2

KNOW YEARS INCUMBENT HAS SERVED

V961125 Post. Does R know the number yrs that incum has been in House
V980329 DOES R KNOW THE NO. YRS THAT INCUM HAS BEEN IN HOUSE?
V001363 R KNOW #YRS HSE INCUMBENT HAS SERV

KNOW IF INCUMBENT SUPPORTS CLINTON

V961131 Post. How often does R thinkHouse incumbent supports Clinton
V980332 HOW OFTEN DOES R THINKHOUSE INCUMBENT SUPPORTS CLINTON?

Attitudes about Congress

APPROVE OF HOUSE INCUMBENT

V961124 Post. Strength of R's approval/disapproval of House incumbent
V980327 STRENGTH OF R'S APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF HOUSE INCUMBENT
V001359 STRENGTH APPROVE HOUSE INCUMBENT
V001360 STRENGTH DISAPPR HOUSE INCUMBENT

INCUMBENT IS IN TOUCH

V961128 Post. How well has incumbent kept in touch with district
V980328 HOW WELL HAS INCUMBENT KEPT IN TOUCH WITH DISTRICT?
V001366 HOUSE INCUMB KEPT IN TOUCH W/DISTRIC

FAVOR TERM LIMITS

V960412 Pre. Does R favor a 12-year term limit on members of Congress
V980335 DOES R FAVOR 12-YEAR TERM LIMIT ON MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

CONGAPPROVAL

V000356 CONGRESS JOB APPROVE/DISSAPR
V000357 STRENGTH APPROVE/DISSAPR CONGRESS

Party Identification

V940655 Summary PID
V960420 Pre. Summary of R's party identification
V980339 SUMMARY - PARTY ID
V000523 PARTY ID SUMMARY

Socio-Demographics

AGE

V941203 94PO: Recoded age
V960605 Pre. R's Age
V980572 AGE OF RESPONDENT
V000908 RESPONDENT AGE

EDUCATION

V941209 94PO: R's education - summary
V960610 Pre. Summary of R's education
V980577 SUMMARY - RESPONDENT EDUCATION
V000913 R EDUC SUMMARY

RACE

V941435 94PO: R's race
V960067 Pre. R race
V980673 IWR OSERVATION: R RACE
V001006a RACIAL GROUP #1 SELF-DESCRIPTION
V001006b RACIAL GROUP #2 SELF-DESCRIPTION
V001006c RACIAL GROUP #3 SELF-DESCRIPTION

INCOME

V941404 Family income
V960701 Pre. R's family income in 1995
V980652 R's family income in 1997
V200994 Household income

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Table 1. OLS Coefficients for Effects of Race on Political Efficacy

	Politicians Don't Care	People Have No Say	Gov't Pays Atten. to People	Elections Make Gov't Pay Attn.	People in Gov't are Crooked
Income	.012* (5.345)	.017* (6.354)	-.003 (-1.014)	.002 (.605)	.003 (1.029)
Education	.151* (14.697)	.205* (17.814)	.127* (9.960)	.106* (7.481)	.070* (5.988)
Age	.000 (-.212)	.001 (1.240)	.000 (-.273)	.007* (5.294)	.009* (8.412)
Northeast	-.102* (-2.005)	-.061 (-1.057)	.019 (.306)	-.022 (-.029)	-.030 (-.517)
West	-.080 (-1.742)	-.047 (-.913)	.016 (.276)	.034 (.539)	.007 (.133)
South	.000 (.006)	.025 (.526)	.022 (.410)	.083 (1.414)	-.118* (-2.440)
Black	-.079 (-.899)	-.031 (-.319)	-.093 (-.846)	.271* (2.240)	-.167 (-1.672)
Black * South	-.073 (-.708)	-.135 (-1.163)	.149 (1.222)	-.022 (-.150)	.144 (1.216)
40% district Black	-.188* (-2.216)	-.316* (-3.178)	-.073 (-.612)	-.096 (-.730)	-.072 (-.711)
Black * 40% district Black	.324* (1.989)	.511* (2.792)	.327 (1.660)	-.042 (-.190)	.240 (1.292)
Black respondent/ black legislator	-.157 (-1.077)	-.155 (-.949)	-.064 (-.358)	-.062 (-.314)	-.207 (-1.247)
Respondent same party as incumbent	.028 (.881)	.008 (.235)	.011 (.264)	.035 (.791)	.040 (1.111)
Intercept	1.690	1.747	2.361	2.790	1.550
Adjusted R ²	.058	.081	.025	.020	.021
N	5,721	5,724	3,909	4,006	5,666

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies
Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are t-values.
p .05, two-tailed test

--continued on next page--

Table 1. Effects on Political Efficacy, Continued

	Gov't Wastes Money	Voting Makes a Difference	Matters Who's in Power	Politics too Complicated	Qualified to Participate
Income	.005* (-2.107)	.002 (.411)	.005 (1.003)	.014* (5.377)	.014 (1.315) (-1.816)
Education	.0215 (2.316)	.069* (4.603)	-.096* (-4.617)	.233* (21.168)	.240* (9.823)
Age	-.004* (-4.924)	.008* (6.440)	.001 (.756)	-.004* (-4.003)	.006* (2.722)
Northeast	-.023 (-.499)	-.125 (-1.735)	.118 (1.200)	-.012 (-.219)	.031 (.271)
West	-.080 (-1.910)	-.129 (-1.956)	-.092 (-1.042)	.042 (.857)	.133 (1.281)
South	.022 (.562)	.078 (1.293)	-.078 (-.964)	.106* (2.317)	.232* (2.398)
Black	.061 (.764)	.199 (1.564)	.025 (.135)	.065 (.686)	.272 (1.407)
Black * South	.041 (.438)	.014 (.093)	-.253 (-1.238)	-.318* (-2.860)	.142 (.575)
40% district Black	.037 (.458)	-.103 (-.771)	-.200 (-1.189)	-.092 (-.966)	.394 (1.778)
Black * 40% district Black	.438* (2.959)	-.010 (-.047)	.217 (.876)	.243 (1.388)	-.661 (-1.117)
Black respondent/ black legislator	-.463* (-3.504)	.109 (.578)	-----	-.117 (-.746)	-.062 (-.111)
Respondent same party as incumbent	.016 (.606)	.132* (2.894)	-.328* (-5.362)	.058 (1.689)	.129 (1.796)
Intercept	1.851	3.272	2.730	1.422	1.170
Adjusted R ²	.010	.030	.043	.109	.091
N	5,715	2,561	1,347	5,729	1,357

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies

Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are t-values.

p .05, two-tailed test

Table 2. Logit Estimates of Effects on Candidate Contact

	Met a House Candidate	Attended a Candidate Rally	Got Mail from a Candidate	Talked to Staff of a Candidate
Income	.051* (.016)	.029 (.017)	.054* (.010)	.063* (.018)
Education	.117* (.053)	.228* (.057)	.210* (.036)	.186* (.055)
Age	.016* (.005)	.022* (.005)	.018* (.003)	.011* (.005)
Northeast	.379 (.250)	.103 (.281)	-.303 (.175)	.023 (.282)
West	-.315 (.252)	-.196 (.258)	-.192 (.152)	.192 (.240)
South	.285 (.211)	.128 (.230)	-.202 (.139)	.263 (.224)
Black	.366 (.456)	.422 (.490)	-.267 (.321)	.348 (.482)
Black * South	-.397 (.523)	-.399 (.551)	-.033 (.364)	-.975 (.583)
40% district Black	-1.551* (.727)	-1.930 (1.012)	-.871* (.284)	-1.958 (1.011)
Black * 40% district Black	-.612 (1.340)	.210 (1.502)	1.460 (1.138)	1.597 (1.450)
Black respondent/ Black legislator	2.124 (1.334)	1.905 (1.222)	2.398* (1.102)	1.011 (1.034)
Respondent same party as incumbent	.232 (.161)	.418* (.177)	.156 (.107)	-.057 (.167)
Constant	-4.268	-4.908	-2.366	-4.541
-2 Log likelihood	1103.856	979.860	2073.029	1034.424
Predicted correctly	88.36%	90.15%	63.16%	89.29%
N	1615	1615	1615	1615

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies

Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are standard errors.

p .05, two-tailed test

Table 3. Logit Estimates of Effects of Model on Knowledge about House Race

	Recall House Candidates (self-report)	Accuracy of 1st Recall (post-election)	Accuracy of 2nd Recall (post-election)	Know # Years Incumbent Served (self- report)	Know Freq. Incumbent Voted with Clinton (self- report)
Income	.050* (.004)	.062* (.005)	.081* (.006)	.069* (.005)	.029* (.006)
Education	.272* (.019)	.284* (.020)	.191* (.025)	.074* (.022)	.193* (.024)
Age	.029* (.002)	.027* (.002)	.016* (.002)	.013* (.002)	.017* (.002)
Northeast	-.295* (.092)	-.258* (.100)	-.443* (.124)	-.007 (.107)	-.240 (.123)
West	-.277* (.083)	-.173* (.091)	-.301* (.109)	-.063 (.096)	.197 (.104)
South	-.214* (.077)	-.132 (.084)	-.473* (.105)	-.092 (.090)	.214* (.110)
Black	-.380* (.174)	-.576* (.213)	-.962* (.333)	-.339 (.195)	.129 (.208)
Black * South	-.133 (.210)	-.208 (.252)	-.135 (.422)	.078 (.236)	-.156 (.241)
40% district Black	-.437* (.169)	-.573* (.204)	-1.253* (.371)	-.329 (.193)	.001 (.201)
Black * 40% district Black	-.254 (.344)	1.291* (.431)	.712 (.938)	-.952* (.368)	-.215 (.359)
Black respondent/ black legislator	.787* (.314)	-.689 (.393)	.438 (.863)	2.654* (.355)	.523 (.315)
Respondent same party as incumbent	.140* (.058)	.305* (.064)	-.162* (.080)	.068 (.068)	.017 (.073)
Constant	-3.534	-4.019	-3.858	-1.748	-3.314
-2 Log likelihood	6991.863	5857.887	4055.339	5103.462	4644.137
Predicted correctly	68.30%	70.56%	83.04%	62.99%	75.30%
N	5,915	5,237	4,976	3,940	4,344

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies

Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are standard errors.

p .05, two-tailed test

Table 4.1. OLS Estimates of Satisfaction with Congress

	Approval of House Incumbent	Incumbent in Touch with District	Approval of Congress
Income	.008* (2.806)	.016* (5.957)	.077* (19.958)
Education	.013 (1.126)	-.010 (-.858)	-.037* (-2.388)
Age	-.004* (-3.716)	-.008* (-7.684)	.011* (7.642)
Northeast	-.074 (-1.244)	.066 (1.134)	-.084 (-1.084)
South	-.137* (-2.769)	-.003 (-.068)	.027 (.415)
West	.211* (3.877)	.194* (3.789)	.110 (1.581)
Black	.021 (.194)	.088 (.901)	-.301* (-2.204)
Black * South	.129 (1.025)	-.157 (-1.322)	.038 (.238)
40% district Black	.553* (5.028)	.467* (4.230)	.003 (.027)
Black * 40% district Black	-.582* (-3.068)	-.383* (-2.128)	-.225 (-.599)
Black respondent/ Black legislator	.049 (.301)	-.022 (-.146)	.143 (.402)
Respondent same party as incumbent	-.789* (-21.056)	-.258* (-7.180)	-.054 (-1.117)
Intercept	2.415	2.346	1.915
Adjusted R ²	.124	.052	.146
N	3,739	3,335	2,866

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies

Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are t-values.

p .05, two-tailed test

Table 4.2. Logit Estimates of Satisfaction with Congress

	Support for Term Limits
Income	.015* (.007)
Education	-.080* (.030)
Age	.008* (.003)
Northeast	-.267 (.150)
South	-.352* (.124)
West	-.341* (.133)
Black	-.309 (.238)
Black * South	.086 (.280)
40% district Black	.191 (.249)
Black * 40% district Black	-.083 (.392)
Black respondent/ Black legislator	.686 (.376)
Respondent same party as incumbent	-.260* (.091)
Intercept	1.810
-2 Log likelihood	3306.536
Predicted correctly	(84.34%)
N	3,864

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies
Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are standard errors.
p .05, two-tailed test

Table 5. OLS Coefficients for Effects of Race on Political Behavior

	Interest in Campaigns	Newspaper Frequency	Discussion Frequency	Care about House Election
Income	-.008* (-5.012)	.044* (8.298)	-.038* (-8.353)	.001 (.575)
Education	.110* (16.167)	.264* (11.675)	.236* (12.165)	.131* (15.043)
Age	.009* (14.212)	.054* (26.232)	.005* (2.626)	.015* (18.254)
Northeast	-.050 (-1.459)	.166 (1.481)	-.077 (-1.802)	-.083 (-1.936)
West	.066* (2.144)	-.144 (-1.415)	-.089 (-1.032)	.066 (1.650)
South	.029 (1.035)	-.137 (-1.465)	.015 (.189)	.073* (2.017)
Black	.206* (3.483)	.145 (.758)	-.014 (-.085)	.097 (1.356)
Black * South	-.100 (-1.440)	.016 (.072)	-.520* (-2.628)	.039 (.450)
40% district Black	.023 (.397)	-.287 (-1.478)	-.207 (-1.241)	.129 (1.632)
Black * % district Black	-.257* (-2.308)	-.535 (-1.547)	-.323 (-.981)	-.159 (-1.235)
Black respondent/ Black legislator	.277* (2.756)	.334 (1.076)	.359 (1.210)	.116 (1.002)
Respondent same party as incumbent	.100* (4.632)	.023 (.324)	.112 (1.859)	.148* (5.401)
Intercept	1.160	-.564	2.153	1.435
Adjusted R ²	.08	.135	.037	.118
N	5,327	5,910	5,204	4,289

Source: 1994-1996-1998-2000 National Election Studies

Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients. Figures in parentheses are t-values.

p .05, two-tailed test