Project Presentation

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Problem Statement and Background

- The Basics:
    - What is the FEC?
    - What is the difference between PACs and SuperPACs?
    - Where am I getting all this data from?

Problem Statement and Background

- The Questions:
  - Are SuperPACs as big of a problem as everyone says that they are?
  - Can you predict what kind of PAC you get based off of variables such as:
    - State?
    - Total Contributions?
    - Total Expenditures?
  - Can I use topic modeling to group PAC names? Will I end up with "concrete" topics?

Problem Statement and Background

- The dataset and its variables

```
Observations: 7,504
Variables: 20
$ CMTE_NM             <chr> "SERVICE AFTER SERVICE", "U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION PAC", "ISAKSON VICTORY C…
$ committee_id        <chr> "C00661249", "C00457754", "C00577635", "C00297911", "C00551382", "C0013160…
$ committee_type      <chr> "V", "Q", "N", "Q", "O", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q",…
$ committee_type_full <chr> "PAC with Non-Contribution Account - Nonqualified", "PAC - Qualified", "PA…
$ party               <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, "UNK", "UNK", "NNE", "UNK", NA, NA, "NNE", NA,…
$ party_full          <chr> NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, NA, "UNKNOWN", "UNKNOWN", "NONE", "UNKNOWN", NA, N…
$ state               <chr> "AZ", "DC", "VA", "TX", "MD", "FL", "VA", "GA", "TN", "VA", "SD", "PA", "D…
$ candidate_ids       <chr> "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{}", "{…
$ first_file_date     <date> 2017-11-21, 2008-12-12, 2015-04-27, 1994-09-07, 2013-11-04, 1980-07-21, 1…
$ last_file_date      <date> 2018-01-30, 2019-07-31, 2017-04-25, 2019-10-07, 2019-10-24, 2019-11-05, 2…
$ last_f1_date        <date> 2018-01-21, 2019-07-26, 2015-04-27, 2017-12-22, 2014-02-05, 2018-04-04, 1…
$ CMTE_TP             <chr> "V", "Q", "N", "Q", "O", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q", "Q",…
$ CMTE_DSGN           <chr> "U", "B", "J", "U", "U", "B", "U", "B", "U", "B", "U", "B", "B", "U", "U",…
$ CMTE_FILING_FREQ    <chr> "T", "M", "T", "Q", "Q", "M", "Q", "M", "Q", "M", "Q", "M", "M", "M", "T",…
$ CMTE_ST             <chr> "AZ", "DC", "VA", "TX", "MD", "FL", "VA", "GA", "TN", "VA", "SD", "PA", "D…
$ FEC_ELECTION_YR     <dbl> 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2018, 20…
$ TTL_CONTB           <dbl> 0.00, 906003.16, 0.00, 20555.00, 3449.88, 94181.00, 730.00, 736968.47, 864…
$ TTL_RECEIPTS        <dbl> 0.00, 942452.35, 0.00, 20555.00, 3448.00, 96681.00, 730.00, 736968.47, 876…
$ TTL_DISB            <dbl> 0.00, 833986.16, 6911.09, 20668.67, 11954.77, 97178.78, 993.00, 779000.00,…
$ ORG_TP              <chr> NA, "T", NA, "T", NA, "T", "M", "C", "T", "T", "M", "W", "T", "C", "L", "T…
```

Just for fun. . .

10 STACKS TO THE FIRST MFER WHO HITS DONALD TRUMP WITH A MILKSHAKE

PAC - NONQUALIFIED | ID: C00708131

JESUS WAS A DEMOCRAT

SUPER PAC (INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-ONLY) | ID: C00722140

MAKE AMERICA GOLF AGAIN GOLFING COMMITTEE

SUPER PAC (INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-ONLY) | ID: C00665745

VOTE MAMA

PAC WITH NON-CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT - NONQUALIFIED | ID: C00692137

THIS IS WHY WE CAN'T HAVE NICE THINGS

SUPER PAC (INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE-ONLY) | ID: C00605170

# Methods I Explored/Considered
(Fails!)

1. Classification

- What I thought about doing: using variables to help the data learn how to classify PACs and their affiliated party
- Problem: Not all PACs register with a party

2. Sentiment Analysis

- What I thought about doing: Grouping PACs by their party and then running sentiment analysis to see which party was the most "positive" or "negative"
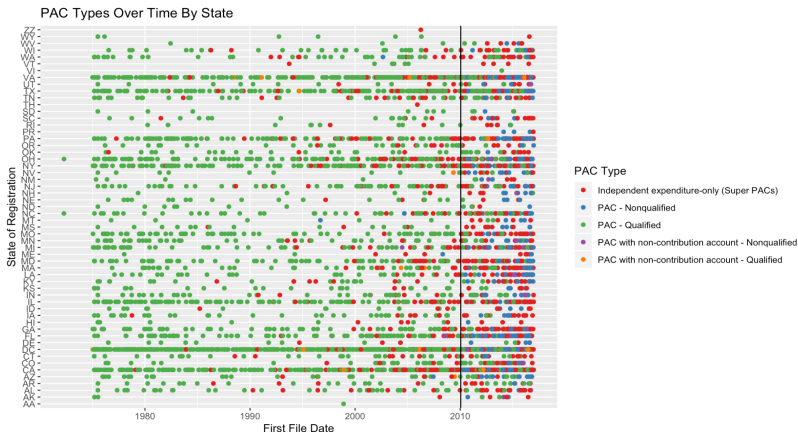- Problem: Not all PACs register with a party

Methods/Tools I Used (Thus Far)

1. Merged Excel files together and cleaned data
2. Analyzed PACs through the state that they're registered in

Number of PACs by State
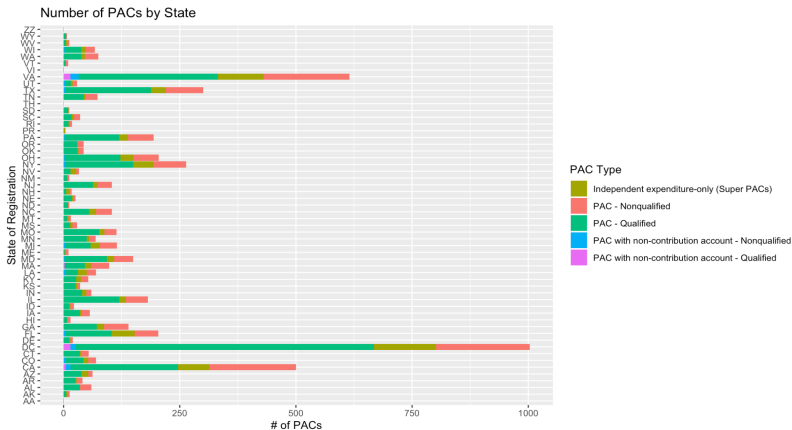
Methods/Tools I Used (Thus Far)

3. Analyzed PACs through their "PAC qualification status" over time

PAC Types Over Time By State

Results

- SuperPACs have boomed in popularity since Citizens United case
- The regular suspects (i.e. DC, VA, NY, CA) have the most number of PACs registered within them
- A healthy portion of registered PACs are "regular" PACS, not SuperPACs

Lessons Learned

- Campaign finance is confusing!
- Data wrangling is 99.99% of this project so far and human error sucks
- RColorBrewer package is amazing