Changing the Dialogue:
Descriptive Candidacies & Position Taking in Campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives

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Abstract

Although the benefits of increasing descriptive diversity in Congress are well-explored, less attention has been paid to the positive impacts of increasing descriptive diversity in elections. Employing a comprehensive collection of campaign platform text from nearly 5,000 campaign websites, we find that Democratic male and white candidates are significantly more likely to take up women's and Black-associated issues when a candidate who possesses that identity runs in their same-party primary election. Extending our analysis to military veterans, we find that Republicans are more likely to discuss veterans' issues when there is a military veteran in their primary; conversely, Democrats are not any more likely to discuss these issues when they run against a veteran. Looking to candidate position taking in the general election, our findings suggest that simply the *presence* of candidates from underrepresented populations in congressional races is important to broadening substantive representation in the legislative arena.

Key words: Congressional Elections, Primary Elections, Descriptive Representation, Issue Ownership, Online Campaigns

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In 2018, Susan Wild—an attorney and former state solicitor—was elected as the first woman to represent Pennsylvania's 7th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives. In her campaign, Wild championed policies related to women's healthcare accessibility and workplace harassment. Once in office, she continued to advocate for such issues, introducing legislation to address sexual violence against girls (H.R. 723) and to improve legal services for female veterans (H.R. 3189). Representative Wild's commitment to women's issues both during her campaign and in Congress is unsurprising; female representatives are thought to be strong stewards for the interests of groups with whom they share an identity. What is *un*expected, however, is that all five of Wild's *male* primary election competitors *also* took up positions related to gender equality in their campaigns. In 2020, when Mckayla Wilkes—a Black woman, political newcomer, and previously incarcerated individual—ran for Congress in the Maryland 5th, there was little to no chance that she would succeed in primarying the district's incumbent House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD). Wilkes predictably lost by an overwhelming vote margin, however her presence in the primary still seemed to impact the types of issues Hoyer discussed in his campaign. In the wake of Wilkes' emergence, Hoyer added an extensive section on criminal justice reform to his campaign website. Moreover, in the weeks leading up to the primary, Hoyer co-sponsored legislation addressing racial justice and police brutality for the first time in his decades-long political career.

In this paper, we assess if and how the presence of candidates from underrepresented and underserved populations impacts the kinds of campaign positions taken up by their primary election competitors. Moving beyond electoral factors like issue salience, we contend that Wilkes' and Wild's emergence was decisive in motivating their primary election opponents' position taking behavior. Following literature on representation, we posit that voters will be particularly drawn to candidates who share their identity because these individuals tend to be strong advocates for group interests. We suspect that candidates who *lack* this same identity will, in turn, take up issues related to their opponents' group identification in an attempt to neutralize that descriptive-based advantage. In testing our theory, we shed light on how competition impacts the electoral dialogue in congressional primaries and, further, general elections.

Our analysis centers on primary elections because this is precisely where we expect to see candidates respond to their competitors' descriptive characteristics. Parties today have firmly staked out their policy priorities (Lee, 2016) and, responding to these now-clarified party cues, voters have sorted (Levendusky, 2009). As a result, each party's constituent base has grown increasingly distinct along cultural, social, and ethnic lines (Mason, 2018) resulting in parties with asymmetric policy priorities (Grossman and Hopkins, 2016). Aligning with this divide, we expect the types of candidates that voters find desirable to differ by party. Because voter preferences on candidate attributes should be more consistent within party than across party, primaries provide the ideal vehicle for testing our theory. Moreover, the vast majority of congressional districts today are safely partisan; in these races, winning the primary may be a candidate's only major obstacle to attaining office. Greater competition in the primary should result in candidates paying greater attention to the positions taken up by their same-party opponents. Competitive primaries should also place added importance on appealing to "captured" groups, like Black voters, because vote choice is not driven by a sole partisan cue (Frymer, 2010; White and Laird, 2021). Given the extant literature's overwhelming focus on the *general* election, our analysis takes a critical step forward in advancing our understanding of the relationship between *primary* electoral dynamics and candidate position taking in modern campaigns.

To examine the types of issues adopted by candidates, we compiled, cleaned, and coded an original data set of text from candidate campaign websites for the 2018 and 2020 congressional primary elections. These sites usually include a biography, a list of endorsements, and—in particular—outline a campaign platform. Using this position taking text, we hand-coded over 10,000 policy positions to determine whether candidates discussed issues in their primary election that pertained to their competitors' descriptive qualities. Campaign websites are a data source well-suited for our purposes because they (1) provide a near complete inventory of the issues important to a candidate's campaign, and (2) are largely representative of the population of campaigns. Importantly, the text collected from these candidates' websites constitute the first compilation of campaign issue positions from congressional primary elections, providing a comprehensive and important source for data on campaign behavior.

Employing these new data, we seek to determine if there is a relationship between the presence of a Black or female candidate in a primary election and the issues adopted by their same-party opponents. We find that candidates from underrepresented and underserved populations spark a significant response from their competitors. For example, the presence of a female candidate in a Democratic primary is associated with a *twenty-five* percentage-point increase in the predicted probability that a male candidate in that same race adopts women's issues (e.g., equal pay for equal work) in their own campaign platform. We uncover similar results in our examination of Black candidate emergence, which is associated with a *fifteen* percentage-point increase in the predicted probability that a white candidate discusses issues in their platform that disproportionately affect Black Americans (e.g., racial bias in policing). We also notably demonstrate that male and white candidates' responsiveness is not contingent on their female or Black opponent discussing identity-related issues; these candidates' presence alone is enough to prompt a strategic response from male and white competitors.

To broaden the generalizability of our findings, we also investigate candidate responsiveness to the presence of a military veteran in their primary. Unlike policy positions regarding race or gender, which tend to be owned by the Democratic Party, advocacy for veterans' issues is an issue area owned by the Republican Party. Yet, it is also the case that both parties tend to discuss veterans' issues in similar ways and adopt these issues into platforms at similar rates. This allows us to compare the position taking behavior of Republican and Democrat non-veterans across the same set of issues. We find that the presence of a military veteran in a Republican primary is associated with a seventeen percentage-point increase in the predicted probability that a Republican non-veteran adopts veterans' issues. Interestingly, when we assess this same relationship on the Democratic side, we find no relationship between the presence of a veteran in a Democratic primary and their non-veteran opponents' coverage of veterans' issues. We suggest that this is because Democratic non-veterans do not feel they must build their own reputation on veterans' issues the same way they do with issues of race and gender, as the issue is not owned by their party.

In primary elections, standing out amongst the crowd is not only difficult but also

vital to securing the party's nomination. In today's increasingly competitive primaries, candidates have adopted a number of approaches in their pursuit to reach a plurality—or in certain states a majority—of primary electorate support. Measuring the candidate preferences of primary election voters has proved challenging for scholars, given limited survey data, and has largely focused on determining their ideological extremity vis-à-vis general election voters (e.g., Hall and Thomsen 2018). Assuming that politicians shape their behavior based on voter preferences (Mayhew, 1974), assessing how candidate strategies are influenced by the observable characteristics of their competition is one of the simplest—and most normatively important—ways to evaluate what primary voters want. By observing the substantial effect that female, Black, and military veteran candidate entry has on the types of issues competitors adopt into their platforms, we discover the high price primary voters place on these kinds of identities.

The Impacts of Descriptive Representation

The importance of increasing descriptive diversity in Congress cannot be understated. Americans traditionally underrepresented in politics tend to vote at a higher rate and take a greater interest in elections when they are represented by a legislator who shares their identity (e.g., Griffin and Keane 2006; Reingold and Harrell 2010). Gay (2002) finds that Black constituents are more likely to contact a co-racial Member of Congress. Wolak and Juenke (2021) notably show that political knowledge gaps between whites and Blacks are diminished when Black constituents are represented by a co-racial legislator. Turning to female constituents, women tend to feel a greater sense of political empowerment (High-Pippert and Comer 1998) and are more politically knowledgeable (Jones, 2014) when their representative is a woman.[1]

The connection between legislators who belong to underrepresented populations and the political engagement of co-group constituents is thought to be a function of group identification. Scholars like Mansbridge (1999) argue that the descriptive representation of a group in legislatures is a necessary condition to achieving substantive representation of

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[1]It is important to note that some scholars assert that the effect of symbolic representation on political engagement may be more modest than other work suggests (e.g., Swain 1995; Lawless 2004).

that group's interests. This notion that co-group representatives serve as stronger policy advocates for group interests is supported by abundant examinations of legislative behavior. In particular, Lowande et al. (2019) employ 88,000 communication records between Members of Congress and federal agencies to demonstrate that women and racial/ethnic minorities are more likely to work on behalf of constituents who share their identities. All of this supports the idea that, by electing co-group members to Congress, Black and female voters work to advance their own interests in the policymaking sphere. Considering the role descriptive representatives play as policy advocates, it is no surprise that women and racial minorities prefer to elect representatives who look like them (Dolan, 2004; Philpot and Walton Jr., 2007).

The literature cited above reflects only a fraction of those studies dedicated to understanding the relationship between candidates from underrepresented populations and constituents' vote choice. Scant attention, however, has been paid to evaluating how these kinds of candidates affect broader electoral dynamics. In this paper, we seek to determine if and how the descriptive identity of a candidate impacts the policy priorities taken up by competitors who do not share their identity. In other words, does the presence of a female candidate in a race motivate male candidates to discuss women's issues? Can the presence of a Black candidate spur white candidates to talk about issues that disproportionately affect people of color? Using new data on the issue positions of congressional candidates who ran in 2018 and 2020, we find that there is a strong association between the presence of a female or Black candidate in a race and the issues taken up by their same-party primary election opponents.

A Theory of Strategic Responsiveness

When crafting their campaign platforms, candidates must make a number of considerations. Previous work highlights a diverse set of factors that may motivate a candidate's position taking behavior, such as issue salience (e.g., Bélanger and Meguid 2008), district characteristics (e.g. Hayes et al. 2010) and—notably for this paper—the composition of their opponent's campaign platform. The idea of elections as a dialogue, where candidates

react to their competitor's rhetoric, is captured in theories on issue divergence and convergence. Proponents of issue divergence assert that candidates should only discuss issues that advantage them (e.g., Simon 2002; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002); this competitive edge could be grounded in partisan issue ownership or personal reputation. These studies suggest that a candidate can only do themselves harm by taking up an opponent's "owned" issues because it reminds voters of their inherent disadvantage. Under certain electoral conditions, however, the benefits of engaging with an opponent's issues may outweigh the costs. For instance, work by Kahn and Kenney (1999) and Kaplan et al. (2006) find that candidates will "converge" on an opponent's issue if that topic is especially salient to voters. Indeed, Banda (2015) describes issue convergence as a "defensive campaign strategy," allowing candidates to "negate—or at least moderate—the electoral benefits their opponents may receive" (p. 826) by detracting from their coalition of support.

Work exploring the dynamics of issue engagement has principally centered on inter-party position taking in general elections (conversely, see Banda and Carsey 2015); we apply theories on issue convergence to understand the intra-party dialogue in primaries surrounding politically salient identities like race and gender. As outlined in the previous section, female and Black candidates have an inherent advantage with co-group voters. Following the literature above, we expect that candidates running in primaries against a female or Black opponent will take up issues related to their competitor's identity in an attempt to neutralize that identity's electoral benefits. Moving beyond established theories, however, we suspect that simply the presence of a female or Black candidate should be enough to motivate competitors' adoption of identity-related issues. Because descriptive cues are tied to a candidate's perceived ability to serve as a policy advocate, their identity alone should prompt a strategic response from competitors. This expectation breaks from existing work in that we hypothesize substantive issue coverage is not always necessary to elicit a strategic reaction. To account for this expectation, our analysis explores candidates' responsiveness to opponents who discuss their politically salient identity as well as those who do not discuss this identity.

We expect the relationship described above to be conditioned by party. Political polarization has precipitated a divide where Democrats and Republicans prefer entirely

different types of candidates (Mason, 2018). This partisan division on preferred candidate qualities extends over personality traits, ideological purity, and demographic characteristics. In tandem with polarization, "party-owned" issues have also become an increasingly important component of campaigns (Petrocik, 1996). Accordingly, voters today see Democrats as better at handling social group interests (Hopkins, 2018), while Republicans are perceived to excel on defense issues, like national security (Meeks, 2016).

In today's elections, partisan preferences over candidate characteristics and perceived issue competencies have become intertwined. Voter stereotypes about candidates are only powerful insofar as they align with partisan stereotypes. For example, the perception that Black candidates are more concerned with minority rights is conditioned on that candidate being a Black Democrat (Fairdosi and Rogowski, 2015). Similarly, the perception that women are especially strong stewards for women's issues is generally limited to Democratic women (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan, 2009). This distinction is integral to understanding the candidate preferences of Democratic voters because, "[these] voters do not simply want more women in office; they want a particular kind of woman in office" (Dolan 2014, p. 193). For these reasons, female and Black Democratic voters should not be any more likely to support a co-group Republican candidate than they would be otherwise. In a similar vein, being female or Black does not intrinsically advantage Democratic candidates in the eyes of Republican voters; these identities do not resonate with the Republican electorate in the same way they do with fellow partisans.

Following theories on issue convergence, we posit that candidates should take up issues related to their competitor's identity when those identity-related issues are salient to voters, thus giving their competitor an electoral advantage. Because female and Black Democrats lack crossover appeal, these candidates pose a nominal threat to Republican candidates in the general election and vice versa. This expectation aligns with existing work on position taking in the general, which finds that candidates *do not* strategically respond to the descriptive identities of their other-party opponents (e.g., Dolan 2005, 2008). It is for these reasons that, in our analysis, we explore *intra*-party position taking. In primaries, setting oneself apart from the competition is vital and, moreover, difficult with the cue of partisanship removed. Candidates from descriptively underrepresented popula-

tions, however, can use their identity to their advantage by standing out amongst crowded fields of primary election candidates. In addition to their co-group appeal, recent work shows increased favorability among liberal male/white voters towards policies dealing with anti-Black and gender-rooted discrimination (Bauer, 2018; Bucchianeri, 2018; Engelhardt, 2021; Reny and Newman, 2021). Put differently, male/white Democrats today may be more open to—or, potentially, even be looking for—anti-racist, progressive candidates. All of this suggests that female and Black candidates pose an especially salient electoral threat to their competitors in Democratic primaries because of their voter appeal. In order to moderate this threat, we posit that male/white primary election candidates will take up issues related to the identities of their female/Black Democratic competitors:

> $H1_a$: Democratic male candidates will be more likely to cover women's issues when there is a female candidate in their same-party primary election.

> $H1_b$: Democratic white candidates will be more likely to cover Black-associated issues when there is a Black candidate in their same-party primary election.

We do not expect all Democrats to be equally responsive to the presence of a female or Black competitor in their primary election. We anticipate that a male or white candidate's inclination to take up issues related to their competitor's identity will be conditional on whether that male/white candidate is "professionalized;" operationalized as currently holding a seat in Congress, garnering electoral experience before running for Congress (Jacobson, 1989), or accumulating sufficient funds in the primary to mount a credible campaign (Maestas and Rugeley, 2002). Truly "amateur" candidates, on the other hand, are often agnostic towards their electoral environment because these individuals choose to run for their own purposes—not necessarily to win (Canon, 1993). Accordingly, we expect that candidates who are mounting a serious campaign for office will be more responsive to the presence of a female or Black candidate in their primary (see $H2_a$ & $H2_b$).

> $H2_a$: Professional male Democrats will be more responsive to the presence of a female candidate in their same-party primary than will amateur male Democrats.

H2$_b$: Professional white Democrats will be more responsive to the presence of a
Black candidate in their same-party primary than will amateur white Democrats.

Data

Campaign websites have become a fixture of congressional elections. Typically, these websites have a main menu that directs readers to an "Issues" tab, which explicitly lays out a candidate's policy priorities and positions. In this paper, we characterize a congressional candidate's campaign platform as the text presented on this "Issues" sub-page. According to Druckman et al. (2009, p. 345), candidate campaign websites are a uniquely ideal form of data for studying campaign communication because they are "unmediated (i.e., directly from the campaign), complete (i.e., covering a full range of rhetorical strategies), and representative of the population of campaigns." Candidates and their staff spend substantial time crafting their website messaging because these sites serve as an informational "hub" for campaigns. It behooves candidates to paint a complete picture of themselves on their websites because journalists often use this information for their stories, which are then circulated to a broader audience (Herrnson et al., 2019). These sites are also frequented by electoral stakeholders, like would-be constituents and potential donors (Druckman et al., 2009). All of this suggests that campaign websites are a comprehensive and complete data source for studying congressional candidate position taking behavior.

It is not as though this research is the first to use campaign websites to explore how gender and race affect campaign position taking. For instance, Dolan (2005) and Schneider (2014) use websites to explore how male/female candidates play into gender stereotypes. Cryer (2019) also employs campaign sites in her exploration of self-presentation among underrepresented candidates. Our analysis, however, differs from the existing literature in several important ways. First, because of the sheer amount of time involved in compiling and cataloging campaign websites, existing work has examined only a sample of campaign sites (e.g., only archive-accessible websites) or restricted its scope to the general election (conversely, see McDonald et al. 2020). These analyses have also tended to center on candidates' biographical pages rather than on their issue agendas. In order to capture a near complete picture of the types of issues candidates took up in their campaigns,

we extracted, cleaned, and parsed the text from campaign platforms for *all* candidates who had an official campaign website and ran in the 2018 or 2020 congressional primary elections. This collection is the first comprehensive data set of website platform text and provides numerous opportunities for future research. Second, by examining primary elections, we hold an election's partisan context constant. Existing work has struggled to disentangle the unique effect of candidate race and gender from partisanship because Black and female candidates tend to overwhelmingly run as Democrats. By examining position taking in the primary, we can more clearly assess how candidates react to the descriptive qualities of their opponents.

## Campaign Websites Text Collection

To collect text data from candidate campaign websites, we first identified the names of all major party candidates running in 2018 and 2020 using candidate filings with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) as well as state-level elections websites. Using this list of names, we sought to identify the campaign website URLs for all candidates in each election year by following links from online repositories like Politics1.com, visiting candidates' social media pages, and conducting simple Google searches.

Next, we identified which of those candidates with a campaign website also had a platform of policy positions on that site. For many candidates, this was a simple process; platforms pages often had clear titles like "Where I Stand" or "My Positions." To extract this position taking text, we used a combination of automated text collection (i.e., extraction with a pre-programmed web scraper) and manual downloading (i.e., copy and pasting). To ensure consistency, text was collected the day before or the day of each candidate's congressional primary. In our data collection, we found that 1,373 of those 1,718 Democrats (80%) who ran in partisan primary elections across 2018 and 2020 had an official campaign website and—on that site—also included a campaign platform.[2]

A small group of candidates running in the 2018 and 2020 primaries either had no official campaign website or, if they did adopt a website, did not outline any policy positions on that site. To determine if this missingness was non-random, we regressed policy

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[2]This number excludes individuals who ran in Louisiana, California, or Washington because these states do not hold partisan primary elections.

Figure 1: Examples of Campaign Issue Pages from 2018 and 2020 Democratic Congressional Primary Elections
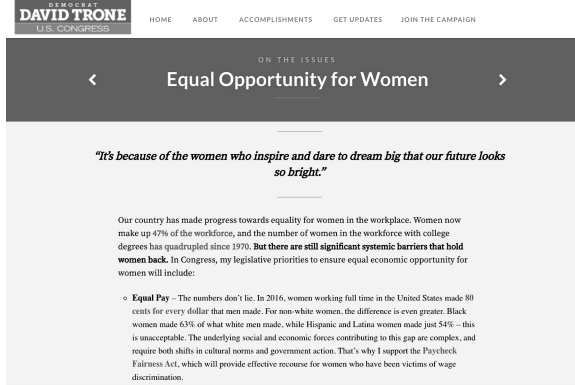
(a) David Trone, 2018 (D-MD)
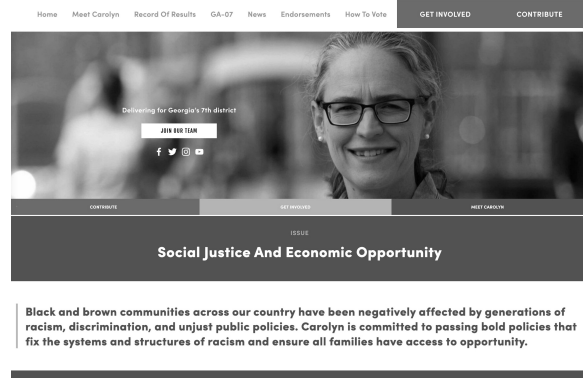
(b) Carolyn Bourdeaux, 2020 (D-GA)

platform presence on a series of candidate characteristics and election-level covariates. The full model for this analysis can be found in Table A1 of the Online Appendix. Candidates who raised nominal funds (less than $2,000) prior to their primary were the least likely to adopt a platform. Campaign platform adoption was also weak among candidates who garnered less than 5% of the vote share in their primary. Generally, these kinds of poor performing candidates lack any campaign presence—online or otherwise—so a missing website is not at all surprising. Although these types of candidates were less likely to have a campaign platform, they are still well-represented in our data. Of the 1,477 Democratic candidates that ran in 2018 and 2020 who *either* raised nominal campaign funds *or* garnered less than 5% of the vote, 1,250 or 83% had a campaign website.

Identifying Candidate Issue-Positions

The issue text on a candidate's website is typically organized as a collection of paragraphs, or "platform points," each with a subheading that describes the topic of that text. Figure 1 depicts two examples of platform points on campaign websites. In Figure 1 (a), David Trone (D-NY) includes *Equal Opportunity for Women* as a component of his 2018 platform and, in the subsequent text, goes on to discuss equality in the workplace. Similarly, in Figure 1 (b), Carolyn Bourdeaux includes a platform point on *Social Justice* that explicitly addresses racial discrimination on her 2020 campaign website. On average, candidates across 2018 and 2020 included a median of nine platform points on their campaign sites, with an interquartile range of six to twelve platform points.

To identify issues that should be most associated with female and Black Democrats, we turned the policy priorities put forward by organized movements and advocacy groups. We define "women's issues" as the policy priorities outlined by The Women's March Network—the group responsible for coordinating the 2017 Women's March on Washington. The goals put forward by Black Lives Matter and the NAACP provided a template for policy priorities that should be most associated with Black Democrats. A list of example policies for both candidate types is provided in Table 1. In addition to explicit policy priorities, our issue definitions include broader topics like healthcare or gun-rights that are framed in racial or gendered terms. For instance, if a candidate covers education reform in their platform while also discussing the racial achievement gap, we would consider that candidate to have taken up a Black-associated issue. To exclude these kinds of discussions would be to misrepresent the scope of topics related to race and gender. For issues with an ideological slant, candidates were only considered to have covered a women's or Black-associated issue if their position was left-leaning. For instance, in their discussion of abortion, if a Democratic candidate stated that they were in favor of repealing *Roe v. Wade*, we would *not* consider that candidate as having covered a women's issue.[3]

Our criteria for determining whether a candidate incorporated women's or Black-associated issues into their campaign platform was broad. By this we mean that, in our coding of issue coverage, we made no qualitative judgments about the substance of a candidate's *policy discussion.* For instance, if a male Democrat simply stated that women should receive equal pay for equal work, we would consider that candidate to have covered a women's issue; we did not require candidates to discuss specific policy proposals. Conversely, if a candidate expressed support for diversity but made *no policy statement whatsoever*, we would not consider that candidate as having covered women's or Black-associated issues in their platform. These kinds of non-policy statements often took the form of platitudes like: "I will fight for Americans of every skin color." We offer a cursory exploration into gendered/racial differences in platform text content in Section A of the Online Appendix. Here we seek to uncover whether male/white candidates are

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[3]We noted a total of four Democratic male candidates as having held non-progressive positions on "women's issues." We noted that a total of twelve white Democrats stated their support for the police and other first-responders while evoking themes purported by Blue Lives Matter.

Table 1: Descriptive Candidate Topic Categories and Example Policies

Women's Issues; Women's March Network	
Topic Category	**Example Subtopic Issues**
Reproductive Rights	Pro-choice; Sex education; Access to contraception; Maternal Healthcare; Funding Planned Parenthood; Body autonomy; Right to reproductive privacy
Women's Healthcare	Maternal mortality rates; Gender as a pre-existing condition; Breast-cancer screening; Racial minority (female) healthcare access and quality of care
Wage Discrimination	Female entrepreneurship; Equal pay for equal work; Hiring discrimination; Breaking the glass ceiling; Support for the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
Domestic Abuse	Re-authorizing the Violence Against Women Act; Closing the boyfriend loophole
Sexual Harassment	Support for #MeToo; Support for It's On Us Campaign; Workplace safety

Black Issues; Black Lives Matter & NAACP	
Topic Category	**Example Subtopic Issues**
Criminal Justice Reform	School-to-prison pipeline; Ending mandatory minimum sentencing; Ban the Box; Re-enfranchising felons; Ending the cash bail system; Stopping mass incarceration; Ending the private prison system; Increasing rehabilitative programs
Police Brutality	Addressing systematic bias; Demilitarizing the police; Investing in community-based policing; De-escalation training; Defund the police; Re-examining hiring practices
Racial Injustice	Support for Black Lives Matter; Discussions of racism, white supremacy, etc.
Voter Suppression	Ballot access initiatives; Increasing polling stations; Repealing Voter ID laws

systematically more vague in their position taking than female/Black candidates. We find weak evidence for gendered difference among male/female candidates, and stronger evidence for racial differences among white/Black candidates.

Given the complexities involved in identifying issues of race and gender, we employed a two-stage qualitative coding process to discern issue coverage. A complete discussion of this process is outlined in Section A.2 of the Online Appendix. Throughout the reading and classification of platform documents, coders were blind to candidate name, race, and gender. Upon the completion of coding, an inter-coder reliability metric of 0.92 was calculated. All disputed texts were reviewed, discussed, and classified based on a majority decision among the authors. All text classified as covering women's or Black-associated issues are available for review in the Supplementary Information and Dataverse for this paper. Based on the reading of thousands of policy positions across 1,373 Democratic candidate platforms, we determined that 66% of women and 55% of men discussed women's issues. Additionally, 39% of white, non-Hispanic Democrats, 59% of Black Democrats, and 49% of other racial/ethnic minorities discussed Black-associated issues.[4] These pro-

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[4]Black candidate adoption of Black-associated issues showed a marked increase after the police killing of George Floyd in May of 2020. In 2018, less than half of all Black candidates discussed Black-associated issues—in 2020 nearly 70% took up such topics.

portions for issue uptake are similar to rates for other important party issues, presented in Table A3 of the Online Appendix.

Identifying Candidate Gender & Racial Identity

To determine whether a candidate ran against a female or Black competitor, we spent considerable time collecting data on gender and racial identity. We distinguished male from female Democrats through their use of gender pronouns in campaign website text.[5] Classifying racial identity was more challenging. Some candidates identified themselves as African American or Black on their websites, but this was not universal. Using images to classify race is fraught with concern due to the complexities of racial identity. Therefore, to further identify Black candidates, we employed resources like newspaper articles, interest group endorsements, and data from social-networking websites.[6]

There are certainly other candidate types we could have examined to explore the relationship between descriptive candidate presence and competitors' issue coverage (e.g., LGBTQ candidates or Latinx candidates). We chose to examine women and Black candidates because a large pool of each candidate type ran in both election years across a diverse set of district conditions. Of those 1,718 Democratic primary election candidates who ran in 2018 and 2020, 602 (35%) were women and 1,116 (65%) were men. Additionally, we identified 1,164 Democrats as white, non-Hispanic (68%), 324 Democrats as Black (19%), and 229 Democrats as some other race or ethnicity (13%).

Empirical Analysis

In this analysis, we ask whether the presence of a female or Black candidate in a primary election affects the position taking behavior of their competitors. Are male Democrats more likely to talk about women's issues in the presence of a female Democrat? Are white Democrats more likely to talk about Black-associated issues when a Black candidate runs

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[5]We consider any candidates who identifies as a woman to be regarded as such. Between 2018 and 2020, two candidates who ran for Congress that identified as women also identified as transgender. No identified candidates used they/them pronouns.

[6]We identified fewer than ten candidates as racially ambiguous. We did not consider these individuals to be Black candidates in our primary analyses; including these individuals in our estimations produces substantively identical results.

Table 2: Covariates for Gender and Race Democratic Primary Models

Model Covariate	Covariate Values	
Unit of Analysis: Male Democratic Primary Election Candidates		
Dependent Variable: Discussed Women's Issues in Campaign Platform		
Independent Variables:		
Presence of a Female Candidate	0 (No Female Candidate)	1 (Female Candidate)
Currently or Previously Held Office	0 (No Elected Experience)	1 (Elected Experience)
Racial Minority	0 (Non-White Candidate)	1 (White Candidate)
Open Seat	0 (Incumbent in Race)	1 (Open Seat)
Primary Election Rules	0 (Non-Open Primary)	1 (Open Primary)
Primary Election Year	0 (2018 Primary)	1 (2020 Primary)
District Seat Safety	0-100 (2016 and 2020 Dem. presidential vote, averaged)	
Unit of Analysis: White Democratic Primary Election Candidates		
Dependent Variable: Discussed Black-Associated Issues in Campaign Platform		
Independent Variables:		
Presence of a Black Candidate	0 (No Black Candidate)	1 (Black Candidate)
Currently or Previously Held Office	0 (No Elected Experience)	1 (Elected Experience)
Candidate Gender	0 (Male)	1 (Female)
Southern State	0 (Non-South)	1 (South)
Open Seat	0 (Incumbent in Race)	1 (Open Seat)
Primary Election Rules	0 (Non-Open Primary)	1 (Open Primary)
Pre/Post George Floyd Protests	0 (Before 04/26/2020)	1 (After 04/26/2020)
District % Black Population	0-100 (reported by 2018 ACS by the U.S. Census)	
District Seat Safety	0-100 (2016 and 2020 Dem. presidential vote, averaged)	

in their same-party primary election? We run two sets of models to test our hypotheses: our gender models assess the position taking behavior of male Democrats who had a policy platform on their campaign website; our race models assess the position taking behavior of white Democrats who had a policy platform on their campaign website. In the logistic regressions to follow, our dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator for whether or not a male/white candidate took up women's or Black-associated issues into their campaign platform. To test our hypotheses, we include dichotomous indicators for female and Black candidate presence in each primary election.[7] In Table 2, we lay out other model covariates, which include measures of district seat safety, primary election rules, and whether a given district had a retiring incumbent.

Our second set of hypotheses investigate whether "professional" male/white candi-

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[7]It is important to note that even if a female/Black candidate *did not* have a campaign website, we still considered their male/white competitors as having ran against that kind of descriptive candidate.

dates are more responsive to a female/Black candidate's presence than their amateur counterparts. To gauge whether a candidate is professionalized, we rely on two principal measures. First, we consider a candidate to be "professional" if they currently hold or have previously held publicly elected office (Jacobson, 1989). This variable is widely considered to be a strong indicator for strategic behavior because it demonstrates that a candidate possesses electoral know-how. Some candidates who lack elected experience may also possess the knowledge and resources to mount a credible campaign—a trait observable in their ability to reach the same fundraising potential as candidates with a history of holding office (Maestas and Rugeley, 2002). Therefore, we consider a political newcomer to be a professional candidate if they garnered more logged campaign contributions in the primary than the average Democratic candidate in that election year.[8] We identified 48% of Democratic men as professional and 53% of white Democrats as professional. Because we expect that strategic campaign behavior will condition a candidate's responsiveness to all kinds of electoral dynamics, we run separate gender and race models for each candidate type. Accordingly, we produce four different models, where the units of analysis are: male professional candidates (N=430), male amateur candidates (N=425), white professional candidates (N=505), and white amateur candidates (N=429).

Before model estimation, we employ a non-parametric method for data preprocessing developed by Hainmueller (2012) called entropy balancing (EB). This procedure attempts to make our subsequent estimation for the effect of female/Black candidate presence more accurate by accounting for differences in the composition of our samples for male/white candidates who *did* and *did not* run against a female/Black candidate. We seek to account for differences in covariates that indicate (1) a candidate's intrinsic likelihood to take up women's or Black-associated issues, and (2) in which types of races a female and Black candidates may be more likely to emerge. This adjustment is done through the estimation of observational weights, which seek to achieve "balance" across covariates so candidates who *did* run against a descriptive competitor and those who *did not* are sufficiently similar.

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[8]Averages were computed separately by year to accommodate potential fundraising differentials based on presidential versus midterm electoral dynamics. These averages exclude candidates who *did not* report any primary election fundraising to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The average logged fundraising among Democrats in 2018 was 11.06 ($63,463) and in 2020 was 11.55 ($103,778).

After the assignment of weights, a candidate's status as having run against a female/Black competitor is closer to being independent from previously specified covariates. We do not claim to have causally identified any effects through this analysis. There are any number of unobserved potential pathways through which our outcome of interest could have been brought into being. We also acknowledge that our balancing covariates cannot and do not perfectly capture all systemic differences across sampled groups. Instead, what we present here is a fairly robust investigation of the empirical relationship between the presence of a descriptive candidate and a non-descriptive candidate's platform content.

We conduct separate balancing exercises for each of the four samples of candidates. In Section B.1 we lay out a lengthy set of balancing covariates and explanations for their inclusion. Plots for covariate distributional balance in Section B.2 demonstrate that we achieve balance on all covariates of interest. We also find our estimates for the effect of female/Black candidate presence to be robust to other balancing strategies. Finally, the results for a series of sensitivity checks can be found in the Online Appendix (Section C); these analyses demonstrate that unobserved confounders do not present a sufficient threat to the robustness of our findings to follow.

Findings

Using our weighted data, we fit four sets of models to explore candidate position taking behavior in online campaign platforms. In our gender models, we expect male Democrats will be more likely to discuss women's issues when a female Democrat runs in their primary. In our race models, we expect white Democrats will be more likely to discuss Black-associated issues when a Black Democrat runs in their primary.[9] We fit separate regressions for professional and amateur candidates and include all covariates in Table 2 as predictors. Across these models, we are interested in comparing the magnitude of first differences—or the effect of moving from no female/Black candidate in a race to the presence of a female/Black candidate—in the predicted probability of issue adoption

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[9]Although our race models do not include non-Black minority candidates as units of analysis—here units of analysis are white candidates only—our regressions include primaries that had a Black candidate emerge as well as other candidates who self-identified as a non-Black racial/ethnic minority. After re-balancing our data and constraining our analyses to only include races with Black and white, non-Hispanic candidates, these new models produce substantively identical results to those presented in Table A8.

Figure 2: First Differences in the Predicted Probabilities of Male/White Democrats'
Issue Adoption in Partisan Primary Elections
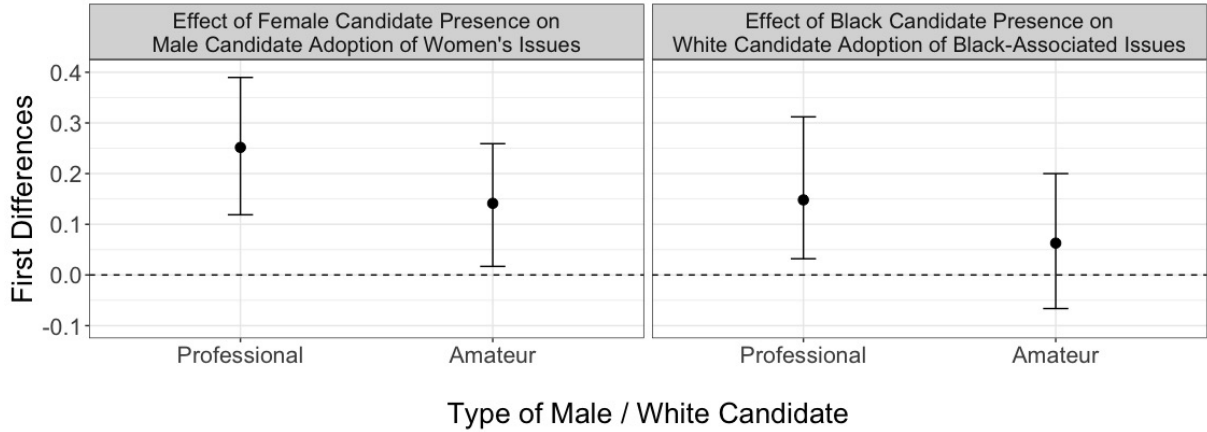
Note: Quantities of interest are first differences in predicted probabilities for women's or Black-associated issue uptake given the absence or presence of a female/Black candidate in Democratic primary elections. Predicted probabilities are produced from 1,000 simulated coefficients drawn from a multivariate normal distribution with all predictors are held constant at their mean value. For full models, see the left-most columns of Tables A6 through A9. These point estimates are presented with 95% credible intervals.

among male/white candidates. The results for all four models are reported in Figure 2.

In both our race and gender models, we find support for our responsiveness hypotheses ($H1_a$ & $H1_b$). The presence of a female candidate in a Democratic primary increases the predicted probability of women's issue adoption among professional male candidate from fifty-five to eighty percent. Per the left facet of Figure 2, the magnitude of this twenty-five percentage-point first difference among professional male candidates is statistically significant. The presence of a Black candidate in a Democratic primary increases the predicted probability of Black-associated issue adoption among professional white candidates from fourteen percent to twenty-nine percent. Per the right facet of Figure 2, the magnitude of this fifteen percentage-point first difference among professional white candidates is also statistically significant.[10]

As expected, we find less consistent responsiveness among true amateur candidates. The presence of a female candidate in a Democratic primary increases the predicted probability that an amateur male candidate running in the same race will take up women's issues

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[10]We find statistically significant, comparable results when replicating our analysis (1) without observational weighting, and (2) with all balancing covariates collapsed as dummy variables; these results are presented in Tables A6 through A9. Moreover, substantially identical results are found when including a dummy variable for incumbency; these results are presented in Tables A6 and A8. Lastly, interacting Black candidate presence with the covariate for district Black population does not impact the substantive takeaways presented in Figure 2; these results can be found in Table A8.

by fourteen percentage points. Although the size of this effect is notable, a t-test reveals that it is statistically significantly weaker than the effect size on professional candidate responsiveness ($t = 37.3$, $p < 0.05$). We find an identical relationship among professional and amateur white Democrats ($t = 26.9$, $p < 0.05$). Aligning with our strategic candidate hypotheses (Ha_a & Ha_b), these findings demonstrate that professional Democrats have a greater probability of related issue coverage in the presence of a descriptive opponent than their true amateur counterparts, all else equal.

Descriptive Candidacies and Substantive Coverage

Theories on issue convergence conceptualize elections as a kind of dialogue, where candidates react to the issue positions taken up by their opponents. Our theory follows this framework to the extent that we also expect candidates to respond to the campaign strategies of their opponents. However, departing from existing work, we posit that female/Black candidates need not discuss issues related to their identity in order to elicit a strategic response from their opponents—their presence alone is enough motivation. To test this theory, we leverage disparities in the identity-related issue uptake of female and Black Democrats. As noted previously, 34% of female Democrats and 41% of Black Democrats *did not* discuss issues related to their identity in their campaign platforms. Using the same covariates discussed in Table 2, we re-weight our data and re-estimate two new sets of models. Across these models, we are interested in comparing the magnitude of first differences—or the effect of moving from no female/Black candidate in a race to the presence of a female/Black candidate, conditional on whether that female/Black candidate did (*Substantive Coverage*) or did not (*No Substantive Coverage*) discuss issues related to their own identity.[11]

Point estimates for first differences in predicted probabilities for professional candidates are shown in Figure 3. The point estimates for our *No Substantive Coverage* models measure the effect of moving from no female/Black candidate in a Democratic primary to running against a female/Black candidate who *did not* discuss issues related to their

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[11]Female/Black candidates with *No Substantive Coverage* were given this label for two reasons. First, they had a platform on their website, but did not include any discussion of women's or Black-associated issues. Additionally, a small number of female/Black candidates were labeled as having no substantive coverage because they did not have a campaign website.

Figure 3: First Differences in the Predicted Probability of Professional Male/White Candidate Issue Adoption Conditional on Type of Female/Black Candidate in Race
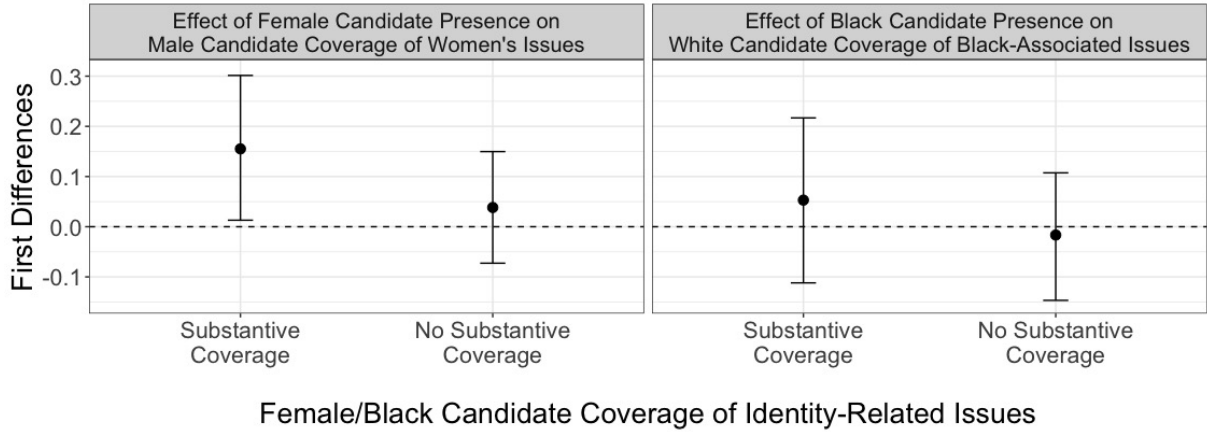

Female/Black Candidate Coverage of Identity-Related Issues
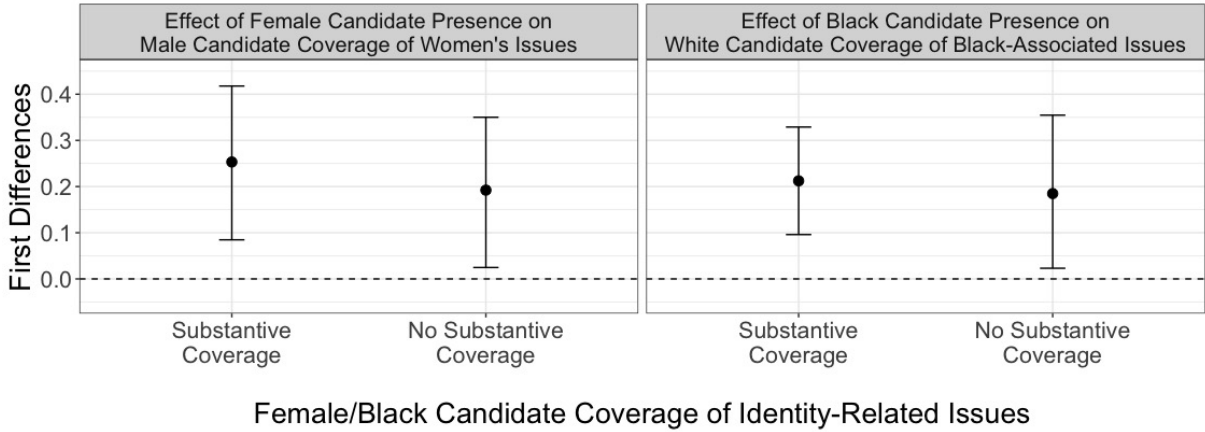
Note: Male/white professional Democrats in the *Substantive Coverage* models ran against a female/Black primary opponent who discussed issues related to their descriptive identity in their campaign platform. Male/white professional Democrats in the *No Substantive Coverage* models ran against a female/Black primary opponent who *did not* discuss issues related to their descriptive identity in their campaign platform. These point estimates are simulated using the same methodology employed to produce those first differences shown in Figure 2.

own descriptive identity.[12] If a descriptive candidate's presence is enough to motivate their opponents to adopt women's or Black-associated issues, then we should see positive point estimates for first differences in predicted probabilities across both of our *No Substantive Coverage* models. Aligning with our theory, we find that a male or white candidate's decision to take up women's or Black-associated issues is tied to the *presence* of a female or Black candidate in their race—not just that candidate's discussion of their own identity. While we find a positive, statistically significant point estimate in our *No Substantive Coverage* gender model, it is important to note that this effect size is statistically significantly weaker than our *Substantive Coverage* gender model ($t = 14.7$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, the effect size in our *No Substantive Coverage* race model is statistically significantly weaker than our *Substantive Coverage* model ($t = 7.0$, $p < 0.05$). Additional analyses presented in Table A10 of the Online Appendix assess whether other female/Black candidates descriptive characteristics might mitigate the results presented here, but we find no such evidence.

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[12]In instances where multiple female/Black candidates ran against a male/white candidate, the category *No Substantive Coverage* was only assigned if none of the female/Black candidates in that race substantively discussed issues related to their identity.

Figure 4: First Differences in the Predicted Probability of Amateur Male/White Candidate Issue Adoption Conditional on Type of Female/Black Candidate in Race

Note: Male/white amateur Democrats in the *Substantive Coverage* models ran against a female/Black primary opponent who discussed issues related to their descriptive identity in their campaign platform. Male/white amateur Democrats in the *No Substantive Coverage* models ran against a female/Black primary opponent who *did not* discuss issues related to their descriptive identity in their campaign platform. These point estimates are simulated using the same methodology employed to produce those first differences shown in Figure 2.

Turning to amateur male Democrats in Figure 4, we find that these candidates' responsiveness to a female competitor is contingent on that competitor discussing women's issues in her own platform. The point estimate in our *Substantive Coverage* gender model is statistically significant and similar to the effect presented in Figure 2; however, for our *No Substantive Coverage* gender model, the effect of female candidate presence on amateur male candidate's uptake of women's issues is statistically indistinguishable from zero. The effect difference between these *Substantive Coverage* and *No Substantive Coverage* gender models is statistically significant ($t = 14.8$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that, when a female Democrat *does not* discuss women's issues, her presence has no effect on the likelihood of women's issue coverage for amateur male Democrats in their same primary. Across all our race models for amateur white Democrats, the presence of a Black candidate has no effect on Black-associated issue uptake. These differences in the responsiveness of professional and amateur Democrats align with our broader expectations about each candidate type. It follows our theory that amateurs will be less likely to respond to the presence alone of a female or Black competitor than their more professionalized counterparts, who possess greater electoral know-how and are motivated to win.

Extension: Democratic & Republican Veterans

To further test our theory and, moreover, extend the generalizability of our findings, we assess whether the presence of a military veteran in a primary affects competitors' coverage of veterans' issues in their online campaign platforms. Just like women and Black politicians, veterans have been shown to be especially strong stewards for group issues. Members of Congress who have served in the military tend to have greater success in advancing their defense-related legislation (Swers, 2007), are more likely to advocate for constituents who served in the military (Lowande et al., 2019), and may be better equipped to produce legislation addressing veterans' mental health concerns (Purtle, 2016). For all these reasons, voters who have served in the military should be especially supportive of co-group candidates. According to our proposed theory, this outsized base of support gives military veterans a perceived electoral advantage and, to counteract that advantage, their competitors should take up veterans' issues in their own campaign platforms.

We choose to examine military veterans because this candidate type gives us purchase in evaluating a central—but unexplored—element of our theory. Employing military veterans, we can evaluate if and how partisan cleavages over voters' candidate preferences impact strategic responsiveness. Up until this point, we have examined only Democratic primaries because candidate characteristics like race and gender do not appeal to Republican voters; according to our theory, this means that the presence of a female or Black Republican in a primary should *not* affect same-party opponents' position taking. Testing this relationship, however, is challenging because female and Black Republicans do not run on the same kinds of women's or Black-associated issues as their Democratic counterparts. Veterans' issues do not present this same measurement problem. Both Republicans *and* Democrats are viewed as committed advocates for military veterans (Lowande et al., 2019); however, Republican voters have a stronger preference for candidates with military experience (McDermott and Panagopoulos, 2015) and the Republican Party is perceived to "own" defense-related issues (Petrocik, 1996). This dichotomy— where one party greatly prefers a type of candidate over the other—allows us to evaluate if partisan preferences on candidate characteristics impact responsiveness.

To formalize our expectations, we put forward three new hypotheses. Our first hypothesis, H1$_c$, is an extension of our strategic responsiveness hypotheses (H1$_a$ & H1$_b$). We expect that Republican non-veterans will be more likely to discuss veterans' issues in their online campaign platforms when a military veteran runs in their same-party primary election. Our second hypothesis, H2$_c$, is an extension of our strategic candidate hypotheses (H2$_a$ & H2$_b$), where professional Republicans will be more responsive to the presence of a military veteran in their primary than their true amateur counterparts. Given the Republican Party's "ownership" of defense-related issues and Republican voters' preference for candidates with military experience, we also put forward a third hypothesis (H3). We expect that Republicans candidates will be more responsive to the presence of a military veteran in their same-party primary than will Democrats.

H1$_c$: Non-veterans will be more likely to cover veterans' issues when there is a military veteran in their same-party primary election.

H2$_c$: Professional non-veterans will be more responsive to the presence of a military veteran in their same-party primary than will amateur non-veterans.

H3: Republican non-veterans will be more responsive to the presence of a military veteran in their same-party primary than will Democratic non-veterans.

For our analyses, we identified veterans' issues using the policy priorities put forward by two advocacy groups: Concerned Veterans for America and With Honor. A list of example veterans' issues is provided in Table 3. We considered candidates to be military veterans if they served in any branch of the United States Armed Forces.[13] We identified 187 Democratic and 376 Republican primary election candidates as veterans. Based on the careful reading of 1,203 Republican platforms, we determined that 59% of veterans and 47% of non-veteran Republicans discussed veterans' issues in their campaign platforms. Conversely, 60% of veterans and 42% of non-veteran Democrats discussed veterans' issues.

Replicating the same estimation procedure as above, we run two sets of partisan models to assess the issue uptake behavior of Democratic and Republican non-veterans who had

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[13]We assume that any candidate who does not mention military service to be a non-veteran.

Table 3: Military Veteran Candidate Topic Categories and Example Policies

Veterans' Issues; Concerned Veterans for America & With Honor	
Topic Category	**Example Subtopic Issues**
Veteran's Healthcare	Reforming the VA; Disability access; Privatization of veteran's healthcare; Expanding vets' healthcare options (i.e., Tricare); Improving VA benefits and eligibility; Passage of the VA MISSIONS Act
PTSD & Suicide	Mental health advocacy; Suicide awareness; Veterans' homelessness
Reintegration	GI Bill; Higher education and vocational training opportunities; Improving hiring for veterans and their families; Improving reintegration and transition programs
Female Veterans	Increasing maternity support; Raising awareness of sexual violence and harassment

a policy platform on their campaign website. We produce four different models, where the units of analysis are: Republican professional non-veterans (N=512), Republican amateur non-veterans (N=398), Democratic professional non-veterans (N=668), and Democratic amateur non-veterans (N=539). In addition to those covariates included in our prior models, we include a measure for each district's veteran population and the number of military installations in that district (i.e., VA hospitals and military bases). A full list of covariates is presented in Table A14. To achieve covariate balance across our samples of candidates who *did* and *did not* run against a veteran, we once again employ entropy balancing. We achieve balance across all covariates of interest; a list of balancing covariates and plots for covariate distributional balance can be found in the Appendix. We also find comparable results when replicating our analysis without observational weighting; results are presented in Tables A15 through A18 in the Appendix.

The results for all four models are reported in Figure 5. Across these models, we are interested in comparing the magnitude of first differences—or the effect of moving from no military veteran in a race to the presence of a veteran—for the predicted probability of issue adoption among Republican/Democratic non-veterans. We find that the presence of a military veteran in a Republican primary increases the predicted probability of veterans' issue adoption among professional non-veterans from sixty percent to seventy-seven percent. Per the left facet of Figure 5, the magnitude of this seventeen percentage-point first difference among professional, non-veteran Republicans is statistically significant. This effect size is comparable to the magnitude of first differences in our professional Democratic gender (+0.25) and race (+0.15) models found in Figure 2. This finding aligns with

Figure 5: First Differences in the Predicted Probabilities of Non-Veteran Republicans'
Issue Adoption in Partisan Primary Elections
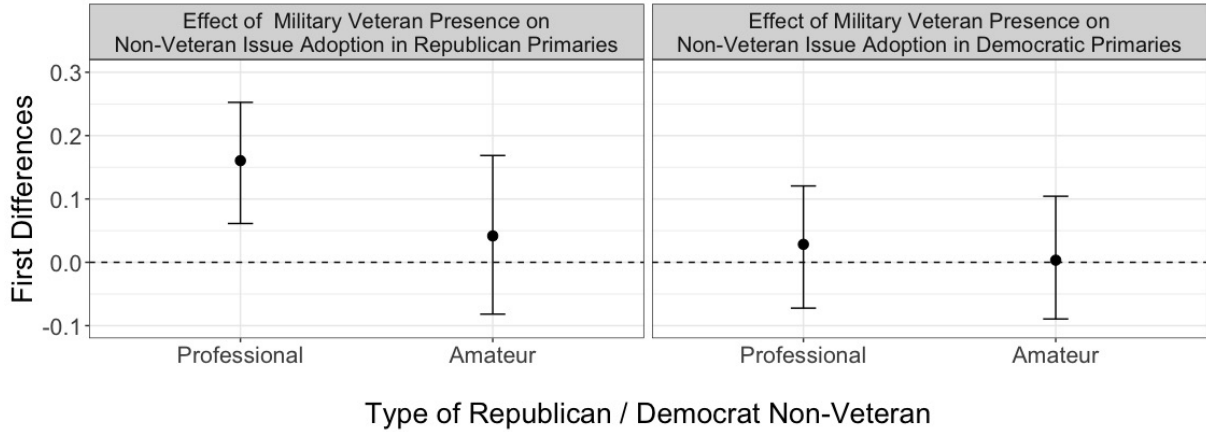
Note: Quantities of interest are first differences in predicted probabilities for veterans' issue uptake given the absence or presence of a military veteran in Republican/Democratic primary elections. Predicted probabilities are produced from 1,000 simulated coefficients drawn from a multivariate normal distribution with all predictors are held constant at their mean value. For full models, see Tables A15 through A18 in the Online Appendix. These point estimates are presented with 95% credible intervals.

our responsiveness hypothesis (H1$_c$), which posits that Republican non-veterans will be more likely to take up veterans' issues when a candidate who possesses that identity runs in their primary. Additionally, we do not find any statistically significant relationship among amateur Republican non-veterans. These results provide support for our strategic candidate hypotheses (H2$_c$), demonstrating that strategic Republican non-veterans have a greater probability of related issue coverage in the presence of a military veteran than their true amateur counterparts, all else equal.

Turning to our Democratic models in the right facet of Figure 5, we find that the presence of a military veteran in a Democratic primary has no effect on the likelihood of veterans' issue uptake for both professional and amateur non-veterans. Conditioning Democrats' issue uptake on whether the military veteran in their primary did (*Substantive Coverage*) or did not (*No Substantive Coverage*) discuss issues related to their own identity has no effect on this null finding. As expressed in our threat hypothesis (H3), we find that candidate responsiveness is contingent on their competitor's identity presenting an electoral threat. Unlike Republican voters, Democrats are not especially warm towards candidates with a history of military service. Because these veterans lack a perceived electoral advantage with same-party voters, Democratic non-veterans do not feel they must build their own reputation on veterans' issues. These results not only support a

key mechanism of our theory, but also underscore the importance of primary elections in shaping candidates' campaign behavior.

The Importance of Diversity in Campaigns

Today, more women and Black representatives are serving in the U.S. House of Representatives than ever before—but there is still significant progress to be made. Much research explores the benefits of electing more women and racial minorities to Congress. However, less attention has been paid to assess the benefits of seeing greater candidate diversity in elections. This paper makes significant strides in demonstrating that simply the *presence* of a female or Black Democrat in a primary can affect the kinds of issues taken up and talked about in that election. These findings are important because the contents of candidates' campaigns will have consequences on their legislative behavior, should they be elected to Congress. A variety of literature finds that representatives tend to follow through on their promises, legislating on and voting in accordance with those positions they touted during their campaigns (Sulkin, 2005, 2009). For example, Sulkin and Swigger (2008) find that election winners who discussed women's issues in their campaign advertisements had a higher legislative voting scorecard with the American Association for University Women (AAUW) in the subsequent session of Congress.

Following this literature, if more candidates from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds run, their presence will not only diversify the electoral dialogue but will also increase the probability that issues related to their identity will reach the halls of Congress—even if those candidates themselves do not win. This relationship, however, rests on the assumption that male and white primary election winners carry their discussions of women's and Black-associated issues onto the general election. To measure consistency in campaign position taking, we conducted a line-by-line comparison of primary and general election campaign platform text. Our comparisons include all male and white Democratic general election candidates who bested a female or Black candidate to earn their party's nomination. As evident in Figure 6, the majority of male and white Democrats who discussed women's and Black-associated issues in the primary carried forward their discussions to the general election. Over 80% of male/white candidates

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Figure 6: Changes in Platform Text on Women's or Black-Associated Issues from the Primary to General Election
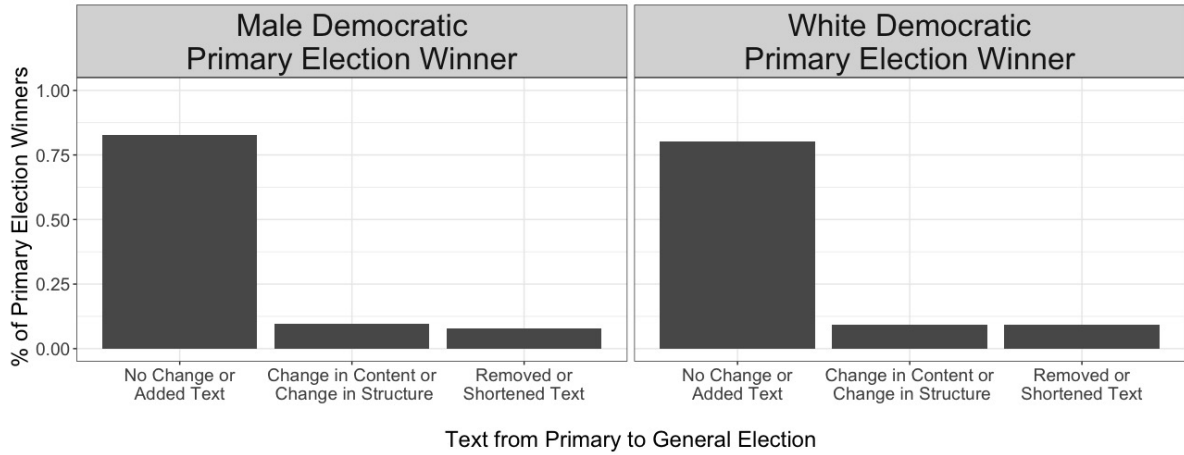
Note: Bars represent the percent of male/white primary election winners that fall into each coding category. Candidates are included in these plots if they were a male/white Democratic candidate went on to the general election after besting a female/Black candidate in their primary.

either made no changes to their platform text or added additional text on women's or Black-associated issues. Candidates from minority populations often feel that, in order to make their bid for Congress count, they must win their election (Lawless and Fox, 2010b). Our work should be encouraging to minority candidates who want to run—the mere presence of their candidacy has downstream consequences on the electoral dialogue and, potentially, legislative discussion.

Conclusion

In the preceding analysis, we demonstrate that candidates from underrepresented and underserved populations can affect the campaign behavior of their primary election opponents in significant ways. Using new data on the position taking behavior of candidates who ran in the 2018 and 2020 congressional primary elections, we find a strong association between the presence of a female or Black candidate in a race and the issues taken up by their same-party primary election opponents. Importantly, we show that this relationship is conditional on whether a candidate is a "professional competitor" or a "true amateur." Breaking from existing work, we also show that a male or white candidate's decision to take up women's or Black-associated issue can be tied to the *presence* of a competitor who possess that identity—not just a female or Black candidate's own discus-

sion of identity-related issues. Extending our analysis to examine military veterans, we demonstrate that candidate responsiveness to primary election competitors' descriptive identities is contingent on how appealing these characteristics are to same-party voters.

Female and Black congressional candidates face countless barriers, including stiffer competition (e.g., Lawless and Pearson 2008; Branton 2009), in their pursuit for elected office. What's more, these kinds of candidates are less likely to be recruited to run than similarly situated white men (e.g., Lawless and Fox 2010a; Juenke and Shah 2016), potentially because party leaders see their chances of winning as lower (Doherty et al., 2019). Building on existing work, this analysis demonstrates that Black and female candidates are not weaker for their race and gender, rather these identities present a threat to primary election competitors because they are prized by primary election voters.

Finally, our analysis demonstrates that the diversity of a candidate's primary election competition has important implications on the issues they will take up in their own campaign. Moreover, comparing the platform text of candidates who won the primary with their issue coverage in the general election, we demonstrate that campaign website content remains largely *unchanged*. In other words, male and white candidates' coverage of issues that disproportionately affect women and Black Americans does not end with the primary. How candidates campaign is important because the positions they take during the election will inform how they govern. Politicians follow through on their campaign platforms after attaining office, making good on the promises they made to voters (Sulkin, 2009, 2011). Accordingly, if more candidates cover issues in their campaigns related to groups traditionally underserved in lawmaking, there should be a greater probability that these policy priorities will reach the halls of Congress. Furthermore, as more male/white candidates cover more traditional female/Black issues in their campaigns and follow through on those campaign promises in Congress, the stereotypes and biases voters perceive in candidates and elected officials may decrease (Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993). All of this broadly suggests that simply the *presence* of candidates from underrepresented populations in congressional elections is important to broadening substantive representation in the legislative arena and perhaps also changing voters' perceptions of candidates and their issue expertise.

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Online Appendix & Supplementary Information

Contents

A Data Collection & Issue Classification

The data collected for this project belongs to a broader, longitudinal study about the nature of elite communication in contemporary congressional elections. At the time of our initial data collection, this paper's development was in a nascent stage; therefore, the initial collection and labeling of campaign platform text was completed agnostic to the researcher's objectives for this paper. In our data collection effort, we sought to collect and code the major topic area for all platform positions found on campaign websites for all primary election candidates who emerged in a given election year. To offer complete transparency, a full description of our data collection practices will be presented here. Before their coding task began, RAs were given a codebook and attended a two-hour training on the text collection process. Our data collection/classification was completed in the following stages:

A.1 Stage 1: Candidate & Website Identification

To collect text data from candidate campaign websites, we first identified the names of all major party candidates running in 2018 and 2020 using candidate filings with the Federal Election Commission (FEC), as well as state-level elections websites. Using this list of names, we sought to identify the campaign website URLs for all candidates in each election year by following links from online repositories like Politics1.com, visiting candidates' social media pages, and conducting simple Google searches.

A small group of candidates running in the 2018 and 2020 primaries either had no official campaign website or, if they did adopt a website, did not outline any policy positions on that site. To determine if this missingness was non-random, we regressed policy platform presence on a series of candidate characteristics and election-level covariates. The full model for this analysis can be found in Table A1 of the following page. Candidates who raised nominal funds (less than $2,000) prior to their primary were the least likely to adopt a platform. Campaign platform adoption was also weak among candidates who garnered less than 5% of the vote share in their primary. Generally, these kinds of poor performing candidates lack any campaign presence—online or otherwise—so a missing website is not at all surprising. Although these types of candidates were less likely to have a campaign platform, they are still well-represented in our data. Of the 1,477 Democratic candidates that ran in 2018 and 2020 who *either* raised nominal campaign funds *or* garnered less than 5% of the vote, 1,250 or 83% had a campaign website.

A.2 Website Text Archival & Segmentation

A team of twenty research assistants were tasked with cataloging campaign website text. Each RA was assigned a random selection of candidate names and website URLs. To ensure consistency, text was collected the day before or the day of each candidate's congressional primary. A visualization of the coding procedure taken by the team of RAs can be found in Figure 1. This includes screenshots taken of the Qualtrics tracking survey that was employed for text collection.

To collect campaign website text data, RAs would first navigate to a candidate's website and verify that the URL matched their candidate's profile (i.e., ensure the right website was assigned to the right candidate). Then, using a Qualtrics tracking survey, RAs were instructed to indicate whether or not a campaign platform could be identified on a candidate's campaign website. A platform page or pages could almost always be found

Table A1: Main Indicators for Missingness in Policy Platform Adoption on
Congressional Campaign Website, 2018-2020

	DV: Presence of Policy Platform on Campaign Website
No Pre-Primary Election Campaign Receipts	-2.035^*
(Raised less than $2,000 prior to their primary)	(0.149)
Performed Poorly in the Primary	-0.579^*
(Garnered less than 5% of their primary's vote-share)	(0.191)
Current Member of Congress	0.297
	(0.279)
Ran Unopposed in the Primary	-0.250
	(0.217)
Previously Held Public Office	-0.274
(State-wide or local-level; prior Member of Congress)	(0.222)
Incumbent in Primary, Other Party	0.118
(Reference Category: Incumbent in Primary, Same Party)	(0.188)
Open Seat	0.357
	(0.208)
Constant	2.014^*
	(0.183)
Observations	1,718
Log Likelihood	-725.431
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,466.863
Note:	*p<0.05

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on the website's "main menu." This stage of data collection is illustrated as "Identify campaign platform page" in Figure 1. If the RA indicated that the web-page *did not* have a campaign platform, the Qualtrics tracking survey would direct coders to the end of the survey to answer a series of biographical questions about the candidate of interest (e.g., candidate partisanship or congressional district number). If the RA indicated that the website *did* have a campaign platform, the Qualtrics tracking survey would direct coders to a secondary page for text archival. This stage of data collection is illustrated as "Indicate platform page presence in Qualtrics form" in Figure 1.

At this point, RAs were instructed to copy and paste individual campaign platform positions into the Qualtrics tracking survey. The process of segmenting platform documents into platform points was straightforward; nearly all campaign platforms are organized into sets of paragraphs, where each paragraph addresses a specific platform topic or "point." Individual platform points are almost always nested under a label or heading describing that topic (i.e., Education, Healthcare, or Gun Rights). RAs were instructed to copy/paste a given platform point's body text and heading into the Qualtrics tracking survey. The most complex coding task assigned to RAs was the labeling of individual platform points for major topic area. Our goal with the labeling procedure was to classify individual platform points into broad categories to expedite future research (by ourselves or other researchers employing these text data). In the codebook, coders were provided with sample text that was illustrative of each major topic-area. If coders had questions about the classification of a particular text during their coding task, they were encouraged to reach out to one of the PIs for clarification. If coders were still unsure about text classification, they were encouraged to use the "Unknown/Don't Know" classifier; these texts were later classified by the PIs. This stage of data collection is illustrated as "Copy and Paste Text; Label for Major Topic Area" in Figure 1. A full list of major topic categories is presented below:

Table A2: Major Topic-Area Categories for Campaign Platform Segmentation

Healthcare & Entitlement Programs	Immigration
Agriculture	Infrastructure & Transportation
Crime & Public Safety	Military & Foreign Policy
Economy, Jobs & Trade	Support Troops / Veterans' Issues
Education	Local or District-Specific Issues
Energy and Environment	Political Opinions
Group Issues; Seniors & Vulnerable Populations	Religion
Government Reform & Constitution	Unknown / Don't Know / Other
Gun Rights & Reform	

Figure 1: Visualization of Initial Campaign Platform Collection & Segmentation
Procedure

A.3   Qualitative Validation for Identity-Related Issues

Using this compilation of platform text from congressional campaign websites, the authors sought to identify which Democratic candidates adopted progressive positions on issues of race and gender; the authors additionally sought to identify which Democratic and Republican candidates adopted positions on veterans' issues. Across 2018 and 2020, we identified a total of 27,484 platform points across all candidates' platform documents. To reduce our task of reading this near thirty-thousand document corpus of individual platform points, several steps were taken. Using our major topic labels, we culled our corpus to only include those platform points labeled as belonging to the "Group Issues; Seniors & Vulnerable Populations" category and/or the "Support the Troops / Veterans' Issues." Moreover, in case these broad categories did not fully capture all platform text on gender/race/veterans' issues, we also did a simple string search across all texts for the inclusion of topic-specific keywords and key-phrases. If a platform point text was identified as having at least two of these keywords or phrases, it was included in our culled corpus. A full list of keywords is presented below:

Women's Issues Keywords: women, woman, reproductive, gender, sex, sexual, equal, equality, harassment, parental, parent, planned parenthood, abortion, pro-choice, breast

Black-associated Issues Keywords: african, black, minimums, prison, bail, incarceration, police, demilitarize, defund, color, racism, racist, bias, supremacy, white, minorities, minority, criminal, black lives matter, blm, voter, voting, vote, suppression, id, school to prison, pipeline

Veterans' Issues Keywords: veteran, veterans, vet, va, tricare, suicide, ptsd, homelessness, unemployment, unemployed, unemploy, homeless, gi, service, thank, thanks

This identification strategy reduced our corpus of platform points from nearly 30,000 documents to just over 10,000. However, this identification approach surely resulted in the inclusion of some texts that did not specifically discuss women's, Black-associated, or veterans' issues. For instance, the "Group Issues" topic employed in our initial coding of platform text encompassed texts about gender equality and anti-racial discrimination *as well as positions* positions advocating for other disadvantaged groups (e.g., individuals with disabilities). Similarly, women's issues keywords like "equal" and "sexual" resulted in the inclusion of platform positions about LGBTQ+ advocacy in our culled corpus. Platform positions such as these needed to be identified and removed to accurately measure which candidates did/did not discuss identity-related issues of interest. Therefore, to ensure the highest level of accuracy in text identification, two coders read through the totality of our 10,000-document culled corpus to identify which platform point texts specifically addressed women, racial, or veterans' issues. These coders also served as authors on the paper. It is important to note that, during coding, the coders were blind to candidate name, race, gender, and veterans' status.

For our purposes, we coded a platform point as pertaining to "women's issues" if it discussed any of the policies outlined by The Women's March Network—the group responsible for coordinating the 2017 Women's March on Washington. The goals put forward by Black Lives Matter and the NAACP provided a template for identifying platform points addressing "Black-associated issues." A list of example policies for both candidate types is provided in Table 1 of the main paper. We identified veterans' issues using the

Table A3: Proportion of Topic Coverage by Democratic Primary Election Candidates, 2018-2020

Healthcare (e.g., Affordable Care Act, Medicare-for-All)	92.23%
Education (e.g., College Debt, School Choice, Vocational Training)	79.21%
Protecting the Environment (e.g., Paris Accords, Climate Crisis)	75.76%
Immigration (e.g., Citizenship, Defund ICE, Border Wall)	54.24%
Ending Gun Violence (e.g., School Shootings, Background Checks)	51.26%
LGBTQ+ Rights (e.g., Discrimination; HIV/AIDS Prevention)	41.36%
Foreign Policy (e.g., World leadership, Combating terrorism)	28.22%
Infrastructure (e.g., Transportation, Broadband Internet)	25.36%

policy priorities put forward by two advocacy groups: Concerned Veterans for America and With Honor. A list of example veterans' issues is provided in Table 3 of the main paper. In addition to explicit policy priorities, our issue definitions include broader topics like healthcare or gun-rights that are framed in racial or gendered terms. For instance, if a candidate covers education reform in their platform while also discussing the racial achievement gap, we would consider that candidate to have taken up a Black-associated issue. To exclude these kinds of discussions would be to misrepresent the scope of topics related to race and gender. For issues with an ideological slant, candidates were only considered to have covered a women's or Black-associated issue if their position was left-leaning. For instance, in their discussion of abortion, if a Democratic candidate stated that they were in favor of repealing *Roe v. Wade*, we would *not* consider that candidate as having covered a women's issue.

Upon the completion of this secondary coding task, an inter-coder reliability metric of 0.92 was calculated. All disputed texts were reviewed, discussed, and classified based on a majority decision among the authors. This arbitration process was additionally completed blind to candidate characteristics. All texts classified as covering women's, racial, or veterans' issues were stored in a .rds dataframe. These texts are made available in Supplementary Resources and Harvard Dataverse for this paper. Across 1,373 Democratic candidate platforms, we determined that 66% of women and 55% of men discussed women's issues. Additionally, 39% of white, non-Hispanic Democrats, 59% of Black Democrats, and 49% of other racial/ethnic minorities discussed Black-associated issues. To place these proportions in perspective, we identified eight other topic categories and, additionally, assessed the propensity at which candidates covered these issues. We chose these issue-areas because they appeared in both the 2016 and 2020 Democratic Party platforms. If candidates take up any and all issues into their campaign platforms, then these topics should be especially prevalent. In Table A3, what we instead find is that candidates are variable in their uptake of issues important to their party. For instance, while over 90% of Democratic primary elections candidates discussed healthcare in their platforms, just over 40% talked about LGBTQ+ Rights.

A.4   Descriptive Survey of Race & Gender Text

To explore potential differences in how men/women and white/Black candidates discuss issues, we employ a semi-supervised machine learning approach called Structural Topic

Models (STM). At its core, an STM defines topics as distributions of semantically cohesive words and determines topical content based on word co-occurrences. Put differently, an STM is able to determine the types of topics or "themes" talked about within a text and groups words into topics based on how often they are used together. We employ these models to evaluate the comparative specificity/vagueness of candidates' platform statements on issues of race and gender.

To prepare the text for modeling, we took several pre-processing steps standard in text analysis (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). First, we removed any stop words—commonly used words such as "the," "a," or "in" that have no substantive meaning but rather serve a purely grammatical function. Second, we discarded punctuation, numbers, and removed capitalization. Third, we simplified platform text vocabulary by stemming words, which removes word endings to reduce the dimensionality of text. For instance, using stemming, words like *legislative*, *legislator*, and *legislation* would simplify to *legislat-*. Finally, we removed infrequent words, dropping any terms that did not appear in at least twenty-five texts. Using a variety of metrics for model quality (e.g., held-out likelihood and semantic coherence), we specified seven topics in our Gender STM and six in our Race STM.

Topics identified in our Gender Model are presented in Table A4; topics identified in our Race Model are presented in Table A5. The left column in both tables is a topic label assigned by the authors based upon that topic's common theme; these labels were informed by the top word stems associated with that topic, presented in the middle column of Tables A4 and A5. The right column of both tables specifies the average amount of text dedicated to that topic across platform texts related to women's or Black-associated issues. For example, per Table A5, 17.78% of candidates' text about Black-associated issues was, on average, dedicated to the topic of "Voter Suppression."

For our purposes, several topics of note emerge. The topic "Broad Equality" in Tables A4 and A5 includes references broad-base discrimination within a variety of social groups (e.g., the Race STM in Table A5 features stems about racial justice *as well as* stems for equality based on gender and sexual orientation). Given these topics' broader focus, text associated with "Broad Equality" may more likely include vague overtures about equality and discrimination rather than specific policy proposals. On the other hand, the topic "Action & Advocate" in Table A4 embodies specific references to legislative action and advocacy through the inclusion of stems like *fight*, *vote*, and *congress-*. Accordingly, text associated with this topic may more likely discuss specific policy proposals about women's issues. No topic well-encapsulates legislative advocacy in Table A5 for our Race Model.

Table A4: Gender Model Topics

Description	Stems	%
Equal Pay	women, equal, pay, leav, cent, men, workplac, make, gap, paid fair, earn	20.11
Reproductive Rights	abort, right, access, reproduct, control, pregnanc, decis, bodi, birth, safe	18.30
Action & Advocate	fight, stand, effort, congress, protect, oppos, washington, vote, voic, defend	15.15
Broad Equality	right, equal, protect, discrimin, gender, human, person, justic, lgbtq, race	12.70
Healthcare	health, access, equal, healthcar, breast, medic, servic, cancer, qualiti, coverag	12.45
Childcare	child, worker, care, childcar, job, program, school, pre-k, infrastructur	11.68
Violence	violenc, sexual, domest, victim, abus, gun, support, assault, campus, survivor	9.62

Table A5: Race Model Topics

Description	Stems	%
War on Drugs	drug, marijuana, sentenc, war, send, color, sentenc, cannabi, offend, black	19.30
Broad Equality	right, equal, racial, discrimin, protect, gender, hate, lgbtq, ethnic, dream	18.33
Voter Suppression	suppress, vote, id, gerrymand, right, civil, holiday, registr, racis, interfer	17.78
Criminal Justice	justic, system, incarcer, rehabilit, recidiv, school-to-prison, nonviol, offend	17.27
Racial Inequality	black, white, gap, health, wage, access, district, color, unequ, repar	14.83
Law Enforcement	polic, oversight, train, reform, investig, camera, floyd, misconduct, de-escal	12.49

In Figure 2 we evaluate gendered difference in the proportion of text dedicate to each of the seven topics in Table A4. Point estimates falling to the left of the dashed line indicate that Democratic female candidates talked more about that particular topic in their platform text about women's issues than did Democratic male candidates. Point estimates falling to the right of the dashed line indicate that Democratic male candidates talked more about that particular topic than did Democratic female candidates. Point estimates are accompanied by 95% confidence intervals. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we see that women dedicate a statistically significantly greater proportion of their campaign platform text on women's issues to the "Action & Advocate" topic than do men. Conversely, male candidates dedicate a statistically significantly greater proportion of their text to the "Broad Equality" topic than do women. It is important to note that these effect sizes are fairly small; gendered differentials in the proportion of text dedicated to the "Action & Advocate" and "Broad Equality" topics are less than five percent.

Figure 2: Difference in Topic Prevalence by Gender in Platform Text on Women's Issues

Mean Diff. between Female and Male Candidates
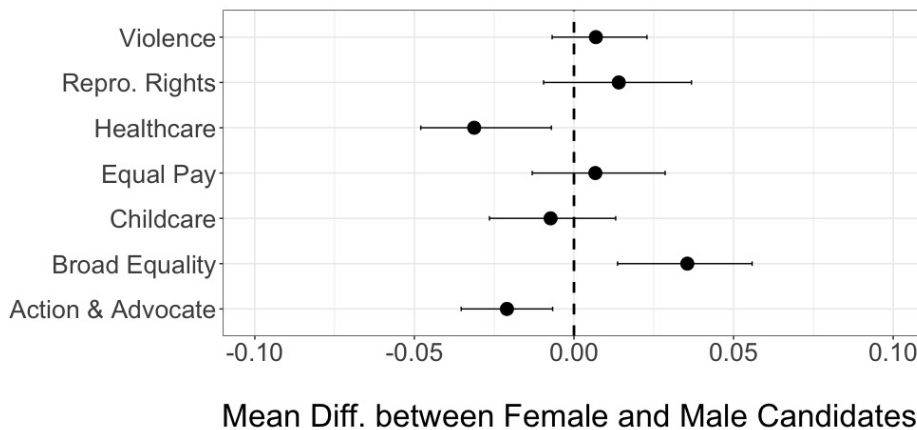
In Figure 3 we evaluate racial difference in the proportion of text dedicate to each of the six topics in Table A5. Point estimates falling to the left of the dashed line indicate that Democratic Black candidates talked more about that particular topic in their platform text about Black-associated issues than did Democratic white candidates. Point estimates falling to the right of the dashed line indicate that Democratic white candidates talked more about that particular topic than did Democratic Black candidates. Point estimates are accompanied by 95% confidence intervals. Figure 3 depicts a much larger difference in

white/Black candidate's inclusion of the "Broad Equality" topic than did Figure 2; white candidates dedicated ten percent more of their campaign platform text on race issues to this topic than did Black candidates. This finding suggests that white candidates' text is more likely to feature vague statements about race than are texts from Black candidates.

Figure 3: Difference in Topic Prevalence by Race in Platform Text on Black-Associated Issues

Mean Diff. between Black and White Candidates
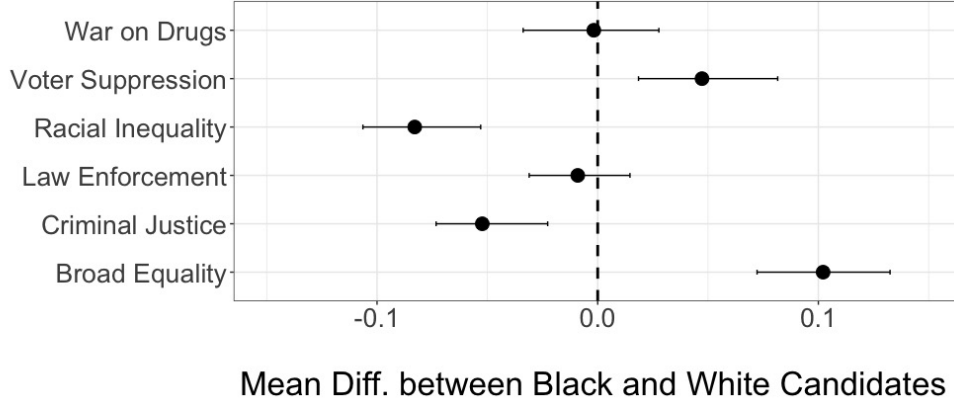
B Entropy Balancing

Before model estimation, we employ a non-parametric method for data preprocessing. This procedure endeavors to make our subsequent estimation for the effect of female/Black candidate presence more accurate and considerably less model-dependent (Ho et al. 2007). Methods such as matching and weighting achieve this aim by accounting for differences in covariates that, in our application, measure (1) a candidate's intrinsic likelihood to take up women's or Black-associated issues, and (2) indicate in which types of races a female and Black candidates may be more likely to emerge. This adjustment is done through the estimation of observational weights, which seek to achieve "balance" across covariates so candidates who *did* run against a descriptive competitor and those who *did not* are sufficiently similar. After the assignment of weights, a candidate's status as having run against a female/Black competitor is closer to being independent from previously specified covariates and, thus, model dependence is greatly reduced.

Although there are a number of methods for inducing balance across covariates, we employ a weighting methodology called entropy balancing (EB) developed by Hainmueller (2012). Entropy balancing purports a key advantage over more traditional matching methods (i.e. propensity score matching) in that it makes balance the primary target of intent. Put diferently, this approach eliminates the need to cyclically model propensity scores and check for covariate balance—what Imai et al. (2008) call the "propensity score tautology"—by directly incorporating covariate balance into the weight estimation procedure. Entropy balancing also (1) keeps estimates for observational weights as close as possible to their base weights to prevent loss of information and (2) is doubly robust (Zhao and Percival 2017). This means that if either the true outcome model corresponds to a linear regression on the covariates or the true treatment assignment model corresponds to a logistic regression on the covariates, the effect estimated using EB weights is unbiased.[14]

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[14]For a deeper discussion of the advantages of covariate balancing methods, see Imai et al. (2008).

Using the Weightlt package developed by Greifer (2020), we estimate balancing weights using the covariates described below. We estimate four sets of observational weights for our four candidate samples:

- Male Professional Democrats (Gender Model I)

- Male Amateur Democrats (Gender Model II)

- White Professional Democrats (Race Model I)

- White Amateur Democrats (Race Model II)

B.1   Observational Weight Estimation

In our analysis, we seek to achieve balance on covariates that measure a candidate's intrinsic likelihood to take up women's or Black-associated issues (the outcome) and covariates that indicate in which types of races a female or Black candidate may be more likely to run (key IV). Across all three models, we balance over some basic district conditions. Candidates tend to run in races where they perceive themselves as possessing an advantage (Maisel and Stone 1997; 2014). Accordingly, Black and female Democrats may be more likely to emerge in safely partisan congressional districts where they have greater clout with voters. To capture voter sentiment, we include a covariate that indicates partisan seat safety, captured through average presidential vote-share for that congressional district across 2016 and 2020. Moreover, incumbents tend to win reelection at overwhelming rates, therefore it is often most strategic for a candidate to emerge when a seat becomes vacant (Jacobson 1983). Therefore, in our covariate balancing, we include an indicator for "incumbent in race" (0) or "open seat" (1). Finally, there is competing research on the effects of a state's primary system (i.e. openness) on strategic candidate behavior (see McGhee et al. 2014; Hill 2015). To ensure our definition of balancing covariates is comprehensive, we include a binary indicator for whether or not a state's primary election system is "closed" (i.e. only registered partisans can vote in the primary).

B.1.1   IV: Female Candidate Emergence

To determine the effect of a female candidate's presence on male Democrats' campaign behavior, we balance over covariates that indicate in which types of races a female candidate may be more likely to emerge. Democratic female candidates are especially calculated in their decision to run, choosing to emerge only when they think that they have a good shot at winning (Fox and Lawless 2005; Fulton et al. 2006; Kanthak and Woon 2014). Therefore, we expect women to be more likely to run in districts that are safely-Democratic. These are the kinds of races where voters are especially receptive to female candidates (Dolan 2014) and where women may find greater success in building their donor networks (Thomsen and Swers 2017). Studies also suggest that women may be especially likely to emerge in districts without an incumbent (Palmer and Simon 1998). The presence of an incumbent is indicated by our "open race" covariate.

B.1.2 IV: Black Candidate Emergence

To determine the effect of a Black candidate's presence on white Democrats' campaign behavior, we balance over covariates that indicate in which types of races a Black candidate may be more likely to emerge. Similar to women, Black candidates are incredibly judicious in their decision to run and, therefore, less likely to emerge (Fox and Lawless 2005). The absence of Black candidates, however, may also be rooted in explanations irrespective of political ambition. Supply-side theories on minority candidate emergence note that, in districts with a small minority population, there may be no viable Black candidate to run for office—absent any hesitations that candidate may have about running (Canon 1996; Branton 2009; Shah 2014). To account for the baseline supply of potential Black candidates we include a continuous measure for the percent of Black residents in a congressional district, as reported by the 2018 American Community Survey. Moreover, Juenke and Shah (2016) find that district conditions like seat vacancy and partisanship are key predictors for Black candidate electoral success. Our measure for presidential vote-share and binary indicator for open race status capture these important factors which predict where Black candidates may be more likely to win and, therefore, where they may be especially likely to run.

B.1.3 Outcome Variable: Likelihood of Issue Coverage

We expect that a candidate's likelihood to cover Black-associated issues will be mediated by the number Democratic-leaning constituents in a district (captured by presidential vote-share), prevalence of Black constituents in a district (captured by % Black residents in district), and whether or not that candidate is running in a southern state. We expect that a candidate's likelihood to cover women's issues will be similarly mediated by whether or not a district leans Democratic. There may be some male or white Democrats who have a personal stake in an issue and, therefore, may be more likely to take up these issues. This is problematic because candidate intention is nearly impossible to observe; therefore, our ability to condition on this covariate is limited. We expect, however, that each individual candidate's inclination to take up a given issue will—to some extent—be mediated by whether or not he is "strategic." For instance, even if a male Democrat genuinely cares about advocating for women's equality, he should be far less likely to cover this topic if he is running in a Republican-controlled district. In such a race, covering "women's issues" presents no advantage to that candidate and, in all likelihood, discussing this topic would serve as a liability (e.g. Thomsen 2015; McDonald et al. 2020). Therefore, by controlling for candidate strategic intent, we can (somewhat) account for a candidate's unobserved personal convictions towards a policy.

B.2 Love Plots: Covariate Distributional Balance

We establish balance across all covariates identified in Table 2 on the main paper. Plots of covariate distributions are presented in Figures 4 through 7. These figures depict— before and after weighting—the absolute mean differences in the covariate distributional balance for white and male Democratic candidates who did and did not run against a descriptive opponent in their partisan primary election. To best approximate the conditions of a controlled experiment using observational data, these mean difference between candidate types should be close to zero. The dotted line indicates a 0.05 threshold; points falling to the left of this line indicates balance has been achieved for that covariate. To

provide a mode of comparison beyond unweighted data, covariate distributions weighted with the covariate balancing propensity score methodology (CBPS) proposed by Imai and Ratkovic (2012) are also plotted. In each instance plotted, entropy balancing outperforms unweighted data and CBPS in achieving covariate distributional balance.

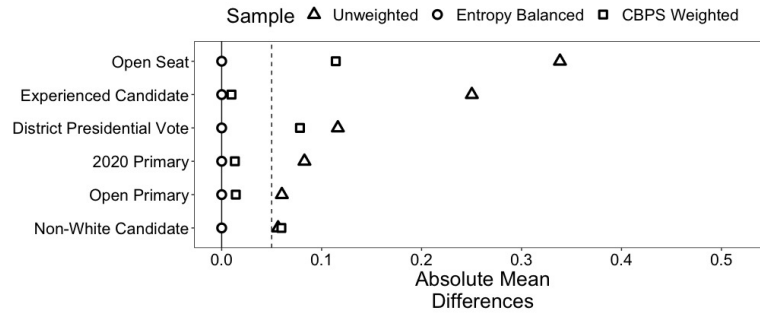Figure 4: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for Male Democratic Professional Candidates

Figure 5: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for Male Democratic Amateur Candidates
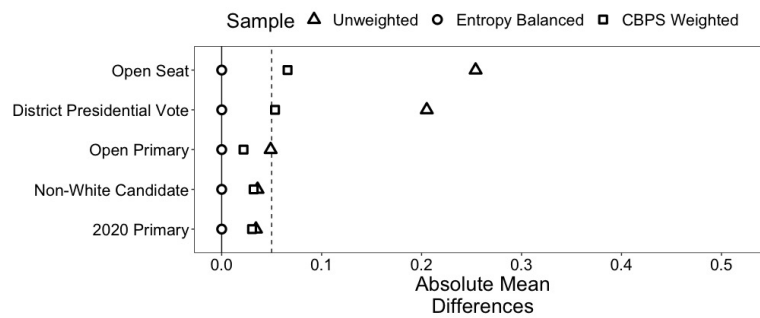
Figure 6: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for White Democratic Professional Candidates
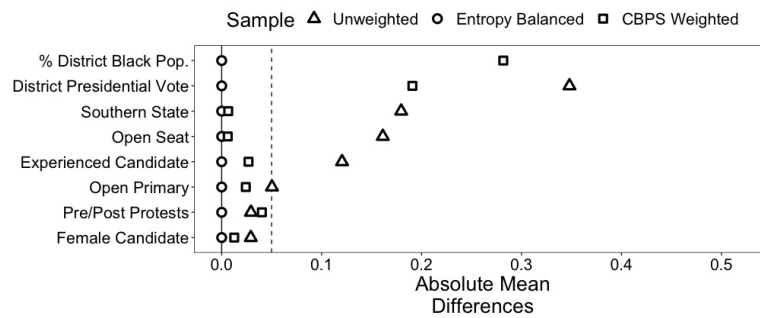
Figure 7: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for White Democratic Amateur Candidates

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Table A6: Full Results: Logistic Regression for Male Professional Democrats' Coverage of Women's Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Women's Issues in Campaign Platforms				
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)		(Model 3)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Female Candidate	1.218*	0.793*	1.250*	0.821*	1.079*
	(0.325)	(0.230)	(0.314)	(0.238)	(0.328)
Experience in Elected Office	−0.855*	−0.661*	−0.919*	−0.757*	−1.025*
	(0.291)	(0.239)	(0.366)	(0.296)	(0.324)
Current Member of Congress			−0.819*	−0.607*	
			(0.373)	(0.303)	
Open Race	−0.674	−0.185	−0.646	−0.128	−0.664
	(0.370)	(0.282)	(0.415)	(0.311)	(0.381)
Dem. Presidential Vote	0.008	−0.001	0.008	−0.001	
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.009)	
Seat Safety: Democratic (Reference: Competitive)					0.251
					(0.494)
Seat Safety: Republican (Reference: Competitive)					−0.782
					(0.488)
Primary Type: Open	−0.145	−0.141	−0.147	−0.143	0.152
	(0.337)	(0.212)	(0.336)	(0.212)	(0.309)
2020	−0.182	0.091	−0.176	0.089	−0.193
	(0.293)	(0.209)	(0.299)	(0.211)	(0.283)
Non-White Candidate	0.193	0.197	0.186	0.188	0.209
	(0.370)	(0.330)	(0.371)	(0.331)	(0.381)
Constant	−0.045	0.397	−0.045	0.435	0.583
	(0.615)	(0.457)	(0.635)	(0.470)	(0.550)
Observations	430	430	430	430	430
Log Likelihood		−278.299		−277.961	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		572.598		573.922	
Pseduo R^2	0.16		0.16		0.17

Note: *p<0.05

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Table A7: Full Results: Logistic Regression for Male Amateur Democrats' Coverage of Women's Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

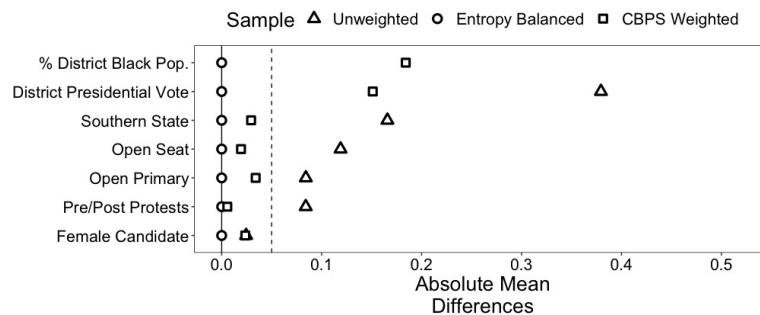|	(Model 1)		(Model 2)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Female Candidate	0.573*	0.284	0.550*
	(0.268)	(0.213)	(0.265)
Open Race	−0.248	−0.061	−0.270
	(0.280)	(0.240)	(0.281)
Dem. Presidential Vote	0.004	0.001	
	(0.008)	(0.007)	
Seat Safety: Democratic			−0.244
(Reference: Competitive)			(0.387)
Seat Safety: Republican			−0.268
(Reference: Competitive)			(0.338)
Primary Type: Open	0.016	0.051	−0.002
	(0.266)	(0.220)	(0.258)
2020	−0.094	0.116	−0.057
	(0.236)	(0.203)	(0.240)
Non-White Candidate	−0.224	−0.274	−0.211
	(0.310)	(0.281)	(0.310)
Constant	−0.337	−0.080	0.099
	(0.461)	(0.394)	(0.386)
Observations	425	425	425
Log Likelihood		−291.405	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		596.811	
Pseudo R^2	0.03		0.03

Note: *p<0.05

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Table A8: Full Results: Logistic Regression for White Professional Democrats' Coverage of Black-Associated Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Issues in Campaign Platforms					
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)		(Model 3)	(Model 4)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Presence of Black Candidate	0.937*	0.860*	0.749*	0.690*	1.026*	0.947*
	(0.327)	(0.271)	(0.282)	(0.277)	(0.335)	(0.402)
Experience in Elected Office	−1.689*	−0.915*	−0.039	−0.451	−1.707*	−0.920*
	(0.402)	(0.229)	(0.355)	(0.269)	(0.419)	(0.230)
Current Member of Congress			−2.176*	−1.611*		
			(0.488)	(0.325)		
Open Race	0.304	0.048	−0.131	−0.268	0.497	0.054
	(0.503)	(0.251)	(0.328)	(0.271)	(0.491)	(0.252)
Dem. Presidential Vote	0.028	0.029*	0.059*	0.047*		0.029*
	(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.013)		(0.011)
Seat Safety: Democratic (Reference: Competitive)					0.298	
					(0.471)	
Seat Safety: Republican (Reference: Competitive)					−0.343	
					(0.531)	
Primary Type: Open	0.223	−0.332	−0.143	−0.350	0.332	−0.321
	(0.384)	(0.205)	(0.296)	(0.208)	(0.385)	(0.209)
Pre/Post George Floyd	0.514	0.656*	1.112*	0.800*	0.616	0.662*
	(0.469)	(0.237)	(0.316)	(0.247)	(0.447)	(0.239)
Female	0.108	0.163	0.514	0.088	0.097	0.161
	(0.394)	(0.200)	(0.276)	(0.203)	(0.384)	(0.200)
District % Black Population	0.004	0.007		0.010		0.011
	(0.024)	(0.015)		(0.016)		(0.021)
Above Average Black Pop.					0.781	
					(0.454)	
South	0.088	0.066	0.068	0.123	−0.164	0.053
	(0.467)	(0.249)	(0.306)	(0.253)	(0.445)	(0.253)
Presence of Black Candidate× District % Black Population						−0.008
						(0.026)
Constant	−1.783	−1.757*	−3.353*	−2.465*	−0.884	−1.800*
	(1.114)	(0.562)	(0.869)	(0.620)	(0.606)	(0.581)
Observations	505	505	505	505	505	505
		−308.181		−302.925		−308.138
Akaike Inf. Crit.		636.361		627.849		638.275
Pseduo R²	0.19		0.21		0.21	

Note: *p<0.05

Table A9: Full Results: Logistic Regression for White Amateur Democrats' Coverage of Black-Associated Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Issues in Campaign Platforms		
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Black Candidate	0.246	−0.106	0.064
	(0.305)	(0.269)	(0.281)
Open Race	−0.318	−0.287	−0.140
	(0.358)	(0.250)	(0.360)
Dem. Presidential Vote	0.043*	0.026*	
	(0.017)	(0.011)	
Seat Safety: Democratic (Reference: Competitive)			−0.006
			(0.505)
Seat Safety: Republican (Reference: Competitive)			−0.965
			(0.499)
Primary Type: Open	0.291	0.028	−0.033
	(0.408)	(0.241)	(0.326)
Pre/Post George Floyd Protests	0.341	0.382	0.189
	(0.400)	(0.286)	(0.389)
Female	0.552	0.242	0.132
	(0.327)	(0.228)	(0.311)
District % Black Population	−0.001	0.044*	
	(0.018)	(0.017)	
Above Average District Black Pop.			0.823*
			(0.301)
South	1.572*	0.689*	1.030*
	(0.392)	(0.251)	(0.373)
Constant	−3.346*	−2.178*	−0.623
	(0.970)	(0.559)	(0.473)
Observations	429	429	429
Log Likelihood		−269.449	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		556.899	
Pseudo R²	0.20		0.15

Note: *p<0.05

Table A10: Issue Adoption Among Professional Candidates Running Against a Female/Black Candidate

	DV: Adopted Issues in Campaign Platform	
	(Male Professional) Candidate	(White Professional) Candidate
Experience in Elected Office	−1.344* (0.370)	−1.203* (0.635)
Open Race	0.276 (0.359)	−0.729 (0.651)
Dem. Presidential Vote	0.014 (0.014)	0.019 (0.034)
District % Blck Population		0.006 (0.029)
Primary Type: Open	−0.174 (0.341)	−1.455* (0.637)
2020	−0.493 (0.333)	
Pre/Post George Floyd Protests		1.499* (0.799)
Non-White	−0.431 (0.468)	
Female		−0.469 (0.555)
Substantive Issue Coverage	0.723 (0.453)	0.252 (0.588)
Strategic Descriptive Opponent	−0.206 (0.402)	0.823 (0.548)
# of Candidates in Race	−0.077 (0.058)	0.052 (0.116)
Constant	0.918 (0.751)	0.918 (0.751)
Observations	210	95
Log Likelihood	−119.638	−49.799
Akaike Inf. Crit.	259.277	123.597

Note:	17	*p<0.05

C Sensitivity Analysis

We endeavor to understand to what extent unobserved cofounders may be responsible for our findings for the effect of descriptive candidate presence, as presented in Tables A6 through Table A8. To do so, we employ the sensmakr package developed by Cinelli et al. (2020). A sensitivity analysis examining the fragility of our estimates for professional male Democratic responsiveness is presented in Table A11. A sensitivity analysis examining the fragility of our estimates for amateur male Democratic responsiveness is presented in Table A12. Moreover, a sensitivity analysis examining the fragility of our estimates for professional white Democratic responsiveness is presented in Table A13.

C.1 Robustness: Male Democratic Candidates

Table A11: Sensitivity Analysis: Professional Male Democrat Responsiveness to the Presence of a Female Candidate

Outcome: Probability of Discussing Women's Issues (0,1)

Treatment:	Est.	S.E.	t-value	$R^2_{Y \sim D|\mathbf{X}}$	$RV_{q=1}$	$RV_{q=1,\alpha=0.05}$
Presence of Female Candidate	0.278	0.046	6.112	8.1%	25.7%	18.2%
Observations = 430					*Bound (3x Previously Held Elected Office)*	

Table A12: Sensitivity Analysis: Amateur Male Democrat Responsiveness to the Presence of a Female Candidate

Outcome: Probability of Discussing Women's Issues (0,1)

Treatment:	Est.	S.E.	t-value	$R^2_{Y \sim D|\mathbf{X}}$	$RV_{q=1}$	$RV_{q=1,\alpha=0.05}$
Presence of Female Candidate	0.141	0.05	2.835	1.9%	12.9%	4.2%
Observations = 425					*Bound (3x Non-White Candidate)*	

The partial R^2 of descriptive candidate presence (treatment) with candidate issue uptake (outcome) presented in column 4 of Table A11 demonstrates that an extreme confounder (orthogonal to the covariates) that explains 100% of the residual variance of the outcome, would need to explain at least 8.1% of the residual variance of the treatment to fully account for the observed estimated effect. Per column 5 of Table A11, unobserved confounders (orthogonal to the covariates) that explain more than 25.7% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome to fully account for our findings (i.e. bring the point estimate to 0). If unobserved cofounders were to explain 18.2% of the residual variance of both the treatment and outcome, these factors would be sufficiently strong enough to make our results indifferent from zero at the significance level of 0.05.

The partial R^2 of descriptive candidate presence (treatment) with candidate issue uptake (outcome) presented in column 4 of Table A12 demonstrates that an extreme confounder (orthogonal to the covariates) that explains 100% of the residual variance of the outcome, would need to explain at least 1.9% of the residual variance of the treatment to fully account for the observed estimated effect. Per column 5 of Table A12, unobserved confounders (orthogonal to the covariates) that explain more than 12.9% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome to fully account for our findings (i.e.

Figure 8: Sensitivity contour plots in the partial R2 scale with benchmark bounds for Professional Male Democrats
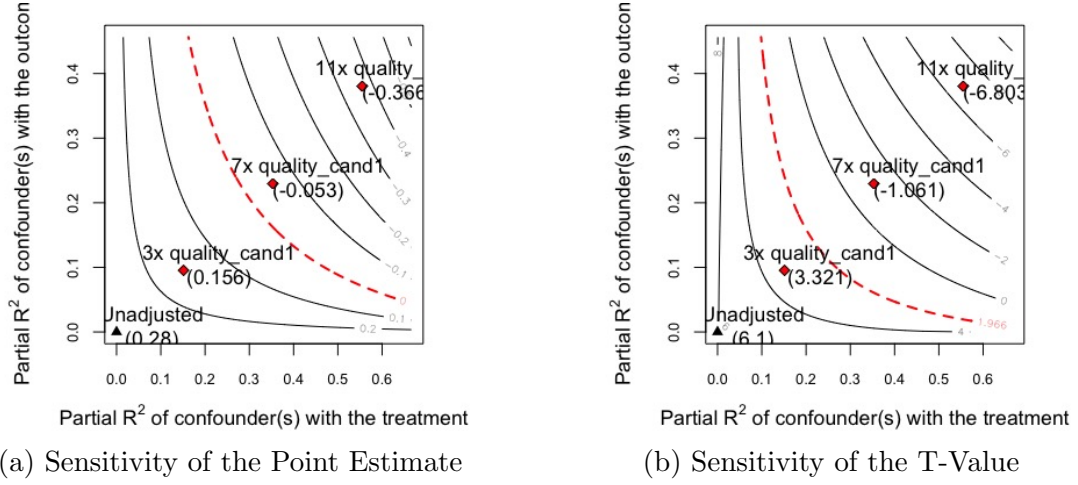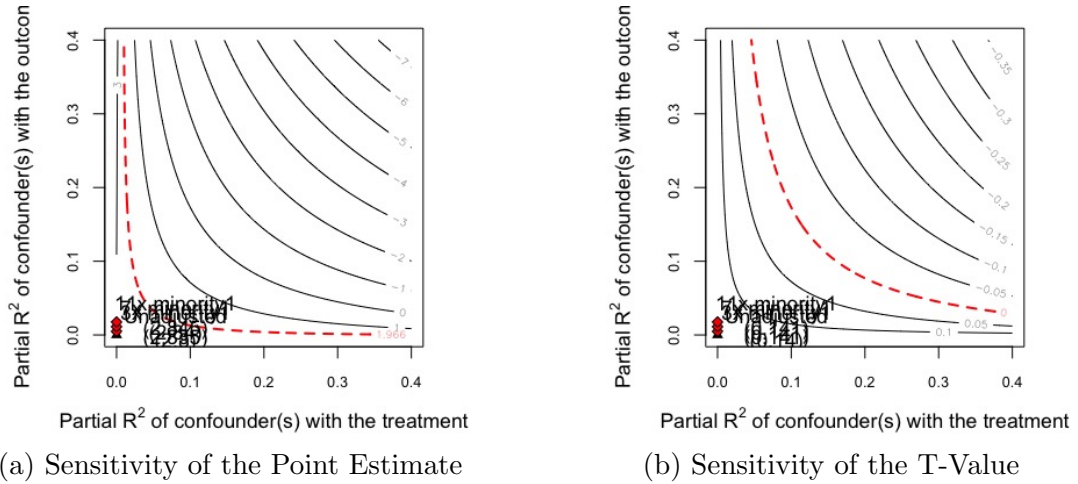

(a) Sensitivity of the Point Estimate

(b) Sensitivity of the T-Value

Figure 9: Sensitivity contour plots in the partial R2 scale with benchmark bounds for Amateur Male Democrats

(a) Sensitivity of the Point Estimate

(b) Sensitivity of the T-Value

bring the point estimate to 0). If unobserved cofounders were to explain 4.2% of the residual variance of both the treatment and outcome, these factors would be sufficiently strong enough to make our results indifferent from zero at the significance level of 0.05.

Next, in Figure 8(a) Figure 8(b), we visually demonstrate how confounders of different types would affect point estimates and t-values for our professional Democratic male model. The horizontal axis describes the fraction of the residual variation in the treatment (partial R^2) explained by the confounder; the vertical axis describes the fraction of the residual variation in the outcome explained by the confounder. The contours show the adjusted estimate that would be obtained for an unobserved confounder (in the full model) with hypothesized values of the sensitivity parameters. The three reference points show that a confounder 3x, 7x, or 11x stronger than observed covariate *Previously Held Elected Office* still produce robust findings. Figure 8(b) shows the sensitivity of the t-value of the treatment effect. As we move along the horizontal axis, the adjusted effect and standard-errors remain fairly consistent. This plot shows that the statistical significance of our treatment remains robust to a confounder 3x, 7x, or 11x stronger than observed covariate *Previously Held Elected Office*.

Similarly, in Figure 9(a) Figure 9(b), we visually demonstrate how confounders of different types would affect point estimates and t-values for our amateur Democratic male model. The horizontal axis describes the fraction of the residual variation in the treatment (partial R^2) explained by the confounder; the vertical axis describes the fraction of the residual variation in the outcome explained by the confounder. The contours show the adjusted estimate that would be obtained for an unobserved confounder (in the full model) with hypothesized values of the sensitivity parameters. The three reference points show that a confounder 3x, 7x, or 11x stronger than observed covariate *Non-White Candidate* still produce robust findings. Figure 9(b) shows the sensitivity of the t-value of the treatment effect. As we move along the horizontal axis, the adjusted effect and standard-errors remain fairly consistent. This plot shows that the statistical significance of our treatment remains robust to a confounder 3x, 7x, or 11x stronger than observed covariate *Non-White Candidate*.

## C.2 Robustness: White Democratic Candidates

Table A13: Sensitivity Analysis: Professional White Democrat Responsiveness to the Presence of a Black Candidate

Outcome: Probability of Discussing Black-Associated Issues (0,1)

Treatment:	Est.	S.E.	t-value	$R^2_{Y \sim D|\mathbf{X}}$	$RV_{q=1}$	$RV_{q=1,\alpha=0.05}$
Presence of Black Candidate	0.201	0.053	3.82	2.9%	15.8%	8%
Observations = 429			*Bound (2x Previously Held Elected Office)*			

The partial R^2 of descriptive candidate presence (treatment) with candidate issue uptake (outcome) presented in column 4 of Table A13 demonstrates that an extreme confounder (orthogonal to the covariates) that explains 100% of the residual variance of the outcome, would need to explain at least 2.9% of the residual variance of the treatment to fully account for the observed estimated effect. Per column 5 of Table A13, unobserved confounders (orthogonal to the covariates) that explain more than 15.8% of the residual variance of both the treatment and the outcome to fully account for our findings (i.e. bring the point estimate to 0). If unobserved cofounders were to explain 8% of the residual variance of both the treatment and outcome, these factors would be sufficiently strong enough to make our results indifferent from zero at the significance level of 0.05.

Next, in Figure 10(a) Figure 10(b), we visually demonstrate how confounders of different types would affect point estimates and t-values for our professional Democratic male model. The horizontal axis describes the fraction of the residual variation in the treatment (partial R^2) explained by the confounder; the vertical axis describes the fraction of the residual variation in the outcome explained by the confounder. The contours show the adjusted estimate that would be obtained for an unobserved confounder (in the full model) with hypothesized values of the sensitivity parameters. The three reference points show that a confounder 4x, 6x, or 8x stronger than observed covariate *Previously Held Elected Office* still produce robust findings. Figure 10(b) shows the sensitivity of the t-value of the treatment effect. As we move along the horizontal axis, the adjusted effect and standard-errors remain fairly consistent. This plot shows that the statistical significance of our treatment remains robust to a confounder 4x, 6x, or 8x stronger than observed covariate *Previously Held Elected Office*.

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Figure 10: Sensitivity contour plots in the partial R2 scale with benchmark bounds for Professional Male Democrats

(a) Sensitivity of the Point Estimate

(b) Sensitivity of the T-Value
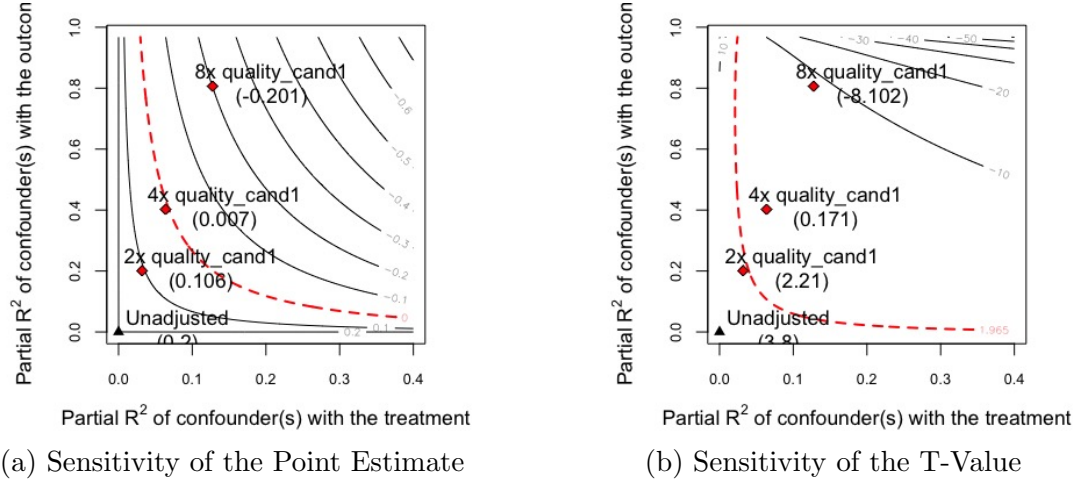
D   Analysis Extension: Military Veterans

Table A14: Covariates for Military Veteran Democratic and Republican Models

Model Covariate	Covariate Values	
Unit of Analysis: Non-Veteran Primary Election Candidates		
Dependent Variable: Discussed Veterans' Issues in Congressional Campaign Platform		
Independent Variables:		
Presence of a Military Veteran	0 (No Veteran)	1 (Veteran)
Open Seat	0 (Incumbent in Race)	1 (Open Seat)
Primary Election Rules	0 (Closed Primary)	1 (Open Primary)
Candidate Gender	0 (Male)	1 (Female)
# of Military Installations	0 (Min)	21 (Max)
District % Military Veterans	0-100 (reported by U.S. Army, 2015)	
District Seat Safety	0-100 (2016 and 2020 same-party presidential vote, averaged)	

D.1   Entropy Balancing

To determine the effect of a military veteran's presence on non-veteran Republicans' campaign behavior, we balance over covariates that indicate in which types of races a military veteran may be more likely to emerge. Supply-side explanations may also provide a rationale for the emergence patterns of Republican military veterans. Certain congressional districts—particularly those with a military base or resources for veterans—tend to have larger populations of veterans and, therefore, have a larger supply of potential candidates. Aside from an elevated presence of veterans, these kinds of installations also provide jobs for the local community and support the local economy, making defense-related issues especially salient to constituents. Studies on the strategic campaign behavior of veterans are limited. However, the nascent body of work dedicated to this topic indicates military vets tend to run in "high opportunity" environments (e.g. Collens 2020). Districts

with constituent populations who care deeply about veterans and policies related to the military seem to fit this description. For all of these reasons, we include count for the number of a military base in a district and the presence of a VA hospital to approximate the salience of veteran-related issues to that district's constituency.

D.2 Love Plots: Covariate Distributional Balance

We establish balance across all covariates identified in Table A14. Plots of covariate distributions are presented in Figures 11 through 14. These figures depict—before and after weighting—the absolute mean differences in the covariate distributional balance for non-veteran Democratic and Republican candidates who did and did not run against a military veteran in their partisan primary election. To best approximate the conditions of a controlled experiment using observational data, these mean difference between candidate types should be close to zero. The dotted line indicates a 0.05 threshold; points falling to the left of this line indicates balance has been achieved for that covariate. To provide a mode of comparison beyond unweighted data, covariate distributions weighted with the covariate balancing propensity score methodology (CBPS) proposed by Imai and Ratkovic (2012) are also plotted. In each instance plotted, entropy balancing outperforms unweighted data and CBPS in achieving covariate distributional balance.

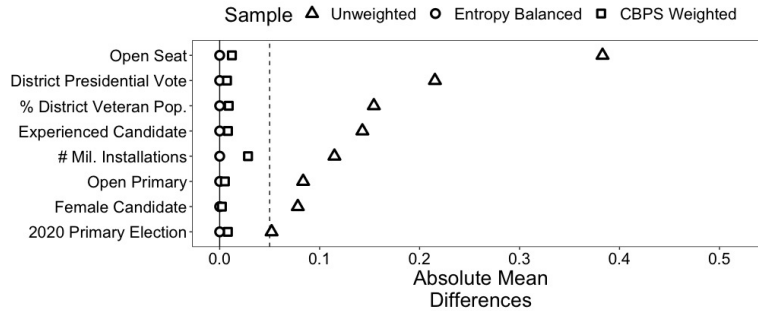Figure 11: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for Non-Vet. Republican Professional Candidates

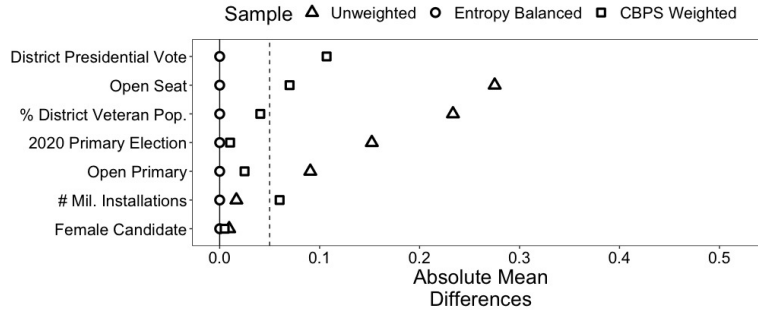Figure 12: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for Non-Vet. Republican Amateur Candidates

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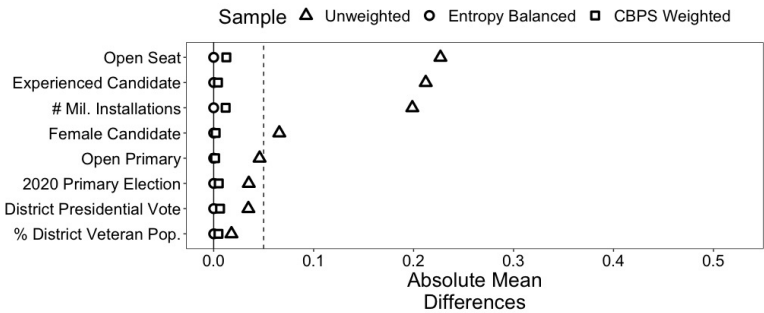Figure 13: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for White Democratic Professional Candidates

Figure 14: Covariate Balance: Love Plot for White Democratic Amateur Candidates
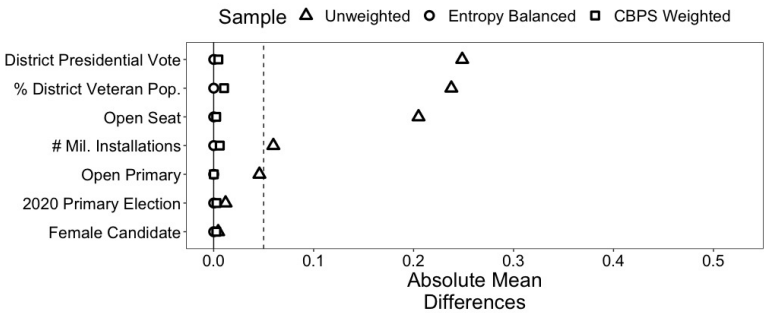
Table A15: Full Results: Logistic Regression for Non-Veteran Professional Republicans'
Coverage of Veterans' Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Veterans' Issues in Campaign Platforms				
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)		(Model 3)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Military Veteran	0.784*	0.424*	0.958*	0.660*	0.778*
	(0.241)	(0.214)	(0.252)	(0.228)	(0.244)
Experience in Elected Office	−0.269	0.123	−0.633*	−0.353	−0.429
	(0.304)	(0.232)	(0.318)	(0.262)	(0.303)
Current Member of Congress			0.366	0.904*	
			(0.402)	(0.318)	
Open Race	−0.772*	−0.292	−0.095	0.382	−0.878*
	(0.266)	(0.235)	(0.352)	(0.297)	(0.259)
Rep. Presidential Vote	−0.011	−0.011	−0.027	−0.024*	
	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.012)	
Seat Safety: Democratic (Reference: Competitive)					−0.580
					(0.509)
Seat Safety: Republican (Reference: Competitive)					−0.167
					(0.314)
Primary Type: Open	−0.051	−0.158	−0.277	−0.252	−0.102
	(0.293)	(0.212)	(0.308)	(0.217)	(0.274)
2020	−0.816*	−0.254	−0.761*	−0.120	−0.779*
	(0.256)	(0.190)	(0.266)	(0.196)	(0.258)
District % Veteran Population	0.572	0.868*	0.442	0.769*	
	(0.294)	(0.241)	(0.301)	(0.246)	
Above Average Veteran Population					1.158*
					(0.291)
# of Military Installations	0.068	0.009	0.068	0.037	0.064
	(0.046)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.039)	(0.041)
Female	−0.088	0.156	0.229	0.272	0.120
	(0.306)	(0.237)	(0.327)	(0.242)	(0.318)
Constant	1.247	0.881	1.823*	1.096	0.068
	(0.789)	(0.608)	(0.824)	(0.619)	(0.412)
Observations	512	512	512	512	512
Log Likelihood		−336.458		−329.133	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		692.917		680.266	
Psuedo R^2	0.15		0.19		0.19

Note: *p<0.05

Table A16: Full Results: Logistic Regression for Non-Veteran Amateur Republicans'
Coverage of Veterans' Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Veterans' Issues in Campaign Platforms		
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Military Veteran	0.230	0.242	0.250
	(0.294)	(0.234)	(0.290)
Open Race	0.247	0.385	0.307
	(0.315)	(0.263)	(0.319)
Rep. Presidential Vote	0.013	0.005	
	(0.011)	(0.009)	
Seat Safety: Democratic			0.123
(Reference: Competitive)			(0.334)
Seat Safety: Republican			0.322
(Reference: Competitive)			(0.347)
Primary Type: Open	−0.314	−0.252	−0.309
	(0.271)	(0.224)	(0.284)
2020	−0.062	0.026	−0.046
	(0.289)	(0.223)	(0.290)
District % Veteran Population	0.075	0.092	
	(0.347)	(0.280)	
Above Average Veteran Population			0.239
			(0.313)
# of Military Installations	−0.009	−0.014	−0.015
	(0.061)	(0.049)	(0.058)
Female	0.257	0.218	0.228
	(0.294)	(0.251)	(0.301)
Constant	−1.278*	−0.999*	−0.963*
	(0.602)	(0.463)	(0.439)
Observations	398	398	398
Log Likelihood		−252.334	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		522.668	
Psuedo R^2	0.0315		0.0299

Note:			*p<0.05

Table A17: Full Results: Logistic Regression for Non-Veteran Professional Democrats' Coverage of Veterans' Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Veterans' Issues in Campaign Platforms				
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)		(Model 3)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Military Veteran	0.116	0.169	0.320	0.355	0.020
	(0.205)	(0.202)	(0.209)	(0.207)	(0.210)
Experience in Elected Office	0.465*	0.560*	−0.199	−0.117	0.476*
	(0.223)	(0.185)	(0.273)	(0.229)	(0.231)
Current Member of Congress			1.490*	1.385*	
			(0.277)	(0.249)	
Open Race	−0.547*	−0.711*	−0.125	−0.155	−0.575*
	(0.255)	(0.208)	(0.276)	(0.232)	(0.258)
Dem. Presidential Vote	−0.003	0.007	−0.013	−0.009	
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.008)	
Seat Safety: Democratic (Reference: Competitive)					−0.470
					(0.278)
Seat Safety: Republican (Reference: Competitive)					−0.593
					(0.304)
Primary Type: Open	0.238	0.106	0.210	0.148	0.246
	(0.224)	(0.169)	(0.229)	(0.173)	(0.228)
2020	−0.332	−0.179	−0.466*	−0.275	−0.311
	(0.210)	(0.165)	(0.219)	(0.171)	(0.212)
District % Veteran Population	0.319	0.670*	0.340	0.663*	
	(0.240)	(0.202)	(0.246)	(0.205)	
Above Average Veteran Population					0.090
					(0.230)
# of Military Installations	0.038	0.005	0.047	0.011	0.070
	(0.037)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.041)
Female	0.009	−0.180	0.257	−0.040	0.086
	(0.218)	(0.164)	(0.217)	(0.170)	(0.224)
Constant	−0.161	−0.562	−0.015	−0.125	−0.050
	(0.467)	(0.400)	(0.488)	(0.421)	(0.312)
Observations	668	668	668	668	668
Log Likelihood		−441.126		−426.447	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		902.252		874.894	
Psuedo R^2	0.06		0.12		0.08

Note: *p<0.05

Table A18: Full Results: Logistic Regression for Non-Veteran Amateur Democrats'
Coverage of Veterans' Issues in Online Campaign Platforms, 2018-2020

	DV: Adopted Veterans' Issues in Campaign Platforms		
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)
Balancing Weights	✓	✗	✓
Presence of Military Veteran	0.026	0.099	−0.016
	(0.224)	(0.216)	(0.224)
Open Race	0.081	−0.034	0.111
	(0.247)	(0.218)	(0.237)
Dem. Presidential Vote	0.008	0.004	
	(0.009)	(0.007)	
Seat Safety: Democratic (Reference: Competitive)			−0.387
			(0.379)
Seat Safety: Republican (Reference: Competitive)			−0.266
			(0.330)
Primary Type: Open	−0.270	−0.337	−0.522*
	(0.268)	(0.209)	(0.246)
2020	−0.095	−0.059	0.035
	(0.228)	(0.189)	(0.221)
District % Veteran Population	0.603	0.770*	
	(0.319)	(0.245)	
Above Average Veteran Population			0.462
			(0.277)
# of Military Installations	0.049	0.007	0.070
	(0.047)	(0.038)	(0.041)
Female	0.086	0.171	0.036
	(0.220)	(0.193)	(0.225)
Constant	−0.933	−0.638	−0.490
	(0.555)	(0.427)	(0.369)
Observations	539	539	539
Log Likelihood		−342.523	
Akaike Inf. Crit.		703.047	
Psuedo R^2	0.04		0.06

Note: *p<0.05