



# Summarizing the Sixth

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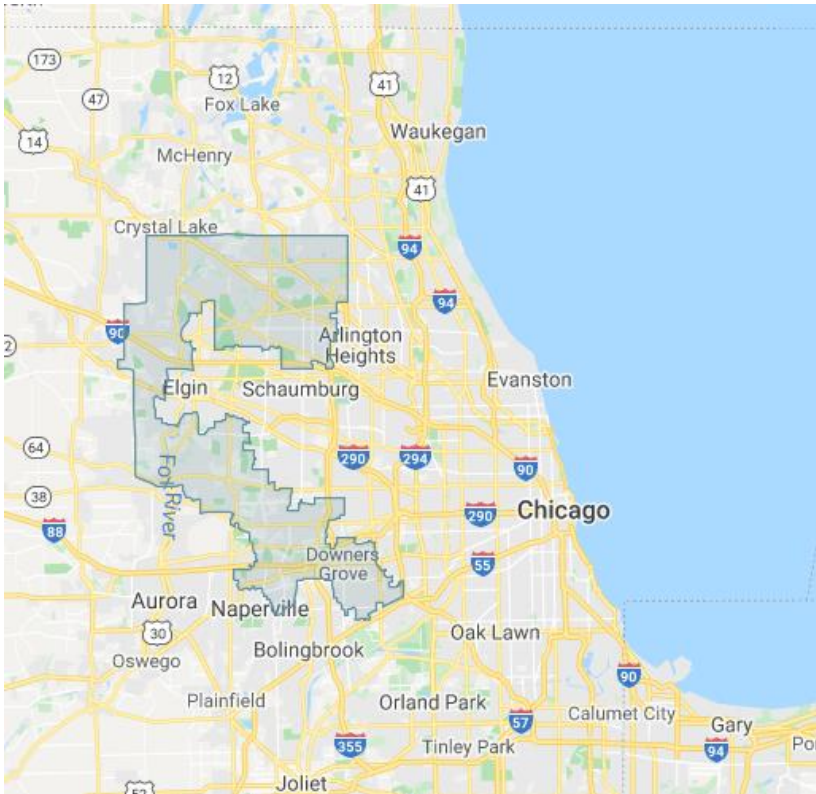
## All in or flipped, Analysis of Illinois 6th Congressional District Election

This report will provide a brief analytical overview of Facebook advertisements from the two primary parties in the Illinois' 6th Congressional District election in 2020. The two candidates' advertisements that were analyzed from this district are Sean Casten (D) and Jeanne Ives (R). The data for this analysis was collected and processed in RStudio, the statistical computer programming software. The data was then imported into Microsoft Excel so that the data could be filtered, mathematically manipulated, and transposed into visualizations using Excel charts.



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### The 6th

The Illinois 6th Congressional District includes areas of Cook, DuPage, Kane, McHenry, and Lake counties. According to information from census.gov, Illinois 6th Congressional District encompasses a little more than 710,000 individuals. Of those, nearly 350,000 are male and a little over 360,000 are female. Highlighting Race, among the population those registered as a single race equated to 689,053, of those, 583,032 of them registered as White. Ancestrally, German, Irish, and Polish were among the top three listed. Observing primary industries in the 6th, the top three are Educational, health care and social assistance, followed by, scientific, administrative, and managerial services.

## Background on the 6th

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Illinois 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District has been dominated by the Republican Party for nearly 50 years (About Sean). In 2010 the Republican Party won by a fairly large margin with 63.6% of the votes. The following election the Democrats closed that gap but not enough to win the seat, losing 59.2% to 40.8%. Six years later that gap finally closed. Sean Casten ran against Peter J. Roskam who held onto the 6<sup>th</sup> district for nearly 10 years and lost. Sean Casten beat out his opponent, 53.6% - 46.4% respectively. The following election in 2020, the democrats stood their ground against the longtime republican seat, Casten ran against Republican and Party Representative Jeanne Ives (Illinois' 6th Congressional District election, 2020).

## Purpose

This report is drafted with the intention of providing information about the methods and discoveries associated with political advertisements surrounding the 2020 election for the Illinois 6th Congressional District. This analysis focuses on the political aspect of power or the ability to influence people or things (Humphreys, 2016). The observations of politicians and their overall goals rest on their efforts to garner support; through this support their efforts may be categorized as a form of mobilization or, the ability to translate existing resources into meaningful political action. This is further observed through electronic mobilization and battleground of Facebook advertisements where each candidate seeks to mobilize their own resources and enact protests towards the opposition (Humphreys, 2016). In this case the actions of facilitating resources from the politicians are through donations and ultimately the individual's vote.

## Data Collection and Analytical Methods

The data collected and analyzed in this report was derived from RStudio. This program used several packages to collect and manipulate the data. The most distinguished package was the developer toolkit which authorized the use of RadLibrary. This package permitted the collection and extraction of Facebook advertisements in their advertisement library. RStudio was able to collect nearly 1,000 Facebook ads from two political candidates, Sean Casten (D) and Jeanne Ives (R) that appeared on Facebook pages from people 18-65+ years old. Additionally, any erroneous unknown variables were removed from the age groups. The percentages of age groups listed are only noted to be approximations. The data collected by RStudio was then imported into Microsoft Excel where additional data manipulation took place. Through this manipulation several visualizations emerged highlighting what was deemed significant. Additional analytical efforts were explored through external research about each candidate's background. Of note, data collected from Democrat Sean Casten included older 2018 information. Considering this data was not directly associated with the 2020 election the entirety of 2018 was removed from the dataset.

## Discoveries

Numerous discoveries developed between political candidates. I found differences among each candidate's publication of advertisements on a monthly and yearly basis, a difference in spending between each candidate to include their most expensive advertisement, their overall intended target audience, their monthly primary target audience, and lastly their advertisement engagement external to the state of Illinois. Through these discoveries it is clear that each candidate made a concerted effort to frame (the process of strategically refer to a social issue, practice or group to heighten some of its attributes and downplay others in a very specific way) themselves and the opposition in a very specific way. Additionally, through this framing, agendas emerged from each candidate, or that their ability of their advertisements to influence highlighted topics within their campaigns (Humphreys, 2016). Insights and assessments are provided within the specific sections of the report.

### Background: Candidate Sean Casten (D)

Sean Casten went to school at Middlebury College where he earned his degree in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry. Casten went on to earn his Masters of Engineering Management and M.S. In Biochemical Engineering from Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth. Casten worked as a energy consultant focusing on public and private optimization of energy technology. Later on Casten led an energy business effort in the industrial sector which brought more than 70 power plants throughout the Americas and Asia. Casten was a former co-founder and leader in recycled energy development and was the chairman for two separate power related associations. Through these recycled efforts Sean focused on the energy economy to help redirect that energy back into necessary facilities (About Sean).



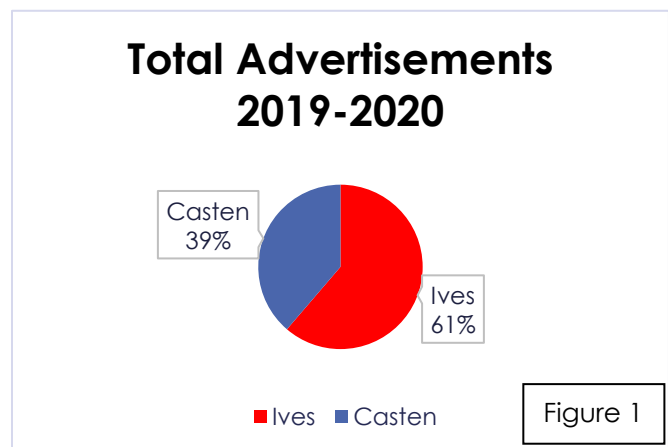
### Background: Candidate Jeanne Ives (R)



Jeanne Ives is a Veteran of the U.S Army and graduated West Point Military Academy where she earned her Bachelor's degree of Science in Economics. Ives a 27-year Illinois resident has served on the Wheaton City Council supporting the tax payers. She was first elected in 2012 where she served as a House Representative for the State of Illinois. In 2018 Ives focused on the families and business owners in Illinois running a campaign for Governor (Jeanne For Congress). Ives' efforts are aimed at tax reform and ensuring the people's interests are protected from big government.

### Overview: Annual and Monthly Democratic and Republican Advertisements

Over the course of 2019-2020 these two political candidates produced approximately 1,426 ads. Of these 1,426 advertisements Democrat Sean Casten published only 552. Republican Jeanne Ives produced 874 ads, 322 more advertisements than her competitor (Figure 1 to the right). However, Casten spent nearly six times more on average in advertising than Ives (Figure 2 below). After reviewing the advertisements that appeared monthly between 2019 and 2020 the most notable month for Ives was in June of 2020.



## TOTAL AVERAGE SPENT ON ADVERTISEMENTS

Ives Casten

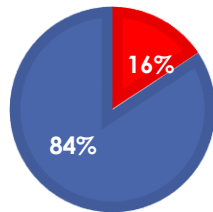


Figure 2

The Ives campaign published 100 ads, spending an approximate total of \$10,200.00 and averaging over 170,000 impressions or, potential reach the advertisement had among other users of Facebook. In June 2020, Ives primary targeted audience diverted from her normal 45-65 male target audience. 18.15% of Ives ads displayed among female Facebook users 65 and older and these ads also drastically altered from Ives' regularly ran republican agenda ads.

These ads primarily focused on minimizing the racial inequality among communities and in political spectrums, using Chicago as an example, as well as attacking the protests and the outcomes of those protests that erupted shortly after the death of George Floyd in May 2020. In response to these ads, Casten's target audience was also the 65 and older female community and 13.67% of his ads targeted this age cohort, or a group of people who are about the same age (Humphreys, 2016). However, unlike Ives, Casten remained consistent among his monthly targeted audience of the 65 and older female Facebook users. Casten ran ads calling Ives a "conservative crusader". He also directly associated Ives with former President Trump and noted that he is facing an extremist GOP opponent, framing Ives in a very aggressive manner for the public. These response ads diverged slightly from Casten's normally scheduled agenda which highlighted his climate concerns, scientific led reform efforts, and requests for donations. Additionally, the most advertisements ran by Casten was in May 2019 which 231 ads ran spending an approximate amount of \$28,269.00 and averaging over 350,000 impressions throughout his targeted audience.

## 2019 - 2020 OVERALL TARGETED AGE GROUPS

Ives Casten 2 per. Mov. Avg. (Ives) 2 per. Mov. Avg. (Casten)

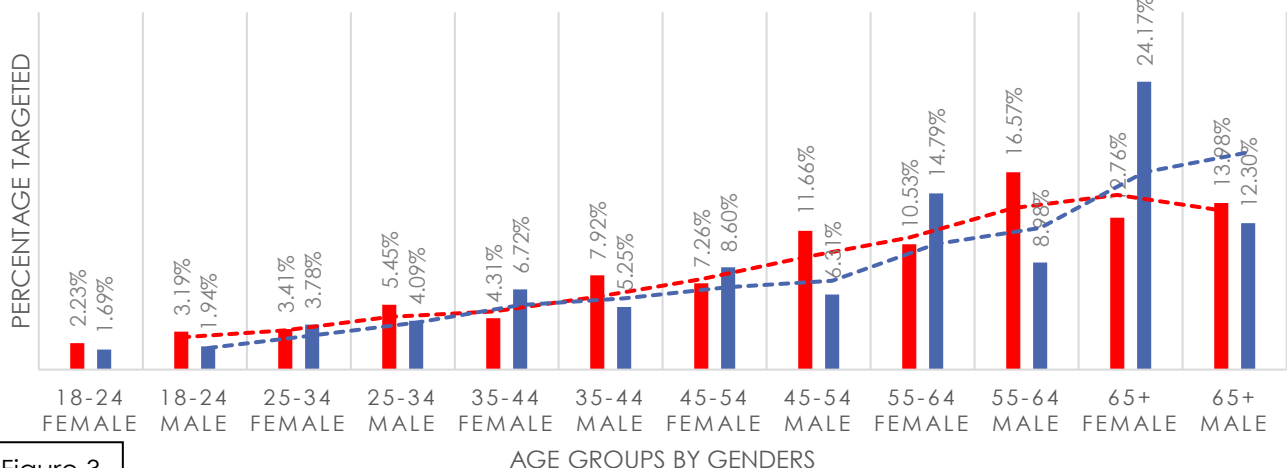
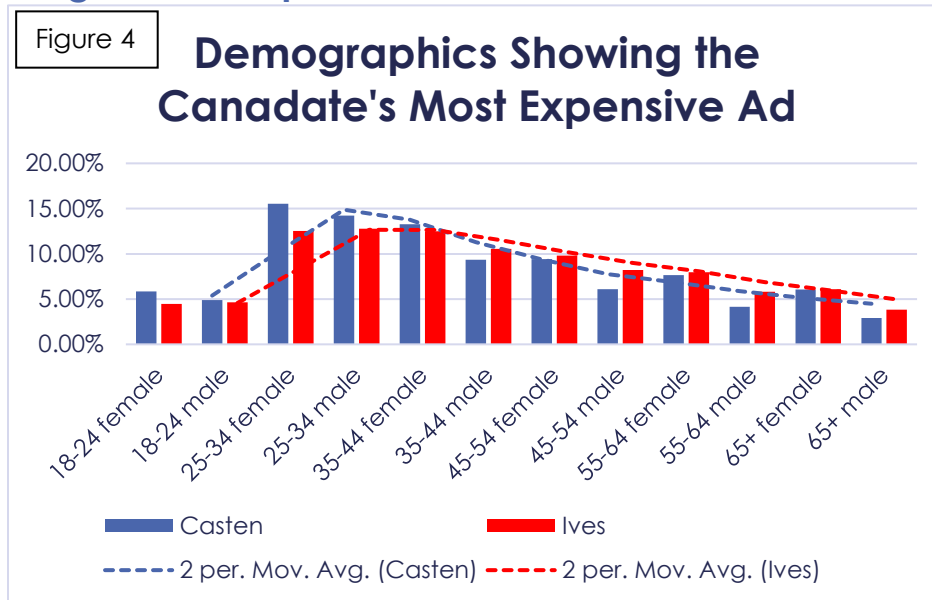


Figure 3



## Insight: Most Expensive Advertisement



Observing the most expensive Facebook advertisement published by each political candidate these ads were likely created to expand their sphere of influence throughout the demographics of their support base and further reinforce their institutional beliefs (Figure 4). It is likely that these ads were more expensive since they encompass a variety of

ages rather than specific groups of individuals. Ives' most expensive advertisement ran in October 2020 a little over 2 weeks before the election in November occurred. It is likely that Ives wanted to pick up any voters that may have been on the fence and solidify those votes. Ives most expensive ad shifted away from her usual targeted support base and focused on females between 25-34, 35-44, and even included males between 25-34. All three of these age cohorts accounted for approximately 12% each of the total advertisement distribution. It is likely that Ives wanted to reinforce her policies that would prevent a tax increase among these career driven individuals and growing younger families. Conversely, Casten's most expensive advertisement was a video presentation that ran in September of 2020 almost a whole

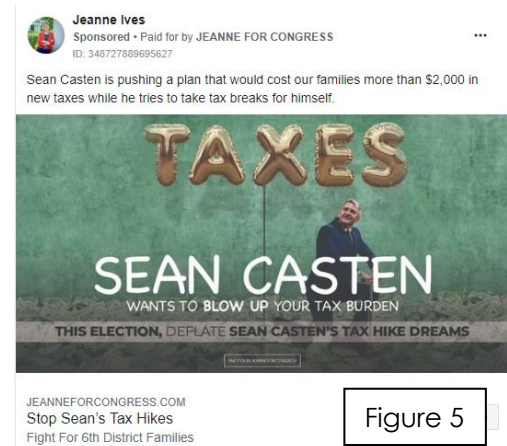


Figure 5



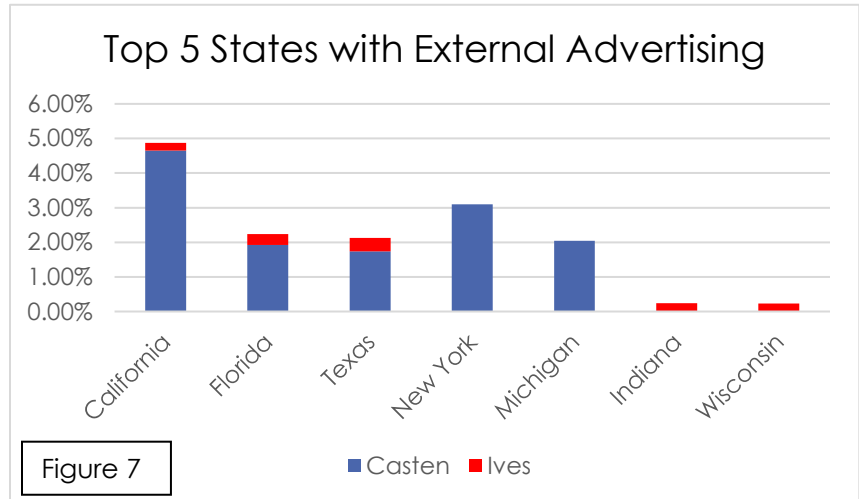
Figure 6

month before Ives' last ad. This video depicted Casten as a businessman, scientist, and nerd. On numerous occasions Ives frequently attacked Casten about his scientific beliefs and advocacy and the production of this video by Casten simply capitalized on these attacks owning up to his status and further reinforcing his and his potential audience beliefs (screenshot from video Figure 6). Again, per Figure 4 above the demographics shifted largely among the targeted audience. Casten's ad focused on the

same age cohorts as Ives, but place slightly more emphasis on the 25-34 female group at 15.53% of the total ad distribution.

### Insight: External State Advertisement

Before closing this report, it was noted to be of interest reporting the observations regarding how these two political candidates advertised outside of their home state. Attempting to garner any additional external support and showcase their political beliefs and ideologies among others may reflect on their efforts in Washington D.C.. True to their character each political candidate attempted to showcase their efforts in their



respective parties' strongholds. Although, we may argue for two different purposes.

Throughout all 50 states the average of each candidates' advertisements were calculated and converted into a percentage which represented the targeted states outside of Illinois. The top five states were selected from each candidate and evaluated accordingly. Three of the top 5 states remained consistent among both candidates those being, California, Florida, and Texas. Ives' other top two states were Indiana and Wisconsin while Casten's were New York and Michigan. It is assessed that Ives likely wanted to reassure neighboring republican states like Wisconsin, given the 6<sup>th</sup> district geographical location and closeness to the state, that there would be allies near and that law and order will be upheld in the 6<sup>th</sup> district. Also, Ives likely wanted to ensure additional validation from Republican states Florida and Texas.

Casten's efforts towards advertising in only one close neighboring state Michigan is likely leveraging his scientific agenda focusing on renewable energy efforts and any additional assistance he may provide in Washington regarding the long-time water issue. Additionally, other ads focused primarily on his energy entrepreneurship and women's rights. Given the recent political scandals involving women, the revisions of women's access to healthcare, and the violation of women's fundamental rights, Casten voiced his beliefs and ideologies supporting women and their rights which placed Ives in a bit of a quagmire.

### Final Thoughts:

This report concludes that the scope information provided is broad in nature, sought to inform the reader about key analytical discoveries within Facebook advertisements between two political entities: Sean Casten from the Democratic Party and Jeanne Ives from the Republican party during their race in the 2020 election. Key discoveries highlighted various aspects from annual and monthly ad publications, demographic reach, expenses related to their ads and demographics related to each party's most expensive ad, as well as the external advertisements projected outside the state of IL. This type of report may benefit from two additions. One being an inclusion of sentiment analysis which may enable the focus on assessing the advertisements being produced between each party member. This analysis

would further elevate the report, adding another layer of depth which may provide insight and help shape the understanding of the parties intended response and reach for future political advertisement campaigns. The second addition that may be beneficial to future reporting may look to observe interactions among the published advertisements. However, this type of information may not be readily available and will be explored further at a future date. It may be argued that Facebook holds power one way while a political candidate holds it another, however they coexist and support one another's power. Facebook may be associated with bureaucratic power projecting this influence throughout the population in an organized hierarchal manner, while the political candidate may further leverage this bureaucratic power through their own efforts and abilities to exert their charisma among their audience.



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