Efficacy of Ohio Sierra Club endorsements in 1986 elections

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THE EFFICACY OF OHIO SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENTS

IN 1986 ELECTIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The American environmental movement is characterized as a collection of organizations whose members share at least one bond of sympathy, their concern for the natural environment. This core concern has various focuses serving to differentiate one organization from another, while at the same time providing avenues for joint cooperation. Support for the movement is substantial. Approximately two million Americans (Mitchell, 1984) demonstrate their support through their organizational memberships. Environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society and Defenders of Wildlife employ various methods to promote their beliefs and values in the public arena. Examples of such techniques are public education, lobbying, and participation in partisan politics. Participation in partisan politics is one of the most recent advocacy techniques to be utilized by these environmental organizations. Due to philosophical differences, the majority of environmental groups have decided not to involve themselves in the partisan political arena. However, the Sierra Club is one environmental organization which has chosen to become actively involved in the partisan political process.

Political endorsements are one specific technique used by the Sierra Club to publicize their candidate preference and express their reasons for the preference. Because endorsement activities require a substantial investment of human and financial resources and because such resources are limited in the Sierra Club, efficient and effective methods to attain the pursued electoral goals are critical to the Club's ultimate welfare.
Periodic examination and evaluation of these methods help to insure the maximum benefit to the Club's electoral goals.

This paper reviews the partisan political endorsement process utilized by the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club in the 1986 general election and examines its effectiveness in influencing voting behavior. A telephone questionnaire was used to gather data to examine the specific effects of the Ohio Chapter's partisan endorsements on two target publics: the general voting public in Ohio and Ohio Sierra Club members. This paper presents general observations revealed through the questionnaire respondents. Discussion of this study is preceded by a brief examination of persuasion theory in general, and endorsement theory specifically, and by a brief look at the Sierra Club's partisan endorsement history with special focus on the Ohio Chapter.
II. THE POLITICAL PERSUASION PROCESS

Importance In Partisan Politics

Persuasion is a communication process directed to change or reinforce certain behaviors. The persuasion process can best be defined as an intentional interaction between individuals aimed at affecting behaviors. The persuasion process can be aimed at changing behavior or can include reinforcement of certain existing attitudes and behaviors. In fact under conditions of voluntary exposure, the majority of persuasive messages assimilated by individuals involve communications that reinforce their existing attitudes and behaviors (Miller, G., 1980). This reinforcing function highlights the fact that "being persuaded" is seldom a one-message proposition but a complex and multi-faceted process.

Persuasion is of premier importance in the arena of partisan politics. Successful politics, as the art of acquiring and wielding power, heavily relies on one's ability to persuade both supporters and opponents. Under the democratic form of government, with the acquisition of power through the electoral process, persuasion skill is often synonymous with political success. Since the seat of electoral power is customarily contested, the candidates must practice persuasion techniques to successfully influence the voting citizenry.

All persuasion deals with the intricacies of human emotions, cognitions and values. Because personal values and ideologies develop over a period of years, most of these predispositions are firmly established and largely unaffected by most political persuasion. However, recent
studies indicate that other factors, such as personal involvement and predecisional uncertainty, influence the effectiveness of persuasive messages. Application of these political persuasion factors can enhance the possibilities for successful influence in the political theatre.

Voter Political Perceptivity

Surveys reveal a general lack of political perceptivity in the American electorate. Only one-half to two-thirds of the adult public is regularly exposed to direct political news and only a very small portion of this audience pays serious attention to such news (Graber, 1980). Most people lack motivation for political learning because they do not perceive detailed knowledge of current political affairs as imperative to their daily lives. However, when people sense that political events do have a large impact on their lives, or when they need information to make voting choices, political interest increases quickly and often dramatically (Graber, 1980).

Even though people ignore a large portion of the political information available, the amount and character of the information which they do collect is important. Recent research suggests that voting behavior is "significantly influenced" by what individuals know about the issues involved (Becker, 1983). The data indicate that voter behavior can be predicted from the information which the voter holds. Persons who know only one side of an issue or candidate will vote accordingly. These findings underscore the importance of studying the voter information environment.
Predispositions

Important elements of the information environment are the voter's own existing attitudes, beliefs and cognitions—collectively called predispositions. Voters attend to political information selectively. They are more likely to attend to those messages which support or reinforce their predispositions than to those that oppose their predispositions (O'Keefe, 1981). According to various cognitive balance theories, people avoid information that disturbs their peace of mind, runs counter to their political and social tastes, or conflicts with their existing attitudes and feelings. Social scientists explain this selective exposure by pointing out that people are uncomfortable when exposed to ideas that differ from their own or that question the validity of beliefs they already hold. Consequently people select information that is congruent with their predispositions (Graber, 1980).

Uses And Gratification Theory

One of the most widely accepted theories explaining why individuals are attentive to particular items of political information, related to predispositions, is the "uses and gratifications approach" (Graber, 1980). Simply stated, advocates of this approach propose that individuals use the information that they find personally gratifying. They ignore personally irrelevant messages and attend to the political information that they find
meaningful and gratifying, provided the expense in time and effort seems worthwhile.

The uses and gratifications may be behavioral, emotional or intellectual. They are generally related to one's predispositions because predispositions often determine the criteria for what one judges to be gratifying or meaningful. For example, if persons perceive a specific political cause as meaningful, they are more likely to attend to particular information regarding that cause. Likewise, voters who value being informed on current issues are more likely to attend to political information concerned with current issues.

Utilization And Evaluation Of Information

It is clear that people are more likely to attend to information which they find personally meaningful and gratifying and which supports their predispositions. It is much less clear what causes them to notice other informational items in the large pool of available political information. People appear to sample more or less randomly from available information. There is little evidence of widespread motivated selective exposure, selective learning or selective perception (Sears, 1973).

People do, however, evaluate their informational sampling. Three important factors influence their evaluations of the selected political messages (Sears, 1973). One determining factor of an individual's selective evaluation is the credibility of the communication. A message delivered by a credible source is evaluated more positively than the same message expressed by a less than credible source. The message itself must
also be credible. It must make sense both cognitively as well as emotionally.

A second determining factor in the selective evaluation of a political message is the discrepancy between the incoming political information and the individual's predispositions. The greater the discrepancy, the smaller the positive impact of the message on the recipient. People are particularly adept at avoiding acceptance of information that is discrepant from strongly held prior attitudes. Consequently, political communications lead to resistance rather than substantial opinion change when they advocate a discrepant position if the target audience is strongly attached to its initial position. Messages of low discrepancy presented by high credibility sources reinforce prior attitudes.

The third and related variable is the initial emotional involvement of the recipient with the information. An individual who is highly involved in a particular issue will view a discrepant message much less positively than will an individual whose involvement in the issue is less intense.

Voter Involvement

Low levels of voter involvement prove to have a clear relationship to increased persuasive effects of political information. Little attitude change can be expected on matters of high involvement and commitment. Political predispositions are factors in one's political involvement and commitment. Those political predispositions which remain constant over
time, such as party allegiance or conservative and liberal inclinations, create barriers to opposing persuasive messages.

However, other political predispositions tend to be less stable over time. The arrival of new candidates or the raising of new issues, for example, can cause changes in one's political evaluation criteria (Sears, 1973). Because of these criteria changes, people tend to become less involved in the political process. Such lack of involvement increases the opportunity for successful political persuasion because such messages meet relatively little resistance. Political messages centering on new issues or unfamiliar candidates are particularly influential because predispositions concerning them are weak, non-existent, or unstable, and involvement is low. For the same reasons, persuasive messages in early campaign phases can be notably effective.

Low levels of voter involvement are characteristic of state and local legislative races. It seems then, that informational (persuasive) efforts by political campaigns are most successful when practiced in these relatively low-involvement races. Low involvement voters are less likely to evaluate persuasive messages or develop counterarguments. In low involvement races, the political advertisements have cognitive rather than emotive results. At the polls, a flicker of name-recognition, for example, can be sufficient to trigger a vote.

However, in high-involvement races, such as national or gubernatorial contests, persuasive messages are not as effective (Rados, 1981). Voters tend to screen out the message's effects by using selective exposure, selective recall and selective interpretation (Rados, 1981). Highly involved voters also develop counterarguments to
messages which oppose their attitudes and opinions. Political advertising is relatively ineffectual in changing voter opinion in high-involvement races.

According to Atkin (1980) the direct impact of most politically persuasive messages occurs primarily at the cognitive level. Messages can be effective in creating or changing various beliefs and altering the criteria for judging the candidate or issue. These modified cognitions then combine with the emotive predispositions to trigger indirect attitudinal changes toward the candidate or issue.

Cognitions And Voter Behavior

An important principle for campaign success is to understand the linkage between the amount of knowledge possessed by potential voters, the communication of that knowledge and eventual voter behavior. Becker and Dunwoody (1982) conducted a study which links media use to knowledge, and knowledge, in turn, to voter behavior. In this study of a local, low-impact election, the use of newspapers and, to a lesser extent, radio news were positively associated with the level of knowledge about local political candidates. Both pre-election and post-election measures of voter behavior indicated that the more knowledgeable a person was about a specific candidate, the more likely that person was to vote for that candidate. This relationship between knowledge and voter behavior was not as strong, however, in one instance involving a candidate where the information available was largely negative.

In general this study supports the idea that cognitions, in this case
knowledge, may be an important link between the type of message presented and the resulting behavior, in this case voting behavior. This study also indicates that knowledge itself may be more complex than has been previously assumed. The study concludes that **what** a person knows is as important to voting behavior as **how much** a person knows. It is not only the quantity of voter knowledge but also the content of that knowledge that influences voter behavior. The study also stresses the importance of the news media as the major determinant of candidate and issue information.
III. POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

Predecisional Uncertainty And Organizational Credibility

The goal of a political endorsement is to positively influence the voter in favor of the endorsed candidate by publicly aligning the endorsed candidate with the endorsing organization. In accordance with the principles of persuasion, the effectiveness of an organizational endorsement relies heavily on two factors: the voter's need for decisional advice and the credibility of the organization supplying the endorsement. For an organizational endorsement to be effective in influencing voter behavior, the voter must possess significant situational uncertainty to force a reliance on an outside source to resolve the internal decisional conflict. Three basic conditions exist which may produce such uncertainty. First, uncertainty can result from low definition election contests where informational messages are minimal or are issued by low credibility sources. Second, low involvement situations where the voter does not particularly care about certain races can also create uncertainty. Rather than exerting the effort required to become educated about such races, the voter may utilize the endorsement as a helpful guide to decision-making. Third, uncertainty can result when the voter is unable to discriminate between competing campaigns in a high involvement race (Atkin, 1980).

Once the voter has determined the need to utilize an outside source to help reach a voting decision, the credibility of the endorsing
organization becomes an important factor. The linking of a candidate to a specific organization can expand the candidate's relevancy base through the transfer of the organization's identity and credibility to the candidate. When the goals of the organization are perceived to be meaningful and relevant; this relevancy can be transferred to the candidate. A political message which might otherwise be viewed as neutral or irrelevant is instead identified as personally relevant to the voter.

The power of this relevancy transfer is largely dependent on the voters' recognition and identification of the endorsing organization. Because voters are more likely to attend to messages which support or reinforce their predispositions, their perception of the endorsing organization is critical to the effectiveness of the endorsement. By linking a candidate to an established organization whose concerns are shared by the public, a campaign may enhance its candidate's public image and thereby the candidate's opportunities for electoral success.

Organizations with a large membership have advantages in their endorsement effectiveness. Their membership numbers alone provide a large base of people who already identify with their organizational goals. Even those persons who are only marginally involved with an organization and are unaware of the endorsement-making decisions generally identify the group's endorsements as being in agreement with their own predispositions.

The name recognition of a nationally-known organization can trigger an immediate association when an endorsement is announced. This immediate recognition can be a significant marker in the vast field of available political information. This information saturates voter consciousness prior to an election causing voters to ignore much of the information to
which they are exposed. Recognition of a familiar organization's name in this vast sea of information may help an endorsement message penetrate the awareness of the voter.

The linking of a candidate to an organization through a political endorsement is also important as a reminder that political candidates, through their legislative actions, do have tangible effects on the lives of voters. When voters sense that such voting behaviors have an impact on their lives—a point that endorsing organizations work to establish—their political interest often increases greatly. Organizations closely associated with specific issues, such as environmental organizations, demonstrate that voting decisions do have direct environmental implications. This establishes a cause-effect relationship that voters might otherwise fail to notice.

The Effectiveness Of Political Endorsements

Because of the inherent complexities which contribute to voting behavior, there is a problem with crediting endorsements as the determining factor in specific voting behavior (St. Dizier, 1985). Even when the endorsement is a major determinant, other factors, including one's predispositions, can be strong contributors to voter response. Research regarding the specific impact of organizational, political endorsements has centered on the effectiveness of newspaper endorsements for individual candidates. Coombs' study (1981) supports the hypothesis that a newspaper endorsement is an important factor in a candidate's election success. Coombs examined the strength of political party
identification and the educational background as factors in newspaper endorsement effectiveness.

Political Party Identification

Coombs' study points out that despite the general voter tendency to vote with their own party, those voters exposed to a newspaper that editorially endorsed the candidate of the opposite party "defected" at a rate of 31.8 percent from their own party of identification. Conversely, voters whose newspapers supported the candidate of their own party defected to vote against their own party of identification only 11.1 percent of the time. This defection difference of more than twenty percentage points suggests that the endorsement is a significant factor in voter behavior.

Coombs' data support the assumption that those voters defecting had weak party identifications, while those strong party identifiers were less influenced by the endorsement. The impact of the endorsement on party-line defectors is inversely related to the strength of the partisan attachment felt by the voters. Even for voters with strong party attachments, the influence of the newspaper endorsement of the opposing party's candidate was significant. Among strong party supporters, seventeen percent defected when their local newspaper endorsed the opposing party's candidate, compared to five percent when their newspaper endorsed a candidate of their own party. This difference of twelve percentage points indicates that, even among the strongest partisans, editorial endorsements impact voting decisions.
In examining the relationship between endorsement influence and the specific partisan choice of the voter, Coombs found no significant difference in endorsement impact associated with a specific political party. The proportion of voters in each of the two major parties who supported their party's candidate when local newspapers endorsed that candidate were nearly identical: Democrats at a ninety percentage rate and Republicans at an eighty-seven percentage rate. The defection rates associated with endorsements of the opposing party's candidates were even closer: Democrats at a thirty-one percentage rate and Republicans at a thirty-two percentage rate.

Education

Coombs' study also investigated the relationship of the voters' educational level to the strength of the endorsement influence. The least educated voters were nearly unaffected by newspaper endorsements. Voters with less than a high school education defected to vote for the opposing party's candidate at the same rate (six to eight percent) regardless of their newspaper's endorsed candidate. This may be due to the fact that the least educated voters are less reliant on newspapers as their informational source than are better educated voters (Sobol and Jackson-Beck, 1981).

The pattern of defection changes substantially among voters with higher levels of education. These voters defected to vote against their own party thirteen to seventeen percent of the time when their newspaper supported their own party's candidate. When the newspaper endorsed the
opposing party's candidate, the endorsement influence was stronger among these voters. Voters with some secondary school education defected thirty percent of the time, and respondents who completed high school defected over forty percent of the time when the local newspapers endorsed the opposition candidate. Voters with some college education defected somewhat less, at a rate of thirty percent.

In short, endorsement positions seem to make little difference among voters with no high school education. However, voters with some high school education show the most sensitivity to endorsement influence. From that point, as voter education increases, there is a small but steady decline in the strength of endorsement influence.

In summary, Coombs presents a strong case for endorsement influence on voting behavior. Other researchers Nimmo (1970), St. Dizier (1985) and McCombs (1967) have presented studies which concur with Coombs' conclusions. Nearly all agree that endorsements are only one of the variables that affect voting behavior. They emphasize that endorsement influence results from the voters' predecisional uncertainty or confusion. If disagreements exist among the many variables available for orientation, voters may utilize the endorsement in their need for orientation. Consequently, an endorsement can be very influential in the voters' overall decision-making process.
IV. SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENT HISTORY

The arm of the Sierra Club responsible for partisan political activities is the Sierra Club Committee on Political Education (SCCOPE). SCCCOPE was formed by the Club's Board of Directors in February, 1976 to direct the Club's political education program. It was established in accordance with the provisions of Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code which permits organizations to establish separate political action committees which conduct programs aimed at influencing election results. The Board of Directors was very specific in its creation of SCCCOPE, authorizing SCCCOPE "to engage in educational activities about candidates, their records and positions" (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21-22, 1981, San Francisco, California) but specifically cautioning that it "did not authorize any entity of the Club to endorse candidates." (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21-22, 1981 San Francisco, California) SCCCOPE concentrated on educating the public, as well as the Club membership, on the environmental positions, credentials and voting records of candidates for public office. SCCCOPE also provided political candidates with an opportunity to communicate with members through paid advertising in club publications.

In 1977 and 1978 the Board declined to expand SCCCOPE's authority to include endorsements even though resolutions were presented by many California Club entities requesting such an expansion. But in May, 1980,
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the Board of Directors authorized two California Club Chapters "to conduct a limited experimental test of the effectiveness and potential benefits and risks of expansion of Sierra Club political education activities to include the endorsement of candidates for elective office who are committed to environmental protection." (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21–22, 1981, San Francisco, California) At its July, 1980 retreat, the Board informally authorized a major expansion in SCCOPE activities at the federal level, short of endorsements, including the use of staff time in federal campaigns. Then on September 9, 1980 the Board "released the President and Executive Director of the Club to give their personal endorsements of candidates in the 1980 Presidential election and to use the Club's name for identification purposes only." (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21–22, 1981, San Francisco, California) The Board cautioned that the resolution "in no way constitutes a Sierra Club endorsement of any political candidate." (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21–22, 1981, San Francisco, California)

1981 emerged as the year for the seemingly inevitable development: official participation by the Sierra Club in partisan political endorsements. In February, the Board authorized chapters in states holding elections to make limited endorsements in statewide and local races. This authorization followed a report from the California Chapters on their 1980 endorsement experience. On November 22, 1981 the following resolution was submitted for consideration by the Sierra Club Board of Directors by the members of SCCOPE:
"The Sierra Club Board of Directors, in recognizing the importance of political action in furtherance of conservation goals, authorizes the Sierra Club Committee on Political Education to endorse Congressional Candidates during the 1982 elections on behalf of the Sierra Club. The Board of Directors specifically delegates authority to SCCOPE to develop criteria which will be used to evaluate candidates and to determine the level of effort (financial and staff time) to be expended in each campaign. All Congressional endorsements by SCCOPE will be with the advice and consent of the affected Chapter(s) as provided for in the current SCCOPE guidelines.

The Board also authorizes the continuation of endorsements in State and local races by Interested Chapters under guidelines developed and administered by SCCOPE." (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21-22, 1981, San Francisco, California).

Under discussion of the proposed resolution, the Board heard positions both favorable and opposed to the idea of formal Sierra Club partisan political endorsements. The principle arguments in favor of the resolution focused on the crisis of the present political climate—the Reagan Administration. A major expansion of the level of electoral activity by the Club was viewed as essential to achieve its environmental objectives. Endorsements were considered "an important element in a comprehensive effort to improve the political climate for environmental protection." (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21-22, 1981, San Francisco, California). The argument continued, "...our friends in elected office have made it clear that
they feel our active support is critical to their political survival. Our involvement in elections can make the difference in who gets elected. Endorsements enhance that impact" (Sierra Club Board of Directors Agenda Item 17, Meeting of November 21-22, 1981, San Francisco, California).

Support of pro-environmental officials was also viewed as critical. J. Michael McCloskey, the Executive Director of the Club stated, "...no cause that depends upon success in Congress can long succeed if it doesn't come to the aid of its best friends. If you abandon them at their hour of need, you send exactly the wrong signals — that you're not grateful and that they have not earned the support they will need to come back. And then we won't have them back " (Gendlin, 1983). Further, the trial California endorsement experience in 1980 and 1981 indicated that such endorsements were well received by candidates, the general public and the Club membership. A 1980 survey of a random selection of 1000 Club members showed that 80 percent of those responding favored limited endorsements.

The principal argument against endorsements as part of the overall political program of the Club was that such endorsements might be divisive within the Club. A second argument was that an endorsement by the Club constitutes an appeal to the voters to consider only a single issue, the environment, when they voted. A third argument warned of a danger of appearing to be partisan, especially if the preponderance of candidates supported come from one party.

After much discussion, the resolution to authorize Sierra Club partisan endorsements passed the Board of Directors. Congressional endorsements began in the 1982 elections. With this action, the Sierra
Club became one of the few environmental organizations to officially endorse candidates for elective office.
The Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club is one of fifty-one Chapters throughout the United States and Canada. The Chapter's 10,000 members are predominantly urban professionals between the ages of thirty and sixty. Partisan political endorsements have been an integral part of the Chapter's activities since such actions were authorized by the National Organization in 1982.

Endorsement activity is the specific responsibility of the Ohio SCCOPE committee. This committee consists of a chairperson and one representative from each of the state's seven regional groups. This committee recommends partisan activity to the State Executive Committee which ultimately decides the level of the Chapter's political activity.

The Ohio SCCOPE committee also recommends the candidates to be endorsed as well as the persuasive methods to be used during the endorsement process. The methods available to publicize and communicate the Club's partisan endorsements are typically limited because of low operating budgets.

In 1986, the Ohio Chapter focused its endorsement efforts on two specific populations: the general voting public and the Ohio Sierra Club members. To communicate the Club's endorsements to the general public, the Chapter Chairperson issued a press release to all major newspapers and wire services in Ohio. This press release included a brief description of the Sierra Club, the slate of endorsed candidates, a general statement regarding the importance of electing these individuals, and a voting chart describing the voting records of incumbent officeholders during the past
two years of activity on environmental issues. Endorsed candidates were also sent a personal letter announcing their Sierra Club endorsement. This endorsement could then be utilized in the candidates' personal campaigns if they so desired.

In communicating its endorsements to its membership, the Ohio Sierra Club utilized regular intra-club communications. Regular news columns announcing and explaining Club endorsements were placed in Chapter and Group newsletters. An extra, four-page insert in the Chapter newsletter was mailed immediately before the November election. Special mailings were made to members in the districts of endorsed candidates urging the members to volunteer time for the candidate's campaign. Announcements concerning endorsed candidates were made at regular monthly general meetings and several endorsed candidates were invited to speak at these meetings throughout the state.
VI. THE STUDY

The study explored one aspect of the effectiveness of the 1986 Ohio Sierra Club endorsements on voter behavior by examining the endorsement awareness of two specific target groups: a random sample of Ohio voters and a sample of Ohio Sierra Club voters. The study was carried out in the form of a telephone survey which asked questions of respondents to determine their awareness of the Sierra Club organization, their awareness of specific political endorsements made by the Club, and the influence of those endorsements on their voting decisions concerning the 1986 general elections. Telephone polling was selected as the sampling technique because of the immediacy of response, the reliability, and the low relative cost.

The Ohio Sierra Club was selected for several reasons. First, the Ohio Chapter is one of the more politically active state chapters of the National Sierra Club organization. Second, the Ohio Chapter has a history of endorsement activity beginning with the initial efforts in 1982. Third, Ohio's population is sufficiently clustered to enhance the success of the selected sampling technique. Two major metropolitan areas, Cincinnati and Toledo, were selected for the study to attain a truly representative population of Ohio. Cincinnati, located along the state's southern border, is situated in the most solidly Republican section of the state. Toledo, located on Ohio's northern border, is primarily Democratic in party preference. Importantly, both Cincinnati and Toledo have local Sierra Club Groups. However, the Cincinnati Group is much more politically active than
the Toledo Group. The Cincinnati Group actively promotes club-endorsed candidates with locally-generated publicity and extensive volunteer activity. In contrast, the Toledo Group engages in little political activity on its own, serving primarily as a conduit for the dissemination of Ohio Chapter endorsement information. Both funding and volunteer involvement are lacking in the Toledo Group. The contrast between the two Groups helps to attain a representative sampling of urban Ohioans.

Two levels of electoral contests were included in the study, the Ohio gubernatorial contest and state senate races. The Club did endorse candidates in each of the contests. The Governor's race was a high-involvement, highly visible contest, while state senate races were low in visibility and relatively low in involvement by the Sierra Club.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to determine the following key points:

1) the issue salience and issue importance of environmental problems among members of the Sierra Club and the general public
2) the perceived influence of organizational endorsements on the voting behaviors of both test groups
3) the awareness of Sierra Club political endorsements by both test groups and the effects of such awareness
4) the general perception of the the Sierra Club organization held by the respondents of both test groups.

The questionnaire was designed to be administered in ten minutes or
Questions 1, 2, 3 and 11

Question 1 deals with the issue of issue strength of environmental problems. Education and unemployment problems were included in this list to disguise the environmental focus of the study. Question 11 also determines issue strength using a scale of ten to one.

Question 2 is designed to measure issue salience. Here, environmental problems had to be named specifically to be considered the single, most significant problem by the respondents.

Question 3 is included to determine the respondents' confidence in the government's ability to solve specific problems.

Question 4

This question determines where the respondents gain the majority of their information about local and statewide candidates. Their specific informational sources are key factors in their awareness of political endorsements, particularly with endorsements like those of the Sierra Club that were not widely advertised.

Question 5

This question deals with the perceived influence of political endorsements. It is important to note that even though endorsements may
actually influence their voting behaviors more than the respondents perceive, it is only their perceived influence which can be measured in this kind of study.

Questions 6, 7, 8, 10

Questions 6 and 8 are included to disguise the environmental nature of this study. Question 7 determines the specific awareness of any environmental endorsements in the 1986 gubernatorial race. The question also determines whether the Sierra Club is specifically known as the endorsing environmental organization, how the respondent learned of the endorsement, and whether the endorsement affected the respondent's voting behavior. Because questions were misnumbered, there is no question 9. Question 10 examines the specific awareness of organizational endorsements in the 1986 state senate race (the specific candidates for the appropriate races were mentioned in the question). The series of followup questions are again to determine whether the Sierra Club can be named as an endorsing organization, how the respondent learned of the endorsement and whether the endorsement affected the respondents' voting behavior in the state contests.

Question 12

Question 12 is designed to ascertain the respondents' familiarity with the Sierra Club. Those respondents familiar with the organization are asked whether they have a positive, negative or neutral reaction to it. A
positive response to the organization could affect the credibility of the organization's endorsement.

Questions 13, 14, and 15

Questions 13 and 14 deal with actual voting behavior. This question is important to determine if those persons affected by organizational endorsements actually voted. Question 15 provides an age and occupational breakdown of the respondents.

Sampling Technique

For this study, samples of two hundred were taken from each of the target publics: two hundred voting-age Sierra Club members and two hundred voting-age members of Ohio's general public.\(^5\) Sampling began on November 5, 1986, the day after the 1986 election, and concluded three weeks later on November 26, 1986.

After researching the sampling technique used in studies by Babbie (1986), Miller (1982), Vigderhous (1981), Smead (1980) and Bailey (1978), I trained each volunteer who participated as a telephone research assistant. All volunteers were Sierra Club members. Telephone numbers for the sampling from the general public were selected randomly\(^6\) and the resulting numbers were placed on lists for the telephone research assistants. Membership lists were used to call the Sierra Club members and were dialed in no particular sequence until 200 responses from voting-age members were collected. The same introductory script (see Appendix 2) and
questionnaire was used for both target samples. One hundred respondents from each of the two target groups were contacted in Cincinnati and one hundred from each group were contacted in Toledo.
VII. RESULTS

Results of the study findings revealed differences between the two target samples in their attitudes toward environmental problems, in their sources for political information and in their awareness of organizational political endorsements. Little difference was shown between the two groups in the perceived influence of political endorsements or in confidence in the ability of elected officials to solve specific community problems. A closer examination of the similarities and differences between the two target samples follows.

Issue Importance And Issue Salience Of Environmental Problems

A notably greater percentage of Sierra Club members (eighty-four percent) considered environmental problems to be significant in their communities than did members of the general public (sixty-eight percent). Despite the seventeen percentage point difference between the two publics, the relatively high percentage from the general public signifies that environmental problems do have issue strength among the general public, as well as among Sierra Club members, in Ohio. The general public response to question 11 supported the issue strength of environmental problems. On a scale of ten to one, with ten being the most important in regard to a candidate's views toward the environment, the average response from the general public was 7.2 compared to the average response from the Sierra Club members of 7.9. These high scores indicate that not only are environmental issues themselves significant to Ohio voters, but the
candidates' specific views on the environment are also important.

Twenty percent of the Sierra Club members and fifteen percent of the general public specifically named environmental concerns as the single most important problem in their community. These environmental percentages signify that environmental problems are not the most salient political issue for the majority of Sierra Club members or voters at large in Ohio. It is important to note that a lower salience for environmental concerns was not accompanied by a decline in issue support for environmental concerns, according to the findings from questions 1 and 11.

Voter Confidence In Officials' Ability To Deal With Problems

Study results indicate that Ohio voters are not only interested in the environmental opinions of their elected representatives but also feel that government officials can have an impact on solving environmental problems. Eighty-five percent of the general public and eighty-nine percent of the Sierra Club members indicated that they felt that governmental officials have the capacity to impact important community problems.

Informational Sources

Both target groups named newspapers as their primary informational source for local and statewide candidates. Seventy-one percent of the Sierra Club respondents listed newspapers as their main source for candidate information compared to forty-eight percent of the general
public respondents (see Figure 1). Television was given as the primary informational source by thirty-seven percent of the general public and by thirteen percent of the Sierra Club members. Sierra Club members relied much more heavily on newspapers than on television for candidate information. Radio, family or friends, and other sources (church, employer, union, etc.) retained a small percentage of Sierra Club and general public respondents.

FIGURE 1: SOURCES FOR CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Studies have consistently shown that people who use newspapers as their primary informational source are more knowledgeable than those who use television (Miyo, 1983). Readers of newspapers are generally better educated, are ranked in the middle or upper social classes, and vote more regularly than non-newspaper readers (Sobal and Jackson-Beeck, 1981). These studies have also indicated that television-dependent people are more confused and cynical about politics than those depending on other media for political information (Miyo, 1983).
Perception Of Endorsement Influence

The study indicates that both target populations felt that their voting decisions were influenced to some degree by organizational political endorsements. Sierra Club respondents showed a slightly higher perception of endorsement influence than did general public respondents. On a ten-point scale, with ten indicating a great deal of influence, Sierra Club members responded with a 3.9 average, while general public respondents averaged 3.4.

Awareness Of Environmental Endorsements

In Ohio's gubernatorial contest, neither Sierra Club members nor members of the general public had a high degree of Sierra Club endorsement awareness. Only five percent of the general public respondents were aware of an environmental endorsement in the governor's race, and of that five percent, no one named the Sierra Club specifically as the endorsing environmental organization (see Figure 2). Twenty-eight percent of the Sierra Club members polled were aware of an environmental endorsement in the governor's contest. Nearly twenty-seven percent of the Sierra Club respondents named the Sierra Club specifically as the endorsing environmental organization (see Figure 2). Nearly thirteen percent of the Sierra Club respondents stated that the Sierra Club endorsement in the governor's race affected their votes.

Eighty-three percent of Sierra Club members who were aware of the
Sierra Club's gubernatorial endorsement learned of the endorsement through Club information. Only fifteen percent of those knowledgeable of the endorsement learned of the endorsement from sources outside the Club.

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGES OF AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ENDORSEMENTS

**GEN. PUBLIC AWARENESS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Governor's Race</th>
<th>State Senate Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environ. Endorsement</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. C. Endorsement</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**S. C. MEMBER AWARENESS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Governor's Race</th>
<th>State Senate Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environ. Endorsement</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. C. Endorsement</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the local elections for state senate seats, the awareness of environmental endorsements was somewhat higher for both target groups than in the governor's race. Twenty-one percent of the general public respondents were aware of an environmental endorsement, but none of the respondents named the Sierra Club as the specific endorsing organization. Among Sierra Club members, forty-five percent were aware of an
environmental endorsement, but only nineteen percent identified the Sierra Club specifically as the endorsing organization. Sixteen percent of the Sierra Club sample reported that the Sierra Club endorsement in the state senate contests affected their voting behavior. Sierra Club information was the main vehicle for learning of the state senate endorsements among members. Nearly forty-one percent learned of the endorsements from Club information, compared to thirty-two percent learning from other sources. It is interesting to note that not one respondent learned of Sierra Club endorsements in the state senate contests, or in the governor's race, from campaign information supplied by the endorsed candidate.

General Reactions To The Sierra Club

Members of the general public were largely unaware of the Sierra Club organization. Thirty-nine percent of the general public sample was unfamiliar with the Sierra Club. This percentage of unfamiliarity was higher for the Sierra Club than for the other organizations examined in the study. Percentages of those general public respondents unfamiliar with the other organizations were: the National Education Association, twenty-three percent; the National Rifle Association, twelve percent; and the National Organization for Women, eight percent. The other organization, Americans for a New Society, was a fictitious organization invented solely for the purposes of this study. The percentages of respondents unfamiliar with this fictitious organization (eighty percent of the general public sample and eighty-seven and one-half percent of the Sierra Club members) provide a baseline to compare the other percentages
against. Twenty-four percent of the general public respondents reacted neutrally to the Sierra Club organization, six percent reacted negatively, and thirty-one percent reacted positively.

As expected, the Sierra Club members polled were largely familiar with, and favorable to, the Sierra Club. The percentage of members unfamiliar with the Sierra Club (two and one half percent) is within the study's margin of error. The two percent of respondents who expressed a negative response to the Club is also within the study's margin of error, although at least two of the members expressed a negative attitude as a result of the Club's political and endorsement activities in the 1986 election. The members polled showed positive support for two other organizations, the National Education Association (fifty-four percent positive) and the National Organization for Women (fifty-five percent positive). However, the third organization, the National Rifle Association, received an overwhelming negative response from Sierra Club members (seventy percent negative).
In evaluating the effectiveness of the 1986 Sierra Club endorsements, the study provides several insights. First, the Ohio Sierra Club's efforts to influence the voting behavior of the general public in the 1986 election were largely ineffective. Not one respondent from the general public sample recalled a Sierra Club endorsement in either the high-involvement governor's race or in the low-involvement state senate contests. Even in the Cincinnati area where the Sierra Club campaigned strongly to inform the public through press releases and news conferences, the efforts were ineffective. A second insight is that this ineffectiveness can be partially attributed to the fact that the Sierra Club is unfamiliar to a large percentage of the general public (thirty-nine percent). This unfamiliarity may be part of the reason that of the twenty-one percent of general public respondents aware of some kind of environmental endorsement in the state senate contests, none were able to specifically name the Sierra Club. This result occurred despite the fact that the Sierra Club was the only statewide environmental organization to formally endorse candidates in the 1986 general election. One can theorize that if the Sierra Club had greater name recognition among the general public, the percentage of those able to name the Sierra Club as the specific endorsing organization would also be higher.

Although Sierra Club members were more aware of the Club's endorsements than the general public, the percentage aware of the 1986
endorsements was surprisingly small, considering the amount of political endorsement information supplied to members of the Club. In the high-involvement governor's race, nearly three of every four members were unaware of an environmental endorsement. It is somewhat encouraging, however, to note that of the twenty-eight percent that were aware of such an endorsement, almost all recognized the Sierra Club as the endorsing organization. It is also encouraging that in the state senate contests a much larger percentage (45.5 percent) of members were aware of an environmental endorsement. It is disappointing that only nineteen percent of the Sierra Club sample was able to name the Sierra Club as the specific endorsing organization in these state senate races.

A third insight that the study reveals is that the majority of the Ohio voters sampled from both target groups utilized the newspaper as their primary source of candidate information. This suggests that the most effective medium for reaching Ohio voters about endorsement information is the newspaper.

A fourth insight from the study is that both target publics perceived that organizational endorsements did not have a great influence in their voting decisions. Even though the actual influence of organizational endorsements may differ from the perceived influence, this study deals only with the perception of such influence. Using a ten-point scale with ten indicating a great deal of influence, Sierra Club members responded with a 3.9 average. When questioned whether the specific Sierra Club endorsement in the gubernatorial race affected their votes, nearly thirteen percent of the Sierra Club responded positively. Similarly, when questioned whether the Sierra Club endorsement in the state senate races
affected their votes, sixteen percent of the Sierra Club respondents answered positively.

A fifth insight that the study reveals is that the majority of respondents from both sample publics considered environmental problems to be significant in their communities. The percentages from the study (84 percent of the Sierra Club sample and 67 percent of the general public sample) indicated that the majority of Ohio voters considered environmental problems to be important concerns regardless of the presence or absence of other issues. The views of a specific candidate toward the environment were also perceived as significant by the respondents of both sample publics. It is important to note that the large majority of respondents from both samples also expressed confidence in the impact that elected officials can have on significant community problems.

Study Applications

The Sierra Club intends to continue its partisan endorsement activities. An application of the insights provided in this study can aid in the Club's endorsement recognition and effectiveness among Ohio voters. Undoubtedly the most encouraging finding from the study is the fact that the large majority of both target publics viewed environmental problems as significant. This concern over environmental problems suggests a general positive predisposition toward environmental issues, or at least toward environmental topics that relate to environmental problems. Because voters are more likely to attend to informational messages which support their predispositions, the Ohio Sierra Club has the
definite advantage of voter attentiveness to their environmental messages. Sierra Club members, for example, who are assumed to have heightened predispositions regarding environmental topics, attended to the 1986 political recommendations issued by the Club with greater frequency than did members of the general public. This greater frequency was most likely due to their predisposition for environmental messages combined with the abundance of endorsement information provided in Club newsletters, direct mailings and regular meetings. Wider publicity of the facts by the Club regarding significant environmental problems can help the general public to positively associate the Sierra Club with their environmental concerns.

Efforts to expand the public perception of the Club can contribute to another factor in increased endorsement effectiveness—individual issue knowledge. Voting behavior is influenced by what individuals know about the specific issues. Increased knowledge about the environmental issues impacting Ohio communities can influence the public's voting behavior concerning such issues. If the Sierra Club can increase public knowledge about environmental issues, then Club endorsements of candidates based on their environmental credentials will be viewed as more significant by the public.

Although specific ways to increase the public perception of the Sierra Club were not addressed in the study, the study does suggest that the newspaper, as the primary source of candidate information, is an effective instrument to inform the general public. A close examination of the newspaper as the primary informational source is critical to success of Ohio Sierra Club endorsements for several reasons. First, the Club's limited budget severely limits any television campaigning and forces its
reliance on the newspaper media. Second, while both television and newspapers have strong effects on their audiences at the most general level of information, only newspapers deliver at more specific levels of information. This is congruent with the Sierra Club's aim to provide voters with specific information concerning state and local candidates and their environmental propensities. Third, and most important, if newspapers make decisions regarding which political information to print and which to omit, they become powerful controllers of the information which reaches the public.

The Ohio Sierra Club issued a press release which included a brief description of the Sierra Club, the slate of endorsed candidates, a general statement regarding the importance of electing the endorsed candidates, and a chart with the voting records of incumbent candidates, to all major newspapers and wire services in Ohio. However, research revealed that this press release did not appear in either The Toledo Blade or The Cincinnati Enquirer, the major newspapers in the two cities where the study was administered. This omission raises serious questions as to why the press release was not printed by either newspaper and who made the decision that it would not be printed. It also raises the question of whether the political bias of the specific newspaper affects its decisions to publish political endorsements.

The Deputy Managing Editor of The Cincinnati Enquirer, Mr. Dennis Dougherty, explained that The Enquirer treats organizational endorsements as news events and publishes such endorsements as soon as practical after their issuance. He stated that legitimate organizations are given coverage but that the coverage of the endorsement announcement generally consists
of only a sentence or two in a regularly appearing "Political Notes" column. This column appears soon after Labor Day and continues through the election. The following organizational endorsements were printed in the "Political Notes" column: the Cincinnati Fraternal Order of Police 1900 Club, on October, 11 and October, 14; the Cincinnati Firefighters Union on October, 15; and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers on October, 17. Research revealed no Sierra Club endorsement coverage in this column.

Discussions with representatives from The Toledo Blade produced two different versions of The Blade policy concerning the printing of organizational endorsement information. Judy Terlanny, The Blade assignment editor, explained that The Blade has a standard policy of not printing the political endorsements of individual organizations, but instead, of combining the endorsements from several organization into a single article printed a few days prior to the election. She noted that the endorsements of all credible organizations which The Blade had received were included in this article. The article to which she referred appeared in The Blade on October 26, 1986, ten days before the election (see Appendix 5). It included the endorsements of the following organizations: the Teamsters; Ohio Council 8, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; the Toledo Women's Bar Association; and the Metro-Toledo Churches United. However, it failed to include the Sierra Club endorsements.

Chase Clements, the political columnist for The Blade provided a different explanation concerning the printing of organizational political endorsements. He provided a brief history of The Blade policy.
explaining that until a few years ago, the newspaper printed a summary of all the candidates endorsed by various organizations in the election-eve edition. However, as this practice grew too cumbersome, The Blade began to print organizational endorsements individually. When asked about the specific criteria for organizational endorsements to receive this coverage, he responded that if the organization was viewed as credible, its endorsements were printed by The Blade. Specific questions about the Sierra Club endorsements were not asked to any of the newspaper representatives to avoid biasing their responses.

The implications of the failure of the Sierra Club endorsement information to reach the public in Toledo and Cincinnati are shown in the study results among the general public sample. The fact that none of the general public respondents were aware of specific Sierra Club endorsements in either the governor's race or the state senate contests is more predictable in light of this omission. The fact that Club endorsement information did not appear in the Toledo and Cincinnati newspapers may have also been a factor in the lack of name recognition for the Sierra Club among general public respondents (thirty-nine percent were unfamiliar with the Sierra Club organization).

Increasing the Club's name recognition among the general public is critical to increasing its political effectiveness. Not only would Ohio voters associate the Club's name and purpose with their environmental concerns, but they would also view the Sierra Club as a credible informational source. The more prominent the public perception of the Sierra Club, the more enhanced the Club's credibility would become among the general public. Increased credibility benefits endorsement
effectiveness, as messages delivered by credible sources are evaluated more positively than the same messages from less credible sources.

However, increasing the Club's name recognition among the general public is heavily dependent on reaching that public. The fact that neither The Toledo Blade nor The Cincinnati Enquirer printed the Sierra Club endorsement information raises important questions for the Club: was the Ohio SCCOPE committee aware that certain newspapers did not print the press release containing its endorsement information? Can the committee take steps to insure that its press releases are printed? Should the Sierra Club utilize other approaches, such as paid advertising, to insure that its information reaches the public? Should the Club consider utilizing television or other media to reinforce its messages?

Lynn Frock, chair of the Ohio SCCOPE committee responded to these questions. Frock was aware that the Sierra Club endorsement information was not printed by his hometown newspaper, The Cincinnati Enquirer. He was not aware if it had appeared in other Ohio newspapers, but was not surprised to learn that it was not printed by The Toledo Blade. The Ohio SCCOPE Committee did not have high expectations, according to Frock, that Ohio newspapers would print the Club's endorsement information. Frock explained that the SCCOPE committee aimed its endorsement effort primarily toward its membership. The tactic used to reach the public was to issue the press release on the chance that it might be printed by some Ohio newspapers. Frock explained that the lack of funds prohibits the use of other approaches, such as paid advertising, or other media to reach the public audience. Specific monies would have to be raised to make such efforts possible because membership dues and Sierra Club treasury funds
cannot be used for this purpose. Frock concluded that if such funds were raised to be used in the effort to reach the public audience, the money could be better spent given directly to the endorsed candidate to be used on the behalf of the Sierra Club, than used to promote its endorsement information. As for positive directions that the Sierra Club could take to insure that its endorsements receive media coverage, Frock suggested that local groups become involved to promote and monitor coverage by their local newspapers.

In the final analysis, do Sierra Club endorsements influence actual voter behavior substantially enough to warrant the heavy investment of Club resources? The study results of question 5 would initially indicate that endorsements have little real effect on voting decisions. According to the responses to this question from both samples, organizational partisan endorsements do not have great influence on actual voting decisions. It is important to note here that the results to this question are difficult to evaluate. Because of an inherent desire for people to see themselves as independent thinkers who weigh all the issues when making their voting decisions, they may fail to recognize, or to admit, their reliance on a single endorsement as a major influence in their decision-making process. While the perceived influence of endorsements may be downplayed (on a ten-point scale, the average responses were 3.4 among the general public and 3.9 among Sierra Club members), the actual influence may be higher than the numbers indicate. Similarly, the Sierra Club members who admitted that Sierra Club endorsements actually influenced their voting decisions (thirteen percent in the gubernatorial race and sixteen percent in the senate contests) may only be a portion of
the members who were actually influenced by the endorsements.

Whether these percentages are high enough to be considered substantial is a subjective determination. The Sierra Club endorsement effort to influence the voting decisions of its members can be determined successful, in that a measurable percentage of members polled admitted that their votes were influenced by the endorsements. However it seems clear that the Club is failing to maximize both its endorsement investment and its success possibilities among the general public. The Club's cost to generate its endorsements remains the same, whether the information is available to its members alone, or to the general public as well. It follows that to expend a little more to make the endorsement information widely available would be a wise extension of the initial investment.

The Ohio Sierra Club needs to expand the focus of its endorsement activities. If the Club is content with impacting primarily those within its membership ranks, then it may be performing adequately, within realistic expectations, in its endorsement efforts. However, it is clear that the original intention of Sierra Club endorsements, from their birth in 1982, was to impact the general public as well as its own membership. It is on this front that the results of the study are most discouraging. Not only did the Ohio Sierra Club endorsements fail to persuade the voting public, they failed to even reach the public in the two cities where the study was administered. Even the finest work to generate the endorsements, and even the greatest potential impact of those endorsements are futile unless the information reaches its audience. The impact of unpublished endorsement information cannot be measured. If the Ohio Sierra Club judges that the investment in making political endorsements is
worthwhile, and if it perceives that efforts to influence general public voters are valuable, it must also invest in ways to insure that this information reaches the public audience.
IX. SUMMARY

The Sierra Club intends to continue the partisan endorsement activities begun in 1982 to advocate its views and to affect political change in this country. Endorsement activities require a substantial investment of the Club's energies as well as monies. Because such resources are limited in the Sierra Club, the examination and evaluation of endorsement effectiveness is important to measure benefits against costs. This study examines one aspect of endorsement effectiveness by polling Ohio voters from two samples, the general public and the Sierra Club, and asking specific questions concerning Sierra Club endorsements in the 1986 elections.

The most positive finding of the study is the issue importance of environmental problems for the large majority of both target publics. Other findings are cause for concern in gauging the effectiveness of Sierra Club endorsements. First, a large number of general public voters is unaware of the Sierra Club organization. Second, the Sierra Club had no measurable influence on the voting decisions of the general public in the 1986 general election. And third, in the two cities studied, the Ohio Sierra Club endorsement information was not published by the newspapers.

Although endorsements may serve purposes other than that of influencing votes, the Sierra Club has viewed political persuasion as the primary focus of such endorsements. The findings of this study suggest two conclusions. First, that the Ohio Sierra Club may be performing adequately among its membership ranks, both in the dissemination of its
endorsement information to members and in the effectiveness of this information on members' voting decisions. Second, the Ohio Sierra Club has been largely ineffective among the general public, not only in its efforts to persuade voters through its endorsements, but also in its efforts to reach the voting public with its endorsement information. It is in this public arena that the Sierra Club needs to review its endorsement strategy to determine if its investment in environmental endorsements can yield greater benefits.
X. ENDNOTES

(1) Some organizations focus on wildlife preservation (Defenders of Wildlife) and often argue against hunting (Fund for Animals), while other organizations' memberships are comprised mainly of hunters (Ducks Unlimited and National Wildlife Federation). The Nature Conservancy, which preserves land by outright purchase is relatively non-confrontational in its activities, while the National Resources Defense Council focuses its activities mainly in the courtroom. Groups such as National Parks Conservation Association and Save-The-Redwoods League are more narrowly focused, while the National Audubon Society concerns itself with many issues. The Sierra Club is an example of a grassroots volunteer-based organization with relatively few paid staff positions, while the functions of the National Resources Defense Council are carried out mainly by their paid staff members. All of the organizations collectively form the American environmental movement.

(2) The following figures are the most recent membership totals for selected environmental organizations. They total more than two million due to many dual memberships among the members.

National Audubon Society 510,000
National Wildlife Federation 4,500,000
Sierra Club 400,000
Wilderness Society 170,000
Defenders of Wildlife 68,000
Natural Resources Defense Council 60,000
National Parks Conservation Association 55,000
Fund for Animals 175,000
Ducks Unlimited 565,000
Friends Of The Earth 30,000
Save-The-Redwoods League 40,000

(3) A Group is a geographical sub-division of a Chapter. The seven groups in Ohio with each group's major city are: Miami Group (Cincinnati); Western Lake Erie Group (Toledo); Northeastern Ohio Group (Cleveland); Central Ohio Group (Columbus); Tecumseh Group (Dayton); Portage Trails Group (Akron); and Salt Springs Group (Youngstown).

(4) According to Babbie (1986) telephone polling has become established as an authoritative sampling method, ranking with the mailed questionnaire method in reliability.

(5) According to Babbie (1986) and Healy (1984), a sample of 200 is necessary in order to attain 95 percent confidence that the study findings are accurate to at least within plus or minus seven percentage points of the population parameters. Figures 3 and 4 indicate the sample size requirements for various accuracy intervals.
(6) Every effort was made to use a random sampling method which would include unlisted as well as listed numbers. The following practice was used to select the numbers which were called:

An odd numbered page in the telephone directory for both cities was selected at random, page 93. The fourth number from the bottom of the fourth row was selected. The final digit of that number was increased by one to include the possibility of reaching an unlisted number. The next number called was from the following odd-numbered page, fourth row, fourth number from the bottom, adding one to the final digit of the number. This process continued until arriving back to the original odd-numbered page, page 93. In the event that the required number of samples was not obtained at the completion of this sequence, even numbered pages, beginning with page 94, were used with the same procedure and sequence. If more numbers were needed after returning to page 94, the third number from the bottom of the third row on all the odd-numbered pages was used, starting on page 93 with the procedure remaining the same.

(7) For comparative purposes, education was considered a significant problem by forty-six percent of the general public and fifty-six percent of the Sierra Club members. Unemployment was considered a significant problem by eighty-one percent of the general public and eighty-three percent of the Sierra Club members.

(8) For comparative purposes, the average responses from the general
public to a candidate's views on other issues were as follows:
unemployment, 7.8; crime, 7.6; and education, 8.0. Average responses
from Sierra Club members were: unemployment, 7.3; crime, 7.1; and
education, 7.8.

(9) For comparative purposes, the most salient issues for the general
public respondents were unemployment (34.5%) and education (16%),
followed by the environment (15%). The most salient issue for Sierra
Club respondents was unemployment (32.5%) followed by the environment
(21%).

(10) The telephone research assistants noted that a number of respondents
elaborated on this question, saying that even though they felt such
officials do have the capacity to manage these problems, the officials
may not always choose to utilize this capacity.

(11) The true percentage of those unfamiliar with the Club is probably
higher, assuming that some people report being familiar when they are
not and virtually no one does the opposite. A case in point: Nineteen
percent of the general public and thirteen percent of the Sierra Club
members indicated recognition of the fictitious organization,
Americans for A New Society, included in this question.

(12) Both The Toledo Blade and The Cincinnati Enquirer are
known to be politically conservative newspapers.
XI. APPENDIX 1

1. I will read a short list of problems that afflict many communities throughout America. As I read them, please indicate if you consider them to be significant problems in (your community).

- quality of education yes  no
- unemployment yes  no
- environmental problems yes  no

2. What do you consider the most important problem in (your town).

3. Do you feel that elected government officials can have an impact on significant problems such as these?

   yes  no  (other)

4. From which of the following sources do you obtain most of your information about local or statewide candidates?

   newspapers____, family or friends____, radio____, TV____, other____

5. How much do political endorsements by organizations influence your voting decisions using a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no influence whatsoever and 10 being a great deal of influence. ________.

6. In the Governor's race, are you aware of any educational organizations who have endorsed either Rhodes or Celeste? yes  no
   (If Yes) Which organizations?
   How did you learn of their endorsement?
   Did the endorsement affect your vote? yes  no
   (If Yes) Was it a positive or negative effect?

7. Are you aware of any environmental organizations who have endorsed either Celeste or Rhodes? yes  no
   (If Yes) Which organizations?
   How did you learn of their endorsement?
   Did the endorsement affect your vote? yes  no
   (If Yes) Was it a positive or negative effect?

8. Are you aware of any business organizations who have endorsed either Celeste or Rhodes? yes  no
   (If Yes) Which organizations?
   How did you learn of their endorsement?
   Did the endorsement affect your vote? yes  no
   (If Yes) Was it a positive or negative effect?
10. In the State Senate race between ___________ and ___________, are you aware of any organizations that have endorsed one of the candidates? Yea_No__

(If Yes) Which organizations?
How did you learn of their endorsement?
Did the endorsement affect your vote? Yea_No__
(If Yes) Was it a positive or negative effect? ____________

11. On a scale of 10 to 1, with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important, how important is a candidate's views on the following issues?

Unemployment ___
Education ___
Environment ___
Crime ___

12. I will read a list of organizations and ask you to tell me if you feel positive, negative, or neutral about the organization. If you have never heard of the organization, please indicate this as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Neg.</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unfamiliar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Education Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Americans For a New Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Rifle Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Organization for Women</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Are you a registered voter? Yea_No__

14. Did you vote in this November's election? Yea_No__

15. Could we please include your age______

and occupation____________.

****Thank you so much for your time and cooperation****

16. (To be filled in by interviewer = Sex M_F__ )
Hello,

I am conducting an opinion poll to complete my graduate thesis at the University. This opinion poll asks voting-age residents of the _____ area brief questions about various issues. The questions will take three or four minutes of your time and your responses will remain strictly confidential. Would you be willing to help me with this research by answering a few questions?
Question #1:
% Yes to environmental problems
84.0%

Question #2:
% Environmental problems most important
19.5%

Question #3:
% Yes to government officials having impact
88.5%

Question #4:
% of sources where candidate information is obtained
1) Newspapers	71.0%
2) Family or Friends	5.5%
3) Radio	4.5%
4) Television	13.5%
5) Other Sources	5.5%

Question #5
Average influence of political endorsements
(1 = No Influence)
(10 = Great influence)
Average = 3.9

Omit question #6
Question #7
Awareness of endorsements for Celeste or Rhodes

% Aware of environmental organization endorsements 28.0 %

% Stating Sierra Club 94.6 %

% Of information sources for those stating Sierra Club
1) Sierra Club information 83.0 %
2) Candidate information 0.0 %
3) Media sources 1.9 %
4) Other sources 15.1 %

% Of those whose vote was affected and stated Sierra Club 47.2 %

% Of those votes affected positively and stated Sierra Club 76.0 %

Omit questions #8 and #9

Question #10
Awareness of endorsements for Senate

% Aware of environmental organization endorsements 45.5 %

% Stating Sierra Club 40.7 %

% Of information sources for those stating Sierra Club
1) Sierra Club information 40.6 %
2) Candidate information 0.0 %
3) Media sources 27.0 %
4) Other sources 32.4 %

% Of those whose vote was affected and stated Sierra Club 86.5 %

% Of those votes affected positively and stated Sierra Club 78.1 %

Question #11
Average of environment response

Average = 7.9
### Question #12
Totals for responses to each organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Education Association</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Americans for a New Society</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>175</td>
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<td>Sierra Club</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Rifle Association</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Organization for Women</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question #13
% Registered voters

98.0%

### Question #14
% That voted last November

87.5%

### Question #15
% Of ages by ranges

- 18-29 yrs. 14.0%
- 30-39 yrs. 29.0%
- 40-49 yrs. 16.0%
- 50-59 yrs. 18.0%
- 60-69 yrs. 15.0%
- 70-79 yrs. 6.5%
- 80 + yrs. 1.5%

% Of occupations

1) Retired 16.5% 6) Technician 3.0%
2) Skilled Labor 12.5% 7) Homemaker 9.5%
3) Unskilled labor 0.5% 8) Artist/Artisan 1.0%
4) Sales 2.5% 9) Student 3.0%
5) Professional 49.0% 10) Unemployed 2.5%

### Question #16
% Sex (male/female)

- Male = 37.5%
- Female = 62.5%
Question #1:
% Yes to environmental problems
66.7 %

Question #2:
% Environmental problems most important
14.6 %

Question #3:
% Yes to government officials having impact
84.8 %

Question #4:
% Of sources where candidate information is obtained
1) Newspapers 47.5 %
2) Family or Friends 3.0 %
3) Radio 4.5 %
4) Television 37.4 %
5) Other Sources 7.6 %

Question #5
Average influence of political endorsements
(1 = No Influence)
(10 = Great influence)
Average = 3.4

Omit question #6
Question #7
Awareness of endorsements for Celeste or Rhodes

% Aware of environmental organization endorsements
5.1%

% Stating Sierra Club
0.0%

% Of information sources for those stating Sierra Club
1) Sierra Club information 0.0%
2) Candidate information 0.0%
3) Media sources 0.0%
4) Other sources 0.0%

% Of those whose vote was affected and stated Sierra Club
0.0%

% Of those votes affected positively and stated Sierra Club
0.0%

Omit questions #8 and #9

Question #10
Awareness of endorsements for Senate

% Aware of environmental organization endorsements
20.7%

% Stating Sierra Club
0.0%

% Of information sources for those stating Sierra Club
1) Sierra Club information 0.0%
2) Candidate information 0.0%
3) Media sources 0.0%
4) Other sources 0.0%

% Of those whose vote was affected and stated Sierra Club
0.0%

% Of those votes affected positively and stated Sierra Club
0.0%

Question #11
Average of environment response
Average = 7.2
Question #12
Totals for responses to each organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Education Association</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans for a New Society</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Rifle Association</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Organization for Women</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question #13
% Registered voters
86.9 %

Question #14
% That voted last November
72.7 %

Question #15
% Of ages by ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29 yrs.</td>
<td>23.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 yrs.</td>
<td>25.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 yrs.</td>
<td>14.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 yrs.</td>
<td>13.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 yrs.</td>
<td>11.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79 yrs.</td>
<td>9.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 + yrs.</td>
<td>2.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Of occupations

1) Retired 20.7 %
2) Skilled Labor 7.6 %
3) Unskilled labor 7.6 %
4) Sales 4.5 %
5) Professional 31.3 %
6) Technician 3.5 %
7) Homemaker 16.7 %
8) Artist/Artisian 0.0 %
9) Student 5.6 %
10) Unemployed 2.5 %

Question #16
% Sex (male/female)

Male = 42.4 %
Female = 57.6 %
Teamster Unit Makes Endorsements

Linda Furney and Ruth Ann Franks, the Democratic candidates for the state Senate and a vacant county judgeship, respectively, were the only nonincumbents endorsed for election in Lucas County by Ohio DRIVE, the political action arm of the Teamsters Union.

The rest of the endorsed Teamster slate is made up of Democrats Casey Jones, Barney Quilter, Donald Czarnecki, and Fred Deering and Republican John Galbraith, all for state representative seats; Democratic Judges Arthur Wilkowski and Alice Robie. Resnick for the Sixth District Court of Appeals; Democrats William Skow and Charles Abood and Republican Robert Christiansen for Common Pleas Court; Democrat Sandy Isenberg for county commissioner; Democrat Bill Copeland for county recorder and Republican Robert Christiansen for auditor.

In area congressional races, the Teamsters endorsed all incumbents: Marcy Kaptur in the Ninth District, Delbert Latta in the Fifth District, and Michael Oxley in the Fourth District.

In Wood County, the Teamsters endorsed two Democratic challengers — Joyce Kepke for the Ohio House and Kevin Philo for auditor — and incumbent Republican Gale Williamson for the Common Pleas Court judgeship.

The statewide Teamsters endorsement went to all Democrats except for one Supreme Court race, where both Democrat Herbert Brown and Republican Judge Joyce George were rated as qualified.

AFSCME Endorsements

Ohio Council 8, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, endorsed a straight Democratic ticket for legislative races in Lucas and Wood counties.

AFSCME endorsed Miss Kaptur and challenger Thomas Murray in the Ninth and Fifth districts, respectively, and Ms. Furney in the state Senate contest.

In Ohio House races, the union endorsed incumbents Quilter, Jones, and Czarnecki and challenger Arlene Singer in Lucas County races. In Wood County, the council endorsed Mrs. Kepke.

Women Lawyers' Choices

The Toledo Women's Bar Association, formed in May with 70 members, has announced its recommendations for judicial races, according to Holly Taft Sydlow, association president.

She said the process involved questionnaires and interviews, and members voted on candidates' judicial qualifications and their "demonstrated interest in the advancement of the cause of women, in general, and women in the legal profession."

For Ohio Supreme Court, the association endorsed Judge Thomas Moyer and Judge George; for Sixth District Court of Appeals, Judges Resnick and George Glasser, and for Common Pleas Court, Judges Skow, Mrs. Franks, and Darrell Van Horn.

TARTA Levy Endorsed

The board of directors of the Toledo Metropolitan Mission, 444 Floyd St., has endorsed a 0.75-mill levy on the Nov. 4 ballot that would provide funding to the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority.

The Rev. Larry Whittington Clark, chairman of the board of the ecumenically funded department of Metro-Toledo Churches United, said that recommendation for passage comes as a result of TARTA's newly developed plan for transportation of the elderly and handicapped.

The board did not endorse TARTA's 1.5-mill levy that was defeated in May because it did not feel that TARTA was responsive to concerns about such transportation.


