Hamline University Professor’s Research Shows That National Political Convention Locations and Vice-Presidential Picks Don’t Sway Voters

The importance of national political convention locations and vice-presidential picks on swing states is overblown according to Hamline University Professor David Schultz in his latest article.

St.Paul, Minnesota (PRWEB) July 11, 2016 -- Hamline University professor David Schultz, noted expert on elections, politics, and author of Presidential Swing States, Why Ten Only Matter, argues in his most recent article that there is little evidence that placement of a national political convention in Cleveland for the Republicans or Philadelphia for the Democrats will affect the presidential outcome in Ohio or Pennsylvania. Schultz also argues that it is unlikely that the selection of a vice-presidential candidate from a swing state will enhance the ability of Clinton or Trump to win it.

In his “(Un)Conventional Wisdom and Presidential Politics: The Myth of Convention Locations and Favorite-Son Vice Presidents,” published in the July PS: Political Science and Research, Schultz examines all 17 presidential elections back to 1948 to determine if the location of national political conventions or the selection of vice-presidential candidates impact voting.

According to Schultz: “Among the widely held myths by politicians and pundits is a belief that a political party's placement of a national convention in swing states such as Ohio for the Republicans or Pennsylvania for the Democrats this year can affect presidential voting, flipping it to its presidential candidate or ensuring that it will be held by them. Second, there is the belief that the selection of a vice-presidential candidate from a specific state as a favorite son (or daughter) will deliver its electoral votes to a presidential ticket. Both beliefs are wrong.”

Schultz’s research shows that since 1948 when a political party holds a convention in a specific state there is a slightly better chance of its presidential candidate losing as opposed to winning the state. Similarly, there are actually very few instances of favorite son vice-presidential candidates flipping a state. In fact, 80% of the time the presence of a favorite son or daughter VP candidate made no difference or perhaps hurt the ticket.

Schultz’s research shows that politicians and pundits spend too much time worrying about convention locations and VP picks. Their importance for Schultz is “Largely a myth” that has distracted too much analysis and strategy regarding the factors that actually matter in successful presidential campaigns.

David Schultz is a professor of political science at Hamline University. He has taught classes on American government and election law for more than 25 years. Schultz, a three time Fulbright scholar and winner of the Leslie A. Whittington national award for excellence in public affairs teaching, is the author and editor of 30 books and 100 articles on American politics and law.

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