

Ryan Blackburn

Independent Study and Mentorship

Spiece 4B

6 November 2017

The Breadth of Influence - Understanding the Dichotomy of Political Agendas

Interview Assessment 2

Name of Professional: Mr. Ryan Neil

Profession/Title: Campaign Manager

Business/Company name: Pat Fallon for Texas

Date of Interview: 6 September 2017

Through multiple assessments and analysis of my current research, I have realized that a large component of my time has been lent to understanding the legislative, more policy-focused effects that come to light when policymakers interact with a wide variety of interest groups. Because of this, I aimed to branch out my research and focus on the other side of the dichotomy that characterizes the actions of politicians: campaigning. More specifically, I looked to understand the impacts that the presence of such groups had on campaign organization, as well as how elected officials will work to appeal to all members of society during the process of

election with a clear acknowledgement of interest groups' championed ideals or philosophies. With these goals in mind, I reached out to Mr. Ryan Neil of State Representative Pat Fallon's 2017 campaign, looking to understand the impacts made on the campaigning process through a professional who has actively overviewed a political campaign.

Firstly, throughout the interview, Mr. Neil discussed in great detail the importance of those involved in the campaigning process. Those who actively work to expand the breadth of political awareness help aid in securing the American ideal of civic duty, where a growing population of people more concerned about the issues facing their society will help work towards resolution. Such is the focal point of Mr. Neil's work: I learned from him the dedication required to expand on the duties of the citizen, while also understanding the intricacies and interactions that epitomize the campaigning process. Not only that, but another critical component of the campaigning process also included those who volunteer their time to the cause; I understood from Mr. Neil that the greatest asset of campaigning comes from the involvement and direct communication with the public.

As such, the campaign manager underscored the significance of community interaction, founding the values that characterize the relationship a campaign has with interest groups. Because of this, a large portion of our discussion tailored around the interaction the campaign has with such interest groups. Mr. Neil offered a revelation on the topic, suggesting that a campaign focuses more so on appealing to the entire public, rather than working to appease the concerns of businesses, nonprofits, and sectional movements. Such an argument held true, as Mr. Neil offered the idea that running for public office comes with running on a primary ticket beforehand, where candidates must adhere to a set platform that does not shift based on the

worries of private organizations. Indeed, in an effort to ascend to public office through appealing to the majority of voters, many campaigns, I have learned, tend to work more closely on advertising potential policies and views of the candidate that are already set in stone, rather than drafting responses to the arguments made from private organizations.

From this interview, I have capitalized on the information provided by Mr. Neil to understand more of the dichotomy between legislative and campaigning procedures: while in-office work is all too often associated with the influence of interest groups through lobbying, working to ascend or reelect an incumbent representative to office merits little interaction with the private sector. Truly, in an attempt to fully understand the breadth interest groups can influence policy at the state level, it is apparent that such influence stops at the campaigning level; only in office do elected officials face the task of addressing private organizations' agendas towards reforming American policy.