

Dr. Tim Krebs & Dr. John Wagner

Professor & Post Doc Fellow, Political Science
University of New Mexico

Try, Try Again: Candidate Persistence in California Local Politics

Abstract:

When do unsuccessful candidates give up their quest for office? And if they do try again, is it for the same office or a different one? In this paper we track the local office-seeking behavior of candidates in California over nearly 25 years to understand candidate persistence, or repeated efforts to win political offices. In addition to a general focus on candidate persistence, we seek to understand whether there are gender-related differences in decisions to persist, and for what offices.

Our dataset includes information on all candidates who ran for local, state, or congressional office between 1996 and 2019. Our coding scheme includes individual identifiers which allows us to track candidate persistence over time. Because democracy relies on a steady stream of people willing to put themselves forward as candidates, our results will shed important new light on the behavior of those seeking to serve their local communities as elected officials.

About the Authors:



Professor Timothy Krebs teaches courses in American politics with a specialization in urban politics, public policy, and campaigns and elections. His research focuses on urban elections and campaigns and urban policy. In addition to teaching and research, Professor Krebs serves as department chair. Prior to UNM, he taught at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Illinois Wesleyan University.

Dr. John K. Wagner is an accomplished researcher specializing in political communication and representation. Holding a Ph.D. in Political Science from the UNM, his scholarly journey has focused on unraveling the profound effects of online communication on political behavior, attitudes, and representation. Employing a blend of meticulous analysis and a profound understanding of the ever-evolving media landscape, his work illuminates the pivotal role of communication in shaping the dynamics of governance.



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