

BUCKEYE BATTLEGROUND

*Ohio, Campaigns, and Elections
in the Twenty-First Century*

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CONTENTS

List of Figures / vii

List of Tables / xi

Preface / xiii

1. Buckeye Battleground / 1

2. Region and the Vote: The Five Ohios / 24

3. The Political Impact of Demography / 58

4. Attitudes and Political Choice / 87

5. Campaigns and Voting in the Battleground / 118

6. A Look to the Future of the Buckeye Battleground / 159

Notes / 171

Bibliography / 189

Index / 201

FIGURES

- 1.1 Presidential margin of victory, 2004 and 2008 / 11
- 1.2 Republican presidential vote, 2004 and 2008 / 13
- 1.3 Composite index of electoral competition, 1856–2010 / 14
- 1.4 Republican percentage of Ohio and national presidential vote, 1856–2008 / 15
- 1.5 Republican percentage of Ohio and national congressional vote, 1856–2006 / 17
- 1.6 Republican percentage of Ohio and national senatorial vote, 1914–2010 / 19
- 1.7 Republican percentage of Ohio and national gubernatorial vote, 1855–2006 / 21
- 2.1 Map of the Five Ohios / 35
- 2.2 Map of average Republican presidential vote, 1980–2008 / 45
- 2.3 Map of Republican presidential vote, 1960, 1976, 2004, and 2008 / 47
- 2.4 Map of Kerry versus Obama vote percentage / 48
- 2.5 DeWine regional performance, 1994–2006 / 49
- 2.6 Map of Republican statewide vote percentage, 1982–2006 / 50
- 2.7 County Republican support in federal elections, 1980–2008 / 53
- 2.8 County Republican support in statewide elections, 1982–2006 / 54

- 3.1 Primary candidate support and county racial makeup, 2008 / 59
- 3.2 Percent of vote for Obama and median income / 65
- 3.3 County median income and the vote by region / 67
- 3.4 Education level and the Obama vote / 68
- 3.5 Education level and Obama support by region / 69
- 3.6 Bush and Obama vote and county growth rate / 73
- 3.7 Racial differences in county voting patterns, 2004 and 2008 / 75
- 3.8 Variance in county racial makeup / 76
- 3.9 Racial voting in the Five Ohios / 77
- 3.10 Evangelical Protestant distribution by region / 78
- 3.11 Church attendance and voting, 2004 and 2008 / 79
- 3.12 Obama Evangelical vote by county / 80
- 3.13 Evangelical and racial makeup by county / 81
- 3.14 The marriage gap in the 2008 election / 83
- 3.15 Presidential voting by age and region, 2008 / 84
- 4.1 Perceptions of Ohio economy, 2004–8 / 88
- 4.2 Partisanship in Ohio, 2004–8 / 92
- 4.3 Partisanship by state, 2004 / 95
- 4.4 Partisanship by state, 2008 / 96
- 4.5 Ohio ideology, 2004–8 / 97
- 4.6 Ideology and partisanship, 2008 / 97
- 4.7 Ohioans' presidential approval, 2004–8 / 99
- 4.8 2004 candidate preference by issue / 107
- 4.9 2008 candidate preference by issue / 108
- 4.10 Ideology and Ohio regions / 110

- 5.1 Media exposure by candidate / 133
- 5.2 Media exposure of candidate by form / 134
- 5.3 Candidate familiarity / 135
- 5.4 Ideological placement and media exposure, September 2008 / 136
- 5.5 Reported campaign contact / 137
- 5.6 Contact by form, 2008 / 139
- 5.7 Reported contact by form, 2004 / 140
- 5.8 Campaign contacts and party identification / 141
- 5.9 Campaign contact and intention to vote / 142
- 5.10 Demographics and contact / 143
- 5.11 Campaign contact by interest groups, 2004 and 2008 / 148
- 5.12 Contact by campaign affiliate and respondent vote choice / 148
- 5.13 Map of candidate visits, 2004 / 150
- 5.14 Map of candidate visits, 2008 / 151
- 5.15 Map of candidate field offices, 2008 / 154
- 6.1 Sources of the 2008 presidential vote in Ohio: Relative impact / 163
- 6.2 Sources of the 2008 presidential vote in Ohio: Direct and indirect impacts / 165
- 6.3 Sources of the 2004 presidential vote in Ohio: Relative impact / 165
- 6.4 Sources of the 2004 presidential vote in Ohio: Direct and indirect impacts / 165

TABLES

- 2.1 Demographics of Ohio and the nation / 31
- 2.2 The Five Ohios / 33
- 2.3 Demographics of the Five Ohios / 36
- 3.1 Income by region and 2008 Obama vote / 66
- 3.2 Ohio county presidential voting, 1980–2008 / 70
- 3.3 Characteristics of Ohio’s fastest-growing counties / 71
- 3.4 Republican advantage among religious groups / 79
- 4.1 Republican vote in statewide elections, 2004–8 / 93
- 4.2 Ohioans’ issue perceptions / 100
- 4.3 Selected issue positions by party / 102
- 4.4 Most important issue, 2004 and 2008 / 104
- 4.5 Priorities and assessments of the major parties / 106
- 4.6 Partisanship and Ohio regions / 109
- 4.7 Economic ratings by region, 2004–8 / 111
- 4.8 Economic issues and the Five Ohios / 112
- 4.9 Social issues and the Five Ohios / 113
- 4.10 Regional differences in issue attitudes, 2004 / 114
- 4.11 Net Obama advantage / 115
- 5.1 Top media markets (by number of ads) in 2004 and 2008 / 131
- 5.2 Contact by abortion and Iraq War attitudes / 145

- 5.3 Campaign spending by region / 149
- 5.4 Differences in regional contact by campaign / 155
- 5.5 Mean number of campaign contacts by region / 156

PREFACE

AS POLITICAL SCIENTISTS LIVING IN THE quintessential battle-ground state in American politics, we are frequently called on to comment on elections and politics in the Buckeye State. While there are many excellent sources for citizens and journalists on Ohio politics and history, we felt that a systematic analysis of voting patterns and public opinion was missing, especially an accessible analysis of individual, regional, and county voting patterns. In this analysis, we have strived to be as empirical as possible. At times, our focus on data analysis led us to confirm what many readers may already know about their state and what many citizens understand about the forces that drive election results in the United States generally. In other cases, however, our research led us to surprising findings that may provide readers with a better understanding of the diversity that makes the “Buckeye battleground” so competitive and such a good bellwether for the nation as a whole.

The research that produced this book represents an effort by the entire Bliss Institute at the University of Akron. In fact, we collected enough material to write two books. Some of this work was part of a national research project directed by the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy at Brigham Young University; another source of research was the Akron Buckeye polls, supported by the University of Akron. In addition, many of the students in the Bliss Institute’s applied politics degree program work for national, state, and local campaigns while enrolled at the University of Akron. They provided us with tremendous insight into campaigns

and strategies and often were the genesis for the many ideas that were explored in our analysis.

Thus this book is the product of a collective effort. Some individuals deserve special thanks. Diana Kingsbury devoted most of 2008 and 2009 to piecing together the manuscript, tracking down data and sources, and ironing out wrinkles that had arisen over multiple accumulated drafts. Diana and Anne Hanson played an important similar role in data collection for the 2004, 2006, and 2008 elections. Our many research assistants provided enormous help, including Heidi Swindell, Zach Vierheller, Josh Peterson, Angela Ryan, Brent Lauer, Derek Feuerstein, and Will Miller. David Huskins prepared the maps that appear in the text, while Michelle Henry and Amanda Barna conducted the Akron Buckeye polls, in part through the Center for Marketing and Opinion Research. Daniel Coffey would like to thank the students enrolled in the Ohio Politics Seminar in the summers of 2008 and 2009 for their reactions and helpful feedback to early versions of the manuscript. We would like to thank Janet Lykes Bolois for reviewing and preparing the final version of the text.

Finally, we also want to thank the team at the University of Akron Press for having such unbelievable patience. We owe a debt of thanks to Tom Bacher, Amy Freels, Julie Gammon, Elton Glaser, and Carol Slatter. We also would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the support of our families, principally Mary Coffey, Lynn Green, Dawn Cohen, and Mary Brooks. Without their unwavering support and encouragement, *Buckeye Battleground* would not have been possible.