

Deaniacs and Democrats: Howard Dean's Campaign Activists

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Presented at the State of the Parties conference, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio, October 5-7, 2005.

Abstract

In his quest for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination, Howard Dean energized hundreds of thousands of supporters nationwide, many of whom were engaging in the political process for the first time. In addition to its ideological appeal, the Dean campaign was considered to be revolutionary in its use of the internet for facilitating donations and coordinating volunteers. This paper presents findings from a unique panel survey of Dean campaign supporters conducted by the Pew Research Center in September and November of 2004. The study examines who the campaign supporters were, their political orientations, where they fit in the Democratic Party and where would take the party in the future. About four in ten (42%) Dean supporters were participating in their first political campaign – yet contrary to some media accounts most activists were not young but rather drawn from the Baby Boomer generation. The political orientation of campaign supporters was decidedly more liberal than Democrats as a whole or than the general population. The war in Iraq was a top issue for this group; 99% of campaign supporters opposed the war. And, 66% of supporters cited the war in Iraq as the most important issue in their decision to support Dean for president, although health care and “fiscal responsibility” were important concerns as well. The study also explores where the supporters fit in the Democratic Party through comparisons from general population surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and supporters’ evaluations of the presidential election and the future of the Democratic Party.

INTRODUCTION

Howard Dean, a physician and four term governor of Vermont, was an improbable candidate for president of the United States. He was from a small state with a reputation for political eccentricity, and had no national political experience. Despite jokes about his temperament, concerns about his lack of experience, and aggressive challenge to the established leadership of the party, he mounted an impressive campaign for the nomination of the Democratic Party, leading the field in the pre-election polls up until the Iowa Caucuses. Given the polarization of the electorate and the “anybody but Bush” attitude of many Democrats, Dean might well have been competitive in November. Indeed, few would have predicted after his demise as a candidate that he would become the party’s national chairman in 2005.

Dean not only became a serious national figure, but his campaign left a strong imprint on the political world. It assembled a network of over a half-million active supporters and contributors, raised over \$20 million in mostly small donations online, and demonstrated the power of the internet as a networking and mobilizing tool in politics. One important political legacy of Dean’s candidacy, thus, is that it established a model for a 21st Century grassroots campaign. In his memoir of the nomination contest, former Dean campaign manager Joe Trippi said of the populist internet supporters “...the only reason the Dean campaign even got close enough that it mattered was because of those people” (Trippi, p. 179). Despite this, relatively little is known about the campaign foot soldiers who donated time, money, and other resources in hopes of seeing Dean win the nomination.

In this chapter we present a multidimensional profile of the campaign activists nationwide who helped propel Dean to such improbable prominence. We begin by examining the activists’ demographic characteristics and political orientation, as well as their self-reported

motivations for supporting Dean's candidacy. We then consider where Dean activists fit within the larger Democratic Party. Finally, we assess the activists' vision for the future direction of the party and its role, relative to other political organizations, in advancing progressive causes.

This analysis is based on data from a unique survey conducted by the Pew Research Center with a random sample of 11,568 activists drawn from the online database of those who had contributed money or otherwise worked on behalf of Gov. Dean.¹ The survey was conducted in two waves: one before the election (Sept. 13-Oct. 12), and a second after the election (Nov. 18-Dec. 14). Further details about the survey are provided in the Appendix.²

WHO ARE THE DEAN ACTIVISTS? WHO CAME AND WHY?

The Pew study corroborates depictions of the critical role played by the internet in the Dean campaign. Fundamentally, however, Dean's candidacy was made viable not by the technology but rather by the issue-driven supporters who *used* the technology to create a movement of political and cultural significance. In that spirit, this section focuses on the foot soldiers of the Dean campaign. We explore who these activists are, how they view the political landscape, and what motivated them to mount one of the most surprising movements in recent political history.

Activism and Political Junkies

¹ Gov. Dean and his political organization, Democracy for America (formerly known as Dean for America), generously provided the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press with access to their database, from which Pew drew a random sample. Democracy for America then sent an e-mail message to those who had been selected requesting that they participate in the survey. Respondents then completed the survey on a website created by Pew. In order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents, Pew had no access to the names and addresses in the database. Democracy for America officials did not view the completed interviews and did not know who chose to participate in the survey. Neither Gov. Dean nor his organization had any control over the drafting of the questionnaires for this study or the content of this report.

² The Pew Research Center first released results from this study in an April 6, 2005 press release, "The Dean Activists: Their Profile and Prospects." The release, which includes complete toplines from the surveys, is located online at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=240>. An earlier version of this paper, which also includes a more complete discussion of the importance of the internet for the Dean campaign, was presented at the 2005 annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (Keeter, Funk, and Kennedy, 2005).

In many respects, Dean activists resemble other political activists on the left and right. They were more interested and engaged in politics, more ideological, and better educated than the average citizen or their fellow partisans. As befits a population heavily involved in politics, Dean activists were heavy news consumers and relied on a wide array of sources – the web, newspapers, radio and, to a lesser extent, TV. Nearly as many said they regularly get news from the network and cable news websites as from the news broadcasts themselves. And 58% said they regularly listen to NPR, compared with just 16% of the general public.

They Really Were Activists	
	<u>Dean activists</u>
<i>During the primaries</i>	
Gave money to any candidate	85
Attended a Dean campaign event	47
Contributed to online chats/blogs	33
<i>During general election campaign</i>	
Voted in Nov. 2004	99
Gave money to Kerry	66
Sent campaign e-mails for Kerry	54
Attended a Kerry campaign event	40
<small>Based on interviews with 11,568 Dean activists conducted Sept. 13-Oct. 12 and Nov. 18-Dec. 14, 2004, Pew Research Center.</small>	

Moreover, their activism extended beyond just the Dean campaign. Dean activists were heavily involved in other political and social causes. Nearly eight-in-ten (77%) had signed petitions for something other than the Dean campaign. About half (51%) had boycotted a product or company. A similar number, 48%, had participated in a protest, demonstration or rally for an unrelated cause. This contrasts starkly with the general population in 2004 where just 4% had participated in a protest, march or demonstration in the past year on a national or local issue (National Election Studies 2004).

Drawn by the Issues

Dean’s supporters were attracted to his campaign by issues. This is true of most activist campaigners, despite the common notion of somewhat irrational followers captivated by the personal charisma of the candidate. In the case of Dean’s followers, a majority (66%) cited the war in Iraq as one of the two most important issues. But two other issues that had defined Dean’s

time as governor of Vermont also resonated with his supporters: health care (34%) and fiscal responsibility (24%). The economy and jobs (19%), the environment (11%), and gay and lesbian rights (9%) were also mentioned by significant numbers of supporters.

The transcendent quality of issues is illustrated by the remarkable similarity of the issues cited by supporters across the

demographic spectrum. For example, despite sizeable age differences in opinions on some key issues and values, younger and older supporters were motivated by a similar pattern of issues – with the notable exception that gay and lesbian rights were cited by fully one-fifth of the youngest supporters, but far fewer of the older Deaniacs. Predictable differences appear in certain subgroups: the least affluent were somewhat more likely to cite the economy and jobs, younger women were much more likely to cite abortion rights. But Dean’s candidacy appealed to liberal Democrats and leaning-Democrats across a broad range of the population.

An Engaging Campaign

While many Dean activists were seasoned veterans of earlier electoral battles, the Dean campaign attracted a sizable number of political newcomers. More than four-in-ten Dean activists (42%) – and 66% of those under 30 – said this was their first political campaign. Of the majority with some previous campaign experience, most (36% of the total) said they were more

	Most Important Issue in Decision to Support Dean			
		<i>Age Group</i>		
	<u>All</u>	<u>15-29</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>50+</u>
	%	%	%	%
War in Iraq	66	57	64	71
Health care	34	35	31	35
Fiscal responsibility	24	21	26	24
Economy/jobs	19	17	20	20
Environment	11	11	12	10
Gay/lesbian rights	9	21	10	4
Education	5	11	5	3
Terrorism	4	4	4	5
Abortion	4	7	4	2
International trade	1	2	*	1
Other	13	8	13	14

*Respondents could select up to two issues.
Based on interviews with 11,568 Dean activists conducted Sept. 13-Oct. 12 and Nov. 18-Dec. 14, 2004, Pew Research Center.*

involved in the Dean campaign than in prior races, compared with 21% who were about as involved, or less involved than in the past.

Demographic Distinctiveness

Dean activists were a distinctive group within their own party. Men and women were equally likely to be

campaign supporters. As a group, they were much more racially homogenous than the general public or people who identify with the Democratic Party. More than nine-in-ten Dean activists (92%) were white and just 1% were African American (2% were Asian and 4% described themselves as being of another race or multi-racial). By comparison, the public is 79% white, as are about two-thirds of national Democrats (68%). Over one-in-five Democrats (22%) are African Americans.

Dean activists tended to be not only significantly better educated but also wealthier than other Democrats. Nearly one-in-three Dean activists (29%) reported a family income of more than \$100,000 per year, nearly triple the proportion who fall into this bracket among all Democrats (10%). An overwhelming majority (79%) were college graduates; 41% have earned a graduate or professional degree. Just a quarter of all Democrats, and 26% of the public, are college graduates.

Count Me In				
		<i>Age Group</i>		
	<u>All</u>	<u>15-29</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>50+</u>
<i>Dean activists...</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Sought out campaign involvement on their own	79	78	72	77
<i>Campaign experience</i>				
First presidential campaign	42	66	48	28
Not first campaign	57	34	51	71
More active in this one	36	23	32	44
Less active	5	3	5	6
Same	16	8	14	21
No response	1	*	1	1

Based on interviews with 11,568 Dean activists conducted Sept. 13-Oct. 12 and Nov. 18-Dec. 14, 2004, Pew Research Center.

Surprisingly, the age profile of Dean activists is similar to that of other Democrats and the public. While news coverage of the Dean campaign focused on his youthful support, the Dean activists were not especially young; just 6% were under 23 and 12% were 23-29, compared with 8% and 10% among Democrats nationally.³

Dean activists were much more secular than the party as a whole. A relatively large proportion of Dean activists (38%) had no formal religious affiliation. Far fewer Democrats (10%) and members of the public (11%) express no religious preference. Only about a third of Dean activists were affiliated with either the Catholic or Protestant religious traditions (34%). One-in-five (21%) identified themselves as Unitarians, non-denominational Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, or some other religion. Moreover, just 24% of Dean activists described themselves as a “religious person.”

Far more (68%), however, said they think of themselves as a “spiritual person.”

Dean Activists: White, Well-Educated, Affluent

	Dean activists	All Dems ¹	General public ²	Libs ³
<i>Race</i>	%	%	%	%
White	92	68	79	83
Black	1	22	11	6
Other/no answer	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Income</i>				
\$75,000+	45	18	21	41
\$50,000-74,999	20	13	15	15
\$20,000-49,999	26	35	34	32
<\$20,000	6	22	17	12
<i>Age</i>				
Under 30	18	18	21	28
30-44	26	28	30	29
45-64	42	33	32	32
65+	14	20	16	10
<i>Education</i>				
College grad	79	25	26	49
Some college	17	22	24	26
HS grad or less	4	53	50	25
<i>Religion</i>				
Protestant	21	53	55	36
Catholic	13	27	24	23
Jewish	7	3	2	8
Other	21	5	6	11
No religion	38	10	11	22
<i>Sexuality</i>				
Gay, lesbian, or bisexual	12	6^	4^	NA

Based on interviews with 11,568 Dean activists conducted Sept. 13-Oct. 12 and Nov. 18-Dec. 14, 2004.

¹ Figures for Democrats from Pew surveys conducted Jan. 2004-Feb. 2005.

² All Census figures from March 2003 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Religious affiliation from Pew surveys fielded Jan. 2004 to Feb. 2005.

³ Figures for Liberals (n=359) based on typology classification, Pew Research Center survey taken December, 2004.

^From NEP exit poll Nov. 3, 2004

³ We address the question of whether the survey underrepresents younger Dean activists in the Appendix.

WHERE DO DEAN ACTIVISTS FIT IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

Different Kind of Democrat: Color Me Liberal

Howard Dean once quipped that he represented the “Democratic Wing of the Democratic Party.” Dean’s followers are more precisely described as part of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Across a range of issues, especially military and national security matters, social and cultural issues, and the role of government in solving societal problems, the Dean activists hold much more liberal positions than does the average Democrat in the general public. Their liberalism stands out even when compared with delegates to the 2004 Democratic convention, who themselves were significantly more liberal than rank-and-file Democrats. Roughly eight-in-ten Dean activists (82%) described themselves ideologically as liberal, compared with 41% of the convention delegates and 27% of national Democrats.

When viewed from another angle, however, the liberalism of the Dean activists doesn’t appear to be that different from the subset of liberals within the Democratic Party. To better understand how Dean’s campaign supporters fit within the Democratic Party we compared them to a group classified as Liberals in the Pew Research Center 2005 Typology Study⁴. The Liberal classification is not simply ideological self-identification but is based on a cluster analysis of values across a wide range of topics. From a total of nine typology groups, three were composed primarily of Democrats: Liberals, Conservative Democrats, and Disadvantaged Democrats.

⁴ For more details on the Pew Research Center 2005 Typology study and the method used to classify Liberal Democrats see www.people-press.org. Nine value dimensions were used to create the typology: foreign policy assertiveness, religion and morality, environmentalism and regulation, social welfare, immigration, business sentiment, financial security, anti-government sentiment, and individualism. Each value dimension is based on combined responses to two or more survey questions. Each of the questions used a “balanced alternative” format that presents respondents with two statements and asks them to choose the one that most closely reflects their own views. To measure intensity, each question was followed by a probe to determine whether or not respondents felt strongly or not strongly about the choice they selected. As in past typologies, a measure of political attentiveness and voting participation was used to extract the “Bystander” group, people who are largely unengaged and uninvolved in politics. A statistical cluster analysis was used to sort the remaining respondents into relatively homogenous groups based on the nine value scales, party identification, and self-reported ideology.

Liberals constitute a small plurality of the Democratic electoral base. Among all who identify themselves as Democrats or Democratic-leaning independents, 34% are Liberals, 30% are Conservative Democrats, 20% are Disadvantaged Democrats, and the remainder are classified in other typology groups.

The typology's Liberals are similar demographically to Dean activists; both groups are largely white, highly educated, and earn high incomes relative to the general public. Liberals also hold remarkably similar positions to Dean activists on a range of social and cultural issues. Both groups show strong support for gay marriage and acceptance of homosexuality in society, support for government assistance to the poor and environmental protection, and a positive view of immigrants in U.S. society.

This is not to say that the two groups are perfect matches. Dean activists are more positive than Liberals about government effectiveness but are more pessimistic about the degree to which elected officials care about their views. And, while both Deaniacs and Liberals are nearly unanimous in their belief that using military force in Iraq was the wrong decision and in their belief that diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace in the world, other views on military policy are less in sync. Deaniacs are less likely than Liberals to say that the preemptive use of military force is ever justified. Views about the how well the war in Iraq is going and what to do with the troops from the time of the survey forward also showed some differences between groups, although some of this may be due to real differences in Iraqi war developments and the different timing of the surveys.

Despite some similarities between the views of Liberals and Dean activists, then, it is important to keep in mind that the Dean activists were clearly a unique group and one that cannot, in a strict sense, be thought to represent anything other than the 2004 Dean activist base.

How Liberal Are They?

Unified Opposition to the War in Iraq

Nearly all Dean activists believe that the decision to use military force in Iraq was wrong. And, there are far fewer hawks among the Dean activists than among Democrats nationally.

Nearly all Dean activists (96%) believed that diplomacy, rather than military strength, is the best way to ensure peace. Only about one-in-five Dean activists (19%) said military force is often or sometimes justified against countries that may seriously threaten the U.S. but have not yet attacked. And, 21% of the activists would entirely rule out such preemptive military action. Both Liberals and Democrats in the general public are more likely to say that preemptive force is at least sometimes justified (45% of all

Democrats say this as do 33% of Liberals).

The activists were more divided on the question of what to do in Iraq at the time of the survey. Compared with national Democrats, the Dean supporters in September were actually more supportive of keeping troops in Iraq until the situation stabilized (44% said this, compared with 33% of Democrats in an August 2004 poll).

Views on the Use of Force				
	Dean	General		
	<u>Activists</u>	<u>Dems</u> ¹	<u>public</u> ¹	<u>Libs</u> ¹
	%	%	%	%
<i>War in Iraq</i>				
Right decision	1	21	49	11
Wrong decision	99	71	44	87
DK/No answer	*	8	9	2
	100	100	100	100
<i>Best way to ensure peace</i>				
Military strength	3	15	30	6
Diplomacy	96	76	55	88
DK/No answer	1	9	15	6
	100	100	100	100
<i>Preemptive force justified?</i>				
Often	1	9	14	1
Sometimes	18	36	46	32
Rarely	60	28	21	44
Never	21	21	14	23
DK/No answer	*	6	5	*
	100	100	100	100

Based on interviews with 11,568 Dean activists conducted Sept. 13-Oct. 12 and Nov. 18-Dec. 14, 2004, Pew Research Center.
¹ Figures for Democrats (n=641) are from a Pew Research Center survey taken December, 2004. Liberals (n=359) based on typology classification. General public (N=2000).

Younger and older Dean activists saw eye-to-eye on many issues: government's efficacy, keeping churches out of politics, the importance of racial discrimination as a reason for racial inequality, the importance of the social safety net for the poor, the value of immigrants, and especially the view that corporations make too much profit. On military matters, though, the older activists who came of age in the 1960s were significantly less supportive of keeping troops in Iraq (34%, vs. 61% among the younger group), and less likely to say that the use of pre-emptive military force is sometimes justifiable (13% vs. 31%).

Libertarian Sentiment, at Least on Social Issues

On social issues, Dean activists stood out for their strong support for gay marriage and their near-universal belief that homosexuality should be accepted by society. They were nearly unanimous in their opposition to censoring "dangerous" books from school libraries. Fully 98% of Dean activists said public school libraries should be able to carry any books they want; just 1% said that public school libraries should ban books "that contain dangerous ideas." The idea of banning such books draws much more support among all Democrats (41%).

Social and Cultural Issues			
	Dean activists	All Dems ¹	Liberals ¹
	%	%	%
<i>Books with 'dangerous ideas'...</i>			
Should be permitted in public school libraries	98	54	85
Should be banned from public school libraries	1	41	13
No answer/DK	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Homosexuality should be...</i>			
Accepted by society	96	58	92
Discouraged by society	4	36	5
No answer/DK	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Immigrants today...</i>			
Strengthen the U.S. because of hard work and talents	87	47	76
Are a burden because they take jobs, housing, health care	12	43	15
No answer/DK	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Churches should...²</i>			
Keep out of political issues	69	45	NA
Express views on politics	30	51	
No answer/DK	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	
	100	100	

¹Figures for Democrats (n=641) are from a Pew Research Center survey taken December, 2004. Liberals (n=359) based on typology classification.

²Figure for Democrats (n=237) from Pew Research Center survey taken August, 2004.

By a similar margin (96%-4%), Dean activists expressed the view that homosexuality is a way of life that should be accepted, rather than discouraged, by society. Older Dean activists were less likely to express that view than younger activists, though most do so. There is far less unanimity among rank-and-file Democrats on this point, however, and a majority of black Democrats (59%) believe that homosexuality should be discouraged.

While there was a majority among Dean activists in support of legalizing gay marriage, those under age 30 did so

more strongly; 71% strongly favored legalizing gay marriage compared with 46% among those 50 and older. Younger activists also were much more apt to mention gay and lesbian issues as a key reason they joined the campaign (21% vs. 4%). Support for gay marriage was far less common among Democrats in the general public (43% favor and half oppose). Liberals in the Pew typology however, were similarly lopsided in their support for gay marriage; eight in ten Liberals favored gay marriage while just 15% opposed it.

Generation Gap on Homosexuality				
		<i>Age group</i>		
	<u>All</u>	<u>15-29</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>50+</u>
<i>Gay marriage</i>	%	%	%	%
Strongly favor	58	71	65	46
Favor	33	24	29	42
Oppose/Strongly oppose	8	5	6	10
DK/No answer	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100

Based on interviews with 11,568 Dean activists conducted Sept. 13-Oct. 12 and Nov. 18-Dec. 14, 2004. Pew Research Center.

Most Dean activists (69%) said that churches should keep out of day-to-day social and political matters, but a sizable minority (30%), including nearly a quarter (24%) of those with no religious affiliation, said churches should weigh in on the

issues of the day. The difference between the activists and other Democrats is narrower on this question than on some other social issues.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Dean activists believed that racial discrimination is the main reason many blacks can't get ahead, but a majority (52%) of Democrats nationally say that blacks are "mostly responsible for their own condition."

A similar chasm separates the opinions of Dean activists and national Democrats on immigration. Fully 87% of activists said immigrants are strengthening the country, while national Democrats are split: 43% consider immigrants as a burden, 47% think immigrants strengthen the country.

Pro-Government Solutions

Compared with rank-and-file Democrats, Dean activists are more supportive of government solutions to important national problems. While three-quarters of Dean activists felt that the government often does a better job than people give it credit for, nearly half of Democrats nationally (47%) disagree, instead believing that government is almost always wasteful and inefficient. Liberals tilt just slightly toward the more positive view of government by 48% to 45% thinking it is almost always wasteful and inefficient.

Fully 96% of activists want the government to step in to protect the environment even if it hurts business profits and results in the loss of some jobs. With respect to poverty, an overwhelming proportion of Dean activists (93%) think government benefits do not go far enough to help poor people live decently. Liberals are similarly inclined to think government benefits don't go far enough to help the poor (80% say this) but a more modest majority (64%) of Democrats agree.

Views on Government			
	<u>Dean</u> <u>activists</u> %	<u>All</u> <u>Dems</u> ¹ %	<u>Liberals</u> ¹ %
<i>Government...</i>			
Is almost always wasteful and inefficient	25	47	45
Often does a better job than people give it credit for	75	42	48
No answer/DK	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Stricter environmental regulations...</i>			
Are worth the costs	96	NA	NA
Cost too many jobs and hurt the economy	3		
No answer/DK	<u>1</u>		
	100	100	100
<i>Poor people...</i>			
Have it easy because of Government benefits	5	24	11
Have hard lives because Benefits don't go far enough	93	64	80
No answer/DK	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100

¹ Figures for Democrats (n=641) are from a Pew Research Center survey taken December, 2004. Liberals (n=359) based on typology classification.

WHERE WOULD DEAN ACTIVISTS TAKE THE PARTY? LEFTWARD HO!

Falling in Line for the General Election

One crucial test of the Deaniacs' relevance to the future of Democratic politics came in the November 2004 presidential election. While they found in Howard Dean a Democratic candidate they trusted, there was no guarantee that Dean supporters would shift their allegiance to John Kerry in the general election. Kerry was,

after all, Dean's strongest rival throughout the run-up to the Democratic primaries and caucuses.

Given the Dean activists' opposition to the war,

Kerry's vote to authorize the use of military

force in Iraq was especially problematic.

Despite this, Dean's activist supporters overwhelmingly – if somewhat unenthusiastically – turned to Kerry. Throughout the general election campaign, most Democratic voters consistently characterized their vote as

being against Bush rather than for Kerry. This also was the case among Dean activists – 69% said their vote was against Bush, compared with just 30% who said it was a vote for Kerry.

Given their strong liberal tendencies, it is perhaps surprising that only 1% of Dean activists threw their support behind Ralph Nader, the outspoken independent candidate and long-time crusader for progressive causes. The activists' deeply held political values, such as opposition to the Iraq war, support for social justice, and antipathy toward corporate interests,

From Dean to Kerry, Reluctantly?

	<u>Dean</u> <u>activists</u>	<u>Dem</u> <u>voters</u>
<i>Presidential vote</i>	%	%
For Kerry	97	89*
For Bush	*	11
For Nader	1	0
Other/Didn't vote	2	==
	100	100
<i>Among Kerry voters,</i> <i>vote was...</i>		
A vote for Kerry	30	41**
A vote against Bush	69	53
No answer/DK	1	6
	100	100

* NEP exit poll; ** Oct. 1-3; ** Oct. 15-19

were much more at home in the platform articulated by Nader than the Kerry campaign. Based on issues alone, Nader seemed the natural candidate to rekindle the activists' spirits in the aftermath of Dean's defeat in the Democratic primaries.

But these activists wanted, above all else, to defeat George W. Bush, and they no doubt remembered Nader's impact in the 2000 election, where he captured far more votes in Florida than the margin of Bush's victory there. Fully two-thirds of Dean activists expressed an unfavorable opinion of Nader, with a sizable proportion (30%) saying their opinion of him was *very unfavorable*.

Dissatisfaction with Democratic Leadership

While the activists stuck by the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, they are critical of the party in a number of respects. Dean activists overwhelmingly fault Democratic leaders for going too easy on the president. More than eight-in-ten (86%) said the party has not been critical enough of President Bush and his policies. Just 12% said Democratic leaders have criticized Bush the right amount. With respect to the Iraq, relatively few activists (19%) said that Democratic leaders voted for the war because the leaders thought it was the right thing to do.

Instead, the vast majority of activists (80%) believed Democratic leaders voted for the war out of reluctance to stand up and oppose Bush.

Most Dean activists did not think the party has done well in advocating for its traditional constituencies or for liberal positions in 2004. Just 19% rated the party's efforts in promoting

Job Democratic Party is Doing Standing Up For...			
	Dean <u>activists</u>	All <u>Dems*</u>	Lib <u>Dems</u>
<i>Minorities, poor, and working people*</i>	%	%	%
Excellent	2	3	*
Good	19	30	23
Only fair	51	51	55
Poor	28	14	21
No Answer	*	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100

* Based on Democrats and independents that lean Democratic. Pew Research Center survey March 2005.

progressive/liberal positions as good or excellent; most believed the party has done only a fair (45%) or poor (36%) job in this area. Dean activists also voiced disappointment with the party's efforts as an advocate for traditional Democratic positions. Fewer than a quarter of Dean activists (21%) said the party has done an excellent or good job of standing up for such things as protecting the interest of minorities, helping the poor and needy, and representing working people.

Critical assessments of the Democratic Party put the Dean activists in step with liberal Democrats across the nation. Pew's political typology shows that Liberals are more negative than other subsets of Democratic or Democratic-leaning clusters when evaluating the party. Like Dean activists, less than one-quarter (23%) of Liberals said party performance in this area has been excellent or good. Democrats nationally are a bit more favorable to the party as of March 2005, though not overwhelmingly so. In March 2005, 33% of Democrats nationwide gave the party excellent or good marks; that figure is down significantly since before the election (49% in July 2004).

The Future of the Democratic Party

Given their numbers, their highly visible role in the 2004 campaign, and their generally strong commitment to political activity, the attitudes of Dean activists toward the Democratic Party will help shape the party's future direction. The Dean activists are highly critical of the Democratic Party in a number of areas. But they are not ready to give up on it – rather, they want it to reflect, to a much greater degree, their own liberal and progressive positions.

Despite the Democrats' lack of bottom-line success in the last three elections (2004, 2002, and 2000), only a small fraction of activists thought the Democratic Party should die off and be replaced by an entirely new political party. But maintaining the

Dean Activists Favor Shift to the Left	
<i>What would you like to see happen to the Democratic Party?</i>	%
Reflect more progressive/liberal positions	67
Reflect more centrist positions	13
Die off and be replaced by new party	11
Remain the same	8
No answer	$\frac{1}{100}$

status quo was also seen as unacceptable; just 8% of Dean activists wanted the party to remain more or less the same. The Dean activists expressed the most support (67%) for the Democratic Party responding, instead, by adopting more liberal or progressive positions.

These attitudes contrast sharply with the opinions of both Democratic officials and rank-and-file Democrats. A Gallup poll of Democratic National Committee members (in February 2005) showed that, by more than two-to-one (52%-23%) the DNC members want the party to become more moderate, rather than more liberal. That view is shared by Democrats nationally; in a January survey, Gallup found that 59% of Democrats wanted the party to take a more moderate course.

Extra-Party Advocacy for Progressive Issues

While Deaniacs want the Democratic Party to move to the left, they do not completely trust the party to take the lead in promoting their views. Only 38% identified the Democratic Party as the best vehicle to advance progressive and liberal causes. Nearly as many (36%) cited privately-funded advocacy groups, so-called 527's, and 13% thought a new political party would be most effective.

Nonetheless, 527's were not universally loved. A majority of Dean activists (55%) approved of the role 527's have played in elections, but 41% disapproved. According to Byron

York (2005, p. 7), organizations such as 527's that arose after the adoption of new campaign finance rules "actually *increased* the influence of big money in politics. By giving directly to "independent" groups rather than to the party itself, big-ticket donors could influence campaign strategy and tactics more directly than they ever had previously."

Still, a clear majority of Deaniacs think the major liberal philanthropists such as George Soros, Peter Lewis and Andy Rappaport are helping rather than hurting progressive and liberal causes. This perception is well supported by 2004 federal campaign finance records, which show not only that the largest portion of funding for pro-Democratic 527's come from just five

<i>Liberal philanthropists such as Soros, Lewis, and Rappaport are</i>	Progressive/		U.S.
	<u>Causes</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>System</u>
	%	%	%
Mostly helping	72	57	51
Mostly hurting	6	10	14
Having no impact	16	26	28
No answer	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100

* Based on Democrats and independents that lean Democratic. Pew Research Center survey March 2005.

people⁵ but their collective contribution surpassed the \$75 million in federal funds that John Kerry received to run his post-convention campaign (York, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Dean's candidacy for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination serves as a reminder that the right mix of candidate, issues, and effort can mobilize grass roots supporters. The Dean campaign succeeded beyond their own hopes and expectations at mobilizing about a half of a million people to take action in support of the campaign; this was a clear grass roots success with many supporters getting involved in presidential campaigns for the first time. In contrast to some news media depictions of a campaign dominated by college-age firebrands, the majority of

⁵ The five biggest donors to Democratic 527's were George Soros, Peter Lewis, Stephen Bing, and Herbert and Marion Sandler (York, 2005).

Dean's campaign supporters were well over 30. They were nearly unanimous in their opposition to the War in Iraq and President George W. Bush's policies more generally.

Dean campaign supporters' views across a range of issues are to the left of the general population and of Democrats as whole but look roughly comparable to those of one of the three major subgroups within the Democratic Party, the Liberals, as classified in the Pew Research Center's 2005 Typology Study. Liberals are the largest wing of the Democratic electoral base. The newly flexed muscle of the Dean campaign supporters will play an influential role in shaping the future of the Democratic party, regardless of whether they remain associated with a future Dean campaign or align with other liberal candidates and causes within the party.

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APPENDIX

STUDY DESIGN

The activists participating in the study were randomly selected from the Democracy for America (formerly Dean for America) volunteer database. Only active members of the campaign⁶ were eligible for participation. Democracy for America contacted these activists by e-mail on behalf of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. Each potential participant received an initial e-mail request; one follow-up message was sent if they had not completed the survey within approximately two weeks. Respondents were directed to a website managed by the Pew Research Center, where they could complete the survey. Interviews were completed from Sept. 13, 2004 through Dec. 14, 2004.

Participation in the Study		
<i>Sample description</i>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Rate</u>
Pre-election (Wave I)	3,925	13%
Wave I Re-interview*	2,016	(51%)
Post-election (Wave II)	7,643	19%

*Response rate based on respondents who completed the pre-election survey.

Two separate samples were interviewed: one was interviewed in September and re-interviewed after the election (Wave I); a separate sample was interviewed only after the election (Wave II). The September survey drew 3,925 respondents, for a response rate of 13%.

Study Participants Slightly More Involved in Dean Campaign			
<i>Involvement in Dean Campaign*</i>			
	<u>Less engaged</u>	<u>Moderately engaged</u>	<u>Very engaged</u>
Study participants	9	67	24=100%
All Dean activists	14	73	13=100%

*The index of involvement was calculated from three auxiliary variables: number of contributions (coded as 0, 1, 2 or more), membership in MeetUp and membership in Commons.

Slightly more than half (51%) of those responding to the September survey also completed the post-election re-interview. In the second sample, one-in-five (19%) of those invited to participate completed the survey.

⁶“Active members of the campaign” were defined as those having made a financial contribution or engaged in at least one substantive activity such as attending a MeetUp for Dean.

SAMPLE REPRESENTATIVENESS

Although the response rates in the study were relatively low, auxiliary information⁷ in the Democracy for America database enabled us to compare the survey respondents with all Dean activists in terms of campaign activity. We found only two substantive differences between the sample of respondents and the entire database, and we have reason to believe that neither resulted in a significant bias in the sample.

First, younger activists may have been slightly underrepresented in the study. While age was not recorded in the Democracy for America database, there was a rough proxy for age from membership in “Generation Dean,” which was the student and youth wing of the campaign. According to the auxiliary data, 5.5% of Dean campaign supporters were involved in Generation Dean, but only 3.9% of the study’s respondents were involved in Generation Dean. While this difference was statistically significant ($p < .001$), it was not very large in absolute terms and is not a perfect proxy for age.

Second, the study participants were more likely than the average activist to have contributed money to the campaign. Two-thirds of those participating in the study (66%) contributed money to the campaign compared with only about half (49%) of all activists in the database. This would appear to be a large difference, but the study participants and the entire pool of activists had similar levels of campaign involvement on other measures of activity including membership in MeetUp for Dean and membership in Commons. And, on measures within the survey itself, those who contributed money tended to hold the same views on major political issues, the party, and the campaign as those who did not make a contribution.

⁷ The identity of all respondents in the study was kept strictly confidential. The Pew Research Center did not have individual identifying information such as names, mailing addresses, or e-mail addresses. Auxiliary information provided by Democracy for America consisted of records of which activists had participated in various campaign-related activities.

To ensure that these differences did not bias the survey results, we went one step further and tested whether using weights on the dataset would improve the representativeness of the sample to the activists in the Democracy for America database. We weighted the data by the inverse of a five-point involvement index⁸ so that the engagement profile of the respondents – including contributing money to the campaign – exactly matched that of the sampling frame. The results corroborated other evidence suggesting that the error due to nonresponse was minimal, and the errors were in the hypothesized direction. The weighting had no impact on such measures of technology usage, news sources, political values, or views on the Democratic Party. From an empirical perspective then, weighting the data did not have a substantive effect on our measures of Dean campaign supporters’ opinions and characteristics. Consequently, the analysis presented in this chapter is based on the sample of respondents without weighting.

⁸ The involvement index was calculated from the number of contributions (0, 1, and 2 or more), membership in MeetUp and membership in Commons.