

# THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

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It is high time, in my opinion, to begin considering the potential Democratic and Republican candidates in the 1988 Presidential campaign - from a logological standpoint, of course. Their qualifications, proposed policies, and popularity with American voters are entirely irrelevant.

Historians tell us that the past serves as a guide to the future. Let us, therefore, look at the winners and losers in the 28 Presidential races from 1876 to 1984, both inclusive. Do these races provide any lessons that can be applied to the crop of 1988 contenders for nomination by the two major political parties? They do, indeed. In how many of these elections, in which no third-party candidate muddied the waters by receiving a significant number of votes, did a Presidential candidate of the Republican or of the Democratic party - one with a short last name - defeat such a candidate with a longer surname? For the purposes of our research, we shall define a short surname as one not exceeding five letters in length, and a significant number of votes for a third-party candidate as a number exceeding one million. The answer to the question just posed is none, illustrating a 100 per cent exclusion principle. As any psychologist or sociologist will tell you, a principle that works 100 per cent of the time in human affairs is truly a rara avis.

A superficial look at the facts suggests a few exceptions, but these fade away upon closer examination. In 1876, for example, Rutherford B. HAYES defeated Samuel J. TILDEN on the basis of a razor-thin vote margin in the Electoral College (185 votes for Hayes as opposed to only 184 for Tilden). We, however, are concerned with the popular vote, since we are interested in how voters act, not with the artificial mechanism of the Electoral College. It was Tilden who received a majority of the popular vote in 1876 - 4,284,020 votes for Tilden, as opposed to only 4,036,572 votes for Hayes.

In 1908, William H. TAFT, a four-letter man, won the Presidential election. The violation of our general rule was, however, an apparent one, not a real one, because Taft had run against William Jennings BRYAN, another candidate with a short surname. In a contest between two candidates both of whom have short last names, the predictive test advanced here can simply not be administered. Note that it has been impossible to administer that test in only one out of 28 elections - an insignificant shortcoming of this valuable political and sociological tool. Parenthetically, an

additional logological factor militating in Taft's favor was the unique quality of his surname - of all the Presidents that the United States has ever had, Taft has been the only one whose last name generates a palindrome describing him accurately - TAFT: FAT! President Taft weighed 300 pounds.

In 1968 and again in 1972, Richard M. NIXON defeated his Democratic opponents: first, Hubert H. HUMPHREY, then George S. McGOVERN. In both of these elections, however, a third-party candidate - that of the American Party - received more than one million votes. In 1968, George C. Wallace garnered 9,906,473 votes; in 1972, John G. Schmitz took 1,098,482 votes away from the major-party candidates, distorting the election results and making the general principle announced here inapplicable.

The data examined tell us that, during the past 112 years, no candidate with a surname of fewer than six letters has succeeded in winning the popular vote for President in a straight, two-man competition - except in the freak situation where such a candidate was matched with another such candidate. If we assume that there will be no significant third-party vote in 1988 (and there is no reason, at this time, to suppose that such a vote is going to materialize), and if we assume further that the electoral vote in 1988 will agree with the popular vote (as it has for almost a century, since 1888), then any Democratic or Republican Presidential candidate is doomed from the outset - unless his or her opponent is equally handicapped. Since the party that holds its national convention first has no guarantee that the other party will oblige it by nominating someone with a short last name, it will be suicidal for the party nominating its candidate first to select one with a surname of fewer than six letters. In the light of this stark reality, how do the individuals regarded as potential 1988 Presidential candidates at this time stack up?

On the Republican side, the most visible - and ostensibly most probable - nominee is Vice President George H. BUSH. His four-letter surname eliminates him as the possible next President. Other Republicans who are likely to seek the Presidential nomination in 1988 include New York Representative Jack F. KEMP, Kansas Senator Robert J. DOLE, North Carolina Senator Jesse A. HELMS, and former Tennessee Senator Howard H. BAKER, all with impossibly short surnames. Baker happens to follow his last name with a JR., and the argument could be made that he thereby stretches his name to seven letters. However, the required comma in BAKER, JR. clearly separates the attachment from the surname, invalidating the argument.

Since none of the men just enumerated has even the slightest logological chance of winning a Presidential election, the Republican Party must look elsewhere for a viable candidate. The surname REAGAN has proved to be a magic one in two consecutive elections, producing landslide victories both in 1980 and 1984. The obvious solution is for President Reagan's wife, or for one of his children, to become the Republican Presidential candidate in 1988.

That tactic would, incidentally, pave the way for the first American Presidential dynasty. Alternatively, several logologically viable dark horses have already been mentioned. These include Georgia Representative Newt GINGRICH, New York millionaire Lew LEHRMAN, and Colorado Senator William L. ARMSTRONG.

On the Democratic side, former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, after suffering a disastrous defeat in 1984, has ruled out the possibility of making another try for the Presidency in 1988. That defection from the ranks leaves candidates such as New York Governor Mario M. CUOMO, Colorado Senator Gary HART, Ohio Senator John H. GLENN, former Florida Governor Reubin O. ASKEW, Texas Governor Mark W. WHITE, Jr., Virginia Governor Charles S. ROBB, and Delaware Senator Joseph R. BLDEN, Jr. Logologically, only one of these individuals has a theoretical chance of winning - Senator HART, provided that he changes his surname back to its original form, HARTPENCE. Since Hart is exceedingly unlikely to do so, he is doomed to defeat from a practical standpoint.

On the other hand, the Democratic Party does have a number of logologically viable 1988 candidates. These include the Reverend Jesse L. JACKSON, West Virginia Senator John D. ("Jay") ROCKEFELLER, Arizona Governor Bruce E. BABBITT, New Jersey Senator Bill BRADLEY, MASSachusetts Senator Edward M. ("Ted") KENNEDY, Massachusetts Governor Michael S. DUKAKIS, Ohio Governor Richard F. CELESTE, and Arkansas Senator Dale L. BUMPERS. If the party is ready to nominate a woman not already tainted with a national election defeat, there is San Francisco Mayor Dianne FEINSTEIN. Some of these individuals - Babbitt, Bumpers, Bradley, Celeste, and Dukakis, in particular - suffer from insufficient name recognition at this time. If one of them wishes to become the Democratic standard-bearer in 1988, he will somehow have to make his name a household word by January 1, 1988.

According to Dirk L. Schaeffer, who holds a Ph.D. degree in University, who has taught at various universities, and whose major interest is in the philosophy of social science methodology, there is a simple explanation for the logological phenomenon explicated here. In the minds of most Americans, there is a persistent association between long words and "brains" on the one hand, and between short words and "brawn" on the other. These associations are a consequence of the two principal sources of English - the short words of the plebeian Anglo-Saxon tongue, and the long words of the scholarly Latin language (Dirk L. Schaeffer, "The Naming of the President, 1980," *Psychology Today*, April 1980, pp. 96, 99-100). When choosing a President, Americans prefer someone with brains to someone with brawn.