



**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IN ILLINOIS:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE 2011 CHICAGO MAYORAL
ELECTION**

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Abstract

In this research we study the effect of campaign finance reform in Illinois via an examination of the 2011 Chicago mayoral election. Because campaign contribution limits were implemented in the middle of the election campaign we are able to assess in a quasi-experimental fashion the efficacy of the new law. In theory we expect contribution limits to cause candidates to rely on more contributors making smaller donations. Although we cannot generalize from this one election, our results indicate that the reform law succeeded in decreasing average contributions to candidates, but not in producing a broader fundraising base. In a concluding section we address the issue of whether the contribution limits established under the law are too high.

Campaign Finance Reform in Illinois:

An Examination of the 2011 Chicago Mayoral Election

By Timothy Krebs and Fraser Turner

The 2011 Chicago mayoral election was significant for a number of reasons. It was the first open seat race for mayor in several decades, marking a transition of power in a city long accustomed to having Richard M. Daley at the helm. The election also garnered significant national media attention because a sitting U.S. president's chief of staff—Rahm Emanuel—left his job in the White House to enter the race for mayor. Among the remaining viable contenders were former U.S. Senator, U.S. Ambassador and presidential candidate Carol Moseley Braun; former state senator and City Clerk Miguel Del Valle; and former Daley aide and president of Chicago Public Schools Gery Chico.

A third reason the election was significant was because new state campaign finance regulations were implemented during the middle of the contest. The reforms changed how receipts and expenditures were reported, and established for the first time campaign contribution limits in Illinois elections. Passage of P.A. 96-832 by the Illinois state legislature limited individual campaign contributions to \$5,000, organizations to \$10,000, and political action committees and parties to \$50,000, per election cycle. The new limits, effective January 1, 2011, brought what had been an unbridled system of campaign funding under greater restrictions and oversight.

Because the Chicago mayoral election was the first major contest in the state to be held under the new law, and because the change occurred during the middle of an on-going campaign, we have a natural experiment with which to evaluate its effects.

The Chicago mayoral election is also a good test case because this is where one might expect to see big money donors dominate. In the next section we provide an account of the 2011 Chicago mayoral election with a focus on key events that influenced the campaign horse-race.

We then discuss the role of money in mayoral elections before considering how campaign finance reform in Illinois might affect candidates' fundraising in this election cycle, before discussing our research design and findings. In summary, we find that the implementation of contribution limits did not cause candidates to broaden their donor base, but it did affect average donations. In a concluding section we interpret our results in light of efforts in Illinois to more tightly regulate and limit campaign finance in state and local elections.

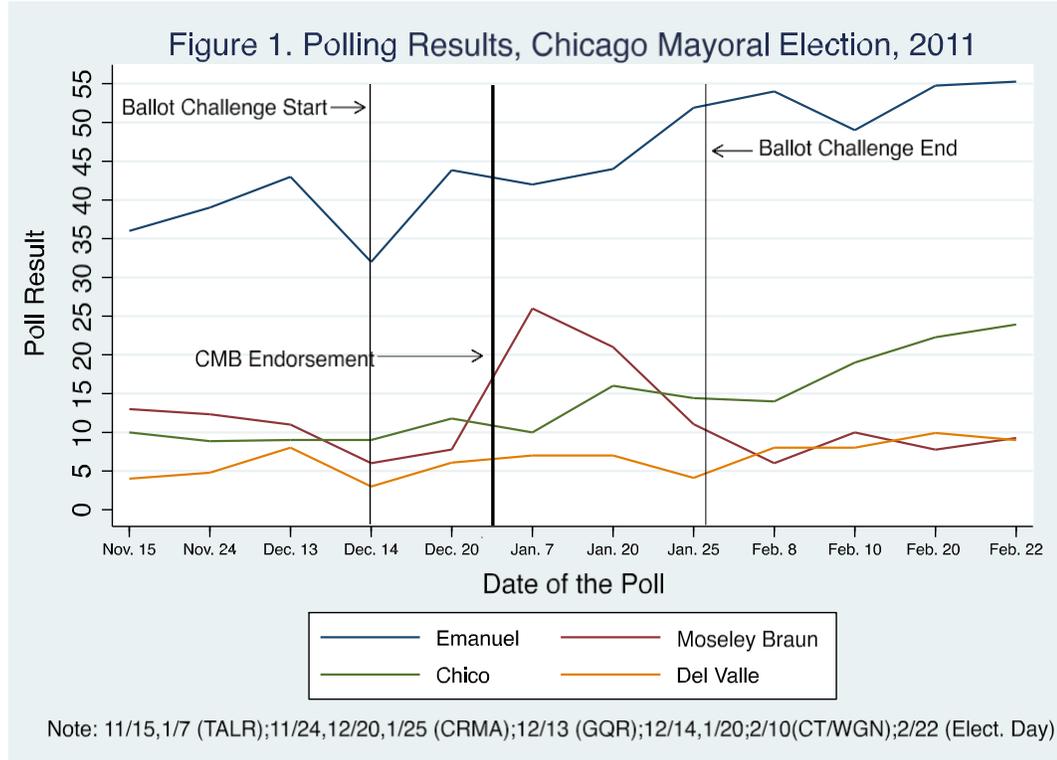
The 2011 Chicago Mayoral Election

The 2011 Chicago mayoral election was the first open seat contest for that office since 1947. In that year, Mayor Edward Joseph Kelly, in office since 1933 chose not to seek reelection, a decision that cleared the way for Martin Kennelly to run as the Democratic Party nominee against Republican Russell Root. In the 67 years since, Chicago has had only eight mayors—all Democrats—and in 43 of those years, a person with the last name Daley has occupied the office.

In office since 1989, the Richard M. Daley administration received praise for its efforts to redevelop downtown and to reform Chicago public schools. Nonetheless, at the end of its long run in office Chicago was beset with budget deficits, charges of mismanagement, corruption and economic recession

. In addition, a failed bid for the Olympics, a controversial decision to privatize the city's parking meters, and an endemic crime problem resulted in some of Daley's lowest job approval numbers in close to two decades (Rudin, 2011). Thus when Daley announced in September 2010 that he would not seek a sixth full term, several well qualified candidates announced their intentions to run for mayor. Emanuel, who was immediately viewed as the frontrunner by local media, would eventually face five opponents (Chico, Moseley Braun, Del Valle, Patricia Van Pelt Watkins, and Dock Walls), but only three would turn out to be viable (Chico, Moseley Braun, and Del Valle). On Election Day, Emanuel came in first followed by Chico, Del Valle and Moseley Braun, Van Pelt Watkins and Walls.

To get a sense of the trajectory of the race, in Figure 1 we present the results of polls conducted by various organizations between November, 2010, and February, 2011.¹ We also include as a data point the primary election vote outcome on February 22nd. We make note of two key moments during the campaign: the start of Emanuel's ballot challenge on December 14th and its conclusion on January 27th, a little over three weeks before Election Day; and the announcement of the unity endorsement of Moseley Braun on January 2nd. We discuss each below.



Beginning December 14th the campaign for mayor entered a lengthy period in which Emanuel’s qualification for the ballot was officially questioned. The debate centered on whether Emanuel met the requirement that he be a resident of Chicago in the year before the election. The residency issue stemmed from the argument that Emanuel had failed to meet this requirement since he had been living and working in Washington D.C. until October 2011. Emanuel rebuffed this accusation, stating that he was a homeowner in Chicago, owned and had vehicles registered in the state of Illinois, and that he was a registered voter in the state (Fitzsimmons, 2010). This evidence of domicile status therefore confirmed his intention to return to Chicago upon completion of his work for the president. After a complicated legal process that at one point involved Chicago residents arguing for and against his case and that was ultimately settled by the Illinois

Supreme Court, Emanuel was deemed a resident of Chicago and thus able to stay on the ballot (Konkol and Pallasch, 2010; Pallasch and Spielman, 2011).

The unity endorsement of Moseley Braun was significant because it signaled the intention of the city's large black community (about 33 percent according to recent census estimates) to unify the black vote behind one candidate, something it had failed to do in previous election cycles.² In addition to Moseley Braun, there were two potential rivals for Chicago's African American vote: Danny Davis, a West Side congressman, and James Meeks, a state senator and local pastor. However, shortly after the New Year both dropped out and endorsed Moseley Braun in a well-publicized effort to present a unified African American effort.

¹The data for Figure 1 come from pre-election polls conducted by several different organizations including Teamsters Anzalone List Research (TALR), Chicago Retail Merchants Association (CRMA)/We Ask America, Greenberg Quinlan Research (GQR), *Chicago Tribune*/WGN (CT/WGN), and ABC 7/Richard Day Research.

Although the endorsement appeared to be a positive sign for Moseley Braun's campaign, numerous gaffes shortly thereafter plagued her efforts. In January and February, she had to respond to her assertion during a debate that a minor candidate, Patricia Van Pelt Watkins, also African American, was "strung out on crack." She had to answer to claims that she made racially insensitive remarks concerning Emanuel's Jewish faith and background (CBS 2011) (Pallasch 2011). Later, Davis, a key campaign surrogate following his exit from the race, taped a radio ad on behalf of the candidate in which he said, "my father would tell us that the Bible says any man who will not support his own house is worse than an infidel" (Mihalopoulos, 2011). Adding insult to injury, she initially refused to release income tax returns until pushed by media outlets and other campaigns to do so.

The ballot challenge appears not to have hurt Emanuel's public standing as he went from the low 30s to about 50 percent in the polls during the legal proceeding. (Whether it actually helped him is a question we cannot answer at this time.) Moseley Braun's standing appears to have increased substantially between December 20th and January 7th, at which time it sank precipitously going from 25 percent to below 10 percent on February 8. Although it is difficult to interpret these polls since we have only one for each time point, they are suggestive. Around the time of the unity endorsement, Moseley Braun appears to gain some traction. And during the same January 7 to February 8 time period, Emanuel's support levels off, while Chico's support declines slightly.

² Although still large, this percentage declined significantly during the last decade (Davey 2011).

Moseley Braun's declining support not only coincides with her campaign's missteps, it appears to benefit Emanuel—whose support increased approximately 15 points—more than Chico whose support increased by only five points.

As the polls closed on February 22, Emanuel claimed 55 percent of the vote, sufficient to avoid a run-off election, which in Chicago is triggered if no one receives a simple majority of the vote in the first contest. At 24 percent, Chico had failed to attract enough of the anti-Emanuel vote to force a runoff. Coming in third was Miguel Del Valle, finishing with 9.4 percent, while Moseley Braun finished fourth with 8.8 percent of the vote.

Money in Local Elections and Reform Efforts

Research on campaign finance in urban elections indicates that patterns we observe in elections to higher offices apply at the local level, especially in large cities. Fundraising is related to both static (e.g., things related to the candidates themselves), and dynamic aspects (e.g., previous fundraising success, momentum) of the campaign. For example, incumbents are likely to be returned to office, thus donors typically target them for contributions (Adams, 2007; Krebs, 1998). Not only are incumbents likely to be returned to office, those who are in positions of power (e.g., mayor, city council president) are doubly advantaged since their ability to raise money from well-heeled interests such as those in real estate, development, and finance is greater than incumbents not in positions of power (Fleischmann and Stein, 1998; Krebs and Pelissero, 2001; Hogan and Simpson, 2001). For non-incumbents, we see a similar pattern whereby candidate resources such as background and experience, endorsements and racial characteristics to a large degree explain fundraising success (Arrington and Ingalls, 1984; Krebs, 2001).

Candidates' momentum also is a key predictor of fundraising success (Fuchs, Adler and Mitchell 2000).

Research on reforms directed at limiting the size of contributions suggests these efforts do affect elections and campaign strategy. Much of this work has focused on the effects of campaign finance reform on the incumbent advantage and electoral competition in state legislative and gubernatorial elections (Gross, Goidel, and Shields, 2002; Lott Jr., 2006; Stratmann and Aparicio-Castillo, 2006). Contribution limits in state elections may level the playing field between incumbents and challengers and may "democratize" campaigns by decreasing the average dollar amount per contributor and increasing the number of donors (Eom and Gross, 2007). The nature of the reforms enacted in Illinois promise to do similar things: namely, to force candidates to broaden their fundraising base and to rely more on smaller donations, thus encouraging more participation and lessening the political influence of well-connected candidates and their supporters.

Data and Methods

Because the state of Illinois placed limits on donations starting in 2011 we have an opportunity to understand more fully the effect of legal restrictions on campaign finance. To examine whether the law had a democratizing effect on campaigns in Illinois, we gathered contribution data on each candidate for mayor of Chicago in this election cycle. Campaign finance data are stored in both electronic and hardcopy format by the Illinois State Board of Elections.³ We expect the reform law to have two main consequences: first, it should cause candidates to broaden their base of support by seeking to attract more donations; an

d second, it should cause average donations to decrease, as candidates are barred from relying on very large donations from a small number of donors. Although six candidates were listed on the ballot for mayor, only four—Emanuel, Chico, Del Valle, and Moseley Braun—were viable, thus we restrict our analyses and discussion to them.

We examine total dollar amounts, number of contributions, and average donations received by each candidate each week of the campaign. Week to week fundraising totals are an appropriate measure of the health of the campaign as is it is not too short (e.g., day to day) or too long (e.g., month to month). The former is unlikely to pick up variation in fundraising trends because candidates are not hosting fundraisers every day nor are donors making contributions every day,⁴ while the latter risks masking important variation within the overall campaign. Our time frame begins with the first donation reported in mid-September, 2010, and concludes at the end of the first quarter (March 31) of 2011. The election was held on February 22, thus we have data for 17 weeks before the reforms started and 12 weeks after. There were no major changes in the costs of campaigning for mayor of Chicago, thus any effects we uncover should be directly related to the intervention of campaign finance reform.

³ Chico and Emanuel filed all of their documents electronically while Del Valle did so after the start of the year when the law required. Moseley Braun filed electronically from October to December 2010 but then by paper starting in 2011

⁴ There is also a slightly flexible window in which the campaigns have to report donations; in other words, some contributions are entered as one date but may be several days different on either side than when the actual contribution was made.

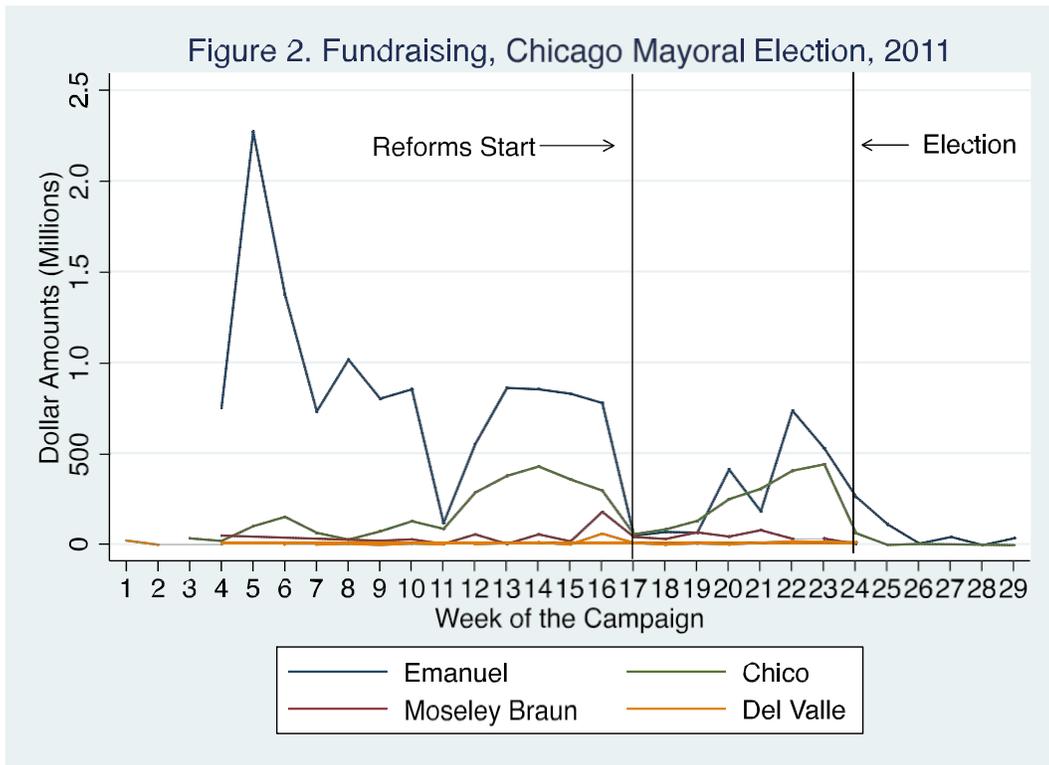
Findings

Candidates' Fundraising

We begin by displaying a series of graphs on candidate's itemized receipts, which are any donations equal to or in excess of \$150 from the date of their initial campaign committee filing through March 31, 2011.⁵ Figure 2 shows the dollar amounts raised by each of the major candidates for mayor. These data clearly show Emanuel's dominance at the beginning of the campaign. In the first 10 weeks he did not raise *less* than \$750,000 per week. By contrast, Chico only *approached* \$500,000 at week 14, three weeks before the start of the campaign finance regime that would limit each candidate's ability to raise money. In 2011 Chico did better vis-à-vis Emanuel but still lagged behind. Indeed, in only two weeks of the campaign did Chico raise more overall than Emanuel—week 18 and week 21. Neither Del Valle nor Moseley Braun could compete with the two leading candidates in the area of total campaign receipts.

Emanuel's campaign benefited immediately from funds remaining in his existing congressional campaign committee. The injection of over 1 million dollars of capital kick-started what would be a dominating fundraising performance over the next three months. From October 2nd through the end of December, of the nearly 11 million dollars Emanuel raised, nearly half came from 70 contributions of \$50,000 or more. These 70 contributions alone totaled more than all the other contributions to opposing candidates. Many of the donors were celebrities or businessmen residing outside of Chicago.

⁵ We do not distinguish here between individual contributions, which can come from groups, companies, and individuals, and transfers from other political committees. In general, transfers in represent a very small share of candidates' receipts.



Some notables on the list were Donald Trump (\$50,000), Steve Jobs (\$50,000), David Geffen (\$100,000) and Steven Spielberg (\$75,000).⁶ In general, while dollars raised on a weekly basis is lower in the reform period, this is due mainly to the presence of Emanuel in the race. The trends for Chico, Del Valle and Moseley Braun are unaffected by the new law.

The new law of course was not designed to limit total contributions, but rather to cause candidates to broaden their fundraising efforts and to rely more on small contributions. We begin to explore this in Figure 3, which shows the number of individual contributions made to each campaign, again aggregated to the week and starting with the date of the first donation to any candidate.

⁶ The data in this paragraph are from Turow (2011.)

These data suggest that the two major rivals for the mayoralty were competitive with one another in generating donations. From week 11 to week 19 Chico's campaign actually generated more contributions than Emanuel's. (This was also the case in week five to week eight.) The trend lines suggest that contributions to Emanuel, Del Valle, and Moseley Braun increased during the reform period.

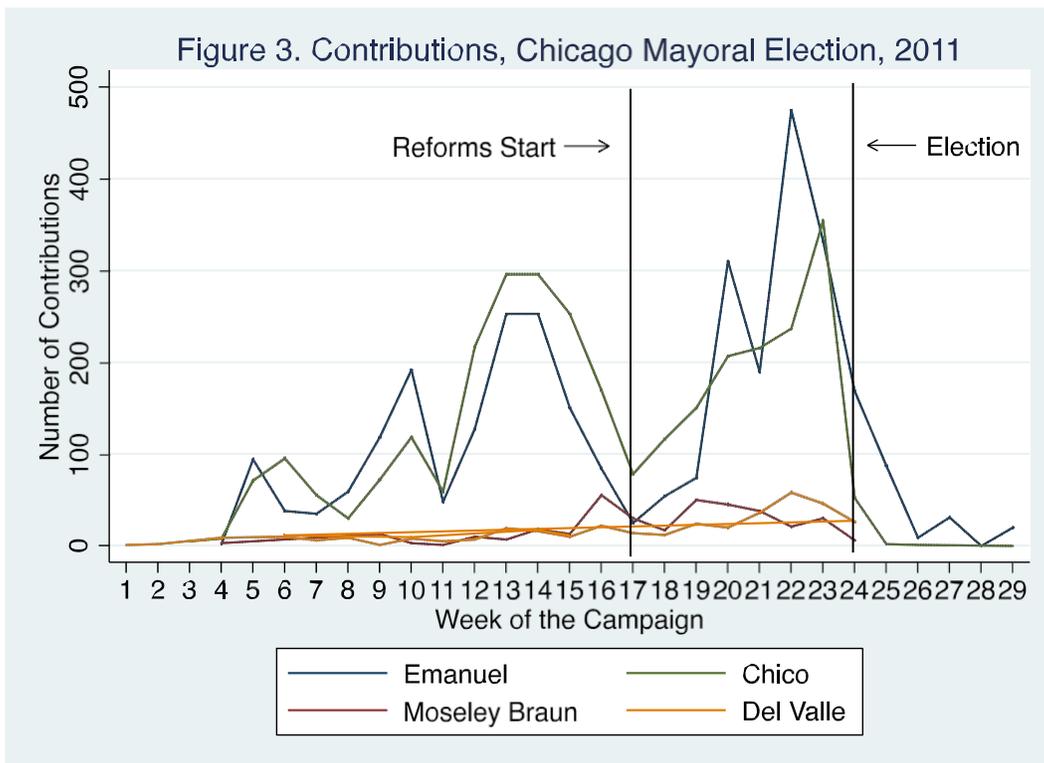


Table 1 presents a somewhat clearer picture of fundraising in the periods before and after the reforms were implemented. Emanuel raised almost \$12 million before the reforms took effect with an average donation of almost \$8,000. Chico was second in the pre-reform period, generating just over \$2.5 million in contributions from 1,833 donations. Although he raised about 400 more contributions than Emanuel, his average donation was only \$1,385. Emanuel's base of financial support was deeper than it was wide, while Chico's base of financial support was wider than it was deep. Moseley Braun is third generating about \$500,000 in the pre-reform period from 163 donors for an average donation of almost \$3,000.

Table 1. Average Donations, Chicago Mayoral Election, 2011, Before and After Implementation of Reforms

Candidate (to 12/31/2010)	Total	Number	Average	Median	Maximum
Rahm Emanuel	\$11,892,738	1,489	\$7,987	\$1,000	\$359,454
Gery Chico	\$2,538,277	1,833	\$1,385	\$500	\$30,000
Miguel Del Valle	\$166,009	154	\$1,078	\$300	\$31,800
Carol Moseley Braun	\$484,575	163	\$2,973	\$1,000	\$50,000
Candidate (1/1/11 to 3/31/2011)	Total	Number	Average	Median	Maximum
Rahm Emanuel	\$2,484,635	1,757	\$1,414	\$500	\$50,000
Gery Chico	\$1,706,355	1,341	\$1,272	\$500	\$50,000
Miguel Del Valle	\$83,166	230	\$362	\$200	\$5,000
Carol Moseley Braun	\$308,608	214	\$1,442	\$500	\$25,000

In the reform period we see fairly dramatic differences. Among the four viable candidates, only Chico raised fewer donations in the reform period than in the pre-reform period. That three of the four candidates raised more donations in 2011 than in 2010 is noteworthy given that the period examined is about five weeks shorter. As anticipated, average donations shrink in size and maximum donations do not exceed the upper bound for groups and parties established in the reform law.

Although these descriptive data suggest that reform in Illinois may have had an effect in the Chicago mayoral election, they do not allow us to rule out alternative hypothesis regarding the flow of contributions or the average size of contributions. For example, that Emanuel, Del Valle, and Moseley Braun generated more donations in 2011 may relate to the reform law, something about the candidates' themselves (e.g., more aggressive fundraising efforts), or candidate momentum. As for average donations, the data suggest that the difference between Emanuel's efforts pre and post-reform are significant, but it is unclear whether the differences in average donations for the remaining candidates was caused by the reforms or other factors.

In Table 2 we present the results of a regression model that predicts the number of donations to candidates each week of the campaign. Because our data vary both temporally (29 weeks) and cross-sectionally (4 candidates), and because our time points are significantly larger than our number of cases, we estimate our model with OLS using panel corrected standard errors (PCSE)(Beck and Katz, 1995). We model contributions as a function of the pre- and post- reform periods, thus we include a dummy variable coded 0 for each week of the campaign between the time when candidates began raising money until the end of the year, and 1 for each subsequent week through March 31, 2011.

We also include a lagged dependent variable to capture campaign momentum as candidates who are successful in raising money should benefit from that at later points in time. To determine the appropriate lag structure we tested our model with lags lasting up to four weeks. We include lags that reflect the peak influence of earlier fundraising on later fundraising. Lastly, we include dummy variables for each candidate. This allows us to pick up variation inherent to each candidate as a result of his or her background and experience, propensity to raise money, and competitiveness. Emanuel is the excluded category against which estimates for the other candidate dummies are compared.

Table 2. Number of Contributions, Chicago Mayoral Election, 2011

Independent Variable	Coefficient	SE B	z	p> z
Reform	1.162	17.189	0.07	0.946
Contributions (<i>t-1</i>)	.590	.136	4.36	0.000
Chico Dummy	-1.861	18.192	-0.10	0.919
Del Valle Dummy	-45.666	24.551	-1.86	0.063
Moseley Braun Dummy	-45.483	25.354	-1.79	0.073
Constant	50.865	27.191	1.87	0.061
R2	0.55			
N	104			

Note: Prais Winsten regression estimates with panel corrected standard errors are shown. Emanuel is the excluded category against candidate dummies are compared.

As one can see, the number of contributions to each candidate is unaffected by the reform period. Although the sign of the coefficient for the reform variable is in the expected direction, it is not significant. Contributions are, however, a function of donations received in the previous week, indicating that candidates' momentum is at work in this election. For every donation received in the previous week candidates generate .546 more in the subsequent week. Interestingly, although Chico raised fewer donations than Emanuel overall, the difference is not significant indicating that Chico was not disadvantaged vis-à-vis Emanuel in terms of donations received. Del Valle and Moseley Braun also raised fewer donations than Emanuel, but here the differences approach significance at .05. ($p < .06$ for Del Valle, and $p < .07$ for Moseley Braun).

Next we examine average contributions to each campaign (see Table 3). Recall that we expect to find that the campaign finance reforms enacted in the middle of the contest will reduce average donations to each candidate. Unlike our model for number of donations, in this model the most appropriate lag for our dependent measure is two weeks; in other words, it takes about two weeks for average donations to be reflected in future contributing behavior.

Here we find that the reform coefficient is negative as expected and significant at .001. On average candidates raised about \$2,137 less per week than they did in the period before the reforms were implemented. Average donations are linked to average donations in prior weeks; average donations at $t-1$ are about .08 greater than at $t-2$. Unlike our model for donations where Chico kept pace with Emanuel, we find that the average donation to Chico was about \$4,200 less than that received by Emanuel, while Del Valle's was \$4,900 less, and Moseley Braun's was approximately \$3,900 less. The coefficients for the candidate dummies are significant at .001 illustrating again the

substantial financial advantage enjoyed by Emanuel over his rivals. The model explains 55 percent of the variation of candidates' average donation.

Table 3. Average Contributions, Chicago Mayoral Elections, 2011

Independent Variable	Coefficient	SE B	z	P> z
Reform	-2136.684	473.997	-4.51	0.000
Average Contribution (<i>t</i> -2)	.079	.010	8.14	0.000
Chico Dummy	-4195.435	872.852	-4.81	0.000
Del Valle Dummy	-4938.778	833.821	-5.92	0.000
Moseley Braun Dummy	-3903.004	1037.008	-3.76	0.000
Constant	6225.329	834.285	7.46	0.000
R2	0.55			
N	100			

Note: Prais Winsten regression estimates with panel corrected standard errors are shown. Emanuel is the excluded category against candidate dummies are compared.

Discussion and Conclusion

Campaign finance reforms limiting donations aim to reduce the influence of large contributors in the electoral process and to cause candidates to seek contributions from a larger pool of donors. We examined both of these aspects with data from the 2011 Chicago mayoral in an effort to understand if reform in Illinois has had any effect on the local electoral process. The Chicago mayoral election is an important test case because it was the first major contest to be held under the new rules, it was an open seat election drawing strong candidates into the process, and because Chicago mayoral elections tend to be high dollar affairs. Our results offer qualified support for the notion that the reforms have worked. Average donations to candidates did decrease in the reform period. Because Emanuel's fundraising in the last months of 2010 was prodigious, one concern is that the effect we see for reform is driven entirely by his presence in the analysis. When we exclude Emanuel from the analysis, the effect of reform on average donations remains negative and significant, thus we are confident that our results do not reflect the presence of an unusually well-funded candidate.

Because Chicago mayoral elections are not typical, a second concern is whether the new law's limits on contributions are set too high to alter the status quo more generally in Illinois politics. To get a sense of this we examined contributions in the 2010 Democratic Party Primary for Cook County Board President, the last major local contest in which no contribution limits were in place. In Table 4 we show information on campaign receipts in this election.

The campaign period is the same number of weeks (N=29) as our analysis fundraising in the Chicago mayoral election, with the same number of weeks before and after the election represented. As one can see Terrence O'Brien raised the most money with a little over \$1.4 million in campaign receipts, while Toni Preckwinkle, the eventual winner, finished second in the money race, generating slightly over \$1.15 million for her campaign. Most important is information on average contributions. In no case did any of the four candidates even approach the threshold established under the new law for individual donors of \$5,000. And although O'Brien did have one donation of \$50,000, maximum contributions for his three rivals are at or below the threshold for individual contributions established in the new reform statute. Moreover, the upper bound for average donations in this election was approximately \$1,200. In general, these figures are comparable to what we show in the reform portion of the Chicago mayoral campaign.

**Table 4. Summary Data of Campaign Receipts,
Cook County Board President Election, Democratic Party Primary, 2010**

Candidate	Total	Number	Average	Median	Max
Toni Preckwinkle	\$1,152,316	959	\$1,202	\$1,044	\$4,424
John Stroger Jr.	\$63,602	181	\$351	\$292	\$1,500
Dorothy Brown	\$438,643	677	\$648	\$512	\$5,000
Terrence O'Brien	\$1,440,193	1,212	\$1,188	\$832	\$50,000

More data, of course, are required to determine whether the limits are too high to affect the status quo. Especially important here will be data from state legislative elections. Future research might also consider the effect of campaign finance reforms on the behavior of particular interests in the process. As currently regulated, however, campaign finance reports generate a substantial amount of missing data on employers and occupations of individual donors, which hampers efforts of researchers and the public to understand a potentially important source of bias in the electoral process. It might also be helpful to add categories to the receipt type in the disclosure documents. At present, individual contributions, transfers in, and in-kind contributions are the only categories used in designating contributions. Adding a category for “corporate entity” or “interest group” might facilitate public awareness of who is contributing in these contests. All in all, while the new reforms appear to be working, more data and analyses will be needed to help determine the course of future reform efforts in the state.

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