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## “Wine and Cheese Liberals”: Mo Udall’s 1976 Presidential Campaign and the New Suburban Democrats

The attendees had paid \$25-a-head for the promise of drinks, “little things to nibble on,” and the chance to meet a Democratic congressman from Arizona making an apparently quixotic bid for the presidency. Representative Morris K. “Mo” Udall had been running for president for fourteen months and was engaged in a now familiar ritual of appealing for funds from liberal Democrats in an affluent suburb. Most of those present in May 1976 at that suburban home in Newton, Massachusetts, had voted for Udall in the state’s primary two months earlier. Also in attendance were Rep. Robert Drinan, the Roman Catholic priest who had been elected a Massachusetts congressman on an anti-Vietnam War platform in 1970, and Archibald Cox, the Watergate special prosecutor who had become a hero to liberals after President Richard Nixon forced his dismissal in 1973. With his campaign sputtering, Udall had come with what he hoped was a defiantly optimistic message for his audience, maintaining that he still had “a fighting chance” and that there would be opportunities to “turn this thing around.” Udall’s campaign co-chair, William Carman, plied the audience with tales of the campaign’s penury, of its struggle to buy telephones for its field offices, and urged them to “take out another check.”<sup>1</sup>

In most histories of the 1976 presidential election, the Udall campaign is a subplot, overshadowed by the improbable ascendancy of Georgia governor Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan’s close-run primary challenge to incumbent president Gerald Ford.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the 1976 election itself remains underappreciated, with Kathryn Cramer Brownell noting that historians often “gloss over” it, seeing in the contest simply “more evidence of the nation’s

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Charlton, “Udall Takes Some Time off To Appeal for More Funds,” *New York Times* (hereinafter *NYT*), May 10, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> The classic narrative of this election is Jules Witcover, *Marathon: The Pursuit of the Presidency, 1972-1976* (New York: The Viking Press, 1977).

rightward turn.”<sup>3</sup> New work has sought to reappraise that election as the crucible of many trends in modern American politics. Daniel K. Williams, for instance, has argued that the 1976 contest was a pivotal moment in the polarization of the Republican and Democratic parties on issues of values and culture.<sup>4</sup> Amber Boessner has shown that Jimmy Carter’s innovative media management strategies foreshadowed modern candidate- and image-centric political campaigns.<sup>5</sup> This work has mostly focused on the overlooked legacies of Carter’s winning campaign, rather than those of his luckless Democratic rivals. The only losing candidate in 1976 widely acknowledged to have had a meaningful impact is Ronald Reagan.<sup>6</sup>

Though Udall’s campaign was a failure by the most important metric – winning the presidency – it deserves more scholarly attention than it has so far received. In one of the most crowded Democratic presidential primaries in decades, Udall managed consistently solid results in a variety of states. He won approximately 10% of the total votes cast, sustained a campaign that ran from November 1974 until the national convention almost two years later, and was the best-performing standard bearer of the party’s liberal wing. Most significantly, his campaign was predicated on appealing to a comparatively new constituency: the upper-income liberal suburbanites who turned up to fundraisers like that in Newton, Massachusetts. Udall’s 1976 campaign demonstrated the growing value and influence of these “upper-middle class liberal Democrats of suburbia” to the party’s evolving coalition.<sup>7</sup> Though these voters were not enough to carry Udall to victory in 1976, his campaign was a foretaste of the role they would play in the Democratic Party’s future.

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<sup>3</sup> Kathryn Cramer Brownell, “How the 1976 Election Shaped American Politics: A Review Essay,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 136:1 (2021), 155.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel K. Williams, *The Election of the Evangelical: Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, and the Presidential Contest of 1976* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Amber Roessner, *Jimmy Carter and the Birth of the Marathon Media Campaign* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Rick Perlstein, *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014); Craig Shirley, *Reagan’s Revolution: The Untold Story of the Campaign That Started It All* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2005); Michael Brenes, “Making Foreign Policy at the Grassroots: Cold War Politics and the 1976 Republican Primary,” *Journal of Policy History*, 27:1 (2015), 93-117.

<sup>7</sup> William Chapman, ‘The Good-Times Democrats,’ *Washington Post* (hereinafter *WP*), March 28, 1976.

According to Kenneth T. Jackson, the suburb is “the quintessential physical achievement of the United States.”<sup>8</sup> The emergence of the suburb was one of the most consequential social and political developments of the postwar U.S. In 1950, one-quarter of Americans lived in suburban homes and by 1990 the majority of Americans were living in the suburbs.<sup>9</sup> In recent years the “new suburban history” has made a forceful case for the suburb as an important lens for historical enquiry, as scholars have explored the laws and policies that created these new residential communities and their impact on urban decay, racial segregation, the distribution of public goods, social and family life, and myriad other issues that shaped the post-war U.S.<sup>10</sup> From Lisa McGirr’s pathbreaking study of suburban activists in Orange County, California, to Matthew Lassiter and Kevin Kruse’s work on the central role of suburban communities in fashioning a “color-blind” conservatism to resist desegregation policies, the suburb has become particularly indispensable for political historians.<sup>11</sup>

However, most studies have focused on the suburb as a driver of conservative politics and the rise of the Republican Party after 1968. An exception is Lily Geismer’s work on the educated knowledge-sector professionals in suburbs around Boston’s Route 128, whose liberalism has continued to shape Democratic policy priorities. The pursuit of these voters, suggests Geismer, has led Democratic politicians to champion “economic policies that touted the government’s stimulation of private sector high-tech industries.” Yet Geismer argues that liberal suburban voters embraced ideals of meritocracy and equality of opportunity which led

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<sup>8</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Kevin M. Kruse, Thomas J. Sugrue, “Introduction,” in Kevin M. Kruse, Thomas J. Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>10</sup> For a concise overview of the “new suburban history” see, Dolores E. Janiewski, “Towards A New Suburban History,” *Social History*, 33:1 (2008), 60-67.

<sup>11</sup> Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013).

them to support “individualist solutions to rights-related issues, requiring limited financial sacrifice, and offered tangible quality-of-life benefits.”<sup>12</sup> Geismer’s book is a standout example but suburban liberalism, and its role in transforming the Democratic Party, remains an understudied subject. This article seeks to add to that burgeoning literature by using Udall’s 1976 presidential campaign as a prism through which to understand the Democratic Party’s changing electoral coalition. Several contemporary commentators faulted Udall for his liberalism, which they claimed put him out of step with the times. In some respects, though, Udall was not a figure of liberalism’s past, but of its future.

Winning suburbanites has become a preoccupation for Democratic politicians in the twenty-first century. They were at the core of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 strategy against Donald Trump – as then-campaign surrogate Senator Chuck Schumer put it, “for every blue-collar Democrat we lose in Western Pennsylvania, we will pick up two, three moderate Republicans in the suburbs of Philadelphia, and you can repeat that in Ohio and Illinois and Wisconsin.”<sup>13</sup> Although this did not prove a winning strategy in the 2016 elections, the Democrats’ remarkable victories in the 2018 midterm elections reignited media speculation about Democratic inroads into the suburbs.<sup>14</sup> This was reinforced in the aftermath of the 2020 presidential election, as leading Democrats and many media outlets attributed Joe Biden’s victory to his advances in the nation’s suburbs.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lily Geismer, *Don’t Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 6, 150.

<sup>13</sup> Jeet Heer, “The Democrats’ Risky Pursuit of Suburban Republicans,” *The New Republic*, December 19, 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/146345/democrats-risky-pursuit-suburban-republicans> (accessed August 18, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Skelley, “The Suburbs – All Kinds of Suburbs – Delivered the House to the Democrats,” *FiveThirtyEight*, November 8, 2018, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-suburbs-all-kinds-of-suburbs-delivered-the-house-to-democrats/> (accessed June 3, 2020); Sean Rossman, “The Suburbs Turned on Republicans and Trump. The Midterm Election Results Prove It,” *USA Today*, December 11, 2019, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2018/11/08/midterms-suburbs-republicans-democrats-trump/1921590002/> (accessed June 3, 2020).

<sup>15</sup> Joshua Jamerson, Aaron Zitner, and Anthony DeBarros, “Joe Biden Gained, Trump Stalled in the Nation’s Suburbs,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 9, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/joe-biden-gained-trump-stalled-in-the-nations-suburbs-11604937011> (accessed May 1, 2021); Emily Badger and Quoc Trung Bui, “How the Suburbs Moved Away From Trump,” *NYT*, November 16, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/06/upshot/suburbs-shifted-left-president.html> (accessed May 1,

The rising power of the suburbs, and the Democratic Party's pursuit of suburban voters, was also a persistent theme of politics in the 1970s. Between 1966 and 1974, the number of House of Representatives districts that were more than half suburban rose from 92 to 131.<sup>16</sup> As it would be in future cycles, Democratic successes in the 1974 midterm elections would be attributed to their victories with suburbanites.<sup>17</sup> However, the "suburb" has never been monolithic and that shorthand covered a range of conurbations and of voters, in terms of class, race, and region. Journalists and political strategists drew distinctions between, for instance, the residents of blue-collar suburbs with those voters whom the Udall campaign pursued in 1976: "upper-middle class liberal Democrats" who generally had higher education degrees and worked in white-collar occupations. The journalist William Chapman called them "good-times Democrats" because they "came of age politically in the 1950s and '60s, when the good times brought them high-paying, recession-proof jobs and good schools and the leisure time to play hard at politics." These were voters whose political identities were undergirded by their comfortable, and stable, economic circumstances and shaped by the experience of the civil rights movement, second-wave feminism, anti-Vietnam War activism, and the burgeoning environmental movement. They were also active in Democratic politics. As Chapman put it, "[t]heir children went off to New Hampshire for Gene McCarthy in 1968 and whole families pitched in for George McGovern in 1972."<sup>18</sup>

The Udall campaign would demonstrate the increasing influence of these voters in the Democratic coalition and expose fractures within the party as it was being remade along racial, gender, and class lines. Chapman described a confrontation between what he called "good-times Democrats" (who supported Udall) and "hard-times Democrats" who were "the

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2021); Richard Florida, Marie Patino, and Rachel Dottle, "How Suburbs Swung the 2020 Election," *Bloomberg CityLab*, November 17, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-suburban-density-election/> (accessed May 1, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Alan Ehrenhalt, "Suburbia Gains Plurality in House But Not Influence," *WP*, April 28, 1974.

<sup>17</sup> "Suburbs and the South: Democratic Gold Mines," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, Vol. 30 (1974), 854.

<sup>18</sup> Chapman, "The Good-Times Democrats."

familiar core of the party, the ones who elected FDR and Truman” and whose “politics was forged in the hard times of the Depression” and who were motivated primarily by “[j]obs and a paycheck.”<sup>19</sup> Many historians have blamed this conflict – between a traditional liberalism of “pocketbook” economic concerns and a newer liberalism of rights-consciousness and “quality of life” issues, like peace activism and environmentalism, forged by the 1960s – for the disintegration of the New Deal coalition the travails of the Democratic Party in the latter decades of the twentieth century. Some, such as Bruce Miroff, have been more sympathetic to the party’s supposed “identity crisis” while others, such as Jeffrey Bloodworth, have criticized liberals for “ideological incoherence and political ineptitude.”<sup>20</sup> That conflict raised fundamental questions over who the Democratic Party was for, whose interests it should represent, and whether confrontations within the party’s coalition could be reconciled. The conflict between older “pocketbook” Democrats and a newer “quality of life” Democrats – between the priorities of the economically insecure and the comfortable – would shape Udall’s campaign and his interactions with rival Democratic candidates, particularly Senator Henry M. Jackson, who positioned himself as the tribune of those “hard-times Democrats.” That conflict continues to contort Democratic politics to the present day.

*“The Longest of the Long Shots”: Udall the Candidate*

Mo Udall announced he was running for president on November 24, 1974, almost three weeks after that year’s midterm elections, which had seen Democrats score record wins in the wake of President Nixon’s resignation. Udall was the first candidate to announce in that

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<sup>19</sup> Chapman, “The Good-Times Democrats.”

<sup>20</sup> Bruce Miroff, *The Liberals Moment: The McGovern Insurgency and the Identity Crisis of the Democratic Party* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009); Jeffrey Bloodworth, *Losing the Center: The Decline of American Liberalism, 1968-1992* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 3. See also Steven M. Gillon, *The Democrats’ Dilemma: Walter F. Mondale and the Liberal Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Ronald Radosh, *Divided They Fell: The Demise of the Democratic Party, 1964-1996* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

cycle's primaries, one of the most crowded and uncertain fields in decades. At a press conference in Bedford, New Hampshire, a suburb of Manchester, he declared that his campaign would be based on the issues of the economy, the environment, and energy, issues that were entwined "like a pretzel, you can't pull them apart." The next president, he predicted, would have to confront the transition from "an era of abundance to an era of scarcity."<sup>21</sup>

Udall joined the race as an eight-term congressman from Arizona, the only Democrat in the state's all-Republican delegation. He was from a large family of Mormon settlers and Udalls had occupied public offices across the Southwest from the nineteenth century onwards. He lost his right eye to a friend's pocketknife in a childhood accident and wore a glass prosthesis for the rest of his life.<sup>22</sup> He was also 6'5" – a basketball star in college – which made him one of the most physically distinctive candidates in the race. Before entering Arizona politics, he served as a non-combat officer in the Second World War, and then worked as a lawyer in Tucson, for a firm he co-founded with his older brother Stewart, Udall & Udall. Their careers would be intertwined for decades afterwards, though, to Mo's chagrin, Stewart's career seemed to be overshadowing his own. In 1954, Udall was defeated in the primary for a Superior Court judgeship, while his brother won election to the U.S. House of Representatives.

After several unsuccessful bids for office, he won a special election, narrowly, for Arizona's 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional district in 1961, the seat which had been occupied by his brother Stewart, who had been appointed Secretary of the Interior in President John F. Kennedy's cabinet.<sup>23</sup> Udall ran as a New Frontier liberal, endorsing federal aid to education and the

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<sup>21</sup> Jackie Judd, "Morris Udall Enters Presidential Race," *WP*, November 24, 1974.

<sup>22</sup> Donald W. Carson, James W. Johnson, *Mo: The Life and Times of Morris K. Udall* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 3-4; Bloodworth, *Losing the Center*, 179-80; Molly Ivins, "Liberal from Goldwater County," *NYT*, Feb 1, 1976.

<sup>23</sup> For more on Stewart Udall's tenure as Interior Secretary, see, Thomas G. Smith, "John Kennedy, Stewart Udall, and New Frontier Conservation," *Pacific Historical Review*, 64:3 (August 1995), 329-362.



minimum wage, and deflecting Republican jibes about “big brother Stew.” In a low turnout contest, Udall was helped to his close victory by his opponent’s vocal support of the far-right John Birch Society and penchant for crudely racist jokes.<sup>24</sup>

When he arrived in Washington, D.C., Congressman Udall brought Arizona with him. He was often seen sporting a wide leather belt studded with turquoise stones and fastened with a Navajo-made silver buckle. This, coupled with his unusual height, “short burr” haircut, and fondness for bow ties, made Udall all but unmissable.<sup>25</sup> The new congressman soon became better known on Capitol Hill for his sense of humor. Udall had a gift for repartee, and he recognized its political value. He went to considerable lengths to cultivate his wit, collecting jokes and anecdotes to be recycled in his speeches and on the stump.<sup>26</sup> Humor was, he once explained, “a powerful weapon in politics.” It could “warm up an audience,” create sympathy, or “make a point” effectively. “The best kind of humor,” he said, “is self-deprecating, which puts down yourself in a way that creates sympathy and maybe makes a point against your opposition.”<sup>27</sup>

Udall also distinguished himself as a consistently liberal member of the Democratic Caucus. In 1964, he was chosen as a floor whip for the Civil Rights Act, his first congressional leadership role. Though he had voted for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, he became one of the earliest congressional critics of the Vietnam War.<sup>28</sup> In 1968, he played a key role in launching the investigation into the My Lai massacre.<sup>29</sup> He was also a central player in the congressional reform movement, agitating for the democratization of the House and the end of the seniority system that gave privileges to members based on the length of

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<sup>24</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 58-59.

<sup>25</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 61; Ivins, “Liberal from Goldwater County.”

<sup>26</sup> Memo, “For Mo’s Ironic Humor File,” n.d., Papers of Morris K. Udall (hereinafter MKU), University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections, Tucson, AZ, Box 38, Folder 2.

<sup>27</sup> Memo, MKU to Bob Neuman/File, October 15, 1976, MKU papers, Box 23, Folder 25.

<sup>28</sup> Udall said later that his early support of the war was his greatest political regret. Ivins, “Liberal from Goldwater County.”

<sup>29</sup> Myra MacPherson, “Mo Udall, Triumph of the Good Guy,” *WP*, December 29, 1985.

their service (and thus, said reformers, gave unfair clout to conservative Southern members). He was committed throughout his career to demystifying the work of legislators. From the moment he arrived in the House, he became one of the few members to collate and publicize their roll call votes, preparing a summary of his voting record and sending it to all the newspapers and broadcast media in his district.<sup>30</sup> In 1966, he published a co-authored guide to the House of Representatives for new members, *The Job of a Congressman*.<sup>31</sup> In 1969, to further the cause of reform, Udall mounted an insurgent challenge to incumbent House Speaker John McCormack.<sup>32</sup> Though Udall lost heavily, he cemented his position as a reform leader in the House. When he ran unsuccessfully for Majority Leader in 1971, it was again with the support of the liberal, pro-reform faction in the House.<sup>33</sup>

That congressional reform movement reached a climax in the aftermath of the 1974 midterm elections, in which the Democrats made their biggest gains in a decade, swelling their already substantial House and Senate majorities. The class of '74, soon to be nicknamed the "Watergate Babies," represented one of the most significant generational shifts in the history of Congress and the Democratic Party. That class was younger, more diverse, and less traditionally experienced than earlier cohorts, and committed to reform.<sup>34</sup> The reforms that followed were most wide-reaching in the House, where reformers made all committee chair assignments subject to approval of the Caucus, removed a number of once-feared chairmen, increased the number of committee and subcommittee posts, and increased the staff and funding available to individual representatives. These reforms were intended to democratize Congress and empower its members and meant that new arrivals would attain some position

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<sup>30</sup> Robert C. Albright, "A Congressman Shows His Legislative Ace," *WP*, July 29, 1962.

<sup>31</sup> Donald G. Tacheron, Morris K. Udall, *The Job of the Congressman* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970).

<sup>32</sup> Matthew N. Green, "McCormack Versus Udall: Explaining Intraparty Challenges to the Speaker of the House," *American Politics Research*, 34:1 (January 2006), 3-21.

<sup>33</sup> "Udall Leads Race for Majority Leader," *Washington Post-Times Herald*, January 12, 1971.

<sup>34</sup> Diane Granat, "Whatever Happened to the Watergate Babies?" *Congressional Quarterly*, March 3, 1984. For more on the "Watergate Babies," see John A. Lawrence, *The Class of '74: Congress After Watergate and the Roots of Partisanship* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018).

of authority at an accelerated rate. By 1984, thirty of the remaining thirty-seven Watergate Babies in the House were chairing their own subcommittees. Udall joked that if he ever failed to recognize a fellow congressman, he would greet him as “Mr. Chairman.”<sup>35</sup>

Udall’s profile as a reformer, and his stances on issues like the Vietnam War, meant that he enjoyed good relations with the large freshman class. His affable personality also meant that he was generally well-liked across Congress – he counted arch-conservative and fellow Arizonan Senator Barry Goldwater as a close personal friend.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, in early 1974, when two of Udall’s Democratic colleagues, Representatives David Obey and Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, circulated a petition urging him to “begin an exploratory effort” to mount a presidential campaign, they were able to solicit twenty-seven signatures with relative ease.<sup>37</sup> The petition, according to Obey, was to reassure Udall, who was “reluctant to stick out his neck without visible support from his colleagues.”<sup>38</sup> Though Congress enjoyed more public goodwill in the aftermath of Watergate, members of the House, in contrast to the Senate, were not usually considered likely presidential prospects. As Udall quipped, “Hell, if you’re under 65, a Senator, and not presently indicted, you’re automatically assumed to be a presidential candidate.”<sup>39</sup> Even Obey conceded that Udall was “the longest of the long shots.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Granat, “Whatever Happened to the Watergate Babies?”; Thomas P. O’Neill, Jr., William Novak, *Man of the House: The Life and Political Memoirs of Speaker Tip O’Neill* (New York: Random House, 1987), 283-84.

<sup>36</sup> According to legend, the Udall-Goldwater bond ran deep. Udall enjoyed telling the story that one of Goldwater’s ancestors, merchant Michael Goldwater, had once bailed his ancestor, David King Udall, out of jail after the latter’s arrest on charges of polygamy. “A House Is Not A Home,” *Newsweek*, December 8, 1975, offprint in the MKU papers, Box 50, Folder (Clippings, Dec 1975).

<sup>37</sup> R. W. Apple, Jr., “Morris Udall, Backed By 27 In House, to Explore Presidential Bid,” *NYT*, May 17, 1974. The signatories to that petition were not necessarily endorsing Udall as their choice for nominee, just encouraging him to consider a run. As one Udall backer wrote to a potential signatory, signing the petition “doesn’t, incidentally, commit you in blood to Mo over the others contemplating the race.” Letter, George E. Brown, Jr., to Thomas M. Rees, July 25, 1974, MKU papers, Box 37, Folder 2.

<sup>38</sup> Form letter, from David R. Obey, 1974, MKU papers, Box 37, Folder 2.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Schneider, “For the Easy Going Arizona Rebel, Mo Udall, It’s Do or Die Time in His Campaign,” *People*, March 1, 1976, offprint in the MKU papers, Box 91, Folder 92.

<sup>40</sup> “Udall Campaign Aimed at Putting End to Secondary Role of House,” *Los Angeles Times* (hereinafter *LAT*), June 30, 1974.

Nonetheless, a Udall candidacy became a likelier prospect over the course of 1974. Udall's proto-campaign expected that the race would eventually come down to a confrontation between candidates representing the party's liberal and conservative wings. It was, said Udall, "like a tennis tournament with two brackets."<sup>41</sup> Udall's path to victory, the campaign believed, lay in coalescing the party's liberals behind his candidacy. "Our objective," wrote Stewart Udall to his brother in January 1975, "between now and next September should be to garner so much support and raise enough funds that [other liberal candidates such as] [Idaho Senator Frank] Church, [Indiana Senator Birch] Bayh, et als [*sic*] will realize it is too late to get in the contest."<sup>42</sup>

Udall's advisors identified suburban liberals, particularly those in more affluent suburbs, as the core of a potential Udall coalition. They believed that Udall's issue agenda would have particular appeal for those Democrats, many of whom had supported Eugene McCarthy in 1968 and George McGovern in 1972. "The liberal Democrats are issue-oriented," wrote Stewart Udall. "Your speeches, articles, and TV appearances will give this wing of the party insight into your convictions ... The activists will activate once they identify with you."<sup>43</sup> In making a pitch for those voters, Udall was endeavoring to get out ahead of a changing Democratic coalition. In the 1974 midterms, Democrats made gains in suburbs across the nation, picking up seats in the environs of New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Detroit, Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.<sup>44</sup> The Democratic class of 1974, more than any previous generation, was dependent on suburban voters. Twenty-one of the forty-nine Democratic gains in the House had been in districts with majority suburban populations.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> David Nyhan, "The Strategy: Beat the Other Liberals, Tackle Top Conservative," *Boston Globe* (hereinafter *BG*), Jan. 11, 1976.

<sup>42</sup> Memo, SLU to MKU, January 31, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2.

<sup>43</sup> Memo, SLU to MKU, January 19, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2.

<sup>44</sup> Richard L. Lyons, "Democrats Intensify Role in the House," *WP*, November 7, 1974.

<sup>45</sup> "Suburbs and the South: Democratic Gold Mines."

Aside from his good government bona fides, the issue that many in the nascent Udall campaign thought would most endear him to liberal suburbanites was environmentalism. Here he often took a fatalistic view, issuing warnings about unrestrained economic growth, the energy crisis, and the population explosion, and urging Americans to adapt to a coming “Age of Scarcity.”<sup>46</sup> In 1974, for instance, Udall had sponsored a doomed Land Use Bill that would have imposed stricter regulations on real estate developers.<sup>47</sup> Throughout 1975, he sought to use his sponsorship of legislation banning strip mining to burnish his environmentalist credentials and to draw contrasts with Gerald Ford’s administration. When Ford vetoed the strip mining bill in May 1975, Udall denounced the president’s stated concern with the cost of the bill and its impact on production as “a mere smokescreen” for Ford’s real concern for “the coal and utility companies” and “the nice little setup” they presently enjoyed.<sup>48</sup> Several months later, when Ford gave a speech calling for “détente with nature,” Udall responded with a press release in which he joked, “Based on his record, I suspect the President really would prefer first strike capability on environmental matters.”<sup>49</sup>

Udall’s issue profile – pro-civil rights, pro-congressional and government reform, environmentalist, and anti-Vietnam War – was in most respects conventionally liberal. Indeed, a key part of his mythos was that he was, in his own words, “a one-eyed Mormon Democrat from conservative Arizona,” a liberal who could win elections in Goldwater’s home state.<sup>50</sup> However, on some issues he was at odds with prevailing liberal orthodoxies, and these usually reflected his Southwestern context. For instance, he was more sympathetic to gun rights than many liberals. He was fond of reminding people that he was ‘the

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<sup>46</sup> Bloodworth, *Losing the Center*, 185-88.

<sup>47</sup> Richard D. Lyons, “House Vote Kills Bill on Land Use,” *NYT*, June 12, 1974.

<sup>48</sup> Release, “Udall Responds to Ford’s Veto of Strip Mining Bill,” May 19, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 7. “Udall Says Strip Mine Bill ‘Won’t Cost Miners Jobs’,” April 8, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 5.

<sup>49</sup> Udall Release, July 11, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 9.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Severo, “Morris K. Udall, Fiercely Liberal Congressman, Dies at 76,” *NYT*, December 14, 1998.

Congressman from Tombstone [the site of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral].<sup>51</sup> More significantly, Udall continued to be viewed with suspicion by labor leaders. Though he had a generally pro-labor voting record, he was burdened by his 1965 vote to uphold Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which protected state right-to-work laws.<sup>52</sup> His environmentalism also put him at odds with parts of the labor movement, which had opposed some environmental protection laws and regulations on the grounds that they threatened jobs.<sup>53</sup> Udall hoped he might defuse that tension. “The labor-conservationist hostility,” Udall wrote to Dave Obey in September 1975, “is a product of misunderstanding and bad communication on both sides.”<sup>54</sup> This conflict would not necessarily be a significant barrier with voters in affluent suburbs, many of whom worked in industries with low union densities; however, labor’s influence, and organizational muscle, could become an issue if it was flexed against Udall’s candidacy.

### *Leading the Liberals: The Udall Campaign*

Udall’s entry into the presidential race came a few weeks before the Democratic Party’s first ever midterm convention in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>55</sup> Udall’s experience at this event underscored some of the funding and organizational problems that were to plague his campaign. Though not yet a formal candidate, Washington senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson arrived with the most sophisticated and best-resourced campaign. He had a paid staff of at least 65, connected by “a beeper communications system.” Working from a pair of trailers, Jackson’s team had prepared detailed profiles of all 2,038 delegates and devised “a

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<sup>51</sup> Mike Barnes, “Udall for President: No Laughing Matter,” *Democratic Review*, June/July 1975, available from University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections Online Exhibits, <https://speccoll.library.arizona.edu/online-exhibits/items/show/1688> (accessed May 2, 2021).

<sup>52</sup> Rachelle Patterson, “Unions Still Undecided on Presidential Choice,” *BG*, March 16, 1976.

<sup>53</sup> Irston Barnes, “Labor and the Environment,” *WP*, December 12, 1971.

<sup>54</sup> Letter, MKU to Dave R. Obey, September 17, 1975, MKU papers, Box 37, Folder 2.

<sup>55</sup> David S. Broder, “Democrats Adopt Their First Charter,” *WP*, December 8, 1974.

Pentagon-style logistical system” to ensure that the senator met with them all. Former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, who would declare his candidacy after the convention, had the funds and infrastructure to prepare a glossy, full-color magazine on his life and career, which was mailed to all the delegates a week in advance. By contrast, the Udall campaign had a black-and-white brochure, prepared in relative haste (on ten days’ notice), and distributed to the delegates’ hotel rooms by volunteers. There was cause for optimism, however, as the Udall operation was delighted to discover that it had been able to distribute all 5,000 campaign buttons they had brought for the delegates.<sup>56</sup>

Udall also had to reckon with his almost non-existent national profile and the disadvantages of being a member of the House. He had low national name recognition, and even some of that came vicariously through his brother Stewart, with whom he was sometimes confused by members of the public.<sup>57</sup> This was coupled with the fact that House members were not widely regarded as likely presidents. If elected, he would have been the first member of the House of Representatives elected to the presidency since James Garfield (and he, as Udall often reminded audiences, got shot).<sup>58</sup> On the campaign trail, he was fond of telling a self-deprecating anecdote in which he walked into a New Hampshire barbershop and introduced himself to the owner. “Hi. I’m Mo Udall and I’m running for president.” The barber responded, “Yes, we were just laughing about it.”<sup>59</sup>

There was also the issue of Udall’s Mormon identity. Discussions of religion in the 1976 election often center on Jimmy Carter’s “born again” evangelical Christianity, notably the supposed “weirdo factor” (in the words of his campaign manager Hamilton Jordan) that

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<sup>56</sup> R. W. Apple, Jr., “The Race Is On for Democrats,” *NYT*, December 7, 1974.

<sup>57</sup> Roy Reed, “In Lion’s Den of South, Udall Is a Liberal Daniel,” *NYT*, October 17, 1975.

<sup>58</sup> On a campaign stop in Ohio, Udall staged an event at the home of James Garfield in Lawndale, signing the guest book before addressing around 200 supporters from the back porch. Linda Charlton, “Udall Visits Garfield’s Home and Hopes To Follow Ohioan to the White House,” *NYT*, June 8, 1976.

<sup>59</sup> Jules Witcover, *The Making of an Ink-Stained Wretch: Half a Century Pounding the Political Beat* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 203.

Carter's Southern Baptist faith gave his candidacy.<sup>60</sup> As the first Mormon candidate to seek the Democratic presidential nomination, Udall was also a political curiosity. The campaign also recognized that there were specific concerns related to Mormonism that might prove alienating to key Democratic blocs, most significantly African Americans. Although Udall had left the church over its racist clerical practices, he refused to disavow all connections with his faith, often referring to himself as a "nonpracticing Mormon" or a "jack Mormon."<sup>61</sup> In a statement at the outset of his campaign, he declared that while he was "proud of his Mormon heritage," he had a "profound disagreement" with the church's policy of "accord[ing] inferior status to certain classes of persons on the basis of race and color."<sup>62</sup> Udall's lengthy apologies exasperated his staff. "Your Mormonism answer is too wordy, and too subtly self-defensive," wrote Stewart Udall in a memo in early 1975.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, Udall never overcame the urge to explain the complexities of his religious identity when challenged. In response to a letter from one California voter, Udall wrote a two-page explanation of his beliefs and affiliations. Though he was not an active member of the Church, he explained, his "values and principles" were "the outgrowth of my Mormon upbringing and the devotion of parents who deeply believed and practised the doctrines of the Church."<sup>64</sup>

Udall was an unlikely candidate with significant obstacles to overcome. However, the 1976 Democratic primaries took place in a radically transformed context that created new opportunities for unlikely candidates. Following the tumultuous 1968 convention in Chicago,

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<sup>60</sup> Leo Ribuffo, "God and Jimmy Carter," in *Transforming Faith: The Sacred and the Secular in Modern American History*, eds., M. L. Bradbury, James B. Gilbert (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), 146. For more on Carter's faith, see Randall Balmer, *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter* (Boulder, CO: Basic Books, 2014); J. Brooks Flippen, *Jimmy Carter, the Politics of Family, and the Rise of the Religious Right* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> Ivins, "Liberal from Goldwater County."

<sup>62</sup> The statement was prepared by Stewart Udall. Release, "Mo Udall Statement on the Mormon Church," November 27, 1974, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2.

<sup>63</sup> Memo, SLU to MKU, February 19, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2. Stewart Udall's had drafted a statement along those lines in November 1974, a short paragraph affirming Udall's pride in his heritage and his 'profound disagreement' with those church doctrines. "Mo Udall Statement on the Mormon Church," Prepared by SLU, November 27, 1974, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2.

<sup>64</sup> Letter, MKU to Mrs. Kenneth H. Johns, April 2, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 5.



the Democratic Party had dramatically reformed the process for choosing its presidential nominees – both significantly increasing the number of state primaries and caucuses that would be held and implementing a proportional system for awarding convention delegates.<sup>65</sup> This new system had enabled George McGovern, an insurgent candidate with enthusiastic and well-organized supporters, to win the nomination in the teeth of fierce opposition from much of the party’s establishment in the 1972 cycle.<sup>66</sup> Alongside the party reforms were the 1974 amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act, that not only created stringent new limits and disclosure requirements on campaign donations, and created the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to enforce them, but also established a matching fund program of public financing for campaigns. Udall had been a longtime supporter of campaign finance reform and a co-author of the 1974 amendments. He often boasted that he had published financial statements and tax returns since 1962.<sup>67</sup>

As a candidate, Udall tried to present himself as a pragmatist rather than an ideologue. He chided idealistic liberals to stop waiting for “Abraham Woodrow Franklin John Fitzgerald Smith to step from the clouds.”<sup>68</sup> What the Democrats needed, he said, was “a moderate, centrist, unifying figure who’s got enough personal appeal that he can hold the different elements together and get enough of them to get the nomination.”<sup>69</sup> He even shied away from

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<sup>65</sup> The most detailed account of the reform of the Democratic Party’s institutions can be found in Byron E. Shafer, *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics* (New York: Russell Sage, 1983).

<sup>66</sup> The McGovern campaign was both a model and a warning for the Udall operation. “Unlike McGovern,” wrote Stewart Udall to his brother, “we should run the kind of campaign so that the manner of winning [the nomination] will enable us to win in November.” This meant a campaign that was “inclusive, not exclusive,” would “consciously court all of the potential or supposed big and little brokers,” and was national in scope. Memo, SLU to MKU, January 19, 1975, Box 38, Folder 2. Statement by Congressman Morris K. Udall, September 25, 1971, MKU papers, Box 21, Folder 17. There are many narrative histories of the McGovern campaign – produced by participants, journalists, and scholars – but the best recent example is Miroff, *The Liberals’ Moment*.

<sup>67</sup> Ivins, “Liberal from Goldwater County.” Udall’s fundraising letters emphasized the fact that it was only the new campaign finance law – “which I am proud to have co-authored” – that made it possible for him to mount a campaign. Morris K. Udall, Fundraising letter, June 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 8.

<sup>68</sup> Mike Barnes, “Udall for President: No Laughing Matter,” *Democratic Review*, June/July 1975, available from University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections Online Exhibits, <https://speccoll.library.arizona.edu/online-exhibits/items/show/1688> (accessed May 3, 2021).

<sup>69</sup> “Udall Campaign Aimed at Putting End to Secondary Role of House,” *LAT*, June 30, 1974

identifying as a “liberal,” preferring to describe himself as a “progressive.”<sup>70</sup> Udall claimed that this was more an issue of branding than of his beliefs. He said that “liberal” had become “a worry word” that caused otherwise sympathetic voters to “[tune] you out before you start.”<sup>71</sup> Several observers saw Udall’s contortions as evidence of the ongoing crisis within liberalism. The conservative columnist George Will suggested that Udall had, with “exquisitely awful timing ... established himself as the liberal candidate at a moment when liberalism seems stale.”<sup>72</sup>

Nonetheless, Udall recognized that his route to the nomination was by first becoming the candidate of the party’s liberal wing.<sup>73</sup> In June 1975, regional coordinator John Gabusi wrote an all-staff memo encouraging campaign workers to begin compiling lists of names from key constituencies for the campaign’s direct mail operation. That list demonstrated that the Udall campaign was constructing its voter coalition around identities and causes likely to be found among in affluent suburban liberals: the university educated (“American Association of University Women”), environmentalists (“Any ‘SAVE the Anything (BAY, River, trees, etc.) lists”), civil libertarians (“Any Civil Liberty type groups”), mainstream feminists (“League of Women voters”), Reformed Protestants (“Unitarian Church members,” “Congregational Church members”), and Jewish voters (“Synagogue [sic] Members”).<sup>74</sup>

The Udall campaign sought to build alliances with the activists and groups that represented its target constituencies. Stewart Udall, drawing on contacts he had built with environmentalist groups since his time as Interior Secretary, appealed to old allies at Friends of the Earth and Zero Population Growth and signed fundraising letters to the Environmental Defense Fund arguing that his brother’s candidacy “has given the environmental community

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<sup>70</sup> Larry L. King, “Unbowed Udall,” *NYT*, July 14, 1976.

<sup>71</sup> “Morris Udall: The Candidate on the Issues: An Interview,” *WP*, April 25, 1976.

<sup>72</sup> George F. Will, “The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Liberal,” *Newsweek*, May 3, 1976.

<sup>73</sup> David Nyhan, “The Strategy: Beat the Other Liberals, Tackle Top Conservative,” *BG*, January 11, 1976.

<sup>74</sup> Memo to All Staff, from John Gabusi, June 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 8.

a remarkable opportunity” to put a committed environmentalist in the White House.<sup>75</sup> In a speech to the National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC), Udall committed himself to “affirmative action to attain equal employment opportunities for women in this country,” adding that women held key leadership roles in his presidential campaign at the national and state level.<sup>76</sup> In March 1976, the NWPC published a survey rating Udall’s stances on a range of “women’s issues” (including abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, child care, and rape law reform) as “superior” to those of all other candidates.<sup>77</sup> In late 1975, one aide even proposed the strategy of organizing university campuses “not as students, but as communities – faculty, graduate students, administration, and undergraduates.”<sup>78</sup>

Demographically, Udall’s campaign staff reflected his intended coalition. With the exception of the campaign manager, Stewart Udall, the senior staffers were mostly young, held graduate degrees, and were veterans of the McCarthy, Robert Kennedy, and McGovern campaigns.<sup>79</sup> For example, the campaign’s issues coordinator, Jessica Tuchman, the daughter of historian Barbara Tuchman, was in her late twenties, had a Ph.D. in biophysics and biochemistry from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and was the author of a number of published studies, and had been a McCarthy volunteer in 1968. She had been a key figure in legal challenges mounted by the McCarthy campaign to the credentials and rules decisions at the Chicago convention (an experience which she said left her “physically and emotionally destroyed”). Tuchman had joined the Udall-chaired House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment in 1973 on a Congressional Science Fellowship from the American

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<sup>75</sup> Letter, SLU to David Brower, n.d.; Letter, SLU to Paul Ehrlich, April 4, 1975; SLU, Final Draft, Letter to Membership List of the Environmental Defense Fund, March 27, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 5.

<sup>76</sup> Release, “‘Affirmative Action’ Reflected in Udall Campaign Staff,” June 28, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 8.

<sup>77</sup> “Campaign Briefs: Udall Rated Highest on Women’s Issues,” *LAT*, March 7, 1976

<sup>78</sup> The memo proposing this, from issues coordinator Jessica Tuchman, noted that the campaign had been considering this idea for some time and recommended that resources should now be directed to the effort. She suggested a combination of meetings, film screenings, and the recruitment of supporters (especially university faculty) which would culminate in the creation of a campus organizing committee for Udall. Memo, JT to MKU, SLU, TB, JQ, October 14, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 12.

<sup>79</sup> “Stewart Udall Heads Team for Brother,” *WP*, December 22, 1974.

Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), having completed her graduate studies in the intervening years.<sup>80</sup>

On the campaign trail, Udall's advisor Terry Bracy tried to persuade voters that the Udalls were "the Arizona Kennedys."<sup>81</sup> While this moniker never caught on, the Udall family was involved in the campaign to a Kennedy-esque extent. Alongside Stewart Udall's consistently senior place in the campaign organisation, other Udalls fanned out across the country in support of Mo's candidacy. Four of Udall's six children by his first marriage, along with his stepson from his second, joined him on the campaign trail. His eldest son, Mark, who would later be elected as senator from Colorado, spent months campaigning in New Hampshire, where he was reportedly popular with voters. His daughters Judith ("Dodie") and Anne ("Bambi") likewise acted as campaign surrogates, and his son Brad delayed his matriculation at Stanford to campaign. Both Brad and Anne reflected that it was an opportunity to spend quality time with their father. "My father had just been somebody I read about in the paper," recalled Anne.<sup>82</sup>

Though Udall could rely on his extended family, a stable campaign infrastructure proved more of a challenge. Financing was an ongoing problem. In November 1975, Udall wrote senior campaign staffers that he had "no intention of spending future years working to get out of hock." He wanted to end the campaign without "getting into debt – either legal obligations or moral ones – and have made firm promises to [his wife] Ella on this score." The campaign needed to run on a tight budget, instead of "gambling on donations that may never come in."<sup>83</sup> The campaign's straitened finances often created tensions with some

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<sup>80</sup> Barnes, "Udall for President: No Laughing Matter"; Memo, from Jack Quinn, n.d., MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 12.

<sup>81</sup> Aaron Latham, "Will Rogers is Running for President," *New York Magazine*, December 1974, available from University of Arizona Libraries, Special Collections Online Exhibits, <https://speccoll.library.arizona.edu/online-exhibits/items/show/1686> (accessed May 2, 2021).

<sup>82</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 147-48.

<sup>83</sup> Memo, MKU to SLU, JG, Kurz, November 11, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 3.

staffers who could expect severe delays in the arrival of their paychecks. The case of Maria Carrier, the veteran political operative who headed Udall's New Hampshire campaign, was not atypical. Carrier had been part of the Udall effort from the start. By the end of 1975, however, Carrier's \$300-per-week salary was several months in arrears and, despite her making representation to several officials, the campaign showed no sign of settling up. Carrier wrote to Stewart Udall threatening to resign in November 1975 and January 1976. By early January – by which time she was awaiting payment for October, November, and December – she wrote to Stewart Udall that, unless her full back pay was reimbursed, she would not only “disassociate [herself] completely from the Udall campaign” but also “resign as a delegate candidate pledged to Udall.”<sup>84</sup> Ultimately, Carrier remained in post until the New Hampshire primary in February.<sup>85</sup> Financial difficulties bedeviled the Udall campaign until the end. When he arrived at the party's national convention in New York City's Madison Square Garden in July, Udall joked that he was attending to evade his creditors.<sup>86</sup>

From the outset, the Udall campaign expected that the primaries would be, as Stewart Udall put it, “a contest of the long-distance runners.”<sup>87</sup> By the summer of 1975, Udall had already visited forty-five states.<sup>88</sup> John Gabusi wrote to the political staff in February 1975 that they would run “a high-risk campaign designed to develop delegate support in sufficient numbers to achieve a first-ballot victory.”<sup>89</sup> Yet even an optimistic (“highly hypothetical”) delegate projection prepared by aide William Connell in April 1975 had Udall arriving at the convention with 979 pledged delegates, a bare plurality rather than a majority.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Letter, Maria Carrier to SLU, January 5, 1976, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 13; Letter, Maria Carrier to SLU, November 17, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 13.

<sup>85</sup> David Nyhan, “The Candidates React: Udall,” *BG*, February 25, 1976.

<sup>86</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 172

<sup>87</sup> “Stewart Udall Heads Team for Brother,” *WP*, December 22, 1974.

<sup>88</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 156.

<sup>89</sup> Memo, John Gabusi to Political Staff, February 1, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 3.

<sup>90</sup> That projection was based, as Connell conceded, on a very specific set of assumptions and had Udall winning the primaries and caucuses in Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Memo, William Connell, “Delegate projections,” April 30, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 8.

The other long-distance runner in the race was former Georgia governor, Jimmy Carter, who had joined the presidential race less than three weeks after Udall.<sup>91</sup> Beyond their early starts, and long odds of winning the nomination, the two candidates had little in common. Carter represented the “New South,” a populist Democrat who eschewed racial demagoguery and had built a winning coalition of white moderates and African Americans.<sup>92</sup> Where Udall used his credentials as a Washington reformer to appeal to voters weary of Watergate-era corruption, Carter used his status as a Washington outsider. He emphasized his background as a peanut farmer and promised voters that he would “never tell a lie.”<sup>93</sup> Carter’s self-effacing exterior concealed his political acumen, ambition, and determination. His campaign’s approach, as Julian Zelizer puts it, was a blend of “local organizing and media-savvy campaigning.”<sup>94</sup> Carter was also broadly identified with the party’s conservative wing, though he sought to create an aura of ideological ambiguity, mixing conservative and liberal positions.<sup>95</sup> On the stump, Udall would regale audiences with the “Udall Quick Carter Quiz, also known as Yes, No or Waffle,” a series of questions – on issues such as natural gas deregulation, healthcare reform, and right-to-work laws – on which Udall claimed Carter had taken opposing positions.<sup>96</sup> In the first instance, however, the Udall campaign did not view Carter as an immediate rival for the liberal support they were chasing.

As 1976 arrived, Udall’s national poll numbers remained lackluster, “just ahead of Don’t Know,” as he joked earlier in his campaign. When journalists challenged his poll numbers, his staff remained optimistic. Campaign director Jack Quinn told one reporter that Udall was best placed to benefit as the field began to winnow because “he doesn’t antagonize

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<sup>91</sup> Wayne King, “Georgia’s Gov. Carter Enters Democratic Race for President,” *NYT*, December 13, 1974.

<sup>92</sup> Randy Sanders, *Mighty Peculiar Elections: The New South Gubernatorial Campaigns of 1970 and the Changing Politics of Race* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2002), 146-169.

<sup>93</sup> Ron Shaffer, “Carter Asks Md. Support,” *WP*, December 1, 1975.

<sup>94</sup> Julian E. Zelizer, *Jimmy Carter* (New York: Times Books, 2010), 37.

<sup>95</sup> Rowland Evans, Robert Novak, “Jimmy Carter: Can He Maintain His Growing Support,” *WP*, February 3, 1976.

<sup>96</sup> Linda Charlton, “Udall Takes Some Time off To Appeal for More Funds,” *NYT*, May 10, 1976

the supporters of other candidates” and was already “the strong second choice” of many primary voters and “a natural heir to a lot of progressive and centrist support.”<sup>97</sup> Udall finished a disappointing fourth in the Iowa caucuses in January but rebounded to a strong second place in the New Hampshire primary the following month.<sup>98</sup> With Udall taking 24% of the vote, six points behind the winner, Jimmy Carter, and eight points ahead of his nearest liberal rival Birch Bayh, the result seemed an early vindication of his campaign’s strategy.<sup>99</sup> From here, Udall had to solidify his position as the liberal standard bearer, and more importantly to amass enough delegates to put himself in contention for the nomination. To do that, he needed to start winning primaries.

*“Wine and Cheese” vs. “Lunch Pail”: The Massachusetts Primary*

New Hampshire had gone well for Udall, reviving his flagging campaign and strengthening his claim to be the liberals’ champion. It was Massachusetts that would secure that position and put him firmly on course for the nomination. The Bay State’s primary was crucial to the Udall campaign’s strategy. It was to be Udall’s springboard, launching him ahead of the pack as the candidate of the party’s liberal wing. It would also ensure that Udall was able to raise the money, and attract the volunteers, to keep the campaign alive to the convention. “You must risk all ... on the roll of the dice in these first two primaries [New Hampshire and Massachusetts],” wrote William Connell to Udall in October 1975. He added, “if the man on the late TV shows of March 9, the morning headlines of March 10, and the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* on March 15 is not you, then it will be some other ‘liberal’ who will be getting the money, the volunteers and the press from then on.”<sup>100</sup> Udall’s state campaign manager,

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<sup>97</sup> Ivins, “Liberal from Goldwater County.”

<sup>98</sup> David S. Broder, “Udall’s Supporters Rally,” *WP*, January 29, 1976; Curtis Wilkie, “Carter Wins; Ford Leading Close Race,” *BG*, February 25, 1976.

<sup>99</sup> Robert Shogan, “First Primary Indicates Long Wars of Attrition,” *LAT*, February 26, 1976.

<sup>100</sup> Memo, William Connell to MKU, October 1, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 13.

Paul Tully, told reporters that, “[o]nly one, possibly two of us are going to stagger out of Massachusetts alive.”<sup>101</sup>

Massachusetts was, wrote one journalist, “more than any other, a state of enclaves, where a voter’s allegiance to the Democratic Party – ethnic, class, or ideological – can largely be determined by address.”<sup>102</sup> As Lily Geismer has argued, though widely pegged as a liberal state, its politics have been more nuanced and shaped by those conflicting communities. Massachusetts was the home of the Kennedys and had been the only state to vote for George McGovern over Richard Nixon in 1972.<sup>103</sup> It was also the site of virulent ongoing protests against “busing” to achieve school desegregation.<sup>104</sup> Udall’s strategy was to focus on the affluent suburban enclaves that might deliver him a victory. By the beginning of February, Udall had established eight campaign headquarters across the state (particularly in suburban cities like Quincy, Lawrence, and Newton) and employed fifteen salaried campaign workers, supported by around 1,200 volunteers.<sup>105</sup>

The Udall campaign believed Massachusetts’ primary electorate would be particularly favorable to their candidate’s strategy, with a comparatively high proportion of affluent, educated, suburban liberals who should be well-disposed to Udall’s issue agenda. A victory in Massachusetts would vindicate the Udall strategy. By contrast, a poor showing there would deal a mortal blow to the campaign. In one memo, Connell estimated that the state primary electorate had a “65% liberal tilt,” with the remaining 35% leaning towards more conservative candidates. Given the fragmented field, added Connell, even a final vote total of “15-18%” might be considered victory by the media.<sup>106</sup> Initially, Udall struggled to make

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<sup>101</sup> Jack Thomas, “Udall Trying to Solve Organizational Problems,” *BG*, February 5, 1976.

<sup>102</sup> John Kifner, “Massachusetts: A Voter Mosaic,” *NYT*, March 2, 1976.

<sup>103</sup> Geismer, *Don’t Blame Us*, 15-16.

<sup>104</sup> Kathleen Banks Nutter, “‘Militant Mothers’: Boston, Busing, and the Bicentennial of 1976,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 38:2 (Fall 2010), 52-75.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas, “Udall Trying to Solve Organizational Problems.”

<sup>106</sup> Memo, William Connell to SLU, December 26, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 16.



headway. When some of the candidates appeared at a conference at Acton-Boxboro Regional High School at the end of January, one attendee summarized the reported mood of the audience when she told a journalist, “I was confused as to who to support and I still am confused. But I feel that I know [the candidates] better.”<sup>107</sup> One Bayh organizer remarked sardonically, “The liberals are waiting for the Massachusetts primary returns so that they can figure out which liberal they will support in the Massachusetts primary.”<sup>108</sup>

The worst case for liberal Democrats was that they would split the vote and produce a plurality for a conservative candidate. The nightmare scenario was that former Alabama governor George Wallace would win the primary, even with a comparatively small plurality of the vote, exploiting anti-busing sentiment to carry him to victory.<sup>109</sup> Long before Massachusetts, Udall went to considerable lengths to position himself as a foil to Wallace and the best hope of the anti-Wallace liberals. He assailed Wallace as a proponent of the “politics of negativism” and a purveyor of “catchy slogans that touch every raw nerve of fear and resentment” but concealed only “know-nothingism, pure and simple.”<sup>110</sup> He declared that he would not run on a party ticket that included Wallace, and nor would he support such a ticket. As the primary approached, he urged liberals to “coalesce” behind him. It would be “a shame,” said Udall, for the “progressive state” of Massachusetts to deliver a win to Wallace. That could be avoided, he continued, if the “progressive voters” of the state united behind his candidacy.<sup>111</sup> He directly attacked Wallace in a major speech in Faneuil Hall, taking out a

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<sup>107</sup> Robert L. Turner, “Voters Size Up Five Presidential Candidates at Forum in Acton,” *BG*, February 1, 1976

<sup>108</sup> Robert Healy, “Wallace Win In Mass. Would Derail Liberals,” *BG*, February 1, 1976

<sup>109</sup> Wallace had achieved national notoriety as an implacable opponent of desegregation before launching an unexpectedly successful presidential bid in 1968. Returning to the Democratic Party, Wallace had run for the nomination in 1972, when an assassination attempt had left him in a wheelchair. Though Wallace’s injuries convinced many commentators that he was a diminished force, he remained a serious contender for the nomination, a champion for many Democrats and a bogeyman for liberals. Healy, “Wallace Win In Mass. Would Derail Liberals.” For more on Wallace’s political career, see Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1996).

<sup>110</sup> MKU, “The Politics of Negativism and 1976,” Remarks to the Communication Workers of America, June 12, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 8.

<sup>111</sup> Curtis Wilkie, “A Look at 3 Democrat Campaigns in Mass. – Udall: Appeal to Liberals,” *BG*, Feb 28, 1976

full-page ad in the *Boston Globe* on the same day describing himself as “the only Presidential candidate who dared to campaign against George Wallace.”<sup>112</sup>

Udall’s strategy in Massachusetts relied heavily on endorsements to legitimize his candidacy and strengthen his appeal to key electoral blocs, particularly suburban liberals. Udall’s coalition combined established Massachusetts politicians like House Majority Leader Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill and Representative Barney Frank with academic worthies like Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith.<sup>113</sup> The campaign also ran full-page advertisements featuring Ramsey Clark – the former attorney general with a bright reputation among civil rights and civil liberties groups – praising Udall’s “character.”<sup>114</sup> Columnist Mary McGrory argued that this gave Udall “fortunate and perfectly balanced sponsorship,” which made him unique among the candidates: “Irish and Yankee, gown and town, pol and scholar, bow tie and old shoe.”<sup>115</sup> Udall even invoked his connection to the Kennedys in the absence of an endorsement, telling one audience in Lawrence, “You can give me the kind of help I gave John Kennedy in Arizona in 1960.”<sup>116</sup>

The endorsement that the Udall campaign valued most highly came from Archibald Cox, the Watergate special prosecutor whose attempted firing by Nixon had triggered the “Saturday Night Massacre” in October 1973. As early as December 1974, Udall had approached Cox to ask him for “the use of [his] good name” in the campaign.<sup>117</sup> The courting

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<sup>112</sup> Curtis Wilkie, “Some Democrats Beginning to Play a Rougher Game of Primary Politics,” *BG*, February 6, 1976; Udall for President Ad, *BG*, February 5, 1976.

<sup>113</sup> Robert Healy, “Wallace Win In Mass. Would Derail Liberals,” *BG*, February 1, 1976; Ken Galbraith, Statement on MKU, October 13, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 12.

<sup>114</sup> Udall for President Ad, *BG*, February 1, 1976

<sup>115</sup> Mary McGrory, “Call Cambridge ‘Udall Country’,” *BG*, February 28, 1976

<sup>116</sup> Ray Huard, “Udall Seeks Kennedy-Type Help,” *Lawrence Eagle-Tribune*, January 28, 1976, offprint in MKU papers, Box 50, Folder (Clippings, Jan 1976).

<sup>117</sup> Udall requested that Cox provide some “visible help” to his campaign, suggesting that he become chair/co-chair of a Citizens for Udall group and sign a fundraising letter for some key mailing lists. Letter, MKU to Archibald Cox, December 16, 1974, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2.

continued throughout 1975, while Cox remained wary of making a public commitment.<sup>118</sup> When Cox finally did make his endorsement in late January 1976, Udall hailed him as “a symbol of the rule of law” who embodied “in this troubled and cynical time the virtues of character, decency, civility and integrity.”<sup>119</sup> Udall’s state campaign manager, Paul Tully, told journalists that Cox’s endorsement was “an enormous help because he holds a very special place in people’s minds.”<sup>120</sup> Cox represented integrity and courage in the face of the corruption of Watergate, and appealed to the good government instincts of those voters who had supported party, congressional, and campaign finance reforms.

Udall’s principal rival in the Massachusetts primary was not George Wallace or even Jimmy Carter, but Henry Jackson. The Washington senator was widely identified as being on the party’s conservative wing, largely because of his views on foreign policy. Jackson was an unrepentant supporter of the Vietnam War and a relentless critic of détente.<sup>121</sup> His best-known legislative accomplishment by 1976 was the Jackson-Vanik amendment, an addition to the 1974 Trade Act that sought to make normal trade relations with any nation contingent on its human rights record. He was a vocal critic of the persecution of Soviet Jews within the USSR and a supporter of aid to Israel, which won him widespread support among Jewish voters.<sup>122</sup> On domestic issues, Jackson was squarely within the traditions of the New and Fair Deal. He was a staunch ally of organized labor, a keen environmentalist, and a supporter of robust welfare programs. Jackson had no qualms with describing himself as a “liberal” and scoffed at Democrats like Udall who preferred to call themselves “progressives.” He was, however, an unabashed critic of busing (although he had been an early and consistent

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<sup>118</sup> In October 1975, Cox was complaining to Stewart Udall about fellow Harvard professor, and Udall supporter, John Kenneth Galbraith “pushing” him for an endorsement. Memo, SLU to MKU, October 10, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 12.

<sup>119</sup> Release, Udall Reaction to Archibald Cox Endorsement, n.d., MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 15; “Cox Endorses Udall For President,” *BG*, January 25, 1976.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas, “Udall Trying to Solve Organizational Problems.”

<sup>121</sup> Jeff Bloodworth, “Senator Henry Jackson, the Solzhenitsyn Affair, and American Liberalism,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 97:2 (2006), 69–77.

<sup>122</sup> Tom Wicker, “Jackson on the Offense,” *NYT*, September 23, 1973.

supporter of civil rights laws) which made him a respectable option for anti-busing voters who could not stomach Wallace. Though an uncharismatic campaigner, Jackson had the advantage of his Senate record. He pledged to campaign “not on the road, but on the job” and during 1975, he maintained his 99% Senate attendance rating even as he visited thirty-eight states.<sup>123</sup>

The Udall campaign assumed that Jackson’s campaign strategy would come up short. At the beginning of 1975, Stewart Udall wrote in a memo that although Jackson was counting on “troops” and well-stocked coffers from labor and Jewish groups, “he is not getting (and cannot get) the grassroots Democrats who will pick the delegates.”<sup>124</sup> Nonetheless, Jackson was supported by some of the most important Democratic voting blocs. He spoke of recreating the “great coalition” (the New Deal coalition) and his base consisted of labor, Jewish voters, and regular Democratic organizations in the state. One journalist noted that Jackson’s alliance of “union halls and synagogues” would make him a formidable candidate.<sup>125</sup>

The Udall and Jackson campaigns clashed most fiercely over the issue of busing. On this, Jackson was blunt and uncompromising, running newspaper advertisements that proclaimed, plainly, “I am against busing.”<sup>126</sup> Udall, although he was usually described as the most pro-busing candidate in the race, sought a middle path. In 1973, he had co-sponsored a bill with Rep. L. Richardson Preyer, a North Carolina Democrat, to resolve the nationwide busing crisis. The Equal Education Opportunity Act would have devolved responsibility for achieving racial balance in schools to states and local districts, mandating them to devise plans in concert with citizen advisory groups. While the bill would maintain busing as a “last

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<sup>123</sup> Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000),, 301, 304, 329.

<sup>124</sup> Memo, SLU, January 31, 1975, MKU papers, Box 38, Folder 2.

<sup>125</sup> Garry Wills, “Jackson’s Coalition Hopes Unreal,” *BG*, March 15, 1976; Martin F. Nolan, “Bay State Front Is All Quiet,” *BG*, February 3, 1976.

<sup>126</sup> Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson*, 324.

resort,” it would “open the door to virtually limitless techniques for achieving the goal.” This was Udall’s position on the campaign trail and it made him one of the few white Democrats prepared to defend busing in any form. Nonetheless, Udall went to considerable lengths to sympathize with anti-busing activists. Busing, he acknowledged, “understandably arouses the fears and passions of parents” which made them “susceptible to irresponsible leaders and, most unfortunately, vote-seeking politicians.”<sup>127</sup>

Campaigners and journalists understood the confrontations over busing as emblematic of a class and generational struggle within the Democratic coalition. The Jackson campaign styled itself as fighting a rear-guard action on behalf of traditional Democrats against a new party elite. Jackson referred to his own supporters as “[l]unch pail Democrats,” motivated by jobs, paychecks, and other issues of personal material circumstance. By contrast, Jackson supporters spoke dismissively of the “[w]ine and cheese liberals” who were the base of Udall’s support.<sup>128</sup>

The results of the Massachusetts primary on March 2 reflected those divisions. As expected, no candidate won a majority. Jackson’s coalition was enough to deliver him victory with 23% of the vote. “I got the lunch-bucket vote, and some of the liberals,” he remarked to one journalist. “You know, this is a working-class state.” Udall managed a respectable a second place finish with 18% of the vote, though he was only narrowly ahead of Wallace, who took 17% and swept Boston.<sup>129</sup> Udall ran well in the affluent suburbs – 49 percent in one Lexington precinct, 53 percent in one Lincoln precinct – and received nearly a third of the votes of college graduates and of families earning over \$25,000 per annum, well ahead of any other candidate.<sup>130</sup> He also performed well in college towns, sweeping Cambridge, home of

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<sup>127</sup> Morris K. Udall, “My Views on Busing,” n.d., MKU papers, Box 22, Folder 30.

<sup>128</sup> Chapman, “The Good-Times Democrats.”

<sup>129</sup> Associated Press, “Final Tallies in 2 Races,” *NYT*, March 4, 1976; Douglas E. Kneeland, “Jackson Lays Result to Coalition,” *NYT*, March 3, 1976.

<sup>130</sup> Chapman, “The Good-Times Democrats.”

Harvard University, with more than three times Jackson's vote.<sup>131</sup> Carter trailed in fourth place. The results left Udall, according to one round-up, "king of the liberal, upper-income suburbs, but little else."<sup>132</sup>

Following the Massachusetts primary, Udall joked that he was gaining "momentum."<sup>133</sup> Rival liberal campaigns began briefing journalists that their candidates would soon withdraw from the race.<sup>134</sup> "I'm the only show that's left in town," exulted Udall in the immediate aftermath.<sup>135</sup> Heading for primaries in New York and Wisconsin, and for an expected showdown with Jimmy Carter, the Udall campaign was growing optimistic. However, they continued to rely on suburban voters as the basis of their strategy. A few days after his strong finish in Massachusetts, Udall appeared at a \$25-a-head fundraising event at the "sprawling estate" of campaign volunteer Putsie Jackson in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. To a mixed audience of lobbyists, congressional aides, and "well-heeled Montgomery County professionals," Udall pitched himself as the last viable progressive in the race and urged the assembled to "dig down" into their wallets.<sup>136</sup>

However, Udall's second place in Massachusetts proved to be the high point of his campaign, rather than the prelude to later successes. Apart from a landslide victory in his home state of Arizona, Udall did not win a single primary in 1976.<sup>137</sup> Udall's consistent runner-up finishes earned him the nickname "Second Place Mo." His nearest miss came in the Wisconsin primary on April 6, where he told voters that "the hour is very late" and that he was the "only viable" liberal candidate left in the running.<sup>138</sup> Udall seemed poised to win and was buoyed when several media outlets called the race for him. As the late returns trickled in,

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<sup>131</sup> David Farrell, "Jackson Got Big Edge from Antibusing Stand," *BG*, March 4, 1976.

<sup>132</sup> William Chapman, "Mass. Shirks Liberalism of '72," *WP*, March 4, 1976.

<sup>133</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 163.

<sup>134</sup> R.W. Apple, Jr., "Bayh and Shriver Expected to Quit Democratic Race," *NYT*, March 4, 1976.

<sup>135</sup> Frank Lynn, "Primary In State Gains A New Role," *NYT*, March 4, 1976.

<sup>136</sup> Bill Peterson, "Udall Urges Md. Liberals To 'Dig Down' For Donations," *WP*, March 8, 1976.

<sup>137</sup> Grace Lichtenstein, "Arizona Primary is Won By Udall," *NYT*, April 26, 1976.

<sup>138</sup> Charles Mohr, "'The Hour Is Very Late,' Udall Says, And He's the 'Only Viable' Liberal Left," *NYT*, March 18, 1976.

however, Carter closed the gap with Udall, and then overtook him. In the end, Udall lost by one percentage point. A beaming Carter, in imitation of Harry Truman in 1948, was photographed holding up a copy of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* which had gone to press on the misguided headline, “CARTER UPSET BY UDALL.”<sup>139</sup>

The Udall campaign tried to make a virtue of his second-place finishes, arguing that this made him the second choice of Democratic constituencies across the country and thus a consensus candidate who could unify the party. Udall himself remained defiant, telling one reporter, “If I keep on finishing ‘only’ second, I may have to ‘only’ wait for the second ballot [at the convention] to get the nomination.”<sup>140</sup> The Udall campaign’s hopes of a deadlocked convention never materialized and Carter secured the nomination on the first ballot. In the popular vote, Udall finished fourth, behind Carter, California governor Jerry Brown (a late entrant into the primaries, boosted by his large majority in the California primary), and Wallace. Udall arrived at the convention behind only Carter in delegate share, though it was a distant second, 329½ to Carter’s 2,238½.<sup>141</sup> Though he could perhaps claim, as he had hoped, to have been the most successful liberal candidate in the 1976 cycle, Udall had run a high-risk campaign and the risks had not paid off.

#### *“A College-Educated, Information-Age Constituency” : Conclusion*

In November 1976, just days after Carter narrowly defeated Ford in the presidential election, Udall fell from the roof of his suburban home in McLean, Virginia, and broke both of his arms. He had been repairing a leak, one of many chores that had gone unattended during his campaign. It capped a run of bad luck for Udall in the months following the suspension of his campaign, which included contracting viral pneumonia and developing peritonitis after his

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<sup>139</sup> Morris K. Udall, with Bob Neuman and Randy Udall, *Too Funny To Be President* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 29-30.

<sup>140</sup> Myra MacPherson, “Udall: Making the Most of 2d Places,” *WP*, April 16, 1976.

<sup>141</sup> Carson, Johnson, *Mo*, 144.

appendix burst. “This hasn’t been my year,” was his public comment. His statement also implicitly characterized the accident an unfortunate consequence of his pride in his suburban home and lifestyle. “I’m a Harry Homeowner-type,” he said.<sup>142</sup> Privately, he was more acerbic. “I had suspected that Jimmy Carter had sent me that collapsible ladder,” he wrote to a friend.<sup>143</sup>

Nonetheless, Udall’s political prospects were enhanced by his presidential run. He had been mentioned throughout 1976 as a likely candidate for the vacant Arizona Senate seat, though he ultimately decided against it, and there was even speculation that he might join Carter’s administration.<sup>144</sup> When he won the Democratic primary for his House district in September, Udall released a statement saying that “if re-elected I’m going to be in a position in January to put it all together.” He expected to “become a committee chairman,” to draw on his new “national contacts,” and to “work with” President Carter.<sup>145</sup> In one memo, legislative assistant Terry Bracy suggested that Udall was “now in a position to become, at the very least, perhaps the conscience of the Democratic Party, a man who would have the kind of clout that Goldwater does in GOP circles.”<sup>146</sup>

There were numerous competing explanations for the failure of Udall’s presidential campaign. Some saw Udall’s flop as symptomatic of a wider crisis for liberal Democrats, and particularly the lack of a divisive issue, like the Vietnam War, that could unify and energize liberals and propel their candidate to the nomination, as it had with McGovern four years earlier. As political scientist Richard Scammon put it, “[t]he real problem for Udall is that the [Vietnam] war is over.”<sup>147</sup> Others placed the blame with the Udall campaign itself, dogged as

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<sup>142</sup> “Udall Breaks Arms, Says It Isn’t His Year,” *NYT*, November 15, 1976.

<sup>143</sup> Letter, MKU to Joe Grandmaison, November 30, 1976, in MKU papers, Box 23, Folder 23.

<sup>144</sup> One friend wrote that “a lot of politically hip people here believe the Carter Administration will draft you out of the House and into the Cabinet.” Letter, John E. Crow to MKU, July 29, 1976, MKU papers, Box 23, Folder 21.

<sup>145</sup> Campaign release, Text of MKU’s statement on winning the House Dem primary, Sept 7, 1976, MKU papers, Box 23, Folder 21.

<sup>146</sup> Memo, Terry Bracy to MKU, November 2, 1976, MKU papers, Box 23, Folder 25.

<sup>147</sup> William Chapman, “The Good-Times Democrats,” *WP*, March 28, 1976.



it was by persistent financial difficulties and organizational crises. Many of these failings were traceable to the candidate's decisions, and this was only one of the personal criticisms levelled at Udall himself. One Udall aide, Tom Kiley, felt that Udall did "not have a sense for the jugular," that he "lacked the ruthlessness to press his advantage and force candidates ... out of the race when primaries exposed their weakness."<sup>148</sup> Still others faulted the strategic decisions of the Udall campaign, in particular the focus on suburban voters as the core of his coalition. As the conservative columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak put it in June, Udall had made himself the "liberal darling of fashionable suburban salons" but not much else.<sup>149</sup>

Udall's underwhelming performance seemed to reveal the limits of relying on suburban liberals. The Massachusetts primary demonstrated that Udall's "wine and cheese liberals" were not enough to beat Jackson's "lunch-pail Democrats." However, the activists and voters who turned up to fundraisers, wrote checks, knocked on doors, and turned out to polling booths for Udall looked more like the Democratic Party's future. Upper-income, educated liberals living in well-heeled suburbs have become have become an increasingly important part of the Democratic coalition, and one that receives outside attention from Democratic politicians and strategists. Whether these voters have been an asset to the Democratic Party is another matter. Indeed, Lily Geismer and Matthew Lassiter have suggested, in a 2018 *New York Times* op-ed, that because upper-income suburbs are sites of "resource hoarding" and "the consistent defense of homeowner privileges" they could not be the base of a consistently progressive majority.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Kiley, quoted in Witcover, *Marathon*, 301

<sup>149</sup> Rowland Evans, Robert Novak, "Showdown in Ohio for the Democrats," *WP*, June 2, 1976

<sup>150</sup> Lily Geismer and Matthew D. Lassiter, "Turning Affluent Suburbs Blue Isn't Worth the Cost," *NYT*, June 9, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/09/opinion/sunday/affluent-suburbs-democrats.html> (accessed August 20, 2019).

Mo Udall's 1976 presidential campaign was a harbinger of the modern Democratic coalition. Udall's candidacy was an object lesson in the political potential of affluent suburban liberals, portended their waxing influence, and revealed their impact on the party's values and policy priorities. Though dismissed by some at the time, and not yet a force that could secure the presidential nomination for a candidate, the social, cultural, and economic capital of those voters made them increasingly sought-after for Democratic politicians. As Colorado representative Tim Wirth put it a few years later, "Our constituents are changing ... [They] used to be labor, blue-collar and minority-oriented. Now, as in my case, they are suburban, with two working parents – a college-educated, information-age constituency."<sup>151</sup> To study the Udall campaign is to see glimmers of how the Democratic Party would be transformed by the early twenty-first century: its emphasis on environmentalism and good government reform, its declining reliance on labor unions, and its focus on college-educated professional voters in upscale suburbs. For good and ill, these voters will continue to exercise outsized influence on the priorities of the Democratic Party, and of American liberalism itself.

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<sup>151</sup> Steven V. Roberts, "Democrats: An Aye For Business," *NYT*, March 1, 1981.