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The study estimated that 60 percent of Nader voters would have voted for Gore, thus giving him in the presidency. If those estimates are true, Nader being in the race “spoiled” the election for Gore.

Nader was a true believer in his cause and was attempting to win the election outright. However, some candidates get into a race with the express goal of tearing down another candidate. It was thought that then “Never Trump” Republican Mitt Romney would run as a spoiler in 2016, but he felt he could not fundraise in good conscience to play spoiler.

Some candidates even attempt to spoil the entire system, or at least game it beyond recognition.

Also in 2016, many hoped that “Never Trump” Republican David Evan McMullin would

act as a spoiler for the president. He actually ran in a number of states, with a big showing in Utah. Some hoped that he would win that state and deny Trump the needed 270 Electoral College votes to win.

But McMullin had loftier goals. Since he wasn't on the ballot in enough states to win the 270 electoral votes outright, his eyes were set on winning enough votes to ensure neither Trump nor Clinton could reach 270, which would leave the decision up to the House of Representatives.

McMullin failed at being a spoiler. His highest showing was in Utah with 21.54 percent of the vote, compared to Trump's 45.54 percent.

It's these kinds of shenanigans that STAR voting hopes to put an end to.

“You can vote for Nader if you want,” Roberts said of STAR. “Why should you feel like you

can't express that on a ballot? You should be able to express, ‘This is my favorite candidate, period.’ Vote honestly. And if you have a ballot that doesn't allow voters to vote honestly, you have to ask yourself ‘Why?’ — and ‘What can we do to fix it?’”

However, political parties and their candidates aren't the only ones who can engage in gaming the voting system. STAR voting is not completely immune to voters taking part in tactical voting.

FairVote found that there were indeed examples of tactical voting within the system. Following an example from FairVote, the Siuslaw News conducted its own experiment to see if tactical voting could be used to manipulate an election's outcome. The experiment, which utilized soda brands, parroted FairVotes concerns.

Imagine a contest where people are voting for their favorite cola soda drink. The four choices are Coke, Pepsi, RC and Shasta Cola. The frontrunners are Coke and Pepsi, with RC coming in a close third and Shasta pulling up the rear.

Let's say the majority of people would be happy with Coke or Pepsi and would rate either soda a four or a five. They could rate RC a four or a three, and Shasta a three or a two. After the initial election, Coke and Pepsi would head to the runoff, and Shasta and RC would be dropped from the running.

However, some Coke voters don't just like their soda of choice, but they really hate Pep-

si. Not so much the taste of Pepsi, as they find it pretty palatable. It's the brand they hate. They grew up in a Coke town, but the majority of restaurants in their new city only serve Pepsi. It's against their hometown values and they want it out of the picture completely. So, they decide to sabotage Pepsi.

They want Coke to win, so they give it a five. Pepsi gets a zero, of course. But RC and Shasta? They get a four rating. Now, they've never actually had RC and they find Shasta only palatable. But their goal is to trounce Pepsi out of the runoff. By overvaluing their like of RC and Shasta, and undervaluing their like of Pepsi, they raise the probability that either RC or Shasta will make it to the final runoff along with Coke, leaving Pepsi in the dust.

“I don't think there's any safety in using that strategy when you could elect RC Cola, and you don't want that to happen,” Roberts said. “It would be very unwise for voters to try and manipulate the system that way. I can't imagine a Republican voting for (2016 Green Party nominee) Jill Stein just because they don't want Hillary to win.”

The voters would be taking a gamble with this. A large block of voters, upwards of 30 percent, would have to tactically vote together to make that strategy a sure bet. That's difficult to do in mass numbers. But in today's social media word, is it that difficult?

In the 2016 election, it was postulated that Democrats were

signing up in Republican primaries to vote for Trump, thinking that Trump would be an easy target for Clinton. But so far, there isn't any evidence that it actually happened. A Washington Post analysis of voting data in March 2016 found that the margin of Trump's primary victories, compared to the percentage of Democratic voters, showed no sign of mass strategic voting.

But such a thing is not unheard of.

TACTICAL VOTING

One of the greatest examples of tactical voting is in the 2000 election, again with Nader.

In that election, even many of Nader's supporters didn't feel he had a chance to win. Instead, their goal was to have Nader get 5 percent of the popular vote, allowing the Green Party to receive federal funding in the 2004 election.

But Nader supporters didn't want Bush to win.

To fix this problem, Gore supporters in solid Republican states that had no chance of having their candidate win electoral votes would swap votes with Nader supporters in swing states. A Nader supporter in swing-state Michigan would vote for Gore, with the express promise from a red-state Gore supporter in Texas would vote for Nader. Gore would get a vote in a swing state in a bid to win electoral votes, and Nader would get a vote in a red state that would give him a chance to get the needed five percent popular vote.

People organized. The internet, which was just coming into its own, saw trading sites begin to pop up, putting red-state and swing-state voters together. According to a 2000 article in Slate, one website got 90,000 visits in one day.

But there were problems. In California, vote trading was deemed illegal and a popular site was shut down.

The public wasn't as tech savvy as it is today, either. This was be-

fore Facebook and Twitter, and people were still learning how to navigate the world wide web. Many had to go actively searching for these sites or hope for an email chain to get involved, far from the ease of a Facebook post today that can potentially reach 5,000 people with the click of a button.

And time wasn't on their side. These websites only became prevalent just one month before the election.

The Nader Trader experiment ended in failure, with Nader only receiving 2.74 percent of the vote, well below the five percent threshold needed to obtain federal funding. But with more planning and a better social media, it's possible a larger population could have taken up the cause.

A more recent example of tactical voting took place in the Illinois Third Congressional District race, held last March.

In that primary race, the Republicans only had one candidate, Arthur Jones. The Brookings Institute, which ran a report on the race results on April 18, described Jones as a Holocaust denier.

The Democrats had two candidates, incumbent Dan Lipinski and newcomer Marie Newman.

It was a hard-fought battle for the Democrats. While it is generally difficult to unseat an incumbent, Lipinski was unusual in his party. He was anti-abortion and had differing views on healthcare and funding for Planned Parenthood.

Newman, on the other hand, supported universal health insurance and keeping abortion legal, and considered herself a progressive like Bernie Sanders.

Polls had Newman leading the race in December by five points. But by March, she was down by two. She ended up losing the election by 2,000 votes. The likely reason? People who voted for Trump, according to Brookings.

One in five Lipinski voters stated that they had voted for the president in 2016, compared to one in 20 for Newman voters. Brookings postulated that because many Republican voters found their candidate so unelectable, they jumped ship over to the Democratic primary and voted for the more conservative choice, essentially choking out the progressive candidate for the general election, leaving a Republican and a centrist in the final election.

Brookings does point out that there could have been other reasons for the change, including the possibility that they just liked Lipinski. But the numbers hinted at a substantial population taking part in tactical voting.

It is these types of examples that proponents of STAR voting see their system actually helping.

For the Illinois race, getting rid of primaries, having all three candidates on the ballot, and having a more robust system allowing voters to express their opinions on a candidate would eliminate the need for tactical voting.

Of course, one way to fix the system would be for each person to simply vote for who they want to win and leave out the “politics” of politics.

While many Democrats were concerned with their perceived notion of electability in the 2016 primaries as they decided between Sanders and Clinton, Republicans went full steam ahead and voted for a change with nominating Trump, who bucked the norm. They brought substantial change to the system without implementing a new voting system like STAR.

“I think that's a fair assessment, and it will always be based on the exact players,” Roberts said.

Of course, as seen with examples like Romney's potential spoiler bid, not every Republican was happy with Trump. Both Clinton and Trump's approval ratings were historically low prior to the election, with Clinton holding a 52 percent unfavorable rating compared to Trump's 61 percent.

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