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Preface

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PREFACE

Few topics stimulate as much political discussion today as the decline of party voting in the United States. The rise of the independent voter and the shrinking turnout of registered voters are cited by some as evidence of political malaise. A frequently mentioned culprit in such discussions is the mass media, especially the modern technology of television. This issue of the *Journal of Political Science* examines the effect the mass media has on elections in American politics. There is a special focus on the 1992 presidential election which unites the articles in this issue.

The first piece, by Noyes, Lichter and Amundson, compares television coverage of the American presidential election in 1988 with that of 1992. The authors ask if the familiar litany of complaints about television—the shrinking sound bites, neglect of policy coverage and a preoccupation with polls and the private lives of candidates—was replaced with more substantive coverage in the recent election. The authors also examine the type of coverage the candidates received in both the primary and general phases of the election.

Virginia is the focus of Larry Sabato's analysis of the 1992 election. In a year of change, voters in the Old Dominion stayed close to the GOP at the national level, and used the status quo as a guide for congressional elections as well. Even though Virginia remained in the GOP column in the presidential election, the extent of the Bush collapse nationally is evident in the tables and figures of this article. This article is used with permission from the University of Virginia News Letter.

Dave Woodard examines twenty years of evening television news coverage in his article. He uses the Vanderbilt Television News Archive as a data resource to examine coverage on a host of issues for presidential elections from 1972 to 1992.

Richard Davis presents an overview of the impact

technology has had on the media's ability to cover war. The media's capacity to gather information independent of government briefings has created a dilemma for policymakers, pitting the rights of free speech against the imperatives of national security.

Finally, Clifford Staten and Sam Sloss examine the coverage presidential candidates received during the 1992 election in the Indiana edition of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. Their analysis uses news stories, editorials and cartoons to search out media biases.

For most of its history, the *Journal of Political Science* has been a labor of the Department of Political Science at Clemson University. This year the production would have been impossible without the support of Tim O'Rourke, Department Head, as well as the efforts of Kim Gibby and Angie Newell to complete the manuscript.

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