



Caucus harms Missouri GOP election results



Ken Dusold

The Missouri Republican Party might end up the biggest embarrassment in the 2012 presidential primary process.

This might seem a bit of a stretch, but the March 17 GOP caucus will be a blemish nonetheless on the state party's ability to organize a process in which Missouri Republicans select their choice for the party's presidential nominee.

The caucus is not an unusual form of selecting a state's preference among presidential nominees in a given party. Thus far during the 2012 election, there have been 16 caucuses used to allot delegates. Missouri's will be the last GOP presidential caucus of this election cycle. A caucus differs from a primary in that the caucus is operated by the political party rather than the state government, and requires voters to attend a convention-like event wherein voters hear from representatives for each candidate prior to selecting which candidate they prefer.

There are several problems facing the Missouri Republican Party's decision to use a caucus to assign delegates.

First, the caucus could create further strife within the party if the results contradict the Feb. 7 presidential primary results. What happens if Rick Santorum fails to win the caucus after having won the primary with a resounding 55 percent of the vote? It might make the nearly 140,000 Missourians who voted for him feel robbed of what they saw as an outright majority opinion. While most of them still likely would vote Republican, I wonder whether some of those voters might not become disinterested in the entire process and not turn out for Election Day during November — when the GOP really will need them.

Such a blatant discrepancy in Missouri's view of the GOP presidential primary race also would send shock waves through the national party. If either Newt Gingrich or Ron Paul wins the Missouri caucus, the uncertainty about the candidates will deepen. Only a win for Mitt Romney would help the party by showing a need to adhere to one candidate, but Romney isn't polling strongly in Missouri and has had problems winning Midwestern states — particularly when they have caucuses.

If the caucus' negative effect on the GOP isn't enough, consider how wasteful it makes Missouri look. A presidential primary is expensive, and as mentioned earlier, the state operates a primary. Missouri's Feb. 7 primary cost taxpayer's about \$7 million, according to a Jan. 30 LA Times article. The moment it became clear to elected Republicans in the state legislature that the primary's date conflicted with national party rules — which dictate that only Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada can have a primary or caucus prior to March 6 — they should have forced a bill through both chambers that would have moved the primary back a month. With a sizeable majority in both the House and Senate, there doesn't seem to be a legitimate reason to explain why such a proposal didn't pass. There can be no excuse for the legislators who decided the primary cost was acceptable despite concerns surrounding how much state funding would be cut from higher education and transportation budgets.

Even when someone tries to explain the mistakes the state GOP made in this election cycle, I think about the overarching fact about caucuses in general: They draw fewer voters than primaries. Because a caucus takes hours of an individual voter's life — rather than just a few minutes — fewer people see their one vote as worth the cost to their time. In 16 caucuses, only Iowa has seen voter turnout exceed 100,000 people. Missouri's Feb. 7 primary drew 252,185 voters according to the CNN Election Center. I'll be surprised if the number exceeds 50,000 total participants during the March 17 caucus.

So who won't vote? For starters, Irish Republicans and those who like to pretend they are probably won't show up. Apparently someone in the state party failed to notice March 17 is St. Patrick's Day. Moderates and more pragmatic-minded individuals likely will hesitate to attend as well, leaving the more extreme party members and the most ardent of candidates' supporters — none of whom will make a difference during November.

To be fair, there still is a chance the state party's worst case scenario — that the results of the caucus differ from those of the primary — doesn't come to fruition. But even Santorum winning the Missouri caucus won't change the drawbacks that have escorted the presidential primary election in the Show-Me State.

Ken Dusold is a senior political science major from St. Louis

Kony responses should reflect awareness mission



Lacy Murphy

Treating the symptoms won't cure the disease. This is the argument used against the viral YouTube video, "Kony 2012." The video that is sponsored by Invisible Children, a human rights organization that works to stop the abduction of children for use as soldiers, aims to garner the attention of American citizens to publicize the injustices of Joseph Kony, a warlord in Uganda.

Kony is just a symptom of a much larger disease plaguing the Uganda region — a destabilized government. In cases such as these, however, treating a symptom never is a bad thing, especially when it means life or death like it does for the children in Uganda.

Kony has quite the reputation for organizing large scale, systematic and organized child abductions. After he steals these children from their homes, he forces them to commit unspeakable acts of violence. The Kony 2012 video endeavors to increase awareness of these acts so the United States government hopefully will send aid to help his victims. As this video grew in popularity, the criticism of the Invisible Children organization grew as well. This negative press is unfounded, unhelpful and unrealistic. While the video spends a lot of time on

self-congratulation, the message remains clear and strong — we must put an end to the suffering of the Ugandan children. The backlash against this video seeks to destroy the credibility of the Invisible Children project, which strives to change the lives of thousands of children.

The first problem many people have with the project is how the Invisible Children organization utilizes its funding. The company only spends 80.5 percent of its budget on direct services. The confusion here is what happens to the rest of the money. The only paid employees of the organization are the three major directors, who each receive 1 percent of the budget. This comes out to \$1,444,570 for administrative expenses out of a total budget of \$13,765,180. For the amount of dedication their occupation requires, the compensation seems legitimate.

Keep in mind this organization receives less money than larger charity organizations, yet has an equally massive cause. For example, the American Cancer Society has a total revenue of \$884,107,078 and spends \$61,806,494 on administrative expenses. While it takes more money to run a larger charity corporation, one hardly can criticize the Invisible Children Kony 2012 cause for being greedy. It could be argued that most large charities waste too much money on advertisement and fundraising expenses. The American Cancer Society and the group responsible for the Kony 2012 video received the same rating on charitynavigator.com, which is America's leading independent charity evaluator.

The controversy doesn't end there. Many people accused those who passed the video along on Facebook to be guilty of hopping on the newest media bandwagon. The criticism is that these people

don't truly care about the issue and only want to conform and should be more concerned with issues closer to home. I absolutely am disgusted by the onslaught of negativity this video has obtained because it supposedly has become the cool new thing to do. The goal of the video is to spread awareness. The simple act of re-posting the video on Facebook can help achieve that.

Many organizations also have marketed themselves in similar ways. Some examples include Livestrong bracelets, which unite, inspire and empower people affected by cancer, TOMS, which donates shoes and clothing to children in need and groups like Relay for Life, which endeavor to raise funding for cancer research. Each of these groups strives to entice people to raise awareness and funding while simultaneously becoming a fad and yet, except for possibly Livestrong, have not been criticized like the Kony 2012 video. While I can agree this video is emotionally manipulative, I argue this technique is important in acquiring the attention of the largest quantity. What better way is there to gain the attention than to appeal to the emotions of the viewer?

While this is a highly complex problem that cannot be solved by a YouTube video, Invisible Children still is making positive strides in ending Joseph Kony's reign of terror. In the end, regardless of the means used by the organization to raise awareness, nothing negative can happen by bringing more publicity to this terrible situation.

Lacy Murphy is a sophomore French major from Springfield, Mo.

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'conservative?'

"I would think of a fiscally responsible person with Christian roots."

Alex Currie
freshman



"Mostly my dad because he's Republican and really religious. I usually see it as extreme, though not necessarily positive or negative."

Carolynn Williston
freshman



"I like to think of keeping to yourself and not forcing your views on everyone else. I tend to see it as having more meaning than the political definition."

Kellen Weiss
freshman



"I think of the importance in distinguishing between fiscal and social conservatism."

Cassandra White
senior



AROUND THE QUAD

Despite contrary evidence, humans should be trusted



Bob Overmann

Imagine you're taking an afternoon stroll with a friend through a local park and you spot a smartphone sitting on a park bench. Would you immediately give it to authorities, or would you go through a stranger's personal files and even sensitive financial information? Surely, most of us would do the right thing and attempt to return it to its rightful owner.

This is not true, according to a recent experiment by Symantec Corporation. Symantec has presented some rather strong evidence for the

Hobbesian view of human nature: The vast majority of us seem to be hiding a pair of metaphorical horns on our heads.

Based on the findings of this not-so-pretty exposé of human nature, few Americans did as we likely were taught as children. Contrary to what our parents taught us, what we learned in church and what we'd probably do if our loved ones were watching, most of us would allow our dark, curious, disgraceful sides to take control.

Symantec placed 50 smartphones were throughout the United States and Canada in public places: bus stops, newspaper stands, park benches, public restrooms and many other easy-to-spot locations. They were pre-loaded with tracking and logging software so Symantec immediately was alerted when these smartphones were picked up or accessed. They also were pre-loaded with files entitled "banking information," "saved passwords" and "private photos."

A stunning 89 percent of participants clicked on something they shouldn't have, according to Symantec. Forty-three percent tried to access an

"online banking" application, while 72 percent opened a "private photos" file. Only 50 percent of those who found these "lost" smartphones attempted to return them.

Does this surprise you? Would it be necessary for governments around the world to have strict legal and penal codes if humans were not innately selfish and thoughtless of others? As young children, do we instinctively share with and consider one another, or do we have to be taught to do so? Regardless of how well we resist these evil impulses, are we not tempted to use people for personal gain?

Yes, while we often are pleasant and thoughtful of one another in the presence of others, human beings often act differently in the absence of consequences. I'm not making an argument for an authoritarian, iron-fist style of rule, nor am I attempting to marginalize those who would do the right thing in this instance. If anything, Symantec's experiment should make us appreciate those in our lives who would return such a phone, should it be ours.

Before you grab the nearest blunt object and begin swinging it at all of the "heathens" closest

to you, I'm not saying we can't be good to one another. Symantec, a manufacturer of security software, undoubtedly is rolling its nonexistent eyeballs in an annoying "I-told-you-so" fashion. No, we shouldn't lose all faith in our fellow human beings, but rather be prudent with our trust.

For those apparently few of you who would want to do the right thing if you find a lost cell phone, you should turn it in to the local authorities. Better yet, if you can determine the cell phone's carrier, technicians at the carrier's local store can look up the lost phone's owner.

When asked about the results of the experiment, Kevin Haley, Symantec's security response team director, replied, "I wasn't surprised, but I wish I had been." Well said, Haley — it's far better to view those in our lives as human than pretend they're perfect.

Bob Overmann is a freshman English major from Cape Girardeau, Mo.