CAMPBELL VS. HELLER:

A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE 1978 ELECTION FOR SOUTH CAROLINA'S FOURTH DISTRICT

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In popular memory and most published accounts, the 1978 election for South Carolina's Fourth Congressional District represents "[t]he most serious incident of anti-Semitic intrusion in a South Carolina political campaign."[1] According to historians such as Jack Bass and Diane Vecchio, Republican candidate Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. used anti-Semitic tactics to defeat his Jewish opponent, Democratic candidate Max M. Heller.[2] However, this narrative misrepresents Campbell's campaign strategy and ignores the political and economic factors that influenced the election. Using electoral data and contemporary newspapers, this study seeks to re-contextualize the 1978 election within broader political trends. During a period when southern white conservatives were becoming disillu-

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[1] Jack Bass, "Just Like One of Us," in *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life*, ed. Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 39.

[2] Jack Bass and W. Scott Poole, *The Palmetto State: The Making of Modern South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 154. Diane Vecchio, "Max Moses Heller: Patron Saint of Greenville's Renaissance," in *Doing Business in America: A Jewish History*, ed. Hasia R. Diner (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2018), 200. Vecchio says that the Campbell campaign "crafted a strategy that relied on consistently reminding the electorate that Heller was an immigrant and a Jew."

sioned with the Democratic Party, the Republicans saw an opportunity to challenge the open seat in the Fourth District. With an aggressive, well-funded campaign, Campbell successfully branded Heller as a big-spending liberal who raised taxes and opposed protective tariffs for the local textile industry. Campbell defeated Heller by 51,377 to 45,584 votes (52.1 to 46.2 percent), becoming the first Republican since Reconstruction to represent the Fourth District.[3]

Unfortunately, the political reasons for Heller's defeat faded from memory almost immediately after the election, as Heller's supporters speculated that he had lost due to anti-Semitism. Five days before the election, independent candidate Don W. Sprouse had declared that Heller was not qualified to represent the largely Christian district because he was Jewish.[4] At the time, Campbell condemned the remarks and several readers wrote to the editor of *The Greenville News* to denounce Sprouse.[5] After the election, however, Heller's friends privately expressed their concern that voters had turned against him out of prejudice.[6] His contacts in the Anti-Defamation League even suspected that Sprouse had acted as

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[3] South Carolina State Election Commission, *Report of the South Carolina State Election Commission for the Period Ending June 30, 1979* (Columbia, SC: State Election Commission, 1979), 56.

[4] Sally Saunders, "Sprouse Says Religion Makes Heller Unqualified," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 3, 1978. Al Dozier, "Sprouse Attacks Heller Religion," *Greenville Piedmont* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 2, 1978, Box 3, Folder 1, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.

[5] For Campbell's response, see Saunders, "Heller Unqualified."

[6] L.D. Johnson to Max and Trude Heller, Nov. 8, 1978, Box 1, Folder 6, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC. Beth Israel Sisterhood to Max Heller, Nov. 13, 1978, Box 1, Folder 8, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.

a "stalking horse" for Campbell.[7] A few years later, in the March 28, 1983 edition of his political newsletter, Washington-based Democratic analyst Alan Baron alleged that Campbell was behind Sprouse's attack. According to Baron, Campbell had commissioned a poll, which indicated that voters would respond negatively to the information that Heller was "a foreign-born Jew who did not believe Jesus Christ was the savior."[8] Campbell then allegedly shared the poll results with Sprouse, who brought up Heller's religion while Campbell stayed clean. Neither Heller nor Campbell had released their polls to the press during the 1978 race. After Democratic activist Samuel Tenenbaum publicized Baron's allegations during Campbell's 1986 gubernatorial campaign, Campbell released his poll, which did contain two questions related to Heller's Jewishness, but without Baron's wording.[9] At the same time, Democratic consultant Marvin Chernoff claimed that Campbell's friend and associate, Republican politico Lee Atwater, had admitted to sharing the poll results with

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[7] Stuart Lewengrub to Max Heller, Nov. 22, 1978, Box 1, Folder 8, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC. Stuart Lewengrub to Max Heller, June 6, 1986, Box 1, Folder 8, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.

[8] Alan Baron, *The Baron Report*, no. 173 (March 28, 1983): 2, Box 6, Folder 2, Max Moses Heller Collection, Acc. #2009-076, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.

[9] Arthur J. Finkelstein & Associates, Poll, Box 6, Folder 1, Max Moses Heller Collection, Acc. #2009-076, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC. Question #22 asks which phrases best describe Max Heller and Carroll Campbell. There are six choices, including "A Christian man" and "Jewish." Question #25 asks voters which personal qualities would make them more or less likely to vote for a candidate. Among the fifteen choices are "A Jewish immigrant" and "A native South Carolinian."

Sprouse.[10] Although the criticism subsided after Campbell's election as governor, the controversy haunted him for the rest of his career. When Campbell emerged as a possible running mate for Bob Dole in the 1996 presidential race, Tenenbaum used his connections with the Anti-Defamation League to ensure that Campbell was not selected.[11] In this way, the anti-Semitism allegations have come to dominate the memory of the 1978 election until the present day, so that the issues which the candidates actually debated have been forgotten. It is therefore important to return the election to its proper political context.

Campbell's identification with the Republican Party should have placed him at a disadvantage in a historically Democratic state like South Carolina. Since Reconstruction the Democratic Party had created an unbeatable "juggernaut" that seemed able to perpetuate itself indefinitely.[12] Southern Democrats had locked up the white vote by combining liberal spending policies with conservative positions on race, taxes, and unions.[13] By contrast, the Republican Party represented the "waste, graft, and mismanagement" of Reconstruction and

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[10] Al Dozier and Marilyn Rauber, "Consultant's Allegation Links Campbell to '78 Polling Scheme," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), July 15, 1986.

[11] Bass and Poole, *The Palmetto State*, 154. See also David Twersky, "GOP Strategist May Have Injected Religion Into Past Campaign," *MetroWest Jewish News* (New Jersey), July 25, 1996; James T. Hammond and Dan Hoover, "Dole Aides Talk to Democrat Who Accused Campbell of Using 'Political Anti-Semitism,'" *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 3, 1996; Matthew Dorf, "Possible Dole Running Mate Could Threaten Jewish Vote," Daily News Bulletin, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York), Aug. 7, 1996.

[12] Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Rise of the Southern Republicans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 46-48.

[13] Ibid., 57.

struggled to make inroads into the Democratic electorate.[14] If Republicans contested seats at all, they fielded inexperienced candidates against a veteran Democrat. Incumbent Democrats were almost always reelected.[15] For example, the retiring Fourth District representative, James R. Mann (D-S.C.), had been elected to five consecutive terms, often by large margins.[16]

By 1978, however, many southern white conservatives no longer saw the Republican Party as a foreign enemy. Thirty years earlier, President Harry S. Truman had angered many racial conservatives when he began to advocate civil rights legislation.[17] As the presidential candidate for the States' Rights Party in 1948, Senator Strom Thurmond (D-S.C.) led a "psychological break from the national Democratic Party" in the South.[18] White southerners who identified as Democrats declined from 78 percent in 1952 to 60 percent in

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[14] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 41; Jack Bass and Walter Devries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 13, 251.

[15] Ibid., 48.

[16] In 1968 Mann was elected to his first term, defeating Republican Charles Bradshaw by a total of 61,247 to 39,062 votes (excluding Laurens County). South Carolina State Election Commission, *Supplemental Report of the Secretary of State O. Frank Thornton to the General Assembly of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Election Commission, 1969), 20. In 1972 he defeated Republican Wayne N. Whatley by 64,989 to 33,363. South Carolina State Election Commission, *Report of the South Carolina Election Commission for the Period Ending June 30, 1973* (Columbia, SC: State Election Commission, 1973), 573. In 1976 he defeated Robert L. Watkins (R) by 91,711 to 33,149. South Carolina State Election Commission, *Report of the South Carolina Election Commission for the Period Ending June 30, 1977* (Columbia, SC: State Election Commission, 1978), 30.

[17] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 207.

[18] Bass and Devries, *Transformation of Southern Politics*, 253.

1960, while those who identified as Republicans rose from nine to 21 percent.[19] Supported by a strong Republican organization in his home state of South Carolina, Thurmond formally switched his allegiance to the Republican Party in 1964 and openly campaigned for Barry Goldwater in the presidential race that year.[20] Although he ultimately lost to Lyndon B. Johnson, Goldwater became the first Republican ever to sweep the Deep South, winning 55 percent of the southern white vote due to his opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act.[21] The Fourth District was split between Goldwater in Greenville County and Johnson in Spartanburg County.[22] In 1968 Richard Nixon attempted to realign whites into the Republican Party, but the candidacy of segregationist George Wallace limited Nixon's impact to only 40 percent of the white vote.[23] However, Nixon did win both Greenville and Spartanburg counties in the Fourth District.[24] In 1970, during the desegregation of the Greenville school system, Republicans won in Greenville County in the races for governor, lieutenant governor, and the state House. Greenville native Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. was elected to the state House with 27,706 votes.[25] Without Wallace to take away votes in 1972, Nixon defeated liberal Democrat George McGovern with a platform of law and order and economic conservatism. He won again in both counties of the Fourth District. That year, Republicans won

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[19] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 209.
[20] Bass and Devries, *Transformation of Southern Politics*, 24.
[21] Ibid., 28; Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 209.
[22] South Carolina State Election Commission, *Supplemental Report of the Secretary of State to the General Assembly of South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: State Election Commission, 1965).
[23] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 210.
[24] State Election Commission, *Report* (1969), 15.
[25] State Election Commission, *Report* (1973), 89-92.

four-fifths of the total southern white vote.[26] Campbell was reelected to the state House with a record-breaking 41,296 votes, while Thurmond won the U.S. Senate seat. Republicans also contested all six districts for the Greenville County Council and won five of them.[27]

Nixon's involvement in the Watergate scandal and Jimmy Carter's election temporarily arrested Republican advancement in the South, but Carter's lack of progress in fighting inflation increased disillusionment among Democrats. Watergate "severely embarrassed and discredited" the Republicans and by 1974 the percentage of white southerners who identified as Republicans had not increased from the 1960 level.[28] Riding on a wave of resentment towards the establishment, Democratic outsider Charles D. "Pug" Ravenel presented a serious challenge to Republican James B. Edwards in the 1974 South Carolina governor's race. Unfortunately for the Democrats, Ravenel was disqualified due to the residency requirement and the party nominated William Jennings Bryan Dorn, who lost narrowly to Edwards. Ravenel's disqualification and refusal to endorse Dorn left many South Carolina Democrats bitter and the party in disarray.[29] Democratic hopes rose when Jimmy Carter ran as a "centrist" outsider in the 1976 presidential election and won ten out of eleven southern states.[30] However, as in 1964, the Fourth District was split, with Republican Gerald Ford winning Greenville County and Jimmy Carter capturing Spartanburg County.[31] President Carter's inability to solve economic issues soon disappointed

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[26] State Election Commission, *Report* (1973), 572-573; Black and Black, *Rise of Southern Republicans*, 210-211, 222.
[27] State Election Commission, *Report* (1973), 356-361.
[28] Black and Black, *Rise of Southern Republicans*, 210-211, 222.
[29] Bass and Devries, *Transformation of Southern Politics*, 270.
[30] Black and Black, *Rise of Southern Republicans*, 211.
[31] State Election Commission, *Report* (1978), 28.

many of his supporters among southern whites and conservative Christians.[32] After starting his presidency with an approval rating of 66 percent (Feb. 4-7, 1977), Carter's rating dropped to 42 percent by June 16-19, 1978 and to 39 percent in early August.[33]

The one constant during this period of political transition had been Democratic Rep. Mann's perennial reelection as the representative of the Fourth District. This changed in January 1978, when Mann resigned his seat amid a financial scandal. On January 2, 1978, Mann announced that he would not seek re-election for a sixth term. Although he did not explicitly state his reasons for stepping down, reporters speculated that his decision was related to accusations that he had used his congressional office staff to help a failing mail-order coin dealership, in which he was a principal financial backer.[34] When the story first broke in spring 1977, Campbell was already being tapped as the Republican candidate to challenge Mann in 1978. He claimed that the story would not influence

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[32] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 213-214.

[33] Gallup Organization, "Jimmy Carter Presidential Approval," Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/presidential-approval/.

[34] Associated Press, "Rep. Mann Announces Plans to End Career," *Index-Journal* (Greenwood, SC), Jan. 3, 1978. In February 1977, *The Washington Post* reported that, in violation of congressional rules, Mann had loaned $38,000 to Ben Gause of US Coin Co. in Greenville, SC and had used his Washington staff to perform services for Gause, such as affixing postage stamps to bills, ordering coins and bills, and shipping coins and bills from Washington to Greenville. Gause was found guilty of mail fraud for failing to fill nearly $250,000 in customer orders. This was particularly embarrassing for Mann, who served on the House Judiciary Committee and had gained national attention for his powerful speeches against Nixon during the televised impeachment proceedings. Rudy Maxa, "Rep. Mann Had Hill Aides Help Firm He Backed," *Washington Post*, Feb. 27, 1977.

his decision to run against Mann, but he believed that the Republicans had "an outstanding opportunity" to win.[35] The 1978 election became an even better opportunity for Republicans when Mann announced his retirement in January. Until then, Mann had been the "controlling influence" on the candidates because they had to orient their campaigns to challenge him as the formidable Democratic incumbent. When he withdrew from contention, the national Republican Party smelled blood in the water.[36] This fit with their overall strategy for 1978: instead of challenging incumbent Democrats, the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee decided to concentrate its money and expertise on open seats. According to *The State*, the Committee was "pinning its hopes on Campbell."[37] If he won the Republican primary, Campbell would have "the full backing, including a huge financial commitment, of the national party."[38] Campbell easily secured this support by defeating Robert L. Watkins by 6,808 to 899 votes in the primary on June 13, 1978.[39] His Democratic opponent would be Greenville mayor Max Heller, who had defeated Nick Theodore in a much closer contest by 25,295 to 22,319 votes.[40]

In order to win Mann's seat, Campbell needed to attract the district's white conservatives who traditionally voted Democrat and would likely vote for Heller as Mann's successor. Ordinarily, the lack of viable Republican opposition in open-seat contests in the South meant that a conservative

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[35] Dale Perry, "Reaction Divided Along Party Lines," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), March 1, 1977.
[36] Walter Julian, "4th District a 'Target District,'" *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), June 11, 1978.
[37] Lee Bandy, "Fourth District – A GOP Target," *The State* (Columbia, SC), Jan. 15, 1978.
[38] Julian, "'Target District.'"
[39] State Election Commission, *Report* (1979), 50.
[40] Ibid., 42.

Democratic challenger could easily pick up the retiring incumbent's conservative support.[41] However, the Democratic Party as a whole had become more moderate in the 1970s due to the defection of many conservatives and the addition of newly registered black voters who were more liberal.[42] While Democrats could still win as moderates, white voters preferred conservatives; therefore Republicans could defeat Democratic nominees who had failed to unite all wings of their party and/or who could be convincingly attacked as liberals or moderates.[43] Republicans could win open seats with "aggressive and well-financed" campaigns, in which they combined positive messages about themselves with "slashing negative attacks against their Democratic opponents." [44] Campbell adopted precisely such a strategy against Heller.

Campbell's main obstacle was Heller's record as the popular mayor of Greenville, which he needed to convince

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[41] Joseph A. Aistrup, *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican Top-Down Advancement in the South* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 122.

[42] Ibid. While these defections should not be overestimated (only 30 percent of southern white conservatives identified as Republicans in 1976), they did produce a growing number of independent voters. (Most Democrats became independents rather than Republicans.) Between 1960 and 1976, the percentage of southern white conservatives identifying as independents increased from 18 percent to 31 percent. Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 211.

[43] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 82, 172-173. Many moderate white southerners remained Democrats: in 1968, only 15 percent were Republicans, while 55 percent were Democrats. The percentage of moderate white southerners who were Republicans increased to only 24 percent in 1980. That said, moderates did favor Republican presidents: Nixon (1972), Ford (1976), and Reagan (1980, 1984, and 1988). See Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 230.

[44] Black and Black, *Rise of the Southern Republicans*, 74, 84.

voters was that of a big-spending liberal, not a fiscal conservative. This was a difficult task. Heller's August 1978 survey told him that voters viewed his mayoral record positively. "The voters are tired of waste and inefficiency in government. They're looking for a good fiscal manager," the survey report said. It recommended that he talk about "better management of tax dollars, cutting waste and inefficiency, and better planning to get the most from tax money."[45] Since Heller had a good track record, he "doesn't need to be defensive about his record in office; he is not seen as a big spender. He should run on what he has done for fiscal management in Greenville and how he can do these same things in Congress."[46]

Campbell found one way to portray Heller as a liberal by targeting the mayor's use of federal grants to condemn private property and sell it to private developers. Campbell said he had "severe reservations" about this policy and considered it an "abuse" of the federal community development program.[47] "There are many things that are done in the name of public good," Campbell said. "But it doesn't do much for the people who have to move out to have the land resold at one-third the value to developers who redevelop the land at a profit."[48] As an example, Campbell cited an urban redevelopment project where privately owned homes along Webster Street and Webster Alley, a low-income area, would be torn down and the residents relocated. The property would be resold at one-third the value to a private developer, who planned to build one thousand condominiums.[49] Heller defended the

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[45] Peter D. Hart Research Associates, "A Survey of the Political Climate in the Fourth Congressional District of South Carolina," 23, Box 1, Folder 1, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Sally Saunders, "Campbell Says Condemnation Procedure Is an 'Abuse,'" *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Sept. 13, 1978.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

practice, saying that the federal community development money was used to eliminate slum housing in order to "give the residents the opportunity for more decent living conditions."[50] All the property owners had been treated fairly in the Webster Street project, according to Heller. He said the project was part of an urban renewal program that included construction of a senior center, apartments for the elderly built by private investors, and the rebuilding of one of the oldest churches in the state, which had been destroyed by fire.[51] When some Greenville city officials also defended the program, Campbell responded that he felt he was fighting not against an individual candidate, but against "a small power group pretty much aligned with the city of Greenville." He declared: "If my campaign means I have to go against this downtown (Greenville) power group, then I'll stand against them."[52]

Campbell labeled Heller as a "liberal" candidate who supported "big government spending" because the mayor had used federal money while also raising taxes.[53] In March 1978, *The Greenville News* had reported that federal grants accounted for more than 40 percent of the city's budget, up from only 1.3 percent in 1969.[54] The city's downtown revitalization project, which was considered crucial to Greenville's economic future, was going to cost $25 million. Mayor Heller was instrumental in obtaining a $7.2 million grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to finance the city's part of the project (the other part would be financed by private businesses). The grant request equaled almost half

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Sally Saunders, "Campbell Says Foe Now Favors Tax Cut," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Sept. 26, 1978.
[53] Sally Saunders, "Campbell Rips Heller," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 18, 1978.
[54] Sally Smith, "City Woos Once-Shunned Grants," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), March 6, 1978.

of the city's annual budget.[55] Campbell cited a March 1978 Clemson University study prepared for the state legislature, which found that Greenville city residents paid the highest percentage of their income to property taxes of all cities in the state. "I find it inconsistent that my opponent says on one hand he wants a tax cut and a reduction in federal spending, and on the other, he has increased the local use of federal grant money along with increasing local taxes," Campbell said.[56] City taxes had increased twice under Mayor Heller. According to Campbell, Greenville city residents now paid 7.92 percent of their income to city taxes, while the mean percentage for the state's big cities was 5.02 percent and Spartanburg city residents paid only 4.6 percent. Because of the high taxes, Campbell said that about six percent of city residents had left Greenville.[57] Campbell also claimed that, while Heller had reduced the number of city employees, he had "not told the public how many employees have been added under federal programs supported by their taxes."[58] In fact, Campbell said, the city bureaucracy had increased 70 percent, including eighty-nine non-essential federally funded employees.[59]

Campbell cited Heller's opposition to the Kemp-Roth tax cut proposal as further evidence that Heller would not help the taxpayers if elected to Congress. Endorsed by Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) and Sen. William Roth (R-D.E.), the proposal would cut federal taxes by 33 percent over a three-year period. Kemp advocated supply-side economics, a theory which holds that cutting taxes will ultimately lead to higher government revenue because of economic growth. As a Republican, Campbell supported the proposal, while Heller believed that a

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Saunders, "Campbell Rips Heller."
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] "Why Vote for Carroll Campbell for Congress," *Greenville News*, Nov. 5, 1978; Saunders, "Campbell Rips Heller."

cut in federal spending should accompany the tax cut. In August, Campbell said that the tax cut would "encourage savings, bring about lower interest rates and create jobs."[60] He did not think the tax cut would cause inflation because it was not creating money; reduced revenues would force the federal government to cut spending. He contended that inflation pushed taxpayers into higher tax brackets, while their real income did not increase. "The point is that the federal government is making money from inflation," he said, noting that government income increased 1.5 percent with every one percent increase in inflation.[61] On the other hand, Heller believed that the proposal "sounded too liberal and could be highly inflationary." "I won't be part of a promise that can't be kept," he said.[62] In August, Campbell claimed that Heller was "out of touch with the average taxpayer" in his opposition to the Kemp-Roth tax cut and challenged him to debate the issue. Heller did not answer the charges, saying, "I don't intend to comment every time he issues a press release."[63] In an October 5 speech, Campbell implicitly referred to Heller when he said that criticism to Kemp-Roth usually came "from people who have backed big government spending programs their whole political careers."[64] Addressing "those who piously stand up and say we have to cut spending before we cut taxes," Campbell said, "They haven't offered any specific proposals, and I can only assume that they would vote against the four tax cut bills

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[60] Scott Sunde, "Campbell Calls for Broad Cuts in Income Taxes," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 10, 1978.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Allen Clark, "Campbell Radio Ads Urge Support for Tax-Cut Bill," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 16, 1978.
[63] "Heller Attacked on Taxes," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 17, 1978.
[64] Sally Saunders, "Heller, Campbell Debate," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 5, 1978.

in Congress this year because none of them carry spending cuts."[65]

Campbell also attacked Heller on one of the most sensitive issues for the Fourth District: the failing textile industry. Approximately 58,000 people in the district depended on the textile industry for their livelihood. Mills Mill, one of Greenville's oldest textile mills, reduced its work force by two hundred in 1977 before announcing in August 1978 that it would cease operations by the end of the month, cutting the remaining 136 jobs.[66] Abney Mills closed six plants, including two in Greenville and four in Anderson County, with a loss of one thousand jobs. Burlington Industries closed Poe Mill in Greenville, with a loss of seven hundred jobs. In all, the mill closings resulted in more than two thousand jobs lost during 1977 and the first half of 1978.[67] Mill owners cited tight labor conditions in the carded cotton yarn market, increased textile imports, and the estimated $3 billion cost of meeting the stricter Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OHSA) standard for the control of cotton dust in mills. Textile executives expected to see more closings once the new OHSA standard went into effect in September 1978.[68]

The problems in South Carolina's Fourth District reflected a wider trend in the South. According to data from the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA), there was a 17 percent loss of textile employment in the South from February 1951 to July 1958, chiefly due to foreign imports.[69] The textile

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ann Green, "Old Mill to Cease Operations," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 8, 1978.

[67] Scott Sunde, "More Mills May Face Shutdown," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 9, 1978.

[68] Green, "Old Mill to Cease Operations"; Sunde, "More Mills May Face Shutdown."

[69] Timothy Minchin, *Empty Mills: The Fight Against Imports and the Decline of the U.S. Textile Industry* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 20.

industry was particularly susceptible to import competition because it relied on low-wage, unskilled labor, which made up a large part of the production cost.[70] Between 1952 and 1958, one hundred and fifteen plants closed in eleven southern states, and 31,855 workers lost their jobs.[71] By 1968, textile imports made up one-third of the U.S. balance of payments deficit.[72] The country also entered a recession in the 1970s, when the post-World War II economic boom came to an end.[73] Two hundred and forty-six more textile plants closed in the South between 1970 and 1979.[74] The Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA) of 1974, which allowed countries to enter into bilateral agreements to restrict textile and apparel trade, failed to stem the tide of imports. Textile leaders and politicians pressured President Carter to renew the MFA in 1977 and keep his promises to protect the industry.[75] In an effort to stop the bleeding, Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) and Rep. Ken Holland (D-S.C.) sponsored a bill that would prohibit U.S. trade negotiators from reducing textile tariffs at the ongoing Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Congress passed the bill in September 1978, but it awaited the president's signature.[76] In October, Sen. Hollings met with Carter to urge him to sign the bill, but the president was noncommittal. Most of Carter's aides, including U.S. trade representative Robert Strauss, believed that the bill was "a protectionist piece of legislation that would prevent American negotiators from extracting concessions from their trading partners." They urged him to veto it.[77]

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[70] Ibid., 46.
[71] Ibid., 37.
[72] Ibid., 46.
[73] Ibid., 67.
[74] Ibid., 69.
[75] Ibid., 80-81.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

Heller attempted to work with the Carter administration on the textile issue. On August 3, 1978, he traveled to Washington to meet with David Rubinstein, assistant to the president's advisor on domestic affairs. He laid out a seven-point plan to reduce the rate of inflation and create more jobs. The plan included a reduction of government regulations such as OHSA standards, special tax incentives to encourage businesses to promote exports, and an investment tax credit for any federally imposed expenditure for nonproductive equipment.[78] "The textile industry is faced with having to put in almost $1 billion in equipment because of the brown lung situation," Heller said. "There is no question in my mind that it is a legitimate problem…but the burden would be tremendous." He said the proposals received "a very good response" and Rubinstein assured him his staff would look at them carefully.[79] When Mills Mill announced its closing a few days later on August 8, Heller sent a telegram to President Carter, urging him to "take action that will stop this loss of jobs. The textile import situation is hurting too many lives and companies. Any reduction in tariffs would be disastrous."[80]

By contrast, Campbell chose to criticize the Carter administration for not protecting the textile industry. While cheap foreign imports were "costing Americans jobs and closing our mills," President Carter was using the textile industry as a "pawn" in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations.[81] Camp-

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[78] Karl Hill, "Heller Gives 7-Point Plan to Add Jobs, Cut Inflation," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 4, 1978.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Max Heller to President Carter, Aug. 8, 1978, telegram, Box 2, Folder 6, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.
[81] "Campbell Says Flow of Cheap Foreign Imports Must Stop," *Greer Citizen* (Greer, SC), Aug. 16, 1978, Box 3, Folder 1, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC; Karl Hill, "Campbell

bell said he was "appalled" that the administration had betrayed its "solemn promise not to bargain away the textile industry," when textiles were "a part of our economy's backbone." [82] Campbell had written a section in the 1976 Republican platform, asking the Carter administration to extend the existing MFA instead of including textiles in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations.[83] He believed that an extension would have allowed the United States to work on bilateral agreements with individual nations. Campbell argued that, by including textiles in the negotiations, the Carter administration was using the textile industry as "a bargaining chip" that would cost American jobs.[84] Like Heller, Campbell had sent a telegram to President Carter asking him to remove textiles from the negotiating table, but he did not receive a response. "I guess they throw them (telegrams) in the trash can," said Campbell.[85]

Campbell also linked Heller to the Carter administration, implying that Heller would not protect the district's textile jobs in Congress. According to Campbell, Heller's "friend" Robert Strauss proposed cutting tariffs on imports by an average of 60 percent during the next eight years. "This would cause the loss of 500,000 United States textile jobs, with a ripple effect in related industries creating losses totaling two million jobs by 1990," Campbell said. "That's what this administration is pushing for."[86] Yet Heller had "shown support for administration policy" and recently urged that

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Says President Using Textiles as Pawn," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Aug. 25, 1978.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] John A. Byrne, "A Hot Race in the 'Textile Capital of the World,'" *Daily News Record* (Harrisonburg, VA), Sept. 25, 1978.

[86] Karl Hill, "Heller Denies Campbell Textile Charges," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 17, 1978.

Strauss's office be allowed to handle all negotiations concerning textile imports and tariffs.[87] In spite of Heller's vehement denials, Campbell continued to claim that Heller supported the textile tariff reductions. On November 5, two days before the election, Campbell took out a full-page advertisement entitled "The Piedmont Textile Worker: Can His Job Survive?" The ad says that "Heller's friend" Strauss is "working full-time to reduce textile tariffs, which will eliminate textile jobs."[88] It shows how Carter has failed to protect American textile workers' jobs from unfair imports. "The textile industry is vital to the people of South Carolina," the ad says. "It is estimated that 5,000 jobs in the Greenville-Spartanburg district alone will be endangered unless the Hollings-Thurmond bill is signed."[89] The ad concludes: "We must have a foreign policy that puts America and American workers first…A vote for Carroll Campbell is a vote for American jobs."[90]

Heller generally showed reluctance to respond in kind to Campbell's attacks, which allowed Campbell to control the narrative of the election. For example, in September, Campbell announced that Heller had switched positions on the tax cut issue. Their disagreement over the tax cut "was one of the major differences between myself and Max Heller," Campbell said. "But I'm glad we got him over on our side."[91] Both Campbell and Heller reacted positively in October when the House voted to back a Senate plan calling for a massive tax cut if federal spending was restrained.[92] Campbell referred implicitly to Heller when he said that the Senate bill "has even received support from some liberals who have been opposing

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[87] Ibid.

[88] "The Piedmont Textile Worker: Can His Job Survive?", *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 5,1978.

[89] Ibid. Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) also supported the bill.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Saunders, "Campbell Says Foe Now Favors Tax Cut."

[92] Karl Hill, "Proposed Tax Cut Delights Heller, Campbell," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 14, 1978.

tax cuts of more than $20 billion. Obviously these liberals found it politically expedient to change tunes with the election so near." Heller maintained that the Senate bill was "completely different" from the Kemp-Roth proposal, which he had earlier opposed.[93] Although they supposedly now agreed, Campbell still criticized Heller for not proposing any specific alternatives to cutting taxes. "It's just a smoke screen – you make a very general statement about cutting taxes and spending but when, where, how are you going to cut taxes?"[94] Campbell attributed other positions to Heller. For instance, during an October 5 debate at a meeting of the Spartanburg Development Association, Campbell said, "I support tax credits for businesses who hire the structurally unemployed. I'm sorry Max opposed that."[95] According to reporters, Heller jumped to his feet and exclaimed, "I didn't say that." "If you didn't say that I stand corrected," Campbell replied. "Don't put words in my mouth," Heller snapped. After Heller explained that he did not oppose the tax credits, Campbell said, "Well, I'm glad you cleared that up."[96] Campbell also accused Heller of "waffling" because he opposed collective bargaining and striking by public employees yet supported a state-sponsored negotiating mechanism for public school teachers.[97] Heller complained that Campbell was "trying to put words in my mouth. And I am perfectly capable of speaking for myself."[98] He explained that he did not believe public school teachers should strike, but they needed some kind of mechanism to negotiate their contracts. Campbell insisted that Heller had a "double standard" and was "playing with semantics."[99]

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Saunders, "Heller, Campbell Debate."
[96] Ibid.
[97] Sally Saunders, "Campbell Hits Heller Record on Taxes, Use of Federal Money," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 18, 1978.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.

Campbell made a similar argument when he launched his attack on Heller's use of federal money in Greenville. He claimed Heller had "vacillated on the issues" because he supported both government cutbacks and "big government spending" in his administration.[100] "Saying one thing and doing the other is not the way to operate," said Campbell. He accused Heller of using "one ruse or another" rather than taking a stand on the issues.[101] Heller's campaign did not immediately respond to Campbell's attack, while Campbell claimed that Heller had referred to him as a "parrot" that spouted off figures. Campbell repeated his accusation that Heller was avoiding the issues, but Heller told reporters, "I don't think Mr. Campbell's comments deserve a response."[102] Finally, Campbell created the impression that Heller was a political novice. "There is no time for on-the-job training with unchecked inflation, tremendous tax burdens and 58,000 textile jobs in the district at stake," Campbell told Spartanburg voters. It was not enough to be a nice person and tell people that it is what is in your heart that counts. "People have got to know where you stand," he said.[103]

In the last few weeks of the campaign, Heller attempted to regain control over the electoral discourse, but he faced an uphill battle. In September, he hired Washington-based political consultant Mark Shields to help with advertising, but he did not begin television and radio ads until late October. By contrast, Campbell had already spent about $11,500

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] David Ramseur and Sally Saunders, "Heller Remarks Draw Accusation from Campbell," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 21, 1978.

[103] Charles Reams, "Campbell Says Heller Has No Experience," *Spartanburg Herald* (Spartanburg, SC), Oct. 18, 1978, Box 2, Folder 4, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.

on television advertising and about $2,100 on radio advertising between July and September.[104] Campbell had also raised more money than Heller during the same three-month period. He started July with $12,089 on hand and added another $54,967 by the end of the quarter, for a total of $67,056.[105] Much of this money likely came from Campbell's fund-raising event with Ronald Reagan in late September. Hundreds of people attended the $50-a-person reception and $10-a-person barbecue, raising $18,000 to $20,000 for Campbell's campaign.[106] Meanwhile Heller began the quarter with no cash on hand and raised $47,054, which included his own $15,000 loan to the campaign and $32,054 in contributions.[107]

On October 18, the same day that Campbell attacked Heller's use of federal money and increase in taxes, Shields wrote to his candidate:

There can be little argument that Mr. Campbell is presently dominating the dialogue of this campaign. For entirely laudable reasons, you are reluctant to attack Campbell. But, in the absence of any press initiatives from your campaign, you are left in the position of either responding or not responding to Campbell's attacks. And let us also note that Campbell has been shrewd enough to drop his two major political bombshells in the Spartanburg media market where half the undecided voters reside and your record as Mayor is not that widely known.[108]

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[104] Karl Hill, "Campbell Topping Heller Financially," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 11, 1978.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Karl Hill, "Reagan Stumps for Campbell; Calls GOP 'Party of Hope," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Sept. 28, 1978.
[107] Hill, "Campbell Topping Heller Financially."
[108] Mark Shields to Max Heller and John Rubin, "Free Media Effort for Last Three Weeks of Campaign," Oct. 18, 1978, Box 1, Folder 2, Max Heller Collection, Acc. 2011-066, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.

Shields advised Heller to campaign on his mayoral record "in an aggressive and imaginative way that underlines and emphasizes the very real differences between you and Campbell."[109] Heller's team must "think and breathe press for the next three weeks." At press conferences and other publicity events, Heller could speak about his record as mayor and refute Campbell's claims, which were based on a "very royalist view of government." Shields believed that most South Carolinians found this view "abhorrent and decidedly contrary to American tradition."[110]

Following Shields' advice, Heller issued press releases to answer Campbell's accusations. Heller acknowledged that the number of state employees in Greenville had increased by 229 percent in the seven years since he became mayor, but the number of city employees decreased from 738 to 617 during the same period. Of the 108 federally paid employees, only nineteen would become full-time city employees if federal funding stopped.[111] He also said that Campbell misunderstood the purpose of federal money, which was "to improve our community and enrich the lives of our people."[112] While federal money was indeed "the hard-earned tax dollars of the working men and women of South Carolina and the United States," it was also an investment back into the community.[113] Heller emphasized the positive results he had achieved for Greenville. He had reduced the city debt by almost half and increased the city surplus to $4.2 million. He had built playgrounds and community centers, paved roads, improved housing, increased street lighting, improved garbage collection, and strengthened law enforcement.[114] Moreover,

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Karl Hill, "Heller Says Charges 'Totally Misleading,'" *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Oct. 20, 1978.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

Heller said that Campbell's statements about the increase in city taxes were "misleading." The Clemson study included county taxes and school taxes and did not account for inflation. While the tax rate in the city had increased 18 percent since 1971, the inflation rate had increased 51 percent. "Those are facts," Heller said. "Facts we can be proud of."[115] He also called Campbell's statement about the city's population decrease "grossly unfair" because the numbers did not tell "the whole story." In fact, Heller said, the number of households in the city had increased even if the total population had declined. He concluded by dissociating himself from Robert Strauss on the textile issue.[116]

Then suddenly, just as Heller was working to recover lost ground, independent candidate Don W. Sprouse interjected his religious views into the race. On November 2, five days before the election, Sprouse declared that Heller "has not made clear to the voters he is not a Christian and that there is a difference between Christians and Jews."[117] Referring to an October 25 debate, during which Heller had spoken about the common heritage and traditions of Christianity and Judaism, Sprouse said that he wanted to emphasize the difference between Heller and himself. "He cannot turn to Jesus Christ in time of need," said Sprouse. "He doesn't believe Jesus Christ has come yet."[118] As a non-Christian, Heller was "not as qualified to represent the Christian people of the district as a Christian congressman."[119] Sprouse's remarks produced mixed reactions, with both the Heller and Campbell camps believing that they had suffered damage. Campbell's press secretary Mike Ussery regarded Sprouse's remarks as a "devastating"

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Saunders, "Heller Unqualified."
[118] Dozier, "Sprouse Attacks Heller Religion."
[119] Saunders, "Heller Unqualified."

blow to Campbell's campaign.[120] Campbell worried that Sprouse would take away votes from him out of sympathy for Heller. Indeed, several people wrote to the editor of *The Greenville News*, denouncing Sprouse's comments, while others wrote to Heller to express their disgust with Sprouse and their support for Heller. "I thought I'd lost the race because of that," Campbell recalled in May 1986.[121]

Contrary to Campbell's fears, Sprouse did not receive enough votes to determine the outcome of the election. Campbell defeated Heller by a margin of 5,893 votes, while Sprouse received only 1,693 (1,126 in Greenville County and 567 in Spartanburg County). On the precinct level, the number of Sprouse's votes sometimes exceeded the margin of Campbell's victory, seemingly suggesting that Sprouse took these votes away from Heller. However, Sprouse had adopted an even more conservative stance than Campbell, for instance advocating a fifty percent tax cut, and therefore likely drew the votes from Campbell instead of Heller. At any rate, Sprouse received no more than thirty-seven votes in any one precinct. Most political observers predicted that Campbell would do well in Greenville County, and he did, winning by 32,061 to 27,273 votes (a margin of 4,788).[122] But Campbell also took half of the precincts in the city of Greenville, which indicated that at least some of Heller's mayoral constituents had become dissatisfied with his performance. On October 31, Campbell had campaigned in Heller's "back yard," visiting merchants and salespeople along Main Street in downtown Greenville. They complained to him about the construction and blocking of Main Street as part of the downtown redevelopment program and pledged their votes to him. "You won't have any

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[120] Sally Saunders and Karl Hill, "Campbell Hopes Democrats Got Textile 'Message,' *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 9, 1978.

[121] Chris Weston, "Campbell Plays Many Roles as Politician," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), May 23, 1986.

[122] State Election Commission, *Report* (1979), 56.

trouble down this street," said one merchant.[123] In perhaps the biggest shock of the night, Campbell won the traditionally Democratic county of Spartanburg by 19,316 to 18,211 votes (a margin of 1,105).[124] "We're amazed, floored by Spartanburg County," said Ussery. "Our whole strategy had been predicated all along on losing big in Spartanburg County."[125] Campbell was ecstatic. "I took Spartanburg County," he shouted to his supporters after the returns came in.[126] Heller's team was likewise in shock. "I'm stunned," said John Rubin, Heller's campaign manager. "Everything had said we were okay."[127] It seems that Heller's reliance on his mayoral record and good character had lulled his supporters into a sense of complacency.

While we do not have demographic data for the November election, Heller's August 1978 survey indicates that there was fertile ground for Campbell to plant seeds of doubt. For example, Heller did not receive as much support as a Democrat should have from younger voters and blue-collar workers, the latter mainly Spartanburg residents.[128] Forty-nine percent of voters aged 18-34 said they supported Heller strongly or with some reservations, while 40 percent supported Campbell, and 11 percent were undecided. Forty-four percent of blue-collar whites supported Heller strongly or with some reservations, while 38 percent supported Campbell, which was

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[123] Sally Saunders, "4th District Candidates Head Down Home Stretch," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 2, 1978.
[124] State Election Commission, *Report* (1979), 56.
[125] Sally Saunders, Al Clark, and Rick Warner, "Republican Leads Both Counties," *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 8, 1978.
[126] Al Dozier, "Campbell Scores State's Biggest Upset," *Greenville Piedmont* (Greenville, SC), Nov. 8,1978, Box 23, Folder 6, Max Moses Heller Collection, Acc. #2009-076, Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, SC.
[127] Saunders and Hill, "Textile 'Message.'"
[128] Hart Research Associates, "A Survey of the Political Climate," 10.

impressive for a Republican, and 18 percent were undecided. Campbell also had 38 percent support among middle-income white voters, which was the group most concerned about government spending.[129] Forty-six percent of Spartanburg County voters supported Heller strongly or with some reservations, 25 percent supported Campbell, and 29 percent were undecided.[130] Conservative voters made up 42 percent of the sample electorate, and 38 percent of these said they would vote for Campbell. Undecided voters comprised 20 percent of the sample electorate and over half of them lived in Spartanburg County. The survey report recommended that Heller target these older, low-informational voters.[131] When asked to respond to the statement, "Max Heller would be too much of a big spending liberal," fifty percent of voters disagreed, but 34 percent were not sure.[132] When asked to respond to the statement, "Max Heller has done a good job of holding down government spending in Greenville," fifty-one percent of all voters agreed, while 41 percent were not sure. More concerning, only 35 percent of Spartanburg County voters agreed with this statement, while 62 percent were not sure. Among undecided voters, thirty-three percent agreed, with 62 percent not sure.[133] The numbers indicated that "these voters will have to be sold on the job that Max Heller has done as mayor and will do as congressman."[134] Campbell's aggressive strategy prevented that from happening.

As we have seen, the open seat in South Carolina's Fourth District and the general disillusionment of conservatives with the Democratic Party provided an ideal opportunity for the Republican Party in the 1978 election. With the full

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[129] Ibid., 10-11.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., T23.
[133] Ibid., 27, T40.
[134] Ibid., 27, T40.

support of his party, State Sen. Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. challenged the popular mayor of Greenville, Max M. Heller, for the seat. The two candidates fought a closely contested race, debating issues such as government spending, federal tax cuts, and textile tariffs. In order to win crucial conservative votes, Campbell frequently labeled Heller as a liberal who raised city taxes, spent federal money, and opposed tariffs to protect the local textile industry. He also criticized Heller's political inexperience and lack of specific proposals. With Heller reluctant to strike back, Campbell dominated the narrative of the election with his own interpretation of Heller's views. At the last minute, independent candidate Don Sprouse attempted to "expose" Heller's Jewish beliefs to the Christian voters. Sprouse received more rebukes than votes for his trouble, while Campbell's strategy paid off at the polls on election day. It was undoubtedly a painful loss for Heller and his supporters. Unfortunately, the political reasons for his defeat have been largely forgotten, as historians and journalists have chosen to focus on the unsubstantiated allegations that Campbell used Sprouse as a "stalking horse" against Heller. As a result, a great deal of important political history has been lost. The 1978 election took place during a time when South Carolina was transitioning from a solidly Democratic to a two-party state. Campbell's victory represented a milestone for the Republican Party in its mission to become the new party of conservatism in the South.