

We Choose You

In *We Choose You*, Julian J. Wamble investigates the sophisticated process of Black voter candidate selection. Contrary to the common assumption that Black voters will support Black politicians, Wamble explores what considerations, outside of race, partisanship, and gender, Black voters use to choose certain representatives over others. The book complicates our view of candidate selection, expands our understanding of identity's role in the representative–constituent paradigm, and provides a framework through which scholars can determine a candidate's preferability for other identity groups. Wamble uses original experimental tests on Black respondents to prove that Black voters prefer a politician, regardless of race, who shows a commitment to prioritizing the racial group's interest through personal sacrifice. Novel and timely, this book makes an important contribution to our understanding of Black political behavior and will only gain salience as the significance of the Black vote increases in upcoming elections.

Julian J. Wamble is an assistant professor of political science at George Washington University. His research has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Journal of Politics*.

We Choose You

How Black Voters Decide Which Candidates to Support

JULIAN J. WAMBLE

George Washington University



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For Anita & Marvin and Mark & Mike, my rocks

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Acknowledgments

The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. It is all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time.

—Ecclesiastes 9:11

In no way am I the fastest runner, and I am definitely *not* the strongest warrior. The acquisition of wisdom is, so I'm repeatedly told, an ongoing journey, as is building wealth. But, as I look back, my time writing this manuscript can be summed up in the epigraph – right place, right time. Though I would add, if I may, “right people” to the list of factors that have led me to this moment. It is to those right people who I owe a huge debt of gratitude and wish to acknowledge. I'll begin by first thanking the many scholars, colleagues, and reviewers who, throughout the many years I have worked on this manuscript, and in the midst of their busy lives, took the time to provide integral and extremely helpful feedback in the early stages of this work. I want to highlight the three anonymous reviewers who devoted their time to evaluating this manuscript for Cambridge University Press. Your thoughtful and unwavering feedback assisted in strengthening this manuscript and offering further clarity to its contribution.

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make me laugh and then forced me to go back to work. She has an incredible penchant of making sure my accomplishments never go undiscussed or uncelebrated, which has, during this book-writing process, reminded me to celebrate the smallest accomplishment. This one isn't so small, and she is a large contributor to why this manuscript made it this far. Looking forward to the celebration!

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It's a fascinating facet of being an academic where writing a book manuscript feels like something one just does and not a Herculean feat (or Sisyphean, depending on where you're at in the process). As I worked, I often fell prey to the projected mundanity of writing this book, and Natalie Walker quickly and lovingly reminded me every time just what a big deal this was. Both in explicit words and in her sheer, unbridled excitement for me every time I reached another milestone in this process. Those moments have fueled so much of my progress as they kept my eye on the prize of finishing with a recognition that this was more than just "something that I have to do."

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During the abyss that was the pandemic years, I impulsively bought a Peloton treadmill, hoping that the physical activity would drag me out of the

prolonged malaise in which I found myself. What I got, in addition to the physical activity, was an incredible community of people who are now stuck with me for the rest of their lives. Peloton has completely changed my life for the better, and in addition to sweating away any and all stress while writing this book, I found an incredible support system in it. I want to shout out (lol!) some incredible ladies who have been pushing me since we met – Sara, Chrissy, Meli, Steph, Tina, and Jess!! I'm beyond thankful for you all on and off the leaderboard. I would also be remiss to not thank Marcel Dinkins who has, through her incredible leadership and energy, provided me a safe space to leave my degrees at the door and just be. Without her and many of her colleagues, the stress of the book would have been even more overwhelming.

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