

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Campaigns and Elections

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## STOREFRONT CAMPAIGNING

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## Storefront Campaigning

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**Abstract:** Since Barack Obama’s historic and unprecedented field operations in 2008 and 2012, campaigns have centralized their voter contact operations within field offices: storefronts rented in strategically chosen communities. That model was upended in 2020: Joe Biden won the election without any offices (due to COVID-19), while Donald Trump’s campaign opened over 300. Using two decades of data on office locations and interviews with campaign staffers, the Element shows how the strategic placement and electoral impact of local field offices changed over the past twenty years, including differences in partisan strategy and effectiveness. This Element finds that offices are somewhat more effective for Democrats than Republicans, but Democratic field operations are declining while Republicans’ are increasing. The Element concludes by assessing whether future campaigns will invest in offices again – or if the rebirth of storefront campaigning is over and the future of political campaigning is purely digital.

**Keywords:** elections, political participation, voter contact, campaign strategy, campaign organization

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