

# Extra credit assignment



Campaigning to the Heart The film documentary “ Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington Anymore?” shows how a “ no r” candi for the Missouri congressional seat of the 2004 Democratic primary staked his campaign against a political bigwig who is practically an heir of the political throne (Popper).

Jeff Smith was just a 29 year old Political Science instructor fuelled with much passion and idealism for political service such that he was willing to stage a campaign against the son of a politically powerful family even if he did not have enough resources, name-recall, or political connections to back up his campaign. Instead of relying on these three surefire ways to get elected into office, Smith relied on a grassroots-based campaign, largely relying on a multitude of youths and many others who shared his political ideals and fervor for honest-to-goodness civil service.

Due to his lack of resources, especially on the financial aspect, Smith relied heavily on campaign contributions in order to try and keep his campaign going. Unlike his opponent, he barely had deep-pocketed colleagues who could do him a favor in exchange for a future favor that he would be returning to them. Instead, Smith literally walked the extra mile as he conducted his door-to-door campaign on foot. Smith further battled his disadvantage of lack of name-recall by packaging himself as an extreme underdog. It was through this packaging that people started to notice him and took him seriously. This same tactic allowed him to gain more followers even if he barely had any initial political connections.

The electoral race ended quite closely, signifying that even if the diminutive Smith lost to a political Goliath, his grassroots-campaign strategy was effective enough to touch people’s hearts.

Reference:

Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington Anymore? Dir. Frank Popper. 2006.