

**RED COUNTIES IN A BLUE STATE: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
2004 U.S. SENATE ELECTION IN ILLINOIS**

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ABSTRACT

In seeking to better understand the 2004 U.S. Senate election in Illinois, this research investigates the question: What factors help to explain the tendency of an Illinois county's citizens to vote for the Republican candidate, Alan Keyes, or the Democratic candidate, Barack Obama? Multiple regression analysis is used to examine the nine independent variables selected as possible influential factors on a citizen's tendency to vote for the Republican candidate, Alan Keyes. These nine independent variables focus on: religious affiliation; income; educational attainment; race; voter turnout; rural populations; support for George W. Bush; recent party loyalty; and historical party loyalty. After conducting the statistical tests, support for George W. Bush, income, recent party loyalty, and historical party loyalty were found to be significant predictors of a vote for Alan Keyes. Ultimately, the aim of this study is to provide a significant contribution to the field of electoral geography.