

POLLYPRIZE 2006

Announcement. Polly is happy to announce that on behalf of the International Institute of Forecasters, it will make a \$1,000 award to the designer(s) of the best model for forecasting the results of this year's U.S. House of Representatives elections.

Purpose of the competition. The purpose of the competition is to advance the scientific approach to political forecasting through greater understanding of legislative election outcomes and of the policy or campaign factors that influence such outcomes.

Qualifications. To qualify for consideration, all entries will have to meet the following requirements:

- The variable whose value is to be forecast is the net change in the number of seats held by the President's party (i.e., the Republicans) in the U.S. House of Representatives resulting from the November 7, 2006 congressional elections.
- The forecast is made with a quantitative model estimated with historical data.
- The model is clearly specified and explained in an essay of no more than 2,000 words of text (i.e., title page, tables, figures, endnotes and references do not count against the word limit) to which all data used to estimate the model and make the forecast are attached in a machine-readable format, e.g., an excel spreadsheet.
- The model is readily replicable with the data submitted in easily accessible form, with all sources listed.
- The submission is sent by e-mail simultaneously to Alfred Cuzán (acuzan@uwf.edu) and Randy Jones (ranjones@ucok.edu) no later than midnight (U.S. Central Daylight Time) on September 11th, 2006.
- The author(s) agree to post the submission and the appended data at the PollyPage at politicalforecasting.com.

Criteria of evaluation. All accepted entries will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Accuracy of prediction. The three models whose forecasts are closest to the actual election outcome will qualify as finalists.
- The finalists will be further evaluated according to the quality of the model and its practical relevance. Among the criteria included in determining model quality are lead (how far ahead of the election was the forecast issued), ease of reproducibility, and parsimony. By practical relevance is meant that the model includes at least one variable that is subject to manipulation by decision-makers. The variable may be a policy or a campaign variable. Other things being equal, the prize will go to the model with greater practical relevance.

Selection process. By majority vote, the organizing committee for the Pollyprize, whose members are Alfred Cuzán, Randy Jones, and Scott Armstrong, will decide whether a submission meets the stipulated qualifications and which models advance to the finalist stage. The finalists will be evaluated by a separate panel of judges consisting of a diverse group of experts in forecasting, elections, and other relevant fields.

The Pollyprize. The author(s) of the winning model will receive a \$1,000 award, which will be duly publicized. Additionally, the paper will be treated as an invited submission to *Foresight: The Journal of Applied Forecasting*, one of the publications of the IIF. The editor will grant the same privilege to the paper describing the runner-up model.

Exclusions. No member of the organizing committee, the panel of judges, or the IIF Board of Directors is eligible to compete for the Pollyprize.

Additional Information. For additional information on the IIF and Polly, visit their respective websites at forecasters.org and pollyvote.com.