



## ***Sleep on the Campaign Trail***

Political campaigning is extremely exhausting and time consuming for all those involved. According to the Congressional Management Foundation, the campaign staff for a member of the Senate or House of Representatives, including the candidate, “works 60 to 80 hours a week in the time leading up to Election Day.” Here, it’s interesting to consider how political candidates’ campaign experiences are affected by a lack of sleep — something that certainly comes with the territory of a 60-80 hour work week.

The first thing that comes to mind is communication. Sleep deprivation is associated with impaired communication skills, which can severely damage a candidate’s ability to articulate their message clearly and connect with voters. Obviously, Effective communication is critical in conveying policy positions and connecting with diverse political constituencies. This is not possible without adequate sleep.

Long work hours, the pressure to perform, and the inherent uncertainty of election outcomes contribute to heightened stress levels for candidates in every election. This stress, made worse by insufficient sleep, can lead to difficulty in managing the emotional demands of the campaign. A candidate who is emotionally ill-equipped to deal with the demands of a time-intensive campaign is unlikely to be successful.

I’m interested in whether the candidates who are most successful in campaigning — and later, as politicians — are those who get the most quality sleep. I can’t help but believe that this is the case.