

Third-party candidates a nonissue in this election

April 25, 2012 12:30 PM Ryan Rivet
rrivet@tulane.edu

After failing to gain any traction as a Republican presidential candidate, former Louisiana Gov. Buddy Roemer is trying to get on the ballot as a third-party candidate. As part of his whistle-stop tour, Roemer brought his campaign finance reform message to Tulane earlier this month.



Former Louisiana Gov. Buddy Roemer, shown at left at a campaign rally, is hoping for a third-party presidential run centered around finance reform.

Although his anti-super PAC message resonates with voters exasperated with the two major parties, Roemer's campaign is more about being “a gadfly and provocateur” than it is about a real run for office, says political science professor [Thomas Langston](#).

“The position he has taken in this campaign against the influence of money ? and corporate money in particular ? is what makes him so appealing,” Langston says. “But in a money-soaked electoral system, it's kind of a catch-22. You can't fight the influence of money in politics without money.”

Langston says that if history is any indication, Roemer is already at a disadvantage as a third-party candidate. He points to Ross Perot as the last third-party candidate that had any real impact on an election, and that was more in the role of “spoiler” than it was any real threat to win the White House.

“Third parties have an influence when something is happening in the real world to which the major parties have failed to respond,” Langston says. “In this election season, I don't see this dynamic at play because the things that voters are most concerned about are the economy, the recession, jobs and deficits ? and the two parties are focused on those issues.”