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Voters skipping over candidates on the ballot for state Legislature – often because the race is not competitive enough to interest them – could change the outcomes of those elections, according to research published today by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy.

The results of three contested New Jersey state Assembly elections in 2011 could have been reversed by voters who went to the polls but did not vote in those races.

That trend was found in the 7th Legislative District in Burlington County, where Democrat Troy Singleton won an Assembly seat previously held by a Republican. The number of possible votes that were not cast in that race was nearly three times higher than the winner's margin of victory.

Voters who failed to vote for Assembly candidates also could have changed the outcomes in tight Assembly races in the 1st

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