

POST

We've Got No Power, No Money . . . I Like Our Chances to Reform the Clean Air Act!

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Let's see. We've got no money. No power. And we are trying to change the Clean Air Act. I like our chances!

What? How can I like our chances? Because when the weak charge headlong into a challenge, acknowledging their weakness, and doing so in a manner that does not conform to the norms around them, they usually win. The political scientist Ivan Arreguín-Toft recently looked at every war fought in the past two hundred years between the strong and the weak. He looked at conflicts in which one side had at least ten times more power. The Goliaths of the world, he found, won in 71.5 per cent of the cases. Almost 1/3 of the time, however, the underdogs prevailed—which is significant in and of itself. Next Arreguín-Toft asked what happened when the underdogs though acknowledged their weakness and chose an unconventional strategy—like David dropping the armor his brothers had put on him, grabbing 5 smooth stones, and running at the giant. When Arreguín-Toft re-analyzed the data

in search of an answer to this question, he found that the underdog's winning percentage went from **28.5% to 63.6%**. Arreguín-Toft concluded that when underdogs choose not to play by Goliath's rules ... **they usually win***—“even when everything we think we know about power says they shouldn't”.*

Time to transform the SIP process. We've got no money. We've got no power. Just a bit of logic, love, and a willingness to run at the giant. I'm liking our chances!

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