

Is There a Partisan Way to Administer Elections?

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Abstract

Many debates about election reforms in Congress and state legislatures tend to break down along partisan lines, with Democrats advocating measures to increase access to voting and Republicans advocating measures to combat fraud. Less attention has been given to the attitudes and preferences of officials who administer elections. Most local officials who administer elections are either appointed or elected based upon partisan affiliation. Yet at the same time, running efficient and fair elections would seem to be nonpartisan in character. Our paper examines the relationship between party affiliation and the views of local election officials on proposals to change the way elections are administered in the United States. We merge the results of a national survey of local election officials (LEOs) with data on the party affiliation of LEOs in the United States. We examine policy attitudes of local officials along three dimensions: new voting methods, easing registration, and combating voter fraud. There is considerable variation in the policy preferences of local election officials. We find evidence of partisan polarization in the policy attitudes only on registration and anti-fraud policies and only among LEOs serving large jurisdictions.

We thank the Pew Charitable Trusts for supporting this research and we thank Jennifer Collins-Foley and the Pollworker Institute for assistance in this study. We thank Cassie Gross and Laura Wiedlocher for research assistance. We thank Joshua Dyck and Nicholas Seabrook for sharing their data on the party affiliation of Oregon election officials. We alone are responsible for the analyses and interpretations made in this study.

Election administration in the United States has received greater attention from scholars, journalists, advocates, and policy makers in the wake of the 2000 presidential election and the passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-252). As the study of election administration moves forward, attention is shifting to local officials who enforce state and federal election laws. However, not much is known about the attitudes of election officials. In particular, there is little evidence indicating, one way or the other, whether the policy preferences of local officials on contentious election administration issues reflect their party affiliation.

In this paper, we report the results of a survey of local election officials in the United States. The survey includes several questions about election reform policies that have been the subject of partisan debate in Congress and many state legislatures. We also gathered information about the party affiliation of the officials who participated in our survey. There is considerable variation in the policy attitudes of local election officials. In addition, we find three separate dimensions of election administration policy preferences organized around new voting methods, easing voter registration, and combating voter fraud. In bivariate analyses, we find significant differences between the policy attitudes of Democratic and Republican officials on registration and fraud protection issues, but only among officials in relatively large jurisdictions. In more rigorous analyses, the policy attitudes of local officials are partly explained by party affiliation, but only for officials in large jurisdictions and only on voter registration and anti-fraud policies. Other factors that help explain the policy attitudes of local election officials include jurisdiction size, local challenges in finding poll workers, state experience with particular

election policies, and constituency partisanship. We discuss the implications of these findings in the conclusion.

Conflict over Election Administration Policies

A political environment of increasing partisan polarization (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006; Niemi et al. forthcoming) and a series of close and competitive national elections, particularly the presidential election of 2000, have fueled controversy and litigation over election procedures in the United States (Hasen 2005). In this climate, there is an increased awareness that candidates and political parties may try to manipulate election laws and procedures for political gain (Tokaji 2005).

In recent years, partisan conflicts are evident in legislative debates in Congress and many state legislatures about photo identification requirements for voters, restoring voting rights for ex-felons, purging voter registration lists, Election Day registration, and other election laws. Generally, Democratic politicians tend to prefer policies that reduce barriers to voting, while Republican lawmakers tend to prefer policies that reduce election fraud. In legislative debates, the two policy goals are often set against one another, as policies that combat fraud are often perceived to increase barriers to voting. Similarly, policies to reduce voting barriers are often perceived to increase the opportunities for fraud. In addition, there is some evidence of partisan divisions in public opinion on election administration issues. For example, Republicans tend to believe that voter fraud and voter impersonation occur more frequently than Democrats (Ansolabehere and Persily 2008).

However, elections are primarily administered by local officials, not politicians or the public. There is less evidence to indicate the degree to which partisan divisions exist in the policy attitudes and administrative behavior of election officials. A relatively small literature examines the impact of local officials on election outcomes. One study suggests that Republican and Democratic election officials differ in their zeal to purge voter registration lists (Stuart 2004). There is evidence suggesting partisan differences in the way officials administer the casting and counting of provisional ballots (Kimball, Kropf and Battles 2006; Kropf, Vercellotti, and Kimball 2010). Dyck and Seabrook (2009) find partisan influence on the rates of accepting vote-by-mail ballots in Oregon. More generally, Bassi, Morton, and Trounstein (2008) find that the partisanship of local election officials influences voter turnout. Other studies find that election officials may manipulate ballot wording and design, as well as other procedures, to pursue a partisan advantage (Hamilton and Ladd 1996; Lund 1998; Hayduk 2005).

Even less is known about the policy attitudes of local election officials, although election officials are the subject of a series of recent surveys (Vercellotti 2007; Fischer and Coleman 2008; Moynihan and Silva 2008; Kropf, Vercellotti, and Kimball 2010; Kimball et al. 2009). These surveys find significant variation in the election policy preferences of local officials. While these studies examine several predictors of the policy attitudes of local election officials, such as resources and views toward federal oversight of elections, they tend to ignore partisanship as a predictor (c.f., Kropf, Vercellotti, and Kimball 2010). As a result, the relationship between party affiliation and the policy attitudes of local election officials remains largely unexplored.

Data and Methods

The data for this study come from a mixed-mode survey of local election officials (Internet and mail) conducted from December of 2008 to March of 2009. Election administration in the United States is highly decentralized. Most election functions, including hiring and training poll workers, are administered by local jurisdictions (counties, cities or towns). We identify 10,370 local jurisdictions in the United States with responsibility for hiring and training poll workers – the sampling frame for the survey. These localities vary substantially in terms of the number of voters they serve and thus the number of poll workers they need to hire. The median jurisdiction served slightly more than 1,000 voters in the 2004 presidential election. Half of the local election jurisdictions in the United States are small towns or townships with very few election staff. At the same time, roughly 64% of the voters in the 2004 election were served by just 418 large jurisdictions (4% of the jurisdictions) with more than 50,000 voters. These large jurisdictions have much larger staffs and need to hire a lot of poll workers. We expect that the poll worker experiences in small jurisdictions are vastly different than in large jurisdictions.

We divide our sample into small jurisdictions (serving less than 1,000 voters), medium jurisdictions (serving between 1,000 and 50,000 voters), and large jurisdictions (serving more than 50,000 voters). The smallest jurisdictions are primarily in the upper Midwest and New England, with a smaller number in the Plains. Large jurisdictions are concentrated in the major metropolitan centers of the United States. We derived our sample from the universe of 10,370 elections offices. Most of these offices serve quite

small voting populations. To ensure representation of the largest offices we drew a stratified sample. All jurisdictions with over 50,000 voters in the 2004 general election were included in the sample, of which there were 418 jurisdictions. For those with between 1,000 and 50,000 voters in 2004, we randomly sampled 2,000 jurisdictions from the 4,931 meeting this population criterion. For those with less than 1,000 voters in 2004, of which there were 5,021, we randomly sampled 500 jurisdictions. All told, our sample frame was 2,919 jurisdictions.

For each jurisdiction in the sampling frame, we sent the survey to the top election official (usually an elected county or town clerk, or an appointed election director or town clerk). The preferred mode was via a web survey. However, not all jurisdictions had an email address – some jurisdictions had only postal mail contacts. For those contacted by email they were given an opportunity to respond via a SurveyMonkey instrument. For those contacted by mail, they were sent a paper survey. For various reasons, some of the surveys sent initially via email were eventually sent via the mail instead. All told, 795 surveys (27%) were sent via mail, 2,104 (72%) via email, and for 20 we could not obtain any information and therefore no type of instrument was sent. The vast majority of paper surveys sent by mail went to small and medium-sized jurisdictions.

We received 900 surveys, for an overall response rate of 31%. The response rate was the same for mail respondents and email respondents. However, the response rate for small jurisdictions (26%) is somewhat lower than the response rate for medium (31%) and large jurisdictions (37%). We conducted a separate survey of state election officials, and got responses from thirty-three of the fifty states. The main focus of the surveys is on

poll worker management, but we included a series of questions about election reform policies in the surveys.

[Table 1 about here]

In a separate data collection, we gathered information on the party affiliation and method of selection for each of the local officials who responded to our survey. The data came primarily from state and local government directories and web sites, using a similar approach as in Kimball and Kropf (2006).¹ In the majority of cases where local officials are elected or appointed on a nonpartisan basis, we were unable to find additional information on the partisan leanings of those officials. The first column in Table 1 shows the method of selection and party affiliation for the local officials in our sample. For comparative purposes, the second column shows similar figures for all local officials coded by Kimball and Kropf (2006). The results suggest that our survey sample approximates the national population of local election officials (see footnote 1). Slightly more than half of the local officials in our sample are elected, the rest are appointed. Half of the officials in our sample are nonpartisan officials, with the other half split evenly between Republicans and Democrats. In addition, the demographic profile of our sample

¹ One major difference between the two studies involves coding local officials in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, where election administration is shared between county and municipal officials. Kimball and Kropf (2006) code county election officials in those three states. For our survey, we interviewed municipal clerks in those three states, because municipal clerks are most responsible for hiring poll workers. A large majority of county election officials in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are elected. In contrast, roughly half of the municipal clerks in those three states are elected while the other half are appointed. This may account for the differences in the top portion of Table 1. While there has been some turnover among local officials since 2005, we are not aware of significant changes in the way local officials are chosen. With the exception of Oregon, we did not attempt to verify the party registration of election officials from voter files in states where registered voters declare a party affiliation.

of local election officials (in terms of age, education, gender, education, and experience) is very similar to the two surveys reported by Fisher and Coleman (2008).²

The Policy Attitudes of Local Election Officials

The survey of local officials included eight questions about their support for policy proposals that have been recently debated or adopted in at least one state. For each item, respondents were asked to register whether they favor or oppose the policy on a five-point scale, with higher values indicating stronger support for the policy. See the appendix for the wording and response options for each question. We included two items that are promoted by liberal advocacy groups – Election Day registration and universal registration (in which the government automatically registers adults once they turn 18). Both are pitched by advocates as reducing barriers to registration and thus boosting voter turnout. The survey includes two questions about policies that are favored by conservative groups – a photo identification requirement when people vote and a proposal to purge voter registrations if the name, address, or other information does not match records in other state databases (such as for driver’s licenses or social security benefits). Both of these policies are promoted as ways to minimize voter fraud. Finally, the survey included four questions about more modern voting methods that are alternatives to Election Day voting staffed by poll workers. These new methods include voting by mail, early voting, Internet voting, and vote centers.

Summary statistics for each of the policy questions are reported in Table 2.

Among the items we included in the survey, the most popular policy is a photo

² See Kimball et al. (2009).

identification requirement, followed by increased use of early voting and vote centers. The least popular policies among election officials are Internet voting and Election Day registration. Each item has a standard deviation greater than 1.2. Given that each item has a range of four, the standard deviation figures indicate considerable variation in the election reform policy attitudes of local election officials.

There is less partisan disagreement about some of the newfangled voting methods, such as voting by mail. As a result, we expect attitudes toward new forms of voting will be structured along a separate dimension from the items dealing with registration and voter fraud, which are a frequent source of partisan debate. At another extreme, if policy attitudes toward easing registration and reducing fraud are highly partisan, then items for those two policy domains may form opposing poles on a single dimension. On the other hand, the questions on easing registration may form a separate dimension from the items on fraud reduction, since they address separate elements of election administration. Since the survey questions touch on three separate policy domains (new voting methods, eased access to voter registration, and fraud protection), we expect responses to fall into three separate factors.

[Table 2 about here]

To test this expectation, we subjected responses to the policy questions to a factor analysis, using promax rotation to allow the emerging factors to be correlated. The results, in Table 3, confirm that there are three factors in the policy attitudes of local election officials. The analysis reveals three factors that correspond to the three policy

domains described above. We created three scales from each of the factor loadings in Table 3. The *more access* scale and the *fight fraud* scale are indeed negatively correlated ($r=-.16, p<.001$). In other words, election officials who favor policies to ease voter registration tend to oppose policies to combat registration fraud, and vice versa. The *new voting* scale is positively correlated with the *more access* scale ($r=.42, p<.001$), indicating that election officials who support new voting methods tend to also favor efforts to increase access to voter registration. The *new voting* factor is unrelated to the *fight fraud* factor ($r=-.01$).

[Table 3 about here]

We hypothesize that support for new voting methods among election officials is explained in part by a desire to reduce the burdens placed on poll workers and even reduce the need for poll workers. The survey included another question asking whether weekend or holiday voting would be helpful in recruiting more poll workers. As expected, support for weekend or holiday voting is positively correlated with the *new voting* scale ($r=.32, p<.001$).

We create indexes for each set of policy questions by calculating the mean response to the answered items in each policy domain.³ Each index is highly correlated with the corresponding factor in Table 3. In previous work we examined the importance of jurisdiction size in the study of election administration. We found that there are vast differences in the experiences of local officials based on jurisdiction size. Small

³ This is done partly to reduce missing data. Roughly fifty officials skipped one of the policy questions on the survey. The factor analysis uses listwise deletion, thus losing more data in creating the attitude indexes than our method.

jurisdictions have few polling places and poll workers and do not face a large administrative burden in managing elections. By contrast, large jurisdictions must serve many voters and manage many polling places and poll workers. Officials in large jurisdictions report significantly more activities and challenges in recruiting, training and evaluating poll workers, and consequently officials in large jurisdictions are more supportive of reforms that might reduce the need for so many poll workers (Kimball et al. 2009).

We expect that jurisdiction size may modify the impact of partisanship on the policy attitudes of local election officials. When it comes to elections, political parties and candidates are very interested in the rules of the game and the referees who enforce the rules. Political parties are especially interested in the people who administer elections in large jurisdictions. Because they serve large numbers of voters, administrators in big jurisdictions could affect the outcome of a close election by their decisions. In contrast, officials in small jurisdictions, because they serve so few voters, will have much less impact on the outcome of state elections. As a result, partisan disputes over election administration are more likely to be fought in large jurisdictions, and these disputes are more likely internalized by local officials in large jurisdictions.

[Table 4 about here]

Table 4 reports the mean policy preferences of local officials for each of the three indexes. The mean scores are calculated separately by party and by large versus small jurisdictions. Table 4 indicates that there is little difference between the policy

preferences of Democratic and Republican officials in small jurisdictions (those serving less than 5,000 voters in a presidential election). In large jurisdictions, there are significant differences between Democratic and Republican officials on the anti-fraud policies and the policies designed to ease access to voter registration. As expected, in large jurisdictions GOP officials are more supportive of photo identification requirements and “no match, no vote” policies. By the same token, Democratic officials in large jurisdictions are more likely to favor policies that reduce barriers to voter registration (Election Day registration and universal registration).

The figures in Table 4 also indicate that nonpartisan election officials tend to have a more favorable evaluation of policies to ease voter registration than officials of either major party, especially in small jurisdictions. This is probably due to the fact that more than half of the nonpartisan local officials serving small jurisdictions in our sample come from Maine, Minnesota and Wisconsin, because these are a handful of states where elections are administered by (often small) municipalities, rather than counties. These three states already have Election Day registration. As we show below, attitudes toward reform policies are more positive in states that have already adopted those policies.

Predictors of Election Reform Policy Attitudes

We next conduct a more rigorous assessment of the predictors of the policy attitudes of local election officials. In particular, we examine whether partisan differences remain when controlling for other explanatory variables. We use the indexes examined in Table 4 as the dependent variables in this section. Each index measures the respondent’s

mean score for the questions that fall in a particular policy domain. We use ordinary least squares regression to model variation in each index.

The partisanship of local official is one factor in explaining policy attitudes. We create separate dummy variables for Republican and Democratic election officials, leaving nonpartisan officials as the comparison group. It is also possible that the policy attitudes of election officials reflect the political views of their constituents. We measure Barack Obama's proportion of the 2008 presidential vote as a measure of constituency opinion. We hypothesize that officials who serve more Democratic constituencies will be more supportive of policies that increase access to voter registration and less supportive of policies that combat voter fraud. Similarly, we expect that officials who serve more Republican constituencies will be more opposed to policies that increase access to voter registration and more supportive of policies that combat voter fraud.

Two additional explanatory variables focus more directly on the election administration environment facing local officials. As noted above, large jurisdictions have many more voters, polling places, staff, budget resources, and outside scrutiny than small jurisdictions. Our impression is that many new practices in election administration are created by large jurisdictions. Thus, officials in large jurisdictions may have a more favorable view toward policy reforms. Put differently, officials in small jurisdictions may be more supportive of the status quo in election administration. We measure the size of the jurisdiction by the natural log of the total number of votes cast for president in 2008.

In order to test for varying effects of partisanship in small versus large jurisdictions, we interact each party dummy variable with the measure of jurisdiction size (the natural log of votes cast in 2008). In Table 4 we find that partisanship is associated

with the policy attitudes of election officials only in large jurisdictions. The interaction terms will test whether these pattern hold when controlling for other predictors.

The second explanatory variable dealing with election administration is an index measuring the challenges officials face in recruiting poll workers. Election officials were asked a series of questions about the level of difficulty in meeting various poll worker recruiting goals (such as simply finding enough poll workers, or finding equal numbers of Democratic and Republican poll workers for each polling place). They evaluated each item on a scale from 1 (“not at all difficult”) to 4 (“very difficult”). The index is the mean response across nine of these items. The index has a reliability coefficient of .85. We expect that local officials facing more difficulties in recruiting poll workers will be more supportive of policies (particularly early voting, vote-by-mail, and vote centers) that can reduce the workload and need for poll workers.

Another explanatory factor examines the state policy environment. We hypothesize that local officials are more likely to support policies that they already enforce, rather than policies they might have to enforce in the future. Experience with a policy tends to promote acceptance. For the model of support for new voting methods, we include a dummy variable indicating whether a state has already implemented some type of early voting program, including voting by mail. For the model of support for easing voter registration, the model includes a dummy variable for states that already have Election Day registration. For the model of support for policies to combat voter fraud, the model includes a dummy variable for states that already have a photo identification requirement.

The penultimate independent variable measures each official's experience in election administration (in years). We hypothesize that officials who have served longer may have a stronger preference for the status quo. A final explanatory variable accounts for potential mode effects in our survey. As described above, most officials completed the survey via the Internet while others completed the survey on a printed copy and mailed it back. We include a dummy variable for the hard copy respondents to test whether either survey mode elicited more favorable policy attitudes.

[Table 5 about here]

The results of the regression analyses are presented in Table 5. There are three models presented – one for each of the policy index measures. We find that support for new voting methods is explained in part by jurisdiction size and difficulties in recruiting poll workers. Larger jurisdictions and officials who report more challenges in finding poll workers are more supportive of new voting methods. By comparison, poll worker difficulties appear to have no effect on attitudes toward policies easing registration or combating voter fraud.

One constant is that we find that election reform policies are more popular among election officials in states that have already adopted those policies. Local officials in states with early voting tend to evaluate new voting methods more positively than officials in states without early voting. Local election officials in states with Election Day registration produced more positive scores on the *more access* index. The index measuring support for two anti-fraud measures received higher scores in states that have

already adopted photo identification requirements. Finally, we find that administrative experience and survey mode have little to no impact on the policy views of election officials.

We also find that the interaction between partisanship and jurisdiction size only affects policy attitudes on the anti-fraud and easing registration measures. The views of local election officials toward new voting methods are unrelated to party affiliation. Since it is difficult to evaluate the interaction effects directly from the regression coefficients, we compute expected values of the *more access* and *combat fraud* indexes at varying levels of jurisdiction size and partisanship, based on the model estimates in Table 5 (see Tables 6 and 7).⁴ For jurisdiction size, we examine the median jurisdiction for each of the three size categories used in our stratified sampling. Thus, we compare a small jurisdiction (400 voters in 2008), a medium jurisdiction (4,600 voters in 2008) and a large jurisdiction (160,000 voters in 2008).

[Table 6 and 7 about here]

The estimates reveal minimal partisan differences in the policy attitudes of election officials in small and medium-sized jurisdictions. In contrast, there is substantial polarization in the attitudes of election officials in large jurisdictions on policies to reduce voter fraud (Table 7). Republican officials in large jurisdictions have a more favorable view of anti-fraud policies than Democratic election officials. The one-point difference

⁴ The expected value estimates in Tables 6 and 7 are computed using the Clarify software (Tomz, Wittenberg and King 2001; King, Tomz and Wittenberg 2000) with Stata version 11.

between Republicans and Democrats on anti-fraud policies is quite large considering that the index has a range of just four units.

We find smaller but statistically significant differences between Democratic and Republican officials in large jurisdictions on policies to ease access to voter registration (Table 6). We also find that constituency preferences are a significant predictor of policies to ease voter registration. Election officials who serve heavily Democratic constituencies tend to be more supportive of Election Day registration and universal registration. It is important to note that the impact of party affiliation in large jurisdictions holds even after controlling for constituency political preferences. This suggests that the differences between the policy attitudes of Republican and Democratic officials in large jurisdictions are indeed a function of their own partisanship.

Conclusion

Since the 2000 election, there has been a veritable smorgasbord of policy proposals that proponents claim will improve election administration. How do local election officials, those who actually implement the elections, perceive these proposals? Our analysis suggests that these proposals are viewed by local officials through a number of filters based upon the needs of each jurisdiction and the partisanship of the local election official. However, there is significant variation among election officials in their support, or lack thereof, for the proposals. This suggests that local officials would be hesitant to support single, broadly reaching policies that purport to improve elections.

Given that heterogeneity, we still find some interesting patterns that help to explain local election officials' opinions about various policy proposals. First, there is a degree of structure to the attitudes. Our factor analysis finds that local election officials shared similar opinions within three categories: Those that changed how votes were cast (*new voting*), those that increased access (*more access*), and those that decreased the potential for fraud (*fight fraud*). Clearly, the first category is less partisan, and more technological than the latter two, and perhaps the one in which there has been the most movement in recent elections.

Second, these structures are explained by a number of factors, including size of jurisdiction and partisanship. For the less controversial issues, those that change how voters cast their ballots, partisanship does not play a role in determining support by local elections officials. Their opinions are shaped by more technocratic aspects like the needs of the jurisdiction or the challenges that the jurisdiction faces. This makes sense; if an official is comfortable with the status quo, there is little incentive for her to change her behavior.

On the more controversial issues like increasing access and fighting fraud, partisanship plays a role, but not the overwhelming one that perhaps would be suggested by the conventional wisdom. On the issues of increasing access, traditionally Democratic issues, the partisan affiliation of the official certainly plays a role, but it depends on the size of the jurisdiction. An official in a relatively large jurisdiction is more in line with the national Democratic Party position than an official in a small one. There are a number of reasons as to why these differences emerge, and it is something we will explore in future analyses. Opinions of elections officials about combating voter fraud,

traditionally of interest to the Republican Party, hold similar dynamics for members of that party. Elections officials in larger jurisdictions are more likely to hew to the party line than are their colleagues in smaller localities.

Is there a partisan way to administer an election? Our answer appears to be sometimes – partisanship plays a role under certain conditions, but then again, many local election officials are not just mouthpieces for their party organizations. If the national parties have entered the policy debate – for example, on increasing access, or fighting fraud – local election officials in large jurisdictions tend to have opinions that reflect the positions of the national parties. In other words, the size of a jurisdiction conditions the effect of partisanship. This makes sense, as large jurisdictions are where the votes lie, and party organizations likely make sure that its election officials in those jurisdictions hold the appropriate views.

Appendix

Question Wording for Policy Attitudes

Please indicate how much you favor the following proposals for new ways of voting or conducting elections:

	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Neutral	Somewhat Favor	Strongly Favor
Allowing people to register on Election Day at the polls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting all elections by mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Automatically registering all citizens over 18 to vote	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Voting over the Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vote centers (where many polling places are consolidated to a small number of locations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requiring all people to show a government-issued photo ID when they vote	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delete names from voter lists if they do not match other state records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased use of early voting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Table 1
Selection Methods for Local Election Authority

Selection Method	Share of survey sample (2009)	Share of all local jurisdictions (2005)
Elected	54%	63%
Appointed	46%	37%
Party Affiliation		
Democrat	25%	26%
Republican	25%	20%
Other/Nonpartisan	51%	53%
	N=900	N=4,612

Note: Source for 2005 data on all local jurisdictions is Kimball and Kropf (2006).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Election Reform Policy Attitudes

Policy Question	Mean (standard deviation)
Allowing people to register on Election Day at the polls	2.3 (1.6)
Conducting all elections by mail	2.7 (1.5)
Automatically registering all citizens over 18 to vote	2.4 (1.4)
Voting over the Internet	2.1 (1.3)
Vote centers (where many polling places are consolidated to a small number of locations)	3.2 (1.4)
Requiring all people to show a government-issued photo ID when they vote	3.7 (1.3)
Delete names from voter lists if they do not match other state records	2.9 (1.2)
Increased use of early voting	3.3 (1.4)

Each policy is evaluated on a scale from 1 (“strongly oppose”) to 5 (“strongly favor”).

Table 3
Structure of Election Reform Policy Preferences

Factor loadings of policy preferences; promax rotation.

Policy	<i>Factor 1</i> <i>New voting</i>	<i>Factor 2</i> <i>More access</i>	<i>Factor 3</i> <i>Fight fraud</i>
All elections by mail	.547	.091	-.087
Using vote centers	.600	-.123	.034
More early voting	.525	-.015	.026
Internet voting	.440	.254	-.004
Election Day registration	-.135	.448	-.039
Automatic registration	.148	.443	.060
Require government photo ID to vote	-.000	-.090	.447
Delete names from voting list if not matching state records	-.035	.121	.447
Eigenvalue	1.24	.62	.42

N=678

Table 4
Mean Policy Attitudes by Partisanship and Size of Jurisdiction

Policy scale	Small (under 5,000 voters)			Large (more than 5,000 voters)		
	GOP	Dem	Other/NP	GOP	Dem	Other/NP
New Voting	2.4	2.7	2.5	3.1	3.3	3.1
More Access	1.9	1.8	3.0	1.7	2.1	2.3
Fight Fraud	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.6	2.9	3.3
N	95	53	230	100	131	125

Note: Cell entries are group means for responses averaged across the relevant policy items, rated on a scale from 1 (“strongly oppose”) to 5 (“strongly favor”). Shaded cells indicate where differences between Republican and Democratic election officials are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Table 5
Predictors of Election Reform Policy Attitudes

Independent Variables	New Voting	More Access	Combat Fraud
Total votes cast in 2008 (natural log)	.13*** (.03)	-.07** (.03)	-.05 (.03)
Challenges in recruiting poll workers	.24*** (.06)	-.03 (.07)	.11 (.07)
Obama proportion of 2008 presidential vote	-.44 (.28)	.58* (.31)	-.25 (.32)
Democratic election official	-.46 (.43)	-1.36** (.53)	.88* (.50)
Republican election official	-.27 (.39)	-.56 (.47)	-1.04** (.46)
Democratic official x votes cast in 2008 (natural log)	.05 (.05)	.13** (.05)	-.13** (.05)
Republican official x votes cast in 2008 (natural log)	.01 (.04)	.03 (.05)	.12** (.05)
Official experience (years of service)	-.005 (.004)	.001 (.004)	-.005 (.004)
Early voting state	.33*** (.07)	----	----
EDR state	----	1.06*** (.11)	----
Photo ID state	----	----	.34*** (.11)
Mail survey mode	-.08 (.08)	-.02 (.09)	-.08 (.09)
Constant	1.34*** (.28)	2.42*** (.35)	3.72** (.30)
N	708	708	704
Adjusted R ²	.21	.30	.06
Root MSE	.88	.99	1.00

Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.01, two-tailed

**p<.05, two-tailed

*p<.1, two-tailed

Table 6
Expected Attitudes on More Access Policies
By Partisanship and Size of Jurisdiction

Party Affiliation	Jurisdiction Size		
	Small (400 voters)	Medium (4,600 voters)	Large (160,000 voters)
Republican	1.9	1.8	1.6
Democrat	1.7	1.8	2.0
Other/NP	2.3	2.1	1.9

Note: Cell entries are expected scores on the more access index, based on the estimates in Table 5, model 2. Shaded cells indicate where differences between Republican and Democratic election officials are statistically significant at $p < .1$.

Table 7
Expected Attitudes on Anti-Fraud Policies
By Partisanship and Size of Jurisdiction

Party Affiliation	Jurisdiction Size		
	Small (400 voters)	Medium (4,600 voters)	Large (160,000 voters)
Republican	3.2	3.3	3.6
Democrat	3.6	3.2	2.6
Other/NP	3.5	3.4	3.2

Note: Cell entries are expected scores on the more access index, based on the estimates in Table 5, model 3. Shaded cells indicate where differences between Republican and Democratic election officials are statistically significant at $p < .05$.