

# When do Politicians Tie their Fates to Ballot Propositions?

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## Abstract

Increasingly, politicians and political parties in the United States have tied their own campaigns to ballot issues in an attempt to set the agenda and to provide themselves with popular issues to win elections. This paper asks what motivates politicians to tie their electoral fates to the fortunes of ballot propositions. In particular, I look at Twitter messages related to statewide ballot measures that governors posted on Twitter as a means of quantifying their involvement in ballot campaigns. I analyze both strategic considerations and ideological explanations. To test these theoretical arguments, this paper examines the Twitter activities of 47 incumbent governors over 319 ballot measures during the US 2014 and 2012 election cycles based on a data set which comprises daily observations over a period of 308 days. My logistic regression analysis finds that governors campaign in propositions associated with issues their party "owns", when they bargain with a state legislature controlled by the other party, and when there is a possibility for a dead heat on election day.

## Introduction

In 2014, California Governor Jerry Brown spent more money campaigning on Propositions 1 and 2 than on his reelection (Mehta, 2014). Those two measures were placed on the November's ballot by the state legislature. Brown funded and appeared in two television ads promoting a \$7.5 billion water bond and advocating for the passage of Proposition 2 which aimed to stabilize the rainy day budget (O'Connor, 2014). Politicians in the state have long endorsed and campaigned for ballot propositions. Governors, in particular, from Jerry Brown in 1994 to Arnold Schwarzenegger in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, have tied their campaigns to issues on the ballot (Alvarez & Butterfield, 2000; Bowler et al., 2006; Chandler & Kousser, 2008; Chávez, 1998; Kousser & McCubbins, 2005; Nicholson, 2005, 2003; Tolbert & Hero, 1998).

Increasingly, journalists, reporters, and political scientists report on the involvement of politicians in direct legislation campaigns in the United States (Hasen, 2000; Karp, 1998; Kousser & McCubbins, 2005; Smith, 2005; Smith & Tolbert, 2004, 2001, to name but a few). Beginning with the study by Hasen (2000) and Smith and Tolbert (2001) the literature on direct legislation has increasingly documented the involvement of political parties and politicians in ballot measure contests. Contrary to what the published literature had

argued (Lipow, 1996; Magleby, 1984), they show that candidates and elected officials are far from passive bystanders in these campaigns. A few years later, the work of Bowler and Donovan (2006) highlights that although political parties in the United States rarely sponsor their own initiatives, major party candidates do occasionally promote their candidacies by sponsoring initiatives. Linking ballot campaigns with elections for elected office, Nicholson (2005a) examines two ballot propositions associated with race (Propositions 187 and 209 in California) and the extent to which candidates have played the race card. While the involvement of politicians and political parties in ballot measures is not new, it seems to be increasing in recent years as political parties and candidates are all scouring the policy space to find niche issues for the purpose of affecting elections or rewarding or punishing candidates and parties (Kousser & McCubbins 2005). Dempsey (2007:144) contends that: “If initiatives were once a conversation between citizen proponents and the voters at large, the process is now significantly intermediated by political figures who actively use mass market advertising to influence the kind and quantity of those conversations.”

Collectively, this emerging body of empirical research illuminates a great deal about the campaigning surrounding ballot measures. Whether alerting us to the fact that politicians use ballot measures for advancing objectives which are not policy oriented or illustrating the various possibilities developed by politicians to support or oppose a measure (sponsoring a measure, raising money, mobilizing voters, publishing an argument in the Voter Information Guide, etc.), each one of these studies reveals something important about a new form of campaigning. What is missing in this research, however, is a large-N empirical analysis that covers several election cycles, several policy issues, and multiple states. Indeed, previous empirical research is mainly single-state and often report elaborately about the specificities of a referendum or initiative. Hence they have been limited in their ability to move beyond case studies. Unfortunately, they stopped short of discussing the factors that might drive politician participation in direct legislation campaigns. As a result, important questions remain unanswered:

- Which factors drive politicians to campaign in direct legislation?
- Which factors enhance or inhibit their behavior in those campaigns?
- What do politicians aim to accomplish with their involvement in these elections?

The purpose of this analysis is to complement those efforts and to fill the void in the existing literature by moving away from an examination grounded in single campaigns. The first question raised is the following: when do politicians campaign in direct legislation campaigns? After testing two approaches to explain politicians’ behavior, this paper turns to the decisions that politicians make when they take a position in ballot campaigns: what do those politicians hope to accomplish strategically with their position?

This paper is organized as follows. In the theoretical analysis, I lay out concrete two reasons why governors take position in ballot campaigns. In addition, I develop two strategic goals pursued by

politicians with their position taking. I then discuss the data employed in this analysis. The analysis section moves through a set of statistical tests. The conclusion summarizes the results and considers their implications.

## Theoretical perspectives & Hypotheses

### *Issue Ownership*

Following Smith and Tolbert (2001) and Smith (2005) who suggest that party organizations have become directly involved in ballot initiatives if there is a high level of ideological compatibility between the party's platform and the proposition with the aim of solidifying their collective ideology, I argue that politicians might be involved in campaigns associated with issues their respective party own. Issue ownership provides an intuitive explanation for why politicians would have an incentive to campaign in ballot campaigns by linking their positions with their ability to handle specific policies.

Decades after Petrocik (1996) documented the positive associations Americans made between parties and individual issues, the phenomenon of issue ownership continues to play a large role in scholarly research on political campaigns. In his extensive study of issue ownership, Egan (2013) focuses on what he calls 'consensus issues'. These issues are characterized by a broad national consensus regarding their ultimate goals (Egan 2013: 5). Most Americans – conservatives and liberals alike – want to pay lower taxes, have good schools for their children, live in a society where people have healthier lives and with low level of crimes. On the other hand, issue ownership, he argues, is of limited relevance to understand the politics of non-consensus issues (e.g. abortion, gun rights, school prayer, and gay rights). He identifies seventeen consensus issues<sup>1</sup> in from the 1970s to 2011 and finds that ownership is remarkably stable over time. For the most part, the issues owned by the two major parties in the 1970s are the same ones as they own today. The empirical work on issue ownership and political campaigns has largely focused on campaigns for *elected offices* and has asked whether candidates emphasize their owned issues in their campaigns for office. Yet, in this study, I test whether this hypothesis is true in the case of direct legislation campaigns.

Given the basic thrust of the issue ownership argument, it might be expected that politician will focus on issues owned by their party and ignore issues associated with the opposite party to maximize perceptions of their credibility over the campaign agenda. The competency advantage associated with issue ownership leads some politicians to participate in specific ballot campaigns, while others abstain from engaging.

**H1:** Politicians are expected to campaign in ballot measures associated with issues owned by their respective party.

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<sup>1</sup> Those include (in alphabetical order): crime, deficit, domestic security, the economy, *education*, *energy*, *the environment*, foreign affairs, *health care*, immigration, inflation, jobs, military, *poverty*, *Social Security*, taxes, and trade. The issues underlined are those owned by the Republican Party and in italics are those owned by the Democratic Party. For the remaining two issues – the economy and foreign affairs – ownership changed hands during this period and are therefore not considered as “owned” by either party.

Politicians might also use ballot campaigns as an additional avenue to pass legislation when they face hurdles in state legislatures. Studying the initiative in California, Dempsey (2007:153) argues that the initiative process might help politicians carry on the political struggles of their elected office by other means. Direct legislation provides politicians the power to promote and enact favored policy proposals when such ideas cannot be secured through traditional channels (Dempsey 2007: 153). In addition, the process can be used by politicians to circumvent the majority party or, in case where different parties control the legislature and the governor's office, the process offers one party a means to end-run the other. In his study of California propositions in the 1990s, Hasen (2000) argues that the fact that Republicans were the minority party in the state legislature for most of the 1990s helps explaining why they outspent Democrats more than two-to-one on initiative politics. He argues that the "majority party has less need than the minority party to build its strength through the initiative process" (Hasen, 2000:742). Similarly, empirical evidence reports on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's heavy reliance on the direct democracy process to make public policy (Chandler & Kousser 2008; Dempsey 2007; Garrett 2005; Westen 2008). Facing a Democratic-dominated legislature, the Republican Governor pursued those policies he could not win legislatively through the ballot box instead. In addition to the governor, state legislators also use the initiative process. In 2004, California Democratic Assemblyman Darrell Steinberg supported Proposition 63, a measure providing hundreds of millions of dollars annually for mental health services, because he had not been able to convince his colleagues in the state assembly to appropriate a substantial level of funding for mental health services through the traditional budget process (Garrett, 2005). Outside of California, Michigan Gov. John Engler, a Republican, sponsored in the 1990s a property tax reduction initiative to circumvent a hostile legislature (Zimmerman 1999: 92).

Based on the empirical works, I hypothesize that politicians in states where both the executive and the legislative branches are not controlled by the same party have an incentive to use the devices of direct legislation to advance and put forward their legislative agenda. Given that some politicians, mainly in California, have turned so overtly to the direct legislation process to pursue policy goals, I expect:

**H2:** Politicians in states with divided government to use the devices of direct legislation to a greater extent.

The second part of the analysis asks what politicians aim to accomplish strategically with their campaign activity. Direct legislation gives politicians the opportunity to link their campaigns directly to a ballot proposition, thus increasing their support among voters and drawing to the polls people who might not have gone without this added motivation. To the extent a politician becomes involved in a ballot campaign, it is reasonable to presume he or she has a substantial political interest in the measure. This interest might be personal, that is, increasing a politician's popularity among voters. Or, he or she might help a campaign committee to pass a proposition by adding his or her support.

### *Increase their Popularity*

Analyzing the complex combination of representative and direct democracy in the United States, Garrett (2005) describes three interactions of the phenomenon she calls “hybrid democracy”. The most relevant for this analysis is the fact that candidate elections, taking place simultaneously as ballot elections, can be influenced by initiatives on the ballot. She argues that political actors use ballot measures to frame their campaigns and highlight issues that they think will help them to win office, and to affect participation. Dempsey (2007: 151) argues that the most obvious advantage for candidate in proposing, promoting or opposing a ballot measure is the increase in his or her public visibility. There is no shortage of recent examples and scholars and reporters alike report on numerous candidates for political office using ballot measures to advance their campaigns. This tradition is well-established in California and dates back to the gubernatorial run of Secretary of State Jerry Brown in 1974. Kousser and McCubbins (2005) call initiatives designed to serve this political objective “crypto-initiatives” and claim that their use is likely to increase. Asking why would politicians avoid campaigning in direct legislation campaigns, Nicholson (2005a) raises the following argument: “it is crucial for parties and candidates to choose an initiative issue that voters support by a large margin, and the more solid the support behind it the better” (Nicholson, 2005: 92). Assuming that politicians are motivated by increasing their visibility and popularity, I expect

**H3:** Politicians to take position on ballot propositions that win by large margins or to oppose big losers.

### *Swing Propositions*

In addition to helping their own political fates, politicians take position to help secure a proposition’s victory. When support among the electorate for a proposition might swing in both directions, politicians might consider jumping into the campaign to help to pass the measure. That happened in 2012 when California Gov. Jerry Brown in the last weeks before the election aggressively campaigned for Proposition 30 as polls registered a decline in support for the initiative among voters (Nagourney, 2012). The initiative raised \$6 billion with sales tax increase and income tax surcharge on those earning more than \$250,000 a year. I therefore expect:

**H4:** Politicians to take positions on ballot propositions that end up being close races.

### **Data & Method**

Instead of choosing a narrow slice of time or a lone measure of direct legislation, as have most prior case studies, this analysis aims to be general, longitudinal, and comprehensive. The goal of this research is to record, rather than to judge, the roles of politicians in ballot campaigns. It will highlight what changes between states but leave it up to others to say whether these changes have been good or bad for direct democracy, and democracy in general.

## *Data*

To test these hypotheses, I collected data on all ballot measures put on the ballot in the 2012 and 2014 election cycles. The data set includes 319 ballot measures<sup>2</sup> which appeared on *statenide* ballot in 44 states. Ballot propositions going before the voters in the primary season and the general election were included. Many political scientists have focused exclusively on ballot initiatives, or those propositions put on the ballot by citizens. By doing so, they have ignored a part of the direct legislation action that is taking place during an election (i.e. legislative referendums) and for which politicians can add their name to the supporting or opposing sides. In this study, I consider both initiatives and referendums.

I now turn to the definition of the dependent variable of this study and describe how I operationalize it. Second, to estimate the motivations behind politicians' use of direct legislation, several factors must be taken into account; therefore, I tackle the variables that the literature has put forth either directly or indirectly.

### *Dependent Variable: Taking Positions on Twitter*

In this paper, I define politicians as governors. The emphasis on top state executives is pertinent given that direct legislation in the United States takes place at the state level<sup>3</sup>. States provide an excellent laboratory for comparative analyses of institutional processes (Erikson et al., 1993). I follow in that tradition using state-level analysis of direct legislation to draw conclusions about what drives politicians to campaign in direct legislation elections.

To gather data on state executive's involvement in ballot measures, I rely on Twitter (2015) accounts of incumbent governors in states with ballot measures in 2012 and 2014. Twitter provides interesting opportunities for online campaigning. Unsurprisingly, politicians in the United States have taken notice of the potential communication power of Twitter and have embraced microblogging themselves (Wallsten, 2014) to engage with supporters and the wider public (Gibson et al., 2008:19). All incumbent governors considered in this paper are registered with Twitter (as of November 2015)<sup>4</sup>. They all maintain active Twitter accounts. Following the identification of politicians holding accounts on Twitter, I extracted the totality of the tweets between the eve of election day and the first day of that year, as well as the exact date of each tweet. From this, governor's activity was gauged.

The primary advantage of using the Twitter profile of politicians rather than survey data, for instance, to test hypotheses about their strategies and roles in direct legislation campaigns is that the data describe what politicians did rather than what they said they did. The primary disadvantage is that taking position

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<sup>2</sup> Not included in the dataset were 5 measures put on the ballot in Nebraska given the unpartisan nature of its state legislature, 5 measures which were not triggered by the legislature or citizens (constitutional convention questions), and 14 measures from 2014 due to lack of data on the dependent variable.

<sup>3</sup> While direct legislation is available at the local level, it is not studied here.

<sup>4</sup> With the exception of North Carolina Gov. Bev Perdue, for which no official Twitter account was found. The only measure from North Carolina in 2012 was therefore dropped from the analysis.

reflects only a subset of politicians' activities in the direct legislation process, that is, activities that involve officially supporting or opposing one side of the ballot campaign. In addition, posting a 140-character long message is a low-effort activity as compared to other forms of campaign venues (rallies or town meetings, direct mail, phone banks).

The dependent variable is a simple binary measure of Twitter positioning. Categorized as position taking were both what Kwak et al. (2010) call in their typology 'singleton' (i.e., a statement from an user) and 'retweet' (i.e., a copy of someone's else tweet posted as one's own, sometimes with additional comments). Tweets in which governors explicitly affirmed their support for a specific measure (e.g. 'I'm proud to join the #NRA in support of Amendment 2. Let me tell you why'<sup>5</sup>) or urged voters to vote for a measure (e.g. 'Polls close at 8:00pm! For a stronger California, vote @YesOnProps1and2'<sup>6</sup>) were scored 1 as well as tweets mentioning governor's opposition (e.g. 'As an Alaskan and as a father, I am a strong \No\" vote on Ballot Measure 2. #akgov'<sup>7</sup>). 1 indicates that governors have used Twitter for endorsing one side of the campaign measure. Evidently, tweets posted after the election were not considered as position taking (e.g. 'Amendment Two passed thanks in part to strong support from BBA. This amendment was about creating jobs'<sup>8</sup>). Ballot campaigns with no position taking from governors were scored 0.

#### *Independent Variables*

I describe the measures of each of the concepts featured in the four hypotheses.

#### *Issue Ownership*

The phenomenon of issue ownership is based largely on survey questions. Questions have been asked on about every topic on American politics (Egan, 2013: 50). The basis of this analysis of issue ownership consists of two main sources: first, national survey questions from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, an online database of opinion surveys housed at the University of Connecticut, as well as the work by Egan (2013) on issue ownership. I relied on survey questions which asked about associations between issues and parties and took the following form: "Which party do you have more confidence in to handle the issue of... (issue X), the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?" For issues identified by Egan (2013) as consensus issues, I relied exclusively on his coding. The main reason for using his coding is relying on single or a few recent surveys available from the Roper Center leads to some counterintuitive results. For instance, a July 2013 survey asking a sample of national registered voters found 45 percent of them saying Democrats handle the issue of tax reform compared to 42 percent for Republicans. For those issues not covered in Egan's work (2013) I relied exclusively on polls asked to a representative sample of American adults or registered voters and available at the Roper Center.

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<sup>5</sup> Alabama's Governor Bobby Jindal, October 18, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> California's Governor Jerry Brown, November 4, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Alaska's Governor Sean Parnell, October 7, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Alabama's Governor Robert Bentley, November 13, 2012.

I categorized every measure as Democratic or Republican according to the reputations of the parties with regard to specific issues. If a clear majority of the respondents considers that a party does a better job at handling the issue of... (issue X), I code the variable 1 if the issue is owned by Democrats, and 2 if owned by Republicans. Some issues are not clearly owned by either party (transportation for instance) and were therefore coded 0. In addition, for some issues (such as state and local government or agriculture) I found no recent relevant survey questions addressing issue ownership and they were also coded 0. Table A in the appendix at the end of this paper describes the coding for ballot measures. Categorizing issues might be a thorny task. And in spite of the fact that several state constitutions provide that laws passed by initiative measures shall not contain more than a single subject (Dubois & Feeney, 1998; Waters, 2003), ballot measures may simultaneously concern several policy domains. And this is particularly the case for bond questions and questions associated with taxes. Regarding the latter, Nicholson (2005a: 45) highlights a potential problem in coding them and it appears “[b]ecause tax measures may involve multiple dimensions and target different groups”. For the categorization of propositions by policy issues, I made judgments based upon the National Conference of State Legislature’s database as well as the Ballotpedia’s website.

To grasp whether politicians campaign on ballot propositions associated with issues owned by their own party, I then create a trichotomous variable called issue affiliation. Measures whose subject is affiliated with a politician’s party are coded 1, issues owned by the opposite party are coded -1, whereas all the others for which there is no issue ownership party are coded 0. To provide an illustration of the coding strategy, consider Initiative 1351, a measure on the 2014 ballot in the state of Washington. The measure aimed to reduce class sizes and was categorized as ‘education’. With the governor’s mansion being occupied by a Democrat, the measure was thus coded 1 for issue affiliation.

### *Divided Government*

Similarly to previous work (Kousser & Phillips, 2012) I calculate the partisanship of the executive and legislative branches by using two measures. Using data from the National Conference of State Legislatures (2014), I first include a dichotomous variable that is coded 1 for divided government and 0 for unified government. This first measure does not capture nuances between state legislatures which are massively controlled by one party from legislatures where one party controls slightly more than half of the seats. For this reason, I also include the proportion of total seats in both state houses controlled by the governor’s party. Rather than choosing between two approaches, I compare the results from models using each operationalization.

### *Solid Margins of Support*

In order to assess whether politicians take positions on propositions supported by a majority of the electorate, I create a dichotomous variable *dichomargin* using electoral results from the National Conference of State Legislatures. The variable is coded 1 when ballot propositions were supported by 60 percent or more (wide margin victory) or by less than 40 percent (wide margin loss). In the other cases,



the variable is coded 0. In addition, I also include *margin* which is the percentage point advantage for the winning side.

### *Close Elections*

Based on election results from the National Conference of State Legislatures, I compile a binary measure of close elections. Propositions whose margin of victory is less than 10 percentage points are coded 1; all the others are coded 0.

### *Control Variables*

Before presenting the results, I describe a set of other characteristics that I wish to hold constant as control factors. First, I include a set of institutional variables: a dummy variable for the sponsor of the measure (citizen-sponsored versus elite-sponsored), a dummy variable controlling for the types of direct legislation available in the state (the initiative and referendum versus referendum only), the state's experience with direct legislation (measured as the number of ballot measures<sup>9</sup> on the state's ballot since direct legislation has been adopted in each individual state, and this, until the eve of the election), and a dummy variable for California<sup>10</sup>. To do so, I use data from the National Conference of State Legislatures, from the Initiative and Referendum Institute, and from Ballotpedia. In addition are included governor's demographic characteristics (age and gender using data from the National Governors Association), their strength measured by the number of days in office, their political experience measured as the number of years they have been holding elected office at the time of the ballot election using data from Project Vote Smart, and a dummy if they were running for reelection.

## **Analysis**

### ISSUE OWNERSHIP

Given the binary nature of the dependent variable, I use logistic regression models to test whether issue ownership shapes governor strategy to take positions on ballot measures. Table 1 shows the details. Column 1 shows the bivariate positive relationship between positioning and issue ownership although it fails to reach a statistically significant level<sup>11</sup>. When the governor's party owns the issue on the ballot (for instance, a Democratic governor with a measure dealing with education), her probability of taking position is 0.11. In cases where, on the hand, the issue is owned by the opposite's party (for instance, a proposition on veterans with a Democratic governor), the probability falls by 5 percentage points. When neither party

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<sup>9</sup> The total number of measures include initiatives, legislative referendums, popular referendums, and recalls.

<sup>10</sup> I originally included a dummy variable called West because it is the region with the greatest use of direct legislation. However, there was no statistically significant effect and I dropped it from the analysis.

<sup>11</sup> I ran separate logistic regression models to test whether incorporating those issues for which broad disagreements exist among Americans regarding desired end states (what Egan (2013) calls 'non-consensus issues'). Excluding these issues from the analysis returns similar results to those displayed here.

owns the issue (for instance, a measure on gun rights), the probability equals 0.08 (results not reported here).

Colum 6 in Table 1 shows a positive and statistically significant impact of the dummy variable controlling for California. Given the numerous examples reported in both the literature and in the media about politicians in California sponsoring, endorsing, campaigning, and funding ballot propositions, I include a dummy in the regression model. The results are largely consistent with the prior literature, but by exploring a longer stretch of time, put earlier case-study findings into a broader context. Holding other predictors constant, the probability for a governor in California to take position when the issue on the ballot is owned by her own party is 0.44. When the issue is owned by the opposite party, the probability goes down by 10 percentage points (0.34). Finally the probability is 0.24 when neither party owns the issue. The differences in terms of probabilities between California and the other 43 states highlight the specific relationship between California and direct legislation.

**Table 1: Issue Ownership**

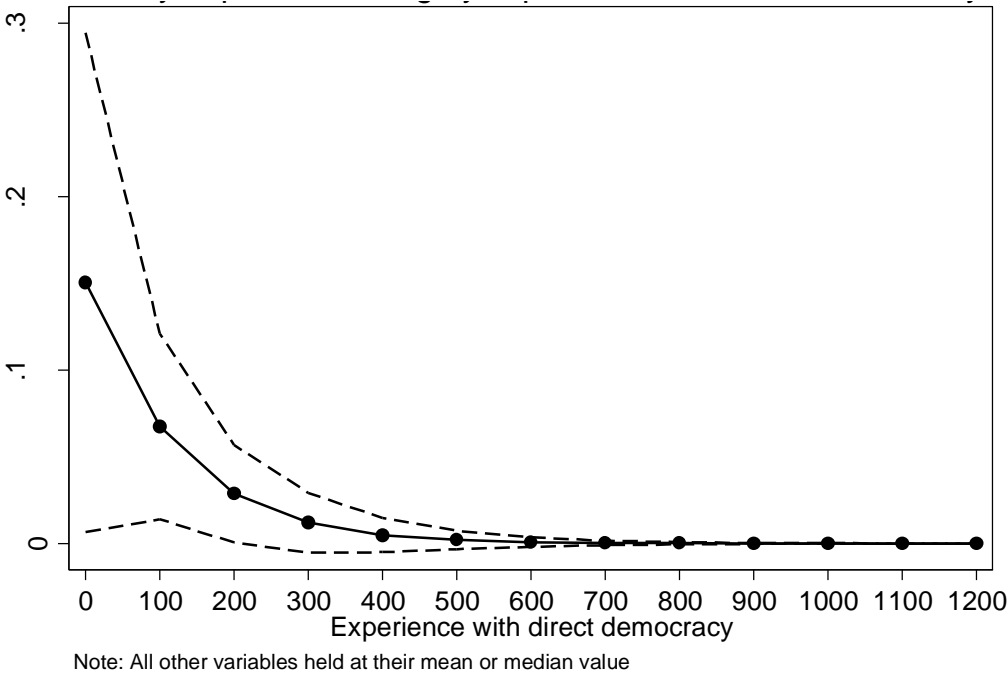
DV = Governors take position on Twitter (1 = yes; 0 = no)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Governor's party owns the issue	0.40 (0.29)	0.40 (0.29)	0.41 (0.30)	0.39 (0.29)	0.44 (0.29)	0.44 (0.30)
Citizen-sponsored measures		0.15 (0.43)				0.72 (0.60)
Initiative states			-0.77+			-0.61 (0.57)
Experience with direct democracy (log)				-0.37* (0.17)		-0.64** (0.22)
California (dummy)					1.13+ (0.61)	2.57** (0.83)
Constant	-2.42*** (0.21)	-2.46*** (0.25)	-1.92*** (0.31)	-0.63 (0.82)	-2.53*** (0.23)	0.58 (0.88)
<i>N</i>	319	319	319	319	319	319
pseudo <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.011	0.011	0.029	0.035	0.026	0.102
<i>AIC</i>	187.04	188.93	185.69	184.47	186.10	178.14

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Finally, Table 1 also shows the negative effect of the experience with direct democracy. As depicted in Figure 1, a high use of direct democracy decreases the probability for a governor to take position. This result is somewhat surprising given, among others, the case of California. The Golden State has held more than 1,200 initiatives, referendums and recalls since direct legislation was introduced in 1911 and is without any doubt a high-use state. And as the literature review has highlighted politicians in California do often campaign in direct legislation. Further research might provide a deeper understanding of this relationship.

**Figure 1: Probability of taking position by experience with direct democracy**



Finally, I control for governors’ personal characteristics (models not reported). Among the five predictors (political strength measured by days in office, age, gender, running for reelection, and political experience measured in years), gender appears to be the only predictor reaching a statistical significant level. Holding other constant, the probability for female governors to take positions is 8 percentage points lower than for male governors. In summary, this analyses show that, at least in the most two recent electoral cycles, issue ownership seems to play a role to explain politician campaigning by governors.

DIVIDED GOVERNMENT

Empirically I measure the presence of divided government using two variables. Contrary to my hypothesis, the share of seats held by members of the governor’s party a statistically significant impact on the propensity for governors to campaign in any of the six models<sup>12</sup> (see Table 2). This is even more evident in Figure 2. There is no relationship between the share of seats controlled by the governor’s party in both chambers and position taking. And California does not seem to be different than any other states in this respect. On the other hand, the dummy variable for divided government has a positive effect but not statistically significant. Among the controls, three variables seem to matter: the experience with direct democracy, whether the state allows for the referendum process only or both the initiative and the referendum, and the dummy variable for California.

<sup>12</sup> I tested for state fixed effects (results not reported here) and both of the measures of divided government failed to reach a statistically significant level.

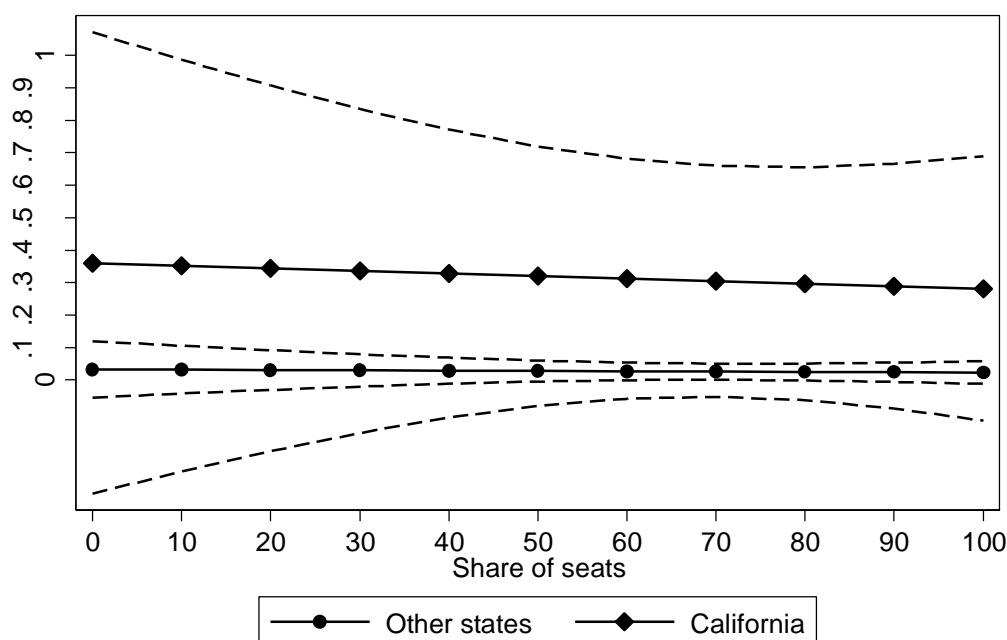
**Table 2: Divided Government**

DV = Governors take position in Twitter (1 = yes; 0 = no)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Divided government (dummy)	0.38 (0.67)	0.38 (0.67)	0.71 (0.68)	0.33 (0.69)	0.56 (0.69)	0.83 (0.75)
Share of seats controlled by the governor's party	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Citizen-sponsored measures		0.21 (0.44)				0.94 (0.62)
Initiative states			-0.86* (0.42)			-0.68 (0.60)
Experience with direct democracy (log)				-0.39* (0.17)		-0.70** (0.24)
California					1.23* (0.62)	2.80** (0.86)
Constant	-2.36+ (1.25)	-2.37+ (1.25)	-2.36* (1.18)	-0.33 (1.52)	-2.55* (1.30)	0.84 (1.68)
Observations	319	319	319	319	319	319
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.006	0.007	0.027	0.032	0.023	0.110
AIC	189.97	191.73	188.04	187.13	188.67	178.64

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.1, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

**Figure 2: Probability of position taking by share of seats in the legislature controlled by the governor's party**



Note: All other variables held at their mean or median value

To ease the interpretation, Table 3 reports some predicted probabilities. The probability for a governor in a divided government to take positions in ballot measures is 3 percentage points higher compared with a

governor in state where both the legislative and the governor’s office are controlled by the same party. In California, the difference in the two probabilities is 20 percentage points. In other words, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger had a 0.51 probability of taking position when he was facing a legislature controlled by Democrats. The probability for the current governor, on the other hand, drops to 0.31 given the unified character of the government. Note that the dummy variable controlling for California has, as expected, a positive and statistically significant effect. Holding the other variables constant, the differences in the two probabilities between a governor in California and a governor in one of the 43 other states is 45 percentage points when they bargain with a legislature controlled by the other party. This result confirms evidence reported in prior research suggesting that politicians in California have since Gov. Brown in the 1970s used the devices of direct democracy.

**Table 3: Predicted probabilities of position taking controlling for institutional characteristics**

VARIABLES	Predicted Probabilities
Governor in a state other than California with unified government	0.03+ (0.01)
Governor in California with unified government	0.31+ (0.20)
Governor in a state other than California with divided government	0.06+ (0.04)
Governor in California with divided government	0.51* (0.26)
Observations	319

Standard errors in parentheses  
+ p<0.1, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

NOTE: Categorical predictors at their median value and continuous predictors at their mean value

In another model, I add control variables associated with governors’ characteristics (age, gender, political experience, whether she was running for reelection, time in office). Gender seems to be the only variable to have an impact on the probability to take position: holding other variables constant, the probability for female governors to campaign for ballot measures on Twitter is 8 percentage points lower compared to their male counterparts. Holding age, time in office, and political experience at their mean values, Table 4 shows the predicted probabilities for a series of situations. The top four probabilities concern unified government, that is when both the governorship and both houses of the state legislature are controlled by the same party and the last four deals with divided government. The probability for a male governor not running for reelection and whose party does not control both the governorship and the legislature is 13 percentage points. The probability goes down by 9 percentage points if the governor is a woman.

**Table 4: Predicted probabilities of position taking controlling for demographic characteristics**

VARIABLES	Predicted Probabilities
Male governor not running for reelection in a unified government	0.09*** (0.02)
Male governor running for reelection in a unified government	0.07* (0.03)
Female governor not running for reelection in a unified government	0.02 (0.02)
Female governor running for reelection in a unified government	0.01 (0.01)
Male governor not running for reelection in a divided government	0.13** (0.04)
Male governor running for reelection in a divided government	0.11* (0.06)
Female governor not running for reelection in a divided government	0.02 (0.02)
Female governor running for reelection in a divided government	0.02 (0.02)
Observations	319

Standard errors in parentheses  
+ p<0.1, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

NOTE: All predictors at their mean value

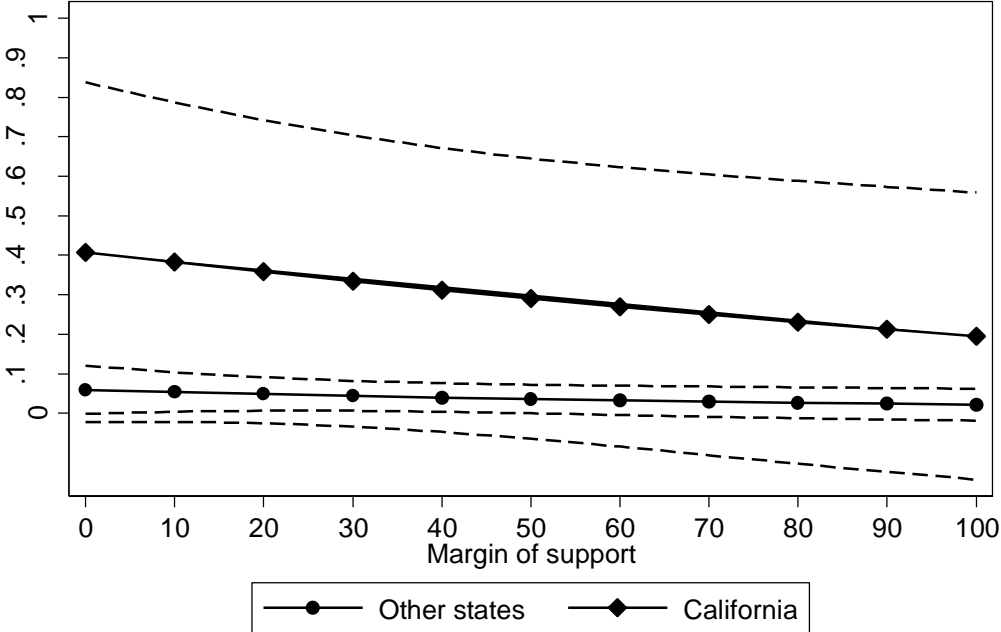
In the second part of the analysis, I turn to the strategic goals pursued by governors in taking position in ballot measures. The first hypothesis asks whether politicians try to advantage themselves and increase their popularity by getting on the bandwagon and supporting measures which are expected to win or to be defeated largely. The second hypothesis, on the other hand, tests whether politicians aim to help a specific ballot campaign assuming that voters who support them might also support the ballot campaign. Those are the questions I try to address in this section.

#### JUMPING ON THE BANDWAGON

The logistic regression estimate for the central variable –the margin of support – is small and not statistically significant (results not reported here). For the sake of parsimony, I only included the explanatory factors that reached a statistical significant level in the logistic regression model<sup>13</sup>. The findings on the control variables show that California again matters in terms of position taking. Holding other variables at their mean or median value, the probability for a governor in California to take position is 38 percentage points higher than in the other 43 states. Similarly as in the analyses for the first two hypotheses, the experience with direct democracy is negative and statistically significant. The type of states (initiative and referendum states versus referendum only) is no longer statistically significant.

<sup>13</sup> I ran separate regression models for the institutional and individual characteristics. In the institutional model, the experience with direct democracy, the dummy for California, and the dummy for the type of states are statistically significant. On the other hand, gender was the only individual control predictor to be significant.

**Figure 3: Probability of position taking by margin of support**



Note: All other variables held at their mean or median value

Given the influence of California in the data, Figure 3 distinguishes California from the other states included in this dataset and shows the predicted probabilities of taking position on ballot measures by margin of support. The dashed curves around the probabilities depict a 95 percent confidence interval. In the case of the group of 43 states, the horizontal line suggests the absence of any relationship between margin of support and position taking. In California, a negative effect is present: as the margin of support increases, the probability of taking position decreases. Holding the other variables at their mean or median value, the difference from a 5-percent margin of support to a solid margin of 40 is 10 percentage points in California (from 0.40 to 0.50) but there is almost no difference in the other states (from 0.07 to 0.05). This supports the contention that there is a relationship between margin of support and position taking, but the direction of the relationship is the opposite direction as expected. Governors in California do not seem to support with higher probability measures favored by a larger share of the electorate. This result foresees the findings for the last hypothesis, at least for California.

SWING PROPOSITION

Finally I turn to my last hypothesis. The results reported in Table 5 suggest a small positive impact of close elections on position taking. Yet, the coefficient is small and fails to reach a statistically significant level. Again, the coefficients for the dummy for California and the experience with direct democracy are statistically significant.

**Table 5: Close elections**

DV = Governors take position in Twitter (1 = yes; 0 = no)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Close elections (binary)	0.41 (0.46)	0.40 (0.47)	0.39 (0.47)	0.46 (0.47)	0.39 (0.47)	0.27 (0.49)
Citizen-sponsored measures		0.12 (0.43)				0.72 (0.60)
Experience with direct democracy (log)			-0.37* (0.17)			-0.64** (0.22)
Initiative states				-0.79+ (0.41)		-0.62 (0.57)
California					1.02+ (0.60)	2.44** (0.82)
Constant	-2.47*** (0.23)	-2.51*** (0.27)	-0.68 (0.83)	-1.97*** (0.33)	-2.57*** (0.25)	0.56 (0.91)
Observations	319	319	319	319	319	319
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.004	0.004	0.029	0.023	0.017	0.092
AIC	188.25	190.17	185.65	186.67	187.80	180.03

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<0.1, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

Finally I report predicted probabilities in the two groups of states. Holding other variables constant, the difference in the two probabilities is 8 percentage points in California whereas it is only 1 percentage points in other states. When a measure such as Proposition 30 in 2012 is on the ballot in California, the probability for the governor to take position is 0.49. The measure was close with 8.6 percentage points between voters supporting the measure and those opposing it. In contrast, the probability for governors in California to take position is 0.41 when the race is not close.

## Conclusion

In 2012, seven ballot measures appeared on the November ballot in Maryland. Maryland's governor, Martin O'Malley, a Democrat, supported three of them. Known as Maryland's version of the 'Dream Act', Question 4 grants in-state tuition rates to undocumented college students who attended Maryland high schools for at least three years and meet other conditions. Question 6 asked Marylanders whether to affirm a law that legalizes gay marriage in the state. The third measure supported by Gov. O'Malley concerned gambling expansion. The other measures on the 2012 ballot included measures on judiciary reforms, redistricting, and crimes committed by elected officials. Two years later, two measures were on the November 4, ballot. The first measure deals with the creation of a fund designated for road and bridge repairs and the second gives local jurisdictions the right to hold special elections to fill vacant executive posts were on the ballot. Gov. O'Malley abstained from taking any position on any of these two measures.



In light with the results of this research, issue ownership might explain the behavior of Maryland governor. Questions 4 and 6 are two issues (education and gay rights) owned by the Democratic party, and in this case, the party of Maryland governor. I hypothesize that governors have an incentive to take position when the issue on the ballot is owned by their respective party. On the other hand, neither party owns the issues of concerning redistricting, judiciary reforms, transportation, and elections. In addition, the issue of crime has long been associated with the Republican Party. Although the results are not statistically significant, the findings suggest a positive association between issue ownership and position taking. Owning the issue on the ballot matters for governor to tweet. This research also shows that governors have a higher probability to take position when they bargain with a legislature controlled by the other party. I find no impact of the share of seats controlled by the governor's party. In the second part of this analysis, I examine the strategic goals achieved by governors in taking position. The findings suggest that governors rather attempt to help to pass a specific measure than to increase their own visibility and popularity by supporting propositions with a solid margin of support. Throughout this analysis, a consistent and general pattern emerges and suggests a particular relationship between California politics and position taking in direct legislation campaigns. Governors in California have a higher probability to tweet about ballot measures than any of their counterparts in the other 43 states included in this analysis. The results suggest that California politics, at least with respect to politicians campaigning in direct democracy in the last two election cycles, is unique.

One must be cautious in interpreting these results. As depicted in Table B, the distribution of the dependent variable suggests that tweeting about ballot measures needs to be considered as a 'rare event'. Appropriate strategy should be adopted to tackle this phenomenon. In addition, further research needs to deepen our understanding of the negative association between position taking and a state's experience with direct legislation. A first avenue might be to use the approach adopted by Tolbert (1998) and divide the total number of measures by the number of years the state has had the process, and then multiply this number by two for the average number of measures appearing on the ballot every two-year.

The goal of this paper has been to advance the scholarly understanding of the role politicians play in ballot campaigns. In this analysis, I extended the empirical investigation of campaign activities to a novel and challenging environment – ballot elections. This paper presents the first large-N analysis of governors' campaign activity in ballot measure contests in the United States, showing that state executive officials can have a role in direct legislation. This contrasts with findings suggesting that parties and politicians are weakened by direct legislation and are therefore unable to use the mechanisms of direct legislation (Budge, 1996; Magleby, 1984).

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## Appendix

**Table A: List of Issues and Issue Ownership Coding**

Issues Owned by Democrats (=1)	Issues Owned by Republicans (=2)	Non-Owned Issues (=0)
Abortion	Crime	Agriculture
Civil Rights	Domestic Security	Budget
Energy	Immigration	Businesses
Environment	Military	Economy
Health	Taxes	Elections
Jobs		Gambling & Lotteries
Marijuana		Guns
Same-sex marriage		Hunting & Fishing
Social Security		Judiciary
		Legislatures
		State and local Government
		Transportation

**Table B: Distribution of Twitter Positioning**

Absence of Twitter Positioning ("nonevents")	292 27
<u>Twitter Positioning</u>	
Total number of cases	319

**Table C: List of Ballot Propositions 2012-2014, with coding for issues**

<b>Year</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Ballot Proposition</b>
2014	Alabama	ECON	End the assessment refund program for cotton producers
2014	Alabama	STATEGOV	Forbid the state's courts from recognizing foreign and other laws that violate the rights of the state's citizens
2014	Alabama	BUDGET	Increase the total amount of bonding authority
2014	Alabama	GUN	Protect the right to bear arms
2014	Alabama	LEGISLATURE	Require a two-thirds majority vote by state legislature to increase local education expenditures
2014	Alabama	HUNT	Clarify that the people have the right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife
2014	Alaska	ENERGY	Repeal bill that grants tax breaks to oil companies
2014	Alaska	MARIJUANA	Decriminalize marijuana in the state
2014	Alaska	POVERTY	Increase the minimum wage
2014	Alaska	ENVT	Authorize the legislature to prohibit mining projects if harmful to wild salmon in fisheries reserve
2014	Arizona	STATEGOV	Allow the state to opt out of federal laws deemed unconstitutional by the voters or the legislature
2014	Arizona	HEALTH	Use of investigational drugs on terminally ill patients
2014	Arkansas	STATEGOV	Require legislative review and approval of changes to state agencies' administrative rules
2014	Arkansas	ELECTIONS	Set threshold of 75% of required signatures to obtain additional time for signature collection
2014	Arkansas	LEGISLATURE	Extend length of time state legislators can stay in office
2014	Arkansas	ECON	Legalize the sale, manufacture, and transportation of alcohol statewide
2014	Arkansas	POVERTY	Increase the minimum wage
2014	California	MILITARY	Bond to provide multifamily housing to veterans
2014	California	STATEGOV	Require all local governments to comply with the California Public Records Act
2014	California	ENVT	Bond to fund water quality, supply, treatment and storage projects
2014	California	BUDGET	Alter the state's requirements for the budget
2014	California	HEALTH	Require approval of health insurance rate changes
2014	California	HEALTH	Drug and alcohol testing of doctors
2014	California	CRIME	Reduce the classification of most nonviolent crimes from a felony to a misdemeanor
2014	California	GAMBLING	Overturn Indian Gaming Compacts
2014	Colorado	ABORTION	Recognize unborn children as persons
2014	Colorado	GAMBLING	Educating fund funded by expanding limited gaming at horse racetracks
2014	Colorado	EDUCATION	Require meetings of the members of a board of education of a school to be open to the public
2014	Colorado	AGRICULTURE	Mandate labeling of certain food stuffs that contain genetically modified organisms
2014	Connecticut	ELECTION	Allow the legislature to expand early voting
2014	Florida	ENVT	Dedicate fund to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund
2014	Florida	MARIJUANA	Grant the right to use marijuana for certain medical conditions
2014	Florida	STATEGOV	Empower the governor to fill judicial vacancies
2014	Georgia	TAXES	Prohibit the state from increasing the maximum state income tax rate
2014	Georgia	CRIME	Empower the legislature to impose additional penalties or fees for the offense of reckless driving

2014	Georgia	TAXES	Extend a public property ad valorem tax exemption to student dormitories within the University of Georgia
2014	Hawaii	JUDICIARY	Require the disclosure of names of nominees for appointment to state courts
2014	Hawaii	ECON	Empower the legislature to issue bonds in order to offer loans to agricultural enterprises
2014	Hawaii	JUDICIARY	Increase the mandatory age of retirement for judges
2014	Hawaii	EDUCATION	Spend public funds for private early childhood education programs
2014	Hawaii	ENVT	Issue bond in order to offer loans to dam and reservoir owners
2014	Idaho	STATEGOV	Empower the legislature to delegate rulemaking authorities to executive agencies
2014	Illinois	CRIME	Strengthen the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights
2014	Illinois	ELECTION	Right to vote amendment
2014	Illinois	POVERTY	Increase the minimum wage
2014	Illinois	HEALTH	Require prescription birth control to be covered in prescription drug coverage health insurance plans
2014	Illinois	TAXES	Increase tax on income greater than one million by 3 percent
2014	Kansas	GAMBLING	Permit charitable raffles
2014	Louisiana	HEALTH	Give constitutional protection to the Medical Assistance Fund
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Provide for the redemption period for abandoned or hazardous property sold at tax sale
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Change the maximum number of executive branch departments of the state government
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Add members to the state's Wildlife and Fisheries Commission
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Authorize the city of New Orleans to sell property
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Limit when tax rebates can be altered by the legislature
2014	Louisiana	HEALTH	Create a Hospital Stabilization Fund
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Permit authorized agents to assist local governments in the tax sale process
2014	Louisiana	TRANSPOR	Create a State Infrastructure Bank for transportation projects
2014	Louisiana	JUDICIARY	Remove the mandatory retirement age from judicial offices
2014	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Authorize Orleans to levy an additional ad valorem tax for fine and police protection
2014	Louisiana	MILITARY	Provide for eligibility for disabled veterans and their spouses for certain exemptions from ad valorem taxes
2014	Louisiana	ENVT	Create an Artificial Reef Fund to manage seafood
2014	Louisiana	POVERTY	Exclude owners who are disabled from the requirement that they annually certify their income
2014	Maine	HUNTING	Prohibit the use of dogs, bait or traps when hunting bears
2014	Maine	AGRICULTURE	Bond to create an animal and plant disease and insect control facility
2014	Maine	ECON	Bond to ensure loans to small businesses
2014	Maine	HEALTH	Bond to build a research center for genetic solution to cancer and disease of aging
2014	Maine	HEALTH	Bond to modernize laboratory specializing in tissue repair and regeneration
2014	Maine	ENVT	Bond to insure clean water
2014	Maine	ECON	Bond to facilitate growth of business
2014	Maryland	TRANSPOR	Create a transportation trust fund for state transportation system
2014	Maryland	ELECTIONS	Permit a county charter to provide for filling vacancies in county executive offices through special elections
2014	Massachusetts	ENERGY	Repeal gas tax indexing

2014	Massachusetts	ENVT	Expand the state's beverage container recycling law
2014	Massachusetts	GAMBLING	Expand prohibition on gaming
2014	Massachusetts	JOBS	Entitle employees to earn and utilize paid sick days
2014	Michigan	TAXES	Eliminate the personal property tax
2014	Michigan	HUNTING	Overturn a law allowing the state to establish wolf hunting seasons
2014	Michigan	HUNTING	Overturn a law allowing the Natural Resources Commission to designate game species
2014	Mississippi	HUNTING	Establish the right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife
2014	Missouri	AGRICULTURE	Guarantee the right of citizens to engage in agricultural production and ranching practices
2014	Missouri	GUNS	Establish the right to keep and bear arms
2014	Missouri	TAXES	Establish a temporary increase on sales tax to fund transportation projects
2014	Missouri	GAMBLING	Create new lottery ticket with profit going toward veterans' programs
2014	Missouri	DOMSEC	Protect electronic data against unreasonable searches
2014	Missouri	STATEGOV	Requirements on governor's budgeting authority
2014	Missouri	CRIME	Render prior criminal acts admissible in court during child sexual abuse trials
2014	Missouri	EDUCATION	Implement performance evaluation for teachers
2014	Missouri	ELECTIONS	Establish a six-day-long early voting period
2014	Montana	STATEGOV	Rename the position of the state auditor
2014	Montana	ELECTION	Close late voter registration the Friday before election day
2014	Nevada	JUDICIARY	Create an intermediate appellate court
2014	Nevada	TAXES	Remove the cap in the taxation of minerals
2014	Nevada	ECON	Implement a margins tax on businesses for public schools
2014	New Jersey	CRIME	Provide for pretrial detention of certain criminal defendants
2014	New Jersey	ENVT	Dedicate 6 percent of corporate business tax revenues to open space preservation
2014	New Mexico	ELECTIONS	Provide that school election shall be held on different dates from partisan elections
2014	New Mexico	EDUCATION	Allocate one position on the New Mexico State School Board of Regents to a student representation
2014	New Mexico	JUDICIARY	Require for filing candidacy declarations for judicial retention elections
2014	New Mexico	STATEGOV	Allow certain counties to become "urban counties"
2014	New Mexico	BUDGET	Invest in the Land Grant Fund
2014	New Mexico	BUDGET	Bond to improve senior citizen facilities
2014	New Mexico	EDUCATION	Bond for expenditures for school and libraries
2014	New Mexico	EDUCATION	Bond for school
2014	New York	STATEGOV	Create a redistricting commission
2014	New York	LEGISLATURE	Allow for electronic version of bills
2014	New York	EDUCATION	Bond to fund technology upgrades in schools
2014	North Carolina	CRIME	Allow criminal defendants to waive jury trial
2014	North Dakota	ELECTIONS	Move the filing deadline up for initiated petitions
2014	North Dakota	ABORTION	Declare that life begins at conception
2014	North Dakota	TAXES	Prevent the imposition of mortgage, sales or transfer taxes on the mortgage or transfer of property
2014	North Dakota	EDUCATION	Abolish elected State Board of Higher Education
2014	North Dakota	ELECTION	Require measures that have significant fiscal impacts on the state to be voted on at a general election

2014	North Dakota	ENVT	Redirect some of the state's oil tax revenues to conservation efforts
2014	North Dakota	CIVILRIGHTS	Give equal parental rights and responsibilities in child custody case
2014	North Dakota	HEALTH	Remove requirement that majority ownership in a pharmacy be held by a registered pharmacist
2014	North Dakota	EDUCATION	Require school classes to begin after Labor Day
2014	Ohio	BUDGET	Bond to Fund Public Infrastructure Capital Improvements
2014	Oklahoma	MILITARY	Permit a disabled veteran to sell his or her homestead and acquire another property
2014	Oklahoma	STATEGOV	Permit dual office holding
2014	Oklahoma	MILITARY	Establish a homestead exemption for the surviving spouse of military personnel
2014	Oregon	EDUCATION	Create fund for Oregonians pursuing post-secondary education
2014	Oregon	JUDICIARY	Permit employment of state judges by public universities as teachers
2014	Oregon	CIVILRIGHTS	Provide 'driver card' without requiring proof of legal presence in the United States
2014	Oregon	CIVILRIGHTS	Guarantee equal rights regardless of sex
2014	Oregon	ELECTIONS	Create an open, top-two primary
2014	Oregon	MARIJUANA	Legalize recreational marijuana
2014	Oregon	AGRICULTURE	Mandate labeling of certain foodstuffs that contain genetically modified organisms
2014	Rhode Island	GAMBLING	Authorize casino gaming in Newport
2014	Rhode Island	GAMBLING	Prohibit changes in location of gambling without the approval of voters
2014	Rhode Island	EDUCATION	Bond to construct a new College of Engineering building
2014	Rhode Island	EDUCATION	Bond to fund artistic, historic and cultural centers
2014	Rhode Island	TRANSPORT	Bond to fund renovations to mass transit hub infrastructure
2014	Rhode Island	ENVT	Bond for environmental and recreational purposes
2014	South Carolina	GAMBLING	Legalize raffles conducted by non-profit organizations
2014	South Carolina	STATEGOV	Require that the governor appoint the Adjutant General
2014	South Dakota	GAMBLING	Authorize roulette, keno, and craps in Deadwood
2014	South Dakota	HEALTH	Allow any healthcare provider to join an insurance company's network
2014	South Dakota	POVERTY	Increase the state minimum wage
2014	Tennessee	ABORTION	Empower the legislature to amend statutes regarding abortion
2014	Tennessee	STATEGOV	Empower the governor to appoint judges
2014	Tennessee	TAXES	Prohibit state taxation of payroll on earned personal income
2014	Tennessee	GAMBLING	Empower the legislature to permit lotteries for charity
2014	Texas	TRANSPORT	Divert half of the revenue derived from oil and gas taxes to the State Highway Fund
2014	Utah	STATEGOV	Modify the qualification for members of the State Tax Commission
2014	Utah	STATEGOV	Modify the term of office of a person appointed to fill a vacancy in the office of Lieutenant Governor
2014	Utah	STATEGOV	Authorize the Lieutenant Governor, State Auditor, and State Treasurer to appoint legal counsel
2014	Virginia	MILITARY	Exempt property from taxation for any surviving spouse of a member of armed forces
2014	Washington	MARIJUANA	Eliminate agricultural tax preferences for marijuana industry
2014	Washington	TAXES	Eliminate leasehold excise tax on tribal property
2014	Washington	EDUCATION	Reduce class size
2014	Washington	GUN	Prohibit background checks for firearms recipients
2014	Washington	GUN	Apply background checks to all firearm sales



2014	West Virginia	TAXES	Exempt from property taxation youth organization
2014	Wisconsin	TRANSPORT	Create Transportation Fund
2014	Wyoming	EDUCATION	Allow the governor to appoint nonresidents to serve as University of Wyoming trustees
2012	Alabama	HEALTH	Transfer from gas Trust Fund to General Fund for Medicaid Budget
2012	Alabama	ENVT	Extend payments to Forever Wildcard Trust
2012	Alabama	BUDGET	Allow the state to issue bonds of no more than \$750 millions
2012	Alabama	STATEGOV	Define the Stockton Landmark District
2012	Alabama	CIVILRIGHTS	Remove references to segregation of schools in the state constitution
2012	Alabama	STATEGOV	Transfer the assets of the city of Prichard to the city of Mobile
2012	Alabama	HEALTH	Prohibit mandatory participation in any healthcare system
2012	Alabama	JOBS	Allow for the use of secret ballots in union votes
2012	Alabama	LEGISLATURE	Forbid increase in legislator compensation during term in office
2012	Alabama	TAXES	Allow the legislature to implement business privilege tax on corporations
2012	Alabama	ECON	Amend the authority of the legislature concerning banks
2012	Alabama	STATEGOV	Prohibit any municipality outside Lawrence County from imposing any municipal ordinance
2012	Alaska	TAXES	Increase the maximum residential property tax exemption
2012	Alaska	ENVT	Establish an Alaska Coastal Management Program
2012	Alaska	TRANSPORT	Bond for transportation projects
2012	Arizona	CRIME	Prohibit crime victims from being subject to a claim for damages for causing death or injury
2012	Arizona	JUDICIARY	Modify the Appellate and Trial Court Commissions
2012	Arizona	ECON	Give tax break to businesses with newly acquired equipment
2012	Arizona	TAXES	Limit annual growth in limited property value
2012	Arizona	BUDGET	Establish a Permanent Fund
2012	Arizona	STATEGOV	Allow the state to exchange state trust land for other public land
2012	Arizona	STATEGOV	Declare Arizona's sovereign and exclusive authority
2012	Arizona	ELECTIONS	Implement a top-two style open primary system
2012	Arizona	TAXES	Renew the sales tax increase
2012	Arkansas	TRANSPORT	Levy a temporary sales and use tax for state highways and bridges
2012	Arkansas	STATEGOV	Authorize cities and counties to create districts for the purpose of financing sales tax
2012	Arkansas	MARIJUANA	Authorize the use of medical marijuana
2012	California	LEGISLATURE	Limit legislators' terms in office
2012	California	TAXES	Impose additional tax on cigarettes for cancer research
2012	California	TAXES	Temporarily increase the state sales tax to pay for programs funded in the state budget
2012	California	BUDGET	Establish a two-year state budget cycle
2012	California	ELECTIONS	Prohibit political contributions to state and local candidates on corporations and unions
2012	California	TRANSPORT	Allow auto insurance companies to set prices based on a driver's history of insurance coverage
2012	California	CRIME	Repeal death penalty
2012	California	CRIME	Increase penalties for human trafficking and sex slavery
2012	California	CRIME	Impose life sentence
2012	California	AGRICULTURE	Require labelling on food if made with genetic material

2012	California	EDUCATION	Increase tax on earnings for education and early childhood programs
2012	California	ENERGY	Require business to pay income taxes based on their sales to fund clean energy projects
2012	California	ELECTIONS	Prevent the revised Senate District Plan to take effect unless approved by voters
2012	Florida	HEALTH	Prevent penalties from not purchasing healthcare coverage
2012	Florida	MILITARY	Allow for property tax discount for disabled veterans
2012	Florida	BUDGET	Replace the existing state revenue limitation
2012	Florida	TAXES	Amend commercial and non-homestead property taxes
2012	Florida	LEGISLATURE	Give the legislature increased control over the judicial branch
2012	Florida	ABORTION	Prohibit public funding of abortions
2012	Florida	CIVILRIGHTS	Protect religious freedom
2012	Florida	MILITARY	Authorize homestead property tax exemption for surviving spouse of military veterans
2012	Florida	TAXES	Provide tax exemption on personal property
2012	Florida	POVERTY	Authorize additional tax exemptions on homes of low-income seniors
2012	Florida	EDUCATION	Revise the selection process for student member of Board of Governors of the State University System
2012	Georgia	EDUCATION	Provide for the creation of public charter schools
2012	Georgia	STATEGOV	Give the State Properties Commission the authority to enter in multiyear lease agreements
2012	Idaho	HUNTING	Preserve the rights to hunt, fish, and trap
2012	Idaho	EDUCATION	End the practice of issuing renewable contracts for school staff
2012	Idaho	EDUCATION	Provide for teacher performance pay based
2012	Idaho	EDUCATION	Require computing devices and online courses for high school graduation
2012	Idaho	CRIME	Limit the Board of Correction's authority to the supervision of felony offenders
2012	Illinois	SOCIALSEC	Require a three-fifths vote from any governing body to change pension benefits for their public employees
2012	Kansas	TAXES	Alter the state's property tax on boats
2012	Louisiana	HEALTH	Prohibit monies in the Medicaid Trust Fund from being used for other purposes
2012	Louisiana	GUN	Protect the right to bear arms
2012	Louisiana	SOCIALSEC	Require public notice for legislation changing public employment retirement systems
2012	Louisiana	MILITARY	Exempt from ad valorem taxation the spouse of a deceased veteran
2012	Louisiana	CRIME	Deny retirement benefits to any public employee who commits a felony related to their office
2012	Louisiana	TAXES	Authorize the city of New Iberia to grant contracts for the exemption of property annexed by the city
2012	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Restructure the composition of constitutional boards and commissions
2012	Louisiana	TAXES	Authorize the granting of ad valorem tax exemption contracts for certain business
2012	Louisiana	STATEGOV	Establish certain requirements prior to creating special districts
2012	Maine	SAMESEX	Legalize same-sex marriage in the state
2012	Maine	EDUCATION	Authorize a bond for higher education
2012	Maine	ECON	Authorize bonds to support Maine's natural resource-based economy
2012	Maine	TRANSPORT	Authorize bond to invest in transportation infrastructures
2012	Maine	ENVT	Authorize bond for wastewater and drinking water
2012	Maryland	JUDICIARY	Require judges to be admitted to practice law in the state

2012	Maryland	JUDICIARY	Change the qualification for judges of the Orphans' Court
2012	Maryland	CRIME	Specify condition under which elected officials convicted of a felony is to be removed from office
2012	Maryland	EDUCATION	Establish requirements for in-state tuitions rates at community colleges
2012	Maryland	ELECTIONS	Approve congressional redistricting plan of 2011
2012	Maryland	SAMESEX	Allow same-sex couples to obtain a civil marriage license
2012	Maryland	GAMBLING	Allow the construction of a new casino
2012	Massachusetts	BUSINESS	Make motor vehicle repair information available
2012	Massachusetts	HEALTH	Allow physician to prescribe medication at a terminally ill patient's request
2012	Massachusetts	MARIJUANA	Allow for the use of medical marijuana in the state
2012	Michigan	STATEGOV	Expand powers for emergency managers
2012	Michigan	JOBS	Grant the right to organize through labor unions
2012	Michigan	ENVT	Establish a minim standard for renewable energy
2012	Michigan	HEALTH	Provide training for in-home care workers
2012	Michigan	TAXES	Prohibit state government from imposing new taxes
2012	Michigan	TRANSPORT	Require voter to approve any new bridge or tunnel from the state to Canada
2012	Nevada	LEGISLATURE	Provide that the legislature convene a special session
2012	New Hampshire	TAXES	Prohibit personal income tax
2012	New Hampshire	JUDICIARY	Make the chief justice of the state Supreme Court the administrative head of all the courts
2012	New Mexico	JUDICIARY	Add members to the Judicial Standards Commission
2012	New Mexico	STATEGOV	Increase the qualification for Public Regulation Commissioners
2012	New Mexico	STATEGOV	Provide authority to regulate corporations to the Secretary of State
2012	New Mexico	STATEGOV	Establish an insurance nominating committee
2012	New Mexico	STATEGOV	Change the qualification of the chief public defender
2012	New Mexico	BUDGET	Bond for senior citizen facility improvement
2012	New Mexico	EDUCATION	Bond for library resource acquisition and construction
2012	New Mexico	EDUCATION	Bond for higher education capital improvements
2012	North Dakota	LEGISLATURE	Prohibit the appointment of a member of the Assembly to a state office
2012	North Dakota	TAXES	Eliminate property and poll taxes
2012	North Dakota	CIVILRIGHTS	Prohibit the government from burdening a person from religious liberty
2012	North Dakota	EDUCATION	Allow the University of North Dakota to drop the Fighting Sioux nickname
2012	North Dakota	TAXES	Eliminate the annual poll tax
2012	North Dakota	STATEGOV	Require the governor and other executive officials to take an oath of office
2012	North Dakota	AGRICULTURE	Guarantee the right of farmers and ranchers to engage in farming and ranching practices
2012	North Dakota	BUSINESS	Prohibit smoking in public places
2012	North Dakota	CRIME	Make animal cruelty a class C felony
2012	Ohio	STATEGOV	Create a State-Funded Commission to draw districts
2012	Oklahoma	TAXES	Prevent annual increases in property taxes
2012	Oklahoma	CIVILRIGHTS	Prohibit the state from granting affirmative action programs
2012	Oklahoma	CRIME	Modify the authority of the Pardon and Parole Board
2012	Oklahoma	ENVT	Bond for water resource and sewage treatment programs

2012	Oklahoma	STATEGOV	Create department to provide for public welfare for state residents
2012	Oklahoma	TAXES	Abolish property taxes on intangible personal property
2012	Oregon	STATEGOV	Grant the governor the constitutional authority to declare and respond to natural disaster
2012	Oregon	STATEGOV	Make wording changes in the Oregon constitution
2012	Oregon	TAXES	Prohibit real estate transfer taxes
2012	Oregon	MARIJUANA	Allow personal marijuana
2012	Oregon	HUNTING	Prohibit commercial fishing with gillnets
2012	Oregon	GAMBLING	Authorize the establishment of privately-owned casinos
2012	Oregon	GAMBLING	Authorize privately-owned wood village casino
2012	Oregon	TAXES	Phase out existing inheritance taxes on large estates
2012	Oregon	EDUCATION	Allocate corporate income and excise tax to public education
2012	Rhode Island	GAMBLING	Allow casino gambling at the Twin River slot venue
2012	Rhode Island	GAMBLING	Authorize casino games at Newport Grand
2012	Rhode Island	EDUCATION	Bond for renovations and modernization of academic buildings
2012	Rhode Island	MILITARY	Bond for the construction of a new Veterans' Home
2012	Rhode Island	ENVT	Bond to finance drinking water infrastructure projects
2012	Rhode Island	ENVT	Bond for environmental and recreational purposes
2012	Rhode Island	POVERTY	Bond for affordable housing
2012	South Carolina	STATEGOV	Require the governor to select running mate for lieutenant governor
2012	South Dakota	BUSINESS	Change the constitution regarding certain provisions relating to corporations
2012	South Dakota	LEGISLATURE	Repeal certain reimbursement restrictions for travel by legislators
2012	South Dakota	BUDGET	Replace the existing method for Cement Trust Fund Distribution
2012	South Dakota	BUDGET	Require a balanced budget
2012	South Dakota	TAXES	Increase state general sales and use taxes
2012	South Dakota	ECON	Establish the Large Project Development Fund
2012	South Dakota	EDUCATION	Reform teacher requirements and bonuses
2012	Utah	BUDGET	Require a portion of the revenue from state's severance taxes to be deposited into the permanent state trust fund
2012	Utah	MILITARY	Exempt military personnel from paying property taxes
2012	Virginia	STATEGOV	Limit instances when private property could be taken for public use
2012	Virginia	LEGISLATURE	Allow the legislature to delay the start of its veto session
2012	Washington	TAXES	Require two-thirds legislative majorities for tax increases
2012	Washington	EDUCATION	Create a public charter school system
2012	Washington	SAMESEX	Allow same-sex couples to marry
2012	Washington	MARIJUANA	Regulate marijuana
2012	Washington	BUDGET	Include the recommendations of the commission on state debt
2012	Washington	EDUCATION	Provide authority to state research universities to invest funds
2012	Washington	BUDGET	Improve the sustainability of the state budget
2012	Washington	ENVT	Delay the expiration of the pollution liability insurance agency's funding
2012	Colorado	MARIJUANA	Regulate marijuana

2012	Colorado	ELECTIONS	Limit campaign contributions and spending
2012	Colorado	JOBS	Change aspects to the state personnel system
2012	Kentucky	HUNTING	Protect the right to hunt and fish
2012	Minnesota	SAMESEX	Ban same-sex marriage
2012	Minnesota	ELECTIONS	Require people to present photo identification to vote
2012	Montana	ELECTIONS	Prohibit corporate contributions and expenditures in elections
2012	Montana	MARIJUANA	Approve a legislative revision of 2004 concerning medical marijuana
2012	Montana	ABORTION	Revise parental notification of abortion and judicial bypass
2012	Montana	IMMIGRATION	Prohibit state service to people who have unlawfully entered the United States
2012	Montana	HEALTH	Prohibit health insurance purchase requirement