Primary Election Competitiveness in State Legislative Elections, 2012-2020

Presented to:

The State of the Parties Conference
Akron, OK
November 4,5 2021

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Abstract

Election competitiveness is a significant measure of electoral health in a democracy. Competitive elections suggest an engaged public and the perceived value of seeking office. Competitive elections contribute to the overall legitimacy of a democratic government. Conversely, uncompetitive elections are a sign of electoral distress. When the public does not value participation and electoral rules hinder it, democracies are challenged.

Overall, the competitiveness of U.S. elections has decreased over time. Fewer competitive general election campaigns exist today than over the last forty years (Abramowitz et. al 2006; Keyser and Lindstadt 2015), and a concomitant increase in uncontested elections has followed (Squire 1999, 2000). Most general electoral competitiveness now just in open seats (Gaddie and Bullock 2000; Barnes et al 2017).

U.S. primaries have been shown to be even less competitive than their general counterparts. Primary elections have the lowest turnout of all elections, suggesting the least public engagement of elections. Over the course of the 20th Century, primary competitiveness declined precipitously. (Ansolabehere et. al 2006) Much has changed since the publication of Ansolabehere and colleagues' work on primary competitiveness, however. In 2010, Republican splinter group the TEA Party emerged with the express intent of pushing the GOP further right through a plan of primary election challenges to more moderate incumbent Republicans. Further, the twin decisions of *Citizens United vs. FEC* and *SpeechNOW vs. FEC* opened up new avenues for outside groups to fund elections. Klump and colleagues (2012) found that the decisions introduced new money flows into campaigns and were beginning to alter the landscape of primary elections. With six election cycles since those pivotal decisions, enough time has passed to determine if primary elections remain uncompetitive or if a new era indeed dawned post-*Citizens United*.

This manuscript will use primary election data from state and federal elections from 2010 to 2020 to determine if primary competitiveness has indeed changed since the end of the 20th Century. Preliminary findings suggest that, as general elections became less competitive over time, outside groups found primary elections as a better environment for recruiting and supporting candidates which in turn has increased primary election competitiveness.

Introduction

Electoral competitiveness is one of the significant measures of a healthy democracy. Not only must elections be free and fair, there must be a robust base of willing and able competitors to enter the electoral arena. When few seek to run for office or candidates who run are not competitive, the result is a weaker democratic accountability mechanism. Competitive elections are the products of having engaged publics, and they highlight the public's perception of there being value in seeking office.

The corollary is also salient for the health of a democracy. An uncompetitive electoral environment suggests that the public does not value participation OR that the electoral structure hinders that participatory impulse. If citizens are not compelled to contest elections, or if the public believes that the winners are decided by factors other than the candidates' personalities, partisanship, and issue positions, then the public's sense of their government's legitimacy may be jeopardized.

Primary Elections

The United States is nearly unique in the world having two separate contests during each election year: the general election and the primary. The primary election is rare because most democracies in the world allow party elites to nominate candidates through an internal process. The United States, however, opens the process up to the electorate. Primary rules vary widely between different states (and within individual states by party) regarding the composition of the eligible electorate, time of election, and candidate qualification. Due to their timing, fewer partisan informational cues, and a variety of other factors, primaries are low-turnout events. (Hirano and Snyder 2019) Furthermore, except for a brief period at their onset, primary elections have not attracted challenger candidates at the same rate as general election contests. As a result, primary elections have not drawn attention commensurate with their general counterparts.

However, primary elections are worthy of study as their role in selecting general education candidates is pivotal. The method of nominee selection is very important, because the theoretical view of nominee selection deviates from reality. In theory, members of the partisan base are strategically-minded selectors who want to advance the most qualified candidate, and most likely to win, in a general election. This has traditionally implied that more moderate candidates – or more moderate-seeming candidates – would be likely to advance from primary to general. (Downs 1957) Instead, primaries have tended to produce candidates that are more ideologically extreme, and even primaries open to non-partisans have not shown to provide any advantage to the politically moderate. (Ahler et al 2013)

The combination of low turnout, low attention, minimal competitiveness, and a contribution to polarization invites greater scrutiny of primary elections and their key role in the election process. Theoretically, if primary elections were more competitive, stronger candidates should emerge and in turn produce not only more competitive general election contests but more responsive governance once the winner is in office.

Throughout the last half of the 20th Century, primary elections displayed little competition. (Ansolabehere et al 2006) Party elites played a significant role, albeit a behind-the-scenes one, in determining party nominees. (Cohen et al 2009) In any measure, primaries were even less competitive than general elections. Elections are susceptible to the effects of exogenous shocks, and as the political environment changes, so may primary elections.

Two developments in 2010 altered the political landscape, and perhaps with it, primary election competitiveness. First, a new faction within the Republican Party emerged. Calling itself the TEA Party, the group's purpose was to move the GOP further to the right. Using the debate over the Affordable Care Act as a frame, the TEA Party was not a formal party but used primary elections to try to remake the party. The rise of the TEA Party thus prompted an increase in the number of contested primary elections, but they were limited to the Republican Party only. (Rosenthal and Trost, 2012) The TEA Party also represented a potential threat to the power of internal party elites over the nomination process.

The twin Supreme Court decisions of *Citizens United vs FEC* and *SpeechNow vs. FEC* delivered the other shock, by ruling that groups which only contributed independent expenditures to campaigns could not be considered potentially corrupting and allowing undisclosed and unlimited contributions by groups not engaged in FEC-defined express advocacy. Myers (2020) attributes some of the increase in contested general election races to the new campaign finance regime.

By expanding opportunities for existing groups to direct money in ways they would not when they had to disclose those independent expenditures and inviting the creating of new groups that also wanted to avoid disclosure, the Supreme Court's decisions opened up the possibility of a change to the election environment. As Petrova and colleagues show (2019), the new campaign finance regime did not increase general election competitiveness at the federal level, but noted that the ruling seemed to increase spending in primary elections. *Citizens United* and *SpeechNOW* may not have impacted the general election environment, but they plausibly had an effect on federal primary elections.

While the decisions focused on campaigns at the federal level, there is reason to think that there may be a secondary effect in state-level elections as well. Coordinated campaigns and agency agreements allow a significant level of federal party organization involvement in state level campaigns. A 'trickle down' effect of the *Citizens United* and *SpeechNOW* suggests that primary elections may see more money, more candidates, and thus more competition.

Competitiveness

One of the challenges in developing a definitive understanding of election competitiveness is the many different ways one might measure competition. Blais and Lago (2019) define competitiveness as the degree of uncertainty in the outcome of an election. But even that definition allows multiple interpretations of measuring competitiveness.

Research highlights four main markers that are characteristic of competitive elections: 1) Margin of victory in contested races, 2) Number of contested seats, 3) number of pre-election retirements, and 4) entry of a high-profile candidate to the race.

Number of Contested Seats

The number of contested seats in an election is also salient. Squire (1989) showed that in one-party dominated areas like the South and other largely Democratic districts, districts with a popular incumbent with a large margin of victory in a previous election, U.S. House races saw an increase over time in the number of seats that went uncontested. When Squire shifted the work to state legislative elections (2000), a different result emerged. Uncontested elections were growing in number, but state characteristics such as legislative professionalism, member pay, and overall statewide partisan competition saw greater numbers of contested elections. Contrary to the U.S. House findings, Southern states saw more contested primaries for their state legislatures.

Retirements

Not only are contested seats and margin of victory important factors, but the number of candidates contesting the primary are as well. When While they are rare in the United States, multicandidate elections have shown to be much more competitive, especially in states with plurality winning margins. (Merrill 1984)

High-Profile Candidates

Not all candidates are created equally. For independently wealthy candidates, their ability to forego fundraising may empower them to enter a contest that others would shirk. Similarly, being a celebrity can bolster the likelihood a candidate will enter a race. Candidates who are deemed high-profile may have non-political acclaim, or are a celebrity. These candidates tend to come from outside the traditional political field, draw more attention and have greater likelihoods to enter races and make them competitive. (see Squire 1992a, 1992b; Ladam et al 2018)

Victory Margin

The debate regarding competitiveness of general elections can help elucidate some potential measures of competitiveness in primaries. Mayhew (1974) and Jacobson (1987) began the debate over the margin of victory as 'vanishing marginals', or a decreasing number of closely-contested Congressional elections over time. The advantages of incumbency depressed the likelihood of strong challenger contestants entering a race, and thus generally the candidates who entered had little hope of a competitive result. Those candidates were often 'placeholders,' individuals recruited at the last minute before filing deadlines to ensure there was a party's candidate on the ballot.

The Uncompetitive Primary

Primary elections have a number of characteristics that contribute to an overall lack of competitiveness. Turnout in primaries is very low, hovering around twenty percent since the beginning of the current primary regime in 1974. 1974 is pivotal for being the year the

McGovern-Fraser Commission functionally forced all states to choose their presidential nominees by primary or caucus. Since Presidential primaries are detached from state legislative primaries in many states, those states with separate primaries have lower turnout rates than their counterparts that combine presidential and state nomination contests.

If primaries at the state level track generally with the Presidential contests, then we have strong reason to believe that primaries are becoming more competitive. Both the 2016 and 2020 presidential primaries saw significant spikes in turnout rates nationwide, with the 2020 presidential primary voting rate exceeding thirty percent for only the second time in the McGovern-Fraser era. (McDonald 2021)

History suggests that those two elections are more ephemeral. Occasional spikes in turnout punctuate what is typically very low primary turnout. That low turnout is caused by a number of reasons that also suggest why primaries have been mostly uncompetitive throughout the history of the process.

Since turnout is low in primaries, their results are susceptible to small shifts in the composition of the electorate that make the likelihood of victory much smaller. The normal partisan cues that help inform and mobilize voters in general elections are mostly non-existent in primaries. (Schaffner and Streb 2002) Low-information voters thus have little to help define their choices and do not vote. Primaries are also much earlier in the calendar, which accelerates a campaign's needs for planning. A first-time candidate may need months to a year to assemble a campaign organization, and those primaries are usually seven to ten months before the general election. The ramp-up process for a campaign discourages potential candidates from entering the race. Since the partisan cues are difficult to discern, fundraising for a primary campaign is also more complicated and suppressive on potentially strong candidates entering a race. Combined together, these barriers constitute a significant disincentive to enter a primary. Strategic candidates will likely take the highest-probability path to victory, which is to wait for the seat to open. (Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2008; Kanthak and Loep 2018)

Considering the strategy of candidate entry, the presence of a primary contest is itself a measure of competitiveness. If more potential candidates see the challenges as ones they can overcome, then the number of contested primaries will increase. Once candidates have entered a race, three more conditions may arise that exemplify increased competition in primary elections. While Presidential primaries have consistently featured multiple candidates throughout the McGovern-Fraser era, state legislative primaries are much more often one-on-one contests. The presence of more than two candidates in a primary also suggests a competitive election, as multiple candidates see an opportunity to unseat and incumbent. *Citizens United* and *SpeechNOW* are important factors in this possibility, because if outside groups focus on state legislative elections competing groups may be more likely to push potential candidates into three-or-more-way races that would also reduce victory margins through wider distributions of votes. (Breaux and Gierzynski 1991)

State legislative elections provide an additional comparison, one between elections for the two chambers of an assembly. As ambitious candidates consider the seat they eventually

want to hold, they will try to 'climb the ladder' and try to advance from the state house to the state senate. State senate seats are a typical precursor to Congressional runs, so the candidates should be more risk-acceptant and thus more likely to enter a contest. We should then expect to see more competition for state senate seats than state house seats.

Finally, the margin of victory in the primary is a strong indicator of race competitiveness. Stronger, more strategic, better funded, and higher-profile candidates will be much more likely to win or at least keep the election close. Ansolabehere and colleagues (2004) showed that wide margins of victory appeared consistently throughout primary elections over time.

Hypotheses

The literature guides us to four hypotheses for this study:

H^1. The number of seats contested in state legislative primary elections has not increased between 2012 and 2020.

H^2. The variance in open seat races between 2012 and 2020 is the results of structural factors more than candidate recruitment by outside entities.

H^3. Candidate primary candidate emergence will not be related to party competitiveness in the state.

H^4 Primary challenges will be progressively more successful between 2012 and 2020.

H^5 Margin of victory by the winning primary candidate has not increased between 2012 and 2020.

Data

The author collected data from every contested primary election for a state house or senate between the years of 2012 and 2020. Because of the variations from state to state, thirteen states were excluded from this analysis. Those states featured either top-two primaries, multi-member districts, all-comers "jungle" primaries, party convention nominations, odd-year elections, ranked-choice voting, nonpartisan elections, and unicameral legislatures. The thirty-seven states included in the study are geographically and ideologically representative of the US as a whole. [1]

Among the thirty-seven states, data was collected on the state, chamber, district, party, and vote totals of all candidates. Additionally, data in the set includes the number of open seats, number of incumbents seeking re-election, number of incumbents defeated, number of total seats in each chamber, and the Democratic and Republican caucus totals, party control, and the National Conference of State Legislatures' data on legislative professionalism in every state's legislature for each election in the study period, along with a dummy variable for whether the state had term limits or not.

[1] The states excluded are Arizona, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Utah, Virginia, and Washington

Analysis

Despite the emergence of the TEA Party as a presence in Republican primary politics, the number of contested primaries generally, and among Republicans, did not consistently increase over the course of the 2012 to 2020 time period. In both 2014 and 2020, fewer contested primary elections occurred than in the prior election cycle. As shown in Figure 1, not only did the number of contested primaries not significantly increase, but no pattern of difference emerged between the parties in state House contests. [Figure 1 About Here]

State Senate primaries exhibited a different pattern than their state House counterparts. Despite a downward trend from 2012 to 2014, throughout the rest of the decade Senate contested primaries did increase, but the growth was primarily concentrated in Democratic contests. Overall, the TEA Party appears to have very little influence on the number of primary elections contested over the course of the 2010's. Thus we can reject H^1 [Figure 2 About Here]

Since state legislative contests are different from their federal counterparts, there are mitigating structural factors that may explain the lack of appreciable increase in primary contests. Five factors influence primary candidate entry: total number of legislative seats, term-limited legislators, legislative professionalism, retirements or resignations, and party control of the chamber. Term limits can artificially increase the aggregate number of contested primaries by automatically making the incumbent officeholder ineligible to run again. Legislative professionalism, with longer sessions and higher pay, should be more appealing and draw a larger pool of primary candidates. Retirements, which are separate from term-limited forced ineligibility, also will draw larger pools of candidates. Finally, in states with one-party control of a legislature, primaries will be the main locus of competition and thus should lead to more candidates emerging.

Tables 1 and 2 regresses the number of contested primaries during a given election year against those four factors for state House and state Senate races. The count of chamber seats and term-limited seats serve as two variables. To measure legislative professionalism, we used the National Conference of State Legislatures' three tiers of professionalism (green for the most amateur, grey for legislatures with some elements of professionalism, and gold for the most professional legislatures) to create an index of professionalism scaling from one to three. The aggregate number of retirements per year is the third variable, and finally a dummy variable for which party controlled the majority of the chamber.

Table 1 reports the regression coefficients for state House races from 2012 to 2020. While House contested primaries are significantly driven by retirements in the first three cycles, no other consistent trend in systemic factors develops. The aggregate number of House seats in 2014 was significantly related to candidate emergence, and party control was in 2016. Professionalism and term limits were not significantly related to House contested primaries. [Table 1 About Here]

In Table 2 we see the results from the regression of Senate seats, with similar results. Retirements were significantly related to candidate emergence in 2012 and 2016, with aggregate seats and retirements also significant in 2016. Thus we can reject H^2. [Table 2 About Here]

Turning to H^3, candidate entry may be a byproduct of the lack of general election competition. If a state does not feature competitive general elections because of one-party dominance, then primary candidate entry may be explained as compensatory for the lack of general election competitiveness.

To test the partisan element, we retain two factors: legislative professionalism and party chamber control. We add the size of the party's caucus in the chamber as a well as a measure of statewide party competitiveness, a lagged variable of the prior election Republican presidential nominee's margin of victory.

As seen in Tables 3 through 6, reporting regressions of candidate entry against party caucus size, presidential margin of victory, legislative professionalism, and party control of the chamber. Two distinct patterns emerge from the analysis. In Table 3, Democratic state House candidate emergence was clearly and significantly a factor of the size of that state's Democratic state House caucus. From 2014 to 2020, the more Democratic legislators in a state House, the greater number of primary candidates would emerge. In 2020, the prior election's presidential vote and party chamber control were also significantly related to candidate entry. [Table 3 About Here]

Republican state House candidates exhibited a similar pattern, but a clear one. In four of the five elections, the previous Republican presidential margin of victory was significantly related to GOP primary candidate emergence. The Republican caucus size was also significantly related to primary candidate entry in 2012 and 2020. [Table 4 About Here]

In state Senates, more consistency in candidate emergence factors is evident. For both Democrats and Republicans in state Senates, the most consistently significant variable was the extant size of that party's Senate caucus. State-level partisanship was much less related to Republicans in the Senate than in the House. We can then reject H^3. [Tables 5 and 6 About Here]

Tables 7 through 10 report regressions of incumbent losses by party and chamber against total chamber seats, party caucus size, state party competitiveness, uncontested races, and legislative professionalism. Results vary by party, chamber, and year. State House Democrats saw a significant relationship between the prior presidential vote and incumbent losses, but that was the only significant variable in the five election cycles. State House Republicans saw the same party strength variable emerge as significant in 2012 as their Democratic counterparts, but also in 2018 the seat total was significant and in 2020 both Republican House caucus size and margin of victory were as well. [Tables 7 and 8 About Here]

In state Senate elections, only legislative professionalism, solely in the 2016 cycle, was significant for Democrats. Senate Republicans, on the other hand, saw seat numbers drive incumbent losses in 2012 and 2016. No consistent pattern emerges in incumbent losses, leading us to reject H^4.[Tables 9 and 10 About Here]

Tables 11 thought 14 provide regressions related to Hypothesis Five, focusing on the margin of victory in state legislative races. Using the same variables as in the incumbent loss models, we regress margin of victory for each party in each chamber.

Tables 11 and 12 show no significant causal relationships between the expected competitiveness factors and race margin of victory. Table 13, reporting Democratic state Senate race margins of victory, saw legislative professionalism emerge as significant, but only in 2014. [Table 13 About Here]

Senate Republican margins of victory were significantly related to aggregate chamber seats, uncontested elections, and legislative professionalism in 2012, but in no subsequent races did any of the variable achieve statistical significance. [Table 14 About Here]

Discussion

The political shifts of 2010 suggested that a new era of competitive primary elections was possible and imminent. Here we see states with strong Republican bases tended to have more contested House primaries, but not to a significant degree and certainly not appreciably different from Ansolabehere and colleagues' earlier findings (2006).

Exploring the partisan and chamber differences further, we see that while some marginal increases in contested races may have emerged among Democrats in state Senate chambers, the expected Republican surge in contested primaries did not appear. The most significant area of increased state legislative primary contestation was in Democrats seeking state Senate positions, not in Republicans. If the TEA Party was actively recruiting primary candidates at the state level, the data do not reflect their efforts being successful. Whether in the number of incumbents defeats in state legislative elections or in the margins of victory in those races, no appreciable change occurred between 2012 and 2020. The data suggest that not only did a surge in candidates not occur, but that the quality of primary challenger candidate did not improve either.

The TEA Party's lack of early success may have contributed to its relatively brief impact on American politics. While a number of high profile federal candidates with TEA Party ties won their races, such as Justin Amash (R-MI) and Tim Huelskamp (R-KS), the faction was not able to become a viable competitor for control of the Republican Party at the state level. Huelksamp was successfully primaried in 2016, and the election of Donald Trump as a Republican caused Amash to leave the party for the Libertarians in 2020.

For elected officials and candidates who seek to move their party in a given direction, an important lesson emerges here. U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) has emerged as a mirror image of the TEA Party's leadership in 2020, as she attempts to recruit candidates to primary Democrats in hope of moving the party to the left. The data here suggests that her efforts will meet a similar fate to that of the TEA Party, because the efforts are focused on federal races.

The last truly successful splinter group to significantly shift the policy direction of their party was among Republicans, and their method is salient here. Newt Gingrich helped build a conservative Republican majority in Congress in 1994, because he did not start candidate

recruitment at the federal level. (Matthew and Kunz 2017) Instead, Gingrich founded the GOPAC organization in the early 1980s, and focused its efforts on recruiting state and local candidates for office, who then in turn developed experience and were trained candidates when GOPAC recruited those candidates to seek Congressional seats in the 1994 cycle. (Corkery 2011)

Even if future ambitious political leaders attempt to shift their party ideologically, they will face massive challenges. The inertia of low turnout and low attention races that characterize state primary elections work strongly against efforts to recruit effective challengers. Not only do we see ambitious candidates foregoing primary challenges to incumbent representatives at the state level, the candidates that do run have shown little success in bringing margins of victory down in the races they do run.

Caveats and Future Directions

The data presented here are part of a larger project on state legislative elections, and as such they are limited. While none of the expected structural or electioneering variables showed consistent statistical significance, we do know that the TEA Party had begun efforts, albeit piecemeal ones in only a few states, to recruit primary candidates. The implications of those efforts appear, at least in the confined period of study in which the data is available, that primary races continue to be of little import. But other variables may be significant, notably funding. As such, future presentations of this data will include state legislative campaign finance data in its analysis.

Furthermore, an opportunity to compare primary competitiveness with general election competitiveness emerges here. Primary challenges, when they occur, may be a sign of weakness and draw stronger general election challenger candidates. Future presentations of the data will compare primary competition with general election candidates and outcomes as well.

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Tables and Figures

Figure 1:

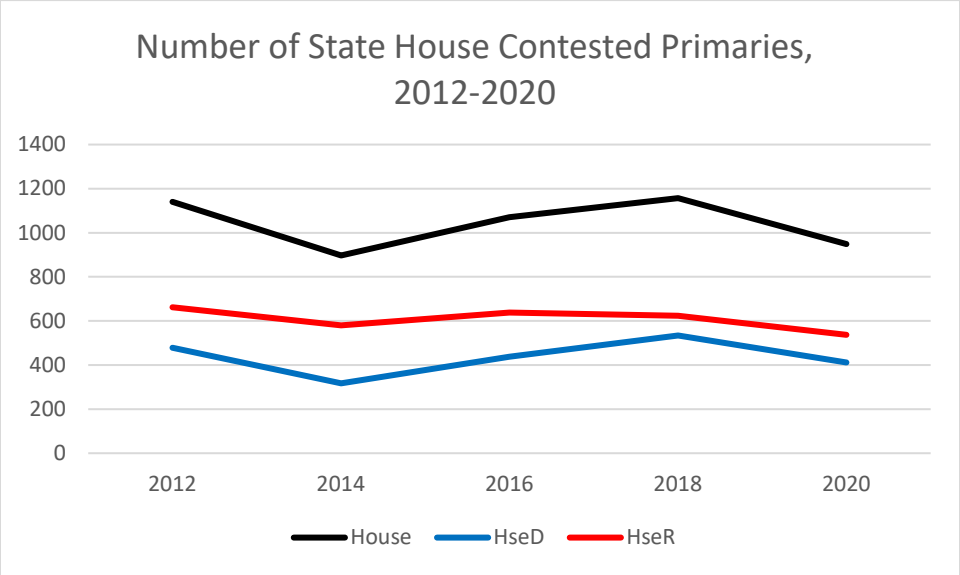

Figure 2:

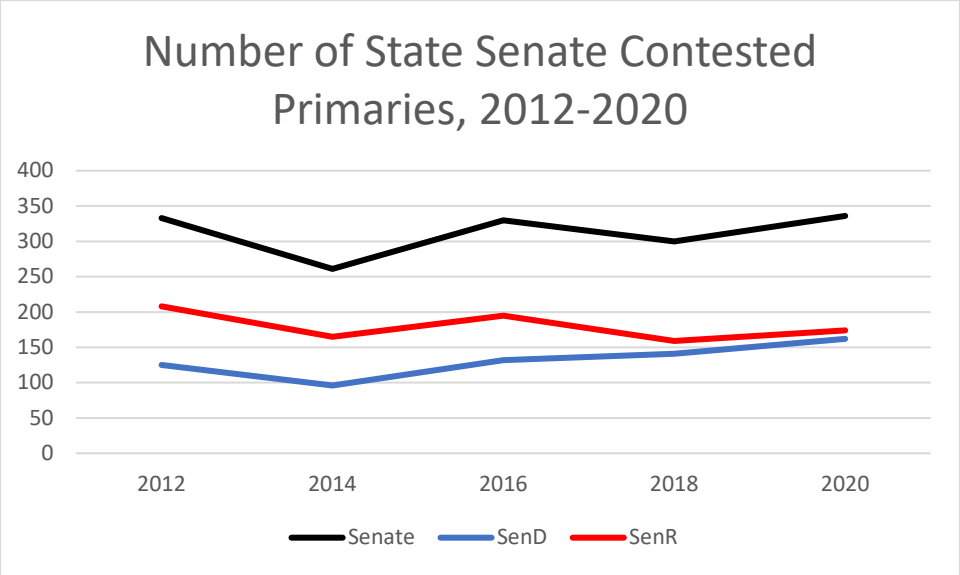

Table 1: Emergence of State House Candidates Regression, 2012-2020

	2012	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**	**2020**
Seats	0.025	.050*	0.106	0.076	0.153
Term Limits	0.432	0.272	0.086	0.898	0.873
Professionalism	0.859	0.812	0.642	0.232	0.613
Retirements	.010**	.009**	.031*	0.494	0.432
Party Control	0.48	0.404	.030*	0.694	0.285

Table 2: Emergence of State Senate Candidates Regression, 2012-2020

	2012	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**	**2020**
Seats	0.349	0.848	.009**	0.674	0.064
Term Limits	0.089	0.855	0.509	0.702	0.695
Professionalism	0.622	0.533	0.146	0.499	0.185
Retirements	.010**	0.36	.050*	0.951	0.647
Party Control	0.293	0.417	0.128	0.77	0.228

Table 3: House Democratic Candidate Entry

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
House Democratic Caucus Size	0.049	0.181**	0.242*	0.264*	0.158*
Republican President MOV	-0.064	0.054	-0.13	0.063	-0.349*
Legislative Professionalism	6.204	4.555	-1.485	7.163	-1.165
Party Control of Chamber	3.781	1.056	13.0848	2.634	10.964*

Table 4: House Republican Candidate Entry

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
House Republican Caucus Size	0.295**	0.112	0.159	0.147	0.188*
Republican President MOV	0.312*	0.276*	0.064	0.339*	0.185
Legislative Professionalism	-2.6	6.128	2.941	6.976	2.324
Party Control of Chamber	-5.194	1.415	12.272	-2.011	1.275

Table 5: Senate Democratic Candidate Entry

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Senate Democratic Caucus Size	0.245**	-0.023*	0.231**	-0.031	0.306**
Republican President MOV	0.021	-0.051	0.018	-0.078	-0.022
Legislative Professionalism	0.571	0.52	0.116	1.525	-0.959
Party Control of Chamber	-1.989	1.519	-0.221	0.647	2.719

Table 6: Senate Republican Candidate Entry

	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Senate Republican Caucus Size	0.351*	-0.114	0.409**	0.054	0.03
Republican President MOV	0.069	0.107	0.046	0.051	0.131**
Legislative Professionalism	-1.17	-0.233	0.386	1.963	0.923
Party Control of Chamber	-3.219	4.574	-5.346	1.153	0.754

Table 7: House Democratic Incumbent Losses

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	0.001	0.98	0.001	0.981	0.048	0.327	0.014	0.6	0.17	0.649
Caucus	0.011	0.40	0.008	0.585	0.013	0.386	0.015	0.171	-0.006	0.935
Party	-0.049	0.001**	-0.021	0.089	-0.009	0.429	-0.005	0.508	0.015	0.448
Margin of Victory	-0.074	0.884	1.172	0.486	-0.017	0.295	-0.002	0.818	-0.108	0.971
Uncontested	-0.214	0.91	-0.992	0.542	2.502	0.177	0.158	0.863	0.761	0.373
Professionalism	-0.433	0.18	-0.191	0.514	-0.313	0.248	-0.255	0.159	-0.013	0.627

Table 8: House Republican Incumbent Losses

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	0.001	0.98	0.059	0.435	0.042	0.647	0.08	0.05*	0.238	0.158
Caucus	0.011	0.40	-0.006	0.824	0.009	0.79	-0.008	0.609	-0.058	0.021*
Party	-0.049	0.001**	0.031	0.255	0.046	0.123	-0.007	0.692	0.006	0.485
Margin of Victory	-0.214	0.91	0.067	0.991	-0.016	0.727	0.002	0.933	-3.738	0.008**
Uncontested	-0.433	0.18	0.612	0.827	0.757	0.875	0.731	0.733	0.004	0.632
Professionalism	0.033	0.152	0.247	0.675	-0.274	0.659	-0.581	0.16	0.016	0.142

Table 9: Senate Democratic Incumbent Losses

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	0.017	0.635	-0.032	0.741	0.024	0.738	0.034	0.487	-0.296	0.457
Caucus	0	0.899	0.004	0.822	-0.006	0.807	0.019	0.25	0.144	0.319
Party	-0.005	0.601	-0.002	0.839	-0.009	0.181	5.98E-05	0.989	-0.023	0.659
Margin of Victory	0.197	0.693	0.411	0.702	0.008	0.36	0.001	0.866	-0.359	0.877
Uncontested	0.04	0.842	0.515	0.717	-0.235	0.821	0.027	0.961	-0.01	0.702
Professionalism	0.033	0.152	-0.079	0.741	-0.373	0.012*	-0.26	0.042	-0.001	0.927

Table 10: Senate Republican Incumbent Losses

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	0.257	0.001**	0.033	0.554	0.143	0.043*	0.012	0.493	-0.968	0.088
Caucus	0.00001	0.684	0.012	0.576	-0.027	0.513	0.009	0.359	-0.234	0.451
Party	0.002	0.92	0	0.969	0.002	0.913	-0.003	0.453	0.034	0.692
Margin of Victory			-2.088	0.186	0.002	0.9	0	0.941	-7.664	0.276
Uncontested	-0.074	0.884	0.197	0.693	-0.036	0.965	-0.527	0.138	0.003	0.934
Professionalism	-0.01	0.803	0.064	0.77	-0.554	0.16	-0.178	0.09	-0.008	0.734

Table 11: House Democratic Margin of Victory

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	-0.004	0.318	-0.002	0.796	0.564	0.361	0.456	0.332	0.922	0.193
Caucus	0.002	0.182	0.001	0.77	-0.102	0.608	-0.238	0.229	-0.316	0.137
Party	0.001	0.26	0.001	0.375	-0.125	0.402	0.072	0.564	-0.001	0.993
Uncontested	-0.118	0.485	0.125	0.532	19.316	0.41	25.751	0.116	42.558	0.182
Professionalism	0.057	0.063	0.032	0.363	-1.268	0.713	1.692	0.6	-2.322	0.543

Table 12: House Republican Margin of Victory

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	0.003	0.274	0.002	0.369	0.341	0.42	-0.101	0.721	0.812	0.079
Caucus	-0.001	0.214	9.30E-07	0.999	0.051	0.729	0.077	0.489	-0.155	0.339
Party	0	0.743	-0.001	0.141	0.039	0.772	-0.23	0.073	-0.149	0.261
Uncontested	0.145	0.257	0.04	0.686	20.844	0.344	-2.142	0.888	35.527	0.166
Professionalism	0.04	0.076	0.003	0.885	0.992	0.729	1.883	0.512	0.76	0.808

Table 13: Senate Democratic Margin of Victory

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	-0.017	0.532	0.008	0.724	-3.078	0.095	-1.164	0.496	0.605	0.735
Caucus	0.011	0.208	0.005	0.282	1.252	0.028*	0.352	0.539	-0.316	0.635
Party	0.001	0.563	0.003	0.138	0.152	0.397	0.037	0.814	-0.142	0.54
Uncontested	0.211	0.58	-0.224	0.516	38.099	0.155	3.389	0.863	1.745	0.954
Professionalism	0.041	0.416	0.145	0.005**	-0.487	0.892	-0.59	0.89	-0.752	0.868

Table 14: Senate Republican Margin of Victory

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig	Coefficient	Sig
Seats	0.016	0.011*	-0.012	0.155	0.288	0.688	-0.103	0.901	-1.352	0.616
Caucus	-0.004	0.149	0.003	0.319	0.151	0.731	0.618	0.173	0.273	0.673
Party	0	0.921	0	0.754	0.082	0.694	-0.192	0.316	-0.266	0.278
Uncontested	0.295	0.025*	0.087	0.251	0.961	0.913	-3.035	0.849	-16.497	0.781
Professionalism	0.064	0.024*	-0.005	0.893	0.125	0.976	10.685	0.015	-2.946	0.523