1

ELECTION TIMING

Sarah F. Anzia, PhD
Assistant Professor, Goldman School of Public Policy
University of California, Berkeley
Author of *Timing and Turnout: How Off-Cycle Elections Favor Organized Groups* (The University of Chicago Press, 2014)

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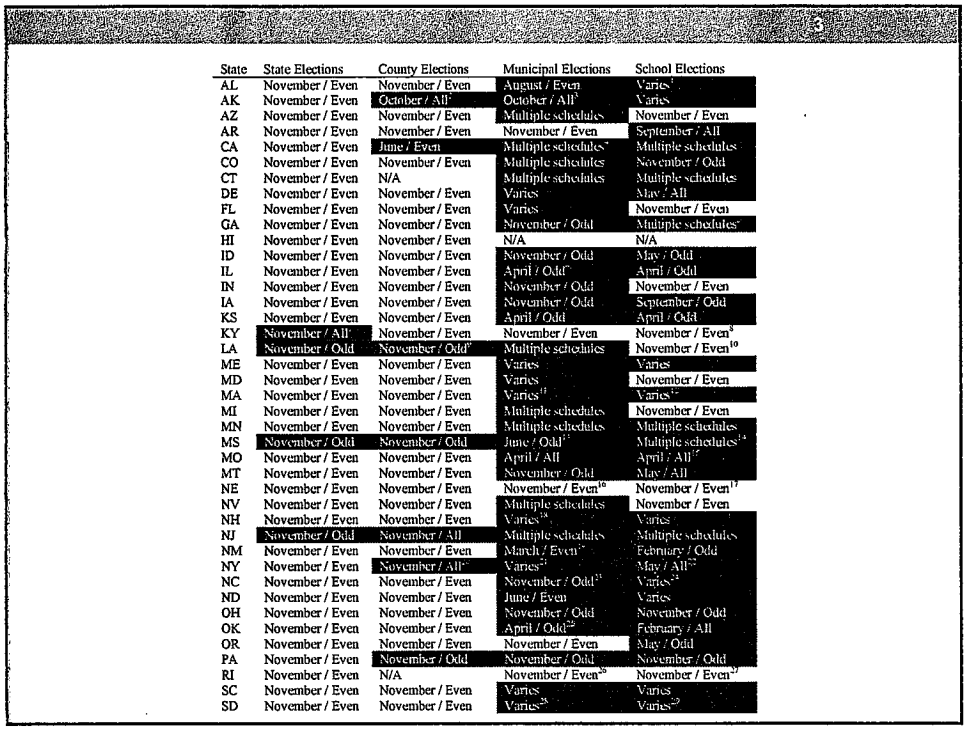
2

Most government is local government

- 89,055 governments in U.S.
- 17 million full-time employees
  - Federal (civilian): 2,619,051
  - State and Local: 14,560,581
- $6.3 trillion in direct expenditures (2012)
  - Federal: $3.2 trillion
  - State and Local: $3.1 trillion
- Over 500,000 elected officials
- Most are not elected on "Election Day"



State	State Elections	County Elections	Municipal Elections	School Elections
AL	November / Even	November / Even	August / Even	Varies[1]
AK	November / Even	October / All[2]	October / All[3]	Varies
AZ	November / Even	November / Even	Multiple schedules	November / Even
AR	November / Even	November / Even	November / Even	September / All
CA	November / Even	June / Even	Multiple schedules[4]	Multiple schedules
CO	November / Even	November / Even	Multiple schedules	November / Odd
CT	November / Even	N/A	Multiple schedules	Multiple schedules
DE	November / Even	November / Even	Varies	May / All
FL	November / Even	November / Even	Varies	November / Even
GA	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd	Multiple schedules[5]
HI	November / Even	November / Even	N/A	N/A
ID	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd	May / Odd
IL	November / Even	November / Even	April / Odd[6]	April / Odd
IN	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd	November / Even
IA	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd	September / Odd
KS	November / Even	November / Even	April / Odd	April / Odd
KY	November / All	November / Even	November / Even	November / Even[8]
LA	November / Odd	November / Odd[9]	Multiple schedules	November / Even[10]
ME	November / Even	November / Even	Varies	Varies
MD	November / Even	November / Even	Varies	November / Even
MA	November / Even	November / Even	Varies[11]	Varies[12]
MI	November / Even	November / Even	Multiple schedules	November / Even
MN	November / Even	November / Even	Multiple schedules	Multiple schedules
MS	November / Odd	November / Odd	June / Odd[13]	Multiple schedules[14]
MO	November / Even	November / Even	April / All	April / All[15]
MT	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd	May / All
NE	November / Even	November / Even	November / Even[16]	November / Even[17]
NV	November / Even	November / Even	Multiple schedules	November / Even
NH	November / Even	November / Even	Varies[18]	Varies
NJ	November / Odd	November / All	Multiple schedules	Multiple schedules
NM	November / Even	November / Even	March / Even[19]	February / Odd
NY	November / Even	November / All[20]	Varies[21]	May / All[22]
NC	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd[23]	Varies[24]
ND	November / Even	November / Even	June / Even	Varies
OH	November / Even	November / Even	November / Odd	November / Odd
OK	November / Even	November / Even	April / Odd[25]	February / All
OR	November / Even	November / Even	November / Even	May / Odd
PA	November / Even	November / Odd	November / Odd	November / Odd
RI	November / Even	N/A	November / Even[26]	November / Even[27]
SC	November / Even	November / Even	Varies	Varies
SD	November / Even	November / Even	Varies[28]	Varies[29]

4

Voter turnout is lower in off-cycle elections

- Hajnal, Lewis, and Louch (2002)
- Wood (2002)
- Caren (2007)
- Hajnal (2010, 159): "election timing is the most important factor in explaining local turnout."
- School districts: Hess (2002)
- Gubernatorial elections: Patterson and Caldeira (1983)

5

Roadmap for today's presentation

- Brief summary of the book's argument
- The history of election timing choice (19th century and the Progressive Era)
- The politics of election timing choice today
- The effect of election timing: school board elections
- The effect of election timing: California cities
- Common arguments for and against on-cycle elections

6

Summary of the book's argument

- Shifting from on-cycle to off-cycle election timing increases the electoral presence of *the organized*:

  1) People with a large stake in an election turn out at high rates regardless of timing, and many are members of organized groups.

  2) Off-cycle election timing enhances the effectiveness of organized groups' mobilization efforts.
- Organized groups should be more successful in securing favorable policies in governments with off-cycle elections.
- Even when organized groups compete, changes to election timing can tip the balance of power between them.

7

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8

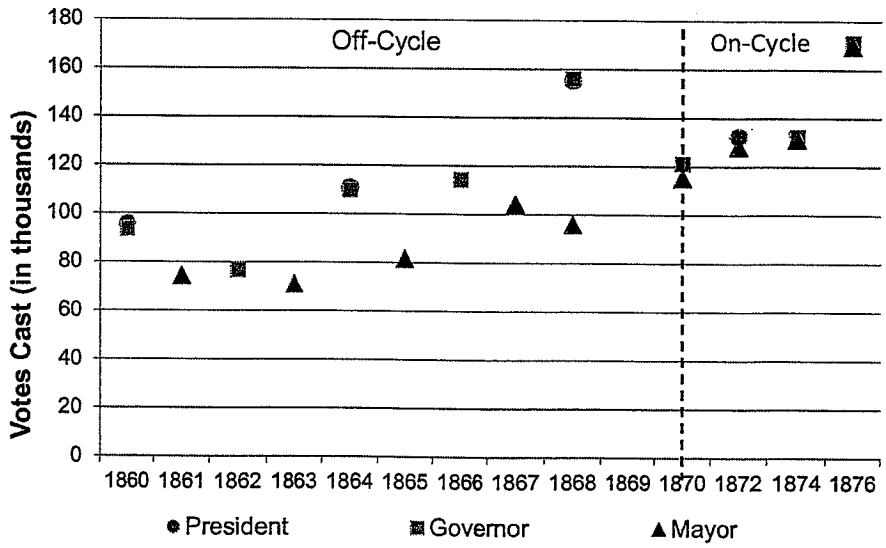
Election timing switches in 3 cities

New York	San Francisco	Philadelphia
1849 Moved from April to November	**1861** Moved from September to May	**1854** Moved from October to May
1857 Moved from November to December	**1866** Moved from May to September	**1861** Moved from May to October
1870 Moved from December to November	**1898** Moved from November of even-numbered years to November of odd-numbered years	**1873** Moved from October to February
1896 Moved from November of even-numbered years to November of odd-numbered years		

History of election timing choice

- Even in the 19th century, voter turnout was lower in off-cycle city elections than on-cycle city elections.

Turnout in National, State, and City Elections, New York City, 1860-1876



11

History of election timing choice

- Even in the 19th century, voter turnout was lower in off-cycle city elections than on-cycle city elections.
- Political parties (the groups that competed in local elections in the 19th century) manipulated the timing of city elections as early as the 1840s.

12

New York City Switch of 1849

- City elections originally in April
- Democrats and Whigs both well organized in 1830s and 1840s; slight Democratic advantage
- Whig candidates received greater vote share from New York City voters in November than in April
- State legislature controlled by Whigs

13

New York City Switch of 1857

- The Democrats had a very strong organization
- City Reformers proposed a switch to December city elections
- State legislature approved the city election timing change in 1857 by a party-line vote:
  - All Democrats opposed
  - Know Nothings and Republicans in favor
- Democrats lost the first off-cycle city election in 1857

14

History of election timing choice

- Even in the 19th century, voter turnout was lower in off-cycle city elections than on-cycle city elections.
- Political parties (the groups that competed in local elections in the 19th century) manipulated the timing of city elections as early as the 1840s.
- Republicans and Democrats took different positions in different cities.
- Progressive Era municipal reformers favored moving local elections to off-cycle.

15

TABLE 3.2 Municipal election timing in 1940 and 1986, by state

State	% *Off-cycle to off-cycle*	% *Off-cycle to on-cycle*	% *On-cycle to on-cycle*	% *On-cycle to off-cycle*
AL	100	0	0	0
AR	0	100	0	0
AZ	100	0	0	0
CA	71	26	0	3
CO	100	0	0	0
CT	85	0	0	15
FL	89	0	0	11
GA	89	0	6	6
IA	97	3	0	0
ID	100	0	0	0
IL	99	1	0	0
IN	0	0	14	86
KS	100	0	0	0
KY	84	11	0	5
LA	80	0	10	10
MA	98	0	0	2
MD	100	0	0	0
ME	58	33	0	8
MI	84	4	2	10
MN	43	48	9	0
MO	93	7	0	0
MS	67	8	0	25
MT	100	0	0	0
NC	100	0	0	0
ND	100	0	0	0

16

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17

Do American voters want off-cycle elections?

In most states, elections for local government offices like mayor, city council member, and school board member are held on different days than elections for national government offices like U.S. president and U.S. senator. Some people favor having local elections on <u>different</u> days than national elections, because it allows voters to focus on a shorter list of candidates and issues during each election. Other people favor having local elections on the <u>same</u> day as national elections, because combining the elections boosts voter turnout for local elections. What do you think? Do you think local elections should be held on the same day as national elections or on different days than national elections?

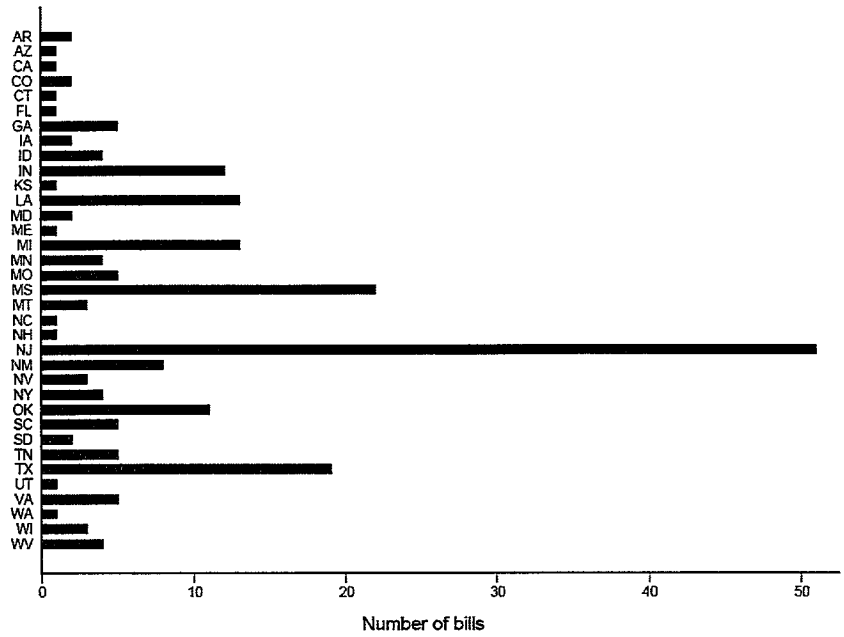
	Democrat	*Republican*	*Independent*
Different day	**27%**	**39%**	**35%**
	(73)	(90)	(81)
Same day	**73%**	**61%**	**65%**
	(200)	(143)	(150)
Total	100%	100%	100%
	(273)	(233)	(231)

18

Data

- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Database of Election Reform Legislation: 479 "Dates of Elections" bills from 2001 to 2011
- Researched each bill individually and pared down to 219 relevant election timing bills in 35 states
- Examples:
  - CO 2001 HB 1309: Requires regular town and special district elections to be held in November of even-numbered years (were in April and May, respectively)
  - IA 2005 SF 115: Moves local school district elections to November of even-numbered years
  - NJ 2004 A 3364: Allows municipalities to move municipal elections from second Tuesday in May to Tuesday after first Monday in November

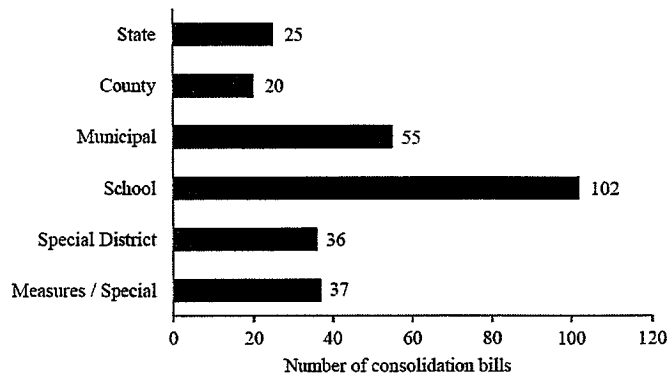
19



20

An election consolidation movement?

- 203 of the bills (93%) proposed combining different elections on the same day or reducing the number of election days in the state



21

What kinds of election consolidation bills advance in the legislative process?

- Dependent variable: Legislative progress
  - 0=Never received committee hearing
  - 1=Died in committee in originating chamber
  - 2=Died before passing the first chamber
  - 3=Died in the second chamber
  - 4=Passed both chambers but never signed
  - 5=Became law
- *Discretionary* = 1 if bill would have made election consolidation discretionary, 0 if mandatory
- *November of Even Years* = 1 if bill would have moved elections to November of even years, 0 if some other date
- *Specific Govt.* = 1 if bill would have changed timing of one or a small number of governments, 0 if applied broadly

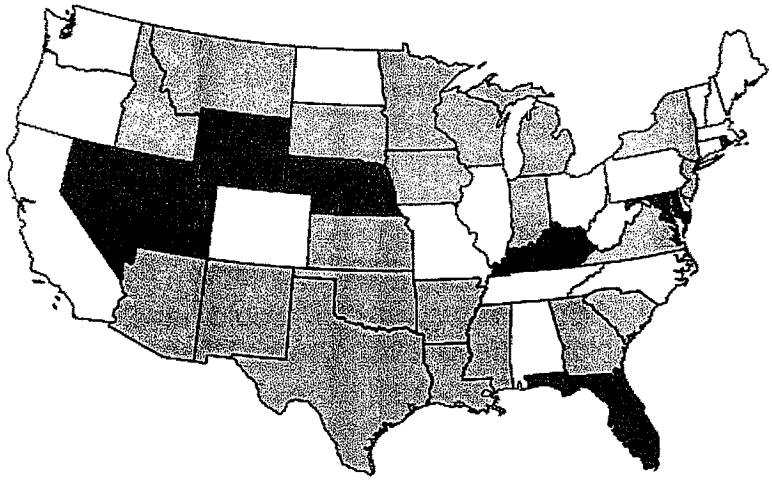
22

TABLE 4.2 **Legislative progress of election consolidation bills**

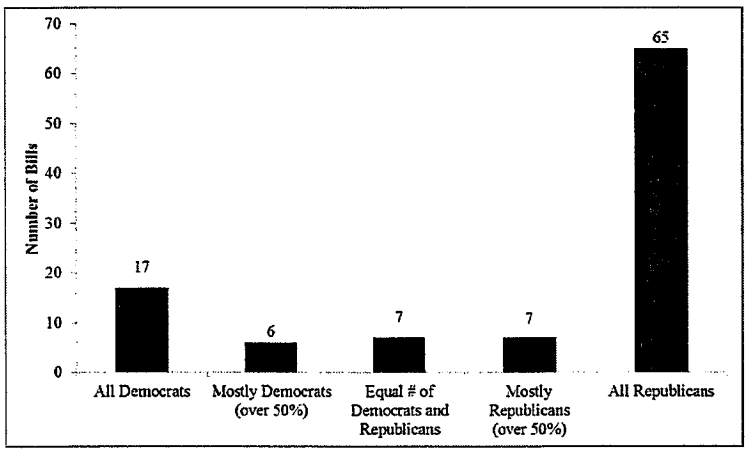
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Discretionary	1.854***	1.439***	1.901***	1.885***
	(0.430)	(0.485)	(0.493)	(0.658)
November of even years	−1.022***	−0.72**	−1.254***	−1.146**
	(0.256)	(0.303)	(0.320)	(0.511)
Specific government	1.652***	1.261*	1.932***	1.472*
	(0.564)	(0.659)	(0.527)	(0.885)
Constant	1.592***	1.501**		
	(0.230)	(0.741)		
Observations	203	203	203	203
Model	OLS	OLS, State FE	Ordered Logit	Ordered Logit, State FE
R-squared	0.24	0.48		
Pseudo R-squared			0.09	0.26

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable is the legislative progress of the election consolidation bill, 0–5, with 5 indicating that the bill was signed into law.
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

States that proposed school election consolidation bills (in light grey)

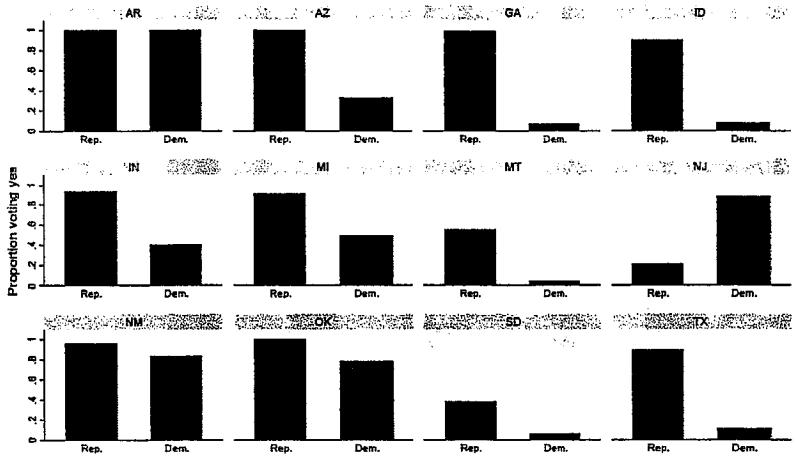


Who sponsors school election consolidation bills?



25

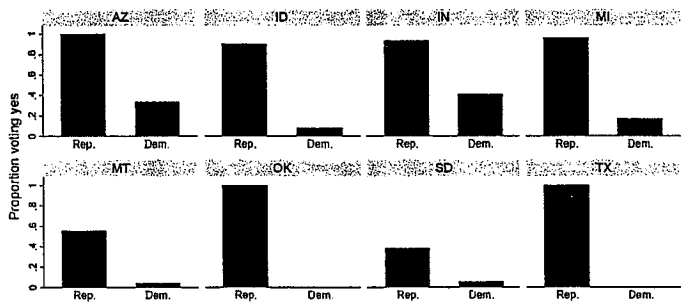
Who votes in favor of school election consolidation?



(28 bills, 35 unique bill-chamber pairs, 2,324 individual votes)

26

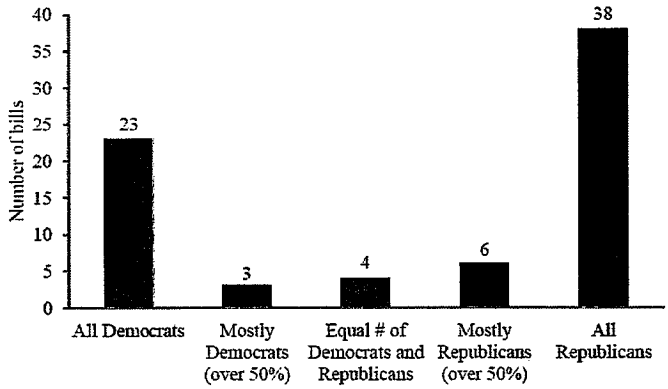
Who votes in favor of school election consolidation?



(16 chamber-bills)

27

Sponsorship of non-school non-state bills



28

TABLE 4.3 State partisanship and the legislative progress of nonschool election consolidation bills

	(1)	(2)
Discretionary	2.379***	2.857***
	(0.533)	(0.883)
November of even years	–1.326***	–1.695***
	(0.306)	(0.451)
Specific government	1.905***	2.693***
	(0.624)	(0.792)
% Democratic vote share	–5.578***	–8.723***
	(1.850)	(3.244)
Constant	4.388***	
	(0.939)	
Observations	101	101
	OLS	Ordered logit
R-squared	0.37	
Pseudo R-squared		0.15

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable is the legislative progress of the election consolidation bill, 0–5.
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

29

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30

Estimating the effect of election timing: school board elections and teacher salaries

- **The 8-State Test**: Dependent variables are steps of the district salary schedule
- **The Minnesota Test**: Incorporates data on voter turnout in school board elections
- **The Texas Test**: State legislature forced subset of school districts to switch from off-cycle to on-cycle elections.
  - Observe same districts before and after switch to on-cycle elections (7 years of data)
  - Assignment to "treatment" was objective

31

8-State Test: Data and model

- Data: 2003-4 Schools and Staffing Survey sample of school districts from AL, CA, GA, MN, NC, SC, TN, and VA
- Dependent variables: Logged base salary for teachers at three steps of the salary schedule
- Off-Cycle=1 if school board election not concurrent with state or national elections
- Model: OLS with state fixed effects
- Controls: Enrollment, income, demographics, urbanicity, % revenue from state

32

8-State Test: Results

	Logged base salary for a teacher:		
	With bachelor's degree and no experience	With master's degree and 10 years of experience	At highest step of the salary schedule
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Off-Cycle Elections	0.015	0.037	0.042
	(0.005)***	(0.005)***	(0.011)***
Observations	665	658	665
R-squared	0.84	0.84	0.84

Notes: Standard errors clustered by state in parentheses.
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

33

Minnesota Test

- Data on turnout in school board elections in 2006 and 2007 from MN Office of the Secretary of State
- All other data from MN Department of Education
- Dependent variable: Logged average teacher salary
- Independent variables: Turnout and turnout squared

34

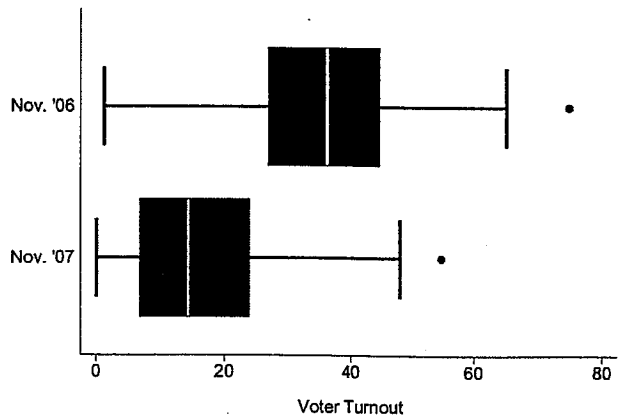


FIGURE 5.1. Voter turnout in Minnesota school board elections.

35

Minnesota Test: Effect of Voter Turnout on Average Teacher Salary

	Logged average teacher salary	
	(1)	(2)
Off-Cycle Elections	0.02	
	(0.009)**	
Voter Turnout		-0.167
		(0.066)***
Voter Turnout Squared		0.184
		(0.072)***
Observations	235	228
R-squared	0.74	0.74

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses.
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

36

Conclusions from the 8-State Test and the Minnesota Test

- School districts with off-cycle elections pay higher teacher salaries
- Salary premium is associated with lower voter turnout
- Omitted variable bias, spuriousness?
- Might school district officials choose election timing on the basis of anticipated outcomes?

37

Texas House Bill 1 (2006)

- Before 2006, school districts held elections in May.
- HB 1 required school districts to combine trustee elections with either city or county elections.
  - Most cities hold elections in May.
  - All counties hold elections in November of even-numbered years.
- Starting in 2007-8, a subset of Texas school districts were forced to hold general elections in November of even-numbered years.

38

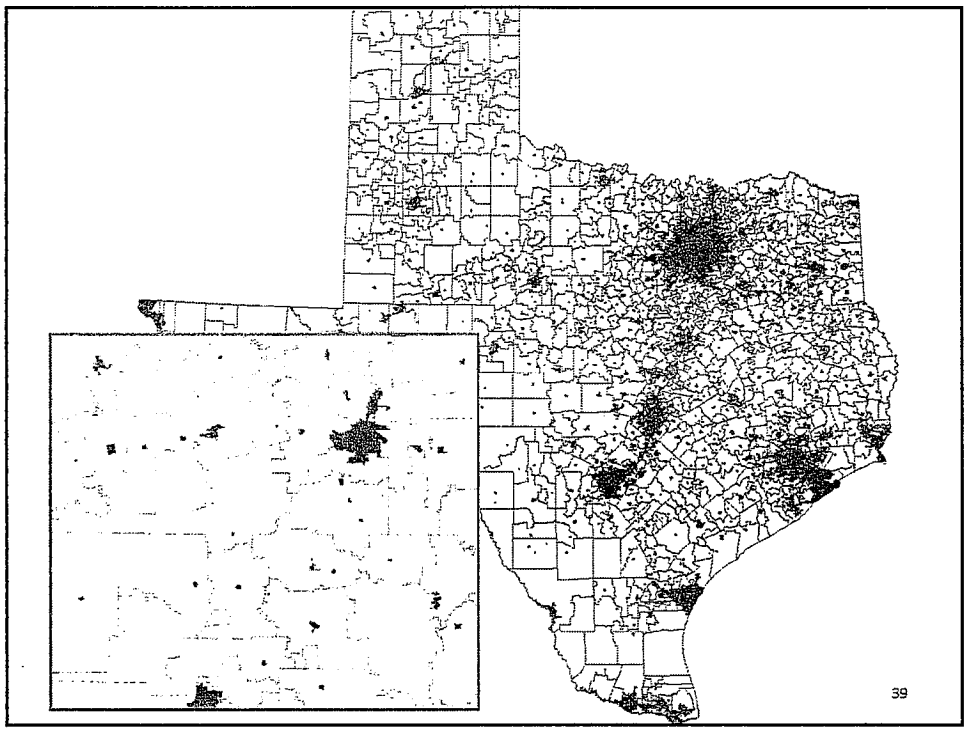
Four Types of School Districts in TX

Control Group

- Type 1: Has incorporated municipality, and municipality holds May elections.
- Type 2: Has incorporated municipality, and municipality holds elections in November of odd-numbered years.

Treatment Group

- Type 3: Has incorporated municipality, and municipality holds elections in November of even-numbered years.
- Type 4: No incorporated municipality.



40

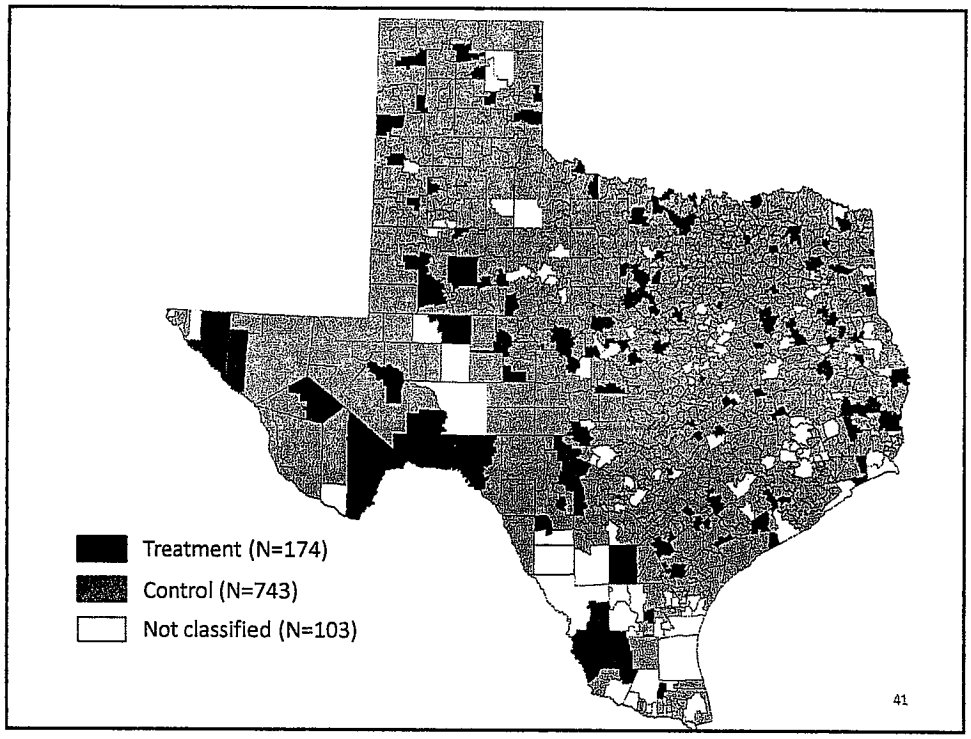
Four Types of School Districts in TX

Control Group

- Type 1: Has incorporated municipality, and municipality holds May elections. (N=743)
- Type 2: Has incorporated municipality, and municipality holds elections in November of odd-numbered years.

Treatment Group

- Type 3: Has incorporated municipality, and municipality holds elections in November of even-numbered years. (N=24)
- **Type 4: No incorporated municipality. (N=150)**



42

Texas Test: Data

- Independent variable: On-Cycle = 1 for treatment districts after implementation of HB 1 (2007-8); On-Cycle = 0 otherwise
- Dependent variable: Average teacher salary in district, 2003-4 to 2009-10 from Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Annual data on enrollment, average years of teacher experience, assessed property value, and demographics from TEA and NCES

Texas Test: Effect of On-Cycle Elections		
	(1)	(2)
On-Cycle	-0.009	-0.013
	(0.004)**	(0.003)***
Controls?	No	Yes
Observations	6418	6407
R-squared	0.88	0.91

Notes: Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses. Models include district fixed effects. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

43

44

Texas Test: Summary

- School trustees forced to switch to on-cycle elections gave smaller salary raises to teachers.
- The response was greater in districts in which teachers were more highly organized.

45

The effect of election timing on turnout in California city elections

- Average turnout in off-cycle city elections is 26% of registered voters
- 9 points higher in city elections held during statewide primaries in midterm/gubernatorial years
- 16 points higher in city elections held during presidential primaries
- 18 points higher in city elections held during midterm/gubernatorial general elections
- 35 points higher in city elections held during presidential general elections

46

The effect of election timing on turnout in California city elections

- The higher turnout of on-cycle elections is not eliminated by "roll-off."
- The effect of on-cycle election timing on turnout dwarfs the effects of many other factors people consider to be important.