

Hey! Governor! Leave them Kids Alone: Political Influence during Childhood*

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Abstract

Do elected officials merely reflect the preferences of their constituents, or can these officials, once in office, shape these preferences? We investigate this by examining the political influence of U.S. governors. Using data from 200 million registered voters and a regression discontinuity design based on gubernatorial elections, we find that governors increase the future share of voters registered to their party. These effects are all concentrated among individuals who were between 7 and 16 years old during the governor's term. Growing up with only Republican governors throughout childhood, rather than only Democratic ones, increases the likelihood of registering as a Republican in adulthood by 10 percentage points. We also document significant effects on participation in primaries, partisan donations, and political beliefs and attitudes. Finally, we examine the role of the educational system in shaping these long-term political preferences.

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1. Introduction

Democratic elections are widely understood as a mechanism for voters to select politicians who align with their preferences. Yet, this relationship is not unidirectional. Once in office, politicians gain access to an extensive set of tools and resources, allowing them to influence citizens’ political preferences.

Politicians can exert influence through agenda-setting and strategic framing (e.g., [Iyengar and Kinder \(1987\)](#)). They can shape how the public perceives policies, problems, and potential solutions by prioritizing specific issues and presenting them in a particular light ([Slothuus and Bisgaard, 2021](#); [Ali et al., 2023](#)). Politicians also use rhetoric, media appearances, and policy decisions to construct narratives that align with their political goals, persuading voters to adopt certain viewpoints or reassess their priorities ([Blumenau and Lauderdale, 2024](#); [Durante et al., 2019](#)). Beyond direct persuasion, politicians’ actions can also have a profound impact on citizens’ broader attitudes toward government legitimacy and institutional trust ([Levi, 1998](#); [Persson, 2002](#); [Persson et al., 2003](#)). For example, frequent corruption scandals, ethical violations, or perceived incompetence can erode public confidence in democratic institutions, leading to disengagement and decreased trust ([Daniele et al., 2023](#); [Martinangeli et al., 2024](#)).

This paper examines a less explored and more general question: Can democratically elected public officials systematically shape political attitudes in ways that align with their party’s ideology? If so, this challenges a core democratic principle, suggesting that politicians do not merely reflect voters’ preferences but actively mold them to their electoral advantage. We study this question in the U.S. context, exploiting quasi-random exposure to either a Republican or a Democratic governor across states.

Political attitudes are typically formed during youth, although they can evolve and be influenced by significant events in adulthood. The formative years of adolescence and early adulthood are crucial, as individuals begin to develop their understanding of social, economic, and political issues, which sets the foundation for their ideological orientation, party affiliation, and overall political views ([Malmendier and Nagel, 2016](#); [Dinas, 2013](#); [Ghitza et al., 2023](#); [Sears and Valentino, 1997](#); [Carreri and Teso, 2023](#)). Following this idea, we see the youth as a group that could be more vulnerable to the influence of a partisan government. Therefore, to identify the effects of exposure to a partisan government, we specifically focus on early-age experiences, i.e., individuals who were exposed to either a Republican or Democratic governor during their youth. If this

influence is substantial and lasting, we would expect to observe its effect on political behaviors in adulthood.

Gubernatorial elections offer an ideal setting for causally estimating the effect of partisan government. First, the binary political environment, where candidates represent either the Republican or Democratic Party, provides a clear and consistent contrast in ideologies.¹ Second, the direct election of governors makes partisanship easily identifiable. Third, governors wield substantial policy-making authority, particularly in areas like education, which may be crucial for shaping political attitudes during youth.

To identify the causal effect of partisan exposure, we employ a Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) leveraging gubernatorial elections. This approach isolates the impact of partisanship instead of other confounding factors that may affect the partisanship of the governor and political preferences.

The analysis is based on 200 million registered voters in the United States in 2024. Voter registration is a prerequisite for participation in elections and includes information on each voter’s partisan affiliation. The primary outcome of our study is whether individuals are registered as Republicans, Democrats, Independents, or for a third party. In addition, we have gathered individual data on political donations, participation in party primaries, and political beliefs and attitudes.

Our findings, based on the RDD, show that exposure to a governor during youth significantly impacts political affiliation in adulthood. Specifically, individuals exposed to a Republican (with respect to a Democratic) governor during their formative years are more likely to register with the Republican Party as adults. These effects are driven by individuals exposed between the ages of 7 and 16, a period that broadly aligns with compulsory school attendance. For instance, having a Republican (instead of a Democratic) governor in power when you were 14 years old increases the likelihood of being registered as a Republican in adulthood by approximately 3.4 percentage points. We find precisely estimated null effects for individuals exposed to governors when they were younger than 6 years old or older than 17 years old.

We extend this analysis by examining the cumulative effects of partisan exposure throughout youth. Since, in this case, multiple elections determine the exposure, we

¹The last large political realignment in the US is a process largely concluded by the end of WW2 (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018). Although both parties have evolved since then, their relative ideological positions have remained stable, with Republicans consistently more conservative than Democrats. Consistent with this, our analysis begins after WWII.

employ new methods of regression discontinuity aggregation that allow us to estimate the effects of a treatment that is determined by multiple discontinuities (Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer, 2024). We find that having a Republican governor during your whole childhood instead of a Democratic one increases the likelihood of registering as a Republican in adulthood by 10 percentage points.

These results are further validated by individual-level data on political donations, party primaries, and political beliefs. Young individuals exposed to Republican governors are more likely in their adulthood to donate to and vote in primary elections consistently with the political ideology they were exposed to. Additionally, we replicate our analysis using survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), yielding similar findings. This complementary analysis shows that the effects of early exposure to partisan governors extend to a broader spectrum of political identity. Specifically, we observe significant impacts on individuals’ attitudes toward key policy issues, including gun control, abortion, affirmative action, race, and trade tariffs.

In the final section of the paper, we present suggestive evidence regarding the mechanisms underlying our findings. As noted in the introduction, public officials can shape voters’ attitudes through a variety of channels. The fact that our effects are most pronounced among individuals during their compulsory school years aligns with the significant influence of this formative period – education is the largest state-level expenditure and a central focus in governors’ campaigns. Heterogeneity analyses further suggest that this could be an important mechanism, as our findings are primarily driven by governors who have the authority to appoint the Board of Education – the state entity responsible for shaping educational policy –, as opposed to states where the board is elected.

This paper contributes to our understanding of the mechanisms that shape political behavior.² Similarly to our paper, previous studies suggest that younger individuals are more vulnerable to external influences, leading to distinct belief patterns across generations (Sears and Funk, 1999). Varied contexts, analyzed in studies by Dinas (2013); Brown et al. (2019); Roth and Wohlfart (2018), underscore cohort-specific disparities rooted in economic, social, and institutional environments. Malmendier and Nagel (2016)

²Past research has explored the origins of our political inclinations, examining genetic predispositions and family dynamics (Sears and Valentino, 1997; Fowler et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2009; Healy and Malhotra, 2013), or specific elements like racial context (Billings et al., 2021; Brown and Enos, 2021; Kaplan et al., 2019), economic adversity (Chyn, 2018; Elder et al., 2024; McNeil et al., 2023), school quality (Cohodes and Feigenbaum, 2021), and immigration (Bolotnyy et al., 2022).

suggest a possible explanation: early-life encounters shape future expectations and behaviors, with the youth showing heightened responses to novel situations due to their limited life experiences. Within the political sphere, [Bartels and Jackman \(2014\)](#) provide a framework highlighting the evolving political attitudes within specific birth cohorts, influenced by age-specific factors and period-specific events. In a recent application of this framework, [Daniele et al. \(2023\)](#) find that an unexpected wave of corruption scandals impacted young first-time voters permanently reducing trust in institutions and shaping their voting behaviors twenty-five years later. [Acemoglu et al. \(2024\)](#), exploiting within-country variation across cohorts and surveys, find that individuals with longer exposure to successful democracy display stronger support for democratic institutions. In the US, [Cantoni and Pons \(2022\)](#) investigate the influence of youth peer groups on political affiliations, focusing on voters who relocated across states, while [Brown et al. \(2023\)](#) using a similar strategy focus on the childhood political environment, measured by the length of exposure to a Republican or Democratic county. Relatedly, [Chyn \(2018\)](#) and [Elder et al. \(2024\)](#) study the role of peers exploiting individuals displaced from disadvantaged neighborhoods during childhood.

Our primary contribution to this evolving literature is to uncover the lasting influence of elected governments on shaping long-term attitudes. As highlighted in the opening paragraph, prior research has examined various mechanisms through which governments can shape citizens’ beliefs and behaviors. For example, recent contributions in economics, such as [\(Cantoni et al., 2017\)](#), show the significant impact of a revised school curriculum in China on students’ political attitudes. Similarly, [Fouka \(2020\)](#) investigates the aftermath of language restrictions in U.S. schools following World War I, showing that these policies, rather than fostering assimilation, sparked a cultural backlash. Despite these insights, we know little about whether elected governments can systematically shape citizens’ attitudes to align with their own interests. In the context of U.S. state governance, this impact is both lasting and far-reaching, spanning generations, diverse geographic regions, and various dimensions of political behavior. This finding raises a potential concern for democracy, as even elected governments may wield enough power to reshape narratives and implement policies that can significantly influence the behavior of future generations.

In the next two sections, Sections 2 and 3, we introduce the institutional setting and our main data. In Section 4, we describe the empirical strategy. In Sections 5 and 6, we present our findings. We conclude in Section 7.

2. Institutional background

2.1. The Role of the Governor

Governors, as the chief executives of their states, have substantial power to influence the lives – and, in turn, the attitudes – of their citizens. They lead the legislative agenda by proposing laws and policies in key areas such as healthcare, education, economic development, and public safety. For example, in healthcare, they oversee the Medicaid program, make decisions about coverage and funding, and advocate for state-specific healthcare reforms. They implement public health initiatives to improve community health, manage disease outbreaks, and promote wellness. For economic development, governors use tax incentives, infrastructure projects, and workforce development programs. In public safety, governors oversee law enforcement agencies, set priorities for crime prevention, and manage corrections systems, while advocating for justice reforms to address incarceration rates and recidivism.

They collaborate with their staff and legislators to draft and introduce bills, shaping the legislative agenda.³ The state budget is one of the most significant policy tools at a governor’s disposal. Governors prepare and submit a budget proposal that reflects their policy priorities, outlining how state funds should be allocated.

Beyond policy, governors might affect citizens in less direct but equally impactful ways. They can set the tone for public discourse by shaping narratives on critical societal issues such as race, religion, and cultural values. Through media appearances and public speeches, governors can signal their values and priorities, influencing societal norms and fostering debates on key topics. Moreover, governors’ actions can affect citizens’ trust in government and perceptions of legitimacy.

2.2. State Governance

Education consistently emerges as a critical priority in state governance, as clearly illustrated by its dominant role in state budgets and its prominence in political discourse. Analysis of budget allocations from 1970 to 2020 (see Appendix Figure B.1) underscores education’s sustained importance, maintaining the largest share of state expenditure

³Governors hold significant veto power, allowing them to reject bills passed by the legislature, with some states granting them the ability to use a line-item veto to reject specific parts of budget bills.

despite experiencing a gradual decline from approximately 40% to 35%. Other significant budget categories include public welfare and highways, both of which have notably decreased over time, alongside modest growth in health and hospital expenditures and consistently low allocations for construction.

This budgetary emphasis on education aligns closely with the prominence given to educational issues in political communications. Appendix Figure B.2 highlights how education remains a central topic in gubernatorial manifestos and State of the State addresses. Specifically, Panel A reveals education’s consistent appearance in political discourse, reaching a peak during the 1970s and continuing prominently thereafter. Panel B further reinforces this trend by identifying education as the most frequently mentioned topic in recent gubernatorial addresses (85% occurrence), surpassing other significant concerns such as economy and jobs, health and healthcare, public safety and justice, and infrastructure and transportation.

2.3. Republican vs Democrats

Beyond examining the specific roles and policy influences of governors, we investigate whether state politics differ ideologically between Republican and Democratic governors. Specifically, we aim to understand if and how the political messages articulated by governors vary systematically along party lines. To achieve this, we analyze the textual content of state party platforms to identify ideological differences and patterns in their policy narratives.

To explore this, we employ logistic regression models trained separately for each policy topic and across distinct historical periods (1950–1969, 1970–1989, 1990–2009, and 2010–2017). These logistic regression models are meant to predict governors’ political affiliations (Republican or Democrat) based solely on harmonized textual summaries of their manifestos.⁴ This methodology allows us to quantify the extent to which Republican and Democratic governors differ in their framing of policy issues. As a first thing we visualize the most predictive words identified by logistic regression coefficients about the topic Education and the Economy for our period of interest in Figure 1, revealing that Republican and Democratic governors distinctly frame their policy narratives. For

⁴We use a GPT-based text summarization process to categorize manifesto content into predefined topics. The topics are Civil Rights and Equality, Economy and Jobs, Education, Environment and Energy, Foreign Policy and National Security, Government and Law, Healthcare and Social Services, Immigration, Infrastructure and Technology, Social and Cultural Issues.

example, regarding the Economy and Jobs, Democratic governors from recent decades (1990-2029) prominently emphasize terms like "wage," "fair," and "worker," indicating a strong focus on fair wages and employment rights. In contrast, Republican governors frequently highlight concepts such as "tax," "free markets," and "enterprise," underscoring their commitment to lower taxation, market deregulation, and promoting private business. On the topic of Education, Democratic governors stress terms such as "funding," "education," and "public education," signaling a prioritization of increased educational funding and support for public schooling. Republican governors, however, consistently emphasize "control," "parental," and "choice," reflecting their advocacy for local governance, parental rights, and educational choice initiatives.

Additionally, we find that the predictive power of our models increase over time, potentially suggesting increases in ideological differentiation in the last 60 years, coherently with existing evidence ([Gentzkow et al., 2019](#); [Ash and Galletta, 2024](#)).⁵

3. Data Description

We combine multiple datasets to examine the long-term influence of gubernatorial ideologies on political preferences. The core data sources include 1) voter registration records and 2) gubernatorial election outcomes. We also integrate state-level policy data. This section provides an overview of these datasets and the construction of the final sample. Additional data is described in [Appendix A](#).

Our primary measure of political preferences is derived from harmonized voter registration records provided by L2, a leading electoral data vendor. For most elections, only U.S. citizens aged 18 and older can vote. Voter registration is required and varies by state—some allow online registration, same-day registration on Election Day, or automatic registration through government agency interactions. When registering, voters declare their party affiliation. Party affiliation is necessary for participating in a party political process. For example, in most states, only party affiliates can vote in party primaries. If a voter does not want to be affiliated to a party, it can also choose to be an independent registered voter. For 31 states, we are able to observe the party affiliation of all registered voters. For an additional 11 states, we are able to infer party affiliation

⁵We find an average accuracy across the different topic of interest of 0.66 in 1950-69, 0.67 in 1970-1989, 0.91 in 1990-2009, 0.93 in 2010-2017.

based on which party primary elections the individuals participate in. The remaining states are not included in our sample. It is worth noting that party affiliation is one of the strongest predictors of whether someone will vote for the Republican or Democratic candidate (Bartels, 2000).

In addition to party affiliation, the voter registration data include key demographic and geographical details. These include individuals' dates of birth, residential addresses, and a record of state-to-state moves since 2008. These variables allow us to link individuals with high confidence to their childhood governors. To focus on stable exposures, we only include individuals who stayed in the same state since 2008. The data also capture supplementary political behaviors, such as participation in primaries and donations to political campaigns.

Finally, to measure exposure to political ideologies during formative years, we compile a detailed dataset on gubernatorial terms across all 50 U.S. states from 1945 to 2020. This dataset includes the party affiliation of each governor and their term durations, accounting for variation in state-specific term limits (e.g., two-year versus four-year terms). It also includes, for each election, the vote share for all parties.

4. Empirical Framework

In this section, we present the empirical framework used to examine the causal effect of being exposed at a particular age to a Republican governor on an individual's political preferences. We then discuss the identification assumptions and the interpretation of the main parameter of interest. We conclude by discussing how we aggregate various close elections to identify the effect of being exposed throughout your whole childhood to a Republican governor.

4.1. Regression Discontinuity Analysis

Using a simple OLS estimation that regresses a dummy variable equal to 1 if the governor in power was a Republican when the voter was of age τ on today's political preferences would most likely not estimate the causal effect of governors.

First, some states consistently favor a particular party, which can create a correlation between a voter's current political preferences and the historical party affiliation of governors. To address this issue, we include state-fixed effects, which allow us to control for unobserved, time-invariant characteristics of states.

Additionally, there may be some life cycle in political preferences that, by chance, could correlate with the historical performance of parties. For instance, between 1955 and 1965, the Democratic party was very popular and held a large percentage of the gubernatorial positions. Individuals who were children during this time are now over 60 years old, an age group that tends to be more conservative and, therefore, more likely to favor Republican candidates. This relationship would mechanically generate a negative correlation between the political party of the governor during childhood and today’s political preferences. This poses a significant identification challenge, as it could lead us to misattribute age-related shifts in political ideology to childhood exposure effects. To address this potential issue, we control for the year of birth.⁶

Yet, our identification strategy must still account for potential state-by-birth-year unobservables that could jointly influence gubernatorial elections and individual political preferences. Consider, for instance, severe economic downturns: these events could both increase the electoral prospects of a particular party (e.g., voters favoring the Democratic party during recessions) and shape the long-term political attitudes of children experiencing economic hardship during their formative years. Such economic conditions represent just one example of state-specific temporal shocks that could confound our estimation of the effects of political exposure during childhood.

To address these remaining issues, we employ a Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD). This approach exploits information on the margin of victory to estimate the effect of having a Republican with respect to a Democrat governor.

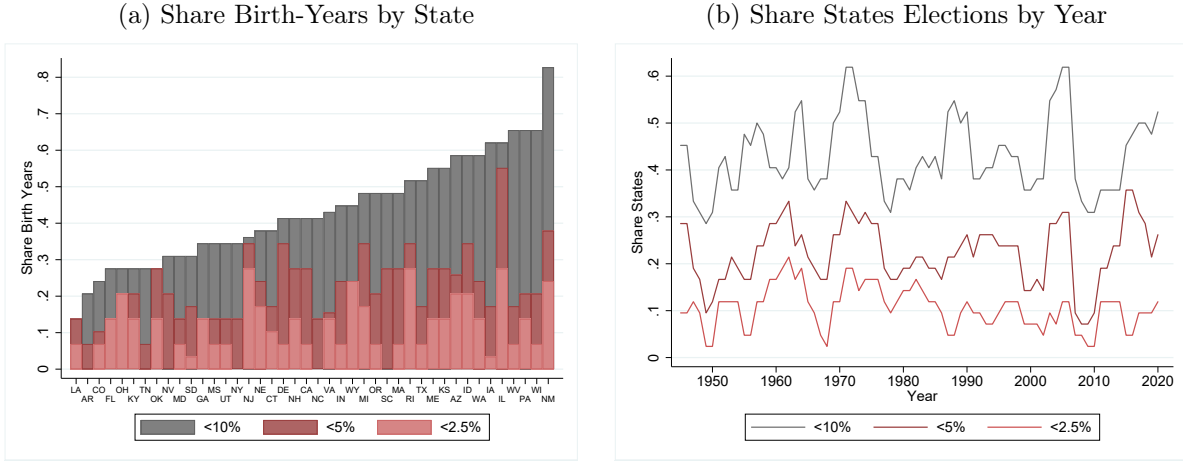
The main regression equation employed is:

$$Y_{i,s} = \alpha_s + \beta_0 RepGov_{i,s}^\tau + \beta_1 MV_{i,s}^\tau + \beta_2 (MV_{i,s}^\tau \times RepGov_{i,s}^\tau) + \beta BY_{i,s} + \epsilon_{i,s}, \quad (1)$$

where i denotes the individual and s is the state. In our baseline specification, $Y_{i,s}$ is a dummy variable equal to 100 if the individual is a registered Republican as of October 2024, and 0 otherwise. $RepGov_{i,s}^\tau$ is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the governor in power in state s when voter i was τ years old was a Republican and 0 otherwise. $MV_{i,s}^\tau$ denotes the margin of victory in the gubernatorial election for the governor in power in state s when voter i was τ years old. We also include birth year $BY_{i,s}$. α_s are state fixed

⁶Since our voter registration data is observed at a single point in time (October 2024), age and year of birth are perfectly collinear in our sample, making them empirically indistinguishable. Therefore, controlling for the year of birth is equivalent to controlling for age.

Figure 2: Sample selection



Note: The left panel shows the share of birth-years included in the sample depending on the bandwidth size by state, while the right panel shows the number of elections by year. The sample includes elections from 1945 to 2002.

effects. It is worth mentioning that our specification focuses on exposure to Republican governors, but the results are symmetric when reframed for Democratic governors, with reversed signs and similar magnitudes. This symmetry reflects the bipartisan nature of most U.S. gubernatorial elections. To select the bandwidth, we use the MSE-optimal bandwidth from [Calonico et al. \(2014\)](#). This is a data-driven procedure that generates different bandwidths when changing the outcome of interest or the age τ . To maintain a consistent sample throughout all specifications, we use the average MSE-optimal bandwidth (10 percentage points) and show how robust the results are in changing the bandwidth. In Figure 2, we present an overview of the sample selection based on different bandwidth sizes. Panel (a) illustrates the share of birth years by state, while panel (b) depicts the share of states by election year. With our defined bandwidth of 10, we observe an average of approximately 40% for both birth years by state and the share of state elections per year. Moreover, there is no evident trend indicating an increase in the number of competitive elections over time.

For inference, we cluster standard errors at the cohort level ([Abadie et al., 2023](#)). We define cohorts as groups of individuals who share the same governor's term at age τ . Since most gubernatorial terms last four years, this grouping is effectively similar to a state-by-four-year clustering.

To construct the estimating sample, we impose several restrictions to ensure the va-

lidity and relevance of our analysis. First, we want to study a period when the ideological meaning of “Republican” and “Democrat” has remained quite stable. While the exact timing of this event is different for each state and sometimes unclear following [Kuziemko and Washington \(2018\)](#), we see the 1948 Democratic party convention as a turning point where many conservatives left the Democratic party and concluded the party’s ideology realignment. Our analysis includes individuals born after 1945 to ensure that the ideological ranking of each party is consistent with the one they experienced during their childhood. Second, we want to improve the likelihood that we are correctly identifying voters’ exposure to a specific governor during their formative years. Since we only have access to current voter registration data, we implicitly assume that individuals have lived their entire lives in the state where they are currently registered.⁷ To strengthen this assumption and reduce potential misclassification, we exclude individuals who have moved between states based on whether a voter has ever been registered in another state since 2008.

4.2. Identification Strategy and Interpretation

In a RDD, a key identifying assumption is the continuity assumption. In this case, it implies that $E(\epsilon|MV^\tau)$ varies smoothly when $MV_{i,s}^\tau = 0$. Given this assumption, the coefficient β_0 quantifies the effect of having a Republican governor at age τ on Republican voter registration.

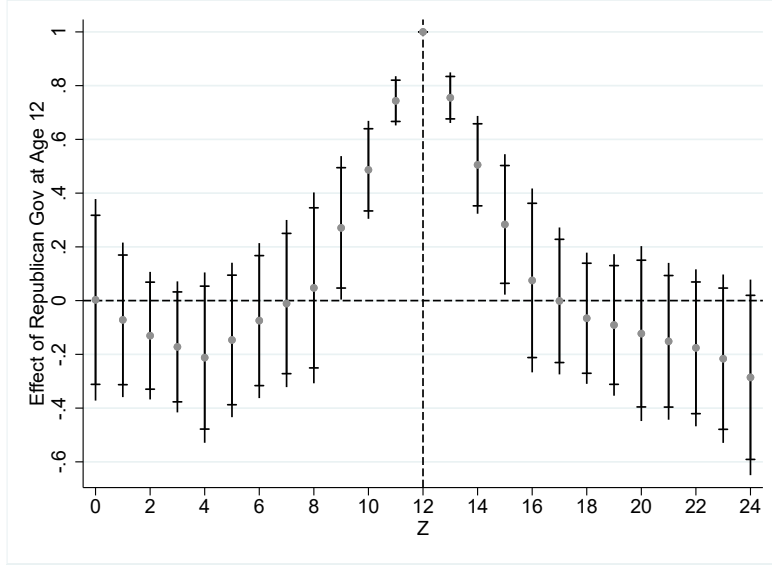
The primary consideration for a careful interpretation of the β_0 coefficient in our context arises from the fact that governors typically serve a 4-year term. As a result, for some individuals, $RepGov_{i,s}^\tau$ and $RepGov_{i,s}^z$ may overlap if τ and z are close. For example, consider a gubernatorial election held in November 1969, where a Republican governor was elected for a term beginning in 1970 and ending in 1973. An individual born in 1960 would have $RepGov^{10} = RepGov^{11}$, as both ages fall within the same gubernatorial term. In contrast, an individual born in 1963 has $RepGov^{10} \neq RepGov^{11}$ because the term overlaps differently for them.

This artifact complicates the interpretation of β_0 , as it does not solely capture the effect of having a Republican governor at age τ . For some individuals, β_0 also reflects the influence of having a Republican governor at ages close to τ . To better understand how

⁷[Molloy et al. \(2011\)](#) shows that approximately 70% of the U.S. population has never migrated outside of their state of birth over the course of their lifetime.

to interpret β_0 , we estimate Equation (1) using as an outcome a dummy variable that identifies the presence of a Republican governor at different ages. This approach allows us to examine the relationship between $RepGov^\tau$ and $RepGov^z$ within our estimation sample, controlling for the running variable. As an illustration, Figure 3 presents the estimation results for $\tau = 12$, showing the relationship for different values of z ranging from 0 to 24.

Figure 3: Interpreting the Parameter of Interest



Note: This figure display the relationship between $RepGov^{12}$ and $RepGov^z$ for different levels of z . To do so, we estimate equation 1 where $\tau = 12$ and $RepGov^z$ is the outcome and report β_0 for different levels of z between 0 and 24.

When $z = 12$, there is perfect collinearity, and the coefficient is equal to 1. For the $Z = 11$ and $z = 13$ the coefficient is 0.75 and statistically significant. The size of the coefficient is in line with the fact that the usual governor term lasts for 4 years, and therefore, only 1 out of 4 people will not have the same governor when they were 12 and 11 (or 13). A similar argument can be made for any value of z between 9 and 15.

The coefficients for z lower than 9 test whether a marginal victory by a Republican at age 12 is correlated with more likely victories of a Republican at a much younger age. As typical in an RDD design, evidence in favor of the continuity assumption is that predetermined variables do not jump discontinuously at the threshold. These coefficients test exactly this by looking at the results of previous elections. In line with the continuity assumption being satisfied, all these coefficients are not statistically distinguishable from zero.

The coefficients for z higher than 15 instead test whether a marginal victory by a

Republican at age 12 is correlated with more likely victories of a Republican later in time. This is an interesting test to see whether gubernatorial victories generate future victories. This type of phenomenon could happen because of incumbency advantage or the more general consolidation of a party in a state. The results in Figure 3 dismiss this hypothesis.

Overall, these results mean that β_0 from equation 1 should be interpreted as the effect of having a Republican governor at age τ but also includes part of the effect of having a Republican governor at ages $[\tau - 3, \tau + 3]$. The weights of these effects are the coefficients in Figure 3.

Finally, our design also fits the standard identifying assumptions of the RDD: The Cattaneo et al. (2018) test indicates that the forcing variable (margin of electoral victory) is smooth (Figure D.3).

4.3. Regression Discontinuity Aggregation

While the regression discontinuity design proposed in 4.1 does provides the causal effect of a governor on political preferences under mild and easily testable assumptions, it has 2 drawbacks: 1) As discussed in Section 4.2, each estimation provides the causal estimate of the weighted sum of effects at various ages. 2) To have the overall effect of governors on political preferences, one must present the estimation results of equation (1) for various ages (i.e., for various values of τ).

To tackle these two issues, we follow Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer (2024) that extends the RD design where the treatment status is the average or aggregate across multiple discontinuities. Our paper fits this scenario because the overall effect of governors on political preferences could depend on the political party of the governor at various ages and these are determined by various discontinuities induced by electoral results. In particular, we study the effect of the share of years between ages a and b spent under a Republican governor ($ShRep^{a,b}$).

The first method proposed by Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer (2024), called the "upper-level" estimator, involves aggregating various regression discontinuity regressions. To do that, we use the share of years between ages a and b spent under a Republican governor elected in a narrow election ($ShRepNE^{a,b}$) as an instrument for $ShRep^{a,b}$. A narrow election is an election with a margin smaller than a selected bandwidth. After controlling for the appropriate aggregation of the original controls and running variables,

Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer (2024) shows that this method identifies the causal effect of $ShRep^{a,b}$ under the same identifying assumptions of the original RD estimation.

Formally, we estimate the following system of equations:

$$ShRep_{i,s}^{a,b} = \gamma_s + \gamma_0 ShRepNE_{i,s}^{a,b} + \gamma_1 Q_{i,s} + \gamma_2 BY_{i,s} + \epsilon_{i,s}, \quad (2 \text{ FS})$$

$$Y_{i,s} = \beta_s + \beta_0 \widehat{ShRep}_{i,s}^{a,b} + \beta_1 Q_{i,s} + \beta_2 BY_{i,s} + \rho_{i,s}, \quad (2 \text{ SS})$$

Where is $ShRep_{i,s}^{a,b} = \sum_{\tau=a}^b \frac{RepGov_{i,s}^\tau}{(b-a+1)}$ and $ShRepNE_{i,s}^{a,b}$ follows the same formula but using only elections with $MV_{i,s}^\tau < c$. The aggregated controls and running variables are $Q_{i,s}$, the share of elections that were narrow elections, the average margin of victory in the narrow elections, and the average margin of victory when Republicans win in a narrow election. Formally, $Q_{i,s} = [\sum_{NE} \frac{1}{(b-a+1)}, \sum_{NE} \frac{MV_{i,s}^\tau}{(b-a+1)}, \sum_{NE} \frac{MV_{i,s}^\tau \times RepGov_{i,s}^\tau}{(b-a+1)}]$. As in the regression discontinuity analysis, we control for state fixed effect and birth year ($BY_{i,s}$). In our baseline, we continue using the 10% margin of victory bandwidth and show the results for other bandwidths.

Alternatively, Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer (2024) describe a second aggregation method called the “lower-level” estimator that proposes to stack all the RDs in a single aggregate RD and uses victories by a Republican governor in a narrow election as an instrument for $ShRep^{a,b}$.

Formally we estimate the following system of equations:

$$ShRep_{i,s}^{a,b} = \gamma_s + \gamma_0 RepGov_{i,s}^\tau + \gamma_1 MV_{i,s}^\tau + \gamma_2 (MV_{i,s}^\tau \times RepGov_{i,s}^\tau) + \gamma_3 BY_{i,s} + \epsilon_{i,s}, \quad (3 \text{ FS})$$

$$Y_{i,s} = \beta_s + \beta_0 \widehat{ShRep}_{i,s}^{a,b} + \beta_1 MV_{i,s}^\tau + \beta_2 (MV_{i,s}^\tau \times RepGov_{i,s}^\tau) + \beta_3 BY_{i,s} + \rho_{i,s}, \quad (3 \text{ SS})$$

Where the sample contains observations for which at age $\tau \in [a, b]$ $MV_{i,s}^\tau < c$. The peculiarity of these equations is that for an individual where there are multiple ages τ for which $MV_{i,s}^\tau < c$, the equations provide multiple expressions of $ShRep_{i,s}^{a,b}$ and $Y_{i,s}$. Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer (2024) show that despite this peculiarity, γ_0 identifies the local treatment effect of $ShRep^{a,b}$ on $Y_{i,s}$ under the same identifying assumptions of the original RD estimation. In all regressions, we also control for state fixed effect and birth year ($BY_{i,s}$). In our baseline, we also continue using the 10% margin of victory bandwidth and show the results for other bandwidths. Because this method is just a fuzzy RD specification, we are also able to produce the standard RD plots.

Informed by the estimation results of equation 1, we choose a and b to encompass

schooling age. For our baseline specification, we choose $a = 7$ and $b = 16$, which, as shown in our analysis in Section 5.1, are the first and last ages for which the estimates of equation 1 are statistically significant at a 5% level.

5. Main results

In this section, we present the main results of the analysis conducted on both the L2 and ANES data. Subsection 5.1 shows the results obtained with the RDD identification, while subsection 5.2 discusses those obtained with the RDA identification.

5.1. RDD estimates

We begin the discussion of the paper’s main results by examining the outcomes obtained through the RDD analysis. To make the discussion clearer and more interpretable in terms of effect sizes, we initially focus on two ages—10 and 14—during which individuals lived under a Republican candidate. We broadly define youth as those between ages 6 and 18, making 10 and 14 representative midpoints within this range. In the next sections, we will also present the estimated effects at other ages.

Table 1 shows the effect on various outcomes of having lived at age 10 (upper panel) or at age 14 (lower panel) in a state where the Republican candidate won the gubernatorial election. In columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is a dummy variable equal to 100 if the individual is a registered Republican; in column 3, it is a dummy variable equal to 100 if the individual is a registered Democrat; and in column 4, it is a dummy variable equal to 100 if the individual is a registered independent. The specifications in columns 1, 3, and 4 consider all registered voters (i.e., Republican vs. Democrat vs. Independent). In column 2, we only include individuals registered as Republican or Democrat.

Column 1 shows that having a Republican governor at age 10 or age 14 increases the probability of registering as a Republican by 3.3 and 2.7 percentage points, respectively (corresponding to 10% and 8% relative to the outcome mean). These estimates are larger when restricting the sample to individuals registered with one of the major parties (i.e., column 2 shows an increase of 4.2 percentage points for those who were 10 years old and 3.4 percentage points for those who were 14). However, these effects are slightly smaller when expressed relative to the outcome mean (9% for age 10 and 7% for age 14).

Similarly, the probability of being registered as a Democrat decreases by 3.4 percentage points (equivalent to 10% relative to the outcome mean) for individuals who were 10

years old and by approximately 2 percentage points (6% relative to the mean) for those who were 14 (as shown in column 3). No significant effect is observed on the probability of registering as an Independent voter.

Table 1: Growing up under a Republican governor: RD Estimates

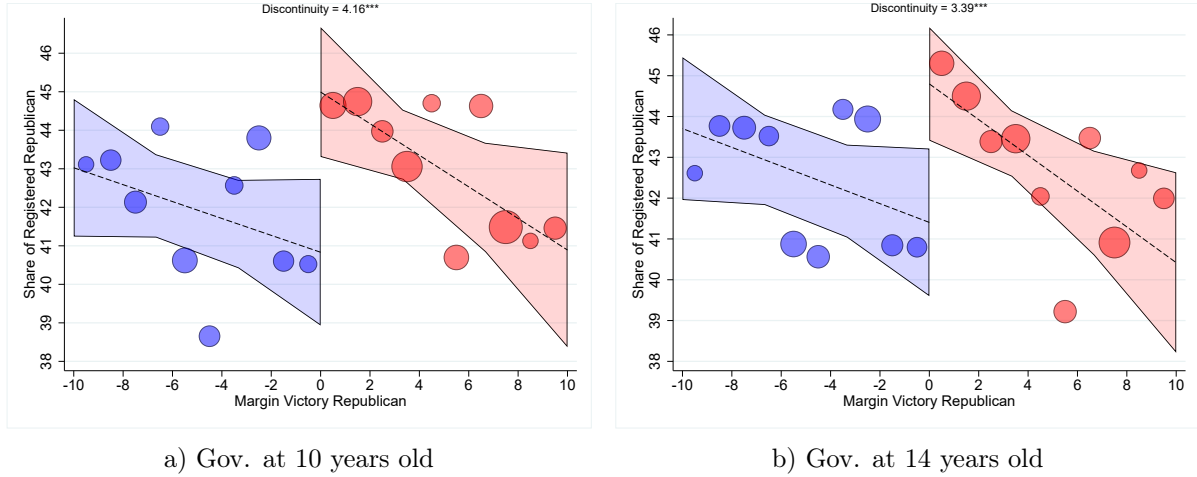
	Republican (1)	Republican (2)	Democrat (3)	Independent (4)
Republican at Age 10	3.33*** (1.07)	4.16*** (1.37)	-3.42*** (1.29)	-0.11 (1.32)
Observations	71.84M	50.61M	71.84M	71.84M
Outcome Average	33.85	47.61	35.49	29.21
Republican at Age 14	2.72*** (0.98)	3.39*** (1.20)	-2.01* (1.19)	-0.94 (1.44)
Observations	72.45M	50.97M	72.45M	72.45M
Outcome Average	33.71	47.33	35.60	29.30
Controls	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Sample	Full Sample	Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RD regression, as estimated from Equation 1. The outcomes are a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican (col. 1 and 2), as a Democrat (col. 3), and as an Independent (col. 4). The treatment variable is equal to 1 for individuals living at the age of 10 (upper panel), or 14 years old (lower panel), in a state where the Republican candidate won the gubernatorial race with respect to who lived where a democrat candidate won. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945. Column 2 further restricts the sample to individuals who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects, linear RD specification, and weight observations by a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

Taking as a reference the specification shown in column 2 of Table 1, Figure 4 provides its graphical representation for individuals who lived under a Republican governor at age 10 (panel a) or age 14 (panel b). As can be observed, the discontinuity in the probability of being registered as a Republican for individuals who lived in states where a Republican candidate narrowly won the gubernatorial election compared to those where they narrowly lost is positive and significant.

Additionally, it is worth noting that on both sides of the discontinuity, the relationship between the share of votes received by the Republican candidate and the probability of registering as a Republican is negative. This observation confirms the validity of using RD identification to properly estimate the causal (positive) effect of growing up with a Republican governor on adult Republican affiliation, as opposed to the potential

Figure 4: Growing up under a Republican governor: Graphical representation of RD Estimates



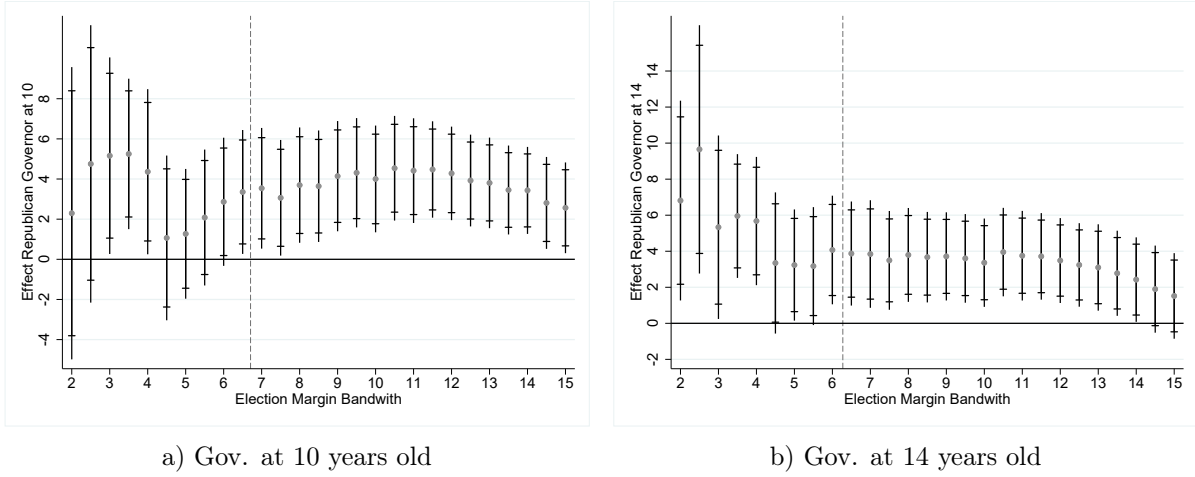
Note: This figure graphically represents the estimated effect of growing up under a Republican governor at age 10 (panel a) and age 14 (panel b) on the probability of registering as a Republican in adulthood. The figure is based on the Regression Discontinuity (RD) specification in column 2 of Table 1. The circles represent binned averages of the share of individuals registered as Republicans, grouped according to the Republican candidate's margin of victory in the gubernatorial election. The solid line represents the fitted regression line, estimated separately for observations just above and below the zero margin threshold. The shaded area around the line represents the confidence interval.

misguidance of relying on a simple OLS analysis.

Still based on the specification shown in column 2 of Table 1, Table C.1 tests the robustness of the estimates obtained for ages 10 and 14 to the inclusion of individual controls for race and gender (col. 1), the use a triangular kernel (col. 2), and second-degree polynomial specification for the margin of victory of the Republican candidate over the Democratic candidate (col. 3). Figure 5 tests the robustness of the estimates for ages 10 (panel a) and 14 (panel b) to different bandwidths of the electoral margin of victory. As observed, and regardless of the age considered, the effect remains stable and significant across all the alternative specifications shown in Table C.1 and almost all bandwidth values taken into account in Figure 5, although it becomes slightly noisier for very small bandwidths.

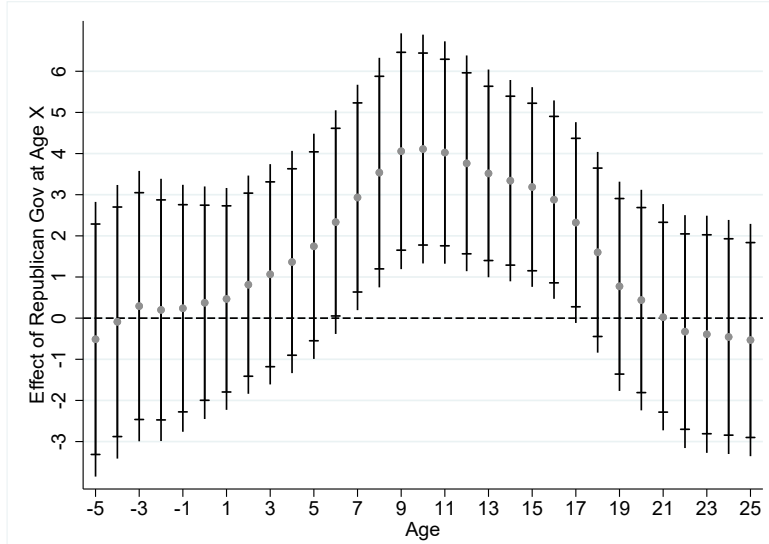
Finally, in Figure 6, we show how the estimate of the specification presented in column 2 of Table 1 varies depending on the age at which individuals live under a Republican governor. As observed, the effect of the latter on the individual probability of registering as a Republican is positive and statistically significant (at the 5% level) only for those who lived under a Republican governor between the ages of 7 and 16. It is weakly significant for those aged 6 or 17, while it becomes non-significant for all other ages considered.

Figure 5: Growing up under a Republican governor: RD estimates - Different bandwidths



Note: This figure presents the robustness analysis of the Regression Discontinuity (RD) estimates for the effect of growing up under a Republican governor at age 10 (panel a) and age 14 (panel b) on adult party registration. Each point in the figure represents an RD estimate for a specific bandwidth. The x-axis shows the bandwidth range, varying from 2 to 15 percentage points, while the y-axis shows the estimated effect size of Republican gubernatorial exposure on Republican registration in adulthood. The vertical lines around each estimate represent confidence intervals. The vertical dashed lines represent the value of the optimal bandwidth for each specific age.

Figure 6: Growing up under a Republican governor: Different ages



Note: This figure illustrates how the estimated effect of growing up under a Republican governor varies by the age at which individuals were exposed. The x-axis represents the age at which an individual experienced a Republican governor, ranging from before being born (-5), early childhood (age 0) to early adulthood (age 25), while the y-axis shows the estimated effect on the likelihood of registering as a Republican in adulthood. The dots represent the estimated RD effect at each age, and the solid lines indicate the confidence intervals.

5.2. RDA estimates

In this section, we discuss the results obtained using the RDA estimation strategy. Specifically, based on the results shown in Figure 6, we aggregate the effect for the 7–16

age range.

Table 2 reports the estimated coefficients from this analysis. Panel A shows the results obtained using the upper-level instrument, while Panel B those obtained using the lower-level instrument. Column 1 presents the estimate of the first-stage regression. Panel A shows the estimate for 2 FS. A shift from 0 years to 10 years lived during childhood under a Republican governor elected in a narrow election increases the share of years lived under a Republican governor between ages 7 and 16 by 33 percentage points. Similarly, Panel B shows the estimate for 3 FS. After controlling for the margin of victory, each narrow victory by a Republican governor during childhood increases the share of years under a Republican governor by 32 percentage points.

The F-statistics (Kleibergen-Paap) of the first-stage regression for both instruments reported for each panel in the last rows of columns 2–5, we see that these are all very large, definitively ruling out the possibility of weak instruments. The results of the second-stage regression shown in columns 2–5 confirm those presented in Table 1 and obtained with RD identification. Having a Republican governor throughout one’s entire childhood, as opposed to a Democratic one, increases the probability of registering as a Republican by 6.8 percentage points when using the upper-level instrument and by 8.8 percentage points when employing the lower-level instrument. The second-stage estimates are even larger when restricting the sample to individuals registered with either the Democratic or Republican parties, amounting to 8.7 and 12.0 percentage points for the upper- and lower-level instruments, respectively. Conversely, the probability of registering as a Democrat decreases by 4.5 percentage points with the upper-level instrument and by 8.3 percentage points when using the lower-level instrument, while no significant effect is observed on the probability of registering as an independent. Finally, column 6 shows that the reduced-form regression also yields a positive and significant coefficient for the effect of both instruments on the probability of registering as a Republican versus a Democrat, with estimates of 2.8 and 3.6 percentage points for the upper- and lower-level instruments, respectively.

Figure 7 provides the graphical representation of the first-stage regression (i.e., panel a) and the reduced form regression (i.e., panel b), by considering the lower level instrument. In both cases, and in line with the estimates presented in Table 2, the discontinuity is clear, positive, and highly statistically significant. Each narrow victory of a Republican governor during childhood increases the percentage of years lived under a Republican governor between the ages of 7 and 16 by approximately 32 percentage points (panel

Table 2: Growing up under a Republican governor: RDA estimates

	Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)	Republican	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Republican
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)		6.76*** (1.44)	8.65*** (1.86)	-4.49** (1.75)	-2.48 (1.80)	
Upper Level Instrument	0.33*** (0.03)					2.82*** (0.52)
Observations	141.82M	141.82M	98.67M	141.82M	141.82M	98.67M
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		124.8	121.7	124.8	124.8	
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)		8.78*** (1.11)	11.99*** (1.58)	-8.33*** (1.45)	-1.11 (1.29)	
Lower Level Instrument	0.32*** (0.03)					3.58*** (0.38)
Observations	724.73M	724.73M	509.38M	724.73M	724.73M	509.38M
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		154.8	131.0	154.8	154.8	

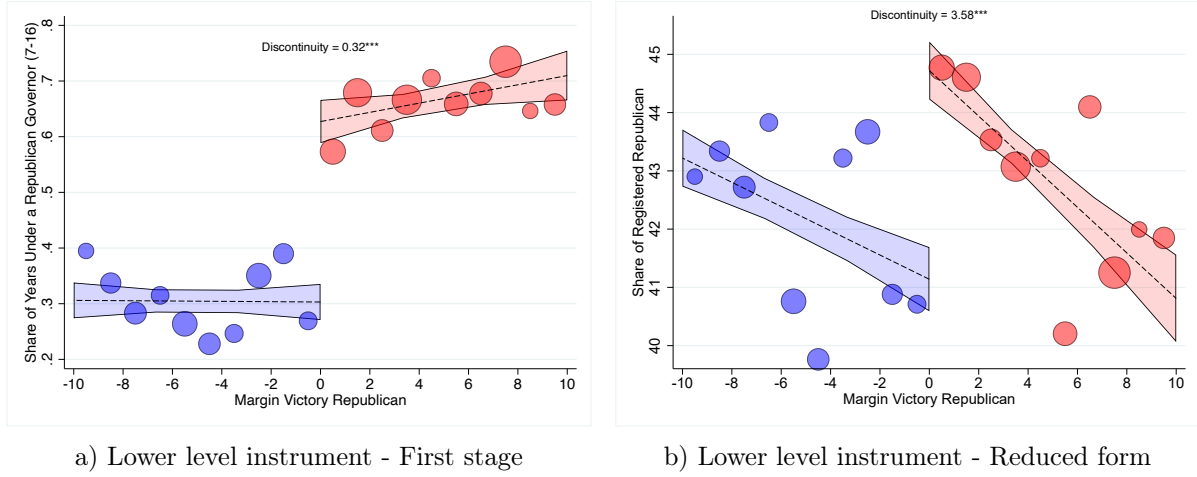
Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 FS (panel a, col. 1), 2 SS (panel a, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel a, col 6). Panel B follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 FS (panel b, col. 1) and 3 SS (panel b, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel b, col 6). The outcomes are the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old (col 1), a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican (col. 2, 3 and 6), as a Democrat (col. 4), and as an Independent (col. 5). "Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old. "Upper Level Instrument" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor who won a narrow election between 7 and 16 years old. "Lower Level Instrument" is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the election is won by a Republican. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945 who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

a), as well as the probability of registering as a Republican (panel b) by 3.6 percentage points (equivalent to an 8% increase relative to its average within our sample)

Based on the specification shown in column 3 of Table 2, in Figure 8 we test the robustness of the estimates obtained using different bandwidths for the Republican candidate's margin of victory over their opponent. Once again, the effect remains positive and significant across all the bandwidth values considered, with its size varying from 5 to 30 percentage points depending on the combination of the bandwidth length and type of instrument.

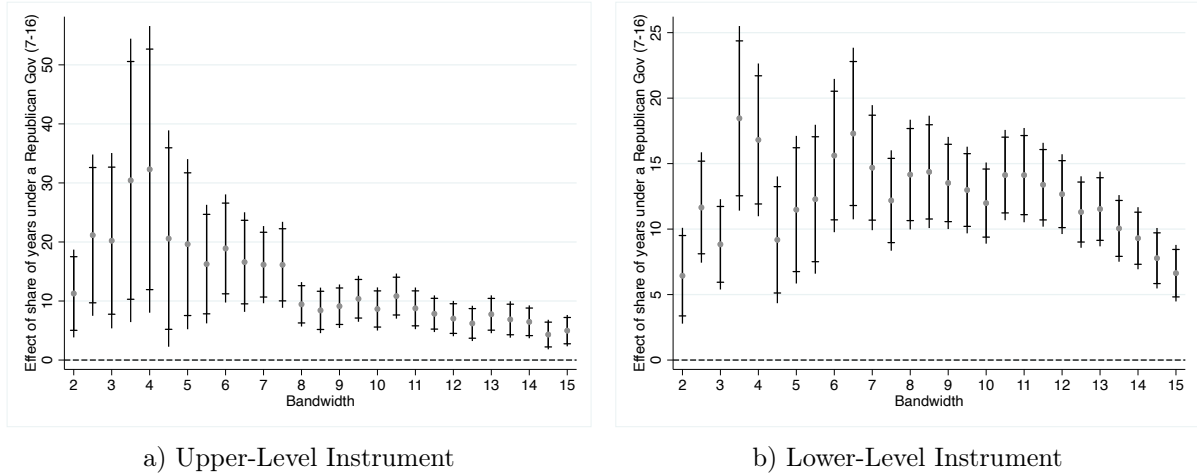
Table 3 presents the estimated coefficients from the second-stage regression for equation 2 SS (Panel A) and equation 3 SS on alternative outcomes that measure individuals'

Figure 7: Growing up under a Republican governor: Graphical representation of RDA Estimates



Note: This figure shows the estimation results of the RDA regression from Equation 3 FS (panel a) and lower-level estimation reduced form (panel b). The sample includes all individuals born since 1945 who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level.

Figure 8: Growing up under a Republican governor: RDA estimates - Different bandwidths



Note: This figure shows the estimation results of the RDA regression from Equation 2 SS (panel b) and from Equation 3 SS (panel b). The sample includes all individuals born since 1945 who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects. The definition of narrow election varies between 2 percentage points and 15 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level.

political preference. These include making an electoral donation to the Republican or Democratic party (columns 1 and 2), and voting in the Republican or Democratic pres-

idential primaries⁸ (columns 3 and 4)⁹ Unlike voter registration, which in most states entails very low costs to complete, these alternative measures of individual political preferences involve tangible costs, potentially indicating political preferences more strongly. On the one hand, through electoral donations to political parties, individuals assign an actual monetary value to their willingness to support the success of a specific party, visibly signaling the intensity of their political preference. On the other hand, voting in a party’s primary election entails varying levels of transaction costs associated with the voting process, reflecting the importance individuals attach to their specific political preference.

Consistent with the voter registration results presented in Table 2, individuals who spent their entire childhood under a Republican governor are less likely to make electoral donations to either party, with a significantly larger reduction in donations to the Democratic Party compared to the Republican Party. Specifically, they donate \$40 less when using the upper-level instrument (i.e., a reduction of \$23 for the Republican Party and \$63 for the Democratic Party) and \$70 less with the lower-level instrument (i.e., a reduction of \$2 for the Republican Party and \$71 for the Democratic Party).

Similarly, individuals who spent their entire childhood under a Republican governor are more likely to vote in Republican Party primaries (an increase of approximately 1 percentage point, representing 10% of the sample mean) and less likely to vote in Democratic Party primaries (a decrease of approximately 3 percentage points, representing 30% of the sample mean). Taken together, these results corroborate the main estimates presented in Tables 1 and 2, namely that spending one’s childhood under a Republican governor increases the political leaning toward the Republican party in adulthood.

Finally, as a last test to validate the results shown in Table 2, we leverage an additional source of information on individuals’ political preferences, namely the American National Electoral Study (ANES), and re-estimate Equations 2 FS, 2 SS, 3 FS, and 3 SS using this alternative dataset.¹⁰

In addition to representing an alternative data source compared to party registration,

⁸In the case of primary voting, we observe each individual’s voting history starting with the 2008 primaries. This allows us to build a panel dataset for these specific outcomes and thus control for election-fixed effects.

⁹For a detailed description of these outcomes, as well as the sources from which they are derived, please refer to Appendix A.

¹⁰The detailed description of this information source, as well as the specific variables constructed from it and used in our analysis, are provided in Appendix A.

Table 3: Growing up under a Republican governor: RDA estimates - Alternative outcomes

	Donation Amount		Voted Primary	
	Donation Rep (1)	Donation Dem (2)	Voted Rep (3)	Voted Dem (4)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation				
Share Republican Year (7-16)	-22.94*** (7.09)	-62.92*** (16.94)	0.17 (0.78)	-3.09*** (0.90)
Observations	141.82M	141.82M	526.43M	526.43M
Sample Mean	30.05	42.02	9.77	12.37
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation				
Share Republican Year (7-16)	-1.62 (6.04)	-71.20*** (13.22)	1.36** (0.64)	-3.82*** (0.64)
Observations	724.73M	724.73M	2712.71M	2712.71M
Sample Mean	30.98	42.57	9.34	12.23

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 SS and Panel B the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 SS. The outcomes are the dollar amount of donations to the Republican party (col 1), Democratic party (col. 2), a dummy variable equal to 1 if you participated in a presidential Republican primary (col. 3), and presidential Democratic primary (col. 4). "Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. The unit of observation in columns 1 and 2 is the individual voter. The unit of observation in columns 3 and 4 is the individual election year - voter. We include the presidential election years of 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects. Columns 3 and 4 include election year fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

ANES offers two further advantages for corroborating our main results. On the one hand, ANES provides information on the state where each individual actually grew up, avoiding the need to infer it indirectly from their current state of residence, as we do for vote registration. On the other hand, given the presence of multiple waves, using ANES allows us to construct a cohort-level panel and thus control for state-specific annual shocks in all regressions by including state-election fixed effects. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4, whose structure mirrors that of Table 2.

Using the information provided by ANES and following a similar approach to the analysis presented in Table 3, we constructed alternative measures of individual political preferences that can, to some extent, signal an individual's inclination toward values typically associated with the Republican Party's political agenda. The estimates obtained using these alternative measures as outcomes in the regressions are presented in Tables 5 and 6 and are strongly consistent with the results shown thus far.

Table 4: Growing up under a Republican governor: RDA estimates - ANES

	Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)	Republican	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Republican
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)		7.46* (4.44)	11.52** (5.39)	-11.23** (4.58)	3.77 (3.17)	
Upper Level Instrument	0.34*** (0.01)					3.96** (1.85)
Observations	23840	23712	20326	23712	23712	20326
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		3993.8	2836.2	3993.8	3993.8	
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)		8.81*** (2.74)	12.76*** (3.41)	-7.95*** (2.82)	-0.86 (1.96)	
Lower Level Instrument	0.22*** (0.00)					2.71*** (0.72)
Observations	125815	125176	107523	125176	125176	107523
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		6450.7	4318.1	6450.7	6450.7	

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 FS (panel a, col. 1), 2 SS (panel a, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel a, col 6). Panel B follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 FS (panel b, col. 1) and 3 SS (panel b, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel b, col 6). The outcomes are the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old (col 1), a dummy equal to 100 if you identify as a Republican (col. 2, 3 and 6), as a Democrat (col. 4), and as an Independent (col. 5). "Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old. "Upper Level Instrument" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor who won a narrow election between 7 and 16 years old. "Lower Level Instrument" is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the election is won by a Republican. The sample includes all individuals surveyed by ANES from 1952 to 2020, and born since 1945. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, and state-birth of year fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

By looking at Table 5, spending one's entire childhood under a Republican governor increases the likelihood, in adulthood, of favoring gun control laws (col. 1), abortion rights (col. 2), support for African Americans (col. 3), preferential treatment for African Americans (col. 4), adoption rights and legal protections for same-sex couples (col. 5 and 6). Moreover, the estimates of Table 6 shows that, it also makes people less worried about how equal individuals are (col. 1) and whether they have equal chance to succeed in life (col. 3), less in favor of affirmative action (col. 2) and government's intervention to improve individuals' standard of living, and more supportive of government-imposed

import restrictions (col. 6).¹¹

Taken together, these values reflect the typical profile of a Republican voter, and the estimates presented thus far suggest that individuals who spent their childhood under a Republican governor are more likely to align with this value profile.

Table 5: Growing up under a Republican governor: RDA estimates - ANES - Political values

	Gun law (1)	Abortion (2)	No favor black (3)	Aid black (4)	Gay adopt. (5)	Gay prot. (6)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation						
Share Republican Year (7-16)	-0.18*** (0.07)	-0.05 (0.10)	0.38*** (0.14)	-0.44** (0.18)	-4.54 (4.52)	-3.26 (4.22)
Observations	14634	14650	16851	20284	15820	15220
Sample Mean	2.46	1.94	3.43	3.69	70.21	79.99
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation						
Share Republican Year (7-16)	-0.19*** (0.04)	-0.20*** (0.06)	0.26*** (0.08)	-0.67*** (0.11)	-11.28*** (2.54)	-6.05** (2.37)
Observations	76897	77028	88841	107713	83084	80076
Sample Mean	2.46	1.94	3.44	3.68	70.30	80.00

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 FS (panel a, col. 1), 2 SS (panel a, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel a, col 6). Panel B follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 FS (panel b, col. 1) and 3 SS (panel b, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel b, col 6). The outcomes are whether individuals are in favor of gun control laws (col. 1), abortion rights (col. 2), whether they oppose support for African Americans (col. 3), whether they favor preferential treatment for African Americans (col. 4), adoption rights and legal protections for same-sex couples (col. 5 and 6). "Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old. "Upper Level Instrument" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor who won a narrow election between 7 and 16 years old. "Lower Level Instrument" is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the election is won by a Republican. The sample includes all individuals surveyed by ANES from 1952 to 2020, and born since 1945. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, and state-birth of year fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

6. Mechanisms

6.1. The Role of the Educational Channels

Our effects are driven by young individuals of school age (7–16) (see Figure 6), making education a natural channel to consider in explaining our findings. As discussed in Section 2, education is a key area of state-level authority.

¹¹The detailed description of each of these outcome variables, as well as the scale over which they are measured, is provided in Appendix A

Table 6: Growing up under a Republican governor: RDA estimates - ANES - Political values

	Equality not prob. (1)	Affirmative act. (2)	Equal chance (3)	Gov. help (4)	Limit import (5)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation					
Share Republican Year (7-16)	0.26** (0.13)	-11.82*** (4.33)	-0.02 (0.18)	-0.12 (0.18)	14.95** (6.23)
Observations	18698	16454	10905	19434	10444
Sample Mean	2.83	24.69	3.32	3.80	59.16
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation					
Share Republican Year (7-16)	0.25*** (0.08)	-9.13*** (2.49)	-0.20* (0.11)	-0.28** (0.11)	20.70*** (3.61)
Observations	98511	86692	58089	103152	54855
Sample Mean	2.84	24.22	3.31	3.79	59.33

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 FS (panel a, col. 1), 2 SS (panel a, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel a, col 6). Panel B follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 FS (panel b, col. 1) and 3 SS (panel b, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel b, col 6). The outcomes are whether people are less worried about how equal individuals are (col. 1), less in favor of affirmative action (col. 2), whether they think that individuals should have equal chance to succeed in life (col. 3), favoring and government's intervention to improve individuals' standard of living, and more supportive of government-imposed import restrictions (col. 6). "Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old. "Upper Level Instrument" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor who won a narrow election between 7 and 16 years old. "Lower Level Instrument" is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the election is won by a Republican. The sample includes all individuals surveyed by ANES from 1952 to 2020, and born since 1945. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, and state-birth of year fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

If this channel plays a significant role, we would expect stronger effects in states where the governor has greater influence over education policy. Specifically, since the Board of Education serves as the central governing body for public education, we expect stronger effects in states where the governor appoints board members rather than in states where the board is elected.

In columns 1 and 2 of Table 7 (column 1 with the Upper-Level estimation, column 2 with the Lower one), we estimate the existence of heterogeneous treatment effects, depending on whether the governors can appoint the Board of Education. In some states, this authority varies over time, while in others, it has remained constant. The estimates show that when the governor has no control over the board of education, being exposed to a Republican instead of a Democratic governor has smaller and marginally significant effects on partisan affiliation. In this scenario, having a Republican instead of a Democratic governor throughout your whole childhood increases your likelihood of being affiliated with the Republican party by 2.4 (4.5) percentage points. The effects are larger when the governor has control of the board of education. For example, comparing

a person who has been exposed all their childhood to a Republican governor with board control to a person who has been exposed all their childhood to a Republican governor without board control, the effects on party affiliation are 9.5 (8.3) percentage points larger. These effects are not confined to Republican governors. Comparing a person who has been exposed all their childhood to a Democratic governor with board control to a person who has been exposed all their childhood to a Democratic governor without board control, the effects on party affiliation are 7.7 (8.1) percentage points larger. All these results are in line with the amplified influence of governors when they have direct control over key educational appointments.

Table 7: Heterogeneity - Education as a Mechanism

	Board of Education Control	
	Republican (1)	Republican (2)
Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)	2.44 (1.93)	4.49** (1.78)
Share Years Governor Board Control (7-16)	-7.68*** (1.41)	-8.12*** (1.37)
Share Years Rep Governor Board Control (7-16)	9.46*** (1.46)	8.34*** (1.49)
Observations	99.41M	509.38M
Type of Estimation	Upper Level	Lower Level
F-stat	56.3	63.6

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. column 1 follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 SS and column 2 follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 SS. The outcome is a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican. "Share Years Rep Governor (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor between 7 and 16 years old. "Share Years Governor with Board Control (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a governor with board of education control between 7 and 16 years old. "Share Years Rep Governor with Board Control (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican governor with board of education control between 7 and 16 years old. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945 who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

6.2. Other Elected Officials

While our analysis focuses on governors, other public officials may also have similar influence. By studying the effects of other public officials, we can learn about the mechanism behind our main results. In this section, we focus on federal representatives in the U.S. House and Senate, who also play a significant role at the local level. Although they serve in the legislative branch at the national level, they remain visible figures in their home states through media coverage and local events. Their actions in Washington can have tangible effects locally, particularly when securing federal funding through pork-barrel politics.

A key distinction between governors and federal legislators lies in their direct authority—governors exercise executive power within their states, while federal representatives do not. However, both are influential in shaping local political dynamics through their visibility and engagement with constituents.

Following the approach used for governors, we examine the effect of growing up with Republican or Democratic federal representatives. In Appendix Table E.3, we replicate the RD approach, distinguishing between individuals raised with Democratic or Republican representatives in the House. Here, the match between individuals and representatives is based on electoral districts rather than state-level alignment, reflecting the local boundaries for the House of Representatives. In Appendix Table E.3 we find no significant effects. In Appendix Table E.4, we apply the RDA approach. In this case, we find some significant although noisy effects, as depending on the specification we find positive (in column 1) or negative effects (in columns 2, 3 and 6). Overall, these estimates do not indicate a substantial effect of House representatives on political preferences.

We then replicate a similar approach for the Senate. First, in Table E.5, we examine the treatment effect for individuals who were 10 years old (upper panel) or 14 years old (lower panel) during a Senate race. The treatment is coded as 1 for those living in states where the Republican candidate won, compared to those living in states where a Democratic candidate won. In Tables E.6 we replicate the same approaches using the RDA methodology. Across several specifications, we observe significant results suggesting an influence of Senators on political preferences. However, the magnitude of these effects is substantially smaller than the effects estimated for governors.

One possible interpretation is that Senators, with different powers than governors, have a less direct influence on the youth’s daily lives. However, their influence may still

be sufficient to account for the observed effects. This interpretation remains suggestive, even more so considering that the effects are not consistent across different estimations.

7. Conclusion

This study provides evidence that early political exposure to a partisan governor significantly influences long-term political affiliation. Using a Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) and a large dataset of U.S. registered voters, we find that individuals who grew up under a Republican governor between the ages of 7 and 16 are significantly more likely to register as Republicans in adulthood.

Our findings are robust across multiple specifications, including variations in bandwidth selection and different aggregation methods (RDA approach). The effect is further validated by alternative measures of political behavior, such as electoral donations and primary election participation, which show that early exposure to Republican governors increases engagement in Republican-leaning political activities.

We also explore potential mechanisms driving this effect, focusing specifically on education policies as a channel of influence. Given the executive role of the governor and the age-specific nature of the effect, we test whether the ability to shape the education system plays a crucial role in political socialization. Our findings indicate that the effect is stronger in states where governors have direct control over the Board of Education and where their education policies align closely with their party's ideology.

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A. Additional Data Description

A.1. American National Election Studies

For validation and robustness checks, we use data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), a nationally representative survey of U.S. voters conducted periodically since 1945. The ANES provides self-reported party identification, which serves as a valuable complement to voter registration data. Additionally, respondents report the state in which they grew up, allowing us to link childhood gubernatorial exposure to adult political preferences. Finally, the ANES offers detailed information on respondents' beliefs and values across several political dimensions, which we use as additional corroborative analyses of our main results.

Specifically, we utilize waves from 1952 to 2020, conducted biennially before 1996 and every four years thereafter. The average number of observations per wave is approximately 3,200, with the sample size generally increasing over time—particularly in waves from the 2012–2020 period. Below, we provide a list of the variables derived from ANES data, along with brief descriptions:

- *Party Identification*: Measures political identification on a 1–7 scale, where 1 indicates strong Democrat, 4 indicates Independent, and 7 indicates strong Republican. Based on this, we construct three sets of dummy variables:
 - *Democrat Identifier*: Individuals scoring between 1 and 3.
 - *Independent Identifier*: Individuals scoring exactly 4.
 - *Republican Identifier*: Individuals scoring between 5 and 7.
- *State of Upbringing*: FIPS code of the state where the respondent grew up, defined as the state where they lived the longest between ages 6 and 18.
- *Birth Year*: Year of birth of the respondent.
- *Gun Laws*: Respondent's opinion on whether gun laws should be more restrictive, measured on a 1–3 scale where 1 = less restrictive, 2 = remain the same, and 3 = more restrictive.

- *Abortion*: Respondent's stance on abortion legislation, measured on a 1–3 scale where 1 = prohibit abortion, 2 = allow only in specific cases, and 3 = always allow.
- *No Favor for Blacks*: Respondent's agreement with the statement that African Americans should not receive special treatment to succeed, measured on a 1–5 scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).
- *Aid to Blacks*: Respondent's opinion on whether African Americans should receive government assistance, measured on a 1–7 scale (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree).
- *Gay Adoption*: Dummy variable indicating whether the respondent supports the right of same-sex couples to adopt.
- *Gay Protection*: Dummy variable indicating whether the respondent supports special legal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- *Equality Not a Problem*: Agreement with the statement that less attention should be paid to individual differences, measured on a 1–5 scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).
- *Affirmative Action*: Dummy variable indicating support for affirmative action in hiring and promotion processes.
- *Equal Chance*: Agreement with the statement that it is a major problem if not everyone has the same opportunities for success, measured on a 1–5 scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).
- *Government Help*: Respondent's opinion on whether the government should intervene to improve individuals' living standards, measured on a 1–7 scale (1 = government should not intervene, 7 = government should definitely intervene).
- *Limit Imports*: Dummy variable indicating whether the respondent supports government-imposed limits on imports to protect domestic production.

A.2. State-Level Policy and Educational Data

We integrate state-level expenditure data with information on the selection procedures of state boards of education, codifying whether they are appointed or influenced by governors.

For the state-level budget data, we use the updated online resource provided by [Pier-son et al. \(2015\)](#), which is based on a comprehensive compilation of U.S. state and local government financial data. In particular, our data come from state-level Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs).

Next, we reconstruct the historical selection process of state boards of education by analyzing state constitutions and tracing changes in governance structures from 1930 to 2020. To capture historical changes in selection processes, we rely on state constitutions compiled by the NBER/Maryland Constitutions Project. This source provides constitutional provisions and amendments but lacks data for nine states: Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, Oregon, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington D.C., and Wisconsin. For these states, we input the most recent value as compiled by the National Association of State Boards of Education in 2024. We categorize state boards of education selection into five groups: states with no board, states where the board is elected by citizens, states where the governor appoints all members, states where the governor appoints at least one member while others are elected or appointed by a different authority.

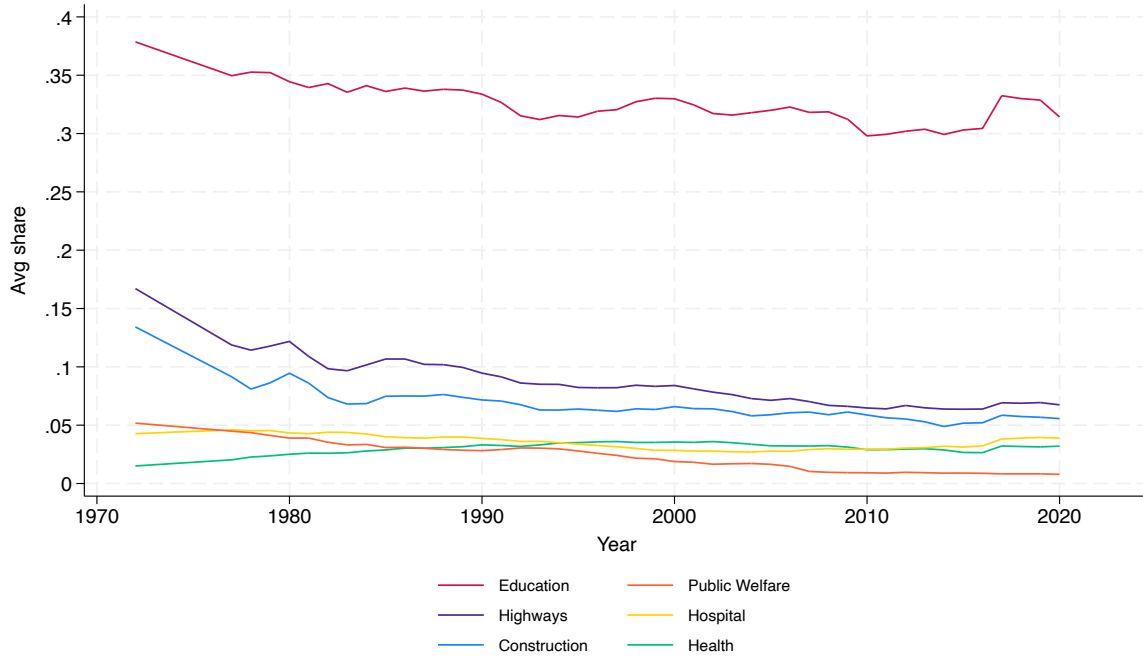
A.3. State Party Platforms and State of State Addresses

We proxy for state-party specific priorities and policy positions using the dataset compiled by [Hopkins et al. \(2022\)](#). This dataset includes 1,783 state party platforms from 1918 to 2017, representing Democratic and Republican state parties across 49 U.S. states. For each document, we use the OpenAI API (model gpt-4o) to identify the four most relevant topics.

We complement our data by using a sample of recent State of the State Speeches collected on the official websites of each state. The dataset spans the years 2014 to 2024, though certain states have missing observations for specific years. In this analysis, we utilize the OpenAI API (GPT-4o-mini model) to extract the five most relevant topics from each governor’s speech.

B. Institutional Background

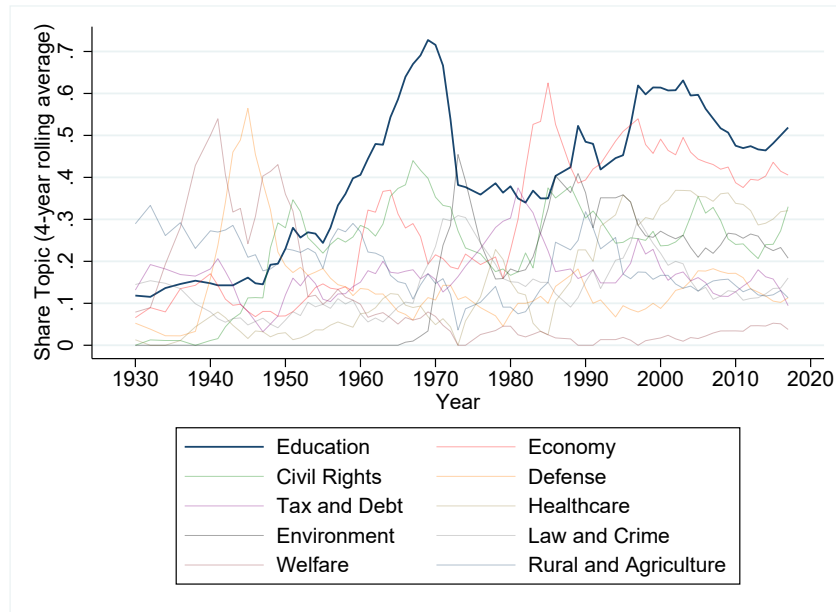
Figure B.1: Trends in Average Share of State Budget Expenditures Over Time



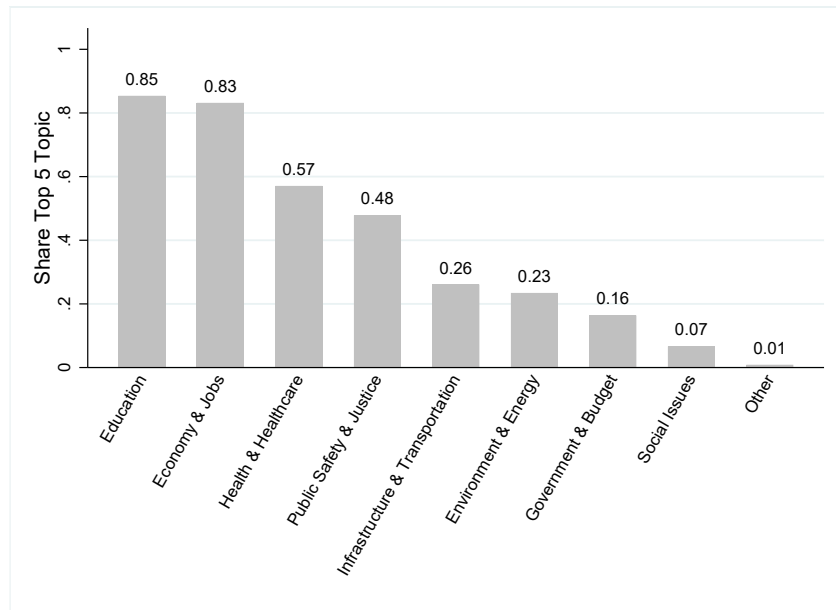
Notes: This figure shows the trends in the average share of state budgets allocated to various categories from 1970 to 2020. Categories include education, public welfare, highways, hospitals, health, and construction. The data highlights the changing composition of state budget priorities over time.

Figure B.2: Political Manifestos and State of the State Speeches

(a) Share of Topics in Political Manifestos



(b) Top Five Topics in State of the State Speeches



Notes: Panel A shows the share of topics in political manifestos of Republican and Democratic parties across U.S. states over time, highlighting education's prominence. Panel B displays the share of the top five topics mentioned in State of the State speeches (2007-2023), emphasizing the consistent prioritization of education and its comparison to other topics such as the economy, healthcare, and public safety.

C. Additional Tables

Table C.1: Growing up under a Republican governor: RD Estimates - Different functional specification

	Republican (1)	Republican (2)
Republican at Age 10	3.51*** (1.31)	3.45* (1.92)
Observations	50.61M	71.84M
Republican at Age 14	3.65*** (1.14)	5.06*** (1.66)
Observations	50.97M	72.45M
Test	Trian. kernel	2nd degree poly.

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RD regression, as estimated from Equation 1. The outcome in all columns is a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican, and 0 if you are registered as Democrat. The treatment variable is equal to 1 for individuals living at the age of 10 (upper panel), or 14 years old (lower panel), in a state where the Republican candidate won the gubernatorial race with respect to who lived where a democrat candidate won. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945. All columns include state fixed effects and birth year. Column 1 weights observations by a triangular kernel, while column 2 include a quadratic RD specification. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

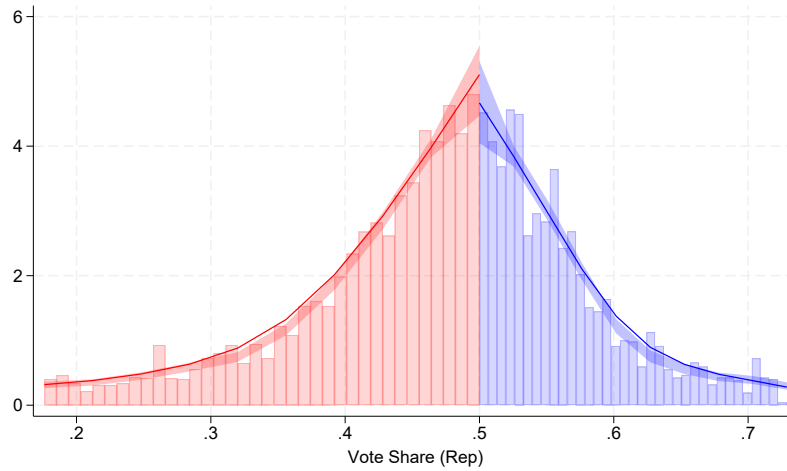
Table C.2: Growing up under a Republican governor: RD Estimates - Adding controls

	Republican (1)	Republican (2)	Republican (3)	Republican (4)
Republican at Age 10	4.14*** (1.37)	3.53*** (1.25)	3.38*** (1.18)	3.06*** (1.14)
Observations	50.32M	50.61M	50.60M	50.31M
Republican at Age 14	3.34*** (1.20)	2.84*** (1.08)	2.73*** (1.00)	2.40** (0.96)
Observations	50.69M	50.97M	50.96M	50.68M
Controls	Gender	Race	Zip Code	All Controls

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RD regression, as estimated from Equation 1. The outcome in all columns is a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican, and 0 if you are registered as Democrat. The treatment variable is equal to 1 for individuals living at the age of 10 (upper panel), or 14 years old (lower panel), in a state where the Republican candidate won the gubernatorial race with respect to who lived where a democrat candidate won. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects, linear RD specification, and weight observations by a uniform kernel. Column 1 includes gender fixed effects, column 2 race fixed effects, column 3 zip code fixed effects, whereas column 4 all these fixed effects together. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

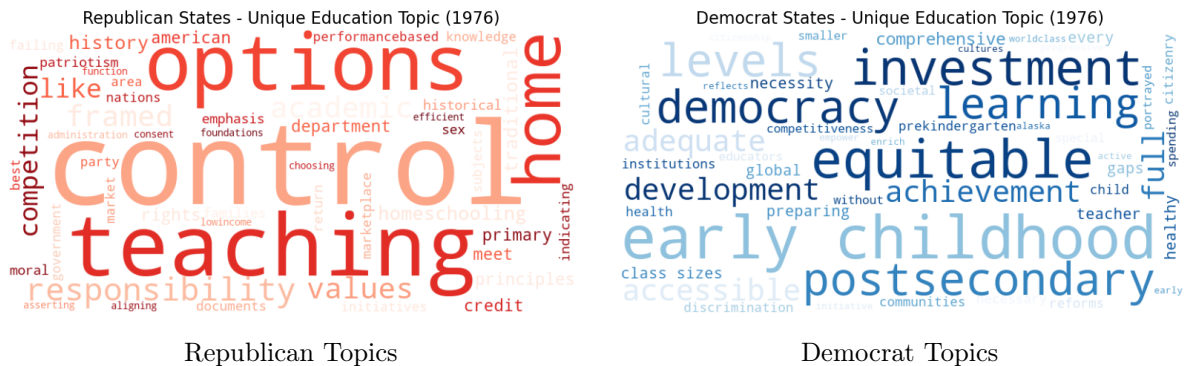
D. Additional Figures

Figure D.3: Test of No-Sorting Assumption



Note: This figure shows the density of the running variable in the RD design in Equation 1. The running variable is the margin of victory between the Republican and the Democrat candidates in each gubernatorial election between 1952 and 2016. Local polynomial density estimates and confidence intervals computed according to Cattaneo et al. (2018) are also reported in the graph.

Figure D.4: Education-related Topics in Party Manifestos



E. Additional Results

E.1. House of Representatives

Table E.3: RD Estimates - House of Representative

	Republican (1)	Republican (2)	Democrat (3)	Independent (4)
Republican at Age 10	-0.31 (0.34)	-0.24 (0.44)	-0.10 (0.37)	0.41 (0.36)
Observations	25.18M	17.67M	25.18M	25.18M
Republican at Age 14	-0.37 (0.35)	-0.21 (0.45)	-0.28 (0.39)	0.72* (0.39)
Observations	24.36M	17.00M	24.36M	24.36M
Sample	Full Sample	Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RD regression, as estimated from Equation 1, using the electoral results from the US House of Representatives. The outcomes are a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican (col. 1 and 2), as a Democrat (col. 3), and as an Independent (col. 4). The treatment variable is equal to 1 for individuals living at the age of 10 (upper panel), or 14 years old (lower panel), in a zip code where the Republican candidate won the House of Representatives race with respect to who lived where a democrat candidate won. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945. Column 2 further restricts the sample to individuals who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects, linear RD specification, and weight observations by a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

Table E.4: RDA estimates - House of Representative

	Share Years Rep Representative (7-16)	Republican	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Republican
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Representative (7-16)		-1.20 (1.42)	0.33 (0.48)	-0.02 (0.43)	1.25*** (0.48)	
Upper Level Instrument	0.44*** (0.01)					0.15 (0.21)
Observations	74.49M	74.49M	52.16M	74.49M	74.49M	52.16M
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		489.7	2077.4	2224.8	2224.8	
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Representative (7-16)		-1.85*** (0.49)	-1.21* (0.64)	-0.69 (0.56)	2.82*** (0.60)	
Lower Level Instrument	0.21*** (0.01)					-0.25* (0.14)
Observations	249.08M	249.08M	174.33M	249.08M	249.08M	174.33M
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		957.0	868.7	957.0	957.0	

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 FS (panel a, col. 1), 2 SS (panel a, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel a, col 6). Panel B follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 FS (panel b, col. 1) and 3 SS SS (panel b, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel b, col 6). The outcomes are the share of years governed by a Republican Representative between 7 and 16 years old (col 1), a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican (col. 2, 3 and 6), as a Democrat (col. 4), and as an Independent (col. 5). "Share Years Rep Representative (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican representative between 7 and 16 years old. "Upper Level Instrument" is the share of years governed by a Republican Representative who won a narrow election between 7 and 16 years old. "Lower Level Instrument" is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the election is won by a Republican. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945 who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, zip code fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

E.2. Senate

Table E.5: RD Estimates - Senate

	Republican (1)	Republican (2)	Democrat (3)	Independent (4)
Republican at Age 10	0.65 (0.93)	1.96* (1.14)	-1.53 (0.98)	0.89 (1.11)
Observations	131.18M	131.18M	131.18M	131.18M
Republican at Age 14	0.60 (1.02)	1.73 (1.21)	-1.48 (0.93)	1.04 (1.14)
Observations	126.49M	126.49M	126.49M	126.49M
Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RD regression, as estimated from Equation 1, using the electoral results from the US Senate. The outcomes are a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican (col. 1 and 2), as a Democrat (col. 3), and as an Independent (col. 4). The treatment variable is equal to 1 for individuals living at the age of 10 (upper panel), or 14 years old (lower panel), in a state where the Republican candidate won the Senate race with respect to who lived where a democrat candidate won. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945. Column 2 further restricts the sample to individuals who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. Because each state has 2 senators, this is a stacked sample, one for each senator. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects, linear RD specification, and weight observations by a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

Table E.6: RDA estimates - Senate

	Share Years Rep Senator (7-16) (1)	Republican (2)	Republican (3)	Democrat (4)	Independent (5)	Republican (6)
Panel A: Upper-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Senator (7-16)		0.57 (0.54)	2.95*** (0.70)	-2.11*** (0.70)	1.67** (0.75)	
Upper Level Instrument	0.57*** (0.02)					1.70*** (0.39)
Observations	196.13M	196.13M	137.80M	196.13M	196.13M	137.80M
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		576.8	578.5	576.8	576.8	
Panel B: Lower-Level Estimation						
Share Years Rep Senator (7-16)		1.19** (0.54)	3.61*** (0.68)	-2.95*** (0.68)	1.90*** (0.72)	
Lower Level Instrument	0.49*** (0.02)					1.77*** (0.33)
Observations	1294.56M	1294.56M	918.44M	1294.56M	1294.56M	918.44M
Sample	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered	Full Sample	Full Sample	2Party-Registered
F-stat		501.7	480.1	501.7	501.7	

Note: This table shows the coefficients of the RDA regression. Panel A follows the upper-level method as estimated from Equation 2 FS (panel a, col. 1), 2 SS (panel a, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel a, col 6). Panel B follows the lower-level method as estimated from Equation 3 FS (panel b, col. 1) and 3 SS (panel b, cols. 2-5) and the reduced form (panel b, col 6). The outcomes are the share of years governed by a Republican Senator between 7 and 16 years old (col 1), a dummy equal to 100 if you are registered as a Republican (col. 2, 3 and 6), as a Democrat (col. 4), and as an Independent (col. 5). "Share Years Rep Senator (7-16)" is the share of years governed by a Republican Senator between 7 and 16 years old. "Upper Level Instrument" is the share of years governed by a Republican Senator who won a narrow election between 7 and 16 years old. "Lower Level Instrument" is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the election is won by a Republican. The sample includes all individuals born since 1945 who are affiliated with one of the 2 main parties. Panel B, because it is a stacked regression, has repeated observations. All columns include linear trends in age, state fixed effects. The definition of narrow election in all regression is those with a margin of victory lower than 10 percentage points. Observations are weighted with a uniform kernel. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and clustered at the cohort level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.