

Rural Representation in the American States

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Influential studies have demonstrated a troubling representation gap in American politics: elected officials are less responsive to the needs of racial and ethnic minorities, to the less affluent, and to sexual orientation minorities. Do geographic minorities also face a representation gap? Rural Americans are a numerical minority group facing considerable socioeconomic obstacles, but whose representation in state government has been largely unexamined. This project is the first to quantitatively evaluate how policy preferences between rural and non-rural co-partisans vary and the extent to which state legislators represent rural constituents relative to their non-rural constituents. Using original data combining the preferences of constituents with legislator roll call votes on state legislative bills pertaining to issues covered in the CES, I assess the quality of dyadic substantive representation between rural voters and their state legislators relative to other politically marginalized groups, including race and ethnic minorities and women. Republican legislators provide slightly better representation to their rural constituents relative to their non-rural constituents. On the other hand, rural voters face a democratic deficit when being represented by Democratic legislators, and the rural representation gap is persistent across race, ethnic, education, and gender subgroups. Although rural voters received disproportionate representation through malapportioned U.S. Senate districts, state legislatures are not the bastions of rural interests they were once thought to be. Accurate assessments of representation should incorporate both federal and state levels of government.

Rural Americans are a minority group that faces considerable socioeconomic obstacles, but whose political representation has been largely unexamined. Previous work has examined the preferences and policy representation of low-income voters (Gilens 2005, Ellis 2012, Rigby and Wright 2013), Latinos (Griffin and Newman 2007), African-Americans (Griffin and Newman 2008), women (Swers 2002, Griffin et al. 2012), LGBT individuals (Hansen and Treul 2015, Saraceno et al. 2020), but research on the preferences and political representation of rural Americans is far less common despite a multitude of troubling statistics on the well-being of rural Americans, including below average health, education, income, food and housing security, life expectancy, and economic mobility. Large and prominent bodies of work within political science have been motivated around normative concerns about the political roots or consequences of human welfare, save for rural Americans.

Declining socioeconomic and human well-being outcomes for rural Americans is ironic given that rural voters have an advantage in American federal institutions because of their outsized voting power in the Electoral College and Senate and House of Representatives districts.¹ Rural Americans also disproportionately occupy presidential swing states, which attract exorbitant media attention, increased campaigning (Shaw 2006), and particularistic policy benefits (Kriner and Reeves 2015). These political circumstances, along with poor well-being of rural Americans, comprise an alluring intellectual puzzle for political scientists that draws on knowledge of both political behavior and institutions, including identity politics, parties, legislative processes, and elections.

¹ The Electoral College and Congress give inflated numerical representation to small states. The population size of a state is negatively correlated (-0.5, statistically significant at $p < 0.01$) with population rurality, thus rural states are favored by these institutions through their status as small states.

Previous work has generated insight on public opinion and political behavior in rural America, including ruralites' views on same-sex marriage (Anderson et al. 2015), perceptions of fairness in resource allocation (Lyons and Utych 2021), place-based resentment (Cramer 2016, Munis 2020) and identity (Lee and Blackford 2020), political party support (Gimpel et al. 2020), political networking (Van Duyn 2018), and presidential vote choice (McKee 2008, Scala and Johnson 2017, Scala et al. 2015, Gimpel and Karnes 2006). Yet, an understanding of geographic differences in representation requires systematic public opinion data on a wide range of policy topics and corresponding actions taken (or not taken) by elected officials to advance their constituents' policy preferences. To this end, I use CES questions covering 45 unique issue policy issues that fall under state jurisdiction to show the divide between the preferences rural and non-rural² co-partisans on twelve policy themes. The difference in preferences between rural and nonrural voters, even within party, forces legislators to choose between representing their rural and nonrural co-partisan constituents on issues that geographically divide legislators' districts. When there is an intra-partisan geographic divide regarding a bill being considered in a state capitol, is a legislator more likely to represent the preferences of their rural or nonrural constituents? The *State Policy Representation Database* enables me to answer this question. This dataset pairs constituent preferences expressed on the CES with state legislator roll call votes on over 1,300 corresponding bills, resulting in several million constituent preference - legislator vote observations that can be used to study dyadic substantive representation in state government.

² I use the categories *rural* and *nonrural* instead of the more commonly used urban and rural categories because urban and rural are not comprehensive nor mutually exclusive categorizations of voters, who also reside in suburban and exurban communities. I discuss the assignment of individuals to nonrural and rural categories in the measurement section of this paper. For more detail on geographic classification in political science, see Nemerever and Rogers 2020.

I find that ruralites have diametric representational patterns when being represented by Democratic legislators versus Republican legislators. Rural voters face a democratic deficit when being represented by Democratic legislators, and the rural deficit is persistent across race, ethnic, education, and gender subgroups. On the other hand, Republican legislators are more likely to represent the preferences of their rural constituents relative to their nonrural constituents..

This research engenders new insights into how rural Americans are a disadvantaged group within the American political system, at least in Democratic districts. Future work to identify political institutions, such as electoral rules and legislative institutions, associated with the substantive representation of rural voters will provide direction for policy practitioners who are charged with alleviating urban-rural inequalities in socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and health outcomes.

MEASURING THE RURAL GAP IN AMERICAN LIBERALISM

It is necessary to establish how the preferences of rural voters systematically differ from the preferences of nonrural voters prior to investigating whether rural and nonrural voters receive different qualities of substantive representation. If the policy preferences of rural and nonrural voters are indistinguishable, then legislators can represent both geographic factions on the same bill with a single roll call vote. However, if a legislator's co-partisan base is geographically divided on a policy, the legislator will not be able to represent both rural and nonrural positions with their single roll-call vote. I measure the rural divide in public opinion on state legislative issues using survey responses to the Cooperative Election Study (CES) and find that rural and nonrural co-partisans are divided on the majority of policy areas surveyed.

A prominent vein of American politics research concerns how policy preferences vary across demographic groups and socially-constructed identities. Pertinent to the representation of rural Americans, previous studies find that geographic location and identities³ are related to differences in policy preferences in both the social and economic domains (Lyons and Utych 2021, Anderson et al. 2015). Although these one-issue studies are useful for deeply understanding geographic nuances on singular policy issues, they do not facilitate understanding comprehensive political representation of voters. This study meets this need by examining over 160 unique CES questions across the 45 issues and 12 policy themes show in Table 1.

To accurately study representation at the state level, I exclude survey items concerning exclusively federal issues, such as defense and foreign policy, debt ceiling, and Social Security. I include questions only if they concern a policy that falls under state jurisdiction (such as marriage or driver's licenses) or could be legislated at the state level (investment in clean energy can be done at both the federal and state levels). Regarding the latter, the Violence Against Women Act is an example of a federal policy for which the states could pass their own version to provide protections equal to or more than federal policy. An exception to this rule is bills or policy areas that could elicit the federal government in the minds of CES respondents, such as the Paul Ryan Budget Bill, Bush Tax Cuts, the Lilly Ledbetter Act, and Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act. Although budgets, taxes, equal pay, and healthcare all fall within purview of the states- the naming of these policies may provoke respondents to project their attitudes towards federal politicians onto broader policy areas. I also exclude questions that are tangentially political (existence of climate change, civic organizations). Alike questions are

³ These two features are correlated but not necessarily the same. For more explanation, see Nemerever and Rogers (2020).

Table 1: State policy questions in the CES

Theme	Issue	Coverage
Education	Charter schools	2013
	Education spending	2016, 2018
Environment	Carbon emissions	2008-2011, 2014-2018
	Climate change	2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013
	Environmental regulations	2006-2008, 2010, 2012-2018
	Renewable energy	2014-2018
Gender	Equal pay	2009
	LGBT hate crimes	2009
	Same-sex marriage	2008-2016
	Violence Against Women Act	2013, 2015
Guns	Assault rifles	2013-2018
	Background checks	2013-2018
	Concealed carry	2013-2018
	High-capacity magazines	2009, 2010, 2012
	Registration	2008
	Healthcare	Children's health insurance program
	Medicaid expansion	2008-2010
	Medicare for all	2012-2017
	Public option	2014
	Repeal Affordable Care Act	2007-2011
Immigration	Funding for sanctuary cities	2017
	Hiring undocumented immigrants	2009
	Police questioning	2010-2015
	Police reporting requirement	2017
	Public services	2007, 2010, 2012-2017
Labor	Minimum wage	2006-2008, 2016, 2018
	Unions	2006, 2007
Law	Mandatory minimums	2016
	Police body cameras	2016
Redistribution	Food stamps	2013
	Welfare	2016, 2018
Reproduction	Abortion illegal	2015-2018
	Abortion Likert scale	2006-2013
	Government funding of abortions	2014-2018
	Government funding of stem cell research	2006-2008, 2010, 2011
	Insurance for abortions	2014-2018
	Insurance for birth control	2012, 2014
	Prohibit abortion after 20 weeks	2006, 2007, 2013, 2018
Tax	Capital Gains tax	2006, 2007
	Corporate Income tax	2018
	Earned Income Tax Credit	2007
	Income tax	2018
	Sales tax	2013, 2018
Voting	Election Day registration	2008
	Photo Identification	2008
	Vote-by-mail	2008

Note: The wording of all CES questions organized by theme, issue, and year is available in the Supplementary Materials.

combined across waves of the CES. Response options are re-coded into binary responses, with 1 being the liberal position and 0 being conservative.

The CES offers a couple measurement advantages over other surveys commonly used in studies of American public opinion (e.g. the American National Election Survey). First, the sample size is sufficiently large to study uncommon demographic profiles, such as urban Oregonian Republicans or rural Wyoming Democrats. Second, the CES provides ZIP code-level identification of survey respondents. Although many academic and government publications have used counties as the unit of measurement for urban-suburban-rural residents, zip codes are a superior unit of analysis because of the inconsistency across states of how counties are determined and the geographic heterogeneity within counties. Counties can contain urban, suburban, and rural populations. (Nemerever and Rogers 2020) discuss why ZIP code is the superior unit of analysis for respondent geography, especially compared to counties. Nearly all counties are a mix of urban, suburban, and rural. Less than two percent of the population lives in a completely rural county and less than 4 live in a completely urban county. Geographic aggregation at the county-level mis-characterizes rural Americans who live in a large county that also contains a metropolitan area. The CES sample in the 2006-2018 cumulative file facilitates precise geographic identification of respondents and adequate coverage of rare demographic and partisan profiles.

To this end, I sort CES respondents into rural and nonrural categories according to Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) Codes originally published by the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. RUCA codes classify census tracts on a ten-point ordinal urban to rural spectrum according to three factors: population size, population distribution, and commuting population (both size of the commuting population and size of the

integrated economic areas). The most precise location collected by the CES is ZIP code so I use ZIP Code Tabulated Area level estimates of RUCA Codes from the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. Table 2 shows the ten categories of RUCA codes and their frequencies within both the U.S. population and CES respondent pool.⁴

Table 2: Rural Urban Commuting Area Scheme

Code	Description	US Pop.	CES Pop.
1	Metropolitan area core: primary flow within an urbanized area (UA)	73%	76%
2	Metropolitan area high commuting: primary flow 30% or more to a UA	10%	8%
3	Metropolitan area low commuting: primary flow 10% to 30% to a UA	1%	1%
4	Micropolitan area core: primary flow within an urban cluster of 10,000 to 49,999 (large UC)	6%	7%
5	Micropolitan high commuting: primary flow 30% or more to a large UC	2%	2%
6	Micropolitan low commuting: primary flow 10% to 30% to a large UC	1%	0%
7	Small town core: primary flow within an urban cluster of 2,500 to 9,999 (small UC)	3%	3%
8	Small town high commuting: primary flow 30% or more to a small UC	1%	1%
9	Small town low commuting: primary flow 10% to 30% to a small UC	0%	0%
10	Rural areas: primary flow to a tract outside a UA or UC	3%	3%

I classify respondents living in code 7 and higher as rural, and respondents living in an area coded as 6 or lower as nonrural. The pool of CES respondents is almost identically distributed over the RUCA categories as the U.S. population. Table 3 shows the breakdown of CES respondents by partisanship and rural residence.⁵

Table 3: CES Respondent Counts by Partisanship and Rural Residence

Rural Democrats	Nonrural Democrats	Rural Republicans	Nonrural Republicans
11,394	192,172	13,395	149,715

⁴ I drop respondents who have ZIP codes that are military areas, located in U.S. territories (i.e. Puerto Rico), or contain clerical errors that prevent me from matching them to a RUCA code.

⁵ I exclude respondents that identify as Independents or “Other” because my theory focuses on within-party divisions and the co-partisan electoral connection between constituents and legislators.

GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVIDED PARTIES

In this section I present the difference of means in policy liberalism between rural and nonrural respondents. I present difference of means tests rather than a regression because the research question concerns if there is a difference between rural and nonrural individuals, independent of how much of that difference is attributable to different facets of intersectional identities such as race or class.⁶

It is well-established that there is an increasing trend of geographic polarization with rural voters sorting into the Republican Party and urban voters into the Democratic party. I divide Republican and Democrat into separate analyses to avoid capturing differences in liberalism that may arise from partisan socialization (voters adopted their policy preferences from party cues). These tests address the question, is there a difference between the policy preferences of rural and nonrural voters while controlling for partisanship?

Figure 1 shows differences in policy liberalism among rural and nonrural individuals (numeric values underlying the figure are in Table A4). Unsurprisingly, Democrats have higher liberalism than Republicans on every policy theme. More interestingly, there is variation in both the magnitude and direction of the liberalism gap within both parties.

Examining the Democratic party first, nonrural partisans are more liberal than rural partisans on all but two policy areas. Rural Democrats are more liberal than nonrural Democrats on the issue of law policy and there is no statistically significant liberalism gap on labor policy. Guns, immigration, redistribution, reproduction, and voting have the largest liberalism gap between nonrural and rural Democrats.

⁶ For those interested, Table A3 uses OLS to show that rurality has a statistically significant relationship with policy liberalism looking within party while controlling for race, education, income, and gender (although a thorough understanding of how geography intersects with other identities to shape public opinion necessitates far more than a single regression.)

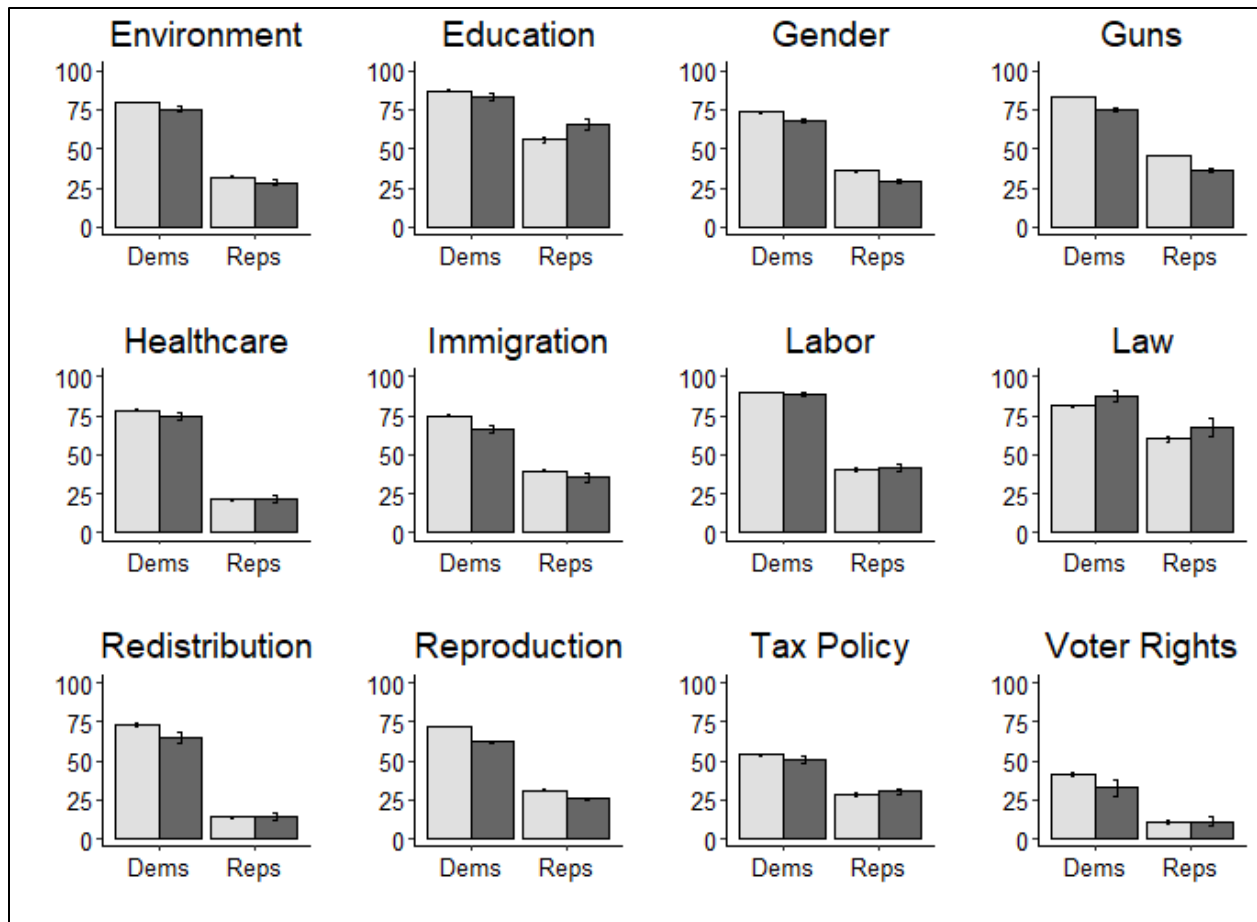


Figure 1: Rural and Nonrural Differences in Liberalism by Policy Area
 Dark gray represents rural, light gray represents nonrural

Turning to the Republican party, there is no statistically significant liberalism gap on five of the twelve policy issues: healthcare, labor, redistribution, tax policy, and voter rights. In this respect, the Republican party is less geographically divided than the Democratic party. Rural Republicans are more conservative than nonrural Republicans on five issues: environment, gender, guns, immigration, and reproduction.

Rural Republicans are more liberal than nonrural Republicans on education and law policies. In addition to being the only two policy areas where rural Republicans are more liberal

than nonrural Republicans, the liberalism gap on education⁷ and law⁸ are also the largest two gaps between rural and nonrural Republicans. Law policy includes CES questions police body cameras and mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenses.

The Republican and Democratic party have two geographic divides in common. First, there is no difference in labor preferences between rural and nonrural constituents. Second, both rural Republicans and Democrats hold more liberal preferences on law policies than their co-partisan respondents.

The results of this section establish that urban and rural constituents have distinct policy preferences while subsetting by partisanship. Geographic sorting is homogenizing the parties such that rural voters are increasingly sorting into the Republican party and urban voters into the Democratic party, yet there remains non-negligible amounts of rural Democrats and urban Republicans. It is crucial for scholars of representation to acknowledge the geographic divisions within the parties because often they will result in one group receiving better representation on a policy on which different geographies of voters disagree.

⁷ Public schools are especially important in rural areas, where private and charter schools are less likely to exist. Additionally, school sports teams are frequently the core of rural towns' identities (Cramer Walsh 2012). Sporting events are some of the only places to gather that are not bars or churches. When there is only one high school in a rural community, the school's sports teams represent the whole community and are a source of pride. Many rural residents have strong connections to place (Munis 2020), in part because they are more likely to have grown up there and have parents or grandparents who also lived there, which can deepen their personal attachment to and support for the school and sports that represent it.

⁸ Law enforcement may be less politicized in rural places where Black Lives Matter and Defund the Police movements are less common, whereas nonrural Republicans may feel the need to take a stronger stance against body cameras to differentiate themselves from these largely, if not entirely, Democratic movements. Additionally, the primary drug epidemic in rural and small-town American is the opioid crisis, which many folks attribute to the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry and less to common drug dealers.

EXPECTATIONS FOR RURAL REPRESENTATION

The previous section shows clear state-level differences between rural and non-rural voters within each party. When rural and non-rural partisans disagree on a policy, a legislator cannot represent both geographic factions of their same-party constituency with their single roll call vote. I expect that on average, rural preferences will be less likely to be represented in legislator roll call votes than non-rural preferences because on average ruralites are the geographic minority within a state legislative district.

Hypothesis 1: Rural preferences are less likely to be represented by state legislator roll-call votes than non-rural preferences.

Hypothesis 1 expects that rural representation will be worse than non-rural representation. Rural districts should be the exception to this pattern. I expect that rural voters will not have a representation deficit in rural districts.

Hypothesis 2: There is no rural representation gap in rural districts.

MEASURING POLICY REPRESENTATION IN THE STATES

Deficiencies in substantive representation have been observed consistently in American politics using various measurement approaches. Substantive representation in state legislatures has been measured using both ideological representation (overall policy liberalism/conservatism) and issue-specific representation (e.g. abortion restrictions). Regarding the former, the canonical *Statehouse Democracy* aggregates New York Times and CBS public opinion data from 1976 to 1988 to calculate state-level measures of mass public opinion liberalism, which they compare to a state policy liberalism index based on eight issues: education spending per pupil, Medicaid scope, consumer protection, criminal justice, legalized gambling, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), tax progressivity, and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

(Erikson et al. 1999). Their analyses indicate robust responsiveness of state policy liberalism to public opinion liberalism. Caughey and Warshaw (2018) build on *Statehouse Democracy* by creating time-variant measures of state-level public opinion liberalism 1936 – 2014 separately for social and economic policy areas. Like Erikson et al. (1999), Caughey and Warshaw (2018) find evidence of state policy responsiveness to public opinion. The second approach to studying substantive representation in state politics examines representation within a single policy domain, such as abortion (Kreitzer 2015) or federal spending across policy domains (Griffin et al. 2012). In this vein, Lax and Phillips (2012) look at 39 issues, each in a separate analysis to capture issue-specific representation. These two approaches allow social scientists to look at different facets of substantive representation.

For this study I use aggregated public opinion across CES questions, saving issue-specific analyses for future research.⁹ However, I do use policy theme fixed effects when appropriate. Additionally, although representation at both the district and legislative levels are normatively desirable, I begin by examining the representation of rural voters in their districts, where rural voters are more likely to be in the majority bloc of their district than at the state level.

THE STATE POLICY REPRESENTATION DATABASE

I measure policy representation by looking at the congruence between constituents' policy preferences and their legislators' roll call votes on corresponding legislation.¹⁰ The CES

⁹ An exception to this is Figure 6, which looks at rural representation gaps by policy themes. However, this is an exploratory analysis and does not yield statistically or substantively significant results.

¹⁰ Roll call votes typically occur at the end of the legislative process after conceptualization, introduction, committee edits, and agenda-setting. This may introduce bias by not being representative of all potential policies considered at different stages of the policy-making process.

data on public opinion is paired with legislative roll call votes is collected from the Project Vote Smart (PVS) and Open States.

Bills are selected from the PVS repository of Key Votes spanning 2009 - present. PVS uses the following criteria to select the legislation that comprises the Key Votes dataset: the vote should be helpful in portraying how a member stands on a particular issue, the vote should be clear for any person to understand, the vote has received media attention, and the vote was passed or defeated by a very close margin. I match 1,715 of the designated 12,212 key votes bills to the CES issues listed in Table 3. The distribution of bills across themes is detailed in Table 4. Figure 2 shows the distribution of bills and themes per state¹¹ and Table 4 shows the number of Project Vote Smart (PVS) Key Votes bills per policy themes across all state legislatures. Some of these bills reached the roll call stage in both chambers and produced two sets of roll call votes, while other bills were voted on in just one chamber. Although this dataset is a vast improvement on previous datasets linking public opinion to legislator roll call vote, the generalizability of this bill selection should be considered when drawing broad conclusions from the empirical results.

Table 4: Bills per Policy Theme

Theme	Number of Bills
Education	104
Environment	125
Gender	74
Guns	347
Healthcare	97
Immigration	96
Labor	160
Law	21
Redistribution	52
Reproduction	323
Taxes	265
Voting	51

¹¹ Table A5 shows the count of unique bills, themes, and issue per state.

In addition to limitations imposed by the breadth of topics included on the CES and in the PVS Key Votes, political institutions, such as professionalization and chambers rules, also affect how many bills may be included in the dataset, which begets problems with statistical power and precision for potential theme-specific or state-level analyses. First, legislators who spend more time in their legislator role may produce higher numbers of bills. For example, the states with the highest number of bill observations, New Jersey and California, meet yearlong. Second, higher numbers of legislators may result in higher volumes of bills introduced each session. Nebraska, the nation’s only unicameral legislature, has the fewest number of state legislators with just 49 members and the fewest bills in the dataset with only 4 bills covering three issue areas and themes. Finally, about a quarter of the 99 state legislative chambers have constitutional or procedural limits of the number of bills a legislators can introduce during a session (Erickson 2017).

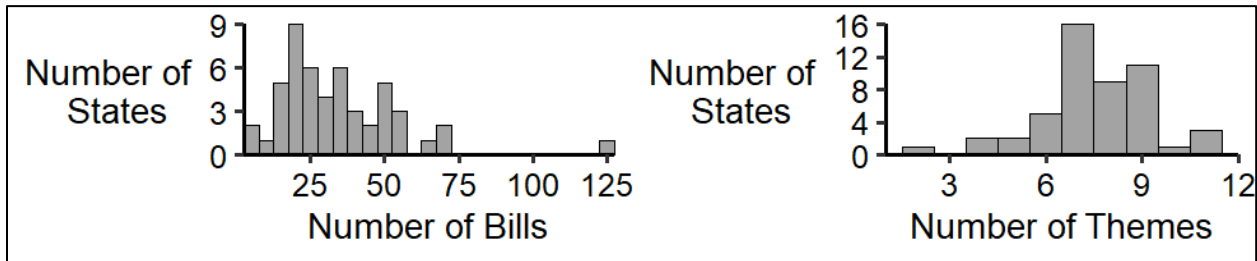


Figure 2: Coverage of Bills and Themes per State

The cumulative 2006-2018 CES file contains 452,755 unique respondents across the twelve survey waves. Drawing on measurement rationale presented in Nemerever and Rogers (2020), respondents are assigned to rural and nonrural categories at the ZIP code-level according to Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) Codes published by the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. RUCA codes classify census tracts on a ten-point urban to rural spectrum according to three factors: population size, population distribution, and commuting population. Respondents are classified as rural if they live in a small-town core with

a primary commuting flow to an urban cluster of 2,500 to 9,999 people, or any area that is more rural. Respondents are classified as nonrural if they live in a micropolitan areas with a commuting flow of 10% to 30% to a large urban core, or any area more urban. Table 4.2 lists the descriptions of all ten RUCA categories. The pool of CES respondents is only slightly more rural than the American population. Ninety-one percent of CES lives in a nonrural area, compared to 93% of the U.S. population (Nemerever and Rogers 2020, Table 1). I probabilistically assign CES respondents to state legislative districts using the proportion of people in their ZIP code that live in each district using geographic relationship files from the Missouri Census Data Center's Geocorr program, adopting the method used by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013). There are 121,060 respondents who live in a ZIP code that exists entirely in a single legislative district and the rest of the respondents are assigned based on how the population of their ZIP code is distributed across districts. After accounting for missingness at the rurality and legislative district assignment stages, there are 397,213 unique respondents in the study. The sample size by state, party (republican, democrat, and independent), and rural status are included in Table A1.

Subgroups with fewer than 30 respondents were excluded from the analysis because sample sizes of less than 30 respondents are generally insufficiently small for application of the Central Limit Theorem. Subgroups excluded because of size include rural Democrats from Delaware and Connecticut and rural Republicans from Hawaii, Connecticut, Massachusetts. The comparisons groups for each of these populations were excluded accordingly (i.e., nonrural Republicans from Hawai'i were excluded because there was no rural population available for comparison). Additionally, New Jersey and Rhode Island samples are excluded from the data set because they do not have rural CES respondents. Commuting patterns within these states

geographically-small states makes it difficult to sample respondents from a ZIP code that does not have a primary commuting flow to an urban cluster with less than 10,000 residents.

Roll call votes are paired to CES respondent across all years to maximize power for hard to measure populations, such as rural Americans, and seldom-legislated policy areas.¹² For example, a respondent preference from the 2010 CES wave can be paired with a roll call vote on 2016 legislation as a representation dyad. Representation is coded as a binary variable: 1 if the legislator votes the voter’s preference on the bill, 0 otherwise. Individual respondents may have more than one observation per roll call if they reside in a multi-member district, in which case they would have two observations for a roll call vote on a particular bill (one for each legislator’s vote).

The unit of observation for the analyses is respondent legislator dyad for a specific legislative term. A respondent’s representation score is the average of value of the binary match variable for a unique legislator in a unique legislative session. Table 4 shows the number of unique issues and themes (from Table 3) comprising each observation average. There are 4,693,462 respondent-legislator vote dyads in the dataset, which are aggregated into 732,874 respondent-legislator-term dyads. The plurality of observations are based on a single issue or theme, and the generalizability of these findings should take into account this data limitation.

Table 5: Frequency of Unique Themes and Issues per Respondent-Legislator-Term Observation

	Themes	Issues
One	310,607	302,015
Two	49,641	57,226
Three	6,189	6,794
Four	0	402

¹² Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) similarly treat multiple survey waves as cross-sectional.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 6 shows the mean representation scores by Democratic and Republican legislators across partisanship and demographic groups. I present results separately for representation by legislator party because these two subsets have different, and often opposing, representational patterns that are obscured when aggregated.

Table 6: Group Means for Representation Scores (0-100), aggregated nationally

	Represented by Democratic Legislator			Represented by Republican Legislators		
	Score	Difference	Observations	Score	Difference	Observations
Democrat	69		101,929	30		98,459
Republican	43		51,884	63		102,871
		26			33	
Nonrural	60		147,368	46		181,243
Rural	55		6,445	50		20,087
		5			4	
White	60		103,640	48		165,932
Nonwhite	61		50,173	42		35,398
		1			6	
Male	57		70,273	51		91,961
Female	62		83,540	43		109,369
		5			8	
Bachelor's Degree	63		62,303	44		70,639
No Bachelor's Degree	58		91,504	48		130,684
		5			4	

Note: All differences are significant at $p < 0.01$.

As expected, partisans represented by a legislator of their own party have higher rates of representation than individuals represented by a legislator of the opposite party. Democratic respondents represented by Democratic legislators benefit from a 39 point representational advantage relative to Democratic respondents represented by Republican legislators. To a lesser extent, Republican respondents represented by Republican legislators benefit from a 19 point representational advantage relative to Republican respondents represented by Democratic legislators. The disparity between representational rates given to co-partisan constituents vs. out-partisan constituents is 24 points for Democratic legislators and 33 points for Republican legislators.

Turning to the population of interest, ruralites have diametric representational patterns when being represented by Democratic legislators versus Republican legislators. When represented by a Democratic legislator, ruralites fare worse than non-ruralites by 5 points, is equal to the gender and education difference among constituents of Democratic legislators. Rural respondents represented by Republican legislators have a representation advantage of 4 points compared to the representation of non-rural respondents by Republican legislators.

In addition to the rural representation gap, Table 5 shows the representation gaps for additional demographic and social divisions. Democratic legislators provide higher rates of representation to nonwhite respondents, female respondents, and respondents with a Bachelor's degree. Republican legislators exhibit the inverse pattern, such that white respondents, male respondents, respondents without a Bachelor's degree have higher representation scores than their counterparts. The largest representation gap for Republican legislators occurs is the gender of the constituent.

Next, I examine the consistency of the rural representation gap as it intersects with respondents other politically relevant identities. Figure 3 shows variation in the rural representation deficit among those who are represented by Democratic legislators. Rural respondents receive less representation than non-rural respondents across all subgroups. Across race, sex, and education, the rural representation deficit by Democratic legislators ranges between 5 and 10 percentage points, meaning that being rural carries a representation penalty even within groups already facing a democratic deficit.

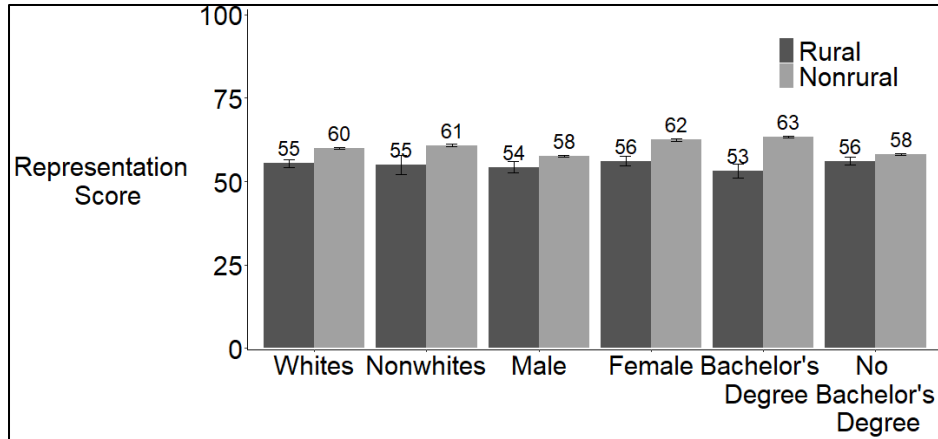


Figure 3: Representation Gaps by Democratic Legislators, across intersectional identities

Representation by Republican legislators, shown in Figure 4, is better for rural constituents consistently by 4 to 6 percentage points across sub-constituencies - except for among nonwhite constituents for whom the representation score is equal across rural and nonrural constituents. The primary takeaways from Figures 3 and 4 are that the rural representation gap by Democratic legislators is consistently negative across subgroups, while the rural representation gap by Republican legislators is consistently positive, although generally smaller in magnitude than the Democratic representation gaps.

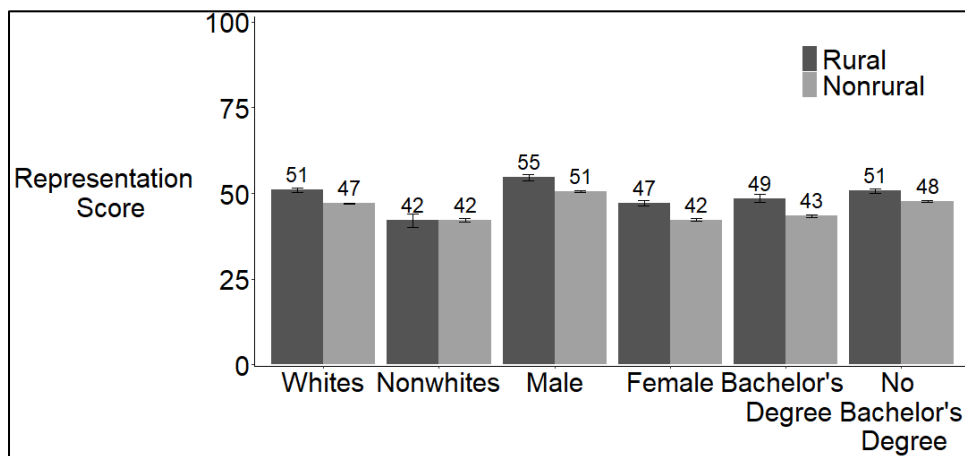


Figure 4: Rural Representation Gaps by Republican Legislators, across intersectional identities

The evidence shows a slight rural advantage from Republican legislators and a marked disadvantage from Democratic legislators. Hypothesis 1, that rural preferences are less likely to be represented by state legislator roll-call votes than non-rural preferences, is supported only for roll-call votes cast by Democratic legislators. Rural constituents do not have a representation deficit when represented by Republican legislators.

PARTY MATCHES

These analyses represent subset of co-partisan representation, a context in which we would expect the electoral connection and congruence between legislator and voter the strongest. This is not meant to be representative of rural representation in the United States¹³, but rather a deeper look at the generalizability of the findings presented above. Figure 5 shows the rural representation gap for constituents who are co-partisans with their legislator.

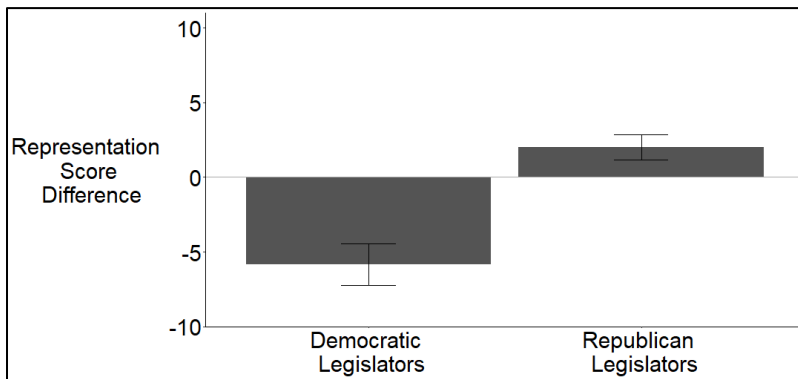


Figure 5: Rural Representation by Co-partisan Legislators Relative to Nonrural Representation

Rural Democrats receive less substantive representation than nonrural Democrats. Rural Republicans are slightly favored related to nonrural Republicans. These findings suggest that electing a co-partisan representative is not the end-all be all for rural Democrats seeking

¹³ Whether urban or rural voters are more likely to be of the opposite party of their representative has not yet been systematically documented and remains a question worth answering.

substantive representation. Future analyses could further investigate what types of Democrats, both ideologically (Blue Dogs vs. The Squad) and contextually (jungle primary, electoral competition), do a better job of representing their rural constituents.

Table 7 presents OLS models exploring whether the differences in rural and nonrural representation by co-partisan legislators hold when controlling for other demographic variables and varying the measurement of constituent rurality. These estimates do not substantively change when including policy theme fixed effects, as shown in Tables A6-7.

Table 7: Representation (0-100) by Co-partisan Legislators

	Republicans	Republicans	Democrats	Democrats
Intercept	54.51*** (0.37)	55.35*** (0.34)	67.69*** (0.35)	65.89*** (1.61)
Rural (0,1)		2.60*** (0.43)		-5.64*** (0.67)
Rural (1-10)	0.42*** (0.06)		-1.17*** (0.08)	
Bachelor's Degree	0.26 (0.30)	0.21 (0.30)	4.29*** (0.27)	4.44*** (0.27)
Black	-7.23*** (1.14)	-7.33*** (1.14)	-9.02*** (0.31)	-8.63*** (0.31)
Hispanic	-4.45** (0.66)	-4.62** (0.66)	-5.51*** (0.44)	-5.17*** (0.44)
Asian	-7.14*** (1.42)	-7.32*** (1.42)	-3.03*** (0.80)	-2.78*** (0.80)
Income	0.40*** (0.04)	0.39*** (0.04)	0.60*** (0.04)	0.61*** (0.04)
Male	8.15*** (0.27)	8.14*** (0.27)	-0.38 (0.26)	-0.33 (0.26)
Observations	114,976	114,976	114,562	114,562
R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Adjusted R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

The models reaffirm that there is a statistically significant relationship between rurality (both measurements) and representation in opposing directions for the two parties. Echoing the substance of Figure 5, the models show that there is a small positive relationship for rural voters

represented by Republicans and a larger negative relationship for rural voters represented by Democrats.

Additionally, we might want to know which policy themes are driving the representation gap, and how this varies by party. Figure 4.6 shows representation by policy theme and legislator party for constituents who are of the same party as their representative. There are no statistically significant differences, most likely due to lack of power derived from a small sample of bills (see Table 4). Nonetheless, the substantive differences on gender issues and gun control comports with previous work on social conservatism of ruralites vs. urban and suburbanites. Because of the rampant pro-life conservatism in rural America, the rural advantage for reproductive policy is most likely due to Democratic legislators voting conservatively (towards the median voter) on abortion and birth control bills (although this has yet to be confirmed empirically).

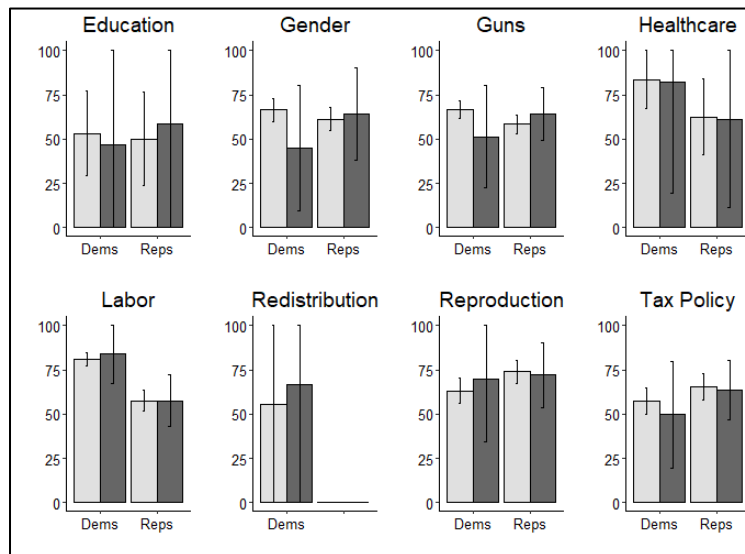


Figure 6: Policy Representation by Co-partisan Legislators, by theme
Dark gray represents rural, light gray represents nonrural

DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT FOR RURALITES

Lax and Phillips (2009) define “democratic deficit” as government not representing the preferences of the majority of voters. Another way to think about this is democratic dysfunction

because majoritarian institutions are designed so that government is responsive to the preferences of the majority, and failure to achieve this is a sign that majoritarian institutions, in this case American state legislatures, are not functioning as intended. I test for a democratic deficit by looking at rural representation when a rural constituent is in a rural district.

I measure rural districts using the *State Legislative District Urban–Rural Dataset* (Nemerever and Rogers 2021). For the creation of this dataset, RUCA codes were probabilistically assigned state legislative districts based on the proportion of the district population belonging to each of the 10 RUCA categories. While this procedure may introduce noise into the dataset, this type of assignment occurs without systematic bias. There are 6,593 unique district-session observations in the CES sample. Multi-member districts are counted once per member, i.e. if there are two members representing a single district per session it is counted as two district-session observations. Table 8 shows the distribution of districts by rural/nonrural classification and legislator party.

Table 8: Rural and Nonrural District-Session Observations in CES sample (2006-2018)

	Represented by a Democrat	Represented by a Republican
Rural Districts	404	686
Nonrural Districts	2,782	3,020

To what extent is this pattern present in rural versus non-rural districts? Table 9 shows the representation scores for rural and nonrural constituents across rural and nonrural districts. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, that there is no rural representation gap in rural districts, the difference between rural and nonrural constituent representation in rural districts is not statistically significant. In non-rural districts, rural constituents represented by Democratic legislators fare worse than nonrural constituents and rural constituents represented by Republican legislators fare better than nonrural constituents. The gap in Republican districts is two-thirds the

magnitude of the gap in Democratic districts. Tables A8 and A9 show the representation gap using OLS models to hold constant demographic variables and vary measurement between binary and ordinal operationalization of both constituent rurality and district rurality.

Table 9: Group Means for Representation Scores (0-100) for Rural and Nonrural districts

	Democratic Legislators			Republican Legislators		
	Score	Difference	Observations	Score	Difference	Observations
Rural Districts						
Rural voter	56		23,013	50		76,972
Nonrural voter	55		36,017	50		1,020,099
		1			0	
Nonrural Districts						
Rural voter	54		40,481	50		137,694
Nonrural voter	60		1,665,667	46		1,764,669
		6***			4***	

Note: An observation is a CES respondent – legislator dyad for a legislative session. *** $p < 0.001$

Finally, Table 10 presents models that interact the rurality of the constituent with the rurality of the district. In other words, is the effect of being a rural voter in a rural district different from the effect of being a rural voter in a nonrural district? I find that for constituents represented by Republicans, the interaction of voter rurality with district rurality is negative, meaning that the effect of the two characteristics combined is less than the sum of the individual effects. The more rural a district is, the less important it is that the voter is rural for the quality of representation by a Republican legislator, with district rurality having a negative association with representation. Although overall rural voters have a representational advantage in Republican districts, rural voters in the most rural Republican districts may receive worse representation. The opposite effect is present in Democratic districts. The rurality of the district is more important for increasing substantive representation for rural voters. Very rural districts are likely the context in which Democrats finally provide their rural constituents equal substantive representation.

Table 10: Regression of Representation Scores (0-100) by Legislator Party and District Rurality

	Republican	Democrat
Intercept	41.24*** (0.28)	61.85*** (0.31)
Rural (0,1)	5.16*** (0.62)	-7.14*** (1.06)
District Rurality (1-10)	0.69*** (0.05)	-0.94*** (0.07)
Rural * District Rurality	-0.74*** (0.11)	1.22*** (0.17)
Bachelor's Degree	-5.21*** (0.22)	5.28*** (0.24)
Black	-6.34*** (0.39)	0.83*** (0.31)
Hispanic	-4.15*** (0.44)	-0.34 (0.40)
Asian	-6.73*** (0.87)	2.75*** (0.73)
Income	0.34*** (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Male	8.43*** (0.20)	-5.15*** (0.23)
Observations	206,946	158,494
R-squared	0.02	0.01
Adjusted R-squared	0.01	0.01

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

CONCLUSION

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APPENDIX

Table A1: CES Respondent Count by State, Party, and Rurality

State	Republicans		Democrats	
	Nonrural	Rural	Nonrural	Rural
Alaska	306	81	243	42
Alabama	2,197	464	1,949	300
Arkansas	1,271	361	1,362	317
Arizona	4,373	303	4,006	206
California	13,169	393	22,083	427
Colorado	2,495	261	2,728	153
Connecticut				
Delaware	511	57		
Florida	12,315	312	14,049	234
Georgia	3,970	470	4,844	325
Hawaii			587	30
Iowa	1,055	514	1,525	482
Idaho	1,038	287	596	133
Illinois	5,237	527	9,189	428
Indiana	3,479	427	3,842	288
Kansas	1,538	422	1,499	230
Kentucky	1,792	770	2,058	708
Louisiana	1,948	198	1,760	155
Massachusetts			3,377	41
Maryland	2,386	70	4,466	60
Maine	353	130	436	210
Michigan	4,422	603	6,690	633
Minnesota	2,361	440	3,343	456
Missouri	3,206	815	3,798	502
Mississippi	1,051	334	1,006	290
Montana	445	273	461	196
North Carolina	4,432	508	5,491	637
North Dakota	307	148	283	112
New Hampshire	841	149	886	186
New Mexico	1,000	87	1,269	79
Nevada	1,699	91	2,005	56
New York	6,385	491	12,886	521
Ohio	6,529	485	8,458	467
Oklahoma	1,788	374	1,519	274
Oregon	2,150	307	3,177	286
Pennsylvania	6,879	643	8,798	517
South Carolina	1,859	91	1,609	155
South Dakota	399	219	326	135
Tennessee	3,096	574	2,940	390
Texas	12,147	980	12,051	540
Utah	1,821	148	1,153	70
Virginia	4,012	644	5,058	545
Vermont	136	118	252	249
Washington	2,951	263	4,328	265
Wisconsin	2,590	723	3,315	636
West Virginia	722	284	879	355
Wyoming	251	159	165	58

Table A2: Federal Policy CES Question Topics Excluded From State Analysis

Theme	Issues
Foreign Policy	Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel-Lebanon, Iran Sanctions Act, Syria, Cuba
Defense	justifications for war, foreign surveillance, Don't Ask Don't Tell
Science	existence of climate change
Governance	redistricting, corruption, Tea Party, third parties
Federal Economic Issues	Paul Ryan Budget Bill, debt ceiling, Social Security, stimulus, bank bailouts

Table A3: Regression of Liberalism (0-100) Within Party

	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Intercept	43.32*** (0.14)	73.29*** (0.09)	44.19*** (0.10)	74.39*** (0.10)
Rural (0,1)	-2.42*** (0.20)	-3.66*** (0.16)		
Rural (1-10)			-0.59*** (0.03)	-0.64*** (0.02)
Bachelor's Degree	-0.95*** (0.12)	7.19*** (0.08)	-1.03*** (0.12)	7.09*** (0.08)
Black	12.87*** (0.39)	-3.64*** (0.10)	11.00*** (0.49)	-3.83*** (0.10)
Hispanic	9.21*** (0.24)	-2.51** (0.13)	-5.56*** (0.38)	-2.72*** (0.13)
Asian	-0.69*** (0.02)	0.52*** (0.01)	-0.71*** (0.02)	0.50*** (0.01)
Income	16.57*** (0.48)	-3.92*** (0.25)	16.39*** (0.02)	-4.12*** (0.25)
Male	-8.48*** (0.11)	-0.06*** (0.08)	-8.50*** (0.11)	-0.08*** (0.08)
R-squared	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.08
Adj. R-squared	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.08
Observations	165,585	206,353	165,585	206,353

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Note: The dependent variable is policy liberalism, measured on a scale from 0 to 100 with higher values representing higher levels of liberalism. The model specification is OLS> The models include controls for race and ethnicity, education, and income. White, Black, and Hispanic are binary demographic variables. Education is measured in six categories ranging from "No HS" to "Post-Grad." Income is measured categorically in increments of 10,000 dollars beginning with "Less than 10k" and ending with "150k+." Columns 2 and 4 use a categorical measure of rurality instead of the binary indicator used in the first and third columns. As stated in the previous section, the binary measure groups together RUCA categories 1-6 and 7-10. The categorical variable maintains all ten RUCA values as separate categories (see Table 1).

Table A4: Geographic Liberalism Gap by Party and Policy

Party	Policy Theme	Liberalism Gap	Rural Mean	Rural C.I.	Nonrural Mean	Nonrural C.I.
Democrats	Education	1.9	75.2	73.6, 76.8	79.6	79.3, 79.9
Democrats	Environment	4.8	83.4	80.7, 86.0	86.9	86.3, 87.6
Democrats	Gender	5.5	67.7	66.2, 69.2	73.5	73.2, 73.9
Democrats	Guns	4.5	74.8	73.6, 75.9	83.3	83.1, 83.5
Democrats	Health	2.1	74.7	72.1, 77.4	78.6	78.1, 79.1
Democrats	Immigration	6.5	66.2	63.7, 68.6	74.9	74.3, 75.5
Democrats	Labor	0.7	89.0	87.7, 90.2	90.1	89.8, 90.4
Democrats	Law	0.9	87.9	84.3, 91.4	81.1	80.2, 81.9
Democrats	Redistribution	8.0	64.7	61.1, 68.2	72.6	71.7, 73.6
Democrats	Reproduction	9.7	62.1	61.2, 62.9	71.7	71.5, 72
Democrats	Tax	2.7	50.9	48.9, 52.9	53.7	53.1, 54.2
Democrats	Voting	8.6	32.6	27.1, 38.1	41.2	39.6, 42.8
Republicans	Education	3.4	28.3	26.5, 30.2	31.7	31.2, 32.2
Republicans	Environment	-9.8	65.5	61.6, 69.4	55.7	54.3, 57.2
Republicans	Gender	6.9	29.0	27.4, 30.5	35.9	35.4, 36.4
Republicans	Guns	9.3	36.2	34.9, 37.5	45.5	45.1, 45.9
Republicans	Health	-0.0	21.4	18.9, 23.8	21.3	20.7, 22
Republicans	Immigration	4.3	35.3	32.7, 37.8	39.6	38.8, 40.4
Republicans	Labor	-1.0	41.5	39.5, 43.4	40.4	39.8, 41.1
Republicans	Law	-7.4	67.3	61.4, 73.2	59.9	58.4, 61.5
Republicans	Redistribution	-0.6	14.4	12.1, 16.6	13.8	12.9, 14.6
Republicans	Reproduction	5.6	25.5	24.7, 26.3	31.1	30.8, 31.4
Republicans	Tax	-2.0	30.3	28.5, 32.1	28.3	27.6, 28.9
Republicans	Voting	-0.9	11.2	7.9, 14.5	10.3	9.2, 11.3

Table A5: Bills, Themes, and Issues per State

State	Bills	Themes (of 12)	Issues (of 45)
Alaska	10	7	8
Alabama	18	7	11
Arkansas	18	7	14
Arizona	37	7	18
California	71	11	24
Colorado	33	9	18
Connecticut	17	9	13
Delaware	16	7	11
Florida	19	9	12
Georgia	21	9	15
Hawaii	14	7	11
Iowa	25	7	15
Idaho	29	9	15
Illinois	31	10	21
Indiana	21	8	13
Kansas	31	8	17
Kentucky	7	4	5
Louisiana	20	6	13
Massachusetts	14	7	10
Maryland	32	10	18
Maine	13	7	10
Michigan	39	10	18
Minnesota	23	8	14
Missouri	35	9	15
Mississippi	19	7	13
Montana	29	8	15
North Carolina	20	8	13
North Dakota	24	6	12
Nebraska	4	3	3
New Hampshire	48	11	17
New Jersey	47	11	25
New Mexico	17	9	11
Nevada	11	8	11
New York	16	8	9
Ohio	22	6	12
Oklahoma	32	8	16
Oregon	33	9	17
Pennsylvania	15	8	11
Rhode Island	15	7	9
South Carolina	9	5	7
South Dakota	20	8	15
Tennessee	27	8	15
Texas	16	7	10
Utah	23	9	13
Virginia	33	9	15
Vermont	5	4	4
Washington	16	8	10
Wisconsin	15	7	11
West Virginia	10	6	8
Wyoming	14	8	9

Table A6 Regression of Co-partisan Republican Representation (0-100)

	Republicans	Republicans	Republicans	Republicans
Intercept	0.50*** (0.02)		0.50*** (0.02)	
Rural (0,1)			0.03*** (0.005)	0.05*** (0.005)
Rural (1-10)	0.01*** (0.001)	0.01*** (0.001)		
Bachelor's Degree	0.0002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
White	0.001 (0.01)	0.002 (0.01)	0.002 (0.01)	0.001 (0.01)
Black	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.01)
Hispanic	0.02** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Income	0.004*** (0.0004)	0.004*** (0.0004)	0.004*** (0.0004)	0.004*** (0.0004)
Male	0.09*** (0.003)	0.09*** (0.003)	0.09*** (0.003)	0.09*** (0.003)
Observations	93,225	93,225	93,225	93,225
R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Model	OLS	Theme F.E.	OLS	Theme F.E.

Note: F.E. stands for fixed effects. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table A7 Regression of Co-partisan Democrats Representation (0-100)

	Democrats	Democrats	Democrats	Democrats
Intercept	67.69*** (0.35)		65.89*** (0.32)	
Rural (0,1)			-5.64*** (0.67)	-0.02*** (0.001)
Rural (1-10)	-1.17*** (0.08)	-1.26*** (0.08)		
Bachelor's Degree	4.29*** (0.27)	4.86*** (0.26)	4.44*** (0.003)	5.02*** (0.26)
Black	-9.02*** (0.31)	-7.99*** (0.30)	-8.63*** (0.01)	-7.58*** (0.30)
Hispanic	-5.51*** (0.44)	-3.30*** (0.44)	-5.17*** (0.44)	2.95*** (0.44)
Asian	-3.03*** (0.80)	-1.86** (0.79)	-2.78*** (0.80)	-1.60 (0.79)
Income	0.60*** (0.04)	0.52*** (0.04)	0.61*** (0.04)	0.54*** (0.04)
Male	-0.38*** (0.26)	-0.64*** (0.25)	-0.33*** (0.26)	-0.59*** (0.25)
Observations	114,562	114,562	114,562	114,562
R-squared	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Adjusted R-squared	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Model	OLS	Theme F.E.	OLS	Theme F.E.

Note: F.E. stands for fixed effects. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0,01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table A8 Regression of Republican Representation (0-1) with District Rurality

	Republicans	Republicans	Republicans	Republicans
Intercept	40.88*** (0.28)	41.42*** (0.27)	41.61*** (0.27)	42.65*** (0.25)
Rural (0,1)	0.48*** (0.05)	0.60*** (0.05)		
Rural (1-10)			1.69*** (0.37)	2.51*** (0.36)
District Rurality (1-10)	0.40*** (0.05)		0.54*** (0.04)	
Rural District (0,1)		1.83*** (0.34)		2.65*** (0.34)
Bachelor's Degree	-5.19*** (0.22)	-5.21*** (0.22)	-5.26*** (0.22)	-5.32*** (0.22)
Black	-6.22*** (0.39)	-6.29*** (0.39)	-6.36*** (0.39)	-6.51*** (0.39)
Hispanic	-4.01*** (0.44)	-4.09*** (0.44)	-4.19*** (0.44)	-4.37*** (0.44)
Asian	-6.60*** (0.87)	-6.67*** (0.87)	-6.79*** (0.87)	-6.96*** (0.87)
Income	0.35*** (0.03)	0.35*** (0.03)	0.34*** (0.03)	0.33*** (0.03)
Male	8.44*** (0.20)	8.44*** (0.20)	8.43*** (0.20)	8.42*** (0.20)
Observations	206,946	206,946	206,946	206,946
R-squared	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R-squared	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table A9 Regression of Democratic Representation (0-1) with District Rurality

	Democrats	Democrats	Democrats	Democrats
Intercept	62.05*** (0.32)	61.59*** (0.31)	61.49*** (0.31)	60.43*** (0.29)
Rural (0,1)	-0.56*** (0.08)	-0.78*** (0.08)		
Rural (1-10)			-1.06*** (0.01)	-2.46*** (0.01)
District Rurality (1-10)	-0.51*** (0.07)		-0.72*** (0.06)	
Rural District (0,1)		-1.60*** (0.54)		-3.29*** (0.53)
Bachelor's Degree	5.24*** (0.24)	5.25*** (0.24)	5.30*** (0.24)	5.33*** (0.24)
Black	0.74** (0.31)	0.82*** (0.31)	0.89*** (0.31)	1.08*** (0.31)
Hispanic	-0.40 (0.40)	-0.30 (0.40)	-0.28 (0.40)	-0.08 (0.40)
Asian	2.71*** (0.73)	2.76*** (0.73)	2.81*** (0.73)	2.92*** (0.73)
Income	-0.04** (0.03)	-0.04*** (0.03)	-0.03*** (0.03)	-0.03*** (0.03)
Male	-5.18*** (0.23)	-5.17*** (0.23)	-5.16*** (0.23)	-5.15*** (0.23)
Observations	158,494	158,494	158,494	158,494
R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Adjusted R-squared	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

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