

# POLICY EXPECTATIONS VOTING IN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS: THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** If voters cast their votes based on the policy outcomes they expect from different candidates, then survey research provides us with little useful information about voters. Most surveys ask respondents questions about the personal positions of the competing candidates. In a system of checks and balances, the personal positions of the candidates matter less than what the candidates can do in office, given the constraints imposed by other branches of government. New survey questions—tested in recent gubernatorial elections in Ohio, Texas, New Jersey, and Virginia—reveal that voters distinguish between candidates’ personal positions and the policies the candidates will produce if elected. The importance that voters attach to the candidates’ personal positions depends on the institutional structure of government, particularly the relative influence of the executive and legislative branches in policymaking. In states with constitutionally weak executives, voters vote based on candidate position; in states with stronger executives, votes are based on policy expectations.

## INTRODUCTION

The idealized voter decides which candidate to support in an election based on the policies he or she expects the candidates to implement if elected, not the platforms on which they campaign. Empirical studies of voter decision making do not measure voters’ expectations about the policies each candidate would implement. Instead, standard election surveys, such as the American National Election Studies, ask respondents to place the candidates on a series of issue scales. These questions capture the candidates’ personal positions or platforms, leaving election studies without reliable measures of what voters believe the candidates will do in office. In short, researchers lack accurate data on the foundations of vote choice.

Lacy and Paolino (1998) find that voters decide which candidates to support in an election based upon the policies they expect the candidates to implement if elected, not the platforms on which they campaign. New survey questions, first presented to telephone survey respondents in Texas during the 1996 U.S. presidential election, show that voters

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see clear differences between presidential candidates' personal positions and the policies each candidate would produce as president. Furthermore, voters' placements of the policy expectations associated with the candidates are a stronger predictor of vote choice than their placements of the candidates' personal positions. Lacy and Paolino (1999) present follow-up results from surveys conducted during the 1998 gubernatorial elections in Texas and Ohio that support, in part, the earlier findings. Specifically, we show that while voters in Ohio based their choice of candidates on policy expectations, voters in Texas did not. Theoretical work (Lacy and Paolino 2000*a*; Lacy and Paolino 2000*b*) suggests that voters' beliefs about the relative strength of executive and legislative institutions in each state — particularly beliefs about the influence of the governor over public policy — explains some of the difference between the states.

Existing models of how voters form policy expectations in executive elections restrict attention to the position of the legislature and the influence of the executive branch over policymaking. Fiorina (1992) writes that voters base their policy expectations on both their beliefs about the strength of the executive and the position of the legislature. Alesina and Rosenthal (1995) argue that voters choose a legislature with an eye toward balancing the preferences of the executive. While both works develop theoretical arguments about voters' policy expectations, neither provides direct tests of these arguments with survey data.

In this paper, we describe survey instruments that capture voters' policy expectations, and we test existing models of how voters form policy expectations. We also replicate our earlier work to determine whether or not voters generally use policy expectations or candidates' platforms when voting for executives. We take advantage of the differences in the structure of government in New Jersey, Virginia, Texas, and Ohio to compare the importance of policy expectations across these states. We find that voters cast their ballots based on expectations about what the candidates will do in office, but the importance of policy expectations depends on the executive's influence in policymaking. The constitutional relationship between the executive and legislative branches affects voters' decision-making. In systems where the executive has little influence over policy, voters cast their votes based on the candidates' personal positions; in systems where the executive has great influence over policy, voters' policy expectations better explain vote choice.

## 1. POLICY EXPECTATIONS MODELS

Several scholars have proposed models of policy expectations. Fiorina (1992) develops a model in which voters select their preferred combination of parties across the executive and legislative branches of government. In Fiorina's model, a voter expects that a policy outcome ( $X$ ) is a convex combination of the positions of the executive ( $E$ ) and legislature ( $L$ ),  $X, E, L \in \mathbb{R}^1$ , such that:

$$(1.0.1) \quad X = wE + (1 - w)L = w(E - L) + L$$

where  $w \in [0, 1]$  is the relative influence in policymaking of the executive branch. A voter's behavior is guided by her preferences for the expected policies of government given a combination of legislature and executive. Fiorina's model marks a notable departure from traditional models of voting by taking seriously the impact of checks and balances on the decisions made in the voting booth.

Alesina and Rosenthal (1995) and Mebane (2000) extend Fiorina's model (equation 1.0.1) to specify the legislative component of the model in terms of the vote shares of each party such that

$$(1.0.2) \quad L = V_R\theta_R + (1 - V_R)\theta_D$$

where  $V_R$  is the Republican Party's vote share or proportion of seats and  $\theta$  represents the ideal point of each party. This model demands more of voters than Fiorina's model because it requires not only that voters recognize the majority party in the legislature, something that roughly one-third of the American public is unable to do (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997, 117), but also that they are attuned to how the degree of partisan balance in the legislature may foster or hinder compromise by allowing different minorities to sustain vetoes or "Filibuster" bills. Furthermore, voters are presumed to vote upon their expectations of how others in the electorate will behave, voting strategically, if necessary, to achieve their preferred policy outcome.

The models of vote choice proposed by Fiorina, Alesina and Rosenthal, and Mebane imply that voters intentionally choose to divide government between the two major parties. In the Alesina, Rosenthal, and Mebane models, voters think about dividing government in both the legislative and executive elections. The critical question for a voter in Alesina and Rosenthal's model is whether their vote in the legislative elections can affect the overall

policy position of the legislature. Since Alesina and Rosenthal assume a party in the legislature pulls policy further toward its platform with each seat it picks up, voters believe that if they are pivotal in the race in their own district, they will alter the policy position of the entire legislature. This assumption is tenuous and flies in the face of most theories of legislative politics (Krehbiel 1998). Suppose a voter believes, as most political scientists do, that the position of the legislature is determined by the median legislator or the legislator whose vote guarantees a veto-proof supermajority. Then she knows that even if she is pivotal in determining the outcome of the election in her own district, her vote has little chance of changing the overall position of the legislature. Even if her representative is the median member of the legislature and she chooses to replace him or her with an extremist, the position of the median legislator is highly unlikely to change. In any legislature, the median position is occupied by several legislators who have similar positions. Voters in the district represented by a powerful speaker or committee chairperson may have reason to believe their vote will change legislative policy. Such districts are rare. Yet many models of divided government or of midterm loss by the president's party are based on the unrealistic expectation that voters believe their one vote in their one district will change legislative policy with some probability. The prevailing models of intentional ticket-splitting due to Fiorina, Alesina and Rosenthal, and Mebane rest on the assumption that voters use their votes for the legislature to balance the position of the executive.

It is more plausible and more firmly grounded in theories of legislative politics to believe that voters treat the position of the legislature as fixed in each election, not something any one voter can change. If the position of the legislature is taken by voters as fixed, then intentional ticket splitting will occur as voters use their votes for the executive branch to balance the position of the legislature. While this paper is not about divided government and split-ticket voting, our analysis does imply that voters may intentionally divide government in executive elections, taking the position of the legislature as fixed even as they cast ballots in legislative elections. We turn studies of intentional divided government and ticket-splitting around to focus on balancing in executive rather than legislative elections.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>An objection may be raised that even in executive elections a voter believes her vote will have no chance of changing the outcome of the election. However, in a game-theoretic model of voting decisions, voters cast their votes as if they were pivotal in the election. In executive elections, a voter who is pivotal will determine the policy position of the executive. In legislative elections, a voter who is pivotal in her generic district—one not represented by a powerful speaker or committee chair—cannot determine the policy position of the legislature.

To test empirically whether voters think in terms of the models proposed by Fiorina and by Alesina and Rosenthal, we need measures of voters' beliefs about the ideological placement of each executive candidate and the state legislature, the ideological placement of the policies each executive candidate will implement if elected, the executive's influence in the policy making process, and the likely composition of the legislature following the next election. No existing studies of policy expectations have gathered such data. We obtained measures of all of these variables in surveys conducted immediately before the 2001 Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial elections and immediately after the 2002 Ohio gubernatorial elections.<sup>2</sup>

Traditional election studies, such as the American National Election Studies, measure voters' general ideological or issue preferences as well as voters' beliefs about the positions of the competing candidates. For decades the ANES instrument has used the following question, included in our New Jersey and Virginia election studies, to tap respondents' ideology:

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Please think of a seven-point scale in which the political views that people might hold range from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. On this scale, a score of one means extremely liberal, a score of seven means extremely conservative, and a score of four means exactly in the middle. Where would you place your own political views on this scale?

In the 2001 New Jersey and Virginia election studies, we asked voters to place the candidates using the ANES instrument. For the Republican candidate in New Jersey:

On the scale from one to seven [where one is extremely liberal, seven is extremely conservative and four is in the middle,] where would you place Bret Schundler, the Republican candidate for governor?

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<sup>2</sup>Survey data for Virginia and New Jersey were collected by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia, using random-digit-dialing of independently-sampled telephone numbers in Virginia and New Jersey. A respondent of voting age was randomly selected from each household. Only respondents who said they would definitely vote or were likely to vote in the November 6 election for governor were interviewed. Interviews were conducted between October 18 and November 5, with a total of 724 completed interviews in Virginia and 699 in New Jersey. The response rate (AAPOR's RR3) was 13 percent in Virginia, 9 percent in New Jersey. The cooperation rate (COOP4) was 66 percent in Virginia and 62 percent in New Jersey. Survey data in Ohio were collected by the Center for Survey Research at Ohio State University using a sampling procedure identical to the one used in Virginia and New Jersey with two exceptions. First, respondents were Ohio residents rather than likely voters. Second, interviews were conducted after the election, allowing more time to recontact phone numbers. The response rate in Ohio was 27 percent. Most of the results in this paper focus on the Virginia and New Jersey surveys, which were more extensive than our surveys in the other states.

We asked the same question about Democratic candidate James McGreevey. In Virginia we asked about Democrat Mark Warner and Republican Mark Earley.

The primary innovation in our research is a new measure of respondents' beliefs about the general ideological or issue position of policies enacted by state government conditional on the election of each of the candidates. We asked respondents:

On the scale from one to seven [where one is extremely liberal, seven is extremely conservative, and four is in the middle,] where would you place the government of the state of New Jersey if James McGreevey, the Democrat, becomes governor?

with similar questions for Bret Schundler, the Republican candidate for governor in New Jersey, Mark Warner, the Democratic candidate for governor in Virginia, and Mark Earley, the Republican candidate for governor in Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

When we have inserted similar questions on other surveys (a 1996 presidential election study in Texas, 1998 gubernatorial election studies in Texas and Ohio, and a 2002 study in Ohio), we invariably asked this question *after* the ideological placement questions for the candidates. We had done this to make our test of policy expectations voting as conservative as possible. Respondents may place candidates they like for non-policy reasons closer to them on policy scales, creating the illusion of policy voting. This phenomenon, known as *projection*, was first described by Page and Brody (1972). We believe that having the candidate placement questions prior to the policy expectations questions maximizes the effect of projection on the candidate placement questions compared to its effect on policy expectations. While such a procedure allows for a conservative test of our hypotheses, it leaves open the possibility that respondents are cued to provide different response to the policy expectations question without having real beliefs about the distinction between candidate positions and policy expectations. In our previous studies about 50% of respondents provided different responses to the candidate placement and policy expectations questions

To check the effect of question order, we included an experiment on the 2001 Virginia and New Jersey surveys. A randomly designated half of the respondents were first asked the candidate placement question followed by the policy expectations question for each candidate; the other half were asked the policy expectations question first. Within this randomization, we also randomized the order of the candidates, creating four possible question

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<sup>3</sup>In the Ohio surveys, we used a branching question for ideological placements: "Would you say that (candidate name) is liberal, moderate, or conservative?" followed by "would you say very liberal/conservative, somewhat liberal/conservative, or only slightly liberal/conservative?"

orders.<sup>4</sup> Prior to these questions, respondents were made familiar with the standard ideological placement question, as they were asked to place themselves and President Bush. At the end of the ideological placement questions, respondents were asked the overall position of the state legislature.

The results of this question order experiment indicate that there is little reason to believe that responses to the policy expectations questions are simply an artifact of the order (Table 1). For none of the policy expectations placements is there a significant difference in the responses of individuals who were asked to place the candidates first as compared with those asked to place the expected policies first. The only question where order affects respondents' answers are the ideological placement of Mark Warner, where respondents who were asked the candidate placement question first were significantly more likely to perceive Warner as liberal than respondents who were asked the policy expectations questions first. Oddly, this order effect is due in part to a significant difference in the respondents' own ideological placements. Even though all respondents were asked their own ideological position before the questions on candidate placement and policy expectations, respondents' own ideological placements are slightly more liberal if they are asked the candidate positions before the policy expectations questions. When we convert ideological positions into ideological distances between the voters and their placements of the candidates or their governments, then none of the four ideological distances are significantly different across question orders.

The question order experiments reveal that question order does influence the relationship between candidate and policy expectations placements. In previous work, we found that between 40 and 60% of the respondents saw differences between the candidates' personal positions and the expected policies their governments would enact. Among respondents who were asked the candidate placement question first, the proportion of respondents giving different answers to the two questions ranges from a high of 52% (for Mark Warner) to a low of 43% (for James McGreevey). In contrast, respondents asked for policy expectations first gave a different response in as little as 26% of the cases (for James McGreevey) to as much as 36% (for both Virginia candidates). In the cases where policy expectations are asked first, we believe that many respondents do not appreciate the distinction, particularly as such questions were asked immediately following an ideological placement question for George

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<sup>4</sup>Asking respondents about the Democratic candidates before the Republicans has a statistically significant effect only on the placement of Bret Schundler. When placements for James McGreevey were asked first, respondents rated Schundler as more liberal than respondents asked about Schundler first.

TABLE 1. Question Order and Ideological Placements

New Jersey				
	McGreevey (D)		Schundler (R)	
Question Order	Cand. First	Expect. First	Cand. First	Expect. First
Candidate Placement	3.34 (1.54) 299	3.40 (1.58) 294	5.36 (1.50) 281	5.21 (1.62) 279
Expectations Placement	3.52 (1.56) 278	3.35 (1.54) 293	4.97 (1.32) 268	5.09 (1.64) 285
Virginia				
	Warner (D)		Earley (R)	
Question Order	Cand. First	Expect. First	Cand. First	Expect. First
Candidate Placement	3.45 (1.41) 280	3.77 (1.51) 341	5.23 (1.40) 274	5.24 (1.53) 329
Expectations Placement	3.86 (1.37) 283	3.83 (1.55) 343	5.22 (1.28) 277	5.25 (1.50) 331

Entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses and number of cases below.

W. Bush. Because of these differences, we checked the results that follow and determined that question order does not influence any of our conclusions.

Policy expectations may also represent voters' views on specific policy issues. To measure voters' issue positions on the 2001 Virginia election survey, we asked respondents:

“Now, I’m going to read a short list of issues. In deciding how to vote for governor in the upcoming election, which would you say is the most important to you: (issues were read in randomly-started order) abortion, gun control, transportation, the car tax, the economy, education, taxes (such as income tax, the food tax, or the tax holiday), or terrorism.

Respondents who answered “none of the above” or “more than one” were further asked which one issue from the list mattered most to them in the election.

We asked the same question in New Jersey with a list of issues that included abortion, gun control, auto insurance, tolls on the Garden State Parkway, the economy, education, property taxes, terrorism, and racial profiling. After choosing a single issue, voters were asked a series of questions about that issue. The survey instrument for each issue was a



seven-point scale with labeled endpoints representing opposing views. Voters placed themselves, the candidates, the government of the state with each candidate as governor, and the state legislature on the same seven-point scale. (See Appendix for question wording).

Table 2 presents the mean placements on each issue, as well as on the general ideological question, for all respondents from Virginia. Issues are ordered from the one chosen by the most respondents (the economy) to the one chosen by the fewest (the car tax). On each issue, voters' placements of the government of Virginia given the election of each candidate are more centrist than the placements of the candidates personal positions. Voters also placed the legislature's position between the positions of the two candidates on all issues except terrorism.

In New Jersey (Table 3), voters placed the state legislature between the positions of the two gubernatorial candidates on all issues. Voters also placed the government of New Jersey under each candidate as more centrist than the candidates on most issues. The only exceptions are cases where the difference between a candidate's personal position and likely policies in office is not statistically significant.<sup>5</sup>

The results confirm that voters can discriminate the ideological and issue positions of candidates, the state legislature, and the government of the state given each candidate's election. Across the issues and in both states, voters are getting the placement of the legislature and the candidates about right. It is not always the case that voters place the legislature between the two candidates. Responses in Virginia to the question on terrorism show that voters believed that both gubernatorial candidates emphasized increasing police powers, while the state legislature supported increasing emergency preparedness. In Ohio in 2002, results we do not report here, respondents placed the state legislature at about the same position as the Republican candidate for governor, Republican Bob Taft, showing that voters understood that the Republicans' two-to-one seat margin over the Democrats produced a conservative legislature. Respondents also placed both Taft and the legislature slightly to the left of President Bush, which also makes sense given that Ohio Republicans tend to be more moderate than their national (and especially Southern) counterparts. On

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<sup>5</sup>Respondents who are uncertain about a question often place themselves or the candidates at the midpoint of the scale, raising the concern that the moderate positions we find for the governments of each candidate and the legislature may be due to uncertainty. In neither state is the proportion of respondents who placed a candidate's government at the midpoint of the scale significantly higher than the proportion who place the candidate's personal position at the midpoint of the scale. The percentage of respondents who place the legislature at the midpoint of the scale is only two points higher than the percentage who place the candidates at the midpoint.

TABLE 2. Ideological and Issue Placements of Virginia Candidates and Their Governments

Issue	Warner's			Earley's		
	Warner	Government	Respondent	Legislature	Government	Earley
Ideology	3.62 (1.47) 621	3.85 (1.47) 626	4.53 (1.46) 680	4.86 (1.11) 571	5.23 (1.40) 608	5.23 (1.47) 603
Education	3.11 (1.73) 146	3.32 (1.65) 148	2.44 (1.91) 176	4.14 (1.33) 144	4.85 (1.69) 136	5.05 (1.73) 130
Economy	3.32 (1.51) 151	3.33 (1.41) 151	3.95 (1.44) 163	4.39 (1.29) 143	4.70 (1.64) 149	4.91 (1.53) 144
Taxes	4.83 (1.71) 89	4.83 (1.60) 87	2.93 (1.46) 98	4.25 (.88) 76	3.86 (1.46) 87	3.73 (1.48) 86
Terrorism	4.28 (1.73) 83	4.47 (1.57) 55	4.22 (2.09) 83	4.72 (1.61) 61	4.15 (1.61) 55	3.92 (1.63) 52
Abortion	2.40 (1.35) 43	2.64 (1.35) 39	4.84 (2.48) 57	4.45 (1.22) 40	6.04 (1.00) 45	5.78 (.88) 45
Guns	2.77 (1.41) 22	3.64 (1.8) 25	4.73 (2.49) 26	4.63 1.50 24	5.13 (1.48) 24	5.52 (1.17) 21
Transportation	4.77 (1.12) 31	4.82 (.95) 33	4.02 (1.60) 41	4.56 (1.01) 32	4.04 (1.82) 26	4.07 (1.41) 30
Car Tax	4.86 (2.18) 14	4.60 (2.20) 15	2.05 (1.96) 19	4.07 (1.83) 15	3.33 (1.91) 15	2.14 (1.70) 14

Source: 2001 Virginia Gubernatorial Election Survey. Entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses and number of cases below.

issues and ideology in all of the states we have studied, respondents put the position of the government of each candidate between the candidate's personal position and the state legislature. At rough glance, our data show that voters are aware of the influence of checks and balances.

Even in relatively low information elections such as those for governor, where national media seldom provide coverage and where the subtle institutions of state government may

TABLE 3. Ideological and Issue Placements of New Jersey Candidates and Their Governments

Issue	McGreevey's			Schundler's		
	McGreevey	Government	Respondent	Legislature	Government	Schundler
Ideology	3.37 (1.56) 593	3.43 (1.55) 571	4.31 (1.49) 651	4.33 (1.20) 491	5.03 (1.49) 553	5.28 (1.83) 560
Education	2.69 (1.57) 120	2.85 (1.60) 121	3.32 (2.13) 139	3.67 (1.48) 110	4.88 (1.81) 117	5.46 (1.83) 114
Taxes	4.93 (2.07) 107	4.83 (1.88) 113	2.61 (1.84) 130	4.72 (1.44) 100	4.19 (1.80) 110	4.01 (1.94) 108
Economy	3.33 (1.81) 95	3.47 (1.72) 94	4.37 (1.89) 106	4.11 (1.18) 72	4.47 (1.60) 89	4.75 (1.82) 89
Terrorism	4.83 (1.65) 54	4.70 (1.58) 57	3.70 (2.02) 79	4.59 (1.57) 59	3.98 (1.55) 53	3.82 (1.52) 51
Auto Insurance	3.59 (1.90) 44	4.16 (1.73) 43	4.17 (2.20) 54	4.16 (1.67) 37	4.46 (1.76) 46	4.39 (2.05) 41
Abortion	2.16 (1.43) 44	2.52 (1.44) 46	3.92 (2.71) 48	3.81 (1.56) 37	5.52 (1.42) 44	6.39 (1.04) 46
Guns	2.32 (1.56) 28	2.63 (1.55) 27	3.44 (2.64) 32	3.68 (1.74) 28	5.18 (1.81) 28	5.44 (1.95) 27
Racial Profiling	3.06 (1.98) 16	2.82 (1.81) 17	3.05 (2.02) 21	4.2 (1.97) 15	4.8 (2.11) 15	4.36 (2.13) 14
Tolls on State Pkwy	4.6 (1.52) 5	5.4 (1.82) 5	1 (0) 5	4.16 (1.67) 5	2.8 (1.30) 5	2 (1.22) 5

Source: 2001 New Jersey Gubernatorial Election Survey. Entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses and number of cases below.

be little known to voters, we find that voters can distinguish the policy positions of the gubernatorial candidates, the legislature, and the policies each candidate will produce if elected. That voters have policy expectations for each candidate that are different from

the candidates' personal positions raises fundamental questions about how these policy expectations are formed and what role they have in voter decision-making. We address each of these questions.

## 2. WHAT DETERMINES POLICY EXPECTATIONS?

In Fiorina's and Alesina and Rosenthal's models, policy expectations are a convex combination of the legislature's position and the executive's position, weighted by the executive's influence over policy outcomes. Several studies have tested Fiorina's model of divided government by constructing the policy expectations voters should have given the election of different configurations of legislatures and executives (Alvarez and Schousen 1993; Born 1994; Burden and Kimball 2003). Our approach to determining the policy expectations that voters have about different combinations of executives and legislatures has been to ask them directly. The policy expectations placements for each candidate in the Virginia and New Jersey surveys reveal a voter's expectations about how the legislature, and possibly other government institutions, will constrain the governor. At a minimum, the system of checks and balances in state government may force a governor to compromise with the legislature. This simple notion of checks and balances would be consistent with Fiorina's model. But other variables may enter a voter's calculus of policy expectations—variables such as the candidate's own political skill and mendacity, opposition from the bureaucracy and courts, or changing political circumstances that render the fulfillment of campaign promises impossible. The policy expectations placements that we uncover in the New Jersey and Virginia surveys are produced in each voter's head by a combination of variables that we cannot hope to uncover.

We do have evidence that the process of compromising with other branches of government may be the primary reasons voters believe candidates will not do everything they promise. In the Virginia and New Jersey surveys, we asked respondents:

Generally speaking, do you believe that elected officials will or will not actually do most of the things they promise?

In Virginia, 52 percent of respondents answered that elected officials will not do most of the the things they promise, and 26 percent volunteered that officials try to do the things they promise. The rest, 18 percent, believed the elected officials will do everything they promise. In New Jersey, 62 percent believed that elected officials will not do everything

they promise, 2 percent said they will try, and 11 percent believed they will do everything they promise. To respondents who answered that elected officials will not do everything they promise or will try to do everything they promise, we asked the follow-up:

Generally speaking, do you think elected officials do not keep their promises because they only say things to get elected, because they have to make compromises with other people in government, because unforeseen circumstances can limit what they are able to do, or because of something else?

The modal response in both states was the compromise with other people in government prevents officials from keeping their promises. In Virginia, 14 percent answered that elected officials say things only to get elected, 48 percent that they must compromise with others, and 16 percent that unforeseen circumstance limit what they are able to do. In New Jersey, 19 percent believed officials say things only to get elected, 44 percent that they must compromise, and 14 percent that unforeseen circumstances arise. Responses to these questions provide further evidence that most voters are aware of the constraints imposed on politicians by checks and balances.

To better gauge the effect of checks and balances, we asked voters their assessment of the influence of the governor over policymaking using a scale of influence relative to the legislature.

Thinking about most issues of public policy, and not just the one we've talked about, who would you say has more influence over policy in the State of New Jersey (Virginia): the Governor, or the New Jersey state legislature? Would you say that the governor (legislature) has slightly more influence, somewhat more influence, or much more influence?

Answers to the relative influence question create a seven-point scale, with one endpoint anchored by the perception that the governor has much more influence over policy; the other endpoint, the legislature has much more influence.

In a model in which the dependent variable is a voter's expectation of the policy position of the state government under each candidate, weighting the candidates' and the legislature's positions by respondents' perceptions of the governor's influence over policy—using either the absolute or relative measure—does little to help predict voters' policy expectations. Weights, such as the  $w$  term in Fiorina's model, are notoriously difficult to uncover directly

from survey questions. However, if we estimate a simple model of policy expectations,

$$(2.0.3) \quad X = \beta_0 + \beta_E(Candidate'sPosition) + \beta_L(Legislature'sPosition)$$

we find that  $\beta_L$  is not statistically significant among the set of respondents who believe that the governor has more influence over policy than the legislature; but  $\beta_L$  is statistically significant for respondents who believe that the legislature is equally influential or more influential over policy than the governor.

Table 4 presents results from regressions based on equation (3). If Fiorina's model of policy expectations is correct, then  $\beta_E$  and  $\beta_L$  should be statistically significant. In all cases, there is a clear and strong relationship between a candidate's personal position and voters' policy expectations given that candidate's election. But the position of the legislature is also quite important. The more conservative that respondents see the legislature, the more conservative they expect the policies of the next governor will be, regardless of the governor's party.

The results imply that the average voter attaches a weight ( $w$ ) of at least .70 to the governor's position. If we recalculate the relative weight of the governor as  $\frac{\beta_L}{\beta_L + \beta_E}$ , then the results imply that the average voter believes the governor's influence over policy is at least .80, compared to the legislature's influence of less than .20 across all four candidates.

A slight question order effect emerges from these results. In the policy expectations associated with Schundler in New Jersey, asking the candidate placement question before the policy expectations question reduces the coefficient on candidate placement by .05. In the policy expectations attached to Warner in Virginia, asking the candidate placement before the policy expectations question increases the effect of the legislature's position by .06. We suspect that asking the candidate placement question before the policy expectations question allows voters to better differentiate the two.

There is an objection to these results. Voters' policy expectations should not be based upon the ideological position of the current legislature. Rather, attitudes should be based upon the legislature they expect to have in office after the election. We asked respondents to identify both the party that they thought currently had the majority of seats in each chamber of the state legislature and the party they expected to have a majority of seats in each chamber after the election. In both states, the placement of the legislature is significantly related to whether or not the respondent believe that, correctly in both states, the

TABLE 4. Predicting Policy Expectations Placements on General Ideology

	New Jersey		Virginia	
	Policy Exp.		Policy Exp.	
	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.
Candidate Placement	0.74*	0.66*	0.71*	0.58*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Legislature Placement	0.12*	0.14*	0.04	0.09*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Self-Placement	-0.06	-0.01	-0.05	-0.10*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Candidate Placement* Order	ns	-0.05*	ns	ns
		(0.02)		
Legislature Placement* Order	ns	ns	0.06*	ns
			(0.02)	
Constant	0.68*	1.12*	1.23*	2.25*
	(0.26)	(0.32)	(0.43)	(0.40)
N	409	397	503	484
$R^2$	.64	.50	.48	.45
$\sigma$	0.95	1.04	1.04	0.98

Source: October 2001 Virginia and New Jersey Surveys. Entries are OLS coefficients. “ns” indicates that there are no question order effects for that variable. See text for more information about the questions. \* indicates parameter is statistically significant,  $p < .05$ , one-tailed.

Republicans control both houses of the legislature compared to split control or Democratic control. In New Jersey, however, a majority of the respondents answering the question believed that the Democrats would take control of both houses of the state legislature.

Reestimating the policy expectations models with control of the next legislature substituted for the ideological placement of the current legislature reveals mixed results. In Virginia, respondents did not see any significant relationship between the expected policies of Democrat Mark Warner’s government and the partisan control of the legislature after the election, but they did find a significant relationship between control of the next legislature and Republican Mark Earley’s government. Similarly, there was no significant effect of respondents’ beliefs about partisan control of the next legislature and Republican Bret Schundler’s government, and respondents in New Jersey were significantly more likely to think that the policies of the next governor, if the Democrat were elected, would be more liberal if the Republicans controlled the legislature. These results may be a product of

our rough measure of the post-election position of the legislature. We simply asked voters which party would have a majority of seats in each chamber. Interestingly, in both New Jersey and Virginia the expected partisan control of the Senate has a larger effect on policy expectations than expected partisan control of the House.

We also asked voters what percentage of seats they believed the majority party would have in each house of the legislature. Alesina and Rosenthal’s model of divided government includes a variable representing the partisan balance of the legislature. That voters have expectations about the partisan balance of the legislature is a critical feature of the Alesina-Rosenthal model as well as Mebane’s. Less than 40 percent of respondents in either state offered an estimate of what percentage of seats the majority party would have in either the state senate or the state assembly after the election, indicating that few voters have the information available to behave according to Alesina and Rosenthal’s or Mebane’s models. A voter’s estimate of the partisan balance in the next house is not statistically significant as a predictor of policy expectations for any of the four candidates in our study.<sup>6</sup> However, a voter’s estimate of the partisan balance in the next state senate does have a statistically significant effect on policy expectations for Mark Earley, the Republican in Virginia.

On the issue questions as well as the ideology question, voters’ policy expectations are determined by a combination of the candidate’s position and the legislature’s position. Though we do not present the results, the effects of the legislature’s and candidate’s positions on policy expectations are similar to the results in Table 4 for each of the major issues in the election.

The evidence shows that Fiorina’s model may be correct as a description of how voters form policy expectations, but only partially so. Recall that in Fiorina’s model, a voter has an idea about the placement of the legislature as a whole, but knowing the percentage of seats held by each party is unnecessary. Fiorina’s model is underspecified for sake of parsimony, and it is clear from Table 4 that things other than the positions of the candidate and the legislature act on voter’s policy expectations. The  $R^2$ ’s for the simple policy expectations model range from .48 to .64. Other variables must also affect policy expectations: the courts, the bureaucracy, unforeseen circumstance, and a candidate’s political skill and mendacity.

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<sup>6</sup>The partisan balance variable is coded as a nine-point scale ranging from -4 (Dems would have more than 70 percent of seats), -3 (Dems would have 65-60 percent of seats), -2 (Dems would have 55-60 percent of seats), -1 (Dems would have 50-55 percent of seats), 0 (even split), 1 (Republicans would have 50-55 percent of seats), ..., 4 (Republicans would have more than 70 percent of seats). But, our results are robust to several other coding schemes for this variable.



Since voters' policy expectations in an election contain substantial "noise," then existing empirical tests of Fiorina's model are likely to miss the extent to which voters may cast their ballots intentionally for divided government.

### 3. POLICY EXPECTATIONS AS A PREDICTOR OF VOTE CHOICE

Examining policy expectations can inform our understanding of voters' behavior in elections. Theoretically, voters should choose candidates based on the policies they expect from the candidates once in office. Empirically, most studies of issue voting assume that voters choose candidates based on the candidates' platforms. In an election to choose a dictator, such a perspective may be warranted. But in a system of checks and balances, multiple policymakers, and constitutional constraints on power, voters likely consider what a candidate *can do* in office rather than what a candidate *wants to do*.

To assess a policy expectations theory of voting against standard candidate position theories, we include a variable capturing each in a vote choice model, along with controls for voters' party identification, race, and assessments of the incumbent's performance in office. Table 5 presents the results from the 1996 US presidential election and gubernatorial elections in 1998 in Texas, 1998 and 2002 in Ohio, and 2001 in New Jersey and Virginia. The dependent variable in all of the models is a binary variable, coded (1) if the respondent voted for the incumbent party, (0) for the challenger. *Party ID* is a standard seven-point scale capturing whether the voter's self-described partisanship, ranging from "Strong Democrat" to "Strong Republican," with "Independent" as the middle category. In the 1996 US election and 1998 Texas election, the surveys asked respondents only if they think of themselves as a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent. We include a respondent's race, rating of the incumbent governor, and, in the 1996 US election, rating of Congress as control variables.<sup>7</sup> We have also included evaluations of the economy, finding no effect in the model independent of the rating of the incumbent.

*Candidate position* is a continuous variable constructed by taking the difference in the squared distance between a respondent's self-placement on the ideology scale and her placement of each of the candidates. A positive value on the variable indicates that the respondent is closer to the incumbent candidate; a negative value, closer to the challenger. *Policy expectations* is similarly constructed using responses to the question in which voters are asked to

<sup>7</sup>We include a variable for "white" in Ohio in 1998 since a variable for "black" perfectly predicts vote choice. White and black are not the only racial categories in the survey. In the 2002 election sample, we have variance in the vote choice of black respondents, allowing an estimate of an effect for "black."

place the government under each candidate. We interpret the ideology scales as a summary measure of respondents and candidates issue positions across several issues. The results in the Virginia and New Jersey cases do not change when we measure candidate position and policy expectations using the most important issue cited by respondents.

Since we use the voter’s own placements of the candidates in our vote choice model, our results may suffer from projection bias (Page and Brody 1972). The usual cure for projection bias is to substitute the mean placement of a candidate by all voters (an “objective” measure) for each voter’s own placement. We cannot do this with both our policy expectations and candidate position measures since the resulting variables would be colinear: knowing a voter’s value on one measure predetermines his or her value on the other. We have estimated the vote choice models with objective candidate position and subjective policy expectations and again with subjective candidate position and objective policy expectations. In all cases the results mirror our results using subjective placements. Furthermore, projection bias is a more serious problem with candidate position measures than with policy expectations measures. The correlation between a voter’s feeling thermometer rating of a candidate and the voter’s distance from that candidate is higher (by .05 to .10) with the candidate position measure than with the policy expectations measure in all cases. The policy expectations and candidate position variables are correlated in all of our surveys at about .80, which is not colinear enough to cause problems in estimation.

The results in Table 5 make clear that the policy expectations measures add to our understanding of voter behavior.<sup>8</sup> The effect of policy expectations is statistically significant in the US presidential election and in gubernatorial elections in Ohio (both in 1998 and 2002), New Jersey, and Virginia. In New Jersey and in the 2002 Ohio election, the policy expectations measure is the only of the two ideological measures that is statistically significant, and it has a larger effect on vote choice than the proximity to the candidates’ personal positions. In Virginia and in the 1998 Ohio election, both candidate positions and policy expectations are statistically significant. Although the position measure has a larger effect, it is not statistically larger than the policy expectations measure. We find the same results if we use responses to the issue questions in New Jersey and Virginia rather than the ideological placement questions. In only one election, Texas in 1998, is candidate position

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<sup>8</sup>Because of the order effects we noted above, we tested the vote choice models to determine if there were significantly different effects of either variable related to question ordering, and we found no significant differences between respondents.

TABLE 5. Models of Vote Choice including Policy Expectations

Independent Variables	TX 1998	VA 2001	OH 1998	OH 2002	US 1996	NJ 2001
Constant	-2.97* (0.70)	-.04 (0.91)	-3.35* (1.01)	-.76* (0.31)	-2.14* (0.49)	-2.07* (0.90)
Party ID (7-point)	—	0.37* (0.12)	0.19* (0.10)	0.30* (0.07)	—	0.48* (0.05)
Democrat	-1.17* (0.23)	—	—	—	0.84* (0.27)	—
Republican	1.11* (0.37)	—	—	—	-1.00* (0.23)	—
White	—	—	1.86* (1.01)	—	—	—
Black	-0.70* (0.39)	0.10 (0.34)	—	-.59 (.38)	1.49* (0.59)	-0.63 (0.41)
Hispanic	0.10 (0.24)	-0.10 (.43)	—	—	0.64* (0.27)	0.19 (0.44)
Rating of Incumbent	1.41* (0.23)	0.67* (.13)	0.013* (0.008)	0.89* (0.15)	1.10* (0.15)	0.02 (0.14)
Rating of Congress	—	—	—	—	-0.23 (0.15)	—
Candidate Position	0.047* (0.022)	0.070* (0.020)	0.030* (0.015)	0.003 (0.006)	0.031* (0.015)	0.021 (0.014)
Policy Expectations	-0.006 (0.022)	0.047* (0.023)	0.039* (0.017)	0.023* (0.009)	0.068* (0.023)	0.048* (0.018)
Number of Cases	390	450	134	244	527	354
$\chi^2$	286.3	409.7	100.5	71.0	523.3	293.7

Note: Dependent variable is 1=vote for incumbent or incumbent party (Democrat in 1996 U.S.; Republicans in Ohio, New Jersey, Texas, and Virginia), 0=vote for challenger. Rating of incumbent is of Clinton in U.S., the Republican incumbent in Texas, Republican incumbent in Ohio (2002), outgoing Republican governor in Ohio (1998), New Jersey, and Virginia. “Black” and “hispanic” are not in the Ohio model since all black respondents voted Democratic and no hispanic respondents voted; “white” is a dummy variable representing only white respondents, all other respondents are the baseline. Entries are maximum likelihood (probit) estimates with standard errors in parentheses. For all models, heteroskedastic-consistent standard errors are used. \* indicates  $p < .05$ , one-tailed.

statistically significant while policy expectations is not. The results for the US presidential election of 1996 are based on a sample of Texas voters. The change in the effect of policy expectations and candidate position between the 1996 presidential election and 1998 gubernatorial election remarkable given that the population of interest is the same.

In a previous paper (Lacy and Paolino 2000a), we demonstrate theoretically that the relative influence of policy expectations and candidate position depends on the influence of the executive over policy. When the executive has no influence over policy, voters base their decisions on the candidates’ personal positions. Since the executive cannot change policy, the election becomes a popularity contest between competing platforms. Voters choose

the candidate whose personal position they prefer, possibly as a signal to the legislature about the electorate's policy preferences. When the executive has complete influence over policy, then a voter's policy expectations will be the same as the candidate's position since the candidate will be able to implement policy unhindered. It is when the legislature and executive share policymaking that policy expectations become important to voters.

Comparing the relative effects of policy expectations and candidate position across the six elections confirms our hypotheses about the effects of the institutional relationship between the legislature and executive on policy expectations. The six elections are arranged according to the formal powers of the chief executive in policymaking, from least influential to most influential.

Texas has the weakest executive. The Texas governor has fewer formal powers than the state's lieutenant governor, and the governor's role is largely reduced to collecting budget requests from state agencies, holding public hearings about the state budget, and appointing members to the state sentencing commission. The actual state budget is drafted by a ten-member panel chaired by the lieutenant governor. By our reasoning, elections in Texas are less oriented toward policy expectations and more toward the popularity of the candidates' personal positions due to the governor's minimal influence over policy.

The next weakest executive is the governor of Virginia. Virginia elects its lieutenant governor and attorney general separately from the governor, and the governor can serve no more than one term in office. Our finding that policy expectations matter less than candidate position to voters in Texas and Virginia suggests that executive elections in those states may be more about symbolism and the positions of the candidate than about what the candidates will do in office.

Texans voting in the 1996 U.S. presidential election behaved differently than those voting in the 1998 state gubernatorial election. In the election to select a U.S. president who has significant formal powers, Texans cast their votes based more on policy expectations than candidate position.

The Ohio governor and US president represent intermediate cases of executive influence. In both cases the second-in-command (Vice President in the US, Lieutenant Governor in Ohio) is selected by the chief executive and runs on the same ticket. However, both cases have strong, partisan legislatures that have significant influence over policy. We place the

US president ahead of the Ohio governor in formal power due to the president's greater power in foreign affairs.

In the 1998 Ohio gubernatorial election, candidate position was statistically significant as a predictor of vote choice, and only slightly lower in substantive impact than policy expectations. In the same state four years later, however, candidate position was statistically and substantively insignificant while policy expectations remained significant. One explanation for this change in the relative importance of policy expectations in Ohio may be the growing influence of the governor over policy in the face of a term-limited state legislature. Ohio adopted an eight-year limit of service for its legislators in 1992. By 2002 both houses of the legislature had undergone a complete turnover in membership.

New Jersey represents the upper end of executive powers among our cases. State politics specialists rate the governorship of New Jersey as one of the most powerful in the US. The governor is the only elected executive in the state and has the authority to appoint the other constitutional officers. Our results show that policy expectations matter more to voters than candidate position in New Jersey. New Jersey is the only case where candidate position is not statistically significant as a predictor of vote choice. The governor of New Jersey is not, however, a dictator. The legislature retains significant power. Sixty percent of voters in the 2001 election believed that the state legislature was more influential than the governor in policymaking.

Our results indicate that policy expectations matter more to voters when the executive has significant influence over policy-making. Candidate position matters more to voters when they are electing an executive whose formal powers are eclipsed by other branches or offices of government. More generally, the results across the states and elections show that institutions—in this case the relative power of the executive and legislature—affect voters' decision-making. Voters in Texas behave differently depending on the office for which they are casting votes. Voters in different states put different emphasis on policy expectations and candidate position depending on the governor's role in policymaking. Were we to gather further data from outside of the rather limited variation of US state government, we would expect even larger differences between the importance of policy expectations and candidate position.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings in this paper offer three contributions to our understanding of voter behavior. Our first contribution is to the measurement of issue voting. Existing studies of issue voting are misspecified since they ask voters to place the candidates on issue scales. We show in six different elections that voters see differences between the candidates' personal positions and the policies they will produce in office. The latter carry greater weight in voters' voting decisions than the former in all but two elections.

In a related paper, we show further that voters who are highly informed about politics are use policy expectations more than voters who are lower in information. Low information voters base their voting decisions on party identification and candidate position (Lacy and Paolino 2003). Any model of issue voting that focuses solely on candidate position will underestimate the importance of issues on voting decisions, particularly for high information voters. The policies voters expect from candidates are influenced by the position of the legislature. But more goes into voters' policy expectations than we are able to capture with questions about the position of the legislature and the governor's relative influence in policymaking. Since policy expectations cannot be constructed for all voters from a set of constituent parts, a wise course of action in survey research is to ask voters directly what they believe the position of the government will be with each candidate in office.

Second, our results inform debates about whether divided government is an intentional act of voters. Existing theories of split-ticket voting and divided government are essentially theories of policy expectations. A first step in testing any of these theories is to determine if voters distinguish the candidates' personal positions from the policies they are likely to produce in office in a system of checks and balances. Our evidence strongly demonstrates that voters pass this test.

A second step in assessing intentional ticket-splitting is to determine if voters cast their votes based on policy expectations or on candidate position. Most studies of split-ticket construct the expectations voters should have about the policies produced by divided government (Alvarez and Schousen 1993; Born 1994; Burden and Kimball 2003). The simplest of these constructions is that policy outputs will be the midpoint of the ideal points of the legislature and executive. We show that the policy expectations voters have for different combinations of executives and legislatures are not so simple. A more direct way to construct voters' policy expectations is to ask them directly what they expect from each

candidate in office. Once we allow voters to offer their own judgments of how the executive and legislature will interact, we find that voters do choose candidates based on what they expect the candidates to do in office, constrained by the other actors in government. At a general level, theories that voters intentionally divide government may be true.

The third and final step in confirming intentional ticket-splitting models is to determine if voters have the information and influence over the composition of the legislatures necessary to use their executive ballots and legislative ballots to engineer policy. Here the results from our surveys suggest that current theories and empirical tests of intentional divided government are mis-specified. Voters do not have enough information about the partisan balance of the legislature nor enough influence over the composition of the legislature to behave according to the models offered by Alesina and Rosenthal or Mebane. Our results are from state elections, but even at the national level not much more than half of voters know which party has a majority in the US House of Representatives. Fiorina's simpler model of divided government is closer to capturing voters' decision-making capacity, but his model also presumes voters use their legislative ballots to balance the executive branch. Voters base their legislative votes on local politics — local issues, constituency service, home style, and other things not tied to state or national policy. In executive elections, we believe, voters take the legislature as fixed and condition their choice of executive candidates on the likely constraints that will be imposed by the legislature.

Our focus is not on intentional models of divided government. Voting based on policy expectations is a more general phenomenon, of which intentional ticket-splitting models are a special case. Even voters who cast straight ballots may do so based on policy expectations rather than candidate position. And voters who split their ballots may do so based on candidate position in executive elections and local politics in legislative elections.

It is theoretically and empirically clear that voting in a system of checks and balances is more complex than simply choosing the candidate whose personal position one likes best. Candidates are aware of the complexity. In the 2000 presidential election, George W. Bush capitalized well on voters' policy expectations when he affirmed that even though he is staunchly opposed to abortion, there is little he could do to change the pro-choice status quo due to the constraints imposed by Congress and the courts. In essence, Bush told voters that his personal position and the policies they should expect from him on abortion are very different.

Our third contribution is cross-state evidence that institutions play an interesting role in shaping voter behavior. Comparing results from the elections we have studied yields aggregate-level evidence that the average voter in states where the governor has little influence over policy cast their votes based on candidate position. Voters in states with more influential governors cast their votes based on policy expectations.

Measuring voters' policy expectations is important for understanding how voters think about issues in elections. Theoretically, voters should base their votes on the policies government will produce, not on the personal positions of the candidates, especially in a system of checks and balances.



**Appendix. ISSUE QUESTIONS IN BOTH STATES**

**Abortion** On the issue of abortion, some people believe that all abortions should be allowed, while others think that all abortions should be prohibited. In between, other people believe that abortion should be allowed, but only in certain instances, such as when the mother's health is at risk, in cases of rape and incest, or in cases where a teenager has parental consent. Please think of a seven-point scale, where a score of one means allowing all abortions, a score of seven means prohibiting all abortions, and points in between represent varying levels of accessibility to abortion.

**Gun Control** On the issue of gun control, some people believe that the state government should greatly increase restrictions on the ownership and possession of guns, such as requiring the registration of guns, while others believe the state government should greatly reduce restrictions, such as allowing people to carry concealed weapons. In between, some people believe that the state government should not increase restrictions on ownership, but should require things like trigger locks to make guns safer. Please think of a seven-point scale, where a score of one means much greater state government regulation of gun ownership, a seven means much less state government regulation of gun ownership, and points in between represent varying levels of gun regulation.

**Education** On the issue of education, some people believe that the state should improve the education system by increasing state funding for public schools. Others think that the state could best improve the educational system by creating charter schools and providing parents with scholarships to send their children to private schools. In between, other people think that public school reforms, such as increased testing, are adequate for improving public education. Please think of a seven-point scale, where a score of one represents increased funding to public schools, seven represents giving students scholarships to private schools, and points in between represent varying degrees of public school reform.

**Economy** On the issue of the economy, some people believe that the state can best insure economic growth by spending more money on programs like education and transportation, even if it means increasing some taxes, while others believe that the best way to insure

economic growth in New Jersey is to reduce public spending and taxes. In between, other people think that taxes should be reduced, but that too great a reduction would make it difficult to maintain a level of public services that encourages economic growth. Please think of a seven-point scale where a score of one represents increasing public spending, even if some taxes have to be increased, a seven represents reducing taxes and spending, and a four means keeping taxes and government spending where they are now.

**Terrorism** On the issue of terrorism, some people believe that the state government should emphasize increasing security and police powers, such as search and surveillance activities, in order to prevent terrorism. Other people believe that the state should emphasize preparing better for emergencies by providing better rescue operations and disaster relief. Others believe in various combinations of these two approaches. Please think of a seven-point scale, where a score of one means increasing police powers, seven means increasing emergency preparation, and points in between represent varying combinations of the two.

#### ISSUES ONLY IN NEW JERSEY

**Racial Profiling** On the issue of racial profiling, some people believe that the state should eliminate racial profiling by enacting new measures, such as making racial profiling a crime or prohibiting the State Police from asking motorists for consent to search their cars. Others believe that, while racial profiling may sometimes occur, these measures would place too great a burden on State Police's ability to reduce crime and argue that only greater monitoring of police stops is necessary. Please think of a seven-point scale where a score of one represents the enactment of measures to eliminate racial profiling and seven represents greater monitoring.

**Auto Insurance** On the issue of insurance rates, some people believe that the government should use the state's regulation of insurance companies to reduce the rates that New Jersey drivers pay for auto insurance, while other people believe that the government should not increase regulation, but should instead focus on reducing rates by limiting drivers' ability to file accident-related lawsuits. Please think of a seven-point scale where a score of one represents government action to greatly reduce insurance rates, seven represents limiting

drivers' ability to file accident-related lawsuits.

**Tolls** On the issue of tolls, some people believe that the state should eliminate tolls immediately on the Garden State Parkway. Others argue that the state should keep the tolls as they are. In between, some have argued that the state should reduce tolls eventually, but cannot afford to do eliminate them now. Please think of a seven-point scale where a score of one represents the elimination of tolls and seven represents keeping tolls on the Parkway.

**Property Taxes** Some people believe that the state should significantly reduce property taxes, while others believe that property taxes should remain at their current levels. Please think of a scale from one to seven where one means that the state should significantly reduce property taxes, and seven means that property taxes should remain at their current levels.

#### ISSUES ONLY IN VIRGINIA

**Transportation** On the issue of transportation, some people believe that the state government should reduce traffic congestion primarily through emphasizing alternatives to driving, such as mass transit and telecommuting. Others believe that the state needs to reduce traffic congestion primarily by increased road construction. In between, some people believe that while alternatives to driving can provide relief in some areas, newer roads are also needed. Please think of a seven-point scale, where a score of one means emphasizing alternatives to driving, a seven means emphasizing road construction, and points in between represent varying combinations of the two approaches.

**Car Tax** On the issue of the car tax, some people believe that the government should eliminate the car tax as scheduled. Others believe that repeal of the car tax has placed too great of a strain on the state's finances and the state should bring it back to its previous levels. In between, some people believe that the car tax should not be increased from its current level, but that further reductions should be postponed indefinitely. Please think of a seven-point scale, where a score of one means complete elimination of the car tax, a seven means bringing back the car tax, and points in between represent varying levels of

maintaining the car tax.

**Taxes** On the issue of taxes, some people believe that the state should significantly reduce taxes while others believe that the state should significantly increase taxes. In between, other people think that taxes should remain at their current levels. Please think of a seven-point scale where a score of one means greatly reducing taxes, a seven means greatly increasing taxes and a four means keeping taxes at their current levels.

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