Endorsement Count Collection

Endorsement data was collected from the major, highest daily circulation, paper in each of Florida's ten media markets. Our goal was to collect endorsement counts for as many election years as possible, we discontinued collecting endorsement counts prior to 1994 as we are unable to collect endorsements for the majority of media markets in the state. Endorsement counts were collected through 1994 for the Gainesville, Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando-Daytona Beach, Tampa-St. Petersburg, and West Palm Beach – Ft. Pierce media markets. Counts were collected through 1996 in the Ft. Myers-Naples and Jacksonville media markets. Endorsements in the Tallahassee media market were collected through 2002. Endorsements in the Pensacola media market were collected through 2014. We were unable to find endorsement data for the Panama City media market.

Multiple archival sources were used to collect newspaper endorsement records. The Newsbank database was used to collect the bulk of the count data. Newsbank was the sole source of collection for the Florida Times-Union, Miami Herald, Naples Daily News, Orlando Sentinel, and Tampa Bay Times. Newsbank was also used to collect Gainesville Sun count data through 2008 while previous years were collected through Google News archives. The Tallahassee Democrat was archived through 2002 by the Florida State library system. We collected the Pensacola News-Journal through Proquest Advanced. We attempted to collect endorsement count for the Panama City World Herald through Newsbank, Proquest, and the paper's website archives. Unable to find endorsement data, we contacted the editorial staff of the News Herald and received no response.

The same sources were used to collect count data for the presidential and gubernatorial top of the ticket endorsement data. Additional endorsements were collected through George Washington University's Democracy in Action database.

http://www.gwu.edu/~action/

Variables

Dataset 1 – Label: 2017-08-01 Newspaper Endorsements Main Dataset

countyid – A unique id for county-year. First digit is the county; the next four digits are the year. Ex: 11994 is county 1, year 1994.

numericid – A unique id for amendment-year. First digit is the amendment; the next four digits are the year. Ex: 11994 is amendment 1, year 1994.

racecode – An identifier for each amendment. The number refers to the amendment's position on the ballot and its common nomenclature for that year's election. Referred to as **Ballot Position** in models in the manuscript.

year – Election year of amendment, ranges from 1978-2014.

countycode – Number of county when listed alphabetically, range from 1 to 67. Note, Miami-Dade is coded as Dade in the matrix. The county names associated with each code in the merged dataset.

countynum – Same as countycode. Number of county when listed alphabetically, range from 1 to 67. Note, Miami-Dade is coded as Dade in the matrix. The county names associated with each code in the merged dataset.

canvotesyes – A continuous variable indicating the number of votes in favor of an amendment's adoption, broken down by county.

canvotesno – A continuous variable indicating the number of votes against adoption of an amendment, broken down by county.

totalvotes – A continuous variable indicating the total number of votes cast in favor or against an amendment, by county.

pctyes – The percentage of votes cast in favor of passage of an amendment, by county. Continuous from 0-1.

legspons – A dichotomous variable; a 1 indicates the Florida Legislature sponsored the amendment. A 0 indicates the Florida Legislature did not sponsor the amendment.

cmsnspons – A dichotomous variable; a 1 indicates that either the Florida Constitutional Revision Commission or Florida Tax Revision Commission sponsored the amendment. A 0 indicates that neither commission sponsored the amendment. Commission sponsored amendments appear on the ballot in 1978, 1988, 1998, and 2008.

otherspons – A dichotomous variable, a 1 indicates that amendment was sponsored by a citizen initiative. A 0 indicates that either the Florida Legislature or a Commission sponsored the amendment.

wordcountballot – A continuous variable indicating the number of words on the ballot, describing the amendment. Coded by hundreds of words, a value of 1.50, for instance, means 150 words appeared in the ballot question.

Archived sample ballots were obtained through 2004 from the Miami-Dade county elections website. Archived sample ballots prior to 2004 through 1994 were collected from the Citrus county supervisor of elections website.

Note: Citrus county has digitized archived sample ballots through 1956 online.

wordcountamend – A continuous variable counting the number of words in the proposed constitutional amendment. Coded by hundreds of words, a value of 1.50 means 150 words appear in the proposed language of the constitutional amendment.

Proposed language was collected from the Florida Department of State's Initiatives Amendments and Revisions database. Full text of the proposed amendment was attached in a pdf on the database site.

mediamarket – A categorical variable, indicating which of Florida's ten media markets the county resides. Value ranges from 2 to 11, shown below:

2: Fort Myers/Naples
3: Gainesville
4: Jacksonville
5: Miami
6: Orlando
7: Pensacola
8: Panama City
9: Tallahassee
10: Tampa Bay/St. Petersburg
11: Palm Beach

newspaper – A categorical variable, indicating which of the ten flagship papers the county is assigned to. Same as **mediamarket**.

2: Naples Daily News
3: Gainesville Sun
4: Florida Times-Union
5: Miami Herald
6: Orlando Sentinel
7: Pensacola News Journal
8: The News Herald
9: Tallahassee Democrat
10: Tampa Bay Times
11: The Palm Beach Post

winner – A discrete variable measuring top of the ticket endorsement. A 1 means that the county's paper endorsed the winner of the popular vote for the top executive in the election (i.e. Obama in 2008, Jeb Bush in 1998). A 0 means the county's paper endorsed the loser of the popular vote for top executive. A 9 means the county paper wrote an editorial article in which they refused to endorse either candidate. A blank means we were unable to find an editorial endorsement for top executive for the county's paper.

loser – A discrete variable measuring top of the ticket endorsement. A 1 means that the county's paper endorsed the loser of the popular vote for the top executive in the election (i.e. McCain in 2008, Christ in 2014). A 0 means the county's paper endorsed the winner of the popular vote for top executive. A 9 means the county paper wrote an editorial article in which they refused to endorse either candidate. A blank means we were unable to find an editorial endorsement for top executive for the county's paper.

totreg – A continuous variable, that counts the number of total registered voters in a county, at the time of election book close.

demreg – The total number of registered democrats in a county at the time of the election book close.

repreg – The total number of registered republicans in a county at the time of the election book close.

thirdreg – The total number of registered third party voters in a county at the time of the election book close.

npareg – The total number of nonpartisan registered voters in a county at the time of the election book close.

All election data was collected from the Florida Secretary of State's website, using the states book close reports. The book close is the last day in which a voter can register and be eligible to vote in the November election.

turnout – A continuous variable, the total number of ballots cast in a county during an election.

Total ballots cast include all election day, absentee, early voting, and provisional ballots cast for all elections through 2004. In elections prior to 2004 through 1996 election data only reports one number for total ballots cast. Turnout data from 1996 through 2014 was collected from the Florida Division of Elections website. 1994 turnout data was estimated using David Lieb's Election Atlas of the 1994 Florida Senate race.

pctturnout – The percentage turnout in a county during an election.

gopvotes – The total number of votes the Republican top of ticket executive received in an election, by county.

demvotes – The total number of votes the Democratic top of ticket executive received in an election, by county.

ref96 – A continuous variable that controls for the year 1996.

amendwon – A dichotomous variable, a 1 indicates that the amendment was adopted by voters, a 0 indicates the amendment was rejected by voters.

pctcollege – The percentage of residents in the county with a bachelorette degree or higher level of education. Continuous from 0-100.

unemrate – The percent unemployment rate in the county. Continuous from 0-100.

totamends – A count measure of the total number of constitutional amendments on the ballot in an election year.

passedamend – A count measure of the number of constitutional amendments that passed in an election.

pctpassed – The percentage of constitutional amendments that passed in an election.

raised – A continuous variable, the value indicates the amount spent by an amendment's initiative committee in favor of the amendment. The raised sum is the sum of all campaign contributions, loans, and in-kind contributions.

spent – A continuous variable, the value indicates the amount of money spent by an amendment's initiative committee.

sixty – A dichotomous variable indicating for the 2006 transition between a majority-requirement and a 60% supermajority-requirement to see passage of a ballot initiative. A one indicates the amendment needs a 60% supermajority requirement, a 0 indicates the amendment needs a majority to pass.

prezyr – A dichotomous variable that indicates if the year fell on a presidential election. A 1 indicates a presidential election year, a 0 indicates a midterm election year.

nytmention – A dichotomous variable that indicated whether the amendment was discussed in the New York Times' post-election coverage on the day following Election Day. A 1 indicates if the amendment was discussed in the NYT, a 0 indicates that it was not.

endorsement – A dichotomous variable, a 1 indicates that the county's flagship paper recommended voting in favor of the amendment. A 0 indicates the newspaper recommended voters in the county reject the amendment. A blank cell means that no endorsement recommendation could be found. The variable is organized by amendment-county-years.

Dataset 2 – Label: Executive Endorsments 8-24-2016

County – A variable that reports the names of all 67 counties in Florida.

County.**Code** – A count variable that duplicates the **countycode** variable.

Media.**Market** – A character variable that reports the names of each media market.

Newspaper – A character variable that reports the names of each newspaper. *Note: when merging datasets, newspaper will be duplicated. We use Newspaper.x in our analyses*.

Year.**Code** – A variable that reports the four-digit year code for each observation.

Winner – A dichotomous variable that indicates whether the endorsed candidate won the election. A 1 indicates the endorsed candidate won the election, a 0 indicates the endorsed candidate did not win.

Loser – A dichotomous variable that indicates whether the endorsed candidate lost the election. A 1 indicates the candidate lost the election, a 0 indicates they won the election.

endorsewin – A dichotomous variable that duplicates the **winner** variable. A 1 indicates the endorsed candidate won the election, a 0 indicates the endorsed candidate did not win.

countyid – A unique id for county-year. First digit is the county; the next four digits are the year. Ex: 11994 is county 1, year 1994.

Dataset 3: Newspaper Circulation Dataset

Year – Election year of amendment, ranges from 1978-2014.

Newspaper – A factor variable that reports acronym newspaper name titles.

Print.Circulation – A continuous variable that counts the number of print readers for each newspaper.

Digital.Circulation – A continuous variable that estimates the number of digital readers and subscribers for each newspaper.

eReaders.no.Subscription – A continuous variable that estimates the number of non-subscribing e-Readers for each newspaper.

Total.Circulation – A continuous variable that combines Print, Digital, and eReader circulation figures for each newspaper.

media.market – A categorical variable, indicating which of Florida's ten media markets the county resides. Value ranges from 2 to 11, shown below:

2: Fort Myers/Naples
3: Gainesville
4: Jacksonville
5: Miami
6: Orlando
7: Pensacola
8: Panama City
9: Tallahassee
10: Tampa Bay/St. Petersburg
11: Palm Beach

Dataset 4: 2017-4-24 Salience_Measure

ElectionDate – The chronological date of the election. MM/DD/YYYY format.

Month – the two-digit month of the election.

Day- the two-digit day of the election.

Year – the four-digit year of the election. *An additional four digits, all zeroes, are added in the script to combine with another variable to make an identifier variable.*

RaceCode - An identifier for each amendment. The number refers to the amendment's position on the ballot and its common nomenclature for that year's election. Referred to as **Ballot Position** in models in the manuscript.

Id – Character variable indicating the amendment on the ballot.

OfficeDesc - Character variable describing the amendment text.

CountyCode – a two-digit code for each county.

Countynum – a four-digit code for each county, mirrors **CountyCode**.

CountyName – Character variable of the name of each county.

NYT.Mention – A variable that duplicates the **nytmention** variable.

TBT.Mention – A dichotomous variable that indicates whether or not the amendment was discussed in the Tampa Bay Times' post-election day coverage.

Salience – A measure that combines the New York Times and the Tampa Bay Times' coverage (in our analysis, we use the **TBT.Mention** variable rather than **Salience**)

uniqueid – An eight-digit identifier variable. The first four digits are the four-digit year. The fifth and sixth digits represent the county. The last two digits represent the amendment number (from **RaceCode**). *This variable was made after loading the dataset.*

The amendment finance data was collected from the Florida Department of State's Initiatives Amendments and Revisions database. Financial disclosure data is only available for citizen initiatives, thus finical data was available for 27 amendments. Data was collected through 1994. In three cases an initiative committee sponsored multiple amendments in the same election year; FairDistrictsFlorida.org sponsored two amendments in 2010, Floridians for Patient Protection sponsored two amendments in 2004, and the Save Our Everglades committee sponsored three amendments in 1996. Only one financial disclosure report was filed by each initiative committee. We coded the total amount raised and spent the same for all multi-amendment committees. The logic being that these committees would use the money raised to urge passage of the amendments under one campaign. We were unable to collect financial disclosure data on committees that raised and spent money urging rejection of proposed constitutional amendments.