LOUISIANA

An Analysis of Representation, Equity, and Inclusion in Louisiana Elected Offices

Contents

1   ABOUT THIS PROJECT

We want to explore diversity and inclusion at all levels of government, investigate representation across race and gender, and understand the demographic impact on state and local politics across the United States. Louisiana was chosen as the initial case study because of ease of access to the data and the breadth of dimensions available to consider. *A collaboration of NationBuilder's Run for Office project with help from the Data for Democracy network.*

1.1   ABOUT RUN FOR OFFICE, A NATIONBUILDER PROJECT

In 2015, NationBuilder embarked on an effort to create a free database that would help people understand what elected offices they can run for and how to appear on the ballot as a candidate. Driven by the observation that there was consistently poor "candidate turnout" for local elections and, as a result, a lack of diversity among officeholders, NationBuilder created Run For office to address one of the first hurdles facing many potential candidates— simply understanding what they can run for, and when/how to file. We at NationBuilder felt it was crucial to maintain this tool as a free service, as well as provide further instruction on how to launch a campaign in today's digital and political environment. NationBuilder's Run For Office site is an effort to empower more people to be civically engaged as candidates by providing resources to:

- Find the office you want to run for

- Get the information you need to appear on the ballot

- Learn how to run for office

- Get a free voter file

- Launch your campaign

NationBuilder's goal with Run For Office is to build and maintain the first comprehensive database of elected officials in the United States, and provide free access to all users. We have national datasets for all federal, state, county, and school board positions, and we collaborate on data analysis and visualization projects that we believe benefit civic engagement. If you are interested in speaking further, feel free to email Jim Cupples at cupples@nationbuilder.com

1.2   ABOUT DATA FOR DEMOCRACY

MISSION

Data for Democracy brings together an active, passionate community of people using data to drive better decisions and improve the world in which we live.

STORY

Data for Democracy began as an experiment in December 2016, when people from around the world began to collaborate on data-related problems solely through Slack messages and GitHub commits. With no rules or formal organizational structure, the focus was on getting real and impactful work done with minimal delay. As of April 2018, the community is based on Slack and GitHub. It has increased to over 3400 e-volunteers spanning a wide range of locations and timezones, and continues to grow every day. These volunteers apply their diverse skills and interests to an equally varied array of projects.

GOALS

- To produce objective, rigorous data analysis that keeps people informed and engaged, and supports them in forming their independent opinions.

- To connect with communities and partners that contribute to positive social change, and help equip them with the tools and technology to support the work they are already doing.

- To make data science transparent and accessible to a wider audience, and create opportunities for passionate and socially conscious people to get involved with using data to serve the public good.

1.3   LEADS

PROJECT LEAD

Jim Cupples works on the Business Development team at NationBuilder, a leadership company best known for its software used by leaders of campaigns, parties, brands, nonprofits, advocacy groups, and universities around the world. Jim helped cofound the Run For Office site while at NationBuilder, and continues to help coordinate the site's data expansion and usage. He can be reached at cupples@nationbuilder.com

TECH LEAD

Charlotte McClintock is a third year student at the University of Virginia studying studying data science, behavioral science, politics, and economics to understand how people make choices, both as individuals and in groups. She wants to use patterns and insights derived from empirical quantitative analysis to improve human lives wherever possible.

1.4   CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to:

- **Stephen Gardner** for the parish breakdowns and election analysis.

- **Jake Johnson** for wrangling the election results data to a usable format.

- **Marc Maxmeister** for running a predictive gender script on the candidates.

1.5   DATA SOURCES

- **Elected officials list with race and gender** from the Louisiana Secretary of State.

- **2014 and 2016 election results and vote totals**: the Louisiana Secretary of State Election Results online portal.

- **State demographics**: the 2016 5-year American Community Survey retrieved through SocialExplorer.

- **City and town population sizes**: American FactFinder.

- **State gender demographics** from the US Census QuickFacts on Louisiana, updated in 2017.

2   DECISION POINTS

2.1   RACE

The ethnicity factor was re-coded to "White", "Black or African-American", and "Other". This decision was made taking into consideration two points:

- **Relative population size**: Races other than Black or White make up 5.2% of the Louisiana population, and consistently less than 5% of the data. Taking all of those groups together makes it easier to discern their collective status, relative to small individual populations.

- **Uncertainty in classification**: We were uncertain about the ethnicity classifications other than "W" and "B", and there was not adequate time to investigate the issue.

2.2   LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement positions include: Judge, Court of Appeal, Judge, Judge, Family Court, District Judge, City Judge, City Judge, City Court, Sheriff, Chief of Police, District Attorney, Marshal, City Marshal, City Constable, and Constable. Similar positions were categorized together for ease of visualization and communication. To see how, check out to section 3 of the clean.R script.

2.3   LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government positions include: Mayor, Council Member (general category for all types of council titles like Councilman at Large, Council Member II, etc), Parish President, and Police Juror. Mayor and Council Member are municipality level positions, where Parish President and Police Juror are county level positions. To see the code that produced these distinctions, check out to section 4 of the clean.R script.

2.4   URBAN/RURAL DIFFERENCES IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Cities with a population greater than 47,000 were categorized as urban, and cities and towns with a population less than 47,000 were categorized as rural.

3   RACIAL REPRESENTATION IN ELECTED OFFICES

3.1   COMPARING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The state of Louisiana is 62.6% White, 32.2% Black, and 5.2% citizens of other races. The registered voter pool closely mirrors the state demographics, with 62.3% White, 31.2% Black, and 5% Other. White citizens of Louisiana are over-represented at every level of government, where Black citizens and citizens of another race are underrepresented.

This analysis will primarily consider the disparity in racial representation in elected office faced by Black citizens of Louisiana. Citizens of a race other than White or Black are underrepresented

Figure 1: 2017 elected officials by race of officeholder at local, state, and federal levels.

across every level and dimension of government, to the extent that there are often no representative of a race other than Black or White.

The disparity is most significant in the federal government where only one of 8 elected representatives is a of a race other than white (Cedric Richmond, a Democrat in the Louisiana 2nd District). Representation is similar at the state and local levels, with Black representatives accounting for 51 of 224 elected representatives at the state level, and 1002 of 4348 elected representatives at the local level, or around 23% of both levels of government, 9% lower than the 32% percent mark for Black citizens of Louisiana. White citizens are most over-represented in law enforcement and the judicial branch, where local government is the closest to the actual demographics of the state.
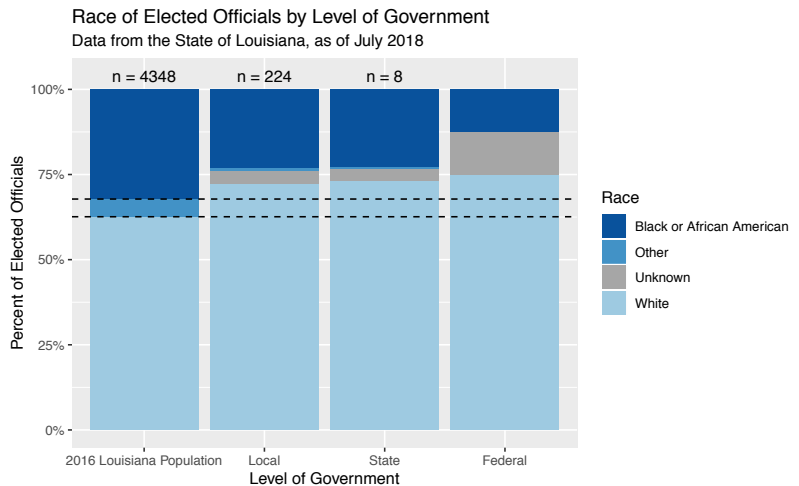

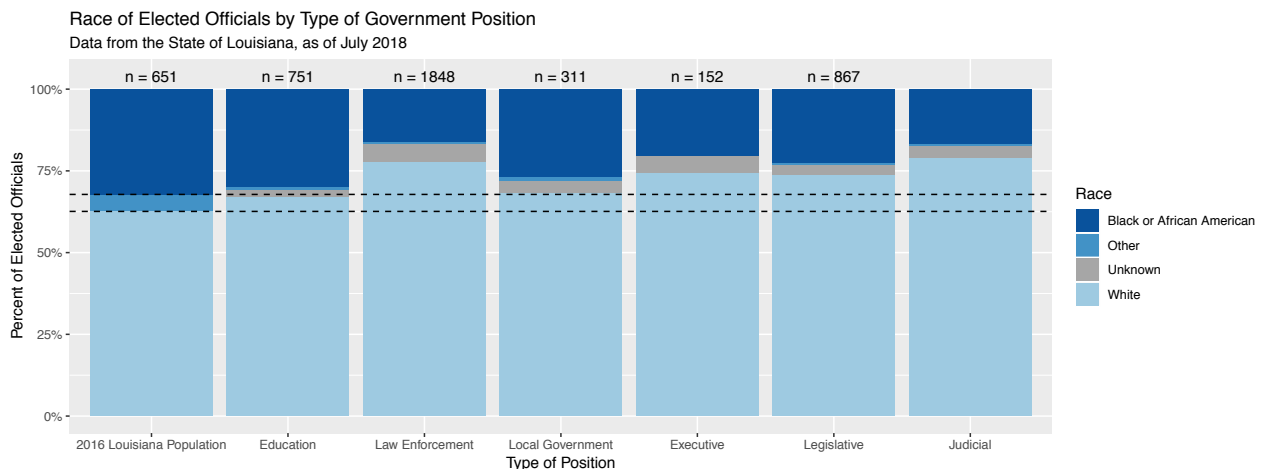**Figure 2:** 2017 elected officials by by race of officeholder broken down by type of position.

Law Enforcement Offices by Race of Elected Official
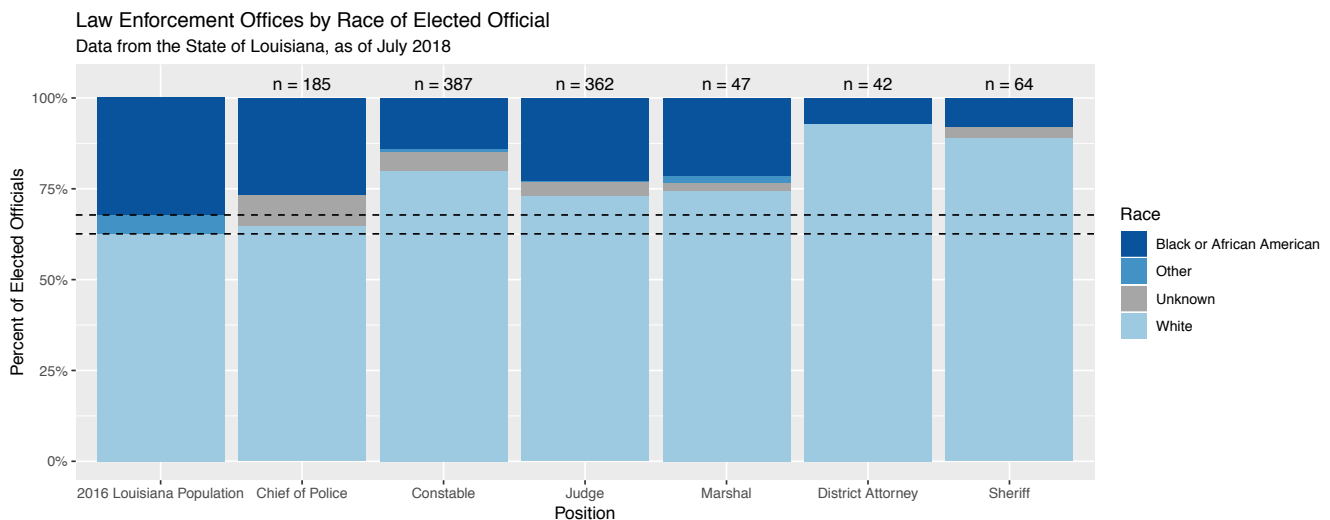Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 3: 2017 elected officials by race of officeholder for law enforcement positions.

Racial representation also varies substantially by parish, with the most proportional representation for Black citizens in Union Parish and St. John the Baptist Parish with a 0% disparity between the population of Black citizens and the demographics of the elected officials, to the least proportional in Caddo with a 31% disparity and in Madison Parish with a 40% disparity between population and representation for Black citizens.

3.2   LAW ENFORCEMENT POSITIONS

Black citizens are also underrepresented in law enforcement, to varying degrees. Black citizens make up 29% of police chiefs, 23.5% of judges, 21.7% of marshals, 14.7% of constables, 8% of sheriffs, and 7% of DAs. Citizens of a race other than Black or White are also underrepresented, making up between 0% and 2% of all law enforcement officials across the board. Black citizens are also underrepresented in law enforcement, to varying degrees. Black citizens make up 29% of police chiefs, 23.5% of judges, 21.7% of marshals, 14.7% of constables, 8% of sheriffs, and 7% of DAs. Citizens of a race other than Black or White are also underrepresented, making up between 0% and 2% of all law enforcement officials across the board.

3.3   POSITIONS WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Executive, individual positions appear to be more white, where legislative/council type positions seem to be more diverse. 90% of Parish Presidents are white, compared to 62% of the general population.

3.4   RACE AND THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Black citizens are underrepresented relative to their proportions in the state as a whole, and over-represented in urban areas relative to the state. Citizens who identify as a race other than White or Black are significantly underrepresented in both areas.
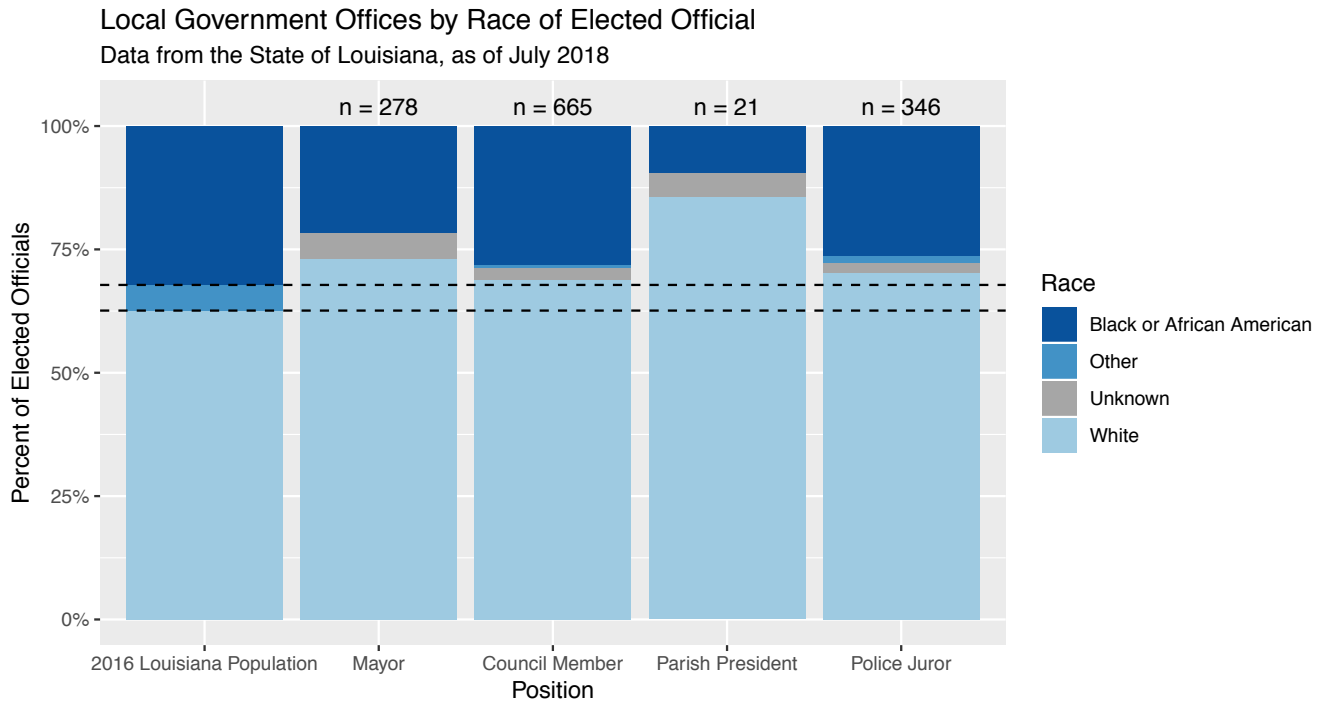
Local Government Offices by Race of Elected Official
Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 4: 2017 elected officials by race of officeholder for local government positions.

Differences in Urban & Rural Racial Representation in Local Government
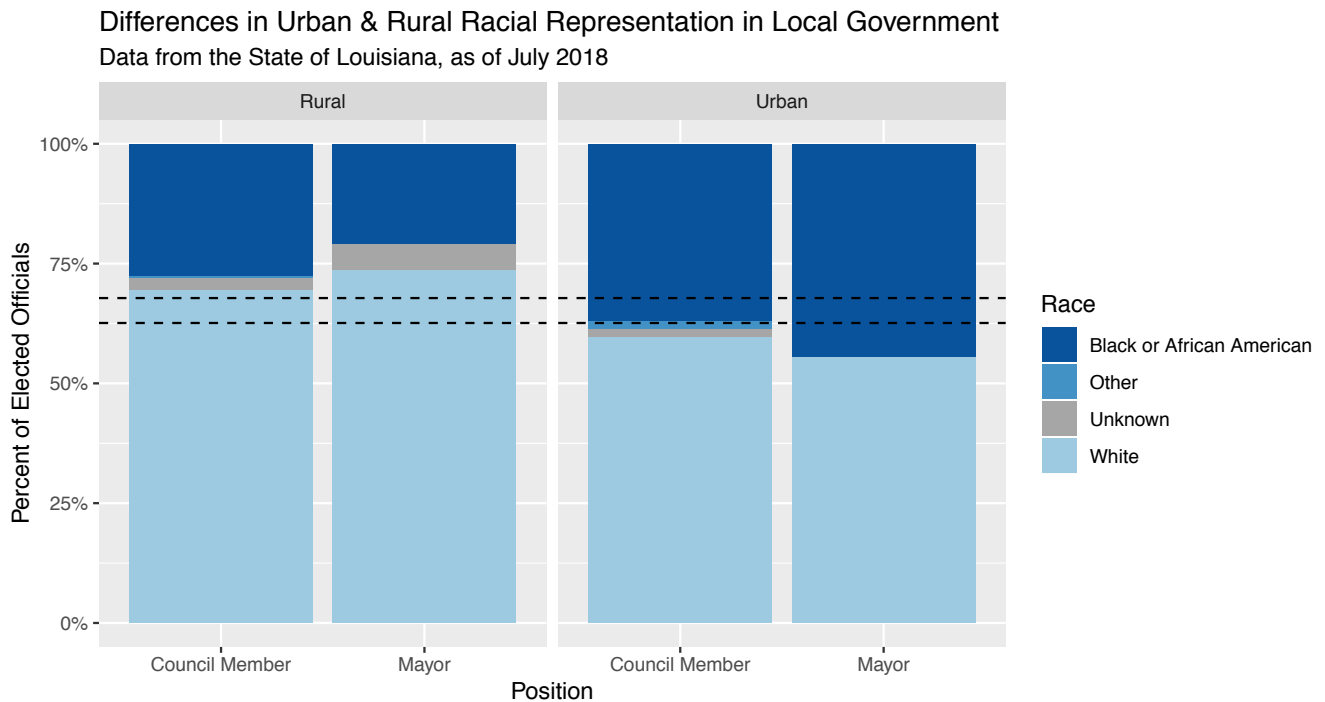Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 5: 2017 elected officials by race of officeholder for law enforcement positions.

4   GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ELECTED OFFICES

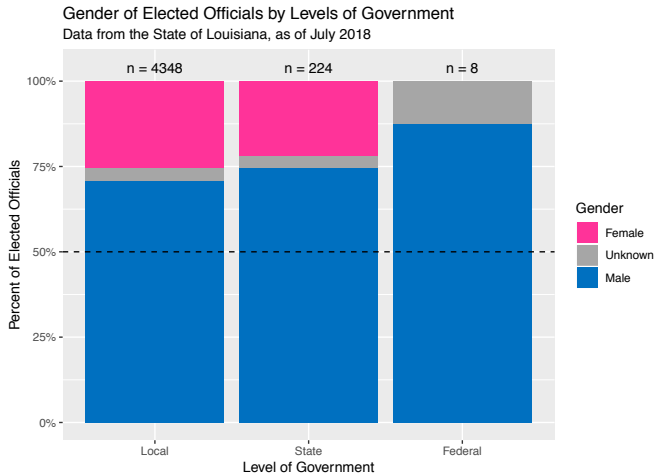## 4.1   COMPARING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Figure 6: 2017 elected officials by gender of officeholder for different levels of government.

Gender for the context of this report will rely primarily on the male-female binary for identifying gender because of the political context of the analysis. The authors acknowledge this does not capture the full spectrum of identities and experiences.

Women make up 51.1% of the population of Louisiana and and 55% of the registered voters, but consistently less than 50% of elected officials, usually by a sizable disparity. Women have the highest level of representation in local government, with 1101 of 4180 elected positions, or around 26%, and the lowest representation in federal government, where there are no female representatives out of 5 members of the House of Representative and 2 Senators.

Across position types, women have the highest levels of representation in education and judicial fields at 33.4% and 35% respectively, and the least representation in law enforcement positions and in the legislature at 7.9% and 13.8%. Gender representation also varies substantially by parish, with the most proportional representation in East Baton Rouge Parish at 43% female to the least proportional in Vernon Parish at 12% female.
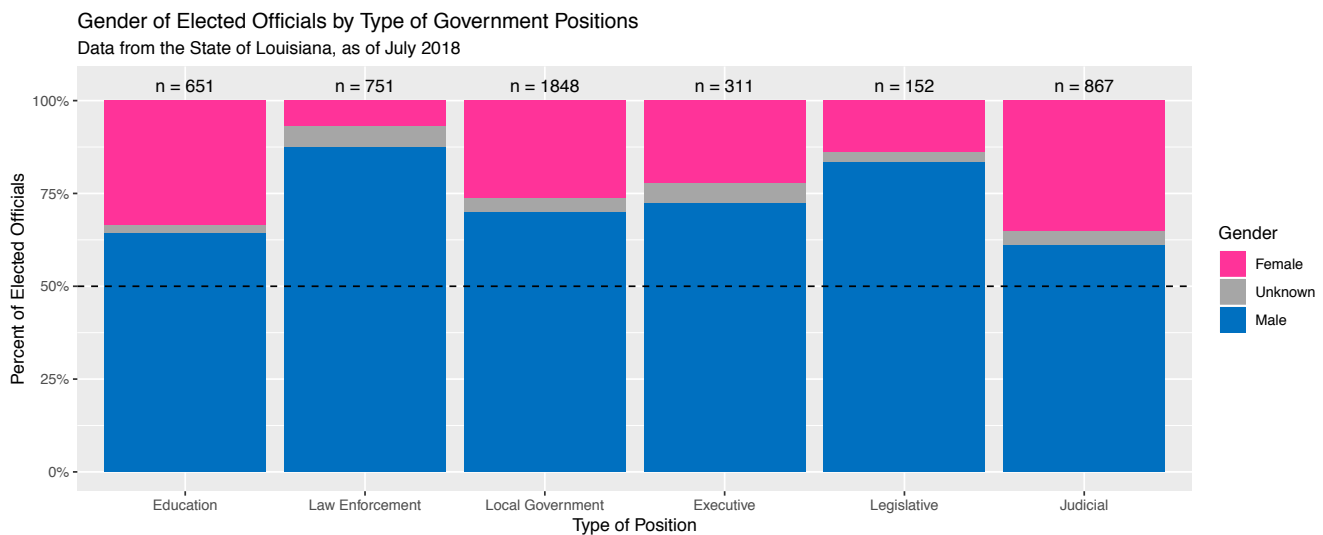

Figure 7: 2017 elected officials by gender of officeholder for position types.
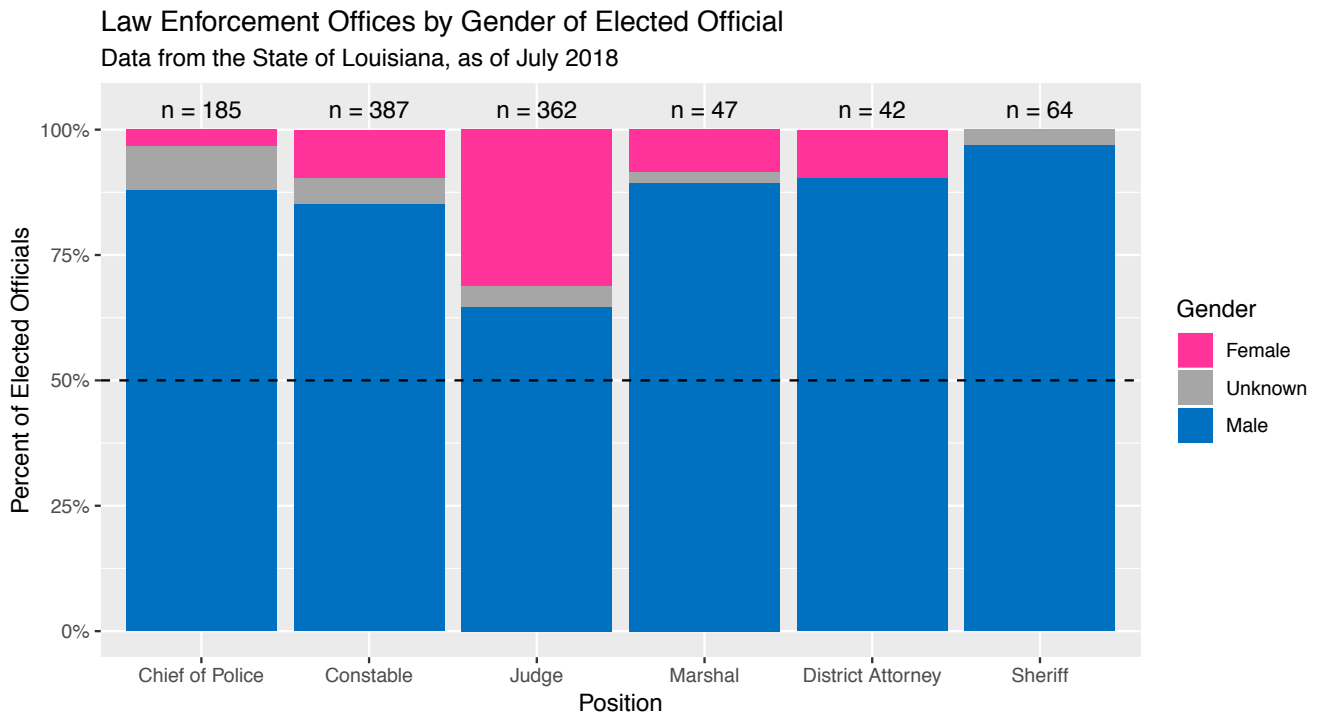
Law Enforcement Offices by Gender of Elected Official
Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 8: 2017 elected officials by gender of officeholder for law enforcement positions.

4.2   LAW ENFORCEMENT POSITIONS

Women are significantly underrepresented in elected law enforcement in Louisiana. Representation is the most equitable in the position of judge, where women account for around 32.5% of all judges. Other positions show significant disparity, with women only representing 10% of all constables, 9.5% of all DAs, 8.6% of all marshals, and 3.5% of all police chiefs. There are no female sheriffs out of 54 positions statewide.

4.3   POSITIONS WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Women have similar representation across the executive/legislative position type divide in local government (Mayor is similar to Council Member, Parish President is similar to Police Juror), but the proportion of women is 15 percentage points higher in municipal government, as compared to parish government.

4.4   GENDER AND THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Women generally make up around 25% of most local government positions, but make up a slightly higher proportion of urban mayors.
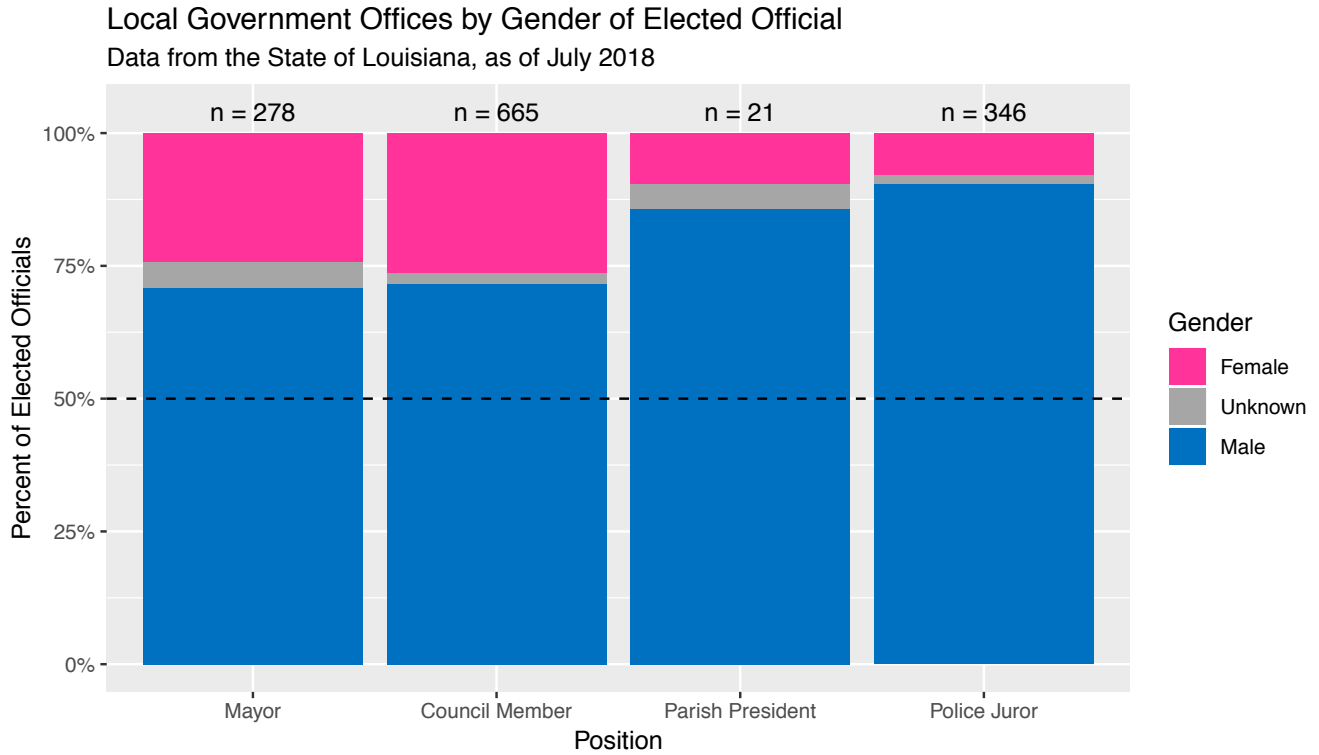
Local Government Offices by Gender of Elected Official
Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 9: 2017 elected officials by gender of officeholder for local government positions.

Differences in Urban & Rural Gender Representation in Local Government
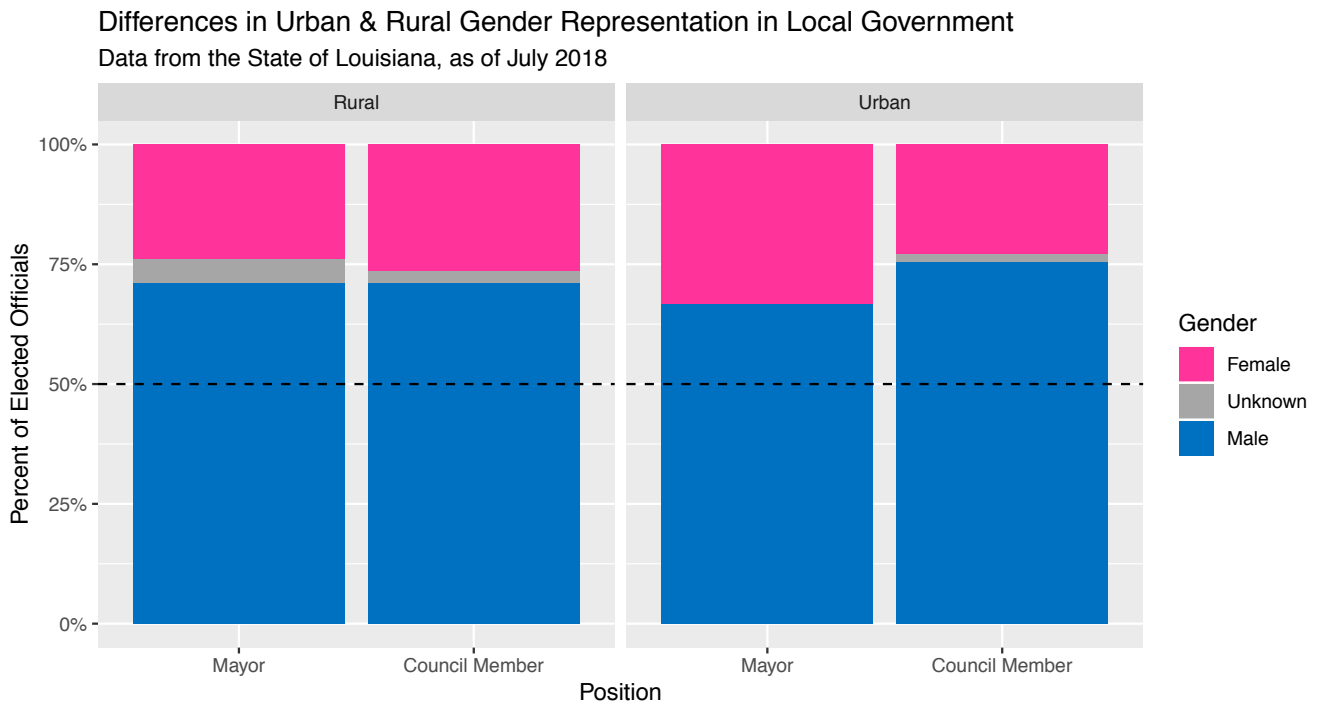Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 10: 2017 elected officials by gender of officeholder for municipal mayors and council members in urban and rural areas.

5   POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATION IN ELECTED OFFICES

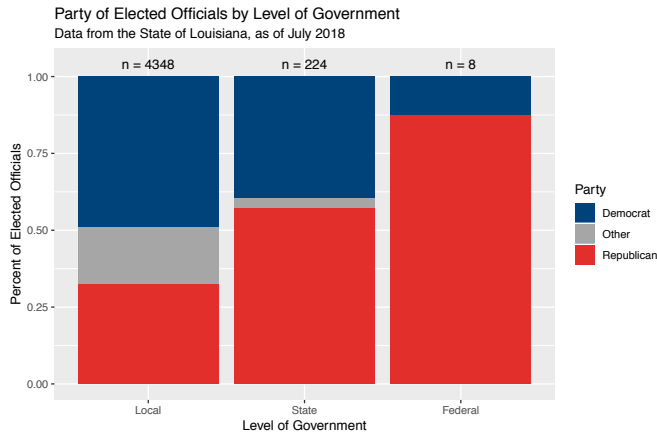## 5.1   COMPARING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Figure 11: 2017 elected officials by party of officeholder for different levels of government.

For our analysis of party representation in elected office we will primarily consider Democrats and Republicans, with Independents, third parties, and nonpartisan candidates grouped together as "Other." Democrats make up 43.4% of the registered voters in Louisiana, Republicans are at 30.3% and other parties are at 26.2%.

The federal government has only one Democrat of eight positions, also the only Black representative, in Cedric Richmond of the 2nd District. The state level is closer to even, with 56% Republican, 38% Democrat, and 3% Other. Local government has the highest proportion of Democrats, and also has the highest proportion of officials who identify either with a third party or don't have a political affiliation.

The proportions of party representation are remarkably stable across types of position, except for the legislature where there are only three representatives out of 152 elected offices that identify with a third party or have no party affiliation.
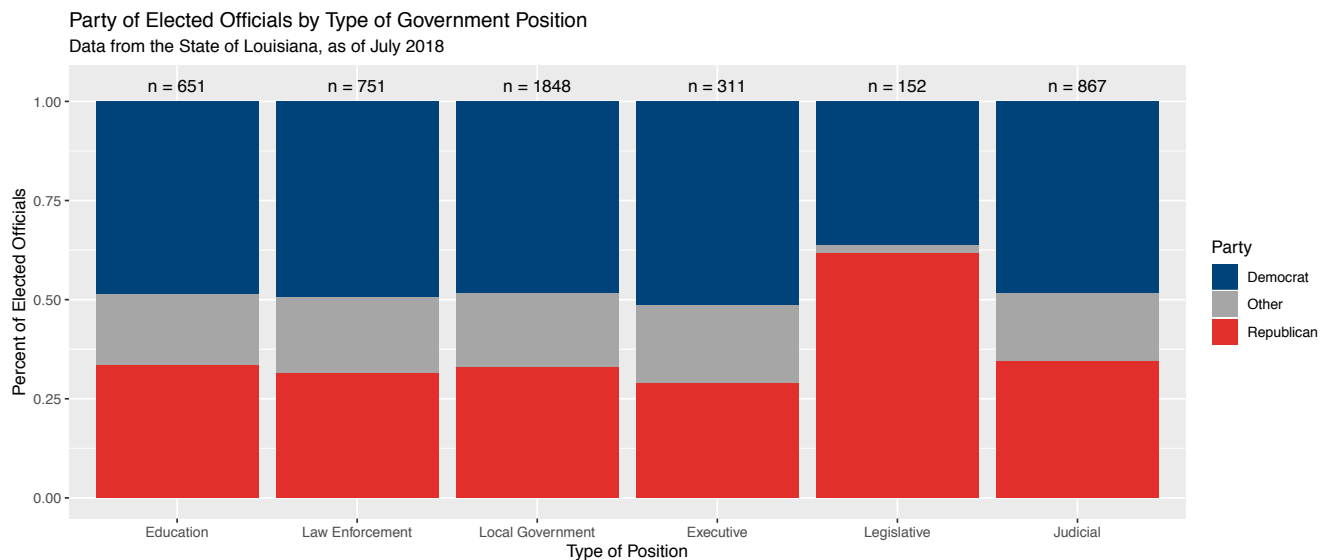

Figure 12: 2017 elected officials by party of officeholder for position types.
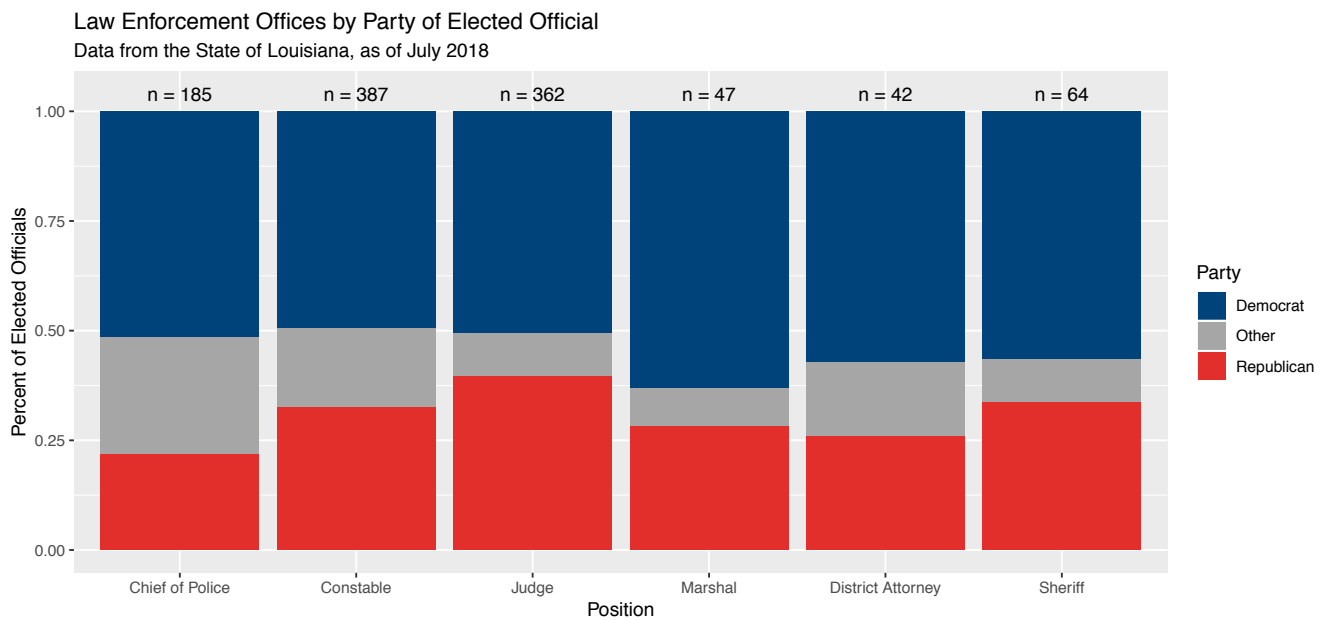
Law Enforcement Offices by Party of Elected Official
Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 13: 2017 elected officials by party of officeholder for law enforcement positions.

5.2 LAW ENFORCEMENT POSITIONS

Party representation is relatively stable across law enforcement positions, with Democrats making up between 50-60% of most offices, and 63% of marshals. Police chiefs have the highest proportion of independent or non-partisan officials, where marshals have the least.

5.3 POSITIONS WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Parish presidents have the highest proportion of Republicans, where Mayors have the highest proportion of Democrats, a different of 13%. The proportion of independent or non-partisan candidates is consistently between 14% and 20%.

5.4 POLITICAL PARTY AND THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Rural municipal governments have a much higher proportion of officials with either third-party or no party affiliation, with almost 25% of small town mayors not identifying with either of the two major parties. Urban areas are have substantially fewer officials without a party affiliation. All urban mayors are affiliated with one of the two major parties.
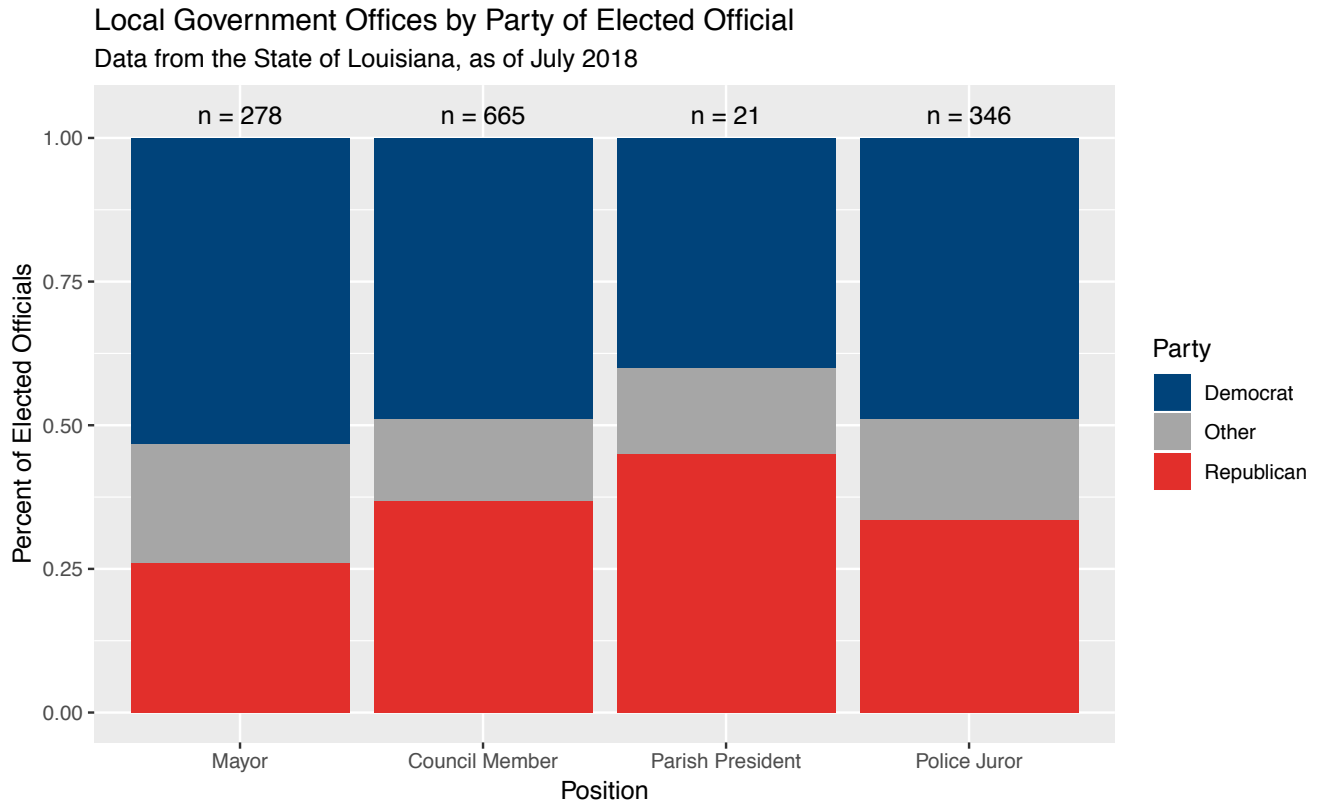
Local Government Offices by Party of Elected Official
Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 14: 2017 elected officials by party of officeholder for local government positions.

Law Enforcement Offices by Party of Elected Official
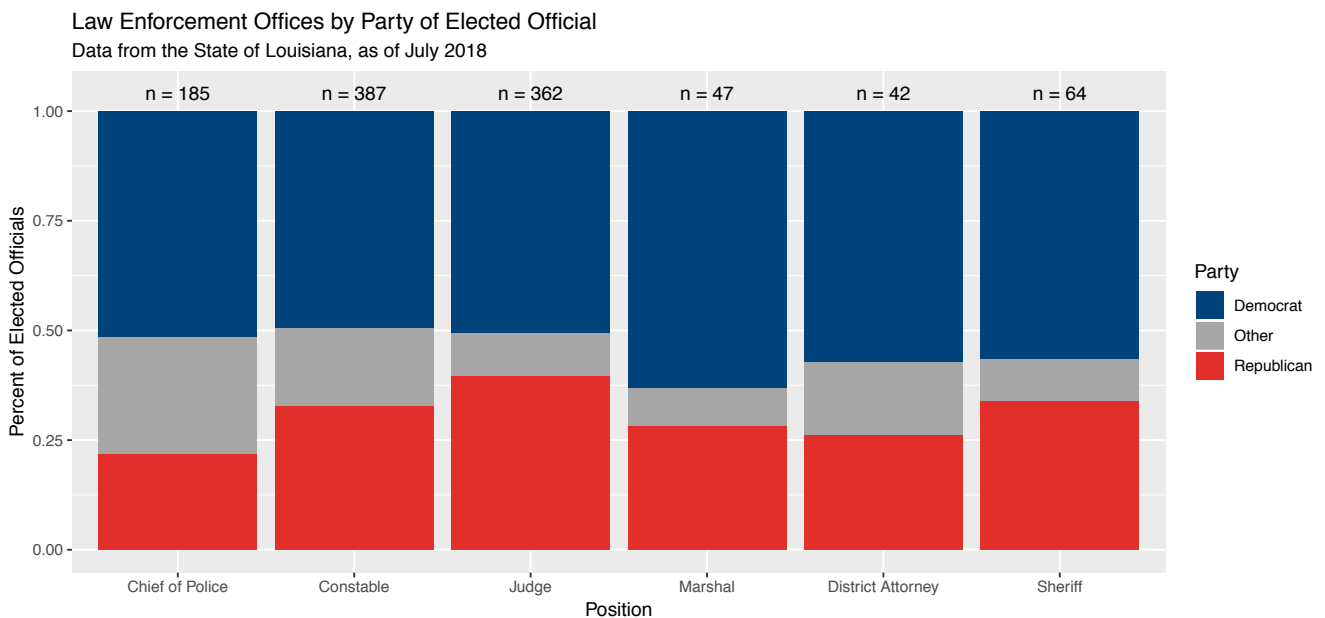Data from the State of Louisiana, as of July 2018

Figure 15: 2017 elected officials by party of officeholder for municipal mayors and council members in urban and rural areas.

6 GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ELECTIONS

6.1 OVERALL

For the 1153 election races, there were 3402 candidates. Based on script to identify candidates' sexes by comparing their names and ages to census data, with at least 60% probability, about 2/3 of the candidates were male, 29% were female, and the sex of the remaining 4% could not be guessed with enough certainty.
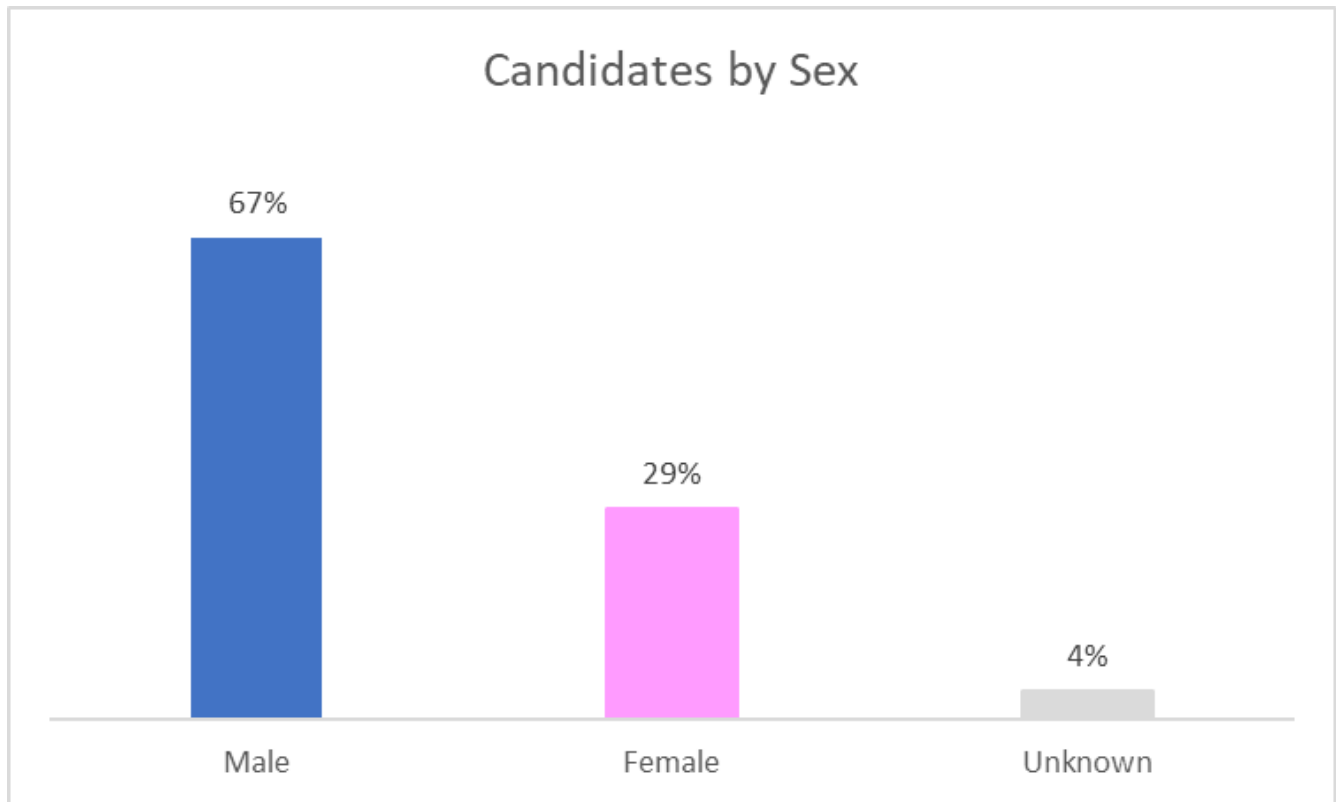

Figure 16: 2014 and 2016 candidates for elected office by gender, for all levels of government.

6.2   COMPARING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Even though there were two times as many male candidates as female candidates, the majority of election races had both male and female candidates. Nearly as many races had only male candidates, with a small percentage of races having only female candidates: Despite making up only 29% of the candidates, women
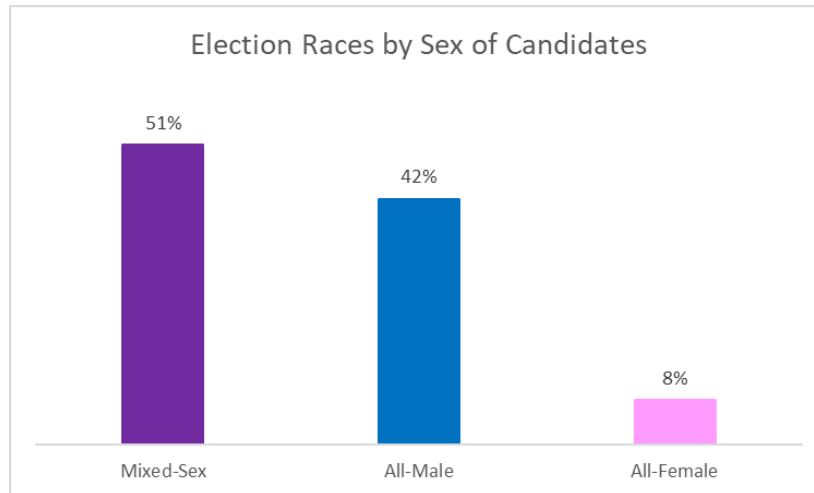

Figure 17: 2014 and 2016 election races by gender of candidates.

ran in 59% of the races. This means that, in the races with more than 2 candidates, the women were out-numbered by the men – and were not represented at all in the other 41% of races.

6.3   BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

The percentage of female candidates for elections at the federal level (for president and the two chambers of Congress) was much lower than the percentages at the state and local levels:
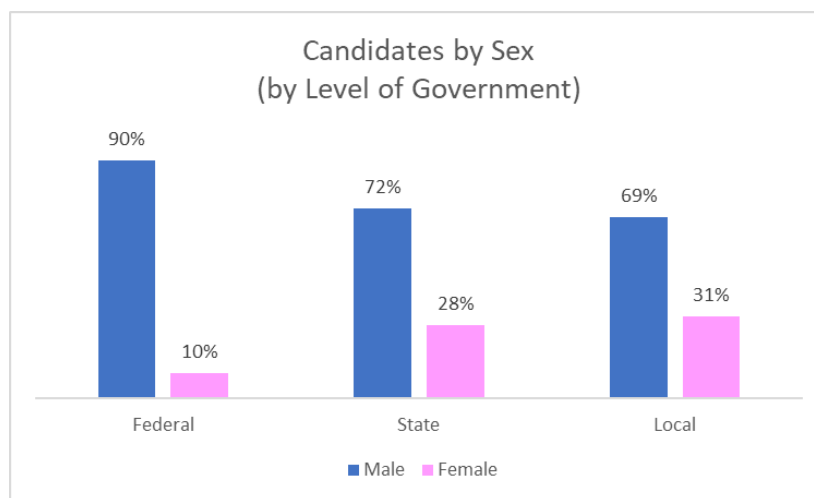

Figure 18: 2014 and 2016 candidates for elected office by gender and by level of government.

Note: There were only 15 races at the federal level and 8 races at the state level, compared to 1,130 races at the local level.

6.4   RACES BY TYPE OF POSITION

Looking at the 1130 races at the local level, men ran in more than 1.5 times as many races (1026) as women did (613). The races for local government, education, and judicial positions had the highest percentage of female candidates, with a slight drop off for executive positions, while law enforcement positions had very few female candidates:
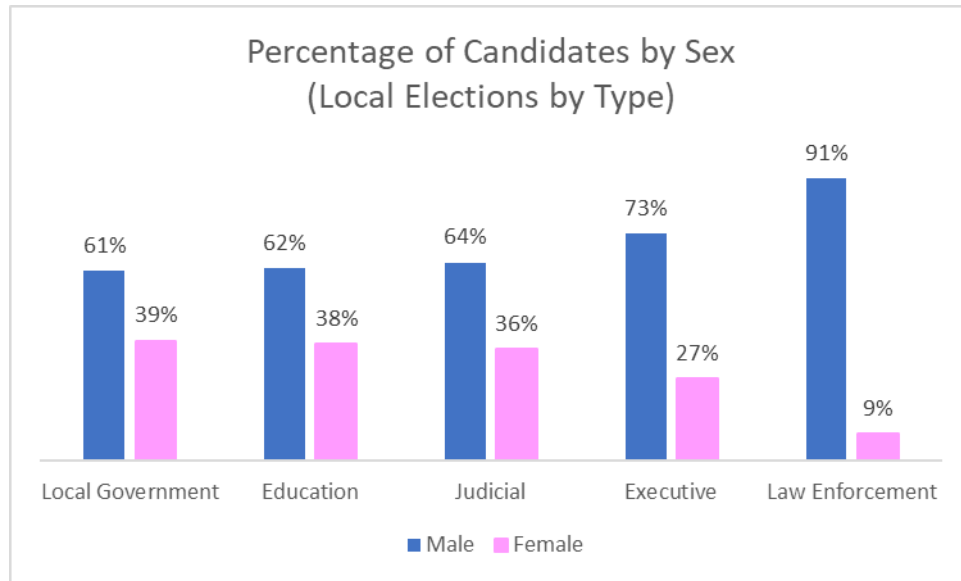

Figure 19: Percentages of 2014 and 2016 candidates for local office by gender and by type of position.

This is mirrored in the number of races in which men ran compared to in which women ran, with men running in far more law enforcement races than women did:
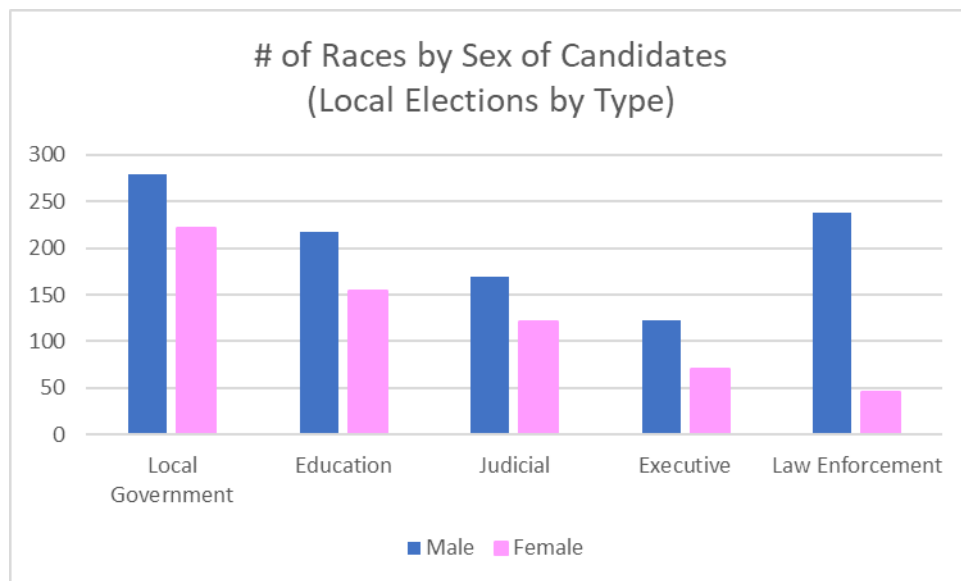

Figure 20: Counts of 2014 and 2016 candidates for local office by gender and by type of position.

6.5   POSITIONS WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Excluding the positions where there were too few races for a meaningful sample (conservatively, fewer than 11 races, or 1% of the total), most specific positions were very close to the average for that type. The sole exception was "District Attorney", a position with strong ties to law enforcement, which saw a far smaller percentage of female candidates (6%) than the other judicial positions (where 36% of candidates were female) and averaged closer to the law enforcement positions (where 9% of candidates were female):
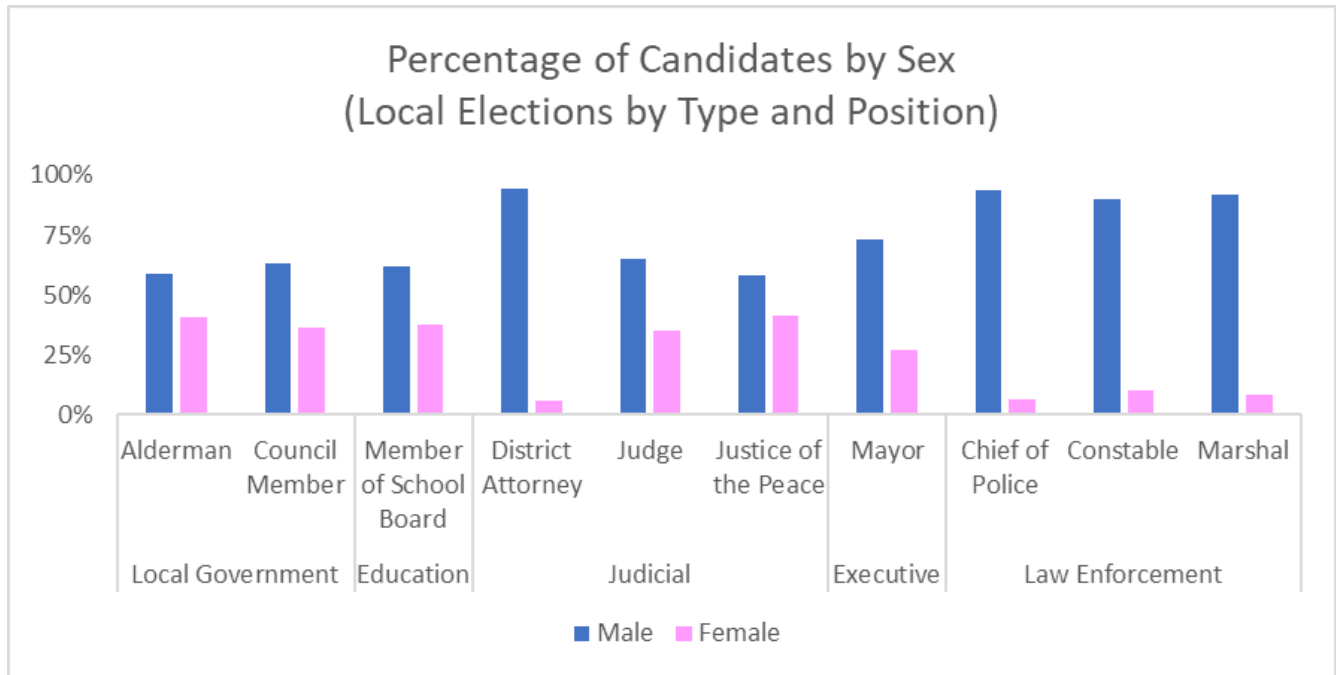

Figure 21: 2014 and 2016 candidates for local office by gender and by position and type.

6.6   GENDER AND THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

These results broadly held true when considering rural and urban locales separately. The rural areas had a slightly higher percentage of female candidates than the urban areas (33% vs 29%), and most positions reflected this. The only exceptions were judges (but not justices of the peace), and chiefs of police and marshals (but not constables) where there were slightly more female candidates than male candidates in urban areas:
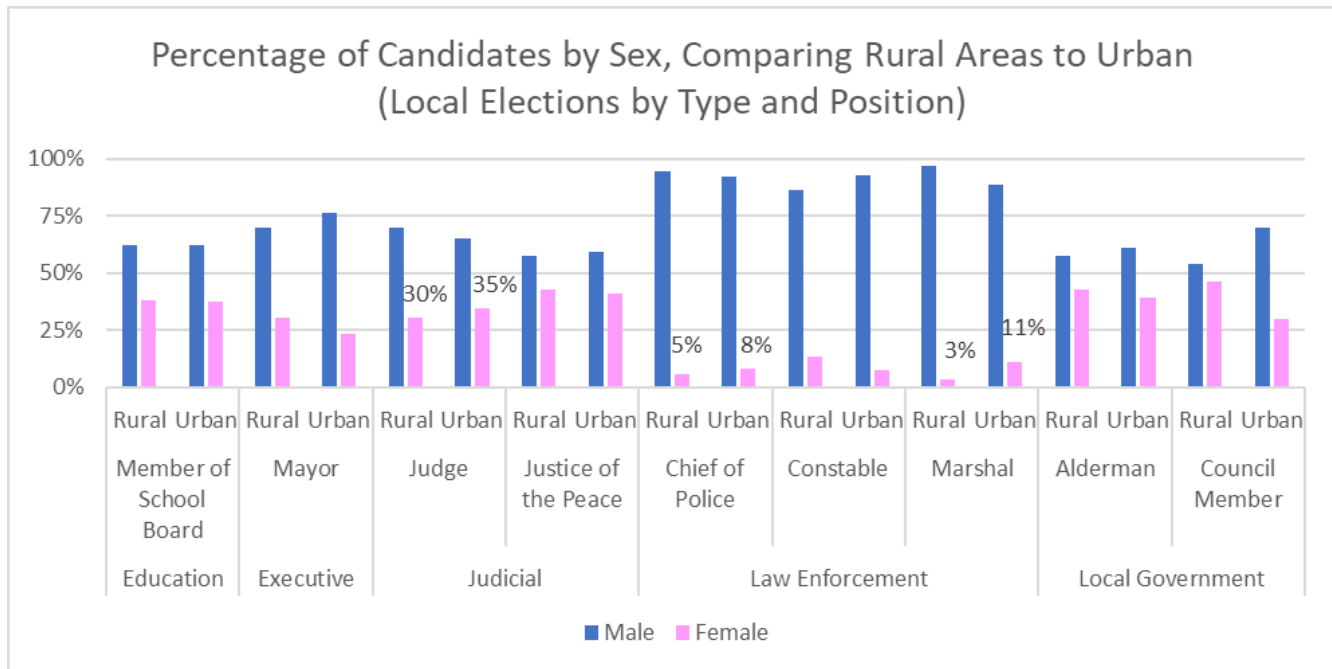

Figure 22: 2014 and 2016 candidates for local office by gender, municipality size, position and type.

7 COMPETITIVENESS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

7.1 BY NUMBER OF CANDIDATES

7.1.1 OVERALL

In the 1153 election races in Louisiana, in 2014 and 2016, there was little competition. The typical race saw just 2 candidates vying for each seat, and 90% of races had 3 or fewer candidates:
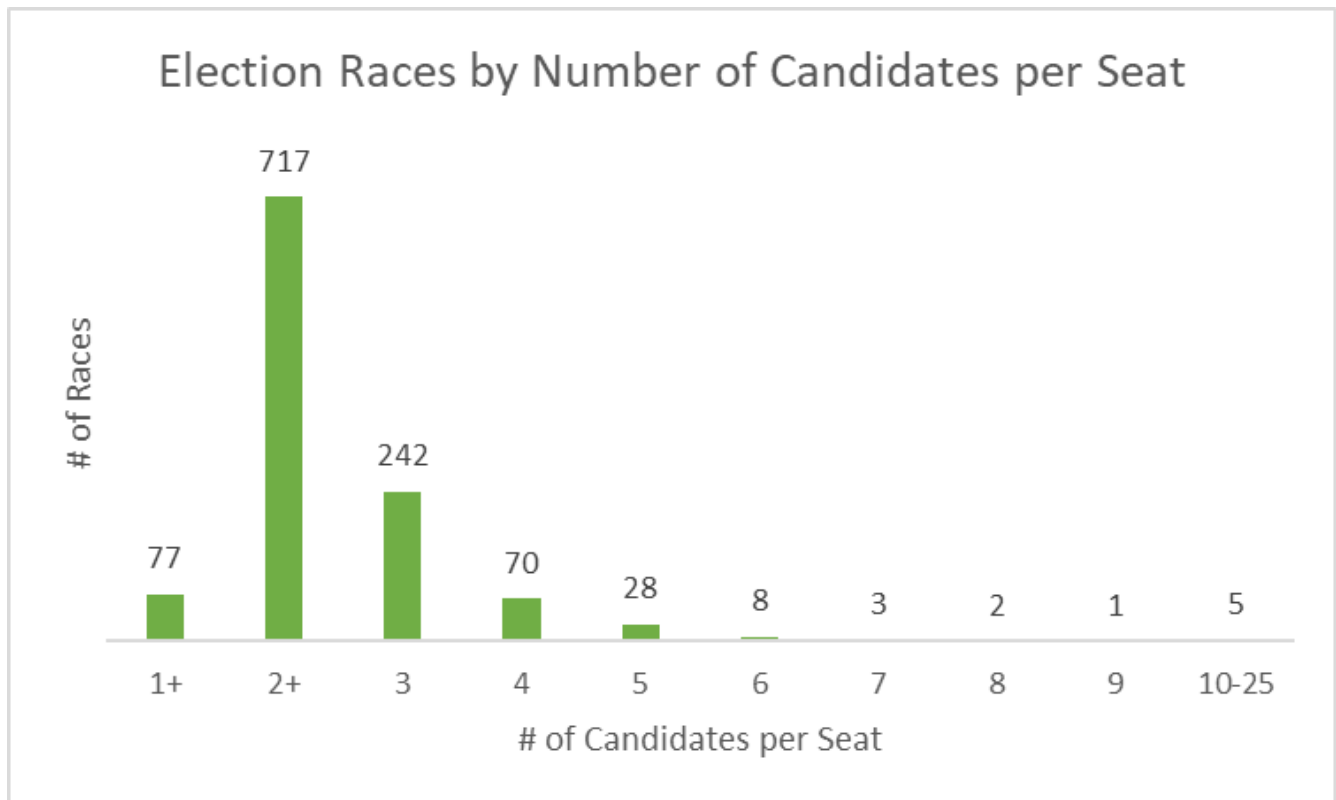

Figure 23: 2014 and 2016 election races by numbers of candidates per seat.

   (The 1+ and 2+ indicate races with multiple seats open; e.g. 3 candidates competing for 2 seats results in 3/2 = 1.5 candidates per seat.)

7.1.2   MOST COMPETITIVE RACES

The federal-level races were generally more competitive than the local races, with roughly 5 times as many candidates per seat as the state- and local-level races:
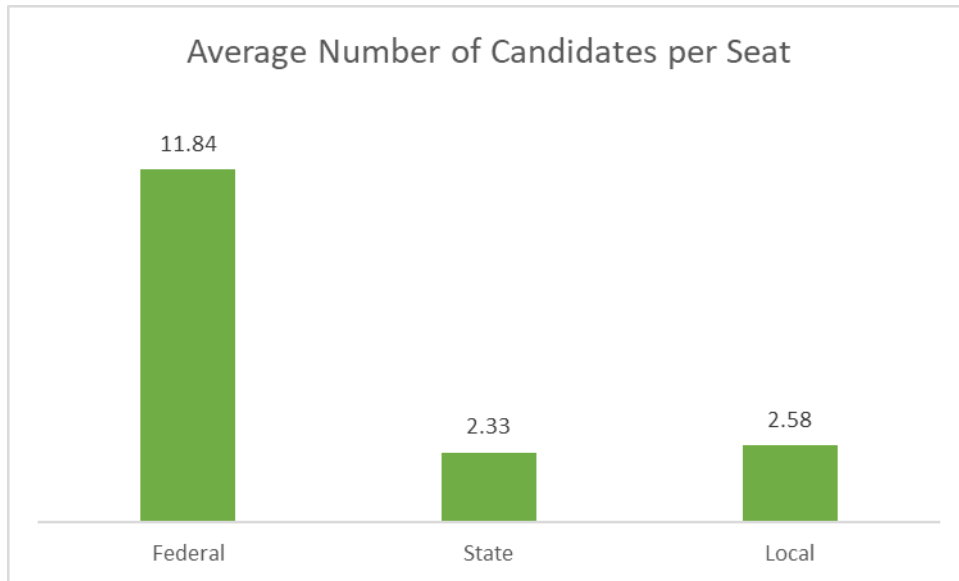

Figure 24: 2014 and 2016 election races by average numbers of candidates per seat, by level of government.

The federal-level races were 8 of the top 11 races with the most candidates:

Level	Position	Number of Candidates
Federal	U. S. Senator (2016)	24
Federal	Presidential Electors (2016)	13
Federal	U. S. Representative-6th Congressional District (2014)	12
Local	Mayor-President-Metro Council, City of Baton Rouge (2016)	12
Federal	U. S. Representative-3rd Congressional District (2016)	12
Federal	U. S. Representative-5th Congressional District (2014)	9
Federal	U. S. Representative-4th Congressional District (2016)	8
Federal	U. S. Senator (2014)	8
Federal	U. S. Representative-1st Congressional District (2016)	7
Local	Mayor-City of Shreveport (2014)	7
Local	City Marshal-City Court, City of Hammond-Tangipahoa (2014)	7

7.1.3 LEAST COMPETITIVE RACES

There were only 8 state-level races (less than 1% of the 1,153 total races), making it difficult to draw any generalizations. Of the 1,130 local-level races, the least competitive were the races for aldermen and council members, where an average of 2.26 candidates ran per seat – compared to an average of 2. candidates per seat, across all races:
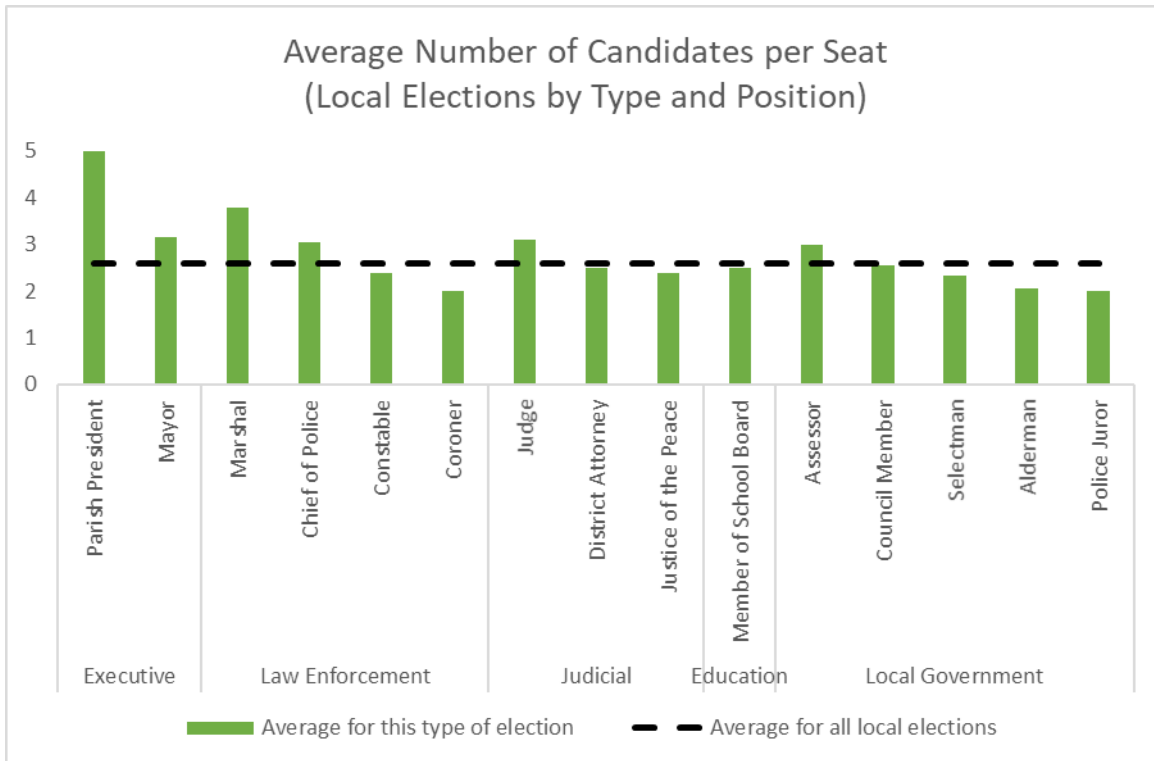

Figure 25: 2014 and 2016 local election races by average numbers of candidates per seat, by position and position type.

This lack of competitiveness in the local government races was especially visible in those races where multiple seats were available:

Position	Number of Candidates
Aldermen-Town of Lecompte (5 to be elected)-Rapides (2014)	1.2
Councilmen-Town of Berwick (5 to be elected)-St. Mary (2014)	1.2
Aldermen-Town of Port Barre (5 to be elected)-St. Landry (2014)	1.2
Aldermen-Town of Clarks (5 to be elected)-Caldwell (2014)	1.2
Aldermen-Town of Tullos (5 to be elected)-Lasalle (2014)	1.2
Aldermen-Town of Abita Springs (5 to be elected)-St. Tammany (2014)	1.2
Aldermen-Town of Urania (5 to be elected)-Lasalle (2014)	1.2
Aldermen-Town of Cullen (5 to be elected)-Webster (2016)	1.2
Council Members-Town of Leonville (5 to be elected)-St. Landry (2014)	1.2

(The full list includes a total of 98 elections, where the average number of candidates per seat is only 1.8.)

There were a few noticeable exceptions to this rule, where the alderman/council member race was hotly contested, particularly in East Baton Rouge and Opelousas-St. Landry:

Position	Number of Candidates
Councilman-Metro District 12-East Baton Rouge (2016)	6
Councilman-Metro District 5-East Baton Rouge (2016)	5
Councilman-Metro District 7-East Baton Rouge (2016)	5
Councilman-Metro District 9-East Baton Rouge (2016)	5
Councilman-Metro District 10-East Baton Rouge (2016)	5
Councilman-District E, City of Bogalusa-Washington (2014)	5
Council Member-Division B, City of Westlake-Calcasieu (2014)	5
Alderman-District B, Town of Farmerville-Union (2016)	5
Alderman-District E, City of Opelousas-St. Landry (2014)	5
Alderman at Large-City of Opelousas-St. Landry (2014)	5

7.2   COMPETITIVENESS AND THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Continuing the categorization of municipalities and parishes with a population less than 47,000 as "rural" and those with a greater population as "urban", we can compare whether the amount of competitiveness differed. The number of election races, by type, was nearly identical between the rural and urban areas:
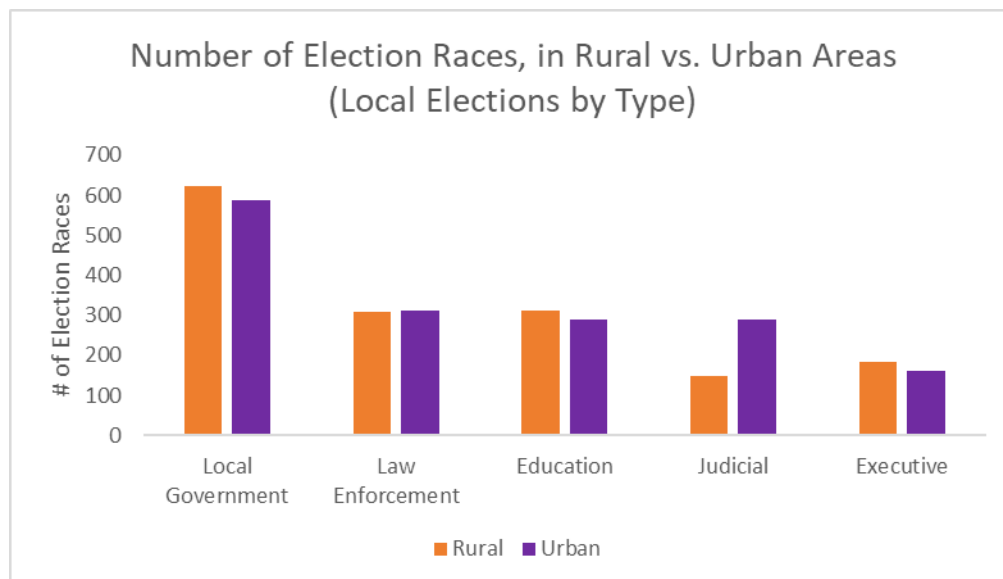

Figure 26: Counts of 2014 and 2016 local election races, by position type and municipality type.

7.2.1   THE JUDICIAL EXCLUSION

The one exception is the number of Judicial races. The voting areas for some of these races – 22 races, in cities and districts that spanned multiple parishes – was unclear and so was not quantified. However, 22 races represent only 5% of the total judicial races (148 in rural areas and 289 in urban areas) and are not enough to make a difference.

7.2.2   RACES BY TYPE OF POSITION

Just as the number of races was nearly the same in rural and urban areas, the number of candidates per seat was nearly the same as well:
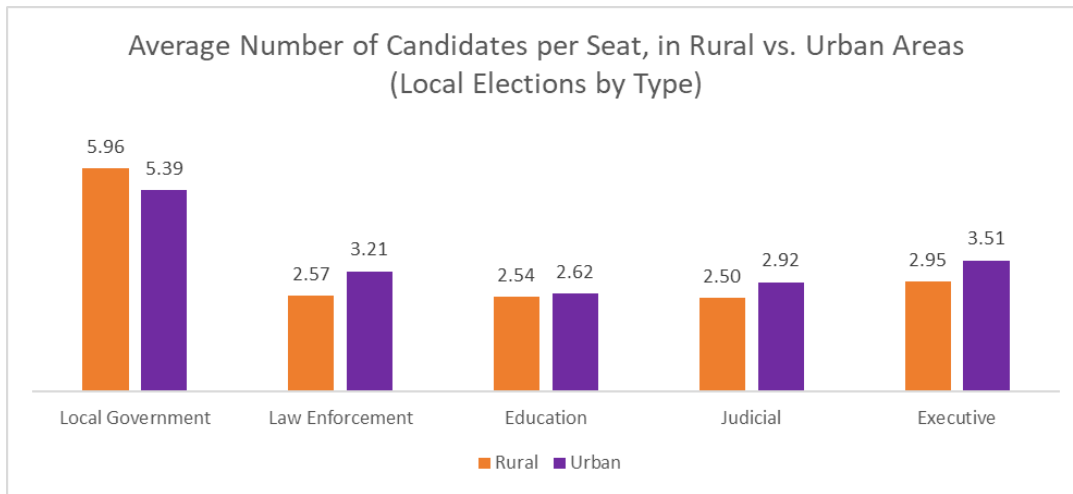

Figure 27: 2014 and 2016 local elections by average numbers of candidates per seat, by position type and municipality type.

The biggest differences were for Local Government positions, where the rural areas averaged 0.58 more of a candidate, and Law Enforcement positions, where the urban areas averaged 0.64 more of a candidate.

7.2.3   POSITIONS WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Specifically, in those Local Government and Law Enforcement types of positions, there were two positions that showed the biggest differences:
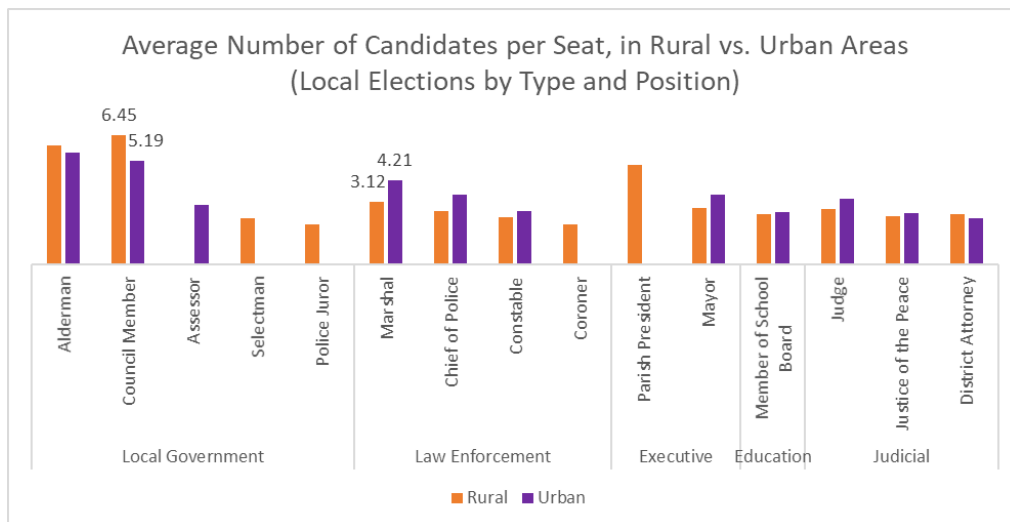

Figure 28: 2014 and 2016 local elections by average numbers of candidates per seat, by position and municipality type.

The Council Member position had an average of 1.26 more candidates per seat in the rural areas, and the Marshal position averaged 1.09 more candidates per seat in the urban areas.

7.3 MARGIN OF VICTORY

Defining the margin of victory as the winner's percentage of all votes cast minus the percentage of votes cast for the second-place candidate, elections averaged a 17% margin of victory.

7.3.1 COMPARING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections at the federal level had a slightly bigger margin, while elections at the state level had a slightly smaller margin:
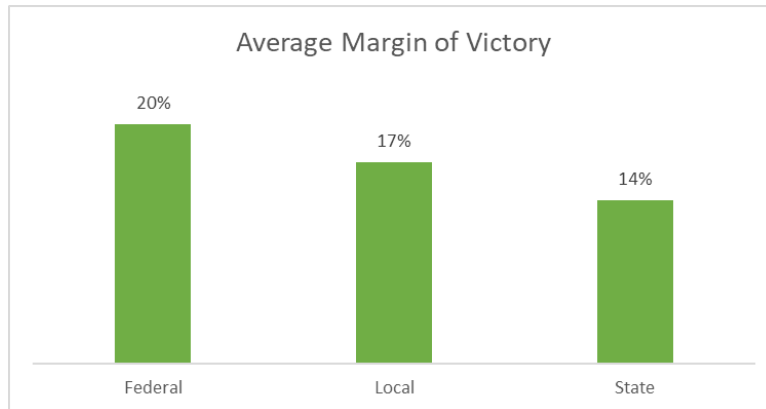

Figure 29: Margin of victory for 2014 and 2016 election races, by level of government.

7.3.2 POSITIONS WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Breaking down the local elections by type, the local government elections had a significantly narrower margin (9%), with the other types averaging 21%:

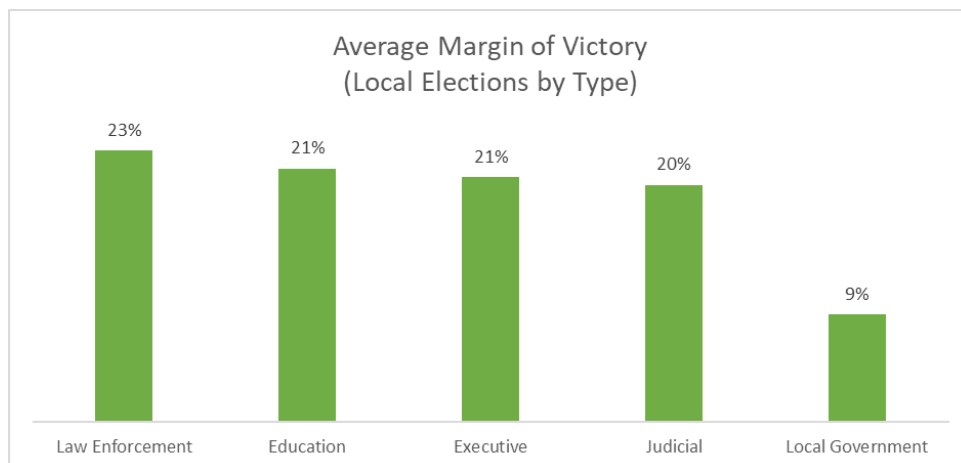
Figure 30: Margin of victory for 2014 and 2016 local election races, by position type.

These margins were practically the same in rural and urban jurisdictions, showing 3% difference or less. Certain positions within these types show considerable variance from the average, but this is always in cases where there are far fewer elections in the data set, meaning no conclusions can be drawn.

7.3.3   LEAST COMPETITIVE RACES

The races with the biggest margins of victory were all at the local level, and six of those ten were for Chief of Police:

Position	Margin of Victory	Number of Candidates
Mayor-Village of Pine Prairie-Evangeline (2016)	88%	2
Chief of Police-Town of Marion-Union (2014)	81%	2
Chief of Police-Town of Chatham-Jackson (2016)	78%	4
Constable(s)-Justice of the Peace Ward 7-Vermilion (2014)	76%	2
Chief of Police-Town of Gramercy-St. James (2014)	75%	2
Chief of Police-Village of Converse-Sabine (2016)	74%	2
Chief of Police-Village of Pine Prairie-Evangeline (2016)	74%	2
Selectman-District IV, City of Plaquemine-Iberville (2016)	73%	2
Chief of Police-Village of Epps-West Carroll (2014)	73%	2
Councilman-District 1, Town of Ringgold-Bienville (2014)	70%	2

7.3.4   MOST COMPETITIVE RACES

The races with the smallest margins of victory were also at the local level, with six of those races being for a position on the council:

Position	Margin of Victory	Number of Candidates
Council Member-District A, Town of Dubach-Lincoln (2014)	0%	2
Councilmen-Town of Keachi (5 to be elected)-De Soto (2014)	0%	7
Constable-Justice of the Peace District 4-West Carroll (2014)	0%	2
Justice of the Peace-Justice of the Peace Ward 7-St. Mary (2014)	0%	9
Member of School Board-District 12-St. Landry (2014)	0%	6
Councilmen-Town of Berwick (5 to be elected)-St. Mary (2014)	0%	6
Councilmen-Town of Coushatta (5 to be elected)-Red River (2016)	0%	11
Councilman-District A, City of Shreveport (2014)	0%	4
Alderman-Seat E, Town of Ball-Rapides (2014)	0%	2
Member(s) of School Board-District 1 (5 to be elected)-Vernon (2014)	0%	8

Note: One council position and one selectman position appear on the list of least-competitive races, and constable positions appear on both lists as well, meaning these specific races are outliers – much different than averages for those positions. There seems to be very little correlation between the margin of victory and the number of candidates per seat.