Dear Editor and Reviewers,

The authors would like to thank you all for your kind, thoughtful, and patient consideration of our paper. The comments were excellent and prompted us to thoroughly reflect on the project and hopefully craft a better paper. We really found the suggestions both clear and insightful.

Below we outline the substantial revisions we've undertaken to respond to the concerns of the reviewers:

First, we have clarified what it is that voters are doing when they reflect on economic performance when they vote. Reviewers had rightly noted that epistemic democrats believe that legitimate democratic institutions come to bring about states of affairs that voters want or believe to be right. Drawing from the economic voting literature we now note that voters reflect on economic performance in order to select for the *policies* that contribute to future economic growth. Our results conform to that as well, with the variables *retrospective* and (now) *prospective* both loading with strong and significant coefficients in the models. We have noted this periodically through the paper. We have also tried to emphasize that we don't confuse the correlation between models (1)-(4) and the outcomes of interest to be sufficient for a broader substantiation of majority rule results. Rather the models come to support an expansive theory on economic voting, earlier results from Nadeau and Lewis-Beck (2001), and our own findings, namely that deltaRDI corresponds in the right way to the variables *retrospective* and *prospective*. It is the correspondence between statistical evidence and theory that leads us to offer our conclusions.

The revision also comes to clarify the proposition. Currently, the assumptions are cleaved, with Assumptions 1 & 2 coming to support Proposition 1, a weaker result that did not appear in the first draft of the manuscript, and Assumptions 1, 2, and 3 come to yield the main proposition, which is now Proposition 2. The inclusion of Proposition 1, in particular, should clarify the role of independence. Without the independence assumption, a candidate's superiority increases her expected vote total. However, her probability of winning will not necessarily increase. We believe that this seemingly small leap can be accomplished with a substantially weaker assumption, at the cost of more theoretical structure and complexity. Though the independence assumption is commonly on shaky ground, the fact that the majority rule result is not asymptotic coupled with the fact that deltaRDI is something voters plausibly directly observe for themselves puts the assumption on surer footing in our case. The technical restatement of the propositions is also clearer, and we fixed the mistake regarding the definition of alpha that referee 1 helpfully pointed out. We also clarified that the non-factual assumptions in the appendix are intended to weaken the assumptions and broaden the applicability of the theory.

The analogies we previously made between our work and CJT may have obfuscated our argument. For that reason, we now distinguish the majority rule result from CJT in a section in the appendix. Indeed, both we and Dietrich (2008) allow for heterogeneous competencies. However, since our claim pertains to multidimensional decision functions, we are not able to make use of his extension. The appendix shows that ours is neither stronger nor weaker than his. Footnote 8 now also explains how we come to say that were voters to have decided at random, between three and eight elections since 1980 might well have been different.

Overall we hope that you find the paper clearer and better motivated, cleanly articulating how we believe sociotropic voting in U.S. presidential elections comes to select for policies that are apt to promote economic growth.

Sincerely,
The Authors