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 did find the suggestions offered helpful, both in their clarity and their insight. So thanks!

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 these institutions come to bring about states of affairs that voters want or believe to be right. Drawing from the economic voting literature we note that voters reflect on economic performance in order to select for the policies that contribute to economic growth. Our results conform to that as well, with the variables *retrospective* and *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 demonstrated by models (1)-(4) and outcomes to be sufficient for a broader substantiation of majority rule results. Rather the models come to support an expansive literature 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 goes a long way towards clarifying 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 yielding 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; we leave this for future work. The technical restatement of the propositions is also clearer, and we fixed the mistake regarding the definition of alpha that referee one 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 made between our work and CJT may have obfuscated our argument. For that reason, we now distinguish the majority rule mechanism 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