

# Predictors of Ballot Roll-off and Knowledge of Candidates

## Analyzing State Senate races in Connecticut, Georgia, and Minnesota

Breeze Floyd • Faculty Sponsor Logan Dancey • Quantitative Analysis Center • Summer 2021

### Introduction

Although the 2020 U.S. Presidential election received significant analysis, less research focusing on the state-level elections exists. To better understand ballot roll-off, which occurs when voters do not cast votes for each race on their ballot, we explore vote share for state senate candidates in Connecticut, Georgia, and Minnesota. Using the currently available candidate data, we examine whether campaign spending is a reliable predictor of ballot roll-off.

### Research Questions

Is there a relationship between ballot roll-off and spending in state senate races?

Which factors predict knowledge of incumbent in state senate races?

### Data Sources

Connecticut Secretary of State website  
<https://ctemspublic.pctcg.net/#/reports>

Georgia Secretary of State website  
<https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/105369/web.264614/>

Minnesota Secretary of State  
<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/election-results/>

Spending data from followthemoney.org

Dailykos.com

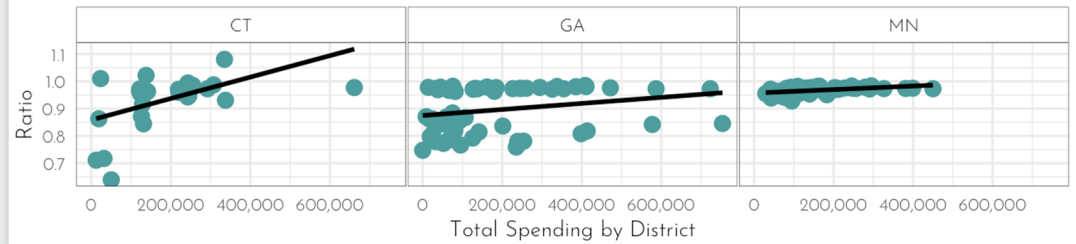
An online survey of Connecticut, Georgia, and Minnesota residents collected by Dynata after the November 2020 election. The survey includes responses from 837 participants

### Acknowledgments

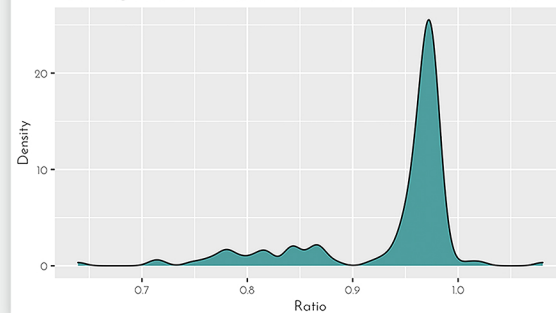
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### Results

Ballot Roll-off and Spending in the 2020 State Senate Elections



Proportion of votes cast in races for upper houses of state legislatures to votes cast on the same ballot for U.S. President



Predicting Knowledge of State Senate Incumbents

Variables	Est.	p-value
(intercept)	-3.18	0.00
District Spend	0	0.16
Open Seat	-1.75	0.00
Age	0.74	0.00
Education	0.87	0.00
Sex	0.54	0.00
Follows State Politics		
Not too closely	1.15	0.02
Somewhat closely	1.54	0.00
Very Closely	1.93	0.00

### Discussion

Ballot roll-off exists in each three states. We see the most variation in Georgia, where many of the races were uncontested.

In a November 2020 survey, 46.5% of the 837 respondents correctly identified their State Senate incumbent. In Connecticut, 59% correctly identified the incumbent. Similarly, in Minnesota, 55% did. However, in Georgia, where 60 respondents were from open seat districts, only 34% correctly identified their incumbent.

Using logistic regression, we explored which variables are more likely to predict whether someone correctly identifies their state senate incumbent.

The amount spent in a district is not a statistically significant predictor of whether a respondent correctly identifies the incumbent in the race. Several demographic variables (age, gender, education, and interest in state politics) are statistically significant predictors of whether the respondent can correctly identify the incumbent. In open seat races, respondents are more likely to give an incorrect answer to the incumbency question (in such cases the correct answer is that neither candidate was the incumbent).

