

Understanding Policy Mood for US Election Reform

Caroline Tolbert, Political Science, University of Iowa (caroline-tolbert@uiowa.edu)

Joseph Coll, Political Science, University of Iowa (joseph-coll@uiowa.edu)

Michael Ritter, Political Science, Washington State University (michael.ritter@wsu.edu)

The last decade has seen a decrease in American's satisfaction with government and the democratic process, leading two-thirds of Americans to say 'significant changes' are needed in the design and structure of US democracy. At the same time, politicians and pundits frequently tie electoral reforms to political party success, increasing the salience and (perceived) electoral importance of these laws. Early work found most convenience voting reforms had mixed support with less than majority favorability nationwide. More recent work shows public attitudes about election reform, even low visibility laws, are strongly conditioned by partisanship. Using jackknifing resampling methods and a 2020 national survey this study develops an index of election reform policy mood. With one exception, every reform received majority support with 3 in 4 favoring early voting and no-excuse absentee ballots. Multivariate results find the effect of partisanship is conditioned by whether the respondent feels they generally win or lose in elections and satisfaction with democracy. Independents who are electoral losers or dissatisfied with government strongly favor election reform and resemble Democrats, while independents who feel they regularly win or are more satisfied are more opposed and resemble Republicans. The results find national policy mood for broad structural reform of US elections is high.

Introduction

The last decade has seen a decrease in American's satisfaction with government and the democratic process as a whole. Large majorities of the American public possess negative views of politics, a distaste for political polarization, and perceive elected officials to be unresponsive to the public. Just one in three Americans hold a favorable opinion of the federal government and a mere one in four say "the tone of debate among political leaders is respectful." Over four-fifths of Americans suggest that US democracy is not working well, and two-thirds agree that 'significant changes' are needed in the design and structure of US democracy (Pew 2018).

Elections are pivotal to the quality of a country's governance and can either advance or set back its long-term development. The most fundamental principle defining credible elections is that they must reflect the free expression of the will of the people (Alizada et al. 2021). To achieve this end, elections should be transparent, inclusive, and accountable, and must have equitable opportunities for opposing candidates and parties to compete. Free and fair elections are consistently ranked as one of the most important features of democracies, according to the V-Dem project ranking countries cross-nationally. When asked what is important to being good citizens, three in four Americans believe voting in elections is "very important"—the most highly ranked component of citizenship, above paying taxes, following the law, serving on jury duty, respecting the opinions of people you disagree with, and other factors (Pew 2018).

Thus, it is not surprising that a 2021 Pew survey found a majority of Americans favor reforms to increase voting access, as well as ensure elections are secure (Pew 2021). Overall, 6 in 10 Americans favor automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote (AVR), ranging from 38% among Republicans to 82% for Democrats; to date 21 states have adopted this reform (Brennon Center for Justice 2021a). Seven in ten Americans favor allowing convicted felons to

vote after serving their sentences. Nearly 8 in 10 favor making early in-person voting available to all voters at least two weeks before Election Day, including 63% of Republicans to 91% of Democrats. Identical shares of Republicans, Democrats, and independents support requiring electronic voting machines to print a paper back-up ballot (over 80%), and requiring a government issued photo ID to vote is supported by 61% of Democrats and 93% of Republicans. Purging voter rolls—removing people from voter rolls if they have not recently voted—is controversial, favored by less than half of Americans overall (Pew 2021). In a highly publicized move, the 2020 battleground state of Georgia removed 100,000 names from the voter rolls.

Beyond voting and registration, there is growing support for structural reforms of the electoral system. A 2021 survey found nearly half of the American adults favor independent redistricting commissions (e.g., requiring equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans to draw congressional/legislative district maps) rather than partisan controlling state legislatures, while 13% disapprove and a significant number are unsure. A majority of Americans also support electing whichever presidential candidate receives the most popular votes nationally (as opposed to Electoral College votes).

In light of these trends, this study explores public mood for election reform. Early work found most convenience voting reforms had mixed support with less than a majority favoring them nationwide (Alvarez et al. 2011). More recent research shows public attitudes about election laws, even low visibility laws, were strongly conditioned by partisanship, with Democrats more supportive and Republicans opposed (Bowler and Donovan 2018). Scholars have also found that public attitudes about voting access, election rules, and procedures are shaped by partisan self-interest (Biggers 2019; Biggers and Hanmer 2017; Bowler and Donovan 2018; McCarthy 2019), perceptions that an individual's vote matters, satisfaction with

democracy, and whether individuals feel they win more than lose under the current system (Bowler and Donovan 2007).

For example, Biggers (2019) uses survey experiments that manipulate the specific group for whom election reforms make voting more or less difficult. The results show individuals update their attitudes in response to that information, with members of both parties consistently expressing greater support for election reform changes when framed as advancing their party's electoral prospects than when characterized as benefiting their opponents. In addition, scholars have consistently found that those who tend to lose more than win have lower satisfaction with democracy and are more supportive of electoral reform (Bowler and Donovan 2007; 2013). Partisanship and perceptions of winning or losing under different election rules can work together to make public opinion about election rules strategic, based on individual and group self-interest.

A limitation is that much of the previous literature analyzes single policies rather than a spectrum of election laws or index (but see but see Alvarez 2011). Yet existing evidence (Bowler and Donovan 2018) and theory (Stimson 2015) suggests that citizens may possess a general mood towards election processes that moves in a predictable manner (e.g., decreasing support for a reform if it benefits out-partisans). Further, despite the wealth of previous research, few studies have explored general public support for structural change of elections (e.g., direct election of the president, national primary, rotating state primaries, non-partisan redistricting, national referendum) side by side with state voting laws (early voting, mail voting, no-excuse absentee ballots, voter ID laws, automatic voter registration (AVR), election-day registration (EDR), and restoring felon voting rights) as is done here. Do voting access laws and more structure rules of the game go together, even though they are often studied separately? Last, though many studies

have shown that partisanship, satisfaction with democracy, and feelings of winning or losing in recent elections influence opinion regarding election reforms, few studies have explored whether these attitudes interact with or condition partisanship in shaping political attitudes.

Using a series of unique questions placed on a national 2020 Cooperative Election Survey (CES) fielded by YouGov and jackknifing resampling methods, this study measures national mood for election reform. By developing an index of policy reform mood and examining its determinants, this study takes a more nuanced look at what structures support for institutional changes among the mass public.

Except for all-mail voting, every reform received majority support nationwide, with 3/4 Americans favoring early voting and no-excuse absentee ballots and majorities of both parties supporting voter ID requirements. Multivariate results indicate partisanship and ideology continue to strongly predict support, with independents leaning Democrat the most supportive of reform and independents leaning Republican most opposed. Those who feel their side loses more often than wins or are less satisfied with democracy have higher election reform policy mood. At the same time, the effect of partisanship is conditioned by whether the respondent feels they win or lose in elections and their level of satisfaction with democracy, painting a more complex picture of public support. Independents who feel they regularly lose in elections or dissatisfied with government strongly favor reform and resemble Democrats, while independents who feel they regularly win or are more satisfied are more opposed and resemble Republicans. The results find that national policy mood support for broad structural reform of US elections is high.

The next section describes the recent rise in the political salience of election laws and factors that undergird reform opinion. Following is a discussion of ‘policy mood (Stimson 2015)’ and what we call reform policy mood. The specific election policy indicators that create the

reform policy mood index are discussed and how the index is constructed. Here, we also further support the validity of our index through a series of jackknife resampling methods, factor analyses, and interlegibility measures. Multivariate estimation and analyses follow with discussions of the primary results.

Political salience of election laws

Recent high-profile competitive national elections have resulted in voting access and election laws becoming a highly salient political issue. Following the 2000 election and the debacle of ballot counting in Florida that led to Supreme Court involvement in the presidential election, issues surrounding election administration became increasingly salient among scholars, journalists, and members of the public (Hasen 2012; Donovan and Bowler 2003). By the 2008 and 2012 elections, convenience voting began making headline news as then-presidential candidate Barack Obama emphasized the use of early voting and absentee mail voting in his campaign strategies (Janjigian 2016; Kenski and Kamieson 2010; Peralta 2012). At the same time, issues regarding voter identification, gerrymandering, and other reforms became increasingly salient as the United States Supreme Court was repeatedly asked to weigh in on the constitutionality of several states' election practices.¹ In recent years, election laws have been repeatedly tied to political party success as politicians and pundits claim some laws benefit or hurt their party (Herron and Smith 2014), although political elites often are not correct about which laws will benefit or hurt their party's electoral success (Burden et al 2014).

These trends accelerated in the 2020 presidential election. Conducted during the global coronavirus pandemic, the 2020 election witnessed historic voter turnout with 159 million votes, and over 66% of eligible voters (US Election Project). To assuage health concerns related to the

¹ See, for example, *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*, 553 U.S. (2008); *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013). *Husted v. A. Phillip Randolph Institute*, 584 U.S. (2018).

pandemic, many states expanded use of in-person early voting and no-excuse absentee mail ballots so people could avoid election crowds and maintain social distancing. This milestone election saw nearly two-thirds of all election ballots cast early, roughly one-third of which were in-person and two-thirds by absentee mail, up from four in ten ballots cast using these alternative methods in 2018 (a similarly high turnout election).

Former Republican president Trump was an outspoken proponent that widespread election fraud occurred in the 2020 presidential election leading to his electoral loss; it would be expected that in this context that Republican partisans would be more likely to follow their leader and believe claims about election fraud, regardless of empirical evidence. Specially, Trump staunchly opposed absentee mail voting (Parks 2020), contending they led to fraud despite little empirical evidence to support these claims (Alvarez, Hall, Hyde 2009; Minnite 2011). Yet, concerns about the security of voting process resonated with his Republican base, who grew increasingly opposed to mail voting over the course of the election (Pew 2021). Following the 2020 general election, more than 360 bills were introduced in state legislatures to restrict voting access, especially targeting early voting and no-excuse mail voting while also increasing the stringency of voter identification requirements (Brennan Center for Justice 2021b). Numerous states – including Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Texas, and more – have adopted changes to how elections are conducted, scaling back the days allowed for in-person early voting, restricting the use of no-excuse absentee mail voting, along with other restrictions.

Even before the 2020 presidential election and elite priming of election fraud tied to mail ballots, research found mail voting leads to lower confidence in election results. Alvarez, Cao and Li (2021) show that voters who cast mail ballots are less confident about their votes being counted correctly than in-person voters. The authors used a large online survey of registered

voters in Orange County (CA), implemented immediately after the November 2018 midterm elections. Using item response theory (IRT) as well as voters' perceptions of various election laws or voter fraud to measure voting experience and social media usage, the authors were able to estimate associations with voter confidence via logistic regression models using a treatment and control type design—comparing in-person voters to mail voters. For both types of voters (mail voting or in-person voting), individuals with poor experiences with the voting process were less likely to report confidence in the election. Additionally, voters who have strong concerns about election fraud are less likely to report being confident in the election.

What factors shape public preferences about US election laws?

Given the increased political salience of voting access and election laws, as well as rapid change in how people cast voting ballots, it is important to understand how Americans view reforms of democratic institutions and their overall mood towards reforming the election process. Previous work studying the elections of 2008, 2012, and 2016 found most convenience voting reforms had mixed support with less than majority favorability nationwide (Alvarez et al 2011; Bowler and Donovan 2018). According to these recent studies, less than 1 out of 4 Americans supported voting by mail, strong majorities oppose voting over the internet, roughly 1 in 2 supported Election Day Registration, and a bare majority favor Election Day being a holiday. At the same time roughly 3 out of 4 Americans believe requiring identification to vote is necessary (Alvarez et al 2011; see also Wilson and Brewer 2013). Over the past decade, public support for changing election laws has significantly changed. As discussed above, the coronavirus pandemic normalized the use of absentee mail ballots for a majority of Americans, as well as broadening use of early in-person voting.

When it comes to why people support changing election rules, a number of studies clearly show that partisanship, feelings of being an electoral loser versus winner, anticipation of electoral gain, confidence in government or satisfaction with democracy, and other factors shape orientations and preferences linked to election reform laws (Alvarez et al. 2011; Anderson et al 2005; Biggers 2019; Bowler and Donovan 2007, 2013, 2016, 2018; Gronke et al. 2019; Kane 2017; Mann, Gronke, and Adona 2020; McCarthy 2019).

Preferences toward election laws often fall along partisan lines, with recent studies suggesting a mix of elite cues and partisan election perceptions structuring how citizens view election laws. On the one hand, preferences towards these laws may reflect those of party elites (Zaller 1992, e.g., Alvarez et al. 2011; Bowler and Donovan 2016, 2018; Mann, Gronke, and Adona 2020; Stewart III et al. 2016). In this line of thought, elites send cues informing the public on party positions and individuals then align their opinions accordingly. Gronke et al. (2019) investigate determinants of voter ID support using an index constructed from 7 questions. The authors find, among other things, that partisan preferences may be shaped by elite cues. Democrats (Republicans) who watched more news were less (more) supportive of voter IDs than their less news-oriented counterparts, in line with their respective party's stance, suggesting that those who watch the news are more likely to have knowledge regarding the positions of their respective parties and adjust opinions accordingly. Mann, Gronke, and Adona (2020) find that Republicans and independents are more likely to expect election problems (relating to perceived election fairness and legitimacy) after hearing about Democratic support for the reform. Democrats' expectations were not found to change upon learning about the extent to which different parties support the law.

Partisanship can also color preferences on election laws in that the rule or law is expected to benefit (hurt) the respondent's preferred party. Biggers (2019) uses experimental data from Mechanical Turk to evaluate respondents' preferences for photo voter identification laws, in-person early voting, and same day registration. Questions were posed for each of these issue areas in a negative, neutral, or positive manner. The results show that Republicans and Democrats are generally more supportive of reform when framed as benefiting their co-partisans and less supportive when aiding out-partisans. Considering specifically same day registration, McCarthy (2019) finds that partisans are less likely to support the reform when they are told the law will benefit opposing partisans. These findings demonstrate that one's preferences are partially structured by partisanship and group self-interest.

When faced with enacting a new election law that may result in lower chances of their party winning future elections, voters tend to prefer the status quo. Bowler and Donovan (2007) code survey respondents as (retrospective) winners or losers based on their self-reported partisanship, recent national election outcomes, and subjective self-assessments. Using a survey experiment, they find that frequent winners are less supportive of reform and their support decreases substantially more than losers when the reform is framed as involving some loss. On the other hand, people who regularly feel that they lose in elections have been shown to favor changing electoral institutions in the US and cross-nationally (Anderson et al 2005).

In a similar vein, research finds that voters with a history of backing the losing candidate are less risk adverse and are more likely to believe changing election rules will improve their chances of electoral and policy success (Bowler and Donovan 2007), leading to higher support for electoral reform among people whose favored party is out of government than those in power. Donovan and Snipp (1994), for example, find that Republicans and Democrats had higher

support for term limits when the other party held a majority of the seats in the state legislature. Similar results have been found when exploring public support for non-partisanship redistricting, a national referendum, the direct election of the president, a national primary, proportional representation, and more (Anderson et al. 2005; Biggers 2019; Banducci and Karp 1999; Bowler and Donovan 2007, 2013; Fougere, Ansolabehere, Persily 2010; Smith et al 2010; Tolbert, Smith, Green 2009), with individuals favoring the losing political party more favorable of changing election rules. Change is evidence pre and post-elections depending on whether the respondent's candidate/party was successful.

Perceptions of fraud also influence policy preferences. Wilson and Brewer (2013) find that individuals with higher perceptions of voter fraud increases support for voter ID requirements. At the same time, some evidence suggests that issues of fraud may be more influential on Republican support for voter identification laws (Kane 2017); while perceptions of fraud are also related to racial and immigrant resentment (Minnite 2007; Udani and Kimball 2018).

Overall satisfaction with democracy and the election process can also influence one's perceptions of wanting to change the system. When satisfied with the current system, citizens' self-interest dissuades them from supporting reforming the system. On the other hand, those who are less satisfied may be more willing to alter the system. Bowler and Donovan (2007) hypothesize that individuals whose favored candidates loses more often than win will be less satisfied with the way democracy works, and hence more likely to favor election reform. Their results indicate that individuals whose candidates lose more often are less satisfied with democracy and more supportive of direct election of the president and proportional representation for Congress. Satisfaction with the election process can also influence support for

voting reforms, as those who face longer voting wait times or tried to vote but could not have been found to be more supportive of election reform (Bowler and Donovan 2018).

In light of these trends, this study explores public mood for election reform and what determines that mood. Though previous studies have provided a wealth of knowledge regarding what structures preferences for election laws, they are limited by several factors that warrant further investigation. First, it is entirely possible that election reform opinion has changed over the past decade, with recent studies relying on data from 2008-2016 (e.g., Alvarez et al. 2011; Bowler and Donovan 2018). In 2020, President Trump's frequent and repeated claims of election fraud (i.e., the Big Steal) related to the use of mail voting ballots and high-profile Supreme Court cases may have changed public preferences. With four in ten Americans identifying as independent and political polarization at an all-time high (Abramowitz 2018; Mason 2018), this study measures election reform mood for pure independents, independents who lean towards one of the two major political parties, and partisans. Second, previous studies routinely find that partisanship is an overwhelmingly strong predictor of reform preferences, but, at the same time, other factors may also shape policy preferences. Within party, do partisans update their preferences in light of democratic satisfaction and political fortunes, or does partisanship trump these other factors; and are there differences in the effects of these factors across partisanship, as others have found (Bowler and Donovan 2016; Mann, Gronke, and Adona 2020; Kane 2017)?

Most existing research examines a single policy or a small group of policies individually. Additionally, few studies have sought to investigate a general public mood towards election reform, with one major exception (Bowler and Donovan 2018). Yet, this study only examined convenience voting laws, omitting voter ID, as well as other policies such as direct election of the president and non-partisan redistricting. In contrast this study measures public support for

reforming the election system as a whole – not just convenience voting – creating a measure of the public mood for election system reform.

Election reform preferences as a policy mood

While information regarding specific election laws is insightful, investigating single policies may mask a more general trend in preferences for overall election system reform. That is, citizens may collectively possess ‘moods’ towards election reforms. Several seminal studies have shown generalized and latent policy attitudes for general and domain specific policy preferences (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Caughey and Warshaw 2018; Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson 2002; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993; Page and Shapiro 1992; Stimson 2015; Wlezien 1995; Soroka and Wlezien 2009). Stimson (2015) defines a generalized set of policy preferences as ‘policy mood,’ or a manifestation of public opinion that ebbs and flows in predictable ways over time to local, state, and national events, prospective and retrospective voting assessments in response to policy expectations or impacts, and the political party in power. As an example of a policy mood, Stimson (2015) takes account of conservative and liberal policy preferences on education, healthcare, environment, cities, race, welfare, and taxes from 1950s to the 2010s using scientific polling and dividing the percentage of liberal policy preference responses by the total (sum of liberal and conservative responses). This and other similar measures of policy mood offer explanatory leverage regarding a variety of political phenomena (e.g., Caughey and Warshaw 2018; Caughey, Xu, and Warshaw 2017; Soroka and Wlezien 2010; Wlezien 1995). This study argues that, like preferences for specific (sets of) policies, there may also exist a mood for more or less election reform.

In line with this argument, Bowler and Donovan (2018) assess generalized public support for absentee voting online, voting by cell phone, voting by mail, automatic voter registration,

Election Day Registration, elections held on weekends, elections made a national holiday, and automatic registration with moves to new residential locations. The authors find these policies represent a single dimension of preferences for more or less access to voting, creating a single index measure of preferences for convenience voting. They hypothesize that an individuals' voting access preferences will be structured by partisanship (with Democrats theorized to be more supportive, Republicans less so), confidence in the validity of state voting counts, experiences with the voting process such as longer voting lines (with greater difficulties posited to increase support for greater voter access), and whether individuals are from more marginalized voting groups such as the poor, racial minorities, and the young (who are theorized to be more in favor of greater voting access). Their results confirm each of these hypotheses, suggesting that the public may have specific moods regarding election reforms and that these moods are shaped in constrained and predictable ways by relevant political phenomenon.

Cumulatively, even though many studies do not employ policy mood indices, evidence clearly suggests that preferences towards more or less reform form an interrelated mood that ebbs and flows in predictable ways, much like preferences for other policies (e.g, Stimson 2015). Like general policy liberalism, Democrats tend to be more open to electoral change than Republicans. At the same time, related phenomena alter people's preferences, such as feeling like one is winning or losing under the current system and their satisfaction with it.

Research hypotheses

Given previous work, this study seeks to understand the importance of partisanship, electoral fortune, and satisfaction with democracy in structuring preferences for more or less electoral reform. Generally, the expectations are that (1) Democrats will be more likely than Republicans to support election reform and that independents leaning Democrat or Republican

may have stronger policy preferences that partisans consistent with research arguing independents that lean to one of the two major parties are “hidden partisans” (Keith et al 1992; Klar and Krupnikov 2016), (2) that individuals who feel they lose elections more often will be more likely to support election reform, and (3) that individuals regardless of party identification will be more likely to support election reform if they are less satisfied with democracy. Finally (4), this study tests if effects of partisanship are conditioned by (interact with) other political attitudes, such as overall political interest, electoral fortunes, and general confidence in elections.

Measuring election reform policy mood

To gauge public support for electoral reforms we draw on original questions placed on a nationally representative survey of US adults, the 2020 Cooperative Election Study (CES, formerly CCES). The CES is a state and nationally representative 60,000+ person internet survey conducted by Harvard through the surveying firm YouGov, routinely used for studying public opinion, including that of election reform. Of the full sample, 1,000 nationally representative respondents were asked their support for a variety of election reforms. Question wording was designed to be comparable to similar questions placed on national Pew Research Center surveys and previous CCES surveys.² Some questions dealt with the way elections are conducted – rotating the order of presidential primaries, a national primary on a single day, a national referendum, the direct election of the president, and use of non-partisan redistricting commissions. Others asked respondents about their support regarding voting access – automatic voter registration, Election Day Registration, early voting, conducting elections by mail, requiring photo voter identification, felon re-enfranchisement post-serving their sentence, and

² See Appendix B for question wording.

no-excuse absentee/mail voting. These questions are used to measure public support for individual reforms as well as overall public mood towards reforming the system.

Specifically, respondents were asked the extent to which they strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose each election reform, with an additional option of answering don't know/not sure. Response options for each question were scored on a five-point variable with categories of (0) strongly oppose, (1) oppose, (2) unsure, (3) support, and (4) strongly support.³ The dependent variable of overall policy reform mood is created by summing support for each reform, dividing by 12 (the number of reforms), and multiplying the resulting quotient by 100 to form a 0-100 scale where higher values represent higher support for reforming the current system. Factor analyses support the assumption that these factors load on to a single dimension, while interreliability measures also validate this measure (Cronbach's alpha=0.8367) (see Appendix Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows support for each election reform item included in the index with 0 equaling strongly oppose and 100 strongly favor. Among the 12-question battery, the highest favorability was for in-person early voting and no-excuse absentee mail voting, each with 75% approval. These results are consistent with other national surveys.⁴ Nearly 70% favor voter photo identification, also consistent with previous research (Wilson and Brewer 2013). What is striking is that every reform, with the exception of conducting elections exclusively by mail, received majority support. These high levels differ somewhat from earlier studies (see Alvarez et al. 2011) but are in line with recent national polls (see footnote 4) and reflect increasing support for

³ A 0-4 scale is used to ensure that, when measuring an individual's overall policy reform mood, those who strongly oppose reforms do not appear to have higher-than-actual support.

⁴ <<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/momentum-democracy-reform-across-country>>; <<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/04/22/republicans-and-democrats-move-further-apart-in-views-of-voting-access/>>

election reforms in recent years (Bowler and Donovan 2018, 976). Given the variation in the types of election laws proposed, the moderately level uniform distribution in the responses is striking. Support for very different reforms of the political system are highly correlated. As convenience voting laws diffuse across the states, citizens may become more familiar with the processes, utilize them, and update their preferences accordingly (Pacheco 2012).

Figure 1: Support for Varying Election Reforms on the 0-100 scale, November 2020

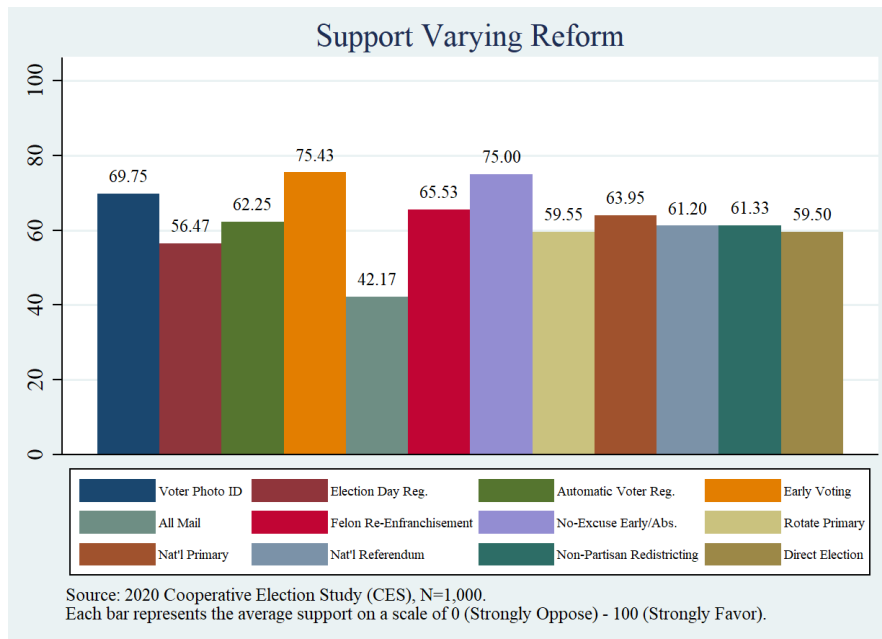
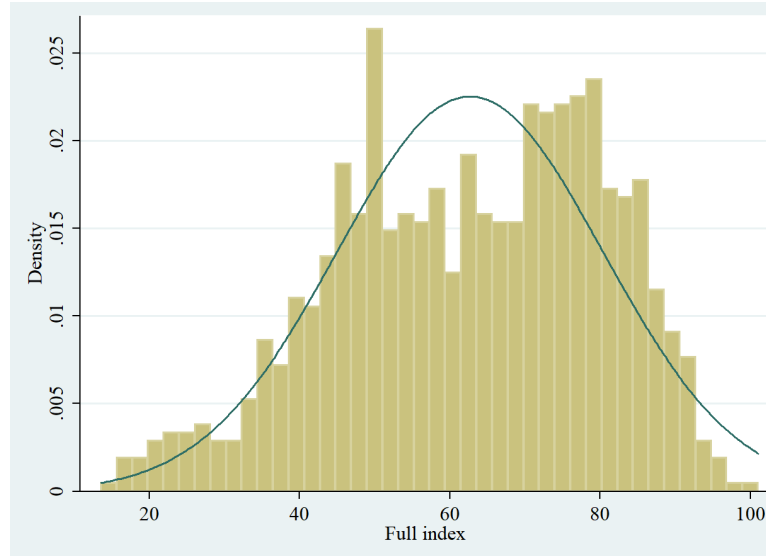


Figure 2 shows the distribution of election reform policy mood for the US public in November 2020, which appears to be distributed fairly normally. Average support for election reform is 62.68 out of 100 ($\sigma=17.71$), suggesting that a significant portion of the American public favors reforming the current election process.

Figure 2: Distribution of Election Reform Policy Mood US Public, November 2020



To protect against any single election law biasing the results, a jackknife procedure is used for the policy mood index, which accounts for the possibility that different election reforms may elicit different responses from citizens (shown in Figure 3). To examine if some of the reforms are unique from others, we apply this procedure to the dependent variable where we drop one reform at a time and recompile the index. For example, responses to voter identification requirements are omitted for the first column in Figure 3, and the index is created based on the 11 other indicators. Next, responses regarding voter identification are added back in, but Election Day Registration is omitted, and the index is recreated for column 2. This process affords additional protection against any one reform driving the results. As can be seen, the index of election reform policy mood varies little across different specifications. The average (absolute) deviation from the overall index is 0.63 and the greatest change results from omitting all-mail preferences (-2.86). These results, as well as factor analyses showing the 12 policies loading on a single dimension, suggest high scale reliability, with little evidence of single indicators having

outsized influences. The overall index and the jackknifed samples are used as outcome variables in the multivariate regression.

Figure 3: Mean Support Election Reform Policy Index, Dropping One Item at a Time

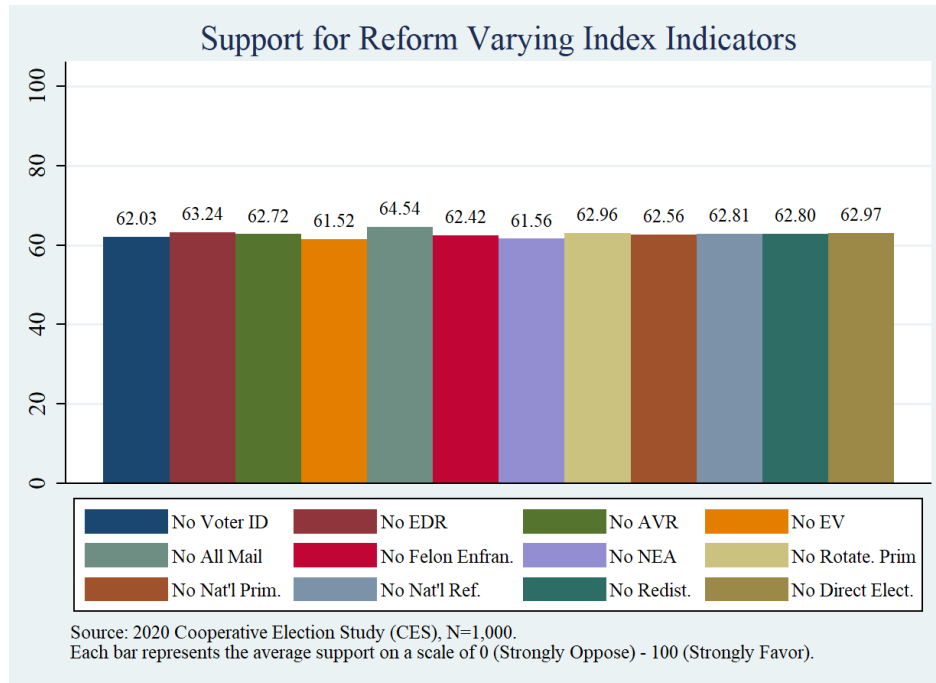
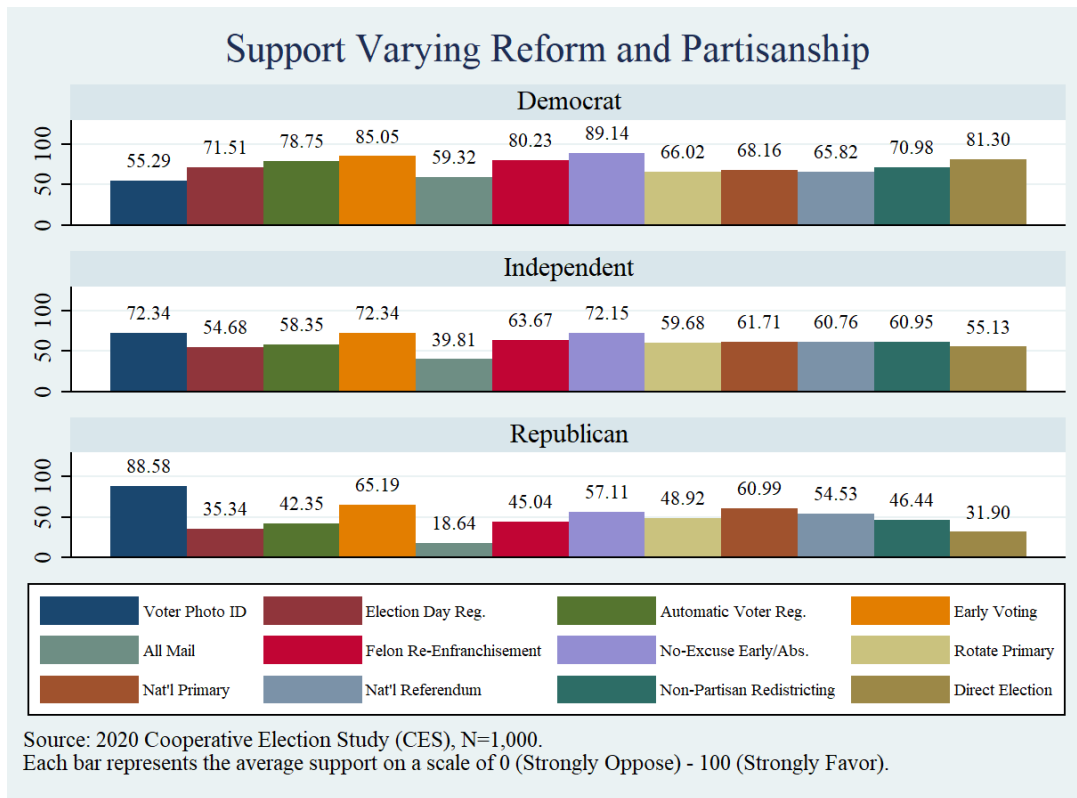


Figure 4 shows support for the 12 election laws broken down by partisan groups (leaners classified as independent). While Republicans have higher approval of photo identification laws than Democrats, Republicans are in general less likely to approve of these election reforms, consistent with much of the previous research (Alvarez et al. 2011; Bowler and Donovan 2016, 2018; Wilson and Brewer 2013). Nationwide, Democrats express the highest approval of these reforms, with independents in the middle and Republicans the most opposed. At the same time, several reforms appear to have bipartisan support. On issues such as voter ID requirements, early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, and instituting a national referendum, majorities of Democrats, independents and Republicans approve.

Figure 4: Support for Individual Election Reforms on the 0-100 Scale by Partisanship



Multivariate analyses

Ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors clustered by state is used to examine the determinants of election reform mood.⁵ Included are basic demographic variables: whether the respondent is female (1= female, 0=male), Black (1=Black, 0=non-Black), Hispanic (1=Hispanic, 0=non-Hispanic), other race that is not Hispanic (1=Other), labor force participation, marital status, level of education, household income (1=Less than \$10,000, 16=\$500,000 or more), the respondent’s partisanship measured on a 7-point scale (strong Democrat, moderate Democrat, leaning Democrat, pure independent, leaning Republican,

⁵ Results are robust to alternative modeling strategies, including the use of state fixed effects, multilevel modeling and jackknife analyses. See Appendix B for robustness checks.

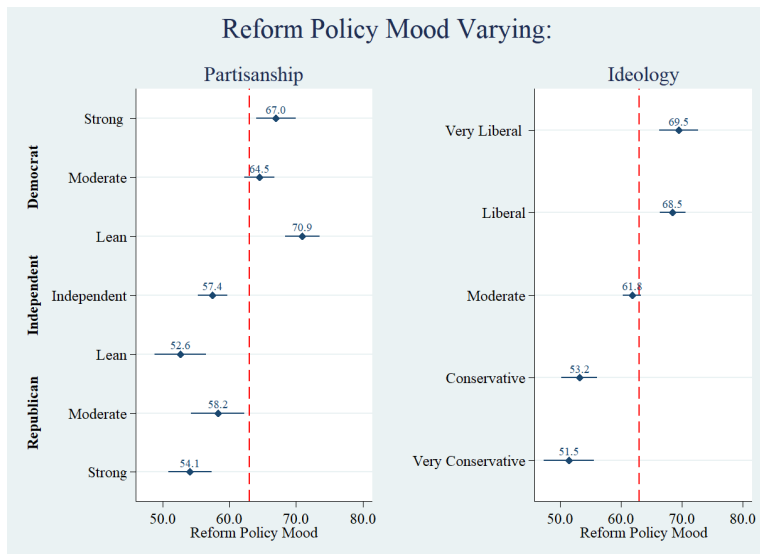
moderate Republican, and strong Republican, with strong Democrats as the reference group), political ideology (1=very liberal, 5=very conservative), and a binary political interest variable (1=high, 0=low). To test how perceptions of the government and politics impacts support for policy reform, two additional variables are included. The first is satisfaction with democracy (1=not at all satisfied, 5=very satisfied). The second is whether the respondent feels their side wins more often than loses (1=wins, 0=loses). See Appendix Figure 3 for summary statistics.

To demonstrate the validity of the policy reform mood index, Table 1 reports thirteen linear regressions, each with the same independent variables but differing specifications for the dependent variable of policy reform mood using jackknifed sampling. For the first model, the dependent variable is the policy reform mood index with all components. Each subsequent model includes all but one reform (shown in the title of the model) using the same jackknifing procedure described earlier (see also Figure 3). The statistical significance, sign, and size of the covariates are nearly identical across the model specifications, further supporting the validity of the policy mood measure. While demographic factors are not shown to be important in public opinion on election rules, political ideology and partisanship are.

Given the results are similar across specifications, Figure 5 plots the predicted overall election reform score (Table 1, model 1), varying partisanship on the seven-point scale (left side) and political ideology (right side), all else equal. The red dotted line signifies average election reform policy mood. Controlling for other demographic factors, Democrats have higher election reform policy mood than Republicans, as expected. Striking from Figure 5 is that independents leaning Democrat have higher support (71%) than both strong and moderate Democrats. In a reverse pattern, independents that lean Republican are equally opposed to changing election rules as the strongest Republicans. Moderate Republicans are closer to pure independents than those

who lean Republican, with 57% approval. Strong Republicans and lean-Republicans are the most opposed (53%), yet majorities of even these groups favor change. Ideology shows a consistent downward sloping line, with more liberal respondents higher policy reform mood than moderate or conservative individuals. The most liberal respondent has an average support of 71, which decreases to 61 for moderates, then 51 for the most conservatives.

Figure 5: Predicted Election Reform Policy Mood Varying Partisanship and Ideology



Overall, the results show that independents leaning-Democrat (Republican) more closely resemble their strong-Democrat (Republican) counterparts, but to a slightly greater extreme. This is in line with research arguing the independents that lean toward one of the two major parties are hidden partisans (Klar and Krupnikov 2016; Keith, Magley, Nelson, Orr, and Westlye 1992). These results also find that political characteristics like ideology and partisanship may overcome demographic differences when influencing support for electoral reform.

To examine the socio-demographic determinants of public opinion and how political characteristics change these relationships, Table 2 reports a series of ordinary least squares regression to predict overall policy mood based on responses to all 12 questions. The first model

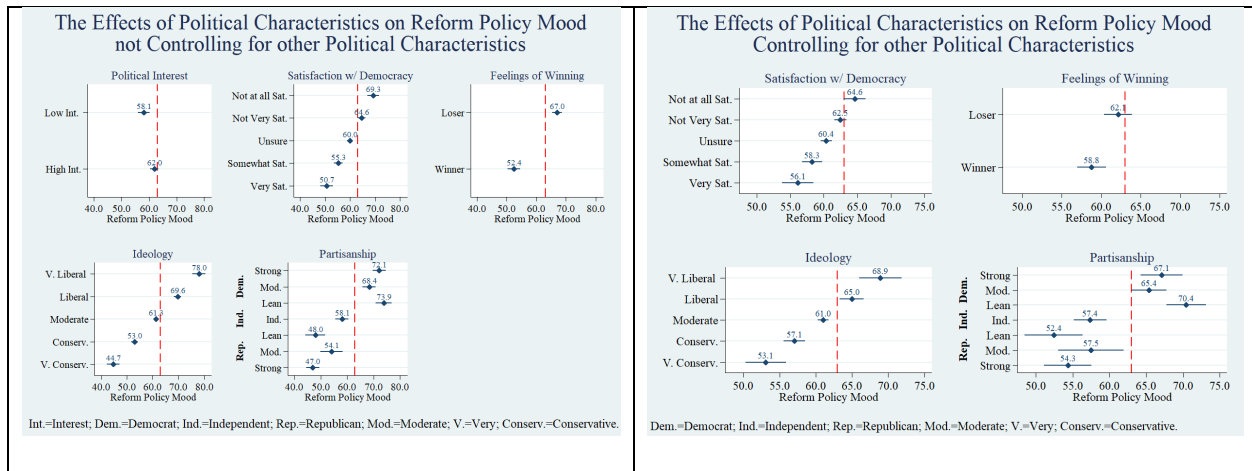
includes all base demographic variables. Model 2 includes a variable denoting political interest. Model 3 swaps interest for satisfaction with democracy. Model 4 interchanges satisfaction with whether the respondent feels their political party wins more often in politics. Model 5 includes ideology. Model 6 adds partisanship. Model 7 includes all above mentioned political variables.

Focusing on first column of Table 2, several demographics are statistically related to policy reform mood when ideology and partisanship are omitted. Younger, female, more educated, and Black respondents have higher election reform policy mood. Young people (under age 30) are about six percentage points more supportive of these cumulative reforms than are the oldest respondents, all else equal. A similar difference arises between Black and white non-Hispanics respondents. Female respondents are four percentage points more supportive than males for altering election rules. The largest gaps are found among education groups. Those with a high school degree or less are eight percentage points less supportive of election rule changes than are those with the highest education levels. Yet, these demographic differences are small compared to ideology and partisanship. Controlling for partisanship renders all demographic characteristics statistically insignificant.

Figure 6 shows the effects (predicted probability) of varying political characteristics on policy mood without controlling for other political characteristics (left side). The top left panel suggests that more interested respondents have four percentage points higher election reform policy mood than those with lower interest. Including satisfaction with democracy (model 3), those who are not at all satisfied with democracy are nearly twenty points more supportive of policy reform than the most satisfied (see top middle), a very large effect on par with partisanship or ideology. Individuals who feel their side (candidates, party) win more often than lose are fifteen points less supportive of reform than electoral losers (top right panel, Figure 6),

consistent with previous research (Bowler and Donovan 2013). Yet few studies have explored the interaction between attitudes about whether one’s vote matters and partisanship in shaping support for electoral reform.

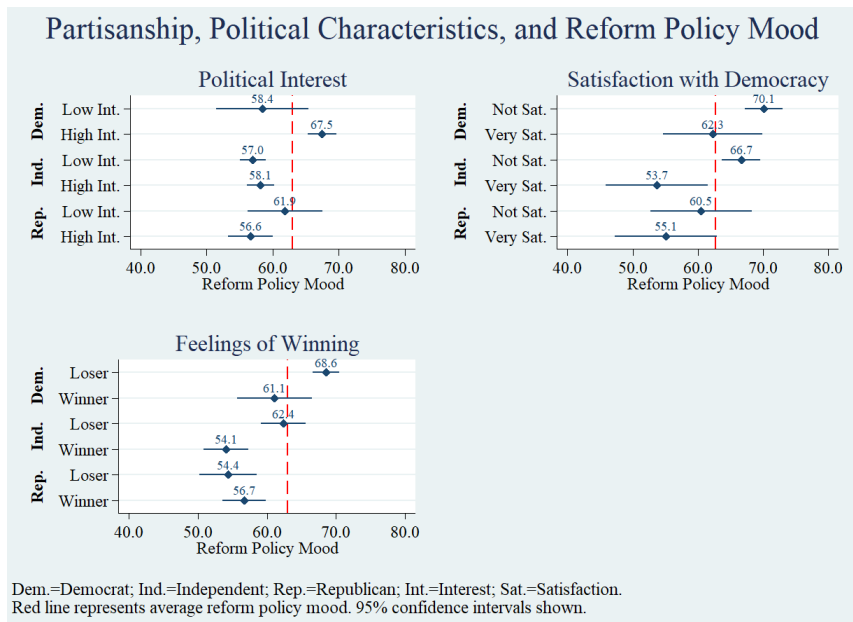
Figure 6: Predicted Election Reform Policy Mood varying Political Factors



The last model in Table 2 includes all political variables (political interest, satisfaction with democracy, whether the respondent feels they win more than lose, ideology, and partisanship). Satisfaction with democracy, feelings of winning, ideology, and partisanship are still significant but decreased in substantive effect compared to Figure 6, while political interest is no longer statistically significant. Figure 6 (right panel) displays predicted values of policy reform mood across significant political variables while controlling for all other characteristics. Independent leaners within each party continue to deviate and reflect strong partisan identifiers more so than moderates. The effects of ideology are cut in half, with conservatives 16 percentage points lower in support for reforms than are liberals. The effects of satisfaction with democracy are also halved, with the least satisfied 9 percentage points more supportive of reform. Last, those who feel they win more than lose are 3 percentage points less supportive, 1/5th the effect when not controlling for all other variables. We contend these fully specified models more accurately reflect the true effects of these political variables.

These results also suggest policy reform mood is also strongly linked to evaluations of democracy and whether voters feel they tend to win or lose under the current system (Bowler and Donovan 2007, 13). However, it could be that these factors interact to affect policy reform support. That is, even among partisan identifiers, satisfaction with democracy and feelings of winning or losing can further affect the extent to which individuals support or oppose policy reform. To explore the conditional effects of partisanship and other political factors, Table 3 model 1 interacts political interest and a three-point indicator of partisanship (Democrats serve as the reference group). Results find differences in support for electoral reforms across partisanship and political characteristics and perceptions. For ease of interpretation, Figure 7 plots the predicted reform support mood across the different interactive effects reported in Table 3.

Figure 7: Predicted Election Reform Policy Mood, Interacting Partisanship and Political Factors



The top left panels show political interest impacts Democrats more so than independents or Republicans in terms of general election reform policy mood. Though low interest respondents have statistically similar opinions on policy reform (high 50's to low 60's) regardless of partisanship, more interested Democrats are significantly and substantively more

supportive of electoral reforms than are either more interested independents or Republicans. Specifically, more interested Democrats boast a 67 (+5 compared to less interested Democrats) on the policy reform scale.

Model 2 interacts satisfaction with democracy with partisanship and the top right panel in Figure 7 displays the predicted policy mood across these values (top right panel). When unsatisfied, Democrats are the most supportive of electoral reform, at 70 percent. Independents are similar to Democrats but slightly less likely to be supportive of electoral reforms when not satisfied with democracy (67%). Dissatisfied Republicans are significantly less likely than Democrats and independents to support policy reform, with only 61% in support. Even when satisfied, Democrats have on average higher support for electoral reform (62%) than Republicans (55%) or independents (54%). These results suggest dissatisfaction with US democracy conditions the effects of partisanship. While the difference between the least and most dissatisfied Democrats (Republicans) is -8 (-6) percentage points, independents see a 13-point decrease. Satisfaction with democracy seems to color the lenses of non-partisans more than their partisan counterparts. When independents are unsatisfied with democracy, they are as receptive to electoral system reform as are Democrats. However, when they feel that democracy is working just fine, independents are similar to, if not (insignificantly) less, open to reform than are Republicans.

When looking at perceptions of winning, the biggest differences are for those who feel they lose more than win. When Democrats feel that they lose more often than win, they are the most supportive of reform at 69%. Losing independents are statistically less supportive at 62%. Lower than either Democrats or independents, Republicans who feel they lose more than win are only 54% supportive of reform. At the same time, there are no statistically different results

across partisanship for those who are unsure if they win more than lose or for those who feel they win more than lose. Further, going from feeling like the respondent loses more than wins to wins more than loses results in a significant 7 percentage point decrease in support for Democrats and Independents but no statistically significant effect for Republicans. This could suggest that Democrats and independents are more likely to feel their losing is a result of the system and, as such, the system needs to be reformed. Alternatively, it could be that Republicans may see reform as potentially resulting in even higher rates of losing, as politicians and pundits often tie electoral reforms to partisan outcomes (e.g., Donald Trump and all-mail ballots).

Summary & conclusion

Taken together, these results suggest that there are demographic differences in support for electoral reforms, but they are heavily trumped by political characteristics like ideology and partisan identification. Further, the extent to which an individual supports reform is linked to how satisfied they are with the current system and the extent to which they feel they win or lose in politics. At the same time, political characteristics and perceptions may have differential influences on voters based on their partisanship. While political interest changes the preferences of Democratic identifiers, interest has little influence on independent or Republican voters. When it comes to satisfaction with democracy, its effect on policy reform support is almost twice as large for independents than partisan identifiers and causes independents to look more like Democrats when satisfied but more closely mirror Republicans when dissatisfied. Similarly, Democrats and independents that feel they lose more than win are more supportive of reform while feelings of winning among Republicans have very little effect on their support for altering the administration of elections. Republicans see very little change in reform preferences across levels of satisfaction, winning, or interest.

This study sought to measure policy reform mood, or the extent to which the public favors reforming the current election system, and to understand its determinants. Previous work finds that partisanship is a defining feature in public opinion about election reform (Alvarez et al. 2011; Bowler and Donovan 2013, 2018; Kane 2017; Wilson and Brewer 2013), but that preferences for changing the system are also related to who is perceived to benefit or be burdened by change (Biggers 2019; Bowler and Donovan 2007; McCarthy 2019) and perceptions of the democratic system (Bowler and Donovan 2007). Using responses from a nationally representative survey conducted immediately before the 2020 presidential election we measure support for twelve election related reforms⁶ to create an index of policy reform mood. The results show similar levels of support across individual reforms, suggesting majority support for many election reforms studied here.

While Republicans are the least receptive of reform (average policy reform mood=49.59), Democrats are the most (72.63), with independents in between (60.67), in line with previous work. However, even within party, there is significant variation. Interestingly, we find that independents that lean toward one of the two major parties have nearly the same support for overall reform as do the strongest partisans, with moderates unique in each party. Results also show that satisfaction with democracy, perceptions of winning/losing in politics, and political interest condition the effects of partisanship. Those who are more satisfied with democracy, perceive to win more often than lose, and are more interested in politics are more supportive of election reform. Further, these patterns also exist within party, particularly for Democrats and independents. For instance, when satisfied with democracy, independents and Democrats are

⁶ Rotating the order of presidential primaries, a national primary on a single day, a national referendum, the direct election of the president, use of non-partisan redistricting commissions, automatic voter registration, Election Day Registration, early voting, conducting elections by mail, requiring photo voter identification, felon re-enfranchisement post-serving their sentence, and no-excuse absentee/mail voting.

nearly as supportive of reform. Unsatisfied independents, on the other hand, more closely resemble similarly dissatisfied Republicans.

These results suggest that recent years have seen a transformation in preferences towards election reforms, with the American public currently largely in favor of election reforms despite earlier studies suggesting otherwise. This high electoral reform policy mood may result from recent greater distrust of government and elected leaders, the increased salience of voting laws, high political polarization, elite priming, the diffusion of these practices across the states, and other factors. Further, results highlight the highly influential role of partisanship in coloring perceptions of reform practices. Yet, even within party, satisfaction with democracy, perceptions of winning or losing, and (to a lesser extent) interest remain important influences—even trumping partisanship. Future works should consider deciphering the causes (and consequences) of changing policy reform mood and measure policy reform mood rather than individual policies.

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Online appendix

Appendix Figure 1: Cronbach's Alpha Results Policy Mood Index

Item	Obs.	Sign	Item-Test Correlation	Item-Rest Correlation	Average Interim Covariance	Alpha
Voter Identification	1000	-	0.5289	0.4067	347.2316	0.8321
Election Day Registration	1000	+	0.6838	0.5829	318.6322	0.8173
Automatic Voter Registration	1000	+	0.7293	0.6419	312.5310	0.8120
Early Voting	1000	+	0.5502	0.4486	349.4992	0.8281
All Mail Elections	1000	+	0.6568	0.5537	325.0733	0.8198
Felon Restoration	1000	+	0.6364	0.5346	330.8859	0.8215
No Excuse Absentee	1000	+	0.6320	0.5369	335.0837	0.8214
Rotate Primary	1000	+	0.5007	0.4145	363.3277	0.8305
National Primary	1000	+	0.3674	0.2701	378.3818	0.8387
National Referendum	1000	+	0.4250	0.3177	368.6688	0.8367
Redistricting	1000	+	0.6247	0.5430	343.5644	0.8218
Direct Election	1000	+	0.7574	0.6753	306.5267	0.8087
Test Scale					339.9505	0.8367

Appendix Figure 2: Descriptive Statistics Jackknifing Policy Mood Index

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Full Index	1,000	62.67708	17.70686	14.58333	100
No voter ID	1,000	62.03409	20.4276	6.818182	100
No EDR	1,000	63.24091	17.14677	15.90909	100
No Avr	1,000	62.71591	16.9425	15.90909	100
No Early Voting	1,000	61.51818	17.79804	15.90909	100
No All Mail	1,000	64.54091	17.39552	15.90909	100
No Felon Re-Enfranchisement	1,000	62.41818	17.42301	9.090909	100
No No-Excuse Absentee Voting	1,000	61.55682	17.50016	15.90909	100
No Rotating Primary	1,000	62.96136	18.27808	13.63636	100
No National Primary	1,000	62.56136	18.50698	13.63636	100
No National Referendum	1,000	62.81136	18.28097	9.090909	100

No Redistricting 1,000 62.8 17.8649 15.90909 100

No Direct Presidential Election 1,000 62.96591 16.92555 15.90909 100

Appendix Figure 3: Descriptive Statistics Variables Regression Models

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Policy Reform Mood Index	1,000	62.68	17.71	14.58	100
Age	1,000	48.52	17.71	18	92
Female	1,000	0.58	0.49	0	1
Married	1,000	0.47	0.50	0	1
Education	1,000	2.70	1.46	1	5
Income	1,000	6.34	3.49	1	16
Homeownership	1,000	0.59	0.49	0	1
Employed	1,000	0.45	0.50	0	1
Not in Labor Force	1,000	0.42	0.49	0	1
Black	1,000	0.11	0.32	0	1
Other	1,000	0.07	0.26	0	1
Hispanic	1,000	0.11	0.32	0	1
Conservatism	1,000	2.95	1.15	1	5
Political Interest	1,000	2.36	0.79	1	3
Strong Democrat	1,000	0.28	0.45	0	1
Moderate Democrat	1,000	0.10	0.30	0	1
Lean Democrat	1,000	0.12	0.32	0	1
Independent	1,000	0.19	0.39	0	1
Lean Republican	1,000	0.09	0.29	0	1
Moderate Republican	1,000	0.08	0.27	0	1
Strong Republican	1,000	0.15	0.36	0	1

Appendix B: Question wording

A. Rotate primaries

There are proposals to change the presidential nomination process and the order of the caucuses and primaries. One would rotate states so a different state goes first each time. Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose such a plan?

- 1 Strongly Favor
- 2 Favor
- 3 Oppose
- 4 Strongly Oppose
- 8 Don't know, not sure

B. National primary

Others have proposed a national primary, similar to Super Tuesday, where every state would hold their caucuses or primaries on the same day. Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose such a plan?

- 1 Strongly Favor
- 2 Favor
- 3 Oppose
- 4 Strongly Oppose
- 8 Don't know, not sure

C. National referendum

There is a proposal for a national referendum to permit people to vote directly to approve or reject some federal laws. Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose this proposal to give voters a direct say in making laws?

- 1 Strongly Favor
- 2 Favor
- 3 Oppose
- 4 Strongly Oppose
- 8 Don't know, not sure

D. Direct Election of the President

When it comes to electing the President, some suggest we get rid of the Electoral College and elect the candidate who wins the most votes nationwide. Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose such a proposal?

- 1 Strongly Favor
- 2 Favor
- 3 Oppose
- 4 Strongly Oppose
- 8 Don't know, not sure

E. Redistricting

There are proposals to create a non-partisan commission appointed with the help of judges to redraw the lines for congressional and state legislative districts, which occurs every ten years.

The commission would help make elections more competitive. Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose such a proposal?

- 1 Strongly Favor
- 2 Favor
- 3 Oppose
- 4 Strongly Oppose
- 8 Don't know, not sure

The process of voting and registering to vote is different by state. States can pass laws that affect the way citizens can register and vote. Please indicate if you support the following ideas about election policy. [Randomized reform order]

- 1 Strongly oppose
- 2 Somewhat oppose
- 3 Somewhat favor
- 4 Strongly favor
- 8 Don't know/no answer

A. Automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote when they interact with government offices (e.g. Department of Motor Vehicles)

B. Allowing people to register on Election Day at the polls.

C. Allowing eligible citizens to vote in person before Election Day (usually two weeks to a month before Election Day).

D. Conducting all elections by mail.

E. Requiring all voters to show government issued photo ID to vote.

F. Allowing people convicted of felonies to vote after serving their sentences.

G. Any voter should have the option of voting early or absentee by mail

Table 1: Predictors of Policy Reform Mood, Varying Components (Jackknifed Sampling Method)

	(1) Base	(2) No Voter ID	(3) No EDR	(4) No AVR	(5) No EV	(6) No All- Mail	(7) No Felon	(8) No NEA	(9) No Rotate Primary	(10) No Nat'l Primary	(11) No Nat'l Referendum	(12) No Redistricting	(13) No Direct Election
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Age	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Female	1.53 (1.17)	1.82 (1.29)	1.34 (1.16)	1.21 (1.10)	1.59 (1.22)	2.17 (1.17)	1.12 (1.19)	1.65 (1.19)	2.05 (1.20)	1.65 (1.23)	1.24 (1.24)	1.65 (1.15)	0.86 (1.12)
Married	-0.34 (1.03)	0.09 (1.13)	-0.30 (0.97)	-0.55 (1.00)	-0.38 (1.07)	-0.48 (1.09)	-0.20 (1.13)	-0.51 (1.00)	-0.47 (1.03)	-0.51 (1.07)	0.04 (1.05)	-0.42 (1.06)	-0.33 (1.00)
Education	0.36 (0.34)	0.30 (0.36)	0.46 (0.33)	0.33 (0.33)	0.36 (0.33)	0.19 (0.35)	0.21 (0.35)	0.25 (0.32)	0.31 (0.36)	0.47 (0.36)	0.58 (0.37)	0.42 (0.35)	0.49 (0.33)
Income	0.13 (0.19)	0.16 (0.21)	0.14 (0.19)	0.15 (0.19)	0.07 (0.18)	0.13 (0.19)	0.07 (0.18)	0.07 (0.19)	0.11 (0.19)	0.16 (0.19)	0.26 (0.21)	0.07 (0.19)	0.17 (0.19)
Homeowner	-0.68 (0.92)	-0.98 (1.09)	-0.57 (0.99)	-0.59 (0.92)	-0.59 (0.92)	-0.54 (0.89)	-0.51 (0.92)	-0.33 (0.90)	-0.75 (0.97)	-0.88 (0.96)	-1.21 (1.00)	-0.52 (0.93)	-0.69 (0.89)
Employed	-1.75 (1.56)	-1.88 (1.68)	-1.52 (1.46)	-2.02 (1.63)	-2.27 (1.41)	-2.05 (1.60)	-0.93 (1.60)	-1.58 (1.57)	-1.56 (1.57)	-1.49 (1.65)	-2.11 (1.63)	-1.60 (1.65)	-1.96 (1.59)
Not in Labor Force	-2.33 (1.90)	-2.07 (1.99)	-1.81 (1.87)	-2.54 (1.93)	-2.77 (1.77)	-2.99 (1.97)	-1.92 (1.89)	-2.66 (1.90)	-2.16 (1.91)	-2.03 (2.00)	-2.48 (1.94)	-2.12 (2.03)	-2.48 (1.93)
Black	-0.47 (1.45)	0.34 (1.55)	-0.47 (1.38)	-0.46 (1.42)	-0.36 (1.56)	-0.65 (1.39)	-0.09 (1.60)	-0.28 (1.41)	-0.46 (1.51)	-0.49 (1.50)	-1.18 (1.50)	-0.67 (1.51)	-0.87 (1.48)
Other	-0.95 (1.42)	-1.09 (1.50)	-0.99 (1.46)	-0.23 (1.44)	-0.81 (1.29)	-0.79 (1.61)	-0.46 (1.37)	-1.58 (1.54)	-0.85 (1.33)	-1.35 (1.43)	-1.10 (1.45)	-0.95 (1.50)	-1.19 (1.40)
Hispanic	-1.94 (1.29)	-2.34 (1.43)	-1.79 (1.26)	-1.28 (1.31)	-1.84 (1.27)	-2.08 (1.30)	-2.19 (1.29)	-1.79 (1.30)	-2.03 (1.28)	-2.06 (1.43)	-2.08 (1.28)	-1.98 (1.38)	-1.85 (1.30)
Conservative ideology	-4.98*** (0.78)	-5.99*** (0.84)	-4.80*** (0.79)	-4.65*** (0.76)	-4.88*** (0.72)	-4.84*** (0.81)	-4.70*** (0.75)	-4.62*** (0.75)	-5.32*** (0.86)	-5.13*** (0.82)	-5.14*** (0.81)	-4.87*** (0.79)	-4.84*** (0.81)
Political Interest	-0.18 (0.67)	0.44 (0.72)	-0.22 (0.63)	-0.22 (0.66)	-0.48 (0.69)	0.30 (0.65)	-0.35 (0.74)	-0.06 (0.68)	-0.28 (0.69)	-0.39 (0.74)	-0.45 (0.70)	-0.29 (0.70)	-0.16 (0.62)
Strong Democrat	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)	0.00 (.)
Not strong Democrat	-1.77 (1.71)	-3.48 (1.87)	-1.09 (1.63)	-1.74 (1.59)	-1.79 (1.62)	-1.48 (1.81)	-0.80 (1.75)	-2.09 (1.61)	-1.26 (1.92)	-1.93 (1.79)	-2.07 (1.80)	-1.97 (1.78)	-1.52 (1.73)
Lean Democrat	4.18* (1.92)	4.26* (2.08)	4.28* (1.77)	3.65 (1.86)	4.11* (1.91)	4.96* (2.00)	4.70* (1.83)	4.40* (1.76)	4.30* (2.10)	4.34* (2.14)	3.67 (2.00)	3.61 (1.89)	3.93 (1.97)
Pure Independent	-9.63*** (1.78)	-11.59*** (1.91)	-9.27*** (1.57)	-9.09*** (1.66)	-9.51*** (1.72)	-8.86*** (1.83)	-9.48*** (1.83)	-9.39*** (1.87)	-9.45*** (1.90)	-9.79*** (1.93)	-10.60*** (1.81)	-10.10*** (1.81)	-8.47*** (1.81)
Lean Republican	-16.03*** (2.54)	-20.10*** (2.89)	-15.56*** (2.24)	-15.61*** (2.32)	-16.35*** (2.36)	-14.11*** (2.53)	-15.56*** (2.61)	-15.69*** (2.60)	-16.18*** (2.63)	-16.97*** (2.71)	-16.55*** (2.74)	-16.58*** (2.69)	-13.66*** (2.53)
Not strong Republican	-10.35*** (2.83)	-13.68*** (3.35)	-9.33*** (2.63)	-9.69*** (2.45)	-10.55*** (2.76)	-8.67** (2.83)	-10.28*** (2.77)	-9.82** (2.91)	-10.34** (3.04)	-11.42*** (3.07)	-11.20*** (2.87)	-10.39*** (2.83)	-8.88** (2.78)
Strong Republican	-14.10*** (2.64)	-17.64*** (3.01)	-13.57*** (2.53)	-13.49*** (2.46)	-14.74*** (2.42)	-12.58*** (2.71)	-13.47*** (2.65)	-13.84*** (2.59)	-13.84*** (2.87)	-15.10*** (2.83)	-14.97*** (2.68)	-14.25*** (2.70)	-11.66*** (2.61)
Constant	82.80*** (2.40)	86.08*** (2.53)	80.54*** (2.19)	81.83*** (2.44)	83.01*** (2.39)	82.76*** (2.55)	81.71*** (2.38)	81.84*** (2.58)	83.28*** (2.59)	83.76*** (2.62)	83.99*** (2.43)	83.59*** (2.51)	81.21*** (2.37)
Observations	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors clustered by state. * 0.05 ** 0.01 ***0.001.

Table 2: The Socio-Demographic and Political Determinants of Policy Reform Mood

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Base	Political	Satisfaction	Feelings of	Ideology	Partisanship	All
	Demogra	Interest	with	Winning			
	phics		Democracy				
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Age	-0.09*	-0.11**	-0.06	-0.07	-0.01	-0.01	0.00
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Female	3.76**	4.15**	2.17	3.97***	1.96	2.07	1.21
	(1.20)	(1.22)	(1.15)	(1.09)	(1.20)	(1.14)	(1.13)
Married	-2.52	-2.68	-2.07	-1.81	-1.15	-0.50	-0.18
	(1.40)	(1.37)	(1.34)	(1.14)	(1.11)	(1.08)	(1.02)
Education	2.10***	1.85***	1.46***	1.33**	0.85*	0.54	0.09
	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.32)	(0.37)	(0.34)
Income	0.26	0.24	0.32	0.32	0.27	0.11	0.16
	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.19)
Homeowner	-1.73	-1.84	-0.76	-1.09	-0.54	-1.12	-0.32
	(1.20)	(1.20)	(1.14)	(1.11)	(1.02)	(0.95)	(0.91)
Employed	-2.59	-2.90	-1.98	-1.97	-1.94	-2.02	-1.55
	(1.91)	(1.95)	(1.89)	(1.69)	(2.16)	(1.42)	(1.49)
Not in Labor	-3.17	-3.41	-2.72	-3.49	-2.42	-2.54	-2.46
Force	(2.29)	(2.29)	(2.37)	(2.27)	(2.44)	(1.84)	(1.88)
Black	5.80***	5.62**	6.51***	4.74**	2.42	-1.22	0.43
	(1.62)	(1.62)	(1.59)	(1.47)	(1.53)	(1.80)	(1.40)
Other	2.02	2.42	1.70	1.72	0.28	-1.43	-0.55
	(1.53)	(1.57)	(1.72)	(1.45)	(1.86)	(1.29)	(1.57)
Hispanic	0.46	0.38	-0.03	1.99	-0.25	-2.95*	-1.51
	(1.50)	(1.59)	(1.37)	(1.40)	(1.37)	(1.34)	(1.29)
Political		1.93**					0.23
Interest		(0.64)					(0.66)
Satisfaction			-4.65***				-2.11***
Democracy			(0.55)				(0.46)
Wins more than				-7.28***			-1.67*
Loses				(0.80)			(0.81)
Conservative					-8.31***		-3.95***
ideology					(0.59)		(0.69)
Not strong						-3.73*	-1.75
Democrat						(1.76)	(1.62)
Lean Democrat						1.77	3.33
						(2.23)	(1.88)
Pure						-14.03***	-9.76***
Independent						(1.52)	(1.99)
Lean						-24.11***	-14.70***
Republican						(2.35)	(2.67)
Not strong						-18.00***	-9.64**
Republican						(2.62)	(3.06)
Strong						-25.09***	-12.79***
Republican						(2.00)	(2.79)
Constant	59.77***	57.35***	72.35***	73.23***	84.25***	73.07***	87.99***
	(2.39)	(2.51)	(2.83)	(2.45)	(2.28)	(1.80)	(2.36)
Observation	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors clustered by state. * 0.05 ** 0.01 ***0.001.

Table 3: Interaction of political interest, satisfaction with democracy, and feelings of winning/losing with partisanship

	(1) Partisanship x Political Interest	(2) Partisanship x Satisfaction with Democracy	(3) Partisanship x Feelings of Winning
	b/se	b/se	b/se
Independent	-1.39 (2.52)	-0.90 (2.62)	-2.55 (2.29)
Republican	-3.77 (3.27)	2.46 (3.81)	-4.36 (2.99)
Political Interest		0.38 (0.56)	0.86 (0.55)
High Interest x Independent	-7.86** (2.65)		
High Interest x Republican	-7.08* (3.13)		
Satisfaction with Democracy	-2.16*** (0.43)		-2.18*** (0.43)
Not at all Satisfied		14.64*** (3.41)	
Not Very Satisfied		10.64** (3.43)	
Somewhat Satisfied		8.19* (3.36)	
Very Satisfied		6.80 (4.64)	
Not at all Satisfied x Independent		-2.56 (3.24)	
Not at all Satisfied x Republican		-12.07** (4.38)	
Not Very Satisfied x Independent		-3.43 (2.94)	
Not Very Satisfied x Republican		-13.76** (4.42)	
Somewhat Satisfied x Independent		-6.50* (3.17)	
Somewhat Satisfied x Republican		-10.05* (4.72)	
Very Satisfied x Independent		-7.70 (4.99)	
Very Satisfied x Republican		-9.64 (7.49)	
Loser	3.04 (1.59)	2.51 (1.67)	6.60** (2.16)
Winner	-1.49 (1.22)	-2.33 (1.30)	-0.90 (3.03)
Loser x Independent			-3.66 (2.21)
Loser x Republican			-9.84** (3.20)

Winner x Independent			-4.46 (3.66)
Winner x Republican			-0.02 (4.02)
Age	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)
Female	1.33 (1.12)	1.63 (1.34)	1.52 (1.15)
Married	-0.47 (1.08)	-0.31 (1.10)	-0.59 (1.08)
Education	0.49 (0.32)	0.29 (0.38)	0.16 (0.36)
Income	0.23 (0.22)	0.23 (0.22)	0.25 (0.21)
Homeowner	-0.24 (1.01)	-0.55 (0.97)	-0.00 (0.95)
Employed	-1.89 (1.99)	-2.31 (1.98)	-1.96 (1.99)
Not in Labor Force	-2.97 (2.32)	-3.18 (2.36)	-2.85 (2.35)
Black	1.93 (1.35)	1.54 (1.50)	1.53 (1.34)
Other	0.43 (1.92)	-0.21 (1.74)	0.29 (1.72)
Hispanic	-0.44 (1.41)	-0.50 (1.40)	-0.50 (1.40)
Conservatism	-5.04*** (0.64)	-5.15*** (0.63)	-5.03*** (0.60)
Constant	82.29*** (3.63)	71.38*** (3.61)	82.29*** (3.44)
Observations	1000	1000	1000

Ordinary least squares regression predicting policy reform mood (0-100) while varying the inclusion of political characteristics. * 0.05 ** 0.01 ***0.001