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Off to the Polls and then Down the Ballot: Are Union Members Less Likely to Roll-Off?

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## ABSTRACT

Despite being one of the cornerstone activities of a democracy, not everybody in the United States can, or will, vote. Even those who do turn out to vote may not vote in all races on the ballot. The concept of ballot roll-off (i.e., not completing one's ballot) has received less attention from political scientists than turnout. Roll-off often happens in low-profile elections where voters do not have enough information to decide. Additionally, perhaps this practice is not too surprising given that many voters need to be motivated by someone or something to turn out to the polls. Labor unions are one notable turnout mobilizer. They spend considerable resources socializing and encouraging their members to vote. Since they train their members to be more civically engaged, it raises the question of whether these efforts go beyond merely turnout and translate to voting down-ballot. Using data from the Cooperative Election Study, I found that union members and union household members are not more likely to vote in United States House of Representatives or Senate elections. When testing gubernatorial elections, I found that union members are *less* likely to vote than non-members.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In recent history, Americans are becoming more active in elections. The 2020 U.S. Presidential Election had a national turnout of 66%, the highest turnout in a presidential election since 1900 (Hartig et al. 2023). Furthermore, the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections had turnouts of 49% and 46%, respectively. These are the highest midterm turnouts in the past fifty years. Although these numbers superficially suggest American democracy is strengthening, there is growing concern that it is trending in the wrong direction.

Political polarization is growing within the nation, reflected in both the public and elected officials (Kleinfield 2023, 40-42). Additionally, Americans are showing less faith in democracy and the security of American elections. An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research Poll found that 49% of the country believe that democracy is not working (Riccardi and Sanders 2023). Similarly, an NPR-Ipsos poll found that 64% of Americans think that the nation's democracy is "in crisis and at risk of failing" (Rose and Baker 2022). With the 2020 election, a Monmouth poll found that 30% of respondents believe Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's victory was illegitimate, and only 59% believe it was "fair and square" (Kamisar 2023). Views on the 2020 election reflect the growing partisan divide with Democrats overwhelmingly believing the election was fair and a majority of Republicans believing Biden won "due to voter fraud." These underlying attitudes and the fragility of American democracy are best reflected in the events of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, where an assault on the U.S. Capitol was carried out in an attempt to overturn the results of the 2020 election.



What makes democratic societies extraordinary is the ability of average citizens to exert influence on their government and public policy. In most democracies this is most notably done through exercising one's right to vote, whether in a direct manner like a ballot referendum, or indirectly through citizens electing their preferred candidates to represent their interests in government. In the United States, voting was a right originally reserved for White men who owned property, and is now, at least nominally, enjoyed by all free citizens who are at least eighteen years of age. However, guaranteeing one's right to vote on paper does not necessarily mean one can, or will, vote. For example, despite the Fifteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution declaring that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged... on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude," Black Americans were largely denied the right to vote for most of the history since the amendment's ratification (Garrett 2023, 6-8). The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has significantly expanded the right to vote to Black Americans, but voter suppression persists (Cobb 2015; American Civil Liberties Union 2021).

The fact that so many citizens in a democracy like the United States choose not to vote has captured the attention of candidates, policymakers, and academics alike (Davis, Summers, and Montanaro 2020; Thomson-DeVeaux, Mithani, and Bronner 2020; Gerber et al. 2017; Ragsdale and Rusk 1993). However, even those who vote do not always do so for all races on the ballot. Voting for races at the top of the "ticket" (e.g., President) and not in down-ballot races is referred to as ballot roll-off. Understanding roll-off is important because although each election may contain important offices and issues on the ballot, the attention these races receive is disproportionate. Although one's municipal or state government officials may craft policy with greater impact on their day-to-day lives, few Americans can name their state legislator or governor (Rosen 2018). Therefore, when they go into the election booth, they are likely to rely

on heuristics, like whether a candidate has a “(D)” or an “(R)” next to their name, to help them vote in these lower profile races. Furthermore, a significant part of the electorate will choose not to vote at all in these elections, leaving their voices unheard in this part of the democratic process. However, candidates and scholars have recognized the importance of mobilizing voters to the polls (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Gershtenson 2003; Francia and Orr 2014). One of the important voter mobilizers in the United States are labor unions.

In similar fashion to American democracy, labor unions have been in decline. Unionization in the U.S. peaked throughout in the 1940s and 1950s where roughly one-third of American workers were represented by a union (Romero and Whittaker 2023, 3). Since its peak in 1945 at 34.2%, private sector unions have been in steady decline, with 10.1% of all workers being in a union in 2022 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023, 1).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, laws that limit union shop types, known as “right-to-work”, have spread across the states since the 1950s (Noah 2023). As of writing, there are 27 states with right-to-work laws. These laws limit union workplaces to having to operate under an “open shop” agreement, meaning that although a union has the exclusive right to represent all workers in a specific “shop,” or workplace, it may not take union dues from non-members who do not wish to pay (U.S. Department of Labor n.d.). This differs from other shop agreements such as the agency shop, where non-members and members alike must pay union dues, and the union shop, where all workers must become members of the union representing them.

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<sup>1</sup> The exact percentage and year of when union density peaked can vary based on how union density is calculated. Goldfield and Bromsen (2013), for example, estimated a peak union density of 35% of all American workers in 1953. Importantly, these calculations will show the same downward trend of union density from the 1950s to today. Furthermore, it is important to note an exception to this trend: public sector unions. Public sector union density has grown from roughly 10% in 1953 to 33.1% in 2022 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023).

Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court significantly hindered public sector unions in its decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* (2018). The Court ruled that agency shop agreements between unions and state and local governments violate the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution by compelling non-members to pay agency fees to the union, which they found tantamount to forcing subsidizing of speech which may violate an individual's conscience (8-10). This decision effectively put all public sector unions in the same status as private sector unions in right-to-work states as they must now all operate under open shop agreements. These downward trends in density and bargaining power for unions come despite the active role that unions play in politics as election mobilizers and an active interest group lobbying state and federal legislators. Not to mention, a majority of the American public has approved of unions, save for the single year of 2009 where approval was 48% (McCarthy 2022).

Labor unions are a notable force in electoral politics because they encourage their members to turnout when members may otherwise not. However, even if unions can get their members to the polls, that does not necessarily mean they can motivate members to vote in every race. Alternatively, as politically active entities, unions could also assist in providing a useful heuristic for their members to vote in these races, like how partisan affiliation would.

Political scientists have studied both union mobilization and ballot roll-off. They have yet to consider, however, whether unions can not only mobilize members to the voting booth, but also to vote for down-ballot races that still matter. Therefore, in this thesis, I explored whether union electoral influence extends beyond merely turning members out and into voting down-ballot. Specifically, does being a member of a union or union household make one more likely to vote down-ballot? Roll-off often occurs because voters lack necessary information to vote in lower-ballot races. Unions frequently give their members plenty of information about elections

and candidates to encourage them to vote, which can have a spillover effect on union households. Therefore, union members and union household members should be better equipped to vote down-ballot. To test this, I used data from the Cooperative Election Study to estimate the probability of union voters voting in United States House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, and state governor's elections during presidential elections. Despite union voters seemingly having the resources and information to help them vote down-ballot, my results showed that for House and Senate races they were no more likely to vote than a non-union voter, and in governor's races they were *more* likely to roll-off. I concluded by considering the meaning of these results for both the study of voter behavior and unions themselves.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Unions and Elections

Unions participate in politics in a variety of ways, most notably in their ability to mobilize voters. Union mobilizing in elections can be best understood through the mechanisms of providing civic training and fostering political identities in their members, information provision, and directly mobilizing members into political and collective action (Kerrissey and Schofer 2013, 898). As a result of these efforts, unions mobilize their members and non-members to the polls.

##### *2.1.1 Civic Training and Fostering Identity*

Unions directly cultivate civic skills in their members, which, in turn, can translate to political activity. For example, they have formal and informal training to teach their members civic skills like lobbying, phone banking, and conducting workplace negotiations (Kerrissey and Schofer 2013, 898). Unions regularly encourage members to directly participate in the political process by urging them to vote through get-out-the-vote drives, voter registration drives, and so on (899). Moreover, activities related to labor-management relations such as contract negotiations can spillover to influence political involvement of members. Kerrissey and Schofer's research indicated that these mechanisms are successful to some degree, as union members are more politically active than non-members in a range of activities including voting, protesting, etc. (920-921). This phenomenon is even more pronounced in individuals with low levels of education (921). Lastly, the democratic structure of unions also gives members

experience in political participation through voting for officers and contracts, and participating in strikes (Ahlquist 2017, 422).

Unions also foster member identity through political discussion at meetings and exposing members to the union's political stances. By influencing members to identify more strongly with their union, unions indirectly contribute to these members participating further in politics (Kerrissey and Schofer 2013, 898-899). This socialization and its policy implications manifest in a variety of ways. For example, Franko and Witko (2023) found that union members are more likely to identify as working class, regardless of what their "objective" socioeconomic class may be (558-559). Policy implications from this identification include people that identify as working class being more likely to identify support welfare state policies (563). Another important aspect of the union identity can be found when examining racial politics. Francia and Bigelow's (2010) analysis of the White working class in the 2004 election found that White working-class members that were part of a union were more likely prioritize "jobs/economy" as their top issue and vote for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry (149, 152-153). On the flipside, White working-class members who were not part of a union were more likely to prioritize "moral values" (149). The persons who prioritized moral values were also less likely to support Kerry (153). Additionally, White union members were less likely to harbor feelings of racial resentment than non-members, and they were more likely to support policies that benefit Black Americans, like affirmative action (Frymer and Grumbach 2021, 233).

Union identity building can even influence members to support policies that are seemingly against their economic interests. This is highlighted in Ahlquist, Clayton, and Levi's (2014) study on the International Longshore and Warehouse Union's (ILWU) stances against free trade and NAFTA. Since increased trade brings more economic opportunity and wealth to

dockworkers, it would be expected that dockworkers would be more supportive of free trade (33-34). However, the ILWU has explicit principles that emphasize fighting for not only the betterment of their workers, but for all American workers, and their stances against trade liberalization stem from these principles (44, 49, 52). Members of the ILWU are more likely to hold similar views toward free trade as the official union stance than a sample of non-ILWU affiliated workers in the same geographic areas (57-58). Furthermore, the more time a worker spent in the ILWU, the more likely they were to hold these anti-free trade views (61-62). Lastly, ILWU workers were less likely to have a positive view of NAFTA compared to non-ILWU workers and the American public (63, 67). The case of the ILWU workers suggests that socialization that occurs within the union can influence members policy positions even when the policies seemingly conflict with their economic interests.

Moreover, union identity construction can spill over into union households. While the literature on union households in this respect is lacking, general literature on household political socialization offers insight. Glaser (1959) determined that the influence of family is enough on the individual to produce a strong reinforcement of their intentions to vote or not vote if they are in line with the household view or reverse their intentions if they contradict the view (567). This means that if an individual intends to vote and the rest of the household also intends to vote, that individual is more likely to vote than if they were in a household where the rest did not intend to vote. Additionally, household views seem to influence an individual's motivations. Families with high interests in voting can influence those uninterested in turning out, and on the opposite end, families with low interests can influence members that are highly motivated to not vote (568).

While there is conflicting evidence of the degree to which parents can influence their children's political orientation, it seems that parents are generally successful in passing on their

partisan affiliation to their children (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 172-173; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009, 787). Additionally, parents are more likely to pass on political attitudes with a strong moral aspect to their children (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009, 786). For example, attitudes on race or school prayer are more likely to be transmitted from parent to child. Parent to child political socialization is influenced by other factors such as how frequently politics is discussed at home, how correctly a child perceives their parents' politics, and the salience of a political issue (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009, 786; Tedin 1974, 1585-1586). However, the direct transmission model has been challenged recently. For example, Ojeda and Hatemi (2015) argued that the model is incorrectly based on the assumption that children are generally successful at perceiving their parents' politics (1154, 1161). They proposed an alternative model where child perception is more central to whether transmission is successful or not (1167-1169). Furthermore, some scholars such as Smith et al. (2012) suggest that biology and genetics influence one's political attitudes (28, 30)

A similar relationship exists between married couples. For example, joint voting or non-voting between husband and wives are more likely to occur than the husband or wife acting independently (Glaser 1959, 564). Beck's (1991) research on political discussion in the 1988 Presidential Election found that respondents were most likely to discuss the campaign with their spouses and coworkers (374). Furthermore, spouses are likely to have similar views with each other (377-378). This is perhaps, as Stoker and Jennings (2005) argued, because marriage induces mutual socialization and brings married couples closer to each other's political leanings (70). For example, they found that accommodation of a spouse's views is common in marriages, especially with wives yielding to their husbands (57-58). The influence of married couples on each other's political views carries into longer lasting marriages, with husbands typically being



more influential over their wives than the other way around (65). Additionally, Hobbs, Christakis, and Fowler's (2014) study on spousal influence found that the death of one's partner makes them more likely to stop participating in elections (8, 13). This possibly occurs due to the loss of an important person for political discussion and mobilization in one's life (2, 12). However, there are challenges to the socialization explanation for why spouses have similar political views. Some scholars argue that rather than socialization, people with similar views are more likely to choose each other (Alford et al. 2011, 372-373, 377; Smith et al. 2012, 525, 528). Choosing a partner based on political preferences can occur indirectly or even be influenced by biological processes (Klofstad, McDermott, and Hatemi 2013, 525, 528; McDermott, Tingley, and Hatemi 2014, 1001-1002)

In a similar vein to the literature on political socialization, Kim (2022) argued that "when a union member is aware of the roles of unions and what to do as a member in the coming election, his or her family members are more likely to learn about their roles and the issues in the election" (165). What a union leader communicates with a member is likely to be transferred from that member to members of their family. This in turn could contribute to a union-oriented political socialization of the broader members in a union household.

### ***2.1.2 Information Provision and Direct Mobilization***

Two important mobilization mechanisms utilized by unions are information provision and direct mobilization. Information provision refers to unions providing political information to their members about preferred candidates, election dates, etc. Direct mobilization is the direct effort of unions to encourage their members to go to the polls, like get-out-the-vote drives. Information provision and direct mobilization are often conducted in tandem with top-down

efforts by union leadership to encourage their members to vote for candidates preferred by the union to occurring horizontally between rank-and-file members.

MacDonald (2021) identified two key methods that unions employ to increase the political knowledge of their members (121). The first is direct provision of political information, like emails, flyers, etc. These methods give members information on candidates and issues preferred by the union and provide union members with an advantage over their non-union counterparts since members do not need to go out of their way to seek information. This advantage is notable since voters often have trouble finding information about candidates' stances on issues and turn to heuristics and shortcuts instead (Bernhard and Freeder 2020, 606-607). The more information one has, the better they will be able to participate in elections. Furthermore, this is an important advantage in the context of roll-off as voters often roll-off because they lack the information needed to vote in a given race (Vanderleeuw and Liu 2002, 382). In addition, this method of informing often works in synergy with strategies to directly mobilize union members to the polls. These strategies consist of contact between union leadership and their members to encourage them to engage in political activity. Some ways leaders mobilize their members are through campaign activities like get-out-the-vote drives, phone banking, and more (Kim 2016, 1210-1211). These efforts not only reach current members, but also retired members and union households.

Another notable mobilization tool utilized by union leadership is the endorsement of candidates. This is a direct communication of a union's preferred candidate from leadership to members and the public. This tool can be effective but is limited in its scope. Juravich and Shergold's (1988) research into the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO's endorsement of Democratic candidate Walter Mondale in the 1984 presidential election suggested that unions do not

influence a member's decision to vote. However, once a union member decided to vote, the endorsement influenced *how* they voted (383). The study also found that the more active one is in their union, the more likely they are to vote for their union's endorsed candidate (384). Additionally, Rapoport, Stone, and Abramowitz's (1991) study on group endorsements in the 1984 Democratic caucuses in Iowa, Michigan, and Virginia similarly found a significant relationship between labor unions and teachers' groups support for Mondale and members voting for him, as well as participating in campaign activities like donating, canvassing, raising funds, trying to convince friends to support their candidate, and attending public meetings and rallies (196, 199).

Union endorsements also serve as signals to non-union voters. McDermott (2006) found that both hypothetical and real endorsements of Democratic candidates by the AFL-CIO makes liberal voters more likely to vote for them and conservatives less likely (253-255). Labor endorsements can help non-union liberals vote given that labor has historically supported the most liberal candidates in a given race and has ties to the Democratic Party (251). Because of this signal, it can then serve the opposite for conservative voters, assisting them in knowing which candidates to stay away from.

The second information mechanism identified by MacDonald (2021) is workplace discussion (124). Union workplaces facilitate greater workplace discussion and dissemination of political information. MacDonald's study found that unions significantly influence political knowledge among lower-income and less educated individuals (130-131). This second method is an important mechanism of mobilization in that it comes from the bottom-up rather than from leadership, and it can spillover into union households (Kim 2022, 164-165). Kim noted that the organizational structure of unions makes them more likely to enable these discussions than other

organizations because they encourage discussion on workplace related issues in a variety of contexts like meetings, workshops, and conventions. Furthermore, frequency and intensity of information dissemination among unions is higher in states with greater union membership than states with weaker membership (136).

### ***2.1.3 Unions' Impact on Elections***

When it comes to voting, higher levels of union density are correlated with higher rates of voter turnout (Radcliff & Davis 2000, 137). In an aggregate analysis of their mobilizing ability, union density is positively correlated with an increase in voter turnout in midterm elections (Kim 2022, 169). Additionally, Leighley and Nagler (2007) found that individual union members are more likely to vote than their non-union counterparts (439). Furthermore, they determined that individuals in states with higher union densities are more likely to vote. On an aggregate basis, they predict that voter turnout in the 2004 U.S. elections would have been 3 percent higher if union strength stayed at its 1964 levels.<sup>2</sup> This effect is notable for those in lower- and middle-income brackets, whose turnout would have increased by 3.5% (438). Kim (2016) found that unions may play some role in increasing minority voter turnout. People of all races are more likely to vote in areas with higher union density, and Asian union members are more likely to vote than their White counterparts (1219). Kim noted that “[i]t seems that Asians, who are considered as least participatory in the political process, actually get the most benefit from being union members as to voting participation,” and that Black and Latino union members also vote at higher rates than White members, but not at a statistically significant level (1219). In a similar vein, Francia and Orr (2014) found that Latino union members are more likely to register to vote

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<sup>2</sup> Union membership in the United States in 1964 is estimated to be 29.3% of all non-agricultural workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics 1965, 51). In 2022, this estimate has declined to 10.1% (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023, 1).

and participate in elections than Latino non-members (948-950). Moreover, membership in a union increased the likelihood of a person voting as well as having a family household member in a union (Kim 2022, 173). On a local level, union contacts with potential voters have shown to significantly increase turnout among voters in local and state elections in Los Angeles (Lamare 2010, 465-466).

## **2.2 Roll-Off Voting**

Roll-off voting is when voters fail to complete their entire ballot. Voter roll-off typically happens with races further down the ballot. These races often include ones that do not typically come to mind with voters such as statewide races (e.g., judges), and local races (e.g., city councilor and school board). Additionally, many elections further down the ballot are referendums or initiatives, which can vary in their appeal to voters. Explanations for roll-off include ballot structure, information deficits, and contest salience (Bullock & Dunn 1996, 72-73).

### **2.2.1 Ballot Structure**

Different aspects of the physical (or electronic) ballot can contribute to voters becoming fatigued as they vote and rolling off as a result. This includes the length of the ballot, the structure of it, and how the ballot is being administered. Augenblick and Nicholson (2016) examined roll-off in San Diego precincts in elections from 1992 to 2002 (467-468). California ballot ordering rules create scenarios where voters from different precincts can see the same contests but at different locations on their ballots (461). For example, one precinct may see ballot referendums and certain local positions lower than another precinct due to the presence of other state or local races in their precinct (461-462). They estimated that lowering a given contest by

one position on the ballot increases roll-off by 0.11% and estimated that choice fatigue is responsible for 8% of undervotes in their sample set (462).

The structure of the ballot itself can lead to confusion among voters, which in turn influences them to roll off. In his study on ballot structure, Walker (1966) found that office block ballots correlated with higher roll-off than partisan column ballots, especially among less educated and informed voters. He concluded that “the more complex the design of the ballot, the greater the tendency of voters to neglect races at the bottom of the ticket” (462). In a study on roll-off in the 1986 Oklahoma elections, when optical ballots had more confusing placement of races than paper ballots (such as placing a polarizing U.S. Senate race on the bottom or back of the ballot instead of at the top), the optical ballots had more roll-off (Darcy and Schneider 1989, 355-356). Confusing placement of races on optical ballots compared to paper ballots consistently correlated with more roll-off in both highly salient races like the U.S. Senate and lower-interest races like judicial elections (356). For ballot referendums, the more complexly worded an issue referendum is has been correlated with higher levels of voter roll-off (Reilly and Richey 2011, 64). Similarly, Bonneau and Loepp (2013) found that states with ballots that contain straight-ticket voting options (STVO) combined with non-partisan judicial elections feature the highest levels of roll-off in these judicial elections compared to states with partisan judicial elections and those with non-partisan judicial elections and no STVO (125-126). Part of why these elections feature more roll-off could be voters utilizing the STVO and not realizing that they accidentally did not vote in the judicial election.

With ballot administration, differences between how the ballot is given has been correlated with different levels of roll-off. For example, lever machines correlated with more roll-off down-ballot than punch-cards (Darcy and Schneider 1989, 348-349). This is possibly due

to the machines presenting voters with many of the races at once and thus overwhelming them whereas punch cards present fewer races at a time. Further research on more contemporary voting machines such as the ELECTronic machine showed that they are more capable of retaining voters (Nichols 1998, 109). One way the ELECTronic machine can do this is by simply utilizing a red flashing light atop races for which a voter has not yet cast a ballot, thus drawing their attention to lower ballot races. In an analysis of the 1992 and 1996 elections in Kentucky, one researcher found that counties that utilized electronic voting machines had lower rates of roll-off than counties that used manual voting mechanisms (112).

### ***2.2.2 Salience and Information Deficiency***

Information, or lack thereof, also plays a pivotal role in a voter's decision to roll-off as voters often choose to not participate in an election where they do not feel sufficiently informed to decide. However, an issue or candidate's salience can help bridge information gaps by making a race more relevant to a voter and cause them to vote. Examples of salience include hot-button political issues, race, and partisanship/ideology.

On racial salience, Vanderleeuw and Engstrom's (1987) study on roll-off in the 1983 New Orleans elections found that voters (and Black voters in particular) were less likely to roll-off on local referendums that were more racially divisive (1086). Vanderleeuw and Liu (2002) further determined the presence of Black candidates and greater Black elite influence in political institutions influences whether Black voters are likely to roll-off. For example, they found that Black voter roll-off in New Orleans decreased as Black politicians became more prevalent in holding mayoral and city council offices (388). Furthermore, increased numbers of Black candidates correlated with a decrease in Black roll-off (390). Vanderleeuw and Sowers (2007) lend further credence to racial heuristics and divisiveness being a contributor to roll-off.

Evidence from Memphis City Council elections between 1967 and 2003 indicated that there is less roll-off among both Black and White voters in elections featuring both Black and White candidates contesting the same office (947). Additionally, White voters had higher roll-off rates than Black voters in elections involving Black mayors and a majority Black city council (948).

Another important signal for voters is partisanship. This is displayed in judicial elections, where many voters will vote at the top of the ticket but will not vote in contested judicial elections or retention elections down-ballot (Kritzer 2016, 410). In judicial elections with partisan labels, roll-off decreases significantly compared to elections with no partisan labels (Kritzer 2016, 434). Moreover, Miller (2022) found that candidate extremism can influence roll-off in U.S. House of Representatives elections. A candidate away from the ideological center of a race is associated with lower levels of roll-off among Democrats and Republicans (805, 807). An explanation for this could be that while extreme candidates could put off moderate voters, they energize voters within their own party and the opposite party to polls, leading to a reduction in roll-off (810).

A more direct information theory of voting is that although most citizens are willing to vote, they fail to do so because they are unable to evaluate their choices on the ballot (Fahey, Weissert, and Uttermark 2018, 94). To make up for this gap in information, voters turn to various authorities they view as credible to assist them in making informed decisions (95). For example, they can turn to campaign literature, “people who have similar interests,” interest group endorsements, and media such as newspapers (95). A study on the relationship between local Florida newspaper endorsements and roll-off established a significant relationship between the endorsed position on a ballot referendum and citizens voting in favor of it but did not find a significant relationship between endorsements and roll-off (104-105). However, voters in a



media market who shared the ideology of the newspaper were less likely to vote than those who did not, but when they did vote they were less likely to roll-off (108). Chapp and Aehl (2021) observed that a national decrease in newspaper circulation correlates with an increase in roll-off in presidential elections (240). They further found that ballot roll-off decreases in districts with higher per capita newspaper circulation, and this effect is more pronounced in districts with lower electoral competition (244-245).

## Chapter 3

### Theory and Hypotheses

#### 3.1 Theory

Brady, Schlozman, and Vera (1995) described the reasons for one to not participate in elections as coming down to “because they can’t, because they don’t want to, or because nobody asked” (271). The phenomenon of voter roll-off tends to fall into the first category. Roll-off voters tend to not have the ability or resources to make decisions down-ballot (Vanderleeuw and Liu 2002, 382). The literature on demographic roll-off voting thus far has been primarily focused on racial demographics, and it has concerned Black and White voters who cannot or do not want to vote down-ballot. This research reveals that voters in these demographics use information such as the race of candidates to signal the importance of an election and aid their decision to vote down-ballot. Furthermore, studies on the connection between the presence of newspapers in an area and voter roll-off further indicate that roll-off can be described by the “because they can’t” categorization. For example, the lack of newspaper presence correlates with higher levels of roll-off, possibly because newspapers fill the information gaps for voters on their choices down-ballot. When this tool is unavailable in a community, more voters are left with insufficient information come election day, particularly for the more local elections appearing lower in the ballot. Additionally, ideological or partisan signals from newspapers or candidates can help inform voters on their choices.

Unions have the potential to help fill the information gap that often contributes to roll-off voting. The literature on unions shows that they are significant in their ability to mobilize members to the polls. Much of this mobilization is accomplished through identity-building and

providing information to members which would address all three categorizations of potential non-voters identified by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995). In particular, the ability of unions to increase their members' political knowledge, train them to be more civically engaged, and directly mobilize them to support specific candidates should make union members more likely to vote down-ballot than the average non-union voter. All these mechanisms make union members better informed and the races more salient to them than they normally would be.

Additionally, union information provision should have a spillover effect. Union leaders can communicate their political views to members who can then distribute these views through workplace discussions and at home. Therefore, union mobilization can trigger a chain reaction of indirect mobilization. An important area for this spillover to occur within is the home, which has long been recognized as an important vehicle for political socialization. Since union members are frequently exposed to political socialization, they are likely to pass on some of the information they received from their union to their family members. Given a union's abilities to inform and mobilize their members, and the spillover effects of indirect mobilization, I theorized that unions are effectively able to address the information gap that leads to voter roll-off and influence union members, as well as members of union households, to vote down-ballot.

### **3.2 Hypotheses**

I hypothesized that because unions can better inform and socialize their members politically, union members are more likely to vote down-ballot than non-members. This led to the following hypothesis statements:

H1: In elections with candidates for the President of the United States at the top of the ballot, union members are more likely to vote in a United States House of Representatives race than non-members.

H2: In elections with candidates for the President of the United States at the top of the ballot, union members are more likely to vote in a United States Senate race than non-members.

H3: In elections with candidates for the President of the United States at the top of the ballot, union members are more likely to vote in their state's governor's race than non-members.

Furthermore, I expected a similar phenomenon with union household members given the household's role as an agent of political socialization:

H4: In elections with candidates for the President of the United States at the top of the ballot, union household members are more likely to vote in a United States House of Representatives race than non-members.

H5: In elections with candidates for the President of the United States at the top of the ballot, union household members are more likely to vote in a United States Senate race than non-members.

H6: In elections with candidates for the President of the United States at the top of the ballot, union household members are more likely to vote in their state's governor's race than non-members.

## Chapter 4

### Data and Methodology

To test my hypotheses, I used a logistic regression to evaluate whether there is a relationship between union membership and union household membership and roll-off in the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, and their state's gubernatorial races in 2012, 2016, and 2020. For collecting data, I used the Cooperative Election Study (formerly known as the Congressional Cooperative Election Study). The CCES is an online survey conducted by YouGov that collects individual level data (Schaffner, Ansolabehere, Luks 2021; Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2017; Schaffner and Ansolabehere 2013). The survey is carried out in two waves, a pre-election survey sent out from late September to late October, and a post-election survey conducted in November. The pre-election survey gathers information on demographics, political attitudes, how much news one consumes, and so on. The post-election survey follows up on some of the information gathered in the pre-election survey and asks respondents whether they voted in the election and who they voted for. Because of this, I only utilized the post-election survey, so my data was only comparing people who actually voted or not instead of their stated intentions. Additionally, I only used CCES datasets since 2012 because 2012 was the first year CCES started collecting data on union membership and union household membership.

My dependent variable was down-ballot voting, measured dichotomously by whether someone voted in a given House, Senate, or gubernatorial race. Roll-off requires that someone does not vote in at least one race and thus fail to complete their ballot. Due to my election samples being the 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential elections, I assumed that if somebody voted at all in these elections, they voted for the president at the top of the ballot. I filtered out respondents who did not vote in the election as they could not roll-off and removed respondents

who stated an intention to vote in the pre-election survey but failed to do so from my sample. Importantly, not everyone finishes completing their CCES survey. Due to this there are three categories of answers for vote choice: did vote, did not vote, or no answer. For my models I assumed that individuals that did not answer their vote choice questions did so because they did not vote in that race, and therefore I treated these answers the same as a did not vote response.

Because not every state has a U.S. Senate or gubernatorial race during a presidential election cycle, voters in these states cannot vote down-ballot in these races. Therefore, states without these races were removed from the sample. Table 1 shows the U.S. Senate races in 2012, 2016, and 2020, respectively, and are included in my sample.

**Table 1 States with U.S. Senate Elections in 2012, 2016, and 2020**

2012 U.S. Senate Races	2016 U.S. Senate Races	2020 U.S. Senate Races
Arizona	Alabama	Alabama
California	Alaska	Alaska
Connecticut	Arkansas	Arizona
Delaware	Arizona	Arkansas
Florida	California	Colorado
Indiana	Connecticut	Delaware
Hawaii	Colorado	Georgia (Regular and Special Election)
Maine	Florida	Idaho
Maryland	Georgia	Illinois
Massachusetts	Idaho	Iowa
Minnesota	Illinois	Kansas
Missouri	Iowa	Kentucky
Michigan	Indiana	Louisiana
Mississippi	Kansas	Massachusetts
Montana	Kentucky	Maine
Nevada	Louisiana	Michigan
North Dakota	Maryland	Mississippi
New Mexico	Missouri	Minnesota
New York	New York	Montana
Nebraska	New Hampshire	Nebraska
New Jersey	Nevada	New Jersey
Ohio	North Carolina	New Hampshire
Pennsylvania	North Dakota	New Mexico
Rhode Island	Oregon	North Carolina
Tennessee	Oklahoma	

Texas	Ohio	Oregon
Utah	Pennsylvania	Oklahoma
Virginia	South Carolina	Rhode Island
Vermont	South Dakota	South Carolina
Washington	Utah	South Dakota
West Virginia	Vermont	Tennessee
Wisconsin	Washington	Texas
Wyoming	Wisconsin	Wyoming

Table 2 shows the 2012, 2016, 2020 gubernatorial races that are included in my sample.

**Table 2 States with Gubernatorial Elections in 2012, 2016, and 2020**

2012 Gubernatorial Races	2016 Gubernatorial Races	2020 Gubernatorial Races
Delaware	Delaware	Delaware
Indiana	Indiana	Indiana
Missouri	Missouri	Missouri
Montana	Montana	Montana
New Hampshire	New Hampshire	New Hampshire
North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina
North Dakota	North Dakota	North Dakota
Utah	Oregon (Special Election)	Utah
Vermont	Utah	Vermont
Washington	Vermont	Washington
West Virginia	Washington	West Virginia
	West Virginia	

Additionally, many U.S. House races have only one major party (Democratic or Republican) candidate contesting and therefore voters lack a meaningful choice in these elections. To control for these races I made a variable, “no competition,” to indicate whether an election had no major party competition (1) and test whether a lack of competition influenced voter participation. Tables 3 shows the specific U.S. House races that were coded as 1 for this variable. All other races, which were competitive, are coded 0.

**Table 3 U.S. House of Representatives Elections without Major Party Competition**

2012 U.S. House Elections	2016 U.S. House Elections	2020 U.S. House Elections
AL-01	AL-01	AL-05
AR-03	AL-04	AL-06
CA-33	AL-07	AL-07
FL-15	AR-01	AR-01
FL-24	AR-03	FL-02
GA-03	AR-04	FL-25
GA-08	AZ-03	IL-08
GA-10	AZ-08	MA-01
KS-01	CA-12	MA-03
LA-04	CA-40	MA-07
MA-01	FL-24	MA-08
MA-02	GA-01	MS-04
NY-07	GA-09	NY-05
OH-08	GA-10	NY-16
OH-11	GA-14	NC-12
SC-02	IL-03	RI-01
SC-06	IL-04	SD-01
TX-03	IL-15	TN-05
TX-13	IL-16	VA-09
TX-19	IN-01	
TX-29	KS-01	
	KY-02	
	KY-05	
	MA-01	
	MA-02	
	MA-05	
	MA-06	
	MA-07	
	NE-03	
	NY-08	
	NY-09	
	NY-16	
	NY-17	
	OK-01	
	OR-03	
	PA-03	
	PA-13	
	PA-18	
	TX-04	
	TX-05	
	TX-08	
	TX-11	
	TX-13	



	TX-16	
	TX-19	
	TX-20	
	TX-32	
	TX-36	
	VT-01	
	VA-11	
	WI-03	
	WI-04	

My key independent variables were union membership and union household membership, both of which were dichotomous. CCES contains three answers for both union members and union household questions: yes currently, yes formerly, and no. Both the yes answers were combined and coded 1, and no was coded 0. Control variables included race, gender, education, age, ideology, family income, news interest, and electoral competition. Race and gender were both coded dichotomously, White vs. non-White and male vs. female. For race, White was coded as 1, and non-White was coded as 0. Gender was coded with male as 1 and female as 2. Education was coded as an ordinal scale with six components: no high school diploma (coded 1), high school graduate (2), having some college education (3), having an associate's degree (4), having a bachelor's degree (5), and having a post-graduate degree (6). Age was on a scale and was calculated by the year of the survey minus a respondent's date of birth. Ideology was a five-point scale from very liberal (1), liberal (2), moderate (3), conservative (4), and very conservative (5). Family income was based on twelve self-reported income ranges starting at less than \$10,000 (1), \$10,000-\$20,000 (2), to \$150,000 or more (12). News interest was a four-point scale asking respondents if they follow the news "most of the time" (1), "some of the time" (2), "only now and then" (3), or "hardly at all" (4). Electoral competition reflects whether a race featured candidates from both major parties and was coded as 0 for races with

two candidates, and 1 for races with only one candidate from a major party. This variable was only measured for House races because these were the only type of races with no major party competition. Descriptive statistics for the included variables appear in Table 4.

**Table 4 Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Race	111,429	0.78	0.42	0	1
Gender	111,429	1.54	0.50	1	2
Education	111,429	3.80	0.42	1	5
Age	111,429	53.28	16.23	18	95
Ideology	111,380	3.16	1.29	1	5
Family Income	111,293	7.24	3.62	1	13
News Interest	110,133	1.54	0.81	1	4
Electoral Competition	111,429	0.06	0.24	0	1
Union Membership	111,199	0.29	0.45	0	1
Union Household	110,832	0.24	0.43	0	1

## Chapter 5

### Results

The results from the logistic regression models are reported in Table 5. The results are presented as odds ratios, where a value greater than 1 represents a variable that increases the odds of down-ballot voting and value less than 1 means the odds of voting are decreasing. Union membership had no statistically significant relationship with voting in House races or Senate races, making the results inconsistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2. Union membership did have a statistically significant relationship with voting in gubernatorial elections, but membership *decreases* the odds of voting in those races. Therefore, the results are not consistent with Hypothesis 3. There were similar results for union household membership. Union household membership did not have a statistically significant relationship with voting in House or Senate races, thus making the results inconsistent with Hypotheses 4 and 5. Additionally, union households had a statistically significant *negative* relationship with voting in gubernatorial races, making the results inconsistent with Hypothesis 6. In the Any Down-Ballot model, union members were less likely to vote down-ballot, and there was no statistically significant relationship for union household members.

Statistically significant results were present for all control variables tested, except for family income in gubernatorial races. As expected from the literature, White voters were more likely to vote down-ballot than their non-White counterparts. Women were more likely to vote down-ballot than men. Older voters were more likely to vote down-ballot. The more educated a voter was, the more likely they were to vote down-ballot. Conservatives were less likely to vote

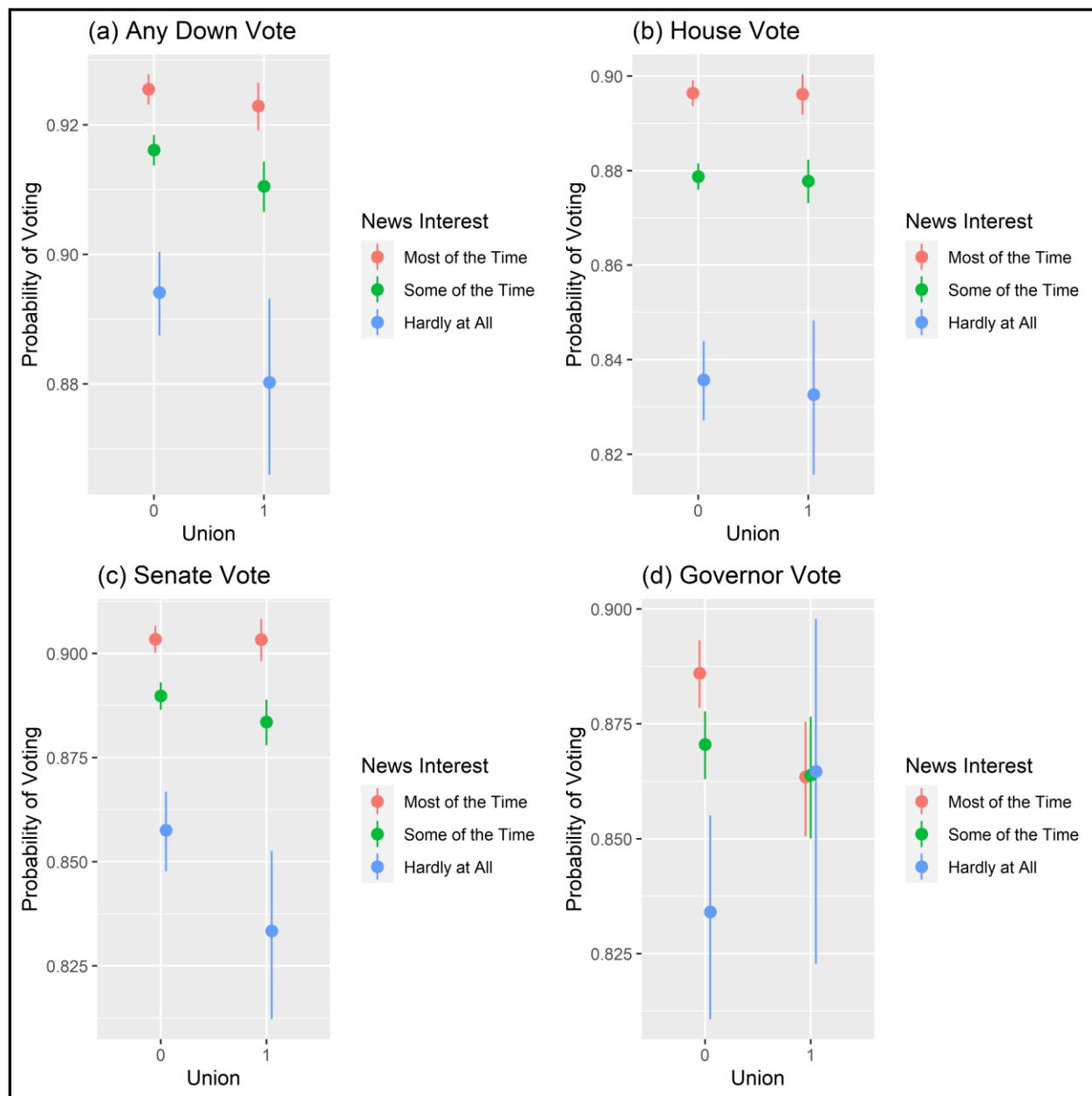
down-ballot in the Any Down-Ballot model, and they were less likely to vote in House and Senate races. However, they were more likely to do so in gubernatorial races. The greater one's family income is, the more likely they were to vote in House and Senate races, but there is no statistically significant effect in gubernatorial races. In line with the literature, consuming less news correlated with greater levels of roll-off. For House races, the lack of meaningful competition in the race correlated with higher levels of roll-off.

**Table 5 Determinants of Roll-Off in Any, House, Senate, and Gubernatorial Elections**

Variables	Any	House	Senate	Governor
Female	<b>1.35</b> [1.30, 1.41]	<b>1.27</b> [1.22, 1.32]	<b>1.35</b> [1.29, 1.41]	<b>1.17</b> [1.06, 1.28]
Age	<b>1.05</b> [1.05, 1.05]	<b>1.04</b> [1.03, 1.04]	<b>1.04</b> [1.03, 1.04]	<b>1.04</b> [1.03, 1.04]
Education	<b>1.27</b> [1.26, 1.30]	<b>1.24</b> [1.22, 1.25]	<b>1.25</b> [1.23, 1.27]	<b>1.19</b> [1.15, 1.23]
White	<b>2.80</b> [2.69, 2.92]	<b>2.35</b> [2.26, 2.44]	<b>2.75</b> [2.62, 2.89]	<b>2.42</b> [2.18, 2.69]
Conservative	<b>0.94</b> [0.92, 0.95]	<b>0.95</b> [0.94, 0.97]	<b>0.93</b> [0.01, 0.94]	<b>1.05</b> [1.01, 1.09]
Family Income	<b>1.01</b> [1.01, 1.02]	<b>1.01</b> [1.00, 1.02]	<b>1.01</b> [1.00, 1.01]	1.01 [0.99, 1.02]
News Interest	<b>0.87</b> [0.85, 0.89]	<b>0.84</b> [0.82, 0.85]	<b>0.85</b> [0.83, 0.88]	<b>0.89</b> [0.84, 0.94]
No Competition	<b>0.89</b> [0.82, 0.96]	<b>0.44</b> [0.42, 0.47]	N/A	N/A
Union Member	<b>0.94</b> [0.90, 0.99]	0.99 [0.95, 1.04]	0.96 [0.91, 1.02]	<b>0.88</b> [0.79, 0.98]
Union Household	0.94 [0.92, 1.04]	0.99 [0.94, 1.03]	0.98 [0.93, 1.04]	<b>0.82</b> [0.73, 0.92]
Intercept	0.14 [0.12, 0.16]	0.26 [0.22, 0.28]	0.19 [0.16, 0.22]	0.19 [0.14, 0.25]
N	109,187	109,187	71,209	16,418
Odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Bold $p < 0.05$ .				

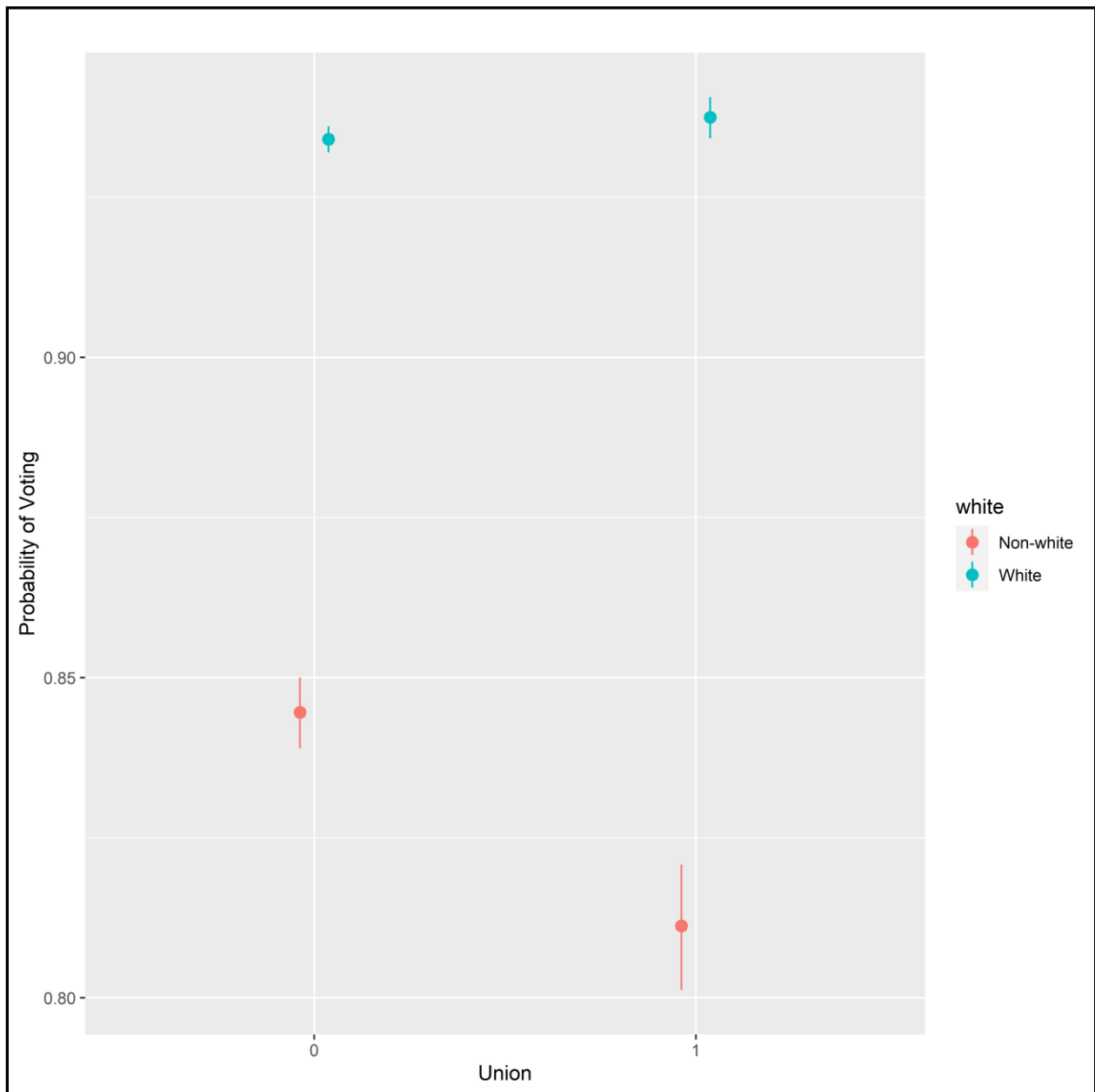
The literature on the relationship between newspaper availability and roll-off indicates that the availability of newspapers can have a limited influence on roll-off at the individual and aggregate level (Fahey, Weissert, and Uttermark 2018; Chapp and Aehl 2021). Unions additionally provide their members with a wealth of information during election cycles. I expected that union members who consume more news to be best equipped to vote down-ballot and therefore are less likely to roll-off. To test this expectation from the literature, I estimated the same models but included interactions between union membership and news interest. The full results are in Appendix A, but Figure 1 visualizes the interaction effects with marginal effects plots (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). For the Any Down-Ballot, House, and Senate models there was no interaction. There was an interaction in gubernatorial elections. Union members who consume news most of the time or some of the time were less likely to vote in gubernatorial elections than members who consume news hardly at all.

**Figure 1 Interaction between Union Membership, News Interest, and Voting**



Additionally, the roll-off literature indicates that one's race can influence whether they roll-off (Vanderleeuw and Engstrom 1987; Vanderleeuw and Liu 2002; Vanderleeuw and

Sowers 2007). The union mobilization literature suggests that unions can partially influence minority turnout, depending on the minority group (Kim 2016; Francia and Orr 2014). Given that the roll-off literature indicates that Black voters often need another influence to make an election salient enough for them to participate in (such as an election featuring a White candidate versus a Black candidate), and unions can help make elections more salient for some minority groups to turnout, I expected that union non-White voters to be more likely to vote down-ballot than non-union non-White voters. I estimated a model of any down-ballot voting with an interaction between union membership and race. As shown in Figure 2, White voters regardless of union membership were more likely to vote down-ballot, however non-White union members were less likely to vote down-ballot than non-White non-union voters.

**Figure 2 Interaction between Union Membership, Race, and Any Down-Ballot Voting**



## Chapter 6

### Discussion

Overall, I found no support for the hypotheses that resulted from joining the union mobilization and ballot roll-off literatures. I hypothesized that union members and union household members would be less likely to roll-off in U.S. House, Senate, and gubernatorial races when voting during presidential elections. In most cases there was no significant relationship between union or union household membership and voting down-ballot. In the cases where there were, the opposite effect was found. In U.S. House and Senate races, union membership or being in a union household did not significantly influence whether someone voted in these races. Whereas in gubernatorial races, union and union household members were more likely to roll-off than their non-union counterparts. In the overall voting model, union household members were not significantly more likely to vote down-ballot, but union members were more likely to roll-off. Furthermore, when testing the conditional relationship between union membership and one's news interests, union members were consistently more likely to roll-off across all elections and news interests compared to their non-union counterparts with one notable exception: union members who hardly consumed news were more likely to vote down-ballot in gubernatorial races. When testing the conditional relationship between union membership and one's race, non-White non-union voters were more likely to vote down-ballot than non-White union voters.

A possible explanation for these results is salience. For one, it could be simply that the union relationships do not make certain elections more salient as the literature would suggest candidate race does. Given that a candidate's race is more apparent than whether one is union-

friendly and is overall more predominant in American politics than unions are, this is not surprising. However, another explanation for the results of this study could be that the elections evaluated are already very salient. The salience of federal elections can be inferred by how billions of dollars were spent in congressional campaigns in 2012, 2016, and 2020, with the spending climbing each cycle (Evers-Hillstrom 2021). These campaign expenditures translate into campaign mail, yard signs, television advertising, and other means to significantly raise the profile of a race. Meanwhile gubernatorial races feature the most high-profile office in state government. This explanation would mean that federal elections are so high-profile that unions are unlikely to make them more salient to their members. In other words, union voters are like ordinary voters when it comes to federal election salience. Lastly, it could be that union information provision has diminishing marginal returns. Giving members information about elections could be enough to get them to engage in baseline electoral activity (i.e., vote for President), but as they receive more political information it does not provide them with enough knowledge, or encourage them enough, to vote down-ballot, again making union voter behavior in line with the average roll-off voter.

In the broader context, my findings suggest that although unions can mobilize their members to the polls, they cannot necessarily translate this mobilization to voting in key races down-ballot. However, the interaction between union membership, news interest, and voting down-ballot suggests that unions have a niche role in deterring roll-off. The interaction showed that union members who consumed hardly any news were more likely to vote in gubernatorial elections than non-members. These elections were the lowest profile ones tested in this thesis. Given that only members who consumed little news were more likely to vote in these races, union communications and mobilization mechanisms may have a limited ability to influence

members who hardly follow the news to vote down-ballot in lower profile elections. Whereas union members who are more active in their news consumption are more likely to receive information from sources other than their union, and thus be exposed to different viewpoints, information, etc. and form their opinions independent of union influence.

My findings do reinforce some previous findings in the roll-off literature. First, White voters were the group most likely to vote down-ballot. This is consistent with previous roll-off literature that suggests that White voters are less likely to roll-off than non-Whites (Vanderleeuw and Engstrom 1987; Vanderleeuw and Liu 2002; Vanderleeuw and Sowers 2007). Second, my results support the theory that information is critical in voting down-ballot. Tests on indicators that one would be more politically knowledgeable, news interest and education level, showed that as one consumes more news or becomes more educated, they are more likely to vote down-ballot (Fahey, Weissert, and Uttermark 2018; Chapp and Aehl 2021).

The roll-off literature thus far has primarily focused on already low-salience races such as local elections which do not usually feature the same level of interest as federal and gubernatorial elections (Vanderleeuw and Liu 2002; Vanderleeuw and Sowers 2007; Augenblick and Nicholson 2016; Kritzer 2016). Therefore, it would be worthwhile to study whether union relationships deter roll-off in these low-salience races. In the aggregate, comparing roll-off in states based on union density or whether they have right-to-work laws would also be valuable to evaluate union influence on voting down-ballot. Furthermore, the intersection between union membership and race needs more study. So far it appears that union electoral impacts are limited when it comes to race. Kim (2016), for example, only found a significant relationship between unions and turnout of Asian voters. Although Kim (2016) did not find a similar relationship for unions and Latinos, Francia and Orr's (2014) study suggests otherwise, that unions can influence

Latino turnout. My interaction model between union membership and race suggested that union influence in voting behavior of non-White voters does not extend further than turnout. However, my research only examined White voters versus non-White voters, so further study between unions and roll-off by specific minority groups could be valuable.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

Unions spend considerable resources and effort to socialize and train their members to be civically engaged. In this thesis I argued that the mechanisms utilized by unions to turn out members in elections should similarly encourage members to vote in down-ballot races. This expectation arises from bringing together the existing, but separate, political science research on union mobilization and down-ballot voting. However, I found no support for these hypotheses in federal and gubernatorial elections. It therefore appears that although unions are successful at turning their members out to vote in an election, they are not necessarily ensuring that their members vote in all elections on the ballot. These findings provide nuance in the intersection between unions and elections and raise further inquiries to resolve between unions, elections, and voting down-ballot. To better understand these nuances, I suggested different directions for future researchers including intersections between unions and low-salience elections and unions and minority voters.

Given the role of unions in elections in as mobilizers it is interesting that their mobilizing does not translate to participating down-ballot. My thesis may suggest broader implications regarding American civic practice since convincing one to go to the polls may not necessarily mean they give full civic commitment once they arrive. Although roll-off only happens among a fraction of voters, and thus may not appear impactful in elections where candidates win by at least thousands of votes, it is important to remember the smaller scale of equally important state and local elections. To highlight this, in 2022 the Pennsylvania Democratic Party won a majority of seats in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for the first time in twelve years (Orso, Lai, and Marin 2022). Their one-seat majority can be attributed to a legislative district in

Delaware County that the Democratic candidate won by a razor-thin 59 more votes than their Republican opponent, flipping the seat and the chamber. In state and local races that come down to winning by margins in the ones, tens, or hundreds, who does and does not roll-off can be an important influence on the outcome.

## Appendix A

**Determinants of Roll-Off with Union-News Interest and Union-Race Interactions**

Variables	Any	House	Senate	Governor
Female	<b>1.35</b> [1.30, 1.41]	<b>1.27</b> [1.22, 1.32]	<b>1.35</b> [1.29, 1.41]	<b>1.17</b> [1.06, 1.28]
Age	<b>1.05</b> [1.05, 1.05]	<b>1.04</b> [1.03, 1.04]	<b>1.04</b> [1.03, 1.04]	<b>1.04</b> [1.03, 1.04]
Education	<b>1.27</b> [1.26, 1.30]	<b>1.24</b> [1.22, 1.25]	<b>1.25</b> [1.23, 1.27]	<b>1.19</b> [1.15, 1.23]
White	<b>2.80</b> [2.69, 2.92]	<b>2.35</b> [2.26, 2.44]	<b>2.75</b> [2.62, 2.89]	<b>2.42</b> [2.18, 2.69]
Conservative	<b>0.94</b> [0.92, 0.95]	<b>0.95</b> [0.94, 0.97]	<b>0.93</b> [0.01, 0.94]	<b>1.05</b> [1.01, 1.09]
Family Income	<b>1.01</b> [1.01, 1.02]	<b>1.01</b> [1.00, 1.02]	<b>1.01</b> [1.00, 1.01]	1.01 [0.99, 1.02]
News Interest	<b>0.87</b> [0.85, 0.89]	<b>0.84</b> [0.82, 0.85]	<b>0.85</b> [0.83, 0.88]	<b>0.89</b> [0.84, 0.94]
Competition	<b>0.89</b> [0.82, 0.96]	<b>0.44</b> [0.42, 0.47]	N/A	N/A
Union Member	<b>0.94</b> [0.90, 0.99]	0.99 [0.95, 1.04]	0.96 [0.91, 1.02]	<b>0.88</b> [0.79, 0.98]
Union Household	0.94 [0.92, 1.04]	0.99 [0.94, 1.03]	0.98 [0.93, 1.04]	<b>0.82</b> [0.73, 0.92]
Union Member*News Interest	0.96 [0.91, 1.02]	0.99 [0.95, 1.04]	0.94 [0.88, 1.00]	<b>1.16</b> [1.02, 1.32]
Union Member*White	<b>1.33</b> [1.21, 1.47]	N/A	N/A	N/A
Intercept	0.14 [0.12, 0.16]	0.26 [0.22, 0.28]	0.19 [0.16, 0.22]	0.19 [0.14, 0.25]
N	109,187	109,187	71,209	16,418
Odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Bold $p < 0.05$ .				

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## ACADEMIC VITA

### EDUCATION

**Pennsylvania State University, Middletown, PA**

**Schreyer Honors College**

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

**December 2023**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Pennsylvania House Fellowship, Harrisburg, PA**

**September 2023-December 2023**

*Legislative Fellow*

- Worked in the Local Government Committee, under Chairman Robert L. Freeman
- Currently in the process of researching the issues of access to swimming lessons and public pools and writing legislation to introduce to help solve the issue
- Assisted the representative and constituents by researching and responding to constituent inquiries
- Prepared bill analyses to brief representatives on proposed legislation, including complicated topics such land use regulation, municipal disincorporation, pensions, and taxes

**Pennsylvania State University, Center Valley, PA**

**September 2021-December 2022**

*Tutor*

- Worked with undergraduate students
- Tutored in Micro and Macroeconomics
- Conveyed complex information about economics in a way to help tutees understand the content better
- Taught tutees study tips and notetaking to help them learn outside of tutoring sessions

**Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, PA**

**August-December 2022**

*Intern*

- Researched various issues involving Rural Pennsylvania
- Wrote policy briefs on these issues to assist the Center with its grants program

- Identified gaps in research and advised the Center on what topics they should issue grants for
- Three of the topics researched are in their 2024 grants program:
  - Combatting the opioid epidemic in rural PA
  - Economic issues facing mobile homeowners in PA
  - Impact of short-term rentals in PA
- Often contacted by my former supervisor for policy or research ideas after my tenure with the Center

## **AWARDS & HONORS**

### **Alexandria Downing Outstanding Student in Sociology Award 2022**

- Awarded to students who have “demonstrated outstanding academic performance and promise in the field of sociology”

### **National Political Science Honor Society (Pi Sigma Alpha) 2023**

### **President’s Freshman Award (Pennsylvania State University) 2020**

- University-wide award presented to students who achieve a 4.0 G.P.A. during their first semester of admission

### **Dean’s List Every Semester, Spring 2020 through Fall 2023**

## **EXTRACURRICULARS & INTERESTS**

### **Eastern Sociological Society Poster Presentation March 2022**

- Presented “Making sense of Critical Race Theory in light of recent backlash and its relevance to contemporary social problems”
- Based on a literature review I wrote for honors credit in an introductory sociology course

### **Volunteer Work- Project Restoration May-August 2023**

- Assisted the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church with aiding survivors restore their homes in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida
- Responsibilities included site work ranging from helping with tearing down damaged parts of homes, building new parts, and cleanup.
- Attended regular meetings to take notes between members of Pennsylvania Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and state and local government officials

## **Amateur Film Photography**

- Canon AE-1 enthusiast