

Local Elections Consolidation: A Primer and Model Policy

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Introduction

The timing of elections in the United States plays a critical role in shaping democratic participation and representation. The Constitution authorizes Congress to set the timing of elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate.¹ An 1845 federal statute establishes that elections for federal legislative offices are to be held on “the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November, in every even-numbered year.”² Terms for federal legislative offices vary between two and six years, thereby creating two cycles, both occurring on even-numbered years. Presidential cycles occur in years divisible by four, when voters elect both their congressional representatives and presidential electors for the Electoral College. Midterm cycles happen every two years between presidential years, when voters elect members of Congress but not the president.

The Constitution does not specify when states and localities are to hold elections for nonfederal offices; indeed, the Tenth Amendment reserves these decisions to the states.³ State constitutions, statutes, and local legislation therefore set the timing for state and local races. Only four states—Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia—hold elections for legislative and executive offices “off-cycle,” or in odd-numbered years.⁴ In addition, Kentucky elects its state executive officers on these years.⁵

But many *local* elections across the country take place in odd-numbered years.⁶ For example, since 1894, the New York State Constitution has required that general elections for city offices, including in New York City, be held on “the Tuesday succeeding the first Monday in November in an odd-numbered year.”⁷ Likewise, school board elections, which have recently come under national scrutiny,⁸ are often held off-cycle, which tends to favor special interests, especially teachers’ unions.⁹

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The justifications for off-cycle elections vary. Sometimes, the elections simply began in an odd-numbered year for terms of office that last for an even-year duration. Other times, the off-cycle date is deliberate. Legislators have reasoned that because state and local issues are distinct from national issues,¹⁰ these elections are sufficiently distinct and important to be separated from national ones. Voters, too, would have an opportunity to focus on the issues pertinent to each election and electoral office at the federal, state, and local levels.

At core, opposition to moving state and local elections on-cycle centers on the fear of “down-ballot voting”—the possibility that voters who are motivated to vote in the presidential or other high-profile national elections will unduly influence state and local elections by reflexively voting for every candidate on the ballot who shares the national candidate’s party affiliation.¹¹ “Down-ballot roll-off” is a similar phenomenon, in which voters pick their preferred candidate for top-ticket races like president but do not vote in lower profile, down-ballot races.¹²

A recent study by Justin de Benedictis-Kessner and Christopher Warshaw finds little evidence to suggest that election consolidation would significantly affect partisan and ideological outcomes of elections,¹³ assuaging concerns about the potential impacts of down-ballot voting. Results from the 2020 election also suggest that voters can and do distinguish between federal and state-level issues and races.¹⁴

Similarly, MI senior fellow Michael Hartney and David Houston found “no evidence to suggest that moving school-board elections on-cycle would increase voter ignorance of education issues.”¹⁵ Evidence also suggests that down-ballot roll-off is not as prevalent as proponents of off-cycle elections fear.¹⁶ The sharply higher turnout of an on-cycle local race would almost certainly exceed the effects of roll-off. Finally, down-ballot concerns can be addressed through voter-education efforts.

In sum, research suggests that the benefits of election consolidation outweigh the costs. “The data on improved representation from synchronized elections are unequivocal,” writes Zoltan Hajnal.¹⁷ And as Hartney summarizes:

Consolidating to on-cycle elections offers a rare opportunity to forge bipartisan support for election reform that “does no harm.” Turnout will increase. The power of special-interest groups—especially relative to the political preferences of the average voter—stands to be reduced. On the whole, a single election will increase efficiency in election administration and reduce onerous costs facing local governments that run go-it-alone elections.¹⁸

State lawmakers should, therefore, strongly consider consolidating the timing of local elections to coincide with federal elections in even-numbered years. Some states, such as New York, New Jersey, and Louisiana, would require constitutional amendments to consolidate election timing; in others, ordinary legislation would suffice.

There has recently been some movement toward consolidation. Nevada,¹⁹ California,²⁰ and Arizona²¹ have taken steps in that direction, and in late 2023, New York State enacted a law moving most town and village elections on-cycle, though this does not affect the timing of New York City local elections.²² In addition, several large cities have voted to consolidate their local elections with state or federal elections, including Phoenix, Arizona; Austin, Texas; El Paso, Texas; and Baltimore, Maryland.²³ Turnout in these cities increased between 240% and 460%.²⁴ In 2022, Los Angeles held its first even-numbered local election year in more than a century, resulting in a 90% voter-turnout increase and, in absolute terms, the most ballots ever cast in a mayoral race.²⁵

A state-level bill that seeks to consolidate elections can either: (1) require the election to be on-cycle; or (2) as in California's Voter Participation Rights Act,²⁶ require localities that experience a sufficient disparity between voter turnout in odd- and even-numbered years to transition local elections to even-numbered years.

All else equal, the second approach is preferable, as it gives localities greater flexibility if they wish to retain off-cycle elections and do not suffer from substantial voter drop-off in those elections. If local jurisdictions begin to experience such a drop-off, they can take alternative steps to bolster local off-year voter turnout. If none of these approaches proves sufficient, the state legislation will require transitioning to a unified election cycle.

This policy document seeks to provide a model for public officials as they consider the merits of election consolidation. It first assesses the benefits of election consolidation and then proposes draft legislative language to guide decision-makers considering this important policy change.

The Need for Uniformity in Local Elections

Synchronizing elections will increase voter turnout for neglected local offices, such as school board and city council.

The single most important benefit to election consolidation is the dramatic increase in turnout that would result. Off-cycle local elections regularly have far lower turnout than those that coincide with federal elections. According to MIT's Election Data and Science Lab, voter turnout is highest during presidential elections, lower during midterm elections, and lowest in off-year local elections.²⁷ Turnout in off-cycle municipal elections can be up to 30% lower than similar municipal elections that are held during presidential-election years.²⁸ "When local elections do not coincide with important federal or state contests, the marginal cost to voters of participating rises, and consequently only those voters with the greatest stake in the electoral outcome turn out," explain Christopher R. Berry and Jacob E. Gersen.²⁹

These disparities occur across the nation.³⁰ According to the Seattle-based Sightline Institute, moving elections from off-cycle to on-cycle is the single most effective means of increasing voter turnout for those elections. For this reason, in its 2022–23 voter analysis report, the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB) recommended consolidating city elections with state and federal ones.³¹ The CFB report notes that, since 2001, the average turnout for mayoral elections has been 29.5%, compared with 60.8% for presidential elections.³² No other single reform, short of compulsory voting, (a radical and unpalatable measure in the U.S.), would achieve a similar increase in voter participation. By comparison, other attempts to increase voter turnout, such as get-out-the-vote and registration drives, result in only marginal percentage increases in participation.³³

The recent study by de Benedictis–Kessner and Warshaw found that mayoral elections held on-cycle had a 29% voter turnout, on average, whereas off-cycle elections averaged 13.3%.³⁴ According to their causal model, "switching to on-cycle elections increases voter turnout by approximately 20 percentage points. This is equivalent to a little more than a doubling in voter turnout after transitioning from off- to on-cycle elections."³⁵

Increased participation is desirable for its own sake in a democratic society. Higher turnout is a marker of civic health, a sign that voters believe in the political system's ability to respond to their needs and concerns.³⁶ Voter turnout and winning margins indicate what voters care about. They also signal the strength of a political agenda's mandate.

Thinkers as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville have taken public participation as a critical aspect of American democracy.³⁷ The ballot box effectively provides a feedback loop for the public, the media—which shapes popular perceptions and provides public scrutiny—and government, ensuring democratic accountability for results. As de Benedictis–Kessner writes, “this feedback loop is normatively appealing because it incentivizes politicians to respond to the preferences of their constituents. In turn, via regular elections, it helps citizens get policies that represent their wishes.”³⁸

Increased turnout can decrease polarization and the influence of special interests in local government.

Electoral reformers often seek to improve both substantive and descriptive representation. Substantive representation gauges the degree of closeness between voters' policy preferences and normative values and those of their elected representatives.³⁹ Descriptive representation measures the degree of resemblance of racial, ethnic, and other such characteristics between voters and their representatives, as well as the degree of shared experiences between the two.⁴⁰ Both forms of representation seek to align and tighten the interests of voters and those whom they elect.

Off-cycle elections result in poorer substantive and descriptive representation for several reasons.⁴¹ Of the population that turns out to vote in off-cycle elections, the electorate skews away from minority voters⁴² and toward older,⁴³ wealthier voters,⁴⁴ as well as those with a direct stake in the outcome of the election, such as unionized public-sector workers.⁴⁵ Moreover, de Benedictis–Kessner and Warshaw's recent research finds that moving to on-cycle elections would not affect the partisan composition of the electorate, again allaying fears that consolidation may cause lopsided partisan impacts.⁴⁶

Special interests—most notably, public-sector unions—have inordinate influence in off-cycle elections, resulting in policy outcomes that favor their interests at the expense of the public writ large. Research by Adam Dynes, Michael Hartney, and Sam Hayes has found that “both conservative and liberal electorates can experience diminished responsiveness in off-cycle settings.”⁴⁷

This is apparent in elections for school board across the United States. Michael Hartney, for example, has found that teachers'-union-endorsed candidates dominate their competition in red and blue states alike, partly because school board elections are frequently held in odd-numbered years, when relatively few highly motivated voters can determine elections.⁴⁸ Sarah Anzia has also found that off-cycle elections allow “teacher union interest groups to negotiate more generous salaries for their members.”⁴⁹

Off-cycle elections can amplify the effects of other electoral structures that discourage political competition, including closed partisan primaries, plurality voting, and the lack of informational cues on ballots. This occurred in several elections for so-called progressive prosecutors. In Philadelphia's 2017 municipal elections, for example, District Attorney Larry Krasner won the closed Democratic primary—in which only registered Democrats could participate—with only 59,368 votes out of 155,246 cast, or a plurality of 38.2%.⁵⁰ In other words, measured against the city's 800,136 registered Democrats at the time, Krasner secured 7.4% of eligible voters in an election in which only 19.4% bothered to participate. Krasner dominated the general election with 150,330 votes out of a total of 201,246 cast, but that consisted of only 14.5% of Philadelphia's 1,034,160 total registered voters at the time.⁵¹

Likewise, in New York City's 2021 election for Manhattan district attorney, progressive prosecutor Alvin Bragg won the closed Democratic primary with 85,720 votes,⁵² or 34.3% out of 250,273 votes cast.⁵³ Compared with the 751,029 active registered Democrats in Manhattan at the time,⁵⁴ that amounts to a mere 11.4% share, which would likely be lower still, if New York had another primary system, such as open or nonpartisan primaries. These results scarcely herald a mandate for Bragg's progressive prosecution platform.

The need to capture only a plurality of the vote in these low-turnout, off-year elections has attracted the interest of large donors and organizations and amplified their impact. In 2017, the Philadelphia Justice and Public Safety Political Action Committee received nearly \$1.7 million from billionaire progressive George Soros to support Krasner's campaign.⁵⁵ Krasner also won the endorsement of groups like Color of Change PAC, a racial advocacy organization that seeks to elect black political candidates.⁵⁶ Soros likewise donated \$1 million to Color of Change PAC in 2021, partly to help Bragg secure election.⁵⁷

Higher turnout might dilute some of the inordinate influence of special-interest groups in off-cycle elections. Raising the cost of reaching a sufficient number of voters to win an election would make it more difficult for special interests to influence electoral outcomes.

Higher turnout could also lead to better substantive and descriptive representation. Zoltan Hajnal's research suggests that election consolidation would switch the dynamics in local races, from today's domination by small, unrepresentative groups of voters "to local elections with broad and significantly more representative participation."⁵⁸ Max Eden at the American Enterprise Institute has argued that "greater local democratic participation will empower local control by yielding school board members whose values more closely reflect their constituents and who will make policy and fiscal decisions that more closely reflect parents' preferences."⁵⁹

Fewer elections means less costly and potentially improved election administration.

Another issue with off-cycle elections is that it simply increases the total number of elections, which requires local taxpayers to shoulder the burden for extra resources and staffing. These costs could easily be reduced by moving those elections on the federal election cycle, when elections must occur anyway. Adding names to each ballot is a trivial expense compared with administering separate elections.

Synchronizing elections would mean that localities would not have to shoulder the entire cost of their local elections. As Zoltan Hajnal's research demonstrates, most states require municipalities to bear the costs of administering off-year local elections, whereas for races held on even-numbered years, the costs are shared because there are also state or federal candidates on the ballot.⁶⁰ Some localities receive additional funding to administer state and federal elections,⁶¹ which can be used to defray costs of holding local elections on the same day.

In New York City, for example, the 2021 primary and general election cost local taxpayers approximately \$60 million (now about double the cost of previous election cycles, thanks to the introduction of early voting).⁶² That equated to about \$28 per ballot cast in the primary elections and \$27 per ballot in the general election.⁶³ By contrast, the cost per general-election ballot was \$10.43 in 2020 and \$10.19 in the 2018 gubernatorial general election.⁶⁴ The Citizens Union, along with other good-government and civic groups, has therefore argued for election consolidation in New York City. The city's own Campaign Finance Board has noted that "consolidating elections would mean the City BOE would spend less on running elections year to year and concentrate on delivering crucial election services in dedicated election years."⁶⁵

Nationwide, MIT's Election Lab has estimated that local elections departments can spend between \$2 billion and \$2.6 billion each year on election administration.⁶⁶ The Sightline Institute has estimated that local and state elections together can cost upward of \$5 billion per year for taxpayers. Sightline has also estimated that in three states alone—Idaho, Montana, and Washington—election consolidation could save their taxpayers \$30 million.

These savings can improve election administration. Local election administrators must recruit poll workers, find appropriate polling venues, support voter education, and execute lawful voting procedures, including vote-by-mail, early voting, and election-day processes.⁶⁷ They have limited resources, however, especially to recruit a pool of talented, dedicated, and experienced officials.⁶⁸ These officials are often modestly compensated,⁶⁹ resulting in increased turnover and, in turn, decreased trust from all sides of the political spectrum.⁷⁰ Increasing the number of elections makes it more difficult for administrators to fulfill their responsibilities adequately.

State and local election-administration officials are also selected through partisan processes in many parts of the United States.⁷¹ Democratic voters may view Republican officials as corrupt or negligent,⁷² and vice versa for Republican voters and Democratic officials.⁷³ Focusing poll-observation efforts on a single election day can address doubts about election integrity through economies of scale. Poll watchers can facilitate the perceived integrity of more elections on election day, requiring fewer of them compared with administering separate elections.

Election consolidation also promises to spur ballot-design improvements. Overly complicated ballot layouts have long plagued many jurisdictions,⁷⁴ and election consolidation will invariably mean longer ballots. Two-page ballots may confuse voters.⁷⁵ Election administrators should therefore consider ways to simplify ballot design and make voting intuitive for the various offices that appear on the ballot. This is especially important in jurisdictions like New York City, where ranked-choice voting is used for local primary elections, but not for any state or federal races.

Federal elections officials should provide direct assistance to local administrators tasked with implementing consolidated elections. The United States Election Assistance Commission, for example, provides resources to improve ballot-design practices.⁷⁶ Tracking ballot error rates across jurisdictions nationwide will also be important for ongoing improvement.

Election consolidation is popular with voters.

When voters are polled or asked to approve a ballot measure on consolidating election calendars, they overwhelmingly support it.⁷⁷ After surveying a representative sampling of American registered voters, Anzia found that 70% of respondents were in favor of election consolidation.⁷⁸ Reducing the costs of voting in terms of time and hassle through consolidation appeals strongly to voters across ideological and partisan lines. For those on the political right, consolidation resonates with themes like greater government efficiency, reduced special-interest influence in local elections, and the potential for more secure, less frequent elections.⁷⁹ For those on the political left, consolidation promises far higher democratic participation and better descriptive representation.⁸⁰

Leading think tanks, advocacy organizations, and commentators from across the political spectrum have also expressed support for some form of election consolidation. Right-of-center research organizations, or their scholars, that have endorsed election consolidation for at least some local races (most notably, for school board seats) include the Manhattan Institute,⁸¹ the Thomas B. Fordham Institute,⁸² the America First Policy Institute,⁸³ the American Enterprise Institute,⁸⁴ and the Foundation for Government Accountability.⁸⁵ Left-leaning voices, including the Sightline Institute⁸⁶ and Reinvent Albany,⁸⁷ among others, have joined these calls. Good-government groups in favor of election consolidation include Common Cause⁸⁸ and the New York-based Citizens Union.⁸⁹

Conclusion

Research and experience demonstrate that off-cycle elections fail to justify the cost, inconvenience, and special-interest empowerment that they impose on local democracy. Election consolidation promises to reinvigorate local democracy through greater voter participation and closer descriptive and substantive representation. Better still, taxpayers will save resources. The overwhelming popularity of this proposal—proven by polling and the results of referenda in other cities—indicates that it should be given serious consideration.

A Model for Election Consolidation

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

This policy document seeks to increase voter participation, reduce unnecessary election-administration costs for taxpayers, and improve democratic accountability in local elections by consolidating local election scheduling with federal elections.

SECTION 2. CONSOLIDATION

- A. If the four most recent regularly scheduled general elections for offices of the political subdivision of the state of [STATE NAME] were held on odd-numbered years and resulted in a decrease in average voter turnout equal to [X PERCENT*90] or more, compared with the political subdivision's average voter turnout during the four most recent federal general elections held on even-numbered years, the political subdivision must transition to holding primary and general elections for the political subdivision's elected offices exclusively on even-numbered years.
- B. Each political subdivision that falls under the requirements of Subsection (A) must create a transition plan to consolidate all future elections for the political subdivision's elected offices with the schedule of elections for federal office. This transition plan must be submitted to the secretary of state of [STATE] [or chairperson of the STATE Board of Elections] and include detailed steps and resources required for the political subdivision to achieve election consolidation and to inform the political subdivision's voters of this change.
- C. Each political subdivision will be provided a Transition Period to implement its transition plan. Implementation must be completed before the next regularly scheduled statewide primary election held on the even-numbered year immediately following the Transition Period.
- D. Before the end of the Transition Period, each political subdivision must pass legislation either to extend or reduce by a period of one calendar year the term of office of the political subdivision's elected officials whose elections are affected by the consolidated election schedule.
- E. Subsection (A) does not apply to a political subdivision if that subdivision has, by January 1, 2025, adopted a transition plan to consolidate future elections with statewide elections before the 2026 primary elections. Notwithstanding this exception, such political subdivisions must comply with the requirements of Subsections (C) and (D).

F. Notwithstanding Subsections (A)–(E), Special Elections may be held on odd-numbered years

G. For the purposes of this Section:

- i. “Political subdivision” means a geographic area of representation created for the provision of government services and in which elections are held to select officeholders, including, but not limited to, a city, town, county, borough, school district, or other district organized pursuant to state law.
- ii. “Voter turnout” means the percentage of voters who are eligible to cast ballots within a given political subdivision who voted.
- iii. “Average voter turnout” means the sum of the voter turnout over a number of elections, divided by the number of elections, and expressed as a percentage.
- iv. “Transition Period” means a period of time, beginning on the day of certification of the results of the political subdivision’s most recent regularly scheduled general election for elected offices of that political subdivision, and not to exceed [DURATION].
- v. “Special Elections” are elections held for the purposes of expediency or legal necessity arising from exigent circumstances including, but not limited to, the resignation, impeachment, death in office, incapacity, or expulsion of an incumbent officeholder.

SECTION 3. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- A. The secretary of state [or STATE Board of Elections] must:
 - i. Provide guidance and support to political subdivisions in developing and implementing their election transition plans;
 - ii. Include information on the state government’s elections website detailing the requirements of Section 2; and
 - iii. Include a list of political subdivisions on the state government’s elections website that have begun transitioning elections to even-numbered years and their anticipated completion date.
- B. At least three months prior to the primary election for the political subdivision’s elected offices that are held for the first time on an even-numbered year following implementation of a transition plan, the political subdivision must initiate a voter-education campaign to inform the political subdivision’s voters of changes to the election schedule, including information on when elections will be held. Voter-education campaigns must include such information on the political subdivision’s website.
- C. An attorney acting on behalf of a political subdivision may request a legal opinion of the secretary of state [or the STATE Board of Elections] as to whether the subdivision’s transition plan complies with this policy document.

SECTION 4. OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT

- A. The secretary of state of [STATE] [or chairperson of the STATE Board of Elections] must establish a nonpartisan oversight committee to monitor the election-transition plans, address any conflicts with existing laws, and assist political subdivisions with compliance. The chairperson and members of this oversight committee must have qualifications

in election administration. This oversight committee will receive and must respond to requests from political subdivisions for additional resources required to implement their transition plans.

- B. The secretary of state of [STATE] shall have authority to reallocate resources from the secretary of state's budget to establish this oversight committee. Such budget funds may also provide additional resources to political subdivisions, where the oversight committee has determined that additional resources are necessary for the political subdivision to implement its transition plan.
- C. In the event that a political subdivision covered by the requirements of Section 2(A) has failed to create a transition plan, or implement its transition plan in whole or in part to comply with the requirements of Section 2 before the end of the Transition Period, the oversight committee will have the authority to install officers for the specific purpose of implementing the political subdivision's transition plan, whose authority will cease upon the secretary of state's approval, not to exceed a duration reasonably necessary to achieve implementation.
 - i. The [STATE] attorney general or district or county attorney for the district or county in which the political subdivision is located may petition the oversight committee to install officers for this specific purpose. If the oversight committee has failed to respond to this petition within 30 days, the attorney general or district or county attorney may initiate a suit in the district or county court with jurisdiction over the political subdivision for the purpose of compelling compliance with this policy document.
- D. In the event that the political subdivision fails to pass legislation as required by Section 2(D), the oversight committee must determine, in light of the political subdivision's transition plan, whether to reduce or extend the term of office of each affected elected official by a period of one year. This determination must receive the governor's signature to obtain legal effect.
- E. The [STATE] secretary of state must establish an administrative tribunal with exclusive jurisdiction to resolve complaints made by the political subdivision of alleged overreach by the oversight committee. The administrative tribunal will be staffed by three members of the state judiciary, one appointed by the governor, one appointed by the chief executive of the political subdivision, and one appointed by the chairperson of the oversight committee. The administrative tribunal's determination must be final and binding, except that it may not nullify or diminish the requirements of Section 2.

SECTION 5. SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this policy document are hereby declared to be severable. If any provision of this policy document or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is declared or held to be invalid for any reason, such declaration or holding must not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this policy document and the application of its provisions to any other persons or circumstances.

Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Const. Art. I Section 2; Art. II Section 1.
- ² 2 U.S.C. § 7.
- ³ U.S. Const. Amend. X (“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people”).
- ⁴ Adam Kuckuk, “Odd Ones Out: Just 4 States Hold Off-Year Elections,” National Conference of State Legislatures, Oct. 25, 2023.
- ⁵ Horsley McKenna, “Moving Kentucky Governor’s Races to Presidential Election Years Gets Nod from Senate Committee,” *Kentucky Lantern*, Jan. 10, 2024.
- ⁶ Alan Durning, “Voters Want Fewer Elections: Here’s How to Do That,” Sightline Institute, Jan. 31, 2023. Unfortunately, in the remaining states—about 20 of them—the law still bans election consolidation.
- ⁷ NY Const. Art. XIII Section 8 (“All elections of city officers, including supervisors, elected in any city or part of a city, and of county officers elected in any county wholly included in a city, except to fill vacancies, shall be held on the Tuesday succeeding the first Monday in November in an odd-numbered year, and the term of every such officer shall expire at the end of an odd-numbered year”).
- ⁸ “Gov. Glenn Youngkin Urges Virginia Voters to Elect New School Board in Loudoun County,” *Fox and Friends*, aired Nov. 3, 2023 (Fox News covering Youngkin urging voters to participate in county school board elections).
- ⁹ Michael T. Hartney and Sam D. Hayes, “Off-Cycle and Out of Sync: How Election Timing Influences Political Representation,” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (2021): 335–54; Michael Hartney, “Still the Ones to Beat: Teachers’ Unions and School Board Elections,” Manhattan Institute, June 21, 2023.
- ¹⁰ NJ governor Alfred E. Driscoll, quoted in Kuckuk, “Odd Ones Out”: “The importance of a gubernatorial election merits an election that will not be overshadowed by a national contest for the presidency. The problems confronting the state are frequently distinct from those confronting the nation.”
- ¹¹ See Sarah F. Anzia, “When Is the Election?” *City Journal*, Sept. 20, 2020.
- ¹² Gaby Goldstein and Mallory Roman. “Downballot Roll-Off: Lopsided Roll-Off Among Major Parties May Be Linked to Downballot Losses: Sister District Project,” Sister District, Sept. 14, 2022.
- ¹³ Justin de Benedictis-Kessner and Christopher Warshaw, “The Electoral and Policy Effects of Election Timing in City and County Governments,” working paper, December 2023.
- ¹⁴ Trip Gabriel, “How Democrats Suffered Crushing Down-Ballot Losses Across America,” *New York Times*, Nov. 28, 2020.



Local Elections Consolidation: A Primer and Model Policy

- ¹⁵ Michael Hartney, “Revitalizing Local Democracy: The Case for On-Cycle Local Elections,” Manhattan Institute, Oct. 14, 2021.
- ¹⁶ Goldstein and Roman, “Downballot Roll-Off?”
- ¹⁷ Zoltan Hajnal, “We Can Double the Number of Americans Voting: Reschedule Elections to Make Local Politics More Representative,” Scholars Strategy Network, Sept. 10, 2020.
- ¹⁸ Hartney, “Revitalizing Local Democracy,” p. 8.
- ¹⁹ Nevada Assembly Bill No. 50.
- ²⁰ California Senate Bill No. 415.
- ²¹ Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS), 16-204.
- ²² “Hochul Signs Bill Moving Local Elections to Even-Numbered Years,” Spectrum News, Dec. 22, 2023.
- ²³ Citizens Union, “Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years,” December 2022, 2.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 22–26.
- ²⁶ California Senate Bill No. 415.
- ²⁷ MIT Election Lab, “Election Timing,” updated May 6, 2022.
- ²⁸ Ibid., citing Zoltan L. Hajnal and Paul G. Lewis, “Municipal Institutions and Voter Turnout in Local Elections,” *Urban Affairs Review* 38, no. 5 (May 2003); Zoltan L. Hajnal, Paul G. Lewis, and Hugh Louch, *Municipal Elections in California: Turnout, Timing, and Competition* (San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California, 2002).
- ²⁹ Christopher R. Berry and Jacob E. Gersen, “The Timing of Elections,” *University of Chicago Law Review* 77, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 37–64.
- ³⁰ Citizens Union, “Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years,” December 2022.
- ³¹ NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB), “2022–2023 Voter Analysis Report,” 90.
- ³² Ibid., 91.
- ³³ Alan Durning, “Washington Should Move All Elections to Even Years,” Sightline Institute, Oct. 14, 2022.
- ³⁴ de Benedictis–Kessner and Warshaw, “The Electoral and Policy Effects of Election Timing in City and County Governments.”
- ³⁵ Ibid., 12.
- ³⁶ Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 1–2.

- ³⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* trans. Henry Reeve (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2017), 315–16: “In the United States, except slaves, servants, and paupers supported by the townships, there is no class of persons who do not exercise the elective franchise and who do not indirectly contribute to make the laws. Those who wish to attack the laws must consequently either change the opinion of the nation or trample upon its decision.”
- ³⁸ Justin de Benedictis-Kessner, “Strategic Government Communication About Performance,” *Political Science Research and Methods* 10, no. 3 (July 2022): 601–16.
- ³⁹ Suzanne Dovi, “Political Representation,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2018).
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Hartney and Hayes, “Off-Cycle and Out of Sync.”
- ⁴² Zoltan L. Hajnal, Vladimir Kogan, and G. Agustin Markarian, “Who Votes: City Election Timing and Voter Composition,” *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 1 (2021): 374–83.
- ⁴³ Vladimir Kogan, Stéphane Lavertu, and Zachary Peskowitz, “Election Timing, Electorate Composition, and Policy Outcomes: Evidence from School Districts,” *American Journal of Political Science* 62, no. 3 (2018): 645.
- ⁴⁴ Hajnal, Kogan, and Markarian, “Who Votes.”
- ⁴⁵ Sarah F. Anzia, “Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups,” *Journal of Politics* 73, no. 2 (May 19, 2010): 412–27.
- ⁴⁶ De Benedictis–Kessner and Warshaw, “The Electoral and Policy Effects of Election Timing.”
- ⁴⁷ Adam M. Dynes, Michael T. Hartney, and Sam D. Hayes, “Off-Cycle and Off Center: Election Timing and Representation in Municipal Government,” *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 3 (2021): 1097–1103.
- ⁴⁸ Hartney, “Still the Ones to Beat.”
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., citing Anzia, “Election Timing and the Electoral Influence of Interest Groups.”
- ⁵⁰ Ballotpedia, “Lawrence Krasner,” visited Jan. 5, 2024.
- ⁵¹ City of Philadelphia, “Voter Registration by Party 1940–2022.”
- ⁵² “Manhattan District Attorney Primary Election Results,” *New York Times*, July 20, 2021.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ NYS Board of Elections, “NYS Voter Enrollment by County, Party Affiliation and Status,” Nov. 1, 2021.
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- ⁵⁶ Larry Krasner for District Attorney, “Color of Change PAC Backs Krasner for DA,” press release, Apr. 20, 2017.
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