

Are Missourians Voting for Conservative Candidates and Liberal Policies? A Case for Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting

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Introduction

Since the 2006 midterm election, voters in Missouri have potentially demonstrated a political paradox. While voting predominantly for Republican candidates in statewide and national offices, they “have consistently shown support for policies that typically align with the Democratic Party.”¹ This study examines whether this contradiction is correct by analyzing candidate election results and state ballot measure outcomes from Missouri’s 2024 general election. Our objective is to determine whether voters split their votes by supporting candidates from one ideological position while endorsing ballot measures from the opposite. If so, we propose distinguishing two types of split-ticket or divided voting: *Candidate Ticket Splitting* (CTS), which refers to the established phenomenon in which voters divide their choices across different political parties. In contrast, Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting (BMTS) occurs when voters select a straight-ticket of candidates from a single party but vote in favor of ballot measures that align with a different party or ideological position than their chosen candidates.

The 2024 election provides a valuable case to assess Missouri’s voter practices. Republican candidates won all national and statewide offices by at least 55 percent of the vote, and the voting totals suggest that straight-ticket voting for candidates from a single party occurred in significant numbers.² There were four ballot measures supported by Democratic or liberal candidates or groups, and one measure associated with Republican or conservative issues (Table 1).

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¹ Dmitry Martirovsov, “Why Progressive Policies Are Able to Prevail in Conservative Missouri,” *Columbia Missourian*, November 7, 2024, accessed May 1, 2025, https://www.columbiamissourian.com/news/elections/why-progressive-policies-are-able-to-prevail-in-conservative-missouri/article_c916a250-9b05-11ef-b51e-f356be90d7d3.html. For information concerning Missouri’s use of initiative and referenda voting, see Ballotpedia, “Laws Governing the Initiative Process in Missouri,” accessed April 4, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Missouri#Laws_and_procedures.

² Missouri Secretary of State, *Official Election Returns, State of Missouri – General Election, November 5, 2024*, as announced by the Board of State Canvassers on December 5, 2024, accessed May 1, 2025, <https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/ElectionResultsStatistics/2024GeneralElection.pdf>.

Table 1

2024 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT MEASURES
CLASSIFIED BY PARTISAN SUPPORT

Democratic or Liberal Support on Issue	Republican or Conservative Support on Issue
Amendment 2: Legalize and regulate sports wagering in Missouri	Amendment 7: Prohibit the state and local governments from allowing noncitizens to vote and ranked-choice voting
Amendment 3: Provide for a state constitutional right to reproductive freedom, defined to include abortion	
Amendment 5: Allow the Missouri Gaming Commission to issue one additional gambling boat license to operate on the portion of the Osage River from the Missouri River to the Bagnell Dam	
Proposition A: Increase the state’s minimum wage to \$15 per hour and require employers to provide earned paid sick leave for employees	

Source: Ballotpedia, “Missouri 2024 Ballot Measures,” accessed May 1, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_2024_ballot_measures.

To assess BMTS behavior in the 2024 election, we begin by reviewing the literature on voting behavior, including the current use of the term split-ticket voting, or CTS, as well as studies on initiative and referenda voting in the United States.³ We then address Missouri ballot measures from 2006 to 2022 to determine if past elections demonstrate BMTS and summarize five of the 2024 ballot measures. Evidence of BMTS in the 2024 election is evaluated using exit poll data from the Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center. Specifically, we isolate voters who cast straight tickets in major national and state-wide races (US president, US senator, and Missouri governor) but who voted for the opposing position on ballot measures, including Missouri Constitutional Amendments 2, 3, 5, 7, and Proposition A, a statute change.

While the cumulative vote totals indicate that Missouri voters are indeed splitting tickets between candidates and certain ballot initiatives, they do not answer the question of why this is occurring. We hypothesize that the ideological or even the partisan view of the issue is the primary consideration, but self-interest or identity, such as local issues or personal characteristics, particularly gender, are likely to be more influential in ballot measure voting. Finally, we assess whether Missouri’s voting behavior is unique or has broader implications among states.

³ Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, *Exit Poll of the 2024 Missouri General Election*, Maryville, MO, November 5, 2024. The authors gratefully acknowledge the Center for providing access to the data.

Voting Behaviors: Splitting Tickets, Initiative, and Referenda Voting

The mechanisms of direct democracy available in some American states allow voters to place legislation on the ballot via a petition process known as the initiative. Initiatives are coupled with referenda, which allow citizens to create or change laws through voting, enables them to shape public policy beyond the less direct representation provided by elected officials.⁴ Political scientist Peverill Squire notes that “the most significant difference between national and state politics” is “the existence of state ballot propositions.”⁵ Despite their importance, research on voting behavior pertaining to initiatives, referenda, and outcomes remains limited. Squire’s recent work, *Reforming Legislatures: American Voters and State Ballot Measures, 1792–2020*, provides a data-based approach, analyzing state ballot propositions that target legislative organization and procedures to assess how citizens vote and public opinion toward the legislature. It does not, however, address how such measures influence individual voting behavior. Most existing scholarship focuses on the processes of initiatives and referenda, or on debates over the existence and value of citizens legislating through voting.⁶ Legislative efforts to limit the ballot measure process are receiving scholarly attention as well, but this literature is not related to voting behavior.⁷

Studies on voting behavior related to citizen choice and policy are not entirely absent in scholarship. According to Professor of Economics Randall G. Holcombe in *Following Their Leaders*, the public assumption is that voters “adopt the policy preferences of the candidates and the parties with whom they identify.” He states that this perspective is refuted by political scientists who argue that candidates and parties respond favorably to voter policy preferences. Holcombe contests that view and asserts that policy preferences are determined by political elites, and that only competition among themselves offers democratic options against government abuse.⁸ His viewpoint, however, assumes voting is limited to candidates who

⁴ According to Ballotpedia, 26 states and the District of Columbia allow for either a statewide initiative, referendum process or both. Ballotpedia, “States with Initiative or Referendum,” accessed April 26, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/States_with_initiative_or_referendum. See also National Conference of State Legislatures, “Initiative and Referendum Overview and Resources,” last modified January 4, 2022, <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/initiative-and-referendum-overview-and-resources>.

⁵ Peverill Squire, *Reforming Legislatures: American Voters and State Ballot Measures, 1792–2020* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2024), 3.

⁶ Pertinent or related literature to the substance of this paper include Joshua J. Dyck and Edward L. Lascher Jr., *Initiatives without Engagement: A Realistic Appraisal of Direct Democracy’s Secondary Effects* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019); Barbara S. Gamble, “Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote,” *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 1 (1997): 245–69, accessed May 1, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111715>; Priscilla F. Gunn, “Initiatives and Referendums: Direct Democracy and Minority Interests,” *Urban Law Annual* 22 (1981): 135, accessed May 1, 2025, https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_urbanlaw/vol22/iss1/4.

⁷ P. K. Jameson and Martha Hosack, “Citizen Initiatives in Florida: An Analysis of Florida’s Constitutional Initiative Process, Issues, and Alternatives,” *Florida State University Law Review* 23, no. 2 (1995): 417–468, accessed May 2, 2025, <https://ir.law.fsu.edu/lr/vol23/iss2/5>; Richard Braunstein, *Initiative and Referendum Voting: Governing Through Direct Democracy in the United States* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2004); Sara Carter, Alice Clapman, and Alexi Comella, “Politicians Take Aim at Ballot Initiatives,” *Brennan Center for Justice*, January 16, 2024, accessed May 2, 2025, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/politicians-take-aim-ballot-initiatives>;

⁸ The author also notes that in the Trump era of American politics, this view has gained general credence among the public. Randall G. Holcombe, “Instrumental and Expressive Voting,” *Following Their Leaders: Political*

become policymakers. It omits ballot measures from the discussion, which, while sometimes supported by candidates, are typically citizen-driven attempts at policymaking.

“Ticket splitting,” also known as “divided voting,” occurs when voters cast their ballots for candidates from more than one political party.⁹ “Straight-ticket voting” is the opposite; it occurs when a voter casts all votes for candidates from a single party. Scholarship on split-ticket voting traces back to V.O. Key’s seminal work on Southern politics, in which he noted instances of split-ticket voting. As the 20th century progressed, however, increases in split-ticket voting were viewed as a driver of divided government. Ticket-splitting became the focus of a growing body of scholarship within voting behavior.¹⁰ Interest in divided voting peaked in the 1990s, a decade marked by the increasing frequency and consequences of both ticket splitting and partisan division in government.¹¹

In the early 2000s, in *Why Americans Split Their Tickets*, political scientists Barry C. Burden and David C. Kimball challenged explanations suggesting that individuals select candidates to either check or balance party positions. They determined that prior assertions of ticket-splitting occurring as a byproduct of competitive congressional elections was incorrect. Instead, they argued that the lack of competition in congressional elections, facilitated by incumbent advantage, campaign spending, and candidate name recognition, resulted in lopsided races between quality and inadequate candidates. While opposing the party of the stronger candidate, voters nevertheless chose the likely winner from that party over the inevitable loser from their own. Party divisions blurred as a result. Thus, “reasonable reactions to local candidates” (US House races) with uneven competition led to ticket splitting or swing-voter behavior, which in turn led to pronounced divided government.¹²

The rise in partisan polarization during the early 2000s significantly affected split-ticket voting, and the emergence of Donald Trump and the Make America Great Again movement further intensified earlier polarization and appeared to increase the likelihood of straight-ticket voting.¹³

Preferences and Public Policy, Cambridge Studies in Economics, Choice, and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), xiii.

⁹ Barry C. Burden and David C. Kimball, *Why Americans Split Their Tickets: Campaigns, Competition, and Divided Government* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 2-3.

¹⁰ Earlier works concerning ticket splitting include V. O. Key Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949); Angus Campbell and Warren E. Miller, “The Motivational Basis of Straight and Split Ticket Voting,” *American Political Science Review* 51, no. 2 (1957): 293–312; accessed May 3, 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1952193>; and Charles D. Hadley and Susan E. Howell, “Partisan Conversion in the Northeast: An Analysis of Split Ticket Voting, 1952–1976,” *American Politics Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1979): 312–322, accessed May 3, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X8000800108>.

¹¹ Works from the 1990s include: Alberto Alesina and Howard Rosenthal, *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Richard Born, “Split-Ticket Voters, Divided Government, and Fiorina’s Policy-Balancing Model,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19 (February 1994): 95–115; accessed May 25, 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/439802>; Morris P. Fiorina, *Divided Government*, 2nd ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1996); Paul Frymer, Thomas Paul Kim, and Terri S. Bimes, “Party Elites, Ideological Voters, and Divided Party Government,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22 (May 1997): 195–216, accessed May 25, 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/440382>; Gary C. Jacobson, *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990).

¹² Burden and Kimball, *Why Americans Split Their Tickets*, 13.

¹³ While some evidence suggests polarization has been exacerbated by the presence of Donald Trump in American politics, other research suggests he may be more of a symptom than a causal factor. See Michael Dimock and John

Pre-election polling ahead of the 2024 election suggested that ticket splitting might reemerge, indicating that “peak polarization” had occurred and would result in compensating “down ballot candidates who were able to distinguish their brands from the national party.”¹⁴ In Missouri, our research indicates that support for presidential candidate Donald Trump, the eventual winner, did not result in uniformly straight-ticket voting for Republican candidates, as Donald Trump’s vote totals did not align evenly with those of other Republican candidates on the ballot (Table 2).

Table 2

2024 MISSOURI GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS FOR U.S. PRESIDENT, U.S. SENATOR, AND MISSOURI GOVERNOR

Office	Candidates	Vote Total	Percentage (%)
President, Vice President	Donald J. Trump, JD Vance (R)	1,751,986	58.5
	Kamala D. Harris, Tim Walz (D)	1,200,599	40.1
	Other*	42,742	1.4
	Total	2,995,327	100%
U.S. Senator	Josh Hawley (R)	1,651,907	55.6
	Lucas Kunce (D)	1,243,728	41.8
	Other	76,924	2.6
Total	2,972,559	100%	
Missouri Governor	Mike Kehoe (R)	1,750,802	59.1
	Crystal Quade (D)	1,146,173	38.7
	Other	63,291	2.2
Total	2,960,266	100%	

Source: Missouri Secretary of State, Official Election Returns: State of Missouri General Election, November 5, 2024, as announced by the Board of State Canvassers on December 5, 2024, <https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/ElectionResultsStatistics/2024GeneralElection.pdf>.

*NOTE: “Other” denotes the aggregate of all votes cast except for the two major parties.

Studies concerning candidate choice and ballot measure voting are a relatively recent focus in political scholarship. Research conducted during the 2008 election by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) suggests that public policy preferences, specifically, beliefs about what government should or should not do, are a causal factor in determining presidential candidate selection. However, it remains unclear how these preferences influence voting behavior when policies are presented as ballot measures or when there is no

Gramlich, “How America Changed During Donald Trump’s Presidency,” *Pew Research Center*, January 29, 2021, accessed May 25, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/01/29/how-america-changed-during-donald-trumps-presidency/>; Sourabh Gupta, “Trump a Symptom, Not Cause of U.S. Polarization,” *Institute for China-America Studies*, February 23, 2024, accessed May 25, 2025, <https://chinaus-icas.org/research/trump-a-symptom-not-cause-of-u-s-polarization/>; Pew Research Center, “Large Shares of Voters Plan to Vote a Straight Party Ticket for President, Senate and House,” October 21, 2020, accessed May 25, 2025, www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/10/21/large-shares-of-voters-plan-to-vote-a-straight-party-ticket-for-president-senate-and-house/.

¹⁴ Politico, “Is Ticket-Splitting Back?” *Politico Nightly*, May 29, 2024, accessed May 3, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-nightly/2024/05/29/is-ticket-splitting-back-00160530>; Ballotpedia, “Election Results, 2024: Split-Ticket States in the 2024 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections,” last modified December 3, 2024, accessed May 3, 2025, date, https://ballotpedia.org/Election_results_2024:_Split-ticket_states_in_the_2024_presidential_and_gubernatorial_elections.

direct connection between a candidate and a policy issue.¹⁵ More recent research has suggested that ideology, or at least support for Donald Trump and his Make America Great Again movement, has shaped how voters evaluated Trump on policy issues he championed after his 2016 election.¹⁶

Existing research on ballot measures tends to focus on the effects on voters, democratic elements, or voter turnout.¹⁷ Research findings suggest that self-interest is stimulated when citizens clearly understand the stakes or are informed of the personal consequences; that citizens are more motivated to turn out for initiative voting during midterm rather than presidential elections; and that initiatives have only a limited effect on voter knowledge.¹⁸ Connecting divided voting to selections on both candidates and policy has not yet occurred.

Cognitive research offers insight into why voters may split their votes along partisan or ideological lines. Libby Jenke and Scott A. Huettel argue in “Identity Politics and Local Political Culture: Some Comparative Results from the Social Capital Benchmark Survey” that rational choice application and voter identity do not achieve balance but compete to determine voter preference, at least in economic matters.¹⁹ Identity, in this context, can be inferred from multiple characteristics, including geographic location, although class, income, and education are considered the most influential variables.²⁰ The internal competition between rational choice and identity may help explain why some voters cast ballots against their economic interests in favor of cultural values that reinforce their sense of identity. This argument was made in the 2004 book, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?* which contends that cultural identity can override material

¹⁵ Charles Prysby and Carmine Scavo, “Policy Issue Orientation,” SETUPS: Voting Behavior: The 2008 Election, American Political Science Association, and Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, Greensboro, NC, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/pages/instructors/setups2008/background/public-policy.html>.

¹⁶ Steve Rathje, Azim Shariff, and Simone Schnall, “Ideology Trumps Self-Interest: Continued Support for a Political Leader Despite Disappointing Tax Returns,” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 33, no. 3 (2022): 479–96, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2022.2051148>.

¹⁷ Examples of recent research on initiatives include Daniel A. Smith and Caroline J. Tolbert, *Educated by Initiative: The Effects of Direct Democracy on Citizens and Political Organizations in the American States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Mark A. Smith, “Ballot Initiatives and the Democratic Citizen,” *The Journal of Politics* 64, no. 3 (2002): 892–903, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1520118>; Joshua J. Dyck and Edward L. Lascher, *Initiatives Without Engagement: A Realistic Appraisal of Direct Democracy’s Secondary Effects* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019); Joshua J. Dyck and Nicholas R. Seabrook, “Mobilized by Direct Democracy: Short-Term Versus Long-Term Effects and the Geography of Turnout in Ballot Measure Elections,” *Social Science Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (2010): 188–208, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2010.00688.x>; and Joshua J. Dyck and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, “Ballot Initiatives and Status Quo Bias,” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (2019): 180–207, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532440018815067>.

¹⁸ Dennis Chong, Jack Citrin, and Patricia Conley, “When Self-Interest Matters,” *Political Psychology* 22, no. 3 (2001): 541–570, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00253>; Daniel Schlozman and Ian Yohai, “How Initiatives Don’t Always Make Citizens: Ballot Initiatives in the American States, 1978–2004,” *Political Behavior* 30, no. 4 (2008): 469–89, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-008-9062-0>.

¹⁹ Libby Jenke and Scott A. Huettel, “Issues or Identity? Cognitive Foundations of Voter Choice,” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 20, no. 11 (2016): 794–804, accessed May 4, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2016.08.013>.

²⁰ Richard E. DeLeon and Katherine C. Naff, “Identity Politics and Local Political Culture: Some Comparative Results from the Social Capital Benchmark Survey,” *Urban Affairs Review* 39, no. 6 (July 2004): 689–719, accessed May 5, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087404264215>.

self-interest. This argument, however, does not account for decisions in which self-interest plays an identifiable role.²¹

The citizen-driven ballot process inherently entails some degree of self-interest, as the effort to secure ballot placement and garner voter support typically arises outside the formal party system. The petition process is rarely led by political parties, which are often more effective at pursuing policy goals through legislative processes than through direct appeals to public opinion. Nevertheless, parties and candidates may still endorse or align themselves with ballot measures that reflect their ideological positions, either to influence policy outcomes through public support or financial contribution, or to reinforce their preferred candidates.

Ballot Initiatives and Referendums 2006-2024

State ballot measures are divided into two types: initiative and referendum. Both are authorized by Missouri's constitution. Initiatives allow citizens to propose new statutes or constitutional amendments through a petition process, while referendums enable voters to approve or repeal existing laws.²² Support or opposition from candidates, interest groups, or parties depends on what the ballot measure addresses in policy terms. Some ballot measures may reflect national debates and align with the platforms or rhetoric of major political parties, potentially impacting multiple states. Others, by contrast, address state-specific or localized interests within a state.

There is no universally acknowledged standard for determining whether a ballot measure is ideologically liberal, progressive, conservative, or partisan. As a result, voters often rely on partisan clues or heuristics, such as endorsements from candidates, interest groups, organizations, or political parties, to assess whether initiatives and referendums align with their ideological preferences. However, cognitive shortcuts may not satisfy voters' ideological inclinations when a policy issue is appealingly framed to address seemingly opposing viewpoints, complicating the impact of ideological identification. The Ballot Initiative Policy Center contends that "ballot measures transcend party lines," and thus bypass partisan cues, although this assertion may require further analysis, particularly if the measure has national significance.²³ Ultimately, the most reliable indicator of a measure's ideological orientation is the political or partisan identification of its supporters or opponents, whether expressed through public endorsements or financial contributions. We adopt this approach in our analysis.

Missouri's perceived pattern of voting for conservative candidates while supporting liberal policies is a relatively recent development. The state's shift from a swing state to a reliably Republican one is also a recent phenomenon. From 1904 to 1956, and again from 1960 to 2008, Missouri consistently voted for the winning presidential candidate, earning a reputation as a

²¹ Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Seth Masket, "What's the Matter With Kansas? Aptly Describes the 2016 Election — but Was Written in 2004," *Slate* (via *Mischiefs of Faction on Vox*), December 1, 2016, accessed May 5, 2025, <https://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2016/12/1/13807382/thomas-frank-kansas-2016-election>.

²² Ballotpedia, "States with Initiative or Referendum." For more information about the signature process for initiatives and referendum, see Ballotpedia, "Signature Requirements for Ballot Measures in Missouri," accessed April 26, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/Signature_requirements_for_ballot_measures_in_Missouri.

²³ Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, "Progress by Ballot Measure," accessed May 11, 2025, <https://ballot.org/progress-by-ballot-measure/>.

quintessential 20th-century “bellwether” state. The 2008 election marked a turning point: for the first time since 1956, and only the second time since 1900, Missourians backed the losing presidential candidate, narrowly choosing John McCain over Barack Obama by fewer than 4,000 votes. Since 1996, Missouri has supported the Republican nominee in every presidential election, regardless of the national outcome.²⁴

Given Missouri’s lack of strong partisan alignment at the state level up to 2016, it was not entirely surprising that a ballot initiative considered both nationally liberal and controversial succeeded there in 2006, although the outcome was far from certain.²⁵ At the time, Missouri’s elected officials at both the state and federal levels reflected a partisan mix. The 2006 ballot featured only two statewide offices: US senator and state auditor, both of which were won by Democrats. More notably, however, it included a high-profile initiative to amend the state constitution to allow embryonic stem cell research. The measure attracted national attention because such research involves the destruction of embryos, a practice strongly opposed by anti-abortion and right-to-life advocates. This marked the first attempt in the nation to affirmatively protect stem cell research through a state constitutional amendment.²⁶

US Senate candidate Claire McCaskill publicly supported the initiative, and her campaign aired a thirty-second advertisement featuring actor Michael J. Fox, a well-known Parkinson’s disease advocate who supports embryonic research due to its potential benefits for Parkinson’s research. McCaskill narrowly defeated her Republican opponent by 48,314 votes (49.6 percent), while the stem cell amendment passed by 50,800 votes (51.2 percent).²⁷ The disparity in vote totals suggested some ticket-splitting, though a clear, consistent pattern of voter behavior had yet to emerge.

The 2016 general election marked a significant shift to the right in Missouri as Republican candidates won every contested statewide race, including the presidential and US Senate contests. While the outcomes of five of the ballot measures aligned with the Republican candidates’ victories, Amendment 2 proved an exception. The initiative, titled the “Missouri State and Judicial Campaign Contribution Limits,” was supported by prominent Democrats,

²⁴ Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, “2008 Presidential Election Results,” The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara, accessed May 1, 2025,

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/2008>; Ballotpedia, “Presidential Voting Trends in Missouri,” accessed May 1, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_voting_trends_in_Missouri.

²⁵ Sonia L. Canzater, “Face the Facts: The Benefit of Continued Support of Stem Cell Research Transcends Partisan Politics,” *O’Neill Institute, Georgetown Law*, February 7, 2017, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://oneill.law.georgetown.edu/face-the-facts-the-benefit-of-continued-support-of-stem-cell-research-transcends-partisan-politics/>.

²⁶ It also excluded human cloning, required expert medical and public oversight, including annual reports concerning the nature and purpose of stem cell research, while imposing criminal and civil penalties for any violations and protecting such research from overreach by state or local government. Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 2, Stem Cell Research Initiative (2006),” accessed May 10, 2025,

[https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_2,_Stem_Cell_Research_Initiative_\(2006\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_2,_Stem_Cell_Research_Initiative_(2006)); Jim Salter, “Actors, Athletes to Be in Stem-Cell Ad,” *Washington Post*, October 25, 2006, accessed May 10, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/25/AR2006102500145.html?noredirect=on>.

²⁷ Missouri Secretary of State, *Official Election Returns: State of Missouri General Election, November 7, 2006, as Announced by the Board of State Canvassers on November 29, 2006*, accessed May 10, 2025, <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/ElectionResultsStatistics/AllRacesGeneralNovember2006.pdf>.

including Senator Claire McCaskill and outgoing Governor Jay Nixon. Eric Greitens, the Republican gubernatorial candidate, opposed the measure. Amendment 2 aimed to establish limits on campaign contributions from individuals and groups, including political parties and committees. The initiative was a response to the 2008 repeal of a 1994 proposition that limited campaign funding. The measure passed overwhelmingly, receiving 70 percent of the vote and winning in every Missouri county. By comparison, Donald Trump carried the state with 56.8 percent of the vote, while incumbent Republican US Senator Roy Blunt was re-elected with just 49.2 percent against Democrat Jason Kander.²⁸ The success of Amendment 2 in 2016 demonstrated that, even amid strong support for Republican candidates, a ballot measure backed by Democrats could still earn voter approval, highlighting a tendency to split their votes between candidates and policy issues.

The 2018 general election reaffirmed Missouri's Republican lean, as Republican State Attorney General Josh Hawley defeated incumbent Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill. Following the election, the only statewide office remaining in Democratic hands was the state auditor's office. The ballot was most notable for three proposed initiatives related to the legalization of medical marijuana: two constitutional amendments (Amendments 2 and 3) and one state statute measure (Proposition C). If all three measures passed, conflicting provisions could have arisen, but Amendment 2 was widely regarded as the most substantive proposal. The debate over marijuana policy reflected broader national trends—by 2018, thirty-one states had enacted laws legalizing medical marijuana, signaling a major shift in public opinion. This trend stood in contrast to the Trump administration's decision to rescind Obama-era guidelines that had protected state-level marijuana laws.²⁹

Senator McCaskill publicly supported medical marijuana legalization, while opposition was led by the Missouri State Medical Association, with cooperation from the established medical community. Ultimately, Amendment 2 won with 65.6 percent of the vote, while Amendment 3 and Proposition C were defeated. Once again, Missouri voters demonstrated a willingness to split their votes, supporting conservative candidates while endorsing a policy viewed as liberal. Ironically, Claire McCaskill lost her Senate reelection attempt to Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley 51.4 percent to 45.6 percent.³⁰

The 2020 election in Missouri reaffirmed Republican dominance in candidate races. Donald Trump carried the state with 58.6 percent of the vote, matching his 2016 performance, even as he lost the presidency to Joe Biden nationally. The most consequential political shift in Missouri, however, occurred during the primary election, when voters approved a constitutional amendment to expand Medicaid eligibility from 133 percent to 138 percent of the federal poverty level and to provide additional protections for individuals affected by the expansion. With no Democratic candidates associated with the measure, liberal-leaning support was largely

²⁸ The 1994 Proposition A was passed by voters by 74 percent. Ballotpedia, "Missouri State and Judicial Campaign Contribution Limits, Constitutional Amendment 2 (2016)," accessed May 10, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_State_and_Judicial_Campaign_Contribution_Limits_Constitutional_Amendment_2_\(2016\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_State_and_Judicial_Campaign_Contribution_Limits_Constitutional_Amendment_2_(2016)).

²⁹ Tom Angell, "Marijuana's Ten Biggest Victories of 2018," *Forbes*, December 6, 2018, accessed May 10, 2025, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomangell/2018/12/06/marijuanas-ten-biggest-victories-of-2018/>.

³⁰ Missouri Secretary of State, *Official Election Returns: State of Missouri General Election, November 6, 2018*, accessed May 10, 2025, <https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/ElectionResultsStatistics/2018GeneralElection.pdf>.

mobilized by interest groups and advocacy organizations.³¹ In contrast, leading Republican officials, including the governor and lieutenant governor, publicly opposed the amendment. Nevertheless, the measure passed by a margin of 53.3 percent to 46.7 percent, highlighting once again that liberal policy initiatives can succeed in Missouri even amid strong Republican electoral performance.³²

In 2022, marijuana policy returned to the Missouri ballot through the Marijuana Legalization Initiative (Amendment 3). The measure sought to “legalize the purchase, possession, consumption, use, delivery, manufacturing, and sale of marijuana for personal use by adults over the age of 21; allow individuals convicted of non-violent marijuana-related offenses to petition for release from incarceration and/or expungement of their records; and impose a 6% tax on marijuana sales.” While support and opposition did not follow strictly partisan lines, each position was shaped by ideological divisions. Funding favored proponents of the amendment, and the advantage was reflected in the outcome: the measure passed with 53.1 percent of the vote to 46.9 percent.³³

There were six measures on the 2024 general election ballot. Of these, five, comprising four constitutional amendments and one statutory amendment, were associated with liberal or conservative positions in some way.³⁴ Amendments 2 and 3 represented issues with national import. Amendment 2, known as the Sports Betting Initiative, proposed legalization and regulation of sports wagering through licensed online platforms for individuals physically located in the state, including at gambling boats, or a fixed location “within each sports district.” The measure also included a provision for a 10 percent wagering tax on revenues to be applied to education, but only after incurred expenses and required funding for a gambling prevention program were appropriated.³⁵ Prior to the 2024 general election, thirty-eight states (including five via ballot measures) and the District of Columbia had legalized sports betting. There was early pushback, however. California and New Jersey rejected ballot measures on the matter, and the federal government banned sports betting in 2014 after the major sports leagues and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) filed litigation. The US Supreme Court overturned the national sports betting ban in *Murphy v. NCAA* (2018).³⁶ As a result, while sports betting remains a nationally significant issue, its regulation has been returned to state discretion.

While Democrats have more frequently advanced sports betting legislation when controlling both the legislature and the governor’s office, bipartisan support has generally enabled the

³¹ Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 2, Medicaid Expansion Initiative (August 2020),” accessed May 10, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_2,_Medicaid_Expansion_Initiative_\(August_2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_2,_Medicaid_Expansion_Initiative_(August_2020)).

³² Missouri Secretary of State, *Official Election Returns: State of Missouri General Election, November 3, 2020*, https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/ElectionResultsStatistics/November3_2020GeneralElection.pdf.

³³ Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 3, Marijuana Legalization Initiative (2022),” accessed May 10, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_3,_Marijuana_Legalization_Initiative_\(2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_3,_Marijuana_Legalization_Initiative_(2022)).

³⁴ The amendment which we do not analyze in this paper, Amendment 6, Levying of Fees to Support Salaries of Law Enforcement Personnel Amendment, had limited support and opposition to examine.

³⁵ Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 2, Sports Betting Initiative (2024),” accessed May 14, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_2,_Sports_Betting_Initiative_\(2024\)#States_with_sports_betting](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_2,_Sports_Betting_Initiative_(2024)#States_with_sports_betting).

³⁶ The Supreme Court’s ruling made it clear that a previous federal law, the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) breached an accepted doctrine based upon the Tenth Amendment, known as anti-commandeering (states cannot be divested of their power to enforce federal law). Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 2.”

passage of ballot initiatives or laws across states.³⁷ That was not always the case. In 2012, the Republican National Platform stated its “support [for] the prohibition of gambling over the Internet,” and called “for reversal of the Justice Department’s decision distorting the formerly accepted meaning of the Wire Act that could open the door to Internet betting.”³⁸ Social conservatives, regardless of party affiliation, have long held that gambling is a moral issue, whereas the Democratic position has been to attach certain sources of wagering to educational funding.³⁹

Missouri’s 2024 Amendment 2 attracted both bipartisan support and opposition. However, polling data from a Saint Louis University/YouGov survey of likely voters prior to the November election indicated a stronger support for sports betting among Democrats (65 percent) than Republicans (58 percent).⁴⁰ Proponents of the measure emphasized its potential to generate revenue for education. Opponents, however, raised concerns about the uncertainty of revenue projections and implementation costs, questioning whether the tax would ultimately yield any tangible benefit for Missouri schools.⁴¹ Expenditures by those supporting the initiative exceeded those of the opposition, totaling \$43,399,161.05 compared to \$9,310,764.84 spent by the opposition.⁴²

Another measure with significant national implications was the Missouri Amendment 3, the Right to Reproductive Freedom Initiative. This measure emerged in response to the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* (2022), which overturned *Roe v. Wade* (1973), and returned abortion policy decisions to the states. In Missouri, the 1973 law banning abortion with limited exceptions was reinstated, creating concern about women and various procedures. Between 2022 and 2023, seven states considered ballot measures on abortion, and the right to the procedure was supported. In 2024, ten more states, including Missouri, placed similar measures on their ballots.⁴³

Abortion as a national issue was framed along partisan lines in 2024. The Democratic Party’s position embraced reproductive rights, committing to federal codification of *Roe v. Wade*, while

³⁷ Nick Ashbourne, “How the 2024 US Election Will Impact Sports Betting Legislation,” *RG.org*, September 4, 2024, <https://rg.org/research/political/how-the-2024-election-will-impact-sports-betting>.

³⁸ Millions of Americans suffer from problem or pathological gambling that can destroy families.

³⁹ Kerry Chambers, *Gambling for Profit: Lotteries, Gaming Machines, and Casinos in Cross-national Focus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 14; Mark Chin and Lena Shi, “The Impact of Political Party Control on Education Finance and Outcomes: Evidence from U.S. States,” *State Higher Education Executive Officers Association*, May 2021, accessed May 10, 2025, https://sheeo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Impact-of-Political-Party-Control-on-Education-Finance-and-Outcomes_Chin-and-Shi.pdf; Bruce DePuyt, “Dems: Md. Needs Casino Revenue ‘Lockbox’ to Boost School Funding,” *Maryland Matters*, January 30, 2018, accessed May 10, 2025, <https://marylandmatters.org/2018/01/30/dems-md-needs-casino-revenue-lockbox-to-boost-school-funding/>.

⁴⁰ Nick Ashbourne, “How the 2024 US Election Will Impact Sports Betting Legislation,” *RG.org*, September 4, 2024, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://rg.org/research/political/how-the-2024-election-will-impact-sports-betting>.

⁴¹ Meg Cunningham and Maria Benevento, “Would Sports Betting Boost Missouri School Funding? There’s No Guarantee, Experts Say,” *The Beacon*, October 22, 2024, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://thebeaconnews.org/stories/2024/10/22/missouri-amendment-2-school-money-education-nov-5/>.

⁴² Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 2.”

⁴³ Voters in three of the ten states with abortion measures on the ballot, Florida, Nebraska, and South Dakota, defeated initiatives supporting abortion, while seven states, including Missouri, approved abortion initiatives. Ballotpedia, “Missouri Amendment 3, Right to Reproductive Freedom Initiative (2024),” accessed May 15, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_3_Right_to_Reproductive_Freedom_Initiative_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_3_Right_to_Reproductive_Freedom_Initiative_(2024)).

Republicans shifted their message on abortion from a federal abortion ban to one supporting states' decision-making, aligning with presidential candidate Donald Trump's position.⁴⁴ In Missouri, the initiative drew support from the Missouri Democratic Party and numerous other organizations. Opponents included Governor Mike Parson and Senator Josh Hawley. As with Amendment 2, financial backing favored the initiative's supporters, who raised over \$31 million, compared to the opposition's \$1.4 million.⁴⁵

Amendment 5, the Osage River Gambling Boat License Initiative, and Amendment 7, the Require Citizenship to Vote and Prohibit Ranked-Choice Voting Amendment, differed from Amendments 2 and 3 because of their Missouri-centric emphasis. Amendment 5 sought authorization for a gambling boat license for the construction and operation of a casino and other facilities on a designated section of the Osage River. The measure also specified that estimated state revenues from the gambling boat license, a projected \$14.3 million, would be designated for early-childhood literacy programs. Supporters expected the Osage River site near the Lake of the Ozarks would benefit from the established tourist industry. The initiative was required because Missouri's Constitution currently permits casinos only along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and state law limits the number of statewide casino facilities to thirteen.

Politicians largely avoided the debate over Amendment 5, leaving the traditional liberal-conservative divide on gambling absent from public discourse. The campaign committee supporting the measure, the Osage River Gaming and Convention, operating under the banner "Yes on 5," framed the initiative primarily as a request for a gambling boat license rather than a broader casino development. Their messaging emphasized support for early childhood literacy, with a secondary focus on economic benefits for the Lake of the Ozarks region.⁴⁶ "Yes on 5" was also the sole campaign to spend money on the initiative, and was funded by the Bally's Corporation, a prominent US casino operator, and a regional development firm. The campaign faced strong opposition from the Osage Nation, which has its own \$60 million casino-resort project planned for the same area.⁴⁷ Unlike the proposed Amendment 5 development, the Osage Nation's project does not require voter approval. Beyond support from Bally's Corporation, the only other formal endorsement came from the Missouri AFL-CIO.⁴⁸ While many states have considered various gambling-related initiatives over the years, the casino placement issue in this

⁴⁴ PBS NewsHour, "Republicans Change Platform to Reflect Trump's Position Opposing Federal Abortion Ban," *PBS NewsHour*, July 9, 2024, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/republicans-change-platform-to-reflect-trumps-position-opposing-federal-abortion-ban>.

⁴⁵ Ballotpedia, "Missouri Amendment 3."

⁴⁶ Yes on 5, "Get the Facts," *Vote YES on Amendment 5 for Early-Childhood Literacy Funding*, accessed May 16, 2025, <https://yeson5.com/facts/>.

⁴⁷ Ballotpedia, "Missouri Amendment 5, Osage River Gambling Boat License Initiative (2024)," accessed May 16, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_5,_Osage_River_Gambling_Boat_License_Initiative_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_5,_Osage_River_Gambling_Boat_License_Initiative_(2024)); Meg Cunningham, "Missouri Amendment 5: What to Know about the Lake of the Ozarks Casino Ballot Question," *KCUR*, September 18, 2024, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://www.kcur.org/politics-elections-and-government/2024-09-18/missouri-amendment-5-lake-ozarks-casino-ballys-election-2024>; Rudi Keller, "Backers of a New Missouri Casino near the Lake of the Ozarks Submit Signatures Seeking Ballot Slot," *Missouri Independent*, May 6, 2024, accessed May 11, 2025, <https://missouriindependent.com/2024/05/06/backers-of-a-new-missouri-casino-near-the-lake-of-the-ozarks-submit-signatures-seeking-ballot-slot/>.

⁴⁸ Ballotpedia, "Missouri Amendment 5."

case remained a distinctly state-level matter. In contrast, online sports betting has typically been viewed through a national lens, due in part to its prior prohibition under federal law.⁴⁹

Amendment 7, titled the Require Citizenship to Vote and Prohibit Ranked-Choice Voting Amendment, had three provisions. The first was to change the Missouri Constitution from allowing all US citizens to vote to permitting only US citizens to vote, aligning it with current state law. The second provision explicitly prohibited ranked choice voting in any Missouri election. The third required that the winner of a party’s primary be the sole candidate for that party in a general election.⁵⁰ The second and third provisions were intended to prevent any change to ranked-choice voting, a system currently used in Alaska.

Amendment 7 differed from the other proposed ballot measures in two ways: it was a legislatively referred constitutional amendment, rather than a citizen-initiated measure, and its provisions were viewed as ideologically conservative.⁵¹ In Missouri, Republican politicians, including Mike Kehoe, then lieutenant governor and the Republican gubernatorial nominee, and various conservative organizations rallied to support the amendment. Opposition was a mix of Democratic state legislators and liberal organizations, particularly those focused on preserving alternative voting systems.

Critics argued that the measure was not truly about restricting voting to US citizens—a requirement already enshrined in both Missouri law and its constitution—but was instead a form of “ballot candy,” designed to address a manufactured issue rooted in right-wing rhetoric and thwarting the use of a voting system “designed to diffuse such extremism” that asserts non-citizens are illegally voting in US elections.⁵² Although ranked-choice voting is not inherently partisan, it has come to be associated with the liberal and Democratic agenda in the US. The divide in support and opposition in Missouri reinforced this perception, with Democrats generally favoring ranked-choice voting and Republicans opposing it.⁵³

⁴⁹ Legal Information Institute, “Gambling,” *Wex*, Cornell Law School, last modified June 2024, accessed May 12, 2025, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/gambling>.

⁵⁰ Ballotpedia. “Missouri Amendment 7, Require Citizenship to Vote and Prohibit Ranked-Choice Voting Amendment (2024),” Last modified November 5, 2024, accessed May 12, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_7,_Require_Citizenship_to_Vote_and_Prohibit_Ranked-Choice_Voting_Amendment_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Amendment_7,_Require_Citizenship_to_Vote_and_Prohibit_Ranked-Choice_Voting_Amendment_(2024)).

⁵¹ Jude Joffe-Block, “6 Facts About False Noncitizen Voting Claims and the Election,” *NPR*, October 12, 2024, accessed May 13, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/12/nx-s1-5147789/voting-election-2024-noncitizen-fact-check-trump>; Jude Joffe-Block and Miles Parks, “How Republicans, in Missouri and Beyond, Mainstreamed the Baseless Idea of Noncitizen Voting in 2024,” *KCUR*, October 19, 2024, accessed May 13, 2025, <https://www.kcur.org/politics-elections-and-government/2024-10-16/how-republicans-mainstreamed-the-baseless-idea-of-noncitizen-voting-in-2024>.

⁵² The Kansas City Star Editorial Board, “The Star’s Endorsement on Missouri Amendment 7 on Voting,” *The Kansas City Star*, September 18, 2024, accessed May 13, 2025, <https://www.kansascity.com/opinion/editorials/article293712849.html>; St. Louis Post-Dispatch Editorial Board, “Post-Dispatch Endorsement: Vote No on Missouri Amendment 7,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 20, 2024, accessed May 13, 2025, https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/editorial/post-dispatch-endorsement-vote-no-on-missouri-amendment-7/article_d63b5f38-9066-11ef-93f4-8b871b0797a1.html.

⁵³ Andy Craig, “Why Conservatives Shouldn’t Fear Ranked-Choice Voting,” *Cato Institute*, October 18, 2022, accessed May 13, 2025, <https://www.cato.org/commentary/why-conservatives-shouldnt-fear-ranked-choice-voting>.

Lastly, Proposition A, the Minimum Wage and Earned Paid Sick Time Initiative, was a citizen-initiated state statute proposed to amend a previous voter-approved proposition passed in 2018.⁵⁴ It proposed raising the state minimum wage in 2025 and again in 2026, while establishing earned sick leave provisions for hourly workers. Of the five states with wage and/or sick leave ballot measures on the ballot in 2024, three, Alaska, Missouri, and Nebraska, passed their measures. Minimum wage increases are familiar to Missouri voters, who approved similar measures in 2006 and 2018.

Consistent with past trends, support and opposition to Proposition A largely followed party lines: liberal and Democratic groups generally backed the initiative, while conservative and Republican figures tended to oppose it, though some divisions remained.⁵⁵ As with other high-profile measures, financial support for the initiative significantly outpaced that of its opponents.⁵⁶

Election 2024 Analysis: Missouri and Maryville

As Burden and Kimball note, “[a]ny empirical study of the causes of ticket splitting must begin with accurate estimates of the frequency of this behavior.”⁵⁷ The common assumption that Missourians support conservative candidates while endorsing liberal policies is often supported anecdotally through observations of past election results. This paper draws on exit poll data collected by the Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center in Maryville, Missouri, to empirically assess this phenomenon. Maryville, a city with a 2025 population of 10,193, is a rural community and home to one of the largest public higher education institutions, Northwest Missouri State University. The center is affiliated with the university.⁵⁸ Polling stations were established in two of the three city precincts, and data were collected after voters exited the polls. There were 475 polling respondents.⁵⁹

Specifically, we examine two voting behavior patterns from the data: (1) whether voters cast straight-ticket ballots (choosing candidates exclusively from one party), and (2) how they voted on ballot measures identified as either liberal or conservative. The survey included questions about voters’ gender, party affiliation, or lean, candidate choices for US president, US senator, and governor, as well as their votes on ballot initiatives. We focus on respondents who supported

⁵⁴ 2018’s Proposition B was an amendment to 2006’s Proposition B. Both propositions were passed with strong support from the voters (62.34 percent in 2018 and 75.94 percent in 2006). Ballotpedia, “Missouri Proposition A, Minimum Wage and Earned Paid Sick Time Initiative (2024),” accessed May 15, 2025,

[https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Proposition_A_Minimum_Wage_and_Earned_Paid_Sick_Time_Initiative_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Proposition_A_Minimum_Wage_and_Earned_Paid_Sick_Time_Initiative_(2024)).

⁵⁵ Leslie Davis and Hannah Hartig, “Two-Thirds of Americans Favor Raising Federal Minimum Wage to \$15 an Hour,” *Pew Research Center*, July 30, 2019, accessed May 15, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/07/30/two-thirds-of-americans-favor-raising-federal-minimum-wage-to-15-an-hour/>.

⁵⁶ Ballotpedia, “Missouri Proposition A, Minimum Wage and Earned Paid Sick Time Initiative (2024),” accessed May 15, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Proposition_A_Minimum_Wage_and_Earned_Paid_Sick_Time_Initiative_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Missouri_Proposition_A_Minimum_Wage_and_Earned_Paid_Sick_Time_Initiative_(2024)).

⁵⁷ Burden and Kimball, *Why Americans Split Their Tickets*, 13.

⁵⁸ NWMSU is the sixth largest public university out of thirteen institutions. UnivStats, “Largest Missouri Colleges and Universities,” last modified 2024, accessed May 31, 2025, <https://www.univstats.com/corestats/largest-student-population-in-missouri/>; US Census Bureau, “QuickFacts: Maryville city, Missouri,” last modified 2024, accessed May 31, 2025, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/maryvillecitymissouri/PST045224>.

⁵⁹ While the precinct totals were unavailable, in Nodaway County, Missouri, 9,689 votes were cast out of 13,613 registered voters (71.17 percent). Maryville is the county seat for Nodaway County.

candidates from one party but voted for at least one ballot measure aligned with the opposing ideological or partisan position. We define this behavior as “Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting” (BMTS), distinguishing it from the more traditional form of split-ticket voting, “Candidate Ticket Splitting” (CTS).

The 2024 election was dominated by the presidential race, with particular attention on Donald Trump’s third bid for the presidency following his 2020 defeat, the January 6 Capitol assault by his supporters, 34 felony convictions in New York, and multiple additional charges at both state and federal levels. Missouri once again backed Trump, as it had in 2016 and 2020, awarding him 58.5 percent of the vote, his highest share in the state to date.

Missouri also elected Republicans to the US Senate, the governorship, and the four other positions in its plural executive branch that were decided by the election. The state’s continued rightward shift was evident in its support for the Republican candidates in the two other key races tracked in this study, US senator and governor (see Table 2). Republicans secured all statewide offices and preserved their majorities in both chambers of the Missouri General Assembly.⁶⁰ Missouri’s shift to the right was clearly evident in its support for the winning candidates in the other two races we tracked (US senator and governor; see Table 2).

The number of votes cast for these three offices suggests some straight-ticket voting; however, the data also indicate that some voters may skip down-ballot races, as the presidential vote total exceeds those for US senator by 22,768 and for governor by 35,061. Statewide, there was a 3.5 percent difference between the best-performing Republican gubernatorial candidate, Mike Kehoe, and Josh Hawley, the incumbent US senator. This was likely related to Kehoe, an experienced and moderate Missouri politician who served as lieutenant governor for six years prior to the election, compared to Hawley’s more extreme views.⁶¹ Donald Trump outperformed Josh Hawley by nearly three percentage points but slightly underperformed Michael Kehoe by 0.6 points.

Table 3 presents data from respondents in Maryville, Missouri, to the Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center’s exit poll from the 2024 general election.⁶² The responses included individuals who identified as Republican, Democrat, or as third-party or non-affiliated voters (collectively designated as “Other” in Table 2). The table includes only those respondents who voted a straight ticket for the three major races: president, US senator, and governor, selecting candidates exclusively from one of the two major parties. Additionally, the data are disaggregated by gender: male, female, and “other,” which includes non-binary responses or respondents who did not disclose their gender.

⁶⁰ The state auditor is elected in the midterm election cycle every four years. The current officeholder is also a Republican.

⁶¹ Michael Olson, quoted in “Why Missouri Voters Backed Liberal Policies but Chose Conservative Leaders,” *FOX 2 Now*, November 6, 2024, accessed May 31, 2025, <https://fox2now.com/news/missouri/why-missouri-voters-backed-liberal-policies-but-chose-conservative-leaders/>.

⁶² Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, *2024 Missouri General Election Exit Poll Data*, collected November 5, 2024, Maryville, MO.

Table 3

MARYVILLE EXIT POLL: RESPONSES FOR PARTISAN IDENTIFICATION BY GENDER, AND STRAIGHT-TICKET VOTING

Partisan ID	Men	Women	Other*	N (%)
ID Republican	107 (45.53)	125 (53.19)	3 (1.28)	235 (100.00)
ID Democrat	62 (37.58)	99 (60.00)	4 (2.42)	165 (100.00)
Other ID*	34 (45.33)	41 (54.67)	0 (0.00)	75 (100.00)
ID Rep.; Straight Ticket Voter	88 (45.36)	105 (54.12)	1 (0.52)	194 (100.00)
ID Dem. Straight Ticket Voter	55 (38.20)	86 (59.72)	3 (2.08)	144 (100.00)
ID Other Straight Ticket Rep. Voter	10 (55.56)	8 (44.44)	0 (0.00)	18 (100.00)
ID Other*; Straight Ticket Dem.	17 (44.74)	21 (55.26)	0 (0.00)	38 (100.00)

Source: Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, 2024 Maryville Exit Poll.

*NOTE: “Other Identification” indicates those who responded with a third-party option or registered no response to the question.

**NOTE: Other includes no response or response other than M/F.

Out of 475 respondents, 235 (49.47 percent) identified as Republican, 165 (34.74 percent) identified as Democrat, and 75 (15.79 percent) were classified as “Other.” Among Republican identifiers, 194 (82.55 percent) voted a straight Republican ticket for US president, US senator, and Missouri governor. Of the Democratic identifiers, 144 (87.27 percent) voted a straight Democratic ticket. Within the “Other” group, 18 respondents (25 percent) voted a straight ticket for Republican candidates, while 38 (50.67 percent) voted a straight ticket for Democratic candidates. Cumulatively, 394 respondents (82.95 percent) voted straight tickets for the major offices on the ballot, and 17.05 percent engaged in Candidate Ticket Splitting (CTS). These results reflect the effects of polarization, confirming that while straight-ticket voting remains dominant in Missouri, a notable minority of voters continue to split their tickets based on candidate preferences.

Table 4 presents how voters cast their ballots on Amendments 2 and 5, which addressed gambling and education funding. Respondents are categorized by partisan affiliation, straight-ticket voting behavior, and their support for or opposition to each amendment (i.e., voting “yes” or “no”). While both measures garnered bipartisan support, their framing aligned with liberal priorities, particularly in advocating for increased education funding, whereas opposition was primarily driven by conservative interests. Toward the end of the campaign, some opponents criticized the corporate funding behind the anti-Amendment 2 effort, favoring a more grassroots approach. In contrast, Amendment 5 faced minimal organized opposition; aside from limited involvement from the Osage Nation, it lacked both financial support and identifiable institutional backing.⁶³

⁶³ Rudi Keller, “Opponents of Missouri Sports Betting Amendment Pull TV Ads in Campaign’s Homestretch,” *Missouri Independent*, October 18, 2024, accessed May 31, 2025, <https://missouriindependent.com/briefs/opponents-of-missouri-sports-betting-amendment-pull-tv-ads-in-campaigns-homestretch/>.

Table 4

MARYVILLE EXIT POLL: SURVEY RESPONSES FOR AMENDMENTS 2 AND 5

Amendments 2 and 5 Responses	Straight Ticket (R) N=194	Straight Ticket (D) N=144	Straight Ticket (O/R)* N=18	Straight Ticket (O/D)* N=38
Yes Amendment 2 n (%)	87 (44.85)	75 (52.08)	9 (50.00)	19 (50.00)
No Amendment 2 n (%)	99 (51.03)	66 (45.83)	9 (50.00)	19 (50.00)
Other/No Response Amendment 2 n (%)	8 (4.12)	3 (2.09)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
Total	194 (100.00)	144 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	38 (100.00)
Yes Amendment 5 n (%)	75 (38.66)	72 (50.00)	8 (44.44)	17 (44.74)
No Amendment 5 n (%)	106 (54.64)	67 (46.53)	9 (50.00)	21 (55.26)
Other/No Response Amendment 5 n (%)	13 (6.70)	5 (3.47)	1 (5.56)	0 (0.00)
Total	194 (100)	144 (100)	18 (100.00)	38 (100.00)

Source: Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, 2024 Maryville Exit Poll.

*NOTE: “O/R” and “O/D” designations indicate those who did not identify with a major party but voted straight tickets for either the Republican or Democratic Party candidates.

Amendment 5 saw a slightly lower percentage of straight-ticket Republican voters supporting the initiative (38.66 percent) than Amendment 2 did. Nonetheless, this still represents a substantial share of Republican support for a liberal policy. What is particularly notable about Amendment 5, however, is the level of BMTS among Democrats. A significant 46.53 percent of self-identified Democratic voters opposed the amendment. When combined with straight-ticket Democratic voters who did not identify as Democrats, opposition to the liberal position increased to 48.35 percent.

Table 5 presents the polling results for Amendment 7 and Proposition A. Amendment 7 was unique among those analyzed for combining two provisions associated with conservative and Republican interests: one concerning citizenship requirements for voting and another opposing ranked-choice voting. The complexity of combining the provisions on citizenship and ranked-choice voting may have made the measure more difficult for voters to evaluate. Nevertheless, the data show that nearly 25 percent Republican voters split their ticket and voted against Amendment 7.

Interestingly, an even larger share of Democratic straight-ticket voters (31.94 percent) also opposed the amendment. This suggests that the amendment’s complexity may have contributed to voter hesitation or confusion, supporting claims that the citizenship provision was used to obscure the amendment’s primary goal: preventing the implementation of ranked-choice voting.

Table 5

**MARYVILLE EXIT POLL:
SURVEY RESPONSES AMENDMENT 7 AND PROPOSITION A**

Amendment 7/Proposition A Responses	Straight Ticket Rep. N=194	Straight Ticket Dem. N=144	Straight Ticket (O/R)* N=18	Straight Ticket (O/D)* N=38
Yes Amendment 7 n (%)	135 (69.59)	46 (31.94)	14 (77.78)	10 (26.32)
No Amendment 7 n (%)	48 (24.74)	88 (61.11)	2 (11.11)	28 (73.68)
Other/No Response Amendment 7 n (%)	11 (5.67)	10 (6.95)	2 (11.11)	0 (0.00)
Total	194 (100.00)	144 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	38 (100.00)
Yes Proposition A n (%)	65 (33.50)	128 (88.89)	6 (33.33)	34 (89.47)
No Proposition A n (%)	122 (62.89)	14 (9.72)	12 (66.67)	4 (10.53)
Other/No Response Proposition A n (%)	7 (3.61)	2 (1.39)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
Total	194 (100.00)	144 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	38 (100.00)

Source: Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, 2024 Maryville Exit Poll.

*NOTE: “O/R” and “O/D” designations indicate those who did not identify with a major party but voted straight tickets for either the Republican or Democratic Party candidates.

Proposition A reflected a traditionally liberal stance in support of living wages, specifically by advocating higher minimum wage standards and protecting workers’ rights.⁶⁴ Notably, 33.5 percent of Republican straight-ticket voters supported the measure, indicating some BMTS on this issue. In contrast, Democratic BMTS was significantly lower, marking the first instance in which BMTS fell below 24 percent among either party, at just 9.72 percent. This disparity may be attributed to the county’s poverty rate and the relatively high cost of housing in Maryville, driven in part by demand associated with the university.⁶⁵

Arguably, the most publicized ballot measure, Amendment 3, was also the most polarizing according to polling data. Support of the amendment, or a “yes” vote, was clearly associated with liberal politics, women’s rights, and the 2024 Democratic National Platform agenda.⁶⁶ The substance of the amendment was also part of the Democratic national platform. Table 6 shows the results from the Maryville exit poll.

⁶⁴ Democratic National Committee, *2024 Democratic Party Platform*.

⁶⁵ US Census Bureau, “QuickFacts: Nodaway County, Missouri.”

⁶⁶ Democratic National Committee, *2024 Democratic Party Platform*.

Table 6

MARYVILLE EXIT POLL: YES/NO/NO RESPONSE AMENDMENT 3

Amendment 3	Straight Ticket (R) N=194	Straight Ticket (D) N=144	Straight Ticket (O/R)* N=18	Straight Ticket (O/D)* N=38
Yes n (%)	30 (15.46)	140 (97.22)	4 (22.22)	34 (89.47)
No n (%)	155 (79.90)	4 (2.78)	12 (66.67)	4 (10.53)
Other/No Response n (%)	9 (4.64)	0 (0.00)	2 (11.11)	0 (0.00)
Totals	194 (100.00)	144 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	38 (100.00)

Source: Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, 2024 Maryville Exit Poll.

*NOTE: “O/R” and “O/D” designations indicate those who did not identify with a major party but voted straight tickets for either the Republican or Democratic Party candidates.

Table 6 indicates that Amendment 3 showed the lowest incidence of BMTS in the poll, yet instances occurred among supporters of both major parties. Among Republican straight-ticket voters, 15.46 percent voted “yes,” as did 22.22 percent of voters who cast a straight Republican ticket without identifying as Republicans, resulting in a combined support rate of 16.03 percent. Democratic straight-ticket voters were the least likely to split their vote on this measure, with only four out of 144 respondents (2.78 percent) opposing the amendment. Among voters who selected a straight Democratic ticket but did not identify as Democrats, only 10.53 percent voted “no.”

Gender has been shown to play a significant role in shifting Republican voters’ positions on women’s reproductive issues nationally, suggesting that women’s collective support for these rights was substantial. We examined whether Republican women in our survey sample were specifically splitting their tickets on this measure.⁶⁷ Gender also played a notable role in BMTS among Republicans voting on Amendment 3. As shown in Table 7, among female Republican identifiers, 15.2 percent supported the amendment, compared to just 5.62 percent of their male counterparts. This disparity suggests that gender may moderate partisan alignment on specific policy issues, even among otherwise unified voting blocs.

Polling data from Maryville supports the hypothesis that some Missouri Republican voters in 2024 engaged in BMTS. Of the 194 total observations, 120 straight-ticket Republican voters (61.86 percent) voted “yes” on at least one liberal-leaning measure. Forty (20.60 percent) supported two such measures, twenty-six (13.40 percent) approved three, and fifteen (7.73 percent) voted “yes” on all four (see Table 8).

Among straight-ticket Democrats, 31.94 percent supported Amendment 7, a measure identified as conservative or Republican-aligned. Additionally, 92 of the 144 Democratic respondents

⁶⁷ Elaine Kamarck, “Women Favored Abortion Rights but Not Harris,” *Brookings Institution*, November 7, 2024, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/women-favored-abortion-rights-but-not-harris/>.

(63.89 percent) opposed at least one liberal policy. While none rejected all four, 46 (31.94 percent) voted against two liberal measures, and 7 (4.86 percent) opposed three.

Table 7

MARYVILLE EXIT POLL: STRAIGHT TICKET REPUBLICAN VOTERS FOR AMENDMENT 3 DIVIDED BY GENDER

	Straight Ticket (R)			Straight Ticket (D)			Straight Ticket (O/R)*			Straight Ticket (O/D)*		
Yes Vote by Gender n (%)	M	F	O**	M	F	O**	M	F	O**	M	F	O**
	N=88	N=105	N=1	N=55	N=86	N=3	N=10	N=8	N=0	N=17	N=21	N=0
	11 (12.5)	19 (18.1)	0 (0.00)	51 (92.7)	85 (98.8)	4 (75.0)	3 (30.0)	1 (12.5)	0 (0.00)	16 (94.1)	18 (85.7)	0 (0.00)
		0		2	4	0	0	0		2	1	

Source: Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, 2024 Maryville Exit Poll.

*NOTE: "O/R" and "O/D" designations indicate those who did not identify with a major party but voted straight tickets for either the Republican or Democratic Party candidates.

**NOTE: "O" indicates respondents who did not respond to the question.

Table 8

MARYVILLE EXIT POLL: STRAIGHT TICKET REPUBLICAN VOTERS CUMULATIVE BALLOT MEASURE VOTES

Voter	n (%)
Party ID Republican; Voted Straight Ticket Republican Candidates; Voted "Yes" for "Liberal" Amendments 2, 3, 5, and Proposition A; Voted "No" for "Conservative" Amendment 7 (N=194)	2 (1.03)
Party ID Republican; Voted Straight Ticket Republican Candidates; Voted "Yes" for "Liberal" Amendments 2, 3, 5, and Proposition A (N=194)	15 (7.73)
Party ID Republican; Voted Straight Ticket Republican Candidates; Voted "Yes" for "Liberal" Amendments 2 and 5 (N=18)	23 (11.86)
"Other" Party ID*; Voted Straight Ticket Republican Candidates; Voted "Yes" for "Liberal" Amendments 2, 3, 5, and Proposition A (N=18)	3 (16.67)
Republican and "Other"* Vote All Straight Ticket Republican Candidates; Voted "Yes" for "Liberal" Amendments 2, 3, 5, and Proposition A (N=212)	18 (8.49)

Source: Northwest Policy and Civic Engagement Center, 2024 Maryville Exit Poll.

*NOTE: "Other" designation indicates those who did not identify with a major party but voted straight tickets for Republican candidates.

Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting: Examining Causal Factors

Although further research is warranted on this type of voting behavior, the findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between how voters behave in candidate selection and ballot measure elections. The Missouri case supports the identification of a distinct form of split-ticket voting, Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting (BMTS), which differs from the more traditional Candidate Ticket Splitting (CTS). The next question to consider is why BMTS is occurring in Missouri. While the scope of this study does not permit a comprehensive analysis of causal factors, we can offer informed speculation and examine the individual elements related to the ballot initiatives.

In a post-election interview discussing the observed ticket-splitting between candidates and ballot measures, Michael Olson, a political science professor at Washington University in St. Louis, offered insights into why this phenomenon is emerging in states that lean Republican in candidate preferences. Olson suggests that voters often distinguish between candidates and issues, and that strong partisan attachment may influence how voters prioritize their choices. Voter valuations may also stem from prioritization of ballot measures, leading them to support ballot measures that conflict with their party's official stance when those issues are perceived as less personally significant. Selective prioritization eases voter decision-making on ballot measures that appear ideologically contradictory without feeling they are violating partisan identity.⁶⁸

Olson also suggests that the specific measures on the ballot can shape voter behavior. A form of “natural selection” likely influences which measures succeed, because the initiative process requires a concerted campaign effort to qualify a measure for the ballot.⁶⁹ By the time voters weigh in, the initiative has already cleared multiple hurdles, signaling significant organizational and public support. Therefore, the choices presented to voters are not random but filtered through a process that favors measures with established backing. In this context, the origin of a ballot measure becomes especially important. Not all measures originate from citizen initiatives; Missouri legislatures can also place measures on the ballot through an initiated statute, as they did in 2024 with Proposition A. In the case of Proposition A, the Legislature sought to amend a law that had previously undergone the same electoral process and had been successful. Any political risk to those invested in the change was marginalized by utilizing a ballot measure.

To these considerations, we would add, based on the Missouri case, the significance of ballot measure language, particularly when multiple provisions are grouped into a single initiative. While Missouri's constitution requires an initiative to be on a single subject, there is some subjectivity in the use of what constitutes a single subject.⁷⁰ Voters are often asked to make a single decision that encompasses multiple policy components. We believe language played a significant role in Amendment 7, where there were two distinct actions that the amendment was authorized to do under the umbrella of the subject of “elections;” if voters did not agree with

⁶⁸ Olson, quoted in “Why Missouri Voters Backed Liberal Policies.”

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Missouri Constitution, art. III, sec. 50, accessed June 1, 2025, <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=50>; Ballotpedia, “Laws Governing the Initiative Process in Missouri,” accessed June 1, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Missouri.

both, they were forced to choose which they prioritized. Closely tied to language is the role of campaign messaging in shaping public understanding and engagement with ballot measures. Well-funded initiatives are generally better positioned to inform voters and mobilize support or opposition.⁷¹ As campaign messaging, disseminated through both traditional and digital media, continues to evolve, its effects on ballot outcomes are likely uneven, particularly when funding structures are independent of political parties.⁷²

Personal identity appears to be a significant factor in how voters decide on ballot measures. Elements of identity, including geographic location, personal experience, and demographic characteristics, interact with voters' partisan and ideological orientations. Identity may influence voting behavior by considering who is most likely to be affected by an initiative and whether the measure has a direct personal impact. For example, Amendment 5, which authorized a new casino in the Lake of the Ozarks region, received strong support in the surrounding counties but saw weaker backing elsewhere in the state. By contrast, Amendment 2 had more uniform implications for voters statewide, yet some counties that supported the measure had no obvious connection to its content, suggesting the need for further analysis to uncover underlying motivations.⁷³ Personal characteristics, such as gender, may also matter. Amendment 3 received more support from women than from men, according to our survey data, and women are more affected by women's health initiatives, such as those promoted in Amendment 3. Other identity elements that affect voter behavior, such as education and socio-economic status, must also be considered.

While the precise causal mechanisms remain unclear, it is evident that polarization reinforces straight-ticket voting.⁷⁴ However, as straight-ticket voting has become more common, there appears to be an increased likelihood that voters will diverge from their partisan or ideological affiliations when deciding on statewide ballot measures that affect them directly. This form of ballot measure "splitting" is not confined to conservative or "red" states; liberal-leaning states have likewise seen recent instances in which voters rejected progressive initiatives, underscoring the broader complexity of voter behavior transcending traditional partisan divides.⁷⁵ As we have also shown in the Maryville polling data, the reverse action is happening even within a state, as Democratic voters either rejected liberal policies or supported conservative ones.

⁷¹ John M. de Figueiredo, Chang Ho Ji, and Thad Kousser, "Financing Direct Democracy: Revisiting the Research on Campaign Spending and Citizen Initiatives," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 27, no. 3 (2011): 485–514, accessed June 2, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1672408>.

⁷² "Ad Buy," Ballotpedia, accessed June 1, 2025, https://ballotpedia.org/Ad_buy; Edward Lempinen, "Deep Data — and Big Money — Are Driving a New Era in Political Advertising," *Berkeley News*, February 15, 2024, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2024/02/15/deep-data-and-big-money-are-driving-a-new-era-in-political-advertising/>.

⁷³ "Missouri Amendment 5: Allow Osage River Casino," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2024, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/11/05/us/elections/results-missouri-amendment-5-allow-osage-river-casino.html>.

⁷⁴ National Conference of State Legislatures, "State Legislative Policymaking in an Age of Political Polarization," February 1, 2018, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.ncsl.org/center-for-legislative-strengthening/state-legislative-policymaking-in-an-age-of-political-polarization>.

⁷⁵ "'Red' US States Pass Progressive Laws While 'Blue' States Vote for Conservative Measures," *The Guardian*, November 6, 2024, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/nov/06/election-state-ballot-measure-results>.

Whatever the rationale for what is occurring, there is strong anecdotal evidence that some voters vote in different directions ideologically for candidates and ballot measures. While this has been pointedly associated with conservative voters splitting tickets between conservative candidates and liberal policies, the reverse has been observed in some states.

Conclusion: Implications for States and Voting Behavior on Ballot Measures

Ballot measures establish policies that either become part of statutory law or amend a state's constitution. The process by which these measures are determined may be as crucial to understanding democratic functioning as the outcomes themselves. The Northwest Policy Center's exit polling data for the 2024 election in Maryville, Missouri, supports the existence of a new variation of split-ticket voting, with over 60 percent of Republican straight-ticket voters voting for at least one of four liberal ballot measures and almost 64 percent of Democratic straight-ticket voters voting against the same liberal policies. To better conceptualize this behavior, we distinguished between two forms of split-ticket voting. The traditional form, casting votes for candidates from different parties, is classified here as Candidate Ticket Splitting (CTS). In contrast, voting a straight partisan ticket for candidates while splitting on votes on measures that represent contrasting ideologies is identified as Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting (BMTS).

Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting (BMTS) challenges the assumption that party loyalty dictates policy preferences. Recognizing this phenomenon compels a reevaluation of how voters engage with democratic choice at the state level. It offers evidence of both the effects of party polarization and growing voter independence from party elites. One of the paradoxes of polarization is that as voters increasingly support candidates along party lines, they may simultaneously reject those parties' policy positions on ballot measures. This trend suggests that while partisanship structures candidate choice, it does not always determine issue preferences. As ballot initiatives continue to play a major role in shaping state policy, understanding the interaction between candidate selection and measure voting will be critical to interpreting—and perhaps forecasting—voter behavior. Future research should examine the prevalence of BMTS across states and elections, and whether it reflects durable ideological realignment or isolated, issue-specific divergence. Either way, the distinction between Candidate Ticket Splitting (CTS) and Ballot Measure Ticket Splitting (BMTS) offers a new lens for analyzing electoral behavior in the evolving landscape of American politics.