

STATE POLITICS AND POLICY CONFERENCE 2026

Preliminary Program



“State Politics at 250 Years of Independence”

Chicago, IL

Thursday, June 4 – Saturday, June 6, 2026

Hosted by Loyola University Chicago and the University of Illinois Chicago

Sponsored by the State Politics and Policy organized section of the American Political Science Association, University of Illinois Chicago College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the University of Illinois Chicago Department of Political Science, Loyola College of Arts and Sciences, the Loyola Department of Political Science, the Institute for Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois, and the Center for State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield.



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Schedule Overview

Thursday, June 4

Meet at Navy Pier 5:00 pm
Pre-Conference Reception, Hosted by City Cruise 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Friday, June 5

Breakfast 8:00 – 9:00 am
Regents Hall, Lewis Tower

Panel Session 1 9:00 – 10:30 am
Corboy Law Center

Panel Session 2 10:45 am – 12:15 pm
Corboy Law Center

Lunch 12:15 – 1:45 pm
Regents Hall, Lewis Tower

Panel Session 3 1:45 – 3:15 pm
Corboy Law Center

Panel Session 4 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Corboy Law Center

Graduate Poster Session & Reception 5:00 – 6:30 pm
Beane Hall, Lewis Tower

Dinner & Awards 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Regents Hall, Lewis Tower

Saturday, June 6

Breakfast & Business Meeting 8:30 – 9:30 am
Regents Hall, Lewis Tower

Panel Session 5 9:30 – 11:00 am
Corboy Law Center

Panel Session 6 11:15 am – 12:45 pm
Corboy Law Center

Panel Schedule

PANEL SESSION 1 – FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – 9:00 –10:30 AM

PUBLIC OPINION I

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

When Independents Matter: Electoral Ambiguity and State Lawmaking

Seongjoon Ahn, University of Iowa

Reducing Non-Response Bias in Sampling Frames and Weighting in State Surveys

John Curiel, YouGov

Party Cues, Perception Updating, and the Behavioral Consequences of Fusion Voting

Eric Loebb, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater; **Ben Melusky** Old Dominion University

Support for Making Voting More Convenient: A Long-Term Perspective

Todd Donovan, Western Washington University; **Shaun Bowler**, University of California, Riverside

FEDERALISM

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

Frenetic Federalism: State Applications to the Rural Health Transformation Program

Samuel Harper, University of Tampa

Federalism, States, and a Changing Republic

Jason Rosensweig, Northwestern University

Linking Attitudes Toward Federalism and State Constitutions

James Strickland, Florida State University

State Authority and Tribal Relations: Mapping the Structure and Scope of Indian Affairs Commissions

Elise Blasingame, Emory University; **Adiba Syed**, Georgia Institute of Technology; **Alexa Bowman Olay**, Georgia Institute of Technology; **Michelle Lee**, Georgia Institute of Technology

LEGISLATIVE POLITICS

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

A New Dataset Linking State Legislative Bills, Roll Calls, Ideology, and Policy

Boris Shor, University of Houston

Do Rights Restrictions Drive Out Talent? How Policymakers React to Evidence of Migration Losses

Michael Nelson, Pennsylvania State University; **Chris Witko**, University of California, Davis

Does Legislator Training Improve Policymaking?

Jeff Harden, University of Notre Dame; **Mackenzie Dobson**, University of Virginia; **Emma Schroeder**, University of Notre Dame; **Dan Butler**, Washington University in St. Louis; **Jim Curry**, University of Notre Dame; **Thad Kousser**, University of California, San Diego

Some Considerations for Regression Analysis of Legislative Effectiveness Scores

Frederick Boehmke, University of Iowa; **Taylor Tokos**, University of Iowa

PANEL SESSION 2 – FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

GENDER AND MORALITY POLICY

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

The Anti-Vice Squad: Women’s Organizing, Suffrage, and State Legislative Control of Vice in the Early 1900s

Mirya Holman, Hobby School, University of Houston; **Christina Wolbrecht**, University of Notre Dame; **Michael Olson**, Washington University in St. Louis

Abortion Policy and Electoral Accountability in American Legislatures

Jacob Lollis, University of Cincinnati; **Mackenzie Dobson**, University of Notre Dame & University of Virginia

Abortion Storytelling and Contentious Policymaking in a Conservative Post-Dobbs Legislature

Jamie Morgan, Tulane University; **Anna Mahoney**, Dartmouth College; **Clare Daniel**, Tulane University; **Grace Riely**, Rush University

Do Women Legislators Legislate Differently Than Men on Gun-Related Policy? A Suggestive Yes

Patrick Cunha Silva, Loyola University Chicago; **Agustin Markarian**, Loyola University Chicago; **Brady Mudge**, Loyola University Chicago

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

Divergent Trust: Ideology and Confidence in Police, Prosecutors, and Judges

Damon Cann, Utah State University; **Jamie Carson**, University of Georgia; **Jeff Yates**, Binghamton University; **Josh Baldwin**, University of Georgia

“Leave Illinois Without Moving—Demand a New State!”: MAGA Anti-Urbanism and the New Illinois Secession Movement

Steven Corey, Columbia College Chicago

Trust in Government and Compliance with Stay-at-Home Orders in American States

Oguzhan Dincer, Illinois State University

Closer, Calmer, More Trusted: Explaining the Trust Gap Between Federal and Subnational Government in the United States

Fred Gui, Louisiana State University; **Rongbo Jin**, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen

JUDICIAL POLITICS

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

State High Court Ideological Responses to Court-Curbing Introductions

Meghan Leonard, Illinois State University; **Hayley Munir**, Illinois State University; **Joseph Ross**, Florida Gulf Coast University; **Michael Catalano**, University of Scranton

Judicial Elections and Candidate Quality: Evidence from Pennsylvania Trial Courts

Michael Sances, Temple University

Gender, Race, and the Criminal Justice Priorities of State Chief Justices

Richard Vining, University of Georgia; **Teena Wilhelm**, University of Georgia;

Joshua Baldwin, University of Georgia; **Levi Hudson**, University of Georgia

Gatekeeping Justice: Administrative Burdens and State Trial Courts

Abby Matthews, University at Buffalo; **Tracee Saunders**, Penn State University

ELECTIONS AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

Primary Rules and the Representativeness of State Electorates

Todd Donovan, Western Washington University; **Sami DeRagon**, University of Iowa;

Brendan Meckler, University of Iowa; **Caroline Tolbert**, University of Iowa

Tides of Direct Democracy: The Cyclical Ideology of American Ballot Measures, 1902–2024

Craig Burnett, Florida Atlantic University; **Daniel Smith**, University of Florida

Is an Early Voter an Informed Voter? The Consequences of Early Voting for Down-Ballot Races

Todd Makse, Florida International University; **Anand Sokhey**, University of Colorado Boulder

Examining Post-Shelby Polling Location Closures in Georgia

Kyshani Nichols-Smith, Duke University; **Hye Ryeon Jang**, Morehouse College

PANEL SESSION 3 – FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – 1:45 – 3:15 PM

ROUNDTABLE 1 — Coding State Legislator Race/Ethnicity: Toward a More Collaborative Effort

Room: TBD

Panelists:

Beth Reingold, Emory University

Bernard Fraga, Emory University

Eric Gonzalez Juenke, Michigan State University

Paru Shah, Rutgers University

Jatia Wrighten, Virginia Commonwealth University

Atiya Stokes-Brown, Coastal Carolina University

ROUNDTABLE 2 — LLM-Based Measurement of State Legislative Activity
Room: TBD

Panelists:

Ethan Dee, Amazon
Alex Garlick, University of Vermont
Andrew Ballard, Florida State University
Mackenzie Dobson, University of Virginia and University of Notre Dame
Martin Gandur, Florida State University
Craig Volden, University of Virginia
Alan Wiseman, Vanderbilt University
Jennie Sweet-Cushman, Chatham University
Rebecca Gill, University of Nevada – Las Vegas
Christopher Zorn, Pennsylvania State University

ROUNDTABLE 3 — The Representational Tax of Political Violence: Threats, Harassment, and Democratic Capacity in U.S. Local and State Government
Room: TBD

Panelists:

Alexandra Filindra, University of Illinois Chicago
Laurel Harbridge Yong, Northwestern University
John Cluverius, University of Massachusetts Lowell
Nathan Kalmoe, University of Wisconsin—Madison
The Honorable Sumbul Siddiqui, Mayor, Cambridge, Massachusetts

PANEL SESSION 4 – FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – 3:30 – 5:00 PM

PUBLIC OPINION I

Room: TBD
Chair: TBD
Discussant: TBD

Partisanship and Policy Implementation Tradeoffs

David Doherty, Loyola University Chicago; **Conor Dowling**, University at Buffalo;
Michael Miller, Barnard College

Antecedents and Consequences of State Identity in the United States

Deborah Schildkraut, Tufts University; **Rongbo Jin**, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen

50 States, 50 Democracies: Understanding Cross-State Variations in Public Conceptions of Democracy in the United States

Seongjoon Ahn — Faculty, University of Iowa

Mass Origins of Party Position-Taking

Justin Phillips, Columbia University; **Gerald Gamm**, University of Rochester;

Michael Auslen, University of Texas at Austin

EXECUTIVE POLITICS

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

Partisan Delay: Gubernatorial Discretion and Representation in Special Elections

Cassidy Reller, University of Florida

Bureaucratic Turnover After Civil Service Rollbacks

Ben Goehring, University of Virginia

Agenda Setting by Governors in the State Legislature

E.J. Fagan, University of Illinois Chicago

Southern Gubernatorial Inaugurals and the Politics of Identity, Values, and Policy

Austin Trantham, Saint Leo University; **J. Cherie Strachan**, University of Akron

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND GUN VIOLENCE

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

State Pardons, Commutations, and the Determinants of Clemency

Anna Gunderson, University of Texas at Austin

Artificial Eyes in the Sky and Ears to the Ground: Public Attitudes Toward Expanding Police Use of Surveillance Technology

Magic Wade, University of Illinois Springfield

The Relationship Between Concealed Carry Permit Laws on Gun Ownership and Gun Carry Practices in the United States

Tannuja Rozario, Everytown for Gun Safety; **Alexandra Filindra**, University of Illinois Chicago; **Paul Teas**, University of Chicago

Public Elite Discourse in the Shadows of Mass Shootings

Jack Kappelman, University of California, Los Angeles; **Agustin Markarian**, Loyola University Chicago; **Haotian Chen**, University of California, Los Angeles; **Amanda Mauri**, University of Maryland

PANEL SESSION 5 – SATURDAY, JUNE 6 – 9:30 – 11:00 AM

GENDER AND POLITICS

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

An Intolerably Risky Decision: Gender, Safety, and Judicial Ambition in the States

Laura Moyer, University of Louisville; **Tao Dumas**, The College of New Jersey; **Todd Collins**, Western Carolina University

Local Media Coverage, Gender, and Legislative Accountability

David Nguyen, Washington University in St. Louis; **Jaclyn Kaslovsky**, Washington University in St. Louis; **Michael Olson**, Washington University in St. Louis

What Counts as a Women’s Issue? An Empirical Approach to Gendered Policy in State Legislatures

Jennie Sweet-Cushman, Chatham University; **Christopher Zorn**, Pennsylvania State University; **Rebecca Gill**, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Talk of the Town, or Talked Over? Analyzing Gendered Speech, Time, and Agendas in U.S. City Council Meetings

Alixandra Yanus, High Point University

POLICY DIFFUSION

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

Policy Feedback and Diffusion Across the U.S. States

Kelly Smith, Stetson University

Laboratories of Justice: The Diffusion of Specialty Courts Across California Counties, 1990–2019

Patrick Gauding, University of the South

Advancing U.S. Climate Policy in High and Low-Barrier State Regimes

Rebecca Bromley-Trujillo, Christopher Newport University; **Joshua Basseches**, Tulane University; **Trevor Culhane**, Brown University; **Galen Hall**, University of Michigan

Elite Socialization Diffusion in the American States: A Theoretical Foundation and Preliminary Test

Joshua Jansa, Oklahoma State University; **Daniel Mallinson**, Penn State Harrisburg

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

New World: The Changing Role of Party in American State Politics, 1840–2020

Thad Kousser, University of California, San Diego; **Gerald Gamm**, University of Rochester

Media and Democracy without the Electoral Connection

Michael Auslen, University of Texas at Austin

House Party? Reimagining Intergenerational Party Transmission

Daniel Smith, University of Florida; **Yuguo Wang**, University of Florida

Issue Agendas and Polarization in State Legislatures, 2009–2025

Connor Phillips, Carnegie Mellon University

PANEL SESSION 6 – SATURDAY, JUNE 6 – 11:15 AM – 12:45 PM

INTEREST GROUPS AND INSIDERS

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

From Bluegrass to Red Ink: What the Kentucky Pension Crisis Tells Us about State Governance and Political Institutions

Sarah Anzia, University of California, Berkeley; **Mark Spindel**, Potomac River Capital LLC

Indexing American Interest Groups

Alex Garlick, University of Vermont; **Galen Hall**, University of Michigan; **James Strickland**, Florida State University

The Federalism of CEOs' Campaign Contributions

Mary Kroeger, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; **Maria Silfa**, Ohio State University

EDUCATION AND PARENTING

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

A Pipeline for Extracting Data from Videos of Complex State and Local Political Events

Tyler Simko, University of Michigan; **Mirya Holman**, University of Houston; **Andreas Küpfer**, Technical University of Darmstadt

How Much Do Voters Care About Student Learning?

Vladimir Kogan, Ohio State University; **Michael Hartney**, Boston College

The Political Context of the 2026 Parental Rights Amendment in Texas

Dave Rausch, West Texas A&M University; **Mary Rausch**, West Texas A&M University

From Policy to Practice: Factors Affecting Child Marriage Policies in the United States

Mimosa Khatun, Independent Scholar

IDENTITY AND POLITICS

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Discussant: TBD

North Carolina DEI Policy Impacts for Nonprofit Organizations

Jennifer Beightley, UNC Charlotte; **Lauren Azevedo**, UNC Charlotte

Legislators Matter: How Descriptive Representation Affects Who Testifies in Legislative Hearings

Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, University of Maryland, College Park

OK Boomer: Generational Differences in Legislative Behavior and Policy Priorities in State Legislatures

Kathleen Bratton, Louisiana State University; **Kerry Haynie**, Duke University

GRADUATE POSTER SESSION—FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – 5:00 – 6:30 PM
Beane Hall, Lewis Towers

Redistricting Relationships: Insight into Federal and State Legislative Relationships through Campaign Contributions, Elections and Redistricting

Kristen Adams, The Ohio State University

The Strength of State Parties

Emily Anderson, University of Notre Dame

Regulating in the Dark: Carbon Blindness in State-Level Electricity Tariff Design

Alexi Barrett, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Bothered Enough to Vote? Local Conditions, Nuisance, and Political Participation

Danielle Beavers, The Pennsylvania State University

Multi-Member Districts and Women's Representation in State Legislatures

Anastasia Brown, Arizona State University

Beyond the ACA: The Role of Gender Composition in State Legislatures on Gender-Specific Healthcare Coverage

Lola Browne, University of Virginia

You're Hot Then You're Cold: Feelings of Warmth and Anti-Transgender Policy Support

Brody DeBettignies, University of Iowa

Contemporary Election Policy Polarization in American Legislatures

Jess Esplin, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Illusion of Access: Structural Barriers to Speaking at City Council Meetings

Erin Fisher, Purdue University

Rising Neo-Nationalism and Its Consequences for Democratic Governance: Lessons from the United States and Indonesia

Lalu Ary Kurniawan Hardi, Northern Illinois University

Medicaid Provider Restrictions and Obstetric Care After Hospital Closures

Sophia Helland, University of Southern California

Chronically Online at the State House? The Incentives and Resources that Predict State Legislators' Social Media Presence

Abigail Hemmen, University of Notre Dame

Electoral Competition and Strategic Issue Expansion into Election Policy: Organized Groups in State Legislatures

Joseph Loffredo, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Arenas of the Urban Commons, Power Beyond Procedure: Formal Rules, Informal Institutions, and the Art of Governance in Washington, D.C.'s Advisory Neighborhood Commissions

Christine Miller, University of the District of Columbia

Who Drives Renewable Energy Siting? A Geospatial Analysis of Local Level Solar Farm Distribution

Jasper Neath, Purdue University

The Consequences of Inexperience: Term Limits and Legislative Productivity

Jordon Newton, Washington University in St. Louis

Aggressive & Passive Language in State of the State Addresses

Bailey Oates, Michigan State University

The Causes of Uncontested Elections: A New Evaluation Using Cast Vote Records

Mason Reece, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Examining National Party Influence on Gubernatorial Candidate Platforms Through Pre-Primary Endorsements

Christine Semeniuk, The Pennsylvania State University

Second-Class by Design: Federalism and the Architecture of Otherization in CRIPA

Katherine Sevin, University of Colorado – Boulder

Institutions and Bill Complexity in the States

Taylor Tokos, University of Iowa

Negative Position Taking in State Legislatures

Timothy Yen, University of Iowa