



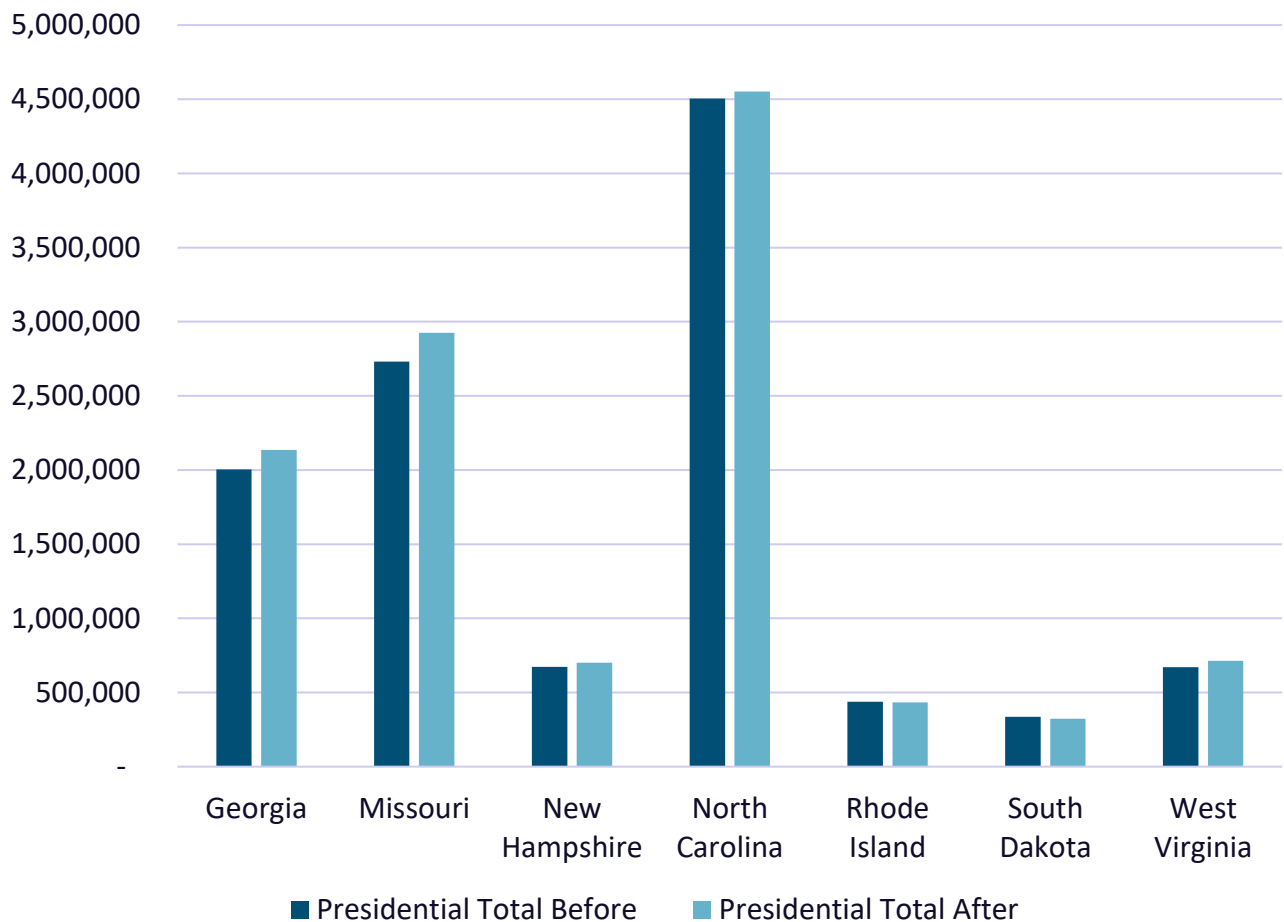






## Effect of Changing STV

The figure below shows the total turnout in a presidential year for several states before and after they eliminated straight ticket voting. In competitive states like Georgia, Missouri, and North Carolina, the vote total increased after removing STV as an option for at least that span of time. However, given population growth in the states over the four year period is likely partially the reason. There was very little total effect on turnout in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, or South Dakota.

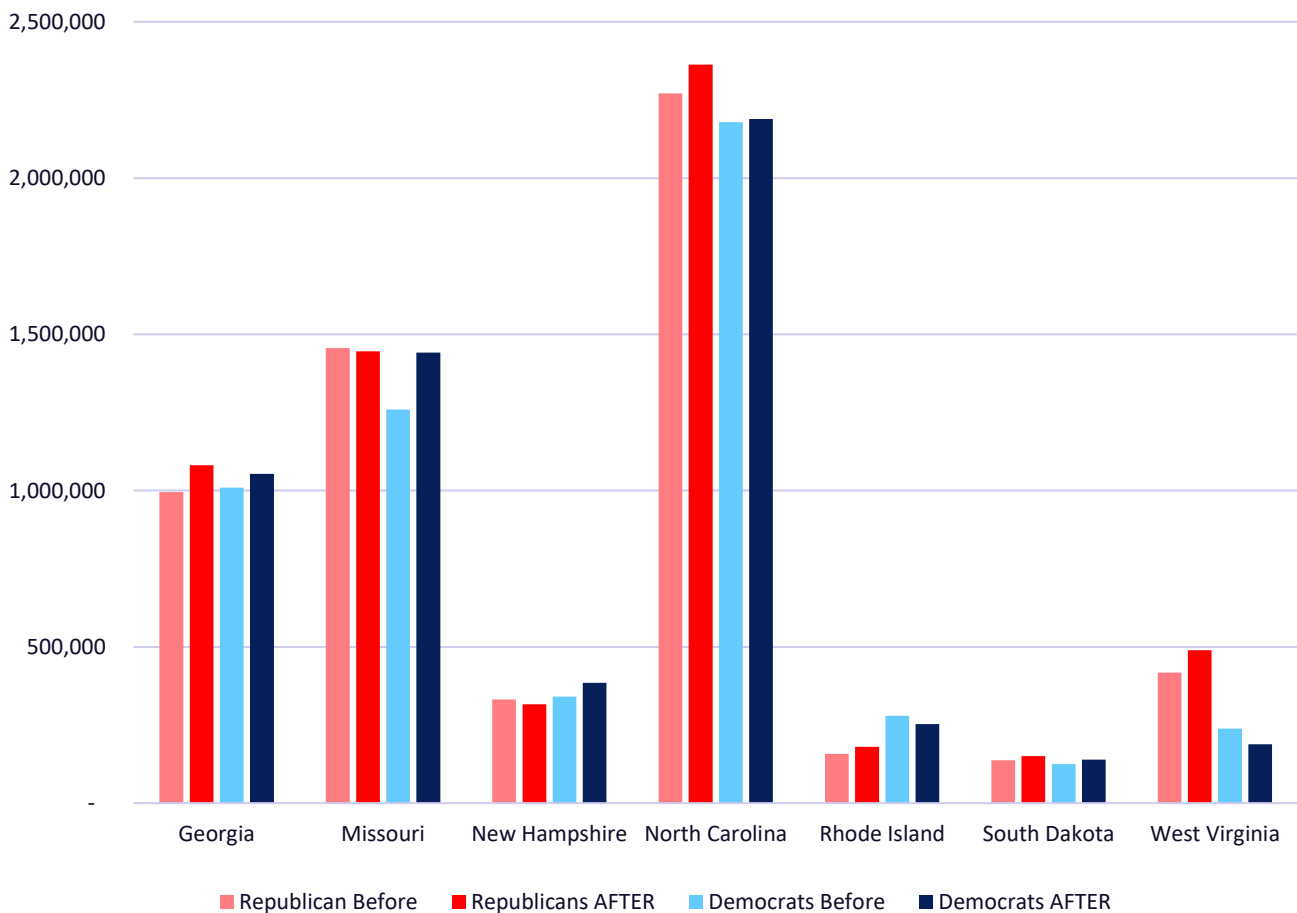


**Does one party benefit from moving away from straight ticket voting?** The results are mixed for a handful of states who have moved away from STV. The figure below shows that some states saw an increase in support for Democratic presidential candidates (Missouri and New Hampshire) while others showed a decrease in support for the Democratic presidential candidate (Rhode Island and West Virginia). States like North Carolina and

West Virginia, and to a lesser extent Rhode Island and South Dakota, also saw increase in support for Republicans.

Georgia and North Carolina have become swing states, so both parties increased their vote totals following the removal of STV, not yielding significant advantages for either. States trending Republican like West Virginia and South Dakota saw little effect for either party following a removal of STV. A strong presidential year for Democrats in 2008 in Missouri led to a boost in support for Barack Obama (but not a victory - John McCain won by only a few thousand votes).

**Ultimately at the state level in a presidential year, no one party seems to benefit unless it is a top target for the party.**



### Down Ballot Races?

Using an ordinary least squares panel regression (with fixed effects for states and several control variables) to estimate vote totals for candidates for state

legislative positions in each party from 2006 to 2016, the results in the table below show moving away from straight ticket voting lowers support for state legislative candidates from both parties. Positive numbers indicate how many votes candidates can count on when straight ticket voting is in effect. Removing the option would reduce the vote totals for each candidate by approximately the amount indicated.

For Democrats, removing the STV option decreases vote totals by about 5,000 votes in presidential years overall and up to 12,000 in state senate races in presidential election years. The effect for Republican house candidates demonstrated a loss of about 1,000 total votes in a presidential election year and about 9,000 votes in a Senate race if the state moved away from STV.

Top of the ticket presidential politics drives much of the vote choice in presidential election years with straight ticket voting facilitating more party-aligned voting. The undervote is generally less pronounced in presidential elections, but the elimination of the straight ticket voting option which attenuates this option could have a larger effect on vote share in presidential elections than other elections.

**Table 1 - Effect of Straight Ticket Voting on Vote Share**

	(1) Total Votes	(2) Democratic (House)	(3) Republican (House)	(4) Democratic (Senate)	(5) Republican (Senate)
Straight Ticket	2,433.0** (1,095.0)	2,295.8*** (392.7)	1,066.1* (444.1)	1,357.3 (1314.4)	-1,919.9 (1424.0)
Presidential Year	11,277.3*** (345.1)	5,084.9*** (122.1)	3,566.3*** (138.1)	11,943.3*** (445.7)	9,321.0*** (482.9)
Constant	24,954.5*** (358.1)	9,364.6*** (130.8)	10,253.7*** (147.9)	20,589.7*** (404.5)	22,327.3*** (438.2)
N	20,558	16,053	16,053	4,505	4,505
R-sq	0.115	0.143	0.169	0.186	0.220
Groups (States)	50	50	50	50	50
Rho	.574	.759	.686	.791	.744
Pr(u <sub>i</sub> =0) (Prob > F)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

NOTE: Dependent variable is total votes by party candidate. Standard errors (clustered) in parentheses, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001. Additional control variables not listed in table.

The average Democratic candidate receives just over 10,500 votes in state House legislative races in the time period examined, 14,600 for incumbents, making this figure substantively impactful. Put another way, the average difference between the Democratic and Republican candidate during the period for lower chamber races is 6,700 votes, so 2,200 votes would be more than 30% of that total.

## Impacts and Implications

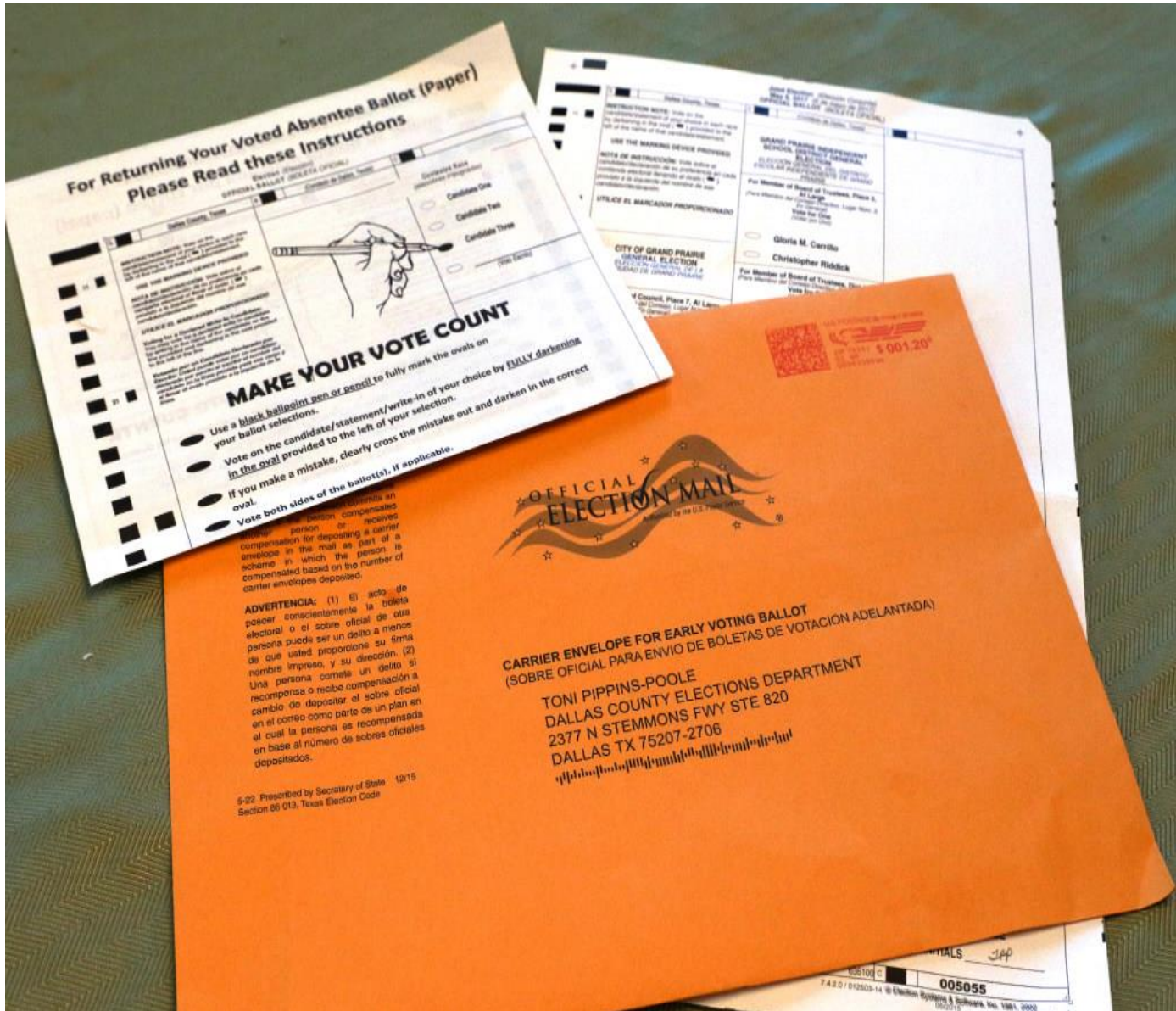
Beyond the direct political impacts, shifting away from STV will change Texas voting process and, eventually, the balance of power. There are three primary ways the loss of STV will affect the state:

**Erosion of Incumbency Advantage.** By nature, this will lead to an erosion of the incumbency advantage as candidates can no longer count on an engineered reservoir of support from partisans in their districts. The effect will be most prominent for Democratic incumbents who stand to absorb the brunt of the electoral effect of the change.

**More Divided Government.** One implication to these changes is that, if STV leads to more unified government, the elimination of straight ticket voting will lead to more ticket splitting and therefore more divided government between the president and Congress, state legislatures and the president, and state legislatures and state governors.

**Longer Lines to Vote.** Without the ability to quickly vote straight ticket, voting will necessarily take longer for most voters. This will lead to longer lines for voters which scholars indicate will reduce turnout for the current election (as voters may not have time to wait) and in subsequent elections.<sup>13</sup> The effect of wait times is more pronounced in minority precincts as scholars show that residents of entirely-Black neighborhoods waited 29% longer to vote and were 74% more likely to spend more than 30 minutes at their polling place.





**For Returning Your Voted Absentee Ballot (Paper)  
Please Read these Instructions**

State County, Texas  
Grand Prairie, Texas

**MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT**  
Use a black ballpoint pen or pencil to fully mark the ovals on your ballot selections.  
Vote on the candidate/statement/write-in of your choice by FULLY darkening in the oval provided to the left of your selection.  
If you make a mistake, clearly cross the mistake out and darken in the correct oval.  
Vote both sides of the ballot(s), if applicable.

Grand Prairie Independent School District Board of Trustees

Candidate One  
Candidate Two  
Candidate Three



**CARRIER ENVELOPE FOR EARLY VOTING BALLOT**  
(SOBRE OFICIAL PARA ENVIO DE BOLETAS DE VOTACION ADELANTADA)

TONI PIPPINS-POOLE  
DALLAS COUNTY ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT  
2377 N STEMMONS FWY STE 820  
DALLAS TX 75207-2706

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