

What Gets Tweeted Gets Done? Gubernatorial Agenda-Setting and State Policymaking

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Introduction

The policy agenda-setting relationship between what a governor says she wants to focus on and what the legislature attends to has received increasing attention as political communication channels have become more individualized. State governors and the corresponding legislature operate in a similar political time, yet how they prioritize information is often fundamentally different as prior research shows that governors prioritize collective goods while legislatures act on particularized benefits (Lewis et al. 2015; Barrilleaux and Berkman 2003). The policy disconnect between the two branches suggests institutional arrangements buttress this behavior, but do incongruent policy priorities between a governor and the legislature extend beyond the institution? During elections, gubernatorial candidates use their platform to outline a bevy of items they want to address once elected, and research suggests candidates' promise-keeping is variable across context and time (Sulkin 2011). In a digitally driven political environment where state issues are both nationalized and polarized, the relationship between

what a governor says on the campaign trail and what happens in the state legislature may not be so distant or incongruent.

In this paper, we explore the relationship between gubernatorial candidate policy priorities and legislative action. In an era of social media agenda-setting and leading via tweet (Russell 2021), the link between what a candidate publicly prioritizes and the policy priorities that are actually addressed is more easily measured as politicians create a public, accessible record of their campaign policy priorities. Politicians have become increasingly reliant on political strategies that offer them the opportunity to ‘go public’ with greater discretion, but we explore whether or not the relationship between what a candidate proclaims online as the most pressing issues within a state, and what a legislature then chooses to act on are systematically intertwined.

Given the rise in nationalized politics (Hopkins 2018), many politicians are eschewing local concerns in favor of advertising widely recognized policy issues that draw partisan opposition and motivate strong emotions. Evidence from congressional lawmakers suggests that the nationalized politics shapes how they engage online, extending from the campaign trail to their social media behavior once elected (Russell 2021). At the state level, both candidates for office and elected policymakers may be drawn into these political fights, even while also responsible for addressing the realities of local governance. Candidates for office and their political communication are not bound by the limits of jurisdiction or state capacity, but legislators as well can use bill introductions to signal priorities and promote a specific policy agenda. This nationalized politics may offer one reason connective link between the policy agendas of governors and those of state lawmakers, tightening the connection between what is said on that campaign trail and what is done in state government.

Additionally, evidence suggests executive rhetoric can alter the congressional agenda (Edwards and Wood 1999; Edwards and Barrett 2000; Cummins 2008). Executives have an important, albeit limited, power to call attention to specific issues. The dynamics of a state-wide election in an era of hyper-partisan attitudes and digital advertising tests whether there is any meaningful linkage between the political realities of state government and what a gubernatorial candidate chooses to speak about on the campaign trail.

In this article, we consider the conditions under which what a gubernatorial candidate addresses on the campaign trail is associated with the policy priorities of the legislature. Increasingly, social media plays a central, agenda-setting role throughout both the campaign where candidates are able to aggregate their policy priorities for journalists and co-partisans. We assess whether candidates' agenda-setting behavior online resembles the policy agenda of the legislature that a future governor is slated to collaborate with. We analyze the relationship between gubernatorial candidates' policy priorities on Twitter and policy priorities captured by legislative activity, using a data set of gubernatorial candidate tweets from 2008 to 2018 (Duell 2021) and state legislative bill introductions (Garlick 2020). We find a consistent set of state policy priorities between what issues winning gubernatorial candidates talk about and legislature activity, suggesting that even beyond institutional differences, the policy priorities between incoming governors and the legislature are by similar political climate dynamics. This effect continues-regardless of a governor's institutional power or margin of victory, suggesting that it's not a candidate effect but rather a question of political context. These findings echo those of previous scholarship studying the relative legislative successes of governors regarding their publicized policy priorities (Ferguson 2003). One potential source of that policy agenda consistency stems from the nationalization of politics (Russell 2021; Hopkins 2018) that extends

from the campaign trail to the legislative agenda across statehouses. In a climate of salient and partisan policy issues, the promise-keeping of governors at the agenda-setting level may be more robust as the political context between the campaign and post-election are more closely connected.

Twitter for Policy Agendas

Political campaigns regularly feature candidates struggling to define the parameters of political debate (Carsey et al. 2011), increasingly doing that through a number of information channels, including social media. Social media has become a powerful tool for political attacks and emotional connections, but it is also a useful way for aggregating policy priorities and signaling issues of import. Twitter users tend to be political elites and journalists (Himmelboim, Hansen, & Bowser, 2013; Hemsley et al. 2018), so those issues that candidates prioritize are then mimicked in the agendas of news and other influential actors.

Most political science research on political Twitter has focused on congressional candidates, largely attributed to the high number of candidates. These lawmakers use Twitter mainly for broadcasting rather than interacting, offering a viable platform for their policy agenda (Golbeck, Grimes, & Rogers, 2010; Hemphill, Otterbacher, & Shapiro, 2013). The literature, thus far, offers more clarity on federal legislative and presidential communication behavior than those in state or local offices, but the agenda-setting power of Twitter makes it well-suited for message curation even among state actors. State politics is where many people most regularly interact with their government, so for candidates to be able to influence or convey those most important issues, can have meaningful implications for the regular interactions that citizens have with their government. While gubernatorial candidates did not uniformly adopt Twitter as quickly as candidates at the federal level, by 2010, about 75% of candidates had adopted Twitter

as a mode of communication (Duell 2020). By 2016, over 90% of candidates had adopted Twitter. Research suggests that gubernatorial candidates' different communicative strategies are related to leading, trailing, or being tied in opinion polls (Rossini et al. 2018). Stromer-Galley et al. (2018) find that challengers are more likely to attack the incumbent on Twitter, but that incumbent attack messages are more likely to circulate on the platform. Attack messages get more retweets on average compared to advocacy messages.

Evidence about behavior and style of communication suggests many of these differences are driven by the characteristic of the race, but do those same characteristics come into play when talking about the agenda-setting behavior of the governor and its relationship to the legislature? This article aims to fill the gap in the research with a data set of gubernatorial candidates' tweets to assess the relationship between gubernatorial candidate's policy agendas and the policy priorities of a state legislature.

Connecting Executive and Legislative Priorities

Issue agendas don't operate in a vacuum nor are they driven solely by individual preference, as candidates contour their issue agendas in response to the agendas of their opponents (Banda 2013). This suggests that there is a political context that drives agenda-setting at the electoral level, and potentially, that context merges into that of governance.

There are many relational effects between the candidates that shape the tenor and priorities of candidates running for office (McGregor and Mourao 2016), but outside of the campaign context, there may be a broader political climate that shapes agenda-setting. Public approval can also be leveraged during an election, as it not only fuels basic electoral fortunes, but can support more legislative policy success (Barth and Ferguson 2002).

Governors' communication, such as in state of the state addresses, can offer important information about policy preferences and values (Coffey 2005). This regular communication can provide a useful assessment of governors' priorities and understanding how those priorities get incorporated into state policy (Coffey 2005; Ferguson 2003). But even before governors are elected to office, they must still identify those issues where they want to build a reputation and define their policy agenda. Evidence suggests Twitter is not some alternative policy agenda removed from legislative behavior (Russell and Wen 2021). Further, research from congressional campaigns suggests the policy agendas of candidates are largely realized once they are in office (Sulkin 2011).

Those connections between electoral and legislative policy agendas are buoyed by a nationalization of politics. For example, governors' approval ratings are often nationalized—gubernatorial popularity mirrors same-party presidential popularity and national unemployment trends (King and Cohen 2005). In addition to the nationalization, the further polarization by the parties means that politicized policy within state legislatures may also be reflected in the political agendas and rhetoric by candidates for governor. Not only are candidates using more polarizing rhetoric in their attacks, but that polarization may also influence the policy priorities that candidates address. Evidence from senators' Twitter accounts suggests some partisan sorting along those issues where a party holds a reputational advantage (Russell 2021).

The relationship between a governor and legislature is often a question of power (Kousser and Phillips 2009), but regardless of whose preferred preferences win out, the policy agenda under which they operate is an important measure of legislative priorities. The governor can use speeches or budget proposals to set the agenda for later negotiations with the legislature

(Kousser and Phillips 2009; Breunig and Koski 2009; Dometrius and Wright 2010), but that agenda setting power may extend beyond the institution.

Hypotheses

In an era of nationalized and polarized politics, the relationship between the electoral priorities and governing priorities is more closely tied to one another. At the state level, candidates for governor can outline their policy priorities for their upcoming tenure, but whether those priorities reflect the realities of the state legislature is conditional on the political environment. We examine the relationship between what issues a governor uses to define his or her candidacy for office and the relationship between those issues actually addressed by the state legislature. We argue that even in a world of unorthodox lawmaking and tweeting to power (Russell 2021, Sinclair 2006) the common policymaking context suggests a relationship between the policymaking promises on the campaign trail and what is actually addressed in government. The permanent campaign, digital media culture, and prevalence of nationalized politics contribute to a state-level political environment where candidates who make policy promises on the campaign trail are better suited to meet those priorities once elected.

More specifically, we hypothesize that candidates' policy priorities are positively associated with legislative activity for a given policy area. We also expect the winning candidates' priorities to have stronger associations with legislative activity, but even when considering losing candidates, we still expect to see a relationship between executive campaign agendas and policy realities in the legislature. Governors are often seen as agenda-setters with respect to the budget (Breunig and Koski 2009). And, as Ferguson (2003) writes, "Chief executives [governors] are not discrete actors. To direct law-making, they must interact with the public and the legislature, in nearly all instances." We expect gubernatorial candidates to use

Twitter to further amplify their policymaking agenda as a platform to engage both legislators and the public directly in their capacity as "chief legislators" (Kousser and Phillips 2009).

Alternatively, candidate signaling on social media may have little relationship with legislative activity given the differences in electoral incentives faced by governors and legislators. In this same vein, we might expect differences between chambers. For example, state upper houses tend to represent more constituents and have longer terms in office; we might expect the relationship between the upper house and gubernatorial priorities to be stronger with state upper house legislative activity than with the lower house, which have more representatives representing a larger number of interests.

We also explore the relationship between expressed executive-elect policy priorities and legislation, conditioning on the governor's public mandate (i.e. margin of victory) and institutional powers. Previous findings are mixed on both counts—on the one hand, Ferguson (2003) found neither a governor's margin of victory nor institutional power had a statistically meaningful relationship with legislative successes. On the other hand, Breunig and Koski (2009) conclude that large-scale budget change is predicted by gubernatorial agenda setting power. Given these results, we are agnostic in our expectations regarding these interactions.

Data & Methods

We bring together gubernatorial candidate tweet data (Duell 2020), state bill introductions (Garlick 2020), and other publicly available covariates to test our expectations about the relationship between gubernatorial candidates' policy priorities and those within the legislature. The unit of analysis is the policy topic-state-year. The Duell (2020) data set includes tweets from gubernatorial candidates from 2008 to 2018. We separated out the winning and losing candidates to explore potential differences and consider the effect of the individual

candidate versus the political environment. We created counts of tweets by policy area using Duell's (2020) categories. We then mapped these categories on to the policy areas Garlick (2020) used to map state legislative proposals.

	Legislation Policy Topic (Garlick 2020)	Tweet Topic(s) (Duell 2020)
1	Agriculture	Agriculture
2	Education	Education
3	Environment	Climate
4	Natural Resources	Climate
5	Insurance	Healthcare
6	Health	Healthcare
7	Civil Rights	Crime, Drugs, Guns, Immigration, Anticorruption, Women's Rights, Corruption
8	Law	Crime, Drugs, Guns, Immigration, Anticorruption, Women's Rights, Corruption
9	Construction	Taxes, Economy
10	Manufacturing	Taxes, Economy
11	Small Business	Taxes, Economy
12	Sports and Recreation	Taxes, Economy
13	Bank	Taxes, Economy
14	Tax Policy	Taxes, Economy
15	Transportation	Infrastructure, Utilities, Transportation
16	Utilities	Infrastructure, Utilities, Transportation
17	Communication	Infrastructure, Utilities, Transportation
18	Welfare	Housing, Childcare
19	Religion	Religion

Before presenting results, we explore trends in the descriptive statistics. In the first figure below, we see that there are some party differences in tweet share by legislative policy topic in expected directions. Winning Republican candidates prioritize economic topics (banking, tax policy, small businesses) and industry (construction, manufacturing) in their social media messaging. This reflects the issue ownership and partisan policy reputation literature, and offers some assurance about the role of policy communication, even on Twitter (Egan 2013; Petrocik 1996). Both camps generally de-prioritize social policy topics, such as health or welfare, and

environmental policy — issues that are commonly ignored by both political institutions and policy actors (Jones and Baumgartner 2009). However, Democratic candidates are more likely to have higher shares of tweets on topics they may seek to exert greater government action—health, insurance, rule of law, and civil rights. Democrats are also more likely to tweet about education, but surprisingly that is not a top priority topic.

In the second figure, the average share of tweets by policy topic for the losing gubernatorial candidates is displayed. The same political trends hold. Republicans that lose their gubernatorial races are prioritizing economic topics, for example. Interestingly, winning Democrats do appear to be prioritizing economic concerns more than their losing counterparts—banks, construction, small business, and tax policy command a larger share of tweets for winning Democrats.

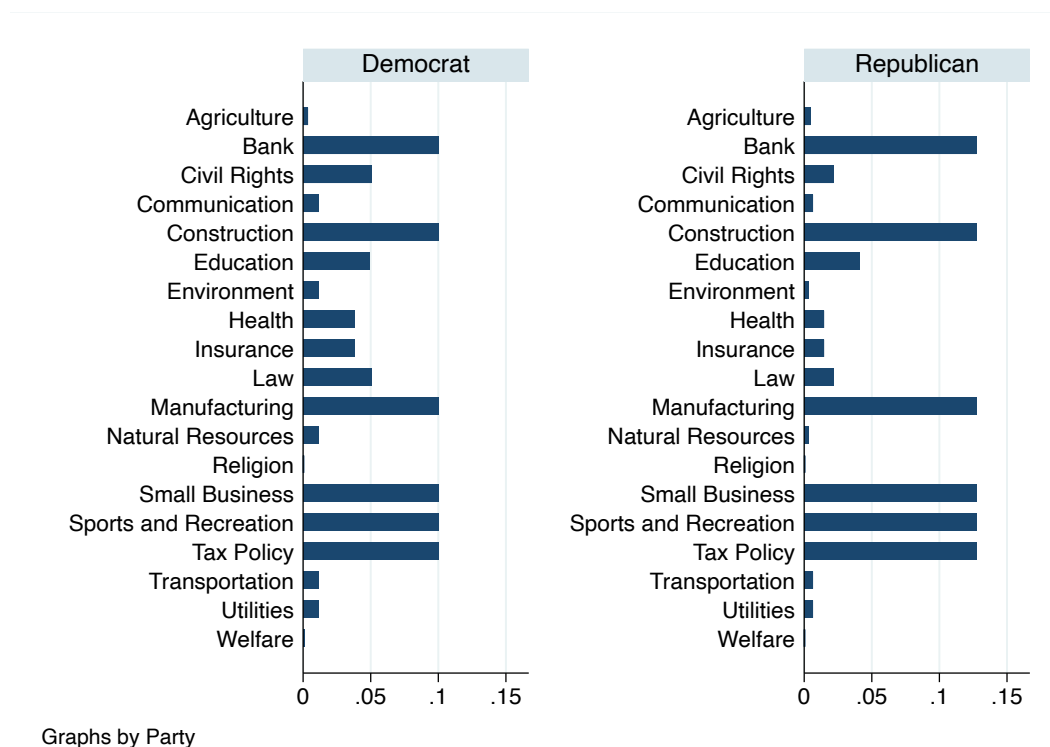


Figure 1: Twitter Trends by Legislative Policy Topic for Winning Candidates

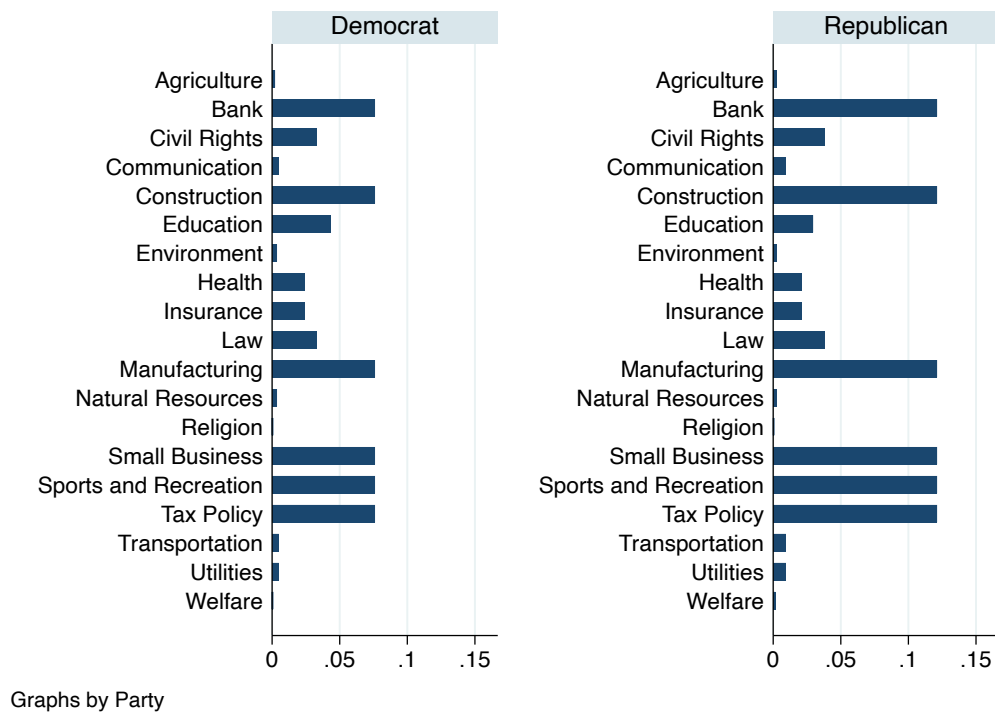


Figure 2: Twitter Trends by Legislative Policy Topic for Losing Candidates

Republican governor-elects during our 10-year time frame tweet more, on average, than their Democratic colleagues; they are also more likely to be incumbents and have higher margins of victory. On average, Republicans win by 18 percentage points over their opponents, while Democrats win by 12 percentage points. Republican candidates also preside over states with more legislative activity — in the same year as their elections, their legislatures propose over a hundred additional pieces of legislation. However, our data does not address the substance or magnitude of policy change proposed. Looking at the third and fourth columns, we see that the losing candidates tweet less than their same-party winning counterparts. As we might expect, very few of them are incumbents.

Table 1: Select Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Republican Gov-Elect</i>	<i>Democrat Gov-Elect</i>	<i>Republican Losing</i>	<i>Democrat Losing</i>
Total Tweets	387.05 (0 – 2,974)	355.94 (0 – 1,256)	364.66 (0 – 1,380)	307.13 (0 – 2,233)
Incumbent (Y=1)	52.81%	50.77%	6.78%	4.65%
Margin of Victory	18.45 (0.40 – 58)	12.48 (0.22 – 44.1)	-	-
Total Legislative Bills (Same Year)	674.30 (126 – 2,046) N = 89	515.66 (110 – 1,280) N = 65	617.64 (126 – 1,765) N = 59	516.18 (110 – 1,280) N = 86

Results

The table below reports the results for five regressions. We use OLS regression to explore the relationship between governor-elect priorities and legislative ones in the year of election, controlling for an array of institutional, economic, and demographic features. We operationalize the gubernatorial candidate policy agenda as the share of tweets dedicated to a given policy topic—this captures the comparative priorities of the elected candidate. The dependent variable in this specification is the corresponding share of bills on the same policy topic. Additionally, we consider the relationship between the total number of bills in a given policy area and the total number of tweets. To measure the margin of victory, we subtract the runner-up candidate’s vote share from the winning candidate’s vote share. We use Beyle’s index to operationalize a governor’s institutional power. We include indicator variables for both year and state, and robust standard errors, in all specifications.

We see that there is a positive relationship between governor-elected prioritization via tweet and subsequent legislative activity, share of bills in a given year, across policy topics. This supports our first expectation. A one percentage point increase in tweets for a given policy area is associated with a 16-percentage point increase in the share of legislation in the same policy

topic. However, when legislation is broken out by legislative chamber (columns II and III), we see that there is no appreciable difference in magnitude or statistical significance. Lastly, interacting the margin of victory (column IV) and the gubernatorial institutional power index (column V) with the tweet share does not have much of an impact. Across all of the regressions, political, institutional, and demographic factors have very little bearing on policy prioritization via legislative action.

Table 2: Governor-Elect Policy and Legislative Priorities, 2008 to 2018

	(1) All	(2) House	(3) Upper	(4) All - Margin of Victory Interaction	(5) All - Beyle Interaction
Percent of Tweets	.1601*** (.03203)	.165*** (.03346)	.165*** (.03346)	.139** (.05351)	.2588 (.2755)
Incumbent	.0001139 (.007079)	-.00003645 (.007205)	-.00003645 (.007205)	-.0001536 (.007068)	.0001562 (.007076)
Tweet Share # Margin of Victory				.001152 (.002496)	
Tweet Share # Governor Powers Index					-.02822 (.07722)
<i>Political Context</i>					
Margin of Victory	-.0000396 (.0003372)	-.00003982 (.0003405)	-.00003982 (.0003405)	-.00006341 (.0003342)	-.00004609 (.0003373)
State Government Ideology	.0003076 (.0007979)	.0002997 (.0008074)	.0002997 (.0008074)	.0003041 (.0007984)	.0003347 (.0007999)
Governor is Democrat (1=Yes)	-.006354 (.01917)	-.005946 (.01933)	-.005946 (.01933)	-.006204 (.01918)	-.006893 (.01919)
Divided Govt Indicator	.001122 (.008295)	.001624 (.008374)	.001624 (.008374)	.001124 (.008295)	.001299 (.008284)
<i>Institutional Features</i>					
Governor Powers Index	0	0	0	0	0

Total Legislature Seats	(.) -.007791 (.02539)	(.) -.009357 (.02548)	(.) -.009357 (.02548)	(.) -.008002 (.02537)	(.) -.007106 (.02547)
Legislative Professionalization Index	.01679 (.3032)	.02364 (.3173)	.02364 (.3173)	.01835 (.3036)	.02435 (.303)
State Govt Rev Per Capita	.002324 (.01154)	.002878 (.01166)	.002878 (.01166)	.002993 (.01163)	.001702 (.01149)
<i>State Demographics</i>					
Population Share Not White	.1871 (.7382)	.2322 (.7378)	.2322 (.7378)	.1711 (.7402)	.1815 (.7388)
Median Household Income	-1.847e-06 (3.278e-06)	-2.033e-06 (3.324e-06)	-2.033e-06 (3.324e-06)	-1.849e-06 (3.278e-06)	-1.659e-06 (3.285e-06)
Total State Population	3.124e-09 (1.856e-08)	4.314e-09 (1.839e-08)	4.314e-09 (1.839e-08)	4.261e-09 (1.861e-08)	2.633e-09 (1.853e-08)
State Citizen Ideology	.0001026 (.0006973)	.0001073 (.0006995)	.0001073 (.0006995)	.00008865 (.0006978)	.00007411 (.0006965)
Poverty Rate	.0002876 (.002903)	.0000982 (.002966)	.0000982 (.002966)	.00006608 (.002848)	.0004016 (.002906)
Year	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constant	1.154 (3.569)	1.366 (3.585)	1.366 (3.585)	1.181 (3.566)	1.052 (3.582)
Observations	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387
R ²	0.022	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3 reports the results for five regressions focusing on the absolute number of tweets and bill introductions using the same framework as above. As we would expect, the total number of bills is positively associated with more bills in a given policy area across all five regressions. And, we see a similar relationship between the number of tweets and legislative action—for every additional tweet on a given topic, there is an additional 0.16 bills across both chambers in

the same year. Separating by upper and lower chamber does not reveal institutional differences. Interestingly, legislative professionalization does not have a statistically significant relationship with the number of bills introduced. Columns IV and V show that electoral mandate and gubernatorial power do not seem to condition the relationship.

Table 3: Governor-Elect Twitter Attention and Legislative Action

	(1) All	(2) House	(3) Upper	(4) All - Beyle Interaction	(5) All - Margin of Victory Interaction
Total Bills (Annual)	.05105** (.01887)	.05213** (.01622)	.05213** (.01622)	.05127** (.01889)	.0506** (.01885)
Number of Tweets	.1575*** (.03742)	.09437*** (.02171)	.09437*** (.02171)	.2799 (.412)	.1245* (.05678)
Number of Tweets # Governor Powers Index				-.03487 (.1169)	
Number of Tweets # Margin of Victory					.002894 (.003278)
Incumbent	.6767 (4.761)	.3879 (2.679)	.3879 (2.679)	.747 (4.777)	.4828 (4.745)
<i>Political Context</i>					
Margin of Victory	-.03423 (.2288)	-.02752 (.1298)	-.02752 (.1298)	-.04352 (.2309)	-.03919 (.2296)
State Government Ideology	.03456 (.5105)	.04272 (.3074)	.04272 (.3074)	.05218 (.5122)	.04151 (.5105)
Governor is Democrat (1=Yes)	-3.871 (11.82)	-2.537 (7.126)	-2.537 (7.126)	-4.16 (11.86)	-3.648 (11.82)
Divided Govt Indicator	3.118 (4.953)	2.072 (3.026)	2.072 (3.026)	3.262 (4.951)	2.629 (4.926)
<i>Institutional Features</i>					
Governor Powers	0	0	0	0	0

Index	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Total Legislature Seats	-3.947	-2.874	-2.874	-3.797	-4.227
	(36.32)	(18.9)	(18.9)	(36.31)	(36.33)
Legislative Professionalization Index	73.06	45.5	45.5	84.18	72.29
	(169.2)	(98.07)	(98.07)	(171.9)	(169.4)
State Govt Rev Per Capita	.6255	.3961	.3961	.08339	1.498
	(7.551)	(4.361)	(4.361)	(7.565)	(7.598)
<i>State Demographics</i>					
Population Share Not White	176.1	120.6	120.6	177.4	144.4
	(439.6)	(244.8)	(244.8)	(439.5)	(437.3)
Median Household Income	-.0009707	-.0007097	-.0007097	-.0008816	-.0009292
	(.002116)	(.001205)	(.001205)	(.002121)	(.002112)
Total State Population	-3.174e-06	-1.048e-06	-1.048e-06	-3.299e-06	-1.468e-06
	(.00001734)	(8.267e-06)	(8.267e-06)	(.00001733)	(.00001748)
State Citizen Ideology	.1226	.06402	.06402	.09984	.09977
	(.443)	(.2599)	(.2599)	(.4398)	(.4421)
Poverty Rate	.1149	.1124	.1124	.1976	-.04186
	(1.824)	(1.125)	(1.125)	(1.839)	(1.815)
Year	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constant	562.2	405.8	405.8	537.3	595.5
	(5121)	(2670)	(2670)	(5119)	(5123)
Observations	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387
R ²	0.156	0.135	0.135	0.156	0.156

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

We then run the same regressions on the losing candidates' tweets, with largely similar results. The results are reported in the fourth and fifth tables. We see that the losing candidates' priorities are also associated with legislative priorities. The magnitude of the relationship is very similar to that of governor-elects; for every one percentage point increase in legislative attention, there is an 18 percentage point increase in the share of tweets of the losing gubernatorial

candidate. And, as above, there isn't a chamber-based difference. The interactions between percent of tweets and margin of loss and gubernatorial power, respectively, do not reveal statistically significant relationships, either.

Table 4: Losing Candidate Policy and Legislative Priorities, 2008 to 2018

	(1) All	(2) House	(3) Upper	(4) All - Margin of Loss Interaction	(5) All - Beyle Interaction
Percent of Tweets	.1841*** (.04092)	.19*** (.04222)	.19*** (.04222)	.1207 (.06799)	.7317* (.3534)
Incumbent	-.006185 (.01337)	-.00562 (.01334)	-.00562 (.01334)	-.004982 (.01334)	-.006463 (.01331)
Tweet Share # Margin of Loss				.005066 (.004545)	
Tweet Share # Governor Powers Index					-.1511 (.09592)
<i>Political Context</i>					
Margin of Loss	-.0001094 (.0002904)	-.0001137 (.0002927)	-.0001137 (.0002927)	-.0001759 (.0002933)	-.0001726 (.0002921)
State Government Ideology	.00008575 (.0007794)	.00006827 (.0007897)	.00006827 (.0007897)	.000118 (.0007789)	.0003022 (.0007801)
Governor is Democrat (1=Yes)	-.002551 (.01868)	-.001931 (.01887)	-.001931 (.01887)	-.004681 (.0187)	-.006938 (.01872)
Divided Govt Indicator	-.003444 (.008832)	-.002883 (.008888)	-.002883 (.008888)	-.003975 (.008813)	-.002859 (.008837)
<i>Institutional Features</i>					
Governor Powers Index	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Total Legislature Seats	-.003156 (.02434)	-.004756 (.02444)	-.004756 (.02444)	-.002896 (.02434)	-.002109 (.0243)
Legislative	.006132	.01501	.01501	.02631	.02462

Professionalization Index					
	(.2896)	(.3061)	(.3061)	(.2904)	(.2888)
State Govt Rev Per Capita	.001074	.001671	.001671	.002735	-.0005854
	(.01151)	(.01164)	(.01164)	(.01151)	(.0115)
	<i>State Demographics</i>				
Population Share Not White	.06333	.1165	.1165	.02321	.09244
	(.6073)	(.6104)	(.6104)	(.6075)	(.6073)
Median Household Income	-8.900e-07	-1.066e-06	-1.066e-06	-7.243e-07	-5.420e-07
	(3.236e-06)	(3.287e-06)	(3.287e-06)	(3.235e-06)	(3.225e-06)
Total State Population	2.236e-09	3.073e-09	3.073e-09	5.874e-09	-2.407e-10
	(1.925e-08)	(1.915e-08)	(1.915e-08)	(1.931e-08)	(1.917e-08)
State Citizen Ideology	.0001327	.0001396	.0001396	.00006634	-.00007826
	(.0007047)	(.0007064)	(.0007064)	(.0007025)	(.0007039)
Poverty Rate	.001179	.001028	.001028	.0007713	.001473
	(.002797)	(.002853)	(.002853)	(.002803)	(.002783)
Year	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constant	.4886	.7056	.7056	.4269	.3386
	(3.455)	(3.471)	(3.471)	(3.454)	(3.449)
Observations	1368	1368	1368	1368	1368
R ²	0.021	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.023

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 shows a greater departure. There is still a statistically significant positive relationship between the losing candidates' number of tweets and legislative action, but the magnitude is smaller than that for winning candidates. We interpret this finding to indicate there is a weaker relationship in overall losing candidate Twitter attention and legislative action.

Table 5: Losing Candidate Twitter Attention and Legislative Action

	(1) All	(2) House	(3) Upper	(4) All - Beyle Interaction	(5) All - Margin of Loss Interaction
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Total Bills (Annual)	.04392* (.01889)	.04781** (.0165)	.04781** (.0165)	.04392* (.01889)	.04326* (.01888)
Number of Tweets	.06727* (.02775)	.0403* (.01655)	.0403* (.01655)	.06421 (.1991)	.008836 (.03422)
Number of Tweets # Governor Powers Index				.0008472 (.059)	
Number of Tweets # Margin of Loss					.006115 (.003631)
Incumbent	-6.141 (7.935)	-3.618 (4.505)	-3.618 (4.505)	-6.132 (7.85)	-2.389 (7.738)
<i>Political Context</i>					
Margin of Loss	-.05187 (.1708)	-.03989 (.1053)	-.03989 (.1053)	-.05176 (.1706)	-.08315 (.173)
State Government Ideology	.00563 (.4821)	.0268 (.2888)	.0268 (.2888)	.00454 (.4899)	-.05953 (.4828)
Governor is Democrat (1=Yes)	1.949 (11.39)	.7852 (6.798)	.7852 (6.798)	1.958 (11.45)	2.19 (11.35)
Divided Govt Indicator	-1.364 (5.278)	-.5545 (3.15)	-.5545 (3.15)	-1.364 (5.28)	-1.529 (5.27)
<i>Institutional Features</i>					
Governor Powers Index	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Total Legislature Seats	-1.26 (36.22)	-1.523 (18.92)	-1.523 (18.92)	-1.271 (36.16)	-.7556 (36.22)
Legislative Professionalization Index	15.85 (160.7)	6.166 (93.03)	6.166 (93.03)	15.61 (160.5)	24.97 (161.7)
State Govt Rev Per Capita	.848 (7.295)	.583 (4.241)	.583 (4.241)	.858 (7.313)	2.53 (7.384)
<i>State Demographics</i>					
Population Share	-69.07	-21.81	-21.81	-69.33	-98.39

Not White	(358.8)	(212.7)	(212.7)	(361.6)	(358.8)
Median Household Income	-.000231	-.0002505	-.0002505	-.0002336	-.0003165
Total State Population	(.001852)	(.001097)	(.001097)	(.001862)	(.00186)
	1.214e-07	1.657e-06	1.657e-06	1.544e-07	3.469e-06
State Citizen Ideology	(.00001811)	(8.720e-06)	(8.720e-06)	(.00001843)	(.00001843)
	.07244	.03943	.03943	.07406	.1215
Poverty Rate	(.4348)	(.2556)	(.2556)	(.4495)	(.439)
	.2058	.1816	.1816	.203	.1159
	(1.59)	(1.014)	(1.014)	(1.57)	(1.585)
Year	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
State	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constant	194.3	215.3	215.3	195.9	105.2
	(5129)	(2682)	(2682)	(5120)	(5129)
Observations	1368	1368	1368	1368	1368
R^2	0.145	0.123	0.123	0.145	0.147

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion and Conclusion

Our results reveal that the policy priorities and attention paid to policy topics on Twitter by governor-elects is “on the same wavelength” as state legislative activity. By and large, that relationship is also mirrored by our analyses of losing candidate policy prioritization and Twitter attention. In an era of nationalized politics and at a time where elected officials are experiencing the permanent campaign, the issue agenda of state governments is associated with the same issue priorities of gubernatorial candidates who are poised to take office. What candidates are talking about on Twitter is not some alternative agenda or unrelated from the state government agenda. Governors and the legislature often have different priorities and preferences that can be attributed to institutional arraignment, but we show that in spite of those differences and the different environment of campaign, there is more consistency than we might assume.

One implication of these findings is the promise keeping that candidates make during the election in terms of their policy priorities may be more easily attainable than previously imagined. Candidates who spend time talking about those issues that the government is already addressing are better poised to make good on those promised issues. This positive association may be made easier in a climate of nationalized and salient issues where state lawmakers are also using bill introductions as a political signal, similar to those signals a candidate makes to voters. The positive association between losing candidates' policy rhetoric on Twitter and the policy agendas within the legislature further reinforce the argument that the policy agendas between the campaign and governance are not as disparate as we might think.

Whether or not legislatures are responding to governors, or both sets of political actors are focusing on the same topics (nationalized or not) should be the subject of future work. Given the many variables that shape how and when candidates communicate on social media, finding a causal relationship between that behavior and legislative activity may prove challenging. The endogeneity between government actions and public opinion can be problematic for more causal assessments.

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