LEAP
Center for Local Elections in American Politics


# Mayoral Elections in Indiana 2003–2015

May 2016

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Knight Foundation
RICE | KINDER INSTITUTE FOR URBAN RESEARCH

# LEAP

## About the Center for Local Elections in American Politics

*The Center for Local Elections in American Politics (LEAP) is developing pathbreaking solutions to the problem of collecting, digitizing and disseminating data on local elections. More information is available at http://www.leap-elections.org/.*

The United States is viewed as an archetype of democracy, yet fundamental questions about the nature of our government and its electoral processes and outcomes are often difficult to answer because of a simple problem: a lack of data.

Because elections are decentralized in this country, basic information about local contests is difficult to access. To date, there has been no comprehensive source of data on U.S. local elections. The situation has vexed political scientists, journalists and other researchers for decades. As a result, much of what we think we know about local government, particularly trends over time, is based on anecdotes and generalizations — not empirical evidence.

We're helping to change that. With a grant from the National Science Foundation in 2010, principal investigators Melissa Marschall and Paru Shah launched the Local Elections in America Project (LEAP). Since then, LEAP has developed the most comprehensive database of local election results in existence. In 2015, the Knight Foundation provided funding to turn LEAP into the Center for Local Elections in American Politics within Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research.

LEAP developed a suite of software application tools to systematically collect, digitize and disseminate data on elections across the U.S. LEAP's innovation was in creating a digital archive of past election results, as well as automating data collection for current and future elections.

At present, the database contains results from 22 states that, in some cases, date as far back as the 1980s. The database contains the names of local candidates, their party affiliations, the number of votes they received, how those votes were cast (e.g., in person, by absentee ballot or by early voting) and whether they ran at-large or by district (and the district name or number). Other fields include government level (county, municipal, school district or special district), office type (executive, legislative, judicial/law enforcement, other) and election type (primary, general, runoff, special or initiative/referendum). In addition, each candidate record is geocoded, making connectivity to other data seamless. We have records of hundreds of thousands of candidates who've run for office in the U.S.

The database is dynamic and continues to be updated as new elections come online, which is a truly pathbreaking feature. And, while we continue to add new election results, we also are expanding data collection to other states and developing new technology that will not only make it possible to expedite the collection of data that's ordinarily difficult to access, but will allow us to enhance our data by adding new fields that measure other candidate, election and campaign features.

Finally, we are working with the Kinder Institute and a large network of stakeholders to make the database and LEAP sustainable so that it can continue to provide data, research and information to scholars, practitioners and policymakers long into the future.

By creating a database that updates automatically — and constantly — we are able to ensure we have the most current information available to help researchers, journalists and others effectively study government. While the presidential campaign continues to generate headlines, the heart of democracy is at the local level. We believe LEAP's database will allow us to better understand the process and outcomes of these elections.


Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research is a "think and do" tank that advances understanding of the challenges facing Houston and other urban centers through research, policy analysis and public outreach. By collaborating with civic and political leaders, the Kinder Institute aims to help Houston and other cities. For more, visit www.kinder.rice.edu.


The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation advances journalism in the digital age and invests in the vitality of communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. The Knight Foundation focuses on projects that promote informed and engaged communities and lead to transformational change. The Knight Foundation Community Initiative focuses on 26 communities. Resident program directors oversee grantmaking in eight communities: Akron, Ohio; Charlotte, N.C.; Detroit; Macon, Ga.; Miami; Philadelphia; San Jose, Calif.; and St. Paul, Minn.

In the remaining 18 communities, the Knight Foundation partners with other community foundations. The foundation has invested more than $841 million in community initiatives since its creation in 1950. The Knight Foundation wants its national network of learning to inspire the actions of residents in each of its communities and help build a better democracy and a successful future. For more, visit www.knightfoundation.org.

## Future Reports

The Indiana study is the third of several reports on municipal elections to be released in 2016 by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research's Center for Local Elections in American Politics. A report on California and Kentucky has already been published. Forthcoming reports will examine trends in municipal contests in Virginia, Louisiana, Minnesota, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arizona and Washington.

*Marschall, Melissa and John Lappie. 2016. "Mayoral Elections in Indiana, 2003–2015." Center for Local Elections in American Politics. Kinder Institute for Urban Research, Rice University, Houston, Texas.*

# Table of Contents

# 1. Executive Summary

Political observers' assumptions about local election trends are often based on anecdotes, incomplete observation or simply conventional wisdom. However, the Kinder Institute for Urban Research and its Center for Local Elections in American Politics (LEAP) offer a first-of-its-kind way to analyze elections.

Several important trends emerge in Indiana. The analysis of election data reveals that more than 20 percent of all mayoral elections in Indiana cities go uncontested. The trend is especially pronounced in the state's smallest cities. The report also shows that during the study period, there has been a steady decline in turnout in both primary and general elections.

## Background

The study focuses on elections of Indiana mayors in the state's 159 cities. The dataset includes the results of mayoral elections in all Indiana cities for the 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 elections. It includes 474 general elections and 706 primary elections.

## Methodology

LEAP software automates the collection of election results, resulting in a database containing records on municipal elections in 22 states dating as far back as the 1980s. The Indiana dataset is based off of information uploaded to the Indiana Secretary of State website. It includes information on general elections in Indiana from Nov. 4, 2003 to Nov. 3, 2015, and primary elections in Indiana from May 1, 2003 to May 5, 2015.

## Findings

- More than 20 percent of all mayoral elections go uncontested. This issue is especially acute in the state's smallest cities. In cities with populations below 5,000, nearly 29 percent of mayoral elections go uncontested, compared to just 13 percent in the state's largest cities.

- The Republicans have made considerable gains in Mayoral elections, going from winning only 42 percent of mayoralties in 2003 to over half by 2011 and 2015. Republican candidates tend to do best in midsized cities, and worst in the largest and smallest cities.

- There is a gradual, steady decline in turnout in mayoral elections during the 2003–2015 study period. In that time, turnout in November general elections dropped from an average of 29 percent in 2003 to 22 percent. Primary turnout declined by 20 percent in 2003 to 14 percent in 2015.

- Average voter turnout is highest in Indiana's smaller cities and declines as city size increases. Cities with 5,000 to 10,000 residents had turnout of 31 percent. In cities with populations above 50,000, average turnout was around 21 percent.

- In Indiana, the relationship between median household income and turnout runs contrary to expectations. Typically, election turnout increases within a community that has a high average median income. In Indiana, regardless of household income, turnout is roughly 26 percent for each category, with little variation.

- Indiana cities with the highest concentrations of college-educated adults have, on average, the lowest turnout (about 24 percent). On the other hand, voter turnout in cities with lower concentrations of residents with at least a bachelor's degree is highest (28 percent). This is also contrary to typical election patterns.

# 2. List of Tables and Figures

# 3. LEAP Mayoral Elections Overview: Indiana

The Indiana mayoral election data compiled by LEAP comes from the Indiana Secretary of State's website (http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2400.htm). The website has mayoral election results for all Indiana cities for the 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 elections. No other local election results are available here, and it does not appear that the Secretary of State maintains election results for city or town council races or any other municipal offices.

## Election Coverage

Nov. 4, 2003–Nov. 3, 2015 (general elections)
May 1, 2003–May 5, 2015

## Total Number of Elections

- 474 general elections
- 706 primary election

# 4. Basic Information About Mayor and Mayoral Elections in Indiana

There are 568 municipalities in Indiana. The majority of these (449) are classified as towns.[1] The remaining 159 are classified as one of three classes of cities, based on population. There is only one first-class city — Indianapolis. However, in 1969 the Indiana General Assembly created the consolidated Indianapolis/Marion County government known as Unigov. Under the consolidated government, the boundaries of Indianapolis were expanded such that they coincided with Marion County. A single government for the city of Indianapolis and Marion County was created, with one directly elected mayor and a single city/county council made up of 29 members. With the exception of other already existing cities within Marion County, all other municipal (town) governments were essentially abolished.[2]

Second- and third-class cities share a similar form of municipal government as Indianapolis — with a directly elected mayor and a legislative body known as the city or "common" council. However citycommon councils in second- and third-class cities are considerably smaller than that of the Unigov. In a second-class city, the city/common council consists of six members elected by voters in each of the six city council districts, plus three additional members elected at-large by all the voters of the city. (Indiana Code 2015: 36-4-6-3). In a third-class city, the city/common council consists of five members elected by voters in each of five city council districts, plus two members elected at-large by all the voters of the city (Indiana Code 2015: 36-4-6-4).[3]

Elections of mayors and council members for Indiana cities are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of odd-numbered years immediately preceding presidential election years (e.g., 2003, 2007, etc.). Terms are four years and there are no term limits. Indiana also holds coordinated municipal primary elections. These take place in May on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in odd years (2003, 2007, etc.) Each political party whose nominee received at least 10 percent of the votes cast in the state for secretary of state at the last election shall nominate all candidates to be voted for at the municipal election to be held in November. If no candidate has filed for the nomination of a party to any office of the municipality, the party may not hold a primary election in the municipality (Indiana Code 2015).

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[1]Most towns have populations under 2,000 (80 percent in 2006). While municipalities may elect to change their status to city when their population exceeds 2,000, this action requires a petition, approved by at least one-third of the town's registered voters, requesting that the question be put to voters in the form of a ballot initiative. If a majority of voters approve the measure, the town can change its classification to a third-class city (Indiana Chamber of Commerce 2013).

[2]This left four cities — Beech Grove, Lawrence, Southport and Speedway — as self-governing municipalities. As county residents however, residents of these municipalities may vote for the mayor of Indianapolis and some candidates for city-county council.

[3]However, a third-class city can alter this structure by adopting an ordinance to provide for a common council consisting of four district members elected by voters in each of four city council districts, and three members elected at-large by all the voters of the city. The city ordinance organizing the common councils in these cities may provide that the common council consists of four district members and one at- large member.

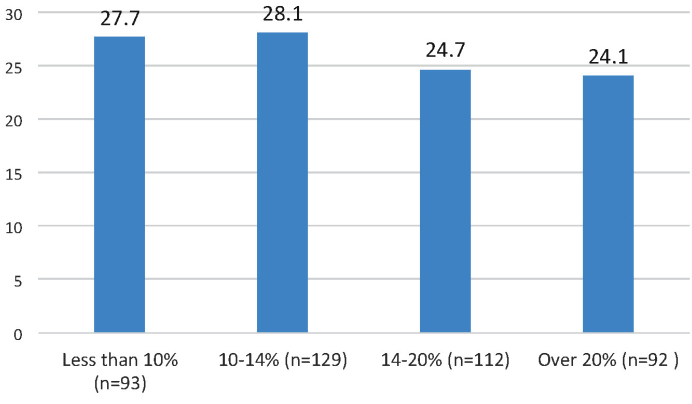
# 5. Mayoral Elections

We begin our analysis of Indiana's mayoral elections by looking first at the general elections, which are held in November of odd years on a four-year cycle. The first feature we investigate is turnout. Existing research on the determinants of voter turnout consistently finds that one of the strongest predictors of whether individuals vote is their socioeconomic status. Specifically, individuals who are more educated and who earn more money are significantly more likely to vote than those with less education and income. Does this relationship hold when we consider aggregates? In other words, do municipalities with higher shares of educated and higher-income residents also have higher turnout?

## Turnout and Demographics

When we look at the question of whether Indiana cities with larger concentrations of educated and wealthy residents have higher voter turnout in mayoral elections, we find a pattern at odds with expectation. Specifically, instead of a positive relationship, as we have confirmed in our reports of mayoral elections in Kentucky and California (Marschall and Lappie 2016a, 2016b), in Indiana we see the opposite. As Figure 5.1 shows, Indiana cities with the highest concentrations of college-educated adults have, on average, the lowest participation rates (24.1 percent).[4] On the other hand, voter turnout in municipalities where smaller percentages of municipal residents have at least a bachelor's degree is highest. In particular, cities where less than 10 percent of residents 25 and older earned a college degree, turnout in mayoral elections averaged 27.7 percent.

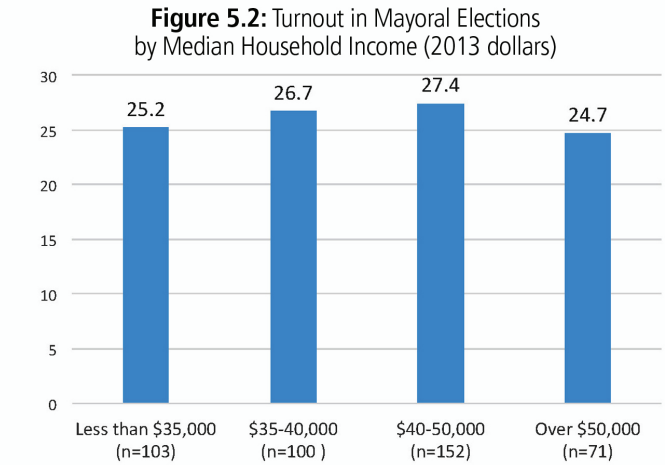
**Figure 5.1:** Turnout in Mayoral Elections by Educational Attainment




These differences are relatively small and because we do not control for other factors, we cannot say that turnout is negatively associated with education. However, the pattern does not conform to expectation.

The relationship between voter turnout and median household income is also contrary to expectation. In this case however, the relationship is not negative. Instead, turnout is highest for the two middle-income categories (26.7 percent and 27.4 percent) and lowest for the lowest and highest income (around 25 percent). As Figure 5.2 demonstrates, the differences are small. Overall, the pattern points most strongly to the conclusion that like education, income does not appear to be related to turnout in mayoral elections in Indiana. In other words, regardless of the median household income of Indiana cities, turnout is roughly the same, varying less than three percentage points.

**Figure 5.2:** Turnout in Mayoral Elections by Median Household Income (2013 dollars)




## Mayoral Elections and City Size

While sociodemographic factors such as the level of education and wealth in the local community are typically strong predictors of political behavior, the social environment in which citizens live can also influence whether or not residents turn out on Election Day. A local community's sense of "place," for instance, can have a major impact on an individual's political engagement (see Huckfeldt, 1979; Verba and Nie, 1972; Lazarsfeld et al, 1968). Grosser and Schram (2006) note that neighbors might ask individuals questions such as "Have you voted yet?" generating social pressure to vote. More broadly, local networks are excellent conduits of information about local politics (Oliver, 2001; Grosser and Schram, 2006).

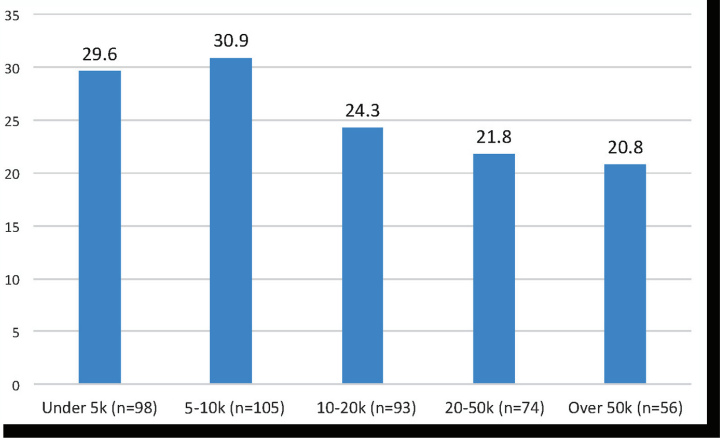
One way to measure "place" is by looking at the size of the city. Many believe that local democracy is healthier

[4]We use voting age population because voter registration data at the municipal level is not available for all cities and years. We interpolate 2003 and 2007 voting age estimates based on 2000 Census data and American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates for 2008–12 (for 2010). For 2011 and 2015, we use the 2009–13 ACS data. This creates some measurement error for 2015, however, ACS five-year estimates are not yet available for later years.

in small cities as opposed to medium or large ones. Since residents are more likely to know and interact with one another in small towns, developing a sense of community and an attachment to "place" is presumably easier there than in big cities where the greater size and heterogeneity of the population means that residents do not have personal relationships or interactions with the vast majority of the population. Of course, this is not always the case. As Oliver (2001) also notes, many small municipalities are suburban bedroom communities that are often distinguished by their lack of sidewalks and emphasis on privacy and automobiles. In these types of municipalities, residents may not only have shorter histories in the community, but may also spend more time commuting and less time socializing with neighbors, and thus develop weaker attachments to "place."

In Figure 5.3, we report average turnout in mayoral elections between 2003–2015 by city size for all cities in Indiana.[5] It shows that average turnout is higher in smaller cities and declines gradually as city size increases. Notably, the highest average participation rate is in cities with 5–10,000 inhabitants (30.9 percent), while the smallest cities (less than 5,000) had slightly less turnout (29.6 percent). The largest Indiana cities, those with populations over 50,000, average about 21 percent turnout in mayoral elections, nearly 10 percentage points less than small cities in the state.

**Figure 5.3:** Turnout in Mayoral Elections by City Size

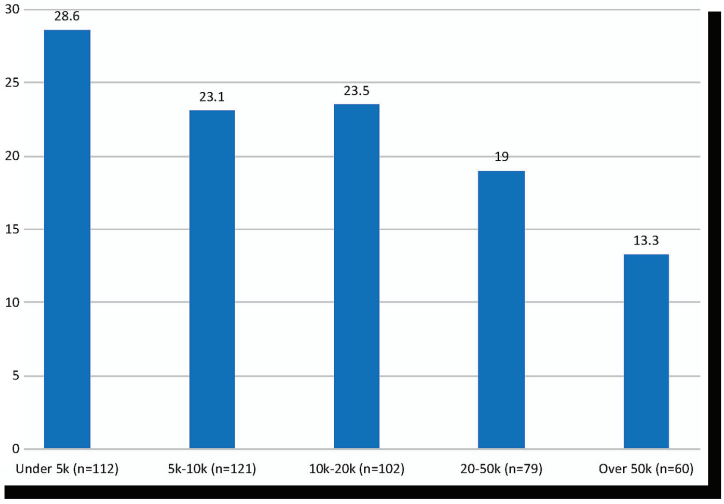



The turnout rates we report exclude cities where a single mayoral candidate ran opposed and no contest appeared on the ballot. This occurred in nearly 10 percent of mayoral elections between 2003 and 2015. In another 10 percent of mayoral elections, unopposed mayoral candidates did appear on the ballot,[6] and not surprisingly, turnout was significantly lower in these elections. Specifically, in the 62 unopposed mayoral elections that were not canceled, turnout averaged 13.9 percent. This compares to an average turnout of 28.4 percent for mayoral races that were contested — a turnout rate more than double that for the uncontested races.

## Unopposed Elections and City Size

With more than 20 percent of all mayoral elections uncontested in the period under examination, it appears that getting candidates to run for office is an issue. Are these uncontested races more common in certain types of cities — for example, smaller cities where municipal governments provide fewer services and where governance may be relatively less complicated? In Figure 5.4, we test for this possibility, graphing the percentage of all unopposed mayoral races by city size. We find city size to be a strong predictor of the incidence of unopposed elections: The smallest Indiana cities are most likely to have uncontested mayoral elections, while the largest cities are the least likely to have uncontested mayoral elections. The difference is more than half — with 28.6 percent of all mayoral elections in the smallest cities (less than 5,000 people) going uncontested compared to only 13.3 percent for mayoral races in the largest Indiana cities (over 50,000 people).

**Figure 5.4:** Percentage of Unopposed Mayoral Elections by City Size




Some observers argue that the highly partisan nature of Indiana municipal elections explains why mayoral elections are often uncontested. In particular, they argue that many cities tend to be dominated by a single party, making it difficult for candidates of the opposing party to find sufficient cause to run since they believe they have little or no chance of winning. These commentators argue that the real election in many cities occurs during the primary,

[5]Since our data on Indiana mayoral elections excludes towns, we cannot fully address the question of how city size and turnout are related. However, even among our city-only sample, Indiana municipalities tend to be relatively small.

[6]In some cities, there may be no more than one nominee for each office, and no declared write-in candidates for any city office. When this occurs, a municipal election may not be held for these offices in the municipal election year (Indiana Code 3-10-6-7.6).

where candidates of the same party face a larger field and stiffer competition. We examine this claim in more detail later, when we look specifically at primary elections.

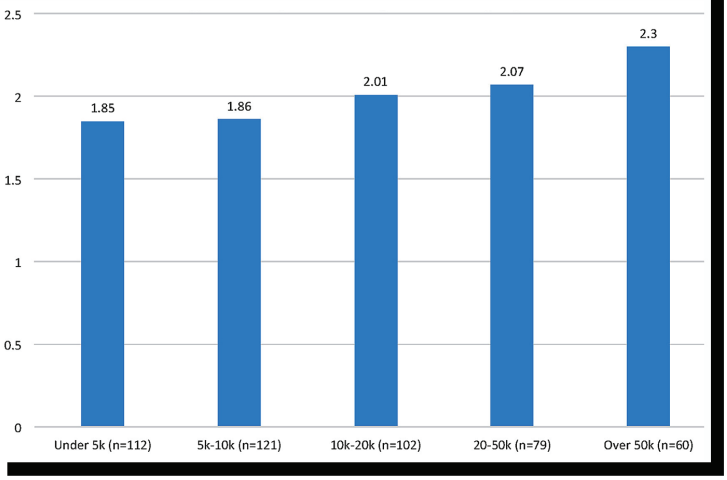
However, it is worth pointing out that our analysis of unopposed mayoral elections in neighboring state Kentucky, where 96 percent of mayoral elections are nonpartisan, provides little evidence to substantiate this claim. In particular, the incident of unopposed mayoral elections is substantially higher in Kentucky, where 54.7 percent all of all nonpartisan mayoral elections between 2010–2014 were unopposed (Marschall and Lappie 2016a). Even if we eliminate Kentucky cities with populations less than 2,000, the percentage of unopposed races is still considerably higher in Kentucky (36.9 percent) compared to Indiana (22.6 percent).

## Average Number of Candidates by City Size

In addition to unopposed elections, a related feature of mayoral elections is the average number of candidates who contest an election. In Indiana, beyond the two major parties, Independent candidates are commonly featured on the ballot. Slightly more than 10 percent of all candidates in mayoral elections between 2003 and 2015 ran as Independents. And other parties, including Libertarian and Green, as well as write-in candidates, have also appeared in Indiana mayoral elections.

While the average number of mayoral candidates per race is slightly fewer than two, to what extent does this vary by city size? We have already shown that uncontested races are significantly more likely in smaller cities than larger ones. Do we find a significantly larger number of candidates competing in mayoral elections in larger cities as well? Figure 5.5 reports the average number of candidates by city size, showing that overall, the differences are relatively small, but that large cities do indeed have a higher average number of candidates than the smaller cities.

**Figure 5.5:** Average Number of Mayoral Candidates by City Size



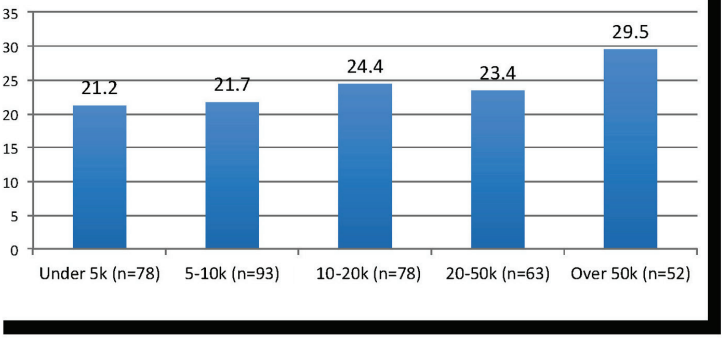

The smallest cities (under 5,000 residents) have an average of 1.85 mayoral candidates and those with 5,000 to 10,000 residents have an average of 1.86 candidates; cities with populations of between 10 and 20,000 and 20 and 50,000 residents have 2.01 and 2.07 candidates respectively, and the largest cities (over 50,000 residents) have an average 2.3 candidates.

## Margin of Victory and City Size

We have already provided evidence to suggest that the partisan nature of mayoral elections in Indiana may not fully explain the incident of unopposed mayoral elections. However, it could still be that elections tend to be largely one-sided, with high margins of victory for one party. In addition, incumbents could have a particularly strong advantage in mayoral races given partisan cues and the fact that Indiana has no term limits for its local elected officials.

Based on all contested elections between 2003 and 2015, the average margin of victory[7] was 23.5 percent — reasonably high, but very much in line with what we have found in other states.[8] If margin of victory is related to uncontested elections, we should see a higher margin in smaller sized cities, where the percentage of uncontested mayoral races is highest, and a lower margin in large cities, where uncontested races are relatively rare. In Figure 5.6, we investigate this relationship and find essentially the opposite pattern. In small cities, the average margin of victory is lowest (21.2 percent), while in the largest Indiana cities, the margin is highest (29.5 percent). Margins of victory for cities with populations in between range from 21.7 to 24.4 percent and exhibit a mostly linear relationship.

**Figure 5.6:** Average Margin of Victory in Mayoral Elections by City Size

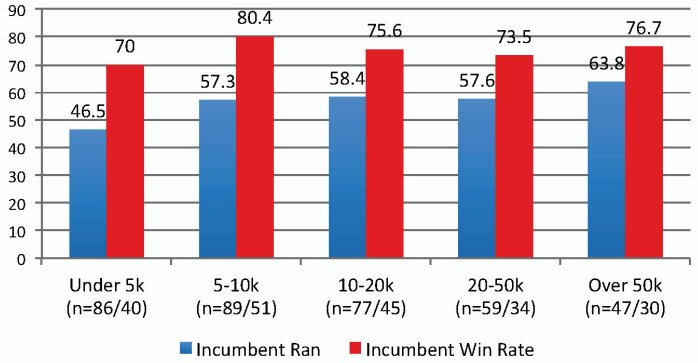



[7]Measured as the raw margin of victory (distance between the winner and the runner-up) divided by the total number of votes.
[8]Specifically, average margin of victory for contested elections was 24.2 percent in Kentucky and 23.2 percent in California (Marschall and Lappie 2016a, 2016b).

## Incumbents and Incumbent Re-election Rates by City Size

We next examine the presence of incumbents and their re-election rates in mayoral races. For all Indiana mayoral elections between 2007 and 2015, the percentage of elections with incumbents was 55.9, and their re-election rate was 75.5.[9] In Figure 5.7, we compare these indicators across city size. While we again find significant differences between the largest and smallest sized cities, the pattern is less consistent for cities in the intermediate categories. For example, in the smallest cities, incumbents ran in 46.5 percent of mayoral contests, while in the largest cities, incumbents ran 63.8 percent of the time. For the three intermediate-sized categories, incumbents ran between 57.3 and 58.4 percent of the time, suggesting essentially no difference in these smaller and medium-sized cities. In terms of re-election rates, there is less variation overall, and no real pattern across cities of different sizes. The highest re-election rate for incumbents was 80.4 percent — in cities with between 5 and 10,000 residents — while the lowest rate was 70 percent — in cities with less than 5,000 inhabitants. The incumbent re-election rate in the largest Indiana cities was 76.7 percent.

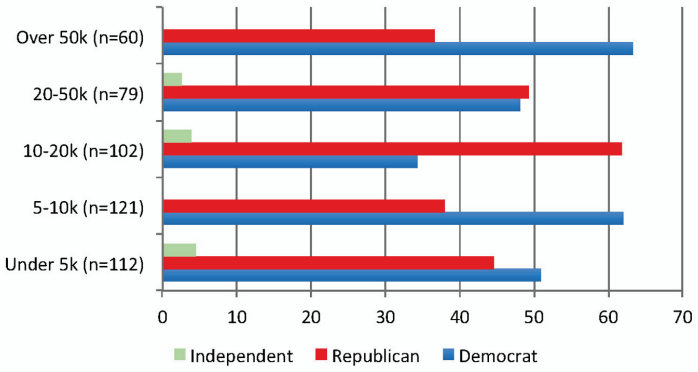
**Figure 5.7:** Incumbents and Mayoral Elections by City Size




## Partisanship of Winning Candidates by City Size

Our last analysis before turning our attention to trends over time examines the partisanship of winning mayoral candidates. For the time period under analysis, Democratic candidates have had a slight edge over Republicans, winning 51.3 percent of contests. When we look at the partisanship of winners by city size, we find considerable variation, but no real pattern. For example, Democrats won most of the time in the largest Indiana cities (63.3 percent), but also won the majority of contests in the two smallest city size categories: 62 percent in cities between 5 and 10,000 and 50.9 percent in cities less than 5,000. On the other hand, Republicans did best in medium-sized cities, winning 61.8 percent of contests in cities with populations between 10,000 and 20,000. In cities with populations between 20 and 50,000, the two parties were roughly equal, with Democrats winning 48 and Republicans 49 percent of the contests. Independents had their best showing in the smallest cities, winning 4.5 percent of those contests.

**Figure 5.8:** Party of Winning Candidates by City Size




## Trends Over Time

One of the most pressing questions with regard to elections and political participation in the United States is whether and how much turnout has declined over time. Apart from our California report (Marschall and Lappie 2016b), no report or study has ever systematically documented this for local elections. Despite this, it is almost always assumed that declining turnout is a distinguishing feature of local elections. Since we only have comprehensive data on mayoral elections in Indiana cities for four election cycles, spanning 2003–2015, we can only partially address the question of declining turnout. Nevertheless, our analysis provides the most systematic look at Indiana trends in mayoral elections to date.

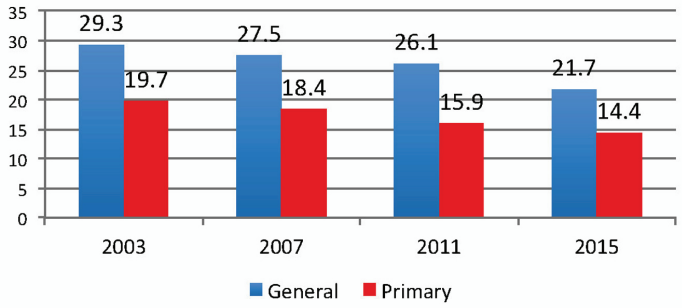
## Turnout

In Figure 5.9, we report turnout in mayoral elections from 2003–2015 for both general and primary elections. As the data show, there has been a steady, linear decline in turnout for both the general and primary elections, though the decline is more pronounced for general elections.

[9]Because we use the prior election to code for incumbents, we cannot code incumbents in the 2003 election since this is the first year for which we have comprehensive mayoral election data in Indiana.

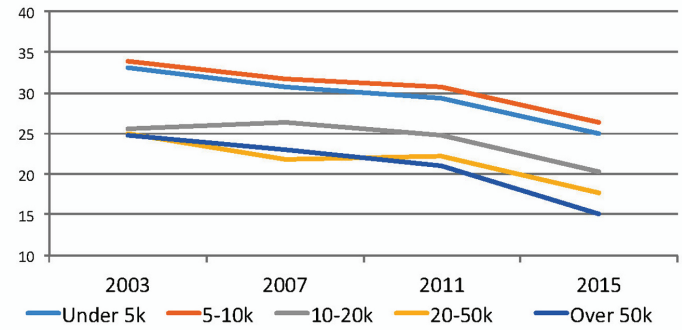
Specifically, turnout in the November, general elections dropped from an average of 29.3 percent in 2003, to 21.7 percent in 2015. For primary elections (held in May), the decline was more modest, from 19.7 percent in 2003 to 14.4 percent in 2015.[10]

**Figure 5.9:** Turnout in Mayoral General and Primary Elections, 2003–2015




At least from the slice of history that we are able to evaluate, it does appear to be the case that turnout in local elections is on the decline in Indiana. To delve a bit deeper into these trends, in Figure 5.10, we compare turnout in November general elections by city size over the four election cycles. We see the same decline regardless of city size, however, the trend is not strictly linear across each city size category. The sharpest decline was 9.7 percentage points (from 24.8 to 15.1 percent), registered for the largest Indiana cities. Cities between 10,000 and 20,000 saw the smallest average decline (5.3 percentage points), from 25.6 to 20.3 percent.

**Figure 5.10:** Turnout in Mayoral General Elections by Year and City Size

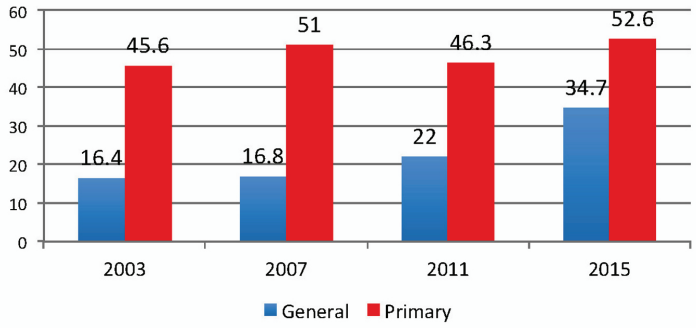



## Unopposed Elections

As we saw in the previous section of this report, turnout may be affected by the absence of competitive elections. In particular, if mayoral races are uncontested, there may be little incentive for voters to turnout on Election Day. This is especially likely for primary elections, when few if any other races may be on the ballot.

In Figure 5.11, we present data on the percentage of uncontested mayoral races for both primary and general elections from 2003 to 2015. What we see here is a rather large share of uncontested primary races, reaching over 50 percent in two of the four years, and a relatively more modest share of uncontested general elections. That said, while the rate of uncontested primary races has held mostly steady since 2003, there has been a much more steady and sizeable increase in uncontested general election races. In fact, since 2003, the percentage of uncontested (general) mayoral elections has doubled, increasing from 16.4 percent to over 34 percent.

**Figure 5.11:** Percent Unopposed Mayoral Elections by Year and Election Type

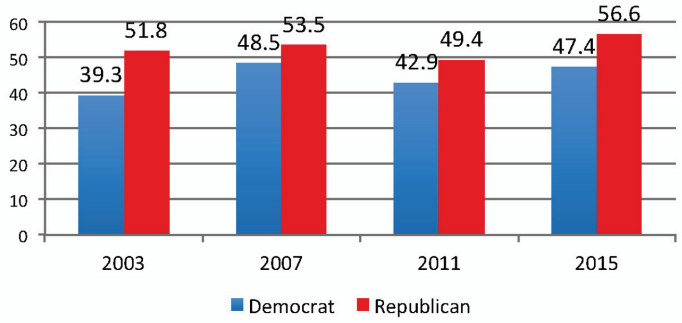



Given that all Indiana mayoral elections are partisan, it is interesting to consider whether there are differences in the percentage of uncontested races across the primary elections of the two parties. In other words, do Democratic mayoral candidates face challengers in their primary elections at roughly the rate as Republican mayoral candidates or are the primaries of one party typically more contested than the other?

Figure 5.12 reports the percentage of uncontested primary races by party for each of the four elections in our database. It shows a modest yet consistent difference across the two parties. Specifically, Republican mayoral candidates are less likely face opponents in their primaries than Democratic candidates. On average, the difference works out to about 8 percentage points. The trend is mostly increasing for both parties, and for the Republicans, unopposed mayoral races occur more than half of the time. Democrats have not passed the 50 percent threshold yet, but the trend suggests that it may not be long before this happens.

[10]To compute turnout in primary elections, we combine all votes cast in Democratic and Republican primary contests and divide by the voting age population of the city. When primaries for one party are cancelled due to unopposed elections, this means we have votes for only one party's primary. Obviously, this significantly reduces the turnout rate.

**Figure 5.12:** Percent Unopposed Primary Elections by Party, 2003–2015

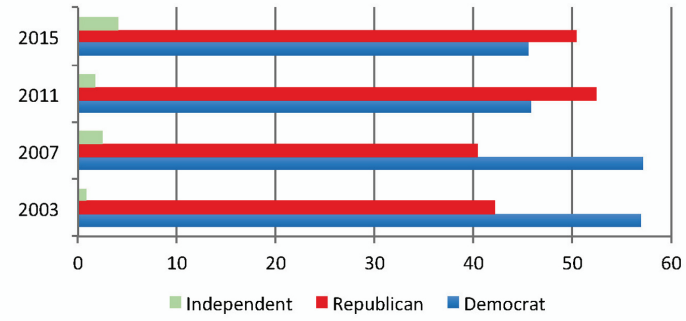



## Partisan Winners Over Time

The final trend we consider is partisanship. Do we see any change over time in the partisanship of winning mayoral candidates in Indiana? We already reported a slight advantage to Democrats in terms of overall contests won, however it is not clear whether Democrats have always outperformed Republicans in Indiana or whether the state has seen a partisan shift over time. In Figure 5.13, we report the percentage of winning Democratic, Republican and "other" mayoral candidates in general elections from 2003 to 2015.

As the graph shows, there has indeed been a partisan shift over time. In both the 2003 and 2007 general elections, Democratic candidates won more than 56 percent of all mayoral contests. By 2011 however, this had flipped and Republicans were winning the majority of mayoral contests (52 percent). Democrats slipped to around 46 percent of mayoralties. The 2015 mayoral elections saw a slight decline for Republicans with 50.4 percent of contests won by their party and a slight increase for Independents, who won their largest share of mayoral races (4 percent).

**Figure 5.13:** Party of Winning Mayoral Candidates, 2003–2015

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# 7. Appendices

## List of Cities and Number of Mayoral Elections in the LEAP Database

| City | Number of Elections | City | Number of Elections |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alexandria, IN | 4 | Gas City, IN | 4 |
| Anderson, IN | 4 | Goshen, IN | 4 |
| Angola, IN | 4 | Greencastle, IN | 4 |
| Attica, IN | 4 | Greendale, IN | 4 |
| Auburn, IN | 4 | Greenfield, IN | 4 |
| Aurora, IN | 4 | Greensburg, IN | 4 |
| Austin, IN | 3 | Greenwood, IN | 4 |
| Batesville, IN | 4 | Hammond, IN | 4 |
| Bedford, IN | 4 | Hartford City, IN | 4 |
| Beech Grove, IN | 4 | Hobart, IN | 4 |
| Berne, IN | 4 | Huntingburg, IN | 4 |
| Bicknell, IN | 4 | Huntington, IN | 4 |
| Bloomington, IN | 4 | Indianapolis, IN | 4 |
| Bluffton, IN | 4 | Jasonville, IN | 4 |
| Boonville, IN | 4 | Jasper, IN | 4 |
| Brazil, IN | 4 | Jeffersonville, IN | 4 |
| Butler, IN | 4 | Jonesboro, IN | 4 |
| Cannelton, IN | 4 | Kendallville, IN | 4 |
| Carmel, IN | 4 | Knox, IN | 4 |
| Charlestown, IN | 4 | Kokomo, IN | 4 |
| Clinton, IN | 4 | La Porte, IN | 4 |
| Columbia City, IN | 4 | Lafayette, IN | 4 |
| Columbus, IN | 4 | Lake Station, IN | 4 |
| Connersville, IN | 4 | Lawrence, IN | 4 |
| Covington, IN | 3 | Lawrenceburg, IN | 4 |
| Crawfordsville, IN | 4 | Lebanon, IN | 4 |
| Crown Point, IN | 4 | Ligonier, IN | 4 |
| Decatur, IN | 4 | Linton, IN | 4 |
| Delphi, IN | 4 | Logansport, IN | 4 |
| Dunkirk, IN | 4 | Loogootee, IN | 4 |
| East Chicago, IN | 4 | Madison, IN | 4 |
| Elkhart, IN | 4 | Marion, IN | 4 |
| Elwood, IN | 4 | Martinsville, IN | 4 |
| Evansville, IN | 4 | Michigan City, IN | 4 |
| Fishers town | 1 | Mishawaka, IN | 4 |
| Fort Wayne, IN | 4 | Mitchell, IN | 4 |
| Frankfort, IN | 4 | Monticello, IN | 4 |
| Franklin, IN | 4 | Montpelier, IN | 3 |
| Garrett, IN | 4 | Mount Vernon, IN | 4 |
| Gary, IN | 4 | Muncie, IN | 4 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Nappanee, IN | 4 |
| New Albany, IN | 4 |
| New Castle, IN | 4 |
| New Haven, IN | 4 |
| Noblesville, IN | 4 |
| North Vernon, IN | 4 |
| Oakland City, IN | 4 |
| Peru, IN | 4 |
| Petersburg, IN | 4 |
| Plymouth, IN | 4 |
| Portage, IN | 4 |
| Portland, IN | 4 |
| Princeton, IN | 4 |
| Rensselaer, IN | 3 |
| Richmond, IN | 4 |
| Rising Sun, IN | 4 |
| Rochester, IN | 4 |
| Rockport, IN | 4 |
| Rushville, IN | 4 |
| Salem, IN | 4 |
| Scottsburg, IN | 4 |
| Seymour, IN | 4 |
| Shelbyville, IN | 4 |
| South Bend, IN | 4 |
| Southport, IN | 4 |
| Sullivan, IN | 4 |
| Tell City, IN | 4 |
| Terre Haute, IN | 4 |
| Tipton, IN | 4 |
| Union City, IN | 4 |
| Valparaiso, IN | 4 |
| Vincennes, IN | 4 |
| Wabash, IN | 4 |
| Warsaw, IN | 4 |
| Washington, IN | 4 |
| West Lafayette, IN | 4 |
| Westfield, IN | 3 |
| Whiting, IN | 4 |
| Winchester, IN | 4 |
| Woodburn, IN | 4 |
| Zionsville town | 1 |


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- Advance understanding of the most important issues facing Houston and other leading urban centers through rigorous research, policy analysis and public outreach

- Collaborate with civic leaders to implement promising solutions to these critical urban issues