

Partisan Departures from the Administrative States

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Abstract

The 20th Century saw widespread adoption of civil service regimes at all levels of government across the United States. These protections insulate employees from politically-motivated hirings, terminations, and demotions, allowing them to invest in developing expertise while also making them difficult to remove. In more recent decades, efforts have been made to roll back these protections at both the state and federal levels. Most notably, President Trump attempted to reclassify tens of thousands of senior civil servants into a new, unclassified Schedule F designation at the end of his term—promising to renew the effort if reelected in 2024. In this paper, I examine whether executives use the opportunity provided by the rollback of civil service protections to remove opponents from the bureaucracy. I study this in the context of U.S. state bureaucracies, a large and relatively understudied set of institutions. Using a new dataset containing the voter and personnel records of nearly one million government employees in 11 states, I first describe the partisan composition of U.S. state government. Among other findings, I show that southern, Republican-controlled states are disproportionately staffed by registered Democrats. I then turn to a case of civil service retrenchment in Mississippi—where six agencies were temporarily exempted from the state’s merit system between 2014 and 2020—to test whether removing bureaucrats’ job protections increases turnover among outpartisan civil servants. I demonstrate that although removing protections led to large increases in the number of terminations (171% to 634%), there is no evidence that Democratic civil servants were more likely to depart than their Republican colleagues.

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Newly-elected executives inherit bureaucracies. While they might have the ability to pick their own staffs, agency heads, and other high-ranking departmental leaders, executives at the head of most modern bureaucracies lack control over who works in the vast majority of government positions.¹ Civil service and, in some cases, union protections insulate these classified workers from politically-motivated termination and force executives to work with employees with varying preferences and principals to fully implement their own agendas. At the federal level, Republican and Democratic presidents have found themselves frustrated with the perceived (in)actions of career employees. The Nixon administration, for instance, informed political appointees that it “has been left a legacy of finding disloyalty and obstruction at high levels while those incumbents rest comfortably on career civil service status” (United States: Congress: Senate et al. 1973). After the election of Bill Clinton in 1992, some senior civil servants who had spent the prior twelve years implementing Republican policies expressed concern over possible retribution from the incoming administration (Pear 1992). More recently, President Trump has referred to the federal government as a “Deep State” filled with ideological opponents aiming to upset his policy goals.

If executives are often frustrated with career employees, what happens when they gain a relatively free hand to manage employees previously covered by civil service protections? Over the last three decades, a number of U.S. states have reclassified at least a portion of their public workforces from a protected civil service to an unclassified service where employees can be fired “at-will.” At the federal level, President Trump tasked agencies in October 2020 with identifying employees engaged in “confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-

1. Less than a quarter of a percent of U.S. federal employees are political appointees (Spenkuch, Teso, and Xu 2023).

advocating positions” for reclassification into a new Schedule F classification (Trump 2020). Although President Biden overturned the order immediately upon taking office, Trump has indicated that he will reinstate it if he wins the 2024 election, potentially affecting the job security of tens of thousands of federal workers.

While proponents of the retrenchment of civil service protections argue that it will increase the efficiency and accountability of government (Sherk 2021), critics contend that removing protections will reintroduce partisanship and ideology as key criteria for professional advancement within public bureaucracies. I evaluate this argument here, examining whether executives use periods of civil service retrenchment to remove opponents from the bureaucracy. I focus on U.S. state bureaucracies, a large, relatively understudied type of American bureaucracy. Using a new dataset of individual-level personnel and voter registration records of nearly one million public employees across 11 states, I first describe the partisan composition of state workforces across the country. Among other descriptive findings, I show that Republican-controlled southern states are disproportionately staffed by registered Democrats.

Given this possible tension between the preferences of employees in southern state governments and their principals, I test whether reclassification increases the likelihood of Democratic state employees leaving the state workforce. I focus on the case of civil service retrenchment in the state of Mississippi. Since 1988, agencies in Mississippi have been periodically exempted from the civil service system. Between 2014 and 2020, five Mississippi state agencies received temporary exemptions from rules regarding hiring, firing, and compensation (*PEER Report 670* 2022; *PEER Report 651* 2020). These exemptions, largely issued in the wake of significant agency scandals, provided the governor and agency leaders considerable

leeway to remove agency staff. I show that these exemptions led to large increases in the number of involuntary dismissals, although I find no evidence that executives used these opportunities to specifically target Democratic civil servants for termination.

These results have a number of implications for the study of both bureaucracies and state politics. They provide the first detailed, comparative examination of who opts to work in public employment in the U.S. states. While scholars have utilized personnel files of federal employees (Spenkuch, Teso, and Xu 2023; Bolton, de Figueiredo, and Lewis 2021; Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker 2019b, 2019a), this is the first project to utilize similar files from the states. The data, which will be made available to other scholars, can serve as the foundation for studies across political science, public administration, and economics. In addition, the results of my analyses provide insight into the effects of reclassification policies on personnel management. I show, perhaps unsurprisingly, that these policies are implemented in order to remove swaths of employees who were previously difficult to fire.

More interestingly, though, my results suggest that, at least in the case of reclassification in Mississippi, partisanship (and by proxy, ideology) is not a salient dimension over which managers are deciding whom to fire. There are numerous ways to explain such a result: executives might be unable to ascertain the policy preferences of individual bureaucrats, most government work is not ideological, or executives are interested in evaluating employees based on their job performance rather than their partisan affiliations or policy preferences. For proponents of civil service retrenchment, the latter explanation is a key benefit of reform. Reducing protections provides managers the necessary flexibility to remove poor performers and retain the best employees. While my results do not contradict this argument, design shortcomings exist which confound my ability to firmly rule out alternative explanations.

For instance, unlike in Mississippi, reclassification at the federal level—which would almost certainly occur under a Republican president—would likely be supported by conservative nonprofits and think tanks. These groups are interested in staffing the federal workforce with ideologically-aligned individuals and would be able to provide an administration with detailed information about which agencies, bureaus, and employees to focus their attention on.² This information, unavailable to Mississippi governors, would dramatically reduce the costs faced by executives in using ideology or partisanship as a criterion for making staffing decisions.

Nevertheless, my null findings are still normatively reassuring. Much has been made in recent years of the “backsliding” of Republican-controlled state governments (Grumbach 2023). In this case, however, Republican-controlled Mississippi—which has some of the highest rates of public corruption of any state in the country (Glaeser and Saks 2006; Liu and Mikesell 2014) —does not display the type of biased hiring patterns one might expect of a state teetering toward authoritarianism.

Executive Control of the Bureaucracy

Executives have much to gain by controlling the administrative state (Wood and Waterman 1991; Moe 1985; Seifter 2017). The increasingly complex and technical nature of governing has made agencies a key arena of policymaking at both the federal and state levels (Epstein and O’Halloran 1999; Huber and Shipan 2002; Boushey and McGrath 2017, 2020). As a result, gaining control of the bureaucracy has become a critical task for presidents and

2. The most salient example of this is the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025, which aims to provide a future Republican president with a pre-vetted database of candidates to draw from to staff reclassified positions.

governors keen to implement their policy agendas. If an agency is staffed with incompetent or disloyal employees, an executive’s policy agenda might be at risk, resulting in unfulfilled campaign promises, lost re-elections, and a diminished legacy (Lewis 2011).

The power to appoint senior bureaucrats is a key source of executive influence (Lewis 2008; Wood and Waterman 1991).³ At the federal level, newly-elected presidents have to fill thousands of politically-appointed positions, taking into account candidates’ policy preferences, competencies, political connections, and, in some cases, likelihood of Senate approval (Hollibaugh, Horton, and Lewis 2014; Bonica, Chen, and Johnson 2015). These multiple dimensions of fit and the stakes of agency responsiveness have incentivized presidents to develop formal systems for controlling the distribution of government positions (Moe 1985; Kumar 2009). Once the task of one White House staff member in the Truman administration, over 100 staff now work to match appointees to positions in the federal workforce during presidential transitions (Lewis 2008).⁴

Presidents have long understood the importance of placing the right people in politically appointed positions. As Larry O’Brien, an aide to President Kennedy, described, “If we can get control of the top 600 or 400 or 300 jobs...then we will have some degree of control” (Weko 1995, p. 26). However, presidents—Republican and Democrat—have also been consistently frustrated by career staff outside the reach of political appointment (Pfiffner 1987). Many consequential policymaking levers are controlled by career employees who do not serve at

3. This is especially true for presidents. Many governors enjoy other powers that presidents lack, such as the line-item veto, increased regulatory review, and a relatively free hand to restructure agencies (Seifter 2017). Governors’ appointment power is also complicated by the presence of other state elected officials and legislative appointments — neither of which exist at the federal level (Seifter 2018; Devlin 1993).

4. Recent efforts by the Heritage Foundation to create a trained group of personnel to fill specific posts in a hypothetical Republican administration in 2025 suggest that personnel operations will only become more professionalized. See <https://www.project2025.org/>.

the pleasure of the executive. These employees, often attracted to government work because of their interest in an issue area, have ideological priors regarding their work (Gailmard and Patty 2007). If a key employee disagrees with a policy, she might be willing to work against its successful implementation. Civil servants might also frustrate a policy agenda for non-ideological reasons. The protections afforded career staff lengthen their time horizons, making them more likely than their political principals to seek gradual change and be concerned about policies' effects on their own job and agency (Pfiffner 1987; Hecl 1977).

Executives have developed a number of informal mechanisms for marginalizing civil servants viewed as unable or unwilling to implement preferred policies. While civil servants can only be fired for cause, anecdotal and quantitative evidence suggests that executives, especially presidents, use creative techniques to incentivize opposing career employees to leave the public workforce. For instance, the Trump Administration opted to relocate two research agencies within the Department of Agriculture from Washington, DC to Kansas City after the agencies published a series of reports that did not fully support the administration's policy agenda (Morris 2021; *Evidence-Based Policy Making* 2022). Over half of the two agencies' staffs opted to not relocate, resulting in short-term decreases in productivity and reductions in both agency expertise and diversity (*Agency Relocations* 2022).

Similar stories exist of agency managers marginalizing career staff by reassigning them to less prestigious positions. Following the election of Bill Clinton, for example, senior career staff who worked closely with the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations were concerned that they would be targeted by the incoming administration. As the president of the Senior Executives Association at the time put it, "There is a real danger that a career executive will be sent to the turkey farm – given a job with few responsibilities, few staff and

no access to the boss” (Pear 1992). President Nixon gave voice to this approach in a taped conversation with the OMB Director, telling him “There are many unpleasant places where Civil Service people can be sent. . . Demote him or send him to the Guam regional office. There’s a way. Get him the hell out” (Aberbach and Rockman 1976, p. 457). More recently, careerists working on environmental and climate change policies voiced concerns about being assigned to new roles by the Trump Administration. One employee in the Department of the Interior who directed research on the effects of rising oceans was directed to review oil and gas leases (Halper 2017). In other cases, civil servants might remain in their original roles but lose discretion as additional political appointees are “layered” between career and political staff (Lewis 2008, p. 34). Even if this does not cause career employees to leave, the executive gains greater political oversight and diminishes the influence of opposing civil servants.

Recent research suggests that marginalization—or the threat of it—leads powerful civil servants to leave their jobs. Studies at the federal level (Spenkuch, Teso, and Xu 2023; Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker 2019b, 2019a; Bolton, de Figueiredo, and Lewis 2021) and outside of the United States (Kim and Gerber 2005; Dahlström and Holmgren 2019; Boyne et al. 2010) have consistently found that, despite their job protections, senior civil servants are more likely to depart the workforce after the election of a new administration. This is particularly true among career employees who are ideologically opposed to the new administration (Bolton, de Figueiredo, and Lewis 2021; Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker 2019a).⁵ Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly why senior career employees leave the workforce, these studies suggest that it is likely a result of both voluntary exits due to expectations of marginalization and explicit dismissal attempts by a new administration.

5. But see Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker (2019b).

Another literature examines the inverse of marginalization: strategic protection. The initial rise of civil service systems in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries has been ascribed to national parties tackling the poor quality of service delivery (Johnson and Libecap 1994)⁶ and competing for control of the administrative state (Skowronek 1982; Ting et al. 2013).⁷ In a similar vein to the latter argument, whereby civil service expansion serves as a means to protect partisan employees from being replaced by the incoming administration, Chen and Johnson (2014) shows that presidents strategically unionize supportive federal agencies. By protecting ideologically similar agencies, presidents can ensure that their allies in the workforce are insulated from future interference.

The Partisanship of State Bureaucracies

Considerable evidence exists that executives care about the ideological composition of their workforces. Despite this evidence, however, little information exists about makeup of the state bureaucracies in charge of implementing numerous consequential regulatory and distributive programs. In this section, I provide the first account of the partisan composition of U.S. state bureaucracies. While partisanship is distinct from ideology, it serves as a reasonable and accessible proxy in contemporary American politics (Mason 2015; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009).

I measure partisanship using a new dataset of personnel and voter registration files of 952,691

6. Aneja and Xu (2023) shows how, in the context of the postal service, installing merit protections improved the quality of service delivery. Moreira and Pérez (2021) provides a twist on this finding, documenting how, at least in the case of customs collection, civil service reform actually decreased the quality of service delivery by increasing the number of low-paid, unclassified employees at the large customs houses initially covered by the Pendleton Act.

7. See Theriault (2003) and Anzia and Trounstine (2023) for different accounts that stress, respectively, the role of the public and government employees in expanding merit protections.

state employees across 11 states.⁸ Personnel data on these employees, who comprise nearly all public state employees in the respective states, was collected via a series of public record requests to state human resource agencies.⁹ These data include, at baseline, employees' full legal names, salaries, job titles, employing agencies, and annual salaries. In some states, the personnel files also note employees' race, sex, civil service classification status, age, county of employment, and hire date. The data span from at least 2019 to 2021, although most states' files cover a longer timespan. The frequency of the files also vary by state—Mississippi and Florida, for instance, provide monthly snapshots of their state workforces, while Minnesota and Nevada provide data at annual intervals. Overall, the dataset contains 25,421,967 period-employee observations. Additional information about the data, such as the frequency, span and available variables is located in Table C.1 in the Supplementary Information.

The 11 states comprise a convenience sample of U.S. states' workforces. For a variety of reasons, some states' personnel data proved inaccessible. South Dakota, for example, does not release any payroll data about state employees to the public. Other states were unable to be contacted (e.g., New Mexico), charged exorbitantly high fees for the data (e.g., Nebraska), or were unable to provide a sufficient amount of information about their employees (e.g., Oklahoma does not publish employees' last names). Once collected, the data required considerable cleaning and standardization, since each state has different public disclosure laws, human resource software, and data organization standards. The most intensive clean-

8. The included states: Alaska, Washington, Vermont, South Carolina, Nevada, Florida, Minnesota, Colorado, Mississippi, North Dakota, and Idaho

9. Most states exclude at least some employees from public disclosure. In most cases this is limited to hospital employees or undercover police officers, although some states exclude additional workers. Washington, for instance, excludes all state patrol officers and all employees who work in the ferry bureau of the Department of Transportation, since federal law prohibits releasing information about employees who have unsecured access to a vessel. Other states also differ in the availability of higher education and national guard employees, who are removed from all of the analyses that follow.

ing task involved imputing unique employee identification codes for tracking employees entry into and exit from the workforce. Few states were able to provide these codes and, as a result, I had to assign them myself using available demographic variables and the probabilistic merge techniques developed in Enamorado, Fifield, and Imai (2019).

I measure employees' partisanship by merging the state personnel files with a copy of the national voter registration file from late 2020 and early 2021. The voter data, provided by the vendor L2, includes information on the political, social, and economic characteristics of the American voting public. For my purposes, however, the key variable of interest is voters' party affiliations. Of the 11 states in my sample, 6 have partisan primaries and thus partisanship is recorded directly from the given state's voter rolls. In the remaining states, L2 imputes partisanship using a proprietary algorithm. Details can be found in the Supplementary Information in Table C.4.

Matching state employees in the personnel dataset to their corresponding voter registration records is not a simple task. Administrative datasets often contain misspellings, middle initials present in one file might be missing in another, and the number of variables common to both datasets might be insufficient to uniquely identify record pairs. In order to minimize these difficulties, I merged each state's employees with the L2 data using the probabilistic record linkage model implemented in the R Package `fastLink` (Enamorado, Fifield, and Imai 2019). In contrast to deterministic matching methods that pair records with identical values, `fastLink` uses the key variables common to both datasets to estimate the probability of a true match between pairs of records, taking into account missing values and the similarity of character strings.

The details of the merge procedure are located in the Supplementary Information in

Section C.1. In broad strokes, the matching algorithm first uses `fastLink` to find the most likely matches in the voter dataset for each state employee. Post-processing culls remaining unlikely matches (e.g., voters with different, non-missing middle initials or voters who do not live in the same or an adjoining county).¹⁰ Following the advice of Enamorado, Fifield, and Imai (2019), if, after post-processing is complete, one employee still matches to more than one voter, partisanship is imputed as the weighted mean partisanship of the matched voters. If an employee is matched to only one voter (or more than one voter who all share the same partisan registration), then the employee’s partisanship is set to 1 for the given partisan affiliation. In the analyses that follow, I discretize this continuous measure of partisanship by defining someone as affiliated with a given political party if their probability of being registered with that party exceeds a certain threshold (e.g., 0.9).

I relegate merge diagnostics to the Supplementary Information. Table C.2 shows the share of state employees matched to at least one voter by state. Overall, 61% of the 952,691 unique state employees and 72% of the 25,421,967 employee-period observations were matched to at least one voter. Since these match rates treat one-to-one and one-to-many matches equivalently, Table C.3 shows the share of state employees matched to one, two, five, and ten voters. In most states, over three-fourths of matches are one-to-one and less than 10% of state employees are matched to two voters. Finally, Figure C.1 shows the correlates of being matched to at least one voter. In most states where race and sex indicators are available, being white and male, respectively, are positively correlated with being matched to a voter. Notably, while variation exists across the states, there are few differences between matched

10. The specific variables used to merge and post-process the datasets varies from state to state depending on availability. See Table C.1 for more information.

and unmatched state employees in Mississippi, the focus of my causal analyses below.

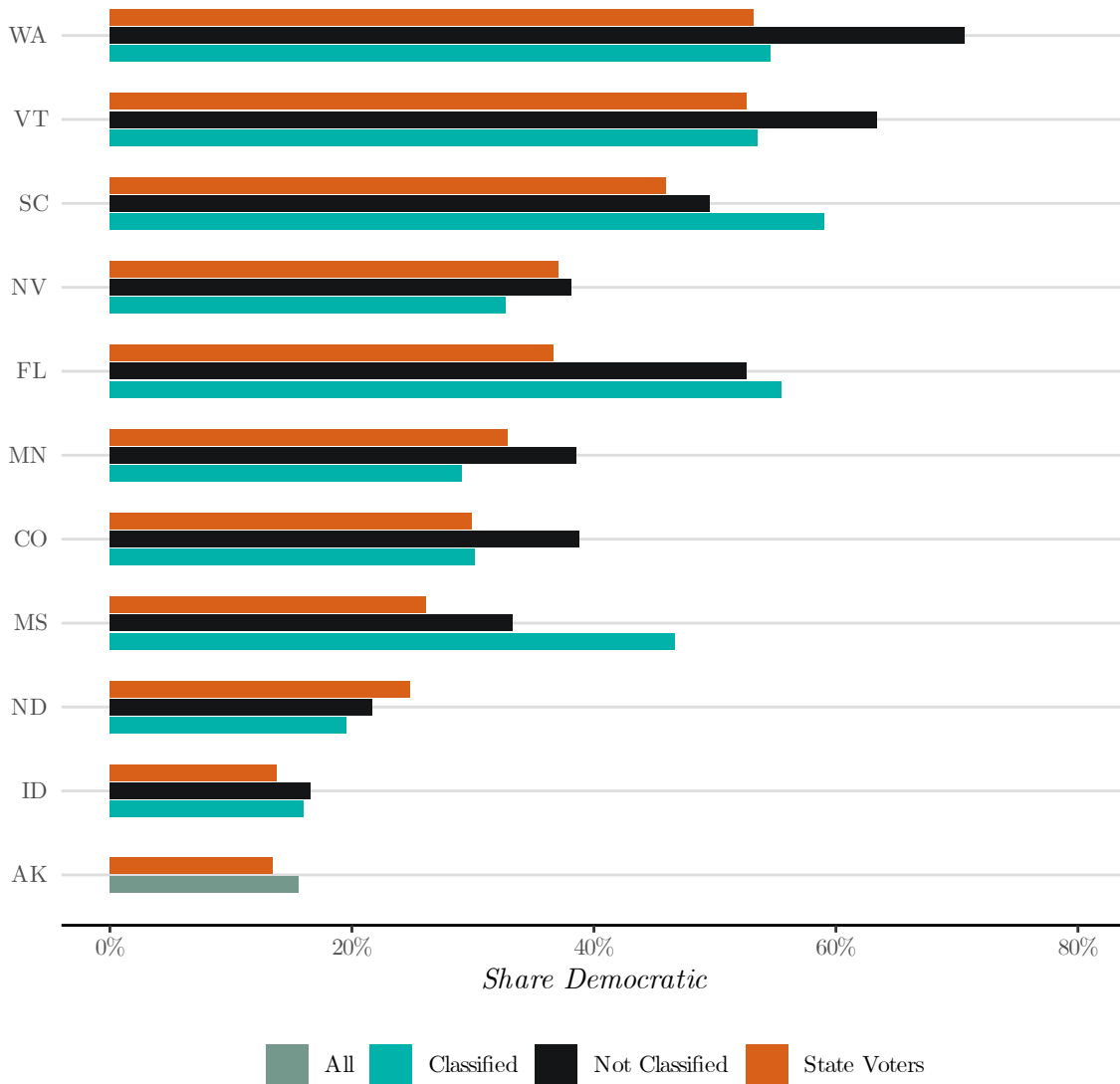
Figure 1 shows the partisan composition of U.S. state bureaucracies relative to their state populations, as of early 2021.¹¹ For each state, the teal and black bars show, respectively, the share of classified and unclassified government employees that are registered Democrats. If a state does not include employees' civil service classification in its personnel file, then a grey bar denotes the share of all matched employees who are registered Democrats. The orange bar provides the baseline share of Democrats among the voting population in the state. The data are limited to only full-time, non-temporary employees who work outside of the national guard and higher education system.

Intuitively, the share of Democrats in the state workforce is correlated with the share of Democrats living in the state. A heavily Republican state like Idaho has only 16% of its classified and unclassified workforce staffed by Democrats. In contrast, 55% of Washington's classified service and 71% of its unclassified service are registered Democrats. Within this overall trend, however, are interesting deviations. Notably, Republican-controlled southern states—South Carolina, Florida, and Mississippi—are heavily staffed by Democrats. This holds not only for the classified service but also the unclassified service under more direct control from Republican governors and legislatures. In Mississippi, for example, 47% of the classified and 33% of the unclassified service is Democratic. Notably, these overall trends also hold for higher-paying positions in the state. Figure B.1 reproduces Figure 1 but restricts the data to only those employees whose annual salary exceeds the median for the state public workforce. Among higher-earning classified employees in Mississippi, 43% are

11. Due to differences in the frequency of the data snapshots, the exact date of the data varies from state to state.

registered Democrats. Likewise, 34% of unclassified Mississippi employees who earn above the median salary are Democratic.

Figure 1 – The Partisanship of State Bureaucracies Shows the share of classified state employees, unclassified state employees, and state voters that are registered Democrats. For states that do not include classification status (i.e., Alaska), the partisanship of all state employees is shown. Data is a snapshot from early 2021. An employee is deemed to be a registered a Democrat if their probability of being a Democrat exceeds 0.9. Data excludes national guard, higher education, part-time, and temporary employees. See Figure B.1 for an identical plot limited to state employees who earn more than the median annual salary of the state public workforce. Table B.1 contains the full results for all partisan affiliations.



Reclassification

The descriptive results above demonstrate that state workforces, including their senior echelons, are often staffed by employees of a different political persuasion than the governor and legislature. This is especially true in southern states, many of which have been under solid Republican control for a decade or longer. When given the opportunity, do these Republican governors attempt to reshape the public workforce to be more in line with their own partisan and ideological preferences?

I address this in the context of large-scale reclassifications of classified civil servants into unclassified, at-will positions. Beginning in the 1990s, some U.S. states began to roll back public sector employees' protections (McGrath 2013b). A few states succeeded in implementing significant changes to their civil service systems during this period. In 1996, Georgia eliminated its classified service for all newly-hired employees. Current employees retained their rights and benefits under the former classified system insofar as they stayed in their current position and did not transition to a new, unclassified role (Gossett 2002). In 2001 under Governor Jeb Bush, Florida reclassified over 16,000 senior employees from the state's classified service to an unclassified service for middle managers. Employees in this new at-will designation lacked a legal right to their position or an avenue to formally appeal a termination (Bowman et al. 2003). More recently, states like Indiana, Arizona, Mississippi, and Missouri have reformed their merit-based civil service systems (Stephenson 2012; Cournoyer 2012; Parson 2018), removing job protections for at least some previously classified civil servants.

The scope and consequences of reclassification often makes implementation politically

challenging. It must overcome opposition from public sector unions and affected employees who, even if they lack collective bargaining rights, constitute a sizeable constituency in many states (Johnson and Libecap 1994; Anzia and Moe 2015; Anzia and Trounstone 2023).¹² In an empirical account of the correlates of reclassification, McGrath (2013a) shows that civil service retrenchment is more likely when Republicans have unified, long-term control of state government. This finding fits with theoretical work from Ting et al. (2013) who shows that increasing civil service protections is more likely when a party is about to lose control of state government. In much the same way, decreasing civil service protections ought to be more likely when a party knows it is not at risk of losing control of the positions they just uncovered.

Regardless of the causes behind its initial adoption, reclassification provides an opportunity for the executive to alter the composition of the state workforce. No longer needing to heed civil service protections, agencies are relatively free to fire, hire, demote, and promote whom they please. There are two alternative, though not mutually exclusive, stories for how agencies ought to use this newfound discretion. On the one hand, managers could focus their attention on removing poor performers, regardless of their ideology or partisanship, in an attempt to boost the quality of policymaking. On the other, they could use their relative increase in power to seek out and terminate opposing senior civil servants in order to bring the agency's ideology more in line with the executive. I lay out both potential cases below before attempting to adjudicate between them using the case of reclassification in Mississippi.

Advocates of reclassification contend that merit-based protections for civil servants im-

12. The National Treasury Employees Union immediately sued following Trump's executive order reclassifying senior employees into a new Schedule F designation. (*NTEU v Trump*, n.d.).

pede the efficiency, flexibility, and accountability of government (Coggburn 2006; Sherk 2021). In contrast to the private sector where employees can be quickly hired, fired, and incentivized with compensation increases, supervisors of public sector employees face unnecessary costs when trying to manage their teams. At the federal level, managers looking to discipline or remove a worker have to contend with the possibility of appeals, hearings before the Merit Systems Protection Board, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or (in the case of whistleblower allegations) the Office of Special Counsel (Katz 2015). Surveys of federal workers suggest that this appeals process might help to keep poor performers on the job. Only 42% of respondents to a 2021 survey agreed that “In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve” (up from 31% in 2017) (*Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey* 2021). Half of respondents also agreed that poor performers neither improve nor depart but instead remain on the job.

Surveys of state human resources managers offer some suggestive evidence that at-will employment makes it easier for managers to deal with poor performers. In a survey of human resource directors in Texas (where nearly all state employees are at-will), Coggburn (2006) finds that 72.4% of respondents agreed that workers in their agencies had been fired at-will because of underperformance. Nearly all respondents (97.4%) agreed that most of these terminations were for good cause. A similar study of human resource directors in Mississippi also suggests that at-will employment improves efficiency and flexibility. Just over half of respondents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that at-will employment “provides essential managerial flexibility over the [human resources] function” and “makes the [human resources] function more efficient” (Goodman and French 2011). Likewise, in a survey of senior civil servants in Florida who lost their merit protections following reforms in 2001,

57% of respondents agreed that increasing “the state’s flexibility to hire, fire, reward, and punish employees” was a goal of the reform (Bowman et al. 2003).

In contrast, critics of reclassification view the rollback of merit protections as a way to target ideological opponents of the executive rather than poor performers. Recently, advocates of reclassification have in fact also taken up this position, arguing that eliminating removal protections would increase the democratic link between the executive and the public (Sherk 2021). Surveys conducted in the wake of states removing job protections provide mixed evidence of increased partisan and ideological terminations. Following the 2001 reforms in Florida, for instance, 31% of reclassified civil servants reported that the policy change “permits my office to hire more people who have friends or connections to government” (Bowman et al. 2003, 41% of respondents disagreed with the statement). In Texas, 2.6% of surveyed human resources administrators in Texas reported knowing “of a case where a competent employee was fired at-will so that another person with friends or connections to government could be hired” (Coggburn 2006). In Georgia, 1.6% of state employees surveyed after the state’s 1996 adoption of at-will employment “reported that they had been asked to resign a position or transfer to another position because of their political beliefs or political connections.” A larger share of respondents, 9.7%, said that their career progression was hindered by political interference (Nigro and Kellough 2000).¹³

The existing survey evidence on reclassification in the states provides two alternative, albeit not mutually exclusive stories. Given the structure of my data—which contains information about individual employees’ partisan affiliations but lacks insights into how well

13. Georgia’s 1996 reform reclassified all positions filled after July 1996, so it did not change the job protections afforded to current employees. Therefore, the survey sample collected by Nigro and Kellough (2000) in April 2000 included civil servants who still enjoyed merit protections.

employees perform in their roles—I focus my attention on testing for partisan-motivated dismissals. If reclassification is a tool to target opponents of the executive, managers should be focusing their attention on terminating the senior civil servants who actually influence policy. Not all jobs in the public workforce offer the opportunity to influence public policy. Agency leaders likely do not particularly care about the ideological leanings of the clerk processing drivers’ licenses or the mechanic maintaining the fleet of vehicles used by the state police. If reclassification is a means to alter agencies’ ideological outputs, then the “spigots of policymaking” who control key policymaking levers will be the likely targets (Doherty, Lewis, and Limbocker 2019a, p. 160).

Temporary At-Will Employment in Mississippi

I test these expectations in the context of reclassification in Mississippi. Between 2010 and 2020, six Mississippi state agencies were granted temporary exemptions from the purview of the Mississippi State Personnel Board (MSPB), which exercises considerable authority over personnel management in Mississippi’s public sector. Created in 1980 to oversee the state’s merit-based civil service system, the MSPB assigns every position in the state’s civil service into specific job classes created by the agency.¹⁴ The MSPB is responsible for setting the range of allowable salaries within each job class, which provides the agency considerable influence over who is eligible for a raise and by how much (*PEER Report 651* 2020). In addition to control over classification and compensation, the MSPB is also responsible for adjudicating disputes between state employees and agencies. Since employees in the civil service enjoy a legal right to their jobs, they can appeal any “written notice of dismissal or

14. <https://careers.mspb.ms.gov/mississippi-careers>

action adversely affecting his compensation” to the Employee Appeals Board located within the MSPB (Mississippi Code 25-9-127 2020).

Beginning in 1988, the Mississippi state legislature allowed state agencies to petition for temporary exemptions from the MSPB’s authority. These exemptions vary in scope, but usually provide an agency with wide discretion to fire, promote, and compensate employees without regard to salary bands or due process procedures. After the exemption period is over, the agency is once again under the purview of the MSPB and must adhere to all merit system policies. While exempted from the merit system, agencies operate with little oversight. Agencies do not have to justify why they want an exemption or describe their plan for reorganizing the workforce during the exemption.¹⁵ Although exempted agencies are required via statute to submit annual reports detailing how many employees were hired, demoted, fired, or received a salary increase, none of the agencies exempted between 2010 and 2020 actually submitted the reports (Mississippi Code 25-9-127 2020; *PEER Report 651* 2020)

Table 1 lists the six temporary exemptions issued to five Mississippi state agencies between 2010 and 2020. Of these exemptions, all of them allowed agencies to disregard civil servants’ legal property rights to their jobs (i.e., treat them as at-will employees). Consequently, during the exemption periods, civil servants were considerably easier to demote or fire. Three of the exemptions also gave agencies wide latitude to increase or decrease employees’ salaries without regard to MSPB rules. Based on a report prepared for the Mississippi legislature, the exemptions from compensation rules led to a number of salary raises, which

15. Beginning July 2021, exempted agencies have to submit annual reports to the legislature and MSPB describing how their exemptions are improving agency operations (*PEER Report 670* 2022).

were in some cases significant. One employee's salary increased by 71% during the agency's exemption period, while the salary of an employee hired by the Department of Education between July 2014 and June 2016 had their salary readjusted after the completion of the exemption because it exceeded the maximum allowed for state employees (*PEER Report 651* 2020).

Table 1 – Temporary Agency Exemptions, 2010 - 2020 Shows each of the six temporary exemptions issued to Mississippi state agencies between 2010 and 2022. A checkmark under the *Compensation* header indicates that the agency did not have to comply with the MSPB’s compensation plan. A checkmark under the *Property Rights* header indicates that the agency did not have to abide by the statute providing civil servants with property rights in their positions. For more information, see *PEER Report 670 (2022)* and *PEER Report 651 (2020)*. Mississippi’s School of the Arts was also excluded from the MSPB’s purview beginning January 1, 2020. Since that exclusion was permanent, it is excluded from this table.

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Exemption Period</i>		<i>Exempted Rules</i>	
	<i>Begin Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>	<i>Compensation</i>	<i>Property Rights</i>
Marine Resources	4/16/2014	10/17/2014	✓	✓
Education	7/1/2014	6/30/2016	✓	✓
Corrections	7/1/2015	6/30/2016		✓
Corrections	7/1/2016	6/30/2017	✓	✓
Human Services	7/1/2016	6/30/2019		✓
Child Protection Services	7/1/2016 ¹	6/30/2020		✓

¹Before July 1, 2016, the Department of Child Protection Services was part of the Department of Human Services.

Contemporary accounts of the exemptions suggests that they were pitched as mechanisms for improving agency performance. At least three of the exemptions followed major scandals in the given agency. In November 2013, the Executive Director of the Department of Marine Resources and six other agency employees were charged with fraud (U.S. Attorney’s Office 2013; Lee 2018). In the wake of the scandal,¹⁶ the legislature promptly passed a bill to reform the agency, giving the new Executive Director “flexibility in making an orderly, effective and timely reorganization of the Department of Marine Resources” (Wiggins 2014; Havens 2014). Likewise, eight months before the Department of Corrections was first exempted from merit rules, the Commissioner of the agency was indicted on federal corruption charges (Gates 2017). The July 2016 exemption of the Departments of Human Services and the newly-created Department of Child Protection Services stemmed from the settlement of a 2004

16. All seven employees pleaded guilty. The Executive Director and a manager both served time in jail, while the Chief of Staff was sentenced to house arrest.

civil suit accusing the state of neglecting foster children in its care. As part of the revised settlement, the state and plaintiffs agreed that the “Governor will take all reasonable steps, within legal authority, to exempt [the Departments of Human Services and Child Protection Services] from State Personnel Board oversight for a period of at least 36 months, beginning July 1, 2016” (Lee 2015).

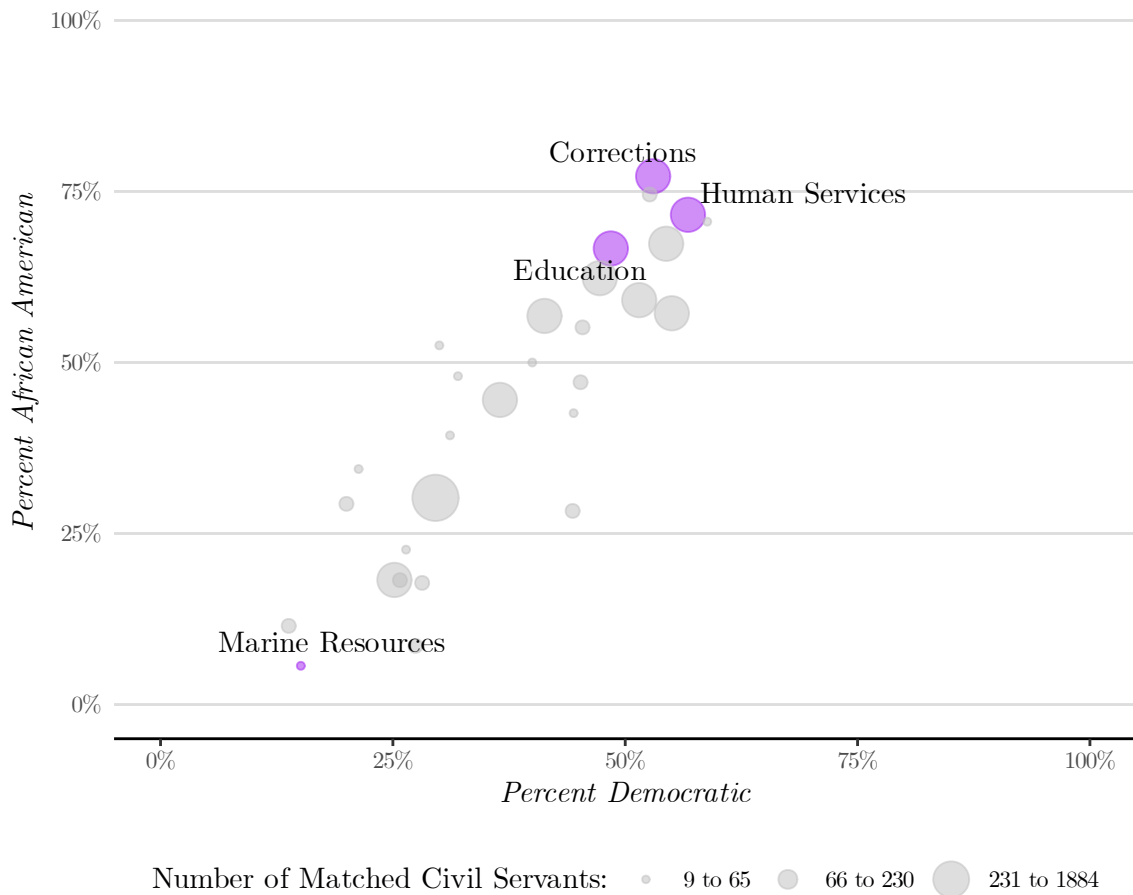
While described by supporters as a means of addressing governmental failures rather than a mechanism for removing opponents from the state workforce, these temporary exemptions still provided windows of opportunity for the Republican-controlled government to dismiss Democratic employees. Notably, the affected agencies are among the largest, most Democratic in the entire state. Figure 2 shows the share of registered Democrats in every Mississippi state agency with more than ten employees, as of January 2021.¹⁷ The Departments of Corrections, Human Services, and Education—all of which received at least one exemption between 2010 and 2020—are some of the most Democratic, African American agencies in Mississippi. The clear outlier is the Department of Marine Resources, which has the smallest share of African Americans and registered Democrats of any state agency. While it is difficult to assess whether the decision to reclassify these agencies in the first place was driven by its partisan makeup, it is clear that, upon reclassification, there were plenty of Democrats for managers to dismiss.

I test whether Democratic civil servants were more likely to depart Mississippi state government following reclassification using two datasets.¹⁸ The first is a subset of the individual-

17. I exclude the Department of Child Protection Services from this figure, because, in the quantitative models to follow, I fold the Child Protection Services into the Department of Human Services.

18. I focus on firings rather than hirings in this paper because I possess the universe of currently-employed individuals and lack the universe of candidates for government positions. Nevertheless, I show descriptive hiring trends in Figures E.1 and E.2 in the Supplementary Information. These figures plot the number and share of new hires by period in the Departments of Corrections, Marine Resources, Human Services, and

Figure 2 – Race and Partisanship of Mississippi Agencies Shows, for each Mississippi state agency with more than 10 employees successfully matched to a voter, the share of matched employees that are Democratic and African American (As of January 2021). The four agencies that received an exemption from merit rules between 2010 and 2020 are highlighted in purple. The size of the dots correspond to the number of matched employees in each agency, binned by tertile.



level personnel and voter dataset described above. These data span from January 2010 through June 2022 and include 60,029 unique employees and 3,245,938 month-employee observations.¹⁹ 71% of the month-employee observations and 63% of the unique employees between 2010 and 2022 were successfully matched to at least one voter.²⁰ While seemingly low, not all state employees are registered to vote. In Mississippi, 80% of voting age citizens were registered to vote in 2020 and, given national trends, this percentage is likely even lower for the lower-earning individuals who comprise a relatively large share of the Mississippi state workforce (“U.S. Census Bureau” 2021).

While these data provide an extremely granular look at the makeup of the Mississippi public workforce, they do not include any information about why an employee leaves government employment. All that is observed is the last month an employee works for the state. Therefore, in order to examine the effect of reclassification specifically on dismissals, I also collected, via public records requests to the MPSB, the number of resignations, retirements, and terminations in each agency for every month from January 2005 through January 2020. These data allow me to track not only the effect of reclassification on overall departures, but on the specific type of departure.²¹

Education. The plots do not show any clear changes in the partisanship of new hires following reclassification.

19. These counts include temporary, part-time, national guard, and higher education employees — all of whom are eventually dropped for the analyses. The personnel files do not include employees of state hospitals or law enforcement personnel employed by the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics.

20. Of the employees successfully matched to at least one voter, 83% were matched to only one voter. See Tables C.3 and C.2 for more information.

21. Figure A.2 shows that the number of departures per month in the personnel data closely resembles the sum total of resignations, retirements, and terminations from the dismissal data. Note that this figure excludes the Departments of Corrections and Mental Health. For unknown reasons, both agencies’ monthly departure counts significantly differ across the two datasets.

Reclassification and Agency-Level Dismissals

I first examine whether employees in exempted agencies were more likely to be dismissed than their peers in other, non-exempt state agencies, regardless of partisanship. While increased dismissals in exempt agencies is not strictly necessary for partisan firings to exist, it is likely that the phenomena occurred in tandem. I empirically test for the effect of reclassification on dismissals using a series of synthetic control models (Abadie and Gardeazabal 2003; Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2010, 2015). Developed as a tool for estimating causal effects when the number of observations is small, a synthetic control model estimates an untreated version of the treated unit as the weighted average of a set of control units. This “synthetic control,” which models the post-treatment outcomes of the treated unit in an alternative world in which the unit never actually received treatment, can then be used to calculate treatment effects via comparison with observed post-treatment outcomes.

I estimate these models with the agency-level dataset that includes monthly counts of the number of terminations, retirements, and resignations in each agency from 2005 through 2020. The outcome of interest is the number of terminations in the agency in a given month.²²

I estimate separate models for the exemptions of the Departments of Human Services, Marine Resources, and Education. I do not fit a model for the 2015 exemption offered to the

22. It is also possible that reclassification affects an employee’s willingness to voluntarily leave state employment. The job security that comes with civil service employment is a valued feature of public sector employment, both as a means for investing in expertise development (Gailmard and Patty 2007) and an end in itself (Lewis and Frank 2002). For those who particularly value the stability afforded by government employment, the loss of removal protections reduces the appeal of remaining in the public sector. Reclassification might also provide a signal that the executive disagrees with the status quo and additional oversight is on the way (Richardson 2019). In the Supplementary Information, I include models where the outcome is the number of resignations and retirements in a given month. These models show little evidence of an increase in voluntary departures following reclassification. The relatively short duration of the exemptions in Mississippi might lead exempted employees to simply wait out reclassification rather than leaving.

Department of Corrections because of a data quality issue with the dismissal data.²³ For the remaining three exempted agencies, I generate the respective synthetic version of the agency as the weighted mean of pre-treatment outcomes, agency size, and agency employee location (i.e., the number of employees in the county in which the state capital is located).²⁴ Inference involved running a series of placebo tests where each of the agencies in the control set was randomly assigned to receive treatment. A low p-value, therefore, suggests that the effect size for the treated unit is rare, relative to other untreated agencies for the same period.

Figure 3 presents the results. The dark blue line shows the observed share of employees in the treated agency that were involuntarily dismissed in the given period. The outcome is calculated annually for the Departments of Education and Human Services, and biannually for the Department of Marine Resources.²⁵ The shaded regions represent the periods in which agency employees lacked civil service protections. In each of the three agencies, the first period following reclassification saw substantively and statistically significant increases in the number of terminations. Relative to the synthetic control, terminations increased by 11 percentage points in Marine Resources, 7 percentage points in Human Services, and 5 percentage points in Education.²⁶ Relative to pre-treatment dismissal rates, these are

23. As shown in Figure A.3, between roughly 2012 and 2017 the number of dismissals, resignations, and retirements is much higher than the number of departures calculated from the personnel data. Furthermore, as shown in Figure A.4, which computes synthetic control models for all four exempted agencies using the number of departures calculated from the personnel data as the dependent variable, the relatively high turnover rate of the Department of Corrections is an outlier relative to other agencies in the state. Consequently, even without data quality issues, it would not be possible to generate a statistical control for the agency.

24. The specific variables used to fit the synthetic control varies across the models depending on fit. More information on the agencies and variables used to fit the synthetic control is available in the Supplementary Information.

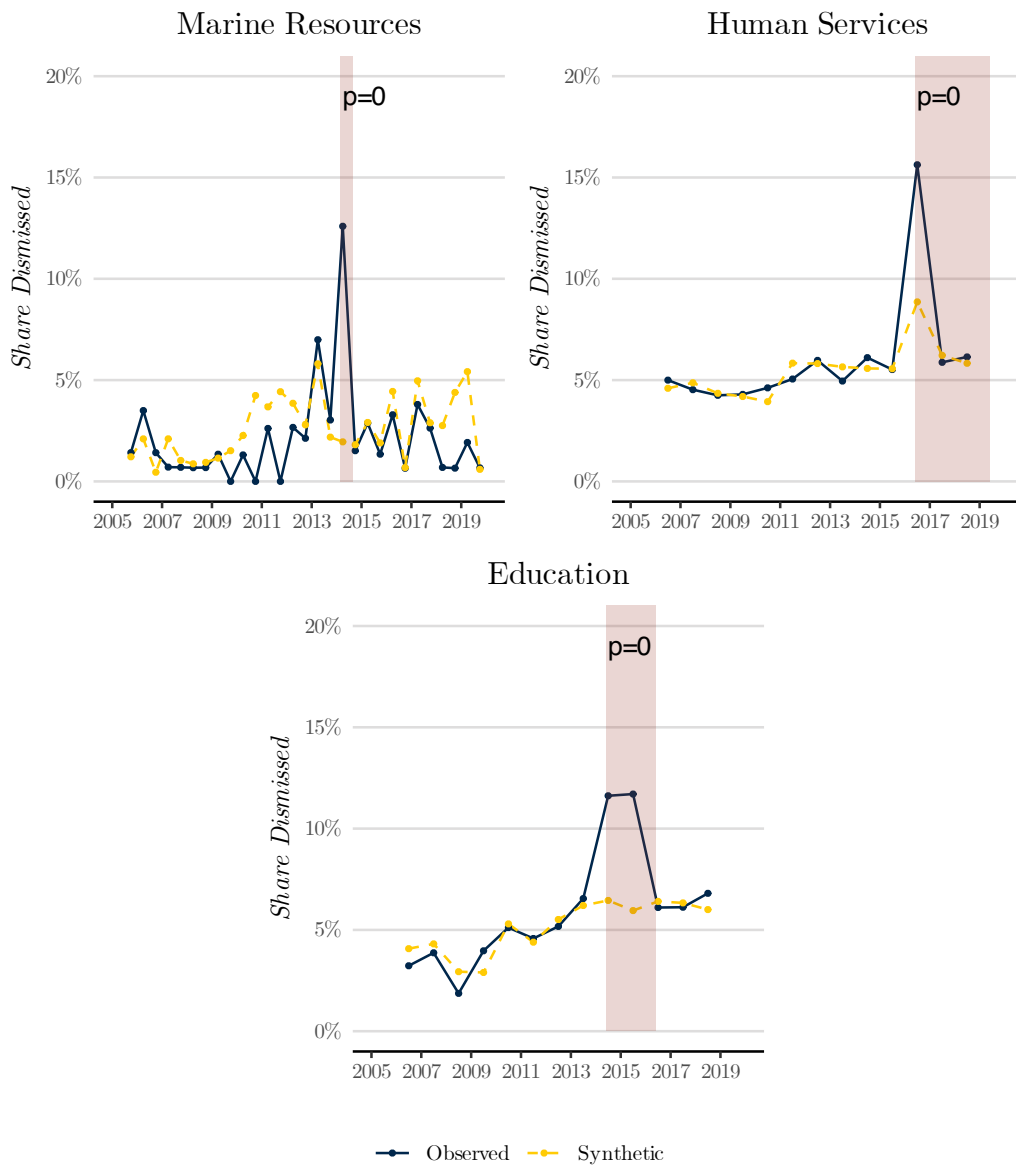
25. For instance, the outcome for the Department of Education in July 2017 is the number of people who resigned or retired from the agency between July 2017 and June 2018 divided by the number of Education employees in July 2017. Splitting the data into annual intervals reduces seasonal trends in turnover, but the Department of Marine Resources' exemption only lasted 6 months.

26. Although data quality issues and the lack of comparable agencies in Mississippi prevents fitting a similar model for the Department of Corrections, that agency did not see an increase in overall departures following

extremely large treatment effects. In the first period of reclassification, terminations increased by 634% in Marine Resources, 211% in Human Services, and 171% in the Department of Education. Reclassification was not only a means of removing a handful of senior employees but rather a tool for large-scale reforms.

reclassification. See Figure A.4 and *PEER Report 651* (2020) for more information.

Figure 3 – Effect of Reclassification on Involuntary Dismissals Shows three separate synthetic control models comparing the share of employees in the given agency that were involuntarily dismissed from state employment in the given period (blue) against a statistically generated control (yellow). The unit of analysis for the Corrections and Education models is the agency-year. For the Marine Resources model, the unit of analysis is the agency-biannual. In each plot, a point represents the total number of employees involuntarily dismissed over the forthcoming 12 or 6 months divided by the number of employees in the agency at the start of the period. The shaded area in each of the plots represents periods where the given agency was not covered by the MSPB. The p value (rounded to the hundredth) represents the probability of observing a treatment effect as extreme via a series of placebo exercises where treatment is randomly assigned to an agency in the control set. Additional information about the variables and other agencies used to create the synthetic controls is available in Figures A.6 and A.5.



Who is Dismissed?

The synthetic control models demonstrate that reclassification increases the number of terminations from the state workforce. These agency-level findings do not, however, shed any light on which types of employees are most at risk of losing their jobs. Do principals use reclassification to target opposing civil servants for termination?

I address this question using the individual-level personnel and voter record dataset. I estimate two different versions of a difference-in-differences model where the outcome of interest is whether a Mississippi civil servant departed the workforce in the period. Unlike the agency-level data used in the synthetic control models, the individual-level data does not indicate whether an employee voluntarily departed or was dismissed. I collapse the monthly data into 6-month snapshots to smooth fluctuations in departures.²⁷ Given Mississippi Republicans' control over the state legislature and governorship in recent decades, I operationalize registered Democrats as being in the opposition.²⁸ I am agnostic as to whether partisanship matters on its own or as a proxy for ideological disagreement.

I test for the presence of partisan-influenced departures using three agencies exempted from civil service rules: Education, Corrections (beginning July 2015), and Human Services. I use the first exemption issued to the Department of Corrections because the second exemption only gave the agency additional control over employee compensation. Likewise, I fold the exemption to the newly-formed Child Protective Services agency into the exemption to the Department of Human Services since they were part of the same agency before receiving exemptions in July 2016. I leave out the Department of Marine Resources because

27. See Figure A.2 for a visualization of monthly fluctuations in departures.

28. More specifically, I treat a civil servant as a registered Democrat if their probability of being a Democrat exceeds 0.9.

its relatively few employees pose a challenge for statistical tests.

The first model, enumerated below in Equation 1, examines whether partisan employees in an exempted agency are more likely to depart than similar partisan employees in the rest of the state workforce following reclassification. The model, therefore, is estimated separately for all Republican and Democratic civil servants, respectively, in each of the three agencies. In order to test whether senior civil servants are especially susceptible to partisan pressures upon reclassification, I also estimate a separate series of models for only those employees whose annual salary is in the top quartile for the state. In total, this results in estimating 12 different versions of Equation 1.

$$y_{iat} = \beta_1 exempt_a + \beta_2 exempt_a * post_t + \gamma_t + \Omega \mathbf{X}_{iat} + \epsilon_{iat} \quad (1)$$

The model is indexed by individual i , time period t , and employing agency a . The coefficient of interest is β_2 , the interaction between whether an employee works in the given exempted agency ($exempt_a$) and a post-treatment indicator ($post_t$). All pre- and post-treatment periods are captured by γ_t . Unlike the classic difference-in-differences design with one pre-treatment and one post-treatment period, this design includes one post-treatment period and a variable number of pre-treatment periods depending on the agency. The Department of Education model includes nine pre-treatment periods, while the models for Human Services and Corrections have, respectively, thirteen and eleven pre-treatment periods. I only include one post-treatment period because, as shown in the last section, the majority of dismissals occurred in the period immediately following reclassification.²⁹

29. Focusing on short-term effects is also in line with similar work on employee turnover following the election and inauguration of new presidents (Bolton, de Figueiredo, and Lewis 2021; Doherty, Lewis, and

The main assumption underlying a causal interpretation of the β_2 parameter in Equation 1 is that, in the absence of reclassification, the change in the probability of departing before and after the date of treatment would be the same for similar employees in the exempted agency and the rest of the state workforce. In order to more plausibly meet this “parallel trends” assumption (Angrist and Pischke 2008), I include a variety of individual-level controls in the model. The matrix \mathbf{X}_{iat} includes binary indicators for whether an employee is white, male, and works in the county containing the state capital (Hinds County). Continuous control variables in \mathbf{X}_{iat} include employees’ annual salary expressed as a percentile of the state public workforce, the unemployment rate in the employee’s county, and the number of employees in a given employee’s agency. Finally, fixed effects control for the number of years employees have worked for the state.

In order to assess the validity of the parallel trends assumption, I estimate the interaction between the treatment variable ($exempt_a$) and each of the pre-treatment period fixed effects in (γ_t). The results are plotted in the Supplementary Information in Figures D.4 and D.5. The results show some evidence of pre-trends.

Figure 4 plots the coefficients of interest from Equation 1, estimated via OLS with standard errors clustered at the individual level. I opt for a linear probability model over a logistic regression in order to more easily interpret the results and test for pre-trends. Results from a logistic model are largely similar and are included in the Supplementary Information in Figure D.1.³⁰ The top facet includes all employees, while the bottom facet only includes civil servants whose annual salary was in the top quartile for the entire workforce. Standard and

Limbocker 2019a).

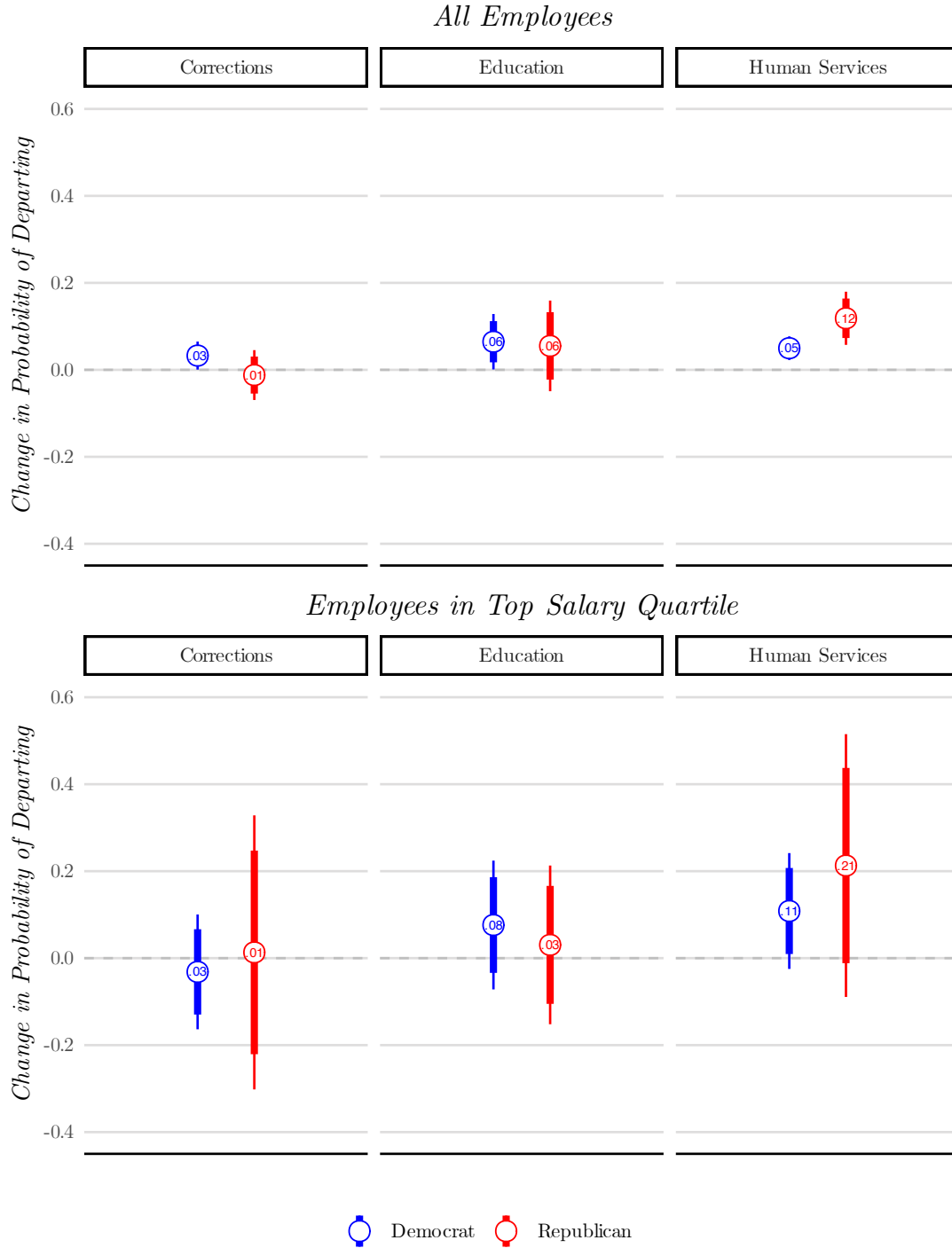
30. The full results of the linear models are located in the Supplementary Information in Tables D.1, D.2, D.3, and D.4.

Bonferroni corrected 95% confidence intervals are plotted alongside the point estimates.³¹

If at-will outpartisans were targeted for expulsion, Figure 4 would show a divergence in Republicans' and Democrats' departure probabilities, as the latter would be at increasing risk of leaving. In contrast, the results show limited evidence of at-will Democrats being more likely to depart and no evidence that Democrats were more likely to leave than Republicans. For instance, for each of the tests using all civil servants in the state, reclassification led Democratic employees to be at greater risk of departing the state workforce. These results are either statistically significant (as with Human Services) or right on the cusp of significance. However, there is little difference between these findings and the estimates for Republican employees. In fact, for Republican employees in the Department of Human Services, the agency's exemption from civil service rules increased the probability of departing by 12 percentage points. This is larger than the effect size for Democratic employees in the same agency, suggesting that something other than partisanship mediated dismissals in the 6 months following reclassification.

31. The multiple-testing corrected confidence intervals were calculated as $\bar{x} \pm Z(1 - (0.05/6/2)) \cdot se$, where $Z()$ returns the z-score for a given probability, 0.05 is the confidence level, and 6 is the number of tests (3 agencies \times 2 salary groups).

Figure 4 – Within-Party Difference-in-Difference Estimators Shows the difference-in-differences coefficient point estimates from Equation 1 with both standard and Bonferroni-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level. Full regression results are located in the Supplementary Information in Tables D.1, D.2, D.3, and D.4



Although the reduction in power makes it difficult to draw crisp conclusions, the results from the higher-earning civil servants in the bottom facet do not suggest that more powerful outpartisans were at even greater risk of leaving. The results largely mirror the findings from the top facet. None of the coefficients are statistically distinguishable from zero and in only one case (Education) does the size of the Democrats’ point estimate increase relative to the estimate for Republican employees.

Another approach for examining whether at-will outpartisans were more likely to depart the state workforce involves comparing the probabilities of departure within exempted agencies. This is what I do in the second difference-in-difference model, specified below in Equation 2. In this setup, the coefficient of interest is the interaction between post-reclassification and whether the employee is a registered Democrat. The model is estimated separately for each agency and only registered Democrats or Republicans who work in the given agency are included. The model includes the same individual-level controls (\mathbf{X}_{it}) as in Equation 1, as well as a main partisan effect ($democrat_i$) and time fixed effects (γ_t).³²

$$y_{it} = \beta_1 democrat_i + \beta_2 democrat_i * post_t + \gamma_t + \Omega \mathbf{X}_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

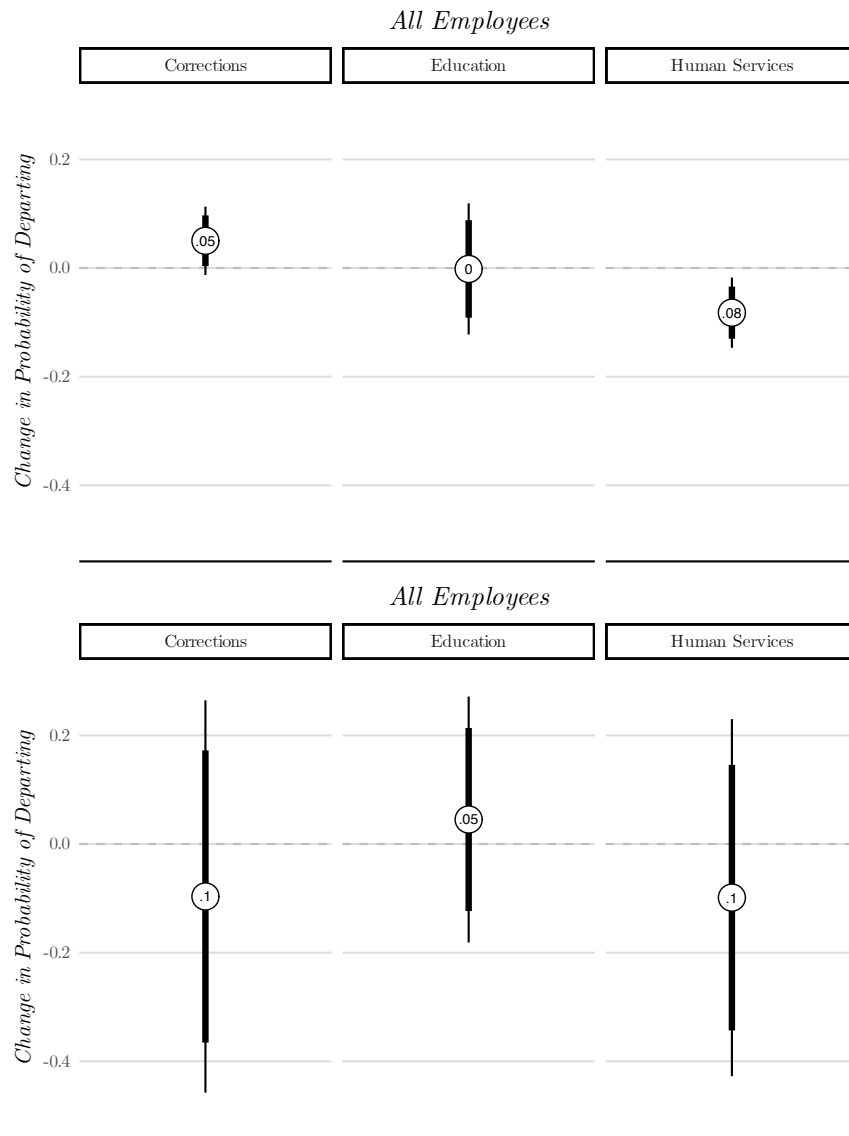
The key assumption for a causal interpretation of β_2 in Equation 2 is that, in the absence of reclassification, the change in the probability of departing for Democratic and Republican employees would remain the same before and after reclassification. As with the prior model, there is some evidence of pre-treatment divergences in the departure rates of Democrats and

32. The models in Equations 1 and 2 can be combined into a single model with a triple-interaction of time, partisanship, whether the employee works in the exempt agency. I do not show the results of that model in the text because of the difficulties with interpreting three-way interactions. However, the results are included in the Supplementary Information in Tables D.7 and D.8.

Republicans (Figure D.3).

Figure 5 shows the estimates of Equation 2 for each agency. As with the results in Figure 4, there is no consistent evidence of reclassification leading to a disproportionate departure of Democratic civil servants. Democratic civil servants in the Department of Corrections were 5% percentage points more likely to depart. However, there was no increased probability of departure for Democratic employees in the Department of Education, and Democrats working in Human Services were actually 8% percentage points less likely to leave in the period following reclassification.

Figure 5 – Within-Agency Difference-in-Difference Estimators Shows the difference-in-differences coefficient estimates from Equation 2. Full results in Tables D.5 and D.6. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level.



Discussion

The states are consequential players in American policymaking (Grumbach 2018). State agencies administer cap-and-trade programs, federal public welfare programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Medicaid, carceral systems, highway construction projects, state lands, and other impactful policies. Despite their impact, however, we know relatively little about the personnel who operate state government. In this paper, I both provide the first descriptive account of the partisanship of U.S. state workforces and examine whether governors use reclassification to reshape the composition of the bureaucracy. Using the case of civil service retrenchment in Mississippi, I demonstrate that removing protections leads to large increases in the number of terminations. Reclassification empowers supervisors, providing them with greater latitude to dismiss employees. With fewer hurdles in place to remove civil servants, more employees are terminated.

Contemporary debates over reclassification, however, are not so much over whether it will cause more employees to leave the public workforce. Instead, arguments focus on which types of government employees are burdened by reclassification and the effects of at-will employment on policy outcomes. I leave the latter point for future work, but uncover some interesting findings regarding the former. There is no evidence that outpartisan employees, even ones with more high-paying positions, in the Mississippi state workforce were systematically identified and fired following reclassification. At least in the short run, agency leaders did not use at-will employment to systematically track down and push Democrats out of the state workforce. Employees were selected for termination according to a different criterion, such as their performance on the job.

Of course, this null result could be a function of the events preceding reclassification. Ostensibly, the agencies were exempted due to valence concerns brought about by major scandals. While this is a different situation than a president removing protections to counteract the “Deep State,” it is still notable that the Republican state leaders did not utilize the opportunity provided by the scandals to remove opponents from the workforce.

There are, of course, limitations to this study. The first and most obvious is that it is based on a single U.S. state. As a result, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other states or the federal government. For instance, in Mississippi, public sector unions lack the power to collectively bargain. In settings where unions are more powerful, the effects of reclassification might be more muted. In addition, the main analyses in this paper focus on the short-run effects of reclassification. The temporary nature of the agency exemptions in Mississippi means that I cannot test how reclassifying employees into at-will employment affects turnover five or ten years following reclassification.

Nevertheless, this paper still contributes to the literature on personnel management in public bureaucracies. Future work can use my findings to explore a variety of interesting, pressing questions. For instance, I focus solely on departures as my outcome of interest. However, reclassification might also affect which employees receive raises and by how much. Likewise, it might also affect who gets hired into new positions. Future analyses might also look to link up similar employee-level analyses with agency-level measures of service delivery to see if reclassification affects the operation of government. Other scholars should look beyond the federal workforce (and Mississippi) to answer these important questions. The other U.S. states that have reclassified their public employees into at-will employment in recent decades are a fertile ground for answering pressing questions about the staffing of

American bureaucracies.

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Supplementary Information
Partisan Departures from the Administrative States
Benjamin Goehring

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A Synthetic Control Models – Additional Results and Diagnostics

Figure A.1 – Effect of Reclassification on Resignations and Retirements Shows three separate synthetic control models comparing the share of employees in the given agency that resigned or retired from state employment in the given period (blue) against a statistically generated control (yellow). The unit of analysis for the Corrections and Education models is the agency-year. For the Marine Resources model, the unit of analysis is the agency-biannual. In each plot, a point represents the number of employees who retired or resigned over the forthcoming 12 or 6 months divided by the total number of employees in the agency at the start of the period. The shaded area in each of the plots represents periods where the given agency was not covered by the MSPB. The p value (rounded to the hundredth) represents the probability of observing a treatment effect as extreme via a series of placebo exercises where treatment is randomly assigned to an agency in the control set. Additional information about the variables and other agencies used to create the synthetic controls is available in Figures A.8 and A.7.

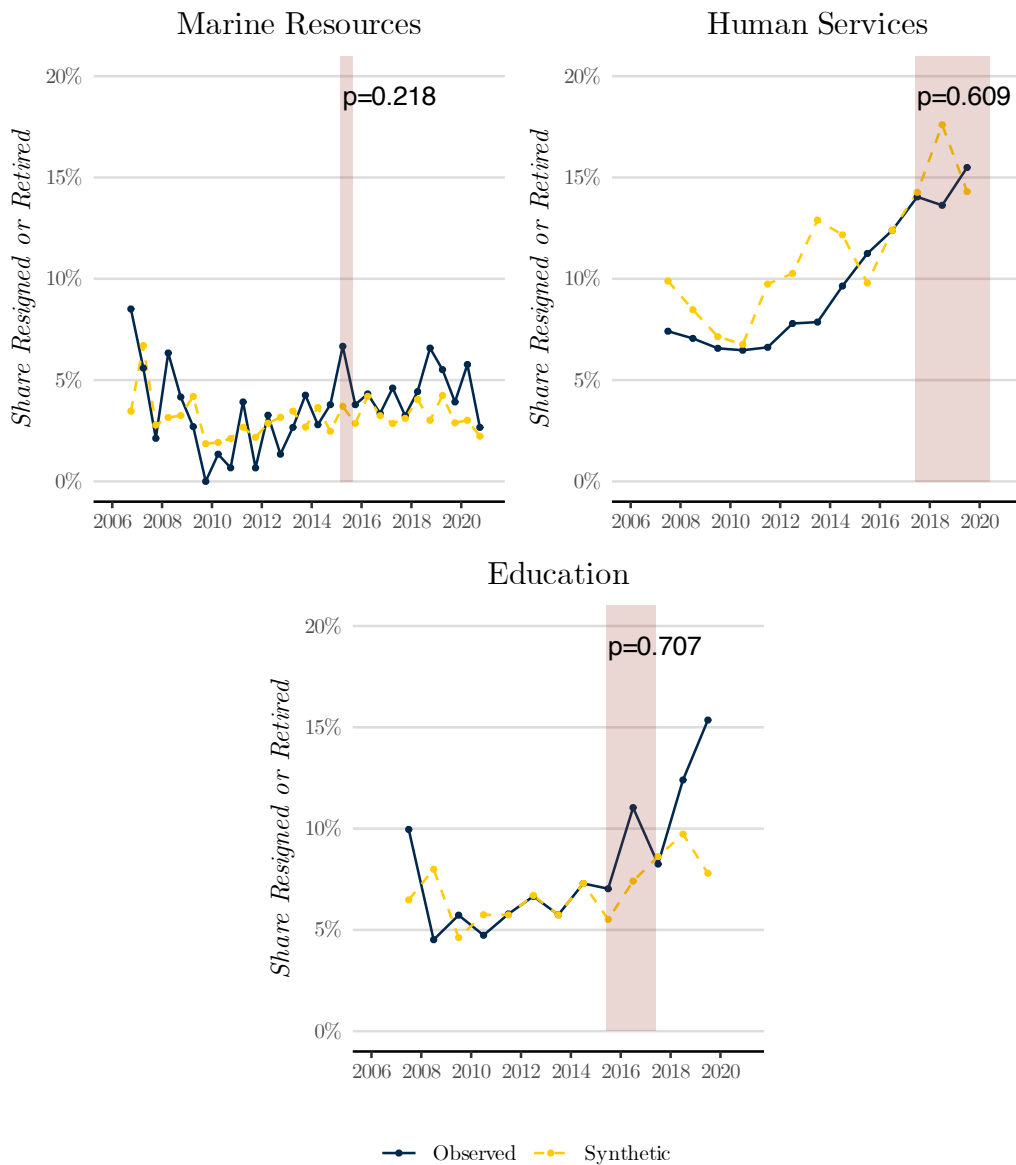


Figure A.2 – Comparison of Dependent Variables – All Agencies Compares the number of departures from Mississippi state agencies using the aggregated number of dismissals, resignations, and retirements, and the aggregated individual-level measure of departures from the personnel data. The counts exclude the Departments of Corrections and Mental Health. Both agencies are large and their dismissal data is highly uncorrelated with the departure data for unknown reasons. The measures include unclassified and part-time state employees.

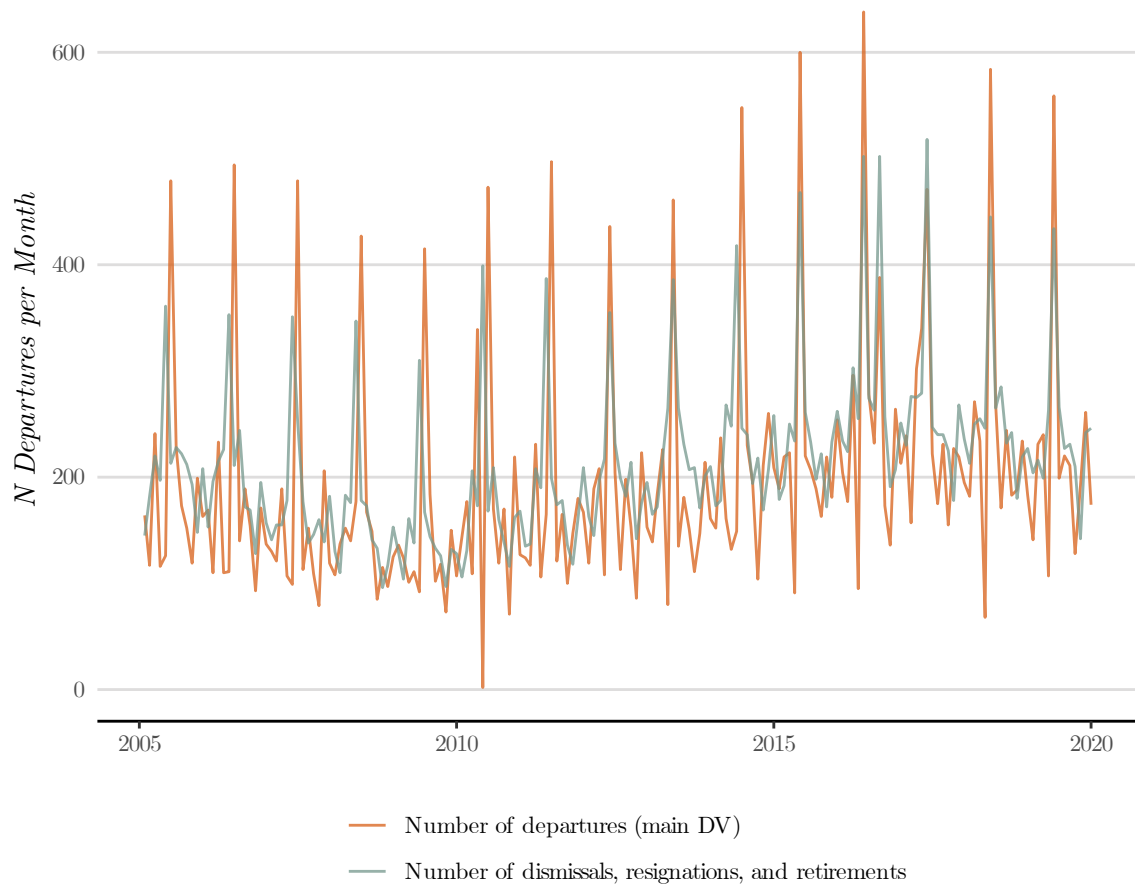


Figure A.3 – Comparison of Dependent Variables – Reclassified Agencies Compares the number of departures from the Departments of Corrections, Education, Human Services, and Marine Resources using the aggregated number of dismissals, resignations, and retirements, and the aggregated individual-level measure of departures from the personnel data. The measures include unclassified and part-time state employees.

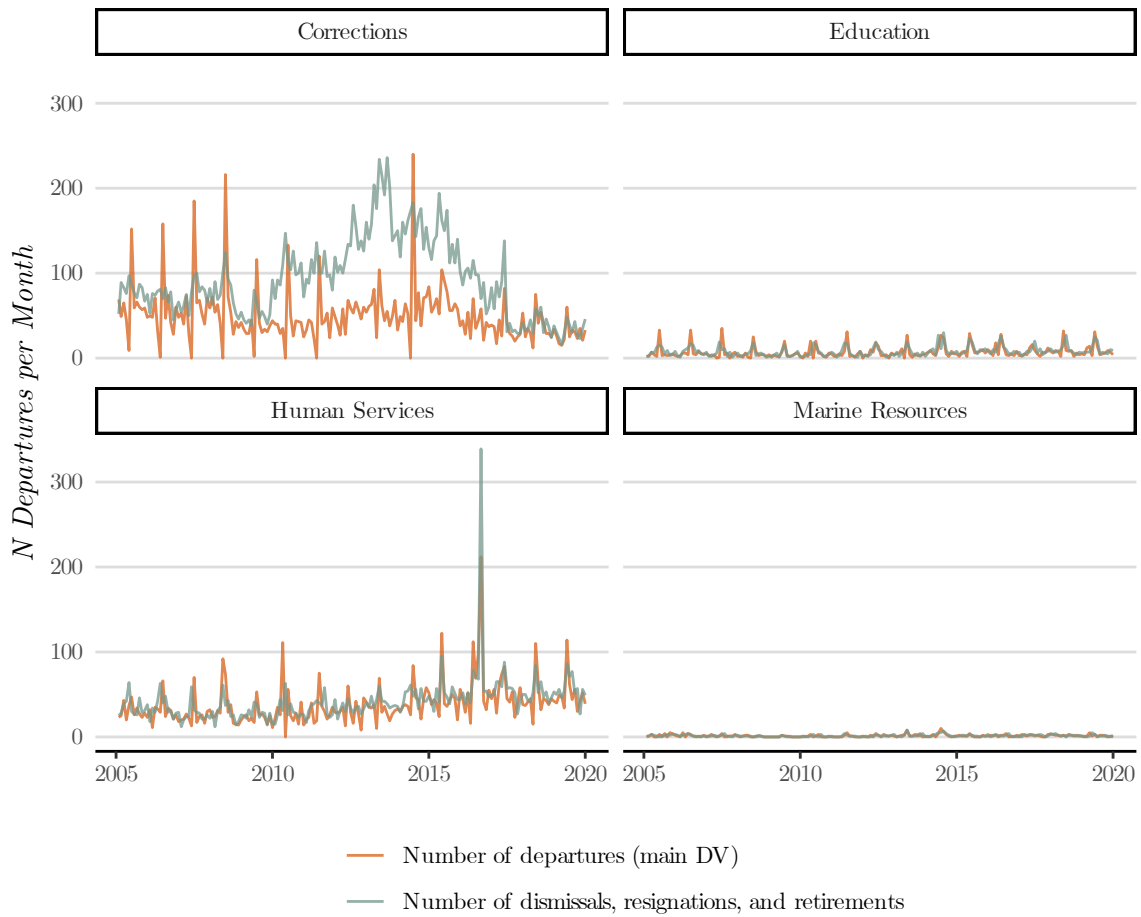


Figure A.4 – Effect of Reclassification on Departures Shows three separate synthetic control models comparing the share of employees in the given agency that departed state employment in the given period (blue) against a statistically generated control (yellow). Unlike the models in Figures A.1 and 3, the dependent variable in these three models is calculated directly from the personnel data using the last month an employee appears in the dataset (lagged 1 month). The unit of analysis for the Corrections and Education models is the agency-year. For the Marine Resources model, the unit of analysis is the agency-biannual. In each plot, a point represents the total number of employees who departed over the forthcoming 12 or 6 months divided by the number of employees in the agency at the start of the period. The shaded area in each of the plots represents periods where the given agency was not covered by the MSPB. The p value (rounded to the hundredth) represents the probability of observing a treatment effect as extreme via a series of placebo exercises where treatment is randomly assigned to an agency in the control set. Additional information about the variables and other agencies used to create the synthetic controls is available in Figures A.6 and A.5.

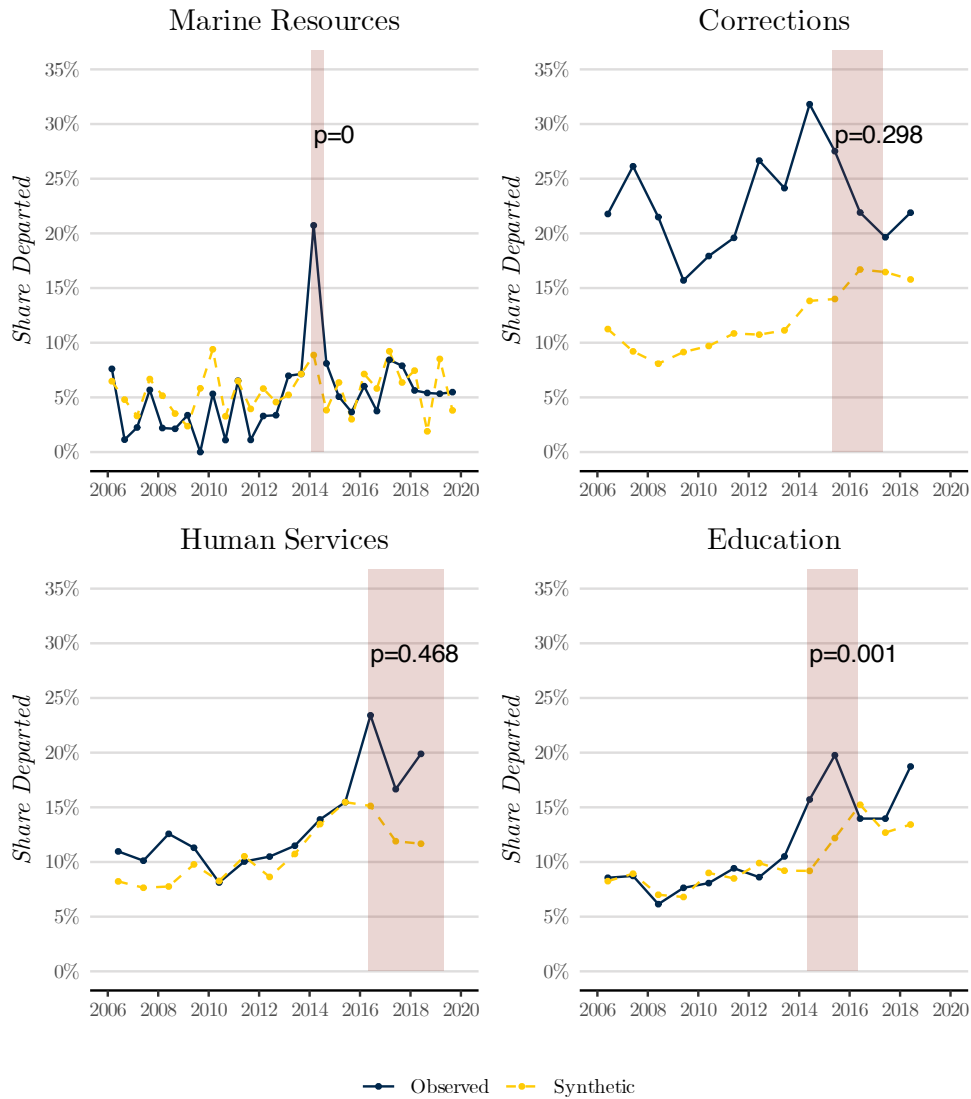


Figure A.5 – Agency Weights for Involuntary Dismissal Models in Figure 3
 Shows the weights of the untreated units used to create the respective synthetic controls for the models testing the effect of reclassification on involuntary dismissals in the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Marine Resources. The variables used to generate the weights are shown in Figure A.6.

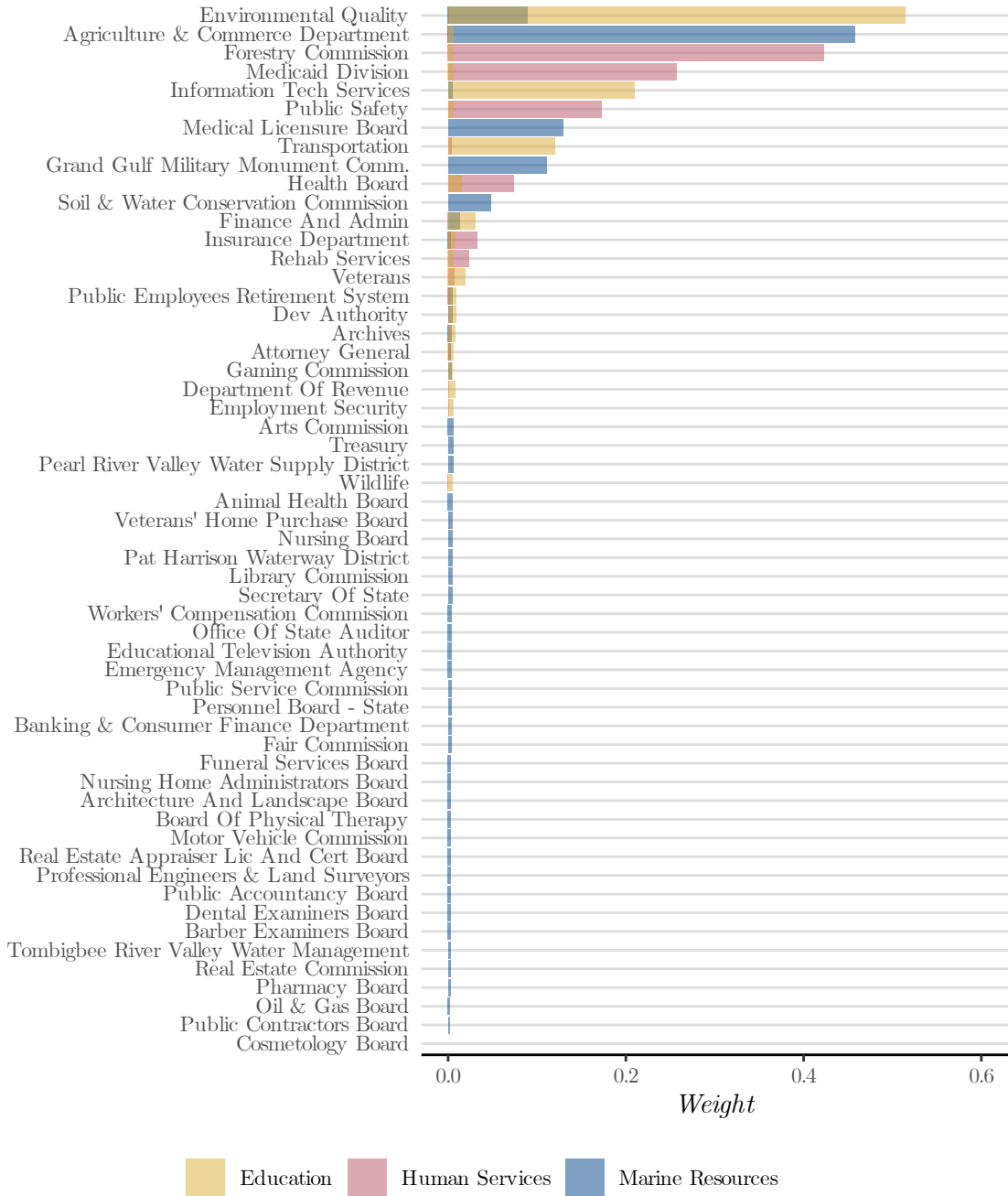


Figure A.6 – Variable Weights for Involuntary Dismissal Models in Figure 3
 Shows the pre-treatment outcome variables and covariates used to generate the respective synthetic control models testing the effect of reclassification on involuntary dismissals in the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Marine Resources.

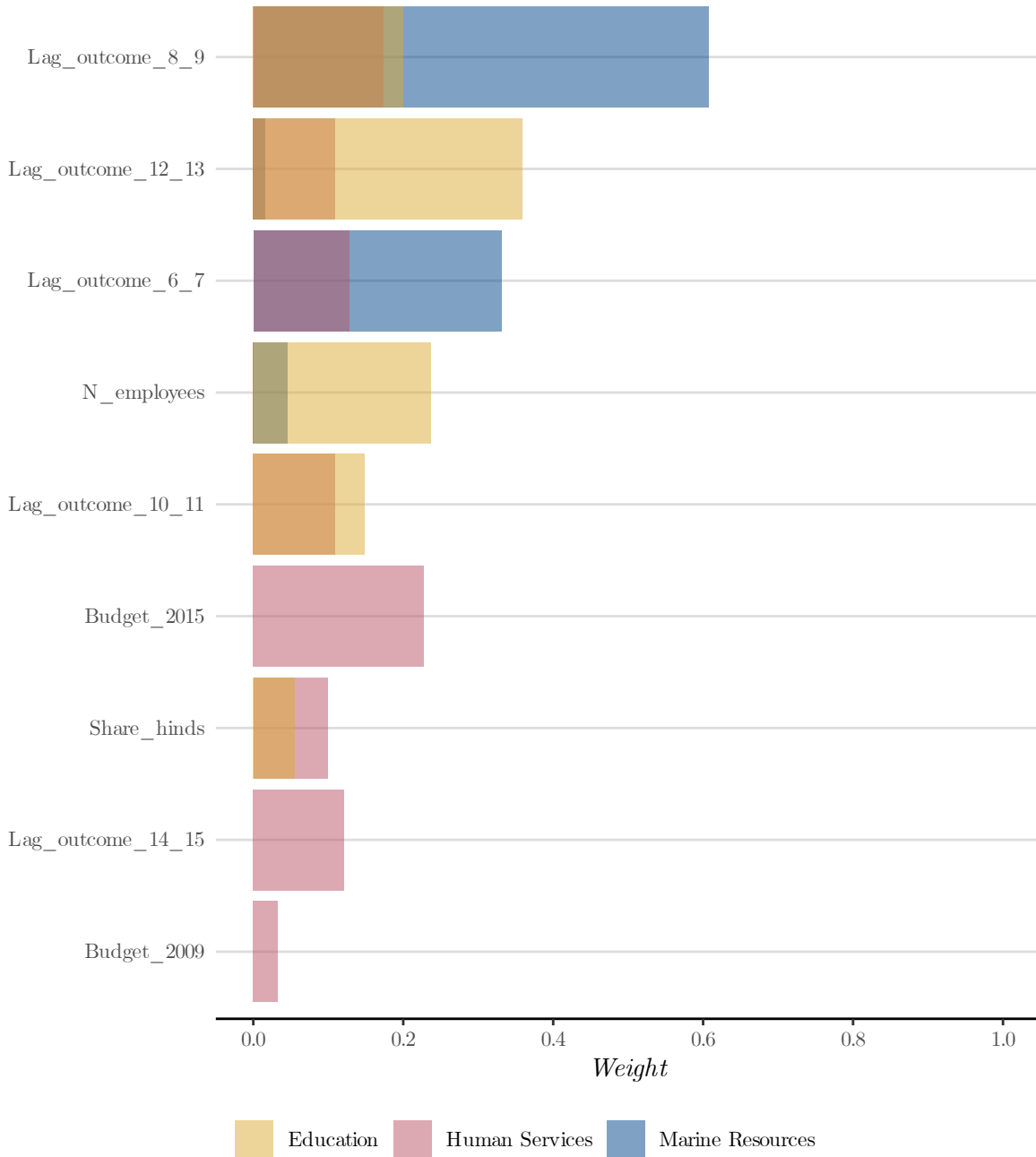


Figure A.7 – Agency Weights for Retirement and Resignation Models in Figure A.1 Shows the weights of the untreated units used to create the respective synthetic controls for the models testing the effect of reclassification on retirements and resignations in the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Marine Resources. The variables used to generate the weights are shown in Figure A.8.

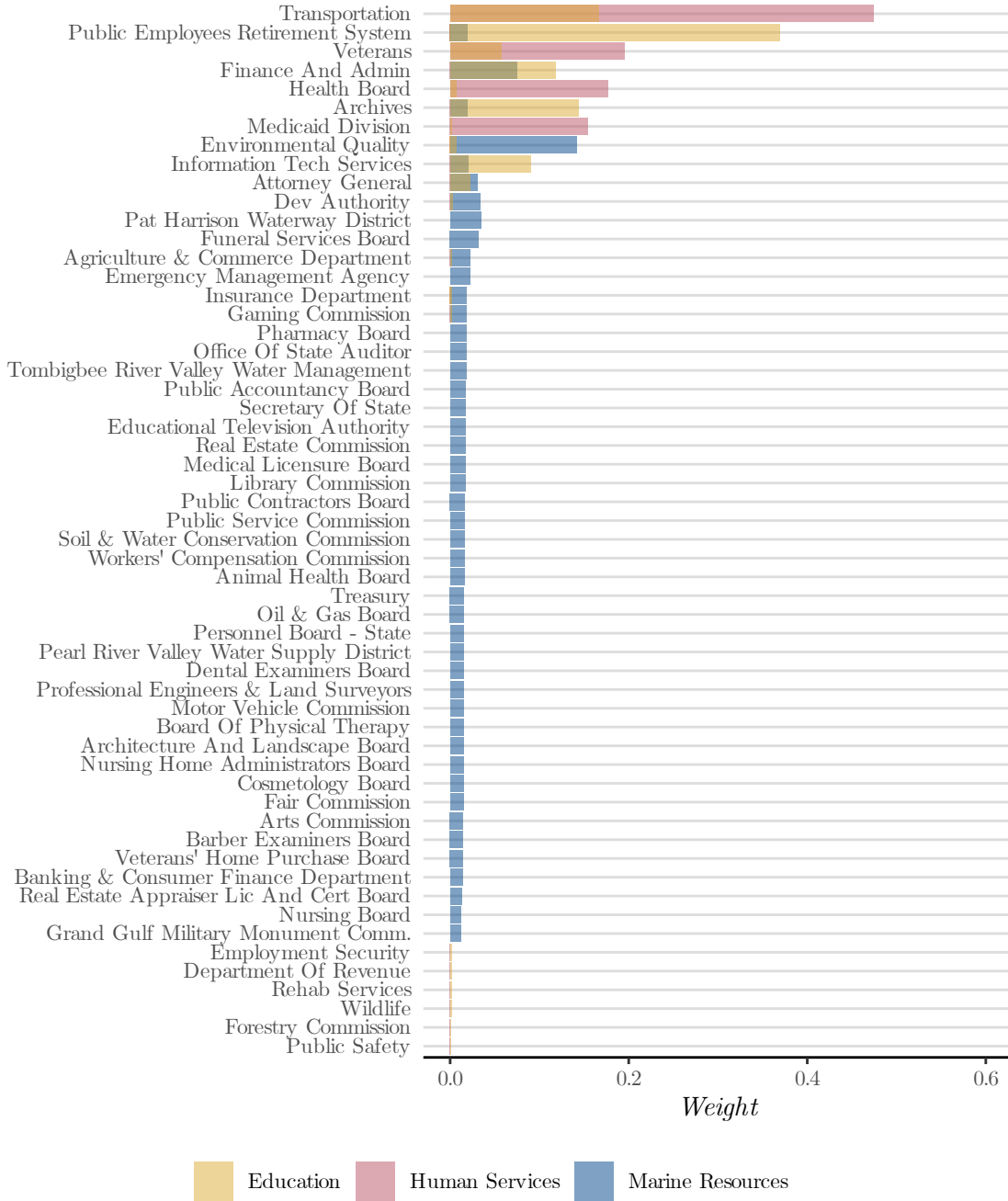


Figure A.8 – Variable Weights for Retirement and Resignation Models in Figure A.1 Shows the pre-treatment outcome variables and covariates used to generate the respective synthetic control models testing the effect of reclassification on retirements and resignations in the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Marine Resources.

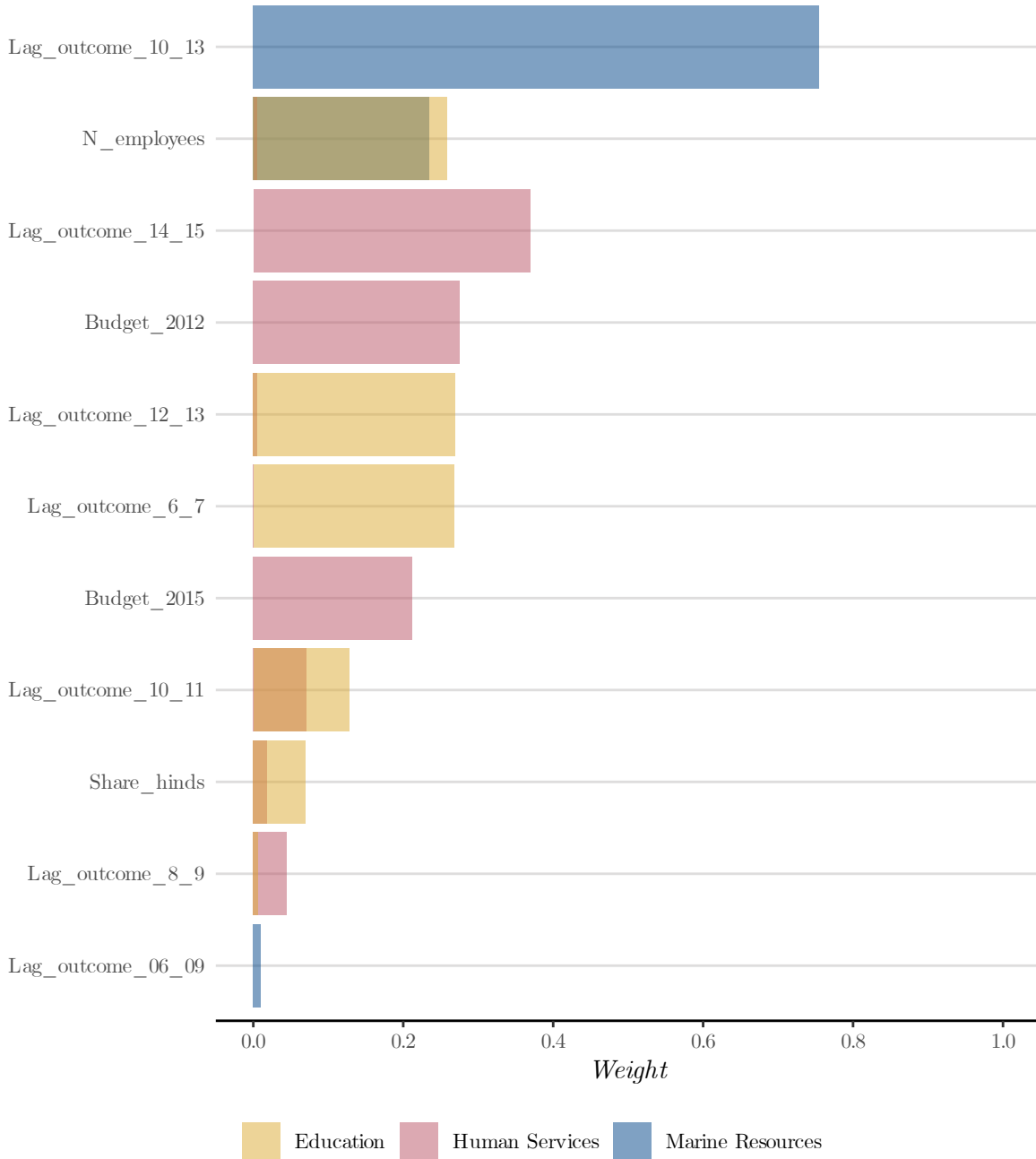


Figure A.9 – Agency Weights for Retirement and Resignation Models in Figure A.4 sdfsfdf

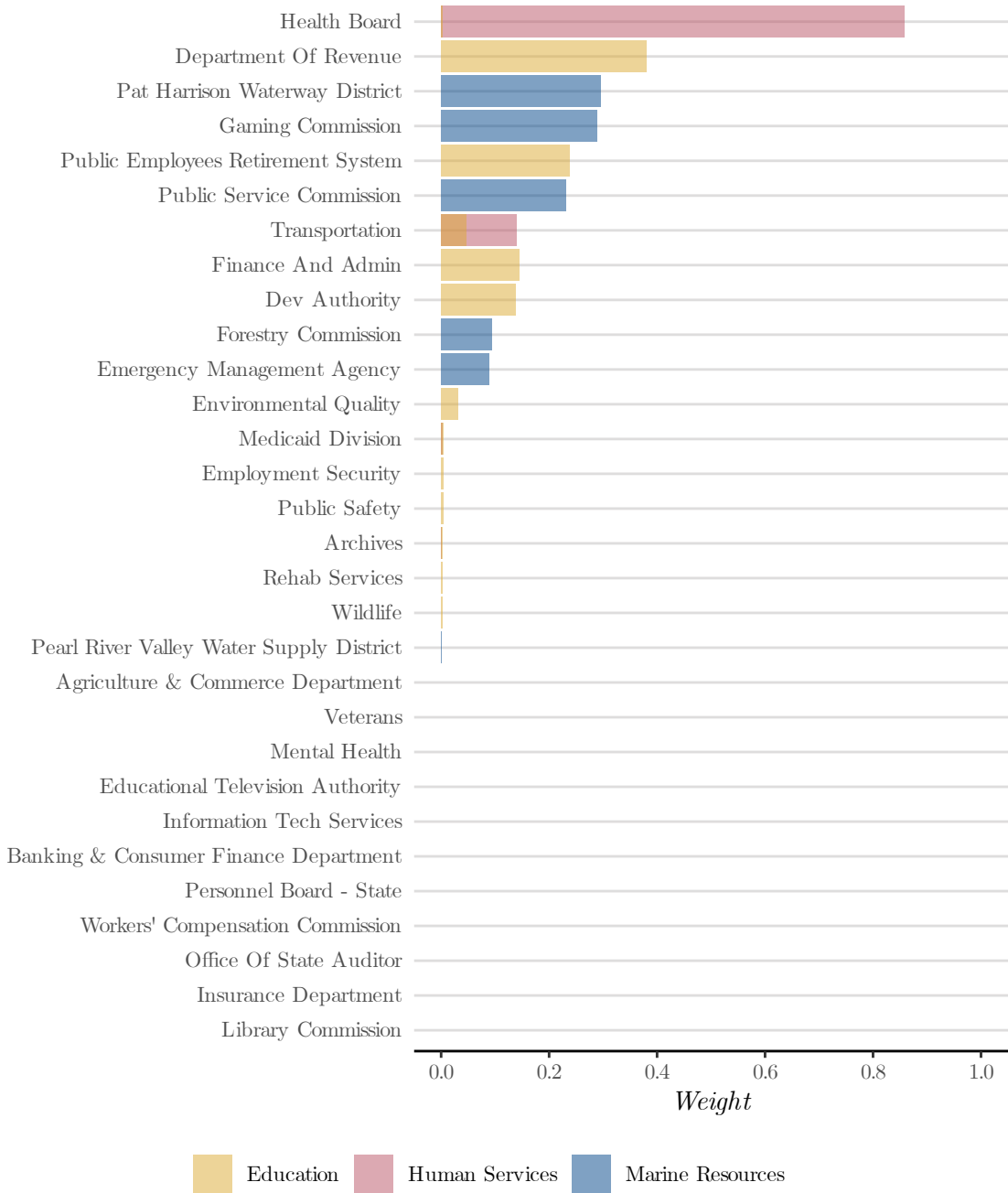
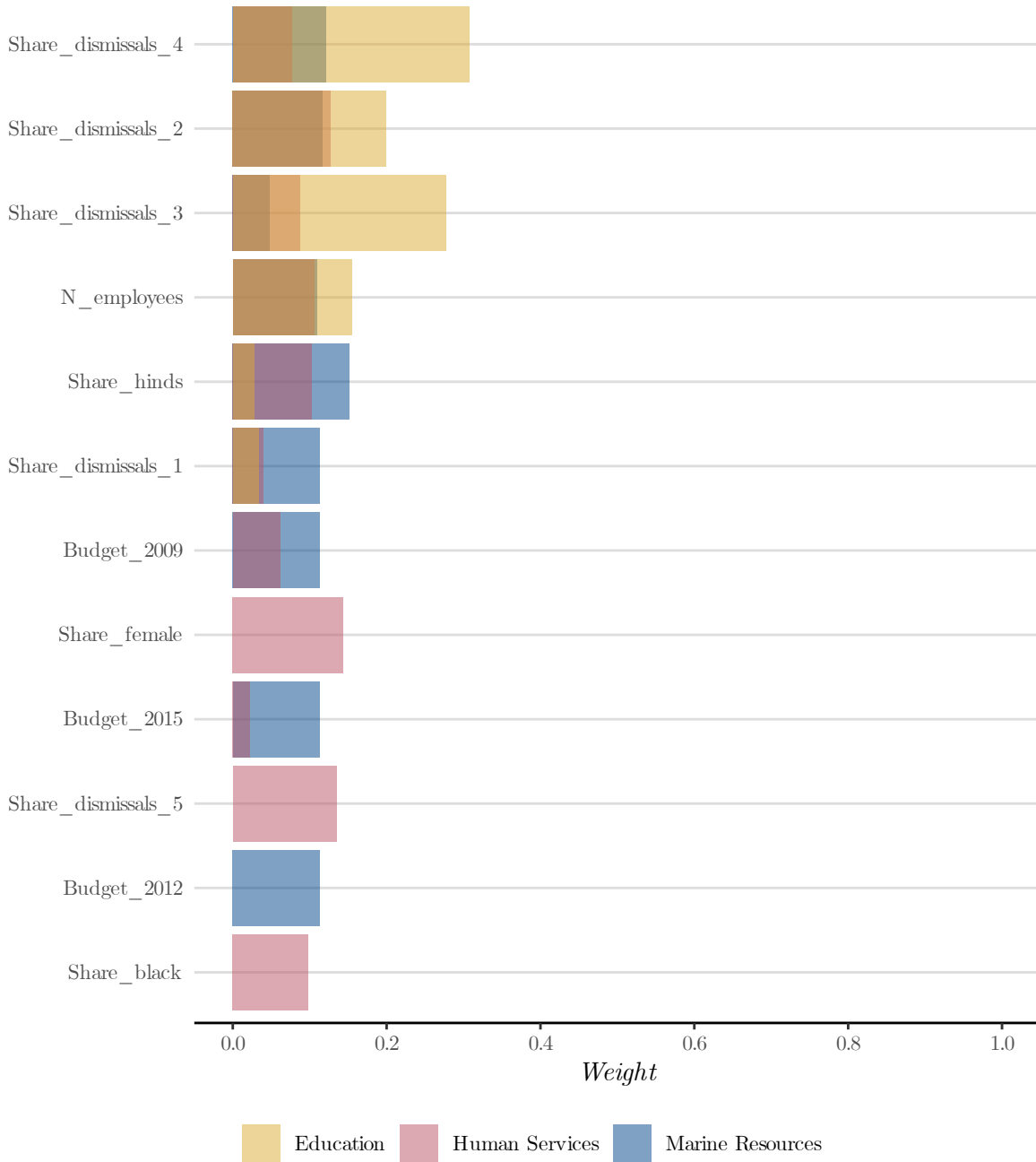


Figure A.10 – Variable Weights for Retirement and Resignation Models in Figure A.4 sdfdfd



B Additional Descriptive Results

Figure B.1 – The Partisanship of State Bureaucracies (Employees > Median Salary) Shows the share of classified state employees, unclassified state employees, and state voters that are registered Democrats. For states that do not include classification status (i.e., Alaska), the partisanship of all state employees is shown. Data is a snapshot from early 2021 and limited to only those employees whose annual salary is above the median for the state and period. An employee is deemed to be a registered a Democrat if their probability of being a democrat exceeds 0.9. Data excludes workers in the national guard and higher education systems. See Table B.2 for the full results.

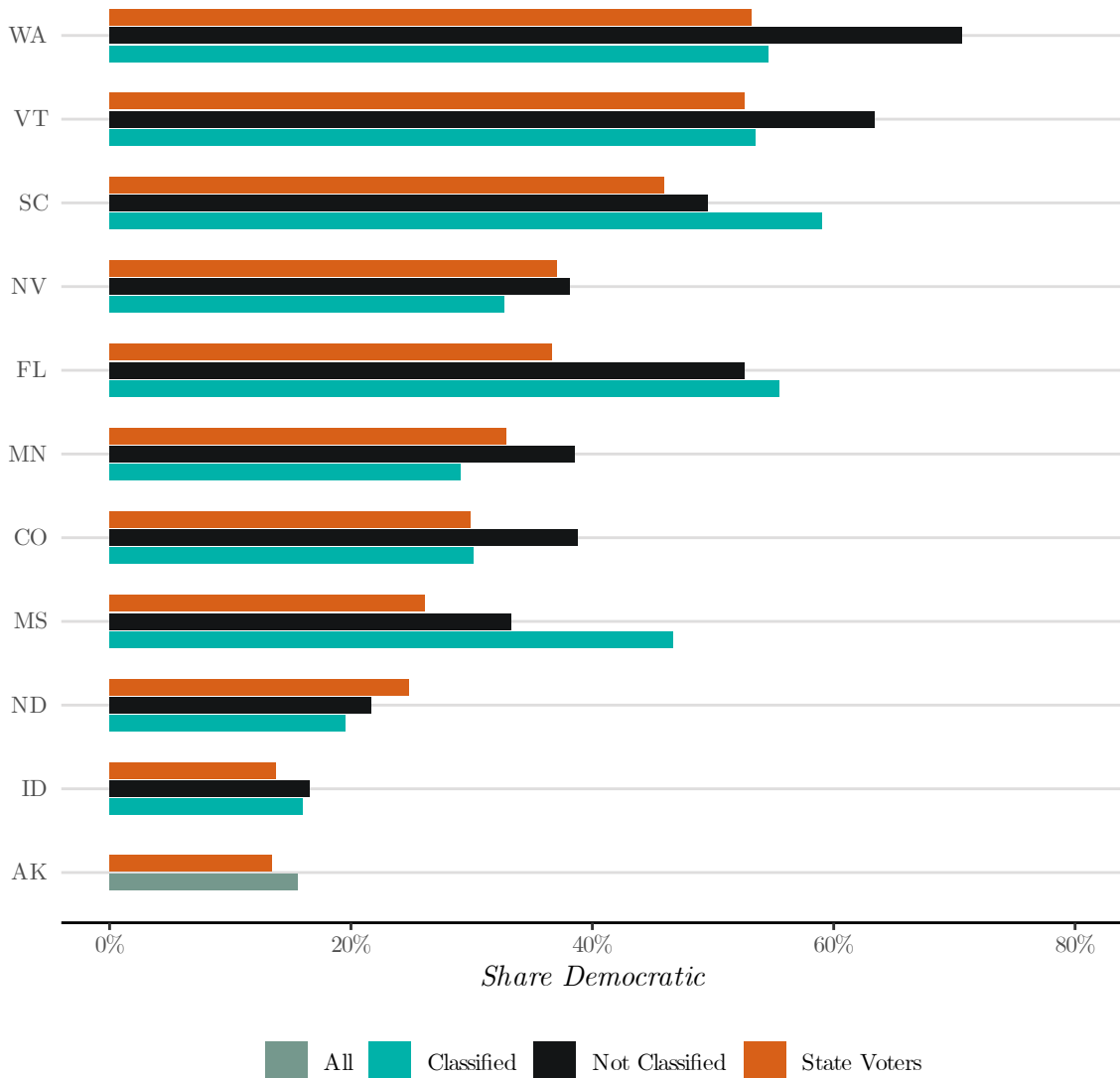


Table B.1 – Partisanship of State Bureaucracies Shows the number and share of matched classified and unclassified state employees by partisan affiliation. Temporary and part-time employees are excluded.

State	Partisanship	Classified		Not Classified		All	
		N	Share	N	Share	N	Share
AK	Democratic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1905	0.16
	Non-Partisan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1973	0.16
	Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5602	0.46
	Republican	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2714	0.22
CO	Democratic	4580	0.30	954	0.39	5534	0.31
	Non-Partisan	6034	0.40	1049	0.43	7083	0.40
	Other	187	0.01	24	0.01	211	0.01
	Republican	4399	0.29	433	0.18	4832	0.27
FL	Democratic	16216	0.55	3417	0.53	19633	0.55
	Non-Partisan	5231	0.18	1031	0.16	6262	0.18
	Other	308	0.01	40	0.01	348	0.01
	Republican	7465	0.26	2004	0.31	9469	0.27
ID	Democratic	1045	0.16	277	0.17	1322	0.16
	Non-Partisan	2324	0.35	543	0.33	2867	0.35
	Other	91	0.01	11	0.01	102	0.01
	Republican	3087	0.47	837	0.50	3924	0.48
MN	Democratic	4932	0.29	674	0.39	5606	0.30
	Non-Partisan	5875	0.35	563	0.32	6438	0.34
	Other	4	0.00	n/a	n/a	4	0.00
	Republican	6158	0.36	510	0.29	6668	0.36
MS	Democratic	4047	0.47	243	0.33	4290	0.46
	Non-Partisan	1995	0.23	116	0.16	2111	0.22
	Other	1	0.00	n/a	n/a	1	0.00
	Republican	2628	0.30	372	0.51	3000	0.32
ND	Democratic	853	0.20	77	0.22	930	0.20
	Non-Partisan	1260	0.29	94	0.26	1354	0.29
	Other	2	0.00	n/a	n/a	2	0.00
	Republican	2250	0.52	184	0.52	2434	0.52
NV	Democratic	2928	0.33	303	0.38	3231	0.33
	Non-Partisan	1981	0.22	160	0.20	2141	0.22
	Other	592	0.07	40	0.05	632	0.06
	Republican	3463	0.39	292	0.37	3755	0.38
SC	Democratic	15717	0.59	291	0.50	16008	0.59
	Non-Partisan	1424	0.05	31	0.05	1455	0.05
	Other	2	0.00	n/a	n/a	2	0.00
	Republican	9500	0.36	265	0.45	9765	0.36
VT	Democratic	2117	0.54	161	0.63	2278	0.54
	Non-Partisan	846	0.21	33	0.13	879	0.21
	Other	13	0.00	n/a	n/a	13	0.00
	Republican	979	0.25	60	0.24	1039	0.25
WA	Democratic	17906	0.55	1228	0.71	19134	0.55
	Non-Partisan	6173	0.19	217	0.12	6390	0.18
	Other	33	0.00	1	0.00	34	0.00
	Republican	8698	0.27	293	0.17	8991	0.26

Table B.2 – Partisanship of State Bureaucracies (Employees > Median) Shows the number and share of matched classified and unclassified state employees by partisan affiliation. Temporary and part-time employees are excluded.

State	Partisanship	Classified		Not Classified		All	
		N	Share	N	Share	N	Share
AK	Democratic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	977	0.16
	Non-Partisan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1043	0.17
	Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2659	0.43
	Republican	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1448	0.24
CO	Democratic	2586	0.31	842	0.39	3428	0.32
	Non-Partisan	3274	0.39	936	0.43	4210	0.40
	Other	97	0.01	22	0.01	119	0.01
	Republican	2449	0.29	379	0.17	2828	0.27
FL	Democratic	6870	0.52	2807	0.50	9677	0.52
	Non-Partisan	2332	0.18	905	0.16	3237	0.17
	Other	121	0.01	37	0.01	158	0.01
	Republican	3840	0.29	1861	0.33	5701	0.30
ID	Democratic	647	0.17	163	0.16	810	0.17
	Non-Partisan	1420	0.37	371	0.37	1791	0.37
	Other	40	0.01	6	0.01	46	0.01
	Republican	1765	0.46	470	0.47	2235	0.46
MN	Democratic	2618	0.26	392	0.35	3010	0.27
	Non-Partisan	3168	0.32	380	0.33	3548	0.32
	Other	3	0.00	n/a	n/a	3	0.00
	Republican	4119	0.42	364	0.32	4483	0.41
MS	Democratic	1661	0.43	234	0.34	1895	0.42
	Non-Partisan	737	0.19	97	0.14	834	0.18
	Other	1	0.00	n/a	n/a	1	0.00
	Republican	1451	0.38	358	0.52	1809	0.40
ND	Democratic	553	0.22	62	0.22	615	0.22
	Non-Partisan	565	0.23	66	0.24	631	0.23
	Other	2	0.00	n/a	n/a	2	0.00
	Republican	1390	0.55	148	0.54	1538	0.55
NV	Democratic	1458	0.30	177	0.36	1635	0.31
	Non-Partisan	1029	0.22	111	0.23	1140	0.22
	Other	310	0.06	26	0.05	336	0.06
	Republican	1985	0.42	176	0.36	2161	0.41
SC	Democratic	4164	0.47	277	0.49	4441	0.47
	Non-Partisan	437	0.05	28	0.05	465	0.05
	Republican	4299	0.48	256	0.46	4555	0.48
VT	Democratic	1396	0.54	136	0.65	1532	0.55
	Non-Partisan	484	0.19	27	0.13	511	0.18
	Other	4	0.00	n/a	n/a	4	0.00
	Republican	688	0.27	45	0.22	733	0.26
WA	Democratic	9446	0.57	1154	0.71	10600	0.58
	Non-Partisan	2793	0.17	204	0.12	2997	0.17
	Other	12	0.00	n/a	n/a	12	0.00
	Republican	4246	0.26	278	0.17	4524	0.25

Table B.3 – Demographic and Political Characteristics of Matched Mississippi Employees Shows, for the month before the agency received an exemption from the state’s civil service system, the number of employees matched to at least one voter and various political and demographic characteristics, for both the exempted agency and the rest of the state workforce. The state workforce includes all state agencies with more than 50 employees that did not also receive an exemption between 2010 and 2020.

Agency	N Matched Employees	Percent Black	Percent Female	Percent Democrat	Mean Experience (Years)	Mean Salary
State Workforce	7757	40.0	46.9	37.6	11.6	36969
Corrections	1647	80.6	63.4	52.6	8.5	28091
State Workforce	7611	40.7	47.0	37.7	11.5	37710
Human Services	1837	70.6	90.1	59.1	10.2	30121
State Workforce	7822	39.3	47.2	39.6	11.6	36586
Education	315	68.3	76.8	50.5	12.5	36672

C Merge Procedure and Diagnostics

C.1 Merge Procedure

1. Match the state personnel file to voter files from the given state and neighboring states. (With the exception of the Mississippi employee merge, all merges use voter files that are point-in-time snapshots from late 2020 and early 2021. The Mississippi merge incorporates additional snapshots from earlier periods in time. See Table C.5 for more information about timing of the voter file snapshots for Mississippi and neighboring states.)
2. Filter the voter registration file to only include voters living in the given state or within 50km of the state border.
3. Using `fastLink` and the available key variables common to both the personnel and voter files, return all voters for whom the probability of a true match with a given state employee is greater than 0.95. First and last names are used as key variables for all state merges. Other key variables are included on a state-by-state basis depending on availability and are listed in Table C.1.³³
4. Post-process the potential matches returned from `fastLink`, removing any voters matched to a state employee who, despite the high match probability, have.³⁴

33. First names and last names were merged using Jaro-Winkler string distance matching (with the prefix weight set to 0.2). The lower bound for an exact match was set to 0.99, while the lower bound for a partial match was 0.94.

34. Post-processing steps c-f depend on data availability. See Table C.1.

- (a) A first name where the first two characters differ
 - (b) A last name where the first two characters differ
 - (c) A different, non-missing middle initial
 - (d) A birth date that is $+/-$ 1 year from the state employee’s birth date
 - (e) A date of birth that is less than 18 years from the state employee’s hire date
 - (f) A residential address that is not in the same county or an adjacent county as the state employee’s work address
5. Since more than one voter can still be matched to a given state employee, calculate the weighted mean probability that each employee is a registered Republican, Democrat, non-partisan, and member of another party. Specifically, each state employee s is matched to k voters, denoted v_i, v_{i+1}, \dots, v_k . For each state employee there exists a vector \mathbf{f}_s containing the `fastLink` match probabilities for state employee s and the i th voter matched to s . Using these match probabilities, the partisan probabilities for a given state employee equal:³⁵

$$\mathbb{P}(\textit{Republican}|S = s) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si} \cdot r_{si}}{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si}}$$

$$\mathbb{P}(\textit{Democrat}|S = s) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si} \cdot d_{si}}{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si}}$$

$$\mathbb{P}(\textit{Nonpartisan}|S = s) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si} \cdot n_{si}}{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si}}$$

$$\mathbb{P}(\textit{Other}|S = s) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si} \cdot o_{si}}{\sum_{i=1}^k f_{si}}$$

Where r_{si} , d_{si} , n_{si} , and o_{si} are binary variables that indicate whether the i th voter matched to state employee s is, respectively, a registered Republican, Democrat, non-partisan, or member of another party. For state employees matched to one and only one voter, the state employee’s partisanship equals 1 for that voter’s registration status.

C.2 Merge Diagnostics

35. Note that $1 = \mathbb{P}(\textit{Republican}|C = c) + \mathbb{P}(\textit{Democrat}|C = c) + \mathbb{P}(\textit{Nonpartisan}|C = c) + \mathbb{P}(\textit{Other}|C = c)$

Table C.1 – Personnel Data Shows the timespan, frequency, and available variables in each state’s personnel data. For the six key variables, ‡denotes that the variable was used to block the data before running `fastLink`, × means that the variable was used in the call to `fastLink`, and ✓denotes that the variable was used to post-process the `fastLink` matches. Since `fastLink` is probabilistic, using a variable in the function call does not mean that it will only return matches. In some cases, therefore, variables are used in both the function call and post-processing, which is shown with ×/✓.

State	Timespan	Frequency	Key Variables Used in Merges						Classification
			Gender	Race	M. Initial	Age	Hire Date	County	
AK	2017-2021	Quarter			×/✓				No
CO	2019-2022	Month			×/✓		✓		Yes
ID	2012-2022	Day			×/✓		✓		Yes
FL	2010-2022	Month	‡	×			✓		Yes
MN	2011-2021	Year			×/✓		✓		Yes
MS	2010-2022	Month	×/✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Yes
ND	2010-2022	Year					✓		Yes
NV	2010-2021	Year			×/✓				Yes
SC	2019-2022	Month	‡	×	✓	✓			Yes
VT	2009-2021	Year			×/✓				Yes
WA	2019-2022	Quarter			×/✓		✓		Yes

Table C.2 – Match Rates Shows the share of state employees and employee-period observations successfully matched to at least one voter by state.

State	Employees			Period-Employees		
	N Matches	N	Share Matched	N Matches	N	Share Matched
AK	19,922	27,589	0.72	204,603	263,839	0.78
CO	40,939	65,794	0.62	1,063,290	1,600,375	0.66
FL	194,359	333,965	0.58	10,215,707	13,875,569	0.74
ID	24,958	46,141	0.54	1,310,617	2,007,500	0.65
MN	84,870	137,868	0.62	439,532	706,331	0.62
MS	37,577	60,029	0.63	2,296,334	3,245,938	0.71
ND	15,345	21,382	0.72	89,940	111,529	0.81
NV	23,718	48,647	0.49	128,687	234,456	0.55
SC	70,089	94,902	0.74	1,780,049	2,309,601	0.77
VT	13,024	27,788	0.47	82,874	148,650	0.56
WA	58,920	88,586	0.67	641,388	918,179	0.70
<i>Total</i>	<i>583,721</i>	<i>952,691</i>	<i>0.61</i>	<i>18,253,021</i>	<i>25,421,967</i>	<i>0.72</i>

Table C.3 – Share of State Employees Matched to N Voters Among state employees matched to at least one voter, shows the share of state employees who were matched to 1, 2, 5, and 10 voters.

State	Share of State Employees Matched to:			
	1 Voter	2 Voters	5 Voters	10 Voters
AK	0.96	0.03	0	0
CO	0.83	0.08	0.01	0
FL	0.44	0.11	0.03	0.01
ID	0.88	0.07	0.01	0
ND	0.77	0.1	0.01	0
NV	0.88	0.07	0.01	0
SC	0.81	0.12	0.01	0
VT	0.86	0.09	0.01	0
WA	0.79	0.09	0.01	0
MS	0.83	0.11	0.01	0
MN	0.8	0.09	0.01	0

Table C.4 – Voter Registration and Partisan Modeling Describes how voter-level partisanship is calculated for each state in the L2 data. Unless otherwise noted, partisanship is modeled using “a great many public and private data sources including demographics available through the voter file, exit polling from presidential elections, commercial lifestyle indicators, census data, self-reported party preferences from private polling and more.”

<i>State</i>	<i>Description</i>
AK	Registered partisanship
CO	Registered partisanship
ID	Registered partisanship
FL	Registered partisanship
MN	Modeled
MS	Registered partisanship
ND	Modeled
NV	Registered partisanship
SC	Partisanship modeled using voter-level turnout information from most recent partisan primary
VT	Modeled
WA	Use partisanship recorded during partisan presidential primary contests. If a voter did not participate in a presidential primary, their partisanship is modeled using demographic and campaign finance data

Figure C.1 – Correlates of Being Matched to At Least One Voter Shows the results of regressing, separately by state, whether an employee was matched to at least one voter against a series of correlates. The data is subsetting to only include full time, non-temporary employees. All models are logistic regressions and 95% confidence intervals are plotted alongside the points. The models include an indicator for whether an employee’s middle initial is missing in the personnel file. That coefficient is excluded here due to extreme values.

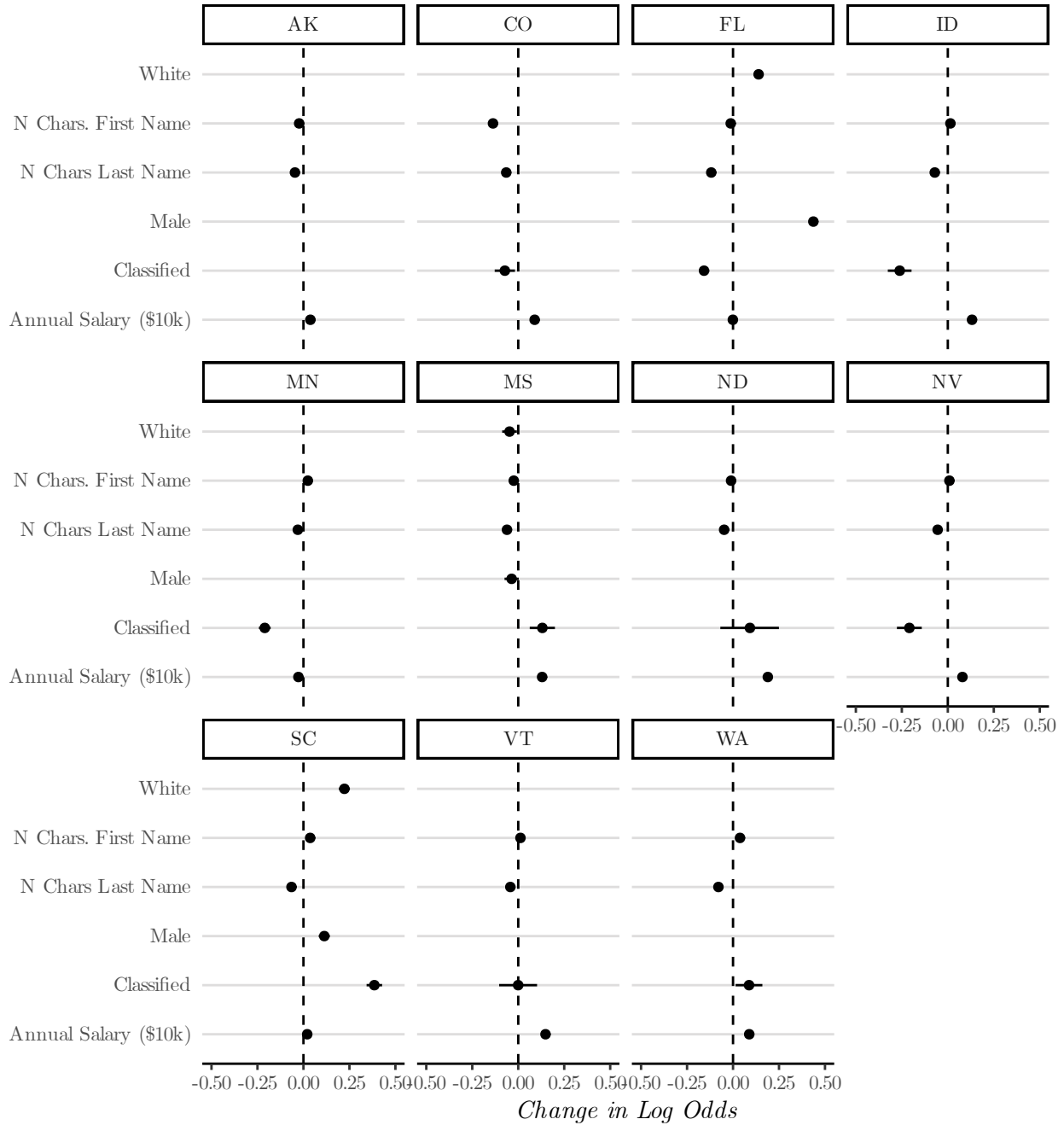


Table C.5 – Mississippi Personnel and Voter File Dates Shows the intervals used to bin the MS personnel file into three groups and the dates of the state voter files matched to the corresponding group.

<i>Personnel File</i>	<i>State Voter Files:</i>				
	<i>MS</i>	<i>AL</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>AR</i>
1-1-2010 to 12-31-2014	3-17-2014	3-18-2014	3-20-2014	3-18-2014	4-11-2014
1-1-2015 to 12-31-2019	3-7-2017	3-7-2017	2-14-2017	2-17-2017	3-29-2017
1-1-2020 to 6-30-2022	3-23-2021	2-4-2021	1-22-2021	3-29-2021	3-16-2021

D Additional Regression Results

Table D.1 – Regression Results from Equation 1 (Registered Democrats with Annual Salary > 0th percentile) Shows the full regression results, excluding period and tenure fixed effects, from Equation 1, estimated using all civil servants who are registered Democrats and earn more than the 0th salary percentile. The coefficients of interest (*Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency*) are plotted in Figure 4.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency	0.06** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Post-Reclassification	0.02** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Treatment Agency	-0.00 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.04*** (0.00)
Hinds County	0.00 (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Black	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Female	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Salary Percentile	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.03*** (0.00)
Unemployment Rate	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00* (0.00)
Intercept	0.06*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.08*** (0.01)
N	35421	62426	52393
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.011	0.014	0.022
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.2 – Regression Results from Equation 1 (Registered Democrats with Annual Salary > 75th percentile) Shows the full regression results, excluding period and tenure fixed effects, from Equation 1, estimated using all civil servants who are registered Democrats and earn more than the 75th salary percentile. The coefficients of interest (*Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency*) are plotted in Figure 4.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency	0.08 (0.06)	0.11* (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)
Post-Reclassification	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Treatment Agency	-0.00 (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Hinds County	0.01** (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Black	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.01)
Female	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Salary Percentile	-0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.04)
Unemployment Rate	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)
Intercept	0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
N	7343	10847	8688
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.022	0.023	0.022
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.3 – Regression Results from Equation 1 (Registered Republicans with Annual Salary > 0th percentile) Shows the full regression results, excluding period and tenure fixed effects, from Equation 1, estimated using all civil servants who are registered Republicans and earn more than the 0th salary percentile. The coefficients of interest (*Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency*) are plotted in Figure 4.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency	0.06 (0.04)	0.12*** (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Post-Reclassification	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Treatment Agency	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)	0.06*** (0.01)
Hinds County	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Black	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Female	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Salary Percentile	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.02** (0.01)
Unemployment Rate	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)
Intercept	0.05*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
N	28566	44209	36121
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.013	0.017	0.017
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.4 – Regression Results from Equation 1 (Registered Republicans with Annual Salary > 75th percentile) Shows the full regression results, excluding period and tenure fixed effects, from Equation 1, estimated using all civil servants who are registered Republicans and earn more than the 75th salary percentile. The coefficients of interest (*Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency*) are plotted in Figure 4.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency	0.03 (0.07)	0.21 (0.11)	0.01 (0.12)
Post-Reclassification	0.03** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Treatment Agency	-0.00 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.08*** (0.02)
Hinds County	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Black	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Female	0.01* (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
Salary Percentile	0.14*** (0.03)	0.09** (0.03)	0.09** (0.03)
Unemployment Rate	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)
Intercept	-0.08* (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)
N	10249	14487	12299
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.02	0.018	0.019
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.5 – Regression Results from Equation 2 (Annual Salary > 0th percentile) Shows the full regression results, excluding period and tenure fixed effects, from Equation 2, estimated using all civil servants whose salary is above the 0th percentile. The coefficients of interest (*Post-Reclassification * Democrat*) are plotted in Figure 5.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Democrat	−0.00 (0.05)	−0.08*** (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)
Post-Reclassification	0.36*** (0.08)	0.25*** (0.04)	0.36*** (0.05)
Democrat	0.00 (0.02)	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
Hinds County	−0.00 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.00)	−0.01 (0.01)
Black	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01* (0.00)	−0.03*** (0.01)
Female	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01* (0.01)
Salary Percentile	−0.00 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.07*** (0.02)
Unemployment Rate	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00* (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Intercept	−1.70*** (0.38)	−2.13*** (0.59)	−2.17*** (0.36)
N	2499	20209	14276
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.034	0.028	0.045
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.6 – Regression Results from Equation 2 (Annual Salary > 75th percentile) Shows the full regression results, excluding period and tenure fixed effects, from Equation 2, estimated using all civil servants whose salary is above the 75th percentile. The coefficients of interest (*Post-Reclassification * Democrat*) are plotted in Figure 5.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Democrat	0.05 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.12)	-0.10 (0.14)
Post-Reclassification	0.35 (0.23)	0.07 (0.31)	0.74 (0.54)
Democrat	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.06)
Hinds County		0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)
Black	0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.06)
Female	0.02 (0.02)	0.04* (0.01)	0.02 (0.03)
Salary Percentile	0.35* (0.15)	-0.02 (0.17)	-0.10 (0.32)
Unemployment Rate	0.07 (0.05)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Intercept	-1.77 (1.51)	3.29 (6.45)	-4.31 (3.50)
N	684	1559	518
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.05	0.054	0.074
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.7 – Regression Results from Triple-Interaction Model (Annual Salary > 0th percentile) Shows the full regression results from a triple-interaction model that combines Equations 1 and 2.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency * Democrat	0.01 (0.05)	-0.07** (0.03)	0.04 (0.02)
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency	0.06 (0.04)	0.12*** (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Post-Reclassification * Democrat	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Treatment Agency	0.00 (0.01)	0.01** (0.00)	0.06*** (0.01)
Post-Reclassification	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Democrat	0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Hinds County	0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)
Black	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Female	-0.00* (0.00)	-0.00* (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)
Salary Percentile	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Unemployment Rate	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)
Intercept	0.05*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)
N	63987	106635	88514
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.01	0.01	0.02
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table D.8 – Regression Results from Triple-Interaction Model (Annual Salary > 75th percentile) Shows the full regression results from a triple-interaction model that combines Equations 1 and 2, estimated using only civil servants whose annual salary is greater than the 75th percentile.

	Education	Human Services	Corrections
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency * Democrat	0.05 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.13)	-0.05 (0.13)
Post-Reclassification * Treatment Agency	0.03 (0.07)	0.21 (0.12)	0.01 (0.12)
Post-Reclassification * Democrat	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Treatment Agency	-0.00 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.07*** (0.02)
Post-Reclassification	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)
Democrat	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Hinds County	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
Black	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Female	0.01 (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
Salary Percentile	0.08*** (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)
Unemployment Rate	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
N Employees in Agency	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)
Intercept	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
N	17592	25334	20987
N Pre-treatment Periods	9	13	11
Adj. R Squared	0.02	0.02	0.02
Period Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓
Tenure Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Figure D.1 – Within-Party Difference-in-Difference Estimators (Logit) Shows the difference-in-differences coefficient point estimates from Equation 1 with both standard and Bonferroni-corrected 95% confidence intervals, calculated using logistic regression. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

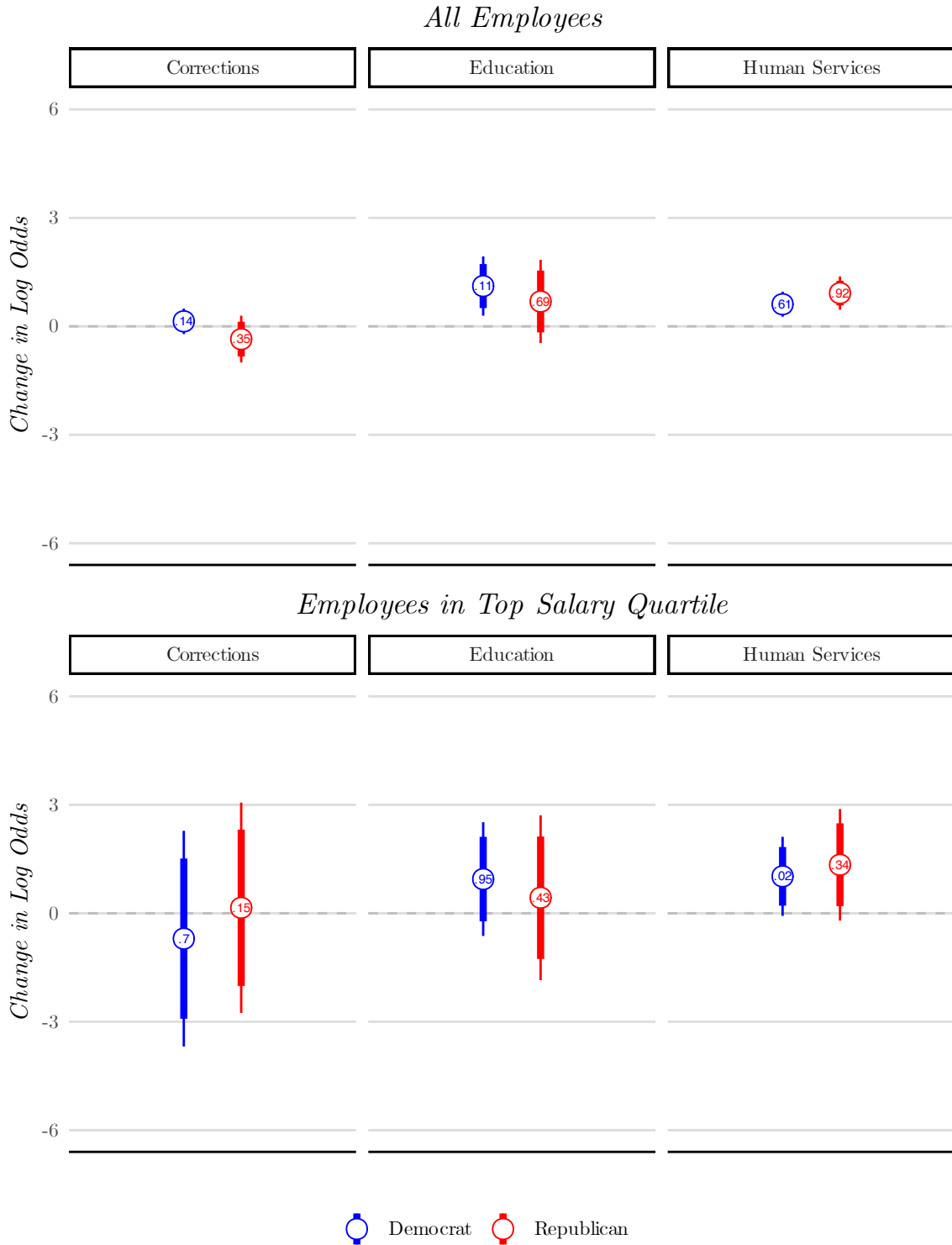


Figure D.2 – Within-Agency Difference-in-Difference Estimators (Logit) Shows the difference-in-differences coefficient estimates from Equation 2, calculated using logistic regression. Standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

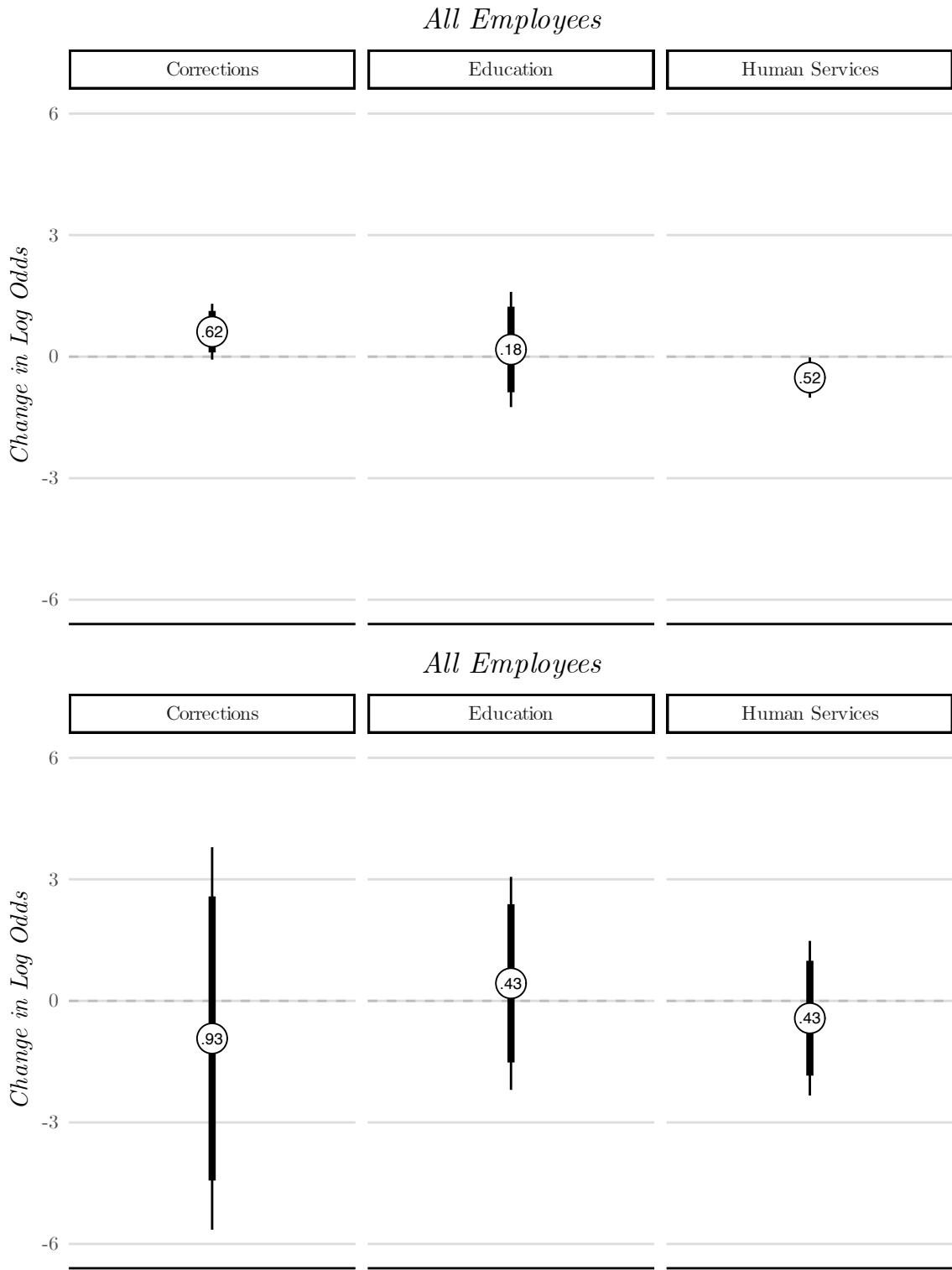


Figure D.3 – Pre-trends Testing – Within-Agency Models Shows the interaction between the registered Democrat indicator and each of the pre-treatment 6-month periods from Equation 2.

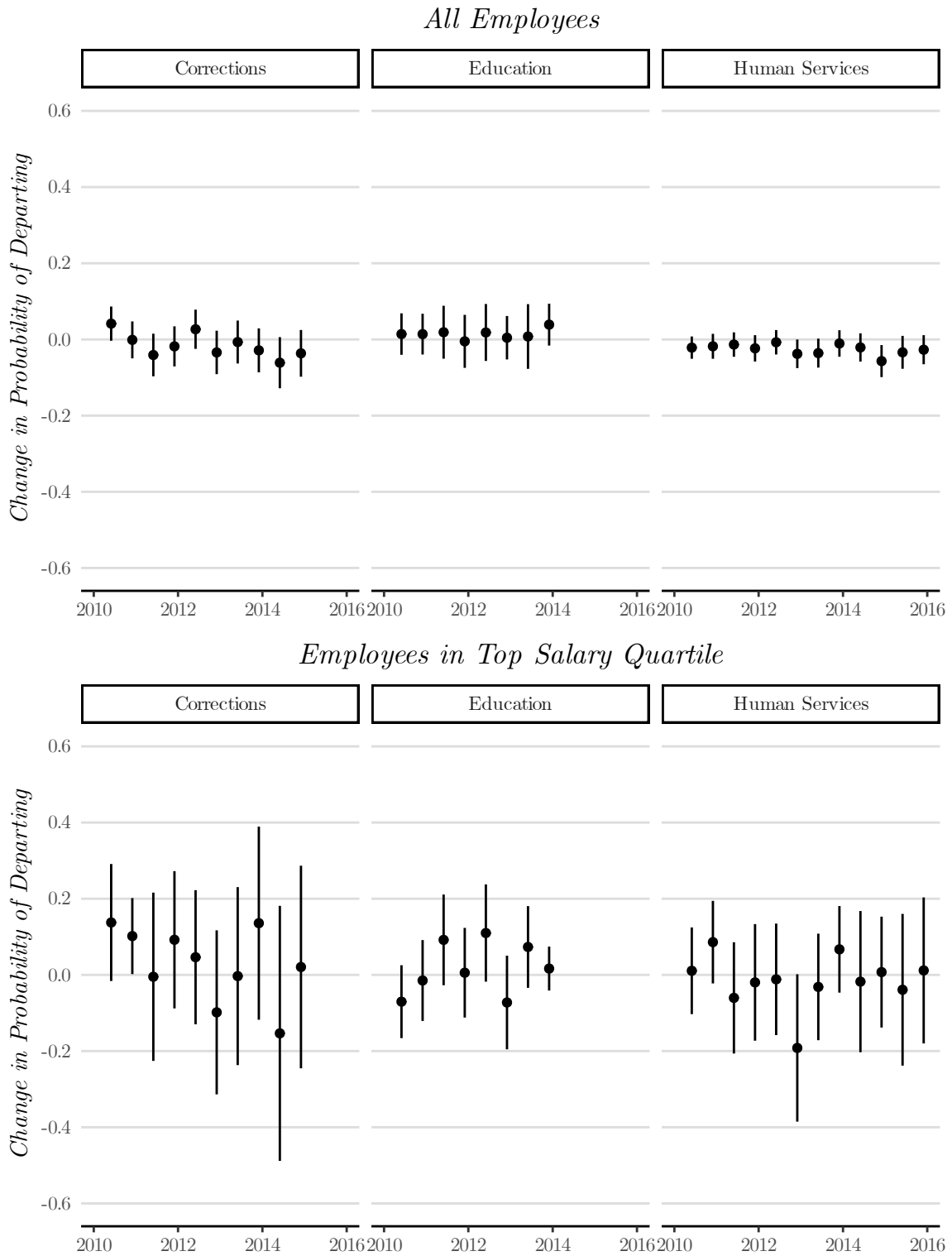


Figure D.4 – Pre-trends Testing – Within-Republican Models Shows the interaction between the treated agency indicator and each of the pre-treatment 6-month periods from Equation 1, estimated using only civil servants who are registered Democrats.

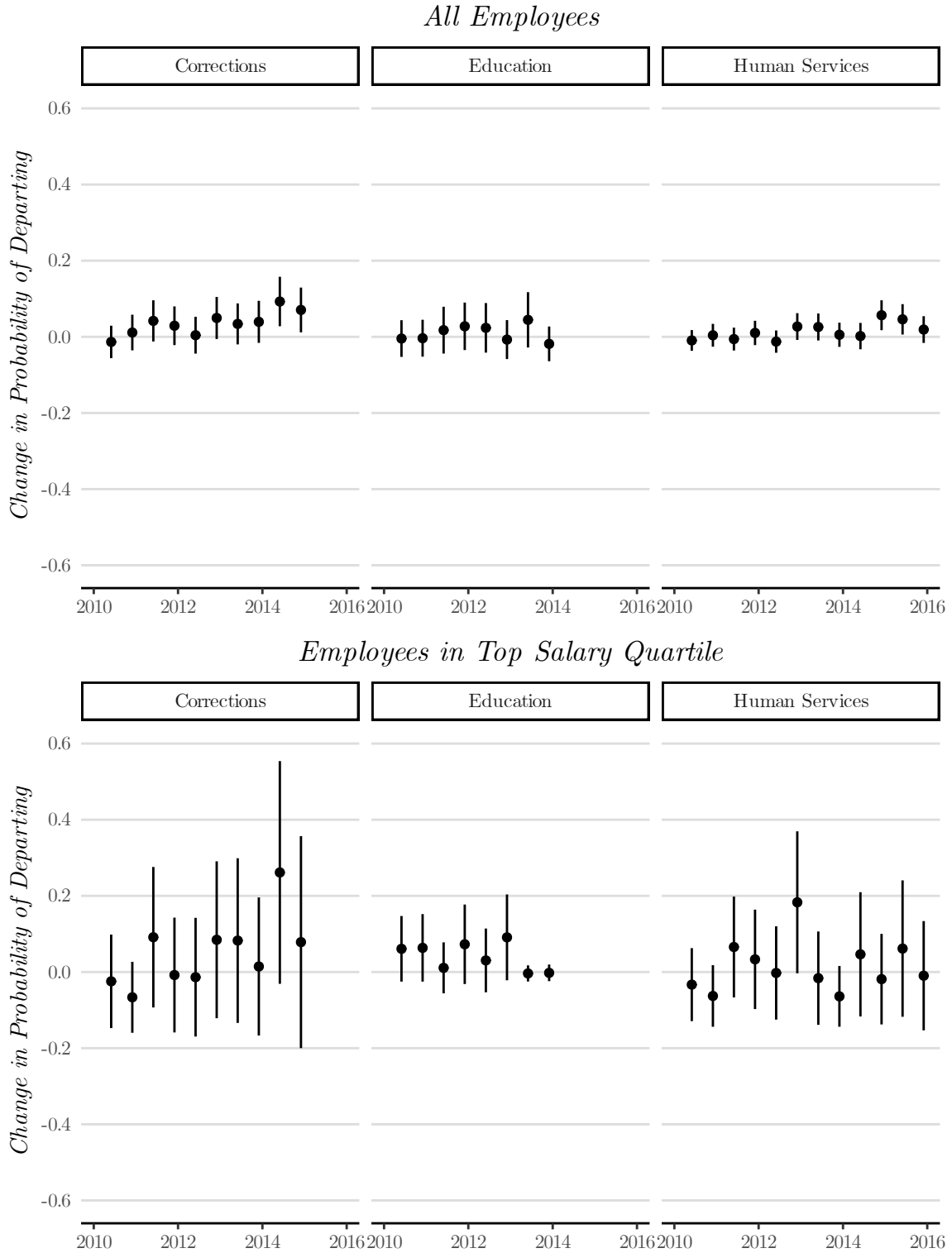
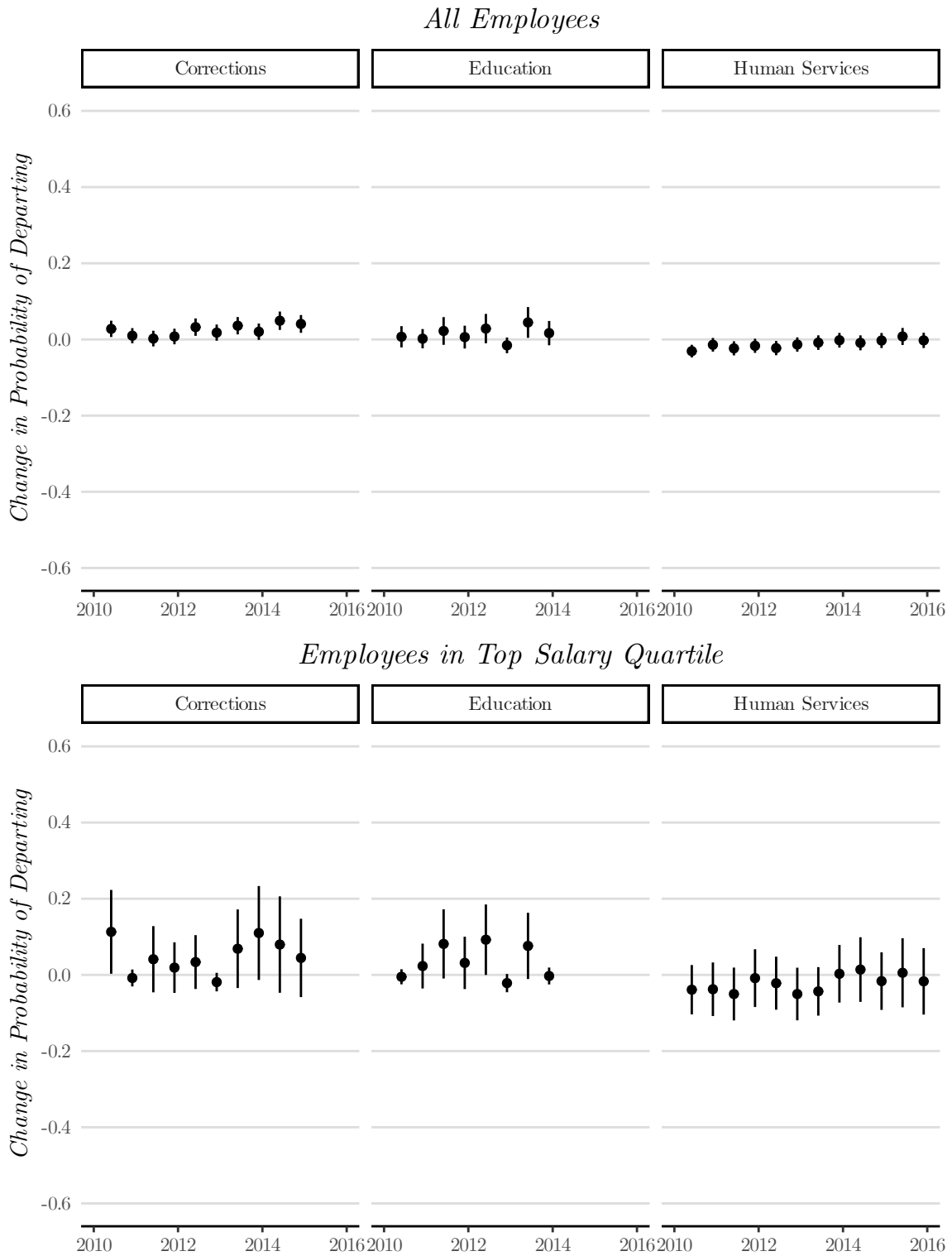


Figure D.5 – Pre-trends Testing – Within-Democrat Models Shows the interaction between the treated agency indicator and each of the pre-treatment 6-month periods from Equation 1, estimated using only civil servants who are registered Democrats.



E Hiring Analyses

Figure E.1 – Number of New Hires, by Partisanship Shows the number of new hires in each of the four exempted Mississippi agencies, by partisanship affiliation. The data are aggregated to annual intervals for the Departments of HUmAn Services, Corrections, and Education. The data for the Department of Marine Resources is aggregated to the 6-month period since that was the length of the agency exemption. Data excludes part-time, temporary employees.

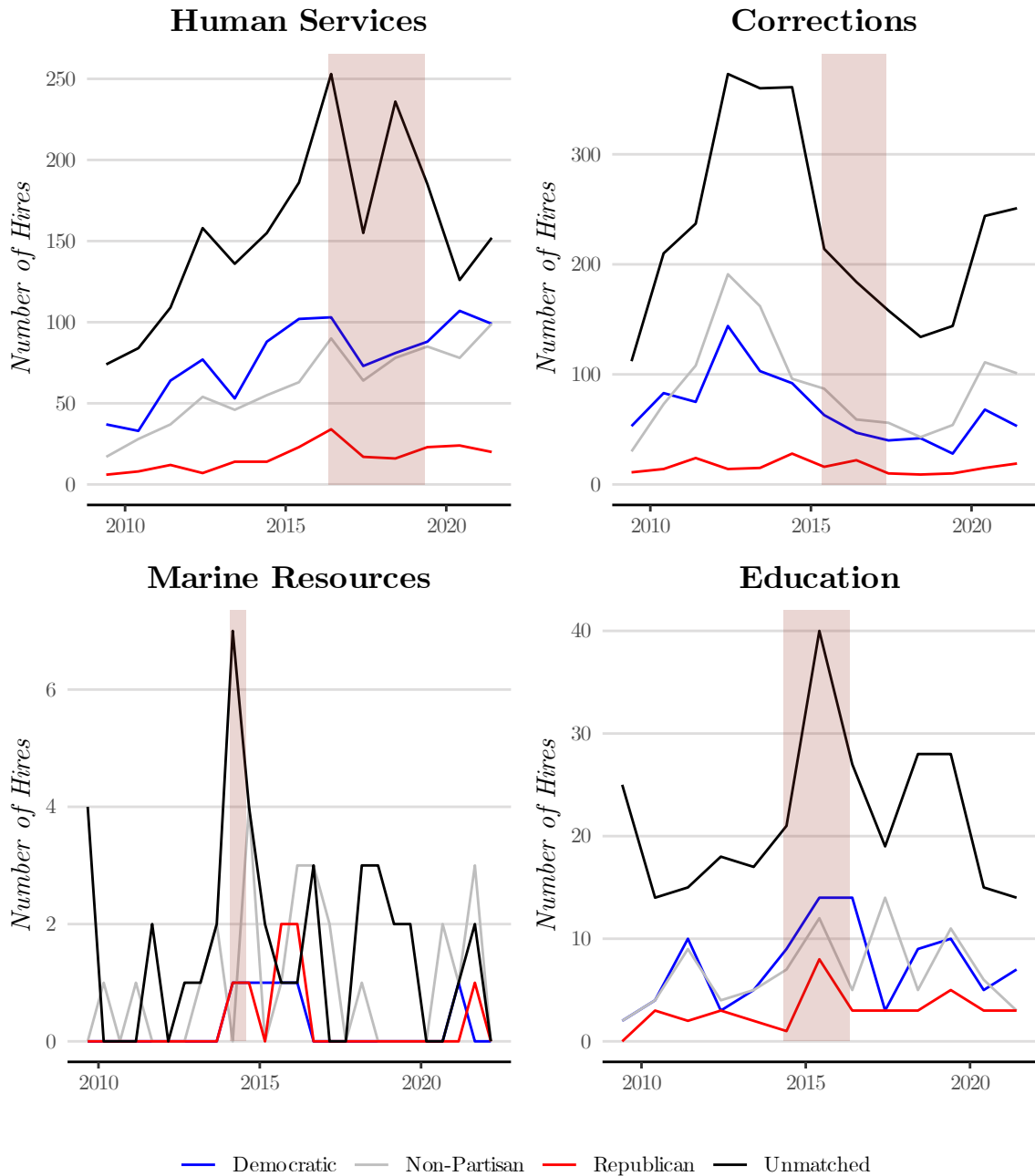


Figure E.2 – Share of New Hires, by Partisanship Shows the share of new hires in each of the four exempted Mississippi agencies, by partisanship affiliation. The data are aggregated to annual intervals for the Departments of HUMAN Services, Corrections, and Education. The data for the Department of Marine Resources is aggregated to the 6-month period since that was the length of the agency exemption. Data excludes part-time, temporary employees.

