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• Most likely to participate when combination of success (primary and general) and value of the seat is maximized.

• Do not respond to strategic pressures in the same way. Often "sacrificial lambs", in it for self-promotion, personal satisfaction, etc.

• Parties help recruit candidates.

• At district level – the share of the vote the opposing party got in the previous election is the biggest predictor of a potential challenger winning – provides strong signal to potential candidates: "Look, Johnson only lost by 3 points in 2014, you can do it!"

• Level of legislative professionalism (proxy for value of seat, prestige, etc.) – More professionalized legislatures have greater budgets, staff, salaries, more opportunities to pursue politics full-time for everyone involved.

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- Alaska (60.42): Competitive elections (Lisa Murkowski won)
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- Degree of party competition (more generally)

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- Process is similar to candidate selection at the national level

1. Party Identification – voters use this as a lens to filter their political atmosphere. Voters use this to link their voting behavior across different offices.
   - If president is popular, voters more likely to back same-party candidates for governor, state legislature; vice-versa

2. Impact of the economy – voters engage in retrospective evaluations of their state's economy
   - Indicators of unemployment significant factor – higher unemployment lower vote for incumbent governor
   - Increased state taxation yields a weak but consistently negative overall effect for governor in power – but the cause is the sales tax – that is where the link to vote exists.

   - Issue sorting based on level of government (e.g., incumbent governors don't get blamed for foreign policy blunders)
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External Pressures on State Legislatures

- Coattail Effect: Tendency for a popular public official from a given party to attract votes for other candidates of the same party.
- Both gubernatorial and presidential coattails – so when a president/governor is popular candidates try to bring that president into their districts to gin up support and fundraising. The opposite when gov/pres is unpopular – they run, run far away!
- As legislature professionalism increases, coattail effect decreases. Institutional boundaries insulate members from external forces in more professionalized legislatures.