Limits on Terms, Limits on Control: The Effect of Chief Executive Term Limits on Bureaucratic Responsiveness

Abstract

Term limits for elected officials are often advocated to enhance responsiveness to constituents. We argue however, that they can weaken executive power by reducing bureaucratic deference. Using an experimental survey of state bureaucrats across nine U.S. states, we investigate the impact of gubernatorial term limits on bureaucratic effort and prioritization of executive preferences. Our findings reveal that bureaucrats exert less effort and place lower importance on the preferences of term-limited governors compared to those at the beginning of their term or running for re-election. However, these effects are modest in size, suggesting that while gubernatorial term limits create space for bureaucrats to afford executives less deference, the degree to which they ultimately shirk is limited. Our findings highlight the unique ways in which term limits affect elected executives and that term limits affect not only how the officials subject to them represent the public, but also how others in government interact with them.

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Government reform advocates and the public often promote term limits to make government officials more responsive to voters and to reduce the influence of special interests.[1] However, term limits generate pernicious effects such as officials putting less effort into representing their constituents, policymaking, and oversight (Fouirnaies and Hall 2022, Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2011); greater deference to the executive branch (Butcher 2023, Kousser 2005); greater reliance on outside actors for information (Butcher 2023, Moncrief and Thompson 2001); and higher levels of polarization (Olson and Rogowski 2020). While most studies of term limits focus on legislators, at the federal and state level, more jurisdictions impose term limits on chief executives than legislators. While the president and 36 of 50 state governors face term limits, members of Congress do not and only 16 state legislatures have term limits.[2] Further, research on executive term limits often focuses on behaviors we study with respect to legislators, such as their effort and policy outputs (Alt et al. 2011; Besley and Case 1995; Ferraz and Finan 2011), while neglecting the consequences of term limits on functions unique to executives, like managing the bureaucracy, which represents important principal-agent dynamics (Miller 2005).[3]

We examine how term limits shape the chief executive's ability to induce bureaucrats to follow directives. In almost all cases—even when acting unilaterally—chief executives need bureaucrats to act on their behalf to effectuate their preferences (Neustadt 1991, Rudalevige 2021). We expect bureaucrats to be less responsive to term-limited executives because of their shorter time horizon (Heclo 1977; Lewis 2009). Bureaucrats, anticipating longer tenures than term-limited

[1] Lopez, Ashley. "Term limits for Congress are wildly popular. But most experts say they'd be a bad idea." *National Public* Radio, October 29, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/10/29/1207593168/congressional-term-limits-explainer.

[2] "Provisions for the Number of Consecutive Terms." *The Book of the States*, 2023 Edition, https://bookofthestates.org/tables/2022-4-9/; "The Term-Limited States." *National Conference of State* Legislatures, August 3, 2023, https://www.ncsl.org/about-state-legislatures/the-term-limited-states.

[3] An important exception is work at the international level that explores how term limits conditions executives' propensity to engage in interstate conflict (Carter and Nordstrom 2017; Ziegler et al 2014).

executives, can resist initiatives likely to change with new leadership, avoid implementing disagreeable policies, and expect less oversight and sanctioning from a departing executive. We evaluate our expectation with a survey experiment completed by bureaucrats in nine US states that assesses how the presence of a gubernatorial term limit affects their responsiveness to a gubernatorial executive order. Our results show bureaucrats are somewhat less responsive to a term-limited governor's directives, but the effect size is modest. These results indicate that term limits influence not only how officials represent the public, but also how others in government respond to term-limited officials.

Our work has significant implications for scholars of term limits. We show that there is a modest but statistically distinguishable effect, suggesting that term limits can influence how others in government (including nonlegislative officials) respond to term-limited officials (Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha 2007; Cockerham 2021; Light 1999). Additionally, our findings speak to concerns about bureaucratic legitimacy. Because bureaucrats are not elected, they are largely accountable to the public through the oversight relationships they have with elected officials (Kagan 2000, Rogowski 2020). If bureaucrats are less responsive to term-limited chief executives, this accountability may weaken. While we find evidence of reduced responsiveness, its modest magnitude suggests bureaucrats are largely committed to their jobs and may not be strongly affected by political considerations, thus dampening concerns about legitimacy.

Disincentives for Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Term-Limited Chief Executives

Among their myriad responsibilities, chief executives are charged with directing the conduct of the bureaucracy (Ferguson and Kousser 2024; Lewis and Moe 2010). Numerous factors can make it difficult for the executive as principal to control the behavior of bureaucrats acting as agents. This includes, but is not limited to moral hazard, adverse selection and asymmetric

information (Miller 2005; Gailmard 2014). Despite these features that make it difficult for governors to control bureaucrats, governors still are judged based on bureaucrats' actions. As the single unitary actor atop government functions in most jurisdictions, chief executives are "held accountable for the broad performance of their agencies," and "an executive decision is the decision of the individual politician" in the eyes of the public (Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002, 315). This responsibility motivates chief executives to ensure the bureaucracy performs efficiently and fulfills its obligations to stakeholders and the public. Additionally, chief executives use the bureaucracy to influence policymaking by appointing like-minded officials, issuing unilateral directives, and intervening in the regulatory process (Lewis 2008; Rudalevige 2021; Yackee Forthcoming). Consequently, chief executives seek to establish and maintain control over the bureaucracy.

While bureaucrats are hierarchically accountable to chief executives, they often have some discretion in carrying out their duties and deviate from the executives' intentions. In deciding whether and how to "shirk" the chief executive, bureaucrats often take cues from the political environment, including the preferences of coworkers, agency superiors, legislators, and outside stakeholders like interest groups and the public (Brehm and Gates 1999; Palus and Yackee 2022; Waterman, Rouse, and Wright 1998; Whitford 2005). Term limits can serve as one such cue, shaping bureaucrats' expectations about the duration of the chief executive's influence (Heclo 1977; Lewis 2009). Bureaucrats often enjoy civil service protections and can serve for decades, giving them a long-term approach to policy. In contrast, chief executives' time horizons are often shorter because they need to deliver on policy to satisfy a myopic public (Fiorina 1981; Kriner and Reeves 2015; Lowande 2024). Term limits were introduced partly to control the power of the executive (Grofman and Sutherland 1996), and they exacerbate the disjuncture between

executives' time horizons and those of bureaucrats. When bureaucrats know with certainty that the chief executive will depart in the near-term, they may become less willing to respond to their directives.

Research on executive branch politics highlights at least three ways discrepancies in time horizons between term-limited chief executives and bureaucrats can produce misaligned incentives that reduce bureaucratic responsiveness to executives. First, term limits reduce uncertainty about how long an incumbent executive will serve but increase uncertainty about policy initiatives undertaken in her final term. With their longer time horizons, bureaucrats typically hold "gradualism" mindsets where they prioritize making sure programs continue working over making sudden and dramatic changes that could prompt disruptions (Helco 1977: 142-148). When term-limited chief executives initiate new policies, bureaucrats recognize that their successors could rescind those policies or stop supporting them. For instance, newly-inaugurated presidents often upend the directives of their predecessors by revoking executive orders (Thrower 2017) or delaying the implementation of regulations (Thrower 2018). When directives are reversed, the effort bureaucrats exerted to implement them essentially goes to waste, presenting an affront to the core public administration value of efficiency (Rutger and van der Meer 2010). Because term-limited executives cannot ensure their directives will remain once they leave office, bureaucrats should be less responsive to those directives.

Second, if a bureaucrat disagrees with a term-limited executive's directive, they may be able to obstruct implementation until the executive leaves office. The processes by which executives' policies are codified and implemented often take substantial time; the average time to final adoption for rules that go through the regulatory process is 4 months in US states (Boushey and McGrath 2024) and 15 months at the federal level (Potter 2017). Further, bureaucrats enjoy

significant procedural discretion to delay policies, such as deciding the extent of cost-benefit analyses and interagency coordination they conduct or simply the speed with which they compile documents and move them through the process. Existing research indicates that bureaucrats routinely use dilatory tactics to slow-roll policies when their preferences diverge from those of their political bosses, such as chief executives, in hope that future political environments will be more aligned to their preferences (Potter 2017, Rudalevige 2021). By providing firm turnover dates for chief executives, term limits encourage bureaucrats to be less responsive to directives they oppose.

Third, it is harder for term-limited chief executives to detect and sanction noncompliance by bureaucrats. As term-limited executives scramble to accomplish as much as possible as their terms close, their ability to detect shirking erodes. For instance, Bolton et al. (2016) demonstrate that in the "midnight" period of presidents' terms (i.e., the time between the November election and January 20 of the following year), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) decreases the length of time it spends reviewing final rules, suggesting presidents and their political appointees are less able to identify and address bureaucrats' deviations from presidents' intentions. Additionally, even if term-limited executives catch bureaucratic shirking, their diminishing political capital makes it harder to sanction non-compliance; for example, given that presidents and governors lose influence with their legislatures as their final terms progress, shirking bureaucrats may anticipate that their legislative principals would shield them from or push back on coercive action from the executive (Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha 2007; Cockerham 2021; Light 1999). Because term-limited executives who pursue new initiatives might not witness their full execution before they leave office, we expect bureaucrats are less responsive to their directives as

they strategically delay until the executive leaves office and loses all oversight power (Potter 2017, Rudalevige 2021).

These rationales prompt a general expectation that bureaucrats are less responsive to term-limited chief executives relative to those eligible for re-election. This expectation informs two pre-registered hypotheses: bureaucrats exert less effort in implementing term-limited executives' directives (H1) and bureaucrats place less weight on the executives' preferences in the implementation process (H2). These two outcomes reflect different aspects of bureaucrats' responsiveness, as effort reflects the time and energy spent to manifest the policy, while weight placed on the executives' preferences reflects how closely bureaucrats align policy implementation with the executives' intentions.

Research Design

Extant scholarship on term limits often uses quasi-experimental designs by comparing jurisdictions that have adopted or rescinded term limits to those that have not (e.g., Alt et al. 2011; Fouirnaies and Hall 2022; Olson and Rogowski 2020). These quasi-experimental designs require publicly observable outcomes, such as state government expenditures or the number of bills legislators sponsor. However, evaluating bureaucratic compliance with executive directives is challenging because this information is typically neither publicly observable nor comparable across jurisdictions. While some executive directives are public, such as executive orders, many others are made out of public view. Even when directives are public, executives and their advisers typically communicate informal guidance and expectations to the bureaucrats charged with carrying them out (e.g., Rudalevige 2021). Consequently, it is difficult for observers to evaluate implementation outcomes and determine how they correspond to the executives' intentions. Additionally, the scope, complexity, policy areas, and expected outputs of executive directives

vary greatly, making consistent assessment of bureaucratic responsiveness challenging. For example, presidents' directives can range from straightforward topics with objectively measurable outcomes like setting a minimum wage for federal contractors,[4] to controversial issues that are hard to track such as authorizing the removal and relocation of US residents deemed national security threats.[5] Measuring responsiveness to such varied directives is difficult, making an observational approach to assessing the effect of executive term limits on bureaucratic responsiveness impracticable.

As an alternative, we use an experimental approach that exposes bureaucrats to a stylized executive directive and randomly varies whether that executive is term-limited. Our approach constructs a controlled context where responsiveness to the directive is observable, measurable, and comparable across respondents. It also allows us to identify causal effects of term limits as previous approaches have striven to do (e.g., Alt et al. 2011; Fouirnaies and Hall 2022; Olson and Rogowski 2020).

Survey and Experimental Protocol

We embedded our pre-registered experiment in a survey fielded between May 31 and June 26, 2024 distributed to state bureaucrats in the following nine U.S. Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and Vermont.[6] While our respondents are drawn from only these nine states, these states demonstrate substantial variation

[4] "Executive Order on Increasing the Minimum Wage for Federal Contractors." *The White House*, April 27, 2021, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/04/27/executive-order-on-increasing-the-minimum-wage-for-federal-contractors/.

[5] While Executive Order 9066 does not make explicit what persons President Franklin Delano Roosevelt intended to be subject to removal and relocation, the historical record demonstrates that the order was intended to and in effect did target persons of Japanese ancestry ("Executive Order 9066: Resulting in Japanese-American Incarceration (1942)." *National Archives*, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9066).

[6] Our survey was approved by the institutional review board at **[**REDACTED]. Our pre-registration documentation is available through the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/rd6bs/?view_only=37e2d6d0fdc346b2ac035d0c3d6be0cc). Please see the Supplemental Information for details about the demographic characteristics of the sample.

along state-level characteristics we might expect to inform the responsiveness of bureaucrats to their governors such as state size, partisanship, and gubernatorial power (e.g., Cockerham and Crew 2017; Ferguson 2003; Ferguson and Kousser 2024; Jugl 2022; Morehouse and Jewell 2004; Yackee 2025).[7] Thus, so long as our experiment yields similar results across the states whose employees we survey, we expect our findings can generalize across US states that have different values for these state-level characteristics.[8] Out of the 219,103 individuals invited to participate, 2,542 responded to at least one of the two outcome questions in our experiment, leading to a response rate of 1.2% (2,542/219,103). [9]

After respondents answered questions about their personal and professional characteristics, we presented them with a vignette about a stylized governor's executive order (see Box 1 for vignette and question wording). The vignette asked respondents to imagine working for a state agency similar to where they currently work in but in a different state.[10] Using this abstraction approach, we aim to ensure that respondents' answers are predicated on the content of our vignettes rather than idiosyncratic experiences or knowledge they might carry into the experiment, such as prior experiences with their state's current governor that may positively or negatively color their affect towards them (Aguinis and Bradley 2014; Gaines et al. 2007; Harrits 2019). While this

[7] When one of the authors began planning for this survey in late 2021, 25 of the 50 US states provided publicly available contact information for the individuals listed in their states' employee directories. From this subset of 25 states, the author worked with research assistants to determine the feasibility of scraping each state's directory given existing time and resource constraints. The final list of nine states was chosen to ensure a sufficiently large number of respondents given expected response rates as well as capture sufficient state-level variation across important state-level characteristics. Please see Supplemental Information Section B for more about the selection of states and collection of emails.

[8] In subsequent analyses that apply our preregistered specifications to respondents in each state separately, we find that in nearly all cases the directionality of our effects are negative, as expected, though these effects sometimes do not achieve statistical distinguishability due to small sample sizes in some states (see Supplemental Information Section C).

[9] Please see Supplemental Information Section B for more information on the descriptive statistics of respondents.

[10] In giving this instruction, we sought to encourage respondents to separate their idiosyncratic experiences from working in their own state governments, such as interactions they have had with their own governor and staff from the governor's office, from how they interpreted the vignette.

approach emphasizes internal validity, studies comparing the effects observed using abstracted versus real-world stimuli in other areas of political science and public administration, such as public support for specific policies, find that vignettes with more abstracted or realistic content yield substantively similar conclusions (Brutger et al. 2023). The respondents were informed that the state's governor issued an executive order to enhance environmental sustainability and their job was to manage their agency's response to the procurement part of the order.[11] The key manipulation is what we told respondents about the governor's tenure. One third of respondents read that the governor had just started their term, indicating the longest possible time horizon (we use this as our baseline condition). Another third read that the governor is running for re-election this year, implying an uncertain time horizon since they could either win or lose. The final third read that the governor is in their final year and cannot seek re-election due to term limits, indicating that their time horizon is certain to be short. By varying the perceived tenure of the governor, we assess how bureaucratic responsiveness changes with the certainty of an executive's limited time in office.

Box 1. Vignette and Question Wording

Imagine you are working in a state agency that is similar to the one you work in now, but in a different state. Your role in this agency is to oversee procurement (purchasing/contracting for goods and services for your agency).

The governor of your state, who **[started their term this year/is running for re-election this year/is in their final year in office and cannot seek re-election due to term limits],** recently issued an executive order directing all state agencies to devise plans to enhance environmental sustainability. Part of the executive order requires agencies to enhance sustainability in procurement by making sure products purchased:

- contain recycled materials
- are free of toxic and hazardous chemicals
- conserve energy and water
- minimize waste and packaging

[11] We chose to focus the vignette and questions respondents were asked to consider on procurement because it is a common bureaucratic function with which all respondents should have at least some familiarity, even if only through procuring supplies and equipment for themselves.

Your job requires you to manage your agency's response to the governor's executive order as it pertains to procurement.

In light of the governor's executive order, how much effort would you plan to put into the following activities: (RESPONSE OPTIONS: "No effort" "Little effort" "Some effort" "A great deal of effort")

- Auditing how sustainable goods routinely purchased by the agency are
- Seeking out more sustainable alternatives that the agency could purchase
- Educating other agency employees about promoting sustainability in procurement
- Reviewing new purchase orders to make sure the goods listed are sustainable

When planning how to respond to the governor's executive order, how important would the preferences of the following stakeholders be in your decision-making process? (RESPONSE OPTIONS: "Not at all important" "Slightly important" "Somewhat important" "Very important" "Extremely important")

- The governor
- The director of your agency
- The employees of your agency
- The state legislature
- Interest groups
- The residents of your state

Following the vignette, we asked respondents two sets of questions. In the first set, respondents indicated on a four-point scale how much effort they would allocate to four activities that would advance the governor's executive order. Following our pre-analysis plan, we averaged the responses to these four questions to create an effort index to test H1—that term limits reduce the effort bureaucrats exert on executives' directives. In the second set of questions, respondents used a five-point scale to rate how important the preferences of various stakeholders would be when implementing the governor's executive order. We use respondents' answer to their rating regarding the governor test H2—that term limits reduce the weight bureaucrats place on executives' preferences when carrying out their directives.

Results

We use linear regression to assess the impact of the governor's tenure information on respondents' responsiveness to the executive order. We present the treatment effects for *Implementation Effort Exerted* and *Importance of Governor's Preferences* in the left and right panes of Figure 1, respectively. First, focusing on *Implementation Effort Exerted*, we observe that, consistent with H1, respondents informed that the governor is term-limited would exert less effort on the executive order than would respondents told the governor just started their term (the baseline condition) or is running for re-election. Although this effect is statistically distinguishable from zero, it is substantively small; as our effort index ranges from 1 to 4 with a mean value of 3.38 and standard deviation of 0.64, the -0.06 effect associated with the governor being term-limited represents an effect roughly equal to only one-tenth of a standard deviation. Thus, bureaucrats serving under a term-limited governor are still willing to exert between "some effort" and "a great deal of effort" (the labels associated with values of 3 and 4 on our four-point scale) on implementing the executive order, but this level of effort is marginally lower than that of bureaucrats serving under a governor either at the start of their term or running for re-election.

Turning to *Importance of Governor's Preferences*, we find support for H2. The respondents told that the governor is running for re-election or is term-limited would both place less weight on the governor's preferences when implementing the executive order (relative to the baseline), with the treatment effect associated with a term-limited governor (-0.31) being distinguishably larger than the effect associated with a governor running for re-election (-0.13). With a mean of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.16 for this measure, the treatment effect corresponds to a quarter standard deviation shift. Although this shift is larger than that observed for *Implementation Effort Exerted*, it remains relatively modest. Bureaucrats in the term-limited

condition still consider the governor's preferences to be between "somewhat important" and "very important" (the labels associated with values of 3 and 4 on our five-point scale).

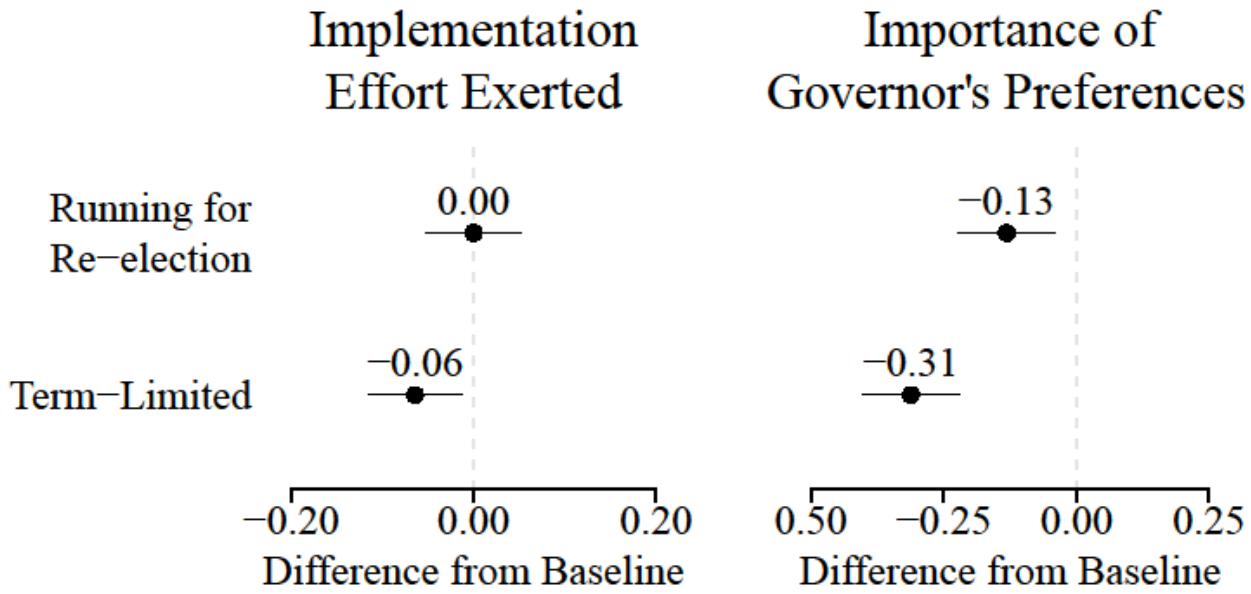

Figure 1: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order. Points and lines in the left pane represent the difference in the amount of effort respondents in each of the treatment conditions indicated they would exert (measured on a four-point scale) relative to respondents in the baseline condition and the 95% confidence intervals (one-tailed) for those differences, respectively. Points and lines in the right pane represent the difference in the importance respondents in each of the treatment conditions indicated they would assign to the preferences of the governor in implementing the executive order (measured on a five-point scale) relative to respondents in the baseline condition and the 95% confidence intervals (one-tailed) for those differences, respectively. Estimates obtained using ordinary least squares regression. See Supplemental Information Table SI.3 for a tabular presentation of the underlying regression models.

In exploratory analyses, we also examined the effects of our treatments on the importance respondents placed on the other stakeholders—the director of the agency, the agency's employees, the state legislature, interest groups, and state residents (see Table SI.4). Among these stakeholders, the term-limited treatment manifests a statistically distinguishable effect for only the agency director (-0.10). While this effect is smaller than that associated with the governor's preferences, it offers additional support for H2 because, as most agency directors are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of state governors, respondents could reasonably infer that the agency

director appointed by a term-limited governor would also soon leave office. Consequently, respondents felt they could assign less importance to the preferences of a term-limited governor's appointee.

Our experimental design does not allow us to assess the relative credibility of each of the three proposed mechanisms we provided. However, we are able to test the plausibility of the second mechanism—bureaucrats' policy disagreement with the governor. Because the policy content of the stylized executive order—environmental sustainability—is starkly polarized along partisan lines (e.g., Dunlap et al. 2016), respondents who identify as more Democratic are likely more supportive of the order than are respondents who are more Republican. Thus, we perform an exploratory test of our policy disagreement mechanism by interacting respondents' party identification (self-reported on a seven-point scale) with our treatment indicators.[12] Our results, presented in Table SI.5, indicate that while conservative respondents are less likely to allocate effort to implementing the governor's directive across all treatment conditions, they provide no evidence that conservative respondents exhibit larger term-limited treatment effects than liberal respondents. This analysis suggests that, in this particular context, bureaucrats' disagreement with the term-limited governor's policy may not drive the overall treatment effects we observe. However, our inability to reject the null hypothesis is not dispositive, and future research should probe the plausibility of these mechanisms linking executive term limits to decreased bureaucratic responsiveness.

Conclusion

[12] In addition to this test of one of our theorized mechanisms, we also probed other factors that extant research suggests may moderate bureaucrats' responsiveness to their principals, such as the presence of term limits in the respondents' own state and the power of their own state's governor. These exploratory analyses, presented in Supplemental Information Section C, do not provide substantive evidence for the conditional relationships examined.

While many pundits, advocates, and members of the public push for term limits to enhance elected officials' responsiveness to their constituents' preferences, this study finds that term limits actually *diminish* a different kind of responsiveness—that of bureaucrats to their chief executives. However, the magnitude of these effects is modest, suggesting that bureaucrats largely adhere to their responsibility to implement executives' directives, even when they are term limited. Since elected principals of bureaucrats, such as chief executives, are the key pathway for bureaucratic accountability to voters (Kagan 2000, Rogowski 2020), the small magnitude of our results may mitigate concerns for bureaucratic legitimacy that our statistically distinguishable point estimates may raise.

Our study examines a specific context and scholars should assess how bureaucratic responsiveness may change when term-limited executives and their bureaucrats operate in different contexts. For example, while environmental sustainability is a polarized policy issue, it is not a high salience issue, and bureaucrats may be even less responsive when term-limited governors seek to implement policies concerning hot-button political issues. It would be useful to vary the ideological content of the executive order (e.g., conservative, liberal, or neutral) to learn if bureaucrats are less responsive to term-limited governors when they disagree with the order. Similarly, the limited scope of our featured directive—procurement within state government—means it is unlikely to manifest in any policy consequences noticeable to other politicians, the media, stakeholders, or the public. However, if a directive could produce policy outcomes that would harm or attract negative attention from those audiences, bureaucrats may be more resistant to follow it if the executive is term-limited. For instance, future studies might consider whether regulatory output related to a governor's executive order differs in quantity or character

depending on whether the governor is term-limited; if term limits have a larger negative effect in this context, we may have larger concerns about bureaucratic legitimacy.

Researchers should also consider how term-limited executives might anticipate decreased responsiveness from bureaucrats. Knowing that their ability to influence the bureaucracy will decline, executives may prioritize maximizing their control over agencies likely to exhibit recalcitrance. For example, executives may ensure that all appointable positions are filled and they may "burrow" political appointees into the civil service system before they become ineligible for re-election (Lewis 2008). Executives may also take steps to augment responsiveness in other ways to counteract this natural decline, such as bolstering trust by making the agency feel it has sufficient support to fulfill its mission (Yang and Pandey 2009) or defending the agency against criticism for adverse policy outcomes (Miller and Reeves n.d.).

Finally, this paper should motivate scholars to devote more attention to elected executives in the study of term limits. While previous research on the effect of term limits for legislators about representation might also apply to executives since they are doing similar work (see Alt et al. 2011; Besley and Case 1995; Ferraz and Finan 2011), executives exercise many exclusive powers not yet fully explored in the context of term limits. We consider one of these exclusive powers—executives' ability to influence bureaucrats through directives—but many other exclusive powers remain to be explored. For example, term limits may affect the type and volume of pardons chief executives issue; once executives are ineligible for re-election and thus less accountable to the public, they may issue more pardons for more controversial offenses or individuals, such as political donors and allies. Additionally, with substantial control over grant administration (Kriner and Reeves 2015; Nicholson-Crotty 2015), term-limited executives may shift the focus of grant funding or prioritize grants with short timelines to fulfill campaign

promises before they leave office. Given the high number of chief executives subject to term limits, further research assessing the effect of those term limits on executive behavior is vital to understand how well our institutions facilitate responsiveness and accountability for executives and the political elites with whom they interact.

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Supplemental Information

Section A: Preregistration

We preregistered our experimental design through the Open Science Framework on May 18, 2024 (https://osf.io/rd6bs/?view_only=37e2d6d0fdc346b2ac035d0c3d6be0cc). As we analyzed our survey responses, we made one deviation from our preregistered design concerning which potential respondents in the sampling frame we solicited to participate in the survey. Namely, in our preregistration, we planned to randomly sample 25% of the email addresses we obtained from state employee directories. We made this design choice to balance both power considerations for all of the modules on the survey while not overburdening public employees.[1] The size of our random sample anticipated a response rate of between 5% and 10%, as reported in recent studies utilizing survey experiments with other elite populations (e.g., e.g., Furnas and LaPira 2024; Miller 2022), which would have yielded us approximately 2,600 to 5,200. However, 24 hours after distributing email invitations to the random sample, we observed a response rate of lower than 1%, which prompted concern that we would not obtain enough responses to conduct sufficiently powered analyses.[2] Accordingly, we decided to send email invitations to all state government employees for which we collected email addresses.

Section B: Survey Protocol

Section B.1: Sampling Procedure

The sampling frame for the survey in which the survey experiment was embedded was all state government employees in the following nine states whose email addresses were posted publicly in the employee directories of those states: Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and Vermont.[3] While these states are a subset

[1] Starting with the initial sample of 253,344 emails across the nine states, we considered two factors that would inform our expected response rate: 1) the expected turnover of state employees between the time the emails were collected in 2023 and the survey was fielded in 2024 and 2) observed response rates in other recent samples of political elites. First, based on reported turnover rates of states in our sample, we expected approximately 16% of employees in our sample to no longer be employed by their state rendering their email address invalid. Second, examining recent survey experiments of political elites, such as congressional staff and federal lobbyists, we anticipated a response rate of between 5% and 10% (e.g., Furnas and LaPira 2024; Miller 2022). Given these factors, we expected to collect approximately 2,600 to 5,200 responses.

[2] While it is difficult to understand systematic reasons for non-response, anecdotally we believe state government employees are not as responsive as other recently studied elite populations because they have been trained to be cautious when opening and interacting with emails sent from unfamiliar sources. Many potential respondents emailed the author who facilitated survey distribution asking for confirmation and/or evidence that the survey invitation was legitimate, and officials from the information technology (IT) offices of several state agencies called the author to assess whether the emails were associated with a cybersecurity risk. Additionally, several potential respondents informed the author that the policies set forth by their IT offices prevented them from participating, and others indicated that their IT offices send similar messages to "test" the employees' compliance with agency policies. Separately, several potential respondents also told the author that their agency barred employees from completing outside surveys or participating in academic research unless the activities were pre-approved by the agency head.

[3] In late 2021, one of the authors surveyed the employee directories of all fifty states to determine whether the state posted publicly the email addresses of its employees publicly. At that time, 25 states provided such information publicly. From those 25 states, one of the authors worked with research assistants to determine the feasibility of scraping the contact information from each state's employee directory given time and resource constraints. The final

of the full population, they demonstrate substantial variation across important state-level characteristics that could conceivably inform bureaucrats' responsiveness to their governors. For instance, to the extent bureaucrats may interact with their governors differently on the basis of region of the country, state size, or the population density of the state (e.g., Jugl 2022), our subset of states includes at least one representative of each of the four Census regions—Northeast (Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont), Midwest (Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska), West (Oregon), and South (North Carolina and Florida)—and exhibit considerable variation by total population (e.g., while Florida was the 3rd most populous state in the 202 Census, Vermont was the 49th most populous) and population density (e.g., while Connecticut was the 4th most densely populated state in the 2020 Census, Nebraska was the 43rd most densely populated). Again, to the degree that experience with governors of different partisan stripes might inform bureaucrats' responsiveness to them (e.g., Yackee 2025), our subset includes states that have consistently elected Democratic (Connecticut and Oregon) or Republican (Florida, Indiana, Nebraska) governors in recent cycles as well as states that exhibited greater degrees of partisan competition for their state's top office (Illinois, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Vermont). Finally, if bureaucrats in states with more powerful governors are acculturated to be more responsive to them, the power of the governors of the states in our sample vary substantially along existing indices (e.g., Ferguson and Kousser 2024). For instance, in examining governors' personal power, while the average state in Ferguson and Kousser's 2024 ratings is 3.9 on a five-point scale, the range of personal power among governors of states in our sample ranges from 3.0 (Indiana and New Hampshire) to 4.8 (Vermont). Again, turning to governors' institutional power, while the average state rating is 3.5, the range of institutional power among governors in our sample ranges from 2.3 (North Carolina) to 3.7 (Connecticut). Given this substantial variation across these and other characteristics, so long as our experiment yields similar results across the states whose employees we survey, we expect our findings can generalize across US states that have different values for these state-level characteristics.

In the first half of 2023, one of the authors and student research assistants collected the emails from the directories of these states and formatted them into comma-separated files. The total number of unique email addresses collected from these nine states is 252,316. Initial email invitations were sent to all unique email addresses between May 31 and June 3, 2024, and reminder emails were sent to all respondents that had not yet completed the survey on June 11 and June 18, 2024. Response collection ceased at the end of the day on June 26, 2024, at which point 2,542 respondents had provided an answer to at least one of the outcome questions in the experiment. Subtracting from the 33,213 emails which were returned as undeliverable, the response rate for this module is approximately 1.2% (2,542/219,103).

Section B.2 Vignette and Question Wording

list of nine states was chosen to ensure a sufficiently large number of respondents given expected response rates as well as capture sufficient state-level variation across important state-level characteristics.

After responding to a pre-treatment question battery, respondents were prompted to imagine working in a state agency similar to the one they work in now, but in a different state, and that their role in the agency is to oversee procurement activities. Then, respondents were informed that the governor of the state recently issued an executive order concerning environmental sustainability, and that part of the order seeks to enhance sustainability in procurement. As their role in the agency is to oversee procurement, respondents are told that they are responsible for their agency's response to the parts of the executive order concerning procurement. The one component of the vignette that is randomized across respondents is the information provided about where the featured governor's tenure—whether they are in their first year in office, up for re-election this year, or in the final year of their term and cannot seek re-election. The wording of the vignette and the different treatments associated with each requirement are provided below.

Section B.2.1 Vignette

Imagine you are working in a state agency that is similar to the one you work in now, but in a different state. Your role in this agency is to oversee procurement (i.e., purchasing/contracting for goods and services for your agency).

The governor of the state, [INFORMATION ABOUT THE GOVERNOR'S TENURE], recently issued an executive order directing all state agencies to devise plans to enhance environmental sustainability. Part of the executive order requires agencies to enhance sustainability in procurement by making sure products purchased:

- contain recycled materials
- are free of toxic and hazardous chemicals
- conserve energy and water
- minimize waste and packaging

Your job requires you to manage your agency's response to the governor's executive order as it pertains to procurement.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE GOVERNOR'S TENURE

- BASELINE: who started their term this year
- RE-ELECTION: who is running for re-election this year
- TERM LIMITED: who is in the final year in office and cannot seek re-election due to term limits

Section B.2.2 Question Wording

1. In light of the governor's executive order, how much effort would you plan to put into the following activities? [RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR EACH ITEM: No effort, Little effort, Some effort, A great deal of effort]
    - Auditing the sustainability of goods routinely purchased by the agency
    - Seeking out more sustainable alternatives that the agency could purchase
    - Educating other agency employees about promoting sustainability in procurement

- Reviewing new purchase orders to make sure the goods listed are sustainable

2. When planning how to respond to the governor's executive order, how important would the preferences of the following stakeholders be in your decision-making process? [RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR EACH ITEM: Not at all important, Slightly important, Somewhat important, Very important, Extremely important]
   - The governor
   - The director of your agency
   - The employees of your agency
   - The state legislature
   - Interest groups
   - The residents of your state

Section B.3 Respondent Demographic Characteristics

The only systematic information we were able to collect about state government employees in the full sampling frame was their names, email addresses, and the states by which they were employed.[4] We present information about survey responsiveness by state in Table SI.1.

For respondents who participated in our experiment, we collected information on a range of demographic characteristics pre-treatment. We provide information about the characteristics of our sample of respondents in Table SI.2.

Because we do not have demographic information for those in our sampling frame who did not complete the survey, we cannot assess the representativeness of these characteristics among our respondents to those in the full population of bureaucrats in the 9 sampled states. While any differences between the demographic characteristics of our respondents and those in the sampling frame would not impact the internal validity of our experiment, they could impact its external validity if bureaucrats with different demographic characteristics react differently to gubernatorial term limits (Coppock 2019). One characteristic for which there is a plausible theoretical argument for such a differential effect is the political leanings of the respondents, measured either with ideology or party identification. For instance, if conservative/Republican respondents were uncomfortable responding to our vignette because the subject of the governor's executive order leaned liberal and they did not want to portray themselves as willing to shirk a term-limited governor, they may have skipped the outcome questions or dropped out of the survey; were this the case, our analyses may underestimate the effect of term limits on bureaucrats' willingness to shirk their executives.

To consider this possibility, we draw on findings from two recent studies that produce estimates of the party identification of bureaucrats in the United States using voter registration information and compare the distribution of party identification from those studies to that among our respondents. Because these studies utilize voter registration information, which is publicly

[4] For some states, we were also able to collect information about the agency and/or office in which they worked and the physical address of their workplace. However, this information was not provided by all states and is not presented in a uniform format across states, so we are not able to use it in assessing sample representativeness.

available (i.e., all bureaucrats registered to vote are recorded), there is less concern about non-random missingness and their estimates better reflect the distributions of party identification in the underlying populations. First, Spenkuch et al. (2023), which focus on federal bureaucrats in the United States, find that from 1997 to 2019, the share of Democrats in the federal government hovered around 50%, the share of Republicans hovered around 30%, and the share of unaffiliated bureaucrats hovered around 20%. These proportions compare favorably to the distribution of party identification among respondents—57.8% of whom identify as Democrats, 25.9% of whom identify as Republicans, and 19.4% of whom identify as Independents, something else, or do not provide a party affiliation. Second, Goehring (n.d.), which focuses on bureaucrats across 24 US states in late 2020/early 2021, finds that Democratic bureaucrats outnumber Republican bureaucrats in 17 of 24 of the states; additionally, for the three states in our sampling frame that are also in Goehring's study, Democrats outnumber Republicans, though a higher share of bureaucrats are not formally registered with a party or cannot be matched to a voter registration record (Florida: 33% Democrats, 18% Republicans, 50% Independents/undetermined ;New Hampshire: 27% Democrats, 24% Republicans, 50% Independents/undetermined ;Vermont: 49% Democrats, 20% Republicans, 31% Independents/undetermined).

Taken together, these studies that capture a more complete picture of the political leanings of bureaucrats in the United States suggest that the leftward lean in our sample is in line with a leftward lean in the broader population, thus mitigating concerns about representativeness and generalizability.

Table SI.1: Sampling Frame Response Rates by State

State	# of respondents	# of employees invited to participate	Response rate
Connecticut	189	11,929	1.6%
Florida	438	68,178	0.6%
Illinois	29	1,840	1.6%
Indiana	160	27,168	0.6%
Nebraska	326	12,701	2.6%
New Hampshire	23	8,898	0.3%
North Carolina	538	48,283	1.1%
Oregon	744	36,460	2.0%
Vermont	95	3,645	2.6%
TOTAL	2,542	219,103	1.2%

Table SI.2: Respondent Demographic Characteristics

	# (%) of respondents
Gender	
Male	1145 (45.0%)
Female	1340 (52.7%)

Something else/Other	28 (1.1%)
Prefer not to say	25 (1.0%)
NA	4 (0.2%)
Age	
18-29	136 (5.4%)
30-49	1115 (43.9%)
50-64	1098 (43.2%)
65 or older	192 (7.6%)
NA	1 (0.0%)
Income	
Less than $25,000	7 (0.3%)
$25,000-$49,999	219 (8.6%)
$50,000-$74,999	462 (18.2%)
$75,000-$99,999	497 (19.6%)
$100,000-$199,999	1033 (40.6%)
$200,000 or more	304 (12.0%)
NA	20 (0.8%)
Education	
Some high school, or less	1 (0.0%)
High school graduate or GED	80 (3.1%)
Some college, no 4-year degree	377 (14.8%)
College graduate	925 (36.4%)
Post-graduate degree	1155 (45.4%)
NA	4 (0.2%)
Race	
American Indian or Alaska Native	17 (0.7%)
American Indian or other Pacific Islander	10 (0.4%)
Asian	64 (2.5%)
Black or African American	221 (8.7%)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5 (0.2%)
Other	128 (5.0%)
White	2018 (81.9%)
NA	16 (0.6%)
Hispanic	
Yes	159 (6.3%)
No	2348 (92.4%)

Prefer not to say	30 (1.2%)
NA	5 (0.2%)
Party Identification	
Strong Democrat	741 (32.2%)
Not a very strong Democrat	350 (13.8%)
Lean Democrat	301 (11.8%)
Independent	251 (9.9%)
Lean Republican	153 (6.0%)
Not a very strong Republican	219 (8.6%)
Strong Republican	286 (11.3%)
Other/NA	241 (9.5%)
Ideology	
Very liberal	272 (10.7%)
Liberal	625 (24.6%)
Slightly liberal	328 (12.9%)
Moderate	632 (24.9%)
Slightly conservative	199 (7.8%)
Conservative	369 (14.5%)
Very conservative	106 (4.2%)
NA	11 (0.4%)
Years of Experience in State Government	
Less than 5 years	608 (23.9%)
5-10 years	713 (28.0%)
11-15 years	319 (12.5%)
16-20 years	297 (11.7%)
More than 20 years	602 (23.7%)
NA	3 (0.1%)
Job Selection Method	
Appointed by elected official	89 (3.5%)
Hired/promoted through civil service system	2073 (81.5%)
Other	378 (14.9%)
NA	2 (0.1%)

Section C: Empirical Analysis

In this section, we present the tabular representations of the models underlying the figures in the main paper as well as tabular representations of exploratory analyses we describe in the main paper. While some of these analyses follow directly from our theoretical expectations and are described in detail in the main paper (Tables SI.3-SI.5), others explore whether our findings are

driven by and/or moderated by factors other than our treatments or hypothesized mechanisms (Tables SI.6-SI.11). We briefly explain the rationale behind this latter set of analyses and the specifications we implemented here:

- State-Specific Effects—Each of the nine states in our sample vary along many dimensions including but not limited to state size, partisanship, gubernatorial power. It is possible that some unique characteristics of some states may make respondents systematically more or less responsive to our treatments; if this were the case, it would be important to consider which state-level characteristics in common among those states might drive those effects. To explore this possibility, we reestimated our main specifications for each outcome for each state separately (Tables SI.6 and SI.7). Of the 14 models estimated, the directionality of the effect of the governor in the vignette being term-limited remains negative, and in the remaining 2 specifications the coefficients are substantively small (i.e., close to zero); while many of the coefficients are no longer statistically significant, it is important to note that the sample sizes within states are often small, therefore naturally making the estimates less precise. These results do not provide any clear evidence that the effects of our treatment vary systematically across states in our sample.
- Respondents' Experiences with Term Limits—While our vignette prompted respondents to imagine working in another state for an agency similar to their own, thus encouraging respondents to abstract away experiences with their own state's unique institutional framework, it is possible that respondents who have previous experience working under officials subject to term limits may respond more strongly to our term limited treatment because they can better relate to the scenario (Morehouse and Jewell 2004). Accordingly, we add to our main specifications indicators for whether each respondents' state has term limits on their governors (Florida, Indiana, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Oregon) or legislators (Florida and Nebraska) and fit models that interact those indicators with our treatment indicators (Tables SI.8 and SI.9, respectively). The results of these analyses do not provide evidence that suggests respondents with lived experience with term-limited principals respond differently to our term-limited treatment than respondents who lack that experience.
- Respondents' Experiences with Gubernatorial Power—Again, while our design encouraged respondents to abstract away experiences with their own state's institutional framework, respondents may have carried into the experiment their own lived experience working under governors with more or less power that prompts them to be more or less responsive to those governors' directives (Cockerham and Crew 2017; Ferguson 2003; Ferguson and Kousser 2024; Morehouse and Jewell 2004). This power could manifest as the personal power individual governors they have served under wield by nature of their political influence or the institutional power those governors have been able to exercise given the structure of the governor's office with respect to other political actors in a given state. To assess whether respondents with lived experience serving under more powerful governors reacted less strongly to our term-limited treatment (i.e., even if the governor is

term-limited, respondents may be accustomed to high responsiveness), we add to our main specifications the five-point 2024 measures of gubernatorial personal and institutional power constructed by Ferguson and Kousser (2024) and fit models that interact those measures with our treatment indicators (Tables SI.10 and SI.11, respectively).[5] The results of these analyses do not provide evidence that suggests respondents with lived experience working under more powerful governors exhibit systematically smaller effects to our term-limited treatment than respondents who lack that experience.

Section C.1: Tabular Presentation of Results Presented in the Main Paper

Table SI.3: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Intercept	3.40 *	3.95 *
	(0.02)	(0.04)
Re-election Treatment	0.00	-0.13 *
	(0.03)	(0.06)
Term Limited Treatment	-0.06 *	-0.31 *
	(0.03)	(0.06)
Num. obs.	2523	2526

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for the first model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale, and the dependent variable for the second model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order.

Section C.2: Tabular Presentation of Exploratory Analyses Discussed in the Main Paper

Table SI.4: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Importance Assigned to Preferences of Other Stakeholders

	Agency Director	Agency Employees	State Legislature	Interest Groups	State residents
Intercept	4.12 *	3.68 *	3.30 *	2.76 *	3.75 *
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Re-election Treatment	-0.05	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.11 *
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Term Limited Treatment	-0.10 *	-0.01	-0.07	-0.08	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Num. obs.	2523	2520	2507	2519	2518

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the preferences of the stakeholder identified in the column heading in implementing the governor's executive order on a five-point scale.

[5] For details on how these measures are constructed, see Ferguson and Kousser (2024).

Table SI.5: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order, Conditioned by Respondent Ideology

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Intercept	3.69 *	3.93 *
	(0.05)	(0.09)
Re-election Treatment	-0.02	0.07
	(0.07)	(0.13)
Term Limited Treatment	-0.02	-0.24 *
	(0.07)	(0.13)
Resp. Ideology (L→C)	-0.08 *	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Re-election:Ideology	0.00	-0.06 *
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Term Limited:Ideology	-0.01	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Num. obs.	2512	2516

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for the first model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale, and the dependent variable for the second model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order. Respondent ideology is measured on a seven-point scale, where a value of 1 represents "very liberal" and a value of 7 represents "very conservative."

Table SI.6: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Effort by State

	CT	FL	IL	IN	NE	NC	OR	VT
Intercept	3.46 *	3.53 *	3.17 *	3.41 *	3.26 *	3.54 *	3.26 *	3.45 *
	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.29)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Re-election Treatment	0.04	-0.09	0.41	-0.10	0.08	0.09	0.04	0.01
	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.37)	(0.14)	(0.09)	(0.20)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Term Limited Treatment	-0.09	-0.17 *	0.04	-0.16	-0.06	-0.04	0.05	-0.03
	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.35)	(0.14)	(0.09)	(0.18)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Num. obs.	186	436	28	160	324	23	532	739

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale. Each model estimated including only respondents from the state indicated by the column heading.

Table SI.7: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Importance Assigned to Governor's Preferences by State

	CT	FL	IL	IN	NE	NC	OR	VT
Intercept	4.00 *	3.86 *	4.00 *	4.04 *	3.75 *	3.71 *	3.95 *	4.05 *
	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.44)	(0.18)	(0.11)	(0.52)	(0.09)	(0.07)
Re-election Treatment	-0.23	0.03	0.40	-0.41	0.13	-0.05	-0.22 *	-0.18 *
	(0.19)	(0.14)	(0.57)	(0.25)	(0.16)	(0.76)	(0.13)	(0.10)

	CT	FL	IL	IN	NE	NC	OR	VT
Term Limited Treatment	-0.13	-0.17	-0.33	-0.29	-0.37 *	-0.21	-0.43 *	-0.31 *
	(0.19)	(0.14)	(0.55)	(0.25)	(0.16)	(0.67)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Num. obs.	187	432	29	160	322	23	536	742

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for each model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order. Each model estimated including only respondents from the state indicated by the column heading.

Table SI.8: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order, Conditioned by Presence of Gubernatorial Term Limits in Respondents' State

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Intercept	3.45 *	3.95 *
	(0.06)	(0.11)
Re-election Treatment	0.00	-0.19
	(0.09)	(0.16)
Term Limited Treatment	-0.12	-0.22
	(0.09)	(0.15)
Resp. State Has Term Limits	-0.06	-0.00
	(0.06)	(0.12)
Re-election:Resp. State Has Term Limits	-0.00	0.07
	(0.09)	(0.17)
Term Limited: Resp. State Has Term Limits	0.07	-0.10
	(0.09)	(0.16)
Num. obs.	2523	2526

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for the first model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale, and the dependent variable for the second model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order.

Table SI.9: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order, Conditioned by Presence of Legislative Term Limits in Respondents' State

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Intercept	3.39 *	4.00 *
	(0.03)	(0.05)
Re-election Treatment	0.01	-0.22 *
	(0.04)	(0.07)
Term Limited Treatment	-0.04	-0.33 *
	(0.04)	(0.07)
Resp. State Has Term Limits	0.03	-0.19 *
	(0.05)	(0.09)

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Re-election:Resp. State Has Term Limits	-0.02	0.29 *
	(0.07)	(0.12)
Term Limited: Resp. State Has Term Limits	-0.09	0.07
	(0.07)	(0.12)
Num. obs.	2523	2526

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for the first model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale, and the dependent variable for the second model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order.

Table SI.10: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order, Conditioned by Gubernatorial Personal Power in Respondents' State

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Intercept	3.19 *	4.46 *
	(0.21)	(0.37)
Re-election Treatment	0.18	-0.64
	(0.29)	(0.53)
Term Limited Treatment	0.38	-0.66
	(0.29)	(0.52)
Gubernatorial Personal Power	0.06	-0.15
	(0.06)	(0.10)
Re-election:Personal Power	-0.05	0.14
	(0.08)	(0.15)
Term Limited: Personal Power	-0.13	0.10
	(0.08)	(0.14)
Num. obs.	2523	2526

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for the first model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale, and the dependent variable for the second model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order.

Table SI.11: Effect of Governor's Tenure on Bureaucratic Responsiveness to Executive Order, Conditioned by Gubernatorial Institutional Power in Respondents' State

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
Intercept	2.98 *	3.92 *
	(0.16)	(0.28)
Re-election Treatment	0.05	-0.41
	(0.23)	(0.41)
Term Limited Treatment	0.29	-0.80 *
	(0.22)	(0.40)
Gubernatorial Institutional Power	0.14 *	0.01

	Implementation Effort Exerted	Importance of Governor's Preferences
	(0.05)	(0.09)
Re-election:Institutional Power	-0.02	0.09
	(0.07)	(0.13)
Term Limited: Institutional Power	-0.12	0.16
	(0.07)	(0.13)
Num. obs.	2523	2526

Models are estimated with ordinary least squares regression. * denotes statistical significance at the p<0.05 level (one-tailed). The dependent variable for the first model is an index that measures how much effort respondents would exert on implementing the governor's executive order measured on a four-point scale, and the dependent variable for the second model is a five-point scale that indicates how much importance respondents would assign to the governor's preferences in implementing the executive order.

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