STATE LEGISLATURES

Now Playing:
Velvet Underground,
“Run, run, run”
STATE LEGISLATIVE CAPACITY

- "Our Beleaguered Institution"
- Modernization in 1960s
  - More efficient, professional
  - Diffusion of policy innovation (NCSL)
- Counter-Pressures to remain citizen-legislatures
  - Term Limits in 1990s
- Disapproval -- 2010

Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Florida legislature is doing?

- Approve: 33%
- Disapprove: 54%
- Don't Know: 13%

n=800
**WHY DISAPPROVAL IN FLORIDA?**

- **Lack of party competition**
  - 2/3rds 160 legislators elected in 2014 without a competitive race
  - 1/3rd legislators in 2014 won without a single vote cast in their favor
  - 12/40 Senate 38/120 House
- **Gerrymandered districts → Low voter turnout**

- **Aggregation of district preferences → Asymmetric statewide representation**
  - Statewide Public opinion ≠ district electorates
- 81 (R) / 39 (D) in House
- 26 (R) / 14 (D) in Senate
Florida Senate Presidential Election

Legend

FINAL OBAMA
OBAMA

- 49.69 - 50.00
- 50.01 - 55.00
- 55.01 - 60.00
- 60.01 - 70.00
- 70.01 - 85.89

FINAL MCCAIN
MCCAIN

- 49.84 - 50.00
- 50.01 - 55.00
- 55.01 - 60.00
- 60.01 - 70.00
- 70.01 - 70.43
STATE LEGISLATURES

Now Playing:
Cream, “Run”
WHY LEGISLATIVE DISAPPROVAL?

• STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES ACROSS STATE LEGISLATURES
• REPRESENTATION vs. RESPONSIBILITY tradeoff?
• Do INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES Matter?
  • BICAMERAL vs. UNICAMERAL (NE)
  • LEGISLATURE SIZE
  • ANNUAL vs. BIENNIAL SESSIONS
  • LENGTH OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION
  • Full-Time, Part-Time, Hybrid Legislatures
  • LENGTH OF TERMS
  • TERM LIMITS
  • SINGLE-MEMBER vs. MULTI-MEMBER Districts
  • STRENGTH OF LEGISLATIVE PARTY LEADERSHIP
DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION: FEMALE LEGISLATORS

- 1970: 5% WOMEN
- 2012: 23.5% WOMEN
## Descriptive Representation: Racial/Ethnic Minority Legislators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>% Leg</th>
<th>% Pop (2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-Americans</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.5** Minority Representation in State Legislatures

Note: The states are ranked here by the ratio of the percentage of state lawmakers who are not non-Hispanic whites to the percentage of the state’s population who are not non-Hispanic whites in 2009. These ratios range from 1.05 in Hawaii and .88 in New Mexico to .07 in Idaho and .12 in Vermont. The DAKER the state, the MORE representative its legislature is of the racial and ethnic minorities in its population.

Source: Compiled and calculated by the authors from data in Morgan and Morgan, op. cit., Sánchez, op. cit., the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF FEMALE AND BLACK LEGISLATORS ON REPRESENTATION?

- Both more interested in education & social welfare policies
- Blacks concerned about civil rights
- Females more liberal on social issues, gun control, & abortion
- Females engage in more constituent service and more consensus building
3 MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF LEGISLATURES

1) REPRESENTATION
2) LAWMAKING
3) POLICY OVERSIGHT
LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

- Determined by Party
- Effects of Term Limits on Leadership