Does Process Matter?
Direct Democracy and Citizens' Perceptions of Laws

Supporting Information

August 19, 2019

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1 Experimental Structure Report

Prepared in accordance with the reporting standards suggested by JEPS.

A. Hypothesis

- Does the way in which a law is passed affect people's evaluations of that law?

B. Subjects and Context

- Participants were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk).
- Participants were eligible to participate if they were 18 years of age or older, and were citizens of the United States. These eligibility standards are maintained by MTurk, and those who did not meet these standards could not participate in the studies.
- Both studies took place online, and the studies were designed and implemented using Qualtrics.
- Study 1 took place between November 25 and 26, 2014. Study 2 took place between March 25 and April 19, 2015.

C. Allocation Method

- Participants were randomly assigned to treatment condition at the individual level using Qualtrics' randomization algorithm.
- Balance tests across key demographic characteristics yield nonsignificant differences across treatment group, providing evidence of successful random assignment.

D. Treatments

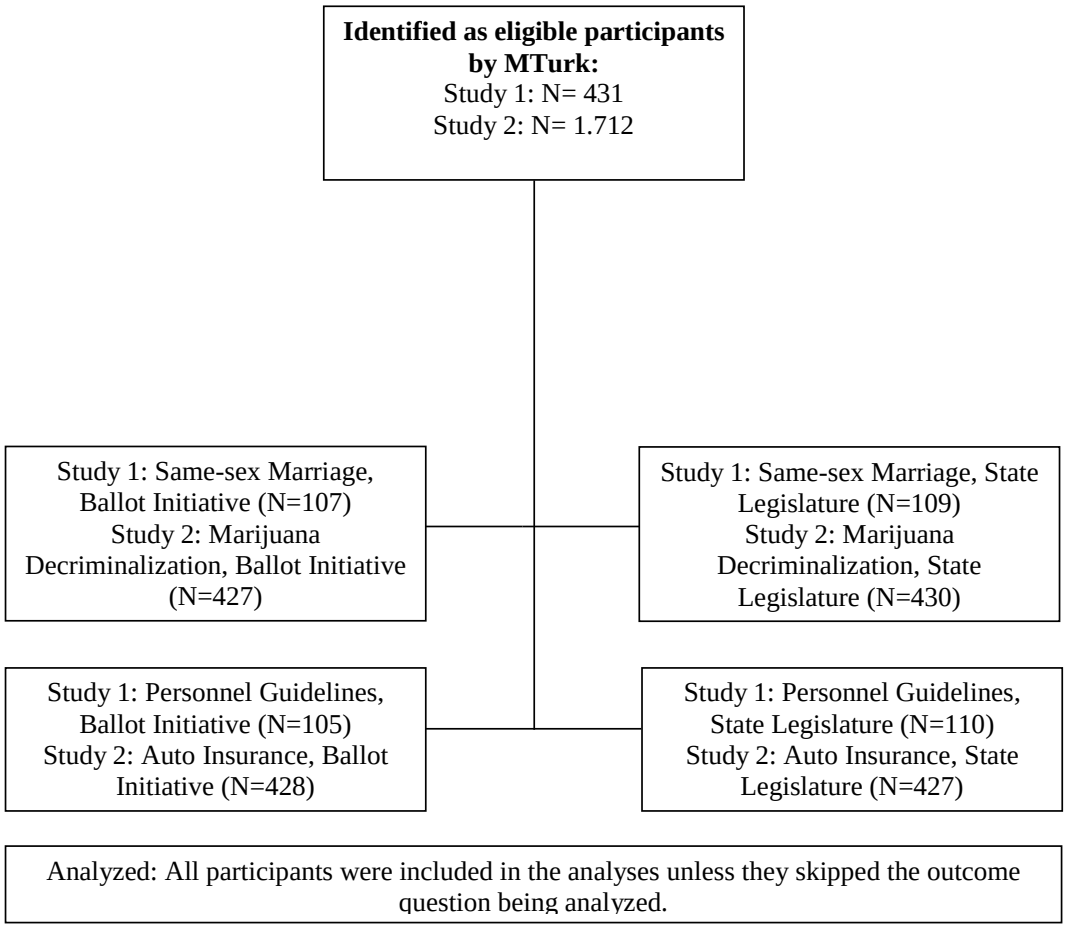
- Full texts of treatment conditions are provided in figures 1 and 3 in the main manuscript.
- The experiments took place online using the Qualtrics platform.
- Both studies use a 2x2 factorial between-groups design.
- In study 1, participants were paid $0.50 for successful completion. In study 2, participants were paid $0.35 for successful completion.

E. Results

- Outcome Measures and Covariates
  - The outcome measures are described in the main manuscript. The full survey instrument questions can be found in section 2 of the supplementary information.
  - Based on feedback during the review process, I also conducted analyses conditioning on pre-test measures of policy support. These analyses can be seen in section 5 of the supplementary information.
- CONSORT Participant Flow Diagram: Provided below
- Other Information
  - IRB approval was obtained from the University of Colorado - Boulder.

– Funding for study 2 was provided by the Political Science department at the University of Colorado - Boulder.
– Information needed for replication available at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/UQSZDY.

CONSORT Participant Flow



2 Survey Instrument Questions

2.1 Study 1

2.1.1 Pre-test Questions

"Do you believe that gay and lesbian individuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals?"

"Strongly disagree" (1)

"Disagree" (2)

"Somewhat disagree" (3)

"Neither agree nor disagree" (4)

"Somewhat agree" (5)

"Agree" (6)

"Strongly agree" (7)

"Do you agree or disagree with merit-based hiring practices for public employees?"

"Strongly disagree" (1)

"Disagree" (2)

"Somewhat disagree" (3)

"Neither agree nor disagree" (4)

"Somewhat agree" (5)

"Agree" (6)

"Strongly agree" (7)

2.1.2 Post-test Questions

"Do you think the process used to pass this law was fair or unfair?"

"Very unfair" (0) to "Very fair" (100)

"Would you support an effort to repeal the law, or let it stand?"

"Repeal the law" (0)

"Let it stand" (1)

2.2 Study 2

2.2.1 Pre-test Questions

"Do you agree or disagree that people caught with small amounts of marijuana should face criminal charges?"

"Strongly disagree" (1)

"Disagree" (2)

"Somewhat disagree" (3)

"Neither agree nor disagree" (4)

"Somewhat agree" (5)

"Agree" (6)

"Strongly agree" (7)

"Do you agree or disagree with governmental regulation of private industries?"

"Strongly disagree" (1)

"Disagree" (2)

"Somewhat disagree" (3)

"Neither agree nor disagree" (4)

"Somewhat agree" (5)

"Agree" (6)

"Strongly agree" (7)

2.2.2 Post-test Questions

Questions only given to those who received the state legislature treatment.

"Do you think the process used to pass this law, through the state legislature, was fair or unfair?"

"Very unfair" (0) to "Very fair" (100)

"Do you support the law that was passed by the state legislature?"

"No" (0)

"Yes" (1)

Questions only given to those who received the ballot initiative treatment.

"Do you think the process used to pass this law, through citizen ballot initiative, was fair or unfair?"

"Very unfair" (0) to "Very fair" (100)

"Do you support the law that was passed by citizen ballot initiative?"

"No" (0)

"Yes" (1)

3 Test Statistics from Main Analyses

Table 1: Study 1: Test Statistics for Dependent Variables by Process Treatment

Dependent Variable	Issue Treatment	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	df	*t*	Sig.
Process Fairness	Same-Sex Marriage	2.70	3.78	213	-0.71	0.48
(0-100)	Personnel Guidelines	**6.57**	3.21	212	-2.05	0.04
Support for Law	Same-Sex Marriage	-0.03	0.04	198	0.64	0.52
(0, 1)	Personnel Guidelines	0.02	0.06	136	-0.31	0.76

Note: Results from t-tests run by process treatment. Mean differences indicate the ballot initiative process - state legislative process, and significant differences are in bold ($p<0.05$).

Table 2: Study 2: Test Statistics for Dependent Variables by Process Treatment

Dependent Variable	Issue Treatment	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	df	*t*	Sig.
Process Fairness	Marijuana Decrim.	**7.64**	1.68	834	-4.56	>0.01
(0-100)	Auto Insurance	**11.45**	1.69	836	-6.78	>0.01
Support for Law	Marijuana Decrim.	-0.01	0.02	847	0.25	0.80
(0, 1)	Auto Insurance	**0.10**	0.03	847	-3.19	>0.01

Note: Results from t-tests run by process treatment. Mean differences indicate the ballot initiative process - state legislative process, and significant differences are in bold ($p<0.05$).

4 Sample Demographics

Table 3: Descriptive Estimates, MTurk Samples vs. 2016 ANES

	Study 1	**Study 2**	**2016 ANES**
Age			
18 to 24 years	13.9%	21.9%	12.0%
25-34 years	50.9%	45.5%	16.5%
35-44 years	19.1%	17.3%	14.9%
45-54 years	9.8%	8.1%	17.3%
55-64 years	5.9%	6.0%	18.9%
65-74 years	0.5%	1.2%	11.8%
75 and over	0%	0.2%	6.4%
Gender			
Female	37.6%	40.7%	51.4%
Male	62.4%	59.3%	47.5%
Education			
Less than high school	0.5%	0.8%	6.6%
HS diploma	14.7%	10.7%	19.0%
Some college	36.1%	37.0%	35.12%
Bachelors degree	40.2%	41.7%	22.4%
Advanced degree	8.6%	9.7%	15.9%
Party Identification			
Strong Democrat	17.4%	20.0%	20.8%
Democrat	27.2%	24.7%	13.1%
Lean Democrat	15.6%	16.6%	11.5%
Independent	18.1%	13.6%	13.6%
Lean Republican	7.2%	6.9%	11.7%
Republican	10.2%	11.9%	11.9%
Strong Republican	4.4%	6.4%	16.9%

5 Additional Analyses

5.1 Conditional Effect of Pre-test Policy Views on Support for Law

In order to test whether respondents' support for the law is conditional on their support for the policy, I estimate models predicting post-treatment support for the law using an interaction between process and pre-test support. Figures 1 through 4 show the conditional effects of pre-test support for each of the four policy areas. The only significant finding is that participants receiving the auto insurance treatment are more likely to support the law when it is passed by ballot initiative. This finding is reflected in the direct effect reported in the manuscript. These results are consistent with the argument that process has a negligible effect on policy evaluations.

Figure 1: **Study 1: "Do you believe that gay and lesbian individuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals?"**

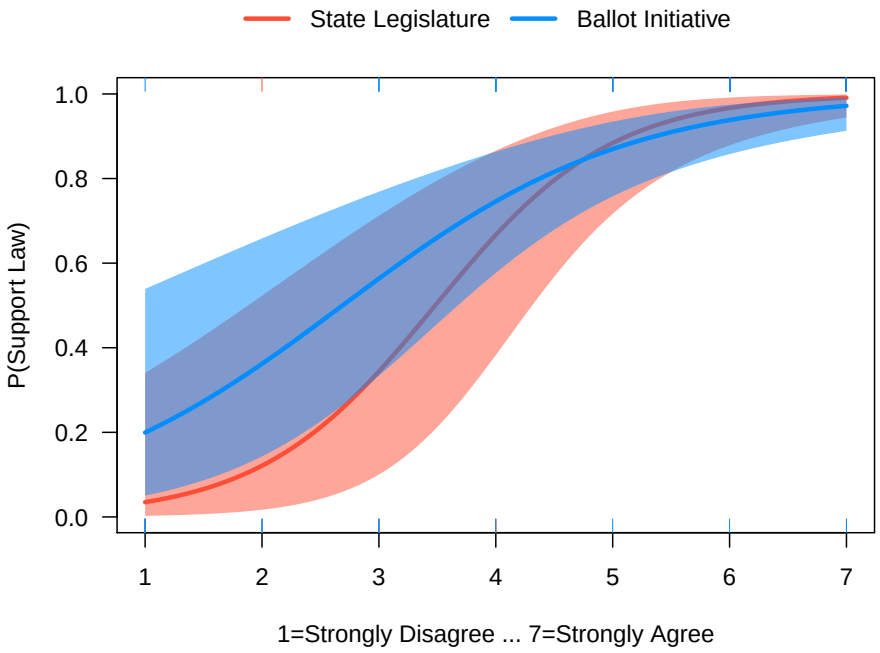


Figure 2: **Study 1: "Do you agree or disagree with merit-based hiring practices for public employees?"**

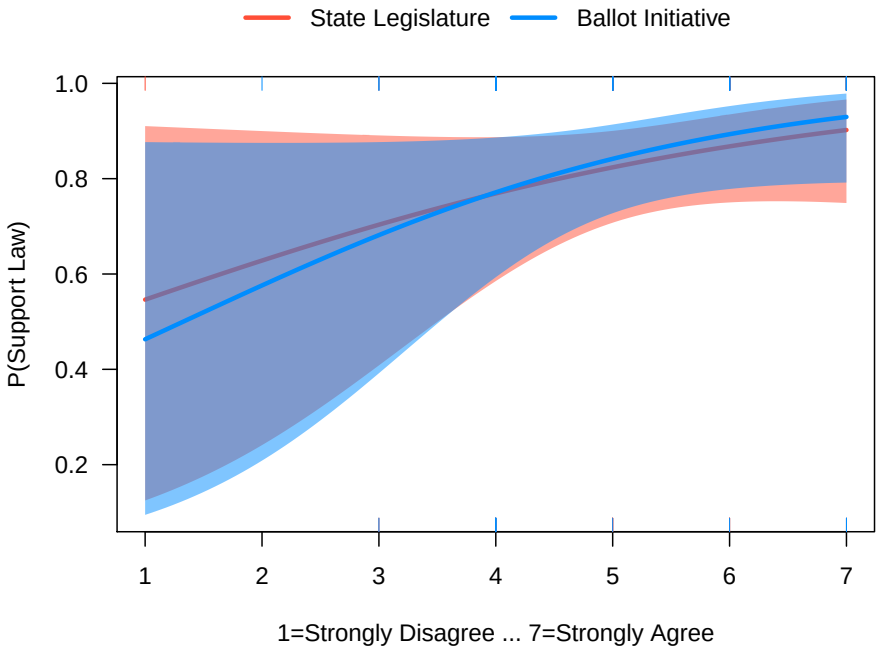


Figure 3: **Study 2: "Do you agree or disagree that people caught with small amounts of marijuana should face criminal charges?"**

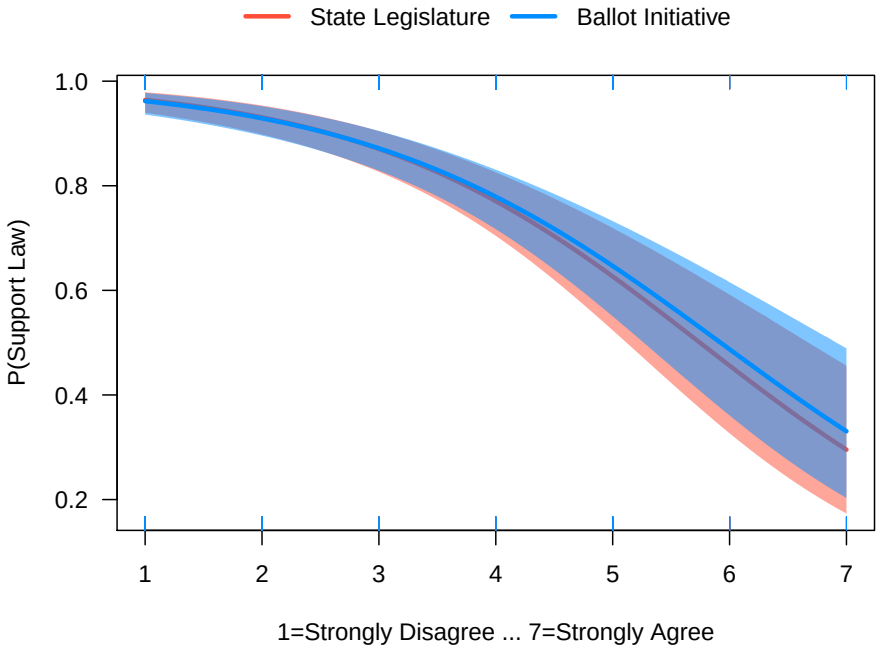
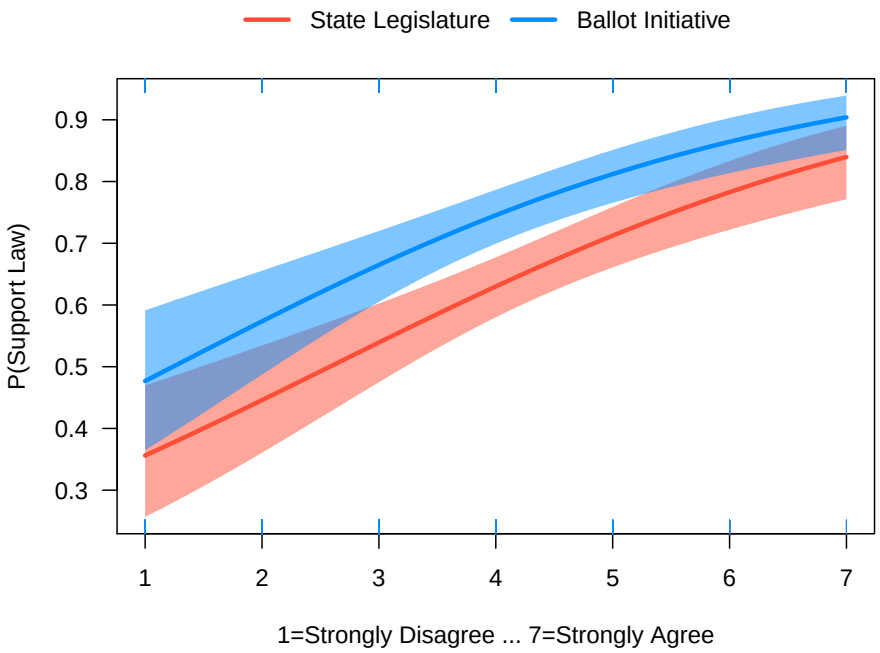


Figure 4: **Study 2: "Do you agree or disagree with governmental regulation of private industries?"**



5.2 Conditional Effect of Pre-test Policy Views on Perceived Fairness of Process

Additionally, I test whether respondents' perceived fairness of the process used to pass the law is conditional on their support for the policy. I estimate models predicting post-treatment perceived fairness of the process used to pass the law using an interaction between process and pre-test support. Figures 5 through 8 show the conditional effects of pre-test support for each of the four policy areas. Pre-test support for the policy does result in higher levels of perceived fairness of the process used to pass the law. This relationship holds for both the ballot initiative and state legislative processes, though respondents in study 2 view the ballot initiative process as fairer than the state legislative process. The findings from this additional analysis are consistent with the findings presented in the manuscript.

Figure 5: **Study 1: "Do you believe that gay and lesbian individuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals?"**

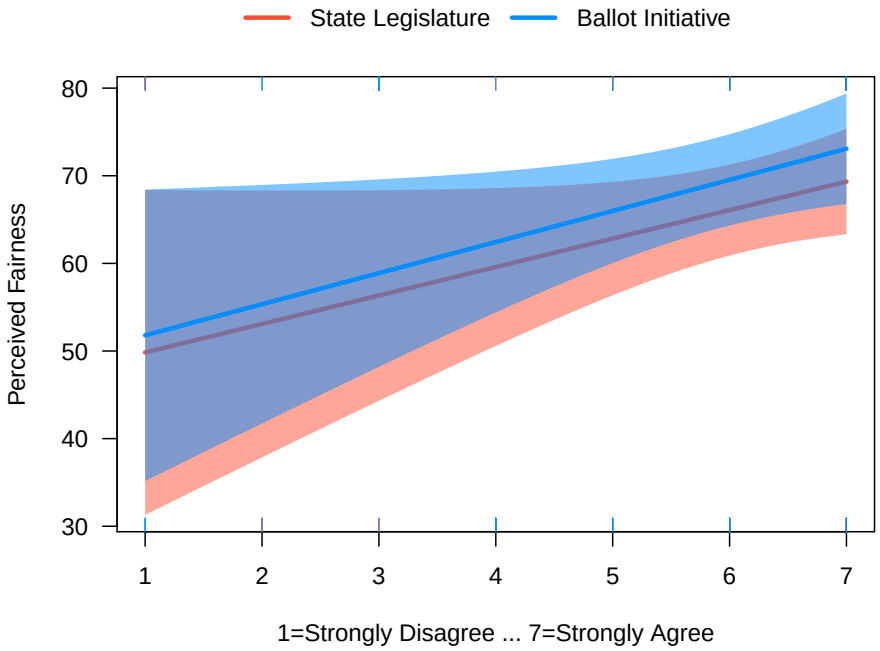


Figure 6: **Study 1: "Do you agree or disagree with merit-based hiring practices for public employees?"**

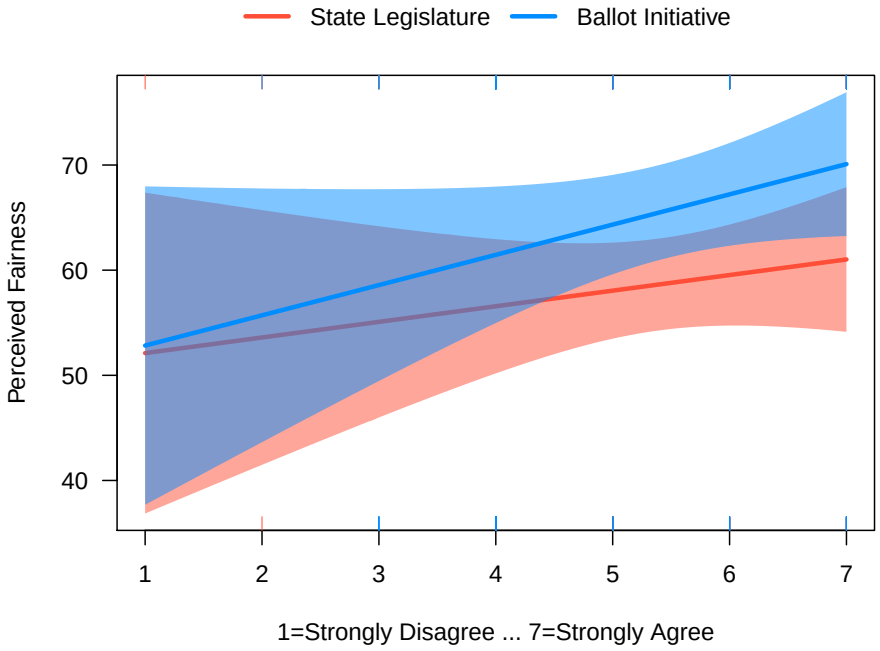


Figure 7: **Study 2: "Do you agree or disagree that people caught with small amounts of marijuana should face criminal charges?"**

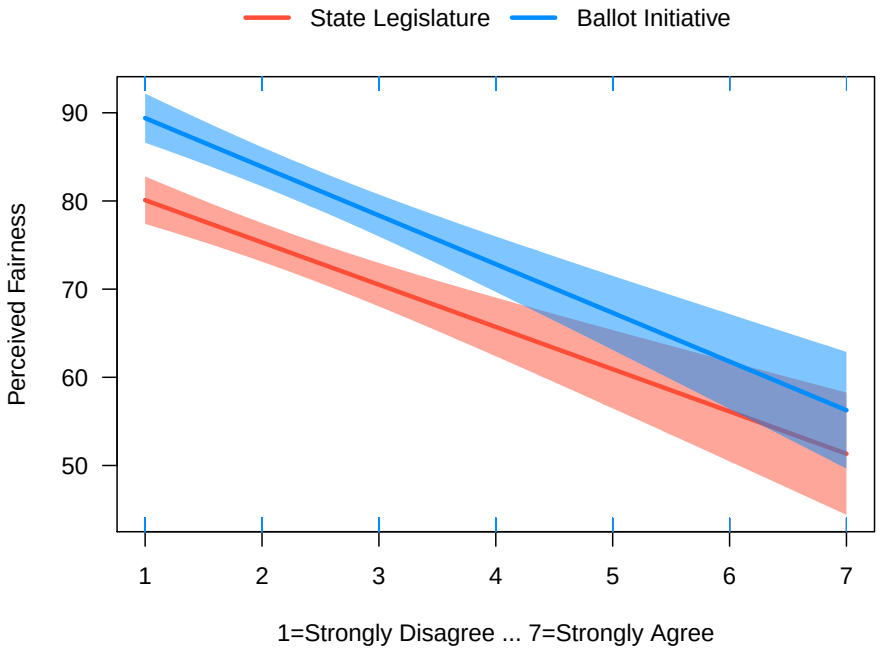
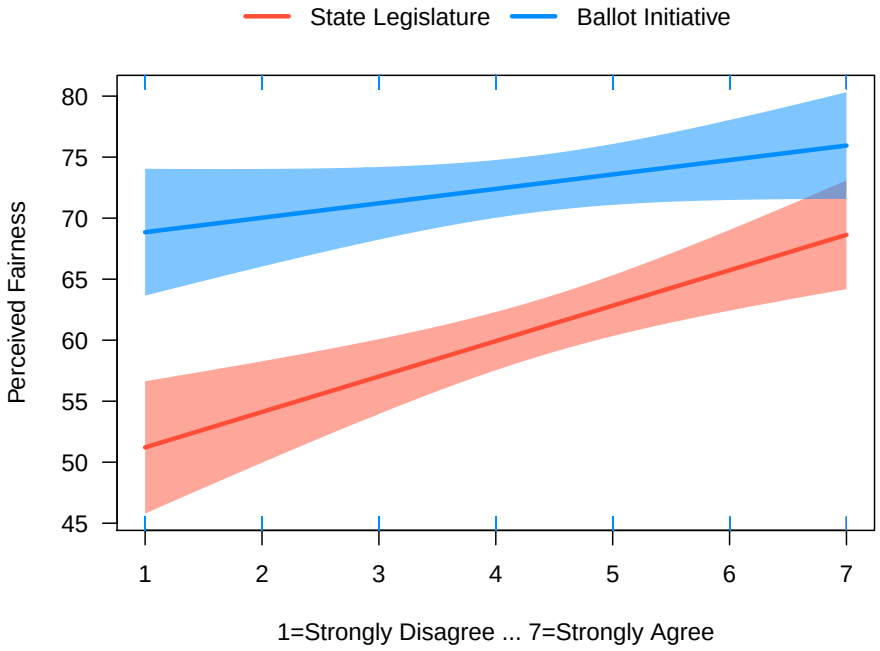



Figure 8: **Study 2: "Do you agree or disagree with governmental regulation of private industries?"**