How Partisan Is Local Law Enforcement? Evidence from Sheriff Cooperation with Immigration Authorities*

Daniel M. Thompson[†]
Department of Political Science
Stanford University

August 20, 2019

Abstract

Is local law enforcement conducted differently based on the party in power? I offer an answer to this question by focusing on a case in which law enforcement is elected and has meaningful independent discretion: sheriff compliance with federal requests to detain unauthorized immigrants. Using a regression discontinuity design in a new dataset of over 3,200 partisan sheriff elections and administrative data on sheriff behavior, I find that Democrats and Republicans comply at nearly the same rate. These results contribute to ongoing research into the role that partisanship plays in local policymaking, indicating that law enforcement officers make similar choices across party lines even when they have broad authority. I also present evidence that sheriffs hold more similar immigration enforcement views across party than the general public, highlighting the role of candidate entry and selection in determining the level of partisan polarization.

1 Introduction

The direct election of executives with police power is a key feature of the American system. Increasing partisan polarization across the country has raised concerns that these local executive elections lead elected officials to apply the law differentially for partisan reasons, rather than to act as neutral arbiters, compromising the legitimacy of law enforcement.[1] Yet, these elections could also act as a moderating force, selecting candidates who advocate a politically neutral approach to law enforcement. Do elected law enforcement officials make partisan enforcement decisions?

Republican and Democratic representatives make unmistakably different policy choices across a wide range of offices, even when compared to others serving the same constituents (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Bafumi and Herron 2010; Besley and Case 2003; Caughey, Xu, and Warshaw 2017; de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw 2018; Fowler and Hall 2016; Lee, Moretti, and Butler 2004). The similarity of policies put in place by Republican and Democratic executives at the local level may be an exception, or it may simply reflect the constraints executives face (Ferreira and Gyourko 2009; Gerber and Hopkins 2011). Recent evidence suggests that executives may move policy in their party's preferred direction when they have the necessary discretion (de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw 2016; Kousser 2002).

In order to isolate the differences between Republicans and Democrats in terms of the policies they choose, I focus on a case in which the local policymaker has considerable flexibility: a sheriff's decision to detain unauthorized immigrants on behalf of federal immigration authorities. The vast majority of states during the period I study place no constraints on a sheriff's choice to comply with these requests from immigration authorities. Given the authority sheriffs have over compliance with these detainer requests and the scale of their use—more than 677,000 instances of detention— journalists and advocates have argued that sheriffs determine immigration enforcement levels in their counties.[2]

---

[1] Gordon (2009) discusses this problem at the federal level. For recent accounts of ideological law enforcement in the popular press, see "The Renegade Sheriffs" in the New Yorker (https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/30/the-renegade-sheriffs) and "County Sheriff Races in 2018 Might Be the Key to Resisting Trump's Immigration Plans" on Vox (https://www.vox.com/2018/5/10/17339274/midterms-primaries-immigration-elections).

[2] See, for example, "County Sheriff Races in 2018 Might Be the Key to Resisting Trump's Immigration Plans" (https://www.vox.com/2018/5/10/17339274/midterms-primaries-immigration-elections). "The Renegade Sheriffs" in the New Yorker also discusses some of these issues (https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/30/the-renegade-sheriffs).

Simply comparing compliance in places that elect Democrats to those that elect Republicans could capture differences due to factors other than who controls the sheriff's office. I overcome this using a regression discontinuity design, estimating the difference in compliance between counties that just barely elect a Democrat or Republican (Eggers et al. 2015).[3] To estimate this difference, I use my newly collected dataset of 3,500 sheriff elections, drawn from the roughly 85% of counties with sheriffs elected in partisan races, and pair it with administrative data measuring sheriff compliance with detainer requests.

I find that, in counties with close elections, the average Democratic sheriff cooperates at nearly the same rate as the average Republican sheriff. As I detail below, a sheriff's choice to cooperate with immigration authorities is only one step in the path from arrest to deportation. I use the same regression discontinuity design to test for differences in the number of background checks they send to the Department of Homeland Security and the policies they state publicly. These measures are noisier, but I also find no substantial partisan differences between Democratic and Republican sheriffs on these other dimensions.

I demostrate that this result cannot simply be explained by homogeneous voter preferences across parties. Indeed, when members of Congress from similar districts vote on immigration enforcement matters, and when voters from the same county are asked about immigration enforcement, Democrats and Republicans make radically different choices. Further, Democratic and Republican sheriff candidates from the same county make noticeably different donations to federal and state candidates in their personal life. I present suggestive evidence that this convergence is instead a consequence of sheriffs having more similar preferences over local immigration enforcement across party than the general public.

These results allay concerns that immigration law is enforced differently based on the partisan attachments of the executive in charge, at least when the law enforcement official is elected. A growing literature in political science argues that local officeholders will take actions to agree with their national party agenda rather the pursuing the policies that increase local welfare (e.g., Hopkins 2018). My results suggest that, at least in this case, local officeholders tasked with controlling crime

---

[3]For a broader review of regression discontinuity designs in political science, see Cattaneo, Idrobo, and Titiunik (2017); de la Cuesta and Imai (2016); Skovron and Titiunik (2015).

and running jails are not independently pursuing their party's national agenda in a highly-salient policy domain.

2   Partisanship in Local Offices

The degree to which elections tether policy to the preferences of the electorate is one of the key questions in political science. Elections are said to place a pressure on candidates to appeal to the median voter (Downs 1957). In a dynamic setting where candidates can serve multiple terms, the threat of future electoral sanction policymaking toward the median voter as well (Ashworth 2012; Fearon 1999). Despite this pressure, Republicans and Democrats elected in similar districts make different policy choices in a wide variety of offices, implying that representatives from at least one party, and likely both, are not conforming to the preferences of the median voter (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Bafumi and Herron 2010; Besley and Case 2003; Caughey, Xu, and Warshaw 2017; de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw 2018; Fowler and Hall 2016; Lee, Moretti, and Butler 2004). There is further evidence that the threat of future electoral sanction is also not driving legislators to converge toward the median (Fouirnaies and Hall 2018).

Local officeholders are said to face an additional pressure to converge arising from the inter-municipality competition over tax revenue (Tiebout 1956; Peterson 1981). This competition rewards cities that offer more favorable tax policy, and the same competition can also apply to law enforcement, driving mayors to take up more aggressive strategies for reducing crime or changing the way law enforcement officials respond to undocumented immigration. While some recent work is consistent with this model (Ferreira and Gyourko 2009), including some work studying local immigration policy (Williamson 2018), it is by no means settled (Gerber and Hopkins 2011; de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw 2016, 2018).

Among the most common explanations for partisan divergence is the citizen-candidate model (Alesina 1988; Besley and Coate 1997; Osborne and Slivinski 1996). This class of models, which points to candidate entry costs as an important factor in determining representation, is connected to a large empirical literature on the causes and consequences of candidate entry which finds that moderates are less likely to run (e.g., Besley 2004; Fox and Lawless 2005; Hall 2017; Thomsen 2014). The key idea is that, when running is costly, a candidate whose views are further from the other

candidate or candidates entering the race may be more wiling to pay the cost of entry to move policy in their direction. This dynamic can leave voters to choose between two candidates who are some distance from the median voter.

Most of our understanding about local partisan convergence comes from studies of taxation, government spending, and government debt. But, while Republicans and Democrats have different views on national economic policy, local economic policy may not be as polarized among voters (Jensen et al. 2019). Immigration enforcement, on the other hand, is a highly polarized issue at the national and local level. Accordingly, if the conditons exist for divergence on any issue at the local level, immigration enforcement is one of the domains in which we would be most likely to observe it. Indeed, Creek and Yoder (2012) find that states with Republican governors are more likely to pursue tough immigration enforcement policies. Further, the actions of many local officials are hemmed in by other political and bureaucratic actors. The existing empirical research on partisanship in local immigration enforcement has primarily focussed on police, finding that they behave in a nonpartisan way, particularly when the are accountable to a city council rather than a partisan mayor (Lewis and Ramakrishnan 2007; Lewis et al. 2012). This is consistent with their role as bureaucratic policy implementers. But, the work that includes sheriffs finds that they are more exposed to the electoral dynamics described above (Varsanyi et al. 2012). Sheriffs also have a greater capacity to act on these electoral pressures given their independence and joint role as policymaker and implementer. And, despite their more limited role in policing, sheriffs are responsible for the majority of local jails, a policy domain in which they can often exert significant discretion.

These results offer competing predictions for whether we should observe partisan divergence among sheriffs on immigration enforcement. While re-election incentives and inter-municipality competition may drive convergence, if these forces are not strong enough, candidate entry could drive divergence. But the typical set up of the citizen candidate model that results in divergence may not apply in this case. The common version of the model is that costs are similar for all potential candidates across the ideological spectrum, and perhaps even highest for moderate candidates. The case of sheriffs offers a potential alternative scenario: If law enforcement experience leads people to adopt a view on immigration enforcement within a narrow range, and candidates for sheriff need

law enforcement credentials to run,[4] the costs of running may be too high to permit entry to anyone outside of a narrow band of the ideological spectrum.

In the following analyses, I first present evidence that Democratic and Republican sheriffs from similar counties make similar immigration enforcement decision. I then demonstrate that this is not a consequence of my choice to study immigration enforcement, finding that Democratic and Republican members of Congress from similar districts vote quite differently on immigration enforcement matters and that Democratic and Republican members of the public from the same county report different views on immigration enforcement. I also present evidence that this similarity between sheriffs of different parties does not hold on all issues—Democratic sheriff candidates are much more likely to donate to Democratic candidates for state and federal office than Republicans and vice versa. Finally, I test two substantive explanations based on the models above. First, I assess whether sheriff candidates hold more similar views on immigration enforcement across party, following the logic of heterogenous entry costs I described above. Second, I estimate the effect of term limits on partisan convergence. The evidence I present in both cases is only suggestive, but it is more consistent with the heterogenous entry cost story than an electoral accountability model.

3   Sheriffs and Immigration Enforcement

3.1   Sheriff Elections

Unlike most other law enforcement officials, the vast majority of sheriffs are elected. Out of 3,142 counties or county equivalents, 3,083 in 46 states elect a county sheriff.[5] Five states, and a small number of counties outside of these states, hold nonpartisan sheriff elections.[6] The remaining 41 states, totaling to more than 2,700 counties, hold partisan sheriff elections.

---

[4]More than 95% of sheriffs have prior law enforcement experience (Farris and Holman 2015, 2017). Fourteen states codify this by requiring all sheriff candidates to have prior law enforcement experience.

[5]Alaska, Connecticut, and Hawaii do not have local sheriffs. Rhode Island's sheriffs are appointed by the Governor. A small number of counties outside of these states, such as the boroughs of New York City, do not elect a sheriff.

[6]These states are California, Louisiana, Minnesota, Oregon, and Tennessee.

Figure 1: **Status of Unauthorized Immigrant from Arrest to Deportation, Secure Communities Program.** The process of identifying and removing an unauthorized immigrant accused of committing a crime in the interior often requires cooperation between federal and local law and immigration enforcement. Decisions made independently by actors at the federal or local level can make it much harder for a particular unauthorized immigrant to be identified or removed.

```
┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌───────────┐   ┌────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
│  Local   │──▶│ Sheriff  │──▶│    FBI    │──▶│Immigration │──▶│   ICE    │
│  Arrest  │   │ Custody  │   │Background │   │  Status    │   │ Detainer │
│          │   │          │   │   Check   │   │   Check    │   │ Request  │
└──────────┘   └──────────┘   └───────────┘   └────────────┘   └──────────┘
                                                                     │
                                                                     ▼
               ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
               │Deportation│  │   ICE    │   │ Sheriff  │
               │   Pro-    │◀─│Detention │◀──│  Com-    │
               │ ceedings  │  │          │   │ pliance  │
               └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘
```
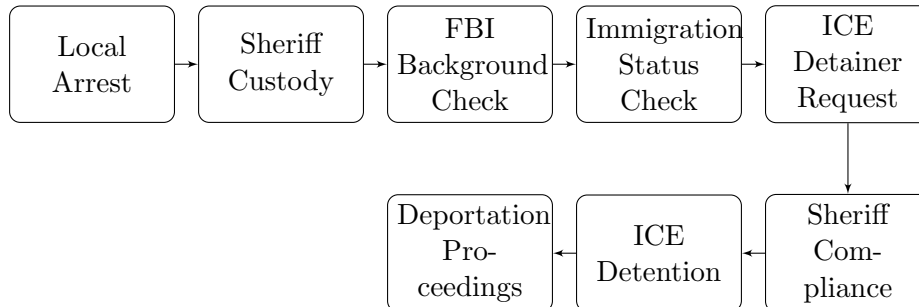
3.2 The Role of Sheriffs in Immigration Enforcement

Immigration policy is largely a federal matter, but the federal authorities request help from sheriffs at a few important junctions.[7] Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is responsible for most interior enforcement of federal immigration law. Although it is not a legal mandate of their office,[8] local law enforcement agencies still come across immigrants who are unlawfully in the US in the course of their regular duties. Sheriffs, who are responsible for most jails, run federal background checks on most people who come into their custody. These background checks are administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigations and, in recent years, due to the federal program Secure Communities and the Priority Enforcement Program, have been shared with the DHS. The DHS then checks the immigration status of the individual held by a sheriff. If the DHS flags the person being held as an unauthorized immigrant, ICE can choose to send a request to the sheriff asking that she detain the immigrant for an additional 48 hours beyond scheduled release so that ICE can pick up the person and process them through the immigration system. Figure 1 describes the basic path an unauthorized immigrant could take from arrest to deportation under the program that is currently active, Secure Communities.

ICE started operations in 2003 but detainer requests were relatively uncommon in the early years of the bureau because ICE had limited resources to determine whether a jail was holding a potential

---

[7]For a helpful discussion of the history of federal, state, and local immigration policy, see Provine et al. (2016).

[8]The supremacy clause of the US Constitution has been read by numerous courts to imply that local and state law enforcement officials cannot be compelled to enforce immigration law. See Galarza v Szalczyk from the US Court of Appeals for the Third District. This was an active area of litigation throughout the period I am studying.

candidate for removal (Cox and Miles 2013). In 2008, ICE began rolling out the Secure Communities program as part of the post-9/11 mission to encourage data sharing across law enforcement agencies and to focus interior immigration enforcement on migrants who had committed crimes or were potential terrorism threats. This program allowed ICE to detain migrants accused and convicted of crimes more easily. The program was first rolled out primarily in South Florida and along the US-Mexico border. According to calculations in Miles and Cox (2014), over 90% of the population living along the US-Mexico border lived in a county where Secure Communities was active by 2010, and approximately 80% of the US population lived in a county where Secure Communities was active by 2012. Cox and Miles (2013) also find that the program was rolled out earlier in places with larger Hispanic and foreign born populations. They also find that political factors, such as Republican presidential vote share and local anti-immigration legislation, do not independently predict early activation. In 2013, all law enforcement agencies not yet enrolled were automatically made participants. In 2015, the Obama administration replaced Secure Communities with the Priority Enforcment Program through which the FBI continued to share fingerprint data with the DHS, but ICE was instructed to only pursue national security threats and individuals convicted of committed a serious crime (Alsan and Yang 2018). The Trump administration reactivated Secure Communities in 2017.

More than 368,000 deportations since 2009 began with an apprehension under a well-defined interior enforcement program. Of those deportations, over 153,000 were facilitated by the Secure Communities program. Another 115,000 were initiated under the 287(g) program that also enlists local law enforcement in cooperation with ICE.[9]

4 Empirical Approach

4.1 Competitive Partisan Elections for Sheriff, 2003-2016

For this project, I gathered an original dataset of 3,500 sheriff elections held between 2003 and 2016. Fifteen states with partisan sheriff elections collect most or all county-level election results at the state level for some of the years I am studying.[10] I collected all of these election results.

---

[9]Like other immigration enforcement measures, I calculated these statistics using data from TRAC.

[10]These states are Arkansas, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, and West Virginia.

I supplemented this data by collecting sheriff election results from 2003 to 2016 for every county with a population over 100,000 according to the 2000 Census. I collected this data from each of the roughly 400 county election boards directly. I focused on large counties because they are more likely to have a large enough population of unauthorized immigrants that at least some would end up in a sheriff's custody and be subject to a detainer request.

Table A.1 in the appendix compares the sample to all regularly-scheduled general elections for sheriffs that occurred from 2003-2016.[11] My sample covers 80% of all partisan sheriff elections held in high-population counties during this period and 32% of all sheriff elections. Since the large, partisan sample is nearly a census, the elections I collected from large counties look very similar to the full set of elections held in large counties in terms of geographic distribution, voting population, recent presidential voting, and partisan control of the governor's office and state legislature. Overall, my sample includes fewer sheriff races in the Midwest and more everywhere else.[12] I also have more elections in larger counties and counties with larger foreign-born populations. All told, this means the estimates are a weighted average of the count-level treatment effects where large counties are weighted up. In the Appendix, I report the main results comparing large-only estimates and all-county estimates.

37% of all partisan races in my sample, and 48% of the large-county elections, have at least one Democrat and Republican competing. In both the full sample and the large-county sample, roughly 55% of races have two or more candidates receiving votes. The typical vote share for the winner is 78%, coding uncontested candidates as receiving 100% vote share. Table A.2 reports these descriptives in full. For comparison, I include the same statistics for US House general elections held during this period, 83% of which had a Republican and Democrat running and only 6% of which were uncontested.

4.2   Detainer Requests and Compliance, 2006-2015

I also collected data on detainer requests from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University. Their team uses Freedom of Information Act requests to acquire

---

[11]My data on sheriff election timing comes from the National Sheriff's Association, with minor corrections based on records from county election administrators.

[12]Data on state partisan control comes from Carl Klarner's State Partisan Balance Data and Governors Dataset. Presidential voting by county come from Dave Leip's Atlas of Presidential Elections.

data on every detainer request made by ICE and records on whether the subject of the request is ultimately detained. Their data also notes the institution that receives the request, the state and county where the institution is located, whether the institution is run by the county, city, state, or federal government, and the month in which the request was sent. I used their database to obtain the number of detainer requests received every month by each institution broken out by whether ICE ultimately detained the individual. I hold out the institutions not run by the county sheriff, such as city jails and state and federal prisons, and aggregated the data to the county-by-year level.

This data highlights the importance of the Secure Communities program. The roll out of the program coincided with a ramp up from 110,000 requests and 80,000 detainees in 2008 to 201,000 requests and 115,000 detainees in 2011. As federal policy changed to limit detainer request for those not convicted of a crime, the number of detainer requests has dropped. Only 83,000 requests were made in 2014—39,000 resulted in ICE detaining the individual. Figure A.1 in the appendix presents these trends.

This data from TRAC can be further divided by whether the arrestee was convicted of a crime and, if so, how serious. The seriousness ranges from level 3, which is composed of misdemeanors, to level 1 which captures what ICE calls "aggravated felonies," including murder, rape, and drug trafficking.

My primary measure of sheriff immigration policy is the rate at which sheriffs comply with detainer requests. I calculate a sheriff's compliance rate as the share of detainer requests that result in detention. This means that when no detainer requests are made, I do not have a measure for the compliance rate for that county and time period.

I focus on this measure for two substantive reasons and a methodological reason. First, sheriffs are able to manipulate this outcome directly. One of the challenges in previous work studying the behavior of executives is that they often have limited control over outcomes we can easily measure—fiscal policies are often set in part by legislatures, broad economic indicators are likely not immediately responsive to executive choices, etc. By contrast, even offices that receive many requests, resulting in a good measure of the underlying willingness to comply, display considerable heterogeneity in compliance rates. Roughly 20% of sheriffs receiving more than 80 requests comply less than 30% of the time or more than 80% of the time with a standard deviation of 18%. Figure

9

A.2 in the appendix plots the distribution of compliance rates by decile of the number of requests received.

Second, despite considerable media coverage of outspoken sheriffs, most sheriffs do not join in a 287(g) cooperation agreement with ICE or pursue policies that earn them the "sanctuary" label. The compliance rate is a continuous measure that allows me to compare sheriff who do not state a policy publicly to those who do.

I also focus on compliance rates because they do not require any normalization. Most outcomes that a sheriff can affect, such as the number of detainer requests with which they comply or the number of background checks they submit, have an unobserved base rate. Though the causal identification strategy I explain below ensures that these base rates are equal for Democratic and Republican sheriffs in expectation, the unobserved base rates increase the variance of the estimated difference between Republican and Democratic sheriffs. The compliance rate solves this problem at a cost. The ideal way to normalize the measure of compliance would be to use the expected number of opportunities for ICE to send a detainer request. This is unobservable. Instead, I use the number of requests ICE makes. Since this number could be impacted by strategic choices ICE makes in response to the behavior of the sheriff, it is also an outcome in some sense and could introduce a bias. I am able to check this, and I present these checks along with the results.

4.3 Other Ways Sheriffs Can Impact Immigration Policy

The compliance rate is a useful measure of the immigration enforcement policy a sheriff is pursuing because it captures the outcome of an important immigration policy decision sheriffs have the authority to make, it is sensitive to many policies a sheriff can implement, and it has an interpretable scale. But, sheriffs are also able to change policies in ways that impact local immigration enforcement but may not change the compliance rate. I obtained two additional datasets that measure some of these policy outcomes. The first is a dataset on the policies sheriffs say they had toward cooperation with ICE as of 2015, collected by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. This data was collected over time with some updates after 2015 without a clear note regarding when the policy changed. I treat these policies as though they were active in 2015 for the analysis.

I also collected data from reports ICE made to Congress on the progress of the Secure Communities program. These reports include roughly annual updates on the number of background

checks submitted from a particular county, how many identified an unauthorized immigrant, and how many identified people were ultimately deported. This data runs from 2012 to 2015.

4.4 Regression Discontinuity Design in Sheriff Elections

For my main results, I estimate regression functions of the form

$$Y_{ct} = \mu + \tau Dem_{ct} + f(V_{ct}) + X_{ct}\beta + \epsilon_{ct}$$

where Y_{ct} is an immigration enforcement-related outcome in county c and year t. Dem_{ct} is a dummy variable indicating a Democratic sheriff winning the election, and $f(V_{ct})$ is a flexible function of the running variable which is the percentage of the two-party vote share going to the Democrat minus 50 so that a 50-50 election is 0 on this scale. I subset the data to cases where the winner and runner-up are a Democrat and Republican in any order. This means that τ is the effect of having a Democrat elected as the sheriff conditional on a 50-50 tie between a Republican and Democrat. Finally, X_{ct} is a set of controls that I leave out of most specifications but include to increase the precision of my treatment effect estimate and as a robustness check.

The key identifying assumption behind this design is that the compliance rate of Republican and Democratic sheriffs would, hypothetically, change smoothly with the Democratic vote share near the 50-50, perfect tie threshold (Imbens and Lemieux 2008; Lee and Lemieux 2010). This is a highly plausible assumption. As Eggers et al. (2015) point out, a violation of this assumption would require incredibly good information about voting patterns in the county or illegal vote editing, and this capacity would have to be differential across parties. They also test this assumption in a large number of American elections, and some outside of the US, and find very little evidence for violations.[13] I report a test of this assumption with my data in Table A.10 in the appendix. Though the tests are somewhat noisy, I do not find strong evidence for bias.

Still, even a randomized experiment can have imbalances due to sampling variability. This can happen in an observational setting too. As I mentioned above, I report some estimates with controls, including a flexible function of the lag of the outcome variable, to adjust for any remaining pre-treatment imbalances between the potential outcomes at the 50-50 threshold.

---

[13]For a fuller discussion of balance in election-based RD designs, see Caughey and Sekhon (2011); de la Cuesta and Imai (2016); Grimmer et al. (2012); Snyder (2005).

When setting up this design, I consider a county in a given year its own experimental unit. The treatment is assigned to a cluster of years for a county based on the statutory term length. Based on this design, the average difference between counties that just barely elect a Democratic sheriff and those that just barely elect a Republican should be zero for all fixed county characteristics. For example, places that just barely elect a Democratic sheriff should include a similar share of rural counties as places that barely elect and Republican sheriff. Further, since the probability of joining Secure Communities early is not a consequence of local political control (Cox and Miles 2013), the share of early adopters should be the same for counties that barely elected a Republican sheriff as for those that barely elected a Democrat.

An important part of estimating the effect in a regression discontinuity design is to make sure that the functional form of f is appropriate. A bias-variance trade-off arises here in which one would like to use a flexible functional form, but if the true relationship between the potential outcomes and the running variable is a low-order polynomial, a more flexible functional form could produce an estimate in any given sample that is much further from the true effect. I address this by reporting the results using many functional forms and showing that estimate is robust to changes in the functional form and the subset of the data used to estimate the effect.

5   Results

5.1   Counties Represented by a Democratic and Republican Sheriff Comply with Detainer Requests at the Same Rate on Average

In Figure 2, I present a graphical version of the regression discontinuity design. The vertical axis represents a sheriff's compliance rate with ICE detainer requests in a given year. The horizontal axis is the Democratic sheriff's share of the two-party vote in the most recent sheriff election. The most striking feature of this figure is how similar the average compliance rate is across electoral environments. Counties in which the Democratic sheriff received around 65% of the two-party vote have a similar compliance rate to counties in which the Democratic sheriff won 35% of the vote. Consistent with this nearly flat relationship, there is almost no difference in average compliance rates at the discontinuity. It is important to note that the variable plotted on the vertical axis here is controlled by sheriffs. Previous work has shown that places that support Democrats at higher

12

Figure 2: **Republican and Democratic Sheriffs Comply with ICE Detainer Requests at the Same Rate.** Each of the large dots represent binned averages of the underlying data. The small dots are the raw data. The blue line comes from a third-order polynomial regression of compliance rate on Democratic vote share fit separately for counties with Democratic and Republican winners.
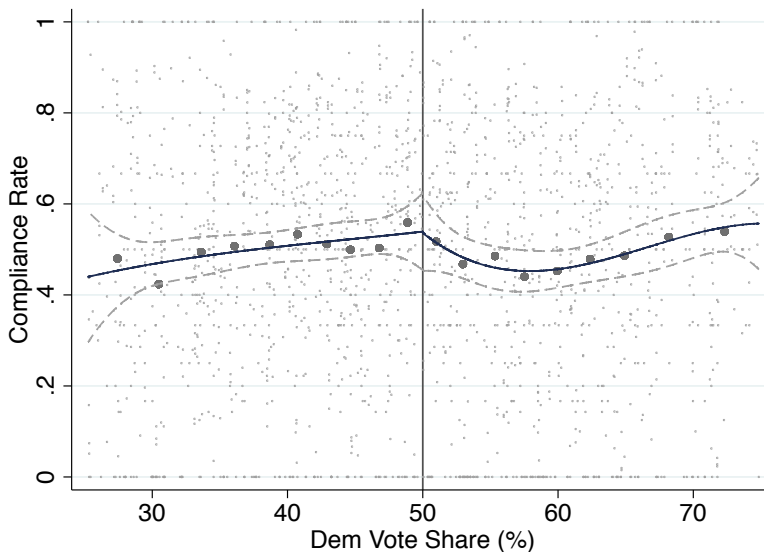
levels have more favorable policies toward unauthorized immigrants generally (Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015; Provine et al. 2016). This plot, instead, shows that the enforcement policies sheriffs choose on their own are relatively similar in more and less Republican-leaning counties.

I report formal estimates of the local average treatment effect in Table 1. The first row presents estimates of the effect using all elections in the specified bandwidth. Columns 1-4 report estimates from fitting a local linear, third-order polynomial, third-order spline, and fifth-order polynomial function of the running variable. In columns 5-8, I report estimates using the same functional forms as in columns 1-4, but I also adjust for the county's compliance rate in the year before the sheriff takes office. The compliance rate is changing throughout the years in my sample, meaning that the relationship between the compliance rate in time t and time $t - x$ is also changing. To address this, I include an interaction between a fully saturated set of dummies for year and election year as well as the election-year compliance rate. The last column reports the treatment effect estimated by the procedure described in Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014), which selects a bandwidth that minimizes the mean squared error of the treatment effect estimator and uses kernel regression with a triangular kernel.

Table 1: **Effect of Democratic Sheriff on Detainer Compliance Rate.** Democratic and Republican sheriffs representing similar counties at similar times comply with immigration detainer requests at nearly the same rate.

	Detainer Compliance Rate [0,1]								
Dem Sheriff Win	-0.01	-0.04	-0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.01	-0.00	-0.06
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
N	947	1894	1894	1894	722	1467	1467	1467	760
Elections	346	688	688	688	257	523	523	523	447
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year-Specific Lag DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	8

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0. Year-Specific Lag DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable interacted with a fully-saturated set of year-by- election-year dummies.

Across specifications, the treatment effect estimates tend to be negative yet close to zero. The first row in column five, for example, reports a 2-percentage point lower compliance rate when a county's sheriff is a Democrat versus a Republican. Returning to Figure 2, note that a large share of counties produce compliance rates above 70% or below 30%. Figure A.2 further shows that even counties receiving many requests have compliance rates outside of that range. A 2-percentage-point difference is barely noticeable in the natural variation of compliance rates. Taking the 95% confidence interval of the estimate from my preferred specification, column seven, only includes effects of -10%, which is still quite small relative to the authority sheriffs are granted and the natural variation in the measure. These plausible effects look particularly small when compared to the change in sheriff compliance rate in California from 2013 to 2014 when the state passed a law banning compliance for misdemeanors and encouraging sheriffs to reject more detainer requests. From 2013 to 2014, the compliance rate of California's sheriffs dropped by 40% while the compliance rate of sheriffs in the rest of the country stayed roughly the same.

As I described above, the outcome is undefined when the sheriff's office receives no detainer requests and is therefore coded as missing. If these observations are not missing at random, this could bias my estimates. I conduct an initial check of this by limiting the analysis to large counties since they are, ex ante, more likely to have received at least one detainer request and therefore have

a defined compliance rate. These estimates using only large-population counties, which I report in Table A.11, are noisier but consistent with the estimates from the full sample. I also present estimates in Table A.13 based on alternative transformations of the total number of ICE detentions, and reach a similar conclusion.

The large-population county estimates, which I report in Table A.11, also offer evidence that the partisan gap is similar in small counties and large counties. I draw this conclusion by noticing that the estimates based on large counties alone are similar to these estimates using both large and small counties.

5.2 The Number of Detainer Requests Is Not Affected by the Partisanship of the Sheriff

One potential threat to my interpretation is the fact that the denominator in my measure of sheriff compliance is also post-treatment. To see the possible issue, assume that Democrats are in fact less likely to comply with a detainer request. If ICE knows this, they may respond by sending fewer requests, focusing on the requests with which the sheriff will comply. The effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the compliance rate could be zero in this case, but not because Democratic and Republican sheriffs implement the same policy.

I investigate this possibility by estimating the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the total number of requests ICE sends. I normalize this measure of ICE response by dividing by the population as of the 2000 Census. The regression discontinuity design does not require normalization for the estimator to be unbiased, but without it, small changes in the number of requests in large counties could drive the results. On the other hand, a bad choice of normalization factor—one unrelated to the expected number of requests pre-treatment—could also introduce noise. Unfortunately, the expected number of requests cannot be directly estimated because it is always potentially subject to a political process. Instead, I choose the most plausible and universally available normalization factor from the Census. I report the resulting estimates in Table 2.

Counter to the concern, I find that the number of requests per capita that the sheriff receives, if anything, increases when a Democrat is elected to sheriff. This result is quite unstable across specifications, though. I suspect the main reason for this instability is the per capita normalization. Since my measure of population is from 2000, prior to all of the elections I am studying, the

Table 2: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Number of Detainer Requests per 1,000 Residents.**
Democratic and Republican sheriffs representing similar counties at similar times receive similar numbers of detainer requests.

	Requests per 1,000 Residents								
Dem Sheriff Win	0.12	-0.02	0.22	0.09	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.16
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.16)
N	1346	2590	2590	2590	1271	2396	2396	2396	1065
Elections	460	882	882	882	431	813	813	813	439
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year-Specific Lag DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	8

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0. Year-Specific Lag DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable interacted with a fully-saturated set of year-by- election-year dummies.

normalization factor is constant from year to year for a given county. Accordingly, the columns that add in controls for lagged requests per capita adjust for imbalances due to the normalization factor and are more stable. These four columns imply that ICE sends roughly the same number of requests, regardless of whether the sheriff is a Democrat or Republican. In Table A.14, I present estimates of the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on alternative transformations of number of detainer requests and reach the same conclusion.

Looking at Figure 1 again, it is clear that there are multiple places in the pipeline from arrest to deportation that could be effected by choices the sheriff or ICE make. I have gathered administrative data on all of these, and tested the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on these outcomes using the same regression discontinuity design. In Table A.15, I report the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the total number of background checks a sheriff runs, the number of background checks that result in an immigration database match, and the number of detainer requests with which the sheriff complies. I find that, at all other points along the pipeline from arrest to deportation, Republican and Democratic sheriffs behave similarly, and ICE makes similar choices regardless of the party of the sheriff.

5.3 Counties Represented by a Democratic and Republican Sheriff Are Similar across Other Immigration Policies and Outcomes

In line with the main findings, I find no effects of obtaining a Democratic sheriff on the stated immigration enforcement policies in the county as collected by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. I estimate the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on participation in the 287(g) program, contracting out jail beds for immigrant detention, alerting ICE of immigrants, and limits on ICE interrogations in the jail. Some of the estimates are noisy, making large effects, such as a 25% difference in the probability of participating in the program, fall within the 95% confidence interval. But, for the two policies with narrow confidence intervals—287(g) participation and detention contracts—the effect is nearly zero. I have included the formal estimates in Table A.17 in the appendix.

5.4 Away from Threshold, Convergence Is Similar under a Plausible Alternative Identifying Assumption

The regression discontinuity design I present above is a strategy for identifying convergence in places where the election was a 50-50 tie between a Republican and a Democratic sheriff candidate. This means that the effect is local to places where changing the partisan control of the sheriff office is most likely and where we might be most interested in the returns to changing partisan control of the office. But, if electoral pressures are particularly strong at this threshold, we might worry that partisans only converge in a small set of unusual counties and points in time. I explore this electoral pressure mechanism further below, but as a first check of whether the convergence is more general, I estimate convergence using a generalized difference-in-differences design. This design relies on the common trend assumption, which is stronger than the continuity assumption necessary for the regression discontinuity design, but the estimand is a weighted average of convergence for a more general population. The results, reported in Tables A.4, A.5, and A.6, are quite similar to the results from the regression discontinuity design, suggesting that convergence is not unique to the 50-50 threshold.

5.5 Convergence Is Similar with and without State Policy

During the period I am studying, seven states with partisan elected sheriffs implemented a policy that limited the ability of sheriffs to control the detainer request process.[14] The implementation dates range from 2007 to 2015, and the policies include changes that make it harder to comply and those making it harder to not comply with a detainer request. These types of policy changes offer an illuminating yet somewhat limited natural experiment: does the difference in compliance rates between Democrats and Republicans get smaller when these policies go into place? I test this possibility using a triple differences design. I include county fixed effects and year fixed effects, using this to isolate the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on compliance. I interact the indicator for a Democrat with an indicator for restrictive state policy and also include those indicators separately. I find that the coefficient on the interaction is 0.01 (s.e. 0.06) with the coefficient on the indicator for a Democrat being -0.03 (s.e. 0.03). The results, which I report in Table A.18, imply that the effect of electing a Democrat rather than a Republican sheriff is similar regardless of whether the state imposes constraints on the sheriff's behavior. State policy is most likely not the reason I observe similar compliance rates under Republican and Democratic sheriffs.

5.6 Republican and Democratic Sheriffs Appear to Converge in 2017 and 2018

One additional potential threat to my interpretation of this result is that nearly all of my data comes from a single Democratic presidency. If convergence is different based on the president executing immigration law, I may draw incorrect inferences about the drivers of convergence. Data on the number of detainer requests ending in detention is only available through 2015 at the time of writing. Instead, I assess convergence using two additional datasets: a list of 287(g) sheriff cooperation agreements active in 2018, and a list of sheriffs identified by the Federation for American Immigration Reform as implementing sanctuary policies as of 2018.[15]

The data on policies active in 2018 provide more support for partisan convergence than strong divergence. My estimates of partisan convergence on immigration-related enforcement policy imply that Republican bare winners are somewhat more likely to implement a stricter enforcement policy

---

[14]These states are Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia.

[15]In the appendix, I also present estimates of the effect on ICE arrests in 2017 and 2018, but the limited sample makes it difficult to draw substantive inferences.

than a Democratic bare winner, but the estimates are too noisy to rule out complete convergence. To tease out whether the effects are more consistent with convergence or partisan polarization, I run a horse race between two alternative models of sheriff policy selection: one in which policy choice is independent of party, and one in which only Democratic sheriffs select sanctuary policies and only Republican sheriffs join 287(g). Across both models, I hold the share of sheriffs participating in either program constant. I then put these measure together to make an enforcement scale where 1 means participating in a 287(g) agreement, -1 means implementing a sanctuary policy, and 0 mean the sheriff does neither. In Table A.9, I present estimates of the probability that the effect I estimated arises from the complete convergence model as opposed to the partisan separation model, starting with the prior that both models are equally probable. The probability of complete convergence ranges from .48 to .78 across regression specifications. This means that, while the evidence is not dispositive, if we are choosing between complete convergence and a model of strong divergence, we should favor the model of complete convergence. Altogether, these results do not suggest that sheriffs are taking radically different positions across party in 2017 and 2018.

6   Explanations for Partisan Convergence

Why do Democratic and Republican sheriffs choose similar immigration enforcement policies? First, I ask whether the issue of local immigration enforcement is sufficiently split along partisan lines to offer a useful issue for studying the partisan behavior of sheriffs. I find that Democrats and Republicans living in the same counties hold very different views on local immigration enforcement, and that legislators from similar districts but opposing parties also cast different immigration enforcement votes in Congress. Next, I ask whether sheriff candidates are unusual members of their parties. I find that, while sheriff candidates donate to co-partisans, they hold similar immigration enforcement views across party. This is consistent with an ideologically constrained candidate pool, but not dispositive. Finally, I test whether this similarity is driven by reelection incentives. I find suggestive evidence that the threat of reelection is not driving these results.

6.1 Immigration Enforcement Splits Lawmakers

One important potential explanation for my finding is that sheriffs are just as partisan as legislators, but immigration enforcement is not a partisan issue. The US House provides a nice baseline comparison for sheriffs. A large body of empirical work has demonstrated that members of the US House from different parties vote in markedly different ways even after for adjusting for district tastes (e.g., Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Bafumi and Herron 2010; Lee, Moretti, and Butler 2004). Is immigration enforcement one of the issues that splits Republicans and Democrats?

I use a regression discontinuity design to test this, comparing the voting behavior of members of opposing parties serving similar, competitive districts. I analyze roll call votes on four pieces of legislation from 2007, 2012, 2013, and 2017. The issues, described in the appendix, all relate to programs that encourage local cooperation with ICE, either changing funding for them, constraining them, or punishing localities for not participating. Figure 3 presents the graphical results. I report the formal results in Table A.19 in the appendix.

I find that Democrats are much less likely to support aggressive local immigration enforcement in all four cases. For some of the House votes, a large share of the difference between Republicans and Democrats is explained by local district qualities. But, in all four cases, the party of the member matters even in the identical districts at the threshold between just barely electing a Democrat or Republican. The votes occurred at different times throughout my analysis window and were on different issues. Accordingly, it is difficult to say whether these partisan differences are getting larger or the votes they are taking are focusing more on the areas where the parties differ. Either way, these results rule out the possibility that the national parties have similar positions on local immigration enforcement. And they provide a useful baseline, highlighting the puzzle of sheriffs implementing the same policy regardless of party.

6.2 Immigration Enforcement Splits Citizens

Voting patterns in the US House rule out partisan agreement on local immigration enforcement as an explanation for sheriff convergence, but House members are subject to logrolling and strong-arming that may allow members to cooperate and make choices closer to the national party's

Figure 3: **The Effect of Democratic House Member on Anti-Sanctuary Votes.** Republican members of the US House of Representatives are much more likely to support bills or amendments that punish localities for failing to work with federal immigration enforcement in some way than are their Democratic colleagues. This is true even in districts with nearly identical preferences. The votes in 2007, 2012, and 2013 were amendments to Department of Homeland Security appropriations bills. The vote in 2017 was on HR 3003, titled the No Sanctuary For Criminals Act.
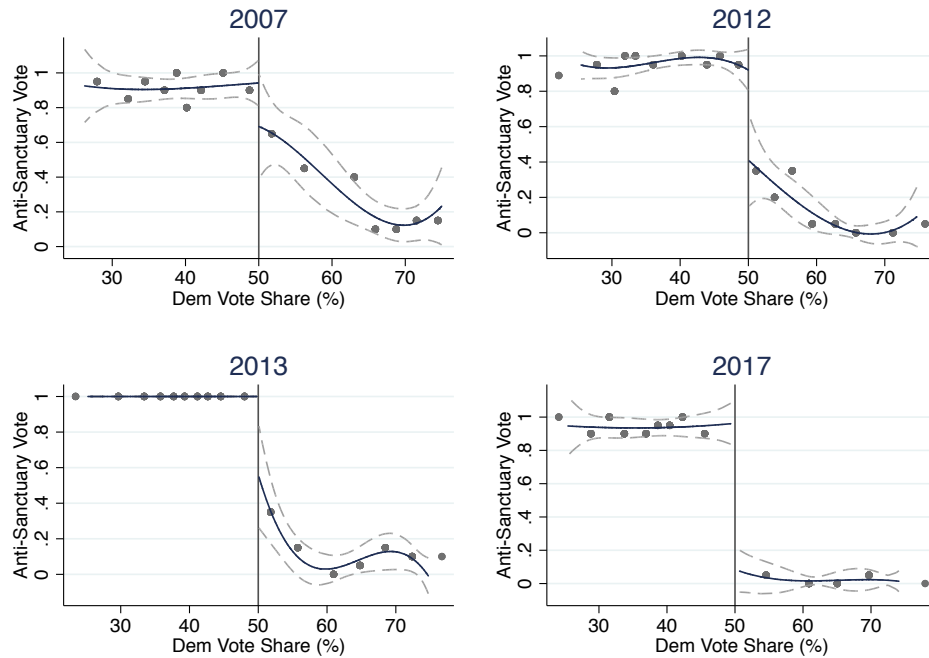
preference than their district's. Further, immigration preferences may be much more ideologically homogeneous within a county than a congressional district.

In order to get around these limitations of the US House regression discontinuity design, I estimate within-county partisan differences on immigration policy preferences using the CCES. Even compared to other members of their county, Democrats and Republicans respond differently to questions about immigration policy, including immigration enforcement. These differences also persist across census regions. And these differences are similar for counties at the 50-50 tie threshold between electing a Democratic or Republic sheriff. I report the average differences for individual survey questions from 2006 to 2016 in Table 3. Differences on measures two and five in the table, reported in columns two, five, and six, are the most relevant here because they ask directly about live immigration law enforcement matters. These within-county differences range from 21%—Midwestern Democrats being more likely to favor a Senate proposal to offer citizenship

to undocumented immigrants in 2006—to 58%—Western Republicans being more likely to support police asking anyone about their immigration status as of 2010. In 2016, the CCES repeated a question it asked in 2014 about whether the US government should identify and remove undocumented immigrants, and across both years and regions Republicans were between 39% and 49% more likely to agree. The last row reports partisan gaps at the RDD threshold of between 32% and 56% across an array of questions demonstrating that, if sheriffs were randomly drawn from the full set of co-partisans in their county and implemented their ideal policy, the compliance rate and other policy outcomes should differ based on the political party of the sheriff.

Table 3: **Differences in Immigration Attitudes by Party Within County.** Respondents to the CCES who identify themselves as aligned with Democrats respond more negatively to questions about strict immigration enforcement and more favorably to questions about pro-immigration measures than do Republicans. This is true even when compared to Republicans who live in their county. This within-county relationship holds across all four census regions and at the threshold between electing a Democratic and Republican sheriff.

	2006 (1)	2010 (2)	2012 (3)	2012 (4)	2014 (5)	2016 (5)
Dem	-0.27	-0.50	-0.32	-0.42	-0.41	-0.44
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Dem * West	-0.42	-0.58	-0.37	-0.49	-0.49	-0.49
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Dem * South	-0.26	-0.50	-0.31	-0.41	-0.41	-0.44
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Dem * Northeast	-0.30	-0.51	-0.30	-0.41	-0.41	-0.42
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Dem * Midwest	-0.21	-0.45	-0.32	-0.41	-0.38	-0.44
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Dem | Tied Sheriff Race	-0.38	-0.56	-0.32	-0.51	-0.40	-0.51
	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.09)
N	28984	47952	45847	45847	44772	51919
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each column presents results for a survey measure and survey year. All responses are coded so that the reponse most similar to support for enforcement is 1 and the other response is 0. The measures, in order from 1 to 5, are about citizenship for undocumented immigrants, the ability of police to question people about the citizenship, denial of citizenship to children of undocumented immigrants, prohibitions on hospital care and public school use by undocumented immigrants, and identifying and deporting undocumented immigrants. The regressions are reweighted so that each county is counted equally rather than weighting the estimates toward places with higher populations. The last set of partisan split estimates are estimated using a regression with a flag for Democratic respondents interacted with a third order polynomial of the RDD running variable fit separately on either side of the 50-50 tie between a Democratic and Republican sheriff.

6.3 Democratic Sheriffs Donate to Liberal Candidates, Republicans Donate to Conservatives

Even if Democrats and Republicans hold different views on immigration policy within a given county, Democratic and Republican sheriff candidates running against one another could hold similar views. Fourteen states require candidates for sheriff to have prior experience or training in law enforcement. And nearly all elected sheriffs outside of these states have law enforcement experience even where it is not strictly required (Farris and Holman 2017). This sometimes statutory requirement for running limits the pool of possible candidates. It may be that Democrats and Republicans with law enforcement backgrounds have similar policy views across the board based on shared experiences.

The most direct test of broad ideological differences between sheriff candidates of opposing parties suggests that there are meaningful gaps between partisans. I use Adam Bonica's Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME) to understand the political choices sheriffs make in their personal lives (Bonica 2013). DIME uses campaign finance data from the state and federal level to construct a measure of ideology called the CFScore. This data is often used to measure the ideology of candidates by looking at the donations they receive. Instead, I focus on the donations sheriffs make in their personal capacity. I find that the donations Democratic sheriff candidates make earn them CFScores that are different by about two-thirds of the distance between Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Paul Ryan.[16] The results are similar when I compare all Democratic sheriff candidates to all Republican sheriff candidates rather than comparing sheriff candidates running against one another. These results are reported in Table A.20 in the appendix.

This result comes with two important caveats. First, most sheriff candidates do not make political donations that appear in the DIME. Accordingly, this is only a comparison among candidates who are sufficiently engaged in national or state politics to make a donation and may overstate the degree to which the average Democratic sheriff candidate differs from the average Republican candidate. This analysis also depends on CFScores from sheriff candidates who make only a few donations. The CFScores, then, are quite imprecise for a particular individual. Nevertheless, the donation patterns suggest that sheriffs typically give to state and national co-partisans.

---

[16]Nancy Pelosi has a CFScore of -1.124. Paul Ryan has a CFScore of 1.071

Figure 4: **Smaller Partisan Differences Among Sheriffs Than Public.** In surveys fielded in the same year and asking similar questions, sheriffs responded in a more similar way across party than members of the general public living in the same counties as the sheriffs. The surveys asked whether the respondent approves or disapproves of increased border enforcement ("border") and police asking about immigration status ("inquire"). The partisan split is larger on police-specific activities for the general public and smaller for sheriffs.
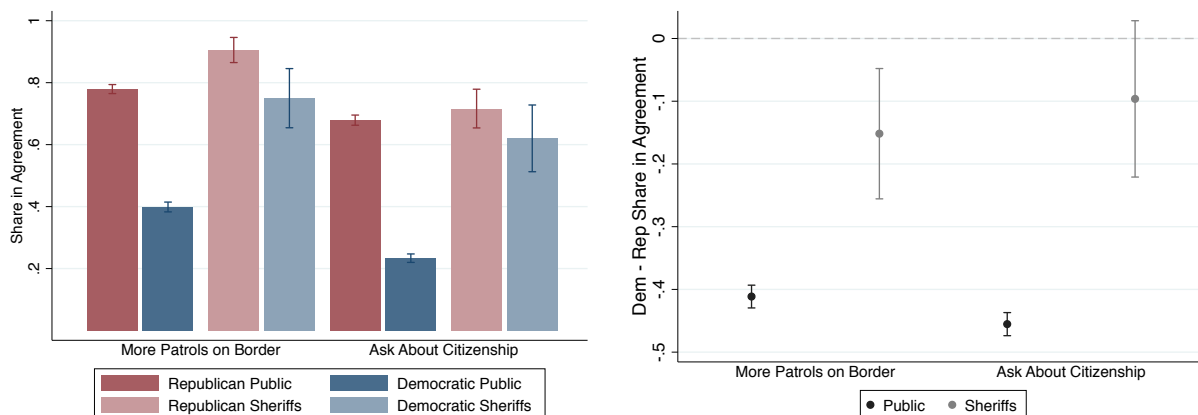
6.4 Democratic and Republican Sheriffs Hold Similar Views on Their Role in Immigration Enforcement

The campaign finance-based results suggest that, on a broad set of issues, sheriffs who run as Democrats likely agree with Democrats more often, and likewise for Republicans. This does not necessarily mean that Republican and Democratic sheriff candidates share views on immigration enforcement.

This suggests one additional explanation for convergence: that Democrats and Republicans running for sheriff share views on immigration enforcement. Given existing data, I cannot test this directly—no one to my knowledge surveyed sheriff candidates during the period I am studying. Instead, I can test the joint explanation that candidate entry and selection together produce a set of candidates who hold similar policy views across party. I evaluate this explanation by re-analyzing a survey of sitting sheriffs conducted in 2012 by Farris and Holman (2017).[17]

In their survey, Farris and Holman ask sheriffs about their personal views on immigration policy. Two of the questions they ask are similar, though not identical, to two questions asked in the CCES

---

[17]While giving to candidates may plausibly be unrelated to their job, future candidates for sheriff are likely loathe to state views that about immigration enforcement that would make it difficult to get elected. Still, it is useful to see whether Democratic and Republican sheriff candidates say the have different immigration policy preferences.

during the same year.[18] The questions ask whether the respondent approves of increased border enforcement and police inquiring about immigration status. Figure 4 presents the degree to which Democrats and Republicans split on these questions across the two surveys, limiting the CCES respondents to those from counties from which I have a sheriff respondent. I find evidence that sheriffs are more similar across party than non-sheriffs. While neither of these questions directly addresses detainer requests, the question about police asking people to reveal their immigration status is relevant for the job of sheriff. On this question, the average share of Republicans supporting the policy by county is nearly 50% greater than the share of Democrats. Among sheriffs that difference is less than 10% and cannot be distinguished from zero given sampling variability. Most of the difference in this gap is driven by Democratic sheriffs holding more conservative views on immigration than their co-partisans in the public rather than Republican sheriffs holding more liberal views.

The pattern of responses across the two surveys suggests that sheriffs from different parties are more likely to agree on immigration policy than randomly selected citizens from opposing parties. Sheriffs are particularly likely to agree on an immigration enforcement matter directly relevant to their job. These results do not necessarily imply that the convergence in compliance rates is mostly a function of the types of people who become sheriff—sheriffs could be stating their public policy position when responding to the survey, and these positions could be impacted by their interests in reelection. But, given the anonymity of the survey, it is the best evidence supporting the joint entry and selection mechanism. It appears that, despite likely having different political views on many other issues, people who gain the Democratic nomination as sheriff have similar views on the sheriff's role and authority in immigration enforcement as do those who win as Republicans.

6.5 Convergence Is Similar When Facing Term Limits

The sheriff survey was conducted by interviewing sitting sheriffs. Most of those sheriffs are likely to run for sheriff again. Are the survey and the compliance rate results a consequence of these sheriffs pursuing a policy position that gets them reelected?

A key prediction of the Fearon (1999) model of electoral accountability is that, if an elected official is ideologically distant from the median voter, she will moderate to win reelection but

---

[18]I have included the exact language of the questions in the appendix.

Table 4: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Compliance Rate, Term Limited vs Non-Term Limited Sheriffs.** Democratic and Republic sheriffs who have reached a statutory term limit do not comply with detainer requests at noticeably different rates after adjusting for changes in the compliance rate over time and differences between counties that elect Democrats and Republicans. Term limited sheriffs comply with detainer requests at a higher rate, but this may reflect something about the types of sheriffs who make it to the term limit.

	Detainer Compliance Rate [0,1]			
Dem X Term Limited	-0.08	-0.02	0.00	-0.04
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.11)
Dem	-0.02	-0.03	-0.00	0.08
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Term Limited	0.00	0.07	0.07	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Candidates	91	91	91	91
Counties	45	45	45	45
N	326	326	326	326
Year FE	N	Y	Y	Y
County FE	N	N	N	Y
County Controls	N	N	Y	N

Robust standard errors clustered by county in parentheses. The reported estimates come from counties with sheriff term limits in Colorado, Indiana, and New Mexico.

will not moderate when she faces no threat of removal from office. Further, if local officeholders, subject to Tiebout competition (Tiebout 1956)—or some other office-specific pressure, including those described by Williamson (2018)—pursue policies that maintain a tax base because it sends a valence signal to voters for reelection (e.g., Ashworth 2012), we should expect divergence when they no longer face reelection. In four states, sheriffs are limited to a certain number of terms in office.[19] Using a number of different panel regression specifications, I compare convergence with and without reelection incentives in place. The results are reported in Table 4.

Given the limited number of cases, the evidence is quite noisy. My approach also does not isolate the causal effect as cleanly as a fully within-candidate design (Fouirnaies and Hall 2018). I am unable to completely rule out the possibility that electoral sanction is responsible for the convergence. But recall the size of the difference between partisans in the public on immigration policy questions, the large difference in voting patterns on immigration enforcement between Democrats

---

[19]These states are Colorado, Indiana, New Mexico, and West Virginia.

and Republicans in the US House, and the 40-percentage-point drop in compliance rates among California sheriffs from 2013 to 2014. The upper bound implied by the 95% confidence intervals for all four of the estimates in Table 4 are not quite large enough to explain the difference between the preferences of sheriffs and their co-partisans in the general public.

7   Conclusion

In February, 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions went before a gathering of the National Sheriffs' Association, telling them, "[t]he most important thing that any government does is keep its citizens safe. The first civil right is the right to be safe. Too often, politics gets in the way of that mission."[20] His concern is broadly held, as many worry that local governments will pursue policies elected officials prefer or that are politically expedient rather than those that keep their community safe and cause the least harm. Many on the right point to sanctuary policies, while many on the left point to historic rates of incarceration, both as examples of political interference in the administration of justice.

In this paper, I ask whether the party that controls the office administering justice influences the law enforcement behavior. Many law enforcement decisions are hard to observe or made jointly by many institutional actors. It is also difficult to distinguish the effect of political control from other peculiarities in the local politics. I focus on a case in which a sheriff is given considerable discretion and all of her decisions are recorded. And I use a regression discontinuity design to isolate the independent effect of electing a Democratic rather than Republican sheriff. I find that Democratic and Republican sheriffs make remarkably similar choices regarding whether to comply with a federal request to detain an unauthorized immigrant.

This result runs contrary to the expectations we would have from reading the work on legislative voting patterns. I demonstrate this directly, showing that Democratic and Republican members of Congress from identical US House districts vote for quite different immigration enforcement policies once in office.

I investigate two possible explanations for why local law enforcement might be different. First, I ask whether the types of people who become sheriff are different from their co-partisans. I find

---

[20]https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/attorney-general-sessions-delivers-remarks-national-sheriffs-association.

evidence that, while sheriffs who win as Democrats likely hold more liberal views generally, and Republicans likely hold more conservative views, winning Democratic and Republican sheriffs hold similar views on immigration-related law enforcement matters. Second, I do not find support for the claim that sheriffs converge under electoral pressure. These results are consistent either with a different set of people running to be sheriff, and with elections favoring people within a narrow range of views, highlighting the role of candidate entry and selection over re-election incentives.

Going forward, an important question this paper leaves open is exactly what policy the candidate selection process produces.[21] A number of roles in local government, particularly in the criminal justice system, require special expertise or draw out particular types of candidates. My results point toward this selection process as a constraint on partisanship in the administration of justice. But, this constraint may also result in law enforcement and criminal justice officials that are less sensitive to the needs of their community.

---

[21]Gordon and Huber (2002) and Huber and Gordon (2004) discuss related questions in the area of criminal prosecutions and sentencing.

References

Alesina, Alberto. 1988. "Credibility and Policy Convergence in a Two-Party System with Rational Voters." *The American Economic Review* 78(4): 796–805.

Alsan, Marcella, and Crystal Yang. 2018. "Fear and the safety net: evidence from secure communities." Working Paper.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, Jr., and Charles Stewart, III. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in US House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 136–159.

Ashworth, Scott. 2012. "Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 183–201.

Bafumi, Joseph, and Michael C Herron. 2010. "Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 519–542.

Besley, Timothy. 2004. "Paying Politicians: Theory and Evidence." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 2(2-3): 193–215.

Besley, Timothy, and Anne Case. 2003. "Political Institutions and Policy Choices: Evidence From the United States." *Journal of Economic Literature* 41(1): 7–73.

Besley, Timothy, and Stephen Coate. 1997. "An Economic Model of Representative Democracy." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112(1): 85–114.

Bonica, Adam. 2013. "Ideology and Interests in the Political Marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 294–311.

Calonico, Sebastian, Matias D Cattaneo, and Rocio Titiunik. 2014. "Robust Nonparametric Confidence Intervals for Regression-Discontinuity Designs." *Econometrica* 82(6): 2295–2326.

Cattaneo, Matias D, Nicolas Idrobo, and Rocıo Titiunik. 2017. "A Practical Introduction to Regression Discontinuity Designs." Working Manuscript.

Caughey, Devin M., and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. 2011. "Elections and the Regression Discontinuity Design: Lessons from Close US House Races, 1942–2008." *Political Analysis* 19(4): 385–408.

Caughey, Devin, Yiqing Xu, and Christopher Warshaw. 2017. "Incremental Democracy: The Policy Effects of Partisan Control of State Government." *The Journal of Politics* 79(4): 1342–1358.

Cox, Adam B, and Thomas J Miles. 2013. "Policing Immigration." *University of Chicago Law Review* 80: 87.

Creek, Heather M, and Stephen Yoder. 2012. "With a Little Help from Our Feds: Understanding State Immigration Enforcement Policy Adoption in A merican Federalism." *Policy Studies Journal* 40(4): 674–697.

de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin, and Christopher Warshaw. 2016. "Mayoral Partisanship and Municipal Fiscal Policy." *The Journal of Politics* 78(4): 1124–1138.

de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin, and Christopher Warshaw. 2018. Politics in Forgotten Governments: The Partisan Composition of County Legislatures and County Fiscal Policies. Technical report Working paper.

de la Cuesta, Brandon, and Kosuke Imai. 2016. "Misunderstandings About the Regression Discontinuity Design in the Study of Close Elections." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 375–396.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy." *The Journal of Political Economy* 65(2): 135–150.

Eggers, Andrew C, Anthony Fowler, Jens Hainmueller, Andrew B Hall, and James M Snyder. 2015. "On the Validity of the Regression Discontinuity Design for Estimating Electoral Effects: New Evidence from Over 40,000 Close Races." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1): 259–274.

Farris, Emily M, and Mirya R Holman. 2015. "Public Officials and a "Private" Matter: Attitudes and Policies in the County Sheriff Office Regarding Violence Against Women." *Social Science Quarterly* 96(4): 1117–1135.

Farris, Emily M, and Mirya R Holman. 2017. "All Politics is Local? County Sheriffs and Localized Policies of Immigration Enforcement." *Political Research Quarterly* 70(1): 142–154.

Fearon, James D. 1999. "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance." In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. Bernard Mann, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes. Cambridge University Press pp. 55–97.

Ferreira, Fernando, and Joseph Gyourko. 2009. "Do Political Parties Matter? Evidence from US Cities." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124(1): 399–422.

Fouirnaies, Alexander, and Andrew B Hall. 2018. "How Do Electoral Incentives Affect Legislator Behavior?".

Fowler, Anthony, and Andrew B Hall. 2016. "The Elusive Quest for Convergence." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 11(1): 131–49.

Fox, Richard L, and Jennifer L Lawless. 2005. "To Run or Not to Run for Office: Explaining Nascent Political Ambition." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 642–659.

Gerber, Elisabeth R, and Daniel J Hopkins. 2011. "When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 326–339.

Gordon, Sanford C. 2009. "Assessing Partisan Bias in Federal Public Corruption Prosecutions." *American Political Science Review* 103(4): 534–554.

Gordon, Sanford C, and Gregory A Huber. 2002. "Citizen Oversight and the Electoral Incentives of Criminal Prosecutors." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 334–351.

Grimmer, Justin, Eitan Hersh, Brian Feinstein, and Daniel Carpenter. 2012. "Are Close Elections Random?" Presented at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. https://www.dropbox.com/s/e92fezclgfvvl2k/cef2.pdf?dl=0.

Gulasekaram, Pratheepan, and S Karthick Ramakrishnan. 2015. *The New Immigration Federalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Andrew B. 2017. "Who Wants to Run? How the Devaluing of Political Office Drives Polarization." Working Manuscript.

Hopkins, Daniel J. 2018. *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized.* University of Chicago Press.

Huber, Gregory A, and Sanford C Gordon. 2004. "Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind when It Runs for Office?" *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 247–263.

Imbens, Guido W., and Thomas Lemieux. 2008. "Regression Discontinuity Designs: A Guide to Practice." *Journal of Econometrics* 142(2): 615–635.

Jensen, Amalie, William Marble, Kenneth Scheve, and Matthew J Slaughter. 2019. "City Limits to Partisan Polarization in the American Public." Working Paper.

Kousser, Thad. 2002. "The Politics of Discretionary Medicaid Spending, 1980–1993." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 27(4): 639–672.

Lee, David S, and Thomas Lemieux. 2010. "Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(2): 281–355.

Lee, David S, Enrico Moretti, and Matthew J Butler. 2004. "Do Voters Affect or Elect Policies? Evidence from the US House." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3): 807–859.

Lewis, Paul G, and S Karthick Ramakrishnan. 2007. "Police Practices in Immigrant-Destination Cities: Political Control or Bureaucratic Professionalism?" *Urban Affairs Review* 42(6): 874–900.

Lewis, Paul G, Doris Marie Provine, Monica W Varsanyi, and Scott H Decker. 2012. "Why Do (Some) City Police Departments Enforce Federal Immigration Law? Political, Demographic, and Organizational Influences on Local Choices." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 23(1): 1–25.

Miles, Thomas J, and Adam B Cox. 2014. "Does Immigration Enforcement Reduce Crime? Evidence from Secure Communities." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 57(4): 937–973.

Osborne, Martin J, and Al Slivinski. 1996. "A Model of Political Competition with Citizen-Candidates." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 111(1): 65–96.

Peterson, Paul E. 1981. *City limits.* University of Chicago Press.

Provine, Doris Marie, Monica W Varsanyi, Paul G Lewis, and Scott H Decker. 2016. *Policing immigrants: Local law enforcement on the front lines.* University of Chicago Press.

Skovron, Christopher, and Rocío Titiunik. 2015. "A Practical Guide to Regression Discontinuity Designs in Political Science." Working Paper.

Snyder, Jason. 2005. "Detecting Manipulation in US House Elections." Unpublished Manuscript, University of California, Los Angeles. `http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.335.6505&rep=rep1&type=pdf`.

Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress." *The Journal of Politics* 76(3): 786–797.

Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *Journal of political economy* 64(5): 416–424.

Varsanyi, Monica W, Paul G Lewis, Doris Marie Provine, and Scott Decker. 2012. "A Multilayered Jurisdictional Patchwork: Immigration Federalism in the United States." *Law & Policy* 34(2): 138–158.

Williamson, Abigail Fisher. 2018. *Welcoming New Americans?: Local Governments and Immigrant Incorporation.* University of Chicago Press.

Online Appendix

Intended for online publication only.

Contents

A.1 Additional Descriptive Results About Detainer Requests and Sheriff Elections

A.1.1 Detainer Requests Sent to Sheriffs Over Time

Figure A.1: **The Number of Detainer Requests Sent to Sheriffs, 2006–2015.** The number of detainer requests peaked in 2011. The compliance rate peaked in 2009 and declined from 73% in 2008 and 2009 to 43% in 2015.
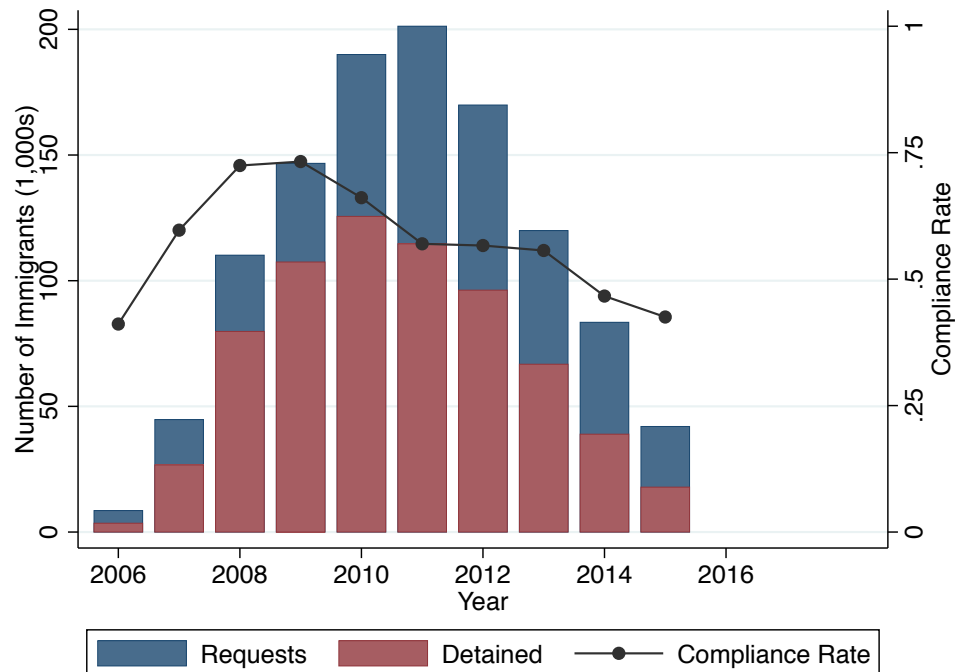
Figure A.1 presents the total number of requests sheriffs received, and the number with which they complied, over time. The number of requests sheriffs received peaked in 2011. The number with which they complied peaked in 2010. The changes through time are in part due to changes in federal policy around the use of detainers. The main program using detainers rolled out in 2008 and ramped up until 2013. Throughout this period, policy changed around who the detainers should be used for, with the most notable change coming in 2015 when the Obama administration ended the use of detainers for immigrants not convicted of a crime.

A.1.2 Distribution of Compliance Rates for Counties with Many and Few Requests

Figure A.2: **The Distribution of Compliance Rates by Request Decile** The distribution of compliance rates in counties that received more requests are plotted in darker shades. The bottom third of counties received no detainer requests, leaving only seven lines. The top three deciles include counties that received 80 requests or more.
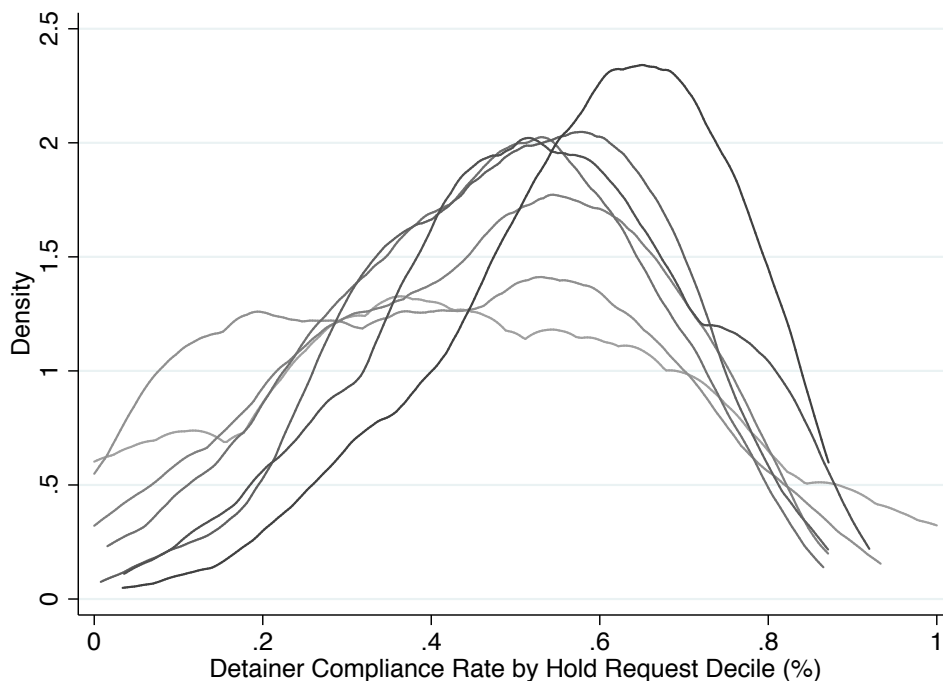
An important part of my analysis is a theoretical quantity that I cannot measure: a sheriff's propensity to comply with a detainer request. To interpret the convergence results properly, it is critical to know whether sheriffs actually have control over the propensity to comply. There is quite a bit of legal reasoning and informed discussion of about the freedom sheriffs have to comply or not, but if they do, there should at least be some evidence of differences in propensities to comply from county to county.

If all requests were identical, the rate of compliance across a large number of draws will recover propensity to comply. But some counties receive very few requests. The small number of requests introduces sampling variance that is independent of the variance in propensity to comply across counties. To address this, I plot the distribution of compliance rates by decile of requests received. The plot, Figure A.2, demonstrates that even counties receiving many requests vary quite a lot in the propensity to comply.

A.1.3 Sheriff Election Sample

I gathered the sheriff election data using two strategies. First, I gathered data from state authorities overseeing elections in 15 states where they collected county election results. Since this only represents a small percentage of the overall counties in the country, I also gathered election data directly from counties. I visited every county elections board website for counties with more than 100,000 people as of the 2000 Census. In table A.1, I compare the elections I gathered to all sheriff elections that occurred from 2003 to 2016. Since I was able to get data from most counties with populations over 100,000, I have nearly a census of those elections. My data coverage is also bent toward larger counties because I over sampled them with my strategy. This comparison simply describes the counties for which my analysis applies and provides guidance about the generalizability of my results—it does not implicate the internal validity of my findings.

In Table A.2, I report descriptive statistics about candidate entry and competitiveness from my sample of sheriff elections. I compare these elections to US House elections for context. I find that open or uncompetitive sheriff elections are more common than open or uncompetitive US House elections, but there is still a large share of sheriff races (55%) that have at least two candidates.

Table A.1: **Comparison of Election Sample to Universe of Sheriff Elections**

| | All Counties | | Large & Partisan | |
	All	Gathered	All	Gathered
Geographic Region				
Midwest	0.32	0.18	0.26	0.27
	(0.47)	(0.38)	(0.44)	(0.44)
Northeast	0.07	0.11	0.24	0.24
	(0.25)	(0.32)	(0.42)	(0.43)
South	0.49	0.53	0.41	0.40
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.49)
West	0.12	0.18	0.09	0.09
	(0.32)	(0.38)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Dist to Mex Border, 100s of Miles	8.66	9.95	10.19	10.44
	(3.74)	(3.92)	(4.46)	(4.38)
Population				
All, 1,000s of People	84.01	175.25	345.89	367.52
	(268.82)	(443.86)	(431.20)	(462.30)
Foreign Born, 1,000s of People	8.05	20.93	33.82	37.07
	(69.43)	(121.50)	(81.19)	(88.94)
Politics				
President	0.44	0.44	0.50	0.50
	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Governor	0.30	0.27	0.32	0.30
	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.47)	(0.46)
State House	0.51	0.50	0.51	0.52
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.13)
State Senate	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Num of Counties	3083	1395	420	397
Obs	11142	3500	1560	1216

Standard deviation in parentheses.

Table A.2: **Sheriff Election Characteristics.** Sheriff elections have fewer candidates than US House elections and winners win with a greater share of the vote. Counties with large populations (more than 100,000 citizens as of 2000) have more races with a Democrat and a Republican.

	All Counties	Large Counties	US House
Partisan Competition			
At Least One Dem	0.60	0.65	0.91
	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.28)
At Least One Rep	0.66	0.80	0.91
	(0.47)	(0.40)	(0.28)
Both Parties	0.37	0.48	0.83
	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.37)
Candidate Entry			
One Candidate	0.45	0.43	0.06
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.23)
Two Candidates	0.46	0.49	0.47
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Three Candidates	0.07	0.06	0.32
	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.46)
Competitveness			
Winning Vote Share	0.79	0.78	0.66
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.13)
Num of Counties	1282	397	-
Obs	3226	1216	3023

Standard deviation in parentheses. Large counties are those with populations greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census. Candidates who receive less than 1% of the vote do not count toward the number of candidates.

A.1.4 Outcome Descriptives

Table A.3 presents descriptive statistics for all of the main outcomes I study. The table breaks out the outcomes from the 2006-2015 period and 2017-2018 period. The first column reports these statistics for the full population. The second column reports these statistics only for the cases that enter the regression discontinuity design.

Table A.3: **Distributions of Outcomes for Sheriffs.**

	All Counties	RD Sample
2006-2015		
Compliance Rate	0.49	0.50
	(0.33)	(0.29)
	[12473]	[1894]
Detentions per 1k Residents	0.16	0.17
	(1.50)	(0.40)
	[26860]	[2590]
Detainer Requests per 1k Residents	0.31	0.32
	(2.47)	(0.79)
	[26860]	[2590]
287(g) Participant (2015)	0.01	0.04
	(0.11)	(0.19)
	[2164]	[309]
ICE Detention Contract (2015)	0.06	0.09
	(0.23)	(0.28)
	[2164]	[309]
ICE Interrogation (2015)	0.01	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.10)
	[2164]	[309]
ICE Alerts (2015)	0.97	0.97
	(0.18)	(0.17)
	[2164]	[309]
2017-2018		
ICE Arrests per 1k Residents	0.11	0.10
	(0.83)	(0.21)
	[5372]	[697]
Enforcement Scale (2018)	-0.00	0.01
	(0.22)	(0.29)
	[2686]	[347]
287(g) Participant (2018)	0.02	0.05
	(0.16)	(0.21)
	[2686]	[347]
Sanctuary Sheriff (2018)	0.02	0.05
	(0.16)	(0.21)
	[2686]	[347]

Standard deviation in parentheses. Sample size reported in square brackets. RD sample includes counties in which the Democratic vote share in the race that determined the sitting sheriff ranged between 25% and 75%. Candidates who receive less than 1% of the vote do not count toward the number of candidates.

A.1.5 Compliance Rate for Partisan and Nonpartisan Sheriffs Over Time

Figure A.3: **The Overall Rate of Compliance for Partisan and Nonpartisan Sheriffs, 2006–2015.** Nonpartisan sheriffs were more likely to comply prior to 2010. In 2014 and 2015, the compliance rate dropped dramatically for nonpartisan sheriffs, largely drive by policy change in California which whose sheriffs are elected in nonpartisan races.
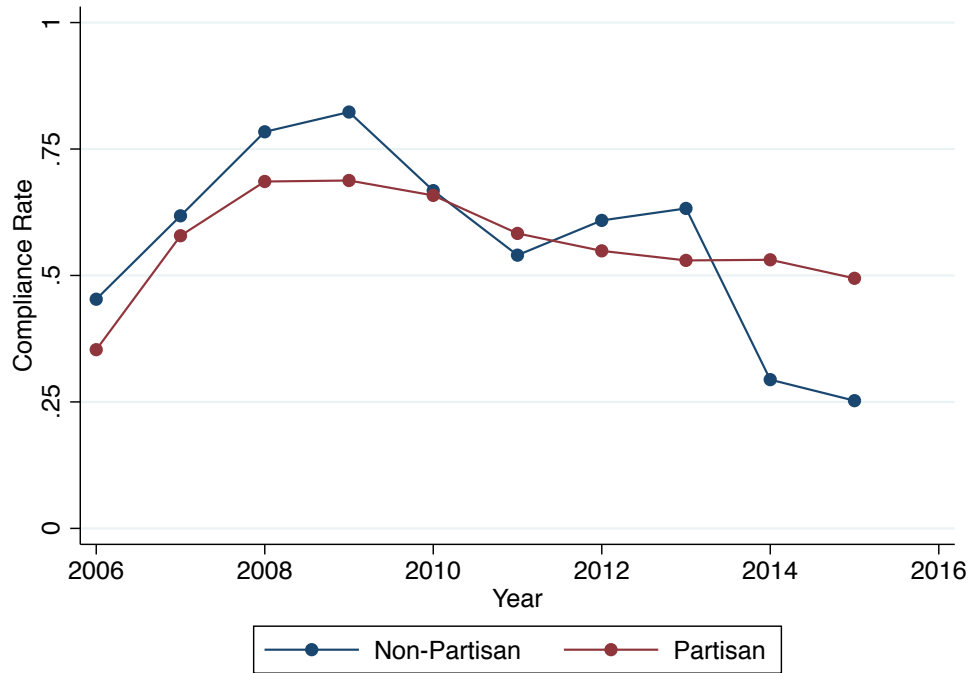
Figure A.3 presents the share of detainer requests sent to sheriffs that resulted detention over time and broken out by partisan and nonpartisan sheriffs. Given the pre-existing differences between states that elect partisan sheriffs and those that do not, I am limited in the causal claims I can make about the institution of partisan sheriff elections. The figure highlights a few interesting patterns, nevertheless. First, the nonpartisan trend drops steeply in 2014. This is largely driven by California which implemented the TRUST act in 2014 requiring sheriffs to limit the cases in which they complied with ICE requests. This is a helpful benchmark, suggesting that compliance is not simply a function of federal policy and that state policy may be able to dramatically change compliance among sheriffs under the right conditions.

A.2 Panel Replication of Main Results

In this section, I present the results of a replication of the main results in the paper using panel regressions rather than a RD design. The panel regressions require a stronger assumption, namely that the counties where the sheriff is from the same party over time were on the same trajectory as counties where the party of the sheriff switched. This assumption pays off in two ways: First, the difference-in-differences design is generally more powerful, reducing the standard errors of the estimate. Second, the estimand is more general than the RDD estimand, allowing researchers to be more confident that the results are not local to a small set peculiar places or points in time.

Across the panel analyses I present, the conclusions are essentially the same as those from the RDD analysis. The main finding continues to be that Democratic and Republican sheriffs comply with detainer requests at essentially the same rate.

A.2.1 Similar Compliance Rate Despite Change in Party of Sheriff

Table A.4 presents a set of difference-in-differences estimates of convergence. The first column reports the estimate from a simple two-way fixed effects estimator with year and county dummies absorbed. The second column includes interactions between year and census region dummies, permitting within-county and within-region-and-year comparisons. The third column presents results from a regression in which the year dummies are interacted with quartiles of county population. The fourth column reports results from a regression in which the year dummies are interacted with region and population quartile dummies. Columns five through eight mimic columns one through four but adjust for county-specific time trends.

Across all of these specifications, the results are largely the same, ranging from a Democratic sheriffs complying 3-percentage-points less to 1-percentage-point less. These effects are all substantively quite small, and all of the confidence intervals overlap zero.

Table A.4: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Detainer Compliance Rate**

	Detainer Compliance Rate							
Dem Sheriff	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
N	4500	4500	4499	4490	4500	4500	4499	4490
Counties	785	785	785	785	785	785	785	785
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Region-by-Year FE	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Pop Quartile-by-Year FE	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
Pop Quartile-by-Region-by-Year FE	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Linear County Trends	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Robust standard errors clustered by county in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of counties with available election results.

A.2.2 Similar Flow of Detainer Requests Despite Change in Party of Sheriff

The effects presented in Table A.5 mimic those in Table A.4 but change the outcome to focus on the behavior of ICE in response to the election of a Democrat. As before, the effects here are substantively quite small and all of the confidence intervals overlap zero. As we found before, this suggests that ICE is not strategically responding to the party of the sheriff by reducing or increasing the number of requests.

Table A.5: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Number of Detainer Requests per 1,000 Residents**

	Requests per 1,000 Residents							
Dem Sheriff	-0.01	-0.03	-0.01	-0.05	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
N	6170	6170	6170	6155	6170	6170	6170	6155
Counties	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Region-by-Year FE	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Pop Quartile-by-Year FE	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
Pop Quartile-by-Region-by-Year FE	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Linear County Trends	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Robust standard errors clustered by county in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of counties with available election results.

A.2.3 Similar Number of Detentions Despite Change in Party of Sheriff

The effects presented in Table A.6 also follow those in Table A.4 but change the outcome to be something measured for all counties regardless of whether the county received any requests. As we saw before, the results suggest that Republicans are not meaningfully more likely to produce detentions for ICE than Democratic sheriffs.

Table A.6: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Number of Detentions per 1,000 Residents**

	Dententions per 1,000 Residents							
Dem Sheriff	-0.01	-0.03	-0.01	-0.03	-0.00	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
N	6170	6170	6170	6155	6170	6170	6170	6155
Counties	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013	1013
County FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Region-by-Year FE	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Pop Quartile-by-Year FE	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
Pop Quartile-by-Region-by-Year FE	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Linear County Trends	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Robust standard errors clustered by county in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of counties with available election results.

A.3 Extension of Convergence Estimates to 2017 and 2018

A.3.1 Data on Sheriff Immigration Enforcement, 2017 and 2018

One concern I addressed in the paper is whether convergence is local to times when a Democrat is president. In order to tease this out I gathered two additional datasets: one on ICE arrests, and one on policies selected by the sheriff that relate to immigration enforcement. The arrests data come from TRAC, run from October 2014 to May 2018, and include the total of arrests made by ICE in a local jail by county and year. Unlike the detainer data, I cannot exclude city jails in this data, I cannot tell which arrests began with a detainer request, and I do not know the number of requests sent to these facilities.

The enforcement policy data come from two sources. First, I scraped a list of all participants in 287(g) in 2018 using archived copies of the ICE website in the Wayback Machine.[22] 287(g) is a program through which ICE grants local police officers and sheriffs the authority to behave as an ICE officer. I then limited this list to participating sheriffs. Second, I collected a list of all the sheriffs identified by the anti-immigration advocacy organization Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) as overseeing sanctuary policies.[23] Putting these two lists together, I construct an enforcement scale in which 287(g) counts as a 1, sanctuary status counts as a -1, and sheriffs participating in neither are counted as 0s.

A.3.2 Infeasible to Test for Convergence in ICE Arrests from 2017 and 2018

For the analysis of arrests, I total up the number of arrests from 2014 through 2016 by county as well as all arrests in 2017 and 2018. I then focus on places with competitive sheriff races in 2016. This allows me to use the 2014 through 2016 data as a pre-treatment measure of arrests and net out the ICE arrests driven by factors other than the sheriff in some specifications following the approach I used in the main analysis.

This analysis, first presented graphically in Figure A.4 and then formally in Table A.7, suggests that the effect of electing a Democratic versus Republican sheriff on ICE arrests in 2017 and 2018 is not large enough to be detected in the data. This does not mean that there is no effect or that it is small. In fact, the difference at the threshold stands out as quite large relative to the natural variation of changes in the arrests per 1,000 residents. A key contributor to this estimated difference is Oklahoma County, OK, which barely elected a Democratic sheriff in 2016 and also had a dramatic increase in ICE arrests in 2017 and 2018. According to contemporaneous local reporting based on data from a source separate from the data I am using,[24] the number of detainer requests sent to the Oklahoma County jail increased from 109 to 746 in 2017. This single case appears to be driving the results. When I remove this case, as I do in the figure on the right, Republicans and Democrats appear to lead counties in which ICE arrests a similar number of undocumented migrants. If this is simply irregular behavior by ICE, or a type of action they took independent of the party of the sheriff, a larger number of cases would make that clear and this outlier would not make it difficult to draw meaningful inferences. But, given this data challenge, it is impossible to

---

[22]https://archive.org/web/

[23]The details behind FAIR's measure are described and documented at http://fairus.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/Sanctuary-Report-FINAL-2018.pdf. In most cases, they describe a county as a sanctuary when the county has a stated policy against complying with some form of detainers, but this information occassionally comes from sources other than the sheriff themselves.

[24]https://newsok.com/article/5583647/immigration-arrests-holds-increase-in-wake-of-enforcement-priority-shift

Figure A.4: **Electing a Democratic or Republican Sheriff Does Not Meaningfully Effect ICE Arrest Rates, 2017-2018.** Each of the large dots represent binned averages of the underlying data. The small dots are the raw data. The blue line comes from a third-order polynomial regression of compliance rate on Democratic vote share fit separately for counties with Democratic and Republican winners. A plot with all counties with competitive elections included is on the left. A plot excluding Oklahoma County, OK is on the right.
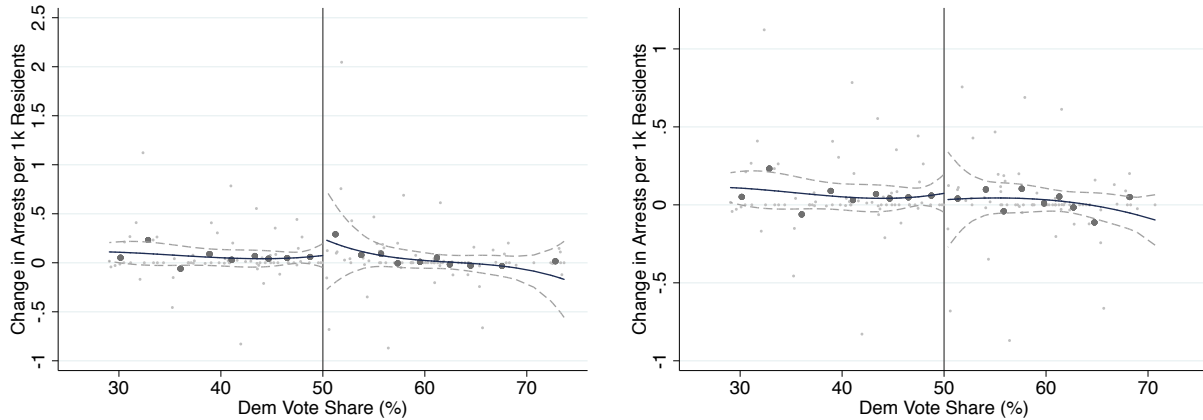
rule out meaningful differences between Republican and Democratic sheriffs in terms of the number arrests made in 2017 and 2018.

Further, ICE arrests are determined in equilibrium. In the same way that Democratic and Republican sheriffs at the 50-50 threshold could take different actions and end up with the same compliance rate due to strategic changes by ICE, the number of arrests could be similar for Democrats and Republicans at the 50-50 threshold because of strategic choices made by both the sheriffs and ICE. I cannot tease out these types of strategic adjustment without additional data on ICE's behavior. In order to focus on the choices sheriffs make more directly in this 2017-2018 period, I turn to data on the policy choices they make.

A.3.3 Sheriff Immigration Enforcement Policies in 2018 Are More Consistent with Convergence than Meaningful Divergence

In Table A.8, I present estimates of convergence in terms of the immigration enforcement scale I constructed from sheriff policies active in 2018. I also present results for each of the policies that go into the scale. The point estimates that suggest Democrats may score slightly lower on the score at the 50-50 threshold. The estimates range from -0.08 to 0 or approximately -0.3 to 0 standard deviations. The theoretically feasible effects range from -2 to 2, but more than 90% of sheriffs choose neither 287(g) nor sanctuary. More sheriffs could choose to offer sanctuary or opt into 287(g), but if we take the population participation rates as given and assume only Democrats offer sanctuary and only Republicans join 287(g), this full divergence would produce average effects of around -0.15. Four of my five estimates are closer to complete convergence than the divergence scenario I laid out, and two of them have confidence intervals that do not include the full separation effect. All of this evidence is consistent with convergence, though it is only suggestive.

As a more formal check of this logic, I switch to an explicitly Bayesian framework. I define two alternative models: Model 0 in which policy selection is independent of party, and Model 1 in which only Democrats select sanctuary policies and only Republican join 287(g). Across both

Table A.7: **Effect of Democratic Sheriff on ICE Arrests, 2017 and 2018.** During the first two years of a new Republican presidency, ICE arrested a similar number of migrants in similar counties when represented by Democratic sheriffs or Republican sheriffs.

	Arrests per 1,000 Residents								
Dem Sheriff Win	0.72	0.52	0.80	0.63	0.30	0.23	0.33	0.28	0.74
	(0.29)	(0.23)	(0.38)	(0.29)	(0.23)	(0.17)	(0.29)	(0.22)	(0.32)
N	78	159	159	159	78	159	159	159	80
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Lagged DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	10

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat. Spline means that the regression is run separately on both sides of the cut point between a Republican and Democratic win. Lagged DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable.

models, I hold constant the average participation rate in 287(g) and the share of counties operating as sanctuaries, meaning that the only thing that changes is where the probabilities of participation are independent of party or not. I then estimate the probability that the effect I observe arises from each model beginning with a prior that these are the only two possible descriptions of the world and both are equally likely. Formally, I define

$$Z \sim \pi$$

$$f(\tau) = (1 - \pi)f_0(\tau) + \pi f_1(\tau)$$

where f_0 is the density under Model 0 and f_1 is the density under Model 1. This implies that

$$P(Z = 0|\tau = \hat{\tau}) = \frac{(1 - \pi)f_0(\hat{\tau})}{(1 - \pi)f_0(\hat{\tau}) + \pi f_1(\hat{\tau})} = \frac{1}{\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\frac{f_1(\hat{\tau})}{f_0(\hat{\tau})} + 1} = \frac{1}{\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\frac{1}{LR} + 1}$$

where $\hat{\tau}$ is the estimated treatment effect under the RDD and LR is the likelihood ratio of the effect under the alternative models. I calculate this likelihood ratio by simulating the empirical distribution each RDD estimator under the two models, calculating the mean and variance of these empirical distributions, and using a normal approximation to these distributions to extract the density at the value of the estimated effect. Table A.9 reports the probability estimates derived from plugging in the estimated likelihood ratio and my prior.

I find that the effects are generally much more consistent with complete convergence with the probability ranging from 44% to 80%.

Table A.8: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Stated Policies in 2018**

	Effect by Policy				
Enforcement Scale [-1, 1]	-0.05	-0.08	-0.00	-0.05	-0.01
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)
287(g) [0, 1]	-0.05	-0.06	0.00	-0.04	-0.00
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Sanctuary County [0, 1]	-0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
N	188	347	347	347	183
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	CCT

Robust standard errors in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat. Spline means that the regression is run separately on both sides of the cut point between a Republican and Democratic win.

Table A.9: **Probability of No Effect versus Partisan Separation for Trump Era Sheriff Enforcement Policy.** The observed effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on active enforcement policies in 2018 is more probable if all sheriffs were equally likely to participate in any enforcement program than if only Democrats lead sanctuary counties and only Republicans lead 287(g) counties, holding the average participation rate constant across both scenarios.

Regression Degree	Bandwidth	Spline	Estimate	P(Z=0 | Est=b)
1	25	Y	-0.05	0.69
3	25	N	-0.08	0.44
3	25	Y	-0.00	0.78
5	25	N	-0.05	0.67
CCT	CCT	Y	-0.01	0.80

Each cell reports a probability that the correct model is simple partisan separation a likelihood ratio test with either partisan separation or partisan separation and increased intensity as the null hypothesis and no effect as the alternative hypothesis. Partisan separation means that all Democrats have 0% probability of participating in 287(g) and all Republican sheriffs have a 0% probability of leading sanctuary counties. No effect means that Republicans and Democrats have an equal probability of participating in any program. The average participation rate is held constant across programs in each scenario The regressions mirror the .

A.4 Additional Statistical Results

A.4.1 RD Balance Table on Lagged Detainer Compliance Rate

The key assumption behind the regression discontinuity design is that counties that just barely elect a Democrat are just like those that just barely elect a Republican in terms of all things not impacted by the outcome of the election. The best test of this is whether counties on either side of the cutoff were similar in terms of pre-treatment outcomes. I present tests of this in Table A.10.

For elections held early in the study window, like those held in 2004 or 2006, most counties had received no detainer requests before the election, so they are not included in the analysis. This smaller sample means that I have noisier estimates. Across all five estimators, I cannot reject the null of perfect balance. Since the third-order polynomial with a 25% bandwidth results in the best balance, I choose that as my preferred specification for discussion in the body of the paper.

The specifications reported in column one and two, while not meaningfully different from zero given the sampling error, are far enough from zero that it is worth adjusting for these remaining imbalances. Accordingly, I adjust for these imbalances in columns five through eight in the main analysis in the body of the paper.

Table A.10: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Pre-Treatment Detainer Compliance Rate**

	Pre-Treatment Detainer Compliance Rate				
Dem (All)	0.06	0.07	-0.02	0.02	-0.01
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Dem (Large)	0.03	0.01	-0.05	0.01	-0.19
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.10)
N (All)	1007	2041	2041	2041	730
N (Large)	583	1203	1203	1203	301
Elections (All)	264	538	538	538	403
Elections (Large)	155	319	319	319	303
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Bandwidth All (Large)	10	25	25	25	7 (5)

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat as well as a subsample of elections held in counties with population greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0.

A.4.2 Partisan Convergence in Large vs All Counties

Table A.11 presents the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on detainer request compliance rates in all counties in the election sample as well as only the counties with more than 100,000 residents as of 2000. One of the challenges to the validity of my main estimates is the fact that counties that receive no request drop out entirely. If ICE responds to Democratic sheriffs by sending fewer requests, some of these counties could drop out of the analysis altogether. Counties with larger populations are, simply by the fact of having more people, more likely to have at least one person ICE seeks to detain in a year. Accordingly, estimates based only on large counties are less likely to be missing in the data even if ICE were changing the number of requests they send.

Table A.11: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Detainer Compliance Rate**

	Detainer Compliance Rate								
Dem (All)	-0.01	-0.04	-0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.01	-0.00	-0.06
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Dem (Large)	-0.01	-0.05	0.02	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01	-0.05
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.06)
N (All)	947	1894	1894	1894	722	1467	1467	1467	760
N (Large)	605	1237	1237	1237	457	941	941	941	444
Elections (All)	346	688	688	688	257	523	523	523	447
Elections (Large)	209	430	430	430	154	318	318	318	433
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year-Specific Lag DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth All (Large)	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	8 (8)

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat as well as a subsample of elections held in counties with population greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0. Year-Specific Lag DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable interacted with a fully-saturated set of year-by- election-year dummies.

Table A.12: **Effect of Democratic Sheriff on Detainer Compliance Rate, Post-2012.** Democratic and Republican sheriffs representing similar counties at similar times comply with immigration detainer requests at a similar rate between 2013 and 2015. The estimates are consistent with Democrats complying slightly less than Republicans, but the estimates are also consistent with no difference, and are inconsistent with large differences.

	Detainer Compliance Rate [0,1]								
Dem Sheriff Win	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	-0.05	-0.07	-0.10	-0.04	-0.06	-0.09
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.08)
N	404	810	810	810	376	775	775	775	406
Elections	220	437	437	437	202	414	414	414	567
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year-Specific Lag DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	10

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0. Year-Specific Lag DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable interacted with a fully-saturated set of year-by- election-year dummies.

A.4.3 Convergence Similar after 2012

The main analysis estimates differences between Republican and Democratic sheriffs at the 50-50 threshold using all years for which I have data. Assuming the partisan gap is stable over time, this approach maximizes the precision of my estimates. But, there are a few reasons to think the effect may vary over time. One concern is that the politics of local immigration enforcement may have become more partisan in 2012 and 2013 (Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015). Also, the roll out of Secure Communities was not complete until 2013. In order to test whether convergence is local to the period before 2013, I replicated the main estimates using only data from 2013-2015.

Table A.12 presents the results from the post-2012 analysis. I find that, while the reported effects are slightly more negative that those based on all years, the confidence intervals are much wider and still include zero. While we cannot rule out small amounts of divergence, we can still safely rule out most meaningful levels of divergence.

A.4.4 Partisan Convergence Holds Across Measures of Detentions

In Table A.13, I estimate the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the rate of ICE detention from the county's jails. While there appears to be some residual imbalance at the threshold, the effect is consistently close to zero after adjusting for pre-treatment outcomes. This is holds across all three alternative versions of the detention rate.

Table A.13: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Alternative Versions of Detention Outcomes.** Democratic and Republican sheriffs representing similar counties at similar times oversee jails that provide ICE a similar number of detentions.

	Dem Sheriff Win								
Detentions per 1k Residents	0.11	0.03	0.15	0.09	0.01	-0.00	0.03	0.02	0.11
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.09)
Detentions per 1k Foreign Born	4.03	1.32	7.00	3.82	0.76	0.53	1.95	0.86	7.05
	(1.94)	(2.03)	(2.83)	(2.10)	(1.10)	(1.14)	(2.03)	(1.47)	(3.01)
log(Detentions + 1)	0.12	-0.10	0.06	0.01	-0.16	-0.09	-0.05	-0.09	-0.14
	(0.38)	(0.34)	(0.48)	(0.39)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.26)	(0.20)	(0.42)
N	1346	2590	2590	2590	1271	2396	2396	2396	1125
Elections	460	882	882	882	431	813	813	813	465
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year-Specific Lag DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	8

Each cell reports an estimate of the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff. Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0. Year-Specific Lag DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable interacted with a fully-saturated set of year-by- election-year dummies.

A.4.5 Similar Number of Requests Across Threshold Holds Across Measures of Requests

One concern that arises with the main analysis is that the ICE may be strategically adjusting the number requests it sends to sheriffs in response to changes in the compliance rate. I report one test of this possibility in the body of the paper, but the results are noisy. In Table A.14, I present estimates of the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the number of detainer requests ICE sends to sheriffs. The effects on detainer requests per 1,000 residents are generally close to zero. Once I adjust for the pre-treatment request rate, the remaining imbalance and noise goes away, and it becomes clear that the effect is null. A similar pattern shows up in the second row when estimating the effect on the number of requests per 1,000 foreign born residents. Given the number of counties with small foreign born populations, the estimates are quite noisy and suggest an increase in requests for counties in which Democrats win a narrow victory. This appears to be due to imbalance at the threshold and goes away when I adjust for pre-treatment request rates. Estimates of the effect on log(requests + 1) are similar though harder to interpret since the large number of counties with no requests in a given year means that I cannot simply take the log of requests.

Table A.14: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Alternative Versions of Detainer Requests.** Democratic and Republican sheriffs representing similar counties at similar times oversee jails that receive a similar number of detainer requests.

	Dem Sheriff Win								
Requests per 1k Residents	0.12	-0.02	0.22	0.09	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.16
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.16)
Requests per 1k Foreign Born	5.27	0.59	10.01	4.60	0.47	0.85	2.10	0.94	10.50
	(2.71)	(3.72)	(4.33)	(3.07)	(1.53)	(1.50)	(2.66)	(1.95)	(4.21)
log(Requests + 1)	0.20	-0.06	0.17	0.07	-0.10	-0.03	-0.06	-0.08	0.01
	(0.40)	(0.36)	(0.51)	(0.41)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.27)	(0.21)	(0.44)
N	1346	2590	2590	2590	1271	2396	2396	2396	1065
Elections	460	882	882	882	431	813	813	813	439
Deg of Running Var Func	1	3	3	5	1	3	3	5	CCT
Spline	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year-Specific Lag DV	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Bandwidth	10	25	25	25	10	25	25	25	8

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat as well as a subsample of elections held in counties with population greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census. Spline means that the flexible regression the outcome on Democratic vote share was fit separately on both sides of 0. Year-Specific Lag DV refers to the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable interacted with a fully-saturated set of year-by- election-year dummies.

A.4.6 Effect of Democratic Sheriff on Contributors to the Number of Requests

As presented in Figure 1, a number of decisions must be made by ICE and sheriffs for someone to ultimately be detained and deported. I gathered data on each of these decisions. In Table A.15, I report the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the number of cases that pass each decision point. I find no meaningful effect of electing a Democrat on any of these outcomes.

Table A.15: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Number of Detainer Requests**

| | Contributors to Num of Requests | | | | |
	BG Checks	Imm BG Checks	No Requests	Num Requests	Num Comply
Dem (All)	-839.79	-0.66	-0.17	10.01	7.00
	(728.41)	(10.79)	(0.11)	(4.33)	(2.83)
Dem (Large)	109.69	-3.36	-0.07	2.19	2.21
	(292.22)	(5.39)	(0.08)	(2.49)	(1.66)
N (All)	1162	1162	2590	2587	2587
N (Large)	462	462	1420	1420	1420
Counties (All)	593	593	882	881	881
Counties (Large)	239	239	460	460	460
Deg of Running Var Func	3	3	3	3	3
Spline	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bandwidth	25	25	25	25	25

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat as well as a subsample of elections held in counties with population greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census.

A.4.7 Effect of Democratic Sheriff on Compliance Rate by Most Serious Crime

In Table A.16, I report the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the compliance rate with requests for different types of immigrants. The first column simply replicates the main finding from the body of the paper. The second through fifth columns report the effect on the rate at which a sheriff complies with detainer requests for immigrants who are not convicted of any crimes, convicted of misdemeanors, convicted of non-aggravated felonies (serious but nonviolent offenses), and aggravated felonies (murder, rape, drug or human trafficking, etc.), respectively. The results are noisy, but are consistent with the main convergence result.

Table A.16: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Detainer Compliance Rate**

| | Detainer Compliance Rate | | | | |
	All	No Crime	Misd.	Non-Agg Felony	Agg Felony
Dem (All)	-0.00	-0.03	0.06	0.02	0.02
	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Dem (Large)	0.02	0.00	0.05	-0.02	0.00
	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
N (All)	1894	1472	1285	976	1236
N (Large)	1237	966	885	765	898
Counties (All)	688	535	491	398	479
Counties (Large)	430	335	318	289	324
Deg of Running Var Func	3	3	3	3	3
Spline	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat as well as a subsample of elections held in counties with population greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census.

A.4.8 Effect of Democratic Sheriff on Stated Policies

Drawing on data from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), I estimate the effect of electing a Democratic sheriff on the stated policies in the county. The policies I include in the analysis are, from column one to column four, not having a 287(g) agreement with ICE, not having a detention contract with ICE, not alerting ICE about inmate release, and limits on ICE interrogations in the jail. In some counties, these policies are already set by the state and cannot be impacted unilaterally by a sheriff. The surveyed states and counties about policies in 2015, gathering only a snapshot in time of the policies.

Table A.17 presents the results. The results are noisy, but in row one and columns one a two, where the estimates are more precise, I estimate effects of electing a Democratic sheriff that are close to zero.

Table A.17: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Stated Policies**

	Policy			
	No 287(g)	No Detention	No Alerts	Interog Limits
Dem (All)	-0.04	0.00	0.03	-0.01
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.18)	(0.10)
Dem (Large)	-0.08	0.04	0.21	0.20
	(0.11)	(0.15)	(0.37)	(0.18)
N (All)	309	309	309	309
N (Large)	144	144	144	144
Counties (All)	309	309	309	309
Counties (Large)	144	144	144	144
Deg of Running Var Func	3	3	3	3
Spline	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bandwidth	25	25	25	25

Robust standard errors clustered by election in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat as well as a subsample of elections held in counties with population greater than 100,000 as of the 2000 Census.

A.4.9 Effect of State Policy on Convergence

Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, and Virginia passed laws that constrained the role a sheriff plays in the cooperative with ICE. I use these states (with the exception of New Hampshire and Virginia which are not in my data) to estimate the effect of state-level constraints on sheriff divergence. Table A.18 presents the results. My prefered specification, a triple differences approach, is reported in column 4. I find little evidence that state-level policy plays an important role in producing the convergence I observe.

Table A.18: **Effect of Dem Sheriff on Compliance Rate, State Detainer Policy vs No Policy**

	Detainer Compliance Rate			
Dem X Sate Policy	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.06)
Dem	-0.07	-0.06	-0.04	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)
State Policy	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)
Counties	852	852	852	852
N	4567	4567	4567	4567
Year FE	N	Y	Y	Y
County FE	N	N	N	Y
County Controls	N	N	Y	N

Robust standard errors clustered by county in parentheses. The reported estimates come from counties with sheriff term limits in Colorado, Indiana, and New Mexico.

A.4.10 Effect of Electing Democratic Representative on Sanctuary Policy Roll Call Votes

In table A.19, I report the formal statistical results that accompany Figure 3 from the body. Replacing a Republican member of the US House with a Democrat results in a large drop in the probability that the representative will vote for measures that punish local sanctuary policies. In all four columns, I estimate a third order polynomial regression separately on both sides of the threshold using elections in which the Democrat received between 25% and 75% of the vote.

Table A.19: **Effect of Dem House Member on Anti-Sanctuary Voting**

| | Anti-Sanctuary Vote | | | |
	2007	2012	2013	2017
Dem	-0.25	-0.51	-0.44	-0.88
	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.10)
N	311	332	309	246
Deg of Running Var Func	3	3	3	3
Spline	Y	Y	Y	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses. The reported estimates come from regressions on the full sample of elections held between a Republican and a Democrat.

A.4.11 Sheriff Campaign Donation Analysis

In table A.20, I report the average difference between CF Scores for Republican and Democratic sheriff candidates. The first column presents the simple difference. The second column presents the average difference between Democrats and Republicans running in the same county. The third column presents the average difference when the Republican and Democrat are running against one another in the same election. The CF Scores are likely quite imprecise estimates of the sheriff candidate's underlying preference for certain type of candidates in some cases, given how few donations many of the sheriff candidates make. Yet, it is valuable to note that Democrats make donations that place them noticeably to the left of Republicans.

Table A.20: **Differences in CFScore from Sheriff's Personal Political Contributions by Party.**

	CFScore		
Dem	-1.43	-1.46	-1.55
	(0.03)	(0.08)	(0.07)
N	1186	1053	256
County FE	N	Y	N
Election FE	N	N	Y

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

A.5 Details for Mechanisms Analyses

A.5.1 Votes Used in the US House Analysis

In my analysis of roll call votes in the US House of Representatives, I draw on four votes:

- 2007, House Vote 485: Amendment on an appropriations bill blocking federal resources from going to localities that fail to share requested information on the immigration status of people they know to be unauthorized.

- 2012, House Vote 366: Amendment to a DHS appropriations bill restricting the use of fund for terminating the 287(g) program which facilitates cooperation between ICE and local law enforcement agencies.

- 2013, House Vote 195: Amendment to a DHS appropriations bill that would strike $43,592,000 in funding for the 287(g) program and send 10% of that amount to the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

- 2017, House Vote 342: A bill known as Kate's Law that would take numerous measures to penalize local and state governments for enacting a variety of sanctuary policies.

A.5.2 Questions Used in the CCES Analysis

In my analysis of within-county partisan differences in immigration-related policy views, I drew on five questions:

- 2006 (1): Another issue is illegal immigration. One plan considered by the Senate would offer illegal immigrants who already live in the U.S. more opportunities to become legal citizens. Some politicians argue that people who have worked hard in jobs that the economy depends should be offered the chance to live here legally. Other politicians argue that the plan is an amnesty that rewards people who have broken the law. What do you think? If you were faced with this decision, would you vote for or against this proposal?

- 2010 (2), isolating responses to the fifth bullet: What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply.

  - Fine Businesses
  - Grant legal status to all illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least 3 years, and not been convicted of any felony crimes.
  - Increase the number of guest workers allowed to come legally to the US.
  - Increase the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border.
  - Allow police to question anyone they think may be in the country illegally.
  - None of these.

- 2012 (3): What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply. Deny automatic citizenship to American-born children of illegal immigrants.

- 2012 (4): What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply. Prohibit illegal immigrants from using emergency hospital care and public schools.

- 2014 and 2016 (5): What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply. Identify and deport illegal immigrants.

61

A.5.3 Questions Used in the Joint CCES and Sheriff Analysis

I use two items from the CCES for the joint CCES and sheriff analysis. They come from a single question in which the survey begins:

"What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply."
I analyze whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with two policies:

- Increase the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border.

- Allow police to question anyone they think may be in the country illegally.

The questions I use from Farris and Holman (2017) are

- Federal spending on tightening border security and preventing illegal immigration should be increased.

- In routine patrols, law enforcement should be allowed to inquire about a person's citizenship status.