

# STATE POLITICS AND POLICY

## Spring 2014 Newsletter

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### 1) Message from the Section Chair

It's time for a little Spring cleaning before heading to Bloomington...

First, I would like to thank the 22 Section Members who stepped up when I asked them last fall to serve on our seven award committees, including two new ones. I really appreciate your service to the Section! There is certain to be excitement in the air when we make the announcements and hand out plaques and checks to the big winners at APSA in Washington, DC.

Second, the Section is actively soliciting a host for the 2016 annual meeting. We're quite flexible on the timing of the Spring conference. Please contact me if you're considering a proposal. I know I'm looking forward to venturing West to [Sac State](#) on May 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> in 2015!

Third, Jennifer Wolak has put together a great Section lineup for the [2014 APSA](#) meeting this August.

Fourth, please let me know if you're interested in serving a two-year term on the SPP Council. We will be electing three new members at APSA. Note to junior faculty: It's painless and looks great on your annual activities report.

Fifth, Tom Carsey is stepping down this summer after doing a great job as Editor of *SPPQ*. Please welcome Chris W. Bonneau and Kristin Kanthak at the University of Pittsburgh as the new co-Editors of our esteemed journal.

Finally, please be sure to thank Shannon Jenkins for pulling together the newsletter, Jon Winburn for his web services, and Margie Ferguson for keeping our finances out of the red.

Dan Smith, University of Florida

## 2) 2014 State Politics and Policy Conference Information

The 2014 State Politics and Policy Conference will be held May 15<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> at Indiana University in Bloomington. The conference is sponsored by the Department of Political Science, the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, and the Center for American Politics at Indiana University, Bloomington, as well as the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Political Science at Indiana University, Purdue University at Indianapolis.

Indiana University's main campus is located in Bloomington, a South-Central Indiana town that is readily accessible by ground transportation, approximately one hour away, from the newly renovated Indianapolis International Airport (IND). Transportation options include frequent limousine and airport shuttle services that will drop one off at Indiana Memorial Union, the location of the conference. The main conference hotel is the Indiana Memorial Union Biddle Hotel. The Biddle Hotel, situated on campus, provides guests with free parking for the duration of your stay at the hotel, and is also where the conference will take place. It is a short walk to the center of Bloomington.

Attendees should plan on arriving for a reception on Thursday evening, May 15. Departures should be planned for late Saturday, May 17, or Sunday, May 18. The program will have full days on Friday and Saturday. More information about travel arrangements, Bloomington, and the program is available here:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~sppc2014/index.html>

Jerry Wright, Indiana University

## 3) APSA 2014 Preview

The State Politics and Policy section is sponsoring or cosponsoring ten panels at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in 2014, which will be held in Washington, DC. One panel of particular note is the roundtable, "Can American Legislatures Do Heavy Lifting in Today's Polarized Climate: A Roundtable Drawing Lessons from the Life and Work of Alan Rosenthal." Chaired by Joseph McLaughlin of Temple University, the roundtable features remarks from Maureen Moakley, Thad Kousser, Karl T. Kurtz, Norman J. Ornstein, and Senator Ben Cardin. Among the other section offerings, we will also have panels on questions of political inequality and interest group influence, state policy outcomes, and the imprint of public preferences on policy outputs. Panels cosponsored with the Race, Ethnicity, and Politics section and the Elections and Voting Behavior section engage debates about race, representation, and redistribution as well as electoral accountability in the states.

In other panels, authors take up questions about governors and executive politics, parties and professionalism in state legislatures, campaign finance and electoral competition, and ballot measures and public opinion in the states. It is an exciting array of papers, and I encourage section members to visit the panels to see all of the fascinating work currently being done by scholars in the field.

Jennifer Wolak, University of Colorado at Boulder

#### 4) Review of Moncrief and Squire's *Why States Matter*

Moncrief, Gary and Peverill Squire. 2014. *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics* (Rowman & Littlefield).

"Why States Matter," by Gary Moncrief and Peverill Squire, not only answers the question of why, but even more important, why we should care. Today, with many Americans' knowledge of government limited to news clips and sound bites about the breakdown of the federal government, a full understanding of how state governments influence citizens' daily life, as well as the country's big picture, is woefully lacking.

"Why States Matter" provides a solid framework for why states are an essential part of the nation's federal system. Moncrief and Squire explain in a straightforward fashion why and how states differ, how innovative policies that originated at the state level have rippled through the entire country, and why all this is important.

The authors make the case that legislators and governors have more opportunity to innovate and experiment as the federal government shifts more financial responsibility onto them. Moncrief and Squire are confident that more than any other time in our country's history, states have the capacity and resources not only to handle more responsibility but to handle it better than the federal government does.

States historically have been leaders in pioneering policy in the areas of public education, transportation, administration of justice, economic development, licensing and public health. And over the past two

generations, they have continued to make significant policy changes. In "Why States Matter," the authors focus on the important role states play in the judicial system (only at the state level are judges elected) and with elections. From the presidential election down, states establish almost all the electoral rules of candidacy and qualifications. They determine who can vote, how they vote (in person, mail-in ballot, etc.), whether they can vote in primaries, and more.

Moncrief and Squire also compare states' action to Congress' inaction, by describing how state legislatures have overcome the stalemate on issues that have plagued Congress. Examples include welfare reform in Wisconsin and health care reform in Massachusetts. In both cases, these states addressed an issue the federal government was mired in, and the state policy eventually became the cornerstone of the federal law.

Although it's a college textbook, it doesn't read like it. The book is a great tool for the average citizen wanting to understand state government or the new lawmaker seeking to articulate better exactly why states matter.

Review by Tricia Simmons, National Conference of State Legislatures.

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### 5) Call for Articles: SPPQ Special Issue on Policy Diffusion

SPPQ seeks submissions for a special issue devoted to the study of policy diffusion in the American states.

Guest editors: Frederick J. Boehmke and Julianna Pacheco, University of Iowa

The study of policy diffusion considers the different ways in which policies spread across the American states, with particular attention to the interdependence in policy decisions. We invite contributions for a special issue of SPPQ devoted to cutting edge research on this topic. In particular, we seek papers at the theoretical and methodological frontiers that make novel contributions and that reflect the growing sophistication of work in this area.

Potential topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

1. Theoretical discussion of the primary mechanisms behind diffusion (i.e., competition, learning, emulation, and coercion);
2. Measures of diffusion or policy activity beyond dichotomous adoption

3. Micro level research on the mechanisms of diffusion within the legislature or other policymaking venues;
4. Macro level research that evaluates broad patterns of diffusion;
5. Vertical diffusion between state governments and the Federal or local governments.
6. Methodological approaches for dealing with non-dichotomous adoption outcomes;
7. Methodological approaches that better capture theoretically implied diffusion mechanisms.

The deadline for submissions is August 1, 2014. Please prepare manuscripts following the usual process described at the journal's website, <http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal202001/manuscriptSubmission>.

Submissions should be made online at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sppq>.

Please clearly indicate in the cover letter that the manuscript is intended for the special issue on policy diffusion. Submissions will be peer-reviewed in accord with normal journal practice. Direct questions to [sppq@pitt.edu](mailto:sppq@pitt.edu).

### 6) Reminders and Important Dates

May 15-17, 2014	2014 SPP Conference at Indiana University
August 1, 2014	Deadline for Southern Political Science Association 2015 Conference Proposals
August 1, 2014	Deadline for submissions for <i>SPPQ</i> Special Issue on Policy Diffusion
August 28-31, 2014	2014 American Political Science Association Conference in Washington, DC

Any announcements or information for future newsletters should be sent to Shannon Jenkins at [sjenkins@umassd.edu](mailto:sjenkins@umassd.edu).

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<http://politicalscience.olemiss.edu/state-politics-and-policy/>

All address corrections should be sent directly to APSA.

Shannon Jenkins, Newsletter Editor.