

Indecision in American Legislatures

Lawmaking provides many opportunities for proposals to be altered, amended, tabled, or stopped completely. The ideal legislator should assess evidence, update his or her beliefs with new information, and sometimes be willing to change course. In practice, however, lawmakers face criticism from the media, the public, and their colleagues for "flip-flopping." Legislators may also only appear to change positions in some cases as a means of voting strategically. This book presents a systematic examination of legislative indecision in American politics. This might occur via "waffling"—where a legislator cosponsors a bill, then votes against it at roll call. Or it might occur when a legislator votes one way on a bill, then switches her vote to the other side. In *Indecision in American Legislatures*, Jeffrey J. Harden and Justin H. Kirkland develop a theoretical framework to explain indecision itself, as well as the public's attitudes toward indecision. They test their expectations with data sources from American state legislatures, the U.S. Congress, and survey questions administered to American citizens. Understanding legislative indecision from both the legislator and citizen perspectives is important for discussions about the quality of representation in American politics.



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