

**MORALITY AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY  
IN OKLAHOMA**

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Oklahoma voters use direct democracy to enact legislation that seems to be difficult to process through the Oklahoma Legislature. Several recent initiatives and referendums dealt with moral issues. On November 8, 2016, voters approved an initiative changing the classification of simple drug possession from felony to misdemeanor (SQ 780) and a legislative referendum allowing grocery and convenience stores to sell high and high-point beer (SQ 792). At the same election, voters rejected a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment removing the Blaine Amendment from the Oklahoma Constitution (SQ 790). In June 2018, voters approved a citizen initiative to allow the licensed cultivation, use and possession of marijuana for medicinal purposes (SQ 788), an initiative originally scheduled for the November 2016 ballot. The present research assesses the role of morality in the vote differences observed in different parts of the state. Using OLS regression, this paper examines the vote on the state questions at the county-level and considers the role of religious affiliation, political party identification, and rurality on the successes and failure of the ballot issues. The findings suggest that numerous factors explain the support and opposition to the State Questions.

This research replicates a study published almost 40 years ago and a second study published about 15 years ago. Both studies examined the effect of religion on direct democracy. Morgan and Meier (1980) gathered data on the 77 Oklahoma counties to assess the impact of religious affiliation and other variables on five state questions the researchers determined dealt with moral issues. The state questions asked voters to consider changes to restrictions on alcohol sales, “blue law” shopping bans on Sundays, and betting on horse races. In general, the researchers determined that religious affiliation played a role in the vote. Satterthwaite (2005) extended the earlier research by examining votes on betting on horse racing (1982), liquor by the drink (1984), the liberalization of liquor sales during elections (1990), the creation of a state lottery (1994), and the legalization of gambling (1998). Satterthwaite found that religious variables were significant and negatively related to the vote on these state questions.

The present research seeks to extend Morgan and Meier (1980) and Satterthwaite (2005), as well as Rausch (2019), by examining the four state questions considered by Oklahoma voters in 2016 and 2018. On November 8, 2016, voters approved an initiative changing the classification of simple drug possession from felony to misdemeanor (SQ 780) and a legislative referendum allowing grocery and convenience stores to sell wine and high-point beer (SQ 792) (Perry 2016). At the same election, voters rejected a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment removing the Blaine Amendment<sup>1</sup> from the Oklahoma Constitution (SQ 790) (Perry 2016). In June 2018, voters approved a citizen initiative to allow the licensed cultivation, use and possession of marijuana for

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<sup>1</sup> Blaine Amendments are religion clauses found in state constitutions. Blaine Amendments specifically prohibits state legislatures from appropriating funds to religious sects or institutions (Bindas and Keller [2019]).

medicinal purposes (SQ 788), an initiative originally scheduled for the November 2016 ballot and postponed until June 2018 because of legal actions.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1. The Four State Questions Examined in this Research**

State Question	Election	Result
780. Oklahoma Reclassification of Some Drug and Property Crimes as Misdemeanors Initiative	November 8, 2016	Approved
788. Medical Marijuana Legalization Initiative	June 26, 2018	Approved
790. Oklahoma Public Money for Religious Purposes Amendment	November 8, 2016	Rejected
792. Oklahoma Regulations Governing the Sale of Wine and Beer Amendment	November 8, 2016	Approved

## METHOD

To better understand the patterns exhibited in the voting on the four state questions, this paper replicates the methods used by Morgan and Meier (1980) and Satterthwaite (2005). The previous research used multiple regression analysis to study the county-level vote on several Oklahoma ballot questions. The dependent variable was the percentage of each county’s voters who supported the question under examination. The researchers used several independent variables including rural isolation, socioeconomic status, liquor consumption, and three categories of religious affiliation. They found that support for referenda on liberalizing liquor and gambling laws was found in Oklahoma counties with higher socioeconomic status, a larger percentage of the population identifying as Catholic, and smaller percentages of both fundamentalist and other Protestants (Morgan and Meier 1980; Satterthwaite 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Laura Eastes, George Lang, Ben Luschen, and Jacob Threadgill, “Marijuana Quest,” *The Oklahoma Gazette*, 20 April 2018, <https://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/cover-marijuana-quest/Content?oid=3314451>.

Despite the method's relative simplicity and the level at which the data are aggregated, Morgan and Meier's findings have been cited in much additional research, especially on questions related to morality (Gibson 2004; Haier-Markel and Meier 1996; LeDuc and Pammett 1995; Oldmixon 2002; Satterthwaite 2005; Wald, Button, and Rienzo 1996; Wilcox and Jelen 1990). In a study of legislative constraint in Oklahoma, Rausch (1994) uses a similar methodology.

Several hypotheses may explain the voting on the four state questions examined in the present research. The primary hypothesis under examination is that religious affiliation is the key indicator of voting on these state questions. Rausch (2019, 8) describes the support and opposition to State Question 788 and finds that "the coalition organized to defeat SQ 788 included several religious organizations." State Question 780 was endorsed by many organized groups in Oklahoma included numerous religious organizations. The Catholic Archbishop of Oklahoma City was particularly vocal in his support of State Question 790 to repeal the Blaine Amendment. State Question 792 is the legislatively referred constitutional amendment expanding the sale of wine and high-point beer in convenience stores and grocery stores. A review of groups supporting and opposing the state question revealed very little activity by religious organizations.

A second hypothesis considers the urban and rural population in the state. Voters in rural areas are more likely to oppose the state questions on alcohol and marijuana while supporting the repeal of the Blaine Amendment. The two most populous counties in Oklahoma are Oklahoma County and Tulsa County. Voters in both counties were joined by voters in Cleveland County (home of the University of Oklahoma) in exhibiting the most support for State Questions 780, 788, and 792. State Question 790 on repealing the Blaine Amendment showed significantly different patterns of support. The lowest support for the amendment (37.24 percent) was given by voters in Coal County, a small rural county in the

southeastern part of the state. Oklahoma County voters cast 40.40 percent in support of SQ 790 while 40.28 percent of Tulsa County voters sought to approve the amendment. Two of the counties showing the least support of SQ 790 were Cleveland County (home of the University of Oklahoma) and Payne County (home of Oklahoma State University).

A third hypothesis considers the role of political party on the vote decision. While Republican state leaders like the Attorney General worked to keep the citizen initiatives off the ballot and the Republican-led legislature referred the constitutional amendments, there is less evidence either political party worked hard to support or oppose any of the state questions examined here. Testing this hypothesis is made easier by the fact that Oklahomans register to vote by political party.

Using data collected from a variety of sources, the present research assesses the hypotheses while testing for other potential explanations for support for the four state questions. Data were collected on each of the 77 counties in Oklahoma.

The present research employs aggregate data collected at the county level. While individual-level data collected by a survey is preferable to county-level data, the level of aggregation chosen is more practical. The reliability of the data is much greater than a survey because of respondent recall issues. County-level data are useful for examining the political, economic, and social environment in which voters make their decisions on referenda (Giles 1977; Hero 1998; Key 1950; Morgan and Meier 1980; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Rausch 1994; Satterthwaite 2005a, 2005b; Smith, DeSantis, and Kassel 2005; Tolbert and Hero 2001).

Election return data are found on the Oklahoma State Election Board website (<https://www.ok.gov/elections/>). The data on religion were compiled by the Association of Statisticians of

American Religious Bodies and published in the 2010 U.S. Religious Census (Grammich, et al., 2012).<sup>3</sup> Demographic data are from the United States Census.

### **MORALITY VOTES IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY OKLAHOMA**

Before proceeding, a brief description of each state question is in order. State Question 780 was approved by voters in the November 2016 general election. State Question 780 was a citizen-initiated initiative that changed certain non-violent drug- and theft-related crimes from felonies to misdemeanors. When approved by the voters, the initiative had the effect of reducing the number and duration of state prison sentences. The Oklahoma Supreme Court rewrote the ballot language as part of a legal challenge that argued that the ballot language provided by the initiative proponents and the Oklahoma Attorney General were biased or did not include enough information for the voters. Kris Steele, a Republican and a former Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, was the chief proponent for the state question. Various district attorneys and the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police opposed the measure. State Question 780 was approved 58.23 percent to 41.77 percent.

State Question 790 was defeated by voters. The proposal, a legislatively referred constitutional amendment, would have repealed Section 5 of Article 2 of the Oklahoma Constitution. Article 2, Section 5, prohibits the spending of public money for religious purposes. Supporters of the state question argued that its

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<sup>3</sup> These data are published in electronic form on The Association of Religion Data Archives website: <http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/>.

passage would have allowed the erection of a monument to the 10 Commandments on the State Capitol grounds in Oklahoma City.<sup>4</sup> The proposal was supported by many Republican officeholders and the Catholic Archbishop of Oklahoma City. The American Civil Liberties Union strongly opposed the proposal. State Question 790 was defeated by a vote of 57.12 percent No to 42.88 percent Yes.

Voters approved State Question 792, another legislatively-referred constitutional amendment. The proposal changed constitutional provisions governing alcohol sales and distribution in the state allowing grocery stores and convenience stores to sell full-strength beer and wine seven days a week. In addition to the legislative proponents, the state question was supported by many business interests including the Beer Distributors of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Grocers Association, and the Oklahoma Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association, among others. The opposition included the Retail Liquor Association of Oklahoma and many liquor stores not attached to grocery or convenience stores. Opponents' concerns primarily focused on the growth of large companies taking over the sale and distribution of alcohol beverages in Oklahoma. Voter approved State Question 792 by a vote of 65.62 percent to 34.88 percent.

The successful campaign to approve State Question 788 in June 2018 was one of several attempts to place a proposition on medical marijuana on the Oklahoma ballot. In 2014, Oklahomans for Health circulated petitions for a statewide vote but the group was unable to obtain the required number of signatures. In 2015, Green the Vote also failed to gather enough signatures to place the issue on the ballot. Oklahomans for Health tried again in the spring of 2016. This time the group successfully obtained the required

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<sup>4</sup> John Clanton, "State Question 790: Voters Say Public Money Can't Be Used for Religious Purposes," *Tulsa World*, 8 November 2016, [https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/government-and-politics/state-question-voters-say-public-money-can-t-be-used/article\\_e354f323-280a-5219-b1af-de0eedb3a32a.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/government-and-politics/state-question-voters-say-public-money-can-t-be-used/article_e354f323-280a-5219-b1af-de0eedb3a32a.html)

number of signatures, but the initiative became the subject of a lawsuit after the group accused then-Attorney General Scott Pruitt of changing “the wording of the ballot title to sound as if the state question was calling for full legalization [of marijuana], including recreational use.” In a short ruling issued on March 27, 2017, the Oklahoma Supreme Court sided with Oklahomans for Health and ordered that the original ballot language be restored. On January 4, 2018, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, a Republican, issued a proclamation scheduling the vote on medical marijuana for June 26, 2018, the same day as the state’s primary election.<sup>5</sup> Oklahomans for Health was the organization that led the drive to place the issue on the ballot and it continued through the campaign as the leading organization to support the state question. The opposition was funded largely by money from energy companies headquartered in Oklahoma, Colorado, and Texas.<sup>6</sup> Due to the vote occurring with a primary election, there was some confusion in several counties. Some poll workers asked voters if they wanted a State Question 788 ballot instead of automatically giving a ballot to each voter. All voters were supposed to receive the State Question ballot automatically. The state election board reported correcting any problems and inconsistencies across counties.<sup>7</sup> On June 26, 2018, Oklahoma voters approved SQ 788 with 56.86 percent of voters casting Yes votes and 43.14 percent voting to reject the measure.

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5 Eastes, Lang, and Threadgill, “Marijuana Quest.”

6 Who Were the Biggest Donors to the Anti-SQ788 Campaign?” Tulsa World, 2 August 2018, [https://www.tulsaworld.com/photo/video/slideshows/who-were-the-biggest-donors-to-the-anti-sq-campaign/collection\\_18cc90d2-965a-11e8-aabb-737d495e78eb.html#4](https://www.tulsaworld.com/photo/video/slideshows/who-were-the-biggest-donors-to-the-anti-sq-campaign/collection_18cc90d2-965a-11e8-aabb-737d495e78eb.html#4); Clifton Adcock, “Campaign Filings Show Oklahoma Anti-Medical Marijuana Group was Heavily Financed by Energy Industry,” The Frontier, 1 August 2018, <https://www.readfrontier.org/stories/campaign-filings-show-oklahoma-anti-medical-marijuana-group-heavily-financed-energy-industry/>.

7 Kevin Canfield, “Election Official Acknowledges Hiccups, But Says No Widespread Problems with SQ 788 Ballots,” Tulsa World, 26 June 2018.



## MEASURES

### SUPPORT FOR THE STATE QUESTIONS

The dependent variables are measured by the percentage of voters in each of the 77 Oklahoma counties who cast a ballot in favor of the state question. There is substantial variation among the voting by county on each of the questions. On State Question 780, the vote ranged from 31.69 percent Yes to 69.89 percent Yes (mean county vote = 48.39 percent). State Question 788 was similar with a range of 28.09 percent Yes to 64.94 percent Yes (mean county vote = 48.73). On repealing the Blaine Amendment (SQ 790), the vote was lower ranging from 37.24 percent Yes to 54.37 percent Yes (mean county vote = 45.61 percent). Finally, on State Question 792 to expand the sale of alcohol beverages, the vote ranged from 44.71 percent Yes to 71.87 percent Yes (mean county vote = 59.30 percent).

Factor analysis reveals that the questions share some commonality. There are two factors with SQ 780, SQ 788, and SQ 792, loading on one factor explaining 59.38 percent of the variance. State Question 790 (repeal the Blaine Amendment) loads on the second factor that explains 31.10 percent of the variance. Despite the commonality, the state questions are examined separately.

### RELIGION

Data were collected on the proportion of county residents affiliated with different religions. Religion has been involved in American political life for a long time, but social scientists have only seriously researched the role of religion in politics for about the past forty years (Jelen 1998; Satterthwaite 2005a, 2005b; Wald, Silverman, and Fridy 2005; Wald and Wilcox 2006). Jelen (1998) reviews much literature that specifically examines the role of religion in political behavior. Religious conservatives became

actively involved in the Republican Party in the late 1970s and early 1980s to advocate their positions on a number of social issues (Guth 1983; Oldfield 1996). It was during this period that social science experienced an increase in interest in the role of religion in American politics.

This paper incorporates three variables for religious affiliation: evangelical Protestants; mainline Protestants; and Catholics. Denominations included in the category “Evangelical Protestants” were identified by the authors of the Religious Congregations & Membership Study 2010 as follows:

Evangelical Protestant denominations emphasize a personal relationship with Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, and the importance of sharing faith with non-believers. Evangelical Protestantism is usually seen as more theologically and socially conservative than Mainline Protestantism, although there is obviously variation between denominations, congregations, and individuals within the “Evangelical” category (<http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/evangelical.asp>).

The proportion of Oklahoma county residents who are Evangelical Protestant is calculated from data published in Grammich, et al. (2012). The percentage ranged from a high of 132.41 percent (not a typo; see next paragraph) to a low of 19.67 percent. The mean was 48.49 with a standard deviation of 17.63. We expect to see a relationship between Evangelical Protestant population and lower support for State Questions 780, 788, and 792, reducing the stigma of alcohol and drug use. Evangelical Protestants may be conflicted about State Question 790 on repealing the Blaine Amendment. They may support the erection of a Ten Commandments monument on the State Capitol grounds, but they may not support giving all denominations access to public funding for church projects.

There obviously is a problem with the data from Harmon County, a small rural county in the far southwestern part of the state. It

is impossible that 132 percent of the population is Evangelical Protestant in part because the data indicate that there also are Catholic and Mainline Protestant residents in that county. The population in Harmon County decreased in the first decade of the 21st Century. In 2000, the population was 3,283. By 2010, the population dropped to 2,922. The 2010 U.S. Religion Census report had a difficult time dealing with this population decrease. We controlled for this irregularity by removing Harmon County from the statistical analyses. We found that the results when we included Harmon County were not much different from the results without Harmon County, so Harmon County remains in the analysis. There are 77 counties in Oklahoma.

Similar data were obtained on the percentage of Mainline Protestants. Denominations included in the category “Mainline Protestants” were identified by the authors of the Religious Congregations & Membership Study 2010 as follows:

Mainline Protestantism is a branch of Protestantism encompassing what are considered theologically liberal and moderate denominations, such as the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the Reformed Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. While Mainline Protestantism is usually seen as more theologically and socially liberal than Evangelical Protestantism, there is obviously variation between denominations, congregations, and individual with the “Mainline” category (<http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/mainline.asp>).

The range of mainline Protestant populations among all counties was from 2.29 to 47.80 with a mean of 11.58 and a standard deviation of 8.31. Conflict appears in the research literature with some research suggesting that mainline Protestants may be more tolerant of marijuana use, especially for medical purposes.

A review of the history of the Blaine Amendment<sup>8</sup>, both at the national and state-levels, suggests that Mainline Protestants may be more supportive of prohibiting public funds from being spent on religious projects.

The percentage of Catholics in each county was determined using the Religious Congregations & Membership Study (Grammich, et al., 2012). Only the category labeled “Catholic” was included in this classification. The percentage of Catholics ranged from zero to 17.01 percent. The mean was 2.61 with a standard deviation of 2.73. Counties with larger Catholic populations should exhibit opposition to SQ 788; however, it is possible that counties with larger Catholic populations are more diverse in other demographics that may lead to greater support for the state questions, especially State Question 790 repealing the Blaine Amendment.

#### VOTERS IN RURAL AREAS

The independent variable tapping the effect of residence in rural areas is the percentage of county residents who are rural according to the United States Bureau of the Census. For simplicity, the present research uses “percent rural”; therefore, the remainder of the county population can be considered urban. While there are several counties that have 100 percent of the population living in a rural area, the smallest rural population is 4.78 percent in Tulsa County. Only 6.28 percent of Oklahoma County is considered rural. It is expected that counties with a greater percentage of rural population will exhibit less support for SQ 780, 788, and 792. Rural voters may find comfort in the Blaine Amendment, but there may be some confounding effects with religious affiliation.

#### POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATIONS

The third hypothesis holds that Oklahoma counties with differing proportions of party identifiers will exhibit different levels of voting on SQ 788. Oklahomans register to vote by political party.

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<sup>8</sup> An accessible and concise history of Blaine Amendments may be found in Rassbach (2019).

Oklahoma's primary elections are semi-closed. The Oklahoma Republican Party allows only Republican registrants to vote in the Republican primary. The Oklahoma Democratic Party allows independents (voters who declare no party affiliation) to vote in primary elections in addition to registered Democrats. In the present research, each county's Republican registration was determined. The county with the fewest Republicans had 18.11 percent (Coal County), while the largest Republican population was 75.14 percent (Major County). The mean county Republican registration was 43.26 percent with a standard deviation of 14.26. It is expected that counties with more Republicans may oppose the state questions reducing the stigma of alcohol and drug use, but this expectation is tempered by the economic benefit of approving State Question 780 and reducing the prison population in Oklahoma.

#### CONTROL VARIABLES

Additional independent variables are used as controls in the analysis. These variables are the percentage of each county's population older than 25 with a high school diploma (a measure of educational attainment), each county's median age, and the median household income in each county. The percentage of each county's population who are white also is included in the analysis. The percentage of white population serves as a proxy for diversity; counties with larger percentages of white residents are less diverse.

#### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The present research seeks to better understand the votes on four state questions decided by Oklahoma voters in 2016 and 2018. In order to allay any concerns about multicollinearity and to determine if there are any potential relationships between the independent variables, a correlation matrix was produced for all variables.

The matrix exhibited few surprises. The county-level votes on the four state questions are correlated, but we found that in the factor analysis. The Pearson’s R between the Yes vote on State Question 780 (reduce drug crimes to misdemeanors) and State Question 788 (medical marijuana) is a strong 0.660 ( $p < .001$ ), despite the fact that the questions were considered in different years. The correlation between State Question 788 (medical marijuana) and State Question 790 (repeal the Blaine Amendment) is  $-0.550$  ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 2 presents a correlation analysis of several selected independent variables. While the variables present significant correlations, the only correlation of concern is the fact that rural counties appear to have older populations.

**Table 2. Correlation Between Selected Independent Variables**

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(a) Median Family Income	1				
(b) Percent Over 25 High School Graduate	-.416**	1			
(c) Percent Rural	-.293**	.538**	1		
(d) Median Age	-.363**	.555**	.645**	1	
(e) Percent White	.559**	.078	.137	.079	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For each of the four state questions, a multiple regression model was calculated. The results are presented in Table 3. The variables included in the model are the religious affiliation measures, the county median family income, the percent of each county’s population over the age of 25 and a high school graduate, the percent of county voters registered in the Republican Party, the percent of population living in a rural area, the county’s median age, and the percent of county residents who are white. Standardized regression coefficients (Betas) appear in Table 3. The level of prediction ( $R^2$ ) for the state questions are moderate ranging from .460 to .622, but

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they are consistent across the state questions. The low predictive ability of the model for State Question 790 (repeal the Blaine Amendment) can be attributed to the fact that there have been two streams of opinion regarding the amendment. One stream saw the state question as allowing public money to be spent on religious programs, some of which may benefit people who need assistance. The other stream saw the state question as allowing the erection of a Ten Commandments monument on State Capitol grounds.

**Table 3. OLS Regression of County Vote for State Questions**

	SQ 780	SQ 788	SQ 790	SQ 792				
	Beta	p	Beta	p	Beta	P	Beta	p
% Evangelical Protestant	-.186	.105	-.253	.019	.143	.262	-.362	.001
% Mainline Protestant	-.147	.230	-.315	.007	.215	.117	-.106	.360
% Catholic	-.014	.888	.013	.892	-.051	.656	.005	.956
Median Family Income	.313	.040	.326	.022	-.089	.594	.294	.041
% Over 25 HS Grad	-.169	.148	-.070	.517	.113	.382	-.141	.202
% Rural	-.400	.001	-.360	.002	-.049	.715	-.399	.001
% Republican	.046	.782	-.518	.001	.694	.000	.007	.967
Median Age	.106	.360	.156	.149	.159	.218	.170	.121
% White	-.216	.104	-.090	.464	-.101	.489	.008	.950
	R <sup>2</sup> = .564 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .505 P = .0001	R <sup>2</sup> = .622 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .571 p = .0001	R <sup>2</sup> = .460 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .388 p = .0001	R <sup>2</sup> = .610 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .558 p = .0001				

A striking feature of the models is the effect of rural population across the state questions. Except for SQ 790 (repeal of the Blaine Amendment), voters in rural counties exhibited less support for

the three other state questions. Counties with higher median family income showed stronger support for three state questions dealing with drug and alcohol use. As expected, there is a negative relationship between the votes on the state questions and Evangelical Protestant population, but only on State Questions 788 (medical marijuana) and State Question 792 (expanded alcoholic beverage sales).

On State Question 788 (medical marijuana), voters in more Republican counties were less supportive of the proposal. On this state question, counties with large numbers of mainline Protestants combined with a large population of Evangelical Protestants who registered as Republicans opposed the proposal.

The data suggest that State Question 790 (repeal the Blaine Amendment) was a different kind of proposal. The regression model is slightly underspecified when compared to the other state questions examined in this research. The relationship between Republican voter registration and the affirmative vote overwhelms the other relationships in the model. State Question 790 appears to be a Republican issue that may have been designed to drum up Republican voter turnout in the November 2016 presidential election. Additional research is necessary to more completely understand the appeal of State Question 790.

## DISCUSSION

The present research seeks to understand the relationship between morality and support for several pieces of direct democracy in a politically and socially conservative state. Three hypotheses were tested. The first suggests that counties with large Evangelical populations would strongly oppose the three state questions expanding or destigmatizing alcohol and drug use (SQ 780, SQ 788, and SQ 792) and strongly support State Question 790, which



would have repealed the state's Blaine Amendment. The second hypothesis posits that rural populations will oppose the three drug and alcohol state questions while having some difficulty explaining the vote on State Question 790. The third hypothesis suggests that counties with large numbers of Republican voters will oppose SQ 780, SQ 788, and SQ 792 while supporting SQ 790.

The data suggest that there is not a single explanation for voter support across all four state questions. State Question 790 on the Blaine Amendment clearly had the support of voters in heavily Republican counties. State Question 780 on changing drug crimes from felonies to misdemeanors had the support of voters in more urban counties with wealthier families. State Question 788 on medical marijuana had slightly different support, primarily because it was the only state question on the June 2018 primary ballot. The data suggest that party (Republican) and place (rural areas) best predict opposition to SQ 788. Religious affiliation plays a role, however, supporting the large body of research that stretches from the early 1980s. SQ 788 would benefit from more cross-state analysis; however, any cross-state analysis will need to consider SQ 788's uniqueness in its lack of specification of qualifying conditions to receive a license to possess marijuana. Any analysis of SQ 788 also will benefit from any future attempt to legalize recreational marijuana use in the state.

Finally, in considering State Question 792, rural counties and counties with large Evangelical Protestant populations opposed expanding the sale of alcoholic beverages. Counties with more wealthy residents appeared to support the issue. It is possible that recent state questions about intoxicating substances have been cast in the light of economic development. With the declining fortunes present in the energy industry, it is likely that Oklahoma voters will be more willing to approve state questions that provide for additional revenue through sin taxes.

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