



Educators Overwhelmingly Support Democrats, Even in Republican States

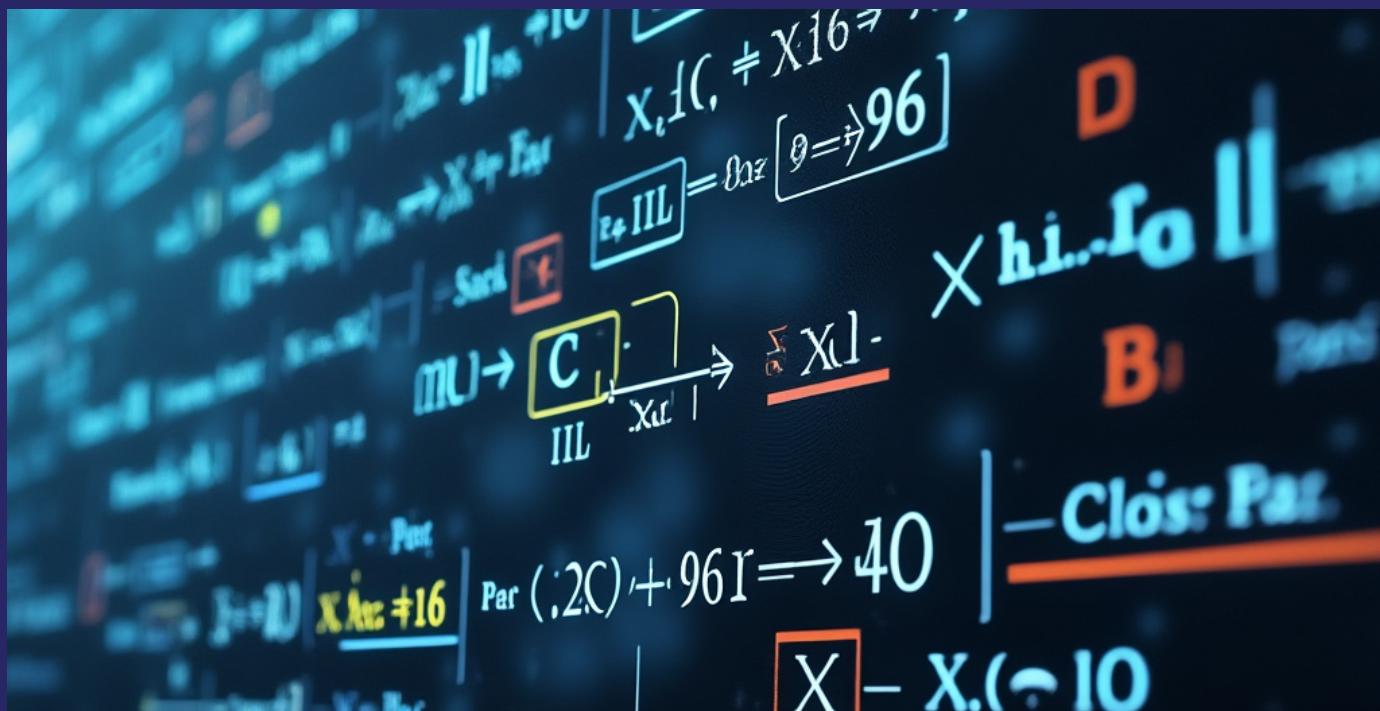
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Introduction

It should come as no surprise that educators tend to be more liberal than the general public. But it is less well-known just how liberal they are, how much professors differ from K-12 teachers, and how much the ideological inclinations of educators vary across states.

In this analysis, we examine 437,783 campaign contributions made by K-12 teachers and university professors during the 2022 election cycle to gain a better understanding of the political orientation of the people who teach our children. The results show that university professors lean much more to the left than do K-12 teachers, and this monolithic support for Democratic political candidates among professors hardly varies with the partisan composition of the state in which they are located. While decidedly liberal, K-12 teachers are less so than professors, and the extent of their leftward tilt tends to vary with the partisan make-up of each state.





Data and Methodology

The Education Freedom Institute contracted with a data/research firm called Data Orbital to gather campaign contribution information from Federal Election Commission reports. People who make campaign contributions are supposed to list their occupation in the federal form. Data Orbital identified contributions from educators and classified them as K-12 teachers or university professors based on the contributors' self-reports of their occupation. Data Orbital also classified the recipients of the contributions as Democrats, Republicans, or other. This analysis focuses only on contributions that went either to Republican or Democratic candidates or committees.

In total, Data Orbital identified 280,227 campaign contributions from professors and 157,556 campaign contributions from teachers that went to Democrats or Republican candidates or committees during the 2022 election cycle.

National Results

Of the 437,783 campaign contributions made by educators during the 2022 election cycle, 84% supported Democrats. Among professors, 93% of contributions went to Democratic candidates or committees compared to 68% of those from K-12 teachers. According to [Open Secrets](#), 54% of campaign dollars during the 2022 election cycle supported Democrats. And according to [Pew Research](#), 51% of voters preferred Republican candidates in the 2022 election. Judging by their campaign contributions, it is clear that both professors and K-12 teachers lean further to the left than does the American electorate. (See Table 1)

As of 2022, there were [3.7 million public and private school teachers](#) in the United States. In the same year, there were [1.5 million university faculty](#), of whom 842,407 were full-time and 665,234 were part-time. Despite the fact that teachers outnumber full-time professors by more than 4 to 1, campaign contributions from professors exceeded those from K-12 teachers by almost 2 to 1 (280,227 versus 157,556). Professors have much stronger political preferences and are far more active in contributing to campaigns than K-12 teachers.

It is important to note that those classified as professors or K-12 teachers include those working in private institutions. Given that many private colleges and schools are religious, it is likely that our results understate how heavily educators favor Democrats if we were to focus only on public institutions. Unfortunately, the information collected by Data Orbital does not easily facilitate distinguishing which of the 437,783 contributions came from those employed by public versus private schools.

Results by State

There is almost no variation across states in the rate at which professors' campaign contributions support Democrats. In only one state, Mississippi, did a majority of campaign contributions from professors back Republicans in 2022. In every other state professors contribute much more to Democrats than Republicans. There are only four states (Louisiana, Montana, South Carolina, and Kansas) in which the rate of professor contributions to Democrats falls between 70% and 80%. In the remaining 45 states, more than 80% of campaign contributions from professors go to Democrats. (See Table 2)

There are 30 states in which Republicans hold the majority of the state legislature. In 18 of those Republican dominated states, more than 90% of campaign contributions back Democrats. In another seven Republican states, professors give between 80% and 90% to Democrats. In total, 25 out of 30 Republican states have professors who contribute to Democratic candidates or committees more than 80% of the time.



Given that the public universities in these Republican states receive billions of dollars each year in taxpayer funds allocated by Republican legislators, it is unclear whether those policymakers have considered the extent to which they are appropriating money to the same people who fund their opponents each election. Obviously, legislators have many reasons for allocating public funds to universities, but one would imagine that whether they are funding their supporters or opponents might be part of their calculations.

Of course, the same concerns could be raised about why Republican legislators allocate billions of dollars each year to public K-12 schools, but the leftward tilt of K-12 teachers is less severe and varies more with the partisan composition of each state. There were 11 states in which a majority of K-12 teachers' campaign contributions supported Republicans. (See Table 3)

Nevertheless, among the 30 Republican states, 19 had a majority of K-12 teacher campaign contributions backing Democrats during the 2022 election cycle. In 13 of those Republican states, more than 60% of campaign contributions from teachers went to Democrats.



Discussion

Both professors and K-12 teachers are to the left of the American public, judging by the distribution of their campaign contributions. The leftward bias of teachers is significant, but the partisan imbalance for professors is gigantic. And while the ideological composition of teachers varies somewhat with the partisan make-up of each state, there is almost no variation in how much professors favor Democrats across states.

There are many factors that contribute to these patterns. [People with more advanced degrees tend to lean further left](#), although both professors and K-12 teachers are even more supportive of Democrats than are others who hold advanced degrees. And the leftward bias of people with higher educational attainment does not account for why there is some partisan variation for teachers across states and almost none for professors.

A likely explanation for this difference has to do with how and from where professors and teachers are recruited. [Almost 60%](#) of K-12 teachers work within 20 miles of where they attended high school. Professors, by comparison, compete in a national market for employment and are very often employed far from where they grew up. [More than a fifth](#) of professors were born in another country, so it may be more accurate to say that the professor job-market is global rather than national. To the extent that partisanship is shaped by where one grows up, teachers are more likely to reflect the political preferences of the communities in which they work than are professors.

The national lock that left-leaning professors hold over who is hired as new professors, who is able to publish in top journals, and who receives tenure, helps solidify the extremely high and unvaried rate of support for the Democratic party among faculty.

If policymakers are concerned about the leftist capture of higher education and if they have grown wary of appropriating money to the people who fund their opponents, they are not obligated to hand money to their ideological adversaries.

The results reported here are consistent with those of previous studies on the political homogeneity of higher education faculty. In 2018, the [National Association of Scholars](#) examined the party registrations of full-time faculty at 51 top-ranked liberal-arts colleges and found that Democratic registrations exceeded Republican registrations by 10.4 to 1. More recently, the [Buckley Institute](#) examined the partisan registration of faculty by department at Yale and similarly found a remarkably lopsided skew toward Democrats. That report also found that the leftward tilt of Yale professors did not vary much across academic departments.

This analysis expands on these prior efforts by examining the partisan split for professors and K-12 teachers nationwide and in each state. The findings confirm the lack of partisan diversity among educators, especially in universities. If a quality education involves exposure to a diversity of perspectives, the status quo is incredibly deficient in this regard. In addition, if education should reflect the value preferences of the states and communities being served, there is no indication that conservatives have their views better represented in educational settings that their children attend and that Republican policymakers fund.

Appendix

Table 1. Campaign Contributions by Type of Educator and State, 2022

| | Number of Campaign Contributions | | | | Partisan Split of Contributions | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| | From Professors | | From K-12 Teachers | | From Professors | | From K-12 Teachers | |
| | Democrat | Republican | Democrat | Republican | Democrat | Republican | Democrat | Republican |
| Nationally | 260,625 | 19,602 | 107,269 | 50,287 | 93% | 7% | 68% | 32% |
| AK | 382 | 76 | 447 | 174 | 83% | 17% | 72% | 28% |
| AL | 1,436 | 165 | 387 | 974 | 90% | 10% | 28% | 72% |
| AR | 931 | 22 | 324 | 313 | 98% | 2% | 51% | 49% |
| AZ | 4,354 | 285 | 2,455 | 645 | 94% | 6% | 79% | 21% |
| CA | 41,507 | 1,170 | 27,695 | 6,105 | 97% | 3% | 82% | 18% |
| CO | 3,161 | 364 | 1,278 | 548 | 90% | 10% | 70% | 30% |
| CT | 4,798 | 135 | 1,852 | 498 | 97% | 3% | 79% | 21% |
| DC | 3,651 | 12 | 405 | 107 | 100% | 0% | 79% | 21% |
| DE | 776 | 25 | 1,636 | 44 | 97% | 3% | 97% | 3% |
| FL | 8,291 | 1,027 | 2,986 | 3,932 | 89% | 11% | 43% | 57% |
| GA | 6,973 | 435 | 1,666 | 2,445 | 94% | 6% | 41% | 59% |
| HI | 1,131 | 135 | 382 | 176 | 89% | 11% | 68% | 32% |
| IA | 2,785 | 157 | 535 | 249 | 95% | 5% | 68% | 32% |
| ID | 683 | 102 | 276 | 458 | 87% | 13% | 38% | 62% |
| IL | 11,393 | 535 | 5,037 | 754 | 96% | 4% | 87% | 13% |
| IN | 6,507 | 257 | 586 | 250 | 96% | 4% | 70% | 30% |
| KS | 981 | 269 | 545 | 343 | 78% | 22% | 61% | 39% |
| KY | 1,941 | 111 | 781 | 450 | 95% | 5% | 63% | 37% |
| LA | 895 | 344 | 905 | 640 | 72% | 28% | 59% | 41% |
| MA | 18,269 | 552 | 4,607 | 805 | 97% | 3% | 85% | 15% |
| MD | 5,691 | 179 | 2,495 | 1,240 | 97% | 3% | 67% | 33% |
| ME | 822 | 55 | 328 | 136 | 94% | 6% | 71% | 29% |
| MI | 7,400 | 1,688 | 2,050 | 849 | 81% | 19% | 71% | 29% |
| MN | 2,977 | 79 | 1,341 | 201 | 97% | 3% | 87% | 13% |
| MO | 3,313 | 121 | 544 | 1,854 | 96% | 4% | 23% | 77% |
| MS | 284 | 1,019 | 210 | 166 | 22% | 78% | 56% | 44% |
| MT | 344 | 127 | 191 | 189 | 73% | 27% | 50% | 50% |
| NC | 6,123 | 699 | 1,873 | 547 | 90% | 10% | 77% | 23% |
| ND | 348 | 5 | 104 | 294 | 99% | 1% | 26% | 74% |
| NE | 2,026 | 164 | 578 | 213 | 93% | 7% | 73% | 27% |
| NH | 2,698 | 77 | 335 | 342 | 97% | 3% | 49% | 51% |
| NJ | 7,437 | 1,129 | 3,311 | 2,801 | 87% | 13% | 54% | 46% |
| NM | 1,764 | 7 | 986 | 428 | 100% | 0% | 70% | 30% |
| NV | 803 | 62 | 611 | 112 | 93% | 7% | 85% | 15% |
| NY | 27,869 | 2,122 | 10,376 | 2,323 | 93% | 7% | 82% | 18% |
| OH | 7,890 | 310 | 2,503 | 1,532 | 96% | 4% | 62% | 38% |
| OK | 1,145 | 95 | 418 | 946 | 92% | 8% | 31% | 69% |
| OR | 2,588 | 70 | 1,411 | 299 | 97% | 3% | 83% | 17% |
| PA | 21,114 | 439 | 2,865 | 5,841 | 98% | 2% | 33% | 67% |
| RI | 1,746 | 46 | 411 | 37 | 97% | 3% | 92% | 8% |
| SC | 1,384 | 404 | 547 | 344 | 77% | 23% | 61% | 39% |
| SD | 86 | 10 | 75 | 87 | 90% | 10% | 46% | 54% |
| TN | 3,267 | 563 | 554 | 539 | 85% | 15% | 51% | 49% |
| TX | 14,161 | 2,354 | 5,764 | 5,114 | 86% | 14% | 53% | 47% |
| UT | 1,007 | 259 | 479 | 1,363 | 80% | 20% | 26% | 74% |
| VA | 4,667 | 922 | 2,486 | 1,392 | 84% | 16% | 64% | 36% |
| VT | 1,076 | 3 | 177 | 23 | 100% | 0% | 89% | 12% |
| WA | 5,617 | 236 | 7,223 | 751 | 96% | 4% | 91% | 9% |
| WI | 3,359 | 66 | 2,047 | 309 | 98% | 2% | 87% | 13% |
| WV | 417 | 37 | 90 | 52 | 92% | 8% | 63% | 37% |
| WY | 357 | 77 | 101 | 53 | 82% | 18% | 66% | 34% |

Appendix

**Table 2. Campaign Contributions in Republican Dominated States
(Professors)**

| | Partisan Split of Contributions | | |
|----|---------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| | From Professors | | Republican Share of State |
| | Democrat | Republican | |
| ND | 99% | 1% | 87% |
| WI | 98% | 2% | 65% |
| PA | 98% | 2% | 50% |
| AR | 98% | 2% | 82% |
| NH | 97% | 3% | 51% |
| MO | 96% | 4% | 69% |
| OH | 96% | 4% | 68% |
| IN | 96% | 4% | 70% |
| IA | 95% | 5% | 64% |
| KY | 95% | 5% | 80% |
| GA | 94% | 6% | 57% |
| AZ | 94% | 6% | 53% |
| NE | 93% | 7% | 67% |
| OK | 92% | 8% | 80% |
| WV | 92% | 8% | 89% |
| NC | 90% | 10% | 60% |
| AL | 90% | 10% | 73% |
| SD | 90% | 10% | 90% |
| FL | 89% | 11% | 70% |
| ID | 87% | 13% | 84% |
| TX | 86% | 14% | 57% |
| TN | 85% | 15% | 76% |
| AK | 83% | 17% | 63% |
| WY | 82% | 18% | 92% |
| UT | 80% | 20% | 81% |
| KS | 78% | 22% | 68% |
| SC | 77% | 23% | 71% |
| MT | 73% | 27% | 68% |
| LA | 72% | 28% | 70% |
| MS | 22% | 78% | 66% |

Appendix

Table 3. Table 3 -- Campaign Contributions in Republican Dominated States (K-12 Teachers)

| | Partisan Split of Contributions | | |
|----|---------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| | From K-12 Teachers | | Republican Share of State |
| | Democrat | Republican | |
| WI | 87% | 13% | 65% |
| AZ | 79% | 21% | 53% |
| NC | 77% | 23% | 60% |
| NE | 73% | 27% | 67% |
| AK | 72% | 28% | 63% |
| IN | 70% | 30% | 70% |
| IA | 68% | 32% | 64% |
| WY | 66% | 34% | 92% |
| KY | 63% | 37% | 80% |
| WV | 63% | 37% | 89% |
| OH | 62% | 38% | 68% |
| KS | 61% | 39% | 68% |
| SC | 61% | 39% | 71% |
| LA | 59% | 41% | 70% |
| MS | 56% | 44% | 66% |
| TX | 53% | 47% | 57% |
| AR | 51% | 49% | 82% |
| TN | 51% | 49% | 76% |
| MT | 50% | 50% | 68% |
| NH | 49% | 51% | 51% |
| SD | 46% | 54% | 90% |
| FL | 43% | 57% | 70% |
| GA | 41% | 59% | 57% |
| ID | 38% | 62% | 84% |
| PA | 33% | 67% | 50% |
| OK | 31% | 69% | 80% |
| AL | 28% | 72% | 73% |
| ND | 26% | 74% | 87% |
| UT | 26% | 74% | 81% |
| MO | 23% | 77% | 69% |



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