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ABSTRACT:

Legislative turnover is a tool that helps us to understand how the legislature functions and what attracts lawmakers to serve. The variation among U.S. state legislatures presents a unique opportunity to explore the factors contributing to turnover rates. The existing research on legislative professionalisation, party control, and party competition point to possible mechanisms for member retention. This study examines the effects of these mechanisms on turnover among the 50 states. By examining turnover, this work uncovers that professionals and strong parties have a place in the legislature and encourage lengthier service, except in state lower chambers when there is increased district competition. This analysis lends insight into how institutions and their restrictions can influence who serves and for how long.

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