

# Legislative Professionalism Component Scores, 1973-2011\*

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## Description

Dataset contains measures of legislative professionalism components over the time period of study. Each component is measured separately by biennium and is presented in detail in Bowen and Greene (2014). We measure legislative expenditures, legislator salary, and session length (both regular and special sessions) from the 1973/4 biennium to the 2009/10 biennium (off-year election states run from 1974/5 to 2010/11). Dataset also includes 1st and 2nd dimension professionalism scores created through multidimensional scaling, as explained in Bowen and Greene (2014).

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## Codebook

Variable	Description
<code>state</code>	State name
<code>stateabv</code>	State abbreviation
<code>fips</code>	State FIPS code
<code>year</code>	Last year of biennium
<code>sessid</code>	Numeric code for biennium <i>Note:</i> takes same value regardless of on-year/off-year elections
<code>expend</code>	Expenditures per legislator in thousands of 2010 dollars <i>Source:</i> U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Survey of State Government Finances <a href="http://www.census.gov/govs/state/">http://www.census.gov/govs/state/</a> <i>Note:</i> Data were created by subtracting the total amount paid in salary (# of state legislators * salary or (per diem * session length) and then divided by the number of state legislators.
<code>salary_real</code>	Legislator compensation, in 2010 dollars <i>Source:</i> Book of the States, various years. Typically Table 3.9 “Legislative Compensation: Regular Sessions” <i>Notes:</i> Only regular session salary included in totals. Salary is annual salary and/or per diem salary multiplied by length of regular session. Other forms of compensation (vouchered and unvouchered per diems for living expenses, housing allowances, pensions, health care benefits, etc) are not included.
<code>t_slength</code>	Total length of session (regular and special sessions) <i>Source:</i> Book of the States, various years. Typically Tables 3.19 and 3.20 “Bill and Resolution Introductions and Enactments: Regular and Special Sessions” <i>Notes:</i> Measured in legislative days. For session lengths coded in calendar days we follow Squire (1992) and multiple by 5/7.
<code>slength</code>	Length of regular session <i>Source:</i> Book of the States, various years. Typically Table 3.19 “Bill and Resolution Introductions and Enactments: Regular Sessions” <i>Notes:</i> Measured in legislative days. For session lengths coded in calendar days we follow Squire (1992) and multiple by 5/7.
<code>mds1</code>	Multidimensional scaling (MDS) predicted value, first dimension <i>Source:</i> Calculated by authors. See Bowen and Greene (2014) for description.
<code>mds2</code>	Multidimensional scaling (MDS) predicted value, second dimension <i>Source:</i> Calculated by authors. See Bowen and Greene (2014) for description.

## Miscellaneous Notes about Usage

**Constant dollars:** All dollar amounts are in constant 2010 dollars. This deviates very slightly from what is shown in Bowen and Greene (2014). There, dollar amounts are in 2009/2010 dollars.

**Missing data:** Several states are missing data on the length of sessions, particularly during the mid-1990s. When possible, we use formal start and stop dates to count the calendar days and then convert to legislative days by multiplying by 5/7. Still, there are many years in which the Book of the States simply does not contain enough information to code session length. We have left these values as missing in the dataset. However, we believe that, depending on the usage of the data, scholars may want to impute these missing values based the length of sessions from previous bienniums. For states with per diem salaries, missing data on the session length variables also result in missing data on compensation and expenditures.

**Off-year elections:** Five states in our data hold (or have held) state legislative elections on odd years: New Jersey, Mississippi, Virginia, Louisiana, and Kentucky (prior to 1984). For these states, bienniums are coded as beginning in the even year. The first observation for these states is thus the 1974-5 session rather than the 1973-4 session.

Kentucky switched from off-year to on-year elections in 1984. Kentucky did not have a regular session in 1985 but did have a special session. We double-count the 1985 special session, first as part of KY's 1984/5 off-year session and then as part of the on-year 1985/6 session. We believe this is a better representation of the state's level of professionalism, but such a coding strategy may not be appropriate for all uses of the data.

## References

- Bowen, Daniel C. and Zachary Greene. 2014. "Should We Measure Professionalism with an Index? A Note on Theory and Practice in State Legislative Professionalism Research." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 14(3):277–296.
- Squire, Peverill. 1992. "Legislative Professionalization and Membership Diversity in State Legislatures." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17(1):69–79.