

## **Can Polarization be Mitigated? California's Experiment with the Top-Two Primary**

Efforts by states to curb party polarization in their legislatures have generally met with unimpressive results. This paper assesses California's experiment with the top-two primary, which became law with the passage of Proposition 14 in 2010. To what extent does this new system of primary elections allow for the election of more moderate officeholders, and how are the state's parties working to undermine the new system?

### **Academic Biography:**

**Seth E. Masket** is associate professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Denver. He received his PhD from UCLA in 2004. He is the author of *No Middle Ground: How Informal Party Organizations Control Nominations and Polarize Legislatures* (2009: University of Michigan Press). He has written on state legislatures, party organizations, social networks, and campaigns and elections, and he is currently working on a book manuscript on the subject of state-level party reform movements.