Abstract
We measure the relative ideological positions of newspapers, voters, interest groups, and political parties, using data on ballot propositions. We exploit the fact that newspapers, parties, and interest groups take positions on these propositions, and the fact that citizens ultimately vote on them. We find that, on average, newspapers in the U.S. are located almost exactly at the median voter in their states, i.e. they are balanced around the median voter. Still, there is a significant amount of ideological heterogeneity across newspapers, which is smaller than the one found for interest groups. However, when we group propositions by issue area, we find a sizable amount of ideological imbalance: broadly speaking, newspapers are to the left of the state-level median voter on many social issues, and to the right on many economic issues. To complete the picture, we use two existing methods of measuring bias and show that the news and editorial sections of newspapers have almost identical partisan positions. (JEL: D72, L82)