

Rejoinder to Hero

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Rodney Hero's discussion of "A Federalist Explanation of Municipal Elections" is filled with thoughtful comments and criticisms. Many of his assertions directly support our own pronouncements while others prompt us -- and, hopefully, our readers -- to rethink the idea of federalism and its relationship to municipal elections.

Nevertheless, Professor Hero appears to underestimate the significance of the word "A" in our article's title. Our discussion of the relationship of the American federal structure and municipal elections is not presented as *the only viable* federalist explanation of municipal elections. We, too, recognize that, as Hero points out, the community of scholars of federalism is unable to agree completely on the concept's meaning and implications. Our goals here are much more modest than Hero's projections of them.

In our article, we interpret the fundamental works on federalism and seek to extend certain existing theories concerning the impact of the federalist structure on mayoral elections. We welcome Hero's generous elaboration and extension of our section on general theories of federalism. In our opinion, any scholarly discussion of theories that in any way relate to our research benefits both previous and future research.

From the questions and interpretations included in Hero's Section II, we infer that our manuscript obscured some critical facts and issues concerning the election. We will focus on clearing up two of these misunderstandings in the little space we have available.

First, while Hero states that incumbency and, thus, familiarity may have played a role in the re-election of Kathy Whitmire, we should remind the reader of the high familiarity of voters with Louis Welch, himself a former mayor of Houston and Chamber of Commerce president.

Second, the gay rights debate during this election took on a much more *redistributive* tone than Hero admits. Beyond the mere hiring of city employees, the issue was perceived by residents as redistributing political and economic power. Had it been merely an allocational issue, the public debate and outrage, which is well documented in Houston's two daily newspapers, would never have reached the magnitude that it did.

In conclusion, we appreciate Professor Hero's thoughtful evaluation of our article. We hope that our research and his commentary will encourage others to question the political, economic, and structural factors that influence the conduct and outcomes of municipal elections.