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Political Finance in City Elections: Toronto and Calgary Compared

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Abstract

Comparing candidate contribution and expenditure data from urban elections in Toronto and Calgary, the paper concludes that elements of the regulatory regime in Toronto contribute modestly to a more level playing field for political competition in that city. In particular, the limits on the size of contributions, when coupled with a rebate for political donations, make candidates less reliant on corporate and development sources. These elements of Toronto's regulatory regime also contribute to greater competitiveness in municipal elections in Toronto than in Calgary, where election finance is effectively unregulated.

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