

**Representation in the Statehouse: The Responsiveness of State Legislators to their
Constituents, their Parties, and their Supporters**

Nathan S. Bigelow
Ph. D. Candidate
Department of Government and Politics
1108 Tawes Building
University of Maryland
nbigelow@gvpt.umd.edu
(301) 405-9722

Abstract

Using a new data set on over 4,200 state legislators in 30 states, this paper systematically tests three competing theories of representation. The first, *district congruence theory*, suggests a close relationship between legislative roll-call voting and district opinion. Second, the *responsible parties theory*, suggests that legislator's party affiliations will explain legislative voting. Finally, *interest representation theory*, suggests that legislators' votes will favor certain groups of supporters. Because policymaking at the state level usually happens under the radar screen, this research expects the more elite level theories (responsible party and interest representation) to explain state legislative decision-making. The results indicate broad support for the responsible party's thesis. Regardless of context, political parties enforce an impressive level of discipline on their members. Interest representation occurs most when legislators face easy reelection and when they come from more professional legislative institutions. Although electoral competitiveness is not found to significantly increase legislative responsiveness to district opinion, non-amateur legislatures are significantly more likely to nurture district congruence.

The laws and processes of state governments intimately affect the lives of Americans. Assisting us into this world are doctors and nurses licensed and certified by the state, assisting us out are state licensed and certified morticians. In-between, state laws and processes concerning such things as education, welfare, transportation, the consumption of alcohol, and the ability to marry, influence the lives of state citizens. The devolution revolution of the 1980s and 1990s made states even more relevant by transferring many functions of government away from the federal government and into the hands of the states. The most famous examples include food stamps, Medicaid, and welfare, which states administer through federal block grants. The oft-cited justification behind the politics of devolution is that state governments are “closest to the people.” The assumption is that state legislators are particularly attuned to their constituents and uniquely able to represent their interests. But how in touch are they?

Certain conditions exist in the states; including largely uncompetitive elections (Weber, Tucker, and Brice 1991), a citizenry with very little information about state politics (Jennings and Zeigler 1970), and in some states only part-time legislative institutions (Rosenthal 1998); that may make this “closest to the people” idea a myth. In this detached political environment, it is possible that constituency representation suffers. Furthermore, such an environment seems a perfect breeding ground for elite influence over legislative decision-making. This rather grim supposition leads to the broad research questions that motivate this research. First, who influences the legislative voting behavior of state legislators? Second, under what conditions are legislators most likely to represent their constituents, their parties, and their interest group supporters?

Using a new dataset that includes information on over 4,200 state legislators in 30 states, this paper systematically tests three competing theories of representation. The first, *district congruence theory*, suggests a close relationship between legislator's roll-call votes and district opinion.¹ Second, *responsible party theory* suggests that party membership should explain legislative voting. Finally, *interest representation theory*, suggests that legislators' positions will favor certain groups of supporters.

The expectation is that the more elite level theories (responsible party and interest representation) will best explain legislative voting behavior in the disconnected world of state politics. Indeed, broad support exists for the responsible parties thesis. Regardless of context, political parties enforce an impressive level of discipline on their members. Interest representation occurs most when legislators face easy reelection and when they come from more professional legislative institutions. Somewhat surprisingly, district opinion is a significant predictor of legislative voting behavior. Although electoral competitiveness is not found to significantly increase legislative responsiveness to district opinion, non-amateur legislatures are significantly more likely to nurture district congruence.

Representation and the Motivations of Legislators

Most definitions of representation require some level of responsiveness (Eulau et al. 1959; Key 1961; Pitken 1967; Dahl 1989). That is, for representative government to fulfill its promise, it must respond in some meaningful way to public sentiment. At the congressional level, evidence supports a link between legislative behavior and district opinion (Miller and Stokes 1963; Eulau and Karps 1978, Erikson 1978, McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Glazer and Robbins 1985; Stimson, Mackuen, Erikson 1995). Likewise, state level research finds a link

between statewide public opinion and state policy (Dawson and Robinson 1963; Hofferbert 1966; Erikson, Wright and McIver 1989; 1993).

At the state legislative district level studies tend to focus on just one state (Erikson, Luttbeg and Holloway 1975; McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Snyder 1996) thus limiting the generalizations we can draw from the findings (but see Uslaner and Weber 1977; 1979, 1983). More recent work by Gerald Wright and coauthors Jon Winburn and Tracy Osborn find evidence of constituents' preferences influencing legislative roll-call positions either directly, or through parties acting as a linkage mechanism connecting people to their state legislators (Wright and Osborn 2002; Wright 2005).

Focusing exclusively on representation as a struggle between legislator and constituents, however, oversimplifies a more complicated political reality. "Public officials don't stand naked before an undifferentiated mass public. Nor do they jump through ideological hoops. They are pushed – by their partisans, party activists, and fellow officeholders" (Uslaner 1999). Fenno (1978) described the full district as just one, and in fact the most remote, of several constituencies conceived of in terms of concentric circles. Fenno's study of congressional representation finds representatives are closest to the innermost activist circles of their districts and only concern themselves with their more remote constituencies, if they must, to assure reelection. For example, a legislator from a one party dominated district would likely focus no further out than their primary constituency.

Other congressional studies describe a similar "two-constituencies" perspective, finding that congruence is much stronger between legislators and core supporters than between legislators and the district as a whole (Huntington 1950; Fiorina 1974; Markus 1974; Achen 1978; Powell 1982; Bullock and Brady 1983). These inner circles are by no means a

representative sampling of a legislator's district. Party elites and interest group activists hold much more polarized views of policy than do the mass public (Aldrich 1983; Stimson, Mackuen, and Erikson 1995; Jackson, Bigelow, and Green 2004).

Party Influence

Representation, conceived of in terms of responsible party government, is the opposite of district congruence or constituency control notions of representation (Key 1956; Miller and Stokes 1963). In the responsible party model, legislators do not court the opinion of their districts, but instead present voters with two diametrically opposed party positions (APSA 1950). Strictly disciplined roll-call voting along party-lines is key to responsible party government.

Parties in the United States, however, do not have all the tools they might want to control the votes of their members. Parties cannot remove a member for voting against their wishes, but they can offer benefits to members who toe the party-line. Parties must use the carrot rather than the stick (Hershey and Beck 2003). Such benefits party leaders can bestow include prime committee assignments, chair assignments, help in introducing/passing legislation, help delivering pork to the member's district, and help finding jobs and appointments for legislators' constituents (Rosenthal 1998).

In state legislatures, the power of parties varies greatly, but in many ways is greater than that of parties in Congress. At the state legislative level, party leaders have more direct control over the day-to-day workings of the legislatures than congressional leaders have over Congress. Furthermore, they usually do not have to defer to powerful steering committees or policy committee chairs and are freer to appoint committee chairs of their choosing, regardless of seniority (Jewell and Morehouse 2000).

Research finds that party identification of legislators is essential to understanding the positions taken by members of Congress. Over the last twenty years, and due in large part to the alignment of the South with the Republican Party, Congress has polarized along party-lines (Bartels 2000, Poole and Rosenthal 1997). One study goes so far as to say there is virtually no overlap between the policy positions of the parties (Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart 2000).

State legislative research from the 1950s and 1960s explored the different levels and causes of party voting (for example see MacRae 1952; Keefe 1954; Jewell 1955; Becker et al 1962; Sorauf 1963; Flinn 1964). In the 1970s, however, this line of research turned increasingly to Congress. Recent research finds that party is still extremely important to understanding representation in the state legislatures (Wright and Osborn 2002).

Interest Group Influence

The influence of interests groups on representation is largely missing from contemporary studies of representation (but see Denzau and Munger 1986; Gray and Lowery 2000, 246-257). This is puzzling given the strong tradition that the study of groups has in political science. Classic works argue that business interests are especially powerful and overrepresented in our lawmaking bodies (Schattschneider 1960; Lindblom 1977). Journalists go a step further, charging the political activity of business with “the breakdown of contemporary democracy” (Greider 1992). Businesses, however, are not the only groups trying to influence government. Labor unions and citizens groups also are active at both the federal and state level (Berry 1999; Francia 2005; Gray and Lowery 2000).

How do groups attempt to influence policy? The most traditional way groups influence policy is through direct lobbying. Lobbyists work to gain access, and then work to develop a rapport with legislators (Ainsworth 1993). Lobbyists are often specialists in their issue area and

become a trusted source of information for legislators (Hansen 1991). Groups also engage in outside strategies aimed at influencing legislators through affecting public opinion (Berry 1997; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), including television and prints advertising (West, Heith and Goodwin 1996), the activities of think tanks (Weaver 1989), and organizing demonstrations (Page, Shapiro and Dempsey 1987).

Another way groups attempt to influence policy is through the direct and indirect financial support of candidates for public office (Herrnson 2004). There is much dispute concerning the influence of interest group money on policy at the congressional level (Wright 1985). Some studies find only marginal influence (Grenzke 1989), while others show a great deal of influence (Moore et al. 1994). The trouble with inferring influence is establishing that the legislator's predisposition was actually altered by the money. Berry (1997) speculates that influence is highest on legislation that is not highly visible. Legislation in the statehouse usually meets this condition.

Theory and Hypotheses

Who influences the roll-call voting behavior of state legislators? Two opposing views exist in the literature. The first, espoused by district congruence scholars, argues that legislators look to the bottom (their constituents) when deciding how to cast their roll-call votes. The second, espoused by scholars following the two-constituencies tradition, as well as responsible party and interest representation theorists, suggests that legislators look to the top (parties and interest) when deciding how to cast their votes. Which of these views is most likely correct in state legislatures?

Conceiving of legislators as agents and districts, parties, and interests as principals (a relationship akin to an employer/employee relationship), we can examine which circumstances

help principals gain the service of the agent. Voters want legislators to be delegates, while legislators want to follow their own ideologies (Uslaner 1999). In addition, parties want their members to toe the line, and interest groups want their positions represented. What do legislators, the agents, do when the preferences of their principals are inconsistent? Everything else being equal, the agent likely follows their own interests and shirks their constituents' interests in favor of more common ideological ground (Uslaner 1999).

Not everything, however, is equal. Electoral and institutional variation likely empowers the principals differently. These variations include the electoral competitiveness of each representative's district and the nature of their legislative institutions.

There are few electorally competitive districts at the state level (Weber, Tucker, and Brice 1991). This reality encourages legislators to look to the top to inform their roll-call positions. If the agent has nothing to fear from shirking the principal, it is only more likely that it will happen. In competitive districts, however, the agent must concern themselves with an empowered district principal. Thus district opinion is expected to be a stronger predictor of legislative voting in competitive as opposed to uncompetitive districts. Likewise, this forced appreciation of district opinion likely comes at the expense of party and interest representation. As such, the elite principals are likely poorer predictor of legislative roll-call voting in competitive legislative districts as opposed to safe districts.

Not all legislative institutions are the same. Some states, like California and New York, have extremely professional legislatures, whereas other states like Idaho and Wyoming have much more amateur legislative organs. Characteristics that make legislatures professional include Rosenthal's (1998) five S's (space, sessions, structure, staffing, and salaries) of which three (session length, staff size, and legislative salary) can be operationalized (Squire 1992).

Research on legislative professionalism tends to focus on the way the legislator's job has changed (Moncrief, Thompson, and Kurtz 1996), the effects of professionalism on public opinion (Squire 1993), and partisan implications of professionalized legislatures (Fiorina 1994). Some research finds that professional legislatures nurture congruence between state policy and aggregate state opinion (Maestas 2000), while others argue that legislators in professional legislatures may be more responsive to the interest groups that provide them funding than to their constituents (Weber 1999). To my knowledge, no systematic research exists that actually tests the effect of professionalism on legislative roll-call voting.

Regarding the influence of district opinion on legislative voting, under various levels of professionalism, two opposing conclusions seem reasonable. The literature suggests that legislators with increased capacity (high professionalism) may be better able to serve their constituents (they have more staff, work year round and attract legislators who take their job seriously) (Rosenthal 1998; Fiorina 1994). On the other hand, term-limit reformers argue that amateur legislatures may attract legislators who are "of the people" and more in touch with their views. Both possibilities are explored, with the expectation being that increased professionalism nurtures district congruence.

Extending upon Fiorina's (1994) work, parties are likely more influential in professional legislatures where members are more likely to aspire to be career legislators. If the legislator agent wishes to be a career legislator and become institutionally powerful, they will likely pay particular attention to the party principal. As such, it is expected that legislators in more professional legislatures will be more likely to follow the party-line.

Legislators in professional legislatures are likely more receptive to interest pressures. Three reasons make this likely. First, it costs more to run for election in more professional states

(Thompson and Moncrief 1998). As such, legislators in professional states may be under pressure to please groups that will support them in the next election. Second, professional legislatures have more points of access that groups can use to reach legislators. Finally, and probably as a result of the first two points, the number of groups active in state legislatures appears to be greater in professional states (Gray and Lowery 2000).

Data and Methods

This study includes information on 4,238 state legislators in both the upper and lower chambers of 30 state legislatures in the late 1990s and 2000 (see Table 1 for a complete list of states included in the study).² To test the hypotheses, this research employs Ordinary Least Squares regression with Huber-White heteroskedasticity-consistent robust standard errors, adjusted for clustering by state. The first OLS table presents all the non-interacted variables in one model. Subsequent OLS tables interact the main independent variables with dummy variables representing electoral competitiveness and the degree of legislative professionalism. For clarity, only the main independent variables and the significance of the interaction terms are included in the tables. Full models are included in the appendix tables. In each model, the dependent variable is legislator roll-call liberalism and the main independent variables are district opinion liberalism, party identification of the legislator, percent of campaign contributions from business interests, and percent of campaign contributions from labor interests.³

Measuring Legislative Roll-Call Liberalism

The dependent variable is state legislator roll-call liberalism. To measure each legislator's roll-call liberalism, this research employs an index of interest group scorecards from the state chapters of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the Chamber of Commerce

(COC), the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), the Christian Coalition (CC), Right to Life (RTL), Planned Parenthood (PP), National Association of Reproductive Rights and Liberties (NARAL) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).⁴ Table 1, provides a detailed listing of all scorecards included in the study.

TABLE 1 HERE

Because the same group scorecards do not exist in every state, and because scoring groups measure different votes from state to state, indexing these scores may create threats to internal validity through instrumentation problems (Campbell and Stanley 1963). As such, it is necessary to assure that all the scorecards are measuring one common dimension of policy liberalism, or if they are measuring multiple dimensions, those nuances are taken into account. In fact, one common dimension does exist between these scorecards. The Cronbach's Alpha, which measures the inter-correlations between scorecards in each state, never falls below .700 (see table 1), and the correlation of scores across states averages $R=.761$, indicating enough interrelation to justify the overall roll-call liberalism index (see table 1). The index is a mean of all scores and is scaled between 0 and 1 to give a continuous measure of legislative liberalism that can be interpreted like a percent.

Measuring District Opinion Liberalism

To measure district opinion, I use the Ardoin and Garand (2003) method, a "top-down" estimation technique conducted in the following manner: First, using OLS regression, state level ideology (as measured by Erikson, Wright, & McIver 1993) is predicted using various state level demographic and political variables.⁵ Second, analogous district level demographic and political

variables are included in the model with the resulting predicted values representing the ideological orientation of the districts.

The first-stage estimations, providing the equation upon which the district ideology is based, is conducted as follows:

$$\textit{State Ideology} = a + b_1(\textit{percent government workers}) + b_2(\textit{percent service workers}) + b_3(\textit{percent farm workers}) + b_4(\textit{percent with college education}) + b_5(\textit{northeast}) + b_6(\textit{mid-west}) + b_7(\textit{west})$$

These variables produce an equation that does a reasonably good job predicting state ideology (R^2 of .506). The resulting predicted values in each district are scaled between 0 and 1 to give a continuous measure of district opinion that can be interpreted like a percent.

Measuring Interest Opinion

To measure interest opinion, this research uses campaign finance data from the Institute on Money in State Politics. The Institute collects their data from state disclosure agencies with which candidates must file their campaign finance reports. They then assign political donors an economic interest code, based either on the occupation and employer information contained in the disclosure reports or on information found through a variety of resources. The Institute models this sector designation on the coding scheme used by the federal government for classifying industry groups. The Institute then makes public the contributions made to each candidate broken down by economic sector (Institute 2005).

Two major economic sectors dominate American politics – business, typically courted by Republicans, and labor, typically supported by the Democrats. Campaign finance data reflect the level of support that each of these primary economic interest sectors give to legislators.⁶ Because the amount of money in each of these categories varies dramatically from state to state, each legislator's labor and business contributions are converted into a percentage of total contributions.⁷ All campaign finance data comes from the election immediately preceding the

one for which the interest group ratings of legislators is available. For most legislators, this means 1998 (see table 1).

Other Variables

To measure district competitiveness, or marginality, election results are collected from each district in the election immediately preceding the scorecard year. This election data comes from the official tallies provided by the Secretary of State's office in each state. In models that break out competitive and uncompetitive districts, competitive elections are those in which the winner and the runner-up were determined by 10 percentage points or less.⁸ The other models that include a control for competitiveness use a continuous measure of competitiveness reflecting the difference between the vote total of the legislator and their closest opponent (0-100). Data on party identification and upper/lower chamber designations also come from these election results. In the models, Democrats are coded 1 and Republicans 0. Lower house members are coded 1 and upper house members 0.⁹

These models use the Squire (1992) index, a continuous measure, to control for legislative professionalism. Some models use the classification scheme developed by Morehouse and Jewell (2003) which separates states into categories of professionalism (amateur, hybrid, professional). Because each state has a different sized legislative body and a different state population, a control is included that measures constituents per legislator. This is found by dividing the total population of the state by the number of legislators in the corresponding chamber. Because of the South's historical conservatism (regardless of party), the models control for Southern states. As determined by the U.S. Census, Southern states are coded 1, all others are coded 0. Finally, because this study uses scorecards from three different years (see Table 1), the

models control for any difference between years. Dummy variables for 2000 and 1999 are included in the models, while 1998 remains the base.

Representation in the Statehouse

The distribution of state legislator's roll-call liberalism is bimodal. In state legislatures, as in Congress, Democrats are the liberal party and Republicans are the conservative party. The correlation between legislator's party and their roll-call liberalism is an impressive $R=.752$ ($p<.000$). Democratic legislators' roll-call votes average 65.8 percent liberal whereas their Republican colleagues average only 21.5 percent liberal (see figure 1). Geographically, Democrats are most conservative in the South (55.7 percent roll-call liberalism) and Republicans are most liberal in the Northeast (28.4 percent roll-call liberalism). In no region and in no state, however, is there any confusion over which party is more liberal and which is more conservative. Even in Georgia, a state famous for its conservative Democrats, the Democrats are a full 30 percent more liberal than Republican (55.1 to 25.1 percent).

FIGURE 1 HERE

Despite the obvious importance of parties to the structure of legislative roll-call voting, the 50 state legislatures are not "little parliaments." Indeed the distribution in the states appears to be less bimodal than in Congress. Within each party, legislative roll-call behavior spans the entire ideological continuum. Furthermore, district ideology and support from labor and business also relate to legislative roll-call liberalism. District ideology, labor support, and business support each correlate with legislative roll-call liberalism at $R=.143$ ($p<.000$), $R=.328$ ($P<.000$), $R=.248$ ($p<.000$) respectively.

Which of these groups influences the legislative voting behavior of state legislators? The results support the hypothesis that party membership strongly effects legislators' roll-call voting

behavior even when controlling for the influence of their districts, their supporters, and various other control variables (see table 2). Democratic legislators roll-call votes are an average of 42 percent more liberal than the roll-call votes of their Republican Colleagues.

TABLE 2 HERE

Support for interest representation theory is less impressive. Although statistically significant, and in the expected directions, the substantive significance of labor and particularly business is far weaker than party. A legislator receiving 100 percent of their funding from labor is 18 percent more liberal than a legislator receiving no funding from labor. A legislator receiving all of their funding from business, however, is only 6 percent less liberal than a legislator receiving no funding from business.

There is a surprising level of support for the district congruence theory. A legislator from the most liberal district is 27 percent more liberal than a legislator from the most conservative district. Put another way, for every 4 percent increase in district liberalism, legislators respond by increasing their legislative liberalism by approximately 1 percent, when controlling for the effects of party, their supporters, and other control variables.

Context and Representation

Descriptively, context seems extremely important to understanding these varying notions of representation. As expected, district opinion appears more significant in competitive districts and interest representation appears most significant in uncompetitive districts (see table 3). Party, however, is extremely important in both. District opinion appears to be a weak indicator in amateur legislatures. As expected, parties appear more influential in more professional legislatures and interests seem able to sink their teeth into professional legislatures with more ease than amateur legislatures.

TABLE 3 HERE

Are the differences between these categories (competitive, uncompetitive and professional, hybrid and amateur) significant when controlling for the effects of the other independent controls? Regarding competitiveness, the only difference that remains significant is labor's increased effectiveness in uncompetitive districts (see table 4). This suggests that labor gives money to support its inside lobbying efforts. Instead of spending money to help elect potential supporters running in competitive districts, labor is giving its money to sure thing incumbents. Despite sound logic and descriptive support, district liberalism is not a better predictor of legislator liberalism in competitive as opposed to uncompetitive districts.

TABLE 4 HERE

Two conflicting possibilities were discussed regarding district influence across levels of professionalization. One possibility was that legislators in amateur legislatures might be "closer to the people." Another possibility was that legislators in professional legislatures would be better able to serve the districts because of increased institutional capacity. The findings strongly validate the second possibility (see Table 5). Legislators in amateur legislatures do the worst job in terms of responding to district opinion. In hybrid legislatures, they actually do the best job, with a slight decline in the most professional legislatures. The significant increase comes between amateur and hybrid levels of professionalism, with no significant change occurring between hybrid and professional.

Party was expected to become more important as level of professionalism increased. While this is true, the change between amateur and professionalism just misses the .05 level of statistical significance. What appears to be a significant difference between labor money and legislative liberalism in professional legislatures (in table 3) disappears in the multivariate

analysis. As expected, however, business money has a greater effect as in more professional legislatures. Again, the statistically significant increase comes between amateur and hybrid levels of professionalization, with no significant changes occurring between hybrid and professional.

TABLE 5 HERE

Conclusions

This paper addressed three broad theories of representation and tested them under various electoral and institutional constraints found in the state legislatures. The expectation was that the more elite level theories (responsible party and interest responsiveness) would best explain the disconnected world of state politics. This expectation was at least partially correct. Regardless of context, there is no greater predictor of legislative roll-call liberalism than party membership.

The responsiveness of legislators to their economic interests, however, is somewhat less impressive. Although reaching statistical significance (but perhaps not substantive significance), legislators are not willing to move mountains to appease their business and labor interests. This study, however, only analyzes legislative action. Perhaps these interests are particularly adept at promoting inaction. In other words, business may not secure its interests by effecting legislator's roll-call decisions but instead effects outcomes by controlling what gets on and what stays off the agenda (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). Furthermore, business likely underperforms vis-à-vis labor because as a sector they are less selective in their contribution strategies. Business spreads its money over a much greater number of legislators than labor, which concentrates its funds in fewer, usually Democratic, hands.

Representatives from uncompetitive districts are more likely to engage in interest representation and representatives in non-amateur legislatures (hybrid and professional) are

significantly more likely to represent district opinion. These findings have implications for reform. If curbing the influence of interest groups is the normative goal, redistricting plans that encourage electoral competitiveness should be encouraged. Likewise, if district congruence is our normative goal, “closeness to the people” matters less than legislator’s capacity to connect with their constituents. That is, districts get their collective voices heard more when their representatives are well equipped, well compensated and work full-time. Thus governmental reforms aimed at amateurizing legislatures, be it term-limits or suggestions to cut staff and legislative salary, may negatively effect the ability of representative to be a voice for their districts as a whole.

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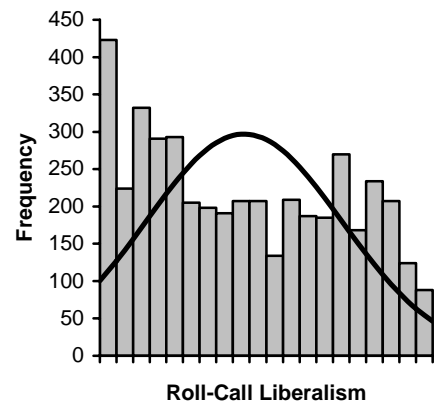
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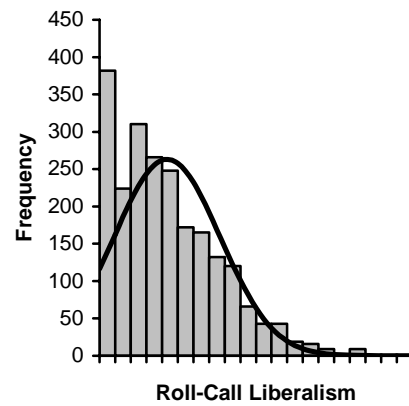
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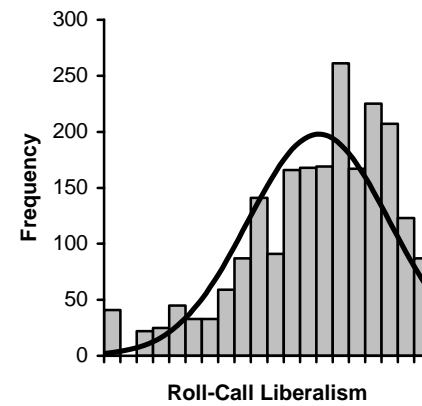
Figure 1:
The Distribution of Legislator Roll-Call Liberalism



All Legislators
N=4,508



Republican Legislators
N = 2,300



Democratic Legislators
N=2,208

Figures are Histograms.

Table 2:
Legislator Roll-Call Liberalism

	β (se)	P > z
District Liberalism	.272 (.038)	.001
Democratic	.417 (.030)	.001
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.057 (.034)	.049
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.184 (.097)	.033
<i>Control Variables:</i>		
Lower Chamber	-.011 (.019)	.277
Electoral Margin	.001 (.001)	.097
Professionalism	-.009 (.086)	.458
Constituents Per Legislator x 100k	.017 (.011)	.073
South	-.028 (.071)	.351
Scoring Year 2000	.121 (.079)	.068
Scoring Year 1999	.077 (.086)	.187
Constant	-.015 (.089)	.431
R ²	.616	
N	4238	

OLS Coefficients with Huber-White heteroskedasticity-consistent robust standard errors, adjusted for clustering by state. One tailed significance tests.

Table 3:
Legislator Roll-Call Liberalism by Context

	Competitiveness		Legislative Professionalism		
	Competitive	Uncompetitive	Professional	Hybrid	Amateur
District Liberalism	.194 (.001)	.133 (.001)	.132 (.001)	.179 (.001)	.085 (.001)
Democratic	.728 (.001)	.757 (.001)	.855 (.001)	.712 (.001)	.741 (.001)
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.215 (.001)	-.259 (.001)	-.296 (.001)	-.240 (.001)	-.244 (.001)
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.199 (.001)	.374 (.001)	.443 (.001)	.289 (.001)	.282 (.001)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients P values in parenthesis.

Table 4:
The Effect of Competitiveness on Representation

	β (se)	P > z	P > z difference from slope for uncompetitive
Competitive			
District Liberalism	.283 (.071)	.001	.432
Democratic	.404 (.037)	.001	.321
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.023 (.049)	.323	.231
Percent of Receipts from Labor	-.041 (.090)	.001	.001
Uncompetitive			
District Liberalism	.270 (.041)	.001	--
Democratic	.420 (.031)	.001	--
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.060 (.035)	.048	--
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.290 (.078)	.001	--

OLS Coefficients with Huber-White heteroskedasticity-consistent robust standard errors, adjusted for clustering by state. P-values for differences were computed based on models with interaction terms between the independent variables and dummies representing the degree of legislative professionalism. Full models are included in Appendix Table 1. One-tailed significance tests.

Table 5:
The Effect of Legislative Professionalism on Representation

	β (se)	P > z	P > z difference from slope for hybrid	P > z difference from slope for professional
Amateur				
District Liberalism	.171 (.062)	.050	.017	.129
Democratic	.370 (.040)	.001	.199	.078
Percent of Receipts from Business	.037 (.036)	.155	.008	.005
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.099 (.146)	.251	.341	.133
Hybrid				
District Liberalism	.382 (.060)	.001	--	.141
Democratic	.430 (.055)	.001	--	.185
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.109 (.046)	.013	--	.371
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.202 (.188)	.146	--	.343
Professional				
District Liberalism	.277 (.071)	.001	.141	--
Democratic	.462 (.050)	.001	.185	--
Percent of Receipts from Business	-.132 (.046)	.004	.371	--
Percent of Receipts from Labor	.298 (.107)	.005	.343	--

OLS Coefficients with Huber-White heteroskedasticity-consistent robust standard errors, adjusted for clustering by state. P-values for differences were computed based on models with interaction terms between the independent variables and dummies representing the degree of legislative professionalism. Full models are included in Appendix Table 2. One-tailed significance tests.

Notes

¹ What I call district congruence, others refer to as policy responsiveness or policy congruence. District congruence seems a more appropriate term because a single legislator cannot make policy (an output of government).

² This project started with the intention to collect information on all legislators in all 50 states. Adding new data sources, however, revealed that not all necessary data was available for every state. Reliable scorecards (see below) do not exist in all states, and campaign finance records going back to 1998 and before (see below) do not exist in all states. The 4,238 usable cases represent the entire universe of legislators for which all the necessary data are available.

³ I also checked for multicollinearity in the models and found that none of the primary independent variables had VIF scores higher than 1.25. The two dummy variables that control for year produce VIF scores that in some models are above 2, but are never above 3. The inclusion of these slightly correlated control variables never affects the main explanatory variables in any of the models. In the models that use interaction, there is expected correlation between the interaction and its components.

⁴ These scorecards are a record of votes that each legislator cast, of interest to the scoring group. The quality of these reports, in terms of research usability, varies greatly by state and group. Some reports include several dozen roll-call votes, others only include only a handful of votes. For a scorecard to be included in this study, the scoring group needed to record at least 5 roll-call votes. Because this is a measure of legislative roll-call liberalism, the conservative scorecards (NFIB, COC, RTL, CC) were all converted into liberal scores. For example, a legislator receiving a score of 100 from the NFIB was recoded to a 0.

⁵ Gerald Wright makes his state ideology data available on his website (<http://php.indiana.edu/~wright1/>). For this study, I only use the ideology data from 1990-2000 (average for each state). The demographic census aggregations (at the state and district level) come from *The Almanac of State Legislatures*.

⁶ The Institute on Money in State Politics assigns Labor its own category. A combination of individual business sectors make up the overall business sector. Those individual sectors include the following: agriculture, communications & electronics, construction, defense, energy & natural resources, finance insurance & real estate, general business, health, transportation. These sectors display enough inter-correlation to justify their aggregation into a business index (Cronbach's Alpha = .876).

⁷ Total contributions do not include candidate contributions to their own campaign.

⁸ I tested several measures of competitiveness, including a 15 and 20 percent margin, each of which yielded similar results. The 10 percent margin was selected because it is both reasonable to assume that a 10 percent spread would be competitive and because the 10 percent cut-off line is almost exactly one standard deviation from the mean victory margin – suggesting it is a natural break point.

⁹ In the 30 state sample, only 10 legislators are independents or of a third party. Because of their scarcity, they are not included in this study.