Buying Time in the Connecticut Legislature Before Clean Elections

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We investigate a simple question: what does money contributed to legislators buy? Evidence that money buys votes (and theoretical explanations for why we should expect such a relationship) is thin at best (Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, and Snyder 2003). A more compelling explanation of what money buys is offered by Hall and Wayman (1990), who argue that money buys legislators' time. In this understanding, the object of a campaign contribution "is not simply the direction of the legislators' preferences, but the vigor with which those preferences are promoted" (802). Using a research design similar to that employed by Hall and Wayman, we investigate the impact of campaign contributions, institutional position, legislative experience, and constituency interest on rates and types of participation in committee by Connecticut state legislators before the implementation of public financing in that state.

This paper is part of a larger research project on the impact of public financing, or "Clean Elections," on electoral and legislative politics in the states. Clean elections advocates cite a number of justifications for removing private money from legislative elections, but at their core, most are premised, either implicitly or explicitly, on the idea that money received in the form of campaign contributions distorts the representational process, biasing it in favor of moneyed interests.[1] If the clean money advocates are correct, then students of legislative politics should be able to isolate the effects of contributions not only on aspects of electoral politics, but also on the behavior of legislators in those legislatures in which private contributions are allowed. This paper is an initial cut at importing a research design that successfully isolated an effect of contributions on the behavior of U.S. House Members into the state legislative context. Arguably, the influence of money could be greater at the state level where significant policy

[1] This bias may manifest itself during the election process, the legislative process, or both.

decisions get made in an environment that tends to receive less media coverage and scrutiny by good government organizations.

Our study is set in Connecticut. The Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) is an appropriate place to situate such a study for two reasons. First starting in the 2008 elections, candidates for state office in Connecticut have the option to participate in a Clean Elections program that allows them to fund their campaigns with public money in exchange for voluntarily limiting their political spending. The enactment of public financing creates a naturally occurring experiment in which we will, at a future date, have the opportunity to compare the predictors of legislative participation pre- and post-Clean Elections. Second, as a hybrid legislature,[2] evidence that money buys time in Connecticut, coupled with Hall and Wayman's findings regarding Congress, would suggest that this relationship likely exists in the various state legislatures that fall between these two points on the continuum of professionalization (Squire and Hamm 2005; NCSL 2008). Alternatively, a finding that factors other than money (e.g., institutional position, tenure, or district need) predict participation would suggest that money does not appear to play the same role in hybrid state legislatures as it may in the U.S. House. At the very least, it would indicate that our search for the impact of campaign contributions on legislative behavior in non-professional legislatures requires a different approach.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, we cover briefly the literature that informs our choice of setting, our case selection, and the methods we employ in our investigation of the effects of money on the behavior of legislators. Because this paper represents an effort to replicate Hall and Wayman's (1990) approach in a different institutional setting, we focus primarily on their article. Then, we describe our data and methods in more detail. We present

[2] Members of hybrid legislatures "typically say that they spend more than two-thirds of a full time job being legislators," but do not make enough income "to allow them to make a living without having other sources of income." Legislatures in the hybrid category "have intermediate sized staff" (NCSL 2008).

our results and conclude with a discussion of their implications for the larger project and for our understanding of money and politics. While the current analysis is limited to a rather small sample of legislation that meets the criteria necessary to execute this design, our findings are encouraging. We emphasize three here: (1) campaign contributions from interest groups (in this case, labor unions) are positive predictors of legislators' participation in committee-level deliberations over legislation in which the group has a strong stake; (2) one's status as a party leader depresses one's level of participation in committee deliberations, as does being a first term legislator; and, (3) the relationship between contributions and participation emerges only on the committee of primary referral (in this case, the Labor Committee). That contributions to members of the other committees that also considered the legislation in our sample did not predict participation in those committees suggests that even in the relatively amateur CGA, groups contribute strategically.

Literature Review, Theory, and Expectations

Criticisms that moneyed interests dominate legislative politics are nothing new (see, e.g., Schattschneider 1960), although the empirical scholarship on the subject yields precious little systematic evidence of the effect of interest groups' campaign contributions on the behavior of legislators at either the national (Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, and Snyder 2003) or state (Ramdsden 2002) levels. In "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees," Richard Hall and Frank Wayman (1990) argue that scholars seeking to document the effects of campaign contributions on member behavior failed because they were looking in the wrong places. They start with the question of why Political Action Committees (PACs), the legal conduits of gifts from organized interests, might contribute to members in the

first place. They acknowledge the possibility that PACs might not even pursue legislative strategies, instead allocating their contributions as part of a pure electoral strategy in which they target sympathetic members in tightly contested races. But patterns of PAC giving suggest that there is both an electoral and a legislative component to PAC contribution strategies. In addition to marginal members, PACs target safe incumbents, party leaders, members and leaders of "power" (sub)committees, as well as members and leaders of (sub)committees with jurisdiction over issues that affect their interests directly (Grier and Munger 1986).

So if PAC contributions indicate a legislative strategy, what are these gifts to legislators intended to purchase? It is unlikely they are purchasing votes on the floor (or in committee) with the goal of changing legislative outcomes. Kingdon (1981) shows that legislators are bound by previous votes they have cast on issues, suggesting that there is little that could cause a legislator to change his or her public position on a particular issue. In light of these constraints, Hall and Wayman (1990) assert the following:

> Simply put, interest group resources are intended to accomplish something different from, and more than, influencing elections or buying votes. Specifically, we argue that PAC money should be allocated in order to *mobilize* legislative support and *demobilize* opposition, particularly as the most important points in the legislative process (800-801).

They continue: "The goal is not simply to purchase support, but to provide incentives for supporters to act as agents" (802).

In order to test this hypothesis, Hall and Wayman look at three pieces of significant legislation in three different House Committees: (1) a bill to reduce the support price for milk (the Dairy Stabilization Act) considered in the House Agriculture Committee in 1982; (2) a job training bill (the Job Training Partnership Act) considered in the House Education and Labor Committee in 1982; and (3) a bill to deregulate natural gas prices (the Natural Gas Market Policy Act) considered in the House Energy and Commerce Committee in 1983-84. The policy areas they chose, each of which had clear and quantifiable economic relevance to members' districts, had been studied previously by other scholars of money and politics, but such work examined the PAC contributions in conjunction with the floor roll calls, finding little connection between the two. Instead of roll call votes, Hall and Wayman focused on the action in committees, specifically formal markup and behind the scenes activity, through interviews with staffers on the committees and the markup records of the bills. Their model assumes that legislative committees retain some degree of control—a property right of sorts—over legislation that falls within their jurisdictions and that moneyed interests have the information necessary to identify the committees where bills directly affecting them are likely to be deliberated. PACs will act on this information by donating to legislators sitting on these committees. Their primary hypothesis is that money contributed to potential supporters of the group's favored legislation—captured through an interaction term—will be associated with higher scores on their index of participation, indicating more vigorous advocacy of the group's position. They also hypothesize that money contributed to potential opponents of the group's favored legislation will be associated with lower scores on the participation index as opponents choose to "hold their fire" rather than advocate forcefully against the legislation.

Modeling committee-level participation, Hall and Wayman uncover support for both hypotheses: campaign contributions by organized interests mobilize members of Congress to act in committee decision making, even after controlling for constituency interest, institutional position, and legislative experience.[4] This is especially interesting because previous studies looking only at roll call votes did not find the same link between PAC contributions and voting action, a discrepancy that could be due, in part, to the members of Congress knowing that their actions in committee are harder to observe than their actions on the floor of the House. In addition, Hall and Wayman found that while organized economic interests (e.g., natural gas producers) in a member's district exerted a stronger impact on the actions of legislators than unorganized interests (e.g., natural gas consumers), "preferences of unorganized interests sometimes constrain the responsiveness of members to organized groups" (1990, 813; see also Arnold 1990). In other words, members take into account how voters in their districts will respond should they attempt to push too hard for policies favored by interest groups that rub against constituent preferences.

Research Design, Case Selection, Data and Methods

To select the bills used in this study, we developed a seven-part checklist, modeled on Hall and Wayman's study, and applied it to all bills in the 2006 Connecticut legislative session. We were particularly interested in bills dealing with agriculture, commodities, or labor/employment issues to enhance comparability to Hall and Wayman.

[4] They find strong support for their "mobilization" hypothesis (i.e., that contributions subsidize participation in committee deliberations) and what they characterize as "weak" (812) support for their "demobilization" hypothesis (i.e., that contributions to one's legislative "enemies" will reduce the vigor with which those members oppose or fight the group's favored legislation in committee).

First, we examined bills in which conflict existed in committee or on the floor of the State House or Senate to ensure we observed policies that required some form of mobilization by legislators.[5] Second, we chose legislation that appeared significant or "high stakes." Like Hall and Wayman, we believe that members' decision making calculus is fundamentally different on controversial, significant legislation than on consensual, trivial issues. Significant issues bear "on major interests, both public and private" (1990, 804), and public statements of support or opposition can carry costs. Participation on consensual legislation, on the other hand, is "cheap," and it seems unlikely that this is the sort of activity groups have in mind when they contribute to members of committees with jurisdiction over issues of importance to them. Third, and related, the legislation needed to have salience for the broader public beyond private groups immediately affected. Fourth, it had to be relevant to constituents at the district level. By including criteria three and four, we are able to assess whether a piece of legislation posed a conflict between particular interest groups and the preferences of the legislator's constituency.

The final three items on the checklist were essential for the collection of data. The fifth requirement is whether the bill allowed for district-level measurement of demand for the legislation among constituents. Critics of money in politics argue that the system encourages members to place the demands of moneyed interests ahead of those of their constituents, so any study of the impact of contributions on legislative behavior must be able to control for constituent interest. Sixth, there must be moneyed interests on both sides of the issue to increase the likelihood that we select instances in which an issue was contested by moneyed interests trying to influence the process. Finally, the seventh criterion was that we could observe bills that

[5] Most bills in the Connecticut legislature are not conflictual, so this decision eliminates the majority of bills. Conflict does not mean an evenly divided committee vote or floor vote. With so many bills in the Connecticut legislature passing unanimously, any bills with divided committees or chambers were considered to have met the first criteria.

allowed us to identify the extent to which members participated in committee deliberations. For these purposes we chose bills with roll call votes in committees and published transcripts and/or minutes from hearings and markups.

Due to the consensual nature of the policy making process in the CGA, only a handful of bills marked up in 2006 met the criteria established by the checklist. However, one bill, An Act Concerning the Retention of Jobs in Connecticut and the United States (H.B. 5279), was particularly well-suited for the analysis undertaken in this study. The conflict over the bill is observable and rare for legislation in Connecticut. The bill was marked up in three different committees -- Labor and Public Employees (where the bill originated), the Government Administration and Elections Committee, and the Appropriations Committee -- with conflict apparent in each committee vote. When the bill reached the floor of the House, a motion to refer and amend failed in a divided vote before dispensation of a subsequent amendment – also divisive—cleared the path for passage in that chamber. While the bill was never subject to a floor vote in the Senate, it was the subject of a heated, two hour floor debate before finally being tabled on a voice vote.

The jobs bill was also significant and relevant to constituency and interest groups. Lobbying on the bill was dominated by the behemoths of Connecticut interest group politics: the labor unions that supported the bill (specifically the AFL-CIO, Connecticut Working Families, and the International Association of Machinists) and, on the side opposing the bill, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), the largest and most politically active umbrella organization of business interests in the state.

H.B. 5279 was an anti-outsourcing bill that mobilized both labor and business groups. The Connecticut AFL-CIO identified the bill as one of its “Legislative Priorities” for the 2006

session, and when the legislation died in the Senate, the organization labeled the loss a "notable disappointment" in their "Legislative Wrap-Up" (2006). The CBIA issued legislative alerts to its members on April 21, 2006, and April 28, 2006, arguing that the legislation would "significantly undercut Connecticut's ability to be a more competitive player in the global economy" (CBIA 2006).[6] The AFL-CIO testified for the legislation in an open meeting of the Labor Committee on February 28, 2006; the CBIA testified against it before the Labor panel on April 28, 2006. The bill was substantial, and key groups in the state were divided on it.

Finally, this legislation was discussed at public committee meetings in all three committees and the record includes recorded roll call votes at both the committee level and the floor of the House. Thus, we were able to observe closely member participation at multiple stages and across several venues for this bill.

Dependent Variable: Legislative Participation in Committee

Following Hall and Wayman's study (1990), we coded member activity on the bill across five different areas. Within the committee, legislators received credit for a discrete act of participation if they attended committee sessions when the bill was discussed and a vote was taken, if they voted on the bill, and if they spoke at the committee hearings. This was done for each committee that voted on a bill. Next, legislators received credit for participating if they offered an amendment to the bill and if they were a sponsor or co-sponsor to the legislation.[7] We summed the acts of participation to create an index with a theoretical range of 0 (no participation) to 5 (participated at every recorded opportunity).

[6] The CBIA issued a press release on May 5, 2006 celebrating the decision of Senate leaders not to call the legislation up for a vote in that chamber, mentioning specifically the role of "Senate Republicans" in securing its demise.

[7] Hall and Wayman also include an indicator of the role legislators played through informal negotiations over the legislation, drawn from staff interviews. We do not replicate this portion of their index of participation.

Independent Variables

Hall and Wayman identify four variables that should predict participation in legislative committees: district impact, demand, or interest; institutional position; legislative experience (indicated as freshman status); and interest group contributions. For H.B. 5279, a jobs bill, we measured district demand with a district-level indicator of the unemployment rate. We expect a positive relationship between district unemployment rate and legislative participation during committee deliberations on H.B. 5279. We use binary indicators to capture a legislator's status as a freshman or a party leader.[8] In the course of our research, we conducted two dozen interviews with Connecticut political elites. During these interviews, the substantial influence of party leaders in all aspects of the policy making process in the CGA emerged as a recurring theme. On the one hand, this might lead us to expect a positive relationship between party leadership status and participation. On the other hand, in such an institutional setting, party leaders might not view participation in committee-level deliberations as the most efficient use of their limited time. Thus, while we include a binary indicator of party leadership status, we remain agnostic about the direction of the relationship. Hall and Wayman hypothesize (and on one of their bills find) a negative relationship between freshman status and participation. While we doubt the practice of "legislative apprenticeship" Hall (1987) and Hall and Wayman (1990) uncovered will be as strong in the CGA as it is in Congress, we still anticipate that freshman legislators will be less active during committee deliberations than their more senior counterparts as they "learn the ropes." Finally, we collected data on every contribution to members of the

[8] In their model, Hall and Wayman focus on committee or subcommittee leadership positions. However, subcommittees do not exist on Labor or Government Administration, and while they do exist on Appropriations, they do not markup or report legislation. While the number of committee leaders on any given committee is small, the number of party leaders can be surprisingly large. Eighty-nine of the 187 members of the House and Senate hold a party leadership post of some description. Twenty-seven of 55 members of the Appropriations Committee, 9 of 20 members of Government Affairs, and 7 of 14 members of the Labor Committee were party leaders in 2006.

2005-06 CGA during the 2004 election cycle and calculated total contributions from labor unions. Because of the intensity with which organized labor advocated on behalf of this bill, we expect a positive relationship between (logged) union contributions and participation in committee deliberations on H.B.5279. Table 1 reports summary statistics on these variables, broken out by the three committees that marked up the bill.

[Table 1 here]

Results

Because it is possible that interest groups subsidize the participation of members they anticipate will work hard on their behalf, we follow Hall and Wayman and use two-stage least squares (2SLS) estimation to deal with potential endogeneity.[9] Our results are reported in the first column of coefficients in Table 2.[10] We report only the results of the second stage. The two-stage model fits the participation data very well (Adjusted R-squre = .44) and the results corroborate our hypothesis that contributions from labor unions subsidized legislative participation of members on the Labor Committee. An increase in contributions from labor

[9] In estimating the first stage, we relied on the extensive literature on campaign contributions as well as our knowledge of the CGA. Four variables served as instruments: party, the relevant interest group rating—in this instance, lifetime AFL-CIO ratings of CGA members; an indicator of a member's electoral marginality (measured here as the difference between the Democratic and Republican shares of the percent of the two-party registration in the district); and, chamber (since the CGA exclusively employs joint legislative committees). The first stage model of contributions to Labor Committee members yielded an Adjusted R-square of .66, and both the AFL-CIO rating and district marginality emerge as statistically significant predictors of contributions.

[10] The dependent variable, an index of participation comprised of five discrete categories of participation, has a theoretical range of 0 (no participation) to 5 (participated at every stage). The ordinal properties of the variable and the relatively small number of values it takes suggest that estimation via ordered logit or ordered probit might be more appropriate. However, we opted to use least squares (two stage) estimation for four reasons. First, ordered logit works best when each value of the dependent variable has many cases. With N=14, this condition does not obtain in our data. Second, and relatedly, the potential endogeneity of contributions necessitated a two-stage estimation procedure. Least squares estimators are highly robust to deviations from normality, whereas it is not clear that a two-stage ordered logit model would be similarly robust. Third, despite our dependent variable's limited range, the actual data are distributed approximately normally. A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality yields W=0.94 (p=.43). The test is structured such that the null hypothesis is that the variable is distributed normally, and at p=.43, we are unable to reject the null. Finally, as shown in Figure 1 (in the Appendix), a density plot of our dependent variable with an overlay of the normal distribution passes the "eyeball" test: the variable appears to be distributed normally.

unions was associated with a statistically significant increase in the participation rate of Labor Committee members on H.B.5279: a move from one standard deviation below the mean of the logged union contributions variable to one standard deviation above the mean was associated with an increase of one fifth of the range of the participation index.

[Table 2 here]

Neither district demand nor freshman status emerges as a significant predictor of participation on H.B.5297. In the case of district demand, this may be attributable to the timing of the deliberations. While we believe that the unemployment rate in a member's district is a valid indicator of district interest in job stimulus and job protection legislation, the period from January 2005 to January 2006 was characterized not by job losses but by job growth in all 187 districts. While it seems plausible that members representing districts that experienced slower job growth would participate more vigorously and extensively on behalf of a job stimulus bill than those representing districts that experienced higher levels of job growth, the overall positive employment picture in Connecticut during the 2005-06 session may have weakened the impact of unorganized groups (such as the overall labor force) on legislators' behavior . Regardless, it seems unlikely to us that constituent demand for employment protection legislation would be as intense in a period of job expansion as it would in a period of employment contraction. Similarly, while Hall and Wayman do find strong evidence corroborating their hypothesis that senior members dominate committee deliberations, the failure of the freshman status variable to achieve statistical significance is not terribly surprising given the institutional context of the CGA. The relative lack of professionalism (Squire and Hamm 2005) in even the most "professionalized" state legislatures makes us doubt that junior members intend to sit on the

sidelines during committee deliberations in Connecticut's hybrid legislature, especially on a bill marked up in the second year of the 2005-06 session.[11]

The seven party leaders on the Labor Committee were statistically significantly *less* inclined to participate than their rank-and-file counterparts, controlling for other factors. Others have documented the high degree of centralization in the CGA (see, e.g., Satter 2004), and in our interviews with legislators, lobbyists, and party officials, this centralization has been a recurring theme. The negative sign on this variable thus suggests to us that while interest groups and committee chairs view the committees as vital cogs in the policy making process, party leaders may save their efforts for later opportunities to influence or shape legislation in the confines of the leadership offices. Given the choice between investing limited time and energy during committee deliberations and investing those scarce resources elsewhere, party leaders chose a more passive approach in committee than rank-and-file members. Without access to the (admittedly large) inner sanctum of party leaders, the remaining Labor Committee members engaged during committee deliberations. The behavior of this variable certainly merits further investigation because it may provide clues as to the real locus of power in the CGA. Do members become less engaged in policy work once they ascend into the ranks of the party leadership, choosing to focus instead on strategy, coalition building, and fundraising? Or do leaders remain engaged in policy work, but choose to focus their efforts on a few key bills (such as the budget) of particular importance to their party's "brand"? Or does their behavior reveal the existence of an alternative, less transparent policy making apparatus in the leadership suites?

[11] We also estimated the model with a variable capturing number of years served, rather than the simple binary indicator of freshman status. The estimate associated with this variable was not statistically significant either. In fact, the inclusion of the tenure variable reduced the explanatory power of the model and the standard error was much higher in relation to the estimate on the tenure variable than on the freshman indicator. For these reasons, as well as a commitment to comparability to Hall and Wayman's model, we retained the specification that included the freshman status variable.

The answers to these questions have implications not only for pinpointing the locus of power in the CGA, but also for identifying possible unintended consequences of legislative and electoral reforms. We return to this theme in the conclusion.

Does a similar pattern of subsidized participation by rank-and-file committee members emerge on the other committees to which H.B.5279 was referred? To investigate this question, we also modeled participation in the Appropriations and Government Affairs Committees using the same 2SLS approach (results not shown). Interestingly, neither labor union contributions nor one's status as a party leader predicts participation in these committees. In fact, the participation on this bill in these committees, both of which reported the bill after contentious markup hearings, varied independently of all of the variables in our model. Given the larger number of cases in both Appropriations (55 members) and Government Affairs (20 members), we initially expected to uncover evidence of subsidized participation in these venues as well. However, it is important to remember the logic underpinning the expectation that money buys legislators' time. Neither Appropriations nor Government Affairs has jurisdiction over labor issues. This bill was referred to these committees because it involved regulating state contractors (the purview of Government Affairs) and included language requiring the outlay of state funds for several related purposes (the responsibility of Appropriations). Targeting the diverse (and in the case of Appropriations, very large) membership of these two panels would be an extremely inefficient contribution strategy for organized labor. Hall and Wayman assert that groups will target contributions "at the most important points in the legislative process" (1990, 801), and as mentioned above, their model assumes that rational PACs will contribute disproportionately to members of the committees where bills affecting them are most likely to be considered. Some labor issues will find their way into other committees, but all labor bills will originate in the

Labor Committee. In fact, a quick investigation into labor PAC giving patterns to Connecticut legislators suggests that these groups pursue legislative strategies similar to those of their national counterparts. Unions gave Labor Committee members about twice as much, on average, as non-Labor Committee members, and gave party leaders more than twice as much, on average, as rank-and-file members.[12] However, mean labor contributions to members of Appropriations and Government Affairs were not statistically significantly different than the mean contributions to other legislators. In light of this, it is not surprising that unions were unable to buy legislators' time on this bill in these secondary venues: they did not shop there.

Finally, one element of the Hall and Wayman study we have not addressed yet is the notion that contributions may *demobilize* one's opposition. Replicating their design, we divided the membership of each committee into two groups—likely potential supporters and likely potential opponents—based on whether they fell above or below the chamber mean on their lifetime rating on the AFL-CIO's Legislative Scorecard. We then estimated a two-stage model in which we interacted the predicted values generated in the first stage with the indicator of support or opposition. Results of this analysis also appear in Table 2 (in the right-most column). Whereas Hall and Wayman found the coefficients took different signs—i.e., money increased supporters' rates of participation but depressed opponents' rates of participation—only the former relationship emerged in our data. The coefficient for the contributions X supporters interaction was positive and statistically significant, but we did not find evidence for the demobilization hypothesis. In fact, the coefficient on the contributions X opponents interaction was also positive, though not statistically significant. Other variables in the model behave similarly with the exception that the positive coefficient on the district unemployment rate variable—our indicator of district demand for the jobs bill—achieves statistical significance at

[12] Both differences statistically significant at $p < .05$.

traditional levels in this specification. A move from 2.8% unemployment (the 10th percentile) to 6.6% unemployment (the 90th percentile) was associated with an increase of one fifth of the range of the participation index.

Encouraged by the results presented in the preceding paragraphs, we became curious as to whether or not labor union contributions subsidized participation during Labor Committee deliberations on other bills on which organized labor took a strong stand during the 2005-06 session. Fortunately, the Connecticut AFL-CIO produces a legislative scorecard in which it identifies key floor votes on issues that it deems "vital to the working men and women of Connecticut" (2006), so we used the scorecard as our starting point. The 2005-06 scorecard was based on nine floor votes related to seven underlying bills (including H.B. 5279). Of the seven bills on which the AFL-CIO built its ratings, five were marked up in the Labor Committee and only three of those (again, including H.B. 5279) exhibited any real conflict at either the committee or floor stages.[13] We coded member participation on these two new bills,[14] and also computed an additive index of participation in Labor Committee deliberations on conflictual legislation on which organized labor took a strong position (as indicated by inclusion in the Scorecard). This "grand" index simply sums each Labor Committee member's discrete acts of

[13] To reiterate, we believe that participation on consensual legislation is "cheap," and it seems unlikely that this is the sort of participation groups have in mind when they contribute to members of committees with jurisdiction over issues of importance to them. In fact, the limited data available to us are consistent with this interpretation: the mean on the participation index among Labor Committee members on the two consensual bills included in the Scorecard was 2.71, compared to a mean of just 2.28 on the three conflictual bills.

[14] The first was S.B. 94, a bill limiting the state's ability to privatize various services, and the second was H.B. 6827, a bill prohibiting employer-mandated meetings regarding politics, religion, or union activities. While it was marked up in the Labor Committee, H.B. 6827 was never actually brought to the floor of either chamber for a vote. Instead, its content was offered as an amendment to a non-controversial bill specifying penalties for violations of apprentice permit and occupational licensing laws.

participation across all three bills.[15] The results of the models of participation on all three bills, as well as the additive index, are presented in Table 3.

[Table 3 here]

The results provide strong support for the mobilization hypothesis—i.e., that labor union contributions subsidize participation by Labor Committee members during committee deliberations on bills important to organized labor. The coefficients on the contributions variables are all positive, and three of the four are statistically significant. A $4,000 contribution from organized labor (the mean contribution to Labor Committee members) was associated with an increase equivalent to 60% of the actual range of the additive index. As was the case with H.B. 5279, being a member of the party leadership depressed one's participation in committee-level deliberations by an amount equal to just over one fifth of the range of the index. An increase in the unemployment rate from 2.8% unemployment (the 10th percentile) to 6.6% unemployment (the 90th percentile) was again associated with an increase of just under one fifth of the range of the additive index.

The behavior of the freshman status variable is particularly interesting, especially when considered in light of previous research on legislative participation. The results of the models of H.B. 6827, S. 94, and the additive index all suggest that freshman status severely depresses participation levels. Yet no such relationship emerges in our model of H.B. 5279. Further investigation reveals that this likely reflects the relatively steep learning curve freshman legislators face. While H.B. 6827 and S. 94 were both marked up in the session immediately following the 2004 elections (on March 22, 2005 and May 5, 2005 respectively), H.B. 5279 was marked up a year later (on March 14, 2006). On H.B. 6827, marked up in committee just weeks

[15] While the "grand" index, like the indexes generated for each individual bill, is technically a count, the variable is distributed approximately normally (see Appendix A2), thus lending itself to least squares estimation. It ranges from 3-10, with mean = 6.8 and standard deviation = 2.1.

after the session began, none of the freshmen legislators participated despite (or possibly because of) the bill's conflictual nature. On S. 94, marked up about six weeks later, all three freshmen participated, but in very limited ways. By the following year, however, being a freshman member of the committee had no impact on one's level of participation during committee deliberations on H.B. 5279, the most controversial and substantial of the three bills. Interestingly, this diminishing impact of freshman status on participation over time is *precisely* what Hall (1987, 119-120) observes in his comprehensive analysis of participation in Congress: "the negative effects [of freshman status on participation] diminish as the members and their staffs gain experience and expertise over the course of the first term" (120). Sharing Fenno's (1973) view that apprenticeship of the sort described by Matthews (1960) no longer constrains the behavior of new members of Congress, Hall articulates a modern understanding of apprenticeship: "apprenticeship of a different sort operates in committee decision making, one deriving from the relative costs and resource constraints faced by the newcomer in learning a complex political process and sometimes esoteric subject matter" (120). Our results suggest a similar dynamic may be at work in the hybrid Connecticut legislature: by the second year of their first term, once reticent freshmen legislators are participating fully in committee deliberations.

S. 94 and H.B. 6827 were important for organized labor, but the Labor Committee was not the only committee to which these bills were referred. H.B. 6827 was referred to three additional committees before its content was offered as a floor amendment, and S. 94 worked its way through *nine* committees in addition to Labor before reaching the floor. We coded participation on both bills in all 12 committees and modeled member participation on these bills in those venues. Consistent with the results on H.B. 5279, union contributions did not predict

participation on either bill on *any* committee other than Labor. And as was the case with H.B. 5279, the explanation appears to be that organized labor could not buy time on these committees because it did not "shop" there. Contributions to members of all 12 of these committees were statistically indistinguishable from contributions to non-members. Again, organized labor seems to be engaging in a sophisticated contribution strategy with both legislative and electoral dimensions.

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, our findings that money appears to buy time on the Labor committee in the Connecticut Legislature suggest that policymakers in the states – even in legislatures less institutionalized than Congress and less in need of campaign resources – are influenced by political contributions. It also appears that interest groups in the states behave in similar ways to those at the federal level. To be sure, this analysis needs to be evaluated using more data. To put our theories to a stronger test, we intend to observe additional legislative bills in other committees across time. Our research is ongoing, and we continue to apply our selection criteria to other bills from the 2005-2006 session. We believe that interest group scorecards such as the AFL-CIO scorecard utilized here are a particularly useful way of expanding the number of bills in our analyses. Fortunately, the CGA makes the transcripts of committee hearings available online, which helps make this ambitious project feasible. That said, the consensual nature of policy making in Connecticut severely limits the number of bills that meet the selection criteria spelled out by Hall and Wayman.

In focusing on the policy process, we are cognizant that our findings apply to behavior and not necessarily final policy outcomes. After all, legislators may mobilize on behalf of

funders but it is plausible that such efforts may gain contributors little more than "sound and fury." However, our underlying assumption, built on Hall's (1987) extraordinary work on participation and power (see also Hall and Evans 1990), is that process matters a great deal to the final outcome of policies.

For this reason, we believe the research is worth pursuing further. As far as we know this is the first analysis at the state level to assess what political contributions buy. Under federalism, American states engage in significant policymaking that frequently fails to receive the public attention bestowed on Congress. Policies get made in some state capitols where news coverage is lacking and insiders routinely avoid other mechanisms that increase transparency, and possibly accountability, in the policy process. This study seeks to shed light on the political strategies of interest groups to influence policy through political contributions. It also attempts to identify how policymakers respond to such contributions. In doing so, it highlights the potential impact of campaign finance reforms, such as Clean Elections, that attempt to reduce such transactions or attenuate the influence of money in policymaking. Future research after the implementation of Clean Elections should allow us to test whether this reform has an effect on the behavior of political elites in the legislative process.

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Table 1
Summary Statistics

Committee	Variable	Mean (std. dev.)	Min	Max
Labor	Unemployment Rate in District	4.5 (2.0)	0.25	8.66
(N=14)	Union Contribs ($ thousands)	4.1 (6.0)	0	21.65
	Freshman Status	0.21 (.43)	0	1
	Party Leader	0.5 (.52)	0	1
Appropriations	Unemployment Rate in District	4.5 (1.6)	2.8	8.66
(N=55)	Union Contribs ($ thousands)	2.5 (3.6)	0	21.2
	Freshman Status	0.2 (.40)	0	1
	Party Leader	0.5 (.50)	0	1
Gov't Affairs	Unemployment Rate in District	4.0 (1.7)	0.1	8.66
(N=20)	Union Contribs ($ thousands)	2.1 (2.8)	0	9.4
	Freshman Status	0.2 (.41)	0	1
	Party Leader	0.45 (.51)	0	1

Table 2

Labor PAC Money and Labor Committee Participation:
An Act Concerning the Retention of Jobs in Connecticut and the United States (H.B. 5279)

Independent Variables (expected direction)	Unstandardized 2SLS Coefficients (std. errors)	
Logged Union Contributions to Supporters ($ thousands) (+)		0.686**
		(.207)
Logged Union Contributions to Opponents ($ thousands) (-)		5.248
		(.3.059)
Logged Union Contributions to Labor Members ($ thousands) (+)	0.481**	—
	(.207)	
Unemployment Rate in District (+)	0.157	0.253*
	(.104)	(.118)
Party Leader (n/a)	-0.835**	-1.229**
	(.366)	(.434)
Freshman Status (-)	0.620	0.638
	(.455)	(.440)
Constant	1.607**	0.968
N of Cases	14	14
Adjusted R^2	.44	.48
$F_{(5, 8) (4, 9)}$	4.02**	3.93**

* Significant at $p < .05$ (one-tailed test); ** Significant at $p < .05$ (two-tailed test)

Table 3

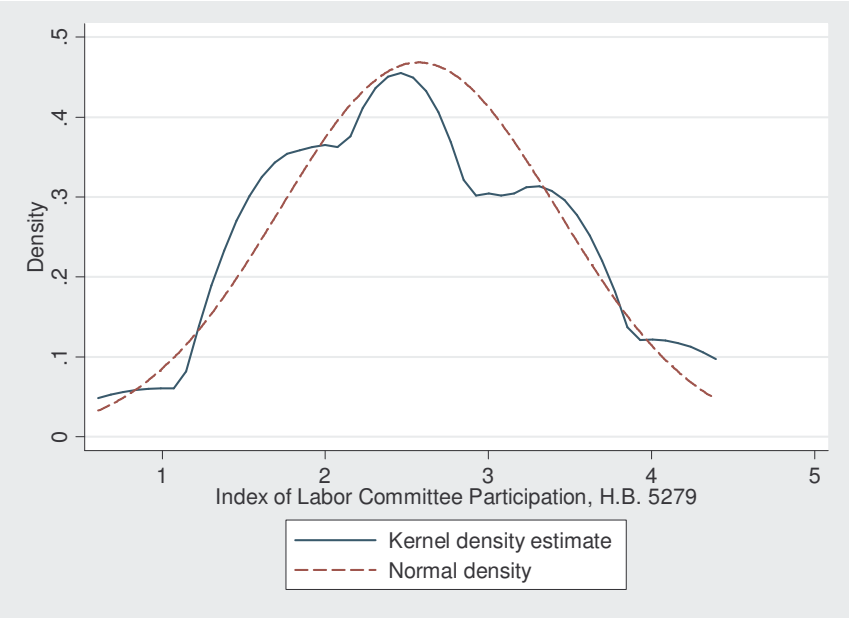
Labor PAC Money and Labor Committee Participation, 2005-06:
Conflictual AFL-CIO Scorecard Bills

Independent Variables (expected direction)	**Unstandardized 2SLS Coefficients (std. errors)**			
	H.B. 5279	S. 94	H.B. 6827	Index
Logged Union Contributions to Labor Members ($ thousands) (+)	0.481** (.207)	0.396* (.205)	0.181 (.295)	1.06** (.417)
Unemployment Rate in District (+)	0.157 (.104)	0.128 (.103)	0.056 (.148)	0.341† (.209)
Party Leader (n/a)	-0.835** (.366)	-.424 (.362)	-.299 (.521)	-1.558* (.737)
Freshman Status (-)	0.620 (.455)	-1.594** (.451)	-2.941** (.649)	-3.915** (.917)
Constant	1.607**	1.602**	2.539**	5.748**
N of Cases	14	14	14	14
Adjusted R^2	.44	.53	.59	.62
$F_{(4, 9)}$	4.02**	4.06**	5.84**	6.43**

** Significant at p < .05 (two-tailed test); * Significant at p < .05 (one-tailed test); † Significant at p < .07 (one tailed test)

Appendix A1

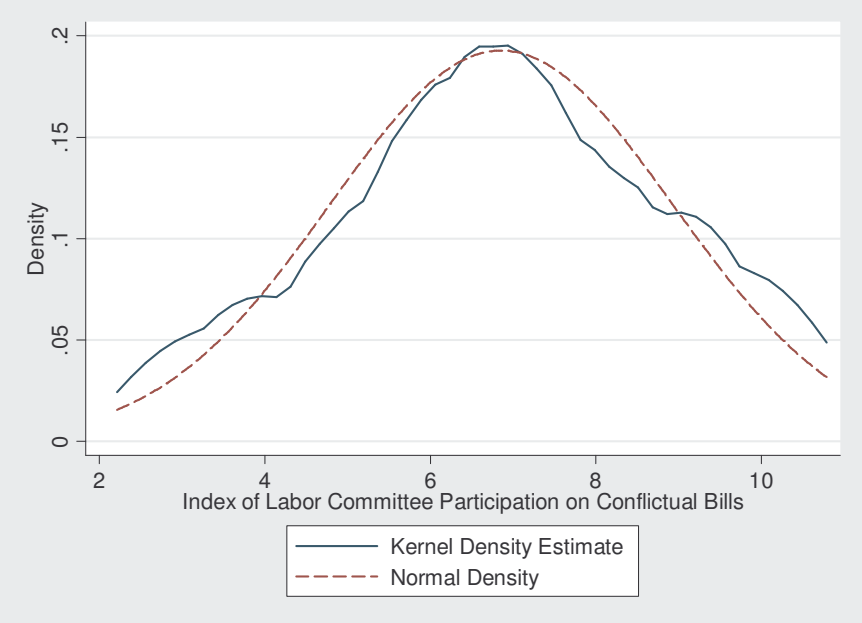
Figure 1: Kernel Density Graph of Dependent Variable with Normal Distribution Overlay



* Shapiro-Wilk W = 0.94 (p = .43). H_0: DV normally distributed

Appendix A2

Figure 2: Kernel Density Graph of Index of Labor Committee Participation on Conflictual AFL-CIO Scorecard Bills, with Normal Distribution Overlay



* Shapiro-Wilk W = 0.99 (p = .99). H_0: DV normally distributed