ESSAYS ON MONEY AND CAMPAIGNS IN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

By

Mellissa Meisels

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Political Science

August 9, 2024

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Joshua D. Clinton, Ph.D.

Larry M. Bartels, Ph.D.

Alan E. Wiseman, Ph.D.

Danielle M. Thomsen, Ph.D.

In loving memory of Carol Gevurtz Meisels and Rabbi Stanley Meisels

זכרונם לברכה

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance, mentorship, and friendship of my Ph.D. advisor and dissertation committee chair, Josh Clinton. It is an open secret that Josh is one of the kindest, most generous, and intellectually serious members of our discipline. Josh provided me with precisely the type of advising that I needed in each moment of graduate school: when I was dejected and anxious, he encouraged me; when I finished anything, he immediately pushed me to start something better; and when given opportunities that were beyond my wildest dreams, he did everything in his power to set me up for success. As an intensely independent student and researcher, I am extraordinarily lucky to have had an advisor who allowed me to chart my own course.

I am equally indebted to my other dissertation committee members. In year two, Larry Bartels encouraged me to explore something outside of primary campaign website platforms — the focus of my undergraduate research — before beginning dissertation work. That advice led me to develop an interest in campaign finance, which ultimately became a major component of my research agenda. Alan Wiseman and his incredible graduate seminar on the U.S. Congress were largely the reason I decided to pursue Congress–related research. As a leader in the fields of primary elections and campaign finance, Danielle Thomsen is one of the scholars I look up to most, and it has meant the world to have her cheer me on at every step of my graduate studies. These faculty provided a level of constructive feedback well beyond what was expected, and for that, my dissertation is immensely improved.

I have also benefitted from spending time in intellectual environments aside from Vanderbilt's. John Zaller treated his 300–student lectures at UCLA like discussion–based seminars — and I was always happy to share my opinion in class. Spending years assisting him and Shawn Patterson with research on House primaries was invaluable in shaping my research interests and preparing me for graduate school (and beyond). However, they failed to prepare me for the harsh reality that not everyone agrees party is everything. Scott Abramson and Sergio Montero were instrumental in bringing me to University of Rochester as a visiting scholar in the Democracy Center. My time spent in that department transformed the rest of my graduate school experience and the trajectory of my dissertation research, for which I will always be thankful.

Finally, my family, who are everything to me. Living in a part of the country so distant and different from my home during a pandemic was the most difficult thing I have ever done. However, it was impossible to feel alone knowing that the weight of my family was always behind me. My parents, Kim and David, have been my biggest cheerleaders from the moment I began applying to Ph.D. programs until my dissertation defense. They begged to hear every mundane detail about the academic publication process, comprehensive exams, and going on the job market. When I felt inadequate and anxious, they refused to let me write myself off and reminded me of who I was. As a Ph.D. herself, my aunt Julie was always there to commiserate about graduate school. My brother Gavin and sister–in–law Kendra have also provided encouragement and support to me every step of the way. Michael, who fully embodies the term 'partner,' sustained me with his love and support through the highest highs and lowest lows of this wild ride. I am forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

Political campaigns in the United States have become increasingly expensive. The total amount spent in congressional races rose to almost $10 billion in 2020, up from $3 billion in 2000,[1] while House winners spent over $2 million on average compared to $850,000 in 2000.[2] Although candidates still need voters' support to win elections, raising sufficient funds is, essentially, a prerequisite to waging a competitive campaign. Logically, then, candidates' reliance on donors creates the potential for financial contributors to have an outsized influence on politics.

Accordingly, an impressive academic literature investigates the distorting effects of money in American politics, with a predominant focus on individual donors (Barber 2016*a*; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; Kujala 2020; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024) and corporate PACs (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014, 2018; Powell and Grimmer 2016; Thieme 2020). Much of this work is interested in the giving strategies of moneyed interests with regard to candidates' issue positions, as the rise of polarization among elites has roughly coincided with the explosion of money in politics (e.g. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006).

In addition to increases in polarization and campaign spending, the importance of the primary stage of House elections has also increased over the past few decades. The number of congressional districts that are truly competitive for both Democrats and Republicans has declined (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006), making a large portion of races as good as over by the time that the primary election ends. The decline of two–party competition means that electoral outcomes are increasingly determined at the primary stage, which has led to scholarly efforts to shift the emphasis on House elections from the general stage, where it has traditionally focused, to the primary stage (Hirano and Snyder 2019; Thomsen 2022).

In fact, theories of extended party networks suggest that primaries are precisely where

[1] https://www.opensecrets.org/elections-overview/cost-of-election
[2] https://www.opensecrets.org/elections-overview/election-trends

“policy demanders" like moneyed interests have the greatest opportunity to influence who makes it into office (Bawn et al. 2012). This is made possible by a number of features of stemming from primaries' intra–party nature: partisan identification is made irrelevant as an heuristic in voters' decisions, and positioning differences between candidates tend to be smaller within parties than between parties, resulting in low voter participation, little media coverage, and widespread voter apathy. Moreover, competing against opponents who share their partisan identification creates the need for candidates to distinguish themselves from the field in other ways, creating more room for factors like issue attention and positioning to shape the competitive landscape.

Taken together, these trends in American politics highlight the need for research on how candidates present themselves during campaigns and how contributors respond, especially in House primary elections. However, prior work relies upon data and methods with significant limitations for examining these topics. The best existing measure of candidate positioning — Adam Bonica's CF Scores (Bonica 2023), which include the non–incumbents eluded by legislative–based measures such as Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004) and Poole, Romer, and Rosenthal (1987) — are least suitable for use in analyses related to money in politics. In short, CF Scores use campaign contributions to place donors and candidates in the same liberal–conservative space by relying on the assumption that donors contribute to candidates who share their positions. The use of campaign contributions themselves to estimate candidates' positions introduces major challenges when examining how moneyed interests respond to candidates' positions.

Beyond endogeneity concerns, proxying positioning by making assumptions about the generation of data indirectly related to candidates' public positioning also limits what we can learn. In particular, such indirect estimates cannot tell us about how candidates choose to present their positions and issue priorities. Questions related to the substance of campaign content, like how different forces influence which issues candidates focus on and the positions they take, or how different stakeholders respond to those signals, require

a more direct source of data.

This dissertation is a collection of three papers examining candidates' public campaign platforms and moneyed interests' contribution strategies. Throughout each of these papers, I aim to both shed light on and offer solutions to some of the most glaring measurement and methodological issues facing researchers interested in strategic interactions among political elites. In service of the latter, I introduce original hand–collected text data on campaign platforms drawn from the websites of all available House primary candidates who ran in the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 elections. In sum, my dissertation presents a nuanced picture of the role of money in politics: organized interests and individual donors are more strategic than existing empirical studies suggest, and their instrumental behavior creates less straightforward incentives for candidate extremism than currently thought.

The first paper in my dissertation, "Everything in Moderation? The Effect of Candidate Extremism on Individual and Corporate PAC Fundraising," uses a causal inference approach to investigate the relationship between candidates' positions and their fundraising from individual donors and corporate PACs. As discussed previously, which types of candidates are advantaged financially is critical for understanding the role of money in U.S. politics generally as well as polarization specifically. While existing research at the subnational level and in donor surveys suggests that individuals prefer extreme candidates and corporations prefer moderates (Barber 2016*b*; La Raja and Schaffner 2015), identification issues have hampered investigation in the congressional context.

To address these challenges, I use a regression discontinuity design to estimate the effect of "as–if randomly" nominating an extreme candidate over a moderate on general election fundraising from individual donors and corporate PACs. This approach relies upon electorally close primaries from 1980 to 2020 to construct a "treatment" sample consisting of races where an extreme candidate barely won over a moderate co–partisan, and a "counterfactual" sample where moderates barely won over extreme candidates. Conditional on identifying assumptions being satisfied, differences between the fundraising of

these otherwise comparable nominees should be attributable to the quasi–random assignment of an extreme nominee.

At the aggregate nominee level, I find little evidence that extreme House candidates are advantaged in individual contributions nor disadvantaged in corporate PAC contributions compared to moderates. Contributor–level results, however, suggest that corporate PACs substantially penalize extreme nominees. Investigating the presence of heterogeneous effects demonstrates that individuals are not especially more likely to fund extremists in contexts most favorable to extremism, corporate PACs do not penalize extremists in contexts less favorable extremism, and corporate PACs' penalty of extremists is concentrated in more recent elections.

Taken together, these results have important implications for how we study and understand the causes of polarization in Congress. Contrary to the idea that individual donors bolster extremists, individual donors do not appear to advantage extremists at the individual level nor in aggregate level contributions. Likewise, candidates do not raise substantially different amounts of corporate PAC funds on the basis of their ideologies and, if anything, corporate PACs' individual level contribution decisions favor moderates. Consistent with recent work, individuals may have a preference for extreme candidates while corporate PACs have a preference for moderates, yet other instrumental factors may drive their contribution behaviors in practice (Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024; Stuckatz 2022; Thieme 2020). In sum, the countervailing considerations facing contributors make their role in incentivizing extremism and exacerbating polarization more opaque.

My finding that as–if randomly nominating an extremist over a moderate does not lead to substantially greater individual contributions raises real questions about how candidates' positions are measured. Donors have far more extreme preferences than other members of the public (e.g. Barber 2016*c*), and campaign contribution–based measures of candidates' (and donors') positions rely on the assumption that donors contribute to candidates on the basis of shared extreme preferences (Bonica 2014; Hall and Snyder 2015).

However, the null results in my first paper suggest that shared positions alone do not drive donors' contributions.

My second dissertation paper, "Positioning in Congressional Primary Campaigns," seeks to improve upon existing measures of candidate positions by estimating House primary candidates' positioning based directly on their stated campaign platforms. The concept of campaign positioning is integral to theoretical investigation of elections, representation, and political behavior, yet empirical studies rely upon proxy measures that may not reflect candidates' public campaign positions. Measures based on legislative roll–call voting (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004; Poole, Romer, and Rosenthal 1987) by definition exclude non–incumbent candidates, while measures based on campaign contribution networks (Bonica 2014; Hall and Snyder 2015) are of limited utility to scholars of money in politics who want to include other campaign finance variables in their analyses.

Combining original text data on issue positions collected from campaign websites with an unsupervised machine learning approach, I develop election–specific, unidimensional estimates of House primary candidates' positioning based on variation in word usage. This collection encompasses the over 6,000 candidates who appeared on major–party primary ballots in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022, allowing researchers to characterize the policy platforms and positioning of candidates from the most recent primary cycles. The measure possesses a number of conceptually and methodologically desirable properties, such as capturing candidates' rhetoric in a relatively unmediated environment, being transparent and straightforward to validate, and placing no special assumptions on candidates' positions from one election to the next.

In an application, I demonstrate the value of estimating candidates' positions independently from campaign finance by contributing to an ongoing debate regarding national versus constituency influence (Bonica and Cox 2018; Canes-Wrone and Kistner 2022; Lockhart and Hill 2023). I find that even within party, primary candidates' rhetoric varies systematically with district partisan makeup, becoming more liberal (or less conservative)

as Democratic partisanship increases. However, relying instead upon contribution–based estimates would lead to a different conclusion entirely: no relationship is evident among Republicans, and the relationship is *reversed* among Democrats. This suggests that donor behavior and therefore candidates' contribution networks have nationalized, while candidate behavior remains district tailored. Ultimately, these divergent findings indicate a more nuanced role of nationalization in modern House elections, and raise fundamental questions about whether and how donor behavior alters candidate incentives.

Another advantage of campaign platform data is the ability to explore the substance of campaign strategy, especially aspects orthogonal to standard liberal–conservative positioning. My third dissertation paper, "Campaign Agendas and Issue Group Strategy in Congressional Primaries," leverages the information on issue attention contained in these platforms to investigate how single–issue interest groups respond to candidates' prioritization of their issue. Groups focused on a particular issue area, like Planned Parenthood and the National Rifle Association, are some of the most longstanding and recognizable political organizations in the U.S. Existing theories of access–seeking PACs and lobbying (Denzau and Munger 1986; Snyder 1990; Hall and Wayman 1990; Hall and Deardorff 2006) suggest that issue groups could target contributions to incumbents who have signaled a commitment to their issue, whereas theories of extended party networks (Bawn et al. 2012) suggest that they should try to nominate and elect new champions of their issue into Congress.

I investigate issue groups' strategies by combining my original collection of House primary campaign platforms with itemized contribution receipts, allowing me to measure campaign attention and issue PAC support across nine major issue areas: Guns, Abortion, Environment, Animal Rights, Police, Elderly, LGBTQ, Campaign Finance, and Israel. These candidate–issue–year level data facilitate a variety of within–candidate empirical approaches. First, I examine the relationship between campaigning on an issue and raising funds from groups related to that issue among incumbents versus non–incumbents.

Second, I estimate incumbency advantages in issue PAC fundraising among those who did versus did not campaign on the PAC's issue as non–incumbents. Third, I assess how issue groups respond to legislators' campaign attention versus legislative attention to their issue.

My results are consistent with issue groups relying on campaign rhetoric to identify potential issue champions during the primary election stage, and continuing to cultivate relationships with them once in Congress. Primary candidates are more likely to receive contributions from PACs related to their campaign issues, with incumbents who campaigned upon an issue enjoying double the incumbency advantage in funding from PACs related to that issue compared to other incumbents. These differences are not driven by differences in legislative activity: issue PAC contributions are more responsive to campaign attention than to legislative attention.

These analyses contribute to a number of aforementioned literatures which are becoming increasingly important in America politics. I join a burgeoning body of work on the dynamics of primary elections (Hassell 2023; Hirano and Snyder 2019; Thomsen 2022), which have become highly consequential in shaping electoral outcomes and thus representation. I also advance our understanding of the strategies adopted by single–issue interest groups, which have received little scholarly attention in comparison to corporate PACs and individual donors. Additionally, I move beyond the legislative arena, where much work on legislator–group connections starts and ends, in order to illuminate how groups initially decide with whom to work and investigate electoral–legislative connections.

Chapter 1

Everything in Moderation? The Effect of Candidate Extremism on Individual and Corporate PAC Fundraising

1.1 Introduction

Partisan polarization in Congress is one of the best-documented features of contemporary American politics (Lee 2016; Lewis et al. 2023; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006), and many suggest that campaign finance is responsible. Individual donors tend to hold extreme positions (Bafumi and Herron 2010; Barber 2016*c*) and scholars commonly assume or argue that donors contribute to candidates on the basis of ideological congruence, thus aiding in the election of more extreme legislators (Barber 2016*a*, *b*; Bonica 2014; La Raja and Schaffner 2015). Conversely, corporate PACs appear to value moderation, but exert limited spending and influence in the electoral arena (Barber 2016*b*; Bonica 2013; Jacobson and Carson 2019; La Raja and Schaffner 2014; Milyo, Primo, and Groseclose 2000).

Identifying a causal effect of candidates' ideology on their ability to raise money, however, is extremely challenging. Candidates' positions are obviously not randomly assigned, and they are arguably strategically chosen to maximize electoral success. This endogeneity makes it particularly difficult to isolate the impact of candidates' ideology on their fundraising performances. While some studies demonstrate that individual donors tend to support extreme candidates and PACs tend to support moderates (e.g. Ensley 2009; Bonica 2013), interpreting this correlational relationship in terms of implications about the relative ability of moderate and extreme candidates to raise funds is complicated as receipt patterns may not be due to candidate positioning *per se*.

Given these identification challenges, the connection between candidate ideology and campaign fundraising has largely been examined either in state legislative contexts (Barber 2016*b*; La Raja and Schaffner 2015) or at the individual donor level (Barber 2016*a*; Bar-

ber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017). Although such studies provide valuable insight into how candidates' positions might affect donors' campaign contributions, the extent to which these relationships result in differential financial support for House candidates on the basis of their positions remains unclear due to the multidimensional nature of the decisions that donors face.

Indeed, the most recent evidence suggests that ideology may not be the sole driver of candidates' individual nor PAC receipts (Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024; Stuckatz 2022; Thieme 2020). Because of the contentiousness and importance of majority control in the contemporary Congress, candidates vying for seats needed to maintain or gain a legislative majority may receive strong financial support from individuals looking to maximize the marginal impact of their donation with lesser regard for ideology (Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008; Lee 2016). On the other hand, corporate PACs are known to optimize "access-buying" by supporting heavily favored candidates and those who hold institutional influence (Bonica 2013; Milyo, Primo, and Groseclose 2000; Fouirnaies and Hall 2014), who may not be moderate given their district compositions and valence advantages (Burden 2004; Carson and Williamson 2018). If individual and business PAC contributions are shaped by such strategic considerations and not allocated on the basis of candidates' positions alone, differences in candidates' positions may not translate into differences in fundraising.

To estimate the relationship between candidate ideology and campaign contributions, I leverage a regression discontinuity design to estimate the effect of "as-if randomly" nominating an extreme candidate over a moderate candidate on the winner's general election fundraising success (Hall 2015). Specifically, I use data on candidates' ideology, transaction–level contribution records, and election outcomes via Bonica's (2023) Database on Ideology, Money, and Elections (DIME) from 1980 to 2020 to identify races where an extreme candidate just barely won the primary over a moderate co-partisan, with the "counterfactual" consisting of races where a moderate was just barely nominated over an

extreme candidate.

Conditional on the identifying assumptions being satisfied, any difference between these otherwise comparable extreme and moderate nominees' fundraising in the general election should be attributable to the quasi-random assignment of an extreme nominee. If campaign contributions to House candidates are primarily based on their ideologies, we should observe a substantial difference depending on whether an extreme or moderate candidate wins the primary. In particular, existing work predicts an increase in individual fundraising and a decrease in corporate PAC fundraising in response to extremist nominations. If other factors primarily drive candidates' receipt patterns, however, we would not necessarily expect differences in the amounts raised by extreme and moderate nominees.

At the nominee level, I find little evidence that extreme House candidates experience a fundraising advantage among individuals nor a disadvantage among corporate PACs compared to moderates. Analysis of contributor-level donation decisions suggests that corporate PACs substantially penalize extreme nominees, while the sign, magnitude, and statistical significance level of estimates of individual donors' responses are highly variable across operationalizations of candidate ideology. Moreover, individuals are not consistently more likely to fund extreme candidates than moderates even in electoral contexts which are the most favorable to extremists, nor are corporate PACs consistently less likely to fund extreme candidates than moderates where extremism is more of a liability. Despite recent arguments about the nationalization of congressional races (Bonica and Cox 2018; but see Canes-Wrone and Kistner 2022; Lockhart and Hill 2023), corporate PACs' eschewing of extremists is driven by elections in recent decades.

Taken together, these results regarding the behavior of the two largest sources of campaign funds in congressional elections have important implications for how we study and understand the causes of ideological polarization in Congress. Contrary to the idea that individuals disproportionately fund candidates on the basis of extremism, the evidence presented here suggests that their individual-level contributions do not consistently favor

extremists over moderates, nor do candidate-level contributions from individuals favor extremists. Likewise, candidates do not raise substantially different amounts of corporate PAC funds on the basis of their ideologies and, if anything, corporate PACs' individual-level contribution decisions favor moderates. To be clear, I examine just one pathway for money to affect political outcomes — ignoring, for instance, how extreme individual donors may influence the candidate field itself (Hassell 2016; Thomsen 2014, 2017). However, conditional on winning a closely contested primary, the effects that I identify suggest that nominating candidates with vastly different ideologies does not affect candidates' ability to raise funds in the general election from individual donors nor corporate PACs in ways consistent with contributors exacerbating extremism.

1.2 The Logic of Political Contributions

Scholars have long been concerned about the disproportionate access to elected officials and accompanying representational advantages enjoyed by political donors (e.g. Hall and Wayman 1990; Kalla and Broockman 2016; Miler 2010; Powell and Grimmer 2016; Thayer 1974). With the growth of ideological polarization in legislatures in recent decades, campaign contributors' role in the electoral process has likewise come under scrutiny. Specifically, the dominant argument of extant work is that individual donors seek to elect extreme candidates while corporate PACs seek to elect moderates.

1.2.1 Individual Donors

The ideological extremism of individual donors is well-documented. Survey evidence suggests that contributors hold more extreme preferences on policy than the general population (La Raja and Schaffner 2015), voters (Bafumi and Herron 2010), co-partisans (Barber 2016*c*), primary voters (Hill and Huber 2017), and even senators (Barber 2016*c*). Moreover, Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, and Snyder (2003) argue that contributions are a "consumption good" in which donors receive utility from the participatory act of supporting candidates who share their policy preferences.

Most recent empirical work on individual donors shares the view that donors give expressively on the basis of ideological congruence. In a study of contributions to senators running for re-election in 2012, Barber (2016*a*) finds that donors report recipient ideology as extremely important in their contribution decisions, and Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower (2017) show that policy agreement increases donors' likelihood of contributing to a senator. Likewise in the sub-national context, scholars have linked polarization in state legislatures to campaign finance environments that are friendly to individual donors (Barber 2016*b*; La Raja and Schaffner 2015). This view of individual contributions as expressions of donors' ideology constitutes the behavioral assumption of donation-based measures of ideology, in which receipt patterns are thought reveal the preferences of both recipients and contributors (e.g. Bonica 2014; Hall and Snyder 2015).

While donor-level surveys provide valuable insight into how individuals make their decisions, and studies of state campaign finance laws illuminate causes of polarization in state legislatures, the extent to which these findings can inform us about the relationship between House candidates' ideology and fundraising is unclear. Respectively, the influence of ideology on donors' decisions may not translate into an aggregate-level difference in individual fundraising for moderate versus extreme candidates, and extreme state legislative candidates' advantage in individual fundraising does not necessarily imply a similar advantage for extreme House candidates. Along these lines, scholars have also found some evidence that House candidates who are more extreme or closer to their district's donor constituency receive more individual campaign contributions (Ensley 2009; Johnson 2012; Kujala 2020). However, given the plethora of factors that likely confound the relationship between candidate positioning and individual campaign contributions — such as district competitiveness, media attention, and party support — its level of causality remains an open question.

While this characterization of individual donors as expressive and ideology-motivated largely dominates, other work suggests that donors may also be driven by strategic, instru-

mental considerations (Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024). Given the contentiousness of majority control in recent congresses as well as contributors' disproportionate stake in electoral outcomes (Lee 2016), individuals may prioritize contributions to copartisans in importance races with less regard for ideological congruence. Consistent with this, many Senate donors report influencing the race outcome as a top priority when making their contribution decisions (Barber 2016*a*), and studies have found that competitiveness is a strong predictor of out-of-district individual contributions (e.g. Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008) and suggested that individuals' contributions may be more related to their perceived benefits of their own party winning than ideological proximity (Hill and Huber 2017). In addition to valuing important races, donors may also strategically support "high-quality" candidates who are otherwise expected to perform better electorally (e.g. Box-Steffensmeier 1996; Maestas and Rugeley 2008), or contribute to candidates supported by their employer (Stuckatz 2022). If individuals consider these instrumental factors in their donation decisions, House candidates' ideologies alone may not strongly determine their individual receipts.

1.2.2 Corporate PACs

In contrast to individual donors, who are thought to allocate funds to extreme candidates, much of the literature on corporate political action committees (PACs) suggests that business PACs seek to elect moderates. Some scholars have argued that PACs are ideologically moderate, and, like individual donors, primarily contribute to campaigns on the basis of ideological congruence (Bonica 2013). Indeed, recent work has suggested that PACs within politicized industries adopt ideologically-motivated contribution strategies (Barber and Eatough 2019) and that corporate PACs' contribution strategies may be affected by their donors' partisanship (Li 2018).

In an alternative vein, others argue that corporate PACs prefer moderate candidates for non-ideological reasons (Barber 2016*b*). Specifically, numerous studies suggest that

these PACs are primarily driven by their desire to gain access to the policymaking process rather than by ideological alignment (Hall and Wayman 1990; Snyder 1990; Powell and Grimmer 2016). Because gaining election to office is a prerequisite to lawmaking and moderates are thought to be more electable than extreme candidates (e.g. Burden 2004; Hall 2015), moderate candidates should receive more corporate PAC receipts.

Although PACs value candidates' likelihood of election, as demonstrated by their support of those who are heavily favored to win (Bonica 2013; Milyo, Primo, and Groseclose 2000), moderates may not hold a monopoly over electability. Due to the increasing number of uncompetitive districts that are "safe" for one party (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006) and polarization among partisan constituents (Lelkes 2016), recent work has called into question the idea that extreme candidates are less electable than moderates (Utych 2020). If extreme candidates fare no worse than moderates, and corporate PACs are indeed access-driven and value electability, moderate candidates should receive no more PAC contributions than extreme candidates.

However, if corporate PACs are indeed access-oriented, supporting electorally successful candidates is merely one aspect of the contribution strategy. Because the goal is to increase their access to and control over the policymaking process, PACs likewise value institutional influence, leading them to fund incumbents (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014), candidates who chair committees or sit on power committees (e.g. Romer and Snyder 1994), and those who hold procedural power (Fouirnaies and Hall 2018), among others. Consistent with this, recent studies of corporate political giving find that such interest groups are more conservative than what their moderate contribution records suggest, indicating strategic donation behavior (Thieme 2020). Regardless of whether corporate PACs are "truly" moderate or conservative, the importance of candidates' existing institutional clout and other strategic considerations to their goals suggests that candidates may not garner different amounts of corporate PAC funds based on ideology.

1.3 Empirical Strategy

While a large body of work has sought to identify whether ideology impacts individual donors and corporate PACs' contribution decisions, assessing whether candidates receive different levels of financial support on the basis of their ideologies is exceptionally difficult. Candidates' positions are non-random and likely chosen to maximize electoral success in the context of their district, making it particularly challenging to identify the causal impact of positions on fundraising performance. Moreover, confounding and difficult-to-observe characteristics such as experience, strong personal character, and connections in the district threaten our abilities to make inferences about relationships between candidates' ideologies, fundraising performance, and electoral success (Burden 2004; Maestas and Rugeley 2008; Stone and Simas 2010). Even if extreme candidates systematically raise more funds from individual donors and less from corporate PACs than moderate candidates, these receipt patterns may not be due to candidate positioning *per se*.

Because of the difficulty of isolating the effect of congressional candidates' ideology, the evidence on the relationship between candidate ideology and fundraising success comes from contexts that allow for stronger causal claims yet speak less directly to this relationship. Some (e.g. Kujala 2020; McCarty and Poole 1998) have attempted to directly test whether congressional candidates' receive more or less PAC and individual receipts on the basis of their ideologies, such as Ensley (2009) who finds modest evidence that extreme candidates garnered more individual contributions in 1996. However, most recent work has turned to the state legislative context (Barber 2016*b*; La Raja and Schaffner 2015) or surveying donors directly (Barber 2016*a*).

While these studies illuminate how individuals understand their donation behavior and how different types of contributions may affect state legislative polarization, the extent to which their conclusions suggest differential support for moderate and extreme congressional candidates is unclear. For example, individual donors could report prioritizing candidates' ideology in their donation decisions, yet contribute most heavily to co-partisans

of varying ideologies running in races critical for majority control of Congress due to their heightened stakes (Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024). Likewise, state legislative candidate fundraising dynamics may not generalize to federal contexts due to differences in media attention paid to the races, perceptions of importance of majority legislative control, variation in candidate professionalization and experience, and costs of campaigning.

To investigate whether candidates receive more or less financial support from corporate PACs and individuals due to their ideological positions, I employ a regression discontinuity design to estimate the impact of as-if randomly nominating an extreme candidate over a moderate on general election campaign receipts. To do so, I identify primaries with substantial ideological gaps between candidates, with "treated" races consisting of those where the extreme candidate just barely beat the moderate, and the "control" is those where the moderate just barely won (Hall 2015). This strategy complements existing work by using a causal inference approach to evaluate one potential pathway for money to influence polarization via a subset of House elections.

1.3.1 Data and Sample Construction

I obtain transaction–level receipts and candidate–level information spanning 1980 to 2020 from Bonica's (2023) Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME), which also includes unique contributor identifiers and a code for corporate PACs. Following Hall (2015), my sample includes primary elections where the top two vote-getters are an extreme candidate and a moderate candidate, which I identify using Bonica's (2014) CF Scores also made available in DIME. In light of the potential issues with donation-based scaling methodologies (e.g. Barber 2022; Hill and Huber 2017; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024) and endogeneity concerns given contribution-based independent and

dependent variables,[1] I impose especially tight restrictions on contests entering the sample to ensure that primaries are clearly between an extreme candidate and a moderate.

First, I drop races with a top-two candidate whose CFscore is on the "wrong" side of zero – that is, Republican primaries with a "liberal" candidate and Democratic primaries with a "conservative" candidate. Aside from the chance that such candidates are ideologically misclassified, it is not clear whether a Republican with a liberal score or a Democrat with a conservative score should be classified as the extremist or moderate relative to her correctly-aligned opponent. Second, the main sample is restricted to elections in the top quartile of distance between candidates' positions.[2] This cutoff is stronger than the median cutoff employed by Hall (2015) due to concerns about measurement error, which may lead to primaries being incorrectly classified as between an extremist and a moderate when in reality there is little meaningful difference between candidates. However, results from alternative specifications and sample compositions, including the inclusion of races with candidates whose CFscore "disagrees" with their partisanship and a more relaxed candidate gap requirement of the top median rather than the top quartile, are reported in the Appendix.

Although the sample of primaries employed here is not necessarily representative of the universe of primaries, this subset of races is disproportionately important and theoretically relevant for investigating the influence of candidates' ideologies on their fundraising performances. Table 1.1 reports characteristics of interest for (1) the universe of contested primaries over the time period, (2) restricting the sample to opposed primaries, (3) fur-

[1] Although CFscores are contribution-based ideal point measures, other scholars (e.g. Kujala 2020) have used contributors' and recipients' CFscores in the same equation as campaign contributions. However, I merely use CFscores for the coarse purpose of identifying primaries between an extreme and a moderate candidate, and this is also why I employ an especially strong cutoff CFscore distance (top 25%) for races entering the sample. Because the treatment (extremist victory) is binary *and* the sample consists of only races in the top quartile of CFscore distance between candidates, estimation relies very little on the actual individual candidate-level variation in CFscores.

[2] The 75th percentile corresponds to a gap in CFscores of at least 0.459. To illustrate, this is equivalent to the difference between the scores of Jamie Raskin of MD-8 (-1.139) and Kyrsten Sinema formerly of AZ-9 (-1.054). Sinema was a member of the centrist Blue Dog Coalition in the House, while Jamie Raskin is a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Table 1.1: Characteristics of Primaries Across Samples, 1980 – 2020

	All Primaries	Opposed Primaries	Different Ideologies	Close Primaries
Democratic	51.91%	50.76%	44.95%	45.19%
Open Seat	9.08%	20.99%	15.35%	21.23%
Mean Pres VS Margin	10.91%	10.68%	10.97%	10.00%
Median Pres VS Margin	9.00%	8.50%	8.90%	8.00%
Midterm	47.45%	46.67%	44.55%	48.15%
1980 – 1988	21.85%	15.42%	8.89%	12.10%
1990 – 1998	23.85%	23.04%	20.71%	26.42%
2000 – 2008	24.02%	18.96%	20.71%	19.75%
2010 – 2020	30.29%	42.57%	49.70%	41.73%
N	15,381	4,435	990	405

Note: Characteristics of primaries across increasingly restrictive samples: 1) at least one candidate, 2) more than one candidate, 3) top quartile of ideological distance between candidates, 4) 20% bandwidth.

ther restricting to primaries in the top quartile of ideological distance between candidates, and (4) further restricting to primaries won within a 20% bandwidth.[3]

Across all levels of restrictiveness, the similarity of average presidential vote margin and proportion occurring during midterm years demonstrates that races in the most restrictive RDD sample are relatively representative of the universe of primaries with regard to national electoral environment. Consistent with greater prevalence of ideological primarying among Republicans (Boatright 2014), the proportion of Democratic contests is slightly smaller once the sample of primaries is restricted to those between candidates of substantially different ideologies. Finally, the characteristics with the largest divergences between samples suggest that the RDD analysis relies on an especially timely and consequential set of primaries. While 9% of all House primaries over the period were fought without an incumbent running for reelection, open seats made up more than 20% of closely-contested primaries between ideologically different candidates. Given the infrequency with which incumbents are unseated, open seats are how the vast majority of new members enter the House, making these races which are overrepresented in the RDD

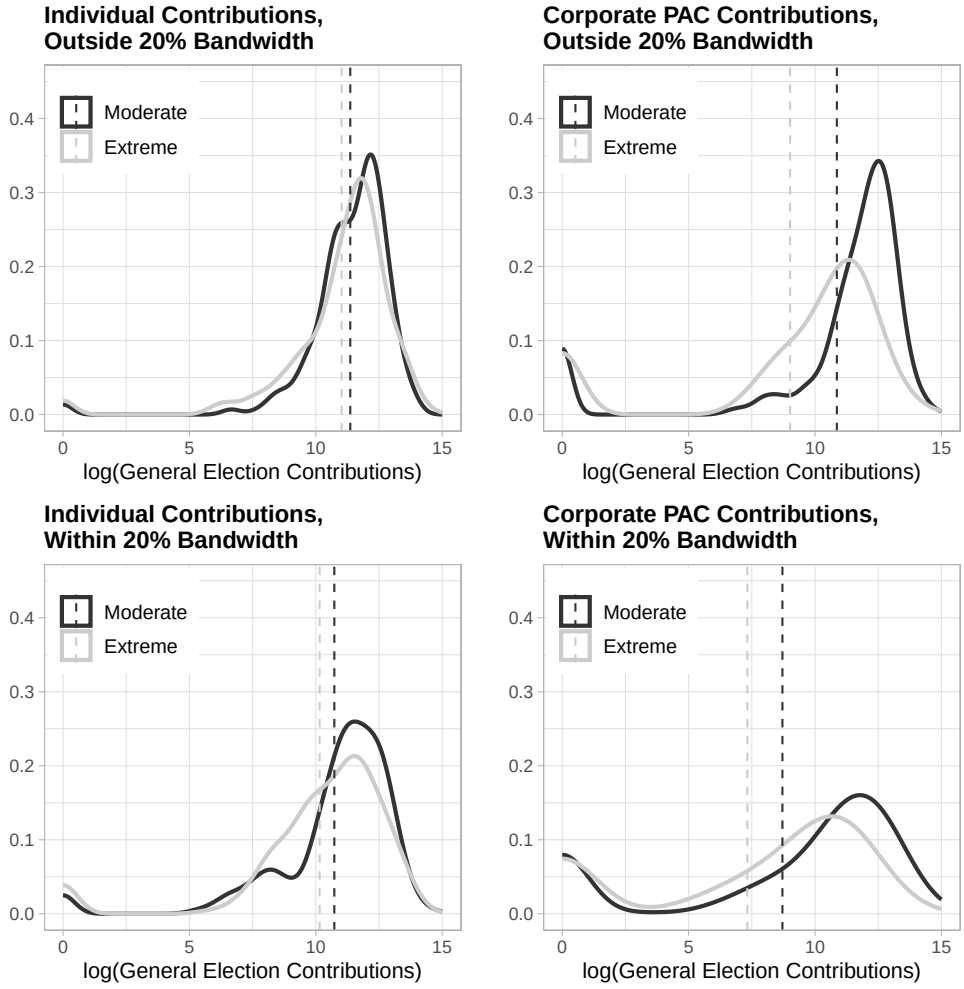
[3]This number approximates the optimal bandwidths automatically selected in the candidate–level analyses that follow, while the optimal bandwidth in contributor–candidate–level analyses is substantially narrower.

sample especially important for the composition and institutional dynamics in Congress. The primaries used in RDD analysis are also drawn most heavily from recent elections: post-2008 is the period most overrepresented in the sample, suggesting that results presented here are disproportionately informed by trends occurring most proximately to the present.

Beyond the general representativeness of the subset of races used for the regression discontinuity, we can also investigate fundraising patterns among those that do and do not enter the sample. Extrapolating treatment effects to populations away from the threshold is inappropriate in single-cutoff regression discontinuity settings, but it is nevertheless important to determine whether the design relies upon cases that have entirely anomalous patterns. To compare campaign receipts of extremists and moderates who competed in more and less competitive primaries, Figure 1.1 plots the density of individual and PAC general election contributions among extreme and moderate nominees who won their primaries within or outside of a 20% bandwidth.

Plotting the distribution of the dependent variable by candidate ideology and primary competitiveness reveals two important takeaways. First, there are some notable differences between general election contributions to candidates who won more and less competitive primaries. The spread of individual and corporate PAC contributions to both extreme and moderate nominees is greater among those who won a competitive primary, with substantially more moderates who won uncompetitive primaries receiving over $250,000 from corporate PACs compared to moderates who won competitive primaries. Second, these descriptive trends are inconsistent with extremists enjoying individual fundraising advantages over moderates, and corporate PACs' observed preference for moderates is only prominent among those who won their primary handily. The fact that moderate-extremist corporate contribution disparities largely disappear when focusing on candidates who won more competitive primaries suggests that this fundraising may not just depend upon ideology, but more strategic factors such as electoral context.

Figure 1.1: Density of General Election Contributions by Candidate Ideology and Primary Competition



Note: Kernel density estimates of nominees' logged individual and corporate PAC general election contributions with dashed lines representing sample means. Black lines are moderates who were nominated over an extreme candidate, and grey lines are extreme candidates who were nominated over a moderate.

1.3.2 Regression Discontinuity Design

Having established the broad representativeness and importance of the sample, as well as the descriptive similarity between fundraising patterns of moderate and extreme nominees, I now turn to regression discontinuity to estimate the effect of "as-if randomly"

nominating an extreme candidate over a moderate on general election fundraising.[4] In particular, I use this design to estimate the difference in individual and corporate PAC general election contributions between extreme candidates who narrowly beat a moderate and moderate candidates who narrowly beat an extremist. I estimate the parameters of the equation

$$C_{ipt} = \beta \text{Extremist Nomination}_{ipt} + \tau \text{Extremist Vote Share}_{ipt} + \mu(\text{Extremist Nomination * Extremist Vote Share})_{ipt} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_n \quad (1.1)$$

where C_{ipt} stands in for the outcome variables used in the analysis that follows: general election logged contributions from individuals and from corporate PACs to party p's nominee in district i in year t.[5] The "treatment" indicator Extremist Nomination$_{ipt}$ takes a value of 1 if the extreme candidate won party p's primary in district i in year t, and 0 if the moderate won instead. Because I focus on close races, β estimates the as-if random effect of nominating an extremist compared to a moderate on general election fundraising from individuals and PACs. The forcing variable Extremist Vote Share$_{ipt}$ represents the extreme candidate's share of the top-two primary candidates' vote, such that values above 0.5 designate an observation as treated (extremist victory) and below 0.5 as untreated (moderate victory).

Following convention (Imbens and Lemieux 2008; Lee and Lemieux 2010), I allow the slopes to vary on either side of the extremist win threshold by interacting the extremist nomination indicator with the extremist vote share running variable. Thus, the coefficient μ on the interaction term captures the difference in slope for extreme candidates from the parameter τ, which estimates the slope for moderate candidates. Additionally,

[4] For a similar usage, see Hall (2015) who employs an RDD to estimate the effect of nominating an extreme candidate over a moderate on parties' electoral success. He includes a brief mechanism analysis examining the effect of nominating an extremist on contribution share from PACs generally, but does not examine the effect on dollars from individuals nor corporate PACs.

[5] I take the natural log of campaign receipts due to their highly skewed distribution and the diminishing returns to the subsequent effects of campaign spending (Jacobson 1990; Sides, Vavreck, and Warshaw 2022).

I include year fixed effects γ_t to account for secular changes in the campaign finance environment with regard to contribution limits, campaigning costs, and fundraising trends (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006; Hall 2019; La Raja and Schaffner 2015), as well as differences between donor composition and receipts in presidential election years versus midterms (Rhodes, Schaffner, and La Raja 2018). Remaining idiosyncratic variation is represented by the error term ε, clustered at the nominee level.

Consistent with current best practices, I use data-driven optimal bandwidth selection and triangular kernel weights, which upweight observations closest to the cutoff (de la Cuesta and Imai 2016; Gelman and Imbens 2019; Imbens and Kalyanaraman 2012). To vary the strictness of ideological difference required to enter the sample, I perform analyses on primaries in both the top quartile and top median of distance between top-two candidates' ideologies, with primaries including those whose ideology "disagrees" with their partisanship reported in the Appendix.

While it is important to understand the impact of extremist nominations on candidate-level general election fundraising, these observed contribution totals are ultimately shaped by the decisions of contributors themselves. To investigate the contributor–level response to the nomination of extreme candidates, I employ the following specification:

$$\begin{aligned} C_{cipt} = \beta \text{Extremist Nomination}_{cipt} + \tau \text{Extremist Vote Share}_{ipt} + \\ \mu(\text{Extremist Nomination * Extremist Vote Share})_{ipt} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_c. \end{aligned} \tag{1.2}$$

The term C_{cipt} represents an indicator for whether contributor c made any general election contribution to party p's nominee in district i in year t, with models estimated separately for corporate PACs and individuals.[6] The independent variables in Equation 1.2 are identical to those in Equation 1.1, however, idiosyncratic error is clustered at the contributor level. On the one hand, we want to construct contributor-primary dyads that capture contributors' decisions about whether to contribute to each possible candidate. While this

[6]Results with logged contributions as the dependent variable can be found in the Appendix.

is a reasonable approach for corporate PACs, it is unlikely that all individuals who donated to any of the sample primaries meaningfully considered contributing to nominees from all such primaries. To better capture the donors of interest, I estimate parameters of Equation 1.2 separately with individuals who contributed to more than one race, individuals who contributed to more than five races, individuals who only ever contributed to candidates of one party,[7] and all corporate PACs.

The key identifying assumption of the regression discontinuity designs is that expected potential outcomes — here, the nominations of extreme versus moderate candidates — are continuous at the threshold, as candidates cannot perfectly manipulate their vote shares. Because the density of potential outcomes should be continuous for each individual, this implies that the density for the sample population should likewise be continuous (McCrary 2008; Lee and Lemieux 2010). As argued elsewhere, the no-sorting assumption in House races is especially likely to be met in the context of primary elections (Cooper and Munger 2000) conditional on a lack of electoral fraud or other post-election sorting behavior (de la Cuesta and Imai 2016). In the Appendix, I test for evidence of sorting around the extremist primary victory threshold and find no significant discontinuity in the density of extremist nominees versus moderate nominees. Another important implication of the continuity assumption is that races where an extreme candidate was just-barely nominated are otherwise comparable to those where a moderate was just-barely nominated, which I investigate via the balance of key pre-treatment covariates in the Appendix.[8]

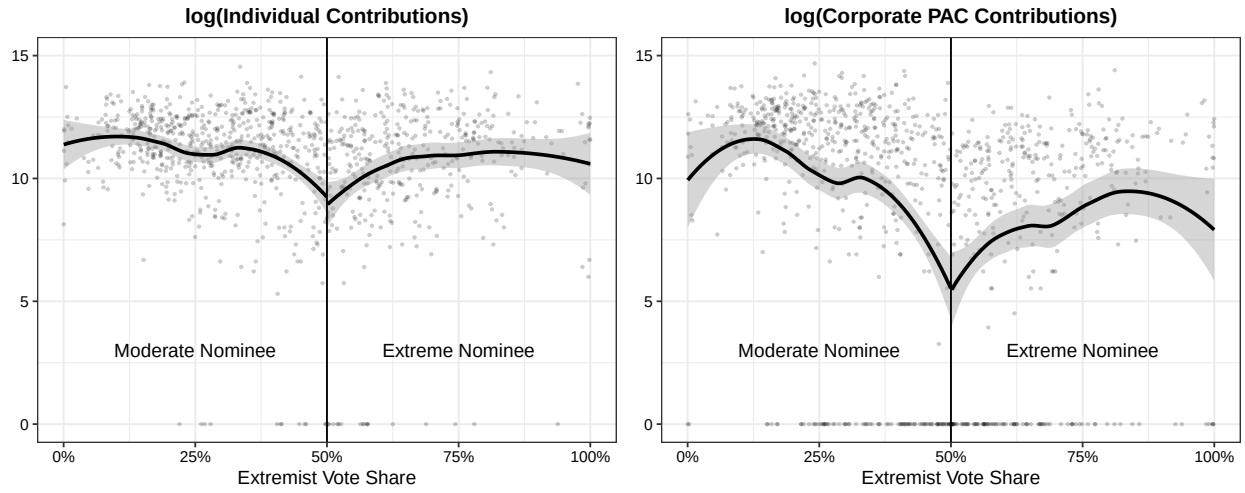
1.4 Results

Figure 1.2 presents graphical evidence that just-barely nominating an extreme candidate does not lead to a substantial difference in general election contributions from individu-

[7] These "pure partisan" dyads consist only of combinations of contributors and all sample nominees of the same party.

[8] I include the following pre-treatment covariates: previous Democratic presidential vote share; previous presidential vote margin; extreme candidate's logged individual primary contributions; extreme candidate's share of individual primary contributions; extreme candidate's logged corporate PAC primary contributions; extreme candidate's share of corporate PAC primary contributions; district median income; district mean income; number of primary candidates.

Figure 1.2: Effect of Nominating an Extremist on General Election Contributions



Note: Relationship between extremist share of top-two primary vote and nominee's general election fundraising from individuals (left) and corporate PACs (right). Gray dots are raw data points with black loess curves fitted separately on each side of 50% victory threshold, with 95% CI shaded in gray.

als and corporate PACs compared to just-barely nominating a moderate. While we would expect a major increase in individual contributions and decrease in corporate PAC contributions immediately to the right of the cutoff if such contributors are motivated primarily by ideology, there does not appear to exist a large nor significant discontinuity in individual nor corporate PAC contributions at the extremist win threshold. As indicated by the large confidence internal overlap and intercept closeness of loess lines fit on either side, no discontinuous jump is detected.

More formally, Table 1.2 estimates the size and significance of any discontinuity in total general election fundraising that may be present when an extreme candidate is nominated compared to a moderate.[9] I report results from models using a sample that is likely to bias analyses *toward* a significant finding: races which fall in the top quartile and median of ide-

[9]The optimal bandwidths, selected via automated procedure to minimize researcher discretion, are admittedly large to still qualify as close elections. However, 1) I use a triangular kernel to upweight the most closely-contested primaries, 2) Figure 1.2, which fits a loess curve to the raw data, shows that lines converge as they approach the limit on either side, suggesting that results are not an artifact of the wide window, and 3) Equation 1.2's reliance on contributor-nominee-level observations includes a vastly greater sample size, allowing for a much narrower optimal bandwidth as reported in Table 1.3.

Table 1.2: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	log(Individual Contributions)		log(Corporate PAC Contributions)	
	Top 25% Distance	Top 50% Distance	Top 25% Distance	Top 50% Distance
Extremist Win	-0.4125	-0.0299	0.0337	-0.1697
	(0.6428)	(0.3434)	(0.9572)	(0.4519)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.191	0.213	0.189	0.374
Baseline	10.7208	10.6963	8.6664	9.1555
Observations	505	1,233	499	1,801
R-Squared	0.1127	0.0929	0.0992	0.0690

Note: Results from Equation 1.1 estimated separately by ideological distance between candidates, with standard errors in parentheses clustered by nominee, triangular kernel weights, and optimal bandwidth automatically selected via Imbens-Kalyanaraman procedure. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

ological distance between extreme and moderate primary candidates, and excluding those with a candidate whose CFscore "disagrees" with their partisanship. These strict requirements for races entering the sample, as well as the stark operationalization of ideology — with the treatment group consisting of extremists nominated over moderates, and the counterfactual group consisting of moderates nominated over extremists — should facilitate the most favorable possible conditions to detect a fundraising discontinuity. Moreover, I do not perform multiple testing corrections despite fitting multiple models to investigate the same hypotheses, resulting in deflated confidence intervals.

Despite these substantial steps taken to stack the deck toward substantively large and statistically significant findings, Table 1.2 suggests that "as-if randomly" nominating an extreme candidate over a moderate does not affect general election receipts. Across the more and less restrictive samples, extreme House candidates do not appear to raise significantly more funds from individuals nor fewer funds from corporate PACs compared to moderate candidates. None of the estimates come close to approaching traditional levels of statistical significance, and only one of four (corporate PAC contributions, top quartile sample) is signed in the expected direction. Moreover, each point estimate is substantively small:

given their respective baselines — moderate nominees' average logged contributions — none of the coefficients reach a mere 5% change from the baseline. Including primaries with candidates whose ideology "disagrees" with their partisanship in the Appendix produces similarly small point estimates and statistical insignificance. Overall, the lack of meaningful change in general election contributions when an extreme candidate is nominated compared to a moderate suggests that extreme candidates are not systematically advantaged by individual donors nor penalized by corporate PACs.

While there is a lack of substantial difference in individual and corporate PAC contributions between extreme and moderate nominees, Table 1.3 suggests that nominating an extreme candidate lowers both individuals' and corporate PACs' likelihood of contributing in the general election relative to nominating a moderate. For individuals who contributed in more than one election, nominating an extreme candidate decreases the likelihood of contributing by 0.01 percentage points, about a 15% decrease from the 0.07% baseline rate of contributions. The relative effects of extremist nominations are even larger among those who contributed in more than five races and pure partisan donors, whose probability of giving decreases 50% from their baseline rates of giving to moderate nominees. Additionally, the estimated chance of a corporate PAC contributing decreases 0.14 percentage points when the nominee is extreme, nearly a 50% decrease from their likelihood of contributing when the nominee is moderate.

The contributor-nominee-level finding in Table 1.3 that corporate PACs are less likely to donate when an extreme candidate is nominated is consistent across all combinations of alternative specifications and samples in the Appendix. However, the negative relationship between extremist nominations and individuals' likelihood of contributing is far less robust. Relaxing the sample requirements by including primaries with smaller ideological distance between extreme and moderate candidates and/or candidates whose ideology "disagrees" with their partisanship, as well as using logged contribution amount as the dependent variable, produces highly variable estimates that are both positively and

Table 1.3: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Likelihood of General Election Contribution

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	-0.0001***	-0.0010***	-0.0003***	-0.0014***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.058	0.036	0.027	0.052
Baseline	0.0007	0.0019	0.0006	0.0030
Observations	18,240,152	1,322,829	3,264,228	1,472,750
R-Squared	0.0004	0.0017	0.0007	0.0016

Note: Results from Equation 1.2 estimated separately by contributor type with sample primaries in top 25% of ideological distance between candidates. Standard errors clustered by winning candidate in parentheses, Imbens-Kalyanaraman optimal bandwidth, and triangular kernel weights. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

negatively signed and span a wide range of statistical significance and substantive size.

1.4.1 Heterogeneous Effects

Thus far, we have uncovered evidence that nominating an extreme candidate versus a moderate does not result in substantially different amounts of individual and corporate PAC fundraising in the general election, but nominee ideology may affect these contributors' individual-level decisions. The potential liability from nominating an extreme candidate, however, varies across electoral context and time. Relaxing the assumption of universal ideology-motivated giving, we can investigate whether individuals are more likely to give to extreme candidates when they should fare best *ex ante* and corporate PACs are less likely to give to extreme candidates when they should suffer most *ex ante*.

Electoral penalties to extreme candidates are largest in competitive districts — due to worse ideological fit between extreme candidates and moderate or ideologically divided constituencies — and open-seat races, where there is a greater emphasis on issues (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006; Campbell, Dettrey, and Yin 2010; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Carson and Williamson 2018; Hall 2015). Given that safe districts and incumbent-challenger races present the greatest opportunity for extreme can-

didates to fare well, ideology-motivated individuals should be particularly enthusiastic to contribute to extreme nominees in such cases. Conversely, ideology-motivated corporate PACs should be especially punitive toward extreme nominees in less safe districts and open seats, where partisan competition is higher and issues matter more.

To test whether nominating an extreme candidate has different effects on individuals' and corporate PACs' general election contributions depending on electoral context, I re-estimate the parameters of Equation 1.2 with the addition of relevant interaction terms. In one model, I include an interaction for whether the race was for an open seat (those without an incumbent running in either primary), and in the other, I include an interaction for whether the district is safe for the party, with safe Democratic districts having a previous Democratic presidential vote share of 60% or higher and 40% or lower for safe Republican districts.[10]

Table 1.4 provides mixed evidence on whether individual donors are especially likely to contribute when an extremist is as-if randomly nominated in a safe district or an incumbent-challenger race. Adding together the direct and interacted coefficients of Safe District, pure partisans and individuals who contributed in over five races are significantly more likely to contribute to extremists who are nominated in safe districts, but individuals who contributed in more than one race are, if anything, less likely to fund extreme candidates when they are nominated in safe districts. In the seat type models, the sum of the direct and interacted Open Seat coefficients suggests that pure partisan and more habitual donors are more apprehensive about funding extreme nominees in open seat races compared to incumbent-challenger races, yet this difference is not present among all individuals who contributed more than once. As demonstrated in the Appendix, however, these results are not robust to alternative specifications, as signs and significance levels change are variable across sample restrictiveness.

Among corporate PACs, Table 1.4 demonstrates that extreme nominees are not espe-

[10]To allow the slopes to vary on either side of the extremist victory threshold for the separate seat types, I triple-interact the indicator of interest (safe district or open-seat), extremist vote share, and extremist victory.

Table 1.4: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Likelihood of General Election Contribution

	Indivs > 1 Race		Indivs > 5 Races		Pure Partisans		Corporate PACs	
Extremist Win	-0.0002***	-0.0001***	-0.0011***	-0.0010***	-0.0005***	-0.0001**	-0.0010***	-0.0017***
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)
Safe District	-0.0012***		-0.0006		0.0003**		0.0027***	
	(0.0001)		(0.0004)		(0.0001)		(0.0004)	
Extremist Win x Safe	0.0009***		0.0093***		0.0033***		-0.0040***	
	(0.0001)		(0.0007)		(0.0003)		(0.0005)	
Open Seat		0.0000		-0.0028***		-0.0013***		-0.0005**
		(0.0000)		(0.0002)		(0.0001)		(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Open		0.0000		0.0020***		0.0006***		0.0012***
		(0.0000)		(0.0003)		(0.0001)		(0.0003)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.058	0.036	0.027	0.052	0.058	0.036	0.027	0.052
Observations	18,120,151	18,240,152	1,322,829	1,322,829	3,264,228	3,264,228	1,462,000	1,472,750
R-Squared	0.0007	0.0005	0.0023	0.0019	0.0009	0.0008	0.0018	0.0017

Note: Models estimated separately by contributor type with sample primaries in top 25% of ideological distance between candidates. Standard errors clustered by winning candidate in parentheses, Imbens-Kalyanaraman optimal bandwidth, and triangular kernel weights. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

cially penalized in districts less safe for the candidate's party and in open seats. Although extremism is more of a potential liability in these contexts, the additional negative (sum of direct and interaction) effect of safe districts and positive effect of open seats suggests that corporate PACs do not further eschew contributions to extremists in places where they are the most at risk *a priori*. While there is not an additive penalty to extremists nominated in unsafe districts and open seats, the effect of nominating an extremist on corporate PAC contributions remains net negative in safe districts, unsafe districts, open seats, and incumbent-challenger races. In the Appendix, results suggest that corporate PACs may further penalize extremists nominated in open seat races in some alternative samples.

Aside from seat and district type, ongoing debates regarding electoral nationalization suggest that the potential liability of nominating an extreme candidate may be smaller during the past three decades as compared to previous decades. In particular, Bonica and Cox (2018) argue that political parties strategically nationalized congressional elections in response to increased competition for majority control since 1994, incentivizing candidates

Table 1.5: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Likelihood of General Election Contribution

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0000*	0.0005**	0.0004***	0.0018***
	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0003)
Post-1994	0.0002***	0.0015***	0.0005***	0.0010**
	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0000)	(0.0003)
Extremist Win x Post-1994	-0.0002***	-0.0024***	-0.0012***	-0.0053***
	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0004)
Bandwidth	0.058	0.036	0.027	0.052
Observations	18,240,152	1,322,829	3,264,228	1,472,750
R-Squared	0.0002	0.0008	0.0004	0.0007

Note: Models estimated separately by contributor type with sample primaries in top 25% of ideological distance between candidates. Standard errors clustered by winning candidate in parentheses, Imbens-Kalyanaraman optimal bandwidth, and triangular kernel weights. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

to appeal to their party's extreme donors and activists. However, the most recent evaluations of this argument have not found decreasing support for extreme nominees post-1994, suggesting that incentives may not have changed along these lines (Canes-Wrone and Kistner 2022; Lockhart and Hill 2023).

To investigate whether individual donors and corporate PACs respond differently to the nominations of extreme candidates after 1994, I re-estimate Equation 1.2 and include an interaction for post-1994 elections. Across all samples, Table 1.5 suggests that, if anything, extreme nominees have been even less likely to receive a contribution after 1994. Although corporate PACs' penalty to extremists is consistently greater post-1994, the results for individual donors are not robust across alternative samples in the Appendix. Overall, this provides some suggestive evidence that corporate PACs may actually see extreme candidates as a greater liability in recent decades, while a temporal shift among individual donors is less clear.

1.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Do House candidates' ideologies drive their campaign contributions? Although findings from state legislatures and donor surveys has suggested that individual donors favor extremists while corporate PACs prefer moderates, the challenges of isolating variation in House candidates' ideologies have made it difficult to test whether more extreme candidates have a fundraising advantage among individual donors and a disadvantage among business PACs. Using a close-elections regression discontinuity design, I assessed the impact of nominating an extreme candidate as compared to a moderate on individual and PAC receipts in the general election. At the nominee level, extreme candidates do not appear to attract more total money from individuals nor less money from corporate PACs than moderate candidates. Further investigation demonstrate that, at the contributor level, corporate PACs are consistently less likely to fund extreme rather than moderate nominees, an effect primarily driven by elections after 1994. In contrast, there is not robust evidence that individuals support extreme nominees more or less than moderates.

These results paint a nuanced picture of how campaign donors may respond to and incentivize candidate extremism, contributing to recent work illuminating the heterogeneity and sophistication of both firms' and individuals' giving strategies (Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; Li 2018, 2023; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024; Stuckatz 2022; Thieme 2020). Despite the fact that corporate PACs favor moderates over extreme nominees, the failure of these individual-level decisions to translate into candidate-level differences between moderates' and extremists' aggregate corporate PAC fundraising means that candidates, voters, and observers may not observe and, therefore, believe that extremists are at a disadvantage among corporate backers. Similarly for individuals' contribution decisions, the volatility in estimated effects of nominating an extremist compared to a moderate across different operationalizations of "moderate" and "extreme" highlights that individuals are not as uniformly expressive as extant work suggests. Combined with the lack of difference between moderate and extreme nominees' total contributions from in-

dividual donors, the instability of results regarding their individual-level decisions across samples raises questions about the extent to which individual donors are truly driving ideological polarization.

While the identification strategy adopted here obtains causal estimates conditional on identifying assumptions being satisfied, the sample and scope conditions of the analyses make these average treatment effects local to cases near the winning threshold and cannot be extrapolated away from the cutoff. For instance, nominating an extremist compared to a moderate may not substantially impact general election fundraising among those who competed in close primaries where the top-two candidates' positions were quite far apart, but there may be an effect in other contexts. As noted in the discussion of Table 1.1, however, the subset of races included in these analyses are relatively representative of the universe of races, aside from an overrepresentation of open seat races. Given that the vast majority of new House members are elected via open seat, the sample races are therefore disproportionately important in shaping the composition of Congress.

Although these elections might constitute a particularly relevant set of cases, the research design employed here investigates just one avenue through which campaign contributors have an opportunity to incentivize political polarization. For instance, individual donors may advantage extreme candidates by helping build up their war chests to war to sufficiently ward off would-be opponents, allowing them to run uncontested in their primary race. Moreover, individual and corporate donors may nevertheless weigh candidates' ideologies heavily in their contribution decisions, yet more instrumental considerations could dominate in practice. While these findings do not preclude campaign finance from creating incentives for certain ideological positions through other means, they do suggest that candidates' ideologies do not systematically impact individual nor corporate PAC general election fundraising in an important portion of House races.

Previous studies have documented a connection between candidates' positions and their PAC and individual campaign receipts at other levels of government. However, the

lack of institutional variation within the U.S. congressional context has made it particularly difficult to overcome endogeneity issues involved in isolating candidate positioning itself. Identifying quasi-random variation in House nominees' ideologies suggests that candidates with vastly different ideologies do not raise substantially different quantities of funds from individual donors and corporate PACs, despite some evidence of differences at the contributor. While this approach likewise introduces some limitations, this paper builds upon existing work by using causal inference tools to evaluate another potential pathway for money to create incentives for polarization or, alternatively, moderation.

Chapter 2

Positioning in Congressional Primary Campaigns

2.1 Introduction

Candidate positioning is a ubiquitous concept in both theories of elections and ongoing empirical debates in electoral and representation studies.[1] Announced policy platforms are critical to Downsian formal models of electoral behavior and competition (Banks 1990; Baron 1994; Cameron and Enelow 1992; Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1982) and a focus of scholarly debates regarding extremist success, the role of nationalization versus district preferences, and other key topics within the study of legislative elections (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Kujala 2020; Bonica and Cox 2018; Hall 2015; Hall and Snyder 2015; Hopkins 2018; Utych 2020; Woon 2018).

Understanding the dynamics of candidate positioning during the primary stage of contemporary elections is particularly important for two reasons. First, primary elections have grown to have an outsized influence on electoral outcomes: the shrinking number of congressional districts competitive for both Democrats and Republicans today means that many House elections are as good as decided once the primary race ends (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006; Jacobson 1990, 2015*b*).[2] Second, primaries are fought between those who share a party label, thus presenting an opportunity to select between different *kinds* of Republican or Democrats. The irrelevance of traditional partisan heuristics creates a potentially greater role of intra-party variation in positions, as candidates may be incentivized to distinguish themselves from a co-partisan field.[3]

[1] While terms like *ideology* or *ideal point* are used frequently in studies involving collections of political views, this paper is interested solely in how candidates present themselves during elections and is agnostic about the "truthfulness" of these self-presentations. For this reason, I instead refer to *positioning* and *positions*, although I use descriptors such as *liberal*, *conservative*, and *extreme* that are commonly associated with ideology.

[2] The number of House races decided within 10% was 33 in 2016, 90 in 2018, 77 in 2020, and 75 in 2022 (`https://ballotpedia.org/Congressional_elections_decided_by_10_percent_or_less,_2018`).

[3] This is especially true in the case of open-seat primaries, where candidate fields tend to be large and no hopeful possesses the valence advantages enjoyed by a typical incumbent.

Although the focus on primary elections has increased in tandem with their influence on shaping the contemporary Congress (e.g. Hassell 2023; Henderson et al. 2022; Hirano and Snyder 2019; Thomsen 2022), scholars' ability to investigate key questions related to how candidates position themselves publicly during primary campaigns is limited by data and measures. Questions regarding position-taking during elections to appeal to voters, co-partisans, potential donors, or the media require a direct measurement of candidates' self-presentation. As proxies for candidate positioning, scholars typically rely on estimates of campaign contribution networks (Bonica 2013, 2014; Hall and Snyder 2015) or legislative roll-call voting (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004; Poole et al. 2011). These measures possess appealing features and have been invaluable for advancing the study of electoral and legislative behavior. However, their underlying behavioral models and data limitations make them less valuable in certain settings. For instance, analyzing the relationship between candidates' positions and either campaign contributions or legislative behavior requires a measure of positions estimated separately from donations and roll-call voting (Kim, Lin, and Schnakenberg 2022; McCarty and Rothenberg 1996; Schnakenberg 2016).

I introduce a measure of positioning that closely mirrors the concept of policy platforms invoked by spatial models and is based on primary candidates' own campaign rhetoric. Using original text data on issue positions collected from campaign websites, I develop election–specific, unidimensional estimates of House primary candidates' positioning based on variation in word usage. This collection encompasses the over 6,000 candidates who appeared on major–party primary ballots in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022, allowing researchers to characterize the policy platforms and positioning of candidates from the most recent primary cycles.

The proposed measure of candidate positioning offers a number of conceptually and methodologically desirable properties. First, campaign websites capture candidates' issue priorities and positions in their own words — unmediated by media portrayals, donors' perceptions, or a fixed agenda (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009; Porter, Treul, and Mc-

Donald 2023) — yet this strategic rhetoric is likely influenced by many factors of scholarly interest, such as electoral and candidate characteristics. In addition, the measure is transparent and straightforward to validate: candidates' estimated positions can be compared to their plain-English campaign platforms, and word-level parameters recovered during scaling make clear how each word influences the position estimation. Finally, no special assumptions are made about individuals' positions from one election to another, effectively producing a time series of positions for candidates who ran in multiple cycles over the period.

The new measure of campaign positioning is introduced as follows. First, I explain how campaign websites constitute an ideal source of data for the concept of interest in much research on polarization and legislative elections. I then outline the process of collecting original data on issue positions from campaign websites and provide descriptive statistics on the primary candidates who are and are not captured in the sample. Having shown the representativeness of those included, I introduce the text scaling model and algorithm used to estimate candidate positions based on word usage and frequency in campaign platforms. With estimates of candidate– and word–level parameters in hand, I probe the measure's construct and face validity, underlying dimensionality, and statistical relationship with external measures. Next, I contribute to an ongoing debate regarding national versus constituency influence and demonstrate that while candidates' contribution networks appear to have nationalized, their campaign rhetoric varies systematically by district partisanship. The concluding section explicates the utility (and limitations) of the measure for yielding new insights about congressional elections and how candidates' strategic self-presentations relate to their fundraising and future legislative behavior.

2.2 Capturing Candidate Positioning

Measures of political actors' positions are integral to many of the most important and ongoing debates in political science. A proliferation of data and methodologies have ad-

vanced our ability to scale preferences for more and more groups of interest, yet the behavioral and statistical models underlying readily–available measures do not always reflect the concept that is often of interest in studies of representation, electoral behavior, and polarization: how candidates publicly position themselves during an election. This section explicates the gaps between campaign positions and existing approaches, the suitability of campaign websites as a source of positioning data, and the text scaling model used to characterize and compare positions across primary candidates and over time.

2.2.1 Existing Approaches

The introduction of roll-call-based ideological estimation transformed the study of legislative and electoral behavior. NOMINATE and its variations (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Poole and Rosenthal 1991; Poole 2005), as well as Bayesian approaches that facilitate incorporation of external information (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004), allowed for the systematic characterization of congressmembers' spatial ideal points based on an underlying behavioral model. These methodologies opened the door for testing theories of representation (e.g. Bafumi and Herron 2010; Brady, Han, and Pope 2007; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002), but the increasing interest in polarization required comparable measures of non-incumbent candidates' positions.

In response, Bonica (2014), Hall and Snyder (2015), and Hall (2015) leverage campaign receipt networks to proxy candidates' positions by assuming that donors contribute to those ideologically similar to themselves. While donors "are free to consider the many ways in which candidates express their ideology" (Bonica 2014, 372) including private information (Austen-Smith 1995; Hall and Wayman 1990; Kalla and Broockman 2016), this means that contribution–based measures do not solely reflect candidates' public positioning. Additionally, the behavioral model of donors making contributions solely on the basis of ideological proximity has been called into question by the apparent influence of strategic factors, such as district competitiveness and opposing candidate ideology, to donors'

decisions (e.g. Barber 2016*a*; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024).[4]

Nevertheless, contribution–based estimates of candidates' positions (most notably, those from Bonica's (2014) Database on Ideology, Money, and Elections) offer one of the only measures of candidate positions not based on legislative behavior. Major surveys of federal candidates' stances, such as NPAT (National Political Awareness Test), have been plagued by low response rates for decades (McGhee et al. 2014), and television advertisements are prohibitively expensive for a large portion of House general election candidates, much less primary candidates (Herrnson, Panagopoulos, and Bailey 2020). Although researchers have derived text-scaling estimates of candidates' positions using Twitter data (Cowburn and Sältzer N.d.; Temporão et al. 2018), responsiveness of social media posts to events and controversies distinguishes tweets from more stable collections of issue stances and policy platforms.

2.2.2 Why Campaign Websites?

Campaign websites constitute a uniquely well–suited source of data for estimating primary candidates' positioning. The vast majority of websites contain a page or section clearly delineated as a collection of issue stances, resembling a stated policy platform more closely than any other campaign activity. Moreover, the priorities and positions found on websites are selected and articulated by candidates themselves, in contrast to media interviews, televised debates, and newspaper write-ups. Websites also provide candidates an opportunity to present a far more comprehensive campaign platform than tightly time- and space-constrained advertisements in newspapers or on television (Sulkin, Moriarty, and Hefner 2007).

In addition to providing an unfiltered and not–directly–mediated picture of candidates' rhetoric, websites are also a highly accessible campaign medium compared to other

[4]Although the same studies demonstrate that ideological congruence is one key factor in individual donors' decisions, widely-used contribution-based measures assume that it is the sole donation motivation.

activities. Creating and maintaining a website is easy and far cheaper than fundraising, sending mailers, and running television advertisements, resulting in a relatively even playing field with regard to candidates' resources.[5] Given that campaign websites "provide an unmediated, holistic, and representative portrait of messages aimed at voters in general" (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009, p. 346-347), scholars have long recognized their value for studying campaign strategy (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009; Druckman et al. 2010; Milita, Ryan, and Simas 2014; Nyhan and Montgomery 2015; McDonald, Porter, and Treul 2020; Porter, Treul, and McDonald 2023).[6]

2.2.3 Data: Primary Campaign Websites, 2016 — 2022

To characterize the rhetorical positioning of modern House primary candidates, I collect original data on the issue positions of all candidates who appeared on the ballot in a Democratic or Republican primary in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 from campaign webpages.[7] This effort includes over 6,000 unique candidate-year observations, representing the largest collection of congressional primary candidates' platforms to my knowledge.

A simplified example workflow is illustrated in Figure 2.1, and Appendix B details the data collection at length. For each House district in a given election year, all candidates who appeared on the ballot in a Democratic or Republican primary were identified from *Ballotpedia*. Next, I searched for each candidate's campaign website by Googling "[candidate name] for Congress [election year]" and cross-checking websites such as Politics1.com and the candidate's *Ballotpedia* page for a designated campaign website.[8] I used

[5] While some candidates host highly professionalized websites clearly created by web designers, many candidates utilize free website creators, which offer easy-to-use interfaces that make website creation accessible to even the least technologically savvy candidate without the aid of campaign staff.

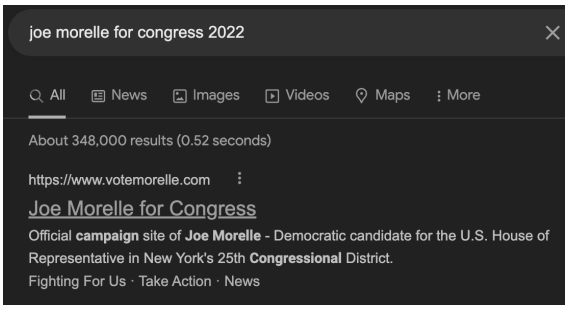
[6] The scope of existing research using House campaign websites has been limited to general election candidates, or to primary candidates from one or two election cycles.

[7] Because my focus is candidates who competed in major-party primaries, I drop third-party candidates, candidates whose primaries were cancelled, and candidates in CA, WA, LA, CT, UT, and certain party primaries in some VA districts. Appendix B provides the full list of and explanations for excluded locales.

[8] I exclude official governmental websites (those ending in `.gov`), as sitting incumbents maintain separate online presences for their campaign. Additionally, I exclude social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter, which are primarily forums for candidates to provide updates or respond to current events rather than establish stable platforms.

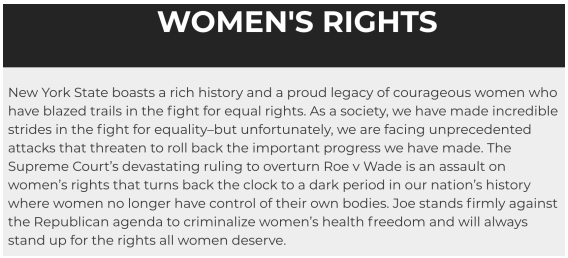
Figure 2.1: Example Data Collection Workflow

(a) Search for campaign website

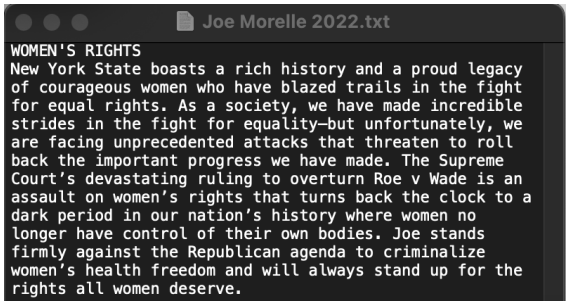


(b) Identify issue content

(c) Access all issue content



(d) Scrape plain text



Note: Visual depiction of simplified steps involved in collecting Representative Joe Morelle's 2022 primary campaign issue positions from `www.votemorelle.com`. Appendix B describes each component of the data collection in detail.

Wayback Machine to find the websites of candidates who ran prior to 2022 as archived most directly prior to the candidate's primary date, and 2022 candidates' websites were collected in real time.[9] I then navigated to issue content, which was typically found on a page or in a section clearly designated "Platform," "Issues," or "Priorities." Candidates' issue positions were manually scraped by copying and pasting the text into files and also saving an image of the content exactly as it appeared.

All in all, over 60% (3,816) of all 6,274 major-party primary candidates from 2016 to 2022 hosted campaign websites with issue content. Because the baseline costs involved in creating a website are so low, "missingness" in the data is more plausibly related to primary candidates' decision not to publicly commit to a platform than to factors unre-

[9]Candidates' live websites were accessed within a week of their primary election.

lated to positioning but related to the availability of extant measures, such as insufficient fundraising (in the case of contribution–based measures) or failure to win election (in the case of roll–call–based measures).

To investigate the representativeness of these candidates, Table C.3 reports relationships between the binary presence of campaign website positions and observable candidate, election, and district characteristics thought to relate to candidates' willingness and ability to announce a platform. I estimate models separately by incumbency status due to different meanings of missingness in the data: incumbents virtually all hosted primary campaign websites over the period, but some omitted positions, whereas some non-incumbents lacked a website altogether, but those with websites nearly all included positions. Data on fundraising are from FEC pre-primary reports and presidential vote shares are from Daily Kos, which include 2020 election results for post-census 2022 districts. Competition is captured by indicators for whether the primary was unopposed or financially uncompetitive (with financially competitive as reference category)[10] as well as the party's advantage in the district[11] (Bartels 1986; Druckman et al. 2010; Lachat 2011; Grimmer 2013). In the non-incumbent model, I also indicate state legislative experience and whether a candidate raised under 10% of the total receipts in the primary (Milita, Ryan, and Simas 2014).

Table 2.1 indicates high rates of campaign website position-taking, especially (and unsurprisingly) among incumbents and those who garnered more than a *de minimis* share of their primary's total fundraising. Non-incumbents who raised under 10% of the total receipts are 15 percentage points less likely to have website positions than those who raised more. However, the magnitude of this missingness is relatively modest considering that nearly 40% of sample non-incumbents did not even file pre-primary fundraising reports,

[10]Following Thomsen (2022), a primary is coded as financially competitive if the top fundraiser garnered under 57.5% of the total receipts in the primary.

[11]Following Hirano and Snyder (2019), a party is advantaged if their nominee received over 57.5% of the vote share in the most recent presidential election, disadvantaged if they received under 42.5%, and swing if their vote share was somewhere in between.

Table 2.1: Determinants of Primary Campaign Website Positions, 2016—2022

	Campaign Website Positions Present	
	Incumbents	Non-Incumbents
(Intercept)	0.866***	0.775***
	(0.068)	(0.028)
Republican	0.025	−0.014
	(0.027)	(0.014)
Unopposed Primary	−0.087	−0.054
	(0.065)	(0.028)
Uncompetitive $ Primary	−0.050	−0.014
	(0.065)	(0.017)
Advantaged District	−0.076**	
	(0.028)	
Receipts < 10%		−0.146***
		(0.015)
State Legislator		0.025
		(0.026)
Open Advantaged		0.001
		(0.025)
Open Disadvantaged		−0.068*
		(0.034)
General Challenger Swing		−0.009
		(0.024)
General Challenger Disadvantaged		−0.092***
		(0.023)
Primary Challenger Advantaged		−0.046
		(0.025)
Primary Challenger Swing		−0.029
		(0.033)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Observations	1,213	4,939
Adjusted R^2	0.012	0.100

Note: Linear probability models predicting presence (1) or absence (0) of campaign website issue positions during primary. Reference value for primary competitiveness is financially competitive, district type in incumbent model is swing, and district-candidate type in non-incumbent model is open-seat swing. HC3 standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

and a substantial portion of such candidates likely did not actively campaign after filing to run. Overall, the results do not suggest that large swaths of candidates are systematically excluded from data on campaign website positions on the basis of candidate type,

electoral competitiveness, or even resources.

2.2.4 Scaling Primary Campaign Positions

Having provided evidence that those who take positions are broadly representative of the universe of primary candidates, I now turn to estimating candidates' overall primary positioning based on their campaign website issue text. I follow other scholars in assuming that the frequency and usage of words in political text are informative about authors' positions on what is thought to be a liberal–conservative dimension (Lauderdale and Herzog 2016; Laver, Benoit, and Garry 2003; Lowe et al. 2011; Rheault and Cochrane 2020; Vafa, Naidu, and Blei 2020). As demonstrated by Grimmer and Stewart (2013), however, the validity of this assumption rests crucially on the dominance of a liberal–conservative dimension within the relevant texts. Manually identifying issue positions ensures that the collection of campaign website text is focused on issue positioning content, and the proceeding section provides individual–, aggregate–, and term–level evidence to validate the underlying dimensionality structuring primary campaign discourse.

To prepare the campaign position text corpus, I construct an $\mathbf{N} \times \mathbf{M}$ sparse document-feature matrix with $\mathbf{M}$ term columns, $\mathbf{N}$ candidate-year rows which include all primary candidates with campaign website positions from 2016—2022, and term frequencies as cell entries. I pre-process the data by removing punctuation, reducing terms to their stem, and removing both highly frequent stopwords and highly infrequent terms to reduce noise in estimation and improve computing performance.[12] To help ensure that the key liberal–conservative dimension is identified and minimize the risk of misspecifying the policy space, I drop terms primarily associated with geographic or incumbency differences between candidates, such as state names and congressional procedure. In addition to all remaining unigrams that meet the above criteria, I likewise preserve frequently-used bigrams (e.g. `common core`), trigrams (e.g. `freedom of speech`), and quadgrams (e.g.

[12] I drop terms that appear in fewer than 100 separate campaign texts. This is an extremely lenient requirement given that the corpus contains almost 4,000 campaign texts, yet this step substantially improves computing time. See Appendix B for further discussion of pre-processing choices.

`right to bear arms`).[13] Altogether, this results in more than 2,500 unique terms across over 3,800 separate primary campaigns. The detailed text processing flow and comparisons of estimates with and without scaling refinements are provided in Appendix B.

I use an unsupervised machine learning algorithm, `wordfish`, to scale unidimensional primary campaign positions at the candidate–year level (Slapin and Proksch 2008). The statistical model is based on item response theory and bears strong resemblance to correspondence analysis, the methodology used to estimate campaign contribution–based CF Scores (Bonica 2014).[14] Importantly, the model also accounts for candidate–level differences in wordiness and word–level differences in the informativeness *vis-à-vis* candidates' positions.[15] The rate y at which primary candidate i uses term j in election year t is assumed to be drawn from a Poisson distribution, which is characterized by a single parameter λ representing both the expected value and variance. This parameter logarithmically links the probability distribution generating the observed term rate to the systematic components of interest:

$$y_{ijt} \sim \text{Poisson}(\lambda_{ijt}) \text{ where } \lambda_{ijt} = \exp(\alpha_{it} + \psi_j + \beta_j * \omega_{it}). \tag{2.1}$$

The key parameter is ω_{it}, which stands in for candidate i's latent primary campaign position in election t, and is scaled to have sample mean 0 and standard deviation 1. As mentioned previously, no special assumption is placed on individuals' positions over time: for candidates who ran in more than one House election between 2016 and 2022, each primary campaign constitutes a separate observation. The β_j represents word j's weight in discriminating between different campaign positions.[16] A word fixed effect ψ_j captures the rate at

[13] Scatterplots in Appendix B demonstrate high correlations between scaling estimates with and without non-unigram, geographic, and procedural terms ($r = 0.997$; $\rho = 0.998$).

[14] Scatterplots in Appendix B demonstrate strong correlations between scaling estimates from `wordfish` and one-dimensional correspondence analysis ($r = 0.988$; $\rho = 0.998$).

[15] For example, the term `gun` is neutral and used by candidates all across the political spectrum, whereas the term `high-capacity` highlights the danger of large firearm magazines and thus predominantly associated with candidates on the left.

[16] This is akin to an IRT discrimination parameter or factor analysis loading score.

which word j is used generally, and a candidate-year fixed effect α_{it} corresponds to the verbosity of candidate i's campaign position text in election t. After calculating start values, estimation proceeds via expectation maximization, which entails estimating conditional expectations for the word and candidate paramaters, calculating conditional maximum likelihoods, and iterating using these new parameter expectations until the model converges successfully.[17] Further technical details of the text data pre-processing, algorithm initialization, and parameter estimation, as well as alternative scalings using correspondence analysis and unrefined tokens, are relegated to Appendix B.

2.3 Results, Validation, and Comparisons

I now examine the substance of the dimension structuring primary campaign positions, subject the measure to a series of validation exercises, and consider its relationship to other measurements. The terms underlying campaign discourse demonstrate that the scaling recovers a recognizable liberal–conservative dimension. Moreover, endogenizing the scaling by performing year– and incumbency–specific estimation shows dimensional stability across time and candidate seriousness. I then establish that the measure replicates the well–known bimodal distribution that distinguishes between positions of Republicans and Democrats and provides facially valid estimates that distinguish between more and less extreme candidates of the same party. Finally, I uncover evidence that primary campaign positions capture something meaningfully distinct from donor networks and legislative voting by exploring the measure's relationship with CF Scores and NOMINATE.

2.3.1 Content and Dimensionality

Of chief importance when using unsupervised scaling methods is ensuring that the dimension of interest — here, a left–right, issue–based dimension — is the one structuring individuals' positioning estimates (Grimmer and Stewart 2013; Egerod and Klemmensen

[17] Start values of ψ and α are functions of word frequencies, while start values of β and ω are obtained via singular value decomposition of the matrix of word frequency marginals — hence the strong relationship between estimates resulting from correspondence analysis versus `wordfish` in the Appendix.

2020). Luckily, interrogating the underlying substance is relatively straightforward and transparent in the case of text data, as terms included in the scaling likewise receive parameter estimates based upon their ability to discriminate between positions. Table 2.2 reports the ten terms with the largest negative (left) and positive (right) β weights from Equation 2.1, while the top 20 terms and their corresponding β and ψ estimates are reported in Appendix B. While terms related to critical race theory, Christianity, anti-abortionism, illegal immigration, and socialism are strongly associated with conservative campaign positions, terms related to inequality, injustice, gender and sexuality, and affordable education are strongly associated with liberal positions. Overall, these results provide strong evidence that the rhetoric underlying the scaling estimates is structured by well–recognized modern divisions along the liberal–conservative spectrum.

A major advantage of primary campaign positions is their dynamic, time-series nature: if a candidate's campaign rhetoric changes from primary–to–primary, so too will her estimated primary campaign position. While the narrow temporal scope of the data makes it especially unlikely that the meaning of words changed substantially across the time period (Egerod and Klemmensen 2020), it is nevertheless informative to check whether the vocabulary of primary campaigns differed from one election to the next. Performing scaling separately by year in Appendix B suggests substantial continuity in even the top terms with the most liberal and conservative weights,[18] as well as correlations above 0.90 between primary campaign position estimates from the pooled scaling and each of the year-specific scalings.

An additional benefit of campaign websites as a data source for candidate positions is the inclusion of vastly understudied long-shot candidates. Although little can be said about the financial contributors, campaign advertisements, or expenditures of candidates who did not file pre-primary fundraising reports with the FEC, 45% of such candidates

[18]Moreover, the emergence of heavily weighted terms such as `lewi` (a stem from references to the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, legislation proposed by House Democrats in the 117th congress) and `crt` in 2022 is consistent with contemporaneous real-world changes in Democrats' and Republicans' electoral and legislative priorities.

Table 2.2: Words With 10 Most Conservative and Liberal Weights

Left	Right
community-bas, rental, equit, reproduct, trauma, matern, lgbtq, high-capac, lewi, low-incom, dispar, childcar, disproportion, pell, pre-k, tuition-fre, underserv, expung, resili, discriminatori	critical race theori, build the wal, tyrann, crt, indoctrin, god, tyranni, christian, sanctiti, god-given, unborn, pro-lif, communist, swamp, socialist, amnesti, islam, sanctuary c, alien, 2nd amend

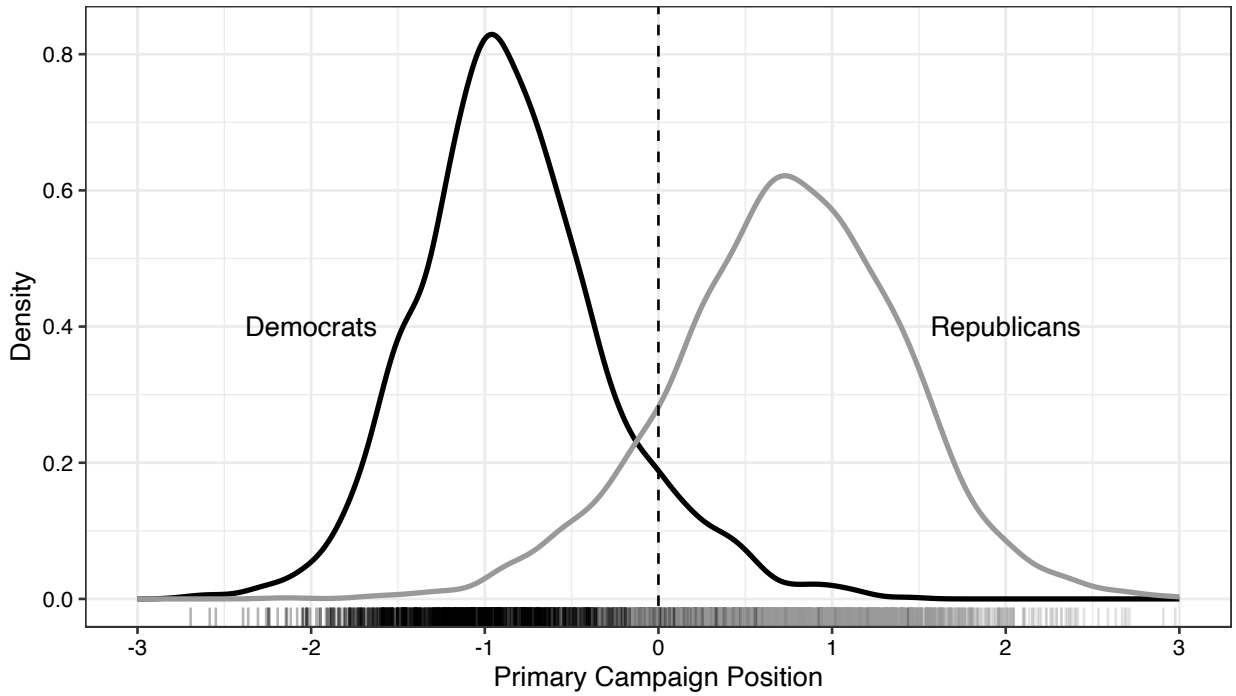
Note: Terms with the ten largest positive (right) and negative (left) β discrimination parameters from scaling. Appendix B reports top 20 terms and corresponding β and ψ parameters.

nevertheless hosted campaign websites with positions, and are therefore included in the new measure of campaign positioning. However, to ensure that the scaling space is not primarily defined by marginal candidates who may be using rhetoric distinct from that of viable candidates, I perform the scaling including only sitting incumbents (see Appendix B). The correlation of over 0.95 between incumbents' campaign positions from the pooled and incumbent-only scalings suggests that marginal candidates do not differentially drive nor distort campaign positioning estimates.

2.3.2 Primary Campaign Positioning Distribution and Variation

The density of primary campaign positions by candidate partisanship is presented in Figure 2.2. Consistent with well–documented partisan polarization among political elites (Bafumi and Herron 2010; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016; Theriault 2006; Thomsen 2014), positions are bimodally distributed, with most Republicans substantially to the right of most Democrats and most Democrats substantially to the left of most Republicans. However, a modest degree of overlap in Republican and Democratic candidates' positions is also consistent with the frequency with which candidates of both parties choose to campaign similarly on the same issues, such as job creation and veterans affairs. This contrasts with roll–call estimates of House members' ideal points from recent congresses, which exhibit no partisan overlap partly due to the strategic selection of legislative floor votes

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Primary Campaign Positions by Party, 2016 – 2022

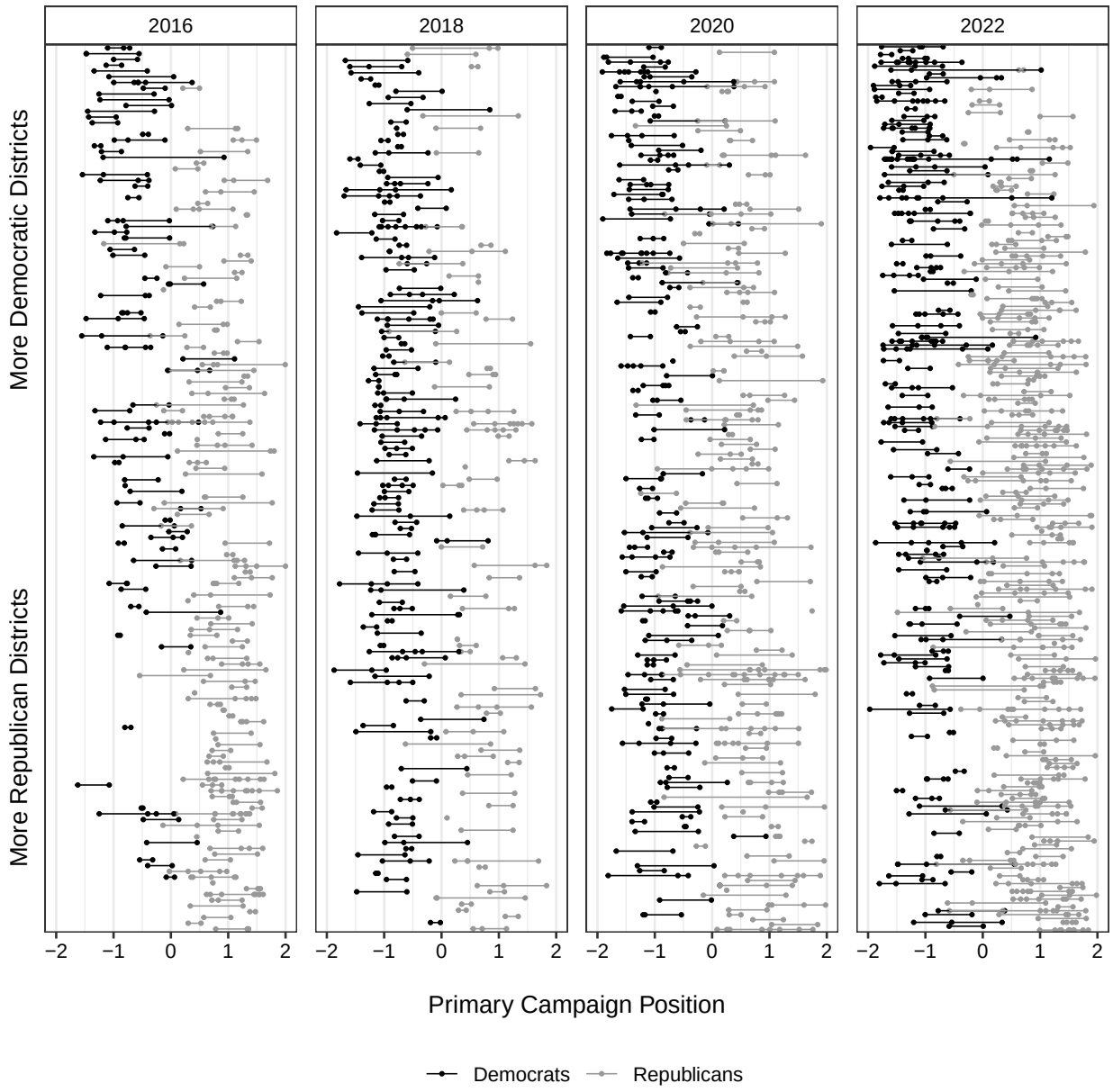


Note: Kernel density plots of ω estimates from Equation 2.1, representing primary candidate positions based on campaign website platforms. Democratic candidates shown in black and Republican candidates in gray. Negative values indicate more liberal/less conservative.

that frequently exaggerate differences between parties (Clinton 2012; Clinton and Lapinski 2008; Cox and McCubbins 2005; Lee 2016). Additionally, the distributions of only viable and incumbent candidates' positions are presented in Appendix B and suggest that these more serious candidates likewise span the full range of the scale.

Beyond aggregate distribution, Figure 2.3 showcases the substantial variation in candidates' positions within and across primaries, districts, and parties. The spread of campaign positioning differs widely by primary field, with some races featuring candidates who are rhetorically located at almost the same point, while others span nearly two standard deviations. Consistent with aggregate evidence in Figure 2.2, Republican primary fields consistently fall to the right of Democratic primary fields across districts, but the degree of divergence — or, in some cases, overlap — between Democratic and Repub-

Figure 2.3: Variation in Campaign Positions Within and Across Primaries



Note: Circles represent campaign positions of each primary candidate, with lines connecting those running in the same primary. Districts descending along horizontal axis from highest to lowest two-party Democratic presidential vote share. Democratic candidates shown in black and Republican candidates in gray. Primaries with at least two candidates with campaign positions are included.

lican primary candidates running in the same (or similar) districts is far from uniform. The ability to independently characterize the campaign positioning of candidates com-

peting within the same primary election highlights the potential for investigation of intra-primary dynamics related to campaign rhetoric, such as whether the most extreme candidate within a primary field tends to campaign on different issues than the other candidates.

2.3.3 Selected Candidates' Primary Campaign Positions

In addition to visually evaluating inter– and intra–party variation, we can also assess the face validity of candidates' primary campaign positions. A selection of relatively well–known candidates' positions from across the political spectrum is reported in Table 2.3. A Republican representing a rural district in New York's North Country since 2014, Elise Stefanik's 2018 primary campaign fell almost one standard deviation to the left of the mean. Although she has since made headlines for her impassioned defense of former President Trump during his first impeachment proceedings,[19] Stefanik campaigned on strengthening trade with Canada, expanding agricultural visa programs, veteran welfare, environmental protection, healthcare access, and affordable education. Conversely, the 2016 primary of Texas Democrat Henry Cuellar, who has voted with Republicans on legislation regarding abortion, firearms, and immigration,[20] was almost a quarter standard deviation to the right of the mean. Tennessean Blue Dog Democrat Jim Cooper, the "man in the middle"[21] and "the last moderate...loathed by Republicans for being in the wrong party, and scorned by Democrats for his fiscal conservatism"[22] represented mean 0 during his 2020 primary campaign. Likewise, the campaigns of those widely regarded as the most progressive Democrats and conservative Republicans fall toward the endpoints of the campaign position range.

[19] https://www.reuters.com/world/us/loyalty-trump-catapults-elise-stefanik-into-republican-stardom-2021-05-11/

[20] https://www.texastribune.org/2022/10/06/henry-cuellar-texas-2022/

[21] https://washingtonmonthly.com/2022/12/13/man-in-the-middle/

[22] https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/06/opinion/the-last-moderate.html

Table 2.3: Primary Campaign Positions of Notable Candidates

Party	Candidate	District-Year	Position
(R)	Elise Stefanik	NY-21-2018	–0.93
(R)	George Devolder-Santos	NY-3-2020	–0.13
(R)	Liz Cheney	WY-2022	0.29
(R)	Andy Biggs	AZ-5-2022	0.58
(R)	John Rose	TN-6-2022	1.07
(R)	Madison Cawthorn	NC-11-2022	1.35
(R)	Marjorie Taylor Greene	GA-14-2020	1.95
(D)	Henry Cuellar	TX-28-2016	0.21
(D)	Jim Cooper	TN-5-2020	–0.00
(D)	Debbie Wasserman Schultz	FL-23-2020	–0.21
(D)	Joaquin Castro	TX-20-2018	–0.74
(D)	Jerrold Nadler	NY-12-2022	–1.01
(D)	Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez	NY-14-2022	–1.54
(D)	Ayanna Pressley	MA-7-2020	–1.89

Note: Primary campaign positions of selected candidates from across the scale. Campaign positions are ω estimates from Equation 2.1, which are scaled to have mean 0 standard deviation 1, and are increasing in conservatism.

2.3.4 Comparisons to Existing Measures

Primary campaign positions measure something conceptually distinct from — yet potentially empirically related to — roll call voting and fundraising networks. The measure introduced here captures primary candidates' public campaign rhetoric, which may reflect "true" views or strategic appeals to potential donors, voters, or activists, but is ultimately under the purview of candidates themselves.[23] In contrast, DW-NOMINATE (Lewis et al. 2023) is based upon legislators' voting behavior, which occurs in an institutional setting that is relatively opaque and influenced by a strategically–selected roll call agenda not determined by any one individual legislator (Arnold 1990; Clinton 2012; Clinton and Meirowitz 2001; Lee 2016; Patty and Penn 2019). On the other hand, CF Scores (Bonica 2023) are sourced from patterns of campaign contributions, which are

[23]This remains true in the case of political consultant influence (e.g. Nyhan and Montgomery 2015), as the buck ultimately stops with the candidate, who can fire consultants advocating strategies with which she disagrees.

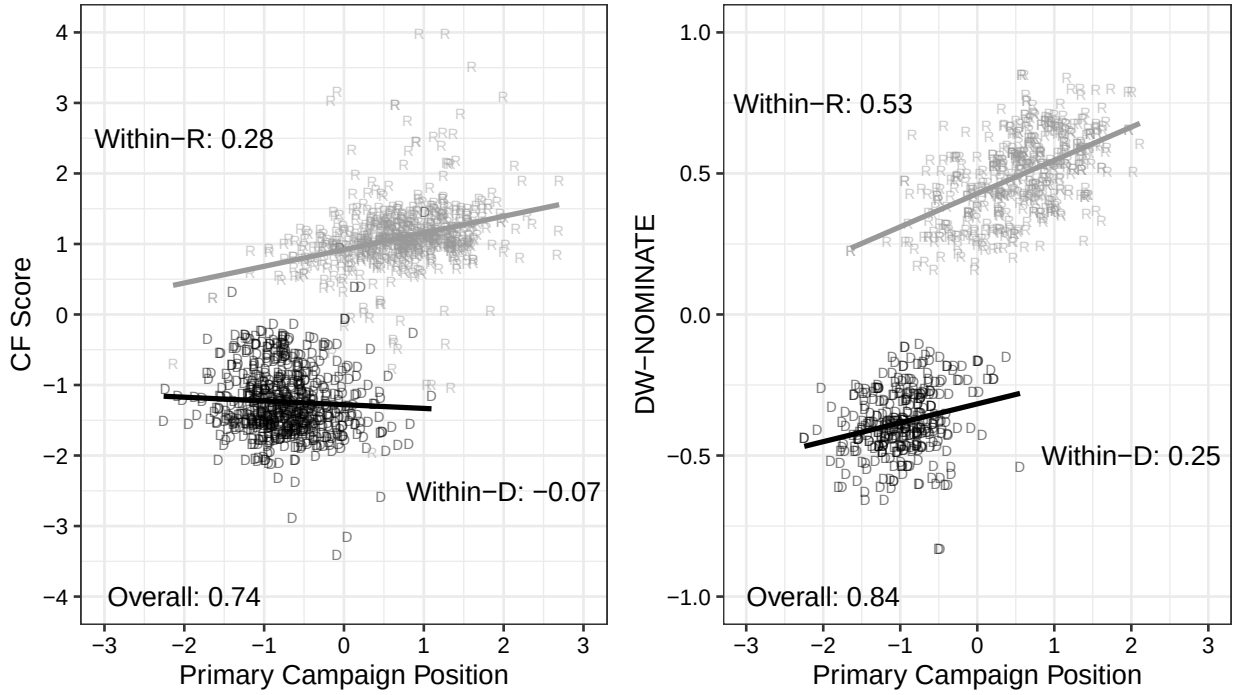
donor–led (rather than candidate–led) and may be driven by candidates' public and private rhetoric, institutional position, personal values, election characteristics, or opponents (Barber 2016*a*; Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; Bonica 2014; Magleby, Goodliffe, and Olsen 2018; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024; Stuckatz 2022). It is therefore unclear how strongly candidates' public primary campaign rhetoric should relate to their legislative voting and contribution networks.

Figure 2.4 presents scatterplots comparing primary campaign positioning to CF Scores and DW-NOMINATE. The left plot includes primary candidates from 2016 and 2018 as CF Scores are only available through 2018, and the right plot includes only sitting legislators.[24] Overall, primary campaign positions appear to co-vary more strongly with roll-call voting than with campaign contribution networks. While pooled correlations are quite strong (but still stronger with DW-NOMINATE than with CF Scores), the intra–party correlations between primary campaign positions and DW-NOMINATE are substantially greater than those with CF Scores. Whereas recent work by Barber (2022) documents the complete disappearance of a statistical relationship between House Democrats' CF Scores and DW-NOMINATE scores since 2014, Democrats' primary campaign positions exhibit a persistent relationship ($r = 0.25$) with their DW-NOMINATE scores, and the NOMINATE–campaign position correlations for Republicans and candidates overall are comparable to the NOMINATE–CF Score correlations found in Barber (2022).[25] These results illuminate the potential for further investigation of relationships between primary candidates' rhetorical positioning, donor networks, and legislative behavior facilitated by measuring public positioning independently of campaign contribution and roll-call data.

[24]Candidates who successfully won their election were matched to their DW-NOMINATE score from the following congress: the 2016 election corresponds to the 115th, 2018 to the 116th, 2020 to the 117th, and 2022 to the 118th.

[25]Moreover, the differences in strength of Democrats' relationships between the new measure and existing measures are not driven by the differential inclusion of non-incumbents when making comparisons to CF Scores versus DW-NOMINATE scores. The intra-Democrats correlation between campaign positions and CF Scores among only those with DW-NOMINATE scores remains at a paltry 0.03.

Figure 2.4: Relationship Between Primary Campaign Scores, CF Scores, and DW-NOMINATE



Note: Left plot compares the primary campaign positions and CF Scores of House candidates from 2016 and 2018. Right plot compares the primary campaign positions and 1st–dimension DW-NOMINATE scores of members of the 115th–118th Houses. Simple bivariate regression lines fit separately by party, with Democrats in black and Republicans in gray. Pooled and intra-party Pearson's *r* correlations reported.

2.4 Evaluating District Importance to Candidate Positions

I now turn to an example of the measure's utility for providing new insights into House candidate behavior with a descriptive application to the ongoing debate about nationalization versus district preferences. I find that even within party, primary candidates take systematically more liberal (or less conservative) campaign positions as the district's Democratic partisanship increases. Crucially, relying instead upon contribution–based estimates would lead to a different conclusion entirely: the district relationship is reversed among Democrats, and no relationship is evident among Republicans. The disparate results for primary campaign positions and CF Scores are consistent with donor behavior

having nationalized while candidate behavior remains district–tailored, presenting a more nuanced picture of the role of nationalization in recent House primary elections.

2.4.1 Does the District Still Matter?

The importance of (sub-)constituency is all but a given in classic theoretical and empirical studies of elections and representation (e.g. Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1984; Meirowitz 2005; Miller and Stokes 1963). Whether represented by the median or a distribution, and consisting of voters, constituents, co-partisans, or donors, the key population of interest in candidates' strategic positioning is thought to be district–specific. However, recent evidence on the nationalization of political behavior, media, and donors calls into question whether candidate–district ties have been severed (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Gimpel, Lee, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2008; Hopkins 2018; Jacobson 2015*b*; Martin and McCrain 2019; Moskowitz 2021).

Bonica and Cox (2018), for example, argue that political parties strategically nationalized congressional elections in response to increased competition for majority control since 1994 (Lee 2016). If elections are primarily fought over national party positions, national donor support, and national media attention, candidates no longer stand to benefit from tailoring their positions to the district, and instead stand to benefit from adopting the party line and appealing to extreme donors and activists.[26] However, the most recent evaluations of this argument have not found decreasing support for extreme nominees post-1994, suggesting that incentives may not have changed along these lines (Canes-Wrone and Kistner 2022; Lockhart and Hill 2023).

Given that primary elections have become increasingly consequential because the number of House districts competitive for both parties in the general election is in decline, I provide new evidence for whether candidates' positions vary systematically by district or

[26]Specifically, Bonica and Cox (2018) argue that voters have become more party-centered and therefore no longer penalize candidates for extremism, whereas extremism can benefit candidates via activist and donor support.

whether nationalization has severed such ties. Focusing on primary candidates presents a potentially more difficult case: the preferences of candidates' key primary constituency (whether co-partisan constituents, voters, or donors) are unlikely to perfectly co-vary with district preferences, which may induce an even weaker district–candidate relationship than would be found in the general election case.

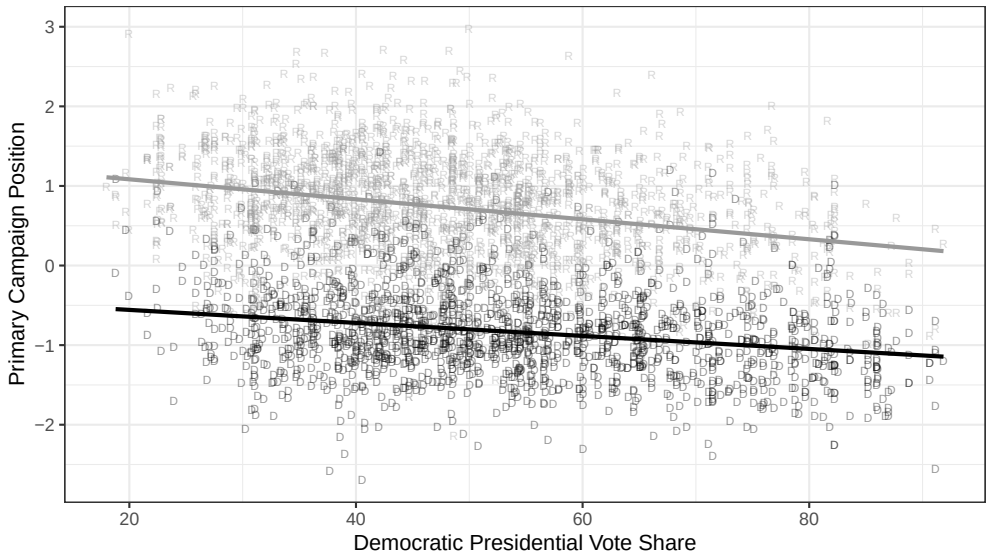
2.4.2 Evaluating District–Candidate Ties

I investigate the responsiveness of primary candidates' public rhetoric and donor networks to district preferences by estimating the relationship between district partisanship and both primary campaign positions and CF Scores. As a first step, Figure 2.5 plots candidate–year level bivariate relationships between district two-party Democratic presidential vote share and primary campaign positions, while Figure 2.6 plots district Democratic vote and CF Scores. Although CF Scores only include two primary cycles while primary campaign positions include candidates from four, plotting only primary candidates who also have CF Scores in Appendix B reproduces the patterns shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 shows that as the Democratic lean of districts grows stronger, both Democratic and Republican primary candidates' positions consistently become more liberal (or less conservative).[27] Although there is, unsurprisingly, an intercept shift between candidates of opposing parties running in similar districts, the lines fit separately by party demonstrate strong relationships between primary candidates' positions and their district's lean, such that increasing a district's Democratic presidential vote by 10% is associated with both Democratic and Republican primary candidates' positions becoming 10% of a standard deviation more liberal or less conservative ($\beta_D = -0.008; \beta_R = -0.012$; both $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, Figure 2.6 paints a different picture in the case of candidates' contribution networks. A very flat gray line ($\beta_R < -0.001; p = 0.708$) suggests that Republicans' CF Scores do not become more conservative as their districts grow less Democratic,

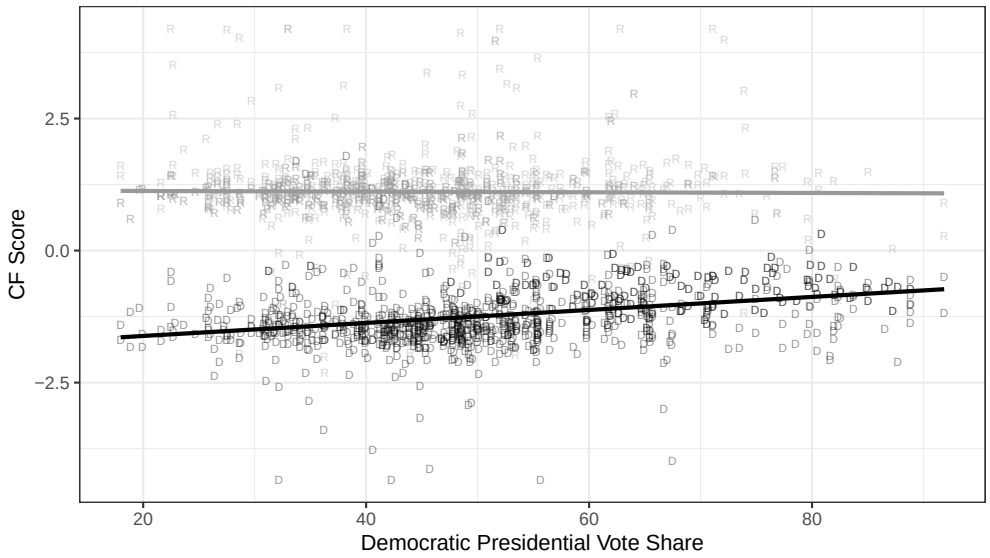
[27] The substantial spread of individual points makes it difficult to visually evaluate the linearity of the relationships. In Appendix B, fitting Loess curves instead suggests that the relationships are highly linear.

Figure 2.5: Primary Candidates' Positions and District Partisanship, 2016–2022



Note: Scatterplot points are individual candidate-year observations, with Republicans represented in gray and Democrats represented in black. Simple bivariate regression lines fit separately by party. Vertical axis plots ω from Equation 2.1, which increase with conservatism and are scaled to have mean 0 SD 1. Horizontal axis plots district's most recent two-party Democratic presidential vote share.

Figure 2.6: CF Scores and District Partisanship, 2016–2018



Note: Scatterplot points are individual candidate-year observations, with Republicans represented in gray and Democrats represented in black. Simple bivariate regression lines fit separately by party. Vertical axis plots recipient CF Scores, which increase with conservatism and are scaled in Bonica (2014) to have mean 0 SD 1. Horizontal axis plots district's most recent two-party Democratic presidential vote share.

while Democrats' CF Scores appear to become *less* liberal in more heavily Democratic districts ($\beta_D = 0.012; p < 0.001$). Appendix B demonstrates that disparities between campaign positions and CF Scores trends are not due to sample differences.

To evaluate the magnitude of the descriptive relationships between primary candidates' positions and district preferences from 2016 to 2022, I estimate the following equation separately for Democrats and Republicans:

$$\text{Position}_{idt} = \alpha + \tau\text{District}_{dt} + \upsilon\text{Open}_{idt} + \kappa\text{GenChall}_{idt} + \eta\text{PrimChall}_{idt} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{idt} \quad (2.2)$$

where Position_{idt} stands in for two dependent variables, both of which were scaled in their original estimation to have mean 0 standard deviation 1: candidate i's campaign position ω from Equation 2.1 during the primary in district d in year t, and her recipient CF Score.[28] The key independent variable, District_{dt}, represents district d's Democratic two-party vote share centered at 50% from the presidential election held in or most immediately before year t. Because primary campaign positions and CF Scores have standard deviations of 1, multiplying parameter υ by 100 corresponds to the percentage of a standard deviation change in the outcome variable associated with increasing district Democratic vote by 1%. To examine descriptive differences between campaign positions by candidate type, indicator variables capture whether i was an open-seat candidate, a primary challenger, or a prospective general election challenger in primary dt. As such, intercept α represents the primary campaign position of an incumbent representing a district with equal Democratic and Republican presidential vote share. Finally, I include year fixed effects to account for secular trends in candidates' extremism, progressivism, or campaign issue focus and I use HC3 standard errors.[29]

[28] Notation is abused slightly by indexing Position by ip, as CF Scores vary only at the candidate level.

[29] Clustering standard errors at the primary level (e.g. the 2020 Republican primary in AL-1) is unsurprisingly immaterial to the results given the large number of primaries that are unopposed.

2.4.3 Conclusions Differ By Measure

Table 2.4 reports the relationships between primary candidates' positions, the district's Democratic lean, and candidate type by positioning measure and candidate partisanship.[30] Among both Democrats and Republicans, primary campaign positions become significantly more liberal (or less conservative) as the district grows more heavily Democratic: increasing a district's Democratic presidential vote share by 10 percentage points is associated with Democratic primary candidates' campaign positions becoming 10% of a standard deviation more liberal, while Republicans' grow 14% of a standard deviation more liberal. This suggests that even during the primary, Republican and Democratic pools of publicly-espoused campaign positions vary systematically by the district's partisan composition.

In contrast, campaign contribution networks do not appear to exhibit a similar relationship to district partisanship. While the coefficient corresponding to district Democratic lean achieves conventional levels of significance in the Democratic candidate model, it is relatively small and signed in the unexpected direction: a 10 percentage point increase in Democratic presidential vote share in the district is associated with Democratic primary candidates having 3% of a standard deviation more *conservative* CF Scores. District partisanship is correctly signed in the case of Republican primary candidates, however, the relationship with CF Scores is similarly small and fails to reach statistical significance.

Additionally, Table 2.4 uncovers evidence that non-incumbent Republican primary candidates' contribution networks and campaign positions are both substantially more conservative than those of incumbent Republicans, but disparate trends emerge among Democratic primary candidates. Although Democratic open-seat candidates, primary challengers, and prospective general election challengers have far more liberal CF Scores than Democratic incumbents on average, the primary campaign positions of Democratic

[30] Results from models using MRP district ideology estimates (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2013; Warshaw and Tausanovitch 2022) as the key predictor or allowing district partisanship to interact with candidate type are presented in Appendix B.

Table 2.4: Relationship Between District Partisanship and Candidate Positions

	Primary Campaign Position		Recipient CF Score	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
(Intercept)	-0.567^{***}	0.489^{***}	-0.733^{***}	0.985^{***}
	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.030)
District Dem. Partisanship	-0.009^{***}	-0.014^{***}	0.003^{*}	-0.004
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Open Seat Candidate	0.001	0.364^{***}	-0.491^{***}	0.183^{***}
	(0.036)	(0.041)	(0.048)	(0.046)
Primary Challenger	0.203^{***}	0.457^{***}	-0.393^{***}	0.259^{**}
	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.075)	(0.080)
General Challenger	0.018	0.347^{***}	-0.586^{***}	0.282^{***}
	(0.039)	(0.049)	(0.045)	(0.065)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,778	2,025	1,117	976
Adjusted R^2	0.135	0.159	0.208	0.025

Note: Parameters from Equation 2.2 with HC3 standard errors in parentheses. Predictors are district Democratic two-party vote from most recent presidential election and candidate type, with intercept representing an incumbent in a 50% Democratic district. Models 1 and 2 include 2016–2022 primary candidates with primary campaign positions ω from Equation 2.1. Models 3 and 4 include 2016 and 2018 primary candidates with recipient CF Scores from **?**. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

open-seat candidates and general challengers do not appear significantly more liberal than those of Democratic incumbents, and Democratic primary challengers have, on average, 20% of a standard deviation *less* liberal campaign positions than Democratic incumbents. The extremism of non-incumbents' positions relative to incumbents' among Republicans and not Democrats complements recent evidence regarding patterns of state legislators running for the House (Phillips, Snyder, and Hall N.d.).

The results presented here suggest that candidates' public-facing rhetoric remains district–tailored while donor behavior has nationalized. Variation in primary candidates' public campaign positions by district preferences could be explained by strategic candidate entry, strategic campaigning behavior, or simple differences in positions of potential candidate pools across districts. However, the district–CF Score relationships shown in Figure 2.6 are consistent with donors contributing to co-partisans across the country — perhaps candi-

dates running in salient, heavily-covered races — and thus across the political spectrum, as demonstrated by Figure 2.5. In fact, electability considerations may lead nationalized donors to strategically fund co-partisan candidates who tailor their positions to district preferences. Ultimately, these divergent findings regarding the district–orientedness of donor networks versus candidate behavior indicate a more nuanced role of nationalization in modern House elections, and raise fundamental questions about whether and how donor behavior alters candidate incentives.

2.5 Discussion and Future Avenues

Candidate positioning is integral to theoretical investigation of elections, representation, and political behavior, yet empirical studies rely upon proxy measures that may or may not be related to candidates' public campaign positions. Using data collected directly from campaign website issue platforms, I introduce a new measure based on candidates' own campaign rhetoric during the increasingly important primary election stage. I have demonstrated that the scaling recovers a widely recognizable liberal–conservative dimension, captures intra–primary variation, and provides facially valid estimates of primary candidates' campaign positions. Moreover, using primary campaign positions to contribute to an ongoing debate regarding nationalization of candidate behavior highlight's the measure's ability to provide unique insights that would be missed by relying on existing measures.

As emphasized throughout, the measure introduced here is not simply a novel flavor of the same concept captured by alternative widely–used measures. Primary campaign positions do not purport to measure candidates' "true" ideologies, whether defined as sincerely held beliefs or accurate predictors of future behavior. As such, they should be employed in analyses concerned with modern candidates' public–facing rhetoric and issue stances. Candidate positions derived from campaign websites are also necessarily limited in how far back in time they can extend, as campaign webpages were not gen-

erally adopted until the 2000s at the earliest (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2007; Sulkin, Moriarty, and Hefner 2007) whereas campaign finance is publicly reported back through the 20th century and legislative voting began in the first U.S. Congress. Moreover, a lack of comparable sources of issue platforms from members of the public and other non-political actors precludes any common-space scaling.

Perhaps most promisingly, estimates of candidates' positions measured independently of their campaign contributions and (incumbents') roll-call votes suggests important new avenues of study. As highlighted by primary campaign positions' far-from-perfect correlations with DW-NOMINATE and CF Scores, each measures something conceptually and empirically different. The ability to estimate campaign positioning without having to assume that receipts or legislative voting *are* candidates' positions opens the door to meaningful empirical investigation into the substantive relationships between public campaign rhetoric, support from moneyed interests, and subsequent legislative behavior (Kim, Lin, and Schnakenberg 2022; McCarty and Rothenberg 1996; Schnakenberg 2016).

Additionally, the properties of text-based estimation of primary candidates' positions allow for research into previously difficult-to-study phenomena. Because this measurement model places no special assumption on individuals' continuity across elections, candidates' positions can be tracked over time and space (in cases of, for instance, redistricting or opting to run in a new district). The word-level parameters included in scaling results, representing each term's prevalence and ability to discriminate between positions, illuminate the substance of House primary discourse election-to-election. And while the average primary voter may not seek out their House candidates' campaign websites, the plain-English campaign platforms present an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which the public perceives inter– and intra–party differences in candidates' positions during primaries.

Chapter 3

Campaign Agendas and Issue Group Strategy in Congressional Primaries

3.1 Introduction

Issue–centric groups constitute many of the most widely recognized and longstanding political spending organizations in U.S. elections. Interest groups focused on a particular issue area, such as Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, and the National Rifle Association, are fixtures in congressional elections which themselves receive millions of dollars in contributions from individuals who share the groups' issue priorities.[1] Literature on extended party networks suggests that such groups are especially active and influential in primary elections, where candidate differences are less salient and voter information is low (Bawn et al. 2012; Cohen et al. 2008). However, existing theories offer divergent predictions regarding how issue groups should use campaign contributions to achieve their policy goals, and candidate–side data limitations have hindered empirical efforts to assess them. This paper investigates how issue groups trade off between helping elect new potential champions of their cause and seeking access to friendly lawmakers.

Like corporate PACs, issue groups may generally fund incumbent candidates in hopes of "buying" favor, access, or influence (Denzau and Munger 1986; Gordon and Hafer 2005; Fouirnaies and Hall 2014, 2018; Powell and Grimmer 2016; Snyder 1990). However, unlike obscure corporate regulations, candidates are more likely to have already decided the extent to which they care about the more salient issues upon which issue groups are formed, rendering contributions inefficient. In a similar vein to theories of lobbying, issue groups could instead target contributions to incumbents who have already signaled a commitment to their issue in order to induce greater effort (Hall and Wayman 1990; Hall and Deardorff 2006). However, to better ensure that they receive returns on their in-

[1] While I refer to them hereafter as *issue groups* or *issue PACs*, the same groups are elsewhere referred to as *single-issue interest groups* (e.g. Bonica 2013; Crosson, Furnas, and Lorenz 2020), *issue advocacy groups* (e.g. Phillips N.d.), or *activist groups* (e.g. Blum and Cowburn 2023).

vestments, group–centric theories of parties instead suggest that a more effective way for issue groups to achieve their policy goals is by helping to nominate and elect a true issue champion (Bawn et al. 2012).

One way for candidates to indicate their priorities is choosing to devote finite campaign attention to an issue. However, limited data on candidates' issue priorities have prevented large–scale empirical studies of whether issue groups' primary contribution strategies are responsive to these potentially low–cost signals. An accounting of campaign issue priorities is especially elusive for large swaths of primary candidates due to the price of running television advertisements and the *de minimis* media coverage of the vast majority of primary races, which existing work typically uses to capture campaign agendas (Banda 2015; Sides 2007; Sulkin 2005; Sulkin, Moriarty, and Hefner 2007; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002). Evaluating issue PACs' contribution strategies in primaries is especially important given the decline of two–party district competition (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006), yet few studies have systematically examined interest group giving in congressional primaries specifically.[2] By focusing on the primary stage, I advance our understanding of how issue groups select among co–partisans, an especially important calculus given many issue groups' increasing alignment with one political party (Barber and Eatough 2019; Crosson, Furnas, and Lorenz 2020; Herrnson 2009; Lacombe 2019; Phillips N.d.).

To test the extent to which issue groups focus on access–buying versus helping elect new potential issue champions, I leverage an original collection of campaign platforms from the websites of candidates who ran in House primaries in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022. Combined with itemized contribution receipts, these textual data allow me to match campaign attention to issue group support across nine major issue areas: Guns, Abortion, Environment, Animal Rights, Police, Elderly, LGBTQ, Campaign Finance, and Is-

[2]For some excellent exceptions, see Hassell (2016, 2023); Grumbach (2020); Patterson (N.d.).

rael.[3] With observations at the candidate–issue–year level, I am able to employ a variety of within–candidate empirical approaches. First, I investigate whether candidates are more likely to receive contributions from PACs centered around their campaign priorities with candidate–year and issue–year fixed effects. I also consider whether these effects vary by electoral context. Second, I further examine how issue groups' respond to office-holding status and campaign prioritization of their issue using a triple–differences design that estimates change in issue PAC fundraising associated with change in incumbency status among candidates who did and did not campaign on the PACs' issue. Third, I assess the extent to which groups respond to legislators' campaign rhetoric versus legislative activity on their issue, again using two–way fixed effects to isolate within–legislator–year variation.

My results are consistent with issue groups relying on campaign rhetoric to identify potential issue champions during the primary election stage, and continuing to cultivate relationships with them once in Congress. In general, primary candidates are substantially more likely to receive contributions from PACs centered around the issues on which they chose to campaign. I find that absolute campaign attention effects are largest among incumbents, while effects relative to baseline rates of issue group fundraising are largest among non–incumbents. To more explicitly characterize how issue PACs respond to incumbency and issue attention, I show that the incumbency advantage in issue group fundraising — measured as the difference in changes in contributions between those who did and did not experience a change in incumbency — is disproportionately concentrated among those who campaigned on the group's issue as non–incumbents. These differences in issue PAC financial incumbency advantage by candidates' previous issue attention are not driven by differences in congressional activity: PAC contributions are more responsive to campaign attention than to legislative attention.

This article makes four contributions to the study of interest groups, congressional

[3]As discussed in Appendix C, I focus on issues which are sufficiently broad yet non–boilerplate, and whose interest groups' goals are primarily collective rather than particularistic.

elections, and legislative behavior in the United States. First, I join a growing literature elucidating the dynamics of primary elections (Blum and Cowburn 2023; Hassell 2023; Hirano and Snyder 2019; Lockhart and Hill 2023; Thomsen 2022). While research on congressional races has traditionally focused on the general election stage, the decline of two-party competition means that electoral outcomes are increasingly determined at the primary stage. Second, I advance our understanding of the strategies adopted by single-issue interest groups, which are widely recognizable fixtures in American elections yet are typically lumped together with general ideological interest groups (e.g. Bonica 2013; Grumbach 2020) and have received far less scholarly attention than corporate PACs and individual donors (e.g. Barber 2016*b*; Fowler, Garro, and Spenkuch 2020; Kujala 2020; Meisels, Clinton, and Huber 2024; Thieme 2020). Third, I illuminate the *beginning* of the legislator–group life cycle by investigating connections formed before candidates make it into office. Moving beyond legislator-group interactions within the legislative arena provides insight into how issue groups initially decide with whom to work. Finally, these findings provide additional evidence of the connection between electoral and legislative behavior (Sulkin 2011; Schnakenberg 2016), as well as key stakeholders' responses to each.

3.2 Theoretical Foundations of Issue Group Primary Strategy

Donating to campaigns is one of the most critical electioneering activities in which interest groups can engage. While strong fundraising is no guarantee that a candidate will win an election, money is a prerequisite for hiring staff and consultants, nearly every aspect of campaigning, and signaling viability and strength — particularly in primary elections (Biersack, Herrnson, and Wilcox 1993; Epstein and Zemsky 1995; Jacobson 2015*a*; Maestas and Rugeley 2008; Thomsen 2022). The importance of campaign contributions and the incentives that they create for candidate behavior are reflected by a sustained scholarly focus on the potential distorting effects of money in politics (Canes-Wrone and Gibson 2019; Francia et al. 2003; Kalla and Broockman 2016; Kujala 2020; Powell 2012).

Issue groups have collective policy goals,[4] and existing theories suggest different primary campaign contribution strategies that such groups might employ to best achieve them. The first approach centers around seeking access to legislators directly, akin to corporate PACs contributing to legislators with the greatest policymaking influence over their industry (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014, 2018; Powell and Grimmer 2016; Romer and Snyder 1994). However, a wide range of unorganized interests are indifferent to obscure corporate regulations, the minutae of which fly under the political radar and are unlikely to activate the public (Arnold 1990; Denzau and Munger 1986). This contrasts with the more salient and controversial policies around which issue groups are formed, making it a much taller order to influence legislators' opinions on the same. As such, formal theories of lobbying suggest that issue groups should target like–minded legislators in hopes of inducing greater legislative effort on their mutual goals (Hall and Wayman 1990; Hall and Deardorff 2006). In the context of modern primary elections, issue priority may be a more relevant indicator of like–mindedness than shared preferences, as co–partisans' specific preferences are relatively homogeneous (Levendusky 2009).[5]

However, focusing contribution strategies on access to incumbents constrains issue groups to form relationships with those already in office, who may be insufficiently reliable allies. Group–centric theories of political parties suggest that a more efficient way to ensure a return on investment is by getting "a genuine friend nominated and elected to office" (Bawn et al. 2012, 575). Because of low participation and widespread voter apathy toward the relatively small differences between co–partisans, special interests are thought to exert especially strong influence at the primary stage (Bawn et al. 2023; Grumbach 2020; Hassell 2016; Karol 2009; Masket 2009).[6] At the same time, co–partisans with relatively

[4]This contrasts with corporate PACs, trade groups, and groups oriented around particularistic benefits for members which are tailored as narrowly as possible to their organization or sector.

[5]For this reason, my analyses exclude nonpartisan or multiparty primaries (see Appendix C).

[6]Another key tenet of this theoretical tradition is coordination among coalitions of different interest groups (e.g. Cohen et al. 2008; Crosson, Furnas, and Lorenz N.d.; Hassell 2023; Patterson N.d.), which some have called into question (e.g. McCarty and Schickler 2018). While I largely set aside the possibility of such dynamics here, Figure 3.3 suggests some co–occurrence of primary contributions by different issue groups — but this does not appear to be related to co–occurrence of campaigning upon the different issues.

similar ideological stances can attempt to distinguish themselves via issue priorities. Because co–partisan (or co–ideologue) candidates are relatively unlikely to face opponents actively hostile to most of their general positions,[7] polarized groups have a real opportunity to identify and support a true friend. By helping to elect a genuine issue ally whose priorities are aligned with theirs, groups can reduce the need for costly oversight, monitoring, and discipline (Stratmann 1998).

In most cases, however, identifying a true champion is no easy task for issue groups. Even for incumbents, who have records of activity in the legislative arena of interest, it may be challenging to separate legislators' priorities from their strategic response to dynamics of agenda control (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Denzau and Mackay 1983), temporal changes in windows of legislative opportunity on an issue (Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Krehbiel 1998; Romer and Rosenthal 1978), and individual ability to marshal bills through the legislative process (Hitt, Volden, and Wiseman 2017; Volden and Wiseman 2014). And while some non–incumbent primary candidates have mayoral or state legislative experience, the extent to which these records predict future priorities in the federal legislative setting is unclear. Moreover, relying upon such records precludes comparison between candidates with and without prior officeholding experience — the latter of which have become increasingly viable contenders in recent years (Porter and Treul 2023).

On the other hand, campaigns provide a relatively level playing field for candidates to more cleanly signal their issue priorities.[8] Campaign platforms are selected on the basis of factors such as national and district issue salience, personal importance of an issue, and constituency composition (Druckman et al. 2010; Sides 2006; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002). Candidates choosing of their own volition to campaign on an issue suggests that they find it important, whether for personal, electoral, or representational reasons. To the extent that they are constrained in the number of issues upon which they can campaign

[7] For example, a modern pro–abortion Democratic candidate is relatively unlikely to face a primary opponent who is both anti–abortion and would exert substantial effort to enact anti–abortion policy.

[8] This is true even for incumbents, who may be partially constrained by their past legislative activity.

(perhaps because campaigning on fewer issues is more effective than campaigning on many), candidates can expend costly campaign focus to reveal their "type" — whether they are an issue champion or not — across issues. However, groups' responsiveness to such rhetoric likely depends upon how costly, and therefore informative, of a signal they believe it to be.

Existing theories also suggest divergent implications for whether issue groups should respond more strongly to incumbents' versus non–incumbents' issue priorities. If issue PACs most value access to friendly lawmakers, responsiveness to incumbents' issue priorities should be especially strong. This could either be due to the reinforcing relationship between legislators' campaign and legislative priorities (Sulkin and Swigger 2008; Sulkin 2009, 2011), or the informativeness of rhetoric itself as a less–mediated signal of incumbents' priorities (Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin 2009). Moreover, incumbents' *a priori* higher likelihood of election to office than non–incumbents (Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning 2006) heightens the stakes of their (implicit) campaign promises due to increased possibility of electoral accountability and punishment in the subsequent election.[9] Conversely, group–centric theories of party nominations suggest that the effect of campaign issue attention on issue group support should be strongest among non–incumbents. Precisely because non-incumbents do not have prominent officeholding records, campaign rhetoric may constitute an especially important source of information for issue groups to draw on when seeking to identify new issue champions.

The extent to which issue groups prioritize access–seeking versus electing new potential issue allies also suggests different levels of responsiveness to campaign priorities by district competitiveness. If issue groups most value access to like–minded legislators, their contributions should be more strongly influenced by shared priorities in districts safer for candidates' parties. Similar to the logic of corporate PAC funds flowing disproportionately to favored candidates (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014), those in safe districts face a more certain

[9]This is true even at very low levels of future accountability.

victory in the general election. This means that issue PACs can attempt to financially bolster candidates during the primary, after which the electoral outcome is relatively secured. If issue groups instead prioritize electing new issue allies, they should gamble on candidates in competitive districts who share their priorities, as these contributions have the greatest marginal impact on legislative composition all else equal. Moreover, this riskier strategy can potentially offer a higher return on investment, as nominees are in greater need of a financial edge in competitive general elections.[10]

To summarize, existing theories offer different predictions about issue group contribution strategy in modern primaries. Access–centered approaches suggest that issue groups should target incumbents and electorally safe primary candidates who have demonstrated shared issue priority. Group–centric theories of parties instead suggest that issue groups should prioritize electing new issue champions by targeting non–incumbents and primary candidates in competitive districts who have demonstrated shared issue priority. However, the extent to which issue groups should rely upon candidates' rhetoric to identify issue allies is also unclear. While incumbents' campaign platforms may reflect their real legislative priorities, other candidates' platforms could be too "cheap" to constitute meaningful signals of issue priorities.

3.3 Data

While transaction–level receipts of issue PACs' contributions to House primary candidates are readily available via the Federal Election Commission (FEC),[11] capturing candidate–side issue priority is a much taller order. The cost of television advertisements, which previous studies have used to examine candidates' campaign priorities (Banda 2015; Sides 2006, 2007; Sides and Karch 2008; Sulkin and Swigger 2008; Sulkin 2009, 2011; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002), is prohibitive for most House primary candidates and not a worthy

[10]Primary–designated contributions not spent during the primary election are legally allowed to go toward general election expenditures.

[11]To identify PACs focused on single issue areas, I merged in OpenSecrets' PAC information, which includes issue codes and descriptions as well as the unique FEC identifiers.

investment for those in all but the most competitive races. Others have employed media coverage of campaigns to identify candidates' issue priorities (Sulkin 2005), yet these characterizations of campaign priorities are mediated by a third party and, likewise, only offer coverage of races that clear some threshold of newsworthiness.

To characterize House primary candidates' issue priorities, I hand–collect data on campaign website issue platforms of all candidates who appeared on the ballot in a Democratic or Republican primary in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022.[12] Campaign website platforms constitute a uniquely well–suited source of data on primary candidates' issue priorities. The vast majority of websites contain a page or section clearly delineated as a collection of issue stances, resembling a stated policy platform more closely than any other campaign activity. Additionally, the priorities and positions found on websites are selected and articulated by candidates themselves,[13] in contrast to media interviews, televised debates, and newspaper writeups. Websites also provide candidates an opportunity to present a more comprehensive campaign platform than purchased advertisements in newspapers or on television (Sulkin, Moriarty, and Hefner 2007). Finally, creating and maintaining a website is easy and far cheaper than fundraising, sending mailers, and running television advertisements, making campaign platforms a more inclusive data source with regard to candidates' resources. For these reasons, scholars have long recognized candidate websites' value for studying campaign strategy in general (e.g. McDonald, Porter, and Treul 2020; Nyhan and Montgomery 2015) and issue platforms in particular (Druckman et al. 2010; Porter, Treul, and McDonald 2023; Milita, Ryan, and Simas 2014).[14]

[12]This effort includes 6,274 unique candidate–year observations, over 60% (3,816) of which hosted campaign websites with issue content. Appendix C provides a detailed explication and examples of each step of the data collection process, as well as evidence of the representativeness of candidates with and without platforms. While incumbents and those who garnered more than a *de minimis* share of their primary's total fundraising create websites with campaign platforms at a higher rate, the magnitude of missingness among candidates without viable fundraising is relatively quite modest considering the large portion of non-incumbents who did not even file pre-primary fundraising reports.

[13]This remains true in the case of political consultant influence (e.g. Nyhan and Montgomery 2015), as candidates can ultimately fire consultants advocating strategies with which they disagree.

[14]As Druckman, Kifer, and Parkin put it: Campaign websites "provide an unmediated, holistic, and representative portrait of messages aimed at voters in general" (2009, 346-347).

I focus on whether each campaign platform includes nine key issue areas: Guns, Abortion, Environment, Animal Rights, Police, Elderly, LGBTQ, Campaign Finance, and Israel. Out of all issue areas on which candidates actively campaigned and PACs actively spend in House races over the period, these met a few important criteria. First, issues are broad enough to have PACs formed around them and candidates across the nation meaningfully considering whether to campaign on them.[15] Second, issues are narrow enough that candidates do not feel uniformly compelled to take boilerplate positions on the issue.[16] Third, issues with a predominant "economic" interest group base of organizations concerned with members' material interests are excluded, as union and trade groups' structures and goals are distinct from other issue PACs' (Barber and Eatough 2019; Phillips N.d.; Welch 1980). The issue selection process is described further in Appendix C.

To identify campaign attention, I create a dictionary of terms associated with each issue to string–match in the platform text. For example, terms associated with Guns include `2nd amendment`, `nra`, `rifle`, `ammunition`, `firearm`, `gun`, and `shooting`, with the full collection of each issue's terms reported in Appendix C.[17] Candidates' rates of campaigning on each of the nine issues are displayed on the left side of Figure 3.1. There is substantial heterogeneity in issue prevalence both between and within parties. As an example of the former, Democrats out–campaigned Republicans on LGBTQ and campaign finance issues, consistent with work on partisan differences in issue coalitions and perceived "ownership" (Banda 2016; Lacombe 2019; Noel 2012).[18] As an example of the latter, however, far fewer Democrats campaigned on campaign finance than on the environment. The intra–party differences in attention across issues, as well as most rates falling far short of 100%, suggest that even candidates of the same party do not consistently campaign on the same issues.

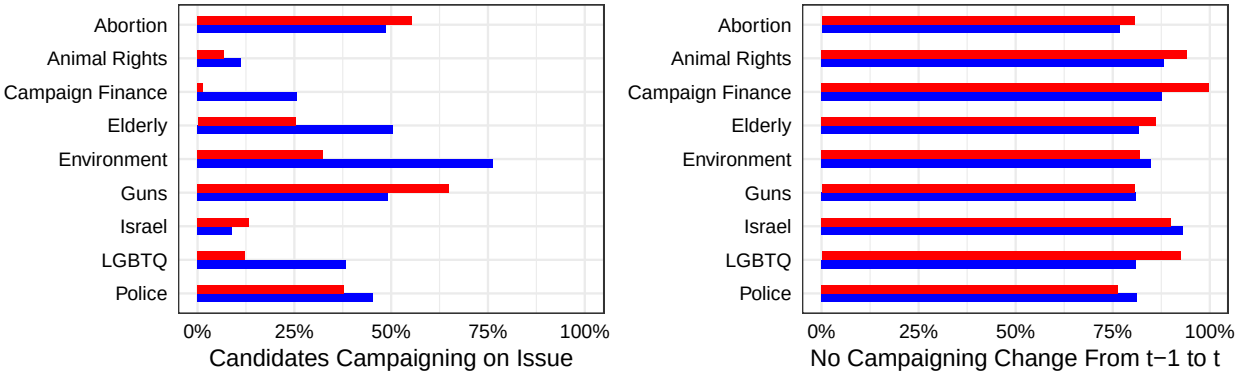
[15] For example, platforms which include curbing the invasiveness of Asian carp (or Copi) are highly localized to areas around the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes, and no PACs are currently formed around the issue.

[16] For example, macroeconomic policy such as taxes and government spending is so widespread among platforms that it is infeasible for economic policy PACs to factor issue attention into their strategies.

[17] Terms were selected by reviewing all tokens occurring in over 100 separate platforms (about 4%).

[18] Additionally, it highlights the necessity of accounting for candidates' partisanship, which is absorbed by candidate fixed effects in the analyses that follow.

Figure 3.1: Primary Campaign Issue Prevalence and Continuity, 2016 – 2022



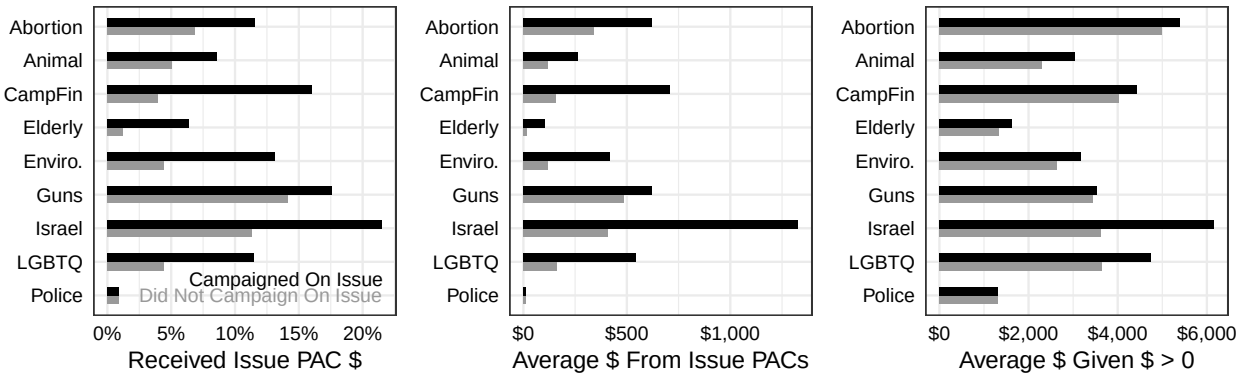
Note: Shares of candidate–year observations including issue in platform and candidates with platforms in consecutive campaigns who did not add or delete issue. Republicans in red and Democrats in blue.

While the differences in shares of candidates campaigning on each issue on the left side of 3.1 implies significant individual–level variation across issues, the right panel of Figure 3.1 also reveals considerable individual–level temporal stability *within* issues. From one election to the next, over 75% of candidates in both parties maintained their choice to campaign on or omit each of the nine issues. In other words, if candidates choose to announce a position on an issue (or not) in a given election, they are empirically likely to make the same choice again in the following election. This suggests that issue agendas tend to be stable, like roll call voting behavior over time (Poole and Rosenthal 1997).[19] Importantly for the analyses that follow, issue agendas appear to be more akin to a fixed candidate characteristic than something changing endogenously. Nevertheless, I examine the possibility of such "reverse" causality in Appendix C and do not find evidence of candidates adapting their campaign agendas based on issue PAC funding.

Turning to issue groups, Figure 3.2 plots primary election contributions from PACs across issue areas by candidates who did and did not campaign on the issue, with all included PACs and their respective issue areas listed in Appendix C. Across each issue area,

[19]This may be due to either candidates' motivations for campaigning on issues — whether due to personal or constituency importance — remaining relatively stable from election to election, or the potential negative electoral consequences of instability on these "principled" policy issues (Tavits 2007).

Figure 3.2: Issue PAC Primary Fundraising by Campaign Attention

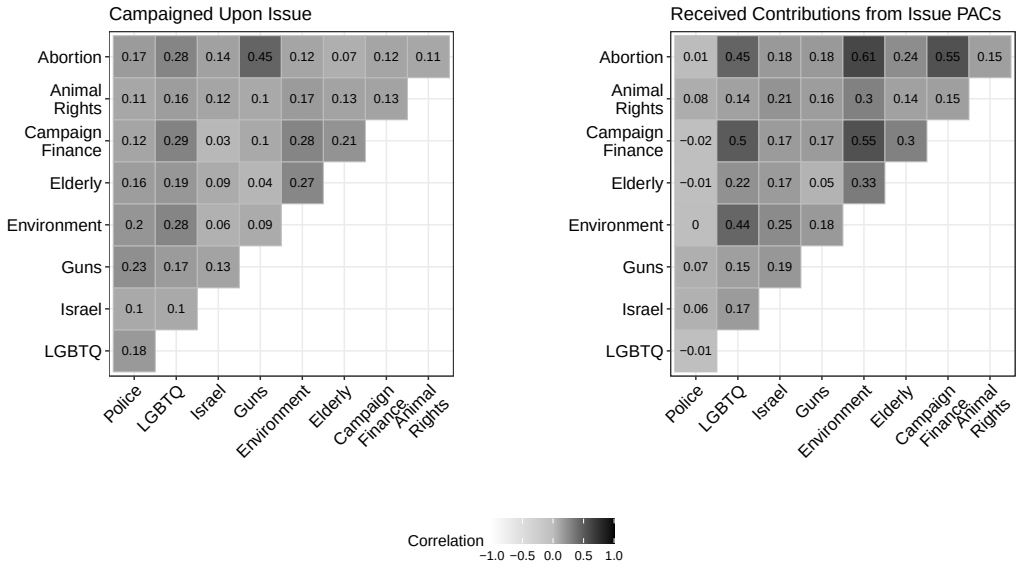


Note: Candidate–year level observations in black if campaigned on the issue, and gray otherwise.

the three subplots provide descriptive, aggregate–level evidence that issue groups give more financial support to primary candidates who choose to campaign on their issue. First, the left plot shows that a larger share of candidates who campaigned on an issue received contributions from the issue's groups than candidates who did not campaign on the issue. Additionally, the center plot demonstrates that on average, candidates who campaign on an issue receive more total funds from groups related to the issue than candidates who did not campaign on the issue. However, as evidenced by the left plot, these averages include a large number of candidates who raised $0 total from groups related to a given issue. On the right side, even selecting on cases where candidates received positive contributions from issue groups produces higher average contribution totals among candidates who campaigned on the issue compared to candidates who did not.

When examining the relationship between campaign attention to an issue and contributions from issue groups, it is important to also consider potential relationships between campaigning on different issues and between fundraising from groups related to different issues. In particular, if there are issues that "go together" — in that candidates who tend to campaign on one issue tend to campaign on the other, and PACs formed around that one issue tend to contribute similarly to PACs formed around the other issue — this may induce a spurious relationship between campaign issue attention and issue PAC con-

Figure 3.3: Issue Correlations Within Campaign Attention and PAC Contributions



Note: Includes 2016–2022 House primary candidates with campaign website platforms. Correlations between campaigning on issues (left) and between receiving issue PAC contributions (right).

tributions. Figure 3.3 presents pairwise correlations between campaigning on different issue areas as well as receiving funds from PACs related to different issue areas. Most correlations are positive, suggesting that candidates who tend to campaign on any of these issues also tend to campaign on others, and that candidates who raise funds from groups related to one issue tend to raise funds from groups related to others. However, the correlations are not overwhelmingly strong. There exists a 0.45 correlation between campaign attention to guns and abortion, yet other campaign attention correlations between issues are far smaller. And while a handful of issues are correlated above 0.5 for PAC funding, these do not appear to be the issues with the strongest correlations for campaign attention. The lack of overlap between issues with the strongest campaign attention correlations and PAC funding correlations casts doubt on the idea that there are simply issues which "go together" in both domains and would subsequently induce a relationship between campaign attention and group contributions.

3.4 Issue PAC Response to Campaign Rhetoric

Aggregate descriptive patterns suggest that primary candidates garner greater contributions from issue PACs related to their campaign priorities, but this may be partly driven by differences across candidates and district contexts. For instance, candidate quality may confound the relationship as higher quality candidates may both have more issue–focused campaigns and be better fundraisers than lower quality candidates. To hold such characteristics constant, I leverage a within–candidate design which relies upon cross–issue variation within candidates' campaigns in a given year to investigate whether campaigning on an issue in the primary is associated with garnering more primary contributions from PACs related to the issue. I estimate the following equation:

$$f(\text{Contributions}_{ijt}) = \mathbf{M}(\text{Campaign}_{ijt}) + \alpha_{it} + \phi_{jt} + \varepsilon_i \tag{3.1}$$

where $\text{Contributions}_{ijt}$ is candidate i's total itemized contributions from PACs associated with issue j during the primary election in year t. The function $f(\cdot)$ maps these contributions into two dependent variable measures: $I(\text{Contributions}_{ijt} > 0)$, an indicator for any positive contributions, and $\log(\text{Contributions}_{ijt} + 1)$ given the inclusion of many zeroes and data skewedness. Fixed effects at the candidate–year level (α_{it}) and the issue–year level (ϕ_{jt}) control for all observed and unobserved election–specific candidate attributes and issue–specific time trends, respectively. Importantly, this means that β captures the change in candidate i's contributions from PACs centered around issue j in election t associated with candidate i campaigning on issue j in election t. I examine binary and continuous functions of campaign attention, measured respectively as presence and number of issue words,[20] the associated effects of which are represented by $\mathbf{M}$. Coefficients, then, are estimated by comparing the same candidate's PAC contributions across issues for which

[20] I do not divide by total words or total number of issues, as platform–level characteristics are already absorbed by the candidate–year fixed effect α_{it}.

they did and did not campaign upon in a given primary.[21] As stated previously, this design ensures that issue–invariant differences in candidates' attributes and electoral contexts — such as incumbency status, unidimensional ideology, race competitiveness, or election newsworthiness — do not confound the relationship between campaign attention to an issue and campaign contributions from groups associated with the issue.

Table 3.1 reports estimated effects of campaigning on an issue on issue PAC contributions from the two–way fixed effects models. The first four columns use a linear probability model with an indicator for having received any contributions, while the middle columns follow Beck's (2020) recommendation for grouped linear probability models by excluding candidates who either did not receive contributions from PACs in any issue area or received contributions from PACs in all issue areas.[22] The last two columns use a log transformation of contribution amount as the dependent variable. In addition to these specifications, I also perform analyses at the candidate–PAC–year level[23] and break results out by party and issue (Appendix C).[24]

Across specifications, candidates receive significantly more contributions from PACs centered around issues they campaign upon than PACs centered around issues they do not campaign upon. As a baseline, note that a contribution occurred for 5.7% of all candidate–issue combinations where candidates chose not to campaign on the issue. Given the coefficient in Column 1 of Table 3.1, this means that the rate of issue PAC contributions increases to over 9% for candidates who campaigned on their issue — more than a 60% increase from the baseline. Column 3 suggests that these relative effects are similar among candidates

[21] Given that this specification relies upon within–candidate–year variation in issue attention, β is assumed to be constant across issues. In Appendix C, I report results from regressions run separately by each issue area (with party–year fixed effects only).

[22] Beck (2020) suggests reporting results from observations with only a mix of zeroes and ones in the dependent variable, as groups with known zero marginal effects violate the constant marginal effects assumption of grouped linear probability models.

[23] While this is the more natural level of observation, as giving happens at the PAC level, aggregating up to the candidate–issue–year level helps to minimize potential biases induced by the possibility of PACs within the same issue area coordinating their giving strategies — e.g. serving as strategic substitutes — and/or some PACs adopting rules against giving to certain types of candidates or in certain types of races.

[24] Given that the two–way fixed effects models rely on variation across issues, I employ only party–year fixed effects in the supplemental issue–specific analyses.

Table 3.1: Issue Attention and Primary Fundraising From Issue PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		Contributions (0/1), Mixed		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.036***		0.128***		0.277***	
	(0.004)		(0.012)		(0.031)	
# Issue Words Used		0.003***		0.009***		0.019***
		(0.000)		(0.002)		(0.004)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	34,380	34,380	9,738	9,738	34,378	34,378
Adjusted R^2	0.303	0.302	0.237	0.230	0.307	0.306

Note: Observations are candidate–issue–year. Candidate–clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

who received funds from PACs in some but not all issue areas, as a coefficient of 13 percentage points likewise constitutes a 60% increase over their respective baseline (21%). Moreover, Column 5 suggests that the relationship is not limited to binary presence of funding: campaigning on an issue is associated with an increase in contribution amount of over 30% from the issue's PACs. Beyond the dichotomous choice of whether or not to campaign on an issue, the even–numbered columns also suggest that the marginal effect of each additional issue word included in candidates' platforms is significantly associated with increased contributions from issue groups.[25]

The parameter estimates in Table 3.1 seem especially large considering aspects of the analysis which may lead to underestimation of effect sizes. I pool candidates who campaigned on any side of an issue into the "treated" category, even though many issue groups would not consider contributing to candidates who take stances opposed to their own, regardless of such candidates' attention to their issue. Similarly, while the analyses include all candidate–year–issue combinations, PACs in certain issue areas (and perhaps in certain cycles) may adopt rules against contributing to certain types of candidates, such as those unopposed or primary challengers. For these reasons, estimates of β may be signif-

[25]Importantly, the candidate–year fixed effect accounts for platform–level characteristics such as total number of words, while the issue–year fixed effect accounts for cycle–specific differences in average word counts across issues.

icantly biased toward zero by including observations where the possibility of "treatment" effects were precluded. Additionally, I focus solely on one manifestation of support — direct contributions — while issue groups and their affiliates may also use independent expenditures or official endorsements to bolster candidates who prioritize their issue.

3.5 Issue PAC Strategy: Campaign Rhetoric and Access

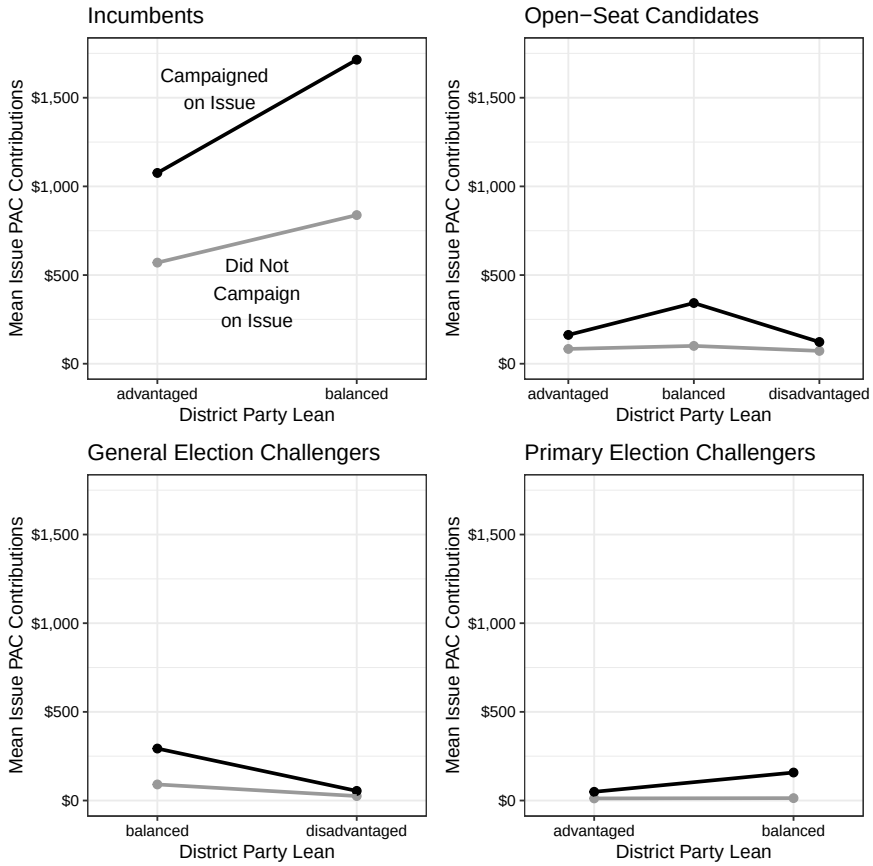
Having demonstrated a general relationship between campaigning on an issue and fundraising from the issue's PACs, I evaluate competing theoretical predictions about where this relationship should be largest. In particular, access–centered approaches suggest that effects should be strongest among incumbents and those in safe districts, while group–centric theories of parties suggest stronger effects among non–incumbents and in competitive districts. Figure 3.4, which plots average issue–level PAC contributions by candidate type, district lean, and campaign attention to the issue, reveals three notable patterns.[26] All else equal and on average, 1) those who campaigned on an issue receive greater contributions from PACs related to that issue than those who did not campaign on the issue, 2) incumbents garner substantially higher contributions than non-incumbents, consistent with findings on the financial incumbency advantage (Fouirnaies and Hall 2014), and 3) candidates in more competitive districts (parties balanced) tend to have higher fundraising than those in less competitive districts (party advantaged or disadvantaged).

To quantify the magnitudes of these heterogeneous relationships at the individual level, Table 3.2 reports the results of Equation 3.1 estimated separately by candidate type and whether the district is a "toss–up" or leans toward one party.[27] For ease of interpretation, I focus on a binary specification of the independent and dependent variable, with estimates from the alternative specifications introduced in Table 3.1 reported in Appendix

[26]Following Hirano and Snyder (2019), I consider districts advantaged for the candidate's party if the party's nominee received over 57.5% of the two–party vote share in the most recent presidential election, disadvantaged if they received under 42.5%, and balanced if their vote share was somewhere in between.

[27]Given the similar average contribution patterns between primary election challengers and prospective general election challengers in Figure 3.4, I collapse challengers into one category, and I collapse districts advantaged and disadvantaged for the party into districts that lean toward one party for the same reason.

Figure 3.4: Average Primary Fundraising From Issue PACs by Electoral Context and Campaign Issue Attention



Note: Party–disadvantaged incumbents and primary election challengers and party–advantaged general election challengers omitted due to small samples.

Table 3.2: Issue Attention and Issue PAC Fundraising by Candidate and District Type

	DV: Presence of Contribution					
	Incumbents		Open Seat		Challengers	
	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean
Campaigned on Issue	0.126***	0.088***	0.027**	0.020**	0.017***	0.007***
	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.002)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,853	5,040	3,708	4,878	6,552	11,331
Adjusted R^2	0.374	0.272	0.231	0.204	0.231	0.208

Note: Observations are candidate–issue–year. Candidate–clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

C. Overall, Table 3.2 suggests that the pooled result in Table 3.2 is not concentrated solely among certain candidate types or levels of district competitiveness, as coefficients are statistically significant and positive across each subset of candidates. The absolute effects of issue attention on issue PAC contributions are much larger for incumbents than for non–incumbents, yet differences between their respective baseline rates of receiving issue PAC contributions are even greater. These baseline rates imply that, in swing districts, the increase in likelihood of receiving issue PAC contributions associated with campaigning on the issue is 56% for incumbents, 119% for open–seat candidates, and 108% for challengers.[28] In districts leaning toward one party, incumbents see a 43% increase while the increase is 100% and 135% for open–seat candidates and challengers, respectively.[29] Although the *absolute* increase in issue PAC funding associated with campaign attention is greatest among incumbents, the proportional increase relative to the baseline is twice as large for non–incumbents. Finally, comparing within candidate type suggests small effect differences between swing and leaning districts, yet none are statistically distinct.

These results are consistent with issue PACs responding especially strongly to non–incumbents' campaign prioritization of their issue in primaries. However, as highlighted by their vastly different baseline rates of receiving issue PAC contributions, making comparisons between incumbents and non–incumbents is difficult due to systematic differences in quality, campaigning skills, strategic positioning, and more. To quantify the relative effects of incumbency, campaign issue attention, and their interaction on primary contributions from the issue's PACs, I employ a triple–differences design estimates a within–candidate incumbency advantage in issue PAC fundraising among candidates who did versus did not campaign on the issue as non–incumbents. The specification is as follows:

[28] Respectively, their baseline rates are 0.226, 0.022, and 0.016.
[29] These baseline rates are 0.199, 0.020, and 0.005.

$$f(\Delta_t \text{Contribute}_{ijt}) = \beta_1 \Delta_t \text{ Incumbency}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{ Campaigned}_{ijt_{-1}} + \beta_3(\Delta_t \text{ Incumbency}_{it} \times \text{ Campaigned}_{ijt_{-1}}) + \varepsilon_i. \quad (3.2)$$

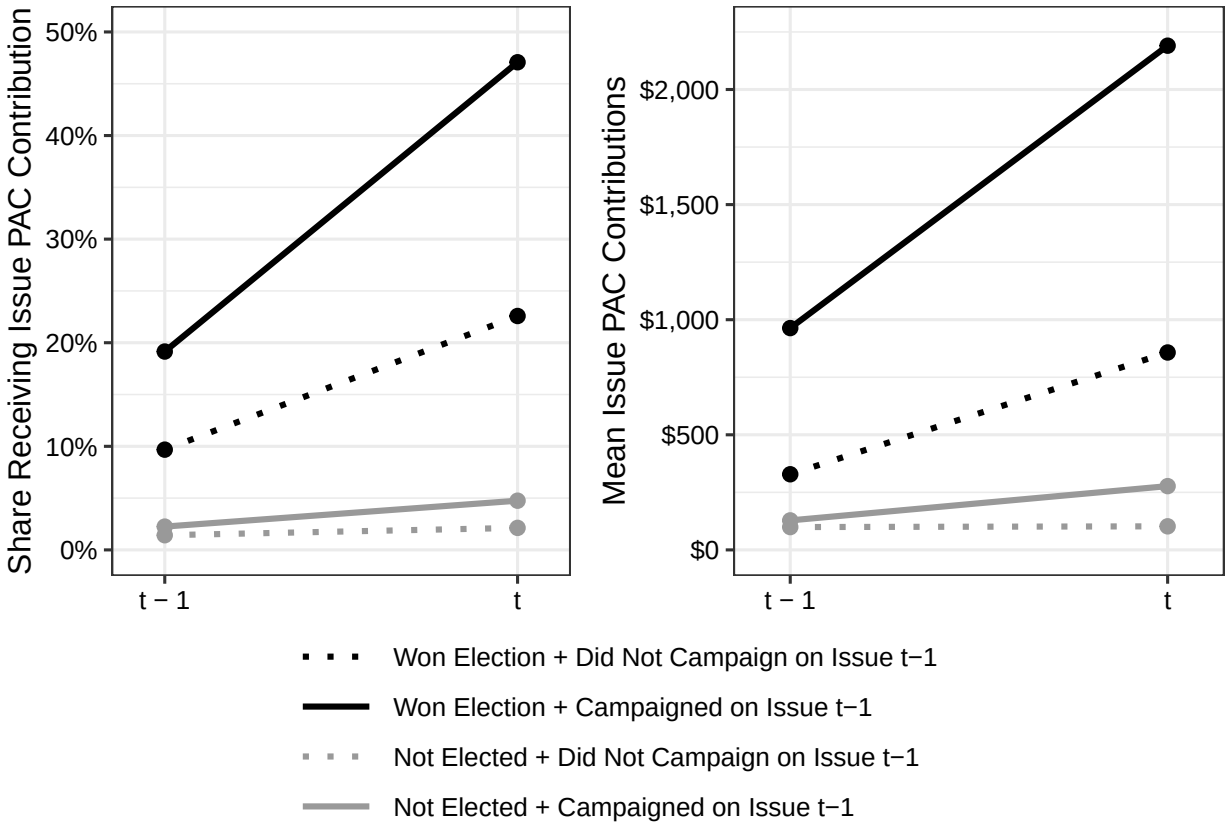
The outcomes represented by $f(\Delta_t \text{Contribute}_{ijt})$ capture the change in candidate i's binary and logged contributions from PACs centered around issue j from year t_{-1} to year t,[30] i.e. $I(\text{Contribute}_{ijt} > 0) - I(\text{Contribute}_{ijt_{-1}} > 0)$ and $\log(\text{Contribute}_{ijt} + 1) - \log(\text{Contribute}_{ijt_{-1}} + 1)$. The main treatment variable $\Delta_t \text{Incumbency}_{it}$ takes the value of 1 if candidate i ran as a non-incumbent in t_{-1} and an incumbent in time t, and a value of 0 if she ran as a non-incumbent in both t_{-1} and t. Since the "treatment" is winning election for the first time, candidates who ran as incumbents in both years are excluded, but it may be the case that existing incumbents are more similar to eventual–winners than to perpetual losers. In Appendix C, I report results instead using incumbents as the "counterfactual" group. For candidates i who campaigned on issue j in t_{-1}, $\text{Campaigned}_{ijt_{-1}}$ is equal to 1, and $\text{Campaigned}_{ijt_{-1}}$ is equal to 0 otherwise. Finally, I include an interaction between change in incumbency and choosing to campaign on the issue in the previous election.

Given this interaction, β_1 estimates a within–candidate incumbency advantage in issue PAC primary fundraising among candidates who did *not* campaign on the issue in the previous election by comparing the issue PAC fundraising changes among candidates elected to office to those who were not elected. Conversely, β_2 estimates the effect of campaigning on the issue in the previous election on change in issue PAC fundraising among candidates who were not elected to office. Lastly, the sum of all three β coefficients represents the change in issue PAC primary fundraising associated with both incumbency and prior issue attention, with β_3 capturing any additional effect of both.

To illustrate, Figure 3.5 plots the temporal change in share of primary candidates receiving issue PAC contributions and average issue PAC contribution amount by whether can-

[30] Given the short time frame, I include candidates' non–consecutive elections if they did not run for office in the intervening years (e.g. candidates who ran in 2016 and 2020 but not 2018 are included). Such cases constitute less than 8% of the sample and results are robust to including only sequential years.

Figure 3.5: Change in Issue PAC Funding by Previous Electoral Success and Issue Attention



Note: Includes primary candidates who were not incumbents at $t-1$. Line color represents whether candidate won election $t-1$ and line type represents whether candidate campaigned on issue in primary at $t-1$.

didates campaigned on the issue in the previous election and went from a non–incumbent to an incumbent. Consistent with access–seeking behavior, the increase in issue PAC contributions is far larger for candidates running as incumbents in the next period (black) than for those running again as non-incumbents (gray). However, among candidates who went from non-incumbents to incumbents (black), Figure 3.5 shows that those who chose to campaign on an issue as non-incumbents (solid) saw an even larger average increase in funding from that issue's PACs than those who did not campaign on the issue (dotted).

The results in Table 3.3 suggest that there exists an incumbency advantage in issue PAC fundraising that is disproportionately concentrated among candidates who campaigned

Table 3.3: Triple Difference Estimates: Incumbency Advantage in Issue PAC Fundraising By Prior Issue Attention

	Δ Contribution (0/1)	log(Δ Contributions + 1)
Δ Incumbency	0.139***	1.389***
	(0.024)	(0.208)
Campaigned on Issue t_{-1}	0.013	0.198*
	(0.007)	(0.081)
Δ Incumbency * Issue	0.142***	1.456***
	(0.032)	(0.306)
Observations	2,880	2,880
Adjusted R^2	0.142	0.191

Note: Observations are candidate–issue–years. Includes candidates who were non–incumbents at t_{-1}. Candidate–clustered standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

on the PACs' issue. Compared to those who lost and did not campaign on the issue at $t-1$, candidates who went from non–incumbents to incumbents but did not not campaign on the issue nevertheless experienced a 14 percentage point increase in the likelihood of receiving contributions from the issue's PACs. While even those who did not devote attention to an issue enjoy an incumbency boost in fundraising from PACs related to the issue, this incumbency–associated increase is far larger for candidates who did campaign on the issue. The coefficient on the interaction term suggests that candidates who go from non–incumbents to incumbents are an *additional* 14 percentage points more likely to receive funding from issue groups if they campaigned on the issue as non–incumbents. In terms of contribution amounts, candidates who go from non–incumbents to incumbents see a 300% increase[31] in issue PAC contributions if they did not campaign on the issue as non–incumbents and almost a 2000% increase[32] if they did campaign on the issue. As such, these triple–difference results demonstrate that issue champions enjoy an incumbency advantage in issue PAC contributions that is at least twice as large as that of non–champions.

[31] In specifications with logged dependent variable and non–logged independent variable, a 1 unit increase in x is associated with a $100(e^{\beta}-1)\%$ change in Y (Angrist and Pischke 2014). As such, going from a non–incumbent to an incumbent is associated with a $100(e^{1.389}-1)\% = 301.084\%$ increase in issue PAC contributions.

[32] Adding together the non–interacted and interacted coefficients yields $100(e^{1.389+0.198+1.456}-1)\% = 1996.805\%$.

3.6 Legislative and Financial Implications of Campaign Rhetoric

Taken together, the findings presented thus far are consistent with issue groups contributing to primary candidates who choose to campaign on their issue and continuing to maintain relationships with those who successfully make it into office. In particular, results from Table 3.3 suggest that newly elected incumbents who championed an issue in their non–incumbent campaigns see an even greater increase in contributions from the issue's groups in their next primary compared to those who did not campaign on the issue as non–incumbents. This suggests that issue PACs seek access to legislators who have already signaled shared priorities. One potential explanation is that campaign priorities serve as a meaningful signal of future legislative activity (Schnakenberg 2016; Sulkin 2011), which issue groups subsequently reward. Candidates may campaign upon issues that they intend to prioritize in office, follow through by disproportionately focusing on such issues, then receive comparatively greater financial support from PACs centered around those issues.

On the other hand, the findings in Table 3.3 could also be consistent with PACs responding to campaign rhetoric itself, which they may value for a number of reasons. First, groups may believe that they will benefit from the increased salience resulting from their issue's prominence in campaigns (Berry and Wilcox 2015; Kollman 1998). Second, issue groups can point to the strong issue rhetoric of candidates to whom they contributed when soliciting additional funds from donors who previously gave to the organization. Finally, in polarized eras, when there is little opportunity to advance legislation on contentious issues, simply having issue allies in office may be the best that groups can hope for (Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Krehbiel 1998; Lee 2016). In contrast to "lobbying as legislative subsidy" (Hall and Deardorff 2006), wherein interest groups exchange informational resources for legislative effort, modern issue group contributions to issue champions may serve as little more than signals of appreciation and desire to maintain relations.

To investigate the extent to which campaign attention predicts legislative attention and

how issue PACs respond to both, I compile data on bills' summaries, sponsors, and co–sponsors from `congress.gov`. Applying a dictionary string–matching approach to the bill summary text similar to that employed in the campaign platform text, I identify whether each H.R. introduced during the 115th, 116th, and 117th congresses[33] pertained to the nine issue areas or not. Figure 3.6 plots the distribution of number of bills sponsored and cosponsored by members in a given congress on a given issue. Across all combinations of legislators, congresses, and issues, the overall rate of sponsorship was about 25% over the period and members who sponsored any bills on an issue tended to sponsor just one. On the other hand, the overall cosponsorship rate was nearly 85%, with a median number of 8 bills cosponsored on a given issue in a given congress among those who cosponsored any bills, and a standard deviation of over 9 bills.

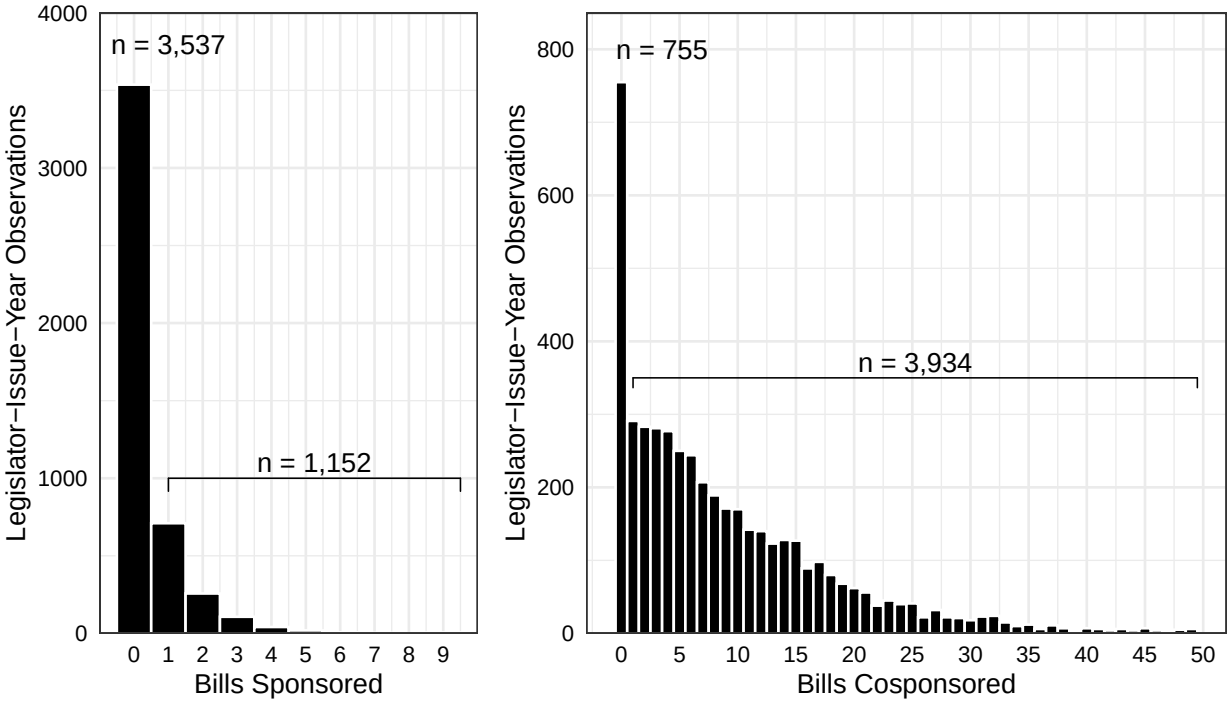
To test whether issue groups increase funding to incumbents who previously campaigned on their issue due to campaign rhetoric or legislative activity, I perform two sets of analyses. First, I investigate the within–legislator relationship between campaigning on an issue and bill sponsorship activity on the issue in the subsequent House session. I estimate the equation:

$$\text{LegislativeActivity}_{ijt} = \mathbf{M}(\text{Campaigned}_{ijt-1}) + \alpha_{it} + \phi_{jt} + \varepsilon_i. \tag{3.3}$$

I consider two outcome variables represented by $\text{LegislativeActivity}_{ijt}$: an indicator for whether House member i sponsored any legislation pertaining to issue j during congress t, and the number of bills she cosponsored on issue j in congress t. I use a binary specification of the sponsorship variable and a continuous specification of the cosponsorship variable because, as discussed previously, Figure 3.6 makes clear that the meaningful variation in sponsorship is in whether or not a member sponsored any bill, whereas the meaningful variation in cosponsorship is in how many bills a member cosponsored. The explanatory variable $\text{Campaigned}_{ijt-1}$ indicates whether legislator i campaigned on issue j in elec-

[33] Although the sample includes candidates elected in 2022, the 118th congress does not end until 2025.

Figure 3.6: Congress-Specific Rates of Legislators Sponsoring and Cosponsoring Issue Bills



Note: Histograms binning the number of legislators who sponsored (left) and cosponsored (right) each number of bills on a given issue in a single Congress. Annotation reports the number of legislators who did and did not sponsor and cosponsor any bills on an issue in a given Congress.

tion year $t-1$, representing the election immediately preceding the legislative session in year t. Once again, α_{it} and ϕ_{jt} are respective legislator–year and issue–year fixed effects, which ensure that differences in legislators' effectiveness, institutional power, committee assignments, and overall productivity levels do not drive results. As such, $\mathbf{M}$ stands in for the within–legislator–year differences in bill sponsorship and cosponsorship activity, respectively, on issues that she did and did not campaign upon while also controlling for issue–specific time trends.

Table 3.4 reports the key parameter estimates from Equation 3.3 separately for freshmen and non–freshmen legislators, as the former allows us to determine whether patterns hold specifically for the "treated" candidates driving the results in Table 3.3, and the latter can inform us about whether the patterns hold more generally. Additionally, Ap-

Table 3.4: Campaign Attention and Subsequent Legislative Activity on Issue

	Sponsored Bill (0/1)		# Bills Co-Sponsored	
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.095***	0.063	2.990***	3.026***
	(0.021)	(0.041)	(0.385)	(0.533)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	954
Adjusted R^2	0.258	0.180	0.564	0.558

Note: Observations are legislator–issue–congress. Legislator–clustered standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

pendix C reports results from models using number of issue words as the independent variable, a continuous specification of the sponsorship dependent variable, and a binary specification of the cosponsorship dependent variable. It is evident that both freshmen and non-freshmen legislators tend to be more active on issues upon which they most recently campaigned. Campaigning on an issue is associated with almost a 10 percentage point increase in likelihood of introducing legislation on an issue among non–freshmen, while there is a somewhat smaller (and not statistically significant) relationship among freshmen.[34] And for both freshmen and non–freshmen, campaign attention to an issue is associated with cosponsoring about 3 additional bills on the issue.

Having found evidence that members are more active on issues upon which they previously campaigned, we can also try to see how responsive issue PAC primary contributions are to prior campaign attention versus bill sponsorship on their issue. To evaluate the extent to which issue groups reward campaign rhetoric versus legislative activity, I estimate parameters of the equation:

[34]The baseline rates among freshmen and non–freshmen are not much different: non–freshmen introduced at a rate of 19 percentage points while freshmen introduced at a rate of 15 percentage points.

$$\text{Contribute}_{ijt+1} = \beta\text{Campaigned}_{ijt-1} + \mathbf{X}(\text{LegislativeActivity}_{ijt}) + \mathbf{N}(\text{Campaigned}_{ijt-1} \times \text{LegislativeActivity}_{ijt}) + \alpha_{it} + \phi_{jt} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (3.4)$$

where $\text{Contribute}_{ijt+1}$ takes the value of 1 if and only if legislator i received positive contributions from PACs centered around issue j in election year $t+1$, the election immediately proceeding legislative session t. Legislator i's campaign attention to issue j in previous election year $t-1$ is captured by $\text{Campaigned}_{ijt-1}$. Given the fixed effects α_{it} and ϕ_{jt} and an interaction term, the parameter β represents the within–legislator–year relationship between previously campaigning on an issue and receiving contributions from the issue's groups in the following election for those who were not legislatively active on the issue. Conversely, $\mathbf{X}(\text{LegislativeActivity}_{ijt})$ contains the coefficients corresponding to the relationships between introducing and cosponsoring legislation on an issue and subsequent contributions from PACs related to the issue among legislators who did not campaign on it. Lastly, $\mathbf{N}$ includes any additional increase in issue PAC primary funding associated with both campaigning on the issue and introducing or cosponsoring legislation on it.[35] Appendix C presents additional estimates from models using number of campaign platform issue words, number of bills sponsored, a binary specification of cosponsorship, and a logarithmic transformation of contributions.

The results reported in Table 3.5 suggest that legislators' previous campaign attention to an issue matters for primary campaign funding independent of subsequent legislative activity on the issue. In all four models, campaigning on an issue (without introducing legislation on it) is significantly associated with an increase in the likelihood of receiving contributions from the issue's PACs in the next primary election, with a magnitude of almost 10 percentage points for non–freshmen and estimates ranging from 14 to 21 points

[35]Similarly to the problem of "bad controls" (Angrist and Pischke 2009), the inclusion of both previous campaign attention and subsequent legislative activity on the right hand side of Equation 3.4 may attenuate β toward zero, as Table 3.4 suggests that legislative activity on an issue can result from campaign attention to the issue.

Table 3.5: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding

	DV: Presence of Contribution (0/1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.095***	0.139***	0.095***	0.212***
	(0.020)	(0.036)	(0.024)	(0.046)
Sponsored Bill (0/1)	0.036	0.087		
	(0.023)	(0.047)		
Campaigned * Sponsored	0.024	-0.125		
	(0.035)	(0.064)		
# Bills Co-Sponsored			0.001	0.012**
			(0.002)	(0.004)
Campaigned * Co-Sponsored			0.001	-0.013***
			(0.002)	(0.003)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	954
Adjusted R^2	0.318	0.430	0.316	0.438

Note: Observations are legislator–issue–congress. Legislator–clustered standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

for freshmen. On the other hand, only one point estimate associated with legislative activity on an issue (without having campaigned on it beforehand) is statistically distinct from zero at the traditional 95% level.[36] Cosponsoring one additional bill on an issue is associated with a 1.2 percentage point increase in the likelihood of receiving issue PAC support. However, a –1.3 percentage point coefficient on the interaction term in the same model means that there is no additional benefit to cosponsoring bills on an issue for legislators who already campaigned upon it. These findings are consistent with issue PACs systematically rewarding rhetorical attention to their issue during primaries while responding far less strongly to bill sponsorship and cosponsorship activity.

[36] However, the confidence intervals of the non–interacted terms overlap in each model, so we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the effect of campaign attention is equal to the effect of introducing bills.

3.7 Discussion and Conclusion

Single–issue interest groups are some of the most recognizable organizations active in American elections, receiving millions of dollars in congressional races each election cycle from members of the public who ostensibly share the groups' priorities. Despite their ubiquity, little is known about issue groups' contribution strategies with regard to the factor which distinguishes them from other moneyed interests: prioritization of a salient issue. Leveraging original data on issue agendas drawn from House primary candidates' websites, I have shown that candidates are more likely to receive support from PACs related to their campaign issues, and successfully elected candidates enjoy an incumbency advantage in issue PAC fundraising that is twice as large among those who campaigned on the issue compared to those who did not — with differences not attributable to differences in legislative activity on the issue. Taken together, these results provide new evidence that issue groups rely on campaign rhetoric at the primary stage to identify and cultivate relationships with potential champions of their cause.

Determining precisely why issue groups respond more strongly to campaign rhetoric than to (short–term) legislative activity is beyond the scope of this paper. However, bill sponsorship, bill cosponsorship, and campaign rhetoric all constitute relatively "cheap" signals of priorities, yet campaign platforms tend to be *clearer* signals due to *de minimus* institutional constraints. As such, groups may prefer to rely on potentially less–mitigated campaign rhetoric, which also allows for a more uniform standard of evaluation across the entire pool of candidates. Issue PACs' apparent responsiveness to campaign attention over legislative activity on their issue may also shed light on conflicting findings regarding the feasibility of long–term alliances between politicians and organized interests (McCarty and Rothenberg 1996; Snyder 1992). Advancing a formal model which offered a resolution to this debate, Hall and Deardorff (2006) concluded that "money buys access only to one's allies, and the behavioral consequence is greater legislative effort on behalf of a shared objective" (80). However, given the preclusion of meaningful progress for legisla-

tion on controversial issues during eras of unorthodox and partisan lawmaking (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Lee 2016; Sinclair 2016), simply having an ally with shared priorities in the contemporary Congress is likely the best for which many issue groups can hope.

These data introduced here highlights the potential for new avenues of research which can extend, build upon, and further clarify our understanding of the role of issue agendas in congressional elections. This paper focuses on nine issue areas that map cleanly onto candidates' selective campaign attention, PACs' organizational priorities, and legislative activity. While I exclude macroeconomic issues due to many candidates making boilerplate campaign statements on them, future studies could capture not just issue attention but specificity or substantive content of campaign appeals in order to test whether, for instance, conservative tax organizations support candidates who announce similarly conservative positions on tax policy. Additionally, this paper only analyzes issue PACs' direct contributions, which are one of a number of avenues of influence moneyed interests can pursue to support candidates or attempt to influence the policymaking process. Subsequent research could examine whether issue groups also engage in lobbying and make independent expenditures for those who have rhetorically prioritized an issue in their campaigns, as well as how these various activities may be used similarly or differently.

Broadly, this work contributes to a number of literatures which are only growing in importance due to recent trends in American politics. While moneyed interests' motivations have traditionally been viewed through the lens of access versus partisanship and ideology, the results presented here advance ongoing efforts to illuminate the heterogeneity of strategy and motivations among both organized interests and individual donors (Barber, Canes-Wrone, and Thrower 2017; Crosson, Furnas, and Lorenz 2020; Grumbach 2020; Gordon, Hafer, and Landa 2007; Li 2018; Stuckatz 2022). Moreover, I focus on issue groups' strategies during primaries, the stage of the election which is becoming increasingly consequential for electoral outcomes *and* where existing theoretical work suggests groups may be able to exercise the most influence (Bawn et al. 2012). In doing so, this

paper joins a growing body of work (e.g. Hirano and Snyder 2019; Thomsen 2022; Blum and Cowburn 2023) seeking to shift the predominant scholarly emphasis from the general to the primary stage of congressional elections in order to better understand the unique dynamics which characterize intraparty contests.

Bibliography

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Steven Webster. 2016. "The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of U.S. elections in the 21st century." *Electoral Studies* 41: 12–22.

Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. 2006. "Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections." *Journal of Politics* 68(1): 75–88.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. 1st edition ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2014. *Mastering 'Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect*. with french flaps edition ed. Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, and Charles Stewart. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 136–159.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M de Figueiredo, and James M Snyder. 2003. "Why is There so Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105–130.

Arnold, R. Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. Yale University Press.

Austen-Smith, David. 1995. "Campaign Contributions and Access." *The American Political Science Review* 89(3): 566–581.

Bafumi, Joseph, and Michael C. Herron. 2010. "Leapfrog Representation and Extremism: A Study of American Voters and Their Members in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 519–542.

Banda, Kevin K. 2015. "Competition and the Dynamics of Issue Convergence." *American Politics Research* 43(5): 821–845.

Banda, Kevin K. 2016. "Issue Ownership, Issue Positions, and Candidate Assessment." *Political Communication* 33(4): 651–666.

Banks, Jeffrey S. 1990. "A model of electoral competition with incomplete information." *Journal of Economic Theory* 50(2): 309–325.

Barber, Michael. 2016*a*. "Donation Motivations: Testing Theories of Access and Ideology." *Political Research Quarterly* 69(1): 148–159.

Barber, Michael. 2022. "Comparing Campaign Finance and Vote-Based Measures of Ideology." *The Journal of Politics* 84(1): 613–619.

Barber, Michael, and Mandi Eatough. 2019. "Industry Politicization and Interest Group Campaign Contribution Strategies." *Journal of Politics* 82(3): 1008–1025.

Barber, Michael J. 2016*b*. "Ideological Donors, Contribution Limits, and the Polarization of American Legislatures." *Journal of Politics* 78(1): 296–310.

Barber, Michael J. 2016*c*. "Representing the Preferences of Donors, Partisans, and Voters in the US Senate." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(S1): 225–249.

Barber, Michael J., Brandice Canes-Wrone, and Sharece Thrower. 2017. "Ideologically Sophisticated Donors: Which Candidates Do Individual Contributors Finance?" *American Journal of Political Science* 61(2): 271–288.

Baron, David P. 1994. "Electoral Competition with Informed and Uniformed Voters." *American Political Science Review* 88(1): 33–47.

Bartels, Larry M. 1986. "Issue Voting Under Uncertainty: An Empirical Test." *American Journal of Political Science* 30(4): 709–728.

Bawn, Kathleen, Knox Brown, Angela X. Ocampo, Shawn Patterson, John Ray, and John Zaller. 2023. "Groups, Parties, and Policy Demands in House Nominations." In *Accountability Reconsidered*, eds. Charles M. Cameron, Brandice Canes-Wrone, Sanford C. Gordon, and Gregory A. Huber. 1 ed. Cambridge University Press , 89–126.

Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. "A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(3): 571–597.

Beck, Nathaniel. 2020. "Estimating Grouped Data Models with a Binary-Dependent Variable and Fixed Effects via a Logit versus a Linear Probability Model: The Impact of Dropped Units." *Political Analysis* 28(1): 139–145.

Berry, Jeffrey M., and Clyde Wilcox. 2015. *The Interest Group Society*. Routledge.

Biersack, Robert, Paul S. Herrnson, and Clyde Wilcox. 1993. "Seeds for Success: Early Money in Congressional Elections." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 18(4): 535–551.

Blum, Rachel M., and Mike Cowburn. 2023. "How Local Factions Pressure Parties: Activist Groups and Primary Contests in the Tea Party Era." *British Journal of Political Science*: Forthcoming.

Boatright, Robert G. 2014. *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges*. University of Michigan Press.

Bonica, Adam. 2013. "Ideology and Interests in the Political Marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 294–311.

Bonica, Adam. 2014. "Mapping the Ideological Marketplace." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 367–386.

Bonica, Adam. 2023. "Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections: Public version 3.1 [Computer file]. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Libraries. https://data.stanford.edu/dime." Stanford University Libraries.

Bonica, Adam, and Gary W Cox. 2018. "Ideological Extremists in the U.S. Congress: Out of Step but Still in Office." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 13(1): 207–236.

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M. 1996. "A Dynamic Analysis of The Role of War Chests in Campaign Strategy." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(2): 352–371.

Brady, David W., Hahrie Han, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2007. "Primary Elections and Candidate Ideology: Out of Step with the Primary Electorate?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 32(1): 79–105.

Burden, Barry C. 2004. "Candidate Positioning in US Congressional Elections." *British Journal of Political Science* 34(2): 211–227.

Cameron, Charles M, and James M Enelow. 1992. "Asymmetric policy effects, campaign contributions, and the spatial theory of elections." *Mathematical and Computer Modelling* 16(8-9): 117–132.

Campbell, James E., Bryan J. Dettrey, and Hongxing Yin. 2010. "The Theory of Conditional Retrospective Voting: Does the Presidential Record Matter Less in Open-Seat Elections?" *The Journal of Politics* 72(4): 1083–1095.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice, and Michael R. Kistner. 2022. "Out of Step and Still in Congress? Electoral Consequences of Incumbent and Challenger Positioning Across Time." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 17(3): 389–420.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice, and Nathan Gibson. 2019. "Does Money Buy Congressional Love? Individual Donors and Legislative Voting." *Congress & the Presidency* 46(1): 1–27.

Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 127–140.

Carson, Jamie L., and Ryan D. Williamson. 2018. "Candidate ideology and electoral success in congressional elections." *Public Choice* 176(1): 175–192.

Clinton, Joshua D. 2012. "Using Roll Call Estimates to Test Models of Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15(1): 79–99.

Clinton, Joshua D., and Adam Meirowitz. 2001. "Agenda Constrained Legislator Ideal Points and the Spatial Voting Model." *Political Analysis* 9(3): 242–259.

Clinton, Joshua D., and John Lapinski. 2008. "Laws and Roll Calls in the U.S. Congress, 1891–1994." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 33(4): 511–541.

Clinton, Joshua, Simon Jackman, and Douglas Rivers. 2004. "The Statistical Analysis of Roll Call Data." *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 355–370.

Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. Illustrated edition ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cooper, Alexandra, and Michael C. Munger. 2000. "The (Un)predictability of Primaries with Many Candidates: Simulation Evidence." *Public Choice* 103(3): 337–355.

Cowburn, Mike, and Marius Sältzer. N.d. "The Effect of Primaries on Intra-Campaign Positional Shifts in Congressional." : Forthcoming.

Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Cambridge University Press.

Crosson, Jesse M., Alexander C. Furnas, and Geoffrey M. Lorenz. 2020. "Polarized Pluralism: Organizational Preferences and Biases in the American Pressure System." *American Political Science Review* 114(4): 1117–1137.

Crosson, Jesse M, Alexander C Furnas, and Geoffrey M Lorenz. N.d. "Party Competition, Interest Group Strategy, and the Resurgent Mischiefs of Faction* ——." : Forthcoming.

de la Cuesta, Brandon, and Kosuke Imai. 2016. "Misunderstandings About the Regression Discontinuity Design in the Study of Close Elections." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19(1): 375–396.

Denzau, Arthur T., and Michael C. Munger. 1986. "Legislators and Interest Groups: How Unorganized Interests get Represented." *The American Political Science Review* 80(1): 89–106.

Denzau, Arthur T., and Robert J. Mackay. 1983. "Gatekeeping and Monopoly Power of Committees: An Analysis of Sincere and Sophisticated Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 27(4): 740–761.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.

Druckman, James N., Cari Lynn Hennessy, Martin J. Kifer, and Michael Parkin. 2010. "Issue Engagement on Congressional Candidate Web Sites, 2002—2006." *Social Science Computer Review* 28(1): 3–23.

Druckman, James N., Martin J. Kifer, and Michael Parkin. 2007. "The Technological Development of Congressional Candidate Web Sites: How and Why Candidates Use Web Innovations." *Social Science Computer Review* 25(4): 425–442.

Druckman, James N., Martin J. Kifer, and Michael Parkin. 2009. "Campaign Communications in U.S. Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 343–366.

Egerod, Benjamin C.K., and Robert Klemmensen. 2020. "Scaling Political Positions from Text: Assumptions, Methods and Pitfalls." In *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*. SAGE Publications , 498–521.

Enelow, James M., and Melvin J. Hinich. 1982. "Ideology, Issues, and the Spatial Theory of Elections." *American Political Science Review* 76(3): 493–501.

Enelow, James M., and Melvin J. Hinich. 1984. *The Spatial Theory of Voting: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Ensley, Michael J. 2009. "Individual campaign contributions and candidate ideology." *Public Choice* 138(1-2): 221–238.

Epstein, David, and Peter Zemsky. 1995. "Money Talks: Deterring Quality Challengers in Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 295–308.

Fouirnaies, Alexander, and Andrew B. Hall. 2014. "The Financial Incumbency Advantage: Causes and Consequences." *Journal of Politics* 76(3): 711–724.

Fouirnaies, Alexander, and Andrew B. Hall. 2018. "How Do Interest Groups Seek Access to Committees?" *American Journal of Political Science* 62(1): 132–147.

Fowler, Anthony, Haritz Garro, and Jörg L. Spenkuch. 2020. "Quid Pro Quo? Corporate Returns to Campaign Contributions." *The Journal of Politics* 82(3): 844–858.

Francia, Peter, John Green, Paul Herrnson, Lynda Powell, and Clyde Wilcox. 2003. *The Financiers of Congressional Elections: Investors, Ideologues, and Intimates*. Columbia University Press.

Gelman, Andrew, and Guido Imbens. 2019. "Why High-Order Polynomials Should Not Be Used in Regression Discontinuity Designs." *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics* 37(3): 447–456.

Gimpel, James G., Frances E. Lee, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. 2008. "The Check Is in the Mail: Interdistrict Funding Flows in Congressional Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 373–394.

Gordon, Sanford C., and Catherine Hafer. 2005. "Flexing Muscle: Corporate Political Expenditures as Signals to the Bureaucracy." *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 245–261.

Gordon, Sanford C., Catherine Hafer, and Dimitri Landa. 2007. "Consumption or Investment? On Motivations for Political Giving." *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1057–1072.

Grimmer, Justin. 2013. "Appropriators not Position Takers: The Distorting Effects of Electoral Incentives on Congressional Representation." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 624–642.

Grimmer, Justin, and Brandon M. Stewart. 2013. "Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts." *Political Analysis* 21(3): 267–297.

Grumbach, Jacob M. 2020. "Interest Group Activists and the Polarization of State Legislatures." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 45(1): 5–34.

Hall, Andrew B. 2015. "What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?" *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 18–42.

Hall, Andrew B. 2019. *Who Wants to Run?: How the Devaluing of Political Office Drives Polarization*. University of Chicago Press.

Hall, Andrew B, and James M Snyder. 2015. "Candidate Ideology and Electoral Success." : Forthcoming.

Hall, Richard L., and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *The American Political Science Review* 100(1): 69–84.

Hall, Richard L., and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *The American Political Science Review* 84(3): 797–820.

Hassell, Hans J. G. 2016. "Party Control of Party Primaries: Party Influence in Nominations for the US Senate." *The Journal of Politics* 78(1): 75–87.

Hassell, Hans J.G. 2023. "Party Elite Engagement and Coordination in House Primary Elections: A Test of Theories of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 67(2): 307–323.

Henderson, John A., Geoffrey Sheagley, Stephen N. Goggin, Logan Dancey, and Alexander G. Theodoridis. 2022. "Primary Divisions: How Voters Evaluate Policy and Group Differences in Intraparty Contests." *The Journal of Politics* 84(3): 1760–1776.

Herrnson, Paul S. 2009. "The Roles of Party Organizations, Party-Connected Committees, and Party Allies in Elections." *The Journal of Politics* 71(4): 1207–1224.

Herrnson, Paul S., Costas Panagopoulos, and Kendall L. Bailey. 2020. *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington*. CQ Press.

Hill, Seth J., and Gregory A. Huber. 2017. "Representativeness and Motivations of the Contemporary Donorate: Results from Merged Survey and Administrative Records." *Political Behavior* 39(1): 3–29.

Hirano, Shigeo, and James M. Snyder. 2019. *Primary Elections in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hitt, Matthew P., Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2017. "Spatial Models of Legislative Effectiveness." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 575–590.

Hopkins, Daniel J. 2018. *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized*. 1 edition ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Imbens, G., and K. Kalyanaraman. 2012. "Optimal Bandwidth Choice for the Regression Discontinuity Estimator." *The Review of Economic Studies* 79(3): 933–959.

Imbens, Guido W., and Thomas Lemieux. 2008. "Regression discontinuity designs: A guide to practice." *Journal of Econometrics* 142(2): 615–635.

Jacobson, Gary C. 1990. "The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections: New Evidence for Old Arguments." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2): 334–362.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2015*a*. "How Do Campaigns Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18(1): 31–47.

Jacobson, Gary C. 2015*b*. "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections." *Journal of Politics* 77(3): 861–873.

Jacobson, Gary C., and Jamie L. Carson. 2019. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. Blue Ridge Summit, UNITED STATES: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Incorporated.

Johnson, Bertram N. 2012. *Political Giving: Making Sense of Individual Campaign Contributions*. Boulder, CO, UNITED STATES: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Jones, Bryan D., and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2005. *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems*. University of Chicago Press.

Kalla, Joshua L., and David E. Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545–558.

Karol, David. 2009. *Party Position Change in American Politics: Coalition Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kim, Dahjin, Gechun Lin, and Keith Schnakenberg. 2022. Informative Campaigns, Overpromising, and Policy Bargaining. preprint SocArXiv. https://osf.io/asqk6

Kollman, Ken. 1998. *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies*. Princeton University Press.

Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. University of Chicago Press.

Kujala, Jordan. 2020. "Donors, Primary Elections, and Polarization in the United States." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(3): 587–602.

La Raja, Raymond, and Brian Schaffner. 2015. *Campaign Finance and Political Polarization: When Purists Prevail*. University of Michigan Press.

La Raja, Raymond J., and Brian F. Schaffner. 2014. "The Effects of Campaign Finance Spending Bans on Electoral Outcomes: Evidence From the States About the Potential Impact of Citizens United v. FEC." *Electoral Studies* 33: 102–114.

Lachat, Romain. 2011. "Electoral Competitiveness and Issue Voting." *Political Behavior* 33(4): 645–663.

Lacombe, Matthew J. 2019. "The Political Weaponization of Gun Owners: The National Rifle Association's Cultivation, Dissemination, and Use of a Group Social Identity." *The Journal of Politics* 81(4): 1342–1356.

Lauderdale, Benjamin E., and Alexander Herzog. 2016. "Measuring Political Positions from Legislative Speech." *Political Analysis* 24(3): 374–394.

Laver, Michael, Kenneth Benoit, and John Garry. 2003. "Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data." *American Political Science Review* 97(02).

Lee, David S, and Thomas Lemieux. 2010. "Regression Discontinuity Designs in Economics." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(2): 281–355.

Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press.

Lelkes, Yphtach. 2016. "Mass Polarization: Manifestations and Measurements." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(S1): 392–410.

Levendusky, Matthew. 2009. *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals Became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans*. University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, Jeffrey B., Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, Aaron Rudkin, Adam Boche, and Luke Sonnet. 2023. "Voteview: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database.".

Li, Zhao. 2018. "How Internal Constraints Shape Interest Group Activities: Evidence from Access-Seeking PACs." *American Political Science Review* 112(4): 792–808.

Li, Zhao. 2023. "When Do Campaign Donors Reject Extremists? Evidence from the U.S. Foreclosure Crisis." *The Journal of Politics*: Forthcoming.

Lockhart, Mackenzie, and Seth J. Hill. 2023. "How Do General Election Incentives Affect the Visible and Invisible Primary?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 48(4): 833–867.

Lowe, Will, Kenneth Benoit, Slava Mikhaylov, and Michael Laver. 2011. "Scaling Policy Preferences from Coded Political Texts." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36(1): 123–155.

Maestas, Cherie D., and Cynthia R. Rugeley. 2008. "Assessing the "Experience Bonus" Through Examining Strategic Entry, Candidate Quality, and Campaign Receipts in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(3): 520–535.

Magleby, David B., Jay Goodliffe, and Joseph A. Olsen, eds. 2018. *Who Donates in Campaigns?: The Importance of Message, Messenger, Medium, and Structure*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin, Gregory J., and Joshua McCrain. 2019. "Local News and National Politics." *American Political Science Review* 113(2): 372–384.

Masket, Seth E. 2009. *No Middle Ground: How Informal Party Organizations Control Nominations and Polarize Legislatures*. University of Michigan Press.

McCarty, Nolan, and Eric Schickler. 2018. "On the Theory of Parties." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21(1): 175–193.

McCarty, Nolan, and Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 1996. "Commitment and the Campaign Contribution Contract." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(3): 872–904.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. MIT Press.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2016. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. MIT Press.

McCarty, Nolan M., and Keith T. Poole. 1998. "An Empirical Spatial Model of Congressional Campaigns." *Political Analysis* 7: 1–30.

McCrary, Justin. 2008. "Manipulation of the running variable in the regression discontinuity design: A density test." *Journal of Econometrics* 142(2): 698–714.

McDonald, Maura, Rachel Porter, and Sarah A. Treul. 2020. "Running as a Woman? Candidate Presentation in the 2018 Midterms." *Political Research Quarterly* 73(4): 967–987.

McGhee, Eric, Seth Masket, Boris Shor, Steven Rogers, and Nolan McCarty. 2014. "A Primary Cause of Partisanship? Nomination Systems and Legislator Ideology." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 337–351.

Meirowitz, Adam. 2005. "Informational Party Primaries and Strategic Ambiguity." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17(1): 107–136.

Meisels, Mellissa, Joshua D. Clinton, and Gregory A. Huber. 2024. "Giving to the Extreme? Experimental Evidence on Donor Response to Candidate and District Characteristics." *British Journal of Political Science*: Forthcoming.

Miler, Kristina C. 2010. *Constituency Representation in Congress: The View from Capitol Hill*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Milita, Kerri, John Barry Ryan, and Elizabeth N. Simas. 2014. "Nothing to Hide, Nowhere to Run, or Nothing to Lose: Candidate Position-Taking in Congressional Elections." *Political Behavior* 36(2): 427–449.

Miller, Warren E., and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57(1): 45–56.

Milyo, Jeffrey, David Primo, and Timothy Groseclose. 2000. "Corporate PAC Campaign Contributions in Perspective." *Business and Politics* 2(1): 15.

Moskowitz, Daniel J. 2021. "Local News, Information, and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections." *American Political Science Review* 115(1): 114–129.

Noel, Hans. 2012. "The Coalition Merchants: The Ideological Roots of the Civil Rights Realignment." *The Journal of Politics* 74(1): 156–173.

Nyhan, Brendan, and Jacob M. Montgomery. 2015. "Connecting the Candidates: Consultant Networks and the Diffusion of Campaign Strategy in American Congressional Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 292–308.

Patterson, Shawn. N.d. "The Effect of Party Networks on Primary Elections." : Forthcoming.

Patty, John W., and Elizabeth Maggie Penn. 2019. "Are Moderates Better Representatives than Extremists? A Theory of Indirect Representation." *American Political Science Review* 113(3): 743–761.

Phillips, Connor Halloran. N.d. "Interest Group Strategy and State Legislative Polarization." : Forthcoming.

Phillips, Connor Halloran, James M Snyder, and Andrew B Hall. N.d. "Who Runs for Congress? A Study of State Legislators and Congressional Polarization." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*: Forthcoming.

Poole, Keith, Jeffrey B. Lewis, James Lo, and Royce Carroll. 2011. "Scaling Roll Call Votes with wnominate in R." *Journal of Statistical Software* 42(1): 1–21.

Poole, Keith T. 2005. "Spatial Models of Parliamentary Voting.".

Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. 1991. "Patterns of Congressional Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 35(1): 228–278.

Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. 1997. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. Oxford University Press.

Poole, Keith T., Thomas Romer, and Howard Rosenthal. 1987. "The Revealed Preferences of Political Action Committees." *The American Economic Review* 77(2): 298–302.

Porter, Rachel, and Sarah Treul. 2023. "Evaluating (In)Experience in Congressional Elections." *SSRN Electronic Journal*: Forthcoming.

Porter, Rachel, Sarah A. Treul, and Maura McDonald. 2023. "Changing the Dialogue: Descriptive Candidacies and Position Taking in Campaigns for the US House of Representatives." *The Journal of Politics*: Forthcoming.

Powell, Eleanor Neff, and Justin Grimmer. 2016. "Money in Exile: Campaign Contributions and Committee Access." *Journal of Politics* 78(4): 974–988.

Powell, Lynda W. 2012. *The Influence of Campaign Contributions in State Legislatures: The Effects of Institutions and Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Rheault, Ludovic, and Christopher Cochrane. 2020. "Word Embeddings for the Analysis of Ideological Placement in Parliamentary Corpora." *Political Analysis* 28(1): 112–133.

Rhodes, Jesse H., Brian F. Schaffner, and Raymond J. La Raja. 2018. "Detecting and Understanding Donor Strategies in Midterm Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 71(3): 503–516.

Romer, Thomas, and Howard Rosenthal. 1978. "Political resource allocation, controlled agendas, and the status quo." *Public Choice* 33(4): 27–43.

Romer, Thomas, and James M. Snyder. 1994. "An Empirical Investigation of the Dynamics of PAC Contributions." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(3): 745–769.

Schnakenberg, Keith E. 2016. "Directional Cheap Talk in Electoral Campaigns." *The Journal of Politics* 78(2): 527–541.

Sides, John. 2006. "The Origins of Campaign Agendas." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 407–436.

Sides, John. 2007. "The Consequences of Campaign Agendas." *American Politics Research* 35(4): 465–488.

Sides, John, and Andrew Karch. 2008. "Messages that Mobilize? Issue Publics and the Content of Campaign Advertising." *The Journal of Politics* 70(2): 466–476.

Sides, John, Lynn Vavreck, and Christopher Warshaw. 2022. "The Effect of Television Advertising in United States Elections." *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 702–718.

Sinclair, Barbara. 2016. *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*. CQ Press.

Slapin, Jonathan B., and Sven-Oliver Proksch. 2008. "A Scaling Model for Estimating Time-Series Party Positions from Texts." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(3): 705–722.

Snyder, James M. 1990. "Campaign Contributions as Investments: The U.S. House of Representatives, 1980-1986." *Journal of Political Economy* 98(6): 1195–1227.

Snyder, James M. Jr. 1992. "Long-Term Investing in Politicians; or, Give Early, Give Often." *Journal of Law & Economics* 35(1): 15–44.

Spiliotes, Constantine J., and Lynn Vavreck. 2002. "Campaign Advertising: Partisan Convergence or Divergence?" *The Journal of Politics* 64(1): 249–261.

Stone, Walter J., and Elizabeth N. Simas. 2010. "Candidate Valence and Ideological Positions in U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 371–388.

Stratmann, Thomas. 1998. "The Market for Congressional Votes: Is Timing of Contributions Everything?" *The Journal of Law and Economics* 41(1): 85–114.

Stuckatz, Jan. 2022. "How the Workplace Affects Employee Political Contributions." *American Political Science Review* 116(1): 54–69.

Sulkin, Tracy. 2005. *Issue Politics in Congress*. 1 ed. Cambridge University Press.

Sulkin, Tracy. 2009. "Campaign Appeals and Legislative Action." *The Journal of Politics* 71(3): 1093–1108.

Sulkin, Tracy. 2011. *The Legislative Legacy of Congressional Campaigns*. Cambridge University Press.

Sulkin, Tracy, and Nathaniel Swigger. 2008. "Is There Truth in Advertising? Campaign Ad Images as Signals about Legislative Behavior." *The Journal of Politics* 70(1): 232–244.

Sulkin, Tracy, Cortney M. Moriarty, and Veronica Hefner. 2007. "Congressional Candidates' Issue Agendas On- and Off-line." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12(2): 63–79.

Tausanovitch, Chris, and Christopher Warshaw. 2013. "Measuring Constituent Policy Preferences in Congress, State Legislatures, and Cities." *The Journal of Politics* 75(2): 330–342.

Tavits, Margit. 2007. "Principle vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 151–165.

Temporão, Mickael, Corentin Vande Kerckhove, Clifton Van Der Linden, Yannick Dufresne, and Julien M. Hendrickx. 2018. "Ideological Scaling of Social Media Users: A Dynamic Lexicon Approach." *Political Analysis* 26(4): 457–473.

Thayer, George. 1974. *Who Shakes the Money Tree? American Campaign Financing Practices from 1789 to the Present*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Theriault, Sean M. 2006. "Party Polarization in the US Congress: Member Replacement and Member Adaptation." *Party Politics* 12(4): 483–503.

Thieme, Sebastian. 2020. "Moderation or Strategy? Political Giving by Corporations and Trade Groups." *The Journal of Politics* 82(3): 1171–1175.

Thomsen, Danielle M. 2014. "Ideological Moderates Won't Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress." *Journal of Politics* 76(3): 786–797.

Thomsen, Danielle M. 2017. *Opting Out of Congress: Partisan Polarization and the Decline of Moderate Candidates*. Cambridge University Press.

Thomsen, Danielle M. 2022. "Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes." *American Political Science Review*: Forthcoming.

Utych, Stephen M. 2020. "Man Bites Blue Dog: Are Moderates Really More Electable than Ideologues?" *Journal of Politics* 82(1): 392–396.

Vafa, Keyon, Suresh Naidu, and David Blei. 2020. "Text-Based Ideal Points." Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, Online.

Volden, Craig, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2014. *Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Congress: The Lawmakers*. Cambridge University Press.

Warshaw, Christopher, and Chris Tausanovitch. 2022. "Subnational Ideology and Presidential Vote Estimates (v2022)." Harvard Dataverse.

Welch, William P. 1980. "The Allocation of Political Monies: Economic Interest Groups." *Public Choice* 35(1): 97–120.

Woon, Jonathan. 2018. "Primaries and Candidate Polarization: Behavioral Theory and Experimental Evidence." *American Political Science Review* 112(4): 826–843.

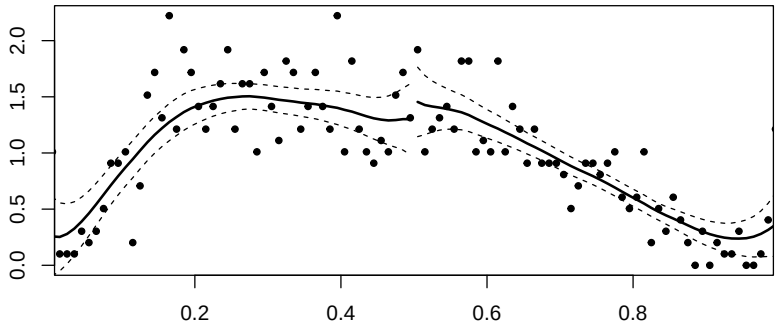
Appendix A

Appendix to Everything in Moderation

A.1 Regression Discontinuity Design Assumptions

I present the results of a McCrary density test for no sorting across the extremist 50% victory threshold. Specifically, this investigates whether there exists a discontinuity in the number of extremist versus moderate primary victories at the cutpoint, which would suggest a potential violation of the assumption that potential outcomes are continuous at the threshold. Using one percentage point vote share bins, I present the results graphically in the figure above, with observations falling to the left representing primaries with extremist two-candidate vote shares of less than 50% (moderate victory) and those to the right representing primaries with extremist vote shares of more than 50%. As suggested by the heavily overlapping confidence intervals around the nonparametric estimates and lack of

Figure A.1: McCrary Density Test for No Sorting



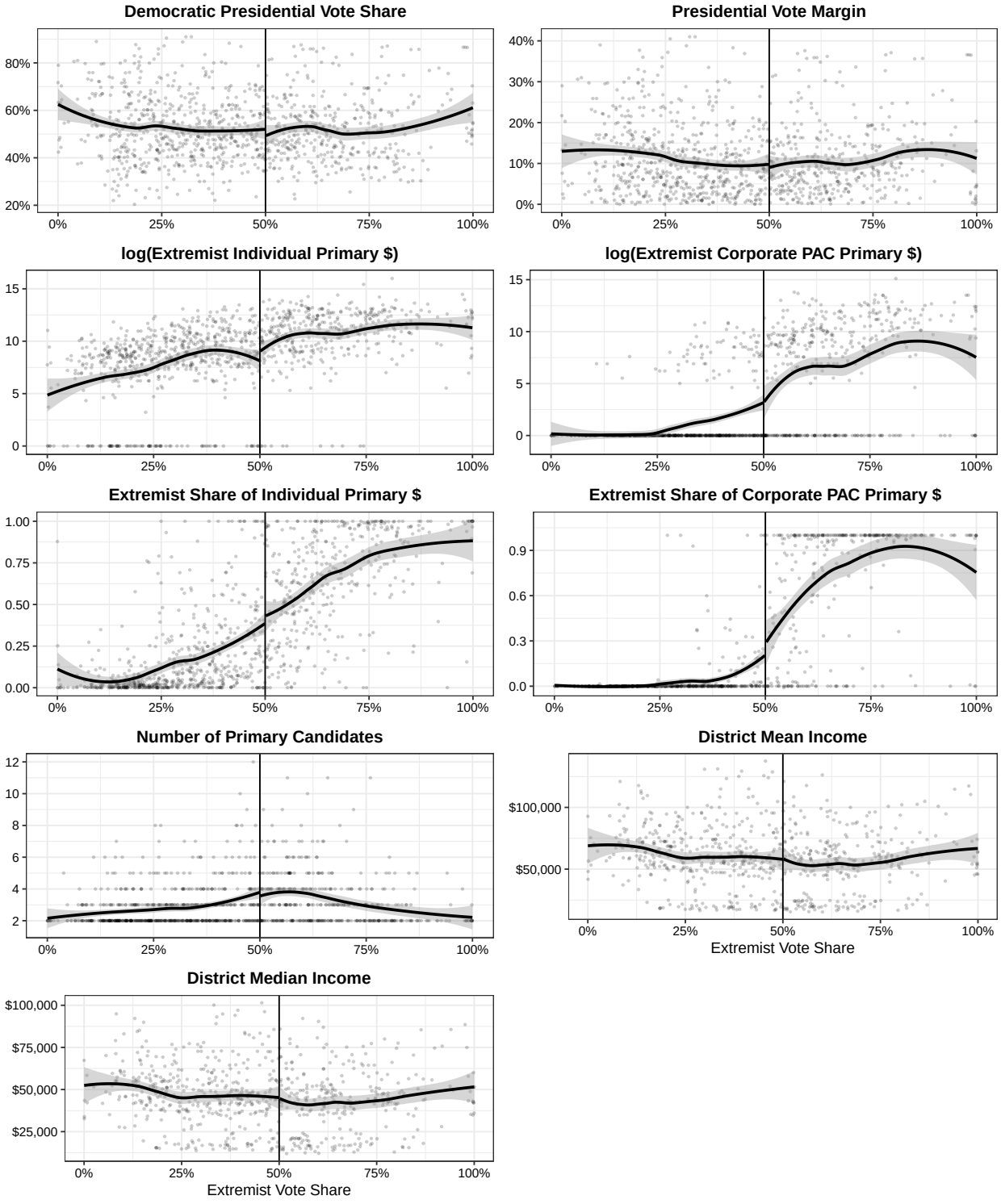
Note: Figure plots the sample density of moderate nominees to the left of 50% and extreme nominees to the right of 50% on either side of the 50% winning threshold using `rdd` package in `R`. Points represent 1% bins, with the horizontal axis plotting extremist share of top-two primary candidate vote and the vertical axis plotting the density of observations.

jump at the 50% threshold, no evidence of sorting is detected. This is reinforced by the p-value of more than 0.5 associated with the estimated difference between the intercepts of the regression lines above and below the cutoff.

Another important assumption of the regression discontinuity design is that observations immediately on either side of the treatment threshold are balanced with regard to pre-treatment covariates. In this context, places where an extreme candidate was just barely nominated over a moderate candidate should look similar to places where the moderate just barely won over the extremist. To evaluate the plausibility of this assumption, I plot the extreme candidate's vote share against nine key pre-treatment covariates. I present the raw data fit with a loess curve for the sake of maximal transparency and minimal parametric assumptions.

I examine pre-treatment covariates related to district partisanship, extremist primary fundraising, district income, and primary field size. These pose the greatest threat to inference because of their potential relationship with both nominee ideology and general election contributions. Across all covariates, there is little evidence of imbalance immediately on either side of the cutoff. In each case, the 95% confidence intervals of lines fit on either side of the cutoff overlap, and the substantive sizes of the gaps between points where the lines approaches the limit are small.

Figure A.2: Pre-Treatment Covariate Balance



Note: Figures plot relationship between extremist share of top-two primary vote and pre-treatment covariates. Gray dots are raw data points with black loess curves fitted separately on each side of 50% victory threshold, with 95% CI shaded in gray.

A.2 Alternative Specifications: Main Primary-Level Results

A.2.1 Including Opposite-Side Candidates

The main specification excludes Democratic primaries with a top-two candidate with a "conservative" CF Score and Republican primaries with a top-two candidate with a "liberal" CF Score. The following table reports estimates including these races.

Table A.1: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	log(Individual Contributions)		log(Corporate PAC Contributions)	
	Top 25% Distance	Top 50% Distance	Top 25% Distance	Top 50% Distance
Extremist Win	0.4697	0.0569	-0.3849	-0.2894
	(0.6894)	(0.3158)	(0.8537)	(0.4511)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.175	0.259	0.217	0.342
Baseline	10.1587	10.4790	8.5686	9.0572
Observations	513	1,556	620	1,906
R-Squared	0.1066	0.1019	0.1139	0.0662

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.3 Alternative Samples: Main Primary-Contributor-Level Results

A.3.1 Including Opposite-Side Candidates

The main specification excludes Democratic primaries with a top-two candidate with a "conservative" CF Score and Republican primaries with a top-two candidate with a "liberal" CF Score. The following table reports estimates including these races.

Table A.2: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Likelihood of General Election Contribution

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0001***	0.0003**	0.0001**	-0.0008***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.073	0.069	0.044	0.102
Baseline	0.0004	0.0014	0.0005	0.0037
Observations	26,040,217	2,517,228	5,398,803	3,182,000
R-Squared	0.0003	0.0009	0.0007	0.0008

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.3.2 Top 50% Ideological Distance

The main specification includes primaries in the top quartile of ideological distance between top-two candidates. The following table reports estimates with primaries in the top median of ideological distance between top-two candidates.

Table A.3: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Likelihood of General Election Contribution

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0013***	0.0037***	0.0037***	-0.0010***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.078
Baseline	0.0008	0.0017	0.0015	0.0033
Observations	21,000,175	2,350,269	7,308,588	5,600,750
R-Squared	0.0020	0.0063	0.0071	0.0005

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.3.3 Top 50% Ideological Distance Including Opposite-Side Candidates

The main specification includes primaries in the top quartile of ideological distance between top-two candidates, excluding primaries with a candidate on the opposite side of zero. The following table reports estimates with primaries in the top median of ideological

distance between top-two candidates, including those with candidates on opposite sides of zero.

Table A.4: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Likelihood of General Election Contribution

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0017***	0.0050***	0.0047***	-0.0011***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.023	0.025	0.024	0.058
Baseline	0.0007	0.0015	0.0013	0.0032
Observations	22,080,184	2,530,071	7,658,502	4,289,250
R-Squared	0.0019	0.0060	0.0071	0.0004

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.4 Alternative Logged Dependent Variable: Primary-Contributor-Level Results

The main results use a binary dependent variable for whether a contributor gave to a particular nominee. The following tables report estimates with the main sample and alternative samples using the log of the amount given as the dependent variable.

A.4.1 Main Sample

Table A.5: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Logged General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	-0.0021***	-0.0061***	-0.0002	-0.0119***
	(0.0001)	(0.0007)	(0.0002)	(0.0012)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.029	0.040	0.056	0.050
Baseline	0.0026	0.0122	0.0057	0.0221
Observations	10,200,085	1,399,886	6,200,158	1,451,241
R-Squared	0.0004	0.0017	0.0008	0.0017

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.4.2 Including Opposite-Side Candidates

Table A.6: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Logged General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0001	-0.0002	-0.0036***	-0.0112***
	(0.0001)	(0.0006)	(0.0003)	(0.0010)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.051	0.047	0.031	0.079
Baseline	0.0025	0.0097	0.0026	0.0225
Observations	17,880,130	1,798,013	3,990,692	2,493,975
R-Squared	0.0003	0.0012	0.0011	0.0011

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.4.3 Top 50% Ideological Distance

Table A.7: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Logged General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0026***	0.0081***	0.0084***	-0.0064***
	(0.0001)	(0.0007)	(0.0003)	(0.0005)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.028	0.032	0.026	0.133
Baseline	0.0034	0.0118	0.0050	0.0284
Observations	24,240,174	2,889,657	7,919,940	9,072,897
R-Squared	0.0005	0.0015	0.0023	0.0006

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.4.4 Top 50% Ideological Distance Including Opposite-Side Candidates

Table A.8: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on Logged General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0043***	0.0136***	0.0128***	-0.0087***
	(0.0001)	(0.0006)	(0.0003)	(0.0006)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.027	0.034	0.024	0.081
Baseline	0.0030	0.0111	0.0041	0.0244
Observations	25,200,183	3,133,671	7,871,286	6,030,691
R-Squared	0.0005	0.0014	0.0025	0.0004

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.5 Alternative Samples: Heterogeneous Effects By Race Type and Safety

The heterogeneous results by race type and safety includes primaries in the top quartile of ideological distance between top-two candidates, excluding primaries with a candidate on the opposite side of zero. The following tables report results using alternative samples.

A.5.1 Including Opposite-Side Candidates

Table A.9: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race		Indivs > 5 Races		Pure Partisans		Corporate PACs	
Extremist Win	0.0001**	-0.0001***	0.0002	-0.0004***	0.0001*	-0.0002**	-0.0019***	-0.0015***
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Safe District	0.0003***		0.0002		0.0002**		-0.0016***	
	(0.0000)		(0.0002)		(0.0001)		(0.0003)	
Extremist Win x Safe	-0.0001		0.0005		0.0002		0.0056***	
	(0.0001)		(0.0003)		(0.0001)		(0.0004)	
Open Seat		-0.0001***		-0.0007***		-0.0005***		-0.0019***
		(0.0000)		(0.0001)		(0.0001)		(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Open		0.0006***		0.0025***		0.0011***		0.0029***
		(0.0000)		(0.0002)		(0.0001)		(0.0002)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.073	0.069	0.044	0.102	0.073	0.069	0.044	0.102
Observations	25,800,215	26,040,217	2,491,542	2,517,228	5,360,568	5,398,803	3,149,750	3,182,000
R-Squared	0.0003	0.0003	0.0009	0.0011	0.0007	0.0008	0.0013	0.0009

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.5.2 Top 50% Ideological Distance

Table A.10: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race		Indivs > 5 Races		Pure Partisans		Corporate PACs	
Extremist Win	0.0015***	0.0021***	0.0043***	0.0059***	0.0043***	0.0062***	-0.0005***	-0.0010***
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Safe District	0.0006***		0.0010***		0.0011***		0.0044***	
	(0.0000)		(0.0003)		(0.0001)		(0.0003)	
Extremist Win x Safe	-0.0016***		-0.0047***		-0.0036***		-0.0045***	
	(0.0001)		(0.0003)		(0.0001)		(0.0004)	
Open Seat		0.0007***		0.0010***		0.0021***		0.0007***
		(0.0000)		(0.0002)		(0.0001)		(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Open		-0.0029***		-0.0078***		-0.0087***		0.0002
		(0.0001)		(0.0004)		(0.0002)		(0.0002)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.078	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.078
Observations	21,000,175	21,000,175	2,350,269	2,350,269	7,308,588	7,308,588	5,590,000	5,600,750
R-Squared	0.0020	0.0023	0.0064	0.0071	0.0072	0.0083	0.0008	0.0006

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.5.3 Top 50% Ideological Distance Including Opposite-Side Candidates

Table A.11: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race		Indivs > 5 Races		Pure Partisans		Corporate PACs	
Extremist Win	0.0022***	0.0029***	0.0063***	0.0087***	0.0060***	0.0081***	-0.0008***	-0.0008***
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Safe District	0.0013***		0.0032***		0.0028***		0.0041***	
	(0.0000)		(0.0002)		(0.0001)		(0.0003)	
Extremist Win x Safe	-0.0025***		-0.0073***		-0.0064***		-0.0032***	
	(0.0001)		(0.0003)		(0.0001)		(0.0004)	
Open Seat		0.0013***		0.0034***		0.0033***		0.0009***
		(0.0000)		(0.0002)		(0.0001)		(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Open		-0.0041***		-0.0124***		-0.0114***		-0.0009***
		(0.0001)		(0.0004)		(0.0002)		(0.0002)
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bandwidth	0.023	0.025	0.024	0.058	0.023	0.025	0.024	0.058
Observations	21,960,183	22,080,184	2,517,228	2,530,071	7,620,267	7,658,502	4,267,750	4,289,250
R-Squared	0.0020	0.0023	0.0062	0.0071	0.0074	0.0085	0.0007	0.0005

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.6 Alternative Samples: Heterogeneous Effects Pre-Post-1994

The heterogeneous results before and after 1994 include primaries in the top quartile of ideological distance between top-two candidates, excluding primaries with a candidate on the opposite side of zero. The following tables report results using alternative samples.

A.6.1 Including Opposite-Side Candidates

Table A.12: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0002***	0.0008***	0.0003***	0.0014***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)
Post-1994	0.0004***	0.0017***	0.0004***	0.0008***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Post-1994	-0.0001***	-0.0006**	0.0000	-0.0037***
	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Bandwidth	0.073	0.069	0.044	0.102
Observations	26,040,217	2,517,228	5,398,803	3,182,000
R-Squared	0.0001	0.0004	0.0003	0.0005

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.6.2 Top 50% Ideological Distance

Table A.13: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0000	0.0002	0.0001	-0.0003*
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Post-1994	-0.0002***	0.0010***	-0.0008***	-0.0003
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Post-1994	0.0019***	0.0049***	0.0053***	-0.0010***
	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Bandwidth	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.078
Observations	21,000,175	2,350,269	7,308,588	5,600,750
R-Squared	0.0005	0.0015	0.0016	0.0002

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A.6.3 Top 50% Ideological Distance Including Opposite-Side Candidates

Table A.14: Regression Discontinuity Estimates of Effect of Nominating Extremist on General Election Contributions

	Indivs > 1 Race	Indivs > 5 Races	Pure Partisans	Corporate PACs
Extremist Win	0.0003***	0.0009***	0.0004***	-0.0001
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)
Post-1994	-0.0001***	0.0005***	-0.0008***	-0.0009***
	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0000)	(0.0002)
Extremist Win x Post-1994	0.0020***	0.0057***	0.0059***	-0.0017***
	(0.0000)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Bandwidth	0.023	0.025	0.024	0.058
Observations	22,080,184	2,530,071	7,658,502	4,289,250
R-Squared	0.0006	0.0019	0.0020	0.0003

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix B

Appendix to Positioning in Congressional Primary Campaigns

B.1 Data Collection Details

Identifying relevant candidates. I used Ballotpedia.com to identify all candidates who appeared on a Republican or Democratic primary ballot in each district in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022, as well as take down the primary election date and candidate type (incumbent/open seat/challenger). Independent, write-in, and dropout candidates were excluded, as well as candidates who ran in the primaries in the table below.

Table B.1: Excluded Primary Races

Locale	Reason
Alaska, 2022 only	Top-4
California	Top-2
Connecticut	Party Convention
Louisiana	Top-2
Utah	Party Convention
Virginia, 2016, Democratic: Districts 5,7,1,6,9,10	Party Convention
Virginia, 2016, Republican: Districts 3,8,5,11,7	Party Convention
Virginia, 2018, Democratic: District 5	Party Convention
Virginia, 2018, Republican: District 5,8,3,7,6	Party Convention
Virginia, 2020, Democratic: District 9	Party Convention
Virginia, 2020, Republican: District 8,5,10,11,4,7	Party Convention
Virginia, 2022, Republican: District 8,5,10,11	Party Convention
Washington	Top-2

Source: Footnotes of FEC primary date calendars.

Searching for campaign websites in real time. Data on 2022 primary candidates were collected in real time. Candidates' web pages were accessed as immediately as possible before their primary, always within a week of the election date. I first performed a web search for "[candidate name] for Congress [election year]". Official governmental websites and social media sites were ignored. If no website appearing to be the candidate's

campaign website appeared in the first page of search results, I added the district (e.g. "AL-1") to the search terms. If nothing appeared, I then consulted Politics1.com and Ballotpedia.com, which compile fairly reliable lists of candidates' campaign websites at various levels of government. If no non-social media website or non-governmental campaign website was found, I moved on to the next candidate. Although it is possible that some candidate websites eluded this data collection process, websites that were not found while deliberating searching via numerous steps were not readily accessible to members of the public, activists, or journalists, who would almost certainly devote less effort to find them.

Searching for archived campaign websites. For candidates who ran in 2016, 2018, and 2020, the process was identical to that outlined above, with an added step of accessing the archived website as it appeared at the relevant time via the Wayback Machine (archive.org). I first performed a web site for "[candidate name] for Congress [election year]". Some candidates ran in more recent elections and maintained a new website at the same URL which hosted their campaign website during the election year of interest. Because many candidates delete their campaign websites after losing election, I likewise consulted historic versions of Politics1.com and Ballotpedia.com. Once a potential historic campaign website URL was identified, I pasted it into the Wayback Machine and accessed the snapshot of the website most immediately before the date of the primary. While these archives ranged in time from very close to the primary to months before the primary, I also recorded the date of the archive version.

Identifying issue positions. The vast majority of campaign websites had clearly delineated pages or sections for policy platforms, issue positions, or candidate priorities. If the area devoted to positions was not readily obvious in the website architecture, I surveyed the entirety of the website for other places where one might find issue positions. I do not consider candidate biographies, endorsement lists, campaign updates, or volunteer/donation pages to be issue positions. Many incumbent candidates (and some candidates with state legislative experience) devoted a section of the website to their legislative achieve-

ments, and these were nearly always separate from issue position pages. I excluded pages devoted exclusively to legislative achievements, but some candidates relate positions on their issue pages to legislative achievements, all of which I include as issue positions. If a campaign website with issue position content was successfully accessed, the URL was recorded in a spreadsheet.

Collecting issue position text. Once issue position content was identified, I manually copied and pasted all of the associated positioning text — including the section header, issue stances, and candidate quotes — from each sub-issue page or section into one .txt file titled the candidate's name and election year. I also captured the website content exactly as it appeared with a combination of manual screen capture and automated screen capture via the Awesome Screenshot extension on Google Chrome.

B.2 Technical Scaling Details

B.2.1 Text Processing Flow

To prepare the text of primary candidates' issue positions for scaling, I build a corpus of documents, or a collection of all individual primary campaign platforms. I then tokenize each document's text with terms standardized to all-lowercase and remove punctuation. Next, I preserve key non-unigram phrases found by compounding the separate terms.

To improve computing performance, I remove "stop words" such as "and", "for", and "of", which are used very frequently and provide negligible substantive information. I then reduce terms to their stems in order to combine terms that have the same central meaning yet slightly different suffixes and prefixes — for example, "reduce", "reduction", and "reducing" share the stem "reduc".

When utilizing unsupervised scaling methods, it is important to ensure that the dimension of interest — here, a left-right, issue-based dimension — is the dominant dimension structuring rhetorical discourse within the corupus. As such, it is beneficial to discard terms that are irrelevant to the dimension of interest and relevant to an orthogonal dimen-

Table B.2: Scaling Refinements

Procedural Terms Dropped	Non-Unigram Terms Included
"hr", "h.r", "co-chair","congresswoman", "congressman", "co-sponsor","reauthor", "codifi", "chair", "caucus","introduc", "passag", "subcommitte","cosponsor", "committe", "lawmak", "mayor", "congress", "chairman", "speaker", "legislatur", "re-elect", "hyperlink"	"first amendment", "1st amendment", "second amendment", "2nd amendment", "planned parenthood", "right to bear arms", "mandatory minimum", "mandatory minimums", "mental health", "clean energy", "sexual assault", "student loan", "student loans", "sexual violence", "critical race theory", "religious freedom", "reproductive freedom", "freedom of speech", "freedom of expression", "freedom of religion", "cancel culture", "debt ceiling", "balanced budget", "common core", "build the wall", "sanctuary city", "sanctuary cities"

Note: Scaling excludes procedural terms as well as geographic terms, and includes compounded non-unigram terms.

sion within which the algorithm may get "stuck" (Grimmer and Stewart 2013; Egerod and Klemmensen 2020). I discard terms related to congressional procedure, which are overwhelmingly used by sitting legislators, as well as commonly-used geographical terms, in order to protect against identifying an incumbency-based dimension or region-based dimension. In practice, this refinement is inconsequential to the vast majority of primary candidates' position estimates as illustrated by the strong correlation between estimates with and without these terms and the non-unigrams shown in the left panel of Figure B1. To improve computing time and drop other terms uninformative of the global dimension, I discard terms used in 100 campaign platforms or fewer — a lenient requirement given that the corpus consists of almost 4,000 campaign platforms.

The resulting $\mathbf{N} \times \mathbf{M}$ document-feature matrix consists of $j = 1, ..., m$ term columns, $it = 1, ..., n$ candidate-year rows, and term frequencies as cell entries.

B.2.2 Estimation with `wordfish`

`wordfish` (Slapin and Proksch 2008) is an unsupervised machine learning algorithm for scaling political text to infer the source's latent position on a single dimension. Based on a Poisson IRT model, `wordfish` uses an iterative expectation maximization algorithm due to the need to estimate both term-level and candidate-level parameters as a function of observed term usage.

The rate y at which primary candidate i uses term j in election year t is assumed to be drawn from a Poisson distribution, which is characterized by a single parameter λ representing both the expectation and variance. This parameter logarithmically links the probability distribution generating the observed term rate to the linear predictors of interest to be estimated:

$$y_{ijt} \sim Poisson(\lambda_{ijt})$$

$$\lambda_{ijt} = exp(\alpha_{it} + \psi_j + \beta_j * \omega_{it})$$

The key parameter is ω, which stands in for candidate i's latent primary campaign position in election t. β represents word j's weight or, put differently, its importance in discriminating between campaign positions. A word fixed effect ψ captures the rate at which word j is used in general, and a candidate-year fixed effect α captures the verbosity of candidate i's campaign position text in election t.

Parameter estimation is initialized with start values consisting of "best guesses" based upon term frequencies. Term fixed effects ψ_j begin as term j's logged average count, while the fixed effect for the first candidate-year (α_1) is set to 0 and $\alpha_{2,\ldots,n}$ begin as the logged average word count relative to that of $it = 1$. Start values for term weights β and candidate-year positions ω are the left and right singular vectors obtained from an SVD of the matrix of term and candidate-year residuals. Unsurprisingly, final estimates of ω correlate highly with nonparametric estimates resulting from a simpler correspondence analysis as shown in the Alternative Scalings subsection. As such, the methodology from which my primary

campaign positions derive bears strong resemblance to the augmented CA methodology used for Bonica's (2014) estimates of candidate ideology.

Estimation proceeds iteratively, with term parameters ψ and β first fixed at their start values and candidate-year parameters ω and α calculated conditionally on the expected term parameters. The following conditional log-likelihood is maximized for each candidate-year:

$$\sum_{j=1}^{m}(-\lambda_{ijt} + ln(\lambda_{ijt}) * y_{ijt})$$

where

$$\lambda_{ijt} = exp(\alpha_{it} + \psi_j^{prev} + \beta_j^{prev} * \omega_{it}).$$

To identify the global directionality of candidate positions ω, a pair of documents (candidate-years) are specified with an inequality constraint. Moreover, the mean of candidate positions across all years is equal to 0 and the standard deviation is set to 1.

Taking the expected values of candidate-year parameters ω and α obtained previously, term parameters ψ and β are then calculated conditionally with the following log-likelihood maximized for each term:

$$\sum_{it=1}^{n}(-\lambda_{ijt} + ln(\lambda_{ijt}) * y_{ijt})$$

where

$$\lambda_{ijt} = exp(\alpha_{it}^{prev} + \psi_j + \beta_j * \omega_{it}^{prev}).$$

The overall log-likelihood of the model with the new parameter estimates is then calculated as the sum of the term log-likelihoods conditional upon the candidate-year log-likelihoods:

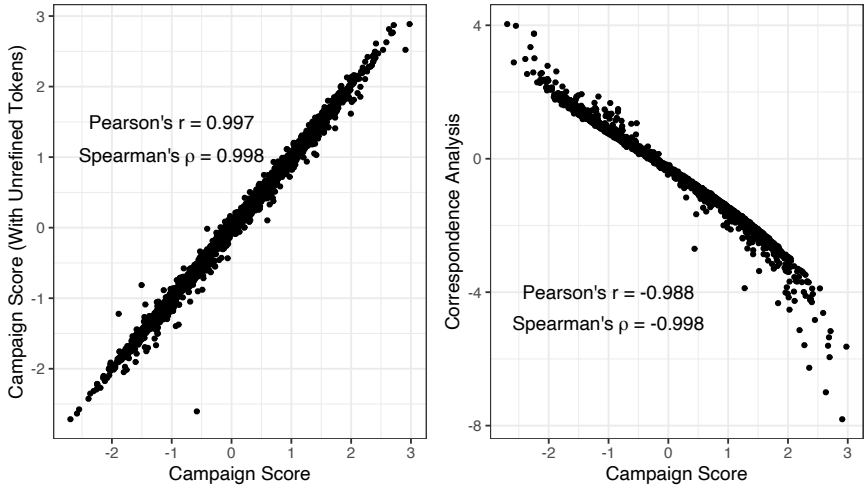
$$\sum_{j}^{m}\sum_{it=1}^{n}(-\lambda_{ijt}+ln(\lambda_{ijt})*y_{ijt}).$$

The candidate-year parameters are then re-calculated based upon the new term parameters, and the resulting candidate-year parameters are used to repeat the term parameter calculation. The conditional maximum likelihoods are calculated iteratively until the log-posterior reaches a convergence threshold of a one-millionth and the differences in parameter values from the previous iteration are under a hundred-millionth.

B.2.3 Alternative Scalings

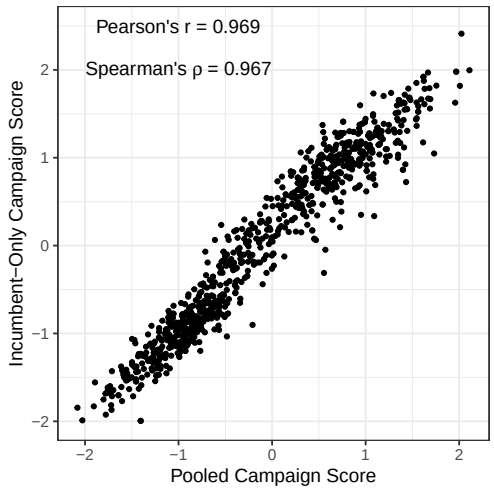
The following figures plot relationships between the main scaling specification and alternative scalings consisting of: leaving the tokens unrefined by keeping procedural and geographic terms and not non-unigrams, simple unidimensional correspondence analysis, incumbent-only scaling, and year-specific scaling. All correlations are above 0.90.

Figure B.1: Relationship Between Primary Campaign Scores and Alternative Scalings



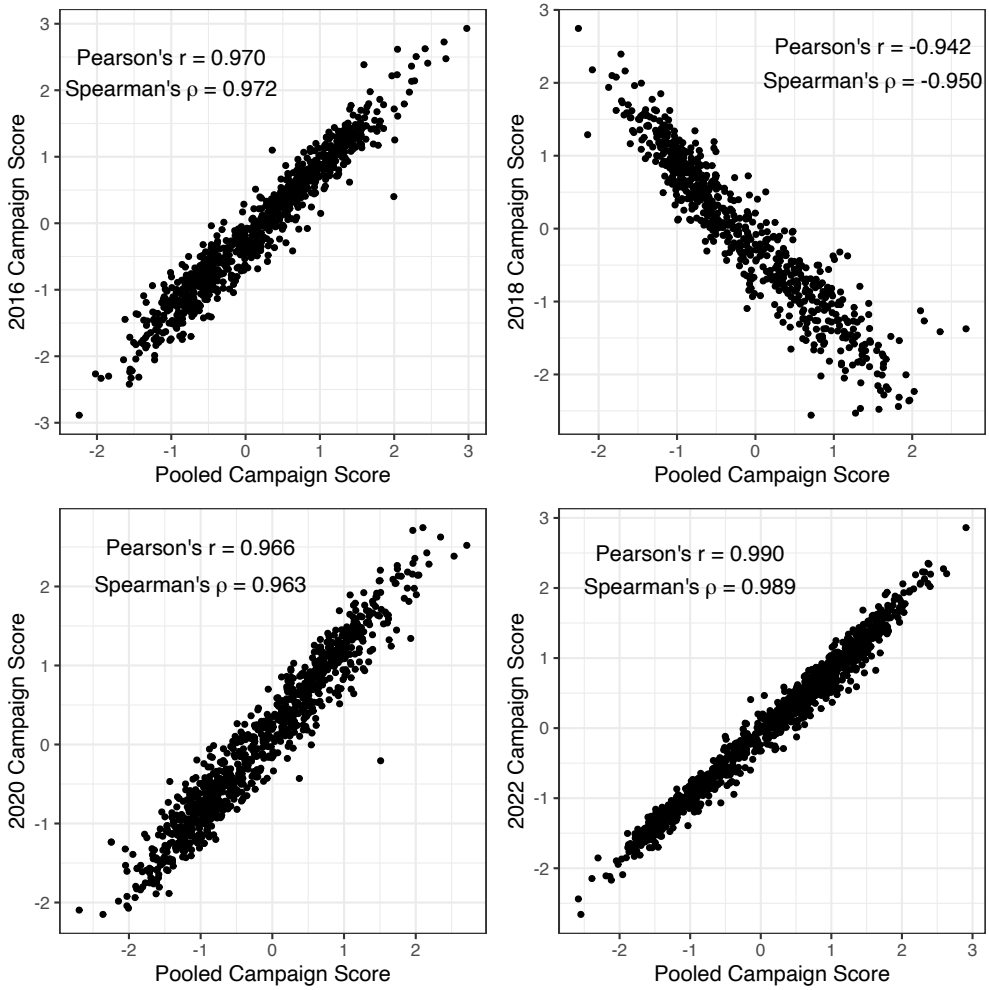
Note: Text-based scaling estimates of primary campaign positions along y-axes, estimates from unigram-only scaling including geographic and procedural terms (left) and from unidimensional correspondence analysis (right) along x-axes. Pearson and Spearman's ranking correlations show strong relationships.

Figure B.2: Campaign Scores From Pooled and Incumbent-Only Scaling



Note: Relationship between incumbents' campaign scores from pooled scaling and incumbent-only scaling. Pearson and Spearman's ranking correlations show strong relationships.

Figure B.3: Relationship Between Campaign Scores From Pooled and Year-Specific Scaling

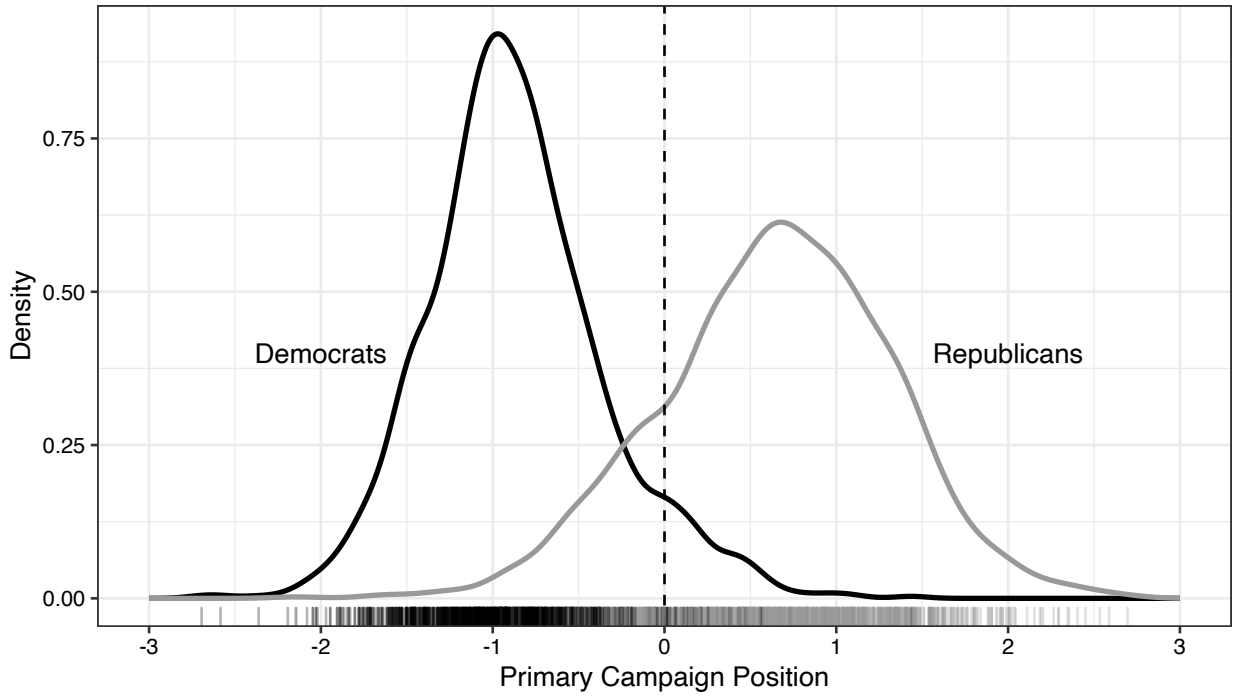


Note: Relationship between campaign scores from pooled scaling and each year scaled separately. Pearson and Spearman's ranking correlations show strong relationships.

B.2.4 Viable Candidates

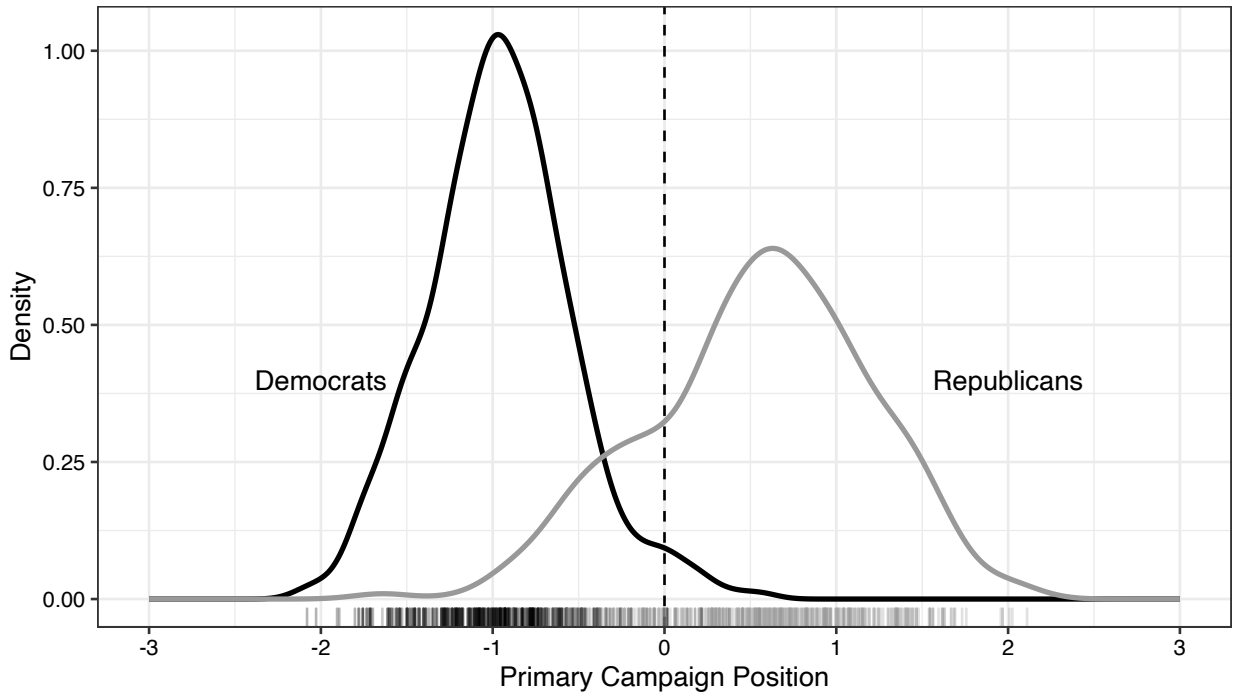
The following figures show that the campaign position distributions of incumbents and candidates who raised at least 10% of their primary's total receipts are similar to the pooled distribution presented in the main text.

Figure B.4: Distribution of Financially Viable Candidates' Primary Campaign Positions



Note: Kernel density plots of ω estimates from Equation 2.1 among only candidates who raised at least 10% of primary receipts. Democratic candidates in black and Republican candidates in gray. Negative values indicate more liberal/less conservative.

Figure B.5: Distribution of Incumbents' Primary Campaign Positions



Note: Kernel density plots of ω estimates from Equation 2.1 among only incumbents. Democratic candidates in black and Republican candidates in gray. Negative values indicate more liberal/less conservative.

B.2.5 Top Discriminating Scaling Terms

Scaling results include word-level discrimination parameter β and overall frequency parameter ψ. Terms with the highest β are those that exert the greatest change to a candidate's campaign position, such that the most positive (negative) terms are most strongly associated with conservative (liberal) positions. The following tables report terms from the main pooled and year-specific scalings sorted by largest negative and positive β.

Table B.3: Top 20 Most Conservative and Liberal Terms

	Conservative	β (weight)	ψ (FE)	**Liberal**	β (weight)	ψ (FE)
1	critical race theori	1.579	-3.306	community-bas	-1.990	-4.569
2	build the wal	1.566	-3.963	rental	-1.970	-4.425
3	tyrann	1.547	-3.885	equit	-1.959	-3.476
4	crt	1.527	-3.630	reproduct	-1.733	-2.395
5	indoctrin	1.510	-3.320	trauma	-1.713	-3.993
6	god	1.469	-1.869	matern	-1.678	-3.375
7	tyranni	1.466	-3.307	lgbtq	-1.637	-2.214
8	christian	1.453	-2.680	high-capac	-1.630	-4.550
9	sanctiti	1.447	-2.997	lewi	-1.621	-4.076
10	god-given	1.443	-3.345	low-incom	-1.586	-2.608
11	unborn	1.441	-1.930	dispar	-1.578	-3.093
12	pro-lif	1.436	-1.684	childcar	-1.572	-2.865
13	communist	1.388	-2.924	disproportion	-1.558	-2.780
14	swamp	1.373	-3.338	pell	-1.555	-3.514
15	socialist	1.365	-2.721	pre-k	-1.541	-3.105
16	amnesti	1.344	-2.393	tuition-fre	-1.506	-4.158
17	islam	1.336	-2.572	underserv	-1.467	-3.464
18	sanctuary c	1.333	-2.773	expung	-1.461	-4.104
19	alien	1.320	-2.301	resili	-1.386	-3.318
20	2nd amend	1.315	-1.483	discriminatori	-1.383	-3.526

Note: Top terms with most positive (conservative) discrimination parameters and most negative (liberal) discrimination parameters.

Table B.4: Top 20 Most Liberal Terms by Year

	2016	2018	2020	2022
1	student_loan	student_loan	lgbtq	equit
2	colleg	reproduct	racial	reproduct
3	infrastructur	mental_health	reproduct	low-incom
4	senior	epidem	disproportion	lewi
5	workforc	color	inequ	childcar
6	mental_health	violenc	incarcer	pre-k
7	bridg	childhood	+	good-pay
8	earli	priorit	low-incom	bargain
9	discrimin	clean_energi	color	inequ
10	loan	communiti	orient	lgbtq
11	invest	opioid	black	disproportion
12	partnership	transport	gender	high-qual
13	climat	champion	workplac	clean_energi
14	minimum	rural	discrimin	incarcer
15	univers	student	justic	childhood
16	access	access	emiss	gap
17	transit	transit	sexual	workplac
18	violenc	expand	fossil	discrimin
19	graduat	prescript	prison	climat
20	student	21st	gap	black

Table B.5: Top 20 Most Conservative Terms by Year

	2016	2018	2020	2022
1	pro-lif	properti	pro-lif	critical_race_theori
2	amnesti	said	unborn	crt
3	unborn	liberti	balanced_budget	indoctrin
4	2nd_amend	obamacar	2nd_amend	god
5	liberti	2nd_amend	shall	unborn
6	constitut	bureaucrat	infring	pro-lif
7	common_cor	bear	concept	pelosi
8	second_amend	constitut	bureaucrat	communist
9	balanced_budget	illeg	obamacar	finish
10	illeg	answer	second_amend	overreach
11	bear	principl	illeg	liber
12	ir	say	radic	speech
13	concept	religi	border	infring
14	obamacar	second_amend	liberti	radic
15	border	man	bear	2nd_amend
16	epa	spend	southern	right_to_bear_arm
17	faith	govern	china	second_amend
18	bureaucrat	abort	presid	concept
19	principl	term	constitut	shall
20	repeal	deficit	conserv	ideolog

B.3 Application Robustness

The following figures and tables demonstrate the robustness of the results presented in the brief application of the new measure. The figures show that the trends from Figure 2.5 hold when subsetting to 2016 and 2018 candidates with CF Scores and when fitting a Loess curve instead of a straight line. The tables show that the main results do not mask considerable heterogeneity in the effect of district partisanship by candidate type, and subsetting to only candidates who raised at least 10% of their primary's total receipts or instead using Tausanovitch and Warshaw's (2013) updated district ideology (conservatism) MRP estimates from (Warshaw and Tausanovitch 2022) leads to similar results. However, this measure's mapping onto the two-year House election time periods is even more problematic than presidential vote share: it is broken down into surveys from 2012-2016 and

2017-2021, so the former is matched to 2016 candidates, while the latter is matched to 2018, 2020, and 2022 candidates even though the surveys used to construct the measure do not include 2022. Although this variable is scaled to have a universe-wide mean 0 SD 1, it only ranges from –0.5 to 0.4 in House districts during this time period, so I rescale the variable such that a 0.1 increase constitutes a one-unit increase in the regression.

Figure B.6: Only Candidates With CF Scores

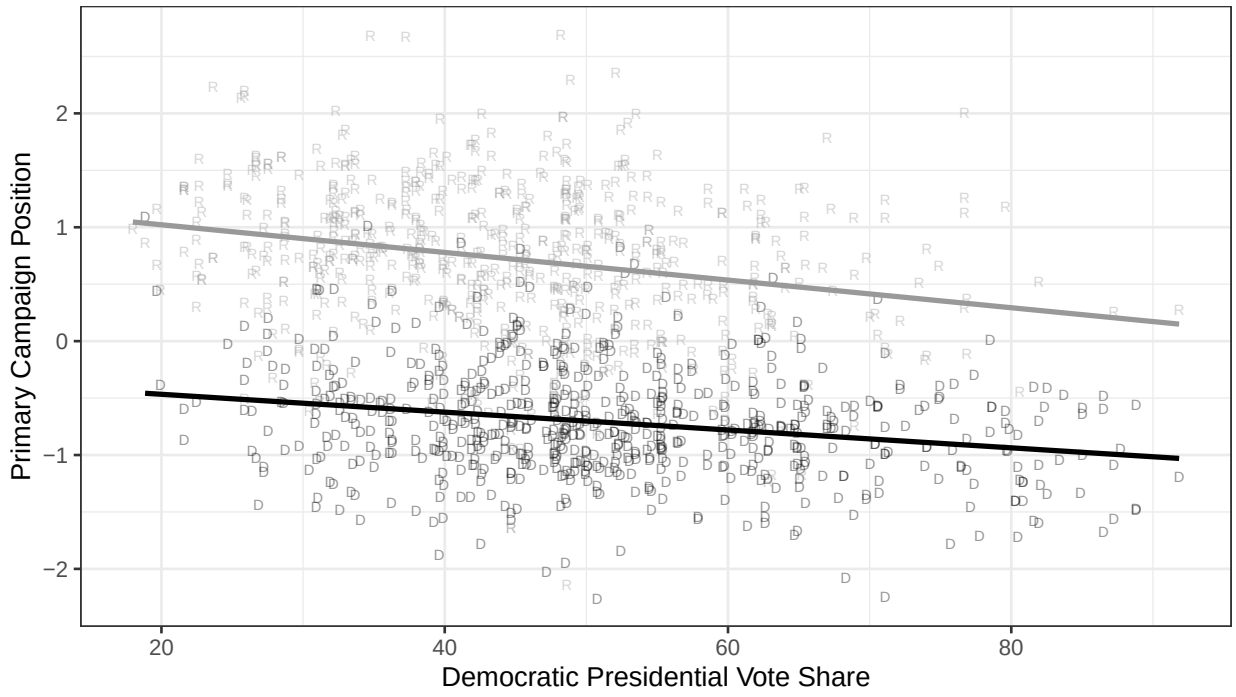


Figure B.7: With Loess Curves Fit

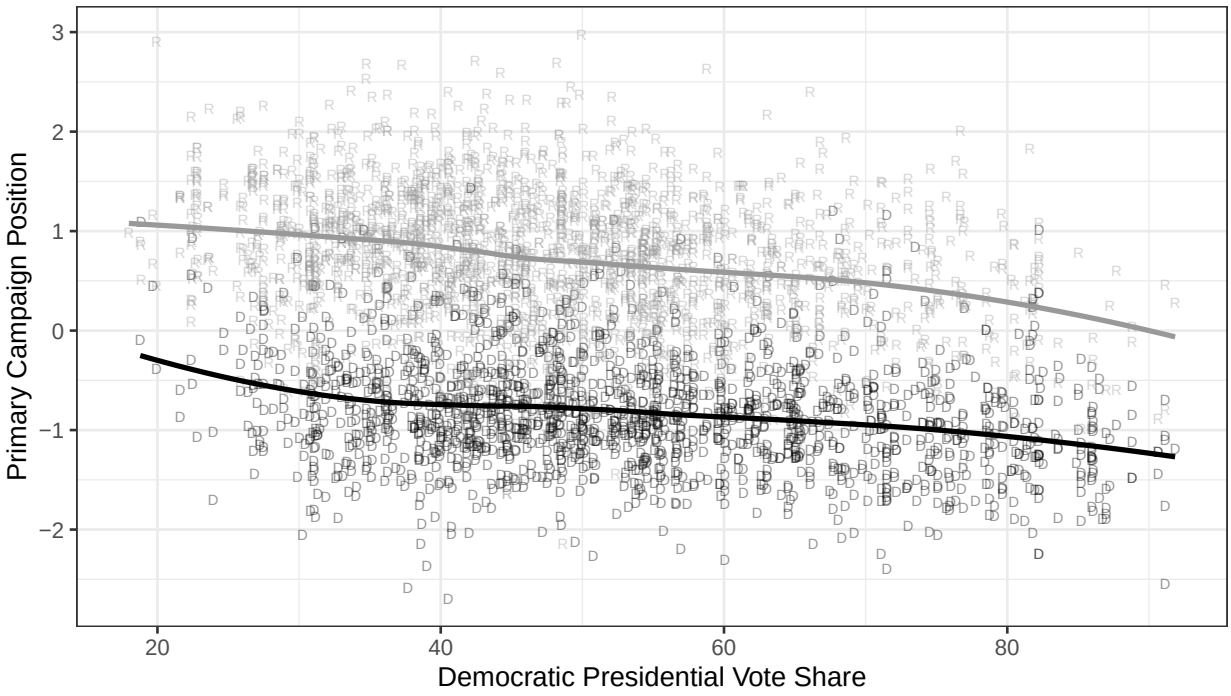


Table B.6: District Partisanship and Candidate Positions With Interactions

	Primary Campaign Position		Recipient CF Score	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
(Intercept)	-0.562^{***}	0.465^{***}	-0.702^{***}	0.985^{***}
	(0.043)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.024)
District Dem. Partisanship	-0.010^{***}	-0.017^{***}	0.001	-0.003^{***}
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Open Seat Candidate	0.0005	0.358^{***}	-0.535^{***}	0.151^{*}
	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.065)
Primary Challenger	0.214^{*}	0.636^{***}	-0.555^{***}	0.332^{**}
	(0.085)	(0.071)	(0.167)	(0.107)
General Challenger	0.045	0.347^{***}	-0.649^{***}	0.280^{***}
	(0.045)	(0.059)	(0.053)	(0.061)
District * Open	-0.001	-0.002	0.007	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)
District * Prim. Chall.	-0.0005	0.016^{**}	0.008	0.007
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.008)
District * Gen. Chall.	0.005	0.004	-0.003	-0.0001
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.006)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,740	1,995	1,090	953
Adjusted R^2	0.138	0.161	0.209	0.023
Note:				*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B.7: Relationship Between District Partisanship and Candidate Positions Among Financially Viable Only

	Primary Campaign Position		Recipient CF Score	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
(Intercept)	-0.550^{***}	0.445^{***}	-0.732^{***}	0.959^{***}
	(0.037)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.029)
District Dem. Partisanship	-0.009^{***}	-0.018^{***}	0.002	-0.003
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Open Seat Candidate	-0.038	0.424^{***}	-0.433^{***}	0.081^{*}
	(0.040)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.037)
Primary Challenger	-0.003	0.541^{***}	-0.251^{*}	0.208^{*}
	(0.056)	(0.062)	(0.108)	(0.101)
General Challenger	-0.030	0.411^{***}	-0.584^{***}	0.288^{***}
	(0.042)	(0.059)	(0.046)	(0.066)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,244	1,224	820	718
Adjusted R^2	0.166	0.170	0.278	0.031
Note:				*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table B.8: District Ideology and Candidate Positions

	Primary Campaign Position		Recipient CF Score	
	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
(Intercept)	-0.630^{***}	0.373^{***}	-0.693^{***}	0.918^{***}
	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.033)	(0.040)
District Conservatism	0.071^{***}	0.140^{***}	-0.009	0.058^{**}
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.020)
Open Seat Candidate	0.012	0.393^{***}	-0.519^{***}	0.195^{***}
	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.048)	(0.046)
Primary Challenger	0.188^{***}	0.454^{***}	-0.386^{***}	0.258^{**}
	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.076)	(0.081)
General Challenger	0.041	0.369^{***}	-0.632^{***}	0.338^{***}
	(0.038)	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.065)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,737	1,986	1,090	953
Adjusted R^2	0.131	0.167	0.201	0.031
Note:				*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Appendix C

Appendix to Campaign Agendas

C.1 Issue Selection

I identified PACs coded by OpenSecrets with an “Ideological/Single–Issue" (versus “Labor" or “Business") sector code which contributed to any House primary elections in 2016, 2018, 2020, or 2022. I then dropped PACs with general ideological, leadership PAC, and candidate committee OpenSecrets industry codes as these are not centered around one single issue. Next, I used industry codes and organization names to drop PACs associated with issue areas insufficiently broad or narrow to feasibly be campaigned upon by some but not all candidates across the nation, as well as those with primarily electoral or representational goals rather than policy goals.

Within OpenSecrets’ “Women’s Issues" industry code, for example, many organizations such as Women Under Forty PAC leverage contributions in order to increase the number of women legislators, young women legislators, or women legislators of a certain party — a primary aim distinct from that of championing a particular issue. In contrast, abortion–centric organizations center a particular issue that some may consider a “women’s issue." Likewise, while a number of PACs devoted to particular foreign policy matters exist, many of these (such as anti–Castro organization US-Cuba Democracy PAC) pertain to issues that are campaigned upon by vanishingly few candidates. However, organizations related to policy and treatment toward Israel are included, as the US’ partnership with Israel and geopolitical issues pertaining to Israel make the issue salient enough for candidates across the country to feasibly adopt stances on it.

Additionally, I exclude issues for which the main organized interests are primarily oriented toward furthering their members’ material interests, such as trade organizations and unions. These include agriculture, education, labor, and corporate business.

C.2 Issue PACs

Table C.1: Included Issue PACs

PAC Name	Issue
Ocean Champions	Environment
Humane Society Legislative Fund	Animal Rights
Safari Club International	Guns
League of Conservation Voters	Environment
Human Rights Campaign	LGBTQ
National Cmte to Preserve Social Security	Elderly
National Rifle Assn	Guns
Joint Action Cmte for Political Affairs	Israel
Desert Caucus	Israel
Sierra Club	Environment
Planned Parenthood	Abortion
New Jersey Republican Pro-Life Coalition	Abortion
SunPAC	Israel
JStreetPAC	Israel
New Jersey Right to Life	Abortion
To Protect Our Heritage PAC	Israel
I-PAC JAX	Israel
Citizens Organized PAC	Israel
EMILY's List	Abortion
National Assn for Gun Rights	Guns
Maryland Assn for Concerned Citizens	Israel
National Action Cmte	Israel
End Citizens United	Campaign Finance
National Pro-Life Alliance	Abortion
Protectseniors.org	Elderly
National Shooting Sports Foundation	Guns
Tri-state Maxed Out Women	Abortion
Florida Congressional Cmte	Israel
Center for Coastal Conservation	Environment
Grand Canyon State Caucus	Israel
Washington PAC	Israel
Gun Owners of America	Guns
Republican Jewish Coalition	Israel
National PAC	Israel
Americans for Good Government	Israel
LGBTQ Victory Fund	LGBTQ
Susan B Anthony List	Abortion
Log Cabin Republicans	LGBTQ

Americans United in Support of Democracy	Israel
NRDC Action Fund	Environment
MaggiePAC	Abortion
American Principles	Israel
NARAL Pro-Choice America	Abortion
Louisianans for American Security	Israel
Bi-County PAC	Israel
Equality PAC	LGBTQ
Republican Majority for Choice	Abortion
Mid Manhattan PAC	Israel
Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition	Environment
America's Conservation PAC	Environment
Illinois Right to Life	Abortion
L PAC	LGBTQ
Americans For Law Enforcement	Police
Friends of the Earth	Environment
Voter Education PAC	Abortion
Environment America	Environment
Giffords PAC	Guns
Ohio Gun Collectors Assn	Guns
White Coat Waste	Animal Rights
Democratic Conservation Alliance	Environment
Partnership for Conservation	Environment
Texas Right to Life	Abortion
Washington Women for Choice	Abortion
Social Security Works	Elderly
Because I Care PAC	Israel
City PAC	Israel
Protect Life PAC	Abortion
Sanctity of Life PAC	Abortion
Action Coalition PAC	Abortion
National Gun Rights PAC	Guns
Protect Our Future	Abortion
Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund	Guns
Population Connection	Abortion
Brady PAC	Guns
Police Action Fund	Police
Environmental Defense Action Fund	Environment
Pride Fund to End Gun Violence	Guns
Animal Wellness Action	Animal Rights
Pro-Israel America PAC	Israel
Pro-Life PAC	Abortion

Tri-State Maxed Out Women	Abortion
Alliance for Retired Americans	Elderly
American Unity Fund	LGBTQ
White Coat Waste Project	Animal Rights
To Protect Our Heritage PAC	Israel
US Israel PAC	Israel
LGBT Democrats of Virginia	LGBTQ
Grand Canyon State Caucus	Israel
National Wildlife Federation Action Fund	Environment
Sunrise PAC	Environment
Democratic Majority for Israel	Israel
Energy Innovation PAC	Environment
Equality California Majority Fund	LGBTQ
End the Occupation	Israel
American Horse PAC	Animal Rights
Illinois Citizens for Life	Abortion
Grass Roots NC/Forum for Firearms Educ	Guns
Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life	Abortion

C.3 Campaign Platform Collection

Identifying relevant candidates. I used Ballotpedia.com to identify all candidates who appeared on a Republican or Democratic primary ballot in each district in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022, as well as take down the primary election date and candidate type (incumbent/open seat/challenger). Independent, write-in, and dropout candidates were excluded, as well as candidates who ran in the primaries in the table below.

Table C.2: Excluded Primary Races

Locale	Reason
Alaska, 2022 only	Top-4
California	Top-2
Connecticut	Party Convention
Louisiana	Top-2
Utah	Party Convention
Virginia, 2016, Democratic: Districts 5,7,1,6,9,10	Party Convention
Virginia, 2016, Republican: Districts 3,8,5,11,7	Party Convention
Virginia, 2018, Democratic: District 5	Party Convention
Virginia, 2018, Republican: District 5,8,3,7,6	Party Convention
Virginia, 2020, Democratic: District 9	Party Convention
Virginia, 2020, Republican: District 8,5,10,11,4,7	Party Convention
Virginia, 2022, Republican: District 8,5,10,11	Party Convention
Washington	Top-2

Source: Footnotes of FEC primary date calendars.

Searching for campaign websites in real time. Data on 2022 primary candidates were collected in real time. Candidates' web pages were accessed as immediately as possible before their primary, always within a week of the election date. I first performed a web search for "[candidate name] for Congress [election year]". Official governmental websites and social media sites were ignored. If no website appearing to be the candidate's campaign website appeared in the first page of search results, I added the district (e.g. "AL-1") to the search terms. If nothing appeared, I then consulted Politics1.com and Ballotpedia.com, which compile fairly reliable lists of candidates' campaign websites at various levels of government. If no non-social media website or non-governmental campaign website was found, I moved on to the next candidate. Although it is possible that some candidate websites eluded this data collection process, websites that were not found while deliberating searching via numerous steps were not readily accessible to members of the public, activists, or journalists, who would almost certainly devote less effort to find them.

Searching for archived campaign websites. For candidates who ran in 2016, 2018, and 2020, the process was identical to that outlined above, with an added step of access-

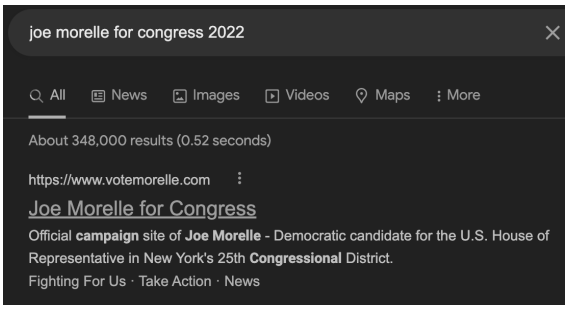
ing the archived website as it appeared at the relevant time via the Wayback Machine (archive.org). I first performed a web site for "[candidate name] for Congress [election year]". Some candidates ran in more recent elections and maintained a new website at the same URL which hosted their campaign website during the election year of interest. Because many candidates delete their campaign websites after losing election, I likewise consulted historic versions of Politics1.com and Ballotpedia.com. Once a potential historic campaign website URL was identified, I pasted it into the Wayback Machine and accessed the snapshot of the website most immediately before the date of the primary. While these archives ranged in time from very close to the primary to months before the primary, I also recorded the date of the archive version.

Identifying issue positions. The vast majority of campaign websites had clearly delineated pages or sections for policy platforms, issue positions, or candidate priorities. If the area devoted to positions was not readily obvious in the website architecture, I surveyed the entirety of the website for other places where one might find issue positions. I do not consider candidate biographies, endorsement lists, campaign updates, or volunteer/donation pages to be issue positions. Many incumbent candidates (and some candidates with state legislative experience) devoted a section of the website to their legislative achievements, and these were nearly always separate from issue position pages. I excluded pages devoted exclusively to legislative achievements, but some candidates relate positions on their issue pages to legislative achievements, all of which I include as issue positions. If a campaign website with issue position content was successfully accessed, the URL was recorded in a spreadsheet.

Collecting issue position text. Once issue position content was identified, I manually copied and pasted all of the associated positioning text — including the section header, issue stances, and candidate quotes — from each sub-issue page or section into one .txt file titled the candidate's name and election year. I also captured the website content exactly as it appeared with a combination of manual screen capture and automated screen capture

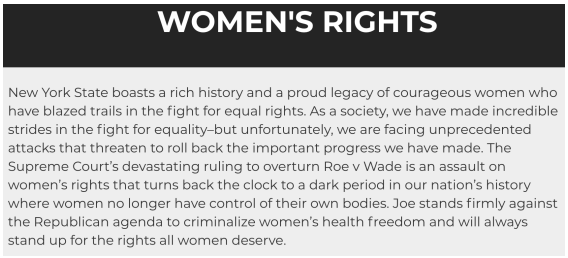
Figure C.1: Example Data Collection Workflow

(a) Search for campaign website

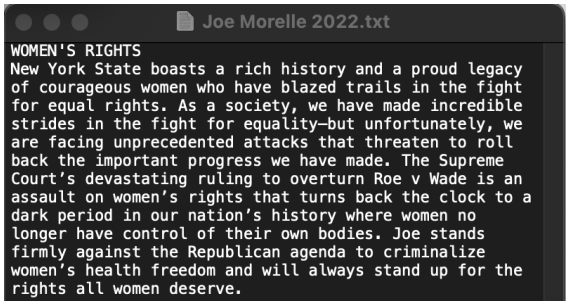


(b) Identify issue content

(c) Access all issue content



(d) Scrape plain text



Note: Visual depiction of simplified steps involved in collecting Representative Joe Morelle's 2022 primary campaign issue positions from `www.votemorelle.com`. Appendix **??** describes each component of the data collection in detail.

via the Awesome Screenshot extension on Google Chrome.

Representativeness. Table C.3 reports relationships between the binary presence of campaign website positions and observable candidate, election, and district characteristics thought to relate to candidates' willingness and ability to announce a platform. I estimate models separately by incumbency status due to different meanings of missingness in the data: incumbents virtually all hosted primary campaign websites over the period, but some omitted positions, whereas some non-incumbents lacked a website altogether, but those with websites nearly all included positions. Data on fundraising are from FEC pre-primary reports and presidential vote shares are from Daily Kos, which include 2020 election results for post-census 2022 districts. Competition is captured by indicators for whether the primary was unopposed or financially uncompetitive (with financially com-

petitive as reference category), defined as financially competitive if the top fundraiser garnered under 57.5% of the total receipts in the primary, as well as the party's advantage in the district, defined as a party advantage if their nominee received over 57.5% of the vote share in the most recent presidential election, disadvantaged if they received under 42.5%, and swing if their vote share was somewhere in between. In the non-incumbent model, I also indicate state legislative experience and whether a candidate raised under 10% of the total receipts in the primary.

Table C.3 indicates high rates of campaign website position-taking, especially (and unsurprisingly) among incumbents and those who garnered more than a *de minimis* share of their primary's total fundraising. Non-incumbents who raised under 10% of the total receipts are 15 percentage points less likely to have website positions than those who raised more. However, the magnitude of this missingness is relatively modest considering that nearly 40% of sample non-incumbents did not even file pre-primary fundraising reports, and a substantial portion of such candidates likely did not actively campaign after filing to run. Overall, the results do not suggest that large swaths of candidates are systematically excluded from data on campaign website priorities on the basis of candidate type, electoral competitiveness, or even resources.

Table C.3: Determinants of Primary Campaign Website Positions, 2016—2022

	Campaign Website Positions Present	
	Incumbents	Non-Incumbents
(Intercept)	0.866***	0.775***
	(0.068)	(0.028)
Republican	0.025	−0.014
	(0.027)	(0.014)
Unopposed Primary	−0.087	−0.054
	(0.065)	(0.028)
Uncompetitive $ Primary	−0.050	−0.014
	(0.065)	(0.017)
Advantaged District	−0.076**	
	(0.028)	
Receipts < 10%		−0.146***
		(0.015)
State Legislator		0.025
		(0.026)
Open Advantaged		0.001
		(0.025)
Open Disadvantaged		−0.068*
		(0.034)
General Challenger Swing		−0.009
		(0.024)
General Challenger Disadvantaged		−0.092***
		(0.023)
Primary Challenger Advantaged		−0.046
		(0.025)
Primary Challenger Swing		−0.029
		(0.033)
Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Observations	1,213	4,939
Adjusted R^2	0.012	0.100

Note: Linear probability models predicting presence (1) or absence (0) of campaign website issue positions during primary. Reference value for primary competitiveness is financially competitive, district type in incumbent model is swing, and district-candidate type in non-incumbent model is open-seat swing. HC3 standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Reverse causality — platform change in response to previous funding. While we cannot directly test the presence of reverse causality, the panel structure of the data allows for investigation into temporal changes in campaign platforms. After wrangling the data into observations at the candidate–issue–year-pair level (e.g. AOC, environment, 2018–

2020) for candidates who ran in multiple cycles from 2016 to 2022, I calculated the net changes in issue word use between the two elections as well as whether they added the issue to their platform between the two elections. Figures C2 and C3 suggest that candidates who received funding from issue PACs in the previous election were not systematically more likely to increase attention (i.e. binary or word count based) to the issue in the next election. For police and campaign finance, a much larger proportion of candidates who received funds campaigned on the issue in the next election compared to candidates who didn't receive funds. However, a much larger proportion of candidates who didn't receive abortion–related funds campaigned on abortion in the next election compared to candidates who did receive funds. The other six issues do not show major differences, and the differences are not consistently in the direction of candidates who received funding being more likely to campaign on the issue in the next election.

Table C.4: Reverse Causality: Issue PAC Funding and Change in Issue Attention

	Added Issue From t-1 to t	Word Count Change From t-1 to t
Received Issue PAC $ at t-1	-0.008	-0.159
	(0.010)	(0.197)
Observations	6,318	6,318
Adjusted R^2	0.000	0.000

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure C.2: Net Campaign Issue Word Change By Previous Issue PAC Funding

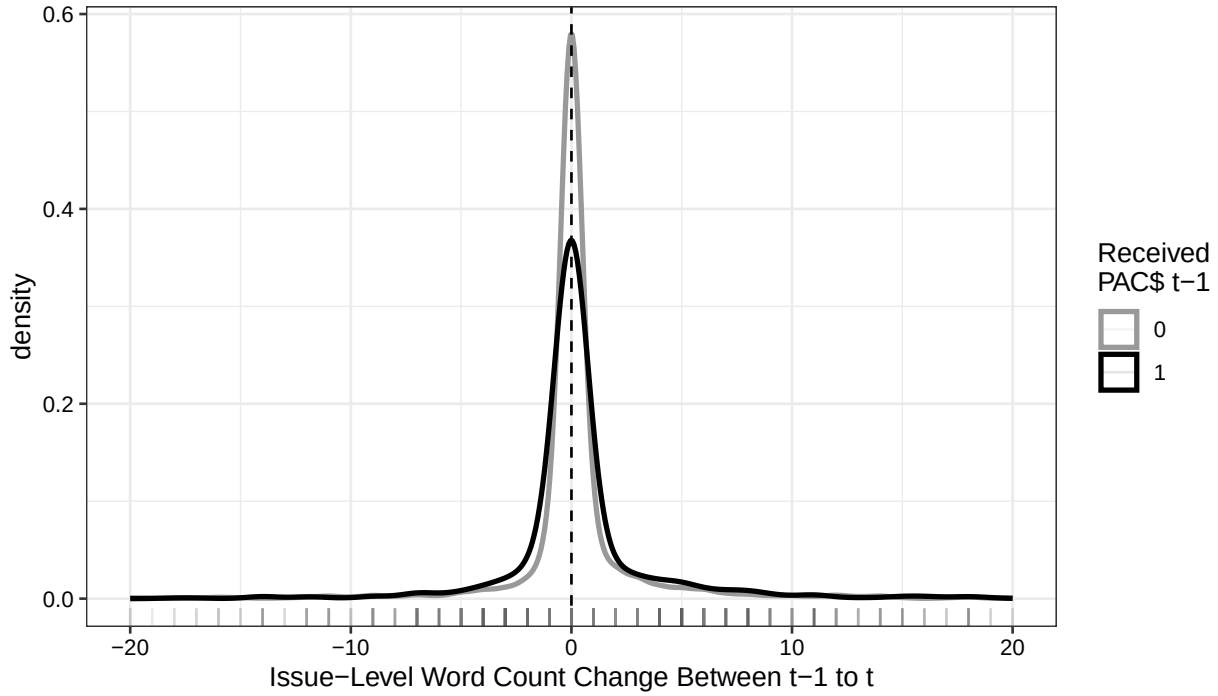
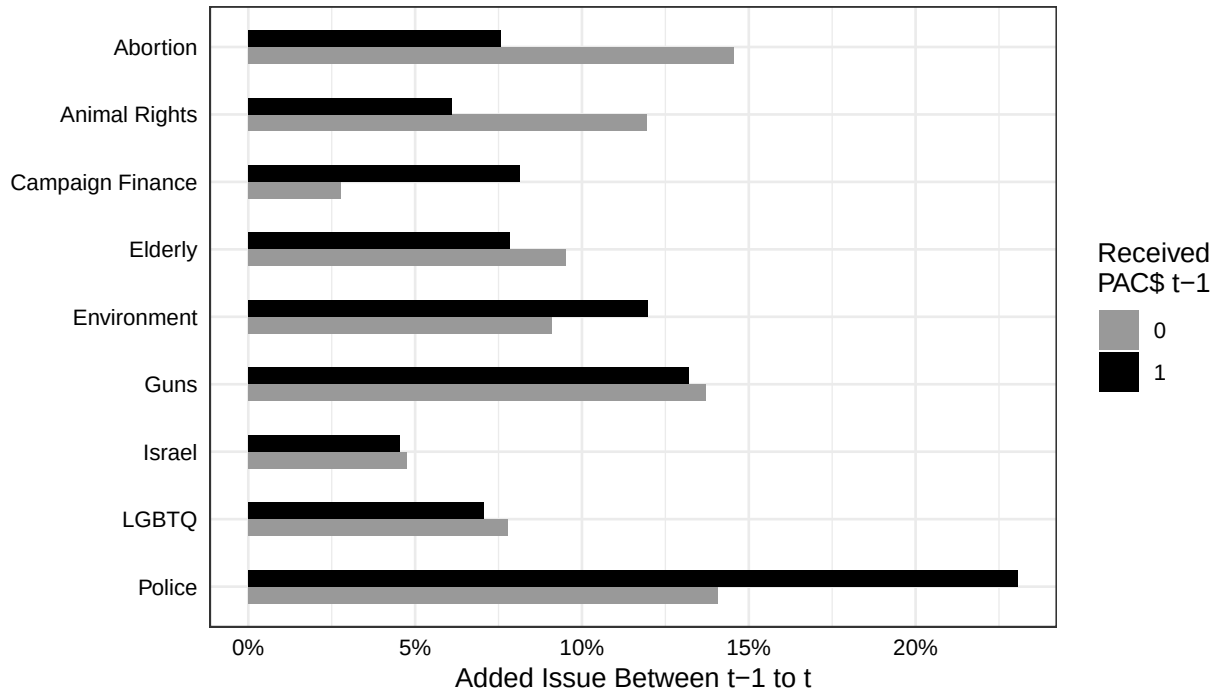


Figure C.3: Rate of Campaign Issue Addition By Previous Issue PAC Funding



C.4 Campaign Issues

Abortion Terms: `"sanctity of life", "unborn", "pro-life", "fetus", "abortion", "abort", "naral", "global gag", "planned parenthood", "terminate", "rape", "right to life", "right to choose", "pro-choice", "pregnancy", "roe", "hyde", "family planning", "reproductive"`

Abortion Example: "Women's reproductive rights are under assault by the Trump Administration. A woman's right to choose is a healthcare issue and economic empowerment issue, which is why it is crucial that we take action to protect women's rights and reproductive freedom. Marilyn strongly supports a woman's right to choose and will fight attempts to restrict access to birth control and women's healthcare. In Congress, she will protect funding for Planned Parenthood and access to birth control, and will fiercely oppose attempts to overturn Roe v. Wade." — Marilyn Strickland (WA-10-2020)

Gun Terms: `"2nd amendment", "infringe", "right to bear arms", "militia", "second amendment", "self-defense", "nra", "rifle", "rifles", "ammunition", "firearm", "firearms", "gun violence", "shooting", "shootings", "shooter", "assault rifle", "automatic rifle", "automatic rifles", "automatic weapons", "assault weapon", "automatic weapon", "background checks", "background check", "bump stock", "high-capacit magazine", "gun", "guns", "high-capacity magazines"`

Guns Example: "When it comes to protecting our right to bear arms, there has been no greater champion than Matt. Marion Hammer, past President of the NRA, has called Matt "one of the most pro-gun members of the Florida Legislature." Matt successfully sponsored legislation banning local governments from infringing on our 2nd Amendment rights, and led the fight to bring Open Carry to Florida. When many called for the repeal of Florida's Stand Your Ground Law, Matt fought to ensure that "not one damn comma" of the law was changed. Matt killed all taxes on gun club memberships, and passed leg-

islation stopping insurance companies from discriminating against gun owners. Matt is once again leading the fight for our 2nd Amendment Rights in Congress by cosponsoring nationwide Concealed Carry Reciprocity legislation." — Matt Gaetz (FL-1-2018)

Animal Terms: `"animal","animals","pet", "pets"`

Animal Example: "I would also champion the promotion of humane animal treatment. I would fight to make sure the next President enforces, funds, and keeps in place current protections for animals and wildlife. I'd work to close loopholes like those in the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and others designed to benefit the few and risk animals and their habitats. And we need to establish and enforce stronger regulations on puppy mills and other inhumane commercial breeding facilities. Our pets are members of our families, and wildlife are an important part of our ecosystem. I am currently the mom of a dog named Winston, and have had pets throughout my entire childhood. As a child, I volunteered at Free Flight Exotic Bird Sanctuary, Helen Woodward Animal Center, and beach clean ups, in addition to supporting conservation efforts and taking wildlife classes at the San Diego Zoo. I would bring this lifelong commitment to our environment, animals, and wildlife, which I know so many people in the 53rd District also share, to my work in Congress." — Sara Jacobs (CA-53-2020)

LGBTQ Terms: `"religious freedom", "marriage equality", "traditional marriage", "same sex marriage", "same-sex marriage", "traditional marriages", "same-sex marriage", "gay", "same sex", "same-sex", "sexual orientation", "lgbt+", "lgbt", "lgbtq", "lgbtq+", "transgend", "sanctity of marriage", "conversion therapy", "gender affirming", "gender-affirming"`

LGBTQ Example: "I believe that marriage is between one man and one woman. It is important to our culture that it be defined as such. I believe in a constitutional amendment

that would protect traditional marriage. Why is a constitutional amendment necessary? It is necessary because of the increasing number of liberal state legislatures pushing for state laws that permit unconventional marriage to occur, and activist judges are sanctioning those laws with increasing regularity. The attack on traditional marriage is an attack on the fundamental core of our society." — Charles Fleischmann (TN-3-2016)

Elderly Terms: `"senior", "seniors", "retiring", "retired", "retire", "retires", "retirees", "retirement", "older americans", "old-age", "old age"`

Elderly Example: "In Congress, I will always honor our commitments to seniors and protect the Social Security and Medicare programs that they have worked hard to fund. I oppose voucher schemes and support reforms that will ensure appropriate cost of living adjustments that account for the rising costs our seniors face. I've fought hard to improve service and cut costs by supporting efforts backed by the AARP and other organizations that represent older Americans. I was named a Medicare Advantage Champion by the Coalition for Medicare Choices, and I will continue these efforts to provide our most valued citizens with the health care and peace of mind they deserve. I've also advocated for a Caregiver's Tax Credit to help families give their elderly loved ones the attention they need in the comfort of home. This effort is strongly supported by the AARP because it provides a tax credit for qualifying caregivers and recognizes the enormous contribution they make to their families and our healthcare system." — Donald Norcross (NJ-1-2020)

Israel Terms: `"israel", "israeli", "palestine", "palestinian", "israeli-palestinian"`

Israel Example: "Israel is one of our strongest allies not only in the Middle East region but across the globe. Under President Trump, American-Israeli relations made great progress, but the Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration threaten our partnership. With anti-Semitic activities on the rise, both nationally and in New York, it is the duty of

our elected officials to properly and swiftly defend our allies. When he gets to Congress, Robert will join the fight to eradicate hate in all forms starting with his efforts to: Push legislation that clearly defines antisemitism and constructs clear punishments for those found engaging in antisemitic activities. Reaffirm and support legislation that maintains funding for Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East and a beacon of democracy in the region. Fight back against the Radical Left's crusade against Israeli sovereignty and their efforts to villainize American Jews. As we've seen across Long Island, New York, and the United States, anti-semitic activities and anti-Israeli sentiments are on the rise. We need to remember who our allies are and to make sure those relationships are reaffirmed. While in Congress, Cap will be vocal in standing by Israel and her right to protect the Israeli people from any outside influence or attacks." — Robert Cornicelli (NY-2-2022)

Campaign Finance Terms: `"citizens united", "campaign finance", "financial disclosure"`

Campaign Finance Example: "Raja opposes the unfettered influx of corporate and special interest money in politics made possible by the Supreme Court's wrong-headed Citizens United decision. In Congress, Raja will work to make sure that the voices of working people and the poor aren't drowned out by special interests.First, Raja supports a constitutional amendment to overturn the effects of Citizens United by stipulating that the rights guaranteed in the Constitution and Bill of Rights are only inherent to natural persons – not to corporations — and that spending unlimited money in elections is not the same as exercising free speech. Second, Raja will work to eliminate so-called "dark money" from our elections by requiring all organizations to disclose their contributions – including those that currently hide their activities by claiming they are for "social" or "educational" purposes. This huge loophole is enabling wealthy individuals and interest groups to hijack our elections without revealing their true identities or purpose. We must return transparency to our elections, so voters can know who is behind the ads and other spending designed to influence their vote. Third, Raja will push for campaign finance reforms that

enables more citizens to participate in our democracy. He will advocate for increased public financing of elections, broader access to our public airwaves for credible candidates, and he will encourage such practices as matching funds for small donations to candidates who agree to spending-limits. This will empower ordinary voters and reduce the over-reliance on special interests that skews our politics in favor of the few over the many." — Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-8-2016)

Environment Terms: `"clean energy", "environment","environmental", "climate change", "global warming", "greenhouse", "pollution", "polluting", "pollutants", "polluters", "fossil fuel", "fossil fuels", "carbon", "clean fuel", "ecosystem", "planet", "solar energy", "solar panels"`

Environment Example: "Our nation's increasing need for energy must be addressed in ways that balance our economy with the stewardship of our environment. Striking this balance is one of the most vital issues facing the United States. Climate Change, as the experts have proven, is a real problem that requires pro-active solutions from the federal government. We need programs that help the private sector explore new business models that can deliver clean energy and energy efficiency at lower cost. If elected to Congress, I will seek out and support appropriate solutions that put our country on a realistic and sustainable path to address this challenge. We need to increase funding for research & development of sustainable energy sources, support tax credits for the development and production of renewable energy like solar, wind, and more efficient and electric vehicles, explore user fees to reduce pollution, and increase funding for mass transit. On a personal note, I grew up on the St. Clair River. Summers of boating, floating on the river in an inner tube, and the thrill of catching that big fish — be it perch, pickerel, bass or walleye – remain fresh in my memory. But the issue of protecting our fresh water supply is a serious one. The Great Lakes are a precious resource for our region and contain 20 percent of all freshwater on the planet. They face serious threats from invasive species,

toxins, water diversion, wetland destruction, sewage overflows and Climate Change. I am committed to working with all communities to protect this valued asset of our region." — Debbie Dingell (MI-12-2020)

Police Terms: `"defund the police", "abolish", "law enforcement", "policing", "back the blue", "police", "protect and serve", "profiling", "incarcer", "officer", "officers"`

Police Example: "We can't have Law & Order without law enforcement. We all have seen the movies where the bad guys have a certain respect for cops – the attitude of "don't kill a cop" because the entire weight of law enforcement would come down and eliminate them. Sadly, since the Obama terms, law enforcement has been vilified, attacked, and disrespected to the point where law enforcement officers have actually been assassinated, and lured into ambushes for harm. Never in my life have I seen this until the last few years. Most law enforcement is at the State and local levels. However, I will do my part to ensure that Federal and local law enforcement work together – one team, one dream! I will publically support law enforcement to renew the respect and honor they deserve. Be vocal!" — Marvin Boguslawski (NC-6-2022)

C.5 Alternative Specifications: Electoral Context Results

Table C.5: Issue Attention and Issue PAC Fundraising by Candidate and District Type, Mixed DV Only

	DV: Presence of Contribution					
	Incumbents		Open Seat		Challengers	
	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean
Campaigned on Issue	0.146***	0.098***	0.140**	0.147***	0.091**	0.130**
	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.030)	(0.041)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,574	4,554	648	639	810	513
Adjusted R^2	0.372	0.264	0.166	0.113	0.256	0.216

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.6: Issue Attention and Issue PAC Fundraising by Candidate and District Type, with Logged DV

	DV: log(Contributions + 1)					
	Incumbents		Open Seat		Challengers	
	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean
Campaigned on Issue	0.998***	0.664***	0.207**	0.160**	0.142***	0.058***
	(0.169)	(0.124)	(0.075)	(0.052)	(0.040)	(0.017)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,852	5,039	3,708	4,878	6,552	11,331
Adjusted R^2	0.392	0.288	0.240	0.204	0.239	0.217

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.7: Issue Attention and Issue PAC Fundraising by Candidate and District Type, Word Count

	DV: Presence of Contribution					
	Incumbents		Open Seat		Challengers	
	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean
# Issue Words Used	0.010**	0.007**	0.003*	0.001	0.002**	0.001*
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,853	5,040	3,708	4,878	6,552	11,331
Adjusted R^2	0.367	0.270	0.231	0.203	0.231	0.209

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

C.6 Alternative Specifications: Triple Differences Models

Table C.8: Triple Difference Estimates: Incumbency Advantage in Issue PAC Fundraising By Prior Issue Attention, First-Period Incumbents as Control

	Δ Contribution (0/1)	log(Δ Contributions + 1)
Δ Incumbency	0.086***	0.567**
	(0.024)	(0.217)
Campaigned on Issue t_{-1}	0.032***	0.461***
	(0.009)	(0.104)
Δ Incumbency * Issue	0.122***	1.193***
	(0.032)	(0.313)
Observations	4,185	4,185
Adjusted R^2	0.046	0.044

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

C.7 Alternative Specifications: Legislative Activity Results

Table C.9: Campaign Attention and Subsequent Legislative Activity on Issue

	# Bills Sponsored		Co-Sponsored Bill (0/1)	
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.248***	0.155*	0.060***	0.041*
	(0.047)	(0.067)	(0.010)	(0.020)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	954
Adjusted R^2	0.240	0.176	0.556	0.592

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.10: Campaign Attention and Subsequent Legislative Activity on Issue, Word Count

	Sponsored Bill (0/1)		# Bills Co-Sponsored	
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
# Issue Words $_{t-1}$	0.011***	0.011***	0.365***	0.264*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.067)	(0.104)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	954
Adjusted R^2	0.259	0.197	0.567	0.566

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.11: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding, Word Count

	DV: Presence of Contribution (0/1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
# Issue Words Used $_{t-1}$	0.007	0.001	0.009	0.005
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Sponsored Bill (0/1)	0.032	0.046		
	(0.021)	(0.037)		
Words * Sponsored	0.006	-0.004		
	(0.005)	(0.004)		
# Bills Co-Sponsored			0.002	0.007*
			(0.001)	(0.003)
Words * Co-Sponsored			0.000	0.000**
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	954
Adjusted R^2	0.315	0.420	0.313	0.425

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.12: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding

	DV: Presence of Contribution (0/1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.088***	0.185**	0.088***	0.065
	(0.019)	(0.067)	(0.019)	(0.041)
# Bills Sponsored	0.033*		0.033*	
	(0.013)		(0.013)	
Campaigned * Sponsored	0.016		0.016	
	(0.016)		(0.016)	
Co-Sponsored Bill (0/1)		0.192***		0.098***
		(0.047)		(0.020)
Campaigned * Co-Sponsored		-0.090		0.039
		(0.063)		(0.045)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	3,735
Adjusted R^2	0.323	0.435	0.323	0.319

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.13: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding

	DV: log(Contribution +1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.689***	1.181***	0.696***	1.809***
	(0.152)	(0.279)	(0.186)	(0.352)
Sponsored Bill (0/1)	0.319	0.882*		
	(0.182)	(0.392)		
Campaigned * Sponsored	0.161	-1.156*		
	(0.270)	(0.519)		
# Bills Co-Sponsored			0.002	0.084**
			(0.013)	(0.028)
Campaigned * Co-Sponsored			0.006	-0.108***
			(0.014)	(0.026)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,735	954	3,735	954
Adjusted R^2	0.341	0.463	0.340	0.469

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

C.8 Alternative Specifications: Candidate-PAC-Year-Level Results

Table C.14: Issue Attention and Primary Fundraising From Issue PAC

	Contributions (0/1)		Contributions (0/1), Mixed		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.006***		0.020***		0.044***	
	(0.001)		(0.002)		(0.005)	
# Issue Words Used		0.000***		0.001***		0.002***
		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.001)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PAC-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	359,080	359,080	93,718	93,718	359,061	359,061
Adjusted R^2	0.080	0.079	0.128	0.126	0.081	0.080

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.15: Issue Attention and Issue PAC Fundraising by Candidate and District Type

	DV: Presence of Contribution					
	Incumbents		Open Seat		Challengers	
	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean	Swing	Lean
Campaigned on Issue	0.027***	0.015***	0.002	0.003*	0.003***	0.001**
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PAC-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	29,798	52,640	38,728	50,948	68,432	118,346
Adjusted R^2	0.194	0.155	0.063	0.039	0.069	0.044

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.17: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding

	DV: Presence of Contribution (0/1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.019***	0.031***	0.017***	0.042***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.008)
Sponsored Bill (0/1)	0.007	0.018		
	(0.005)	(0.012)		
Campaigned * Sponsored	0.001	-0.019		
	(0.007)	(0.015)		
# Bills Co-Sponsored			0.000	0.002***
			(0.000)	(0.001)
Campaigned * Co-Sponsored			0.000	-0.002***
			(0.000)	(0.001)
Observations	39,010	9,964	39,010	9,964
Adjusted R^2	0.152	0.257	0.152	0.258
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
PAC-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.16: Triple Difference Estimates: Incumbency Advantage in Issue PAC Fundraising By Prior Issue Attention

	Δ Contribution (0/1)	log(Δ Contributions + 1)
Δ Incumbency	0.029***	0.233***
	(0.004)	(0.031)
Campaigned on Issue t_{-1}	0.003*	0.031*
	(0.001)	(0.013)
Δ Incumbency * Issue	0.025***	0.205***
	(0.005)	(0.046)
Observations	29,798	29,798
Adjusted R^2	0.027	0.029

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

C.9 Heterogeneity: Results by Party

Table C.18: Issue Attention and Primary Fundraising From Issue PACs, Democrats Only

	Contributions (0/1)		Contributions (0/1), Mixed		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.028***		0.087***		0.235***	
	(0.006)		(0.015)		(0.044)	
# Issue Words Used		0.002***		0.007***		0.018***
		(0.001)		(0.002)		(0.004)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	16,065	16,065	4,833	4,833	16,064	16,064
Adjusted R^2	0.389	0.389	0.277	0.276	0.392	0.392

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.19: Issue Attention and Primary Fundraising From Issue PACs, Republicans Only

	Contributions (0/1)		Contributions (0/1), Mixed		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.008		0.048***		0.057	
	(0.005)		(0.014)		(0.042)	
# Issue Words Used		0.003*		0.011***		0.019*
		(0.001)		(0.002)		(0.009)
Candidate-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	18,315	18,315	4,905	4,905	18,314	18,314
Adjusted R^2	0.212	0.212	0.442	0.445	0.214	0.215

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.20: Campaign Attention and Subsequent Legislative Activity on Issue, Democrats Only

	Sponsored Bill (0/1)		# Bills Co-Sponsored	
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.061*	0.061	1.351*	2.292**
	(0.029)	(0.060)	(0.530)	(0.765)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,674	450	1,674	450
Adjusted R^2	0.280	0.233	0.693	0.678

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.21: Campaign Attention and Subsequent Legislative Activity on Issue, Republicans Only

	Sponsored Bill (0/1)		# Bills Co-Sponsored	
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.111***	0.013	2.392***	1.930**
	(0.031)	(0.062)	(0.478)	(0.666)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,061	504	2,061	504
Adjusted R^2	0.254	0.157	0.585	0.553

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.22: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding, Democrats Only

	DV: Presence of Contribution (0/1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.041	0.042	0.031	0.063
	(0.026)	(0.047)	(0.034)	(0.061)
Sponsored Bill (0/1)	0.052	0.031		
	(0.037)	(0.085)		
Campaigned * Sponsored	0.015	-0.006		
	(0.049)	(0.096)		
# Bills Co-Sponsored			0.004*	0.008
			(0.002)	(0.005)
Campaigned * Co-Sponsored			0.001	-0.003
			(0.002)	(0.004)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1,674	450	1,674	450
Adjusted R^2	0.324	0.544	0.326	0.548

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.23: Legislative Activity, Campaign Attention, and Subsequent Issue Group Funding, Republicans Only

	DV: Presence of Contribution (0/1)			
	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen	Non-Freshmen	Freshmen
Campaigned on Issue $_{t-1}$	0.049*	0.106	0.069	0.171**
	(0.023)	(0.054)	(0.035)	(0.061)
Sponsored Bill (0/1)	0.048*	0.013		
	(0.024)	(0.052)		
Campaigned * Sponsored	0.001	-0.097		
	(0.039)	(0.083)		
# Bills Co-Sponsored			0.010***	0.016**
			(0.003)	(0.006)
Campaigned * Co-Sponsored			-0.004	-0.014**
			(0.003)	(0.005)
Member-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Issue-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	2,061	504	2,061	504
Adjusted R^2	0.524	0.368	0.531	0.381

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

C.10 Heterogeneity: Results by Issue

Table C.24: Abortion Attention and Primary Fundraising From Abortion PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.059***		0.488***	
	(0.009)		(0.075)	
# Issue Words Used		0.005***		0.039***
		(0.001)		(0.008)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.049	0.045	0.053	0.048

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.25: Animal Rights Attention and Primary Fundraising From Animal PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.029*		0.247*	
	(0.013)		(0.097)	
# Issue Words Used		0.015***		0.124***
		(0.003)		(0.023)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.010	0.014	0.009	0.015

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.26: Campaign Finance Attention and Primary Fundraising From Campaign Finance PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.059***		0.504***	
	(0.011)		(0.094)	
# Issue Words Used		0.019***		0.168***
		(0.003)		(0.028)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.082	0.083	0.082	0.084

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.27: Elderly Attention and Primary Fundraising From Elderly PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.036***		0.263***	
	(0.006)		(0.043)	
# Issue Words Used		0.008***		0.056***
		(0.001)		(0.006)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.047	0.058	0.047	0.058

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.28: Environment Attention and Primary Fundraising From Environment PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.018		0.151*	
	(0.010)		(0.077)	
# Issue Words Used		0.003***		0.026***
		(0.001)		(0.005)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,818	3,818
Adjusted R^2	0.088	0.093	0.088	0.093

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.29: Guns Attention and Primary Fundraising From Guns PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.016		0.128	
	(0.012)		(0.095)	
# Issue Words Used		0.001		0.009
		(0.001)		(0.006)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.062	0.062	0.063	0.063

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.30: Israel Attention and Primary Fundraising From Israel PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.111***		0.957***	
	(0.017)		(0.133)	
# Issue Words Used		0.007***		0.057***
		(0.001)		(0.011)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.028	0.022	0.032	0.025

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.31: LGBTQ Attention and Primary Fundraising From LGBTQ PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.031***		0.231**	
	(0.009)		(0.072)	
# Issue Words Used		0.010***		0.076***
		(0.001)		(0.011)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.064	0.074	0.063	0.071

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C.32: Police Attention and Primary Fundraising From Police PACs

	Contributions (0/1)		log(Contributions + 1)	
Campaigned on Issue	0.004		0.023	
	(0.003)		(0.021)	
# Issue Words Used		0.000		0.000
		(0.000)		(0.002)
Party-Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3,820	3,820	3,820	3,820
Adjusted R^2	0.056	0.056	0.049	0.049

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$