

**The Influence of Campaign Contributions on the Content and Passage of Bills:
Modeling Effects of Institutional Design and Partisan Context in State Legislatures**

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Abstract

State legislators were surveyed and asked how much influence campaign contributions have on the content and passage of legislation in their chamber. These responses are used to develop a measure of influence for each of the 99 state legislative chambers. The measure is used to test hypotheses that relate characteristics of the legislatures to the magnitude of influence of money in the chamber. Specifically, legislative professionalization, the size of party majorities, the powers of legislative leaders, the costs of campaigning for office, tied chambers and the education level of constituencies are all determinants of the influence of campaign contributions on legislation.

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The Influence of Campaign Contributions on the Content and Passage of Bills: Modeling Effects of Institutional Design and Partisan Context in State Legislatures¹

The belief that money buys influence from elected legislators has led to laws to curtail the influence of money² and has fostered a sense of cynicism among citizens and elites³. Despite considerable research by scholars, questions of how much influence money has and when it is most and least influential remain unsettled. Indeed, thirty years of academic research has led some scholars to conclude that campaign contributions have little influence on the actions of elected legislators and perhaps none at all⁴.

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² For the U.S. Congress, the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, its subsequent amendments, and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 provide rules for disclosure of contributions and expenditures and specify limits and bans on contributions for different types of contributors. All of the states have also passed a variety of laws regulating campaign finance. All states require some form of disclosure, 45 of the states have limits on contributions and a minority have some form of public funding for candidates who agree to limit spending. (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2006.)

³ A Gallup Survey item of the general population asked “Now we want to know the extent to which you think campaign contributions influence the policies supported by elected officials.” A majority of respondents, 53% said ‘A great deal’, 33% ‘A moderate amount’, 7% ‘Not much’, 3% ‘Not at all’ and 3% DK and refused. (1/31/1997-2/2/1997, N=1056) No comparable item has been asked of elites, but a survey of Congressional campaign contributors asked two agree-disagree items: Donors regularly pressure officials for favors, 57% Agree, 19% Disagree, and Most donors are seeking access to government, 53% Agree and 24% Disagree. (Francia, Green, Herrnson, Powell and Wilcox, 2003).

⁴ Two recent articles exemplify the differing views of the influence of campaign contributions on the voting behavior of Congressional incumbents. Both articles review and analyze previous work (the same 36 studies in both instances) and reference their own research. Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo and Snyder (2003 p 125) conclude, “It doesn’t seem accurate to view campaign contributions as a way of investing in political outcomes. Instead, aggregate campaign spending in the United States, we conjecture, mainly reflects the consumption value that individuals receive from giving to campaigns... Because politicians can readily raise campaign funds from individuals, rent-seeking donors lack the leverage to extract large private benefits from legislation.” In contrast, Stratmann (2005) finds a significant effect of money on votes in a meta-analysis of the same studies and cites his own work finding that contributions have a significant effect on the voting decisions of House members.

Virtually all studies have looked for the influence of money by examining the relationship between campaign contributions to individual legislators and the votes each legislator casts⁵. The relationship between contributions and votes is reciprocal—decisions to contribute are influenced by perceptions of a legislator’s likelihood of a favorable vote and the legislator’s vote is influenced by the contribution. Estimating the influence of money on votes absent the influence of votes on money is a difficult instrumental variable problem. Many studies find no effect of money on votes. Those studies that do find an effect are often accused of inadequately modeling the endogeneity of votes and thus overestimating the effect of money.

Studies have overwhelmingly confined their analyses of the relationship between money and votes because the data are available, at least for the U.S. Congress.⁶ Legislators’ votes on bills are public data and available to scholars, but they are also for this reason very public actions. If a bill is salient to a legislator’s constituency or electoral base, these considerations will largely determine vote choice. Thus we would expect the influence of money on votes to be confined to a subset of votes that lack salience to the legislator or to his or her constituents.

These studies ignore many, more likely and less observable pathways for the influence of money on legislation. Focusing exclusively on the passage or failure of a bill ignores not only the decisions that affect the content of the bill, but also those that determine whether or not a bill is ever written or comes to a vote. A minor provision or

⁵ Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo and Snyder (2003) provide a comprehensive bibliography of this literature through 2002. The earliest work relating contributions to votes on bills in Congress dates from 1976 (Silverman and Durden) and uses data from the first election conducted under federal public disclosure requirements.

⁶ Beginning midway through the 1972 elections, federal law has mandated the disclosure of contributions from individuals and groups to federal candidates. Common Cause published the data for the 1972 and 1974 elections. The Federal Election Commission has provided the data from the 1976 elections through the present.

even the wording of a single line of a bill may be of critical importance to an individual or interest group—the effort of individual members to introduce, negotiate on markup and bargain for support of legislation determines the content of legislation. Finally, the goal of a contributor may be to preserve the status quo and prevent a bill that would alter it from ever coming to a vote. Tom Loftus, former Speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly stated, “The truest thing I can say about special interest money is that it is mainly given to buy the status quo.”

Finally, these studies assume the financial linkage is between the individual legislator and his or her contributors and the votes that legislator casts. Increasingly, party leaders have become fundraisers for not just themselves, but for the caucus. Any influence financial contributions have on leaders’ efforts to mobilize support for or against legislation among members of their caucus will be missed in these models.

The measure used in this analysis incorporates all the effects of campaign contributions on legislation, not just those affecting the final votes on passage. It is based on a national survey of state legislators that asks them to evaluate the extent to which campaign contributions to legislative candidates and to parties determines the content and passage of bills in their chamber. The legislator’s perceptions are used to construct a measure of the influence of money for each of the ninety-nine legislative chambers.

Studying state legislatures rather than the U.S. Congress is critically important to developing theory about the circumstances that enhance or diminish the influence of money. Studying 99 legislative chambers rather than two in the Congress provides leverage to examine the impact of differences in institutional design, the size of party

majorities, the strength of party leaders, and in the costs of campaigning on the magnitude of the influence of money.

Theory and Hypotheses

There is a large literature (see footnote 5) examining and debating the influence of campaign contribution on the votes of legislators. Most notable among the few studies that look for other influences of money is the work of Hall and Wayman. They conclude (1990, p 814), “While previous research on these same issues provided little evidence that PAC money purchased members’ votes, it apparently did buy the marginal time, energy, and legislative resources that committee participation requires.” Their study of committee participation clearly suggests that legislative content is influenced by financial considerations. Although it is unlikely that committee effort is symbolic and without effect in policy terms, it is important to look at the bottom line by asking how much effect campaign contributions have on the policy content of legislation.

Since virtually all studies examining the influence of money have studied the U.S. Congress, they have not formulated theories about factors that vary across legislative institutions. In developing hypotheses about these effects, it is necessary to draw on a broader literature and to rely more on the discussions of politicians than of scholars. Here we develop hypotheses to model institutional differences across states and chambers that explain why money matters more in some states and chambers than in others.

Legislative professionalization has been an important explanatory variable for a variety of legislative behaviors. In a more professionalized chamber, salaries are higher, in large part reflecting a longer session length and time commitment. The base salary for

a legislator in California in 2002 is \$99,000 not counting significant per diem living expenses, leadership bonuses and so forth. In contrast in New Hampshire, legislators are paid \$100 per year, no per diem for living expenses beyond nineteen cents per mile travel expenses, and legislative leaders receive a generous \$25 per year bonus.

Higher salaries make legislative service more desirable—legislators do not need a second income and their legislative salary may exceed what they could earn before their election to the legislature. The more a candidate values winning a seat, and a member retaining one, the more effort candidates will devote to raising larger sums of money to win election and the price to win a seat will be bid higher. In the savings and loan scandal in 1989, Senator Alan Cranston described how the need to raise money to run for reelection required him to spend five, six or sometimes seven hours a day fundraising. (Loftus, 1994) State legislative races require less than is needed to run for the U.S. Senate in California, but states do vary enormously in how much it costs to win a legislative seat, and some states require sizeable efforts to be devoted to fundraising. The average state Senate candidate in California, the most professionalized state, raised almost a half million dollars in 2002. And, competitive elections cost much more than the average.

While modest sums can be raised from friends, family and ideological supporters, larger sums may come with more expectations about specific legislative policies and casework services. Office holders concerned about raising money in future campaigns may fulfill a portion of these expectations, or perhaps without calculation they will simply find the policy requests of their friends, with whom they frequently associate, to be persuasive. Members rarely cast public votes contrary to the strong preferences of

their constituents, especially their party supporters, or to their own personal core beliefs, but this still leaves considerable latitude on many issues of low salience to the public. And although votes cast are visible and watched by variety of local and state groups, actions in committee largely insulate members from public scrutiny and constituency oversight providing even greater latitude.

H1: The more professionalized the chamber, the greater the influence of money.

While the value of seats in more professionalized legislatures drives up the costs of running for office, other factors including constituency population size, media costs, and geographic size increase costs as well. The cost of election, measured by the log of the average amount spent per race in the chamber (The Institute on Money in State Politics, 2004) is correlated with professionalization at .51. This shows a strong relationship between the two measures, while indicating the importance of factors other than professionalization in driving the costs of election. As above, raising large sums of money creates relationships that provides policy rewards to financial contributors.

H2: The higher the costs of attaining office, the greater the influence of money.

The discussion thus far has focused on the motives and actions of individual legislative members. Legislative leaders have increasingly been drawn into the fundraising process through the creation of legislative caucus committees. Tom Loftus (1994, p 37), former Speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly described how “Out of self-interest, legislative leaders have become responsible for retaining or gaining control of their house in the legislature.” In an effort to retain, obtain or increase their majority legislative leaders succeed in raising money from special interests because of their control over the policy agenda. Loftus (1994, p46) states that “Special interest money is

given to buy access and influence. For example, the contributor to the caucus campaign committee buys access to the leadership. The contributor doesn't buy a vote from anyone, let alone purchase a guaranteed victory, but it is the fee that will, in all likelihood get its horse entered in the race.”

Loftus (1994, p 40) argues that money raised by legislative leaders is a less corrupting influence than money given to individual members—there are more checks on leaders from members, interest groups and the press than there are on individual members. In contrast, in a personal interview, a former Speaker in a different state argued that the influence of money was primarily through leaders not members. When presented with the standard model hypothesizing campaign contributions to members influence member's policy actions, he said, “That's not how money works.” He explained how it did work—members would go to the caucus meeting and the leader would say, “Our good friends need our help on this bill.” To the extent to which influence works through leaders, strong leaders should be especially successful in determining the details of legislative content and the success or failure of legislation.

H3: The more powerful the majority leader, the greater the influence of money.

There are two obvious checks on the power of majority leaders. The more power minority leaders possess, the more they can constrain majority leaders. Further, in half the states, elected lieutenant governors preside over the Senate and may exercise additional powers including appointing committees, assigning bills to committees and breaking roll-call ties. In some states, such as Texas, the lieutenant governor is the most powerful figure in the chamber. In Texas, the lieutenant governor can block

consideration of any bill, and thus prevent a bill from passing. A powerful presiding lieutenant governor can constrain the actions of the leaders and members of the Senate.

H4: The more powerful the minority leader, the less the influence of money.

H5: If an elected lieutenant governor has important powers in a chamber, money will be less influential than in other chambers.

Further, when no party has a majority in the chamber and control is shared or rotated, the power of leaders and members to effect policy change is minimized. In this circumstance, the influence of money will also be limited.

H6: In a tied chamber with no majority party, money will be less influential than in one with a majority party.

The slimmer the majority control in the chamber, the harder party leaders work either to maintain or to gain control of the chamber. Ordinary members as well as leaders understand the value of being in the majority rather than the minority. As Loftus (1994, 32) describes, “During the 1980s the value of a seat in the legislature increased dramatically because the margin of the Democratic majority decreased.” He describes how this negated the new public financing law, because in competitive seats, “The stakes were too high (control of one house of the legislature) for many candidates to voluntarily abide by spending limits”. Instead candidates in competitive seats gave up public funding to raise larger amounts through private contributions. The goal of caucus committees led by party leaders is to gain or maintain control of the chamber and narrow majorities lead to greater efforts to raise monies for competitive races.

H7: The smaller the majority in the chamber, the greater the influence of money.

While scholars have not studied variation across states and chambers in the influence of money in the legislatures, they have developed hypotheses regarding variations across states in the corruption of public officials. Corruption and influence are overlapping but not identical concepts. Corruption is illegal conduct, while influence, except for explicit exchanges such as vote buying that are corrupt, is not. Corruption, as studied in this literature, is not confined to legislators, but includes all elected officials in the state, and sometimes includes unelected bureaucrats as well. However, the two concepts share sufficient commonality to anticipate that some of the causes of corruption may apply to influence as well.

Most of these studies have used state level data published annually by the U.S. Department of Justice on the number of elected officials convicted for “criminal abuses of the public trust by government officials.” (Maxwell and Winters, 2004) Maxwell and Winters provide an excellent summary of the literature, replicate and retest the earlier work of Meier and Holbrook (1992) and develop and test new explanatory variables using data from a longer time series than earlier authors had available. Their model fits the data quite well for the 25 year time period. Education measured as the percent college educated age 25 and over in the state is the most consistent predictor of corruption across the various studies that use the DoJ data⁷. Boylan and Long (2001) also find education to be a significant predictor based on a survey of state house reporters’ perceptions of public corruption (including civil servants and appointees). The Boylan and Long measure is significantly related to the prosecution measures although the

⁷ Maxwell and Winters also introduce a measure of civic volunteerism in their model finding that a civic-minded political culture has less political corruption in government. There appears to be no relationship between the civic volunteerism they use and the influence of money measure used here. Other items they included such as the number of levels of government in the state were relevant in their model but not applicable in the legislative model.

magnitude of the correlation between them is modest. Each type of measure has different strengths and weaknesses. Boylan and Long's measure has excellent face validity but is based on very small sample sizes of respondents—only 25 states have more than 3 respondents. The crime based measure is available over a long time period, does measure prosecutions accurately and has theoretically sensible predictors, but prosecutorial effort may vary across states introducing error when used as a measure of corruption. The commonality of education in predicting both measures is reassuring. Higher levels of education are likely to better inform citizens about corrupt activities, to diminish their tolerance for corruption and reduce the electoral and private gains from corrupt activities. Similarly we anticipate an educated citizenry will be more aware of and less tolerant of the influence of campaign contributions.

H8: The better educated the constituency, the less the influence of money.

Data and Measurement

The measure of influence is based on a survey item asked in a national survey of 2982 state legislators conducted in the spring of 2002.⁸ The survey was sent to every state legislator in all 50 states. Two follow up surveys were sent as well as a postcard reminder with a final response rate of 40%. This response rate is comparable to that of other academic surveys of state legislators, and of elites in general.⁹

⁸ The survey was part of the Joint Project on Term Limits, a cooperative effort between state legislative scholars and the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, and the State Legislative Leaders Foundation. Support for the survey was provided by the Smith-Richardson Foundation and from NSF Grant #SES-02131.

⁹ The current survey largely replicated the legislator survey by John M. Carey, Richard G. Niemi and Lynda W. Powell conducted in 1995 with a 38% response rate. See also the review article on surveying state legislators by Maestas, Neeley and Richardson, 2003.

Legislators were asked: To what extent is the content and passage of bills in your chamber influenced by the financial contributions of individuals and groups to candidates and parties? A 7-point scale was given with one end point labeled ‘Not at all Influenced’ and the other ‘Completely Determined’. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses. The mean response was 3.3 and the median 3—the typical legislator locates influence slightly below the mid-point on the 7-point scale. Virtually none of the legislators (1%) thought campaign contributions completely determined legislative content, and only 13% of legislators thought campaign contributions had no influence on legislation. Just over half, 54% placed the influence of campaign contributions roughly halfway between these two extremes—scale positions 3, 4 and 5—with each of these scale positions about equally likely to be chosen. They viewed campaign contributions as having substantial, but certainly not determinative influence in their chambers.

These perceptual measures are subject to several sources of bias. Majority members, especially majority leaders, are likely to assess bills passed by their chamber as more representative of the public interest, and less influenced by financial contributions than are more disaffected minority members¹⁰. Republicans for ideological reasons are

¹⁰ Many studies have found partisan perceptual bias. See, for example, Powell (1981). A variety of studies specifically examine the extent to which partisanship affects the perception of policy performance. Most commonly, these works study economic performance. In *The American Voter* (1960 p 389), Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes found that in 1958 with a Republican president, “Republicans, possibly sensing the likely assignment of political blame, less often admitted that the recession was important to their own financial situation; Democrats, probably equally anxious to establish Republican culpability, more often reported noxious effects of the recession.” Gomez and Wilson (2001) find that citizens are more likely to credit a president of the same party for a strong economy than are citizens who do not share the same partisanship. Wlezien, Franklin and Twigg (1997) model the endogeneity between vote choice and economic perception, finding that vote choice does structure economic perception. Consistent with Zaller’s (1992) work, Duch, Palmer and Anderson (2000) find the effect of bias on perceptions of economic performance to be stronger among the more knowledgeable citizens. Thus we might expect elites, such as state legislators, to show partisan bias in evaluating laws passed by their legislative chamber. Findings regarding bias in policy performance are not confined to the economy. More generally partisan bias shapes evaluations of the performance of democratic systems (Anderson and Tverdova, 2003).

also likely to see the influence of money as less than are Democrats¹¹. In order to determine the extent of bias, the perception of the influence of money is regressed on these respondent characteristics expected to bias perceptions and on state-chamber level dummy variables. **Party Control** is 1 for members of the majority party, 0 for members of the minority party and .5 for members in tied chambers (the upper chambers of Arizona, New Jersey and Texas), and in Nebraska which is nonpartisan.¹² **Party** is 1 for Democrats, 0 for Republicans and .5 for independents and members of other parties. **Majority Party Leader** is 1 for Speakers, Speaker Pro Tems, Vice Speakers, Majority Party Leaders, Majority Floor Leaders, Senate Presidents, President Pro Tems, Vice Presidents and 0 otherwise.

The model is estimated using STATA's Survey procedure with weighted data¹³. Robust standard errors are calculated and all the coefficients on the perceptual bias items are significant at .01 in one-tail tests. As shown in Table 1, Republicans rate the influence of money .60 point less on the 7-point scale than do Democrats; majority members similarly rate influence .57 point less than do minority members. Majority leaders rate the effect of money an additional .36 less than do other majority members.

¹¹ Francia, Green, Herrnson, Powell and Wilcox (2003) find Democratic congressional contributors more likely than Republican contributors to believe that 'Donors regularly pressure officials for favors' and that 'Officeholders regularly pressure donors for money'. Democratic contributors are more likely than Republican contributors to favor increased campaign finance regulation and to consider the federal campaign finance system broken and needing to be replaced.

¹² The upper chambers of New Jersey and Arizona were tied in terms of party control and parties either shared or rotated control of leadership positions. Nebraska and Texas are more complex cases and will be discussed later in the paper.

¹³ Response rate was regressed on chamber, days in session, district population, gender of legislator and a dummy variable for southern state using logistic regression. Members of upper chambers, in short session states with small populations who were women and who were from non-Southern states were more likely to respond. (Other variables of a limited set available on all legislators were examined and found to be unrelated to response rate.) Respondents were then weighted inversely by the estimated probability of responding. These gross weights have a minimum of 1.85 and a maximum of 6.08, a mean of 2.49 and a standard deviation of .44. The ratio of the maximum to minimum weight is 3.3—substantial but arguably not extreme enough to adversely affect precision and warrant capping or constraining the weights.

(Length of tenure, log of length of tenure, an interaction between party and majority status and minority leadership were also tested in the regression as sources of perceptual bias and found substantively and statistically insignificant.)

In order to obtain comparable measures of influence for each of the 99 chambers, it is important to control for these three sources of perceptual bias. The coefficients on the state-chamber dummy variables measure influence controlling for these perceptual biases. By excluding a constant term in the regression and including 99 dummy variables—one for each of the state and chamber combinations, the coefficients on the 99 state-chamber dummies provide estimates of the influence of money for each state and chamber combination¹⁴.

Had the 0-1 coding on the perceptual variables been reversed, the coefficients on the state-chamber dummies would differ by a constant value. For example, had Republicans been coded 1 instead of Democrats, every coefficient on the state-chamber dummies would be .6 more than shown in Table 1. Such a constant change will be irrelevant when the state-chamber coefficients are used as dependent variables in the next stage of analysis. Here we will use as a baseline, the perception of a minority member Republican. This provides a mean estimate across the states of 3.4, roughly comparable to the mean of 3.3 in the sample of legislators. There is no way to know whether the perceptions of Democrats are more or less accurate than Republicans or the perceptions of minority members more or less accurate than majority members. When looking at the coefficients on the state-chamber dummy variables it is important to remember that we care about how they vary across states and chambers, not about their absolute value.

¹⁴ This is equivalent to including a constant term and excluding one of the state-chamber dummies, but the model used in Table 1 slightly simplifies estimating the standard error of the estimate of the influence of money in each state and chamber.

The standard error of a state-chamber coefficient is the standard error of the estimate of the influence of money in that state and chamber. An additional correction is needed for sampling a large fraction of a population without replacement. Some chambers, especially upper chambers, are quite small, as few as 20 members, and there is substantial variance in response rate across chambers. The fixed population correction consists of multiplying the standard errors of the influence coefficients by the square root of $(N-n)/(N-1)$ where N is the chamber size and n is the number of respondents in the chamber.

The influence of money by state is shown for each chamber in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows the lower chambers ordered from the least to the greatest influence of money, and Figure 3 the upper chambers. The bar for each state shows the 95% confidence interval for the estimate with the midpoint of the bar the point estimate. The confidence intervals for the upper chambers are generally much larger than those for the lower chambers, primarily reflecting the size differential between the two chambers. Chambers with more members typically have more respondents than smaller chambers and the estimate of the influence of money has a smaller standard error.

The mean influence of money is similar in both chambers. The maximum values in each chamber are virtually identical: 4.63 in the Ohio Senate and 4.67 in the Alabama House. The upper chambers have more low values of influence than the lower chambers. The upper chambers of Texas, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Delaware all score below 2.5 compared to a low of 2.59 in the lower chamber of South Dakota. The correlation between the two chamber in the same state is .49—a substantial relationship considering the standard errors of our measure. Nonetheless a magnitude that leaves

ample opportunity for explanation by factors that vary across the chambers as well as by factors common to both chambers in the state.

There are no relevant benchmarks for face validity of the measure. The previously cited corruption measure developed by Maxwell and Winters (2004) correlates at .33 with the influence of money measure and is significant at the .01 level. Although the two measures share some conceptual similarity, they are also quite different. The influence of money measure is specific to the legislature and is hypothesized to vary based on electoral and institutional circumstances unique to the legislature that do not apply to the full set of state and local officials which constitute the Maxwell and Winters measure. Further only a very small proportion of influence might constitute legal corruption and legal corruption encompasses actions that are not involved in legislation. For both these reasons, we would expect the causes of the two measures to differ considerably.

Anecdotal beliefs about the influence of money in legislatures may also be based to some degree on publicly revealed corruption in state government and thus provide no satisfactory face validity benchmark to evaluate the measure of the influence of money in legislative chambers. A better way to assess the measure of the influence of campaign contributions is to use it as a dependent variable in a model based on the hypotheses developed above. The measure can then be evaluated based on empirical tests of the hypotheses.

Model Specification

The chamber level measure of the **Influence of Money**, that is, the influence of campaign contributions to candidates and parties on the content and passage of bills in the chamber shown in Figures 2 and 3, is the dependent variable. Independent variables that test the hypotheses described earlier are as follows:

The **Professionalization** measure is drawn from Carey, Niemi and Powell (2000) and Carey, Moncrief, Niemi and Powell (2006) and is based on averaging standardized measures of legislative salary, days in session and total expenditures spent on legislative administration. Although slightly different measures of professionalism are used by different scholars, they are all very highly correlated.

Campaign Costs are measured by the log of the average amount raised by general election legislative candidates in the 2002 elections in each chamber. Estimates for chambers which did not hold elections in 2002 were based on the most proximate year of elections¹⁵. Data were from the State Election Overview 2002 published by The Institute on Money in State Politics (2004).¹⁶

Power Majority Leader and **Power Minority Leader** measures were based on data from the survey of state legislators. State legislators were asked to rate the relative influence of a list of actors in determining legislative outcomes in their chamber. They were given 7-point scales with one endpoint labeled No Influence and the other Dictates Policy. Because of the possibility of perceptual biases coloring these appraisals, the same

¹⁵ 2003 for states with odd year elections and 2000 for states on 4 year election cycles with no races in 2002

¹⁶ The report listed 0 dollars for the lower chamber of New Hampshire. While fund raising is modest in New Hampshire, \$0 is an unrealistic estimate. To estimate a value for NH, the log of money raised was regressed on the log of the mean survey report of dollars spent by winning candidates. All chambers were included in the regression. The two measures correlate at .95 for lower chambers and .78 for upper chambers. The Oregression estimated value replaced the 0 value for NH.

procedure used in estimating the influence of money was used to develop chamber level measures of both these variables. Four variables were included in each regression to capture perceptual bias: Party Control and Majority Party Leader as defined above in determining the measure of the influence of money. Similar dummy variables were also included for Committee Chairs and Minority Party Leaders. The coefficients on the chamber dummy variables constitute the measures for each chamber.

Lieutenant Governor is a dummy variable coded 0 if the elected lieutenant governor does not preside over the chamber and 1 in the 25 Senates in which he or she presides over the Senate. The power to preside is accompanied by the power to break roll-call ties in all but 3 cases and in 11 cases is accompanied by additional powers of either or both appointing committees and assigning bills to committees¹⁷. The data are from *The Book of the States* (2003).

Tied chambers are coded 1, 0 otherwise. Three chambers were tied at the time of the survey: the upper chambers of Arizona, New Jersey and Texas. In addition, the unicameral and nonpartisan legislature of Nebraska is coded as a tied chamber. Wright and Schaffner (2002 p 374) calculate W-NOMINATE scores for roll call votes in Nebraska in the 1999-2000 session and find “no pattern—partisan or otherwise—that could explain the first dimension in Nebraska.” These findings agree with the W-NOMINATE analyses of voting patterns in Nebraska (Aldrich and Battista 2002) and with other earlier analyses of voting patterns. Although parties do support candidates (for example, they list ‘their’ candidates on party websites) and newspapers such as the Omaha World-Herald identify the party registration of candidates for legislative office,

¹⁷ In West Virginia the title of Lieutenant Governor is conferred on the Senate President and is coded as 0 since the Lieutenant Governor is a member of the Senate and is not elected independently of the Senate.

ballots do not contain party identification and the campaigns of the candidates eschew partisan appeals. Candidate partisanship is not an important factor in legislative elections (Schaffner, Streb and Wright 2001). In the legislature, the election of leaders is by anonymous vote of all members. Leaders are not necessarily chosen from the majority party. In 1997, a Democrat was reelected Speaker despite a slight Republican majority in the chamber, and despite the appeal of the state Republican chairman to elected a Republican. Parties appear to play little role in organizing and running the Nebraska legislature. The absence of party in the Nebraska legislature seems most closely akin to a tied legislature.

Size of Majority is percent of the majority party above 50% at the time of the survey and is expressed as a decimal. It ranges from 0 to .41 with a mean of .13. Data were obtained from the National Conference of State Legislatures data base.

Education is measured as the percent college educated age 25 and over in the state and is from the U.S. Census Bureau. The mean percent college graduate is 26.0%, the minimum 15.9% and the maximum 37.6%.

Analysis and Results

Table 2 shows 4 regressions. The first column of results shows an OLS unweighted regression with robust standard errors. However the accuracy of the chamber estimates in the unweighted regression varies greatly largely as a function of differences in sample sizes across the chambers. Due to this heteroscedasticity in the standard errors of the dependent variable, OLS regression with robust standard errors will provide good estimates of the standard errors of the regression coefficients, but estimates of the

regression coefficients themselves will be inefficient. The usual correction is to use WLS, weighting the cases by the inverse of the standard errors on the dependent variable. See for example, King (1997, p. 290). These estimates are shown in the second column of Table 2. This approach assumes that all the error in the regression estimate is due to sampling error in the dependent variable and none to the homoscedastic regression error, ϵ . WLS will provide efficient estimates of the regression coefficients, but inconsistent estimates of the standard errors.

Lewis and Linzer (2005) develop an FGLS estimator that yields an efficient estimate of the regression coefficients as well as consistent estimates of their standard errors. Column 3 presents the regression results applying their technique.¹⁸ The basic pattern of results is quite similar across all three regressions. Six of the eight coefficients are significant and in the expected direction in all three regressions. Of the remaining two, one is in the correct direction although not significant in all three regressions and the remaining coefficient is virtually 0 in the first regression and positive in the correct direction although not significant in any of the other regressions.

The final column of Table 2 shows the prediction of the mean chamber value for the survey item on influence uncorrected for perceptual bias and unweighted. Again the pattern of coefficients is reassuringly similar to the other regressions.

Table 2 includes data on all 99 chambers. There are two chambers, however, whose inclusion in the regression analysis is questionable. First, Nebraska is unique in its nonpartisan legislature. Although members who run for office are almost all affiliated with and supported by a major party, as described earlier, party plays little role in

¹⁸ Jeffrey B. Lewis and Drew A. Linzer graciously provided their R code which was used to generate the FGLS estimates.

organizing or running the legislature. While Republicans are in the majority, it is not clear that the variable on size of the majority makes sense theoretically in this chamber. Nor is it clear that it is appropriate to consider it a tied legislature simply because parties play little role in it. Although legislators responded to the survey items asking about the power of majority and minority leaders, the meaning of their responses in a legislature that in 1997 elected a Speaker of the 'minority' party despite the pleas of the state Republican party leadership is uncertain.

The Texas Senate in 2002 is also an extraordinary case for two reasons. First, the Texas Senate was narrowly controlled by Republicans 16-15 after the 2000 elections. For eight months of the year preceding the survey, the chamber was tied by the successive resignations of two majority party members. However, these ties had little or no substantive impact on the legislative activities of the legislature. Karina Davis, Senate Parliamentarian, provided not only the preceding details regarding the timing of the two resignations and special elections, but also researched the effects of the tied chamber on legislative activity. The regular sessions of the Texas Senate occur in odd numbered years and the regular session ended before the first tie in 2001, and no special sessions were held in 2002 preceding the survey. Although committee hearings were held while the legislature was tied, "The Lieutenant Governor issued interim assignments to the committees sometime in the fall of 2001, with reports being due in November 2002. As is the custom here, committees meet to take testimony and gather information for up to a year, and then finally adopt recommendations shortly before the reports are due. So the first two vacancies, occurring in late 2001 and early 2002, would not have affected any votes at all." (Email from Karina Davis) Thus although the chamber was indeed tied,

there were probably no legislative consequences. However, the effect of the tie on survey responses used to construct three of the variables in the analysis is ambiguous.

Perhaps of more importance, the Lieutenant Governor in Texas may be the most powerful in any Senate. Yet in 2000 the election of Texas Governor George Bush to the presidency resulted in the Lieutenant Governor becoming Governor creating a vacancy in the Lieutenant Governor's position. That vacancy was filled not by a statewide special election, but by a vote of the Senate, electing the chair of the Finance committee to become Lieutenant Governor while continuing as Senator representing his consistency. Constitutionally, the Texas senate has a powerful independently elected Lieutenant Governor. The independence of his election was violated in the 2001-2002 period. Thus there are questions about the coding of Texas on this variable and its effect on survey responses as well.

Table 3 shows the regressions omitting these two cases. The first two columns show the comparisons with and without the two chambers weighted by the inverse of the standard errors and the last two columns show the comparison with the FGLS method. Here the discussion of empirical results will focus on the fourth column of FGLS results omitting the two cases. Considering each hypothesis in order:

H1: The more professionalized chamber, the greater the influence of money.

Professionalization has a positive, though statistically insignificant coefficient. However, we expect professionalization to have an effect on the influence of money in chambers in part because the more professionalized the legislature, the greater the value of service in it and the more resources members are willing to devote to winning election. Thus professionalism works to increase the influence of money partly through increasing

the amounts of money candidates raise for their campaigns. Professionalism is correlated at .50 with the log of campaign costs. If campaign costs are excluded from the equation the coefficient on professionalization is .52; it has a standard error of .24 and is significant at the .05 level. The direct and indirect effects of professionalization are thus likely to be closer to .52 than to the value of .14 shown in Table 3. Comparing the most to the least professionalized state, the influence of money would be approximately half a point higher in the most professionalized. (The professionalism scale is normed so that the least professionalized state, WY has a value of 0 and the most professionalized, CA, a value of 1.) Comparing a chamber one standard deviation above the mean to that one standard deviation above the mean, the influence of money in the more professionalized chamber would be .23 point greater. Table 4 shows these calculations for all the independent variables.

H2: The higher the costs of attaining office, the greater the influence of money.

Campaign costs, measured by the log of the average amount of money raised by candidates for seats in that chamber, has, as expected, a strongly positive and significant effect on the influence of money. The influence of money is .34 point higher in Nevada where the average candidate spent \$124,060 to run for the Senate (about one standard deviation above the mean in the costs of campaigning) compared to the lower chamber in Rhode Island where the average candidate spent \$8343 (one standard deviation below the mean). The amounts raised vary from a low of less than \$1000 for the lower chamber of New Hampshire to a high of almost a half million in California. The standard deviation of the influence of money measure is almost exactly a half point, thus a .34 change is quite considerable movement on this measure.

H3: The more powerful the majority leader, the greater the influence of money.

H4: The more powerful the minority leader, the less the influence of money.

As shown in column 4 in Table 3, the power of the majority leader is positive as expected, but is not statistically significant. It is important to note that in a data set with only 97 cases, weak relationships are unlikely to be found statistically significant and they cannot be distinguished from null relationships. The power of the minority leader is, as expected, negatively correlated with the influence of money; the relationship is modest in impact, but is statistically significant at the .05 level.

H5: If an elected lieutenant governor has important powers in a chamber, money will be less influential than in other chambers.

Money is less influential in senates in which the Lieutenant Governor is a powerful figure than in other chambers—the difference is .28 point in the influence of money and is statistically significant. The Lieutenant governor has particular powers in 23 of the 47 Senates in Table 3. A further refinement to the hypothesis might add the expectation that the effect would be larger if the lieutenant governor was of a different party than the party controlling the Senate, but the sample size is too limited to address this question.

H6: In a tied chamber with no majority party, money will be less influential than in one with a majority party.

In tied chambers, the influence of money is almost a half point lower than in those which are not tied and the coefficient is statistically significant. However, this coefficient must be viewed cautiously. With only two tied chambers included in the sample of 97 cases, there are too few chambers to test this hypothesis adequately. The coefficient for

tied chambers differs significantly from the model including all 99 chambers since the latter doubles the number of tied chambers from two to four. The difference in the estimate of the coefficient is due to TX which is an outlier on the low side in terms of influence and its inclusion in the analysis has a large effect on the estimate of the magnitude of tied chambers.

H7: The smaller the majority in the chamber, the greater the influence of money.

Smaller majorities are associated with a greater influence of money and the result is statistically significant. The substantive effect is modest—comparing a chamber one standard deviation above the mean to that one standard deviation below, the influence of money is increased by .16 point. The maximum theoretical range on this variable is .5—the minimum is in a tied chamber and the maximum in one with only one party represented. The range in this sample is .41 for a maximum effect in the sample of .29 point.

It is important to note that larger majorities are associated with slightly lower costs of campaigning ($r = -.25$). To the extent that small majorities drive up the costs of campaigning for both parties in their efforts to gain or retain the majority, the total direct and indirect effects of the size of the majority will be slightly greater than the coefficient in the regression equation which only measures the direct effect of this variable.

H8: The better educated the constituency, the less the influence of money.

This hypothesis is also supported. Comparing a state one standard deviation above the mean on percent college educated with one a standard deviation below the mean, the influence of money is reduced by .14 point. This is a small but statistically discernable effect.

In net, seven of the eight hypotheses are supported by the data. The predictive power of the model in terms of the adjusted R-square of .22 is not large. A substantial portion of the unexplained variance is due to the small sample sizes used to estimate the influence of money; the standard error of the measure contributes to the unexplained variance. The predictive ability of the model and the accuracy of our estimates of the effects of the independent variables might be improved by refining some of the measures of the independent variables. For example, the dummy variable coding the power of the lieutenant governor in the senate is a crude dichotomous measure that certainly does not capture the range of power the lieutenant governor may exercise in the chamber.

Conclusion

Scholarly studies examining the influence of money almost entirely confine their analyses to the narrow relationship between a member's votes and the contributions he or she receives from special interests. While the literature suggests the importance of developing a broader measure of influence to capture a wider range of influences of money on the content of legislation, these arguments still focus on the relationship between the legislator's actions and contributions of his or her contributors. These studies ignore the larger context of institutional design, party organizational strength, costs of campaigning and other factors that affect how much campaign contributions to legislators and parties shape the content and passage of legislation.

This analysis develops a broad measure of the influence of campaign contributions on the content and passage of legislation, and uses it to measure the influence of money in each of the ninety-nine state legislative chambers. Hypotheses are

developed and tested to explain the varied influence of money in these chambers. There are four types of findings.

First, the higher costs of winning office which accompany legislative professionalization, but are also driven by other factors, such as constituency size and media cost, increase the influence of money in legislatures. Modest amounts of money can be raised easily from friends, family, neighbors and strong party supporters. Raising large amounts of money is much more difficult and the dependence of candidates upon contributors who expect more material benefits may result in networks of obligation that consciously or unconsciously influence the behavior of legislators.

Second, legislative leaders have increasingly become the chief fundraisers for their caucus members. Legislative leaders raise money from groups and individuals largely because of their current control over the policy agenda of the legislature and because of their prospects of future control. The smaller the majority's margin of control in the legislature, the more effort leaders in both parties devote to raising campaign funds to retain or gain control of the chamber. Leaders who raise large amounts of money are more obligated practically and psychologically to contributors. As one legislative leader explained to me, members go to the caucus meeting and the leader will say, "Our good friends need our help on this bill." Thus, the smaller the majority, the greater the influence of money. Further, the more powerful the minority leader, the more the power of the majority is checked and thus the less the influence of money. Similarly, we expected to find more powerful majority leaders increase the influence of money. While the regression coefficient for the latter relationship is positive as expected, it is not statistically significant.

Third, factors that diminish members' and leaders' control over the policy agenda in their chambers reduce the influence of money. Tied chambers result in shared or rotated power and create legislative gridlock that reduces the influence of money. Further, state constitutions in roughly half the states give lieutenant governors a range of powers in state senates which also check the power of legislators and reduce the influence of money in those chambers.

Finally, well educated citizens reduce the influence of money. Well-educated citizens are more knowledgeable about the workings of their government and are less tolerant of the influence of money in the legislative process.

In summary, although completely neglected by the academic literature, institutional design, party balance and leadership strength in the legislature and the knowledge of citizens are all important determinants of the magnitude of influence of money in legislatures. While the increasing costs of campaigns have been argued by some to increase the influence of money, this argument has been disputed by others based on studies looking simply for a linkage between votes and contributions. This analysis provides support for a concern about the effects of increasingly expensive campaigns. Campaign contributions to candidates and parties have more influence on legislation in chambers in which campaign costs are higher than in those in which campaign costs are lower.

Campaign finance laws have not been included in this analysis for two reasons. First, they are endogenous, and including them in a model would require an expanded theory explaining their development. Second, coding not just the types of laws but determining their effectiveness is an extremely difficult task. Money is fungible and

when laws are enacted to preclude or limit some types of contributions, other pathways are discovered and utilized. Even if candidates could be prevented from receiving contributions from private sources altogether (and Supreme Court decisions have found that they cannot), groups and individuals could spend money independently as free speech to elect candidates. (See for example, the discussion of over a quarter of a million dollars of independent expenditures used to make last minute media buys in the 2000 legislative elections in Washington.¹⁹) This is not to argue that campaign finance regulation should be abandoned, but that it is difficult to anticipate and discern the effects of individual laws and rules. One form of regulation, the public disclosure of contributions and legislative activities, is likely to have a positive effect in any circumstances. The impact of education among the electorate on decreasing the influence of money, suggests that public information about campaign finance and legislative issues will lessen the influence of money in the legislative process.

¹⁹ Spokane Spokesman-Review. February 12, 2001. These expenditures were largely made by groups formed within a month of the election. They made large media buys in competitive races just before the general elections.

Table 1

Regression Predicting the Influence of Money
 Unit of Analysis is the Individual Legislator

STATA Survey Procedure: Linear regression

Number of obs = 2982
 R-squared = 0.8491

	Coef.	Std. Err.	t
Pty Control	-0.60	0.06	-10.15
Party	0.57	0.06	9.82
Maj Pty Lead	-0.36	0.13	-2.74
Lower Chambers:			
AK	3.92	0.25	15.69
AL	4.68	0.23	20.38
AR	2.85	0.20	14.46
AZ	3.10	0.25	12.48
CA	3.82	0.35	10.95
CO	3.21	0.30	10.64
CT	3.21	0.21	15.22
DE	3.19	0.38	8.37
FL	3.73	0.25	14.89
GA	3.83	0.22	17.17
HI	3.52	0.32	10.92
IA	4.47	0.21	21.77
ID	3.34	0.34	9.70
IL	3.68	0.30	12.13
IN	3.24	0.23	13.92
KS	3.44	0.16	21.32
KY	3.37	0.23	14.77
LA	3.08	0.25	12.25
MA	3.08	0.22	13.80
MD	3.59	0.23	15.83
ME	2.98	0.20	15.20
MI	3.89	0.23	16.76
MN	3.61	0.23	15.36
MO	3.55	0.21	17.10
MS	3.61	0.28	12.90
MT	3.26	0.17	19.25
NC	3.63	0.24	14.92
ND	3.05	0.17	18.26
NH	3.09	0.12	26.80
NJ	3.28	0.31	10.56
NM	3.20	0.26	12.28

NV	3.50	0.36	9.71
NY	3.36	0.21	15.93
OH	4.10	0.24	17.24
OK	3.20	0.24	13.22
OR	4.24	0.24	17.86
PA	3.88	0.18	21.65
RI	4.11	0.29	14.16
SC	3.66	0.26	14.19
SD	2.59	0.21	12.08
TN	3.59	0.28	12.90
TX	3.06	0.19	16.25
UT	3.08	0.20	15.20
VA	3.46	0.18	19.66
VT	2.92	0.18	16.36
WA	3.64	0.24	15.11
WI	3.99	0.26	15.16
WV	4.00	0.29	13.66
WY	2.92	0.21	14.04
Upper Chambers:			
AK	3.92	0.27	14.63
AL	3.50	0.56	6.26
AR	3.65	0.28	12.84
AZ	3.03	0.35	8.67
CA	3.59	0.29	12.34
CO	4.12	0.40	10.36
CT	2.26	0.34	6.61
DE	2.41	0.40	6.07
FL	4.52	0.45	9.96
GA	3.20	0.37	8.60
HI	2.59	0.50	5.23
IA	3.73	0.24	15.27
ID	3.12	0.28	10.94
IL	3.46	0.31	11.11
IN	2.84	0.28	10.02
KS	2.91	0.29	10.21
KY	2.97	0.32	9.34
LA	3.83	0.48	8.03
MA	3.33	0.49	6.77

MD	3.17	0.42	7.52
ME	2.71	0.21	12.72
MI	3.71	0.38	9.83
MN	3.00	0.22	13.48
MO	3.44	0.51	6.68
MS	4.37	0.74	5.92
MT	3.17	0.27	11.59
NC	3.49	0.34	10.16
ND	3.08	0.25	12.14
NE	2.76	0.23	12.09
NH	2.33	0.43	5.48
NJ	3.18	0.60	5.34
NM	3.37	0.42	7.95
NV	3.07	0.38	8.16
NY	3.39	0.28	12.03
OH	4.64	0.34	13.47
OK	3.24	0.29	11.14
OR	4.17	0.27	15.34
PA	3.67	0.48	7.70
RI	3.16	0.38	8.35
SC	3.74	0.29	12.88
SD	2.62	0.27	9.84
TN	3.56	0.57	6.19
TX	1.69	0.30	5.68
UT	2.71	0.33	8.27
VA	4.00	0.25	16.00
VT	2.80	0.30	9.48
WA	3.34	0.33	10.28
WI	3.99	0.47	8.46
WV	2.89	0.33	8.79
WY	3.43	0.30	11.62

Figure 1

To what extent is the content and passage of bills in your chamber influenced by the financial contributions of individuals and groups to candidates and parties?

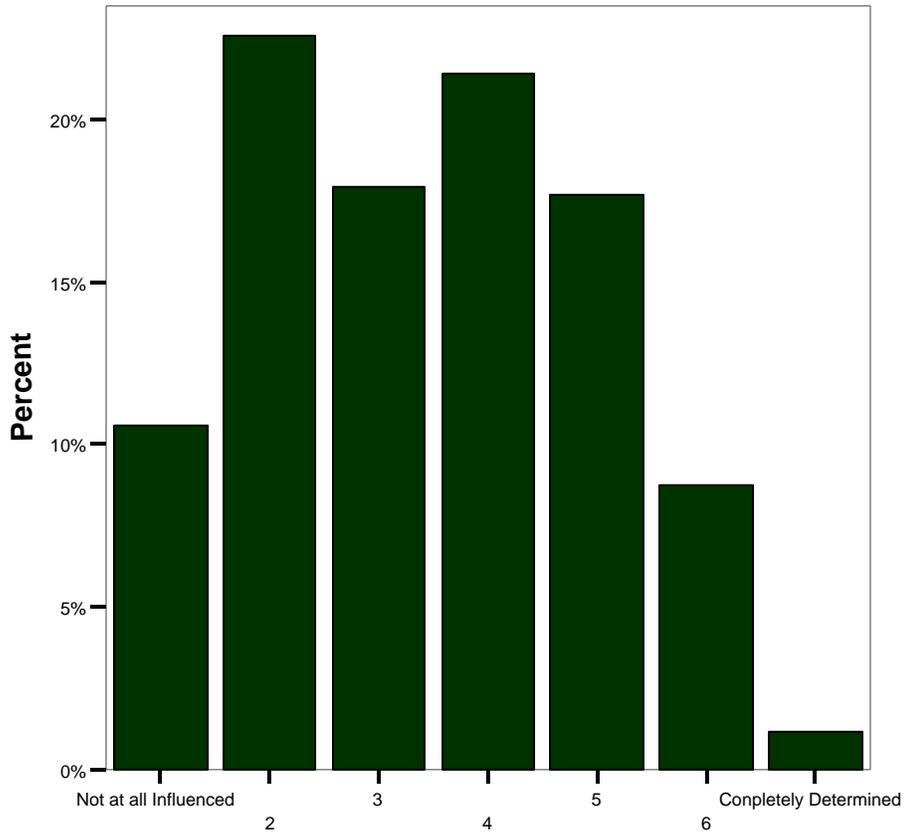


Figure 2

Estimates of the Influence of Money in Lower Chambers
States are Ordered from Least to Most Influence
Vertical Lines Show 95% Confidence Intervals

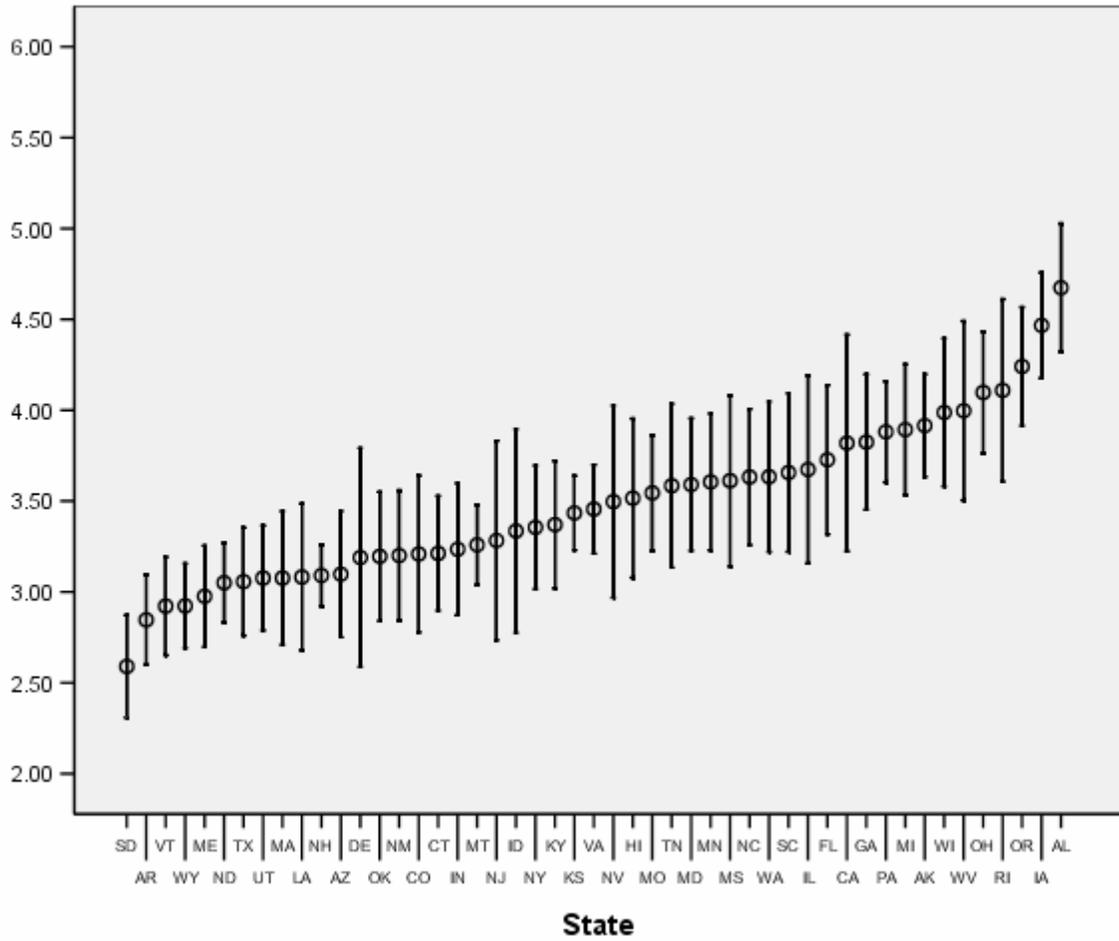


Figure 3

Estimates of the Influence of Money in Upper Chambers
States are Ordered from Least to Most Influence
Vertical Lines Show 95% Confidence Intervals

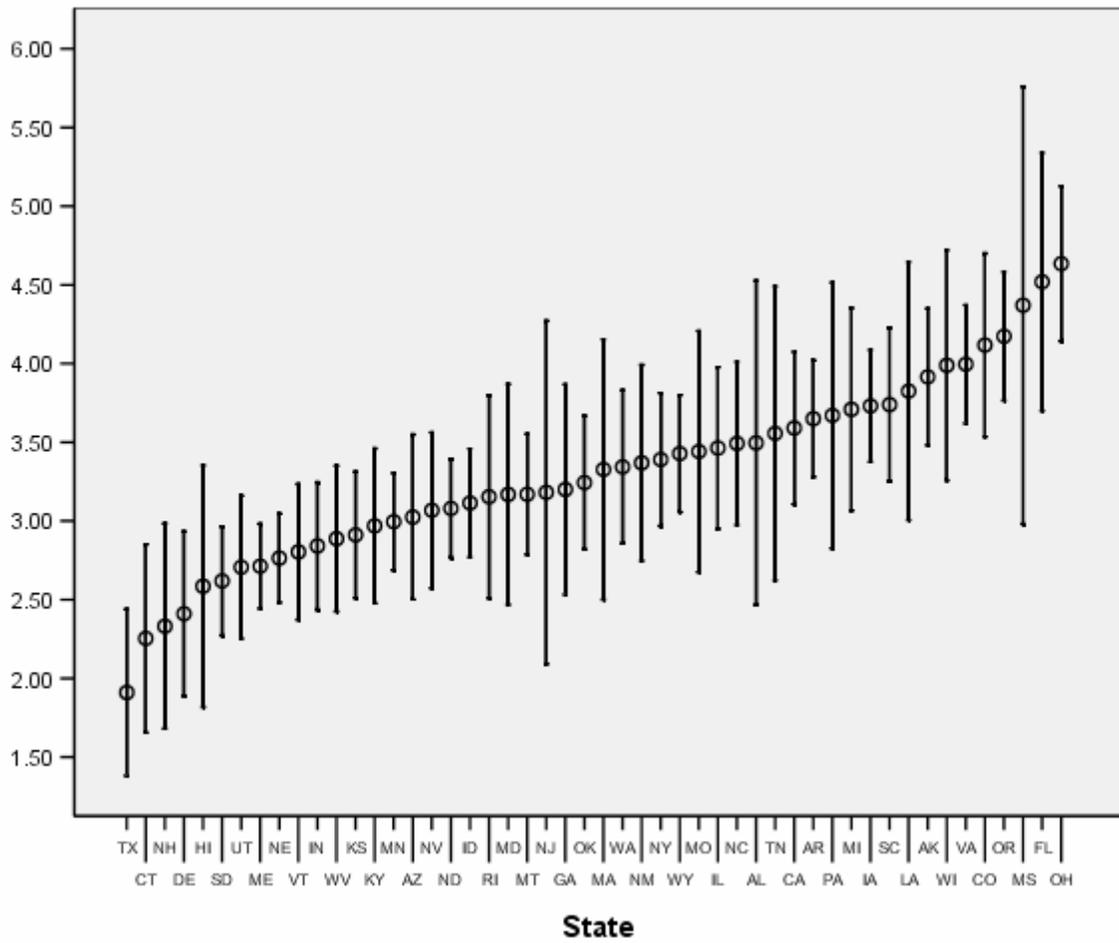


Table 2
 Prediction of the Influence of Money in State Legislatures
 Unit of Analysis: the 99 State Chambers

	Unweighted Regression	Weighted by Inverse Std. Errors	FGLS weights	Prediction of Mean Uncorrected Influence Unweighted
Professionalization	.348 (.278)	.189 (.267)	.177 (.268)	.416* (.291)
Campaign Costs	.114*** (.048)	.114*** (.042)	.112*** (.044)	.132*** (.050)
Power Maj Leader	-.006 (.067)	.060 (.071)	.065 (.072)	-.019 (.070)
Power Min Leader	-.176* (.106)	-.192** (.105)	-.193** (.106)	-.135 (.111)
Lt. Governor	-.318*** (.111)	-.299*** (.115)	-.307*** (.114)	-.307*** (.117)
Tied	-.870*** (.272)	-.786*** (.308)	-.782*** (.309)	-.849*** (.285)
Size of Majority	-.830* (.551)	-.827* (.544)	-.800* (.543)	-1.112** (.577)
Education	-.021** (.011)	-.016* (.011)	-.016* (.011)	-.022** (.012)
Constant	3.472*** (.727)	3.028*** (.709)	2.959*** (.724)	3.161*** (.761)
R-squared	.31	.32	.32	.32
Adj. R-Squared	.25	.26	.26	.26

Standard Errors are shown in Parentheses

*** Significant at .01 in one-tail test

** Significant at .05 in one-tail test

* Significant at .10 in one-tail test

Robust standard errors are shown

Table 3
 Prediction of Influence of Money in State Legislatures
 Unit of Analysis: the State Chambers

	Weighted by Inverse Std. Errors		FGLS Method	
	All Chambers	Omitting Nebraska and Texas	All Chambers	Omitting Nebraska and Texas
Professionalization	.189 (.267)	.157 (.264)	.177 (.268)	.139 (.265)
Campaign Costs	.114*** (.042)	.124*** (.042)	.112*** (.044)	.130*** (.044)
Power Maj Leader	.060 (.071)	.065 (.077)	.065 (.072)	.075 (.078)
Power Min Leader	-.192** (.105)	-.174* (.113)	-.193** (.106)	-.171* (.114)
Lt. Governor	-.299*** (.115)	-.277*** (.115)	-.307*** (.114)	-.285*** (.114)
Tied	-.786*** (.308)	-.464 (.398)	-.782*** (.309)	-.452*** (.401)
Size of Majority	-.827* (.544)	-.761* (.550)	-.800* (.543)	-.718* (.550)
Education	-.016* (.011)	-.016* (.011)	-.016* (.011)	-.017* (.011)
Constant	3.028*** (.709)	2.840*** (.709)	2.959*** (.724)	2.707*** (.796)
R-squared	.32	.28	.32	.28
Adj. R-Squared	.26	.22	.26	.22

Standard Errors are shown in Parentheses

*** Significant at .01 in one-tail test

** Significant at .05 in one-tail test

* Significant at .10 in one-tail test

Robust standard errors are shown

Table 4

Effect of Variables on the Magnitude of Influence of Money in State Legislatures

	Standard deviation for Continuous Variables	Effect on Influence comparing a chamber one std deviation above the mean to one a std deviation below
	0-1 shown for Dummy Variables	For Dummy variables the comparison is to those with a value of one to those with a value of 0
Professionalization*	0.218	0.23
Campaign Costs	1.326	0.34
Power Maj Leader	0.652	0.10
Power Min Leader	0.446	-0.15
Lt. Governor	0-1 Dummy	-0.28
Tied	0-1 Dummy	-0.45
Size of Majority	0.093	-0.13
Education	4.513	-0.15

For professionalism, the effect shown is total direct and indirect effect estimated excluding campaign costs from the regression equation. Estimates are based on FGLS.

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Table of Contents. Overview. Individual Contribution Limits. To help ensure that these groups have no corruptive influence on election and campaigns, many states impose contribution limits on candidates, dictating how much any one entity can give a campaign. This page provides an overview of the types of restrictions states place on contribution limits, and gives examples of certain statutory restrictions. 19 states impose no restrictions on the ability of state party committees to contribute money to a candidate's campaign. Illinois, Kansas, New Jersey, and New York allow state parties to donate unlimited sums if the candidate meets certain qualifications, such as running uncontested or agreeing by certain spending limits. Campaign contributions are widely viewed as a corrupting influence but most scholarly research concludes that they have marginal impact on legislative behavior.... Lynda W. Powell shows that contributions have considerable influence in some state legislatures but very little in others. Using a national survey of legislators, she develops an innovative measure of influence and delineates the factors that explain this great variation across the 99 U.S. state legislative chambers. Powell identifies the personal, institutional, and political factors that determine how much time a legislator devotes to personal fundraising and fundraising for the caucus. In her new book, *The Influence of Campaign Contributions in State Legislatures* (University of Michigan Press, 2012), Powell argues instead that the real power of money is exerted long before the roll call. "The question is, what went into these laws," says Powell. "The wording of just a sentence or two or the addition of an earmark makes all the difference to a special interest group." "This book represents a major step forward in the study of campaign finance effects," writes Gary Jacobson, a professor of political science at the University of California in San Diego. "Lynda Powell combines theoretical clarity with unique empirical data to offer the most rigorous case yet for the widespread but difficult-to-document idea that campaign money influences public policy." *Helping Friends or Influencing Foes: Electoral and Policy Effects of Campaign Finance Contributions*. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 65, Issue. 1, p. 88. Do Campaign Contribution Limits Curb the Influence of Money in Politics?. *American Journal of Political Science*, CrossRef.