Center for
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Do Effective State Legislators
Become Effective Lawmakers in Congress?

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Abstract

What experiences contribute to a legislator becoming an effective lawmaker in Congress? In this paper we draw on new estimates of legislative effectiveness from 46 states between 1989 and 2018 to explore the role of state legislative experience and state lawmaking effectiveness in shaping effectiveness at the federal level. Specifically, we demonstrate that highly effective state legislators who are elected to Congress from more professional state legislatures are more effective than their congressional counterparts who either did not serve at the state level or who served in less-professional legislatures. Such lawmakers behave similarly to much more senior members of Congress; they introduce more legislation and successfully address issues of greater substantive significance. Our findings raise the potential importance of looking to state legislatures for the next generation of highly skilled federal lawmakers, and they speak to broader questions about the identification of candidate traits that are related to their subsequent lawmaking effectiveness in the U.S. Congress.

Center for Effective Lawmaking Working Paper

Do Effective State Legislators Become Effective Lawmakers in Congress?

How do some legislators become more successful at advancing their legislative agenda items than others? Is legislative effectiveness largely due to individual legislators holding privileged positions in their chambers, such as being a member of the majority party, a committee chair, or a subcommittee chair? Alternatively, do legislators cultivate their lawmaking effectiveness over time by building on their innate skills to learn how to compromise and forge bargains? Or, does legislative effectiveness follow from both institutional positions and personal circumstances and situations?

We engage with these questions by connecting new data on state legislative activity in American state legislatures with measures of legislative effectiveness in the U.S. Congress. More specifically, drawing on data from 46 state legislatures from 1989 to 2018, we generate State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) in a manner that is analogous to the methodology that employed by Volden and Wiseman (2014) in their analysis of legislative effectiveness in Congress. After creating the SLES, we then identify all of the state legislators from our set of 46 states who were eventually elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and we explore the relationship between their legislative effectiveness as a state legislator and their subsequent legislative effectiveness (as measured by their LES) in the U.S. House.

Our analysis suggests that state legislators who were highly effective lawmakers in more professionalized state legislatures are more likely to become highly effective lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives. Simply serving in a state legislature or being a highly effective lawmaker in a "citizen legislature," however, does not necessarily correspond to lawmaking effectiveness in the U.S. Congress. In fact, we find no evidence that members of Congress who served in less-professional state legislatures are more effective than those who did not serve at

the state level at all, suggesting that legislative contexts that more closely mirror Congress are helpful in cultivating skills that translate to lawmaking at the federal level. Indeed, highly effective former state legislators who served in more professional contexts outperform their peers who lack experience in state legislatures, and/or served in less-professional state legislatures.

In auxiliary analyses, we show that these differences are not a function of specific experiences that former members of professional state legislatures have, such as being in the majority party or serving as a committee chair. Rather, we find that highly effective Representatives from more professional state legislatures are more successful in Congress than their less effective counterparts because they introduce relatively more expansive legislative portfolios and they carry this larger portfolio—particularly substantively important bills— through to fruition.

Taken together, our results suggest that, first, although a Representative's legislative effectiveness is clearly related to her institutional position in the chamber, legislative effectiveness is indeed a skill that transcends legislative settings. Second, more professional state legislatures serve as more constructive training environments for legislators to cultivate their skill sets as they prepare for their future careers as lawmakers in the U.S. Congress than do citizen legislatures. Third, voters might wish to rely on specific cues if they are seeking to elect a highly effective lawmaker to Congress. Bluntly stated, prior legislative service in a state legislature might not necessarily map onto effective lawmaking in Congress; but being a highly effective lawmaker in a professional state legislature is likely to enhance one's legislative successes in Congress.

Legislative Effectiveness: Theoretical Foundations and Approaches to Measurement

The concept of legislative effectiveness, or who successfully advances their legislation through the legislative process, has been long studied by scholars of the U.S. Congress. Beginning with Matthews's (1960) study of the U.S. Senate, several scholars have measured legislative effectiveness by calculating the percentage of bills (often referred to as "hit rates") that a legislator introduces that pass her respective chamber and/or become law. Other scholars, building on Frantzich (1979), have measured legislative effectiveness by focusing on the number (rather than the percentage) of bills that a member introduces that pass various benchmarks in the legislative process (Moore and Thomas 1991, Anderson et al. 2003, Cox and Terry 2008). More recently, Volden and Wiseman (2014) have developed a new approach for measuring a Representative's or Senator's legislative effectiveness, which they characterize as "the proven ability to advance a member's agenda items through the legislative process and into law" (Volden and Wiseman 2014, 2018).

Volden and Wiseman's measure, which we employ in this paper, is calculated using data that is drawn from the Library of Congress' website. More specifically, for every member of the U.S. House and Senate who served between 1973 and 2018, Volden and Wiseman identify how many bills they introduced in each Congress, along with how many of those bills received any sort of action in committee, action beyond committee, passed their respective chambers, and were signed into law. Each bill is also evaluated for substantive significance, with each being coded as *commemorative*, *substantive*, or *substantive and significant*. Volden and Wiseman use these data to generate a *Legislative Effectiveness Score* (LES) for every lawmaker in the 93rd through 115th Congress (1973-2018). The resulting scores parsimoniously capture how successful each legislator was at advancing her agenda items through the legislative process in comparison to all other members in her chamber during each two-year period. As a result, this

metric has been incorporated into a variety of studies by scholars to explore the causes and consequences of legislative effectiveness in the United States Congress (e.g., Berry and Fowler 2018; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017; Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2013).

While legislative effectiveness has been the focus of a substantial body of scholarship on the U.S. Congress in recent years, engagement with the concept at the state level has been more uneven. Early research in this area primarily used elite surveys that sought to measure perceptions about which state legislators were the most effective lawmakers. Meyer (1980), for example, analyzed responses from a survey in which legislators in North Carolina were asked to identify the "top five" most effective legislators in their state House. Weissert (1991a, 1991b) and Padro i Miquel and Snyder (2006) subsequently built upon these efforts, using responses from the biennial survey administered by the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research since 1979 to assess the opinions of legislators, journalists, and lobbyists regarding the effectiveness of particular lawmakers.

In contrast to these elite interview-based approaches, scholars of state politics, such as Hamm, Harmel, and Thompson (1983), Saint-Germain (1989), and Bratton and Haynie (1999), have studied state legislative effectiveness in a manner that is more analogous to Matthews (1960) and Frantzich (1979), both counting the number of bills that a legislator sponsors that advance through different stages of the legislative process, and calculating legislator hit rates. More recently, Edwards (2018) develops a new methodology for measuring legislative effectiveness based on a legislator's probability distribution over her hit rates, and he uses this metric to explore the determinants of legislative effectiveness in North Carolina, Michigan, and Georgia. A core finding that emerges from Edwards's analysis is that members of the majority party, majority party leaders, and committee leaders are more effective lawmakers than both minority party members and rank-and-file legislators. Similar to Edwards, we embrace a

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methodology that both deviates from elite interview-based metrics and is more nuanced than either hit rates or a simple count of the bills that advance through different stages of the legislative process. We likewise expand upon the scope of previous analyses at the state level to cover 46 states over a substantially larger period of time (with the intention to cover all 50 states in the near future, adding Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, and Kansas), following the approach of Volden and Wiseman (2014).

State Legislative Experience and Congressional Effectiveness: Hypotheses

A sizeable body of work has built on the progressive ambition thesis (i.e., Rohde 1979) to explore the conditions under which state legislators might seek to run for higher office (e.g., Fowler and McClure 1990, Maestas et al. 2006). Yet, there is less research that explores the relationships between legislative activity in state legislatures and subsequent lawmaking in Congress. Anecdotally, a wide collection of political biographies (e.g., Frank 2015) highlight how the skills that state legislators acquired while in office subsequently translated into the strategies that they employed (successfully) upon being elected to Congress. However, there is essentially no large-sample scholarship that speaks generally to how being an effective lawmaker in the state legislature might translate into being a successful lawmaker in Congress. Moreover, there is likewise very little large-sample research on what relationships (if any) exist between the strategies and tactics that are employed by legislators as they move from one legislative body to another.

One notable exception, however, is Volden and Wiseman (2018), who demonstrate that U.S. Senators who were highly effective lawmakers when they served in the U.S. House continue to be highly effective lawmakers after they are elected to the U.S. Senate. In contrast, simply serving in the House of Representatives does not translate into being a highly effective

lawmaker in the Senate. This result suggests that a legislator's lawmaking effectiveness is likely

a transferable skill that can be cultivated in one legislative environment (e.g., the House) and

then be employed in another (e.g., the Senate).

If one accepts that a legislator's lawmaking effectiveness—in addition to being related to

her institutional positions in the chamber—is also partly related to her skills, then the extant

research points to certain testable hypotheses. First, and consistent with the results of Volden

and Wiseman (2018), one might expect that highly effective state legislators became highly

effective because they learned about the legislative process and the politics of coalition

formation, and they developed knowledge and skills that would be generally useful in other

political environments. Therefore, we might expect that highly effective state legislators who are

elected to the U.S. House would subsequently employ their lawmaking skills in their new

legislative environment. This logic motivates our first hypothesis:

Effectiveness in State Legislature Hypothesis*: Highly effective lawmakers in state legislatures
will be highly effective lawmakers in Congress.*

Second, it is possible that simply serving in a legislative environment that is similar to the

U.S. House might help a legislator cultivate skills that she could subsequently apply toward

advancing her legislative agenda at the federal level. Given that state legislatures vary

substantially, in regards to the scope of their professionalism (i.e., Squire 1992, 2017), it serves

to reason that some state legislatures might be more constructive training grounds for state

legislators to learn the process of lawmaking than others. More specifically, one might expect

that legislators who serve in more professional legislatures—those that meet year-round, pay a

substantial salary, and are well-staffed, and thus are more analogous to the U.S. House—will

learn more about the lawmaking process that they can use to advance their legislative agendas

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after they have been elected to Congress than their peers who serve in less professional contexts. This logic motivates our second hypothesis:

Service in Professional State Legislatures Hypothesis*: Legislators who served in more professional state legislatures will be more effective lawmakers in Congress.*

Third, it may also be the case that a Representative's lawmaking effectiveness is related both to how successful they were in advancing their agendas in their state legislatures *and* the scope of professionalism in the legislature in which they served. Indeed, given that some legislatures meet very little (e.g., less than three months a year), employ very few legislative staff, and consider a relatively small legislative agenda, it is plausible that state legislators (even those who were successful in advancing their policies in such citizen legislatures) are not learning much about the lawmaking process that can be meaningfully applied to their subsequent experiences in Congress. In contrast, as alluded to above, some state legislatures are nearly mini-congresses, in that they meet year-round, the legislators are well-paid, they employ significant staffs, and the chambers focus on a broad legislative agenda. In these settings it seems plausible that the skills that are necessary to advance one's legislative agenda are quite similar to the skills that would be necessary to advance one's agenda in Congress. This logic motivates our final hypothesis:

Effectiveness in Professional State Legislatures Hypothesis*: Highly effective lawmakers in more professional state legislatures will be highly effective lawmakers in Congress.*

In a broader sense, these three hypotheses may be thought of as analogous to sources of evidence for success in any new job. Having experience in a similar setting in the past should be useful in a new position. Evidence of high prior performance is also a promising sign. And if that high performance comes in a very similar position, we should have the greatest confidence

of similar success in the new job. Our hypotheses posit that this logic holds up well in the lawmaking arena.

Data: Constructing State Legislative Effectiveness Scores

To test our three hypotheses we draw on data from 46 state legislatures across the United States. For the modal state in our sample, we have data back to the mid-1990s; however, as Table A1 in the Supplementary Appendix shows, states enter our sample as early as 1989 (e.g., Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas) and as late as 2009 (Massachusetts).

To collect these data, we wrote unique web scrapers for each state's online legislative archive, gathering information about every bill that was introduced in either the upper or lower chamber during the sample period, including—at a minimum—the name of the primary sponsor,[1] a short description or title, and information about how far each bill progressed through the legislative process. We then aggregate the data to align with the electoral cycle for each state's lower chamber, combining all regular and special sessions into a single two or four-year term.[2] To ensure that we have a complete record of all legislators who served during each session in each state, we merge our data with the state legislative election returns compiled by Klarner (2018).[3] This process is necessary to avoid systematically missing the least effective members in each session—specifically, those state legislators who did not sponsor a single bill.

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[1] When possible, we collect all named sponsors, whether primary (sometimes referred to as authors) or cosponsors. In states that permit multiple primary sponsors (or authors), we use the first name listed as the primary sponsor for calculating our SLES scores. While the processes vary from state to state, the first listed sponsor is typically the introducing sponsor and tends to have more responsibility for shepherding the bill through the process.
[2] In Tennessee, for example, where elections for the state House of Representatives occur every two years, we combine all sessions that occur in the first and second year after an election (e.g., 2017 and 2018 for the 2016 election). For the four states that have unstaggered four-year terms in the lower house (i.e., Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland, and Mississippi), we follow the same procedure but aggregate the first four years following each election.
[3] It is important to note, however, that we drop all legislators who won election to a chamber but were either never seated or resigned at the very start of the term without sponsoring any legislation.

Drawing on these data, we construct State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) in a manner that is consistent with the approach developed by Volden and Wiseman (2014, 2018) in their analysis of legislative effectiveness in the U.S. House and Senate. Specifically, for each bill that was introduced by a state legislator (BILL), we identify whether it received any action in committee (AIC), any action beyond committee (ABC), whether it passed its respective chamber (PASS), and/or whether it was signed into law (LAW).[4] Whereas Volden and Wiseman code each bill as being "Commemorative," "Substantive," or "Substantive and Significant," for our current project, we only code bills as being Commemorative or Substantive (i.e., we treat all non-Commemorative bills as Substantive).[5]

Drawing on these data, we compute a State Legislative Effectiveness Score (SLES) for each state legislator (i) in each legislative session (t) as the following:

$$SLES_{it} = \begin{bmatrix} \dfrac{\alpha BILL_{it}^C + \beta BILL_{it}^S}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL_{it}^S} \\[2ex] + \dfrac{\alpha AIC_{it}^C + \beta AIC_{it}^S}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC_{it}^S} \\[2ex] + \dfrac{\alpha ABC_{it}^C + \beta ABC_{it}^S}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC_{it}^S} \\[2ex] + \dfrac{\alpha PASS_{it}^C + \beta PASS_{it}^S}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS_{it}^S} \\[2ex] + \dfrac{\alpha LAW_{it}^C + \beta LAW_{it}^S}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW_{it}^S} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \dfrac{N}{5} \end{bmatrix}$$

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[4] For all of the states in our sample, the process of identifying action beyond committee, whether a bill passed its originating chamber, and whether it became law is relatively straightforward. However, because data quality varies from state to state, identifying action in committee can be more challenging. For states that do not provide any intervening information about what happens in committee, we assume that if a bill is reported out of committee and there is no record of it being called out of committee from the floor, it necessarily received action in committee.

[5] Volden and Wiseman code a bill as being "Substantive and Significant" if it is mentioned in an end-of-the-year write up in the *CQ Congressional Almanac*, for bills in the 93-113th Congresses (1973-2014), whereas bills in the 114th-115th Congresses (2015-2018) are coded as "Substantive and Significant" if they were mentioned on two or more occasions in the stories published in the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly/CQ Magazine* during that Congress. We are currently in the time-consuming process of coding state legislative bills as being "Substantive and Significant" depending on whether they are mentioned in major newspapers in each state. Future iterations of this project will account for this aspect of relative bill importance in the calculation of the SLES.

Where the five large terms represent legislator i's fraction of bills that were (1) introduced, (2) received action in committee, (3) received action beyond committee, (4) passed their respective chamber of introduction, and (5) became law, relative to all N legislators. Within each of these five terms, commemorative bills are weighted by $\alpha = 1$ and substantive bills are weighted by $\beta = 5$, meaning that substantive bills are given five times as much weight in our generation of the SLES as are commemorative bills. Similar to the formula that Volden and Wiseman employ in their analysis, the $(N/5)$ normalization above ensures that the average SLES for each chamber in each legislative term is equal to 1. Hence, state legislators who have SLES greater than 1 are more effective than the average state legislator in their chamber during that session, whereas state legislators who have scores less than 1 are less effective.

Having generated SLES for every legislator who served in our sample of 46 state legislatures, it is important to note that each state legislature engages with its own agenda and the state legislatures vary immensely on a variety of institutional factors. Therefore comparing, for example, the score of a legislator who served in Illinois to a legislator who served in Tennessee might not be incredibly informative. After all, what does it mean to compare a legislator who had a score of 1.5 in Illinois to a legislator who had a score of 3 in Tennessee, given that scores in each chamber are normalized to take on a mean value of 1, and the agendas of each chamber may vary wildly from each other? Likewise, it is not clear how one should think about comparing the Illinois legislator who had an SLES of 1.5 to her score her during her freshman term in Congress, which might be greater than or less than 1.5.

Rather, we take a different approach, in which we estimate a *Benchmark Score* for each legislator who served in each state legislature in each legislative session, based on institutional and personal factors that we expect to be highly correlated with her legislative effectiveness. More specifically, for each state legislature, we estimate a regression in which the dependent

variable is the SLES of legislator i in legislative session t, and the independent variables are whether the legislator was in the majority party, whether she held a committee chair, and the number of terms she has served in the state legislature up to that point.

Building on the conclusions of Volden and Wiseman (2014, 2018), we would expect that all of these variables would be positively correlated with a legislator's SLES. After estimating our regressions, we then draw on the regression coefficients to calculate a predicted SLES for each state legislator in each term (in each state), which we refer to as a state legislator's *Benchmark SLES*. Hence, the Benchmark SLES is essentially the expected value of a state legislator's SLES based solely on her majority party status, her institutional position (i.e., committee chair status), and her seniority in the chamber. After calculating each legislator's Benchmark SLES, we then calculate her *State Benchmark Ratio*, which is computed as her actual SLES divided by her Benchmark SLES. Values greater than 1 imply that a state legislator is a more effective lawmaker than what one would expect based on her Benchmark Score, whereas values less than 1 imply the opposite. Drawing on these data, we are able to test our main research hypotheses.

Analysis and Results

In turning to our hypotheses, we begin by exploring whether there is any obvious relationship between a Representative's legislative effectiveness in Congress and her past state legislative experiences. We present a first (coarse) cut at the data in Figure 1, which plots the distribution of Representatives' congressional Legislative Effectiveness Scores (LES) based on whether they served in a state legislature, as well as whether the legislature was more or less professional. We classify a legislature as being "more professional" if it has a professionalism score that is above the observed mid-point on the Squire Index within our data (0.325). Of those

Representatives who served in state legislatures, we further partition them into categories based on whether their state legislative effectiveness was "above expectations," "met expectations," or "below expectations." For the purposes of our analysis, we classify a state legislator as being above expectations in her lawmaking effectiveness if her median State Benchmark Ratio across all of the terms that she served in the state legislature was greater than 1.5. In other words, highly effective lawmakers have a median SLES that is 50% greater than what we would expect based on their majority party status, seniority, and whether they held a committee chair. In contrast, we classify a state legislator as being below expectations if her median benchmark ratio across all terms in the state legislature was below 0.5. Finally, we classify a legislator as having met expectations if her median benchmark ratio across all of her terms in the state legislature was between 0.5 and 1.5.

Figure 1: Effective Lawmakers from Professional State Legislatures Are More Successful in Congress
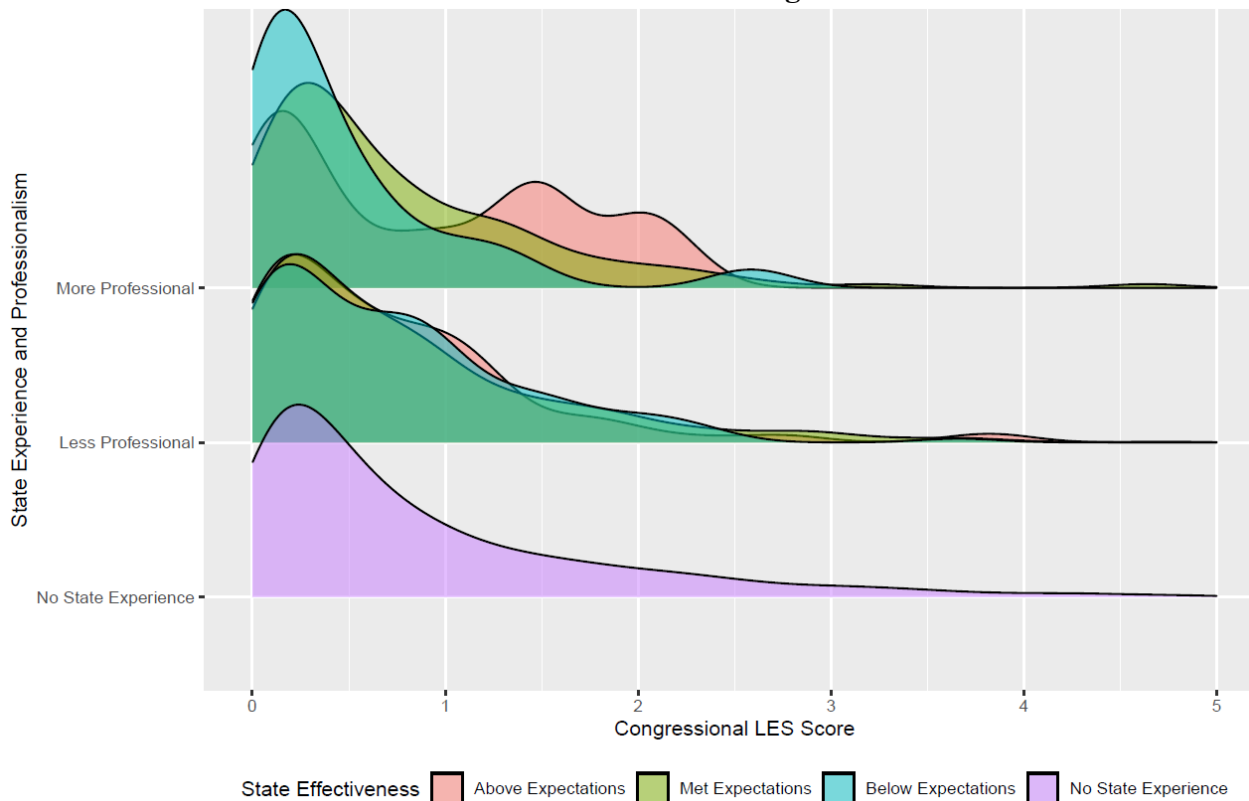
Turning to Figure 1, several points emerge. First, there are relatively more high scoring Representatives (i.e., with LES scores greater than 1) who served in state legislatures, in comparison to those without any state legislative experience, regardless of the scope of state legislative professionalism. Second, there are more highly effective lawmakers in the House who served in more professional state legislatures. Third, and on a more nuanced level, among those legislators who served in a professional state legislature, it is clearly the case that those who were above expectations in their lawmaking effectiveness in the state legislature continued to be highly effective lawmakers upon reaching the U.S. House. In contrast, those legislators who served in more professional state legislatures and who were below expectations in regards to lawmaking effectiveness, continued to be relatively less effective lawmakers in the U.S. House.

Taken together, the distributions in Figure 1 offer tentative support for our *Service in Professional State Legislatures Hypothesis* and our *Effectiveness in Professional State Legislatures Hypothesis*. That said, we know that there are many factors, both personal and institutional, that are correlated with a Representative's legislative effectiveness, and the distributions that are presented in Figure 1 do not account for any of these variables. We now turn to a more systematic analysis of the data to see if these predicted relationships hold after we control for these other factors.

To test our *Service in Professional State Legislatures* hypothesis, we begin by regressing Representative i's LES in Congress t onto the standard battery of variables that have been demonstrated to be correlated with LES (i.e., Volden and Wiseman 2014, 2018).[6] Model 1.1 presents the results from our analysis where the sample consists of all Representatives who

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[6] Descriptive statistics for these variables can be found in Table A2 of the Supplemental Appendix.

served in the U.S. House between the 93rd and 115th Congress (1973-2018), whereas Model 1.2 confines our analysis to only those 46 states for which we have data on state legislative effectiveness, and only those years for which we have these data. More specifically, a state's congressional delegation enters our sample if we have generated SLES for any *preceding* term of the state's legislature. As a result, some states are in the sample for a substantial number of Congresses (e.g., Pennsylvania, for which we have SLES data from 1989 to 2018, such that we include all of the state's delegations from 1991 onward), whereas other states are in the sample for a relatively limited number of Congresses (e.g., Massachusetts, for which we have SLES data from 2009 to 2018). Moreover, for Model 1.2 and all subsequent analyses, we remove members of Congress who served in a state legislature exclusively prior to our time period for generating SLES from the dataset.[7] Hence, the sample size drops considerably in moving from Model 1.1 to Model 1.2.

Consistent with the *Service in Professional State Legislatures Hypothesis*, we see that the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism* is positive and statistically significant in Model 1.1, indicating that across the entire sample of Representatives, those who served in more professional state legislatures are more effective lawmakers than those without any state legislative experience and those from citizen legislatures. For example, a member of Congress who served in a state legislature with a relatively high professionalism score (Squire Index of 0.4), is on average about ten percent more effective than one with no state legislative experience and about twenty percent more effective than one who served in a citizen legislature.

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[7] Specifically, to use a relatively extreme example, our state effectiveness scores for Alaska begin with the 1993-1994 legislative term, so we initially drop all members of the House from Alaska prior to 1995. However, because Don Young, Alaska's at-large Representative since 1973, served in the Alaska Legislature from 1967 to 1973, we do not have state effectiveness for the period during which he was in the Alaska Legislature. As a result, we are forced to drop all observations for Don Young from 1995 to 2018 and – because he is the lone Representative for Alaska – the entire state delegation from the analysis. Column 3 of Table A1 in the Supplementary Materials shows the constricted time period for which we have observations to use in the analysis (i.e., a former state legislator who has been matched to their SLES or a member who did not serve at the state level) for all 46 states.

Table 1: Determinants of Congressional Effectiveness

	Dependent variable:	
	Congressional LES Score	
	Full Sample (1973 – 2018) (1.1)	46 State Sample (Overlapping Years) (1.2)
State Legislative Experience	-0.116[+]	-0.108
	(0.069)	(0.080)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism	0.553[*]	0.378[+]
	(0.220)	(0.227)
Seniority	0.060[**]	0.040[**]
	(0.008)	(0.010)
Committee Chair	3.013[**]	2.305[**]
	(0.224)	(0.287)
Subcommittee Chair	0.742[**]	0.428[**]
	(0.071)	(0.068)
Majority Party	0.463[**]	0.402[**]
	(0.044)	(0.071)
Majority-Party Leadership	0.493[**]	0.345[*]
	(0.151)	(0.152)
Minority-Party Leadership	-0.134[*]	-0.024
	(0.055)	(0.067)
Speaker	-0.724[**]	-0.193
	(0.246)	(0.153)
Delegation Size	-0.003[+]	-0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Power Committee	-0.209[**]	-0.229[**]
	(0.051)	(0.063)
Distance from Median	0.023	-0.304[*]
	(0.095)	(0.150)
Female	0.081[+]	0.010
	(0.047)	(0.050)
African-American	-0.273[**]	-0.048
	(0.071)	(0.061)
Latino	0.016	-0.070
	(0.098)	(0.080)
Vote Share	0.013	-0.002
	(0.009)	(0.013)
Vote Share^2	-0.0001	-0.00001
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Constant	-0.267	0.686
	(0.339)	(0.445)
Observations	9,845	3,317
R^2	0.413	0.347

Note: [+]$p < 0.1$; [*]$p < 0.05$; [**]$p < 0.01$, *two-tailed.* This table replicates the analysis in Volden and Wiseman (2014) on the full sample of Congresses and the subsample of 46 states for which we have State Legislative Effectiveness Scores.

Turning to Model 1.2, which only analyzes data from the 46 states in our sample, we see that the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism* is still positive and consistent with our hypothesis, and attains statistical significance at conventional levels (*p < 0.05, one-tailed test*). We also see that in both specifications the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience* is negative, yet statistically insignificant in Model 1.2. Hence, serving in a state legislature does not unconditionally map into greater lawmaking effectiveness in Congress; rather what seems to matter is whether the legislature was relatively more or less professional. Taken together, the results in Models 1.1 and 1.2 provide evidence that having served in a professional state legislature does, indeed, correlate with one's legislative effectiveness in Congress. Such results might follow, perhaps, because those who have served in these state legislatures have acquired certain skills and learned valuable lessons about the lawmaking process that translate easily to the day-to-day business of lawmaking in Congress.

Turning to a consideration of our other two research hypotheses, Table 2 presents the results from Ordinary Least Squares regressions where the dependent variable is Representative *i*'s LES in Congress *t*, and the independent variables of interest capture whether a Representative ever served in a state legislature and her relative lawmaking effectiveness while serving in that state legislature. More specifically, *State Legislative Experience* is an indicator variable for whether the Representative served in her state legislature, *State Professionalism* is the Squire Index, and *State Benchmark Ratio* is a state legislator's median SLES benchmark ratio across her career in the state legislature.[8] All specifications likewise control for the battery of independent variables from Table 1.

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[8] In Table A3 in the Supplemental Appendix, we compare the results from using the Median State Benchmark Ratio to three other ratios: the Mean State Benchmark Ratio across all terms, and a legislator's State Benchmark Ratio in either her first or final term. The regressions show that our findings are robust to the use of the Mean State Benchmark Ratio and first-term ratio, but they are neither substantively similar nor statistically significant for the

Table 2: Higher Congressional Lawmaking Effectiveness
Among Successful Members of Professional State Legislatures

	Dependent variable:	
	Congressional LES Score	
	(2.1)	(2.2)
State Legislative Experience	-0.035	-0.035
	(0.061)	(0.131)
State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio	0.035	-0.078
	(0.040)	(0.113)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism		-0.094
		(0.475)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio		0.491
		(0.455)
Additional Covariates	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,317	3,317
R^2	0.347	0.348

Note: $^+p < 0.1$; $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$, *two-tailed*. This table displays regression results from two models: the first adds an interaction between having served in a state legislature and a member's State Legislative Effectiveness Score (as measured by the State Benchmark Ratio) to Model 1.2 (including all control variables from Table 1, omitting the professionalism interaction). The second model adds an additional interaction for State Legislative Professionalism. Together, these results show that having served in a state legislature or having been effective at the state level do not necessarily translate into effectiveness in Congress; rather, the positive relationship between state and congressional effectiveness holds only for those who served in more professional state legislatures, as illustrated in Figure 2.
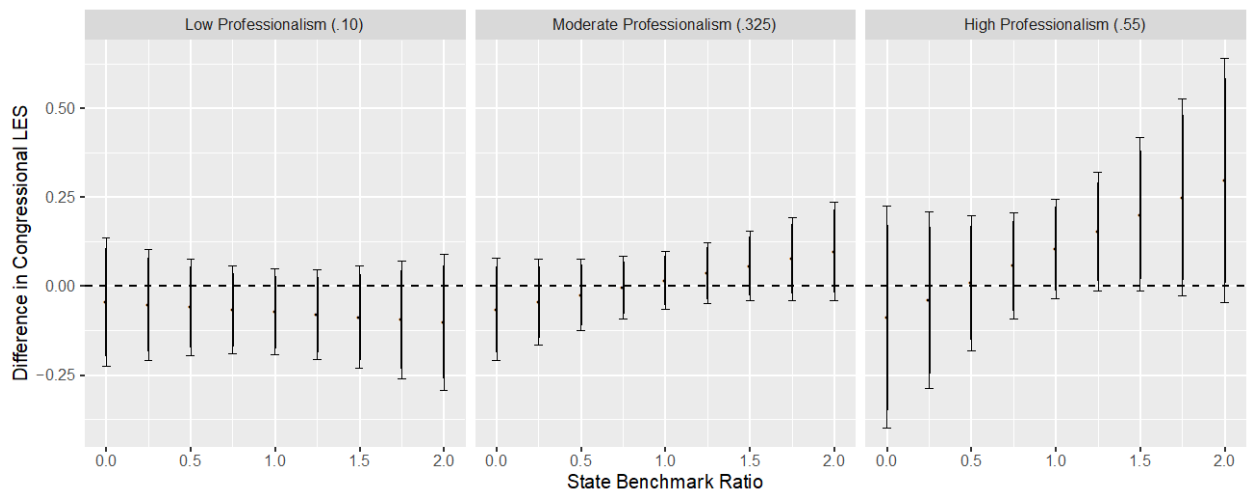
Based on the *Effectiveness in State Legislature Hypothesis*, we would expect that the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio* would be positive and statistically significant, indicating that highly effective state lawmakers continue to be highly effective lawmakers in Congress. As we see in Model 2.1, the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio* is positive (0.035) but it is not statistically significant. This null finding holds in Model 2.2 when we account for state professionalism.

In addition, if the *Effectiveness in Professional State Legislatures Hypothesis* holds, then we would expect the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio* to be positive, which would imply that highly effective state lawmakers in more professional state legislatures are more effective lawmakers in the U.S. House. Looking at

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final-term State Benchmark Ratio. This may indicate that state legislators in their final term behave differently in their lawmaking than do typical legislators, consistent with Volden and Wiseman's (2018) finding for U.S. Senators.

the results of Model 2.2, this positive relationship is precisely what we observe. It is important to note, however, that because of the triple-interaction, interpreting this coefficient by itself is not immediately informative, such that we also need to account for the lower-order terms. To do this, in Figure 2, we plot the predicted congressional LES for a member of Congress who served in a state legislature across varying levels of chamber professionalism and state lawmaking effectiveness less the predicted LES for a member of Congress who did not serve at the state level. Thus, in the far-right panel, for example, we see that members of Congress who served in relatively professional state legislative environments outperform their peers who did not serve at the state level, with congressional LES scores that are 0.12 to 0.25 higher, on average (*p < 0.10*). In contrast, in the far-left panel, we see no such difference for members of Congress who served in relatively less-professional state legislatures. Taken together, these results suggest that being a highly effective state lawmaker does not necessarily translate into being an effective lawmaker in Congress; rather, it is only those Representatives who were highly effective lawmakers in more professional state legislatures who continue to be highly effective lawmakers at the federal level.

Figure 2: More Successful Members of Professional State Legislatures Outperform Members of Congress Without State Experience

Note: This figure depicts the predicted difference in Congressional LES between a member of Congress who served in a state legislature (across varying levels of professionalism and state effectiveness) and a member with no state legislative experience. The thinner and thicker parts of each line represent 95 and 90 percent confidence intervals, respectively.

As an illustrative example, consider, for example Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York's 8th district. Prior to being elected to Congress in 2013, Representative Jeffries served for six years in the New York State Assembly. During his time in the state legislature, he consistently exceeded expectations for state lawmaking effectiveness, with a median benchmark ratio of 1.51. This experience perhaps explains why, since being elected in 2013 and despite being in the minority party through 2018, he has consistently exceeded expectations in the House as well, with congressional benchmark ratios equal to 3.56, 1.61, and 2.94 in his first three terms. And indeed, Representative Jeffries is not an isolated example; others, such as Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Mark Green (R-WI), and Gary Miller (R-CA), exhibit similar patterns. In contrast, while former state legislators from less professional contexts do perform well sometimes, their successes from Congress to Congress are often less consistent, in a way that is similar to those who never served at the state level.

Building on this qualitative evidence, a consideration of one of the other covariates in Table 2 is instructive. More specifically, the coefficient on *Seniority* in Model 2.2 (not shown in Table 2) is positive (0.041) and statistically significant. Consistent with prior scholarship, this result implies that more senior members of the House have higher Legislative Effectiveness Scores. Comparing the magnitude of the *Seniority* coefficient to that from experience in the state legislature is informative. Based on the coefficient on *State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio* (and accounting for relevant lower-order terms), we see that a state legislator who served in a relatively professional legislature (i.e., Squire Index score of 0.4) whose State Benchmark Ratio moved from 0.5 (just below expectations) to 1.5 (just above expectations) would have a 0.116 higher LES. The magnitude of this change is comparable to a Representative who served nearly an additional three terms in Congress. Thus, Representatives who were highly effective in more professional state legislatures experience

lawmaking success in Congress that is equivalent to relatively more senior members of the

House.

This finding raises other questions regarding the source of these Representatives'
enhanced lawmaking effectiveness. Are they introducing more bills than their counterparts who
did not have similar experiences? Are they more successful at keeping their bills alive at
particular stages of the legislative process that prove elusive to their peers? Do they hold
particular positions of influence in the U.S. House? We engage with these questions in Table 3,
in which we present the results from a series of regression analyses where the dependent
variables are different stages of bill progression in the lawmaking process (e.g., All Bill
Introductions in Model 3.1) and the independent variables are identical to those in Model 2.2.

Table 3: Effective Lawmakers from Professional State Legislatures
**Introduce Larger Portfolios and Produce More Important Laws**

	Dependent variable:						
	All Intros	All Laws	Commem. Bills	Substantive Bills	S&S Bills	S&S ABC	S&S Laws
	(3.1)	(3.2)	(3.3)	(3.4)	(3.5)	(3.6)	(3.7)
State Legislative Experience	1.799	-0.074	-0.079	1.879	-0.002	-0.005	0.008
	(2.304)	(0.112)	(0.126)	(2.264)	(0.070)	(0.062)	(0.026)
State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio	-2.305	-0.025	0.048	-2.270	-0.083	-0.060	-0.029
	(2.009)	(0.100)	(0.116)	(1.954)	(0.061)	(0.053)	(0.023)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism	-11.698	0.137	-0.065	-11.448	-0.185	-0.116	-0.096
	(7.995)	(0.375)	(0.476)	(7.825)	(0.236)	(0.204)	(0.084)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio	12.850^+	0.232	0.170	12.328^+	0.352	0.272	0.158^*
	(7.319)	(0.355)	(0.484)	(7.079)	(0.234)	(0.190)	(0.079)
Additional Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,317	3,317	3,317	3,317	3,317	3,317	3,317
R^2	0.046	0.148	0.032	0.039	0.231	0.251	0.156

Note: $^+p < 0.1$; $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$, *two-tailed.* This table shows the relationship between State Legislative Experience, State Professionalism, and components of congressional legislative effectiveness. Each column includes regression results for a unique dependent variable, while controlling for all independent variables from Table 1. In column 3.1, for example, we use the total number of bills that legislator i introduced in Congress t. On the whole, the results indicate that members of Congress who were highly effective in relatively more professional state legislatures introduce more bills in Congress, particularly "substantive" and "substantive and significant" (S&S) bills, and shepherd those bills further through the legislative process.

Comparing across the models, we see that the coefficients on *State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio* are positive across all specifications, suggesting that Representatives who were highly effective legislators in professional state legislatures have more expansive bill portfolios (especially in regards to substantive bills, and substantive and significant bills) than those Representatives without such stellar service. For example, compared to an ineffective lawmaker (*State Benchmark Ratio* = 0.5) from a moderately professional state legislature (Squire Index = 0.4), a highly effective lawmaker (*State Benchmark Ratio* = 1.5), introduces nearly three more bills in each Congress, mostly on matters of substantive public policy.

Once again, to more completely account for the interactions in these specifications, in Figure 3, we plot the predicted difference between a member of Congress who served in a state legislature and one who did not for four of the dependent variables in Table 3, accounting for varying levels of chamber professionalism and state effectiveness as we did in Figure 2. Notably, in the far right column, we see a nearly identical pattern to what we saw previously: members who serve in a relatively more professional state legislature, and who were highly effective introduce more bills and produce more laws than their counterparts who did not serve at the state level. This pattern is functionally identical, but somewhat less precise for introductions, when we subset (in the bottom half of the figure) to "substantive and significant bills." This means that members who were effective in a highly professional state legislature tackle (and successfully advance) issues of greater substantive importance at a higher rate.

Figure 3: More Effective Members of Professional State Legislatures Produce Broader Legislative Portfolios in Congress
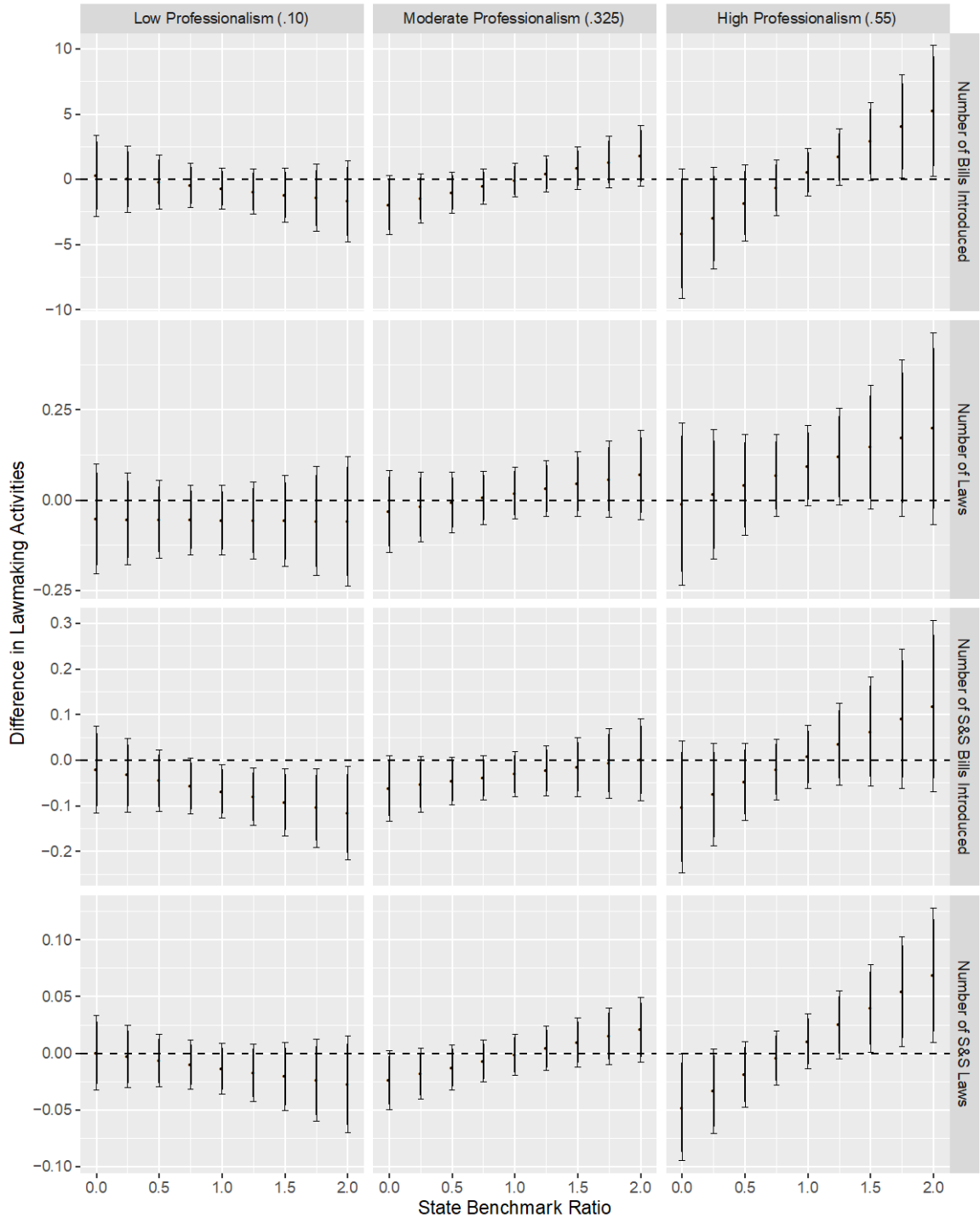
Note: This figure displays the predicted difference in components of Volden and Wiseman's (2014) measure of legislative effectiveness between a member of Congress who served in a state legislature (across varying levels of effectiveness and professionalism) and a member of Congress who did not serve at the state level based on the models from Table 3. For example, the panel in the upper right shows that members of Congress who served in a relatively professional state legislature and were relatively effective in that role introduce more bills in Congress than their counterparts without any state legislative experience. The thinner and thicker parts of each line represent 95 and 90 percent confidence intervals, respectively.

In contrast, looking at the far-left column, we see a markedly different pattern for members of Congress who served in less-professional state contexts. Indeed, regardless of their level of effectiveness at the state level, we find no evidence that members from less-professional state legislatures outperform their counterparts who did not serve at the state level; in fact, in the area of substantive and significant bills, they may even perform worse. Collectively, these results suggest that highly professional state legislatures provide legislators with an opportunity to cultivate their skills in a way that less professional legislatures do not, leading them to be better prepared to introduce a broad legislative portfolio tackling substantive issues when they make it to Congress and to keep those pieces of legislation alive through later stages of the legislative process.

Importantly, in auxiliary analyses, we find no statistically significant relationship between a Representative's past service and/or lawmaking effectiveness in a state legislature and her propensity to become a committee or subcommittee chair in the House. In other words, it is not the case that highly effective state lawmakers from professional state legislatures are more likely to hold positions of institutional influence in Congress. Rather, these Representatives appear to engage in qualitatively different legislative strategies than their peers who lack their experiences or their effectiveness, which contributes to their lawmaking success in Congress.[9]

Finally, we might ask whether there was something about a Representative's experiences as a state legislator, apart from effective lawmaking, that ultimately correlates with her lawmaking effectiveness in the U.S. House. Are state legislators who were members of the majority party more likely to learn the tools of governance that they can bring with them to the House? Alternatively, do state legislators learn more about the lawmaking process the longer

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[9] This latter finding might be taken with a grain of salt, however, given that many of the former state legislators in our dataset are relatively junior in the House, and hence are less likely to acquire committee or subcommittee chairs, due to having low seniority to begin with.

that they are in their chambers? We engage with these and related questions in Table A4 of our supplemental appendix by replicating the analysis in Model 2.2, but rather than controlling for a Representative's relative lawmaking effectiveness in her state legislature, we control for the individual components that contributed to the legislator's benchmark score. More specifically, we control for how often she was in the majority party, the proportion of terms that she held a committee chair (if at all), and how many terms she served in the state legislature. Our results demonstrate that none of these individual factors (even when interacted with the relative professionalism of the state legislature) is correlated with whether a state legislator is a highly effective lawmaker in Congress. Rather, what seems to truly matter is whether the Representative was a highly effective lawmaker in a professional state legislature.

Implications and Conclusions

One of the benefits of American federalism is the possibility that state governments can serve as training grounds for policymakers with the progressive ambition to strive for federal office. In this paper, we explore one aspect of how well the states serve this function. In particular, we look to the state legislatures to answer the question: do experiences in the state legislatures prepare their members to become effective lawmakers once they attain a seat in the U.S. Congress?

As with most features of the American states, the answer to our question is: it depends. Looking at state legislative experience across 46 states over 30 years, we find that members of Congress who have served in state legislatures are, on average, no better or worse as lawmakers than those elected without such experience. Yet, not all state legislative experiences are the same. Those who serve in professional legislatures that more closely reflect the congressional environment do seem to have a leg up in lawmaking upon reaching Congress, compared with

those who serve in citizen legislatures. And those lawmakers who succeed in such professional

state legislatures are particularly well-suited to a successful career in Congress, with their state

experience serving as the equivalent of multiple terms of congressional seniority already in hand

upon their arrival.

These findings are important for a variety of reasons. First, they show some of the

conditions under which state legislative experience prepares representatives for an effective

congressional career. This evidence supports the idea that effective lawmakers carry with them a

proven ability to succeed, especially when they enter a similar legislative setting. Such a finding

therefore runs counter to the argument that political parties or institutional positions alone

determine which policies are advanced and which legislation succeeds or fails.

Second, these findings may present an opportunity for voters to gain a sense of how well

they will be represented in Congress prior to voting candidates into office in the first place.

Noting their successes in (professional) state legislatures should lend voters some confidence that

specific candidates will thrive once in Congress, effectively translating the policy prescriptions

they espouse on the campaign trail into actual public policy.

The next steps in our research involve expanding and improving the measures of state

legislative effectiveness developed here. Specifically, we plan to expand from the 46 states

captured to date to all fifty states. We also plan to improve the State Legislative Effectiveness

Scores presented here to account for the proposals that are "substantive and significant" (and

therefore upgrade their weighting in the SLES) by generating lists of bills that receive coverage

in the major newspapers in each state. Doing so requires significant effort, in part because each

legislature has its own set of institutional rules and legislative procedures (e.g., Squire and

Hamm 2005) that must be accurately captured in developing our state-by-state metrics. But we

believe the benefits of doing so will be significant. For the project at hand, the expansion of the

data will allow us to better capture variance in legislative professionalism and other features across the states.

In addition, we see the possibilities for research based on the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores beyond the present study to be quite extensive. For example, analysis of these scores across the states will allow scholars to characterize which legislative bodies are more egalitarian, which best cultivate lawmaking skills among their members, which are dominated by majority-party influence, or which develop policy expertise in their committees, among many other considerations. These differences can then be traced back to institutional designs, ranging from term limits to voting rules, that vary across the states, and which can be studied to help scholars better understand the policymaking impacts of those foundational choices.

Some of these differences might shed additional light on why and how some state legislatures produce members of Congress who are particularly effective. But these differences may also be useful in understanding state-level policymaking. For example, Shipan and Volden (2014) show that professional legislatures are better able to learn from the policy experiments found in other states. Similarly, there may be other institutional structures, from strong parties to giving every bill a hearing to structured bicameral bargaining, that help determine which states are the most innovative (e.g., Boehmke and Skinner 2012) or the most responsive to their citizenry (e.g., Maestas 2000).

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Table A1: States and Legislative Sessions Included in the SLES And Analysis Samples

State	Years with SLES	Years in Analysis
AK	1993-2018	None
AL	1999-2018	2001-2017
AR	1997-2018	1999-2017
AZ	1995-2018	1997-2017
CA	1993-2016	1995-2017
CO	1999-2018	2003-2017
DE	2003-2018	2011-2017
FL	2001-2018	2003-2017
GA	2001-2018	2003-2017
HI	1999-2018	2003-2017
IL	1997-2018	1999-2017
IN	1999-2012	2001-2017
KY	2001-2018	2003-2017
LA	1996-2019	1997-2017
MA	2009-2018	2011-2017
MD	1995-2018	1997-2017
ME	1987-2018	1991-2017
MI	1995-2018	1997-2017
MN	1995-2018	1997-2017
MO	1995-2018	1997-2017
MS	1996-2019	1997-2017
MT	1999-2018	2013-2017
NC	1993-2018	1995-2017
ND	1997-2018	2011-2017
NE	2007-2018	2009-2017
NH	1989-2018	1991-2017
NJ	1996-2017	1997-2017
NM	1997-2018	1999-2017
NV	1995-2018	1997-2017
NY	1999-2018	2001-2017
OH	1997-2018	1999-2017
OK	1993-2018	1995-2017
OR	2007-2018	2009-2017
PA	1989-2018	1991-2017
RI	2007-2018	None
SC	1989-2018	1991-2017
SD	1997-2018	1999-2017
TN	1995-2018	1997-2017
TX	1989-2018	1991-2017
UT	1997-2018	1999-2017
VA	1994-2017	1995-2017
VT	1993-2018	1995-2017
WA	1991-2018	1993-2017
WI	1995-2018	1997-2017
WV	1993-2018	1995-2017
WY	2001-2018	2017-2017

Table A2: Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev.
State Legislative Experience[a]	Equals "1" if member served in state legislature	0.344	0.475
State Legislative Professionalism[b]	Squire's index of state professionalism relative to Congress	0.099	0.168
State Benchmark Ratio (Median)[c]	Median ratio of member i's state legislative effectiveness score to their benchmark score across all state legislative terms	0.351	0.607
Seniority[a]	Number of terms served by member in Congress	4.749	3.967
Committee Chair[a, d]	Equals "1" if member committee chair	0.039	0.193
Subcommittee Chair[a, d]	Equals "1" if member is a subcommittee chair	0.189	0.391
Majority Party[a]	Equals "1" if member is in majority party	0.553	0.497
Majority-Party Leadership[a]	Equals "1" if member is in majority-party leadership	0.022	0.147
Minority-Party Leadership[a]	Equals "1" if member is in minority-party leadership	0.024	0.153
Speaker[a]	Equals "1" if member is Speaker of the House	0.001	0.034
Delegation Size[e]	Number of districts in state congressional delegation	21.17	15.91
Power Committee[a, d]	Equals "1" if member serves on Rules, Appropriations, or Ways and Means	0.214	0.410
Distance from Median[f]	| Member i's DW-NOMINATE score – Median member's DW-NOMINATE score|	0.448	0.284
Female[a]	Equals "1" if member female	0.182	0.386
African-American[a]	Equals "1" if member African American	0.095	0.294
Latino[a]	Equals "1" if member is Latino/Latina	0.068	0.252
Vote Share[a]	Percentage of vote received in previous election	66.66	13.00

Data sources:
[a] Constructed by authors based on *Almanac of American Politics*, various years.
[b] Constructed by authors based on updates to Squire (1992).
[c] Constructed by authors as described in the main text.
[d] Constructed by authors based on Nelson (1992) and Stewart and Woon (2005).
[e] Constructed by authors.
[f] Constructed by authors from DW-NOMINATE scores provided by Keith Poole.

Table A3: Robustness to Alternate Benchmark Ratios

	Dependent variable:			
	Congressional LES Score			
	(A3.1)	(A3.2)	(A3.3)	(A3.4)
State Legislative Experience	-0.035	-0.039	-0.140	-0.044
	(0.131)	(0.130)	(0.114)	(0.102)
State Professionalism	-0.094	-0.057	0.466	-0.077
	(0.475)	(0.455)	(0.378)	(0.338)
State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio (Median)	-0.078			
	(0.113)			
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio (Median)	0.491			
	(0.455)			
State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio (Mean)		-0.074		
		(0.108)		
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio (Mean)		0.445		
		(0.418)		
State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio (Final)			0.031	
			(0.089)	
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio (Final)			-0.088	
			(0.325)	
State Legislative Experience × State Benchmark Ratio (First Observed)				-0.073
				(0.080)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × State Benchmark Ratio (First Observed)				0.517[+]
				(0.299)
Additional Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,317	3,317	3,317	3,317
R^2	0.348	0.348	0.347	0.348

Note: [+]$p < 0.1$; [*]$p < 0.05$; [**]$p < 0.01$, *two-tailed.* This table shows regression results akin to those in Table 2 but using alternate measures of state-level effectiveness. The first column, which uses the Median State Benchmark Ratio, is identical Model 2.2. The second column uses the Mean State Benchmark Ratio. The third column uses only the Benchmark Ratio from a member's the final term. This measure is likely to be less predictive of congressional effectiveness, given the various incentives faced by state legislators in their final term. The fourth column only uses the Benchmark Ratio from the first state legislative term that we observe for each member.

Table A4: Other State Legislative Experiences Do Not Enhance Congressional Effectiveness

	Dependent variable:		
	Congressional LES Score		
	(A4.1)	(A4.2)	(A4.3)
State Legislative Experience	-0.190	-0.124	-0.118
	(0.116)	(0.090)	(0.126)
State Professionalism	0.516	0.361	0.549
	(0.329)	(0.269)	(0.357)
State Legislative Experience × Share of State Terms in Majority	0.152		
	(0.141)		
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × Share of State Terms in Majority	-0.256		
	(0.396)		
State Legislative Experience × Share of State Terms as Comm. Chair		0.078	
		(0.158)	
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × Share of State Terms as Comm. Chair		-0.034	
		(0.425)	
State Legislative Experience × Terms in State Legislature			0.002
			(0.024)
State Legislative Experience × State Professionalism × Terms in State Legislature			-0.040
			(0.057)
Additional Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,317	3,317	3,317
R^2	0.348	0.348	0.348

Note: $^+p < 0.1$; $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$, *two-tailed.* This table examines the relationship between various aspects of each member's experience at the state level and their lawmaking effectiveness in Congress, using models similar to those in Table 2. We find no clear evidence that any of these features, either separately or interacted with state legislative professionalism, matters. Instead, as earlier evidence suggests, the differences in congressional lawmaking effectiveness are more likely to be related to the lawmaking skills that members bring with them when they are elected and that they further develop while in office.