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Policymaking Effectiveness and Inter-Branch Communications in the US House: Some Legislators are Objectively Better than Others

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ABSTRACT
Collaboration is essential to how Congress works, and members who build large networks are more likely to be entrepreneurial and effective policymakers. Yet less is known about how these same skills carry over to non-policymaking activities. This research argues the same skills that make legislators effective producers of policy also influence more representational activities. Using data from over 33,000 Congressional contacts with the USDA between the 110th and 114th sessions of Congress, this work challenges the classic paradox between representational activities and lawmaking. Results indicate first, effective policymakers are also skilled in other areas, writing to agencies with a greater frequency and larger and more politically diverse network of collaborators. Second, effective policymakers are often more responsive to institutional constraints, working with significantly fewer and less diverse colleagues on distributive requests to agencies when Congressional rules disincentivize collaboration – suggesting institutional rules forcing legislators to compete rather than cooperate can have deleterious consequences on the legislative branch, even beyond policymaking activities.

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INTRODUCTION

What makes for a successful member of Congress? Previous work has focused on the ability of legislators to efficiently move policy through the legislative process, and scholars recognize the normative importance of being an effective lawmaker for issues of representation (see Mansbridge 1999; Volden and Wiseman 2014; among others). Yet legislators are not mere policy producers. Constituency service is a key element of the job, with members who provide casework seeing a reputational and possible electoral advantage (see Fiorina 1978; Mann and Wolfinger 1980; Fiorina 1981; among others). Indeed, representatives are key agents in resolving citizen conflicts with the federal bureaucracy. This fact means legislators are tasked with multiple representational roles, often while navigating an increasingly complex and nuanced political environment in Congress.

While legislator policy effectiveness has seen robust attention in the literature, there remains a question of how the characteristics of successful policymakers translate into other legislative activities and behaviors. One possibility is these legislators are effective at moving their bills through the legislative process precisely because that is their sole focus, choosing to act as policy workhorses or specialists more than district advocates (see Bernhard and Sulkin 2018). However, it is also possible effective policymakers are simply better at their jobs. Not only do they engage in the collaborative and cooperative behaviors necessary to move legislation through the process (see Kalaf-Hughes, MacDonald, and Santoro 2020), but also take this approach into other aspects of representation, acting as more effective advocates for their states, districts, and constituents in all ways.

In considering this relationship, Volden and Wiseman (2012) posit, "…given limited time and resources, members of Congress may be good either at making laws or at other representational activities...with very few legislators excelling at *both* tasks" (240). But, what if the classic paradox between representational activities and lawmaking is not a trade-off? If the skills that make an individual an effective legislator also make them an effective constituent advocate, then no tradeoff emerges. Rather, what if, as Bernhard and Sulkin (2018) acknowledge, efficient legislators may use different strategies to pursue multiple goals. This paper engages directly with this question, building off previous work to explore the relationship between a member's legislative effectiveness and their representational activities outside of the lawmaking process. I argue truly effective representatives do not just pursue good policy, but also engage in the necessary constituent service work to represent their constituents at home. Put differently, effective policymakers may just be effective in all aspects of their jobs. If this is the case, we should observe effective policymakers engaging in greater representational activities, such as constituent service, even beyond what their district demographics or committee membership might otherwise suggest.

To explore the relationship between policy effectiveness and other types of representation, this paper uses data from over 33,000 Congressional contacts with the USDA between the 110th and 114th sessions of Congress, and examines when, how, and with whom members make appeals on behalf of their constituents. [1] Legislative communications to the bureaucracy offer a nuanced picture of representation, and act as an

[1] Congressional contact logs and the associated letters were obtained through a series of FOIA requests to the USDA.

excellent proxy for activities beyond the legislative arena, as unlike the policymaking process, communications are not dependent upon status or institutional position (see Gross 2011), and offer an opportunity to work individually or collaborate, with letters often coming from groups of legislators. Further, the time period under examination includes the House moratorium on earmarks, which shifted control over the allocation of distributive benefits from Congress to the federal agencies, allowing for the examination of how institutional incentives and constraints can influence representation.

This research confirms that for the most effective policy makers, the representation paradox does not necessarily exist. Effective policymakers are more likely to write to agencies, particularly if they are institutionally disadvantaged, and often with a larger network of collaborators than their less effective colleagues. A finding indicative of these representatives pursuing an active legislative and non-legislative agenda. However, the calculations of legislators change when the institutional structure of Congress disincentivizes cooperation. While the frequency of all Congressional communications increases after the moratorium on earmarks, the size of collaborative networks decreases after the ban, but only for communications requesting the allocation of distributive benefits, suggesting even for members predisposed to building coalitions and fostering consensus, the change in institutional motivations reduces the incentives for collaboration. In this view, the reduction in collaboration stemming from changes of institutional rules could have deleterious effects on the legislative body as avenues for cooperation decline.

THE SKILLS OF EFFECTIVE LEGISLATORS

A member's behavior in office often depends on their goals, and much of the literature acknowledges a focus on reelection is necessary to achieve good policy or obtain influence in the chamber (Mayhew 1974). However, pursuing reelection may not mean forgoing other ends (see Fenno 1974; Mayhew 2000), with members able to choose activities that both support reelection and achieve other goals. Consider Bernhard and Sulkin's (2018, 18) example in which a legislator from a rural district may be able to promote both policy and reelection by focusing a lawmaking agenda on agriculture. In this instance, the member would be both an effective policymaker (attempting to move agricultural bills through the legislative process) while at the same time maintaining a local focus salient to their rural district. Voters from this district would not be forced to choose between a policy specialist or district advocate at election time, but instead, could support a legislator who did both.

It therefore is natural that the same factors that make effective legislators better able to move policy through the legislative process (cooperation, consensus building, district focus) should also lend themselves to other aspects of representation, including non-legislative communications with the federal bureaucracy, such as requests for constituent services or the allocation of distributive benefits. First, both moving bills through the legislative process and the provision of goods to constituents requires work. This is not to posit a debate between the work horses and show horses of Congress, rather a question of the legislator's overall willingness to engage with both the legislative details that may occur outside of the public eye, but also the representational aspects of the job that register with individual constituents, regardless of their place in public. Second, both legislative effectiveness and the provision of goods requires a collaborative and consensus-building approach to accomplish their goals. Effective legislators, are so, in part because

they are entrepreneurial, understood as legislators who build bipartisan coalitions and foster consensus behind the scenes (see Wawro 2000; Harbridge-Yong, Volden, and Wiseman 2020; Kalaf-Hughes, MacDonald, and Santoro 2020). These are most often members of the majority party, committee chairs, and more senior legislators who encounter greater success shepherding their bills through the legislative process than their counterparts (Volden et al. 2013; 2014).

Much of what we know about collaboration and consensus building in Congress comes from studies of legislative networks. Members often collaborate based on shared characteristics or shared goals, such as partisanship, ideology, district similarity, or committee assignments (see Bratton and Rouse 2011; Caldeira and Patterson 1987; Gross 2008; and Zhang et al. 2008). The effect of similarity on collaboration makes sense when we consider legislators who are similar in certain ways – either partisanship, race or ethnic background, or gender – may have similar policy preferences, shared histories, or similar districts and therefore may share legislative goals that would benefit from collaboration.

Further, there are good reasons for members to work together, as previous work shows the composition of cosponsorship networks signals both the quality and possible success of the bill. Bills with a larger number of cosponsors receive more consideration and have a better chance of success than bills without cosponsors (Wilson and Young 1997). Further, bills having a bipartisan and ideologically diverse cosponsorship network also enjoy more success in committee (Koger 2003). However, cosponsors alone are not enough to ensure success, with Tam Cho and Fowler (2010) and Cranmer and Desmarais (2011) showing the structure of the network can impact passage. Specifically, Tam Cho and Fowler (2010) find evidence that close relationships (characterized by a network structure with

high levels of local clustering and a generally short path length between nodes) between members is associated with a more productive legislative environment and greater levels of legislative creativity—in other words, the transfer of ideas is facilitated when members are closely connected.

Together, this research suggests policymakers, particularly effective members of Congress, place a high value not only on the needs of their district, but also on collaboration and consensus, if it benefits their goals. Further, it suggests members may strategically collaborate, with their co-partisans and across the aisle, to gain influence over group decisions, shape legislative outcomes, and develop policy (Barnes 2016). These members are often well-positioned to bring their skills to other legislative responsibilities. However, the current body of work does not speak as clearly to the question of the relationship between policymaking and representational aspects of the job. I engage with this question drawing on legislator communications to federal agencies to gauge member behavior as it relates to non-legislative activities.

BALANCING LEGISLATIVE AND REPRESENTATIONAL TASKS

As members of Congress are tasked with allocating time for competing priorities, including lawmaking and representational tasks, the most skilled legislators should find a way to accommodate both. This theoretical idea is echoed in interviews with Congressional staff, with one individual acknowledging, "there are so many ways to affect the process for a dedicated member of Congress" (Confidential Interview 2022). Communications to federal agencies provide an interesting angle to explore how the skills held by effective policymakers transfer from the legislative process into more representational areas. These

communications encompass a variety of tasks from representational constituent service appeals to the allocation of distributive benefits, known as letter-marking, and therefore provide additional opportunities for legislators to distinguish themselves from their colleagues in pursuit of expanding their base of support (Fenno 1978). They often have limited and short term goals, and there are no limits on how many legislators may author a letter, and the only limits on when a letter may be sent depend on the agency's willingness to entertain the request. These loose parameters mean individuals are not dependent upon co-partisans, committee membership, permission from more senior colleagues, or other traditional factors that typically limit the ability of rank-and-file legislators from full participation in the legislative process, and offer an opportunity to work individually or collaborate, with letters coming from individuals, groups of legislators, state delegations, members of both chambers, or even be co-signed by interested individuals or organizations outside of Congress. This type of access makes it a relatively low-cost activity from the perspective of legislator effort and electoral risk. These communications fly under the radar of most constituents (and even the more junior legislators), remaining private outside of a FOIA request or a legislator's decision to publicize the request. In this way, the costs associated with crossing the party lines or being unsuccessful are much lower than more public credit claiming opportunities. Further, these appeals allow legislators to distinguish themselves from their challengers and gain support from constituents who otherwise may not have supported them (see Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita 2006; Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Fiorina 1977; Herrera and Yawn 1999; Serra and Moon 1994; Yiannakis 1981).

At their core, these communications are another avenue for members to act on behalf of their constituents and district, and they should behave as such. Members who rely on their consensus-building skills to advance legislation, should see similar skills carry into their other activities, reflecting a general approach to their work in Congress. In contrast, members who do not prioritize collaborative efforts, and who are less skilled at advancing their legislative agenda, should also struggle to advocate for their constituents in other areas. Here, it is not that legislators are policy focused or representation focused, but rather the skills that make a legislator successful in one area, should make them successful in another.[2]

Put simply, given that effective members of Congress are so successful at moving their legislation through the lawmaking process due to their willingness and ability to engage in the behind-the-scenes cooperative, consensus-building work necessary (i.e., Wawro 2000; Harbridge-Yong et al. 2020; Kalaf-Hughes et al. 2020), I expect them to bring these skills to other activities necessary to represent their constituents and district. Thus, these effective policymakers should not only write more frequently, but given their collaborative nature and approach to lawmaking, should follow a similar pattern and write with a larger and more diverse network of collaborators than their less effective colleagues who may not be as well-positioned or inclined to engage in this type of work.

H1: *Effective legislators will make more frequent appeals to federal agencies than legislators who are less effective lawmakers.*

[2] In this instance, success is not conceived of as a measure of policies becoming laws or the agency granting concessions or allocating funds, rather working on behalf of constituents to advance policies or make the appeal to the agency.

H2: *Effective legislators will compose appeals to federal agencies with a larger and more politically diverse network of collaborators than legislators who are less effective lawmakers.*

However, it is possible the structural differences that exist between members of the majority and minority party lend themselves to different strategies. For example, members of the majority party can advance their agendas without substantial coalition-building across party lines, while minority party members must work across the aisle to accomplish their goals. Effective legislators who have these coalition-building skills, may therefore behave differently when at an institutional disadvantage due to their party's status. In this way it is possible for party status to condition the effect of a legislator's policy effectiveness on other types of representational activities. If this is the case, effective members of the minority party should be more prolific communicators in an effort to represent their constituents in spite of their minority party status.[3]

H3: *Effective members in the minority party will make more appeals to federal agencies than effective members in the majority party.*

At the same time, it is also possible effective policymakers are so because they are strategic in how they allocate their effort, choosing to harness their skills in relation to specific aspects of communication with federal agencies, such as casework or the allocation of distributive benefits, rather than all of the above. For the purposes of this research, communications with federal agencies are divided into two categories. Non-distributive

[3] I would not expect party status to condition the effect of policy effectiveness on network size, as minority members may not be in the best position to grow their networks. Instead, members skilled in the art of collaboration as measured by their policy effectiveness should still have larger networks than their consensus-oriented colleagues.

requests include casework appeals, and allow legislators complete control over decisions related to serving constituents. Requests for the allocation of distributive benefits allow members to advocate for benefits for their district, including grants or federal distributions, even after the legislative process has occurred.

Historically, the allocation of distributive benefits occurred through the earmark process. Reelection-driven members of Congress would attempt to influence agency behavior by "earmarking" or advocating for distributive benefits in their districts (Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1989). Earmarks, while faced with criticism from the media and public, provided a rallying point in Congress with leadership using the targeted benefits to generate support for general interest legislation in Congress, motivating members to support broad legislative proposals in which they may not otherwise have an interest (see Arnold 1990; Evans 2004).[4] Previous work demonstrates that earmarking incentivizes congressional cooperation through specialization and logrolling, and creates incentives for partisan cooperation where it might be absent at a policy level (Mayhew 1974). Thus, if members who are effective policy makers focus primarily on the policymaking aspect of representation, it is natural to expect their communications with agencies to be primarily focused on the allocation of distributive benefits rather than other aspects of representation, as that is most analogous to the lawmaking process, in that it brings targeted benefits back to their districts.

[4] Earmarking is a unique element of Congressional behavior, in that it is an activity that is observed across the aisle and regardless of majority and minority status. It is worth noting, however, earmarking behavior is not equal across partisanship, with Democrats making greater earmark demands than their Republican colleagues, a finding attributed to their ideological predisposition toward government spending and belief in the government's role as a solver of problems (see Engstrom and Vanberg 2010, 982) and presidential politics shaping the allocation of distributive benefits in the Senate (see Cristenson, Kriner, and Reeves 2017).

H4: *Effective legislators will make more frequent requests for the allocation of distributive benefits than legislators who are less effective lawmakers.*

However, if this expectation is not correct, and effective members are no more or less likely to engage in this type of communication, that would offer further support for the idea that effective policy makers are not just policy makers, but are often effective in all aspects of their jobs.

Finally, it is important to note that this activity does not occur in isolation of the environment in which legislators operate. Consider the skills that make certain legislators effective policymakers – willingness to engage in collaborative work behind the scenes, build diverse coalitions, and do the labor required to move bills along the legislative process. To do this work successfully, legislators need to find ways to foster consensus and engage in broad appeals. Historically this has occurred through log-rolling and broad bills allowing many legislators to claim credit (Evans 2004). However, when the institutional incentives are removed, formerly collaborative legislators may changes their strategies. One such example can be found in the moratorium on earmarks passed by the 111th and 112th sessions of Congress.

The long-standing practice of earmarking allowed members of Congress to insert provisions into bills, which provided targeted federal funds for projects in their districts. To gain support for their earmarks from other members, and more importantly Congressional leaders, members would often agree to vote for or against general interest legislation (Evans 2004). However, following the 2010-midterm elections, House Republicans unanimously adopted a measure to ban all earmarks for the 112th Congress. The Senate followed suit in 2011 by passing a two-year moratorium on earmarks. This

moratorium limited the options members had to influence the allocation of distributive benefits primarily to letter-marking, a practice when members of Congress explicitly ask (in writing) the head of an administrative agency to retain or allocate distributive benefits in their districts. While members of Congress had routinely written letters in support of projects for their districts, the moratorium shifted the recipient of the letters from appropriations subcommittee chairs requesting earmarks to be included in appropriations legislation (see Frisch 1998; Evans 2004) to the agencies themselves. Unlike previous reporting requirements for earmarks, letters written to agencies are not required to be publicized by the member of Congress and require a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the agency for the specific allocation decision (Carroll 2013). This action allows members of Congress to publicly advocate for reductions in government spending while working behind the scenes to secure federally funded projects for their districts (Bogardus and Laing 2013). Though letter-marking existed prior to the moratorium, following the ban, it became an important way for members to bring benefits back to their district. Further, as these letters allow members to directly request benefits from agencies rather than their colleagues in Congress, there is little incentive for members to support general interest legislation.

This work argues the moratorium on earmarks removed institutional opportunities for collaboration, making a legislator's policy goals more difficult to accomplish and benefits harder to obtain. Representative behavior should therefore change to reflect this reality. When members are incentivized to collaborate and form consensus to bring benefits back to individuals and their districts, effective policymaking behaviors should also lead to more effective constituency advocacy. However, when avenues for

collaboration are more limited, and new institutions incentivize strategies for rewards that are more competitive and exclusive, the relevancy of a members' policymaking skills should no longer transfer to successful constituent advocacy. Policymaking effectiveness should become less relevant because the opportunities for collaboration should be reduced, particularly among distributive requests, where members will be less incentivized to collaborate over a limited resource allocated by an outside agency. Instead, competition should be the norm, even among the most consensus-driven legislators, as they all try to obtain a slice of an increasingly small federal pie. Thus:

> ***H5:*** *Legislators will compose appeals seeking the allocation of distributive benefits from federal agencies with a smaller network of collaborators following the earmark ban than before the ban.*

COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE USDA

To explore how effectiveness in policymaking translates into other areas of the job, this research draws on letters written to the USDA between the 110th and 114th sessions of Congress. This work focuses specifically on communications to the USDA, as agriculture policy is one driven by particularism and distribution, suggesting the effect of legislator quality or lawmaking effectiveness on communications should be more muted here. Therefore, if results do indeed show a relationship between legislative effectiveness and communications to the agency, even after controlling for other factors, it makes for more persuasive evidence that voters need not make a trade-off between policymaker or constituent servant, but instead can focus on legislator quality more generally. The author obtained (through a series of Freedom of Information Act disclosures) the contacts

between members of Congress and the USDA between 2007 and 2014. With over 33,000 signatures, there were a wide variety of letters in terms of content and authorship, with some letters originating from individual senators and representatives relating to specific local concerns while other letters were from entire state delegations writing on behalf of specific grant allocations. Using these contact logs, letters were coded as written by legislators supporting a specific grant application or allocation of distributive benefits, or for other types of district advocacy.

Further Freedom of Information Act Requests produced the available copies of the communications.[5] The arguments within the letters often make specific requests of support for benefits or programs in the district. Take for example, the June 22, 2011 letter written by Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU), Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI), and Gregorio Sablan (D-MP), requesting funding for a specific program. The ask agency Secretary Tom Vilsack to maintain funding for the Brown Tree Snake control program within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services. They argue,

> *"[T]he Brown Tree Snake (BTS) is an invasive species that is a threat to agriculture, endangered species, and the economy. The BTS control program is critical to restoring endangered species habitats and preventing the spread of the BTS to other islands throughout the Pacific region."*

[5] The full share of communications was limited by the Agency's willingness to entertain the request, redactions, the size and scope of the full text corpus, and the years it took to receive responses to the FOIA requests.

> They go on to acknowledge, *"[W]hile the moratorium on earmarks in the 112th Congress has restricted Congress's ability to provide direct funding for the APHIS BTS program, it remains a critical program and we request its continued funding through the APHIS Wildlife Services Account."*
>
> The authors conclude with, *"[I]n making decisions on the expenditure for the FY 2011 appropriations, we strongly urge you to include adequate funding for the Brown Tree Snake Control Program. The program is critical to the environment and the economies of islands throughout the Pacific region."*

This letter provides an example of both collaboration, as well as the different types of arguments common in these communications, in this case highlighting the economic and environmental implications to their states, districts, and territories if the funding is not allocated, as well as the recent inability for Congress to fund the program itself.

Using the logs and letters, data from each fiscal year were then organized into matrices where each column *i* and each row *j* represents a legislator, and the cell entries are the number of letters that legislator *i* writes that are coauthored with legislator *j.* These matrices represent a series of networks of coauthorship, and show which members communicated with the USDA and with whom. In this way, the analysis can account for each legislator's total number of letters written and for the number of other legislators with whom they write, including across parties. Figures 1 and 2 present histograms showing first, the frequency of communications between members and the USDA, and second, the degree distribution for the undirected network of collaboration across each session of Congress. As seen in Figure 1, the frequency of communications in each session

of Congress varies, with the 111th session of Congress (2009-2010) seeing the largest number of appeals to the USDA, due in part to the number of grant programs and other authorizations coming out of the Farm Bill passed the previous year. The degree distribution, measured as degree centrality (the number of other members a member is connected to within the network, so the number of unique collaborators each member has in letters to the USDA), presented in Figure 2, also shows variation over the time frame, with the largest collaborative networks coming in the 111th, 112th, and 113th sessions of Congress.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

I use Volden and Wiseman's (2012, 2014) legislative effectiveness scores to measure how effective a legislator is at moving their bills through the legislative process.[6] As behavior may be limited or enhanced by party status, membership in the majority party is coded as 1 (0 otherwise). I also control for a variety of factors that are likely to influence the conditions under which a member decides to communicate with the USDA. A measure of committee membership is used, consistent with the work of Adler and Lapinski (1997), coded as 1 (0 otherwise) if the legislator serves on the relevant committee overseeing the agency's budget, in this case the House Agriculture Committee. Similarly, the models account district density, as measured by the 2010 U.S. Census. Additional controls for

[6] The Legislative Effectiveness Score is calculated for each member of Congress, and draws on fifteen indicators that capture the ability of a legislator to advance their agenda items through the legislative process and into law, including the number of bills introduced, the number that receive action in or beyond a committee, and the number that pass and become law, with weights to account for their status as commemorative bills, substantive bills, or substantive and significant bills.

institutional status include membership on the Appropriations, Rules, or Ways and Means committees, as well as if the member serves as a committee chair. A measure of tenure in office is included, as previous literature also suggests senior members are more likely to have greater parliamentary skills and receive federal benefits, and therefore it is natural to expect letters from more senior members of Congress to carry more weight and attract more coauthors (see Lee 2003; Roberts 1990; among others). Consistent with the previous literature (see Dropp and Peskowitz 2012), electoral vulnerability is measured as the vote percent in the previous election.[7]

WHO WRITES AND WITH WHOM

In this section, I examine the relationship between policymaking effectiveness and the decision to communicate with a federal agency and with whom. I model the frequency of communications and the scope of the coauthorship networks. The unit of analysis is the individual legislator. Table 1 shows the results from a series of models exploring legislative behavior as it relates to communications to the USDA. Models 1 and 2 explore the frequency of communications with the USDA, Model 3 explores the size of a member's coauthorship network, and Model 4 explores the number of opposing party cosponsors. A negative binomial specification is used to account for the count nature of each dependent variable.[8] Across the models presented in Table 1, there is a positive relationship between a member's policymaking effectiveness (*LES*) and member's communication activity,

[7] Appendix Table 1 presents the summary statistics for relevant variables.

[8] Models are robust to a strategy using congress member fixed effects.

measured as the frequency of writing, the size of their network, or their willingness to cross the aisle (though the effect is only significant at the .10 level for network size). Broadly, the positive and significant coefficients on the *LES* measure supports the theoretical idea that effective policymakers are also effective advocates for their constituents in other ways.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Looking specifically at each measure of representational activity, the results in Column 1 suggest a member's *LES* is associated with an increase in the number of letters written to the agency, offering tentative confirmation of Hypothesis 1. Similarly, *LES* is associated with the number of coauthors with whom a member writes to the agency (Column 3), though the effect is most pronounced with more effective legislators seeing a larger network of unique and more politically diverse network collaborators, (Column 4) confirming Hypothesis 2. Together, these findings suggest the skills that make a legislator an effective policymaker are similar to those necessary for constituent advocacy, and members who are able to push their bills through the legislative process also engage in agency communications with a large number of diverse coauthors.

However, as theorized, it is possible for representational activities to be influenced by institutional status within the chamber, and members who are institutionally disadvantaged in the policymaking process may need to rely on other representational activities for their districts. This expectation is confirmed in Column 2, where the effect of a member's *LES* is conditioned by party status, with more effective policymakers in the minority writing a greater number of letters to the agency than their majority party colleagues. This finding is consistent with Hypothesis 3 and suggests members at an

institutional disadvantage are eager and willing to seek out alternative representational avenues. The interaction is not significant across the other models. Figure 3 plots the effect of *LES* on each dependent variable, all communications, network size, and opposing partisan network for an *LES* range 1.5 standard deviations above and below the mean. The panels in Figure 3 show the more effective policymakers write to agencies more frequently, particularly if they are in the minority party, and with a wider and more politically diverse network of collaborators. *LES* is only conditioned by the minority party in Panel 1, where members of Congress in the minority party see a difference of 5.3 contacts across the range of *LES* 1.5 standard deviations above and below the mean, holding all other variables at their mean. For members of the majority party, the effect is relatively flat across the range of LES.

Turning to network size measured as degree centrality, party status does not condition the effect of *LES*, and members see an increase of 7.6 unique collaborators across the range of *LES* 1.5 standard deviations above and below the mean, holding all other values at their mean, indicating the most effective policymakers write with the largest number of colleagues from across the aisle. This finding is consistent with previous work suggesting a member's policymaking effectiveness is often related to their collaborative and consensus building skills, and therefore these members should be positioned to work across the aisle in other ways.

In addition to the *LES* measure, the models presented in Table 1 also include the standard controls. Consistent with expectations, members of the majority party write fewer letters than their minority party colleagues and with a much less diverse network of coauthors. However, as indicated in Model 3, majority members do have a large network of

unique co-authors, but within their own party. Members serving on the Agriculture Committee are also more prolific writers, and with a larger and more political diverse network of coauthors. This is consistent with previous literature (Alder and Lapinski 1997) suggesting members serving on the committee overseeing the budget of the agency will be a better position with respect to bargaining, and therefore may be perceived as more influential or possibly successful in their appeals and therefore making the more attractive coauthors in letters to the agency. Members with a greater share of their district being comprised of *rural* area write with a significantly more diverse network, but district composition has no impact on the frequency of communications or size of the network. Members on the Appropriations, Rules, or Ways and Means Committees are also more prolific writers, but their committee membership does not have a significant effect on network size or diversity. Similarly, Committee Chairs are not more likely to write to the agency, but when they do, they have a smaller and less diverse network, due most likely to their status in the majority party. Finally, Freshman members are no more or less inclined to write, but they are significantly less likely to have a diverse network of collaborators.

WRITING FOR THE ALLOCATION OF DISTRIBUTIVE BENEFITS

While effective policymakers are more likely to write to federal agencies, given certain institutional conditions, and do so with a large network of collaborators, it is possible that this behavior is not consistent across all types of communications, but instead is driven by communications that are most similar to their policymaking efforts. For example, if effective policymakers are only concerned with policy benefits, they can bring back to their

districts, the results in Table 1 may be driven by legislator requests for the allocation of distributive benefits.

To this end, I explore how behavior varies across different types of communications, and divide appeals to the agency into non-distributive and distributive requests, and across each member and each session of Congress. Distributive communications are modeled in two ways and the results are presented in Table 2. First, to model the frequency of distributive requests I use a poisson model controlling for the share of total communications (Column 1). Second, I model the frequency of requests including an additional time control for changing institutional rules and the moratorium on earmarks using a model with a selection process (Columns 2 and 3). The selection process was not significant in the specification in the first column, and therefore not used. In Columns 2 and 3, a Heckpoisson model accounts for the frequency nature of the dependent variable and the selection process of a member deciding to speak. In this model, two equations are estimated. The equation of interest explains the frequency of distributive communications. Without the selection process, this equation could be estimated by a Poisson model. The second equation estimates the selection process using a discrete binary model to explain whether a member writes to the USDA. The selection process is based on the possibility that whether a member writes to an agency is non-random, but instead driven by individual and institutional factors.

TABLE 2 HERE

Column 1 in Table 2 presents the results for a negative binomial regression model invariant to institutional rules changes. Consistent with expectations, the *LES* measure is positive, though it is only statistically significant at the .10 level and substantively has very

little effect. In fact, most of the covariates in this model are substantively insignificant, even when they appear statistically significant. What changes this is the inclusion of a measure of institutional change – the moratorium on earmarks. Columns 2 and 3 present the results of the selection models, which model first the decision to write to the USDA, and second the frequency of distributive communications. The selection parameter is significant in these models indicating the two processes (the decision to write and the frequency of distributive requests) are interdependent.

The results in the selection equation presented in Columns 2 and 3 are consistent with the earlier models and show *LES* and membership on the Agriculture committee to be positively associated with the likelihood a legislator writes to the USDA. For members who write to the USDA, Column 2 suggests *LES* does not have a significant effect on the frequency of distributive requests. Rather, members representing rural districts are associated with more distributive requests, and the moratorium on earmarks is associated with fewer requests. However, as indicated in Column 3, *LES* is conditioned by the moratorium on earmarks with effective policymakers making a greater number of distributive requests before the ban, and fewer requests after the ban. These results are presented graphically in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

While these results may seem to run counter to Hypothesis 4, they are consistent with the larger theory. As the moratorium on earmarks transferred power to the federal agencies (see Mills, Kalaf-Hughes, and MacDonald 2015), members had to become more selective with which distributive requests and projects to support, as they were now in competition with each other for funds allocated by the agencies themselves, rather than Congress. The

consequence here may mean fewer overall distributive requests to the agencies, and fewer coauthored letters with their colleagues, as each additional competitive grant application reduces the likelihood of receiving benefits or reduces the potential amount allocated. Put differently, effective legislators know not to compete with themselves.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

While effective policy makers may be more active before the ban, it is possible their networks become more sparse after the moratorium is in place. Table 3 uses a Heckman selection process, with the selection equation again modeling the decision to write the USDA, and the outcome equation modeling the share of a member's collaboration network comprised of coauthors on distributive requests, relative to their overall network size. Recall Hypothesis 5 predicts smaller networks for distributive requests after the ban. The first column presents the results of the base model without controlling for the moratorium on earmarks in network size. The second column includes the control for the moratorium on earmarks. Consistent with the previous models, *LES* and committee membership are both positively associated with the decision to write to the USDA across all three specifications. Membership in the majority party and serving as a committee chair are associated with a reduced probability of writing to the agency.

Once the decision is made to write to the agency, the effect of *LES* is no longer conditional on the moratorium on earmarks. Instead, the results in Column 2 indicate the moratorium decreases the size of everyone's networks on Distributive requests, regardless of policymaking skill. These results offer limited confirmation of Hypothesis 5 and show that after the moratorium, members of Congress write with a smaller share of coauthors on distributive requests relative to their collaborative efforts before the ban.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

It is possible the changes to network composition for effective policymakers is more related to the diversity of the network rather than size. As the moratorium may have reduced both the incentive to collaborate and their willingness to cross the aisle. Controlling again for the selection process of a member's decision to write to federal agencies, across all types of communications members with high *LES* indicative of greater policymaking effectiveness, are likely to see their collaboration networks comprised of a large share of opposing party coauthors due to their skills in crafting policy that appeals to diverse interests. These results are presented in the first column of Table 4. The effect is conditioned by the moratorium on earmarks at lower levels of *LES,* with the least effective policymakers having roughly 39% of their coauthors as members of the opposing party before the moratorium and 29% after. One a member's *LES* is one standard deviation above the mean, there is no significant difference in opposing party coauthors before or after the moratorium, suggesting that for the most effective policy makers, their behavior is not dependent on the institutional rules when it comes to all communications with federal agencies. These results are presented in the first panel of Figure 5. This model is also consistent with earlier specifications indicating membership on the Agriculture committee or representing districts with a greater share of rural area are also associated with more diverse coauthorship networks, though the rural measure is conditioned by the moratorium, with a greater number of opposing party coauthors prior to the moratorium.

FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

Column 2 in Table 4 presents the results for Distributive requests alone. The moratorium on earmarks conditions the effect of *LES,* with the more effective policymakers

seeing a greater share of their coauthorship networks comprised of opposing partisans before the moratorium than after. Prior to the moratorium, the least effective members saw about 10% of their network on distributive requests comprised of opposing party cosponsors. Members with a *LES* 1.5 standard deviations above the mean saw about 20% of their distributive networks comprised of opposing partisans. However, after the moratorium on earmarks the networks become far less diverse, with the least effective policymakers seeing a distributive network of about 2% opposing partisans, and the most effective policymakers seeing a network of about 1% opposing partisans. These results are presented in the second panel in Figure 6.

Turning to the control variables, membership on the Agriculture committee is associated with a smaller share of opposing party cosponsors on distributive requests, with committee members having a 3% smaller share of opposing party cosponsors. Similarly, members representing a greater share of rural area see a smaller share of opposing party coauthors after the moratorium than before. These results are presented in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

Taking the results from Tables 3 and 4 together, the data show following the moratorium, the size of collaboration networks on distributive requests was significantly smaller relative to other requests than before the moratorium. Further, members with a higher *LES,* indicating a greater level of policymaking effectiveness, are responsive to the changing institutional rules within the chamber, writing fewer requests for the allocation of distributive benefits and with a smaller network of diverse coauthors after the moratorium on earmarks. The incentive to collaborate has been removed, even for members who are otherwise likely to do so.

Turning to the significant controls in Column 2, members of the Agriculture committee, while more likely to write to the agency, are also more likely to write with a smaller network after the ban. These members are most likely very aware of the competitive environment in which allocations for distributive benefits are made, as well as confident in having some level of influence over the agency's funding. These members are therefore less likely to need a diverse network to build support. A finding contrasted with members representing rural districts, who are more likely to be prolific coauthors and less well-positioned institutionally to oversee or influence agency behavior.

Overall, the results suggest two key findings. First, the skills that make members effective producers of policy also lend themselves to non-legislative activities. Effective members, who are institutionally disadvantaged, make more frequent appeals to the agency, suggesting they see this as an avenue for representation when limited by their party status in Congress. Effective members also write with a larger and more diverse network of collaborators, suggesting the same factors that are often responsible for policymaking effectiveness, such as an interest in collaboration and building consensus, are evident in non-legislative activities, as well. Second, the moratorium on earmarks reshaped the behavior of these effective policymakers, changing many of the behaviors, disincentivizing collaboration and consensus building, even across non-legislative activities. Effective members act aware of changing institutional norms and respond accordingly, writing fewer distributive requests and with a smaller and less politically diverse network of coauthors after the moratorium on earmarks. This is a finding which suggests the moratorium on earmarks reduced the incentives for members to collaborate, not just on legislation, but on all aspects of work. If collaboration is necessary for Congress

to work well, than any action which disincentivizes members from working together will have a negative effect on the legislative body as a whole.

CONCLUSION

This research argues effective policymaking is not at odds with representation, and voters need not view this as a trade-off. Rather the same skills and characteristics that make legislators effective producers of policy also make them good constituent advocates. Members who are effective producers of policy also know when to reach out to an agency, for what purpose, and with whom. With increasing polarization across the parties and evolving institutional rules, the debate over whether members are skilled at making laws or other representational activities remains increasingly salient in understanding the characteristics of "good" representatives. However, at the same time, these skilled members may not use their talents to build collaborative relationships when the institutional rules and regulations do not foster the behavior.

Effective policy makers, those who are dedicated to shepherding their legislation through the legislative process are also dedicated to being good representatives and advocates for their district and constituents. Further, these legislators are also adept at responding to changing institutional environments. Previous work shows the moratorium on earmarks transferred power away from Congress and to the executive branch and federal agencies (see Mills, Kalaf-Hughes, and MacDonald 2015). This work builds on these findings and demonstrates further unintended consequences, namely the disincentivizing of collaboration in Congress. The moratorium on earmarks reduced the incentive to collaborate on distributive requests more so than non-distributive requests, suggesting the

calculations of legislators change when the institutional structure of Congress disincentivizes cooperation. Even for members predisposed to building coalitions and fostering consensus, the change in institutional motivations reduced the incentives for collaboration. In this view, the reduction in collaboration stemming from changes of institutional rules could have deleterious effects on the legislative body as avenues and options for cooperation decline, a fact members are aware of given the lifting of the moratorium in 2021.

The research presented here offers numerous opportunities for extension. Future work could consider the role of Congressional staff in legislative effectiveness – namely are these legislators so effective because they hire the most effective staff, and are therefore able to not only push legislation through the process, but effectively navigate the federal bureaucracy across distributive and non-distributive appeals. Future work could also consider the outcome of appeals, in exploring which appeals are most successful and under what conditions. Previous work has begun to explore the effectiveness of requests for the allocation of distributive benefits (e.g. Mills et al. 2015; Mills and Kalaf-Hughes 2015; Lowande et al. 2019), but more work in this area is needed to fully understand how legislative appeals to the bureaucracy influence agency outcomes. Finally, future work could explore if collaboration and consensus building in non-legislative activities rebounded after the moratorium on earmarks was lifted to understand how agile members are at responding to changing institutional incentives.

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Table 1. *Effect of Covariates on Communications to the USDA*

	(1) Communication Frequency	(2) Communication Frequency	(3) Network Size	(4) Opposing Partisans
main				
LES	0.0840**	0.288**	0.0185	0.0643**
	(0.0242)	(0.0543)	(0.0113)	(0.0231)
Majority Party=1	-0.314**	-0.183**	0.0693*	-0.210**
	(0.0444)	(0.0568)	(0.0272)	(0.0534)
Ag. Com.	0.726**	0.731**	0.152**	0.301**
	(0.0646)	(0.0649)	(0.0361)	(0.0722)
Pct. Rural	0.192*	0.197*	-0.0502	0.541**
	(0.0977)	(0.0974)	(0.0470)	(0.0891)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means	0.203**	0.211**	0.0168	0.0312
	(0.0722)	(0.0715)	(0.0294)	(0.0627)
Committee Chair	-0.0466	0.0271	-0.147*	-0.365**
	(0.116)	(0.119)	(0.0747)	(0.120)
Freshman	-0.0395	-0.0385	0.00644	-0.143*
	(0.0531)	(0.0529)	(0.0331)	(0.0658)
Pct. Vote	-0.00224	-0.00214	0.00197+	-0.00815**
	(0.00180)	(0.00178)	(0.00118)	(0.00219)
Congress number=111	1.346**	1.343**	0.894**	0.625**
	(0.0542)	(0.0541)	(0.0441)	(0.0759)
Congress number=112	0.991**	0.986**	1.089**	0.739**
	(0.0528)	(0.0529)	(0.0461)	(0.0762)
Congress number=113	1.205**	1.197**	1.403**	1.449**
	(0.0548)	(0.0550)	(0.0436)	(0.0714)
Congress number=114	0.112+	0.101	0.895**	0.452**
	(0.0638)	(0.0642)	(0.0438)	(0.0825)
Majority Party=1 X LES		-0.228**		
		(0.0568)		
Number of Letters			0.0648**	0.131**
			(0.00407)	(0.00983)
Constant	0.606**	0.495**	3.219**	2.214**
	(0.152)	(0.151)	(0.0959)	(0.176)
/				
lnalpha	-0.685**	-0.699**	-0.960**	0.457**
	(0.0639)	(0.0643)	(0.0519)	(0.0448)
r2				
N	2194	2194	1829	2194

Standard errors in parentheses
Coefficients are from a negative binomial regression model. Robust standard errors clustered by member.
$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 2. *Effect of Covariates on Distributive Requests to the USDA*

	(1) Base Model	(2) With Moratorium Control	(3) With Moratorium Interaction
Number of Lettermarks LES	0.0902*	0.0286	0.168**
	(0.0396)	(0.0461)	(0.0563)
Majority Party=1	0.0312	-0.135	-0.182
	(0.122)	(0.130)	(0.172)
Ag. Com.	-0.430*	-0.326	-0.444+
	(0.176)	(0.260)	(0.259)
Pct. Rural	0.992**	1.442**	1.576**
	(0.230)	(0.273)	(0.397)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means	-0.415**	-0.233	-0.231
	(0.135)	(0.145)	(0.147)
Committee Chair	-0.401	0.145	-0.0380
	(0.321)	(0.304)	(0.304)
Freshman	-0.175	-0.254	-0.130
	(0.153)	(0.166)	(0.162)
Pct. Vote	-0.00629	-0.00677	-0.00736
	(0.00400)	(0.00552)	(0.00610)
Number of Letters	0.132**		
	(0.00981)		
Congress number=111	0.654**		
	(0.192)		
Congress number=112	0.303+		
	(0.175)		
Congress number=113	-0.432+		
	(0.222)		
Congress number=114	-0.164		
	(0.237)		
Earmark Ban=1		-0.965**	-0.585**
		(0.114)	(0.159)
Earmark Ban=1 X LES			-0.278**
			(0.0713)
Constant	-2.223**	-1.096*	-1.224*
	(0.337)	(0.455)	(0.506)
Binary Communication			

LES		0.109*	0.0790**
		(0.0498)	(0.00245)
Majority Party=1		-0.159*	-0.133**
		(0.0792)	(0.0440)
Ag. Com.		0.784**	0.688**
		(0.164)	(0.0718)
Pct. Rural		-0.0253	0.0970
		(0.137)	(0.111)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means		0.0911	0.00625
		(0.0919)	(0.0211)
Committee Chair		-0.322	-0.148**
		(0.197)	(0.0274)
Freshman		0.0891	-0.00955
		(0.101)	(0.0252)
Pct. Vote		0.00118	-0.000284
		(0.00303)	(0.00129)
Congress number=111		1.103**	0.993**
		(0.0995)	(0.0680)
Congress number=112		1.052**	0.851**
		(0.0958)	(0.0400)
Congress number=113		0.887**	0.827**
		(0.0925)	(0.0668)
Congress number=114		0.338**	0.240**
		(0.0843)	(0.0572)
Constant		0.251	0.390**
		(0.237)	(0.0923)
/			
athrho		-1.511**	-4.876**
		(0.151)	(1.632)
lnsigma		0.496**	0.589**
		(0.0596)	(0.0776)
r2			
N	2194	2194	2194

Standard errors in parentheses
Coefficients are from a Poisson Model (Column 1) and Heckpoisson models (Columns 2 and 3). Clustered by member.
$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 3. *Effect of Covariates on Share of Coauthors on Distributive Requests to the USDA*

	(1) Base Model	(2) With Moratorium Control
main		
LES	0.00842	0.0232*
	(0.00884)	(0.00961)
Majority Party=1	-0.0927**	-0.0953**
	(0.0351)	(0.0360)
Ag. Com.	-0.0924*	-0.00446
	(0.0369)	(0.0536)
Pct. Rural	0.118*	0.185*
	(0.0584)	(0.0739)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means	0.0191	0.0156
	(0.0395)	(0.0427)
Committee Chair	-0.0408	-0.0633
	(0.0695)	(0.0681)
Freshman	0.0371	0.0234
	(0.0449)	(0.0490)
Pct. Vote	-0.000765	-0.000685
	(0.00136)	(0.00142)
Number of Letters	-0.00842**	
	(0.00255)	
Congress number=111	-0.171**	
	(0.0656)	
Congress number=112	-0.449**	
	(0.0679)	
Congress number=113	-0.507**	
	(0.0677)	
Congress number=114	-0.363**	
	(0.0836)	

Earmark Ban=1		-0.370**
		(0.0323)
Constant	0.652**	0.232
	(0.124)	(0.157)
Communication Dummy		
LES		0.0907*
		(0.0389)
Majority Party=1		-0.168
		(0.123)
Ag. Com.		0.939**
		(0.256)
Pct. Rural		0.489*
		(0.205)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means		0.0571
		(0.143)
Committee Chair		-0.266
		(0.258)
Freshman		0.0353
		(0.159)
Pct. Vote		0.000553
		(0.00462)
Congress number=111		1.406**
		(0.428)
Congress number=112		0.726+
		(0.385)
Congress number=113		0.515+
		(0.272)
Congress number=114		-0.0261
		(0.205)
Constant		-0.963*
		(0.434)

/

athrho		1.215**
		(0.433)
lnsigma		-1.177**
		(0.0981)
r2	0.337	
N	325	664

Standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients are from a Heckman selection model. Clustered by member.
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 4. *Effect of Covariates on Share of Coauthors on Distributive Requests to the USDA*

	(1) All Communications	(2) Distributive Communications
main		
LES	-0.00574	0.0208*
	(0.00526)	(0.00912)
Earmark Ban=1	-0.0561*	-0.0254
	(0.0256)	(0.0244)
Earmark Ban=1 X LES	0.0329**	-0.0213*
	(0.00807)	(0.00880)
Majority Party=1	-0.0776**	-0.00595
	(0.0134)	(0.0111)
Ag. Com.	0.103**	-0.0252**
	(0.0149)	(0.00957)
Pct. Rural	0.203**	0.132**
	(0.0303)	(0.0344)
Earmark Ban=1 X Pct. Rural	-0.102**	-0.0995**
	(0.0381)	(0.0384)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means	0.0147	-0.00860
	(0.0138)	(0.00936)
Committee Chair	-0.0191	-0.0111
	(0.0273)	(0.0197)
Freshman	-0.0323*	-0.00490
	(0.0138)	(0.00999)
Pct. Vote	-0.00264**	0.0000742
	(0.000474)	(0.000380)
Constant	0.426**	0.0334
	(0.0409)	(0.0399)
Communication Dummy		
LES	0.111*	0.114*
	(0.0479)	(0.0508)
Majority Party=1	-0.0916	-0.142+

	(0.0774)	(0.0799)
Ag. Com.	0.633**	0.874**
	(0.185)	(0.164)
Pct. Rural	-0.00204	-0.0309
	(0.131)	(0.141)
1 = Member of Appropriation, Rules, or Ways and Means	0.0893	0.113
	(0.0833)	(0.0973)
Committee Chair	-0.290	-0.360+
	(0.186)	(0.199)
Freshman	-0.0578	0.0307
	(0.0923)	(0.103)
Pct. Vote	-0.00602*	0.000785
	(0.00280)	(0.00316)
Congress number=111	0.782**	1.054**
	(0.120)	(0.115)
Congress number=112	0.734**	0.940**
	(0.123)	(0.106)
Congress number=113	0.251*	0.869**
	(0.123)	(0.0999)
Congress number=114	0.442**	0.263**
	(0.0935)	(0.0957)
Constant	0.865**	0.278
	(0.229)	(0.245)
/		
athrho	1.388**	-0.102*
	(0.121)	(0.0410)
lnsigma	-1.506**	-1.780**
	(0.0296)	(0.0492)
r2		
N	2168	2069

Standard errors in parentheses
Coefficients are from a Heckman selection model. Clustered by member. DV is share of opposing party coauthors.
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 1. Frequency of Communications to the USDA from members of the US House by Session of Congress

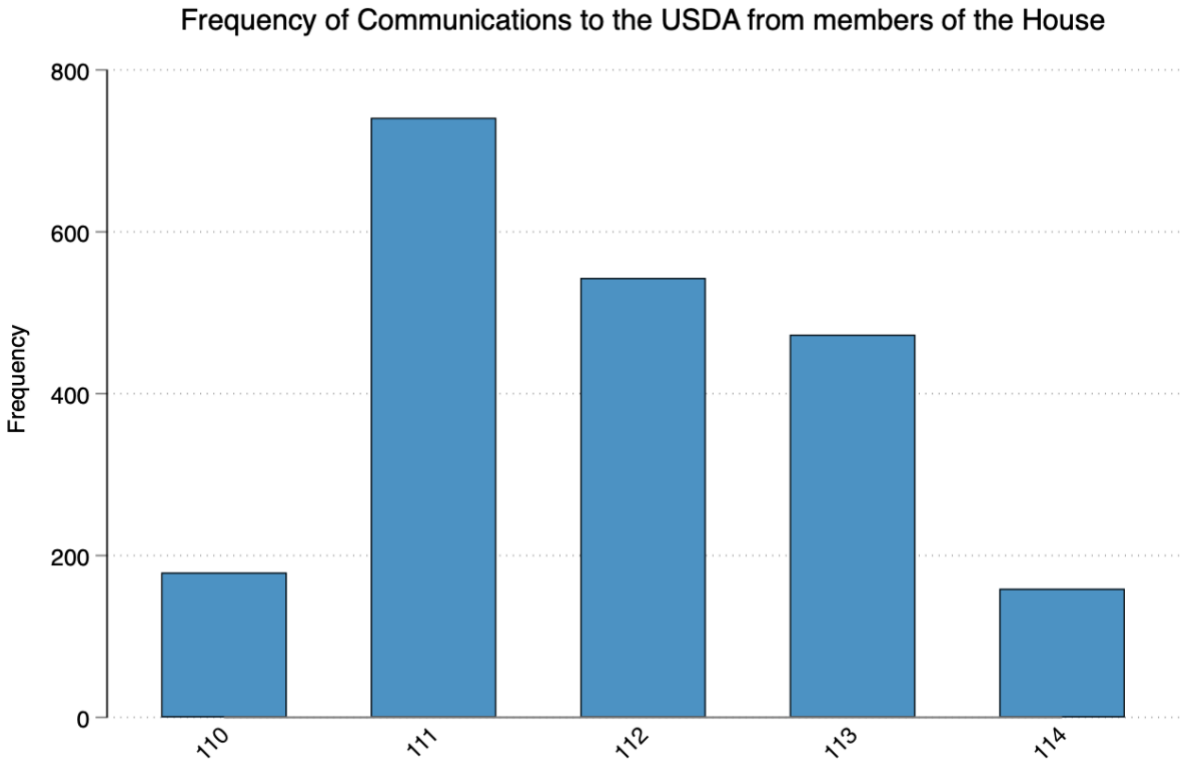


Figure 2. Histograms of Degree Centrality for USDA Communication Networks by Congress

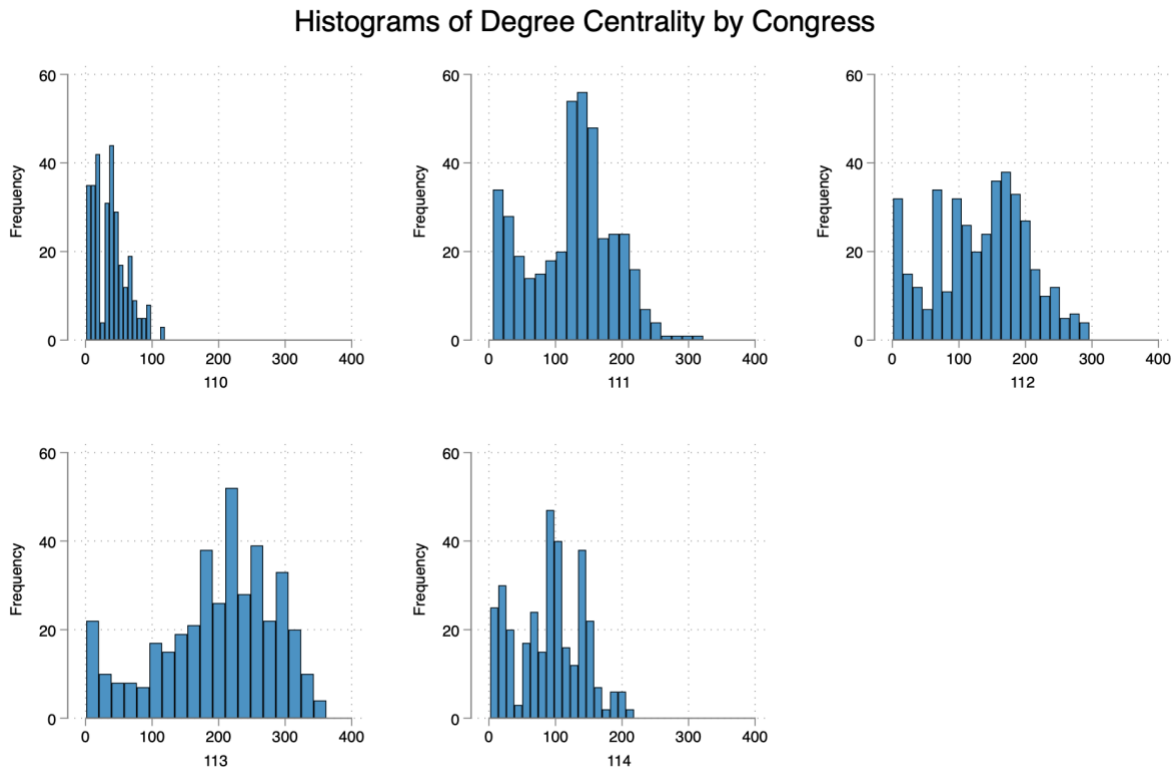
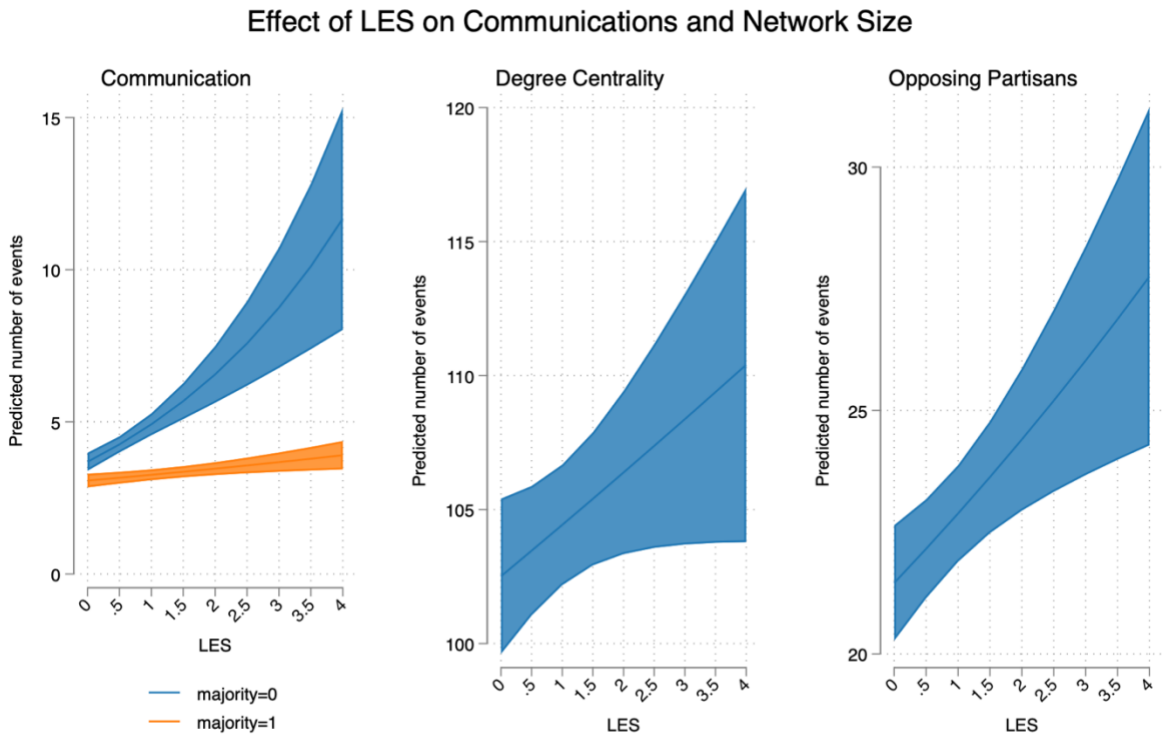
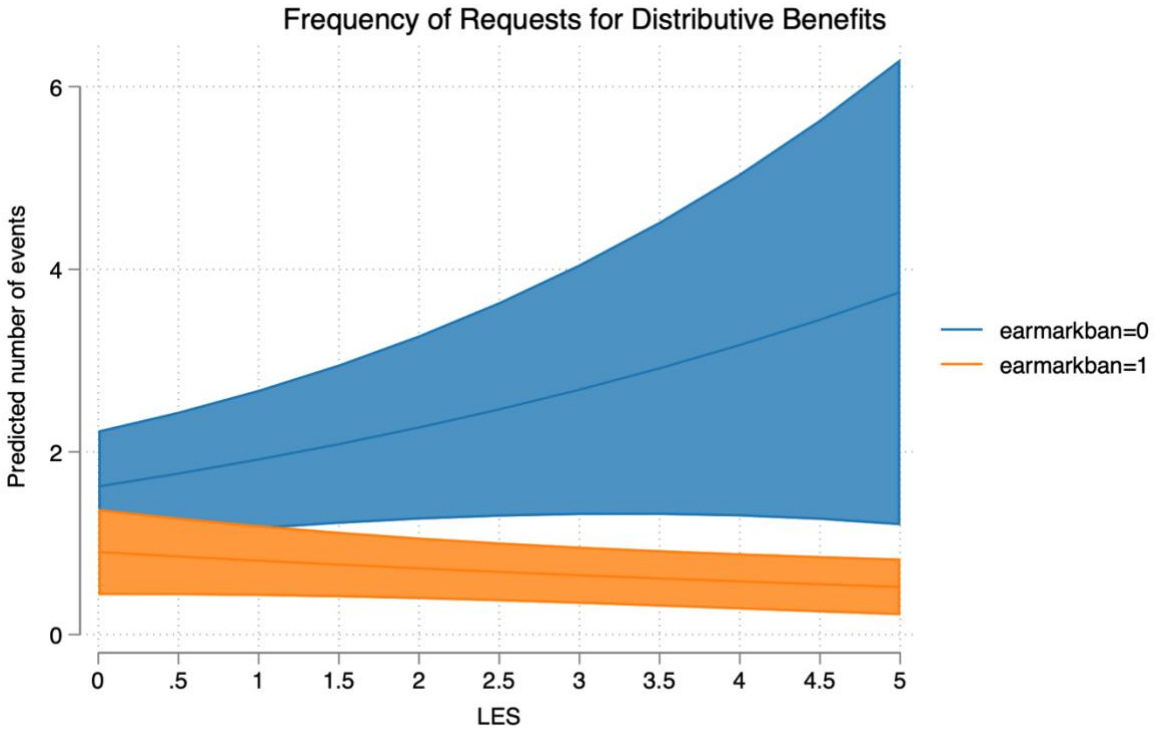


Figure 3. Effect of LES on Communication and Network Size



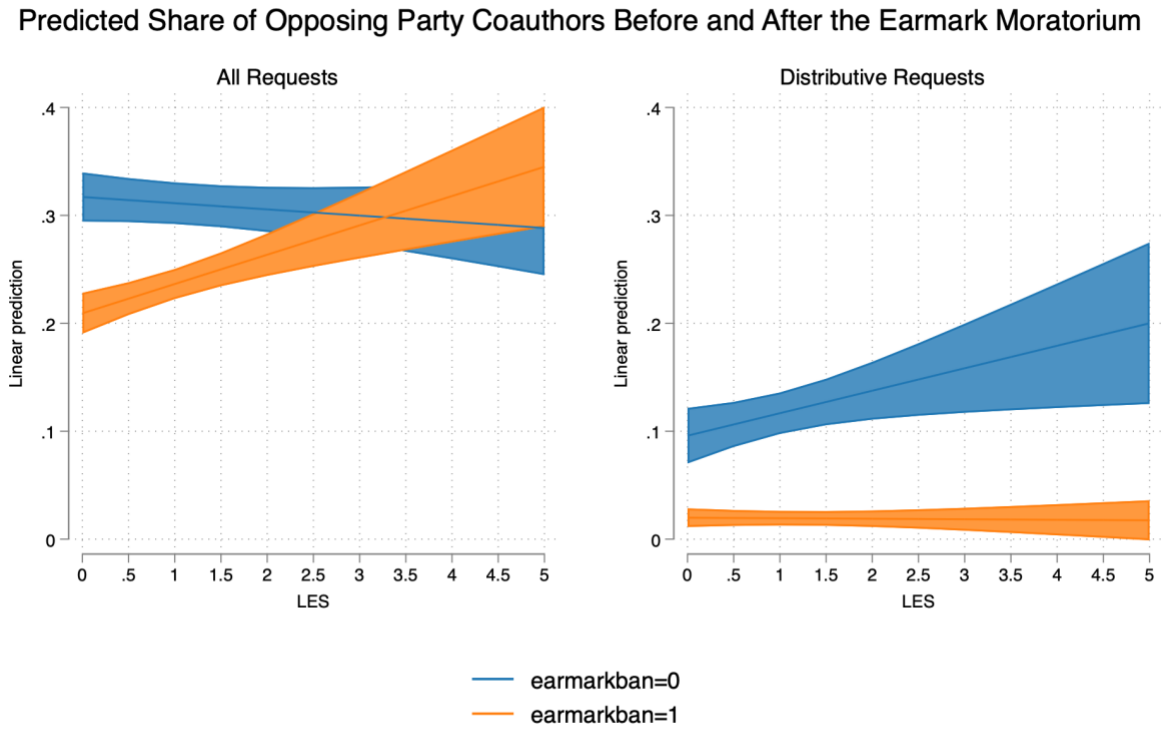
Note. Predicted network size from an negative binomial regression model. Robust standard errors clustered by member.

Figure 4. Effect of LES on Frequency of Distributive Requests before and after the moratorium on earmarks



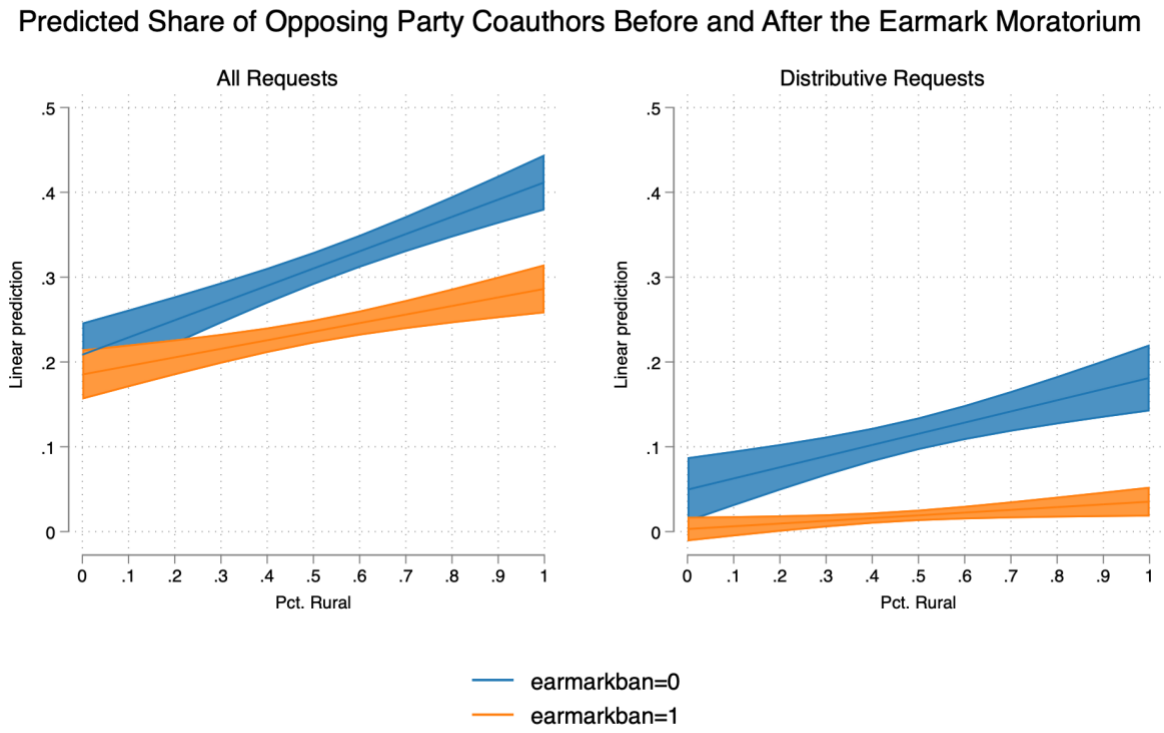
Note. Preidcted number of distributive requests from a Heckpoisson model.

Figure 5. Effect of LES on Share of Opposing Party Coauthors before and after the moratorium on earmarks



Note. Preidcted share calculated from a Heckman selection model. Opposing share relative to total share is measured as a member's opposing party coauthors divided by their degree centrality for the enttire coauthorship network.

Figure 6. Effect of Rural District Share on Share of Opposing Party Coauthors before and after the moratorium on earmarks



Note. Preidcted share calculated from a Heckman selection model. Opposing share relative to total share is measured as a member's opposing party coauthors divided by their degree centrality for the enttire coauthorship network.

Appendix A.

Table 1. *Summary Statistics*

	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Number of Letters	325	9.42	6.47	1	31
Number of Lettermarks	325	1.98	1.73	1	11
Distributive Coauthor Share	325	0.29	0.30	.0038	1
Deg. Cent. - All	325	146	79.61	2	362
Opposing Party Coauthors	325	53.25	41.54	0	169
LES	325	1.09	1.76	.0027	16.31
Earmark Ban	325	0.38	0.49	0	1
Majority Party	325	0.56	0.50	0	1
Ag. Com.	325	0.14	0.35	0	1
Pct. Rural	325	0.60	0.27	0	.9905
Member of Approp., Rules, or Ways and Means	325	0.23	0.42	0	1
Committee Chair	325	0.06	0.23	0	1
Freshman	325	0.18	0.38	0	1
Pct. Vote	325	66.02	12.69	48	100
Congress number	325	111.6	1.14	110	114