



**Center for  
Effective Lawmaking**

# **When Process Becomes Power: Rules, Parties, and Legislative Effectiveness**

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## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

Majority party advantages in lawmaking are consistent in theoretical and empirical scholarship, but overlook a critical question: How do factors beyond numerical advantage and cohesion shape the majority party's success? To address this, we examine how chamber rules structure the legislative environment for both parties holistically and at each stage of the legislative process. We argue that chamber rules do more than reinforce majority party dominance—they form conditions for legislative effectiveness by configuring opportunities for the majority and minority. Using the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman 2024), we disaggregate effectiveness across legislative stages and demonstrate that procedural design does not uniformly advantage or disadvantage one party. Instead, rules create distinct opportunities and constraints at various points in the policymaking process. Our findings refine prevailing assumptions about majority party dominance and show how institutional rules mitigate or exacerbate power asymmetries and legislative influence between parties in lawmaking outcomes.

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Scholars have long held the importance of institutions in structuring opportunities of action, containing behavior, and distributing power among actors. Typified by John Dingell’s famous axiom that “I’ll let you write the substance [...] you let me write the procedure, and I’ll screw you every time,” this focus on the structure of institutions pervades our understanding of politics. Scholars of policymaking (Baumgartner, Jones, and MacLeod 2000; Baumgartner and Jones 2015), elections (Neto and Cox 1997), and institutions (Weingast and Marshall 1988) focus on how procedures shape government processes. This image is reinforced by foundational theories of parties as procedural cartels (Cox and McCubbins 2005), ideological coalitions (Rohde 1991), or electoral machines (Aldrich 1995), each of which presumes some consistent and reliable mechanism for party coordination and influence. Majority parties are expected to exert their will, giving themselves power at the expense of the minority (Koger and Lebo 2017). However, parties may not always function in these idealized or expected ways, as recent evidence by Curry and Lee (2020a) suggests that party strength can be induced or constrained by the institutional rules that shape the legislative arena. Thus, the capacity for majority parties to effectively make policy – and push their electoral interests – are likely a function of the rules under which they operate.

Despite an extensive body of research on legislative rules and procedures – including suspension (Bach 1990; Bussing 2021), and motions to recommit (Roberts 2005), reconsider (Smith 1984), and discharge (Pearson and Schickler 2009) among others — we still lack a clear understanding of how these rules shape the legislative process as a whole and whether they constrain or facilitate lawmakers’ ability to be effective. Legislative rules are often studied in isolation, focusing on the effects of individual procedural mechanisms rather than examining how they combine to structure the legislative environment (Krehbiel and Meirowitz 2002). That much of the existing research focuses on final legislative outcomes (e.g., whether a bill becomes law) rather than analyzing how rules shape effectiveness throughout the lawmaking process, which further limits the study of these rules’ effects (Gailmard and Jenkins 2007).

These legislative rules often serve as the moderator between party goals and policy outcomes (Binder 2018), structuring not only who gets to participate and when, but also how power is dis-

tributed (Curry 2015), challenged (Roberts 2005), or constrained within the chamber (Wawro and Schickler 2007). Some rules amplify the power of the majority party by centralizing agenda control or limiting procedural interference (Owens 1997). Others flatten the procedural landscape, constraining the majority's dominance and facilitating more equitable participation. Still others provide explicit tools for the minority party to obstruct, amend, or influence legislation despite being outnumbered (Binder 1997). In each case, institutional rules define the legislative environment in which parties operate, and by doing so influence whether parties can behave more or less effectively than their ideological unity or numerical strength might otherwise suggest.

Further, scholarship has pinpointed that party influence is not uniform throughout the legislative process. Theories of legislative organization suggest that different loci of influence for majority party advantage. For instance, Cox and McCubbins (2005) point to the committee gatekeeping structure as a mechanism for why we observe majority party advantage, while Anzia and Jackman (2013) point to floor calendar access as a separate mechanism for majority party control, and Krehbiel (2010) points to the chamber median's power as an agenda setter. If we want to understand whether parties operate as powerful legislative actors — or when they fail to do so — we must account for the institutional rules that govern their behavior. We thus ask two related questions: (1) How do rules shape majority and minority party effectiveness? (2) Do these rule structures do what we expect relative to majority and minority party effectiveness throughout the legislative process?

This article uses state legislative chambers to provide the most comprehensive exploration of constraints on policymaking in legislatures to date. We use a set of legislative rules that stretch across the legislative process, while breaking legislative effectiveness scores provided by Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024) into stages to explore the effect that rules advantaging parties have on their ability to be effective policymakers. We argue that legislative rules structure the environment in which parties compete over policy, but that not all rules serve the same function: some consolidate power in the hands of the majority party, others constrain it to create more balanced conditions, and a smaller set of rules explicitly empower the minority. These institutional arrange-

ments do more than simply set the procedural ground rules—they induce or restrict the ability of parties to function as effective legislative actors. The consequences of these rules are not uniform; they amplify and diminish partisan influence at different points in the legislative process. Our results lead to two key findings: (1) rules fundamentally shape the effectiveness of both the majority and minority party and (2) disaggregating the policy-making process into stages shows where and how rules matter in the legislative process for majority and minority party effectiveness.

This project makes three primary contributions. First, by leveraging variation across state legislatures, we provide a more nuanced understanding of how institutional design conditions party influence and legislative outcomes. Second, by analyzing how rules condition legislative effectiveness at different stages of the lawmaking process, this study clarifies the conditions under which parties can exert influence and how institutional design interacts with partisan dynamics to shape lawmaking outcomes. Third, through an analysis of procedural variation in state legislatures, we provide new insights into the role of rules in structuring the balance of power between parties. Our findings highlight that not all rules function in the same way, where some reinforce majority party dominance, others constrain it, and some create more equitable opportunities for minority party influence. Together, our argument and findings speak to broader debates on legislative organization, political parties in government, and representation.

## **Perspectives on Rules and Party Effectiveness**

Central to theories of party capacity is their capability to successfully implement their preferred agendas. This affects electoral politics, as outlined in the focus of Responsible Party Government on parties delivering on their electoral promises (APSA 1950). Parties outline slates of these proposals, and the public judges their ability to carry out these policies once put into power (Jones and McDermott 2004). Parties and individual legislators pay attention their voters' desires, balancing what voters want with the capacity to deliver on those promises (Shor 2018). Primary election voters are highly likely to pay attention to the expressed preferences and corresponding accomplishment of co-partisan legislators (Adams and Merrill III 2008). Additionally, voters reward or punish parties by their perceived legislative party loyalty Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young (2010).

Studies of legislative politics incorporate party success by analyzing the structure of institutions that allow majority parties to exert their will. Cox and McCubbins (2005) describe what policies are possible given the relative ideological positions of the majority party and committees. Other scholars, such as Aldrich and Rohde (2000) focus on the ideological makeup of the parties themselves to understand when legislative chambers are likely to centralize power within leadership (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991). These approaches lead to understanding party success as the ability of parties to attain their goals given the chamber's ideological makeup.<sup>2</sup> Parties respond to each other in terms of their unity as well, providing context for party success beyond parties separately (Howard and Provins 2024; Koger and Lebo 2017). Sometimes appearing as mandates (Grossback, Peterson, and Stimson 2006), this more often appears as the capacity of majority parties. Binder (1995, 1997) formulates this as “strength” of the majority party being a combination of the numerical size of the majority and their ideological unity.

However, when implemented these approaches rely upon the mechanics of legislative processes. These mechanics are given through rules establishing the environments within which policymaking occurs (Cox 2000). They present the structure in which deliberation occurs (Quirk 2005) and under which actions are taken (Binder 1997). Rules guide how bills move throughout the legislative process (Cox and McCubbins 2005) and can empower parties (Aldrich 1995; Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Rohde 1991). Legislative chamber rules are fundamental to structuring the policy-making process. Each stage of the legislative process is dictated by sets of rules that determine how policies advance or fail (Curry and Lee 2022; Ryan 2020). Depending on how these rules are structured, the baseline ability to move policy forward may be more or less difficult (McGrath and Ryan 2019). Some rules are designed to expedite decision-making, while others encourage deliberation and slow the process (Crombez, Groseclose, and Krehbiel 2006; Krutz 2005). Still, others are explicitly designed to advantage certain actors—most frequently the majority party—by granting them procedural control over the legislative agenda (Adler and Lapinski 1997; Curry 2015, 2019). This is not to say that rules are definitive, as Curry and Lee (2020*a,b*) demonstrate with differing

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<sup>2</sup>See Krehbiel (2010) for a treatment of the effects of chamber ideological makeup on outcomes without a focus on party effects.

levels of connection between unorthodox lawmaking and partisan outcomes. However, rules offer guidelines for legislative development and consideration, and each rule has differing purposes.

Parties have clear interests in using the rules that govern the legislative process to shape decision-making (Den Hartog and Monroe 2011; Koger and Lebo 2017). The majority party seeks to advance its preferred policies while limiting the minority's legislative success (Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins 2010; Cox and McCubbins 2005). Conversely, the minority party benefits from rules either slowing the legislative process or providing procedural leverage to influence outcomes (Binder 1997; Wawro and Schickler 2010). Because parties are not equal actors in the legislative process, we should expect systematic differences in how rules structure legislative effectiveness. Moreover, not all rules function in the same way—some strengthen majority control, others constrain it, and some create a more balanced institutional environment between parties (Binder 1997). These rules shape the legislative environment and, by extension, the overall ability of legislators and parties to be *effective lawmakers* (Volden and Wiseman 2014, 2018). These rules shape effectiveness globally (Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman 2024) while also shaping how individual stages within the process function separately (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005; Campbell, Cox, and McCubbins 2002). Scholars such as Anzia and Jackman (2013) highlight how rules can have distinct effects at different stages of the legislative process (i.e. committee and scheduling); we extend this insight by systematically studying the stages of the legislative process to assess how procedural rules shape partisan effectiveness. In what follows, we consider how rules thus shape the ability of parties to be more effective throughout the policymaking process.

## **Rules, Parties, and Legislative Effectiveness**

Legislative rules structure how parties compete over policymaking and allocate authority within the chamber. These rules can either reinforce, redistribute, or constrain institutional power between the majority and minority parties. By extension, rules shape each party's capacity to influence legislative outcomes. We conceptualize three broad types of rules: those that advantage the majority party, those that equalize power between the parties, and those that advantage the minority party. Majority-advantaging rules consolidate agenda control and procedural leverage in the hands of the

majority, increasing their ability to advance legislation and suppress opposition. Equalizing rules reduce asymmetries in institutional power, limiting majority dominance without necessarily empowering the minority. Minority-advantaging rules go further, providing the minority party with specific tools—such as extended debate or amendment rights—to shape or obstruct the majority’s agenda. Each rule type alters the legislative environment that parties must operate in, with direct implications for the relative effectiveness of majority and minority parties.

Majority advantaging rules reinforce the inherent numerical advantage of the majority party, further consolidating its power over the agenda. These rules rely on one of two mechanisms. First, these rules can strictly limit individual members, thereby generating an advantage for the majority party due to their numbers. As a hypothetical example, limiting amendments to one per member would by numerical advantage produce a slate of bills more likely to advantage the majority party. These are rules such as strict limits on debate and procedural hurdles that make it difficult for the minority to amend or delay legislation. Such rules structurally benefit the party commanding more votes. When applied uniformly, these types of restrictions implicitly privilege the majority by making it harder for dissenting voices—who tend to be minority partisans—to meaningfully impact legislative content or timing. As a result, the majority party can more efficiently process its agenda through the legislative process, encountering fewer delays, fewer amendments, and less opportunity for minority obstruction or persuasion.

A second method of this advantage is to allow the majority party to control an inherent part of the process itself. A famous—or perhaps infamous—example is Reed’s Rules in the U.S. House of Representatives which limit the ability of the minority to delay proceedings (Forgette 1997; Squire 2013). In these cases, the institutional infrastructure of the chamber is used to centralize authority in the hands of majority party leaders, empowering them to unilaterally structure legislative activity. Procedurally, these are rules moving gatekeeping powers into majority party leadership’s hands. This includes the capacity for the majority party to control committee assignments, structure committee and floor agendas, and block the minority from their ability to object. By monopolizing agenda-setting and limiting access points for minority interference, these rules

enhance the throughput and success of the majority party's legislative efforts. In other words, we expect an increase in the majority party's legislative effectiveness as they gain both procedural tools and agenda-setting leverage. This leads us to our first two hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1 (Majority Advantage Rules A):** *Rules that advantage the majority party should increase the legislative effectiveness of the majority party.*

**Hypothesis 2 (Majority Advantage Rules B):** *Rules that advantage the majority party should increase the difference in the legislative effectiveness of the majority party and the minority party.*

Next, some rules can equalize majority and minority power to create a more level playing field between the two parties. These are rules restricting the majority's power to harm the minority but do not actually increase the minority's own power. The core logic of these rules is defensive, limiting the procedural dominance that the majority might otherwise exercise. Examples of this include the revolt against Speaker Cannon in 1910 (Miller and Squire 2013) and the creation of the subcommittee bill of rights in 1974 (Rohde 1974). The outcomes of these procedural fights limited specific gatekeepers' central authority, but did not in and of themselves guarantee the minority agenda access. Instead, they worked to decentralize control, opening up space within the chamber for a wider array of actors—including those in the minority—to participate in legislative deliberation and development.

These may include guaranteed debate time for minority party members, bipartisan committee requirements, or super-majority requirements for procedural motions. These mechanisms do not actively empower the minority to override the majority, but they reduce the asymmetry in procedural tools available to each side. The anticipated outcome is not necessarily increased productivity for the minority party, but rather a narrowing of the gap in legislative effectiveness between the two parties. By constraining the majority's unilateral agenda-setting ability, these rules create a more pluralistic legislative process that forces negotiation and sometimes procedural compromise. This leads us to our third hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3 (Equalizing Rules):** *Rules that equalize power between the majority and minority parties should decrease the difference in legislative effectiveness between the parties.*

While less common, some rules explicitly provide the minority with tools to obstruct or shape legislation. Perhaps most famously, the filibuster allows individual members the capacity to speak at length in objection to a bill (Koger 2010). While the implementation of cloture in the U.S. Senate in 1917 provided a means to end an objectionist speech (Wawro and Schickler 2007), that it generally requires a recorded majority or supermajority vote (Sinclair 2012) and can allow additional debate time does increase the capacity of the minority at the majority's expense (Binder 1997). These procedural rules shift the balance of institutional power by giving the minority a formal mechanism to slow or reshape legislation, even when numerically outmatched.

These may include mechanisms such as vote-based procedures to control debate, open amendment proceedings, or the ability to force votes on certain bills. In practice, each of these creates a potential agenda-setting problem for the majority party which the minority can exploit (Walker 1977). When armed with tools to force action, delay consideration, or increase the visibility of their policy alternatives, the minority is better able to insert themselves into the legislative process in a consequential way (Clark 2015). These mechanisms can lead to improved policy influence for the minority and, in some cases, to the successful advancement of their own legislative priorities. This leads us to our fourth and fifth hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 4 (Minority Advantage Rules A):** *Rules that advantage the minority party should increase the effectiveness of the minority party.*

**Hypothesis 5 (Minority Advantage Rules B):** *Rules that advantage the minority party should decrease the difference in the legislative effectiveness of the majority and minority parties.*

While we expect broad effects for different rule sets relative to majority advantaging, equalizing, and minority advantaging rule sets, we know that not all steps in the legislative process may be equal. Volden and Wiseman (2014) and Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024) find that majority members have sizable advantages at the national and state legislative levels respectively, but

this may not be due to equal majority advantages at every stage. Cox and McCubbins (2005) and others such as Anzia and Jackman (2013) suggest that the majority party's advantage is strongest at the committee stage. Committee chairs act as representatives of the majority party, and can select which bills move through the process in line with the preferences of the majority (Rohde 1991). This argues that the majority(minority) should have an increased advantage(disadvantage) once party interests enter through committees. However, Krehbiel (2010) suggests that all decisions within the chamber at large revert to the chamber's median. Thus, we may see a diminished effect for stages after the committee. In short, party influences are likely to be stronger in settings where it is procedurally easier for the majority to control the agenda or for the minority to gain advantage – as reflected in the chamber rules. This leads to our final hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 6 (Legislative Stages):** *Rules that advantage the majority or minority parties are likely to have their strongest effect at the committee stage.*

## **Data and Methods**

While much of the literature has focused on findings from the study of Congress, this also limits our ability to test many theories pertaining to institutional design - specifically for this paper chamber rules' impact on legislative outcomes. The challenges of studying institutional design in Congress is that both chambers operate under set, sticky rules, limiting opportunities to assess how procedural variation impacts legislative success. State legislatures provide a unique opportunity to address this gap. Variation in chamber rules across states allows scholars to systematically evaluate how different procedural structures affect legislative effectiveness at both the individual and party levels. With new data advances in state politics, specifically the creation and public dissemination of State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES) by Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024), it is now possible to systematically examine the relationship between chamber rules and legislative effectiveness across state legislatures.

To test our hypotheses, we use state legislative effectiveness data from Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024) and a novel set of chamber rules that span the entire legislative process. Our

data is a time-series cross-section of state chambers where the unit of observation is the state-chamber-session. This means that, for example, the 2013-2014 session of the Utah House is one observation. We have data for the period between 1993 and 2017. In total, our data structure provides us with 1026 observations.<sup>3</sup>

We collect and code chamber rules from legislative websites and supplement these rules with those already collected by Anzia and Jackman (2013), Provins, Monroe, and Fortunato (2022) and the National Conference of State Legislatures.<sup>4</sup> In total, we consider the impact of 28 different chamber rules. We categorize these state chamber rules to create induces of majority advantaging rules, equalizing rules, and minority advantaging rules. Finally, we include a set of party, chamber, and state controls collected from the National Conference of State Legislatures, Book of States, and Shor and McCarty (2011). The following sections provide detail on how we conceptualize and measure each of our core dependent and independent variables mentioned here including our legislative effectiveness measures, chamber rule indices, and relevant controls.

## **Dependent Variables**

We build on the measurement of State Legislative Effectiveness Scores provided by Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024) in order to operationalize our measure of effectiveness at each stage of the legislative process. Their algorithm is presented in Figure 1, which shows that State Legislative Effectiveness is a combination of a member's effectiveness at each stage, normalized by the size of a member's parent chamber. Importantly, we see in the subscripts that each member  $i$  has a separate score for each time  $t$ , which allows for separate calculation in each session for a state legislator. This score, aggregated to the level of a party as seen in Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024), forms our first category of dependent variable.

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<sup>3</sup>Availability of control variables limits our analyses to 676 observations. However, the results presented here are robust to model specifications with and without controls.

<sup>4</sup>The rules are time invariant. From a conceptual perspective, we follow scholars such as Wawro and Schickler (2007) in assuming that rules are sticky and change very slowly - if at all - over time. Though applications may change, the baseline effect of a set of rules remains. From a data collection perspective, it is beyond the scope of this project to collect over twenty years of chamber rules and measure any changes during the time period we are examining.

Figure 1: State Legislative Effectiveness Algorithm

$$SLES_{it} = \left[ \begin{array}{c} \frac{\alpha BILL_{it}^C + \beta BILL_{it}^S + \gamma BILL_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^N BILL_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^N BILL_{it}^S + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^N BILL_{it}^{SS}} \\ + \frac{\alpha AIC_{it}^C + \beta AIC_{it}^S + \gamma AIC_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^N AIC_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^N AIC_{it}^S + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^N AIC_{it}^{SS}} \\ + \frac{\alpha ABC_{it}^C + \beta ABC_{it}^S + \gamma ABC_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^N ABC_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^N ABC_{it}^S + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^N ABC_{it}^{SS}} \\ + \frac{\alpha PASS_{it}^C + \beta PASS_{it}^S + \gamma PASS_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^N PASS_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^N PASS_{it}^S + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^N PASS_{it}^{SS}} \\ + \frac{\alpha LAW_{it}^C + \beta LAW_{it}^S + \gamma LAW_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^N LAW_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^N LAW_{it}^S + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^N LAW_{it}^{SS}} \end{array} \right] \left[ \frac{N}{5} \right]$$

Given our interest in the impact of rules on party effectiveness at each stage, the generalized score does not fully capture the stage-specific concept. Disaggregating legislative effectiveness by stage allows us to identify where in the lawmaking process procedural rules exert their influence. Legislative rules rarely govern the entire process uniformly; instead, most rules target specific moments—such as bill introduction, committee consideration, floor action, or final passage. Aggregating effectiveness across stages risks obscuring these effects by averaging over institutional constraints and opportunities that operate unevenly across the process. By breaking effectiveness into stages, we can better find the specific points at which rules amplify or constrain party influence, allowing us to distinguish between advantages early in the process versus later. Thus, to generate stage-specific scores, we take each part of the algorithm presented in Figure 1 separately for each of the five stages and aggregate to the level of a party.

To walk through the construction of our dependent variables more specifically, consider Equation 1, which presents the core of our process. This variable is the first stage, bill introductions, of

the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores in Figure 1. As our interest is in a party's average SLES score, we then limit the variable to only members of a party and exclude all others. We then take the mean of all members of that party within a chamber-session pair and generate the average party effectiveness score for bill introductions. The process outlined here is repeated for the alternate party, providing us with the average score of each party within a chamber-session. These form the first two dependent variables for each stage.

$$PartyBILLSLES = \sum_{j=1}^N \left[ \frac{\alpha BILL_{it}^C + \beta BILL_{it}^S + \gamma BILL_{it}^{SS}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^N BILL_{it}^C + \beta \sum_{j=1}^N BILL_{it}^S + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^N BILL_{it}^{SS}} \begin{bmatrix} N \\ 5 \end{bmatrix} \right] \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ N \end{bmatrix} \quad (1)$$

For our third category of dependent variable, we focus on the majority party's advantage at a given stage. We utilize the party-specific scores provided in Equation 2, and focusing on which party is the majority in a given chamber-session we calculate the difference between the majority party's average SLES score and the Minority's average SLES score. We take the continuous, rather than absolute difference due to the possibility that rules, procedures, and behavior could theoretically generate a minority party with a higher average SLES score at a stage than the majority. These two equations – and the three variables they generate – form the basis of our models. We repeat the process outlined in Equations 1 and 2 for each stage of the algorithm in Figure 1, resulting in eighteen separate dependent variables.<sup>5</sup>

$$MajorityAdvantageBILL = MajorityBILLSLES - MinorityBILLSLES \quad (2)$$

We divide the scores into the average party legislative success in separate stages for two reasons. First, this provides the most specific test of the underlying logic presented above. While Cox

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<sup>5</sup>Appendix A includes the descriptive statistics for all of our measures and a correlation matrix for differences in party LES by stage.

and McCubbins (2005) and Anzia and Jackman (2013) are certainly correct that the ability to control the chamber's agenda-setting powers greatly advantage the majority party, this does not mean that this operates equally at all stages of legislative development. To properly test assumptions about majority party advantage within agenda-setting and process-based theories, we must break the process into its separate stages. Second, through careful analysis of legislative proceedings we have created a set of rules which affect the process.

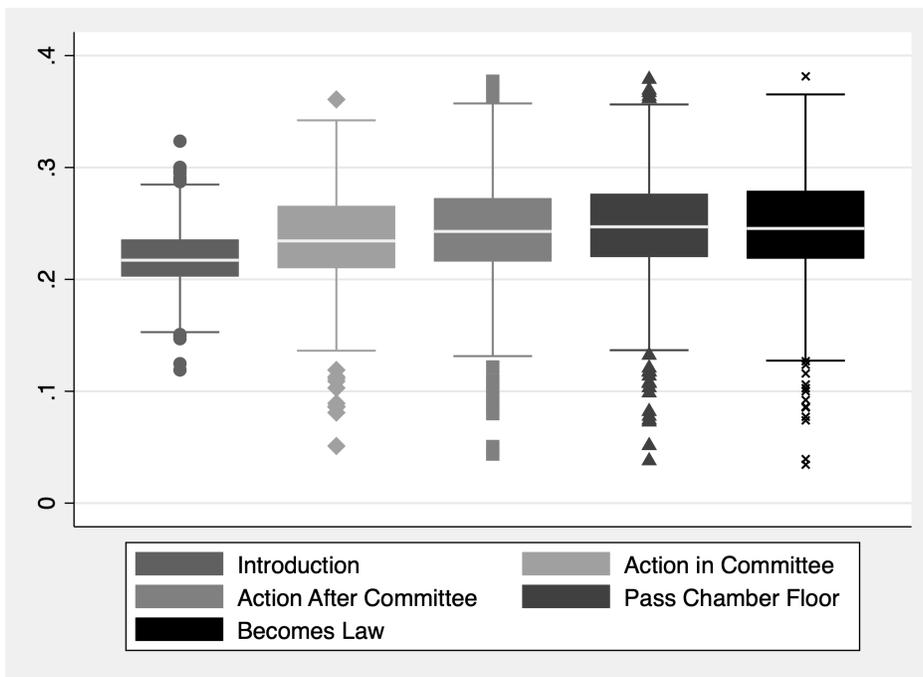
Given our dependent variables' construction in Equations 1 and 2, we want to examine their contents. Their contents are described in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 presents the average State Legislative Effectiveness Score for each party, with majority parties in the top pane of Figure 2 and minority parties in the bottom.<sup>6</sup> We see several interesting patterns in Figure 2. First, the general pattern comports with existing expectations from scholarship. The majority party's effectiveness in the top pane generally increases across stages, with introduction the lowest and becomes law the highest. Conversely, the minority party's effectiveness is the highest at the introduction level and decreases through the ending becomes law stage. Second, there is a leveling-off of effectiveness for both the majority and minority after the committee stages, with almost no difference in effectiveness for the chamber passage and becomes law stages. However, the leveling-off is more dramatic for the majority, who see only a small difference between the action after committee and remaining stages.

Looking next at Figure 3, we see that the differences between majorities and minorities in Figure 2 is preserved when focusing directly on the size of the difference. We see the lowest average difference between majority and minority parties at the introduction stage, and this difference increases through the first four stages before leveling off between the chamber passage and becomes law stages. An additional pattern present here is the increased variation over those same stages. We observe the tightest variation at the early stage, and steadily widening minimums and maximums as we move across the lawmaking process. Thus, we see partisan and majority differences in Figures 2 and 3, but also reason to question the parties' patterns separately and collectively.

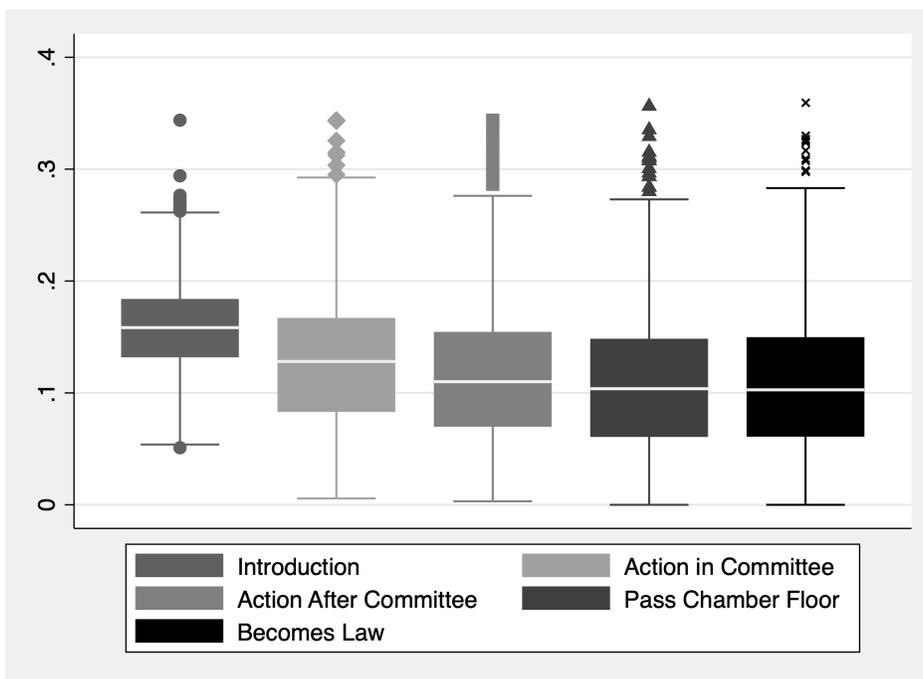
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<sup>6</sup>See Appendix A for a figure with each party split into when it is in the minority (left-hand side of each pane) and majority (right-hand side of each pane). This figure shows nearly identical patterns for both parties.

Figure 2: Party Level Legislative Effectiveness by Stage

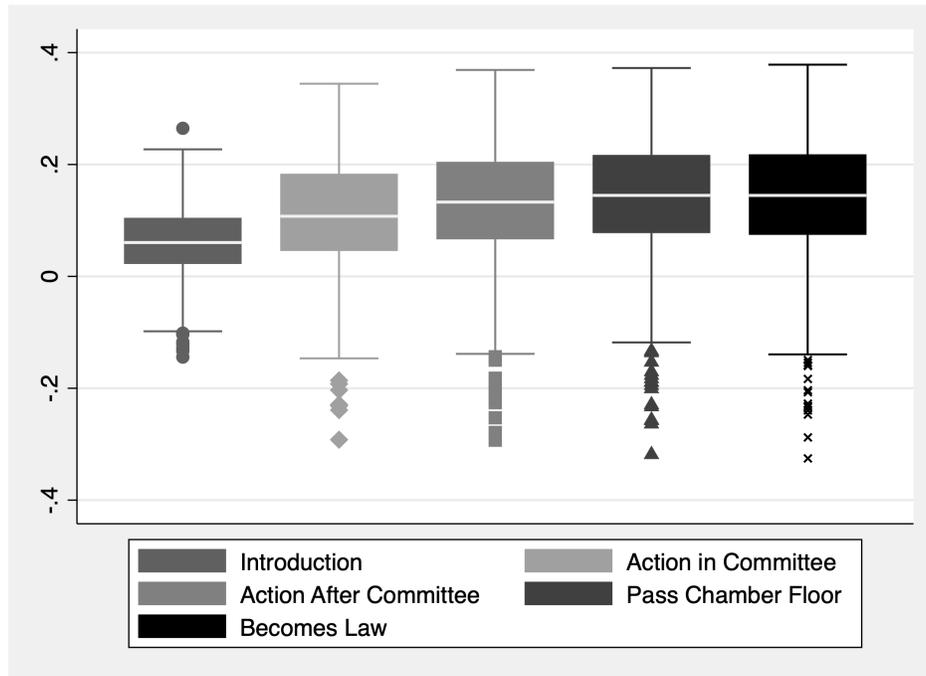


Majority Party Legislative Effectiveness by Stage



Minority Party Legislative Effectiveness by Stage

Figure 3: Majority Party Advantage by Stage



## Rule Variables

Our selection of procedural rules is guided by established theoretical and empirical work on legislative organization and party power rather than an attempt to catalog all formally existing chamber rules. We include rules that the literature identifies as plausibly reallocating agenda control, gatekeeping authority, or opportunities for delay and amendment between majority and minority parties (e.g., Rohde 1991; Cox and McCubbins 2005; Anzia and Jackman 2013; Krehbiel and Meirowitz 2002). Many chamber rules govern administrative, ceremonial, or technical aspects of legislative operation (e.g., formatting requirements, staff procedures, or internal reporting conventions) that are unlikely to systematically affect partisan competition or legislative effectiveness and are therefore excluded. In addition, some rules are highly idiosyncratic, rarely invoked, or functionally redundant with more consequential procedural mechanisms captured elsewhere in our indices. Our approach prioritizes theoretically meaningful variation in procedural power rather than exhaustive rule enumeration, consistent with institutional research that treats legislative rules

as a system of constraints shaping strategic behavior rather than a checklist of formal provisions. Appendix B provides detailed tables listing each procedural rule included in our analysis with its formal definition, theoretical classification and justification for its expected impact on party power and legislative process, and descriptive statistics.

The majority party's ability to control the procedural environment is our first interest. We include canonical rules such as the majority party's ability to set the floor calendar and deny reporting in committee, which greatly increase the majority party's numerical advantage with procedural roadblocks (Anzia and Jackman 2013). However, focusing on only the majority party's capability to control access to the floor as two single-shot events does not account for other methods through which the majority party can gain advantage. These include the ability to shape the referral patterns for bills (Aldrich and Rohde 2000) and the ability to invoke cloture on dilatory actions (Boehmke, Osborn, and Schilling 2015). We include these rules, as well as others relating to committee sponsorship of legislation and overriding of reading days, in Table 1.

Procedural rules can also equalize all members' participation regardless of partisanship. These are rules that apply equally to all members regardless of their majority status, such as filing requirements or bill introduction limits. These rules generally provide members with equal footing in the deliberation process, as they must abide by similar structures that cannot be overcome with greater access to the agenda or need special protection due to minority status. Other equalizing rules limiting any individual's or block of members' capacity to monopolize chamber time through total or individual limits on speech-making. These rules, and others focusing on deadlines for action, can be found in Table 1.

Finally, limiting ourselves to only rules whose presence advantages the majority – and therefore absence disadvantages the majority – or equalize all members ignores what else procedures can do. Rules can also directly protect the interests of the minority party through giving them the opportunity to make dissenting views public or ensuring their membership on committees (Deering and Smith 1997). These rules allow the minority advantages directly – rather than simply relying on the absence of majority-oriented gatekeeping mechanisms. These rules, and others focusing on

reading requirements and suspension of the rules, can be found in Table 1.<sup>7</sup>

Table 1: Classification of Procedural Rules by Partisan Advantage

<b>Rule Type</b>	<b>Procedural Rules</b>
<b>Majority Advantage</b>	Multiple Committee Referral Allowed Majority Can Deny Hearing Majority Can Deny Report Committee May Sponsor Bills Majority Leader Set Calendar Majority Comm. Sets Calendar Reading Override Germaneness Rule Cloture Available
<b>Equalizing</b>	Limit Number Bill Introduction Bill Introduction Deadline Prefiling Allowed Carry Over Committee Meeting Regularized Committee Amendments Allowed Committee Discharge Allowed Member Speaking Limits Member Time Limits Chamber Time Limits Deadline for Committee Action Deadline for Chamber of Origin Action Deadline for Crossover Chamber Action Deadline for Conference Committee Action
<b>Minority Advantage</b>	Minority Consulted Committee Assignments Proportionality Rule Dissenting Committee Report Allowed Reading Days Suspension of the Rules

To systematically measure the procedural landscape of state legislatures, we construct additive indices of legislative rules grouped into three theoretically distinct categories: majority advantage, equalizing, and minority advantage rules. The majority advantage index reflects rules that enhance the ability of the majority party to control the legislative agenda and block minority interference (e.g., restrictive calendar powers, strong gatekeeping by the majority leader, or limited opportunities for minority amendments). The equalizing index includes rules designed to standardize access

<sup>7</sup>We expect these rules to be the average effect of their presence. As Binder (2018) suggests for Congress, it is possible that rules are sometimes dodged through extra-procedural mechanisms. However, each rule supplies the baseline under which a chamber, party, and individual legislators operate.

and reduce asymmetries in procedural power among legislators, regardless of party affiliation or leadership status (e.g., bill sponsorship rights, open committee hearings, or floor access rules). The minority advantage index captures procedural protections that insulate the minority party from majority dominance or offer tools to delay or amend legislation (e.g., supermajority cloture thresholds, guaranteed debate time, or minority reporting rights).

Our approach examines multiple rules simultaneously rather than isolating individual procedural changes for several reasons. First, legislative rules do not operate in isolation; they function as interconnected systems that collectively define the procedural environment (Krehbiel and Meirowitz 2002). A chamber with strong majority calendar control but weak committee gatekeeping creates a different strategic landscape than one with both features present. Examining rules in combination allows us to capture these interactive effects and provides a more realistic assessment of how institutional design shapes party effectiveness. Second, the relative stability of legislative rules limits opportunities for causal identification through within-chamber rule changes. State legislative chambers rarely modify their procedural rules, and when changes do occur, they are often bundled together as part of broader institutional reforms rather than implemented individually. This makes it difficult to isolate the effect of any single rule change while holding others constant. Instead, we leverage the substantial cross-sectional variation in rules across state legislative chambers, which provides greater analytical leverage than the limited temporal variation within chambers. Third, our theoretical interest centers on understanding how different configurations of procedural environments condition legislative effectiveness, rather than estimating the causal effect of any particular rule. By examining variation across chambers with different rule bundles, we can assess whether chambers characterized by more majority-advantaging, equalizing, or minority-advantaging rules produce systematically different patterns of legislative effectiveness.

Each index is calculated as the sum of rules present in a given chamber, with each rule coded as 1 if present and 0 if absent. This additive approach treats each rule as contributing equally to the overall procedural environment, providing a straightforward measure of the density of rules within

each category.<sup>8</sup> The majority advantage index ranges from 0 to 8, the equalizing index from 0 to 11, and the minority advantage index from 0 to 5.<sup>9</sup>

## Controls

We include the following variables that may shape the legislative effectiveness of the chamber at any given stage of the legislative process. The partisan makeup of the chamber is measured as the presence of a *Democratic Majority* in the models focusing on the separate parties, and as the *Seat Margin* – or number of seats that the majority party has more than the minority party – in the model focusing on the majority party advantage. We create the party ideology variables using Bonica (2019) DIME Scores. *Ideological Difference* is measured as the distance between party medians in a given state chamber-year. *Majority Heterogeneity* and *Minority Heterogeneity* are measured as the standard deviation of ideological scores within the party. *Chamber Size* is measured as the number of legislative seats in the chamber.<sup>10</sup> *Number of Committees* is measured as the number of standing committees in a chamber during a given session.<sup>11</sup> *Percentage Female* is measured as the proportion of members in a party or the chamber respectively. For party-level models, we include the proportion of members in a party that are female. For the models that include the difference in party legislative effectiveness we use the proportion of female legislators in the chamber. *Term Limits* is measured as a binary variable for whether term limits were in place for that state during that session and 0 otherwise. *Professionalism* is included as the Squire Index which is a measure of salary, length of session and number of staff in a state legislative chamber during a given session (Squire 2024). *Unified Government* is measured using a binary variable

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<sup>8</sup>While we recognize that the same rule may be invoked with different frequency or strategic intent across chambers, our theoretical interest centers on whether the formal availability of these procedural tools—their presence or absence in a chamber’s rulebook—conditions legislative effectiveness. This approach follows institutional scholarship emphasizing that rules structure opportunities for action and establish the formal constraints within which political actors operate (Shepsle 1989; North 1990). The presence of a rule creates a potential mechanism that can be deployed, whether routinely or strategically, and thus shapes the institutional environment even when not constantly invoked. Our focus on rule presence captures this structural dimension of institutional design.

<sup>9</sup>As a robustness check, we also construct continuous indices using Item Response Theory (IRT) models, which allow for differential weighting of rules based on their estimated difficulty and discrimination parameters. The IRT approach enables the estimation of an unobserved, latent trait—the extent to which legislative rules favor a particular distribution of power—based on a set of observable procedural features. Full details of the IRT models, including item characteristic curves and item information functions, are provided in Appendix E.

<sup>10</sup>The substantive results do not change when this variable is logged.

<sup>11</sup>The substantive results do not change when this variable is logged.

coded as 1 when the governor and the majority party in both legislative chambers are controlled by the same party and 0 otherwise.<sup>12</sup> *Direct Democracy* is measured using a binary variable coded as 1 if the state allows citizens to initiate and vote on laws or constitutional amendments through initiatives or referenda, and 0 otherwise. *Senate* is measured using a binary variable coded as 1 if the observation corresponds to an upper legislative chamber (Senate) and 0 otherwise. The descriptive statistics for each control variable is included in Appendix C.

### **Model Specification**

Our unit of analysis is the state–chamber–party–session. Given the continuous nature of the dependent variables, we estimate all models using linear regression. Standard errors are clustered at the state–chamber level (e.g., South Dakota Senate) to account for serial correlation within legislative chambers over time.<sup>13</sup>

In the main specifications, we estimate models for overall legislative effectiveness across all stages of the legislative process using single-equation linear regression. We then estimate separate models for each stage of the legislative process and jointly model these stage-specific outcomes using Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR), which allows the error terms to be correlated across stages while maintaining equation-specific coefficients (Jackson 2002).<sup>14</sup>

## **Results**

Tables 2–4 present the results of our analysis examining the impact of different types of legislative rules on party-specific legislative effectiveness. Table 2 reports results for majority party effectiveness, Table 3 for minority party effectiveness, and Table 4 for the difference in effectiveness between the majority and minority parties. For each outcome, we first estimate a single-equation linear regression for overall legislative effectiveness across all stages. We then estimate stage-specific models that are jointly estimated using Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR), which

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<sup>12</sup>We do not control for state budget requirements.

<sup>13</sup>Following Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024), we do not include state fixed effects, as many of the institutional features of interest vary primarily across states rather than within states over time. Instead, we include a set of party, chamber, and state-level controls.

<sup>14</sup>Because the stage-specific outcomes represent related components of the same legislative process and are estimated jointly in the SUR framework, we do not apply multiple-testing corrections in the main analysis.

allows the error terms to be correlated across stages while maintaining stage-specific coefficients. In all models, standard errors are clustered at the state–chamber level. All specifications include controls for party, chamber, and state characteristics with full model details in Appendix D.

Table 2: Impact of Rules on Majority Party Legislative Effectiveness in the Legislative Process

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage Rule Count	0.0411** (0.018)	0.0054** (0.002)	0.0101*** (0.003)	0.0092** (0.004)	0.0092** (0.004)	0.0098** (0.004)
Equalizing Rules Count	0.0278 (0.019)	0.0018 (0.001)	0.0036 (0.002)	0.0050* (0.003)	0.0049* (0.003)	0.0047* (0.003)
Minority Advantage Rules Count	-0.0110 (0.038)	-0.0039* (0.002)	-0.0093** (0.005)	-0.0118** (0.005)	-0.0122** (0.006)	-0.0123** (0.006)
Party Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chamber Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676
R-Squared	0.16	0.08	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.10

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column is an OLS model for the legislative effectiveness for all stages combined. Columns 2-6 are models for Legislative Effectiveness at a given stage, and these models are OLS with Seemingly Unrelated Regression which allows the underlying error to be correlated across stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Table 2 displays the results examining the relationship between legislative rules and majority party legislative effectiveness across the legislative process. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, majority-advantaging rules are positively and statistically significantly associated with higher levels of majority party effectiveness. In the aggregate model pooling all stages, an additional majority-advantaging rule is associated with a statistically significant increase in overall majority party effectiveness ( $p < .05$ ). When disaggregated by stage, this positive and statistically significant association holds at every stage of the legislative process, including bill introduction ( $p < .05$ ), committee consideration ( $p < .01$ ), post-committee action ( $p < .05$ ), floor passage ( $p < .05$ ), and enactment into law ( $p < .05$ ). The magnitude of these effects is largest and most precisely estimated at the committee stage, consistent with expectations that committee gatekeeping represents a critical point at which majority procedural control can be exercised most effectively. However, the persistence of positive and statistically significant effects at later stages indicates that majority-advantaging rules continue to shape outcomes beyond committee consideration.

Equalizing rules are also positively associated with majority party effectiveness. In the aggregate model, the coefficient on equalizing rules is positive but does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. At the stage level, equalizing rules are associated with statistically significant increases in majority effectiveness at the post-committee, floor, and law stages (all  $p < .10$ ), though the effects are smaller and not statistically significant at earlier stages. These results indicate that equalizing rules do not reduce majority party effectiveness and, in later stages, are associated with modest increases in majority effectiveness.

Minority-advantaging rules are negatively associated with majority party effectiveness. While the aggregate effect is not statistically significant, minority-advantaging rules are associated with statistically significant reductions in majority effectiveness at introduction ( $p < .10$ ), committee consideration ( $p < .05$ ), post-committee action ( $p < .05$ ), floor passage ( $p < .05$ ), and enactment ( $p < .05$ ). This pattern suggests that procedural tools designed to protect minority participation constrain majority party effectiveness throughout much of the legislative process.

Overall, the results in Table 2 provide strong support for Hypothesis 1 which predicts that majority-advantaging rules increase majority party legislative effectiveness and Hypothesis 6 that rules advantaging a party will have the strongest effect at the committee stage.

Table 3: Impact of Rules on Minority Party Legislative Effectiveness in the Legislative Process

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage Rule Count	-0.0257 (0.024)	-0.0045 (0.003)	-0.0096** (0.004)	-0.0082* (0.004)	-0.0083* (0.005)	-0.0092* (0.005)
Equalizing Rules Count	-0.0333* (0.019)	-0.0011 (0.002)	-0.0031 (0.003)	-0.0040 (0.003)	-0.0040 (0.003)	-0.0038 (0.003)
Minority Advantage Rules Count	0.0651** (0.028)	0.0032 (0.003)	0.0054 (0.005)	0.0091 (0.006)	0.0095 (0.006)	0.0094 (0.006)
Party Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chamber Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676
R-Squared	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column is an OLS model for the legislative effectiveness for all stages combined. Columns 2-6 are models for Legislative Effectiveness at a given stage, and these models are Seemingly Unrelated Regression with the underlying error correlated across the stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Table 3 reports results examining the impact of legislative rules on minority party legislative effectiveness. Consistent with Hypothesis 4, minority-advantaging rules are positively and statistically significantly associated with minority party effectiveness in the aggregate model ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates that chambers with more minority-protective procedural rules are associated with higher overall minority party effectiveness.

When disaggregated by stage, the estimated effects of minority-advantaging rules are positive across all stages but do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance at any individual stage. These results suggest that minority-advantaging rules are associated with cumulative gains in minority effectiveness across the legislative process rather than concentrated effects at specific stages.

Majority-advantaging rules are negatively associated with minority party effectiveness. In the aggregate model, the coefficient is negative but does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p > .10$ ). At the stage level, majority-advantaging rules significantly reduce minority effectiveness beginning at the committee stage ( $p < .05$ ) and continuing through post-committee action, floor passage, and enactment (all  $p < .10$ ). This pattern indicates that majority procedural control systematically constrains minority effectiveness once bills move beyond introduction.

Equalizing rules are also negatively associated with minority party effectiveness. In the aggregate model, equalizing rules are associated with a statistically significant reduction in minority effectiveness ( $p < .10$ ). At the stage level, however, these effects do not reach statistical significance, indicating that the negative association is driven primarily by cumulative effects rather than discrete stage-specific impacts.

Taken together, the results in Table 3 provide evidence in support of Hypothesis 4 at the aggregate level, while also indicating that minority-advantaging rules do not generate strong, stage-specific increases in minority effectiveness. Again, the results provide evidence for Hypothesis 6 that rules advantaging the majority party will have the strongest effect at the committee stage.

Table 4 examines how legislative rules affect the difference in legislative effectiveness between the majority and minority parties. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, majority-advantaging rules are

Table 4: Impact of Rules on Difference in Majority and Minority Party Legislative Effectiveness in the Legislative Process

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage Rule Count	0.0668** (0.032)	0.0099** (0.005)	0.0197*** (0.007)	0.0175** (0.008)	0.0175** (0.009)	0.0190** (0.009)
Equalizing Rules Count	0.0611** (0.025)	0.0029 (0.003)	0.0067 (0.005)	0.0090 (0.006)	0.0089 (0.006)	0.0085 (0.006)
Minority Advantage Rules Count	-0.0761* (0.046)	-0.0071 (0.005)	-0.0148 (0.009)	-0.0209* (0.011)	-0.0217* (0.012)	-0.0217* (0.012)
Party Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chamber Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676
R-Squared	0.09	0.09	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.11

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column is an OLS model for the legislative effectiveness for all stages combined. Columns 2-6 are models for Legislative Effectiveness at a given stage, and these models are Seemingly Unrelated Regression with the underlying error correlated across the stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

positively and statistically significantly associated with a larger majority–minority effectiveness gap in the aggregate model ( $p < .05$ ). When disaggregated by stage, majority-advantaging rules significantly increase the effectiveness gap at every stage of the legislative process, including introduction ( $p < .05$ ), committee consideration ( $p < .01$ ), post-committee action ( $p < .05$ ), floor passage ( $p < .05$ ), and enactment ( $p < .05$ ), with the largest effects observed at the committee stage. There is again evidence for Hypothesis 6 that rules advantaging the majority party have the largest and strongest effect at the committee stage.

Equalizing rules are also associated with a statistically significant increase in the effectiveness gap in the aggregate model ( $p < .05$ ). However, when examined by stage, the estimated effects of equalizing rules do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance at any individual stage. These results indicate that equalizing rules do not reduce the effectiveness gap between parties and instead are associated with a larger gap when effectiveness is aggregated across stages. Accordingly, these findings do not provide evidence in support of Hypothesis 3.

Minority-advantaging rules are negatively associated with the majority–minority effectiveness gap. In the aggregate model, minority-advantaging rules significantly reduce the gap between par-

ties ( $p < .10$ ). At the stage level, these rules significantly reduce the effectiveness gap beginning after committee consideration and continuing through floor passage and enactment (all  $p < .10$ ). These results provide evidence in support of Hypothesis 5, particularly at later stages of the legislative process.

Taken together, the results provide differentiated evidence regarding our theoretical expectations. We find strong support for Hypotheses 1 and 2, as rules that advantage the majority party increase majority party effectiveness and widen the effectiveness gap between parties. We find no evidence in support of Hypothesis 3 where equalizing rules do not reduce the effectiveness gap and are instead associated with a larger gap in aggregate models. We find support for Hypothesis 4 at the aggregate level, as minority-advantaging rules increase overall minority party effectiveness, though these effects are not concentrated at specific stages. We also find support for Hypothesis 5, with minority-advantaging rules reducing the effectiveness gap between parties, particularly after bills exit committee consideration. Finally, we observe strong effects at the committee stage, consistent with Hypothesis 6, though some minority advantaging effects appear only after this stage. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that legislative rules shape not only overall party effectiveness, but also the timing and accumulation of partisan advantages across the stages of the legislative process.

## **Discussion**

This article addresses the question of how legislative rules shape majority and minority party lawmaking effectiveness. Developing three indexes of rules – majority advantaging, equalizing, and minority advantaging – through an extensive set of rules across state legislative chambers and using a new breakdown of the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores from Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2024) by stage, we find that rules do shape lawmaking. Majority party advantaging rules increase the majority party’s lawmaking effectiveness, as do rules advantaging the minority party increase the minority party’s effectiveness. That said, these patterns vary widely across policymaking stages within the legislative process and how we conceptualize majority advantage in lawmaking. We do see the expectations from Cox and McCubbins (2005) and others of a

consistent effect for majority advantaging rules throughout the process, but the strength of this relationship varies throughout the process. Interestingly, we see that equalizing rules may actually have a negative effect on minority party effectiveness (Curry and Lee 2020*b,a*). These results provide clarity on how we should understand parties within the lawmaking process and provide useful nuance to explore in future scholarship.

Certainly, our key takeaway is that rules and stages matter but there is significant nuance to *what* rule sets matter and *when* those rules matter that defines the real contribution of this article. When we break down the majority and minority party effectiveness into the legislative process' stages, a new story emerges. Our findings surrounding whether majority party advantaging rules positively impact majority party effectiveness in Tables 2 and 4 in many ways confirm the findings of many studies of majority procedural advantage (Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Cox and McCubbins 2005). Turning to the minority party, our findings in Table 3 show that minority advantaging rules impact the overall effectiveness of the minority party but these rules provide limited effects at any specific stage (Gailmard and Jenkins 2007; Jenkins, Monroe, and Provins 2023). We do not see direct effects for Minority Advantaging Rules at the committee stage in Table 3, but we see the strongest effects for rules Advantaging the Majority in lowering the effect of the minority party. Thus, the cumulative effect for the minority party may actually be driven by the collective rule sets that advantage the majority and minority parties later in the legislative process. However, when we step back and look at whether rules impact the difference in legislative effectiveness *between* the majority in Table 4, a much clearer understanding emerges of what drives the difference between the effectiveness of the majority and minority party. Prior literature expects that majority advantaging rules increase the difference in partisan effectiveness from the committee stage through final passage on the floor (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Anzia and Jackman 2013). We do see some evidence of this, with Majority Advantaging Rules' effect the strongest at the committee stage and statistically significant effects for Minority Advantaging Rules lowering the difference only after committee and beyond. However, we see that rules advantaging the majority still have an effect even at the introduction stage, which is not an expectation shown by partisan theories.

Interestingly, we see that equalizing rules have no significant impact at any individual stage of the process, even though those equalizing rules actually increase the majority party advantage when effectiveness is not broken down by stage. So while it is well-established that the majority party holds an advantage in lawmaking, our findings suggest that this advantage is not uniform across all stages of the legislative process and that institutional design plays an important role in structuring parties' legislative effectiveness.

Normatively, we would expect that the majority party will structure institutions that provide advantages in order to win in the lawmaking process. Indeed, as Curry and Lee (2020*b*) point out, this is a fundamental expectation in many scholarly approaches to the lawmaking process. When we look to how parties are actually structuring these institutions, what we find is that this expectation does not universally hold. This variance raises important questions about the conditions under which these rules function as intended. What we observe in this paper is likely the mechanism behind these results in Curry and Lee (2020*b*) – with rules pushing small success early but the majority's ability to deny reporting and controlling the calendar providing more dramatic effects later. Broadly, this tells us that the electoral campaigns built on legislative wins – bills signed into law – are built on majority advantages in the committee stage but do provide advantages throughout the process. Additionally, allowing the minority to have access through rules that advantage them does increase their effectiveness – in isolation as well as the difference between them and the majority party – but this effect only appears in the stages after bills leave the committee. Thus, we see the overall patterns expected in partisan theories, but with important caveats that the minority can and will take advantage of rules that allow them to promote their interests.

Taken together, our findings call for a broader consideration of how institutional design influences legislative behavior. By grounding party successes in the rules that structure the policymaking process, we move closer to understanding not just whether parties win, but how, when, and under what constraints they do so. First, scholars should continue to explore the conditions under which rules are adopted in the first place. Are the majority parties more likely to adopt “equalizing” rules when their margins are slim or when turnover is high? How do electoral incentives

shape procedural reforms? Second, the effects of rules are contingent on the broader political environment, including the extent of party polarization, leadership strength, and legislative professionalism. Understanding these interactions is essential for assessing how institutional design influences lawmaking. Future research should explore these mechanisms in greater depth — for example, by examining under what conditions majority parties are able to adjust their strategies in response to rules that limit their power or when minority parties are able to capitalize on procedural opportunities to influence policy outcomes. Third, while our analysis focuses on the average effect of rule regimes, there is substantial unexplored variation across chambers. Case-based or mixed-method work could investigate why some chambers experience more dramatic disparities in effectiveness or why minority protections succeed in some contexts but not others. Finally, accounting for how early-stage legislative success impacts later outcomes could provide a more dynamic understanding of the lawmaking process and clarify the extent to which rules shape legislative trajectories over time. Considering the stage-specific effects of rules rather than thinking of institutional design as a monolithic force shaping legislative outcomes can dramatically improve our understanding of lawmaking. By further unpacking these dynamics, scholars can refine theories of institutional design and legislative effectiveness and provide a more comprehensive account of the factors that shape lawmaking.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A: SLES Scores Additional Tables

### Stage Descriptive Statistics

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics for Majority Party SLES Scores by Stage

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Introduction	1026	0.22	0.03	0.12	0.32
Action in Committee	1026	0.24	0.04	0.05	0.36
Action After Committee	1026	0.25	0.04	0.04	0.38
Pass Chamber Floor	1026	0.25	0.05	0.04	0.38
Becomes Law	1026	0.25	0.05	0.03	0.38

Table A2: Descriptive Statistics for Minority Party SLES Scores by Stage

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Introduction	1025	0.16	0.04	0.05	0.34
Action in Committee	1025	0.13	0.06	0.01	0.34
Action After Committee	1025	0.12	0.06	0.00	0.34
Pass Chamber Floor	1025	0.11	0.06	0.00	0.36
Becomes Law	1025	0.11	0.06	0.00	0.36

Table A3: Descriptive Statistics for Party Difference in SLES Scores by Stage

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Introduction	1025	0.06	0.06	-0.14	0.26
Action in Committee	1025	0.11	0.10	-0.29	0.34
Action After Committee	1025	0.13	0.10	-0.29	0.37
Pass Chamber Floor	1025	0.14	0.10	-0.32	0.37
Becomes Law	1025	0.14	0.11	-0.32	0.38

## Correlation Matrix

Table A4: Correlation Matrix for Difference in Party LES by Stage

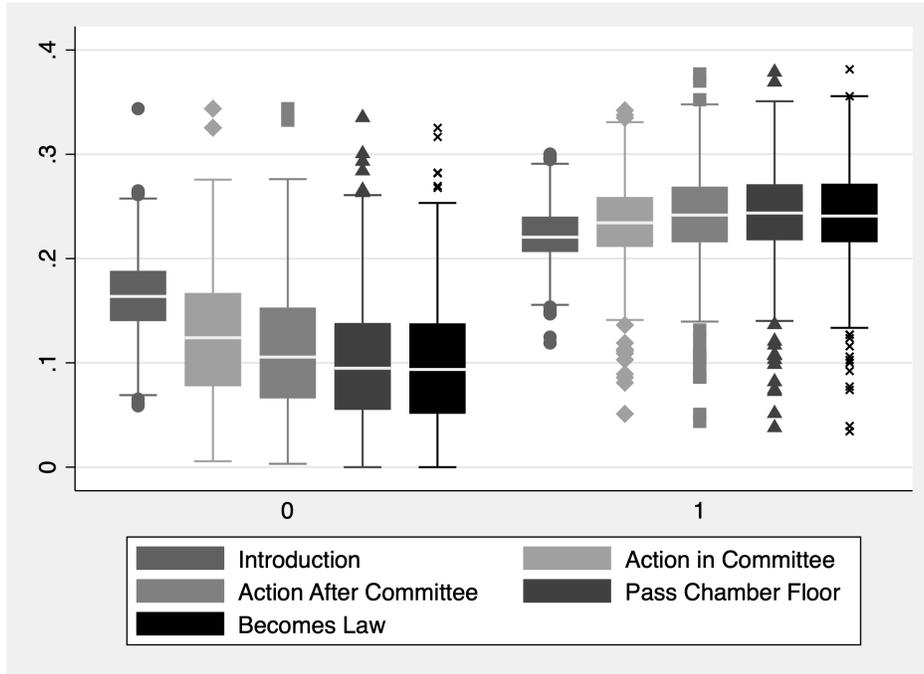
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Introduction	1.00				
Action in Committee	0.72***	1.00			
Action After Committee	0.72***	0.90***	1.00		
Pass Chamber Floor	0.68***	0.88***	0.96***	1.00	
Becomes Law	0.64***	0.86***	0.93***	0.97***	1.00

*t* statistics in parentheses

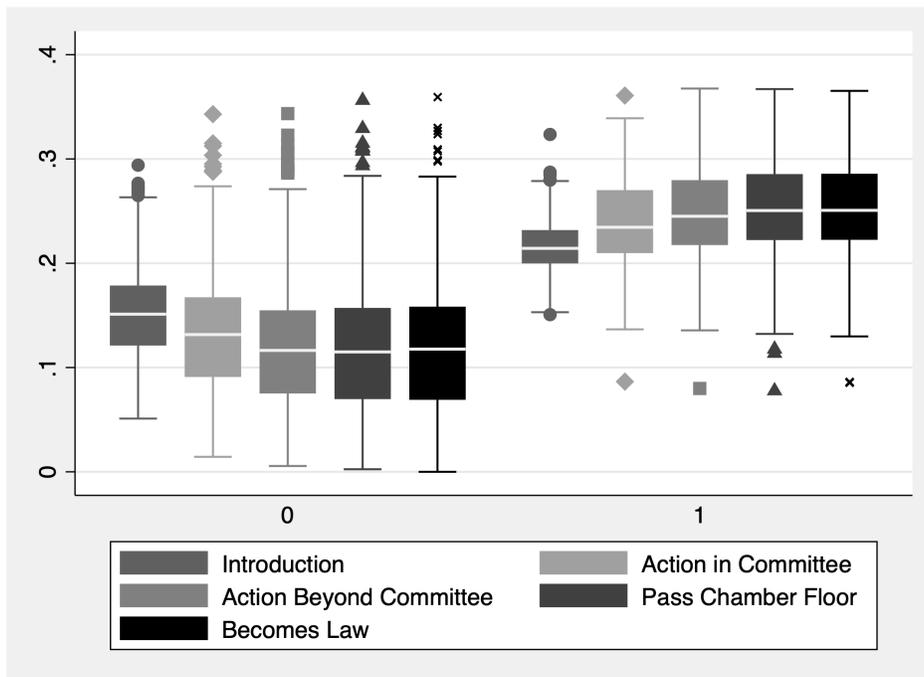
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## Party Level Legislative Effectiveness by Stage

Figure A1: Party Level Legislative Effectiveness by Stage



## Democratic Party Legislative Effectiveness by Stage



## Republican Party Legislative Effectiveness by Stage



## Appendix B: Rules Definitions, Explanation of Impact and Descriptive Statistics

Table A5: Legislative Rule Definitions

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Bill Introduction Deadline	A formal cutoff date by which legislators must submit new bills for consideration during the legislative session.
Carry Over	Allows bills that were not given final action in one session to be considered in the next session without reintroduction.
Chamber Time Limits	Limits the total time allocated for debate on a bill or calendar item for floor consideration.
Cloture Available	A procedure that allows the chamber to end debate on a bill with a specified time.
Committee Amendments Allowed	Permits legislative committees to offer, debate, and adopt amendments to bills referred to them.
Committee Discharge Allowed	Allows a bill to be brought to the floor without a committee report, typically through a majority vote or motion.
Committee May Sponsor Bills	Allows standing committees to introduce original legislation as a body, not just individual legislators.
Committee Meeting Regularized	Requires committees to meet on a fixed schedule.
Deadline for Chamber of Origin Action	Requires bills to be disposed by a specified date in the chamber where they were introduced.
Deadline for Committee Action	Requires bill to be reported by a specified date from referral standing committee to continue consideration.
Deadline for Conference Committee Action	Sets a deadline for conference committees to resolve differences between chambers.
Deadline for Crossover Chamber Action	Requires bills to be disposed by a specified date by the second chamber to remain active.
Dissenting Committee Report Allowed	Allows a minority of committee members to file a formal dissenting opinion on a bill.
Germaneness Rule	Requires that amendments be related to the subject matter of the bill under consideration.
Limit Number Bill Introduction	Restricts the number of bills that a legislator may introduce during a session.
Majority Can Deny Hearing	Majority party can prevent a bill from receiving a committee hearing.
Majority Can Deny Report	Majority party can block a committee from reporting a bill to the full chamber.

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**Table A5 – continued from previous page**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Majority Comm Sets Calendar	Assigns authority to the majority-party-controlled rules or calendar committee to schedule floor consideration.
Majority Leader Set Calendar	Majority leader has formal power to determine the floor calendar.
Member Speaking Limits	Imposes limits on the amount of time individual legislators may speak on the floor.
Member Time Limits	Sets time limits for individual debate participation, regardless of party.
Minority Consulted Committee Assignments	Consultation with minority leadership when making committee assignments is required.
Multiple Committee Referral Allowed	Permits a bill to be referred to more than one committee for sequential or simultaneous consideration.
Prefiling Allowed	Allows legislators to file bills before the formal start of the legislative session.
Proportionality Rule	Requires that committee membership reflect the partisan composition of the full chamber.
Reading Days	Bills to be read across multiple legislative days before consideration for final passage.
Reading Override	Allows the chamber to waive procedural requirement for multiple readings of a bill.
Suspension of the Rules	Provides a process for temporarily setting aside standing rules on individual bills for consideration.

Table A6: Legislative Rule Classifications and Impact on Legislative Process

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Bill Introduction Deadline	Equalizing	By imposing uniform temporal constraints on bill introduction, this rule standardizes agenda access across legislators regardless of party status. While it may constrain overall legislative volume, it does so symmetrically, limiting strategic advantage derived from differential access to agenda-setting authority.
Carry Over	Equalizing	Allowing legislation to carry over across sessions reduces the costs of initial agenda access for all members. This rule mitigates disadvantages associated with limited introduction windows without privileging either party's control over scheduling or gatekeeping.
Chamber Time Limits	Equalizing	By capping total chamber debate time, this rule prevents either party from monopolizing floor consideration. While it constrains minority obstruction, it simultaneously limits majority overuse of floor time, thereby reducing asymmetries without reallocating agenda control.
Cloture Available	Majority	The availability of cloture empowers the majority to terminate prolonged debate or obstruction, effectively neutralizing minority delay tactics. This shifts procedural leverage toward the majority by reducing veto points late in the legislative process.
Committee Amendments Allowed	Equalizing	Permitting amendments in committee grants all committee members the opportunity to shape legislation prior to floor consideration. Because committee membership typically includes both parties, this rule expands participation without privileging majority gatekeeping authority.
Committee Discharge Allowed	Equalizing	Discharge mechanisms weaken committee-level gatekeeping by allowing members to force consideration of legislation. While this limits majority control over committee bottlenecks, it does not grant the minority independent agenda-setting power.
Committee May Sponsor Bills	Majority	Granting committees the authority to sponsor legislation expands the majority's capacity to introduce bills through institutional actors they typically control. This rule enhances agenda throughput by shifting proposal power toward majority-dominated committees.

*Continued on next page*

**Table A6 – continued from previous page**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Committee Meeting Regularized	Equalizing	Regularized committee meetings reduce informational and access asymmetries by ensuring predictable opportunities for participation. This limits strategic manipulation of scheduling while preserving existing partisan balances within committees.
Deadline for Chamber of Origin Action	Equalizing	By requiring action within a fixed timeframe, this rule prevents strategic delay by majority leadership seeking to suppress minority-supported bills. It constrains agenda control without empowering the minority to advance legislation unilaterally.
Deadline for Committee Action	Equalizing	Mandated committee deadlines restrict the ability of majority-controlled committees to stall legislation indefinitely. While this reduces majority gatekeeping power, it does not alter final agenda-setting authority.
Deadline for Conference Committee Action	Equalizing	This rule limits prolonged inter-chamber bargaining that can be used strategically to derail legislation. It standardizes timing constraints across parties and chambers without reallocating substantive control.
Deadline for Crossover Chamber Action	Equalizing	Crossover deadlines prevent one chamber's majority from blocking legislation by delaying consideration. The rule equalizes procedural opportunities without directly advantaging minority party priorities.
Dissenting Committee Report Allowed	Minority	Allowing dissenting reports provides the minority with a formal mechanism to articulate alternative policy positions and signal disagreement. This increases minority visibility and influence at the committee stage without requiring majority consent.
Germaneness Rule	Majority	By restricting amendments to those germane to the underlying bill, this rule limits minority opportunities to delay or reshape legislation through unrelated proposals. It strengthens majority agenda control, particularly during floor consideration.
Limit Number Bill Introduction	Equalizing	Caps on bill introduction prevent strategic flooding of the agenda by well-resourced members or party leaders. Because the constraint applies uniformly, it equalizes access rather than reallocating control.
Majority Can Deny Hearing	Majority	This rule grants the majority unilateral authority to prevent bills from receiving committee consideration. By eliminating early-stage access points, it consolidates agenda control at the committee level.

*Continued on next page*

**Table A6 – continued from previous page**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Majority Can Deny Report	Majority	The ability to block committee reporting allows the majority to suppress legislation before it reaches the floor. This rule reinforces majority gatekeeping by controlling downstream legislative opportunities.
Majority Comm Sets Calendar	Majority	Calendar authority vested in majority-dominated committees enables strategic scheduling that prioritizes majority-supported legislation while delaying or excluding minority-backed bills.
Majority Leader Set Calendar	Majority	Centralizing floor scheduling authority in the majority leader consolidates agenda-setting power and reduces opportunities for minority intervention during floor consideration.
Member Speaking Limits	Equalizing	Uniform limits on speaking opportunities reduce disparities arising from strategic obstruction or dominance. These constraints apply symmetrically and do not reallocate formal agenda power.
Member Time Limits	Equalizing	By capping individual floor time, this rule limits both obstruction and agenda monopolization. The effect is to standardize participation rather than privilege a particular party.
Minority Consulted Committee Assignments	Minority	Requiring consultation with the minority during committee assignment ensures minority input into early agenda formation. This increases minority influence without granting veto authority.
Multiple Committee Referral Allowed	Majority	Allowing multiple referrals enables the majority to route legislation through additional committees, increasing opportunities for delay or modification. This rule strengthens majority control over the committee process.
Prefiling Allowed	Equalizing	Prefiling legislation reduces informational and timing advantages associated with leadership or agenda access. Because all members may prefile, the rule equalizes preparatory opportunities.
Proportionality Rule	Minority	Mandating proportional committee representation ensures minority presence aligns with seat share. This increases minority access to agenda development without undermining majority control.
Reading Days	Minority	Requiring multiple readings slows legislative progression, increasing opportunities for minority scrutiny, amendment, and mobilization. This raises procedural costs for the majority.

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**Table A6 – continued from previous page**

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Justification</b>
Reading Override	Majority	Allowing the majority to waive reading requirements enables expedited consideration of priority legislation, reducing minority delay opportunities and enhancing agenda throughput.
Suspension of the Rules	Minority	Suspension procedures can allow the minority to force consideration of legislation outside the normal agenda sequence, particularly when supermajority consent is required. This creates leverage against majority control.

Table A7: Descriptive Statistics for Rules

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Limit Number Bill Introduction	1026	0.22	0.41	0.00	1.00
Bill Introduction Deadline	1026	0.73	0.45	0.00	1.00
Prefiling Allowed	1026	0.78	0.42	0.00	1.00
Carry Over	1026	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
Minority Consulted Committee Assignments	1026	0.44	0.50	0.00	1.00
Proportionality Rule	1026	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Committee Meeting Regularized	1026	0.29	0.46	0.00	1.00
Dissenting Committee Report Allowed	1026	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
Committee Amendments Allowed	1026	0.55	0.50	0.00	1.00
Multiple Committee Referral Allowed	1026	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
Committee May Sponsor Bills	1026	0.36	0.48	0.00	1.00
Deadline for Committee Action	1026	0.47	0.50	0.00	1.00
Majority Can Deny Hearing	1015	0.71	0.45	0.00	1.00
Majority Can Deny Report	1026	0.71	0.45	0.00	1.00
Committee Discharge Allowed	1026	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00
Reading Days	1026	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Reading Override	1026	0.08	0.26	0.00	1.00
Suspension of the Rules	1026	0.99	0.10	0.00	1.00
Majority Leader Set Calendar	983	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
Majority Comm Sets Calendar	983	0.15	0.36	0.00	1.00
Member Speaking Limits	968	0.76	0.43	0.00	1.00
Member Time Limits	968	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
Chamber Time Limits	968	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Cloture Available	968	0.89	0.31	0.00	1.00
Germaneness Rule	1026	0.98	0.13	0.00	1.00
Deadline for Chamber of Origin Action	1026	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
Deadline for Crossover Chamber Action	1026	0.39	0.49	0.00	1.00
Deadline for Conference Committee Action	1026	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00

## Appendix C: Descriptive Statistics for Control Variables

Table A8: Descriptive Statistics for Control Variables

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Democratic Majority	1026	0.49	0.50	0.00	1.00
Seat Margin	1026	0.26	0.19	0.00	1.00
Ideological Difference	932	1.52	0.48	0.45	3.04
Majority Heterogeneity	920	0.28	0.11	0.07	0.68
Minority Heterogeneity	918	0.29	0.11	0.01	1.34
Chamber Size	1026	76.46	58.29	20.00	400.00
Number of Committees	1002	18.01	8.68	4.00	57.00
Proportion Female - Dem	1026	0.29	0.14	0.00	0.79
Proportion Female - Rep	1025	0.17	0.10	0.00	0.88
Proportion Female - Chamber	1026	0.22	0.09	0.00	0.52
Term Limits	1026	0.30	0.46	0.00	1.00
Direct Democracy	1026	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00
Professionalism	1026	0.21	0.12	0.03	0.63
Unified Government	1012	0.54	0.50	0.00	1.00

## **Appendix D: Full Regression Models with Additive Indexes of Rules**

Table A9: Impact of Rules on Majority Party Legislative Effectiveness in the Legislative Process

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage Rule Count	0.0411** (0.018)	0.0054** (0.002)	0.0101*** (0.003)	0.0092** (0.004)	0.0092** (0.004)	0.0098** (0.004)
Equalizing Rules Count	0.0278 (0.019)	0.0018 (0.001)	0.0036 (0.002)	0.0050* (0.003)	0.0049* (0.003)	0.0047* (0.003)
Minority Advantage Rules Count	-0.0110 (0.038)	-0.0039* (0.002)	-0.0093** (0.005)	-0.0118** (0.005)	-0.0122** (0.006)	-0.0123** (0.006)
Ideological Difference	-0.2687* (0.135)	-0.0051 (0.007)	-0.0027 (0.011)	0.0002 (0.013)	-0.0005 (0.014)	-0.0028 (0.014)
Majority Heterogeneity	0.4127 (0.411)	0.0216 (0.027)	0.0018 (0.046)	-0.0022 (0.054)	-0.0033 (0.058)	-0.0112 (0.059)
Minority Heterogeneity	-0.1834 (0.350)	0.0264 (0.018)	0.0589* (0.031)	0.0452 (0.037)	0.0482 (0.039)	0.0553 (0.039)
Seat Margin	0.0485 (0.159)	-0.0163 (0.013)	-0.0230 (0.024)	-0.0298 (0.026)	-0.0270 (0.028)	-0.0275 (0.028)
Proportion Female - Chamber	0.5863* (0.334)	0.0345 (0.034)	0.0450 (0.057)	0.0472 (0.065)	0.0659 (0.069)	0.0720 (0.068)
Democratic Majority	-0.0743 (0.058)	0.0016 (0.006)	-0.0197* (0.010)	-0.0239* (0.013)	-0.0311** (0.014)	-0.0329** (0.014)
Chamber Size	-0.0023 (0.001)	-0.0003** (0.000)	-0.0003* (0.000)	-0.0005** (0.000)	-0.0005** (0.000)	-0.0005** (0.000)
Number of Committees	0.0068 (0.006)	-0.0001 (0.000)	-0.0004 (0.001)	-0.0009 (0.001)	-0.0010 (0.001)	-0.0010 (0.001)
Term Limits	-0.1781* (0.100)	-0.0032 (0.006)	-0.0002 (0.012)	-0.0015 (0.015)	-0.0003 (0.016)	-0.0003 (0.016)
Direct Democracy	0.0914 (0.137)	-0.0037 (0.007)	-0.0090 (0.012)	-0.0175 (0.016)	-0.0164 (0.017)	-0.0158 (0.017)
Professionalism	-0.0767 (0.342)	-0.0159 (0.021)	-0.0286 (0.042)	-0.0221 (0.046)	0.0049 (0.050)	0.0016 (0.050)
Unified Government	0.0443 (0.050)	-0.0017 (0.004)	-0.0024 (0.008)	-0.0064 (0.008)	-0.0079 (0.009)	-0.0047 (0.009)
Upper Chamber	-0.2700** (0.131)	-0.0117 (0.008)	-0.0159 (0.015)	-0.0279* (0.016)	-0.0329* (0.017)	-0.0299* (0.017)
Constant	0.8564*** (0.311)	0.1991*** (0.020)	0.1985*** (0.037)	0.2357*** (0.043)	0.2378*** (0.045)	0.2350*** (0.045)
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column is an OLS model for the legislative effectiveness for all stages combined. Columns 2-6 are models for Legislative Effectiveness at a given stage, and these models are OLS with Seemingly Unrelated Regression which allows the underlying error to be correlated across stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Table A10: Impact of Rules on Minority Party Legislative Effectiveness in the Legislative Process

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage Rule Count	-0.0257 (0.024)	-0.0045 (0.003)	-0.0096** (0.004)	-0.0082* (0.004)	-0.0083* (0.005)	-0.0092* (0.005)
Equalizing Rules Count	-0.0333* (0.019)	-0.0011 (0.002)	-0.0031 (0.003)	-0.0040 (0.003)	-0.0040 (0.003)	-0.0038 (0.003)
Minority Advantage Rules Count	0.0651** (0.028)	0.0032 (0.003)	0.0054 (0.005)	0.0091 (0.006)	0.0095 (0.006)	0.0094 (0.006)
Ideological Difference	-0.1024 (0.114)	0.0059 (0.009)	0.0017 (0.012)	-0.0018 (0.014)	-0.0027 (0.015)	0.0011 (0.015)
Majority Heterogeneity	0.1944 (0.392)	-0.0032 (0.033)	0.0343 (0.050)	0.0367 (0.066)	0.0350 (0.072)	0.0440 (0.073)
Minority Heterogeneity	-0.4314** (0.192)	-0.0339 (0.026)	-0.0530 (0.040)	-0.0355 (0.044)	-0.0414 (0.046)	-0.0523 (0.048)
Seat Margin	-0.0771 (0.155)	-0.0078 (0.018)	-0.0224 (0.029)	-0.0049 (0.032)	-0.0092 (0.033)	-0.0084 (0.034)
Proportion Female - Chamber	-0.1289 (0.357)	-0.1101** (0.043)	-0.1506** (0.065)	-0.1519** (0.076)	-0.1513* (0.081)	-0.1581** (0.080)
Democratic Majority	0.0342 (0.062)	0.0038 (0.007)	0.0306*** (0.012)	0.0365*** (0.014)	0.0438*** (0.015)	0.0459*** (0.015)
Chamber Size	0.0013 (0.001)	0.0004*** (0.000)	0.0005** (0.000)	0.0006*** (0.000)	0.0006*** (0.000)	0.0006*** (0.000)
Number of Committees	0.0162** (0.006)	-0.0005 (0.001)	-0.0006 (0.001)	0.0003 (0.001)	0.0003 (0.001)	0.0002 (0.001)
Term Limits	-0.1056 (0.085)	-0.0036 (0.009)	-0.0058 (0.013)	-0.0038 (0.015)	-0.0050 (0.016)	-0.0057 (0.017)
Direct Democracy	0.2420** (0.111)	0.0143 (0.010)	0.0250* (0.014)	0.0359** (0.017)	0.0361** (0.018)	0.0372** (0.019)
Professionalism	-0.3028 (0.290)	0.0019 (0.027)	-0.0031 (0.048)	-0.0199 (0.050)	-0.0515 (0.053)	-0.0468 (0.054)
Unified Government	0.0144 (0.040)	0.0029 (0.005)	0.0026 (0.008)	0.0079 (0.009)	0.0086 (0.010)	0.0034 (0.010)
Upper Chamber	-0.0464 (0.110)	0.0145 (0.011)	0.0102 (0.018)	0.0287 (0.019)	0.0366* (0.020)	0.0312 (0.020)
Constant	0.6627** (0.281)	0.1886*** (0.026)	0.2041*** (0.041)	0.1377*** (0.049)	0.1300** (0.052)	0.1362*** (0.051)
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column is an OLS model for the legislative effectiveness for all stages combined. Columns 2-6 are models for Legislative Effectiveness at a given stage, and these models are Seemingly Unrelated Regression with the underlying error correlated across the stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Table A11: Impact of Rules on Majority–Minority Legislative Effectiveness Difference in the Legislative Process

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage Rule Count	0.0668** (0.032)	0.0099** (0.005)	0.0197*** (0.007)	0.0175** (0.008)	0.0175** (0.009)	0.0190** (0.009)
Equalizing Rules Count	0.0611** (0.025)	0.0029 (0.003)	0.0067 (0.005)	0.0090 (0.006)	0.0089 (0.006)	0.0085 (0.006)
Minority Advantage Rules Count	-0.0761* (0.046)	-0.0071 (0.005)	-0.0148 (0.009)	-0.0209* (0.011)	-0.0217* (0.012)	-0.0217* (0.012)
Ideological Difference	-0.1663 (0.111)	-0.0110 (0.015)	-0.0044 (0.023)	0.0020 (0.026)	0.0022 (0.028)	-0.0039 (0.029)
Majority Heterogeneity	0.2183 (0.462)	0.0248 (0.059)	-0.0326 (0.094)	-0.0390 (0.117)	-0.0383 (0.128)	-0.0553 (0.130)
Minority Heterogeneity	0.2480 (0.403)	0.0603 (0.039)	0.1120* (0.064)	0.0807 (0.074)	0.0896 (0.078)	0.1077 (0.081)
Seat Margin	0.1256 (0.233)	-0.0086 (0.029)	-0.0006 (0.051)	-0.0249 (0.056)	-0.0178 (0.059)	-0.0191 (0.060)
Proportion Female - Chamber	0.7153 (0.512)	0.1446* (0.075)	0.1956 (0.121)	0.1991 (0.138)	0.2172 (0.146)	0.2300 (0.145)
Democratic Majority	-0.1085 (0.103)	-0.0022 (0.013)	-0.0503** (0.022)	-0.0604** (0.026)	-0.0748*** (0.028)	-0.0788*** (0.028)
Chamber Size	-0.0036* (0.002)	-0.0006*** (0.000)	-0.0008** (0.000)	-0.0011*** (0.000)	-0.0011*** (0.000)	-0.0011*** (0.000)
Number of Committees	-0.0093 (0.006)	0.0004 (0.001)	0.0002 (0.001)	-0.0011 (0.001)	-0.0013 (0.002)	-0.0012 (0.002)
Term Limits	-0.0726 (0.096)	0.0004 (0.015)	0.0056 (0.024)	0.0023 (0.030)	0.0047 (0.032)	0.0054 (0.032)
Direct Democracy	-0.1506 (0.135)	-0.0180 (0.016)	-0.0339 (0.026)	-0.0534* (0.032)	-0.0524 (0.034)	-0.0530 (0.035)
Professionalism	0.2261 (0.477)	-0.0178 (0.045)	-0.0255 (0.086)	-0.0021 (0.092)	0.0564 (0.101)	0.0484 (0.101)
Unified Government	0.0299 (0.075)	-0.0047 (0.009)	-0.0050 (0.016)	-0.0142 (0.017)	-0.0165 (0.018)	-0.0081 (0.018)
Upper Chamber	-0.2236 (0.180)	-0.0262 (0.019)	-0.0261 (0.032)	-0.0566 (0.035)	-0.0695* (0.036)	-0.0612* (0.036)
Constant	0.1937 (0.452)	0.0106 (0.045)	-0.0056 (0.076)	0.0979 (0.089)	0.1078 (0.095)	0.0988 (0.093)
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column is an OLS model for the legislative effectiveness for all stages combined. Columns 2-6 are models for Legislative Effectiveness at a given stage, and these models are Seemingly Unrelated Regression with the underlying error correlated across the stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

# Appendix E: IRT Models

## Diagnostics for IRT Models of Chamber Rules

Figure A2: Item Characteristic Curves for Majority Advantage Rules

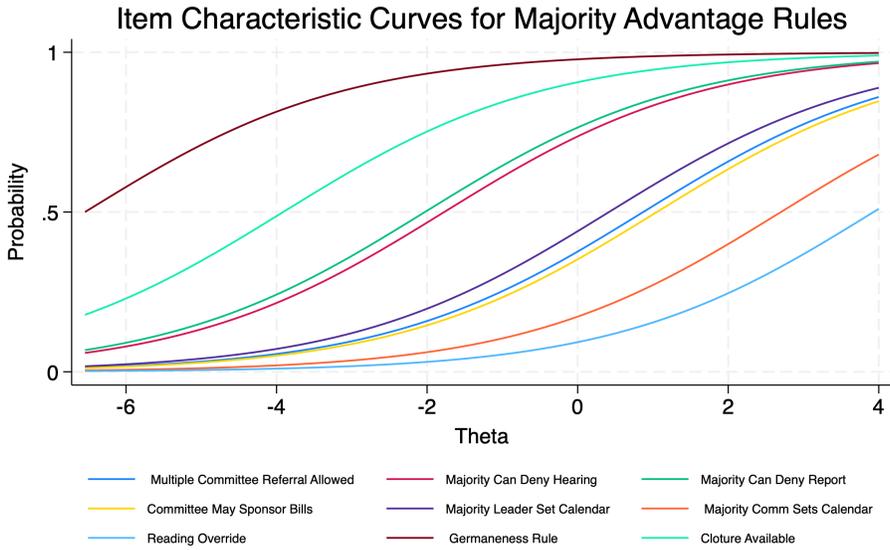


Figure A3: Item Information Functions for Majority Advantage Rules

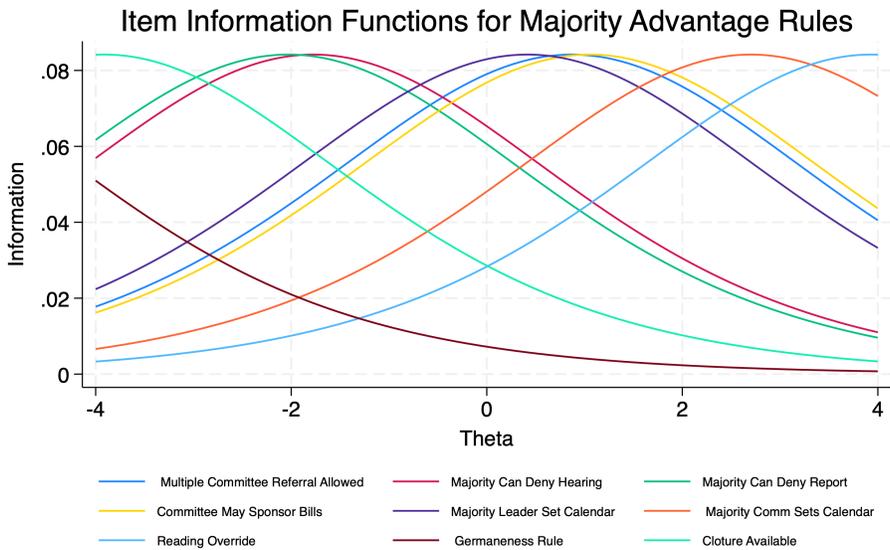


Figure A4: Item Characteristic Curves for Equalizing Rules

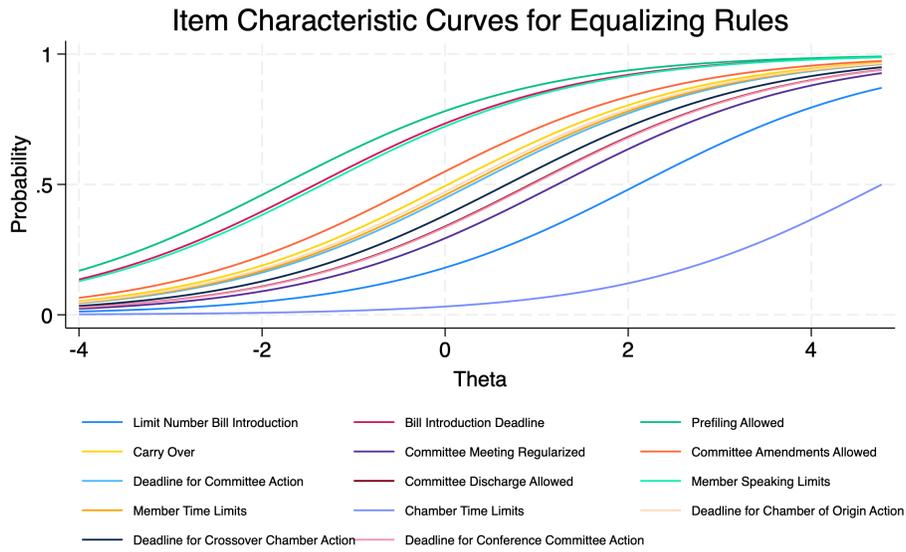


Figure A5: Item Information Functions for Equalizing Rules

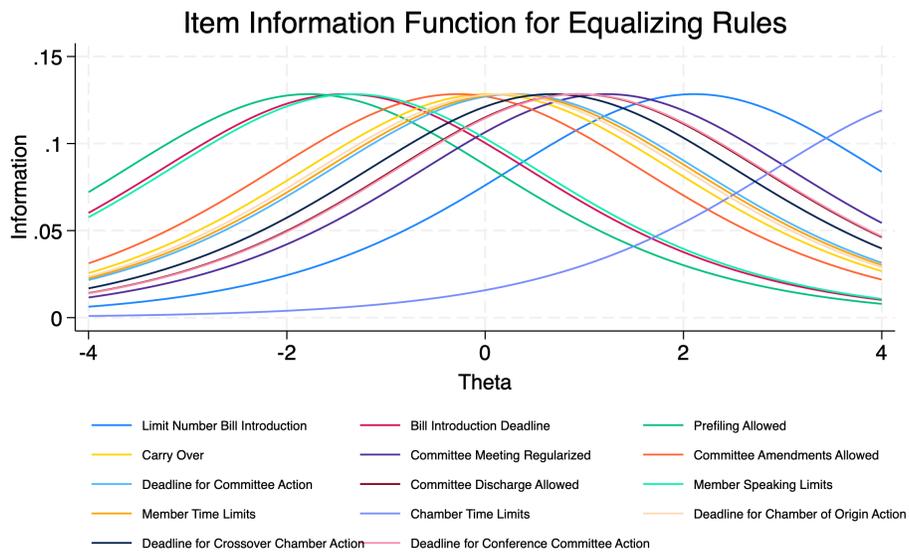


Figure A6: Item Characteristic Curves for Minority Advantage Rules

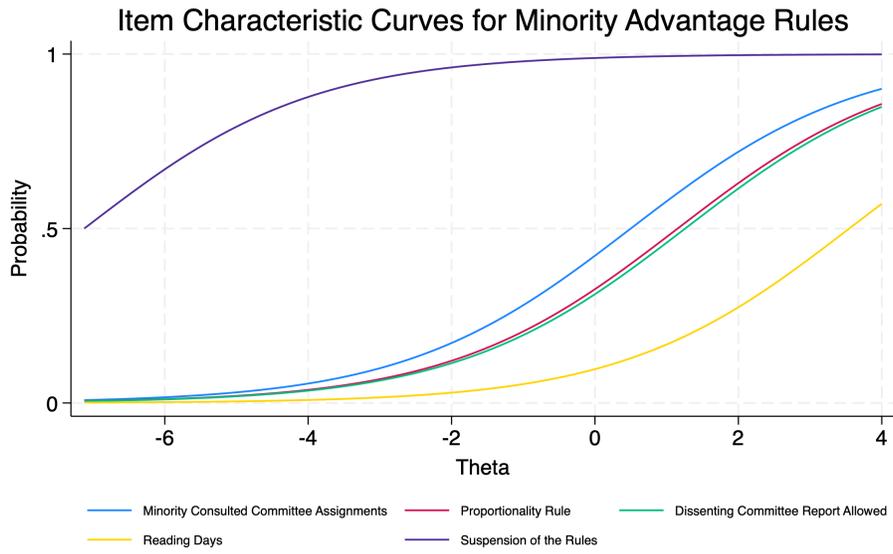
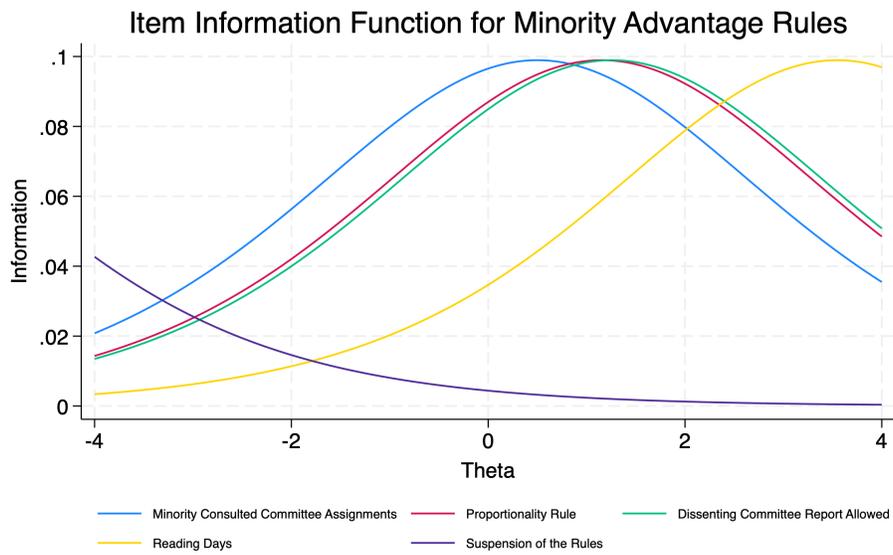


Figure A7: Item Information Functions for Minority Advantage Rules



## **Full Regression Models Using IRT- Derived Induces**

Table A12: Impact of Rules on Majority–Minority Legislative Effectiveness Difference in the Legislative Process (IRT Measures)

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage (IRT)	0.0923** (0.044)	0.0114** (0.005)	0.0200** (0.009)	0.0185* (0.010)	0.0184* (0.010)	0.0197* (0.010)
Equalizing (IRT)	0.0827 (0.064)	0.0057 (0.004)	0.0112 (0.008)	0.0160* (0.009)	0.0158 (0.010)	0.0152 (0.010)
Minority Advantage (IRT)	-0.0077 (0.077)	-0.0065 (0.005)	-0.0160* (0.009)	-0.0213** (0.011)	-0.0221* (0.012)	-0.0221* (0.012)
Ideological Difference	-0.2736* (0.138)	-0.0057 (0.007)	-0.0038 (0.011)	-0.0010 (0.013)	-0.0017 (0.014)	-0.0041 (0.014)
Majority Heterogeneity	0.4156 (0.409)	0.0217 (0.027)	0.0014 (0.046)	-0.0024 (0.053)	-0.0034 (0.057)	-0.0113 (0.058)
Minority Heterogeneity	-0.1780 (0.356)	0.0266 (0.018)	0.0587* (0.031)	0.0454 (0.037)	0.0484 (0.039)	0.0554 (0.039)
Seat Margin	0.0457 (0.161)	-0.0165 (0.013)	-0.0232 (0.025)	-0.0302 (0.027)	-0.0274 (0.028)	-0.0280 (0.029)
Proportion Female - Chamber	0.6114* (0.336)	0.0368 (0.034)	0.0505 (0.057)	0.0519 (0.064)	0.0705 (0.068)	0.0769 (0.067)
Democratic Majority	-0.0785 (0.057)	0.0010 (0.006)	-0.0209* (0.011)	-0.0252** (0.013)	-0.0324** (0.014)	-0.0342** (0.014)
Chamber Size	-0.0022 (0.001)	-0.0002** (0.000)	-0.0003 (0.000)	-0.0004** (0.000)	-0.0005** (0.000)	-0.0005** (0.000)
Number of Committees	0.0068 (0.006)	-0.0002 (0.000)	-0.0004 (0.001)	-0.0009 (0.001)	-0.0010 (0.001)	-0.0010 (0.001)
Term Limits	-0.1796* (0.101)	-0.0035 (0.006)	-0.0006 (0.012)	-0.0022 (0.015)	-0.0009 (0.016)	-0.0009 (0.016)
Direct Democracy	0.0978 (0.140)	-0.0034 (0.007)	-0.0083 (0.012)	-0.0168 (0.016)	-0.0156 (0.017)	-0.0151 (0.017)
Professionalism	-0.1126 (0.344)	-0.0178 (0.021)	-0.0316 (0.043)	-0.0262 (0.046)	0.0008 (0.051)	-0.0025 (0.050)
Unified Government	0.0483 (0.051)	-0.0013 (0.004)	-0.0018 (0.008)	-0.0056 (0.008)	-0.0071 (0.009)	-0.0039 (0.009)
Upper Chamber	-0.2529* (0.130)	-0.0099 (0.009)	-0.0124 (0.016)	-0.0241 (0.017)	-0.0291 (0.018)	-0.0261 (0.018)
Constant	1.1855*** (0.329)	0.2262*** (0.018)	0.2452*** (0.033)	0.2821*** (0.039)	0.2827*** (0.040)	0.2814*** (0.040)
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column reports an OLS model for legislative effectiveness across all stages. Columns 2–6 report stage-specific models estimated using Seemingly Unrelated Regression, allowing errors to be correlated across stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Table A13: Impact of Rules on Minority Party Legislative Effectiveness in the Legislative Process (IRT Measures)

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage (IRT)	-0.0307 (0.056)	-0.0096 (0.008)	-0.0197** (0.010)	-0.0175 (0.011)	-0.0174 (0.012)	-0.0196* (0.012)
Equalizing (IRT)	-0.1099* (0.062)	-0.0033 (0.006)	-0.0093 (0.009)	-0.0129 (0.010)	-0.0128 (0.011)	-0.0120 (0.011)
Minority Advantage (IRT)	0.1178** (0.059)	0.0054 (0.006)	0.0081 (0.011)	0.0162 (0.012)	0.0171 (0.013)	0.0168 (0.012)
Ideological Difference	-0.0978 (0.113)	0.0064 (0.009)	0.0026 (0.013)	-0.0007 (0.014)	-0.0016 (0.015)	0.0023 (0.016)
Majority Heterogeneity	0.2027 (0.383)	-0.0033 (0.033)	0.0344 (0.050)	0.0364 (0.065)	0.0347 (0.071)	0.0437 (0.072)
Minority Heterogeneity	-0.4257** (0.192)	-0.0339 (0.026)	-0.0530 (0.041)	-0.0360 (0.045)	-0.0419 (0.046)	-0.0528 (0.048)
Seat Margin	-0.0736 (0.154)	-0.0077 (0.018)	-0.0224 (0.029)	-0.0045 (0.032)	-0.0088 (0.033)	-0.0081 (0.034)
Proportion Female - Chamber	-0.1514 (0.348)	-0.1123*** (0.043)	-0.1560** (0.065)	-0.1556** (0.075)	-0.1550* (0.079)	-0.1624** (0.078)
Democratic Majority	0.0406 (0.061)	0.0043 (0.007)	0.0315*** (0.012)	0.0375*** (0.014)	0.0448*** (0.015)	0.0470*** (0.015)
Chamber Size	0.0011 (0.001)	0.0004** (0.000)	0.0004** (0.000)	0.0006*** (0.000)	0.0006*** (0.000)	0.0006*** (0.000)
Number of Committees	0.0162** (0.006)	-0.0005 (0.001)	-0.0006 (0.001)	0.0003 (0.001)	0.0004 (0.001)	0.0002 (0.001)
Term Limits	-0.1019 (0.086)	-0.0035 (0.009)	-0.0056 (0.013)	-0.0032 (0.015)	-0.0044 (0.017)	-0.0052 (0.017)
Direct Democracy	0.2388** (0.111)	0.0141 (0.010)	0.0242* (0.014)	0.0352** (0.017)	0.0354* (0.018)	0.0365* (0.019)
Professionalism	-0.2908 (0.283)	0.0032 (0.027)	0.0003 (0.049)	-0.0157 (0.050)	-0.0475 (0.054)	-0.0426 (0.055)
Unified Government	0.0113 (0.041)	0.0026 (0.005)	0.0019 (0.009)	0.0071 (0.009)	0.0078 (0.010)	0.0026 (0.010)
Upper Chamber	-0.0650 (0.117)	0.0131 (0.012)	0.0071 (0.019)	0.0255 (0.020)	0.0334 (0.021)	0.0279 (0.021)
Constant	0.4893** (0.217)	0.1685*** (0.025)	0.1540*** (0.039)	0.0951** (0.044)	0.0886* (0.046)	0.0917** (0.045)
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is minority party legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column reports an OLS model for effectiveness across all stages. Columns 2–6 report stage-specific models estimated using Seemingly Unrelated Regression, allowing errors to be correlated across stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Table A14: Impact of Rules on Majority–Minority Legislative Effectiveness Difference in the Legislative Process (IRT Measures)

	All	Introduction	Committee	After Committee	Passage	Law
Majority Advantage (IRT)	0.1230* (0.072)	0.0209 (0.013)	0.0398** (0.018)	0.0360* (0.020)	0.0358* (0.021)	0.0393* (0.021)
Equalizing (IRT)	0.1927** (0.085)	0.0091 (0.009)	0.0205 (0.017)	0.0290 (0.019)	0.0286 (0.020)	0.0272 (0.020)
Minority Advantage (IRT)	-0.1255 (0.092)	-0.0120 (0.010)	-0.0241 (0.019)	-0.0374* (0.022)	-0.0392* (0.023)	-0.0389* (0.023)
Ideological Difference	-0.1758 (0.115)	-0.0121 (0.015)	-0.0064 (0.023)	-0.0003 (0.027)	-0.0002 (0.029)	-0.0063 (0.029)
Majority Heterogeneity	0.2129 (0.448)	0.0250 (0.059)	-0.0330 (0.094)	-0.0388 (0.116)	-0.0381 (0.126)	-0.0550 (0.128)
Minority Heterogeneity	0.2477 (0.416)	0.0606 (0.039)	0.1116* (0.066)	0.0813 (0.075)	0.0902 (0.079)	0.1082 (0.081)
Seat Margin	0.1193 (0.235)	-0.0087 (0.029)	-0.0008 (0.052)	-0.0258 (0.057)	-0.0187 (0.060)	-0.0199 (0.061)
Proportion Female - Chamber	0.7628 (0.501)	0.1491** (0.074)	0.2064* (0.120)	0.2076 (0.136)	0.2255 (0.144)	0.2392* (0.143)
Democratic Majority	-0.1191 (0.101)	-0.0033 (0.013)	-0.0524** (0.022)	-0.0627** (0.026)	-0.0772*** (0.028)	-0.0812*** (0.028)
Chamber Size	-0.0033 (0.002)	-0.0006** (0.000)	-0.0007* (0.000)	-0.0010** (0.000)	-0.0011** (0.000)	-0.0011** (0.000)
Number of Committees	-0.0094 (0.006)	0.0003 (0.001)	0.0002 (0.001)	-0.0012 (0.001)	-0.0014 (0.002)	-0.0012 (0.002)
Term Limits	-0.0777 (0.096)	-0.0000 (0.015)	0.0049 (0.025)	0.0011 (0.030)	0.0035 (0.032)	0.0043 (0.033)
Direct Democracy	-0.1410 (0.135)	-0.0174 (0.016)	-0.0325 (0.026)	-0.0520 (0.032)	-0.0511 (0.034)	-0.0516 (0.035)
Professionalism	0.1782 (0.474)	-0.0210 (0.046)	-0.0319 (0.089)	-0.0105 (0.094)	0.0483 (0.103)	0.0401 (0.102)
Unified Government	0.0370 (0.077)	-0.0040 (0.009)	-0.0037 (0.017)	-0.0127 (0.017)	-0.0149 (0.018)	-0.0065 (0.019)
Upper Chamber	-0.1879 (0.186)	-0.0230 (0.020)	-0.0194 (0.034)	-0.0496 (0.036)	-0.0625* (0.038)	-0.0540 (0.038)
Constant	0.6962 (0.449)	0.0577 (0.041)	0.0912 (0.070)	0.1870** (0.080)	0.1941** (0.084)	0.1897** (0.083)
Observations	676	676	676	676	676	676

Standard errors clustered by state chamber in parentheses. The dependent variable in all models is the difference between majority and minority party legislative effectiveness, either in total or for a given stage. The first column reports an OLS model for effectiveness across all stages. Columns 2–6 report stage-specific models estimated using Seemingly Unrelated Regression, allowing errors to be correlated across stages.

\*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$