Policy Agendas, Effective Lawmaking, and Women's Issues in State Legislatures♣

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Abstract

We leverage transformer-based text classification to accurately assign more than 1.6 million bills that were introduced into state legislatures to 18 different policy areas. We then introduce Issue-Specific State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (ISLES), for legislatures that convened between 2009-2019 in 48 states. We show which issues gain the most attention in legislatures, and which are the most gridlocked, as well as systematic patterns in the issues over which experts or ideological centrists are most successful. We also demonstrate that female lawmakers disproportionately sponsor bills engaging with Civil Rights, Education, Health, and Welfare: policy areas that are conventionally categorized as being "women's issues." We find that bills in these issue areas are more gridlocked than other policy areas, on average. However, in chambers approaching gender parity, women's issue bills—especially those proposed by women—are more likely to advance into law.

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In the United States, lawmaking authority is shared between national and state governments, with states exercising equal or greater jurisdiction on issues such as health, transportation, education, taxation, energy, and many other areas of public policy. The sheer volume of policymaking in state legislatures far outpaces that of Congress (Rogers 2023), positioning them as critical arenas for experimentation and reforms. The vastness of these proposals across the states, however, raises many key questions. Which states raise which policy issues in response to crises or to federal inaction? Which of those many proposals are stuck in gridlock, and which progress into law, perhaps even spreading from state to state? What are the traits of legislators who succeed in advancing their proposals, and do those traits vary across states and policy issue areas? Put simply, what are the politics of policymaking across the varied issues confronted by state legislators?

Scholars have dedicated significant effort to answering these questions. Classic and current studies have focused on questions ranging from the causes and consequences of policy experimentation and adoption within and across states (e.g., Gray 1973, Karch 2007, Parinandi 2020, Shipan and Volden 2008, Walker 1969), to who acts as key policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom 1997, Mintrom and Norman 2009), to who are the most effective lawmakers (Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman 2025), to the role and responsiveness of women and underrepresented minority legislators (e.g., Reingold, Haynie, and Widner 2021). Yet, in each of these areas (and many more), scholarship is limited by the inability to fully categorize the more than one hundred thousand bills that are introduced each year in different state legislatures into their respective policy areas (for other recent work in this area, see Dee and Garlick 2025; Zorn, Gill, and Sweet-Cushman 2026). The most expansive datasets covering policy diffusion (Boehmke and Skinner 2012) capture an impressive 728 policies that spread across the states; and yet the authors set

aside millions of bills from the time period studied. The most expansive data on lawmaker effectiveness (Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman 2025) does not differentiate between the lawmakers that are effective in one policy area compared to another.

Numerous avenues of important research on legislative politics and public policymaking would be opened if we had systematic, accurate, and widely accessible data classifying bills into broadly accepted policy issue areas. Scholars could explore which legislatures are responsive to constituents confronting important policy challenges. We could examine whether and how the amount of attention given to policy challenges spreads across states. We could understand how states' norms and institutions promote or undermine issue specialization and expertise acquisition among their lawmakers. We could explore whether the factors that contribute to effective lawmaking on complex and technical issues differ from those in issues where coalitions are based mainly on moral principles. We could better understand the nature of representation in addressing issues that focus more heavily on the concerns of women or men or racial minorities. The list of possibilities is enormous.

In this paper, we take three steps down this road. First, we introduce a new approach for categorizing all bills that were introduced in 48 state legislatures between 2009 and 2019 into one of 18 different policy areas drawn from the Comparative Agendas Project coding scheme. We do so by building a transformer-based supervised classification model with human coded bills as training data to classify more than 1.6 million bills into one of 18 different policy areas.

Second, we pair these coded bill categories with Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) data that classifies who sponsored each bill and how far each proposal advanced through the lawmaking process. This approach yields a comprehensive dataset of issue-area lawmaking that allows us to identify which policy areas receive the greatest attention by state legislators, as

well as which policy domains are most prone to gridlock across states. We also develop Issue-Specific State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (ISLES), scoring legislators for their activities and successes in each of the 18 issue areas. With these scores in hand, we show that, although many established correlates of overall lawmaking effectiveness extend to the issue level, important differences emerge across policy domains.

Third, we explore one of these areas of difference in greater depth, focusing on proposals in areas commonly labeled as "women's issues": Civil Rights; Education; Health; Housing; Labor; Law, Crime & Family; and Welfare (see Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2018 for a review of this literature). We find that women in state legislatures do indeed sponsor more bills in areas such as Health, Education, and Welfare. But we also find that such proposals are less likely to become law than bills in other issue areas. We then establish that in legislatures that are closer to parity in gender, women's issue bills emerge from the legislature at about equal rates as proposals in other issue areas. Such novel findings cannot be achieved without the classification work that we have undertaken here, and thus speak to the potential for future research that arises through the issue coding of bills and of effective lawmakers.

Classifying Bills by Policy Topic

We begin by developing a standardized, scalable approach to classifying bills in policy areas defined by the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP) coding scheme (Jones et al. 2023).[1] More specifically, we implement a supervised machine learning pipeline that combines human-coded training data with transformer-based natural language models to classify over 1.6 million

[1] Our scheme is slightly modified, following several efforts to create state-specific CAP coding schemes in places like Pennsylvania (McLaughlin et al. 2025) and Florida (Cornacchione and Ciltas 2024). Specifically, we do not include topics that are entirely the purview of the federal government—topics 9 (immigration), 18 (foreign trade), and 19 (foreign affairs)—and do include a code for policies on local matters affecting counties or municipalities (topic 24).

state bills by policy area. In doing so, we follow Ballard et al.'s (2023) supervised classification approach from the target text of bill descriptions of each bill in our corpus from LegiScan.

Our supervised approach to classifying bills in state legislatures is comprised of two main stages. First, we hand-coded a training set of nearly 5,000 bills using the CAP coding guidelines, which direct coders to identify the *primary* substantive policy area of each bill rather than its mechanism or target population.[2] Then, each of the coders was given text descriptions for a sample of 2,000 bills.[3] Three coders (including two coauthors) independently coded the bills, with 500 overlapping cases to assess reliability.[4] The group met weekly to discuss hard-to-code observations, coding these bills via consensus. Overall, we hand-coded 4,978 bills (approximately 1,500 unique bills for three coders, plus 500 common bills for each coder), where we achieved 87% agreement and a Cohen's kappa of 0.73, indicating strong consistency across coders.[5] We provide an example of a bill description for each policy topic in Table 1.[6]

Table 1: Bill Text Description Examples for Each Policy Topic

Topic	Bill Description	Bill Information
1. Fiscal and Economic Issues (Macroeconomics)	"A bill for an act relating to state taxation and related laws of the state including the collection of tax, tax credits, the assessment and classification of property, taxes on electricity providers, fees for registration of vehicles, sales and use tax, and the authority of the director of revenue, and providing penalties, and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions."	Iowa SSB1122 (2021-2022)

[2] More information can be found on the CAP website: https://www.comparativeagendas.net/pages/master-codebook
[3] Several policy areas (Civil Rights, Agriculture, Social Welfare, Finance & Commerce, Defense, Science & Technology, Public Lands, and Local Government) were rare enough that we did not have large enough samples to train accurate models. We oversampled these policy areas with data from Dee and Garlick (2025). More details on this approach can be found in Appendix C.
[4] We opt to classify bills into a single topic so that we can compute ISLES on a mutually exclusive set of topics. This is a similar approach to the single-issue coding used for Congress by the Congressional Research Service, even though there is an increasing use of many-topic omnibus policymaking in Congress (which is less common in state legislatures).
[5] We could not come to a determination of the policy area for 22 of the 5,000 bills based on the text; these were removed from the training data.
[6] See Appendix B for additional examples.

2. Civil Rights	"To amend Section 3599.20 of the revised Code to prohibit any person from intimidating, threatening, or coercing a person for the purpose of interfering with that person's right to vote in an election."	Ohio HB783 (2019-2020)
3. Health	"Amends the Newborn Hearing Screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve hearing follow-up of infants."	Hawaii HB678 (2019-2020)
4. Agriculture	"Modifies the existing Plant and Animal Declaration form to also require in-bound travelers to the state to acknowledge state laws, federal laws, and individual responsibility to protect the environment and agriculture of the state. requires all other documents travelers are required to complete to enter the state, except documents only relating to a dangerous communicable disease, to include an environmental and agricultural affirmation."	Illinois SB2298 (2013-2014)
5. Labor and Employment	"Relating to the eligibility of school bus drivers and cafeteria workers for unemployment compensation benefits."	Texas HB2068 (2021-2022)
6. Education	"An act to repeal Section 35583 of the Education Code, relating to school district reorganization, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately."	California SB41 (2013-2014)
7. Environment	"Concerning the use of green hydrogen to meet statewide greenhouse gas pollution reduction goals."	Colorado HB1140 (2021-2022)
8. Energy	"To require natural gas leaks to be repaired within two business days of reporting to the gas company."	Connecticut HB06301 (2017-2018)
10. Transportation	"Provides for the registration and regulation of warrantors of vehicle protection products and related sellers and warranty administrators of such products."	Nevada SB118 (2009-2010)
12. Law, Crime, and Family	"Allows a law enforcement officer to arrest a parolee or probationer without a warrant in certain circumstances and requires conditions and terms of probation or parole to be recorded in mules."	Montana HB2859 (2023-2024)

13. Social Welfare	"An act to amend Title 31 of the Delaware Code relating to eligibility for public assistance."	Delaware HB365 (2015-2016)
14. Community Development/Housing Issues	"Provides that the sponsor of a cooperative apartment building or condominium units may not continue to sit on the board or to vote after the transfer to the cooperative corporation or condominium ownership."	New York A01102 (2017-2018)
15. Finance, Banking, and Domestic Commerce	"Relative to fees for certain inactive bank accounts. Financial services."	Massachusetts H2976 (2017-2018)
16. Defense	"An act to amend Title 20 of the Delaware Code relating to the Delaware National Guard."	Delaware HB391 (2017-2018)
17. Science, Technology, and Communications	"Prohibits the activation of previously owned mobile telephones unless all personal identification information of a previous owner has been removed from the number assignment module or the number assignment module contains the personal information of the person attempting to activate such phone."	New York A00830 (2013-2014)
20. Government Operations	"An act to preserve the integrity of the voter registration and election process."	Maine HP1015 (2011-2012)
21. Public Lands and Water Management	"Exempting certain individuals from state park entrance fees; effective date."	Oklahoma HB1117 (2021-2022)
24. Local Matters	"Establishes the Nassau County and Queens County border task force to review jurisdiction and boundary disputes."	New York A05204 (2021-2022)

After reaching agreement to code 4,978 bills into their respective issue categories, we use our hand-coded bills to fine-tune a transformer model for classifying the remaining bills in our sample (Vaswani et al. 2017). Transformers are integral to all state-of-the-art text modeling (including current AI systems), allowing computers to create and evaluate context-specific

representations of text in a relatively low-dimensional space, which can then be used for natural language processing tasks like text generation, classification, translation, and named entity recognition. This is critical in a legislative setting where terms like "sanction" or "rehabilitation" can have very different meanings across policy domains. These methods are relatively new to political science but they are being adopted in a variety of contexts, due to their accuracy in classifying texts (e.g., Ballard et al. 2023; Ballard and Curry 2025; Bosley et al. 2025; Lin 2025; Terechshenko et al. 2020; Timoneda and Vera 2025).

Using a RoBERTa transformer model (Liu et al. 2019), we randomly sampled 80% of the hand-coded training data to fine-tune our model for the purpose of classifying texts by their policy topic, and we then tested the model's accuracy on the remaining 20% of the training data, using *k*-fold cross-validation with 5 folds to guard against overfitting.[7] The results of our model testing can be found in Table 2, showing the F1 scores on the test data in each of our cross-validation folds, by issue topic and overall, as well as the averages across folds.[8] The model achieved an overall out-of-sample accuracy and F1 score of 0.90, with all but one policy area exceeding an F1 of 0.70, and the majority surpassing 0.85.[9] These performance metrics provide confidence in applying the model to our full dataset of 1.6 million bills across all 48 states.

[7] K-fold cross-validation is a standard procedure for evaluating how well a machine-learning model performs on new data. The labeled data are divided into k (5) equal subsets. The model is trained repeatedly, each time using four subsets (80% of the data) for training and the remaining subset (20% of the data) for testing, repeating the process until each observation has served in the test set once. Model performance is then averaged across the five iterations, providing a more reliable estimate of out-of-sample accuracy and reducing the risk that any particular train-test split drives results.

[8] The F1 score is a standard evaluation metric for model classification that accounts for both false positives and false negatives. It combines *precision* (how often the model's classifications are correct) and *recall* (how often the model successfully identifies all relevant texts) into a single statistic ranging from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate more accurate and balanced classification performance.

[9] In an earlier version of this manuscript, we reported an overall F1 score of 0.81. Since then, we worked to improve our model accuracy by engaging with the training data in two ways. First, we examined the errors made by our model to look for systematic failures. We found clear overlap between several issue areas. We also found that the model overclassified topics into Macroeconomics (topic 1) and Government Operations (topic 20). This led us to reassess how several aspects of state legislative issues were coded and to modify the training data accordingly. Second, after settling on the revised coding scheme, we went back through all the hand-coded observations to look

Table 2: Out-of-Sample Accuracy by Policy Topic

Topic	Fold 1	Fold 2	Fold 3	Fold 4	Fold 5	Mean	Obs.
1: Fiscal and Economic Issues	0.792	0.795	0.810	0.711	0.880	0.798	32
2: Civil Rights	0.848	0.837	0.889	0.939	0.894	0.881	26
3: Health	0.925	0.947	0.922	0.934	0.968	0.939	116
4: Agriculture	0.889	0.850	0.935	0.982	0.868	0.905	28
5: Labor and Employment	0.900	0.886	0.833	0.818	0.959	0.879	43
6: Education	0.912	0.913	0.949	0.976	0.934	0.937	81
7: Environment	0.848	0.948	0.947	0.901	0.875	0.904	57
8: Energy	0.909	0.919	0.882	0.930	0.826	0.893	23
10: Transportation	0.917	0.900	0.943	0.914	0.984	0.932	61
12: Law, Crime, and Family	0.933	0.908	0.926	0.934	0.935	0.927	140
13: Social Welfare	0.643	0.667	0.500	0.286	0.556	0.53	16
14: Housing and Community Development	0.894	0.772	0.829	0.821	0.857	0.835	28
15: Finance, Banking, and Domestic Commerce	0.857	0.825	0.894	0.885	0.859	0.864	78
16: Defense	0.857	0.800	1.000	0.902	0.923	0.896	19
17: Science and Technology	0.750	0.857	0.952	0.889	0.571	0.804	9
20: Government Operations	0.951	0.928	0.930	0.931	0.915	0.931	198
21: Public Lands and Water Management	0.800	0.778	0.750	0.818	0.762	0.782	13
24: Local Matters	0.712	0.842	0.825	0.872	0.815	0.813	32
Macro Average	0.852	0.854	0.873	0.858	0.855	0.858	1000
Weighted Average	0.893	0.890	0.905	0.900	0.907	0.899	1000

More specifically, we utilized the cross-validation scheme to apply topics to the remaining data, where we coded each observation as the policy area that was the modal prediction of the 5 models we used for cross-validation. If there was no modal prediction, we

for errors, either substantive or mechanical. Together, these efforts led to substantial improvements in model accuracy, but they do come at a potential cost of increased chances of overfitting. As a result, we rely heavily on cross validation to produce our topic classifications.

chose the policy area that was predicted by the model with the highest F1 score among those tied for the most common prediction.

Calculating ISLES

The methodological advancement of accurately categorizing bills by issue area allows us to produce, for the first time, issue-specific measures of legislative effectiveness at the state level.[10] By pairing these policy classifications with data on bill progression, such scores enable systematic analyses of lawmaking success across policy domains, advancing the study of specialization, coalition-building, and policy influence in a way that was previously infeasible.[11]

We generate Issue-Specific State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (ISLES) for every state legislator serving in 48 state legislatures (96 chambers) between 2009 and 2018,[12] by building on the lawmaking effectiveness framework developed by Volden and Wiseman (2011, 2014) and Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2025), extending these approaches to the issue level. For each state legislator within each issue area, we identify how many sponsored bills they introduced (BILL), and how many of those bills received any action in committee (AIC), action beyond committee (ABC), passed their chamber of origin (PASS), and/or became law (LAW), where each bill is coded as being commemorative (C), substantive (S), or substantive and

[10] Dee and Garlick (2025) classified bills in state legislatures over a similar period (2009-2020) into 28 policy topics, using a mixture of CAP codes and those from a classification system developed by Garlick (2023). While their model is multi-label (individual bills can be classified as multiple topics), which might better reflect some aspects of the policymaking process, Dee and Garlick report low F1 scores: 0.30 on data from the Pennsylvania Policy Database Project, 0.43 on author-developed hand-coded data, and 0.40 on data from Garlick (2023). With this information in mind, and seeking more accurate classification, we opted to train our own model.

[11] The degree to which our full dataset of issue-coded bills overlaps with the data on bill progression offered by Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2025) is illustrated in Appendix D. This overlap allows us to use the coding and fates of over 600,000 bills throughout the rest of our analysis.

[12] For the current project, we exclude Nebraska (a unicameral and nonpartisan legislature) and Kansas (a state for which the necessary data on bill sponsorship was not widely available for the time period analyzed).

significant (SS). These data are then used to compute the ISLES for legislator (*i*) on issue (*m*) in term (*t*) as follows:

$$ISLES_{imt} = \left[\begin{array}{c} \frac{\alpha BILL^{C}_{imt} + \beta BILL^{S}_{imt} + \gamma BILL^{SS}_{imt}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL^{C}_{jmt} + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL^{S}_{jmt} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} BILL^{SS}_{jmt}} \\ + \frac{\alpha AIC^{C}_{imt} + \beta AIC^{S}_{imt} + \gamma AIC^{SS}_{imt}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC^{C}_{jmt} + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC^{S}_{jmt} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} AIC^{SS}_{jmt}} \\ + \frac{\alpha ABC^{C}_{imt} + \beta ABC^{S}_{imt} + \gamma ABC^{SS}_{imt}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC^{C}_{jmt} + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC^{S}_{jmt} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} ABC^{SS}_{jmt}} \\ + \frac{\alpha PASS^{C}_{imt} + \beta PASS^{S}_{imt} + \gamma PASS^{SS}_{imt}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS^{C}_{jmt} + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS^{S}_{jmt} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} PASS^{SS}_{jmt}} \\ + \frac{\alpha LAW^{C}_{imt} + \beta LAW^{S}_{imt} + \gamma LAW^{SS}_{imt}}{\alpha \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW^{C}_{jmt} + \beta \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW^{S}_{jmt} + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^{N} LAW^{SS}_{jmt}} \end{array} \right] \left[\frac{N}{k_{mth}} \right]$$

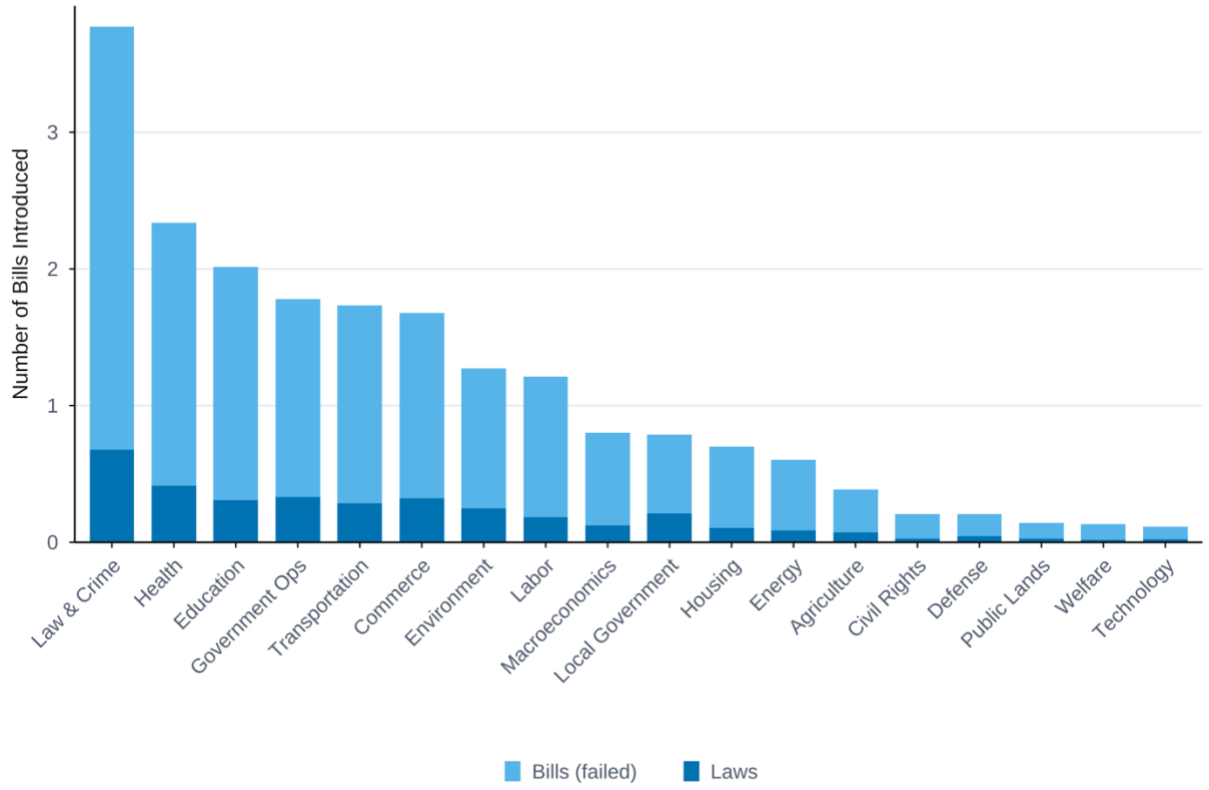
Consistent with Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2025), within each of the five components above (BILL, AIC, ABC, PASS, LAW), commemorative bills are weighted by α = 1, substantive bills are weighted by β = 5, and substantive and significant bills are weighted by γ = 10. We make one adjustment to the SLES formula by normalizing the scores over $\frac{N}{k_{mth}}$, where k_{mth} denotes the number of non-missing components across the five lawmaking stages for bills dealing with issue *m* in each state legislative term *t* and chamber *h*. This adjustment is necessary because, for some issue areas in some term-chamber combinations, no bills advanced through particular stages in the legislative process. This adjustment ensures that the average ISLES is equal to 1 for each issue area, in each chamber, in each legislative term. When $k_{mth} = 5$, the estimation of the scores is analogous to Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) approach. Yet this adjustment also implies that we do not compute ISLES for legislators whenever $k_{mth} = 0$ (i.e., when no bills were introduced in a given chamber and legislative term, for a particular policy area).

Overview of the Data by Issue Area

Before we dive into an analysis of state legislators' ISLES scores, it is worthwhile to begin with an overview of the data, to illustrate the scope of variation in bill sponsorship and law passage rates across issues and legislators. In Figure 1 we plot the average number of bills introduced and laws produced per state legislator for each issue area in our dataset. As can be seen, there is a wide variation in issue advocacy across policy areas, where legislators are, on average, most active in sponsoring bills engaging with Law, Crime, and Family issues (3.75 bills per legislator), as well as with Health and Education issues (more than 2 bills per legislator). At the other end of the spectrum, we see that bills engaging with Civil Rights, Defense, Public Lands, Welfare, and Technology all attract the lowest number of bill introductions across state legislators. This seems quite reasonable, given that many components of these policy areas (Public Lands and Defense, especially) largely fall under the jurisdictions of the federal government, rather than state governments.

Figure 1 also reveals that the average number of bills that become law in each issue area is correlated (although not perfectly correlated) with the number of bills that a legislator sponsors in that issue area. In other words, a higher average number of bills sponsored in a particular issue area tends to correspond to a higher average number of laws passed in that issue area. The largest number of laws per legislator arises in the commonly introduced Law, Crime, and Family area, while the most infrequent laws come in the rarely introduced Technology and Welfare areas. Among the more intermediate levels of bill introductions, the same pattern tends to hold, with some notable exceptions. For example, Local Matters tend to translate from bill to law at a higher rate than for other issue areas. In contrast, Civil Rights bills do not find their way into law very frequently.

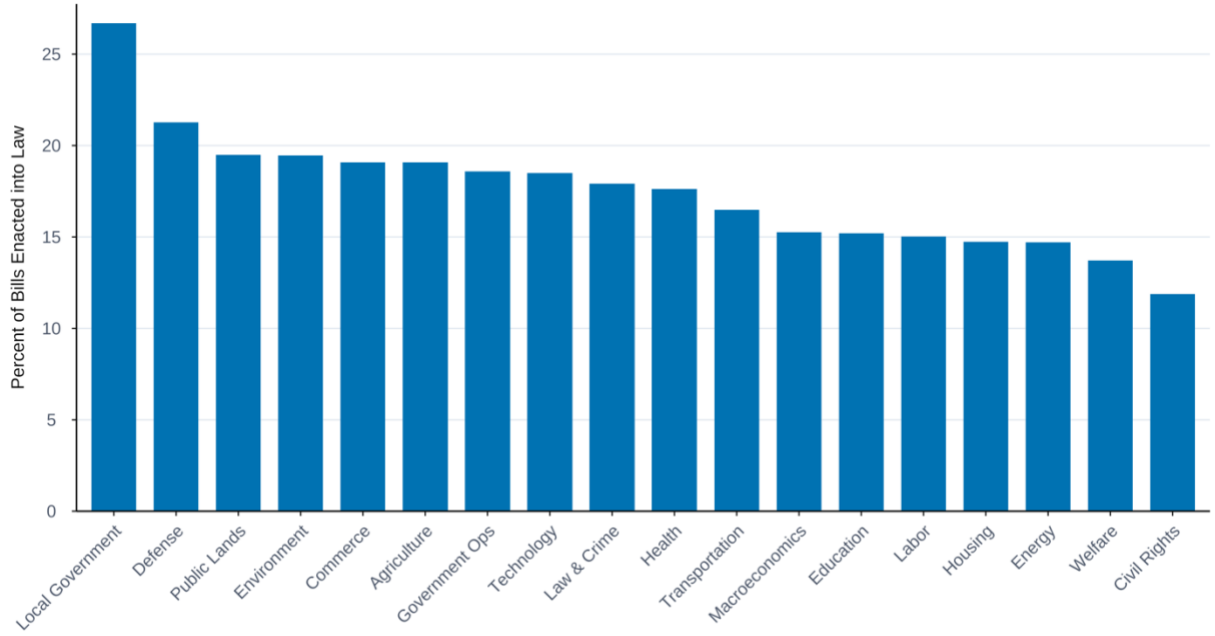
Figure 1: Bills Introduced and Laws Produced per State Legislator, by Issue Area



Note: Bars display the average number of bills introduced per legislator per term, by issue area, across 48 state legislatures (2009-2018). Light blue represents the number of failed bills, and dark blue represents the number of enacted bills.

Figure 2 explores this rate of conversion from bills to laws in greater detail, revealing some interesting initial patterns. First, it is important to highlight that across all issue areas, a substantial percentage of sponsored bills become law. Whereas less than 3% of sponsored bills became law in the U.S. Congress over the past 40 years, we see that 12% to 27% of sponsored bills become law in state legislatures with an average of 18%, depending on the issue area. In other words, the likelihood of proposal success is about six times as great in the states compared to Congress. Even the most gridlocked issue areas in the states fare much better than an average bill in Congress.

Figure 2: Percent of Proposed Bills that Become Law in the States, by Issue Area



Note: Bars display the percentage of bills introduced that became law, by issue area, across 48 state legislatures (2009–2018). On average, roughly 18% of sponsored bills advanced to law, with success rates varying by issue area.

Second, similar to Figure 1, where we saw that Civil Rights bills were, on average, introduced less frequently than bills in most other issue areas, we see in Figure 2 that Civil Rights bills also are less likely to become law, with only 12% of all sponsored Civil Rights bills becoming law in state legislatures. However, such a correlation between number of bills put forward and their likelihood of success is more limited in other issue areas. For example, while Defense and Public Lands bills were also among the policy issues with the fewest per capita introductions in Figure 1, bills in these areas are among the most likely to become law, with around 20% of all sponsored Defense and Public Lands bills becoming law. Local matters, which were in the middle of the pack in terms of introductions, are the most likely to be converted into law on a bill-by-bill basis.

Third, it is worth noting that the patterns of legislative productivity (or gridlock) across issues display some degree of consistency with patterns of legislative gridlock that are observed at the federal level (e.g., Volden and Wiseman 2014, 129). Public Lands and Defense bills, for example, are more likely to become law in both state legislatures and Congress. Bills in other areas, such as Health policy, are in the middle of the pack in terms of their likelihood of becoming law in state legislatures, whereas Health bills are among the most likely to be mired in gridlock in the United States Congress. The extent to which we see varying patterns of legislative gridlock, by policy areas, in state legislatures and Congress, points to the ways that state legislatures might be fulfilling their potentially valuable roles as policy incubators and innovators when Congress is unable to act. Future work using these data to explore when and where states step up when the national government is gridlocked, especially on pressing high-profile issues, would be valuable (e.g., Clouser McCann, Shipan, and Volden 2015).

Effective Lawmaking by Issue Area

With this sense of which topics are addressed most frequently in the states, and with what rates of success, we can now turn more directly to our fundamental questions of interest: what are the characteristics of the most effective lawmakers across these issue areas? For example, are there some policy areas in which legislative experience is essential to make progress? Do some policy areas feature compromise and the success of moderate lawmakers, or has partisan polarization made such moderate lawmakers less effective across the board? Are there patterns of issues advanced differently by men and women?

To engage with these questions, we turn to our analysis of the ISLES, first by replicating the empirical approach used by Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman across all issue areas combined, and then by estimating models separately for each issue. More specifically, we

estimate regression models via OLS where the dependent variable is State legislator *i*'s ISLES in legislative session *t*, and we control for a wide range of personal and institutional variables that have been demonstrated to be correlated with a state legislator's lawmaking effectiveness, including: indicators for whether the legislator is in the majority party, whether they serve as a committee chair or a party leader, and whether they sit on a "power committee", the legislator's seniority (measured in the number of terms served), their ideological distance from their chamber median (e.g., Shor and McCarty 2011), their vote share in the previous election (and that value squared), as well as whether the legislator is female, African American, or Latino.[13] We also include term-level fixed effects to control for idiosyncratic variation in agendas that might be specific to particular legislative terms and which might influence legislators' ISLES scores, and we include issue area fixed effects in the model in which we analyze all issues combined. We report cluster-robust standard errors by legislator to account for their potential presence in the dataset across multiple legislative terms and multiple issue areas.

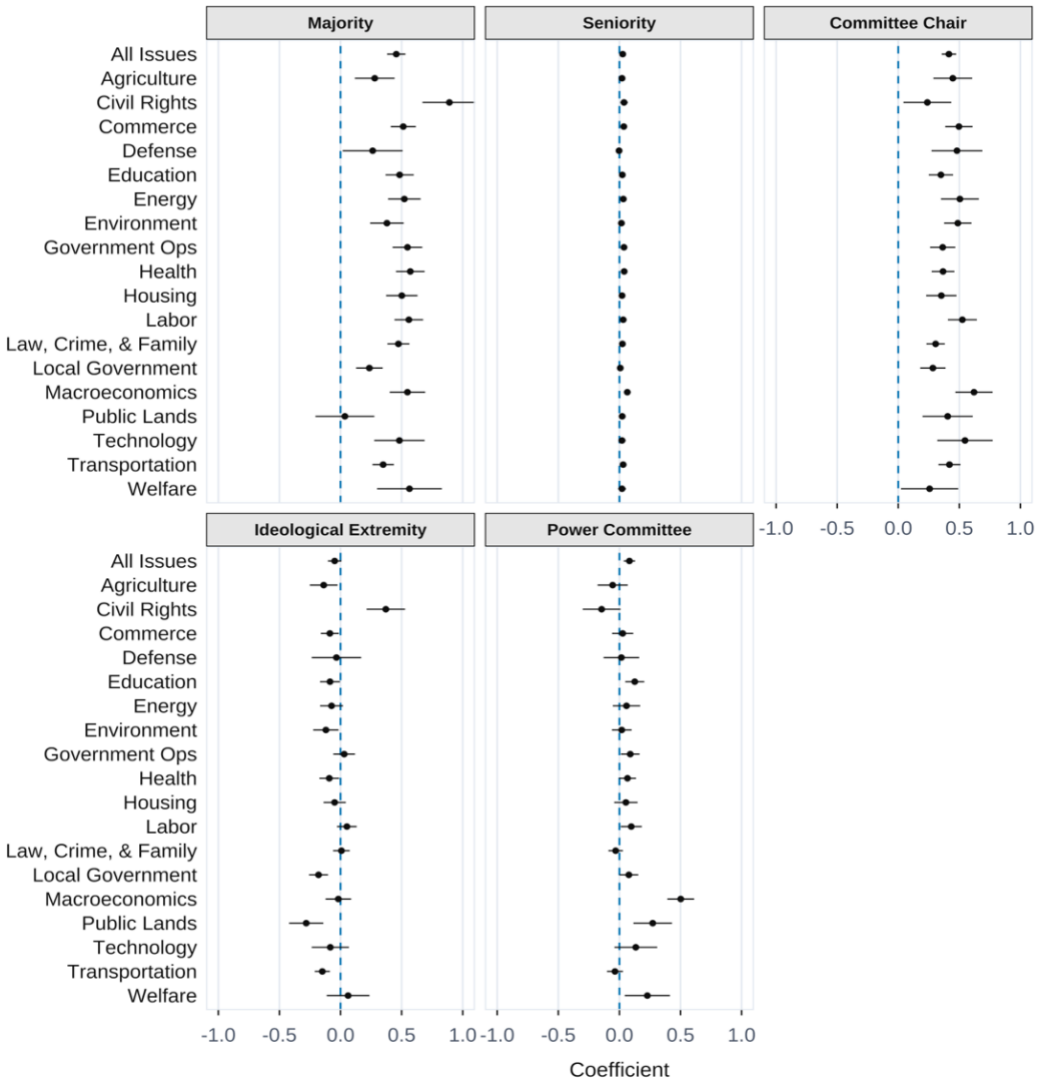
To best compare our analysis to that of Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2025), while taking into account that we are analyzing 19 separate models, we focus here on variables that were previously found to be highly correlated with legislators' State Legislative Effectiveness Scores.

Figure 3 is a coefficient plot showing the relationships between five such covariates and ISLES, pooled and separately by issue: being a member of the majority party, being more senior, being a committee chair, being an ideological extreme member, and serving on a power committee.[14] Here, we establish that many of the variables that were found to be correlated with

[13] Descriptive statistics for these and other variables can be found in Appendix A (Table A1).
[14] In Appendix E, we present regression tables for the models in Figure 3.

legislators' State Legislative Effectiveness Scores are also associated with legislators' issue-specific scores.

Figure 3: Relationship between Important Covariates and Lawmaking Effectiveness, by Issue Area



Note: Each point is the coefficient representing the relationship between the relevant covariate and each ISLES, shown with 95% confidence intervals. Each model conditions on full controls, includes state-chamber and term fixed effects, and clusters standard errors by legislator.

Interestingly, for some key variables, the effects of these predictors on legislative effectiveness point in a consistent direction across policy areas. For example, for every issue area

we see positive coefficients for the effect of being in the majority party, of being a committee chair, and of greater seniority (except Defense), almost all of them achieving statistical significance. That said, the variance in the size of some of these coefficients is suggestive of interesting underlying lawmaking patterns. For example, more complex policy areas like Energy or Macroeconomics (e.g., Gormley 1986, Nicholson-Crotty 2009) may require the acquisition of expertise, which takes time in office or intensive study in committee, consistent with larger coefficients on seniority and/or committee chairs, as shown in the figure and in the models of Appendix E. In contrast, policy areas that rely more on connections with the needs and conditions back home might require less expertise developed over time, as indicated by the smaller seniority and chair coefficients for issues like Welfare Policy or Local Government.

Serving on a power committee is usually associated with being a more effective lawmaker, just as members with more extreme ideology scores are usually less effective, but in each of these cases there is notable variation. For example, we find a negative—rather than positive—but not statistically significant association between serving on a power committee and legislative effectiveness for bills dealing with 4 of 18 issue areas: Agriculture; Civil Rights; Law, Crime, and Family; and Transportation. For ideological extremity, where we expect more extreme members to have lower ISLES on average, we find instead a positive association in 5 of 18 issue areas, including one, Civil Rights, where this relationship is statistically significant. This may suggest that common ground across parties and ideological perspectives has been more difficult to find in the civil rights area.

In consulting Appendix Table E1, we also see that women legislators are notably more effective lawmakers than men in certain policy areas (e.g., Health, Welfare), yet significantly less successful at advancing bills in many other issue areas (e.g., Transportation, Public Lands).

Given that the ISLES begins with the number of bills introduced in the policy area, it is plausible that those issues where female lawmakers take a greater interest and introduce more legislation are naturally associated with them receiving higher scores. Thus, a focus on both the number of bills introduced and their subsequent success is helpful when trying to assess the correlates of lawmaking effectiveness. We turn to such an examination next in the context of "women's issues," as an illustration of how the issue coding offered here allows for new and important contributions in long-standing debates within legislative politics and public policy.

Women's Issues and their Fates in the States

An extensive literature explores the different approaches to lawmaking that women take compared to their male counterparts (e.g., Little, Dunn, and Deen 2001; Osborn 2012; Reingold 2000; Swers 2002; Thomas 1991, 1994; Thomsen and Sanders 2020). According to the vast scholarship in this area, women take a particular interest in advancing policy change in issue areas like Health, Education, and Welfare. Defining women's issues by those in which women in Congress introduce bills at a greater rate, Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer (2018) highlight these same issues and uncover a few more. Importantly, however, they establish that the issues receiving greater attention from women are also among the most gridlocked in Congress. They suggest that this uphill struggle for women in advancing policies in particular areas may be due to the historical and continued underrepresentation of women in Congress.[15]

Our data at the state level allow us to explore these patterns in greater depth than could be found with a focus on the U.S. Congress alone. This analysis is illustrative of the novel scholarship and insights that can be derived from the issue-level bill data produced here.

[15] Recent work by McGrath, Ryan, and Wrighten (Forthcoming) likewise demonstrates how women in state legislatures are often given less desirable committee assignments than their male counterparts, which could influence their lawmaking effectiveness.

Building on the vast literature on women's issues in legislatures, we develop and test three main hypotheses. First, we explore the possibility that women in state legislatures do systematically propose bills in issue areas that differ from those sponsored by men. Defining women's issues by any means other than those issues demonstrated to be important to women (here based on the bills sponsored by women vs. men) is problematic (Reingold and Swers 2011). However, in the large literature that Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer (2018) review, the same sorts of issues arise time and again, including but perhaps not limited to: Civil Rights; Education; Health; Housing; Labor; Law, Crime, & Family; and Welfare. Building on this work, we tentatively call these issue areas "women's issues," while acknowledging that this is a coarse and necessarily simplified definition that is not without drawbacks. Our first hypothesis simply suggests that women in state legislatures are expected to introduce more legislation in these issue areas, and less in other areas, compared to men.

Women's Issues Sponsorship Hypothesis: *Women in state legislatures introduce more bills than men in canonical women's issues areas (Civil Rights; Education; Health; Housing; Labor; Law, Crime & Family; and Welfare) and fewer bills in other issue areas.*

In some ways, this first hypothesis also serves as a validity test for our methodology in characterizing the issues of the bills put forth by legislators across the states. If no such gender-based findings emerge, despite their extensive attention in the scholarly literature, that may suggest that our coding scheme for identifying the policy focus of bills is problematic.

Upon seeing the results of the analysis of the Women's Issues Sponsorship Hypothesis, we will then follow the lead of Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer (2018) in more properly defining "women's issues" in the states, not in the exogenous classic sense, but instead in terms of the issues that are central in the agendas of women lawmakers themselves. We do so by identifying

issues where women are both more likely to introduce bills than men and introduce a greater number of bills per lawmaker than men. With that set of issues in hand, we turn to two other testable hypotheses.[16] Specifically, based on a large literature regarding the biases that women face in legislatures (e.g., Githens and Prestage 1977, Kathlene 1994, Thomas 2005), we hypothesize that women's issues are more gridlocked than are those of interest to men, who tend to hold dominant positions in most legislative settings.

Women's Issues Gridlock Hypothesis: *Bills in issue areas sponsored more heavily by women are less likely to pass and become law.*

It is possible that this hypothesis will receive greater support in some legislative settings than in others. Indeed, there is an important literature on the "critical mass" of women serving in legislatures and other institutions that impacts the relative influence of women in such settings (Kanter 1977; Saint-Germain 1989; Thomas 1991, 1994; Bratton 2002, 2005). Because we are looking across nearly all state legislative chambers in recent years, we are able to see if those chambers with a larger proportion of women lawmakers have been able to overcome the institutional biases found in male-dominated legislatures. Following the critical mass literature, we hypothesize that they do, to some degree.

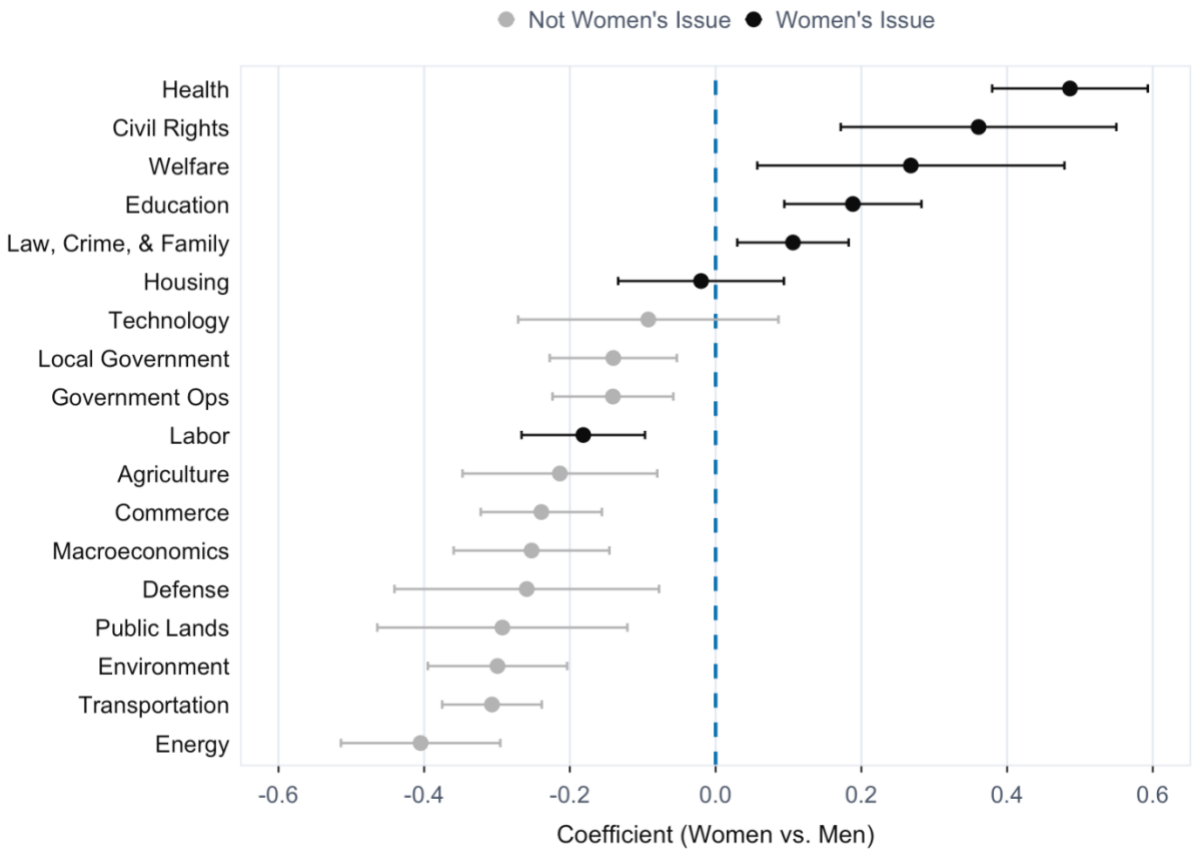
Critical Mass Hypothesis: *Gridlock in women's issues is diminished in legislative chambers with larger proportions of women legislators.*

We begin with a holistic assessment of the effectiveness of women relative to men across all issue areas. In Figure 4 we present the coefficient for the Female indicator variable in each of

[16] Testing these hypotheses with the classic set of women's issues instead of those emerging organically from the sponsorship choices of women lawmakers yields largely similar results (see Appendix G).

the 18 issue-specific regression models that we discussed in the correlates of ISLES section above, the full regression tables for which can be found in Appendix E.

Figure 4: Relationship between Gender and Lawmaking Effectiveness, by Issue Area



Note: Each coefficient point represents the estimated association of being a woman (relative to a man, the reference category) on each ISLES, accompanied by 95% confidence intervals. Each model conditions on full controls, includes state-chamber and term fixed effects, and clusters standard errors by legislator. Classically described women's issues are shaded black.

As we can see, the top five issues on which women legislators are more effective than men are all classic women's issues: Health; Civil Rights; Welfare; Education; and Law, Crime, & Family. The sixth-highest such issue, Housing, is also a classic women's issue, but the coefficient is slightly negative and not statistically significant. Labor is the only women's issue on which male legislators are more effective than female legislators. By contrast, many of the lowest values, where male legislators are more effective than women, are those policy areas

identified in the literature as being of less legislative interest to women, such as Energy, Transportation, Macroeconomics, and Agriculture. Hence, Figure 4 offers initial support for the Women's Issue Sponsorship Hypothesis.

As the Women's Issue Sponsorship Hypothesis focuses solely on bill introductions, however, we test it more directly by examining introduction rates of bills in each issue area among women men, which we show in Table 3. Here, we also show the average number of bills introduced by women and by men in each area across legislative terms. Italicized issues are those classically identified in the literature as women's issues and asterisks are placed next to the larger value between men and women—either the proportion introducing at least one bill in an area or the average number of introductions—based on whether the difference between men and women is statistically significant.

Of the seven classic women's issues, there are four where a higher proportion of women introduce at least one bill and the average woman introduces more bills than the average man in state legislatures: Civil Rights, Health, Education, and Welfare. For the issue areas of Housing and of Law, Crime, & Family, however, we find no statistically significant differences in bill introductions between men and women. And, unexpectedly, for the area of Labor, a larger percentage of men than women introduce bills, and the average man introduces more bills than the average woman. Fittingly, this is also the only classic women's issue with a negative coefficient in Figure 4, indicative of women taking less interest in this issue area. In contrast, we find that men are more likely to introduce bills, and they introduce more bills per member, than women for each and every one of the 11 issues that are *not* in the set of classic women's issues.

Table 3: Bill Introductions by Issue Area

Issue Area	% of Women Introducing Bills	% of Men Introducing Bills	Avg. # Intros (Women)	Avg. # Intros (Men)
Agriculture	16.9%	20.0%**	0.355	0.396*
Civil Rights	*16.6***	*12.9*	*0.246***	*0.197*
Commerce	48.7	54.5**	1.308	1.797**
Defense	10.5	12.6**	0.161	0.224**
Education	*56.4***	*54.1*	*2.229***	*1.944*
Energy	22.2	28.2**	0.455	0.650**
Environment	38.3	45.0**	1.064	1.339**
Government Operations	52.0	56.2**	1.473	1.875**
Health	*62.0***	*54.3*	*2.826***	*2.182*
Housing	*29.2*	*30.3*	*0.684*	*0.704*
Labor	*41.2*	*43.7***	*1.077*	*1.255***
Law, Crime & Family	*70.2*	*69.5*	*3.637*	*3.817*
Local Matters	32.2	37.8**	0.663	0.830**
Macroeconomics	29.4	36.0**	0.609	0.865**
Public Lands	8.7	10.1**	0.129	0.145*
Technology	7.6	8.5*	0.094	0.121**
Transportation	48.8	57.2**	1.350	1.858**
Welfare	*11.4***	*8.9*	*0.162***	*0.126*

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, on differences across genders, shown next to gender with higher value. *Italicized Issue Areas* are hypothesized to be "women's issues," based on prior scholarship.

This overall pattern across issues supports the Women's Issues Sponsorship Hypothesis, with 15 policy areas matching expected directions of women or men being more active, two being inconclusive, and only one yielding unexpected results. That said, because we appreciate Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer's (2018) perspective of identifying as women's issues only those

issues for which women themselves display a greater interest, for the rest of this section we define as women's issues only the four policy areas identified in Table 3 for which women exhibited greater interest than men in the state legislatures: Civil Rights, Education, Health, and Welfare.

To test the other hypotheses, we seek to explain the fates of these proposals as they move through the lawmaking process after introduction. The Women's Issues Gridlock Hypothesis suggests that bills in those areas that have more women as sponsors are likely to be more gridlocked, perhaps due to difficulty finding their way forward in male-dominated institutional settings. We already found some suggestive support for this hypothesis in Figure 2, where *none* of the classic women's issues were among the top eight most successful categories of bills moving into law, with women's issues bills including Civil Rights and Welfare policies being the most gridlocked. To examine this possibility more systematically, we present a bill-level regression analysis of whether each bill—whether in a women's issue area or not—passes its home chamber and becomes law in Table 4. Each of the models in Table 4 is estimated with OLS and predicts the outcomes of each bill, coded 1 upon reaching the particular lawmaking stage and 0 for failing to reach that stage. Logit models are offered in Appendix E and show similar results. We include the same covariates from our earlier models, as these institutional and individual factors might aid or hinder bill progression. These models also include fixed effects by legislative term and by chamber, because some years and some legislatures offer greater opportunity for bill advancement than do others.

Table 4: Women's Issue Bills Are More Gridlocked

	(4.1) Passing Chamber	(4.2) Becoming Law	(4.3) Passing Chamber	(4.4) Becoming Law
Women's Issue Bills	-0.018***	-0.018***	-0.023***	-0.020***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Women's Issue Bills × Female			0.017***	0.009**
			(0.005)	(0.004)
Female	0.020***	0.015***	0.015***	0.013***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Majority	0.066***	0.026***	0.066***	0.026***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Seniority	-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.001*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Committee Chair	0.051***	0.033***	0.051***	0.033***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Majority Leader	0.040***	0.032***	0.040***	0.032***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Minority Leader	-0.012	-0.012	-0.012	-0.012
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)
Speaker/President	-0.002	0.003	-0.002	0.003
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.017)
Ideological Extremity	-0.065***	-0.053***	-0.065***	-0.053***
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Power Committee	0.018***	0.014***	0.018***	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
African American	-0.003	-0.004	-0.003	-0.005
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Latino	-0.013*	-0.010*	-0.013*	-0.010*
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.005)
Voteshare	0.031	0.054	0.030	0.054
	(0.077)	(0.056)	(0.077)	(0.056)
Voteshare^2	-0.010	-0.020	-0.010	-0.020
	(0.050)	(0.036)	(0.050)	(0.036)
Constant	0.199***	0.158***	0.200***	0.159***
	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.028)
N	600,413	600,413	600,413	600,413
R-squared	0.166	0.152	0.166	0.152

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, OLS models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$, two-tailed*

Model 4.1 focuses on bill passage, and shows that majority party members, committee chairs, centrists, and those on power committees all see a greater percentage of their bills advancing through their home chamber than do other members. The positive coefficient on Female puts in place another interesting piece of the puzzle, as it implies that women in state

legislatures are, *ceteris paribus*, more likely to see their sponsored bills advance further in the legislative process than men. Hence, the reason that women had a lower overall level of effective lawmaking, as found by Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman (2025), was not due to their bills failing at a greater rate than men; rather, that finding was at least partly due to women putting forward fewer legislative proposals, as evident in many issue areas in Table 3. Perhaps women view themselves as being less qualified to put forward policies in such areas, whereas men think more highly of their own ideas and abilities (cf., Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll 2018).

Most relevant to supporting the Women's Issues Gridlock Hypothesis, the negative coefficient on Women's Issue Bills implies that the bills in the areas of Civil Rights, Education, Health, and Welfare are indeed more gridlocked than those in other issue areas. Given that 26% of all bills in our sample pass their home chamber, the negative coefficient suggests that this average is about 24% for women's issues, controlling for all other factors. Model 4.2 shows that such findings extend to those bills becoming law as well—women's issue bills become law at about a 16% rate, compared to 18% for all other issues.

Models 4.3 and 4.4 add further nuance to these findings by interacting the Women's Issue Bills indicator with an indicator for whether the bill's sponsor was a woman. Here we find, in contrast to Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer (2018), that women's issue bills sponsored by women are more likely to pass their home chamber and to become law than are women's issue bills sponsored by men. The still-positive coefficient on the non-interacted Female variable shows that women are more successful than men in moving their bills forward in other issue areas as well. If, indeed, women sponsor fewer bills in these areas due to a misperception that they are not well-positioned to advocate for their agendas outside of more traditional women's issues,

these results suggest just the opposite. Compared to those of men, women's bills are better received and more likely to progress regardless of whether they focus on women's issues or other issues. Finally, the sum of the coefficients on Women's Issue Bills, Female, and the interaction show collectively that the fate of women's issue bills sponsored by women is about the same as the fate of bills sponsored by men in other issue areas, despite any institutional biases that may be at work.

Such potential biases undergird our final hypothesis. The Critical Mass Hypothesis asserts that women's issues are more likely to move through the legislative process in chambers with a larger proportion of women. To test this hypothesis, we introduce a new independent variable, Proportion Women, which ranges for certain years from less than 0.1 in the upper chambers in Oklahoma, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wyoming, to greater than 0.4 in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and Vermont. We interact that proportion variable with the indicator for women's issue bills and present the results of models with the same covariates as before in Table 5. A positive coefficient on the interaction would support the Critical Mass Hypothesis, with women's issues bills finding a more receptive audience in chambers with a larger proportion of women.[17]

[17] Because of recent work showing how nonlinearities can pose challenges for inference in multiplicative interaction models (Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu 2019), in Appendix F we present results instead using a binning estimator to test for any nonlinearities and their effects. These results show that the effect of the proportion of women in the chamber are decidedly linear, confirming that it is appropriate to use the modeling strategy we do in the main text.

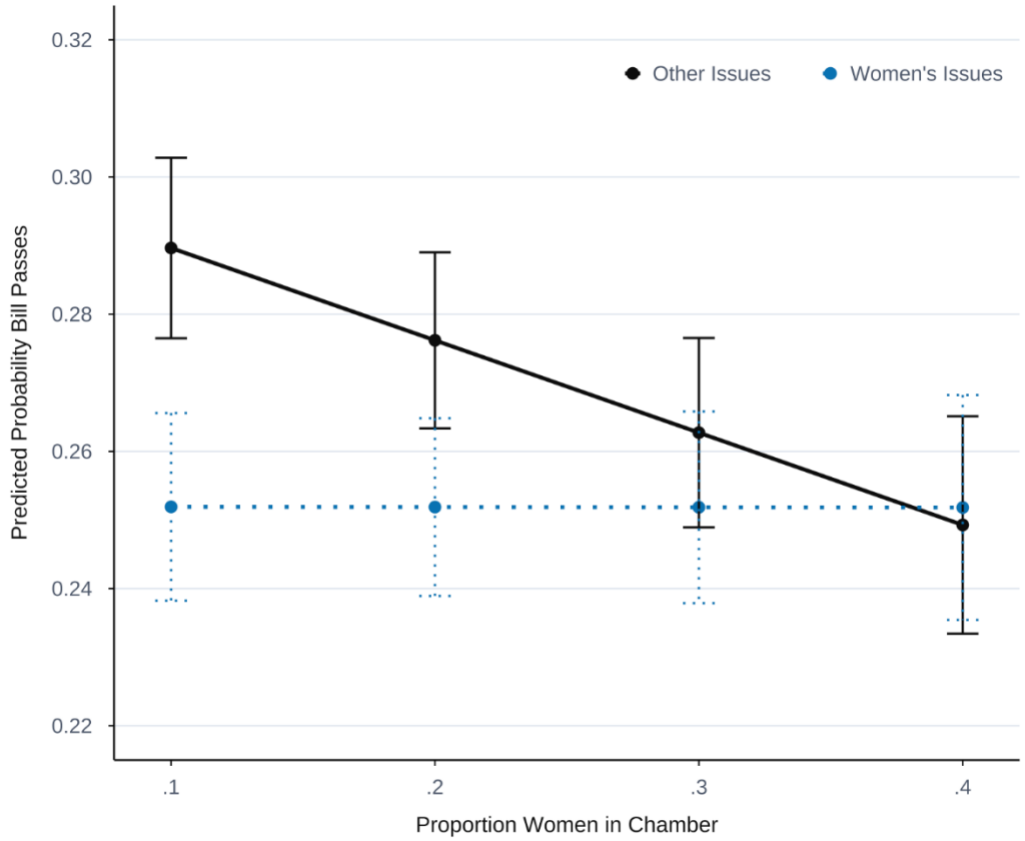
Table 5: Proportion of Women in Chamber Affects Fate of Women's Issue Bills

	(5.1) Passing Chamber	(5.2) Becoming Law	(5.3) Passing Chamber (Women's Issues)	(5.4) Becoming Law (Women's Issues)
Women's Issue Bills	-0.051***	-0.040***		
	(0.007)	(0.005)		
Women's Issue Bills	*0.134***	*0.090***		
× Proportion Women	*(0.026)*	*(0.020)*		
Proportion Women	-0.136***	-0.179***	-0.118	-0.172***
	(0.050)	(0.042)	(0.073)	(0.060)
Female	0.020***	0.016***	-0.022	-0.039***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.019)	(0.014)
Female			*0.198***	*0.231***
× Proportion Women			*(0.068)*	*(0.053)*
Majority	0.065***	0.025***	0.071***	0.031***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Seniority	-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.000	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Committee Chair	0.051***	0.034***	0.048***	0.030***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Majority Leader	0.040***	0.031***	0.033***	0.029***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Minority Leader	-0.013	-0.012	-0.012	-0.012
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Speaker/President	-0.002	0.004	-0.018	-0.004
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.018)
Ideological Extremity	-0.065***	-0.053***	-0.062***	-0.048***
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Power Committee	0.018***	0.014***	0.019***	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
African American	-0.003	-0.005	-0.003	0.003
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Latino	-0.013*	-0.010*	-0.019**	-0.011*
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Voteshare	0.030	0.051	0.084	0.068
	(0.077)	(0.056)	(0.110)	(0.076)
Voteshare^2	-0.010	-0.018	-0.047	-0.028
	(0.050)	(0.036)	(0.071)	(0.049)
Constant	0.234***	0.205***	0.166***	0.172***
	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.055)	(0.046)
N	600,413	600,413	142,435	142,435
R-squared	0.166	0.152	0.181	0.161

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, OLS models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed*

Such a positive interactive relationship is what we find, both for bills passing their home chamber (in Model 5.1) and in bills becoming law (in Model 5.2). We believe Model 5.1 offers the best test of the Critical Mass Hypothesis, as passing the home chamber is the lawmaking stage most proximate to where the critical mass is found. That such bills also find their way into law, however, suggests that this benefit for women's issues bills does not disappear upon leaving the receptive home chamber.

Figure 5: Balanced Fates in More Balanced Chambers



Note: The figure shows the predicted proportion of women's issue bills and bills in all other issues that pass their home chamber, depending on the proportion of women in the chamber, based on Model 5.1, along with 95% confidence intervals. For chambers with a larger female presence among lawmakers, the gap in progress between women's issue bills and other issue bills narrows and then disappears.

Figure 5 illustrates these effect sizes, based on predicted values from Model 5.1, with all other variables held at their means (or modes for dichotomous variables). As we can see on the

left of the figure, in the chambers with very few women, women's issue bills pass out of the chamber at about a 25% rate, compared to 29% for other issues, which is consistent with the Women's Issues Gridlock Hypothesis. But, moving to the right, that gap narrows and then disappears as the proportion of women in the chamber rises to 40%, which is consistent with the Critical Mass Hypothesis.

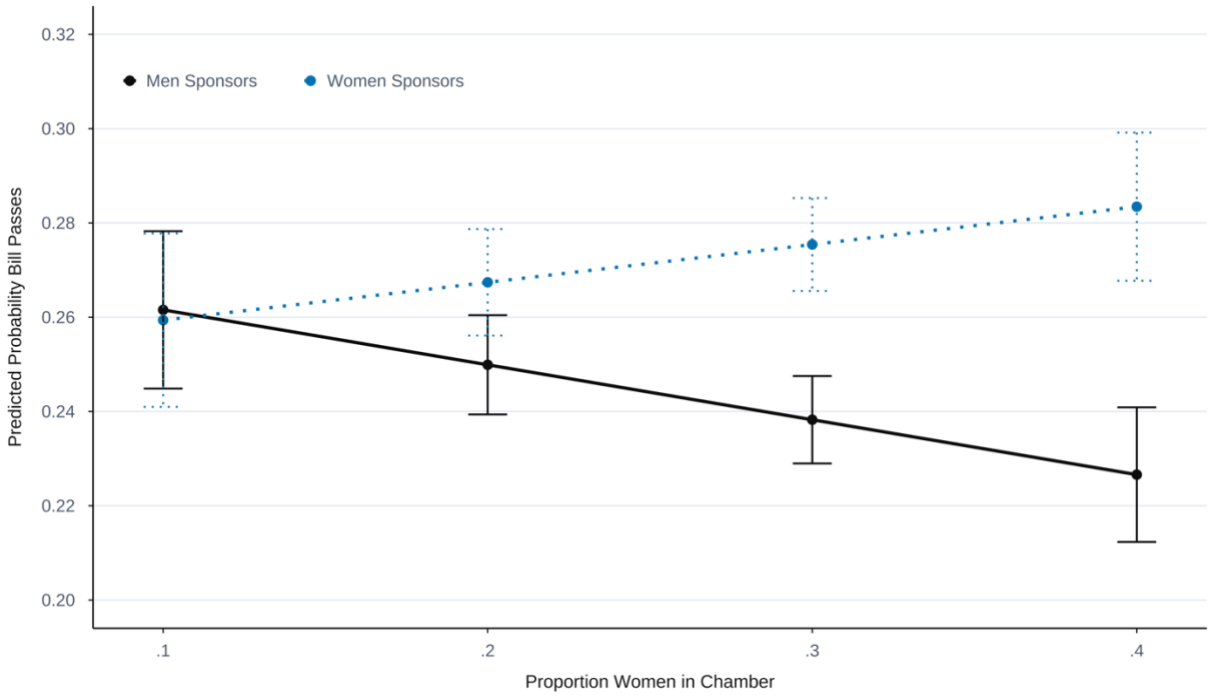
It is interesting that this narrowing comes from the decline in the rate of other issues progressing rather than a rise in the rate of women's issues succeeding. Such a finding may raise concerns that a critical mass of women does not ultimately result in the production of more legislation addressing the concerns of women. But the final models in Table 5 add one more wrinkle to the story. Here we focus solely on women's issue bills, interacting the Proportion Women with whether the bill sponsor was a woman. Our results demonstrate that the positions of women are advanced more prominently on women's issues when more women are serving as lawmakers in the chamber.[18]

We illustrate this finding in Figure 6, where we see that in chambers with very few women, the percent of bills dealing with women's issues that pass their home chamber is about equal, regardless of whether the sponsor is a man or a woman. However, as women in the chamber approach a greater degree of parity, the fates of their bills diverge. Women sponsors of women's issue bills see more of their bills passing, while men see fewer of their bills in women's issue areas passing. Thus, the reason for the flat line on women's issues in Figure 5 is that the gains for women lawmakers in legislatures with closer gender parity are offset by the worse performance of men in these issue areas. Future work diving more deeply into the content and

[18] These findings complement recent work by Schroeder (forthcoming) who analyzes the relationships between increased numbers of women legislators and bill sponsorship activities.

ideological positions of the proposals of men and women in these areas (e.g., Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll 2018; Swers 2002; Swers and Thomsen 2025) would be welcome.

Figure 6: Female Lawmakers Excel on Women's Issues in Balanced Chambers



Note: The figure shows the predicted proportion of women's issue bills that pass their home chamber, depending on whether they were sponsored by men or women, and depending on the proportion of women in the chamber, based on Model 5.3, along with 95% confidence intervals. For chambers with a larger female presence among lawmakers, women enjoy greater success for their women's issue bills than do men.

While this set of findings adds some important new insights into the lawmaking and representational patterns of women in the states, the data offered here open up even further avenues for research. For example, other institutional considerations, such as the presence of women's caucuses or the increasing presence of women in leadership positions (e.g., Reingold, Haynie, and Widner 2021) are worthy of future exploration in light of the findings reported here. Moreover, there is an exciting line of recent scholarship on the relative lawmaking effectiveness of women in state legislatures (e.g., McGrath, Ryan, and Wrighten Forthcoming; Sweet-

Cushman, Gill, and Zorn Forthcoming), raising questions that are worthy of further study across different issue areas.

Conclusions and Future Directions

State legislatures are the keystone of policymaking action in the United States, with around 100,000 new policy proposals offered each year. Yet far too little is known about the nature of these policies and their fates. What are the issue areas of greatest interest to state legislators? Which areas of public policy are well addressed at the state level, and which are mired in gridlock? Which lawmakers are effective policy entrepreneurs, shepherding their proposals through to law in key issue areas? And what does their success tell us about the nature of legislative politics, public policy, and democratic responsiveness to major societal issues?

To engage with these questions, we developed a process to accurately code 1.6 million bills across the states into 18 major policy areas. We then linked these bills to the lawmakers who proposed them, to their substantive significance, and to their progress through the legislative process and into law. We then calculated Issue-Specific State Legislative Effectiveness Scores for each state legislator in each of these 18 issue areas, for each term of their legislative service. These data offer scholars an ability to engage with important questions and gain new insights.

For example, we illustrate that some policy areas face much greater legislative interest in statehouses across the country. Policy challenges in the areas of Law, Crime, Health, and Education each receive substantial attention in legislative proposals, whereas much less attention is paid to matters of Social Welfare or Technological Change. Moreover, some of these issues (e.g., Housing or Energy policy) are much more difficult to resolve through the legislative process than others (e.g., Local Matters or Public Lands).

To overcome policy gridlock, legislators often look to their leaders and more senior members as effective lawmakers. We find that, along with senior legislators, those in the majority party, and committee chairs in particular, are the most effective in moving legislative proposals forward. Additionally, as we demonstrate in Appendix E (Table E1), legislative experience and expertise have a differential impact depending on the policy area. In complex areas such as Macroeconomics and Energy, senior lawmakers and committee chairs are much more effective than their less-experienced colleagues in advancing legislative solutions. We find that such expertise is less essential and impactful on issues in which knowledge is gained less through time in the legislature and more through connections back home (e.g., Welfare or Local Matters).

We also show the usefulness of the ISLES metric in shedding new light on longstanding scholarly debates. For example, we demonstrate that many issues still feature a heightened success of centrist legislators, bridging the significant ideological gap between Democrats and Republicans.

To better illustrate the ways that these issue-area codings can help advance scholarship, we rely on the extensive literature around women's issues in legislative politics to develop and test three key hypotheses. We find that women state legislators do, indeed, sponsor more bills in four policy areas that are commonly described as women's issue areas—Civil Rights, Education, Health, and Welfare—while sponsoring fewer bills in issue areas not commonly described as women's issues. We then find that such women's issue areas are more gridlocked than others. Finally, we demonstrate that as the number of female lawmakers approaches parity with the number of male lawmakers, women's issues become no more gridlocked than other issues, and the proposals of women in those areas advance further than those of men.

While many of the findings presented here—like those dealing with issue complexity or the success of moderates—are quite preliminary, our exploration of women's issues illustrates the sort of paths scholars could take, building on our data and approach. Beyond the insights offered here, scholars now can ask and answer many further pressing questions. For example, to what extent do state legislators specialize in particular policy areas, as opposed to being generalists with proposals across a wide array of issue areas? Are such specialists more effective lawmakers like they are in Congress (Volden and Wiseman forthcoming), and is specialization more important in some (perhaps more complex or gridlocked) issue areas than in others? Moreover, do some legislatures actively encourage and promote such specialization, and to what effect for addressing emerging policy challenges?

On another front, coupling the data here with information about cosponsors may shed new light on the nature of bipartisanship across the states and across different issue areas, so that we could understand where and when bipartisanship continues to thrive despite increased polarization. Especially in instances where bipartisanship in one issue area builds the trust needed for compromise and coalition building elsewhere, understanding such pockets of collaboration seems to be increasingly valuable.

The data presented here also open new pathways to understanding democratic responsiveness, more broadly considered. Are the policy issues that state legislatures are dedicating themselves to appropriately aligned with the most important problems facing their states, as defined by voters? Are lawmakers who display effectiveness in the areas of highest priority rewarded by voters, or in the campaign contributions they receive? Are their successes seen by potential policy entrepreneurs in other states? And are those legislatures that are successful in raising and addressing pressing public policy challenges more likely to see their

successes emulated across the country? We are excited about the new frontier in state politics and policy research now opening up with the innovations discussed here.

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Appendix

Policy Agendas, Effective Lawmaking, and Women's Issues in State Legislatures

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A. Descriptive Statistics

Table A1: Summary Statistics

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev
ISLES	Legislator *i*'s State Legislative Effectiveness Score in Session *t* in Specific Issue Area	1.000	3.662
Majority	=1 if legislator is in majority party, 0 otherwise	0.639	0.480
Seniority	Number of terms legislator has served in chamber	3.862	3.394
Committee Chair	=1 if legislator is committee chair, 0 otherwise	0.251	0.433
Majority Leader	=1 if legislator is majority party leader, 0 otherwise	0.025	0.155
Minority Leader	=1 if legislator is minority party leader, 0 otherwise	0.026	0.160
Speaker/President	=1 if legislator is Speaker or President of chamber, 0 otherwise	0.023	0.150
Ideological Extremity	Ideological Distance between legislator *i* and chamber median in McCarty-Shor space	0.709	0.669
Power Committee	=1 if legislator is member of "Power Committee," 0 otherwise	0.431	0.495
Female	=1 if legislator is female, 0 otherwise	0.243	0.429
African American	=1 if legislator is African American, 0 otherwise	0.025	0.155
Latino	=1 if legislator is Latino, 0 otherwise	0.038	0.191
Voteshare	Legislator *i*'s proportion of votes cast in most recent election	0.706	0.240
Democrat	=1 if legislator is a Democrat	0.464	0.499

B. Bill Text Descriptions for Each Policy Topic - Extended Table

Table B1: Bill Text Descriptions for Each Policy Topic – Extended Table

Topic	Bill Description	Bill Information
1. Fiscal and Economic Issues	"A bill for an act relating to state taxation and related laws of the state including the collection of tax, tax credits, the assessment and classification of property, taxes on electricity providers, fees for registration of vehicles, sales and use tax, and the authority of the director of revenue, and providing penalties, and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions."	Iowa SSB1122 (2021-2022)
	"An act amending the act of March 4, 1971 (p.l.6, no.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971, in personal income tax, further providing for taxability of estates, trusts and their beneficiaries."	Pennsylvania SB825 (2013-2014)
	"Increasing, from $2,500 to $5,000, the maximum amount allowed in a taxable year as a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax for advance payments of certain qualified higher education expenses made by an account holder or a contributor under a Maryland prepaid college trust contract; and applying the act to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017."	Maryland HB1663 (2015-2018)
2. Civil Rights/Liberties	"The purpose of this bill is to add 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' to the categories covered by the human rights act, prohibiting discrimination in employment and places of public accommodation. the bill adds 'age', 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' to the categories covered by the fair housing act prohibiting discrimination in housing. the bill defines 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity'."	West Virginia HB2266 (2023-2024)

	"To amend Section 3599.20 of the revised Code to prohibit any person from intimidating, threatening, or coercing a person for the purpose of interfering with that person's right to vote in an election."	Ohio HB783 (2019-2020)
	"Amend the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, so as to enact the 'save women's sports act' by adding Section 59-1-500 so as to ensure continued inclusivity of females in the school sports arena by providing that public and private middle school-level and high school-level teams and sports must be designated based on biological sex, to provide that teams or sports designated for females may be restricted to students of the female sex, to provide for certain protections for public and private schools, and to provide certain relief for violations."	South Carolina H4153 (2021-2022)
3. Health	"Requires physicians, chiropractors, dentists, registered nurses, podiatrists, optometrists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and dental hygienists to have completed two hours of coursework or training regarding the identification and reporting of elderly abuse prior to the renewal of a license, registration or limited permit; provides procedures and provides for exemptions when no need therefore."	New York A05761 (2013-2014)
	"As introduced, prohibits a health insurance carrier, and any subcontractor of the carrier, from making changes to policies, procedures, payment methodologies, or claims processing edits that have the effect of lowering negotiated rates unless agreed to by the hospital."	Tennessee SB0481(2011-2012)
	"Amends the Newborn Hearing Screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation	Hawaii HB678 (2019-2020)

	results to improve hearing follow-up of infants."	
4. Agriculture	"An act to support local agricultural production."	Maine HP948 (2017-2018)
	"An act relating to the duties of the commissioner of natural resources; relating to agriculture; relating to the noncommercial transfer of seed; and relating to community seed libraries."	Arkansas HB197 (2017-2018)
	"Modifies the existing Plant and Animal Declaration form to also require in-bound travelers to the state to acknowledge state laws, federal laws, and individual responsibility to protect the environment and agriculture of the state. requires all other documents travelers are required to complete to enter the state, except documents only relating to a dangerous communicable disease, to include an environmental and agricultural affirmation."	Illinois SB2298 (2013-2014)
5. Labor, Employment, Immigration	"Relating to the eligibility of school bus drivers and cafeteria workers for unemployment compensation benefits."	Texas HB2068 (2021-2022)
	"An act to create and enact a new Section to Chapter 44-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to public employment hiring practices and confidentiality of some applications."	North Dakota 2152 (2017-2018)
	"An act to amend 814.04 (Intro.); and to create 103.08 and 893.997 of the Statutes; relating to: prohibiting abusive work environments and permitting a person who has been subject to such an environment to bring a civil action."	Wisconsin AB364 (2011-2012)
6. Education	"An act to repeal Section 35583 of the Education Code, relating to school district reorganization, and declaring the	California SB41 (2013-2014)

	urgency thereof, to take effect immediately."	
	"School Calendar. Makes local school boards responsible for setting the school calendar and determining the opening date of the school year and eliminates the post-Labor Day opening requirement and 'good cause' scenarios for which the board of education may grant waivers of this requirement."	Virginia HB1941 (2014-2015)
	"Directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to convene a group of stakeholders to review the standards for grade level promotion established by local education agencies."	Rhode Island S0943 (2019-2020)
7. Environment	"Making an appropriation to the department of environmental services for eligible wastewater projects."	New Hampshire HB311 (2023-2024)
	"Concerning the use of green hydrogen to meet statewide greenhouse gas pollution reduction goals."	Colorado HB1140 (2021-2022)
	"To enact Section 6111.60 of the Revised Code to require the director of environmental protection to consider, to the extent allowable under the federal water pollution control act, specified factors before issuing NPDES permits for sewerage systems, requiring and approving long-term control plans for wet weather discharges from sewerage systems, and enforcing provisions of that act as applied to sewerage systems."	Ohio HB72 (2011-2012)
8. Energy	"To require natural gas leaks to be repaired within two business days of reporting to the gas company."	Connecticut HB06301 (2017-2018)
	"Allowing an individual or a corporation to claim a credit against the state income tax for 15% of the cost of a renewable energy system; requiring a	Maryland HB1198 (2011-2014)

	renewable energy system for which a credit is claimed to satisfy specified requirements; providing that the amount of the credit may not exceed the state income tax for a taxable year; authorizing an individual or a corporation to apply any excess amount of the credit against the state income tax for succeeding taxable years; etc."	
	"Establishes community net metering for purpose of allowing subscribing customers to receive on-bill credit for portion of electricity produced by community net metering facility."	Oregon HB2795 (2013-2014)
10. Transportation	"As enacted, creates a waiver for the registration fee for a class A or class B motor vehicle upon the renewal of the motor vehicle's registration if the renewal occurs during the period of time beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2023."	Tennessee SB2491(2021-2022)
	"Provides for the registration and regulation of warrantors of vehicle protection products and related sellers and warranty administrators of such products."	Nevada SB118 (2009-2010)
	"Prohibiting the Maryland Aviation Administration, under specified circumstances, from contracting with a company to provide shared-ride transportation to or from an airport to members of the public; providing that existing obligations or contract rights may not be impaired by the act; etc."	Maryland HB917 (2011-2014)
12. Law Crime and Family	"Allows a law enforcement officer to arrest a parolee or probationer without a warrant in certain circumstances and requires conditions and terms of probation or parole to be recorded in mules."	Montana HB2859 (2023-2024)

	"Amends the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act. Makes a technical change in a section concerning the application of the civil practice law."	Illinois HB4762 (2011-2012)
	"Cites this act as the 'communication of judicial opinions act.' Requires the clerks of the state supreme court and district courts of appeal to transmit certain judicial opinions to the governor, the president of the senate, and the speaker of the house of representatives within a specified time."	Florida S0996 (2011-2012)
13. Social Welfare	"Requires DHS to ensure that expedited benefits under supplemental nutrition assistance program (snap) are made available to certain households."	New Jersey A3976 (2014-2015)
	"An act to amend Title 31 of the Delaware Code relating to eligibility for public assistance."	Delaware HB365 (2015-2016)
	"An act relating to the delivery of services and programs to persons with disabilities; conferring powers and duties on the office of the governor; creating the office for people with disabilities and advisory committee for people with disabilities; and providing for powers, duties and funding of the office for people with disabilities and the advisory committee for people with disabilities."	Pennsylvania HB2733 (2007-2008)
14. Community Development/Housing Issues	"An act to establish the Mississippi Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund; … to authorize Mississippi Home Corporation to implement and administer the housing opportunity fund; … to provide minimum standards for the housing opportunity fund application process; … and for related purposes."	Mississippi HB1107 (2012-2015)
	"Provides that the sponsor of a cooperative apartment building or condominium units may not continue to sit on the board or to vote after the	New York A01102 (2017-2018)

	transfer to the cooperative corporation or condominium ownership."	
	"A bill … to require that residential units conveyed pursuant to a land installment contract receive an appraisal and an inspection, to define residential lease option contract, to regulate residential lease option contracts under the Ohio landlord and tenant law, and to provide penalties."	Ohio HB145 (2009-2010)
15. Banking, Finance, Domestic Commerce	"Provides an exemption for restaurants from certain liquor license prohibitions."	New York A05688 (2013-2014)
	"A bill … relating to the 'Fair Business Practices Act of 1975,' so as to require cash overpayments to be remitted by merchants in the form of store credit under certain circumstances; to provide for a definition; to provide for exceptions; to provide for penalties and remedies; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes."	Georgia HB149 (2023-2024)
	"Relative to fees for certain inactive bank accounts. Financial services."	Massachusetts H2976 (2017-2018)
16. Defense	"Indiana Department of Veterans' affairs. Requires the Director of Veterans' affairs to be a resident of Indiana for at least two cumulative years prior to being appointed … Revises certain program eligibility provisions to reference participants more precisely. Repeals statutes related to unused programs. Makes technical changes."	Indiana HB1173
	"An act to amend Title 20 of the Delaware Code relating to the Delaware National Guard."	Delaware HB391 (2017-2018)

	"An act establishing the Alaska Military Affairs Commission; and relating to the duties and powers of the Alaska Military Affairs Commission."	Alaska HB155 (2023-2024)
17. Space, Science, Technology, Communications	"Prohibits the activation of previously owned mobile telephones unless all personal identification information of a previous owner has been removed from the number assignment module or the number assignment module contains the personal information of the person attempting to activate such phone."	New York A00830 (2013-2014)
	"An act to create … a new section to … the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the definition of telecommunications company and telecommunications services and a sales and use tax exemption for equipment used in telecommunications infrastructure development …"	North Dakota SB2142 (2013-2014)
	"Establishing certain cybersecurity standards applicable to insurance carriers, including health maintenance organizations and third-party administrators; requiring a carrier to take certain actions related to cybersecurity, including developing, implementing, and maintaining a written information security program, identifying certain threats, and establishing a certain incident response plan; applying certain requirements relating to cybersecurity to managed care organizations; etc."	Maryland SB207 (2019-2022)
20. Government Operations	"An act to preserve the integrity of the voter registration and election process."	Maine HP1015 (2011-2012)
	"Concerning rule making, including requiring new information uncovered during the rule-making process to be provided to the appropriate legislative policy committees and a review of certain rules."	Washington HB1913 (2015-2016)

	"Campaign finance; contributions and expenditures; independent expenditures by corporations; require disclosure to and approval by shareholders."	Michigan HB6184 (2009-2010)
	"Relative to authorizing the committee on state administration and regulatory oversight to make an investigation and study of certain senate and house documents concerning state administration."	Massachusetts H4683 (2017-2018)
21. Public Lands/Water Management	"Exempting certain individuals from state park entrance fees; effective date."	Oklahoma HB1117 (2021-2022)
	"An act creating the Stampede State Recreation Area."	Arkansas SB60 (2011-2012)
	"Prohibits person, public body or local service district from constructing bridge on Deschutes River within certain segments of Deschutes scenic waterway. Directs state parks and recreation department to study and make recommendations to legislative assembly for recreational trail connecting Bend and Sunriver. Directs Department to study three scenic waterways each biennium and make recommendations to Governor for designation of additional scenic waterways."	Oregon HB4029 (2017-2018)
24. Local Matters	"Establishes the Nassau County and Queens County border task force to review jurisdiction and boundary disputes."	New York A05204 (2021-2022)
	"A bill … creating the Board of Commissioners of Baker County, approved August 8, 1917 (GA. L. 1917, p. 306), as amended, so as to change the description of the commissioner districts; to provide for definitions and inclusions; to provide for the	Georgia HB1202 (2021-2022)

	continuation in office of current members…"	
	"Concerning the number of inhabitants required for incorporation as a city or town."	Washington HB2063 (2021-2022)

C. Topic Oversampling using Dee and Garlick's (2025) Dataset

To enhance the accuracy of our model, we supplemented our hand-coded training data with a targeted oversampling procedure using Dee and Garlick's (2025) [DG] dataset. We describe this procedure here. First, for each of our 18 policy areas, we generated a list of relevant keywords and phrases (Table C1 provides the full list). We used these terms to identify potentially relevant bills within the DG dataset, from which we randomly sampled candidate bills for each policy topic.[19]

We manually reviewed and validated each candidate bill according to the CAP coding schema, which resulted in 624 additional hand-coded bills. However, several policy areas – civil rights, agriculture, social welfare, finance and commerce, defense, science and technology, public lands, and local government – still contained relatively few bills. To address this imbalance, we repeated the procedure to randomly sample an additional 100 bills per under-represented area, yielding 800 more bills.

We then combined all validated bills (1,424 in total) with our original hand-coded training data to retrain the transformer models. This process of targeted oversampling and manual validation strengthened the model's classification performance, particularly for the under-represented policy areas noted above.

[19] We excluded commemorative legislation by dropping bills that contained any of the expressions "commemor", "recogniz", or "day".

Table C1: Policy Area Keywords for Oversampling Procedure

Policy Area	Keywords
1. Fiscal and Economic Issues	"inflation"; "prices"; "interest rates"; "economic plans"; "economic growth"; "recession policies"; "unemployment rate"; "monetary supply"; "federal reserve"; "treasury"; "treasurer"; "cash management"; "budget"; "debt"; "tax policy"; "industrial policy"; "price control"; "taxation"; "tax credit"; "sale tax"; "use tax"; "revenue"; "tax reform"; "tax code"; "taxability"; "property tax"; "taxable"; "income tax"; "tax code"; "deduction"; "taxpayer"; "tax levy"
2. Civil Rights/Liberties	"civil rights"; "voting rights"; "equal protection"; "discrimination"; "racial justice"; "human rights"; "fair housing"; "equal opportunity"; "freedom of speech"; "racial equality"
3. Health	"department of health"; "health care"; "medicare"; "medicaid"; "health insurance"; "insurance reform"; "medical product"; "medical procedure"; "medical school"; "teaching hospital"; "medical aid"; "insurance provider"; "physician"; "medical liability"; "medical fraud"; "medical abuse"; "medical malpractice"; "medical license"; "health certification"; "health care worker"; "disease"; "health promotion"; "cancer"; "health education"; "prenatal care"; "school health"; "immunization"; "mental health"; "mentally ill"; "mentally handicapped"; "long-term care"; "terminally ill"; "medical rehabilitation"; "guardianship"; "nursing home"; "prescription drug"; "drug prescription"; "substance abuse"; "health research"; "clinical research"; "health information"; "opioid"; "health services"
4. Agriculture	"agriculture"; "farming"; "farm"; "rural development"; "crop"; "livestock"; "soil conservation"; "irrigation"; "agribusiness"; "food security"; "organic farming"; "pesticides"; "forestry"; "dairy"; "fisheries"
5. Labor, Employment, Immigration	"work safety"; "workplace protection"; "employment training"; "employee benefits"; "child labor"; "employment relations"; "labor union"; "employment regulation"; "seasonal workers"; "migrant workers"; "parental leave"; "labor standards"; "labor regulation"; "employment practices"; "minimum wage"; "workforce development"; "state employees"; "collective bargaining"; "employee compensation"; "labor compensation"; "subminimum wage"; "retirement benefits";

	"employment conditions”; "hiring practices”; "retirement plan”; "migrant labor"
6. Education	"department of education”; "education budget”; "higher education”; "professional school”; "elementary school”; "secondary school”; "secondary education”; "primary education”; "students”; "vocational education”; "vocational school”; "special education”; "educational excellence”; "arts and humanities”; "education research”; "university”; "board of education”; "charter school”; "teachers”; "school district"
7. Environment	"environmental”; "wildlife”; "pollution”; "water conservation”; "recycling”; "waste disposal”; "species protection”; "fishing”; "fisheries”; "hunting”; "forest protection”; "clean air”; "clean water”; "chemicals"
8. Energy	"public utilities”; "public utility”; "utility line”; "nuclear energy”; "nuclear power”; "energy conservation”; "renewable energy”; "alternative energy”; "energy resource”; "energy conversion”; "fuel”; "oil and gas”; "gas and oil”; "natural gas”; "natural oil”; "natural resources”; "petroleum”; "energy code"
10. Transportation	"department of transportation”; "transportation department”; "driving license”; "transportation safety”; "road safety”; "air traffic”; "air transportation”; "truck transportation”; "truck safety”; "vehicle registration”; "motor vehicle”; "registration plate”; "license plate”; "road driver”; "highway driver”; "truck driver"

12. Law, Crime, and Family	"criminal justice”; "law and crime”; "witness protection”; "law enforcement”; "office of attorney general”; "attorney general office”; "district attorney office”; "office of district attorney”; "organized crime”; "drug trafficking”; "selection of judges”; "crime prevention”; "court administration”; "administration of courts”; "circuit court”; "district court”; "judgeship”; "civil action”; "criminal action”; "sexual offense”; "sexual assault”; "prevention of crime”; "prevent crime”; "civil code”; "penal code”; "criminal code”; "justice reform”; "criminal procedure”; "civil procedure”; "police misconduct”; "marriage license”; "divorce”; "family violence”; "domestic violence”; "child support”; "foster care”; "child abuse”; "public defender”; "law reform”; "victim's rights”; "rights of victims”; "real state law”; "property law”; "property rights”; "gun sale”; "sale of guns”; "crimes and offenses”; "juvenile justice”; "judicial district”; "procedural code”; "code of civil procedures”; "firearm”; "police department”; "judicial procedure”; "judiciary"
13. Social Welfare	"social welfare"; "public assistance"; "food stamps"; "Medicaid"; "Medicare"; "social security"; "disability benefits"; "housing assistance"; "unemployment benefits"; "poverty relief"; "welfare reform"; "family support"; "low-income assistance"; "childcare subsidies"; "homelessness prevention"
14. Community Development/Housing Issues	"housing safety”; "multi-family housing”; "housing discrimination”; "military housing”; "housing assistance”; "rural development”; "urban development”; "housing development”; "housing market”; "handicapped housing”; "veteran housing”; "secondary mortgage”; "housing finance”; "residential condominium”; "residential housing”; "economic development”; "community development”; "housing authority”; "affordable housing”; "housing opportunity”; "mobile home”; "mortgage market”; "housing program”; "residential unit”; "residential lease”; "landlord and tenant”; "landlord rights”; "tenant rights”; "landlord responsibilities”; "tenant responsibilities”; "residential mortgage"
15. Finance and Commerce	"finance"; "commerce"; "economic development"; "investment"; "securities"; "stock market"; "business regulation"; "trade policy"; "consumer protection"; "e-commerce"; "financial services"; "small business"; "capital markets"

16. Defense	"veterans"; "military procurement"; "military installations"; "national guard"; "reserve affairs"; "military nuclear"; "hazardous waste disposal"; "civil defense"; "civilian employment"; "military base closing"; "defense contractors"; "war-related"; "war relief"; "claims against military"; "research and development"; "military R&D"; "military research"; "military tech"; "military funding"
17. Science and Technology	"NASA"; "space exploration"; "satellites"; "government use of space"; "commercial use of space"; "science technology transfer"; "international scientific cooperation"; "telecommunication regulation"; "cell phone regulation"; "communications infrastructure"; "mobile communications"; "long distance carriers"; "911 capabilities"; "telemarketing regulation"; "broadcast industry regulation"; "cable television laws"; "public television"; "weather forecasting"; "NOAA"; "oceanography"; "computer industry"; "cybersecurity"; "computer security"
20. Government Operations	"intergovernmental relations"; "impeachment"; "legislative oversight"; "government operations"; "executive branch"; "bureaucratic oversight"; "political campaign"; "commemorative legislation"; "commemorative resolution"; "state holiday"; "referendum"; "voter registration"; "government property management"; "public property management"; "campaign contribution"; "branch relations"; "interbranch relations"; "inter-branch relations"; "election regulation"; "civil service"; "postal service"; "political advertising"; "branch relations"; "state lottery"; "holiday observance"; "department of revenue administration"; "general assembly"; "floor rules"; "legislature rules"; "legislative rules"; "speaker of the house"; "house speaker"; "legislative journal"; "constitutional amendment"; "legislators' salary"
21. Public Lands	"Native American land"; "Native American affairs"; "land conveyance"; "state parks"; "state memorials"; "historic sites"; "recreation"; "natural resources"; "public lands"; "forest management"; "highway construction"; "water resource development"; "water research"; "budget requests"; "reservoir construction"; "flood control"; "drinking water safety"; "territorial issues"

24. Local Matters	"county"; "counties"; "classification of counties"; "municipalities"; "municipality"; "cities"; "townships"; "boroughs"; "towns"; "municipal zoning"; "local elections"; "local property laws"; "county taxing powers"; "local tax revenue"; "property tax relief"; "school district taxes"; "sales taxes"; "state restrictions on local government debt"; "municipal debt limits"; "public works employment"; "governance of multi-purpose special districts"; "local employee collective bargaining"; "government employee benefits"; "federal aid to local governments"

D. Overlapping between LegiScan and Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) SLES

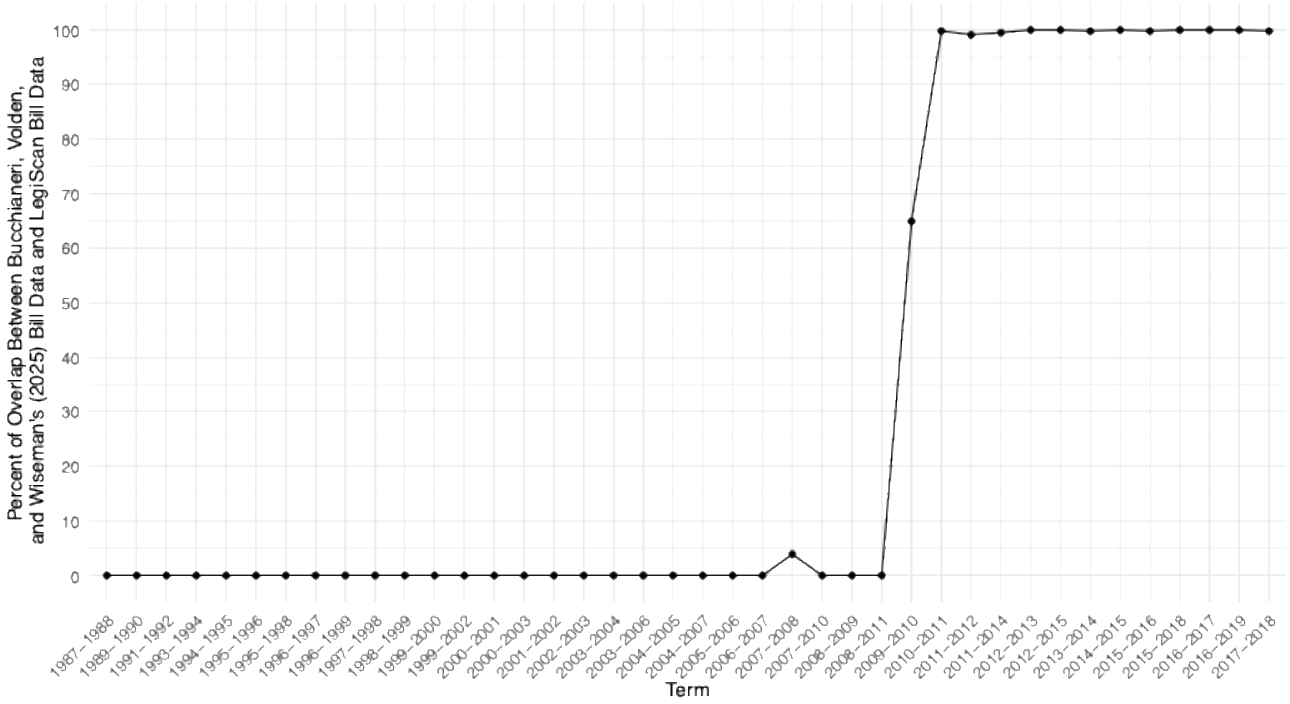
Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) dataset of sponsored legislation in American state legislatures provides more extensive longitudinal coverage than LegiScan offers, as LegiScan coverage begins in 2009 for most states (data are available for Ohio and Pennsylvania for the 2007-2008 legislative term). As such, the overlap between the two data sources is limited to more recent legislative terms. To align the datasets, we generate a crosswalk identifier using state abbreviation, legislative term, and bill number. This required extensive bill number cleaning to address state-specific formatting rules (e.g., handling of prefixes in California, dash formatting in Michigan, and removal of redundant bill types in North Dakota).

Because some of the earlier years in LegiScan's data are available only partway through a legislative term (e.g., recording only the second year of a two-year term, such as 2008-2009), we exclude such partial cases from the merged dataset. This ensures that all state-term observations reflect consistent bill-level coverage. After constructing the crosswalk, we merged LegiScan bills into Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's dataset to produce a unified dataset for our subsequent tasks of classifying bill topics and generating ISLES.

Figure D1 visualizes the percentage of bills in Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) dataset that also appear in LegiScan, by legislative term. This provides a clear view of how the overlap between the two sources changes over time. As expected, overlap is relatively low in the earliest terms but rises steadily in later years, reflecting both improved LegiScan coverage and the fact that BVW remains the more complete longitudinal dataset. This figure highlights that while LegiScan does not capture the full time series found in Bucchianeri and colleagues' (2025) dataset, its coverage in more recent terms is sufficiently robust to support analyses that rely on topical classifications of bills.

In contrast, while the LegiScan data continue forward to more recent years, the BVW data end in 2018. Future work extending the BVW work to the present will allow a further overlapping time series of ISLES, enhancing the questions such data allow scholars to address.

Figure D1: Overlap of LegiScan Bills with Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) Dataset, by Legislative Term



Note: Each point represents the percentage of bills in Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2025) dataset that also appear in LegiScan, by legislative term. Most states use two-year legislative terms beginning in odd years (e.g., 2009–2010). Virginia and New Jersey begin two-year terms in even years, and Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Maryland operate on four-year terms. All terms present in the BVW data are presented along the x axis.

E. Regression Tables Predicting Legislative Effectiveness by Issue

Table E1: Effective Lawmaking by Issue Area

	(E1.1) Overall	(E1.2) Agriculture	(E1.3) Civil Rights	(E1.4) Commerce	(E1.5) Defense
Majority	0.456***	0.280***	0.891***	0.513***	0.263**
	(0.038)	(0.083)	(0.112)	(0.052)	(0.125)
Seniority	0.027***	0.022*	0.038**	0.036***	-0.003
	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.011)	(0.012)
Committee Chair	0.415***	0.447***	0.238**	0.497***	0.481***
	(0.030)	(0.081)	(0.100)	(0.057)	(0.106)
Majority Leader	0.002	0.074	0.427	0.091	-0.034
	(0.057)	(0.224)	(0.278)	(0.107)	(0.193)
Minority Leader	0.137**	0.109	0.473*	0.103	-0.175
	(0.064)	(0.132)	(0.243)	(0.070)	(0.114)
Speaker/President	0.264	-0.055	0.181	0.236	-0.117
	(0.172)	(0.221)	(0.293)	(0.205)	(0.228)
Ideological Extremity	-0.048*	-0.138**	0.371***	-0.087**	-0.033
	(0.028)	(0.058)	(0.080)	(0.038)	(0.103)
Power Committee	0.082***	-0.055	-0.145*	0.027	0.016
	(0.024)	(0.063)	(0.079)	(0.044)	(0.074)
Female	-0.074***	-0.204***	0.353***	-0.225***	-0.256***
	(0.022)	(0.067)	(0.101)	(0.037)	(0.092)
African American	-0.092	-0.177	-0.436***	-0.042	-0.251
	(0.061)	(0.173)	(0.110)	(0.097)	(0.197)
Latino	-0.049	-0.056	-0.074	-0.020	0.161
	(0.041)	(0.119)	(0.165)	(0.067)	(0.191)
Voteshare	-0.393	0.463	0.237	-0.215	-2.060
	(0.305)	(0.747)	(0.708)	(0.419)	(1.924)
Voteshare^2	0.242	-0.348	-0.113	0.078	1.378
	(0.205)	(0.526)	(0.504)	(0.289)	(1.287)
Constant	0.669***	0.645*	-0.046	0.605***	1.519**
	(0.145)	(0.357)	(0.411)	(0.200)	(0.658)
N	518,512	28,985	28,991	29,149	28,548
R-squared	0.009	0.008	0.006	0.039	0.004

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, using OLS models with fixed effects by biennium. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$, two-tailed.*

Table E1 (cont.): Effective Lawmaking by Issue Area

	(E1.6) Education	(E1.7) Energy	(E1.8) Environment	(E1.9) Government Operations
Majority	0.484***	0.522***	0.380***	0.548***
	(0.059)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.062)
Seniority	0.024***	0.032***	0.017	0.037***
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Committee Chair	0.349***	0.505***	0.488***	0.364***
	(0.051)	(0.079)	(0.057)	(0.053)
Majority Leader	-0.228***	0.259	-0.100	0.151
	(0.085)	(0.170)	(0.114)	(0.098)
Minority Leader	0.123	0.121	0.123	0.374***
	(0.086)	(0.109)	(0.090)	(0.116)
Speaker/President	0.076	0.581**	0.171	0.867***
	(0.163)	(0.255)	(0.177)	(0.250)
Ideological Extremity	-0.086**	-0.073	-0.120**	0.030
	(0.042)	(0.048)	(0.053)	(0.045)
Power Committee	0.126***	0.058	0.019	0.089**
	(0.040)	(0.057)	(0.041)	(0.039)
Female	0.189***	-0.386***	-0.285***	-0.133***
	(0.047)	(0.052)	(0.044)	(0.042)
African American	0.121	-0.077	-0.111	-0.166*
	(0.101)	(0.175)	(0.105)	(0.095)
Latino	0.115	-0.282***	-0.185**	-0.230***
	(0.081)	(0.076)	(0.073)	(0.064)
Voteshare	0.152	-0.375	0.004	-0.295
	(0.428)	(0.573)	(0.512)	(0.480)
Voteshare^2	-0.191	0.318	-0.031	0.170
	(0.298)	(0.419)	(0.351)	(0.330)
Constant	0.506*	0.602**	0.721***	0.449*
	(0.271)	(0.293)	(0.246)	(0.265)
N	29,149	29,149	29,149	29,149
R-squared	0.023	0.018	0.025	0.032

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, using OLS models with fixed effects by biennium. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$, two-tailed.*

Table E1 (cont.): Effective Lawmaking by Issue Area

	(E1.10) Health	(E1.11) Housing	(E1.12) Labor	(E1.13) Law, Crime, Family
Majority	0.571***	0.501***	0.559***	0.474***
	(0.060)	(0.066)	(0.060)	(0.046)
Seniority	0.039***	0.022**	0.031***	0.025***
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Committee Chair	0.367***	0.353***	0.525***	0.306***
	(0.047)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.038)
Majority Leader	0.071	0.019	0.164	-0.005
	(0.102)	(0.147)	(0.145)	(0.072)
Minority Leader	0.122	0.126	0.188*	0.067
	(0.077)	(0.114)	(0.102)	(0.066)
Speaker/President	-0.102	-0.020	0.277	0.182
	(0.141)	(0.164)	(0.194)	(0.158)
Ideological Extremity	-0.092**	-0.048	0.052	0.008
	(0.041)	(0.046)	(0.041)	(0.035)
Power Committee	0.066*	0.053	0.097**	-0.031
	(0.036)	(0.049)	(0.044)	(0.030)
Female	0.483***	-0.015	-0.170***	0.110***
	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.042)	(0.041)
African American	-0.051	0.253	0.068	-0.073
	(0.106)	(0.175)	(0.110)	(0.068)
Latino	-0.028	0.222*	-0.058	-0.034
	(0.070)	(0.127)	(0.073)	(0.053)
Voteshare	-0.271	-0.429	-0.542	0.103
	(0.450)	(0.704)	(0.542)	(0.408)
Voteshare^2	0.147	0.194	0.336	-0.089
	(0.304)	(0.477)	(0.373)	(0.275)
Constant	0.483**	0.755**	0.506*	0.516***
	(0.210)	(0.316)	(0.277)	(0.176)
N	29,149	28,929	29,149	29,149
R-squared	0.040	0.011	0.023	0.028

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, using OLS models with fixed effects by biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*

Table E1 (cont.): Effective Lawmaking by Issue Area

	(E1.14) Local Matters	(E1.15) Macro-Economics	(E1.16) Public Lands
Majority	0.236***	0.548***	0.035
	(0.056)	(0.074)	(0.123)
Seniority	0.007	0.065***	0.023
	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Committee Chair	0.283***	0.620***	0.405***
	(0.053)	(0.078)	(0.105)
Majority Leader	-0.285***	-0.024	-0.319*
	(0.078)	(0.159)	(0.182)
Minority Leader	0.215**	0.237*	-0.061
	(0.100)	(0.131)	(0.191)
Speaker/President	0.453**	1.490***	0.386
	(0.206)	(0.448)	(0.344)
Ideological Extremity	-0.180***	-0.018	-0.281***
	(0.040)	(0.053)	(0.071)
Power Committee	0.077**	0.502***	0.273***
	(0.039)	(0.056)	(0.081)
Female	-0.133***	-0.242***	-0.284***
	(0.044)	(0.053)	(0.083)
African American	-0.098	0.104	-0.250
	(0.091)	(0.211)	(0.177)
Latino	-0.220***	-0.057	0.027
	(0.077)	(0.098)	(0.183)
Voteshare	0.075	-1.546**	-0.614
	(0.471)	(0.720)	(1.084)
Voteshare^2	-0.165	1.011**	0.238
	(0.326)	(0.482)	(0.746)
Constant	0.878***	0.543	1.193**
	(0.224)	(0.367)	(0.535)
N	29,149	29,149	28,084
R-squared	0.014	0.035	0.004

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, using OLS models with fixed effects by biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*

Table E1 (cont.): Effective Lawmaking by Issue Area

	(E1.17) Technology	(E1.18) Transportation	(E1.19) Welfare
Majority	0.482***	0.349***	0.564***
	(0.105)	(0.045)	(0.135)
Seniority	0.021	0.031***	0.021
	(0.015)	(0.007)	(0.016)
Committee Chair	0.546***	0.419***	0.257**
	(0.116)	(0.046)	(0.120)
Majority Leader	0.082	-0.029	-0.310
	(0.221)	(0.090)	(0.198)
Minority Leader	-0.040	0.063	0.309
	(0.154)	(0.069)	(0.281)
Speaker/President	0.057	0.008	0.012
	(0.315)	(0.145)	(0.322)
Ideological Extremity	-0.084	-0.149***	0.062
	(0.078)	(0.032)	(0.089)
Power Committee	0.134	-0.036	0.229**
	(0.089)	(0.033)	(0.094)
Female	-0.083	-0.295***	0.272**
	(0.089)	(0.034)	(0.107)
African American	-0.292*	-0.075	-0.116
	(0.173)	(0.100)	(0.237)
Latino	-0.068	0.066	-0.156
	(0.144)	(0.072)	(0.129)
Voteshare	-0.419	-0.371	-1.045
	(1.185)	(0.434)	(1.336)
Voteshare^2	0.402	0.186	0.893
	(0.814)	(0.295)	(0.909)
Constant	0.586	0.896***	0.617
	(0.561)	(0.203)	(0.540)
N	27,851	29,089	26,545
R-squared	0.006	0.033	0.003

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, using OLS models with fixed effects by biennium. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$, two-tailed.*

Table E2: Women's Issue Bills Are More Gridlocked (Logit Models)

	(E2.1) Passing Chamber	(E2.2) Becoming Law	(E2.3) Passing Chamber	(E2.4) Becoming Law
Women's Issue Bills	-0.111***	-0.144***	-0.140***	-0.165***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Women's Issue Bills × Female			0.099***	0.110***
			(0.030)	(0.029)
Female	0.129***	0.131***	0.111***	0.081***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Majority	0.485***	0.297***	0.484***	0.297***
	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.057)	(0.060)
Seniority	-0.008	-0.009	-0.008	-0.009
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Committee Chair	0.294***	0.254***	0.294***	0.253***
	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.030)
Majority Leader	0.228***	0.233***	0.228***	0.232***
	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.047)	(0.049)
Minority Leader	-0.161*	-0.171	-0.160*	-0.170
	(0.097)	(0.105)	(0.097)	(0.105)
Speaker/President	-0.028	-0.014	-0.028	-0.013
	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.149)	(0.148)
Ideological Extremity	-0.349***	-0.364***	-0.350***	-0.364***
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.042)
Power Committee	0.111***	0.111***	0.112***	0.111***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
African American	0.015	0.012	0.014	0.012
	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.063)
Latino	-0.054	-0.079	-0.054	-0.078
	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.049)
Voteshare	0.096	0.243	0.095	0.242
	(0.464)	(0.420)	(0.464)	(0.419)
Voteshare^2	-0.026	-0.090	-0.025	-0.090
	(0.301)	(0.275)	(0.301)	(0.275)
Constant	-1.535***	-1.774***	-1.528***	-1.769***
	(0.219)	(0.238)	(0.219)	(0.238)
N	600,413	600,413	600,413	600,413
Pseudo R-squared	0.146	0.154	0.146	0.154

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, logit models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*
Results show the findings from Table 4 to be robust to logistic modeling assumptions.

Table E3: Proportion of Women in Chamber Affects Women's Issue Bills (Logit)

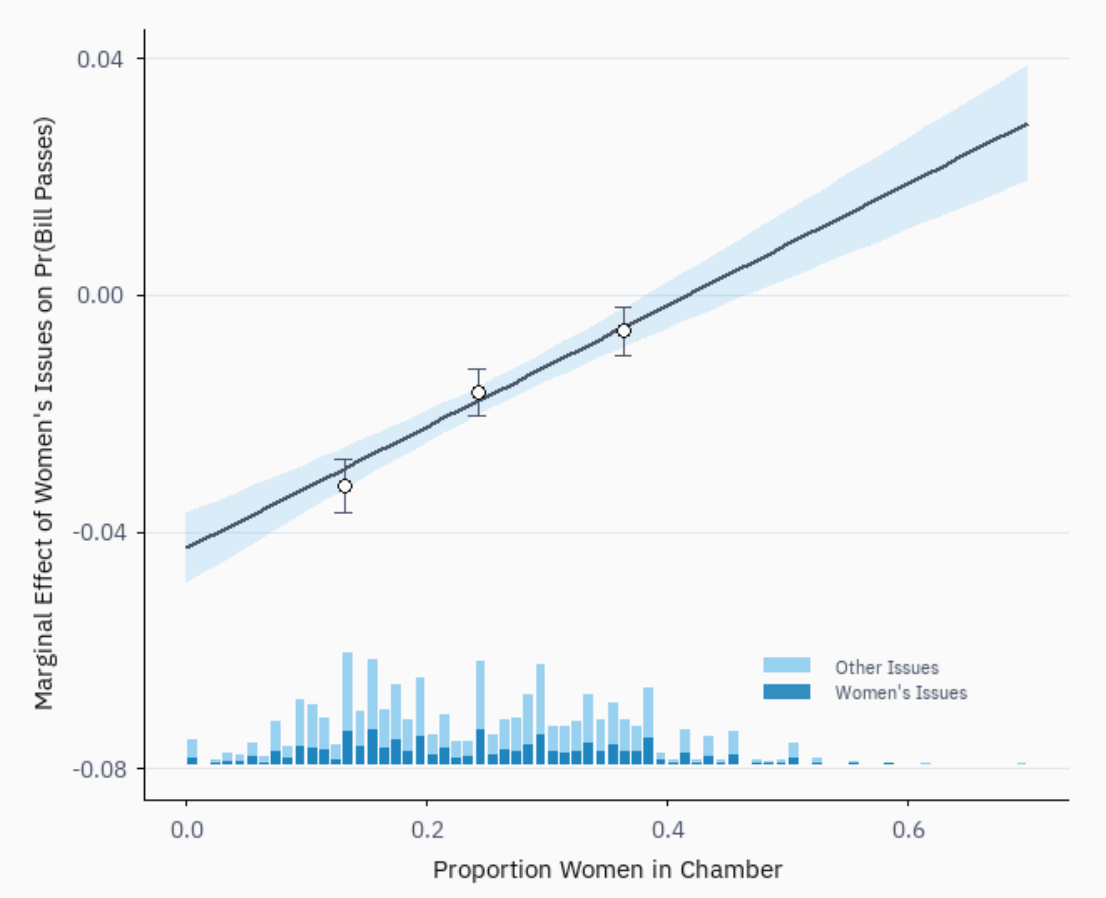
	(E3.1) Passing Chamber	(E3.2) Becoming Law	(E3.3) Passing Chamber	(E3.4) Becoming Law
Women's Issue Bills	-0.272***	-0.277***		
	(0.039)	(0.041)		
Women's Issue Bills	*0.682***	*0.559***		
× Proportion Women	*(0.159)*	*(0.167)*		
Proportion Women	-0.552*	-1.120***	-0.581	-1.295***
	(0.294)	(0.308)	(0.451)	(0.478)
Female	0.129***	0.134***	-0.141	-0.315***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.114)	(0.116)
Female			*1.320***	*1.950***
× Proportion Women			*(0.434)*	*(0.449)*
Majority	0.484***	0.295***	0.542***	0.353***
	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.065)
Seniority	-0.008	-0.009	-0.002	-0.005
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Committee Chair	0.295***	0.256***	0.284***	0.233***
	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.037)
Majority Leader	0.228***	0.232***	0.194***	0.222***
	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.060)	(0.063)
Minority Leader	-0.161*	-0.172	-0.150	-0.171
	(0.097)	(0.105)	(0.100)	(0.114)
Speaker/President	-0.027	-0.011	-0.118	-0.067
	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.152)	(0.164)
Median-Distance	-0.349***	-0.363***	-0.360***	-0.372***
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.046)
Power Committee	0.112***	0.113***	0.117***	0.114***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.032)	(0.034)
African American	0.015	0.012	0.013	0.068
	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.073)	(0.084)
Latino	-0.055	-0.078	-0.110*	-0.096
	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.057)	(0.062)
Voteshare	0.100	0.249	0.444	0.453
	(0.464)	(0.420)	(0.680)	(0.597)
Voteshare^2	-0.028	-0.094	-0.267	-0.227
	(0.301)	(0.275)	(0.437)	(0.390)
Constant	-1.395***	-1.486***	-1.757***	-1.670***
	(0.226)	(0.248)	(0.352)	(0.418)
N	600,413	600,413	142,435	142,435
Pseudo R-squared	0.146	0.154	0.164	0.170

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, logit models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*
Results show the findings from Table 5 to be robust to logistic modeling assumptions.

F. Testing for Nonlinearities with the Binning Estimator

Our Critical Mass Hypothesis rests in part on an assumption that the multiplicative interaction in our models does not introduce nonlinearities in the relationship between the combination of the predictor variables and the outcome variable. Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (2018) propose a strategy for testing for such nonlinearities. We present the results of this binning estimator test in Figure F1 below. As we can see, the binned estimates fall almost exactly on the linear fit line, suggesting that there is no specific threshold or tipping point. This means that our modeling choices in the main text of estimating a multiplicative interaction with OLS, and of estimating a continuous rather than discrete effect, are reasonable.

Figure F1: Marginal Effects on Bill Passage, with Binning Estimates



Note: The line of best fit and uncertainty interval come from the Critical Mass Hypothesis model presented in the main text. The points with uncertainty bars are estimates from the binning estimator. The histogram along the x-axis shows the distribution of bills by issue type at varying levels of the proportion of women in the chamber. All uncertainty intervals are 95% intervals.

G. Regression Tables Analyzing Classic Set of Women's Issues

Table G1: Women's Issue Bills Are More Gridlocked (Classic Women's Issues)

	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Classic Women's Issue Bills	-0.010***	-0.014***	-0.013***	-0.016***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Female	0.019***	0.015***	0.012**	0.009**
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Classic Women's Issues Bills × Female			0.013***	0.011***
			(0.004)	(0.003)
Majority	0.065***	0.026***	0.065***	0.026***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Seniority	-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.001*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Committee Chair	0.051***	0.033***	0.051***	0.033***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Majority Leader	0.040***	0.032***	0.040***	0.032***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Minority Leader	-0.013	-0.012	-0.013	-0.012
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)
Speaker/President	-0.002	0.003	-0.002	0.003
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.017)
Median-Distance	-0.065***	-0.052***	-0.065***	-0.052***
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Power Committee	0.018***	0.014***	0.018***	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
African American	-0.003	-0.004	-0.003	-0.004
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Latino	-0.014*	-0.010*	-0.014*	-0.010*
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.005)
Vote Share	0.034	0.057	0.033	0.056
	(0.077)	(0.056)	(0.077)	(0.056)
Vote Share^2	-0.012	-0.021	-0.012	-0.021
	(0.050)	(0.036)	(0.050)	(0.036)
Constant	0.199***	0.160***	0.201***	0.161***
	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.028)
Observations	600,413	600,413	600,413	600,413
Adjusted R^2	0.166	0.152	0.166	0.152

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member. OLS models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*

Table G2: Proportion of Women in Chamber Affects Fate of Women's Issue Bills (Classic Women's Issues)

	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Classic Women's Issue Bills	-0.033***	-0.033***		
	(0.006)	(0.005)		
Proportion Women	-0.149***	-0.197***	-0.176***	-0.233***
	(0.051)	(0.044)	(0.060)	(0.050)
Female	0.019***	0.015***	-0.029*	-0.034**
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.017)	(0.014)
Classic Women's Issue Bills × Proportion Women	0.092***	0.078***		
	(0.023)	(0.019)		
Female × Proportion Women			0.203***	0.208***
			(0.062)	(0.049)
Majority	0.065***	0.025***	0.069***	0.028***
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Seniority	-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.001	-0.001*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Committee Chair	0.051***	0.033***	0.052***	0.033***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Majority Leader	0.040***	0.031***	0.038***	0.030***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Minority Leader	-0.013	-0.013	-0.013	-0.011
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)
Speaker/President	-0.002	0.003	-0.008	0.001
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(0.017)
Median-Distance	-0.065***	-0.052***	-0.062***	-0.048***
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Power Committee	0.018***	0.014***	0.017***	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
African American	-0.003	-0.004	-0.009	-0.004
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.009)
Latino	-0.014*	-0.010*	-0.014*	-0.006
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Vote Share	0.032	0.054	0.065	0.077
	(0.077)	(0.056)	(0.078)	(0.057)
Vote Share^2	-0.011	-0.019	-0.042	-0.039
	(0.050)	(0.036)	(0.051)	(0.037)
Constant	0.238***	0.212***	0.220***	0.206***
	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.042)	(0.034)
Observations	600,413	600,413	313,535	313,535
Adjusted R^2	0.166	0.152	0.171	0.155

Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member. OLS models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium.
**** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*

Table G3: Women's Issue Bills Are More Gridlocked (Logit Models) - Classic Women's Issues

	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Classic Women's Issue Bills	-0.064***	-0.111***	-0.082***	-0.132***
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Classic Women's Issues Bills × Female			0.083***	0.095***
			(0.027)	(0.027)
Female	0.126***	0.130***	0.079**	0.077**
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.031)
Majority	0.484***	0.298***	0.484***	0.298***
	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.057)	(0.060)
Seniority	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Committee Chair	0.294***	0.252***	0.293***	0.252***
	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.030)
Majority Leader	0.228***	0.232***	0.228***	0.232***
	(0.047)	(0.049)	(0.047)	(0.049)
Minority Leader	-0.162*	-0.173*	-0.162*	-0.173*
	(0.097)	(0.105)	(0.097)	(0.105)
Speaker/President	-0.028	-0.015	-0.028	-0.015
	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.149)	(0.148)
Median-Distance	-0.348***	-0.361***	-0.348***	-0.361***
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.042)
Power Committee	0.109***	0.108***	0.109***	0.108***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
African American	0.016	0.015	0.016	0.015
	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.063)
Latino	-0.055	-0.079	-0.055	-0.079
	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.049)
Vote Share	0.112	0.257	0.107	0.253
	(0.464)	(0.420)	(0.463)	(0.419)
Vote Share^2	-0.033	-0.097	-0.031	-0.094
	(0.301)	(0.276)	(0.300)	(0.275)
Constant	-1.531***	-1.755***	-1.520***	-1.743***
	(0.219)	(0.238)	(0.219)	(0.238)
Observations	600,413	600,413	600,413	600,413
Log Likelihood	-296,939	-237,904	-296,925	-237,890
Akaike Inf. Crit.	594,110	476,040	594,083	476,014

*Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, logit models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium. *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*

Table G4: Proportion of Women in Chamber Affects Women's Issue Bills (Logit Models) - Classic Women's Issues

	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law	Passing Chamber	Becoming Law
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Classic Women's Issue Bills	-0.173***	-0.220***		
	(0.033)	(0.036)		
Classic Women's Issue Bills × Proportion Women	0.463***	0.462***		
	(0.139)	(0.148)		
Proportion Women	-0.621**	-1.219***	-0.869**	-1.700***
	(0.302)	(0.318)	(0.358)	(0.382)
Female	0.126***	0.132***	-0.175*	-0.272**
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.104)	(0.110)
Female × Proportion Women			1.319***	1.738***
			(0.390)	(0.412)
Majority	0.483***	0.296***	0.524***	0.339***
	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.056)	(0.059)
Seniority	-0.008	-0.009	-0.006	-0.007
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Committee Chair	0.294***	0.254***	0.305***	0.259***
	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.031)
Majority Leader	0.228***	0.231***	0.224***	0.229***
	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Minority Leader	-0.163*	-0.174*	-0.172*	-0.166
	(0.097)	(0.105)	(0.096)	(0.106)
Speaker/President	-0.027	-0.013	-0.060	-0.027
	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.153)	(0.156)
Median-Distance	-0.348***	-0.360***	-0.339***	-0.332***
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.041)
Power Committee	0.109***	0.110***	0.107***	0.114***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.028)
African American	0.016	0.016	-0.021	0.010
	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.072)	(0.071)
Latino	-0.055	-0.079	-0.054	-0.041
	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.053)	(0.055)
Vote Share	0.112	0.260	0.341	0.509
	(0.464)	(0.420)	(0.483)	(0.440)
Vote Share^2	-0.033	-0.098	-0.237	-0.295
	(0.301)	(0.276)	(0.314)	(0.289)
Constant	-1.373***	-1.443***	-1.481***	-1.503***
	(0.228)	(0.250)	(0.258)	(0.294)
Observations	600,413	600,413	313,535	313,535
Log Likelihood	-296,920	-237,869	-151,443	-119,138
Akaike Inf. Crit.	594,077	475,975	303,121	238,511

Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by member, logit models with fixed effects by chamber and biennium.
**** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10, two-tailed.*