

Online appendix to “The Strategic Choice of National Interest Groups to Lobby in the American States.”

Coding of national interest group ideology.

This is done by using the way the terms “liberal” and “conservative” are understood in the context of US politics. For a general ideological variable, 1 indicates a liberal disposition which means a protection for civil liberties and acceptable of a role for the government in promoting general welfare. On the other side, -1 means a conservative disposition is resistance to state oversight and regulation, resistance to state-supported assistance programs, and a high respect for private property and business being driven largely by market competition. Organizations meeting none of these requirements, or which appeal broadly to most Americans irrespective of ideology (like recreation and entertainment) are coded 0. Examples are:

- Any organization calling for more government action or regulation is 1
- Any calling for less government action or regulation, or show a preference for free market competition, is -1
- Any organization making a broad, public-interest based appeal to all people, like guaranteed healthcare for all, are coded 1
- Any organization challenging such broad, public-interest based approaches, perhaps by suggesting its failures in other nations (as has been done in healthcare), are coded -1.
- Pushing any type of pro-business interest is -1
- Pushing any type of promotion of an ethnicity is 1 except business associations making the same arguments which are coded 0.
- Any organization advocating for the environment or on behalf of animals is 1
- Promoting traditional American values is -1
- Promoting leisure and recreation (including gambling) and entertainment is 0
- Pro-abortion is 1 and anti-abortion is -1
- Promoting energy exploration and land use is -1
- Preserving land and the environment is 1
- Promoting property rights is -1
- Generally all health organizations are 0 unless meeting another of the above criteria
- Generally all education organizations are 0 unless either meeting another of the above criteria or resisting the control of the state (in which case they are coded 1).

NOTE: In the main paper, the ideology variable is then changed to three binary variables, a liberal one coded 1 if the organization as coded liberal, another coded 1 if the organization is coded conservative, and a third coded 1 if the organization is neither liberal nor conservative. However, in the analyses in the main paper, the non-ideological binary variable is designated as the excluded category and not included in the models (its effect is implied in comparison to the effects for the liberal and conservative binary variables).

Potential bias in the dependent variable from inconsistent state registration laws

Research by Newmark (2005; 2017) shows that some US states have more detailed interest group (and lobbyist) registration requirements than others, and the extent to which this may, or may not, bias datasets is an old debate. Hunter, Wilson, and Brunk (1991) perhaps first brought attention to this potential problem, but a couple of years later Lowery and Gray (1993) argued that it was unlikely that variation in registration laws affected the choices of interest group leaders to register or avoid compliance (meaning there was no-to-minimal bias). Hamm et al. (1994), however, found that states with broader registration laws were reporting more interest groups than those with more restrictive ones. The problem is that we don't know if the number of reported groups undercounts the actual number in a state because, of course, we don't know the true number. There is no baseline against which we can compare observed registrations.

Strickland (2019) took on this problem by developing a model to estimate the number of interest groups in a state against which registrations could be compared. Looking at his Figure 2 (page 905), a large majority of states show what appear to be only small differences, and in most cases where there were differences they largely disappear over time (2012 is his final year of analysis), suggesting predicted and actual registrations are converging (and he attributes the reason not to registration laws but to campaign finance laws). Virginia appears, though, to have a gap later in time, and Massachusetts too, but these are the only ones that stand out to me (where predictions appear greater than actuals in 2012).

I do not try anything as ambitious as using a model to predict the number of groups that ought to be registered. Instead, I rely on a cruder approach to see if there are any states with oddly few registered national interest groups - using variables of significant importance in determining state group populations to standardize group numbers in each state. That is, since both state population and gross state product (GSP) are key components to determining state group population size, by dividing actual numbers of public interest groups and associations in each by each of these variables, I might produce somewhat better estimates of what the group numbers in a state ought to be which I can then compare to the numbers that are actually in that state. Group numbers in Virginia (for example) each year are thus divided by the population in Virginia that year, and then (in a separate calculation) group numbers are divided by GSP. These form rough baselines.

At this point correlation tests are possible. I correlated the observed raw data for each state (each variable containing all years) with its version standardized by population and then its version standardized by GSP. All correlations were over 0.90 (though some just barely so). It suggests there is little in the way of systematic differences.

Difference of means tests might also be revealing. The problem now, though, is that the raw count of groups in each state is on a scale incompatible with that count normalized by population, as well as that count normalized by GSP. I therefore convert all three sets of trends into z-scores, which sets them on a common scale. I then conduct two-tailed difference of means test on the average of the z-scored raw data with the z-scored per capita data, and then do the same with the z-scored raw data and the z-scored GSP data. There are no statistically significant differences. I have not found any systematic evidence that the structures of some state group registration laws are biasing the data (at least as far as *national* interest groups are concerned).

Hamm, K.E., A.R. Weber, and R.B. Anderson. 1994. "The Impact of Lobbying Laws and their Enforcement: A Contrasting View." *Social Science Quarterly* 75(2): 378-381.

Hunter, K.G., L.A. Wilson, and G.G. Brunk. 1991. "Societal Complexity and Interest-Group Lobbyings in the American States." *Journal of Politics* 53(3): 488-503.

Lowery, D., and V. Gray. 1993. "Do Lobbying Regulations Influence Lobbying Registrations?" *Social Science Quarterly* 75(2): 382-384.

Newmark, A.J. 2005. "Measuring State Legislative Lobbying Regulation, 1990-2003." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 5(2): 182-191.

Newmark, A.J. 2017. "Lobbying Regulation in the States Revisited: What Are We Trying to Measure, and How Do We Measure It?" *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 6(3): 215-230.

Strickland, J. 2019. "A Paradox of Political Reform: Shadow Interests in the US States." *American Politics Research* 47(4): 887-914.

Table A1: General model of all groups without differentiating by organizational type (rare events logit method used clustered by state)

Explanatory variable	Coefficient and robust standard error
National group is an association	0.41*** (0.06)
National group is coded as “liberal”	−0.18* (0.09)
National group is coded as “conservative”	−0.50*** (0.08)
The state legislative majority party leans conservative	−0.10 (0.08)
Difference between the medians of the majority and minority legislative parties	0.47*** (0.13)
Number of employed lobbyists	0.61*** (0.02)
State policy mood	3.74*** (1.14)
Unified Democratic control	−0.14 (0.08)
Gross state product (per capita)	1.31* (0.63)
Recession	−0.14* (0.06)
Covid (year is 2020)	0.16* (0.06)
Constant	−8.47*** (0.56)
χ^2 of model fit	2412.78***
<i>N</i>	952,885

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.005$