Conference Committee Proposal Rights and Policy Outcomes in the States—Supplemental Information

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The models in the paper used regression with fixed effects at the state level. Though these results are suggestive, the units of observations, conference committee votes are nested within state chambers. Multilevel models are an alternative specification that allows for the estimation of between-state effects. The multilevel models used here, with a variety of specifications, examine the robustness of the models and fully account for state-level variation in conference committee rules. These specifications use multilevel models with random intercepts for state and random slopes for chamber-level variation. In this way, the models account for differences across both states and chambers while allowing each of the variables to fully estimate at the chamber level. Using the same specification as the base model used in the paper in a multilevel form (column 1 of Table 2), the minority state variable is always positive, though the p-value varies by model specification. Further, depending on the specification used, the substantive effect of minority proposal rights is very similar to those shown in the paper.

Column 1 in Table 1, shown below, is the multilevel specification using the same variables used in the paper. Columns 2 and 4 include, separately, additional variables that control for the ideological spread or dispersion of members within the chamber and across the chamber through a measure of divided party control of the chambers. These variables may be important to control for because, while the formal models suggest coalitions are larger under the minority conference rule, this relationship is also affected by the distance between members and the distance from members to the median (where policy collapses to when the proposers have preferences on opposite sides of the median). Column 2 controls for the ideology of the party medians in each chamber. Column 4 controls for the average distance between any two members in both the House and Senate, a party-free measure of chamber polarization. All ideology data is taken from Shor and McCarty's (2011) state legislative aggregate ideology data. Finally, column 3 controls for both, and demonstrates the minority report variable is positive and statistically significant. It is important to control for chamber ideology

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and chamber polarization in both chambers because the conference bill must pass. Conferees report a bill out of committee that is designed to pass both chambers—further, the location of the final bill is a function of the ideal point of the more moderate median in either chamber (see the "Effects of Bicameralism" section in the paper).

Table 1: The Effect of Minority Proposal Rights on Coalition Size—Multilevel Specifications

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Independent Variables				
Minority Proposal (1=Yes)	.012	.049	.113	.038
	(.046)	(.038)	(.038)	(.028)
Majority Party Size	.471	.713	.833	.276
	(.159)	(.269)	(.153)	(.116)
Chamber Distance	.074	.152	.201	.069
	(.055)	(.049)	(.05)	(.038)
Legislative Professionalism	.130	.30	.280	.099
	(.108)	(.097)	(.073)	(.066)
Chamber Size (*100)	.029	-.025	-.033	-.032
	(.022)	(.023)	(.023)	(.016)
Percent of Conf. Votes	.437	-.172	-.096	.124
	(.306)	(.253)	(.253)	(.180)
Total Number of Votes (*100)	.0002	.0008	.0005	-.0005
	(.003)	(.002)	(.001)	(.001)
Divided Party Control		-.089	-.109	-.079
		(.024)	(.021)	(.017)
House Dem. Ideology		.097	.223	
		(.051)	(.072)	
House Rep. Ideology		.179*	.031	
		(.069)	(.08)	
Senate Dem. Ideology		-.011	-.186	
		(.036)	(.076)	
Senate Rep. Ideology		-.213	-.080	
		(.061)	(.071)	
Avg. House Dist. Btw. Members			.256	.034
			(.129)	(.058)
Avg. Sen. Dist. Btw. Members			-.343	-.124
			(.143)	(.049)
(Constant)	.413	.348	.324	.689
	(.124)	(.117)	(.112)	(.088)
Residual Var.	.023	.023	.023	.015
	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
Chamber Var.	.014	.017	.022	.006
	(.007)	(.009)	(.011)	(.003)
N	908	908	893	833
Wald Chi-squared	11.89; 0.1	42.11; 0.00	74.45; 0.00	26.97; 0.00
AIC	-739.20	-744.04	-727.13	-1065.79

Maximum likelihood-estimation with random intercepts and random slopes for chamber by state and an unstructured covariance matrix.

The paper interacts chamber differences with minority reports. Because the conference report must pass both chambers, the greater the difference between the chambers, the larger the coalition size will be, regardless of whether a minority is allowed to propose its own conference bill. Thus, the paper hypothesizes, and the regression results show, a negative conditional effect of chamber differences on the relationship between minority reports and coalition size. Model 3 in Table 2 in the paper limits the interactive effect to only instances in which the same party controls both the state House and Senate. In that case, the relationship is positive as allowing a minority report increases coalition size due to the nature of party control—the majority party can push more extreme conference bills without worrying about rejection in the other chamber.

The multilevel models (shown below) with the same interaction term do not perform as well. The chamber distance component term is nearly always positive and the interaction term is negative, consistent with the results in the paper, but the variables are not close to statistically significant. The interaction term and chamber distance are nearly significant at the .1 level (two-tailed test) using a slightly different specification than those previously used. This specification is shown in column 1 and controls for the variables previously included in all models, along with divided party control of at least one lawmaking institution. As expected, the chamber distance component term is positive and statistically significant, but the interaction term is not (though it is negative). Model 2 includes control variables for unified legislature, divided party control, and party-based measures of ideological spread in both chambers. In this specification the interaction term is negative, and p=.102. Finally, Model 3 shows the results when the sample is limited to cases of unified party control of the chambers, with another set of control variables. These variables are the same as used in Table 1 above, and the party-free measures of ideologically spread in the chambers and the relative ideologies of each of the parties in the chambers.

In sum, these models show support for the regressions and conclusions in the paper. While the specifications at the multilevel model reflect the substantive size and direction of those shown in the paper consistently, the interaction term is only statistically significant under different specifications. The results therefore, are robust to other, potentially confounding, influences.

Table 2: Minority Proposal Rights and Coalition Sizes—Interaction Models

Independent Variables	(1) *All Chambers w/ Interaction*	(2) *All Chambers w/ Interaction*	(3) *Unified Chambers w/ Interaction*
Minority Proposal (1=Yes)	.094	.219	-.463
	(.213)	(.133)	(.287)
Majority Party Size	.515	.579	1.01
	(161)	(.122)	(.298)
Chamber Distance	.120	.063	.556
	(.053)	(.042)	(.163)
Distance*Minority Proposal	-.740	-1.71	4.36
	(1.74)	(1.04)	(2.33)
Legislative Professionalism	.107	.135	.345
	(.091)	(.065)	(.093)
Chamber Size (*100)	-.041	.007	-.014
	(.022)	(.016)	(.038)
Percent of Conf. Votes	.266	.474	-1.11
	(.274)	(.170)	(.441)
Total Number of Votes (*100)	.0003	.002	.002
	(.002)	(.001)	(.002)
Unified Legislature		-.106	
		(.039)	
Divided Party Control	-.047	-.10	
	(.024)	(.02)	
House Dem. Party Heterogeneity		-.167	
		(.09)	
House Rep. Party Heterogeneity		.165	
		(.094)	
Senate Dem. Party Heterogeneity		.134	
		(.048)	
Senate Rep. Party Heterogeneity		-.331	
		(.075)	
House Dem. Ideology			.224
			(.10)
House Rep. Ideology			-.252
			(.133)
Senate Dem. Ideology			.005
			(.112)
Senate Rep. Ideology			-.311
			(.121)
Avg. House Dist. Btw. Members			.675
			(.224)
Avg. Sen. Dist. Btw. Members			-.291
			(.261)
(Constant)	.422	.549	.505
	(.114)	(.07)	(.183)
Chamber Var.	.018	.006	.010
	(.01)	(.003)	(.006)
Residual Var.	.023	.015	.023
	(.001)	(.0007)	(.001)
N	908	848	800
Wald Chi-squared	19.54; .02	58.36; 0.00	75.84; 0.00
AIC	-737.98	-1093.518	-660.47

Maximum likelihood regression estimation with random intercepts and random slopes for chamber by state and an unstructured covariance matrix.

Table 3 below, shows the results from multilevel logit models predicting the likelihood of rejection of the conference report. These models correspond to Table 3 in the paper, where logit models show a significant, negative effect of minority conference rights on the likelihood of rejection. As explained in the paper, because minority proposal rights force policy toward the median, rejection of the conference report by the median should occur much less frequently in these states than in states where the majority has unilateral proposal power and seeks to extract the most extreme policy possible.

Again, these models control for a variety of political conditions within and across the chambers. As with the model in the paper, the coefficient on minority report is negative, as expected, and significant or nearly significant in each of these specifications, despite the inclusion of a number of control variables. Model 1 is the same specification as used in the paper, while model 2 controls for divided party control of at least one lawmaking institution (i.e., the governor, house, senate) and a unified legislature to account for conference proposals that are proposed with an eye toward approval by the other actors.[1] Model 3 controls for divided party control along with House and Senate party ideology, and the average distance between any two members (similar to the previous models). It should also be noted that substantive effects of the minority proposal variable are nearly identical to those estimated in the regression models shown in the paper.

[1]In short, conference bills must be passed by both chambers and signed by the governor. Conferees, when proposing a bill, likely craft a compromise that will likely be approved by all other pivotal actors—when the pivotal actors belong to a different party, the conference bill will be moderated and thus less likely to be rejected within a chamber, though the effects in these models are positive and do not come close to statistical significance.

Table 3: The Effect of Minority Proposal Rights on Conference Report Failure

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Independent Variables			
Minority Proposal (1=Yes)	-1.42	-.798	-1.04
	(.839)	(.714)	(.97)
Majority Party Size	-1.02	-.214	-11.57
	(4.59)	(4.66)	(11.77)
Chamber Distance	-3.72	-7.27	
	(1.92)	(4.59)	
Legislative Professionalism	-9.76	-4.16	-22.54
	(5.18)	(6.58)	(7.67)
Chamber Size (*100)	-.513	.490	-.102
	(.748)	(.703)	(.876)
Percent of Conf. Votes	-18.46	-23.13	-33.33
	(6.07)	(18.83)	(29.41)
Total Number of Votes (*100)	-.096	-.041	-.044
	(.042)	(.036)	(.052)
Unified Legislature		.909	
		(.806)	
Divided Party Control		.274	.726
		(.717)	(.834)
House Dem. Ideology			-9.29
			(5.46)
House Rep. Ideology			4.65
			(7.22)
Senate Dem. Ideology			15.16
			(13.46)
Senate Rep. Ideology			-10.11
			(13.12)
Avg. House Dist. Btw. Members			-10.25
			(6.63)
Avg. Sen. Dist. Btw. Members			15.48
			(13.05)
(Constant)	3.37	-1.35	14.93
	(3.48)	(3.10)	(13.25)
Chamber Var.	2.93	2.89	1.02
	(2.16)	(2.2)	(1.21)
N	604	604	604
Wald Chi-squared	14.78; .04	11.89; .156	28.05; 0.014
AIC	385.77	390.78	391.32

Maximum likelihood logit estimation with random intercepts and random slopes for chamber by state and an unstructured covariance matrix.

References

Shor, Boris & Nolan McCarty. 2011. “The ideological mapping of American legislatures.” *American Political Science Review* 105(3):530–551.