Common-space Measures of Judicial Ideology for Federal Judges (2024 update)

April 30, 2025

Description:
This codebook describes the dataset on federal judge ideology updated through 2024. The methodology is detailed in "A Common-Space Scaling of the American Judiciary and Legal Profession." The dataset was constructed using data from the Federal Judicial Center's Biographical Directory of Federal Judges (FJC) and the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME). See Bonica and Sen (2017) (link) for details.

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How to Cite:

Bonica, Adam, and Maya Sen. 2017. "A Common-Space Scaling of the American Judiciary and Legal Profession." *Political Analysis* 25(1): 114–21..

1 Data Sources

Biographical Directory of Federal Judges: Data on judicial commissions for federal courts and background information on judges were obtained from the Federal Judicial Center's Biographical Directory of Federal Judges. (Available for download at http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf/page/judges.html.)

Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME): Contribution records and corresponding Commmon-space CFscores for judges were obtained from DIME version 4.0. (Available for download at http://data.stanford.edu/dime.)

DW-NOMINATE Scores: DW-NOMINATE scores for the 1-118th Congresses were obtained from Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. (Available for download at http://www.voteview.com.)

2 Datasets Included in the 2024 Update

This update includes three primary datasets derived from the Federal Judicial Center (FJC) data, the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME), and the imputation process detailed in the associated paper and R script.

2.1 Main Judge Dataset (Wide Format): `bonica_sen_fed_judges_2024.csv`

This dataset provides comprehensive information for each judge, with one row per judge. It includes details for up to three separate federal judicial appointments held by that judge.

- `fjc_judge_idno`: Unique identifier for judges assigned by the Federal Judicial Center. Primary key for linking across datasets.
- `fjc_nid`: Legacy unique judge identifier assigned by the Federal Judicial Center. May differ from `fjc_judge_idno` for older judges. See FJC documentation.
- `dime_cid`: The unique DIME contributor ID associated with the judge, if found. Used for linking to DIME campaign finance records. May be NA if no match was found or the judge made no recorded contributions.
- `judicial_cfscore`: The judge's common-space CFscore based on their campaign finance contributions (if available) or imputed based on biographical and contextual information. Lower values are more liberal, higher values more conservative.
- `is_imputed`: Binary flag: 1 if `judicial_cfscore` was imputed, 0 if it was calculated directly from the judge's contribution history in DIME.
- `judge_last_name`: Judge's last name.
- `judge_first_name`: Judge's first name.

- judge_middle_name: Judge's middle name.
- judge_suffix: Judge's suffix (e.g., Jr., Sr.).
- judge_full_name: Judge's full name.
- gender: Judge's gender as recorded by FJC.
- race: Judge's race/ethnicity as recorded by FJC.
- birthyear: Judge's year of birth.
- law_school: Name of the law school the judge attended (standardized).
- enter_year: Year of the judge's first federal judicial commission included in this dataset.
- exit_year: Year the judge left their last federal judicial position (or 3000 if still active/no end date recorded by FJC).
- served_as_circuit_judge: Binary flag: 1 if the judge served on a U.S. Court of Appeals at any point, 0 otherwise.
- served_as_scotus_judge: Binary flag: 1 if the judge served on the U.S. Supreme Court at any point, 0 otherwise.
- first_court_type: FJC court type code for the judge's first recorded federal appointment.
- first_court_name: FJC court name for the first appointment.
- first_state: State associated with the judge's first appointment seat (if applicable).
- first_appointing_pres: Name of the president who appointed the judge to their first position.
- first_appointing_pres_party: Party of the appointing president for the first appointment.
- first_commission_start_date: Start date (YYYY-MM-DD) of the first commission.
- first_commission_end_date: End date (YYYY-MM-DD) of the first commission (NA if ongoing or not recorded).
- first_jud_chair_cfscore: DIME CFscore of the Senate Judiciary Committee chair at the time of the first appointment.
- first_home_state_senators_cfscore: Average DIME CFscore of the home-state senator(s) from the appointing president's party at the time of the first appointment (NA if no senators from president's party).
- first_pres_cfscore: DIME CFscore of the appointing president at the time of the first appointment.
- first_state_delegation_cfscore: Average DIME CFscore of the state's full congressional delegation (House and Senate) at the time of the first appointment.

- second_court_type: FJC court type code for the judge's second recorded federal appointment (if applicable).
- second_court_name: FJC court name for the second appointment.
- second_appointing_pres: Name of the president who appointed the judge to their second position.
- second_appointing_pres_party: Party of the appointing president for the second appointment.
- second_commission_start_date: Start date (YYYY-MM-DD) of the second commission.
- second_commission_end_date: End date (YYYY-MM-DD) of the second commission.
- second_jud_chair_cfscore: DIME CFscore of the Senate Judiciary Committee chair at the time of the second appointment.
- second_home_state_senators_cfscore: Average DIME CFscore of the home-state senator(s) from the appointing president's party at the time of the second appointment.
- second_pres_cfscore: DIME CFscore of the appointing president at the time of the second appointment.
- second_state_delegation_cfscore: Average DIME CFscore of the state's full congressional delegation at the time of the second appointment.
- third_court_type: FJC court type code for the judge's third recorded federal appointment (if applicable).
- third_court_name: FJC court name for the third appointment.
- third_appointing_pres: Name of the president who appointed the judge to their third position.
- third_appointing_pres_party: Party of the appointing president for the third appointment.
- third_commission_start_date: Start date (YYYY-MM-DD) of the third commission.
- third_commission_end_date: End date (YYYY-MM-DD) of the third commission.
- third_jud_chair_cfscore: DIME CFscore of the Senate Judiciary Committee chair at the time of the third appointment.
- third_home_state_senators_cfscore: Average DIME CFscore of the home-state senator(s) from the appointing president's party at the time of the third appointment.
- third_pres_cfscore: DIME CFscore of the appointing president at the time of the third appointment.
- third_state_delegation_cfscore: Average DIME CFscore of the state's full congressional delegation at the time of the third appointment.

2.2 Stacked Judge Dataset (Long Format): bonica_sen_fed_judges_stacked_2024.

This dataset provides longitudinal data, with one row for each distinct judicial commission held by a judge. Judge-level information (like CFscore, name, demographics) is repeated across rows for the same judge.

- `fjc_judge_idno`: Unique FJC judge identifier. Links to the main dataset.
- `fjc_judge_nid`: Legacy FJC judge identifier.
- `dime_cid`: Unique DIME contributor ID for the judge (repeated for each commission).
- `judicial_cfscore`: Judge's common-space CFscore (repeated for each commission).
- `is_imputed`: Binary flag indicating if the judge's CFscore was imputed (repeated).
- `judge_full_name`: Judge's full name (repeated).
- `judge_last_name`: Judge's last name (repeated).
- `judge_first_name`: Judge's first name (repeated).
- `judge_middle_name`: Judge's middle name (repeated).
- `judge_suffix`: Judge's suffix (repeated).
- `gender`: Judge's gender (repeated).
- `race`: Judge's race/ethnicity (repeated).
- `birthyear`: Judge's year of birth (repeated).
- `court_type`: FJC court type code for this specific commission.
- `court_name`: FJC court name for this specific commission.
- `appointing_pres`: Name of the president who appointed the judge to this specific commission.
- `commission_start_date`: Start date (YYYY-MM-DD) of this specific commission.
- `commission_end_date`: End date (YYYY-MM-DD) of this specific commission (NA if ongoing or not recorded).
- `comm_number`: Sequential number (1, 2, 3) indicating which commission this row represents for the judge (e.g., 1 = first commission, 2 = second).

2.3 Itemized Contributions Dataset: bonica_sen_fed_judges_itemized_conts_2024

This dataset contains itemized campaign finance contribution records from DIME for individuals identified as federal judges in the main dataset. Each row represents a single contribution.

- `transaction_id`: Unique identifier for the contribution transaction within DIME.
- `dime_cid`: The unique DIME contributor ID of the judge who made the contribution. Links to the main dataset.
- `contributor_name`: Name of the contributor (the judge) as recorded in the contribution record.
- `contributor_address`: Street address of the contributor.
- `contributor_city`: City of the contributor.
- `contributor_zipcode`: Zip code of the contributor.
- `contributor_state`: State of the contributor.
- `contributor_occupation`: Occupation of the contributor as recorded.
- `contributor_employer`: Employer of the contributor as recorded.
- `cycle`: Election cycle (e.g., 2020, 2022) in which the contribution was made.
- `date`: Date (YYYY-MM-DD) the contribution was made.
- `amount`: Amount of the contribution in US dollars.
- `bonica_rid`: The unique DIME recipient ID (candidate or committee) who received the contribution.
- `recipient_name`: Name of the recipient candidate or committee.
- `recipient_cfscore`: DIME CFscore of the recipient.
- `fjc_judge_idno`: The unique FJC identifier for the judge who made the contribution. Links to the main dataset.

2.4 Data Relationships

- `fjc_judge_idno` is the primary key linking the main dataset (`..._fed_judges_2024.csv`), the stacked dataset (`..._stacked_2024.csv`), and the itemized contributions dataset (`..._itemized_con`
- `dime_cid` links judges in these datasets to their full contribution profiles within the broader DIME database.

2.5 Notes on Missing Data

- The `is_imputed` column in the main and stacked datasets explicitly indicates whether the `judicial_cfscore` is based on observed contributions or an imputation model.
- Missing values (NA) in date columns (e.g., `first_commission_end_date`) typically indicate that the appointment or commission was ongoing at the time the FJC data was compiled, or the end date was otherwise not recorded.

- `dime_cid` will be NA if a judge could not be matched to a contributor record in DIME, implying they likely did not make any recorded federal campaign contributions. Contextual CFscores (e.g., ‘first$_p res_c fscore$‘)$mayalsobeNAifthecorrespondingpoliticalactor(e.g., president, senator)lacksascoreintheu$