

Factors Conditioning the Representational Activities of State Legislators

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Abstract

This analysis examines the representational activities of state legislators. Specifically, it addresses questions regarding the relative amount of effort these elected leaders devote to various tasks. For example, how much effort do they give to activities within the legislature such as writing and passing legislation? How do these efforts compare to those directed toward constituents such as fulfilling service requests or working to bring funds home to the district? How often do legislators stay in touch with constituents and to what extent do they use the opinions of constituents in making important decisions? These questions are addressed through an analysis of state legislators in 16 states. A major goal is to identify factors that explain observed differences. A variety of district-level variables such as the information environment, electoral conditions, and population characteristics are examined. Legislators' attitudes and perceptions are also included as potential explanations. A major finding to emerge is that representational behaviors are conditioned by a variety of district and state level factors. Legislators who share similar personal characteristics and attitudes often exhibit very different types of representational behaviors depending on the prevailing conditions in their states and districts.

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Introduction

Elected legislators go about “representing” their constituents in various ways. This analysis is about the tasks undertaken by legislators -- what work they perform in their capacity as representatives and more importantly, what factors influence the emphasis they place on their various roles. Specifically, why do some legislators give greater attention to matters of lawmaking (e.g., writing bills, building coalitions, etc.) while other members spend considerable effort on constituency service (e.g., helping citizens navigate the government bureaucracy or solve problems)? To what extent do legislators use techniques for staying in touch with voters and how much do they rely upon constituent opinion in making decisions? A central question is determining the relative influence of factors that explain why legislators differ in the emphasis they place on various representative functions. *In essence, what explains variation in representation?*

Much literature on representation over the past several decades has been devoted to describing and explaining the differing roles of elected representatives. Fenno’s (1978) work in particular set the stage for many later studies that developed quantitative indicators of representation that identified the influence of various contextual influences. The present study follows in this scholarly tradition by examining representational activities of legislators serving in state-level assemblies. Such a setting provides variation on a number of potentially important conditions that may influence representational activities. Institutional conditions (e.g., term limits and professionalism) district characteristics and electoral features vary widely across the states.

In addition to the analytical leverage states provide, legislative institutions in these settings are an interesting place to address questions of representation given their increasingly influential policy role within the federal system (Gray 2008). Decisions that have far reaching effects on citizens’ lives from health care and environmental regulation to stem-cell research and immigration are increasingly made in state legislative assemblies. In the realm of policy, states are indeed functioning as “laboratories of democracy”. Unfortunately, we do not know enough about the process of representation in the states, especially those parts involving the activities of individual legislators in relation to their constituents. Representational studies in recent years indicate a high level of congruence between public preferences and policy adoption measured at the state level (e.g., Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993, Lax and Phillips 2009), but we know relatively little about how this process plays out for individual lawmakers in their districts. Studies that have examined this process are rather dated (Jewell 1982, Wahlke, et al. 1962) and recent work tends to focus on more limited indicators of representation (e.g., Freeman and Richardson 1996, Hogan 2008). One recent study by Herrick (2011) does provide a more comprehensive assessment of representational behaviors of state legislators by making connections between these activities and various institutional differences. But more effort in this realm is needed that incorporates additional representational dimensions and ties them to an even wider assortment of state, district, and individual-level conditions. It is such an integrated approach that the present study initiates.

As the analysis will demonstrate, legislators differ considerably in how they represent their constituents and these behaviors are affected by a variety of different factors. A key finding is that representative behaviors are highly conditioned by contextual features. Representatives who share similar personal characteristics and attitudes often exhibit very different types of representative

behaviors depending on the prevailing conditions in their states and districts. Various district-level features are shown to have particularly interesting effects. For example, the level of campaign engagement in the last election has a major influence on several dimensions of representation. Also, aspects of the information environment measured as legislators' perceptions of citizen and media attention are found to have strong effects. The multi-state research design gives additional insight into the influence of various state-level institutional factors. Legislative professionalism and the presence of term limits play a large role in shaping observed styles of representation.

Elements of Representation

Legislators engage in a wide variety of behaviors intended to “represent” their constituents' interests. Various studies over the years indicate that such activities range from introducing and voting on bills to various forms of constituency-related matters. Eulau and Karps (1977) categorize these various representative or “responsive” behaviors into four types: policy responsiveness, allocation responsiveness, service responsiveness, and symbolic responsiveness. Policy responsiveness refers to the degree of congruence between citizen preferences and a legislator's voting record. Allocation responsiveness involves efforts to satisfy the constituency with funding for public projects while service responsiveness involves efforts to assist constituents with their problems. The category of symbolic responsiveness refers to “gestures” on the part of legislators to demonstrate their work to their constituents in an effort to “generate and maintain continuing support” (Eulau and Karps 1977: 246). Jewell (1982) argues that many aspects of symbolic responsiveness involve communication between legislators and constituents and this forms a separate category of responsive behaviors. These categories provided by Eulau and Karps (1977) and elaborated upon by Jewell (1982) encompass a broad range of activities that have been examined in various congressional and state legislative studies over the years.

Studies examining representative behavior at both the Congressional and state legislative levels indicate that individual lawmakers vary in how much emphasis they place on different parts of their jobs. For example, Fenno (1978) identifies varying “home styles” exhibited by congressmen. For some members, their home styles center on their Washington accomplishments, while for others they are focused on the constituency “service-bureau” elements. At the state level too, studies note that some legislators devote substantial efforts to service responsiveness while others spend little time on such duties, choosing instead to focus on activities within the legislature (e.g., Ellickson and Whistler 2001, Freeman and Richardson 1996, Herrick 2011, Jewell 1982, Rosenthal 2009). These large differences suggest that legislators face many choices about how to represent their constituents' interests (Hall 1996). Some choose to emphasize certain responsive behaviors over others. Certainly there are constraints on how much legislators can emphasize some aspects of their job over others (e.g., they cannot simply ignore work within the legislature), but there is a wide degree of discretion in how legislators choose to conduct themselves.

While a wide range of behaviors could be examined, for now the focus is on two broad sets of behavioral components, legislature-directed and constituency directed efforts. In addition, two aspects of constituency directed efforts are given close consideration: the techniques used for staying in touch with constituents and the relative reliance on constituents as a source of information in making important decisions.

Legislature-Directed and Constituency-Directed Efforts

How much effort do legislators devote to legislature-directed versus constituency-directed efforts? Several quantitative studies note these differences by examining specific types of behaviors such as bill introduction and success (Anderson, et al. 2003, Hall 1996, Rocca and Sanchez 2008, Schiller 1995) or the degree to which some legislators “shirk” their roll-call voting responsibilities (Rothenberg and Sanders 2000, Sarbaugh-Thompson, et al. 2004). Similar differences among legislators have also been identified at the state legislative level (e.g., Herrick 2011, Kousser 2005, Wright 2007). Members who are not as engaged in the process of lawmaking are often involved in a number of constituency-related tasks (Fenno 1978, Jewell 1982). While most legislators devote some effort to both sets of activities, some legislators clearly do more of one than the other and such choices are often deliberate. For example, Jewell quotes the perspective of one legislator who reports that “[y]ou must choose between being an ombudsman or being a legislator or lawmaker.” (p. 2).

The issue of relative time spent on lawmaking activities versus constituent activities goes to the heart of the debate about the role of legislators in the policy making process. Some worry that legislators are overly concerned about their prospects for reelection and this focuses their attention on matters of satisfying constituent concerns rather than the nuts and bolts of the legislative process. Instead of toiling over the merits of legislative proposals, working on coalition building within institutions, and playing an active role in oversight, legislators are busy trying to satisfy constituents’ service requests. Past studies suggest that a tradeoff between these two categories of activities may occur. Fenno states that “[b]uilding a reelection constituency at home and providing continuous access to as much of that constituency as possible requires time and energy. Inevitably, these are resources that might otherwise be allocated to efforts in Washington” (1978: 215). Observers such as Rosenthal (1998) contend that state legislative institutions in particular have become too porous and that constituent pressures have diminished representative democracy in the states. In other words, the goal of making sound laws has been compromised by the pressures to retain one’s elected position. While members may have various goals in serving in the legislature (Fenno 1973), the current circumstances may mean that the goal of winning reelection trumps the desire to pass good legislation.

An important empirical question for the present study is the degree of effort legislators place on these tasks of lawmaking and constituency-related matters. Measures of relative effort towards these different representational tasks are determined by responses to a series of questions that ask about various legislative-directed activities such as “conducting research and writing legislation,” “committee activities involving oversight of agencies,” and “informal discussions and negotiations with other legislators,” among others. A central issue will involve comparing the level of effort legislators report devoting to these tasks relative to constituency-directed activities such as “helping constituents deal with government red tape,” “helping constituents solve problems,” and “educating constituents about your legislative activities.”

Constituency Connections

Two specific aspects of relations with the constituency are important for this analysis. The first involves the techniques for communicating or staying in touch with constituents. Past studies indicate there are a wide variety of techniques that legislators use to stay in touch with citizens in their districts (Herrick 2011, Jewell 1982, Rosenthal 2009). These include sending letters of

congratulation and condolence to newsletters, speaking engagement at local civic meeting, and making door-to-door visits. Many of these are informal contacts legislators make as they travel around their districts while others entail more formal encounters during town hall meetings or guest speaking appearances. Some involve direct contact with constituents such as going door-to-door while others are more indirect (e.g., newsletters, e-mails and writing newspaper columns). Such techniques help legislators learn about the district as well as help citizens in the district learn about the activities of the legislators.

A second dimension of constituency information involves the reported reliance of legislators on constituents when making important decisions. Past studies demonstrate that various factors are responsible for legislator voting patterns in the legislature ranging from partisanship and ideology, to interest group influence and constituency input (Jenkins 2006, Ray 1982, Richardson, et al. 2004, etc.). The focus here is on the influence of constituents compared to other factors. From the legislator's perspective, what impact does constituency have relative to these other sources of information when making important decisions?

Potential Explanatory Factors and Conditions

A major goal for this analysis is to understand differences in the way legislators go about representing their constituents. The conceptual starting point is that context probably has a large influence on the types of representative behaviors observed. Various institutional features of states along with district characteristics, information environment, and electoral conditions are examined.

Institutional Features

Legislative Professionalism

Mooney (1995) describes the concept as “the extent to which a legislature can command the full attention of its members, provide them with adequate resources to do their jobs in a manner comparable to that of other full- time political actors, and set up organizations and procedures that facilitate lawmaking” (p. 48-49). Past studies have measured professionalism in a number of ways (e.g., Bowman and Kearney 1988, Carey, et al. 2000, King 2000, Squire 1992), however, most of these measures include indicators for member compensation, staffing support, and number of days in session. Highly professionalized legislatures are those that meet frequently, provide significant levels of staff support, and have relatively high salaries for their members. Less professional legislatures, sometimes called “citizen legislatures”, are those that meet infrequently, provide little if any staff support, and pay members smaller salaries. The term “hybrid” legislatures are those chambers that fall somewhere in the middle and have characteristics of both professional and citizen institutions.

Past studies demonstrate that legislative professionalism has wide ranging effects that set the context for representation. For example, professional chambers have a membership that is more stable (Moncrief, et al. 2004) and more diverse (Squire (1992) and legislators in these settings are more likely to view these jobs as careers (Thompson and Moncrief 1992). With regard to elections, rates of contestation and incumbency challenge are much higher for seats in professional chambers (e.g., Van Dunk and Weber 1997), however, incumbents are more likely to win reelection (Carey, et al. 2000) and their fortunes are less dependent on the vicissitudes of coattail effects and high-

stimulus elections (Berry, et al. 2000). As for direct effects on representation, Jewell (1982) notes that legislators in professional chambers “have not only more time but a greater incentive to maintain constituency contacts, provide services, and build a political organization for the next election” (p. 8). Some quantitative assessments suggest that legislators in more professional chambers spend more time on the job (Kurtz, et al. 2006) and this time is spent on a wide variety of activities including lawmaking functions. Studies looking at more specific elements of constituency-directed efforts such as casework find that professionalism has a positive effect (Ellickson and Whistler 2001, Freeman and Richardson 1996, Herrick 2011). With regard to communicating with constituents, work by Herrick (2011) shows some aspects of professionalism having a positive influence.

The present analysis will attempt to give clarity to this issue by examining the effects of professionalism on the amount of individual effort that legislators themselves exert on these various representative behaviors. It is expected that professionalism will result in much greater effort toward constituency-related behaviors relative to legislature-directed activities. It is also expected that professionalism will be positively related to greater use of communication techniques to stay in touch with constituents. Moreover, constituency opinion is expected to play a larger role in legislator decision making in professional settings. Two dichotomous indicators are used to gauge the effects of professionalism based on a categorical indicator developed and update by Kurtz that identifies each legislature as either professional, citizen or hybrid (Hamm and Moncrief 2008).

Term limits

Several states in the 1990s adopted limited terms for state legislatures and currently 15 states limit the number of terms that members may serve (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). Term limits were enacted by reformers to achieve various goals ranging from enabling wider legislative service by a more diverse group of individuals to reducing the role of interest groups (e.g., Bowser and Moncrief 2007). Given that term limits negate the possibility for long service within the chamber, it seems that elements of representation would be profoundly affected. Cooper and Richardson (2006) find that term limits lead legislators to hold a more “trustee” approach to representation (as opposed to a “delegate” approach) or what Carey, et al. (2000 and 2006) refer to as a “Burkean shift”. In addition, Carey, et al. (2000, 2006) find that legislators were more focused on the state versus constituency interests. But in terms of actual behavior, however, Powell, et al. (2007) find term limits results in greater efforts to keep in touch with constituents, help constituents with problems, and help their district get their fair share of government funding. These authors go on to say that “[s]evering the electoral bond did not result in allocating more time to the business of legislating itself” (p. 49). Thus, there is mixed evidence and some of these effects appear to be restricted to attitudes, and may not necessarily be reflected in the legislator behaviors. Once various legislators attitudes are controlled (these variables are discussed later), term limits may not have much of a direct effect.

What influence will term limits have on the representative behaviors examined here? Given that a long-term career within the chamber is simply no longer possible, it seems that members facing a short time horizon would put greater emphasis on securing legislative accomplishments. This may manifest itself as greater emphasis on legislative matters rather than constituency matters. Given previous findings, term-limited lawmakers are probably less likely to deploy as many techniques for staying in touch with constituents and probably rely less on their opinions in making

decisions. To gauge the effect of term limits, a dichotomous variable is used (1=term limits, 0=no term limits).

District Characteristics

Various studies point to the influence of district conditions on the responsive behaviors of elected officials. In the classic Miller and Stokes (1963) model, constituency preferences are viewed as a major factor that influences legislators' perceptions and ultimately the roll call votes they cast. Various district conditions are explored here.

Electoral Conditions

Mayhew (1974) and other scholars argue that the behavior of legislators can be understood largely by their desire to win reelection. Legislators adopt various styles of representation and engage in activities for the purpose of obtaining favorable recognition of voters that increase their likelihood of securing reelection. Mayhew mentions bill sponsorship and policy voting as mechanisms for "advertising" or "position-taking" to garner electoral support. Other scholars point to constituency directed activities such as pork barrel projects and service responsiveness (e.g., Cain, et al. 1987). Studies often test this effect by examining what is referred to as the "marginality hypothesis" which states that legislators in more marginal districts will exhibit different representative behaviors than legislators elected from more electorally safe districts. Specifically, legislators from more marginal districts will engage in more constituency service and incorporate constituency opinion into their decision-making process.

Various studies at the congressional level have sought to find support for the marginality hypothesis on constituency and legislative activities and have uncovered rather inconsistent results. For example, Fenno (1978) as well as Johannes (1984) find little statistical support for such a relationship between marginality and time spent on district activities. However, other studies show marginality to increase the use of constituency service (Cover 1980, Cain, et al. 1987) and pork barrel behavior (e.g., Bickers and Stein 1996). Regarding the possibility that competitive elections might reduce a focus on legislative efforts, the record is mixed. Looking at bill sponsorship as one indicator of legislative effort, some studies show that competition decreases bill sponsorship (Campbell 1982, Garand and Burke 2006, Frantzych 1979), others find that members in safer seats introduce fewer bills (Herrick and Moore, 1993), and still others find few effects at all (e.g., Kessler and Krehbiel 1996, Schiller 1995). If one considers the ability to pass proposed legislation, the evidence here is also weak. For example, Frantzych (1979) finds that members from competitive districts are less likely to be effective in passing legislation, however, other studies find competition has little influence on success gauged in this manner (Herrick and Moore, 1993 Jeydel and Taylor, 2003).

Similar questions regarding the effects of marginality are addressed in the state legislative setting and here too the results are rather mixed. Most agree that elections have little effect on case work (Carey, et al 2000, Freeman and Richardson 1996), but with regards to pork, some studies show a positive effect (Carey, et al. 2000) while others show no influence (Ellickson and Whistler 2001). Carey, et al. (2000) indicate greater efforts to "keep in touch with constituents" in marginal districts, but find district safety unrelated to "developing new legislation". In a chamber-level analysis of bill introduction behavior, Gray and Lowery (1995) show that higher general election competition leads to more bill introductions in a chamber. These effects on bill introductions, a

rather fundamental feature of legislative activity, suggest that rather than detracting from legislative efforts, competition may increase them. Perhaps, bill sponsorship is a mechanism used by state legislators to “advertise” to particular constituents back in the home districts.

The results of both the congressional and state legislative levels indicate only mixed support for the marginality hypothesis. The lack of strong effects may be due to the fact that objective indicators of marginality do not get at perceptions of vulnerability on the part of legislators. Or, it may be that perceptions of vulnerable are simply ubiquitous among incumbents. Jewell (1982) notes that many state legislators believe they are vulnerable even when objective indicators suggest that they are not. Another possibility, however, is that past studies have not tapped into indicators of competitiveness that are most salient to legislators. Most studies have utilized either legislator-reported or objective indicators of district competitiveness. Such variables are probably a valid indicator of underlying partisan loyalties in a district and convey a sense of electoral threat observed by an elected legislator. However, there are probably other salient indicators of electoral threat that could also elicit a behavioral response. For example, it may be that what affects a legislator’s behavior is whether they are challenged by a strong, well-financed candidate. The availability and willingness of candidates to mount a serious challenge would seem to be a key signal to legislators beyond simply how well the opposing candidate did in the last election. Indeed, recent work suggests that the presence of such candidates has implications for various indicators of policy responsiveness in the Congress (Sulkin 2005). A key question is whether these alternative measures of electoral threat have a bearing on the representative behaviors of state legislators.

In addition to electoral threat, there are other ways the electoral environment might influence representative’s behavior. Fenno makes the case that “campaigns help to establish, maintain, and test the connections between politicians and citizens -- connections that constitute the very core of a representational relationship” (1996, p. 74). One element of a campaign that may have implications for representative behaviors is the degree to which legislators are engaged in campaign efforts. Do they devote considerable amounts of their personal time in campaign-related tasks or do they delegate these responsibilities to others, such as political consultants. Given that nearly one-half of all state legislators hire at least one political consultant (Abbe and Herrnson 2003), it seems that there is probably variation in the personal commitment that legislator invest in their campaigns. And, such experiences may have a direct bearing on their representational styles. For example, legislators who have been more personally engaged in their campaign efforts may be more attuned to their constituencies and, therefore, once elected give greater attention to these matters. Such legislators may also have a greater commitment to staying in contact with constituents, paying closer attention to constituency views, and ultimately voting in a manner consistent with district preferences.

Another way that the electoral environment may play a role involves a legislator’s political career as a state legislator. Specifically, does the legislator run for reelection? While some legislators are term limited out of office, other choose to forgo reelection to run for another office or decide to simply leave politics behind for personal or professional reasons (other job opportunities, retirement, etc.). Whatever the reason, it seems that voluntary or involuntary departure may have an influence on representative behavior. Analyses of voluntary departures by members of congress indicate that their patterns of representative behavior are altered considerably. For example Herrick, et al. (1994) find that “without elections members miss roll-call votes, introduce fewer bills, pass fewer bills, and do not work as hard at keeping in touch with or servicing the district” (p. 225). These same authors go on to say that “elections apparently discourage members from having

focused and potentially successful legislative agenda” (p. 225). Are similar patterns uncovered in the state legislative setting? Are they less likely to engage in legislative or constituency-related activities? Are they less active in staying in touch with constituents?

To gauge the effects of these various electoral conditions, three measures are used. Details about each variable along with anticipated effects are provided below.

Opponent Strength Opponent strength is gauged here using a measure of relative campaign funding.¹ It is calculated as the percentage of opponent funding relative to the legislator. While funding is only one indicator of candidate strength, it is probably a very salient characteristic for the legislator that signals the presence of a strong or weak challenge.²

Campaign Engagement Given the central nature of campaigns to representation (Fenno 1996), it would seem that legislators who wage campaigns that put them in close proximity to citizens may develop different representation styles. In particular, such activity in campaigns may lead legislators to engage in more constituency-related activities as well as stay in close communication with the citizens in the district. Legislators were asked about the amount of time spent during their last contested election on various campaign activities (1 = “almost none” to 5 = “a great deal”). This focus on time is important because it represents the degree of engagement that the legislator have in the overall campaign effort. The measure is calculated as the average amount spent on the seven activities: devising strategy, recruiting workers, raising funds, meeting voters, giving interviews, meeting interest groups, and meeting party leaders. Larger values represent greater levels of campaign engagement.

Seeking Reelection So far the effects of electoral threat involve condition of previous campaigns that are expected to shape a legislator’s representational style. However, another factor that could have an effect involves whether the legislator is seeking reelection during current election cycle. In some ways such conditions provides another way to test the electoral threat hypothesis. Do we find legislators serving in their last terms are more likely to engage in shirking constituency responsibilities and focus more on legislative proposals similar results among legislators who do not run for reelection? A dichotomous variable is used to examine whether or not a legislator decides to run in 2006 (1=yes, 0=no). Such a variable captures the voluntary retirements as well as those required by term limits.³

Demographic Features

In addition to electoral condition, there are also basic population characteristics of districts that may affect representation behaviors. Given the relatively small size of legislative districts, there

¹As one might expect, this indicator is highly correlated with past vote margin.

²There are other indicators of candidate quality used in the literature, most notably whether the candidates has held prior elective office (e.g., Bond, et al. 1985, Jacobson and Kernell, 1983, Van Dunk, 1997). Campaign funding is used here for several reasons. First, level of funding is probably a superior indicator of electoral threat, given the importance of funding to election results (e.g., Gierzynski and Breaux, 1991, Jacobson 1978). Second, level of funding is something that the opponent is paying close attention to, so it is likely to “quality” that matters. And, third, this variable is much easier to measure given that information on state legislative candidates (especially those who lose) is hard to determine. For these theoretical and practical reasons, total funding per eligible citizen is examined.

³It is important to remember that these legislators were surveyed in the fall of 2006 and in the beginning months of 2007. Given this timing, most had passed the point of deciding to run in 2006.

are often wide disparities in terms of their basic demographic makeup. For example, some districts contain large proportions of high-income earners while others contain many impoverished citizens. The differences are quite numerous on several dimensions such as racial composition, education levels, age, work force employment, and urbanization. Scholars at both the congressional (Fenno 1978, Fiorina 1974) and state legislative levels (Jewell 1982) have noted these differences and point to their potential effects on representative styles. For example, Jewell says “[g]enerally it is accurate to say that the demand for constituent services is greater in districts that are below average in socioeconomic terms” (Jewell 1982, 145). Fiorina (1974) points to the importance of district heterogeneity as a factor that may decrease the likelihood that legislators vote in accord with the median district voter. Congressional studies indicate that various constituency characteristics related to need for certain types of service responsiveness affect the amount of casework performed by members. For example, Johannes (1984) finds that casework burdens in Congress are higher in districts that are urban, have lower education, and large concentrations of government employees (p. 55).

Three specific population characteristics are expected to have an effect on elements of representation: average household income, percent racial minority population, and the percent of citizens living in rural areas.⁴ Given Jewell’s (1982) contention that citizens in poorer districts will make more requests for services, it seems likely that fewer legislative-directed efforts will be present in low-income and high-minority districts. Representatives in such districts are likely to focus much more effort on allocational and service responsiveness. A similar style of representation is likely to be found in rural districts as well given that these districts tend to have lower levels of income. But in addition, citizens in rural areas may expect more attention from state legislators because they simply lack representation at the city or town level. State legislators are probably the most prominent local officials to be relied upon in unincorporated or small communities. It is therefore likely that we will see higher levels of constituency efforts in rural districts.

Information Environment

The level of information that constituents have about legislators and the degree to which media outlets cover their activities may affect the way legislators go about their jobs. A major contextual condition that sets the state legislative setting apart from the congressional setting is that voters generally possess much lower levels of knowledge about state legislators. Past studies demonstrate that citizens can seldom name their state representative or merely identify their party identification (Patterson, Ripley, and Quinlan 1992, Songer 1984). Even more recent studies at the state only about one out of five citizens can correctly identify their state representative (Niemi and Powell 2003) while over 50 percent can name their U.S. House member and nearly 68 percent their U.S. Senator (p. 197).

While the information environment of legislative districts is generally characterized by low levels of media attention and subsequent voter awareness, there is certainly variation from district to district. For example, in small communities represented by a single legislator where most local

⁴A variety of other indicators of income and socio-economic status could be used (e.g., education, job classification, etc.). The measures of household income, percent minority, and percent in rural areas are used because they denote slightly different aspects of these concepts and are not so highly inter-correlated to prevent them from being used simultaneously in multivariate models later in the analysis. These characteristics are measured in percentages and come from the *Almanac of State Legislative Elections* (Lilley, et al. 2008).

information is disseminated by a newspaper, we are likely to find higher levels of media attention and voter knowledge concerning the local state representative. Such differences in the information environment are expected to have consequences for matters of representation. For example, when legislators perceive that voters are more aware and are paying greater attention, it could be that we see legislators exerting more effort on those particular activities. These effects are probably quite pronounced on the matters of staying in touch with constituents and on incorporating constituency opinions into the decision process.

To gauge the information environment within each district, the analysis relies on each legislator's assessment regarding two elements. The first involves their perceptions of voter awareness of their activities across several dimensions. Do they believe voters know much or little about what they do? The second element involves legislators' perceptions regarding the extent that local media outlets focus on their activities. While such conditions are certainly related given that citizens know more about legislators where the media outlets give them attention, these concepts represent distinct aspects of the information environment. Examining both conditions makes it possible to differentiate between the influence of media attention and voter attention. In other words, which of these elements of the information environment is more effective at shaping legislator behavior?

The measures used to calculate citizen knowledge and media attention were constructed from questions asked of state legislators. The following question was used to assess citizen knowledge of a legislator's effort: "How much information do you believe the average citizen in your district knows about the following?" The questions posed on a 1 to 5 points scale from "almost none" (1) to "large amount" (5) included: (a) "your votes on important policy matters," (b) "legislation that you introduced or had passed," (c) "your oversight of agency performance," (d) "constituency service activities you perform," and (e) "your ability to secure state funding for the district." For the models used to predict legislature-directed behavior, the average of responses for a, b, and c were used to construct a measure ranging from 1-5. For the models predicting constituency-directed activities, responses d and e were used. For the models of techniques of staying in touch and relative influence of constituency, all five responses were averaged. To assess media attention, the same response categories were used when asking the following question: "When local media organizations do cover your activities, how much attention do they give to the following?" The response categories were combined in a fashion similar to the perceptions of citizen knowledge in an effort to differentiate legislature- and constituency-directed activities.

Legislator Attitudes, Perceptions, and Characteristics

A number of studies over the years have considered how the attitudes or perceptions of legislators affect representation. Here attention is focused on several legislator perceptions involving their role orientations as well as their attitudes about their job and whether they have plans to run for higher office. Legislator characteristics are also considered as factors that have the potential to shape aspects of representation.

Legislator Attitudes about Current Position and Future Plans

A legislator's perceptions concerning his or her current job as well as future political plans may have strong consequences for behavior. Some legislators see their jobs as a full-time endeavor, and given the considerable time and energy they devote to it, view it as a professional career. Past

studies demonstrate that attitudes about current positions and future plans for running for higher office can affect representational activities (Maestas 2003). Legislators who view their jobs as careers are probably more likely to expend greater effort in both legislative and constituency-related tasks. However, because many legislators believe that constituency efforts are critical for retaining their positions, it may mean that those who view their jobs as careers devote significantly more energies to these tasks. Plans to run for higher office might also affect the way one decides to allocate efforts. For example, Herrick and Moore (1993) find that legislators harboring progressive ambitions engage in greater floor activity, legislative specialization, and floor activities. Such actions are a way legislator try to build a reputation among their peers in the legislature as well as among attentive publics statewide. Such findings suggest that a legislator's attitudes about their current position and future political plans may affect their behavior. Separate dichotomous measures were constructed from survey response to determine if respondents viewed their jobs as a careers and whether they had plans to run for higher office.⁵

Legislator Perceptions of their Role

The most commonly referenced set of role orientations involves whether a legislator takes a “delegate” or “trustee” approach to representation (e.g., Pitkin 1967, Wahlke et al 1962). Delegates view their jobs as voting in a manner consistent with the wishes of their constituents. Trustees believe they should base their decisions on their own thinking even if it conflicts with the immediate preferences of the citizens he or she represents. Early studies (Wahlke et al 1962) as well as more recent ones (Cooper and Richardson 2006) consistently show that legislators tend to view themselves more as “trustees” than as delegates.

While previous studies do not demonstrate a strong effect for role orientation, much of this literature was assessing its influence on policy congruence (e.g., Gross 1978, McCrone and Kuklinski 1979). Some studies that have looked at their broader effects show that orientations do influence some behaviors related to communication and constituency service. For example, Gross (1978) finds that legislators with more of a delegate orientation devote greater effort to “tap constituency opinion”. Cooper and Richardson (2006) demonstrate that legislators with more of a trustee orientation hold fewer office hours. Herrick (2011) shows that delegate-oriented legislators rely more on information from constituents when deciding about pending legislation.

In addition to “trustee” or “delegate”, another role orientation examined is whether legislators are more concerned with the needs of the district versus the needs of the state as a whole. Wahlke et al (1962) refer to this as a legislator's “areal role” (p. 292). Recent work by Carey et al (2006) finds that legislators elected in term limited states and those serving in less professional legislatures are more likely to focus on the state as a whole. To assess the district versus state as well as the trustee versus delegate orientations, the legislator survey asked respondents to place themselves on a 7-point scale between descriptions of these two extremes. It is expected that legislators who view their roles more as delegates (as opposed to trustees) and who have an areal role orientation directed toward their district (as opposed to the state as a whole) will be more focused on constituency matters.

⁵Specifically, the questions asked: “Do you think of politics and public office as a career?” and “Do you plan to run for a higher office within the next five years?”

Legislator Relative Issue Positions

A legislator's positions on important issues may affect the nature of his or her representation activities. We know there is very often a high degree of correspondence between voter ideology and legislator roll-call voting (Shore and McCarty 2011), although some lawmakers believe their positions are divergent from the average positions of constituents they represent (Rosenthal 2009). One question is whether these perceptions of congruence or divergence might affect the degree of effort given to legislative and constituency-directed efforts. For legislators who perceive themselves as outside the mainstream of their district, we might expect to see greater efforts in constituent-directed efforts as a form of compensatory behavior. Gaining favor through constituency service is a way to stave off criticism for a voting record that is out of line. Legislators outside the mainstream might also be likely to be more engaged in contact with constituents as a symbolic gesture or as a means of educating voters (convincing) them of his or her point of view.

Legislators can be ideologically distinct relative to their constituents, but there is also the possibility of being distinct from their fellow legislators. Within the legislative chamber, are legislators within the mainstream or outside the mainstream? It may be that legislators in the mainstream are more likely to exert effort toward legislative matters since they can probably be successful in that realm as they build coalitions and win support for their proposals. Of course, there is also the possibility that legislators outside the mainstream might have to work harder to win support for their proposals, so they might also be expected to exert effort toward legislative activities. As constituency-directed activities, it seems that legislators outside the mainstream would put devote greater effort there, perhaps again as a means of compensating for what is probably a low level of legislative accomplishment.

Divergence with the constituency is determined by questions that directly ask candidates to rate their own political views on a five-point ideological scale separately for economic and social issues (liberal=1, slightly liberal=2, moderate=3, slightly conservative=4, and conservative=5). They were then asked to rate the views of "average votes in your district" using the same scales for both issues. A divergence measure was created for both social and economic issues by subtracting the legislator's own views from those of the district. The average of the absolute values for both indicators represents the divergence measure where high values indicate that a legislator perceives himself to be farther from the average district voter.

A similar technique was used to gauge a legislator's past voting history in the chamber based on voting scores of the National Federation of Independent Business. A legislator's score on this 0-100 indicator of economic conservatism was first subtracted from the average score in the chamber divided by the standard deviation of the chamber. The absolute value represents the measure used where higher values indicate greater extremism.

Legislator Characteristics

Various characteristics of individual legislators are expected to have an influence on representational activities. Political party affiliation and ideology are two basic variables that have strong effects on policy voting in legislatures (e.g., Jenkins 2008, Ray 1982) and are likely to influence other representative behaviors as well. For example, conservatives are less likely to engage in casework Ellickson and Whistler (2001) and keep in touch with constituents (Carey, et al. 1998), but are more likely to make sure "districts gets their fair share of government money and projects"

(Carey, et al. 1998). Here a dichotomous indicator for political party is used (1=Democrat, 0=Republican). Number of years served is another characteristic likely to influence representation. More senior members may have the option of spending more time focused on legislative matters while newly elected members must exert effort on solidifying their voter support. Holding a leadership role might also affect representation given that leaders necessarily must allocate greater effort towards legislative duties. This condition is taken into account by a variable indicating whether the member holds a major party position in the chamber or chairs a standing committee (1=yes, 0=no). Finally, legislator gender may also matter. Past studies indicate that women are more likely to engage in casework (Richardson and Freeman 1995) and take constituent opinion into account (Herrick 2011). A dichotomous variable (1=woman, 0=man) is therefore included to estimate the effects of this characteristic.

Data

A wide variety of data are brought to bear on the questions addressed in this paper. The goal was to obtain as much detailed information as possible about the legislators themselves and the districts they represent. Sixteen states provide variation on institutional variables of interest here, term limits and legislative professionalism. In addition, they differ in terms of region and political culture (See Appendix). Overall, these states are a good representation of all fifty on a wide range of variables. When these 16 states are compared to all 50, few statistically significant differences emerge on demographic indicators such as average income, racial composition, and urbanism. There are also few statistically significant differences on measures of legislative professionalism, political culture, ideology, public opinion liberalism, partisan competition, interest group strength, and percent of women in the legislature.

The major source of data for the project is a survey of state legislators. All lower house members of assemblies in 16 states who were elected in regular elections in 2004 were sent a mailed survey. The survey was conducted in late 2006 and early 2007. This time period was chosen given that many first-term legislators would be completing their first term and could reflect upon these experiences. An initial survey was mailed that included a cover letter, survey instrument, and stamped return envelope. If no response was received after about three weeks, a post-card reminder was sent. Approximately four weeks after the post card, another survey instrument packet was mailed. This three-wave survey design resulted in a response rate of approximately 37 percent.⁶

In addition to the survey data, a variety of other measures were also gathered on legislators and district. Characteristics of individual legislators (e.g., terms served, leadership positions, and gender) were gathered from various sources. District characteristics were obtained from the U.S. Census as well as from the *Almanac of State Legislative Elections* (Lilley, Defranco, Bernstein, and Ramsby 2008). Information on campaign financing in previous elections was obtained from the Institute of Money in State Politics web site while primary and general election results were gathered from each state's election reporting division (usually the Secretary of State). Interest group rating scores were obtained from the individual state chapters of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

⁶The response rates ranged considerably across states, with the lowest percentage in Florida (24%) and the highest in Idaho (49%). Response rates in the other states were as follows: Colorado (37%), Iowa (44%), Illinois (32%), Maine (46%), Michigan (43%), Minnesota (31%), Missouri (39%), Montana (41%), New Mexico (45%), Ohio (35%), Oregon (33%), South Carolina (27%), Tennessee (28%), Utah (39%).

Findings

How Do Legislators Allocate Their Efforts?

As indicated earlier, legislators have many choices regarding what they can do with their time. One major distinction is whether legislators are focused more on activities within the legislature or are they focused more on constituency-oriented activities. To get at this issue, the survey asked legislators to characterize their degree of effort for 16 different categories of activities on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 for “almost none” to 5 for “a great deal”. The percentages marking either 4 or 5 on the scale are indicated in Table 1. As one can see, state legislators place greater priority on some aspects of their jobs than others. Among all legislators in the first column, we find that over 70 percent of legislators direct much of their efforts toward three types of activities: “Committee activities” (73.9%), “studying, reading, and discussing pending legislation” (70.3%), and “communicating with citizens from your district” (70.7%). A second tier of activities that mostly contains constituency-directed duties includes: “helping constituents solve problems” (59.9%), “informal discussions and negotiations with other legislators” (59.6%), “helping constituents with government red tape” (57.4%), “helping constituents find information” (53.1%), and “talking with business and group leaders from your district” (50.9%). Fewer than fifty percent of legislators ranked other activities as highly. Interestingly, the lowest percentage deemed as a high priority are “monitoring agency activities in your district” (16.9%) and “helping constituents find government jobs” (6.1%).

Across levels of professionalism, one sees that the priorities of legislators differ quite markedly, especially with regard to constituency-oriented activities. Among legislature-directed activities members serving in less professional chambers emphasize lawmaking somewhat more than those serving in professional chambers. Among constituency directed activities, the differences are much more distinct. On 8 of the 10 activities considered to be constituency-directed, members in more professional chambers reported putting greater emphasis on these activities. Only on the two activities that were least emphasized (monitoring agencies and helping constituents find jobs) do we see few differences across professionalism.

Another way to compare the relative effort devoted to legislature-directed activities, as opposed to constituency-directed activities is shown in Figure 1 for citizen, hybrid, and professional chambers. Here the average scores of the 6 indicators of legislature activities are compared to the average scores of the 10 constituency activities. As one can see, average effort devoted to legislative activities is higher than constituency activities in citizen and hybrid chambers while constituency efforts are higher than legislature activities in professional chambers. As for constituency efforts, the average was lowest in citizen chambers, higher in hybrid and highest among professional legislatures. These findings suggest that professionalism is having an effect on relative efforts toward legislative activities, however, there may be other explanatory factors that involve district and legislator-level factors.

Two aspects of constituency connections are also examined. The first involves the various types of techniques used to stay in touch with constituents. Survey respondents were asked about 9 different techniques (e.g., sending newsletters, press releases, speaking with local groups, etc.) and

asked to indicate on a five point scale how often they used each one ranging from “almost never” (value of 1) to “a great deal” (value of 5).⁷ The average of all nine responses represents the frequency of techniques used to stay in touch. The left side of Figure 2 displays the average values of this variable across the three types of legislatures. There appears to be a clear trend with citizen legislatures showing the lowest value 2.45, hybrid chambers in the middle with 2.87, and professional institutions with a value of 3.08.

Another aspect of constituency connections involves the degree to which constituency opinion matters to lawmakers in making decisions. Survey respondents were asked to report the degree of reliance on various sources of information in making important decisions. Nine different sources were provided that included “constituents from your district” as well as “personal experience,” “legislative leaders,” etc. For each source, respondents were asked to report the importance of each on a five-point scale ranging from “very little” (value of 1) to “a great deal” (value of 5).⁸ The response for “constituents from your district” is divided by the average for the remaining eight responses and this constitutes the measure used to gauge the relative importance of constituency influences. The right side of Figure 2 displays the average of each variable in the three types of chambers. There are minor differences across the states with legislators from citizen chambers reporting slightly relative reliance on constituents.

Multivariate Analyses

Table 2 reports the results of OLS regression analyses where legislative efforts and constituency efforts are used as dependent variables. As explained earlier, these dependent variables represent the average effort for the 6 legislative activities and the 10 constituency activities respectively. As the results demonstrate, several of the variables in each equation have an influence on the observed variation in these dependent variables. Collectively the variables do a better job of explaining differences in constituency efforts than legislative efforts as shown by the R-square statistics (.219 for legislative activities and .494 for constituency activities).⁹

Consistent with the descriptive findings, legislative efforts are lower in the more professional chambers, although the citizen chambers are indistinguishable from the hybrid chambers. Regarding constituency efforts, both dichotomous variables for citizen and professional are statistically significant. In states with term limits, legislators give greater effort to legislative efforts, but constituency efforts remain unaffected. Moving on to the electoral conditions, the results indicate mixed effects for these factors. Whether the legislator sought reelection and the strength of the opponent had no statistical influence on effort in either legislative-directed or constituency-directed

⁷The question asked: “How frequently do you use each of these techniques for staying in touch with your constituents?” The response options included: “forums and town halls,” “surveys or opinions in polls,” “sending newsletters to constituents,” “writing a newspaper column,” “cable television program,” “door-to-door visits with constituents,” “press releases,” “holding regular office hours for constituents,” and “speaking with local groups.”

⁸The question asked: “In going about your legislative work, how much do you rely on the following sources for information in making important decisions?” The response options included: “personal experience,” “legislative leaders,” “legislators with specialized knowledge in a given area,” “legislative staff,” “governor’s office,” “state agency staff,” “lobbyists and interest groups,” “constituents from your district,” and “media.”

⁹Given the mixed-level data in the analysis (state and district level data), a clustering technique was used that accounts for the possibility that standard errors can be understated (Primo, Jacobsmeier, and Milyo 2007). All results reported use the clustering technique in STATA.

efforts. However, greater campaign engagement of state legislators results in higher reported levels of both types of activities. The interesting finding for the electoral effects is that a heightened degree of campaign engagement results in more legislative effort, not less as one might have expected.

None of the demographic features differentiate legislature-directed activities, however, all three influence constituency efforts. Lower average income, higher percentages of minorities, and a more rural environment results in greater constituency efforts. The information environment variables were statistically significant in both equations, however the substantive effects and statistical relationships were stronger for constituency service. Greater attention by the media and higher levels of citizen knowledge resulted in greater effort.

Concerning the influence of legislator-level factors, legislators who view their jobs as careers allocated no more (or less) time to either type of activity. However, legislators who reported plans to run for higher office did give greater emphasis to constituency matters. As expected, legislators focused more on the needs of the state (rather than the district) put greater effort toward legislative activities and less toward those in the constituency. Whether the member espoused a trustee or delegate approach had no influence in either model.

Moving to the relative issue positions, neither of the variables was significant in the two equations. A legislator's perceptions about his placement relative to his constituency does not seem to matter. Moreover his position inside or outside the mainstream in terms of roll-call voting does not matter. With regard to legislator characteristics, half of the coefficients are statistically significant. Democrats engage in less constituency efforts while longer-serving members put greater emphasis on legislative activities. Women put greater effort on both legislative- and constituency-directed efforts.

Moving to Table 3, we assess the effects of nearly the same set factors on constituency connections. Beginning with the institutional effects we see that legislators in citizen chambers use fewer techniques (than those in hybrid chambers) for staying in touch with constituents. Moreover, members of citizen chambers rely less often on constituent opinions relative to various others when making important decisions. This latter finding has some consistency with previous findings that show that legislators in professional settings have resources that enable them to assess constituency opinions (Maestas 2003). Another institutional feature, term limits, reduces the reliance on constituency sources of influence. This finding makes sense in light of results from previous studies showing that term-limited members are more likely to hold more Burkean views of representation.

Four of the six coefficients related to electoral conditions are statistically significant. Those seeking reelection are more likely to use techniques for staying in touch, although this does not increase the extent to which legislators rely on constituent sources of information. Opponent strength in the last election increases the use of techniques, but reduces the reliance on constituent opinions. Campaign engagement only increases the use of techniques. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that the competitiveness of the electoral environment has a greater influence on the activities of legislators than they do on their actual decision making.

Demographic features of districts have little influence in either of the equations. Interestingly, media coverage and citizen knowledge had some degree of influence on techniques for staying in touch, but no influence on their reliance on constituent opinions. Thus, when legislators

perceive they are being observed they stay more in touch, but they are not more likely to incorporate constituent opinions.

Among general attitudes and perceptions, legislators who report plans to run for higher office say they engage in more techniques of staying in touch with constituents, but as with perceptions of the information environment, this does not result in constituency opinion being used in making decisions. Legislators who view their jobs as a career are no more likely to use techniques for staying in touch, but are slightly less likely to use constituency opinion. Legislators more prone to look after state needs as a whole and oriented more toward “trustee” views representation use constituency opinion less often in making decisions. Finally, legislator characteristics play only a minor role with longer-serving members using constituency techniques less often and Republicans relying more on constituent opinion in their decisions.

Discussion and Conclusions

There are patterns to the representative activities of state legislators. The amount of effort members devote to particular activities varies in systematic ways due to a wide variety of contextual features ranging from state institutional characteristics to prevailing electoral conditions. While it is certainly true that legislator-level factors have an effect, such factors appear to play a much smaller role. Instead of being a product of legislator preferences, it appears that representation is something strongly influenced by external conditions. While this study is certainly not the first to identify the importance of contextual effects, it does demonstrate the wide range of conditions that have an influence on the observed representational styles of state legislators.

It is clear from the findings that legislative professionalism exerts a strong influence on legislative and constituency efforts. Legislative efforts are lower in professional states while constituency efforts are higher. Members in citizen legislatures engage in fewer techniques for staying in touch with constituents and report using constituent opinions less in their decision making. The other state context variable, term limits, does not have as consistent of an effect and its substantive influence is not nearly as large as professionalism. Nonetheless, in combination these two state level conditions exert a strong pull on choices legislators make with regard to representation.

District-level features of average income, percent minority, and rural have an influence, however, mostly on constituency efforts. Higher values of these variables result in greater constituency activities, although their substantive impact is not enormous. The nature of the information environment is one that has an effect on both legislative and constituency activities. When legislators perceive others are paying attention to their activities, they give greater effort to those activities, especially constituency-directed activities.

Interesting finding emerge regarding electoral considerations. The literature generally hypothesizes (but does not always find) that competition increases constituency efforts and reduces legislative efforts. In this analysis, no such tradeoff was observed, neither legislative efforts nor constituency efforts were affected much by electoral competitiveness measures. However, there were aspects of elections that had some consistent effects. The degree of campaign engagement had a strong positive influence in three of the four models. Legislators who were heavily engaged in a wide assortment of campaign activities are the ones who extended greater effort to both constituency and legislative activities. These legislators are also the ones who use more techniques

to stay in touch with constituents. Perhaps being brought into closer proximity to voters during campaigns gives legislators incentives to do more in both areas.

Finally, the results show that some legislator-level factors also have an influence. But none of these factors has a large substantive effect. Such findings suggest that contextual matters are the components of greater consequence. If one considers findings from previous literature showing that some of these attitudes and predispositions are themselves a product of contextual features (Cooper and Richardson 2006), context is clearly a major driving factor. Legislators may bring with them various attitudes and perceptions concerning representation, but their activities appear to be affected much more by the context in which they are elected and serve.

Appendix
Views of Legislative Position as a Full-Time Position
and as a Career by Characteristics of Legislature

	Professionalism Rank	Term Limits	Political Culture
<i>Professional</i>			
Michigan	5	Yes	Moralistic
Ohio	7	Yes	Individualistic
Illinois	8	No	Individualistic
Florida	13	Yes	Traditionalistic
<i>Hybrid</i>			
Colorado	14	Yes	Moralistic
Missouri	21	Yes	Individualistic
Iowa	22	No	Moralistic
Minnesota	23	No	Moralistic
Oregon	25	No	Moralistic
South Carolina	36	No	Traditionalistic
Tennessee	38	No	Traditionalistic
<i>Citizen</i>			
Idaho	29	No	Moralistic
New Mexico	39	No	Traditionalistic
Maine	43	Yes	Moralistic
Montana	44	Yes	Moralistic
Utah	46	No	Moralistic

Note: Professionalism rank is based on the Squire (1992, 2007) index of legislative professionalism and political culture is based on the three-category classification system developed by Elazar (1984).

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Table 1
Legislators' Time and Energy Devoted to Various Activities by Type of Institution
 (Percentage indicating a high amount)

	All	Citizen	Hybrid	Professional
<u>Legislature-Directed Activities</u>				
Conducting research and writing legislation	24.2	15.3	27.5	31.1
Studying, reading and discussing pending legislation	70.3	70.0	71.5	68.3
Committee activities dealing with proposed legislation	73.9	81.2	77.7	56.3
Committee activities involving oversight of agencies	26.5	35.0	24.1	18.4
Informal discussions and negotiations with other legislators	59.6	54.9	65.8	55.9
Attending and participating in floor debates	48.6	51.0	53.3	36.7
<u>Constituency-Directed Activities</u>				
Communicating with citizens from your district	70.7	55.3	75.9	83.8
Talking with business and group leaders from your district	50.9	40.9	49.6	57.6
Monitoring agency activities in your district	16.9	17.4	14.0	21.3
Securing money for district programs and projects	29.4	23.4	24.5	46.7
Helping constituents deal with government red tape	57.4	41.7	57.8	79.4
Helping constituents find information	53.1	41.2	51.7	73.1
Helping constituents solve problems	59.9	42.3	59.9	85.1
Helping constituents get benefits from government	34.6	21.8	31.4	59.0
Helping constituents find government jobs	6.1	4.0	6.0	7.4
Educating constituents about your legislative activities	41.2	32.1	41.7	53.3

Question Wording: "In your job as a legislative representative, how much of your time and energy are devoted to each of the following tasks? (options: from 1 to 5 with 1=almost none, 3=moderate amount, and 5=a great deal; the percentages are those marking either 4 or 5).

Table 2

Factors Affecting Legislature-Directed and Constituency-Directed Activities

	Legislative Efforts	Constituency Efforts
Institutional Features		
Citizen Legislature	-.0349	-.2148*
Professional Legislature	-.2750**	.3821***
Term Limits	.2185**	.0236
Electoral Conditions		
Seeking Reelection	.0436	.0956
Opponent Strength	.0011	.0006
Campaign Engagement	.2311***	.2668***
Demographic Features		
Average Income (in thousands)	-.0059	-.0051**
Percent Minority	.0012	.0055*
Rural	.0007	.0059**
Information Environment		
Media Coverage of Efforts	.0592+	.1255*
Citizen Knowledge of Efforts	.0777+	.2148***
Legislator Attitudes and Perceptions		
View Job as a Career	.0655	.0693
Planning to Run for Higher Office	.0506	.1194**
Needs of the State over District	.0415**	-.0469**
Trustee Role over Delegate Role	-.0245	-.0057
Legislator Relative Issue Positions		
Divergence with Constituency Opinions	.0066	-.0315
Divergence with Fellow Legislators	-.0550	.0228
Legislator Characteristics		
Political Party (Democrat)	-.1331	-.1650*
Legislative Leader	.0483	-.0453
Terms Served	.0144*	-.0041
Gender (woman)	.1481***	.1281**
<i>Constant</i>	2.1390***	1.5867***
R ² =	.219	.494
N =	502	506

+ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 3

Factors Affecting Use of Techniques for Staying in Touch with Constituents and Reliance on Constituents for Making Decisions

	Techniques for Staying in Touch	Reliance on Constituents
Institutional Features		
Citizen Legislature	-.3629***	-.0603***
Professional Legislature	.1758	-.0040
Term Limits	.0029	-.0251 ⁺
Electoral Conditions		
Seeking Reelection	.1503*	.0160
Opponent Strength	.0018**	-.0007**
Campaign Engagement	.2455***	.0066
Demographic Features		
Average Income (in thousands)	.0030	-.0003
Percent Minority	-.0002	.0011 ⁺
Rural	.0060 ⁺	.0009
Information Environment		
Media Coverage of Efforts	.1003 ⁺	.0092
Citizen Knowledge of Efforts	.1736**	.0304
Legislator Attitudes and Perceptions		
View Job as a Career	.0854	-.0606 ⁺
Planning to Run for Higher Office	.1223**	.0361
Needs of the State over District	-.0216	-.0302**
Trustee Role over Delegate Role	-.0182	-.0222**
Legislator Relative Issue Positions		
Divergence with Constituency Opinions	.0463	.0439
Divergence with Fellow Legislators	.0605	-.0631 ⁺
Legislator Characteristics		
Political Party (Democrat)	.0564	-.1123**
Legislative Leader	.0462	-.0242
Terms Served	-.0167*	.0016
Gender (woman)	.0349	.0057
<i>Constant</i>	.8817**	1.3758***
R ² =	.418	.173
N =	494	494

+ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Figure 1
Average Legislative and Constituency Efforts of State Legislators By Professionalism

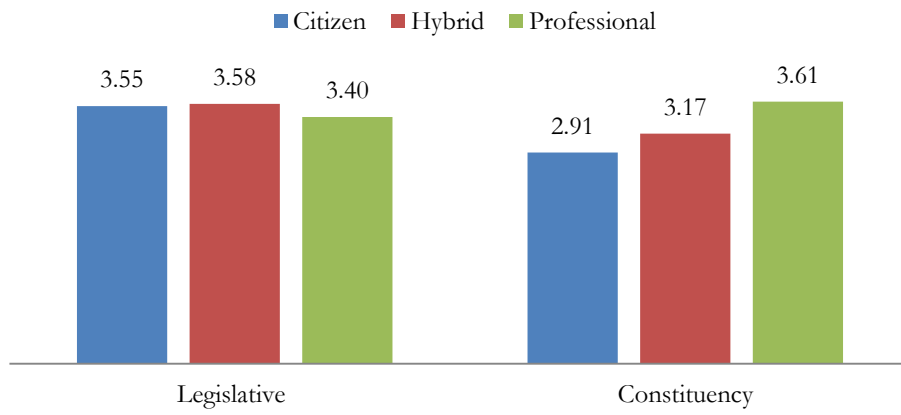


Figure 2
Average Legislative and Constituency Efforts of State Legislators By Professionalism

