

# Electoral Rewards for Political Grandstanding in Congressional Committee Hearings

Ju Yeon Park\*  
University of Essex

May 8, 2021

## Abstract

Members of Congress often use committee hearings as venues for political grandstanding. What we do not know is if members who engage in this behavior are electorally rewarded. Using a dataset of 12,820 House committee hearing transcripts from the 105th to 114th Congresses, I find that an increase in a member's grandstanding tendency in a given Congress leads to an increased vote share in the following election. The effect is stronger when voters are potentially more exposed to grandstanding. To further investigate the causal path, I test mechanisms through which voters reward members' grandstanding efforts using the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) panel survey data. The results show that the effect of grandstanding tends to work through persuading non-supporters rather than mobilizing turnout of supporters. An additional analysis shows that PAC donors and voters react differently to members' grandstanding behavior, providing members with incentives to represent these two groups differently.

Keywords: Congress, committee, hearings, political speech, grandstanding, election

Word count: 11,994

---

\*Lecturer at the Department of Government. [jp20761@essex.ac.uk](mailto:jp20761@essex.ac.uk).

# Introduction

Committees in the U.S. Congress hold public hearings for multiple purposes. One purpose is to collect expert policy-relevant information and provide it to the floor and the external audience (Krehbiel 1991). However, hearings occasionally turn into political theater when committee members take positions on policy issues, criticize the other party or its members, praise their party’s achievements, or grill a witness. I define this set of behaviors as “grandstanding”. As members are generally believed to be singled-minded reelection seekers and, accordingly, strategize their behavior to maximize reelection prospects (Mayhew 1974), scholars have argued that members grandstand with the expectation of reaping electoral benefits by doing so (Martin 2011). Yet congressional scholarship lacks a clear understanding of whether and how members’ grandstanding in hearings increases their reelection prospects.

Previous studies on congressional committees have argued that publicized committee hearings provide members with free airtime to promote their policy perspectives, communicate their vote intentions, and gain media attention (Del Sesto 1980; Huitt 1954). Electoral campaigns in recent congresses have become a perennial event that can happen anywhere at any time between elections (Lee 2016). In this sense, congressional hearings can serve as venues for running electoral campaigns. Beyond conventional channels through which politicians communicate with the public, various media platforms are developed and used to broadcast hearing procedures, enabling the public to observe members’ activities and statements in hearings more frequently (Rieselbach 1994). Thus, members have a greater incentive to grandstand in committee hearings. Although most committee hearings that receive broad public attention tend to be ones involving members’ grandstanding, it is surprising that few analytical works have tested the electoral consequences of members’ grandstanding behavior.

This paper is the first to undertake this analysis by examining specifically whether U.S. House representatives’ grandstanding in hearings is rewarded by their constituents. Although there can be other types of audiences, such as organized interest groups or other members of Congress, I mainly argue that the political messages members transmit during hearings

are aimed specifically at winning the minds of voters. On the one hand, compared to voters, other types of audiences tend to have better access to information about individual members' legislative activities and achievements (Hall and Snyder 2015), they are likely to disregard symbolic, grandstanding messages (Esterling 2007). On the other hand, voters lacking resources to access and assess such information tend to rely on politicians' public statements or the media coverage they generate. When it comes to reporting hearings, both politicians and the media are likely to disproportionately highlight dramatic moments involving members' grandstanding statements. Political messages typically conveyed in grandstanding statements tend to have elements resembling electoral campaign messages, such as position-taking, advertising, and credit-claiming. Hence, the effects of members' grandstanding on voter behavior will be similar with those of campaign messages aimed at strengthening constituents' support. Therefore, members' grandstanding efforts are likely to be rewarded through an increased vote share.

To test these theoretical claims, I use a recently released dataset on House committee hearing transcripts from the 105th to 114th Congresses and the "grandstanding score" for each statement or utterance that committee members made during these hearings (Park 2021). From them, I construct a member-level panel dataset and link it to data on election results from CQ Press.<sup>1</sup> Major findings from this analysis suggest that when a member grandstands more in a given congress than in the previous congress, their vote share tends to increase. However, effectiveness in legislative activities, as measured by Volden and Wiseman (2014), does not have any effect on the vote share. This finding that politicians' grandstanding in hearings has a direct, positive, non-trivial effect on their vote share is novel as well as striking. It also resonates with the classic discussion on work horses versus show horses, where Payne (1980) regrettably states, "the most capable baseball players are the most publicized," while the same relationship does not seem to hold for legislators.

---

<sup>1</sup><https://library.cqpress.com/elections/>

Additionally, two more analyses are conducted to test theoretical mechanisms through which members' grandstanding tendency affects their vote share. First, using data including all public remarks made from 2015 to 2016 by congressmen through various outlets, including newspapers, newsletters, press releases, and members' official websites, as well as members' tweets and YouTube channels, I demonstrate that the public is exposed to the statements that members make in public hearings almost every day.

Second, to further investigate the mechanisms through which a member's vote share increases when they grandstand in hearings, I analyze the CCES's panel data from 2010 to 2014 covering three elections. The analysis tests two potential mechanisms: an increase in turnout among incumbents' co-partisans relative to independents or out-partisans and vote switches in support of the incumbent on a larger scale than vote switches in the opposite direction. Findings imply that a grandstanding member's vote share tends to increase due to increased support for the incumbent among previous non-supporters rather than due to increased turnout of base supporters. I also test whether vote switches merely result from the increase in publicity for the incumbent instead of the message contents conveyed in grandstanding remarks. This result shows that although members' grandstanding makes them more recognizable to their constituents, the increased publicity barely mediates the effect of grandstanding on the vote share. This finding suggests that the content of the political messages conveyed in members' grandstanding statements is what matters and has a persuasion effect that can shape electoral outcomes.

In the last section of the empirical analysis, I additionally present a test of whether organized groups react to members' grandstanding in hearings. Studies have found that organized interest groups tend to react to what members say in hearings. For example, members' engagement in analytical discourse—as opposed to symbolic, political grandstanding messages—is rewarded through hard money contributions from political donors (Esterling 2007). Furthermore, members speaking similarly with witnesses that are representatives of interest groups are likely to be offered jobs at lobbying firms once they leave Congress (Ray 2018). In

contrast with voters, but consistent with the previous findings, I find that organized donors are unlikely to be moved by members' political cheap talk. Instead, they reward members who are effective in legislative activities.

This paper provides interesting insights about how electoral incentives may interfere with the effective functioning of legislative institutions. For politicians to make any legislative achievements, they first need to win the election. Hence, reelection is an essential goal that every politician pursues. The downside of this is that the electoral incentive may work at the cost of institutional effectiveness (Lee 2009). This paper presents one such example in a congressional committee hearing context. The finding that legislative effectiveness does not directly work toward reelection, while self-promotional grandstanding speeches do, suggests that public hearings may provide committee members with reasons to make political speeches rather than focus on regular committee business, such as information-seeking. Moreover, technological developments, which allow for broadcasting excerpts of congressional committee hearing procedures more easily and frequently, may strengthen politicians' electoral incentive at the cost of congressional committees' institutional efficiency.

This study contributes to multiple strands of extant literature. First and most importantly, it is the first study to systematically test an old conjecture that committee hearings are used as venues for members to establish electoral connections with constituents and confirms that the target audience of political grandstanding is the public rather than interest groups (Fenno 1973; Huitt 1954). In this way, it makes a novel contribution to the literature on legislative committees. Second, while extant studies have considered that legislators' styles, such as show horses and work horses, are time-invariant features that are intrinsic to each legislator (Esterling 2007; Payne 1980), this study highlights variations over time in legislators' styles across a continuum, calling for further research on the dynamics in legislators' communication and legislative styles. Third, the study extends our understanding of behavioral differences between voters and donors especially by examining their reactions to legislators' performance in one study rather than testing their behavior separately (e.g.,

Esterling 2007; Kriner and Schickler 2014). Fourth, this study contributes to the scholarship on incumbent advantage, because only incumbents can enjoy the benefit of utilizing legislative procedures, such as hearings, as a campaign strategy.

## **Establishing Electoral Connections through Committee Activities**

Members of Congress tend to serve on multiple committees and spend significant time undertaking committee activities. Fenno (1973) points out three goals that committee members pursue in general—reelection, making good policies, and gaining influence in the chamber—and argues that these goals can be achieved through their committee services. The first goal highlights the communicative role of committee activities. Especially by holding public hearings, committee members can utilize the hearings to make legislative processes within a committee visible to their constituents, show that they represent and protect their interests (Fenno 1973; Martin 2011), or promote their own policy perspectives for their constituents to adopt (Huitt 1954).

While members' communication with the public through committee activities has been largely neglected in theoretical studies (e.g., Diermeier and Feddersen 2000; Gilligan and Krehbiel 1987), some recent works bridge the gap between traditional theoretical models of committees and empirical observations of members' grandstanding behavior in congressional committees (DeGregorio 1992; Del Sesto 1980; Farnsworth 1961; Huitt 1954). For example, Park (2017) assumes that a committee member can increase their utility by holding a hearing in two ways: by collecting information to make a good public policy or by promoting their preferred policy alternative. In this study, the return for the latter is assumed to be determined externally, and the higher it is, the more resources a member concentrates on self-promotive grandstanding as opposed to information-seeking. However, in previous works, both theoretical and empirical, the return for grandstanding in hearings has been neither clearly identified nor tested.

Members' grandstanding in public hearings can be considered part of their electoral campaigns. In recent decades, electoral campaigns in the U.S. have become almost a continuous process throughout congressional sessions due to intensified partisan competition to win majority status (Lee 2016). Consequently, members of Congress endeavor to send campaign messages not only using traditional campaign channels but also throughout legislative processes in D.C. (Evans and Oleszek. 2001). These campaign messages, which often contain position-taking or credit-claiming or advertise members' partisan agenda (or alternatively condemn the other party and its members), are aimed at enhancing members' reelection prospects.

The external audience of public committee hearings largely comprises two groups: interest groups and constituents. Studies focusing on the influence of interest groups in policy-making processes find that interest groups tend to reward members who engage in analytical discourse or speak similarly with witnesses that are representatives of these groups in hearings (Esterling 2007; Ray 2018).

While most hearings rarely reach general voters (Levendusky 2013; Lenz and Lawson 2011), scholars argue that some hearings are used for public consumption (Esterling 2007; Park 2021; Payne 1982).<sup>2</sup> In these hearings, committee chairs and members often try to ad-

---

<sup>2</sup>Previous studies make this argument to motivate their study (DeGregorio 1992) or assume that this must be the case, but none tests this claim. For example, Esterling (2007), in his work testing donors' contributions in response to members' analytical speech style in hearings, assumes that members' experiential, symbolic speech style is aimed at appealing to voters but does not test this claim. Park (2021) examines institutional contexts under which legislators grandstand in hearings, assuming that members' grandstanding statements are likely to compensate for their lack of legislative power as a way to win reelection, but she does not test this assumption. The research that has come closest to testing this claim is that of Kriner and Schickler (2014), but they examine the effect of investigative hearings on public opinion of the president, not of the grandstanding members themselves.

vertise and promote their policy preferences directly through their statements or indirectly through inviting witnesses who will provide testimonies favorable to themselves (DeGregorio 1992; Huitt 1954; Leyden 1995). As a result, hearings help committee members, especially committee chairs, set the agenda and tone of national debate (DeGregorio 1992). Investigative hearings attacking the executive branch tend to undermine the president's approval rating (Kriner and Schickler 2014). Yet no systematic work has tested members' electoral benefits obtained from grandstanding in hearings. This paper is the first to perform this test.

Owing to these previous findings, I argue that committee members' grandstanding statements are likely to be aimed at influencing voters' electoral behavior. The following section theoretically outlines how and why voters would react positively to members' grandstanding in hearings.

## Theory

For politicians to stay in office and get reelected, winning the hearts and minds of voters is key. Voters want politicians to represent their policy preferences (Bronars and Jr. 1997), and politicians can best represent their supporters' preferences through policymaking. To evaluate a politician's legislative performance, one must acquire information about her legislative activities and be able to assess them. However, in general, voters lack the resources and ability to directly monitor and evaluate their representatives' legislative activities (Arnold 1990; Carpini, X., and Keeter 1996).

Consequently, voters tend to rely on their representatives' explanations of their own legislative achievements, which they are likely to strategically select to satisfy constituents' interests, or media reports of their performance. In general, the media tend to disproportionately highlight dramatic moments that are newsworthy. With regard to politicians' participation in hearings, the media are likely to report members' grandstanding statements

rather than their engagement in analytical discourse. Similarly, in their direct communication with voters, for example, through newsletters, official websites, and social media posts, politicians tend to reproduce their grandstanding moments including political messages that are easier for voters to understand and adopt (Ferguson 2013; Slapin et al. 2018). Thus, these political messages are more likely to reach voters and influence their electoral behavior than technical details of policy issues they address in hearings.

These messages typically involve position-taking, promoting their own party while criticizing the other party or the government, or grilling a witness, and I define this set of speech styles as “grandstanding”. As electoral campaign messages involve similar elements, I expect that once voters are successfully exposed to these messages, they will have effects that increase an incumbent’s reelection prospects as electoral campaign advertisements do. In addition, the effect size will depend on the level of exposure, which can be, for example, increased by the salience of a hearing and negatively affected by redistricting that disconnects the relationship between the incumbent and their constituents.

Electoral campaigns are designed to increase candidates’ chances of winning an election . There are two principal ways to increase an incumbent’s chances of reelection. The first is to increase the turnout of in-partisans. If the constituents who voted in the previous election do not change their vote choices, the only way to increase the incumbent’s vote share is to mobilize supporters who did not vote previously to turn out or to demobilize non-supporters who voted previously. However, the turnout of both groups may decrease in midterm elections and increase in presidential elections. Technically, then, as long as in-partisans are relatively better mobilized than independents or out-partisans compared to the previous election, the incumbent’s vote share may increase. Partisan messages are known to increase voter turnout especially among base supporters (Foos and de Rooij 2017; Jung 2019; Nickerson, Friedrichs, and King 2006; Panagopoulos 2009). Therefore, the political messages that members send in hearings are likely to mobilize in-partisan voters and increase the incumbent’s vote share in the following election.

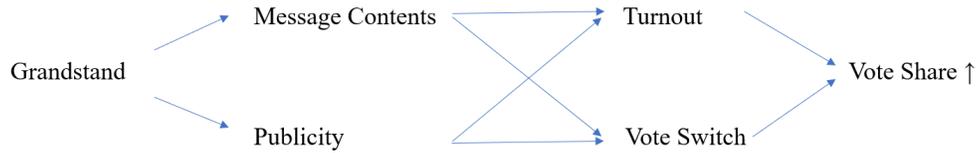
The second way to increase an incumbent’s chances of reelection is to persuade independents or opposite partisans to switch their vote in support of the incumbent. If the turnout rates of both supporters and non-supporters are fixed, the only way to increase the incumbent’s vote share is to win the votes of previous non-supporters. Politicians’ position-taking messages are found to have a persuasion effect by shifting public opinion (Broockman and Butler 2017). Studies note that voters tend to be persuaded by a like-minded candidate’s messages (Druckman 2001; Hartman and Weber 2009) but dissuaded by an unlike-minded candidate’s messages, and the size of the dissuasion effect is larger than that of the persuasion effect (Gilens and Murakawa 2002; Lupia 1995). However, the persuasion effect among strong in-partisans and the dissuasion effect among strong out-partisans will hardly affect their vote choices and will not contribute to vote shifts. Rather, vote shifts will depend on the backfire effect among lean in-partisans or the persuasion effect among independents or lean out-partisans. As long as the latter trumps the former, the incumbent’s grandstanding in hearings is likely to have a positive persuasion effect and increase their vote share in the following election.

The two explanations above assume that the message contents conveyed in grandstanding statements will have an effect in mobilizing supporters or persuading non-supporters. However, besides the contents of these messages, the fact that politicians can gain media attention through grandstanding may provide them with increased publicity and reputation (Payne 1980) that may also mobilize supporters or induce vote switches among previous non-supporters. Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical arguments.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>There can be other mechanisms not identified in this study. However, this study proposes that these are the major reasons that may increase an incumbent’s vote share as a result of their grandstanding statements in hearings and, thus, focuses on testing these mechanisms. More detailed psychological mechanisms through which political messages or publicity affect voter behavior are beyond the scope of this research.

**Figure 1** – Theoretical Mechanisms on Voters’ Reactions



Through these multiple potential mechanisms, which may work simultaneously, I expect that as a member grandstands more in hearings, their vote share is likely to increase in the following election. Six hypotheses are presented below. The first one is the main hypothesis on voters’ reactions to members’ grandstanding statements in general, and the second proposes the moderating effect of the level of exposure. The other four address potential mechanisms through which members’ grandstanding statements can be electorally rewarded:

**Vote Share Hypothesis:** If a member grandstands in public committee hearings more than they used to, they are likely to gain a higher vote share in the following election.

**Exposure Hypothesis:** A member’s grandstanding in hearings tends to have a greater effect on their vote share when their constituents have better exposure to their grandstanding.

**Publicity Hypothesis:** If a member grandstands in public committee hearings more than they used to, their publicity is likely to increase.

**Publicity-as-Mediator Hypothesis:** A member’s increased publicity due to their grandstanding in hearings is likely to mediate the effect of grandstanding on voters’ behavior.

**Mobilization Hypothesis:** If a member grandstands in public committee hearings more than they used to, in-partisan supporters in their district are more likely than independents or out-partisans to be mobilized to turn out in the following election.

**Vote Switch Hypothesis:** If a member grandstands in public committee hearings more than they used to, independents or out-partisans are likely to switch their votes in support of them.

## Empirical analysis

This section consists of four subsections. First, I assess the frequency of public exposure of members' statements in hearings. Second, I test the main hypothesis on the effect of members' grandstanding on their vote share and the moderating effect of the public exposure. Third, I explore the micro-level mechanisms. The last analysis provides a supplemental analysis of PAC donors' reaction to members' grandstanding.

### 1. How Often Are Members' Statements in Hearings Publicized?

To study the effect of members' grandstanding statements on voters' reactions, the key assumption is that voters are exposed to what members say in congressional hearings. One may think that ordinary voters barely watch hearings on C-SPAN. There are, however, lots of diverse communication channels through which the statements that members make in hearings can be delivered to voters. Before testing the hypotheses, this section briefly analyzes various textual data extracted from the press and members' social media accounts and demonstrates that voters are exposed more frequently to members' statements in hearings than one may think they are.

First, I collected 74,294 documents that contain public statements of members of the 114th Congress (2015-2016) from the Vote Smart Project website.<sup>4</sup> The original sources of these statements include press releases, statements that members post on their official websites, campaign websites or committee websites, newspaper articles, interviews, newsletters, press conferences, floor speeches, etc.<sup>5</sup> Figure 2 presents the frequency of these documents by the document type. I find that 5,982 of the documents mention "hearing" in their main texts. Since the term "hearing" can be used differently other than referring to congressional

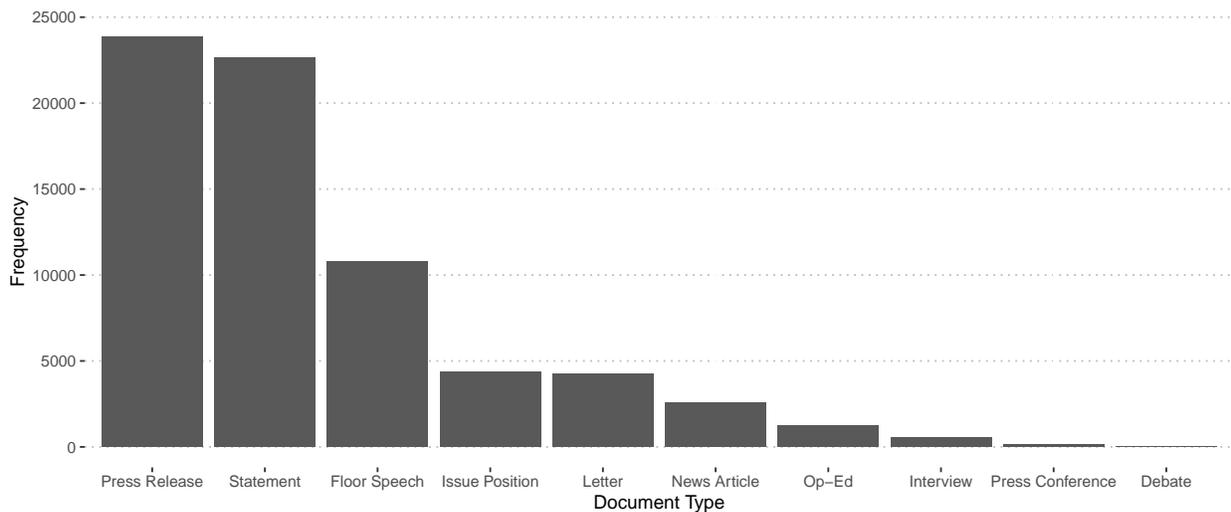
---

<sup>4</sup>For further information about the data, please visit <http://www.votesmart.org/>

<sup>5</sup>I include all types of documents in the analysis except for congressional hearing transcripts and social media. There are only 9 documents collected from social media in this data.

hearings, I randomly sampled 50 documents that include “hearing” and identified false positives in which “hearing” is used to mean more generally “listen to someone”. It turns out that 44 documents mention congressional hearings, and 15 documents directly quote or explain what members said in hearings. Given that, approximately 1,795 (30%) of the documents mentioning “hearing” are likely to convey statements that members made during congressional committee hearings. In addition, around half of them, 7 out of the 15, correspond to the definition of “grandstanding” used in this study, which suggests around 838 (14%) grandstanding statements that members made in congressional hearings are published for voters’ consumption in two years. Therefore, since there are approximately 262 business days per year, voters are exposed to members’ grandstanding in hearings at least once or twice a day on average.

**Figure 2** – Congressmen’s Public Statements by Document Type



Second, as one may further doubt that most voters hardly read press releases or newsletters on a regular basis, now I analyze only the newspaper articles that may be more widely consumed by the public. The documents from the Vote Smart Project include 2,595 newspaper articles, but it does not seem to include all newspaper articles conveying members’ statements published in the U.S. during the two-year period. To more accurately assess how frequently a voter subscribing one of the major U.S. newspapers is exposed to the statements

that members made during congressional hearings, I additionally analyze articles from the Washington Post in 2019.<sup>6</sup>

To examine a daily frequency of the exposure, I randomly selected ten days: one in each month excluding January and August in which Congress is in recess.<sup>7</sup> Using keyword search by “committee hearing” while restricting the search results to “articles,” I found 4,861 results in 2019 and 192 on the selected ten days. Among the 192 hearings, 97 news articles cover stories about congressional hearings. Figure 3 presents the distribution of these 97 articles by day. Among the 97 articles, 35 of them quote or cite members’ statements from a hearing, and in all these articles at least one statement is characterized as grandstanding.<sup>8</sup> Although members’ grandstanding remarks are not reported on certain days (3 days out of 10), on average, readers are exposed to around three newspaper articles including members’ grandstanding statements in hearings per day.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>A more comprehensive search using Lexis-Nexis across various news outlets was also conducted, but the search results frequently included contents about committees and hearings of European legislatures even with regional restrictions applied to the search criteria. Thus, I decided to choose a major U.S. news outlet and focus on it. The Washington Post based in D.C. ranks the top 5 in terms of circulation in the U.S. producing world-class news on politics according to the following source: <https://www.agilitypr.com/resources/top-media-outlets/top-10-daily-american-newspapers/>. I chose 2019 because it is the most recent full calendar year that I can easily access manually on the Washington Post website, and I also tried to avoid the year 2020 in which the congressional session was abnormally affected by the outbreak of COVID-19.

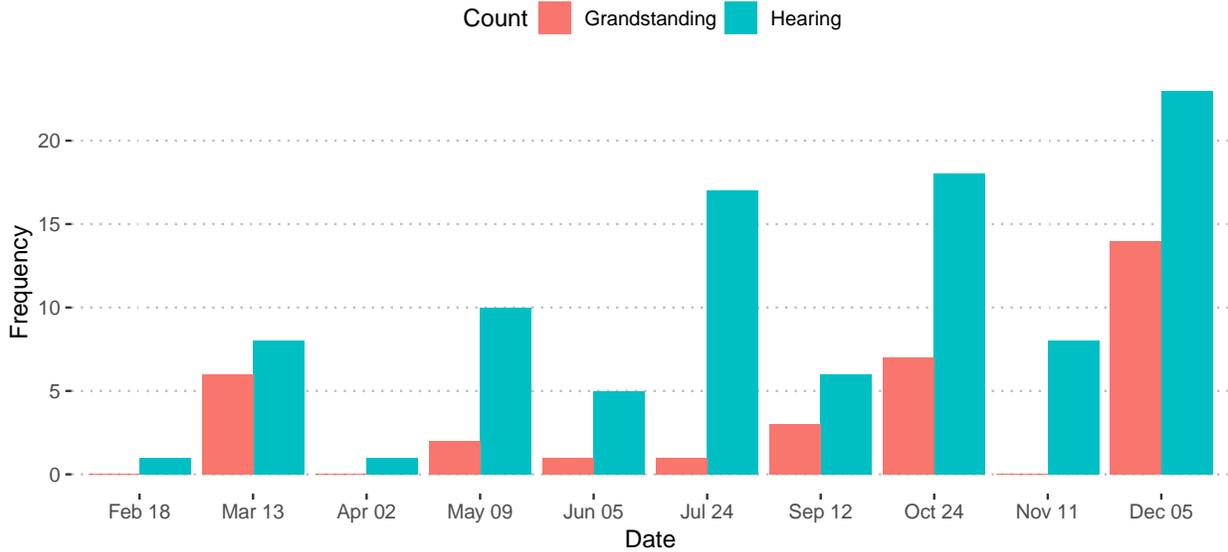
<sup>7</sup>The dates were chosen by random sampling ten numbers from 1 to 31 with repetition using R. I had to adjust the order of assigning each number to each month to avoid choosing weekends in certain months. The selected dates are presented in Figure 3.

<sup>8</sup>Some examples of those quotes are presented in Table A3 in the online appendix.

<sup>9</sup>Given that there are normally 262 business days in a year, it is computed as follows:

$$\frac{\frac{35}{192} * 4,861}{262} = 3.38.$$

**Figure 3** – News Articles on Hearings and Members’ Grandstanding Statements by Date



Third, beyond conventional communication channels, politicians recently are actively using social media platforms such as Twitter or YouTube to directly advertise their grandstanding moments in hearings.<sup>10</sup> Most of the members of Congress have their official Twitter handles and YouTube channels. Even congressional committees have them and post videos of hearing sessions in full or in part. One of the good examples that shows how politicians use these online communication channels is shown in Figure 4. This is a tweet with a video clip in which a Democratic House Representative of New York, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), condemns Republicans for their anti-environmental move at a House Financial Services Committee hearing on environmental justice.<sup>11</sup> This video clip was originally excerpted from the YouTube channel of the committee and tweeted by a social media user @nowthis-

---

<sup>10</sup>Only recently most of the members started using social media as their communication channel. So, the usage of this channel only applies to the last several congresses in my dataset.

<sup>11</sup><https://twitter.com/nowthisnews/status/1176563951712096256>

news. Then, the video clip quickly went viral as soon as AOC retweeted it on her own wall.<sup>12</sup> The view count of this video clip is 9.4 million as of December 15, 2020, and it was retweeted more than 6,200 times and liked by more than 21,700 users.

**Figure 4** – An Example Tweet with a Member’s Grandstanding Moment Originally Excerpted from the House Finance Committee’s YouTube Channel



To better assess how many video clips containing congressional hearing sessions congressmen post for public view, I collected YouTube data. Using the official YouTube channels of the members of the 115th Congress provided by GovTrack.us, I extracted information of the video clips that a random sample of 96 members posted during the 115th Congress.<sup>13</sup> Around 354 (8%) out of the 4,455 video clips they posted cover public hearing sessions typically including the member’s speech, and these videos were viewed 1,516,094 times in

---

<sup>12</sup>However, she deleted her posting from her account on December 13, 2019 according to the PolitWoops website: <https://projects.propublica.org/politwoops/user/AOC?page=2>

<sup>13</sup>Originally, 100 members were randomly selected from the pool of both senators and House representatives, but four channels of them no longer existed.

total.<sup>14</sup> Given that the selected channels constitute only one fifth of all members of the 115th Congress, approximately, I expect that 1,788 YouTube videos covering hearing sessions are published during this two-year period and the view count of all these videos would count over 7 million. It is reasonable to expect that these videos would have substantial impact on voters' behavior.

In addition, members actively share moments from committee hearings on Twitter as shown in the example in Figure 4. Among the 12,080 tweets that congressmen posted during the 115th Congress using their official Twitter accounts and contain the word "hearing", I randomly selected 50 tweets for the analysis. I find 80% of them are about congressional committee hearings and 67.5% of those about hearings contain either the video clip for a hearing session or members' statements made during the hearings they mentioned.

Overall, there is strong evidence that members communicate their statements in hearings through various public platforms. Even though not every hearing is spotlighted, stories on congressional hearings are publicized in various ways every day. Even though the stories do not pick up all the grandstanding remarks that members make each day, there is a good chance for members to receive public attention by grandstanding in hearings and thus worth continuously betting on it.

## **2. Electoral Rewards for Grandstanding in Hearings**

This section tests the first two hypotheses on vote share. A recently constructed dataset on the House committee hearing transcripts by Park (2021) is especially suitable to test this hypothesis. The data is available in two versions: a statement-level dataset and a member-level dataset. The statement-level dataset includes 1,026,677 statements committee members

---

<sup>14</sup>These video postings are identified if either the title or the description of the video contains the word "hearing". Unlike other media data analyzed in this section, almost all video clips that mention "hearing" are about congressional committee hearings with few false positive cases.

made in 12,821 House committee hearings from the 105th to the 114th Congresses as well as variables that characterize the congresses, committees, hearings and individual members. Most importantly, the dataset includes the “grandstanding score” which measures the level of grandstanding of each statement or utterance that a member made in these hearings using a crowd-sourced supervised-learning method.

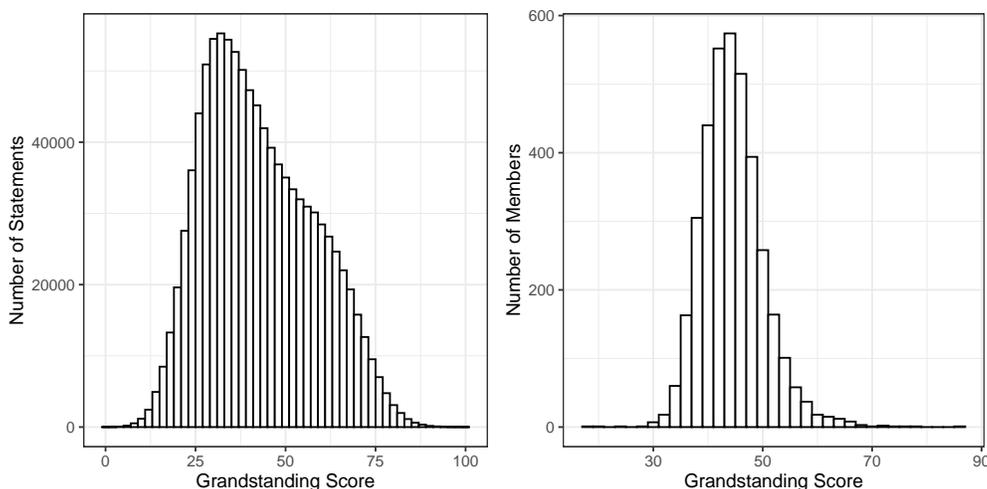
The score is measured through the following procedure. First, a statement is defined as a grandstanding statement if it denounces or praises a person or an institution, takes a position on a policy issue, or asks questions to embarrass or attack a witness.<sup>15</sup> Second, 3000 sample statements are randomly selected to be coded by Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) workers. Third, these online coders are presented a randomly paired two statements and asked to choose the one that is more grandstanding. Fourth, after collecting the workers’ responses to 30,000 such pairwise comparisons and fitting a Stan model embedded in the SentimentIt R package (Carlson and Montgomery 2017), which helps creating and analyzing tasks at MTurk, each sample statement is assigned a score which runs from -2.4 to 2.6 for the sample statements. Fifth, with the sample statements as the training set, 39 machine learning models are fit. Sixth, through the ensemble Bayesian averaging technique (Montgomery, Hollenbach, and Ward 2012), the 39 models are aggregated to optimize the prediction performance of the final, aggregated model. Last, the final model is used to predict the score for the rest of the members’ statements in the data, and the measurement is rescaled to run from 0 to 100. The mean of the grandstanding score is 53.48, and its standard deviation is 15.22. In the member-level dataset, the score is averaged for each member in each congress and

---

<sup>15</sup>To further clarify the definition of grandstanding statements, the study provides explanations on what is not grandstanding: A typical non-grandstanding statement offers an objective description of a policy-relevant situation or asks a witness a question to find facts or to seek expert opinion.

ranges from 17.65 to 85.78 with its pooled standard deviation at 4.34.<sup>16</sup> Figure 5 presents the distribution of the score in each dataset. More examples of most and least grandstanding statements are in the online appendix. The score in both member-level and statement-level datasets is used as key independent variables in this section.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 5** – Distribution of the Grandstanding Score



I present the analyses using both member-level and statement-level data for the following reasons. The member-level data is panel data so that it allows measuring within individual effects which facilitates making causal inference. The statement-level data, on the other hand, is useful to test important characteristics of hearings, such as salience of a hearing which is necessary to test the exposure hypothesis, and it allows measuring the effect of individual grandstanding statements on electoral gains.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>The pooled standard deviation is the weighted average of each member’s standard deviation over time.

<sup>17</sup>See Park (2021) for more information on the grandstanding score.

<sup>18</sup>Theoretically, it is ideal to identify members’ statements that are highlighted in news reports or any other communication channels and analyze only these. However, it is almost impossible to do so for the length of the period covered in the data and for the variety of potential communication channels. So, I analyze the entire data which include the

As a dependent variable, I compute the percentages of votes that a member received in the election held during a given congress in which the member's grandstanding score is measured using the election result data from the CQ Press.

In the regression analysis, the following potential confounders are controlled. First, because they can positively affect the vote share, I control for the total number of statements a member made in hearings in each Congress, the legislative effectiveness score (Volden and Wiseman 2014), seniority and its squared term, a member's total receipt of political contributions (Bonica 2016), the electoral security of the incumbent which is measured by taking the absolute value of (the Democratic presidential candidate's vote share in the previous election<sup>19</sup> - 0.5), and binary indicators for uncontested elections, party leaders and committee leaders.<sup>20</sup> The level of loyalty to the party, captured by the party unity score,<sup>21</sup> may increase the support from the party leadership for the member through endorsement or allocation of campaign contributions and thus boost the vote share. In contrast, the ideological inten-

---

hearings that received greater public attention and those that received less. Thus, correctly speaking, the effects of grandstanding score can be interpreted as the effects of members' grandstanding "efforts" rather than the effects of members' grandstanding statements that the public heard or read. However, given that the grandstanding score can approximate the probability that the statement can receive public attention, the analysis still allows us to learn the effects of members' grandstanding in hearings.

<sup>19</sup>This variable is from Bonica (2016).

<sup>20</sup>The number of statements and being in the leadership positions of a party or a committee may increase the publicity of a member. In the statement-level analysis, instead of the member-level indicator for committee leaders, a committee-level indicator for committee leaders is used as it is more refined measurement to capture characteristics of statements that committee leaders tend to make in hearings that they administer as a chair or a ranking member.

<sup>21</sup>It measures the frequency of voting with the party median on party unity votes and is collected from [VoteView.com](http://VoteView.com).

sity, which is the absolute value of the first dimension of the DW-NOMINATE score, may reduce the chances of garnering broader support from constituents. For their importance in determining members' incentive to grandstand and in shaping electoral environment in general, the indicators for being minority party members and for divided government and the interaction between the two are included (Park 2021). Another important factor that may disconnect the electoral connection between a member and constituents is redistricting. Thus, an indicator for redistricting is included.<sup>22</sup>

In the statement-level analysis, I control for three additional variables. As the statement-level data only allows cross-sectional comparisons, to control for the variations in the vote share across members, I include members' vote share from the previous election and its squared term assuming that its serial relationship may not be linear. In addition, unlike in the member-level data, the statement-level data includes hearing-level characteristics such as the level of issue salience of a hearing which I measure by counting the number of committee members who spoke in a hearing as a proxy.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, some variables are rescaled to range from 0 to 1 if they do not originally to make their effect size comparable with one another. The rescaled variables are the ideological intensity, the legislative effectiveness score, seniority, statement frequency, and the salience of a hearing.

---

<sup>22</sup>The information on when redistricting occurred in each district is from the election result data by the CQ Press.

<sup>23</sup>This measure can capture the salience of a hearing because members would have a greater incentive to speak in a hearing in which they expect more media attention. The salience of a hearing can be better measured using the number of references to the hearing in media reports, but this way of measuring it is problematic because it may be a result of members' grandstanding behavior rendering it a post-treatment variable. In contrast, the number of members speaking in a hearing is relatively more exogenous to members' grandstanding and thus is a more suitable measurement.

Because of the structure of the data, I had to devise a modeling strategy. In the member-level panel data analysis, I estimate within-individual effects by fitting an OLS regression with member fixed-effects and Congress fixed effects with robust standard errors clustered by member.<sup>24</sup> In the statement-level analysis, an OLS model is used with fixed effects for committees and Congresses and random effects for members and hearings.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1 presents regression results testing the effects of members' grandstanding on their vote share in percentages. Some control variables are omitted from this table, and full regression results are available in Table A2 in the online appendix. The first two models are from the member-level analysis. In both baseline and full model specifications, members' grandstanding statements have positive and statistically significant coefficients providing support for the vote share hypothesis. Note that the coefficients are within-individual estimators. Thus, the results suggest that if a member grandstands more in current congress than she did in other congresses she served, she is likely to gain higher vote share in the following election. More specifically, based on the second model with full specification, one point increase in the grandstanding score is likely to increase the vote share by 0.122% points.

Now, more realistically, how much do members change their speech styles from a congress to another in general? To answer this question, I compute the difference between the current congress and previous congress for each member. The distribution of this difference is shown in Figure 6. In most cases (72.22%), members change their grandstanding score by one pooled standard deviation of the score in the member-level data, which is 4.34, or less. There is, however, a significant proportion of members (27.78%) who changed their speech style by

---

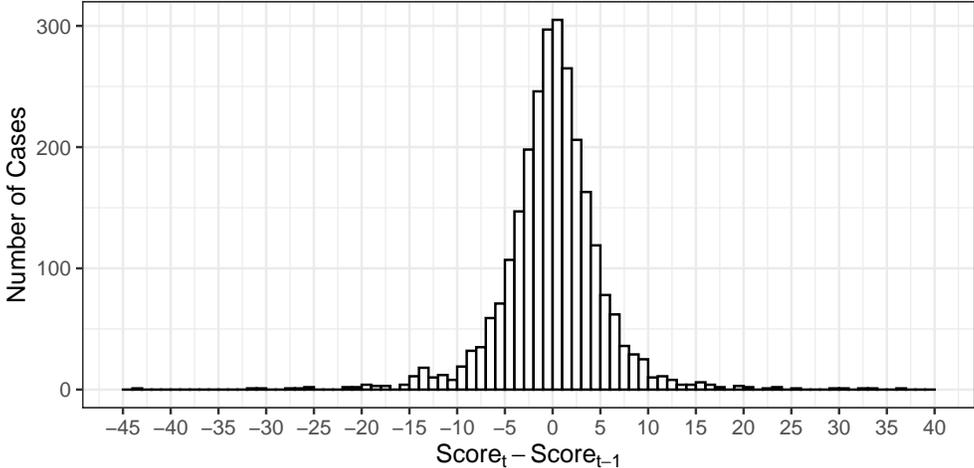
<sup>24</sup>In the model, I do not include lagged dependent variable because Durbin-Watson tests of autocorrelation on the full models presented in Table 1 provide insignificant test statistics which suggests that there is no autocorrelation in the dependent variable, the vote share.

<sup>25</sup>The main reason for not including fixed effects for members and hearings is due to the large number of fixed effect coefficients to be estimated which prevents the R software from successfully fitting the model.

more than one pooled standard deviation ranging up to over 20 points in extreme cases. Members’ incentives to grandstand may vary depending on various institutional conditions. Certain members may experience a greater need to change their speech style, and these members who change their behavior drastically are of interest in this study. Then, the result suggests that if a member grandstands more by 10 points, her vote share is likely to increase by 1.22%, and a 20-point increase is likely to lead to 2.44%. Whether this amount of increase would be deterministic in winning a close election or not may depend on each member’s electoral conditions, but it is certainly a non-trivial, substantial effect.

For example, the members whose grandstanding score jumped by more than 10 points from the previous congress they served and whose scores compared are measured based on at least 10 statements experienced about 6.6% increase in their vote share on average. One of them is the former Vice President Mike Pence who served as a House Representative of Indiana from the 107th to 112th Congresses. In his second term, his grandstanding score increased from his first term by 11.89%, and he gained 3% more votes at the end of his second term than he received at the end of his first term. Similarly, Mac Thornberry, who served as a representative of Texas’ 13th district from the 105th to 114th Congresses, experienced an 11% increase in his vote share at the end of the 107th Congress after his grandstanding score increased by 13.73% compared to that of the 106th Congress.

**Figure 6** – The Distribution of Changes in the Grandstanding Score



**Table 1** – The Effect of Grandstanding on Vote Share (%)

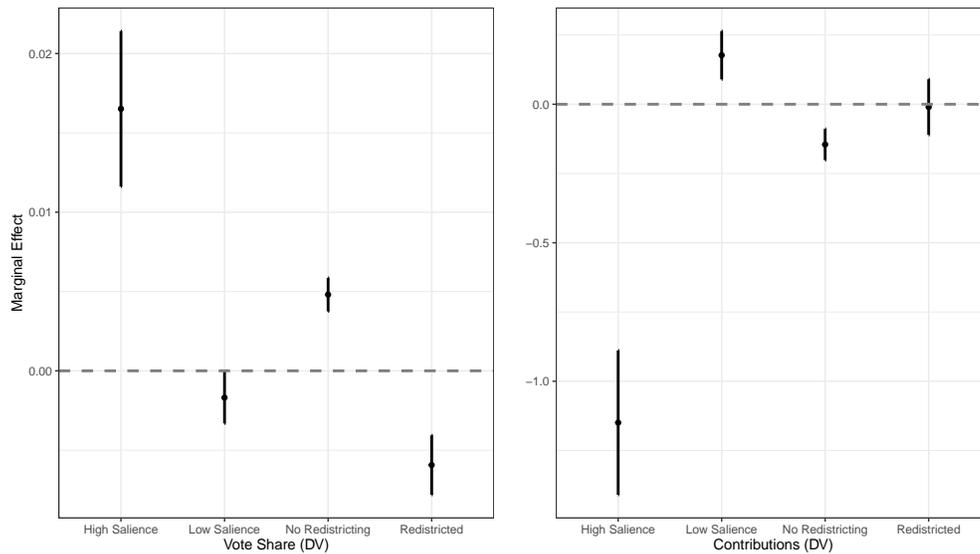
	<i>Member-level</i>		<i>Statement-level</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Grandstanding score	0.098** (0.043)	0.122** (0.048)	0.001** (0.0005)	0.002*** (0.0005)
Legislative effectiveness		-3.252 (2.578)		-4.573*** (0.139)
Salience				-0.168 (0.328)
Redistricted		-4.398*** (1.102)		-4.326*** (0.071)
Vote share			0.603*** (0.009)	0.344*** (0.010)
Vote share squared			-0.005*** (0.0001)	-0.003*** (0.0001)
Constant	56.884*** (2.188)	28.766*** (6.221)	53.816*** (0.586)	30.198*** (0.651)
Member effect	Fixed	Fixed	Random	Random
Hearing effect	-	-	Random	Random
Committee effect	-	-	Fixed	Fixed
Congress effect	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed
Observations	3,259	2,842	897,671	777,484
R <sup>2</sup>	0.641	0.703		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.504	0.571		

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
The dependent variable is a member's vote share in the election held at the end of their two-year term. Some control variables are omitted.

The last two models use the statement-level data which allow measuring the effect of individual statements on members' vote share. The coefficients on the grandstanding score in both baseline and full models are positive and statistically significant. This result from the full model suggests that making one sensational grandstanding statement scoring 100 points is likely to increase the vote share by 0.2% and making five such statements is likely to result in 1% increase in vote share. It is a surprisingly large effect. Moreover, it is not implausible at all given the number of statements each member makes in each congress—with its mean at 270—and the range and distribution of the grandstanding score. These results strongly support the main hypothesis on vote share suggesting that members' grandstanding efforts tend to increase their electoral prospects.

Now, I further test whether the relationship between members' grandstanding and election results is moderated by the degree of voters' exposure to members' grandstanding statements. I capture this concept using the salience of hearings and redistricting. First, the effect of members' grandstanding can be amplified when it is done in salient hearings which more people pay attention to and thus have higher chances to be picked up by the media. To address this moderating effect of the issue salience, I add an interaction term between the grandstanding score and the level of salience to the same specification of Model 4. The full regression results are in Table A4 in the online appendix. The coefficient on the interaction term is positive and highly significant (0.018 (s.e.= 0.003)) while that on the grandstanding score is negative and significant (-0.008 (0.002)). The salience measure is rescaled to run from 0 to 1. The marginal effects of the grandstanding score when the salience is 1 and 0 are presented in the graph on the left in Figure 7. In the most salient hearing where the largest number of committee members attended and spoke, making a 100-point grandstanding remark is likely to increase the percentage of votes by 1%, but this positive effect disappears in less salient hearings. This result confirms that there is a moderating effect as expected such that a member's grandstanding statement is likely to have a greater effect on the vote share when made in a more salient hearing.

**Figure 7** – Marginal Effects of the Grandstanding Score by Saliency or Redistricting



Second, I also test whether the effect of grandstanding diminishes when the incumbent experienced redistricting during her term. Redistricting disconnects the link between some voters and the incumbent. Especially, the incumbent’s new constituents vote in the following election without enough observation of her performance including grandstanding in hearings. Thus, the effect of grandstanding may reduce when redistricting occurs due to the lack of exposure. I test the moderating effect of redistricting by adding an interaction between the grandstanding score and the indicator for redistricting to the statement-level regression model with full controls. The coefficient on the interaction term is negative and statistically significant,  $-0.011$  (s.e.= $0.001$ ), and the coefficient on the grandstanding score is positive and significant,  $0.005$  (s.e.= $0.0005$ ). The marginal effects of the grandstanding score when the redistricting indicator is 1 and 0 are presented in the graph on the right in Figure 7. The result suggests that in general, when there is no redistricting, the effect of grandstanding is positive, and its size is much larger than the size reported in Model 4 ( $=0.002$ ), which is noteworthy. When there is redistricting, however, members’ grandstanding no longer works in favor of themselves. This result demonstrates that the effect size of grandstanding in Model 4, which is substantively large enough, seems to be deflated by the cases that were redistricted. Overall, these additional tests provide support for the exposure hypothesis.

### 3. A Closer Look at the Mechanism

Then, through what mechanism would members' grandstanding in hearings increase their vote share? To investigate these mechanisms proposed in the last four hypotheses, I analyze the CESS panel survey data from 2010 to 2014 which include surveys fielded biannually before and after each of the three elections held during this period.

Here are the case selection criteria for this analysis. First, as in the previous section, only the cases in which the incumbent ran for reelection are considered. Second, the major challenge in using this short panel data is that there was a large-scale redistricting in January 2012, and the analysis in the previous section confirmed that the effect of grandstanding is nullified when there was redistricting probably due to the sudden disconnection between incumbents and constituents. Therefore, only the respondents in the districts unaffected by the 2012 redistricting are included.<sup>26</sup> Third, when estimating within-individual over-time effects, the cases where the match between an incumbent and a respondent is observed only in one wave out of the three are automatically dropped from a regression model.

The data include multiple variables that allow testing various mechanisms. Theoretically, of my particular interest are respondents' validated turnout<sup>27</sup> and whether they say they

---

<sup>26</sup>Even though the match between an incumbent and a respondent did not change, politicians whose district boundary changed might have modified their policy-positions or ways of communication to accommodate new constituents. In addition to these changes, other unidentified district-level environments influencing the relationship between an incumbent and a respondent might have changed upon redistricting. Thus, including the incumbent-respondent pairs in the redistricted regions in this analysis will introduce time-varying, unobservable confounders. Therefore, the analysis excludes responses collected from the redistricted districts in the 2012 survey.

<sup>27</sup>I only use validated voters because self-reported turnout is often found untruthful in previous studies (e.g., Traugott and Katosh 1979), and I confirmed that the current dataset suffers from this issue as well.

voted for the incumbent. Given the errors and biases in self-reported vote choices documented in previous literature (Mattei 1998; Wright 1990) and especially low response rate for this item, however, to complement the analysis, I also test the effect of members' grandstanding on respondents' partisan affiliation with the incumbent party. In addition, to test whether the increased publicity instead of the message contents conveyed in members' grandstanding statements affects voters' reactions and to what extent, I use respondents' correct recall of their incumbent's name and party as a measure of the members' level of publicity. All these four dependent variables are binary indicators. The unit of analysis in this section is a member-respondent pair, and I look at the over-time changes in each of these pairs.

The main explanatory variable is the incumbent's grandstanding score, and I control for the following potential confounders. At the respondent-level, I control for age, the level of education, family income, the level of political interest and binary indicators for registered voters and unemployment.<sup>28</sup> At the member-level, I include the legislative effectiveness score, seniority and its squared value, total receipt of political contributions, previous vote share and binary indicators for party leaders and uncontested elections. In addition to the respondent-member fixed effects, Congress fixed effects are included to capture time trends. To estimate the effects of grandstanding on the four types of voter reactions, I use a fixed-effects logit model, which is also called conditional logistic regression (Chamberlain 1980; Longhi and Nandi 2017), using the "clogit" function in the "survival" R package (Therneau 2020).<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>The coding rules are in the online appendix.

<sup>29</sup>Some of the dependent variables were originally ordered variables. However, I converted them to binary variables for the following reason. There are neither many ready-made statistical packages that estimates a fixed-effects ordered logit model consistently nor a consensus on the validity of a few new approaches to estimate the estimators. One option recently made available is the "feologit" command in Stata (Baetschmann et al. 2020), but none of my model specifications were fit due to non-convergence. Thus, except for

Table 2 presents regression results for only the key independent variables.<sup>30</sup> Model 5 tests the mobilization hypothesis proposing that there can be a mobilization effect especially among in-partisans rather than among independents and out-partisans. The dependent variable is respondents' validated turnout, and the grandstanding score is interacted with partisan groups with independents as a reference category. The result shows that there is neither a mobilization effect nor a demobilization effect in any group. Model 6 tests the vote switch hypothesis on whether incumbents' grandstanding in hearings tends to motivate non-supporters more likely to vote for the incumbent but finds no evidence of vote switches in any group. Even without the interaction with partisan groups, the politicians' grandstanding tendency does not have any independent effects on voter turnout or vote choices. (See Table A5 for the results.)

These two results are inconsistent with the member-level findings presented in the previous section. The potential reason for this inconsistency might be related to the typical issue with survey respondents' self-reported vote choices. By using the validated turnout, the first model overcomes the bias in self-reported behavior. Yet, the second model on candidate choices still suffers from this problem. Their vote choices can never be validated for the nature of the secret ballot system. So, the result in the first model on turnout is relatively more reliable than that in the second model on vote choices. This suggests that there is no mobilization effect but there is still a possibility of vote switches resulting from members' grandstanding and the vote switches may not have been fully captured in the respondents' self-reported vote choices. I will revisit this issue shortly.

Next, I further delve into the mechanisms that might mediate their vote choices upon observing members' grandstanding behavior and thus provide us with insights on how it helps

---

the binary turnout record, I choose to recode the other three ordered variables to binary indicators in order to consistently and efficiently estimate within-individual estimators using a fixed-effects logit model.

<sup>30</sup>I present full model specifications in Table A4 in the online appendix.

**Table 2** – The Effects of Grandstanding on Voter Behavior (2009-2012)

Dependent Variables	Validated	Vote	Partisanship	Incumbent's	Partisanship
	Turnout	Choice		Publicity	
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Grandstanding score	−0.00001 (0.0232)	0.0023 (0.0270)	0.0072*** (0.0097)	0.0078*** (0.0072)	0.0067*** (0.0098)
In-partisan	−0.0186 (1.1070)	0.4493 (1.2684)		0.2000 (0.1629)	
Out-partisan	0.0104 (1.1429)	0.1826 (2.0038)		0.3157*** (0.1809)	
Recognition					0.0647 (0.1227)
Grandstanding x In-partisan	0.0003 (0.0244)	−0.0041 (0.0280)			
Grandstanding x Out-partisan	−0.0001 (0.0252)	−0.0139 (0.0442)			
Voter-Member effect	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed
Observations	9,168	8,721	9,911	9,865	9,865
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00002	0.0016	0.0002	0.0025	0.0003
Log Likelihood	−3,295.0730	−2,537.5170	−3,766.1980	−5,641.2560	−3,756.6200

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

All dependent variables are binary indicators: Vote choice is 1 for voting for the incumbent, and 0 otherwise. Partisanship is 1 for affiliating with the incumbent party, and 0 otherwise. The incumbent's publicity is 1 if a respondent correctly recalls the incumbent's party, and 0 otherwise. Fixed effects logit models are used to estimate within-individual effects. Control variables are omitted.

members garner voters' support by grandstanding in hearings. Model 7 examines the effect of grandstanding on voters' affiliation with the incumbent party. The dependent variable is 1 if the voter is affiliated with the incumbent party and 0 otherwise. Interestingly, I find that as the incumbent grandstands more than before, the respondents are more likely to switch their partisanship to affiliate with the incumbent party. The coefficient on the grandstanding score is positive and highly significant. Given that voters who switched partisanship to the incumbent's party are also likely to switch their votes to the incumbent, this result provides indirect support for the vote switch hypothesis.

Then, would the switches in voters' partisanship be a result of the persuasion effect induced by political messages conveyed in members' grandstanding statements, or would it be a consequence of members' increased publicity for grandstanding in hearings? I test the latter, which will also enable indirectly assessing the former assuming that these are the only two possible mediating mechanisms for the respondents' partisanship switches to the incumbent party. First, Model 8 considers whether politicians' grandstanding increases voters' recognition of their representative's name and party. The dependent variable is 1 if the respondent recognizes the incumbent's name and correctly recalls her party and 0 otherwise. The result shows that the grandstanding score has a positive, significant effect on voters' recognition of the incumbent providing support for the publicity hypothesis.

Second, now I test if a respondent better recognizes the incumbent, she is more likely to affiliate herself with the incumbent's party. Model 9 regresses the publicity on the in-partisanship, that is the respondents' affiliation with the incumbent party, while controlling for the grandstanding score. If the publicity mediates the effect of members' grandstanding on partisan switches, the coefficient on the grandstanding score should either lose statistical significance or reduce in size. Compared to that in Model 7, the coefficient on the grandstanding score remains statistically significant but reduced in size from by 0.0005 or around 7% which is tiny. Thus, the increased publicity of the incumbent mediates the causal path from the incumbent's grandstanding in hearings to voters' partisanship switches by a neg-

ligibly small margin implying that the persuasion effect mediates the process mostly. This result indirectly shows that the publicity-as-mediator hypothesis is hardly supported.

Then, why do we not find respondents' vote switches while we observe their partisanship switches as well as the increased vote share of the incumbents resulting from members' grandstanding in hearings? I identify two potential reasons. First, survey respondents often misreport their vote choices (Wright 1990; Mattei 1998). Due to the secrecy of vote choices, misreporting can be worse for the vote choice question than for any other questions including the turnout. Second, not only misreporting vote choices, but also high non-response rates can be another reason. Despite the anonymity of the survey data, respondents are likely reluctant to reveal their vote choices compared to any other survey items. Indeed, the non-response rate for this item is 13.1% as opposed to 3.6% for the turnout question and 1.8% for the question on partisanship.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the self-reported vote choices may suffer from selection bias in terms of who responds and who do not. In this panel regression analysis, only the observations that changed over time contribute to the fit of the regression. So, if those who switched their votes feel uncomfortable revealing their vote choices and refuse to respond at a higher rate than those who did not switch their votes, the regression result which relies only on the vote switchers will fail to correctly estimate the relationship between members' grandstanding and voters' vote choices as in Model 6.<sup>32</sup>

Lastly, to be completely free from any potential intervention of the 2012 redistricting, a cleaner test can be conducted using only the responses from the single-district states such as Alaska. In this dataset, there are 308 such cases from five states. The same regression analysis presented above using only these responses is conducted and presented in A6 in the online appendix. I find that out-partisans tend to switch their votes to the incumbent as the

---

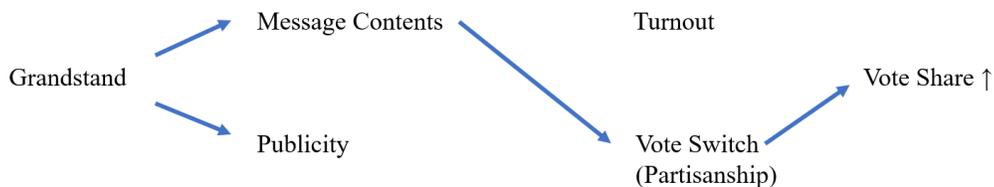
<sup>31</sup>However, it makes sense that less people would refuse to respond to the vote choice question because only those who turned out to vote can say who they voted for. Still, 4.4% out of those who said they voted did not report their vote choices.

<sup>32</sup>A simple test on this argument is provided in the online appendix.

incumbent grandstands more in hearings. The coefficient on the interaction term between the grandstanding score and the indicator for out-partisans is positive and statistically significant at .05 level, and the marginal effect of the grandstanding score for this group is positive. The analysis further shows no effect of the incumbent’s grandstanding on turnout, partisanship, and recognition of the incumbent. Although the results are slightly different from the previous analysis, they corroborate the finding on the persuasion effect.

Figure 8 summarizes findings of voters’ reactions to members’ grandstanding in hearings by removing the lines representing the theoretical relationship that were not empirically supported from Figure 1. This section demonstrated that the increase in vote share of the grandstanding incumbents can be explained by voters’ vote switches to the incumbent party rather than mobilization effect, and the vote switches are likely a result of persuading non-supporters through the contents of political messages conveyed in members’ grandstanding statements. Members can increase their publicity by grandstanding in hearings, but the increased publicity does not necessarily lead voters to switch their choices in favor of the incumbent.

**Figure 8** – Summary of Findings on Voters’ Reactions



#### 4. The Effect of Members’ Grandstanding on PAC Contributions

Political donors are another type of audience of congressional committee hearings. Then, how would they react to members’ grandstanding behavior? Previous studies find that interest groups tend to reward committee members’ engagement in analytical– as opposed to experiential or symbolic– discourse in hearings through political contributions (Esterling 2007). Given that grandstanding statements tend to be symbolic rather than analytical

about policy details, I expect that by grandstanding in hearings members would not be able to solicit more donations from organized interests making a clear contrast between how voters and donors react to politicians' speaking styles.<sup>33</sup>

Using the total receipt of PAC contributions (Bonica 2016) as a dependent variable, I conduct a regression analysis to test this claim. In addition to the set of controls included in the analysis on the vote share, the number of candidates running for the district primary is controlled because it may reduce the amount of donation that an incumbent can receive due to the intensified competition. Table 3 presents regression results only with key independent variables.<sup>34</sup> In the first two models based on the member-level analysis, the coefficients on the grandstanding score are insignificant in both the baseline and full models. In the baseline model using the statement-level data in the third column, however, the coefficient becomes statistically significant and negative, but it turns insignificant when a set of potential confounders are controlled in the last model. This result suggests that members' grandstanding does not affect PAC contributions they receive.

Another interesting finding from the results in 3 is that the legislative effectiveness score has a positive and statistically significant effect on political donations while it has no effect on the vote share as shown in 1. This finding makes a stark contrast between voters and

---

<sup>33</sup>There are other types of political donors such as individual donors, and they may react differently to members' grandstanding behavior. Analyzing their reactions can be an interesting topic for future research but is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>34</sup>The full regression results are in A7 in the online appendix. In addition, as in the speech-level analysis on vote share, I assumed that political contributions that a member received in the previous election cycle may not be necessarily related to the current one linearly. So, I tried controlling for the previous one's squared value in Models 10 and 11 as well. However, the models with this variable failed estimation due to rank deficiency. Thus, this analysis includes only the lagged total receipt of PAC contributions without its squared term.

**Table 3** – The Effect of Grandstanding on Total Receipt of PAC Contributions (\$1K)

	<i>Member-level</i>		<i>Statement-level</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Grandstanding score	0.367 (1.166)	1.520 (1.271)	-0.077*** (0.010)	-0.009 (0.010)
Legislative effectiveness		535.544*** (113.929)		407.530*** (2.924)
Total PAC contributions (t-1)			0.326*** (0.001)	0.301*** (0.001)
Constant	382.819*** (44.140)	111.717 (131.224)	164.168*** (10.921)	120.456*** (15.249)

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

The dependent variable is the total receipt of PAC contributions each member received during their two-year term. Some control variables are omitted from this table.

donors regarding which types of members' activities they pay attention to. That is, voters are more likely to react to members' political statements while relatively ignorant about their legislative achievements. In contrast, donors barely react to the political statements that members make in hearings. Rather, they are more interested in members' legislative activities and assess them when making their donation decisions. This asymmetric rewarding scheme raises a concern about the representation of constituents' preferences because it incentivizes politicians to win voters' minds only by making impressive political speeches while proposing and voting on bills that reflect organized interests' preferences as opposed to public welfare if they vary. This conjecture is consistent with the literature that shows politicians' pattern of voting that is more aligned with their donors' preferences than with their constituents' (Barber 2016a).

## Conclusion

This study investigated whether committee members' grandstanding behavior in congressional committee hearings is electorally rewarded and through which mechanisms voters react to it. Using the dataset of House committee hearing transcripts and panel data analysis, the study finds that members' grandstanding in committee hearings tends to increase

their vote share in the following election. The analysis on mechanisms further demonstrated that the message contents in members' grandstanding statements are likely to persuade non-supporters of the incumbent in the previous election to switch their partisan affiliation or to vote in favor of the incumbent. In addition, members' grandstanding increases their publicity likely due to the increased media exposure, but it does not necessarily lead non-supporters of the incumbent to become supporters. Moreover, contrary to voters, PAC donors do not react to members' grandstanding statements but, rather, reward legislative activities, about which most voters are ignorant.

The most interesting finding of this study is that congressmen's grandstanding remarks that most people consider theatrical, political cheap talk do have electoral consequences, suggesting that not all grandstanding statements are cheap talk, especially from the perspective of the public. What is more surprising is that the effect is not only appealing to the members' base supporters but also persuading out-partisans, as previous studies have found that voters are less likely to be persuaded by an unlike-minded candidate's messages (Gilens and Murakawa 2002; Lupia 1995). This gap is likely due to the fact that an incumbent's grandstanding might make their supporters like them more and make non-supporters dislike them more, but these changes do not lead to vote switches. Instead, the opposite, non-mainstream effects of disappointing supporters and persuading non-supporters do, and it turns out that the latter is stronger than the former. This is consistent with my theoretical claim and is not necessarily inconsistent with the previous scholarship.

Another important finding is that voters and donors have asymmetric responses to members' grandstanding in hearings and legislative activities. This asymmetry raises concerns about representation. Since politicians can win voters' minds only by verbally appealing to them while enacting policies benefiting special interests, when legislators make policies, the preferences of special interests are likely better represented than those of the general public. Therefore, unless voters are better trained to acquire information about members' legislative activities and achievements and develop the ability to assess them, public hearings are

likely to be exploited by committee members for running political campaigns rather than for serving their original aim to promote transparency in policymaking processes.

The different reactions from voters and organized donors to different aspects of legislators' activities also have implications for institutional effectiveness. The finding that members' grandstanding in hearings can increase their reelection chances provides members with an incentive to focus on exploiting hearings to further their political aims rather than conducting regular committee business, such as information-seeking, which undermines institutional effectiveness. Especially with the increasing public exposure of committee hearing procedures through new and conventional media outlets, this tendency is likely to increase. However, the finding that organized donors tend to reward members' legislative effectiveness and ignore their grandstanding behavior may incentivize members to invest in building policy expertise and be active in policymaking, as political donations are essential to win reelection. This may offset members' incentive to grandstand to some extent.

Lastly, this paper paves the way for multiple avenues for future research. Given that there are other types of political donors who may behave more like voters than organized special interests, it will be interesting to further explore the effects of members' grandstanding in hearings on various other types of donors. While this analysis focused on electoral rewards, investigating non-electoral rewards, such as a position at a higher office or any other career benefits that members gain from grandstanding, will be valuable as well.

## References

- Arnold, R. Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. Yale University Press.
- Baetschmann, Gregori, Alexander Ballantyne, Kevin E. Staub, and Rainer Winkelmann. 2020. “feologit: A new command for fitting fixed-effects ordered logit models.” *The Stata Journal* 2: 253-275.
- Barber, Michael. 2016a. “Representing the Preferences of Donors, Partisans, and Voters in the US Senate.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80(S1): 225–249.
- Bonica, Adam. 2016. “Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections: Public Version 2.0.” *Stanford, CA: Stanford University Libraries* (<https://data.stanford.edu/dime>).
- Bronars, Stephen G., and John R. Lott Jr. 1997. “Do Campaign Donations Alter How a Politician Votes? Or, Do Donors Support Candidates Who Value the Same Things That They Do?” *The Journal of Law and Economics* 40(2): 317-350.
- Broockman, David E., and Daniel M. Butler. 2017. “The Causal Effects of Elite Position-Taking on Voter Attitudes: Field Experiments with Elite Communication.” *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1): 208–221.
- Carlson, David, and Jacob M. Montgomery. 2017. “A Pairwise Comparison Framework for Fast, Flexible, and Reliable Human Coding of Political Texts.” *American Political Science Review* 111 (4): 835-843.
- Carpini, Delli, Michael X., and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press.
- Chamberlain, Gary. 1980. “Review of Economic Studies.” *The Journal of Law and Economics* 47(1): 225–238.
- DeGregorio, Christine. 1992. “Leadership Approaches in Congressional Committee Hearings.” *The Western Political Quarterly* 45(4): 971-983.

- Del Sesto, Steven L. 1980. "Conflicting Ideologies of Nuclear Power: Congressional Testimony on Nuclear Reactor Safety." *Public Policy* 28(1): 39-70.
- Diermeier, Daniel, and Timothy J. Feddersen. 2000. "Information and Congressional Hearings." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 51-65.
- Druckman, James N. 2001. "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" *Journal of Politics* 63(4): 1041-1066.
- Esterling, Kevin M. 2007. "Buying Expertise: Campaign Contributions and Attention to Policy Analysis in Congressional Committees." *American Political Science Review* 101(1): 93-109.
- Evans, C. Lawrence, and Walter J. Oleszek. 2001. "Message Politics and Senate Procedure." In *The Contentious Senate: Partisanship, Ideology, and the Myth of Cool Judgment*, ed. Colton C. Campbell and Nicol C. Rae. MD: Rowman Littlefield Publishers, INC.
- Farnsworth, David N. 1961. *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Fenno, Richard F. 1973. *Congressmen in Committees*. Little, Brown & Co.
- Ferguson, Brent. 2013. "Congressional disclosure of time spent fundraising." *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy* 23(1): 1-45.
- Foos, Florian, and Eline A. de Rooij. 2017. "The role of partisan cues in voter mobilization campaigns: evidence from a randomized field experiment." *Electoral Studies* 45: 63-74.
- Gilens, Martin, and Naomi Murakawa. 2002. "Elite Cues and Political Decision Making." *Political Decision Making, Deliberation and Participation* 6: 15-49.
- Gilligan, Thomas W., and Keith Krehbiel. 1987. "Collective Decision Making and Standing Committees: A Collective Choice Rationale for Restrictive Amendment Procedures." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3: 287-335.

- Hall, Andrew B., and James M. Snyder. 2015. "Information and Wasted Votes: A Study of U.S. Primary Elections." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10: 433–459.
- Hartman, Todd K., and Christopher R. Weber. 2009. "Who Said What? The Effects of Source Cues in Issue Frames." *Political Behavior* 31(4): 537–558.
- Huitt, Ralph K. 1954. "The Congressional Committee: A Case Study." *American Political Science Review* 48 (2): 340-365.
- Jung, Jae-Hee. 2019. "The Mobilizing Effect of Parties' Moral Rhetoric." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(2): 341-355.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. University of Michigan Press.
- Kriner, Douglas L., and Eric Schickler. 2014. "Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953–2006." *Journal of Politics* 76: 1–14.
- Lee, Frances E. 2009. *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U. S. Senate*. University of Chicago Press. IL.
- Lee, Michaelle Ye Hee. 2016. "Trump Camp's Repeated Use of Dubious Sources on Voter Fraud." *Washington Post* November 29.
- Lenz, Gabriel S, and Chappell Lawson. 2011. "Looking the Part: Television Leads Less Informed Citizens to Vote Based on Candidates' Appearance." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 574-589.
- Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. "Why do partisan media polarize viewers?" *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 611-623.
- Leyden, Kevin M. 1995. "Interest Group Resources and Testimony at Congressional Hearings." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20 (3): 431-439.

- Longhi, Simonetta, and Alita Nandi. 2017. *A Practical Guide to Using Panel Data*. SAGE Publications Ltd: London.
- Lupia, Arthur S. 1995. "Who Can Persuade?: A Formal Theory, A Survey and Implications for Democracy." The Midwest Political Science Association.
- Martin, Shane. 2011. "Using Parliamentary Questions to Measure Constituency Focus: An Application to the Irish Casepost." *Political Studies* 59(2): 472–488.
- Mattei, Franco. 1998. "Winning at the Polls and in the Polls: The Incumbency Advantage in Surveys of U.S. House Voters." *Electoral Studies* 17(4): 443–461.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Montgomery, Jacob M., Florian Hollenbach, and Michael D. Ward. 2012. "Improving Predictions Using Ensemble Bayesian Model Averaging." *Political Analysis* 20 (3): 271-291.
- Nickerson, David W., Ryan D. Friedrichs, and David C. King. 2006. "Partisan Mobilization Campaigns in the Field: Results from a Statewide Turnout Experiment in Michigan." *Political Research Quarterly* 59(1): 85-97.
- Panagopoulos, Costas. 2009. "Partisan and nonpartisan message content and voter mobilization: Field experimental evidence." *Political Research Quarterly* 62(1): 70-76.
- Park, Ju Yeon. 2017. "A Lab Experiment on Committee Hearings: Preferences, Power, and a Quest for Information." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42 (1): 3-31.
- Park, Ju Yeon. 2021. "When Do Politicians Grandstand? Measuring Message Politics in Committee Hearings." *Journal of Politics*.
- Payne, James L. 1980. "Show Horses & Work Horses in the United States House of Representatives." *The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Northeastern Political Science Association* 12(3): 428-456.

- Payne, James L. 1982. "The rise of lone wolf questioning in House committee hearings." *Polity* 14(4): 626-640.
- Ray, John. 2018. "Walk this way, talk this way: legislator speech and lobbying." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 7(2): 150-172.
- Rieselbach, Leroy. 1994. *Congressional reform: The changing modern Congress*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Slapin, Jonathan B., Justin H. Kirkland, Joseph A. Lazzaro, Patrick A. Leslie, and Tom O'Grady. 2018. "Ideology, Grandstanding, and Strategic Party Disloyalty in the British Parliament." *American Political Science Review* 112(1): 15-30.
- Therneau, Terry M. 2020. *A Package for Survival Analysis in R*. R package version 3.2-7. <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=survival>.
- Traugott, Michael W., and John P. Katosh. 1979. "Response validity in surveys of voting behavior." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 43: 359-377.
- Volden, Craig, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2014. *Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Congress: The Lawmakers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, John. 1990. "Contributions, Lobbying, and Committee Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 84 (2): 417-438.

# Online Appendix

## Contents

1	Example Grandstanding Statements Reported in Newspaper Articles	2
2	The Most and Least Grandstanding Statements	4
3	The Customized Codebook for the CCES Panel Survey Data	6
4	Analysis: Are Vote Switchers Less Likely To Reveal Their Votes?	6
5	Additional Regression Results	6

# 1 Example Grandstanding Statements Reported in Newspaper Articles

Table A1 lists members’ example grandstanding statements quoted in newspaper articles at the Washington Post on the ten randomly selected days –a day per month– in 2019 while Congress was in session. I picked one statement a day from many grandstanding statements quoted on each day.

**Table A1** – Example Grandstanding Statements Quoted in the Washington Post News Articles

Date	Member	Grandstanding Statements
Feb. 18	-	-
Mar. 13	Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO), Armed Services	Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) is still the new guy on Capitol Hill. But the freshman senator is swiftly emerging as one of the Republican Party’s toughest critics of Big Tech. Hawley’s rigorous grilling of Google executive Will DeVries was the most heated exchange during yesterday’s privacy hearing: He slammed Google for collecting people’s location data on Android phones — even after they try to disable the tracking function. He compared the practice to an Eagles song — saying, “You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-technology-202/2019/03/13/the-technology-202-freshman-sen-josh-hawley-emerges-as-one-of-toughest-republican-critics-of-big-tech/5c88136a1b326b2d177d6069/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-technology-202/2019/03/13/the-technology-202-freshman-sen-josh-hawley-emerges-as-one-of-toughest-republican-critics-of-big-tech/5c88136a1b326b2d177d6069/</a>
Apr. 2	-	-
May 9	Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), Judiciary	During the Judiciary panel session, Republicans used their time to defend Barr’s name and tried to divert the conversation to the origins of the Russia investigation, accusing the FBI of being guided by anti-Trump bias. “I think it’s all about trying to destroy Bill Barr because Democrats are nervous that he’s going to get to the bottom of everything,” said Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio). <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/barr-to-trump-invoke-executive-privileged-over-redacted-mueller-materials/2019/05/07/51c52600-713e-11e9-b5ca-3d72a9fa8ff1_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/barr-to-trump-invoke-executive-privileged-over-redacted-mueller-materials/2019/05/07/51c52600-713e-11e9-b5ca-3d72a9fa8ff1_story.html</a>
Jun. 5	Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Judiciary	“The power of the state should not be used by one segment of society to impose its moral or religious beliefs on another,” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/06/04/busy-philipps-testifies-about-abortion-rights-capitol-hill/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/06/04/busy-philipps-testifies-about-abortion-rights-capitol-hill/</a>

Jul. 24	Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Armed Services	Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), a presidential hopeful, grilled Esper about his decision during his Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing, arguing that if he would not commit to better distance himself from Raytheon, “you should not be confirmed as secretary of defense.” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/senate-votes-to-confirm-mark-esper-as-defense-secretary/2019/07/23/694b18a0-acb4-11e9-a0c9-6d2d7818f3da_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/senate-votes-to-confirm-mark-esper-as-defense-secretary/2019/07/23/694b18a0-acb4-11e9-a0c9-6d2d7818f3da_story.html</a>
Sep. 12	Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Oversight and Reform	“You can’t tell me why there’s a new policy. You can’t tell me what motivated the new policy. And you can’t tell me what the policy is,” said Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), chairman of the House Oversight Committee’s civil rights and civil liberties subcommittee. “Is that a correct assessment?” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/administration-provides-few-answers-for-critically-ill-immigrants-facing-possible-deportation/2019/09/11/4e98d390-d4d1-11e9-9610-fb56c5522e1c_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/administration-provides-few-answers-for-critically-ill-immigrants-facing-possible-deportation/2019/09/11/4e98d390-d4d1-11e9-9610-fb56c5522e1c_story.html</a>
Oct. 24	Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Financial Services	Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) raised those concerns during yesterday’s hearing, saying Facebook permits a “lower standard for truthfulness and decency” for politicians, saying: “It is hate speech, it’s hate, and it’s leading to violence and death threats in my office.” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-technology-202/2019/10/24/the-technology-202-mark-zuckerberg-struggles-to-defend-facebook-s-civil-rights-record/5db0811f602ff10cf14f9700/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-technology-202/2019/10/24/the-technology-202-mark-zuckerberg-struggles-to-defend-facebook-s-civil-rights-record/5db0811f602ff10cf14f9700/</a>
Nov. 11	-	-
Dec. 5	Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Judiciary	“I will honor my oath, and as I sit here today, having heard consistent, clear and compelling evidence that the president has abused his power, attempted to undermine the constitutional role of Congress, and corrupted our elections, I urge my colleagues to stand behind the oath you have taken,” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/impeachment-hearings-live-updates/2019/12/04/b7cc7b4e-1682-11ea-a659-7d69641c6ff7_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/impeachment-hearings-live-updates/2019/12/04/b7cc7b4e-1682-11ea-a659-7d69641c6ff7_story.html</a>

## 2 The Most and Least Grandstanding Statements

### The Five Most Grandstanding Statements

[1] ” And even the environmental movement should realize that the worst polluters in the world were the Socialist and Communist governments. People take better care of their own private property than is taken of property that is in public ownership. I haven’t been to this area, but I bet these people take good care of their property. It is so sad to think that a lot of these people, or most of them, are people who came from Cuba where land was confiscated and taken away from them by a Communist dictator, and now they come to the United States, a country that is supposed to be a free country, yet these people are coming all the way from south Florida to Washington, DC, to try to defend their little piece of the American dream. The unbelievable thing is, this is happening all over this country. These liberal, left-wing, Socialist, big-government types think they can run everybody’s life better than they can themselves. So they don’t mind coming in and doing a really cruel thing and taking away this property. And I just think that we need to speak out against it and that it needs to stop, or at least hopefully we can slow it down a little bit. Thank you.”

[2] ” Let me just say that this was a half-a- billion-dollar mistake and I would ask that we point out that there was an action taken by your body under a justification of a legal definition that I think is a threat to both Democrats and Republicans that the word “is” is, and that for somebody to sit there and ignore the law and redefine the word “is” I think the American people are outraged that a half-a-billion-dollar issue was raised while legal jargon was ignoring the fact that the law is in there. And I don’t think Democrat or Republican wants to have to add in every law that it will never happen. I yield back to the gentleman.” [3] ” And were never willing to admit just how oppressive they really were. I think it is time that we insisted that they face this reality of what Marxism/Leninism is all about. I think it is time that—there are many millions of Muslims around the world, many if not most who could be friends and be open to these kind of ideas of accepting people and not oppressing somebody simply because they worship God in a different way. We need to call to task the Saudis and the Pakistanis and these other people who have supposedly been on our side and quit trying to treat them with kid gloves because it ain’t going to work. These regimes are basically gangster regimes in terms of the way they treat their people and it shouldn’t be tolerated and the United States has done that. Shame on us. Thank God for you and Chris Smith and other people who have committed their lives to exposing those people who are stepping on the religious freedom of other human beings. Thank you very much for being with us today, and I think I am supposed to gavel this down. This hearing is now adjourned.”

[4] ” But I want to say one thing, though. I remember watching on television, as many people have. And it was really heart-rendering and warm when I saw the replica of the Statue of Liberty and everything it stood for. And all I can say is when we saw the tanks rolling in and as they brought the—basically, I understand they were drugged, hyped-up people from outside of Beijing in to roll over those people as they were screaming for help and screaming for the rest of the people to cry out for freedom, I mean, I just—I—it broke my heart. And for all those that are still fighting for freedom in China, they represent one-quarter of this world population. And yet we seem to turn our backs on them again and again. And I am glad that the people here in this room stand up for freedom and stand up for those, and I will always remember that photograph. Yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.”

[5] ” Right. And it is difficult, especially right now when we are having trouble recruiting, to walk away from people with a genuine love for their country. Obviously, it is not a policy. And to turn away from

people who have done nothing wrong and to choose others who have committed some offenses and have been arrested for offenses and to say you are somehow better than others simply because of who people are—I am embarrassed. I mean, there is not a whole lot more to say except that I apologize that we use the wrong yardstick to measure a person’s worth and devotion to the country. And it is my fervent hope that in 15 or 20 years we will change. Because I will tell you for myself that I may be straight, but I am not narrow. And I think that this policy here is very, very narrow. Thank you, and I yield back. I am sorry, may I take that one question, Chairwoman?”

## The Five Least Grandstanding Statements

[1] ” Dr. Boskin, I wanted to ask you, how would you go about assessing a risk adjusted rate of return? Mr. Cavanaugh in his written testimony talked about an adjusted risk rate of return. What would your comments be on that, and then I want to ask also Mr. Cavanaugh?”

[2] ”Thank you. I would ask unanimous consent that the three statements previously submitted to the committee be entered into the record. Without objection, so ordered. Mr. Waxman, do you have any followup questions?”

[3] ” Without objection, the witness’s full statement will be inserted into the record. And, of course, each of you all are summarizing your statements. I want to thank Dr. Barth. At this time, our second witness is Ms. Janice Ayala, deputy assistant director of the Office of Investigations at United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security. Welcome, Ms. Ayala.”

[4] ” Now, moving back to previous items of discussion, the SMRs. Just in general, how many applications do you anticipate receiving over the next couple of years, Dr. Lyons?”

[5] ” OK. Thank you. And, Mr. Bardee—or, excuse me, Mr. Cauley, you noted that FERC has recently approved the NREC Critical Infrastructure Protection Version 5 standards which become enforceable on April 1 of next year, related to cybersecurity. First question is, can you briefly expand on the new Version 5 cybersecurity standards?”

### **3 The Customized Codebook for the CCES Panel Survey Data**

Validated turnout: 1 for validated voters based on the Catalist data; 0 for validated non-voters.

Vote choice: 1 if the voter self-reported to vote for the incumbent in the post-election survey; 0 for voting for a challenger.

Partisanship: 1 for affiliation with the incumbent party; 0 otherwise.

Incumbent's publicity: 1 for correctly recalling the incumbent party; 0 otherwise.

Age: 1 for below 30; 2 for 30-39; 3 for 40-49; 4 for 50-59; 5 for 60 or older.

Education: 1 for no high school education; 2 for high school graduate; 3 for some college education; 4 for two years of college education; 5 for four years of college education; and 6 for postgraduate education.

Registered voter: 1 for a registered voter; 0 otherwise. Political interest (Following what's going on in government and public affairs): 1 for hardly at all; 2 for only now and then; 3 for some of the time; 4 for most of the time.

Unemployment: 1 for unemployed; 0 otherwise.

Income: Family income in an 18-point scale with 1 for less than \$10,000 and 18 for \$25,000 or more.

### **4 Analysis: Are Vote Switchers Less Likely To Reveal Their Votes?**

To test whether there was such a selection, I investigate if the respondents who shifted their partisanship and thus might have changed their vote choices are less likely to reveal who they voted for while they still report their partisanship. Indeed, I find that the non-response rate for the vote choice question among those who switched their partisanship from an out-partisan to an in-partisan or vice versa between elections (15.29%) is higher than the non-response rate among those who did not (13.36%) although the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant based on the two-sided z-test of two-sample proportions. However, also note that the difference between the two groups is over 4% (13.96% vs. 9.83%) and statistically significant at 0.015 level when all responses in including the ones in redistricted districts in 2012 are used. This result substantiates my claim that the null effect of the members' grandstanding behavior on the respondents' vote choices may be related to the tendency that those who changed their vote choices are more likely to shy away from reporting their vote choices. In addition, the respondents who did not switch their partisanship yet but only switched their votes in favor of the incumbent are less likely to report their vote choices than those who switched both the partisanship and vote choices at the same time with more confidence. However, the former cannot be identified. Thus, this test on the latter group serves as a weaker test of the former group.

### **5 Additional Regression Results**

This section provides additional regression results mentioned but not presented in the main manuscript.

**Table A2** – The Effect of Grandstanding on Vote Share (%)

	<i>Member-level</i>		<i>Statement-level</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Grandstanding score	0.098** (0.043)	0.122** (0.048)	0.001** (0.0005)	0.002*** (0.0005)
Statement frequency		3.918 (3.146)		5.647*** (0.125)
Saliency				-0.168 (0.328)
Legislative effectiveness		-3.252 (2.578)		-4.573*** (0.139)
Party support		23.794*** (6.024)		27.082*** (0.351)
Seniority		12.727 (10.540)		6.758*** (0.704)
Seniority squared		-0.300*** (0.099)		-0.503*** (0.006)
Ideological intensity		9.455** (3.953)		14.750*** (0.231)
Committee leader		0.959 (0.594)		0.369*** (0.022)
Party leader		-0.114 (1.078)		0.157** (0.074)
Minority		-1.343** (0.670)		-2.126*** (0.036)
Unified		-12.902*** (2.400)		-10.992*** (0.306)
Minority*Unified		7.383*** (0.915)		8.829*** (0.052)
Uncontested		30.092*** (1.499)		29.672*** (0.134)
Redistricted		-4.398*** (1.102)		-4.326*** (0.071)
Secure District		13.454** (6.780)		10.710*** (0.357)
Total contributions		0.0002 (0.0003)		0.0002*** (0.00002)
Vote share			0.603*** (0.009)	0.344*** (0.010)
Vote share squared			-0.005*** (0.0001)	-0.003*** (0.0001)
Constant	56.884*** (2.188)	28.766*** (6.221)	53.816*** (0.586)	30.198*** (0.651)
Member effect	Fixed	Fixed	Random	Random
Hearing effect	-	-	Random	Random
Committee effect	-	-	Fixed	Fixed
Congress effect	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed
Observations	3,259	2,842	897,671	777,484
R <sup>2</sup>	0.641	0.703		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.504	0.571		

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The dependent variable is a member's vote share in the election held at the end of their two-year term. In the member-level analysis, the committee leader indicates a committee chair and a ranking member. In the speech-level analysis, it indicates their statements.

**Table A3** – Moderating Effects of Salience and Redistricting

	<i>Vote Share</i>		<i>Political Contribution</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Grandstanding score	-0.002** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.177*** (0.044)	-0.145*** (0.029)
Salience	-0.983*** (0.356)	-0.164 (0.328)	114.491*** (18.762)	54.872*** (17.198)
Statement Frequency	5.644*** (0.125)	5.658*** (0.125)	-247.924*** (7.219)	-248.398*** (7.220)
Vote share	0.344*** (0.010)	0.343*** (0.010)		
Vote share squared	-0.003*** (0.0001)	-0.003*** (0.0001)		
Total contributions (t-1)			0.098*** (0.001)	0.098*** (0.001)
Legislative effectiveness	-4.553*** (0.139)	-4.579*** (0.139)	580.218*** (7.415)	581.704*** (7.414)
Party support	27.091*** (0.351)	27.028*** (0.351)	264.064*** (19.719)	265.877*** (19.723)
Seniority	6.767*** (0.704)	6.708*** (0.704)	879.019*** (44.786)	880.987*** (44.789)
Seniority squared	-0.503*** (0.006)	-0.503*** (0.006)	8.626*** (0.340)	8.605*** (0.340)
Ideological intensity	14.749*** (0.231)	14.732*** (0.231)	-739.682*** (12.213)	-739.381*** (12.214)
Committee leader	0.366*** (0.022)	0.369*** (0.022)	8.974*** (1.184)	8.805*** (1.184)
Party leader	0.158** (0.074)	0.157** (0.074)	4.383 (4.226)	4.414 (4.226)
Minority	-2.126*** (0.036)	-2.130*** (0.036)	23.195*** (1.962)	23.293*** (1.962)
Unified	-10.994*** (0.306)	-10.986*** (0.305)	415.413*** (16.924)	415.122*** (16.926)
Minority*Unified	8.830*** (0.052)	8.830*** (0.052)	-60.683*** (2.916)	-60.649*** (2.916)
Uncontested	29.668*** (0.134)	29.676*** (0.134)	86.188*** (7.062)	85.742*** (7.062)
Redistricted	-4.325*** (0.071)	-3.855*** (0.085)	59.247*** (4.119)	53.339*** (4.864)
Secure district	10.717*** (0.357)	10.695*** (0.357)	-2,254.491*** (20.290)	-2,254.014*** (20.291)
Total contributions	0.0002*** (0.00002)	0.0002*** (0.00002)		
Log of primary candidates			29.392*** (1.289)	29.376*** (1.289)
Grandstanding*Salience	0.018*** (0.003)		-1.326*** (0.167)	
Grandstanding*Redistricted		-0.011*** (0.001)		0.135** (0.058)
Constant	30.364*** (0.651)	30.161*** (0.651)	918.572*** (38.267)	931.006*** (38.240)
Observations	777,484	777,484	625,652	625,652

*Note:* Congress and committee fixed effects and hearing and legislator random effects are included.

**Table A4** – The Effects of Grandstanding on Voter Behavior (2009-2012)

	Turnout	Vote for Inc.	In-Partisanship	Recognition	In-Partisanship
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Grandstanding score	−0.00001 (0.0232)	0.0023 (0.0270)	0.0072*** (0.0097)	0.0078*** (0.0072)	0.0067*** (0.0098)
In-partisan	−0.0186 (1.1070)	0.4493 (1.2684)		0.2000 (0.1629)	
Out-partisan	0.0104 (1.1429)	0.1826 (2.0038)		0.3157*** (0.1809)	
Recognition					0.0647 (0.1227)
Age	0.0026 (0.0825)	−0.0185 (0.1015)	0.0277 (0.0908)	−0.0942*** (0.0725)	0.0340 (0.0923)
Education	−0.0006 (0.0612)	−0.1111* (0.1002)	−0.0090 (0.0923)	0.0409* (0.0558)	−0.0109 (0.0925)
Registered voter	−0.0034 (0.5215)	−0.4646 (0.4977)	0.0905 (0.2569)	−0.3469 (0.2103)	0.0869 (0.2571)
Political interest	−0.0045 (0.0810)	−0.0367 (0.0974)	−0.0235 (0.0766)	0.0403 (0.0649)	−0.0246 (0.0768)
Unemployment	−0.0061 (0.1585)	0.1065* (0.1944)	−0.0342 (0.1759)	0.0920 (0.1381)	−0.0338 (0.1764)
Family income	−0.00003 (0.0166)	−0.0016 (0.0202)	−0.0060 (0.0189)	0.0094 (0.0147)	−0.0067 (0.0190)
Legislative effectiveness	0.0089 (0.4877)	0.1921** (0.5184)	0.3106*** (0.4834)	−0.3639** (0.3953)	0.3032** (0.4846)
Seniority	−0.0388 (3.3147)	0.9334** (5.0681)	−0.1876 (4.8636)	0.7664 (3.0681)	−0.1914 (4.9483)
Seniority squared	0.0006 (0.0200)	−0.0066 (0.0229)	−0.0028 (0.0220)	−0.0091 (0.0165)	−0.0026 (0.0221)
Party leader	0.0091** (0.1456)	−0.0160 (0.1778)	−0.0786** (0.1624)	0.0246 (0.1173)	−0.0808** (0.1629)
Minority	0.0003 (0.0511)	0.0325** (0.0631)	−0.0279 (0.0585)	−0.0544** (0.0466)	−0.0304 (0.0588)
Vote share	−0.0002 (0.0036)	0.0026*** (0.0043)	0.0017 (0.0040)	0.0019 (0.0033)	0.0015 (0.0040)
Total contributions	−0.000001 (0.00005)	−0.00003* (0.0001)	−0.00002** (0.0001)	−0.00001 (0.00004)	−0.00002** (0.0001)
Uncontested	0.0103** (0.3016)	0.4002*** (0.3289)	0.0702 (0.2726)	0.2089 (0.2478)	0.0525 (0.2752)
112th Congress	0.0644** (0.2094)	−0.0613** (0.2559)	−0.0368 (0.2462)	0.0730** (0.1777)	−0.0419 (0.2487)
113th Congress	−0.0009 (0.2265)	−0.0227 (0.3483)	−0.0147 (0.3337)	0.1341*** (0.2104)	−0.0224 (0.3403)
Grandstanding x In-partisan	0.0003 (0.0244)	−0.0041 (0.0280)			
Grandstanding x Out-partisan	−0.0001 (0.0252)	−0.0139 (0.0442)			
Voter-Member effect	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed
Observations	9,168	8,721	9,911	9,865	9,865
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00002	0.0016	0.0002	0.0025	0.0003
Log Likelihood	−3,295.0730	−2,537.5170	−3,766.1980	−5,641.2560	−3,756.6200

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

Although not discussed in the main text of the article, I additionally analyzed whether the effects of members' grandstanding on voters' partisanship changes and recognition of their representatives are moderated by how often voters follow political news. Model 3 and 4 in Table A5 test these moderating effects. The results show that voters' partisanship changes do not vary by their level of political interest suggesting that this is more of a general pattern observed widely across voters with different level of political interest. However, voters who do not frequently follow political news tend to better recognize their representatives, compared to those who are more politically savvy, when their representatives grandstand more in hearings. This suggests that the effect of members' grandstanding can be far-reaching even to those who do not closely follow political news, and they are likely to be the target audience than political intellectuals.

**Table A5** – Additional Analysis on The Effects of Grandstanding on Voter Behavior

	Turnout	Vote for Inc.	In-Partisanship	Recognition
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Grandstanding Score	0.0001*	−0.0019	0.0061	0.0649**
	(0.0084)	(0.0104)	(0.0334)	(0.0276)
In-partisan	−0.0071	0.2690***		0.1996
	(0.1780)	(0.2110)		(0.1628)
Out-partisan	0.0067	−0.4400*		0.3193***
	(0.1831)	(0.3209)		(0.1811)
Age	0.0028	−0.0168	0.0274	−0.0757**
	(0.0823)	(0.1011)	(0.0916)	(0.0730)
Education	−0.0006	−0.1112*	−0.0092	0.0321
	(0.0611)	(0.1002)	(0.0925)	(0.0560)
Registered voter	−0.0031	−0.4668	0.0919	−0.3664*
	(0.5212)	(0.4971)	(0.2603)	(0.2110)
Political interest	−0.0045	−0.0378	−0.0371	0.7562**
	(0.0810)	(0.0968)	(0.4314)	(0.3406)
Unemployment	−0.0062	0.1096*	−0.0343	0.0862
	(0.1585)	(0.1941)	(0.1759)	(0.1381)
Family income	−0.00001	−0.0022	−0.0060	0.0094
	(0.0166)	(0.0201)	(0.0189)	(0.0147)
Legislative effectiveness	0.0079	0.1804*	0.3104***	−0.3286**
	(0.4852)	(0.5160)	(0.4834)	(0.3957)
Seniority	−0.0371	0.9102**	−0.1930	0.8230
	(3.3122)	(5.0676)	(4.8664)	(3.0684)
Seniority squared	0.0006	−0.0071	−0.0028	−0.0100
	(0.0200)	(0.0228)	(0.0220)	(0.0166)
Party leader	0.0091**	−0.0138	−0.0792**	0.0489
	(0.1455)	(0.1767)	(0.1635)	(0.1178)
Minority	0.0003	0.0319**	−0.0278	−0.0490**
	(0.0511)	(0.0631)	(0.0585)	(0.0467)
Vote share	−0.0002	0.0026***	0.0017	0.0018
	(0.0036)	(0.0043)	(0.0040)	(0.0033)
Total contributions	−0.000001	−0.00003*	−0.00002**	−0.000003
	(0.00005)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.00004)
Uncontested	0.0099**	0.4043***	0.0705	0.2200
	(0.3012)	(0.3285)	(0.2728)	(0.2477)
112th Congress	0.0643**	−0.0593**	−0.0367	0.0792**
	(0.2092)	(0.2558)	(0.2462)	(0.1778)
113th Congress	−0.0010	−0.0207	−0.0142	0.1196***
	(0.2262)	(0.3482)	(0.3341)	(0.2106)
Grandstanding x Political interest			0.0003	−0.0163**
			(0.0090)	(0.0076)
Observations	9,168	8,721	9,911	9,865
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00002	0.0016	0.0002	0.0030
Log Likelihood	−3,295.0740	−2,537.5670	−3,766.1980	−5,638.9400

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

**Table A6** – The Effects of Grandstanding on Voter Behavior (Single-district States Only)

	Turnout	Vote for Inc.	In-Partisanship	Recognition
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Grandstanding Score	−0.1072 (0.6666)	−0.1168 (2.1684)	0.0559 (0.7332)	0.0790 (0.5528)
In-partisan	−1.7054 (13.9127)	0.8197 (94.0953)		0.4155 (1.5590)
Out-partisan	−1.9559 (11.4534)	−54.3567** (95.7272)		−0.1967 (1.1230)
Age	0.0486 (0.4105)	0.0468 (0.5227)	0.0073 (0.5118)	0.0329 (0.3155)
Education	−0.0356 (0.7474)	0.0137 (1.4093)	−0.0507 (1.4123)	−0.1086 (0.5587)
Registered voter	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Political interest	−0.0883 (0.4186)	−0.0067 (0.4126)	−0.0140 (0.4405)	0.0714* (0.3048)
Unemployment	−0.3365 (1.0853)	0.2955 (1.2014)	−0.3085 (1.1954)	−0.1143 (0.8318)
Family income	0.0020 (0.1098)	0.0043 (0.0935)	−0.0005 (0.0926)	−0.0005 (0.0666)
Legislative effectiveness	−1.0217 (31.0218)	1.1985 (40.2040)	2.2298 (34.3889)	3.1481 (24.8313)
Seniority	0.4373 (51.2381)	5.5766 (72.1496)	−3.3865 (60.1171)	−4.6953 (42.7321)
Seniority squared	−0.0326 (0.5080)	−0.1513 (0.7302)	0.0365 (0.5943)	0.0320 (0.4372)
Party leader	0.0147 (2.1850)	−0.0481 (2.9619)	0.1555 (2.5067)	0.1988 (1.7838)
Minority	0.0244 (2.0734)	0.0919 (2.6595)	0.1338 (2.2568)	0.1599 (1.6284)
Vote share	−0.0237 (0.3747)	−0.0403 (0.5110)	0.0309 (0.4299)	0.0354 (0.3108)
Total contributions	0.0001 (0.0046)	0.0005 (0.0062)	−0.0004 (0.0052)	−0.0005 (0.0038)
112th Congress	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
113th Congress	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Grandstanding x In-partisan	0.0243 (0.3317)	−0.0123 (2.0865)		
Grandstanding x Out-partisan	0.0507 (0.2864)	1.4647** (2.5649)		
Observations	241	258	288	288
R <sup>2</sup>	0.0032	0.0089	0.0003	0.0016
Log Likelihood	−158.3056	−145.2950	−152.7717	−341.1135

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

**Table A7** – The Effect of Grandstanding on Total Receipt of PAC Contributions (\$1K)

	<i>Member-level</i>		<i>Statement-level</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Grandstanding score	0.367 (1.166)	1.520 (1.271)	-0.077*** (0.010)	-0.009 (0.010)
Statement frequency		-273.795*** (78.104)		-9.402*** (2.849)
Legislative effectiveness		535.544*** (113.929)		407.530*** (2.924)
Party support		64.673 (116.733)		161.900*** (7.784)
Seniority		894.050** (426.843)		988.082*** (17.606)
Seniority squared		0.377 (2.878)		5.424*** (0.133)
Ideological intensity		-44.148 (110.680)		-6.122 (4.847)
Committee leader		18.482 (13.760)		7.072*** (0.467)
Party leader		64.519** (32.856)		10.014*** (1.666)
Minority		17.417 (15.913)		18.163*** (0.773)
Unified		157.039* (89.689)		40.375*** (6.864)
Minority*Unified		-41.866** (19.560)		-60.599*** (1.151)
Uncontested		0.781 (41.929)		-11.386*** (2.785)
Redistricted		4.706 (21.087)		47.417*** (1.625)
Secure district		-33.135 (139.706)		-480.029*** (8.016)
Log of primary candidates		-22.794*** (7.112)		-16.640*** (0.508)
Total PAC contributions (t-1)			0.326*** (0.001)	0.301*** (0.001)
Salience				39.936*** (7.050)
Constant	382.819*** (44.140)	111.717 (131.224)	164.168*** (10.921)	120.456*** (15.249)
Observations	3,183	2,847	691,731	625,652
R <sup>2</sup>	0.719	0.745		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.607	0.631		

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

The dependent variable is the total receipt of PAC contributions each member received during their two-year term. In the member-level analysis, committee leader indicates the committee chair and the ranking member. In the speech-level analysis, it indicates their statements.