Wealth and Policymaking in the U.S. House of Representatives

Darrian Stacy, Vanderbilt University*

September 2020

Abstract

Do members of Congress with more and less wealth approach policymaking differently, or succeed at different rates? Past research holds that members are typically much wealthier than the average citizen, and wealth is not associated with policymaking power. In this paper, I use data on the personal wealth and legislative effectiveness of representatives between 1980-2014 to explore whether wealthier legislators are more or less successful at advancing their agenda items though the legislative process than their less-wealthy peers. My analysis reveals that the wealthiest quintile of legislators are significantly more successful in advancing their policy agendas than the remaining 80% of representatives in nearly all Congresses examined. Meanwhile, the least-wealthiest quintile of legislators are significantly less successful in advancing their policy agendas than their wealthier peers. I also find that wealthy lawmakers do not necessarily enter Congress with more experience working within a legislature, nor are they innately more effective in advancing their legislative agendas. Instead, their increased effectiveness develops over time and is strongly related to specific institutional arrangements, such as congressional committees and majority parties. My findings suggest that wealthy representatives hold outsized policymaking influence at the expense of less-wealthy members, and they provide insights into how the historical overrepresentation of the highest economic strata in government continues to shape political inequality in contemporary congresses.

*Prepared for presentation at the 2020 American Political Science Association Meetings. The author thanks Andrew Eggers, Marko Klašnja, and the Center for Effective Lawmaking for research assistance. The author also thanks Nicholas Carnes, Sharece Thrower, and Alan Wiseman for helpful feedback on earlier drafts. Darrian Stacy is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Political Science at Vanderbilt University (darrian.k.stacy@vanderbilt.edu).

1 Introduction

At the beginning of the 98th Congress in 1983, no one knew what bills the members of the West Virginia delegation would propose in the House of Representatives or how far such bills would advance through the legislative process. In the previous year, West Virginians elected three new members to fill three-fourths of their congressional delegation in the House: Reps. Alan Mollohan, Harley Staggers Jr., and Robert Wise Jr. These freshman legislators were all white male Democrats who had previously worked as lawyers. Once in Congress, they tended to vote the same on almost every bill. Whose legislative agenda would advance the furthest in the legislative process from among this new guard of legislators from West Virginia was anyone's guess. Perhaps all three members would do equally well in passing their legislative priorities, or perhaps they would all struggle.

By the end of the 98th Congress, only one of these members introduced a bill that became a law. What accounts for this difference? One noteworthy difference between these three representatives, which is commonly overlooked in literature on legislative policymaking, was their personal wealth. Reps. Mollohan and Staggers were both similar in their experience of winning open seats previously held by their fathers. Yet, while Rep. Mollohan's financial disclosures suggest that he was among the most-wealthy representatives (the top wealth quintile) in the House, Rep. Staggers' financial disclosures show that he was among the least-wealthy representatives (the bottom wealth quintile). Rep. Staggers held assets that amounted to more than $100,000, making him wealthier than most individuals back home in his district, but he was less wealthy than most of his peers in Congress. Rep. Wise was the least-wealthy member of the trio, and perhaps all of Congress given his financial disclosure of barely $5,000.

In their early years in Congress, Reps. Staggers and Wise struggled to advance their legislative agendas in Congress; of the dozens of bills that they introduced, not a single bill was reported out of committee during their first two terms in office. For Rep. Mollohan, however, advancing a legislative agenda appeared to be routine. Not only did one of his bills become a law in his first term, a quarter of all legislation that he introduced in the 98th Congress passed through a committee. In the 99th Congress, Rep. Mollohan acquired a seat on the Appropriations committee, one of the most desirable congressional committees, and he continued to further his legislative priorities. Meanwhile, Reps. Staggers and Wise continued to see their bills die in committee for nearly half a decade.

Were the experiences of these three members unique or were they representative of larger trends about wealth and policymaking power? In this chapter, I consider various perspectives about the historical framing, development, and function of Congress; and I explore the relationship between representatives' personal wealth and their approaches (and success) in the policymaking process. Are wealthy lawmakers more effective

at passing their legislative agendas through Congress than their less-wealthy peers; and, if so, how? Are the least-wealthy representatives as effective in passing their bills through Congress as their wealthier peers; and, if not, why not?

Past research argues that the personal wealth of members of Congress tells us little about members' behavior as lawmakers because all members are generally wealthy, compared to the public. However, wealth is relative and, therefore, dependent upon one's own circumstances and peer group. Even if they do not apply to most other individuals, the differences that distinguish millionaires from billionaires, or the wealthy from the less-wealthy, are potentially quite meaningful.[1] As I illustrated in a previous chapter, representatives whose only assets are their district homes and a savings account with less than $100,000 may be wealthier than most of their constituents, but they are far less wealthy than many other members and (likely) have different experiences than representatives with multiple homes and millions in assets. In Congress, wealth may be related to how representatives conduct themselves while they try to accomplish their policy goals – and how other representatives engage with them as they pursue their goals.

Drawing on data about the personal wealth of representatives, I assess whether wealthy representatives experience different levels of success in the lawmaking process, and why. In the analysis that follows, I demonstrate that in nearly all Congresses between 1980 and 2012 the wealthiest 20% of representatives were more effective in advancing their policy agendas through Congress than the remaining 80% of representatives. In contrast, I find that in most Congresses over the same period, the least-wealthy 20% of representatives were less effective in advancing their policy agenda through Congress than most other representatives.

Why are the wealthiest representatives more effective in lawmaking than their less-wealthy peers? I conduct several analyses to assess wealthy representatives' efforts and successes throughout various stages of the policymaking process, and in various institutional contexts. I find that wealthy legislators' increased effectiveness is not the result of them introducing more bills than their peers; but, rather, it is due largely to their bills advancing further through various stages of the lawmaking process. I also find that wealthy lawmakers do not necessarily enter Congress with more experience working within a legislature, or that they are more effective in advancing their legislative agendas, than their less wealthy peers. Instead, their increased effectiveness develops over time and is strongly related to specific institutional positions (such as being in the majority party, holding a committee chair, and/or subcommittee chair). Lastly, I demonstrate that wealthy lawmakers excel in advancing legislation for policy areas that provide concentrated benefits for a constituency (such as banking and finance), as well as areas that provide widely distributed benefits (such as civil rights).

[1]The wealth of members in the 116th Congress reinforce my claim that wealth is relative. Whereas it is still the case that these members are generally much wealthier than the median U.S. household, it is also true that the wealthiest 10% of lawmakers in the 116th Congress have three times more wealth than the bottom 90% combined (Evers-Hillstrom 2020).

In exploring why the least-wealthy representatives are generally less effective in lawmaking than their wealthier peers, I examine the extent to which the least-wealthy representatives' experiences are similar to other groups that appear relatively less effective in lawmaking. I find that the least-wealthy representatives do not have less policymaking experience as a legislator, or propose less legislation than their peers. Instead, their policy proposals are disproportionately stopped at various stages of the policymaking process (especially within House committees). I also explore the temporal variation in the data to analyze one brief period in time when the least-wealthy representatives appear, as a group, to be relatively more effective lawmakers than the average House member. I find that, in such periods, the least-wealthy representatives excelled in policy areas that typically require intensive advocacy from an individual (i.e., a policy entrepreneur) on behalf of widely-distributed supporters to produce policy change.

Collectively, my findings provide insights into how the historical overrepresentation of the highest economic strata in government continues to shape political inequality for members in contemporary congresses and their policy goals. More broadly, this chapter demonstrates that the consequences of economic inequality may potentially apply to elites and not just the mass public.

2 Conventional Wisdom About Wealth and Policymaking

We know very little about how wealth relates to how members of Congress approach policymaking. The conventional wisdom on the topic usually takes the form of a hasty generalization: most people believe that the government favors wealthy people (Pew Research Center 2016; 2019),[2] just as most of the Framers of the Constitution believed that the wealthy few should have a permanent share of government power (Klarman 2016, 169-210).[3] These generalizations are unsatisfying to those who are interested in how institutions actually work (i.e., the causes and consequences of the design of legislative institutions). These generalizations do, however, motivate other key questions: who do people feel the government benefits most (and least), and who did the Framers view as the governing class for the government that they created?

Legislators contribute to the conventional wisdom when they publicly comment on the personal wealth of their colleagues or challengers, and they usually warn of unspecified advantages in Congress for wealthier individuals. For example, for decades members advocated for limits on self-financing by candidates in

[2] A majority of people also stated in their survey responses that the federal government provides insufficient support for poor people and middle class people (Pew Research Center 2016).

[3] Perhaps the clearest articulation of the Framers' beliefs about wealthy individuals having a permanent share of government power is found in their debates surrounding the design of the Senate during the Constitutional Convention. While arguing in favor of the lifetime tenure for Senators, Alexander Hamilton recommended that the "rich and well-born" hold a "permanent share in the government" in order to protect the wealthy few from the many (United States Constitutional Convention et. al. 1839, 129-137). Most other delegates disagreed with Hamilton about lifetime tenure for Senators, but they acknowledged that the Senate "ought to come from, and represent, the wealth of the nation" (James Madison) and that it should resemble Britain's House of Lords as the "aristocratic part of... government" (Pierce Butler); moreover, they agreed to six year terms for Senators (and indirect elections) to insulate these members from popular control (Klarman 2016, 209-210).

congressional elections because "in a democracy, we must not allow individuals who control vast wealth to enter the election booth with a big, sometimes unassailable advantage" (U.S. Senate 1987, S2685).[4] Research demonstrates, however, that candidate victory rates do not increase with self-financing (Steen 2006). In addition to campaign finance matters, legislators also speak publicly about personal wealth when discussing their own pay. During the mark-up of the legislative branch funding bill for FY 2020-2021 for example, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman, Tim Ryan (D-OH), commented on language in the bill that prohibited a cost of living adjustment for members for the twelfth consecutive year. He noted that every Federal judge and some senior executives are compensated at a higher rate than members of Congress. Before voting for passage of the bill through his subcommittee, Rep. Tim Ryan also said:

> We cannot keep turning this into a gotcha moment... As of May 2020, [the] average rent for an apartment in Washington, DC is $2339. We have Members sleeping in their offices to save money. So, we need to have a real discussion on this issue and stop using it to score easy political points, or this body will be filled with only millionaires who do not represent the vast majority of the American people (Marcos 2020).

As these illustrations show, when legislators comment on personal wealth, they usually allude to the over-representation of a specific economic class if certain policies are not enacted.

However, their statements about wealth are easily dismissed because members usually advocate the enactment of policies that they themselves (to a large extent) control and benefit from. Members might be concerned broadly about challengers "buying offices" through self-financing campaigns, but they could also be motivated to increase incumbents' electoral advantage. Likewise, some lawmakers may find living in Washington D.C. prohibitively costly, but it is not clear how this affects lawmakers' performance of their duties. If we assume that a member's salary is her only income, and Rep. Tim Ryan is accurate, she would pay 16% (on average) of her pre-tax salary for housing in Washington D.C. It is worth noting, however, that high income citizens pay (on average) more than 30% of their incomes for housing and low income citizens pay (on average) more than 40% of their income for housing (Schanzenbach, Nunn, Bauer, Mumford 2016). Moreover, lawmaker statements about personal wealth are usually difficult to interpret. When lawmakers complain about their pay, for instance, are they suggesting that earning higher incomes would improve how they govern, as studies that examine lawmaker pay and performance in state legislatures suggest (Squire 1992, 2007; Hall 2019)? Or, do lawmakers mean that six-figure salaries are insufficient compensation to

[4]Eventually, this line of argument culminated in passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 and included the "Millionaires' Amendment", which raised the limits of individual and party contributions for candidates who face wealthy opponents who contribute to their own campaigns above a certain threshold (Steen 2006).

satisfy their needs? More broadly, when members warn us about the overrepresentation of millionaires in Congress are they unaware that such an arrangement is already the status quo by design, and that most of their colleagues are millionaires (Carnes 2012, Gilens 2012)? Or, are members aware of the wealth of their peers, and they attribute personal wealth for the success of other lawmakers?

Beyond the conventional wisdom and lawmaker statements, political scientists have never asked whether politicians with more and less wealth have more and less power in the policymaking process. Part of the scarcity in the literature is due to a lack of available data on the personal finances of members of Congress. Without such data and analysis, which may highlight large disparities in wealth between members (as I describe in a previous chapter), scholars assume that all members are wealthy because they generally are wealthier than the public at large (Gilens 2012, 235). Even with personal wealth data becoming increasingly available in recent years, however, scholars have focused on investigating the relationship between wealth and roll-call voting behavior. Some research, for example, suggests that members vote in accordance with their material self-interest for specific issues, such as the reduction and repeal of the estate tax (Griffin and Anewalt-Remsburg 2013) and raising the federal debt limit (Grose 2013). For more broad policy domains, however, the evidence of a lawmaker's wealth influencing her voting behavior is limited, with most studies finding either minimal (Welch and Peters 1983) or null (Chappelle 1981; Carnes 2013) effects. While the emphasis on roll-call voting has provided insight into how personal wealth may (or may not) potentially influence representatives' voting behavior in Congress, few studies have explored the important question of whether wealth (or a relative lack thereof) influences their approach and success in policymaking during their time in Congress.

3 Historical Perspectives and Theoretical Considerations

Because there is a lack of scholarly focus on the relationship between personal wealth and policymaking, and because conventional wisdom and lawmaker statements provide limited (but useful) information on the subject, I turn to the historical record to motivate my expectations about wealth disparities within Congress and the policymaking behavior of members.

3.1 Why wealth may not be relevant for policymaking success

A pluralist reading of the institutional design and historical origins of Congress does not point to obvious features of the lawmaking process that advantage or disadvantage individuals in particular economic classes.[5]

[5]As I describe further on, however, there were (and still are in many cases) obvious features of the electoral process that advantage the highest economic classes and disadvantage lower economic classes. Historically these features included: the requirement that one garners the support of large constituencies, indirect elections, and longer terms in office for specific

Dahl ([1961] 2005, 305), for example, argues that the political system as designed has a "built-in, self-operating limitation on the influence of all participants". Indeed, Article I of the U.S. Constitution does not explicitly prohibit (or require) individuals of a certain level of wealth from serving in Congress, and the Framers of the Constitution did not extensively debate the specifics of the lawmaking process that we know today. Their primary focus was to prevent the totality of government power from being concentrated in the hands of a single individual (or a very small group of individuals), and this shared motivation of the Framers is inferred from the very first proposal that a majority of delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 agreed to. Although it was not the original goal of the Constitutional Convention, the Framers first voted in favor of creating a national government comprised of three branches, which was based on the Virginia Plan that was drafted by James Madison.[6] To the delegates, separation of key governmental powers across different branches ensured that a narrow coalition or interest would not be able to control the entire national government, to advance its goals.

After adopting the Virginia Plan as a revisable framework for the new national government, the delegates then addressed how to balance competing interests within the national legislature. They agreed to the idea of a bicameral Congress, but they debated on how to apportion representation in each chamber, and how to select the membership of the Congress. Objections notwithstanding, the delegates eventually agreed to proportional representation (by population) in the House and equal representation for states in the Senate. They also agreed to popular elections to select the members of the lower chamber, while state legislatures were to select the members of the upper chamber. On its face, all of these compromises about the original institutional design of the national government (e.g., separation of powers) and Congress (i.e., bicameralism, proportional and equal representation, and popular elections and appointments) point to a desire of the framers to divide power equitably among various groups of political actors, who presumably identified with various economic classes, as well. From this perspective, there is little reason to expect personal wealth to enter meaningfully into how individual members of Congress work to advance legislation into law.

3.2 Why might wealthy people be effective lawmakers in Congress?

An alternative reading of the historical origins of Congress, albeit one with additional context, provides some basis to expect that legislators from different economic classes might approach policymaking differently and/or experience different levels of success in their policymaking efforts. This interpretation is consistent

positions.

[6]The purported purpose of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was to amend the Articles of Confederation, given that the articles created a government that was ill-equipped to address the issues of the time. More specifically, under the articles, the Confederation Congress could not raise taxes to pay foreign debts or establish a military, and Congress could not regulate interstate or foreign commerce (Klarman 2016, 21-23). Many of the delegates did not expect to create a new national government when they agreed to attend the convention, which is why this first compromise – using the Virginia Plan as a blueprint for the new constitution – is noteworthy.

with pluralists who argue that government institutions continue to retain certain (perhaps even noble) values of the Framers. Yet, the reading rejects the notion that the institutions that were established by the Framers transcended the class biases of the delegates and ratifying conventions that first created and adopted the constitution. Instead, this interpretation suggests that wealthy members, regardless of their legislative strategies, hold considerable policymaking influence. In short, Congress favors the policy agendas of wealthy lawmakers because it was designed and shaped over time by wealthy individuals, whose influence continue to shape outcomes in contemporary legislative institutions. Moreover, the exclusion of specific groups in the decision-making for the creation and development of Congress enshrined long-standing inequalities within the institution that continue to shape the behavior (and success) of its membership.

The origins of the upper-economic class dominance in Congress can be traced back to governance under the Articles of Confederation. Political scientists and historians have argued that the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 were motivated by providing for the general welfare of Americans, and were less partisan, less constrained by their constituencies, and less self-interested than contemporary lawmakers when they drafted the Constitution (McDonald [1958] 1992; Riker 1987). Others have argued in favor of an "economic interpretation" of the Constitution, following the work of Charles Beard ([1913] 1935), which views the debates over the creation of the Constitution as a conflict based upon competing economic interests.[7] Although Beard's thesis has been challenged by other scholars (e.g., McDonald 1958), because of its oversimplification of the economic interests and motivation of the Framers and adopters of the Constitution, more recent studies have supported Beard's central claim that personal interests shaped the behavior of the Framers and ratifiers. For example, McGuire (2003) supplements Beard's view with statistical analyses to assess the choices of the individuals involved in the drafting and ratification of the Constitution. He finds that, on the margins, a consideration of the personal (e.g., debt holdings and slave ownership) and constituent (e.g., the extent to which local communities were commercialized) interests of the Framers and ratifiers can help to explain the design and adoption of the Constitution.[8]

At the close of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin noted his surprise that the Constitution "approach[ed] so near to perfection" given that "when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views" (Farrand 1966). Yet, legislative scholars rarely point a critical eye to which prejudices, local interests, and selfish views were enshrined in the institutions created by the Framers (and their political successors). While scholars have debated how diverse the economic interests of the Framers were, there is little dispute that the Framers were a cross-section of the wealthiest

[7] See Schuyler (1961) for a summary of the debate surrounding Beard's thesis.
[8] See also McGuire and Ohsfeldt (1984) and Heckelman and Dougherty (2007).

early Americans (McDonald 1958, McGuire 2003). Most of the Framers also served in the first Congresses (McGurire 2003, 53), or in other parts of the federal government, and collectively they believed that the governing class of individuals were to be chosen from and by the highest economic strata. For instance, a majority of the Framers were in favor of imposing property requirements for individuals to hold federal office, but ultimately they did not include them in the Constitution because they were not able to agree on a national standard (Klarman 2016, 180-181). The Framers also sought to insulate control of the government from the majority of the population that were in lower economic classes because they wanted to ensure the property rights of wealthier citizens. To that end, a majority of the Framers favored (but disagreed about the implementation of) wealth-based requirements for the right to vote in federal elections (Williamson 1960). Moreover, they structured the length of terms and selection processes for the Senate to protect the influence of wealthy citizens from those who, as James Madison said, "labor under all the hardships of life, and secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of its blessings" (Klarman 2016, 209). Collectively, the membership and origins of the first Congresses and exclusionary voting eligibility requirements (in most states) in early American history meant that policy inputs and influence were predicated on one having a certain level of wealth.

Alternatively, the perspectives of women, African-Americans, and individuals in low economic classes were not included in the deliberations of the Framers, and Congress has long been unrepresentative of the public across a range of descriptive characteristics. Legislators' personal policy interests contribute to their participation in pre-vote stages of the lawmaking process (Hall 1996), and members from historically underrepresented groups often employ legislative strategies that are informed by their personal backgrounds and tailored to meet community needs beyond the boundaries of their districts. Representatives with predominantly working-class occupational backgrounds, for instance, focus more of their limited resources and efforts on advancing bills that deal with economic policies than representatives who had other career experiences (Carnes 2013). Among state legislators, African-American lawmakers commonly have legislative agendas that focus on issues that are important to the Black community (Bratton and Haynie 1999). Likewise, female legislators commonly express a feeling of responsibility for representing the interests of women broadly (Carroll 2002), and they have been shown to introduce and advance more bills on womens' issues than men (Little, Dunn, Deen 2001; Volden, Wiseman, Wittmer 2018). While legislators from historically underrepresented groups are not monolithic in their perspectives and backgrounds, what we know about their legislative strategies suggests that they may engage in similar behaviors and share similar experiences while in Congress.

Despite their best efforts, for example, legislators from historically underrepresented groups face unique challenges in guiding their legislation through Congress. The causes of these challenges are not very well-

understood by scholars, but their effects have been well-documented. Representatives with working-class backgrounds work to garner more cosponsors on their economic policy legislation than their peers, yet they are no more likely to see their bills pass the House or be enacted into law (Carnes 2013). Black Democrats in Congress appear less effective in passing their legislative agendas than their white co-partisans when serving in the majority party (Volden and Wiseman 2014). Similarly, female representatives in the majority party in the House propose more legislation, on average, than their male colleagues, yet the two groups are statistically indistinguishable from each other in terms of legislative effectiveness. Instead, women appear more effective than their male co-partisans in the minority party, when their policy influence is constrained by requisite compromises with the majority party (Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2013).

Similar to a representative's previous occupation, race, and gender, her lack of personal wealth may signal that she is a member of another historically underrepresented group in Congress: individuals of low and middle economic status. Hence, she may face similar challenges in advancing a legislative agenda, and she may be less effective in lawmaking than her wealthier peers. In contrast, wealthier legislators may not face such challenges, and they may even disproportionately benefit from the institutional arrangements established by their disproportionately wealthy predecessors. Moreover, while scholars continue to debate the motivations of the Framers, contemporary political institutions may or may not reflect the Framers' preference for wealth-based requirements for policy influence. Collectively, this conjecture and the extant literature motivates the following hypothesis:

> **Economic Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis**: The wealthiest representatives will be more effective in advancing their legislative agendas through Congress than their less-wealthy peers. Additionally, the least-wealthy representatives will be less effective in advancing their legislative agendas through Congress than their wealthier peers.

The null hypothesis is that there is essentially no difference in the legislative effectiveness between wealthier members of Congress and their less-wealthy peers. Failure to reject the null hypothesis would be consistent with the conventional wisdom (and other arguments), which suggest that because all legislators are wealthy compared to the broader public, we would therefore expect there to be no meaningful wealth-based differences in their behavior or success. A rejection of the null hypothesis, however, would suggest that the less-wealthy representatives engage in different legislative strategies and/or encounter unique challenges in lawmaking compared to other members. My focus on the legislative effectiveness of wealthy and less-wealthy members is important because it may potentially help to identify specific policymaking behaviors of representatives and the obstacles that they encounter. More fundamentally, my focus on the legislative effectiveness of wealthy and less-wealthy members may provide an indication of whose ideas are generally accepted or

rejected in Congress.

3.3 When Might Wealthy Lawmakers be More Effective than Their Peers?

If accurate, the *Economic Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis* implies that a more representative group of Framers and ratifiers may not have designed or assented to the institutional arrangements that were created to govern all people. Some might argue that the expansion of suffrage in America throughout history has led to a more equitable share of policymaking influence for all economic classes, but research does not suggest that this claim is necessarily true. Congress has become more (though not entirely) representative of the larger public along numerous dimensions, such as gender and race. Yet, the wealthy politicians, lawyers, business owners, and white-collar professionals who disproportionately serve in contemporary Congresses (Carnes 2013, 20) resemble their forefathers who were primarily wealthy "lawyers, officeholders, merchants, financiers, and planters" (McGuire 2003, 55). If institutional arrangements disproportionately advantage the economic classes that created them, then we might expect that wealthy legislators excel in policymaking especially in certain institutional contexts and while serving in specific institutional roles.

But what are the institutional arrangements that empower wealthy lawmakers? One might argue that they are probably the structures that are overlaid atop the original framework of Congress by individuals who were disproportionately economic elites. The common feature of these institutional arrangements is that they centralize authority over policymaking, similar to how the Framers centralized authority in drafting the Constitution. Indeed, it seems that every time government power becomes more diffuse, a new power structure is overlaid (or, alternatively, an old power structure is reinforced) to centralize authority. This conjecture is consistent with political theorists who argue that rule by an oligarchy is inevitable within any democratic organization because of the necessity to centralize power to make the organization function effectively (Michels [1911] 1962; Leach 2005).

In the House specifically, scholars have identified at least two institutional arrangements that greatly enhance the policymaking influence of members: majority party membership (Volden and Wiseman 2014) and committee chairs (Berry and Fowler 2018, Volden and Wiseman 2014). Majority parties centralize decision-making by filtering out legislative proposals from minority party members, which they do mostly through the committee system (Volden and Wiseman 2014, chapter 3). Similarly, the heads of these committees exhibit unmatched authority and lawmaking effectiveness within their committees, when compared with rank-and-file members. Volden and Wiseman (2014, chapter 2) demonstrate that the legislative effectiveness of members is based on their innate abilities, cultivated skill sets, and institutional positions (among other considerations). If the *Economic Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis* holds, and the institutional positions described above contribute the most to the lawmaking effectiveness of wealthy representatives,

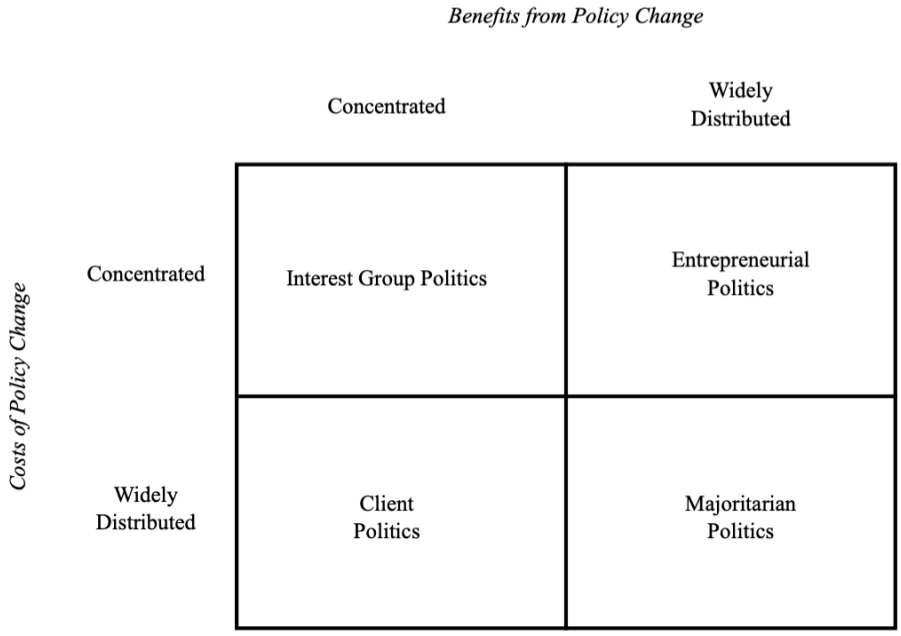
then we would expect there to be no difference in the lawmaking effectiveness of wealthy and less-wealthy members who do not hold such positions. Instead, wealthier lawmakers would only be more effective than their peers in advancing their bills through Congress when they utilize key institutional positions, which were devised by economic elites, and that have been identified by scholars. This conjecture informs my second hypothesis:

> **High Economic Status and Institutional Position Hypothesis**: The wealthiest representatives will be more effective in advancing their legislative agendas through Congress than their less-wealthy peers only when they serve in institutional positions that enhance the policymaking influence of members.

3.4 Which Areas Might Wealthy Legislators be Most Effective Lawmakers in?

Considering when and why wealthy legislators are likely to be effective lawmakers from a historical perspective may provide some insight into their legislative strategies. Moreover, the historical record can also help us develop expectations about the types of issues that wealthy legislators excel in; albeit with help from political science research and some additional assumptions.

Figure 1: The Wilson Matrix



Wilson (1980) argues that any policy change can be classified into one of four categories, depending on whether the costs and benefits from changing the status quo are concentrated (and thus likely to be politically active) or widely distributed (and thus likely to be politically inactive).[9] Cases of interest group politics involves costs and benefits that are concentrated, while – in direct contrast – majoritarian politics features costs and benefits that are widely distributed. Client politics involve concentrated benefits and widely distributed costs, while – conversely – entrepreneurial politics feature widely distributed benefits and concentrated costs. This typology has become known as the Wilson matrix, which I replicate in Figure 1.

While the categories are broad and may not capture all of the complexities of particular policy areas, scholars have nonetheless gained further insight about the policymaking process by referencing the Wilson matrix. For example, Volden and Wiseman (2016) find support for their hypothesis that policy gridlock is more likely in policy areas that feature entrepreneurial politics because supporters of policy change in those areas are widely distributed, while opponents are well-organized and have the means to obstruct policy change. Likewise, we can use the Wilson Matrix to classify the policies of the Framers, and; to the extent that contemporary wealthy legislators are similarly motivated, we can develop expectations about the policy areas that wealthy legislators are likely to excel in.

The historical perspectives above suggest at least two interpretations of the policies enacted by the Framers. The first interpretation follows a pluralist view of the framing of the Constitution and institutional

[9]Lowi (1964) also develops a typology for different policy areas, although it has a different focus and terminology. Grossman (2013) provides a critique of policy area typologies that attempt to summarize differences surrounding each area.

development of Congress, and it suggests that early policymakers provided widely distributed benefits for society, at the expense of the governing elite, given the fragmentation of government power. This interpretation views early policymakers as being especially effective in areas of entrepreneurial politics given their early victories in establishing a system of separation of powers and checks and balances. This interpretation also regards some of the Framers as policy entrepreneurs, who invested their resources to promote significant policy change despite considerable opposition (Kingdon [1984] 1995; Mintrom and Norman 2009). This view comports with the historical example of wealthy policy entrepreneurs – such as George Mason and Elbridge Gerry – who advocated for the protection of individual rights and famously refused to sign the Constitution because it did not contain a Bill of Rights.[10] This interpretation also comports with a view of the Framers as being concerned less about their own self-interest and more about the public good. If the wealthy legislators in contemporary Congresses are similarly motivated as their wealthy predecessors, then they might excel in similar policy areas. This conjecture informs my next hypothesis:

> **High Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis**: The wealthiest representatives will be especially effective in advancing legislation that involves entrepreneurial politics through Congress, in comparison to other policy areas.

Alternatively, a historical perspective that views the framing and institutional development of Congress as protecting the interests of a specific economic class would suggest that early policymakers provided concentrated benefits to an economic group (or similar groups) at the expense of particular groups and/or the larger public. This interpretation views early policymakers (and the institutions that they created) as favoring issue areas that feature client politics. If the wealthy legislators in contemporary Congresses are similarly motivated as their wealthy predecessors, then they might excel in similar policy areas. This conjecture informs my next hypothesis:

> **High Economic Status and Client Politics Hypothesis**: The wealthiest representatives will be especially effective in advancing legislation that involves client politics through Congress, in comparison to other policy areas.

The existing literature provides less guidance about the nature of legislative strategies and challenges that are faced by historically underrepresented groups. However, if the least-wealthy representatives behave similarly to lawmakers who represent historically underrepresented groups, then they likely focus more of their limited resources and efforts on advancing bills that benefit the majority of the public, who are dispro-

[10] George Mason and Elbridge Gerry were also two of the wealthiest delegates at the Philiadelphia Convention (McDonald [1958] 1992, 44, 72; McGuire 2003, 54).

portionately in lower economic classes. In other words, they are likely to focus their legislative agendas on areas that are characterized as cases of entrepreneurial politics. This conjecture informs my final hypothesis:

> **Low Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis**: The least-wealthy representatives will focus more on advancing legislation that involves entrepreneurial politics through Congress than other policy areas.

4 Data

For us to better understand whether representatives behave differently depending on their wealth, we first need some measure of their personal wealth. To test my hypotheses I draw on data on the personal finances of representatives between 1979 and 2013. These data were collected by Eggers and Klašnja (2018), who acquired and transcribed the scanned financial disclosure reports of members of the U.S. House for even-numbered years between 1980-2002.[11] They also combined these data with previously-released records from 2004-2012 to create a dataset of congressional assets and liabilities spanning 32 years.[12] Since members generally report the value of their financial holdings in ranges (e.g., $1,001 - $5,000), Eggers and Klašnja (2018) calculate the sum of the mid-points of the value range for each item that is reported to estimate the total value of each member's assets and liabilities. Given that the highest value range for a holding has no upper bound, they impute the lower bound for items of the highest value. This coding rule implies that very large assets or liabilities are underestimated.[13]

Drawing on these data, I construct wealth indicators that identify representatives in the bottom or top 20% of wealth-holders in the House for each Congress. I calculate the wealth of each representative in each Congress by focusing on the estimated sum of mean values of House members' assets (reported assets) as a coarse measure of their wealth for each year in the dataset. One caveat with using reported assets is that the variable will tend to overestimate the wealth of members who have outstanding debts. However, the results of my analyses are substantively unchanged if I use a different measure of wealth (such as net worth, which calculates the difference between the assets and liabilities of members).[14] Additionally, using wealth indicators based on the value of a representative's reported assets provides a clear indication of their wealth (or lack thereof) that will allow me to distinguish the most likely group of haves from the most likely group

[11] Eggers and Klašnja (2018, 5) note that as much as 15% of financial disclosure reports are missing in the early years of the dataset, and they attribute missing financial disclosure forms to "House archives fail[ing] to include them or... member[s] fail[ing] to disclose."

[12] Data for 2004-2012 were transcribed and released by the Center for Responsive Politics.

[13] Moreover, if the true values of assets and liabilities are near the bottom of a value range then those items will be overestimated; but if the true values of items are near the top of a value range, then those items will be underestimated.

[14] Reported assets is also a more appropriate measure of legislator wealth than net worth because it allows us to identify wealthy, yet highly leveraged, representatives. If, for example, a member has a higher value of reported liabilities than reported assets, a wealthy member may appear impoverished (despite being quite wealthy) according to their (negative) net worth.

of have-nots in Congress.

In using a measure of representatives' relative wealth, vis-à-vis each other, I assume that members in the bottom 20% of wealth-holders in the House are more likely than their peers to identify with lower economic strata. It is true that all members of Congress appear to be wealthier than large swaths of the public by virtue of the income that they collect from their salaries alone. Members of Congress were paid between $160,000 and $200,000 (2010 USD) between 1980-2012, and the current minimum salary for representatives is $174,000, which is nearly three times the median household income nationally ($61,376) (U.S.Census Bureau). However, my assumption comports with several analyses. For example, in a previous chapter, I describe how representatives who are in the bottom 20% of wealth-holders in the House are much closer (in terms of wealth and prior experiences) to average and low-income citizens than the average (with regards to wealth) member of Congress. I also show that representatives who begin their careers among the bottom (or top) 20% of wealth-holders often remain there throughout their careers, and they do not appear to become similar to their wealthier colleagues over time. Lastly, in the appendix (Table A1) I demonstrate that the bottom 20% of wealth-holders disproportionately represent lower income-districts.

To test my hypotheses, I also need a measure of representatives' legislative effectiveness. Volden and Wiseman (2014) develop and employ a Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES) for each representative, which they describe as a parsimonious indicator that captures "the proven ability to advance a member's agenda items through the legislative process and into law" (18). The LES is a useful measure for my analyses because it incorporates multiple stages of the lawmaking process, from a bill's introduction to it becoming law, and the operationalization of the LES gives greater weight to members who are more successful at later stages of the process.[15] Also, the coding protocol that Volden and Wiseman employ categorize each bill that is proposed by a member according to its relative importance, and each bill's contribution to a member's LES is weighted according to its categorization.[16] One drawback of using LES as a measure of legislative effectiveness is that it does not credit members who contribute to the drafting or advancement of bills, but who are not the primary sponsors. If, for example, the entirety of a bill's text is amended in committee or on the House floor, then the LES of those members who offered successful amendments would not be impacted. Fortunately, however, Volden and Wiseman (2014, 52) demonstrate that interpretations of legislative effectiveness based on the LES are likely to hold even with the inclusion of amendment activity in constructing the measure.

[15]More specifically, the LES incorporates information from five stages of the legislative process: (1) how many bills each member introduces, and how many of those bills (2) receive action in committee, (3) pass out of committee and receive action on the House floor, (4) pass the House, and (5) become law.

[16]More specifically, Volden and Wiseman categorize each bill as being either commemorative, substantive, or substantive and significant. For more detail about this coding protocol, see Volden and Wiseman (2014, 20).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables in the House

Variable				Difference-in-means		
	Bottom 20 percent of wealth-holders Mean (Std. Dev.)	Top 20 percent of wealth-holders Mean (Std. Dev.)	Chamber Mean (Std. Dev.)	Bottom 20 percent vs. Chamber (remaining)	Top 20 percent vs. Chamber (remaining)	Bottom 20 percent vs. Top 20 percent
Age	51.527(10.353)	57.054(9.715)	53.983(10.171)	-3.064***	3.807***	-5.527***
Seniority	4.926(3.933)	5.426(4.31)	5.203(3.998)	-0.345***	0.276**	-0.499***
State Legislative Experience	0.536(0.499)	0.491(0.5)	0.52(0.5)	0.021	-0.036**	0.046**
State Legislative Professionalism[a]	0.322(0.16)	0.261(0.153)	0.293(0.154)	0.036***	-0.039***	0.061***
Majority Party	0.555(0.497)	0.558(0.497)	0.557(0.497)	-0.002	0.001	-0.002
Majority-Party Leadership	0.022(0.148)	0.019(0.138)	0.02(0.141)	0.003	-0.001	0.003*
Minority-Party Leadership	0.019(0.136)	0.016(0.125)	0.02(0.139)	-0.001	-0.005	0.003*
Speaker	0.003(0.058)	0.004(0.059)	0.002(0.049)	0.001	0.001	0
Committee Chair	0.046(0.21)	0.052(0.222)	0.048(0.214)	-0.003	0.004	-0.006
Subcommittee Chair	0.218(0.413)	0.242(0.428)	0.236(0.425)	-0.023*	0.008	-0.024
Power Committee	0.238(0.426)	0.307(0.461)	0.265(0.442)	-0.034**	0.052***	-0.069***
Distance from Median	0.399(0.251)	0.385(0.25)	0.391(0.249)	0.011	-0.007	0.015
Female	0.096(0.295)	0.122(0.328)	0.108(0.311)	-0.015	0.018	-0.026**
African American	0.116(0.32)	0.014(0.118)	0.066(0.248)	0.062***	-0.064***	0.102***
Latino	0.061(0.239)	0.013(0.114)	0.041(0.197)	0.025***	-0.034***	0.048***
Size of Congressional Delegation	19.334(12.966)	19.229(15.04)	18.752(14.404)	0.726*	0.591	0.106
Vote Share	69.355(14.004)	68.937(14.102)	68.752(13.514)	0.75	0.229	0.418***

Note: [a] For members with previous experience as a state legislator.

5 Analysis and Results

Are wealthy representatives more effective in advancing their legislation through Congress than their less-wealthy peers? Do the most-wealthy and the least-wealthy representatives (i.e., the bottom and top quintile of wealth-holders) have distinct backgrounds and experiences from each other, and the broader chamber as a whole?

I begin my analysis with the second question to get a sense for how similar and different the least-wealthy and the most-wealthy representatives are from each other. In a previous chapter, I explored the variation in the professional, personal, and family backgrounds of a small sample of the most-wealthy and least-wealthy representatives. Here, I take a look at the variation in several indicators of personal demographics and professional experiences inside and outside of Congress for representatives in the top and bottom wealth quintiles.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the independent variables that are used in the regression models in the next section, for the bottom and top quintiles of wealth-holders in the House, and the chamber as a whole.[17] For most of the independent variables, each of the groups are substantively similar. However, there are several key differences in the personal backgrounds and experiences of the members in each group.

[17]These independent variables have been demonstrated to be correlated with LES (i.e., Volden and Wiseman 2014, 2018). See the appendix (Table A2) for a description of these variables and a list of the data sources used to construct them.

Most strikingly, it is clear from Table 1 that the least-wealthy and the most-wealthy representatives are not disproportionately drawn from majority or minority parties. Likewise, these groups are also similar with respect to the (very small) proportion of members who serve in the minority or majority party leadership, and have been the Speaker of the House. The most-wealthy representatives do appear to have a higher proportion of members who serve as committee and subcommittee chairs than the least-wealthy representatives, and the chamber as a whole, but the differences are not statistically significant.[18] Moreover, there are minimal differences between these groups in terms of their ideological extremity and vote share. Lastly, both the least-wealthy and most-wealthy representatives tend to come from more populous states, on average, compared to the rest of the chamber; but (again) these differences are substantively small and may be attributed to sampling error.

There are, however, several key differences between the samples of the least-wealthy and most-wealthy representatives. The fifth and sixth columns of Table 1 show the results of a series of difference-in-means tests that compare the group means for the bottom/top wealth quintiles (respectively) and the group mean of the remaining 80% of the chamber across each variable; and the final column shows the results of a series of difference-in-means tests between the bottom and top wealth quintiles. In these columns we see that the most-wealthy representatives are about 5% more senior than the rest of the chamber, and they are about 10% more senior than the least-wealthy representatives; and these differences are statistically significant at conventional levels. Moreover, the most-wealthy representatives are nearly 7% older, on average, than the remainder of the chamber, and they are more than 10% older than the least-wealthy representatives. In contrast, the least-wealthy representatives are about 6% younger than the remainder of the chamber. Given the average gender and racial diversity of the most-wealthy representatives, these differences suggest that they would likely be more effective lawmakers than their less-wealthy peers. The most-wealthy representatives have more than 15% more women among them than the rest of the chamber (although this result is not statistically significant), and they have more than 20% more women in their ranks than the least-wealthy representatives. The most-wealthy representatives also have a smaller proportion of racial and ethnic minorities. African-Americans and Latinos make up almost 12% and 6% (respectively) of the members in the bottom wealth quintile, and almost 7% and 4% (respectively) of the entire chamber throughout this period. Yet, African-Americans and Latinos combined comprise less than 3% of representatives in the top wealth quintile.

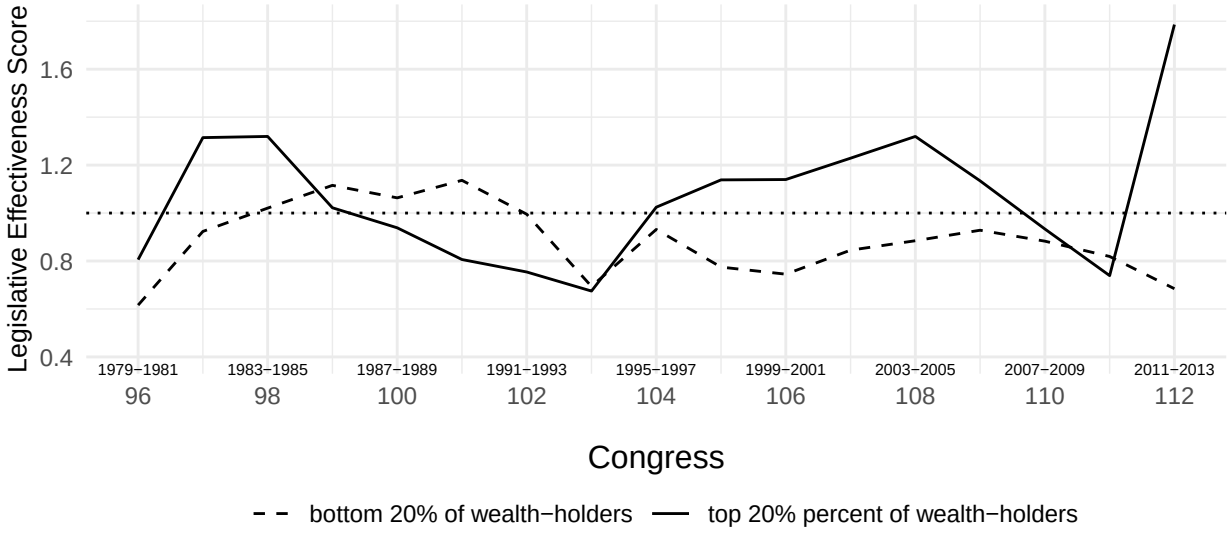
There are also other key differences between the samples of the least and most-wealthy representatives. For instance, fewer than between 7-9% of the most-wealthy representatives served in a state legislature before being elected to Congress, compared with their less-wealthy peers. Moreover, among those members who have prior experience as a state legislator, the most-wealthy representatives have substantively less experience

[18] I conduct additional analyses concerning these institutional positions a bit further on.

(13-19% fewer years) within more professionalized state-legislatures. To the extent that service in a state legislature that closely resembles the national legislature translates into increased lawmaking effectiveness for members (Bucchianeri, Volden, and Wiseman 2020), we would expect the least-wealthy representatives (of any of the groups observed) to be more effective in advancing their legislative agendas than their wealthier peers. The differences in the previous experiences of wealthy and less-wealthy representatives highlight the different routes that members take to enter Congress. As I describe in a previous chapter, the least-wealthy representatives tend to have experience as state legislators, expand their constituencies over time, and rise through the ranks of political office. Wealthier members also tend to have experience working in government before being elected to Congress, but their government experience credentials often are the result of holding appointments within the federal executive branch and the White House. Some wealthier members skip government service altogether before running for Congress and are instead familiar with government through the interactions that their businesses have (e.g. Rep. Darrell Issa (D-CA)) or their service as party delegates and fundraisers (e.g. Reps. Cecil Heftel (D-HI) and Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)). Lastly, the most-wealthy representatives have almost 20% more members who serve on power committees compared to the least-wealthy representatives and the remainder of the chamber. Meanwhile, the least-wealthy members are significantly underrepresented on the most powerful committees.

In sum, wealthy and less-wealthy representatives are similar to one another across various variables; but there are also several –potentially meaningful– differences between wealthy representatives and less-wealthy representatives.

Figure 2: Legislative Effectiveness Scores for the Bottom and Top Quintiles of Wealth-holders in the House for the 96th-112th Congresses



Note: Figure 2 presents the mean LES of the bottom (dashed line) and top (solid line) quintiles of wealth-holders in the House. LES is normalized to be mean 1.0 within each Congress. For most Congresses between 1980 and 2014, the top quintile of wealth-holders appear, on average, to be more effective at advancing their legislative agendas than their less-wealthy colleagues.

To engage with the first question of this section and test my hypotheses, in Figure 2, I demonstrate that, in most Congresses, the most-wealthy representatives are, on average, more effective than the average and the least-wealthy representatives. The difference in means for the LES of the least-wealthy representatives in each Congress compared with the LES of the wealthiest representatives in each Congress indicates that the latter (mean = 1.07) are more effective than the former (mean = 0.89) by 0.18 units ($t\text{-}stat = 2.74$). In other words, representatives in the top wealth quintile are about 17% more effective than representatives in the bottom wealth quintile. This difference in means for LES is smaller than the differences between minority-party members and majority-party members and committee chairs, who are about two to five times more effective, respectively, than the average minority-party member of Congress (Volden and Wiseman 2014, 43-44). However, this difference is larger than the difference in LES between the average representative in his first term and the average representative in his third term. Likewise, the difference in LES between the most-wealthy and least-wealthy members is more than the 10% difference in LES between the average female and male representatives; and, the difference approaches the 22% difference in legislative effectiveness between white and African-American legislators (Volden and Wiseman 2014, 43).

Since the LES scores are normalized to be mean 1.0 in each Congress, these differences also suggest that the wealthiest representatives hold a slight advantage in advancing their legislative agendas in Congress than the average representative. This finding provides tentative support for the *Economic Status and Legislative*

Effectiveness Hypothesis. Meanwhile, less-wealthy representatives appear slightly disadvantaged in advancing their proposals to become law than the average representative. The exception to these trends occurs (most notably) between the 99th and 102nd Congresses (1986-1993); but overall the findings in Figure 2 provide suggestive support for the *Economic Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis*.[19] That said, there are still many institutional and personal factors that are correlated with a representative's legislative effectiveness that are unaccounted for in Figure 2, which I consider below. To test my hypotheses and determine whether the patterns shown in Figure 2 hold after accounting for all of the factors referenced above, I conduct a series of Ordinary Least Squares regressions. In these regression models, the dependent variable is a representative's Legislative Effectiveness Score (Volden and Wiseman 2014) in Congress t, and the indicators of interest are variables that equal "1" if a legislator is in the bottom wealth quintile or the top wealth quintile in the same Congress.

I present the results of these regression models in Table 2. Model 1 presents the results of my analysis using the indicator *Top 20% of wealth-holders*, and the positive and statistically significant coefficient suggests that the most-wealthy representatives are more effective in advancing their legislative agendas than their less-wealthy colleagues, all else equal. This finding supports the *Economic Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis*. Model 2 presents the results of my analysis using the indicator *Bottom 20% of wealth-holders*, and the negative and statistically significant coefficient suggests that the least-wealthy representatives are less effective in advancing their legislative agenda than their wealthier peers, all else equal. This result provides support for the *Economic Status and Legislative Effectiveness Hypothesis*. In Model 3, I include both wealth indicators in the same model to account for the above-average effectiveness of the most-wealthy representatives and the below-average effectiveness of the least-wealthy representatives. The magnitude of the coefficient estimate for each wealth indicator diminishes slightly, but the results are still consistent with the previous models. Overall, those members identified as the *Top 20% of wealth-holders* are approximately 7-9% more effective than their peers, and members identified as the *Bottom 20% of wealth-holders* are approximately 8-10% less effective than their peers. Finally, in Model 4, I conduct an analysis that is similar to the analysis for Model 1 on a sample that only includes representatives from the bottom and top wealth quintiles. The positive and statistically significant estimates for *Top 20% of wealth-holders* in Model 4 suggests that the most-wealthy representatives are more than 18% more effective than the least-wealthy representatives, all else equal.[20]

[19] A bit further on I go into detail about the 99th and 102nd Congresses (1986-1993). While I am still investigating the period, the leading explanation for why the observed trends reverse is that there was a lot of instability in the House leadership in these four Congreeses. This disruption in House governance may have briefly advantaged less-wealthy representatives in advancing their legislative priorities.

[20] The average LES of the least-wealthy representatives in Model 4 is 0.89. Hence, $100 \times (0.162/0.89) = 18.2$; which implies that the most-wealthy representatives are have Legislative Effectiveness Scores that are approximately 18% more than the least-wealthy representatives.

Table 2: Lawmaker Wealth and Legislative Effectiveness

	LES			
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Top 20% of wealth-holders	0.091**		0.073*	0.162***
	(0.041)		(0.042)	(0.055)
Bottom 20% of wealth-holders		−0.101**	−0.087**	
		(0.041)	(0.042)	
Seniority	0.071***	0.069***	0.071***	0.114***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)
Seniority^2	0.001	0.001	0.001	−0.002*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
State Legislative Experience	−0.030	−0.028	−0.033	0.018
	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.090)
State Legislative Experience × Legislative Prof.	0.379**	0.372**	0.394**	0.204
	(0.168)	(0.168)	(0.168)	(0.251)
Majority Party	0.542***	0.541***	0.543***	0.595***
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.076)
Majority-Party Leadership	0.299**	0.298**	0.299**	0.363*
	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.193)
Minority-Party Leadership	−0.206*	−0.209*	−0.208*	−0.342*
	(0.115)	(0.115)	(0.115)	(0.190)
Speaker	−0.570	−0.558	−0.579	−0.645
	(0.437)	(0.437)	(0.437)	(0.603)
Committee Chair	3.050***	3.052***	3.051***	3.151***
	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.129)
Subcommittee Chair	0.708***	0.707***	0.706***	0.647***
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.075)
Power Committee	−0.306***	−0.304***	−0.307***	−0.318***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.061)
Distance from Median	0.052	0.052	0.054	0.155
	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.140)
Female	0.056	0.054	0.054	0.103
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.085)
African American	−0.259***	−0.260***	−0.247***	−0.208*
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.114)
Latino	0.011	0.007	0.017	0.089
	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.134)
Size of Congressional Delegation	−0.002	−0.001	−0.002	−0.0002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Vote Share	0.022*	0.021*	0.021*	0.022
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.018)
Vote Share^2	−0.0002**	−0.0001*	−0.0001*	−0.0002
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Constant	−1.332	−1.305	−1.320	−0.809
	(1.264)	(1.264)	(1.264)	(1.307)
Age dummies?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	5716	5716	5716	2235
R-squared	0.441	0.441	0.442	0.471

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Ordinary least squares estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses, observations clustered by member.

5.1 The Legislative Strategies of Wealthy and Less-Wealthy Members

My findings raise additional questions about why the wealthiest representatives are more effective lawmakers than most of their peers in the House, and why the least-wealthy representatives are less effective in most Congresses. Are these members introducing more or less bills than their counterparts who are from different economic strata? Are they more or less successful at ushering their bills through particular stages of the legislative process while the bills of their peers meet different fates? Do they hold or lack particular positions of influence in the U.S. House? I engage with these questions by examining the comparative effort and success of wealthy and less-wealthy representatives throughout different stages of the lawmaking process.

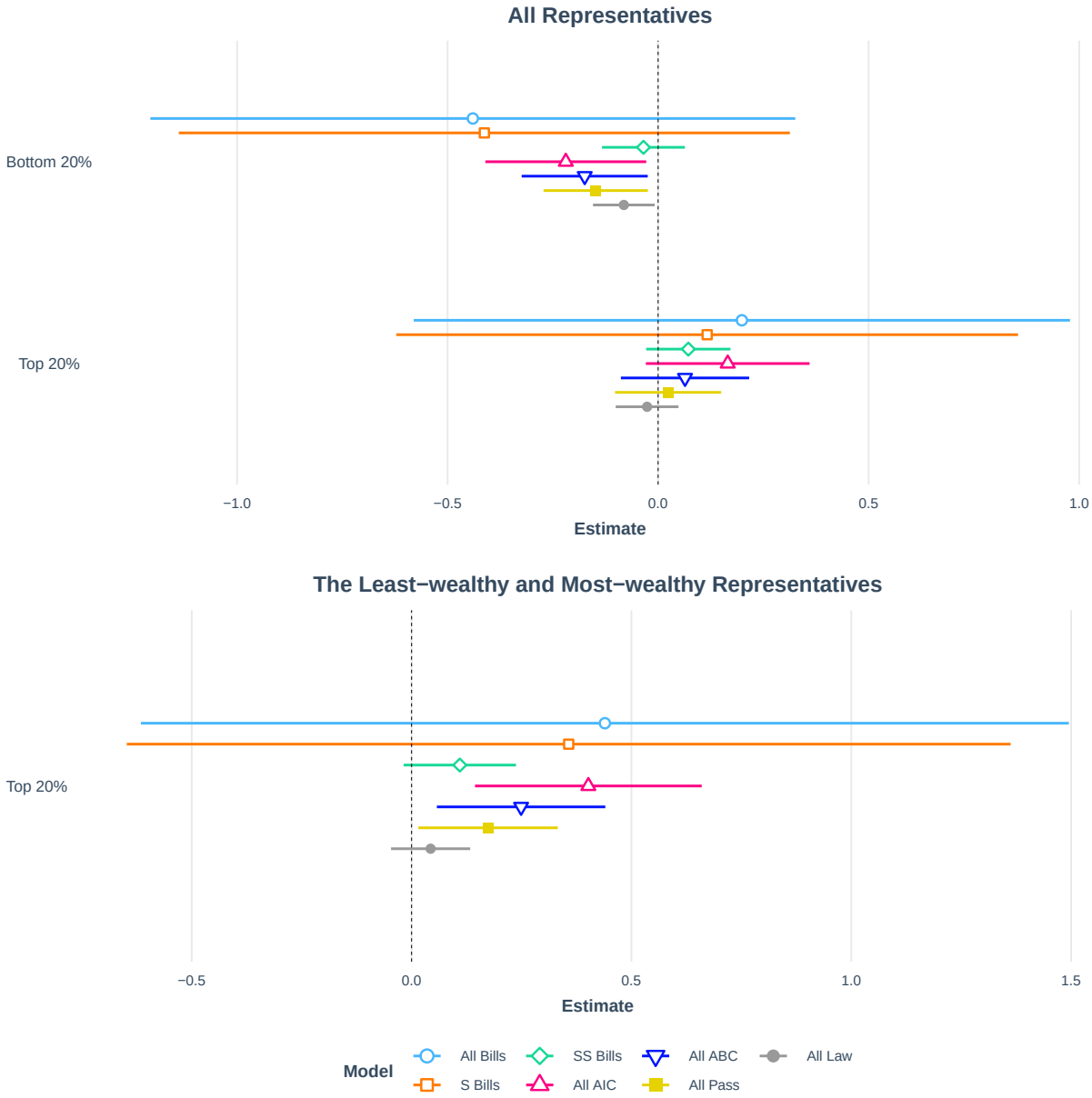
In Figure 3, I present the results of a series of Ordinary Least Squares regressions, where the dependent variables in each of the models are the number of bills that a representative has in each of the five stages of the lawmaking process that serve as components of Volden and Wiseman's LES: the number of bills that a representative introduces (BILLS), the number of those bills that receive any sort of Action in Committee (AIC), the number of her bills that receive any kind of Action Beyond Committee (ABC), the number of her bills that pass the House (PASS), and the number of her bills that become law (LAW). Similar to the models in Table 2, the key independent variables are the indicators for whether a representative is in the top or bottom wealth quintile. For the purposes of illustration, I also conduct separate regressions on the total number of bills that are introduced (All Bills) as well as the number of bills in each of the substantive categories that are used by Volden and Wiseman in their coding protocol: substantive, and substantive and significant bills.[21]

In Figure 3, I present the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals from a series of OLS regressions for all representatives (top panel), and for the most-wealthy representatives and the least-wealthy representatives (bottom panel). From the results shown in the top panel of Figure 3, we can see that the most-wealthy representatives do not necessarily introduce more legislation than most of their peers. The point estimates for All Bills, S Bills, and SS Bills are all positive for the most-wealthy members, but the uncertainty surrounding the estimates suggests that these estimates are statistically indistinguishable from zero. The most-wealthy representatives do appear to have more of their bills receive action in committee (by more than 7%, *t-stat* = 1.67) than their less-wealthy peers, which is a finding that is likely driving their increased effectiveness shown in Table 2.[22]

[21] I also conduct separate regressions for the total number of commemorative bills that representatives introduce, and the results are similar to the findings for All Bills and Substantive bills.

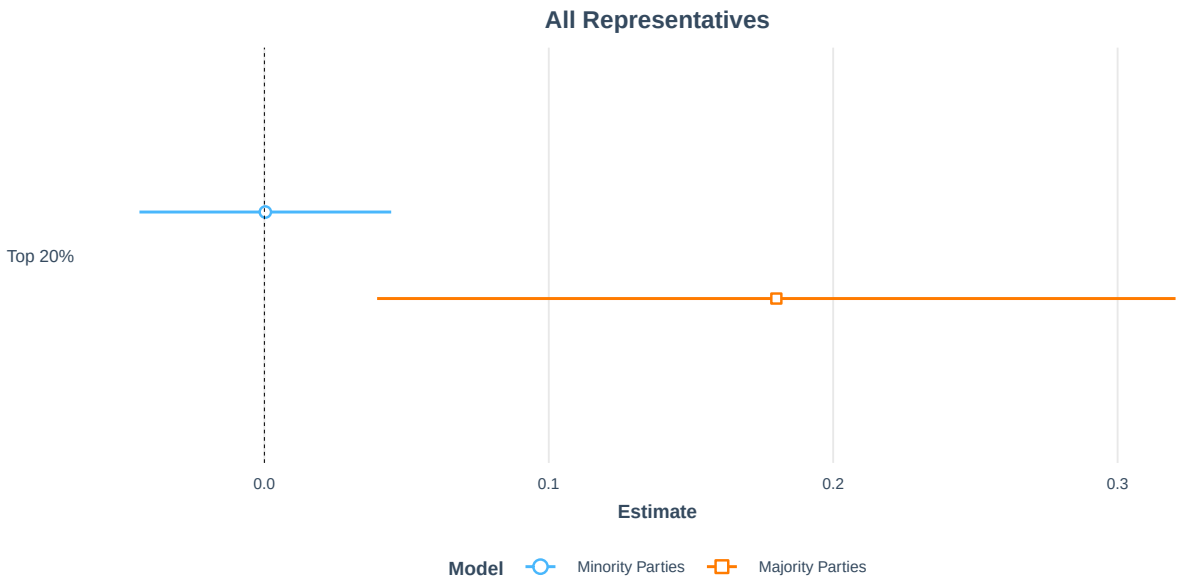
[22] The point estimate for most-wealthy representatives in this model is 0.17. The average number of bills that receive action in committee for less-wealthy representatives is 2.22. Hence, $100 \times (0.17/2.22) = 7.7$; which implies that the most-wealthy representatives have more than 7% more of their bills receive action in committee than their less-wealthy peers.

Figure 3: Success of Representatives in the Bottom and Top Wealth Quintiles Throughout the Lawmaking Process



Note: Figure 3 shows the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for a series of OLS regressions where the dependent variables are: the number of bills that representatives sponsor, including All Bills, Substantive (S), or Substantive and Significant (SS); the number of their bills that receive action in committee (AIC); the number of their bills that make it beyond committee and to the floor of the house (ABC); the number of their bills that pass the House (PASS), and the number of their bills that become law (LAW). The independent variables of interest are indicators for the bottom 20% of wealth-holding representatives (least-wealthy) and the top 20% of wealth-holding representatives (most-wealthy). The top panel estimates models with the full sample of representatives in the data, and the bottom panel estimates models with the sample of the least-wealthy and the most-wealthy representatives. Each model uses the same controls as the model shown in Table 2. Standard errors are clustered by member.

Figure 4: Lawmaker Wealth and Legislative Effectiveness in Majority and Minority Parties



Note: Figure 4 shows the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for two OLS regressions (reported in the appendix, Table A5) with the sample of minority parties and majority parties. The dependent variable of interest is the LES of members in each Congress, and the independent variable of interest is an indicator for the top 20% of wealth-holding representatives. Standard errors are clustered by member.

In contrast, while the least-wealthy representatives also *do not* necessarily introduce less legislation than their wealthier peers, their bills *do* receive significantly less attention in all of the subsequent stages of the lawmaking process. Bills from the least-wealthy representatives see less action in committee (about a 10% difference), have less action beyond committee (roughly a 10% difference), pass the House less frequently (about another 10% difference), and become law less frequently (a 12% difference) compared to their wealthier peers. The point estimates for these models are all statistically significant.

In a direct comparison of the most-wealthy representatives and the least-wealthy representatives in the bottom panel of Figure 3, we see that the increased effectiveness of the former is not driven primarily by bill introductions. The most-wealthy representatives do offer roughly 17% more substantive and significant bills ($t\text{-}stat = 1.68$) than the least-wealthy representatives, but these estimates are small and imprecise compared with other stages of the lawmaking process.[23] Bills that are introduced by the most-wealthy representatives receive more action in committee (about a 20% difference), receive more action beyond committee (roughly a 16% difference), and pass the House more frequently (about a 14% difference), compared to bills offered by the least-wealthy representatives. The point estimates for these models are statistically significant, but the bottom panel of Figure 3 also suggests that there are statistically indistinguishable differences between

[23]The point estimate for most-wealthy representatives in this model is 0.17. The average number of SS bills that least-wealthy representatives introduce is 0.65. Hence, $100 \times (0.11/0.65) = 16.9$; which implies that the most-wealthy representatives offer about 17% more substantive and significant bills than the least-wealthy representatives.

the number of bills that become laws which are offered by the least-wealthy members and the most-wealthy members.

Since the wealthiest representatives appear to be most advantaged in advancing their bills through committees, while the least-wealthy representatives are disadvantaged the most at the same stage, there is some evidence that institutional arrangements in Congress are driving the relationships that we observe. To test the *High Economic Status and Institutional Position Hypothesis*, I conduct two Ordinary Least Squares regressions that are similar to the models in Table 2. In these models, however, I split the sample into minority parties and majority parties. In Figure 4, I present the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for the main independent variable of interest from these models.[24] Figure 4 shows that the top quintile of wealth-holding representatives are statistically indistinguishable from their less-wealthy peers while in the minority party, and they are only more effective while in the majority party.

We might wonder if systematic differences in access to institutional positions, such as committee and subcommittee chairs, account for the difference in legislative effectiveness that we observe for wealthy majority party members. We saw in Table 1 that the wealthiest representatives had a larger – yet statistically insignificant – proportion of appointments as committee and subcommittee chairs. In auxiliary analyses (reported in the appendix, Table A3), I show that the wealthiest committee and subcommittee chairs are more effective than their similarly-positioned less-wealthy peers. Wealthy committee and subcommittee chairs do not account entirely for the difference in legislative effectiveness that we observe for majority party members because I obtain similar, albeit diminished, positive and statistically significant results for models that do not include members holding these institutional positions. Collectively, however, these findings provide suggestive support for the *High Economic Status and Institutional Position Hypothesis*, which is consistent with the argument that the wealthiest representatives' enhanced lawmaking effectiveness is closely related to the institutional positions they hold in Congress.

In auxiliary analyses, I also test for whether the differences in legislative effectiveness between wealthy and less-wealthy members are apparent from the beginning of their tenures or develop over time. In the appendix, I show that the least-wealthy members and the most-wealthy members have legislative effectiveness scores that are statistically indistinguishable from each other when they first enter Congress (Figure A1), but significant differences emerge between the two groups after about four terms in office (Table A4 and Figure A2). This finding does not rule out the possibility that wealthier representatives cultivate different skill sets (and/or more quickly) while in Congress than their less-wealthy peers. However, these findings, in addition to my earlier finding that wealthier members are indistinguishable while in the minority party, suggest that the observed differences in legislative effectiveness are not due to differences in the innate abilities of wealthy

[24] These models are shown in the appendix, Table A5.

and less-wealthy legislators.

5.2 Identifying Areas of Entrepreneurial Politics

My findings raise further questions about the types of issues that wealthy and less-wealthy representatives introduce and work to advance in the House. Do some of the most effective representatives (i.e., the most-wealthy members) use their institutional positions to advance policies that have concentrated or widely distributed benefits or costs? Alternatively, do the least-wealthy representatives advance bills in areas of entrepreneurial politics, which benefit the majority of the public?

I engage with these questions by using the Interest and Legislative Effectiveness Scores (ILES) that were developed and employed by Volden and Wiseman (2011, 2014, 2016) in their analysis of representatives' legislative effectiveness in particular substantive areas. More specifically, Volden and Wiseman use the same methodology that they use to generate Legislative Effectiveness Scores to measure lawmaking effectiveness across 19 policy areas identified by the Congressional Bills Project coding protocol (Adler and Wilkerson 2013). Hence, a representative's Civil Rights ILES, for example, is a parsimonious indicator of how successful a representative was in a given Congress at advancing those bills that she introduced that engaged with civil rights issues (as coded by the Congressional Bills Project), in comparison to all other members of the House, where each bill is likewise coded for relative substantive significance. Drawing on these data, I can identify the issue areas that wealthy representatives excel in.

I go one step further to identify areas of entrepreneurial politics by following Volden and Wiseman's (2014, 2016) approach. Specifically, they use the ILES measure to calculate the Entrepreneurial Politics Score (EPS) for each of the 19 policy areas they examine. The EPS for each policy area is the average value, across the Congresses sampled, of the highest ILES in each policy area. Volden and Wiseman (2014, 2016) argue that a relatively high ILES in a policy area, within a Congress, indicates an area of entrepreneurial politics. They reason that these policy areas likely feature entrepreneurial politics because policymaking is difficult in such areas, and policy change typically requires the effort of a policy entrepreneur. As Kingdon ([1984] 1995, 122) noted, policy entrepreneurs' "defining characteristic... is their willingness to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money – in the hope of a future return." Since few members pay the costs associated with trying to accomplish policy change (and few succeed when they do pay the costs), policy entrepreneurs are identifiable by dramatically exceeding the average ILES of 1.0. Thus, a relatively high EPS indicates issue areas, throughout a given period, where policy entrepreneurs were prevalent in advancing legislation. In contrast, issue areas where policy entrepreneurs are not prevalent, such as areas featuring client politics, would be associated with lower scores, as Volden and Wiseman (2016, 31) suggest. Since

Table 3: Entrepreneurial Politics Across Issue Areas

	Entrepreneurial Politics Score	
Issue Area	1979-2013	1985-1993
Agriculture	120.9	107.4
Banking and Commerce	47.9	53.1
Civil Rights and Liberties	102.1	76.7
Defense	53.9	45.1
Education	94.9	102.7
Energy	82.1	130.8
Enviroment	73.3	73.1
Foreign Trade	93.3	86.6
Government Operations	31.1	26.0
Health	100.9	131.4
Housing and Community Development	116.0	134.6
International Affairs	88.3	74.1
Labor, Employment, and Immigration	72.9	78.1
Law, Crime, and Family	73.0	52.8
Macroeconomics	138.2	181.5
Public Lands	32.5	31.1
Science and Technology	121.3	120.9
Social Welfare	89.2	71.0
Transportation	119.2	59.4

Note: The Entrepreneurial Politics Score is based on the highest ILES score across members within the issue area averaged acrossed all of the Congresses in the years specified in each column.

policy change is relatively easy in these areas, and since many lawmakers compete to advance legislation in these areas, they will not stand out from each other. Thus, issue areas that feature less entrepreneurial politics will tend not to have individuals who dramatically exceed the average ILES.

In the first two columns of Table 3, I present a list of each issue area and its corresponding Entrepreneurial Politics Score (EPS) aggregated across all Congresses from 1979-2013. Issue areas with a higher EPS indicate issue areas throughout this period where policy entrepreneurs were prevalent in advancing legislation. By this measure, Macroeconomics is the policy area that features the greatest level of entrepreneurship. This finding is consistent with the idea that policy change in Macroeconomics often deals with promoting economic growth and feature widely distributed benefits. Issue areas with a lower EPS – such as Government Operations, Banking and Commerce, and Defense – indicate issue areas throughout this period where entrepreneurial politics is less prevalent. These issue areas tend to feature policies that advance the interests of concentrated groups, such as the banking industry or defense contractors. Taken together, these findings provide some confidence that EPS is identifying areas featuring entrepreneurial politics.

Table 4: Lawmaker Wealth and Interest and Legislative Effectiveness Score for Less-entrepreneurial Issue Areas

	Govops	**Publiclands**	**Banking**	**Defense**	**Labor**	**Lawcrimefamily**	**Enviroment**	**Energy**	**Intlafffairs**
Top 20%	0.007	−0.002	0.412***	−0.130	0.173	0.611***	−0.090	−0.206	−0.086
	(0.095)	(0.096)	(0.140)	(0.149)	(0.192)	(0.183)	(0.146)	(0.210)	(0.217)
Constant	−2.303	0.088	−1.073	2.045	−7.579	−1.853	0.432	3.986	−0.474
	(2.905)	(2.927)	(4.287)	(4.549)	(5.875)	(5.573)	(4.456)	(6.402)	(6.610)
N	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717
R-squared	0.178	0.059	0.116	0.112	0.078	0.061	0.051	0.039	0.078

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Ordinary least squares estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses, observations clustered by member.

Table 5: Lawmaker Wealth and Interest and Legislative Effectiveness Score for Entrepreneurial Issue Areas

	Welfare	**Trade**	**Education**	**Health**	**Civilrights**	**Housing**	**Trasportation**	**Agriculture**	**Scitech**	**Macroecon**
Top 20%	0.083	0.168	−0.084	0.009	0.486**	0.071	0.042	−0.167	0.366	0.270
	(0.209)	(0.241)	(0.220)	(0.217)	(0.243)	(0.250)	(0.267)	(0.277)	(0.243)	(0.259)
Constant	−3.638	−0.747	−4.436	−4.398	−2.989	−4.557	−3.226	1.469	0.915	−1.850
	(6.383)	(7.342)	(6.723)	(6.617)	(7.426)	(7.636)	(8.137)	(8.460)	(7.416)	(7.899)
N	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717	5717
R-squared	0.041	0.050	0.050	0.048	0.063	0.035	0.064	0.053	0.049	0.087

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Ordinary least squares estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses, observations clustered by member.

5.2.1 The Most-wealthy Representatives and Entrepreneurial Politics

I expect that wealthy representatives will excel in advancing legislation in policy areas that focus on either entrepreneurial politics or client politics. To test my hypotheses, I estimate a series of Ordinary Least Squares regressions, where the dependent variable is representative *i*'s ILES for a particular policy area in Congress *t*. The independent variable of interest is an indicator that equals "1" for representatives who are in the top wealth quintile.

I present the results of these regression models in Tables 4 and 5, where each column represents a model for a specific issue area, and the columns are arranged in (ascending) order by each area's EPS. If the *High Economic Status and Client Politics Hypothesis* holds, then I would expect that the coefficient for *Top 20%* will be positive and statistically significant across more of the models in Table 4 – which features issue areas associated less with entrepreneurial politics – than in Table 5. Alternatively, if the *High Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis* holds, then I would expect the opposite. The positive and statistically coefficient estimates for the areas of Banking and Commerce, and Law, Crime and Family, provide some support for the *High Economic Status and Client Politics Hypothesis*, but it is not clear that the wealthiest members excel in advancing their legislative agendas in other issue areas associated with client politics throughout this period. In contrast, the models in Table 5 provide much more limited support for the *High Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis*. The only coefficient that is positive

and statistically significant is for the area of Civil Rights and Liberties. Taken together, these findings are consistent with the argument that the top quintile of wealth-holders in the House are effective in advancing legislation in issue areas that feature lower incidence of entrepreneurial politics, between 1979 and 2013, than other issue areas.

5.2.2 The Least-wealthy Representatives and Entrepreneurial Politics

Although I have demonstrated that the least-wealthy representatives are less effective than their peers at advancing bills through the lawmaking process, I can still investigate which policy areas the least-wealthy representatives are likely to excel in. Recall from my earlier conjecture that the least-wealthy representatives may be a part of a historically underrepresented group in Congress, and they may seek to advance policies that distribute benefits more widely given their background. If these expectations hold, then we would expect for these members to engage in issue areas that feature entrepreneurial politics. However, to the extent that the least-wealthy representatives are unsuccessful in policymaking, we cannot directly assess which issue areas they participate effectively in. Indeed, similar models to those presented in Tables 4 and 5 show that the bottom 20% of wealth-holders in the House only excel in issues related to agriculture, which is consistent with the *Low-Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis* according to the EPS, but is not exactly the strongest evidence in support of the argument.[25]

We may be able to gain more insight, however, by examining the brief period in the data where the least-wealthy representatives were more effective than their peers in lawmaking. For context, this period corresponded with the 99th-102nd Congresses (1986-1993) and divided government. This period also corresponded with considerable instability in the House leadership. For these four Congresses, there were three different speakers and majority leaders from the same party. It is not clear from the data why there was a reversal in the policymaking success of the least-wealthy representatives, but it is clear (from auxiliary models similar to those shown in Figure 3) that they introduced more bills, and were more successful at advancing those bills through the lawmaking process, than most of their peers in the 99th-102nd Congresses (1986-1993).[26] If the *Low-Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis* holds, then during this period of increased effectiveness for the least-wealthy representatives, we would expect for them to excel in issues associated with entrepreneurial politics in the 99th-102nd Congresses (1986-1993).

[25] In fact, many observers would argue that agriculture policy is a textbook area of client politics, rather than entrepreneurial politics, because of the stability of farm support policies that oppose the larger public's interests (see Freshwater and Leising 2015 for a review of relevant literature). This perspective highlights the role of members of Congress in obstructing policy change on behalf of agricultural groups, which is not directly captured by the Entrepreneurial Politics Score. However, the EPS does capture the numerous policy entrepreneurs since the 1990s whose ILES exceed 100.0 because they have been successful at adding new titles, programs, and beneficiaries to routine agriculture legislation (i.e., farm bills) (Browne 1989).

[26] Consistent with Kingdon's ([1984] 1995) model for policy change, it is possible that the 99th-102nd Congresses were a unique window of opportunity for the least-wealthy policy entrepreneurs in Congress to advance legislation.

Table 6: Lawmaker Wealth and Interest and Legislative Effectiveness Score for Less-entrepreneurial Issue Areas, 99th-102nd Congresses

	Govops	**Publiclands**	**Defense**	**Lawcrimefamily**	**Banking**	**Transportation**	**Welfare**	**Enviroment**	**Intlafffairs**
Bottom 20%	−0.193	0.079	0.566*	−0.331	0.082	−0.238	0.382	0.030	0.135
	(0.188)	(0.191)	(0.295)	(0.351)	(0.295)	(0.337)	(0.385)	(0.304)	(0.376)
Constant	−5.751*	−1.864	−0.864	−5.679	1.116	−0.501	−4.504	4.888	0.700
	(3.245)	(3.281)	(5.073)	(6.046)	(5.072)	(5.805)	(6.634)	(5.242)	(6.475)
N	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364
R-squared	0.291	0.114	0.131	0.117	0.188	0.146	0.115	0.117	0.118

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Ordinary least squares estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses, observations clustered by member.

Table 7: Lawmaker Wealth and Interest and Legislative Effectiveness Score for Entrepreneurial Issue Areas, 99th-102nd Congresses

	Civilrights	**Labor**	**Trade**	**Education**	**Agriculture**	**Scitech**	**Energy**	**Health**	**Housing**	**Macroecon**
Bottom 20%	0.076	−0.700*	−0.349	0.531	1.093**	−0.234	1.227**	0.902	1.141**	−0.243
	(0.431)	(0.423)	(0.446)	(0.480)	(0.469)	(0.449)	(0.599)	(0.594)	(0.511)	(0.678)
Constant	−2.707	−8.073	2.517	−7.449	2.561	11.210	14.094	−8.706	−9.270	−8.372
	(7.412)	(7.281)	(7.676)	(8.271)	(8.078)	(7.736)	(10.305)	(10.221)	(8.800)	(11.665)
N	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364	1364
R-squared	0.188	0.161	0.099	0.087	0.230	0.108	0.061	0.077	0.238	0.139

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Ordinary least squares estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses, observations clustered by member.

To test this hypothesis, I replicate Tables 4 and 5, with the main variable of interest being an indicator that equals "1" for representatives in the bottom wealth quintile, for the representatives that served in the 99th-102nd Congresses (1986-1993). In Tables 6 and 7 I present the results of these models, which are rearranged (in ascending order) according to the EPS of each policy area shown in the third column of Table 3. We can see from Table 6 that representatives identified by the variable *Bottom 20%* are more effective than their peers in one area of less-entrepreneurial politics during this period (i.e., defense policy). However, the positive and statistically significant coefficients in Table 7 suggest that members identified by *Bottom 20%* are more effective than their peers in many more areas that are associated with entrepreneurial politics for these Congresses, such as Agriculture, Energy, and Housing and Development. These results provide additional support for the *Low Economic Status and Entrepreneurial Politics Hypothesis*, which suggests that the least-wealthy representatives focus on and excel in issue areas where policy change provides widely distributed benefits and impose concentrated costs.

6 Discussion

Casual observers of Congress argue that personal wealth and policymaking power are correlated largely because of the historical and contemporary overrepresentation of the highest economic classes within the

national legislature. Yet, this argument has not been engaged with by most theoretical treatments of policymaking or expressly demonstrated in previous empirical analyses. In this paper, I provide insight into how a representative's personal wealth might be connected with advancing her policy agenda in Congress. Specifically, I explore two broad questions: is the personal wealth of lawmakers informative about how they approach policymaking and their successes therein; and, if so, how?

My findings suggest that the answer to my questions are: yes, but it depends on the specific stage of the lawmaking process and the institutional context that a member operates within. Examining data on the wealth, backgrounds, and legislative behavior of representatives over 30 years, I find that the top quintile of wealth-holding representatives are 7-9% more effective in advancing their policy agendas than their peers. This difference in legislative effectiveness is not driven by these members introducing more legislation than less-wealthy members, but, rather, more of the bills that the most-wealthy representatives introduce receive action in committee. In contrast, the bottom quintile of wealth-holding representatives are 8-10% less effective in advancing their policy agendas than most of their peers, and they are more than 18% less effective than the representatives in the top wealth quintile, in particular. These differences are not driven by representatives in the bottom wealth-quintile introducing less legislation than their peers *per se*, but their bills disproportionately failed to advance throughout the various stages of the lawmaking process (particularly at the committee stage). I also find that the increased legislative effectiveness of the wealthiest representatives develops throughout their tenure and is strongly related to specific institutional arrangements (such as being in the majority party, holding a committee chair, and/or subcommittee chair). Lastly, my findings provide suggestive evidence that the wealthiest representatives excel (most clearly) in advancing bills for policy areas that are not associated with entrepreneurial politics over this period. Meanwhile, to the extent that the least-wealthy representatives excel in advancing legislation in a particular issue area, they find success when introducing bills for policy areas that typically require advocacy from policy entrepreneurs to produce policy change.

These findings are important for several reasons. First, they show that the policies that are considered and ultimately passed in the House are usually not introduced by the least-wealthy representatives, who disproportionately represent low-income congressional districts. However, I find no evidence to support the idea that the least-wealthy representatives have substantially less policymaking experience than their peers, prior to entering Congress. Similar to legislation proposed by members in other historically underrepresented groups in Congress, though, bill proposals from the least-wealthy representatives are disproportionately filtered out of the lawmaking process before they can be considered by most other members. These findings add another layer to concerns about descriptive representation; less wealthy people rarely get into office, and even when they do, they have less influence than other members.

Second, these findings confirm the outsized policymaking influence of the highest economic classes in the House. However, the wealthiest representatives are not more effective in advancing their legislative agendas than their peers without the aid of institutional positions or political parties that centralize decision-making authority. Given that the difference in legislative effectiveness between the most-wealthy and the least-wealthy representatives is apparent only after about eight years in office, my findings do not support the idea that wealthier representatives have innate lawmaking abilities that exceed those of their peers.

Finally, these findings also raise additional questions that are worth investigating in future extensions. For instance, what are other features of the legislative strategies of wealthy and less-wealthy representatives? Moreover, what are other conditions under which wealthy and less-wealthy representatives are especially effective (or ineffective) in advancing their agendas in Congress? Future work should also examine the career paths of wealthy and less-wealthy representatives more broadly to better understand how the disparities in legislative effectiveness emerge over time between these members.

Appendix

Table A1: District Income and Representatives in the Bottom and Top Wealth Quintiles

	Linear Probability Model	
	Bottom 20%	Top 20%
District median income (logged)	-0.073^{***}	0.188^{***}
	(0.028)	(0.027)
Percent Urban	0.148^{***}	-0.159^{***}
	(0.026)	(0.026)
Constant	0.681	-2.186^{***}
	(0.491)	(0.481)
Observations	5,849	5,849
R^2	0.073	0.092
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Note: This table shows the results of two OLS regressions, where the dependent variables are dichotomous indicators of whether a representative is in the bottom 20% (model 1) or top 20% (model 2) of wealth-holding representatives. The independent variable of interest measures the median income of each congressional district (logged) in the sample, and both models control for the proportion of the district that is urban. Standard errors are clustered by congressional district. The first model shows that districts with a higher median income are significantly less likely to have a representative who is in the bottom quintile of wealth-holders in the House. Conversely, the second model shows that districts with a higher median income are significantly more likely to have a representative who is in the top quintile of wealth-holders in the House. These findings are statistically significant at conventional levels and robust to alternative specifications. Collectively these results suggest that the least-wealthy members disproportionately represent lower-income districts, and the most-wealthy members disproportionately represent higher-income districts.

Table A2: Description of Independent Variables

Independent Variables	Description
Age[a]	Current year minus the Representative's birth year
Seniority[b]	Number of terms served by member in Congress
State Legislative Experience[b]	Equals "1" if member served in state legislature
State Legislative Professionalism [c]	Squire's index of state professionalism relative to Congress
Majority Party[b]	Equals "1" if member is in majority party
Majority-Party Leadership[b]	Equals "1" if member is in majority-party leadership
Minority-Party Leadership[b]	Equals "1" if member is in minority-party leadership
Speaker[b]	Equals "1" if member is the Speaker of the House
Committee Chair[d]	Equals "1" if member is a committee chair
Subcommittee Chair[b]	Equals "1" if member is a subcommittee chair
Power Committee[d]	Equals "1" if member serves on Rules, Appropriations, or Ways and Means
Distance from Median[e]	|Member i's DW-NOMINATE score - Median member's DW-NOMINATE score|
Female[b]	Equals "1" if member is female
African American[b]	Equals "1" if member is African American
Latino[b]	Equals "1" if member is Latino
Size of Congressional Delegation[f]	Number of districts in state congressional delegation
Vote Share[b]	Percentage of vote received in previous election

Data sources:
[a] Constructed by the author.
[b] Constructed by Volden and Wiseman (2014) based on Almanac of American Politics, various years.
[c] Constructed based on updates to Squire (1992).
[d] Constructed based on Nelson (1992) and Stewart and Woon (2005).
[e] Constructed from DW-NOMINATE scores provided by Keith Poole.

Table A3: Lawmaker Wealth and Legislative Effectiveness among Committee and Subcommittee Chairs

	Dependent variable:			
	LES			
	Committee Chairs		Subcommmittee Chairs	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Top 20% of wealth-holders	1.178**	1.269	0.154	0.297*
	(0.518)	(0.884)	(0.125)	(0.165)
Seniority	0.447*	−0.273	0.140***	0.273***
	(0.239)	(0.634)	(0.044)	(0.074)
Seniority^2	−0.004	0.018	0.0001	−0.009**
	(0.009)	(0.025)	(0.002)	(0.004)
State Legislative Experience	0.185	0.580	−0.177	−0.168
	(0.922)	(1.740)	(0.184)	(0.272)
State Legislative Experience × Legislative Prof.	3.160	5.313	1.191**	0.819
	(2.611)	(5.425)	(0.518)	(0.758)
Majority Party Leadership	−0.979	−0.305	0.555	0.522
	(2.004)	(4.747)	(0.339)	(0.535)
Committee Chair			1.934***	2.573***
			(0.197)	(0.298)
Subcommittee Chair	−1.513***	−1.763**		
	(0.423)	(0.798)		
Power Committee	−0.883*	−1.969*	−0.235*	−0.139
	(0.530)	(1.021)	(0.121)	(0.176)
Distance from Median	−1.960	4.188	0.762**	0.378
	(1.574)	(3.627)	(0.340)	(0.503)
Female	−1.239	0.689	−0.067	0.415
	(1.393)	(4.299)	(0.189)	(0.312)
African American	0.121	−2.274	−0.767***	−0.550
	(0.847)	(2.040)	(0.213)	(0.369)
Latino	−0.002	−0.423	−0.251	0.072
	(1.073)	(1.604)	(0.272)	(0.448)
Size of Congressional Delegation	−0.006	0.029	−0.006	0.0002
	(0.017)	(0.032)	(0.004)	(0.006)
Vote Share	0.170	−0.046	0.027	0.029
	(0.177)	(0.381)	(0.038)	(0.058)
Vote Share^2	−0.001	0.0005	−0.0002	−0.0002
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.0002)	(0.0004)
Constant	−7.263	2.834	−0.328	−1.021
	(6.996)	(15.067)	(2.196)	(2.804)
Age dummies?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	283	113	1,363	515
R^2	0.364	0.471	0.236	0.336
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: This table shows the results of OLS regressions, with the sample of individuals who serve as committee chairs and/or subcommittee chairs in each Congress between 1979-2013, where the dependent variable is the LES of representatives. In Model 1, the independent variable of interest is an indicator for representatives who were in the top 20% of wealth-holding representatives with the sample of individuals who served as committee chairs. Model 2 is the same, but it includes the sample of committee chairs from the top and bottom wealth quintiles. Models 3 and 4 are similar to Models 1 and 2, but they only include the sample of individuals who served as subcommittee chairs. While our inferences are limited due to the restricted sample, the findings broadly support the argument that the committee chairs in the top 20% of wealth-holding representatives are more effective lawmakers than most of their less-wealthy peers. Moreover, subcommittee chairs in the top 20% of wealth-holding representatives are more effective lawmakers than subcommittee chairs in the bottom 20% of wealth-holding representatives.

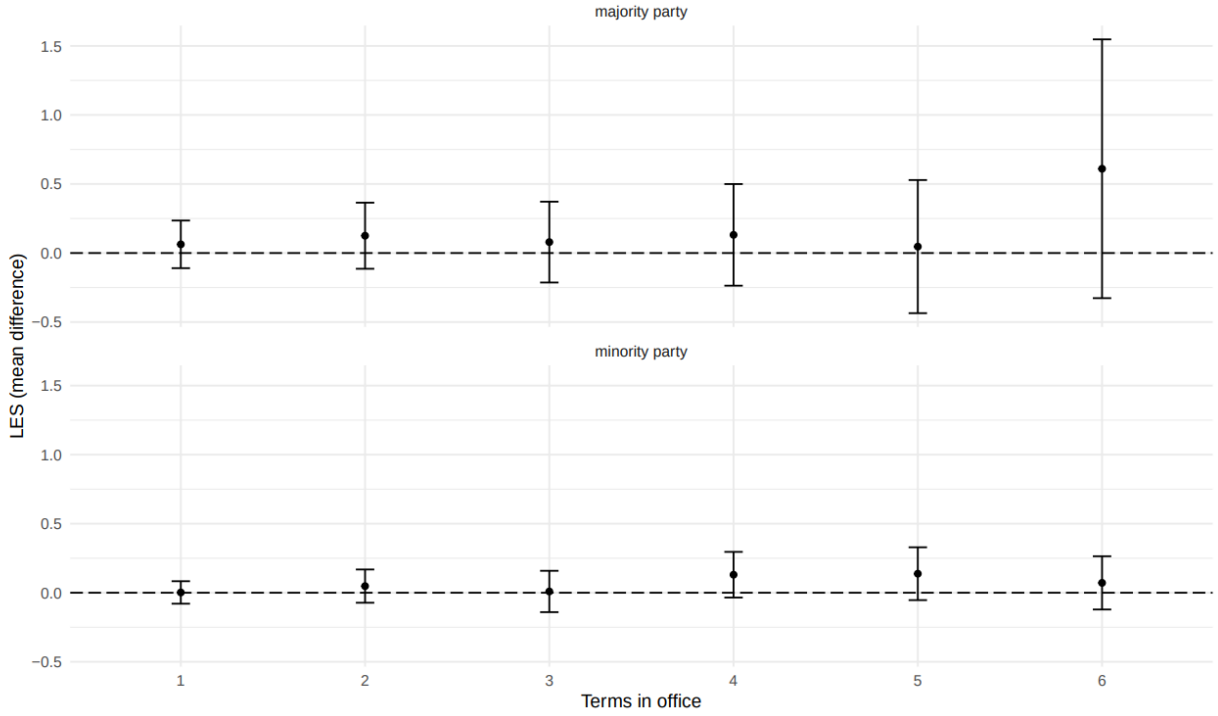
Table A4: Most-wealthy and Least-wealthy Lawmakers and Legislative Effectiveness

	Dependent variable:	
	LES	
	(1)	(2)
Top 20% of wealth-holders	0.233***	−0.036
	(0.049)	(0.079)
Seniority	0.032	−0.003
	(0.028)	(0.029)
Seniority^2	0.005**	0.006***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
State Legislative Experience	0.003	−0.010
	(0.080)	(0.080)
State Legislative Experience × Legislative Prof.	0.235	0.268
	(0.221)	(0.220)
Majority Party	0.417***	0.408***
	(0.068)	(0.068)
Majority-Party Leadership	0.910***	0.907***
	(0.156)	(0.156)
Minority-Party Leadership	−0.239	−0.274
	(0.168)	(0.168)
Committee Chair	2.932***	2.908***
	(0.155)	(0.155)
Subcommittee Chair	0.705***	0.701***
	(0.069)	(0.069)
Power Committee	−0.233***	−0.221***
	(0.055)	(0.055)
Distance from Median	0.106	0.087
	(0.127)	(0.127)
Female	0.033	0.018
	(0.071)	(0.070)
African American	−0.079	−0.093
	(0.102)	(0.101)
Latino	0.262***	0.279***
	(0.099)	(0.098)
Size of Congressional Delegation	−0.004**	−0.004**
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Vote Share	0.040**	0.038**
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Vote Share^2	−0.0003***	−0.0003***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Top 20% of wealth-holders × Seniority		0.066***
		(0.015)
Constant	−0.899	−0.721
	(0.598)	(0.597)
Age dummies?	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,888	1,888
R^2	0.394	0.400
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Note: This table shows the results of OLS regressions, with the sample of individuals who began their careers in the bottom or top 20% of wealth-holding representatives in each Congress between 1980-2012, where the dependent variable is the LES of representatives. I use this sample because in a separate analysis (not shown) I show that representatives who begin their careers in the bottom or top wealth quintiles typically remain in those positions throughout their tenure. In model 1, the independent variable of interest is an indicator for representatives who were in the top 20% of wealth-holding representatives when they were first elected. In model 2, the independent variables of interest are the interaction term, comprised of an indicator for most-wealthy representatives and the seniority term, and its two component terms. Standard errors are clustered by member. Similar to the results in Table 2, the positive and statistically significant coefficient estimate for the first term in model 1 suggests that representatives who first enter Congress in the top 20% of wealth-holders are more effective than representatives who first enter Congress in the bottom 20% of

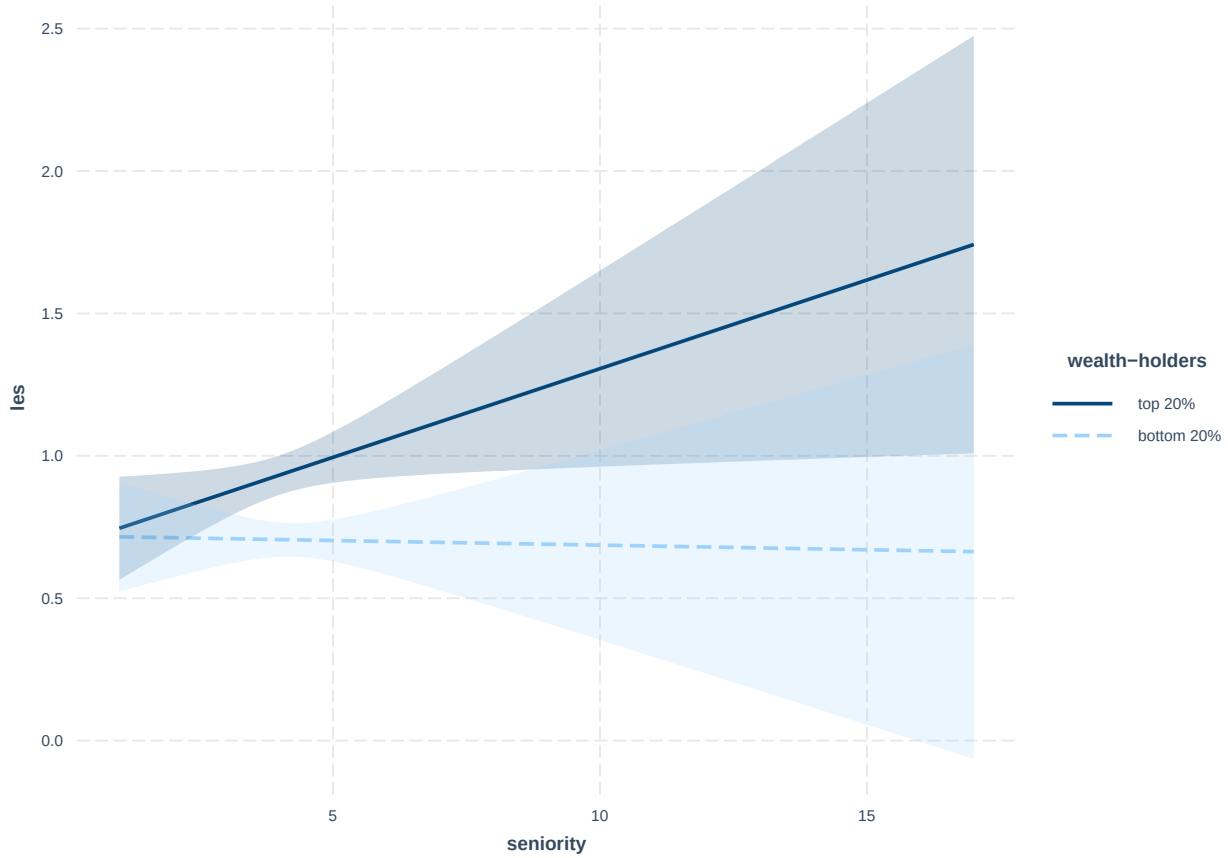
wealth holders. In model 2, the coefficient estimate for the first two terms are negative but statistically indistinct from zero, while the interaction term is positive and statistically significant. This result suggests that most-wealthy representatives do not necessarily begin their careers more effective than less-wealthy representatives, but significant differences between the two groups emerge over time.

Figure A1: LES Difference in Means between Least-wealthy and Most-wealthy Representatives Throughout their Tenure



Note: This plot shows the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for multiple difference in means tests between representatives (in majority and minority parties), who enter Congress in the top 20% of wealth-holders compared to representatives who enter Congress in the bottom 20% of wealth-holders. The sample contains representatives who were elected between 1980-2012, whom I can observe from the beginning of their careers in the House. The point estimates are all positive, which indicates higher mean scores among the most-wealthy representatives, yet statistically indistinguishable from zero. From this plot, we cannot be certain that most-wealthy representatives begin their careers more effective than least-wealthy representatives, and we are uncertain about when significant differences in LES emerge between the two groups as well.

Figure A2: Legislative Effectiveness of Least-wealthy and Most-wealthy Representatives across Levels of Seniority.



Note: This plot shows the marginal effects of the interaction term in model 2 from the previous table. The solid line shows the predicted values of LES for representatives who are in the top 20% of wealth-holders when they enter Congress across different values of seniority. The dotted line shows the predicted values of LES for representatives who are in the bottom 20% of wealth-holders when they enter Congress across different values of seniority. The bands around each line represent the 95% confidence intervals for each value. Similar to the difference in means plot, the predicted values and overlapping confidence bands indicate that there is not a clear or substantial difference in the LES of least-wealthy and most-wealthy representatives when they enter Congress. Instead, according to this model, differences between these two groups are most apparent after about four terms in office.

Table A5: Lawmaker Wealth and Legislative Effectiveness in Majority and Minority Parties

	Dependent variable:			
	LES			
	Minority Party		Majority Party	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Top 20% of wealth-holders	0.0003	0.029	0.180**	0.274***
	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.072)	(0.096)
Seniority	0.043***	0.031***	0.143***	0.199***
	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.025)	(0.044)
Seniority^2	−0.001***	−0.001*	0.002	−0.002
	(0.0005)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)
State Legislative Experience	−0.062*	−0.084*	−0.070	0.037
	(0.033)	(0.049)	(0.102)	(0.155)
State Legislative Experience × Legislative Prof.	0.084	0.073	0.775***	0.405
	(0.090)	(0.130)	(0.298)	(0.448)
Minority-Party Leadership	−0.112***	−0.222***		
	(0.042)	(0.067)		
Majority-Party Leadership			0.140	0.164
			(0.157)	(0.254)
Speaker			−0.936*	−1.026
			(0.561)	(0.787)
Committee Chair			2.542***	2.657***
			(0.120)	(0.195)
Subcommittee Chair			0.465***	0.417***
			(0.070)	(0.111)
Power Committee	−0.161***	−0.135***	−0.455***	−0.463***
	(0.022)	(0.033)	(0.065)	(0.103)
Distance from Median	−0.041	−0.016	0.379**	0.556*
	(0.043)	(0.063)	(0.193)	(0.295)
Female	0.035	−0.015	0.025	0.188
	(0.028)	(0.040)	(0.098)	(0.165)
African American	−0.081**	−0.055	−0.484***	−0.425*
	(0.036)	(0.055)	(0.128)	(0.217)
Latino	0.032	−0.045	−0.007	0.191
	(0.044)	(0.068)	(0.148)	(0.244)
Size of Congressional Delegation	−0.001	−0.0002	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.004)
Vote Share	0.015**	0.020**	0.019	0.026
	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.020)	(0.032)
Vote Share^2	−0.0001**	−0.0001**	−0.0002	−0.0002
	(0.00004)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Constant	−0.276	−0.548	−0.893	−0.710
	(0.309)	(0.510)	(1.686)	(1.580)
Age dummies?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,537	1,001	3,179	1,234
R^2	0.083	0.136	0.411	0.444
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: In this table, I present the results of a series of OLS regression models, where the dependent variable is a representative's LES and the independent variable of interest is an indicator for representatives in the top 20% of wealth holders in the House. Model 1 uses the full sample of minority party members for which data is available between 1980-2012. Model 2 uses the sample of minority party members who are in the top or bottom 20% of wealth-holders in the House. Both models show positive estimates for the wealth coefficient, but the findings are substantively small and statistically insignificant. In contrast, Model 3 uses the sample of majority party members during this same period, and Model 4 uses the sample of majority party members who are in the top or bottom 20% of wealth-holders. The findings of these majority party models are similar to my earlier findings. Taken together, these models suggest that the wealthiest representatives are only significantly more effective than their less-wealthy peers when in the majority party.

References

Adler E. Scott, and John D. Wilkerson. 2013. *Congress and the Politics of Problem Solving*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Aldrich, John H., and David W. Rohde. 2001. "The Logic of Conditional Party Government: Revisiting the Electoral Connection." In Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (eds.). *Congress Reconsidered*, 7th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (pp. 269-292).

———. 2000. "The Republican Revolution and the House Appropriations Committee." *Journal of Politic*s, 62: 1-33.

Beard, Charles. [1913] 1935. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. 2nd ed. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Berry, Christopher, and Anthony Fowler 2016. "Cardinals or Clerics? Congressional Committees and the Distribution of Pork." *American Journal of Political Science*, 60: 692-708.

———. 2018. "Congressional committees, legislative influence, and the hegemony of chairs." *Journal of Public Economics* 158(C): 1-11.

Bratton, Kathleen A., and Kerry L. Haynie. 1999. "Agenda Setting and Legislative Success in State Legislatures: The Effects of Gender and Race." *Journal of Politics* 61(3): 658-679.

Browne, William. 1989. "Agricultural Policy Can't Accommodate All Who Want In." *Choices* 4:1 pp. 9-11.

Bucchianeri Peter, Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. 2020. "Do Effective State Legislators Become Effective Lawmakers in Congress?" Working Paper.

Carroll, Susan J. 2002. "Representing Women: Congresswomen's Perceptions of Their Representational Roles." In Cindy Simon Rosenthal and Richard F. Fenno, Jr. (eds.). *Women Transforming Congress*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press (pp. 50-68).

Carnes, Nicholas. 2013. *White-Collar Government : The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2018. *The Cash Ceiling: Why Only the Rich Run for Office - and What We Can Do About It*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chappell, Henry W. 1981. "Conflict of Interest and Congressional Voting: A Note." *Public Choice* 37(2): 331–35.

Cook, F. L., B. I. Page, and R. L. Moskowitz, 2014. "Political Engagement by Wealthy Americans." *Political Science Quarterly,* 129 (3): 381-398.

Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dahl, Robert A. [1961] 2005. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Denzau, Arthur T., and Robert J. Mackay. 1983. "Gate-Keeping and Monopoly Power of Committees: An Analysis of Sincere and Sophisticated Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 27: 740-761.

Dion, D., and J. Huber 1997. "Sense and Sensibility: The Role of Rules." *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(3), 945-957.

Eggers, Andrew, and Marko Klašnja. 2018. "Wealth, Fundraising, and Voting in the U.S. Congress." Working Paper.

Evers-Hillstrom, Karl. 2020. "Majority of lawmakers in 116th Congress are millionaires." *Opensecrets.org* www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/04/majority-of-lawmakers-millionaires/.

Farrand, Max. 1966 *Records of the Federal Convention*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Fenno, Richard F. 1966. *The power of the purse: Appropriations politics in Congress*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Freshwater, David, and Jordan Leising, 2015. "Why farm support Persists: An Explanation Grounded in Congressional political Economy," Annual Meeting, January 31-February 3, 2015, Atlanta, Georgia. Southern Agricultural Economics Association.

Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Griffin, John. D., and Claudia Anewalt-Remsburg. 2013. Legislator Wealth and the Effort to Repeal the Estate Tax. *American Politics Research*, *41*(4), 599–622.

Grose, Christian. 2013. "Risk and Roll Calls: How Legislators' Personal Finances Shape Congressional Decisions." SSRN Working Paper 2220524.

Hall, Andrew B. 2019. *Who Wants to Run? : How the Devaluing of Political Office Drives Polarization*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hall, Richard L. 1996. *Participation in Congress*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Heckelman, Jac C., and Keith L. Dougherty 2007. "An Economic Interpretation of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 Revisited." *The Journal of Economic History, 67*(4), 829-848.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Theda Skocpol. 2005. "American Democracy in an Era of Rising Inequality." In Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol eds., *Inequality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kingdon, John W. [1981] 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd eds. Boston: Little and Brown.

Klarman, Michael J. 2016. *The Framers' Coup: The Making of the United States Constitution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Krehbiel, Keith. 1993. "Where's the Party?" *British Journal of Political Science* 23: 235-266.

Leach, Darcy K. 2005. "The Iron Law of What Again? Conceptualizing Oligarchy Across Organizational Forms." *Sociological Theory*, 23(3): 312-337.

Little, Thomas H., Dana Dunn, and Rebecca E. Deen. 2001. "A View from the Top: Gender Differences in Legislative Priorities Among State Legislative Leaders." *Women & Politics* 22(4):29–50.

Marcos, Christina. 2020. "House Democrat Calls for 'real adult discussion' on lawmaker pay." *The Hill.* www.thehill.com/homenews/house/506280-house-democrat-calls-for-real-adult-discussion-on-lawmaker-pay.

McDonald, Forrest [1958] 1992. *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

McGuire, Robert A. 2003. *To Form A More Perfect Union: A New Economic Interpretation of the United States Constitution*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

McGuire, Robert, and Robert Ohsfeldt. 1986. "An Economic Model of Voting Behavior over Specific Issues at the Constitutional Convention of 1787." *The Journal of Economic History, 46*(1), 79-111.

Michels, Robert. [1911] 1962. *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Mintrom, Michael, and Phillipa Norman. 2009. "Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Change." *Policy Studies Journal*, 37(4): 649-667.

Page, Benjamin, and Martin Gilens. 2017. Democracy in America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pew Research Center. 2016. "Most Americans Say Government Doesn't Do Enough to Help Middle Class."

———. 2020. "Most Americans Say There Is Too Much Economic Inequality in the U.S., but Fewer Than Half Call It a Top Priority."

Rhode, David. 1991. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Riker, William. 1987. *The Development of American Federalism.* Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers

Schanzenbach, Ryan Nunn, Lauren Bauer, and Megan Mumford. 2020. "Where Does All the Money Go: Shifts in Household Spending Over the Past 30 Years." Retrieved from the Hamilton Project,

www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/where_does_all_the_money_go_shifts_in_household_spending_over_the_past_30_y?_ga=2.38361187.1199367577.1598395659-78784854.1598395659.
Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Schuyler, Robert. 1961. "Forrest McDonald's Critique of the Beard Thesis." *Journal of Southern History* 27(1): 73-80.
Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. "The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power." *American Political Science Review* 81(1) 85-104.
Squire, Pererill. 1992. "Legislative Professionalism and Membership Diversity in State Legislatures." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17(1): 69-79.
———.2007. Measuring State Legislative Professionalism: The Squire Index Revisited. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly, 7*(2), 211-227.
Steen, Jennifer A. 2006. *Self-Financed Candidates in Congressional Elections*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Swain, Carol M. 1995. *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of Arican Americans in Congress*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
U.S. Constitution art. I.
United States Constitutional Convention, Robert Yates, John Lansing, and Luther Martin. 1839. *Secret proceedings and debates of the Convention assembled at Philadelphia, in the year: for the purpose of forming the Constitution of the United States of America*. Richmond, Va.: W. Curtiss. [Web.] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://lccn.loc.gov/10017297.
U.S. Senate. 1987. Sen. Dennis Deconcini speaking on Senatorial Election Campaign Act. *Congressional Record*. 100th Cong., 1st sess. Vol. 133, no. 32, daily edition (March 3): S2685.
Volden, Craig, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2011. "Breaking Gridlock: The Determinants of Health Policy Change in Congress." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 36(2): 227-264.
———. 2014. *Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Congress: The Lawmakers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
———. 2016. "Entrepreneurial Politics, Policy Gridlock, and Legislative Effectiveness." In J. Jenkins and E.M. Patashnik (eds.), *Congress and Policy Making in the 21st Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 21-47).
———. 2018. "Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Senate." Journal of Politics. 80(2): 731-735.
Volden, Craig, Alan E. Wiseman, and Dana E. Wittmer. 2013. "When are Women More Effective Lawmakers than Men?" *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2): 326-341.
———. 2018. "Women's Issues and Their Fates in the US Congress." *Political Science Research and Methods*. 6(4): 679-696.
Weingast, Barry R., and William Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress." *Journal of Political Economy* 91: 765-800.
Welch, Susan, and John G. Peters 1983. "Private Interests and Public Interests: An Analysis of the Impact of Personal Finance on Congressional Voting on Agriculture Issues." *Journal of Politics* 45(2): 378-396.
Williamson, Chilton. 1960. *American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy 1760-1860*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
Wilson, James Q. 1980. *The Politics of Regulation*. New York: Basic Books.