

Cutting in Line: How Powerful Organized Interests Hasten and Delay Executive Branch Nominations

Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, The Ohio State University
Dino P. Christenson, Washington University
Lauren Ratliff Santoro, University of Texas
Elizabeth Steffensmeier, Cornerstone Research

Despite the potential to shape policy in every domain of government, organized interests have not been central to discussions of the nomination process for bureaucratic appointments. We test measures of the quantity of interest group opposition and support for nominees as well as the power of groups on nomination outcomes and duration. Using an original data set of interest involvement in nominations from the 106th to 115th Congresses, we find that powerful interests affect the timing of executive branch nominations for confirmation and return. Interests weigh in on nominations when the stakes are high, and legislators heed the call of the most powerful groups over the sheer number of groups. The influence of interests in the committee stage is similar but limited. Our analysis shows that organized interests affect the bureaucracy before nominees make it to office by speeding up or slowing down their time to confirmation, return, or withdrawal.

The executive nomination process responsible for a number of bureaucratic positions is easily obstructed and frequently backlogged due to various Senate rules and creative legislative tactics, including filibusters and holds, as well as strategic presidential decisions. In the polarized political environment of today, even once routine nominations can be extremely difficult and cumbersome to fill. Opposition senators, for example, have been less receptive to a president's nominees over time (Krause and O'Connell 2016). Over the course of a typical presidential term, a quarter of presidential appointments are left empty (O'Connell 2009), and, on a given day, approximately 16% of executive branch positions remain unfilled (McCarty and Razaghian 1999). These bureaucratic absences are problematic given federal agencies make an astounding amount of policy decisions ranging from

trivial to critical matters. The lack of bureaucrats at any level slows the work of the bureaucracy, perhaps at times even grinding it to a halt in wait of new leadership and direction. In short, important governmental functions do not get done. Of course, leaving positions vacant can be a strategy of both the president and senators. Delay is not innocuous, and, thus, the strategy of defeat by malign neglect is sometimes preferred (Bond, Fleisher, and Krutz 2009).

Senators' actions on nominations may be guided by their policy preferences, staff, party, constituents, and, importantly, interest groups. Given the hundreds of executive branch appointments and policies that come through the Senate each congressional session, interest groups provide information and other resources that can lower the costs of legislative action (Hall and Deardorff 2006). Moreover, they alert or

Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier (box-steffensmeier.1@osu.edu) is a distinguished university professor and Vernal Riffe Professor of Political Science at The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210. Dino P. Christenson (dinopc@wustl.edu) is a professor of political science and research fellow at the Weidenbaum Center at Washington University, St. Louis, MO 63130. Lauren Ratliff Santoro (laurenratliffisantoro@utdallas.edu) is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX 75080. Elizabeth A. Steffensmeier (esteffen@alumni.nd.edu) is an economic consultant and analyst at Cornerstone Research, Chicago, IL 60602.

The research reported here is supported by the National Science Foundation's Law and Social Science Program and Political Science Program, grants no. 1124386 and 1124369. Replication files are available in the *JOP* Dataverse (<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/jop>). The empirical analysis has been successfully replicated by the *JOP* replication analyst. An online appendix with supplementary material is available at <https://doi.org/10.1086/736336>.

Published online March 25, 2026.

The Journal of Politics, volume 88, number 3, July 2026. © 2026 Southern Political Science Association. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial intelligence technologies or similar technologies. Published by The University of Chicago Press for the Southern Political Science Association. <https://doi.org/10.1086/736336>

000

“sound the alarm” when they notice potential problems (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; Scherer, Bartels, and Steigerwalt 2008). As such, extant literature suggests that interest group participation plays a number of roles in the political process. Yet, the conditions under which interests endeavor to influence legislative decision-making and the great variance in interests’ abilities to do so are still unclear and under-explored—and almost entirely so in the context of agency nominations. But why?

Although the US political system was designed to control a host of negative effects from organized interests (Madison 1787), today they endeavor to impact virtually every aspect of American democracy. Should executive agency nominations be any different? That is, what role, if any, do interest groups play in executive nominations? Do they have something to do with why some nominees sail through the confirmation process while others get stuck in a quagmire? Or is their impact nominally relative to the formal institutional hurdles, procedural tactics, and ideological makeup of senators? We simply do not know.

In this article, we describe and explore interest group involvement in executive nominations. We consider at large scale and over time the number of groups not just in opposition to nominees but also in support of them as well as the heterogeneity among them. Using a measure of interest group power based on their coalition activity, we seek to provide a richer picture of their involvement in this facet of democracy. Shedding light on the reasons behind the winners and losers in bureaucratic politics builds upon the earliest debates on pluralistic participation and representational bias (Dahl 1961; Schattschneider 1960). We find that while there are a number of voices in the chorus for the nomination process, the most powerful are more clearly heard in the Senate.

THE FACTORS OF CONFIRMATION

The Senate approval process of presidential nominations to federal and civil service positions in the executive and judicial branches is a crucial form of executive oversight laid out in the Appointments Clause of the US Constitution (Article II, Section 2, Clause 2). Over 1,100 presidential appointments require Senate approval, although not all are full time (Committee on Oversight 2020). After review of potential nominees, the president sends formal nominations to the Senate, where the nomination is referred to the germane committee (s). Committees are responsible for vetting a nominee before it reaches the Senate floor. The committee of jurisdiction may hold a hearing on a nomination, although this is not a requirement. A nominee must receive approval from the majority of senators on the committee before being considered on the floor.

Once on the floor, final approval is customarily given by unanimous consent agreements or a voice vote (requiring a simple majority) during an executive session of the Senate. Roll-call votes, which also require a simple majority, are also taken on the floor. The Senate approves a majority of presidential appointments, and the vast majority of executive appointments are routine (Bell 2002; Krutz, Fleisher, and Bond 1998). However, besides confirmation or the failure to be confirmed (which we call rejection), nominations can be returned to or withdrawn by the president at any time of the process. Return indicates that the nominee never received a vote before a recess or before the end of the congressional session. A lesser number of nominations are withdrawn by the president. In this process, the president removes the nominee from consideration.¹

Historically, the Senate rarely challenged the presidential appointment; however, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, the Senate began to assert itself as an equal partner in the process. Despite the fact that a majority of executive appointments are confirmed, a nominee’s confirmation can be delayed by various procedural tactics in any stage of the process. Executive branch scholars acknowledge that significant hurdles, such as periods of divided government, exist and that vacancies in these executive appointments are often problematic for policy implementation and rulemaking (e.g., Bell 2002; McCarty and Razaghian 1999). Important work focuses on presidential nomination strategies (Kinane 2021), broad institutional politics (Resh et al. 2020; Rottinghaus and Bergan 2011), and the quality of appointees (Lewis and Richardson 2021). Recent literature on appointments also asks whether the Congress or president has greater impact on the confirmation process, much of it from formal or spatial theory approaches (e.g., Bertelli and Feldmann 2007; Nixon 2004; Nokken and Sala 2000; Shipan 2004).

Scholars have also weighed in on the Senate’s role in delaying the confirmation process. Broad trends, such as polarization, and institutional changes contribute to “a more drawn out confirmation process” (Jo 2017; McCarty and Razaghian 1999). Senate confirmation procedures coupled with tactics employed by senators also have been shown to delay the process (Bell 2002; Krutz et al. 1998), including holds (Howard and Roberts 2015), filibusters and 2013’s Rule XXII, or the nuclear option that lowered cloture thresholds to a simple majority on most nominations (Boyd, Lynch, and Madonna 2015; O’Connell 2015; Ostrander 2015). In this context, the ideology of the agency to which an individual is nominated can be crucial (Ostrander 2016), as can be the ideological distance

1. Our analyses explicitly take these different outcomes into account. We provide further details on the confirmation process in the appendix.

between the Senate and the president, the president's popularity (Jo 2017), and even the nominee's ideology and the independence in the target agency (Hollibaugh and Rothenberg 2018). Generally missing from studies of executive agency nominations, however, is the role of interest groups.

The role of organized interests

Organized interests have strong incentives to get involved in the confirmation process of executive branch nominations because they provide a strategic opportunity to influence the individuals that can make up the government. Executive branch positions oversee the execution and implementation of laws. Because legislation often does not include specific information regarding interpretation, executive agencies have substantial leeway in policy implementation. Thus, interests vested in the policy formation and approval process may attempt to exert influence in the confirmation of those individuals who are responsible for interpreting and implementing those laws. In addition, because knowledge of the vast majority of them go unnoticed by the mass public, opportunities abound for interest group involvement.

Hundreds of appointments to the executive branch move through the US Senate every congressional session, in addition to a plethora of bills and resolutions. Limited resources mean legislators often turn to interest groups for information and expertise (Hall and Deardorff 2006; McCubbins and Schwartz 1984; Scherer et al. 2008). In the context of executive branch appointments, interest groups can provide information about particular nominees to senators via testimony at congressional hearings or by initiating personal contact—so-called “inside tactics” (Hall and Deardorff 2006). Interest groups can also engage in “outside tactics” in which they mobilize outside support or opposition for nominees in order to put pressure on senators to vote a certain way (Caldeira and Wright 1998). These tactics might either hasten or delay the nomination process (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2016; Cameron et al. 2020; Cameron and Kastellec 2023).

Seminal works, such as those by Gilens and Page (2014), Baumgartner et al. (2009), and Gilens (2012), show that in legislative and rulemaking settings, the number of groups impacts success. However, recent scholars who look at the total number of groups or monetary resources of groups find the opposite (Dwidar 2022a, 2022b; Lorenz 2020).² We test whether the number of groups that get involved in the process

2. Recent works include measures of coalition diversity via industry association or partisanship. Because of the theoretical fit with coalitional power and informational theory, we concentrate on the number and power of the groups involved while leaving diversity and a host of other potential interest group characteristics for future work.

influences both the outcomes and speed of the appointment process. For hypothesis 1 (H1: interest quantity), we expect that the greater the number of interests in support of (opposition to) a nominee, the faster (slower) the rates of confirmation. Expanding to the other possible outcomes of a nominee—that is, withdraw by the president and return to the president—we expect that the greater the number of interests in support of (opposition to) nominees, the slower (faster) the rates of return and withdraw.

Of course, all organized interests are not equal. We also test whether well-connected interests send more persuasive or at least different types of information than those conveyed by the simple number of groups on each side. In politics, winning is rarely a solitary act. Interests collaborate to achieve shared goals (Schlozman and Tierney 1986), mobilize their government allies (Heaney and Strickland 2016; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2015), maximize resources, and increase their likelihood of success (Berry and Portney 1994; Box-Steffensmeier, Christenson, and Craig 2019; Box-Steffensmeier, Christenson, and Hitt 2013; Gray and Lowery 1996; Hula 1995, 1999; Loomis 1986). They allow interests to hone and better direct their policy message, provide broad and persuasive signals to legislators, and bolster their limited resources (Esterling 2004; Kingdon 1981; Mahoney 2004; Mayhew 1974). Even if scholars have not always been able to measure the coalitional activity of interest groups, they have always been part of the American democratic system, and, today, they should be expected for all group activities and across all institutional contexts, though not necessarily all the time (Heaney and Lorenz 2012; Hojnacki 1998).³

Interest group coalitions are strengthened by the power and influence of interest groups within the coalition. Some groups are passive actors in these coalitions, while others are active contributors or leaders (Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson 2014; Heaney and Leifeld 2018). That is, which interest group provides the information and to whom it is connected matter. The coalitional activity of interest groups cue legislators about the legitimacy and the quality of the information they provide. We, therefore, conceptualize interest group power in terms of individual interest groups' positions within their coalitions. Legislators may use this information to make quick, informed decisions about the nominee on the floor. Thus, we move beyond measures of interest groups that simply indicate the quantity of involvement in the nomination toward a consideration of the relative power of organized

3. Building on various strains in the interest group literature, our expectations on coalitions does not dispel or encroach upon existing interest group theory but seeks to incorporate the reality of the involvement of their activity.

interests. For hypothesis 2 (H2: interest power), we expect that executive nominations supported (opposed) by a powerful interest will have faster (slower) rates of confirmation than those supported by a weak interest. Likewise, we expect that executive nominations supported (opposed) by a powerful interest will have slower (faster) rates of return and withdraw than those supported by a weak interest. As we discuss below, our conceptualization of power is a coalitional measure, incorporating both the position and the connections of each interest group in the network.

It is not clear whether quantity (H1) or power (H2) is more important to legislators. It may be that the more persuasive information comes from multiple voices or from a single powerful one—or that both are equally influential or not influential at all. As such, when interest groups are present in the nomination process, we pull broadly from the literature to test both the quantity and power of groups to be successful in their support or opposition of a nominee. While the literature does not overwhelmingly support one over the other, we note that the multivariate analysis we employ below contemporaneously includes indicators of quantity and power and, therefore, sheds light on this question of the relative strength of interest group information.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that interest groups may have varying effects on the confirmation length of executive branch nominations at different points throughout the appointment process (Holmes, Shomade, and Hartley 2012). Interest groups, and especially the most powerful interest groups, could be just as influential in the crucial committee stage of the nomination period, as these committees are made up of small subsets of senators with specialized knowledge who play an important gatekeeping and information-gathering role. Thus, we expect both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 to also be supported in the committee stage of the nomination, which we test in a subsequent set of models restricted to that period. Of course, by virtue of senators' specialization in committee, there is also reason to expect them to be less susceptible to outside information, relying instead on ideology or their expertise and experiences in this domain. Similarly, their position on a committee is a result of party decisions, which may make them more insulated from or cautious to the pressure of outside interests.

In summary, we build on the previous literature in at least four important ways. First, we apply the information theory within the context of executive agency nominations (Hall and Dearthoff 2006). Second, we look at both interest groups' statements of opposition as well as their statements of support. Understanding the relative effects of the direction provides a more accurate picture of interest group involvement. Third, we test whether this impact works differently early in the

committee stage versus the full nomination process. Finally, we provide a measure of the power of interest groups based in coalitional activity and test whether this difference matters in confirmation politics—or if it is merely the quantity of groups in support and opposition.

MERGING NOMINATION AND INTEREST GROUP DATA

We focus on appointments from the 106th Congress to the 115th that are subject to presidential appointment with Senate confirmation, which includes Cabinet, deputy secretaries, undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, and general councils, among other appointments. Appointments include nominations to federal agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration, to independent federal agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and appointments to independent regulatory commissions. We address all the presidential nominations to the executive branch except those considered fundamentally different in the literature, including judicial and Department of State and Department of Defense appointments. Our unit of analysis is the nominee appointment—that is, an observation for each nominee specific to that nomination.

Our dependent variable, the duration of the confirmation process for executive appointments, is measured by taking the difference between the date of presidential nomination and the outcome of the confirmation process, less any Senate recess days. More specifically, our duration variable is the days between the formal nomination and its outcome, which can be Senate confirmation, return, or presidential withdrawal. In our sample of nominations, the minimum duration is one, which would be the same day, and the maximum duration is 372, with a mean of 70 days and a median of 50 days to confirmation. Of the 3,845 nominations, 26 are confirmed or rejected on the same day they are appointed. Seven observations experience an event in one day between nomination and confirmation or rejection, for a duration of 2 days. At 34 days, 85 observations experience the event, the most at any time point. Four events occur at 372 days. The Senate eventually confirms the vast majority of executive branch nominations—in our sample, 67.8%. Of the 2,608 that were eventually confirmed, 2,429 of them were approved by unanimous consent of the Senate, and only 179 were taken to a record vote. Of the 1,237 that were not confirmed, 990 were returned to the president, and 247 were withdrawn by the president sometime during the confirmation period.

The quantity and power of interest groups

We collected information on interest group involvement in executive branch nominations according to an approach that

integrates different tactics interest groups use to communicate their position on a nomination. First, to incorporate formal support or opposition made by groups, interest group activity from Senate nomination hearing testimony was collected. This does not include the witnesses who are formally called to testify, which, in nomination hearings, are most often the nominees themselves. Instead, these include the letters of support or opposition, which are included in the supplemental material of the Senate Committee Hearing testimony—they are also available in the Library of Congress' database of presidential nominations. These letters were read, and the group name and their position on a nominee were recorded.⁴

To incorporate more informal or grassroots strategies of interest group involvement in the nomination process (Wittenberg and Wittenberg 1989), we also collected news and op-ed articles indicating organized interest support or opposition of a presidential nominee. A broad search was conducted through LexisNexis using the name of a nominee along with applicable keywords—for example, “nomination,” “support,” and “opposition” (Scherer et al. 2008). This two-pronged approach more fully incorporates the diverse tactics, including inside and outside advocacy approaches, that interest groups employ to influence executive branch nominations (see, e.g., Cameron et al. 2020 on judicial nominations) and is less susceptible to selection by a single source.⁵

Measuring interest group involvement in nominations to the executive branch enters our analyses in two distinct ways. First, we calculate the number of interest groups in support of and opposition to the nominee. This set of measures was formed by summing the total number of groups, found in both the Senate Committee Hearing testimony and the LexisNexis news media search, in support of and opposition to a nominee. Thus, these two variables test our expectations in hypothesis 1. The greatest number of interest groups in support

4. Our data do not include in-person witness testimony. In legislative hearings, the witnesses, including organized interests, are invited to testify by the committee based off a host of partisan and other considerations (Ban, Park, and You 2023). In nomination hearings, the witnesses are typically the nominees themselves. Thus, we gathered the interest group information from the supplementary or appendix information, which includes letters from interest groups that are submitted for the record by one or more members of the nominating committee. Even though interest groups are occasionally called as witnesses, they frequently submit written testimony. While any group is able to submit written testimony in support of or opposition to a nominee, the group must typically work with a committee member who is willing to file their testimony for committee records.

5. The interest groups in our sample represent the groups that are visible through either nomination hearings or media coverage during the nomination process. While these are common interest group strategies, both members of Congress and the media have agency in the selection of which groups to publicize.

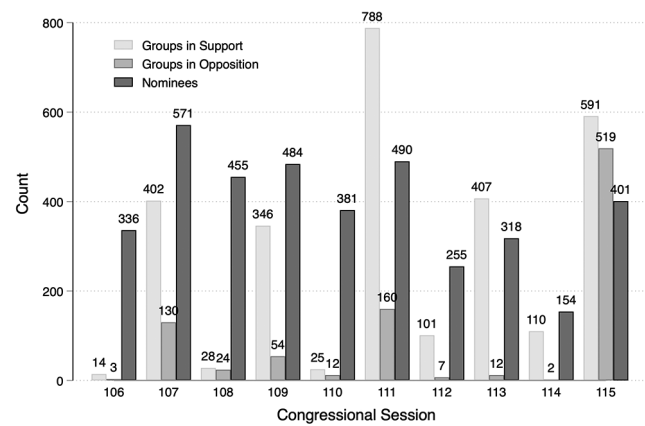


Figure 1. Nominees and interest groups by congressional session.

or opposition of a single nominee was 175, of which 161 were in support. The greatest number of interest groups in opposition to a nominee was 130.

Figure 1 displays the total number of interest groups in support of and opposition to nominees compared with the total number of nominees per congressional session. In the 111th congressional session, for example, 788 interest groups supported and 160 voiced their opposition, to a total of 490 nominees to the executive branch. The number of nominees and the number of interest groups in support and opposition vary across sessions according to intuitive patterns. In the odd-numbered sessions, there are both more nominees and more interest groups involved. Odd-numbered sessions denote the beginning of a president's new term in office. The 107th and 109th sessions correspond to George W. Bush's first and second terms in office, respectively; the 111th session was Barack Obama's first term in office; and the 115th session was Donald Trump's first term. Figure 1 shows interest groups weighing in at the beginning of a president's term, which is when the majority of presidential nominations to the executive branch are made (i.e., in the 107th, 111th, and 115th). There is an increase in interest group involvement starting in the 111th. The contrast between the number of groups in support versus opposition is also striking.

The second set of measures aims to test a theory of interest group involvement in executive branch nominations that incorporates their coalitional power, corresponding to hypothesis 2. To this end, we calculated a measure of interest group power based on the centrality of a group within its political network.⁶ That is, we expect that interest groups with

6. Centrality is a fundamental, indeed classic, concept in network analysis that has long been equated with power in social networks because of the relational position of central nodes (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2013; Li 2018; Newman 2018; Ringe and Wilson 2016; Schmitt 2019).

larger network centrality scores—which are based on their relative position of influence in the network—are more effective in their opposition to and support of executive branch nominations than interest groups with relatively less of this power. To build a network of organized interests, we rely on the only available large-scale data of their coordinated and purposive coalitional activity: Supreme Court amicus curiae. This network is built by treating organized interests as nodes and drawing ties between them when they cooperate to cosign a brief (Box-Steffensmeier and Christenson 2014).⁷ Furthermore, this network is built across policies and time.⁸

Political context and other covariates

Additional independent variables are included in our analyses to examine their possible impact on interest group involvement and whether they speed up or delay the nomination process.⁹ Looking first at congressional committees, we note that they can take a different stance than the administration regarding appointments in the committee's jurisdiction, and, descriptively, there is some variation in the rate of confirmation among Senate committees (Dull and Roberts 2009; O'Connell 2015). The highest confirmation rate, 82.4%, came from nominees who were vetted through the Veteran's Affairs Committee, and the lowest confirmation rate, 50%, came from nominees vetted through the Rules and Administration Committee. Because there could be variation across committees in the duration of confirmation and in interest group involvement in the confirmation, we include committee fixed effects in all our models.¹⁰

Nominations come from all 10 congressional sessions and from all Senate committees. Of the nominations, 1,146 (almost one-third of all nominations in our database) went through the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee, and 549 went through Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Additionally, 142 nominations were approved by two or more committees.¹¹ In addition, we include stan-

dardized measures of the median committee member's ideology using DW-NOMINATE scores because the ideological makeup of these committees could affect both confirmation time and which groups lobby (Carroll et al. 2009; Krause and Byers 2022b).

Because the varying importance of the positions to which a nominee is appointed could affect the confirmation duration as well as the level of interest group involvement, we also include a control for the tier of the nominee's position (Krause and Byers 2022a). We classified nominees into tiers based on the importance of the nomination (McCarty and Razaghan 1999). The first tier contains the most important nominees, such as nominees to secretary, attorney general, and EPA administrative positions. Second-tier nominations include deputy and assistant secretaries and attorney generals, among others, and the third-tier appointments represent residual appointments. The higher-profile nature of the first two tiers may provide an incentive for the president and Senate to move them along, and, therefore, we expect third-tier appointments to take relatively longer times.¹²

We also include controls about the individual nominee and the position to which they are nominated. Reappointment measures whether a nominee is being nominated to the exact same position a second time due to the nomination lapsing at the end of the previous congressional session or within the same congressional session; there are 482 nominees in our database that were reappointed to the same position. While an individual who is being reappointed to the same position should be more likely to be confirmed quickly, because some of the background work on the nominee has previously occurred, even under reappointment, committees require a new submission of all the necessary materials. Thus, we do not have strong expectations for the direction of this variable.

Recess appointments refer to nominees who were confirmed by the president during a recess of the Senate, thus overriding congressional oversight. Although these appointments are confirmed, they have to be formally approved by the Senate by the end of the next session of Congress or become vacant. There are 184 nominees who were originally appointed during a Senate recess in our data set. We expect recess appointments to take longer to be confirmed by the Senate. Rybicki (2019) points out that recess appointments are sometimes controversial and have led to interbranch conflict. Others note that they may be considered as part of a package deal or

7. Qualitative interviews support the idea that groups form network coalitions across the branches of government. The general coalitional behavior of organized interests centers more on shared issue concern than the branch of the government that groups are interacting with; therefore, we feel confident in using a judicial network measure in the legislature. Still, we note that should the coalitions found before the court not translate to the Senate, we would be less likely to reject the null hypothesis for H2, thereby committing a type II error. See the appendix for additional discussion.

8. See the appendix for more details on the network measure.

9. We provide summary statistics for all the variables in the appendix.

10. Some nominations come out of committees in batches. Empirically, batch nominations are most often military appointments and typically come from select committees, further emphasizing the need for the committee-level controls.

11. See the appendix for further details on the sample of nominees.

12. See also related discussions of the independent regulatory commissions (Chiou and Rothenberg 2014; Krause and O'Connell 2019; Nixon 2001, 2005; Ostrander 2016).

low priority because a nominee is now already in office (Black et al. 2011, 2007; Ostrander 2015).¹³

In the same vein, facts about the political landscape could have implications for the variations in our dependent and independent variables. In particular, previous work highlights the potential for periods of divided government to result in slower confirmation times and higher presidential approval ratings to result in faster ones (McCarty and Razaghian 1999; Scherer et al. 2008). To address the former, we include a dummy variable for divided government in which we are particularly interested in the periods when two different parties controlled the Senate and the presidency: the 106th, 107th, 110th, and 114th. Of the total nominations, 1,442 were confirmed in periods of divided government, or 37.5%.¹⁴ To address the latter, we include Gallup presidential approval ratings, measured on the day before the Senate confirmation vote and standardized, to test whether the president's nominees fare better and are approved faster during times of higher approval (Jo 2017).¹⁵

NOMINEE CONFIRMATION, RETURN, OR WITHDRAWAL

In what follows, we explore the impact of interest group support and opposition for nominations in two stages. First, we look for effects across the entire duration of the appointment process until the final decision is reached. Second, we examine the amount of time exclusively in the germane committee. As the strategy of defeat by malign neglect has become powerful (Bond et al. 2009; Kinane 2019), each window provides the potential for unique insights into the ability of outside interests to affect the nomination process across both the initial and ultimate hurdles.

For all our tests on the duration of the appointment process, we use a survival model that takes into account the fact that nominations are ultimately at risk of more than one event. That is, the nomination process involves competing risks, wherein the occurrence of one or more events affects the probability of occurrence of the event of interest. Because the probability of a nominee being confirmed will depend upon the decision rate due to confirmation but also the decision rate due to other causes, such as withdrawals and returns, we

use a competing risks regression model based on the subhazard function of the event of primary interest (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997; Fine and Gray 1999).¹⁶

Time until final decision

To answer whether interest groups influence the incidence and timing of presidential nominations, we explore two sets of independent variables—interest group number (H1) and power (H2)—with control for the aforementioned covariates. The three models in figure 2 evaluate our hypotheses for each of the possible nomination outcomes—confirmed, withdrawn, or returned—relative to the other two outcomes. While our hypotheses primarily pertain to nominee confirmation, looking at the other outcomes provides a richer perspective on the process that has largely escaped scholarly attention. That is, no studies to our knowledge have tested whether the same factors affecting confirmation have comparable effects on withdraw and return.

We include the fully specified models in the appendix and present in figure 2 the coefficients of several key variables from each model (fig. 2A) as well as the more readily interpretable subhazard ratios for the two sets of interest group variables corresponding to hypotheses 1 and 2 (fig. 2B). The subhazard ratio is the exponentiated coefficient, or the ratio of the hazards for a one-unit change in the relevant covariate. Thus, if the ratio is greater than one, there is an increase in the subhazard or risk due to a one-unit increase in the covariate. Ratios less than one signal a decrease in the subhazard or an increase in the chance of survival. In our models of executive nominees, a ratio greater than one indicates that an increase in the covariate leads to a quicker appointment decision, be that confirmation, withdraw, or return. A ratio of less than one means that an increase in the covariate leads to a postponement of the respective decision.

Before turning to the key independent variables of interest group number and power, we begin by examining some of the control variables, beginning with the contextual fixed effects. As noted above, legislative sessions could vary in distinct and important ways; specifically, periods of divided government could bring greater delay of nominees. Individuals nominated during sessions of divided government were confirmed at a rate of 24% more slowly, all else held constant. We also

13. Important work on vacancies differentiates between empty positions and interim appointees (Kinane 2019).

14. In the appendix, we include congressional session fixed effects instead of the dummy variable for divided government in the models. Results are consistent across model specifications.

15. Approximately 30% of the appointments are women. In our analyses, gender did not significantly impact the duration of executive branch nominations and is excluded from the models but included as a robustness check in models in the appendix.

16. A number of methodological problems can arise if one does not take into account competing risks to align with the theory of multiple outcomes, including inaccurate failure probabilities from the Kaplan-Meier survival function and inappropriate incidence-rate curves from Cox models. In contrast, the competing-risks model provides the subhazard function of the failure of event of interest and produces appropriate incidence curves in this context.

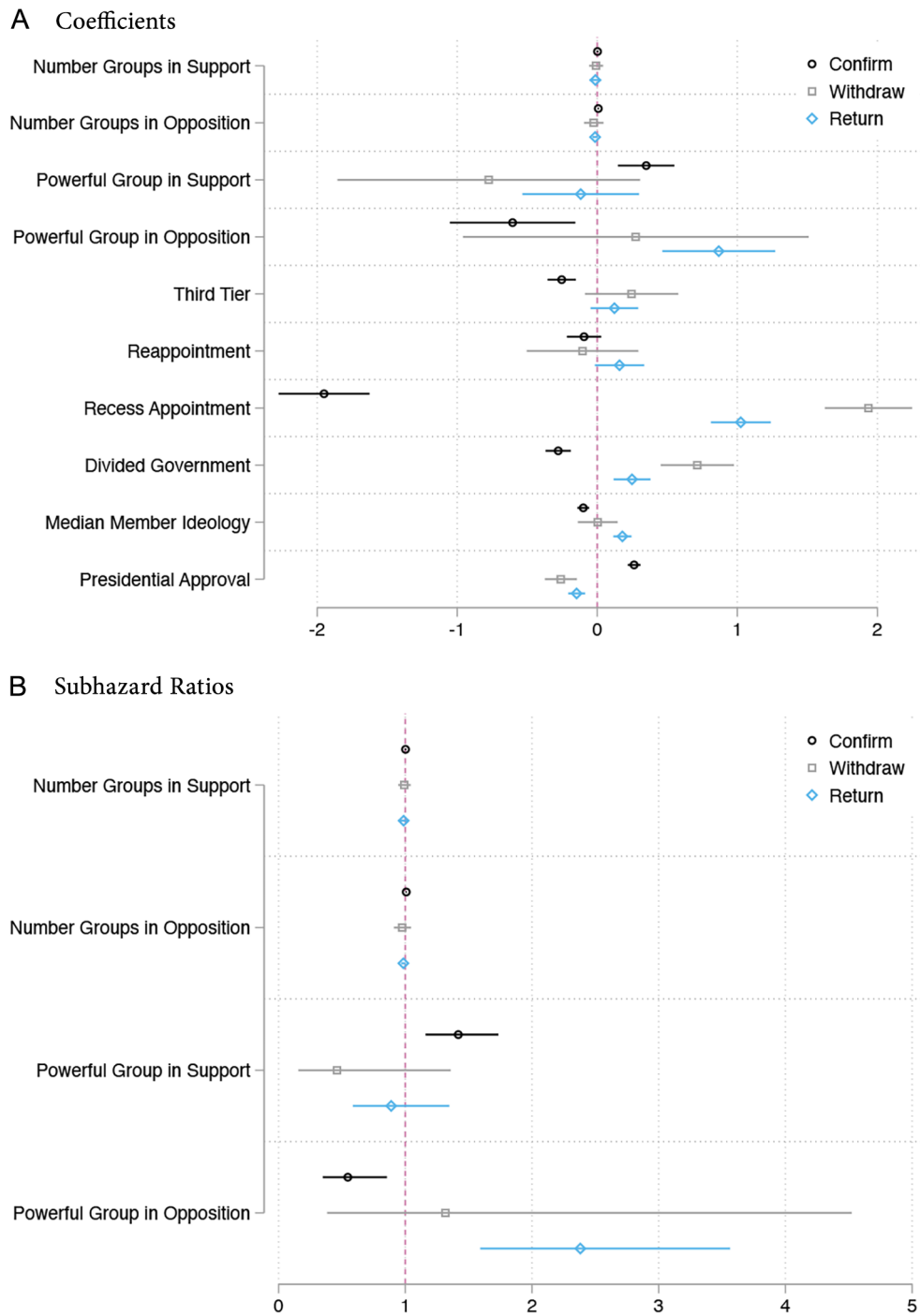


Figure 2. Competing risk regression results for final decision. Results for the final Senate decision. (A) Coefficients and confidence intervals. (B) Subhazard ratios and confidence intervals. The figures are from the same fully specified models (1-3) in table 2 in the appendix.

included fixed effects for the committees because the reviewing committee may be more or less efficient than others. The HELP committee reviews the largest number of nominees (1,146) and serves as the baseline committee in the models. Relative to the HELP baseline, nominees to the Agriculture,

Nutrition, and Forestry; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Commerce; and Veterans Affairs committees take less time to be confirmed and more time to be returned. Both Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and Finance have relatively higher withdraw rates.

The committee might also be more favorable to presidential appointees depending on its ideological makeup. In line with the literature, median committee member ideology (using the standardized DW-NOMINATE score) has strong effects on the timing of executive branch appointments (Carroll et al. 2009; Krause and Byers 2022b). An increase in the median committee ideological score, which reflects a more conservative median member, results in a longer confirmation period and faster returns. Specifically, holding all else constant, a one-unit increase in median member conservatism decreases the rate of confirmation by about 10% and increases the rate of return by 20%.¹⁷

Relative to the more important or higher-status appointments in tiers 1 and 2, those in tier 3 took significantly longer to be confirmed by the Senate. Specifically, the relative decrease in the confirmation rate for the tier-3 nominees is 22%. These results corroborate previous literature and meet our expectations of the political context (Krause and Byers 2022a; McCarty and Razaghian 1999). The president works to appoint the leaders of his Cabinet before appointing individuals to other positions and works in tandem with those Cabinet members to appoint other members of their staff. Congress has incentives and faces pressure to confirm the high-profile positions more quickly, leaving the more rank-and-file Cabinet positions to a slower fate.

As discussed above, presidents seek to exert control over the nomination by appointing nominees during the Senate recess, reappointing nominees who have already met with nomination success and bolstering their chances at getting their wishes by going public when their approval ratings are strong. Here we see that two of the three maneuvers are worthwhile. Recess appointments and presidential approval both affect the nominee's duration but in opposite directions. Recess appointments actually increase the amount of time it takes a nominee to be confirmed. Being nominated during recess decreases the confirmation rate by about 86% and works in the opposite direction for withdrawal and return outcomes—having, by far, the strongest effects on those outcomes of any variable. Contrarily, and in line with expectations, presidential approval substantially decreases the amount of time it takes a nominee to be confirmed and slows down the time for withdrawal or return. A one-unit increase

in standardized presidential approval increases the confirmation rate by 30%. The outlier is reappointment, which has no effect on the duration of the nominee.

Finally, we turn to testing our main hypotheses of interest group involvement in the executive branch nomination process. We find little evidence that the more simplistic measures of a count of the number of groups in support or opposition to the nominee matter for the duration of the process (H1). The measures fail to meet conventional levels of statistical significance across the outcomes for supporting groups. While the number of groups in opposition is statistically significant, it is substantively small and in the opposite direction of what we expected. Opposed organized interests turn out in greater number for nominees who will be confirmed, although they are relatively ineffective. In all cases—across confirmations, withdrawals, and returns—the hazard ratios are close to 1, suggesting little to no impact from the presence of an additional interest group.

While an additional interest group on either side appears largely ineffectual (H1), we find strong evidence for hypothesis 2: The presence of a powerful interest group plays a significant role in the duration of executive nominees. The coefficients for a powerful group in support and a powerful group in opposition are statistically significant, in the hypothesized directions, and substantively meaningful. Specifically, the presence of a powerful interest group in support of a nominee increases the confirmation rate by 42%, while opposition from a powerful group decreases the confirmation rate by 45%. In addition, opposition increases the rate of returns. By contrast, interest groups appear to have no effect on withdrawals.

We gain further insights into the magnitude of the dynamic effect of interest group support and opposition by looking at the probabilities of the outcomes over time. In the setting of competing risks, the appropriate estimate of the probability of a specific event is best described by the cumulative incidence function (CIF). The CIF does not require independence between causes, and we can estimate it nonparametrically (Coviello and Boggess 2004). Figure 3 provides plots of the CIF for the confirmed and returned, respectively.

In figure 3 we have plotted the estimate of the probability of a confirmation by the presence of powerful interest groups in support and opposition. In both cases, there is little difference between powerful and weak groups in the first several days after a nomination. However, as shown in the interest group support graph in figure 3A, the average nominee without support from a powerful group has an estimated probability of .58 of confirmation within 100 days. This nominee's probability of confirmation jumps to .7 within 100 days if she is supported by a powerful interest group. This difference of more than 10%

17. We provide models with alternative ideological scores in the appendix. Committee chair ideology is insignificant and small. The committee chair's presidential support (Edwards III 1985) is statistically significant and positive. Because the presidential support scores are collinear with the more impactful divided government measures and currently unavailable for the 114th and 115th congressional sessions, we include these results in the appendix. In both cases, the substantive conclusions are unchanged.

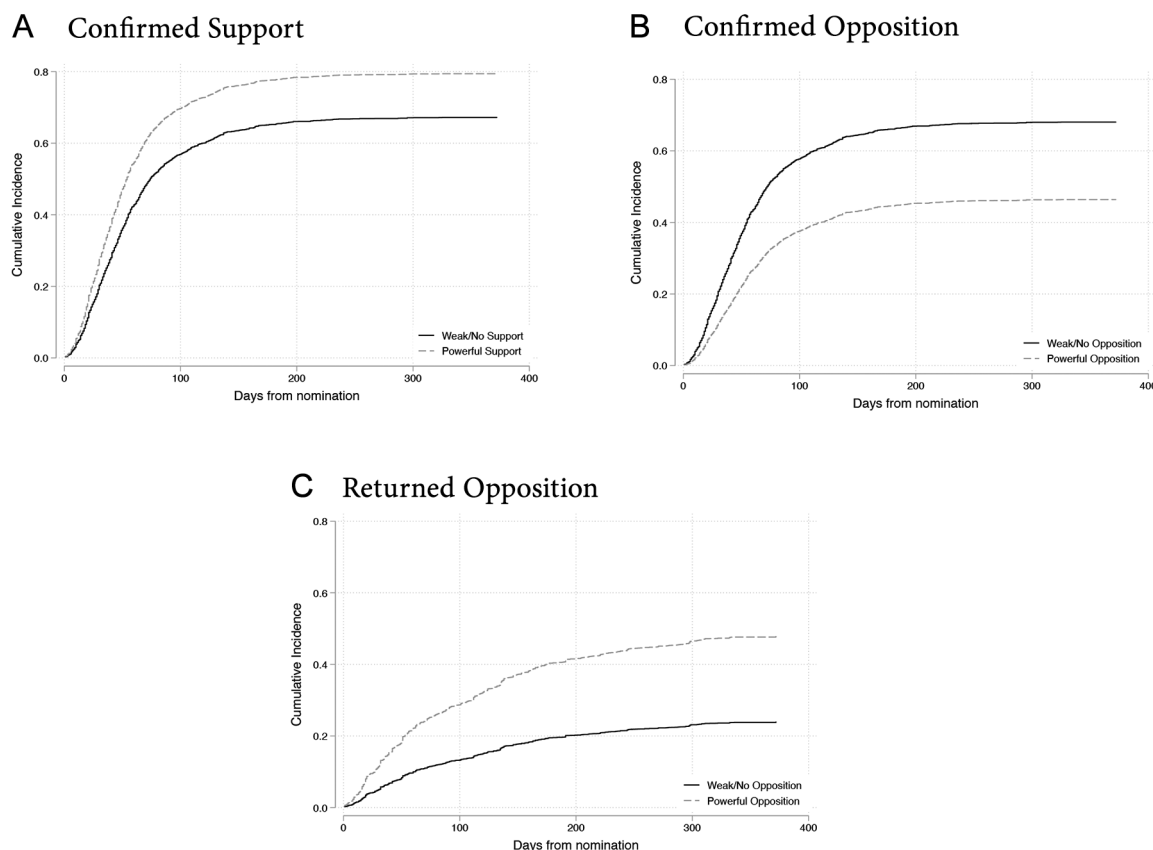


Figure 3. Competing risk cumulative incidence functions. (A) Cumulative incidence function for confirmation by powerful and weak groups in support. (B) Cumulative incidence function for confirmation by powerful and weak groups in opposition. (C) Cumulative incidence function for returned by powerful and weak groups in opposition. The figures are from the fully specified models (1 and 3) in table 2 in the appendix.

begins at around 100 days and persists throughout the remainder of the observed nomination period. In figure 3B, we see the opposite pattern for nominees with interest group opposition. Those with a powerful group in opposition have a probability of confirmation of just under .4 within 100 days relative to those without powerful opposition of just under .6. Having powerful groups in support and opposition are strongly related to the timing of a nominee’s confirmation.

Recall from figure 2 above that the presence of powerful interest groups significantly affected not only confirmation but also return rates. In figure 3B, we have similarly plotted the estimates of the probability of a nominee’s outcome at each point in time but, now, for the event of a return to the president, treating withdrawal and confirmation as competing risks. Relative to confirmations, we see much lower rates for returns overall, which is to be expected, given that most nominees are eventually confirmed. We also see somewhat shallower lines, indicating that the rate of returns is a more gradual process. Yet we still find evidence of the influence of powerful interests. Almost immediately in the process, nominees with powerful opposition have a consistently higher rate of return than those with no opposition. By 100 days, the

difference is nearly .1, and by 200 days, it is about .2. In summary, powerful organized interests in support and opposition affect the timing of both confirmation and return.

Time in committee

As we discussed above, interest groups could be more or less influential at different stages throughout the appointment process as well as have varying effects at different times. In particular, there is reason to believe that our expectations for interest groups (H1 and H2) should hold in the early and crucial committee stage, in which it only takes a small number of senators or their staff to be susceptible to outside influence (see also Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2019; Holmes et al. 2012). We move here to test our hypotheses in this context.

In this analysis, the duration variable is the time in days between the formal nomination by the president and the failure, the date the nominee is successfully voted out of committee versus any other outcome, less any Senate recess days. Compared with the overall confirmation time, nominees spend the majority of the confirmation period in committee. The maximum duration of time spent in committee is 372 days,

and the average number of days a nominee spent in committee is 53, almost 17 days fewer than the average time of the total duration of executive branch appointments.

Individuals are nominated by the president and immediately sent to committee. Indeed, in the Library of Congress nominations database, the date of nomination and committee referral are the same except in some special cases, when they are referred to committee before they are officially nominated. In these cases, the minimum duration in committee is less than zero. In our database, 14 nominations have a committee duration less than zero, which accounts for the fact that some important nominees are debated in the committee before the president officially nominates them. Secretary positions are the most likely positions to be confirmed in this manner. To incorporate them into the following duration model, these observations were treated as having a single-day duration in committee.

We treat the committee stage similarly to the full nomination period above, recognizing that nominees face three potential outcomes in each stage of the process. Thus, we again rely on the competing-risks duration model. However, while the threat of return and withdrawal remains in the committee stage, success here is not confirmation but passage out of committee and onto the Senate floor.

Figure 4 displays the key coefficients and confidence intervals from the competing-risks model (fig. 4A) as well as the hazard ratios, or exponentiated coefficients, for the interest group variables (fig. 4B). For the most part, the substantive covariates as well as the committee fixed effects in the model of the time nominees spend in committee are similar to those of the model of the total time to confirmation.

We again find support for our general expectation on the role of interest groups in nominations. That is, interest groups also affect this early stage in the appointment process. However, and somewhat contrary to our expectations, their impact seems to be more limited here. Similar to the full process in the committee stage, an additional group in support or opposition has no substantively meaningful effects on the time to passage out of committee. Also similar to the full process, powerful groups in support of nominees hasten their passage out of committee onto the floor, while powerful groups in opposition also hasten their return to the president. However, contrary to the full confirmation process, there is no effect from a powerful group in opposition on committee passage. That is, the only statistically and substantively significant effect on passage to the floor is from powerful interests in support. Interests can speed up the time it takes a nominee to make it out of committee with their support (boosting the passage rate by 63%) but are more constrained in their ability to hold up a nominee destined for passage in committee.

In summary, we see a positive effect within committees for powerful groups in support of nominees headed to the floor. We also find powerful groups in opposition maintaining their influence on returns. In the committee stage, like the full process, it is the voices of the powerful that are heard most clearly. Rather than complicating the decision-making process of legislators with additional concerns that might lead to delays, the information from powerful interest groups at this stage seems to simplify it and hasten the outcomes of passage and return.

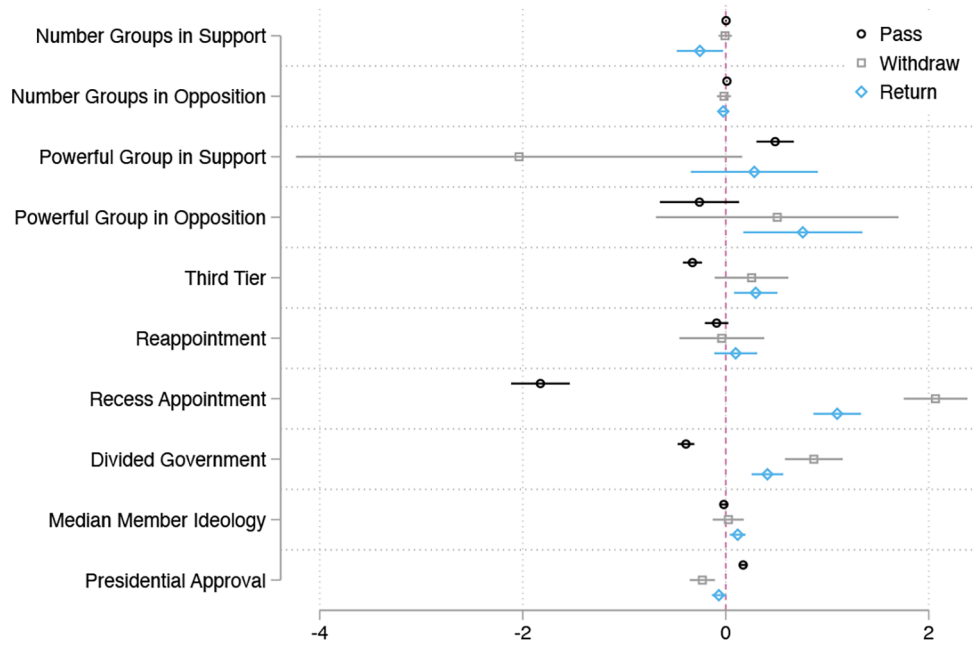
THE ACCENT OF VOICES HEARD IN THE SENATE

Our work makes at least four broad contributions. First, we bring organized interests into the discussion of executive nominations. Second, we combine a comprehensive collection of executive agency nominations across multiple sessions with related media coverage and Senate testimony of the nominations as well as measures of interest group power rooted in their coalitional networks. Combining these data provides unique insights on the role of organized interests in American democracy. Third, we introduce a novel methodological approach to understanding the duration of the nomination process due to our theoretical focus on multiple events. Confirmation is a process that is contingent on withdrawals and returns and, thus, the competing-risks event history model designed for these contexts provides appropriate inferences as well as insights into the less explored factors of return and withdraw. Fourth, and finally, we analyzed not only the overall confirmation process but also the crucial committee stage. The multi-stage approach is based on the premise that the effects of different voices may be conditional on the actors and tasks at hand.

The evidence here strongly suggests that organized interests play a role in the nomination process. However, the influence of groups on executive nominations is at the same time both more effective and more concentrated than previously understood. That is, we find that only particular interest groups—those most powerful in coalitional networks—are able to meaningfully affect the duration of nominee confirmation and return. In addition, these groups are influential at both the crucial committee stage and in the overall process. In terms of the overall process, our results demonstrate that while the most powerful groups are successful in expediting confirmations, they are also effective in slowing them down. In addition, powerful opposition speeds up the return rate. At the committee stage, the effects of powerful groups are more limited. Powerful groups are only able to speed up passage onto the floor, not delay it. However, powerful opposition is still able to increase the speed of a return at this stage.

Our hypotheses consider simply, but importantly, whether and in what form (number and power) interest groups hasten

A Coefficients



B Subhazard ratios

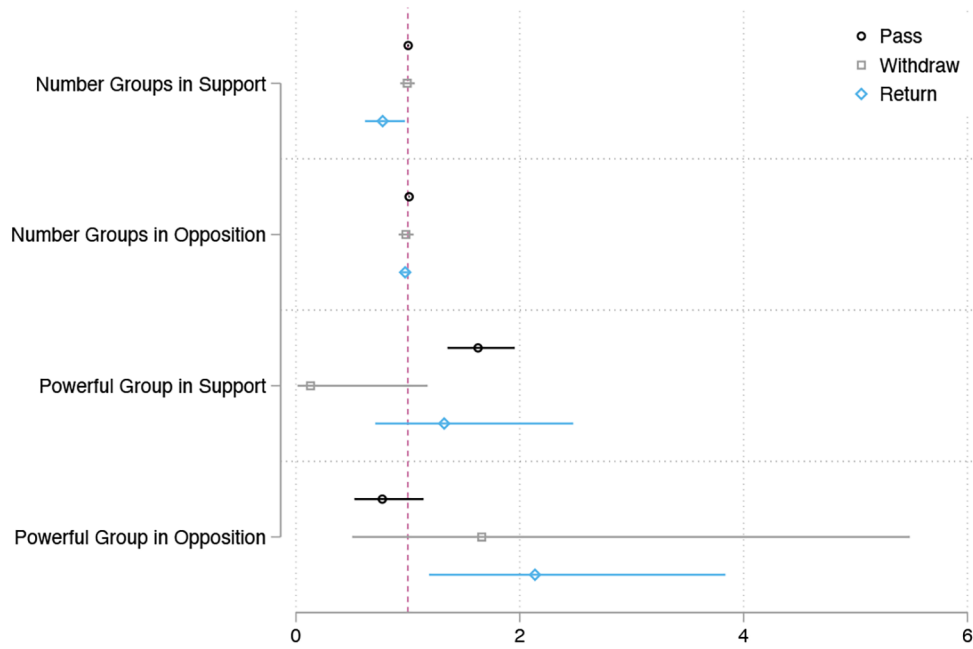


Figure 4. Competing risk regression results for time in committee. Results for the time nominee spent in committee. (A) Coefficients and confidence intervals. (B) Subhazard ratios and confidence intervals. The figures are from the fully specified models (1-3) in table 3 in the appendix.

or delay executive branch appointments in the US Senate. While this is straightforward, the role of interest groups in executive nominations has not yet been accounted for in previous work. Future work might, therefore, consider the vast heterogeneity among organized interests. Different types of interest groups—for example, concentrated interests, broad coalitions, regional, ideological—may be more effective at hastening or delaying the confirmation of executive branch appointments. Indeed, Wilson (1995) lays the foundation for such a study of the impact of diffuse versus concentrated interests. Likewise, we have included interest group involvement from committee hearing testimony as well as via news media, combining both the inside and outside tactics that these groups employ. However, the effect of interest groups in the nomination process may actually be broader than the results here suggest, and future work may be able to incorporate the other ways in which interest groups participate in the nomination process. Given the multitude of avenues of influence, our results here may be a floor not a ceiling.

We address issues of paramount consideration since the founding of the country: representation and the role of factions. If senators respond to the number of organized interests on each side, that could be seen as consistent with normative democratic expectations of heeding the popular will, in line with pluralist observations (Dahl 1961). However, if senators respond to only the most powerful interest groups, that would seem to be consistent with Madison's concern about the impact of factions and evidence of biased pluralism (Schattschneider 1960). Our collection of findings suggest that the conventional wisdom likely understates the effects of factions on government. At least in this domain, a count of interest groups does not convey the full extent of their influence. It is not the volume of attention but rather the power of particular groups that matters in the more obscure executive branch nomination politics. In sum, our findings contribute another piece toward building a fuller understanding of interest group politics by measuring their activities and influence on executive branch nominations. Understanding which interest groups win and why some groups succeed more often than others in all aspects of the political process remains a fundamental concern for a democratic system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Earlier versions of this article were presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association and the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association as well as at Washington University in St. Louis and at Harvard University's Center for American Political Studies. We are grateful for the comments received from these presentations as well as from the anonymous reviewers. We

would like to thank Alison Craig, Melinda Ritchie, William Minozzi, Quintin Beazer, Randy Calvert, Frank Lovett, Andrew Reeves, Jon Rogowski, Maya Sen, Benjamin Schner, Matthew Blackwell, and Galen Hall for helpful discussions as well as Jen Scholl and Andy Duthie for research assistance.

REFERENCES

- Ban, Pamela, Ju Yeon Park, and Hye Young You. 2023. "How Are Politicians Informed? Witnesses and Information Provision in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 117 (1): 122–39.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, Beth L. Leech, and David C. Kimball. 2009. *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. University of Chicago Press.
- Bell, Lauren. 2002. "Senatorial Discourtesy: The Senate's Use of Delay to Shape the Federal Judiciary." *Political Research Quarterly* 55 (3): 589–607.
- Berry, Jeffrey M., and Kent Portney. 1994. "Centralizing Regulatory Control and Interest Group Access: The Quayle Council on Competitiveness." In Allan J. Cigler, Burdett A. Loomis, and Anthony J. Nownes, eds., *Interest Group Politics*. 4th ed. Congressional Quarterly, 319–47.
- Bertelli, Anthony, and Sven E. Feldmann. 2007. "Strategic Appointments." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 17 (1): 19–38.
- Black, Ryan C., Anthony J. Madonna, Ryan J. Owens, and Michael S. Lynch. 2007. "Adding Recess Appointments to the President's 'Tool Chest' of Unilateral Powers." *Political Research Quarterly* 60 (4): 645–54.
- Black, Ryan C., Sarah A. Treul, Timothy R. Johnson, and Jerry Goldman. 2011. "Emotions, Oral Arguments, and Supreme Court Decision Making." *Journal of Politics* 73 (2): 572–81.
- Bond, Jon R., Richard Fleisher, and Glen S. Krutz. 2009. "Malign Neglect: Evidence That Delay Has Become the Primary Method of Defeating Presidential Appointments." *Congress & the Presidency* 36 (3): 226–43.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Charles P. Campisano, Matthew P. Hitt, and Kevin M. Scott. 2016. "Advising, Consenting, Delaying, and Expediting: Senator Influences on Presidential Appointments." *Studies in American Political Development* 30 (1): 19–37.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., and Dino P. Christenson. 2014. "The Evolution and Formation of Amicus Curiae Networks." *Social Networks* 36:82–96.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Dino P. Christenson, and Alison W. Craig. 2019. "Cue-Taking in Congress: Interest Group Signals from Dear Colleague Letters." *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (1): 163–80.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Dino P. Christenson, and Matthew Hitt. 2013. "Quality over Quantity: Amici Influence and Judicial Decision Making." *American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 446–60.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., and Bradford S. Jones. 1997. "Time Is of the Essence: Event History Models in Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (4): 1414–61.
- Boyd, Christina L., Michael S. Lynch, and Anthony J. Madonna. 2015. "Nuclear Fallout: Investigating the Effect of Senate Procedural Reform on Judicial Nominations." *Forum* 13 (4): 623–41.
- Caldeira, Gregory A., and John R. Wright. 1998. "Lobbying for Justice: Organized Interests Supreme Court Nominations, and United States Senate." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (2): 499–523.
- Cameron, Charles M., Cody Gray, Jonathan P. Kestellec, and Jee-Kwang Park. 2020. "From Textbook Pluralism to Modern Hyperpluralism: Interest Groups and Supreme Court Nominations, 1930–2017." *Journal of Law and Courts* 8 (2): 301–22.
- Cameron, Charles M., and Jonathan P. Kestellec. 2023. *Making the Supreme Court: The Politics of Appointments, 1930–2020*. Oxford University Press.

- Carroll, Royce, Jeffrey B. Lewis, James Lo, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2009. "Measuring Bias and Uncertainty in DW-NOMINATE Ideal Point Estimates via the Parametric Bootstrap." *Political Analysis* 17 (3): 261–75.
- Chiou, Fang-Yi, and Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 2014. "Executive Appointments: Duration, Ideology, and Hierarchy." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 26 (3): 496–517.
- Committee on Oversight. 2020. *United States Government Policy and Supporting Positions (Plum Book), 2020*. US House of Representatives.
- Coviello, Vincenzo, and May Boggess. 2004. "Cumulative Incidence Estimation in the Presence of Competing Risks." *Stata Journal* 4 (2): 103–12.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?* Yale University Press.
- Dull, Matthew M., and Patrick S. Roberts. 2009. "Continuity, Competence, and the Succession of Senate-Confirmed Agency Appointees, 1989–2009." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39 (3): 432–53.
- Dwidar, Maraam A. 2022a. "Coalitional Lobbying and Intersectional Representation in American Rulemaking." *American Political Science Review* 116 (1): 301–21.
- Dwidar, Maraam A. 2022b. "Diverse Lobbying Coalitions and Influence in Notice-and-Comment Rulemaking." *Journal of the Policy Studies Organization* 501 (1): 199–240.
- Edwards III, George C. 1985. "Measuring Presidential Success in Congress: Alternative Approaches." *Journal of Politics* 47 (2): 667–85.
- Esterling, Kevin M. 2004. *The Political Economy of Expertise: Information and Efficiency in American National Politics*. University of Michigan Press.
- Fine, Jason P., and Robert J. Gray. 1999. "A Proportional Hazards Model for the Subdistribution of a Competing Risk." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 94 (446): 496–509.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton University Press.
- Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (3): 564–81.
- Gray, Virginia, and David Lowery. 1996. *The Population Ecology of Interest Representation: Lobbying Communities in the American States*. University of Michigan Press.
- Hall, Richard L., and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review* 100 (1): 69–84.
- Heaney, Michael T., and Philip Leifeld. 2018. "Contributions by Interest Groups to Lobbying Coalitions." *Journal of Politics* 80 (2): 494–509.
- Heaney, Michael T., and Geoff M. Lorenz. 2012. "Coalition Portfolios and Interest Group Influence over the Policy Process." Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Heaney, Michael T., and James M. Strickland. 2016. "A Network Approach to Interest Group Politics." In Jennifer Nicoll Victor, Alexander H. Montgomery, and Mark Lubell, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Networks*. Oxford University Press, 433–52.
- Hojnacki, Marie. 1998. "Organized Interests: Advocacy Behavior in Alliances." *Political Research Quarterly* 51 (2): 437–59.
- Hollibaugh, Gary E., and Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 2018. "The Who, When, and Where of Executive Nominations: Integrating Agency Independence and Appointee Ideology." *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (2): 296–311.
- Holmes, Lisa M., Salmon A. Shomade, and Roger E. Hartley. 2012. "The Confirmation Obstacle Course: Signaling Opposition Through Delay." *American Review of Politics* 33:23–49.
- Howard, Nicholas O., and Jason M. Roberts. 2015. "The Politics of Obstruction: Republican Holds in the US Senate." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 40 (2): 273–94.
- Hula, Kevin. 1995. "Rounding Up the Usual Suspects: Forging Interest Group Coalitions." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*, 4 ed. CQ Press.
- Hula, Kevin W. 1999. *Lobbying Together: Interest Group Coalitions in Legislative Politics*. Georgetown University Press.
- Jo, Jinhee. 2017. "Now or Later? A Dynamic Analysis of Presidential Appointments." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 29 (1): 149–64.
- Kinane, Christina. 2019. "Control Without Confirmation: The Politics of Vacancies in Presidential Appointments." PhD thesis. University of Michigan.
- Kinane, Christina. 2021. "Control Without Confirmation: The Politics of Vacancies in Presidential Appointments." *American Political Science Review* 115 (2): 599–614.
- Kingdon, John W. 1981. *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*. 2nd ed. Harper and Row.
- Krause, George A., and Jason S. Byers. 2022a. "Confirmation Dynamics: Differential Vetting in the Appointment of U.S. Federal Agency Leaders." *Journal of Politics* 84 (2): 1189–201.
- Krause, George A., and Jason S. Byers. 2022b. "Executive Deference or Legislative Constraint? Committee Foundations of Confirmation Delay for U.S. Executive Branch Appointments." Unpublished.
- Krause, George A., and Anne Joseph O'Connell. 2016. "Experiential Learning and Presidential Management of the US Federal Bureaucracy: Logic and Evidence from Agency Leadership Appointments." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (4): 914–31.
- Krause, George A., and Anne Joseph O'Connell. 2019. "Loyalty–Competence Trade-offs for Top US Federal Bureaucratic Leaders in the Administrative Presidency Era." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 49 (3): 527–50.
- Krutz, Glen S., Richard Fleisher, and Jon R. Bond. 1998. "From Abe Fortas to Zoe Baird: Why Some Presidential Nominations Fail in the Senate." *American Political Science Review* 92 (4): 871–81.
- Lewis, David E., and Mark D. Richardson. 2021. "The Very Best People: President Trump and the Management of Executive Personnel." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 51 (1): 51–70.
- Li, Hu. 2018. "Centrality Analysis of Online Social Network Big Data." In *2018 IEEE 3rd International Conference on Big Data Analysis (ICBDA)*. IEEE, 38–42.
- Loomis, Burdett A. 1986. "Coalition of Interest: Building Bridges in the Balkanized State." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*. CQ Press.
- Lorenz, Geoff M. 2020. "Prioritized Interests: Diverse Lobbying Coalitions and Congressional Committee Agenda Setting." *Journal of Politics* 82 (1): 225–40.
- Madison, James. 1787. "Federalist No. 10: The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection." *Independent Journal*.
- Mahoney, Christine. 2004. "The Power of Institutions: State and Interest Group Activity in the European Union." *European Union Politics* 5 (4): 441–66.
- Mahoney, Christine, and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2015. "Partners in Advocacy: Lobbyists and Government Officials in Washington." *Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 202–15.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. Yale University Press.
- McCarty, Nolan, and Rose Razaghian. 1999. "Advice and Consent: Senate Responses to Executive Branch Nominations 1885–1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (4): 1122–43.
- McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1): 165–79.
- Newman, Mark. 2018. *Networks*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press.

- Nixon, David C. 2001. "Appointment Delay for Vacancies on the Federal Communications Commission." *Public Administration Review* 61 (4): 483–92.
- Nixon, David C. 2004. "Separation of Powers and Appointee Ideology." *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* 20(2):438–457.
- Nixon, David C. 2005. "The Independent Regulatory Commissioner Database." http://www2.hawaii.edu/~dnixon/IRC/irc_codebook_110.pdf
- Nokken, Timothy P., and Brian R. Sala. 2000. "Confirmation Dynamics: A Model of Presidential Appointments to Independent Agencies." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 12 (1): 91–112.
- O'Connell, Anne Joseph. 2009. "Let's Get It Started: What President-Elect Obama Can Learn from Previous Administrations in Making Political Appointments." Report. Center for American Progress.
- O'Connell, Anne Joseph. 2015. "Shortening Agency and Judicial Vacancies Through Filibuster Reform? An Examination of Confirmation Rates and Delays from 1981–2014." *Duke Law Journal* 64:1645–715.
- Ostrander, Ian. 2015. "The Contemporary Presidency: Powering Down the Presidency: The Rise and Fall of Recess Appointments." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45 (3): 558–72.
- Ostrander, Ian. 2016. "The Logic of Collective Inaction: Senatorial Delay in Executive Nominations." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (4): 1063–76.
- Resh, William G., Gary E. Hollibaugh Jr., Patrick S. Roberts, and Matthew M. Dull. 2020. "Appointee Vacancies in U.S. Executive Branch Agencies." *Journal of Public Policy* 41 (4): 653–76.
- Ringe, Nils, and Steven L. Wilson. 2016. "Pinpointing the Powerful: Covoting Network Centrality as a Measure of Political Influence." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41 (3): 739–69.
- Rottinghaus, Brandon, and Daniel E. Bergan. 2011. "The Politics of Requesting Appointments: Congressional Requests in the Appointment and Nomination Process." *Political Research Quarterly* 64 (1): 31–44.
- Rybicki, Elizabeth. 2019. "Senate Consideration of Presidential Nominations: Committee and Floor Procedure." Technical report RL31980. Congressional Research Service. https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20190404_RL31980_69efa4a5b5cbac2b1a01b01d9a63c93d649b5bce.pdf (accessed June 30, 2020).
- Schattschneider, Elmer Eric. 1960. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Scherer, Nancy, Brandon L. Bartels, and Amy Steigerwalt. 2008. "Sounding the Fire Alarm: The Role of Interest Groups in the Lower Federal Court Confirmation Process." *Journal of Politics* 70 (4): 1026–39.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, and John T. Tierney. 1986. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. Harper and Row.
- Schmitt M. 2019. "Bonacich, Phillip (1987): Power and Centrality: A Family of Measures." In Boris Holzer and Christian Stegbauer, eds., *Schlüsselwerke der Netzwerkforschung*. Springer VS Wiesbaden, 1170–82.
- Shipan, Charles R. 2004. "Regulatory Regimes, Agency Actions, and the Conditional Nature of Congressional Influence." *American Political Science Review* 98 (3): 467–80.
- Wilson, James Q. 1995. *Political Organizations: Updated Edition*. Princeton University Press.
- Wittenberg, Ernest, and Elisabeth Wittenberg. 1989. *How to Win in Washington: Very Practical Advice About Lobbying, the Grassroots, and the Media*. B. Blackwell.