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April 12, 2012

Conditions at home: analyzing constituent versus party pressures on free trade

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## Abstract

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Trade policy within the U.S. Congress has been a controversial issue that sparks tremendous debate. Due to its nature as a pocketbook and international issue, a wide range of interests are activated on any given free trade agreement that influence legislators to different extents. This study seeks to understand how members of the U.S. Senate determined their votes on five major free trade agreements from 2002 to 2011 by examining: (1) constituent demands, (2) party, (3) national interest group pressures, and (4) ideology. Using the factors model and sectors model as two complementary models of political economy, this study predicts that senators will respond favorably to constituent interests within their states to increase their odds of reelection. Overall, the study seeks to address the party versus constituency puzzle: to what extent do senators base votes on constituency interests, when they also face sometimes-different party and ideological pressures? Additionally, what influences the direction of votes on free trade agreements? To address the question, a probit regression analysis was employed with variables addressing many of the major actors outlined in John Kingdon's seminal work on legislative decision-making. The findings of this study support the hypothesis that senators from more export-oriented states will support free trade, even if that means potentially bucking their own party. While partisanship alone cannot predict vote outcomes due to the cross-partisan nature of the votes—when a significant contingent of one party joins with the other for passage—breaking the Democratic Party down by its ideological wings reinforces the ability to determine how each senator will vote on free trade.

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## **The Research Question**

The International Trade Administration lauds Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as “one of the best ways to open up foreign markets to U.S. exporters.” In 2010, FTA countries alone made up 41% of U.S. exports, and the rate of export growth to those countries has increased faster than to non-FTA countries. However, opponents of free trade point to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as an example of job destruction, with one estimate that 879,280 U.S. jobs were lost between 1994 and 2003. (Scott 2003). The issue of trade policy generates significant partisan controversy, as pro-trade politicians are often referred to as job killers and anti-trade ones as market closers. Beyond the politically charged epithets lies complex decision-making in the United States Congress on trade policy.

In October 2011, Congress ended a five-year standoff on three major trade agreements with American strategic allies South Korea, Colombia, and Panama. While the official position of each party significantly varied, “many Democrats voted against the president” of their own party due to concerns over job loss and foreign treatment of labor unions (Applebaum and Steinhauer 2011). Even with this strong opposition, a coalition of Republicans and centrist Democrats was forged to pass these FTAs in a victory President Barack Obama and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell both praised as bipartisan. In such a contentious environment, why would so many Democratic politicians vote against their party’s stated position? In the U.S. Senate, senators who represented the same state and were of different parties often voted the same way on the FTAs, demonstrating the potential importance of constituent interests over partisanship. To examine the research question, the unit of analysis will be individual senators. I will



analyze votes on U.S. FTA between South Korea, Panama, Australia, the Andean Community, and Central America between 2002 and 2011. U.S. Representatives are conventionally seen as more closely tied to constituents due to shorter terms and smaller districts; however, senators from a given state share the same exact electoral district and often are of different parties. This allows for a direct comparison of trade votes against the same backdrop even when parties may differ, thus isolating constituency demands within the legislative process.

One example of this is the state of Florida and its senate delegation. The Office of the United States Trade Representative expects the South Korea Trade Agreement alone to increase the U.S. Gross Domestic Product by \$10 billion, eliminating remaining tariffs within a decade. In the state of Florida, for instance, the *Miami Herald* reported that constituents stand to benefit from the billions of dollars worth of “imports and exports that move to the three markets through Florida ports and airports” (Whitefield and Bolstad 2011). Further, Floridian products are expected to benefit from these agreements. Florida cattle ranchers and beef businesses anticipate more sales to South Korea in terms of exports (Whitefield and Bolstad 2011). Unsurprisingly, both of Florida’s senators, Democrat Bill Nelson and Republican Marco Rubio, voted in favor of the trade agreements. What caused the often-divided senatorial delegation from the state to come together on this controversial issue? At first glance, the answer seems to be their constituents’ economic benefits from the passage of the agreements.

With unusual consensus on these issues between senators of different parties and the same state, one can only wonder if factors unrelated to party affiliation are at play. Since states stand to gain or lose in different ways across the nation, a variation in

support for FTAs is to be expected. What influences the direction of votes on free trade agreements in the U.S. Senate? To what extent do senators base votes on constituency interests, when they also face sometimes-different party and ideological differences? This study seeks to resolve this puzzle by examining five major FTAs within the United States Senate. The relationship between state-level economic factors and constituency characteristics and Senate FTA votes will be analyzed.

### **Literature Review**

Senators can be influenced by a wide variety of forces. On FTAs specifically, senators often face a “wide range of conflicting constituency and institutional pressures” (Wink, Livingston, and Garand 1996, 750). According to Kingdon (1989), the characteristics of constituencies can serve a significant role in influencing roll call voting of members of Congress. Elections serve to place “like-minded” representatives within Congress to support policies that constituents would support as well, if given the opportunity; therefore, the expectation is that in order to gain reelection, self-interested legislators will align themselves with the interests of their constituency on FTAs (Miller and Stokes 1963). If they are not aligned with these interests, they will be held accountable at the ballot box and could face defeat when up for reelection. Outside of constituency interests, there are other factors as well. This study seeks to address two major theoretical questions. First, it asks whether constituency interests can compel U.S. senators to buck their parties on FTA votes. Second, it will analyze the relative effects of other major actors in the legislative process to determine just how significant constituent effects are on FTA passage in the U.S. Senate.

To better understand the decision-making behind roll call voting on FTAs, a specific model of forces that influence senators is required. In *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*, John Kingdon (1989) outlines a multi-actor model<sup>1</sup> of the varied pressures legislators face when determining their vote. While Kingdon's model focuses on a cross-section of representatives, he does mention its applicability to the Senate, noting "some patterns may be different"; special consideration will be given to determining if this model falls short of predicting senators' decision-making process. The model outlines six key actors that influence a legislator's vote: (1) constituents, (2) party leadership and committees, (3) interest groups, (4) administration officials, (5) the media, and (6) the legislators' personal ideological disposition (Kingdon 1989). Constituency interests, being among the most important, were said to vary by intensity of opinion; for example, on tax issues, constituents were particularly energized (Kingdon 1989, 36). This implies that issues of the bottom line—having directly to do with the financial position of constituents—are more important and influential than others.

Constituent interests are well documented as a potential factor influencing trade policy. However, "constituent" is a term not just for an average voter, but also larger industries within districts. As Kingdon (1989, 38) describes it, when there is "little opposition in the district to industry's interests," there is "nothing to lose and everything to gain by defending them." The struggle between constituent interest and personal ideology is quite clear: if a legislator cares deeply about an issue and constituents do not, the legislator will prefer his or her own ideology above the constituent position. Vice versa, if a legislator does not care much about a particular issue ideologically and his or

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<sup>1</sup> The word "actor" has been used previously by John Kingdon (1989) in his work *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*. He describes these components of the legislative decision-making process and their role as actors more comprehensively in his introduction beginning on page five.

her constituents do, they will prefer the position of the constituency above his or her own (Kingdon 1989, 39). Even outside the realm of voter and legislator intensity, one roll call vote may not be that important to a legislator in terms of his or her reelection prospects. However, if that roll call vote affects the pocketbook, as it does on trade issues, that one vote may matter even more. If many votes are taken this way, “a string of votes” can become a liability (Kingdon 1989, 49). Senators who vote against their constituents’ position on several similarly situated votes can find themselves in a primary challenge or close general election. On the other hand, in the U.S. Senate, longer terms and larger districts tend to provide greater legislative freedom. With longer time between elections and a more diverse constituency, senators can buck their constituency and potentially survive if it is not an election year. This decreased accountability to any one constituent interest may allow Senators greater leverage in allowing their own conscience, or other actors, to affect their vote.

To explain the influence of constituency interests on legislators there are two distinct but related models of state-level trade economics: the factors model and the sectors model. Understanding the nature of these two theoretical foundations allows scholars an acute understanding of the economic and political pressures legislators face within their districts. When these models are coupled with the incentive of senators to seek reelection, the decision-making behind roll call voting on FTAs becomes apparent. Senators may very well look towards the wellbeing of their state and its constituents for direction on voting to preserve their incumbency as well as protect their voters.

The factors model (Stolper and Samuelson 1941) predicts that “owners or producers of relatively abundant factors” desire international trade liberalization (Jeong

2009, 521). A factor is relatively abundant when the country's ratio of that factor to others is greater than the corresponding ratios elsewhere in the world. When factors of production—labor and capital—can be put to use in alternative sectors with little transaction cost, the pattern of interests over trade falls along factor lines. In the United States, capital and land are relatively abundant compared to unskilled labor. Capital owners and landowners will favor trade liberalization because they will gain from the opportunity to sell on open international markets (Broz 2005, 481). Therefore, capital owners and the owners of land (due to agricultural business) will support FTAs. Conversely, labor will tend to oppose FTAs, because free trade will introduce greater competition with relatively more abundant and thus cheaper foreign labor, driving wages down and/or unemployment up in the home country (Ladewig 2006, 71). With respect to decisions about an FTA with a given trade partner, the factor-based cleavages in support for the FTA will be all the stronger if that partner has greater relative labor abundance or is less economically developed (Wood 1994; Cain and Paterson 1986).

With capital owners pitted against labor in FTA advocacy, the skill endowment of labor in an electoral district—in this case the state—is important in predicting the support of a senator. Skill has been measured in two different ways by previous studies: the education level attained by constituents, and their occupations. The factors model predicts that skilled workers will gain higher wages, and that unskilled workers will suffer reduced ones, from expanded trade (Beaulieu 2002, 348). On this front, international trade will “increase demand for white collar labor,” and unskilled, blue-collar workers are more likely to “see their jobs performed overseas” (Fordham 2008, 171). Legislators from more affluent states, where higher-income constituents can benefit

from expanded opportunity in globalized markets, are expected to support FTAs (Conley 1999, 789). Constituencies with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to excel in expanded economies, especially as members of the more abundant factor of production: skilled labor (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006, 469). Districts with greater unionization are expected to be less willing to support FTAs, especially as they often consist of a higher proportion of blue-collar workers who may lose their jobs to cheaper labor markets abroad (Kahane 1996, 401).

Scholars have questioned the utility of analyzing education within the context of economic self-interest, because those who are more educated tend to also have greater “exposure to information favoring an internationalist position” in support of free trade (Fordham 2008, 176). Hainmueller and Hiscox (2006) found a nonlinear relationship where the varying levels of post-high school attendance affected support for free trade, and lower levels of education did not. Pro-trade attitudes of more educated constituents can also “stem from exposure to the benefits of trade in college economics courses,” where free trade is trumpeted as effective. This can lead to pro-trade attitudes that are more ideological and less tied to economic self-interest in expanded markets. Bartels (1996, 203) included a variable to control for political information to test whether an independent effect of education existed; political information refers to whether or not the voter understands the issue at hand and can identify the respective positions of each party. He found that “the inclusion of a variable tapping a respondent’s level of political information does not eliminate the effect of education” (Fordham 2008, 176). The variable, although less influential, were still statistically significant. Thus, education’s

independent effects on trade attitudes of constituents are clear; education serves as an indicator of the ability to recognize the benefits of a more globalized market.

A different view of the origins of trade preferences across groups within society comes from a sister theoretical framework, known as the sectors model. Unlike the factors model, the sectors model assumes factors cannot be put to use in a different sector without prohibitive costs (Alt et al. 1996, 692). In this model, sector-based coalitions form depending on whether a given industry is competitive in global markets or not, since the owners of the factors put to use in that sector all share the fate of that industry. That is, if owners of capital cannot easily switch the use of their factors of production, then industries and their laborers who stand to gain from trade will support it. Alt et al. explain the phenomena this way:

If the United States is abundant in software-producing capital but scarce in up-to-date auto-producing capital, and if shifts between these uses are costly and slow, then software manufacturers will embrace free trade and automakers will be protectionist (1996, 692).

This distinction is usually judged by whether the industry is a net exporter or, in contrast, largely competes with imports. Therefore, sectoral coalitions of labor and capital owners will form in support of or against FTAs. In this theoretical economy, where factors are assumed to be immobile, the capital and labor cannot easily move to areas of the economy that are more suited towards the country's comparative advantage at the time.

Where labor finds itself pitted against industry in the factors model, labor and industry will stand together in favor of free trade if their sector gains from more open international markets<sup>2</sup>. On this front, "export-competitive industries will experience

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<sup>2</sup> Often, these alliances may form at the state level, which are not always captured by an analysis of national interest groups. The latter have a range of other issues to consider when contributing to legislators, so they may not align with business on all votes the sectors model would predict.

income gains from free trade,” so they support liberalization, while “import-competing sectors will not” (Ladewig 2006, 72). To the extent that a senator is responding to the interests of the state’s constituency in placing his vote, then varying factors like the export/import position of a state can help to predict a politician’s support and his or her constituents’ interests on a given FTA. A number of empirical studies have linked legislative voting on international economic issues to the electoral district’s import-versus-export position. For example, according to Broz and Hawes (2006, 382), districts that face “strong import competition” often oppose International Monetary Fund (IMF) funding while “export-oriented” districts often support it. While not directly free trade legislation, IMF funding is a pro-globalization policy that increases the world’s capacity for trade liberalization. Electoral districts with industries that have positive net exports are at a comparative advantage and will likely realize income gains through trade liberalization (Scheve and Slaughter 2001, 276). Bailey and Brady (1998, 536) find that greater state exports influenced senators to vote for NAFTA.

Just as constituency interests are driven by self-interest, so too are the efforts of legislators. As portrayed in *Electoral Connection* by David Mayhew (1974), legislators are rational, single-minded election seekers. By this standard, votes on trade policy will be defined by incumbents looking to preserve their political careers with the least resistance possible. When one considers Kingdon’s frame of constituent interests paired with Mayhew’s electoral incentive, the decision-making process of senators becomes clearer. With their eyes set on reelection, senators should vote for the interests of their constituents above all of Kingdon’s other actors, including party. American legislators have to “mobilize [their] own resources” and therefore must “build a power base that is



substantially independent of party” (Mayhew 1974, 26). While other actors will be analyzed, in terms of trade policy, the expectation is that constituent influences will supersede all others.

The electoral connection is rooted in three main activities of legislators: (1) advertising their successes, (2) credit claiming, and (3) position taking. For the issue of trade, there are not particularized governmental benefits like earmarks, post offices, or bridges to bring back to the state. While senators can claim credit for opening more export markets or creating jobs for their states, position taking and subsequent advertising of these benefits are more likely to affect trade voting. Before examining senators’ incentives on trade voting through the prism of position taking and advertising their success, an examination of senate electoral styles is required. Richard Fenno in his seminal work *Homestyle* (1977) describes how senators seek reelection and cater to their constituencies. He states that due to bigger districts, a more suburban society, and fewer personal relationships with voters in modern politics, senators are less concerned with constituent casework than with taking positions and claiming credit. With more access to the media, senators “put more emphasis on position taking than House members and rely [less] on particularized benefits” (Mayhew 1974, 73). Therefore, to increase their electoral chances, senators will look to advertise their pro-constituency positions on trade, especially because they affect the bottom line of the states. While other issues may allow senators more ability to vote their ideology or with their party, trade issues seem less likely to provide that latitude, due to their pocketbook nature.

Constituency interests and the drive for reelection are not the only vital factors in predicting support for or opposition to FTAs. Kingdon (1989) notes that the parties can

be significant actors in congressional decision-making. One of the major ways party can influence congressional decision-making is through the party of the president. If the president is of a legislator's party, the legislator may be more likely to vote with the president and the party position (Kingdon 1989, 120). In the debate over NAFTA, President Bill Clinton's efforts to "persuade and move Democrats on trade votes" resulted in more Democratic support (Bailey and Brady 1998, 534). The president of either party has "consistently sought trade liberalization," which "presents a dilemma for both Democratic and Republican partisans in Congress" (Gartzke and Wrighton 1998, 41). In theory, one would expect systematic partisanship to diminish within Congress on trade issues due to state-specific constituency factors playing into the equation. However, has that actually been the case, or have parties still maintained a great deal of party line votes on this issue of trade? Has opposition to the president as a form of political gamesmanship seeped into trade policy as it has other partisan issues?

Aside from the factors and sectors models, additional research has been done regarding other economic factors that may influence congressional roll call voting on foreign policy and trade agreements. In the realm of electoral politics, a "high salience, unpopular foreign policy issue" can alienate constituents within a legislator's district (Meernik 2004, 453). An issue like trade—which could potentially cost jobs within a state—may make senators less inclined to support it as a foreign policy measure when economic conditions are poor. Increased unemployment has been found to decrease support for internationalist foreign policy: policies that engage American resources towards international efforts, like free trade agreements (Meernik 2004; Nincic 1998). Therefore, if unemployment is higher in a given state, the support of that state's senators

for a free trade agreement may decrease because constituents may see an FTA as a wasted effort on foreign policy while domestic concerns loom larger. Conversely, Presidents Obama and G.W. Bush have cited job growth as a reason to support FTAs (Liberto 2011). If true, this could also mean that poor economic conditions may serve as an impetus for free trade support.

Even though economic interests are the primary focus of the current research, initial examination found that congressional roll call voting for free trade hinged upon partisan considerations. Jeong (2009, 530) studies constituent influence on international trade policy and finds that there has “been strong partisan polarization on trade policy.” These findings help one conclude that political party can explain the variation in support of or opposition to trade policy. Of course, for there to be an independent effect of political party on legislative voting for free trade, legislators from different parties would have to “represent district interests” in systematically different ways (Jeong 2009, 534). Increased polarization often ties legislators to voting with their party regardless of whether or not their constituents benefit or not. These effects can push legislators to ideological extremes where they vote with their party over their constituency (Jeong 2009, 534).

Milner and Tingley (2011, 68) found that the effects of party also play out through the president’s position on a trade agreement. They found that Democratic presidents “seem more likely [than Republican presidents] to be able to sway members of their own party” to vote for trade liberalization agreements, specifically the bloc of moderate Democrats who joined with Republicans for passage (Milner and Tingley 2011, 54). Even when legislators may have been predicted to oppose trade liberalization

agreements based on the political economy of their districts or personal ideology, sometimes they would support them anyway with pressure from the administration. For Republicans, persuasion is obviously less necessary because their party already supports free trade. Gartzke and Wrigthon (1998, 47) found that House Democrats were more likely to bolster the legislative record of a president from their own party. Conversely, House Republicans would rather oppose legislation to prevent an opposing president's success even if they normally would agree with the legislation. This is an important theoretical difference in expectations between House and Senate voting. In the House, shorter terms and greater electoral accountability tend to force representatives to respond to their constituents more closely. Gartzke and Wrigthon found traditional party labels of Republicans as free traders and Democrats as protectionists held; however, a few "liberal senators supported the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) [of 1993] while" a few conservatives voted against it to preserve their agricultural industries (Gartzke and Wrighton 1998, 47). While they expected party influence to be stronger with the Senate, where there were longer terms and less constant electoral accountability, it actually was more influential in the House. According to them, this is the result of a process where senators feel less constrained by party and can buck their affiliations if it helps constituents.

Interest groups, or organized lobbies for particular causes, are yet another actor that can influence legislative decision-making. However, as Kingdon (1989, 150) indicates, interest groups have little influence on the process unless they have a constituency connection. If an interest group has no possible electoral repercussion to punish legislators for voting against its position, then legislators are less inclined to

follow its lead. With greater issue salience, interest groups begin to matter more and more to the legislator's thinking (Kingdon 1989, 147). Political action committees (PACs) in general influence votes through their own "punishment strategies;" a legislator who expects to receive contributions from a PAC would be more likely to support the PAC's positions (Engel and Jackson 1998, 817). In the short term, a PAC could curb its contributions to legislators who buck its position. In the longer term, a PAC might have to realign with a new party if legislators are not voting in support of that PACs' positions (Engel and Jackson 1998). However, not all PACs have the luxury of a party swap. Labor PACs have overwhelmingly supported Democratic incumbents instead of their Republican counterparts, and a switch would most likely require a significant ideological shift in the Republican platform. Therefore, labor PACs' long-term punishment strategies are weaker than their short-term repercussions; even if labor PAC contributions decrease after one bad vote, they have reverted to their previous level in the following election cycle (Engel and Jackson 1998).

On the issue of trade, labor PACs are an important player. Labor PACs can only deal in short-term punishment given Republicans fierce support of free trade; therefore, Democratic legislators could potentially get away crossing party lines to support FTAs while maintaining their prospect for long-term labor support. NAFTA demonstrated that business PACs supported Republicans who voted for the agreement, while labor PACs contributed to protectionist Democrats (Steagall and Jennings 1996, 520). Even with this trend, a legislator might be able to vote against organized labor in favor of a trade agreement without sacrificing long-term labor support. However, there were short-term punishments in the election cycle after NAFTA was passed. In the 1993-1994 election

cycle, contributions to Democrats from organized labor were down (Engel and Jackson 1998, 824). In the next cycle, 1995-1996, they were back up. Organized labor is not a “single-issue interest group,” so its long-term outlook on a range of other issues required it to continue Democratic contributions (Engel and Jackson 1998, 824). The narrow margin of victory on NAFTA implies that some Democrats broke party ranks and supported the agreement. Democrats who received cash from business PACs were significantly more likely to vote yes than Democrats who received greater labor PAC contributions (Peake, Jackson, and Biglaiser 2007, 88).

Business PACs have tended to support trade liberalization and have donated to Republicans who also support it. Baldwin and Magee (1999) found that it cost business PACs more per representative to sway one vote in favor of the GATT Uruguay Round pro-trade legislation in 1993 than it cost labor for their respective nay votes. Organized labor stood firmly against trade liberalization; however, industry and business interests were split based on which factors benefitted or lost as a result of the agreement’s passage (Baldwin and Magee 1999, 93). Unification by organized labor allowed it to pool resources and focus on Democratic incumbents likely to vote against the agreement. On the NAFTA trade agreement, business PAC support sorted out by sector and was less potent than unified labor. Organized labor came out solidly against NAFTA while the “business opinion was mixed” (Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn 1997, 335). While pro-trade supporters favored the agreement to open new markets, others wondered whether some American products like “textiles and household glass” could compete with Mexican products (Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn 1997, 335). This sent a mixed

message in terms of business PAC contributions and one that allowed labor to unify more strongly against NAFTA.

The last of the major actors to be analyzed by this study is legislator ideology. When assessing whether constituent pressures overcome party ones, a legislator's career-long ideology must be controlled for. Ideology has been found to be one of the "most powerful predictors of roll-call support" for previous trade measures (Wink, Livingston, and Garand 1996, 765). While the trade conflict in Congress may be characterized as Democrat versus Republican, the more apt characterization is ideologically between "advocates of free market approaches to economic policymaking" and "proponents of protectionism and government regulation" of the economy (Wink, Livingston, and Garand 1996, 765). Ideology can be particularly important if a legislator's ideology is at odds with his or her constituency's position on legislation. In this case, the ultimate decision on a given piece of legislation can be explained by a senator's perspective on representation.

Congressional scholars describe two parallel models of representation that help explain the debate between independent judgment and constituency opinion debate within the U.S. Congress (Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee 2010, 140). The trustee model of representation calls on legislators to base their votes on the interest of the nation at-large rather than merely reflecting the desires of a particular constituency. Trustee legislators take a "national view" using their "superior information about policy" and "personal judgment," or ideology, when voting on legislation (Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee 2010, 140). Trustee legislators are more inclined to shirk their constituency's position on legislation, because they believe they represent the national instead of local interest. The

alternative model offered is the delegate model of representation. Delegate legislators reflect the interests of their constituency; they are less inclined to buck their electoral district for personal ideology. While each model represents a theoretical extreme on each end of the spectrum of representation, actual legislators ponder a variety of factors including “the nation’s welfare, their personal convictions, and constituency opinions” (Davidson, Oleszek, and Lee 2010, 141).

This notion of representation extends the principal-agent theory, an economic and rational framework by which principal actors (voters) expend “political currency” in exchange for beneficial legislation and effective representation by agents (Peltzman 1984, 181). In the case of Congress, the agent is the legislator and the principals are the voters themselves. Ideology and personal persuasion become important in assessing congressional decision-making when a legislator shirks his constituency in favor of his own beliefs. Peltzman (1984, 180) found that legislative shirking was “more apparent than real.” While he found ideology as a factor equipped to predict roll call outcomes, it was actually just a proxy for the more fundamental realities of representation. In terms of trade, liberal and conservative legislators are expected to “appeal to voters with systematically different incomes, education, and occupations” (Peltzman 1984, 210). One possibility is that voters with similar education and income levels may elect legislators with similar ideologies, therefore leading to a strong correlation between ideology and the eventual vote outcome. However, this may be more a correlation to the potential true causal factor—constituency opinion—than ideology itself. For the issue of trade policy, this framework is important because the “larger and more well defined the wealth stakes in a vote,” the more important constituency characteristics are in prediction (Peltzman



1984, 184). Therefore, for an economic issue like trade, constituency may be the true explainer of voting patterns, even if ideology is statistically significant; legislators are less inclined to shirk their constituency and trust their ideology if more is at stake for their principals (Peltzman 1984, 210).

The study at hand will examine the relative effects of constituency opinion, party forces, and personal legislator ideology on trade votes. It will seek to reconcile the puzzle of constituency versus party interests when it comes to American trade policy. Examining the Senate allows an appropriate context by which to determine whether constituency or party is more important when predicting trade vote outcomes. Examining senators who share the same electoral districts or states and are of different parties can help to isolate constituency opinion as the main causal factor in predicting trade roll call voting. On such a salient and important issue, Kingdon (1989) predicts that many actors, not just one, will eventually influence the legislator's decision. Enlisting recent trade votes in the U.S. Congress, this study will analyze the theory behind legislative decision-making on trade policy.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

The research project at hand will focus on United States senators and the states they represent. Overall, the study seeks to determine whether constituency or party pressures are stronger in legislative decision-making on trade policy. Further, other factors—like ideology and interest group influence—will be controlled for to determine their relative effects on the process. The unit of analysis is confined to an individual senator's vote on one of the five major pieces of trade legislation previously mentioned.

Using Kingdon's (1989) framework with political economy models for trade makes certain expectations of legislative behavior apparent.

The factors model of constituency preferences on trade predicts that states with better-educated and wealthier voters will be more supportive of liberalizing trade. Therefore, states that reflect these characteristics will likely place greater pressure on their senators to support FTAs.

*Hypothesis 1:*

**H<sub>1</sub>:** If a state has better-educated and wealthier constituents, then its senator will be more likely to support free trade legislation.

The sectors model predicts a different model of coalitional support for FTAs. States with stronger export positions will pressure their senators to support liberalizing trade. States that have more exports to the world or to the partner region in the agreement are more likely to benefit. Service-oriented voters stand to gain from FTAs well, specifically from cheaper prices domestically. Therefore, their senator is more likely to vote in favor of the trade agreement.

*Hypothesis 2:*

**H<sub>2</sub>:** If a state has a higher proportion of service-sector employment, then its senator will be more likely to support free trade legislation.

*Hypothesis 3:*

**H<sub>3</sub>:** If a state has a stronger export position, then its senator will be more likely to support free trade legislation.

Outside of constituency factors, party influences may play a significant role in the

legislative decision-making on trade policy. Democrats are expected to oppose free trade at greater rates than Republicans. Conversely, Republicans are expected to vote in favor of free trade more often. When the president is of the same party as a given senator, the senator is more likely to support the president's free trade initiatives.

*Hypothesis 4:*

**H<sub>4</sub>:** If a senator is a Republican (Democrat), they are more likely to support (oppose) FTAs.

*Hypothesis 5:*

**H<sub>5</sub>:** If a senator is of the same party as the president, they are more likely to support free trade initiatives that the president supports as well.

Ideology and interest group influence will be included in the analysis to control for other actors in legislative decision-making on trade. Ideology is expected to align similarly to party. For example, conservative senators will be more likely to support free trade while liberal ones are less likely to do so. Interest group influence is also aligned with the bases of each party. Business interest contributions are expected to influence Republican and moderate Democratic senators to vote in favor of free trade while labor contributions will decrease the likelihood of liberal Democratic support for a free trade measure.

*Hypothesis 6:*

**H<sub>6</sub>:** Conservative (liberal) senators are more (less) likely to vote in favor of free trade.

*Hypothesis 7:*

**H<sub>7</sub>:** Senators receiving greater contributions from business (labor) PACs are more (less) likely to vote in favor of free trade.

**The Research Design**

Much of the previous scholarly research reviewed within this project considered legislation in the 1990s up until NAFTA. Special consideration was given in this project to legislation representative of trade policy in the period of 2000 to the present. Since 2000, there has been a widening gap between the parties on trade policy (Irwin 2009). In his analysis of congressional trade votes in the U.S. House of Representatives, Douglas Irwin finds that Republicans and Democrats were closest in terms of party share supporting free trade directly after NAFTA; however, since around 2004 with the passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), this gap has been the widest in the modern era of trade politics since 1970 (Irwin 2009, 26). The study at hand focuses on the U.S. Senate in the years 2002 through 2011. This timeframe is conducive to determining whether or not partisanship has become more important than constituency interests. After reviewing Irwin's (2009) study, one would expect the expanding gap between the parties on trade to predict an increased role of partisanship in trade policy. Previous scholarship has focused significantly on the political economy of trade in terms of constituency interest. Studying trade votes over the past decade allows us to examine whether this conventional wisdom regarding constituency-driven trade voting remains true, or if party has played a more significant role since 2000.

To keep the study manageable, five major FTAs were chosen that had sufficient variation between party votes to perform a worthwhile analysis. These particular FTAs

were chosen because they represented votes where several senate dyads by state were of different parties, yet voted the same way at critical points in the bill's life. This variation implies that constituent pressures still play a significant role in the determinations of senators on free trade. If the senators are of the same state and different parties, yet vote the same way, what significant role could party play in those situations?

In focusing on these votes, one is able to zero in on the interplay between party and constituent pressures, a relationship that is at the core of this project's focal research question.

In choosing these pieces of legislation, special consideration was also given to ensuring the most recently approved FTA bills were included. Because a significant body of scholarship does not yet exist analyzing the U.S.-Korea and U.S.-Panama FTAs of 2011, including them is a significant and unique contribution of this study. After the election of 2008, President Barack Obama was faced with handling FTAs that his predecessor, George W. Bush, had negotiated. As Irwin (2009, 27) reports, President Obama and his administration were initially avoiding a "strong stand on the issue for fear that it [would] divide the [Democratic Party]." When House Democrats were in the majority during the early years of the Obama Administration, they were unwilling to consider these agreements, particularly because of their party's close ties to organized labor (Needham 2011). This dissent between leaders of the Democratic Party provides a particularly interesting situation with which to examine the role of the president's party in trade policy votes. While the agreements ultimately passed after Republicans took control of the House of Representatives, one factor of interest in this study is whether Democrats

are more likely to support a Democratic president on free trade than a Republican president.

Finally, the U.S. Senate was chosen as the focus of this study because of its significant differences with the U.S. House and its more easily accessible trade data. The senate also has mixed delegations<sup>3</sup>, which are conducive to controlling for constituency effects to gauge the role of party and ideology. With longer terms and larger, more diverse districts, senators are less accountable than representatives who are up for reelection every two years. Senators have the ability to cater to a wide array of different interests in building reelection coalitions while smaller house districts tie representatives more closely to strong interests within their localities. Since senators are less frequently up for reelection, constituency factors on trade may play a less significant role. It is possible, however, that party pressures are actually weaker in the Senate, since senators can buck their party for their constituents more readily in the freer, less accountable senate environment. This study will determine whether the expanding partisan gap on trade legislation since its peak at CAFTA in the House has carried into the Senate making party a more influential factor than constituent interests.

#### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable in this study assesses the direction of the legislators' votes on five major bills: the U.S.-Andean Free Trade Agreement, the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement, and the U.S.-Panama Free Trade Agreement. On the basis of the roll call information from *Congressional Quarterly*, I constructed the variable *Free Trade Vote* as "1" for a pro-trade 'yea' vote on the agreement in question, and "0"

<sup>3</sup> A mixed delegation is a pairing of senators from the same state who are of different parties.

for a protectionist ‘nay’ vote. There are five hundred initial observations coinciding with 100 senators per Congress per vote. Since there are two votes in the year 2011, 200 observations exist for that year. The votes span from 2002 through 2011.

### *Independent Variables*

#### **Factors Model**

In order to test the constituent pressures at play in the aforementioned votes, I created a data set specifically for state-level economic characteristics. To measure the wealth of constituents in a given state, the state median household incomes were extracted from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey for the respective year of the passage of each FTA. I created the variable *Median Income* to adjust the dollar values to 2011 US dollars. Next, I used the American Community Survey again to collect educational attainment levels by state. I created the variable *Education* for each state by year of legislation. For the purposes of this research, educational attainment is defined as the percent of the state population, 25 years old and over, who have received a bachelor’s degree or higher.

#### **Sectors Model**

To test the sectors model, I constructed two variables, *State Exports to World* and *State Exports to FTA*. The former is the total of merchandise exports from the each state to the world, measured as a percentage of the state’s gross domestic product (GDP) in constant U.S. dollars for comparability across time. I used the International Trade Administration’s database to extract the total exports of all merchandise by state to each trading region and to the world overall. Once these were broken down by state, year of the legislation, and trading region (including the world at-large), two separate variables

were created to capture the export position of each state. First, I collected state gross domestic products (GDP) by year using the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Then, I divided the export figures by the total state GDP to determine the export reliance and position of each state for each year in question depending on the legislation. The final variables *Natural Log of Exports to World* and *Natural Log of Exports to FTA* were created by taking the natural log<sup>4</sup> of the proportion of the state GDP that consists of the state's exports to the world and partner region.

Next, to determine the level of service employment versus blue-collar employment within a state, I created the variable *Services*. This study defines service employment as: information, finance, real estate, professional, scientific, and technical services, management of companies and enterprises, administrative, support, waste management, and remediation services, educational services, health care and social assistance, arts, entertainment, and recreation, accommodation and food services, and other services (except public administration). Sector employment figures were exported from the 2002 and 2007 Economic Census Bureau completed every five years by the U.S. Census Bureau. Service-sector employment is an absolute figure produced by combining the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for service employment. Finally, the total service employment was divided by the total employment of the state to characterize the proportion of constituents with service sector jobs.

## **Unemployment**

As an additional economic indicator unrelated to the two political economy models to be tested, I created the variable *Unemployment* by using the data available

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<sup>4</sup> Unlogged, this variable is highly skewed across states, and its mean is very small (.1202). To highlight the impact of differences at this small scale and not give undue weight to outliers, I used the natural log of this variable.



through the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This variable was computed using the yearly average for unemployment by state per senator.

### **Party and Ideology**

The party of each senator is marked with a “1” for Democrat and “0” for Republican and is indicated by a variable called *Party*. All senators are assigned to a specific party variable depending on the party that they caucus or are most likely to vote with during the time period of the votes<sup>5</sup>. Of related interest is the party of the president. Since legislators may be more inclined to vote in favor of legislation the president of their own party favors, a variable for membership in the party of the president was created. This is a dichotomous variable *Same President* marked with a “1” for membership in the president’s party and “0” for the party not in the White House. The election of President Barack Obama after President George W. Bush frames the question of whether or not senators of different parties in the president are more or less likely to support them. Notably, the 2011 U.S.-South Korea and U.S.-Panama agreements were negotiated by the Bush Administration and supported by the Obama Administration.

To control for ideology, I created the variable *Ideology* by using DW-NOMINATE scores that were produced by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. The first dimension of these scores was used for all senators over the course of their careers to determine their place on the liberal-to-conservative spectrum (Poole and Rosenthal 2007)<sup>6</sup>. Nominatate scores are calculated on a -1 to +1 scale based on legislators’ previous

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<sup>5</sup> Three senators during the period of 2002-2011 switched parties and were defined as “independent.” However, for ease of analysis, each of these senators is defined as a Democrat as they openly caucus with the party. These three senators are Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, and James Jeffords of Vermont.

<sup>6</sup> Due to the use of 112<sup>th</sup> Congress and two major trade agreements that they passed, 13 newly elected freshman senators do not have DW-NOMINATE scores. Their votes were dropped from

votes on bills increasing or decreasing governmental involvement in society. A score of +1 is the most liberal, while a -1 is the most conservative. Members with scores closer to -1 are expected to support free trade positions, while members with scores closer to +1 are expected to be protectionist. Performing a correlation test between the variables *Party* and *Ideology* demonstrated a near perfect correlation between the two. Due to this near-perfect correlation, I created the variables *Democrat Right* and *Republican* to produce variation between ideology and party. By finding a natural break at a DW-NOMINATE score of less than .4 for liberal Democrats and greater than .4 for conservative Democrats, I eliminated collinearity between *Party* and *Ideology*, which allows the model to examine both individually without excluding one or the other due to a high correlation between the two.

### **FIGURE 1 HERE**

These variables provide a substantive split between liberal and conservative members of the Democratic Party who may be opposed or supportive of free trade depending on their ideology.

### **Interest Groups**

The influence of interest groups on trade policy tends to split between business and labor interests. I created two variables for each side by using Influence Explorer powered by OpenSecrets.org, a database that tracks PAC contributions from specific business and labor areas to individual senators<sup>7</sup>. First, I combined donor codes for all

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the PROBIT regression analysis and limited the number of observations. Twelve of these freshman senators are Republicans while one is a Democrat from Connecticut.

<sup>7</sup> 111 and 117 missing observations were found within the data set for labor and business respectively. In order to prevent dropping all of these observations, the minimum value of 8.316 for labor contributions and .783 for business contributions was assigned to each. Regressions

labor and business contributions separately. Contributions to individual senators were then separated by the election cycle of the year when a given FTA was up for a vote<sup>8</sup>.

### TABLE 1 HERE

I created the variables *Natural Log of Labor Contributions* and *Natural Log of Business Contributions* by taking the natural log<sup>9</sup> of total contributions from each group to a given senator in the assigned cycle.

### Analyzing the Results

According to *Congressional Quarterly*, Democrats and Republicans voted in line with their parties ninety percent of the time in 2009 and 2010 (Klein 2012). Using this as a barometer for legislative polarization, a basic analysis of party unity on the votes being analyzed demonstrates trade is at least one anomaly where this intense party unity is not the case. Before analyzing the causal relationships at play here, initial analysis of the descriptive nature of the votes by party demonstrates why the party versus constituency interests puzzle is worth studying. In all of the votes, a clear division exists between Democrats who are not unified on the issue of trade. Table 2 demonstrates that Republicans have 91% party unification on all of the votes while Democrats are split 55% in favor to 45% against.

### TABLE 2 HERE

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were run using both the lowest minimum value and then 0 in place of the missing values; however, no difference in the results existed when using either of the methods.

<sup>8</sup> For the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the previous election cycle corresponding to the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress was used since the 2012 elections had not occurred by the time of this study. Thus, contributions for the 13 newly elected freshmen were dropped as observations.

<sup>9</sup> Unlogged, labor and business PAC contributions were highly skewed amongst senators and relatively small at \$61,866 for labor and \$74,335 for business. To highlight the impact of differences at this small scale and not give undue weight to outliers, I used the natural log of this variable.

As shown in Table 3, the breakdown of votes by Republican, Moderate Democrat, and Liberal Democrat on all of the trade bills is inconclusive in explaining why this variation exists. If ideological fissures within the Democratic Party were entirely culpable for the breakdown of unity, one would expect all liberal Democrats and moderate Democrats to vote with ideologically similar members. This, of course, is not the case according to the vote breakdown.

### **TABLE 3 HERE**

Conventional wisdom and the initial tabulations of vote totals indicate that associations exist between party and voting on trade bills; however, since there is not unity within the liberal or moderate branches of the Democratic Party either, other actors like constituency or interest group influence might be at play. To determine their relative effects on the voting process, a regression model was employed. Summary statistics are outlined in Table 5 of the appendix.

The main model employed provides a good overall fit<sup>10</sup>. With respect to the hypotheses, the model performs well and generally as expected; however, certain variables do not confirm their respective hypotheses. In terms of constituency versus party, the factors and sectors models as well as party variables are statistically significant and substantively important to analyzing the actors at play in trade policy. While service-sector employment was not statistically significant, educational attainment and unemployment in the state are statistically significant and positively correlated with support for free trade. The sectors model variable of exports to the partner region also is statistically significant and predicts a positive correlation with support for free trade.

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<sup>10</sup> It is normal that the model does not explain all of the variation in the sample. Of course, some of the variation in the dependent variable is due to chance or actors not included in the main model.

Party variables for conservative Democrats and Republicans both were statistically significant and positively correlated with support for free trade, as expected. The model predicts that both constituency and party factors influence free trade roll call voting. Party variables appear to be more influential in the process during this timeframe.

#### **TABLE 4 HERE**

Table 4 shows the full results of the probit regression model. Included in the regression are the following independent variables: *Natural Log of State Exports to FTA, Service, Unemployment, Education, Natural Log of Labor Contributions, Natural Log of Business Contributions, Democrat Right, Republican, and Median Income*. As shown in Table 4, the regression model explains 28% of the variation in the dependent variable, *Vote*. The model does predict the vote outcomes better than chance as proven by the Wald chi2 statistic of 116.89 and a p-value of 0.00. According to the classification table to test for goodness of fit, the model correctly predicts 81% of the votes within the dependent variable. Overall, this model predicts that constituency, party, and interest groups influence roll call voting in both statistically and substantively significant ways.

#### **Constituency Hypotheses – Factors and Sectors Models**

*Education* was predicted to be positively correlated with a senator's support for free trade. In the regression model, *Education* is statistically significant, with a z-score of 3.41, and the coefficient is correctly in the positive direction, confirming the hypothesis. The regression demonstrates that education is a strong predictor as an indicator of constituency pressures on trade policy. At the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile value for state educational attainment, the predicted probability is .3346 [.248, .43] of opposition and .665 [.569, .752] of support for free trade legislation, holding all other variables constant at their

sample means. If a senator represents a state at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of educational attainment, the predicted probability increases significantly to .91 [.842, .957]. Moving between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles, the probability of support for free trade legislation within the U.S. Senate increases by approximately 24%. In the most educated states, the likelihood of opposition for free trade is only .09 [.043, .157], as opposed to .33 [.248, .431] for the least educated of states. Clearly, education as an indicator of constituency preferences does affect the vote outcomes of senators on free trade legislation.

#### TABLE 6 HERE

The regression model predicted that *Median Income* has statistically insignificant results. Median income should have a positive coefficient, but instead has negative one contrary to the hypotheses' predictions. These results imply that while education is still an influential constituent factor, median income has not served as an equally potent influence in senate roll call voting. It is clear from the results of this model that more educated voters support free trade. This can be either because more educated voters are likelier to take advantage of freer markets in expanded economies than non-educated voters or due to the support for free trade taught in most college economics courses. Given the statistical insignificance of another factors model variable *Median Income*, it seems the latter is more likely to be the case.

Table 4 shows that the *Natural Log of Exports to FTA* displayed a strong statistical significance in the probit regression model with a z-score of 3.41. Its coefficient was positive as predicted, demonstrating that as exports to a given region from a state increase, so too does the likelihood of support for an FTA. For the states with the lowest level of exports to the partner region, the probability that a senator will support the

agreement is .696 [.622, .764]. As expected, at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, holding all other variables constant at their sample means, the predicted probability of support for the agreement increases to .865 [.806, .912]; however, the increase between the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 90<sup>th</sup> is only .06, indicating that at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, additional exports to the region from the state become less and less influential over the vote. The least export-oriented states' senators are predicted to support free trade only .303 [.236, .377]. Contrarily, the most export-oriented states' senators are only .13 [.007, .194] to oppose those same agreements.

#### **TABLE 7 HERE**

The export-position of a senator's state clearly represents the interests of major, organized business interests within the state as they relate to a given FTA. States in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for both *Education* and *Natural Log of Exports to FTA* have senators that will vote for trade liberalization .89 of the time. Conversely, senators from states in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for both of these variables will vote for trade liberalization .68 of the time. Constituency demands clearly influence senators. Everyday voters who are in the service-sector, high-earners, and are more educated are not often organized even though they do benefit from free trade with lower prices as consumers. Due to collective action issues, their concerns do not as easily get across to senators, which explains why most of the variables representing these types of votes come back statistically insignificant. When it comes to export-orientation, though, business and industry tend to have stronger organization and pressure on senators, especially when they are from the home state of that individual. The results of the regression indicate that constituency demands are still

important and influential, but are often filtered through the business and industry interests of a given state as determined by their ability to export to the partner region in question.

### **Interest Group Hypotheses**

As a control, the model predicts that labor and business interest groups both have statistically significant and substantively important impacts on free trade voting in the Senate. As shown in Table 4, the coefficients of each variable *Natural Log of Labor Contributions* and *Natural Log of Business Contributions* are negative and positive respectively, as predicted. The z-scores of each also demonstrate their statistical significance at -3.22 and 3.12 respectively. Interestingly, the coefficients are the same implying that for each dollar contributed there is an equally potent but opposite effect on senate voting. For senators receiving the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of labor contributions, there is a .105 [.057, .170] probability of opposition for free trade; at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of labor contributions, the probability is similar at .144 [.100, .195], with overlapping confidence intervals. At these levels of labor contributions, senators will oppose FTAs about 90% of the time. However, once labor contributions increase dramatically to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile there is much more significant .336 [.237, .453] chance of opposition, up from only .10 at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of contributions. Interestingly, the 10<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles of labor contributions produce rather similar predicted probabilities; however, senators receiving dramatically more labor contributions are much more likely to oppose free trade.

### **TABLE 8 HERE**

Of course, the opposite story is told when business contributions are considered. For senators receiving the fewest business contributions at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, the probability of support for free trade is .675 [.561, .767]. At the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, this



probability increases to .79 [.753, .842] whereas the senators receiving the greatest level of business contributions at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile are predicted to support free trade .87 [.813, .923] of the time. The difference in effect of labor versus business contributions implies that Republicans require less dramatic increases in contributions to support free trade. Democrats, who receive more labor contributions, do not make a significant jump in the probability of opposition to free trade until the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of contributions. Republicans, who receive more business contributions, are .12 more likely at the 50<sup>th</sup> versus the 10<sup>th</sup> percentiles and .8 more likely between the 90<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles. However, the Democrats only see a jump of .04 between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> percentiles. It is only after the jump between the 90<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles of contributions that significantly increases opposition to free trade by .19.

#### **TABLE 9 HERE**

#### **Party Hypotheses**

The regression model also predicted statistical significance of both party variables *Democrat Right* and *Republican* with z-scores of 5.35 and 7.46 respectively. Each of the variables confirms the hypotheses' predictions, as they are positively correlated with support for free trade. According to the results, more conservative Democrats and Republicans are both more likely to support free trade. *Republican* has a higher coefficient than *Democrat Right*, though, indicating that Republicans are even more likely than conservative Democrats to support free trade, which is in line with the hypotheses. The predicted probability of a moderate Democrat supporting free trade, holding all other variables at their sample means, is .77 [.69, .847] while a Republican is predicted to support free trade with a probability of .931 [.883, .964]. Even the most

conservative Democrats are .16 less likely to support free trade than their Republican counterparts. More liberal Democrats are predicted to support free trade only .372 [.271, .487] of the time and oppose it .627 [.512, .729]. Between liberal Democrats and Republicans, there is a very large .56 difference in predicted probabilities of support. Even more interesting, within the Democratic Party itself, there is a difference of .40 between the predicted probabilities of liberal and conservative Democrats; the potential divide referenced earlier came to fruition in the final outcomes of the votes.

### **TABLE 10 HERE**

The results for party are perhaps most interesting in addressing the research question. While previous scholarship on constituent versus party pressures on free trade voting has found stronger constituent pressures, party and ideological pressures seem to produce more significant predicted probabilities related to free trade votes. Irwin (2009, 27) attributes the “polarization on trade issues in Congress” to organized labor’s opposition to more trade and “heightened political conflict” over the issue. Senate Democratic party leadership was particularly unhelpful in supporting President Obama’s trade bills in 2011. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada was outspoken in his opposition to free trade; as a party leader, Senator Reid was a “strong supporter of organized labor” so his trade positions were closely aligned with their interests to preserve a core constituency’s position within the Democratic Party (Needham 2011). This significant Democratic division was also apparent in the debate over CAFTA, where 10 Democrats and independent Senator James Jeffords of Vermont joined with Republicans for passage. Here, again, Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) joined with his Republican colleague Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL) to support CAFTA while hailing his

state as the U.S.’ “largest exporter to the CAFTA region” (Abrams 2005). These examples point to a divided Democratic Party on trade and a strongly unified Republican Party, which means trade liberalization should continue to occur even if only a small contingent of moderate Democrats join ranks with their Senate Republican colleagues.

In these trade votes, strict partisan voting is not the case; however, clear ideological distinctions within the Democratic Party demonstrate the cross-partisanship of recent trade politics in the U.S. Senate. In *Presidency in a Separated System* (2001), Charles O. Jones outlines several forms of partisanship to characterize inter-party relations between Congress and the president. In this case, he defines cross-partisanship as when an “important segment of one party works with or can be counted on for support by the other party” (Jones 2001, 29). In each of these votes, the Republican Party and President G.W. Bush initiated the FTAs with little help from Democratic Party leadership. As evidence of cross-partisanship, the President and Republicans tried to “gain support from a sufficient segment of the other party to win [the vote]” (Jones 2001, 29). When President Obama was elected, he took on these FTAs as his top trade priorities of his administration and courted moderate Democrats to join the unified Republican Party to gain passage in the Senate.

Insofar as cross-partisanship demonstrates the ability for parties to work together, it seems that the capacity for placing the public interest ahead of partisanship is still alive in the Senate. Irwin (2009) demonstrated the large party polarization of votes in the U.S. House that peaked during the CAFTA debate. The cross-partisan CAFTA vote in the Senate implies that this stark partisanship on trade policy does not exist within the Senate. What is it about the U.S. Senate that helps to break down the partisan division to

form winning coalitions for FTAs in the 2000s? David Karol (2007) writes convincingly on the topic of constituency size and its relation to increase support within the U.S. Senate for trade liberalization. Karol finds that larger size constituencies do not “account for the differences in preferences among House [and] Senate” legislators. Karol controlled for the size of constituency by comparing senators and representatives at-large where in places like North Dakota there was only one representative statewide and two senators. He found that representatives at-large were still less likely than their senate counterparts to vote for free trade, even controlling for constituency size; for some reason, he concluded, senators are more “free-trading” than representatives, and that reason is unrelated to the size of constituency<sup>11</sup>.

The model presented in this research tells a different story, though, as to why senators may be more “free-trading” than their House counterparts, which makes way for unique cross-partisan coalitions in favor of FTAs. As Karol writes, existing theory explains that larger states should be more moderate and smaller more protectionist because a greater diversity of views within larger states forces the senator to moderate their position (2007, 485). In many cases, the final position of senators depends on which constituencies they respond to. Fenno (1978) notes that senators share a “geographical constituency,” but that does not necessarily guarantee they respond to the same state interests. The model presented in this research indicates that export-oriented states are significantly more likely to support free trade. While constituency size alone may not be significant in determining senate free trade support, the level of exports to the partner region and world are. The findings of this study demonstrate that Democrats from export-

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<sup>11</sup> Karol did not definitively answer this question; however, he eliminated constituency size as a potential reason for why senators are more “free-trading” than their U.S. House colleagues.

oriented states, irrespective of constituency size, are more likely than the average Democrat to support free trade. According to Fenno (1978), these Democrats are inclined to support free trade because they are catering to their “re-election constituency,” which may consist of export-oriented manufacturing interests within the state as demonstrated by this model’s conclusions.

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) voted in favor of the FTA with South Korea. Even though Sen. Cantwell is generally viewed as a progressive, she cast her vote in favor of free trade because Washington stood to gain from increased wine and beef sales to the Korean markets as tariffs were reduced (Hotakainen 2012). It is not surprising that Sen. Cantwell also received 35% of her PAC contributions from business compared to a significantly smaller 1% from labor over the most recent five years of tracking according to OpenSecrets.org. In this scenario, Sen. Cantwell, otherwise a progressive Democrat, was influenced by the strong export-oriented pressures within her state to buck the party position and stand with Republicans and President Obama in favor of liberalizing trade through the FTA. Using this smaller case study within the Senate, it is clear that export-domination is one of the most significant constituent pressures on trade policy; it makes way for cross-partisan coalitions that would not otherwise form. Export interests and the attractiveness of business contributions from their re-election constituency to Democrats incentivize their cross-partisan behavior on trade policy according to the findings of this study.

*Natural experiments in the U.S. Senate: controlling for constituency pressures*

In the national U.S. political context, the Senate is the only institution with multiple seats for the same constituency, making it a unique laboratory for holding

constituency pressures constant. That is, some states' contingents in the Senate may include senators of different parties. This is a perfectly suited subset of cases to address one aspect of this project's research question. Namely, to what degree do senators from the same state vote differently on a given piece of trade legislation when they are of different parties? The answer, once national interest group contributions are controlled for, is the best estimate of the joint impact of party and ideology on trade.

To reveal this quantity of interest, I first extracted the subset of states with split party contingents for any one of the five votes combined. Overall, there are 250 total instances of different party, same-state delegations over the range of the votes being considered. Of these, 170 are same-party, same-state examples and 80 of them are opposite party, same state examples. The states included here are ones similar to Louisiana in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress where Senator Mary Landrieu is a Democrat and John Vitter a Republican. Other examples of these delegations include Montana in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress where Senator Max Baucus is a Democrat and Conrad Burns a Republican. To what extent did these split party contingents vote differently? If they did, it must be because of party and ideological differences, not constituency differences.

Table 11 shows the evidence bearing on this question. It draws on a list with one observation per state per vote (for a total of  $5 \times 50 = 250$  observations), grouping those states into one of the two categories in the different rows: both senators are the same party, or they are different. The columns show whether the two senators from each of those states voted the same way on the given legislation, or not. The cells show the frequency counts as row percents. Not surprisingly, states with same-party contingents are more likely to have their senators vote the same way: 84 percent of those cases have

same-votes, although 16 percent nevertheless split their vote. The corresponding figure is twice as high for the 80 split delegations: a split vote results in 35 percent of such cases. However, what is particularly surprising is that in 65 percent of those split delegations, the opposite party senators vote the same way. This is in a context in which, during the 2000s as a whole, elite polarization within Congress has been strong (Abramowitz 2010). However, on trade issues, it seems that crossing party lines lives on and is still possible. The impact of party and ideology here is nevertheless substantial. Moving from the top right cell to the bottom right cell, we more than double the odds of a split vote when constituency demands are kept constant.

#### **TABLE 11 HERE**

The last question here is whether senators of different parties are more likely to vote differently, as revealed above, because they are responding to different weights of national interest group pressure. Holding the state constituency constant does not control for such differences. For example, in Massachusetts, Democratic Senator John Kerry receives 18% of his PAC contributions from labor groups while his counterpart Republican Senator Scott Brown receives 0% from the same groups. To deal with this last confound, I construct a variable assessing the degree to which the state's two senators receive contributions from labor versus business in the same proportion of overall contributions. Specifically, the variable *Contribution Difference* is the absolute value of the difference between one senator's PAC contributions from labor as a share of his or her total PAC contributions from labor plus business, and the other senator's. Then, I estimate a probit model regressing whether the delegation splits its vote as a function of whether that delegation is split by party and the new variable *Contribution Difference*,

shown in Table 12. Interestingly, *Contribution Difference* does not add anything to the basic cross-tabulation analysis of the split votes. The variable in the probit model is statistically insignificant and, if anything, has a negative rather than positive effect. Therefore, the impact of party differences is wholly due to party and ideological differences rather than differences in contributions to each senator from labor and business PACs with varying stakes in trade<sup>12</sup>.

#### TABLE 12 HERE

When analyzing the role of party in trade politics, the president is often a significant actor in any FTA. To capture the relationship between senators and the president at the time of the FTA in question, I created the variable *Same President* to indicate whether or not the senator was of the same party as the president at the time. In the regression, the *Same President* variable was statistically insignificant. This implies that regardless of the party of the president and whether a given senator shares the party or not, there will be no effect on the vote outcome. A statistically significant *Same President* variable would indicate that political gamesmanship was at play in trade voting; Democrats would oppose a Republican president and vice versa solely to deny them a victory and help their own electoral prospects. This indicates that political opposition is not a statistically significant factor in predicting the outcomes of these trade votes. Substantively, though, this speaks to a larger question of whether or not the president can persuade members of the opposing party, or even his own party, to vote for trade legislation.

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<sup>12</sup> The variable *Contribution Difference* tells an interesting story by itself; however, Figure 2 in the appendix shows that, of these split delegations, most nevertheless draw on very similar proportions of labor and business contributions with a mean of 35.38. Therefore, when the delegation is splitting its vote, it is by and large doing so despite the fact that senators on average depend on roughly the same amount of labor and business contributions.



As Ezra Klein notes in his article “George Edwards and the Powerless Presidential Bully Pulpit” in *The New Yorker*, “as the two parties become more sharply divided, it may become increasingly difficult for a President to govern—and there’s little he can do about it,” even if he attempt to persuade via speech-giving. Within the sample of trade votes in this study, President Obama was unable to persuade all members of his own Democratic Party to vote with him on trade legislation. Members of the Democratic Party from its liberal wing voted against his priorities even as he spoke openly and publicly in favor of these FTAs. As with President Bush, Republicans and moderate Democrats were already inclined to vote for this legislation, but not due to the independent effects of bolstering a president of their own party or opposing one of the other for its sake alone.

When President G.W. Bush was in office, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) attacked his administration’s trade priorities in a partisan manner. In an unprecedented move, Pelosi “changed the chamber’s rules [to] suspend consideration of the Colombia pact” in what was largely an obstruction of the President and Republican trade priorities (O’Connor and McGrane 2008). This procedural measure was taken to “effectively gut the intent of the Trade Promotion Authority,” which gives power to the president to negotiate and facilitate wide-ranging free trade relationships around the world (O’Connor and McGrane 2008). With President Obama in office, Republicans are far less likely to partake in partisan gamesmanship to hurt the president on trade given his priorities are aligned with theirs. Given the intensely partisan and competitive nature of most pocketbook issues, one would expect the *Same President* variable to be statistically significant; that Republicans would attempt to hurt a Democratic president and

Democrats a Republican one. While journalistic accounts may imply that this was a factor in the votes of members of Congress, the statistical insignificance of this variable implies otherwise. The model suggests that Democratic Party leadership took this sort of gamesmanship into account when President Bush was in office while the rank-and-file members did not; however, Republicans, in a moment of alignment with President Obama also refrained from attempting to hurt him politically. On trade policy in the 2000s, this study finds that the party of the president did not factor into senators' decision-making.

### **Conclusion and Opportunities for Future Research**

This research yielded interesting results about the U.S. Senate decision-making on trade policy over the past decade. Compared to previous research, it seems the factors model has become less important relative to the sectors model; the export-orientation of a district was strongly significant in the probit regression model, while other factors-based variables were not statistically significant. Kingdon's (1989) model remains a strong framework to examine which actors are influential within legislative decision-making; however, on trade, not all actors are equally potent. Party alone is not enough to predict the outcome of vote because of the significant divide within the Democratic Party on trade. When one examines more closely the interest group influence within states of export-oriented constituent manufacturers, the electoral incentive of senators becomes clearer. Election-minded senators look to support the interests of their state even if that means bucking their party, as many moderate Democrats did to form a cross-partisan coalition for passage on FTAs in the 2000s.

As far as interest group influence, the variables for both labor and business interests demonstrate the strong alignment of each with the base of the Democratic and Republican Party respectively. While the influence of each dollar was roughly the same for both types of interest groups, labor dollars influenced protectionist voting, and business dollars the reverse. When the difference in labor and business dollars was controlled for while using same-state senate delegations as natural experiments, party and ideology were shown to play a significant role in trade policy. Senators from the same states—to control for constituency—and of different parties were twice as likely to have opposing votes on the FTAs. The results of using the same-state delegations as natural experiments is to show the possibility that senators of opposing parties can vote the same way on trade. Even though many instances of this occur within this sample of votes, the odds of same-state delegations voting differently when only their party is changed double; this demonstrates that while cross-partisan behavior on trade is possible, party and ideology still play a significant role when controlling for constituent interests.

This research does not answer all questions pertaining to trade policy within the U.S. Congress, though. Several other areas of interest and potential research questions arose while analyzing the findings of the regression model. Specifically, how strong are the export-oriented constituency pressures in U.S. House districts? Due to the districts' smaller size, are manufacturers and business interests in export-dominated House districts able to disproportionately influence their representatives to support them regardless of party? Conversely, do the institutional differences between the Senate and the House—like shorter terms for House members—allow for the break down of cross-partisanship?

These questions can be addressed by performing a similar analysis using Kingdon's framework on the U.S. House from 2002 to 2011.

Throughout the study, questions of the influence of party leadership also garnered interest. Given that party leadership is one of the actors within Kingdon's model of legislative decision-making, how do the priorities of party leadership on trade policy affect the outcome of the vote? Further, while the president's party does not seem to have much of an effect on the outcome of voting, does the institution of the presidency play an oppositely potent role in influencing legislators and their decision-making? When dealing with a complex and controversial topic like trade policy, there are many interesting approaches to take to clarify how legislators determine how and why to vote for or against FTAs. Hopefully, further research will build off the conclusions of this study and continue to elucidate trade decision-making in the U.S. Congress and for individual legislators.

## Appendices

**Table 1: Interest Group PAC Codes for OpenSecrets.org**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Labor	LA100, LB 100, LC100, LC150, LD 100, LE100, LE200, LG000, LG200, LG300, LG400, LG500, LH100, LM150, LT000, LT200, LT300, LT400, LT500, LT 600, L500
Business	G0000, G1000, G1100, G1200, G1300, G1310

**Table 2: Vote Breakdown by Party: All Votes**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Nay (percent)</i>	<i>Yea (percent)</i>
Democrat	106 (44.7%)	137 (55.23%)
Republican	20 (8.23%)	187 (91.77%)

*Table 2A: Central American FTA*

<i>Party</i>	<i>Nay (percent)</i>	<i>Yea (percent)</i>
Democrat	33 (33%)	11 (11%)
Republican	12 (12%)	43 (43%)

*Table 2B: Australian FTA*

<i>Party</i>	<i>Nay (percent)</i>	<i>Yea (percent)</i>
Democrat	14 (14%)	32 (32%)
Republican	2 (2%)	48 (48%)

*Table 2C: Andean FTA*

<i>Party</i>	<i>Nay (percent)</i>	<i>Yea (percent)</i>
Democrat	25 (25%)	25 (25%)
Republican	5 (5%)	41 (41%)

*Table 2D: Panama FTA\**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Nay (percent)</i>	<i>Yea (percent)</i>
Democrat	20 (27%)	31 (43%)
Republican	0 (0%)	21 (29%)

*Table 2E: South Korea FTA\**

<i>Party</i>	<i>Nay (percent)</i>	<i>Yea (percent)</i>
Democrat	12 (17%)	37 (52%)
Republican	1 (1%)	21 (29%)

\*The Panama and South Korea FTAs were recalculated with the 13 excluded and newly elected senators from the 2010 election cycle.

**Table 3: Vote Breakdown by Party and Ideology: All Votes**

Party/Ideology	Nay	Yea	Total
Liberal Democrat	68	48	116
Moderate Democrat	38	89	127
Republican	20	197	217

**Table 4: Probit Regression Model of Free Trade Vote**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>
Natural Log of Exports to FTA	0.155**	(0.045)
Service	-0.010	(0.012)
Unemployment	0.156**	(0.050)
Education	0.073**	(0.021)
Natural Log of Labor Contributions	-0.129**	(0.040)
Natural Log of Business Contributions	0.128**	(0.041)
Democrat Right	1.080**	(0.201)
Republican	1.832**	(0.245)
Same President	-0.148	(0.171)
Median Income	-0.026	(0.111)

Number of observations: 460

Wald chi2: 116.89

Pseudo R2: .2816

\* $p < .05$       \*\* $p < .01$

Code:

1 = Pro-trade vote

0 = Protectionist vote

**Table 5: Summary Statistics**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Observations</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Natural Log of Exports to FTA	500	-3.129	1.650	-10.426	.462
Service	500	42.532	6.934	27.261	65.023
Unemployment	500	6.314	2.080	2.8	13.5
Education	500	26.949	4.795	15.1	39
Natural Log of Labor Contributions	467	8.872	2.284	5.521	14.171
Natural Log of Business Contributions	468	8.470	2.144	5.521	15.555
Democrat Right	472	.277	.448	0	1
Republican	500	.498	.500	0	1
Same President	500	.514	.500	0	1
Median Income	500	56996.790	10425.980	37985	85478.070

**Table 6: Predicted Probabilities for *Education***

<i>Percentile</i>	Pr (Oppose)	Pr (Support)
10 <sup>th</sup>	.204 [.158, .251]	.795 [.748, .842]
50 <sup>th</sup>	.219 [.172, .269]	.780 [.731, .828]
90 <sup>th</sup>	.092 [.045, .156]	.907 [.843, .954]

**Table 7: Predicted Probabilities for *Natural Log of Exports to FTA***

<i>Percentile</i>	Pr (Oppose)	Pr (Support)
10 <sup>th</sup>	.304 [.225, .389]	.695 [.610, .774]
50 <sup>th</sup>	.198 [.153, .245]	.801 [.755, .847]
90 <sup>th</sup>	.135 [.086, .192]	.865 [.808, .913]

**Table 8: Predicted Probabilities for *Natural Log of Labor Contributions***

<i>Percentile</i>	Pr (Oppose)	Pr (Support)
10 <sup>th</sup>	.204 [.158, .251]	.795 [.748, .842]
50 <sup>th</sup>	.210 [.164, .256]	.789 [.743, .835]
90 <sup>th</sup>	.339 [.244, .446]	.660 [.553, .755]

**Table 9: Predicted Probabilities for *Natural Log of Business Contributions***

<i>Percentile</i>	Pr (Oppose)	Pr (Support)
10 <sup>th</sup>	.326 [.233, .431]	.673 [.569, .766]
50 <sup>th</sup>	.201 [.155, .248]	.798 [.751, .844]
90 <sup>th</sup>	.123 [.070, .193]	.876 [.806, .929]

**Table 10: Predicted Probabilities for *Party and Ideology***

<i>Percentile</i>	Pr (Oppose)	Pr (Support)
Liberal Democrat	.627 [.518, .734]	.372 [.265, .481]
Moderate Democrat	.226 [.153, .310]	.773 [.690, .847]
Republican	.070 [.037, .116]	.929 [.884, .963]

**Table 11: Different Party Delegations of Same States**

<i>Different Parties</i>	<i>Same Vote</i>	<i>Different Vote</i>	<i>Total</i>
Same	142 (83.53%)	26 (16.47%)	170 (100%)
Opposite	52 (65.00%)	28 (35.00%)	80 (100%)
Total	194 (77.60%)	56 (22.40%)	250 (100%)

**Table 12: Regression of *Different Party* and Difference in Labor/Business Contributions**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>
Different Party	.655**	.2229
Contribution Absolute Difference	-.303	.2495

\* $p < .05$       \*\* $p < .01$

Number of observations: 184

Wald chi2: 10.06

Pseudo R2: .0487

**Figure 1: Ideological Breakdown of All Senate Roll Call Votes in Sample**

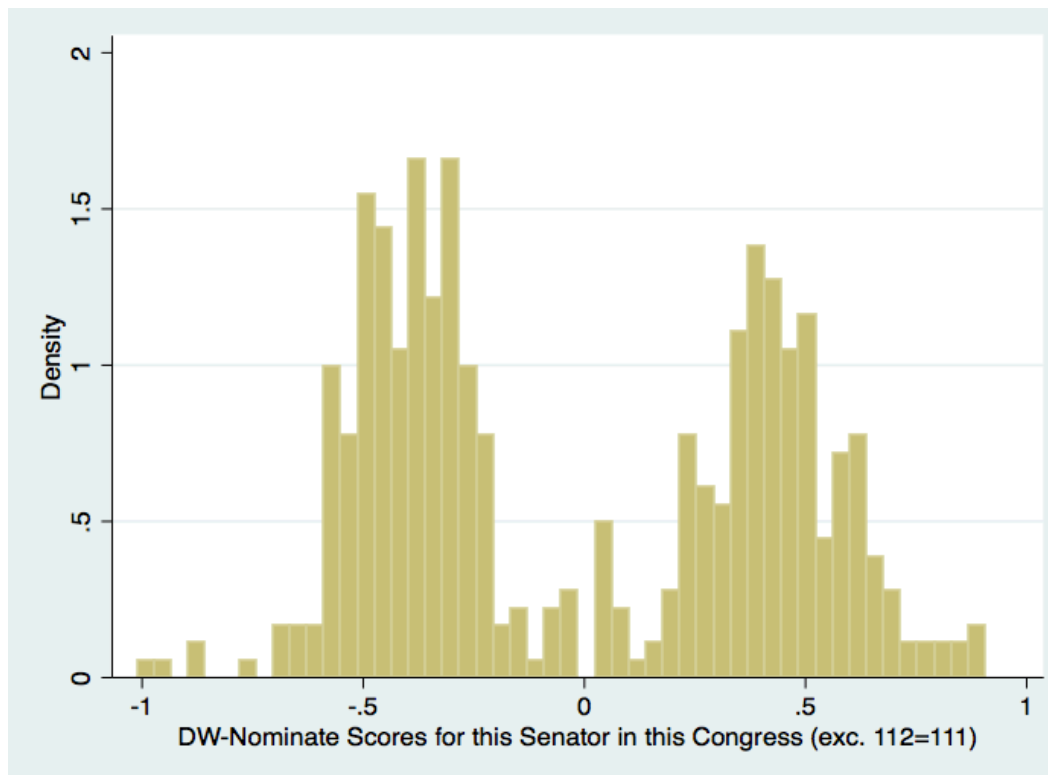
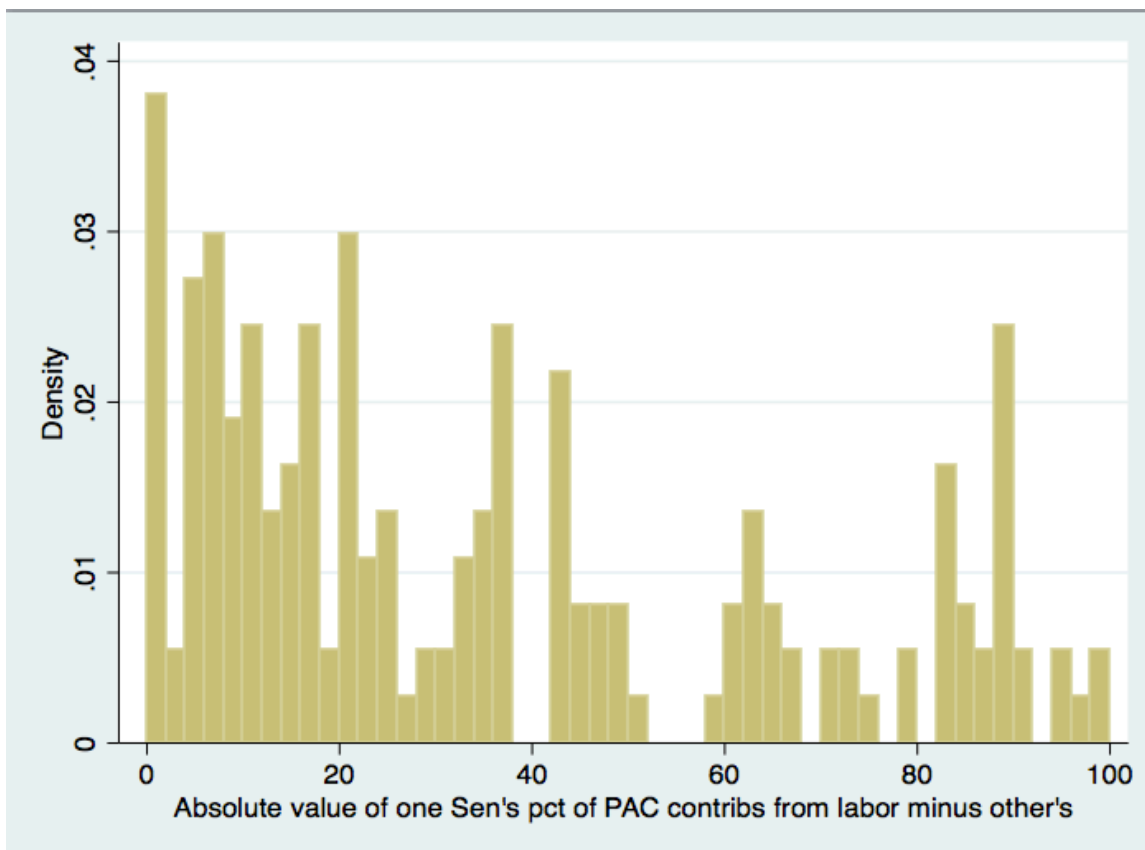




Figure 2: Breakdown of the *Contribution Difference* between senators



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