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Rebecca Berge, 15 April 2014

I Am Somebody: Do Legislator Descriptive Characteristics Help Explain Representation of
Low-Income Constituents, A Marginalized Subgroup?

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Abstract

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The purpose of this project is to determine the extent to which personal legislator attributes such as race and gender influence their positions on representative behavior. I hypothesize that, because of the consistency with which race in America has been a mechanism for transmission of various social disadvantages, and because of the overrepresentation of racial minorities among low-income populations, racial minority legislators will be more likely to support economic policies benefiting low-income constituents. Further, of the groups studied racial minority female legislators will be most likely to support such policies. This study draws data from Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri state governments, and models of roll call voting behavior are compared. This is accomplished by modeling the relationship between individual legislator behavior and “identity” factors such as legislator race-gender, and district factors such as majority-minority status, educational attainment, and unemployment rate. However, legislator party was the only consistently significant predictor of roll call voting behavior across models. While some statistical evidence emerged to support the limited claim that minority race-gender legislators in these states are more likely to vote in the interest of low-income people, legislator party mediated the effects of race-gender identity.

I Am Somebody

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There are many pleasant fictions of the law in constant operation, but there is not one so pleasant or practically humorous as that which supposes every man to be of equal value in its impartial eye, and the benefits of all laws to be equally attainable by all men, without the smallest reference to the furniture of their pockets.

—Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*

Theory

In an ideally representative democracy, every individual's interests is taken into consideration in equal measure by elected officials who have been popularly chosen to represent them in political office. According to Melissa S. Williams (1998), "liberal representation" is made up of two complementary ideas: the principle of "one person, one vote," where every citizen is allowed one vote, and each vote has equal weight; and interest-group pluralism, by which groupings of like-minded citizens organize and agitate for their views to be incorporated in the political agenda. The former idea is exemplified by the judicial principle of "one person, one vote," a phrase that originated in the U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Gray v. Sanders* (1962) and generally in the Apportionment Cases. Interest group pluralism is the idea that any group of people can register their interest in a cause by devoting time, money, and enthusiasm to its realization. One clear advantage of this system is a minority can triumph over the tyranny of the majority when their fervent interests are at stake. "Liberal representation" is the dominant American conception of fair and equal representation (Williams 1998, 57).

But this logic contains a false premise. It is not true that any group of people can influence politicians in more than a quotidian way, because not every person has time, money, and enthusiasm to devote to causes larger than themselves. Political participation is unequal across discrete population groups. And, as political scientist E. E. Schattschneider famously noted in 1960, there is a fatal flaw in the pressure system, the second time in the bifurcated

definition of liberal democracy: “the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent” (Schattschneider 1960, 35). There is bias in the pressure system. Thus, the dominant American conception of fair and equal representation confronts the *de facto* inequality of American society. The failing of proponents of liberal representation is their assumption that a representational theory is just, given an impartial system: that entrenched social inequality and resulting unequal political outcomes are of no concern (Williams 1998, 76). In this paper, I add to the body of political science research that explores unequal representation related to economic class.

This is the question of Who Governs – in favor of the poor, when their interests conflict with those of the rich (Dahl 1961). Is there a particular kind of legislator who will be more sympathetic to the exigencies of the lower economic classes? More specifically, are advocates for the poor effectively sorted along partisan lines, or could particular personal characteristics serve as additional cues for low-income voters?

A key contribution of this project is that it extends research linking substantive and descriptive representation to state level politics. I use original data sets of roll call votes and bill introductions from three states to test the influence of intersectional race-gender identities on representative behavior as it relates to the low-income, a marginalized subgroup within the electorate. This project is also innovative in that it tests the notion that minority race-gender legislators, by virtue of some shared experience of marginalization, are preferable descriptive representatives of an economic minority class.

The Poor as a Minority

Almost by definition, people who are poor are disadvantaged in American society. Economic status is mutable; an onlooker cannot certainly determine someone’s economic status. Think of Mark Twain’s classic story, *The Prince and the Pauper*, in which Prince Edward VI of

England and a pauper named Tom switch lives by swapping clothes, and no one notices the difference. Also, economic status is temporal. The class of people who fall into the lower echelons of the economic hierarchy have some ability to rise. The poor have the relative ability to re-define themselves in terms of their level of advantage (i.e., to make money).

This possibility of re-definition is the concept of social mobility, which is at the heart of the American Dream. Capitalism is a competition, and everyone jockeys for position. Winning is contingent on performing well. Conversely, “losing” is just the other side of the coin: economic hardship is chalked up to laziness or inability to perform, and accepted as part of the way things work (Bartels 2008b, 297). Part and parcel of this conception of the American Dream is the stigma that is attached to the economically unsuccessful.

Americans were asked to express their feelings about different social groups in the American National Election Studies using a “feeling thermometer” scale ranging from zero to 100, with zero signifying “cold” feelings and 100 signifying “warm” feelings. Between the years 1998 and 2010, Americans who were asked to rate their feelings toward “Middle Class People,” “People on Welfare,” and “Poor People” expressed average ratings of 66, 54, and 70 for these groups, respectively (ANES 1998-2010). Why the 16-point divide between “poor people” and welfare recipients? People who are not only poor, but have the gall to ask for aid from the economic system to which they contribute minimally, are inevitably judged harshly.

Americans tend to lend credence to the view of a “judicious sorting out of the worthy by the American marketplace” (Piven and Cloward 1977, 43). Less acknowledged is the fact that redefinition is not at-will, nor even always possible. According to a recent Pew study, part of the organization’s Economic Mobility Project, “[t]hose born at the top and bottom of the income ladder are likely to stay there as adults. More than 40 percent of Americans raised in the bottom

quintile of the family income ladder remain stuck there as adults, and 70 percent remain below the middle” (Urahn, et. al. 2012). All men are not created equal from an economic standpoint. The injustice of it is that inequality persists, giving lie to the hope for economic mobility. Given the choice, of course, citizens would opt to be born into an advantaged group. Most would recognize the social advantages of being born in to the family of a film executive, for example, over being born into a dying coal-mining town in Appalachia.

These qualities of economic disadvantage – that poverty is in some ways involuntary, and that it is a socially undesirable characteristic – lend credence to a view of “the poor” as a marginalized subpopulation. Economic status is recognized in social science literature as a notable attribute of a population, and is often used as an independent variable in models of political opinion (for example, see Griffin and Newman 2008, chapter 5 for a comparison of opinion gaps due to SES and to race). The designation of “group” makes sense in that “economically disadvantaged” or “poor” is a status designation, even where it has yet to be argued that this group possesses any measure of internal cohesion or class-awareness in American politics.

As a minority social group, “the poor” are related to other marginalized groups not only by experiences of subordination to majority interests but by circumstance as well. The poor, as a group, are disproportionately made up of women and racial minorities. Since economic unsuccess is nearly the definition of disadvantage, it is unsurprising that poverty is often a marker of the marginalization of other ascriptive groups. For example, when distinguishing people by gender, males are still advantaged over females in many contexts (Lorber 1994), and oft-cited evidence of this is disparity in earnings between women and men. In 2011, white female full-time wage and salary workers made around 82 percent as much as their male counterparts

(USDL 2012). Further evidence of the economic vulnerability of women is the “feminization of poverty,” the observation that women are overrepresented among those living in poverty (Reingold 2000, 23).

Likewise, “race continues to signify difference and structural inequality,” with whites advantaged over blacks (Omi and Winant 1994, 57). Common examples of “the strong and persistent correlation between race and economic status in American society” (Bartels 2008b, 68) are the unemployment rate among blacks, which in 2011 was about double the unemployment rate for whites, and black household income, which was on average only 59 percent of white household income (Pew 2013). In their 1995 evaluation of civic voluntarism in American politics, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady were careful to establish their portrayal of participatory differences among the races as largely rooted in class differences: “Just as important as recognizing that inequalities in activity are not a function of being black or Latino is the fact of inequalities” (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 523-4). Omi and Winant, in contrast to Verba, Schlozman, and Brady’s mere observation of their coincidence, point to ties between class and race: “We consider, on the contrary, that the fate of the black middle class system remains tied to the lower class precisely through racial dynamics which are structured into the U.S. economy, culture, and politics” (Omi and Winant 1994, 28).

Martin Gilens goes a step further in this line of reasoning: In his book *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (1999), he explores the implicit racial politics of antipoverty policy. Gilens analyzes public opinion data in an attempt to explain the negative opinions of welfare held by the majority of Americans -- even among those who would support measures to increase spending for other welfare state programs. He finds that Americans generally have an exaggerated idea of the proportion of blacks on welfare rolls, and that Americans stereotype blacks as lazy. And,

since lazy people are undeserving of public sponsorship, many Americans have reservations about the deservingness of welfare recipients (Gilens 1999). Ange-Marie Hancock (2004) adds to Gilens' work by examining the intersectional marginalization of black women in antipoverty policy as evident in the stereotype-laden rhetoric of U.S. Congressmen debating the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 on the floor of the House (Hancock 2004).

Representation of Minority Groups: Descriptive and Substantive Representation

Do politicians differentially represent their constituents according to economic class? The relationship between affluence and influence that accounts for political inequality further exacerbates social disadvantage. While Ellis (2013) attributes differential attention to the greater visibility and relevancy of the affluent, Gilens (2005) speculates that this differential attention comes from the willingness of high-income Americans to donate to parties, candidates, and interest organizations. (Their willingness of course assumes their ability to do so.) However it occurs, the end result is that a representative might not have a clear view of the interests of his constituents. There is reason to suspect that a "politician's-eye view" of his constituency might be subject to distortions that are generally unfavorable to the interests of the poor (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 193).

The hypothesis that elected officials are more likely to respond to the political preferences of the affluent is not new, and a sizeable body of work is devoted to the documentation of evidence of favoritism of the relatively well-off (see, for example, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Gilens 2005; Bartels 2008b; Griffin and Newman 2008; but see Ura and Ellis 2008). Politicians do favor rich constituents over poor ones.

More recent work undertakes to address the question of why biases in representation exist. For example, Griffin and Flavin (2011) show that African American and Latino groups

prioritize different “spheres of representation” than whites, referring to the means by which policymakers represent the political opinions of these groups. They posit differences among these groups as a partial explanation for disparities in substantive representation between racial and economic groups: when scholars measure “substantive representation” in terms of roll call votes, for example, they are measuring a “sphere of representation” valued more highly by whites than by Latinos or African Americans, who may judge effective representation instead by the share of federal contract money that the district receives (Griffin and Flavin 2011). Ellis (2013) argues that the poor will be better-represented in certain circumstances: namely, in electorally competitive districts, in districts with low median incomes, where there is a relatively equal distribution of incomes, where there is a significant organized labor presence, and where they are represented by a Democrat (these factors to varying degrees).

It is clear that it only makes sense to talk about differential attention by elected officials where preferences actually differ across levels of economic advantage. To this end, recent research has established that “the disadvantaged speak with a distinctive voice” (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 227; but see Soroka and Wlezien 2008) – at least in some salient policy areas (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, Gilens 2005, Gilens 2009), and at least while circumstances of economic hardship persist (Margalit 2013).

The discussion thus far has been with regards to substantive representation, or representation of *interests* or *ideas*. To theorist Hanna Pitkin, representation “in the substantive sense” means “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin 1967, 209). Again, according to liberal theories of representation, the physical presence (or, as Pitkin called it, descriptive representation) of particular groups among elected officials is an

unconnected idea. People are capable of empathy, and ideally identity itself does not impose boundaries on intellect, or the range of views that can be held.

A redistributive approach to public policy concerning the economy is associated with the Democratic Party platform, much more so than that of the Republicans (Bartels 2008b). It could be that “representation” of a particular policy would mean simply to hold the same opinion of it as a preponderance of concerned constituents. In this case, the assumption is that a Democrat would be more likely to favor a redistributive economic policy than a Republican would, regardless of the personal experiences or identity of the individual elected officials in question.

It is nonetheless reasonable to be suspicious about liberals’ ideals of perfect objectivity. In an argument for descriptive representation, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) posit that sympathetic educated liberals will be less-consistent allies of the poor than those with direct experiences of the exigencies of that population, due to their “stockpile of other participatory concerns” (414). Anne Phillips, in her 1995 meditation on the issue of descriptive representation, makes the point that it is difficult to trust outsiders to represent group interests before their own. This is one reason why “[t]he politics of ideas is being challenged by an alternative politics of presence” (Phillips 1995, 5).

Suzanne Dovi (2002) agrees with Jane Mansbridge (1999) in arguing that there are contingent conditions under which a descriptive representative of a dispossessed subgroup is preferable to a representative who is not descriptively representative, and adds that further research should specify criteria for identifying *preferable* descriptive representatives. She offers one criterion: that preferable descriptive representatives will have strong mutual relationships with dispossessed subgroups. However, as Dovi warns, “One should not assume that class ‘perspectives’ are necessarily better represented if ethnicity, race, and gender are better

represented in legislatures” (Dovi 2002, 740), pointing to research underscoring economic heterogeneity within minority groups.

There is literature that links minority group descriptive representation with policy outcomes benefiting distinctive minority groups. For example, Kerry L. Haynie (2001) found that black legislators were more active in agenda setting in terms of legislation benefiting black socioeconomic well being in education and welfare policy (Haynie 2001, 29). Beth Reingold and Adrienne R. Smith note ample evidence to suggest that female legislators, especially blacks and Latinas, are more active advocates for poor women (Reingold and Smith 2012). Additionally, according to Richard Preuhs (2007), state legislatures respond to the inclusion of Latino members with increases in statewide welfare expenditures and benefits. A slightly different explanation for these observations is race-gender minority legislators are more likely to promote legislation concerning specific issues that benefit the poor.

So, could representation by a racial minority woman serve as a vehicle for substantive representation of the poor in legislatures? This idea might rest more on a legislator’s sense of poverty as an important issue among minority communities than on a legislator’s personal experience of poverty as an ascriptive minority. The hypothetical mechanism for improved representation of the economically disadvantaged could thus be called a “strong mutual relationship” between the disadvantaged group and the preferable descriptive representative.

A “strong mutual relationship” might also include an elected official’s sense of sympathy for a group beyond that which is required in connection with the group’s influence over the official’s chances for reelection (although, as Ellis 2013 found, electoral competitiveness is a context in which the voice of the poor is louder than otherwise). Voting is the least information rich form of political communication between an elected official and a constituent – surely a

group of voters broadly in support of a candidate do not communicate support for particular policies in their votes for her. Perhaps, then, other sources of mutual understanding enrich the relationship of a preferable descriptive representative with her constituents.

It stands to be repeated that the very need for the proxy of race or gender is predicated on the assumption that the poor, by virtue of a costly and selective campaign process, are not descriptively represented in legislatures: elected representatives being “not descriptively representative of the population as a whole, but instead more likely to be well-educated and well-heeled, of the dominant racial or ethnic extraction, and male” (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 166; and see Carnes 2012). However, the legislator can have previous personal experience of economic hardship, prior to recruitment and candidacy. Moreover, the call for descriptive representation rests on establishing a connection between a representative’s official presence and “better representation” of groups ordinarily at a seeming political disadvantage.

Hypothesis

Is it true that differential inputs cause differential outputs, or is it that something gets lost in the “translation” of input into output? In other words, is a different bias introduced by the legislator, in the process of representation? The purpose of this study is to determine whether legislators with different personal characteristics differentially represent groups of constituents.

Gilens (2005) notes that the most prevalent approach to analyzing the link between public preferences and government behavior is to consider “dyadic representation,” referring to the relationship between constituency and legislator. The alternative to dyadic representation is “collective representation,” referring to the relationship between population and legislature (Griffin and Newman 2008, 68). The scope of this paper is further narrowed to measuring the dyadic relationship between constituent preferences and individual legislator behavior rather than

making any further logical jump to *collective* legislature behavior. Thus the question will be, To what extent do a legislator's ascriptive characteristics serve as accurate cues for the kind of legislation that she will promote? The hypothesis is that the identity group sympathies of a representative are an independent factor that influences "representation." I expect that race and gender minorities will be most active in representing the interests of their poor and working-class constituents.

In their comparison of black and white state legislators, Button and Hedge (1996) cite Herring (1990) and Nelson (1991) in stating that "black legislators appear to be most concerned with the broad policy areas of redistribution of wealth, including social welfare, civil rights and liberties, and issues with overt racial components (Button and Hedge 1996, 200; see also Bratton and Haynie [1999], Haynie [2001], Canon [1999], et. al).

Specifically, blacks, Latinos, and women (including, of course, black women and Latinas) will be the best advocates for the economically disadvantaged. In support of this hypothesis, Reingold and Smith (2012) cite Fraga, et. al (2008) in suggesting that black women or Latinas may be "uniquely positioned to leverage the intersectionality of their ethnicity and gender" in ways that enable them "to be the most effective long-term advocates on behalf of working-class communities of color" (Fraga, et. al. 2008, 158). Similarly, Gay and Tate (1998) theorize that "gender identification... should enhance the liberal effect of race on black policy attitudes" (Gay and Tate 1998, 172).

However, it may be more reasonable to expect women and racial minority legislators to represent relatively advantaged members of their respective groups. A useful parallel can be drawn here to Dara Strolovitch's (2007) qualifications of intersectionality in interest group politics. For example, women and blacks affected by welfare policy belong to an economically

disadvantaged class within their respective populations. Strolovitch points out the substantive difference between organizations representing minorities that nonetheless “replicate cleavages within marginal groups that exist in larger society” and those that successfully harness a sense of “intersectionally linked fate,” with “the understanding that their interests are bound up with the well-being of intersectionally disadvantaged constituents” (Strolovitch 2007, 11-12).

It is notable that there is an association between race and party. In their study of the role of personal attributes in African American roll call voting behavior in Congress, Rocca, Sanchez, and Nikora noted that “virtually all black MCs in [their] data [we]re from Democratic districts” (Rocca, Sanchez, and Nikora 2009, 410), a pattern that I expect will hold on the state legislative level. Additionally, recent research has reaffirmed the partisan gap among women state legislators. Elder (2012) notes a growing partisan gap among women in state legislatures, concluding that “recent gains for women have been driven exclusively by Democrats, while progress for Republican women has actually declined” (Elder 2012, 65).

Additionally, liberal economic policies such as increased welfare spending are identified with the Democratic Party. Liberals identify increasingly with the Democratic Party, and conservatives identify increasingly with the Republican Party (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008). Relevant to this study, Bafumi and Shapiro (2009) observed “sustained if not growing ideological and partisan differences on... longstanding domestic welfare issues (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). It may well be that Democratic representatives are most likely to support economic legislation benefiting the economically disadvantaged. Due to disproportionate identification of women and racial minorities with the Democratic Party, and the effect of ideology on support for redistributive economic policies, it is necessary to control for party in order to measure the additional effects of ascriptive group identification.

The null hypothesis is that a legislator's ascriptive characteristics do not, on their own, account for legislative behavior that serves to advantage constituent groups according to class. In other words: although differential representation of constituency groups by economic class may occur, it is due to majority presence of the group in the population or keenest interest in a particular policy by that group among all groups, and not due to the additional influence of the identity and group sympathies of the representative. The alternative hypothesis will find support inasmuch as there are substantive benefits for economically disadvantaged groups when they are represented by legislators from minority ascriptive groups. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis will be thrown out if there are no significant benefits of "sympathetic group" descriptive representation other than those which are attributable to political party affiliation.

The representativeness of individual elected officials, in terms of outcome, is measured by bill introductions or roll call votes rather than by policies enacted because of the uncertain link between constituency preference and a legislator's influence on the *legislative process* that generates policy. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the institutional mechanisms that might account for the impact of individual elected officials within a legislature. This being the case, this paper will consider the representative behavior of individual elected officials rather than policy changes when measuring responsiveness.

Methods

One way in which this project is unique is that analysis will be limited to state legislatures. A preponderance of studies measure the effects of various kinds of descriptive representation in the U.S. Congress (for example, as referenced above, see Bartels [2005], Gilens [2005], and Soroka and Wlezien [2008] for studies of Congress; but for an example of a study of

state legislatures, see Reingold 2000), largely for practical reasons. For example, in their study of the extent to which the personal attributes of black U.S. Representatives influence their ideological positions on votes, Rocca and his colleagues are able to take advantage of Poole and Rosenthal's DW-Nominate data (Rocca et. al. 2009). However, in measuring independent variables for race-gender with the unit of analysis being the individual legislator, there should be more variation on the state level than on the national level. Rocca's study incorporates eight congressional terms and tracks the voting records of 66 black MC's, whereas my study incorporates four chambers over a single term – and includes 73 black representatives.

The analysis will focus on data from multiple state legislatures, namely Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri. These legislatures are all fairly large (and have remained so at least since the legislative session in question) – there are 56 Senate members and 180 House of Representatives members in the current Georgia General Assembly, 47 Senate members and 141 House of Delegates members in the current Maryland General Assembly, and 34 Senate members and 163 House of Representatives members in the current Missouri General Assembly. Anticipating the determinative effect party control may have in constraining legislative agendas (Lawrence, et. al. 2006), and given the expected relationship of partisanship and economic policy liberalism, I have purposely selected a Democrat-controlled legislature and two Republican-controlled ones. Georgia is a Southern state while Missouri and Maryland might be called “border-South states.” Also, while in Georgia and Maryland legislatures and the Governor's seat were controlled by the same party for the time period 2009-2010, control was split in Missouri between a Republican-majority legislature and Democratic Governor Jay Nixon.

Relevant to my independent variable, I have chosen to focus my analysis on states in which nonwhites and women are well represented within the legislature. Due in part, of course,

to the large absolute size of their lower houses, Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri have high numbers of race and gender minorities in comparison to other states – and also comparatively high numbers of race-gender minorities, especially black women (Reingold, Haynie, and Bratton 2013).

In order to answer the questions about the representation of constituent groups, it is necessary first to determine interests particular to them. Since the group of concern is defined by its economic disadvantage, it is most relevant to consider group economic interests. Bartels (2008a) observes that the poor and middle-class, like blue-collar workers, attach more weight to economic issues than to social issues relative to the rich (Bartels 2008a). Additionally, Gilens (1999) measures differences among income cohorts in opinion on spending for federal welfare programs, with the lowest income group most supportive of increased spending (Gilens 1999).

Legislation for the Low-Income

In the same way that the economically *advantaged* are not all businessmen, it is of course true that the economically disadvantaged are not all workers. Larry Bartels concedes that his own definition of the “working class,” the bottom third of the income distribution, includes groups like young people and old people, “many of whom are not truly the working poor” (Bartels 2008a). He analyzes population subgroups defined by income cohort in his 2008 book, *Unequal Democracy*, organizing economic interests by common economic status.

Mansbridge (1999) cautions “this vicarious portrayal of the experience of others by those who have not themselves had those experiences is often not enough to promote effective deliberation” (Mansbridge 1999, 635). However, in his article “Homer Gets a Tax Cut,” Bartels (2005) uses the example of support for the 2001 Bush tax cuts, which “was widely criticized for providing too much tax relief to the wealthy and too little to the middle class and the working

poor” (Bartels 2005, 19; see also Carnes 2012). The measures still found a wide base of support – even among those who did not stand to benefit from selective tax rate decreases. Gilens (2012) relates legal philosopher Denise Meyerson’s concept of “false consciousness” to the idea that disadvantaged people accept and profess to hold beliefs encouraged by “the segments of society that are advantaged by existing arrangements” (Gilens 2012, 25). To the extent that “policy preferences” of a disadvantaged group can be attributed to the social influence of the advantaged group: even if there existed survey data regarding the self-reported policy interests of constituents of legislative districts in these selected states that could be disaggregated by income stratum, it is still arguably more useful to determine “interests” by anticipated direct policy effects.

To my knowledge, there is no organization that systematically tracks the votes of state legislators according to the interests of groups defined by economic disadvantage, so broadly. Although they have not published their positions on active state legislation, organizations such as the National Employment Law Project and the Out of Poverty Congressional Caucus work to define issue positions of high salience to economically disadvantaged people, while organizations like the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy provide state and national policy briefs archived from the past decade. The American Federation of Labor and Congress of

1. According to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, “The American labor movement is all about the real American Dream” (AFL-CIO 2013).

The Chamber of Commerce sees itself in a similar light: “The U.S. Chamber has a plan to spur economic growth, put people to work, and restore the American Dream” (U.S. Chamber of Commerce). It is clear from even a cursory look at *How They Voted*, the Chamber of Commerce’s scorecard of key congressional votes, that the issue stances of this organization are nearly diametrically opposed to those of the AFL-CIO. Issue positions endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce are pro-business. With regards to “level of economic advantage,” it is clear that the AFL-CIO sees itself allied with the interests of the “middle class” rather than “the economically disadvantaged” (AFL-CIO 2013). Unlike the AFL-CIO, the Chambers of Commerce function on the state level – although unfortunately not all state Chamber of Commerce sites provide access to past years’ issue positions (e.g., Missouri’s does not).

Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) publishes a scorecard of selected “key votes” in the U.S. Congress, documenting congressional cohesion to the organization’s values. Issue positions are endorsed by this organization are pro-labor.¹ The Chamber of Commerce, a pro-business organization, is an example of another organization that publishes a similar scorecard of key Congressional votes.

Lacking a “state legislative scorecard” for legislation relevant to this study, I constructed my own. For each legislative session, bills are examined for their relevancy to the interests of the working class and poor. Minutes of modern bills are available in full on most state general assembly websites. Reliable descriptive summaries of the bills are searchable on general assembly websites as well as research databases like LexisNexis State Capital. I classify bills as sympathetic or unsympathetic to the interests of the economically disadvantaged, within a subset of bills concerning measures directly affecting these groups. (For a discussion of the bill sorting procedure, see the Discussion section.) I create a dependent variable based on roll call votes, where legislators are assigned an aggregate “representation” index based on proportion of sympathetic bills sponsored (see Griffin and Anewalt-Remsburg, 2013).

Roll call votes are frequently used in measures of legislative decision making for their facility in adaptation to large-N studies. Ange-Marie Hancock, in her 2004 study of the role of the public identity of the “welfare queen” and its effect on welfare policymaking in the U.S. Congress, relies on roll call votes as “insight into elites’ ‘true beliefs’ about the target population” (Hancock 2004: 89). I believe that this is too strong a statement to make about roll call voting behavior. The end product of the legislative process, roll call vote outcomes are bounded by the preceding steps in the process, such as bill sponsorship and committee work. In the process, compromises are made, and extreme policy alternatives are weeded out. Roll call

votes are nonetheless important as the most public display of legislator preference (see Griffin, Newman, and Wolbrecht 2012).

Legislator roll call votes will be coded by “Yes”/”No” proportion on roll call votes in question, where “1/Yes” is a vote for the pro-worker/economically disadvantaged issue position and “0” is otherwise. A score of 1.00 will represent a perfect state-government-equivalent “report card” index, whereas a 0.00 will represent a case in which no votes were cast in the interest of low-income constituents. In his 2012 study of the relationship between class and economic roll call voting in the U.S. House of Representatives, Nicolas Carnes employed a similar method in coding roll call votes on economic legislation (Carnes 2012).

Legislator representation for state representatives will thus be modeled in terms of roll call votes on a subset of bills directly affecting economically disadvantaged group interests. Additionally, the study will be limited to recent legislative sessions, specifically 2009-2010. These sessions were of interest because they directly followed the political advent of the Great Recession, when economic issues were at the forefront of elected officials’ minds. What is more, low-income people are hard hit by cyclical downturns in the economy (see, for example, Hoynes, et. al. 2012), and so one might expect particular attention paid to bills concerning economic issues of interest to the low-income in this period. On the other hand, numerous studies of welfare policymaking provide evidence that the American public is more supportive of policies which would serve to expand social safety net programs during times of economic downtown (see, for example, Gilens 1999, chapter 2).

In sum, each model will account for the extent to which legislator race and gender account for some degree of representation of the poor, on issues where their interests are most at

stake, accounting for circumstances in the district. The major question will be whether race and gender account for any significant variation independently of legislator party.

Variables

Presence of a Poverty Constituency

In short, are there any low-income people to represent? It could be that this constituency is relevant in the realm of economic policy in the first legislative sessions after the beginning of the Great Recession. In that case, the higher the poverty rate in a district, the higher priority social safety net programs will take on a given district representative's legislative agenda. However, as discussed above, there is reason to believe that the proportion of low-income constituents in a district has less of an effect on representative behavior than the presence of non-low-income constituents. Proportion poor in each district is calculated on a range from zero to one using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates of the number of people living at or below the federal poverty line.

Majority-Minority District

I purposefully chose a binary measure of racial minority population of districts, rather than a proportional measure. This is following the lead of work by David Lublin, Thomas L. Brunell, Bernard Grofman, and Lisa Handley that suggests there are particular thresholds of district racial minority population, above which minority legislators stand a much greater chance of being elected. In particular, the 2009 article of these researchers in collaboration suggests that this threshold is a near-"majority-minority" proportion of 45 percent combined black and Hispanic non-white population. Furthermore, Lublin and his colleagues find that this is the case despite the fact that minority racial groups have unquestionably lower turnout rates than whites, and may

also have more limited access to the franchise than the general population (Lublin et. al. 2009). This information is also derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Legislator Party, Race, and Gender

Many of the arguments for the inclusion of legislator party, race, and gender variables have been made in sections above. Each variable is dichotomous. Legislator party is coded with "Democrat=1" and "Republican=0"; legislator race is coded with "Non-White=1" and "White=0"; and legislator gender is coded with "Female=1" and "Male=0." In order to capture intersectional race-gender effects, dummy variables were created for "Minority-Race Men," "Minority-Race Women," and "White Women." Therefore, the coefficients for each of the race-gender variables denote the percentage difference between the proportions of votes supported by these groups as compared to "White Men."

This data set is original, and was compiled according to caucus membership, news coverage of legislator activity, and bios from state general assembly websites.

Policy Index

As described above, legislators are awarded a "score card"-type index according to their votes on a set of legislation concerning the economic interests of the low-income. The index ranges from 1.00 for a completely "sympathetic" legislator to 0.00 for an "unsympathetic" legislator. One point is awarded for a "yea" vote on a sympathetic bill by the legislator, whereas zero points are awarded for a "nay." Otherwise, in the case of bills forwarding an interest at odds with the interests of the economically disadvantaged, one point is awarded for a "nay" vote, and zero points are awarded for a "yea." The data set is original; I derive legislator votes from state general assembly website records.

Bill Classification – Roll Call Votes

Using both the LexisNexis State Capital database and state general assembly search engines, I began by searching bill summaries for key terms related to means-tested benefits, means-tested benefits being by definition awarded to the low-income. This entailed first researching the names of benefits programs in each state. I referenced the Georgia Department of Human Services, the Georgia Department of Community Health, the Maryland Department of Human Services, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Social Services. For example, Maryland medical benefits programs included the Maryland Medicaid (Medical Assistance) Program, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Families and Children (FAC), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Public Assistance to Adults (PAA), Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), the Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP), the Maryland Primary Adult Care Program (PAC), and others; and additionally, bill summaries for bills concerning these programs generally included keywords such as “medically-needy” or “all-inclusive.” Other general key words included “welfare,” “income,” “low-income,” “assistance,” “pension,” and “unemployment.” The search term “child support” was included because of the disproportionate economic vulnerability of single-parent families with minor children. According to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty, over 40 percent of these families report incomes below the federal poverty line (Blakeslee 1). Many keyword searches for these terms and others produced overlapping sets of legislation. Similar terms were included in Bratton and Haynie’s (1999) umbrella category of “welfare policy” legislation: “Welfare policy included measures that may alleviate poverty and measures regulating government aid to the poor, such as those dealing with public aid, Medicaid, AFDC, utility lifelines, SSI, food stamps, low-income housing, homelessness, minimum wage, foster care, or educational aid for the disadvantaged, etc.” (Bratton and Haynie 1999, 664).

Not all of the legislation chosen for this study relate directly to the expansion (or restriction) of means-tested benefits programs. Some legislation, for instance Maryland House Bill 926 concerning direct mailings to provide information regarding pensions and services offered by retiree organizations, fulfills broadly the goal of furnishing economically vulnerable populations with greater access to state supports (Maryland 2010a).

Next, I restricted these results to include only those bills that had made it to a floor vote. To my surprise as a novice researcher of state legislatures, I found that this severely limited my results. In other words, very few bills of the hundreds or thousands introduced in a given legislative session make it to a floor vote. And, tellingly, even fewer bills concerning state supports for the low-income make it to a floor vote.

From this point, I further restricted my results to include only those bills that did not pass unanimously when put to vote. For my purposes, it was essential to consider roll call votes for which there was some variation in opinion. For example, I excluded the Maryland House of Delegates vote on House Bill 1375, a bill to facilitate low-income children's enrollment in state healthcare programs, because it passed unanimously in that chamber (Maryland 2010b). I also excluded the Maryland Senate vote on Maryland HB 926, concerning state pensions, because of its 43-1 passage in that chamber (Maryland 2010a). Where multiple votes were called, I considered the first vote in the originating chamber.

Within the remaining set of bills, I read all bill summaries to verify that the search process had identified bills that would affect means-tested benefits or constituents' effective access to them. Resolutions were excluded. In all cases, this involved next accessing the full text of bills, and doing media research in order to gain perspective on the legislation when it was current in the state capital. Some legislatures published reports on the expected impact of bills –

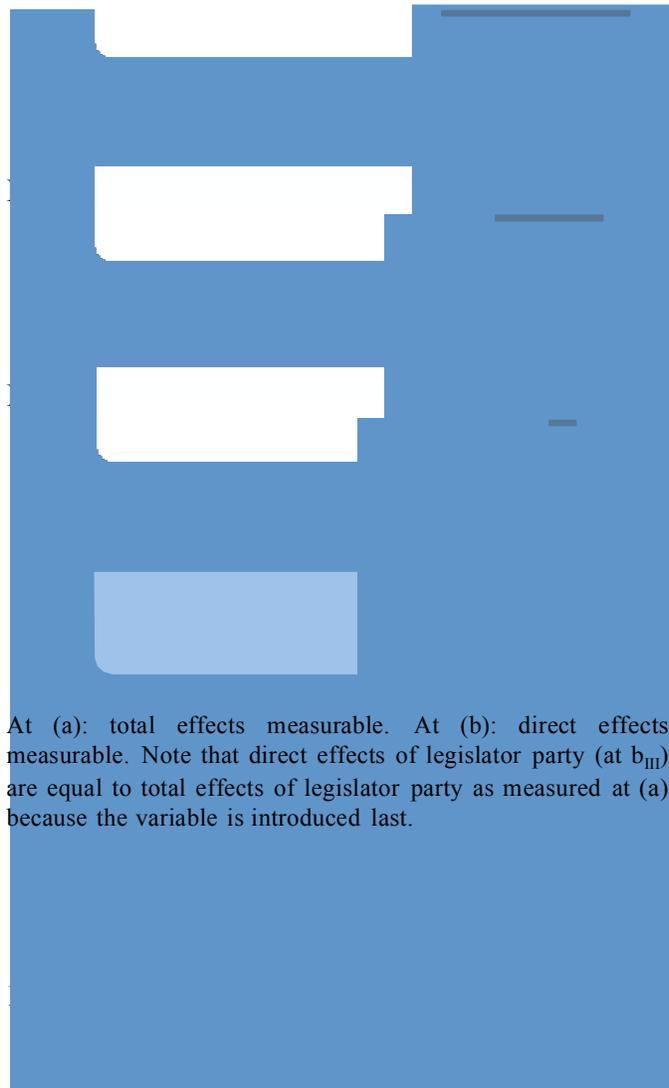
for example, the Maryland General Assembly publishes a “Fiscal and Policy Impact” report for bills advancing through the calendar to a third reading. Again, in all cases, bills that would affect low-income people (so defined) contained keywords such as “income” in the body of the bill. A complete set of bills included in each chamber index and their summaries is available in Appendix B.

Description of Causal Models

The first model for roll call voting behavior is inspired by Martin Gilens’ “multistage regression model” used to model opposition to welfare spending in his 1999 book, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. Gilens’ method is

Figure 1: A Flow Chart of Multistage Regression

I.



essentially the same as separating a complete multivariate linear regression model into multiple models. He separates the complete model into “causal levels” in an attempt to identify the “direct” and “indirect” effects of explanatory variables for welfare opinion. This approach is ideal for the relationships I would like to model, given my null hypothesis that any additional effects of ascriptive group identity on representative behavior will disappear when controlling for party. By introducing sets of variables into a multivariate linear model at different

points, the effects of inclusion of some variables on others can be observed.

Figure 1 is a depiction of the concept of multistage regression. The “total effect” of a variable is its (unweighted) regression coefficient for the first level at which it is introduced. Total effects do not take into consideration the mediating effect of variables introduced in later stages of the model. The “direct effect” of a variable is its coefficient after all variables have been introduced. For example, according to the null hypothesis, the “total effect” of a legislator’s race-gender identity will be larger than the “direct effect” measured after the introduction of the variable for legislator party if the effects of race-gender are mediated by party. Lastly, the “indirect effect” of a variable is the total effect minus the direct effect and measures the effects of a variable that are partially accounted for by variables introduced in later stages of the model. For example, if the introduction of a variable for legislator party accounts for some of the observed effects of legislator race-gender, the indirect effects of legislator race-gender will be observed through the more causally proximate measure of legislator party.

At the first causal level of a multistage regression model of roll call voting behavior are variables describing the demographic makeup of legislative districts. District poverty levels and majority-minority status are district variables described above.

At the next causal level is legislator race and gender. At this point, a new multivariate linear regression model is created, modeling roll call voting behavior on the district factors from the first causal level as well as race and gender factors. The relative importance of the district factors in modeling roll call voting behavior will be different in the new model than in the initial model: this transition will then be attributable to the addition of the new variables to the model.

At the third causal level is legislator party. A final multivariate linear regression model is created to model roll call voting behavior on the district factors from the first causal level, race

and gender from the second causal level, and legislator party. I would argue that this causal ordering makes sense because legislator race and gender are conditions that arise before legislator party ascription. And, as noted in previous sections, there are more female, black, and Latino legislators in the Democratic Party than in the Republican Party. The null hypothesis is that race-gender effects, should they be evident, will be mediated by the introduction of legislator party. If this is the case, then the introduction of the party variable will negate the “direct effects” of race and gender variables. If party were to be introduced at the second causal level and race-gender at the third, then if race-gender has no effect independent of legislator party, we would not be able to determine the magnitude of race-gender indirect effects.

All independent variables are categorically dichotomous (majority-minority status, legislator race-gender, and legislator party). Roll call vote indices are scaled from zero to 100 to aid in interpretation of variable effects. Total effects of a variable can therefore be interpreted as an increase in likelihood, due to that factor, of a legislator adopting a position favorable to his low-income constituency on a piece of relevant legislation.

Table 1 shows the results of a multistage regression model on roll call votes in the Georgia Senate. Coefficients are listed with their standard errors (*italicized*).

Table 1: Predictors of Senate Roll Call Votes in Favor of Measures Benefitting Low-Income Georgia Residents

		Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
I.	Majority-Minority	7.79	-58.59	-50.80***
	Poverty	-3.20	4.07	0.87
II.	Minority-Race Men	55.94***	-5.13	50.81***
	Minority-Race Women	36.37*	-5.49	30.88*
	White Women	8.67	-7.58	1.09
III.	Legislator Party	27.17***	0.0	27.17***

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Georgia General Assembly

N = 51

Final model (III): df = 45

I: R² = 0.0298

II: R² = 0.2704

III: R² = 0.5076

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Right away, we have a case in which it was useful to separate race and gender effects into race-gender effects. In a model of Georgia Senate roll call voting behavior, simply factoring legislator characteristics in terms of single-dimension race and gender might have obscured the large differences between the voting behavior of minority and white women. While the confidence intervals for minority men and women overlap, the confidence intervals for minority and white women do not. Therefore, while the *magnitude* of the difference race makes is conditioned to a somewhat uncertain extent on gender, it is clear that race makes a difference.

Interestingly, in the final model (see “Total Effects” column in Table 1), the coefficients for majority-minority district status, “Minority-Race Men” and “Minority-Race Women” factors, and legislator party are all significant. These variables each concern race. Again, note that “Total Effects” coefficients are unstandardized and indicate percentage increase in legislator support for the legislation. For example, the significant “Total Effect” value of 27.17 signifies that

Democratic representatives supported approximately one more bill (of the four comprising the index) than Republican representatives, all other factors being equal.

The variable for majority-minority district status was not significant when it was introduced as a predictor for the index (see Appendix A). However, when the legislator race-gender predictors were integrated in the second model, the majority-minority district status became significant. When the legislator party predictor was introduced in the third stage of the multistage regression, the coefficient signifying direct effects of the majority-minority district status variable increased. Interestingly, then, district majority-minority status was a suppressed factor.

It is even more interesting to note that the indirect and total effects for the majority-minority district variable are negative while the coefficients for legislator race and legislator party are positive. This is curious: It is more common in general for nonwhites to be elected from majority-minority districts (see variable description).

It was indeed useful to gradually introduce variables in order of causation. We know that, while the majority-minority district status variable is significant, its effects are completely accounted for by two variables introduced in later stages, namely legislator race and party. It is also useful to know that the indirect effects of legislator race are very small; this signifies separate race and party effects in the multivariate regression model.

As predicted, the proportion of low-income constituents in each district was immaterial in the model.

A different pattern emerges in models of representation in the Maryland General Assembly. Tables 2 and 3 show the large influence of party affiliation on legislators in the Maryland Senate and House of Delegates, respectively.

Table 2: Predictors of Senate Roll Call Votes in Favor of Measures Benefitting Low-Income Maryland Residents

		Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
	Majority-Minority	18.45*	-16.22	2.23
	Poverty	7.24	1.00	8.24
II.	Minority-Race Men	-1.78	0.23	-1.55
	Minority-Race Women	-4.19	0.54	-3.65
	White Women	1.38	-4.16	-2.78
III.	Legislator Party	42.89***	0.0	42.89***

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; General Assembly of Maryland

N = 45

Final model (III): df = 39

I: R² = 0.1427

II: R² = 0.1437

III: R² = 0.7305

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 3: Predictors of House of Delegates Roll Call Votes in Favor of Measures Benefitting Low-Income Maryland Residents

		Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
I.	Majority-Minority	24.91***	-24.00	0.91
	Poverty	20.67	-15.20	5.47
II.	Minority-Race Men	20.52*	-20.59	-0.07
	Minority-Race Women	23.30*	-19.48	3.82
	White Women	4.34	-1.59	2.75
III.	Legislator Party	73.63	0.0	73.63***

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; General Assembly of Maryland

N = 140

Final model (III): df = 134

I: R² = 0.1479

II: R² = 0.1881

III: R² = 0.8794

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Note the negligible total effects of all variables except legislator party in the model of roll call votes in the Maryland Senate. The effect of a district's majority-minority status is at first influential in the model: this variable has a direct effect coefficient of 18.45.

However, majority-minority districts also seem to be the ones who elect Democratic state senators. In the complete model, legislator party is the only significant variable (in this measure of support for social safety net programs in the first years of the Great Recession). Legislator party has a large total effect on roll call voting behavior. It may be that some other factor partially effected roll call vote behavior: not only is the total effects coefficient for legislator party much smaller in the Maryland Senate model than in the Maryland House of Delegates model, but the corresponding R^2 value for the model prior to the addition of the legislator party variable is smaller for the Maryland Senate model than for any other model, indicating that independent variables from the first and second causal levels comprise only an incomplete account of the variation in roll call voting behavior. In any case, legislator race and gender were not significant factors in any stage of the multistage regression in the Maryland Senate model. Note especially that the addition of these variables resulted in a negligible change in R^2 value, whereas R^2 value increased noticeably with the addition of the legislator party variable. Legislator race is by far the most consequential factor in both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly.

Party fully accounts for the effects of the majority-minority district variable, legislator race, and legislator gender in the model of roll call voting behavior in the Maryland House of Delegates. The coefficients of each of these variables signify approximately two bills where the roll call vote index for this chamber was comprised of nine bills. Again, this set of variables concerns race. However, note that the addition of legislator race-gender variables contributes little explanatory power to the model of legislator roll call voting behavior: R^2 increases from 0.1479 to only 0.1881 between the first and second models.

When the variable for legislator party is added to the model, we see that there are virtually no total effects attributable to these variables. This means that race and gender factors are mediated by legislator party. Additionally, R^2 increases from 0.1881 to 0.8794, indicating that party is an important indicator of legislator behavior. What is more, the coefficient for this factor is quite large. In the index of nine bills, and all other factors held equal, a Democrat would support six to seven more bills in the interests of low-income constituents than would a Republican.

Yet a different combination of factors is influential in the model of legislator voting behavior in the Missouri House of Representatives. As is evident from a cursory look at Table 4, legislator party is the most important (and only significant) factor in the model. Unfortunately, only three bills comprise the index for legislator voting behavior in the Missouri House of Representatives.

Table 4: Predictors of House of Representatives Roll Call Votes in Favor of Measures Benefitting Low-Income Missouri Residents

		Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
I.	Majority-Minority	28.62**	-20.59	8.03
	Poverty	21.33	-12.87	8.46
II.	Minority-Race Men	5.39	-17.45	-12.06
	Minority-Race Women	17.44	-17.23	0.21
	White Women	21.58**	-16.16	5.42
III.	Legislator Party	51.63***	0.0	51.63***

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Missouri General Assembly

N = 162

Final model (III): df = 156

I: $R^2 = 0.1287$

II: $R^2 = 0.1891$

III: $R^2 = 0.6892$

· $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Gender first seems to make a difference in the Missouri House of Representatives. While the “White Women” factor is significant and the “Minority-Race Women” factor is not, both factors have modest positive effects upon their introduction to the model in the second causal level. The significance of white women in the model indicates that white women in this legislature are more likely to support legislation to expand social safety net programs than are white men.

The majority-minority district variable is significant in the first model, and the poverty variable just misses significance at the $p < 0.10$ level. The introduction of legislator race-gender factors accounts for the effects of majority-minority district status on legislator behavior. This means that legislators elected from majority-minority districts tend to be more likely to support bills in the interest of their low-income constituents because they tend to be female. In the same way, legislator party mediates the effects of gender: Women tend to be more likely to support bills in the interest of their low-income constituents because they tend to be Democrats. Again, it was useful to model the interaction of variables over multiple stages because an argument can now be made for this causal sequence.

Legislator party accounts for the effects of all other variables, to varying extents. Substantively, this means that legislator party finally accounted for about half the variation in voting behavior among groups of legislators in the Maryland House of Representatives, all other factors being equal, of the effects captured by this model. This general statement is supported by the difference between R^2 values: R^2 increases from 0.1891 to 0.6892 after the introduction of the legislator factor, indicating that the introduction of this factor increased the explanatory power of the model in a meaningful way.

In summary, legislator party was an important predictor of roll call voting behavior in all models. It was only in the Georgia Senate model that other factors outweighed legislator party in explaining the voting behavior of representatives. While some race-gender effects were observable in models of roll call voting behavior in the Georgia Senate, the Maryland House of Delegates, and the Missouri House of Representatives, legislator race-gender effects were not observable in the Maryland Senate.

The importance of district factors varied by model. District poverty levels were not significant predictors of legislator behavior, as expected, despite the subject of the legislation, and despite the time frame at issue. Whether a district was majority-minority was somewhat important, although in all cases except for Georgia majority-minority district status was important as a determinant for legislator party.

Discussion

One point of difficulty in comparing state legislator behavior, specifically with regards to economic legislation, is differences in demographics among states. For example, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, Maryland had a median household income of \$72,419 and a poverty rate of 9.0 percent. In contrast, Georgia had a median household income of \$49,736 and a poverty rate of 16.5 percent. Compare these figures to the national median household income of \$52,762 and a poverty rate of 14.3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau). While Georgia is on average slightly poorer than the nation, Maryland is a great deal better off than the rest of the nation.

This issue is partially addressed by the unit of analysis. One circumstantial advantage to measuring dyadic representation rather than collective representation is that representation is measured in terms of legislator behavior, where legislators are elected by their districts.

Legislators are responsible for representing the interests of their own districts, and not necessarily those of the state at large.

Immediately apparent from the data is the very unavailability of floor votes with which to compose indices. The first lesson to take from the study of state legislative politics is that very few bills make it to a full roll call vote. In particular, very few votes concerning means-tested benefits make it to a full roll call vote. Of the three states in question, the two of which this was especially true were Georgia and Missouri, which had Republican-controlled legislatures. Furthermore, the majority of bills included in Georgia Senate and Missouri House of Representatives indices were classified as unfavorable to the interests of a low-income constituency, whereas all bills in the indices for Maryland chambers were favorable (see Appendix B). Given the demonstrated significance of individual legislator party in accounting for legislator roll call voting behavior, one might speculate as to whether chamber party control also serves to define legislator behavior.

The issue of insufficient roll call votes resulted in an important research design decision. Where I had originally intended to include both upper and lower houses of the Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri legislatures, I include only the Georgia Senate, the Missouri House, and both houses of the Maryland General Assembly in the present analysis. This is because the bill screening process as described above was so exclusive that very few bills (depending on the session, and on the chamber) made it through. There are several possible explanations for this outcome.

First, very few bills of the great number introduced – over a thousand for each session – make it to a roll call vote. I pose this as a qualitative observation, lacking statistics for the proportion of bills that make it through the legislative process in the states in question.

Second, it is worth speculating how many bills concerning the interests of low-income constituents are “serious bills,” with enough preordained majority support to survive the legislative process. As discussed at length above, legislators represent diverse constituencies, and political nods to marginalized populations may not be prioritized where resources are finite.

Finally, as alluded to above, both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly was controlled by the Democrats in 2009-2010, while Republicans controlled both chambers of the Georgia and Missouri legislatures in these years (although Democrat Jay Nixon’s tenure as Governor of Missouri during this time has been noted). Where majority parties appoint committee chairs, and majority party leaders schedule votes and influence the behavior of a majority of legislators (who will, in turn, cast a majority of votes), it would make sense that majority parties largely influence the process by which the universe of policy outcomes is constrained. In such an environment, the representative behavior of a legislator in the minority party would be more effectively captured at the beginning of the policymaking process.

In other words, it may be that selection biases in the policymaking process are arrayed against the poor. If this is the case, it may be that legislator voting behavior is not a fine enough measure to capture the total effects of race and gender on legislative representation. In the discussion above (“Representation of Minority Groups: Descriptive and Substantive Representation”), studies by authors such as Haynie (2001) and Reingold and Smith (2012) linked broader advocacy and agenda-setting behavior to legislator race and gender identity.

In an attempt to further explore the meaning of the associations between legislator characteristics and representative behavior, I will next look at the effects of legislator race, gender, and party on a different type of representative behavior – one measured earlier in the policymaking process. Bill introductions are the first step of the process by which a bill becomes

law. The introduction of a bill is part of the agenda setting process that may be undertaken by any member of the legislature. Examining bill sponsorship data precludes the need to account for party leader influence on the legislative agenda (Lawrence, et. al. 2006). Bratton, Haynie, and Reingold (2008) chose to study bill sponsorship in measuring African American women's responsiveness to female and black interests because they judged it "the stage of the legislative process at which gender and racial difference are most likely to emerge" (Bratton, Haynie, and Reingold 2008). Bills can be written to represent nearly the full universe of possible policies, whereas third-read bills are ones that have filtered through committees, revised, and evaluated in advance of a determinative vote in the majority party-controlled chamber. For this reason, measuring representation in terms of bill sponsorship may result in a different picture of the relationship between legislator identity and substantive representation of economically disadvantaged groups.

Although it would be ideal to trace legislation all four chambers discussed above, I am limited due to time constraints to an analysis of the Maryland House of Delegates. The choice of this chamber is a conservative one. First, the chamber is controlled by Democrats. As stated above, liberal economic policies such as increased welfare spending are identified with the Democratic Party. The association between minority race and gender and Democratic Party identification are apparent from the third-stage effects of the legislator party factor in the above multistage linear regression models. When the legislator party variable was introduced in the final model above, legislator race-gender was rendered insignificant. If bill sponsorship and roll call voting are both representative acts, then we might expect similar results (i.e., that race and gender effects are not significant independent of party). While additional race-gender effects might have emerged in an examination of bill sponsorship in the Georgia Senate, where race

variables explained variation not accounted for by the legislator party variable, the null hypothesis in a model of bill sponsorship in the Maryland House of Delegates is that additional race-gender effects will not emerge. So, while it may be that effects of these legislator characteristics will emerge with this examination of a different aspect of representation, these effects should be least likely to emerge in this chamber.

A reason for the choice of the Maryland House of Delegates over the Maryland Senate is its size. The sample size is larger: There are simply more chances for non-majority-ascripting legislators to introduce legislation (or not) -- because of the sheer number and relative diversity of legislators present.

Bill Classification – Introduced Bills

Much the same process was followed to classify bills within the dataset containing bills introduced. In all, I counted forty “good” bills and eight “bad” ones. These included no omnibus or budget bills: It is possible to infer that these bills were indeed intended to effect policy beneficial to low-income groups. In order to increase the sample size, I chose to count both sponsorships and co-sponsorships of all “good” bills. Due to the comparatively low number of “bad” bills, I chose to disregard this data.

Note that re-introductions of 2009 bills in the 2010 session were counted as a second introduction. Note also that introductions by committee chairs, the Speaker of the House, or the Minority Leader on behalf of the Governor of Maryland or his administration were not counted for the simple reason that these introductions did not reflect the will of the legislator.

It is worth exploring the data before attempting to formally model legislative behavior. Table 5 below shows the average number of bills sponsored or co-sponsored by different

subgroups of legislators, within the subset of bills representing policies that would reallocate resources to low-income Maryland residents.

Table 5: Mean and Median Number of Bills Introduced per Legislator by Selected Subgroups of Legislators

Subgroup		Mean Number of Bills Introduced	Median Number of Bills Introduced
I.	Party Affiliation	Republicans	1.000
		Democrats	3.186
II.	Gender	Men	2.289
		Women	3.140
III.	Race	Whites	2.112
		Nonwhites	3.714
IV.	Race-Gender	White Men	2.045
		White Women	2.250
		Nonwhite Men	3.087
		Nonwhite Women	4.474
		Minority*	3.081

Data Source: Maryland General Assembly

*White women, minority-race women, and minority race men

From a cursory look at the descriptive statistics above, some trends are apparent. First, Democrats sponsor more bills to expand social safety net programs. The definition applied here of “legislation to benefit the low-income” guaranteed the selection of many more liberals than conservatives. However, even taking into consideration the two or three bills which a conservative might argue were “good for the low-income” (even as they made qualification requirements for means-tested programs more stringent, or expanded prohibitive regulations) and were excluded from the set, fewer bills concerning means-tested benefits programs were introduced in general by Republicans. It could be that a completely different approach needs to be taken in order to capture Republicans’ representation of the low-income. By stretch of the

imagination (or by channeling national Republican rhetoric about middle-class benefiting “trickle-down effects” of tax cuts to big business), one could picture a situation in which Republicans see themselves as representing low-income constituents by passing pro-business legislation – in an attempt to stimulate the economy. Or, it could be that Republicans are more attentive to the needs of different constituencies.

Also apparent is the difference between the mean number of bills introduced by men and women. Again, it could be that women more actively introduce legislation in issue areas that also affect low-income people. Reingold (2000) provides the examples of “anything having to do with children, education, health, and social welfare” as issue domains perceived as congruent with women’s interests and expertise (Reingold 2000, 14). But far from essentializing women or “women’s interests” (themselves much debated), it is instructive to examine the issue areas in which different legislators – here, by gender or race-gender – are more active. In particular, nonwhite women, of all subgroups featured in Table 5, were most active introducers of bills to expand means-tested programs. The high activity of nonwhite women (sponsoring a mean 4.474 bills) accounts for nearly all of the difference in activity between men and women.

Within the single-axis category “women,” there is a distinct subgroup of representatives who “possibly advance issues of interest to greater numbers of women” (Smooth 2006). As Wendy Smooth put it, intersectionality “is not about choosing or forcing individuals into categories, but is about understanding how many multiple identities are constitutive of others” (Smooth 2006, 413). It becomes clear in comparing the mean number of bills introduced by white women, nonwhite men, and nonwhite women that it is the intersectional identity of both race and gender minority status which classifies the subgroup of legislators most active in this issue domain.

In the case of white women, by contrast, it is instructive to look at the median number of bills introduced by women. Assuming the mean is an appropriate measure of the data, and that the variances of the two sets are equal, the differences between white men and white women in terms of mean number of bills introduced is statistically significant using a t-test at the 95 percent confidence level. However, the median is much lower than the mean, indicating that the distribution is skewed to the right. A few white women introduced several bills, while many introduced one or none. One obvious outlier was Delegate Heather Mizeur (D-20), who was the primary sponsor of *seven* bills and cosponsor of two more. Although count in Table 5 of bills introduced does not distinguish between primary sponsorships and co-sponsorships, it is interesting to note that the next-most prolific primary sponsors of bills (Delegates Harrison, Montgomery, and Hammen) sponsored only two bills each.

The next step is to examine correlations among variables. It is first necessary to identify an appropriate model for bill sponsorships, which is a count variable. To that end, below are histograms depicting bill count, as the total varies depending on legislators' race, gender, and party affiliation. Each variable is factored into its constituent categories. Race-gender groups are not shown below due to limited sample size.

Figure 2: **Bill Introductions** by Legislator Race

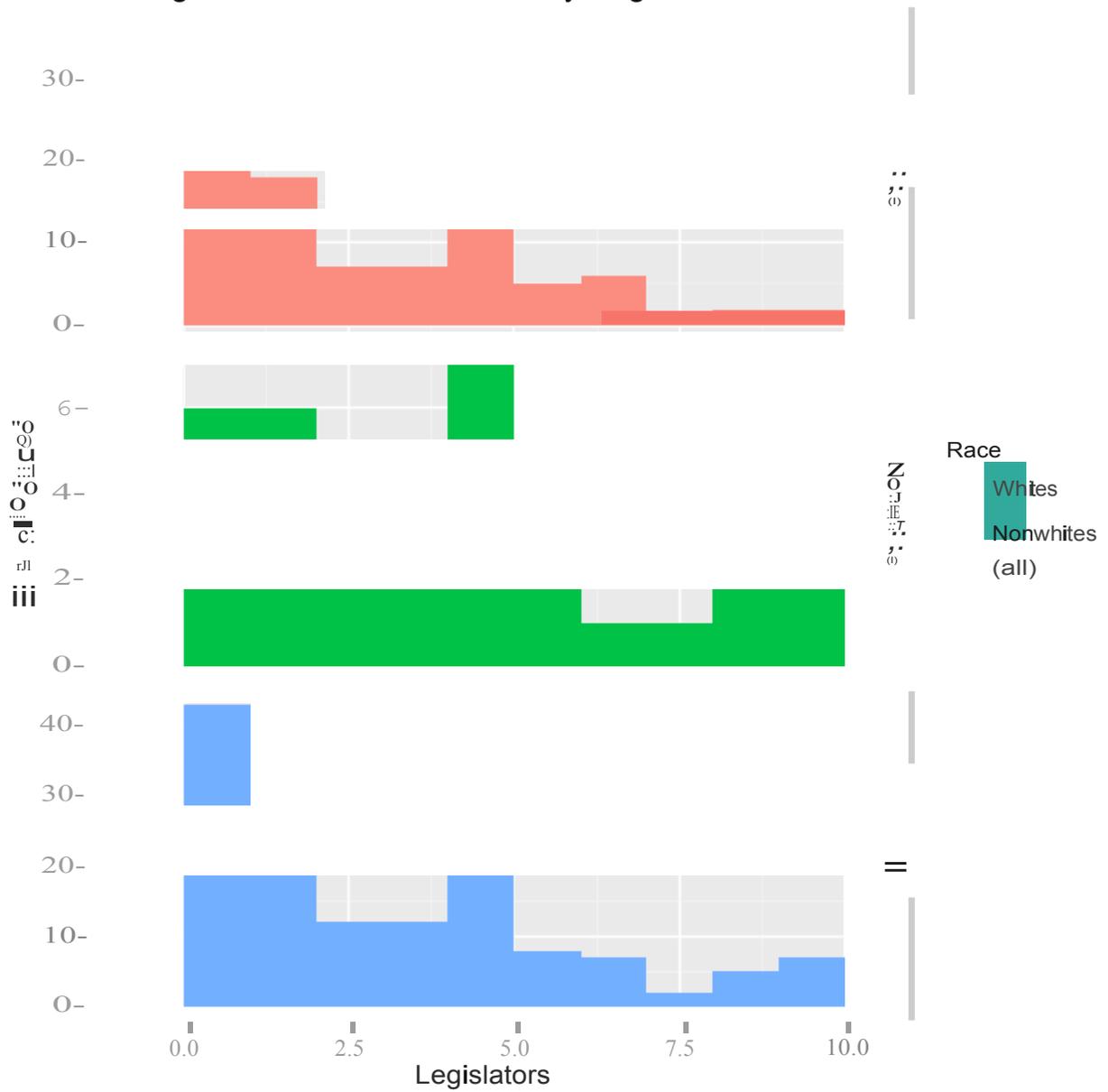
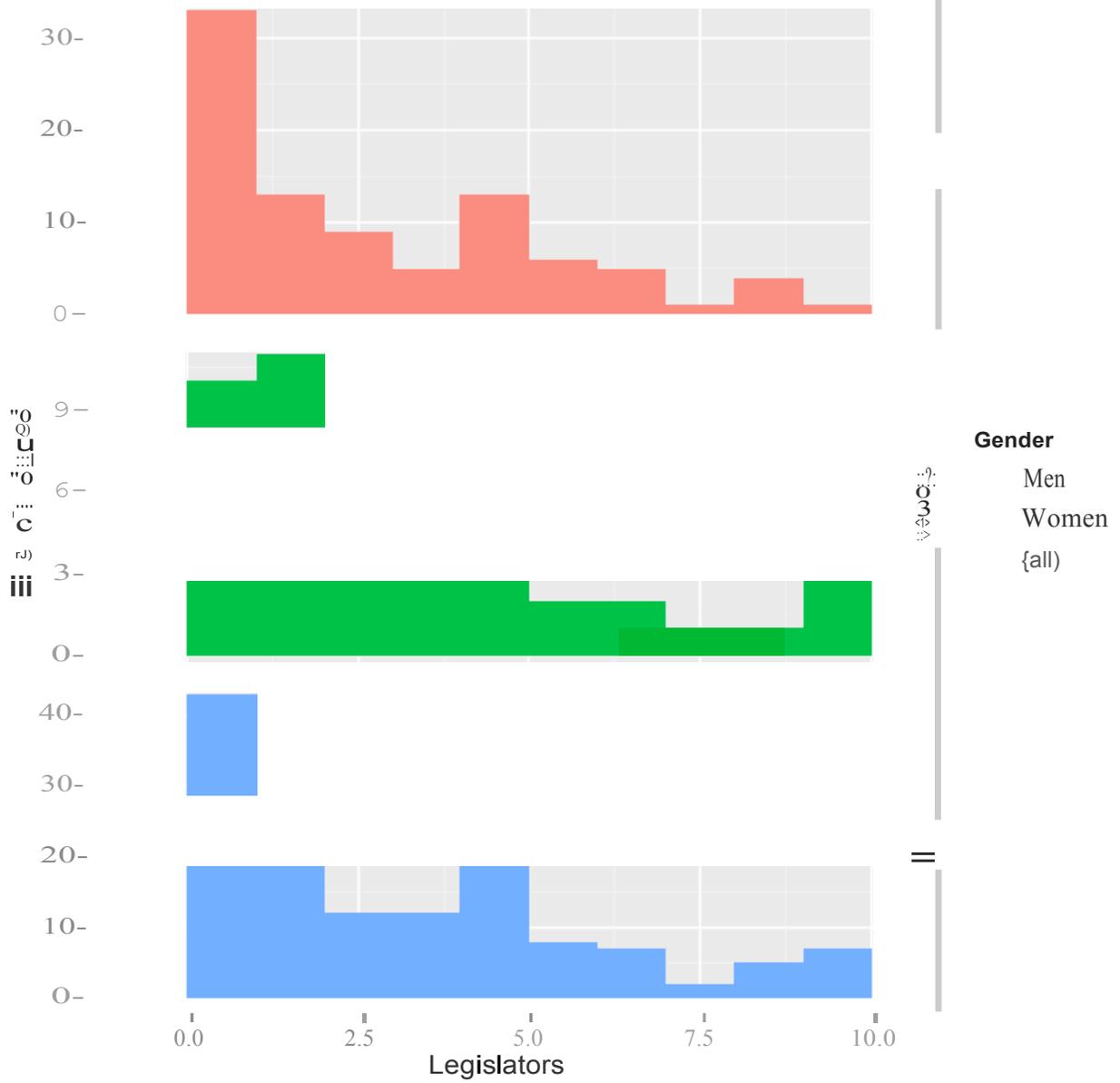
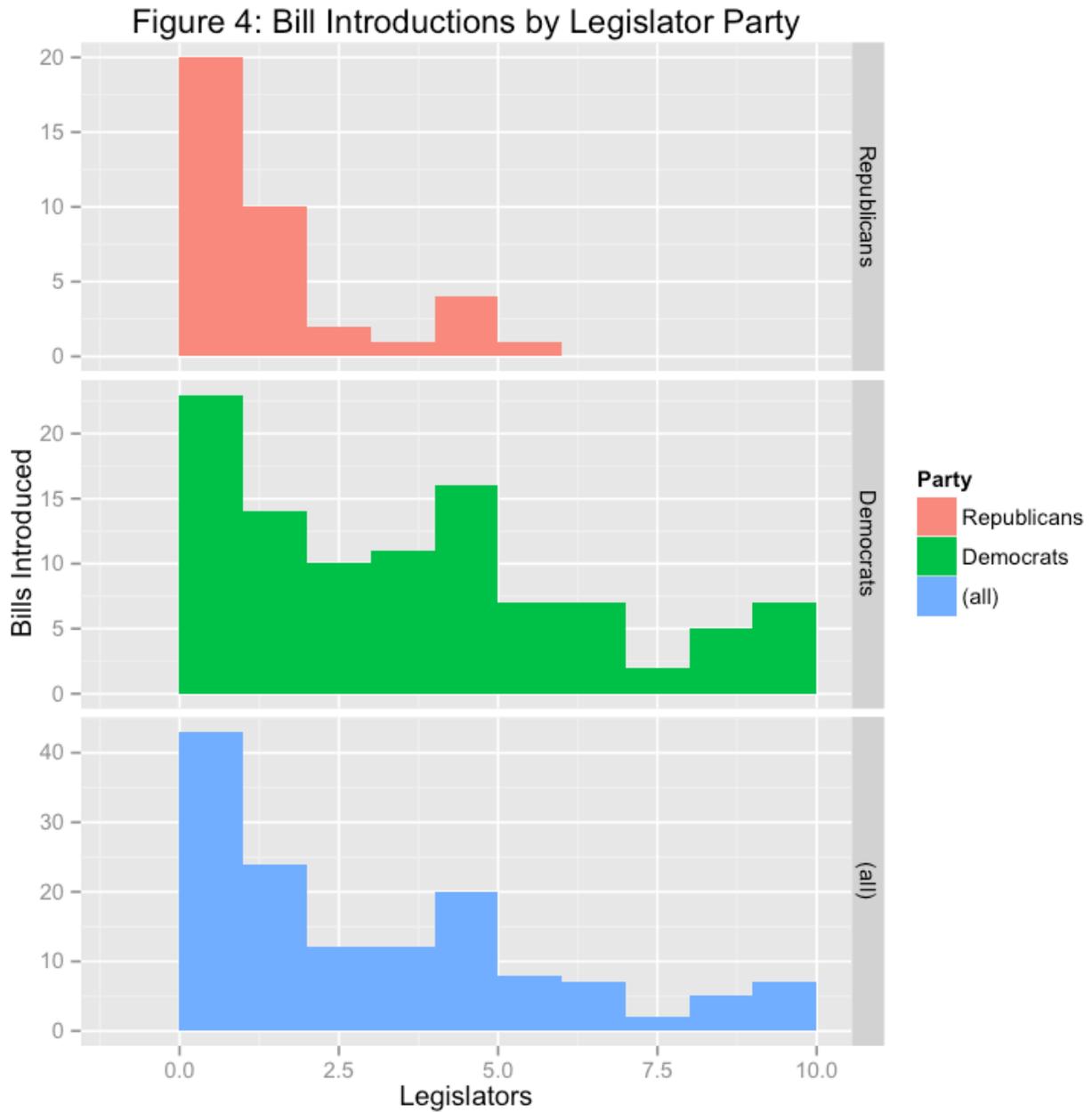


Figure 3: Bill Introductions by Legislator Gender





Observable from the histograms above in Figures 1-3, the count data look as if they have a Poisson distribution. To test the fit of the Poisson distribution to the bill introduction data, I constructed a Poisson generalized linear model (GLM) with the logarithm as the link function. Because political party affiliation was strongly correlated with roll call vote behavior in every

multistage regression model above, I began by modeling bill introductory behavior as a function of a single factor, legislator party affiliation, in order to test dispersion and the fit of the Poisson GLM.

In the resulting model, party is indeed a statistically significant indicator of bill introductory behavior. However, the data appear to be overdispersed because the residual deviance is much greater than the degrees of freedom. A chi-square test for goodness-of-fit based on the residual deviance of 343.1 on 139 degrees of freedom confirms this. If a Poisson GLM were appropriate for this data, the ratio of residual deviance to degrees of freedom would be approximately one. The mean does not equal the variance, which violates an assumption underlying the Poisson distribution.

The negative binomial GLM is useful when overdispersion occurs with Poisson GLMs (see Agresti 2002, 559). The negative binomial GLM may be used to model count data. Let y_i denote the behavior for subject t . For $\mu_i = E(Y_i)$, and using a logarithm as the link function, this model is

$$\log \mu_i = \alpha + \beta_1 x_i + \beta_2 x_i + \dots + \beta_n x_i$$

where μ_i is the mean behavior of legislator i with whose situation is described by n variables (in the full model, $n = 6$) of importance β .

Table 6 shows results for the negative binomial GLM. All variables from the multistage linear regression models of roll call voting behavior in the previous section are incorporated here. One difference between variables as described before and variables as incorporated into the negative binomial GLM, is that index variables were rendered dichotomous because negative binomial GLMs model the interaction of categorical variables (and not continuous ones).

Education levels, poverty rates, and unemployment rates were previously conveyed as indices. In order to use them in the current model, index variables were divided into “high” and “low” levels at the median, with “low” levels falling below it and “high” levels at or above it. “High” levels were coded to receive a value of one, while “low” values were coded as zero.

Remember that the dependent variable has been transformed, which means that coefficients should be read as exponents. The intercept included here for ease of interpretation.

Table 6: Estimates of Regression Coefficients for Predictors of House of Delegates Bill Sponsorship of Measures Benefitting Low-Income Maryland Residents

	Factors	Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
	<i>Intercept</i>	-0.0342	(-0.486, 0.406)
<i>District</i>	Majority-Minority	0.101	(-0.439, 0.639)
	Poverty	0.0551	(-0.367, 0.476)
<i>Legislator Characteristics</i>	Minority-Race Men	0.0559	(-0.505, 0.625)
	Minority-Race Women	0.401	(-0.208, 1.022)
	White Women	0.0783	(-0.388, 0.548)
	Legislator Party	1.001	(0.509, 1.504)

Data Source: Maryland General Assembly

Dispersion parameter $\theta = 1.506$

χ^2 Likelihood = 0.968

AIC: 584.72

As before, legislator race and gender were not statistically significant indicators of representative behavior. Note the confidence interval for legislator party: It is the only one that does not contain zero. Legislator party is again the only significant predictor of representative behavior.

It is helpful for the sake of interpretation of the data to take the exponents of the confidence intervals. The numbers below should be interpreted as the ratios of the treatment to the control. For example, a hypothetical estimate of 2.5 for the poverty variable would indicate

that a representative of a poor district should sponsor 2.5 times the number of bills as a similar legislator representing a non-poor district. Likewise, a hypothetical estimate of 1.0 for the “White Women” factor would indicate that a white woman (again, all other factors held equal) is likely to sponsor the same number of bills as a similarly-situated white man. Where these adjusted confidence intervals contain 1.0, the variable is not a significant influence on bill sponsorship behavior.

Table 7: Exponentiated Estimates of Confidence Intervals for Predictors of House of Delegates Bill Sponsorship of Measures Benefitting Low-Income Maryland Residents

	Factors	Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
	<i>Intercept</i>	0.966	(0.615, 1.501)
<i>District</i>	Majority-Minority	1.106	(0.645, 1.895)
	Poverty	1.057	(0.693, 1.610)
<i>Legislator Characteristics</i>	Minority-Race Men	1.057	(0.603, 1.867)
	Minority-Race Women	1.493	(0.812, 2.779)
	White Women	1.081	(0.679, 1.730)
	Legislator Party	2.722	(1.663, 4.501)

Data Source: Maryland General Assembly

From Table 7, the substantive importance of legislator party affiliation becomes clear. Although the confidence interval for this variable is large, it is possible to conclude that 95 percent of the time, legislator party makes a major difference in representative behavior. The estimated ratio for this factor is 2.722, indicating that a Democrat will sponsor an estimated 2.722 times as many positive bills as a similar Republican.

The only other estimate indicating a difference between treatment and control is the variable for minority-race women. However, the confidence interval contains 1.0, indicating a lack of statistical significance for the modeled behavior. Pursuing this effect nonetheless, I calculated another set of confidence intervals, this time for 80 percent confidence ($\alpha = 0.20$). The

resulting confidence interval for the effects of the minority-race women variable was (1.001, 2.26). So, while this variable was not significant at the customary level ($\alpha = 0.05$), it is still possible to say that 80 percent of the time, it makes a difference if legislators are both minority-race and minority-gender. However, keep in mind that the model is for the entire population of legislators in the Maryland House of Delegates. Because the model of legislative behavior is not necessary generalizable outside of this chamber, and because the model utilizes data for the full population rather than a sample of it, it is possible to interpret the higher coefficient for minority-race women as in fact reflecting more active representation on the part of this group of legislators. The estimated ratio for this factor is 1.493, indicating that legislators who identify with this intersectionally marginalized race-gender group sponsor half again as many positive bills as a similar white man.

Reflection and Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this project was to answer the question of whether certain ascriptive characteristics, namely race and gender, influence representation. Specifically, this project explored the notion that race-gender minorities may more actively represent the interests of the poor, themselves a disadvantaged minority group. I collected roll call voting data for three state legislatures over the 2009-2010 sessions in order to model this type of representative behavior, utilizing district-level variables and legislator characteristic variables including race-gender and party affiliation.

I did not find clear evidence to support the hypothesis that race-gender minority legislators represent the poor more than do non-minority legislators due to ascriptive

characteristics alone. Only in Georgia did a legislator's race (and the racial composition of legislative districts) translate into substantive differences in representation. Elsewhere, in cases in which race-gender identities seemed to have some effect on representative behavior, legislator party mediated these effects.

I did find ample evidence that Democrats are more likely to favor legislation to furnish economically vulnerable populations with greater access to state supports. It is not quite the case that a Democrat is more likely to favor this type of legislation regardless of the personal experiences or identity of the elected official in question. In three of the four legislatures examined, race-gender identity did have some effect. The effects were inconsistent across chambers, but there was indeed some statistical evidence from the model to support the limited claim that minority race-gender legislators are more likely to vote in the interest of low-income people. It is simply the case that most race-gender minority legislators are Democrats – and therefore party mediates the effects of race-gender identity.

It was useful to explore another aspect of representation, bill sponsorship, in a final model of representative behavior in the Maryland House of Delegates. Here, too, party was the most salient legislator characteristic. However, although the coefficient representing the ratio of bills sponsored by minority-race women as compared to otherwise-similarly situated white men was not statistically different than 1.0 at the $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level, this ratio was larger than the coefficient for any other variable excluding legislator party. It is notable that race and gender did not operate as independent, single-dimensional characteristics.

Furthermore, while these effects were not discernable after the addition of the legislator party variable in the model of roll call voting behavior in the same chamber, they emerged in an examination of representative behavior from an earlier point in the policymaking process.

This project tested the notion that minority race-gender legislators, by virtue of some shared experience of marginalization, are preferable descriptive representatives of an economic minority class. For the most part, I found that there are greater similarities than differences among minority and non-minority representatives within the same party (the Democratic Party). Advocates for the poor, so defined, are effectively sorted along partisan lines: Party affiliation would serve as the best cue for low-income voters.

Pursuant this study, it is worth reexamining Haynie's (2001) findings that black legislators were more active in agenda setting in terms of legislation benefiting black socioeconomic well being in education and welfare policy, as touched upon above (see "Representation of Minority Groups: Descriptive and Substantive Representation"; Haynie 2001, 29). This project did not find that these minority-race legislators as such were more active in terms of agenda setting, or at best suggests possible conditions under which findings of greater representative advocacy among minority-race legislators might hold.

Directions for Future Research

In the earlier discussion of the bill classification process, I mentioned referencing media coverage of legislative activity. This was an attempt to uncover the "hidden intent" of bills, or in other words to gain insight into the policymaking process that had resulted in a final bill that was in turn voted upon. Elite interviews could add a useful qualitative element to a project like this one: legislators themselves could shed light on their own considerations when voting for bills. Works like Reingold's (2000) *Representing Women* utilize legislator interviews and surveys in comparing state legislatures. There is also the possibility that information shared by legislators themselves would provide leads to more bills in which they feel low-income constituents have a

stake. It would be especially useful to talk with members of key committees, such as standing committees organized around children or public health.

In many cases, it was readily apparent whether a “yea” or “nay” vote would serve to support the interests of those reliant on state support programs. Inevitably, however, some subtleties of the policymaking process are lost to the outside observer. It is also the case that judgments of whether a policy represents “good” or “bad” in the interests of any constituency are inherently normative and themselves dependent to some extent on researcher ideology. While a liberal (Democratic) observer might consider a policy expanding access to a social welfare benefit to be good for the low-income, a more conservative (Republican; neoliberal) observer might consider “good” one installing stiffer constraints to access, thereby creating a system benefiting those truly in need of the benefit.

In general, a redistributive approach to public policy concerning the economy is associated with the Democratic Party platform, much more so than that of the Republicans (Bartels 2008b). As stated above (see “Bill Classification” within “Discussion”), it could be that a completely different approach needs to be taken in order to capture Republicans’ representation of the low-income. In other words, despite the effort that was made to objectify policy, the process of identifying index bills for the dependent variable was a subjective one.

One alternate direction for this project could have been to emulate Griffin and Anewalt-Remsburg’s (2013) method of focusing on one particularly topical bill, and model all representative behavior. On the state level, this would require interviews of state policy experts and elected officials involved in the creation and passage of the bill in question.

In Maryland, for example, the passage by roll call vote at third reading of SB107 seemed to be only part of the story. Senate Bill 107 (2010), entitled “Unemployment Insurance – Tax

Deferment, Trust Fund Solvency, and Cost-Neutral Modernization,” was a move by the legislature to secure federal incentive funds made available to the states through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for Maryland’s Unemployment Insurance Fund (Maryland 2010c).

In fact, six other votes took place, on six floor amendments proposed by Delegates George (R-30) and O’Donnell (R-29C). It is true that “yea” and “nay” votes were generally split along party lines, with Democrats voting to reject the amendments and Republicans voting to adopt them. However, “yea” votes on the bill in its third reading and “yea” votes on floor amendments by either Delegate George or O’Donnell were not mutually exclusive – representatives described in this group include Delegates Bohanan, James, Krebs, Lafferty, Levy, Minnick, Olszewski, Sophocleus, and Weir. These delegates’ rejection of the amendments was not a categorical rejection of amendment itself, but a rejection of the different particular aspects George and O’Donnell would have brought to the legislation.

Which elements of amendments weighed most heavily in the minds of the delegates who represented their constituents in voting this way? Yet another related question left open at the conclusion of this project is the extent to which institutional factors effectually precluded legislators from representing the low-income. For example, it may be that legislative incorporation (by which I mean to say, *power*) of minority groups is an important factor to consider in the study of which bills make it as far as a roll call vote (see, for example, Reingold and Smith 2012).

A weak point in my bill introduction analysis as I see it at this point is its heavy reliance on medical and public health programs within the realm of means-tested benefits programs and, more generally, “legislation in the interest of the low-income.” Such reliance on a particular

issue area was an unforeseen consequence of my initial unfamiliarity with bill introduction coding: In Maryland, the names of healthcare programs were easily found. A large selection of healthcare programs was available in Maryland to address the diverse human needs of low-income residents.

It is nonetheless reassuring that the same factors, education and, of course, legislator party, were significant in the roll call vote and bill introduction models of representative behavior in the Maryland House of Delegates. The nine bills chosen for inclusion in the roll call vote index concerned a wide range of issues relating to low-income people. Either the same underlying set of interests were tapped both by the set of bills with a broader topic range and by the set of bills with a greater focus on healthcare programs – or the legislators who more actively represented the interest of the constituency at issue are *more active representatives in general*. It is impossible to speculate on the latter point, lacking information on the legislative activity of the delegates outside of bills relating to means-tested benefits programs.

In future research, I would create multiple policy indices to address these concerns. Reingold and Smith (2012) incorporate gender as a single- and multiple-axis predictor in their study of the ways in which legislative incorporation of racial minority representatives in state legislatures affects welfare policymaking. The dependent variable, “welfare policy,” is measured in five different indices for distinct elements of TANF policy: the relative liberal or punitive natures of policy regarding eligibility, flexibility, and cash benefits, and the presence or absence of family cap and domestic violence time limit waivers. Even in the study’s intersectional model, the affects of legislative incorporation of these groups varied by index. Reingold and Smith conclude their study with a caution that “[w]omen’s issues’ may mean different things to

different women,” and that “critical actors” within legislatures can make a difference in welfare policymaking (Reingold and Smith 2012).

Additionally, future research is needed to explore the effects of legislator characteristics on representative activity. This would be to build on Griffin and Flavin’s (2011) work relating legislator group membership to “spheres of representation”: This would entail measuring different “modes” of representation than bill introductions or roll call votes.

A key contribution of this project is that it extends research linking substantive and descriptive representation to state level politics. In particular, this study is unique in that it tests the link between minority legislator characteristics and different minorities within the population, operationalizing representation in terms of both roll call votes and bill introductions. The originality of the subject matter necessitated the creation of several new data sets: roll call votes for the 2009-2010 legislative sessions in Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri state governments, and bill introductions in the Maryland House of Delegates.

A more thorough study of roll call voting behavior in Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri might have been possible if there had been more roll call votes with which to construct indices for the Georgia House of Representatives and the Missouri Senate. Unfortunately, in these two states, very little legislation concerning the needs of low-income people made it to a full roll call vote. The fate of Missouri Senate’s Senate Bill 94 (2009), which would have “increase[d] funding for the child care subsidy for low income working families,” was typical: SB 94 was First Read, passed by the Special Education Committee, and then languished on the informal calendar (Pecinovsky 2009, 7; Missouri 2009).

Additionally, the proportion of roll call votes classified as a vote “for” the low-income varied by state. While in Maryland, all votes included in both indices were classified as being in

the interest of the low-income, this was not the case in Georgia and Missouri. In the Georgia Senate, three of four votes on my index would have restricted access to beneficial programs or revised the tax code in a way unfavorable to the low-income. In Missouri, all three bills were classified as “against” the low-income. What accounted for the differences between Maryland on one hand, and Georgia and Missouri on the other? While I can surmise that much of the difference has to do with party control in the respective legislatures, I did not have a means to test this explanation. Indices are not directly comparable, and so many factors differentiate political culture in a state.

It is not realistic to apply the results of this project to other state legislatures. The states in this project were particularly chosen because of the atypical representation of minority-race women in their chambers, and within the legislatures the entire population was utilized, rather than take a “representative” sample. So, instead of an applicable picture of race-gender representation in the American state legislatures, what we have here is a portrait of this phenomenon in Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri. In any case, race-gender effects were not consistent across chambers.

There is more work to be done in the study of representation of low-income people in the states. It is difficult to extend the many existing studies of representation in the U.S. Congress to the states, because of the huge social and political variation among the fifty American states. Datasets like Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-Nominate scores have been used to study ideology and roll call voting behavior in the U.S. Congress, but analogous datasets for the states are new, limited, and as of yet underutilized (for a discussion of innovations in ideal point estimation in state politics, see Shor and McCarty 2011). Nonetheless, despite the methodological difficulties, I believe that it is the very possibility of wide variation that makes studies of state governments

worthwhile. Variation among the states in terms of means-tested benefits translates into real differences in quality of life for low-income people.

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Appendix A

The following are complete models for each stage of the multistage linear regression on roll call votes.

Georgia Senate

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Georgia General Assembly

I.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	28.57	4.66	1.5e-07
Majority-Minority	7.79	6.48	0.24
Poverty	-3.20	-0.28	0.78

N = 51, df = 49

R² = 0.0298

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

II.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	25.47	4.36	5.0e-07
Majority-Minority	-34.20	14.19	0.020*
Poverty	5.27	10.78	0.63
Minority-Race Men	55.94	14.94	0.0050***
Minority-Race Women	36.37	15.48	0.023*
White Women	8.67	10.68	0.42

N = 51, df = 46

R² = 0.2704

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

III.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	22.36	3.68	2.4e-07
Majority-Minority	-50.80	12.31	0.00016***
Poverty	0.87	9.00	0.92
Minority-Race Men	50.81	12.46	0.00018***
Minority-Race Women	30.88	12.91	0.021*
White Women	1.09	9.02	0.90
Legislator Party	27.17	5.84	2.9e-05***

N = 51, df = 45

R² = 0.5076

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Maryland House of Delegates

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; General Assembly of Maryland

I.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	63.28	3.92	2e-16
Majority-Minority	24.91	7.32	0.00088***
Poverty	20.67	15.25	0.18

N = 140, df = 138

R² = 0.1479

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

II.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	59.52	4.65	2e-16
Majority-Minority	10.59	9.21	0.25
Poverty	20.88	15.12	0.17
Minority-Race Men	20.52	9.31	0.029*
Minority-Race Women	23.30	10.46	0.028*
White Women	4.34	7.05	0.54

N = 140, df = 135

R² = 0.1881

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

III.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	17.80	2.35	5.1e-12
Majority-Minority	0.91	3.58	0.80
Poverty	5.47	5.88	0.35
Minority-Race Men	-0.074	3.68	0.98
Minority-Race Women	3.82	4.11	0.35
White Women	2.75	2.73	0.32
Legislator Party	73.63	2.66	2e-16***

N = 140, df = 134

R² = 0.8794

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Maryland Senate

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; General Assembly of Maryland

I.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	62.22	4.63	2e-16
Majority-Minority	18.45	8.63	0.038*
Poverty	7.24	17.98	0.69

N = 45, df = 43

R² = 0.1427

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

II.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	61.66	5.46	5.2e-14
Majority-Minority	20.67	17.19	0.24
Poverty	9.46	21.08	0.66
Minority-Race Men	-1.78	20.01	0.93
Minority-Race Women	-4.19	21.72	0.85
White Women	1.38	10.63	0.90

N = 45, df = 40

R² = 0.1437

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

III.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	37.34	4.08	2.9e-11
Majority-Minority	2.23	9.97	0.82
Poverty	8.24	11.98	0.50
Minority-Race Men	-1.55	11.37	0.89
Minority-Race Women	-3.65	12.34	0.77
White Women	-2.78	6.06	0.65
Legislator Party	42.89	4.66	2.5e-11***

N = 45, df = 39

R² = 0.7305

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Missouri House of Representatives

Data Sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Missouri General Assembly

I.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	19.47	4.21	7.7e-06
Majority-Minority	28.62	9.22	0.0023**
Poverty	21.33	13.83	0.12

N = 162, df = 160

R² = 0.1287

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

II.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	15.50	4.30	0.00042
Majority-Minority	20.64	15.59	0.19
Poverty	22.01	13.48	0.10
Minority-Race Men	5.39	14.26	0.71
Minority-Race Women	17.44	19.28	0.37
White Women	21.58	6.45	0.0010**

N = 162, df = 157

R² = 0.1891

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

III.

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Pr(> t)
<i>Intercept</i>	1.76	2.81	0.53
Majority-Minority	8.03	9.72	0.41
Poverty	8.46	8.42	0.32
Minority-Race Men	-12.06	8.92	0.18
Minority-Race Women	0.21	12.02	0.99
White Women	5.42	4.13	0.19
Legislator Party	51.63	3.26	2e-16***

N = 162, df = 156

R² = 0.6892

· p < .1; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Appendix B

The following are summaries of all bills included in roll call vote indices for each legislature.

Sources: State General Assembly websites.

Georgia: <http://www.legis.ga.gov/>

Maryland: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>

Missouri: <http://www.mo.gov/government/legislative-branch/>

Georgia Senate (Short Titles Unavailable)

SB42

Unfavorable

Yea: 32

Nay: 21

Not Voting: 1

Excused: 2

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Chapter 12 of Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Georgia Indigent Defense Act of 2003," so as to extensively revise said Act; to reconstitute the Georgia Public Standards Council with new membership; to change the powers and duties of the council and provide that it shall be an advisory body; to provide for the Georgia Public Standards Agency as an agency of the state; to provide for its director and the powers and duties and operations of the agency and the director; to provide for other related matters; to provide for effective dates; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

SB165 with House Amendment

Unfavorable

Yea: 49

Nay: 3

Not Voting: 4

Excused: 0

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to social services, so as to authorize the Department of Community Health to obtain income eligibility verification from the Department of Revenue for applicants for Medicaid and the PeachCare for Kids Program; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

HB1023*Unfavorable*

Yea: 33

Nay: 13

Not Voting: 2

Excused: 8

A BILL to be entitled an Act to enact the Jobs, Opportunity, and Business Success Act of 2010; to amend Title 14 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to corporations, partnerships, and associations, so as to provide for a period of time for the waiver of certain filing fees otherwise charged in connection with such entities; to amend Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to labor and industrial relations, so as to provide that, for a period of time, employers who hire persons receiving employment security benefits shall be entitled to a credit against employer contributions; to amend Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Georgia Public Revenue Code," so as to provide that a portion of net long-term capital gains shall be excluded from state taxable income of corporations and individuals; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

HB307*Favorable*

Yea: 135

Nay: 23

Not Voting: 13

Excused: 9

A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Chapter 8 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the care and protection of indigent and elderly patients, so as to provide for a fee to be imposed on hospitals to be used to obtain federal financial participation for medical assistance payments under Medicaid; to provide for application of the "Georgia Medical Assistance Act of 1977"; to revise definitions relating to quality assessment fees on care management organizations; to revise language relating to the maximum aggregate quality assessment fees which may be imposed; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

*Maryland House of Delegates***HB740 – “Unemployment Insurance - Maximum Benefit - Increase”***Favorable*

Yea: 96

Nay: 39

Not Voting: 1

Excused: 0

Increasing the amount of the weekly unemployment insurance benefit up to a specified maximum weekly benefit over a specified amount of time.

HB310 – “Unemployment Insurance - Eligibility - Part-Time Work”

Favorable

Yea: 94

Nay: 43

Not Voting: 2

Excused: 0

Authorizing an individual who is able to work only part time to be deemed eligible for specified benefits under specified circumstances; clarifying that the Secretary of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation may not use disability as a reason to find an individual is not available for work, actively seeking work, or eligible for benefits; etc.

HB1061 – “Earned Income Credit Information Act”

Favorable

Yea: 106

Nay: 26

Not Voting: 6

Excused: 0

Requiring the Comptroller to publish the maximum income eligibility for the State earned income tax credit on or before January 1 of each taxable year; requiring the Comptroller to prepare a specified notice; requiring an employer to provide specified notification to an employee who may be eligible for the State earned income tax credit; providing that an employee may not pursue a private cause of action against an employer for the employer's failure to provide a specified notice; and applying the Act to taxable years after 2009.

HB926 – “Direct Mailings”

Favorable

Yea: 114

Nay: 27

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

Providing that a specified retiree organization may make only one request in April and one in October of each year to the Board of Trustees of the State Retirement and Pension System for retiree information that is necessary for direct mailings by the retiree organization; prohibiting a retiree organization from including specified political information in specified direct mailings; requiring the Board of Trustees to provide mail processing centers with retiree data subject to secure data share agreements; etc.

HB214 – “Definition of Wages”

Favorable

Yea: 101

Nay: 34

Not Voting: 2

Excused: 0

Clarifying that the definition of "wage" as used in the Wage Payment and Collection Law includes overtime wages.

HB1299 – “The Healthy Retail Employee Act”

Favorable

Yea: 96

Nay: 43

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

Requiring specified retail employers to provide a specified nonworking or working shift break to specified employees under specified circumstances; authorizing specified employees to file a complaint with the Commissioner of Labor and Industry under specified circumstances; requiring the Commissioner to assess a specified civil penalty under specified circumstances; subjecting provisions of the Act to notice and hearing requirements; etc.

HB1295 – “Uninsured Employer Assessments”

Favorable

Increasing the amount of assessments that the Workers' Compensation Commission imposes against uninsured employers and directs as payment into the Uninsured Employers' Fund; etc.

Yea: 126

Nay: 14

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

SB107 – “Unemployment Insurance - Tax Deferment, Trust Fund Solvency, and Cost-Neutral Modernization Act”

Favorable

Providing for an alternative method to determine the base period for unemployment insurance purposes under specified circumstances; altering provisions relating to benefit eligibility of specified part-time workers; creating an additional training benefit for specified individuals; providing that specified training benefits may not be charged to employers; providing for the calculation and limit for the additional training benefits; altering the wage requirements for a specified claimant to be eligible for unemployment benefits; etc.

Yea: 101

Nay: 33

Not Voting: 2

Excused: 0

HB103 – “Plans for Dislocated Residents”

Favorable

Requiring that a copy of a written notice of termination be sent to the local governing body of a county or municipal corporation if the use of land of a mobile home park is to be changed; applying statewide the provision that, if a mobile home park owner does not submit a relocation plan with an application for a change in the land use of a park or does not comply with an approved plan, the application may not be approved until the owner complies; specifying provisions for a park with more than 38 sites; etc.

Yea: 115

Nay: 25

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

Maryland Senate

HB1375 – “The Kids First Express Lane Eligibility Act”

Favorable

Yea: 41

Nay: 6

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

Requiring the Comptroller and the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene to enter into an interagency agreement that allows the sharing of information from the income tax return of a taxpayer for a specified purpose; requiring the Comptroller, in consultation with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, to provide a specified notice with the income tax return; etc.

HB214 – “Definition of Wages”

Favorable

Yea: 35

Nay: 12

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

[See above synopsis.]

HB1299 – “The Healthy Retail Employee Act”

Favorable

Yea: 28

Nay: 16

Not Voting: 2

Excused: 0

[See above synopsis.]

HB1061 – “Earned Income Credit Information Act”

Favorable

Yea: 16

Nay: 31

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

[See above synopsis.]

HB740 – “Unemployment Insurance - Maximum Benefit - Increase”

Favorable

Yea: 36

Nay: 11

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

[See above synopsis.]

HB310 – “Unemployment Insurance - Eligibility - Part-Time Work”

Favorable

Yea: 38

Nay: 9

Not Voting: 0

Excused: 0

[See above synopsis.]

Missouri House of Representatives

HB191 – “ Neighborhood Assistance Act”

Unfavorable

Ayes: 141

Noes: 19

Present: 1

Absent with Leave: 2

This bill changes the laws regarding economic development and taxation. Currently, a person or family is considered eligible to qualify for assistance from the Missouri Housing Development Commission under the Neighborhood Assistance Act for an affordable housing unit of either a rental unit or an owner-occupied unit if the household's combined, adjusted gross income is equal to or less than the specified percentages of the median family income for the geographic area in which the residential unit is located or the median family income for the state, whichever is greater. The bill increases the income threshold for an owner-occupier of an affordable housing unit so that it is double the threshold required for a rental unit.

HB481 – “Regarding Courts and Judicial Proceedings”

Unfavorable

Ayes: 101

Noes: 55

Present: 1

Absent with Leave: 6

“[...] (7) Specifies that the state will no longer require families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits to assign the right to receive any pre-existing child support arrearages occurring before the family received TANF benefits. Families will continue to assign child support arrearages that become due while they receive temporary assistance (Sections 208.040 and 208.055); [...]”

SB376 – “ Missouri Energy Efficiency Investment Act”

Unfavorable

Ayes: 84

Noes: 68

Present: 0

Absent with Leave: 11

“The Public Service Commission (PSC) must allow electric companies to implement and recover costs related to PSC-approved energy efficiency programs. Cost recovery shall only occur when the program has been approved by the PSC, the program results in energy savings, and the program is beneficial to all customers in the class for which the program is proposed. In determining recovery of costs, the PSC shall use a cost-effectiveness test as described. The act allows the electric companies to implement certain programs that are paid for through alternate measures even if the programs do not meet the cost-effectiveness test.

The PSC may develop cost recovery methods to encourage further investments in energy efficiency programs, which may include capitalization of investments, rate design modifications, accelerated depreciation, and allowing the company to retain a portion of the net benefits for its shareholders. The PSC shall fairly apportion the costs and benefits of energy efficiency programs to each customer class except that it may reduce or exempt costs to low-income classes.

Customers may elect not to participate in an electric company's energy efficiency program and not be charged for the associated costs provided the customer meets certain criteria. Customers who elect not to participate will not be eligible to participate in the programs in the future, except as provided by rule by the PSC. Customers who participate in programs starting after August 1, 2009 must participate in the funding recovery for a certain period of time as established by rule by the PSC.

Electric companies must annually report on their energy efficiency activities under the act, with requirements as listed.

Electric companies must list out separately on its customers' bills the cost associated with its energy efficiency programs.

The act prohibits any customer from participating in a company's energy efficiency program that offers a monetary reward for participating if the customer has received a tax credit through the low-income housing or historic preservation tax credit programs. The PSC shall develop rules to prescribe documentation to be provided to the electric company by the customer to prove that he or she did not receive either such tax credit. It shall be a Class A misdemeanor for providing false documentation.

The PSC must develop rules that provide for public disclosure of all the recipients of monetary rewards through energy efficiency programs offered by electric companies under the act.

The act requires any appliance purchased by the state until August 28, 2011 to be an Energy Star rated appliance, unless it is cost-prohibitive.

The act removes the requirement that commissioners of the PSC must live within 45 miles of Jefferson City.

This act is similar to HB 882 (2009) and contains a provision similar to a provision in SCS/SB 430 (2009).”