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Jesse Crosson

Political Science



Dr. Crosson's website

Crosson, J., & Kaslovsky, J. (2024). Do Local Roots Impact Washington Behaviors? District Connections and Representation in the U.S. Congress. *American Political Science Review*. https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305542400056X

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Do Local Roots Impact Washington Behaviors? District Connections and Representation in the U.S. Congress

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JACLYN KASLOVSKY *Rice University, United States*

Although commentators often point to the political value of legislators' geographic ties, less is known about the influence of such connections once in office. Given recent scholarship underscoring the importance of geography as a dimension of identity, we argue that local legislators should behave as descriptive representatives. We collect the hometowns of all members of Congress with known birth locations from 1789 to 2020 to analyze how being born near one's district impacts legislator behavior. We connect these data to information on a series of behaviors, finding that local legislators emphasize constituency work over policymaking and party-building. Moreover, while local legislators do not demonstrate substantively less partisan unity in roll-call voting, they attract a higher percentage of out-party cosponsors to their bills. Together, our results point to important representational implications regarding the geographic roots of legislators and the role of local connections in the contemporary Congress.

Kaylyn Jackson Schiff

Political Science



Dr. Schiff's website

Schiff, K. J., Schiff, D. S., & Bueno, N. S. (2025). The Liar's Dividend: Can Politicians Claim Misinformation to Evade Accountability? *American Political Science Review*, *119*(1), 71–90. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423001454

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The Liar's Dividend: Can Politicians Claim Misinformation to Evade Accountability?

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This study addresses the phenomenon of misinformation about misinformation*, or politicians "crying wolf" over fake news. Strategic and false claims that stories are fake news or deepfakes may benefit politicians by helping them maintain support after a scandal. We posit that this benefit, known as the "liar's dividend," may be achieved through two politician strategies: by invoking informational uncertainty or by encouraging oppositional rallying of core supporters. We administer five survey experiments to over 15,000 American adults detailing hypothetical politician responses to stories describing real politician scandals. We find that claims of misinformation representing both strategies raise politician support across partisan subgroups. These strategies are effective against text-based reports of scandals, but are largely ineffective against video evidence and do not reduce general trust in media. Finally, these false claims produce greater dividends for politicians than alternative responses to scandal, such as remaining silent or apologizing.*

Mollie Cohen

Political Science



Dr. Cohen's website

Cohen, M. J., Noh, E. E., & Zechmeister, E. J. (2024). Vote Buying, Norms, Context, and Trust in Elections. Comparative Political Studies, *58*(4), 647-679. https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140241252099

Article

Vote Buying, Norms, Context, and Trust in Elections

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Abstract

Conventional wisdom says vote buying undermines trust in elections, but few have examined this systematically. We identify why this relationship ought to hold, on average. We also derive two conditioning hypotheses: vote buying will be less consequential among citizens who view these exchanges as positive and in contexts marred by electoral irregularities. We test these three expectations with analyses of cross-national survey data and an original survey experiment. We find only a small and inconsistent relationship between vote buying and electoral trust. We find weak evidence on the role of norms and more support for the notion that context matters. We conclude that a modest connection between vote buying and electoral trust is driven less by approval of vote buying practices and more by variation in how elections are *actually* conducted and, related, the relative novelty of being exposed to vote buying.