



Minutes of the 2007 Annual Business Meeting Legislative Studies Section American Political Science Association

August 31, 2007

President Steve Smith began by reporting that the section was in good shape in terms of its budget and membership.

Linda Fowler, 2007 Program Chair, reported that there were 283 proposals to LSS and 19 panels. She also raised several points of potential concern, including how to ensure quality control for proposals submitted by graduate students, and how to deal with comparative legislative politics proposals. She suggested that these should be matters for the executive council and next program chair to address.

Concerns were also expressed about the high rejection rate for papers and the low attendance at panels. Some suggestions were offered concerning how to improve quality and reduce submissions, but it was noted that reducing the number of proposals will adversely impact the number of panels allocated by APSA.

It was specifically suggested that the program committee charge be provided with subject area advisors in order to produce a more informed paper and discussant selection process. It was also suggested that an effort be made to cluster LSS posters in the same time and place, and to avoid overlapping panels if possible.

Steve thanked Larry Evans for his service as co-editor of Legislative Studies Quarterly, and recognized David Canon as recently appointed editor.

Jeffrey Biggs then provided an update on the Congressional Fellowship Program (after complimenting the section for its business meeting attendance). He noted that the age of the typical applicant is declining, partly due to the declining value of the stipend. He noted that some schools are supplementing the Fellowship in order to encourage faculty to apply. He then requested that section members identify qualified candidates and encourage them to apply.

Steve Smith reported that a new editor is needed for the Extension of Remarks section of the LSS newsletter. Before proceeding to appoint a new editor, the

LSS Council suggested using the LSS listserv to poll members about whether Extension of Remarks is something that they value and read. A motion was proposed and adopted to poll and discontinue Extension of Remarks if the Council determined that there is not sufficient interest.

It was also suggested that distributing an e-mail with the article titles might increase interest. Steve asked that section members forward suggestions on this topic via e-mail.

Steve announced the slate of 2007-2009 section officers nominated by the Council, including Larry Dodd (President), Tracy Sulkin (Secretary/Treasurer), Chuck Shipan (Council), and Cindy Simon Rosenthal (Council). The slate was approved without objection.

AWARDS

Richard F. Fenno Award (Committee: Tracy Sulkin, Burdett Loomis, Thomas Remington)

Gregory Wawro and Eric Schickler, *Filibuster: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the U.S. Senate* (Princeton University Press)

“Of a number of excellent nominations this year, Wawro and Schickler’s *Filibuster* rose to the top. The puzzle that motivates their investigation is how the Senate was able to function as a policymaking body before the adoption of cloture, and, more broadly, why Senate majorities were willing to accommodate supermajoritarian rules. Wawro and Schickler offer the novel and compelling argument that this accommodation was intentional--that obstruction by the minority had informational value to the majority, revealing the intensity of preferences. Moreover, the potential of policy defeat for the majority was mitigated by the threat of rules changes that could create precedents to limit obstruction. As such, even under formally supermajoritarian rules, Senate majorities were able to govern via remote majoritarianism.

The authors bring an impressive amount of evidence to bear on these hypotheses, including extensive statistical analyses of legislative action and in-depth case studies of a variety of important policy debates during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The book serves as a model of the integration of quantitative, qualitative, and formal analyses in the study of Congress. It is a provocative work that has already generated considerable interest and debate and will undoubtedly continue to do so, having a major impact on studies of the Senate and legislative organization.”

Alan Rosenthal Award (Committee: Garrison Nelson, Susan Hammond, Stephen Frank)

Nancy Martarano, “Balancing Power: Committee System Autonomy and Legislative Organization.”

“I am pleased to have been asked to chair this years Rosenthal Prize Committee Award. I remember when the Legislative Studies Section was first

asked by Carl Kurtz of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to present such an award to honor Alan Rosenthal, who has toiled for years in the less glamorous field of state legislative research. I spent time with Alan at the LINKS '98 Conference in Boston and it was clear that Alan not only studies state legislatures but has worked tirelessly to improve their functioning both as legislative bodies but also as the most direct links of a state's citizens to its government.

With those experiences in mind, I was pleased when the members of the committee – Professor Susan Hammond of American University and Stephen Frank of St. Cloud State University agreed on the choice of Nancy Martarano's May, 2006 exceptional article in the LEGISLATIVE STUDIES QUARTERLY, "Balancing Power: Committee System Autonomy and Legislative Organization." Over the past few years, I have been able to participate in panels at the Northeastern Political Science Association where Nancy and her collaborators, her mentor Keith Hamm of Rice University and Keith's mentor, Ron Hedlund of Northeastern University have presented papers dealing with their extraordinary database of a century's worth of invaluable information about the role of legislative committees in defining state public policies.

After receiving the nominations for this award, I brought them to the attention of Vermont state legislators. It was the clear contention of my small legislative panel that nothing more captures the essence of the state legislative process than its committees, meeting in small conference rooms in state office buildings, working long hours, doing most of their own research and far from the glare of public notice. That's where the work gets done. And it was that contention that tipped the scales to Nancy's outstanding paper and I am pleased to be able to award this year's Alan Rosenthal Prize to Professor Nancy Martorano of the University of Dayton."

CQ Press Award (Committee: Linda Fowler, Jason Roberts, Lynda Powell)

Douglas Kriner, "Hail to the Chief? Two Mechanisms of Congressional Influence Over Presidential War-Making."

"Kriner's paper examines congressional influence on military conflicts involving the U.S. using hazard models to predict their duration. While controlling for the characteristics of America's adversary and the strategic climate of the war, he demonstrates that the size of the president's party coalition in both chambers has an impact on the length conflicts. For example, increasing the number of presidential partisans from the 25th to the 75th percentile lengthens a conflict by 60 percent. In addition, Kriner establishes that lawmakers affect the course of war through their willingness to authorize presidential action, to enact binding limitations on its prosecution or to disagree publicly with the president's decisions.

The research is a major contribution to an emerging literature that challenges conventional wisdom regarding congressional power over foreign policy and war, effectively giving content to the "black box" of domestic constraints. Kriner's argument is not only timely, and it is also relevant beyond

the field of legislative studies and to those outside the academy. His results suggest that the challenges to Bush administration policy in Iraq coming from Capitol Hill are more than symbolic gestures.”

Jewell-Loewenberg Award (Committee: Lanny Martin, Samuel Kernell, Wendy Schiller)

John Griffin, 2006. “Senate Apportionment as a Source of Political Inequality.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 31(3): 405-432.

"On behalf of the Jewell-Loewenberg Committee, and the entire LSS section, we wish to congratulate John Griffin for his excellent article entitled “Senate Apportionment as a Source of Political Inequality.” We considered a number of excellent articles that were published in LSQ but John’s work clearly emerged as the winner. In brief, Griffin adapts a measure of geographic and population voting weight and applies it to the Senate to create a state’s voting weight (SVW) in the Senate. Essentially, he is assessing the relative weight that the citizens of any given state can exert on a vote in the Senate. Griffin then maps each state’s racial composition, ideological distribution, and public policy attitudes onto that voting weight to assess the relative influence of groups and policy preferences in the Senate arena. He finds that citizens who tend to vote for the Democratic Party, and support increased government spending in certain social issue areas, live in states with less voting weight. Separate from party affiliation, African Americans and Latinos also tend to live in states that have less voting weight. Griffin hypothesizes that migration patterns among demographic subgroups from the South to the North actually results in a greater political disadvantage for them in Senate. It is important to note that Griffin finds that individual senators are responsive to their supporters in each state, but that senators who support Democratic policy positions tend to be elected in under-weighted states.

This article stood out from all the others because of Griffins’ strong theoretical question and his rigorous and appropriate use of different data and methods together. In the best traditions of social science, Griffin extends the findings of work that has come before his to give us a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the effects of legislative apportionment on representation."

Incoming program chair Craig Volden encouraged section members to submit quality proposals and to be willing to serve as discussants. Steve concluded the meeting by thanking the outgoing officers for their service.

Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

John Wilkerson

Secretary/Treasurer

