



Minutes of the 2008 Annual Business Meeting
Legislative Studies Section
American Political Science Association
Boston, Massachusetts
August 29, 2008

Section Chair Larry Dodd called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and reminded attendees of the section reception to follow the business meeting.

Bruce Oppenheimer announced that he and David Rohde are organizing a two-part conference on bicameralism, with the first part to take place at Duke from March 26-29 and the second to take place at Vanderbilt in the fall. He encouraged those who wished to participate to submit papers.

David Canon, co-editor of *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, made a report on his first year as editor. He noted that submissions are up, that the journal is rising in the rankings (in the latest survey by Garand, it is ranked at number 12, making it the 2nd most highly ranked subfield journal), and that the median turnaround time is two months. He thanked reviewers for the journal.

Canon and Jan Box-Steffensmeier then announced the launching of a new series on legislative politics and public policy at the University of Michigan Press. They encouraged submissions on topics related to Congress and state legislatures.

The final announcement related to the 2009 International Political Science Association Meeting, which will take place in Santiago, Chile. There will be panels on legislatures, so interested section members were encouraged to submit papers.

Larry Dodd read a report from the 2008 LSS Program Chair, Craig Volden, who was unable to attend the meeting. Volden reported that based on past program size, last year's attendance at our panels, and last year's proposal rejection rate, the section was allocated 19 panels for the 2008 conference, the same as in 2007. By initiating and taking advantage of co-sponsorship opportunities, that number was increased to 28 panels that legislative studies solely sponsors or cosponsors at the current meetings. He noted that based on feedback from last year's section meeting, most panels included four papers, a chair and two discussants. He thanked the many section members who volunteered to serve as chairs and discussants.

Patrick Sellers, the 2009 LSS Program Chair, then encouraged section members to submit papers for next year's conference. He also noted that he welcomed assistance from specialists in state legislative politics and comparative legislatures in assessing submissions in those areas.

Larry Dodd reported on several APSA initiatives raised at the meeting for Section Chairs. One relates to the new APSA Community Site, which will enable sections and members to communicate

on-line. The second relates to the "renewal" of sections. Section memberships are at a steady state, though membership in APSA is growing. The lack of growth in the former may be a result of members belonging to fewer sections, particularly as more have become connected to journals and thus have higher dues. Larry highlighted the collective benefits of LSS membership, including panels, subsidizing LSQ and awards, and social activities. He suggested holding an LSS reception at regional conferences, beginning with MPSA in 2009. The section will also sponsor a survey through the Carl Albert Center, seeking member input on possible activities like receptions, further outreach to scholars of state and comparative legislatures, providing selective incentives for members (i.e., priority for members in the selection of submissions for panel slots at the annual meeting), waiving membership fees for graduate students, and developing mentoring opportunities for graduate students and junior faculty. Several section members contributed ideas about how to boost participation in the section, including rethinking the timing of the business meeting and considering the possibility of a legislative studies conference based on the PolMeth model.

The meeting then continued with the presentation of awards.

CQ Press Award for the best paper on legislative studies presented at the 2007 annual meeting (Selection Committee: Bruce Oppenheimer, Jennifer Lawless, Josh Clinton)

Recipients: Kathryn Pearson of the University of Minnesota and Eric Schickler of the University of California, Berkeley, "Discharge Petitions, Agenda Control, and the Congressional Committee System 1929-1976"

" Pearson and Schickler's analysis of recently available data on discharge petition signers from 1929-76, when signatures were not public, and public data on signers since 1993 provides them with a valuable data base for testing competing theories about majority party control, committee power and deference, ideology, and the changing nature of parties in the House of Representatives. Their careful analysis allows them to make important refinements in what are largely unqualified theoretical positions. Thus, instead of finding support for a universal norm of committee deference, they find that the signing of discharge petitions is inversely related to a member's stake in the committee system, and that the assumption that majority party members will be less likely to support discharge petitions than minority party members is largely dependent on the strength of party governance in the House. Thus, it is only in recent years that minority party members predominate among discharge petition signers while in the in earlier decades during the era of the conservative coalition, northern Democrats were the most frequent signers.

Pearson and Schicker take great care to control for the independent effects of a variety of indicators as a means of discriminating among a range of competing arguments that the literature and competing theories make about discharge petitions. In doing so they effectively change the question from one of absolutes to one of asking under what conditions are certain types of members more or less likely to use alternative means to get legislation considered on the floor.

Finally, I should note that reading this paper causes me to rethink what I've traditionally taught students about discharge petitions and other alternative methods of bringing legislation to the floor. Instead of being a rules and procedures caveat, I now see the discharge petition as valuable unobtrusive indicator of who is in control of the House."

Alan Rosenthal Prize for the best book or article in legislative studies written by a junior scholar

that has potential value to legislative practitioners (Selection Committee: James Thurber, Nancy Martorano, Michael Minta)

Recipient: David Primo, University of Rochester, *Rules and Restraint: Government Spending and the Design of Institutions* (published by University of Chicago Press).

"Although there are many worthy recipients for this award, we present the 2008 Alan Rosenthal Prize to David Primo for his excellent book *Rules and Restraint: Government Spending and the Design of Institutions*. Primo argues that budget rules, requiring a balanced budget and spending limits, usually fail because these rules are not properly designed and there is no real threat of credible enforcement. Instead he finds legislators' desire to honor budget commitments is outweighed usually by their desire to provide benefits to politically powerful constituents such as homeowners, seniors, and businesses. Primo's argument challenges the assumption in most studies that budget rules will be credibly enforced by legislators."

Jewell-Loewenberg Award for the best article in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* in 2007 (Selection Committee: John Griffin, Sarah Binder, William Mishler)

Recipients: James Snyder of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Michiko Ueda of California Institute of Technology, "Do Multimember Districts Lead to Free Riding?" (LSQ 32:649-679)

"Although there were a number of laudable pieces in Volume 32, we quickly agreed on "Do Multimember Districts Lead to Free Riding?" by Jim Snyder and Michiko Ueda. This article asks whether the effectiveness of legislators in securing appropriations for their constituents is related to district magnitude. With theories pointing in opposite directions, the authors leverage the change from multimember to single member districts in many states in the 1970s and 1980s. They find that district magnitude is positively associated with state distributions to local governments."

Carl Albert Dissertation Award for the best doctoral dissertation in the area of legislative studies (Selection Committee: Kathryn Pearson, Elizabeth Oldmixon, Kim Quaile Hill)

Recipient: Robert Salmond (University of California, Los Angeles), "Parliamentary Question Times: How Legislative Accountability Mechanisms Affect Citizens and Politics."

"We enthusiastically agreed to give the Carl Albert Dissertation Award to Robert Salmond for his dissertation, "Parliamentary Question Times: How Legislative Accountability Mechanisms Affect Citizens and Politics." In his dissertation, Salmond asks whether Question Time (QT) affects politics beyond the walls of Parliament in advanced democracies, specifically citizens' knowledge about politics, their partisanship, and their propensity to turn out to vote. The answer is a resounding yes, and in a variety of ways, but it matters how QT is structured.

Salmond constructs two measures of the differences in QTs across countries. "QT openness" is based on the rules that govern QT and taps the spontaneity of the questions and answers. "Speeches per hour" measures politicians' behavior.

He finds that QTs featuring shorter speeches, surprise questions, and more contentious debate are more likely to politically engage citizens than are civil and formulaic QTs. This is because, and I quote from his dissertation: "the more vitriolic, circus-like 'open QTs' provide more newsworthy material for the media and are more accessible and enjoyable for citizens, who

encounter QT on the evening news and in the newspaper.”

Beyond these institutional differences across legislatures, Salmond also finds interesting differences across voters. QT does not affect everybody equally. For example, younger voters –those most likely to seek and comprehend ‘spectacular’ forms of information in other contexts – are more likely to be mobilized by a spectacular QT institution. The committee was particularly impressed by Salmond's empirical work in chapter 5 on QT and turnout, partisan effects, and information in the mass public, and the conceptual work that led up to this empirical chapter.

Salmond’s dissertation has many strengths: it bridges the study of institutional rules, elite behavior, and mass behavior; it explores institutional variation across western democracies; and it subjects contemporary political events in the news to scientific inquiry. It started by thinking about how to take a political phenomenon in the news and fit it into a larger puzzle. It is also worth noting that this dissertation was an enjoyable read and a real learning experience for all of us.”

Richard F. Fenno, Jr. Prize for the best book in legislative studies published in 2007 (Selection Committee: Gregory Wawro, Bryan Jones, Barbara Sinclair)

Recipients: Simon Hix, Abdul Noury, and Gerard Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, Cambridge University Press

"In this theoretically and empirically innovative study, Simon Hix, Abdul G. Noury, and Gerard Roland take advantage of the unique opportunity provided by the European Parliament to observe and study in real time the early development and evolution of a legislative institution. This ambitious book clearly documents the emerging partisan organization of the European legislature, and asks a key question: why have national interests not fared better vis-à-vis transnational partisan interests in the organization of conflict in the supranational legislature? To answer this and other questions that are fundamental to the study of legislatures and to the discipline in general, the authors have collected and analyzed an extensive data set that focuses on roll call voting in the EU parliament. Their analysis demonstrates how parties overcome collective action problems to transcend national boundaries in order to influence policy outputs from the EU. The result is a well-organized, empirically convincing, and theoretically open-minded work of timely social science that promises to spur significant interest in the EU parliament and promote more and better research in comparative legislative studies."

LSS Chair Larry Dodd congratulated the award winners and thanked the committees and legislative studies section officers for their service.

Vincent Moscardelli offered a last announcement about a forthcoming special issue of *Congress & The Presidency* on the theme "The State of Inter-Branch Relations at the End of the Bush Presidency." He encouraged section members to submit papers.

Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Sulkin
LSS Secretary-Treasurer

