



Minutes of the 2009 Annual Business Meeting

**Legislative Studies Section
American Political Science Association
Toronto, ON
September 4, 2009**

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. He noted that this would be his final LSS Meeting as Chair and thanked the Council, the Carl Albert Center, Valerie Heitshusen (editor, "Extension of Remarks") and Pat Sellers (2009 LSS Program Chair) for their hard work and support.

Pat Sellers reported on the LSS Program for the 2009 Meeting. The section sponsored 15 panels and cosponsored 4 more. Panel allocation by APSA is based on attendance at panels and proposal rejection rates for the previous annual meeting, and our allotment this year for 2009 represents a decrease of 4 panels from 2008. He noted that the Council has discussed this issue and possibilities for addressing it. Larry Dodd noted that the 2010 Program Chair will be Thad Kousser.

Larry Dodd then summarized the discussion that the LSS Council had preceding the business meeting. He noted that membership in the section has plateaued at about 600 and that this likely reflects overall trends in section membership. As more sections have become affiliated with journals (and have raised membership dues accordingly), APSA members have cut back on the number of sections to which they belong. He also discussed a related issue--the future of Legislative Studies as a section. Historically, it has been Congress-centric, but the growth of comparative legislative studies (cross-national and cross-state) may indicate the need to adjust this. Some possibilities raised in the Council meeting included a new vice-chair for the section or a system of co-chairs for the annual meeting program, one a Congress scholar, one a comparativist, and one a state politics specialist. He noted that no decisions were made, and encouraged the membership and new leadership to continue the discussion over the coming year.

The meeting continued with the presentation of awards.

Carl Albert Dissertation Award for the best doctoral dissertation in the area of legislative studies (Selection Committee: Christine DeGregorio, Rob Salmond, Sean Theriault)

Recipient: Thomas Clark (Emory University), "The Politics of Judicial Independence: Court Curbing and the Separation of Powers."

"The dissertations were really lovely, interesting subject matter, ambitious in scope, dazzling methodological displays. As sound and strong as these all are, we reached unanimity in favoring "The Politics of Judicial Independence: Court Curbing and the Separation of Powers" by Thomas S. Clark, Princeton University under the advising of Charles M. Cameron.

We see several strengths in this work. First and foremost is the contribution. Clark explores an important question about separation of powers and congressional preeminence. In exploring the relationship between the Congress and the Court, Clark finds that public discontent, not congressional action, is the primary determinant of Court-curbing (159). And within Congress, Court-curbing behavior is primarily an exercise in position taking. His findings have both positive and normative implications and generate many fruitful lines of inquiry. Second, Clark formally derives and then empirically tests several hypotheses. This combination is a major strength of the work. Third is Clark's decision to enrich his sophisticated quantitative results with insights from elite interviews. The final product is laudable and worthy of the Carl Albert Award."

CQ Press Award for the best paper on legislative studies presented at the 2008 annual meeting (Selection Committee: Charles Stewart, Kathryn Pearson, John Lapinski)

Recipients: Ken Shotts and Alexander Hirsch, Stanford University, "Policy R&D and Legislative Organization"

"Policy R&D and Legislative Organization" is an important and interesting paper that combines insights from prior efforts to model formally the behavior of legislative committees, producing new insights into the conditions under which committees invest in acquiring policy expertise and when they don't. Building most notably upon the pioneering work of Krehbiel and Gilligan of the late 1980s, which relates information provision to the organization of committees and the rules under which legislation comes to the floor, Shotts and Hirsch ask about the degree to which the information that committees produce can be generalized to inform work on other legislation that might be considered by the same committee. They show that in those cases when the information uncovered in the consideration of one policy can be used to inform other policies, the findings first attributed to Krehbiel and Gilligan hold. However, in cases where information uncovered in the consideration of one policy cannot be used more generally, committees may have an incentive to have their legislation considered under open rules. In showing this, Shotts and Hirsch provide important insights into the generalizability of one of the most important theoretical models used to study legislative committees, including conditions under which prior expectations might be turned on their heads."

Jewell-Loewenberg Award for the best article in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* in 2008 (Selection Committee: Michiko Ueda, Marian Currinder, Keith Hamm)

Recipient: Neil Malhotra, Stanford University, "Disentangling the Relationship between Legislative Professionalism and Government Spending" (LSQ 33(3):387-414)

“In this piece, Neil Malhotra demonstrated that professionalized state legislatures, such as those in California and New York, do not necessarily spend more than their citizen-type or part-time bodies. This finding is significant given the fact that some recent movements to deprofessionalize state legislatures have been driven by the notion that professional legislatures are associated with higher government spending. In addition to its practical implications, the piece is outstanding for its methodological robustness. Using propensity score matching, the article tried to identify the causal effect of legislative institutions on the level of government spending. For its academic and practical contributions, the article deserves recognition as the best paper in the LSQ.”

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: Beth Rosenson, David Primo, Dan Wirls)

Recipient: Christopher Berry, University of Chicago, “Piling on: Multilevel Government and the Fiscal Common-Pool” (published in the October 2008 *AJPS*).

“In this article Chris demonstrates that when multiple (territorially overlapping) local governments can tax citizens, the result is “overfishing” of the tax base. The topic is an ideal fit for the Rosenthal Prize, as it could not be more timely and relevant to modern legislative politics. As state and local governments around the country desperately try to save money in tight budgetary times, Berry’s article certainly suggests one place to look for cost savings.

The intuition is as follows: To the extent that special purpose governments have constituencies interested in securing large amounts of some government service--for instance, education--special purpose governments have an incentive to seek large amounts of spending in their domain. There is no incentive to coordinate with other governments to ensure that “too much” spending does not occur. Berry performs a series of carefully constructed empirical tests and shows that increases in the number of overlapping jurisdictions have substantively consequential effects on revenues. Chris has recently completed a forthcoming Cambridge University Press book on the subject titled *Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multi-Level Governments*, and we look forward to reading more of his work on public finance in the years to come.”

Richard F. Fenno, Jr. Prize for the best book in legislative studies published in 2008 (Selection Committee: Kenneth Shepsle, Sarah Binder, Simon Hix)

Recipient: Damon Cann, *Sharing the Wealth: Member Contributions and the Exchange Theory of Party Influence in the U.S. House of Representatives* (SUNY Press)

“The story of members’ contributions to one another’s election campaigns is fascinating, and clearly under-researched. This is a new and interesting development. Damon M. Cann’s *Sharing the Wealth: Member Contributions and the Exchange Theory of Party Influence in the U.S. House of Representatives* tells this story very well. It engages with the existing theoretical literature, introduces a lot of new data, applies some sophisticated methods well, and draws careful inferences. As such, it is a theoretically informed and empirically succinct contribution to our understanding of the mechanics of party power in the House. It moves beyond our general understanding of the rise of Member-to-Member contributions, and is able to show effectively the consequences of the votes-for-dollars and dollars-for-power exchanges that appear to underlie contemporary majority party politics. Cann complements

existing party theory, providing a neat perspective on the selective incentives that lie at the heart of leader-member exchanges in the House. It stands out as a very nicely executed project.”

LSS Chair Larry Dodd congratulated the award winners and thanked the committees for their service.

The meeting then turned to the election of new officers. LSS officers Larry Dodd and Tracy Sulkin had completed their terms of office, as had Council Members Cindy Simon Rosenthal and Charles Shipan.

The committee to nominate new section officers was chaired by Diana Evans and included Frances Lee and Eric Schickler. The committee proposed the following nominees for two-year terms: for LSS Chair, Sarah Binder; for Secretary-Treasurer, Tracy Sulkin; for Council Members, Scott Adler and Barry Burden. The slate of nominees was unanimously approved by the LSS membership.

Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Sulkin
LSS Secretary-Treasurer

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