The Impression of Influence: How Legislator Communication and Government Spending Cultivates a Personal Vote

Justin Grimmer
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Stanford University

joint work with
Sean Westwood (PhD Candidate, Stanford University)
Solomon Messing (PhD Candidate, Stanford University)
Visclosky (D-IN) $525,000
Visclosky (D-IN)

$525,000

$400,000

$125,000
Visclosky (D-IN)

$525,000

$400,000

$125,000
Representative’s Problem

Strategic Politician

money
votes
service

Visclosky tells them

Representative’s Opportunity

Complicates accountability

Money ⇝ Impression of influence
Representative’s Problem

Strategic Politician

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Inattentive Constituents

Visclosky tells them

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Money

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Impression of influence
Representative’s Problem

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money  votes  service

Learn about representation?

Representative’s Opportunity

Complicates accountability

Money $\Rightarrow$ Impression of influence
Representative’s Problem

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Money ⇝ Impression of influence
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Representative’s Problem ⇐⇒
Representative’s Opportunity
Representative’s Problem \rightarrow Strategic Politician

Money \rightarrow Votes

Visclosky tells them

Representative’s Opportunity

Complicates accountability
Representative’s Problem \(\Rightarrow\) Strategic Politician

Money \(\Rightarrow\) Votes

Money \(\Rightarrow\) Service

Visclosky tells them

Representative’s Opportunity

Complicates accountability

Money \(\Rightarrow\) Impression of influence
Susan Collins (R-ME)
Senator Susan Collins just announced that the US Department of Transportation will award a $5.2 million grant to the Town of Rumford, funding will help replace the 57-year old Martin Memorial Bridge.

"The Martin Memorial Bridge is an important crossing for residents and businesses in the River Valley area and clearly needs to be replaced. Employers in the area, like New Page, have told me that this bridge is critical to efficient and cost-effective transportation. Nearly one-third of New Page's pulpwood and chips are sourced from south of the Androscoggin River, and the loss of this bridge would increase trucking distances and costs."
Senator Collins and USM President Selma Botman cut the ribbon dedicating the new Undergraduate Research Science Center at USM in Portland.
Senators Snowe, Collins Announce $750,000 VA Grant for Preble Street bit.ly/OarOff
Federal grant will help establish high-tech business center in Dover-Foxcroft and create much-needed jobs! 1.usa.gov/PQrnFu
Senator Collins Announces $2.4 Million for Ferry Service Improvements in Maine bit.ly/Ou6X8E
WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Olympia J. Snowe and Susan Collins today announced that the U.S. Department of Energy has awarded $40,441,471 grant funding to Evergreen Wind Power in Danforth.

The funding is being distributed through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and is part of $502 million in awards announced today intended to provide cash assistance to energy companies in place of earned tax credits. According to the Departments of Energy (DOE) and Treasury, the new funding creates additional upfront capital, enabling companies to create jobs and begin construction on planned projects.

"Investment is critical if Maine is to become a leader in the development of wind power. This funding will assist Evergreen Wind Power tap this potential and will help create good-paying, clean energy jobs in Maine," said Senators Snowe and Collins in a joint statement.

Created by the economic recovery act that Senators Snowe and Collins helped craft earlier this year, this grant program is expected to provide more than $3 billion in financial support for clean energy projects by providing direct payments in lieu of tax credits. According to DOE, these payments will support an estimated 5,000 bio-mass, solar, wind, and other types of renewable energy production facilities in all regions of the country over the life of the program. As a result of this first round of funding, more than 2,000 Americans will have access to jobs in the renewable energy industry – both in construction and in manufacturing – while moving the nation closer to meeting the Administration's goal of doubling renewable energy generation in the next few years.
Maine wind farm gets stimulus funds

By Nick Sambides Jr., BDN Staff

Posted Sept. 01, 2009, at 9:36 p.m.

Last modified Jan. 20, 2011, at 10:18 p.m.
February 20, 2009

Snowe, Collins Announce Over $2.5 Million for Aviation Projects in Maine

Washington, D.C.

U.S. Senators Olympia J. Snowe and Susan Collins (R-Maine) today announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration has awarded $2,594,741 in transportation funding for air travel improvement projects in Maine.

"The people of Maine depend on safe and efficient air travel to stay connected to the rest of the country and the world," Senators Snowe and Collins said. "These funds will make necessary infrastructure improvements to airports across the state, keeping travel services safe and Mainers in the air."

The funding is distributed as follows:

$1,177,843 to the City of Portland- This grant will be used for the preliminary engineering and design for a runway safety area construction project at Portland International Jetport.

$166,818 to the Town of Bethel- This grant will be used for an airport master plan update at Bethel Regional Airport.

$222,266 to the Town of Princeton- These funds will be used to expand the aircraft parking apron at Princeton Municipal Airport to meet the growing need for parking space.

$285,000 to the County of Knox- This grant will provide funding for terminal building construction at Knox County Regional Airport.
February 20, 2009

Snowe, Collins Announce Over $2.5 Million for Aviation Projects in Maine

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration has awarded $2,594,741 in transportation funding for air travel improvement projects in Maine, according to a press release from U.S. Sens. Olympia J. Snowe and Susan Collins, R-Maine.

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— **$1,177,843** to Portland for preliminary engineering and design for a runway safety area construction project at Portland International Jetport.

— **$166,818** to Bethel for an airport master plan update at Bethel Regional Airport.

— **$222,266** to Princeton to expand the aircraft parking apron at Princeton Municipal Airport.

— **$285,000** to Knox County for terminal building construction at Knox County Regional Airport.

— **$118,750** to Knox County for the rehabilitation of a runway at Knox County Regional.

— **$99,943** to the state of Maine for runway improvements at Augusta State Airport.

— **$453,818** to Presque Isle for a taxiway extension project and the installation of perimeter fencing at Northern Maine Regional Airport.

— **$70,303** to Auburn and Lewiston for an environmental assessment for Auburn-Lewiston terminal building construction at Knox County Regional Airport.
The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming
Constituent Credit Allocation
Personal Vote

Legislators \(\Rightarrow\) create an impression of influence with strategic credit claiming

Constituents \(\Rightarrow\) heuristic assessment of credit claiming statements

Result: support for incumbent

- Representation: credit for mere report of an action, not just money
- Political Institutions: Bureaucrats cultivate support with credit claiming opportunities
- Congressional Elections: Criticism and electoral return to spending

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming

Legislators create an impression of influence with strategic credit claiming
The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming ➝ Constituent Credit Allocation

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The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming \(\Rightarrow\) Constituent Credit Allocation \(\Rightarrow\) Personal Vote

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The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming \quad \xrightarrow{\text{Constituent Credit Allocation}} \quad \text{Personal Vote}

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The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming

Constituent Credit Allocation

Personal Vote

Credit Claiming: Analyze 170,000 House Press Releases
The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming  Constituent Credit Allocation  Personal Vote

Credit Claiming: Analyze 170,000 House Press Releases
- Legislators vary association with spending (Ensemble classification algorithm)
- Claim credit broadly (Topic models on classified texts)
- Relatively small amounts (Entity Classification)
The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming  Constitute Credit Allocation  Personal Vote

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Credit Allocation: Survey experiments
The Impression of Influence

Legislator Credit Claiming

Constituent Credit Allocation

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Credit Allocation: Survey experiments
- Ecologically valid
- Externally valid
Cultivating an Impression Influence

\[ \$ \rightarrow \text{Votes} \]
Cultivating an Impression Influence

- Generate belief effective at delivering money (Mayhew 1974)
Cultivating an Impression Influence

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Cultivating an Impression Influence

- **Credit Claim**
- **Impressions**
- **Votes**

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- Legislators claim credit broadly and long before expenditure
Cultivating an Impression Influence

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Analyze *credit claiming* in 170,000 House Press releases (2005-2010).

Examples:
Analyze credit claiming in 170,000 House Press releases (2005-2010).

Examples:

Rep. Harold "Hal" Rogers (KY-05) announced today that Kentucky is slated to receive $962,500 to protect critical infrastructure– power plants, chemical facilities, stadiums, and other high-risk assets, through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s buffer zone protection program.
Analyze credit claiming in 170,000 House Press releases (2005-2010).
Examples:

A federal grant will help keep the Brainerd Lakes Airport operating in winter weather. Today, Congressman Jim Oberstar announced that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will award $528,873 to the Brainerd airport. The funding will be used to purchase new snow removal and deicing equipment.
Analyze credit claiming in 170,000 House Press releases (2005-2010). Examples:

Congresswoman Darlene Hooley (OR-5) and Congressmen Earl Blumenauer (OR-3), David Wu (OR-1) and Greg Walden (OR-2) joined together today in announcing $375,000 in federal funding for the Oregon Partnership to combat methamphetamine abuse in Oregon.
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Machine learning ➝ measure rate
Measuring Credit Claiming in 170,000 Press Releases

Weighted Ensemble (van der Laan 2007)
Measuring Credit Claiming in 170,000 Press Releases

Weighted Ensemble (van der Laan 2007)
- Triple hand code 800 documents (credit claiming, other categories)

Output: All 170,000 Press Releases classified
Accurate: 90% accuracy.

Ensembles for classification
⇝
Ensembles for effect heterogeneity and heterogenous treatments (Grimmer, Messing, Westwood 2013)
Measuring Credit Claiming in 170,000 Press Releases

**Weighted Ensemble** (van der Laan 2007)
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Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

Proportion of Press Releases vs. Density

- Dan Burton (R−IN)
- Lee Terry (R−OK)
- Elijah Cummings (D−MD)
- Bill Thomas (R−CA)
- John Tierney (D−MA)
- Hal Rogers (R−KY)
Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

Claiming Credit for Particularistic Spending

- Proportion Press Releases Credit Claiming
- Democrats
- Republicans

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

What legislators claim

“Dave Camp announced today that he was able to secure $2.5 million for widening M-72 from US-31 easterly 7.2 miles to Old M-72. The bill will now head to the Senate for consideration...We have two more hurdles to clear to make sure the money is in the bill when it hits the President’s desk: a vote in the Senate and a conference committee” (Camp, 2005)

Strategic credit claiming about requests, grants, and earmarks, often about small funds

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)

Impression of Influence
Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

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What legislators claim $\rightsquigarrow$ LDA credit claiming press releases

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<td>Requested appropriations</td>
<td>bill, funding, house, million</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulus</td>
<td>recovery, funding, jobs, information, act</td>
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“Congressman Doc Hastings has boosted federal funding for work on the Columbia Basin water supply for next year. Hastings has added $400,000 for work on the Odessa Subaquifer, which when combined with the funding in the President’s budget request, totals $1 million for Fiscal Year 2009...Hastings’ funding for the Odessa Subaquifer and Potholes Reservoir was included in the Fiscal Year 2009 Energy and Water Appropriations bill which was approved today by the full House Appropriations Committee.” (Hastings, 2008)
What legislators claim $\leadsto$ LDA credit claiming press releases

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“Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today **announced** that the West Endicott Fire Company has been awarded a $17,051 federal grant to purchase approximately 10 sets of protective clothing, as well as radio equipment and air packs for its volunteer firefighters” (Hinchey, 2008)
Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

What legislators claim \( \rightsquigarrow \) LDA credit claiming press releases

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“Congressman Pete Visclosky today **announced** that the Crown Point Fire Department will receive a $16,550 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant to purchase a modular portable video system” (Visclosky, 2008)
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What legislators claim → LDA credit claiming press releases

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Small Funds (Named Entity Recognizer, Stanford CoreNLP Library):
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Small Funds (Named Entity Recognizer, Stanford CoreNLP Library): “Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) “announced that the National Endowment for the Humanities has made a grant to the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture. The museum will use the $1,000 grant to support its Transportation Fair” (Johnson 2008)
Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

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Small Funds (Named Entity Recognizer, Stanford CoreNLP Library):
- 19.0% of credit claiming press releases reference an expenditure of $50,000 or less
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<td>0.06</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Small Funds (Named Entity Recognizer, Stanford CoreNLP Library):

- 19.0% of credit claiming press releases reference an expenditure of $50,000 or less
- 24.1% of credit claiming press releases contain a dollar amount that is $100,000 or less
Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

What legislators claim ↝ LDA credit claiming press releases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labels</th>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requested appropriations</td>
<td>bill, funding, house, million, appropriations</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire department grants</td>
<td>fire, grant, department, program, firefighters</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulus</td>
<td>recovery, funding, jobs, information, act,</td>
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Strategic Credit Claiming to Build a Personal Vote

What legislators claim \(\leadsto\) LDA credit claiming press releases

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Strategic credit claiming about requests, grants, and earmarks, often about small funds
Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action: Three Experiments

Strategic legislators

Intuitive constituents

- Quantitative reasoning is difficult
- Heuristics
- Intuitive brains: difficult to evaluate (most) numbers
- Equipped to evaluate actions:
  - Speaker
  - What is being claimed
  - Benefits

Constituents: evaluate action not money

Assess with 3 survey experiments

Experimentally vary content of credit claiming statement

1) Reward requesting money the same as securing
2) Responsive to increases in small dollar amounts, not large
3) Reward many actions more than increased expenditures
Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action: Three Experiments

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Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
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Experiment: vary the action reported and explicit reference to money in credit claiming statement
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

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Action conditions:
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

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Action conditions:
   1) Secured money for district
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Experiment: vary the action reported and explicit reference to money in credit claiming statement
Action conditions:
   1) Secured money for district
   2) Requested money for district
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Experiment: vary the action reported and explicit reference to money in credit claiming statement
Action conditions:
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   2) Requested money for district
   3) Will request money for district
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Experiment: vary the action reported and explicit reference to money in credit claiming statement

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1) Secured money for district
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Money Conditions
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Experiment: vary the action reported and explicit reference to money in credit claiming statement
Action conditions:

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Money Conditions

1) Money: Refer to $84 Million
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Experiment: vary the action reported and explicit reference to money in credit claiming statement

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Money Conditions
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2) Support: Refer to “support”
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1) Money: Refer to $84 Million
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Control condition: no press release
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

**Headline:** Senator |senatorName (secured/requested/will request) [$84 million/support] for local projects

**Body:** |senatorName (|senatorParty - |State) (secured/requested/will request) [$84 Million/support] for local road projects through the Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. Senator |senatorName said “I (am pleased to bring home/ am happy to make this request for/will submit a request for) [$84 Million/support] from the Federal Highway Administration. It is critical that we maintain our infrastructure to ensure that our roads are safe for travelers and the efficient flow of commerce.” This funding (will/would/would) repave local roads.
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**Mechanics:**

Recruit 2,020 from SSI panel
Randomly select one senator
Continue to survey

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford) Impression of Influence
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

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**Mechanics:** Recruit 2,020 from SSI panel
**Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action**

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<th>senatorName</th>
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**Mechanics:** Recruit 2,020 from SSI panel ～ Randomly select one senator and administer treatment
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**Mechanics:** Recruit 2,020 from SSI panel ↦ Randomly select one senator and administer treatment ↦ Continue to survey
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Effectiveness, Deliver Money

- secured support
- secured money
- requested support
- requested money
- will request support
- will request money
- control

Effectiveness, Deliver Money

3.50 3.75 4.00 4.25 4.50
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Average Feeling Thermometer

secured support
secured money
requested support
requested money
will request support
will request money
control

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)

Impression of Influence
Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action

Proportion, Likely to Receive

- Will request money
- Will request support
- Requested money
- Requested support
- Secured money
- Secured support

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
**Study 1: Evaluating the Mere Report of an Action**

Reward *requested* money as much as *secured* money.
Constituents are responsive to actions.
Constituents are responsive to actions. But how responsive to money?
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

Constituents are responsive to actions. But how responsive to money? Intuitive constituents:
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

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Intuitive constituents:
- Can make numerical comparisons when numbers are familiar (Ansolabehere, Meredith, Snowberg, 2013)
Constituents are responsive to actions. But how responsive to money?

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- Some comparisons are easy and fast: ($5 << $1,000,000)
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Assess responsiveness with dose-response study
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

Design:

Fictitious representative
Assign participants to read a press release claiming credit for $X$ dollars, where $X \sim \text{Uniform}[0, 10]$.
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

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Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

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Analysis:
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

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Assign participants to read a press release claiming credit for $X$ dollars, where (in millions)

$$X \sim \text{Uniform}[0.01, 10]$$

Analysis: Estimate

$$E[\text{Feeling Thermometer}|X]$$

with local linear regression
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

**Headline:** Representative (redacted): ([D/R]) Secures |amount to Expand Local Police Force

**Body:** Representative (redacted) ([D/R]) secured |amount today to hire and train new police officers. The money, which is from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, will help local police departments cope with recent budget cuts. When asked for comment, Representative (redacted) said “It is critical that we bolster our local police departments to maintain the safety of our community. I am pleased to announce |amount for local law enforcement.”
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Mechanics: 2,020 SSI panelists\(\Rightarrow\) Provide story\(\Rightarrow\) Administer survey
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

![Graph showing the relationship between millions of dollars announced and feeling thermometer score.]

- $10,000 \rightarrow \$1.4 million (\$1.39 million increase), 9.3 point increase in feeling thermometer [-0.4, 0.6]
- $1.4 million \rightarrow \$10 million increase (\$8.6 million increase), 0.9 point increase in feeling thermometer [2.4, 16.1]
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

$10,000 \sim$ $1.4$ million ($1.39$ million increase), 9.3 point increase in feeling thermometer $[2.4, 16.1]$
Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

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Study 2: Cultivation of Support with Small Grants

Large increase in $ \Rightarrow$ limited response
# Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

How much more responsive to actions than money?

## Repeated actions easier to recall/evaluate than total claimed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Small Award</th>
<th>Large Award</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Day 1: $15,000</td>
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<tr>
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- Enroll participants through MTurk, collect information, randomize to conditions
- Deliver messages through e-mail

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)

Impression of Influence
### Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

How much more responsive to actions than money?  

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Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

How much more responsive to actions than money? ~ Repeated actions easier to recall/evaluate than total claimed

$2 \times 2$ design
**Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money**

How much more responsive to actions than money? \(\sim\) Repeated actions easier to recall/evaluate than total claimed

\[2 \times 2 \text{ design}\]

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Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money
How much more responsive to actions than money? \(\rightsquigarrow\) Repeated actions easier to recall/evaluate than total claimed

2 × 2 design

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How much more responsive to actions than money? ~ Repeated actions easier to recall/evaluate than total claimed

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- Deliver messages through e-mail

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
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- Enroll participants through MTurk, collect information, randomize to conditions
- Deliver messages through e-mail
Headline: Representative |LNAME (|PARTY, |ST–|DIST) Brings Local Fire Departments |$ for Firefighter Safety

Full text: A total of |$ in grants for operations and safety programs was awarded to local fire departments from the Department of Homeland Security, Rep. |LNAME announced. |FNAME |LNAME (|PARTY, |ST–|DIST) announced the grants today. Specifically, the grant will be used to improve training, equipment, and make modifications to fire stations and facilities in local fire departments.

“This is great news for our local community,” said Representative |LNAME. “With these funds, our local fire departments will continue to train and operate with the latest in firefighter technology.”
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

**Headline:** Representative |LNAME (|PARTY, |ST-|DIST) Brings Local Fire Departments |$ for Firefighter Safety

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“This is great news for our local community,” said Representative |LNAME. “With these funds, our local fire departments will continue to train and operate with the latest in firefighter technology.”

**Protocol:**

- Day following last email, respondents complete post-survey
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Proportion Correct

- Small Low Freq.
- Large Low Freq.
- Small High Freq.
- Large High Freq.

Identify Name

Grinner, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Delivering Money

- Large High Freq.
- Small High Freq.
- Large Low Freq.
- Small Low Freq.

Legislator Rating

4.50 4.75 5.00 5.25 5.50

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford) Impression of Influence
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Delivering Money

- Large High Freq.
- Small High Freq.
- Large Low Freq.
- Small Low Freq.

Legislator Rating

4.50 4.75 5.00 5.25 5.50

10 Times More Money

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Delivering Money

Legislator Rating

4.50 4.75 5.00 5.25 5.50

Delivering Money

10 Times More Money

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Legislator Feeling Thermometer

Large
High Freq.

Small
High Freq.

Large
Low Freq.

Small
Low Freq.

Feeling Thermometer

50 55 60

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

10 Times More Money

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

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Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

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Legislator Feeling Thermometer

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10 Times More Money

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

100 Times More Money

90 times greater per dollar return for repeated messages
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Dollar Amount

- 3K
- 36K
- 440K
- 5.4M

Single Message
- ($15,000)

Five Messages
- ($176,000)

Single Message
- ($1.5 million)

Five Messages
- ($17.6 million)

Estimated Funds Brought to District

Proportion of Claimed Dollars Recalled

- Proportion Recalled
  - c(1:4)
  - 0.0
  - 0.1
  - 0.2
  - 0.3
  - 0.4
  - 0.5

Legislators: claim credit throughout process and for grants
Constituents: reward actions more than money

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)

Impression of Influence
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

- **Legislators**: claim credit throughout process and for grants

---

**Estimated Funds Brought to District**

- **Five Messages** ($17.6 million)
- **Single Message** ($1.5 million)
- **Five Messages** ($176,000)
- **Single Message** ($15,000)

**Proportion of Claimed Dollars Recalled**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dollar Amount</th>
<th>Single Message</th>
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<tr>
<td>3K</td>
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**Truth Estimate**

- Proportion Recalled
  - 0.0
  - 0.1
  - 0.2
  - 0.3
  - 0.4
  - 0.5
Study 3: More Responsive to Actions than Money

Legislators: claim credit throughout process and for grants
Constituents: reward actions more than money
Representative’s problem

⇝

Representative’s opportunity

Complicates accountability

Political explanation of how spending builds support
Representative's problem

Representative's opportunity

Complicates accountability

Political explanation of how spending builds support
Representative’s problem
⇝
Representative’s opportunity
Complicates accountability
Representative’s problem
Representative’s opportunity
Complicates accountability

Political explanation of how spending builds support
< Appendix >
Criticism and Contested Expenditures

U.S. Average Hourly Earnings

↑ 0.2% (Nov.) vs. Unchanged (Oct.)

7,536.95
Criticism and Contested Expenditures

Pressure on Republican incumbents: avoid spending, criticize government

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)

Impression of Influence
Criticism and Contested Expenditures

Pressure on Republican incumbents: avoid spending, criticize government
Claiming Credit for Particularistic Spending

Proportion Press Releases Credit Claiming

Democrats
Republicans

Year

2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010

Proportions for Democrats and Republicans over the years 2005 to 2010, showing the proportion of press releases attributed to particularistic spending credit.
Big Government

Year
Proportion Press Releases Mentioning

Democrats
Republicans

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Impression of Influence
Anti-spending Press Releases

Year
Proportion of Press Releases
2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010
0.00 0.05 0.10
● ● ● ● ●
● ● ●
● ● ●
● ● ●
● ● ●
● ● ●

Democrats
Republicans

Grimmer, Westwood, Messing (Stanford)
Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

Intuitive Constituents:
Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

Intuitive Constituents:

- **Budget** and **Spending**: independent (Hansen, 1998); (Bonica and Tausonovitch In Progress)
Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

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- **Budget** and **Spending**: independent (Hansen, 1998); (Bonica and Tausonovitch In Progress)
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Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

Intuitive Constituents:

- **Budget** and **Spending**: independent (Hansen, 1998); (Bonica and Tausonovitch In Progress)
- Reward legislators for spending, unless reminded
- When reminded: negative information will undermine impression of influence

Test effect of negative information with experiment
Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

Experiment: vary the presence of criticism, across three conditions (actual representative):

1) Credit claiming condition

|representativeName announced that the Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration has released $84 million for local road and highway projects. Representative |representativeName said ‘I am pleased to announce that we will receive $84 Million from the Federal Highway Administration. It is critical that we support our infrastructure to ensure that our roads are safe for travelers and the efficient flow of commerce.’ This funding will add lanes to $state highways.
Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

Experiment: vary the presence of criticism, across three conditions (actual representative):

1) Credit claiming condition
2) Congressional Budget Office: non-partisan information

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said that the spending bill contributes to the growing federal deficit. ‘This bill contributes to federal spending without identifying a new source of revenue or off-setting budget cuts. With the total spending across all Congressional districts, the bill will costs $36.5 billion, all of which will be added to the deficit and compounded over time with interest.’
Criticism Undermines Support for Spending

Experiment: vary the presence of criticism, across three conditions (actual representative):

1) Credit claiming condition
2) Congressional Budget Office: non-partisan information
3) Partisan Attack: information from opposing party’s chair

“[Debbie Wasserman Schultz, chair of the Democrat National Committee / Reince Priebus, chair of the Republican National Committee] said that the spending bill is wasteful and contributes to the growing federal deficit. ‘This bill contributes to federal spending without identifying a new source of revenue or off-setting budget cuts. With the total spending across all Congressional districts, the bill will costs $36.5 billion, all of which will be added to the deficit and compounded over time with interest.’ ”
The graph represents an analysis of three factors: Partisan, CBO, and Credit Claim. Each factor is plotted along the x-axis, which is labeled "Fiscally Responsible." The factors are scored as follows:

- **Partisan** scores range from 0.3 to 0.5.
- **CBO** scores range from 0.3 to 0.5.
- **Credit Claim** scores range from 0.3 to 0.5.

The graph includes black horizontal lines for each factor, with a black dot indicating the specific score for each factor. The data is attributed to Grimmer, Westwood, and Messing from Stanford University.

Impression of Influence

32 / 35
**Criticism**: undermines support for legislator and for spending programs
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Deseret Morning</td>
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<td>San. Fran. Chron.</td>
<td>Feinstein (D- CA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>