

Supplemental Material for:
Donation Motivations: Testing Theories of
Access and Ideology

This appendix to “Testing Theories of Access and Ideology” includes a number of results noted in the paper, robustness checks and additional models noted in the paper, and additional results not directly mentioned in the paper. Below is a table of contents for this document.

1. We describe the methodology used in the survey of individual donors in the 2012 election.
This includes details of weighting and representativeness of the sample.
2. Using cross sectional contribution data we create a measure of ideological giving and show that PACs tend to target more moderate legislators.
3. Using cross sectional contribution data we show that individuals are much less likely than interest groups to split their contributions among candidates from both parties.
4. Using cross sectional contribution data we show that PACs are more likely than individuals to spread contributions across the ideological spectrum while individuals target candidates that all share similar ideologies.
5. Using cross sectional contribution data we demonstrate that PACs are more likely than individuals to give money to incumbents who have access to the legislative process. Individuals on the other hand are more likely to support challengers.
6. Using the survey data, we show that ideology is not related to non-ideological motivations for giving.
7. Using the survey data, we also show the relationship between donor income and motivations for giving. We find that there is not much of a relationship.
8. Figure A11 plots an across-unit placebo test by simulating “fake” party switches among legislators who in reality did not change parties and plotting the changes in their contributors’

ideologies. The results show that there is no general trend in the change of ideologies of legislators' donors. Each estimate is very close to zero.

9. We replicate the party switching results of the main paper using a difference-in-differences approach. The results are similar to those reported in the main paper.

A Survey Methodology

To measure the ideological preferences of donors, I conducted an original survey of campaign contributors in the summer and fall of 2013. The Federal Election Commission (FEC) requires that any contributor who gives more than \$200 to a federal candidate register their name, contribution amount, contribution recipient, and address. This list of donors is available to the public.¹ Using the list of donors and addresses, I mailed 15,500 letters to contributors who are associated with the 22 senators who sought reelection in 2012. The letter asked the donors to complete an online survey regarding their political opinions.

I specifically consider reelection-motivated senators in this study for several reasons. Given that senators face election every 6 years, their fundraising strategies vary over the course of their term significantly. In fact, many senators do not actively fundraise in the first year or two after winning an election. Additionally, legislators who announce their retirement drastically reduce their fundraising efforts thereafter. Thus, I consider only those senators who would be immediately concerned with appealing to donors and voters by looking at the 22 senators who faced the voters in 2012.

¹The list is comprehensive among donors who give more than \$200. Small donors who give less than \$200 are not required to register with the FEC. However, candidates do report the amount of money in aggregate they received from unitemized contributions. On average these small contributions add up to a very small percent of the candidate's overall contributions (usually less than 5 percent) http://www.opensecrets.org/politicians/summary_all.php.

To draw the survey sample, I stratified the population of donors in four different ways. First, the sample is stratified by senator. Within each senator, I then draw respondents from three different groups. The first group are donors who reside outside of the senator’s state yet contributed to the senator in the 2012 election cycle. This is an important population of contributors who are often omitted in traditional surveys that identify respondents as contributors. For example, the CCES study asks respondents if they contributed money to candidates for the Senate. However, they only ask if the donor gave to their own senator or another senator. Those who respond that they gave to “another senator” do not indicate which of the other senators they gave to. This would not be concerning when studying the preferences of donors if legislators raised a small proportion of their money from out of district sources. However, this is not the case (Bramlett *et al.*, 2011). In fact, every re-election seeking senator raised a significant proportion of individual contributions from out-of-state.

After sampling out-of-state donors, I next drew an equal number of within-state donors for each senator. These are contributors who both gave to the senator in the 2012 election cycle and reside in his or her state.

Finally, I drew a sample of donors who reside in the same state as the senator, are of the same party as the senator, but did not contribute to the senator in this election cycle. Since the FEC does not record the party of the donor, I estimated the contributor’s party by looking at the percentage of donations from each contributor that went to candidates from each party. Those who gave more than 75% of their money to Republican candidates I considered Republicans. The same was true for Democrats. The overwhelming majority of donors support candidates from one party only. In 2012, 95% of individual donors fit into one of the two categories outlined above. The survey then asked donors to indicate their actual partisanship. In only 3% of cases the estimated

party did not match the donors’ actual partisanship. The reason for sampling these same-party and same-state donors who did not give directly to the senator is as follows. While incumbents raise a great deal of their individual contributions from out-of-state, challengers exhibit the opposite pattern. The majority of challenger money comes from donors inside the challenger’s state. Thus, incumbent senators may pay particular attention to in-state donor’s preferences even if they are not giving directly to the senator since any possible primary challenger is likely to raise most of her money from these people.

Mixed-mode surveys administered through the mail that then direct respondents to complete the questionnaire online are known to have a low response rate (Barber *et al.*, 2014). To increase response rates, each letter contained a \$1 bill as a token of appreciation for completing the survey. This technique has been shown to increase response rates dramatically (James and Bolstein, 1990). The overall survey response rate was 14 percent. Low response rates, however, are less concerning if respondents are representative of the population of interest. In this survey, respondents contributed more money on average than non-respondents. However, after applying post-survey weights, respondents are representative of the population of donors on donation amount, state of residence, and proportion of money given to either party.²

To account for the differences between respondents and the population, I implement post-survey weights that adjust the sample to better fit the population of interest. To do so, I calculate a probability of responding to the survey using a logistic regression for each senator’s donor population with the dependent variable being 1 for survey respondents (Schonlau *et al.*, 2009). I include dummies for ”in-state”, ”out-state”, ”in-state, potential donor”, and a continuous variable

²Weighting to the population of interest can only be done on variables for which we know in both the population and the sample. Since the FEC file does not contain demographic information for each donor, we cannot weight according to demographic factors.

for the total amount of contributions given by the donor. Ideally, an inverse probability weighting model would include other demographics to provide for balance in these factors as well. However, the donor file from which respondents are sampled does not contain any of this information. Using the regression results, I calculate a probability of responding to the survey. The weights are then the inverse of this predicted probability. To avoid giving too much influence to outlying observations, I truncate the highest 10% of the weights and assign them a weight equal to the 90th percentile.

Figure A1 shows the distribution of donation amounts in the population and in the survey after applying the weights. We see that weighting brings the survey proportions closer to the proportions in the population of donors. In Figure A2 and Figure A3 I show the results of weighting state by state. The circles represent the unweighted proportions, the “x”s show the proportions in the population, and the triangles show the proportions in the survey after applying the weights. We see that in nearly all cases, weighting brings the survey proportions closer to the proportions in the population of donors. Figure A3 shows the median contribution amount by senator for the same three subsamples of the survey. Again, we see that the median contribution amount of the weighted survey data moves closer to the median contribution amount in the population.

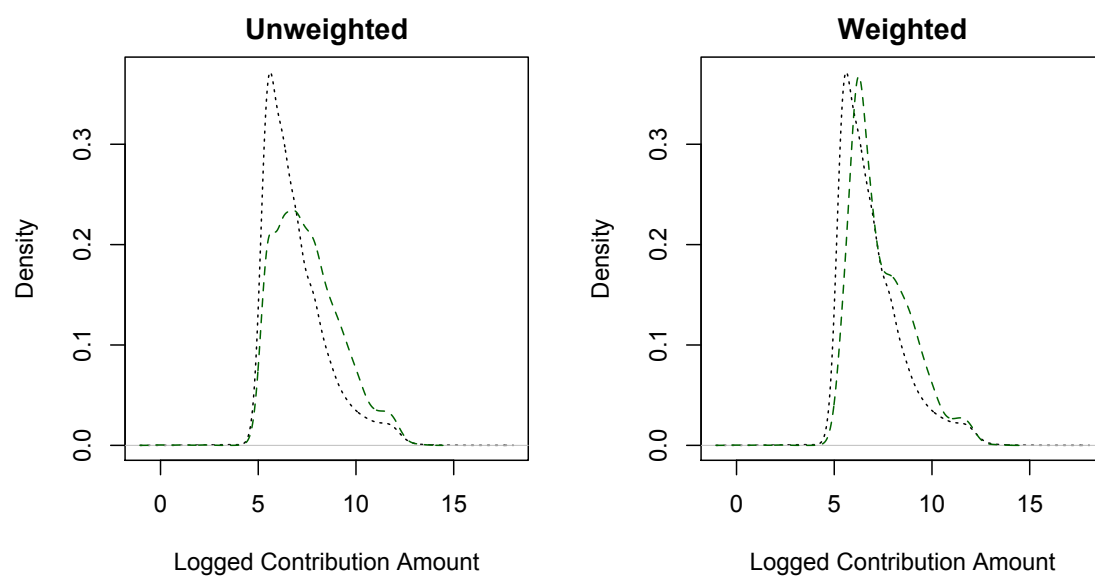


Figure A1: **Donor Survey Weighting** - Prior to weighting there is a bias among respondents towards higher contribution amounts. The dotted line shows the distribution of contribution amounts among survey respondents. The solid line shows the distribution of contribution amounts by all donors. After weighting this difference disappears. The two distributions are overlaid on top of one another. In the second panel (after weighting) they are also overlaid, but now the weighted distribution more closely resembles the distribution in the population.

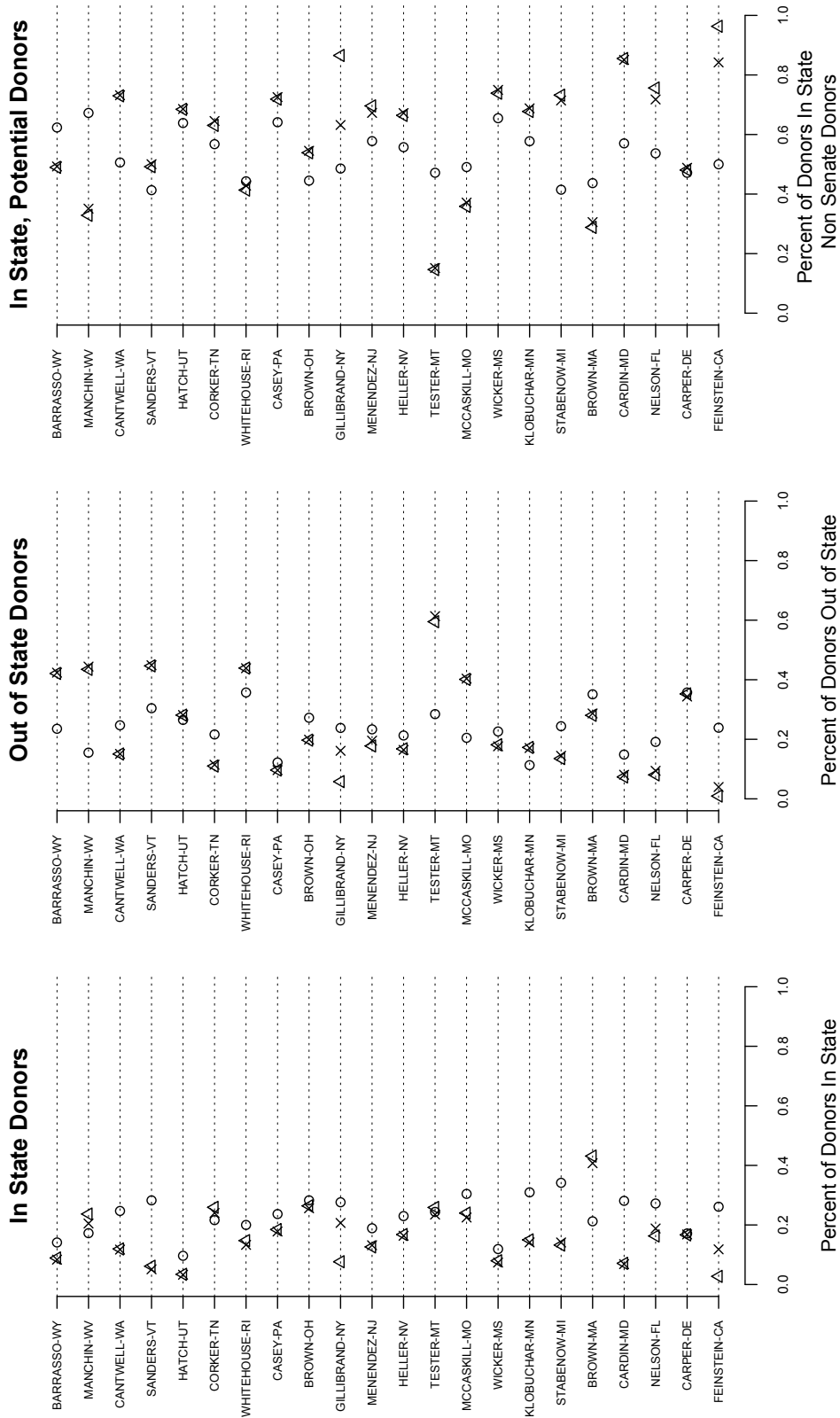


Figure A2: Results of Weighting - The circles show the percentages in the unweighted survey data. The circles show the percentages in the unweighted survey data. The x's show the percentages in the weighted survey data. In nearly all cases, weighting brings the sample closer to the population proportions.

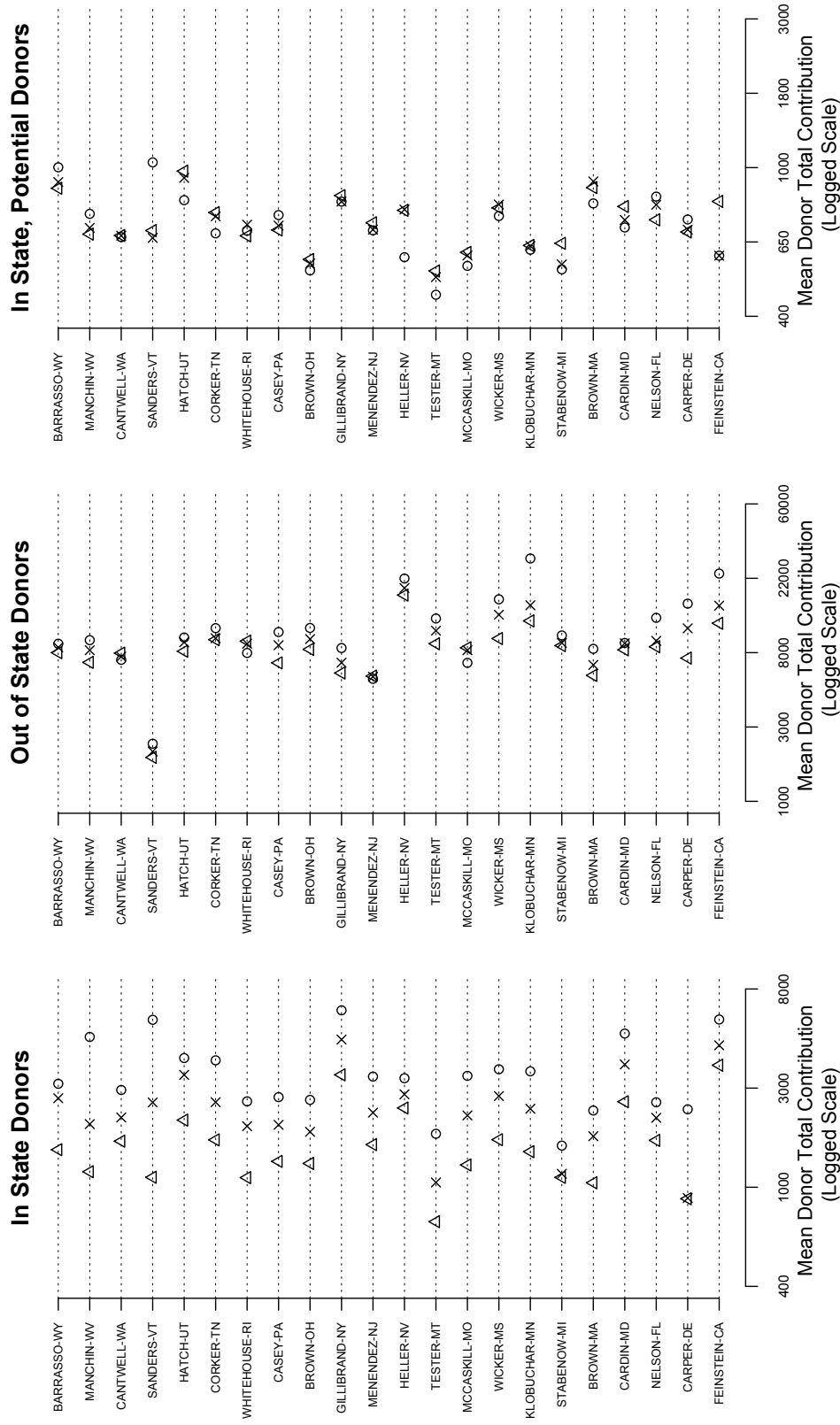


Figure A3: Results of Weighting - The circles show the median total contribution amount in the unweighted survey data. The circles show the amounts in the unweighted survey data. The x's show the amounts in the weighted survey data. In nearly all cases, weighting brings the sample closer to the population proportions.

B Additional Empirical Results

B.1 Cross Sectional Results

If PACs are primarily concerned with having access to legislators in office, we would expect these groups to target more moderate legislators and candidates. This expectation is motivated by the theoretical and empirical literature that suggests more moderate candidates perform better in general election contests (Canes-Wrone *et al.*, 2002; Brady *et al.*, 2007; Hall, 2014). Thus these candidates are excellent targets for groups who are interested in contributing to candidates they anticipate will be more likely to win the election. On the other hand, if individuals and ideological groups are guided by ideology when contributing, we should observe these groups giving to legislators who match their ideological leanings. Given the ideologically polarized views of individual donors (Bafumi and Herron, 2010; Bonica, 2013), we should see individuals contributing to equally extreme candidates.

To measure this, I look at the ideologies of candidates that PACs, ideological groups, and individuals gave to in the 2012 election cycle. Table A1 shows descriptive statistics of individual and PAC contributors. I use NOMINATE scores as a measure of candidate ideology and estimate a money-weighted average ideology for each contributor (Poole and Rosenthal, 1997; McCarty *et al.*, 2006). That is, for each contributor, I consider the average NOMINATE score of the candidates they gave to, weighted by the amount of money they gave to each candidate. This simple measure allows us to see the types of candidates that PACs, ideological groups and individuals give to. Following the scale of NOMINATE scores, smaller values indicate more liberal ideologies while larger values indicate more conservative ideological positions. According to the theories presented

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics of Contributors in 2012 Election Cycle

	# of Contributors		Ave Total Contributions		Ave # of Contributions			
					Incumbents		Challengers	
	Ind	PACs	Ind	PACs	Ind	PACs	Ind	PACs
Federal	684,211	15,242	\$1,118	\$29,177	.65	4.8	1.2	1.2
State	533,486	74,521	\$333	\$2,891	.37	1.4	.85	1.86

in Section , we should see few individuals and ideological groups in the ideological center while PACs should cluster towards the moderate scores.

Figure A4 shows the distributions for each of these groups. The distribution of PAC contributors is centered over moderate scores and is unimodal. On the other hand, scores for individual donors display a bimodal distribution with fewer donors located in the center of the scale. Ideological groups look similar, but with slightly more mass in the ideological center. These results align with the theory that individuals are motivated by ideological concerns when giving while PACs favor moderation and electability over ideology. This comports with a strategy focused around access to those most likely to hold office.³

Another way of looking at this is to compare the percent of donors' money that went to each of the two major parties. Figure A5 shows the incidence of bipartisan giving in federal races among PACs, ideological groups, and individuals over time. To measure this, I first calculate the percentage of a donor's contributions that go to candidates from each party. I then create an index of bipartisan giving by "folding" this measure and rescaling it to extend between 0 and 1. Donors who give all of their money to one party have a score of 1 on this scale, while donors who equally split their money between parties are assigned a score of 0. I then take the average of this measure

³We should note however, that the unimodal distribution among PACs could be the result of two different behaviors. The first is that PACs prefer to support moderate candidates and focus their money towards these candidates. The second is that PACs give money to ideological candidates, but from both parties, leading to a centrist average ideological score. Both of these stories could be true, and both support an access-oriented donation strategy.

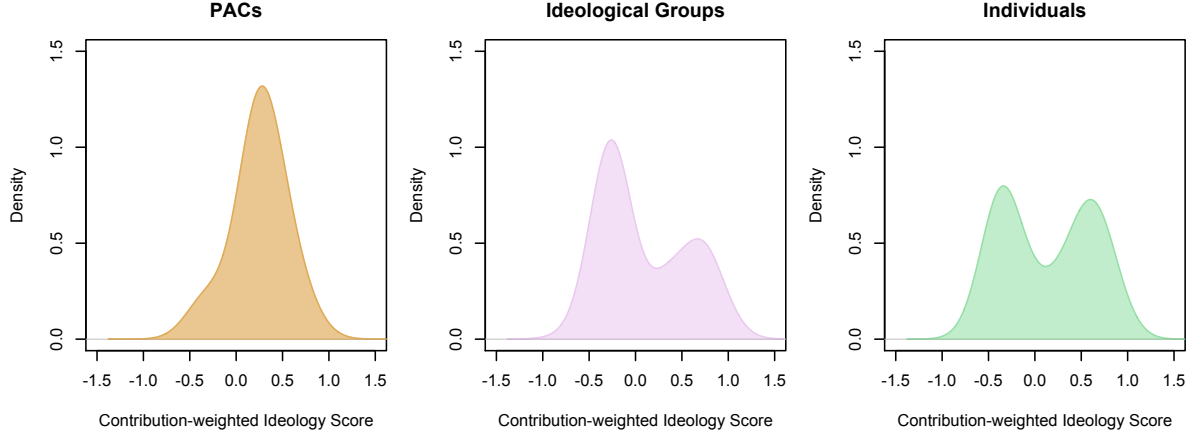


Figure A4: **Distribution of Donors' Contribution Weighted Ideology Score** - The left panel shows the ideology of PAC contributions in the 2012 election cycle. The middle panel shows the same measure for ideological groups. The right panel shows individuals' ideologies, which are bimodal around the ideological extremes. These results comport with the theory that ideologically extreme individuals give to ideologically polarized candidates while PACs prefer more moderate candidates and bipartisan giving.

for PACs, ideological groups, and individuals in each year, weighted by the number of donations made by each donor.⁴ We see in Figure A5 that in every election cycle PACs have lower scores, indicating that they are more likely than individuals and ideological groups to support candidates from both parties. On the other hand, individuals almost exclusively give to candidates from only one party. Ideological groups are close to individuals in their level of support for candidates from only one of the two major parties. These results are consistent with a theory that PACs are less concerned with a candidate's party while ideological groups and individuals focus their contributions to candidates who share their ideology and party. Similar results for contributors

⁴The federal data is available from the 1980 election cycle to the present whereas the contribution data for state legislative races is only available from 1990 to the present. Thus results from 1980 to 1990 are only for federal donors and results from 1990 to the present include both sources. Furthermore, in the Federal data, only donors who gave more than \$200 are included since those who gave less are not required to register with the FEC. The various states have similar reporting limits, most of which are less than the federal \$200 limit. This truncation should not bias the results presented here since there appears to be similar motivations for giving between small and larger donors (Magleby *et al.*, 2015).

to state legislative candidates are shown as Figure A6.

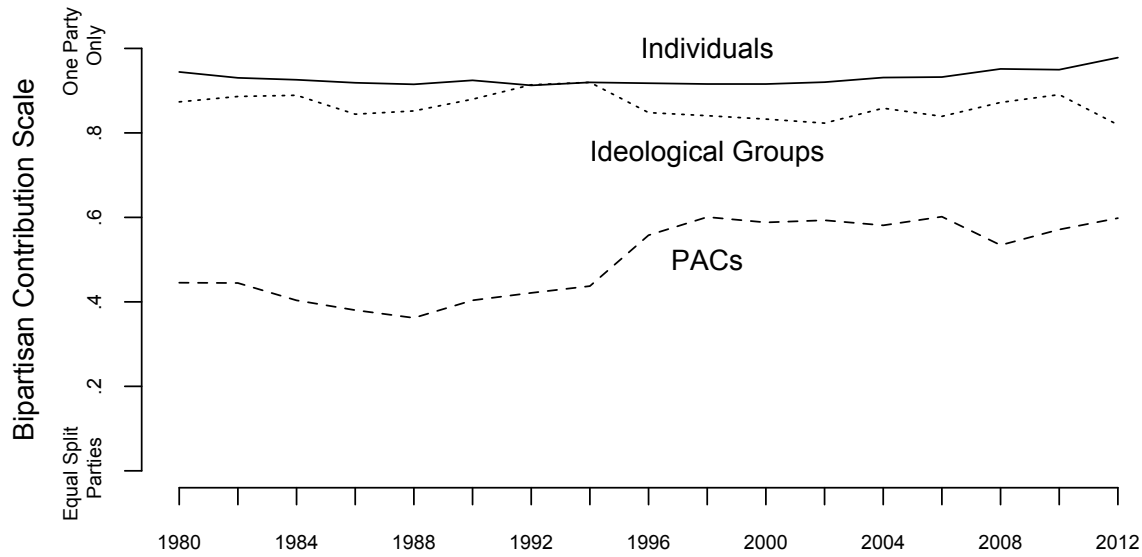


Figure A5: **Incidence of Bipartisan Giving** - This figure shows the percent of donors to U.S. House candidates who gave to candidates from both parties, weighted by the number of donations the donor made. PACs (dashed line) are more likely to contribute to candidates from both parties, whereas individuals (solid line) in all election cycles favor candidates from one party or the other. Ideological groups (dotted line) closely resemble individuals by only supporting candidates from one of the two parties.

In addition to giving to candidates from one particular party, we should also observe ideologically motivated individuals and ideological groups contributing to candidates in one location on the ideological spectrum. For example, an extremely conservative donor will not only target Republican candidates, but will especially support Republican candidates who share her ideology. Among PACs, this should not be the case. In addition to bipartisan giving, we should also see PACs spreading their contributions across the ideological scale. This could be in an attempt to give money to the most electable candidate or to support the sitting incumbent, regardless of her ideology. To show these differences I again use the NOMINATE scores of legislators running in the 2012 election. One way to measure the ideological spread of a donors' contributions is to measure the standard deviation of the ideal points of candidates supported by that particular donor

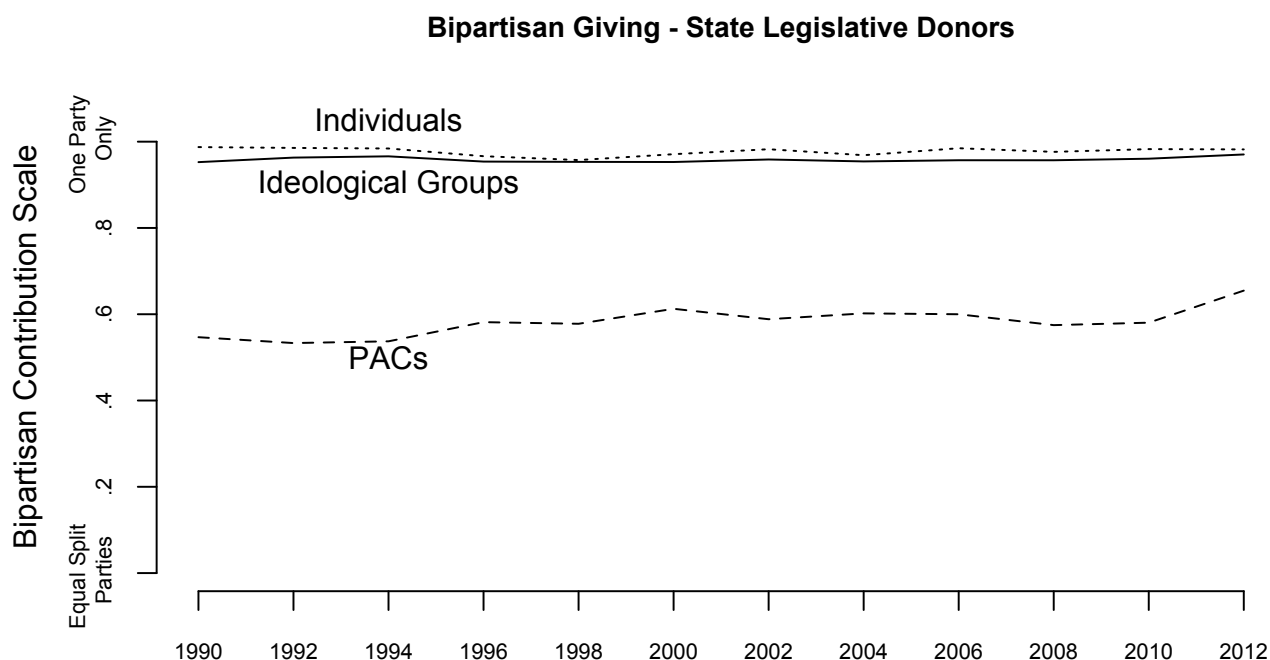


Figure A6: **Incidence of Bipartisan Giving - State Legislative Donors** This figure shows the percent of donors who gave to candidates from both parties, weighted by the number of donations the donor made. These are donations made to state legislative candidates. PACs (dashed line) are more likely to contribute to candidates from both parties, whereas individuals (solid line) in all election cycles favor candidates from one party or the other. Ideological groups (dotted line) closely resemble individuals by only supporting candidates from one of the two parties.

McCarty *et al.* (2006). To measure this, I calculate a contribution-weighted standard deviation for each donor. Higher values indicate contributions to a wider array of candidates while smaller values indicate donations focus towards candidates with similar ideological positions. Donors motivated by ideological concerns should have low standard deviations as they focus their money towards candidates who all share similar ideological positions. Non-ideological contributors should therefore have higher standard deviation scores since they invest their money across the ideological scale.

Figure A7 shows the distribution of donors' contribution-weighted standard deviations. As expected, the majority of individuals' and ideological groups' scores are much lower than the

distribution of scores for PACs.

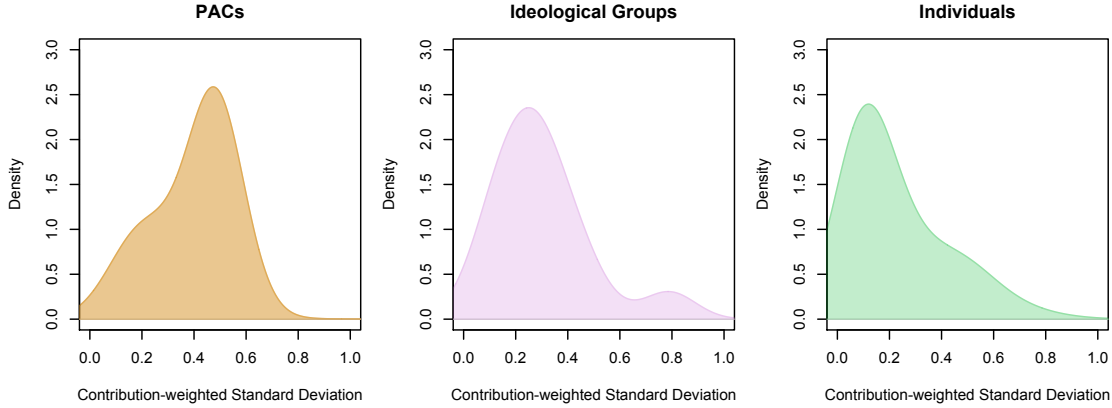


Figure A7: Standard Deviation of Donor's Contributions - This figure shows the distribution of standard deviations for donors the 2012 election cycle. Donors with larger values give to candidates from across the ideological spectrum while smaller values indicate donors focusing on candidates with one particular ideology. The distribution of PAC values (left panel) is shifted right compared to ideological groups (middle panel) and individual donors (right panel). This suggests that PACs give to candidates with a variety of ideologies while ideological groups and individuals give to candidates in one specific ideological location.

One concern with this measure is that PACs tend to give more often than individual donors, which may inflate the standard deviation of their donations and present an incorrect picture of PAC versus individual giving patterns. A simple OLS regression of the contributors' standard deviation on an indicator for ideological groups, individuals, and PACs (the omitted category) shows that individuals and ideological groups still have lower standard deviation scores even after accounting for the number of donations given. Table A2 shows these results. Contributing to candidates from across the ideological range suggests that PACs are less interested in a candidate's ideology than individuals and ideological groups are when contributing.

Moreover, if access to legislators in office is important to PACs and ideological groups, these groups should value incumbency to a greater degree than individuals. Incumbency is necessary for candidates to grant access to the lawmaking process since incumbents (and not challengers) have the formal means of proposing, crafting, and voting on legislation. Therefore we should expect PACs and ideological groups to place a premium on whether or not a candidate currently holds

DV: Standard Deviation of Donor's Contributions	
Individual	−0.18*** (0.00)
Ideological Group	−0.12*** (0.00)
Log(# Donations)	−0.01*** (0.00)
Intercept	0.38*** (0.00)
R ²	0.04
N	95,684

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A2: **OLS Regression of Donor Standard Deviation on Donor Type** - Individuals and ideological groups have lower standard deviations than PACs (omitted category), even after controlling for the number of donations made. Donors with larger values give to candidates from across the ideological spectrum while smaller values indicate donors focusing on candidates with one particular ideology. This suggests that PACs give to candidates with a variety of ideologies while ideological groups and individuals give to candidates in one specific ideological location.

office. To illustrate this, I plot the percentage of the money PAC and ideological groups give to incumbents versus the percent of individual money given to incumbents in U.S. House races from 1980 to 2012. Figure A8 shows these results. Similar results for donations made to state legislative candidates are shown in Figure A9.

Figure A8 shows that PACs and ideological groups give to incumbents more than individual donors do. In each election cycle, the majority of PAC money flows to incumbent legislators. On the other hand, in every election cycle individuals spent more of their money than PACs or ideological groups supporting challengers. Individuals who seek to elect candidates with a particular ideology should be more likely to support challengers who could replace incumbents who do not represent their ideological preferences. Ideological groups split the difference between PACs and individuals. While they value ideology, they also value access, and thus support incumbents at a higher rate than individuals, yet less often than PACs.

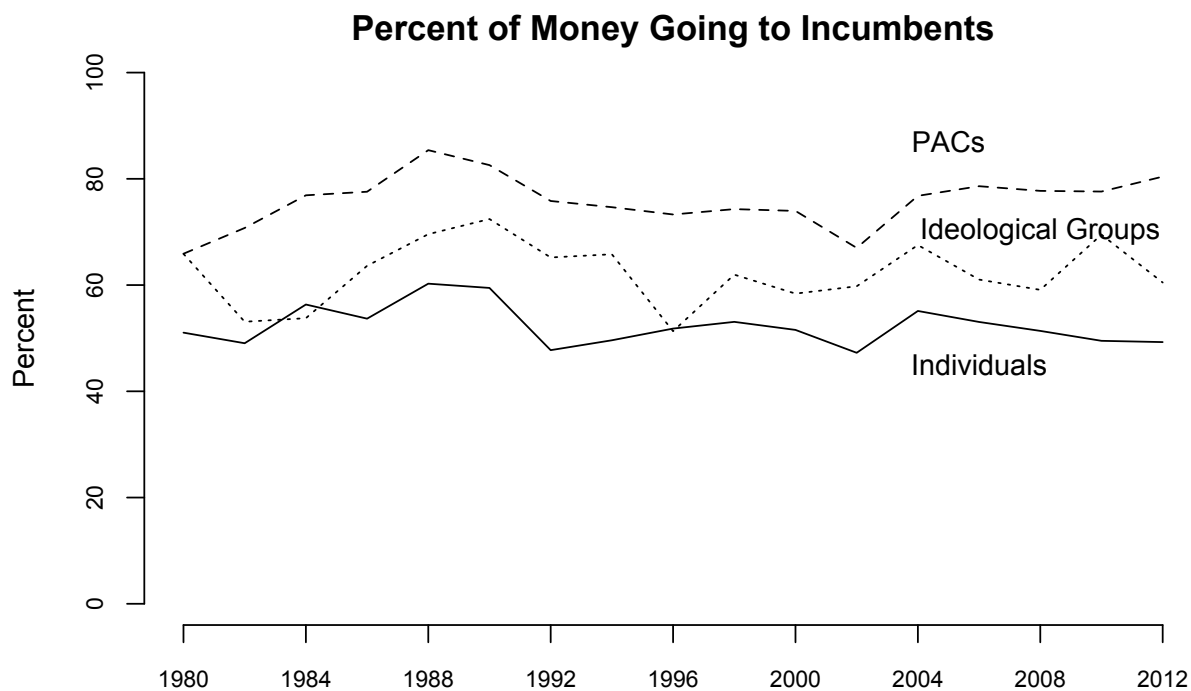


Figure A8: **Percent of Money Going to Incumbent Candidates** - This figure shows the percent of money spent in each election cycle supporting incumbent legislators. PACs are most supportive of incumbents in each election cycle, followed by ideological groups, and finally individuals. This suggests that PACs are more interested than individuals in maintaining a connection to legislators in office than replacing them with new legislators. Ideological groups appear to favor incumbents more than individuals, yet also value ideology as was shown previously.

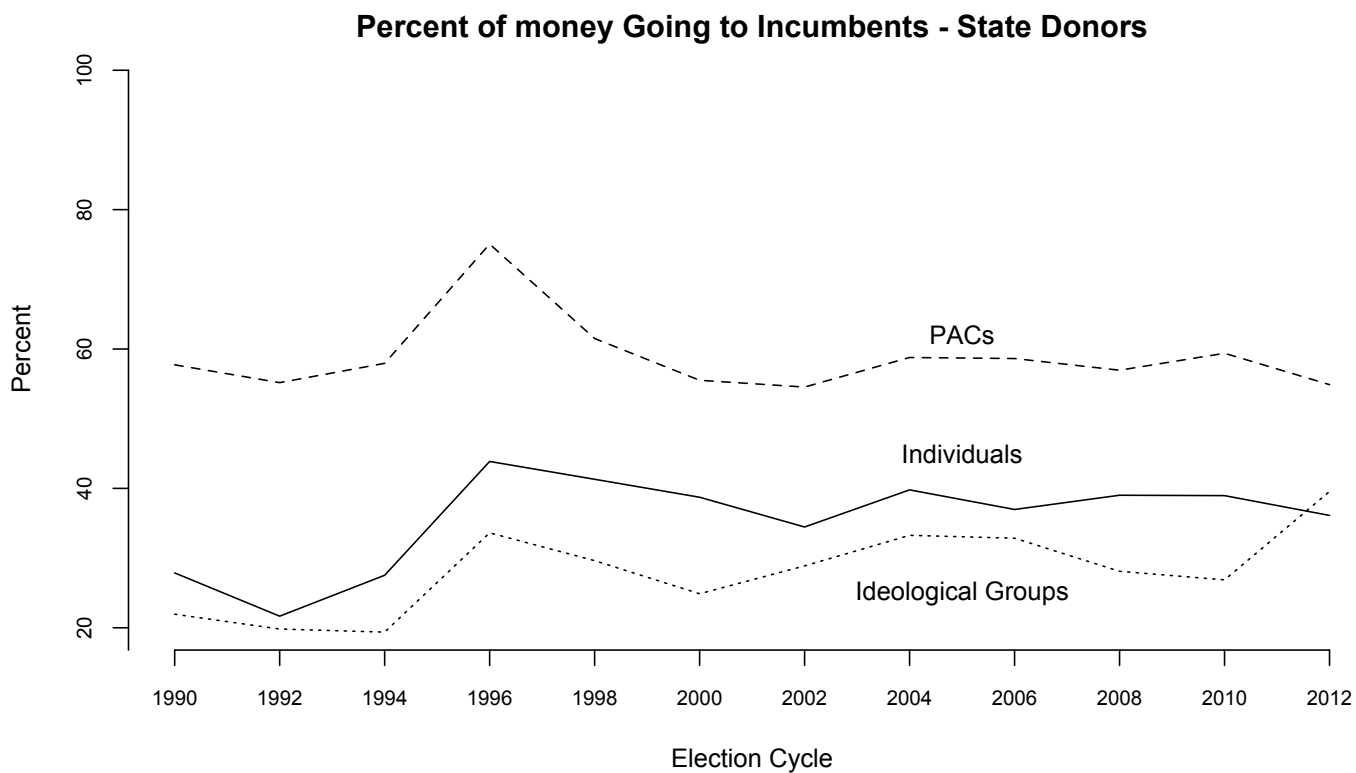


Figure A9: Percent of Money Going to Incumbents - State Legislative Candidates This figure shows the percent of money spent in each election cycle supporting incumbent legislators. PACs are most supportive of incumbents in each election cycle, followed by individuals and ideological groups. This suggests that PACs are more interested than individuals in maintaining a connection to legislators in office than replacing them with new legislators.

B.2 Motivations for Individuals - Additional Survey Questions

Figure A10 shows the relationship between donor ideology and the likelihood of thinking various non-ideological reasons for giving are important. Each panel shows the overall proportion of respondents to the donor survey who said the reason for giving was either “Very Important” or “Somewhat Important” with a dotted line. Each potential reason for given is shown above the figure. Each presents a different reason that is tied to ideological motivations. Unlike the ideological motivations shown in the main paper, individuals do not appear to value these non-ideological reasons as much. Furthermore, there is no obvious pattern in agreeing with these reasons for giving and an individual’s ideological position. Donors from all ideological positions appear to value these reasons with equal importance.

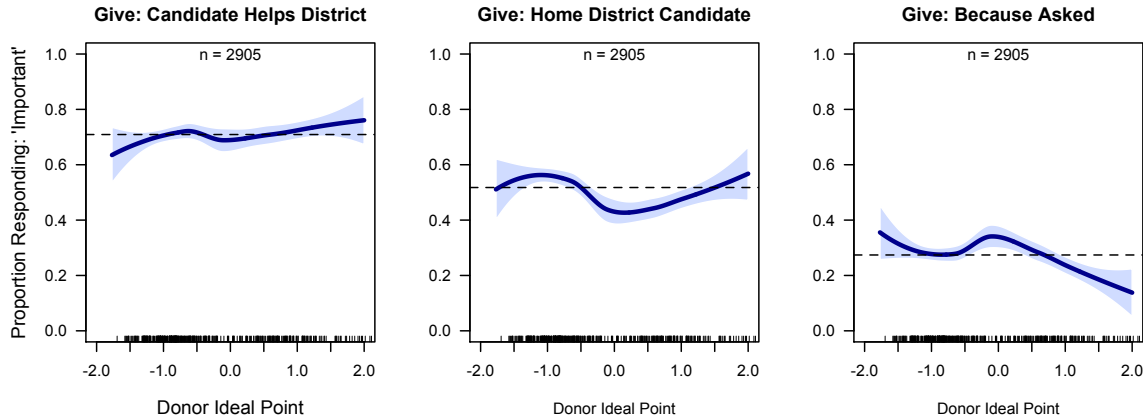


Figure A10: Importance of Non-Ideological Motivations for Giving among Individuals

B.3 Relationship between Income and Motivation for Giving

It is possible that particularly wealthy donors may give for different reasons than those who less wealthy. To test this, I look for a differential relationship between the motivations included in the survey and the income of the donor. Using the survey data I estimate a model in which the

dependent variable is how important the respondent feels about a particular reason for giving. The independent variables are the income of the donor, the ideology of the donor, the donor's partisanship, the total amount of money given by the donor, and an indicator for the donor's state. Table A3 shows the results for each of the different models. Each row is a different model displaying the estimated coefficient on the income variable. We see that wealthier donors are slightly less concerned with ideological agreement and slightly more concerned with personal connections as a motivation for giving. However, these effects are quite small. For example, when considering the largest coefficient (.04: the relationship between income and personally knowing the candidate), the predicted change when moving over the entire range of income leads to a .3 standard deviation change in the dependent variable.

Dependent Variables:	
Ideological Agreement	-0.01* (0.004)
To Affect Election Outcome	-0.02* (0.01)
Unacceptable Opponent	-0.01 (0.01)
Candidate will Help Business	-0.004 (0.01)
Close Race	-0.01 (0.01)
Candidate Listen to My Concerns	-0.03** (0.01)
Personally Know Candidate	0.04*** (0.01)
Home District	0.002 (0.01)
Affect my Work	0.01 (0.01)
Asked by Colleague	0.04*** (0.01)
Asked by Political Group	-0.02* (0.01)

Table A3: **Different Motivations for Wealthy Donors:** The table shows coefficients from models with potential motivations as the dependent variable and income, ideology, and partisanship as independent variables. Each row presents the coefficient on income for a separate model. The dependent variable of each model is shown on the left column of each row. Wealthier donors appear to be slightly less concerned with ideological reasons. However, these effects are quite small substantively.

B.4 Party Switching: Across Unit Placebo Test

Figure A11 plots a similar across-unit placebo test by simulating “fake” party switches among legislators who in reality did not change parties and plotting the changes in their contributors’ ideologies. In this figure I take a random sample of nearly 5,000 incumbent legislators who did not change parties during their careers and simulate “fake” party switches. The exact n is slightly less than 5,000 since some incumbents who are sampled do not raise money from any donors of one of the three particular groups shown here. I then estimate the ideology of their donors before and after these fake party switches. If the ideology of donors were simply trending in one ideological direction, we would see similar results to those shown for real party switchers in the left panel of Figure 3. It could then be argued that the effect is not due to changing parties, but an over time trend in the composition of the contributors. However, the results show that there is no general trend in the change of ideologies of legislators’ donors. Each estimate is very close to zero. we see instead that 95% confidence intervals are displayed, but are too small to be seen.

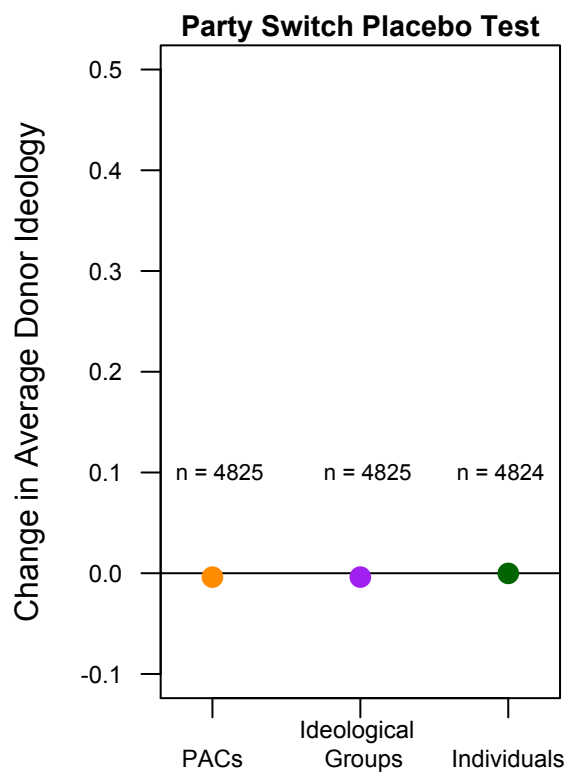


Figure A11: **Placebo Test - Effect of Changing Parties on Average Contributor Ideology**
- Among legislators who do not change parties, there is no general time trend in the average ideology of their contributors.

B.5 Party Switching: difference-in-differences approach

As a supplement to the results shown in Figure 3, I estimate the effect of party switching on the ideology of a candidate’s contributors by using a differences-in-differences approach. The difference-in-differences design identifies the causal effect under the assumption that treated legislators and untreated legislators would have followed the same pattern had the treated legislators not received the treatment. This parallel trends assumption assumes that there are not differences between the two groups of legislators that would have caused a change in contributions aside from switching parties. Using the panel dataset, I estimate the following econometric model:

$$ideology_{it} = year_t + \alpha_i + Republican_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where $ideology_{it}$ is the average ideology of candidate i ’s contributors in election cycle t . The variable $year_t$ is a election cycle fixed effect that measures any systematic changes in fundraising that are constant across all legislators. The variable α_i is a legislator specific fixed effect. The inclusion of this variable accounts for any constant factors that are unique to each legislator that may affect their fundraising abilities. This variable is critical to the difference-in-differences approach as it accounts for differences that may exist between the types of legislators who change parties and those who do not. This helps to satisfy the parallel trends assumption discussed earlier. Finally, the variable $Republican_{it}$ measures the effect of being a Republican legislator on the ideology of a candidate’s donors. Because we include the legislator-specific fixed effect, the Republican variable shows the within-legislator effect of being a Republican. That is, this variable measures the change in ideology of one’s contributors after switching to the Republican party.

As in Figure 3, I estimate this model three different times to see the effect of party switching on individual contributors, interest groups, and ideological groups separately.

The results displayed in Table A4 mirror those presented in the main text of the paper. Ideological groups and individuals care a great deal about the ideology of the candidates they support. Among ideological groups and individual contributors, when legislators switch to the Republican party, there is a dramatic shift in the average ideology of contributors who support these candidates. In both cases, the legislator receives support from significantly more conservative donors. The effect sizes in state legislative races are .27 among ideological groups and .11 among individuals. On the other hand, we do not see a similarly large or statistically significant shift in the ideology of PAC contributors after a legislator switches parties. The result among federal legislators is statistically significant. However, there are very few party switchers in the federal case. The preponderance of the data are state legislators who switch parties.

Dependent Variable, Ideology of:	Individual Donors	PAC Donors	Ideological Group Donors
Republican Party	0.11*** (0.02)	0.05 (0.03)	0.27*** (0.05)
Republican Party \times Federal Race	0.08*** (0.02)	0.09* (0.04)	0.50*** (0.05)
Federal Race	-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.11** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.03)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Legislators	52,457	44,007	34,089
Number of Observations	97,951	88,250	68,821

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table A4: Effect of Party Switching - Difference-in-Differences Models: In each model the dependent variable is the ideology of the legislators' donors in time t . Becoming a Republican legislator leads to more conservative individual and ideological group donors. The shift among PAC donors is much smaller and statistically insignificant.

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