The Partisan Origins of Affluent Influence: Unequal Representation in the U.S. Senate

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Abstract

Recent work in political science has argued that policy outcomes at the national level are more responsive to the preferences of the affluent than to the preferences of lower-income Americans. Generally, this work sets aside party—not only any differences between the behavior of Democrats and Republicans, but also any extra responsiveness to a representative's fellow partisans back home (e.g., a Democratic Senator in WV giving extra weight to WV Democrats). We bring party back in to disentangle the influence of the affluent from that of party. We use 39 roll-call votes from the past eight legislative sessions, including many important economic, social, and foreign policy votes. We estimate constituent preferences by income and party within state using advances in multilevel regression and poststratification (MRP). Paying attention to party changes our understanding of unequal representation: A senator's co-partisan constituents overpower class clout. Democratic senators' votes match public opinion more than Republicans'. The rich do get what they want more often, but only from Republican senators, and only when Republican constituents align with the rich.

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1 Introduction

While decades of research in political science has documented a strong link between public preferences and government policy (Page and Shapiro 1983; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993; Lax and Phillips 2012), scholars have recently focused on whose preferences are most influential and when. Some of this new work has demonstrated that policy outcomes tend to be more responsive to the preferences of the affluent than to the preferences of middle- or lower-income Americans (Jacobs and Page 2004; Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012). As economic inequality continues to rise, the prospect of a vicious cycle emerges in which the disproportionate influence of the affluent leads to policies that exacerbate economic inequality and further increase the inequality of influence.

We investigate the claim of unequal representation in national policymaking, doing so in new way. Rather than looking at system level outcomes as most existing studies do, we consider the responsiveness of members of Congress, comparing the roll call votes of individual senators to the preferences of their constituents across a variety of income categories.

Perhaps most importantly, we also bring party back in, which means asking whether senators listen to their co-partisans more, giving them extra weight and perhaps choosing to please them rather than the home-state median voter. It also means looking at behavioral differences between Democratic and Republican senators.

We focus on a series of roll-call votes (39 in total) from eight prior legislative sessions. These include some of the most important economic, social, and foreign policy votes cast by members of Congress during this period of time. Our sample of votes includes healthcare reform, President Obama's stimulus bill, an extension of the Bush tax cuts on capital gains, the Federal Marriage Amendment, and a vote to withdraw American military personnel from Iraq.

To estimate public opinion we will rely upon multi-level regression and poststratification (MRP). This technique, first presented by Gelman and Little (1997), uses national surveys and advances in Bayesian statistics and multilevel modeling to generate opinion estimates by demographic-geographic subgroups. MRP has been shown to produce accurate estimates of pub-

lic opinion by state and by congressional district. Here, because of the importance of accurately estimating preferences across incomes groups, we developed a more nuanced MRP that allows for the effects of income on opinion to differ across states, effectively incorporating the finding of Gelman, et al. (2007) that the impact of income on political preferences differs across states. The survey data we employ come from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), the National Annenberg Election Survey, and a variety of other reputable polling firms (e.g., Gallup, Pew, etc.). The surveys ask respondents how they would vote on a variety of salient pieces of legislation if they were a member of Congress or how they would like their member of Congress to vote. By using policy-specific survey questions, we are able to place our measures of public opinion and roll call votes on a common metric, avoiding problems of inference that arise when scholars employ aggregate liberalism or other indirect measures of preferences (Achen 1978; Matsusaka 2001).

We employ our estimates of opinion in two ways to assess democratic responsiveness. First, we examine the strength of association between the preferences of different income groups and Senators' roll call votes. To the extent that policymakers respond more to the preferences of their higher-income constituents (as found in Gilens 2012), we expect higher-income groups' preferences to be better predictors of roll call votes than the preferences of lower-income groups, net of the various control variables we include in our analyses. Second, we consider congruence, that is, the matching of policy to the majority preferences within each income category. In particular, we focus on those policy areas where there is disagreement across income groups. If senators are more responsive to their wealthy constituents, we should observe a higher rate of congruence for the top income groups. There is an important advantage to analyzing congruence with data like these—the high correlation between preferences across income categories can make it hard to identify the unique impact of preferences at different income levels (due to multicollinearity among the preferences of all three groups in a single regression model). Our congruence analysis compensates for this.

In addition, we will also document the extent to which the quality of representation received by the lower and middle classes varies across issue areas. Are these voters better represented on so-

cial or economic matters? Are elected officials making predictable tradeoffs across income groups and issues areas? That is, are they choosing to represent the affluent when it comes to most policy decisions, but deferring to lower- and middle-income voters under certain circumstances? Furthermore, since we have preferences and policy (i.e., votes) on a common metric, we can evaluate hypotheses that representational inequality varies by lawmaker type. Existing work, because of either the particular preference measures employed (Bartels 2008) or the outcomes studied (Gilens 2012), has been unable to consider this sort of variation. Though we only begin to do so here, we can, for example, interrogate the frequently offered hypothesis that representational inequality stems in part from the fact that politician themselves tend to be more affluent than the average voter, and thus are simply pursuing the interests with which they are familiar. Another possibility is that increased Republican power at the Federal level drives increased attention to the wealthy. To evaluate this hypothesis, we consider whether Republican lawmakers are more likely than their Democratic counterparts to follow the wishes of wealthier constituents.

As part of this project, we also compare differential responsiveness by income to another potential pathology in representation—the tendency of lawmakers to respond more to the opinions of their co-partisans than to the opinions of the median voter. Recent empirical work has found that senators more heavily weight the preferences for their partisan base when casting roll call votes on the confirmation of nominees to the Supreme Court (Kastellec et al. 2015). We extend this existing work by considering differences in responsiveness to partisan subconstituencies across a range of issues and placing this in the context of varying responsiveness across economic class. We also explore the possibility that what looks like asymmetric responsiveness by income, may in fact be, partisan responsiveness or a symmetries in responsiveness across parties, as in Krimmel et al. (2016). To facilitate this analysis we not only estimate state-level public opinion by income groups, but also (separately) by partisanship, generating estimates of support for each roll call vote by a senator's Democratic, Independents, and Republican constituents.

In studying differential responsiveness, the preferences estimates we generate provide important new descriptive statistics about subnational public opinion. These estimates tell us how

much the opinions of the wealthy differ from those of the middle- and lower-classes at the state level. Our estimates also answer questions about which issues areas have the largest class-based differences and the states in which differences are largest. Our estimates also tell us the corresponding information about state-level differences in opinion between Democrats and Republicans, placing class and partisan differences in context. Therefore we can also discuss on which dimension conflict occurs.

Overall, our investigation will advance the growing literature on the political economy of inequality by developing a more complete understanding of the dimensions, causes, and dynamics—both micro and macro—of differential representation. By identifying alternative sources of representational inequality, our findings could be of practical use to reformers within and outside of government. Finally, as part of this project, we will further develop the statistical tools and methods for studying responsiveness and generate a unique set of opinion estimates for both states and congressional districts, making all of these available for future work.

2 Methodology & Data

To estimate state public opinion by income groups and by partisan identification we will rely upon multi-level regression and poststratification (MRP). This technique, first presented by Gelman and Little (1997), uses national surveys and advances in Bayesian statistics and multilevel modeling to generate opinion estimates by demographic-geographic subgroups. MRP has been shown to produce accurate estimates of public opinion by state and by congressional district (Park, Gelman, and Bafumi 2006, Lax and Phillips 2009a, 2013, Rodden and Warshaw 2012), using a relatively small number of survey respondents—as few as contained in a single (moderately-sized) national poll—and fairly simple demographic-geographic models of preferences (Lax and Phillips 2009a). Indeed, MRP has emerged as the new "gold standard for estimating constituency preferences from national surveys" (Selb and Munzert 2011, p. 455).

MRP proceeds in two stages. In the first stage, a multilevel model of individual survey response is estimated, with opinion modeled as a function of a respondent's demographic and geographic characteristics. The state of the respondents is used to estimate state-level effects, which

themselves are modeled using additional state-level predictors such as aggregate demographics. Residents from a particular state yield information on how responses within that state vary from others after controlling for demographics. All individuals in the survey, no matter their location, yield information about demographic patterns which can be applied to all state estimates. The second step of MRP is poststratification: the opinion estimates for each demographic-geographic respondent type are weighted (poststratified) by the percentages of each type in the actual population of each state. This allows us to estimate the percentage of respondents within each state by income category and partisanship who have a particular issue position or policy preference.

In stage one, we model survey response (i.e., whether a respondent supports a given policy proposal) as a function of a respondent's race and gender combination (males and females divided into four racial categories—black, Hispanic, white, and other), age (18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and 70+), education (less than a high school education, high school graduate, some college, college graduate, and post-graduate education), partisan affiliation (Democrat, Independent, or Republican), income category, and state. We also include interactions between income, state, and party which allow the effect of income to vary by states and party within states.

Income effects occur as follows. There are 14 to 16 income categories, depending on the poll. We allow for random effects by category. There is a linear trend across these based on the midpoint of each category. We also take the square root of this midpoint for an additional trend variable, in case the trend is not linear. We allow both these continuous trend variables to vary by state.

As a state level predictor, we use DPSP which stands for demographically purged state predictor. This measure was created by Lax and Phillips (2013) and is based upon their work estimating state-level policy preferences across a wide range of issues (see Lax and Phillips 2012). In essence, DPSP is the average liberal/conservative shift in state-level public opinion, after controlling for a variety of demographic predictors. Because DPSP was estimated across a wide set of policies it is a good default for state level intercept shifts when using MRP to predict opinion on a given issue.

With the results of this modeling stage, we then estimate opinion for each of our demographic-geographic respondent types. We do, however, face a complication that is not present in most applications of MRP. Typically, researchers poststratify their estimates using population frequencies from the Census "5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample's" or the American Community Survey. Unfortunately, these data do not include partisan identification. Thus, using standard MRP one can estimate the level of support for, say, President Obama's health care reform among middle-income college-educated black females aged 18-29 in California, but one cannot estimate the level of support among Republican, Independent or Democratic individuals of the same type. Fortunately, a recent paper by Kastellec et al (2015) presents a solution to this dilemma, using the Census data as a starting point. Their approach involves using an additional stage of MRP to generate a new post-stratification file that includes party. We begin by collecting data on individual survey responses about partisan identification (i.e. whether a respondent is a Democrat, Republican, or an Independent) across multiple points in time spanning the years of our public opinion surveys. We then model partisanship as a function of demographic and geographic variables. Specifically, we treat partisanship as a response variable and apply standard MRP to estimate the distribution of partisanship across the full set of "demographic-geographic types" from above. We then have an estimate of the proportion of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans among, say, income-category-3 (30 to 40K) college-educated black females aged 30-45 in California.

We then break down our estimates by state quintile, forming five equally sized groups within each state, broken down by income, so that we can look at the opinion of the "rich" (top quintile), "poor" (bottom quintile), or middle (middle quintile).

The survey data that we rely upon to generate our estimates of constituent opinion come from the comment content portion of Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES), the National Annenberg Election Survey, and a variety of other reputable polling firms such as Gallup and Pew.

From these surveys, we have identified questions that ask respondents their preferences on roll call votes that were actually taken by members of Congress. For example, in 2012, one

such questions asked respondents whether they would support a plan to extend Bush era tax cuts for incomes below $200,000; another asked whether the Affordable Care Act should be repealed. The survey data employed ask respondents how they would vote on these issues if they were a member of Congress. Across the surveys with which we are working, we have identified 39 such questions. These include some of the most important economic, social, and foreign policy votes cast by members of Congress during the past four legislative sessions. Our sample of votes includes healthcare reform, President Obama's stimulus bill, an extension of the Bush tax cuts on capital gains, the Federal Marriage Amendment, and a vote to withdraw American military personnel from Iraq.

Table 1 provides a list of the 39 issues/roll call votes for which we measure constituent preferences. For each, we measure the share (of those with an opinion) who favor a "yes" vote (note that a separate MRP model is estimated for each issue). We generate measures of preferences by income quintile and by party (Republicans, Democrats, and Independents) in each state.

3 Opinion and Votes

3.1 Disagreement

We begin with a discussion of our opinion estimates—how much does state-level public opinion differ as a function of economic class and political party? As has prior research (see Gilens 2012), we find that, on average, there are not large differences between the preferences of high- and low-income Americans. Across all of the roll call votes included in our empirical analysis, the average state-level difference in opinion between the top and bottom quintiles is only 9.3 percentage points. Correspondingly, the average within-state correlation between the opinions of the upper and lower classes is a fairly high 0.52 This does not mean, however, that there are not instances of disagreement. In our state-level opinion estimates, we find that the top and bottom quintiles prefer different policy choices (i.e., are on opposite sides of the 50% opinion threshold) approximately 22% of the time.

Figure 1 displays, by roll call vote, the average state-level differences in opinion between

between the top and bottom income quintiles, grouping the roll calls into three issue types—security, economic, and social. Within our sample, we tend to observe the smallest class-based differences in opinion on social issues, where the average state-level difference between the opinion of the top and bottom quintile are only 4.3 percentage points. On security and economic matters, class-based differences tend to be much larger, averaging 12.8 and 10.9 points respectively.

Within the economic category (in particular) there is a great deal of variation in the amount of class based polarization across issues. We often observe, for example, high levels of polarization on roll call votes that those that either largely benefit high-income earners (for example, reducing the capital gains tax or adopting the Bush tax cuts) or that clearly benefit low-income individuals (for example, funding the State Children's Health Insurance Program). In fact, the most polarizing issue in our sample is a 2006 vote to extend a previously enacted capital gains tax cut, for which the average difference in support between the top and bottom income quintiles was over 27 percentage points. We also tend to observe relatively highly opinion polarization on free trade issues, where the average class based difference in opinion is 14 points. That we observe some of the largest amounts of class-based opinion polarization on issues such as these lends face validity to our estimates while also suggesting that if the rich do indeed have a disproportionate influence on the roll call voting behavior of lawmakers, the resulting policies may further economically disadvantage the poor.

Figure 2 shows, by state, class-based opinion polarization averaged across all issues (shown by the dark circles) and by each of our three issue types (shown by the lighter-colored circles, squares, and triangles). The figure demonstrates that the overall patterns noted above are generally also true when we consider our data state by state. The squares, which represent state-level polarization on social issues, are almost universally located to the left of the dark circles. This indicates that, in nearly all states, class-based polarization on social issues is lower than such polarization on the "average" issues or for either economic or security matters. Figure 2 also ranks states by their average amount of class-based polarization across all issues. The range across states is fairly modest—Mississippi is the most polarized (with an average opinion difference between the top

and bottom income quintiles of approximately 12 percentage points), while California is the least polarized (with an average difference of about 7 points).

How do differences in opinion by income compare to partisan differences on the same set of issues? We observe that partisan opinion polarization is much higher. In fact, there is not a single issue in our sample for which class-based opinion polarization (averaged across states) is larger than partisan opinion polarization (again averaged across states). More specifically, the mean state-level difference in opinion between Democrats and Republicans is approximately 39 percentage points, compared to only 9 percentage points for economic class). Thus, while the top and bottom income quintiles in a state agree on many issues, self-identified Democrats and Republicans do not. We find that, within a given state, the Democrats and Republicans disagree 69% of the time (compared to only 22% by class). This means that on the types of salient issues we study here, a senator's Democratic and Republican constituents are likely to pressure her to cast very different votes and, therefore, she have will often have to decide which group to prioritize.

That being said, the extent of partisan disagreement varies, as shown in Figure 3. Security issues are most polarizing, with an average state-level partisan difference of 47 percentage points, compared to differences of 42 and 37 points for social and economic matters. Interestingly, however, among economic matters we observe the greatest cross-issue variation in the size of partisan polarization. For example, on some economic issues, such as the Affordable Care Act (both its adoption and potential repeal) and President Obama's economic stimulus bill, the average within-state difference in Democratic and Republican opinion is quite high (around 70 percentage points). On other economic issues, such middle class tax cuts and free trade agreements, partisan differences are much smaller (approximately 10 percentage points).

Across states there is relatively little variation in the extent of partisan polarization. That is, for any given roll call, most states have a similar degree of partisan opinion polarization, though the extent of this polarization variations quite a bit across issues. Figure 4, which displays partisan opinion polarization by state, shows this result—cross-state differences are somewhat small, with polarization high in all states. Indeed, average state-level polarization only ranges from a high of

40.4 percentage points in California to a low of 38.6 in Rhode Island. Figure 4, also confirms that across all states partisan polarization is, on average, lowest for economic matters and higher on social and security issues.

Figure 5 further captures the extent to which state opinion is much more polarized by party than class. The hollow points on the graph show for each of our 39 issues the percentage of states in which the median members of the high- and low-income quintiles have different policy preferences; the solid points show the percentage of states in which Democrats and Republicans disagree. There is only one issue for which class disagreement is more common than partisan disagreement—support for the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. For nearly all other issues, partisan disagreement is much more common.

Figure 6 summarizes the rates of disagreement together. The left plot averages across state for each issue. The right plot averages within state across issues. Either way, partisan disagreement, far more than class disagreement, characterize the senator's dilemma in pleasing constituents.

3.2 Differential Responsiveness

Now that we have our opinion estimates we can evaluate the responsiveness of lawmakers to public opinion.[1] We proceed by first considering the relationship between the preferences of different income groups and the roll call votes cast by their senators. Because preferences across income quintiles are so highly correlated, we cannot include the preferences of all or even several groups in regression models at the same time. Instead we estimate simple bivariate regressions in which we include the preferences of one group at a time—low-income constituents (the bottom quintile), middle-income constituents, or high-income constituents (the top quintile)—and then compare the coefficients on our measure of preferences across models. If senators tend to listen more to the wealthy, then the coefficient on opinion should be largest in the model that estimates the relationship between wealthy opinion and roll call voting. While this analysis is less than ideal, it is virtually identical the approach used in recent work by Gilens (2012).

The results of these regressions are reported in Table 3. In these crude regressions, public

[1] Data on the votes cast by senators was obtained from Congressional Quarterly.

opinion is a strong predictor of senatorial roll call voting in each model. However, as we anticipated from the work of Gilens (2012), the size of the coefficient on opinion increases as one moves from lower to higher income groups. An extra one point of support among the rich is associated with an increase in the probability of a yes vote of .68 percentage points. An extra point of support from the poor only .27 percentage points, less than half as much. This is similar to what Gilens (2012) found for policy change. We add in co-partisan opinion as an alternative. The result is even more striking, with approximately a one-to-one relationship between opinion of a senator's co-partisans back home and the senator's vote.

We now take this still further. Figure 8 shows curves for responsiveness to poor, rich, statewide, and co-partisan opinion. We show responsiveness curves for all senators (the top panel) and separately for Democrats (the middle panel) and Republicans (the bottom panel). For all senators, as in Table 3, the slope is steeper for rich than poor, but steeper still for co-partisans. Democrats seem responsive to the preferences of all four categories. Republican voting behavior does not track any of the opinion groups except for co-partisans.

XXXThis needs to take into account group size

3.3 Congruence and Choosing Sides

A second approach to analyzing our data is to look not just at responsiveness (i.e., the correlation between opinion and roll call votes), but also to consider congruence, that is, whether a group actually gets the vote that it desires from its senator (as represented by the majority of the group, in turn representable by its median preference). We report the results of this analysis in Table 2. If the opinions of the well-to-do matter more, we should expect to observe the members of the highest quintile prevailing more frequently. The top row of the table is the share of the time (across all issues) that the top ands bottom quintiles get their desired vote. Each does so a majority of the time, with the top quintile prevailing slightly more frequently (of course one might not expect to observe much of a difference here, since on most of the issues in our study members of the top and bottom quintile share similar preferences). Recognizing this, we conduct the same basic analysis, but this time focus only on those issues where the top and bottom quintile (in a

given state) disagree. The results of this analysis are reported in the bottom row of the table. Here we observe a bigger difference in success across income quintiles. When there is disagreement, the top quintile prevails over the lowest income quintile approximately 2/3rds of the time. This result is again consistent with a world in which the opinions of the well-to-do carry more weight with elected officials than do the opinions of lower-income individuals.

Let us break down all votes, as shown in Figure 7. The full area captures all 3,791 votes cast by senators on the bills in question. Divisions left to right break votes down by issue type, within each vertical division. The top set of rectangles, almost half the votes, represent votes that please both the bottom and top quintiles (the medians within both quintiles agreed and got what they wanted). The middle set of rectangles capture votes that were against both the median rich person and median poor person in the senator's state. Finally, the bottom, capturing only 1/5 of all votes, are times when a senator had to vote with one key quintile and against the other. Taking each vote type in turn, we show which choice the senator made.

In economic votes, given conflict, the rich won out over the poor on 60% of economic votes, 65% of social votes, and 81% of security votes. It is these differences (eg. the 10% advantage the wealthy observe on economic issues above the 50% level that would indicate balanced rich and poor representation) that show the extra influence of the rich over the poor. Other times, both or neither get what they want.

That advantage on economic issues is small relative to all votes cast and to the number of votes where senators vote against BOTH the poor and the wealthy. If the poor had equal influence in those times of conflict on economic votes, they would get 1.1% more senator votes on economic issues (a "whopping" 42 votes out of 3,791), 0.6% on social issues, and 2.2% on security votes.

We now shift to the senator as unit. Figure 9's top left panel plots each senator by her degree of congruence with her low- and high-income constituents, whether or not they agree with each other. Points along the 45° line are senators who vote in line with each group at the same level. Higher points are more congruent with rich medians; to the right are senators voting in congruence with the poor. The circles are Democrats, who vote on average with public opinion of both groups

more than do the Republicans (the triangles). That is, both rich and poor are more likely to see their preferences converted into actual senate votes by the Democrats. There does seem to be a slight "bias" towards congruence with the rich among Republicans (above the 45° line) and towards the poor among Democrats (below it). The top right panel show congruence rates with partisan medians, with each side voting with their co-partisans often and displeasing their opposing partisan constituents often.. The bottom panel shows congruence rates with partisan medians and statewide medians. Democrats again are more likely to vote in line with their states. Both sides can be seen to vote on average at the same rate with their fellow partisans.

Congruence so far need not be zero-sum—rich and poor medians often agree, as do party medians. What happens when they clash? Figures 10 and 11 limit the sets of votes to these, so that we only need one dimension. Every such vote is a choice for the senator between pleasing one median or the other. We plot the senators' vote percentages.

In the top panel, senators to the left vote more with their poor constituents and those to the right with the rich. Democrats are spread out but on average tip towards the poor. Republicans far more strongly vote in line with the rich. When the rich and poor disagree (843 votes), the Democrats side with the rich 41% of the time, while the Republicans side with the rich 88%. The average finding of pro-rich bias (67%) is being largely driven by Republican senators. On average the Democrats pull this a bit back the other way (all but 20 of the 75 Democratic senators captured in this vote set; no Republican senator tilts more to the poor).[2]

The second panel shows the normal partisan pull—when the party medians in a senator's state disagree (as they do over two-thirds of the time), each side strongly but not monolithically favors the position of co-partisans.

Now it is time to combine these threads. The third panel shows how senators choose sides when their co-partisan median opposes the position of the rich median. The rich median may beat the poor 2 to 1 when opposed, but the partisan medians beat the rich 3 to 1. Republicans, those who drive the rich victory rate, actually tilt a bit more than Democrats towards the partisan choice

[2]Senator Obama's one vote within this set was a vote for FISA, the rich median's position in Illinois, but not that of the poor median.

when doing so means voting against the rich medians.

As one might suspect, there is a partisan difference in rates of alignment with the rich or poor. When rich and poor medians in a state disagree, the Republican opinion median sides with the rich 91% of the time, the Democratic only 17%. Do the rich still beat the poor 2 to 1 when the partisan median agrees with the poor? The final panel in Figure 10 comes as close to answering this as possible, given the sparseness of data subsets. Of the 43 times when the Republican median in the state sided with the poor median in the state over the rich median in the state,[3] the Republican senators went with party and poor over rich 32 times, or 74%. Democratic senators voted with party and poor over rich 67% of the time (201 of 298 votes).

Figure 11 sets up other median battles to put this in context, subsetting votes accordingly. The story told by these panels from top to bottom: (1) party beats the poor; (2) party beats the statewide median (even more so for Republicans); (3) the rich beat the state medians for Republicans, but not Democrats; and (4) state medians beat the poor for Republicans, but not Democrats.

3.4 Stronger Preferences and Degrees of Incongruence

Gilens and others have pointed out that dichotomous classifications and the close calls they ignore can be problematic: e.g., a narrow 51% majority misses out on getting what it wants; the rich and poor are said to split even when they fall very close but on opposite sides of the 50% cutpoint; or the difference in levels of support between the two groups is close at any level. Gilens also presents a solution, to focus only on the subset of data where the gap in support between the groups is "large" relative to some threshold (Gilens suggests a 10 point gap) or to focus on times a group can be said to "strongly favor" a position in that a supermajority favors it (Gilens suggests 75%). In Gilens (2012), the affluence influence finding only exists when there is such a gapXXXdetails.

Does limiting the scope to larger disagreements or more clear degrees of support change our findings above? What else can we learn focusing on this subset of votes and from treating incongruence not as a yes-no question but as a matter of degree? After all, making a 55% of a

[3] 21 stem cell research, 9 school vouchers, 5 iraq war (2002), then a smattering of others.

group unhappy is quite different from making 75% of that group unhappy. We start by limiting the scope to times of "stronger" preferences or disagreement, but keeping congruence itself a dichotomous categorization (the median member gets what it wants or she does not). Then we explore degrees of incongruence, by asking instead what percent of the group is made happy by the senator's vote.

XXX [RESULTS FROM NEW JEFF SCRIPT]

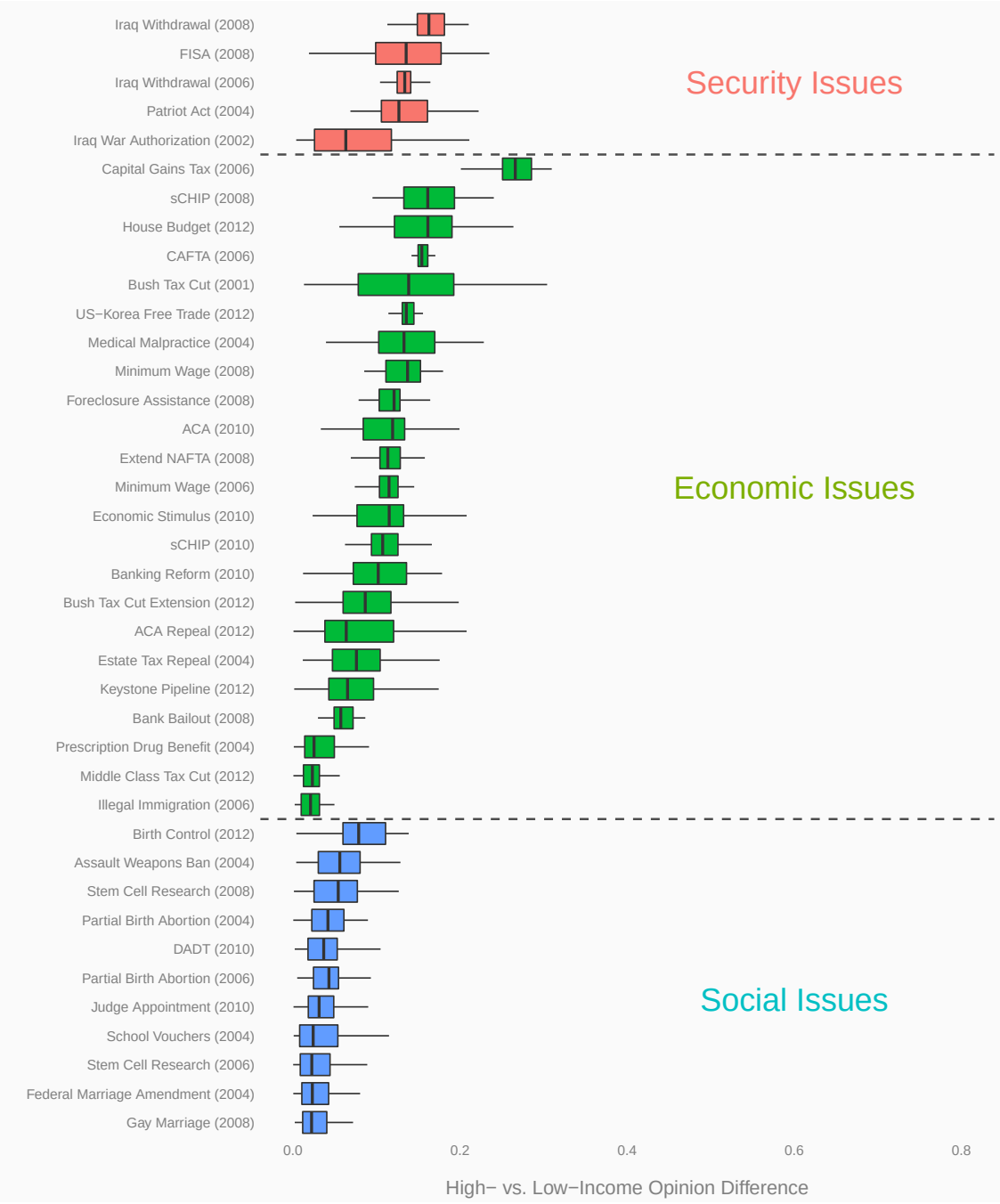
4 Conclusion

For better or worse, this has been a party story more than a class story. The patterns above suggest that many victories of the rich medians are epiphenomenal. The rich do get what they want more often, but only from Republican senators, and only when Republican constituents align with the rich. Affluent influence rests on Republican senators accurately representing Republican constituents.

All these findings are compatible, as we read them, with the work of Gilens and others. However, they do raise distinct normative questions and point to, for those reform-minded, different policy or institutional interventions to equalize responsiveness.[4]

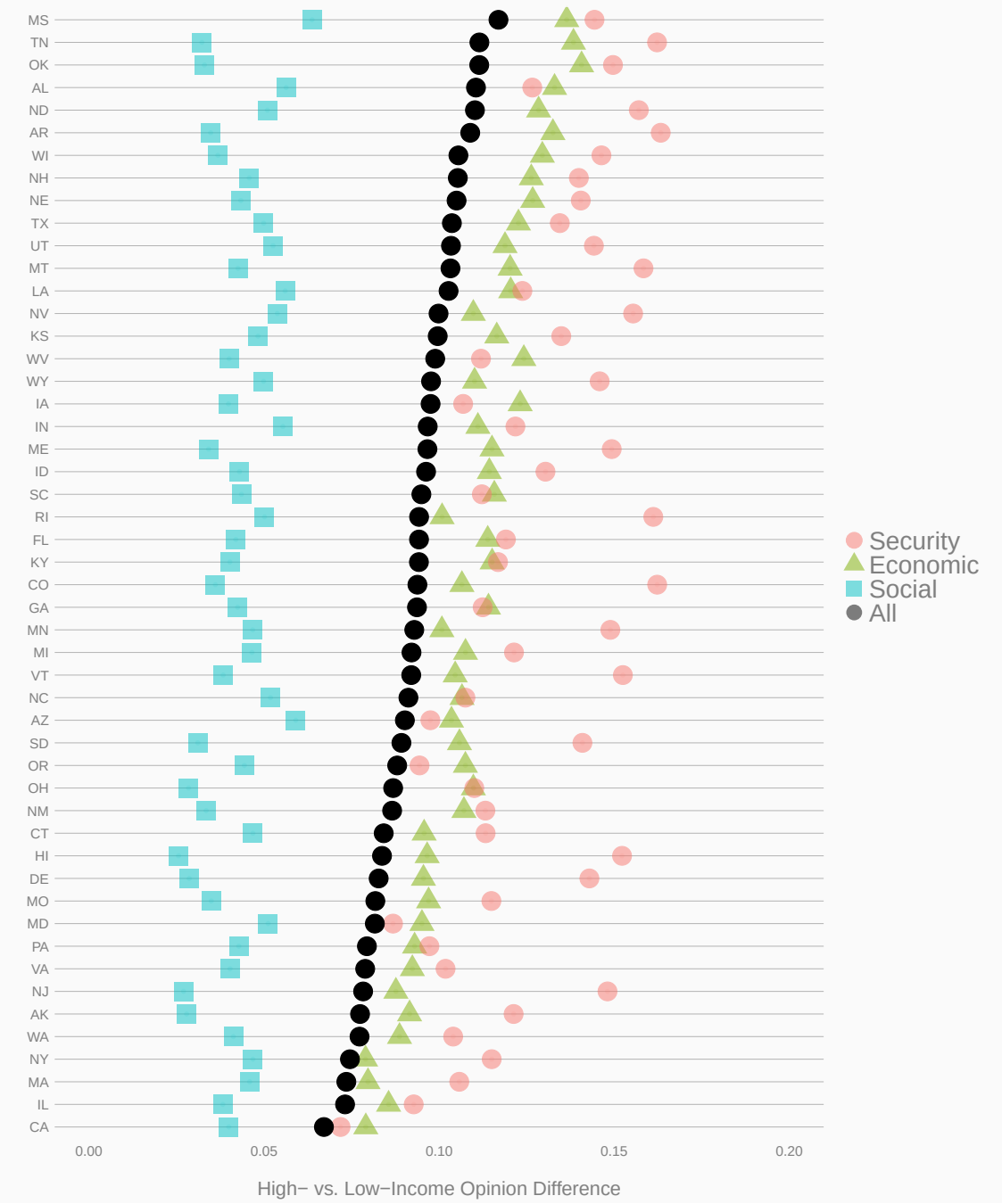
[4]One might prioritize changes to primary rules over changes to campaign finance, or one might still seek the latter if connected to partisan polarization.

Figure 1: Class Opinion Polarization by Issue



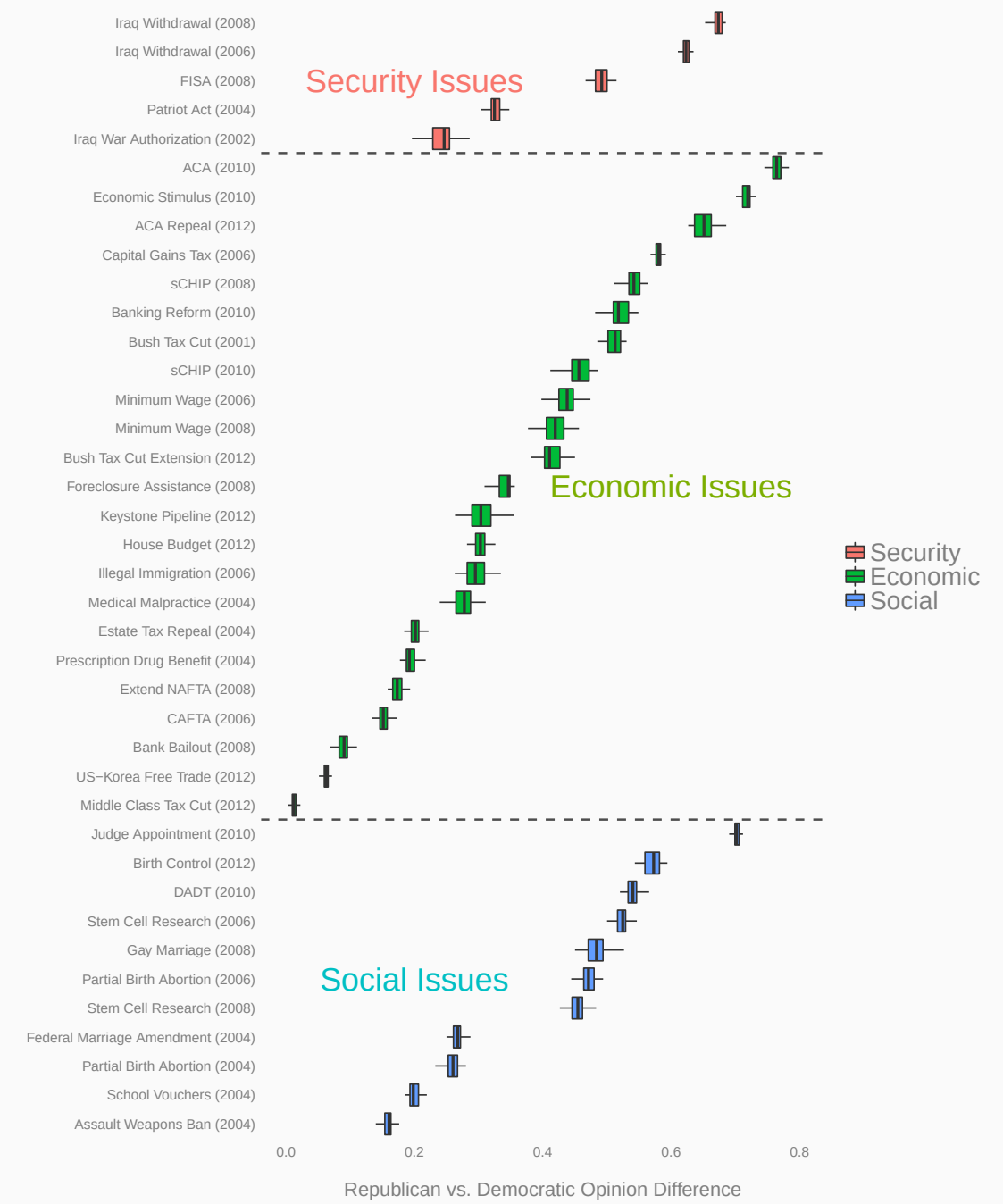
This figure shows the difference in opinion between the top- and bottom-income quintiles, averaged by issue across states. The lower and upper "hinges" in the boxplot correspond the 25th and 75th percentiles. The upper (lower) whisker extends from the hinge to the highest (lowest) value that is within 1.5 of the range of the hinge.

Figure 2: Class Opinion Polarization by State



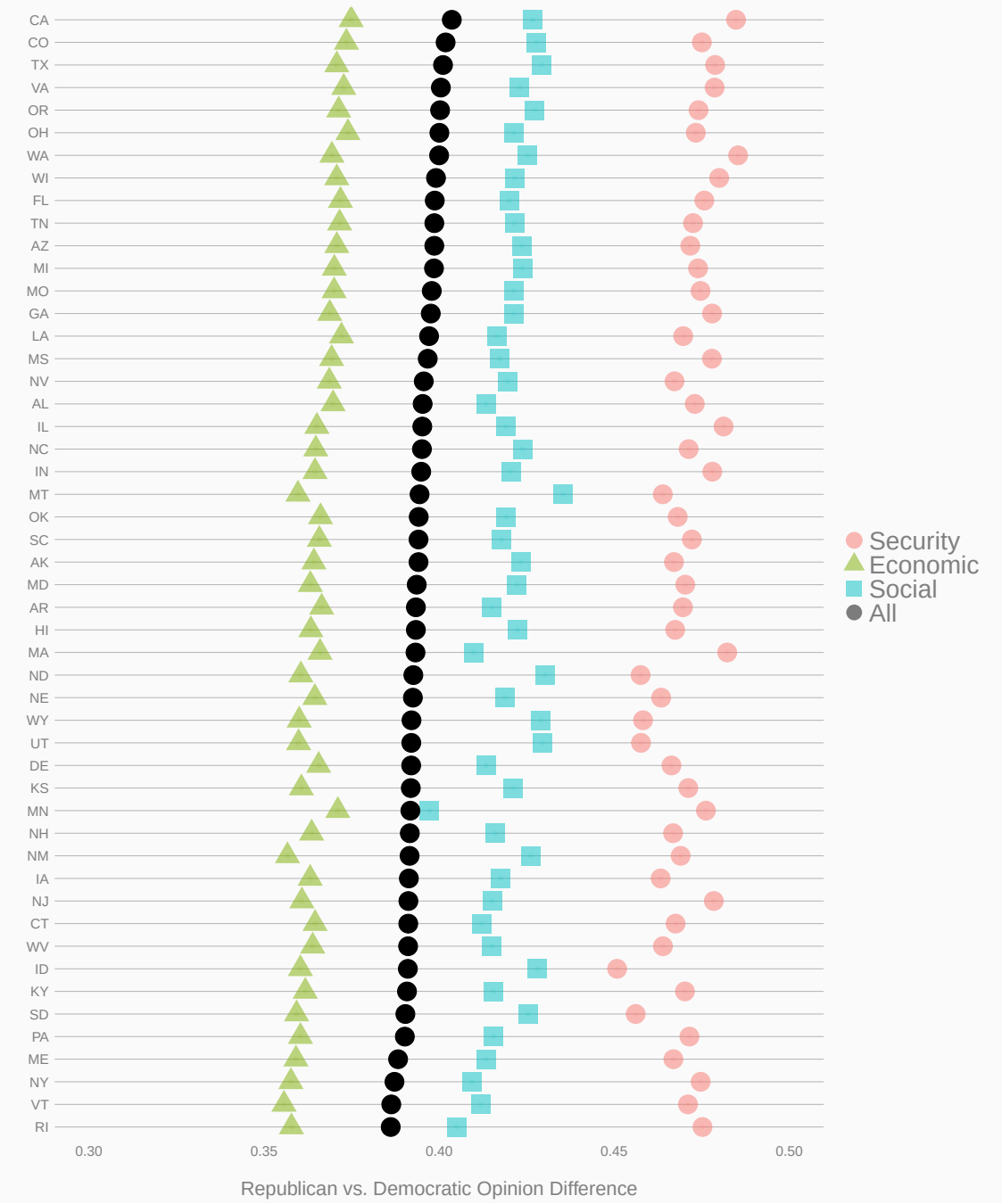
This graph shows the average difference in opinion between the top and bottom income quintile for each state. The dark circle represents the average difference across all issues, while the triangle is for economic issues, the light-colored circle for security issues, and the square for social issues.

Figure 3: Partisan Opinion Polarization by Issue



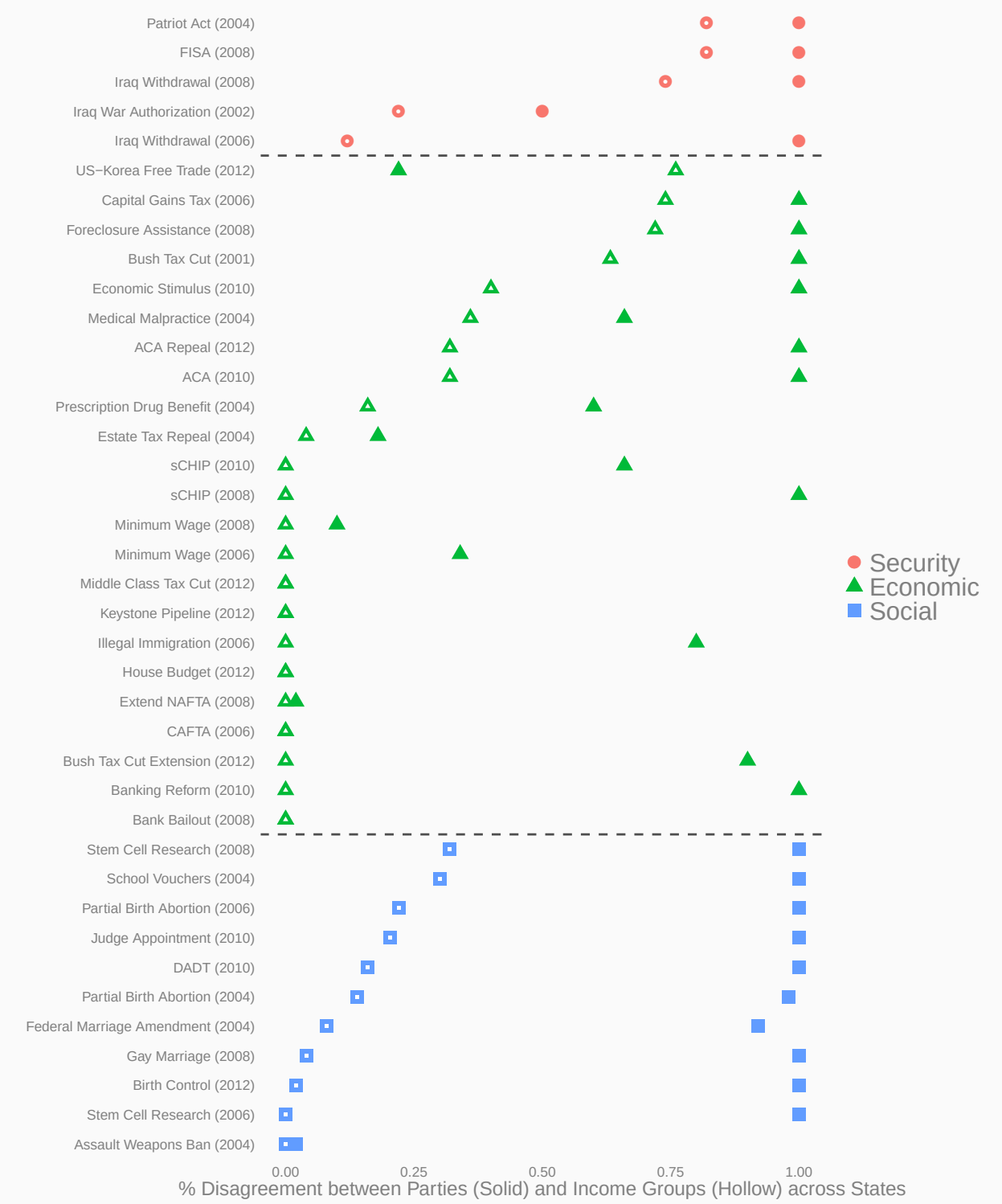
This boxplot shows the difference in opinion between self-identified Democrats and Republicans, averaged across states by issue.

Figure 4: Partisan Opinion Polarization by State



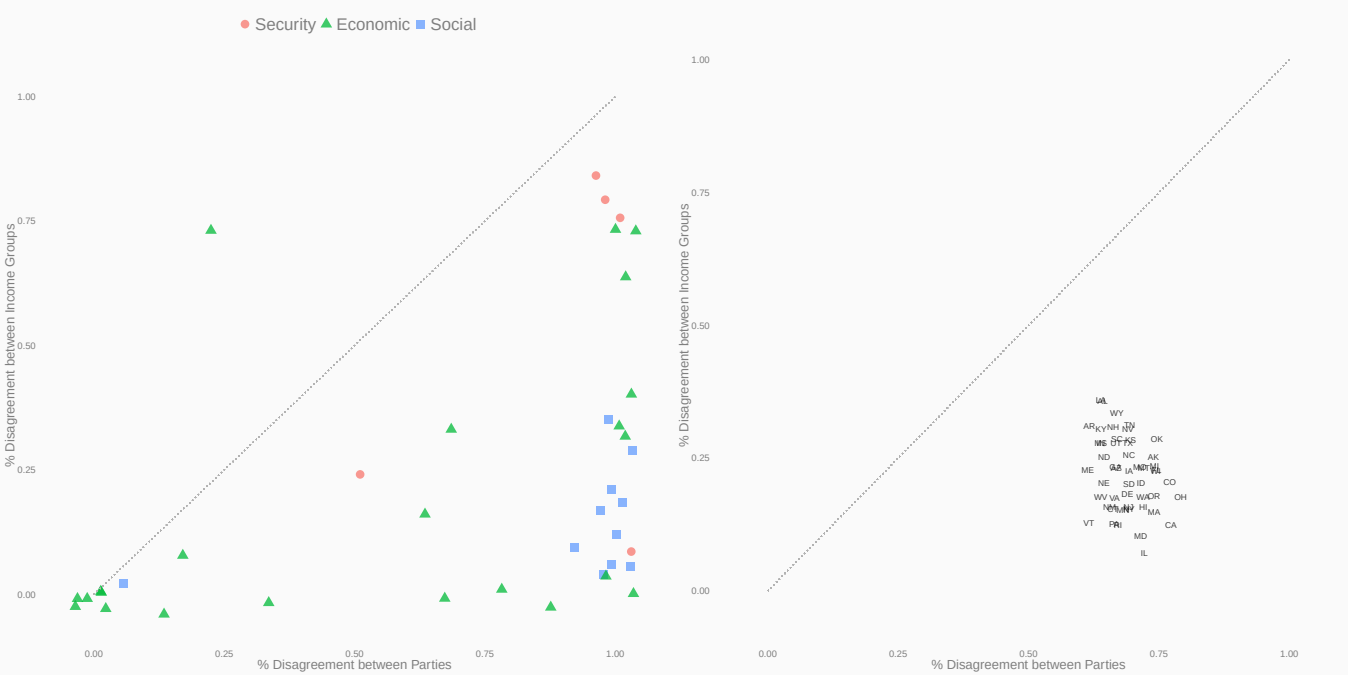
This graph shows the average difference in opinion between self-identified Democrats and Republicans for each state. The dark circle represents the average difference across all issues, while the triangle is for economic issues, the light-colored circle for security issues, and the square for social issues.

Figure 5: How Often Medians Disagree by Issue:
(Rich vs. Poor and Democratic vs. Republican)



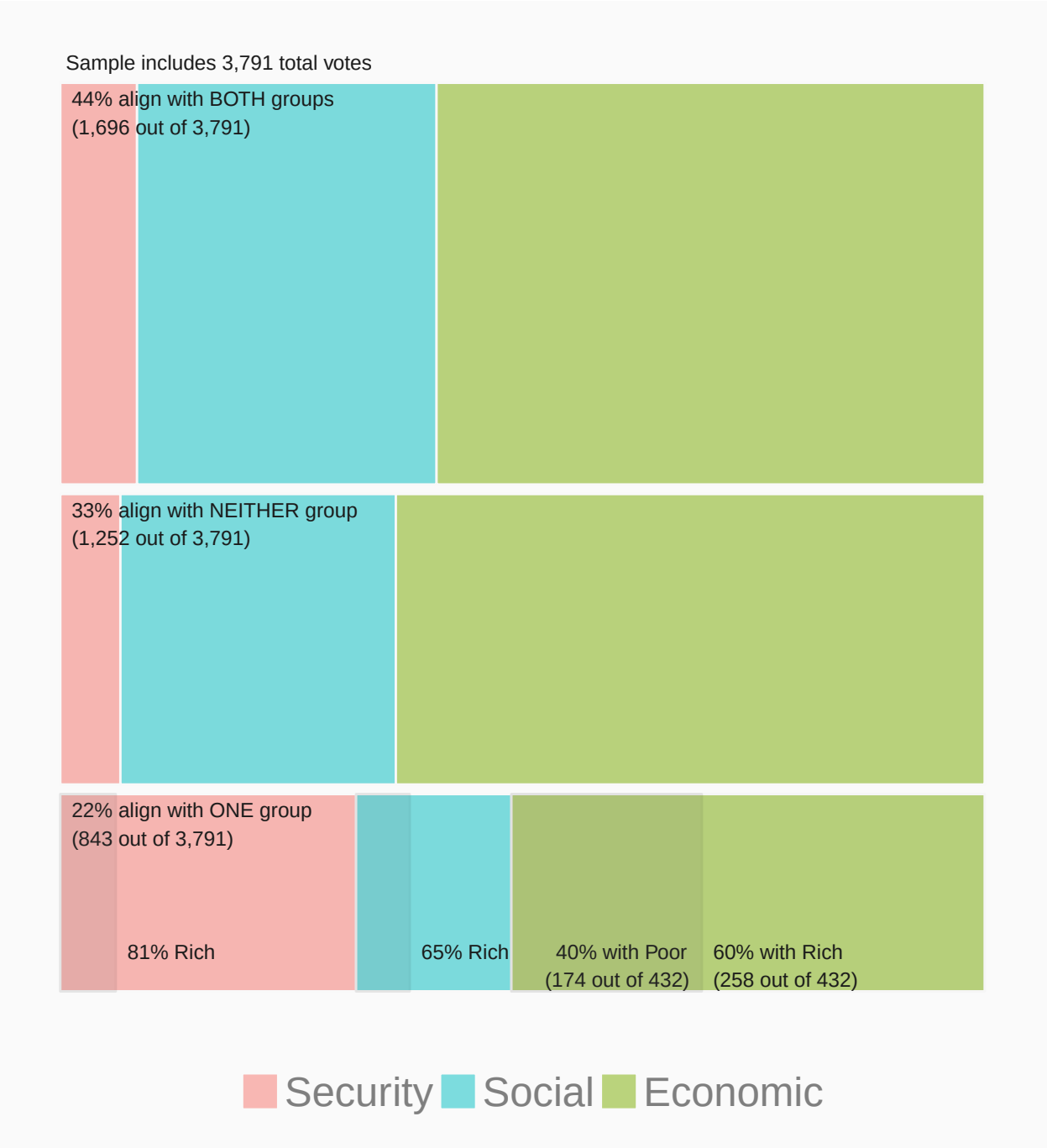
In contrast to focusing on the difference in percentage points separating different opinion groups, we now show how often the median member of one group is on the opposite side from the median member of the other. The rates of class disagreement and of partisan disagreement are shown for each issue, averaged across states.

Figure 6: How Often Medians Disagree by Issue and by State



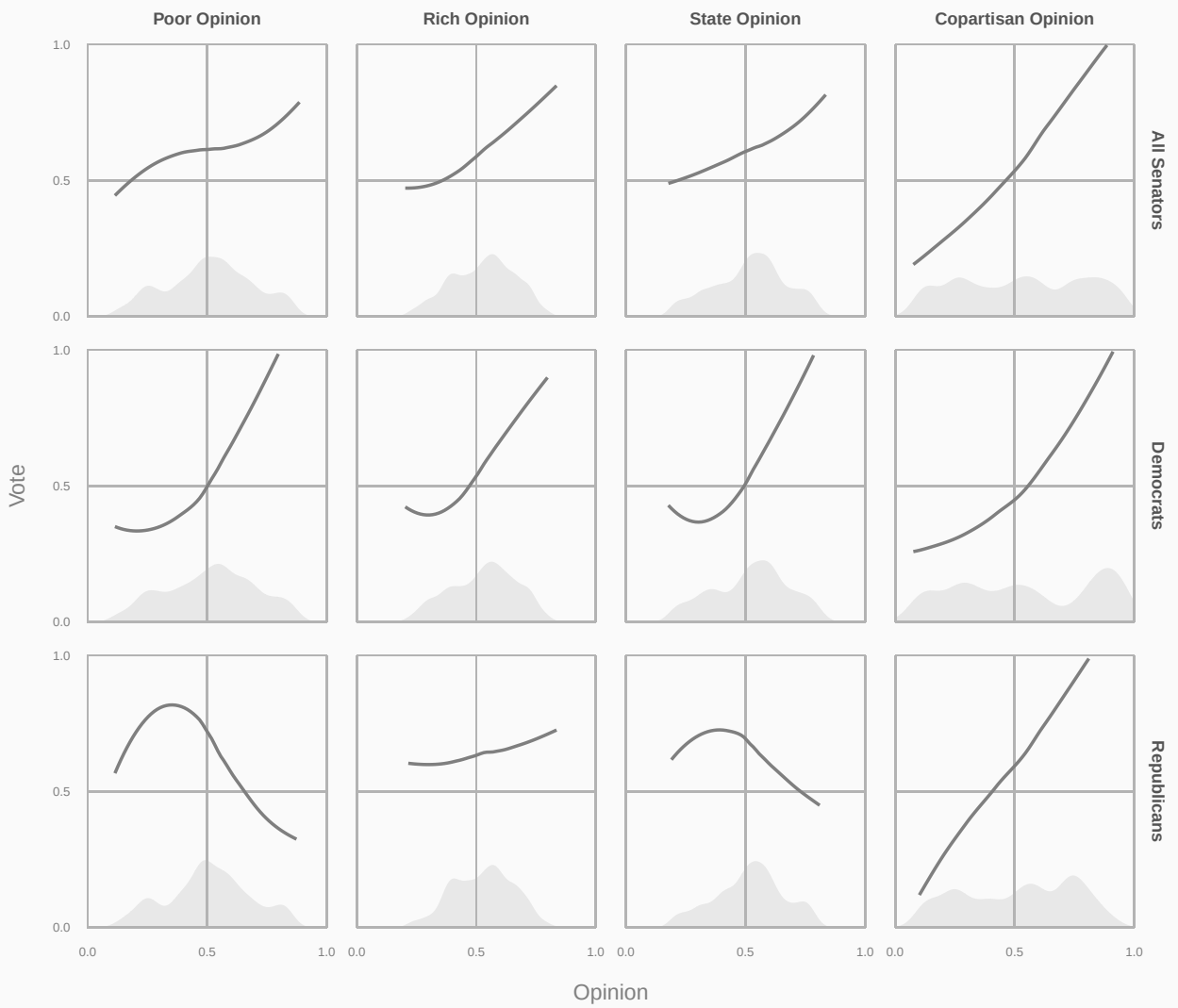
We plot the rate of class median disagreement against the rate of partisan median disagreement. The left panel shows this by issue (averaged over states). The right shows this by state (averaged over issue). The 45○ line is shown.

Figure 7: Mapping the Votes of Senators



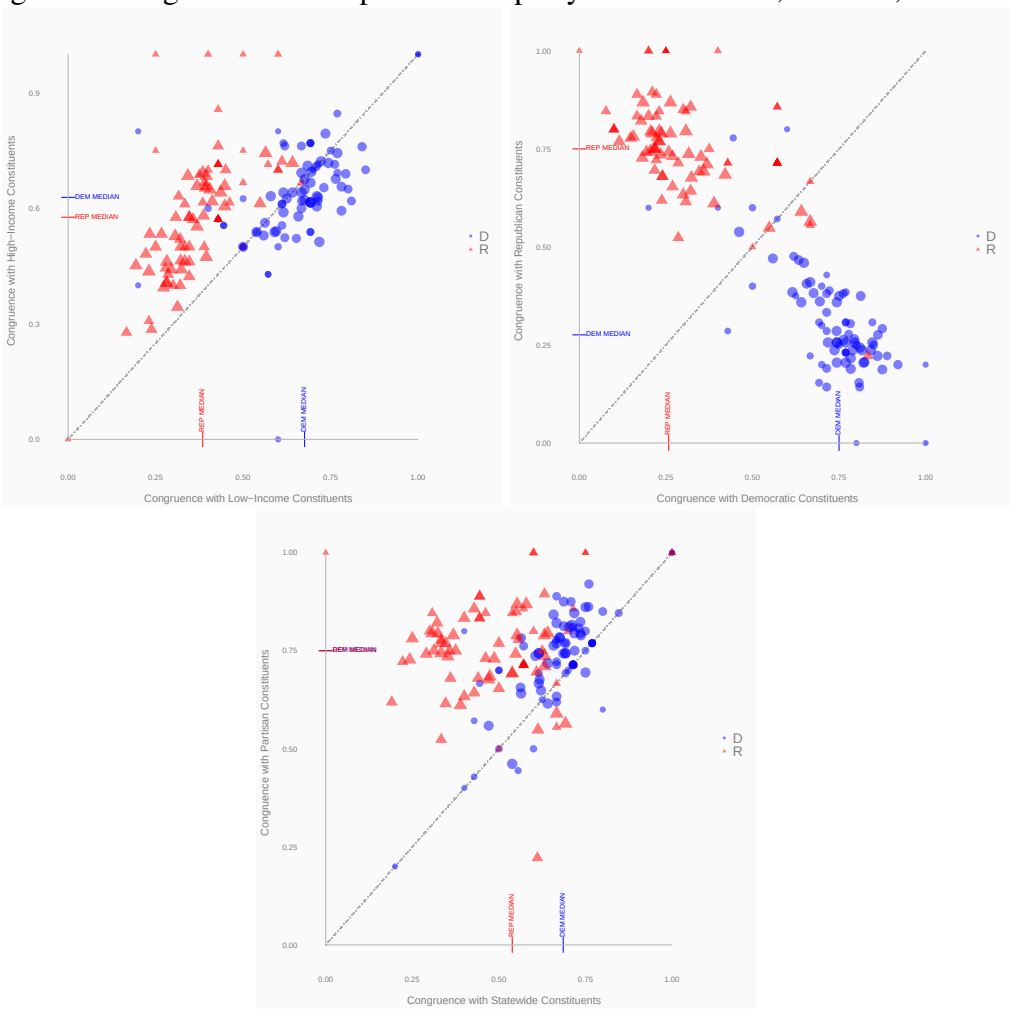
The full area represents all votes cast, broken down vertically by alignment with the rich and/or poor medians and horizontally by issue. Within that, at the bottom, when votes align with one or the other class median but not both, the votes are divided by which one got what she wanted. The differences within the bottom "row", within each issue, of the sizes of those are the class influence effect.

Figure 8: Responsiveness



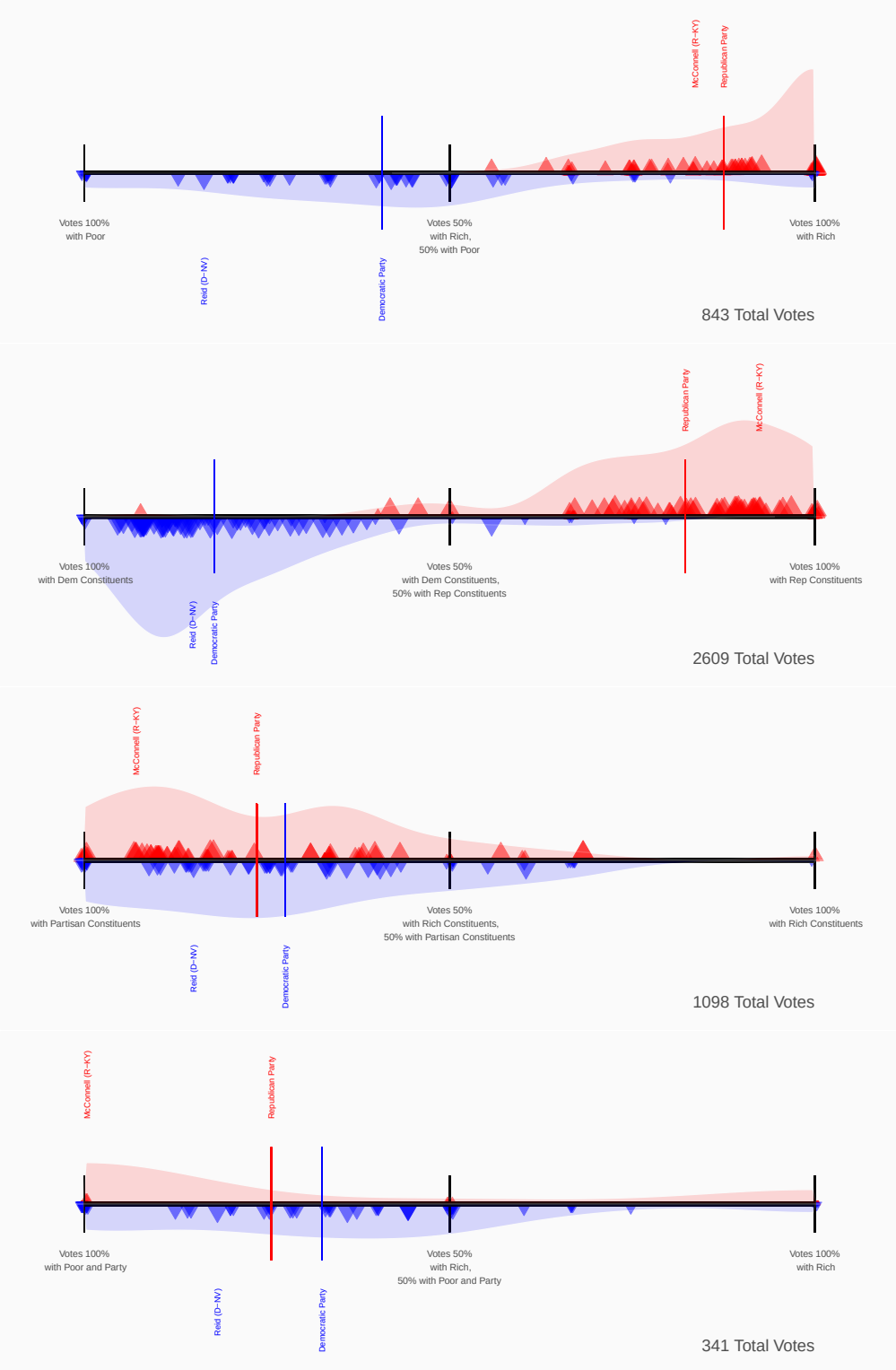
Lowess curves show responsiveness to poor, rich, statewide, and co-partisan opinion. We show responsiveness curves for all senators (the top panel) and separately for Democrats (the middle panel) and Republicans (the bottom panel).

Figure 9: Congruence with Opinion Groups by Senator: Class, Partisan, and State



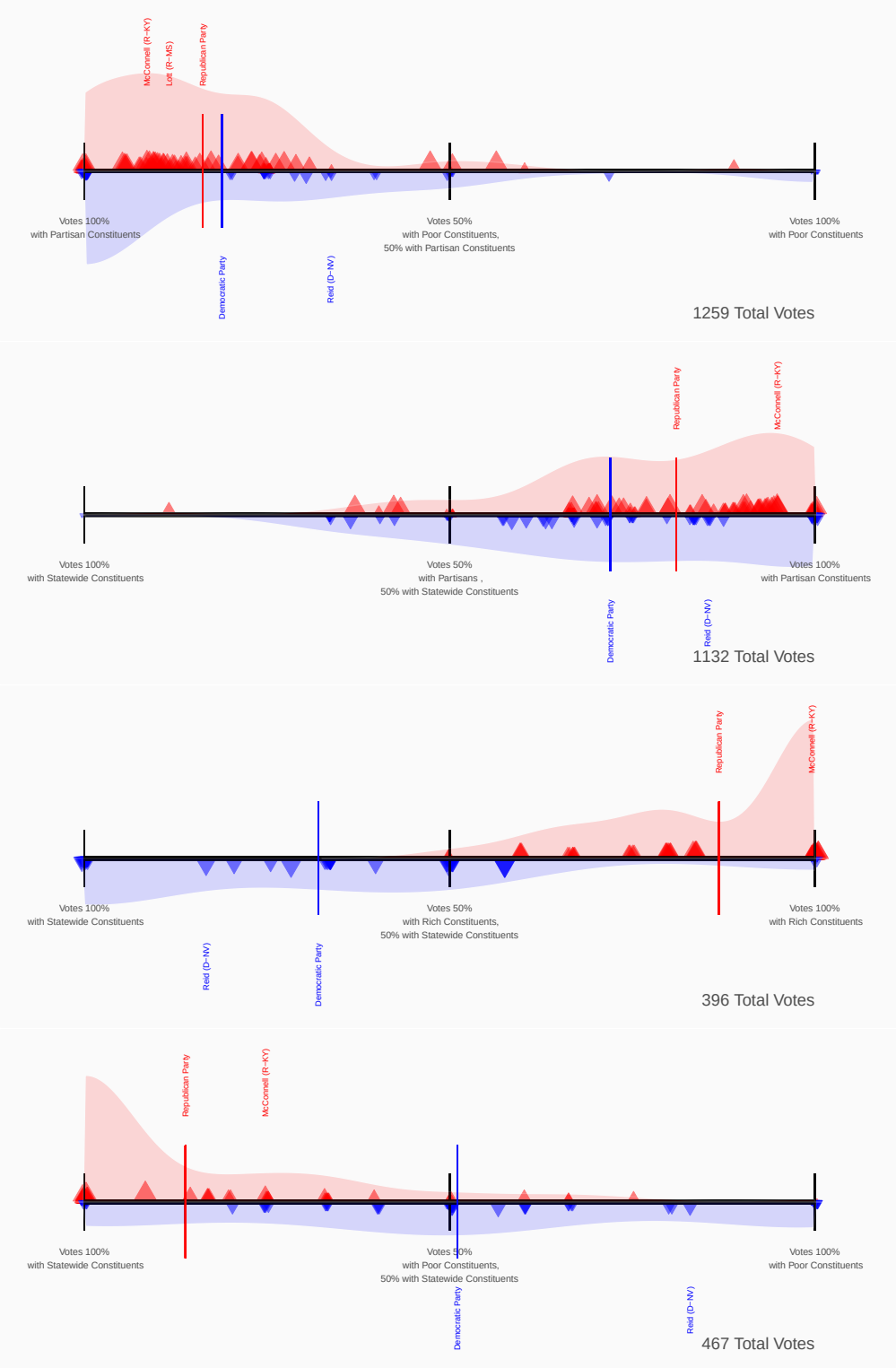
The top left shows the congruence rates of Democratic and Republican senators with high- and low-income median constituents. The top right shows rates of congruence with the party medians. The bottom shows congruence rates with state medians vs. partisan medians (of the senator's party).

Figure 10: Choosing Sides when Medians Conflict: Class and Party



Each panel shows how senators vote when a pair of medians conflict. The first panel shows, e.g., each senator's voting percentage when his/her poor and rich medians conflict, ranging from 100% with the poor median (and 0% with the rich) on the left to 100% with the rich (0% with poor) on the right. Triangle sizes are scaled to the number of votes by senator and are jittered for visibility. Gaussian density distributions are shown for each party.

Figure 11: Choosing Sides when Medians Conflict: Class and Party and State



Each panel shows how senators vote when a pair of medians conflict. The first panel shows, e.g., each senator's voting percentage when his/her partisan and poor medians disagree, from 100% with the partisan median (and 0% with the partisan) on the left to vice versa on the right. Triangles are scaled to represent the number of votes by each senator and are jittered to enhance visibility. Gaussian density distributions are estimated for each party.

Bill Name	Survey Year	N	Question
House Budget	2012		Budget plan would cut Medicare and Medicaid by 42%. Would reduce debt by 16% by 2020.
Middle Class Tax Cut	2012		Would extend Bush era tax cuts for incomes below $200,000. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated $250 billion.
Tax Hike Prevention	2012		Would extend Bush-era tax cuts for all individuals, regardless of income. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated $405 billion.
Birth Control	2012		Let employers and insurers refuse to cover birth control and other health services that violate their religious beliefs.
US-Korea Free Trade	2012		Remove tariffs on imports and exports between South Korea and the U.S.
Affordable Care Act Repeal	2012		Repeal the Affordable Care Act.
Keystone Pipeline	2012		A bill to approve the Keystone XL pipeline from Montana to Texas and provide for environmental protection and government oversight. through 2014 and include 4 million additional children. provider. Sets up health insurance option for those without coverage. Increases taxes on those making more than $280,000 a year.
SCHIP	2010		Program insures children in low income households. Act would renew the program through 2014 and include 4 million additional children.
Affordable Care Act	2010		Requires all Americans to obtain health insurance. Allows people to keep current provider. Sets up health insurance option for those without coverage. Increases taxes on those making more than $280,000 a year.
Judicial Appointment	2010		Appoint Elena Kagan to the U.S. Supreme Court
Financial Reform	2010		Protects consumers against abusive lending. Regulates high risk investments known as derivatives. Allows government to shut down failing financial institutions.
"Don't Ask, Don't Tell"	2010		Would allow gays to serve openly in the armed services. a court order.
TARP	2010		$700 billion loans to banks to stabilize finance
Iraq Withdrawal	2008		Withdraw Troops from Iraq within 180 days.
Minimum Wage	2008		Increase Minimum Wage from $5.15 to $7.25
Stem Cell Research	2008		Allow federal funding of embryonic stem cell research.
FISA	2008		Allow U. S. spy agencies to eavesdrop on overseas terrorist suspects without first getting a court order.
SCHIP	2008		Fund a $20 billion program to provide health insurance for children in families earning less that $43,000
Federal Assistance for Housing Crisis	2008		Federal assistance for homeowners facing foreclosure and large lending institutions at risk of failing.
Extend NAFTA	2008		Extend the North American Free trade Agreement (NAFTA) to include Peru and Columbia.
Bank Bailout	2008		U. S. Governments $700 Billion Bank Bailout Plan
Gay Marriage	2006		Constitutional Amendment banning Gay Marriage
Partial Birth Abortion	2006		A ban on a type of late-term abortion sometimes called "partial-birth abortion".
Stem Cell Research	2006		Should the federal government should fund stem cell research?
Iraq Withdrawal	2006		Should the President begin phased redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq starting this year and submit to Congress by the end of 2006 a plan with estimated dates for continued phased withdrawal.
Illegal Immigration	2006		A plan to offer illegal immigrants who already live in the U.S. more opportunities to become legal citizens.
Minimum Wage	2006		A proposal to increase the federal minimum wage from $5.15 to $6.25 within the next year and a half.
Capital Gains Tax	2006		A proposal to cut taxes on the money people make from selling investments, also referred to as capital gains (a bill to extend capital gains tax cuts passed in 2001).
CAFTA	2006		A new free trade agreement that reduces barriers to trade between the U.S. and countries in Central America.
Prescription Drug Benefit	2004		A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a voluntary prescription drug benefit under the Medicare program.
Partial Birth Abortion	2004		A ban on a type of late-term abortion sometimes called "partial-birth abortion".
Gay Marriage	2004		Constitutional Amendment banning Gay Marriage.
Limiting Medical Malpractice Lawsuits	2004		A bill to reform the medical malpractice system
Assault Weapons Ban	2004		A bill to extend the assault weapons ban.
Iraq War Authorization	2002		A vote to authorize military intervention in Iraq.
Estate Tax Repeal	2002		A proposal to permanently eliminate the federal estate tax.
School Vouchers	2001		A proposed school voucher program in ten cities.
Patriot Act	2001		Expand the legal tools federal law enforcement can use to stop terrorism.
Bush Tax Cuts	2001		Proposal to cut taxes.

Table 1: *Issues Included in Analysis*

Table 2: Congruence by Income Quintile

	Bottom Quintile	Top Quintile
Share of time the group gets its desired vote (Across all issues)	52% (1,970 out of 3,791)	60% (2,265 out of 3,791)
Share of time the group gets its desired vote (When the poor disagree) with the rich)	33% (274 out of 843)	67% (569 out of 843)

Table 3: Responsiveness of Senator Votes to Opinion

Opinion of...	All Respondents	Bottom Quintile	Middle Quintile	Top Quintile	Co-partisans
All votes (N = 3,791)					
Coefficient	0.44*	0.27*	0.42*	0.68*	1.04*
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.03)

Linear probability model. Standard errors are not clustered by senator or bill. $p < 0.05$

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MANY CITES MISSING! UPDATE!!

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