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Abstract

Many studies have quantified the effect of religious affiliation on abortion-related issues. However, reading the “statements of principles” for many religious denominations, it is clear these bodies have positions on issues other than abortion. This paper attempts to tease out any influence affiliation might have on voting behavior in Congress when dealing with some “other” issues on which major faiths still have an expressed interest (i.e. political stance). Using a binary logistic regression, it is found that affiliation’s effects are inconsistent. In some cases, affiliation is insignificant, but in others affiliation is significant.

**IS RELIGION A ONE-TRICK PONY?
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION ON VOTING IN
CONGRESS**

Nate Wheatley

Abstract: *Many studies have quantified the effect of religious affiliation on abortion-related issues. However, reading the "statements of principles" for many religious denominations, it is clear these bodies have positions on issues other than abortion. This paper attempts to tease out any influence affiliation might have on voting behavior in Congress when dealing with some "other" issues on which major faiths still have an expressed interest (i.e. political stance). Using a binary logistic regression, it is found that affiliation's effects are inconsistent. In some cases, affiliation is insignificant, but in others affiliation is significant.*

There is a vast body of work on the impact of religion and citizens, including discussion of how faith impacts the vote, activism and party involvement.³⁶ However, discussion of religion's impact on Congress has been "much more tentative and preliminary."³⁷ More recently, arraying various faiths along an index of theological conservatism has been used to test for any effects of Protestant orthodoxy on roll-call voting.³⁸ Unfortunately, these studies have limits. They either "limit their analyses to a single dimension of religion: religious affiliation"³⁹ or they "[analyze] the influence of...affiliations on issues that seem likely to admit such influence, such as abortion, gay rights, prayer in school or support for the state of Israel."⁴⁰ Discussion of separation of church and state also seems to fall along the same lines, as it is concentrated on issues which kick up a large amount of controversy and thus garner attention. While running for President, John F. Kennedy's critics said he would bend United States policy to the whim of the Vatican, while another man with the initials JFK, John F. Kerry, was accused of not being sufficiently Catholic during his own run forty-four years late.⁴¹ The Catholic Church especially took issue with Kerry's stance on abortion, since he pointedly refused to transfer Catholic teachings directly into law in this case, saying "I can't take my Catholic belief, my article of faith, and legislate it on a Protestant or a Jew or an atheist," despite articulating personal opposition to abortion.⁴² In this case, the politician in question refused to allow his church (or his morality as dictated by that church) to influence his

³⁶ James L. Guth, "Religion and Roll Calls: Religious Influences on the U.S. House of Representatives, 1997-2002," Midwest Political Science Association Conference, (2007):

<<http://ps.furman.edu/faculty/guth/Publications/pub=Religion%20and%20Roll%20Calls,%201997-2002.pdf>>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ David Yamane and Elizabeth A. Oldmixon, "Religion in the Legislative Arena: Affiliation, Salience, Advocacy and Public Policymaking," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (2006).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Guth, "Religion and Roll Calls."

⁴¹ Tom Bethell, "If John Kerry Becomes the Democratic Nominee, how Will His Liberal Views Sit with the Catholic Church?" <<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/2004/02/Not-Just-Any-Catholic.aspx>>, accessed 9/22/2009, (2009).

⁴² Jonathan Finer, "Kerry Says He Believes Life Starts at Conception," <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A27920-2004Jul4.html>>, accessed 9/23/2009 (2009).

policy-making on an issue commonly associated with church-state battles (abortion). However, religion and morality have been brought into discussion of many other issues aside from abortion and gay marriage, either by politicians themselves or faiths who wish their positions to be known. This paper seeks to quantify the influence of affiliation (committing the sin of single-dimension analysis as per Oldmixon but avoiding issues that readily “admit such influence” of religion) on votes relating to bills falling outside of the usual battlegrounds of abortion and gay marriage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A body of recent literature has asked similar questions about religion and political elites, focusing on whether religious affiliation has an effect on voting with regard to abortion, if “religious beliefs and roll-call voting are related”⁴³ in general, whether religion’s explanatory power on gay-rights votes is declining relative to other variables, if religious salience and religious advocacy (lobbying) affect voting in addition to the impact of a legislator’s religious affiliation and how religious affiliation impacts the beliefs of political elites, in this case delegate to the 2004 party conventions.⁴⁴ Daynes and Tatalovich focused specifically on the impact of religion on abortion. They found a statistically significant correlation between “religious affiliation of some members of Congress and their voting on abortion legislation,” but being a correlation and not a regression controls for party and ideology were not included.⁴⁵ Additionally, the impact of affiliation on voting varies by denomination, with Catholics, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Mormons and Lutherans exhibiting a strong link between church doctrine and voting, while “the connection between church doctrine and voting behavior...appears weaker among congresspersons belonging to the other five denominations [that were included]”.⁴⁶ Fastnow, Grant and Rudolph’s adjusted-Americans for Democratic Action score model shows a significant religious-affiliation impact on House member voting, though “party...soaks up much of the variance in adjusted ADA.”⁴⁷ The study includes religious affiliation controls, which are all found to be significant, with an adjusted R-squared of 0.65, confirming the earlier research done by Daynes on a larger, more general scale. The authors even go so far as to claim “neglecting [the effect of religion] leads at best to biased results from specification error and at worst to a misunderstanding of how legislators behave.”⁴⁸ However, Lublin’s 2005 study actually found “the importance of religion has declined over time” on gay issues, and even among the Jewish members

⁴³ Chris Fastnow, J. Tobin Grant, and Thomas J. Rudolph, “Holy Roll Calls: Religious Tradition and Voting Behavior in the U.S. House,” *Social Science Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (1999): 687.

⁴⁴ Byron W. Daynes and Raymond Tatalovich, “Religious Influence and Congressional Voting on Abortion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 23, no. 2 (June 1984); David Lublin, “The Strengthening of Party and Decline of Religion in Explaining Congressional Voting Behavior on Gay and Lesbian Issues,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38, no. 2 (April 2005); Yamane, “Religion in the Legislative Arena.”; David E. Campbell, ed. *A Matter of Faith: Religion in the 2004 Presidential Election* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2007).

⁴⁵ Daynes, “Religious Influence and Congressional Voting on Abortion,” (197-200).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Fastnow, “Holy Roll Calls,” 687.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

who show the highest level of religious influence, "the impact of religion dropped dramatically."⁴⁹ Lublin's conclusion was that "party has grown in importance" between the 106th to 108th Congresses.⁵⁰ Yamane and Oldmixon found "religious salience," defined as "the importance of religion to the individual," has a "direct, positive effect on conservative voting."⁵¹ It could be argued that salience is more important than affiliation, and this author recognizes the limitation of merely measuring declared faiths. However, religious salience data is very difficult to come by, mostly due to methodological issues since no standard measure exists. Therefore, sacrifices have to be made. Namely, this paper will only concern itself with a simple affiliation test, even with the knowledge that within named affiliations political positions and beliefs can vary greatly. Interestingly, the Oldmixon model suggests that "neither Catholic nor conservative Protestant affiliation directly affects the ideological direction of roll-call voting," but that these religious affiliations are negatively related to Democratic partisanship, which in and of itself is negatively related to conservative voting, suggesting an indirect correlation between certain religious beliefs and conservative voting.⁵² Similarly to Lublin, Yamane finds party being most important in predicting votes on abortion and no direct effect from religious affiliation.⁵³ Oldmixon does go on to say affiliation studies have "been very useful in past and current scholarship," but further states using affiliation alone is "only a beginning in understanding the relationship between religion and legislative voting."⁵⁴ *A Matter of Faith: Religion and the 2004 Presidential Election* contains discussion of an affiliation-based comparison between Democratic and Republican delegates to the party conventions, and finds significant differences exist in not just ideology, but opinions on abortion and the justifiability of the Iraq war.⁵⁵ This is the only piece of literature reviewed here that uses the framing of the 'other moral issues.'

The aforementioned literature has had one important caveat: it does not include the United States Senate. Much has been written on the House and major party delegations to the presidential nominating conventions, but comparatively little has been said about the Senate.⁵⁶ Existing studies focused on determinants of roll-call voting, forecasting the 2006 Senate elections or discussion

⁴⁹ Lublin, "The Strengthening of Party and Decline of Religion in Explaining Congressional Voting," 241-245.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Yamane, "Religion in the Legislative Arena," 433.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cambell, *A Matter of Faith*, 308.

⁵⁶ For the House see: Fastnow, "Holy Roll Calls," 687.; Daynes, "Religious Influence and Congressional Voting on Abortion," (197-200).; Yamane, "Religion in the Legislative Arena," 433.; Guth, "Religion and Roll Calls."; Benjamin Highton and Michael S. Rocca, "Beyond the Roll-Call Arena: The Determinants of Position Taking in Congress," *Political Research Quarterly* 58, (2005): 303.; Elizabeth A. Oldmixon, "Culture Wars in the Congressional Theater: How the U.S. House of Representatives Legislates Morality, 1993-1998." *Social Science Quarterly* (Blackwell Publishing Limited) 83, no. 3 (September 2002): 775-788.

For conventions see: Cambell, *A Matter of Faith*, 308.

about the Senate's role in confirming Supreme Court Justices.⁵⁷ None of these relate to religion, which is exactly the point: no studies on the impact of religion or affiliation could be found for the United States Senate. The conclusion from studies on the House is that any measured effects of religion tend to be small. Thus, the hypothesis is that affiliation will have a small but statistically significant impact on a legislator's vote in both chambers.

THEORETICAL MODEL

A theoretical model focusing on individual votes controlling for affiliation would take the form of the following:

$$\text{Vote} = f(\text{PartyID}, \text{ADA}, \text{DemPresSupport}, \text{Faith}, \text{Sex})$$

The vote is a function of the member of Congress's party, that member's "issue score" from Americans for Democratic Action, voter support for the Democratic Presidential candidate in the most recent election prior to the vote on the bill, region of the country represented, the faith of the member and a variable to control for sex. To move beyond "issues that seem likely to admit [religious] influence such as abortion, gay rights, prayer in school or support for the state of Israel," a different batch will be used.⁵⁸ The goal of this research is to apply religious affiliation to issues which can arguably be framed in moral and/or religious terms but are not the "regular two." To this end, the issues of the death penalty, welfare and gun control will be used instead of abortion and gay marriage. These particular issues were chosen because churches still tend to take stances on them, though they are less public.⁵⁹ To proxy each issue, a major bill will be selected that is believed to have an appearance of religious significance in the opinion of this author. The issues include gun control, death-penalty reform and welfare reform. Gun control appears in the "Brady Bill" of 1993. Death-penalty reform at the federal level last took place in 1996 as part of the Contract With America. In the same vein of the Republican Contract, welfare reform appeared under the name "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996."

⁵⁷ Charles S. Bullock and David W. Brady, "Party, Constituency, and Roll-Call Voting in the U. S. Senate," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (Feb 1983); Carl Klarner and Stan Buchanan, "Forecasting the 2006 Elections for the United States Senate," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 4 (2006); L. Marvin Overby, Beth M. Henschen, Michael H. Walsh, and Julie Strauss, "Courting Constituents? An Analysis of the Senate Confirmation Vote on Justice Clarence Thomas," *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 4 (Dec 1992).

⁵⁸ Guth, "Religion and Roll Calls."

⁵⁹ Death Penalty Information Center, "Religion and the Death Penalty | Death Penalty Information Center." Death Penalty Information Center < <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/religion-and-death-penalty> (accessed 10/17/2009, 2009)>; Pew Forum. "Religion & Social Welfare." <http://pewforum.org/social-welfare/> (accessed 10/17/2009, 2009); Peach Pledge Union. "WAR AND WORLD RELIGIONS." Peace Pledge Union. http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/st_religions.html (accessed 10/17/2009, 2009); Pew Research Center. "The Religious Dimensions of the Torture Debate - Pew Research Center." <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1210/torture-opinion-religious-differences> (accessed 10/17/2009); Mackay, Maria. "Church Leaders Call for Tighter Gun Control After College Shootings." <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.leaders.call.for.tighter.gun.control.after.college.shootings/10426.htm> (accessed 10/17/2009, 2009).

Party ID has an obvious connection: to some degree legislators vote their party line.⁶⁰ The expected relationship is that being a Democrat is negatively correlated with “conservative” positions as per Oldmixon. The ADA score is included to measure legislator ideology, with 100 being “most liberal” and 0 least, since previous research shows ideology and voting to be strongly correlated.⁶¹ The lower the ADA score, the more likely the legislator is to engage in “conservative” voting patterns. The DemPresSupport variable tries to capture the level of partisanship in the legislator’s district or state by accounting for the vote share received by the Democratic Presidential candidate in the election most closely preceding the year in which the vote was taken. A legislator from a more conservative district or state (following the Delegate theory of representation) is more likely to vote in a conservative way, so the lower the district’s support for the Democratic Presidential candidate in the last election in which a Presidential contest was held, the more conservative the legislator should be. Faith is the most important variable, since it controls for affiliation effects as discussed by Oldmixon, Guth and Fastnow.⁶²

The greatest risk of affiliation-only testing has already been discussed previously. However, a new testing method is being used by examining the impact of religious “affiliation” on different issues than the usual two. Therefore, the weakness of stated-affiliation-only testing, while obvious, will be permitted for these tests. In addition to affiliation testing, the fit of the model will be tested by running it on a different piece of legislation which is considered notable by an authority but in the opinion of this author lacks any overt religious significance.⁶³ The two bills used include the North American Free Trade Agreement (compared to the Brady Bill) and the 1996 farm-appropriations bill (compared to welfare reform and death-penalty reform). The reason for these tests is to see whether the model which includes religious affiliation has a better fit and/or more statistically significant explanatory factors on issues that are presupposed to have religious significance than issues which lack such implications.

⁶⁰ Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal, "The Polarization of American Politics," *The Journal of Politics* 46, no. 4 (Nov. 1984): 1061-1079.

⁶¹ Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, "Analysis of Congressional Coalition Patterns: A Unidimensional Spatial Model," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (Feb. 1987): 55-75.

⁶² Elizabeth A. Oldmixon, "Culture Wars in the Congressional Theater: How the U.S. House of Representatives Legislates Morality, 1993–1998." *Social Science Quarterly* (Blackwell Publishing Limited) 83, no. 3 (September 2002); Guth, "Religion and Roll Calls.;" James L. Guth and Lyman A. Kellstedt, "The Confessional Congress: Religion and Legislative Behavior," Midwest Political Science Association Conference (2005): <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/glayman/guth-kellstedt_mpsa05.pdf>; Fastnow, "Holy Roll Calls," 687.

⁶³ Brian K. Landsberg, ed, *Major Acts of Congress* (The Gale Group, 2004); Philip D. Duncan and Christine C. Lawrence, *Congressional Quarterly's Politics in America 1998: The 105th Congress* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1997).

DATA AND EMPIRICAL MODEL

Much of the data required for this study is publically available through Congressional websites, published works on the US government such as Barone's and Ujifusa's *The Almanac of American Politics*, and websites which, while not an official or scholarly authorities, has been back-checked against known trustworthy sources (such as the Almanac of American Politics) and found to be trustworthy.⁶⁴ ADA ratings were pulled from the website of Americans for Democratic Action (Americans for Democratic Action 2009). The model used is a binary logistic regression, because the outcome, a yea or nay vote, is dichotomous. The model includes party, sex of the member, the vote share of the Democratic Presidential candidate in the most recent election before the vote, the religious affiliation of the member and the member's Americans for Democratic Action score. Newly-elected members of Congress in both the Senate and House who did not have ADA ratings at the time of the vote have been removed from the samples, as have members who were not voting at the time.

⁶⁴ Preston Hunter, et. al. "Religion of U.S. Congress," <http://www.adherents.com/adh_congress.html>.

TABLE 1⁶⁵*Logistic Regression Model for Votes on the Brady Bill in the House*

	Exp(B)
Party	0.194**
Sex	3.311*
Jewish	4.458*
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.598

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

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate $p > 0.05$

⁶⁵ For the following tables, data comes from Barone, Michael, and Grant Ujifusa. *The Almanac of American Politics 1992*. United States: United Book Press, 1991; "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 614" FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 614." <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/1993/roll614.xml>; Americans for Democratic Action. ADA Today - 1992 the Year in Review. Vol. 47, 1992 <http://www.adaction.org/media/votingrecords/1992.pdf>; "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 575" FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 575." <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/1993/roll575.xml>; Americans for Democratic Action. ADA Today - 1993 Voting Record. Vol. 49, 1994 <http://www.adaction.org/media/votingrecords/1993.pdf>; "U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 103Rd Congress - 1St Session." http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=103&session=1&vote=00394; "FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 126." <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/1996/roll126.xml>; Americans for Democratic Action. ADA Today - A Newsletter for Liberal Activists. Vol. 51, 1996. <http://www.adaction.org/media/votingrecords/1995.pdf>; "FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 383." <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/1996/roll383.xml>; Americans for Democratic Action. ADA Today - A Newsletter for Liberal Activists. Vol. 51, 1996 <http://www.adaction.org/media/votingrecords/1995.pdf>; U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 104Th Congress - 2nd Session." http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=104&session=2&vote=00071.

TABLE 2

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on NAFTA in the House

	Exp(B)
ADA	0.967**
Methodist	1.977*
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.496

*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.01

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 3

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on the Brady Bill in the Senate

	Exp(B)
Party	17.991*
ADA	1.114***
Episcopalian	26.732**
Methodist	62.319**
Presbyterian	37.201**
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.670

*p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 4

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on NAFTA in the Senate

	Exp(B)
Party	5.304*
Jewish	0.086*
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.909

*p < 0.10

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 5

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on Federal Death Penalty Expansion in the House

	Exp(B)
VoteForClinton	0.970***
ADA95	0.983**
Bap	0.497*
Jew	3.198**
Met	3.849**
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.603

*p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 6

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on Welfare Reform in the House

	Exp(B)
Party	13.596***
VoteForClinton	0.946***
Sex	0.341**
ADA95	0.975***
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.418

*p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 7

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on Agricultural Bill in the House

	Exp(B)
VoteForClinton	0.973**
ADA95	0.983**
Bap	2.704**
Met	3.332**
Pre	3.054*
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.418

*p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 8

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on Federal Death Penalty Expansion in the Senate

	Exp(B)
ForClinton	0.642**
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.897

** p < 0.05

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 9

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on Welfare Reform in the Senate

	Exp(B)
ADA	0.891*
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.574

* p < 0.10

Bolded Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate p > 0.05

TABLE 10

Logistic Regression Model for Votes on Agricultural Bill in the Senate

	Exp(B)
Party	28.598*
Sex	10.300*
Hosmer and Lemeshow	0.440

* $p < 0.10$ **Bolded** Hosmer and Lemeshow results indicate $p > 0.05$

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of these logistic regressions are mixed. Since the pseudo-R-squared values for binary logistic regressions are not the best way to judge a model, analysis of a model will instead focus on the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test (H&L Test), a variation on the chi-square test.

In Table 1, Party, Sex and Jewish affiliation are the only significant explanatory factors in votes on the Brady Bill in the House of Representatives. Keep in mind that Catholics are the control group for affiliation, so every odds-ratio is *relative to Catholic-affiliated legislators* and Sex compares women to men as a control. Table 3, covering the vote on the Brady Bill in the Senate, shows partial support for the original hypothesis (affiliation will have a small effect but survive controls), though it is hardly been shown to be universal to all affiliations since only one is significant. Being a Republican means one's odds of voting for a gun-control bill are only 0.19 compared to a Democrat, which is in line with expectations (Republicans tend to oppose gun control on Second Amendment grounds), while having a Jewish affiliation increases the chance one will vote for this gun control bill by four times compared to a Catholic House member. People of the Jewish faith tend to vote for Democrats by large margins, in the case of the 2008 Presidential election Obama won the votes of those who identify as Jewish 77 percent to 21 percent.⁶⁶ Thus, it can be inferred that Jewish voters as a whole are more liberal and through the delegate model of representation that their members in Congress should reflect this view (by being very likely to vote for gun control, a liberal measure). This model is fairly accurate, with a correct classification average of 70 percent (better for voting for the bill than against). The H&L Test fails to reach significance, meaning this model is statistically significant.

⁶⁶ Pew Forum, "Religion & Social Welfare," <<http://pewforum.org/social-welfare/>> (accessed 10/17/2009).

The model (which includes controls for affiliation) was then deliberately applied to a bill which has little religious connotation in the opinion of this author. As is shown in Table 2, the results for NAFTA in the House, using the same model as was applied to Table 1 clearly indicate a better fit of the affiliation-control model to an issue with hypothesized religious significance than one without. This supports the hypothesis that religious affiliation does assist in explaining behavior on religious-motivated issues other than abortion and gay marriage.

Table 3 (Senate Brady Bill) has a very counter-intuitive result: party is significant, but Republicans have eighteen times higher odds of support than their Democratic counterparts. This is somewhat inexplicable and is not what was expected. ADA Scores are also significant, and for each point increase in the Senator's ADA score, they are more likely to vote for the bill by a multiplying factor of 1.14. This is operating as expected, since gun control is a "liberal" issue and increases in ADA scores indicate increasing levels of liberalism. On the affiliation front, Episcopalian, Methodist and Presbyterian affiliations are significant at the 0.05 level or better. (No other faiths are significant even at the 0.1 level). Such affiliations increase the odds of voting for this gun control bill by factors of 26.7, 1.6 and 1.3 respectively over Catholic legislators. This makes sense as all three churches are considered pro-gun control and anti-gun violence, and with the United Methodist Church calling for a blanket ban on public ownership of handguns.⁶⁷ However, to assume this means they are definitively *more* pro-gun control than the Catholic Church based on interpretation of the data is difficult to justify, since the Catholic Church also calls for a ban on public ownership of handguns.⁶⁸ Sex fails to be significant in the Senate. This model is better than the one described in Table 1a in that its classification average is 92 percent, with slightly better odds of predicting a yes vote (93.7 percent) than a no vote (89.2 percent). According to the H&L Test, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected due to the test's value of 0.67.

The NAFTA Senate vote depicted in Table 4 somewhat flies in the face of the results from Tables 1 and 2 since the model is a *better* fit on NAFTA than the Brady Bill. However, the significance of the explanatory factors (which only includes one affiliation) in Table 4 is markedly lower, $p < 0.10$, compared to Table 3 where three different affiliations meets at least $p < 0.05$.

Moving on to Table 5 covering the death penalty expansion in the House, party ceases to be significant. Most of the lifting is done by the percent of the Presidential vote received by Bill Clinton in 1992 in that member's district (VoteForClinton) according to the Wald test, though ADA, Baptist affiliation, Jewish affiliation and Methodist affiliation are all significant at 0.1 or better. For every one-point increase in Clinton's vote share in the Congressional district, it cuts the chance the Representative will vote for an expansion of the Federal death penalty by a factor of

⁶⁷ Daphne Mack, "Episcopal Life Online - DIOCESAN DIGEST," <http://www.episcopal-life.org/81803_97048_ENG_HTM.htm> (accessed 12/8/2009); United Methodist Church, "The Death Penalty." <<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=6385>> (accessed 12/8/2009); Presbyterian Church USA, "PC(USA) - Presbyterian 101 - Gun Control," <<http://www.pcusa.org/101/101-gun.htm>> (accessed 12/8/2009).

⁶⁸ USCCB, "USCCB - (SDWP) - Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice," <<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/criminal.shtml#mission>> (accessed 12/8/2009).

0.97. This makes sense at least superficially—Clinton is a Democrat and the Democratic Party generally disapproves of the death penalty. Similarly, a one-point increase in a member’s ADA score (making them more liberal) decreases the odds of voting to expand the Federal death penalty by a factor of 0.98. There are unexpected directions on some of the odds numbers. Baptist affiliation cuts likelihood of bill support in half, which makes sense for American Baptists who do not support the death penalty (American Baptist Church) but not for Southern Baptists who believe the death penalty to be divinely sanctioned (Southern Baptist Convention). This is a clear demonstration of the weakness of simple affiliation testing—some legislators may list “Baptist” when they really mean “Southern Baptist.” If their affiliation has an effect, it is important to know what denomination of Baptist they are since the two churches take opposite positions on the issue. Both Methodist and Jewish affiliations increase the likelihood of supporting the bill relative to Catholics by a factor greater than three. This only makes sense for conservative Jews, as support for the death penalty splits along liberal-conservative lines in the Jewish faith. However, the United Methodist Church calls for flat-out abolition of capital punishment so the odds do not square with the church’s position.⁶⁹ This returns to the same problem of “more-or-less” relative to the control. Is the UMC “less anti-death-penalty” than the Catholic Church, even though they both call for its abolition?⁷⁰ The model is again correct on average of three quarters of the time, with the caveat that its predictions are very accurate for “yes” votes (92.2 percent correct) but very poor for “no” votes (34.1 percent correct). The H&L Test clears this model as statistically significant (0.603).

The comparison model on agriculture in the House (see Table 7) has a much worse fit (H&L Test value 0.060) but the same number of affiliations show up as statistically significant explanatory factors, at roughly the same level of significance. The hypothesis of better fit, more significant variables or both remains satisfied, however. Including affiliation again works as a better predictor when used on an issue having religious salience than when it is used on an issue lacking any overt religious overtones.

Table 8 (death penalty expansion vote in the Senate) again eliminates party from significance; Wald tests show Clinton’s vote share in the ‘92 election having the greatest contribution to the overall equation while multiplying odds by a factor of 0.642 (as expected). No other explanatory variable is significant in this model, suggesting affiliation has no effect on death-penalty related voting in the Senate in this particular case. A pattern in terms of predictive power is beginning to emerge as this is the third model where “yes” votes are well predicted (100 percent) but “no” votes are only correctly forecasted by this model 37.5 percent of the time. The H&L Test returns an insignificant chi-square of 0.897.

Comparison to the “control” bill (agriculture, see Table 10) indicates again the affiliation-inclusive model appears to fare better on an issue with religious implications since the agriculture bill musters only a 0.440 from the H&L Test. However, this is deceptive since no affiliation makes an appearance as a factor in explaining either set of votes so the affiliation itself is not helping. This result is purely luck.

⁶⁹ United Methodist Church.

⁷⁰ USCCB.

When it comes to welfare reform, party is significant in the House (see Table 6), though it does not have the greatest impact by the Wald test. Party meets the 0.05 standard, and being Republican increases the odds of voting for welfare reform by over thirteen times compared to Democrats, which is consistent with Republican positions on welfare and “handouts.” The statistics line up with Clinton’s vote share too—for each one-percent increase in Clinton’s vote share, the odds of voting for this reform bill shrink (0.946 times as likely). ADA helps out as well; the more liberal a member is on the ADA’s scale, the less likely he or she is to vote for welfare “reform” (which to its liberal opponents unfairly removed people from the welfare rolls), reducing odds by a factor of 0.975. In this particular case, sex kicks in too at the 0.05 level, showing the odds of approval on this bill for female members is only 0.3 compared to male legislators. Without getting into a discussion of psychological politics, the stereotype that women are more “caring” (and would thus more likely support some kind of assistance for the “needy”) is borne out. Religion is not significant here, suggesting that on some partisan issues, party drowns out everything else. Gun control is also a very partisan issue, but here affiliation was statistically significant despite the partisan nature of the issue at hand. The model correctly predicts 67 percent of “no” votes, which is better than any previous model so far. The prediction rate for “yes” votes is still above 90 percent, leaving a respectable average of 87 percent. The model is statistically significant according to the H&L Test (0.418).

Comparison of Table 6 to the control of Table 7’s agriculture bill in the House have interesting results. Though the affiliation model operates much more effectively on welfare, no affiliation is significant. Applying the model to the agriculture bill produces a much poorer fit (H&L Test 0.060) but three different affiliations are significant. The hypothesis remains supported, however, since the affiliation model did fit better to the “religious” bill despite the lack of any affiliation-related significance.

In the Senate (see Table 9) only a single variable, ADA, is significant, and performs as expected to reduce the chance of supporting welfare reform for each one point increase in ADA ratings. The models’ predictive power is good, even for “nay”—80 percent correct. The best part about this particular model is even though religion itself wasn’t important in predicting the end result, the model itself is significant by the H&L Test’s value of 0.574.

Just like a pure H&L Test comparison between Tables 8 and 10, the affiliation-inclusive model works better on an issue with religious implications since the agriculture bill musters only a 0.440 from the H&L Test. No affiliation appears in either model, though, so this result is pure luck and does nothing to support the hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, no clarion call issues from this paper either way (affiliation matters and should be included, or it has no effect, thus should be excluded). While the research hypothesis stating affiliation would have a small, but significant effect in was not fully disproven, nor was it completely sustained by showing religion to a constant factor in the behavior of legislative elites. The second hypothesis which posited affiliation-inclusive models would function better on “religious” issues than “non-religious” issues comes to the same non-conclusion. In many cases,

models including affiliation performed better on the author's faith-oriented issues than those which were deemed to be religiously uninteresting. However, several of these instances left unclear what caused the better fit and did not point to the inclusion of affiliation as a primary reason. In some cases, party has the largest contribution to the model, but usually the largest inputs are Democratic Presidential vote share and Americans for Democratic Action ratings. The first would relate to the Delegate model of legislative behavior, while the second would be emanating from the legislator's own ideology. These make sense at face value: Representatives and Senators account for the ideology of their districts or states when casting votes on contentious issues and that the traditional liberal-conservative divide still explains some legislative behavior. Some statistically significant affiliation effects were observed, but the data repeatedly suggests that certain denominations are more or less supportive of a certain policy than the control (Catholics) even if the control and independent variable have the exact same position on the issue (e.g. gun control). Perhaps measuring the saliency of these issues to each faith is in order.

The fact that religious affiliation has an impact on legislative behavior beyond abortion and gay marriage suggests party and ideology cannot *fully* explain such behavior. A small but statistically significant effect was observed in certain cases on issues specifically selected due to their potential for religious posturing, but at the same time lacking the "hot" nature of abortion. This supports the contention that "neglecting [the effect of religion] leads at best to biased results from specification error and at worst to a misunderstanding of how legislators behave" and also from Fastnow that affiliation will survive controls even if its effect is small.⁷¹

The models themselves were fairly good at classifying votes—no model was less than 70 percent accurate. When a model's predictive power dropped, it was drastic (30 percent prediction rates). It seems the factors chosen work well for explaining why one would vote *for* a piece of legislation on every bill, but do worse at explaining why a legislator would vote against specific legislation (the Brady Bill or an expansion of the Federal death penalty). Perhaps as partisanship rises over time, it becomes easier to predict "nays" because party becomes more reliable at ascertaining said "nay" votes. No model failed the H&L Test; all chi-squares from this were insignificant.

Overall, religion and party acted as they were "expected" to: the more "liberal" denominations were generally more likely to take liberal positions and so on. Factor analysis shows at least one affiliation rising to around 0.4 in the top three components produced by the factor analysis. This confirms the idea of affiliation (without salience) being a small but statistically significant portion of explaining how legislators vote.

⁷¹ Fastnow, "Holy Roll Calls," 687.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE WORK

The biggest weakness of this paper is reliance on affiliation tests without getting into differences within an affiliation (such as Southern Baptists versus Baptists, or Orthodox Jews compared to Reform Jews). Fixing this problem simply requires more data (and thus more time), though it may not be possible to obtain verifiable and more specific data. Some members may not even think of themselves as denominational beyond the basic “Christian” and “Protestant” labels, and there is nothing that can be done about this. The second issue was made glaringly obvious in the data as some affiliations had the opposite of the predicted effect given the official church position on the issue at hand. Obviously other factors affect a legislator’s vote besides religious affiliation, but for these affiliations to have opposite signs of what would be expected and still be significant is troubling to those who would hope their Representative or Senator would faithfully carry their church’s views into the legislature. Further research into “other factors” would help resolve these apparent contradictions. Finally, insights into the salience of religion for each legislator (and indeed the salience, or at minimum presence in the district or state) would shed some light on whether or not some faiths really are more passionate in their position than another faith even if they share the same basic outlook on that issue.

In terms of general modeling, it would be interesting to see why these models were better at predicting “yes” than “no” votes on issues, especially the Brady Bill vote where both the Senate and House models failed to accurately predict “nays” (compared to “yeas”). Another intriguing area would be to figure out why the affiliation-inclusive models functioned notably better on one bill than another in situations where no affiliation actually was significant in either model.