

Why Do Bureaucrats Give? Campaign Contributions to Presidential Candidates, 2004-2012

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Abstract:

Like other citizens, federal employees commit time and money to presidential candidates seeking federal office. However, unlike other citizens, federal employees work in an executive establishment governed by a person to whom they may donate. Which candidates receive the money offered by these politically active bureaucrats? What factors precipitate these contributions from federal employees? By merging original survey data from two presidential elections with all Federal Election Commission records of individual donations, this study examines the contribution behavior of federal employees to presidential candidates in 2004, 2008 and 2012. The article finds the rate at which federal employees contribute to presidential candidates varies depending on the bureaucrat's political beliefs, characteristics about the job the individual performs, and career values of the individual federal employee. It concludes with a discussion of the relationship administrations have with federal employees.

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Like other citizens, federal employees commit time and money to presidential candidates seeking federal office.¹ However, unlike other citizens, federal employees work in an executive establishment governed by a person to whom they may donate. Which candidates receive the money offered by these politically active bureaucrats? What factors precipitate these contributions from federal employees? In answering these questions this article examines the relationship that civil servants have with one of their political overseers. The hope of neutral competence for all civil servants would result in civil servants tabling personal political beliefs and actions that would be in conflict with their daily job tasks in the administrative state. Yet in other sectors of public service, employees participate in elections to influence their political principals (Moe 2006). Making a campaign contribution in an election could influence the outcome of an election and who might be the political principal, but it could also signal to political actors the donor's preferences to help the donor rise through the ranks or gain access to policy decisions. As such, these contributions could have more subtle gains for civil servants and have consequences to the civil servant's job both in terms of immediate assignment but also in terms of promotion through the hierarchical pay grades utilized by the federal government. Appreciating why bureaucrats become campaign contributors allows for a richer understanding of the politicization of staffing decisions in the executive branch and the pervasiveness of federal employees actively campaigning in federal elections.

The article finds evidence of both expressive and career motivated strategic giving motivating contributions to presidential candidates. In addition to gaining understanding about what motivates campaign contributions, the article speaks to the relationship that federal employees have with their political principal, specifically the president. The article finds bureaucrats that value policy are more likely to contribute while those that desire to move up in the federal government are less likely to contribute. The article finds similar differences

between appointees and careerists across two different political administrations. Moreover, the patterns of partisan careerists giving differ depending upon who occupies the Oval Office. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications the findings have for federal employees and the study of campaign contributions.

History of Campaign Contribution Regulation and Public Employees

Historical accounts of campaign finance reform in the United States generally begin with a discussion of The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (FECA). The conversation then transitions to Watergate abuses and the subsequent amendments and court cases surrounding FECA. Beginning at this point is prudent as it was the first Congressional action fully to reign in the role of money in elections. However, scholars note the early 1970's are not the genesis of campaign finance regulation in the United States (Corrado et al. 1996). The first restrictions placed on campaign contributions came in the 1867 outlawing naval officers from soliciting dockworkers for contributions (Naval Appropriations Bill 1867). Such regulation sought to curtail a particular practice by a very specific set of federal employees. The regulation of the political activities federal employees more generally first entered law with the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act (1883). Most notably the Pendleton Act brought about merit based hiring and firing practices for federal employees. In addition to introducing a merit based system, the Pendleton Act as forbid campaign solicitations on Federal government property (Maranto 1993).

While formally only a minor restriction on campaign contributions, switching to a merit based hiring system radically altered practices of campaign contributions. Political machines at the time were dependent upon campaign contributions either from federal employees seeking to keep their patronage position or citizens looking for a patronage position (Theriault 2003).

Any change to the status quo constituted a direct threat to a revenue source. Ultimately, Charles Guiteau's assassination of James A. Garfield over an "owed" position in the diplomatic corps coupled with an impending party change in the executive branch (and thus the need to lock partisans) carried the day and the Pendleton Act went into effect.

Simply having meritorious hiring practices does not remove unwarranted political influence in the administrative state. An Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities, commonly known as the Hatch Act (1939), was enacted following allegations of Democrats using Works Progress Administration (WPA) in key states to employ contributors (Clement 1971; Leupold 1975). At the time of original passage, the Hatch Act limited the dollar amount an employee could give to any one person to \$5,000 and \$3 million in any one election. While the \$5,000 might seem low, it left the loophole of no limits to parties and committees (Corrado et al. 1996). Such a loophole functionally let money still flow into the system.

The Hatch Act and nearly 80 years of subsequent amendments spell out the permissible and impermissible activities of federal employees. With regards to campaign contributions, currently (as of the amendments passed in 2012) federal employees are allowed to contribute to federal offices and candidates just like any other citizen, subject to the current limitations allowed by the Federal Election Commission (FEC) under the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA). However, unlike other citizens, federal employees have a long history of norms and regulations regarding campaign contributions. Understanding the evolution of this dynamic is critical for evaluations of the modern administrative state.

Motivations of Giving

Traditionally, motivations of giving more or less fall into two categories. First, a campaign contribution could indicate the political preferences, either partisan or ideological,

of the donor (Brown, Powell and Wilcox 1995, Francia, et al. 2003, Bonica 2013).² This will be referred to as expressive giving. The logic behind this line of thinking would be donors want in office representatives similar to their own beliefs. As such, donors open their wallets to help likeminded individuals into office. This is more or less akin to the opinion of the majority of the Supreme Court regarding the nature of contributions since the *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) decision equating contributions with speech.

The second category of giving is strategic. While there are many forms of strategic contributions, at its heart this form of contribution is to better the donor's self-interest with little concern for aggregate welfare. The strategic motivations for giving can take on many different forms. For this article, specifically a strategic contribution relates to the preferences housed by individuals regarding the individual's career. Advocates of restrictive campaign finance law fear this form of giving where moneyed individuals buy access for favorable policy through campaign contributions to political actors. Recently, several Supreme Court rulings³ have heightened these concerns as but a few wealthy individuals fund candidates through new legal avenues (Kang 2010, Kang 2012, Briffault 2012).

While these auspicious donors grab attention and headlines, the motivations of these contributions and other donations remain largely anecdotal. Modern presidential candidates need hundreds of millions, perhaps even so to be billions, of dollars to win the Oval Office in a modern campaign (Adkins and Dowdle 2002, Busch and Mayer 2003, Wayne 2012). One of the prominent ways this money flows into a candidate's campaign coffers is through contributions from individual donors. While *McCutcheon v FEC* (2014) recently removed aggregate caps on individual donors making direct contributions to federal candidates, The Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) still limits donors to any one candidate at \$2,000 per election per candidate indexed for inflation.⁴ The hope is by placing a

cap on the size of contributions any one individual can make to a candidate, many citizens can give the maximum legal amount. If donors were hoping for access to the candidate, the intent of the law is the volume of competing voices would crowd out those that attempting to purchase influence.⁵ Whether or not this actually occurs is an empirical question that remains largely unanswered, but at least one recent incident forced presidential candidate Rick Perry to quip "I raised about \$30 million, and if you're saying I can be bought for \$5,000, I'm offended" (NPR 2011). Clearly some still believe the caps insufficient in preventing strategic contributions. Yet pinning down the evidence of these strategic factors motivating a campaign contribution is necessary to understand better the genesis of campaign contributions.

Federal employees provide a unique avenue to consider strategic giving in detail. Despite the Weberian (1946) desire of neutral competence, bureaucrats are political actors within government (Lowi 1969, Wilson 1989). Some individuals opt into civil service with the desire to influence policy (Gailmard and Patty 2007, Gailmard 2010). Others enter into the federal government via political appointment (Lewis 2008). In the past, campaign contributions by federal employees were kickbacks for patronage positions (Theriault 2003, Lewis 2007). Past reforms, the Pendleton Act specifically, sought to remove this form of *quid pro quo* exchange from appointees to elected officials. All of these factors have important implications for how the federal government operates but the pervasiveness of each remains largely unknown in a modern setting. This article aims to begin to shed light on this issue. To do so unique data of federal employees must be collected. The next section describes such data.

Data

To begin to consider campaign contribution behavior of federal employees requires a novel dataset. First, both contributors and those that did not contribute must be present. Donor

files only provide information about the givers. In better understanding why someone gives money to a presidential candidate, one must consider the contributor's peers who opted not to give. Second, personal beliefs that are not readily observable must be included in the analysis. To observe these qualities, scholars typically turn to survey instruments. In this case, the Survey for the Future of Government Service (SFGS) surveyed top careerists and appointees in the United States federal government.⁶

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) publicly discloses all contributions made to federal candidates over \$200.⁷ These records were merged with two SFGS surveys. The SFGS in 2007 and 2014 used the Federal Yellow Pages (FYP) to generate a sample of highly ranked federal employees. Unique identifiers between each dataset matched the survey responses to the campaign contribution records published by the FEC.⁸

The merging of the first survey with 2004 and 2008 contribution records revealed 845 and 1,321 contributions, respectively, made by the population sampled in the survey to any federal office. Removing repeat contributions,⁹ contributions to other offices and those that did not respond to the survey, 75 survey respondents (3.37%) contributed to a presidential candidate in 2004 and 150 survey respondents (6.74%) contributed to a presidential candidate in 2008. In 2012 with the second SFGS survey, 2,272 contributions were made from the sample population to a federally registered entity. Again removing duplicate contributions, donations to candidates for other office and those that did not respond, 150 survey respondents (4.22%) donated money to a presidential candidate.¹⁰ These contributions largely went to the nominees for the two major parties.¹¹ This compares with roughly 3-4% of the population contributing money to office (Bonica, McCarty, et al. 2013) and 4-9% of medical doctors (Bonica, Rosenthal and Rothman 2014).

The unique data generated has several desirable properties. First, by selecting a sample based off a criterion other than making a campaign contribution, the evaluation of similar givers and non-givers is possible. Second, because the contributions went directly to candidates, no ambiguity exists about the intended destination of the contribution and the propensity to give to a presidential candidate. Third, having survey responses to political questions as well as job function questions for federal employees allows for the measurement of concepts that have clear ties to behavior that might motivate a campaign contribution but are not readily observable. Taking these unique facets collectively, a better understanding of campaign contributions as well as the relationship federal employees have with the president and presidential candidates are possible.

Models and Expectations

Expressive giving can be measured by traditional survey measures of partisanship and ideology. Partisanship was measured on a five-point scale, with independents in the middle of the scale, partisans on the ends and “leaners” in-between. Ideology was measured on a seven point scale with moderates in the middle and very conservative or liberal responses on the end of the scale. Both variables were rescaled to have the moderate or independent category be zero, with increases away from zero to be increases in partisanship or ideology.¹² This will be referred to as the absolute deviation of these measures. The expectation for each would be partisans and ideologues contribute more frequently than moderates and independents.

Both surveys as well as other governmental resources measure the strategic context of the bureaucrat. Beginning with the FYP, all individuals sampled note the type of appointment for each bureaucrat. In this article presidential appointees requiring confirmation, presidential appointees, non-career members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) and Schedule C

employees are considered appointees. The FYP notes careerists as a career member of the SES, members of Senior Foreign Service, or simply a careerist. Whether someone is an appointee or careerist could alter the individual's probability of giving. Given historical precedents, appointees should give more frequently than careerists (Lewis 2008).

The FYP also provides the geographical location of where the bureaucrat works. Past work as indicated that different areas of the country give at varying rates (Bramlett, Gimpel and Lee 2011, Mitchell, et al. 2015, Sebold, et al. 2012). In the case of these federal employees, the proximity to Washington, D.C. constitutes a clear geographical bound that would differentiate bureaucrats. Those located in and around the Washington, D.C. area are more likely to engage with political actors and have more politicians in their proximity. This would leave those bureaucrats to behave as political intimates describe by Francia et al. (2003). Additionally, past surveys of donors have indicated that the most common reason for donating to a campaign was the candidates asked the donors to give money (Francia, et al. 2003, Brown, Powell and Wilcox 1995). As such, those living in the Washington, D.C. area should give more frequently than those bureaucrats living elsewhere in the country should.

The SFGS surveys also hold valuable insight into who the bureaucrats are in contact with during their daily job functions. By a similar logic as to why someone in D.C. would be more likely to contribute money to presidential candidates, bureaucrats that have increased contact with the White House or political appointees should also be more likely to contribute.

The 2014 SFGS asked what parts of the bureaucrat's job the individual respondent valued. For example, respondents indicated how important having decisions over policy outcomes as well career aspirations to moving to higher ranks in the federal government were to the respondent. In both instances, as bureaucrats places greater value on either making policy or moving up in government they should also be more likely to contribute. Those that value

policy could view the contribution as gaining access while those that want to move up in the government are attempting to curry favor with potential political allies. This type of contribution varies from expressive giving as the donations made are not in service of a broad political belief but rather the bureaucrat's career motivated preferences.

The SFGS also contains response items that measure the ideologies' of the different federal agencies. Clinton and Lewis (2008) estimate the agency ideal points from the 2008 survey while Richardson, Clinton and Lewis (2015) estimate the agency ideal points for the 2014 survey. The expectation would be that the more ideologically extreme agencies house bureaucrats that are more politically engaged and therefore more likely to contribute to political contests. These ideal points were adjusted like the ideology and party identification variables to be the absolute deviations away from the moderate value.

Finally, past work has indicated that wealthier citizens are more likely to contribute than those that make less money (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Unlike most citizens, wages of federal employees are disclosed to the public. Using FedSmith, the wages of all bureaucrats in the 2014 sample were collected.¹³ The expectation again would be that bureaucrats making more money are also more likely to make a campaign contribution.

Results

The binary nature of the outcome, either giving or not giving to a presidential candidate, makes a probit estimation appropriate. Additionally, the decision to give has no partisan direction as bureaucrats could give either Republican or Democratic candidates.¹⁴ To incorporate partisan differences, the models to come also were estimated with only careerists to consider differences between Republicans and Democrats.

Table 1 reports probit models predicting a contribution to a presidential candidate in 2012. To begin, the first model uses information available for the whole sample, not just survey respondents. As expected, careerists are 8.4 percentage points less likely to give than appointed officials are. Living in Washington, D.C. also increased the probability of giving by 0.8 percentage points. While this change is not particularly large in terms of the size of the increase, it is important to remember for this and the subsequent predicted probabilities slightly less than five percent of respondents contributed to a presidential candidate.¹⁵ As such, even small changes would nontrivially change the proportion of the sample that opted to contribute to a presidential contest. Finally, earning more annually increases the probability of donating to a presidential candidate, consistent with past work (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995).

[Table 1 here]

The next model begins to incorporate survey responses to assess changes in the probability of contributing relative to levels of partisanship and ideology. First, the inclusion of these variables into the specification does not substantively change the results from the first model. Second, partisanship has a 4.5 percentage point increase in giving while the increase for ideology is indistinguishable from zero, suggesting for bureaucrats, increases in partisanship makes a contribution more likely while no statistically discernable change associated with increases in ideology.¹⁶

The third model in table 1 incorporates questions from the survey asking how much bureaucrats value certain components of their jobs. Specifically, respondents indicated how

much value they placed in both moving up in the federal government as well as policy input. As the results from the third model indicate, valuing policy increases the probability of donating to a presidential candidate by 1.4 percentage points. This finding comports with the expectation that bureaucrats wanting policy access are more likely to contribute. However, contrary to expectations, those wanting to move up in the federal government are less likely to contribute by 0.9 percentage points. The Model 3 specification also reveals that for bureaucrats, being a careerist now is associated with a 10 percentage point decreases in the predicted probability of making a contribution while increases in logged annual salary have changes in the predicted probabilities are no longer distinguishable from zero.

The fourth specification now includes controls for agency ideology and contact variables that respondents would have with various political actors. These new variables provide no changes in predicted probability that are distinguishable from zero and do not change the substantive interpretation of any of the other explanatory variables.

Results for 2008 and 2004

The results presented in table 1 are for only one election cycle and one administration. Considering other election years surrounding the earlier SFGS survey allows for the analysis of different election years and a different administration in power. Transitioning to the Bush administration elections, table 2 reports the probit estimations of contributing to a presidential candidate in 2008 and 2004. Unlike the 2014 edition of the SFGS, sample wide characteristics do not exist to estimate a model off the full sample. Instead, model 5 in table 2 begins by predicting a campaign contribution of similar variables as model 2 in table 1. Like 2012, careerists are 8.3 percentage points less likely to contribute than appointees are. Increasing partisanship is associated with a 4.3 percentage point increase in the probability of giving while

working in the agency's headquarters increases the probability of giving by 7.3 percentage points. All of these estimates are the in the predicted direction and are consistent with 2012. However, unlike 2012, increases in ideology have a change in predicted probability that is distinguishable from zero. That said the marginal increase is less than 1 percent and is much smaller than increases in predicted probability associated with partisanship while holding all other values at observed values.

[Table 2 here]

Finally, turning to 2008, a similar pattern holds regarding the contribution pattern of bureaucrats to presidential candidates. As model 7 displays, being a careerist decreases the predicted probability of giving by 4.5 percentage points. Increasing levels of partisanship increase the probability of giving by 4.5 percentage points. Increasing ideology by one unit has a slightly less than one percent point increase in the predicted probability of giving. Finally, including the contact and agency ideology variables do not alter the substantive interpretations of the previously mentioned variables.

[Figure 1 here]

Figure 1 displays the marginal change in predicted probability for each complete model in each election year. Importantly, the key findings in 2012 hold across other election years in a different presidential administration.¹⁷ Careerists are less likely to give than appointees are. Partisans are more likely to give than independents. In some instances, ideologues are more likely to give than moderates are. The inclusions of agency ideology and contact with political actors leave the key explanations substantively unaltered and are not predictive of contributions.

Careerist Contributions

One consistent finding warrants additional analysis. Across election years, careerists were less likely to contribute to presidential candidates than appointees were. While this finding is consistent with past explanations of appointee behavior, the current analysis provides a unique opportunity to look at the behavior of careerists in a political context. Table 3 uses similar models as table 1 and 2, however this time only considering careerists. Partisanship undergoes a transformation as well, dropping the absolute deviation of partisanship and replacing it with indicator variables for Democrats and Republicans.¹⁸ The results in table 3 largely are consistent with the models that included appointees. Being in DC increases the probability of giving in all years except 2004. Additionally the absolute deviation of agency ideology does not correlate with the probability to give and most contact variables are indistinguishable from zero.

[Table 3 here]

What is new to these specifications is the inclusion of indicator variables for partisanship. What is clear from those estimates is Republicans and Democrats give at different rates from one another, and those rates vary by year. In 2004, Republicans and Democrats are more likely to give than independents; however, the increased marginal changes in predicted probability are not different from one another. This finding contrasts with subsequent elections, where Democrats are more likely to give than independents in 2008 and 2012 while Republicans give at rates that are indistinguishable from independents.¹⁹ The findings above suggest the rate careerists give to presidential candidates is specific to the context of a given election. Republican careerists were equally more likely to give than independents in 2004, yet that pattern changes in 2008 and 2012.

To speculate some about why these patterns emerge, the clearest explanation stems from the presidential election results. In 2004, a Republican incumbent controlled the White House. By 2008, it seemed likely a Democrat would occupy the Oval Office and that same Democrat would be in office for a second term in 2012 (Bartels 2013). Perhaps these underlying circumstances altered different partisan groups' probability of giving. The strongest evidence of this interpretation lies in differences between 2004 and 2008. Recall, those samples are the same bureaucrats. In 2004, being a Republican or a Democrat has the same increase in the predicted probability of giving from being an independent. Yet when the election year, and the context associated with that year changes, Republican careerist contribute at rates mirroring independents, not Democrats. This result is not a function of Republicans censoring their behavior. There was actually a slight increase in the number of contributions for John McCain over George W. Bush. Instead, the sizable increase lies with Democratic candidates receiving three times the number of contributions in 2008 when compared to 2004.²⁰ This finding is

evidence of strategic giving, as context seems to be altering the probability of making a campaign contribution. The following interpretation receives support when considering the findings in 2012. With a new sample but still in the Obama administration, Republican careerists give at the same rates as independents, and Democrats are more likely to give than both are. If personal characteristics of donors motivated the underlying propensity to give, clear election specific differences should not emerge. Yet the findings above demonstrate this exact behavior is occurring amongst careerists. To summarize, the same sample demonstrates different behaviors in different election years and different samples demonstrate similar behaviors under the same administration. Such behavior is suggestive of strategic behavior being associated with giving, not just an innate probability of contributing.

Discussion

Looking for trends across the years between the different models reveals consistent findings.²¹ First, bureaucrats display evidence of expressive giving. Partisans are more likely to make campaign contributions than independents. This result is consistent with past studies that characterized donor composition (Brown, Powell and Wilcox 1995, Francia, et al. 2003, Bramlett, Gimpel and Lee 2011). In some cases, this is also true for ideologues, though the magnitude of the change in predicted probabilities is always smaller. All the expressive findings were robust and only trivially decreased by the inclusion of strategic motivations for donating money to a presidential candidate.

Bureaucrats also contribute to presidential candidates for career motivated strategic reasons. Careerists are less likely to contribute to presidential campaigns than appointees are. This decrease in giving for careerists is quite large considering the propensity of the sample to give. Careerists appear to be opting out of the political arena when it comes to making

campaign contributions. There are several reasons for this observation. First, it could be that longer time horizons for federal employees compared to political actors makes picking a side unwise. That said the need to stay away from the political competitions for careerists is interesting. Future work should investigate the extent political retribution against out-party careerists alters the behavior of bureaucrats.

A competing explanation for the lack of giving for careerists is that despite Hatch Act provisions allowing contributions, federal employees opt not to engage the political process as a norm. The reasoning behind this would be again to avoid entering a political morass, leaving an unspoken convention the culprit for the observed behavior. The current data available would not speak to this explanation. Interviews, likely personal and confidential, with federal employees would be required to probe at this consideration.

There is greater suggestive evidence for career motivated strategic giving from the 2014 survey when bureaucrats revealed their values about their career. Those that valued ascension through the federal government were less likely to give to presidential candidates. Taken collectively this suggests that those wanting to climb the federal hierarchy should not contribute to political candidates and the greasing of the political wheels to achieve a promotion seems antiquated. Whether because of decades of civil service reform or a reflection the nature of one administration, the important implication is federal employees wanting promotion seem not to be using campaign contributions as a mechanism for currying favor with the current administration.

Federal employees looking to alter policy are more likely to contribute to a presidential candidate. This behavior mirrors a story of access buying told about donors representing business interests. Those bureaucrats that value policy access in the United States are more likely contribute money to a presidential contest. Like the private sector, contributors looking

to influence the policy outcomes via campaign contributions to presidential candidates, those bureaucrats that place higher values on making policy also are more likely to contribute to presidential candidates.

Another past explanation of giving was resource based (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). People with more money are better equipped to contribute money to elections. In 2012, when salaries of federal employees are known, the simple models predicting giving found evidence of this expectation. However, as more explanations of giving were included into a model predicting giving behavior, the marginal change in predicted probability disappeared. This result suggests that salary varies with other strategic explanations of giving, not just simply making more money. In other words, simply having money does not make federal employees more likely to contribute. While it is likely a necessary condition to be able to give, ultimately the decision to part ways with one's wealth needs something strategic or expressive to facilitate the contribution. This finding is important for scholars studying campaign contributions as simply having more money only coarsely correlates with an increased probability of giving to a presidential candidate for bureaucrats once other explanatory considerations are included in the specification.

Two broader implications of this work merit further exploration. First, the inclusion of partisanship and ideology as predictors of giving result consistently in partisanship having a larger increase in the probability of giving. In some cases, the effect of ideology is statistically indistinguishable from zero. While donors are more ideological than non-donors (Bramlett, Gimpel and Lee 2011), for presidential politics with bureaucrats it is partisanship that has a greater motivating force. Perhaps this finding is a result of presidential politics being the best-case scenario to observe partisan contributions from federal employees. Money clearly goes to candidates of one of the two major parties. The money required to win office also is massive

and requires contributions from citizens all across the country with diverse preferences. Under these circumstances, one could envision partisans participating in presidential elections more so than other elections. This would leave strategic donors giving to candidates in elections with smaller constituencies and less money needed to win office in order to get more mileage out of the contribution. This could also be a quirk of federal employees, but repeating this procedure with different survey samples would reveal if this pattern persists.

The second question these results spur relates to the downstream consequences of a contribution made by a federal employee. Are there payouts to employees that contributed to a presidential candidate? The 2012 results at least plausibly suggest contributors that have a greater stake in policymaking contribute while those hoping to make more money and rise through the federal government do not. Tracking the career trajectories of those that contributed would reveal job consequences regarding both the trajectory of the employee as well as the work output and placement of that official. Documenting the career paths of those employees would answer if campaign contributions were detrimental to promotions as well as if those that contribute get better access to policymaking positions.

Conclusion

The decision to make a campaign contribution is a complicated calculation of strategic and expressive factors. When examining federal employees to limit the complicated strategic environment of the population at large, clear evidence of increases in the probability of giving exists for partisans and in some instances ideologues. Evidence of career motivated strategic giving compliments the expressive giving results. Careerists are less likely to give relative to appointees. Living in Washington, D.C. or working at the headquarters of an agency also increases the probability of contributing. Scholars using campaign finance records should be

mindful of the motivations that generated the contribution when using such data in their analyses.

In addition to providing a better understanding of campaign contributions, this article provides valuable insight into the decisions of federal employees when entering into the political arena. Not all bureaucrats behave in the same way. While breaking employees into categories based off appointment type helps in explaining this variation, there are differences within those categories that stem from the personal beliefs and values of individual employees. These differences likely have other consequences related to the execution of governmental action in the modern administrative state. To understand better the modern administrative state, future work should attempt to map the values of individual employees, as those values likely are consequential for outcomes produced the federal administrative state.

Notes

¹An Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities, known better as the Hatch Act of 1939, restricts the political behavior of federal employees in the executive branch under federal law. Importantly for this article, campaign contributions are not restricted behavior under this Act or any of the subsequent amendments.

²Recent scholarship has used campaign contributions to estimate the ideal points of candidates as well as donors (Bonica 2013).

³Recent SCOTUS rulings such as *FEC v. Wisconsin Right to Life, Inc.* (2007), *Davis v. FEC* (2008), *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), *McCutcheon v. FEC* (2014) all have lessened restrictions on campaign contributions or money in campaigns.

⁴The caps were \$2,000, \$2,300 and \$2,500 in 2004, 2008 and 2012 respectively in one election cycle for an individual donor. This means any one citizen could give \$5,000 in 2012, the maximum contributions in both the general and primary elections.

⁵In other words, the rational actor wanting to purchase access sees thousands of other donors making similar contributions and realizes that her contribution is not unique enough to garner special attention from the candidate.

⁶For full details of each survey please see Clinton et al. (2012) for the 2008 SFSGS survey and <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/research/sfsgs.php> for the 2014 SFSGS survey

⁷The \$200 threshold is an aggregate total of contributions made to a given candidate. As such, campaigns are required to disclose smaller donations if those donations in sum add up to \$200 or more.

⁸Specifically, first name, last name and state of the survey respondent had to match a contribution in the FEC's records. In addition, Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia were considered the same state as not to miss bureaucrats who commute from the suburbs to the

D.C. metro. To ensure that false positives were not included in this matching process, individual's employer as disclosed in the FEC's data must match the agency listed in the FYP or indicate employment by the federal government generally. General employment contributions constituted ~10% in a given cycle and findings are consistent even with their exclusion.

⁹For example, someone giving \$50 to a presidential candidate for five months need only be counted once in terms of their decision to contribute or not.

¹⁰Nonqualified PACs associated with campaigns were treated as a contribution to the candidate for the purpose of this analysis. Therefore, money directed to the Obama Victory Fund would be a contribution to a presidential candidate whereas a contribution to ActBlue would not. For descriptive statistics of the sample, not just survey respondents, see table A1 in the Appendix.

¹¹For full details of which candidates received contributions from respondents, see table A1 in Appendix A.

¹²Cross party giving would complicate interpretations of such a coding scheme. However, across three election cycles only 11, 0.92% of all presidential contributions, were given by members of one party to a candidate of the other party. For more detail, see Appendix B.

¹³Because the pay scheduling of the federal government creates a skewed distribution, the natural log of these salaries were taken and included in the model that follows.

¹⁴Additionally a total of 11 individuals across the three election cycles identified as one party and contributed to a candidate from the other party. The observed lack of cross party giving is consistent with past studies of shared donors during presidential campaigns (Dowdle, et al. 2013). This lack of cross party giving should assuage concerns of removing partisan direction from the dependent and some independent variables.

¹⁵Kanthak and Krause (2010) capitalize on their dyadic design interpreting their estimates into the number of contributions particular candidates could expect to receive. However, that relationship between House members and Leadership PACs is different in that the plausibility of each donor having a dyadic relationship with every candidate is different enough such interpretations are not appropriate for this article.

¹⁶One explanation for this finding could stem from party identification being too strongly correlated with ideology. These variables are correlated a 0.30 in the 2014 SFGS and 0.32 in the 2008 SFGS which should alleviate some concerns with multicollinearity. Appendix B discusses this relationship in detail.

¹⁷Another concern could be the temporal nature of some of these responses. Having the earlier SFGS take place between two presidential administrations could complicate findings if the response items changed over time. If such changes were to occur, the findings should not look similar. However, the models estimated find similar increases in predicted probability but in terms of the direction of the effect but also the substantive size of the change in predicted probability. Such findings should alleviate concerns of changing opinions across time.

¹⁸Because careerists were not selected by a partisan administration, differences between Republicans and Democrats within year are now comparable. In other words, any Democrat appointed by the Bush Administration likely has qualities that differentiate the appointee from other Democrats, making any discussion of partisanship misleading. Such a problem does not exist for careerist that transition from one administration to the next, so comparisons between Democrats and Republicans now are possible.

¹⁹Ideology is also not included in this results presented. Separate specifications of simply ideology with no partisan indicators and ideology in conjunction with partisanship find consistent results.

²⁰Table A in Appendix A shows the number of campaign contributions received by presidential candidates in all three elections considered by survey respondents.

²¹This article chooses not to pool samples for a longitudinal analysis for several reasons. First, the survey instrument changed between iterations of the SFGS. While questions remain largely similar, differences between the two surveys make for pooling on some questions somewhat of a dubious decision. Second, given only two samples, 2004 and 2008 despite having different observable contributions to presidential candidates, are not different across the explanatory variables. As such pooling those variables makes for shaky inferences between years. Finally, election specific variables likely explain the probability of bureaucrats contributing to presidential candidates. That said with only three elections I cannot get variation across the several variables that would need to be included which would leave those variables as catch-alls akin to year fixed effects rather than something to be substantively interpreted.

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Appendix

A. Counts of Candidates Receiving Contributions by Bureaucrats

Table A1 displays the count of the number of donors for each candidate in the three election cycles. Table A2 displays the count of donors that responded to the SFGS in a given year.

[Table A1 here]

When considering which candidates received money from federal employees, the clear pattern that emerges is the eventual nominees receive the lion share of these contributions. By considering both the primaries and the general elections together, this outcome should occur. The general election has far more contributions (Mitchell, et al. 2015) and those campaigns operate over a much wider timeframe than those eliminated in the primary season. While one should not compare absolute numbers received between election years (as sample sizes were not the same), in elections with incumbents those candidate receive the vast majority of the contributions. This could be a function of placing employees in positions and getting contributions in return. Another competing explanation could be donors fearing retribution for giving to the losing candidate feel safe to give to an incumbent that likely will win office. One stark difference is the sizable proportion of donations given to Barack Obama in 2012. That said the sample in the 2014 SFGS that identified as Democratic is much higher than 2008. So

the proportion of giving from Democrats is not particularly outsized given the composition of the sample is heavily Democratic.

[Table A2 here]

B. Cross Party Giving

One potential concern with looking at the decision to give absent partisan direction is that federal employees give across party lines with great frequency. If many strong Republicans gave to John Kerry in 2004, the results would still find partisanship to be a predictor of giving, yet it would not be operating in a way that intuitively makes sense. As such, a check is required to see how many times partisans crossed over to the other party when making a campaign contribution.

[Table B here]

As the results in table B clearly show, bureaucrats rarely give across party lines. The behavior is true of the population at large, as Dowdle et al. (2013) found little evidence of contributors to primary losers giving to the other party in the general election. Importantly for this study, the lack of cross party giving justifies the decision to model simply the act of giving.

C. Ideology vs PID check

Another concern with the model specification could be the inclusion of both partisanship and ideology in the same model. While the correlation is low enough ($\rho < 0.33$ or less in each sample) that multicollinearity should not be a problem, it could be that partisanship simply washes out the effect of ideology. If this were to be true, estimating models with just one of the partisanship or ideology variables should shed light on to the interplay of these two forms of expressive giving. Tables C1-C3 report models from the text, this time excluding one of the partisan or ideological variables as well as the models produced in the text.

[Table C1 – C3 here]

What the results consistently show is that partisanship is diminishing the effect of ideology. If partisanship is not included, the effect of ideology now increases and is statistically distinguishable from zero in all models. That said the marginal change in predicted probability is smaller than partisanship in the model with both variables included and partisanship sees a similar increase in the magnitude of the change in predicted probability when models exclude ideology. Two suggestions naturally follow from this observation. First, ideology and partisanship do vary with one another in a positive manner. However, that variation is not that large. Even when totally excluding partisanship the marginal change in predicted probability for ideology is smaller than partisanship for the model including both variables. Second, excluding partisanship, a clearly important variable, creates a model that likely has omitted

variable bias. Given multicollinearity is likely not an issue here, introducing bias to draw conclusions about ideology would be doing so from a model with theoretical issues. As such, the models reported in the article contain estimates with both ideology and partisanship in the same model.

D. Insulation Check

Political insulation could also increase the probability of giving. Ex ante, this variation could work in either direction. Cabinet departments, with their more direct ties to the current administration could be expected to give at higher rates than independent agencies. It could also be true that independent agencies, with little to no fear of political actors interfering with their job functions, have the political cover to make more campaign contributions. In either case, the FYP indicates if the respondent works in the Executive Office of the President, a cabinet department or an independent agency. Table D estimates the complete model for 2012 with the inclusion of an indicator as to if the respondent was in an independent agency. This will measure how political insulation alters the rate bureaucrats contribute to presidential elections.

[Table D here]

The results below show that political insulation has little effect on the probability of federal employees contributing to presidential candidates. The substantive and statistical significance of the explanatory variables do not change and the new variable is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Probit Estimations of Bureaucrats Giving to Presidential Candidates, 2012

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Give Pres	Give Pres	Give Pres	Give Pres
Careerist	-1.018*** (.0528)	-1.013*** (.109)	-1.056*** (.157)	-.692* (.351)
DC	.364*** (.0738)	.342* (.139)	.231 (.176)	.492* (.243)
Ln(Salary)	.788*** (.0857)	.555* (.250)	.326 (.324)	-.0122 (.429)
Ideology		.0660 (.0607)	.0804 (.0822)	.113 (.0960)
PID		.516*** (.128)	.318* (.134)	.277+ (.149)
Values Policy Influence			.152+ (.0819)	.179+ (.0983)
Value Move Up in Fed Gov't			-.0947+ (.0527)	-.148* (.0680)
Agency Ideology				.242 (.146)
Presidential Contact				.0667 (.0834)
Appointee Contact				-.0595 (.0754)
Constant	-10.68*** (1.009)	-8.746** (2.982)	-5.783 (3.894)	-2.313 (5.172)
Observations	10135	2167	1083	871

+ $p < 0.1$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses

Table 2: Probit Estimation Contribution to a Presidential Candidate, 2004-08

	(5) Give Pres 08	(6) Give Pres 08	(7) Give Pres 04	(8) Give Pres 04
Careerist	-.685*** (.0992)	-.674*** (0.111)	-.690*** (.122)	-.698*** (.132)
Headquarter	.616*** (0.165)	.519** (0.176)	.179 (.178)	.139 (.192)
PID	.319*** (.0946)	.250** (.0956)	.700*** (.191)	.651*** (.191)
Ideology	.0780+ (.0462)	.100* (.0491)	.152** (.0590)	.141* (.0629)
Agency Ideology		-.0950 (.0689)		-.0745 (.0846)
White House Contact		.0564 (.0486)		.102 (.0581)
Own Appointee Contact		.0660 (.0483)		-.00930 (.0595)
Constant	-2.143*** (.254)	-2.261*** (.305)	-2.930*** (.417)	-2.865*** (.438)
Observations	1951	1789	1951	1789

+ $p < 0.1$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses

Table 3: Probit Estimation of Careerists Giving to Presidential Candidates, 2004-2012

	(1) 2004	(2) 2008	(1) 2012
Agency Ideology	.0502 (.101)	-.0590 (.0867)	-.0278 (.0901)
DC	.361 (.225)	.639** (.216)	.378* (.169)
White House Contact	.0841 (.0928)	-.0124 (.0707)	.101* (.0514)
Appointee Contact	-.109 (.0668)	.0504 (.0534)	.0250 (.0502)
Democrats	3.759*** (.107)	.699** (.236)	.610*** (.164)
Republicans	3.804*** (.137)	.211 (.267)	.143 (.219)
Constant	-5.855*** (.280)	-2.917*** (.329)	-2.848*** (.238)
Observations	1565	1565	2512

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses

Table A1: Count of Donors in the SFGS Sample by Candidate, 2004-2012

	Candidate Name	Donors	Percent
2012	Newt Gingrich	1	0.17
	Barack Obama	476	91.36
	Tim Pawlenty	1	0.17
	Mitt Romney	48	8.13
	Ron Paul	1	0.17
	Total	590	
2008	Bob Barr	1	0.24
	Joe Biden	1	0.24
	Sam Brownback	1	0.24
	Fred Thompson	5	1.22
	Hillary Clinton	18	4.39
	Mike Huckabee	1	0.24
	John Edwards	1	0.24
	John McCain	196	47.8
	Barack Obama	157	38.3
	Bill Richardson	2	0.49
	Mitt Romney	11	2.68
	Ron Paul	1	0.24
	Rudy Giuliani	12	2.93
	Tommy Thompson	3	0.73
	Total	410	
2004	George W. Bush	164	72.56
	Howard Dean	3	1.33
	John Edwards	2	0.88
	Dick Gephardt	1	0.44
	Joe Lieberman	1	0.44
	John Kerry	55	24.34
	Total	226	

Table A2: Contributions Made by Survey Respondents by Candidate, 2012-2004

	Candidate	Donor	Percent
2012	Barack Obama	138	92
	Mitt Romney	12	8.01
	Total	150	
2008	Bob Barr	1	0.67
	Joe Biden	1	0.67
	Fred Thompson	2	1.33
	Hillary Clinton	8	5.33
	Mike Huckabee	1	0.67
	John McCain	56	37.33
	Barack Obama	71	47.33
	Bill Richardson	1	0.67
	Mitt Romney	3	2
	Rudy Giuliani	6	4
	Total	150	
2004	George W. Bush	50	66.67
	Howard Dean	2	2.67
	Dick Gephardt	1	1.33
	John Kerry	22	29.34
	Total	75	

Table B: Cross Party Giving by Federal Employees to Presidential Candidates

Year	Rep Dem	to	Dem Rep	to Total	Percent Cross Party
2012	3		1	590	0.68%
2008	5		2	320	2.50%
2004	0		0	266	0.00%
Total	8		3	1176	0.94%

Table C1: Ideology and Partisan Multicollinearity Check, 2012

	(1) Give Pres 12	(2) Give Pres 12	(3) Give Pres 12	(4) Give Pres 12	(5) Give Pres 12	(6) Give Pres 12
Careerist	-.925*** (.0943)	-1.000*** (.0928)	-.926*** (.0943)	-.742*** (.225)	-.834*** (.212)	-.762*** (.224)
DC	.364** (.120)	.375** (.118)	.366** (.120)	.436* (.175)	.463** (.174)	.452* (.176)
PID	.385*** (.0921)		.363*** (.0939)	.355*** (.102)		.313** (.105)
Ideology		.110* (.0515)	.0381 (.0542)		.169** (.0631)	.0960 (.0669)
Agency Ideology				.0313 0.0870)	.0130 (.0840)	.0283 (.0871)
Presidential Contact				.0928 (.0514)	.112* (.0487)	.0907 (.0512)
Appointee Contact				.0267 (.0493)	.0269 (.0486)	.0284 (.0493)
Constant	-1.930*** (.216)	-1.335*** (.145)	-1.925*** (.219)	-2.312*** (.344)	-1.834*** (.289)	-2.325*** (.344)
Observations	2915	2997	2863	2289	2352	2248

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses

Table C2: Ideology and Partisan Multicollinearity Check, 2008

	(1) Give Pres 08	(2) Give Pres 08	(3) Give Pres 08	(4) Give Pres 08	(5) Give Pres 08	(6) Give Pres 08
Careerist	-.691*** (.0985)	-.734*** (.0969)	-.685*** (.0992)	-.674*** (.109)	-.734*** (.108)	-.674*** (0.111)
Headquarter	.611*** (.165)	.646*** (.163)	.616*** (.165)	.510** (.177)	.550** (.174)	.519** (.176)
PID	.367*** (.0934)		.319*** (.0946)	.311*** (.0944)		.250** (.0956)
Ideology		.143** (.0450)	.0780 (.0462)		.154** (.0477)	.100* (.0491)
Clinton-Lewis				-.0910 (.0684)	-.103 (.0677)	-.0950 (.0689)
White House Contact				.0679 (.0481)	.0533 (.0482)	.0564 (.0486)
Own Appointee Contact				.0575 (.0478)	.0640 (.0479)	.0660 (.0483)
Constant	-2.128*** (.254)	-1.692*** (.180)	-2.143*** (.254)	-2.233*** (.301)	-1.882*** (.255)	-2.261*** (.305)
Observations	1973	2031	1951	1807	1856	1789

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses

Table C3: Ideology and Partisan Multicollinearity Check, 2004

	(1) Give Pres 04	(2) Give Pres 04	(3) Give Pres 04	(4) Give Pres 04	(5) Give Pres 04	(6) Give Pres 04
Careerist	-.706*** (0.120)	-.744*** (.118)	-.690*** (.122)	-.727*** (.131)	-.769*** (.129)	-.698*** (.132)
Headquarter	.186 (0.177)	.236 (.173)	.179 (.178)	.152 (.192)	.195 (.189)	.139 (.192)
PID	.790*** (0.191)		.700*** (.191)	.738*** (.191)		.651*** (.191)
Ideology		.226*** (.0558)	.152** (.0590)		.213*** (.0594)	.141* (.0629)
Clinton-Lewis				-.0905 (.0839)	-.0887 (.0835)	-.0745 (.0846)
White House Contact				.0923 (.0585)	.104 (.0563)	.102 (.0581)
Own Appointee Contact				-.0112 (.0590)	-.0127 (.0597)	-.00930 (.0595)
Constant	-2.893*** (.419)	-1.791*** (.203)	-2.930*** (.417)	-2.795*** (.439)	-1.776*** (.287)	-2.865*** (.438)
Observations	1973	2031	1951	1807	1856	1789

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses

Table D: Inclusion of Independent Agency, 2012

	(1) Give Pres 12
Careerist	-.768*** (.223)
DC	.449* (.176)
PID	.303** (.103)
Ideology	.0964 (.0668)
Agency Ideology	.0231 (.0851)
Presidential Contact	.0999 (.0517)
Appointee Contact	.0255 (.0495)
Independent Agency	.134 (.112)
Constant	-2.340*** (.347)
Observations	2248

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, two-tailed
Standard errors in parentheses