Thinking Like Politicians: How Revolving-Door Lobbyists Win at Congressional Appropriations

Huchen Liu[*]

University of California, San Diego

Abstract

Revolving-door lobbyists, lobbyists who held positions in government in the past, have increasingly dominated American interest group politics in recent decades. I argue that revolvers owe their success to their ability to think like politicians, acquired through exposure in their government experience to the politics of winning elections. I test this theory by analyzing original data on interest groups' requests for federal agriculture appropriations and the outcomes attained. This analysis reveals that revolvers with political experience based on their previous government employment followed a strategy of managing their clients' expectations in contrast with conventional lobbyists and revolvers specializing in policy knowledge. Political revolvers made more modest requests for federal spending to Congress and accordingly had their requests granted more fully. This tactic of expectations management serves these revolvers' career incentive but compounds interest groups' problem in delegating to them in this principal-agent relationship, constraining groups' influence on policymaking.

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A salient development of American interest group politics in recent years is the increasing dominance of revolving-door lobbyists in the advocacy profession. These lobbyists once held positions in government and swung through the revolving door connecting government and the lobbying profession, their success manifested by their increasing numbers in the business and greater capacity to get lobbying clients and generate revenue (Drutman and Furnas 2014; LaPira and Thomas 2017; Ban, Palmer and Schneer 2019). The lobbying data, to be described in greater detail later, show that the share of revolvers among all active Washington lobbyists steadily rose from less than 10 percent in 1998 to almost half in 2016. This is a worrying development; the conventional wisdom is prone to deduce that well-financed special interests must be getting their money's worth by having Washington insiders help them alter legislation and secure policy benefits according to their desires at the expense of the public interest (see, for example, Lessig 2011).

A literature seeking to explain revolver's ascendancy has organized itself around a debate between the competing but mutually complementary theses of "who you know" and "what you know." The former argues that revolvers owe their success to political connections forged during their time in government, and the latter attributes it to policy expertise acquired in government service (Salisbury et al. 1989; Bertrand, Bombardini and Trebbi 2014; i Vidal, Draca and Fons-Rosen 2012; LaPira and Thomas 2017; Kang and You 2016; McCrain 2018). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the literature has largely concluded that both assets contribute to lobbyists' client portfolios and revenue. No small part of this is due to the acknowledged intrinsic connections between political connections and policy expertise as they are accumulated over revolving-door personnel's past employment; it is simply inconceivable for an officeholder or staffer to amass one asset to the exclusion of the other. The fusion of connections and expertise as contributors to lobbyists' usefulness becomes an even more intractable problem when we realize that a lobbyist's connections may give clients access to relevant expertise despite her own relative shortage of it. A lobbyist specializing in political connections is expected to be able to provide clients with contacts specializing in expertise,

thereby fulfilling an expertise function vicariously. The interconnected generating processes for connections and expertise suggest a fundamental problem with their measurement.

I argue that revolvers succeed because their previous government experience has trained them to think and operate like politicians, at the heart of which is effective credit claiming, the ability to attribute good outcomes readily to one's efforts. To do so, lobbyists are well advised to manage the expectations of their interest group clients regarding policy outcomes. By influencing clients' belief as to what will likely result from lobbying efforts, lobbyists can cast outcomes in a positive light. Analyzing data on congressional appropriations for federal agriculture programs, I show that revolvers comparatively rich in political experience rather than policy expertise, inferred from the type of government posts they held, exhibited such an edge in expectations management. Socialized in the politics of winning elections, political revolvers disproportionately employed a particular tactic much more than other lobbyists - issuing modest spending requests to Congress in hope of a high probability of fulfillment, a strategy that demonstrably worked as intended.

Expectations management is a behavioral manifestation of revolvers' ability to think like politicians, a theory that helps unify the research on revolving-door lobbying. It does more than merely explaining why some lobbyists draw bigger paychecks than others, however. Political revolvers' expectations management has major implications for the relationship between organized interests and government policy. A symptom of the principal-agent problem between lobbying clients and lobbyists, this behavior advances lobbyists' career incentive at the expense of clients' long-term policy interest. Taken to its logical conclusion, my finding suggests that a substantial source of constraint on interest groups' influence on policy has its roots in their own hired help's private incentives.

1 Lobbyists, Credit Claiming, and Expectations Management

The requirements for continuing and advancing careers create comparable incentives for politicians and lobbyists. A major factor of politicians' success is their ability to claim credit for policy outcomes (Mayhew 1974). While different officeholders are selected according to different processes, credit claiming is invariably a key skill set that politicians must have to secure the favor of those who have hiring and firing authority over them. Coupled with the credit claiming imperative, politicians also live under the pressure of election cycles. This includes not just the actual cycles of elective office; fixed terms of office in different parts of the government all give rise to some sort of election cycle whereby politicians are held accountable to their political principals. Politicians, therefore, face the constant need to please their constituencies in a limited window of realizing outcomes attributable to their actions in office.

Like politicians, lobbyists essentially have election cycles to survive and constituents to please. A typical contract lobbyist serves clients on a short-term (typically annual) basis. This can be thought of as serving year-long terms punctuated by elections at which clients, as constituents, vote to renew or terminate the lobbyist's service. Constituents reward officeholders and lobbyists alike with reelection if they favorably judge their records. Grimmer, Messing and Westwood (2012) show that when allocating credit for federal expenditure in legislative districts, voters are more responsive to the frequency of legislators' credit-claiming messages than to the amount of money being spent locally, even though the latter is certainly important for the amount of positive impact federal spending has on local constituents. Similarly, lobbyists' need to continuously gain their clients' approval creates an incentive to maintain a clear record of delivering policy victories. Satisfying one client also makes lobbyists more attractive to future clients. Although pressures of what amounts to election cycles are more unrelenting for contract lobbyists working on short-term contracts

than for in-house lobbyists more securely ensconced in their organizations for longer periods of time, this difference is primarily one of degree. Successful lobbyists are those that can best weather the election cycle that governs their career development.

For lobbyists, to maintain a clear record of victories is to consistently meet their clients' expectations regarding policy outcomes of their interest, which in turn means bringing about outcomes close to the targets to which clients had in some sense agreed. The more lobbyists can minimize the difference between what their clients expect of them and what they prove to deliver, the more competent they will appear and the more secure their contracts will be. While in theory lobbyists may be able to affect both variables involved in this subtraction, in practice it is much more feasible to shape expectations than results because the latter is simply too frequently and severely outside the control of individual lobbyists. Characteristics of policy issues at hand, institutional rules, and other political actors' preferences all matter for what policy change can take place (Dür and De Bièvre 2007; Baumgartner et al. 2009). In general, therefore, the key to consistently meeting clients' expectations is adeptly managing those expectations in the first place.

I argue that, to a significant degree, revolving-door lobbyists have achieved their dominant position in the lobbying profession by being better at managing clients' expectations and building records of policy victories. This advantage comes from their experience obtained while serving in government - political experience in particular - through learning. Revolvers' previous exposure to politics trains them to think like politicians with the fundamental goal of winning elections. Political experience teaches lobbyists to methodically advertise their competence to constituents by deploying reliable credit claiming tactics such as frequent advertising of tangible benefits as documented by Grimmer, Messing and Westwood (2012) and, as I will endeavor to show, expectations management.

Interviews that I have conducted with lobbyists show that successful lobbyists stay aware of the benchmarks on which clients will judge their performance and that lobbyists'

intelligence gathering for clients may inform these benchmarks in the first place. One interviewee specializes in federal appropriations, the setting of my empirical analysis in this paper. A seasoned expert in fiscal politics, this revolver served in the Office of Management and Budget, charged with centrally coordinating executive agencies' budget requests and compiling them into the annual president's budget to be submitted to Congress. At his current lobbying firm, he helps issue-based interest groups, research institutions, and companies navigate the appropriations process, all his clients with stakes in the allocation of spending for federal programs.

He observes that the single most powerful determinant of appropriations outcomes is the "prevailing mood" for federal spending in Washington. Even the most granular and idiosyncratic sub-agency level spending items cannot escape the sweeping influence of the administration's and Congress's preferences for fiscal liberalism or austerity, which in turn shape the inter-branch dynamics between presidents and congressional majorities that ultimately determine appropriations figures. The semblance of interest groups registering their spending preferences, according to this revolver, belies the fact that the basic tenor of appropriations outcomes can scarcely be altered by lobbying. Lobbyists ought to perceive their limited role. As he put it, "lobbyists present the best argument for why they ask for what they ask for, do their best to look like they know what they're talking about, try to get a sense of what will likely happen, and communicate it to the organization." The limits of external influence are not lost on clients. He observes that clients often understand that their influence is restricted to the margins and rationally do not demand their lobbyists to achieve the impossible. They do, however, hire lobbyists in order not to miss out on what is possible and to stay involved in the process. Expectations management emerges in this account as not only key to lobbyists' perceived success, but something which interest groups actively facilitate and even desire. "Lobbyists serve their organizations best," he reported, "when they are on the same page about what counts as a win and what doesn't." It is incumbent on lobbyists to make sure this communication between principal and agent succeeds.

Of course, some lobbying clients are more sophisticated than others in knowing how to evaluate their lobbyists without having them help shed light on it. Indeed, these clients would be less receptive to lobbyists' attempts at teaching them about what overall policy goals they ought to have, but some expectations management occurs nonetheless. According to another lobbyist I interviewed, his mostly corporate clients primarily spend money on lobbyists for "peace of mind," in strong support for the theory of lobbying as insurance against political risks LaPira and Thomas (2017). Having gone through the revolving door as well, this lobbyist served as policy staff on a Senate committee and now lobbies on behalf of a number of pharmaceutical companies and health care providers. Companies seek out Washington policy experts like him, he reports, as a safeguard against surprises in the legal and regulatory regime. In line with this defensive nature of lobbying, "doing no harm" is of utmost importance; clients are quick to notice problems created by hired help trying to be proactive rather than by policymakers. Still, companies rely on lobbyist input regarding specific objectives although their overall goal is defensive. In their effort to market their own service to potential clients, lobbyists play an ancillary role in alerting companies to policy risks by claiming to "see something they don't see" in the policy environment. Such risks discerned by lobbyists then become the object of further intelligence gathering, day-to-day operations, and - by extension - the basis of their performance evaluation after lobbying contracts are signed.

Notwithstanding the varying extent to which lobbyists help their clients form expectations about lobbying goals, the ability to shape these expectations constitutes a main resource available to lobbyists mindful of keeping a good record. My argument, that revolvers' previous political experience trains them to excel in expectations management, is consistent with a more recent explanation for revolvers' advantage in the profession. Based on the aforementioned insurance theory of lobbying, LaPira and Thomas (2017) argue that revolvers' value is not ultimately due to their policy expertise or political connections, as previous research had debated, but due to their ability to help clients navigate the policy

process. Certainly, lobbyists' ability to think like politicians has a great deal to do with their superior mastery of the policy process, and managing clients' expectations requires lobbyists themselves to have formed such expectations in the first place, which must originate from cumulative experience with the policy process.

As the literature has aptly emphasized, revolvers are far from a monolithic community. As illustrated by the aforementioned "who you know" versus "what you know" debate, scholars have theorized that revolvers picked up different sorts of policy knowledge and political skills through their previous government employment in different capacities. Specific to the theory of "thinking like politicians" that I advance here, I similarly expect some revolvers to be more seasoned reelection seekers than others. If the electoral trappings of lobbying work place an advantage on political experience, lobbyists with more political experience should exhibit marked differences in their strategies and outcomes from those of other lobbyists. I design empirical analysis to reflect this separation by distinguishing between political revolvers, policy revolvers, and conventional lobbyists without previous government employment. Like previous research, I draw on lobbyists' disclosure of previous government positions held in compliance with lobbying disclosure regulation.

I classify lobbyists into three categories - political revolvers, policy revolvers, or conventional lobbyists. Policy revolvers are generally policy staff who worked in policy-specific congressional committees or executive branch agencies, while I designate all other revolvers as political, an empirically appropriate measurement rule. For the most part, political revolvers tend to have served as personal staff in Congress. The more elite portion of this group consists of former officials of various types, including members of Congress and appointed officials in the executive branch. My basic expectation is that political revolvers should be more avid credit claimers than policy revolvers because the former's government experience was generally more politically oriented in nature and exposed them more strongly to the election cycle key to my theory. Political revolvers therefore resemble what LaPira and Thomas (2017) call "K Street kingpins," while policy revolvers are more akin to what they

7

call "librarians." I empirically clarify this distinction between the two species of revolvers below in the context of introducing lobbying data.

If correct, the theory that revolvers outperformed their competition by more effectively managing lobbying clients' expectations does more than highlighting a skill set that profits some lobbyists over others; expectations management on the part of lobbyists as a strategy to build good records is a form of shirking in the principal-agent relationship between them and compounds clients' problem in delegating to lobbyists (Stephenson and Jackson 2010; Lowery and Marchetti 2012; Drutman 2015). As agents, lobbyists rationally consider some degree of shirking because their interests are partially distinct from those of the interest groups that hired them. This incentive misalignment has two roots. The first is the already discussed quasi-electoral incentive, which governs lobbyists' calculus but not that of interest groups. It drives lobbyists to prioritize credit claiming for short-term results at the expense of more long-term goals that groups have. A second source of incentive misalignment between interest groups and lobbyists, though again based on career interests, has to do with lobbyists' reputation in the policy community aside from their current paying clients. Lobbyists value their relationships with officeholders and their staff because their value to clients ultimately stems from the trust of policymakers (Levine 2009; Andres and Hernnson 2015; Drutman 2015; Hirsch and Montagnes 2015), often as adjunct staff charged with the work of crafting policy (Bauer, Pool and Dexter 1963; Hall and Deardorff 2006). Frequently advocating policy outcomes that prove to be largely fulfilled in the end of the policy process helps lobbyists build and cement an image as respectable members of the policy community (Baumgartner et al. 2009). Though a long-term objective of lobbyists, this career incentive similarly drives lobbyists to favor short-term success similar with reelection seeking.

If private incentives motivate lobbyists to shirk, private information enables it. As lobbyists are more knowledgeable about specific short-term lobbying objectives than their clients, as discussed above, their management of clients' expectations inevitably takes advantage of this information asymmetry. Interest groups are uninformed about the amount of

damage caused by lobbyists' pursuit of probable victories as they are unable to perceive alternatives to the decisions lobbyists make in reality. Lobbyists' pursuit of probable immediate victories leaves unrealized the full potential for possible gains for clients, especially long-term ones. The alternative choice for lobbyists to maximize clients' benefit entails more difficult though potentially more rewarding battles, and would therefore likely result in a more blemished if more ambitious professional record. As political experience trains revolvers to be more avid credit claimers, as I theorize, they compound the information asymmetry in lobbying, with expectations management as a clear behavioral manifestation. Hence, finding that revolvers demonstrably excel in it suggests that the most sought-after lobbyists paradoxically make the principal-agent problem particularly severe to the detriment of interest group influence.

2   Empirical Strategy and Hypotheses

For an empirical strategy, I look to the politics of congressional appropriations to detect lobbyists' expectations management tactics. Appropriations politics is a domain of clear records, marked by particularly high observability of policy status quos, interest groups' effort to change them, and any outcomes of policy change that ensue. These key ingredients of lobbyist record building are matters of public record when it comes to appropriations politics, and in conjunction permit fairly unambiguous measurement of lobbying success. They are present in the form of precise dollar figures in data sets to be introduced below. I use these appropriations data to test hypotheses emanating from expectations presented above regarding different types of lobbyists' capacities for managing expectations and hitting policy targets. I expect that, in contrast with policy revolvers and conventional lobbyists, political revolvers should be uniquely adept at managing expectations by setting relatively low policy targets when requesting federal spending. Subsequently, I expect political revolvers to be more successful at meeting the low targets they had set when new appropriations outcomes

have been determined, as a result of expectations management earlier.

When formulating these hypotheses, it is necessary to be cognizant of the fact that lobbying is often a team enterprise (Ban, Palmer and Schneer 2019). In other words, lobbying contingents consisting of sometimes more than one lobbyist collectively issue appropriations requests, making it empirically incorrect to link them to any individual member of these lobbying contingents. I explicitly incorporate this fact in empirical analysis by using the presence and share of each type of lobbyists within interest groups' lobbying contingents as key independent variables. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1 On average, political revolvers are associated with requesting smaller spending changes to Congress than policy revolvers and conventional lobbyists.

H2 On average, political revolvers are associated with less deviation between appropriations outcomes and interest group requests than policy revolvers and conventional lobbyists

3 Data

This paper investigates how the use of revolving-door lobbyists mattered for interest groups' requests for appropriations and the corresponding outcomes. For these relevant variables surrounding appropriations, I collected original data from appropriations for federal agriculture programs for Fiscal Year 2010 consisting of interest group requests and outcomes enacted into law. Group requests come from their testimonies submitted to the relevant subcommittees of the House and Senate appropriations committees, and outcomes - as well as previous-year levels of spending which indicate the status quo - come from the president's budget documents known as congressional justifications. For the independent variable, I extracted from the lobbying disclosure database, frequently used in lobbying research, key variables on interest groups involved in this process and their lobbying activity. Central to

the lobbying data relevant to this research is what type of lobbyists - political revolvers, policy revolvers, and conventional lobbyists - made up the lobbying contingents representing interest groups.

Drawing on these data, I conduct analysis primarily organized at the level of interest group positions: Each position concerned an item in the budget, corresponded to a status-quo level of spending, stated a group's opinion on how much should be appropriated, and received an outcome when Congress passed the appropriations bill under consideration. First, to test Hypothesis **H1**, I conduct analysis to examine how different kinds of lobbyists mattered for appropriations requests, showing that political revolvers requested more modest spending changes. I then test Hypothesis **H2**, demonstrating that this tactic of managing expectations paid off: Appropriations outcomes deviated less from interest group requests when groups were represented by political revolvers, resulting in more favorable records of success for political revolvers than policy revolvers and conventional lobbyists.

3.1 Appropriations Requests and Outcomes

For information on interest groups' requests for appropriations and corresponding outcomes, I gathered data from congressional appropriations, for Fiscal Year 2010, for agriculture programs (the full title of the appropriations bill is "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations"). Data on interest group requests for appropriations come from their testimonies submitted to appropriations hearings. Data on appropriations outcomes come from documents in the president's budget proposal prepared at the beginning of the annual budget process. Known as congressional justification documents, they inform congressional appropriators of the amounts that are currently allocated to detailed items in the federal budget for the ongoing fiscal year. Combining congressional testimonies for FY 2010 with congressional justification documents for both FY 2010 and FY 2011, the appropriations data used in this study contain detailed line-item

figures on status quo spending, interest group requests, and enacted spending.

The case selection for this study - the policy domain and time frame - warrants some justification. The domain of agriculture appropriations has the attractive quality of consisting of largely non-partisan club goods as the examples below will clearly show. While agriculture policy on the whole may contain partisan as well as distributive issues (Hurwitz, Moiles and Rohde 2001), battles among stakeholders regarding the partisan aspects of agriculture policy largely stop at the enactment of authorizing legislation that gives executive agencies policy directives and limits on spending, particularly the Farm Bills passed once every five years. As a result, interest groups' contention over agriculture appropriations is procedurally limited to how much exactly the government ought to allocate to programs already set within the larger directions of agriculture policy and mostly devoid of partisan content. Additionally, agriculture is one of a small number of policy areas where interest group opinions are formally solicited for appropriations hearings.

The choice of Fiscal Year 2010 is also strategic, coming shortly before the 112th Congress began observing a moratorium on earmark spending - i.e., government spending that Congress directs to specific localities and constituents in a highly targeted manner. This choice of time, then, allows interest groups to request both programmatic and earmarked spending in their testimonies, and makes the prevalence of programmatic requests to be noted below especially interesting. The choice of choosing just one year for this study is dictated by a practical concern. Interest group testimonies lack any consistent format and are then released by the Government Publishing Office as image scans. Consequently, the process of transcribing interest group requests in testimonies was a time-consuming one which required a significant time investment by research assistants as well as myself. To extend this study in order to study groups' and lobbyists' long-term behavior in appropriations lobbying, however, I am currently gathering the same data for fiscal years both before and after 2010.

For an illustration of the data on interest group requests, consider an actual instance of congressional appropriations within these data. For Fiscal Year 2009, Congress appropriated approximately $200 million to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to implement the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. During the process of drafting the agriculture appropriations for the following fiscal year, the American Society for Microbiology requested a large increase for this spending, by about 50 percent. In the end, Congress did enact a sizable increase in this program's budget, raising it by 30 percent to over $260 million though this fell short of the expressed desire of the American Society for Microbiology. It is reasonable to say that this interest group achieved a major victory on an aspect of the federal budget it cared highly about. Such a judgment is bolstered by the plausible conjecture that that it might have demanded more funding for the initiative than it found minimally acceptable in order to win the latter; i.e., it might have exaggerated its preference as a bargaining tactic. A more relevant question to my theory, however, is how well this result reflected on the job performance of the group's lobbyists, who actually issued these appropriations requests. Would the lobbyists have had a stronger claim to success in winning appropriations, had they asked for exactly a 30 percent increase from Congress and got as much, even though the realized outcome was the same? The answer to this hypothetical is easily in the affirmative.

Since the passage of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, the regular annual cycle of government spending has started with Congress passing a budget resolution after reviewing the budget submitted by the president for the next fiscal year. The admittance of interest group testimonies to the official record of hearings held by appropriations committees is an important step in the regular annual appropriations process for several policy areas including agriculture. Interest groups see congressional hearings as important opportunities to influence policy (Schlozman and Tierney 1986). At hearings held by the agriculture subcommittees of the appropriations committees in the U.S. House and Senate, many interest groups were invited to testify and submit prepared testimonies. These

were opportunities for groups to formally transmit and justify their requests for agriculture appropriations to congressional appropriators. Figure 1 displays an exemplary set of requests, transmitted by the National Potato Council. Additionally, in their testimonies many interest groups made what could be called "supportive statements," in which they advocated funding for an agency or program without proposing a desired amount, asking Congress to instead "fully fund" or simply "continue supporting" the corresponding budget item. An example is shown in Figure 2. I treat these as requesting Congress to maintain the status quo.

Golden Nematode Quarantine – The NPC supports an appropriation of $1,266,000 for this quarantine which is what is believed to be necessary for USDA and the State of New York to assure official control of this pest. Failure to do so could adversely impact potato exports.

Emerging Plant Pests – The NPC supports at least $145 million with $9.5 million going to the potato cyst nematode regulatory, control and survey activity. The recent discovery of Golden Nematode in seed fields in Alberta, and possibly linked to production fields in the United States, has increased the scope and cost of the national survey being conducted by USDA. In addition, the costs of the eradication program have increased due to rising input costs and some expansion of target acres.

Pest Detection – The NPC supports $45 million. This is essential for the Plant Protection and Quarantine Service's (PPQ) efforts against potato pests and diseases, such as Ralstonia and the potato cyst nematode, and funds many cooperative pest and disease programs.

Trade Issues Resolution Management – The NPC supports $19 million but ONLY if any increase is specifically for plant protection and quarantine activities. These activities are of increased importance as new trade agreements are negotiated, the Agency must have the necessary staff and technology to work on plant related import/export issues and to resolve phytosanitary trade issues in a timely manner.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS:

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

The NPC supports an addition of $8.4 million and report language to assure that the potato objective yield and grade and size surveys and vegetable pesticide use surveys are continued. These surveys provide valuable data to the growers and the EPA for use in registration and reregistration decisions for key chemical tools. NASS has discontinued these chemical use surveys for fruits and vegetables.

Figure 1: Extract, Requests in Testimony of the National Potato Council for Agriculture Appropriations, FY 2010

Figure 2: Extract, Supportive Statement in Testimony of the National Potato Council for Agriculture Appropriations, FY 2010

There is a selection problem in the data on interest group positions gleaned from appropriations testimonies. The literature suggests that interest groups and individuals are not randomly chosen to testify in Congress. Rather, witnesses are invited to testify for reasons having to do with what they are expected to state in Congress. Studying non-legislative hearings, Talbert, Jones and Baumgartner (1995) argue that witnesses are chosen to help Congress define policy issues in preparation for formulating legislation. At any rate, witnesses are invited to testify because members of Congress perceive them to be authorities on the subject matter at hand. This is related to a view of lobbying instructed by the subgovernment thesis, that parties involved in a policy area share biases in their positions compared to the general public (Kollman 1997). This selection problem of group positions manifested in testimonies, however, is expected to downwardly bias findings made in this study, if at all. If the selection problem shrinks the heterogeneity of revealed preferences by interest groups, this should by and large make it more difficult to show a significant difference between the behavior of different types of lobbyists, the focus of the analysis.

The very kind of requests issued by groups in appropriations testimonies is informative

about interest groups' policy objectives. On one hand, for good reason interest groups are hardly concerned about the overall budget authority that Congress gives to an entire department or agency. On the other hand, the testimonies show that groups' interest extended beyond just highly particularistic earmarked funding, though the practice of earmarks was still prevalent heading into FY 2010. Rather, groups were most concerned about the things in between agency-level spending and earmarked spending on the level of specificity, such as an agency's purview over implementing a particular law and funding for carrying out some research initiative to be competitively distributed, and not earmarked, to universities and other research institutions, such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative mentioned at the beginning of this paper. To the extent that interest groups did request funding for clearly specified recipients, almost never were the recipients the groups making the requests themselves. Rather, they tended to be facilities already in existence and presumably having a long-standing working relationship with the agency. Congressional earmarks are classic private goods and are thus highly interesting for lobbying research (De Figueiredo and Silverman 2006; Lazarus and McKay 2012). Nevertheless, at the height of their importance, earmarks constituted a meager one percent of federal spending according to the austerity-minded Citizens Against Government Waste (Doyle 2011), to be divided between thousands of entities. This puts a limit on what we can learn about distributive politics by studying earmarks.

Another type of useful content of the interest group testimonies is information on lobbying coalitions. Forming lobbying coalitions is an important tactic available to interest groups (Gray and Lowery 1998; Hula 1999; Hojnacki 1997; Holyoke 2008; Godwin, Ainsworth and Godwin 2013; Nelson and Yackee 2012). I identify lobbying coalitions as groups of interest groups that collectively submit a single testimony, the heading of one such coalition displayed in Figure 3. This strategy for identifying coalitions is not necessarily better than interviews, which existing work has relied on, but nonetheless has a valuable formality to it that merits recording and analysis.

Alliance for Community Trees
American Forest Foundation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Nursery & Landscape Association
City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation Bureau of Forestry
City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works, Forestry Division
Davey Institute
International Maple Syrup Institute
National Association of State Foresters
Natural Biodiversity
The Nature Conservancy
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc.
The Pennsylvania Game Commission
Purdue University, Department of Entomology
Society of American Florists
Society of Municipal Arborists
The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Georgia, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Figure 3: Heading of an Interest Group Testimony Indicating a Lobbying Coalition

According to manual coding of all testimonies submitted into the official record done by my research assistants and me, a total of 278 groups submitted 515 positions on agriculture appropriations, including requests and supportive statements alike. In order to obtain context for these positions - i.e., the current level of spending for budget items concerned and how much ended up being appropriated when new appropriations had been enacted into law, we linked the interest group positions to budget documents, a data source to be introduced below. I was able to match 343, or two-thirds, of the group positions to 74 distinct items specified in the budget. The 343 positions were made by 126 groups, and 296 were requests for change and 47 were supportive statements. A small number of groups issued supportive statements exclusively, making their entire appropriations testimonies declarations of support for the status quo, while most groups only issued funding change requests.

As data on interest group positions communicate requests, they form the basis for testing Hypothesis **H1**. For the other half of the analysis, data on the federal budget establish status quos and policy outcomes. In particular, I parse budget documents known as congressional justifications, prepared by various executive branch agencies and centrally

17

coordinated, compiled, and submitted to Congress by the Office of Management and Budget. As budgeting work goes from the financial officers of each agency up to the OMB and then further up to White House staff, the documents involved also contain less detailed spending items and more aggregated dollar figures.[1] Data on government spending used by existing literature on appropriations politics have been organized at either a more aggregated (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1985, 1988; Shepsle et al. 2009) or a very particularistic level (Berry, Burden and Howell 2010; De Figueiredo and Silverman 2006). In contrast with these data, congressional justifications are uniquely conducive to lobbying research. Nicely mirroring interest group requests, congressional justifications focus on the most appropriate kind of spending and the main battlegrounds of appropriations politics.

On a given title of federal spending, often "Salaries and Expenses," a typical congressional justification document starts with tables of budget items (such as the one shown in Figure 4), which already contain much more detail than the highly aggregated agency-level budget data used in existing literature, and often proceeds to provide more justification for these items by breaking them down to yet more granular levels (such as the text shown in Figure 5). The tabular statements provide Congress with amounts being spent in the ongoing fiscal year under appropriations law already on the books. Thus, the congressional justification documents provide data on both status quos and policy outcomes at the level of budget items in appropriations politics. When matched with interest groups' requests, they allow us to measure how close lobbyists came to hitting the targets they had set and the extent to which groups saw their wishes granted, the content of Hypothesis **H2**.

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[1]Based on the author's conversations with a former budget director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Project Statement by Program - Current Law
(On basis of appropriation)

	2008 Actual		2009 Enacted		Increase or Decrease	2010 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years		Amount	Staff Years
Pest & Disease Exclusion							
Agricultural Quarantine Inspection (Approp)	$26,873,559	303	$26,979,000	303	-$979,000	$26,000,000	303
Cattle Ticks	7,599,424	110	9,907,000	114	3,250,000	13,157,000	114
Foreign Animal Disease/Foot-and-Mouth Disease	8,634,135	27	4,000,000	2	4,000	4,004,000	2
Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection	55,560,654	373	62,320,000	373	600,000	62,920,000	373
Import/Export	11,158,341	147	12,963,000	153	335,000	13,298,000	153
Overseas Technical & Trade Operations	0	0	15,725,000	71	447,000	16,172,000	71
Screwworm	21,683,268	36	27,635,000	36	79,000	27,714,000	36
Trade Issues Resolution and Management	12,417,465	52	0	0	0	0	0
Tropical Bont Tick	421,032	2	425,000	2	4,000	429,000	2
Total Pest & Disease Exclusion	144,347,877	1,050	159,954,000	1,054	3,740,000	163,694,000	1,054
Plant & Animal Health Monitoring							
Animal Health Monitoring & Surveillance	115,635,706	885	129,180,000	885	-2,058,000	127,122,000	885
Animal & Plant Health Reg. Enforcement	12,350,934	125	13,694,000	132	289,000	13,983,000	132
Avian Influenza	0	0	60,594,000	159	-351,000	60,243,000	159
Biosurveillance	1,834,896	4	0	0	0	0	0
Emergency Management Systems	12,286,389	84	15,619,000	80	175,000	15,794,000	80
High Pathogen Avian Influenza	47,515,481	131	0	0	0	0	0
National Veterinary Stockpile	0	0	3,739,000	8	18,000	3,757,000	8
Pest Detection	27,529,932	116	27,776,000	116	-1,020,000	26,756,000	116
Select Agents	4,221,243	18	5,128,000	22	48,000	5,176,000	22
Total Plant & Animal Health Monitoring	221,374,581	1,363	255,730,000	1,402	-2,899,000	252,831,000	1,402

Figure 4: Extract, Tabular Statement in Congressional Budget Justification for Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection, FY 2010

(1) An increase of $14,280 for the direct community facilities loans ($294,947,552 available in 2009).

This increase is due to rounding and a change in the subsidy rate for the program. Rural Development utilizes these funds to assist rural residents in obtaining access to new or improved essential community services through facilities financed by the program.

(2) A decrease of $11,126 for the guaranteed community facilities loans ($206,428,571 available in 2009).

This decrease is due to rounding and a change in the subsidy rate for the program. Rural Development utilizes these funds to assist rural residents in obtaining access to new or improved essential community services through facilities financed by the program.

(3) An increase of $3,902,000 for the economic impact initiative grants ($10,000,000 available in 2009).

The Economic Impact Initiative provides funding for essential community facilities in rural communities with extreme unemployment and severe economic depression. This initiative requires that the facility must be located in a rural community where the "not employed rate" is greater than 19.5 percent.

In FY 2008, the Economic Impact Initiative funded 20 health care projects, 267 public safety projects, 49 public building and improvements, 19 cultural or educational projects, and 20 other essentials community facilities amounting to $14.7 million. The funds requested for FY 2010 will allow Rural Development to continue to meet the most pressing needs in these communities.

Figure 5: Extract, Explanatory Statement in Congressional Budget Justification for Department of Agriculture, Rural Housing Service, FY 2010

The data allow me to calculate this quantity - more directly, rather, its opposite. Specifically, I calculate the amount by which appropriations outcomes deviated from group requests: the difference between enacted funding change and requested change, as an absolute value, divided by the current funding level allocated for the item concerned. I choose current level rather than requested change as the denominator because the latter was oftentimes zero in cases where groups supported the status quo. This can be written as the following mathematical formula:

$$\text{Relative Deviation} = \frac{Abs[\text{Enacted Change} - \text{Requested Change}]}{\text{Current Level}}$$

3.2 Interest Groups and Lobbyists

I turn to the lobbying disclosure data for useful variables on interest groups' lobbying activity. Made available under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, compiled and cleaned by the Center for Responsive Politics, the LDA data originally lists lobbying reports. I transformed them for use in this study to contain one entry for each client in each year. The main focus of the paper is whether anything was special about revolving-door lobbyists' requests for appropriations and the success they achieved. I link the interest group requests in appropriations testimonies to the lobbying disclosure database by manually locating the interest groups submitting testimonies within the universe of lobbying clients. The aforementioned 343 positions that were matched to items in the budget were issued by 126 distinct interest groups.

Of utmost importance to this study regarding their lobbying activity is what kind of lobbyists they used - specifically, how many and what kind of revolvers they hired, if any. Information on lobbyists' type comes from the LDA data's "covered position" variable.[2] This

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[2]A known deficiency of this variable in its original text form is that some lobbyists' deliberate underreporting of previous government employment (LaPira and Thomas 2012).

variable comes from information entered by lobbyists in a free text field on LDA forms where lobbyists are required to disclose past government employment. I classify whether lobbyists were political revolvers, policy revolvers, or neither (and therefore conventional lobbyists) based on their disclosure. Consistent with the general description of the content of these labels offered earlier, policy revolvers were by and large policy staff who worked in the House and Senate committees on agriculture, the Department of Agriculture, and the Food and Drug Administration. In contrast, former appropriations staff in Congress and various types of elected and appointed government officials were classified as political revolvers. The nature of their government experience means that political revolvers faced the reelection cycle more than policy revolvers, which socialized them to be stronger credit claimers according to my theory. Table 1 displays the number of groups by the type of revolvers hired.

Table 1: Interest Groups by Types of Lobbyists Used

		Policy revolvers		
		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	35	9	44
Political revolvers	No	2	80	82
	Total	37	89	**126**

Eighty of the 126 groups did not hire any revolving-door lobbyists. Among the 46 that did, 35 had both political and policy revolvers. Only 9 had political revolvers but not policy revolvers, and only 2 had the reverse. Though the two types of revolvers seemed to go hand in hand with each other in terms of the presence of at least a single one of each type on interest groups' lobbying contingents, the two bore only a weak correlation in terms of the percentage

While I have no sure-fire solution to truly address this problem, I take advantage of the fact that lobbyists were given an opportunity to disclose previous government employment every time they filed a lobbying report. I may have addressed the problem of deliberate underreporting to some degree by aggregating all text entered by each lobbyist in all lobbying reports over the years of the LDA data.

of each type representing the groups. This point justifies the decision in regression analysis to pit the two's percentages on interest groups' lobbying contingents against each other to reveal which one mattered more for behavior and outcomes in appropriations lobbying.

4   Findings

Combining interest group requests with appropriations outcomes, the data present fascinating patterns that strongly support the hypotheses. The data tell a tale of two groups separated by the makeup of their lobbying contingents and the behavior they exhibited when requesting agriculture spending. Revolving-door lobbyists, particularly political revolvers, set lower targets for agriculture spending as indicated by the requests they issued to congressional appropriators. Consequently, political revolvers achieved greater success in meeting these targets and garnered more attractive records for themselves.

The type of lobbyists mattered systematically from requests to outcomes. Adeptly setting expectations for appropriations outcomes, political revolvers were strongly associated with requesting smaller spending changes, supporting Hypothesis **H1**. Table 2 displays regression analysis examining whether revolvers requested smaller funding changes. Four equations are displayed. The dependent variable for all of them is funding changes requested by groups as a percentage of current spending levels. The set of binary and continuous variables related to lobbyist types is the same as in the analysis above of outcome deviation. Equations 1-3 draw on all requests, and Equation 4 is limited to those asking for funding increases and excludes positions supporting maintenance of the status quo, which made up the bulk of the requests.

Equation 1 shows that representation by more revolvers on an interest group's contingent, both types combined, was associated with smaller requests for funding changes relative to current levels, conditional on its total lobbying expenditure and membership in coalitions. According to the coefficient estimates, on average interest groups represented entirely by con-

ventional lobbyists asked Congress to barely increase funding on the basis of current levels by over 160 percent, while a lobbying contingent made up exclusively of revolvers demanded increases by a mere 8 percent. Coalitions tended to issue considerably more modest requests than standalone groups. Equation 2 uses binary measures for political and policy revolvers, respectively, and shows that political revolvers were solely responsible for revolvers' overall tendency to issue more modest requests. Representation by policy revolvers did not make groups behave differently compared to groups without any revolvers. Equation 3 uses the percentage of each type of revolvers within groups' lobbying contingents, and the estimates are not qualitatively altered. Finally, Equation 4 has the same configuration as Equation 3, but draws on only strictly positive requests. The coefficient estimates are substantively similar as those in Equation 3, except that being in a lobbying coalition loses significance as an explanatory variable.

Table 2: Linear Regressions - Types of Lobbyists and Relative Change Requested for Appropriations

	Dependent variable:			
	Relative Change Requested			
	All Requests			Increase Requests
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Revolvers (%)	-1.637***			
	(0.261)			
Political Revolvers (Binary)		−0.703**		
		(0.313)		
Policy Revolvers (Binary)		−0.251		
		(0.290)		
Political Revolvers (%)			−1.904***	−1.944***
			(0.634)	(0.713)
Policy Revolvers (%)			−0.507	−0.146
			(0.738)	(1.411)
Lobbying Expenditure	0.00001***	0.00001***	0.00001***	0.00001***

	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
In Coalition	−0.726**	−0.754**	−0.705*	−0.563
	(0.392)	(0.349)	(0.390)	(0.411)
Constant	1.721***	1.785***	1.725***	2.152***
	(0.420)	(0.349)	(0.329)	(0.381)
Observations	280	280	280	214
R^2	0.031	0.033	0.034	0.015
Adjusted R^2	0.021	0.018	0.020	−0.004
χ^2	8.882**	9.268*	9.606**	3.284

Note: Standard errors are clustered by group.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Effects of the three types of lobbyists on the funding changes interest groups requested are usefully visualized in a predicted values plot which varies the percentage of each type of lobbyists and uses it to predict relative funding changes requested while holding other variables constant. The predicted values corresponding to the percentage of conventional lobbyists (light gray line) derive from Equation 1 in Table 2 (for visualization purposes, I replace the percentage of revolvers with its opposite - the percentage of conventional lobbyists). The predicted values for policy revolvers (medium gray line) and political revolvers (black line) draw on Equation 3. For revolvers, the predicted values based on each type are calculated by holding the other at its mean in the data. Lobbying expenditure is held at its mean in calculating all three sets of predicted values, and all calculations are for standalone groups rather than coalition members. Each line covers its observed range in the data.

Figure 6: Types of Lobbyists and Requested Spending Changes

This predicted values plot highlights the marked difference among the three types of lobbyists in how they structured interest group requests for appropriations. Political revolvers exhibited a strong tendency to issue modest spending requests. On average, groups with no political revolvers were expected to ask Congress to increase funding on budget items by more than 150 percent, while those with a maximum concentration of them in the data (just under 90 percent on groups' lobbying contingents) on average requested almost no increases on the basis of the status quo. Holding political revolvers constant, policy revolvers largely did not matter for requested funding changes. In contrast with both types of revolvers, a higher percentage of conventional lobbyists was associated with requests for larger increases. The data, thus, lend strong support to Hypothesis **H1**. Political revolvers emerged solely as agents of expectations management.

Did political revolvers' tactic for expectations management pan out as theorized, then, by producing smaller gaps between set targets and eventual outcomes? It did. The data show

that, compared to conventional lobbyists, revolvers tended to diminish the relative deviation of appropriations outcomes from group requests. Figure 7 displays a pair of density curves, overlaid on one another, showing the relative deviation of outcomes from requests by the type of lobbyists employed, one for groups with revolvers and one for those without. Despite an overlapping region, groups with revolvers clearly tended to have lower values on the relative deviation measure.
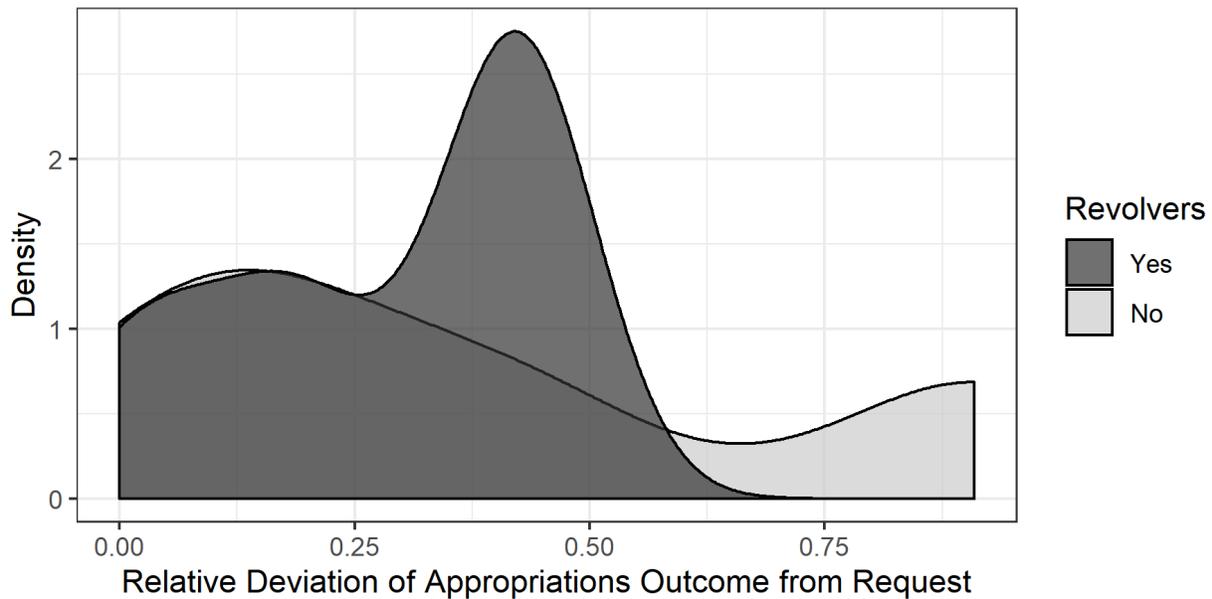

Figure 7: Revolving-Door Lobbyists and Deviation of Requests from Appropriations Outcomes

This comparison is systematically estimated using regression analysis examining the relationship between revolvers and the deviation of outcomes from requests, again separating the two types of revolvers. Table 3 displays four OLS equations, with standard errors clustered by requesting group. Equations 1-3 have relative deviation, calculated as the ratio stated earlier, as the dependent variable, while Equation 4 uses absolute deviation instead and includes requested change as a control variable. Among the rest of the explanatory variables, I again include binary or continuous variables for the presence of three types of lobbyists across the several equations.

Table 3: Linear Regression - Types of Lobbyists and Deviation of Appropriations Outcomes from Interest Group Requests

	Dependent variable:			
	Relative Deviation			Deviation
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Revolvers (%)	-0.186**			
	(0.087)			
Political Revolvers (Binary)		−0.158**		
		(0.066)		
Policy Revolvers (Binary)		0.030		
		(0.051)		
Political Revolvers (%)			−0.180	−6,924.661
			(0.121)	(36,171.460)
Policy Revolvers (%)			−0.170	50,932.220
			(0.230)	(66,336.680)
Lobbying Expenditure		0.00004*	0.00003	−9,082
		(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(6.652)
In Coalition		−0.125**	−0.124**	−27,115.520
		(0.059)	(0.057)	(23,981.760)
Requested Change				−1.118***
				(0.269)
Current Level	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	−0.069
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.087)
Constant	0.323***	0.364***	0.342***	42,680.530***
	(0.079)	(0.069)	(0.064)	(12,677.160)
Observations	63	63	63	63
R^2	0.037	0.099	0.069	0.943
Adjusted R^2	0.005	0.020	−0.012	0.937
χ^2	2.406	6.582	4.518	180.828***

Note: Standard errors are clustered by group.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Equation 1 estimates the association between the percentage of both types of revolvers combined on interest groups' lobbying contingents and the relative deviation of outcomes, controlling only for current funding levels. The revolver variable obtains a positive and strongly significant coefficient estimate. Considering it along with the constant term, Equation 1 shows that groups represented exclusively by conventional lobbyists saw appropriations outcomes of interest deviate from their requests by 32.3 percent on average, while those represented entirely by revolvers had an average outcome deviation of 13.7 percent. Equation 2 separates revolvers into the usual pair of binary indicators. It additionally controls for groups' total lobbying expenditure and whether their submitted testimonies indicated they were in a coalition. Pitted against policy revolvers, political revolvers proved solely responsible for the overall diminishing effect of revolvers on relative deviation. Groups with policy revolvers did not get significantly different outcomes than those without. Equation 3 uses continuous measures showing the percentage of political and policy revolvers on groups' lobbying contingents instead of the binary measures, but they do not attain significance. This demonstrates that, for a group, having at least one political revolver represent it made a major difference compared to having no revolver, but additional revolvers did not make any further difference.

Equation 4 uses absolute deviation as the dependent variable, controlling additionally for changes requested by groups. Requested changes obtain a strongly significant and negative coefficient estimate, and it is close to -1; each additional dollar requested on the basis of current spending was on average associated with a roughly 1.1-dollar deviation in appropriations outcomes. This is not surprising; requesting larger budgetary changes naturally invites more uncertain outcomes. The statistical insignificance of either revolver variable, conditional on requested changes, demonstrates that the type of lobbyists representing groups had no independent effect on how far outcomes deviated from requests. Overall, the data present considerable evidence for Hypothesis **H2**.

Taken together, testing of the two hypotheses shows that political revolvers managed

to meet their policy targets more fully than other lobbyists largely by setting easier targets in the first place. This observation naturally leads to the reasonable conjecture that, when their results are summarized in a simple "win ratio," political revolvers likely did no better than others. The lack of such an absolute difference is indeed borne out by the data. The types of lobbyists representing groups did not matter meaningfully for whether Congress enacted spending increases in accordance with their wishes, as shown in Table 4. While groups represented by revolvers had slightly more of their requested increases granted by Congress than other groups by a few percentage points (68% versus 63%), this difference was practically modest and statistically insignificant according to a chi-squared test on the underlying tabulation.

Table 4: Revolving-Door Lobbyists and Appropriations Outcomes

Revolving-Door Lobbyists	Funding Increased (%)
No	48 (63.2%)
Yes	30 (68.2%)

Of course, this analysis drawing on appropriations records in one policy domain for one fiscal year is far from conclusive evidence that revolvers do not outperform conventional lobbyists. It does create a paradox, however, that revolvers are significantly rewarded in the lobbying market with larger clienteles and more revenue despite mixed evidence for their greater influence on policy. This paradox receives at least a partial solution in my finding detailed in this paper; expectations management learned through political experience can help revolvers build records of success and cement prosperous careers even in the absence of surpassing policy clout.

5   Conclusion

Policy victories mean different things to interest groups and the lobbyists that serve them. For interest groups, they consist of fulfilling long-term policy goals by exerting maximum effort to persuade policymakers. For lobbyists, especially those working on short-term contracts, to win in policy consists of building a tangible and self-explanatory record of effectiveness. Lobbyists need to do so to continuously please their current clients as well as market themselves to potential clients in the future. Efficiency is of the essence for success as lobbyists, as clients have frequent opportunities to evaluate their performance and, if necessary, terminate their contract. The existence of constituents to please and a hiring-and-firing cycle make the lobbyist's job not unlike that of politicians who need to look good to political principals to overcome electoral challenges.

The main ingredient of success for both politicians and lobbyists is credit claiming. Effective and efficient credit claiming does not allow much patience for the nuance of why certain efforts are justifiable in pursuit of some long-term goals and how short-term success or failure can mean something different in the long run. Rather, it is aided by the delivery of highly tangible and self-explanatory results. I argue in this paper that revolving-door lobbyists derive much of their success from their ability to claim credit like good politicians, having received training from their past government employment to think and act with a politician's strategic, short-term mindset. Thinking more specifically about what kind of government experience ought to more strongly develop an instinct and inclination for credit claiming in a lobbyist, I further posit that revolvers with comparatively abundant political experience rather than policy experience should behave more strongly like politicians, an idea that informs the separation of political revolvers from policy revolvers.

The federal appropriations process is natural territory to the delivery of policy results readily attributable to lobbyists' actions, as effort and results are both naturally quantified in dollar figures from year to year. To test the theory regarding lobbyist credit claiming, I

examine how different lobbyists structured the positions that interest groups issued on the FY 2010 agriculture appropriations, drawing on data from interest group testimonies linked to the president's budget documents as well as the lobbying disclosure database. As hypothesized, the results reveal something distinctive about the modus operandi of political revolvers to the exclusion of either conventional lobbyists or policy revolvers - management of clients' expectations about policy targets. Interest groups represented by political revolvers issued more modest and realistic requests for spending changes to congressional appropriators and correspondingly received results close to their expressed demands. Neither the strategy or consequence of such expectations management characterized policy revolvers or conventional lobbyists. These findings lend strong credence to the theory that revolving-door lobbyists owe their success in the advocacy profession to the learned ability to think like the politicians that they used to be.

This study charts new territory in the study of lobbyists by pointing to a highly specific strategy that conceptually separates lobbyists from one another. This display of revolvers' credit claiming skills plays out inside the finer-grained and less observed routines of institutional procedure, and is proven to matter considerably for appropriations outcomes. Revolvers' deliberate effort to effect policy certainty, often at the expense of maximizing policy change favorable to clients, is important for understanding the role of lobbyists in interest group politics. Lobbyists juggle an intricate job as agents to interest groups, trying to strike a balance between the frequently divergent goals of working hard for clients and looking good to them. Interestingly, the need for positive review by both present and potential clients dictates that lobbyists' incentives are necessarily misaligned with those of clients from time to time. Revolvers' manifest credit claiming behavior is a telling symptom of the principal-agent problem in lobbying, and it constitutes a type of agency slip which constraints clients' policy agenda. This reasoning leads to the counterintuitive insight that precisely those lobbyists with the most decorated professional resumes impose a severe limit on interest group influence on policymaking.

Some points of caution bear emphasis as I conclude. First, notwithstanding this agency slip, by no means do I suggest that interest groups are somehow unenlightened to hire revolving-door lobbyists since they tend to compound the problem of delegation in lobbying. As demonstrated in this paper, clients that hired revolvers to lobby would not have been better off had they adopted the alternative of hiring conventional lobbyists. Revolvers prioritize the attainment of clear records of effectiveness and, as I argue, accomplish as much at some expense of maximizing clients' benefit, but can still outperform conventional lobbyists in absolute terms of appropriations outcomes. Second, as the policy domain in the empirical analysis presented in this paper, appropriations politics has a basic process that features a sort of election cycle for lobbyists and rewards short-term credit claiming with clarity. These characteristics of the appropriations game likely exacerbates the misalignment of incentives between clients and lobbyists even compared to other policy domains. If this is true, the analysis conducted in this paper is an easy test of the theory. It promises to be a valuable avenue of future research to investigate how well the conclusions of this study extend to other policy areas which differ from appropriations in structure, process, and behavior.

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