It's Transparent: Open Meetings, Electoral Competition, and Collaboration in the American States

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Abstract

Given the state of partisanship in American politics today, there has been much attention on the factors that can foster a more collaborative work environment between members of opposing parties in government. Several scholars have examined electoral competition and institutional transparency as being potential factors — often finding conflicting results. I argue that institutional transparency and electoral competition can interact to shape bipartisan bill collaborations in the American state legislatures. Leveraging variation in the transparency of state legislative committee meetings, as well as district-level primary and general election outcomes, I examine bipartisan bill co-sponsorship data from 2010-2016 to see if institutional transparency and electoral competition impact lawmakers' willingness to collaborate with the other side. The results suggest that general elections have no bearing on cross-partisan bill cosponsorships, though primary elections may promote or inhibit bipartisan collaboration depending on the transparency of the deliberative process.

"In my state primary voters are probably the biggest deterrent to legislative compromise."

— 2017 NCSL Attendee 50.[1]

On March 24th 2021, The Arizona state legislature was subject to a tense committee debate between Democrats and Republicans[2]. Lawmakers in the House Ways and Means Committee of the state spent the majority of that morning debating a legislative proposal, brought forth by Republicans, that would seek to strike down an education funding ballot initiative that was previously approved by the state's electorate. The Republicans currently hold the majority in the Arizona House of Representatives, and as such Republican lawmakers in the Ways and Means Committee wanted to end any discussion of the proposition that day and their decision to strike it down. This action was initiated by Representative Shawnna Bolick, the chairperson of the committee[3]. This display of raw partisanship led to a heated debate between Representative Bolick and several members of the minority party, ultimately devolving into her labeling the behavior of the opposing party as being at the level of a preschooler. While political posturing and attempts to stymie discussion are not unique or uncommon to the Arizona state legislature, the open display of raw tensions by Representative Bolick is notable. Representative Bolick assumed office in 2019, and shortly thereafter became the chairperson for the Ways and Means Committee. She represents Arizona House District 20 — a district that includes voters who are both ideologically conservative and electorally engaged. Indeed, Representative Bolick won her seat after facing a tough primary election — she beat her Republican primary election opponent by a margin of approximately 1.2% [4]. In previous elections, Republican Party incumbents in the district were routinely challenged in the primary elections — the Republican Party incumbent for the district in 2012 (Carl Seel) actually lost to the primary challenger (Paul Boyer).

This incident illustrates how partisan conflict can play out in the American states — in which lawmakers engage in performative acts to make appeals to an electorate that is motivated by partisan animosity. Given the rising levels of partisanship and polarization, scholars have devoted much time to exploring what, if anything, can prevent incidents like these and lead to a more collaborative environment between members of opposing parties in government (Shor and McCarty 2011). Institutional conditions, electoral concerns, and personal beliefs or ideological values have long been studied in this context. Specifically, electoral concerns

1. Anserson, Butler, and Harbridge-Yong. 2020. "Rejecting Compromise: Legislators' Fear of Primary Voters." Cambridge University Press.
2. *https* : $//www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/legislature/2021/03/24/republicans - arizona - capitol - limit - debate - emotions - boil/6987102002/$
3. *https* : $//ballotpedia.org/Shawnna_Bolick$
4. *https* : $//ballotpedia.org/Arizona_House_of_Representatives_District_20$

have been shown to play a key role in shaping the incentives for members of Congress to engage in bipartisan collaboration (Barber and Schmidt 2019; Carson, Koger, Lebo, and Young 2010; Fiorina 1973; Krehbiel 1995; MacRae 1952; Schiller 1995; Wilson and Young 1997; Woon 2008). Many scholars have examined electoral competition in the context of state legislatures as well — primarily focusing on (bi)partisan voting behaviors and their relation to electoral accountability (Birkhead 2015; Rogers 2017) or the institutional conditions that lead to more cross-aisle bill collaborations (Kirkland 2014; Swift and VanderMolen 2015). Other scholars have studied institutional transparency as a potential factor as well (Harden and Kirkland 2019; Harden, Kirkland, and Shea 2021). However, recent findings show that transparency initiatives may actually be unable to foster more cross-party relations among state lawmakers — Harden and Kirkland (2021) find that open meetings have no aggregate-level effects when it comes to promoting or inhibiting legislative compromise. Thus, there has been a lot of work exploring the impacts of institutional settings and personal conditions on many different indicators of legislative collaboration and compromise. However, it is still not entirely clear how state legislators' collaborative decisions are shaped by their personal electoral concerns at the general and primary stages, and how these concerns are subject to the constraints imposed by a transparent or non-transparent institutional setting.

This paper serves as an initial step in exploring this gap in the literature. I focus on the effects of electoral competition and transparent committee settings on legislative collaboration in the American states. While general and primary elections have been routinely studied in Congress, primary elections remain largely unexplored in the state legislative context[5]. This is a troublesome fact given that many state legislative districts are safe for one party, which has resulted in a slow shift in competition over time from the general election stage to the primary election stage (Carson et al. 2010). How, then, do both general and primary elections shape the incentives of state legislators to engage in legislative collaboration?

Moreover, the recent findings by Harden and Kirkland (2021) indicate that institutional transparency — in the form of open legislative deliberations — has no significant impact on many aggregate measures of legislative compromise (such as party loyalty in roll call voting, budget delays, and legislative productivity). Should we expect institutional transparency to have no effect when it comes to shaping lawmakers' incentives to engage with the other side? Or, are there certain conditions in which institutional transparency may play a role in fostering more or less partisan legislative collaborations? If so, then who are the legislators that we should expect to be most impacted by a transparent legislative process? Addressing all of these questions is important for obtaining a more holistic understanding of the ways in which electoral considerations and institutional designs shape legislative behavior. In particular, given the growing concerns over polarization

5. Indeed, Hogan (2003) likely provides the most systematic study thus far of state legislative primary elections. This study, however, is limited in its scope — focusing only on the 1994 and 1996 election cycles.

(Bonica et al. 2013), it is especially important for scholars to examine how legislators make decisions to collaborate with members of the opposition at the beginning stages of the legislative process.

I build on existing work to develop a theory of bipartisan legislative collaboration in the American state legislatures. Specifically, I posit that the transparency of legislative committee meetings is important in promoting or inhibiting the development of cross-party relationships among individual legislators. The committee system serves a critical role in state legislatures — they allow lawmakers to not only develop or disseminate expertise but to also form collaborative and cooperative partnerships (Kirkland 2014). Indeed, committees provide legislators with an opportunity to interact and engage with one another in a deliberative setting, and the potential to gain meaningful insights about potential legislative partnerships. By opening up the committee setting to the public, a shift can occur in the incentives for legislators to form collaborative partnerships with members of the opposing party. Most importantly, this shift is related to a legislator's electoral concerns (i.e. the degree of electoral competition an individual legislator faces). Given that lawmakers are risk averse, those who face high levels of primary competition and who are subject to legislative committees that are open to the public will be more likely to modify their behavior in the committee setting, thereby engaging in less cross-partisan deliberations. As a result, these lawmakers will form less bipartisan partnerships and will ultimately have lower bipartisan bill cosponsorships. Leveraging variation in the transparency of state committee meetings, as well as new measures of district-level primary and general election competition, I examine bipartisan bill co-sponsorship rates from 2010-2016 to see if institutional transparency and electoral competition impact state lawmakers' willingness to collaborate with the other side in the policy-making process.

The paper is organized as follows. I first provide a brief overview of the literature surrounding legislative compromise, electoral competition, and legislative transparency. In the following section, I expand upon my theory of bipartisan bill collaboration that is shaped by both the openness of committee meetings as well as the level of electoral competition a lawmaker faces, and specify a set of testable hypotheses. The next section details the data and measures I use to test my hypotheses, as well as the research design. Following that is an examination of the results, which indicate that general elections have no bearing on cross-partisan bill cosponsorships, though primary elections may promote or inhibit bipartisan collaboration depending on whether committee meetings are open to the public. I close by discussing the implications of my findings and potential avenues for future research.

Legislative Collaboration

Legislators have a multitude of goals they seek to accomplish during their time in office (Fenno 1978), and as a result they have to collaborate with one another and build working relationships. While legislative compromise can take many forms, bill cosponsorship is a direct measure that has been the focus of most research on legislative collaboration. Legislators' decisions regarding bipartisan bill cosponsorship reflect active decisions to engage in strategic collaboration with members of the opposing party in the chamber (Fowler 2006; Kirkland 2011; 2014). Thus, legislators are aware of how much impact their cosponsorship can decisions have, especially when they involve members of the opposing party. It has been documented at the national level that members of the media and potential electoral challengers can draw attention to and scrutinize the signals that stem from a legislator's willingness to cosponsor legislation with the opposing party (Desposato et al. 2011). Moreover, cosponsorship activity is a unique phenomenon — it is not a substitute for an estimate of a legislator's ideal point and — unlike party loyalty — it is not as tied to the influence of party leadership . This scholarship indicates that bipartisan bill cosponsorships reflect individual lawmakers' policy interests as well as the extent to which substantive agreements on policy can occur between the parties at the early stages of the collaborative policy-making process.

Electoral Competition

The effects of electoral competition on legislative behavior has been routinely examined in the American context. Beginning with MacRae (1952) positing a causal relationship between competitiveness and representation, the "marignality hypothesis" claims that competitive electoral districts causes members of Congress to be more responsive to their constituents' preferences given the incentives of the elected officials to minimize the risk of losing in an election (Fiorina 1973). A variety of legislative behaviors confirm this hypothesis. Lawmakers with roll call votes that align strongly with the party line tend to experience lower electoral vote shares (Carson, Koger, Lego, and Young 2010). Moreover, the institutional coalitions formed by members of Congress — measured as bill cosponsorships — are affected by electoral competition as well (Crisp, Kanthak, and Leijonhufvud 2004). In some respects, we can conceptualize legislators as "single-minded seekers of re-election" (Mayhew 1974); legislators will often be pulled in the direction of their districts, and they will attempt to be representative of the preferences of the voters in their district (Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Erikson 1978). However, legislators are also pulled in the direction of the party: party leaders seek to influence the behavior of the rank-and-file co-partisans in order to maintain a credible and consistent "party brand" that maximizes the chances the party will achieve power (Grynaviski 2010). To

do this, the party apparatus provides legislators with a multitude of resources — campaign funding, cushy committee assignments, etc. Members who "tow the party line" and behave in such a way as to reflect the preferences of party leaders will be more likely to receive these benefits (Fiorina and Levendusky 2006).

Sometimes, legislators are pulled by their constituents and their party in the same direction. However, some legislators are pulled in opposite directions by these competing interests. These particular legislators face unique pressures when it comes to engaging in behavior that can be perceived as either too partisan or too bipartisan (Lebo et al. 2007). Indeed, Harbridge and Malhotra (2011) show how these pressures can impact how lawmakers behave as well as their perceptions of their constituents. In particular, the authors articulate the role that electoral threats can play in influencing how members of Congress behave and the degree to which their behavior reflects the preferences of their constituents or the party leadership. They show that the electoral stage at which lawmakers face potential threats — and the relative strength of those threats — will affect the actions of lawmakers during the policy-making process (see Kanthak and Crisp 2005).

But all of this research is in the context of Congress. Does this logic apply to the state legislatures as well? Some scholarship suggests that state legislators are cognizant of these factors, and that they display a degree of responsiveness to the preferences of their constituency across time (Caughey and Warshaw 2018). For instance, Birkhead (2015) shows that the ideological leanings of incumbents and their general election challengers are important — ideologically extreme incumbents face general election opponents who are more likely to be moderate, and all else being equal, the moderate candidates have a higher likelihood of winning general elections at the state level. However, Rogers (2017) provides a strong counterpoint to these findings — showing that, at the aggregate level, voters do not tend to punish their state legislators in general elections for engaging in non-ideologically representative voting decisions. However, Rogers (2017) also points to the media environment as playing a potentially important role in this context — showing that, as the number of statehouse reporters increases, electorally unsafe legislators are more likely to be punished by their constituents for engaging in less representative voting decisions. Ultimately, it appears that the threat of being thrown out of office for most state legislators may not be that strong — with most general election voters at the state level lacking sufficient knowledge or motivation to keep their elected officials in line.

Thus, it seems that the salience of electoral threats in the context of state legislatures may not be comparable to that of Congress. In other words, while state legislators are likely concerned with their margin of victory in general elections to some degree, the ability for this concern to fundamentally alter their behaviors is low. However, it is not entirely clear how primary elections will factor into the calculus of bipartisan collaboration among state legislators. There is reason to suspect that state legislators' concern

over primary voters may impact their willingness to engage in bipartisan collaboration. Indeed, Anderson et al. (2020) show that legislators are much more fearful of how their primary electorate will potentially punish them for engaging in acts of compromise with members of the opposing party. They show that primary voters' opposition to bipartisanship goes beyond pure ideological concerns. Primary voters are more likely to be knowledgeable of and pay attention to the actions of their elected officials in the policy-making process. Thus, if legislators perceive primary voters as being opposed to collaborating with the other side, they may be responsive to these preferences.

Legislative Transparency

Harden and Kirkland (2020) articulate how the principal-agent dynamic from political economic behavior models can serve as the underlying structure for how transparent institutional settings affect legislative decision making. Legislators are beholden to the citizens that put them into office, thereby making the citizens "principals" who have a stake in ensuring that their elected state representatives (i.e. - agents) behave in accordance with their interests. In essence, citizens likely want to ensure that the decisions of their elected representatives represent an attempt to translate their preferences into the broader policy making process (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2007). An important aspect of the principal-agent dynamic in this context pertains to how much "freedom" a principal provides their agent with regards to the agent operating on behalf of the principal. Most often, agents have unique skills, experience, or knowledge that the principal is not personally purview to. Thus, a principal may grant the agent a certain level of discretion so that they may effectively utilize their skill set in service to the principal. In this context, citizens grant legislators a degree of freedom in which to operate, so that they can make effective use of their policy expertise within the legislative environment (Krehbiel 1993). To prevent shirking and ensure that the agent behaves in accordance with their preferences, the principal will have to rely on a form of monitoring (Miller 2005). In other words, to minimize the likelihood of shirking among legislators, citizens must rely on a set of institutional avenues for monitoring the behavior of their elected officials.

Citizens traditionally rely on a multitude of institutional avenues in order to monitor the behavior of their elected officials. For instance, the desire for members of Congress to routinely shirk the policy preferences of their constituents has been mitigated over time given the increasing openness and accessibility of the policy making process within Congress. Committee hearings, floor debates, and roll call votes are all now within the public domain. Thus, the behavior of each member of Congress is on full display, and each member knows that what they say or do has a chance of impacting how their constituents perceive them[6].

6. See Harbridge and Malhotra (2011) for an illuminating discussion of how voters reward and punish their elected represen-

The state legislatures began to experience a shift towards greater institutional transparency beginning in the 1950s. Facing pressure from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, several states began to open their legislative proceedings to the American public with the hopes that doing so would strengthen the connection between the citizenry and their elected officials — foster more policy responsiveness, reducing corruption, and enhancing the effectiveness of the policy-making process as a whole (Harden 2016; Harden and Kirkland 2020). By 1998, almost every state legislature would implement transparency in the form of open meetings requirements – provisions that guarantee public access to government meetings.

However, legislators in many states have begun to introduce exemptions to these transparency requirements — with many lawmakers contending that transparency inhibits their capacity to make engage in earnest deliberation and develop legislative compromises. Still, many argue that there are important positive effects of institutional transparency. Transparency is thought to provide citizens with access to information when it comes to their elected officials' behavior in the policy making process, thereby equipping the mass public with the power to effectively reward or punish lawmakers in elections (Kirkland and Harden 2020). However, Kirkland and Harden (2020) cast doubt on these claims by finding a pattern of precisely-estimated null results when it comes to the effects of state legislative transparency on aggregate measures of policy responsiveness and compromise — a finding that they attribute to being the result of a potential disconnect between transparency initiatives and greater public knowledge of the policy-making process (Kirkland and Holden 2020). Other research has shown potential negative effects of transparency. For instance, Kirkland and Harden (2018) show that legislators are constrained in their ability to negotiate and effectively manage fiscal resources when their proceedings are more open to the public.

To sum, openness in government can be seen as desirable from a normative standpoint, and popular notions of institutional transparency suggest that it should lead to more effectiveness, accountability, and collaboration. However, the different avenues of research that I have discussed collectively suggest that open meetings likely have no profound impact on the amount of compromise in legislative settings, or that they may even have negative effects when it comes to representation or economic stability (Harden and Kirkland 2021). However, these prior attempts to identify the effects of institutional transparency have overlooked the potential link between institutional transparency and the incentives of individual legislators when it comes to forming collaborative legislative partnerships.

tatives depending on how partisan their behaviors are in Congress.

A Theory of Bipartisan Collaboration and Bill Cosponsorship

To develop a better understanding of how institutional transparency and electoral competition influence how legislators collaborate with one another through bill cosponsorships, I follow Kirkland (2014) by maintaining a series of assumptions regarding cosponsorship decisions. First, I assume that the decision of a given set of state legislators to cosponsor a piece of legislation is a joint decision made by all of them. The initial sponsor of a piece of legislation seeks out others to cosponsor their bill — legislators commonly do this by sending out letters or notifications to their all of their colleagues in which they ask for cosponsors on any new piece of legislation they introduce, though personal appeals are more likely to be effective (Bawn and Koger 2008; Campbell 1982; Koger 2003). State legislators mostly respond to requests for cosponsors and they do not typically go out of their way to find bills to cosponsor. It has been documented that the baseline position for cosponsorship is likely to be no (Kirkland 2014; Woon 2008). Therefore, legislators must be convinced or influenced to cosponsor a bill. Next, I assume that legislators cosponsor a bill due to, in part, having some belief that it has a chance of making it through the various stages of the legislative process. In other words, legislators do not simply cosponsor bills to make a symbolic gesture without ever expecting the bill to be successful[7].

Legislators will decide to cosponsor a piece of legislation if the expected utility they can derive from said decision is higher than the expected utility of not engaging in that decision. Desposato, Kearney, and Crisp (2011) explicate a clear set of models that demonstrate the calculus of cosponsorship among legislators[8]. They frame the incentives for a legislator to cosponsor a bill as follows. For bill j, legislator i has a given propensity to consider cosponsoring that bill. The legislator will either consider the bill for cosponsorship ($C_{ij} = 1$) or not ($C_{ij} = 0$). The legislator will decide to cosponsor the bill if the following occurs: she decides to consider bill j for cosponsorship *and* after considering it she prefers the policy content of bill j to the status quo. This is expressed as (Despato, Kearney, and Crisp 2011, 538):

$$C_{ij} = 1 \cap U_i(A_j) + \epsilon_{ij} > U_i(Q_j)$$

Where A_j is the spatial location of bill j, Q_j is the spatial location of the status quo, U_i is the single-peaked function that defines legislator i's utility for a piece of legislation, and ϵ_{ij} is a stochastic component.

7. I make this assumption since the focus of this paper is on legislation that has policy consequences (i.e. - legislation that can change the policy status quo). I do not focus on continuing resolutions, joint resolutions, or commemorative pieces of legislation in the state legislatures for this paper. Though, these forms of legislation are fairly common, and lawmakers likely sponsor or cosponsor them due to their inherent symbolic nature. Future research should explore these forms of legislation in more detail.

8. In their paper, the authors use these models to describe the data-generating process for cosponsorship decisions in order to derive ideal point estimates from cosponsorship data and compare their performance with ideal point estimates derived from roll-call voting data. However, their models are useful for providing a clear framework of the incentive structures legislators have when it comes to engaging in bill cosponsorships.

The legislator will not cosponsor the bill if she considers the bill for cosponsorship but then decides she prefers the status quo over the proposed policy alternative, or if she simply decides to not even consider the bill for cosponsorship. This is represented as:

$$C_{ij} = 0 \cup U_i(A_j) + \epsilon_{ij} < U_i(Q_j)$$

Thus, a legislator's probability of cosponsoring a bill is the product of (1) the probability of considering a bill for cosponsorship and (2) the probability of supporting it, while the probability of not cosponsoring a bill is the sum of (1) the probability of simply not considering a bill for cosponsorship at all and (2) the probability of considering a bill and then preferring the status quo (Despato, Kearney, and Crips 2011, 538). A legislator's propensity to consider a bill for cosponsorship is shaped in large party by the degree to which they form collaborative relationships with their fellow lawmakers. Imagine, for instance, a legislator who has formed good relationships with some members of the opposing party in her chamber. If she were to come across a request for cosponsors on a bill from a member of the other party, she would be more likely to consider the bill for cosponsorship (all else being equal). Across a large set of bills, it follows that this will likely result in the legislator deciding to cosponsor more bills — where in the absence of the collaborative relationships she formed, she would be less likely to even consider cosponsoring legislation from lawmakers in the opposing party. For some bills, she may still prefer the policy status quo to the proposed policy alternative of the bill, thereby deciding to not cosponsor a bill from a lawmaker in the opposing party even after considering it. However, for some bills she will be likely to prefer the proposed policy alternative to the status quo and will decide to cosponsor them after their consideration. This should result in measurable changes in the degree of partisanship observed in the legislator's cosponsorship decisions in a given session-year.

But how do electoral considerations and the transparency of institutional settings factor into this? I argue that both conditions impact the collaborative relationships legislators can form. Legislators who are subject to open committee meetings must participate in a deliberative setting that is subject to potential viewings from the populace[9]. In this context, the salience of the electoral connection will be stronger for certain legislators than others. Legislators who face little to no primary election competition will be less likely to behave in a partisan manner in the presence of an open committee setting given that they will be less concerned with how they will be directly observed by the primary electorate or how their actions will be framed to the primary electorate by potential primary threats, the media establishment, interest groups, or advocacy groups. This set of state lawmakers will not be as risk averse when it comes to engaging with

9. Indeed, while the number of statehouse reporters has decreased over time, they continue to cover and report on the happenings of the state legislatures (Rogers 2017). Many statehouse reporters claim that the transparency of the committee process is valuable to their coverage — allowing them to not only explain what is going on but to provide commentary for the public as well (Reporters Committee 2011).

members of the opposition in the committee settings, allowing them to form more bipartisan relationships which will increase the likelihood that they will consider cosponsoring legislation that is proposed by members of the opposition party. This, in theory, should result in their cosponsorship decisions becoming more bipartisan.

Among the set of state legislators who face differing levels of competition at the general election stage, they will likely not have an incentive to form more or less collaborative relationships with members of the opposing party given the openness of the committees they serve in. These legislators are not likely to worry about strong general election challenges from the opposing party given that general election voters typically pay little attention to state level politics and ultimately follow party cues when it comes time to vote (Anderson, Butler, and Harbridge-Yong 2020; Bartels 2000). This set of lawmakers is less likely to alter their behavior in transparent committee settings — the electoral connection is not as salient to these lawmakers, and as such they will not be induced to behave in a more bipartisan manner when deliberating in open committee settings. Ultimately, these lawmakers will not experience a fundamental change in the collaborative relationships they form in their chamber, resulting in no observable change in the levels of bipartisanship they display in their cosponsorship decisions.

Lastly, state legislators who happen to face high levels of primary election competition will be more likely to alter their behaviors in the presence of open committee settings. These legislators are more likely to be weary of how their behaviors in the committee settings will translate to the primary electorate in their districts — if they are perceived as being too bipartisan, they may pay for it in the next primary election. By engaging in less bipartisanship in the committee settings, these legislators will be less likely to form collaborative relationships that cross the party line. Indeed, much of their time in committee will likely be dedicated making clearer distinctions between the parties rather than trying to minimize them. As a result, these legislators will be less likely to consider cosponsoring legislation from members of the opposition, leading to lower levels of bipartisanship in their bill cosponsorship decisions. These expectations form the following set of testable hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 *All else being equal, state lawmakers who face higher levels of primary election competition and who are subject to open committee meetings will be more likely to display lower levels of bipartisanship in their cosponsorship decisions.*

Hypothesis 2 *All else being equal, state lawmakers who face lower levels of primary election competition and who are subject to open committee meetings will be more likely to display higher levels of bipartisanship in their cosponsorship decisions.*

Hypothesis 3 *All else being equal, the amount general election competition will not impact the levels of*

bipartisan bill cosponsorship among state lawmakers regardless of whether they are subject to open committee meetings.

Data and Measures

How do open committee meetings and electoral considerations shape the collaborative nature of policy-making in the state legislatures? To address this question, I examine how transparent committee meetings and district-level electoral competition impact the partisan composition of state legislators' cosponsorship decisions. I compile an original dataset of individual bill sponsors and cosponsors in the state legislatures. I obtained this data from LegisScan — a third-party service that scrapes state legislative websites for information on all unique pieces of legislation proposed in a state legislative chamber for a given session[10]. For most states, Legiscan is highly accurate, and it covers most states from 2010 to 2016[11]. However, some state legislative websites have no-bill cosponsorship data available or they limit their reporting of the sponsors and cosponsors on each bill to just one or two members. Thus, I eliminate 10 states from the sample in my analysis due to incomplete or unreliable data. Specifically, I exclude the following states: Arkansas, Colorado, Montana, Tennessee, Missouri, New Mexico, Utah, Nebraska, Idaho, and Louisiana. In all, I am able to compile bill sponsorship and cosponsorship data on 80 legislative chambers in 40 states from 2010-2016. This is by far the most comprehensive dataset on state legislative sponsorship and cosponsorship decisions.

Using the information in the dataset on the individual legislators who sponsored and cosponsored each piece of legislation, I then construct a measure of bipartisan bill cosponsorship. First, I identify the bills each individual legislator cosponsored in a given session-year. Next, I identify the list of individual sponsors for these bills, noting which sponsors are from the same party as the cosponsor under examination and which sponsors are from the opposing party. I then compute the average proportion of sponsors who are from the opposing party given each bill that a legislator decided to cosponsor in a given session-year. This measure is calculated for each legislator per chamber-year, and it will serve as the dependent variable for this analysis. The variable is technically a proportion, meaning it is a continuous measure that ranges between 0 and 1. This measure represents a contribution to the study of bipartisan collaboration in the U.S. state legislatures, by providing an approximate measurement of the level of bipartisanship when it comes to bill cosponsorships at the legislator-level across time.

Figure 1 below displays the distribution of this measure across all states and years in the dataset. Looking at the figure, we can see that the distributions of the variable in each year have a right-skew. The

10. I limit my focus in this paper to bills that received at least 1 cosponsor.
11. *https* : *//legiscan.com/datasets*

distributions seem to have a central tendency around 0.2, and the spread of the distributions are notable — though the distributions for the variable in 2013 and 2015 are more rigid due in part to the fewer number of bills proposed by lawmakers in each state for those years. This indicates that, on average, the state legislators tend to cosponsor legislation from co-partisans.

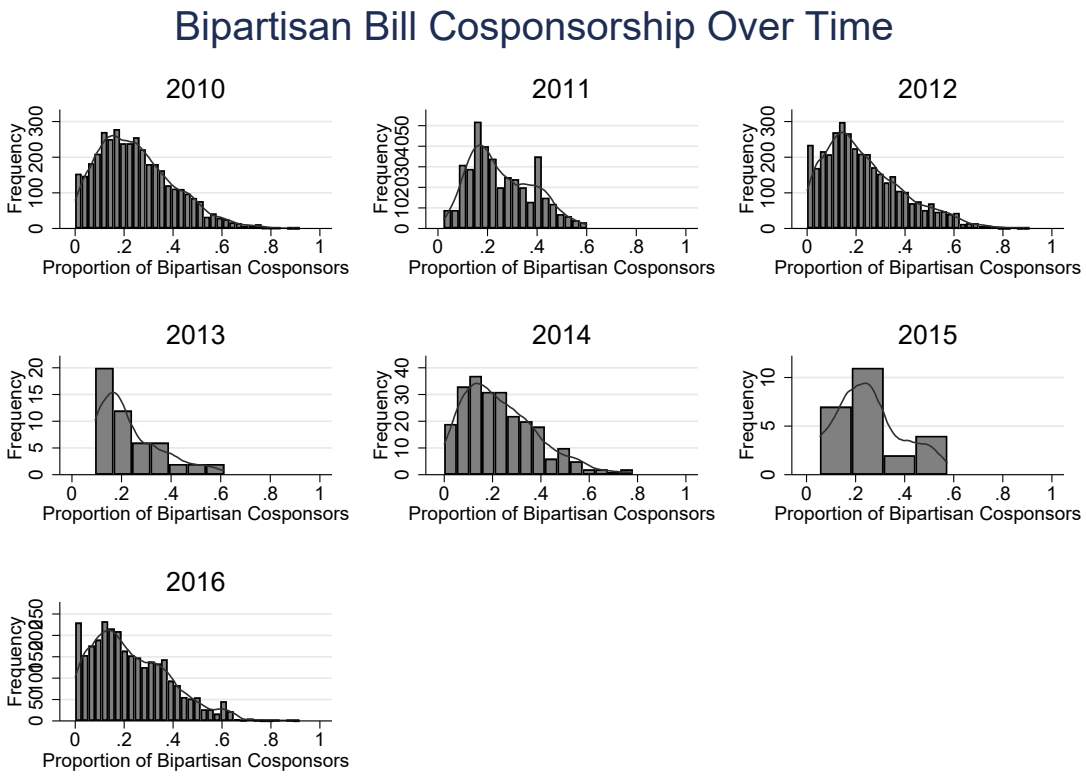

Figure 1

I operationalize state legislators' electoral considerations by focusing on district-level electoral competition. I use Hogan's (2003) measure of electoral competition. The measure is calculated as follows: $1 - \Sigma\rho_i^2$ where ρ_i is the proportion of the election vote won by the ith candidate. I use this measurement strategy to calculate the level of electoral competition a candidate faces at the primary election stage and then the general election stage — resulting in two measures of electoral competition at the legislator-district level[12]. This measurement strategy is beneficial in the sense that it takes into account both the number of candidates who run in a given election and the percentage of the vote received by each candidate. In other words, this measure allows me to examine two-candidate and multi-candidate elections in the state legislative context. These measures are continuous and range between 0 and 1 — with higher values representing greater elec-

12. I exclude special elections for the primary analysis. However, I account for special elections as a robustness check for my findings — which I discuss later on in the paper.

toral competition. Hogan's (2003) original analysis is limited to state legislative elections in 25 states from 1994-1996. Thus, I rely on Klarner's (2018) state legislative electoral data from 1968 to 2016 to generate the values for this measure. I generate values of this measure for all states except for Nebraska given its lack of a partisan legislative structure. To my knowledge, no other measures exist that capture the level of general and primary electoral competition at the state-legislator level across this many years.

Figure 2 below displays the distribution of the general election competition measure across all cases and all time periods in the dataset. *Figure 3* displays the distribution of the primary election competition measure across all cases and time periods in the dataset. Looking at *figure 2*, we can see that the level of general election competition in the state legislatures varies considerably. Most notably, it appears that most state legislators are subject to no general election competition, a moderate amount, or a high level of competition (as seen with the three spiked frequencies in the graph). Turning our attention now to *figure 3*, we see a much different story. The level of primary election competition among state legislators seems to be more normally distributed — though the distribution does skew to the right. However, a sizable portion of state legislators also experience no primary election competition as well.

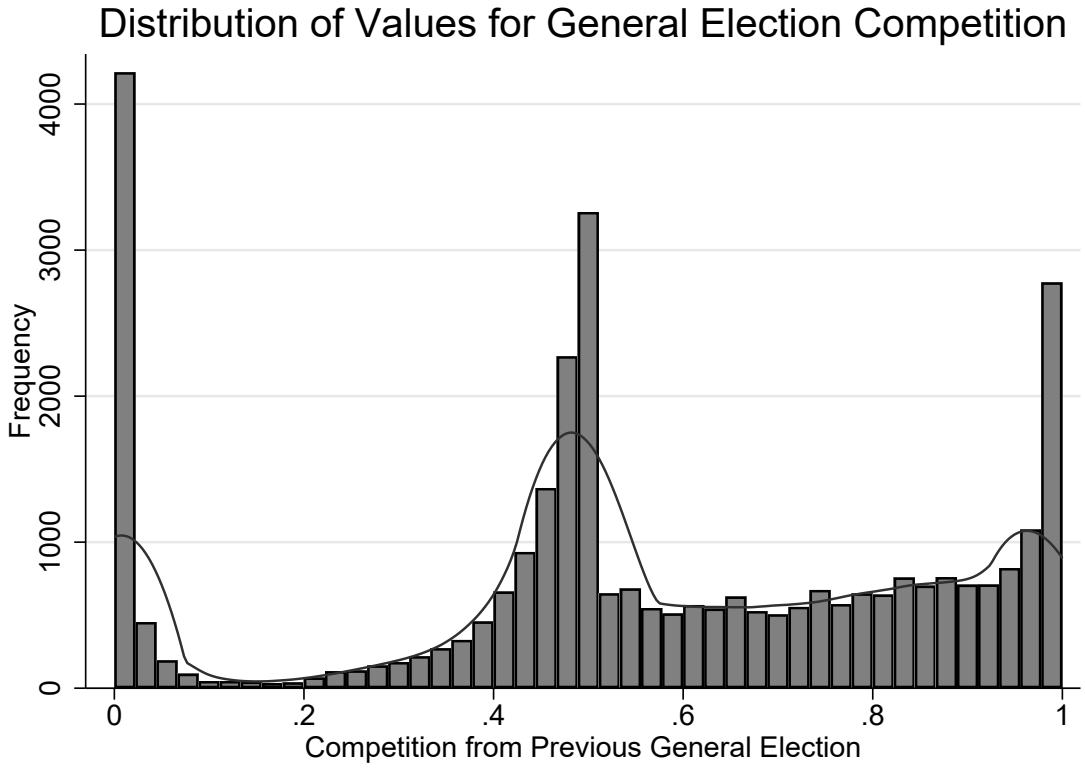

Figure 2

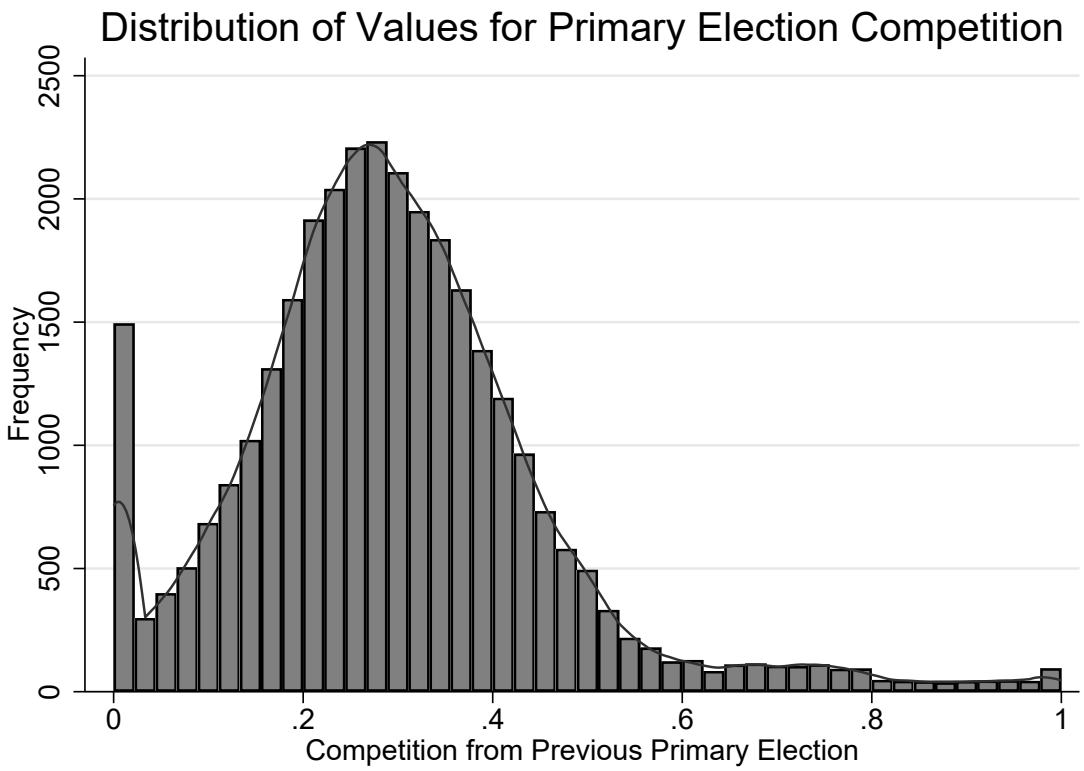

Figure 3

To measure the degree of transparency in committee settings, I use Harden and Kirkland's (2020) data on state legislative open meeting requirements — provisions that guarantee public access to governmental meetings and proceedings. Data is available for every state from 1960 to 2018. Every state has had at least one of these requirements in effect since 1998, but most states have fully or partially exempted their legislatures from these requirements at some point in history. Thus, legislative transparency is classified as the presence of an open committee meetings requirement for a state legislature in a given year.[13] In the data, states are given a value of 1 in a given year if they adopt new open committee meeting guidelines or if the legislature is not exempt from any of the existing guidelines when it comes to all of the following groups listed below:

1. Subcommittees

2. Committees outside of Committees of the Whole

13. This coding implicitly assumes that the effect of the open meeting requirement is not lagged. However, this is not likely to be a problematic assumption since these requirements are closely monitored at the state level by the media and state lawmakers are aware as to whether their committee proceedings remain open or closed at any given time (Diana 2014; Harden & Kirkland 2020).

3. Conference committees

4. Standing committees

Given that this coding strategy may obscure some nuance in states' legislative transparency conditions, I follow Harden & Kirkland (2020) by examining an alternative variable as well: a binary indicator for whether standing political committees were open in a state for a given year. This measure focuses on the transparency of the committee setting in which most bargaining and negotiation over policy occurs (Kingdon 1973).

To test the interactive effect of committee transparency and electoral competition on bipartisan bill cosponsorships, I interact the level of general election competition with the transparency of the committee settings as well as the level of primary election competition with the transparency of the committee settings. I use an OLS estimator with two-way fixed-effects and standard errors clustered on individual legislators. This regression model includes fixed effects for cross-sectional units (state-chambers) and time (years). The two-way fixed effects estimator accounts for the confounding role of any unit-specific time-invariant factors that may be correlated with the interactive effect. Moreover, the two-way fixed effects estimator accounts for possible secular temporal trends in the outcome (Harden & Kirkland 2020).

Electoral competition and legislative transparency are not the only factors that are likely to impact the cosponsorship decisions of state legislators. Various institutional, state-level, and individual-level factors play a role in the process as well. Thus, I include several control variables to help account for any potential confounding. I include measures of the following legislator-level characteristics: party identification, whether they have any prior legislative experience, total tenure in office, personal political ideology, and the number of bills they cosponsor in a given session. I include measures of the following institutional-level factors: the level of two-party competition for government control, the degree of legislative professionalism, whether term limits are in effect, average government ideology, the average ideological distance between the parties in each legislative chamber, and whether there is unified government control under one party.

I also include a one-year lagged measure of the degree of bipartisan bill cosponsorship. However, my analysis is still based on observational data and the absence of random assignment to treatment — meaning that I cannot make strong causal claims for any of the effects in my analysis. Many of the control variables have missing values for the time period under examination. Thus, I use multiple imputation to help account for any missing values[14]. After merging all of the various measures, I am left with a final dataset of 9,151 individual legislators. Descriptive statistics for all variables in my analysis are provided in more detail in

14. Specifically, I employ multiple imputation using chained equations, which is also known as the fully conditional specification or sequential generalized regression. I created 50 imputed datasets per variable. The proportion of missing data per variable ranged from around 0.2 to 0.4. I did not use any auxiliary variables in the imputation model.

tables *A1* and *A2* of the appendix.

Results

In *Table 3*, we can see the results from the OLS regression models. The first five rows of *Table 3* correspond with the hypotheses I laid out earlier. The fourth and fifth rows of the table are shaded since they correspond with the interactive effects I posited in my hypotheses, while the first three rows represent the constituent terms for these interactive effects. For *model 1* and *model 2*, the transparency measure contains all four committee settings, while transparency in *model 3* and *model 4* represents the measure that only accounts for standing committees. If my first and second hypotheses are correct, then we should expect to see that the coefficient for the interactive effect between transparency and primary election competition is both negative and statistically significant. If my third hypothesis is correct, then we should expect to see that the coefficient for the interactive effect between transparency and general election competition is not statistically significant.

Looking at the results, we can see the interactive effect between transparency and primary election competition is both negative and statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ for a two-tailed t-test — providing some evidence in favor of hypotheses 1 and 2. Specifically, the results indicate the following: all else being equal, state legislators who are subject to an open committee setting and who face higher levels of primary election competition will cosponsor less legislation from members of the opposing party when compared to state legislators who are subject to an open committee setting but experience lower levels of primary election competition. However, the results become much less certain when we focus only on standing committees and not all committee settings in a state legislature. While the coefficient for the interactive effect between transparency and primary election competition in *model 4* is the same sign as the coefficient in *model 2*, it does not reach traditional levels of statistical significance — the estimated effect is marginally significant at $p < 0.10$ for a two-tailed t-test.

[Insert table 3 here.]

Moreover, we can see the interactive effect between transparency and general election competition is not statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ for a two-tailed t-test — which is evidence in favor of my third hypothesis. Substantively, this means that, all else being equal, state legislators who are subject to an open committee setting will not experience any statistically significant changes to the levels of bipartisanship in their bill cosponsorship decisions given the level of general election competition they face. This finding holds when looking at the transparency of all committee settings in a state legislature as well as only the

transparency of standing committees. Looking at the constituent elements for the interactive effects, we can see some surprising results. The third row of the table represents the estimated effects of primary election competition in settings where state legislators are not subject to transparent committees. The coefficients in this row are all positive, and they are statistically significant for both *model 1* and *model 2* — suggesting that, all else being equal, legislators who face high levels of primary competition but who are not subject to open committee meetings will cosponsor more legislation from members of the other party. Moreover, the first row of the table represents the estimated effects of just open committee settings. The coefficients in this row are all negative, and they are statistically significant in *model 2* and *model 4* — suggesting that the openness of the committee process on its own may have a negative effect on bipartisan collaboration in the state legislatures.

I perform additional robustness checks of these results to ensure that the findings are not entirely model-dependent. The dependent for my analysis is a proportion. Proportion data is continuous but bounded, with values falling between 0 and 1. Thus, I re-estimate the model specifications above but use a generalized linear estimator with a logit link and the binomial family to generate predicted values that also fall within this range. The results of this analysis are provided in *table A3* in the appendix. Next, I re-estimate the models but include special elections when calculating the measures of district electoral competition. These results are provided in *table A4* of the appendix. Lastly, I re-estimate the models but limit the sample of legislators to those who face contested elections. Overall, the results from the robustness checks reflect what I found in *table 3*.

Taken together, these results provide some initial evidence that the transparency of the committee environment can interact with the electoral conditions of a legislative district to induce lawmakers to engage in differing levels of bipartisan collaboration. Specifically, legislators in transparent committee settings who face higher levels of primary election competition may have a lower proportion of their cosponsored legislation attributable to members of the opposition party. Differing levels of general election competition, however, likely have no bearing on a legislator's willingness to cosponsor legislation from lawmakers in the other party — regardless of the level of transparency in the committee settings. Thus, it seems that institutional transparency may have the opposite effect of what many proponents of the reforms frequently claim. Thus, it is still likely the case that open legislative meetings have no substantive impact on the aggregate levels of bipartisan compromise across the American states (Harden and Kirkland 2021). Yet, it appears that there may be certain electoral conditions that can induce individual legislators to work more or less often with the opposition in government depending on the transparency of the institutional environment they operate in.

Conclusion

"The power of the electoral connection may actually be greater at earlier stages of decision making...when legislators are deciding which alternatives to consider."

— Arnold (1990, 269)

In this study, I proposed a theory of bipartisan collaboration via bill cosponsorships in the U.S. state legislatures. I posited that state legislators who face electoral pressures at the primary election stage in their districts will form less bipartisan collaborative partnerships in committee settings that are open to the public, reducing the likelihood that they will consider cosponsoring legislation that is brought forth by their fellow lawmakers in the other party. Leveraging variation in the transparency of state legislative committee meetings, as well as district-level primary and general election outcomes, I examine bipartisan bill co-sponsorship data from 2010-2016 to see if institutional transparency and electoral competition impact lawmakers' willingness to collaborate with the other side. The findings are in line with the expectations set forth by my theory, although there are limitations in the research design of my study. The measures of electoral competition I rely on for this study do not take into account the entire scope of competitiveness — such as the level of campaign financing general and primary elections are subject to for state legislative offices. Future scholarship is needed to provide a better examination of these factors.

Moreover, while this study focuses on the partisan composition of state legislators' cosonsorship decisions, it does not systematically examine the content of these bills. If state legislators who face higher levels of primary competition cosponsor fewer bills from the other party under a transparent institutional setting, then that begs the question: what type of bills will they cosponsor when they actually decide to work with the other side? One of the surprising findings in my analysis was that state legislators who experience higher levels of primary competition are more likely to cosponsor legislation from the other side when they are not subject to transparent committee settings. More work is needed to examine this phenomena in more detail. Lastly, despite my theory positing that state legislators who operate in transparent committee settings will form less bipartisan relationships, this analysis focuses on an implication of this process and does not examine the actual behavior of state legislatures in committee settings. While it is not possible to compare the behavior of state legislators in transparent committees to the counterfactual condition (i.e. - what their behavior would be in a closed committee setting), it is possible to examine the behaviors of individual legislators in open committee settings to see how, exactly, the change given different electoral and institutional constraints. This is something that future scholarship should explore.

Table 3: Bipartisan Bill Cosponsorship, US State Legislators (2010-2016)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Transparency	-0.036	-0.125**	-0.053	-0.146**
	(0.079)	(0.061)	(0.080)	(0.062)
General Election Competition	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003	-0.004
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.012)
Primary Election Competition	0.082**	0.080**	0.036	0.021
	(0.035)	(0.031)	(0.048)	(0.042)
Transparency x General Election Competition	-0.004	0.002	-0.002	0.003
	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.013)
Transparency x Primary Election Competition	-0.084*	-0.080**	-0.032	-0.014*
	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.054)	(0.08)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber		0.042		0.041
		(0.061)		(0.058)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber (squared)		-0.052		-0.051*
		(0.032)		(0.031)
Democrat		-0.003		-0.004
		(0.006)		(0.005)
Majority Party		-0.071***		-0.071***
		(0.006)		(0.006)
Term Limits in Effect		0.004		0.004
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Prior Legislative Experience		-0.008		-0.007
		(0.005)		(0.005)
Tenure in Legislature (years)		0.001***		0.001**
		(0.0003)		(0.0003)
Legislative Professionalism (First Dimension)		0.002		0.003
		(0.002)		(0.002)
Legislative Professionalism (Second Dimension)		0.004		0.001
		(0.004)		(0.004)
Government Ideology		-0.0001		-0.0001
		(0.0002)		(0.0002)
Legislator Ideology		0.008**		0.008**
		(0.003)		(0.003)
Folded Ranney Index (4yr avg)		0.094**		0.086**
		(0.047)		(0.042)
Number of Bills Cosponsored (logged)		0.034***		0.035***
		(0.005)		(0.005)
Opposite Party Composition		0.403***		0.398***
		(0.018)		(0.018)
Unified Government		0.010		0.006
		(0.007)		(0.006)
Lagged Bill Cosponsorship (-1yr)		0.052***		0.046***
		(0.011)		(0.011)
Intercept	-0.112	-0.080	0.328***	-0.057
	(0.103)	(0.071)	(0.078)	(0.071)
N	9151	9151	9151	9151
Adjusted R^2	0.218	0.523	0.209	0.515

Cell entries report the results from cross-section time-series least square regressions. The models include state-chamber and year fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by legislator. Transparency in models 1 and 2 is a dummy variable for all open legislative committee meetings. Transparency in models 3 and 4 is a dummy variable for open standing committee meetings only. $* \ p < 0.10 \ ** \ p < 0.05 \ *** \ p < 0.01$ for a two-tailed test.

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Appendix

A1: Descriptive Statistics (continuous variables)

Variable	Median	S.D.	Minimum	Maximum
Bipartisan Bill Cosponsorship	0.233	0.098	0	0.918
General Election Competition	0.525	0.322	0	1
Primary Election Competition	0.281	0.162	0	1
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber	0.939	0.160	0.229	1.776
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber (squared)	0.917	0.307	0.052	3.153
Tenure in Legislature (years)	0	5.987	0	60
Legislative Professionalism (First Dimension)	-0.130	1.383	-1.952	7.667
Legislative Professionalism (Second Dimension)	0.143	0.642	-2.268	2.949
Government Ideology	46.940	17.161	17.512	73.619
Legislator Ideology	0.025	0.769	-3.498	3.324
Folded Ranney Index (4 yr avg.)	0.863	0.058	0.664	0.994
Number of Bills Cosponsored (logged)	6.534	0.873	3.091	7.985
Opposite Party Composition	0.444	0.102	0.040	0.960
Lagged Bill Cosponsorship (-1yr)	0.235	0.109	0	0.918

A2: Descriptive Statistics (categorical control variables)

Variable	**Median**	**% of Positive Cases (= 1)**
Open Committees	1	75.0
Open Standing Committees	1	60.0
Democrat	1	51.59
Majority Party	1	62.58
Term Limits in Effect	0	27.5
Prior Legislative Experience	0	43.51
Unified State Government	0	38.03

A3: Bipartisan Bill Cosponsorship, US State Legislators (2010-2016)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Transparency	-0.157	-0.782**	-0.252	-0.904**
	(0.365)	(0.325)	(0.371)	(0.330)
General Election Competition	-0.121	-0.022	-0.017	-0.031
	(0.088)	(0.078)	(0.095)	(0.080)
Primary Election Competition	0.461**	0.460**	0.204	0.118
	(0.199)	(0.178)	(0.272)	(0.241)
Transparency x General Election Competition	-0.019	0.023	-0.010	0.030
	(0.099)	(0.088)	(0.101)	(0.085)
Transparency x Primary Election Competition	-0.474*	-0.457**	-0.181	-0.079*
	(0.241)	(0.211)	(0.306)	(0.035)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber		0.164		0.154
		(0.363)		(0.353)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber (squared)		-0.265		-0.259
		(0.194)		(0.189)
Democrat		-0.034		-0.041
		(0.034)		(0.030)
Majority Party		-0.353***		-0.354***
		(0.032)		(0.031)
Term Limits in Effect		0.036		0.036
		(0.036)		(0.035)
Prior Legislative Experience		-0.047*		-0.041
		(0.027)		(0.026)
Tenure in Legislature (years)		0.006***		0.004**
		(0.002)		(0.002)
Legislative Professionalism (First Dimension)		0.006		0.022
		(0.012)		(0.013)
Legislative Professionalism (Second Dimension)		0.030		0.016
		(0.023)		(0.023)
Government Ideology		-0.001		-0.001
		(0.001)		(0.001)
Legislator Ideology		0.042**		0.039**
		(0.017)		(0.017)
Folded Ranney Index (4yr avg)		0.523*		0.477**
		(0.267)		(0.237)
Number of Bills Cosponsored (logged)		0.327***		0.336***
		(0.047)		(0.047)
Opposite Party Composition		2.330***		2.30***
		(0.101)		(0.098)
Unified Government		0.050		0.029
		(0.041)		(0.036)
Lagged Bill Cosponsorship (-1yr)		0.298***		0.264***
		(0.066)		(0.065)
Intercept	-2.782***	-3.776***	-2.462***	-3.644***
	(0.251)	(0.434)	(0.267)	(0.438)
N	9151	9151	9151	9151
F-statistic	43.61	57.54	45.46	71.35

Cell entries report the results from cross-section time-series generalized linear models with a logit link and the binomial family. The models include state-chamber and year fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by legislator. Transparency in models 1 and 2 is a dummy variable for all open legislative committee meetings. Transparency in models 3 and 4 is a dummy variable for open standing committee meetings only.
$* \ p < 0.10$ $** \ p < 0.05$ $*** \ p < 0.01$ for a two-tailed test.

A4: Bipartisan Bill Cosponsorship, US State Legislators (2010-2016)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Transparency	-0.041	-0.129**	-0.055	-0.149**
	(0.079)	(0.060)	(0.081)	(0.062)
General Election Competition	-0.005	-0.003	-0.004	-0.003
	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.012)
Primary Election Competition	0.073	0.073***	0.033	0.012
	(0.045)	(0.027)	(0.061)	(0.041)
Transparency x General Election Competition	0.001	0.001	-0.0005	0.002
	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.013)
Transparency x Primary Election Competition	-0.078	-0.068*	-0.031	-0.002*
	(0.053)	(0.035)	(0.066)	(0.001)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber		0.045		0.042
		(0.054)		(0.054)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber (squared)		-0.053*		-0.051*
		(0.029)		(0.029)
Democrat		-0.003		-0.004
		(0.006)		(0.005)
Majority Party		-0.070***		-0.069***
		(0.005)		(0.005)
Term Limits in Effect		0.004		0.004
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Prior Legislative Experience		-0.008*		-0.007
		(0.005)		(0.005)
Tenure in Legislature (years)		0.001***		0.001***
		(0.0003)		(0.0003)
Legislative Professionalism (First Dimension)		0.001		0.003
		(0.002)		(0.002)
Legislative Professionalism (Second Dimension)		0.003		0.001
		(0.002)		(0.004)
Government Ideology		-0.0001		-0.0001
		(0.0002)		(0.0002)
Legislator Ideology		0.042***		0.008***
		(0.003)		(0.003)
Folded Ranney Index (4yr avg)		0.078*		0.075*
		(0.043)		(0.043)
Number of Bills Cosponsored (logged)		0.035***		0.036
		(0.005)		(0.005)
Opposite Party Composition		0.403***		0.399***
		(0.018)		(0.017)
Unified Government		0.008		0.004
		(0.007)		(0.006)
Lagged Bill Cosponsorship (-1yr)		0.053***		0.047***
		(0.011)		(0.011)
Intercept	0.319***	-0.068	0.327***	-0.050
	(0.077)	(0.068)	(0.098)	(0.069)
N	9151	9151	9151	9151
Adjusted R^2	0.217	0.521	0.214	0.514

Cell entries report the results from cross-section time-series least square regressions. The models include state-chamber and year fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by legislator. The Electoral competition measures in each model account for general and special elections. Transparency in models 1 and 2 is a dummy variable for all open legislative committee meetings. Transparency in models 3 and 4 is a dummy variable for open standing committee meetings only. $* \ p < 0.10$ $** \ p < 0.05$ $*** \ p < 0.01$ for a two-tailed test.

A5: Bipartisan Bill Cosponsorship, US State Legislators (2010-2016)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Transparency	-0.048	-0.125*	-0.025	-0.211*
	(0.085)	(0.062)	(0.036)	(0.071)
General Election Competition	0.0002	-0.005	0.003	-0.061
	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.008)	(0.045)
Primary Election Competition	-0.014	0.077**	-0.027*	0.089**
	(0.021)	(0.030)	(0.014)	(0.043)
Transparency x General Election Competition	-0.014	-0.0003	-0.087	-0.0003
	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.095)	(0.016)
Transparency x Primary Election Competition	-0.0824*	-0.077**	-0.063*	-0.097**
	(0.042)	(0.036)	(0.020)	(0.040)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber		0.038		0.025
		(0.063)		(0.047)
Avg. Ideological Distance in Chamber (squared)		-0.051		-0.061
		(0.033)		(0.042)
Democrat		-0.001		-0.003
		(0.006)		(0.007)
Majority Party		-0.066***		-0.107***
		(0.006)		(0.004)
Term Limits in Effect		0.005		0.009
		(0.007)		(0.012)
Prior Legislative Experience		-0.009*		-0.015*
		(0.005)		(0.004)
Tenure in Legislature (years)		0.001***		0.007***
		(0.0003)		(0.0002)
Legislative Professionalism (First Dimension)		0.002		0.001
		(0.002)		(0.003)
Legislative Professionalism (Second Dimension)		0.004		0.003
		(0.004)		(0.002)
Government Ideology		-0.0001		-0.002
		(0.0002)		(0.004)
Legislator Ideology		0.007**		0.009**
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Folded Ranney Index (4yr avg)		0.084*		0.102
		(0.047)		(0.097)
Number of Bills Cosponsored (logged)		0.033***		0.058***
		(0.005)		(0.009)
Opposite Party Composition		0.419***		0.632***
		(0.019)		(0.021)
Unified Government		0.010		0.007
		(0.007)		(0.006)
Lagged Bill Cosponsorship (-1yr)		0.057***		0.064***
		(0.012)		(0.015)
Intercept	0.335	-0.020	0.483	-0.017
	(0.083)	(0.004)	(0.099)	(0.082)
N	7774	7774	7774	7774
Adjusted R^2	0.226	0.539	0.214	0.525

Cell entries report the results from cross-section time-series least square regressions. The models include state-chamber and year fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by legislator. Sample is limited to legislators who face contested elections. Transparency in models 1 and 2 is a dummy variable for all open legislative committee meetings. Transparency in models 3 and 4 is a dummy variable for open standing committee meetings only. $* \ p < 0.10$ $** \ p < 0.05$ $*** \ p < 0.01$ for a two-tailed test.