Senate Responsiveness in an Era of Inequality

Thomas J. Hayes

thaye001@ucr.edu

April 17, 2010*

To what extent do members of Congress respond unequally to people in different economic situations? While recent studies have found a responsiveness bias toward the wealthy (Gilens 2005; Bartels 2008), the extent of this bias remains unknown. Using data from the 2004 NAES, Census data, and multiple roll call votes, I examine Senate responsiveness across a range of issues for the 107th through 110th Congresses. Generally, I find strong support for unequal responsiveness, as my results suggest this phenomenon may have increased over time. My results are suggestive of broader factors at play in terms of political knowledge of constituents, the representation of different income groups, and the policies aimed at promoting or reducing inequality in the United States.

* Paper prepared for presentation for the 6th Annual Southern California Graduate Student Conference Democracy and its Development May 8, 2010. The author would like to thank Benjamin Bishin for his continued advisement and help on this project. The author also thanks Chris Haynes, Xavier Medina, Lauren Menor, Bryan Martin, and the students at the UCR research colloquium for the helpful comments.

Central to most standard theories of democracy is the idea that all citizens are to be treated equally. While liberty and popular sovereignty also constitute essential aspects of republican democracy, equality among citizens remains a chief concern for democratic theorists (e.g. Dahl 1971). With the growth in income and wealth inequality in America since World War II, scholars, policy makers, and advocates for disadvantaged persons are increasingly concerned that inequality among citizens could be a mounting threat, as disparities in economic inequality often contribute to unequal political outcomes (Task Force 2004). Researchers that have studied growing inequality as a threat to democracy have even labeled the recent era a "New Gilded Age" (Bartels 2008).

One way to evaluate how wealth inequality affects American democracy is to examine the degree to which the government responds equally (or unequally) to citizens of different economic situations. The concept of representation has become central to contemporary democratic theory. While an essentially modern concept, representation has come to mean *popular* representation and is now linked with self-government (Pitkin 1967). In the political science literature on representation there has been a considerable focus on responsiveness-the level of correspondence between constituency preferences and a legislator's behavior (e.g. Miller and Stokes 1963; Achen 1978). Despite a vast amount of research in this area, relatively little has been done to compare the responsiveness of legislators across social or economic groups. The lack of focus on inequality in responsiveness is a surprise given the importance of equality as a value fundamental to democratic governance and a pre-requisite to the achievement of other democratic values (e.g. Rawls 1971).

Perhaps not surprisingly, the few studies that have looked at inequality in representation find a bias in the preference/policy link between representatives and their constituents; a bias favoring the wealthy (Gilens 2005; Bartels 2008). Despite these findings, the exact causes of this unequal representation are difficult to pin down. For the most part the field largely relies on anecdotal

evidence to support these claims. This is troubling, considering the importance of the topic as well as all the possible ways in which economics can affect political outcomes (or vice versa).

This paper extends the work of scholars investigating the causes and consequences of unequal representation. Using data from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES), I examine the responsiveness of Senators to different economic groups across a range of issues. While I find mixed results for the extent of unequal responsiveness, my findings provide some extension of previous work as well as contribute to knowledge in this area. This paper proceeds as follows. First, I outline the literature on unequal responsiveness. Next, I detail the methods, tests and expectations I have about congressional responsiveness toward different income groups. Finally, I discuss my results and the conclusions that can be drawn from my research as well as directions for future research.

Congressional Responsiveness

The most common way in which representation has been studied is dyadically, examining the relationship between an individual member of Congress and his or her constituency. While this may seem like a relatively straightforward manner in which to evaluate the degree to which legislators respond to constituents, research on dyadic representation is marked by inconsistent results. A significant number of studies find legislators to be responsive to constituent preferences (e.g. Mayhew 1974; Erikson 1978; Fenno 1978; Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson 1996). However, numerous studies find contradictory results arguing legislators are not especially responsive (Bernstein and Anthony 1974; Bernstein 1989; Fiorina 1974; Page et al. 1984; Kau and Rubin 1993; Lindsay 1990; Wilkerson 1990; Cohen and Noll 1991; Dennis, Medoff and Gagnier 1998, Dennis 1998). Still other studies find mixed results (e.g. Miller and Stokes 1963; Achen 1978; Elling 1982; Hutchings 1998; Theriault 2005). The mix of findings presents problems for those studying

representation and those making the argument that legislators respond to constituent concerns, largely because evidence varies as to the extent to which responsiveness occurs. Moreover, an equally important focus for the study of representation should be to examine the extent to which legislators respond to various groups that comprise their constituencies in an equal manner, especially if we take this to be one of the primary aims of democratic governance (e.g. Dahl 1971).

While the representation literature often finds mixed results as to whether legislators respond to the majority of their constituency, a growing perspective examines legislator responsiveness to smaller groups within a constituency. This perspective argues that rather than simply responding to the majority preferred view of an entire district, MCs respond to smaller groups or subconstituencies (Claussen 1973; Fenno 1978; Bishin 2000, Clinton 2006, Bishin 2009). This perspective offers a useful way to examine the extent of legislator responsiveness, especially if we want to know how well the government responds to groups equally (or unequally). Subconstituency politics theory (Bishin 2009) could offer an explanation for biased responsiveness toward upper-income constituents. This theory predicts candidates will take different positions on issues based on the assemblage of groups in a district (or state). According to this theory, when only one group cares intensely about an issue in a district or state, both candidates advocate similar positions. However, when multiple groups in a district have conflicting positions, candidates take divergent views, often closest to their traditional partisan or ideological positions. In the case of responsiveness toward income groups, it might be the case that the wealthy care intensely about certain issues (e.g. tax cuts), but a group opposing such positions does not speak with the same intensity, which leads most candidates to represent the former position rather than offer an alternative.

In terms of how well the government responds equally to citizen concerns, recent studies raise significant questions as to whether this key characteristic of democracy is upheld in practice. Gilens (2005) is one of the few who examines governmental responsiveness to various income

groups and investigates which group preferences are most influential in shaping policy decisions. The author examines how different income groups viewed a proposed policy change (based on surveys) and then whether such a change occurred (based on governmental action). Gilens finds that when high and low income groups disagree on policy, the poor are consistently ignored, yet the preferences of high income Americans receive constant attention.

Others have examined governmental responsiveness to those in different income groups as well. Schumaker and Getter (1977) discover a bias toward spending preferences of upper class whites in a survey of cities, while Berry, Portney, and Thomson (1993) do not find evidence of biased representation in terms of race or economic status for American cities. Hill and Leighley (1992) find a class bias toward spending preferences of upper class citizens in terms of state welfare spending.

The most expansive study along these lines comes from Larry Bartels (2008), whose book tests the linkage between participation and biases in representation. Using the Senate Election Study surveys from three separate years, Bartels finds that Senators, while quite responsive to middle and high-income groups, are largely unresponsive to low-income groups. Bartels also finds partisan differences in representation towards the various income groups, as Republicans are about twice as responsive as Democrats to the views of high-income constituents.[1] However, the author also finds that for either party, there is no evidence of responsiveness to the views of constituents in the bottom income group.

[1] Others have found partisan differences in economic policies and income distributions as well (e.g. Hibbs 1977; Hibbs and Dennis 1988)

Why Uneven Responsiveness?

While recent research finds a responsiveness bias toward upper-income constituents (Gilens 2005; Bartels 2008), a difficulty persists in explaining the exact causes of this bias. One of the most common explanations for why the poor are not well represented in American politics is due to the consistent finding that those in the lower classes often participate in politics at much lower rates than do middle and upper income citizens. In fact, there is much evidence that demonstrates disparities in participation among rich and poor citizens (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). More wealthy citizens generally have a higher propensity to vote, contact public officials, volunteer for campaigns, write letters, attend protests and donate money to candidates (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Moreover, Griffin and Newman (2005) find that voters are better represented in the political system than nonvoters. Similarly, studies show that there are gaps in the political knowledge and interest of rich and poor Americans (Converse 1990; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Because of this, there seem to be many participatory reasons why wealthier citizens could be better represented than the poor.

Despite a vast array of research that demonstrates participatory and knowledge differences between rich and poor citizens, evidence of these differences contributing to differential responsiveness remains largely untested. However, in one study that does examine participatory factors' influence on representation; Bartels (2008) finds differences in voting, contact and knowledge between rich and poor to be uncorrelated with the responsiveness toward the wealthy for Senators. Despite this finding, more research needs to be conducted along these lines to uncover the extent to which participatory differences lead to differences in representation in the government. More research needs to be done especially in the area of political donations, as this factor is the often cited, yet often untested reason for differential responsiveness by governmental

representatives toward higher income Americans, as the wealthy are much more likely to contribute to political campaigns than the poor (e.g. Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995).[2]

Perhaps one reason for a lack of a finding that participatory disparities among income groups does not contribute to biased responsiveness is due to the differences in the characteristics of voters each major party courts. Research suggests that partisan differences in the control over the economy lead to vastly different outcomes for different groups. Cleary, economic philosophies and priorities of Democratic and Republican administrations often diverge. This can often be seen in party platforms and different political ideologies set forth by the two parties (Tufte 1978). As the class composition of the major parties' supporting coalitions differ in the United States (as in many other nations), differences in macroeconomic policies often follow as well (e.g. Hibbs 1987). Moreover, Hibbs and Dennis (1988) present evidence that differences in distributional goals of the major parties affect economic distributions of Americans through policy-induced variations in macroeconomic policy. This finding is supported by Bartels' (2008) recent work that demonstrates individual income growth differs dramatically depending on the party that controls the presidency. Under Republican administrations, Bartels finds richer families' incomes to increase at a much higher rate than poor families, while the opposite is true under Democratic administrations.

In a related manner, popular accounts of recent voting behavior suggest that the Republican Party has convinced the poor to vote contrary to their self interest by casting votes for conservative candidates based on social issues (e.g. Frank 2004). However, empirical evidence in the political science literature calls this assertion into question (Stonecash 2000; Bartels 2008; Gelman et al. 2008). Bartels (2008) for example, finds no evidence that contemporary American politics is driven

[2] This is due in large part to the lack of data available in the surveys used by Gilens (2005) and Bartels (2008), however another explanation that this remains untested is due to the endogenous nature of the relationship between donations and responsiveness (for example see Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, Snyder 2003).

primarily by cultural issues, that working class whites have not abandoned the Democratic Party or become more conservative, and that religious voters are not distracted from economic issues.

Another factor that could contribute to biased responsiveness toward more wealthy citizens is the role of political competition. While early research on the role of competition argued that legislators emerging from close races were more likely to be responsive to their constituents than those from marginal districts (MacRae 1952; Froman 1963; Fiorina 1973), the marginality hypothesis received much less support in research that followed (e.g. Mayhew 1974; Groseclose 2001; Gulati 2004). However, disagreement still persists on the effect that competition has on responsiveness (see Griffin 2006 for a review). It might be the case that in competitive elections, wealthy citizens get represented better as their support is needed for donations and participation.

A final reason why biased responsiveness could exist in the American representational system could be the personal preferences and characteristics of legislators themselves. Traditional research in representation often assumes that members of Congress look outward for cues (e.g. Kingdon 1977) such as party, constituency, other members, or interest groups, however Burden (2007) finds members' own preferences have a substantial impact on their voting behavior for issues such as tobacco legislation and school vouchers. It might be the case that members of Congress are more likely to be responsive to groups for which they share similar social and economic characteristics, which could explain a bias toward upper-income constituents as most members of Congress have much higher degrees of education and wealth than the average constituent.

This literature review provides some reasons to believe the poor might not be represented as well as other groups. In the coming sections, I discuss the expectations and data I use to examine responsiveness of members of Congress toward different income groups.

Expectations

Primarily, this study is an extension of the work of Larry Bartels (2008) in which the author investigates the circumstances and causes of unequal responsiveness in the Senate. The author examined responsiveness of Senators in the 101st, 102nd and 103rd Congresses. While I primarily follow Bartels' methods, I choose different issues to examine and a different time period, largely because it is important to examine the extent to which unequal responsiveness might have changed as well as to examine additional issues that bear directly on inequality. Moreover, researchers have learned that wealth inequality has increased substantially since the time of Bartels' analysis, which is even more reason to examine the extent to which this inequality is affecting governmental responsiveness (Piketty and Saez 2003).

The degree to which parties can control the agenda can affect issues considered in Congress (Cox and McCubbins 2005). While the Congresses studied by Bartels do cover a period of divided government (101st and 102nd) and unified control (103rd), the Senate was controlled by the Democratic Party throughout. The period for which I examine unequal responsiveness (107th through 110th) is during a time in which the Republican Party controlled the Senate and had unified control of the government for almost the entire period for the 107th, 108th, and 109th Congresses.[3] By including the 110th Congress, I am able to examine a period for which the Democratic Party controlled the Senate. This is advantageous because examining periods of different partisan control of the institution allows a better understanding of the many factors at play in policymaking, especially the extent to which partisan control of the legislature can affect agenda setting.

While I explain in more detail my expectations for each test later in the paper, I develop two basic expectations for this analysis of Senator responsiveness to different income groups. My main

[3] Senator Jim Jeffords (D-VT) switched to an Independent, but caucused with the Democrats in June of 2001. The Republicans then re-took control of the Senate after the 2002 midterm elections.

expectation for each case selected is that, all things being equal, Senators will be more likely to respond to the preferences of upper-income constituents. This expectation largely stems from previous findings (Bartels 2008), as well as from the participation literature, which clearly finds the wealthy to have vastly higher rates of participation in politics in terms of most measures of political involvement (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995).

My second expectation is that partisan differences will affect unequal responsiveness. In response to previous findings (Tufte 1978; Hibbs 1987; Hibbs and Dennis 1988; Bartels 2008) I anticipate Democrats will be more responsive than Republicans to the preferences of lower-income groups. Following Greenberg (2004) and Bartels (2008) I anticipate Democrats will be more responsive to disadvantaged groups, given their historical support. While these are just broad expectations, I now explain how I will test these expectations.

Data

The data used in this paper have a number of advantages over other sources. Each of the measures of constituency opinion are taken from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES). One major advantage is survey questions from the 2004 NAES match the roll call votes I examine, which allows for a more direct comparison of senator responsiveness to constituent preferences.[4] For most issues, measures of constituency opinion needed to assess the influence of opinion on responsiveness across districts and states do not exist. When surveys do ask citizens for their preferences on specific legislation, there are seldom enough respondents to obtain accurate

[4] The 2004 ANES significantly underrepresented many groups of citizens such as young people, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with little formal education. This is especially problematic as the underrepresentation of these opinions on matters relating to economic inequality could lead to biased estimates. In order to account for this, as well as to better estimate state opinion, I post-stratified the sample within each state on the basis of education, sex, race, and age.

measures of constituency opinion. However, the 2004 NAES helps overcome this problem with over 90,000 respondents interviewed during the course of the election campaign.[5] Moreover, this survey allows an analysis of the nature of the driving forces behind unequal responsiveness, as the survey includes questions about political knowledge and participation. In addition to data from the 2004 NAES, I employ data from the Census, *The Almanac of American Politics* and *Congressional Quarterly*. Detailed descriptions of each variable used in the analysis are presented in Appendix A.

For this paper, I use issues that reached the floor of the Senate around the time of the 2004 Annenberg survey during the 109th Congress (2005-2006). Moreover, I estimate Senator responsiveness using NOMINATE scores for the 107th through 110th Congress. These Congresses are chosen not only due to their proximity to the Annenberg survey, but also because they occur in an era of increasing inequality. Moreover, these Congresses occur about ten years after the study of Bartels' (2008) analysis, which might illustrate the extent to which responsiveness to different income groups has changed. The roll call votes I selected for this paper have a number of advantages for the study of congressional responsiveness toward different income groups.[6] Descriptions of each of the chosen roll call votes are presented in Table 1.

<<<<Table 1>>>>

Among the many advantages of these votes, two of the most salient are the fact that each of these contribute to inequality and cover different issues for which income groups (the rich and poor specifically) contain different policy preferences on economic issues. While more information on these issues as well as public opinion about them is presented later in the paper, it should be noted

[5] Data and Documentation are available at http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/

[6] I wanted to select votes that were seen as important and could be expected to contribute to inequality. Therefore, I selected "key votes" featured in *Congressional Quarterly* for each Congress under consideration. I tried to avoid votes for which party support was unanimous and roll calls that contained lopsided votes. Moreover, I tried to select a number of different types of votes that covered economic issues for which I expected the rich and poor to have different preferences (see Gilens 2005).

that there is considerable differences in state level opinion by income-group. This allows for an important test of unequal responsiveness, as differences in opinion between economic groups within a state presents a challenge for legislators in terms of who they should respond to.

For each analysis I separated respondents in the Annenberg Survey into three income groups: a low-income group with household income below $35,000, a middle-income group with income between $35,000 and $75,000, and a high-income group with incomes above $75,000.[7] These groups constitute 33%, 37% and 29% respectively.[8] Next, I estimated the average opinion of survey respondents within each state (by income group).[9] I estimated constituent opinion using two different methods. First, I estimated opinion using a proxy measure, using respondent ideology on a traditional liberal/conservative scale. Second, for the specific case studies I choose more specific estimates of opinion using policy relevant questions from the 2004 NAES. More details on the methods employed to test my expectations is developed throughout the paper.

Testing Unequal Responsiveness

A Test of Bartels

To begin, I examine responsiveness as a function of legislator and state ideology, much like the method of Bartels (2008). Table 3 shows responsiveness of Senators of the 107th through 110th

[7] I tried to both create groups that were relatively even in number of respondents as well as matching a concept of class that was appropriate for this study. My classification differs somewhat from the previous literature in this regard (Bartels 2008). Part of this difference is due to a different coding of income in the data set I employ as well as the fact that I wanted to have relatively equal numbers of respondents in each grouping. I also tried other groupings of respondents into different income groups. The results of the analysis were largely similar as those reported in this paper.

[8] This breakdown by income group was chosen both for theoretical relevance and to create relatively equal groupings of respondents. While my groupings differ somewhat from Bartels' (2008) analysis, the results are relatively similar across numerous specifications and groupings.

[9] The notation derives from Bartels' (2008) analysis, which takes the following form:
$Y_k = \sum_i \in_k [(\alpha + \beta W_i) X_i]/N_k + \gamma Z_k + \in k$ Where Y_k is an observed roll call vote cast by senator k, N_k is the number of survey respondents from senator k's state, X_i is the opinion of a specific survey respondent i, $(\alpha+\beta W_i)$ is the weight attached to a respondent's opinion, and $\in k$ is a stochastic term representing other influences on a senator k's behavior, and α, β, γ are constant parameters to be estimated.

Congresses toward constituent ideology (separated by income group). Each column displays a standard OLS regression analysis (for each separate Congress) where the dependent variable is *Legislator Ideology* measured using first dimension DW-NOMATE scores. NOMINATE scores are scaled from a range of -1 for the most liberal members to +1 for the most conservative. The independent variables reflect *Constituency Liberalism* measured using data from the 2004 NAES, which asked respondents to place themselves on a traditional ideological scale.[10] Each regression also included a control variable for whether a Senator is a member of the *Republican* Party.

<<Table 2>>

The results of Table 2 are quite striking when examining unequal responsiveness. As expected, the variable *Republican* retains a positive and statistically significant coefficient in all four Congresses, indicating Senators' voting patterns are strongly related to their party affiliations. However, most strikingly, this table demonstrates that Senators are consistently responsive to upper-income constituents as the *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* variable is both positive and statistically significance for all Congresses except the 107th (although significant at the P<.15 level). Moreover, neither independent variable measuring *Low* or *Middle-Income Constituency Opinion* reaches statistical significance for any Congress, demonstrating that I am unable to detect responsiveness to these income groups. Additionally, the coefficient for *Middle-Income Constituency Opinion* is negative in three out of the four Congresses under examination. *Low-Income Constituency Opinion* is negative in two of the three Congresses.[11] When looking across Congresses by income group, it is clear from the table that the coefficient for *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* is much larger than those for either *Low* or

[10] I recoded this variable to mirror the NOMINATE measure, where higher values reflect more conservative respondents (or members) and lower scores reflect more liberal responses. All question wording can be found in appendix B.

[11] While many of the estimated coefficients of Low and Middle Income Constituency Opinion are negative, the estimated impact is too small in both absolute terms and in comparison to the standard error. This means that I am unable to rule out zero as a plausible value and can therefore not say with certainty that Senators are negatively responsive, only that I am unable to detect responsiveness by Senators to these groups.

Middle-Income Constituency Opinion, reflecting the idea that this higher income opinion has a greater influence on Senator voting behavior.

The nature of unequal responsiveness is seen in the substantive results of Table 2 as well. For example, looking at the 108th Congress, the estimated impact of *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* is .244, which implies enough responsiveness to shift a senator's ideological position by .244 (on the -1 to +1 roll call scale) as his upper-income constituents moved from the liberal end to the conservative end of the ideological spectrum. In relative terms this is actually quite striking, as the *Republican* variable in the same model would cause a shift of .759 of a senator's ideological position. In other words, *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* has about a third the impact on shifting a senator's ideological position as does a senator's party affiliation. Given the rise in partisan voting in recent years as well as the overall impact that party is said to play in Congress, this finding is substantial. Moreover, the *Upper-Income Constituency* variable contains larger coefficients in the 109th and 110th Congresses, meaning that opinion from this group had an even more substantial impact on a Senator's responsiveness. The substantive impacts of the findings in Table 2 are displayed in Figure 1.

<<Figure 1>>>

Figure 1 shows the effect of differential responsiveness across Congresses, as the regression estimate is detailed for each income group as a bar on the graph. Clearly, the responsiveness estimate of *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* is much larger than either *Low* or *Middle-Income Constituency Opinion* in every Congress, but especially when examining the 108th, 109th, and 110th Congresses. Furthermore, the regression estimate for *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* increases with each additional Congress, often as the estimates for *Low* or *Middle-Income Constituency Opinion* decrease over time.

The results from Table 2 add support to my initial expectation that Senators are more likely to respond to the preferences of *Upper-Income Constituents*. I am unable to detect any responsiveness by Senators to either *Low* or *Middle Income Constituents* across multiple Congresses. However, I am able to detect responsiveness to *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion* across multiple Congresses, which does support my initial expectation of biased responsiveness toward more wealthy constituents.

Partisan Differences in Responsiveness

While I do find biased responsiveness in three of the four Congresses I examine, it is an open question whether members of the two major political parties are more responsive to certain economic groups than others. I test this possibility by using similar models as the previous section, for which I used a standard OLS regression analysis (for each separate Congress) where the dependent variable is *Legislator Ideology* measured using first dimension DW-NOMATE scores and the independent variables reflect *Constituency Liberalism* (separated by income group) measured using data from the 2004 NAES, which asked respondents to place themselves on a traditional ideological scale. However, in order to test partisan differences in responsiveness, I create an interaction by multiplying the *Republican* variable (0-Democrat, 1-Republican) by income group opinion.[12] This allows me to examine the independent effect that party has on responsiveness toward each income group. The results to the interactive models for each Congress are shown in Table 3.

<<<Table 3>>>

The key variables of interest are the interaction terms for each income group at the bottom of each column. No partisan effects are detected in the 107th Congress, but this is hardly surprising given the fact that I did not find evidence for responsiveness to any income group in the previous

[12] I also conducted similar tests of partisan differences in responsiveness to those conducted by Bartels (2008), who runs separate regressions for members of each party by Congress. These results can be found in Appendix D.

table. However, in the 108th, 109th, and 110th Congresses, I find *Republican* senators to be significantly more responsive than Democrats to *Middle-Income Constituency Opinion*. While no other partisan effects are detected as being significantly different from each other for either *Low* or *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion*, the finding that Republicans are more responsive to middle class constituents is interesting. This finding goes against my initial expectation that Democrats would be more responsive to lower-income groups and that Republicans would be more responsive to upper-income groups. Instead, I am unable to detect if either party is any more responsive to upper or lower-income constituents.

Overall, my findings differ from Bartels (2008), who finds responsiveness of Senators to *both* upper and middle income constituents. I find evidence of responsiveness to the most wealthy, which is a major difference, one that is in many ways more troubling. The evidence from my analysis also suggests an increase in the magnitude of responsiveness to the wealthy over time. This change in responsiveness could reflect the growing inequality in America (Bartels 2008), increasing polarization in Congress, or change in partisan control of the institution (e.g. McCarthy, Poole, Rosenthal 2006).

A broad analysis is useful in many ways, but a more in-depth analysis is needed to truly examine the way in which unequal responsiveness occurs. The roll calls examined in Table 2 are summary measures of votes that reached the floor on a large swatch of issues during the 107th through 110th Congresses. In order to test the robustness of these findings it is important to examine key votes that directly impact inequality. In order to conduct a more in-depth analysis I now examine two different roll call votes and Senator responsiveness. I examine a vote on the extension of the Bush tax cuts as well as a vote on free trade, two issues which bear directly on the issue of wealth inequality. I begin with an analysis of the Bush tax cuts.

The Bush Tax Cut Extension

A prime example of recent governmental action contributing to wealth inequality in America is change in tax policy. Two of the largest reductions in federal income taxes occurred in 2001 and 2003, as Congress passed key pieces of President George W. Bush's agenda to reduce taxes, stemming from when he ran for president in 2000. While the President set the agenda on this issue, the Republican Party followed in lock step, as not a single Republican voted against the tax cuts during the first vote in 2001 and only a handful voted against the 2003 cut. The Democrats on the other hand, largely opposed both the first round of tax cuts in 2001 as well as those in 2003.[13]

Overall, these cuts disproportionately benefited the wealthiest taxpayers, as the largest cuts were made to the top tax rate and reductions were made on dividends and capital gains, inheritance taxes, and corporate taxes—all cuts that favored wealthy Americans (Bartels 2008). The disproportionate nature of the tax cuts were widely recognized not just in the media and by Democrats, but also by many in the Republican Party. The 2001 bill was reduced in the Senate Finance committee, as the original proposal put forth by the administration did not receive enough in-party support for successful passage (Nitschke 2001a). Moreover, once the bill reached the floor of the Senate, multiple amendments were offered by members of both parties to trim the tax cuts (Nitschke 2001b). Both bills eventually passed and were signed into law, but a key aspect that allowed their passage was the majority party's usage of the budget reconciliation process.[14] This process allowed for passage of the tax cuts with a simple majority vote, thus eliminating many obstacles normally put in the way of controversial bills.

[13] Democratic support waned in 2003, as only three Democratic Senators supported the extension, while twelve supported the first Bush tax cuts in 2001.

[14] This process is normally reserved as to make budget balancing easier, however the tactic came to be used toward tax cutting rather than deficit cutting. These bills cannot be filibustered and have debate limited to 20 hours. Because the Republicans did not have a veto-proof majority, this was key in passing the 2001 cut.

Despite the disproportionate nature of the tax cut extension, public opinion was generally in favor of their passage. Table 4 shows state opinion by income group on the Bush Tax Cut Extension of 2003. The 2004 NAES asked a series of questions about the Bush Tax Cuts, including whether respondents favored or opposed such tax cuts be made permanent (detailed question wording available in Appendix B). As can be seen from Table 4, each income group had relatively similar preferences in favor of extending and making permanent the Bush Tax Cuts.

<<Table 4>>>

While the group of low-income constituents have the lowest support (59 percent in favor), it is still similar to middle-income constituents (64 percent) and upper-income constituents (62 percent). In other words, each group of constituents had majority support overall for the measure. Moreover, even though the minimum average opinion of low-income constituents is much lower than other income groups, the standard deviation from the mean for this group remains similar to others. Nevertheless, considerable variation of opinion remains when examining this issue by state.

Despite relative similarity in opinion by income group on this issue, the case of the vote to extend the Bush tax cuts in 2006 still presents an interesting way to view how Congress deals with a policy that can have dramatically unequal outcomes for different groups of people. By only focusing on issues for which the rich and poor disagree (e.g. Gilens 2005), researchers limit a number of issues that may disproportionately and negatively affect some groups over others. Moreover, the unequal nature of the purpose of the tax cuts represents an important way in which we can view not only how individual members of Congress behave when confronted with such policy, but also how each party confronts the issue as well. Therefore, the roll call vote in 2006 presents a case for which legislator behavior can be scrutinized, especially in terms of their behavior relating to income inequality. This allows the advantage of examining which groups of constituents legislators were responsive to during this vote and to what extent differential responsiveness occurred.

While detailed analyses of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts have been considered elsewhere (e.g. Bartels 2008; Lupia et al. 2006), my aim here is to examine the 2006 vote to extend the Bush tax cuts, which occurred during the 109th Congress. The vote on the tax cut extension was needed because the administration relied on budget reconciliation as a way to pass earlier cuts. This procedure required sunset provisions to be included in the bills, thus leading to a frequent need to renew the cuts. While the administration portrayed any disagreement of extension of the earlier tax cuts as raising taxes, debate about extending the cuts was substantial in the Senate. While this debate was largely along party lines, members of the Republican Party even objected to the disproportionate nature of extending the tax cuts. For example, Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Main) argued, "the preponderance of these revenues will go to upper-income people, people who make a million dollars or more" (Washington Post 2006).

Supporters of the extension argued the tax cuts would encourage economic growth, which in turn would reduce the deficit as businesses would hire more workers, expand their businesses, and spend in the economy. Moreover, the administration argued that previously passed tax cuts were responsible for the rebound in the economy after the recession of 2001 as Treasury Secretary John Snow proclaimed, "rarely has a piece of public policy been so effective, with the effects so evident and immediate." The proposed legislation to extend the tax cut kept the net cuts over a five-year period below $70 billion, largely due to Senate budget rules under the reconciliation process (Washington Post 2006). Despite numerous attempts to derail the bill with a flurry of amendments, the extension was agreed to on a vote of 54-44, with two Senators not voting.

In order to analyze Senator behavior on this issue, I employ a probit model, with the *roll call vote* (coded 0 nay, 1 yea) on the Bush Tax Cut Extension as the dependent variable. The independent variables are *Constituency Opinion,* which is separated by income group and measured by constituent opinion (coded as 0 no support, 1 support) on the Bush Tax Cut asked in the 2004

NAES. An additional independent variable controls for a senator's membership in the *Republican* Party (coded 1 if Republican, 0 if Democrat). *Table* 5 shows the probit results of Senator responsiveness toward each income group level for the roll call vote.

<<<<<Table 5>>>>

The results of Table 5 show that *Republican* Senators were significantly more likely to vote for the Tax Cut Extension, as this variable is both positive and statistically significant. While this is not a surprising finding given the partisan nature of the vote, a surprise appears when examining *Constituency Opinion.* I am unable to detect a responsiveness bias toward any income group in 2003, as no constituency opinion variable attains statistical significance. When taken in conjunction with Table 4, which displayed state opinion by income group, these results are perhaps not that surprising given the relative similarity in state opinion. However, a puzzle remains: why would low-income constituents favor a policy that provided disproportionate benefits for those with higher incomes? It could be argued that this policy was sold by the Bush administration as benefiting the average person. In fact, the President made repeated claims that the average family would receive $1,089.[15] However, most families received far less, as the largest tax cuts to the wealthiest taxpayers inflated the average dollar amount. In fact, the Tax Policy Center estimated the median cut received in 2003 to be around $473 (Tax Policy Center 2003, 2004). Perhaps low-income constituents *thought* they would receive far more monetary returns, especially given the publicity by the administration and Republican Party. However, as seen in Table 6 and Table 7, this appears not to be the case.

<<Table 6>>

<<Table 7>>

[15] The White House later corrected this number to $1,586 (Bush 2004).

Table 6 shows opinion (separated by income group) reflecting respondents answers to a question which asks respondents to identify which income group had benefited from the Bush tax cuts. Low-income respondents appear to be only somewhat perceptive in identifying which group would most likely benefit from the Bush tax cuts. In most cases, lower-income respondents responded with slightly higher percentages in terms of more wealthy income levels benefiting, while at the same time identifying that those with lower income were less likely to benefit. Alternatively, middle and upper-income constituents were more likely than lower-income respondents to view those with less income as being the primary beneficiary of the Bush tax cuts. However, the differences between low-income and upper-income groups is not particularly large. In fact, the largest difference in responses comes for those who chose those making between $100,000 and $300,000. The difference for this category is only seven percentage points, hardly substantial difference in perspective. The largest misperception about this policy seems to come from those with higher incomes, as the wealthy are more likely to view the tax cuts as benefiting lower-income people.

Turning to Table 7, which shows respondent differences by income group for the question of whether they had personally benefited from the Bush tax cuts, a somewhat different picture emerges. Lower-income respondents felt much less personal benefit from the Tax Cuts than did either middle or upper-income respondents. In fact, almost three quarters of low-income respondents chose the option of not benefiting much or not benefiting at all. However, if we examine middle or upper-income opinion on this question, we see that those with more income were much more likely to indicate they had benefited from this policy. Nonetheless, a majority in each income group indicated they did not benefit much or did not benefit at all from the Bush tax cuts. Even though it appears that low-income respondents were more likely to identify with the options that they had not benefited or not benefited much from the tax cuts, this question does not

tell us much about what this group knew about the nature of the cuts or why they supported it at similar levels as those with more income.

Part of the answer to the question of why low-income people would support such a policy seems to be explained by differences in political knowledge, which is detailed in Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10. Examining Table 8, which shows the average political knowledge for each income group, it is clear that large differences exist between groups. Respondent political knowledge is measured using survey data from the 2004 NAES, which asked a series of five basic political knowledge questions. Therefore, Table 8 shows the mean number of correct answers to these knowledge questions, with the average low-income respondent answering 2.22 questions correctly out of 5 total. Middle and upper-income respondents were more likely to answer these questions correctly, as the mean for this group is 2.97 and 3.5 respectively.

<<Table 9>>

As Table 9 portrays, low-income respondents were much less likely to know the name of either of their Senators. These results are not surprising, given the previous research on political knowledge differences between income groups (Converse 1990; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). However, these results do suggest that political knowledge could play a key factor in explaining why those with lower incomes might be supportive of the Bush tax cuts. The above tables suggest self-interest might not be a predictive factor in support for the tax cuts, as lower-income respondents were still supportive of this measure even though an overwhelming majority did not personally benefit. Lower-income respondents seem to be aware they would not personally benefit from the tax cuts and that wealthier people would benefit.

The 2004 NAES allows for further testing of this hypothesis, as the survey was conducted during the election season, a time in which the information environment about the campaign and tax cuts was at an all time high. Table 10 shows the degree to which respondents could successfully

identify which presidential candidate favored making the tax cuts permanent. Clear differences in knowledge emerge from this table, as only about half of low-income respondents could correctly identify which candidate favored making the tax cuts permanent. However more than two-thirds of middle-income and over three-fourths of upper-income respondents could give a correct answer when surveyed. These differences are substantial and demonstrate the way in which deeper questions of knowledge are affected by class differences.

<<Table 10>>

While many of these tables are basic analyses of opinion and knowledge on the Bush tax cuts, they do present an interesting picture about the nature of responsiveness in an era of inequality. Moreover, the results of the roll call votes for the extension of the Bush tax cuts do not provide evidence for unequal responsiveness in this case. While I find no support for the expectation of unequal responsiveness on this issue, it presents an interesting puzzle that is left only partly explained by examining political knowledge. Clearly gaps in political knowledge and information contributed to an inability of low-income voters recognizing or being able to oppose policy contrary to their interest. I now turn to another issue which affects wealth inequality in America, the issue of free trade.

The Central American Free Trade Agreement

The debate surrounding the passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) was one of the more controversial trade bills in a number of years. While Congress passed multiple trade agreements before CAFTA (e.g. the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA), the expansion of trade to Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic developed into a contentious political fight as members of both parties initially objected for a number of reasons, despite this trade bill being much smaller than others

from previous years (such as NAFTA) or those still being negotiated (such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas or FTAA).

Many Democrats objected based on human rights grounds as well as protection of domestic labor interests, as they pushed for greater rights for workers, more attention devoted to environmental issues associated with the trade bill, and protection of domestic labor union interests. On the other side of the aisle, many Republicans objected due to district characteristics, as many Southern members with textile mills in their districts or states did not want U.S. industries to suffer (Blustein and Allen 2005). Despite some Republican objections, signals from the Bush administration were clearly in favor of the bill, as many viewed a defeat in Congress would hamper future and ongoing trade agreements put forth by the administration. The bill passed the Senate in the summer of 2005 by a vote of 54 to 45 (Blustein 2005). Table 11 displays the differences in opinion on this issue by income group. Like opinion on the Bush tax cuts, the mean opinion of each income group is strikingly similar. Despite the similarity in opinion, there is considerable variation by state.

<<Table 11>>

As with previous bills, I am able to examine Senatorial responsiveness to the opinion of constituents of various income groups, while controlling for a number of factors. Table 12 shows a probit analysis of the roll call vote (dependent variable) in the 109th Congress for the adoption of the measure to create a free trade pact with six Central American countries. The independent variables in the analysis are *Constituency Opinion* separated by income group. *Constituency Opinion* is measured using survey data from the 2004 NAES, which asked respondents whether they favored or opposed the federal government negotiating more free trade agreements like NAFTA. An independent variable measuring senator affiliation with the *Republican* Party is also included in the probit model.

<<Table 12>>

The results of this analysis are strikingly different from those of the Bush tax extension, as differential responsiveness occurs.[16] Senators are responsive to *Upper-Income Constituency Opinion*, as this variable is both positive and statistically significant. Senators of this Congress are negatively responsive to *Middle- Income Constituency Opinion*, as it appears that Senators acted contrary to the wishes of the average middle income constituency opinion. I am unable to detect responsiveness to *Low-Income Constituency Opinion*, as this coefficient does not produce statistically significant results. The variable *Republican* is statistically significant across models, as members of the GOP were more likely to vote for the bill than Democrats.[17]

These results are more similar to previous findings of unequal responsiveness (Bartels 2008) as upper-income voices tend to receive the most responsiveness from senators, while the desires of middle and low-income groups were either ignored or senators did the complete opposite of their wishes. This case is illustrative of the previous analysis which examined a large number of votes through the use of NOMINATE scores. Senators appear more responsive to more wealthy individuals in their state, reflecting the idea that unequal representation is a frequent occurrence in the modern day Senate.

Discussion

My results present strong findings for unequal responsiveness. For multiple issues, and across a number of recent Congresses, the results differ from previous findings regarding biased responsiveness, most specifically the findings of Larry Bartels (2008), who found responsiveness to middle and upper-income groups. My analysis of examining Senator behavior on a large number of

[16] I also run these tests using respondent ideology as a proxy for opinion. These results can be found in Appendix C.

[17] I ran this model with interactions for partisan differences in responsiveness to different income groups. The results did not produce significant coefficients, meaning I could not detect either party to be more responsive to any income group.

votes shows evidence of responsiveness to only the most wealthy, a distinct problem for any democracy.

The case of the Bush tax cuts seem to suggest that Senators may not be as responsive to more wealthy constituent opinion as suggested in previous analyses. However, when examining lower-income constituency opinion, it is difficult to say for sure this group was as aware of the consequences as others, especially when political knowledge and the disproportionate nature of the tax cuts is taken into account. Moreover, while public opinion may appear to be highly in favor of passage of the Bush tax cuts, previous surveys and analyses have demonstrated that a substantial portion of the population (if given the option) answers that they have not thought about the policy or their position on it (Bartels 2008). Therefore, future studies should focus on the role that information and knowledge play in Americans' views on inequality. Moreover, with majorities of individuals indicating broad support for government taking an active role in reducing income inequalities and a perceived unfairness of the American governmental system skewed toward the rich, additional research needs to focus on the role that conflicting interests and values play in determining public opinion.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine the nature of unequal responsiveness in the United States Senate in an era for which wealth and income inequality has grown exponentially. I find strong support for unequal responsiveness in the Senate during the period of the 107th through 110th Congresses. In examining two specific issues relating to inequality, only on the issue of free trade do I uncover a clear case of unequal responsiveness to more wealthy Americans, while for the Bush tax cuts I find no evidence of unequal responsiveness to any particular income group.

One consistent finding is that partisan differences in approaches to inequality are clear. While this may not be a surprising finding, it does speak to the lasting effects of polarization (e.g. McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006). With an increase in party polarization and party-line voting in recent years, it is perhaps not all that surprising that clear partisan differences emerge in my findings. Moreover, this finding speaks to the fact that parties respond with different macroeconomic policies to different constituencies (e.g. Tufte 1978; Hibbs 1987; Hibbs and Dennis 1988; Bartels 2008).

My findings are a call for more research in the area of wealth inequality and representation. There has been a tradition in the study of American politics of treating income as a control variable, rather than as something more. Moreover, the distinction between wealth and income is often left out of most analyses. This largely stems from the idea that Americans do not identify along class lines, at least not to the extent as citizens in European democracies. My results caution against this traditional approach, as class effects in terms of political representation in the Senate are discovered. While Americans might not easily identify along class lines, this does not mean that politicians representing these citizens do not place them in these categories.

These results should be taken with caution however, as the issues for which I examine do not always contain clear preference differences between rich and poor Americans. This type of analysis prevents examining issues for which rich and poor preferences are pitted against each other, and legislators are forced to choose between them. While previous research finds that when this is the case the poor tend to lose out (Gilens 2005), more research needs to be conducted in this area, especially as wealth inequality continues to increase. Additionally, the issue of issue intensity, especially among differing income groups may play a large role. Because of this, my findings are a call for more research into subconstituency politics, as it matters which types of groups parties are responsive to as different groups care about some issues more than others (e.g. Bishin 2009).

The case studies for this analysis were chosen for their ability to provide a window into the way in which the Senate responds to groups of citizens with differing income levels. To this extent, it seems as if much of this window is still difficult to see through, as a clear picture of the effect of income inequality and Congressional responsiveness awaits researchers. Despite this, much more research remains in the area of inequality and political representation, as income and wealth inequality show few signs of leaving America any time soon. A more narrow focus on the multiple aspects of economic inequality is surely needed.

While it is clear that Americans often have conflicting views on such matters relating to inequality (e.g. McClosky and Zaller 1984), more needs to be done to examine the circumstances under which people care about reducing inequality and which ones they do not. When does information reduce conflicting views of inequality and governmental action and when does it do the reverse? Moreover, what are the exact causes of unequal responsiveness? These are questions that need future development, as my analysis of unequal responsiveness is limited in many ways. Another area that needs further exploration is the extent to which different income groups are represented differently due to institutional factors. Future scholarship needs to ask whether the House of Representatives is more responsive to the desires of low-income constituents. In many ways, the design of the Congress was set up so that the House responded more closely to the desires of the people, while the Senate was supposed to deal with great issues of the day and be more insulated from public opinion.

Many questions remain for the study of inequality, and the findings in this paper suggest many interesting future avenues. Other aspects of the representation process need to be scrutinized in order to more fully understand the reasons and causes of unequal responsiveness. If my analysis is confirmed in other areas of representation and politicians do in fact pay only slight attention to the opinion of many constituents in their states or districts, they make take their cues from other

factors such as other members, media analysis, interest groups, and party leaders. Each of these factors, while complex, deserves attention if we are to better understand the causes of unequal representation of the American people. If politicians in a democracy are supposed to represent and respond to their citizens in an equal manner and consider each as political equals, much more needs to be done to consider why such unequal outcomes are often the result, and why we continue to live in an age of vast inequality, both politically and economically.

Table 1. Selected Senate Roll Call Votes, 109th Congress

Tax Cut Extension. Adoption of the conference report on the bill (HR 4297) that would extend tax cuts for two years at a cost of $70 billion over five years. Reduced tax rates on capital gains and dividends extended through 2010. The bill would also extend alternative minimum tax exemption amounts for 2006 and allow for small business tax write-offs of $100,000 in depreciable assets for the year they are made (Senate Vote 118, May 11, 2006. Adopted 54-44).

Central American Free Trade Agreement. Passage of the bill (HR 3045) would implement a free-trade agreement between the United States and Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua and a separate pact with Dominican Republic (Senate Vote 209, July 28, 2005. Passed 55-45).

Table 2. Differential Responsiveness of Senators to Constituency Opinion (107th-110th Congresses). Ordinary least squares regression coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) for Poole-Rosenthal W-Nominate scores.

	107th Congress	108th Congress	109th Congress	110th Congress
Constant	-1.301***	-1.344***	-1.180***	-0.982***
	(0.282)	(0.288)	(0.314)	(0.309)
Low-Income Constituency Opinion	0.115	0.0953	-0.0325	-0.130
	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.131)	(0.126)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	0.0270	-0.0322	-0.0256	-0.0520
	(0.0977)	(0.0984)	(0.103)	(0.0989)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	0.159	0.244**	0.301**	0.352***
	(0.109)	(0.110)	(0.115)	(0.112)
Republican	0.740***	0.759***	0.821***	0.870***
	(0.0353)	(0.0359)	(0.0395)	(0.0380)
Observations	96	96	96	98
Adjusted R^2	.86	.87	.87	.88

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Figure 1. Senators' Responsiveness to Income Groups (107th-110th Congresses)

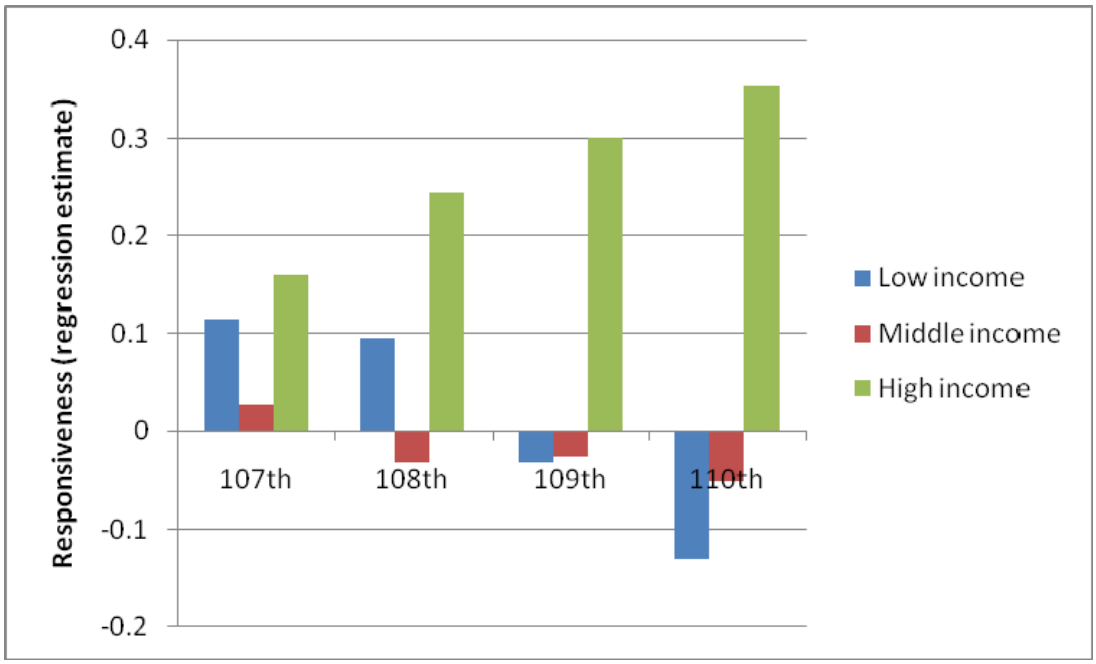


Table 3. Partisan Differences in Responsiveness to Constituency Opinion (107th-110th Congresses). Ordinary least squares regression coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) for Poole-Rosenthal W-Nominate scores.

	107th Congress	108th Congress	109th Congress	110th Congress
Constant	-1.266***	-1.433***	-0.519	-0.400
	(0.410)	(0.452)	(0.575)	(0.477)
Low-Income Constituency Opinion	0.214	0.212	0.0115	-0.0259
	(0.171)	(0.173)	(0.214)	(0.200)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	-0.0989	-0.252*	-0.254*	-0.248*
	(0.137)	(0.136)	(0.145)	(0.127)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	0.178	0.380**	0.272	0.258
	(0.181)	(0.189)	(0.207)	(0.175)
Republican	0.765	1.008*	-0.0736	-0.169
	(0.589)	(0.602)	(0.694)	(0.623)
Republican*Low Opinion	-0.213	-0.275	-0.0899	-0.140
	(0.249)	(0.245)	(0.267)	(0.251)
Republican*Mid Opinion	0.271	0.457**	0.453**	0.474**
	(0.197)	(0.195)	(0.201)	(0.191)
Republican*Upper Opinion	-0.0690	-0.265	-0.0756	-0.00642
	(0.229)	(0.233)	(0.250)	(0.226)
Observations	96	96	96	98
Adjusted R^2	.86	.87	.88	.9

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Table 4. State opinion on the Bush Tax Cut extension of 2003 by income group.

Favor Making Bush Tax Cuts Permanent (by state)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Lower-Income	.59	.12	.16	.84
Middle-Income	.64	.10	.42	.88
Upper-Income	.62	.13	.32	.94

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 5. Differential Responsiveness on Bush Tax Cut Extension 109th Congress. Probit coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) for Senator's positions on roll call vote 118).

	Bush Tax Cut (109th Congress)
Low-Income Constituency Opinion	3.409 (2.214)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	3.286 (2.462)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	-1.116 (1.748)
Republican	3.064*** (0.452)
Constant	-4.967** (2.051)
Observations	94
Pseudo R^2	0.692
Log Likelihood	-19.90

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Table 6. Opinion on who was most likely to benefit from the Bush Tax Cuts by income group. Values in cells reflect percentages.

Who has benefited most from Bush Tax Cuts?	**Lower (below $35,000)**	**Middle ($35,000-$75,000)**	**Upper (above $75,000)**
Greater than $300,000	37	35	34
$100,000-300,000	20	20	13
$50,000–$100,000	14	12	18
less than $50,000	15	17	20
Don't Know/Refused	11	13	13

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 7. Opinion on whether respondent benefited from the Bush Tax Cuts by income group. Values in cells reflect percentages.

Personally Benefited from Bush Tax Cuts?	**Lower (below $35,000)**	**Middle ($35,000-$75,000)**	**Upper (above $75,000)**
Great deal/some	23	35	43
Not Much/not at all	72	62	59
Don't know/Refused	2	1	2

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 8. Political knowledge by income group (averaged across states).

General Political Knowledge (5-point scale)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Lower-Income	2.22	.57	1.1	4.1
Middle-Income	2.97	.45	1.5	3.7
Upper-Income	3.5	.65	.71	4.5

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 9. Knowledge of incumbent Senator name by income group. Values in cells reflect percentages.

Know names of incumbent Senator?	**Lower (below $35,000)**	**Middle ($35,000-$75,000)**	**Upper (above $75,000)**
Game name or names	43	59	69
Don't Know/Refused	57	41	31

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 10. Opinion on whether candidate Bush or Kerry favored making 2001 Tax Cuts Permanent, by income group. Values in cells reflect percentages.

Know if Bush or Kerry Favors Making Tax Cuts Permanent?	**Lower (below $35,000)**	**Middle ($35,000-$75,000)**	**Upper (above $75,000)**
Bush (correct)	52	67	78
Kerry	17	11	7
Both	6	4	2
Neither	10	8	6
Don't Know/Refused	13	9	5

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 11. State opinion on free trade agreements (CAFTA) by income group.

Favor Trade Bills Like NAFTA (by state)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Lower-Income	.60	.11	.26	.88
Middle-Income	.55	.09	.28	.70
Upper-Income	.60	.10	.28	.79

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2004.

Table 12. Differential Responsiveness on CAFTA 109th Congress. Probit coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) for Senator's positions on roll call vote 209).

	CAFTA (109th Congress)
Low-Income Constituency Opinion	-0.939
	(1.383)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	-3.941**
	(1.984)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	3.970**
	(1.588)
Republican	1.452***
	(0.303)
Constant	-0.242
	(1.239)
Observations	96
Pseudo R^2	0.250
Log Likelihood	-49.54

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

References

Almond, Gabriel A. 1950. *The American People and Foreign Policy*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. de Figueirdo, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. "Why Is there So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17: 105-130.

Achen, Christopher H. 1978. "Measuring Representation." American Journal of Political Science 22: 475-509.

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Berry, Jeffrey M. 1999. *The New Liberalism: the rising power of citizen groups*. Washington D.C. Brookings Institution.

Bishin, Benjamin. 2009. *Tyranny of the Minority: The Subconstituency Politics Theory of Representation*. Temple University Press.

Blustein, Paul and Mike Allen. 2005. "CAFTA's Upshot More Political Than Economic." *The Washington Post*. 27 July.

Blustein, Paul. 2005. "CAFTA Wins Approval from Senate." *The Washington Post*. 1 July.

Burden, Barry C. 2007. *Personal Roots of Representation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bush, George W. 2004. "Remarks by the President on the Economy" Presidential Hall, Eisenhower Executive Office Building 19 Feb.

Bumiller, Elisabeth. 2004. "Bush Promotes His Tax Cuts as Beneficiaries Stand By" *New York Times* 20 Feb.

Cohen, Linda R. and Roger G. Noll. 1991. "How to Vote, Whether to Vote: Strategies for Voting and Abstaining on Congressional Roll Calls" *Political Behavior* 13: 97-127.

Converse, Philip E. 1990. "Popular Representation and the Distribution of Information." In John A Ferejohn and James H. Kuklinski, eds., *Information and Democratic Processes*, 369-388. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Cox, Gary W., and Mathew McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dahl, Robert A. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dahl, Robert A. 1982. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Delli Carpini, Michael and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Fiorina, Morris P. 1973. "Electoral Margins, Constituency Influence, and Policy Moderation: A Critical Assessment." *American Politics Quarterly* 1 (4): 479–98.

Frank, Thomas 2004. *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Froman, Lewis A. 1963. *Congressmen and their Constituencies*. Chicago: McNally.

Gilens, Martin. 2005. "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 778-796.

Gelman, Andrew et al. 2008. *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Greenberg, Stanley B. 2004. *The Two Americas: Our Current Political Deadlock and How to Break it*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Griffin, John D., and Brian Newman. 2005. "Are Voters Better Represented?" *Journal of Politics* 67: 1206-1227.

Griffin, John D. 2006. "Electoral Competition and Democratic Responsiveness: A Defense of the Marginality Hypothesis." *The Journal of Politics* 68: 909-19.

Groseclose, Tim. 2001. "A Model of Candidate Location When One Candidate Has a Valence Advantage." *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (4): 862–86.

Gulati, Girish J. 2004. "Revisiting the Link between Electoral Competition and Policy Extremism in the United States Congress," *American Politics Research* 32: 495-520.

Hartz, Louis. 1956. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Hill, Kim Quaile and Jan E. Leighley. 1992. "The Policy Consequences of Class Bias in State Electorates." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 351-65.

Hibbs, Douglas A., Jr. 1977. "Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policy." *American Political Science Review* 71: 1467-1487.

Hibbs, Douglas A., Jr. and Christopher Dennis. 1988. "Income Distribution in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 82: 467-490.

Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. 2005. "Who influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99-107-23.

Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Theda Skocpol eds. 2005. *Inequality and American Democracy: What We Know and What We Need to Learn*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kingdon, John. 1977. "Models of Legislative Voting." *The Journal of Politics* 39: 563-597.

Mansbridge, Jane J. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review* 97: 515-28.

Mayhew, David. 1974. "Congressional Elections: The Case of the Vanishing Marginals." *Polity* 6 (3): 295–317.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. MIT Press.

McClosky, Herbert and John Zaller. 1984. *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Miller, Warren E., and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." American Political Science Review 57: 45-56.

Page, Benjamin I. 1983. *Who Gets What from Government*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Page, Benjamin I. and Lawrence R. Jacobs. 2009. *Class War? What Americans Really Think about Economic Inequality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. 2003. Mobilization*, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Longman Publishers.

Schumkaer, Paul D. and Russell W. Getter. 1977. "Responsiveness Bias in 51 American Communities." *American Journal of Political Science* 21: 247-81.

Stonecash, Jeffrey M. 2000. *Class and Party in American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy. 2004. "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality." *Perspectives on Politics* 2: 651-666.

Tax Policy Center. 2003 Table T03-0123 "Combined Effect of EGTRRA and Conference Agreement on the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003: Distribution of Income Tax Change by AGI Class, 2003" Washington DC 23 May.

Tax Policy Center. 2004. Table T03-0163 "Combined Effect of EGTRRA and JGTRRA: Number of Tax Units by Size of Income Tax Cut and Individual Characteristics, 2003" Washington DC 23 June.

Tufte, Edward R. 1978. *Political Control of the Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim. 1978. *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolfinger, Raymond E., and Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Appendix A
Variables Used in analyses

Variable Name	**Source**	**Coding**
Republican	Senate.gov	Democrat =0 Republican =1
Constituency Liberalism	*2004 National Annenberg Election Study*. Question Cma06.	"Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as very conservative (1), conservative (2), moderate (3), liberal (4), or very liberal (5)?"
Political Knowledge	*2004 National Annenberg Election Study*.	Based on a traditional 5-point scale, with five different questions asking basic political knowledge
Roll Call Votes (Bush tax cuts, CAFTA, etc.)	Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives & Senate.gov	Yea =1 Nay =0
Competition	*CQ Weekly*	Competitive election=1 Non-competitive election=0
Legislator Liberalism	*DW-Nominate Scores* for House and Senate accessed from http://voteview.com/dwnomin.htm	First Dimension Coordinate
Constituency Opinion	*2004 National Annenberg Election Study*.	Questions vary based on issue (see Appendix B), however each question was coded so that respondents either favored (1) or opposed an issue (0)
Household Income (by income group)	*2004 National Annenberg Election Study*.	Low-income: below $35,000 Middle Income: $35,000-$75,000 High-Income: above $75,000
Education	*2004 National Annenberg Election Study*.	Less than High school: (1), High school degree (2), Some college (3), Bachelors degree (4), Professional Degree (5)

Appendix B
2004 NAES Question Wording[18]

Policy Area	Question	Question Wording
Free Trade	Ccb82	The federal government negotiating more free trade agreements like NAFTA—do you favor or oppose the federal government doing this? If favor/oppose: Do you strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose) the federal government doing this?
Tax Cut Extension	Ccb16	Making recent federal tax cuts permanent—do you favor or oppose this?
	Ccb17	Making recent federal tax cuts permanent—do you favor or oppose this? If favor/oppose: Do you strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?
Reduce Inequality	Ccc41	The federal government trying to reduce the income differences between rich and poor Americans—do you favor or oppose the federal government doing this? If favor/oppose: Do you strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose) the federal government doing this?
Household Income	Cwa04	Last year, what was the total income before taxes of all the people living in your house or apartment? Just stop me when I get to the right category—less than $10,000; $10,000 to less than $15,000; $15,000 to less than $25,000; $25,000 to less than $35,000; $35,000 to less than $50,000; $50,000 to less than $75,000; $75,000 to less than $100,000; above $100,000
Respondent Ideology	Cma06[19]	Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal? 1 Very conservative 2 Conservative 3 Moderate 4 Liberal 5 Very liberal 998 Don't know
Who Benefits from Bush Tax Cut?	Ccb20	In your opinion, who has benefited the most from these tax cuts— those with household incomes greater than $300,000; between $100,000 and $300,000; between $50,000 and $100,000; or less than $50,000? 1 Greater than $300,000 2 $100,000−$300,000 3 $50,000−$100,000 4 Less than $50,000 998 Don't know 999 Refused
Personally Benefit from Bush Tax Cuts?	Ccb21	How much have you benefited from the tax cuts proposed by George W. Bush and passed by Congress {10/7/03−3/2/04: last spring}—a great deal, some, not much, or not at all? 1 Great deal 2 Some 3 Not much 4 Not at all 998 Don't know 999 Refused
Which candidate favors making Tax Cuts permanent?	Ccb25	To the best of your knowledge, {7/8/04−11/1/04: who favors | 11/3/04−11/16/04: during the presidential campaign, who favored} making the recent tax cuts permanent—George W. Bush, John Kerry, both, or neither? {7/8/04−10/24/04: If don't know: Anyone come to mind?} 1 Bush (correct) 2 Kerry 3 Both 4 Neither 998 Don't know 999 Refused
Know Senator Name	Cua02	Your state has two U.S. senators in Washington, DC. Do you happen to remember their names? (Probe for two names.) {10/7/03−10/25/04: If don't know: Just your best guess.} 1 Gave name or names 998 Don't know 999 Refused

[18] When more than one question was asked on the same issue or when additional options were given to respondents I collapsed the questions into a dichotomous favor (1) or oppose (0) option.

[19] Recoded to match DW-NOMINATE scale, so a value of 5 is very conservative and 1 is very liberal.

Appendix C. Differential Responsiveness on various roll call votes of the 109th Congress (using ideology as a measure for constituency opinion). Probit coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) for Senator's positions on roll call votes.

	Tax Cut	CAFTA
Lower-Income Constituency Opinion	1.414	0.886
	(1.960)	(1.115)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	-0.810	-1.012
	(1.319)	(0.893)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	1.797	0.0643
	(1.637)	(0.973)
Republican	2.848***	1.319***
	(0.447)	(0.332)
Constant	-8.769*	-0.323
	(4.972)	(2.752)
Observations	94	96
Pseudo R^2	0.679	0.202
Log Likelihood	-20.72	-52.70

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

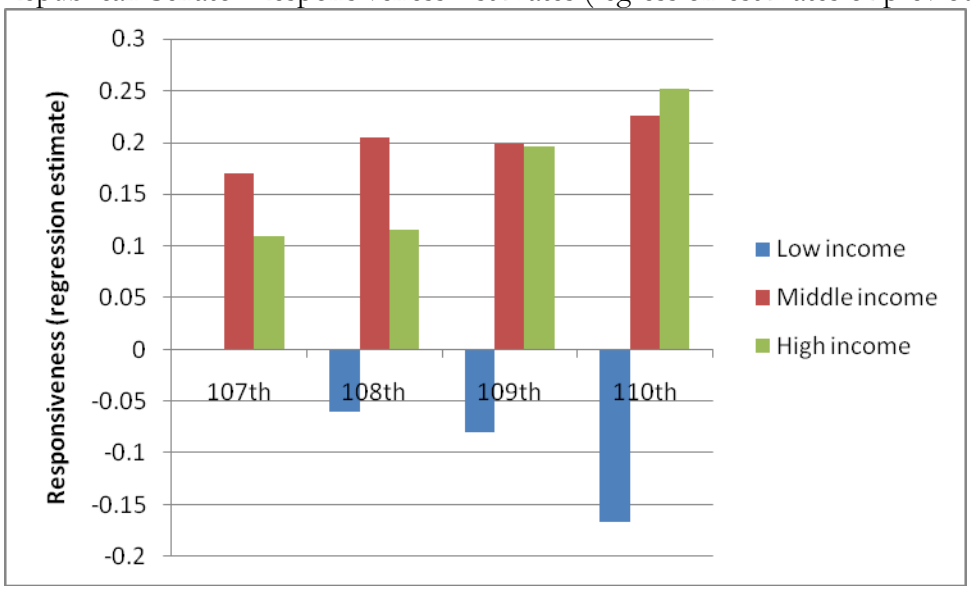
Appendix D. Differential Responsiveness of Senators to Constituency Opinion (107th-110th Congresses). Ordinary least squares regression coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) for Poole-Rosenthal W-Nominate scores.

Republican Senators

	107th Republicans	108th Republicans	109th Republicans	110th Republicans
Low-Income Constituency Opinion	0.000778 (0.203)	-0.0628 (0.169)	-0.0784 (0.167)	-0.166 (0.148)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	0.172 (0.158)	0.205 (0.136)	0.199 (0.145)	0.226 (0.140)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	0.109 (0.158)	0.115 (0.133)	0.196 (0.146)	0.252* (0.142)
Constant	-0.501 (0.473)	-0.426 (0.389)	-0.592 (0.407)	-0.568 (0.394)
Observations	48	49	53	49
Adjusted R^2	.10	.17	.21	.30

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Republican Senator Responsiveness Estimates (regression estimates of previous table)



Democratic Senators

	107th Democrats	108th Democrats	109th Democrats	110th Democrats
Low-Income Constituency Opinion	0.214 (0.148)	0.212 (0.177)	0.0115 (0.201)	-0.0259 (0.203)
Middle-Income Constituency Opinion	-0.0989 (0.118)	-0.252* (0.139)	-0.254* (0.136)	-0.248* (0.130)
Upper-Income Constituency Opinion	0.178 (0.156)	0.380* (0.193)	0.272 (0.195)	0.258 (0.178)
Constant	-1.266*** (0.354)	-1.433*** (0.463)	-0.519 (0.540)	-0.400 (0.485)
Observations	48	47	43	49
Adjusted R^2	.07	.09	.02	.02

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Democratic Senator Responsiveness Estimates (regression estimates of previous table)