

2017

# From Congregations to Congress: the Impact of Religion in the 114th Congress

Emily Mildred Cottle

*Bucknell University*, emc030@bucknell.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/honors\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/honors_theses)

---

## Recommended Citation

Cottle, Emily Mildred, "From Congregations to Congress: the Impact of Religion in the 114th Congress" (2017). *Honors Theses*. 391.  
[https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/honors\\_theses/391](https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/honors_theses/391)

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses at Bucknell Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Bucknell Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [dcadmin@bucknell.edu](mailto:dcadmin@bucknell.edu).

**FROM CONGREGATIONS TO CONGRESS:  
THE IMPACT OF RELIGION IN THE 114<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

by

Emily M. Cottle

A Thesis Submitted to the Honors Council  
For Honors in Political Science

May 4, 2017

Approved by:



Adviser: Scott Meinke, Ph.D.



Chair, Department of Political Science: Michael James, Ph.D.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Entering my freshman year at Bucknell I was confident that I wanted to pursue a degree in Political Science, yet it was an introductory class in American Politics taught by Professor Scott Meinke my first semester that truly got me hooked. I proceeded, then, to obtain an “unofficial minor” in Professor Meinke by taking three more of his courses. I am sincerely grateful for all of his teaching, advice, and encouragement throughout my academic career, culminating in these past two semesters of research. He has served as an invaluable resource and a formative component in my four years at Bucknell.

Additionally, I would like to thank Professors Brantley Gasaway and Chris Ellis: Professor Gasaway for his counsel on the subject and persistence in convincing me to adopt a second major, as my Religious Studies education has contributed significantly to my research on this project; Professor Ellis for serving as a co-reader for this project and helping to keep me sane all the while.

Lastly I would like to thank my fellow thesis writers, with whom I commiserated throughout this process, and my family for their love and support as I achieved this goal. Thank you all for your willingness to engage with me on the two topics about which no one is supposed to talk: religion and politics.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>8</b>
MEASURE OF RELIGIOSITY	9
MORALITY POLITICS	13
BEHAVIOR BEYOND THE ROLL CALL	18
MEMBERS MIRROR THE MASSES	21
CONCLUSION	22
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION</b>	<b>24</b>
MEMBERS' RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS SALIENCE	25
<i>Categorization of Religion</i>	26
<i>Religiosity</i>	28
LEGISLATIVE DATA	29
<i>Selecting Legislation</i>	29
<i>Compiling Cosponsorship Data</i>	31
<i>Handling Vacancies</i>	32
CONTROL VARIABLES	32
<i>2014 Cook Partisan Voter Index</i>	33
<i>DW-NOMINATE Scores</i>	34
<i>District Religion</i>	35
CONCLUSION	38
<b>CHAPTER 4: ANALYSES</b>	<b>40</b>
HYPOTHESES	40
SUMMARY STATISTICS	42
<i>Sample Size</i>	42
<i>Denominational Group</i>	43
<i>Religiosity</i>	44
MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS	46
<i>Abortion</i>	47
<i>Gay Rights</i>	51
<i>Religious Freedom</i>	54
<i>Refugees</i>	59
INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBERS' RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS SALIENCE	63
PARTY-SPECIFIC REGRESSION MODELS	65
CONCLUSION	66
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>TABLES</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>NOTE ON HANDLING VACANCIES</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>LIST OF BILLS IN EACH LEGISLATIVE CATEGORY</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>89</b>

## LIST OF APPENDICES

<b>TABLES</b>	<b>73</b>
TABLE 1—DENOMINATIONAL CATEGORIES	73
TABLE 2—MEMBERS’ DENOMINATIONAL FREQUENCIES	74
TABLE 3—DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS’ DENOMINATIONAL FREQUENCIES	75
TABLE 4—REPUBLICAN MEMBERS’ DENOMINATIONAL FREQUENCIES	76
TABLE 5—MEMBERS’ RELIGIOSITY FREQUENCIES	76
TABLE 6—REPUBLICAN MEMBERS’ RELIGIOSITY FREQUENCIES	77
TABLE 7—DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS’ RELIGIOSITY FREQUENCIES	77
TABLE 8—PEARSON’S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS	78
TABLE 9—PRO-LIFE REGRESSION MODELS	78
TABLE 10—PRO-CHOICE REGRESSION MODELS	79
TABLE 11—GAY-RIGHTS REGRESSION MODELS	79
TABLE 12—RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REGRESSION MODELS	80
TABLE 13—PRO-REFUGEE LOGIT MODELS	80
TABLE 14—ANTI-REFUGEE REGRESSION MODELS	81
TABLE 15—INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND A MATCH WITH MEMBER AND DISTRICT DENOMINATION	81
TABLE 16—PRO-LIFE REGRESSION MODELS FOR REPUBLICANS	82
TABLE 17—PRO-CHOICE REGRESSION MODELS FOR DEMOCRATS	82
TABLE 18—GAY-RIGHTS REGRESSION MODELS FOR DEMOCRATS	83
<b>NOTE ON HANDLING VACANCIES</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>LIST OF BILLS IN EACH LEGISLATIVE CATEGORY</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>89</b>

## ABSTRACT

The impact of religion on congressional politics is a question that is asked frequently, yet most answers I have found are, in my opinion, inadequate in accurately evaluating such an impact. This project has shown the influence that religion has on members of the House of Representatives through religion's effect on cosponsorship patterns. I have shown that both members' denominational affiliation and their religious salience are significant across multiple legislative categories.

In this thesis I have redefined the measurement of religion when considering its impact on congressional politics and broadened the scope of the question. Whereas researchers previously sought to determine how members' denomination affects their support or opposition to abortion-related legislation, I have considered the abortion question, yet added a dimension of religiosity to consider the effect of religiosity along with denomination, and applied such statistical models to non-morality politics.

My research shows that both denomination and religiosity are significant across legislative categories in predicting cosponsorship trends of such legislation. The significance of these relationships are intriguing as the public trends toward preferring a more clear separation between church and state, yet my models show that members are still influenced by their religious affiliation and religious salience.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The notion of separating the church from the state has long been supported by Americans, and is often believed to be a constitutional decree, yet such an interpretation of the First Amendment's religion clauses remains contested. The infamous phrase was coined by Thomas Jefferson in 1802 in a letter he wrote to the Danbury Baptists suggesting that a "wall be built to separate the Church and the State." Americans tend to be hesitant when considering the influence religion has or could have in politics as this wall becomes a sort of ideal, yet few would contend that the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment bar members of Congress from letting their personal religious beliefs influence their political decision making. Through this thesis I will illustrate how religion is pervasive in the political arena and the impact it has on congressional politics.

Historically, there have been two dominant and competing approaches as how best to understand the influence that religion has in politics, the first being an ethnoreligious perspective and the second a theological restructuring perspective. The ethnoreligious perspective is drawn from Emile Durkheim's understanding of religion as a "social phenomenon, emphasizing affiliation with religious groups as the means by which religion shapes political responses." Inspired by Max Weber, the theological restructuring perspective, on the other hand, sees religion "embodied in beliefs, emphasizing their role in shaping political attitudes and behavior." A modern understanding to religion's role in politics, however, combines the two perspectives: it "views religion as embodying belonging, beliefs, and behavior, with all three influencing

the political life.” (Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth 2009, 5) Consistent with this modern perspective I will illustrate that religious belonging and beliefs influence representatives’ political behavior and that the wall that many think separates the church from the state is quite permeable.

Through my research I show that religion is not limited to privately held beliefs, but rather that such beliefs are pervasive in the political sphere and that they play a consequential role in the decision-making processes of members of Congress. I demonstrate the influence and impact religion has on Congressional politics by studying the behaviors of members of Congress in their bill sponsorship in light of their self-reported religion, theological orientation, and religious behaviors. In measuring religion and religious commitment, I predicted that members who adhere to a more traditional/fundamentalist religion and those who exhibit higher levels of religious commitment would be more likely to act in accordance with the denominational stance on an issue and would cosponsor bills regarding such issues more frequently than those who adhere to a more modernist religion, simply cite a religion, or provide no response to the question of religious orientation.

The scope of my research is limited to the House of Representatives in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress (2015-2016) so as to allow for extensive research on 435 members and to obtain accurate and current biographical profiles. I obtained representatives’ self-reported religious identity from the biographies of members of Congress in the CQ Press Congress Collection database. This data was used as a baseline categorical independent variable that was sorted into two additional variables.

I further sorted representatives by their religious affiliation or denomination to create a measure of theological orientation. As Kellstedt and Green argue, “Individual affiliation with a religious group or organization is central to a full understanding of the effects of religion on politics,” and therefore cannot be ignored when studying the impact of representatives’ religion on their political behavior (Kellstedt and Green 1993, 53). I determined denominational categories using methods similar to those of Elizabeth Anne Oldmixon (2005) in her research in *Uncompromising Positions: God, Sex, and the U.S. House of Representatives*. In this work Oldmixon divides representatives’ religious orientation into five categories: Fundamentalists and Nontraditional Conservatives, Mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jewish, Liberal Protestants, and Other small groups (121). Studying denominational alignment is significant in the study of religion’s involvement in politics due to the “difference in belief, practice, and commitment” that can be found within a denominational association “even for individuals with nominal religiosity” (Kellstedt and Green 1993, 55). As opposed to simply grouping representatives based on their listed denomination I discerned the general theology of each denomination in terms of their traditionalist or modernist theological orientation and classify each representative into one of the five aforementioned categories. I used the data from the CQ Congressional Collection biographies to sort representatives, but I also used more detailed descriptions of religious affiliation from official Congressional Directory biographies in addition to members’ biographies on their personal websites to determine more specifically what church or faction of a denomination a member aligns with. The denominational or theological

variable will classify members of Congress according to their religious beliefs, yet I contend that there is another equally useful variable to understand religion's impact on congressional politics.

In addition to sorting by denominational group or theological orientation I categorized each representative's religion in terms of his or her religious commitment or religiosity. I used Congressional Directory and website biographies to form a measure religiosity. Religious commitment proved to be the most difficult variable to operationalize, yet I expected that it would be associated strongly with representatives' choices in the political arena. Authors who study religion's influence in Congress tend to limit their measure of religion to the self-reported affiliation listed in the Congressional Directory, as that is the most easily accessible source of religious affiliation. Scholars stipulate that this common method of measuring religious affiliation is simplistic, yet little has been done to improve this measure (Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph 1999, 688). When measuring levels of religiosity in the general public, polls frequently ask the frequency of church attendance, yet this is not a question that has been asked of Congress, so I am tasked with creating a different measure of religiosity. I measured representatives' religious commitment by recording if they mention their religion, religious behavior, or house of worship in either their Congressional Directory or official website biography. I then coded these descriptions of religious commitment on a scale from no religious involvement aside from a nominal claim (found in the CQ Congressional Collection), to holding a leadership position in a congregation or an equivalent community. This scale is a four-point scale, with one indicating little religious

involvement, two indicating formal membership in a religious organization, three indicating evidence of active involvement in a religious organization, and four indicating that a member holds a leadership position in a religious institution or organization.

I then illustrated the relationship between both denomination/theological orientation and religious commitment and political behavior by analyzing these independent variables in relation to a representative's cosponsorship record. When examining members of Congress' positions on an issue, roll-call votes are the easiest means for determining a positive or negative stance on such an issue, yet I—along with several congressional scholars—argue that there is another measure that demonstrates policy stance. The sponsorship or cosponsorship of a bill is a demonstration of a representative's deeper commitment to an issue as it is an indicator of dedication to a cause. Bethany Blackstone and Elizabeth Oldmixon contend that the study of roll-call votes is understandable due to the fact that it is through these votes that policy is made (2015, 3), yet looking “upstream in the policy process,” as Barry Burden describes it, is a better source to understand members' priorities (2007, 8). Roll-call votes indicate where policy is made, but cosponsorship and introduction of bills are where members' agendas are directly promoted. It is important to note, however, that the absence of a cosponsorship is not necessarily an indication of an objection to a certain policy, yet this measure is useful in understanding policies to which members have extreme dedication.

In determining which bills to study for cosponsors I have selected bills in four categories of policy issues: abortion, religious freedom, gay rights, and treatment of refugees. In order to ensure that there is substantial data to observe representatives'

behavior I limited my search to include only bills and resolutions that originated in the House and had 25 or more cosponsors. Carrying out this search has yielded roughly 40 bills that I will use to construct my dependent variables to study the relationship between religion and congressional behavior, in terms of both theological orientation and religiosity.

To measure the relationship between my dependent variables—measures of representational behavior through (co)sponsorship—and independent variables—measures of religious orientation and religiosity—I used Stata to generate descriptive cross-tabulations to observe the overall impact that religion has on political behavior. Additionally I conducted multivariate regression analyses to control for variables such as party and religious makeup of a representative's constituency and obtain results signaling the effect and significance of religion's role in representational behavior.

James Guth and Lyman Kellstedt (2005) conducted a similar sort of analysis of religious commitment's influence on congressional behavior for the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, yet little information was published as to the results of their study. I intend for my thesis to serve as an updated and expanded version of the research they began. The goal of my research is not necessarily attempting to predict how different denominations influence behavior—as Guth and Kellstedt did—but rather to determine whether and how members of Congress use religion in their decision-making processes, and understand how those with a higher level of commitment to their religion in their private life manifest those beliefs in their political life. Additionally, I examine both the role that religion may play in congressional politics and the consequences of such a role.

Through this thesis I describe the extent to which religion is a factor in congressional politics, yet I expect that it is far more involved in shaping personal decision than normative theories of a “high and impregnable” wall separating the Church from the State might suggest (*Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing*). The idea of a wall separating the church from the state stems from the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which decrees that “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Despite debates persisting as to how involved the church can be in American politics, few would hold that members of Congress must not let their religion influence their decision making processes. The balance between how members of Congress exercise their personal religious views and prevent the establishment of religion is often misunderstood, yet I show that religion is influential in the United States Congress and should be accepted as such so as to better understand political-decision making.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic interest in the effects of religion on congressional politics has grown in recent years, yet the methods of analysis are still in need of refinement. When studying the effects of religion on congressional behavior, scholars tend to emphasize either the accuracy of their measure of religion or the extent to which they apply such a measure to Congressional behavior—some limiting their application to roll-call votes, and others extending it further. It is rare, however, for scholars to accomplish both sufficiently. In this thesis I will attempt to achieve both goals: utilizing an accurate measure of religion—namely religious salience—and applying such a measure to congressional behavior that looks beyond roll-call votes on morality legislation. In order to improve upon existing studies in this field I intend to more accurately measure the salience of religion for representatives, look beyond morality politics to policies that are not inherently religious in nature, and study behavior off of the floor of the House of Representatives. In this chapter I will first discuss previous attempts at measuring religiosity and contexts in which the influences of religion have been measured—and areas in which I argue the study should be expanded. I will then consider the limits of measuring the impact of religion purely in the context of roll-call votes. Lastly I will address the impact that a member's constituency might have in his or her representational behavior.

## MEASURE OF RELIGIOSITY

Accurately measuring members of Congress' religious salience, or religiosity, is frequently regarded as the most difficult task of determining the relationship between religion and politics. The level of difficulty posed by this daunting task often leads scholars to simply accept the nominal religious affiliation reported by members of Congress in the official Congressional Directory produced by the Joint Committee on Printing (U.S. Government Publishing Office 2016), and to use this categorization as their independent variable (Burden 2007, Cann 2009, Green and Guth 1991, Richardson and Fox 1972, Wheatley 2010). Such a measure, however, leads to an oversimplification of the nature of such a complex variable as religion.

The data provided on members' religion in the Congressional Directory is self-reported and exceptionally generic. Members can report either a basic denominational affiliation—such as “Baptist” or “Methodist”—or simply identification with a religion—such as “Christian” or “Jewish.” Most scholars attempt to group responses into a more manageable number of categories, but the process of grouping such generic responses poses a number of difficulties for scholars. The denominational differences within generic sects of Christianity, for example, could lead to drastically inaccurate grouping of members of Congress as the differences within Baptist denominations vary greatly despite being reported as the same in the Congressional Directory. Despite this caveat, scholars still attempt to group representatives, either using region as a cue—to label a Baptist as a Southern Baptist—or race—to discern that a member might be an African

Methodist Episcopalian rather than simply a Methodist (Oldmixon 2009, 500). Such categorization, however, is founded on gross assumptions that could lead to wildly inaccurate results. The predicament scholars find themselves in, however, is that this is the most efficient manner by which members' religious affiliation can be understood. Obtaining detailed data for every member of Congress, such as that of Peter Benson and Dorothy Williams (1982), is an unrealistic task, yet one that would provide exceedingly useful insight.

Benson and Williams completed the most detailed study of members' religion in their work, Religion on Capitol Hill (1982). Their in-depth study of the 96th Congress (1979-1981) produced results on the religious beliefs and behaviors of 80 members of Congress who were willing to participate in their questioning. The sort of information obtained by these scholars proved to be useful to the study of religion and legislative behavior, yet obtaining such detailed accounts for every Congress is not feasible. With the information we are given, namely through self-reported biographies, academics are forced to determine how best to formulate a measure of religious salience. Scholars have adopted the methodology developed by James Guth and Lyman Kellstedt as a more manageable means of obtaining data similar to that of Benson and Williams, as it serves to both categorize members by their religious affiliation, or belonging, and measure the behavior of representatives.

Guth and Kellstedt begin their attempts to define and measure members of Congress' religion by obtaining their self-reported religion from the Congressional Directory (2005, 5), as many other scholars do (Richardson and Fox 1972, Green and

Guth 1991, Burden 2007, Cann 2009, Wheatley 2010). Guth and Kellstedt, however, begin the practice of defining religion as more than a self-reported answer to a survey. They use the Congressional Directory as a starting point, but stipulate that answers found in the database are vague and not very useful unless categorized further (2005, 8). They look at members' congressional and campaign websites to find information about members' local houses of worship, leadership positions in a parish, service on committees in their house of worship, participation in teaching Sunday School, and attendance patterns (2005, 5).

Once more specific information about a member of Congress' religious behavior is obtained, Guth and Kellstedt categorize denominations into eight subcategories: Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, White Catholic, Hispanic Catholic, Jewish, Black Protestant, Latter-day Saints, and Seculars (2005, 9). The practice of creating denominational subcategories is not unique to Guth and Kellstedt, as Oldmixon, for example, creates seven categories in which she groups representatives: Fundamentalists and Nontraditional Conservatives, Mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jewish, Liberal Protestants, and Other small groups (2005, 121). Categorizing members based on denominational alignment is significant in the study of religion's involvement in politics due to the "difference in belief, practice, and commitment" that can be found within a denominational association "even for individuals with nominal religiosity" (Kellstedt and Green 1993, 55). Guth and Kellstedt, however, take one additional step in their measure of religious salience that many other scholars neglect: they place members of Congress on a scale of religious commitment.

To understand the extent to which a member of Congress is committed to his or her religion, Guth and Kellstedt compile cues from the Congressional Directory and members' websites to place them on a four-point scale of religious salience (2005, 10). Guth and Kellstedt score members as follows: "no apparent religious involvement (1); formal membership in a congregation, but no regular activity (2); frequent or regular attendance at services (3); and leadership positions in a congregation and/or activity in parachurch groups (4)" (2005, 10). This scale of religious commitment is what I find most intriguing and useful for understanding the religious salience of members of Congress.

Using only the information provided by representatives in the Congressional Directory grossly oversimplifies the extent to which variance exists within commitment to religion. When members of Congress can state that they are simply "Christian" whereas others indicate a more specific denominational identity it poses challenges of categorizing representatives into accurate denominational families. Oldmixon's approach of grouping representatives into denominational categories is helpful in understanding aggregate behavior as it allows for observations based on group behavior and adherence to doctrinal stances on policy issues, yet Guth and Kellstedt's practice of obtaining more specific information on each representative's religious belonging and behavior prior to categorizing is more useful in understanding members' religious salience. The religious salience measure provides means for understanding the effect of commitment to one's religion on representational behavior, and for observing the impact that a higher level of commitment has on policy positions. Additionally, their religious commitment scale

quantifies a vital component of the religion variable that many scholars neglect. For this reason I will be adopting the denominational families Oldmixon uses, yet with the amount of detail Guth and Kellstedt obtain to create as specific and accurate of a religiosity variable as possible.

### **MORALITY POLITICS**

Most readers would not find it surprising that religious beliefs are predictive of representational behavior on traditional religious matters, such as abortion and gay rights, yet I, and many scholars, argue that the more telling case of religion's relationship to representational behavior would be to study the effects outside of traditional religious issues. Scholars often argue that the interesting phenomenon is not whether religion's influence can be observed in representatives' voting patterns on religious issues, but whether the influence of religion transcends traditional religious causes (Oldmixon 2009, 508). If religion is truly to have an influence on a member's representational behavior then it should be influential not only in issues such as "abortion, gay rights, prayer in school, or support of the state of Israel" or other issues of morality politics, but rather in the political sphere as a whole (Wheatley 2010, 3). Traditionally scholars have tended to focus their research on such issues of morality (Richardson and Fox 1972; Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph 1999; Koopman 2009; Oldmixon and Hudson 2008), yet this trend has begun to change in more recent analyses.

Elizabeth Oldmixon describes morality politics as issues that involve the demand for sin (2009, 503), and Douglas Koopman argues that the basis of morality politics is that it redistributes values rather than economic reward (2009, 549). Either way one goes about describing such legislative issues, morality politics is the policy arena that constitutes a unique set of issues rooted in one's ethical convictions. At the core of such issues is a conflict over "fundamental values about which no consensus exists among members of society" (Koopman 2009, 549).

Studying the relationship between religion and behavior on legislative issues pertaining to issues of morality, or those that are considered traditionally religious, is useful in understanding the loyalty one has to one's own religious affiliation, yet does little to illustrate the importance of one's religion when making legislative decisions. To see the full effect of religious salience it must be studied outside of the realms in which it serves as a predictive variable to the relationship between religious affiliation and policy stances. If I were to analyze representational behavior on traditional religious issues I would in a sense be predicting religious behavior with religious beliefs—likely producing results one would anticipate. Observing a correlation between religious members' representational behavior on religious issues is not surprising, as one would expect deeply held beliefs to influence policy decisions on such issues. Yet one can truly observe the extent to which religion influences representational behavior when considering the impact of religion on policy that transcends traditional religious issues. If religion is truly a personal motivator in forming policy positions its impact ought to transcend issues that are traditionally linked with religion. As I intend to test the

relationship between my independent variable of religiosity and my dependent variable of representational behavior, I must illustrate that the variables themselves are different and not simply indicating the effect of religion on religion. I will accomplish this by considering legislation outside the realm of traditional religious issues.

Many scholars have begun to approach the study of religion and politics from a perspective outside of morality politics so as to see the true relationship between religion and legislative decision-making. In a study on the propensity to engage in floor speeches, Bethany Blackstone and Elizabeth Oldmixon consider the frequency of speeches given on issues pertaining to cultural traditionalism, poverty and social welfare, and the role of government (2015, 3). Such categorical variables could appear at first glance to fall into the morality politics category, yet the specific issues that Blackstone and Oldmixon studied are far more nuanced and removed from traditional religious stances. Issues such as health care, immigration, education, budgets and debt, taxation, and intergovernmental relations are the focus of this study as they allow the authors to observe the full impact of members' religion as it comes into competition with non-religious policy views. When considering religion's impact on legislators and their decision making, studying cases in which religion is challenged by other policy positions indicates the extent to which members uphold their commitment to their religious beliefs.

Oldmixon continues her study of religion outside the context of traditional morality politics in her study on "Needs, norms and food policy in the U.S. House of Representatives" with David Schechter (2011). In this piece the authors study the effect of "partisanship, religion, and district need on legislative behavior pertaining to food policy"

(2011, 597). Oldmixon and Schechter argue that the religious views of members of Congress will influence legislative behavior pertaining to food-policy issues as unlike “ascriptive characteristics, such as race and sex, religion...entails a set of values or creedal admonitions for how one is supposed to live,” and therefore behave (599). They once again cite Burden, as he argues that religion serves as an “internal cue” that will affect behavior on any policy issues that “implicate religious creeds and community interests” (Oldmixon and Schechter 2011, 599). Although food policy is not considered a traditional issue of morality or an inherently religious issue, such as abortion or gay rights, the authors claim that food policy is religious salient (597) as it “implicates religious teaching” (601) through the lens of the social gospel that “traditionally animated religious activism and political attitudes in America” (599). Despite the fact that the scope of such a policy area falls outside the traditional religious dimension food issues remain connected to religious causes. This connection leads Oldmixon and Schechter to argue that religion will prove to influence legislator’s decision-making processes on food issues (599).

In order to test their hypotheses, Oldmixon and Schechter studied the behavior of representatives in regards to three bills: a bill that sought to expand government nutrition programs, an appropriations bill that included a provision removing a food program, and the specific amendment within the appropriations bill that would have cut funding from a school-breakfast program. The amendment was defeated with a bipartisan supermajority, with 59 votes in favor of the amendment—57 of those being Republican (2011, 600). The authors found Catholics more likely than non-Catholics to oppose the amendment,

yet they observed that Catholics behaved extremely similarly to white evangelical, black Protestant, and mainline Protestant representatives when voting on the appropriations bill and other nutrition-related pieces of legislation (601). Interestingly, though, Oldmixon and Schechter find religion to have a stronger effect when “narrower questions related to food assistance emerge” (602). As the scope of a bill narrows and a vote is more clearly in response to a single issue—such as in the case of the amendment to the appropriations bill—religion gains influence. The authors claim that it is easier for members of Congress to act on a “religious imperative” when that is the only issue worth considering in a piece of legislation, rather than attempting to balance religious views with multiple policy goals (601).

The study of the influence of religion on policy areas outside of traditional morality politics allows for these sorts of observations to be made. Oldmixon and Schechter are able to see clearly the influence religion has on policy when a specific issue is isolated, yet they also observe the tendency for religion to lose its influence as an issue is muddled with more traditional non-religious pieces of legislation. Damon Cann agrees with Blackstone and Oldmixon and Oldmixon and Schechter that religion must be considered outside of the sphere of morality politics, but he does so in a study in which he hopes to illustrate the cohesion of a particular religious group. Cann looks at the voting behavior of Mormon legislators in all non-unanimous votes in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. His study is aimed at analyzing the extent to which Mormon representatives vote as a bloc, as he predicts that Mormon legislators will “display a very high degree of cohesion in roll-call voting” if they are truly influenced by their religion (2009, 113). To his, and

my, surprise, however, Cann finds that Mormon representatives are no more likely to exhibit similar voting patterns than a randomly selected group of representatives with the same partisan makeup (2009, 117). If Cann had focused solely on morality politics it is likely that he would have observed a higher degree of cohesion from these representatives than he did when analyzing all non-unanimous votes, which reaffirms the necessity of applying models to issues outside of the traditional religious sphere in order to accurately understand the relationship between religious salience and legislative behavior.

### **BEHAVIOR BEYOND THE ROLL CALL**

In his book, *The Personal Roots of Representation*, Barry Burden makes the case that representational behavior needs to be studied through lenses other than that of roll-call vote analysis. He argues that members of Congress act most proactively through “upstream behaviors,” such as co-sponsorship and speechmaking (2007, 8). Burden defines proactive behavior as “action that requires initiative,” including “doing research outside of committee, lobbying fellow members, contacting interest groups, making floor speeches, and introducing and co-sponsoring legislation” (2007, 9). The key component of proactive behavior, however, is that it “requires a conscious decision by the legislator to take action in advance of a floor vote” (2007, 9). Engaging in proactive behavior, as Burden describes, is costly for members of Congress, and therefore the issues with which

a member is likely to proactively engage must be those in which a member has some investment or personal interest (2007, 76).

The two proactive behaviors on which Burden focuses are co-sponsorship and floor speeches. He articulates that the importance of observing bill sponsorship is the fact that it allows members to articulate a clear position on the issue, makes members publically accountable to their claimed position, and draws attention to the issue (2007, 76). Speeches, additionally, allow members to establish a position, yet are more of a symbolic gesture intended to indicate a position to constituents (2007, 76). Through his research Burden illustrates how personal and district interests are more likely to affect proactive than reactive behavior, and that proactive behavior tends to return more rewards from political action committees than reactive behavior (2007, 87). Burden makes it clear that proactive behavior elicits more positive externalities—namely those of furthering one’s personal and constituent interests—than reactive behavior, which indicates the importance of considering such behavior.

Oldmixon expands on Burden’s understanding of pre-vote behavior: “Legislators have the least personal agency in roll call voting, whereas pre-vote activities provide them with opportunities to shape legislation ‘upstream’ and with more independence from party leaders and constituents” (2009, 502). The fact that the majority of studies on the relationship between religion and politics focus solely on roll-call votes eliminates the “upstream” arena in which representatives express their independent views and indicate unwavering support of an issue, through behaviors such as sponsorship or co-sponsorship

of legislation. Bethany Blackstone and Elizabeth Oldmixon, however, provide an example of the benefit of studying proactive behavior in addition to reactive behavior.

Blackstone and Oldmixon investigate the existence of intra-party division as motivated by religion, and use floor speeches to observe such a phenomenon (2015). They argue that members are time constrained and have varying interests that lead them to pursue different policy agendas. The means through which these agendas are pursued also vary greatly, and can be observed through members' "decision to participate" (2015, 2). Blackstone and Oldmixon found in general that Evangelical Protestants give more floor speeches than their colleagues, yet did not find any variance between Catholic representatives' floor-speech frequency and that of their colleagues (2015, 5). On social issues, however, both Catholics and Evangelical Protestants engage in more proactive behavior than their colleagues (2015, 5). Blackstone and Oldmixon found that members of Congress use proactive behavior—namely floor speeches—to influence their personal agendas, and that these agendas influenced in party by religion (2015, 6). The authors conclude their study by stating, "While speech participation provides opportunities for legislators to engage in personal representation, it also provides opportunities to represent constituency religious communities...Legislators with limited opportunities to engage in representation using floor votes look for other outlets. Speeches provide an outlet where legislators can advertise and position-take" (2015, 6). I argue that this logic is applicable to all proactive representation.

I intend to apply the logic of Blackstone and Oldmixon's study to my research of bill sponsorship, as opposed to their focus on floor speeches. I am interested in bill

sponsorship for the reasons Burden outlined: bill sponsorship is an extremely public means through which representatives may take a position on an issue, and will only be utilized in cases in which a member feels a strong tie to an issue. Studying bill sponsorship allows me to observe behavior the behaviors of the most involved and passionate members.

### **MEMBERS MIRROR THE MASSES**

In addition to considering the impact of members' religious salience on their representational behavior on and off of the House floor, it is worth considering the impact of the religion of members' districts on their legislative decisions. Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph claim, "religion does affect roll call voting," yet "mirror[s] trends demonstrated in the masses" (1999, 686). Green and Guth study this phenomenon statistically in their article, "Religion, Representatives, and Roll Calls" (1991). They find constituency religion to be statistically significant in explaining the behavior of members of Congress, even when controls for district demography and members' personal attributes are introduced (1991, 571). Green and Guth find theologically conservative districts to be negatively correlated to a liberal voting pattern, and constituencies of more moderate theological views to be positively correlated to a liberal voting record (1991, 575). They conclude that "denominational composition of districts is independently associated with congressional voting, with the aggregate theological conservatism of districts negatively associated with liberal voting. In addition," they state, "district-level religiosity seems to

influence congressional behavior in the context of member's partisanship and denominational affiliations" (1991, 579). Scholars have accepted that the religion of a member's district affects their voting behavior, yet in my study I will use constituency religion as a control variable to understand the relationship that a member's own religion has on his or her representational behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Scholars of the influence of religion on representational decision making tend either to oversimplify their measure of religion or underestimate the variety of ways in which members of Congress demonstrate their policy stances. James Guth and Lyman Kellstedt have developed detailed measures of religiosity, yet fail to apply their variable to representational behavior, focusing more on representational alignment. Their research is focused solely on the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress (1997-1999) and serves more as a predictive measure of how religious members of Congress align on policy issues rather than studying specific representational behavior (Guth and Kellstedt 2005). Bethany Blackstone and Elizabeth Oldmixon, however, recognize the need for studying religion in the context of representational decision making, yet use self-reported religious affiliation from the *Congressional Directory* as their only measure of religiosity (2015). There is a need in the academic study of religion and politics to combine these two approaches to the study of the influence of the religious salience of members of Congress in how they behave, which is what I hope to accomplish through this thesis.

Through this research I aim to not only update existing research by focusing on the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, but also to combine what I have found to be the most detailed measurements of religious salience with a range of arenas in which political behavior can be observed. I will study sponsorship and co-sponsorship on issues of morality and those outside of the traditional religious realm. The precedent for conducting such research is well established from previous studies, yet none have accomplished the task of finding the relationship between nuanced religious salience variables and legislative behavior outside of roll-call votes on morality issues. The analysis of these precise variables is what I intend to accomplish in this thesis.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

When considering religious salience of members in conjunction with bill- sponsorship tendencies, I predict that religion will prove to be significant in predicting sponsorship behavior, and that members with higher levels of commitment to their religion will be more likely to sponsor and cosponsor bills in the issue categories of abortion, gay rights, religious freedom, and refugee politics. As stated in the previous chapter, after studying existing research on the influence of religion in Congress, I determined that the methods of analysis previously used by scholars in this field were oversimplified in terms of their measure of religion or too narrow in their focus of ways in which members of Congress take policy stances. In order to improve upon these shortcomings of previous research I was faced with the task of designing and collecting data for an original dataset. I needed to collect religious denominations, religious salience, and cosponsorship of select bills to form a useable dataset for the purposes of this research.

I realized quickly that with the depth of research I intended to conduct it was going to become necessary to limit the breadth of my research. For this reason I limited my analysis to the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress (January 2015 through January 2017). In this chapter I will outline how I went about collecting data on members' religion and religious salience and the categorization of these variables, the process of selecting which pieces of legislation to analyze for cosponsorship, and the control variables I introduced to the

study. I will conclude this chapter by addressing the shortcomings of these variables and the data I obtained.

### **MEMBERS' RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS SALIENCE**

Collecting and determining the religion of members of Congress was perhaps the most complex aspect of creating my dataset. As previously stated, I needed some measure of determining both the religion of a member and the extent to which the religion pervades the member's life. The Congressional Directory, the official directory of the U.S. Congress produced by the Joint Committee on Printing (U.S. Government Publishing Office 2016), and the CQ Press Congress Collection, an independent, non-biased congressional reference tool (CQ Press 2017), both contain basic biographical information about members of Congress. In addition to race, I obtained a basic religious denomination for all but 21 members from the CQ database. The Congressional Directory occasionally had a specific congregation with which a member is affiliated, yet most information was contained in the CQ database. In addition to these two sources I consulted each member's biography listed on their official congressional website. If a religion was cited in the member's website biography that was the denomination to which I assigned the member, as this is the religion the member herself chose to display. In cases in which the member did not cite a religion on her website, I used the denomination given by the Congressional Directory. Lastly, if a religion was not cited in either the member's website or Congressional Directory entry, I used the religion provided by CQ.

## CATEGORIZATION OF RELIGION

Once I obtained a religious denomination for each member I was tasked with grouping each member into a denominational family with similar theological leanings. This task is inherently complex as the level of detail each member of Congress provided on his or her religion varies widely and often is no more specific than simply claiming “Christian” as his or her religion. Furthermore, even if a member were to state her denomination as Presbyterian, for example, the level of variation on theological leanings within the Presbyterian denomination varies greatly. The Presbyterian Church is divided into three differing subdivisions: the more liberal Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA), the more conservative Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and the newer evangelical ECO branch of the Presbyterian Church. These three subdivisions would all claim to be Presbyterian, and a member would likely indicate her religion as such if asked to claim a denominational affiliation, yet this label does little to indicate the nature of the member’s beliefs.

Despite the fact that much of the denominational data I was able to obtain was vague, I used Elizabeth Oldmixon’s practice of categorizing denominations into seven groups, and added an eighth group for members who claim no religious affiliation (Oldmixon 2005, 122). She bases her changes on the research conducted by Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney (1987). In categorizing denominations, specifically those that claim a Protestant tradition, Roof and McKinney consider “theology, history, social

class, group experience, race, and other factors” (1987, 79). These criteria account for variance in “core beliefs and institutional commitments along a liberal-to-conservative denominational continuum” (1987, 79). Table 1 shows the categories in which I grouped members of Congress for analysis.

### **Insert Table 1**

As Oldmixon does not specifically state where she would categorize non-denominational Christians I grouped them with Mainline Protestants. Despite the fact that there are necessarily some non-denominational Christians who would better align with Evangelicals who are grouped in the Fundamentalist category I was forced to generalize all 27 members who identify as “Christian” or “non-denominational Christian” into one category, and therefore chose Mainline Protestants. I also included Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) in the Fundamentalist as he identifies as a Pentecostal, which aligns with the denominations Oldmixon grouped together in the Fundamentalist category despite the fact that she does not include Pentecostals in her list.

In addition to vague and unique denominational claims, the other difficulty I came across was whether or not to categorize African American representatives in the “Black Protestants” group if they did not specifically state that they belonged to a Black Protestant church. Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), for example, is African American, yet only cites “Christian” as her religion. In cases such as this I chose to group her and others in the Black Protestants category. I will stipulate that this, again, is gross

oversimplification, yet without more specific data about what church she attends I was forced to include her in a group based on the limited information I could gather.

## RELIGIOSITY

In order to accurately measure religious salience, however, I was interested in more than a self-reported religion. I needed some measure of the extent to which religion is pervasive in a member's life. For this task I also used the data I collected from members' websites and the Congressional Directory. In twenty cases the Congressional Directory listed a Representative as being a member at or attending a specific church, yet the majority of information I received about members' religious salience was obtained through their official biographies on their websites. Members frequently cite regular attendance, membership, leadership positions, and, in five cases, pastoral roles. These kinds of claims are the ones I used to create a scale of religiosity.

To create a scale of religious salience I adopted the model used by James Guth and Lyman Kellstedt. Their scale ranges from one to four with a measure of one indicating "no apparent religious involvement," two indicating "formal membership in a congregation, but no regular activity," three as "frequent or regular attendance at services," and four signaling a member's holding of "leadership positions in a congregation and/or activity in parachurch groups" (Guth and Kellstedt 2005, 10). When assigning values of religiosity to members I encountered several biographies that indicated a member's attendance at a specific church. When given this limited

information I chose to assign a member to the third category, which indicates frequent attendance despite the fact that the biography was ambiguous as to the frequency of the member's attendance.

### **LEGISLATIVE DATA**

To go about selecting which pieces of legislation to analyze I was interested in considering the two categories of bills most frequently studied when determining the influence of religion on Congress: reproductive rights and gay rights. I was also interested in looking at religious freedom in its own category, separate from legislation surrounding reproductive and gay rights. In addition to these three categories I thought it was important to include a category of legislation that goes beyond traditional "morality politics" categories. For this reason I included legislation related to the issue of refugees. These four categories of bills are the categories in which I will study the influence of religion on members' sponsorship behavior.

### **SELECTING LEGISLATION**

When creating a finalized list of legislation I intended to study I used the advanced search tool on Congress.gov, the "official website for U.S. federal legislative information" (Congress.gov 2017). The advanced search allowed me to limit my analysis to all public and private legislation introduced in the House of Representatives during the

114<sup>th</sup> Congress. I was also able to limit the scope of the search to include Legislative Subject Terms to narrow the returns of my search keywords, which were searched in all summaries and titles. Legislative Subject Terms are assigned by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to “describe a measure’s substance and effects” (Congress.gov 2017). The CRS has a vocabulary of over 1,000 Legislative Subject Terms, and I chose relevant subject terms for each category of legislation I was studying in addition to the keyword (or words) I was searching.

When gathering pieces of legislation to include in my abortion category I searched the term “abortion” and included the Legislative Subject Term “abortion.” The religious-freedom category was equally straightforward: I searched “religious freedom” without quotation marks so as to allow for word variation, and included the Legislative Subject Term “religion.” For refugees, as well, I only included one Legislative Subject Term; I searched the term “refugee” and included the Legislative Subject Term “refugees, asylum, and displaced persons.” The gay-rights category was slightly more detailed as I included three relevant Legislative Subject Terms: I searched “gay” and included the terms “marriage and family status,” “sex, gender, sexual orientation discrimination,” and “civil rights and liberties, minority issues.”

The abortion search returned 42 pieces of legislation, religious freedom returned 75, gay rights returned 12, and refugee policies returned 73 pieces of legislation. As this return of 202 bills was going to be too large for me to code the cosponsorship for each bill I added an additional criteria that required each bill to have greater than or equal to 50 cosponsors in order for me to include it in my dataset. This stipulation not only

simplified the process of collecting cosponsors, but also ensures that the bills I am analyzing are subjectively important enough to members of Congress that 50 or more members are willing to cosponsor such a piece of legislation. Once narrowing the list of bills by imposing the 50-cosponsor cutoff, I was left with 13 bills related to abortion, 15 religious freedom bills, 7 pieces of legislation related to gay rights, and 8 concerning refugee policies, totaling 43 pieces of legislation.

In categories that contain legislation that produce opposing cosponsorship trends—for example within the abortion category there are pieces of legislation advocating for pro-life measures and others advocating for pro-choice causes—I divided the category into a subgroup so as to better analyze representational behavior. Abortion was divided into a pro-life subcategory, containing 12 pieces of legislation, and a pro-choice subcategory containing two pieces of legislation; and the refugee category was divided into a pro-refugee section, which only contains one resolution, and an anti-refugee subcategory, containing 7 bills. Religious freedom and gay rights were maintained as one category as the legislation within these two categories advocated for religious freedom and gay rights, respectively.

#### COMPILING COSPONSORSHIP DATA

Once I had my list of legislation I needed to add data on each member's cosponsorship for these 43 bills, resolutions, and concurrent resolutions. I used the "cosponsors" tab on congress.gov for each piece of legislation and added a dummy

variable with 1 indicating a member signed on as a cosponsor and 0 indicating the absence of cosponsorship for each member for these 43 bills.

#### HANDLING VACANCIES

There were a handful of districts in which a member did not finish their term in office, which posed a problem when merging my data with descriptive data about congressional districts. For all eight cases in which a seat was left vacant for any period of time I used the data from the representative who held the seat longer during the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, which correlated to having more cosponsorship data for each district. (See note on handling vacancies in the appendix.)

#### CONTROL VARIABLES

In addition to collecting data on members' religion and cosponsorship patterns I included three control variables in addition to standard control variables, such as party and race. The three additional variables I added to my analysis are the 2014 Cook Partisan Voter Index, DW-Nominate Scores, and a measure of District Religion.

## 2014 COOK PARTISAN VOTER INDEX

Through his analysis, Barry Burden concludes that district interests affect proactive behavior, such as cosponsorship trends (Burden 2007, 87). District interests can be measured in a variety of specific policy questions, yet I chose to measure district interest through partisanship, as measured by the margin of victory in previous presidential races. In order to control for the partisan leanings of each Congressional District I included the 2014 Cook Partisan Voter Index (PVI) in my dataset. The Cook PVI serves as an index that attempts to “find an objective measurement of each congressional district that allows comparisons between states and districts” (The Cook Political Report 2017). The Cook PVI indicates how conservative or how liberal each district was in the previous two presidential elections, with a score of R+3 indicating that the district was, on average, 3 points more conservative than the national average in the previous two presidential elections. The 2014 PVI, therefore, includes districts’ voting patterns in the 2008 and 2012 elections (The Cook Political Report 2017).

When I inputted the PVI into my dataset I indicated Democratic districts with a negative number and Republican districts with a positive number. A representative with a district PVI of -34, therefore, would indicate the member’s district voted an average 34 points more Democratic than the nation as a whole in the 2008 and 2012 elections.

## DW-NOMINATE SCORES

The second control variable I incorporated into my analysis is the DW-NOMINATE Score for each member, as generated by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal. The Cook PVI allows me to control for the ideology of each district whereas the DW-Nominate Score serves to control the ideology of each member.

DW-Nominate stands for dynamic, weighted, nominal three-step estimation, and is a roll-call scaling method that was created by Poole and Rosenthal in 1985 (Poole and Rosenthal 2001, 6). NOMINATE scales “legislators by their ideological location in so-called issue space within each and every Congress” (Everson, Valelly, and Wiseman 2016, 98). This scale uses all non-unanimous roll calls to map legislators on a left-right issue space that indicates members’ policy preferences relative to other members. This spatial measure is useful in controlling for the overall ideology of each member.

Ideology, as measured by NOMINATE scores, is useful in determining the degree to which a member adheres to his or her party. NOMINATE serves as a more specific control variable than party, as party is limiting in its binary identification, whereas NOMINATE introduces a spatial approach to interpreting Congress (Everson, Valelly, and Wiseman 2016, 101). Such an approach is useful in determining the extremity of a member’s views and if it is her ideology is differentiates her from her party, or if perhaps another factor, such as religiosity is at play.

## DISTRICT RELIGION

In addition to controlling for the ideology of each state and the partisan leaning of each member I argue that controlling for the constituents' religion in each district is equally as important. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Green and Guth found that the denominational composition of a district was significant in predicting voting patterns of representatives. As district religion has proven to be significant in affecting legislative behavior I would be remiss to neglect such a variable when looking to understand the role that a member's religion has on his or her cosponsorship behavior. To obtain information for each congressional district I used data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) and the U.S. Religion Census: Religious Congregations and Membership Study (RCMS).

The CCES is a survey taken by over 50,000 citizens across the nation to “study how Americans view Congress and hold their representatives accountable during elections, how they voted and their electoral experiences, and how their behavior and experiences vary with political geography and social context” (Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2015, 7). This survey was selected as the primary source from which I obtained my data as it provided the most data for each individual district and the most options for respondents to select as their religious identity. Despite this fact, some districts had fewer than 100 respondents so making generalizations about the dominant religion for that district is a bit crude. Other national surveys, like the American National Election Studies (ANES) survey, however, have even fewer options for respondents to

select when identifying their religion: the ANES survey only gives respondents the option to answer Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or other/none. The sample size of the ANES is also less than a tenth of the size of the CCES (Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2015).

After determining that I was going to include data from the CCES survey I categorized each congressional district with a unique code, labeled “statecd,” to allow Stata to analyze each district individually. This unique code allowed me to obtain summary religious data for all survey respondents in a particular district. I tabulated data from each district and used the “religpew” CCES variable to determine if the plurality of respondents in a district were Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Eastern or Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, Nothing in particular, or Something else. In only a handful of districts was there one religion to which a majority of adherents prescribe, and in a few cases, the plurality was under 30% of respondents in the district. Despite these low plurality numbers I still used this data for the reasons previously mentioned.

The biggest complication that the CCES dataset provided, however, was the fact that despite the multitude of options given respondents to indicate which religion they adhere to, there was only one response for Protestants, whereas my categories for members’ religion have four (Fundamentalist and non-traditional conservatives, Mainline, Black, and Liberal). In order to have consistent categories for members of Congress and their district I needed to consult an additional data source. The RCMS, as compiled by Mark Stetzler of High Point University, contained more specific data on the Protestant makeup of each district (Stetzler and Yanus 2015). The RCMS, however, only

indicates the percentage of a district that is Evangelical or Mainline, so I am still left without a measure of Liberal Protestants and Black Protestants. For each district that the CCES indicated was Protestant, I cross-referenced the RCMS to determine whether the district was more Evangelical or Mainline. In ten cases the percentage of Evangelicals and Mainlines in a district were equal, so I indicated that the district was Mainline Protestant. One potential problem this dataset poses, however, is that it records religious membership, not just identification like the CCES. For this reason there were discrepancies between the RCMS and the CCES in terms of if Protestant or Roman Catholic was the dominant religion. I maintained the results of the CCES and simply consulted the RCMS to determine whether Evangelical or Mainline had higher membership rates in districts that the CCES indicated were Protestant. One inconsistency between these two surveys, however, is that the CCES was administered following the 2014 Congressional Election, whereas the RCMS data was obtained following the 2012 Presidential Election. It is unlikely that there would be a substantial change in the RCMS data between 2012 and 2014, but combining these two surveys is operating on the assumption that the RCMS and CCES data are similar enough to do so.

Once the religion for each district was determined, I inputted the religion—based on the categories I used when classifying members of Congress—into my database. In the instances in which there was a tie for the majority religion I took an average of the two religion categories. For example, if a district were tied between Evangelical and Roman Catholic the district's religion value would be 1.5.

## CONCLUSION

In compiling my original dataset I was tasked with collecting data on members' religious identity, religious salience, and cosponsorship behavior; including a measure of control for members' ideological leanings; accounting for the religious affiliation of each district; and controlling for the partisanship of each district. I believe the data I have collected is an improvement upon other datasets that researchers have used to study this issue as I accounted for both religious affiliation and religious salience and included non-morality issues in the types of bills I am studying.

I will not hesitate, however, to admit that there are shortcomings with this dataset. In terms of collecting data on the religious affiliation and religiosity of representatives, members were not equally specific or inclusive on their websites or in the Congressional Directory. Members make strategic decisions when determining how to present themselves to their district, and a key form of their presentation is their official biography. From personal experience with a few members, I know that their websites neglected to include their faith despite the fact that it is important to them and that they have admitted to letting their religion influence their decision-making. I can imagine that this is true for many members of Congress, yet I have no way of confirming nor denying this, so I was left with what information I found on their official website, in the Congressional Directory, or in CQ Press' Congress Collection. Measuring religious affiliation and salience in this manner likely undercounts the religiously committed, and will therefore underestimate the effect of religion on members' legislative behavior. This

underrepresentation of religious salience will be demonstrated in my data as a conservative measure of significance: if religious salience or denomination is significant in my data, then it is likely that if I had a more accurate measure of religion my data would be more significant than what I found.

The categorizations I was forced to make when grouping members into denominational classes are also a shortcoming of this dataset. As previously mentioned, when assigning African American Protestants to a denominational class, if they did not specify a particular church I chose to group them with Black Protestants. If a member only listed that they were “Christian” or “non-denominational Christian” I grouped them with Mainline Protestants, but this decision is also one in which I was forced to make gross generalizations based on the limited information members gave.

This dataset is not without its flaws, yet I argue that it is a vast improvement upon previous data researchers have used for the study of the influence of religion on legislative behavior.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSES

In conducting my analysis I was interested in studying the role of religion in members of Congress' cosponsorship behavior in the following four legislative areas: abortion, gay rights, religious freedom, and refugee issues. To examine the scope of religion's influence I studied both the impact of the member's denominational affiliation and religious salience for each of the four legislative categories. I predict that religion will be significant in predicting cosponsorship trends across all four categories, yet I expect the direction of the relationships between denominational affiliation and religiosity for each category will differ. In this chapter I will first outline my hypotheses for each legislative category, then outline descriptive and summary statistics for my independent variables, and conclude by analyzing regression models for each of my four legislative categories.

### HYPOTHESES

As outlined in my methods chapter I divided the abortion category into two subcategories: pro-life and pro-choice. I predict that as a member's denomination gets more religiously conservative (as denomgroup values decrease) a member will be more likely to cosponsor pro-life legislation. For this reason I predict that there will be a negative relationship between denomgroup and pro-life cosponsorship. I also assume that as a member becomes more religious (as religiosity approaches 4) she will be more

likely to cosponsor pro-life legislation, which will produce a positive relationship between religiosity and pro-life cosponsorship. I predict the inverse to be true for pro-choice cosponsorship and anticipate that there will be a positive relationship between denomgroup and pro-choice cosponsorship and a negative relationship between religiosity and pro-choice cosponsorship.

As the support for gay rights varies widely over the religious spectrum I predict that denomgroup will be significant and have a positive relationship with gay-rights legislation, indicating that more religiously liberal members have a higher likelihood of cosponsoring gay-rights legislation and religiously conservative members will be less likely to cosponsor legislation supporting gay rights. I also predict that there will be a negative relationship between religiosity and cosponsorship of gay-rights legislation, as I anticipate that members who are more religious will be less likely to support such legislation.

For religious freedom, I expect to see similar trends to pro-life cosponsorship. I anticipate that denomgroup will be negatively correlated to religious freedom cosponsorship and that religiosity will be positively correlated to a member's propensity to cosponsor legislation protecting religious freedom.

Lastly, for the category of refugee issues I predict that a member's denomination and religious salience will be significant, yet I am unsure whether a religiously conservative would be more likely to cosponsor pro-refugee or anti-refugee legislation. As the religious right has made cases both for and against admitting refugees into this country I cannot make a clear claim as to whether religious conservatives and those with

higher levels of religious salience will be more or less likely to sponsor pro-refugee legislation. For this reason I do not have a directional hypothesis for either category of refugee bills.

### **SUMMARY STATISTICS**

After the process of collecting and compiling my data was complete I began my analysis by conducting simple summary statistics. This section serves as a discussion of these findings.

### **SAMPLE SIZE**

For all of my analyses I have a sample size of 435 members of Congress, with 188 Democrats and 247 Republicans. I obtained cosponsorship, denominational, and religious salience data for the additional six delegates to the House of Representatives, yet was forced to exclude them from my analyses as they do not have NOMINATE scores because they do not vote on legislation. In addition to the lack of NOMINATE scores, delegates' districts were not reported in the Cook Partisan Voter Index report, the CCES, or the RCMS. For this reason—as I included either NOMINATE scores, Cook scores, or district religion in all of my models—I was forced to exclude delegates from my analyses.

## DENOMINATIONAL GROUP

As discussed in the previous chapter, my denominational variable was coded on a scale from 1 to 8 with 1 indicating more traditional religions and 8 indicating no religious affiliation. As seen in Table 2, the average denomgroup value is 2.816, indicating the average member of Congress is between Roman Catholic and Mainline Protestant, but closer to mainline Protestant.

### **Insert Table 2**

The average Democratic member of Congress has a denomgroup value of 3.510 (Table 3), indicating they lie evenly between mainline Protestant and black Protestant.

### **Insert Table 3**

As Table 4 shows, the average Republican member of Congress, however, has a denomgroup value of 2.287, which signifies members lie between Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant in their religious identification.

### **Insert Table 4**

The denominational group with the most members of Congress is mainline Protestants, with Roman Catholics at a close second, followed by Fundamentalists and nontraditional Protestants with 149, 138, and 70 members, respectively. This trend holds true for Republican members of Congress, yet for Democrats the third most popular religious identification is not Fundamentalists, but rather black Protestants. More Democratic members identify as Jews or claim no religious affiliation than members who identify as Fundamentalist or nontraditional Protestants. 97.17 percent of Republican members of Congress identify as Fundamentalist, Roman Catholic, or mainline Protestant, whereas only 62.23 of Democrats fall into these three denominational categories. This indicates that Republican members of Congress tend to fall within the three more conservative religious traditions whereas Democrat members of Congress are more diverse and less conservative in their religious identification. Not only are Republican members of Congress more conservative in their religious identification, they are also more religious.

#### RELIGIOSITY

My religiosity variable was coded on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating no apparent religious involvement and 4 indicating that the member holds a leadership position within her congregation and/or involvement in a parachurch organization. Table 5 shows the mean religiosity value for the 435 members of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress is 1.418 with a standard deviation of 0.885.

**Insert Table 5**

Republicans have a higher mean religiosity value of 1.555 than that of the Democrats (1.239), as illustrated in Tables 6 and 7, respectively.

**Insert Tables 6 and 7**

341 members of Congress indicate no apparent religious involvement (a religiosity value of 1); 35 members of Congress indicate a formal membership in a congregation, but no frequent attendance (religiosity = 2); 30 members cite frequent or regular attendance at services (religiosity = 3); and 29 members indicate that they hold leadership positions or are involved in parachurch organizations (religiosity = 4). Of those 29 members with a religiosity value of 4, however, 22 of them are Republicans. 87.23 percent of Democrats have a religiosity value of 1, whereas 71.66 percent of Republicans have a religiosity value of 1. This goes to show that overall Republicans tend to have higher levels of religious salience than Democrats.

78.39 percent of members fall into the religiosity category of 1 whereas only 6.67 percent of members have a religiosity score of 4. This indicates that despite the fact that only 17 members, or 3.91 percent of members, profess to have no religious affiliation most members are religiously uninvolved. This discrepancy is likely due to the fact that

members gain a political advantage by signaling to their district that they are religiously affiliated despite the fact that perhaps they are uninvolved with their professed religion.

These basic statistics show that the average member of Congress is Republican, identifying ideologically between Roman Catholic and Mainline Protestant, with a religious-salience level between no apparent religious involvement and formal membership in a congregation, yet no regular activity.

### **MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS**

As discussed in my methods chapter, when conducting my analyses I wanted to control for the ideology of members of Congress, the ideology of their districts, and the religion of congressional districts. Each of these controls was introduced in my regressions as the independent variables *dwnom1*, *cookpvi*, and *districtreli*, respectively. As I began conducting my regressions, however, I noticed that in several cases in which I included both NOMINATE and Cook scores in the same model, one of these control variables was often extremely insignificant. Because of these unexpected results I conducted a correlation test to determine the collinearity between my variables, namely *dwnom1* and *cookpvi*. The Pearson's *r* correlation values I obtained, as seen in Table 8, were not too concerning for any case other than that of the relationship between *dwnom1* and *cookpvi*. In this case NOMINATE and Cook are correlated at a value of 0.8718, indicating that they are very highly correlated.

### Insert Table 8

Due to the high collinearity between *dwnom1* and *cookpvi* I continued my analyses by creating separate models using *dwnom1* and *cookpvi* for each legislative category. For each legislative category, therefore, I had four different regression tests for each category: the first included members' denomination, the religion of each congressional district, and NOMINATE scores; the second included members' denomination, district religion, and Cook Partisan Voter Index (PVI) scores; the third consisted of the religious salience of members of Congress, district religion, and NOMINATE; and the fourth had religiosity, district religion, and Cook PVI scores. I will begin by analyzing the effect of religion on cosponsorship of abortion, then gay rights, followed by religious freedom, and concluding with refugee-related legislation.

### ABORTION

As stated in the previous chapter, in order to have clear regression results it was necessary to separate pieces of legislation within the same category based on their ideological bend. If I were to include both pro-life and pro-choice legislation in the same model understanding the effect of religion on abortion cosponsorship the results would likely be insignificant, yet when I separated my analysis into two separate sub-sections I was able to gain significant insight into religion's effect in both pro-life and pro-choice cosponsorship.

*Pro-Life*

As expected, members' denomination had a negative relationship with cosponsorship of pro-life legislation and religiosity had a positive relationship. This indicates that as a member becomes more religiously conservative and has higher levels of religious salience she is more likely to cosponsor pro-life legislation.

In predicting cosponsorship behavior on pro-life legislation a member's denomination proved significant when controlling for the religions of congressional districts and the partisanship of districts, yet not in the model that includes NOMINATE instead of Cook PVI. Religiosity is significant both the model that controls for members' partisanship and district partisanship. The direction of these relationships is also consistent with what I hypothesized.

When controlling for the religion of congressional districts and the partisanship of members, neither the member's religion nor the district's religion are significant in predicting cosponsorship trends (see Table 9.1). NOMINATE, however, is significant, and has a positive correlation with pro-life cosponsorship.

**Insert Table 9**

In the model for members' denomination and pro-life cosponsorship that includes Cook scores as opposed to NOMINATE scores, the denomination of members of

Congress is significant and has a negative coefficient (see Table 9.2). These results are consistent with what I predicted, as this relationship indicates that as a member's religious identification increases by one point (a shift in the liberal direction of denominations) the proportion of a member's cosponsorship of pro-life legislation decreases by 0.186. The effect of the partisanship of congressional districts is 0.0142, and the effect of the denomination of districts is -0.00192 (see Table 9.2).

Religiosity, on the other hand, is significant in both the model that includes NOMINATE scores (Table 9.3) and the model that includes Cook scores (Table 9.4). In both cases, the religiosity coefficient is positive, which is consistent with my prediction. As religiosity increases by one point (shifts on the scale towards more religious) the proportion of cosponsored pro-life bills increases by 0.0252 in the model that includes NOMINATE and by 0.0352 in the model that includes Cook scores. In each case increasing the district's denomination by one category in the more religiously liberal direction decreases the proportion of cosponsored pro-life bills by 0.00485 and 0.00245, respectively (see Table 9, models 3 and 4).

In all cases of pro-life cosponsorship the direction of the relationship between my member-denomination and member-religiosity variables is consistent with what I expected. In three out of the four models (all models except members' denomination when including NOMINATE scores) my variables of interest were significant which leads me to believe that member's religion and religious salience is an accurate and significant predictor in determining cosponsorship behavior on pro-life legislation. These relationships go to show that not only is a member's tie to his professed denomination

key in determining his stance on pro-life legislation, but his level of religious salience is also significant in determining the proportion of pro-life bills he will cosponsor.

### *Pro-Choice*

In three out of my four models measuring pro-choice cosponsorship the effect of my key variables was as expected: denomination has a positive effect on cosponsorship of pro-life legislation and religiosity has a negative effect. This indicates that as a member becomes more religiously liberal and less religious she cosponsors a higher proportion of pro-choice legislation.

In both models (including NOMINATE and including Cook scores) measuring the relationship between members' denomination and pro-choice cosponsorship members' denomination is significant in predicting cosponsorship. Both NOMINATE and Cook scores are significant in their respective models (see Table 10, models 1 and 2 respectively), and the religion of congressional districts is not significant in either model. In addition to being significant, the denominational variable also behaves as I expected: there is a positive relationship between a member's denomination and the proportion of pro-choice bills she cosponsored in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. In other words, as a member's religion becomes more liberal the proportion of bills she cosponsors that support pro-choice legislation increases.

**Insert Table 10**

The religious salience of members of Congress, on the other hand, is not significant in predicting cosponsorship of pro-choice legislation. In both models in which I analyzed the relationship between religiosity and pro-choice cosponsorship the religiosity variable is not significant. NOMINATE (Table 10.3) and Cook scores (Table 10.4) are significant in their respective models, and the religion of congressional districts is not significant in either model.

The relationships between members' religion and their religious salience and cosponsorship of pro-life legislation are what I anticipated, aside from the lack of significance between religiosity and cosponsorship. The directions of all variables behaved as expected, with more religiously liberal and less religious members more likely to cosponsor legislation that is supportive of pro-choice policies. Whereas pro-life cosponsorship is impacted by both denominational affiliation and religious salience, pro-choice legislation is less affected by religiosity and more determined by the denomination to which a member ascribes.

## GAY RIGHTS

The direction for my key variables in all four of my models' relationship with gay rights was as expected: there is a positive relationship between members' denomination and cosponsorship and a negative relationship with religious salience and cosponsorship.

As seen in Table 11.1, when controlling for the religion of congressional districts and the partisanship of members the denominational identification of members is both positive and significant. A one-point shift in the liberal direction of religious denominations indicates an increase in the proportion of cosponsored gay-rights bills by 0.0145. The religion of congressional districts is not significant, yet the ideology of members, as expected, is significant. NOMINATE has a negative relationship with gay-rights cosponsorship, which, again, is not surprising as an increase of one point in NOMINATE measures the change in cosponsorship trends from an extremely Democratic member to a centrist member (or the change from a centrist member to an extremely Republican member), which indicates that the proportion of gay-rights bill a member will cosponsor decreases by 0.525 (see Table 11.1).

### **Insert Table 11**

When Cook scores are introduced into the model in place of NOMINATE scores, members' denomination is still a significant predictor in determining cosponsorship of gay rights legislation (see Table 11.2). Denomination still has a positive relationship with cosponsorship, just as it did in the model that included NOMINATE instead of Cook scores. In this model, a one-point shift in members' denomination in the liberal direction raises the cosponsorship proportion of gay-rights legislation by 0.0289, and a one-point shift in the liberal direction for Cook scores raises the cosponsorship proportion by 0.0127 (see Table 11.2).

In both denomination models, the religion of congressional districts is not significant in predicting cosponsorship of gay-rights legislation. The significance of denomination in both models, however, indicates that the relative conservatism or liberalism of a member's religious affiliation is significant in determining their propensity to cosponsor legislation that supports gay rights. When controlling for members' partisan leanings and the partisanship of congressional districts denomination still has a significant effect on whether or not members cosponsor gay-rights legislation. Religiosity, on the other hand, is not as consistently significant.

In one model measuring the effect of religiosity on the cosponsorship of gay-rights legislation the variable proved to be significant, whereas in the other it was not significant. As seen in Table 11.3, when controlling for the religion of congressional districts and the partisanship of members, the religious salience of members of the House of Representatives is not significant. Only NOMINATE scores were significant in this model, with a one-point change in NOMINATE in the conservative direction estimating that member will cosponsor 53.9 percentage points fewer bills supporting gay-rights legislation.

In the case when I controlled for the partisanship of districts as opposed to the partisanship of members, religiosity is significant in predicting cosponsorship, along with Cook scores (see Table 11.4). The religion of districts is not significant in either model. An increase in religiosity by one point lowers the cosponsorship proportion of gay-rights legislation by 0.0283 points on average (see Table 11.4). An increase in Cook scores by one point also decreases the cosponsorship proportion, yet in this case by 0.0135 points

(see Table 11.4). The direction of the religiosity variable, however, is consistent with the direction of the NOMINATE variable and my hypothesis: as the level of religiosity increases by one point, the proportion of bills a member cosponsors supporting gay-rights decreases by 0.0283.

As illustrated with my four models, the strength of the relationships between my two independent variables (denomgroup and religiosity) and gay-rights cosponsorship varies, yet it is clear that members' denomination is significant in predicting cosponsorship patterns in this legislative area. Religiosity is significant in one case, yet not in the other that controls for NOMINATE rather than Cook PVI. This shows that in the model that controls for Cook scores, religiosity is accounting for some of the change that exists within the NOMINATE variable. When controlling for NOMINATE as opposed to Cook there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis as most of the model is explained by the partisanship of members rather than their religiosity.

#### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In all four models in which I measured cosponsorship of religious-freedom legislation neither members' denomination nor members' religious salience was significant, yet in all cases the religion of congressional districts is significant with a 90% confidence interval. These four models are the only models in all of my analyses in which district religion is a significant predictor in cosponsorship trends.

When measuring the effect of members' denomination on religious-freedom cosponsorship and controlling for district religion and member partisanship, district religion is significant with a 90% confidence interval and NOMINATE is significant with a 99% confidence interval (see Table 12.1). Denomination, however, is not significant in predicting religious-freedom cosponsorship. I anticipated that members' denomination would be negatively correlated to religious-freedom cosponsorship, yet in this case denomination has a positive coefficient. The fact that denomination is not significant, however, indicates that we cannot reject the null hypothesis and the coefficient, therefore, is inconclusive. District religion has a negative relationship and NOMINATE has a positive relationship with religious-freedom cosponsorship, both of which were expected. These coefficients indicate that as the plurality religion of congressional districts becomes one unit more liberal in tradition the likelihood of cosponsoring religious-freedom legislation decreases by a proportion of 0.0106, and that as members' NOMINATE score shifts one point in the conservative direction their likelihood of cosponsoring such legislation increases by 0.0631 (see Table 12.1). NOMINATE has a much smaller effect in this model than it does in other models, yet it is still statistically significant.

### **Insert Table 12**

Similarly, when controlling for Cook Partisan Voter Index scores as opposed to NOMINATE, district religion remains significant at the 90% confidence interval level

and with 99% confidence I can conclude that Cook is significant, while members' denomination is, again, insignificant in predicting cosponsorship of religious-freedom legislation (see Table 12.2). Like in the previous model, members' denomination has a positive regression coefficient, which is the opposite of what I anticipated, yet the lack of significance indicates that I cannot reject the null hypothesis of no relationship with religious-freedom cosponsorship. District religion and Cook scores both behave in the manner I would expect: district religion has a negative relationship with religious-freedom cosponsorship and Cook scores have a positive relationship with cosponsorship. These results indicate that as districts become more religiously liberal, members are less likely to cosponsor legislation supporting religious freedom, and while members' districts become more ideologically conservative members are more likely to cosponsor religious-freedom legislation. Table 12.2 indicates that as districts shift one denomination group in the liberal direction they are 0.0104 percentage points less likely to cosponsor religious-freedom legislation. A shift of one point in the conservative direction for Cook scores indicates that the average proportion of religious-freedom bills a member cosponsors will increase by 0.00161.

In both models analyzing the effect of member's denomination on religious freedom cosponsorship, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for the denominational variable. Such results indicate that a member's denomination is not a significant predictor in determining a member's cosponsorship habits on religious-freedom legislation. The religion of a member's district, however, is significant in this case and in no other models that measure the effect of members' denomination. More significant

than district religion, however, are the ideology of members and the partisanship of congressional districts.

The results for the effect of religiosity on cosponsorship of religious-freedom legislation are similar to the results measuring the effect of members' denomination on such cosponsorship. In both religiosity models, religiosity is not significant enough to reject the null hypothesis, yet district religion is significant at the 90% confidence interval level, and I can conclude with 99% confidence that NOMINATE and Cook scores are both significant.

In the model in which I control for the partisanship of members and district religion, both control variables behave as expected while members' religious salience is not significant (see Table 12.3). Table 12.3 shows that district religion has a negative coefficient, indicating that as the plurality religion of the district shifts one denominational category in the liberal direction members will cosponsor a proportion of 0.0106 fewer religious-freedom bills. NOMINATE has a positive relationship with religious-freedom cosponsorship and the proportion of bills a member cosponsors increases by 0.0590 if a member's partisanship increases, or shifts in the conservative direction, by one point.

When controlling for district partisanship, as opposed to members' ideology district religion is still significant at the 90% level and members' religiosity is still insignificant (see Table 12.4). In both religiosity models there is a positive relationship between religiosity and religious-freedom cosponsorship, which is what I hypothesized, yet the lack of significance does not allow me to reject the null hypothesis. Table 12.4

indicates that as the denomination of districts shifts one category in the conservative direction a member will cosponsor 1.04 percent fewer religious-freedom bills. The relationship between Cook scores and cosponsorship, however, is positive, illustrating that as Cook scores increase by one point the proportion of religious-freedom cosponsorship a member engages in will increase by 0.00154 (see Table 12.4).

The relationships I found in the four models I used to analyze the effect of members' religious identification and religious salience on their cosponsorship of religious-freedom legislation were surprising. In none of my four models was either of my member-religion independent variables significant. These results are perhaps due to the fact that religious freedom, unlike the previous three legislative categories (pro-life, pro-choice, and gay-rights), is a more bipartisan issue as it is constitutionally protected. This fact could explain in part why the strength of NOMINATE in all four religious-freedom models is significantly less than it is in other models.

NOMINATE's strength in the religious freedom models is significantly smaller than it is in the three previous legislative categories of pro-life, pro-choice, and gay-rights. If supporting religious-freedom legislation is a less contested issue then perhaps members' partisanship is not the best predictor for determining cosponsorship. It is still significant, yet not as strong as it is in other models.

The significance of district religion is also worth noting in these four models. Despite using a level of significance of  $p < 0.05$  for all other regressions in my analysis, the fact that in these four cases, and no other models, district religion had p-values less than 0.10 is interesting. This shows that despite the fact that a member's denomination or

religious salience might not be significant in predicting cosponsorship of religious-freedom legislation, the religion of congressional districts is still significant. As members' districts become more conservative they have a higher incentive to appeal to district preferences in taking a proactive stance on religious freedom, which leads to a higher proportion of cosponsored bills. Despite the lack of significance for members' denomination and religiosity, religion is still a factor in these models, as members respond to their district's religion in making decisions about cosponsoring religious-freedom legislation.

#### REFUGEES

The last category in which I analyzed the relationship between members' religious identification and religious salience and their cosponsorship trends was refugee-related legislation. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, I did not have directional hypotheses for how denomination and religiosity would affect cosponsorship, yet I expected both variables to be significant in predicting cosponsorship trends.

#### *Pro-Refugee*

As I only included one pro-refugee resolution in my analysis I conducted logit tests to observe the relationship between religion and cosponsorship, as opposed to the regressions I used in all other cases. The results for my pro-refugee models are

intriguing, yet not all that surprising. There is a positive relationship between members' denomination and their propensity to cosponsor H.Res. 650, and also a positive—yet not statistically significant—relationship between members' religious salience and their likelihood to cosponsor this pro-refugee resolution.

When controlling for the religion of congressional districts and the partisanship of members, only the denomination of members of Congress is significant (see Table 13.1). NOMINATE is not significant in this case, which is not entirely surprising as 36 of the 70 bill cosponsors are Democrat and the other 34 cosponsors are Republican members of Congress. District religion is also not significant, leaving members' denomination as the only variable by which to explain pro-refugee cosponsorship in this model. Members' denomination is significant in determining the likelihood of a member cosponsoring H.Res. 650, and there is a positive relationship between denomination and cosponsorship. This positive relationship indicates that as members become more religiously liberal they are more likely to cosponsor this pro-refugee resolution.

### **Insert Table 13**

Including Cook scores in my model in the place of NOMINATE does not change the significance of district religion, and members' denomination remains positive (see Table 13.2). The significance level of denomination decreases slightly, as the p-value is now greater than 0.5, but still less than 0.1. Cook Partisan Voter Index is also significant, and has a negative relationship with cosponsorship of H.Res. 650, indicating that as

members' districts become more conservative they are less likely to cosponsor this pro-refugee resolution. This trend is not surprising, as conservative districts are very likely to be adamant about refugee issues, which encourages members to behave consistently with their districts' policy references.

In both models measuring the effect of religiosity on cosponsorship of H.Res. 650 religiosity is not significant, and I, therefore, cannot reject the null hypothesis.

NOMINATE and Cook scores are both significant—NOMINATE with 90% confidence and Cook with 99% confidence (see Table 13, models 3 and 4, respectively).

With all of my logit tests for pro-refugee cosponsorship the R-squared values are extremely low (between 0.0085 and 0.0283), which indicates that this model neglects an important factor in determining members' propensity to cosponsor such a resolution. It is possible that geographic location of a member's district will affect her propensity to support (or oppose) pro-refugee legislation. Additionally, this specific resolution is not particularly linked to most contemporary refugee conversations; this resolution would "provide for the safety and security of Iranian dissidents living in Camp Liberty in Iraq" (Foreign Affairs Committee 2016). If this resolution were more closely linked to Syrian refugees or another issue more publicized it is likely that the results would have been different.

*Anti-Refugee*

The final subsection of regressions I conducted was to determine the relationship between anti-refugee cosponsorship and denomination and religiosity. None of the four models I conducted for anti-refugee cosponsorship had significant results aside from NOMINATE and Cook scores.

When analyzing the effect of members' denomination on their cosponsorship of anti-refugee bills and controlling for district religion and member partisanship, the only significant variable is member ideology (see Table 14.1). NOMINATE has a positive relationship with anti-refugee cosponsorship, indicating that as members become more conservative they are more likely to cosponsor anti-refugee legislation. Neither members' denomination nor their district's religion is significant in predicting anti-refugee cosponsorship, which indicates that the cosponsoring of this legislation is a partisan decision, not based on religious ideals.

**Insert Table 14**

Replacing NOMINATE with Cook has no effect on the relationship between denomination or district religion and anti-refugee cosponsorship (see Table 14.2). Cook scores are significant yet again, and have a positive coefficient indicating that as a member's district becomes more ideologically conservative she is more likely to cosponsor anti-refugee legislation. This model upholds my conclusion from the model

that includes NOMINATE, claiming that anti-refugee cosponsorship is a partisan, rather than religious, issue.

When looking at the effect of members' religiosity on their cosponsorship habits of anti-refugee legislation, the data indicates that there are no significant relationships between religiosity or district religion. The only variables I included in my models that are significant are NOMINATE and Cook scores (see Table 14, models 3 and 4, respectively). Both are positive, illustrating that as members and districts become more ideologically conservative the proportion of anti-refugee legislation they cosponsor will increase.

I did not anticipate the lack of religious significance in anti-refugee legislation compared to the denominational significance in the pro-refugee resolution I studied, yet in retrospect this trend is not surprising. More liberal members of Congress who ascribe to liberal religious traditions are supportive of refugees, yet when considering anti-refugee legislation, which ideological conservatives support, religion is not significant in predicting trends as most religious traditions have doctrines counter to this political stance.

#### **INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBERS' RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS SALIENCE**

As the religion of congressional districts was not significant in any case other than when considering cosponsorship of religious-freedom legislation I was curious what the extent of the impact of district religion is when interacting with religiosity. As Green and

Guth found significant relationships between constituency religion and members' legislative behavior I was surprised that the district religion variable I used was rarely significant (1997, 571). I was additionally intrigued by the lack of significance of religiosity across my models. These two findings led me to question the strength of religiosity if a member's religion matches that of her district. I predict that if a member's denomination is consistent with her district's denomination that the effect of religiosity on her cosponsorship patterns will not change, or might even get weaker. I anticipate that the effect of religiosity will strengthen, however, in cases in which a member does not match her district's denomination. As Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph suggest, members tend to mirror the masses, so when a member does not mirror her district on religious affiliation she is put in the position of deciding whether to uphold her personal religious beliefs or to mirror the beliefs of her district (1999, 686). I predict that the strength of a member's religious salience will determine her propensity to uphold her personal views or to act with her district. For this reason, I anticipate that when interacting a match variable with religiosity, the effect of religiosity will increase when the match variable is 0, indicating the lack of a consistent denomination across the member and her district. This will be demonstrated through negative coefficients for the interaction variable, demonstrating that when a match exists the effect of religiosity weakens.

The results from the interactive regressions I conducted are consistent with my hypothesis in all cases except for pro-life and anti-refugee cosponsorship. There is a positive correlation between the interaction variable in the cases of pro-life and anti-refugee cosponsorship, which indicates that as members match their district's religion the

effect of religiosity on cosponsorship strengthens, yet in all other cases a match between a member's denomination and their district's denomination weakens the effect of religiosity on cosponsorship (See Table 15).

### **Insert Table 15**

In the four other models in which the interaction variable has a negative coefficient I can conclude that the effect of religiosity does not strengthen when a match exists between members' denomination and the denomination of their district, and in some cases, the effect of religiosity weakens. This is not surprising, and consistent with what I predicted, as a member who has higher levels of religiosity exhibits higher levels of commitment to her religion, and her religiosity will be reinforced when challenged by her constituents. A member who, on the other hand, is not extremely religious will likely behave with an even lower level of religious commitment if persuaded by the opposing views of her district.

### **PARTY-SPECIFIC REGRESSION MODELS**

After analyzing regression models with members of both parties I conducted tests for each party individually to determine if the effect of religion on members' behavior is just as relevant when considering each party separately. To determine the effect of denominational group and religious salience within each party I conducted regressions

controlling for district denomination, NOMINATE, and Cook PVI scores for Republicans in the case of pro-life cosponsorship and Democrats in the cases of pro-choice and gay-rights cosponsorship. I only considered three cases as these were the instances in which the cosponsors were nearly or entirely from one party: two Democrats cosponsored pro-life legislation, zero Republicans cosponsored pro-choice legislation, and two Republicans cosponsored gay-rights legislation.

In the majority of cases both denominational group and religiosity retained their significance when analyzing only a specific party rather than the entirety of the House. In two cases the religious independent variables gained significance (see Tables 16.1 and 18.3), and in just one case was religiosity significant across the two-party model and not significant when only considering one party (see Table 16.4).

### **Insert Tables 16, 17, and 18**

These regression models go to show that not only are religious affiliation and religiosity significant when studying the House as a whole, but they are also significant within both Democratic and Republican subgroups.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the 24 models I conducted, 7 out of the 12 regression tests analyzing the effect of members' denomination on cosponsorship had significant results for denomination,

and 3 out of 12 regressions analyzing religiosity allowed me to reject the null hypothesis and show religiosity's significance in cosponsorship.

The levels of significance allow me to claim that member's denomination is a significant predictor of cosponsorship behavior in pro-life, pro-choice, gay-rights, and pro-refugee legislative areas. My results also allow me to claim religiosity's significance in predicting cosponsorship in pro-life and gay-rights cases.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

I began my research with the question of religion's significance in congressional politics, and based on my analyses the answer at which I have arrived is: sometimes. Religion is very clearly significant in traditional religious legislative arenas, yet when stepping outside of morality politics into more of the abstract political sphere, religion begins to lose its influence. Denomination tends to be more significant than religiosity, yet the fact that both measures of religion are significant in various cases leads me to reaffirm the notion that religious belief, behavior, and belonging are key to understanding the impact religion has in the political arena.

In the legislative area of abortion, both members' denomination and religious salience are significant for pro-life legislation, yet only denomination is significant for pro-choice legislation. I am not at all surprised by the results for pro-life cosponsorship, as it indicates that more religious and more conservatively religious members of Congress are more likely to cosponsor pro-life legislation. Even further, members whose denominational affiliation is consistent with their district's are even more influenced by their religiosity in determining cosponsorship of pro-life legislation. In the case of pro-choice cosponsorship, the denominational relationship to cosponsorship is what I expected (members who are more religiously liberal are more likely to cosponsor pro-choice legislation), yet I am surprised by the lack of significance for religiosity in this case. The data indicates, however, that the level of religiosity is not as useful in predicting cosponsorship as denomination is—illustrating that a member's religious

salience is not the key factor in determining her propensity to cosponsor pro-choice legislation, it is more so determined by her religious affiliation. This indicates that religious belief and belonging outweighs behavior, yet pro-life cosponsorship is guided by belief, behavior, and belonging.

Gay-rights cosponsorship, like pro-life legislation, has significant relationships with both members' denomination and their religiosity, indicating, again, the influence of belief, behavior, and belonging. Gay rights are guided in part by denominational doctrine and affiliation, yet a member's level of commitment to such doctrine is significant in determining whether or not a member will cosponsor gay-rights legislation. More religiously liberal and less religious members are more likely to cosponsor gay-rights legislation.

Religious-freedom cosponsorship, unlike all other legislative categories, does not have significant relationships with either members' denomination or members' religiosity. The one case in which religious freedom did have a significant relationship, however, is with the religion of congressional districts, although this variable is not significant for any other issue. District religion is only significant within a 90% confidence interval, but this level of significance is interesting compared to the lack of significance in all other cases. The lack of significance for denomination and religiosity could perhaps be explained by the general support for this issue that is protected under the First Amendment. Religious freedom is a bipartisan issue that is generally supported by all, so it is not too surprising to find that members are generally supportive of religious

freedom and that even controls for member and district partisanship have a smaller effect in this case than in other legislative categories.

The last category in which I studied the influence of religion on cosponsorship was refugee rights. The only instances in which a significant relationship existed with denomination or religiosity was in the case of denomination and pro-refugee cosponsorship. Religiosity is not significant in either pro- or anti-refugee cases, and denomination is not significant in modeling anti-refugee cosponsorship. These results, along with the positive relationship between denomination and pro-refugee cosponsorship, lead me to believe that members will utilize their religion in non-morality cases when it is politically useful. Religiously liberal members capitalize on what is a more liberal cause by making religious cases for accepting refugees, whereas in anti-refugee cases religion does not seem to matter, as religious conservatives cannot use their religion as easily to advocate against assisting refugees. The ease with which members use or neglect their religion is not surprising as religiosity is not significant in either pro-refugee or anti-refugee cases, indicating that the commitment a member has to her religion is not relevant when making decisions in cases such as these. In this case, only belief and belonging are significant—not behavior.

It is also likely that religion would be significant in this non-morality case had the issue been more narrowly focused. Oldmixon and Schechter found that when considering legislation with a broad non-morality scope religion was not significant, yet when they studied narrowly focused non-morality legislation religion was significant in predicting cosponsorship (2011). Because of this, it is likely that had there been legislation more

narrowly focused on refugee issues religion would have been a more significant predictor.

In all cases in which my data produced significant results the relationships were consistent with what I anticipated—indicating that religion does, in fact, have an impact on congressional decision making in many cases. Denomination and religiosity tend to be more significant in traditional religious, or morality cases, yet denomination is significant in the case of pro-refugee cosponsorship. If I were to expand the scope of this research further I would be interested in applying the same analysis techniques to more non-morality legislative categories to understand better the scope of religion's influence.

The significance of religion, as measured in both members' denomination and their religious salience, indicates that religion is a significant factor in congressional decision making. These results demonstrate that members do adhere to personal religious views—even when at odds with their district. The act of cosponsoring legislation allows members to take a clear and defined position on an issue, and to do so without much party pressure. This act gives members the ability to communicate to their district where their priorities lie, yet comes with great cost, as Barry Burden discusses (2007, 76). Burden's conclusion that personal interests are significant predictors of proactive behavior is consistent with my findings.

Religion is clearly pervasive in the political arena, and when attempting to understand the factors members consider when making legislative decisions it is imperative that scholars take into account the effect of members' denominational affiliation and members' religious salience. Religion is not an abstract concept that can

be divorced from members' belief systems when making decisions about legislation—religion is inherently tied with one's beliefs and is therefore relevant when members make decisions. Personal religious beliefs and behavior are empirically tied with policy making, so the separation ideal that many propose is not feasible. This thesis has shown that the high and impregnable wall that many believe separates religion from the state is perhaps not as high nor impregnable as imagined.

## TABLES

TABLE 1—DENOMINATIONAL CATEGORIES

Fundamentalists and Nontraditional Conservatives	Roman Catholics	Mainline Protestants	Black Protestants	Liberal Protestants	Jews	Other small groups	No religious affiliation
Adventists		American Lutheran Church	Black Baptists	Congrega- tionalists			
American Baptist Convention		Christian	Black Pentecostals	Society of Friends			
Assemblies of God		Disciples of Christ	African Methodist Episcopal	Unitarian- Universalist			
Baptist		Lutheran Church in America					
Baptist Missionary Association		Episcopal Church					
Brethren in Christ		Presbyterian Church U.S.A.					
Christian Missionary Alliance		Protestant					
Christian Reformed Church		Reformed Church in America					
Christian Scientists		United Methodist Church					
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter- Day Saints							
Conservative Baptist Association							
Evangelical							
Evangelical wings of mainline denominations							
Independent Baptist							
Nazarene							
Southern Baptist							

**TABLE 2—MEMBERS' DENOMINATIONAL FREQUENCIES**

denomgroup	Freq (Percent)
1	70 (16.09)
2	138 (31.72)
3	149 (34.25)
4	35 (8.046)
5	4 (0.920)
6	18 (4.138)
7	4 (0.920)
8	17 (3.908)
Total	435

**TABLE 3—DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS' DENOMINATIONAL FREQUENCIES**

denomgroup	Freq (Percent)
1	7 (1.609)
2	65 (14.94)
3	45 (10.34)
4	34 (7.816)
5	2 (0.460)
6	17 (3.908)
7	4 (0.920)
8	14 (3.218)
Total	188

**TABLE 4—REPUBLICAN MEMBERS' DENOMINATIONAL FREQUENCIES**

denomgroup	Freq (Percent)
1	63 (14.48)
2	73 (16.78)
3	104 (23.91)
4	1 (0.230)
5	2 (0.460)
6	1 (0.230)
8	3 (0.690)
Total	247

**TABLE 5—MEMBERS' RELIGIOSITY FREQUENCIES**

religiosity	Freq (Percent)
1	341 (78.39)
2	35 (8.046)
3	30 (6.897)
4	29 (6.667)
Total	435

**TABLE 6—REPUBLICAN MEMBERS' RELIGIOSITY FREQUENCIES**

religiosity	Freq (Percent)
1	177 (40.69)
2	25 (5.747)
3	23 (5.287)
4	22 (5.057)
Total	247

**TABLE 7—DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS' RELIGIOSITY FREQUENCIES**

religiosity	Freq (Percent)
1	164 (37.70)
2	10 (2.299)
3	7 (1.609)
4	7 (1.609)
Total	188

**TABLE 8—PEARSON'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS**

	NOMINATE	Cook PVI	Religiosity	Denominational Group	District Religion	Interaction
NOMINATE	1.0000					
Cook PVI	0.8718	1.0000				
Religiosity	0.1996	0.1789	1.0000			
Denominational Group	-0.4011	-0.3748	-0.1542	1.0000		
District Religion	-0.0699	-0.0889	-0.0071	0.0450	1.0000	
Interaction	0.1395	0.1590	0.3632	-0.2224	-0.0045	1.0000

**TABLE 9—PRO-LIFE REGRESSION MODELS**

VARIABLES	(1) Pro-Life Cosponsorship	(2) Pro-Life Cosponsorship	(3) Pro-Life Cosponsorship	(4) Pro-Life Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	-0.00855 (0.00664)	-0.0186** (0.00725)		
District Religion	-0.00452 (0.00818)	-0.00192 (0.00905)	-0.00485 (0.00815)	-0.00245 (0.00904)
NOMINATE	0.537*** (0.0233)		0.539*** (0.0217)	
Cook PVI		0.0142*** (0.000753)		0.0146*** (0.000709)
Religiosity			0.0252** (0.0111)	0.0352*** (0.0123)
Constant	0.257*** (0.0284)	0.337*** (0.0304)	0.198*** (0.0258)	0.236*** (0.0286)
Observations	435	435	435	435
R-squared	0.608	0.521	0.611	0.523

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 10—PRO-CHOICE REGRESSION MODELS**

VARIABLES	(1) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	(2) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	(3) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	(4) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.0212** (0.00864)	0.0394*** (0.0101)		
District Religion	-0.00816 (0.0107)	-0.0107 (0.0126)	-0.00772 (0.0107)	-0.01000 (0.0128)
NOMINATE	-0.746*** (0.0303)		-0.779*** (0.0285)	
Cook PVI		-0.0186*** (0.00104)		-0.0200*** (0.00100)
Religiosity			0.00761 (0.0147)	-0.0101 (0.0174)
Constant	0.347*** (0.0370)	0.222*** (0.0422)	0.398*** (0.0340)	0.346*** (0.0405)
Observations	435	435	435	435
R-squared	0.646	0.510	0.642	0.493

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 11—GAY-RIGHTS REGRESSION MODELS**

VARIABLES	(1) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	(2) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	(3) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	(4) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.0145** (0.00650)	0.0289*** (0.00758)		
District Religion	-0.00742 (0.00801)	-0.00880 (0.00947)	-0.00701 (0.00804)	-0.00815 (0.00958)
NOMINATE	-0.525*** (0.0228)		-0.539*** (0.0214)	
Cook PVI		-0.0127*** (0.000788)		-0.0135*** (0.000751)
Religiosity			-0.0148 (0.0110)	-0.0283** (0.0130)
Constant	0.251*** (0.0278)	0.158*** (0.0318)	0.314*** (0.0255)	0.278*** (0.0303)
Observations	435	435	435	435
R-squared	0.615	0.463	0.612	0.450

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 12—RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REGRESSION MODELS**

VARIABLES	(1) Religious Freedom Cosponsorship	(2) Religious Freedom Cosponsorship	(3) Religious Freedom Cosponsorship	(4) Religious Freedom Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.00166 (0.00470)	0.000251 (0.00466)		
District Religion	-0.0106* (0.00579)	-0.0104* (0.00583)	-0.0106* (0.00579)	-0.0104* (0.00582)
NOMINATE	0.0631*** (0.0165)		0.0590*** (0.0154)	
Cook PVI		0.00161*** (0.000485)		0.00154*** (0.000457)
Religiosity			0.00448 (0.00792)	0.00575 (0.00792)
Constant	0.317*** (0.0201)	0.327*** (0.0196)	0.315*** (0.0184)	0.319*** (0.0184)
Observations	435	435	435	435
R-squared	0.046	0.038	0.046	0.039

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 13—PRO-REFUGEE LOGIT MODELS**

VARIABLES	(1) Pro-Refugee Cosponsorship	(2) Pro-Refugee Cosponsorship	(3) Pro-Refugee Cosponsorship	(4) Pro-Refugee Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.178** (0.0798)	0.140* (0.0785)		
District Religion	-0.0128 (0.107)	-0.0301 (0.106)	-0.0102 (0.108)	-0.0290 (0.106)
NOMINATE	-0.181 (0.317)		-0.506* (0.294)	
Cook PVI		-0.0180** (0.00901)		-0.0247*** (0.00844)
Religiosity			0.129 (0.144)	0.151 (0.144)
Constant	-2.141*** (0.375)	-2.041*** (0.357)	-1.780*** (0.345)	-1.855*** (0.344)
Observations	435	435	435	435

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 14—ANTI-REFUGEE REGRESSION MODELS**

VARIABLES	(1) Anti-Refugee Cosponsorship	(2) Anti-Refugee Cosponsorship	(3) Anti-Refugee Cosponsorship	(4) Anti-Refugee Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.00525 (0.00594)	-0.00204 (0.00627)		
District Religion	-0.00245 (0.00733)	-0.00109 (0.00783)	-0.00229 (0.00733)	-0.00112 (0.00783)
NOMINATE	0.335*** (0.0208)		0.330*** (0.0195)	
Cook PVI		0.00860*** (0.000651)		0.00868*** (0.000614)
Religiosity			-0.00743 (0.0100)	-0.000487 (0.0106)
Constant	0.147*** (0.0255)	0.200*** (0.0263)	0.172*** (0.0232)	0.195*** (0.0248)
Observations	435	435	435	435
R-squared	0.408	0.326	0.407	0.326

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 15—INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND A MATCH WITH MEMBER AND DISTRICT DENOMINATION**

VARIABLES	Pro-Life Cosponsorship	Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	Religious Freedom Cosponsorship	Pro-Refugee Cosponsorship	Anti-Refugee Cosponsorship
Member-District Religion Match	-0.0355 (0.0589)	-0.0356 (0.0818)	-0.0234 (0.0585)	0.00634 (0.0274)	0.106 (0.0689)	-0.00791 (0.0436)
Religiosity	0.0667*** (0.0214)	-0.0632** (0.0297)	-0.0691*** (0.0213)	0.0113 (0.00997)	0.0377 (0.0251)	0.0149 (0.0159)
Interaction Variable	0.0385 (0.0354)	-0.0268 (0.0491)	-0.00367 (0.0352)	-0.00165 (0.0165)	-0.0731* (0.0414)	0.0326 (0.0262)
Constant	0.175*** (0.0360)	0.430*** (0.0500)	0.332*** (0.0358)	0.286*** (0.0168)	0.106** (0.0421)	0.155*** (0.0267)
Observations	435	435	435	435	435	435
R-squared	0.053	0.028	0.040	0.004	0.008	0.020

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 16—PRO-LIFE REGRESSION MODELS FOR REPUBLICANS**

VARIABLES	(1) Pro-Life Cosponsorship	(2) Pro-Life Cosponsorship	(3) Pro-Life Cosponsorship	(4) Pro-Life Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	-0.0379** (0.0150)	-0.0330** (0.0149)		
District Religion	-0.0225 (0.0171)	-0.0275 (0.0170)	-0.0194 (0.0172)	-0.0250 (0.0171)
NOMINATE	0.807*** (0.108)		0.802*** (0.110)	
Cook PVI		0.0171*** (0.00218)		0.0171*** (0.00222)
Religiosity			0.0278* (0.0168)	0.0234 (0.0167)
Constant	0.230*** (0.0741)	0.434*** (0.0579)	0.0961 (0.0648)	0.317*** (0.0489)
Observations	247	247	247	247
R-squared	0.214	0.229	0.202	0.219

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 17—PRO-CHOICE REGRESSION MODELS FOR DEMOCRATS**

VARIABLES	(1) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	(2) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	(3) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship	(4) Pro-Choice Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.0272* (0.0151)	0.0329** (0.0150)		
District Religion	-0.0255 (0.0192)	-0.0298 (0.0196)	-0.0237 (0.0194)	-0.0282 (0.0199)
NOMINATE	-0.724*** (0.260)		-0.824*** (0.257)	
Cook PVI		-0.00505* (0.00269)		-0.00573** (0.00272)
Religiosity			-0.00722 (0.0400)	-0.00927 (0.0408)
Constant	0.402*** (0.117)	0.607*** (0.0781)	0.462*** (0.122)	0.720*** (0.0782)
Observations	188	188	188	188
R-squared	0.076	0.055	0.059	0.030

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**TABLE 18—GAY-RIGHTS REGRESSION MODELS FOR DEMOCRATS**

VARIABLES	(1) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	(2) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	(3) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship	(4) Gay-Rights Cosponsorship
Denominational Group	0.0198* (0.0114)	0.0239** (0.0114)		
District Religion	-0.0210 (0.0146)	-0.0221 (0.0149)	-0.0189 (0.0145)	-0.0205 (0.0148)
NOMINATE	-0.414** (0.197)		-0.509*** (0.191)	
Cook PVI		-0.00144 (0.00204)		-0.00238 (0.00203)
Religiosity			-0.0736** (0.0298)	-0.0731** (0.0304)
Constant	0.328*** (0.0888)	0.460*** (0.0592)	0.446*** (0.0911)	0.617*** (0.0584)
Observations	188	188	188	188
R-squared	0.056	0.036	0.072	0.043

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## NOTE ON HANDLING VACANCIES

The districts that were left vacant and how I handled selecting which member to consider are as follows:

New York's 11<sup>th</sup> District began the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress empty as Representative Michael Grimm announced in December of 2014 that he would be resigning from his office on January 5<sup>th</sup> after he plead guilty to tax evasion (Bash and Jaffe 2014). Despite the fact that he did not serve in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress his resignation after the November General Election forced his seat to remain vacant for five months until Representative Daniel Donovan was sworn in in May of 2015 (C-SPAN 2015). I used cosponsorship data from Representative Donovan.

Representative Trent Kelly filled the vacancy in Mississippi's 1<sup>st</sup> District on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 (Parks 2015) after Representative Alan Nunnelee passed away in February of 2015 (Diamond and Jaffe 2015). I used cosponsorship data from Representative Kelly.

Representative Darrin LaHood took over Representative Aaron Schock's seat in Illinois' 18<sup>th</sup> District when Representative Schock resigned in March of 2015 over allegations that he mishandled public funds, which included reports that he used taxpayer money to redecorate his office in the style of Downton Abbey (Bash, Zeleny, and Jaffe 2015). There was one of my 43 bills for which Rep. Schock signed on as a cosponsor, yet I had far more data on Representative LaHood's cosponsorship so I used Representative LaHood's data.

Representative Warren Davidson took over Speaker John Boehner's seat in Ohio's 8<sup>th</sup> District after Speaker Boehner resigned in September of 2015 (Bash et al. 2015). I used Representative Davidson's data as it is uncommon for the Speaker to cosponsor bills, so there were no cases in which Speaker Boehner cosponsored one of the pieces of legislation I am studying.

Representative Chaka Fattah resigned his seat in Pennsylvania's 2<sup>nd</sup> District in June of 2016 after charged with racketeering, money laundering, and fraud (Schleifer 2016). His seat was filled in November by Representative Dwight Evans (Dwight Evans 2016). I used Representative Fattah's data as Representative Evans did not cosponsor any of the 43 bills and resolutions I am studying.

Representative Mark Takai's seat in Hawaii's 1<sup>st</sup> District was left vacant upon his death in July of 2016 (Diaz 2016) until Representative Colleen Hanabusa was sworn in in November of that year (Colleen Hanabusa 2016). Representative Hanabusa did not cosponsor any of the pieces of legislation I am studying so I used Representative Takai's data.

Representative Ed Whitfield resigned from serving as the Representative Kentucky's 1<sup>st</sup> District in August of 2016 following the report of the House Ethics Committee that found him guilty of giving special favors to his lobbyist wife (Caygle 2016). Representative James Comer filled Representative Whitfield's vacant seat in November of 2016. Like Representatives Evans and Hanabusa, Representative Comer did not cosponsor any legislation I am studying, so I used Representative Whitfield's data.

Lastly, Representative Janice Hahn resigned from her seat in California's 44<sup>th</sup> District in December of 2016 as she was assuming a position on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Wire 2016). Her seat was left vacant until the end of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, so I used Representative Hahn's data.

## LIST OF BILLS IN EACH LEGISLATIVE CATEGORY

### PRO-LIFE

H.R. 36	Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act
H.R. 217	Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act
H.R. 596	To repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and health care-related provisions in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, and for other purposes
H.R. 803	Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act
H.R. 940	Health Care Conscience Rights Act
H.R. 2300	Empowering Patients First Act of 2015
H.R. 3134	Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015
H.R. 3197	Protecting Life and Taxpayers Act of 2015
H.R. 3504	Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act
H.R. 4828	Conscience Protection Act of 2016
H.R. 4924	Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act (PRENDA) of 2016

### PRO-CHOICE

H.R. 448	Women's Health Protection Act of 2015
H.R. 2972	Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act of 2015

### GAY RIGHTS

H.R. 590	International Human Rights Defense Act of 2015
H.R. 915	Voices for Veterans Act
H.R. 1706	Real Education for Healthy Youth Act of 2015
H.R. 2368	Global Respect Act
H.Res. 208	Equality for All Resolution of 2015
H.Res. 263	Supporting the goals and ideals of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
H.Con.Res. 38	Supporting the goals and ideals of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) National Day of Silence in bringing attention to anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender name-calling, bullying, and harassment faced by individuals in schools

**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

H.R. 631	EACH Act
H.R. 940	Health Care Conscience Rights Act
H.R. 1150	Health Care Conscience Rights Act
H.R. 1299	Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act of 2015
H.R. 2601	EACH Act
H.R. 2802	First Amendment Defense Act
H.R. 3185	Equality Act
H.R. 4828	Conscience Protection Act of 2016
H.R. 3575	Refugee Resettlement Oversight and Security Act of 2015
H.R. 5207	Freedom of Religion Act of 2016
H.Res 310	Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding Srebrenica
H.Res. 343	Expressing concern regarding persistent and credible reports of systematic state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China, including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious ethnic minority groups
H.Res. 354	Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the safety and security of Jewish communities in Europe
H.Res. 569	Condemning violence, bigotry, and hateful rhetoric towards Muslims in the United States
H.Con.Res. 75	Expressing the sense of Congress that the atrocities perpetrated by ISIL against religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria include war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide

**PRO-REFUGEE**

H.Res. 650	Providing for the safety and security of the Iranian dissidents living in Camp Liberty/Hurriya in Iraq and awaiting the resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and permitting use of their own assets to assist in their resettlement
------------	---

**ANTI-REFUGEE**

H.R. 1148	Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act
H.R. 3314	Resettlement Accountability National Security Act of 2015
H.R. 3573	Refugee Resettlement Oversight and Security Act of 2015
H.R. 3999	American SAFE Act of 2015
H.R. 4032	States' Right of Refugee Refusal Act of 2015
H.R. 4038	American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015
H.R. 4247	Cuban Immigrant Work Opportunity Act of 2015

## REFERENCES

- Ansolabehere, Stephen and Brian F. Schaffner. 2015. *Guide to the 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Bash, Dana and Alexandra Jaffe. 2014. "Michael Grimm announces resignation," *CNN Politics*, December 30. <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/29/politics/michael-grimm-to-resign-soon/> (February 20, 2016).
- Bash, Dana, Jeff Zeleny, and Alexandra Jaffe. 2015. "Aaron Schock resigns amid scandal," *CNN Politics*, March 18. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/17/politics/aaron-schock-resigns/> (February 20, 2016).
- Bash, Dana, Manu Raju, Deirdre Walsh, and Jeremy Diamond. 2015. "House Speaker John Boehner: 'I decided today is the day,'" *CNN Politics*, September 25. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/25/politics/john-boehner-resigning-as-speaker/> (February 20, 2017).
- Benson, Peter L. and Dorothy L. Williams. 1982. *Religion on Capitol Hill*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
- Blackstone, Bethany and Elizabeth A. Oldmixon. 2015. "Discourse and dissonance: religious agendas in the 104th Congress." *Research and Politics*, July-September.
- Burden, Barry C. 2007. *The Personal Roots of Representation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cann, Damon M. 2009. "Religious Identification and Legislative Voting: The Mormon Case." *Political Research Quarterly* 62(1): 110-119.
- Caygle, Heather. 2016. "Rep. Whitfield will resign following ethics probe," *Politico*, August 31. <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/ed-whitfield-ethics-resigning-227610> (February 21, 2017).
- Colleen Hanabusa. 2016. "Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa Sworn into 114<sup>th</sup> Congress," November 14. <https://hanabusa.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congresswoman-colleen-hanabusa-sworn-into-office> (February 21, 2017).
- Congress.gov. 2017. "About Congress.gov." <https://www.congress.gov/about>.

- The Cook Political Report. 2017. "Glossary." <http://cookpolitical.com/about/glossary> (February 21, 2017).
- CQ Press. 2017. "Congress Collection: Member Profiles." <http://library.cqpress.com/congress/memberanalysis.php>.
- C-SPAN. 2015. "Representative Daniel Donovan Swearing In: Representative Daniel Donovan (R-NY) was sworn in as a member of the 114th Congress. He replaced Representative Michael Grimm (R-NY), who resigned earlier in the year. Members of the New York delegation made speeches in welcome to which Representative Donovan responded." May 12. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?325799-5/representative-daniel-donovan-swearing> (February 20, 2017).
- Diamond, Jeremy and Alex Jaffe. 2015. "Rep. Alan Nunnelee dead at 56," *CNN Politics*, February 5. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/06/politics/alan-nunnelee-dies/> (February 20, 2017).
- Diaz, Daniella. 2016. "Congressman dies after cancer battle," *CNN Politics*, July 20. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/20/politics/mark-takai-hawaii-dies-cancer/> (February 20, 2017).
- Dwight Evans. 2016. "Representative Evans Sworn into 114<sup>th</sup> Congress," November 14. <https://evans.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/evans-sworn-into-office> (February 21, 2017).
- Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing*. 1947. 330 U.S. 1.
- Everson, Phil, Rick Valelly, and Jim Wiseman. 2016. "NOMINATE and American Political History: A Primer." *Studies in American Political Development* 30: 97-115.
- Fastnow, Chris, J. Tobin Grant, and Thomas J. Rudolph. 1999. "Holy Roll Calls: Religious Tradition and Voting Behavior in the U.S. House." *Social Science Quarterly* 80(4):687-701.
- Foreign Affairs Committee. 2016. "H. Res. 650, Providing for the safety and security of the Iranian dissidents living in Camp Liberty/Hurriya in Iraq and awaiting resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and permitting use of their own assets to assist in their resettlement," May 18. <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/legislation/h-res-650-providing-for-the-safety-and-security-of-the-iranian-dissidents-living-in-camp-libertyhurriya-in-iraq-and->

awaiting-resettlement-by-the-united-nations-high-commissioner-for-refugees-and/  
(March 25, 2017).

Green, John C. and James L. Guth. 1991. "Religion, Representatives, and Roll Calls." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 16(4): 571-584.

Guth, James C. and Lyman A. Kellstedt. 2005. "The Confessional Congress: Religion and Legislative Behavior." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

James Comer. 2016. "Congressman Comer Sworn into 114<sup>th</sup> Congress," November 14. <https://comer.house.gov/media/press-releases/member-sworn-office> (February 21, 2017).

Jefferson, Thomas. 1802. *Letter to the Danbury Baptists*.

Kellstedt, Lyman A. and John C. Green. 1993. "Knowing God's Many People: Denominational Preference and Political Behavior." In *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, eds. David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.

Koopman, Douglas L. 2009. "Religion and American Public Policy: Morality Policies and Beyond." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, eds. Corwin E.

Oldmixon, Elizabeth Anne. 2005. *Uncompromising Positions: God, Sex, and the U.S. House of Representatives*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Oldmixon, Elizabeth A. 2009. "Religion and Legislative Politics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, eds. Corwin E. Smidt, Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 497-517.

Oldmixon, Elizabeth A. and William Hudson. 2008. "When Church Teachings and Policy Commitments Collide: Perspectives on Catholics in the U.S. House of Representatives." In *Politics and Religion* 1(1): 113-136.

Oldmixon, Elizabeth A. and David L. Schecter. 2011. "Needs, norms, and food policy in the U.S. House of Representatives." *The Social Science Journal* 48: 597-603.

Parks, Elizabeth. 2015. "Kelly to Take the Oath of Office," *Trent Kelly: Mississippi's First District*, <http://trentkelly.house.gov/newsroom/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=5> (February 20, 2017).

- Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal. 2001. "D-Nominate after 10 Years: A Comparative Update to *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll-Call Voting*." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 26: 5-29.
- Richardson, James T. and Sandie Wrightman Fox. 1972. "Religious Affiliation as a Predictor of Voting Behavior in Abortion Reform Legislation." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 11(4): 347-359.
- Roof, Wade Clark and William McKinney. 1987. *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Schleifer, Theodore. 2016. "Chaka Fatta resigns, effective immediately," *CNN Politics*, June 23. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/23/politics/chaka-fattah-resigns-effective-immediately/> (February 21, 2017).
- Smidt, Corwin E., Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. 2009. "The Role of Religion in American Politics: Explanatory Theories and Associated Analytical Measurement Issues." In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics*, eds. Corwin E. Smidt, Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stetzler, Mark and Alixandra B. Yanus. 2015. "The Impact of Religion on Voting for a Female Congressional Candidates." *Politics & Religion* 8: 679-798.
- U.S. Government Publishing Office. 2016. "Congressional Directory." <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=CDIR>.
- Wheatley, Nate. 2010. "Is Religion a One-Trick Pony?: An Empirical Study of the Impact of Religious Affiliation on Voting in Congress." *Res-Publica Journal of Undergraduate Research* 15(1).
- Wire, Sarah D. 2016. "Rep. Janice Hahn to resign seat early to be sworn in as L.A. County supervisor," *Los Angeles Times*, November 29. <http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-rep-hahn-to-resign-seat-early-to-be-1480446095-htlmstory.html> (February 21, 2017).