Luck of the Draw?

Private Members' Bills & the Electoral Connection

Brian D. Williams
University of West Florida

Indridi H. Indridason*
University of California, Riverside

February 16, 2017

Abstract

The legislative agenda in most parliamentary systems is controlled tightly by the government and bills offered by individual members of parliament have low rates of success. Yet, MPs do seek to present (private) members' bills even where the rate of adoption is very low. We argue that members' bills serve as an electoral connection but also as an opportunity for MPs to signal competence to their co-partisans. To demonstrate the presence of an electoral connection we take advantage of the random selection of private members' bills in the New Zealand House of Representatives and show that survey respondents approve more of electorate MPs whose bills were drawn on the ballot. In addition, we show that MPs respond to the incentives created by the voters and parties' willingness to reward legislative effort and, consequently, that electorally vulnerable legislators are more likely to place members' bills on the ballot.

*Department of Political Science, 900 University Avenue, University of California, Riverside. We would like to thank Hannah Blumhardt for capable research assistance and Shaun Bowler, Jack Vowles, and the anonymous referees for useful comments and suggestions.

1 Introduction

Parliamentary democracy is sometimes described as a chain of delegation; from voters to parliamentarians, from parliamentarians to the cabinet, from cabinets to ministers, and from ministers to the bureaucracy (Strøm, 2000). Each link in the chain of delegation may exhibit the common problems associated with principal-agent relationships. An interesting feature of this view of democracy is that — in contrast with a classical view of hierarchical organizations in which the principal at the top of the hierarchy is seen as wielding the greatest amount of power — the cabinet is typically seen as the most influential actor in the parliamentary chain of delegation. Thus, we appear to be more prone to ask whether voters hold governments accountable than their immediate agents, that is, their representatives in parliament (see, e.g., Powell, 2000; Powell & Whitten, 1993; Hellwig & Samuels, 2008).[1] Indeed, the view that parliament has limited influence on government policy is quite common and often the role of parliament is seen as being reduced to providing the cabinet with support in parliament and protection against votes of no-confidence.

This view of parliamentary democracy raises questions about whether the role of MPs extends beyond providing the government with legislative support and whether voters hold them accountable for their legislative behavior rather than for government performance. The latter can be seen as a precondition for MPs acting as faithful agents of their constituents. Without promise of a reward, MPs have little incentive for pursuing their constituents' interests and are, instead, likely to align more closely with their party leadership (Kam, 2009).

Re-election is generally seen as one of the primary motives of legislators (Mayhew, 1974; Rae, 1971) that helps align legislators' behavior with voters' interests. There is a rich literature, originating with the study of U.S. legislators, that argues that legislators have an incentive to cultivate a personal vote, e.g., through constituency service, in order to maximize their chances of retaining office. Others have noted that the incentives to do so are also present in other political system but that the incentives vary in their intensity depending on, in particular, whether the type of electoral system allows legislators to translate personal following into more favorable electoral prospects (Carey & Shugart, 1996). The electoral system is, however, not the only important factor as Cox's (1987) work suggests — though sharing an electoral system with the U.S., legislators in the U.K. have shown themselves to be far less concerned with building a personal vote. Cheibub & Limongi (2002) point out that this is likely a function of the degree of centralization of decision-making, i.e., individual legislators' lack of ability to exert influence on policy. Martin (2011), similarly, draws attention to differences in how legislators cultivate a personal vote via fiscal legislative particularism (as in the US) or extra-legislative constituency service (as in Britain) and argues that particularistic mechanisms strengthen committees and generate differences in

[1] Of course, the parliamentarians are the conduit for the voters' pleasure or displeasure with the government.

personal vote building activity on the opposite sides of the Atlantic.

Although control of the legislative agenda is firmly in the hands of the cabinet in many parliamentary systems, individual MPs routinely seek to take advantage of their right to propose "private member bills" or "members' bills". The right to propose members' bills is often restricted — and where it is not, a great majority of members' bills die in committees, are not placed on the agenda, or fail to be adopted. Mattson (1995), studying West European parliaments finds, e.g., that the passage rate of private members' bill ranges from 0 to 46% with a mean of 18.4% and median of 14%. Nevertheless, the mere act of proposing legislation may be important for MPs to signal effort to their constituents in order to build a personal vote. Interestingly, Mattson (1995) notes that there is significant variation in the ability of MPs to propose private members' bills, with majoritarian systems generally being more restrictive, which is consistent with the idea that majoritarian systems create the greatest incentives to build a personal votes. That is, restrictions are most likely to be needed in systems where the legislative agenda is threatened to be overloaded with private members' bills.

The fact that MPs seek to offer members' bills — often in the face of near-certain defeat — raises two questions. First, why do they propose members' bills? And second, does their members' bill activity have the intended effect? We argue that the answers to these questions are slightly more complicated than those suggested by the literature on the electoral connection as MPs can occupy two roles (simultaneously in some mixed member systems); as *electorate candidates*, those competing in single-member districts, and *list candidates*, those standing on a national list using proportional representation. Each type of candidate faces a different selectorate and, therefore, seeks to influence different audiences. In their roles as electorate candidates, MPs wish to represent, show responsiveness to, or signal effort to their constituents in the hope of building a personal vote but as Carey & Shugart's (1996) argue, candidates in single-member districts have a strong incentives to build a personal vote whereas candidates on a (closed) party list share their personal vote, by design, with other candidates on the list. One might, thus, expect members' bill activity to be concentrated among electorate MPs and primarily be influenced by competition within their electorate. We argue that while MPs may gain little from building a personal vote in their role as list candidates they nevertheless have an incentive to present members' bill — their legislative efforts are, however, directed at a different audience. The electoral fortunes of list MPs are determined by their placement on the party list, placing list MPs in competition with one another for a favorable list position.[2] We therefore argue that — in their roles as list candidates — MPs propose members' bills in order to signal effort, an ability to appeal to voters, or other qualities to their party leadership and those influential in the parties'

[2]In their candidate typology, Siavelis & Morgenstern (2008), note that closed-list proportional systems are conducive to the emergence of party loyalists because the candidates owe their list position to the party. Taylor (1992) similarly argues that Costa Rican legislators engage in constituency service, despite facing term-limits, to curry favor with party leaders in the hope of receiving political appointments.

candidate nomination process.

New Zealand presents a unique opportunity for evaluating our claim that the selectorate of the MPs' conditions their behavior as well as whether their efforts bear fruit for two reasons: New Zealand employs a mixed-member electoral system and members' bill are selected randomly for introduction in the legislature. The mixed-member electoral system allows us to evaluate our claims about how the MPs' standing with the different selectorates influences their legislative behavior. After examining whether New Zealand MPs members' bill activity targets different audiences — depending on their placement on the party list and their popularity in their electorate — we turn to the question of whether those activities were effective in achieving their hypothesized goals. Here we take advantage of an aspect of parliamentary procedures in New Zealand — the random allocation of the right to present members' bills for debate — which helps estimate the causal effect of members' bills on voter evaluations of electorate MPs.[3]

While empirically the focus here is on the relationship between the legislative behavior of MPs' and the different selectorates in the two tiers of the mixed member system, MPs face at least one of these incentives in other electoral systems — whether they are single member district or proportional representation systems. As the literature has established, MPs in single member districts face personal vote seeking incentives but they may also have an incentive to signal effort to their own party members — in particular if their parties control ballot access. In proportional representation systems, the legislative behavior of MPs is expected to depend whether the system is open list or closed list. In open list systems, the constituents occupy the role of the MP's selectorate whereas the party supplants constituents as the selectorate in closed list systems.[4] The main advantage of focusing on a mixed member system is that it allows us to derive more detailed hypotheses from our theory and to test them. In particular, it allows us to examine how the MPs' electoral safety in one part of the system conditions how her safety in the other part of the system affects legislative behavior. For example, an MP who won her electorate by a comfortable margin is less likely to be concerned by her placement on the party list than an MP who is more uncertain whether she will carry the electorate in the next election.

2 The Electoral Connection

Mixed member electoral systems have become increasingly popular (Shugart & Wattenberg, 2001). One reason for their popularity is that they are often seen as encompassing the positive qualities of both proportional representation and majoritarian electoral systems, i.e., they offer a way to attain both proportional legislative representation and encourage

[3]The random selection of members' bills falls short of being a 'natural experiment' as the MPs elect to place a bill on the ballot. We discuss those limitations below but for lack of a better term for the procedure used for the selection of members' bill we will refer to it as a 'natural experiment'.

[4]Parties do, of course, vary greatly in terms of how centralized their nomination procedures are.

close ties between citizens and their representatives at the constituency level. Such electoral systems create two types of MPs — those elected from a party list in the proportional representation part of the system and those elected in single member districts. A number of scholars have exploited this fact to examine how electoral systems shape legislative behavior.[5] As the fortunes of MPs elected in single member districts are tied closely to the voters in their district, they have a strong incentive to build a personal vote (Carey & Shugart, 1996).[6] In contrast, list MPs are generally more dependent on their party as electoral success requires occupying a seat sufficiently high on the party list. In addition, smaller districts may offer greater rewards for geographically targeted benefits or pork barrel projects — both because single member districts tend to be smaller and the incumbent MP can freely claim credit for such policies as her co-partisan MPs have little incentive to challenge her claims. In mixed-member systems that allow candidates to stand for election simultaneously in a single-member district and on the party list, MPs' strategies will reflect the incentives at both tiers of the system.

New Zealand presents an interesting case for examining whether the behavior of electorate and list MPs reflects the representatives' reliance on the personal vote and, further, whether the MPs are rewarded for their actions. New Zealand has used a mixed member proportional system since 1996. Seventy members are elected in single member districts under plurality rule while the remaining 50 members are elected using proportional representation from a single national district.[7] Voters cast two votes; one for a candidate in their electorate and one for a (closed) national party list. The incentive to cultivate a personal vote thus varies among New Zealand MPs. Whether an MP was elected in a district or of the party list does not necessarily determine whether the MP seeks to build a personal vote as most MPs run as both electorate and list candidates. However, for these MPs, their electoral vulnerability in both their electorate and on the party list is likely to shape the strategies they adopt.

The differences in the roles of MPs in New Zealand are recognized formally to a degree — electorate MPs receive greater allowances for office and staff support than list MPs do.[8] The incentives to engage in constituency service have been studied most extensively in majoritarian electoral systems, e.g., in the U.S. (Mayhew, 1974) and in the U.K. (Cain et al., 1987).[9] These incentives may be magnified in MMP systems where rewarding constituency

[5]The effect of these difference in MPs' incentive to cultivate a personal vote have been examined in other context where mixed member electoral systems are used such as in Germany, Mexico, Wales, and Scotland. See, e.g., Moser & Scheiner (2011); Ugues et al. (2012); Stratmann & Baur (2002); Klingeman & Wessels (2001); Kite & Crampton (2007); Lundberg (2006); Bradbury & Mitchell (2007).

[6]Ashworth & Bueno de Mesquita (2005) formalize this argument, focusing on the inability of candidates to credibly claim responsibility for benefits delivered to the district.

[7]Currently seven of the 70 single member districts are reserved for the Māori roll.

[8]See, e.g., Banducci & Karp (1998). Constituency MPs receive a constituency allowance, ranging from $8,000 to $20,000 depending on constituency size, on top of the $7,000 basic allowance given to ordinary MPs. For information on allowances, see `http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2233.htm`.

[9]On constituency service and its consequences in the U.S. see, e.g., Fenno (1978); Parker & Davidson (1979); Cain et al. (1984); King (1991). Constituency service has been examined elsewhere, see e.g., Studlar & McAllister (1996) on Australia, Norton & Wood (1990) and Gaines (1998) on the U.K., McLeay & Vowles (2007) on New Zealand, Franks (2007) on Canada, Taylor (1992) on Costa Rica, Reed (1994) on Japan,

service does not necessitate abandoning one's favored party entirely as the voter can engage in split ticket voting — casting the 'electorate vote' to reward an incumbent and the 'party vote' for the preferred party.

An important feature, since 1993, of the New Zealand parliamentary procedures is that the number of members' bills has been limited by allowing only three to eight members' bills on the Order Paper for first reading each members' day, which are every second Wednesday.[10] When space becomes available, members' bills are selected by lot to be placed on the Order Paper. MPs can enter bills in the ballot at any time but on average a ballot is held about once a month. Thus, random selection determines which MPs get to propose legislation and having it debated in the legislature. The ballot method was seen as a fairer and more efficient method of members' bill selection than the previous 'first come, first serve' method (Spindler, 2009).

The fact that members' bills are selected randomly has distinct advantages for evaluating whether legislative behavior affects voters' evaluation of MPs.[11] Where MPs do not face restrictions on proposing legislation, or where proposals are selected by some other non-random method, endogeneity is a concern. For example, if electorally vulnerable MPs are more likely to propose members' bills then estimates of their effect would tend to bias estimates of the effect of member bills on electoral strength downwards. While MPs must place a bill on the members' ballot for a chance of their proposal being selected, the random selection can help resolve the endogeneity problem and provide estimates of the causal effect of legislative action on voters' evaluations of MPs. As MPs may face different incentives to place bills on the members' ballot, the probability of having a bill drawn is not independent of the MP's circumstances. However, the effect of having a bill drawn on approval can be estimated by conditioning on the MPs' effort as their members' bills actions are observable.

In line with the literature on the electoral connection, we expect MPs running in an electorate in New Zealand to seek to cultivate a personal following with the aim of helping them win re-election. The electoral connection has been examined in a number of countries[12] but the use of members' bills to build a personal vote has not been studied systematically with a few notable exceptions. Bowler (2010) argues, in the context of the UK parliament, that private member bills constitute one form of cultivating a personal vote. Loewen et al. (2014) suggest that in the face of limited opportunities to claim credit for policy initiatives or service, MPs will welcome any opportunity to increase name recognition or popularity. Solvak & Pajala (2016) study members' bill introduction in Finland and Estonia in the context of list systems and find that the behavior of MPs depends on both whether they

Patzelt (2007) on Germany, and Heitshusen et al. (2005) for a comparison across several countries.

[10]The number of members' bills that can be set down on the House's Order papers has increased from three at the beginning of the time period under study to eight in the last session.

[11]Loewen et al. (2014) have similarly taken advantage of random selection of which MPs are allowed to propose private members' bills in the Canadian Parliament.

[12]See, e.g., Mezey (2008), Denemark (2000), Samuels (2000), Chubb (1963), Crisp et al. (2004), and Bogdanor (1985).

are elected under open or closed list systems and district magnitude. Employing similar logic, Bräuninger et al. (2012) show how patterns of members' bill proposals are shaped by intra-party competition in the Belgian flexible list system.[13]

There are reasons to be skeptical of the claim that member bills have much of an electoral impact and that other forms of constituency service may be more effective. Indeed, voters may not pay much attention to what goes on within legislatures except maybe for the major issues on the policy agenda. When it comes to members' bills, which generally have little chance of success, we can be virtually certain that the vast majority of voters pay little attention to their content or who proposes them. That, however, does not mean that members' bills do not have an effect. While voters may pay limited attention to the day-to-day work of parliament, proposing members' bills may attract the attention of political journalists and help MPs establish themselves even if the bill itself does not receive much media coverage.[14] But occasionally they do. Writing in the New Zealand Herald, David Farrar notes, e.g., that

> [h]aving your bill selected from the ballot can be life changing for an MP. It can take you from an obscure backbencher to a national figure. Sue Bradford was already well known before her anti-smacking law was selected, but the bill saw her become one of the highest profile MPs." (Farrar, 2012)

Proposing members' bill may, thus, help MPs gain name recognition and even popularity.

Proposing a bill may also allow the MP to signal effort and dedication directly to her constituents (Bräuninger, 2009). This, of course, does not require media attention. MPs can highlight their legislative efforts in campaigning in their constituency and some of the parties highlight members' bills on their websites. Even if MPs expect the benefits to be fairly small it must be kept in mind that proposing a member's bill it is not a costly exercise — they are rarely substantial pieces of legislation — and, moreover, that the government maintains a firm grip on the legislative agenda. To put it bluntly, what else is a backbencher to do?

Bowler (2010) finds that MPs in marginal seats in the UK propose private member bills more frequently. French (2009) and Kellermann (2013) comes to a similar conclusion with regard to early day motions. The incentive to propose members' bills, or engage in other forms of constituency work, is a function of the MP's electoral security.[15] MPs in safe seats have little to gain for proposing a member's bill. In marginal districts, a members' bill is more likely to have a decisive effect on the outcome. While New Zealand MPs face similar incentives, those incentives are slightly more complicated because of the electoral system

[13] In a flexible list system, voters choose whether to cast a list vote or a preferences vote for candidates.

[14] While most member's bills don't attract much media attention, it is not that uncommon. A search for "members' bill" on the New Zealand Herald website turns up about 1000 stories containing the term (March 26^{th}).

[15] Shomer (2009) does not examine whether electoral insecurity affects the introduction of members' bills directly but examines whether the use of primaries, which ought to increase the importance of the personal vote, affects Israeli MK's incentive to propose members' bills and concludes that primaries had no such effect. She does find that senior MKs propose fewer members' bills but seniority may be correlated with the MKs' perception of their electoral security.

being a mixed-member proportional system where candidates for office may simultaneously run as electorate candidates and on the party list. Thus, the meaning of occupying a safe seat is not as clear in New Zealand as where elections are conducted using majoritarian methods.

New Zealand MPs can attain electoral security in two ways. The MP can run in a 'safe' single member district, i.e., where her party traditionally wins large majorities or where the candidate enjoys the support of voters for other reasons. In line with the literature on constituency service, electorally vulnerable MPs are expected to offer more members' bills than electorally secure MPs.

Hypothesis 1 *MPs in safe seats in their electorate are less likely to propose members' bills.*

Alternatively, electoral security can be achieved by obtaining a seat relatively high on the party list. The proportional part of New Zealand's mixed-member system is based on a single national district. A candidate placed low on the party list is vulnerable in two ways. First, a decline in her party's vote share reduces the total number of votes allocated to the party. Second, because the electoral system is compensatory, the number of list seats allocated to a party depends on the number of electorate seats won by the party. Thus, the number of electorate seats won by the party can affect a list MP's chances of winning a seat. However, a list MP's chances are only affected by the success of electorate candidates that are appear lower, or are not present, on the party list.

While the importance of a personal vote to electorate candidates, and, therefore, the potential value of offering a members' bill is clear, it is not obvious that list candidates benefit in the same way. While the individual MP's legislative activity may benefit the party, the benefits for the MP are more diffuse. Offering members' bills may help the party win votes but the benefits accrue to the party as a whole but are unlikely to have a decisive effect on the MP's individual electoral fortune.[16] If members' bills have a positive effect on party support, the diffuse benefits may result in an under-supply of members' bills as the party's MPs have an incentive to free-ride on the effort of their co-partisans.[17] While list MPs are unlikely to be motivated by personal vote incentives, offering members' bills may also be a way of building a reputation and to signal ambition, legislative competence, or other qualities valued by the party. List MPs may, therefore, face similar incentives as electorate MPs to offer members' bills but their audience is different, i.e., list MPs offer members' bills in the hope of influencing those responsible for candidate nominations for the party list.[18] List MPs that face greater electoral uncertainty, that is, were lower on the party list in the past election, are expected to put greater effort into offering members' bills.

[16]It is, of course, not necessarily the case that offering members' bills benefits the party. A high number of members' bills offered by a party's MPs might be interpreted as a lack of party discipline and legislative effectiveness, especially in the case of government parties.

[17]Bawn & Thies (2003), on a similar note, argue that list MPs will focus less on unorganized interests through constituency service in favor of organized interests.

[18]McLeay & Vowles (2007) argue that there are several reasons list MPs may engage in constituency service including the hope of securing a favorable place on the party list and the possibility of standing as an

Hypothesis 2 *MPs high on the party list are less likely to propose members' bills.*

The great majority of elected MPs run both as electorate and list candidates.[19] The electoral rules imply that those elected from the party list failed to win a plurality in their electorate. In some sense, then, list MPs are more vulnerable as they are, a priori, less likely to pull off a win in their electorate and their chances on reelection are, therefore, almost entirely dependent on obtaining a favorable spot on the party list. More generally, MPs that are electorally vulnerable *both* in their electorate and occupied a seat low on the party list ought to face greater incentives to offer members' bills.

Hypothesis 3 *MPs that are electorally vulnerable both in their electorate and as list candidates are more likely to propose members' bills.*

Restated in terms of the marginal effect of the two electoral safety variables, the expectation is that the marginal effect of a higher placement on the party list declines the safer the MP's electorate seat. Conversely, the marginal effect of the MP's vote share in his electorate declines the higher placed the MP is on the party list.

The above hypotheses are predicated on the notion that offering members' bills does influence how voters, and parties, evaluate the candidates. Members' bill may do so in several ways. First, voters may notice the effort of MPs in proposing members' bill. It does, however, seem somewhat unlikely except for those voters that would be directly influenced by the legislation — or may, perhaps, have lobbied for it — or in exceptional cases where members' bills have addressed highly salient or controversial issues. An example of such a member's bill was the *Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill* introduced in 2012 that expanded the definition of marriage to include same-sex unions. Second, having proposed members' bills may be useful in the MP's reelection campaign both in terms of signaling her policy emphasis and as concrete evidence of the MP's legislative effort. Third, as noted above, journalists may pay attention to members' bills. While the bills' content is not always of great importance, they may still serve to draw attention to the MP. Members' bills may be more likely to be offered by backbenchers with high ambitions, MPs that are electorally vulnerable, and mavericks — all of which have the potential of making a good news story. The expectations about the effects of proposing members' bill are straightforward — proposing members' bills improves voters' evaluation of the MP.

Hypothesis 4 *MPs that propose members' bills are viewed more favorably by voters in their electorate.*

electorate candidate. Williams & Indridason (2016) find that placing bills on the members' ballot affects the MP's placement on the party list.

[19] As most MPs run both as electorate and list candidates it is not reasonable to assume that MPs act primarily as electorate or list candidates. Instead MPs may be sensitive to both their standing in their electorate and on the party list — and in particular if they don't occupy a safe position in either.

To examine how the electoral connection conditions the behavior of MPs in New Zealand, we focus on members' bill proposal in the 46^{th}-50^{th} parliaments, using the results and party lists from the elections held between 1999 and 2011 to evaluate hypotheses about whether the more electorally vulnerable MPs are more likely to propose members' bills and, subsequently, whether their activity influenced their approval ratings using data from the New Zealand Election Study. To answer the latter question we take advantage of the random assignment of the right to introduce members' bills in parliament.

3 Empirical Analysis

The data on members' bills placed and selected on the ballot were gathered from the New Zealand parliamentary archives and website.[20] Constituency level electoral results were obtained from the constituency level electoral archive (Kollman et al., 2013) while the party lists fielded by the parties in the elections were obtained from the website of the New Zealand Electoral Commission.[21] For the analysis of the effects of members' bills we use the four New Zealand Election Studies (1999, 2002, 2005, and 2011) that include questions about approval of electorate MPs.[22]

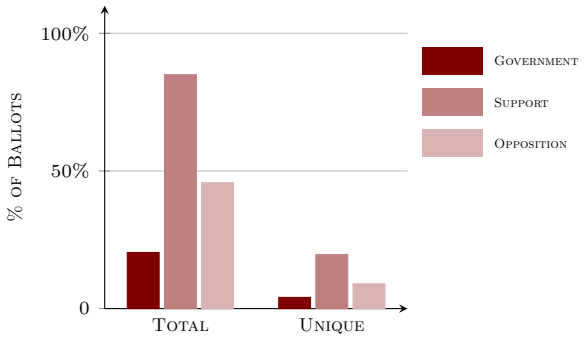
3.1 Proposing Members' Bills

The members' bill ballot is held whenever room opens on the Order Paper for each members' day, which typically means that a ballot is held at most once or twice a month. One or two bills are drawn out of about 40 bills placed on the ballot by MPs each time. If a member's bill is not selected on the ballot, the MP is allowed to place the same bill on subsequent ballots. A total of 3174 members' bills were placed on the ballot during the 46^{th}-50^{th} parliaments. The chances of success are fairly low. Only 159 bills were drawn in the ballots (5.0%). Figure 1 graphs the average participation rate in members' ballots by government, support party, and opposition MPs during the 46^{th}-50^{th} parliaments. As one might expect, opposition MPs were more active when it comes to members' bills, participating on average in nearly half the ballots and placing a total of 1805 bills on the ballot or on average 6.91 bills per MP each session. In contrast, government MPs placed 516 bills on the ballot, averaging only 1.80 bills per MP (per session). Thus, only about 16% of all members' bills were placed by government MPs. MPs of parties that lent their support to the government without being formally a part of it were the most active, making use over 80% of their opportunities to place a bill on the members' ballot.

Figure 2 graphs the number of unique bills placed on the ballot by a MP as well as the number of attempts made. About 35% of the MPs (excluding ministers) didn't participate in

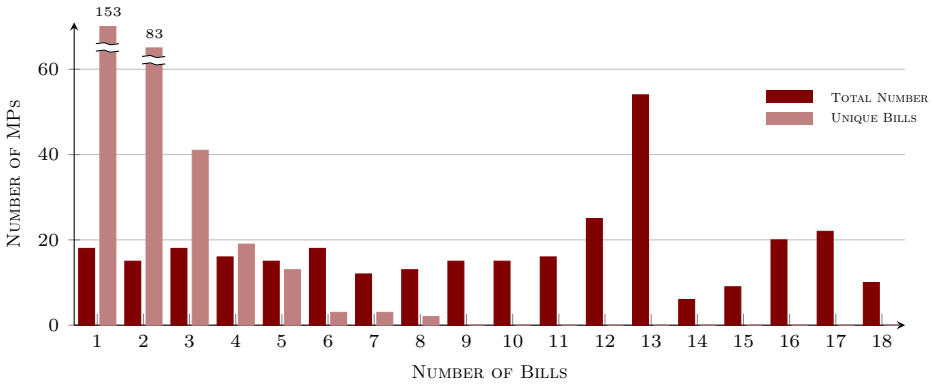
[20] `http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/legislation/proposed-bills/`. Accessed 8/2/2015.
[21] `http://www.elections.org.nz/`. Accessed 8/2/2015.
[22] `http://www.nzes.org/`

FIGURE 1: SHARE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ENTER BILL USED*
—BY GOVERNMENT PARTY MEMBERSHIP—



*Excludes Ministers, House Leaders, and All Speakers.
SOURCE: New Zealand Parliament (www.parliament.nz)

FIGURE 2: BILLS PLACED ON THE BALLOT BY MP
—TOTAL NUMBER OF BILLS & UNIQUE BILLS—



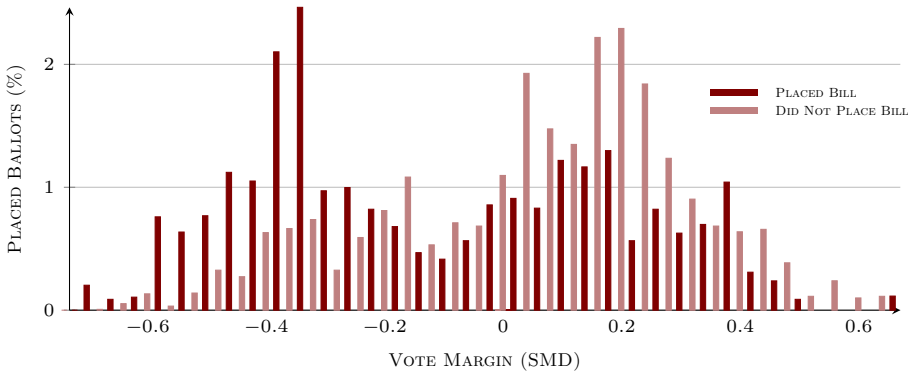
SOURCE: New Zealand Parliament (www.parliament.nz)

the ballot at all. The number of attempts is fairly evenly distributed although a fair number of MPs appear to take every opportunity to place a bill on the ballot.[23] However, about 94% of the MPs who placed a bill on the ballot did so more than once. A plurality of MPs, 48%, placed a single bill (i.e., a unique bill) on the ballot with about 27% placing two separate bills on the ballot and 25% more than two.

To evaluate our first set of hypotheses, concerning the effect of electoral vulnerability on the incentive to place bills on the members' bill ballot, we consider whether each MP entered a bill in each members' ballot held. As we discuss above, proposing members' bill can be seen to have an effect for different reasons. For example, if the MP seeks to signal legislative effort placing the same bill on the ballot repeatedly and proposing several different

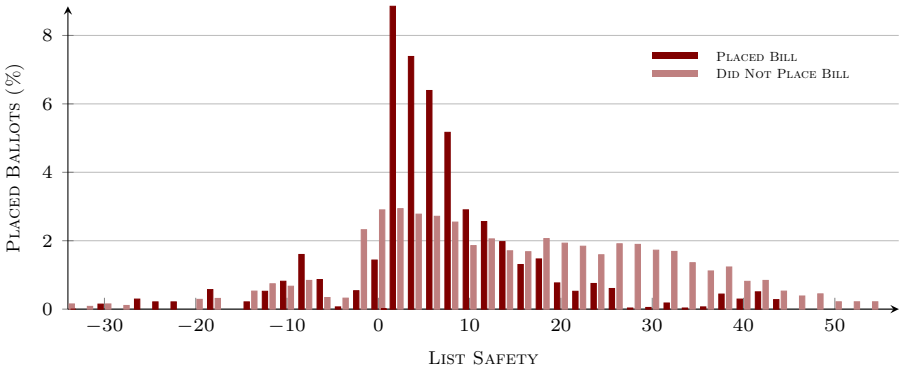
[23]The number of ballots held varied from twelve to eighteen, and in the shorter sessions participating in all the ballots was quite common, thus accounting for the relatively high number of MPs having presented 12 or 13 bills.

FIGURE 3: VOTE MARGIN AND PLACING BILLS ON THE BALLOT



SOURCE: New Zealand Parliament (www.parliament.nz)

FIGURE 4: LIST SAFETY AND PLACING BILLS ON THE BALLOT



SOURCE: New Zealand Parliament (www.parliament.nz)

bills may both be effective strategies, i.e., in either case her name appears on each ballot and is more likely to be noticed by party members or journalists. Similarly, if the benefits are only expected to be realized if the MP's bill is drawn and debated in parliament, however, then the number of attempts rather than the number of unique bills is more relevant for maximizing the probability of (one of) the MP's bills being selected. If, on the other hand, the MP is targeting his constituents the number of unique bills placed on the ballot may be more effective, i.e., the MP may benefit more from having advocated several different issues. For these reasons we measure members' bills activity in two different ways. First, whether the MP placed a bill on each members' bill ballot held. Second, whether the MP placed a new bill on a given ballot.[24]

Our key independent variables measure the MP's electoral safety. As the New Zealand uses a mixed-member proportional system, MPs can be electorally vulnerable either because

[24]Summary statistics are presented in the appendix.

of lack of support in their electorate or because they occupy a seat low on the party list. List Safety is the difference between the number of seats won by the MP's party in the election and the MP's place on the party list. Similarly, SMD Safety is the MP's margin of victory in her electorate in the election.[25] Higher values indicate in both instances a greater degree of electoral safety and the hypothesis that electoral safety matters is then supported if the estimated coefficients of the variables are negative. An interaction between the two variables is also considered as MPs that are both low on their party's list and have limited support in their electorate are the most vulnerable. In contrast, an MP that, e.g., won by a large margin in her electorate has little reason to worry about her placement on the party list.

Figures 3 and 4 graph the distributions of SMD Safety and List Safety for MPs that placed and didn't place a bill on the members' ballot. If the MPs' incentive to propose members' bills were unrelated with either measure of electoral safety then the distribution of those that did and did not place a bill on the ballot would have the same shape. That is clearly not the case. Figure 3 suggests that MPs that placed bills on the ballot are somewhat more likely to be those that fared poorly in their electorates and entered parliament on the party list. In contrast, MPs that did not bother to place a bill on the ballot are more likely be electorate MPs in relatively safe seats. Figure 4 reveals a clearer pattern. MPs that placed bills on a members' ballot are far more likely to be at the lower rung of their party's list while those who did not participate are more evenly distributed.[26] Taken together, the figures perhaps suggest that offering members' bills is directed more at the MP's party than intended to build a personal vote — MPs that offer members' bills appear to be those that fail to win a seat in the electorate they contested and were among the last ones to come in off the party list.

Several control variables are included in the estimated models. Government MP and Support Party MP are indicator variables coded one for, respectively, government and government support party MPs and zero else.[27] As we have argued that placing members' bills on the ballot is potentially seen as a rebellion for government MPs, we also examine an interaction between Gov't MP and SMD Safety. If that is the case, the coefficient for the interaction term should be negative, indicating that government MPs reduce their members' bill activity more rapidly than opposition MPs as their margin of victory in their electorate increases.[28] The mixed-member electoral system implies that the MPs face

[25] SMD Safety is coded zero for candidates that did not contest an electorate seat. For unsuccessful electorate candidates that nevertheless were elected on the party list, SMD Safety is coded as their 'margin of victory', i.e., a negative number. Descriptive statistics are provided in Appendix A.

[26] It bears noting that the figure is slightly misleading as there are more MPs with low values on List Safety as its value for each party is capped at the number of list seats won by each party, i.e., a small party that only wins four seats has no MPs with List Safety greater than three. However, comparing the shape of the two distributions suggests that List Safety does matter.

[27] Government support parties are those parties that have made a confidence and supply agreement with the government parties.

[28] An interaction between List Safety and Gov't MP is not considered because MPs that are vulnerable because of their position on the party list rely on their party to obtain a better place on the party list and, thus, do not face similar incentives to place bills on the ballot to begin with.

different incentives depending on whether the anticipating campaigning as electorate or list candidates (or both). To take account of these incentives we include a control for the MP's candidacy. The variables SMD Only and List Only indicate whether the MP ran, respectively, only in an electorate and only on the party list with the baseline category being MPs that both ran as electorate and list candidates.[29] Parliamentary Leadership is an indicator variable that takes the value one if the MP held a parliamentary leadership positions (Leader of House, Speaker of the House, or Deputy or Assistant Speaker). Days Left is the number of days until the end of the session.[30] If the motive to enter a bill in the ballot is electoral, then those motives ought to become more salient as the end of the session draws closer and MPs ought to be more likely to enter a bill on the ballot. Indicator variables for the parliamentary sessions are included as the use of members' bills may have changed over time. The analysis of whether MPs enter a new or unique bill on the ballot includes two additional variables. First, Previous Bill Drawn is an indicator variable that takes the value one if previous bill proposed by the MP was drawn in the ballot to account for the fact that MPs wishing to continue to signal effort to their electorate or party leadership cannot resubmit a bill that has already been drawn. Second, we include an indicator variable for the first ballot held in each session as a bill entered in the first ballot is new by definition.

As our dependent variable is an indicator for whether the MP entered in given members' bill ballot, the MP's propensity to enter a bill is modeled using a logit model. The unit of observation is thus the MP-Ballot, i.e., there is one observation for each MP for each members' ballot held.[31] As each MP contributes multiple observations to the dataset, and their actions are unlikely to be independent from one ballot to another, standard errors are estimated assuming errors are clustered by MP in each session.

Table 1 shows the estimated logit models. The evidence suggests that electoral vulnerability matters regardless of whether the dependent variable is specified in terms of any bill or new (or unique) bills. Greater safety, whether in the electorate or on the party list, generally reduces the likelihood of a members' bill being submitted by MPs. To gauge the substantive effect of the safety variables, we calculate the change in the dependent variable as the value of the safety variable goes from its mean minus its standard deviation ($\mu_s - \sigma_s$) to its mean plus its standard deviation ($\mu_s + \sigma_s$). The effect of such a change in List Safety reduces the probability of entering a bill in the ballot by 13.6% pts. while the corresponding change in SMD Safety reduces the probability by 11.0% pts. Over a parliamentary session, in which 12-18 member ballots are held, this amounts to entering, on average, about one and a half additional bills in the members' ballots.[32]

[29] We use the MP's candidacy in the previous election as a proxy for the MP's expectations about whether she will campaign as an electorate and/or list candidate in the subsequent election.

[30] When the session end is affected by the PM's decision but as the MPs' behavior is affected by their expectations about when elections are held we define the end of session as being three years from the previous election.

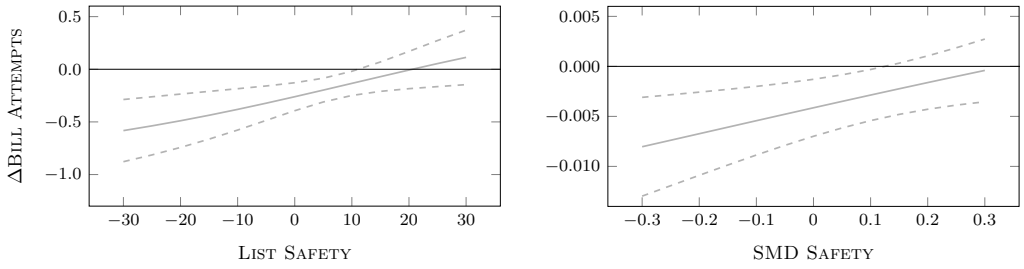
[31] Ministers are excluded from the analysis as they are not allowed to place bills on the ballot.

[32] With regard to new bills entered on the ballot, the same changes in List Safety and SMD Vote Safety reduces the probability of proposing a new bill by, respectively, 2.9% pts. and 3.1% pts.

Table 1: Member Bill Attempts & Electoral Safety:
—46^{th}-50^{th} Parliament, Logit Models—

	All Attempts		Unique Bills	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SMD Vote Safety	-1.67***	-1.24***	-0.97***	-0.91***
	(<.001)	(0.009)	(<.001)	(<.001)
List Safety	-0.026***	-0.025***	-0.013***	-0.013**
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.011)
SMD×List Safety	0.074**	0.075**	0.020	0.021
	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.25)	(0.24)
Gov't. MP×SMD Safety		-1.30*		-0.28
		(0.066)		(0.47)
Gov't MP	-1.31***	-1.28***	-0.82***	-0.82***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Support Party MP	1.83***	1.94***	0.95***	0.97***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
SMD Only	-1.09***	-1.12***	-0.57**	-0.56*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.049)	(0.053)
List Only	-0.23	-0.28	-0.095	-0.11
	(0.42)	(0.35)	(0.60)	(0.56)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.30	-0.29	-0.92*	-0.91*
	(0.68)	(0.70)	(0.085)	(0.084)
Seniority	0.025	0.021	0.019**	0.018**
	(0.12)	(0.19)	(0.034)	(0.043)
Days left of Session	-0.00070***	-0.00070***	0.000093	0.000096
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.68)	(0.67)
47^{th} Parliament	-0.69**	-0.68**	-0.14	-0.13
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.49)	(0.50)
48^{th} Parliament	-0.41	-0.46*	-0.31*	-0.32*
	(0.13)	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.089)
49^{th} Parliament	-0.19	-0.19	0.050	0.052
	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.75)	(0.75)
50^{th} Parliament	2.09***	2.14***	1.01***	1.01***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Previous Bill Drawn			1.51***	1.51***
			(<.001)	(<.001)
First Ballot of Session			2.52***	2.52***
			(<.001)	(<.001)
Constant	0.32	0.36	-3.11***	-3.10***
	(0.24)	(0.20)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Observations	7567	7567	7567	7567
Clusters	515	515	515	515
Log Likelihood	-3695.4	-3682.7	-1786.9	-1786.7
χ^2	326.8	320.6	708.7	704.9

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$



(a) Marginal Effect of SMD Safety — Conditional on List Safety —

(b) Marginal Effect of List Safety — Conditional on SMD Safety —

Figure 5: The Effect of List & SMD Safety on the Number of Attempts

The coefficient for the interaction of the two electoral safety variables is correctly signed but is only statistically significant when the dependent variable is whether the MP entered a bill in the ballot (models 1 and 2). This suggests that members' bill activity is related to the MPs' concerns over their electoral standing. As shown in figure 5, improvement in a MP's SMD safety has a smaller effect for MPs that are in safe seats on their party's list than MP that are ranked low on the party list. Conversely, moving up the party list has less of an effect on participation in the members' ballot for an MP who carried her electorate by a wide margin than a MP who failed to win in her electorate or did so by a narrow margin. Moreover, the graphs of the marginal effect of each safety variable show that improved safety only reduces the number of bills proposed if the MP lacks safety as measured by the other safety variable. That is, improved SMD safety has no effect if the MP was ranked high on the party list. This is in line with expectations — as most MPs run both in an electorate and on the party list they only face electoral insecurity if they are in vulnerable position in both. If a MP occupies a safe seat on the party list then her standing in her electorate is of little concern to her. Similarly, if strong in her electorate there is little reason to try to gain a seat higher on the party list.

Government MPs are less likely to place bills on the ballot. Similarly, the interaction between government MP and electoral safety for electorate MPs provides an indication that government MPs respond more sharply to electoral vulnerability although there is considerable statistical uncertainty about the effect.Overall the results suggest that MPs are influenced by electoral concerns and that their behavior reflects both concern about their ability to win votes in their electorate as well as their standing within the party.

3.2 Rewarding Legislative Action: Approval

We now turn our attention to the question whether voters show greater approval of MPs that place members' bills on the ballot or are afforded the opportunity to present their bills in parliament. The 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2011 New Zealand Election Study asked respondents

to indicate how strongly they approved or disapproved of their electorate MP on a five point scale.

To model the respondents' answers to the MP approval question we use ordered logit models, estimating the effect of the total number of attempts to place a bill on the ballot, the number of unique bills placed on the ballot, and whether the respondent's MP was lucky enough to have her bill drawn on the ballot. When it comes to whether the MP had a bill drawn on the ballot, we are able to take advantage of the members' bill ballot approximating a natural experiment, i.e., members' bill are drawn at random. The 'natural experiment' brings us closer to establishing a causal relationship as the random selection of bills implies that the treatment (a MP's bill being drawn) is exogenous and the possibility of endogeneity is, thus, eliminated. There are, however, some complications as the probability of having a bill drawn is not completely exogenous, i.e., in order to have a bill drawn the MP must have placed a bill on the ballot and the more bills she has placed, the better her chances. As this non-random selection onto the ballot interferes with the random assignment of the 'treatment', we also estimate models that only include respondents represented by MPs that placed a bill on the ballot, include controls for the number of times the MP placed a bill on the ballot, and estimate models for subsamples of respondents whose MPs placed the same, or similar, number of bills on the ballot.[33]

The main reason for questioning the 'natural experiment' generated by the members' bill ballot is, of course, the possibility that MPs that place bills (more often) on the ballot are different from other MPs. That is, it may be that some other factor, whether characteristic or context, induces the MP to place more bills on the ballot and causes voters to evaluate her more highly. This is one version of the popular refrain 'correlation doesn't imply causation'. Given these issues it would be fair to ask why bother estimating models that only consider the number of attempts and the number of unique bills placed on the ballot. The reason is simple. While the above refrain is certainly true, it is also true that 'correlation does not imply the absence of causation'. That is, in some instances there are good reasons to think that a causal relationship exists even when one can only estimate correlations. Consider the number of bills placed on the ballot. As we have argued theoretically and shown empirically, electoral vulnerability affects MPs attempts at proposing members' bills.

[33]The reason the members' bill ballot falls short of being a 'natural experiment' is that the probability of having a bill drawn is not independent of the number of times the MP enters a bill in the ballot, i.e., a MP that enters twice is roughly twice as likely to have a bill drawn than a MP that only participates once. This creates a problem because the decision to enter a bill multiple times may be correlated with MP characteristics such as their electoral strength, persistence, etc. Estimating the effects of having a bill drawn for subsamples of MPs whose levels of participation in the members' ballot helps address this problem. This strategy is potentially limited if the MPs' strategy is to stop participating in the ballot once they have a bill drawn. In that case the number of attempts doesn't reflect a MP's persistence, i.e., a MP who has a bill drawn on the first ballot will have made a single attempt while he might have made multiple attempts had she not gotten lucky. Our data suggests, however, that this is not a significant concern as most MP return to enter a new members' bill in the ballot after they have had a bill drawn. Moreover, those that do not place a new bill on the ballot tend to have had their bills drawn in one of the last ballots of the session and may, therefore, not have had much time to prepare a new bill. Overall, there is little to suggest that MPs strategy involves being satisfied with having a single bill drawn.

Electorally vulnerable MPs typically suffer from lower levels of approval. Thus, if placing bills on the ballot has no effect on approval, a negative coefficient would be expected for the number bills placed on the ballot in the models estimated here. While examining the effects of the number of bills placed on the ballot doesn't offer the clean identification that a natural experiment offers, it does offer some insight into the question whether legislative effort matters apart from the chance of having one's bill debated.

Several control variables that are likely to affect MP approval are included in the models. L-R Distance is the absolute ideological distance between the respondent's self-placement on the left-right scale and her placement of the electorate MP's party. Respondents are expected to approve more of MPs from ideologically proximate parties. The survey also includes a question about how much the respondent approves of the electorate MP's party. MP's Party Approval is expected to be positively correlated with the respondent's evaluation of the MP.[34] General MP Approval captures the respondent's evaluation of MPs in general. The variable is included to account for heterogeneity in the respondents' attitudes towards parliamentarians, i.e., some respondents may approve of all MPs while others may disapprove. Finally, the models include controls for MPs in the Parliamentary Leadership.

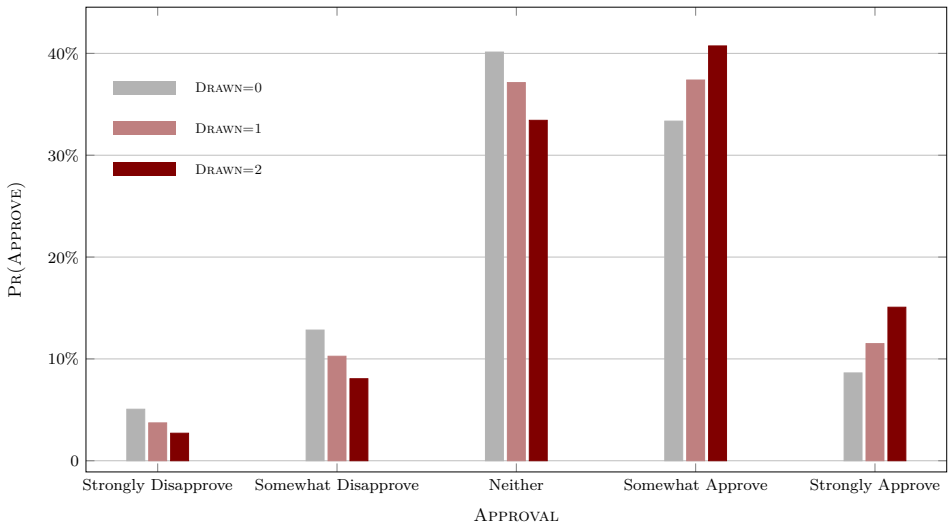
Table 2 shows the results of the estimation of the ordered logit model. The first three columns consider the effects of the two different measures of the number of bills placed on the members' bill ballot and the number of times a MP had a bill drawn on the ballot. Each of the measures has a positive effect on the respondents' approval of the MPs. In the fourth column, which includes all three variables, we find that the total number of bills and the number of bills drawn remain statistically significant while the effect of the number of unique bills is now negative. While these results suggest that participating in the ballot and having one's bill drawn is more beneficial to the MP than presenting multiple different bills, these results must be taken with a grain of salt. The three variables are correlated, which inflates the estimated standard errors and makes coefficient estimates unstable. The results in the first four columns of the table include all MPs but, as mentioned earlier, MPs that participate in the ballot may differ from MPs that don't participate. Column 5 presents the results of the ordered logit model for the subsample of respondents whose MPs placed at least one bill on the ballot. The effect of the number of bills drawn remains virtually the same when the analysis is restricted to the subsample, which suggests that the results are not being driven by the different incentives MPs face in participating in the ballot. To provide a sense of the substantive effect of having a bill drawn on the ballot, Figure 6 graphs the predicted probabilities of a respondent answering the approval question in each of the five possible ways. The figure shows that MPs who had one or two bills drawn were less likely to be rated negatively or neutrally but the respondents were more likely to view the MP favorably. The effect is quite substantial — the probability of a respondent approving of a MP was about seven percentage points higher for each of the MP's bill drawn.

[34] MP's Party Approval may, in large part, be determined by the respondents' evaluation of their electorate MP. However, the substantive conclusions are not affected by the exclusion of the variable.

Table 2: MP Approval: No. & Unique Attempts, Bills Drawn

	All MPs				Only Proposers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
No. Attempts	0.033***			0.037***	
	(<.001)			(<.001)	
No. Unique Bills		0.14***		-0.16***	
		(<.001)		(0.003)	
No. Bills Drawn			0.36***	0.37***	0.26***
			(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
L-R Distance	-0.022*	-0.022*	-0.023*	-0.023*	-0.025
	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.13)
MP's Party Approval	0.19***	0.19***	0.19***	0.19***	0.22***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-1.18***	-1.18***	-1.18***	-1.18***	-0.97***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.14	-0.15	-0.23**	-0.21**	0.38***
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.025)	(0.037)	(<.001)
Election: 2002	0.067	0.095	0.11*	0.077	0.18**
	(0.25)	(0.11)	(0.065)	(0.19)	(0.042)
2005	-0.16**	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.16**	-0.17*
	(0.014)	(0.032)	(0.030)	(0.012)	(0.079)
2011	0.14**	0.13*	0.13**	0.15**	0.13
	(0.038)	(0.054)	(0.044)	(0.028)	(0.21)
Cutpoint: μ_1	-5.84***	-5.83***	-5.85***	-5.86***	-5.06***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_2	-4.17***	-4.16***	-4.18***	-4.18***	-3.43***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_3	-1.80***	-1.80***	-1.81***	-1.81***	-1.08***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_4	0.66***	0.65***	0.65***	0.65***	1.39***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Observations	7102	7102	7102	7102	3513
Log Likelihood	-8392.8	-8400.0	-8385.5	-8376.3	-4130.1
χ^2	2417.9	2403.5	2432.5	2450.8	1062.1

FIGURE 6: PREDICTED RESPONDENT APPROVAL OF MP
—CONDITIONAL ON NUMBER OF BILLS DRAWN—



Some ambiguity still remains about the value of having one's bill drawn. That is, the legislative effort of MPs, in terms of the number of bills placed in the ballot, still varies a lot in column 5 in table 2. Further conditioning the estimated models on legislative effort is methodologically straightforward except that further partitioning implies fewer observations within each subsample. For example, the subsample of respondents whose MPs placed a single bill on the ballot consists of only 528 observations. Because of these data limitation, four ordered logit models are estimated; for MPs that made a single attempt, for MPs that made two to four attempts, for MPs that proposed one unique bill, and for MPs that proposed two unique bills.[35]

The results support the hypothesis that the chance of presenting a bill in parliament does affect the MPs' approval rating (see Table 3). The effect is positive across the subsamples and statistically significant except in the second model. In substantive terms the effect is significant. Each additional bill drawn increases the MPs' average approval rating between .2 and .3 points on the 5 point approval scale, which corresponds to between one in every five voters and three in every ten voters ranking the MP one point higher on the scale.

In sum, there is clear evidence of members' bill mattering when it comes to respondents' approval of their MPs and, also, that they may matter in two distinct ways. First, as the results in Table 3 show, having one's bill drawn on the members' ballot and having the opportunity to present a members' bill in parliament affects MP approval. Second, the

[35]We combine those respondents whose MPs made two to four attempts to ensure a reasonable sized subsample. Appendix C includes the same models estimated on different subsamples (0-5 attempts, 6-10 attempts, and >10 attempts). The results tell substantively the same story.

Table 3: MP Approval: Ordered Logit
— Conditioning on No. Attempts & Unique Bills—

	Attempts		Unique Bills	
	One	Two to Four	One	Two
No. Bills Drawn	0.39**	0.34**	0.27***	0.23
	(0.025)	(0.033)	(0.002)	(0.11)
L-R Distance	-0.029	0.015	-0.031	0.021
	(0.48)	(0.69)	(0.15)	(0.58)
MP's Party Approval	0.19***	0.27***	0.20***	0.26***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-1.10***	-0.80***	-1.07***	-0.96***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	–	–	1.82**	0.45
			(0.017)	(0.18)
Election: 2002	-0.072	0.56**	0.11	0.36*
	(0.76)	(0.022)	(0.31)	(0.077)
2005	-0.62**	-0.36*	-0.35***	-0.11
	(0.017)	(0.077)	(0.003)	(0.66)
2011	-0.18	0.23	0.030	0.077
	(0.43)	(0.21)	(0.80)	(0.72)
Cutpoint: μ_1	-5.45***	-4.22***	-5.68***	-4.43***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_2	-3.97***	-2.46***	-3.98***	-2.97***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_3	-1.69***	-0.063	-1.57***	-0.78*
	(<.001)	(0.89)	(<.001)	(0.083)
μ_4	0.75	2.45***	0.88***	1.74***
	(0.13)	(<.001)	(0.001)	(<.001)
Observations	528	722	2060	642
Log Likelihood	-637.2	-847.0	-2411.6	-766.5
χ^2	173.4	244.6	662.4	205.5

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

results in Table 2 suggest that, at least some, respondents are willing to give their MP an 'A' for effort — merely placing a bill on the members' bill ballot also appears to positively affect the MP's approval rating. Respondents, thus, appear to reward legislative effort, which makes sense as placing a bill on the ballot is about the only thing that the individual MP can do.

Placing a new bill on the ballot or having one's bill drawn would be expected to have bigger impact on approval than placing an 'old' bill on the ballot again. An 'old' bill is old news to those that pay close attention to parliamentary politics. Placing the same bill on the ballot over and over again can still be expected to have an effect as it does signal effort, even if fairly minimal, and the MP may also hope to convey that she is persistent. Nevertheless, new bills or actually having one's bill debated is more likely to be newsworthy and help raise the profile of the MP. The results (Table 2, columns 1-3) suggest that these expectations are borne out by the data. Each additional attempt nets the MPs considerable less positive approval than placing a new bill on the ballot or having her bill drawn.[36]

In addition to MP approval we explored the effects of private members' bills on whether survey respondents knew their electorate MP's name and on the MP's electoral performance. Respondents were more likely to know their MP if they had participated in the members' ballot and if they had placed multiple different bills on the members' ballots whereas the effects of having a bill drawn were more ambiguous — perhaps because voters are more likely to be informed about members' bills by their MPs than from paying close attention to legislative politics. The results with regard to electoral performance are at first sight in stark contrast with previous findings by Loewen et al. (2014), and to a lesser extent Bowler (2010), who find clear evidence of voters rewarding MPs that present members' bills. Our results suggest that members that participate more frequently in the ballot and place more unique bills fare, if anything, worse electorally. However, given our analysis above of the incentives to participate in the members' ballot, this stands to reason. MPs that do place bills on the ballot do so because they face greater electoral insecurity — the observed negative relationship is the result of endogeneity problems. Indeed, when we consider the effect of having a bill drawn, which allows us to condition on the MPs' effort (the number of times the MP participates) we find that having a bill drawn has a positive, but statistically insignificant effect. Thus, there is a slight indication that private member bills do positively affect electoral outcomes but the amount of data available limits our ability to draw inferences about the importance of private member bills in this regard. The results of the analysis can be found in appendices C and D.

Generally, however, there are good reasons for thinking the members' bills have a limited

[36]Of course, column 4 in table 2 suggests that the number of attempts might be more important than the other variables. One must keep in mind, however, that the three variables are correlated and that there is considerably more variation in the number of total attempts than the other variables. Thus, if the number of total attempts has a slight effect then maximizing the likelihood of observing the actual outcome may allocate more of the effect to the number of attempts as it affects a greater number of respondents, which may lead to an underestimate of the effect of the other two variables.

impact on electoral outcomes — even when they are shown to be important for MP approval. In New Zealand, as in many parliamentary systems, politics are dominate by parties and election largely revolve around which party, or parties, will form government. Preferences or evaluations for individual electorate candidates may, therefore, play a rather limited role. Placing bills on the members' ballot may help the MP's approval rating but is perhaps unlikely to overcome partisan differences.[37] Moreover, one might ask which voters reward MPs' for members' bill activity — our analysis suggests, unsurprisingly, that approval increases most among ideologically proximate voters. That is, it appears that the voters that respond most positively to the MP's effort to present members' bills are primarily the voters that were already most likely to vote for the MP.[38]

4 Conclusions

Parliamentary systems tend to be characterized by tight control of the legislative agenda by the government and high levels of party discipline. As a consequence, members of parliament generally face a limited scope of actions outside their parties when it comes to achieving their career goals, whether related to policy or their reelection chances. Private members' bills, or members' bills, are one opportunity for MPs to achieve such goal. There are many reasons why MPs might not want to purse a strategy of proposing members' bills. First, while there are some cross-national differences, members' bills are usually highly unlikely to be adopted by the legislature and become law. Second, offering members' bills can be a costly exercise — especially for government MPs whose parties may put a premium on party discipline. Third, elections in parliamentary elections — in part because party discipline is high — tend to be party focused, i.e., voters pay greater attention to the party platforms, or party leaders, than the individual candidates. In such circumstances it is not clear that an MP would benefit much from striking out on her own by proposing a members' bill. Fourth, some electoral systems, e.g., closed list proportional representation systems, vastly limit the value of a personal vote and, therefore, diminish the incentive to propose members' bill or engage in other legislative activity that might otherwise appeal to voters. Yet, MPs do propose members' bills.

In this paper, we have sought to explain why MPs propose members' bills and to show that, despite everything, members' bills represent a form of an electoral connection. In particular, we show that electorally vulnerable MPs are more likely to propose members' bills and that voters respond by evaluating them more favorably. We choose New Zealand because its electoral rules and parliamentary procedures have particular features that are conducive for studying members' bills. Its mixed-member proportional system has distinct benefits. In order to say something, hopefully, interesting about the electoral connection the system

[37] It bears noting that the two ballot system certainly affords voters greater flexibility to rewards MPs for their constituency service than mixed-member systems where voters cast a single vote.

[38] The results are presented in Appendix E.

under study ought to provide MPs with at least minimal incentives to build a personal vote. The presence of single-member districts provides this condition in New Zealand — electorate MPs have a strong incentive to build a personal following, especially if they are located in electorates where their party is weak and if they are placed low on the party list. List MPs owe their parliamentary seat to the party and have, therefore, little incentives to worry about a personal vote. We find, however, that there is an electoral connection when it comes to list MPs but that it is quite distinct from the one that electorate MPs must grapple with. Vulnerable list MPs, those that are low on the party list, are more likely to offer members' bill. In this instance the goal of the MP is not to signal competence or legislative effort to the voters but rather to the members of their own party who influence the nomination of candidates to the party list.

The major advantage of studying New Zealand is that the ability to introduce members' bill in the legislature is decided by lot as in some other Westminster systems, e.g., the U.K. (Bowler, 2010) and Canada (Loewen et al., 2014).[39] The members' ballot comes close to creating a natural experiment, which helps estimate the causal effect of presenting members' bills in parliament. We find that MPs that have a bill drawn on the ballot have higher levels of approval among respondents in the New Zealand Election Studies. The effect is quite substantial — as many as 20-30% of the respondents are estimated to rate a MP that has had a bill drawn on the ballot a point higher on the five-point approval scale than a MP that didn't have the same luck. These are rather remarkable figures considering that it is unlikely that the respondents pay close attention to whether their MPs present members' bills. However, we have argued that such politically attuned voters are not a necessary condition for members' bills to affect voters' attitudes. The MPs, themselves, e.g., can bring the members' bills to voters' attention when campaigning for reelection. Members' bills may also serve to draw media attention to the MP — whether it is because of the content of the bill or because it signals ambition, or electoral vulnerability, to political journalists.

The total number of bills and number of unique bills placed on the ballot also affect the MPs' approval rates positively but, of course, it is not possible to assert that there is a causal relationship running from placing bills on the ballot and approval. However, if MP approval affects the incentive to place a bill on the ballot it seems more likely that MPs who face a poor approval rating are more likely to place bills on the ballot. That is, indeed, what we find when examining how often MPs place a bill on the ballot and, thus, if endogeneity is a problem it is likely to bias the estimates of partaking in the ballot downwards.

The number of times the MPs take part in the ballot does introduce a potential confounding factor into the natural experiment. Simply put, the more often the MP places a bill on the ballot, the greater are her chances of having her bill selected. Thus, the MPs whose bills are eventually drawn may differ from MPs in general. The argument above about MPs facing low levels of approval having a greater incentives to place bill on the ballot (and, thus,

[39] Of course, whether New Zealand remains a Westminster system is open for debate.

biasing the results against our hypothesis) helps mitigate this problem but we also address it by comparing MPs that placed the same (or similar) number of bills on the ballot and find that the effects of having a bill drawn on approval remain positive.

In sum, the manuscript contributes to the growing body of literature that has sought to demonstrate how members' bills connect MP with their constituents but suggests that members' bills may also have an important role in systems where MPs do not stand to gain much from building a 'personal vote'. The results suggest that MPs also use members' bills to signal effort and competence to their own parties in the hope of securing a more favorable list position. While our analysis takes place within a mixed-member system where contamination between the electorate and proportional representation part of the electoral system are a concern (see, e.g., Krauss et al., 2012; Ferrara & Herron, 2005), we do find that MPs respond to electoral safety within the two parts of the system in a predictable manner. It, thus, appears quite plausible that similar effects would be found in examining members' bill — or constituency service and legislative behavior more broadly — in other electoral systems, whether they employ only single member districts or are proportional representation systems. We also find evidence that suggests the voters notice and approve of MPs' efforts — MPs' that participate more in the members' ballot and are fortunate enough to have their bills drawn are rated more highly by survey respondents, thus suggesting that the MPs' behavior is a rational response to the political context they find themselves in.

References

Ashworth, S. & Bueno de Mesquita, E. (2005). Delivering the goods: Legislative particularism in different electoral and institutional settings. *Journal of Politics*, *68*(1), 168–179. Wiley.

Banducci, S. & Karp, J. (1998). Representation under a proportional system. In J. Vowles, P. Aimer, S. Banducci, & J. Karp (Eds.), *Voters' Victory? New Zealand's First Election Under Proportional Representation* (pp. 153–170). Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press.

Bawn, K. & Thies, M. F. (2003). A comparative theory of electoral incentives: Representing the unorganized under PR, plurality and mixed-member electoral systems. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, *15*(1), 5–32.

Bogdanor, V. (1985). *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies.* Gower: Aldershot.

Bowler, S. (2010). Is there an "electoral connection" to private member's bills? Evidence from the 1997-2001 and 2001-2005 parliaments. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *16*(4), 476–494. Taylor and Francis.

Bradbury, J. & Mitchell, J. (2007). The constituency work of members of the Scottish parliament and national assembly for Wales: Approaches, relationships and rules. *Regional & Federal Studies*, *17*(1), 117–145.

Bräuninger, T. (2009). Responsivität und strategische Adaption im Parteienwettbewerb in den deutschen Bundesländern. In C. Henning, E. Linhart, & S. Shikano (Eds.), *Parteienwettbewerb, Wählerverhalten und Koalitionsbildung* (pp. 28–46). Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Bräuninger, T., Brunner, M., & Däubler, T. (2012). Personal vote-seeking in flexible list systems: How electoral incentives shape Belgian MPs' bill initiation behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research*, *51*, 607–645. Wiley.

Cain, B. E., Ferejohn, J. A., & Fiorina, M. P. (1984). The constituency service basis of the personal vote for US representatives and British members of parliament. *American Political Science Review*, *78*(1), 110–125. Jstor.

Cain, B. E., Fiorina, M. P., & Ferejohn, J. (1987). *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Carey, J. M. & Shugart, M. S. (1996). Incentives to cultivate a personal vote: A rank ordering of electoral systems. *Electoral Studies*, *14*(4), 417–439. Es.

Cheibub, J. A. & Limongi, F. (2002). Democratic institutions and regime survival: Parliamentary and presidential democracies reconsidered. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *5*, 151–179.

Chubb, B. (1963). Going about persecuting civil servants: The role of the Irish parliamentary representative. *Political Studies*, *XI*(3), 272–286.

Cox, G. W. (1987). *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crisp, B. F., Escobar-Lemmon, M. C., Jones, B. S., Jones, M. P., & Taylor-Robinson, M. M. (2004). Vote-seeking incentives and legislative representation in six presidential democracies. *Journal of Politics*, *66*(3), 823–846. Cambridge.

Denemark, D. (2000). Partisan pork barrel in parliamentary systems: Australian constituency-level grants. *Journal of Politics*, *62*(3), 896–915.

Farrar, D. (2012). The members' bill ballot. The New Zealand Herald.

Fenno, R. F. (1978). *Home style: House members in their districts*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Ferrara, F. & Herron, E. S. (2005). Going it alone? Strategic entry under mixed electoral rules. *American Journal of Political Science*, *49*(1), 16–31.

Franks, C. (2007). Members and constituency roles in the Canadian federal system. *Regional and Federal Studies*, *17*(1), 23–45.

French, S. L. (2009). Early day motions and the electoral connection in the British House of Commons. Prepared for the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Gaines, B. J. (1998). The impersonal vote? Constituency service and incumbency advantage in British elections, 1950-92. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *23*(2), 167–195. Jstor.

Heitshusen, V., Young, G., & Wood, D. M. (2005). Electoral context and MP constituency focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. *American Journal of Political Science*, *49*(1), 32–45. Wiley.

Hellwig, T. & Samuels, D. (2008). Electoral accountability and the variety of democratic regimes. *British Journal of Political Science*, *38*(1), 65–90. Cup.

Kam, C. J. (2009). *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kellermann, M. (2013). Sponsoring early day motions in the British House of Commons as a response to electoral vulnerability. *Political Science and Research Methods*, *1*(2), 263–280. Cambridge.

King, G. (1991). Constituency service and incumbency advantage. *British Journal of Political Science*, *21*(01), 119–128.

Kite, H. & Crampton, E. (2007). Antipodean electoral incentives: The pork barrel and New Zealand's MMP electoral rule. Paper presented at the New Zealand Association of Economists Annual Conference 2007.

Klingeman, H.-D. & Wessels, B. (2001). The political consequences of Germany's mixed-member system: Personalization at the grass roots? In Shugart & Wattenberg (2001).

Kollman, K., Hicken, A., Caramani, D., & Backer, D. (2013). Constituency-level elections archive. Produced and distributed by Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan.

Krauss, E., Nemoto, K., & Pekkanen, R. (2012). Reverse contamination burning and building bridges in mixed-member systems. *Comparative Political Studies*, *45*(6), 747–773.

Loewen, P. J., Koop, R., Settle, J., & Fowler, J. H. (2014). A natural experiment in proposal power and electoral success. *American Journal of Political Science*, *58*(1), 189–196. Wiley.

Lundberg, T. (2006). Second-class representatives? Mixed-member proportional representation in Britain. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *59*(1), 60–77.

Martin, S. (2011). Electoral institutions, the personal vote, and legislative organization. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *36*(3), 339–362.

Mattson, I. (1995). Private member's initiatives and amendments. In H. Döring (Ed.), *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe* (pp. 448). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Mayhew, D. R. (1974). *Congress: The Electoral Connection.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

McLeay, E. & Vowles, J. (2007). Redefining constituency representation: The roles of New Zealand MPs under MMP. *Regional and Federal Studies*, *17*(1), 71–95. T&F.

Mezey, M. (2008). *Representative Democracy: Legislators and their Constituents.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Moser, R. G. & Scheiner, E. (2011). Strategic ticket splitting and the personal vote in mixed-member electoral systems. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *30*(2), 259–276. Wiley.

Norton, P. & Wood, D. (1990). Constituency service by members of parliament: Does it contribute to a personal vote? *Parliamentary Affairs*, *43*(2), 196–208. Oxford.

Parker, G. R. & Davidson, R. H. (1979). Why do Americans love their congressmen so much more than their Congress? *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *IV*(1), 53–61. Jstor.

Patzelt, W. J. (2007). The constituency roles of MPs at the federal and länder levels in Germany. *Regional and Federal Studies*, *17*(1), 47–70. T&F.

Powell, G. B. & Whitten, G. D. (1993). A cross-national analysis of economic voting: Taking account of the political context. *American Journal of Political Science*, *37*(2), 391–414.

Powell, G. Bingham, J. (2000). *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Rae, D. W. (1971). *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Reed, S. R. (1994). Democracy and the personal vote: A cautionary tale from Japan. *Electoral Studies*, *13*(1), 17–28. SD.

Samuels, D. (2000). Ambition and competition: Explaining legislative turnover in Brazil. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *25*(3), 481–497.

Shomer, Y. (2009). Candidate selection procedures, seniority, and vote-seeking behavior. *Comparative Political Studies*, *42*(7), 945–970.

Shugart, M. S. & Wattenberg, M. P. (2001). In *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Siavelis, P. M. & Morgenstern, S. (2008). Political recruitment and candidate selection in Latin America: A framework for analysis. In P. M. Siavelis & S. Morgenstern (Eds.), *Pathways to Power: Political Recruitment and Candidate Selection in Latin America* (pp. 3–38). University Park: Penn State Press.

Solvak, M. & Pajala, A. (2016). Sponsoring private member's bills in Finland and Estonia: The electoral context of legislative behaviour. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, *39*(1), 52–72. Wiley.

Spindler, R. (2009). Members' bills in the New Zealand parliament. *Political Science*, *61*(1), 51–79. Sage.

Stratmann, T. & Baur, M. (2002). Plurality rule, proportional representation, and the German Bundestag: How incentives to pork-barrel differ across electoral systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, *46*(3), 506–514.

Strøm, K. (2000). Delegation and accountability in parliamentary democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, *37*, 261–289.

Studlar, D. T. & McAllister, I. (1996). Constituency activity and representational roles among Australian legislators. *Journal of Politics*, *58*(1), 69–90. Cambridge.

Taylor, M. M. (1992). Formal versus informal incentive structures and legislator behavior: Evidence from Costa Rica. *Journal of Politics*, *54*(4), 1055–1073.

Ugues, A., Vidal, D. X. M., & Bowler, S. (2012). Experience counts: Mixed member elections and Mexico's chamber of deputies. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *18*(1), 98–112. TandF.

Williams, B. & Indridason, I. H. (2016). MovinŠ on up membersŠ bills & party list placement. Manuscript.

Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics

Table A4: Descriptive Statistics
—Excluding Ministers—

	Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Electorate MPs	SMD Vote Safety	21.60%	14.25%	0.17%	63.77%
All MPs	SMD Vote Safety	-0.02%	28.50%	-73.14%	63.77%
	List Safety	7.16	12.61	-34	47
	Parliamentary Leadership	2.40%	–	–	–
	Government MP	34.93%	–	–	–
	SMD Only	7.58%	–	–	–
	List Only	10.78%	–	–	–

Appendix B: Members' Bills & Electoral Performance

Examining the effects of private members' bills in Canada, Loewen et al. (2014) find that government MPs gain nearly 3% pts. if they are selected to introduce members' bills (while there is not effect for opposition MPs). Bowler (2010) also finds that introducing members' bills has a small positive effect in the UK but estimates it to be only about 0.33% pts.

We examine the possibility that proposing and having private members' bill drawn affects MPs' electoral performance using electorate results from elections held between 1999 and 2011. The analysis focuses on MPs that contested the same electorate in two subsequent elections for the same party. We consider two ways of operationalizing the dependent variable. First, we consider the MP's margin of victory (tables B5-B8). Second, we consider the change in the margin of victory between subsequent elections (tables B9-B12). The independent variables considered are the same as the ones considered in the body of the paper.

In short, there is little to suggest that MPs in New Zealand benefit electorally from proposing or having the opportunity to propose private member bills. This non-finding appears quite robust as the number of model specifications considered below show. The first of models (tables B5 & B9) pool all the data and examine the effects of the different measures of members' bill activity.[40] To account for changes in party popularity between elections we estimate separate models for each session (tables B6 & B10). Restricting the analysis to the two major parties, including indicators for party and legislative session as well as an interaction between the two, the results remain the same (tables B7 & B11). The estimated coefficients for members' bills are typically negative and in the few instances they are positive they fail to reach conventional levels of statistical significance. In sum, we find no evidence that MPs' electoral fortunes are affect by proposing members' bills or,

[40]The number of observations exceeds the number of electorates as data includes MPs that ran in the same electorate in two consecutive elections. That is, some MPs that contested an electoral district, but failed to win, in subsequent elections but nevertheless had an opportunity to place bills on the ballot as they were elected off the party list.

in contrast with Loewen et al. (2014), having a bill drawn. However, this finding is not altogether surprising. Unlike in the Canadian case where members (as opposed to bills) are drawn in the ballot, MPs in New Zealand choose to place a bill on the ballot — and the decision to take part in the ballot is probably not random. Electorally vulnerable MPs, as we have shown, are more likely to place bills on the ballot, which would tend to deflate whatever positive effect members' bills might have on vote share. Thus, as we have done in our examination of MP approval, we split the sample by the number of times the MPs participated in the ballot — to control for the MP's incentive to build a personal vote — and examine the effect of having a bill drawn and presented in the legislature. The results (tables B8 & B12) still fail to show a positive and statistically significant effect of the number of bills drawn on the MPs' electoral support. The coefficients are, however, positive — there is, thus, some suggestion that presenting a members' bill has a positive effect on the MP's electoral standing. The uncertainty about the estimates is quite large and it is, therefore, difficult to ascribe much meaning to those estimates.

Table B5: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Margin of Victory—

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No. Attempts	-0.016***	-0.017***				
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)				
Gov't*Attempts		0.005				
		(0.59)				
No. Unique Bills			-0.084***	-0.084***		
			(<0.001)	(<0.001)		
Gov't*Unique				0.003		
				(0.94)		
No. Bills Drawn					-0.048*	-0.040
					(0.095)	(0.20)
Gov't*Drawn						-0.053
						(0.50)
Gov't MP	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.10***	0.11***
	(0.39)	(0.65)	(0.36)	(0.46)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Parliam. Leadership	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.09**	0.09**
	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Constant	0.11***	0.11***	0.11***	0.11***	0.006	0.003
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(0.82)	(0.92)
Observations	329	329	329	329	329	329
R^2	0.156	0.157	0.187	0.187	0.088	0.090

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B6: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Margin of Victory, By Parliamentary Session—

	Parliamentary Session							
	1999-2002	2002-2005	2005-2008	2008-2011	1999-2002	2002-2005	2005-2008	2008-2011
No. Attempts	-0.008	-0.024***	-0.012*	-0.016*				
	(0.20)	(<0.001)	(0.05)	(0.096)				
Gov't*Attempts	-0.007	-0.004	0.006	-0.006				
	(0.56)	(0.91)	(0.77)	(0.74)				
No. Bills Drawn					-0.068	-0.077	0.023	0.011
					(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.68)	(0.90)
Gov't*Drawn					-0.006	-0.004	-0.13	-0.11
					(0.97)	(0.98)	(0.48)	(0.47)
Gov't MP	0.25***	-0.007	-0.17*	0.058	0.25***	0.16**	-0.086	0.097
	(0.01)	(0.93)	(0.072)	(0.47)	(0.001)	(0.04)	(0.34)	(0.18)
Parliam. Leadership	0.06	0.11	-0.01	0.11	0.08	0.12	0.0004	0.15*
	(0.50)	(0.20)	(0.88)	(0.16)	(0.31)	(0.21)	(1.00)	(0.05)
Constant	-0.01	0.09	0.21***	0.10	-0.04	-0.09*	0.12**	0.02
	(0.93)	(0.18)	(<0.001)	(0.11)	(0.44)	(0.06)	(0.01)	(0.68)
Observations	80	96	75	78	80	96	75	78
R^2	0.31	0.29	0.084	0.16	0.29	0.18	0.04	0.11

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B7: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Margin of Victory—
—With Party-Year Dummies, Only Labour Party & National Party—

	(1)	(2)	(3)
No. Attempts	0.005		
	(0.15)		
Gov't*Attempts	-0.016**		
	(0.04)		
No. Unique Bills		0.004	
		(0.86)	
Gov't*Unique		-0.067	
		(0.13)	
No. Bills Drawn			0.014
			(0.76)
Gov't*Drawn			-0.089
			(0.23)
Gov't MP	0.16***	0.15***	0.13***
	(<0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Parliam. Leadership	0.083**	0.081**	0.095***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.008)
National Party	-0.11***	-0.10**	-0.10***
	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.01)
2002 Election	-0.19***	-0.18***	-0.18***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
2005 Election	-0.29***	-0.28***	-0.28***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
2008 Election	-0.011	-0.011	-0.017
	(0.78)	(0.78)	(0.68)
National Party×2002 Election	0.40***	0.39***	0.38***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
National Party×2005 Election	0.48***	0.48***	0.47***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Constant	0.11***	0.13***	0.13***
	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.002)
Observations	255	255	255
R^2	0.184	0.178	0.175

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B8: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Margin of Victory—
—Conditioned on Number of Attempts—

	(1) 1-5 Attempts	(2) 6-10 Attempts	(3) >10 Attempts
No. Bills Drawn	0.11	0.036	0.022
	(0.18)	(0.77)	(0.63)
Gov't*Drawn	-0.21	-0.032	-0.44
	(0.10)	(0.87)	(0.27)
Gov't MP	0.035	0.19	0.25
	(0.38)	(0.21)	(0.17)
Parliam. Leadership	0.064	-0.23	0.43*
	(0.11)	(0.52)	(0.089)
Constant	0.10***	-0.12	-0.16***
	(0.001)	(0.17)	(0.005)
Observations	223	35	71
R^2	0.034	0.078	0.070

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B9: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Change in Margin of Victory—

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
No. Attempts	-0.0035**	-0.0044**				
	(0.036)	(0.016)				
Gov't*Attempts		0.006				
		(0.21)				
No. Unique Bills			-0.024***	-0.027***		
			(0.001)	(<0.001)		
Gov't*Unique				0.033		
				(0.17)		
No. Bills Drawn					-0.014	-0.015
					(0.37)	(0.38)
Gov't*Drawn						0.0053
						(0.90)
Gov't MP	-0.083***	-0.100***	-0.089***	-0.11***	-0.068***	-0.069***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(0.001)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.036	-0.027	-0.041*	-0.030	-0.030	-0.030
	(0.13)	(0.27)	(0.08)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.21)
Constant	0.055***	0.061***	0.065***	0.070***	0.034**	0.035**
	(0.002)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Observations	329	329	329	329	329	329
R^2	0.071	0.076	0.089	0.095	0.061	0.061

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B10: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Change in Margin of Victory, By Parliamentary Session—

	Parliamentary Session							
	1999-2002	2002-2005	2005-2008	2008-2011	1999-2002	2002-2005	2005-2008	2008-2011
No. Attempts	0.001	-0.008**	-0.004	-0.003				
	(0.72)	(0.02)	(0.13)	(0.45)				
Gov't*Attempts	-0.012*	0.012	-0.006	0.003				
	(0.08)	(0.53)	(0.51)	(0.67)				
No. Bills Drawn					-0.024	-0.026	0.013	-0.023
					(0.40)	(0.45)	(0.57)	(0.56)
Gov't*Drawn					-0.059	0.060	-0.067	0.017
					(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.37)	(0.79)
Gov't MP	0.10*	-0.28***	-0.15***	-0.016	0.055	-0.22***	-0.13***	-0.0082
	(0.05)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(0.65)	(0.18)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(0.79)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.025	0.059	-0.098**	-0.050	-0.0036	0.061	-0.088**	-0.052
	(0.59)	(0.28)	(0.01)	(0.13)	(0.94)	(0.28)	(0.03)	(0.11)
Constant	-0.016	0.073*	0.11***	0.052*	0.0064	0.0089	0.084***	0.046*
	(0.67)	(0.07)	(<0.001)	(0.06)	(0.82)	(0.75)	(<0.001)	(0.06)
Observations	80	96	75	78	80	96	75	78
R^2	0.084	0.26	0.46	0.045	0.065	0.23	0.44	0.042

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B11: Winning Votes: OLS Regression
—Dependent Variable: Change in Margin of Victory—
—With Party-Year Dummies, Only Labour Party & National Party—

	(1)	(2)	(3)
No. Attempts	-0.0003		
	(0.90)		
Gov't*Attempts	-0.002		
	(0.59)		
No. Unique Bills		-0.014	
		(0.33)	
Gov't*Unique		0.006	
		(0.80)	
No. Bills Drawn			-0.003
			(0.90)
Gov't*Drawn			0.004
			(0.92)
Gov't MP	0.012	-0.001	0.006
	(0.66)	(0.97)	(0.80)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.0001	0.002	0.004
	(1.00)	(0.93)	(0.83)
National Party	-0.063***	-0.060***	-0.063***
	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.006)
2002 Election	-0.27***	-0.27***	-0.27***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
2005 Election	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
2008 Election	0.005	0.004	0.006
	(0.82)	(0.86)	(0.80)
National Party×2002 Election	0.39***	0.39***	0.39***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
National Party×2005 Election	0.29***	0.29***	0.29***
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Constant	0.069***	0.079***	0.068***
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.004)
Observations	255	255	255
R^2	0.44	0.44	0.44

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B12: Winning Votes
—Dependent Variable: Change in Margin of Victory—
—OLS Regressions, Conditioned on Number of Attempts—

	(1) 1-5 Attempts	(2) 6-10 Attempts	(3) >10 Attempts
No. Bills Drawn	0.087	0.040	-0.009
	(0.10)	(0.49)	(0.64)
Gov't*Drawn	-0.065	-0.079	-0.24
	(0.43)	(0.36)	(0.14)
Gov't MP	-0.089***	0.0082	0.052
	(<0.001)	(0.90)	(0.49)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.028	-0.15	0.17
	(0.28)	(0.34)	(0.12)
Constant	0.049**	0.009	-0.009
	(0.01)	(0.83)	(0.71)
Observations	223	35	71
R^2	0.12	0.08	0.08

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Appendix C: MP Approval

Table 3 examined the effects of having a bill drawn conditional on the number of times the MP placed a bill on the ballot (1 or 2-4). There is, of course, a significant number of MPs that make more than four attempts. The models in table C13 shows the results of ordered logit models where 'effort' in presenting members' bills is classified as low (0-5 attempts), medium (6-10 attempts), or high effort (>10 attempts). Having a bill drawn is estimated to improve the MP's approval rating — in particular within the group of MPs putting in 'medium effort'. The effect is highly statistically significant except among the those MPs that put in 'high effort'.

Table C13: MP Approval: Ordered Logit
—No. Attempts & Unique—

	(1) 1-5 Attempts	(2) 6-10 Attempts	(3) >10 Attempts
No. Bills Drawn	0.28**	0.40***	0.13
	(0.010)	(<.001)	(0.25)
L-R Distance	0.020	-0.078**	-0.049
	(0.44)	(0.023)	(0.16)
MP's Party Approval	0.26***	0.18***	0.22***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-0.88***	-1.21***	-1.21***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	–	0.25	1.64**
		(0.41)	(0.038)
Election: 2002	0.27*	0.040	-0.057
	(0.074)	(0.81)	(0.75)
2005	-0.30**	-0.70***	-0.10
	(0.039)	(0.002)	(0.58)
2011	0.17	0.19	-0.17
	(0.19)	(0.41)	(0.49)
Cutpoint: μ_1	-4.33***	-6.36***	-6.20***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_2	-2.74***	-4.58***	-4.54***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_3	-0.43	-2.11***	-2.23***
	(0.16)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_4	2.06***	0.48	0.24
	(<.001)	(0.28)	(0.58)
Observations	1386	857	830
Log Likelihood	-1657.8	-974.3	-969.8
χ^2	451.6	289.0	259.8

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Appendix D: MP Name Recognition

Another way of gauging whether proposing and, if drawn, introducing private members' bills is to consider whether survey respondents are more likely to know who their electorate MP. Table D14 presents models analogous to those presented above on MP approval (i.e., table 2), except the dependent variable her is whether the survey respondent was able to identify her electorate MP by name. The results are fairly similar to what was seen with MP approval — MPs that made more attempts, placed more unique bills on the ballot, and had greater luck in having their bills drawn were more likely to be known by name. When all the members bills' variable are included in the model, the number of unique bills proposed appears to have the largest effect on MP recognition, which maybe suggests name recognition comes about through the efforts of the MPs to publicize their activities rather than respondents directly observing their MPs efforts in the legislatures.

Table D14: MP Name Recognition: Logit Model
—No. Attempts, Unique, & Bills Drawn—

	All MPs				Only Proposers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
No. Attempts	0.037***			0.013	
	(<.001)			(0.19)	
No. Unique Bills		0.21***		0.20***	
		(<.001)		(0.001)	
No. Bills Drawn			0.19***	-0.13*	-0.062
			(<.001)	(0.071)	(0.33)
L-R Distance	-0.027**	-0.026**	-0.027**	-0.026**	0.0025
	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.037)	(0.89)
MP's Party Approval	0.031***	0.033***	0.030***	0.033***	0.064***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-0.22***	-0.22***	-0.22***	-0.22***	-0.28***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	0.23**	0.24**	0.16	0.27**	0.31**
	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.15)	(0.018)	(0.017)
Election: 2002	-0.66***	-0.63***	-0.63***	-0.64***	-0.40***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Election: 2005	-0.12*	-0.100	-0.11	-0.10	0.22*
	(0.086)	(0.16)	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.054)
Election: 2011	-0.24***	-0.24***	-0.26***	-0.24***	-0.30***
	(0.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(0.006)
Constant	1.20***	1.16***	1.28***	1.16***	1.34***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Observations	7531	7531	7531	7531	3706
Log Likelihood	-4831.0	-4828.2	-4848.7	-4825.5	-2246.0
χ^2	251.0	256.5	215.6	261.9	120.7

p-values in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Appendix E: Effect on Approval By Ideological Proximity

The finding that MP approval and recognition is affected by private members' bill activity while it does not affect the MPs' electoral fortunes is surprising. We suggest that, in part, this may be because voters that are already inclined to vote for the MP are the ones that are most likely to be affected by members' bill activity. To explore this possibility we split the sample into respondents that were close (L-R Dist.<3) and far (L-R Dist.>=3) and estimated the models in table 2 separately for these subsamples. The results in tables E15 and E16 suggest that the effects are stronger among respondents that are ideologically close to the MP's party. The results in table E17 further support that this may be a factor (note, however, that the lack of statistical significance is potentially a factor of smaller sample size).

Table E15: MP Approval: No. & Unique Attempts, Bills Drawn
—Ideologically Proximate voters (L-R Dist.<3)—

	All MPs				Only Proposers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
No. Attempts	0.04***			0.04***	
	(<.001)			(<.001)	
No. Unique Bills		0.20***		-0.09	
		(<.001)		(0.17)	
No. Bills Drawn			0.43***	0.34***	0.31***
			(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
L-R Distance	-0.10***	-0.10***	-0.10**	-0.10***	-0.11**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.04)
MP's Party Approval	0.21***	0.21***	0.21***	0.21***	0.25***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-1.23***	-1.23***	-1.23***	-1.23***	-0.97***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.18	-0.20	-0.30**	-0.25*	0.36**
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.024)	(0.06)	(0.01)
Election: 2002	-0.05	-0.02	-0.01	-0.04	0.16
	(0.48)	(0.83)	(0.95)	(0.61)	(0.17)
2005	-0.18**	-0.15*	-0.16*	-0.18**	-0.12
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.35)
2011	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.11	0.04
	(0.22)	(0.26)	(0.29)	(0.21)	(0.74)
Cutpoint: μ_1	-6.07***	-6.04***	-6.09***	-6.07***	-5.04***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_2	-4.35***	-4.32***	-4.36***	-4.35***	-3.44***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_3	-1.93***	-1.91***	-1.95***	-1.93***	-1.01***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_4	0.61***	0.63***	0.60***	0.63***	1.55***
	(.0012)	(<.001)	(0.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Observations	4335	4335	4335	4335	2161
Log Likelihood	-4964.5	-4969.1	-4962.9	-4955.6	-2452.3
χ^2	1295.2	1286.0	1298.3	1313.0	549.8

Table E16: MP Approval: No. & Unique Attempts, Bills Drawn
—Ideologically Distant voters (L-R Dist.>=3)—

	All MPs				Only Proposers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Approval of MP					
No. Attempts	0.02***			0.04***	
	(0.008)			(0.006)	
No. Unique Bills		0.0*		-0.27***	
		(0.10)		(0.002)	
No. Bills Drawn			0.28***	0.41***	0.18**
			(<.001)	(<.001)	(0.04)
L-R Distance	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	-0.001
	(0.57)	(0.57)	(0.60)	(0.60)	(0.97)
MP's Party Approval	0.18***	0.18***	0.18***	0.17***	0.20***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-1.11***	-1.11***	-1.11***	-1.11***	-0.97***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	-0.093	-0.11	-0.14	-0.18	0.40**
	(0.55)	(0.50)	(0.36)	(0.26)	(0.03)
Election: 2002	0.26***	0.28***	0.30***	0.26***	0.22
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.12)
2005	-0.14	-0.13	-0.12	-0.15	-0.28*
	(0.16)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.14)	(0.07)
2011	0.17	0.16	0.18*	0.19*	0.23
	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.16)
Cutpoint: μ_1	-5.39***	-5.42***	-5.39***	-5.44***	-5.02***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_2	-3.78***	-3.80***	-3.77***	-3.81***	-3.37***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_3	-1.46***	-1.49***	-1.45***	-1.48***	-1.10***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_4	0.82***	0.79***	0.84***	0.80***	1.18***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Observations	2767	2767	2767	2767	1352
Log Likelihood	-3411.3	-3413.4	-3407.4	-3402.5	-1669.4
χ^2	798.0	793.8	805.9	815.7	362.7

Table E17: MP Approval: No. & Unique Attempts, Bills Drawn
—Ideologically Distant voters (L-R Dist.>5)—

	All MPs				Only Proposers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
No. Attempts	0.002			0.022	
	(0.89)			(0.40)	
No. Unique Bills		-0.017		-0.25	
		(0.82)		(0.14)	
No. Bills Drawn			0.11	0.31	0.11
			(0.40)	(0.11)	(0.47)
L-R Distance	0.046	0.045	0.047	0.047	0.061
	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.39)
MP's Party Approval	0.17***	0.17***	0.17***	0.17***	0.21***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
General MP Approval	-1.12***	-1.12***	-1.11***	-1.11***	-1.17***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
Parliam. Leadership	0.073	0.057	0.082	0.028	0.85**
	(0.78)	(0.83)	(0.75)	(0.91)	(0.010)
Election: 2002	0.20	0.20	0.22	0.22	0.066
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.81)
2005	-0.13	-0.14	-0.11	-0.13	-0.13
	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.54)	(0.47)	(0.64)
2011	-0.011	-0.018	0.005	0.010	0.34
	(0.96)	(0.93)	(0.98)	(0.96)	(0.26)
Cutpoint: μ_1	-5.29***	-5.33***	-5.22***	-5.29***	-5.23***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_2	-3.59***	-3.63***	-3.52***	-3.59***	-3.39***
	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)	(<.001)
μ_3	-1.29**	-1.33**	-1.22**	-1.28**	-1.08
	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.17)
μ_4	0.94*	0.90*	1.01*	0.96*	1.28
	(0.079)	(0.094)	(0.059)	(0.076)	(0.12)
Observations	792	792	792	792	397
Log Likelihood	-985.6	-985.6	-985.3	-984.1	-484.0
χ^2	209.6	209.7	210.3	212.6	127.7