LSQ
LEGISLATIVE STUDIES QUARTERLY
Published by the Department of Political Science at Washington University in St. Louis

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Interpersonal Relationships and Legislative Collaboration in Congress

Do interpersonal relationships among and between representatives and senators affect legislative collaboration in the contemporary Congress? The extant literature on Congress suggests interpersonal dimensions of life on Capitol Hill should play a minimal role in the legislative process. However, research in other fields, including psychology, finds that relationships are crucially important to within organizations. In addition, many contemporary accounts of congressional deal-making highlight the role of personal relationships. Drawing on interviews with high-level congressional staff, and data on CODEL trips taken by members of Congress, we show that interpersonal relationships help promote collaboration across the aisle. These findings have implications for how we understand the contours of conflict and cooperation on Capitol Hill.

Introduction

The passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 was the signature domestic policy achievement for congressional Democrats and President Obama in the 111th Congress. Its passage secured a long sought after policy goal for many Democrats, but the process was long and arduous. The bill received no Republican support in either the House or the Senate. Democrats alone had to provide the votes necessary for passage—a task that was greatly complicated by the death of Senator Ted Kennedy (D–MA), which ended the Democrats' filibuster-proof majority in the Senate.

In many ways, passage of this bill is a prime example of the partisan polarization that drives much of modern politics. Republicans refused to provide any support for the bill in spite of the fact that many of the components of the bill had originated in conservative think tanks. At the same time, Democrats were

DOI: 10.1111/lsq.12381

resolute in their desire to pass the bill and used every procedural weapon in their arsenal to overcome Republican resistance and secure their desired outcome.

Yet a *Politico* story[1] on how the House was able to pass the ACA led with the following line: "The fate of health care reform may have turned on a single relationship." The story went on to describe the key role that Rep. Mike Doyle (D–PA) played in an intra-party struggle between the House leadership, the Obama administration, and allies of Rep. Bart Stupak (D–MI) over abortion language, which had threatened to sink the bill as it neared final passage. As one member involved in the negotiations, Rep. Steve Driehaus (D–OH) stated, "So much of what gets done here gets done because of personal relationships."

This relationship narrative is commonly recited by D.C. insiders, but has received limited attention in recent political science scholarship. We think there at least two reasons for that lack of attention. First, relationships are not easily observed or quantitatively measured. We do not readily know which members have relationships or with whom, nor how strong these relationships may be. Second, the idea that members would choose which policies to support or oppose based on a relationship is at odds with predominant scholarly thinking about legislative behavior, which focuses instead on the influence of partisanship (e.g., Lee 2009; Theriault 2008), ideology (e.g., McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Poole and Rosenthal 1985), and constituency (e.g., Bishin 2009; Fiorina 1989). Nevertheless, scholarship on legislator networks and cue-taking (Box-Steffensmeier, Ryan, and Sokhey 2015; Fong 2019; Fowler 2006; Ringe, Victor, and Carman 2013), information processing (Curry 2015; Krehbiel 1992), and about the importance of Capitol Hill norms (Hanges et al. 2019) provide a foundation for understanding a role for relationships.

We assess the role that relationships—personal and professional—play in legislative collaborations on Capitol Hill. To do so, we take three steps. First, we developed very general expectations for how relationships and collaboration may interact on Capitol Hill, drawing from scholarship in organizational psychology, especially that which focuses on relationships in the workplace, as well as from political science. Second, we conducted 21 in-depth interviews with high-level congressional staff to explore these dynamics in the setting of Capitol Hill. These interviews

yielded important, and testable, insights about how relationships may influence legislative collaboration. In particular, they pointed to congressional delegation (CODEL) *travel* as factor that is perceived as very important on Capitol Hill as both an indicator of who gets along with whom, and which members of Congress are likely to have more and stronger relationships. Moreover, these interviews helped us identify a new indicator of substantive collaboration among two or more legislators: *original cosponorship* of legisation.

Third, we built on the interview findings and conducted quantitative analyses aimed at a broad test of the relationship between travel and members' propensities to collaborate, especially across the aisle. These analyses draw on an original data set of which members traveled, and which traveled together, as part of official CODELs from 1994 through 2020. Because the interviews found that travel carried such a heavy connotation around relationship building, we employ it as a key indicator to predict both individual members' propensities to collaborate on legislation across the aisle, and on the likelihoods that dyadic pairs of members who traveled together also collaborated together. In these analyses, we also take several steps to partially address selection bias concerns, as it is clear that members' propensities to travel, and to engage in bipartisan collaborations in the first place, are likely endogenous in many ways.

Our findings provide new evidence that relationship building on Capitol Hill can aid collaboration, including bipartisan collaboration, among members of Congress. In an era of intense partisan conflict, our results suggest that efforts to promote relationship building may spur increased cooperation and bipartisan legislating in Washington.

Interpersonal Relationships

The extant literature in both psychology and political science underscore why and how relationships can matter within organizations, including in politics. Combined, these strands of research suggest that relationships—personal or professional—can aid collaborative efforts. These findings, in turn, have implications for how we might understand how relationships matter on Capitol Hill relative to other forces that legislative scholars typically associate with collaboration.

Organizational Psychology

Research in organizational psychology finds that relationships within the context of workplaces can help individuals better engage with each other and produce better outcomes. Specifically, positive co-worker relationships are shown to lead to greater engagement, commitment, and effectiveness for individuals (Colbert, Bono, and Purvanova 2016). Relational conflict, on the other hand, has numerous downsides, including limiting receptivity to new ideas (Pelled 1996) and encouraging promise breaking (Jehn and Bendersky 1985). In other words, individuals with good relationships with their colleagues are more likely to engage with them and work effectively within the organization, while those without them are likely to exhibit behaviors that undermine collaboration and cohesive organizational work.

These general findings appear to stem from both the abilities of groups or dyads of individuals to work together, as well as from the increased opportunities that are afforded to popular, or well-regarded, individuals in an organization. Regarding the former, research on "multiplex" workplace friendships—those in which a personal relationship coincides with a professional relationship—finds those with more multiplex friendships are more productive, as they are more collaborative and engender greater trust among colleagues. Those with poorer or fewer "multiplex" workplace relationships are less productive (Chiaburu and Harrison 2008; Ingram and Zou 2008; Sias 2005). Regarding the latter, more popular individuals in an organization receive more professional help from colleagues, which results in greater job satisfaction (Scott 2012), less severe punishments for failure or misbehavior (Mitchell and Liden 1982), and higher likelihoods of rising to leadership positions (Scott 2012). "Ostracized" individuals in an organization—essentially the opposite of popularity—are less likely to cooperate with coworkers (Howard, Cogswell, and Smith 2020; Leung et al. 2011).

Legislative Studies

These kinds of findings are echoed in the existing literature on relationships in legislatures. For instance, Young (1966) finds that members of Congress who lived in the same boarding houses often voted together, a finding he attributes to personal relationships

that formed in these boarding houses.[2] White (1957) and Matthews (1960) describe how senatorial success in the 1940s–50s turned on a senator's ability to get along with senior senators and gain access to an elite inner club. Similarly, Caro (2002) emphasized the role personal relationships played in Lyndon Johnson's successful leadership and rise to prominence in the Senate of the 1950s. Following this theme, Taylor (2019) finds that members who have served in Congress longer are more effective legislators, a result he attributes to the personal bonds that legislators form across a long career in Washington. Moving outside the U.S. Congress, Arnold, Deen, and Patterson (2000) use interview data from the Ohio legislature to show that legislators who are personal friends are more likely to vote together even when controlling for party, ideology, and other factors that typically affect roll call voting.[3] A few contemporary studies of legislatures in other countries provide evidence that relationships or social interactions may influence legislative politics (see, e.g., Harmon, Fisman, and Kamenica 2019; Saia 2018).

On the other hand, as Sinclair (1989) notes, by the 1980s many of the social dynamics that once brought members together inside the U.S. Congress had eroded. Fewer members moved their families to D.C. and thus members had much less time to interact with each other outside the halls of Congress. Similarly, Uslaner (1993) argues, changes to broader American society permeated Congress and engendered a lack of trust on Capitol Hill. Alduncin et al. (2014) see this decline reflected in data on foreign travel among members of Congress, observing less bipartisan travel in recent years (see, also, Alduncin et al. 2017). While Lawless, Theriault, and Guthrie (2018) find that while women are more likely than men to engage in the kind of social activities that may beget collegiality, these activities are found to have little impact on legislative outcomes in the contemporary Congress.

There are notable exceptions to these conclusions, however. A report produced by Hanges et al. (2019) finds that the longstanding norms scholars observed about the mid-20th century Congress—comity and reciprocity among legislators, the development of relationships and respect across the aisle, the minimization of conflict wherever possible, and the integration of new members into the norms and "folkways" of Capitol Hill (see, Davidson 1969; Fenno 1962; Manley 1965; Matthews 1959, 1960)—continue to influence how lawmakers approach each other and work together. Specifically, they find that legislators who are "other-directed" in their personality and behaviors are more likely to be influential

within the institution, compared to those who are caustic, who grandstand, or who are perceived as unhelpful. They also find that relationships were "... the single most dominant answer that legislators gave when asked about how they chose whom to work with when reaching across the aisle" (p. 39). This building of relationships engenders trust, which allows members to bridge partisan divides and work together.

There is also growing body of research that suggests that lawmakers' social networks may still influence the decisions they make, and even the votes they take, by influencing their information exchanges (Fowler 2006; Ringe, Victor, and Carman 2013). Fowler (2006) finds that the cosponsorship network in Congress is much denser than those found in other settings, while Kirkland (2011) finds that lawmakers who build even "weak ties" with legislators outside their close, personal networks are more likely to build more support for their legislative efforts. Similarly, Kirkland and Kroeger (2018) assess the network of companion bills across chambers and find that having connections in the opposite chamber who sponsor similar legislation increases legislative productivity. It is important to note, however, that the existing work on cosponsorship networks *assumes* that personal connections exist and are key to cosponsorship. As we describe more fully below, our work takes a step back and develops a measure of the presence of relationships that allows us to more accurately assess the role of relationships in the legislative process.

Implications & Expectations

As we noted above, this relational perspective on congressional behavior and action differs starkly from predominant scholarly perspectives, which since the "economic turn" of the 1970s have emphasized members' rational, strategic behavior (Fiorina 2011). These theories expect lawmakers to work together and support the same policies because their ideological (e.g., McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Krehbiel 1998), partisan (e.g., Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Cox and McCubbins 2005; Lee 2009), or constituent interests (e.g., Bishin 2009; Fiorina 1989; Koger 2003) align. Relationships are rarely considered alongside these factors. But expectations for how personal or professional homophily might influence legislative collaboration differ from expectations of how ideological, partisan, or constituent homophily affect legislative collaboration.

Rational and strategic models expect legislators to collaborate because they share partisan affiliation, are similar in their ideological leanings, or represent similar constituencies. Lawmakers more similar in these respects are expected to cosponsor more legislation together and support and promote similar policies than those who are less similar (Bratton and Rouse 2011; Harward and Moffett 2010; Koger 2003). Relationships among lawmakers, because they need not stem from ideological, partisan, or constituent homophily, may predict and explain patterns of collaboration among legislators across party lines, or among ideological odd-couples, who otherwise would appear unlikely to work together.

A relational perspective on legislative collaboration would expect legislators to collaborate because they share some sort of relational tie (personal or professional), or because one or more of those legislators is particularly social or popular. In fact, personal or professional relationships may even help legislators overcome partisan, ideological, or constituent differences that otherwise drive them apart, allowing for a different kind of connection that is at least somewhat independent of these political factors. As such, the general expectations from the extant literature is that we should find that legislators who are better at relationship building, or who do more relationship building, should engage in more legislative collaborations. Moreover, we should expect that two or more legislators who build a relationship should be more likely to collaborate than we would otherwise expect from the standard political variables.

The next section describes our empirical approach, starting with exploratory interviews, which build into quantitative tests of more specified expectations that stem from the interview findings.

Assessing Relationships & Collaboration in Congress

We assess how interpersonal relationships among lawmakers on Capitol Hill affect legislative collaboration by drawing on a mixed-methods approach. Combining quantitative and qualitative analyses strengthens our approach in at least a few important ways. First, it helps us go in-depth into questions of why and in what ways relationships matter on Capitol Hill, using interviews to explore consequences of relationships that we may not have expected among a subset of actors who were willing to participate in our study. The quantitative data analyses then allow us to test the findings and intuitions uncovered in the interviews on a broad and

representative set of lawmakers. Second, in probing how actors on Capitol Hill understand and view relationships, we are able to leverage the interview findings to identify unique and quantifiable indicators of relationships and relationship-building activities to then test with the quantitative analyses. Finally, interviews help us understand *why* relationships appear to matter on Capitol Hill, at least insofar as actors in the legislative process understand their importance.

Our approach started with exploratory interviews with high-level congressional staff. These interviews aimed to uncover not only how actors in the legislative process view and understand the value (or lack thereof) of relationships and relationship building (in other words, why relationships matter or do not matter and how they matter or do not), but also clear indicators of relationships among specific legislators, or indicators of legislators being more relational in their behaviors, activities, or propensities.

We then built on the interviews with several analyses of a unique data set of all official foreign travel by members of the House of Representatives between 1994 and 2020. These analyses utilize measures of who traveled with whom and when, as an indicator for which pairs of legislators are more likely to have a positive interpersonal relationship, and which legislators are individually more likely to be predisposed to building relationships. The intuition for these analyses is built out of the interviews. Every one of our interview participants indicated that travel was the primary cause, and the best indicator, of relationship building in Washington. Our analyses assess whether travel appeared to relate to more legislative collaboration, especially across party lines.

Interviews

We have completed 21 in-depth interviews with current and former high-level congressional staff. The interviewees include both Democratic and Republican staff[4] with experience working in positions of importance for rank-and-file legislators, committee chairs and ranking members, and/or party leaders. Some of the interviewees have worked on Capitol Hill only in the last decade. Others began their careers as early as the 1970s.

Because interviews with elites on Capitol Hill are difficult to obtain (Beckmann and Hall 2013; Curry 2017), we used a snowball-sampling approach to connect with potential interviewees. Using

existing contacts on Capitol Hill, initial interviews were scheduled. These interviewees then referred us to others. Each subsequent interview provides opportunities for referrals, and access to more potential interviewees "snowballs." This process afforded access to individuals who otherwise may not respond to cold requests.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured and in-depth, typically lasting about one hour. Each interview took place in 2020 or 2021, with 13 of the interviews conducted face-to-face and the rest conducted via video conferencing.[5] The interviews were semi-structured. Each interviewee was asked questions from within three buckets of inquiry: (1) Are relationships important for legislative action? (2) Why and how do they matter (or not)? And, (3) how do good (and bad) relationships develop on Capitol Hill? The specific questions asked within each of these buckets, however, varied as each interview progressed, allowing us to explore sometimes new or unexpected lines of inquiry in response to interviewees answers to initial questions. Nevertheless, each interview focused on getting interviewees to discuss these three broad themes.

The interviews were recorded with pen and paper.[6] All interviewees were granted anonymity, and are referred to here only as "staffers." In addition, the use of names and pronouns in interviewee's responses were often scrubbed, redacted, or altered in order to protect the interviewees and the individuals they were discussing. Analyses of the resulting transcription texts was done in a holistic manner, to "... explore how individual comments fit together as parts of a more meaningful whole" (Soss 2014, 16). In other words, we analyzed the body of text produced looking for patterns and assessing the degree to which information provided by our interviewees, taken together, fit (or did not fit) with the expectations laid out above.

Quantitative Data

Our quantitative analyses build on our interview data and findings, testing insights from the interviews about the connection between relationships and legislative collaboration. In doing so, the analyses employ quantitative indicators of relationship building and collaboration that emerged from the interviews themselves. We also structure our analyses to address as much of the selection bias in our data as possible.

Quantitative Indicators. The first indicator is a measure of substantive legislative collaboration. Several of the staffers we interviewed indicated that cosponsorship of legislation, generally, was not a good indicator of who collaborated with whom to substantively draft and introduce a policy proposal. However *original cosponsorship* was often a indicator of serious collaboration. Original cosponsors, in Hill parlance, are those whose names are affixed to the legislation when it is first introduced. While only one of those members will be designated as the *sponsor*, the original cosponsors are understood on Capitol Hill as close collaborators, and often equal partners, on that legislation.[7]

Not only do original cosponsorships signify serious collaboration, but also several staffers explained that *bipartisan original cosponsorship* as a key indicator of whether the legislation was a serious, legislative effort. In other words, when a bill has a bipartisan set of original cosponsors, it is seen as a serious and bipartisan legislative effort by actors on the Hill, in part because it is a signal that legislators on both sides of the aisle collaborated to produce it.[8] As one senior staffer put it:

> *The stupidest thing you can do up there, in our committee, is to introduce a partisan bill. You're basically saying, hey Democrats, here's our bill, don't get on it. Sometimes maybe you do that if it's a messaging bill. But otherwise you need a Democratic cosponsor if its going to have any chance. … Really, the best thing you can do is have a bill introduce in the House and Senate with Democratic and Republican sponsors on both.*[9]

We draw the data on original cosponsors from GovTrack. GovTrack keeps track of the sponsors and cosponsors of each bill, as well as the date on which each cosponsor signed on. Members of Congress can sign on to a bill as a cosponsor at any time after its introduction. However, members who are listed as cosponsors at the time of introduction are understood as the original cosponsors. For our purposes, members whose dates of cosponsorship are the same as the date of the bill's introduction (i.e., the same as the day the sponsor "signed" the bill) are recorded as original cosponsors.

The second quantifiable indicator our interviews uncovered is member travel on official foreign trips, or CODELs, as an indicator of relationships and relationship building propensities. According to our interviews CODELs signify two things. First, they are the key driver of relationship building between members. As discussed below, our

interview participants universally agreed that the extent to which two members traveled together is the best objective indicator of a relationship potentially formed between them. Second, traveling on CODELs is a significant indicator of which members of Congress are likely to be inclined toward positive relationship building, having both the skills and interest in building relationships with and among their colleagues. In this way, CODEL travel functions as an indicator of both the likelihood of a relationship between two or more members of Congress, and an indicator of which members of Congress are individually likely to be better, and more focused, at building relationships.

Importantly, CODELs are organized in a way that provides opportunities to all members of Congress to participate, but with notable biases toward members of Congress perceived as potentially friendlier. In this way, any member willing and interesting in trying to build relationships could find a way to travel, but travel also can serve as an indicator of which members are, and are understood to be, more relational. CODELs are organized by committee chairs and typically must include members of each major party.[10] Committee members are encouraged to participate in CODELs. In fact, many of our interview subjects suggested that committee chairs and ranking members often encourage new members to go on CODELs. The trips give committee leaders an opportunity to get to know the new members and allow new members to get to know other members. Nevertheless, chairs and party leaders do retain discretion over who can travel. As one of our interviewees told us, "We knew who the bad eggs were and we'd keep them off the trip. We wouldn't invite them. [Member name] was a pain in the ass so we'd keep her off the trips."[11] Former Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) pointed to denying requests to go on CODELs as a way of punishing wayward members:

> *Sometimes, when I made the determination that a certain member was acting in a way that was hurting the team, or just being a total jackass, I had a tough decision to make.… I went to the committee chairs and make it clear that it wouldn't be a problem for me if we basically lost their plane ticket. Sometimes I said it more directly than that.… And the knuckleheads never got to go on CODELs. Period (Boehner 2021, 28–9).*

Data on these trips are publicly available. Every quarter, each congressional committee that authorizes official travel for staff or members of Congress must report such travel to the Clerk of the

House of Representatives. These reports include the name of the traveler, the countries she visited, the dates of arrival and departure in each country, and costs expended on each leg of the trip. The Clerk compiles each committee's quarterly report into one larger report that is printed in the *Congressional Record*.

We obtained 372 reports covering all official travel from the first quarter of 1994 to the first quarter of 2020. These raw text files unfortunately featured many rows and columns of extraneous information and lacked much information that we needed to conduct our analyses. Extensive data cleaning was necessary to get these data ready for analysis. For example, the reports include all travelers on a trip, not just members of Congress. In addition, the way trips were reported required us to fill in many missing names and to infer the year of each trip based on the quarter in which the trip was reported.

Importantly, these data did not include any sort of ID number, so we were forced to merge in IDs based on member's name. This created a number of duplicates and mismatches. As such, it was necessary to manually inspect all 31,163 observations by hand to verify that the correct ICPSR ID was assigned. For example, our matching algorithm occasionally confused Rep. Adam Smith and Rep. Adrian Smith. Similarly, House staffer Meghan Gallagher was often confused with Rep. Mike Gallagher. In the 112th Congress, both Donald Payne, Sr. and Donald Payne, Jr. were serving in Congress, so to verify which Rep. Payne traveled to five countries in the 112th Congress we consulted the Clerk's reports to determine which committee authorized the travel. We discovered that the Foreign Affairs Committee authorized these trips and was able to determine that Donald Payne, Sr. was serving on this committee so we attributed this travel to him.

The end result is the most extensive, complete, and accurate portrait of House travel that has been compiled to date. The analyses we present below are only a starting point of what we think is possible to do with these data. The next section details the findings of our exploratory interviews before turning to the quantitative analyses.

Selection Bias & Modeling Strategy. In the results section below, we present analyses using two different units of observation: (1) member-level data and (2) a data set of all possible dyadic pairs of members within each congress. The member-level analyses allow us to analyze whether members who traveled more in a given congress introduced more legislation, or a greater share of their legislation, with bipartisan original cosponsors. The

dyadic-pairs data set allows us to ascertain if two members who traveled together during a Congress were more likely to introduce legislation together in that same Congress, assessing to some degree whether traveling together appears to reflect or promote a working relationship among two members of Congress.

To be clear, neither of these analyses are are able to prove that travel *causes* bipartisan collaboration in any pure form. As noted above, and as our interview results reveal, traveling both reflects a predisposition among members to build relationships *and* helps build relationships among members of Congress. In this way, we present travel as both an indicator of a members' relational nature, as well as an experience that may bolster relationships among two or more members.

Nevertheless, we take steps to try to address the observable selection bias in our data. In other words, we recognize that a number of covariates likely predict *both* a members' likelihood of travel *and* their likelihood of bipartisan collaboration independent of traveling. To these ends, we present the results of standard regression models, as well as models that follow a coarsened exact matching procedure, for both the member-level and dyadic-pairs data.

Interview Findings

Our interviews touched on a number of topics important to understanding interpersonal relationships and their consequences on Capitol Hill. Here, we present interview data that speak to (1) the perceived importance of travel for relationship building, (2) insights into why relationships matter, and (3) the specific consequences of relationships for legislative collaboration.

Travel and CODELs

We asked each interviewee their perspective on what enabled relationships to form on Capitol Hill. A number of progenitors were noted: intensive committee work, socializing away from work, strategic behavior, repeated positive interactions on the Hill, serendipity, and more. However, members and staff traveling together, especially on CODELs, was the most commonly noted. In fact, every single interview participant—100%—noted travel was

the single best way to develop relationships in the contemporary Congress:

> Travel is the best thing you can do to build relationships.[12]

> When [my boss] came in, he made a concerted effort to forge relationships with [his Democratic counterpart on committee]. They traveled together. That was a big help—the CODEL trips over seas.[13]

> Staff travel together, too. ... That makes a difference just like when members travel together.[14]

Travel helps develop relationships because it "can be really intense and it creates bonds. When you're with people for 16 hours a day on a plane... It's intense. People behave very well."[15] In other words, especially with foreign travel, the hours are long, and the time is spent together is in close quarters:

> [Travel] was the most intense time members spent together. They'd be up early and with each other from breakfast until they went to bed. They are small enough groups that you get to know the other people.[16]

> Both staff and members spend time together in close quarters, often not great conditions. Its like a trip with an extended family. I think they make a big difference. They share these moments together.[17]

Our interviewees also emphasized that a significant benefit of travel is not just that it gets members together, but it does so away from the usual pressures of the job, and away from the media and cameras:

> Being on a plane, being in a foreign country, with no outside pressure and no press really frees members up. They can be more candid with each other.[18]

> When you're out of your element in a group, the dynamics change greatly. There's a lot more opportunity through that shared experience to break down political barriers.[19]

Travel allows for a different kind of time spent together. While committee work or other events in D.C. may create bonds, time spent on CODELs or other trips typically involves more social interactions, and, "When you get to know people outside of the 9-5, it's different."[20] It also helped that these experiences often involve family:

Spouses have their own program on these trips—their own meetings. The spouses spent time together, too, and then the members and the spouses are all together for dinner.[21]

This kind of time, spent together over dinner with wives and husbands, can help members connect and establish a relationship in a way they may never otherwise.

Why Relationships Matter

Our interviewees also provided their thoughts about why relationships affect behavior on Capitol Hill. The most commonly cited reason was that relationships increase the *trust* that exists among members of Congress. As one put it, "You have to have trust, and that trust can come from friendship, or it can just come from a mutual respect."[22] This may be especially important for members in positions of power:

When there is a good relationship with these people, with trust, it helps things along, particularly if it is the chair and ranking member of a committee. Having a good relationship between those two people can simplify things a lot. It can be very valuable in preventing mistrust and misperceptions from getting in the way.[23]

This kind of trust is crucial for members to work together successfully. "A lot of what drives success is trust," one staffer explained.[24] Trust enables members and staff to feel like they can engage with others without fear of being stabbed in the back:

If you're negotiating and stuff leaks out from those negotiations early it kills the whole deal and then other members get all riled up from the leaks. … You need trust with the other people you're working with to get the deal together.[25]

Another staffer noted that its hard to get anything done if the trust is broken:

> *It's about the trust quotient between those two people. And it takes just one or two instances of a breach of trust to ruin it. When I took over as staff director, the people who were chair and ranking member at that time had a bad relationship and nothing got done."*[26]

"I keep saying the word trust, but trust is huge part of it," one interviewee remarked.[27] Simply put, "You cannot work with someone you don't trust.[28] As noted by others (Curry and Lee 2020; Warren and Mansbridge 2015), legislators are able to work together better when they do not fear retribution for suggesting ideas that may be unpopular in their party or an anathema to their party's base. Indeed, our interviewees emphasized that relationships, and the trust they form, are important because they allow legislators and staff to *communicate* openly and be honest with each other.

As one staffer put it, "Me and my counterpart over there—he and I could trust each other and be candid with each other."[29] Another noted: "We were able to speak frankly about how each side sees the issue ... We can say there is a problem with x, y, z that we can't move on, or where our limits are, and explore what's possible."[30]

Several staffers noted the importance of open and honest communications for legislators to work together:

> It was about them being honest with each other about what their needs were, what their red lines were.[31]

> [They] talked to each other all the time, they listened to each other, and they had basically agreed not to screw each other. And certainly not to do it publicly.[32]

> People could put out ideas, and if it didn't work out nothing was going to leak out. People could move off of their entrenched positions and talk candidly with each other.[33]

A few emphasized that the long-term relationships they had developed with their counterparts in other offices made it easier for them to overcome obstacles and work together:

The fact that [she] and I had known each other for so long and had stuff in common helped us get to a place where we could work it out. Mostly because I could tell when she was blustering—kicking and yelling and screaming. I knew if I waited an hour, she would eventually stop doing that and we could have a conversation. … Could you do that with strangers? I suppose. Although it certainly doesn't happen much.[34]

Ultimately, a major upshot of our interviews was that when legislators and staff develop relationships, they are able to develop trust, and this trust allows for better communication, discussions, and collaborations:

By humanizing, connecting, and listening and sharing view points there's a chance for people to learn what really matters and helps you listen to the other side. By moving away from bomb-throwing optics, people will tell what really matters to them and you get more revealing that helps you identify low cost trade-offs. You may then find that other side is willing to make trades.... Having relationships takes caricatures out of it for the members.[35]

For those that we interviewed, these things are key for bridging political divides on Capitol Hill. "Partisanship and ideology are the problem," one remarked, "but you can solve that problem by having members who trust each other and behave in a less partisan manner as a result."[36] A trusting relationship can aid the development of so-called "odd-couple" pairings. That is, partnerships between political or ideological opposites. As one interviewee put it, "[Relationships] make it easier to put politics aside and do something."[37] Several commented on how a good relationship aided collaboration among unlikely bedfellows:

> You could not find two more diametrically opposed folks in terms of their backgrounds. [He] is this old-school, cigar smoking, southern guy. [She] is as flaming of a liberal as you're going to find. They got along extremely well.[38]

> [They]were implacable opposites on most issues—but they trusted each other and so they could work together.[39]

Developing these relationships was often about the *necessity* of lawmaking in a system of government that almost always requires the development of broad, bipartisan coalitions (Curry and Lee 2020; Krehbiel 1998; Mayhew 2005). Our interviewees frequently noted this reality:

They have to get along at some level. In the Senate, everything has to be bipartisan. We all have to play in the same sand box.[40]

Our interviewees also noted that legislators and staff can develop a *reputation* for being someone good to work with, and to get know better, or not. Capitol Hill is ultimately a small world. If a member or staffer is congenial and trustworthy, word gets around:

> Members talk. Word gets around: "You know I worked with [him], he's a good guy…" and word gets around that he's a good person to work with.[41]

> [He] had worked with [another office] on [a bill]. And [he] vouched for [them] and he was right. Having him vouch for them helped a lot.[42]

Ultimately, relationships matter because they build trust and open up lines or communication among legislators and staff, which can make it easier for them to set-aside political differences and collaborate. Success then begets success as individual lawmakers can earn a reputation which helps them develop more relationships and find more fruitful collaborators and partnerships.

Consequences for Collaboration

A number of consequences were discussed in the interviews. Most relevant here, many of our interviewees noted that positive relationships could make collaboration easier. In other words, interpersonal relationships can help legislators overcome difficult issues and find agreement:

> Because [we] knew each other and basically trusted each other…we could yell at each other, basically. I think that helped us get to a point where we could help each other out.[43]

> At any number of moments we could have abused the trust between each other and gotten some good partisan wins. But not only were [the members] like-minded in their views, but it also helped to know that the guy you were negotiating with wasn't going to turn around and screw you.[44]

Some explicitly tied relationships to bill cosponsorship. As one staffer noted about her boss, "If you can show him that his friends are on the bill he'll be more likely to want to see it and usually he'll say, 'Great! Put me on that too.'[45]

A good relationship, in short, can help legislators work together to try to get things done. A number of our interviewees named specific bills they thought only moved forward because of strong relationships among key players.

> One example of something that got done because of these relationships was the passage of AGOA (the African Growth and Opportunity Act) ...[46]

> One example is the Music Modernization Act ...[47]

> The USCMA should not have happened. But just the sheer force of personality of the actors involved got it done.[48]

Conversely, poor relationships among key players could create barriers to potentially fruitful collaborations. Our interviewees repeatedly noted things that did not happen, in their estimation, because of poor relationships:

> It never happened. Not because we didn't agree, but because we couldn't work together.[49]

> The [reauthorization bill] is a good example. It was the biggest failure during our time on the committee.

A few of our interviewees highlighted how perceptions of different lawmakers could aid or hinder collaboration. A few highlighted senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Joe Manchin (D-WV)

as cases of contrast. Each the most moderate member of their caucus, Collins was seen as difficult, while Manchin was seen as easy to get along and work with:

[Collins] is completely ineffective as a legislator because she is a complete pain in the ass to deal with ... When things don't work exactly as she told you she wanted it to work she would go right up the food chain and complain and kind of throw a fit. She is just a horrible member to deal with. As a result, no one ever wanted to deal with her.[50]

Manchin, on the other hand, was seen as affable, friendly, and easy to work with. He makes a point of getting to know and socializing with other members. Several explained that Manchin "... has a boat that he keeps here and he'll take senators out on it when the weather is nice with wine and cheese."[51] Consequently, he is seen as someone you want to work with:

As a Republican, if you had to pick a Democrat to work with you hope its Joe Manchin. Not just because he is conservative, but he'll be able to bring along more people because he is such a good guy.[52]

In sum, we can draw a few conclusions. First, everyone we spoke to insisted that positive relationships are often a necessary condition for getting things done on Capitol Hill. These relationships matter because they build trust between key actors, which can reduce barriers to collaboration and compromise. Second, travel seems to be a key venue for the formation of relationships. To be sure, our interviewees cited others ways to build relationships, but travel was by far the most mentioned way these relationships can develop. Finally, the presence of good relationships can help bridge political divides. Several noted that when members trust each other enough to speak frankly about legislative matters, partisan and ideological veneers fade and it is possible to find areas of mutual agreement. Taken together these results suggest that the presence or absence of relationships has the ability to affect collaborative behaviors within Congress.

Quantitative Results

Below are the results of our quantitative analyses of both the member-level and dyadic-pairs data. First, however, we present some descriptive statics on CODEL travel. Figure 1 presents data on the median number of trips taken by each House member and the median total number of days traveled each Congress from the 103rd to 116th Congresses. These data are further broken down by the party of the member. Three clear trends are apparent from these figures. First, members tend to take more trips and travel for more days when their party holds the chamber majority. Second, rates of travel appear to have declined sharply in the last few congresses, though there is substantial variation over time. There does not, however, appear to be any pattern with regard to a member's voting extremity and the number of trips that they take. Figure 2 plots the number of trips taken by a member against the absolute value of the member's DW-NOMINATE score, showing no relationship between these two measure ($r = -0.03$).

We cannot draw any definitive conclusions from these figures, but the overall decline in travel combined with high member turnover over the past decade has created a situation where the current membership of the House has had fewer opportunities to develop the kind of relationships that our interview subjects point to as being so important. It may then be the case that the prevalence strong interpersonal relationships in the House is lower than it was in previous eras.

FIGURE 1
Median Number of Trips Per Member, 103rd–116th Congresses

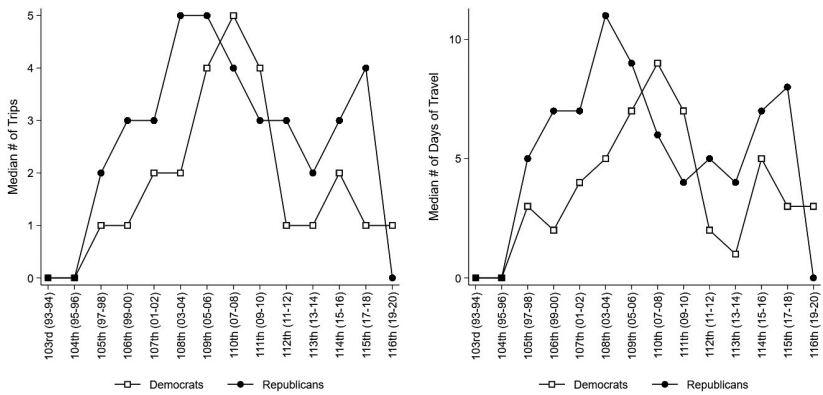
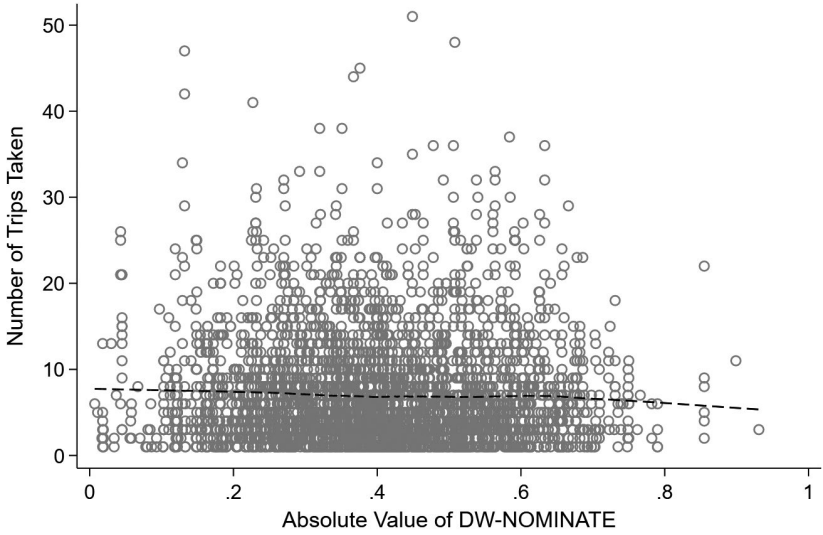


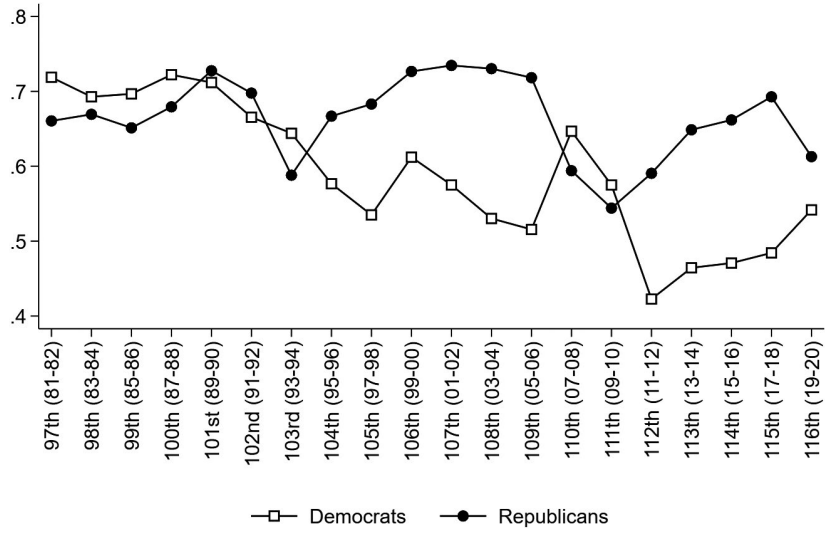
FIGURE 2
Number of Trips Taken by Absolute Value of Dw-Nominate



In Figure 3, we present data on the proportion of bills introduced in the House that had at least one original cosponsor from the opposite party of the sponsor. These data are broken down by the party of the sponsor. As we noted above, many of our interview subjects point to this is a key indicator of legislative collaboration. Given that the vast majority of legislation that passes in recent congresses does so via suspension of the rules, and with overwhelming support, it is imperative that most legislative measures have bipartisan support in order to have any reasonable chance to be scheduled and pass the House.

Several interesting patterns are apparent. First, prior to the 103rd Congress, approximately two-thirds of bills had an original cosponsor of the opposite party and there was very little variance in this measure across the two parties. Beginning in the 103rd and further intensifying in the 104th Congress, the partisan disparity in this measure grows markedly. The partisan gap on this measure was greater than 10 percentage-points from the 104th through the 109th Congresses—which was a period of sustained Republican majorities. The partisan gap then narrows for the 110th and 111th Congress—both with Democratic majorities—then grows again in the most recent congresses.

FIGURE 3
Bipartisan cosponsorship Rate By Party, 97th–116th Congresses



It is unclear why this partisan gap has emerged, but it is clear that they are fewer Democratically sponsored bills with Republican original cosponsors in the recent congresses with Republican majorities. It could be that Republicans see little need to work with Democrats when they hold the majority or that Democrats focus more on messaging bills and do not try to engage their Republican colleagues when they think the chance of legislative success is low. It could also be that minority party Democrats saw more value in opposing Republican-led legislative efforts than signing-on. Unfortunately, the data we have at this time does not allow us to assess which of these is most correct. As result of this partisan gap during periods of Republican control, the proportion of bills that have an opposite party original cosponsor has fallen from approximately two-thirds during the early part of our time series to just over a majority in recent congresses.

Member-level Analyses

Next, we present the results of our member-level analyses assessing the relationship between CODEL travel and bipartisan

TABLE 1
Travel and Bipartisan Original Cosposonsorship Rate, Member-level Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Number of CODELs Taken	0.00102*		0.00129**	
	(0.000615)		(0.000627)	
Number of Days on CODELs		0.000324		0.000433
		(0.000297)		(0.000304)
% vote in last election	0.000563*	0.000569*	0.000501	0.000503
	(0.000301)	(0.000301)	(0.000312)	(0.000312)
Majority party	0.0356**	0.0361**	0.0375**	0.0379**
	(0.00606)	(0.00607)	(0.00637)	(0.00638)
Seniority	0.000823	0.000544	0.00288	0.00256
	(0.00575)	(0.00575)	(0.00599)	(0.00599)
Member fixed-effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Congress fixed-effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matched			✓	✓
Constant	0.0695	0.0747	0.0274	0.0337
	(0.222)	(0.222)	(0.224)	(0.224)
Observations	5999	5999	5802	5802
Adjusted R^2	0.429	0.429	0.436	0.436

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

*$p < 0.1$

**$p < 0.05$

original cosponsorship. The outcome variable is the percent of bills introduced by each member in each Congress on which there was a original cosponsor from the other party. The primary independent variables are (1) the number of CODEL trips each member went on in each congress, and (2) the total days each member was on CODELs during each congress. Each model includes fixed effects for each member and each congress. The analyses include three additional covariates as well: whether or not a member was in the *majority party* during each congress, the percent of the vote each member won in their last reelection, and each member's *seniority* in terms served.[53]

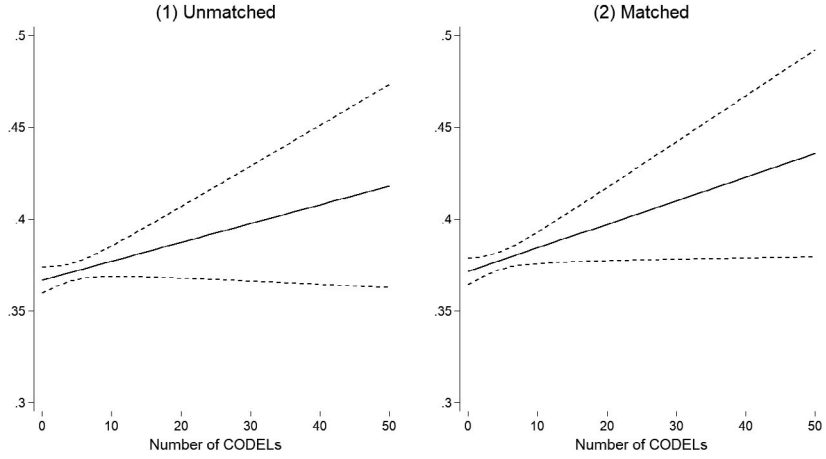
The first two columns of Table 1 present the results of simple OLS models. The third and fourth columns present the results of an OLS model after using Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) (Iacus, King, and Porro 2012) to identify and match members of Congress who are similar on factors that may predict both their

likelihoods of traveling and their likelihoods of introducing legislation with original bipartisan cosponsors. In other words, these models attempt to deal with some selection bias by using CEM to match cases on the following factors for each member: whether or not they were in the *majority* party, the absolute value of each members' first-dimension *DW-NOMINATE* score, whether the member is *female*, and *percent of the vote* each member won in their last reelection. In order to conduct this matching procedure, we used a dichotomous variable for travel that simply indicated whether each member traveled as part of a CODEL in each congress, or not.

Overall, the results provide some evidence that travel, as an indicator of relationship building, is related to bipartisan collaboration. The results in the first column show a positive and statistically significant (at $p < .1$) relationship between the number of CODELs a member of Congress went on in a given congress the the percent of the bills they introduced with at least one bipartisan original cosponsor. While the results in column 2 show no significant relationship between the total number of days members traveled on CODELs and collaboration, the matched results in column 3 are statistically significant (at $p < .05$). Specifically, after matching members of Congress for factors likely to predict both the likelihood of travel and the likelihood of bipartisan cosponsorship, the results in column 3 show a statistically significant relationship between the number of CODEL trips a member went on during a congress and the rate at which they introduced legislation with at least one bipartisan original cosponsor.

Figure 4 shows the substantive effects of these findings. Overall, the size of the predicted effects are small but notable. The "Unmatched" predicted effects in Figure 4 are from the results in column 1 of Table 1. The model predicts a member who traveled the most is predicted to have an original bipartisan cosponsorship rate that is 5 percentage-points larger than a member who did not travel at all. With the "Matched" results (from column 3 of Table 1), the predicted effect roughly 6 percentage-points. These effects may not seem very large, but the analyses presented here use fairly rough data. Travel is a good, but imperfect, proxy for relationship building. Moreover, the member-level data obscure a lot of important information, such as who each member traveled with, how many different people each member traveled with, and so on. Finding any results with these data that reinforce the findings of the interview research should be viewed as meaningful evidence of the role relationships play in legislative collaboration.

FIGURE 4
Travel and Bipartisan Original Cosponsorship Rate, Predicted Effects



Dyadic-Pairs Analyses

To further assess the relationship between travel and bipartisan original cosponsorship, and to address some of the shortcomings of the member-level models, we also analyzed a data set of every dyadic pair of members within each congress. In these data, the outcome variable is a count of the number of bills on which each pair of members in each congress were original cosponsors. Table 2 presents the results of negative binomial regression models predicting this count for each dyad.[54] The first column shows results including every pair. The second column only includes bipartisan pairs. The key independent variable is the number of CODEL trips taken together by each dyad during the congress in question.[55] We control for important indicators of each pair's partisan, ideological, and political homophily or heterophily. The absolute distance between the two members' DW-NOMINATE scores acts as a rough measure of ideological distance. In the first model, another variable indicates if dyad were members of the same party. We also include indicators of the number of committees the two members sat on in common, whether or not the pair entered Congress in the same year, and whether or not they represent the same state.[56]

The results in both columns 1 and 2 find a positive and statistically significant effect for both the number of trips a pair went

TABLE 2
Travel and Bipartisan Original Cosposonsorship, Dyadic-Pairs Results

	(1)	(2)
Number of CODELs Taken Together	0.0248**	0.0231**
	(0.00519)	(0.00747)
Number of Days on CODELs	0.00517**	0.0153**
	(0.00232)	(0.00329)
Abs. Diff. in DW-Nominate	−1.562**	−1.481**
	(0.00452)	(0.00518)
Number of Committees in Common	0.170**	0.219**
	(0.0017)	(0.0023)
Dyad Shares Party	0.456**	
	(0.00322)	
Dyad Entered Congress in Same Congress	0.0156**	0.000349
	(0.00240)	(0.00358)
Dyad from Same State	0.795**	1.031**
	(0.00345)	(0.00471)
Congress fixed-effects	✓	✓
Constant	2.186**	2.259**
	(0.00450)	(0.00527)
Observations	1,373,368	683,453
Log-likelihood	−4210385.4	−1600471.7

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

** $p < 0.05$

on together, and the total number of days a pair traveled together in a given congress. Predicted effects are shown in Figure 5 for both all pairs of members and just bipartisan pairs. Across all dyadic pairs (column 1), each additional trip taken in a congress predicts another 0.5 bills collaborated on as original cosponsors. In other words, members who traveled together on two trips could be expected to collaborate on one additional bill. Among just opposite-party dyads, the model predicts four trips will result in one additional original cosponsorship. These results may seem small, but the median number of original cosponsorships among our dyads is six overall, and just three among cross-partisan pairs. Ultimately, these results lend large scale quantitative credence to the insights found in our interviews.

Again, one inferential concern about the results presented in Table 2 is that there are likely selection bias concerns. The same factors that make members more likely to collaborate, may also affect their likelihoods of traveling together, obscuring the effect

FIGURE 5
Travel and Bipartisan Original Cosponsorship Rate, Predicted Effects

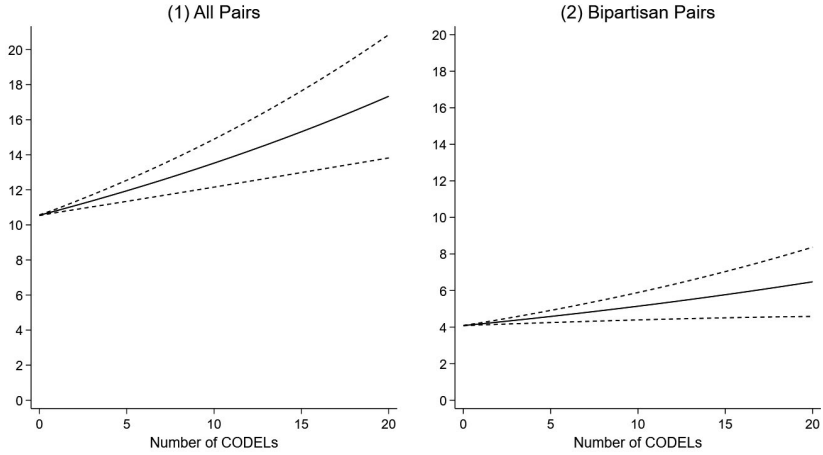


TABLE 3
Travel and cosponsorship, Matching Results

Variable	Coefficient (Std. Err.)
Abs. Diff. in DW-Nominate	−1.50*
	(0.01)
Number of Committees in Common	0.21*
	(0.002)
Dyad Entered Congress in Same Congress	−0.008*
	(< 0.004)
Dyad from Same State	0.99*
	(0.004)
Number of CODELs Taken Together	0.023*
	(0.007)
Number of Days on CODELs	0.015*
	(0.003)
Constant	2.27*
	(0.005)
Congress fixed-effects	✓
N	682,655
Log-likelihood	−1,492,546
$\chi^2_{(18)}$	211455.20

*$p < 0.05$.

of travel (or relationship building) on collaboration. To address this, we again used Coarsened Exact Matching to identify a set of dyads that are statistically similar on factors that may predict both a dyad's likelihood of traveling together and its likelihood of collaborating together. For these data, those covariates include serving on the same committees, ideological homophily (absolute difference in DW-NOMINATE scores), and representing the same state. The procedure "matches" dyads that are similar on the basis of these variables, and then re-estimates the model from Table 2 among these matches pairs to see if travel still predicts more collaboration. We do this in Table 3 for the cross-partisan dyads (those analyzed in column 2 of Table 2).

The results in Table 3 largely mirror those in Table 2. In fact, the estimate for the number of CODELs taken is identical in the model estimated after we matched our dyads. Thus we are confident that the relationship we have found between travel and bipartisan collaboration is robust.[57]

Taken together our results provide empirical support for the claims made by our interview subjects. Members who travel together more do indeed appear to be more successful at finding the common ground necessary to collaborate as original cosponsors of legislation.

Conclusions

In this study, we assess how interpersonal relationship on Capitol Hill affect legislative behavior. Specifically, we focus on how relationships developed among lawmakers and staff affect their legislative collaboration, especially across party lines. To those ends, we combine elite interviews with high-level congressional staff with quantitative analyses to provide an assessment of any clear connection between the development of interpersonal relationships among congressional actors and their behavior.

The interviews highlight that actors on Capitol Hill believe relationships to be crucially important, in part because they build trust and communication among lawmakers. This mutual trust and open and honest communication are highlighted in organizational psychology as important factors in effective workplaces. Our interviewees agree that this is true on Capitol Hill, as well: Legislators and staff who trust each other and can communicate openly find it easier to work together, negotiate, and advance their policy interests together. The interviews also highlighted travel,

especially foreign travel, taken by groups of lawmakers as an important experience that helps members develop these positive and productive relationships, because of the bonds and mutual understanding that time together can foster.

The quantitative analyses build on the interview findings. Using data on which members of Congress participated in foreign CODELs, we find that members who travel together even if they are from the opposite party are more likely to collaborate on legislation. We take this as strong corroborative evidence for the interview findings: legislators who are more relationally oriented, and who do more to develop relationships with their colleagues, are more likely to engage in bipartisan collaborations on legislation. These findings are far from definitive proof of a causal effect of travel on bipartisan collaboration. In fact, we do not intend to argue for a straightforward causal effect. Rather, we present travel as an indicator of both a member's propensity to try to build relationships with their colleagues, and a measure of action taken to build those relationships. Our analyses show that members with this propensity, and who engage in these activities, are more likely to form bipartisan collaborations. Combined with the interview data, which corroborate this intuition, our findings are strongly suggestive of the important of interpersonal relationships in promoting legislative collaboration, including across party lines.

Our findings also demonstrate and underscore that the behavior of lawmakers in the contemporary Congress is not fully explained by spatial, rational, and economic models that focus on ideology, partisanship, and constituency. Lawmakers' relationships also appear to affect who they work with, their collaborative efforts, and potentially more. Moreover, the kind of norms and expectations for behavior that were described as important in the mid-20th century congresses—including the emphasis on comity, reciprocity, and getting along—still appear to matter at some level. Lawmakers still would rather work with others that they can get along with, trust, and work with congenially. This dimension of congressional politics is relatively under-appreciated in political scholarship. But our combined qualitative and quantitative findings suggest it deserves more attention for its ability to explain things—including bipartisan cooperation—that otherwise can be hard to explain in the contemporary, polarized Congress.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in the Harvard Dataverse at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/JCKD2S. We thank the Center for Effective Lawmaking and American University's Program on Legislative Negotiation for their generous financial support, and Emily M. Cottle for research assistance.

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ENDNOTES

1. Jonathan Allen, "Doyle key to Stupuk-WH Deal," *Politico*, March 22, 2010.

2. This study focused on the early 19th century Congress and the results were subsequently called into question (Bogue and Marlaire 1975).

3. Caldeira and Patterson (1987) report similar findings for the Iowa legislature.

4. Currently, our sample of respondents skews toward Republicans: about two-thirds of our interviewees are or were Republican staff.

5. Our original plan had been to conduct all the interviews in person. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic required us to move our interviewing efforts to a virtual format.

6. This is owing to our assessment that actors in Washington have become increasingly skittish about being open and uninhibited in their answers to interview questions when they know the audio is being recorded on a device. In order to avoid interviewees censoring themselves, we avoid producing any such recording.

7. The reason only one member is labeled as a sponsor is due to chamber rules. Only one member can be designated as sponsor of legislation. Original cosponsorship is one way members work around this restriction and recognize collaborative authorship.

8. The data we have on bill outcomes support this assertion as bills with opposite party original cosponsors were much more likely to successfully move through the legislative process. For bills that had only same party original cosponsors 8.2% passed the House and only 1.8% were enacted into law. By contrast, of the bills that had opposite party original cosponsors, 22.1% passed the House and 6.4% were enacted into law.

9. Interview, 02-07-20.
10. One staffer explained to us that larger trips were often desirable as they increased the odds of securing official government aircraft and other resources.
11. Interview, 02-07-20-2.
12. Interview, 02-05-20-4.
13. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
14. Interview, 07-28-20.
15. Interview, 02-07-20-3.
16. Interview, 02-05-20-3.
17. Interview, 07-28-20.
18. Interview, 02-05-20-4.
19. Interview, 01-15-21.
20. Interview, 02-06-20-6.
21. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
22. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
23. Ibid.
24. Interview, 07-28-20.
25. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
26. Interview, 02-07-20-3.
27. Interview, 08-19-20.
28. Interview, 02-05-20-4.
29. Interview, 02-06-20-6.
30. Interview, 02-06-20-2.
31. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
32. Interview, 07-27-20.
33. Interview, 02-07-20-1.
34. Interview, 07-07-20.
35. Interview, 07-28-20.
36. Interview, 08-10-20.
37. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
38. Interview, 02-06-20-4.
39. Interview, 02-07-20-1.
40. Interview, 02-05-20-2.
41. Interview, 02-07-20-2.
42. Interview, 02-06-20-2.
43.. Interview, 07-07-20.
44. Interview, 07-28-20-1.
45. Interview, 02-05-20-1.
46. Interview, 02-07-20-3.
47. Interview, 02-07-20-2.
48. Interview, 02-06-20-3.
49. Interview, 02-06-20-6.
50. Interview, 07-07-20.
51. Interview, 02-07-20-2.
52. Interview, 07-07-20.

53. In addition to the fixed-effects models, we ran models that only included fixed effects for each congress, and then included several other member-level covariates, including *female* and the absolute value of each members' first-dimension *DW-NOMINATE* score (as a measure of ideological extremity). The results, found in Table A4 of online supporting information Appendix are the substantively the same as those presented here.

54. We also fit these analyses as OLS regressions and as an exponential random graph model. The results, found in Tables A1, A2, and A3 of the online supporting information Appendix, are substantively the same.

55. We also fit these models with lagged travel as an independent variable. The lags did not affect the results presented here.

56. The models also include Congress fixed-effects.

57. As an additional robustness check we also conducted this analysis using propensity score matching, which allowed us to use Rosenbaum bounds to test for robustness. For this analysis the average treatment effect of travel was 1.49, $t = 22.08$, which is similar to what we found in our CEM analysis. Our Rosenbaum bounds sensitivity analysis suggested that our results are robust. Specifically, an unobserved confounder would have to make a member 1.4 times more likely to be in the group of members who travel together on CODELs before our inferential results would be undermined.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web site:

Table A1: Exponential Random Graph Model Predicting Original-Cosponsor Ties in the 103rd–109th U.S. Congress
Table A2: Exponential Random Graph Model Predicting Original-Cosponsor Ties in the 110th–115th U.S. Congress
Table A3: Travel and Bipartisan Original Cosposonsorship Rate, Dyadic-Pairs Results
Table B1: Travel and Bipartisan Original Cosposonsorship Rate, Member-level Results