

Who's Getting the Money:

On the Donation Strategies of Oil and Utility Special Interests

Research Question:

Do candidates' attributes impact the amount of donations by oil and gas special interests?

Hypotheses

H1: Republican affiliation will be positively correlated with donation amounts

H2: Incumbent candidates will receive more donations

H3: Candidates with occupations in business or law will receive more donations from oil and utility companies

H4: Candidates in districts with larger oil economies will receive more in donations from oil and utility companies

Methodology

- Using followthemoney.org donation data by oil and utility special interests to Texas State Senate candidates was collected
- Occupation data was collected for each Senate candidate
- Oil production by voting district was aggregated
- OLS regression modelling with fixed-effect modelling by voting district and standard error clustering by candidate was used for each regression model
- Donation data, party ID, and incumbency on California State Senators was collected to increase generalizability of the findings

Statistical Findings:

Regression Analysis on Oil Donations

	Intercept	Republican	Third Party	Incumbent	Oil Production	NA	Law	Politics	Technical
Pr > t	0.273	0.0019*	0.07014	1.13E-04*	0.108	0.164	0.0252*	0.214	0.0586*

Regression Analysis on Utility Donations

	Intercept	Republican	Third Party	Incumbent	Oil Production	NA	Law	Politics	Technical
Pr > t	0.610	0.019*	0.0355*	8.37E-15*	0.829	0.486	0.177	0.979	0.631

Conclusions

- Republicanism was the primary preference for oil donors
- Incumbency was the primary preference for utility donors
- Republican Incumbent candidates would receive the most in donations from both oil and utility donors
- CA results affirmed the importance of republicanism for oil donors and the importance of incumbency for both donors
- Donating to Republicans is a strategy employed to compose conservative legislators with similar values
- Incumbent donation strategies support a theory of access-oriented donations
- Oil donors had an aversion to donating to technical candidates