

Foreign Influence in US Politics*

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Abstract

We provide the first large-sample evidence of foreign influence in US politics, showing that meetings between foreign countries and legislators affect government resource allocation directly for countries and indirectly for firms. To do so, we introduce a comprehensive dataset of date-stamped meetings between foreign countries and individual US legislators, spanning 2000 to 2018 and covering 146 countries, 1,200 US legislators, and 10 Congresses. From this new dataset, three facts emerge: (1) foreign countries lobby most intensely for trade and the economy, (2) meetings are positively related to legislator lawmaking effectiveness and past employment connections with lobbyists while they are unrelated to political ideology, and (3) foreign countries maintain connections with all legislators even after they depart from committees that are important in allocating public resources. Using legislator deaths as a shock to connections, our estimates imply a per-meeting direct loss of US\$5.7 million to countries in foreign aid and indirect loss to foreign firms in state subsidies and government contracts amounting to US\$250,000. Overall, these results highlight the significance of foreign influence in the US and present new observations to guide work in economics, public finance, and political science.

Keywords: Political economy, public finance, political connections, subsidies, foreign lobbying

JEL codes: D72, H25, P16

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1 Introduction

Policymaking and allocation of public resources respond to the concerns of both the general electorate and special interest groups (Grossman and Helpman, 1994; Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020). This conclusion is shaped by research documenting in a broad cross section of countries, including the United States (US), that large economic advantages accrue to domestic firms that maintain relationships with legislators through past employment or campaign contributions (Fisman, 2001; Khwaja and Mian, 2005; Faccio, 2006; Faccio, Masulis, and McConnell, 2006; Claessens, Feijen, and Laeven, 2008; Goldman, Rocholl, and So, 2013). At the same time, empirical evidence on foreign influence in US politics is scant, a fact that is hard to square with the intense public debate on the subject and the billions of dollars foreign governments spend to hire Washington lobbyists each year.

This paper closes this gap by exploiting novel microdata on individual meetings between foreign countries and legislators to establish foreign influence in US politics. In doing so, our study contributes to the existing literature in three ways. First, we characterize the nature and scope of foreign influence by introducing a comprehensive dataset of meetings between foreign countries and US legislators from 2000 to 2018. Second, we study which legislator characteristics relate to meetings with foreign countries and highlight the importance of lawmaking effectiveness and past employment connections with lobbyists for foreign countries when choosing whom to meet with. Third, using these data, we establish that foreign countries that meet more often with legislators directly benefit from increased aid and financial assistance. We also show that firms headquartered in the countries that meet more often with legislators indirectly benefit through increased local government subsidies and new government contracts.

We collect data on individual meetings between foreign countries and US legislators from filings under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). The FARA, designed initially to fight Nazi propaganda, has been in place since 1938 and imposes

reporting requirements on all foreign principals lobbying in the US.¹ Prior work using these filings focuses only on either semi-annual summary reports that do not contain information on meetings or on small subsamples of meetings for specific countries over a few years (Gawande, Krishna, and Robbins, 2006; You, 2020; Montes-Rojas, 2013). In contrast, we link each meeting with a US legislator to a single foreign client represented by a lobbyist using detailed supplemental filings submitted by the lobbyist semi-annually. Overall, our dataset covers 146 foreign countries lobbying approximately 1,200 US legislators spanning 10 Congresses.

Using this new dataset, we proceed to establish trends in foreign lobbying in the US. First, from semi-annual reports, we find that foreign countries mainly lobby for trade and the economy, US regulation, or publicity to promote investment or tourism in the foreign country. At the same time, lobbying for diplomacy and security issues has been increasing in importance over the sample period. Second, foreign countries meet disproportionately with legislators who are most effective at advancing bills through the legislative process. Third, we find that, conditional on being politically active, lawmaking effectiveness and past employment connections are positively related with more meetings, but political ideology is unrelated to meetings.

Turning to our main analysis, we study whether meetings with US legislators influence resource allocation toward foreign entities. Focusing on aid received by foreign countries, we find that when countries meet more with US legislators, they are more likely to receive assistance from the US. On the intensive margin, more meetings are associated with larger aid and assistance. We show our results in a panel regression that flexibly controls for legislator, lobbyist and local economic characteristics.

We then highlight a novel indirect benefit for firms headquartered in foreign countries that meet with the legislators. Specifically, we document that when their country representatives meet more frequently with a legislator, they obtain more subsidies and government contracts in the state or congressional district the legislator represents.

¹The FARA requires the registration of, and disclosures by, agents in the US (*foreign agents*), that work on a *covered activity*, political/lobbying activity and public relations, on behalf of a *foreign principal* (foreign corporation, foreign person, or foreign government). Purely commercial activity or legal work are excluded. We discuss FARA data further in Section 2.

At the extensive margin, we find that a country that meets more with a US legislator is more likely to receive a subsidy or new federal government contract after controlling for local economic confounds. At the intensive margin, the foreign corporation receives a larger subsidy or larger federal government contract, on average.

We explore the robustness of these findings and show that the pattern holds up under a variety of specifications. We employ panel estimations at year-month levels to rule out differences in timing between meetings and resource allocation. Moreover, we conduct congressional-district level regressions and use legislator fixed effects to verify that legislators indeed allocate more resources when they meet more often with foreign countries. Lastly, we exploit legislator deaths as an exogenous shock to foreign country connections and establish that meetings with legislators are a meaningful predictor of resource allocation. Our estimates imply a substantial per-meeting direct loss of US\$5.7 million in the form of aid to foreign countries and an indirect loss of US\$250,000 in the form of local subsidies and new government contracts. In sum, we provide first large-scale evidence that foreign countries receive more resources after meeting with US legislators.

We proceed to understand mechanisms that underlie our results. The literature on lobbying points at two potential and mutually reinforcing channels through which influence can operate: information and *quid-pro-quo*. One view is that lobbying reduces information asymmetries with policymakers thus leading to increased resource allocation ([Austen-Smith and Wright, 1992, 1994](#)). Another view is that agents closely connected with legislators receive preferential treatment in the allocation process ([Eric, 1960](#); [Schlozman and Tierney, 1986](#)).

To shed light on these mechanisms, we rely on the role of important committees in the Congress that in prior work have been shown to influence resource allocation in the US ([Cohen, Coval, and Malloy, 2011](#); [Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021](#)). In this framework, one prediction of the “quid-pro-quo channel” is that foreign countries should meet *less* with legislators after they depart from important committees, holding constant the relative importance of the committee to foreign countries. Therefore, we test this prediction, and document that meeting intensity does not change, sug-

gesting that either the committees are irrelevant for resource allocation—a rather unlikely scenario in light of the large literature supporting the role of committees in resource allocation—or that maintaining connections to legislators is important for foreign countries beyond the committee they serve on for reasons which can include information benefits.

Related literature This is the first paper that characterizes the nature and scope of foreign influence in US politics. To do so, we introduce a novel dataset on the near-universe of meetings between foreign countries and legislators, allowing us to study which legislator characteristics are key determinants of meetings. We provide new insights on the impediments to the effectiveness of the US legislative process, and on how access to politicians is gained and distributed in the economy, a question of both practical and theoretical relevance.

We add to the literature in political economics by showing that meetings between foreign countries and US legislators affect resource allocation. Theoretical models of lobbying stress the importance of special interest groups in determining trade policy, budget priorities, and public good expenditures ([Grossman and Helpman, 1994, 2001](#); [Persson and Tabellini, 2002](#)). A host of papers test the implications of these models in the domestic context, mostly looking at trade tariffs ([Goldberg and Maggi, 1999](#); [Kim, 2017](#)). We are the first to document that more frequent meetings are associated with larger foreign aid and assistance for these countries. By doing so, we contribute to the extant literature on foreign aid, which has linked aid to outcomes like higher consumption or economic growth ([Dreher and Lohmann, 2015](#); [Galiani, Knack, Xu, and Zou, 2017](#); [Temple and Van de Sijpe, 2017](#)) or increased conflict ([Nunn and Qian, 2014](#); [Croston, Felton, and Johnston, 2014](#); [Qian, 2015](#); [Berman and Matanock, 2015](#)).

In addition, our work highlights a novel indirect benefit of political connections for firms headquartered in countries whose representatives meet with US legislators. We show that firms benefit by receiving more local subsidies and new government contracts from the state or congressional district of the legislator who meets more frequently with their country representatives. These novel results add to the literature

on local subsidies to firms (Slattery, 2018; Slattery and Zidar, 2020). Relative to prior work, our paper provides the first evidence that political connections sway subsidies toward firms whose governments meet more with them.

Our results on the indirect benefits for foreign firms also connect our work to the extant literature on the role of political influence on initial contract allocation and renegotiation (Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021; Ağca and Igan, 2020; Goldman, Rocholl, and So, 2013; Tahoun, 2014; Schoenherr, 2019; Fisman, 2001), the role of lobbying across and within industries (Kang, 2016), and the role of corporate philanthropy to influence rule-making and raising investors' political voice (Bertrand, Bombardini, Fisman, Trebbi, and Yegen, 2020; Bertrand, Bombardini, Fisman, Hackinen, and Trebbi, 2021).

Much of this literature proxies for political connections by relying on campaign contributions, donations, and past employment networks. In contrast, our dataset sheds light on the complementary role of political connections through the use of meetings with individual US legislators. This links our paper to work relying on the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), which regulates lobbying activities of all domestic interest groups. The LDA requires lobbyists to disclose the identity of the chamber of Congress or the federal agency contacted, but *does not* require disclosure of the identity of contacted persons, which we instead observe. While useful, the LDA data have left many questions unanswered regarding the identities of legislators and how intensely they were contacted (Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020). We add to the literature on domestic lobbying by providing a new and complementary direct measure of connections, allowing us to examine the scope, intensity of meetings, and their concomitant real effects on resource allocation for foreign governments and firms.

Finally, we also contribute to the literature that seeks to estimate the value of political connections to firms. Changes in political connections relate to abnormal returns (Fisman, 2001; Jayachandran, 2006; Claessens et al., 2008; Ferguson and Voth, 2008; Goldman, Rocholl, and So, 2009; Cooper, Gulen, and Ovtchinnikov, 2010; Akey, 2015; Brown and Huang, 2020; Grotteria, 2021; Child, Massoud, Schabus, and Zhou, 2021), firm value (Faccio, 2006; Borisov, Goldman, and Gupta, 2016), profitability

and revenues (Amore and Bennedsen, 2013; Cingano and Pinotti, 2013), and investment (Cohen et al., 2011; Akey and Lewellen, 2017).² Moreover, politically connected firms are more likely to receive government funding in times of crisis (Faccio, Masulis, and McConnell, 2006; Duchin and Sosyura, 2012; Adelino and Dinc, 2014; Acemoglu, Johnson, Kermani, Kwak, and Mitton, 2016). Our paper provides novel evidence that foreign firms indirectly benefit from political connections of their country representatives as they receive more state and local subsidies and government contracts from US legislators.

2 Foreign Agents Registration Act

To study foreign influence in US politics, we construct a novel dataset that details all meetings that lobbyists have with members of the Congress on behalf of their foreign clients. The data are obtained from over 12,000 semi-annual lobbying disclosures made under the FARA from the US Department of Justice (DOJ). The FARA requires agents operating in the US (*foreign agents*) to register with the DOJ and file disclosures if they work on *covered activity*—political/lobbying activity or public relations—on behalf of a *foreign principal* (foreign corporation, foreign person, or foreign government). Importantly, FARA exempts activities that purely further commercial and trade interests (i.e., purchase and sale of property, services, or commodities) and that have no involvement in the public or political interests of a foreign government or political party.

We digitize and manually transcribe these meetings, creating a dataset that covers more than 250,000 contacts to approximately 1,200 members of Congress by 500 unique lobbying firms. We determine the country of origin for each foreign principal, allowing us to link each meeting with a unique foreign country.³ This gives us 146

²A recent literature also stresses the role of partisan affiliation on firms' choices and investment decisions: see for instance Colonnelli, Pinho Neto, and Teso (2020) and Kempf, Luo, Schäfer, and Tsoutsoura (2021).

³Foreign principals under FARA can be foreign governments, associations representing foreign governments (such as Japan External Trade Organization, JETRO), foreign individuals, or foreign corporations. In each of these instances, we determine the country of origin using data from World Bank and assign the associated geographical location using the International Organization for Stan-

unique foreign countries as clients during the period 2000–2018. To our knowledge, this is the only dataset that allows for a detailed analysis of foreign influence in US politics exploiting details on meetings of lobbyists with US legislators.

We focus on question 12 and the corresponding attachments from all Supplemental Statements filed under FARA from 2000 to 2018. Question 12, reproduced in Panel A of Figure 1, asks about political activities undertaken on behalf of foreign principals during the previous six-month period. The activities include public relations, policies sought to be influenced, any sponsored or delivered speeches, and lectures or TV broadcasts, among others. Importantly, in the corresponding attachments the lobbyist must report the date and subject of the meeting and which US legislator they met with, as seen in Panel B of Figure 1.

The penalties for non-compliance with FARA are quite severe. Violations are punishable by a fine of \$10,000 and up to five years in prison. Since 2000, the DOJ brought 13 criminal FARA cases against 14 organizations and individuals that have reached resolutions to date.⁴ This has resulted in 13 parties being convicted and 1 party having the charges dropped. Most famously, Donald Trump’s former campaign manager Paul Manafort was sentenced to five years in prison for not registering his 2017 lobbying activities. In comparison, the LDA, covering lobbying activities on behalf of domestic agents, also suggests that violations are punishable by a fine of up to \$200,000 per violation or up to five years in prison. However, from 1995 to 2017, there have been nine LDA enforcements settled via civil penalties of \$200,000 or less.⁵

2.1 Summary of semi-annual reports

The DOJ, in addition to the detailed FARA filings, also publishes summary reports semi-annually. These reports are easily accessible and have been used in prior work to understand broad trends in foreign lobbying. Each report describes information on

standardization (ISO) three-letter country codes defined in ISO 3166-1. Throughout our analyses, we drop autonomous regions as they lack data on regional characteristics.

⁴Examples of cases prosecuted under FARA can be found [here](#).

⁵Only one criminal case, outside our sample, occurred in 2020 where lobbyist Jack Abramoff pled guilty to violating registration requirements under the LDA.

the lobbyist including their activities, nature of services, and money received for their political activities undertaken on behalf of foreign clients as reported in question 12. Importantly, these reports do not have information on the meetings lobbyists have with US legislators on behalf of their clients. Therefore, these summary reports are only suited to study broad trends in foreign lobbying in the US, and cannot be used to shed light on the scope and nature of foreign influence.

Using information from these reports, we classify lobbying activities into 12 broad topics using the process described in Appendix B. Panel A of Figure 2 presents the evolution of the 6 most frequently listed topics over the sample period. We find that approximately one in four activities each year relate to publicity while one in ten activities relate to security. Over the sample period, lobbyists increased their engagement in diplomacy, while their engagement in economy and trade trended downwards. In addition to lobbying topics, we also classify the description of services into 5 broad topics which are presented in Panel B of Figure 2. Lobbying services saw a significant uptick in 2010 and surpassed services related to promoting investment, trade, and tourism. By the end of 2018, more than half of the foreign agents report lobbying as their only service. Interestingly, there is a concomitant decrease in the promotion of investment, trade, and tourism around the same time as the uptick noted above. Further, we do not find any changes in consulting or fundraising activities over the sample period. These results reveal substantial heterogeneity in the role of lobbyists.

A next natural question is whether lobbyists specialize in providing issue-specific information to legislators, as indicated by prior work in the context of domestic lobbying (Bertrand, Bombardini, and Trebbi, 2014). To this end, Figure 3 shows that the majority of lobbyists engage with legislators on fewer than three topics, suggesting that most lobbyists concentrate on a small number of topics in the foreign lobbying space.

Finally, we relate the number of topics engaged by the lobbyist on behalf of the foreign principal to the characteristics of the geographical region, where available. Specifically, we assess the relationship between foreign countries that lobby and sev-

eral macroeconomic characteristics using data from the Penn World Tables. Specifically, we include data on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita to capture economic growth, total value of exports and imports to capture reliance on trade, and labour share as a fraction of GDP to capture the trend toward automation that may affect incentives of policymakers (Ramey and Ramey, 1995; Jones and Olken, 2005; Jones and Romer, 2010). Additionally, we include the annual average country conflict score from the Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data, which provides detailed information on the level of conflict within each country every year (Althaus, Bajjalieh, Carter, Peyton, and Shalmon, 2020). Finally, we include data on institutions and the electoral democracy index from the Varieties of Democracy Database.

Table 1 presents the estimates from a regression of the natural logarithm of the number of topics on time-varying characteristics discussed above. In particular, we estimate

$$\log(\text{Number of topics})_{f r t} = \gamma_f + \delta_{r t} + \beta \text{Country Characteristics}_{f t} + \epsilon_{f r t}, \quad (1)$$

where f represents the country of the foreign principal, r represents the topic lobbied for, and t represents the year. The unit of observation is a foreign principal country-topic-year triad. The empirical specification includes country fixed effects to control for unobserved time-invariant regional characteristics in addition to topic-by-year fixed effects to allow for the importance of topics to vary over time. Our results suggest no statistically significant and economically meaningful association between foreign country characteristics and the number of topics except for the share of labor compensation as a fraction of the GDP.⁶

In summary, the associations between topics and country characteristics from the semi-annual reports are informative of the broad trends in foreign lobbying activities. However, there are two major drawbacks. First, the summary reports do not contain information on the identities of individual US legislators, also a key issue in the broader literature on domestic lobbying using LDA data. Second, there is no

⁶The number of observations vary across specifications because of missing values of country characteristics.

information on the individual meetings between lobbyists and legislators. Both these drawbacks render summary reports unsuitable to study foreign influence in the US.

In contrast, we make progress on these issues by using detailed data from the supplemental statements filed under FARA. This confers two advantages. First, these filings cleanly link meetings between an individual foreign country and a specific US legislator. Second, they provide detailed information on individual meetings with legislators. This comprehensive dataset allows us to examine which US legislator characteristics are related to increased meetings with foreign clients, and simultaneously provide us with the unique opportunity to investigate the scope and nature of foreign influence in US politics.

3 Descriptive analysis

We begin by presenting an overview of the patterns in the data, which help us to motivate some features of our empirical specifications in the next section.

3.1 Meetings from supplemental filings

To study the determinants of meetings with legislators, we link legislators to data on their characteristics from a variety of sources. Data on election results and party affiliations come from the MIT Elections Lab, and data on House and Senate committee and sub-committee assignments from [Stewart \(2017\)](#). To measure lawmaking effectiveness, we use the Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES) developed by [Volden and Wiseman \(2014, 2018\)](#). This measure captures the ability of legislators to advance the bills they sponsor through the legislative process. Political ideology for each legislator is measured using the dynamic weighted NOMINATE (DW-NOMINATE) score, as developed by [Poole and Rosenthal \(1985, 2011\)](#). Under this measure, a score closer to 1 reflects a more conservative ideology whereas a score closer to -1 reflects a more liberal ideology. Finally, the employment history of all registered lobbyists (approximately 70,000 individuals) comes from the Washington Representatives and Open Secrets databases. This allows us to establish whether a lobbyist has worked

in the office of a given legislator in the past.⁷ We then merge the resulting dataset to meetings extracted from FARA supplemental filings.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for our sample where we collapse individual meetings at the legislator-country-year level. A foreign country holds on average 4.3 meetings every year with a given US legislator. Moreover, the standard deviation in the meetings variable suggests large variation in the intensity with which they meet. When examining individual characteristics, we find that a foreign country meets with a legislator who is on average 59 years old and holds 16% of their meetings with women legislators and 8% of their meetings with legislators from an underrepresented minority group (latin american or african american). In terms of political characteristics, House members represent 72% of all meetings and the average contacted legislator won their election with a vote share of 66%. Moreover, foreign countries meet equally with legislators from the two major political parties. They also meet more often with legislators that belong to the party in control of the Senate and with legislators who, on average, have served for six terms in the Congress. Further, around 40% of the legislators meet with foreign countries connected through a lobbyist who has worked in the legislator’s office in the past.

Studying ideological characteristics of legislators, foreign countries meet equally with legislators across the ideological spectrum—both conservatives and liberals—a finding that holds when examining different definitions of political ideology. Motivated by prior work, we focus on the first dimension of the DW-NOMINATE score, DW-NOMINATE 1, which captures the economic and governmental aspects of the ideological left-right spectrum. A second dimension of the score, DW-NOMINATE 2, captures differences within the major political parties on currency, nativism, civil rights, and lifestyle issues.

Importantly, we focus on the relevant legislator characteristics that may influence resource allocation for foreign countries. Specifically, we note that a foreign country meets with a legislator with an average legislative effectiveness score of 1.06. This score is approximately the cutoff for effectiveness in the top tercile among all leg-

⁷Interested readers may see Appendix A for more details on the data and their construction.

islators, suggesting that countries meet with legislators who effectively sponsor and advance bills through the legislative process. At the same time, a foreign country has on average nearly 30% of their meetings with sub-committee chairs and 40% of their meetings with members of the rules, ways and means, and appropriations committee. These descriptive statistics are informative of the variation in the legislator characteristics which we explore in detail below.

We next present time-series variation in meetings for our sample. Figure 4 presents a yearly summary of the number of foreign countries met by each congressperson (Panel A) as well as for the number of congresspeople met by each foreign country (Panel B). From 2000 to 2018, both series display a visible growth in the annual average and the median number of meetings. Moreover, both distributions are highly skewed—the median foreign country meets with 20 legislators while the 90th percentile foreign country meets with almost 190 legislators.

The identities of the legislators are just as varied. Table D.2 lists the top five legislators by the number of unique foreign countries they meet with each year. For example, Marco Rubio, the Republican Senator from Florida, was the top legislator in 2012, meeting with 17 countries over 73 meetings. Similarly, Table D.3 reports the top five legislators by the number of meetings with foreign countries each year. Our sample includes well-known and seasoned legislators such as Barack Obama, John McCain, John Kerry, and Joseph Biden, among others.

In terms of identities of foreign countries, Figure D.1 presents the heatmap of meeting frequency for specific years in the sample with varying color intensity representing the number of meetings with US legislators in a given year. The data are representative of nearly every region across the globe.

Lastly, we shift focus on how meetings with legislators evolve over their tenure in either the House of Representatives or the Senate and find substantial heterogeneity in their propensity to meet with foreign countries. Figure 5 presents the number of meetings with representatives and senators relative to the month they are elected into office. Both figures show occasional spikes and drops, but there are no well-pronounced patterns. In the case of senators, however, the number of meetings

appears to go down right before biannual elections, which take place every 24 and 48 months after they are elected.

These preliminary visual patterns provide novel insights into the nature and scope of legislator links with foreign countries. We next proceed to relate these meetings with legislator characteristics to better understand which characteristics matter for connections with foreign countries.

3.2 Legislator characteristics and meeting intensity

We begin by relating meetings to the party affiliation of legislators. As an example, we present the contact pattern of the government of Turkey over time, where a contact is defined as a year-month with at least one meeting between a foreign country and a representative. The horizontal axis indicates the date of contact and the vertical axis indicates the DW-NOMINATE 1 scores of the legislators they meet with. Each dot in the figure represents a contact between the government of Turkey and a US legislator. Republican legislators are represented as red squares, Democrats as blue circles, and Independents as violet triangles. The shaded area in the background is blue when Democrats hold the majority in the Senate. It is clear that Turkey meets with legislators from both parties and across the ideological spectrum. This pattern is not unique to Turkey, but it is the norm. In our sample, foreign countries meet with legislators across different political ideologies and party affiliations consistently over time.

Next, Figure 7 plots the evolution of meetings with effective lawmakers. The horizontal axis indicates the meeting year, as the lawmaker effectiveness scores are only available at annual frequency. The vertical axis plots the fraction of meetings with the most effective lawmakers relative to all the legislators a foreign country meets in a year. We consider three definitions of “most effective lawmakers”—top 5% (blue circles), top 10% (orange squares), and top 20% (green crosses) of legislators by LES score. The striking, though not entirely unexpected, observation is that foreign countries meet relatively more often with the most effective legislators. For example, the fraction of meetings attributable to the most effective 20% of legislators is always

larger than 20%, with a minimum of 20.84% in 2011. This result, that on average foreign countries meet more frequently with the most effective legislators, holds across definitions of effectiveness.

While these visual patterns already provide a broad sense of the relationship between meeting intensity and legislator characteristics, we now relate them more formally in a regression framework to control for potential confounds. Table 3 presents the estimates from a regression of the natural logarithm of the number of meetings between foreign countries and US legislators on time-varying legislator characteristics discussed above. In particular, we estimate

$$\log(\text{Meetings})_{lft} = \delta_{ft} + \beta \text{Legislator Characteristics}_{lt} + \epsilon_{lft}, \quad (2)$$

where f represents the country of the foreign principal, l represents the legislator, and t represents the year. The unit of observation is a legislator-country-year triad. To shed light on the relative importance of legislator characteristics, the empirical specification includes country-by-year fixed effects and uses variation in characteristics across legislators. We cluster standard errors at the country-level (Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan, 2004).

To understand which legislator characteristics matter for foreign countries when considering with whom to meet, Column 1 relates meeting intensity to the political characteristics of legislators. We find that, on average, a foreign country meets more often with senators, legislators who win by larger margins, and legislators who are connected to the lobbyist through past employment networks, i.e., the number of lobbyists at a lobbying firm who previously worked for a legislator as explained on page 51. The finding on the importance of past employment network complements evidence from Bertrand, Bombardini, and Trebbi (2014) who show that employment connections are positively related to campaign contributions by US lobbyists. Interestingly, foreign countries meet less often with legislators if they represent the party that controls the Senate. Finally, consistent with the descriptive analyses, foreign countries meet with legislators irrespective of party affiliation and seniority in the

Congress.

Turning to ideological characteristics, Column 2 shows that meeting intensity is weakly negatively correlated with the legislator’s political ideology. Column 3 focuses on legislator characteristics that may influence resource allocation for foreign entities. Across different proxies, we find foreign countries meet with all legislators regardless of their importance.

Column 4 presents the empirical specification including all characteristics at once. We omit the “Democrat” indicator variable, as it is highly negatively correlated, -94%, with the DW-NOMINATE 1 scores. When considering the characteristics jointly, we find that the relative importance of a legislator, captured by the Legislative Effectiveness Score, and whether the legislator is a chairperson of a subcommittee is positively related to more meetings with foreign countries. However, these patterns are not present for legislators who are members of “power” committees, which include the rules, ways and means, and appropriations committees, or if they served many terms on committees. Finally, ideological characteristics are uncorrelated with meetings, which is in contrast to the extant literature using campaign contributions as a proxy for political connections (Wright, 1990; Battaglini and Patacchini, 2018). In sum, these associations highlight the relevance of political and legislative effectiveness as key determinants of meetings with foreign countries.

Additionally, we are interested in understanding whether, conditional on deciding whom to meet with, changes in legislator characteristics relate to meetings intensity. Such an analysis is informative on what characteristics matter for a connection to persist, a question previously unexplored in the literature. To do so, Column 5 adds legislator fixed effects to our previous empirical specification and relates *within* legislator changes in characteristics to meeting intensity. These results suggest an increase in a legislator’s effectiveness, an increase in their vote margins, increases in their positions of influence—as proxied by chairing a sub-committee—and working with more connected lobbyists, are all positively related to more meetings. Moreover, as before, we find that foreign countries meet more often with legislators when they become senators, potentially due to an increase in their term. Interestingly, changes

in legislator ideology do not play a meaningful role in the determination of meetings with foreign countries.

Lastly, we consider that meetings are set strategically by both legislators and foreign countries. We use a revealed preference approach, exploiting the structure of a two-sided matching market, to characterize the value of meetings between legislators and foreign countries. It relies on the assumption that each legislator reveals a consistent set of preferences by deciding whom to meet with each year. Appendix C describes the approach in more detail and Table C.1 reports the estimates. We find that meetings between foreign countries meetings and more liberal legislators are more valuable, as proxied by the ideology scores. Further, we find that meetings with legislators who are in positions of influence — as proxied by chairing a committee, a sub-committee or membership of the power committees — are more valuable while meetings with effective legislators is not.

Overall, our findings provide new observations that meetings are associated with the effectiveness of the legislators and past employment networks but not their ideology.

4 Do meetings affect resource allocation?

We next ascertain whether meetings with US legislators affect resource allocation. Specifically, we examine the direct benefits that accrue to foreign countries that meet with legislators by relating meetings to foreign aid and assistance provided by the US. We then highlight a novel indirect benefit of political connections. Specifically, we study resource allocation to firms headquartered in countries that meet with legislators. To do so, we focus on local subsidies and new federal government contracts. Interested readers may see Appendix A for more details on these data and their construction. Table 4 presents the summary statistics for foreign aid, state and local subsidies, and government contracts.

4.1 Empirical strategy

Panel regressions The main specification for our analyses relate meetings between US legislators and foreign countries to measures of resource allocation (i.e., “outcome” in the next two equations) using panel regressions. We study two margins of adjustment and estimate the following panel regressions:

$$\mathbb{1}\{\text{Outcome} > 0\}_{l_s f t} = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta \text{Meetings}_{l_s f t} + \eta \text{Controls}_{f t} + \epsilon_{l_s f t} \quad (3)$$

$$\log(\text{Outcome amount}_{l_s f t}) = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta \text{Meetings}_{l_s f t} + \eta \text{Controls}_{f t} + \epsilon_{l_s f t}, \quad (4)$$

where l represents the legislator met with, s represents the state associated with the legislator, f represents the foreign country meeting with the legislator, and t represents the meeting year. As we are interested in studying both the intensive and the extensive margins of adjustments, we work with a balanced panel. Equation (3) quantifies the extensive margin, i.e., increase in the probability of receiving the outcome of interest, and Equation (4) quantifies the intensive margin, i.e., increase in the value of the outcome of interest. The coefficient of interest is β , identified by variation in meetings between multiple foreign countries and legislators. Standard errors are corrected for heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered at the country-level (Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan, 2004).

The empirical specification allows us to rule out concerns about location-specific and country-specific effects that may affect outcome variables for two reasons. First, state-by-year fixed effects are included to control for local economic confounds (e.g., state or regional macroeconomic trends) and general policies that potentially affect meetings and outcome variables. Second, country fixed effects are added to control for time-invariant country characteristics (e.g., natural resources) that may simultaneously drive meetings and resource allocation.

We also explore the robustness of our findings and examine whether the pattern holds up under a variety of specifications. We employ panel estimations at both the event year and year-month levels to rule out timing issues that could potentially drive the relationship between meetings and resource allocation. We also conduct

the estimation at the congressional-district level and use legislator fixed effects to verify that legislators indeed allocate more resources when they meet more often with foreign countries.

Difference-in-differences While the panel regressions are informative of the association between meetings and resource allocation, it is unclear whether omitted factors and reverse causality drive the relationship. For instance, in the case of aid, there is a possibility that a country with more aid at stake tends to meet more with legislators. To mitigate general concerns that unobserved factors that affect both meeting intensity and resource allocation, we study countries that unexpectedly lose a connection due to the death of a representative or senator.⁸ The null hypothesis is that if meetings or connections to the legislators do not matter, then the loss of a connection through deaths should be unrelated to resource allocation. Thus, the identification strategy estimates the effect of losing a connection by utilizing the clean link between local political activity and resource allocation, holding constant country-level and local economic conditions.

In particular, our empirical analyses compare the outcomes for a country exogenously losing a political connection (treated) relative to another country losing a political connection later (control). This analysis exploits the differences in the timing of losing political connection due to deaths. As before with panel regressions, we hold constant time-invariant unobservable country and time-varying location-specific characteristics by including country fixed effects and state-by-year fixed effects, respectively. Moreover, we restrict our analysis to outcomes within one year around the death of the legislator to mitigate issues related to overlapping election cycles.

⁸Deaths have been used to identify importance and ascribe value in several contexts including political ties (Faccio and Parsley, 2009; Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021), independent directors (Nguyen and Nielsen, 2010), executives and CEOs (Johnson, Magee, Nagarajan, and Newman, 1985; Bennedsen, Pérez-González, and Wolfenzon, 2020; Fee, Hadlock, and Pierce, 2013). We focus on deaths of legislators who are most effective in lawmaking, defined as those with above-median LES in the death sample, as they drive all the variation in outcomes of interest.

We estimate the following difference-in-differences specification:

$$\mathbb{1}\{\text{Outcome} > 0\}_{sft} = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta \text{Lost connection}_{sf} \times \text{After}_t + \epsilon_{sft} \quad (5)$$

$$\log(\text{Outcome amount}_{sft}) = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta \text{Lost connection}_{sf} \times \text{After}_t + \epsilon_{sft}, \quad (6)$$

where Equation (5) quantifies the extensive margin and Equation (6) the intensive margin. Here, the coefficient of interest is β which can be interpreted as the effect of losing a political connection (treatment effect) conditional on being politically active and the set of fixed effects. Standard errors are double clustered at the country-event level and state or congressional-district level, depending on the unit of the analysis.

4.2 Direct benefits to countries

We begin by focusing our analyses on resource allocation to foreign countries themselves. Here, we rely on foreign aid, given its importance in winning support in major international affairs, maintaining political regimes, or strengthening international alliances (Alesina and Dollar, 2000). Further, prior work highlights the importance of political relations in determining foreign aid and assistance (Kuziemko and Werker, 2006; Sims, 1980). Hence, foreign aid offers a setting to examine the importance of meetings for resource allocation to foreign countries.⁹ Results are reported in Table 5.

Column 1 reports the results with only state-year fixed effects, finding that an increase in meetings with a legislator is positively associated with receiving aid and assistance from the US. On the intensive margin, meetings are associated with larger aid and assistance. These results are robust to adding controls, country fixed effects, and legislator fixed effects. We examine the relationship between meetings and foreign aid at the year-month level, as reported in Table D.4, and show that differences in timing between meetings and aid do not explain our results.

Next, we examine foreign aid and assistance granted by federal agencies in the US around deaths of legislators. We report results from this exercise in Table 6. The

⁹Prior work has highlighted the role of legislators in influencing federal agencies in the allocation of public resources (Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021).

estimates imply that countries that lose a connection with a legislator through death are 9.2 percentage points less likely to receive an aid and the aid amount they receive are 49 percent lower. Relative to the average aid value of US\$795 million, this loss represents a total drop in foreign aid of US\$402 million, translating to a per-meeting loss of US\$5.7 million. Thus, the loss of a connection substantially reduces the foreign aid that the connected foreign countries receive.

In summary, our findings establish that meetings are a meaningful predictor of resource allocation in the context of foreign aid and assistance. These findings contribute to the literature on the determination of foreign aid and assistance to countries by documenting that political connections sway aid to countries as they meet more with US legislators. In doing so, our paper provides the first evidence that legislators influence the allocation of foreign aid for governments that meet more often with them.

4.3 Indirect benefits to firms

Next, we examine the indirect benefits to firms from countries that meet more often with legislators. The ability to capture indirect benefits is a unique feature of our comprehensive dataset. Specifically, meetings by country representatives with US legislators could influence resource allocation to foreign firms by reducing information asymmetries. We examine two settings: (1) state and local subsidies and (2) government contracts, which allow us to cleanly link meetings with legislators to increased resource allocation.

State and local subsidies As a starting point, we focus on subsidies for two reasons. First, state and local governments spend billions of dollars in subsidies each year to attract and retain firms, and local legislators use considerable discretion to allocate subsidies (Slattery, 2018; Slattery and Zidar, 2020).¹⁰ Second, the localized nature

¹⁰Slattery and Zidar (2020) note that in 2014, states spent US\$5-\$216 per capita on incentives for firms. The total state and local incentive spending amounted to at least US\$30 billion, with the average discretionary subsidy to the tune of US\$178 million. Moreover, discretionary subsidies are roughly 1/4 of total incentive spending within a state, thus highlighting the importance of legislator discretion in the subsidy allocation process.

of subsidies helps us to cleanly link meetings of foreign countries with individual US legislators to the subsidy received by foreign firms in that location. Together, these facts make subsidy allocation a nearly ideal setting to examine whether meetings and connections to legislators influence resource allocation.

Table 7 reports estimates from panel regressions examining both the extensive and the intensive margins. Column 1 reports the results with only state-year fixed effects, finding that an increase in meetings with a legislator is positively associated with receiving a subsidy from the state of the legislator. On the intensive margin, meetings are associated with larger subsidies. These results are robust to adding controls, country fixed effects, and legislator fixed effects.

In Appendix Table D.5, we show that our results are robust to examining this relationship at the congressional district level instead of the state. Across an identical set of empirical specifications as in Table 7, we find that more meetings with a representative in a congressional district are positively associated with greater subsidies. While encouraging, these results come with two caveats. First, we extract the cities awarding the subsidy and link them to the congressional districts of the representatives using zip codes.¹¹ In doing so, when zip codes are associated with more than one congressional district, we apportion the subsidy across them equally. Second, these analyses can only be conducted for house of representatives, as senators run for the office in statewide elections. Even with the noise, we consistently find a positive relationship between meetings and subsidies.

Next, we report in Table 8 our analyses using legislator deaths as a shock to connections. The estimates imply that firms whose countries lose a connection with a legislator through death are 5.2 percentage points less likely to receive a subsidy and the subsidies they receive are 55 percent lower. Relative to the average subsidy value of US\$26 million, this loss represents a total drop in subsidy value of US\$12 million, translating to a per-meeting loss of US\$210,000.

We confirm that these results hold when we repeat the analyses at the congressional-

¹¹We use the crosswalk provided by the US Census Bureau for the 108th Congress to 111th Congress. For Congresses starting after 2010, we use the crosswalks provided by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

district level.¹² The results are reported in Table D.6, which shows that the magnitude is very similar to our baseline estimate, suggesting the importance of political connections in influencing resource allocation. Thus, the loss of the connection of country representatives substantially reduces indirect benefits in the form of local subsidies that the foreign firms receive. Overall, our findings provide novel evidence of indirect benefits to firms when their country representatives meet more often with US legislators.

Government contracts Next, we focus on federal government contracts as prior work highlights the role of political influence on initial contract allocation and renegotiation. Given the importance of political influence in this setting, we investigate whether foreign influence is a determinant of government contract allocation.

We begin by estimating panel regressions and report the results in Table 9. The specification in Column 1 includes only state-year fixed effects, finding that an increase in meetings with a legislator is positively associated with receiving new government contracts from the state of the legislator. On the intensive margin, meetings are associated with larger contract values. These results are robust to adding controls, country fixed effects, and legislator fixed effects.

Interestingly, the sensitivity of meetings to contract allocation is lower than it is on subsidies. One potential explanation for the lower sensitivity is that it reflects differences in the flexibility of the local legislator to influence state subsidies relative to federal government contracts. In particular, state subsidies are determined at the state level, hence meetings with can have large sway over their outcomes. In contrast, federal government contracts are allocated at the congress-level, meaning that contacts with any single legislator may matter less. Nevertheless, meeting with key legislators in important budgetary and oversight committees might still be important and ultimately influence contract allocation.

Next, we report in Table 10 our analyses using legislator deaths as a shock to connections. The estimates imply that firms whose countries lose a connection with a

¹²In these tests, we exploit variation among foreign countries connected to two legislators but unexpectedly lose connection to one. We do this by the inclusion of district-by-year fixed effects.

legislator through death are 6 percentage points less likely to receive a new government contract and the contract value they receive is 48 percent lower. Relative to the average value of US\$3.4 million, this loss represents a total drop in value of about US\$2 million, translating to a per-meeting loss of US\$25,000. Collectively, our findings establish that meetings affect resource allocation indirectly for firms in the form of government contracts.

5 Understanding mechanisms

This section proceeds to understand potential mechanisms that underlie our results. One strand of the literature argues that lobbying reduces information asymmetries with policymakers, thus increasing resource allocation (the “information channel”). Another related strand posits that agents closely connected to legislators may receive preferential treatment in the resource allocation process (the “quid-pro-quo channel”). Both these channels predict an increase in meetings with legislators is associated with more significant resource allocation and, perhaps, even operate simultaneously.

To shed light on these mechanisms, we rely on the role of important committees in the Congress that in prior work have been shown to influence resource allocation in the US (Cohen, Coval, and Malloy, 2011; Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021). In this framework, one prediction of the “quid-pro-quo channel” is that foreign countries should meet *less* with legislators after they depart from important committees, holding constant the relative importance of the committee to foreign countries. We test this prediction in our data by exploiting the timing of departures from important committees. Based on prior work, these committees include key budgetary and oversight committees in the House of Representatives and in the Senate: House Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Oversight and Reform; House Committee on Armed Services; House Committee on the Budget; House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on the Budget; Senate Committee on Com-

merce, Science, and Transportation; and Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

In Table 11, we examine changes in meeting intensity around the departure of legislators from important committees. As committee assignments for legislators are available at the monthly level, we organize our analyses at the committee-month level. Given the granularity of our data we can account for several confounding factors. As before, we control for local economic confounds through the inclusion of state-by-year-month fixed effects. Our empirical specifications hold constant the relative importance of departing committees for foreign countries by including country-by-committee fixed effects. Additionally, we include legislator-by-committee fixed effects to control for influential legislators departing from the same committee at different points in their tenure. In some specifications, we include congress fixed effects to account for differences across Congresses that may influence meetings with legislators. Finally, we also consider changes in meeting intensity can be driven by the relevant importance of the issue to a lobbyist rather than a foreign country (Bertrand, Bombardini, and Trebbi, 2014).¹³ To do so, we include lobbying firm fixed effects and account for lobbying firm switching issues in a predictable way when a legislator departs a committee.

We organize our analyses at the committee-lobbying firm-month level. Results in Table 11 provide evidence that foreign countries continue to meet with *all* legislators even after they leave important committees. These results are inconsistent with the prediction of the “quid-pro-quo channel” operating through important committees influencing resource allocation.

Our results can instead be consistent with two alternative mechanisms: (1) the “information channel” that predicts that lobbyists working on behalf of foreign countries provide useful information to legislators, hence they continue to meet as frequently even if legislators depart these committees; (2) a quid-pro-quo channel that does not operate through committees and yet affects resource allocation, an unlikely scenario given the large literature supporting the role of Congress committees in resource

¹³The granularity of our data allows us to account for this explanation. Specifically, our sample consists of 500 unique lobbying firms with the median firm working on two topics on behalf of three foreign countries.

allocation.

Lastly, we consider an additional prediction of the “quid-pro-quo channel”. Specifically, beyond meeting intensity, this channel predicts that the sensitivity of meetings to resource allocation is economically larger for important committees relative to other committees. In unreported results, we test these predictions for all three resource allocation measures and find that the sensitivity is indistinguishable across committees. Overall, our results speak to the importance that maintaining connections with *all* legislators is essential to foreign countries beyond the committee to which legislators are assigned.

6 Concluding remarks

We introduce a new comprehensive dataset detailing the lobbying activities of foreign countries in the US, which allows us to study the role of foreign influence in the allocation of public resources. Using date-stamped meetings between foreign countries and legislators, we show that lawmaker effectiveness and past employment connections with lobbyists correlate positively with meetings. However, contrary to prior work using campaign contributions, we find the representative’s ideology is uncorrelated with meetings.

Next, we document direct benefits for foreign countries and indirect benefits for foreign firms. For foreign governments, we find that more frequent meetings with US legislators are associated with more foreign aid and assistance from the US. For firms, we find that more frequent meetings by their country representatives with a US legislator are associated with larger local subsidies and federal government contracts allocated to these corporations. We establish these results in a panel regression framework that flexibly controls for time-invariant legislator characteristics, time-varying location-specific characteristics, and country characteristics. Further, we show that this relation is *plausibly* causal when we examine changes in resources allocation around the unexpected death of a legislator to whom the foreign country was connected.

Understanding how access to legislators is gained and distributed in the economy is an important question of practical and theoretical relevance. From a positive perspective, our study highlights the determinants of connections between foreign countries and legislators and examines how resources are allocated when the government controls them. From a normative perspective, our paper's findings can guide efforts to design more effective political institutions. Lastly, our dataset provides new observations that can be used to inform the selection of alternative theoretical models of lobbying and we expect it to be useful to a large community of scholars in political economics and public finance.

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A. Example of question 12

12. During this 6 month reporting period, have you on behalf of any foreign principal engaged in political activity² as defined below?
Yes No

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail all such political activity, indicating, among other things, the relations, interests and policies sought to be influenced and the means employed to achieve this purpose. If the registrant arranged, sponsored or delivered speeches, lectures or radio and TV broadcasts, give details as to dates and places of delivery, names of speakers and subject matter.

See Attachment D

B. Corresponding attachment

Attachment D - Section III, # 12

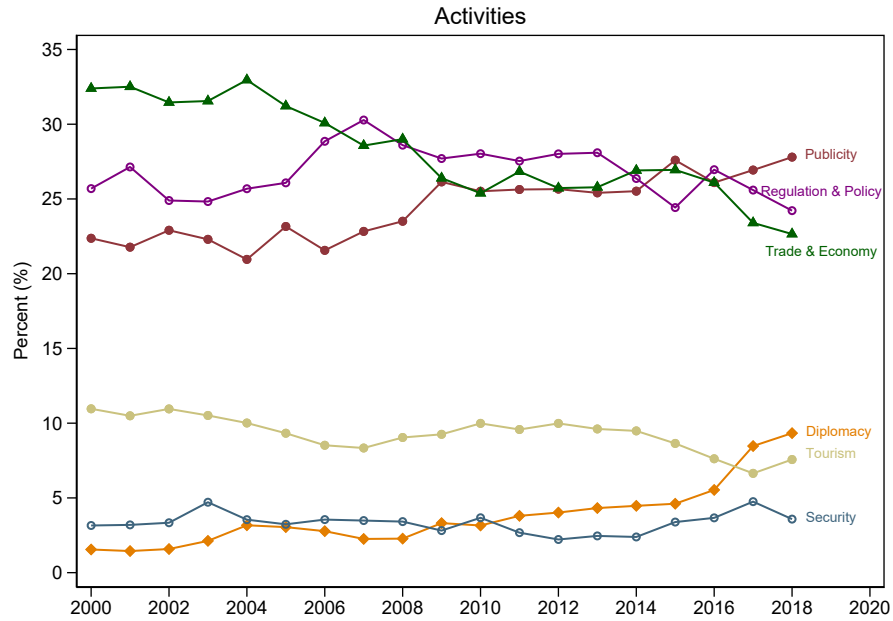
Reporting period – July 1 – December 31, 2007

The Embassy of the People's Republic of China

Date	Office of	Met with	Issues Discussed
07-27-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	Chairman Wu visit
08-06-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	Chairman Wu visit
08-30-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	Chairman Wu visit
09-27-2007	The Speaker of the House	Nancy Pelosi	Chairman Wu visit
10-31-2007	House Ways & Means Committee	Jason Kearns	China-related legislation
11-29-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	China Bilateral relationship
12-07-2007	Senate Majority Leader	Michael Castellano	China-related legislation

Figure 1: Notes: Panel A reproduces the text of question 12 as it is in the official FARA supplemental statement. Panel B shows part of the attached document D, which details meetings with US legislators. These screenshots were taken from the following [supplemental statement](#).

A. Activities provided by the lobbying firm



B. Nature of services provided by the lobbying firm

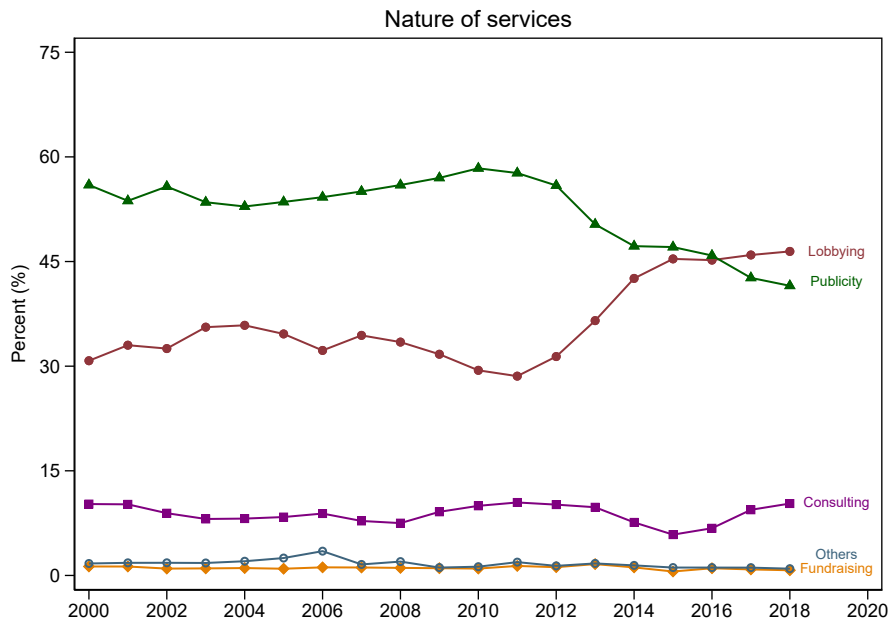


Figure 2: Notes: The figure shows the fraction of activities belonging to each specific topic (Panel A) and each type of services (Panel B). The twelve lobbying topics are identified following the procedure outlined in Appendix B.

Lobbyist specialization

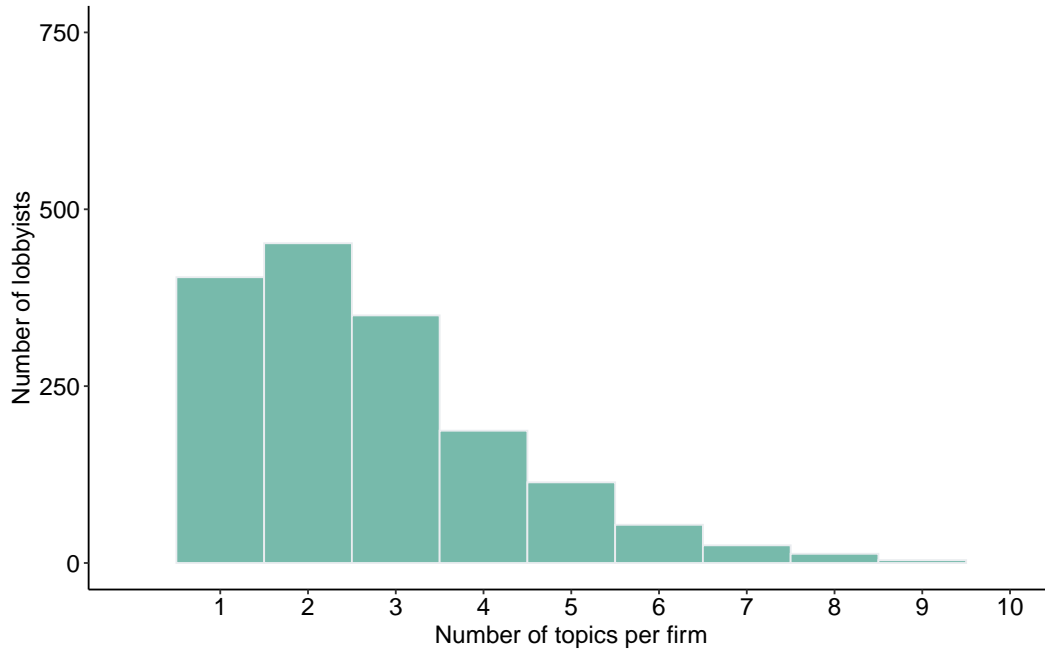
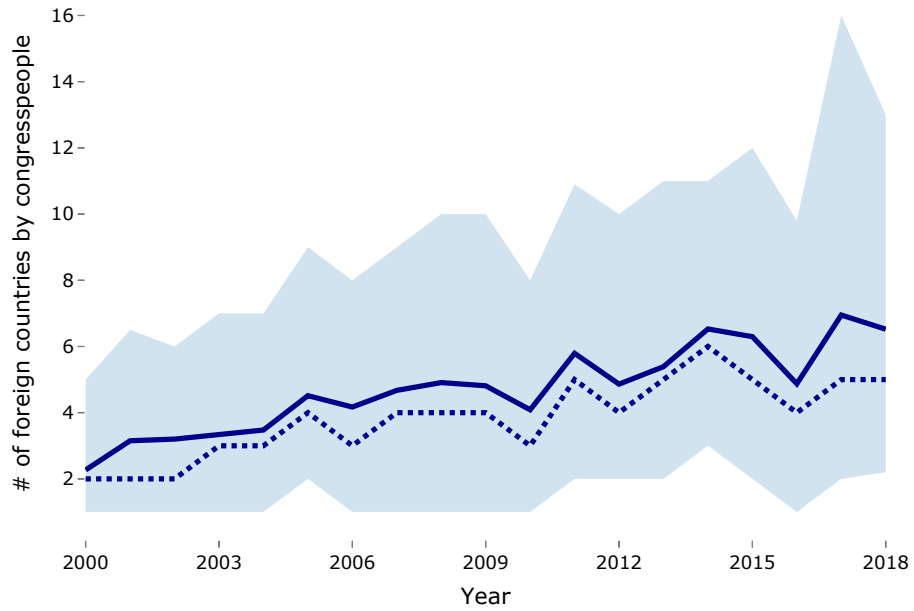


Figure 3: *Notes:* The histogram shows the number of different topics each lobbying firm has worked on from 2000 to 2018 (horizontal axis), and the corresponding number of lobbying firms that have worked on a given number of topics (vertical axis). The twelve lobbying topics are identified following the procedure outlined in Appendix B.

A. Number of foreign principals meeting with each congressperson



B. Number of congresspeople meeting with each foreign principal

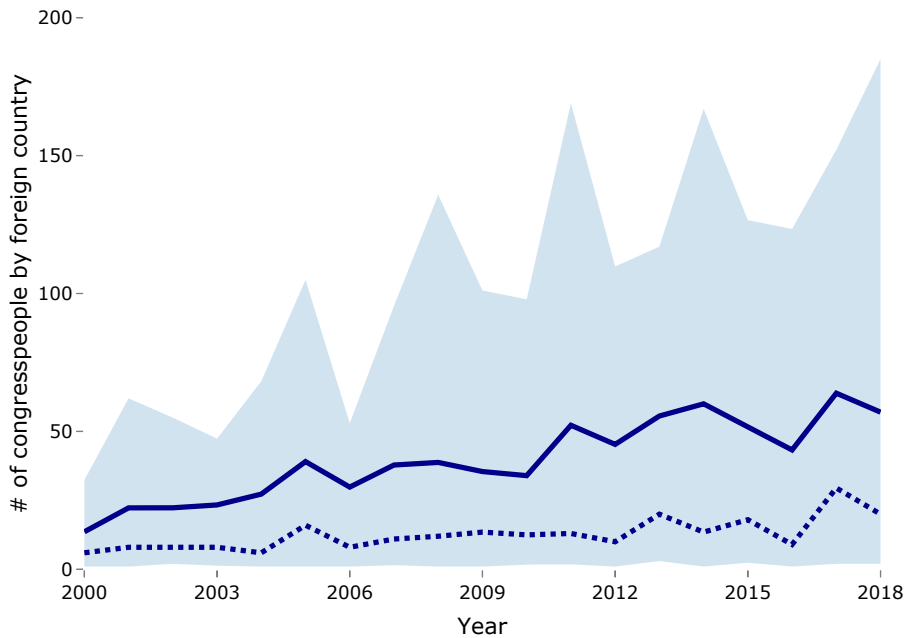
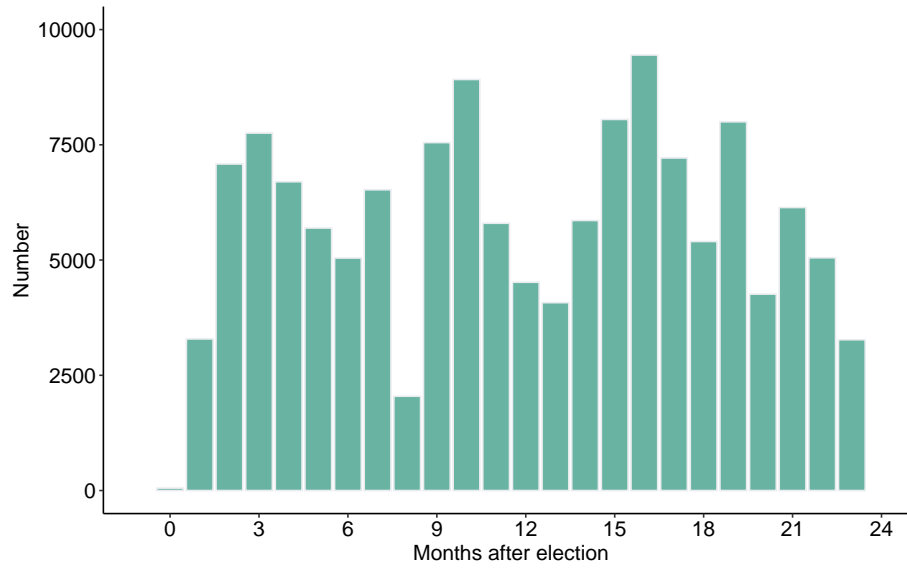


Figure 4: Notes: The figure presents the yearly summary of the number of foreign principals met by each congressperson (Panel A) as well as of the number of congresspeople met by each foreign principal (Panel B). The solid line represents the time series of the yearly average, the dashed line is the median, and the extremes of the shaded area are the 10th and 90th percentile.

A. Total number of meetings after election – House representatives



B. Total number of meetings after election – Senators

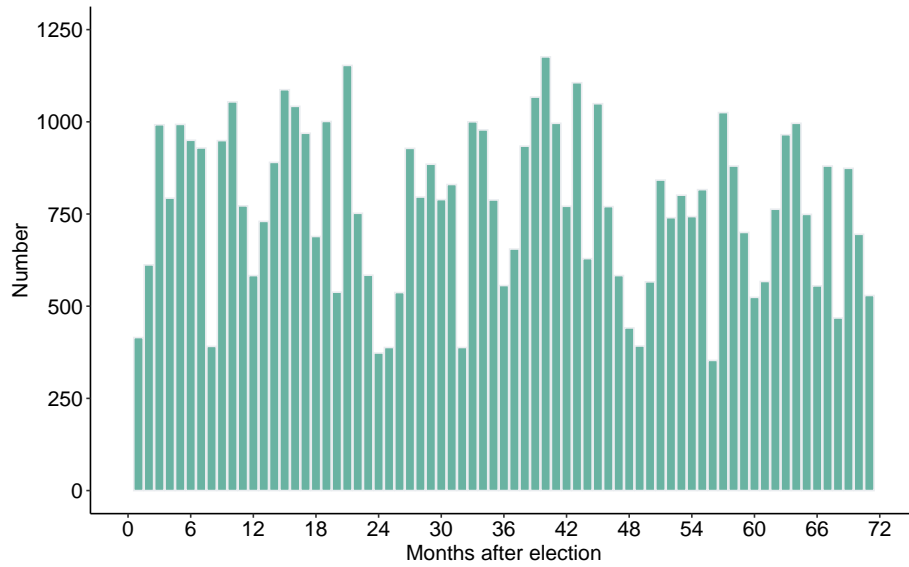


Figure 5: *Notes:* The figure shows the total number of meetings (vertical axis) in each month relative to when the legislator was elected or appointed (horizontal axis). Results for house members (Panel A) and senators (Panel B) are reported separately because of their different terms: house members serve 2-year terms, while senators serve 6-year terms.

Contacts with congresspeople by party affiliation, Turkey



Figure 6: *Notes:* The figure shows the contact pattern over time for the government of Turkey. A contact is defined as a year-month with at least one meeting between a foreign country and a representative. Each dot in the figure represents a contact. Republican legislators are shown as red squares, democrats as blue circles, and independents as violet triangles. The shaded area in the background is blue if democrats had the majority in the Senate. The vertical axis indicates the DW-NOMINATE 1 score from [Poole and Rosenthal \(2011\)](#).

Meetings with effective lawmakers

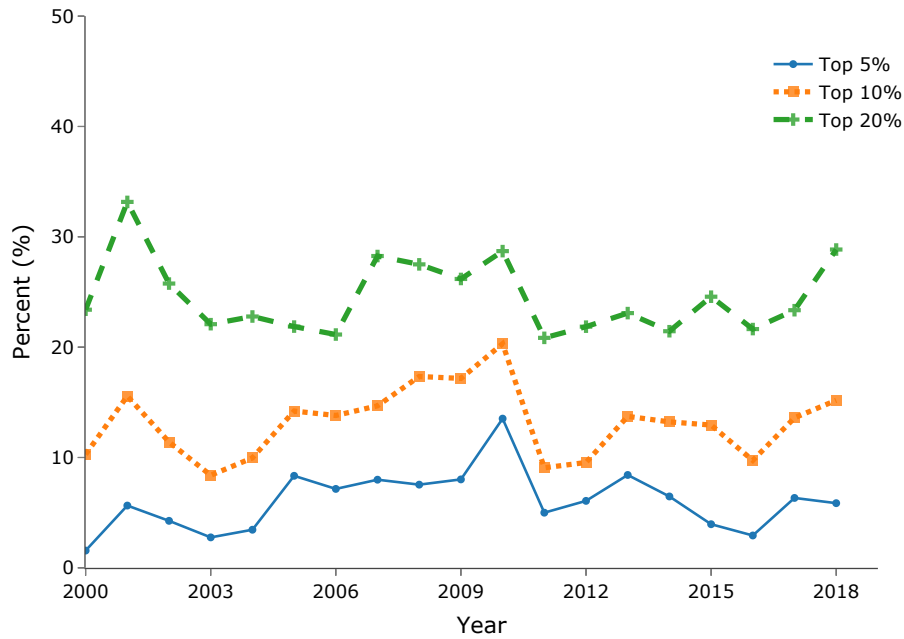


Figure 7: *Notes:* The figure shows the meetings with effective lawmakers over time for all foreign countries. We rank each legislator by their lawmaker effectiveness score (LES) from the Centre of Effective Lawmaking. We then compute the fraction of meetings with top 5% of legislators (blue circles), top 10% of legislators (orange squares), and top 20% of legislators (green crosses) relative to all the legislators a foreign country meets in a year.

Table 1: Lobbying topics and foreign country characteristics: Report-level analysis

This table relates lobbying topics extracted from FARA semi-annual reports to foreign country characteristics. The unit of analysis is a country-topic-year triad. The dependent variable is *Log (Number of topics)*, i.e., the natural logarithm of the number of topics. We relate this to the following foreign country characteristics, namely: *Economic* (column 1), *Conflict* (column 2), and *Institutional* (column 3). Column 4 includes all the characteristics. *Economic* characteristics include: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*); *Conflict* characteristics include: total number of unrest events in the source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events in the target country (*Total unrest (target)*). *Institutional* characteristics include the extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *Topic × year* and *Country* fixed effects and are estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS). Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable Characteristics	Log (Number of topics)			
	Economic	Conflict	Institutional	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	-0.002 (0.026)			-0.011 (0.027)
Population	0.103 (0.123)			-0.005 (0.135)
Imports	0.041 (0.096)			0.017 (0.100)
Exports	0.063 (0.125)			0.083 (0.124)
Labour share	0.630* (0.369)			0.792** (0.362)
Total unrest (source)		0.024 (0.028)		0.005 (0.034)
Total unrest (target)		0.019 (0.027)		0.040 (0.033)
Electoral democracy index			0.160 (0.155)	0.250 (0.200)
Topic × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.41	0.41	0.40	0.42
Observations	4,412	5,696	6,011	3,887

Table 2: Summary statistics: meetings and legislator characteristics

The table presents the descriptive statistics for the sample where we collapse individual meetings at the legislator-country-year level. “Meetings” represent number of times a foreign country and a legislator met in a given year. We include the following legislator characteristics: the age of the legislator (*Age*), whether the legislator is a woman (*Woman*), whether the legislator is from an underrepresented minority group (*Underrepresented minority*), whether the legislator is a member of the House of representatives (*House member*), vote share in the elections (*Vote share*), an indicator capturing party affiliation (*Democrat*), whether the legislator is a member of the party in control of the senate (*Majority party*), rank within the party (*Seniority*), and an indicator equal to one when at least one lobbyist engaged by the foreign country previously worked with the legislator ($\mathbb{1}_{\text{Employment connection}}$). We also include the following ideological characteristics: measures of legislator’s political ideology, *DW-NOMINATE 1* and *DW-NOMINATE 2*. Finally, we also include characteristics that might affect influence, such as lawmaking effectiveness of the legislator (*Legislative Effectiveness Score*), whether the legislator is the chair of either a senate or house committee (*Committee chair*) or of a sub-committee (*Sub-committee chair*), or a member of rules, ways and means, and appropriations committee (*Power committee membership*).

	N	Mean	Median	Std. dev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Meetings	44,934	4.344	2.000	6.202
<i>Personal</i>				
Age	44,934	59.14	60.00	10.56
Woman	44,934	0.164	0.000	0.370
Underrepresented minority	44,934	0.082	0.000	0.275
<i>Political</i>				
House member	44,934	0.720	1.000	0.449
Vote share	44,934	66.03	63.00	12.80
Democrat	44,934	0.502	1.000	0.500
Majority party	44,934	0.533	1.000	0.499
Seniority	44,934	6.226	5.000	4.655
$\mathbb{1}_{\text{Employment connection}}$	44,934	0.384	0.000	0.486
<i>Ideological</i>				
DW-NOMINATE 1	44,934	0.041	-0.045	0.432
DW-NOMINATE 2	44,934	-0.043	-0.053	0.290
<i>Importance for resource allocation</i>				
Legislative Effectiveness Score	44,934	1.060	0.651	1.322
Committee chair	44,934	0.092	0.000	0.289
Sub-committee chair	44,934	0.282	0.000	0.450
Power committee membership	44,934	0.397	0.000	0.489

Table 3: Legislator characteristics and meetings intensity

This table relates meetings with US legislators to various characteristics at the country-legislator-year level. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the number of meetings in a year, *Log (meetings)*. Column 1 includes indicators if legislator is in the House (*House member*), a Democrat (*Democrat*), or in the majority party in the Senate (*Majority*), and the vote share in elections (*Vote share*), number of terms in office (*Seniority*) and the number of lobbyists previously employed by the legislator (*Employment connection*). Column 2 includes the two *DW-NOMINATE* measures of legislator political ideology. Column 3 includes the lawmaking effectiveness of the legislator (*Legislative Effectiveness Score*), and whether the legislator is the chair of either a senate or house committee (*Committee chair*) or of a sub-committee (*Sub-committee chair*), or a member of rules, ways and means, and appropriations committee (*Power committee membership*). Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable: Characteristics	Log (meetings)				
	Political	Ideological	Importance	All	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
House member	-0.055* (0.028)			-0.041* (0.024)	-0.211*** (0.052)
Vote share	0.138*** (0.023)			0.131*** (0.025)	0.103*** (0.038)
Democrat	0.018 (0.031)				
Majority	-0.035** (0.016)			-0.064*** (0.020)	-0.026 (0.022)
Seniority	0.002 (0.001)			0.001 (0.001)	0.003 (0.006)
Employment connections	0.026*** (0.006)			0.027*** (0.006)	0.019*** (0.007)
DW-NOMINATE 1		-0.027* (0.016)		-0.014 (0.015)	-0.333 (0.226)
DW-NOMINATE 2		-0.009 (0.008)		-0.002 (0.007)	0.110 (0.146)
Legislative Effectiveness Score			0.002 (0.005)	0.008** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)
Committee chair			-0.002 (0.016)	-0.014 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.022)
Sub-committee chair			0.015 (0.012)	0.052*** (0.013)	0.025* (0.013)
Power committee membership			0.034 (0.025)	0.009 (0.020)	-0.000 (0.018)
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes
Country × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.37
Observations	44,934	44,934	44,934	44,934	44,903

Table 4: Summary statistics: foreign aid, subsidies, and new government contracts

The table reports the means and standard deviations for the measures of resource allocation. For each foreign country every year, we aggregate the amount of foreign aid received by US federal agencies, state and local government subsidies received by foreign firms, and new federal government contracts allocated to foreign firms. The unit of observation is a legislator-country-year triad. For extensive margin, we report an indicator capturing whether the country received foreign aid ($\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$), whether a foreign firm associated with a country received state and local subsidies from a legislator who meets with their country representatives ($\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$), or whether a foreign firm associated with a country received a new federal government contract from a legislator who meets with their country representatives ($\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$). For intensive margin, we also report the the average amount in US\$ millions of aid (*Aid amount*) received by the foreign country and the average amount of subsidies (*Subsidy amount*) and government contracts (*Contract amount*) received by foreign firms.

	Mean	Std. dev
$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$	0.945	0.23
Aid amount (US\$ millions)	795	2036
$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$	0.055	0.23
Subsidy amount (US\$ millions)	26	290
$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$	0.045	0.20
Contract amount (US\$ millions)	3.40	29.71

Table 5: Meetings with legislators and aid received by foreign countries from the US

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and aid received by foreign countries from the US. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$, an indicator for receiving foreign aid from the US while in panel B the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+\text{Aid amount})$, natural logarithm of one plus the aid amount received by a foreign country from the US. The independent variable of interest is $\text{Log}(1+\text{Meetings}_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Panel A: Extensive margin						
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.551*** (0.024)	0.551*** (0.023)	0.551*** (0.024)	0.550*** (0.023)	0.550*** (0.024)	0.550*** (0.024)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.77	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78
Observations	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348

Panel B: Intensive margin						
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Aid amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	9.841*** (0.449)	9.844*** (0.446)	9.833*** (0.458)	9.835*** (0.459)	9.820*** (0.461)	9.822*** (0.461)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76
Observations	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348

Table 6: Foreign aid received by foreign countries from the US around legislator deaths

This table examines changes in foreign aid received by the foreign country in one year around legislator deaths in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the country received aid from the US while in column 2 the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Aid\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of aid received by the foreign country. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the foreign country connected to a US representative or a senator in a state, respectively, loses the connection due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *State* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are double-clustered at the country-event and state levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$	Log (1+ Aid amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection \times After	-0.092*** (0.006)	-0.494*** (0.125)
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.76	0.90
Observations	787	782

Table 7: Meetings with legislators and local government subsidies to foreign firms

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and state-level subsidies granted to foreign firms. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm whose representatives meet with a US legislator, receives a subsidy from the legislator's state while in panel B the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Subsidy\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from that state. The independent variable of interest is $\text{Log}(1+Meetings_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Panel A: Extensive margin						
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.033** (0.016)	0.033** (0.015)	0.034** (0.015)	0.034** (0.015)	0.034** (0.015)	0.034** (0.015)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10
Observations	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036
Panel B: Intensive margin						
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Subsidy amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.459** (0.219)	0.456** (0.211)	0.472** (0.216)	0.473** (0.215)	0.470** (0.214)	0.471** (0.213)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10
Observations	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036

Table 8: Local government subsidies to foreign firms around legislator deaths

This table examines changes in state-level subsidies granted to foreign firms, whose country representatives met with a deceased US legislator, in one year around the death in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the foreign firms, whose country representatives met with the deceased US legislator, receives a subsidy from the legislator's state while in column 2 the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Subsidy\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from the legislator's state. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the firm whose country representatives are connected to a deceased US representative or a senator in a congressional district or state, respectively, where the subsidy is granted and this connection is lost due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *State* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are double-clustered at the country-event and state levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. They are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$	Log (1+ Subsidy amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection \times After	-0.052** (0.021)	-0.553** (0.254)
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.44	0.42
Observations	787	787

Table 9: Meetings with legislators and new government contracts to foreign firms

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings with US legislators and new government contract allocated to foreign firms in the state. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm, whose representatives meet with a US legislator, received a new government contract from the legislator's state while in panel B the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Contract\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the contract amount received by the foreign firm to perform the contract in that given state. The independent variable of interest is $\text{Log}(1+Meetings_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Panel A: Extensive margin						
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.025*** (0.008)	0.025*** (0.008)	0.026*** (0.009)	0.026*** (0.009)	0.026*** (0.009)	0.026*** (0.009)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920
Panel B: Intensive margin						
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Contract amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.266*** (0.094)	0.267*** (0.093)	0.280*** (0.098)	0.280*** (0.098)	0.281*** (0.098)	0.281*** (0.098)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920

Table 10: New government contracts to foreign firms around legislator deaths

This table examines changes in new government contract awards to foreign firms, whose country representatives met with a deceased US legislator, in one year around deaths in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the foreign firms, whose country representatives met with the deceased US legislator, received a new government contract from the legislator's state while in column 2 the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Contract\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the contract value of the government contract received by the foreign firm from the legislator's state. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the firm whose country representatives are connected to the deceased US representative or senator in a congressional district or state, respectively, where the government contract is administered and this connection is lost due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *State* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are double-clustered at the country-event and state levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. They are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$	Log (1+ Contract amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection \times After	-0.060*** (0.018)	-0.481** (0.178)
State \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.58	0.63
Observations	787	783

Table 11: Meetings around legislators switching important committees

This table present regressions estimating the relationship between meetings with legislators around the time they switch out of important committees for resource allocation. Columns 1 and 2 focus on all legislators departing from important committees while columns 3 and 4 focus on top five legislators based on ranking within committees. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-lobbyist-year month. The dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+\text{meetings}_t)$, the natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators sitting on important committees. The independent variable of interest is *After x Switcher* which is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the US representative or senator switches out of an important committee. The include: the House Committee on Appropriations, House Committee on Oversight and Reform, House Committee on Armed Services, House Committee on the Budget, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Senate Committee on the Budget, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. All regressions include: *Lobbying firm* fixed effects to control for time-invariant differences in lobbying firm characteristics, *Legislator \times committee* fixed effects to control for influential legislators departing from the same committee at different points in their tenure, *Country \times committee* fixed effects to control for relative importance of departing committee for foreign countries, and *State \times year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general state policies. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	Log (1+meetings)			
	<i>All legislators</i>		<i>High-ranked legislators</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
After x Switcher	0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)	0.005* (0.003)
Congress	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lobbying firm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator \times committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country \times committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State \times year-month	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Observations	431,834	431,834	274,722	274,722

INTERNET APPENDIX

A Data appendix

Elections For election data we rely on information from the [MIT election lab](#) which compile biennial documents from the Clerk of the US House of Representatives. In particular, we use state-level returns for elections to the US Senate and the US House of Representative until 2018. The data includes the election year, state, electoral stage (distinguishing between a general election, a runoff election, or a primary election), whether it was a special election, name of the candidates, their parties, details on votes, and the winner. These data give us a comprehensive dataset of all legislators seeking election to legislative office from 2000–2018.

Congressional committee assignment Data on Congressional committees come from Stewart III and Woon (2017) who provide detailed information on committee membership for each legislator serving in Congress from 1993 to 2019 and calculate the first and last time they were on a committee. We make some corrections to the data. For example, six congresspeople in the House of Representatives and for seven Senators are assigned the wrong state, which we manually adjust. Moreover, we adjust the incorrect Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee identifiers for Sen. Jeffrey Chiesa. These data are then matched to the legislators found the in FARA data representing one of the fifty U.S states using a fuzzy matching algorithm. All matches that are not perfect are manually assigned the correct legislator.

Ideology and lawmaker effectiveness Congressperson effectiveness and ideology scores come from the [Center for Effective Lawmaking](#). The lawmaker effectiveness scores were developed by [Volden and Wiseman \(2014, 2018\)](#), and capture the level of success that each Representative or Senator has in advancing their legislative agenda items through the lawmaking process. The lawmaker effectiveness score is calculated by first grouping their sponsored bills into three different categories capturing whether they are commemorative, substantive, or substantive and significant, and, second, assessing how far the bill progressed through the process of becoming a law. Therefore, higher LES scores are given to members with large portfolios, those who tackle significant issues (not just commemorative measures), and those whose bills advance further in the lawmaking process. The LES is normalized to an average value of one in each Congress. These data are then matched to the legislators found the in FARA data representing one of the fifty U.S states using a fuzzy

matching algorithm.

To examine ideology, we use the DW-NOMINATE ideology scores for members of Congress, which are the seminal measures of legislator ideology based on Congressional roll-call votes created by [Poole and Rosenthal \(1985\)](#) and later refined by [Poole and Rosenthal \(2011\)](#). A value close to 1 represents a more conservative congressperson, while a value close to -1 a more liberal congressperson.

Lobbyist employment Data on lobbyist employment come from two sources: the Revolving Door database from OpenSecrets and the Washington Representatives data. The [Revolving Door database](#) which is published by the Open Secrets research group contains information about individuals who have worked both as federal employees, and as lobbyists, consultants, or strategists. The core dataset containing 15,847 people was assembled from an online directory of lobbyists published by Columbia Books Inc. Additionally, publicly available sources are used to continuously update the database.

The level of detail differs between people. In the most complete cases, an individual’s complete employment history is provided (e.g. the industries they have represented, their expertise, and their education history). The employment history includes the time period, the name of the employer, and the job title. Industries represented are identified based upon the amounts of money spent by clients which are classified into an industry-coding system. Assigning an expertise to a lobbyist is done by counting for each client the number of semi-annual lobbying disclosure reports that reference a particular issue. These issues are then categorized by industry.

Washington Representatives is a division of Columbia Books and Information Services which provides data on government relations and the lobbying industry. Over 44,000 lobbyists and government relations professionals are included.

To match these data with FARA, we match the names of the lobbying firms to all lobbying firms in the OpenSecrets and Washington Representatives data. Similarly, we match the employment history records of individuals to the US legislators with whom they worked. We then aggregate these data at the lobbying firm level to create the employment connection measure. For example, if Akin Gump has 2 employees that formerly worked in Mitch McConnell’s office, their employment connection score with Mitch McConnell is equal to 2.

Country political ideology Data on the political ideology of a country come from the Varieties of Democracy Database (V-Dem). In particular, we leverage their party ideology dataset which ranks the political parties within each country based on their stance on several broad categories, such as their left-right economic slant, views on minority and women’s rights, and the level of populism, illiberalism, and anti-elite sentiment they display. To obtain the ideology distance between each country and legislators, we take a legislative seat share weighted average across all ideology categories, and calculate the absolute distance between this score and the ideology scores

of the Democratic and Republican parties, and take an equal-weighted average across all ideology categories. This provides a uni-dimensional distance through which we can assess the ideological closeness of a country to Democratic or Republican lawmakers.

Subsidies Data on government subsidies come from [Good Jobs Subsidy Tracker](#) who provide data at the state and federal levels. Good Jobs provides data on the state and city issuing corporate subsidies along with the company name, ticker, and country of incorporation, where applicable. Good Jobs collects data from a variety of local, state, and federal sources, detailed [here](#). To obtain data at the foreign principal level, we sum subsidies across the country of incorporation, state, and year.

Government contracts We obtain information on government contracts awarded between 2002 and 2018 from [USASpending.gov](#). The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) mandates that whenever a federal contract, grant, loan, or other financial assistance award exceeds \$25,000, it must be displayed on a publicly accessible website. This legislation was amended twice, in 2008 and 2014, to require recipients and government agencies to disclose further information relating to sub-recipients, direct agency expenditures, and the linkage between federal spending and federal agency programs.

The data includes details on the funding amount, the date of the transaction, the awarding and funding agency, sub-agency, the recipient country, and the location of the performance of the contract. Moreover, it also includes information on the type of assistance, e.g., whether it is a grant or a loan, and the type of recipient, e.g., whether it is part of the government or a small business.

We extract information on all government contracts awarded to foreign recipient countries at the contract-level to match these data to foreign governments. We first drop all contracts awarded to US recipients from the universe of contracts, including those executed by US-owned businesses, and keep only contracts performed within the United States. We remove contract cancellations and terminations from our sample to ensure we capture new contract awards. We then aggregate the number of contracts and the total value awarded to each recipient country by the state of performance in each year.

Foreign aid Data on foreign aid comes from [ForeignAssistance.gov](#) which is a website hosted by the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). It provides a comprehensive overview about US foreign assistance on multiple dimensions. Detailed information on the funding and implementing agencies are provided, as is the purpose of the appropriated aid. In particular, aid is differentiated by purpose into several categories: Agriculture, Commodity Assistance, Economics Growth, Education, Governance, Health and Population, Humanitarian, Infrastructure, and Other, whereas the latter differentiates Peace and Security, Democracy, Human

Rights and Governance, Health, Education and Social Services, Economic Growth, Humanitarian Assistance, and Program Development and Oversight. For each entry the name agency to which funds were appropriated is provided. From the data we have dropped all observations where a transaction date was unavailable. Subsequently, we have collapsed the data on the country-executive department-year-month level, that is, for each country we obtain the amount of aid received from each US government agency for every month starting from October 2001. We also calculate the total aid for each year given to a country split by executive department. Note that some of the values we obtain from that process are negative. This is because aid is occasionally provided in the form of loans and for a given month or year a foreign country could be repaying more than it receives.

B Classification of lobbying topics

To identify frequently lobbied topics, we selected key words relevant to each topic and coded the topic of lobbying incidents according to whether the key words were used to describe the incidents. The exact key words are below:

- **Trade:** trade; export; import; fta; nafta; cafta; drcafta; ftaa; naftas; kfta; caftas; korus-fta; tpp; transpacific partnership; gsp; mcool; tariff; custom; agoa; african growth and opportunity act, tpl; tariff preferential level; wto; gatt; mfn; antidump; dump; caribbean & basin; traders; exporters; imports; importers; sanction; commerc; food and drug administration; fda; food label
- **Economy:** financi; financ; fdi; tax; taxat; busi; econom; economi; debt; invest; investment; monetari; imf; bank; antitrust; scal; internat & monetari & fund; world & bank; exchang & rate; government & bond; securities & tax; securities & taxat; securities & exchang; securities & exchanges; securities & regulation; securities & regulations; securities & financial; secur & finance; oil; energy; appropriation
- **Security:** defence;defens; militari; nato; disarm; terror; counterterror; terrorist; antiterror; extremism; troop; peacemak; peacekeep; international & security; national & security; regional & security; security & relations; security & relationship; peace & process; peace & treaty; arms & sales
- **Diplomacy:** government relations; government relationship; government relationships; bilateral relations; bilateral relationship; bilateral relationships; diplomatic relations; diplomatic relationship; diplomatic relationships
- **Policy legal issues:** polici & consult; polici & counsel; polici & servic; polici & advic; polici & analysi; legal & consult; legal & counsel; legal & servic; legal & advic; legal & analysi;

legal; law; political; act; legislation; s.[0-9]1,4; hr.[0-9]1,5; s-[0-9]1,4; hr-[0-9]1,5; public policy; foreign policy; US policy; us policy; resolution; settlement; regulat

- **Publicity:** media; news; newspaper; newspapers; newsletter; newsletters; enewslett; press; public & relations
- **Tourism:** tourism; tourist; tour; travel
- **Nuclear:** nuclear; atom; uranium
- **Visa:** visa; immigr; immigrat; immigrant
- **Foreign aid:** aid; usaid; economi & assistanc; militari & assistanc
- **Human rights:** human & rights; education; women; food assistance
- **Secession:** selfdetermin; self determin; self-determin

C Matching Model – A Revealed Preference Analysis

We use a revealed-preference approach following [Fox \(2010\)](#), [Akkus, Cookson, and Hortacsu \(2016\)](#), and [Fox \(2018\)](#). For a total number of M_y matches in year y , we denote legislators by l and foreign countries by f . In our setting, a match is at least one observed meeting between a legislator and a foreign country. The matched pair (l, f) realizes a value $V(l, f)$, which can be interpreted as the summation of the individual payoffs to the legislator and foreign country.

In the matching equilibrium, every legislator derives higher value from the observed legislator-country match than from any counterfactual match, an insight from revealed-preference theories. Similarly, every country derives higher value from the observed legislator-country match than from any counterfactual match. It follows that if legislator l meets with foreign country f and not with foreign country f' , we infer that the summation of the individual payoffs is larger when l is being matched with f than with f' . This gives rise to the following condition:

$$V(l, f) \geq V(l, f'). \tag{C.1}$$

The same logic applies for the legislator meeting the country f' but not meeting with country f . For simplicity, let us call this legislator l' , i.e.,

$$V(l', f') \geq V(l', f). \tag{C.2}$$

It follows that

$$V(l, f) + V(l', f') \geq V(l, f') + V(l', f), \quad (\text{C.3})$$

implying that the total value from any two observed matches exceeds the total value from two counterfactual matches constructed by exchanging partners. Given that the same legislator in our dataset can meet with multiple foreign countries in a year and vice versa, we extend (C.3) to many-to-many matches.

Our observations on meetings between legislators and foreign countries can be related to discrete-choice models where a match has a value of 1 and a non-match is equal to 0. A simple semiparametric technique to estimate discrete-choice models is provided by maximum score estimation (Fox, 2010). Given a parametric form for the match value function $V(l, f | \beta)$, one can estimate the parameter vector β by maximizing:

$$Q(\beta) = \sum_y \sum_l \sum_f 1 [V(l, f | \beta) + V(l', f' | \beta) \geq V(l', f | \beta) + V(l, f' | \beta)] \quad (\text{C.4})$$

over the parameter space for β . For a given value of the parameter vector $\tilde{\beta}$, $Q(\tilde{\beta})$ is the number of times the inequality (C.3) is satisfied. The maximum score estimator $\hat{\beta}$, therefore, maximizes the number of times that this inequality holds among the set of inequalities considered.

Table C.1: Maximum Score Estimates of Match Value Function

This table presents estimates of the match value function $V(l, f) = \beta' \mathbf{X} + \epsilon$ using maximum score estimation proposed in Fox (2010, 2018). Panel A presents maximum score estimates while Panel B presents the number of satisfied inequalities by year. The characteristics we consider include: lagged population of the foreign country (*Country population*), the two *DW-NOMINATE* measures of legislator political ideology, the lawmaking effectiveness of the legislator (*Legislative Effectiveness Score*), the number of terms in office (*Seniority*), whether the legislator is the chair of either a senate or house committee (*Committee chair*) or of a sub-committee (*Sub-committee chair*), or a member of rules, ways and means, and appropriations committee (*Power committee membership*). Point estimates are generated by running the differential evolution optimization routine using R's DEoptim package (Mullen, Ardia, Gil, Windover, and Cline, 2011).

Panel A: Maximum Score Estimates

Characteristic	Coefficient
Country population	14.24
DW-NOMINATE 1	-52.60
DW-NOMINATE 2	-98.72
Legislative Effectiveness Score	-6.23
Seniority	3.46
Committee chair	91.10
Sub-committee chair	45.31
Power committee membership	77.37

Panel B: Number of satisfied inequalities by year

Year	Tot. num. inequalities	Satisfied inequalities	% of satisfied inequalities
2001	74691	50527	67.65
2002	88410	58199	65.83
2003	99235	65222	65.72
2004	129795	85861	66.15
2005	136503	82257	60.26
2006	134940	86393	64.02
2007	138601	87947	63.45
2008	137550	88441	64.30
2009	120786	78045	64.61
2010	112575	74255	65.96
2011	135981	85541	62.91
2012	138075	84072	60.89
2013	133386	82168	61.60
2014	139128	87505	62.90
2015	138601	84851	61.22
2016	140715	91421	64.97
2017	136503	84712	62.06
2018	139128	88746	63.79

D Additional tables and figures

Table D.2: Top five legislators by meetings with unique number of foreign countries each year
The table reports the top five legislators by the unique number of foreign countries they meet with each year.

Year	1	2	3	4	5
2000	Trent Lott	Tom Lantos	Donald Payne	Norman D Dicks	Jim Kolbe
2001	Rick Santorum	Bill Nelson	Trent Lott	George F Allen	Tom Lantos
2002	Chuck Hagel	Tom Lantos	Henry Hyde	Trent Lott	Bill Frist
2003	Chuck Hagel	Doug Bereuter	Jim Kolbe	Bill Frist	Barbara Lee
2004	Chuck Hagel	Jim Kolbe	Richard G Lugar	Tom Lantos	Sam Brownback
2005	Dan Burton	Chuck Hagel	Mel Martinez	Howard L Berman	Jim Kolbe
2006	Mel Martinez	Norm Coleman	Charles B Rangel	Richard G Lugar	Chuck Hagel
2007	Tom Lantos	Norm Coleman	Chuck Hagel	Nancy Pelosi	Robert Wexler
2008	Howard L Berman	Richard G Lugar	John F Kerry	Chuck Hagel	Norm Coleman
2009	John F Kerry	Howard L Berman	Joseph Crowley	Johnny Isakson	Donald Payne
2010	Howard L Berman	John F Kerry	Orrin G Hatch	Shelley Berkley	Harry Reid
2011	John McCain	Mark Steven Kirk	Robert Menendez	Karen Bass	James M Inhofe
2012	Marco Rubio	James M Inhofe	John F Kerry	Eliot L Engel	Gregory W Meeks
2013	Tim Kaine	John McCain	Jeanne Shaheen	Edward R Royce	Chris Murphy
2014	Chris Murphy	Bob Corker	John McCain	Marco Rubio	Robert Menendez
2015	Edward R Royce	Gregory W Meeks	Benjamin Cardin	Bob Corker	Jim Risch
2016	Edward J Markey	Jeanne Shaheen	Gregory W Meeks	Cory Gardner	Eliot L Engel
2017	Edward R Royce	Marco Rubio	Cory Booker	Lindsey Graham	Joaquin Castro
2018	Bob Corker	Robert Menendez	Eliot L Engel	Marco Rubio	Benjamin Cardin

Table D.3: Top five politicians by number of meetings each year
The table reports the top five politicians by the total number of meetings each year.

Year	1	2	3	4	5
2000	Donald Payne	Trent Lott	Tom Lantos	Norman D Dicks	Bob Graham
2001	Davis Tom	Trent Lott	Dana Rohrabacher	Henry Hyde	John McCain
2002	Chuck Hagel	Trent Lott	Tom Lantos	Doug Bereuter	Barbara Lee
2003	Mike Simpson	Chuck Hagel	Doug Bereuter	Lincoln Diazbalart	Robert Wexler
2004	Roy Blunt	Ed Whitfield	Robert Wexler	Tom Lantos	Jim Kolbe
2005	Charles E Schumer	Robert Wexler	Betty Mccollum	Tom Lantos	Chuck Hagel
2006	Ed Whitfield	Dan Burton	Robert Wexler	John McCain	Roy Blunt
2007	Gus M Bilirakis	Robert Wexler	Tom Lantos	Mich McConnell	John S Tanner
2008	Howard L Berman	Robert Wexler	John S Tanner	Donald Payne	Bob Filner
2009	Melissa Bean	Michael E McMahon	John F Kerry	Robert Wexler	John S Tanner
2010	Howard L Berman	Melissa Bean	Alcee Hastings	Steve Cohen	Lincoln Diazbalart
2011	Daniel K Inouye	Mark Steven Kirk	Mich McConnell	Chris Murphy	Roy Blunt
2012	Tom Marino	Jeanne Shaheen	Steve Cohen	Christopher Coons	James M Inhofe
2013	Chris Murphy	Jim Risch	Jeanne Shaheen	Tim Kaine	Karen Bass
2014	Michael R Turner	Tim Kaine	Chris Murphy	Gerald E Connolly	Jim Risch
2015	Tim Kaine	Gregory W Meeks	Mich McConnell	Benjamin Cardin	John Boehner
2016	Michael R Turner	Darrell Issa	Gerald E Connolly	Steve Cohen	Christopher Coons
2017	Chris Murphy	Tim Kaine	Cory Booker	Bob Corker	Gerald E Connolly
2018	Michael T Mccaul	Joe Wilson	Jim Risch	Todd C Young	Benjamin Cardin

Table D.4: Meetings with legislators and aid received by foreign countries from the US

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and aid received by foreign countries from the US. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year month. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$, an indicator for receiving a foreign aid from the US while in panel B the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+\text{Aid amount})$, natural logarithm of one plus the aid amount received by a foreign country from the US. The independent variable of interest is $\text{Log}(1+\text{Meetings}_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and U.S. legislators from the respective state. In columns 2,4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State* \times *year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Panel A: Extensive margin						
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.610*** (0.046)	0.610*** (0.045)	0.607*** (0.045)	0.607*** (0.045)	0.607*** (0.045)	0.607*** (0.045)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
Observations	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,876	1,923,876
Panel B: Intensive margin						
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Aid amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	8.836*** (0.951)	8.834*** (0.944)	8.804*** (0.937)	8.799*** (0.937)	8.801*** (0.937)	8.796*** (0.937)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year-month	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64
Observations	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,876	1,923,876

Table D.5: Meetings with legislators and local subsidies to foreign firms, district-level analyses

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and congressional-district level subsidies granted to foreign firms. The unit of analysis is legislator-district-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm whose representatives meet with a US legislator, receives a subsidy from the legislator's district while in panel B the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Subsidy\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from that district. The independent variable of interest is $\text{Log}(1+Meetings_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective district. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *district* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general district policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Panel A: Extensive margin						
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.003* (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
District \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Observations	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238

Panel B: Intensive margin						
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Subsidy amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.043* (0.024)	0.043* (0.023)	0.045* (0.024)	0.045* (0.024)	0.045* (0.024)	0.045* (0.024)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
District \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Observations	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238

Table D.6: Local subsidies to foreign firms around effective legislator deaths, district-level analysis

This table examines changes in congressional-district level subsidies to foreign firms, whose country representatives met with a deceased US legislator, in one year around deaths in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is district-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the foreign firms, whose country representatives met with the deceased US legislator, received a subsidy from the legislator’s district while in column 2 the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Subsidy\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from the legislator’s district. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the firm whose country representatives are connected to a deceased US representative in a congressional district, where the subsidy is granted and this connection is lost due to the legislator’s death. All regressions include *district* \times *year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general district policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are double-clustered at the country-event and district levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. They are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

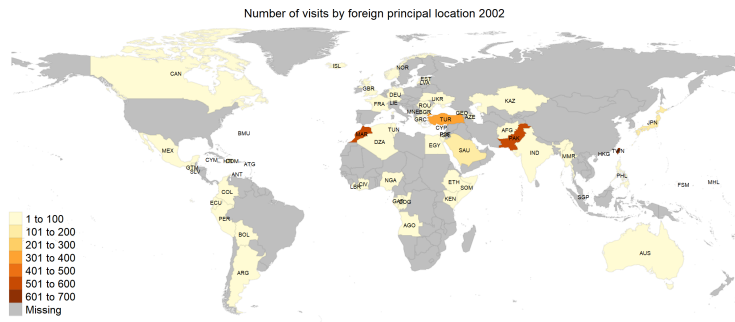
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$	Log (1+ Subsidy amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection \times After	-0.041** (0.014)	-0.667** (0.229)
Controls	No	No
Country \times year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
District fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.52	0.52
Observations	189	189

Table D.7: Meetings with legislators and government contracts to foreign firms

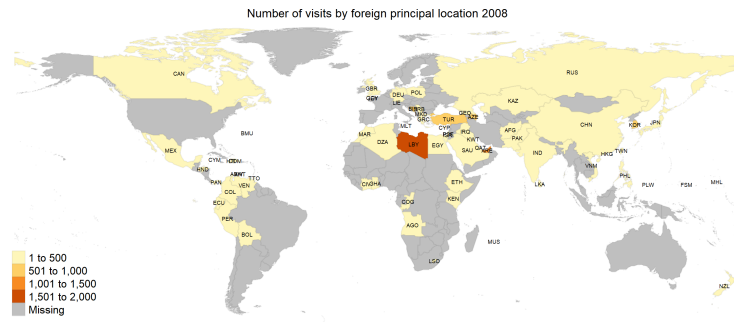
This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings with US legislators and new government contract allocated to foreign firms in the state. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year month. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm, whose representatives meet with a US legislator, receives a new government contract from the legislator's state while in panel B the dependent variable is, $\text{Log}(1+Contract\ amount)$, natural logarithm of one plus the contract amount received by the foreign firm to perform the contract in that given state. The independent variable of interest is $\text{Log}(1+Meetings_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State* \times *year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Panel A: Extensive margin						
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.008** (0.004)	0.008** (0.004)	0.008** (0.004)	0.008** (0.004)	0.008** (0.004)	0.008** (0.004)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Observations	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375
Panel B: Intensive margin						
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Contract amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings _t)	0.075* (0.038)	0.075* (0.038)	0.076* (0.039)	0.076* (0.039)	0.076* (0.039)	0.076* (0.039)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State \times year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Observations	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375

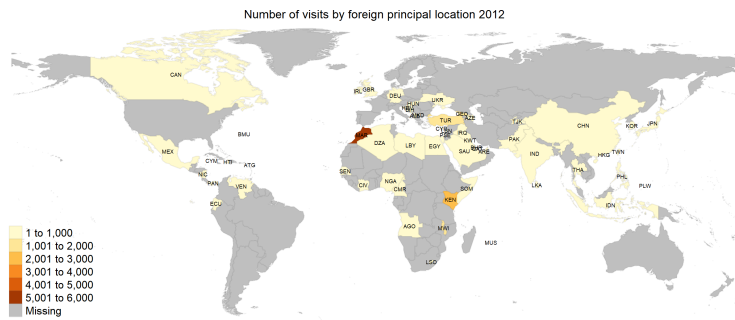
Figure D.1: Meeting intensity over time and foreign principal location



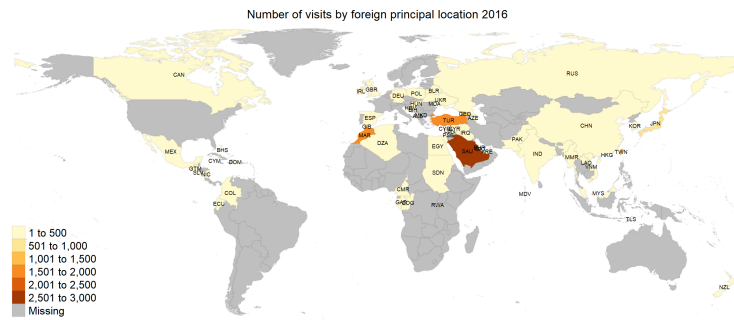
a 2002



b 2008



c 2012



d 2016