The Relationship Between Campaign Contributions And Record Votes in the Texas Legislature

By

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Abstract

Research Purpose

The purpose of this applied research project is explanatory and examines the relationship between political contributions, party, and tenure on record votes in the Texas Legislature. This applied research project will seek to analyze the relationship between campaign contributions and votes on a piece of legislation with clearly defined support or opposition, The Medical Liability Bill: HB 4, during the 78th Texas Legislative Session. Political donations to members of both the Texas Senate and House of Representatives by prominent special interest groups involved will be analyzed for any type of relationship to their overall final vote on the bill.

Method

Along with citing numerous other research studies done on this topic, this applied research project is quantitative and uses existing data to form a micro-conceptual framework of three formal hypotheses:

H1: Political contributions affect voting patterns.

H2: Political party affiliation affects voting patterns.

H3: Legislative tenure affects voting patterns.

The independent variables are campaign contributions, party, tenure and the dependent variable is the actual record vote on House Bill 4 during the 78th Texas Legislative Session. The existing data used to analyze the relationship are campaign finance reports from the Texas Ethics Commission, biographical data from the Texas

Legislative Reference Library, and record votes recorded by the House and Senate Journal Clerks Office.

Findings

The results of this research showed that campaign contributions (H1), party affiliation (H2), and tenure (H3) have no relationship on the overall final vote on House Bill 4 in the Texas Legislature during the 78th Legislative Session. The data showed that there is no relationship between any of the independent variables upon the dependent variable. In other words, campaign contributions, party, or tenure had no relationship on the record vote of Texas State Legislators on House Bill 4.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Special interests have always had a role in American politics. Since the creation of the United States of America, individuals, groups, associations, and business and industries have expressed their various interests to leaders in government.

Special interest groups have had a part in American politics because we are a nation of many diversified ideals, large amounts of wealth controlled by very few, and a general disinterest in politics demonstrated by consistent low voter turnouts. Society is divided into two classes: the few who govern and the many who are governed (Shafritz, 2004, p.220).

In the Declaration of Independence, our founding fathers envisioned a democratic governing structure where the vast population would control the direction of government policy making. Unfortunately, campaign-financing practices have threatened these values and changed the election process. The financial constituency of politics has become more influential, and the voting constituency has become increasingly removed from all aspects of politics that influence the outcomes of elections and shape national policy (Adamany, 1986, p.12). The combination of wealth and specialized interests leaves the door open for certain groups or individuals to have the ability to promote and mold laws to their benefit. Those individuals that do have an interest in the governmental process stick together and form groups of special interest. French commentator Alexis de Tocqueville once said about Americans "interest group observers took to their hearts far too closely and were such frequent joiners" (Browne, 1998, p.14).

The question of campaign contributions and voting patterns has been analyzed numerous times with varying results. Those who have studied voting patterns on a systematic basis are almost unanimous in finding that campaign contributions affect very few votes in the legislature (Smith, 1995, p.6). Campaign contributions may not influence voting directly, but they may affect lobbying activities. And lobbying activities, at the very least, help to define and shape legislative agendas and debates (Wright, 1990, p.418). The development of policy is formed and influenced by a number of different types of players within the system donating dollars for their cause. The passage of a law will certainly have two sides associated with either supporting or objecting to the issue. The side that has been established through political donations and with the strongest network of elected officials will almost always be victorious.

The diversity of our country brings forth many interests to the government arena for recognition. There are business interests that exist to make transitions or trade in some kind of market. Whether the market is free, or unconstrained by government, or regulated, to conform to law takes on a very secondary importance. Making money comes first and any idealization of the market takes a back seat unless that view merges enough with daily reality to secure profits (Browne, 1998, p.33). This comment solidifies the notion that businesses have learned that the development of certain government policy can be quite profitable. There are also social institutions that play the policy development game to there advantage. Religious denominations, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and charity and philanthropy groups make up the category of social institutions that lobby the government. Government institutions also do there own lobbying primarily to succeed in the appropriations funding cycle that they so heavily rely. Finally, there are personal based interests in the United States that lobby on behalf of a cause that usually do not contribute financially to candidates at the level of business interests.

It is quite alarming that public policy is being drafted and implemented with minimal contributions from the general population. Congress and state legislatures operate to serve special interests. In the past laws were made to protect individuals, or remedy a particular social problem, now laws are passed to benefit special interests and developed to maximize profits for a particular business interest, limit the power of competition, and mold regulatory policies to benefit those businesses that have given extensively to the legislative body. A clear breach of ethics is occurring right in front of our faces and nobody seems to care. For this reason, special interest groups will continue to mold state and national policy while non-players sit back and let it happen.

Organization and Explanation of Research

This research project is organized into six well-defined chapters, each with a specific purpose. Chapter One will introduce the topic, justify the research, and state the actual research question. Chapter two is the literature review, which explains the history and literature relevant to my research question, as well as an analysis of other empirical data that exists on the topic. This chapter contains a discussion of the conceptual framework of the research project. Chapter Three will be the setting of the Applied Research Project. My setting will discuss Texas campaign finance law and the legislation that I will analyze for my research project to justify the relationship between finance dollars and record votes. Chapter Four will be a discussion of the methodology used for my research, as well as an operationilization of the conceptual framework. Chapter five will be the results chapter in which I analyze the empirical findings of my research, and Chapter Six will be the conclusion of my research project, which summarizes the paper and compares my findings to my research question.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the nature of special interest groups and their effects on policy formation in American government. The literature review looks at the historical background of special interest groups, sometimes called the third party, and reviews the political process that facilitates the influence of outside interests and money in the policy making process. An explanation of the types of special interest groups and their roles is also observed and a historical overview of campaign finance laws. In conclusion, there is a review of existing studies and empirical literature that examines legislative voting behavior and the influence of campaign contributions on voting patterns.

History

The history of influence upon the political process in American government has always been evident. The Founding Fathers long ago cautioned against the rise of "factions" and recognized the importance of the people's right to organize and petition government so they added it to the U.S. Constitution through the Bill of Rights. However, they could not have foreseen how a more complex society would produce some interest groups representing their perceptions of what is in the public interest (Billeaux et al, 2002, p.120). From a historical perspective, the more crowded the congressional agenda became with issues of finance, industry, internal improvements, and international relations, the more interests demanded to be heard. This is the nub of what political scientists call "pluralistic democracy" (Byrd, 1988, p.497). Political scientists writing since the turn of the century have repeatedly noted the vast proliferation of interest groups in Washington D.C., and in recent decades referred to an interest group explosion (Baumgartner, 2001, p.1191).

The origins of campaign financing in the United States date back to 1791, when groups supporting and opposing Alexander Hamilton published competing newspapers designed to sway the electorate. These minimal expenditures set the tone for campaigns over the next several decades (Federal Election Commission, 1995, p.1). Perhaps James Madison had some insight into the future. In Number Ten of The Federalist papers he made a point that conflict between groups is axiomatic in society. Where freedom exists, factions will inevitably materialize that will attempt to use government for their own ends (Holtzman, 1966, p.13).

The first acts of lobbying in the United States can be traced to the First Congress when, Pennsylvania Senator William Maclay wrote in his diary that New York merchants employed “treats, dinners, and attentions” to delay passage of a tariff bill. Individual shipwrights were concerned about the effects of tariff; merchants desired an end to tax on molasses; federal clerks requested an increase in pay; and military officers sought reimbursement for personal funds expended during the revolution (Byrd, 1988, p.492). During the 1800’s businesses also began to make their presence lobbying the government. The federally chartered private Bank of the United States was the most distrusted special interest group followed by the railroad construction industry in the 1850’s that competed for contracts, grants, and other government subsidies (Byrd, 1988, p.492).

With the expansion of business and trade in the United States, the development and organization of special interest groups flourished. By the close of the eighteenth century, well-financed interests were receiving special attention from the government and legislative leaders. The turn of the century saw the rapid consolidation of American industry and the formation of trusts, which applied new pressures on the congressional government. Between 1897 and 1904, the number of trusts in the United States grew from 12 to 318. These giant trusts included Standard Oil, American Tobacco, and U.S. Steel (Byrd, 1988, p. 501).

By the 1920's lobbying had begun to develop many of the features we associate with the practice today. Lobbying had broadened its scope beyond financial and commercial interests, and the free-lance lobbyist was invented in the form of membership associations, which had been growing and developing since the beginning of the century. In addition, lobbying techniques began to change with the utilization of the telephone, telegraph, and radio. Since the primary initiative behind lobbying is the sharing of information, the proliferation of technology enhanced the practice of lobbying significantly.

Today's practice of lobbying is more diverse than ever before, with an organized lobby formed around every aspect of American social and economic life. Lobbyists engage in a multitude of activities, from raising money for election campaigns to conducting technical studies, with the ultimate goal of influencing the course of legislation and government policy. Billeaux (2002, p.123) says "general prosperity in the United States has resulted in a better-educated citizenry with greater motivation and resources to organize politically". Growth in government has provided further motivation for organization, with more programs and regulations and advances in technology and computers to handle information have brought sophisticated organizational tools within the reach of the vast majority of Americans (Billeaux et al, 2002, p.123).

Drew (1999,p.2) believes that "the culture of money dominates Washington as never before, money now rivals or even exceeds power as the preeminent goal. Money affects the issues raised and their outcome, it has changed employment patterns in Washington; it has transformed politics; and it has subverted values. Money has led good people to do things that are morally questionable, if not reprehensible. Money has cut a deep gash, if not inflicted a mortal wound, in the concept of public service". It is the major determinant of political influence and success and determines which candidates will be able to run effective campaigns and influences which candidates win elective office. Money also defines the parameters of political debate: which issues get raised, how issues are framed, and how legislation is drafted and enables rich and powerful interest groups to influence elections and dominate the legislative process (Jezer, 1996, p.2). The government is for sale, and there are plenty of buyers out there.

Interest Groups

There are differences and connections between special interest groups and lobbyists. Shafritz (2004, p.157) describes interest groups as "groups that act as appropriate and necessary to further group goals based on common interests. The group process, including the formulation of group objectives and the development of specific group actions and response, is seen as a fundamental characteristic of the political process". Interest groups stimulate debate, raise issues that the public or political leaders may not be aware of, and sometimes help prevent bad policy from being enacted. Interest groups can also be harmful to democracy when their activity undermines the broader public interest. Interest groups are not designed to represent the whole society; they represent only those parts of society willing to organize (Billeaux et al, 2002, p.120).

Lobbyists

Salisbury (1970, p.187) defines lobbying as "the practice of trying to persuade legislators to propose, pass, or defeat legislation or to change existing laws". Lobbying is the term identified with the actual process, or technique used to influence the legislative body and a lobbyist is an individual that facilitates the process. Graziano (2000, p.19) says "a lobby or lobby organization may be defined as the bearer of interests or causes to be safeguarded; a lobbyist, as an individual, internal or external to the organization, through whom representation is actuated; while lobbying refers to the various techniques and resources that enable the political representation of organized interests". Lobbying has three functions: getting attention for interests, making contacts with public officials, and reinforcing what was accomplished through these contacts (Browne, 1998, p.63). This process involves campaign contributions, the building of relationships, and providing information to the legislative body of government. Special interest groups exert their influence through lobbying and through campaign contributions.

Rationale for the Proliferation of Special Interests

The combination of wealth and specialized interest in the United States encourages certain groups or individuals to promote and mold laws to their benefit. Many factors provide the rationale for the proliferation of special interests, some of the more evident reasons are that we are a nation of many diversified ideals and exist in a pluralistic society, the democratic process allows for outside influence, and success in the election process has become completely dependent upon fundraising. Jezer (1986, p.2) says "the anger and frustration that Americans feel toward the political process is apparent and citizens believe that politicians are beholden to special interest money and that their own individual views no longer matter". Some public interest advocates assert that we are perilously close to having the best Congress that money can buy (Schroedel, 1986, p.371). Sheffrin (2001, p.260) however, disagrees saying that "in many cases the links between economic interests and regulatory outcomes is indirect at best and it is quite difficult to provide compelling evidence linking economic interests to specific legislative votes and policy outcomes".

Pluralism

Shafritz (2004, p.220) defines pluralism as "a cultural diversity in society and a political system in which there are multiple centers of legitimate power and authority". A multi-cultural and pluralistic society exists in the United States. The multitude of religions, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds provide a platform of various ideas that compete and struggle for recognition and protections. The legislative body in Washington D.C. and throughout the states has also become more diversified to reflect the makeup of society as a whole. Pluralism is not only differentiation but also recognition that differences are legitimate. A societal complexity exists in the United States and political leaders are overwhelmed with pressure to recognize and adapt laws to protect individual rights, consumer affairs, the environment, the workplace, and other social issues that it has never had to deal with in the past because of the pluralistic society that now exists. The proliferation of special interests throughout the governmental arena is a product of the amount of interests present.

The fact that a diverse society exists means that more types of groups can and do emerge in the political arena. These groups often have specific interests that conflict or compete with other groups. For instance, labor versus management and environment versus industry have always competed for government regulatory dominance. Often, if a group wants to pursue its interest it must lobby political bodies so that laws will take into account their interests. Failing to do this means that competing interests groups will shape the policy environment. The pluralistic diverse United States society provides additional opportunities and ways for groups to emerge and seek to influence legislators. Rosenthal (1993, p.167) describes the interest groups scene by saying "there is an association, union, society, league, conference, institute, organization, federation, chamber, foundation, congress, order, brotherhood, committee, council, or board for every human need, desire, ambition, goal, aim, drive, occupation, industry, interest, and frustration in the United States".

Political Arena/Legislative Process

The second reason why special interests are able to form public policy is the actual arena, or legislative process. Our political system provides more favorable opportunities for interest groups to intervene in the decision making process and in the organization and operation of public administration than does any other system (Holtzman, 1966, p.132). The legislative process in the United States is a complex series of actions that requires support at every step along the way, or the law will not pass. A nationwide study found that 25% of state legislators sat on committees that regulated the legislator's own professional business or interest, 18% had financial ties to businesses or organizations that lobby state government, and 23% received income from a government agency other than the state legislature (Center For Public Integrity, 2005, p.4).

The role of a lobbyist is to act as a source of specialized information pertaining to their particular interest. Dollars are funneled to elected leaders in the form of campaign contributions and access is granted to the policy maker. A policy is then, hopefully, molded into a regulatory mandate that benefits the particular interest. Elected officials do not have the time or desire to become experts in all of the issues that they are expected to vote on, so they rely on outside sources. Present-day legislative complexities are such that individual members cannot be expected to explore all topics to which they are regularly subjected, yet full realization of the American ideal of government by elected representatives depends to no small extent on their ability to properly evaluate such topics (McGinnis, 1997, p.3).

In the legislative process, a crucial first step for lobbyists is to win support for their issues at the committee level. Much of the money an interest group gives to candidates is targeted at members of the committee considering legislation relevant to the giver (Schroedel, 1986, p.371). The size of legislative bodies and the volume of work confronting them make deliberation of the many proposed measures by the entire membership impossible. For this reason, the basic business in both houses is conducted according to the committee system. Effective lobbyists are able to penetrate the system and gain attention for their issues. Original jurisdiction over legislation reposes in the various committees, with the legislature as a whole constituting a court of appeal. Appeal action on the floor is usually unsuccessful, and the judgment of the committee almost inevitably prevails (TX Legislative Manual, 1993, p.31). Committee-level voting is best explained by the total number of lobbying contacts elected officials receive from groups on each side of the issue (Wright, 1990, p.417).

Election Process

The United States has a very short history compared to other countries, and has developed a unique system of government. The process of democratic governance vests supreme power with the people and is exercised through a system of representation. Representation comes from the elected officials sent to office from a geographically drawn district. The method used to finance elections is the third determinant of the proliferation of special interest groups. In 2000 lobbyists in 34 states spent $565 million wining, dining, and influencing state legislators and members of the executive branch (Center for Public Integrity, 2005, p.1). Special interests spent up to $230 million on Texas lobbyists in 2001, up 33 percent from $172 million in 1995 (Texans for Public Justice, 2002, p.3). According to Cohen (2004, p.8) “the election process has become a filthy carnival of incompetent candidates, slick consultants, pollsters and sound bites". Financial support is the golden bullet of politics because it enables leaders to win elections, therefore retaining office and seniority. Seniority in the political arena is where the real power comes from because seniority brings leadership roles on committees where policy decisions are made and special interest dollars flow.

In recent years there has been a steep increase in the cost of running a viable local, state, congressional, or presidential campaign. In the 2002 election cycle, the average amount spent for a Congressional race was $938,497 for House candidates and $4,849,891 for Senate candidates (Center for Responsive Politics, 2002, p.3). The increasing cost of an election has made elected officials more beholden to contributors with deep pockets. Political office is not accessible for those without personal wealth or party support. As the cost of running for office have escalated, more and more candidates are jumping into politics using their personal fortune (Center for Responsive Politics, 2002, p.5). The financial constituency of politics has become more influential and the voting constituency has become increasingly removed from all aspects of politics that influence the outcomes of elections and shape national policy. These developments challenge deeply rooted beliefs about the preeminent role of voters in controlling democratic elections and government. (Adamany, 1986, p.12)

Campaign Contributions

With so many interest groups active in Washington and throughout the states, competition is greater and it is more difficult for a single group to attract the attention of the legislative body (Baumgartner, 2001, p.2). Money is a vastly more important ingredient in our politics than ever before. Adamany says “this is more a result of changes in campaign technology and campaign fund-raising techniques than of changes in the law”(Adamany, 1986, p.32). Political donations are a mechanism to gain attention quickly. Lobbyists raise campaign cash for the politicians and large contributions make the job of election and re-election easier. Candidates are then beholden to contributors and are more likely to vote in support of contributor’s interests. If not, the money could go to a competitor. Hence, the more money special interests can afford to contribute, the greater the access to the decision makers. There are many different ways to contribute to political candidates or to support elected officials.

Individual Donations

Individual donations have declined greatly over time and new tactics have been implemented to funnel large amounts of corporate cash into the coffers of legislators. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the U.S. population gave 83 percent of all itemized campaign contributions for the 2002 elections (Federal Election Commission, 1995, p.1). Traditionally the major source of funds was contributions from large individual donors, but limits on individual contributions imposed by recent reforms have resulted in the share of total congressional costs covered by such donations to shrink from 58.6 percent to 22.5 percent between 1976 and 1978 (Lammers, 1982, p.103).

Soft Money

Soft money are contributions that allow national parties to accept corporate and union donations and PAC and individual contributions beyond the statutory limit as long as money is not spent to support federal candidates (Dwyre, 1996, p.410). For instance, a person cannot give $1000 directly to a presidential candidate without getting his or her name in the papers, but can give $100,000 to a soft money fund and never have the contribution disclosed. Under current law, national party committees may spend soft money in several ways: to raise more soft money, to support state and local candidates directly, or to support state and local parties (Dwyre, 196, p.410). Essentially soft money was developed to encourage party building, but has become a mechanism to filter large amounts of corporate dollars into the election process.

Political Action Committees (PACs)

Another reason behind the existence and success of special interests is the proliferation of political action committees (PACs). PACs were created for the purpose of funneling contributions to the political campaigns of members of Congress and state legislatures, and they constitute a subtle but sophisticated form of lobbying (Salisbury, 1970, p.99). PACs were created as special interest groups for donating money legally to candidates in all levels of government to attempt access for meetings, to testify at hearings, and to sway votes on certain issues (Martinez, 1998, p.7). They were also created to get around laws that do not allow corporate funds to be directly contributed to campaigns, and laws that do not allow non-profit corporations to donate to political candidates. A PAC is perhaps the most extreme example of a campaign finance mechanism developed to disguise dollars and ignore the law, or at least legally get around it.

Schroedel (1986, p.372) believes that “spiraling campaign costs have made candidates increasingly more dependant on PAC funds to finance advertising and other political expenditures and the relative importance of PACs as a funding source has increased while individual contributions have declined. Under this innovation, congressional leaders and powerful committee chairmen created their own PACs, which they used to dole out money to win gratitude and advancement within their chamber and maintain power (Drew, 1999, p.3). Wright says “most organizations that sponsor political action committees (PACs) also maintain active lobbying operations that enables the organization to depend on the PAC for their financial leverage and the lobbyist for the information sharing.

Types of Interest Groups

There are many different special interest groups that have evolved over time. One of the most widely recognized changes in the second half of the century was the vast growth in the number and types of interest groups active in U.S. politics (Billeaux et al, 2002, p.123). A multitude of types of special interest groups represent diversified interests including: business interests, governmental interests, religious interests, and social interests. A total of 36,959 businesses, associations and interest groups are registered to lobby in the 50 states, a ratio of one lawmaker per every five lobby groups (The Center For Public Integrity, 2005, p.2). Brown (2005, p.167) categorizes interest groups as economic, professional and government, social, and public interest.

Economic Groups

Economic interest groups exist primarily to promote the economic self-interest of their members and usually contribute significant amounts of money and time to obtain financial benefits through the political process (Brown, 2005, p.167). Economic include both business and labor. One side works for the benefit of the industry, while one side works for the benefit of the employee. Government regulation can be costly to business activities if mandated regulations hinder or eliminate certain business activities. Sheffrin (2001, p.261) say's "regulation does not always serve the interests of the regulated". On the other hand, government regulation can be profitable to economic interests if regulations are beneficial to a particular industry.

Economic groups are often interested in identifying regulatory legislation and business organizations traditionally advocate lower taxes, elimination of price and quality controls, and minimal concessions to labor unions (Brown, 2005, p.167). Businesses want regulatory policy that will not interfere with profit making or that will secure market advantages that will improve opportunities for profit (Billeaux et al, 2004, p.124). Labor groups seek government intervention to increase wages, obtain health and unemployment insurance, and promote safe working conditions (Brown, 2005, p.168).

Professional and Government Employee Groups

Closely related to economic groups are groups dedicated to furthering the interests of a profession or occupation (Brown, 2005, p.169). Professional groups are usually associations made up of individuals in the same field interested in the same objectives. These groups include hospital associations, farmer associations, or realtor associations. The relatively high socioeconomic status of their members gives them the resources to make their voices heard and many elected officials have been, or are, professionals in these fields. Concerns include issues like standards of admission to a profession or licensing of practitioners (Billeaux et al, 2002, p.126). Government employee groups are usually large in number and may include groups like teacher organizations, or state government employee organizations.

Social Groups

Social groups include racial and ethnic, civil rights groups, gender-based organizations, and religious-based organizations. Sociocultural groups are not as well organized as the business groups, but attempt to better the lives of various social categories and cultural identity groups (Billeaux et al, 2002, p.127). Social groups often are able to achieve access to legislative leaders without contributing large amounts of money, rather relying on pressure from their cause or targeting members of the same race, religion, or ideology.

Public Interest Groups

Unlike most interest groups, public interest groups claim to promote the general interest of society rather than narrower private or corporate interests (Brown, 2005, p.171). Public interest groups are usually not interested in direct economic gain, rather an interest that is believed to be important and for the overall well-being of the public. Groups may include consumer watchdog groups, environmental groups like Sierra Club or Greenpeace, or the American Civil Liberties Union, which guards constitutional rights of individuals.

Campaign Finance Laws

Campaign finance laws have continuously failed at attempts to control the process of money governing our political system. Smith (1995, p.1) says "efforts to control political campaign spending have met with little ideological resistance since the turn of the century, and efforts over the past 25 years to reform campaign finance, primarily by limiting contributions to and spending by campaigns, have been exceptionally popular. However, despite its popularity, there is no serious evidence that campaign finance regulation has actually accomplished any of the goals set out for it by its supporters". Graziano (2000, p.42) thinks "the aim of campaign finance regulatory legislation is to disclose to the legislators and the public the identity of the principals, representatives, and the means involved to make the free play of legislative interests transparent".

The laws regulating lobbying processes look thorough and stringent, but are actually weak and have little ability to control dollars from directing our government. Campaign finance laws are problematic and biased because legislators are drafting regulations to place upon themselves. Legislators are very protected about any type of financial disclosures and new campaign finance laws because they know that it will reveal the true system of government, this has been evident through the inability to pass any campaign finance laws with strong reporting requirements.

1928

The first attempt to regulate campaign financing and address the practice of lobbying was in 1928 when the Senate enacted a bill requiring lobbyists to register with the Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House (Byrd, 1980, p.7). A few years later in 1930, a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee continues investigating lobbying practices but formed no consensus on how to deal with lobbying. The effectiveness of this first attempt to regulate the lobby was minimal because few registered because there were no consequences associated for not doing so.

The Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act of 1946

The earliest piece of legislation with some significance on campaign financing was adopted by Congress in 1946 and was called The Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act, which became Title III of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. This act defined a lobbyist as any person in any manner whatsoever, that directly or indirectly, solicits, collects, or receives money or any other thing of value to be used principally to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation by Congress of the United States and required that persons who solicit or accept contributions for lobbying purposes to keep accounts and register with the clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate. The constitutionality of the act was later upheld in the Supreme Court in 1954 in the case of *U.S. Vs. Harriss* (Shafritz, 2004, p.182).

The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1974

The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1974 established a system of private financing of congressional campaigns, with limits on the amounts that parties, interest groups, individuals, and candidates could contribute to or spend on behalf of campaigns. This regulatory regime was never fully implemented, and the Supreme Court overturned portions of FECA allowing citizens and groups to spend unlimited amounts of money on candidates (Wilcox, 1998, p.14).

The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995

The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 established criteria for determining when an organization or firm should register their employee's as lobbyists. In 1998, according to the requirements of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, there were close to 11,500 lobbyists wandering the halls of Congress. Until the act went into effect, there were no real figures on how many lobbyists populated Washington (Drew, 1999, p.2). The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 was passed as a reaction to extreme interest in lobbying controls following widespread illegal contributions during presidential campaigns. The act provided for disclosures of efforts by paid lobbyists to influence the decision making process and actions of Federal legislative and executive branch officials while protecting the constitutional right of the people to petition the government for redress of their grievances. The act was designed to restore public confidence in government by replacing the existing patchwork of lobbying disclosure laws with a single uniform statute, which covered the activities of all lobbyists.

Although this act was developed to put an end to the strength of lobbyists control of government and provide some accountability for those actions, it did very little to regulate lobbyists because of the act's exemptions and exceptions. For example, section three o the act provides generous exceptions to the definition of lobbying contact. One of the exceptions to lobbying contact is testimony before a congressional committee and comments in the Federal Register paid for by corporate funds. The disclosure section of the act also provides for numerous loopholes and directs the Secretary of the Senate and House clerk to develop common standards which is wide open to interpretation. As you can see, the short list, and history of regulatory actions on the profession of lobbying have been developed without any strength.

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002

The most recent, significant campaign finance reforms came in 2002 with the passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) by Senators John McCain and Russell Feingold. Among the myriad of components, there are two key pillars of the legislation that have fundamentally transformed campaign finance law. First, the act prohibits raising and spending "soft money" by federal officeholders and candidates and by the national parties, and severely restricts the use of soft money by state and local parties in relation to federal election activities. Second, the Act redefines what constitutes a campaign advertisement, subject to the disclosure requirements and contribution source restrictions of federal law (Congress Watch, 2002, p.1).

Existing Research

The relationship between campaign contributions and voting behavior patterns of legislators is a popular topic among political scientists and social researchers. The following literature review analyzes several existing studies involving campaign contributions and voting behavior on the national level and what the findings concluded. This applied research project focused on three formal hypotheses:

H1: Political contributions affect voting patterns.

H2: Political party affiliation affects voting patterns.

H3: Legislative tenure affects voting patterns.

The following review of existing studies will be categorized according to the three hypotheses used in this applied research project to better develop an understanding of these variables. All of the existing studies cited below looked at campaign contributions as an independent variable, and included additional independent variables like party and tenure. Table 2.1 outlines the results of the existing studies selected and a narrative explanation of the studies follows the table.

Table 2.1

AUTHOR	YEAR	CONTRIBUTION	PARTY	TENURE	DATA
Schroedel	1986	Not Significant	Significant	N/A	Three Congressional Banking Bills @ Committee Level Vote/PAC Contributions
Martinez	1998	Small Correlation	Significant	N/A	Health Security Act of 1993@ Committee Level Vote/ PAC Contributions
Gordon	2001	Not Significant	Significant	N/A	102 Cal. Legislature Bills@ Committee Level Vote/PAC Contributions
Roscoe	2005	Significant	N/A	N/A	Meta-Analysis

Existing Studies

Jean Reith Schroedel (1986), Massachusetts Institute of Technology: "Campaign Contributions and Legislative Outcomes"

Jean Reith Schroedel's "Campaign Contributions and Legislative Outcomes" examined three pieces of interrelated congressional legislation where conflict among competing political action committees (PAC's) was fierce. Her study focused upon the effect of campaign contributions upon behavior at the committee level instead of the House of Representatives as a whole. Schroedel (1986, p.371) defends this process by saying that "much of the money an interest group gives to candidates is targeted at members of the committee considering legislation relevant to the giver".

Schroedel (1986, p.373) chose three bills from the financial sector because this area was "characterized by sharp interindustry conflicts between the commercial bankers, securities industry, non-depositories, and savings and loan associations". She also decided to analyze only a few bills rather than a whole range of legislation to avoid obscuring the influence of the interest group. The three bills identified were: (1) The 1982 Bank Underwriting Bill; (2) the 1983 Repeal of the Withholding Tax on Interest and Dividends Bill; and (3) the 1983 International Recovery and Financial Stability Bill. Because the research was quite lengthy, the 1982 Bank Underwriting Bill will be the focus of observation for reference.

<u>The 1982 Bank Underwriting Bill</u>

The 1982 Bank Underwriting Bill sought to repeal the 1933 Glass Steagall Act prohibiting commercial bank underwriting of the issue of stocks and bonds and represented a counterattack by commercial banks on the securities and non-depositories which had been encroaching on banking territory (Schroedel, 1986, p.374). The bill did not come up for a vote, so support was measured by co-sponsorship of the legislation. Party was included in the model because it was the only variable common to all of the previous studies on campaign contributions. A logit model was used rather than an ordinary least squares regression model and the variables used in constructing the model were:

VAR 1: Co-sponsor (1=yes, 2=no)
VAR 2: Party (1=Democrat, 2=Republican)
VAR 3: Banking Contributions
VAR 4: Securities Industries Contributions

Table 2.2

Table of Coefficients

Log 1/1-P(COS) = B1 + B2 PARTY + B3 BANKING + B4 SECURITIES

Variable	*LE Error*	*Coefficient*	*Standard Error*	*Z Statistic*
Constant (B1)	7.9	.8585	.5204	1.65
Party	16.9	-1.378	.5689	-2.42
Banking	2.8	0.2358E-04	0.2391E-04	**0.99 (not sig.)**
Securities	12.2	-0.9439E-04	0.4593E-04	-2.06

% of total like equivalent error explained = 35.9
Chi-Square = 11.03
D.F. = 3
N = 67
29 favored, 38 opposed

The results indicated that the party was the most significant predictor of co-sponsorship. Schroedel contends that this made sense, given that the Republicans strongly favored the bill and Democrats opposed the measure (Schrodel, 1986, p.380). An anticipated relationship between banking contributions and co-sponsorship was found (0.99), but the small Z Statistic suggests little confidence. Also a negative relationship between securities contributions and co-sponsorship was quite strong (-2.06) at a 95 percent confidence level with a Chi Square of 11.03, the probability of this happening randomly is less than .02. Schroedel’s research showed an inconsistent relationship between campaign contributions and co-sponsorship

Brandy Martinez (1998), Southwest Texas State University: "An Analysis of the Relationship Between Campaign Contributions Made by Health Interest Groups and the Committee Votes on the Health Security Act of 1993"

Brandy Martinez completed her thesis by researching the relationship between committee votes, like the previous Schrodel research discussed, and just one particular piece of legislation important to a particular industry. Martinez said "The Health Security Act of 1993 was an important piece of legislation, the most publicized health reform package in years, and so it would seem logical for the health care industry to express some interest in the outcome"(Martinez, 1998, p.2). Like most other studies she also concentrated on PAC donations from health care interest groups rather than individual donations.

The Health Security Act of 1993 was a Clinton proposal that got substantial attention because it was basically a universal health insurance proposal. The three main goals were: guaranteed access to affordable health care for all Americans; slower growth of health care costs; and a partnership between government and market to accomplish the goals (Martinez, 1998, p.44). Interest groups including doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, and insurers began to heavily lobby the Congressional body. Conflict in Congress over the proposed Health Security Act grew, as well as interest group activity. Also, with such a well-publicized bill, prestige and exposure were eminent for members of Congress who had influence over the Act (Martinez, 1998, p.47).

Martinez's dependent variable was the actual committee vote on the Health Security Act in 1993 and 1994. Her independent variable were party affiliation, the amount of contributions each member received from health interest groups in 1991 and

1992, the amount of contributions each member received from health interest groups in 1993 and 1994, and finally the difference of contributions between 1991/1992 and 1993/1994.

She found that party affiliation had a significant effect on the voting. Eighty-nine percent of Republicans voted against the Health Security Act, and eighty-nine percent of Democrats voted for the Act (Martinez, 1998, p.57). Also, a correlation was determined between campaign contributions and votes in the party. In 1991, the average contribution received by Democrats from the health industry was $32,827, the average received by Republicans was $28,622. In 1993, the Democrats received an average of $56,688, the average received from republicans was $47,397 (Martinez, 1998, p.57). Martinez then separated the members that did not vote along party lines and analyzed contributions for a relationship. Again, she found that those that did not vote with their party received larger contributions than those that did.

In conclusion, Martinez said that "the complexity of Congressional voting behavior made an analysis and conclusion difficult and that voting behavior has many complicated facets that cannot be fully measured or understood". Party affiliation was found to be the most significant influence of voting behavior. However, some evidence of PAC contribution influence was discovered (Martinez, 1998, p.62).

Stacy Gordon (2001): "All Votes Are Not Created Equal: Campaign Contributions and Critical Votes"

Stacy Gordon's research takes a little different perspective in that analyzes the actual relationship between campaign contributions and votes and extends the effort by studying "vote context" as a determinant of influence. Gordon (2001, p.249) argues "contributions are more likely to influence a legislator's vote when that vote means the difference between a contributing group's success or defeat on a bill". The study evaluates votes on 102 bills in the California Senate Governmental Organization Committee. Unlike previous studies, Gordon examined the relationship between contributions and influence. Gordon (2001, p.249) believes that "researchers have not isolated a consistent relationship between contributions and voting behavior of legislators because the focus of study has been too narrow, usually studying aggregate member voting scores or individual legislative votes on very few bills".

Gordon hypothesized:

H1: Contributions are more likely to affect votes in favor of a contributing group as the amount of money given by that group becomes larger.

H2: Contributions are more likely to affect votes in favor of a contributing group if the voting member has the opportunity to be a critical vote.

The Committee on Governmental Organization in California's Legislature was chosen to analyze final passage votes on 102 bills during the 1987-1988 legislative sessions. There was an independent variable for contributions given by groups in support of the bill and another for those given in opposition, an independent variable of party, and an independent variable of constituent preferences based on voter party registration (Gordon, 2001, p.253).

The findings of the study suggested that campaign contributions given by groups in support of a bill do not influence voting behavior, but money given by groups in opposition to a bill does. The coefficient on opposition contributions was negative (-.0045) and significant at the .001 level and the coefficient on support contributions was positive (.0017) but insignificant (Gordon, 2001, p.253). Again, this study identified party identification as the largest impact on voting behavior.

Douglas Roscoe (2005), University of Massachusetts Dartmouth: "A Meta-Analysis of Campaign Contributions' Impact on Roll Call Voting"

Douglas Roscoe's research is a meta-analysis that looks at more than 30 studies and 350 tests related to the topic of campaign contributions and voting. Conventional wisdom about the link between campaign contributions and roll call votes rarely matter because groups tend to give to like-minded legislators (Roscoe, 2005, p.52). This particular research is important and interesting because it looks at many previous studies and various modeling choices in published research to see if significant results are presented. Meta-analysis involves pooling numerous research studies together into a single data set and italicizing statistical and analytical methodologies to explain the variance in findings using factors that vary across the studies (Roscoe, 2005, p.54).

Table 2.3

Characteristics of Equations Included in Meta-Analysis

Test Characteristic	Test with Char.	Significant Tests with Char.	Significant Tests without Char.	***t* Test of Diff.**
Party Variable	61.1%	38.1%	32.4%	-1.10
Ideology	61.9%	25.3%	52.9%	5.31*
Constituency	80.7%	42.0%	10.1%	-6.81*
Contributions	22.1%	**60.8%**	28.8%	**-5.19***
Tenure	18.8%	38.8%	35.2%	-0.56

*p<0.001

The results of this study showed a significant link between contributions and votes with a frequency of 60.8% and a *t* test variance of –5.19. This statistical method takes the difference between the test frequency with the characteristic present and then the frequency without characteristic present. This meta-analysis suggests a revision to the conventional wisdom about the power of campaign contributions influencing roll call voting. Roscoe's study showed that money did have a statistical significant impact on how legislators voted (Roscoe, 2005, p.63).

Conceptual Framework

This research is explanatory and uses a formal hypothesis as the conceptual framework. A formal hypothesis is the appropriate framework to use in this applied research project because the research question is based around a question of why one factor affects another, or if x then y . Explanatory research addresses the "why" question and uses the formal hypothesis as its conceptual framework (Shields, 1998, Pragmatism). This research examines three hypotheses: Do political contributions affect voting patterns on pieces of legislation? (H1), does political party affiliation affect voting patterns? (H2), and does tenure affect voting patterns? (H3). Hypotheses two (H2) and three (H3) are actually used as controlling factors in the overall research question (H1) and as comparative independent variables.

Campaign Contributions (H1)

In most studies involving political contributions and votes (H1), there has been little evidence to show a connection. The Schroedel, Martinez, and Gordon studies all showed no significance in campaign contributions and actual record votes. The Roscoe meta-analysis did show significance in campaign contributions and record votes. Many scholars have failed to uncover a statistically significant relationship between campaign contributions and congressional action on legislation (Schroedel, 1986, p.80). Another source reports that contributions may not influence voting directly, but they may affect lobbying activities that direct the creation of legislation (Wright, 1990, p.418). And yet another source claims that political scientists claim that there is no evidence that campaign contributions influence politics or shape legislation (Jezer, (1996), p.3).

Party (H2) & Tenure (H3)

Other studies have shown that both party (H2) and tenure or seniority (H3) do, in fact, affect voting patterns. The studies also show that these two independent variables are closely related in their justifications. In other words, senior members tend to stick to party lines for their particular votes. Senior members of legislative bodies follow party trends, with Republicans voting conservatively, and Democrats voting more liberally (Lopez, 2004, p.2). Senior members also obtain key positions in the power structure of government. Outcomes are necessarily influenced in substantial ways not only by distributions of organizational power, but also different levels of seniority (Cooper, 2003, abstract).

Table 2.4

Conceptual Framework Table

Formal Hypothesis	**Source**
H1: Political contributions affect voting patterns?	Baumgartner 2001 Gordon 2001 Martinez 1998 Roscoe 2005 Schroedel 1986 Wright 1990
H2: Political party affiliation affects voting patterns?	Alensina 1995 Brewer 2002 Burden 1998 Cooper 2003 Jacobson 2000 Platt 1992 Wright 2002
H3: Legislative tenure affects voting patterns?	Binder 1998 Canes-Worne 2002 Carey 1994 Lopez 1999 Pachone 2004

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is obviously apparent that special interests are making and controlling public policy development. It is quite alarming that public policy is being drafted and implemented with little contributions from those it mandates. Congress and state legislatures operate to serve special interests. In the past laws were made to protect individuals, or remedy a particular social problem. A few of these laws are still passed to benefit the whole, but the majority of laws are developed to maximize profits for a particular business interest, limit the power of competition, and mold regulatory policies to benefit those businesses that have given extensively to the legislative body. A clear breach of ethics is occurring right in front of our faces and nobody seems to care. For this reason, special interest groups will continue to mold state and national policy while non-players sit back and let it happen.

Chapter 3
Setting

Chapter Three, the setting, discusses Texas campaign finance laws and the actual bill or piece of legislation to examine the relationship between voting and campaign contributions. This applied research examines a particular piece of legislation with clearly defined sides of support and opposition. Political donations to members of both legislative bodies are also be analyzed for any type of relationship to their overall final vote on the bill.

Unlike most previous studies (Schroedel, Martinez, and Gordon) that look at only a legislative committee's votes, an analysis of the entire legislative body is conducted. The Medical Malpractice Bill (House Bill 4) is used to analyze Texas Senate and House votes for a relationship between campaign contributions and final passage votes. The Medical Malpractice Bill has two characteristics: clearly defined opposing and supporting sides with special interest groups with well identified PACs, and an actual record vote. The following research focused on PAC donations and direct industry donations, even though various law firms and individual lobbyists represented the interests of the legislation chosen.

House Bill 4: Medical Liability Bill

House Bill 4 was introduced in the 78th Regular Session in response to skyrocketing medical malpractice rates that were forcing specialist physician out of the state because of an inability to afford the insurance. From 2000 to 2003, the average hospital liability insurance premium more than doubled (TX Alliance for Patient Access, 2003, p.3). The legislation pitted health care providers against trial lawyers because it set a $250,000 cap on non-economic damages. The legislation had four key components: limits on non-economic damages with a $250,000 cap, limits on attorney contingency fees, periodic payments of future damages, and evidence of collateral source payments (TX Alliance for Patient Access, 2003, p.8).

The interest groups in support of the bill were the Texans for Lawsuit Reform, the Texas Medical Association, and numerous other groups including the Texas Hospital Association and individual specialists. The interest groups in opposition to the bill were the Texas Trial Lawyers Association, and the Capitol Area Trial Lawyers Association. Although individual doctors and law firms also gave donations to members, a focus on the prominent PACs that testified for and against the bill during the committee process was chosen. Most campaign contributions come as large donations from political action committees (PACs) (Jezer, 1996, p.2).

Texas Campaign Finance Laws

Texas Government Code, Chapter 305, requires a person who crosses either a compensation or expenditure threshold to register with the Texas Ethics Commission and file periodic reports of lobbying activity (TX Ethics Comm., 2004, p.1). The compensation threshold is $1000 in a calendar quarter and a $500 expenditure threshold in a calendar quarter. Lobbying is defined as "direct communications" with members of the legislative or executive branch of state government to influence legislation or administrative action (TX. Ethics Comm., 2004, p.1). An "incidental lobbying" exception is made for those that constitute no more than five percent of a persons compensated time during a calendar quarter for purposes of advising a committee, responses to information, or complying with an audit.

Restrictions on expenditures include bribery, and cash gifts and loans for state officers, but the prohibitions do not apply to political contributions. Texas campaign finance laws prohibit corporate contributions, but the development of PACs has allowed the influence of corporate dollars and even state agencies abilities to give money to candidates. Also, unlike attorneys, lobbyists cannot operate on contingent fees to influence legislation, as that would be considered bribery and a second-degree felony. Lobby contracts, or compensation, are categorically reported in terms like \$0-\$10,000, or \$49,999-\$99,999, clouding the true amount of compensation that lobbyists are receiving.

A political committee, commonly referred to as a “PAC”, is “a groups of persons that has a principal purpose accepting political contributions or making political expenditures” (TX Ethics Comm., 2004, p.1). Political Action Committees (PACs) basically fall under the same guidelines of reporting but have a \$500 contribution threshold and a \$501 expenditure threshold, and must appoint a campaign treasurer if these thresholds are met. PAC’s must report contributions of more than \$50 per reporting period and there is no limit on contributions.

In Texas politics, the amount of dollars, lobbyists, and special interest groups is vast. Texas’ state lobby ranks number two in the nation after California and the most recent data shows that lobby spending in Texas increased by an estimated 20 percent from the 2001 to the 2003 legislative years (Texans For Public Policy Justice, 2002, p.5). In 2003, there were 1578 registered lobbyists in the state of Texas and 6,593 individual lobby contracts, that’s 50 lobbyists for every senator and 10 lobbyists for every House member (Texas Ethics Commission, 2004). One reason for these numbers is that Texas operates on a biennial system that only allows the legislature to meet every other year for one hundred and forty days to create new laws, amend old ones, and eliminate others (Texas Legislative Manual, 1993, p.23). Working on a limited time frame, special interest groups employ droves of lobbyists to connect with the legislative body, and deliver their message.

Chapter 4
Methodology

Chapter Four is a discussion of the methodology used to test the hypotheses in the research, as well as an operationilization table of the conceptual framework. The research method that will be used in this applied research project is existing data analysis, primarily record vote journals and campaign finance reports. This data is used to determine if the independent variables of political contributions, party, and tenure have an impact on the dependent variable, or voting pattern. An association between the independent variables will be analyzed for the outcome of the dependent variable. House and Senate record votes are maintained by the Texas Legislative Reference Library and campaign contributions are maintained by the Texas Ethics Commission, these agencies will be the sources used to obtain data.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable used in this research is the record vote of legislators on House Bill 4. The source used to determine the record vote comes from House and Senate Journals maintained by the Texas Legislative Reference Library. A legislator votes "Yea", "Nay", or "Present Not Voting" on legislation. Present but not voting votes were eliminated from the survey because they hold no statistical significance to the overall relationship of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Yea and Nay votes are considered dichotomous variables and were assigned a value of 1 for Yea, and 0 for Nay.

Independent Variables:

1) The first independent variable is campaign contributions in net contribution amounts. The difference between contributions from the supporting PACs and opposing PACs were used to determine a positive or negative number to run a statistical regression. This variable is the most important independent variable in that this research project is looking at the relationship between campaign contributions and record votes. Campaign contributions were obtained from campaign finance reports filed with the Texas Ethics Commission from the time period of January 1, 2002 to January 30, 2003 leading up to the 2003 legislative session. In this research, an emphasis on PAC donations, rather than individual donations, from the supporting and opposing interests were used.
2) The second independent variable used was party affiliation and this information was obtained from the biographical data maintained by the Legislative Reference Library. Party has shown to be the most significant factor in voting behavior in the existing studies discussed earlier (Schroedel, Martinez, Gordon, and Roscoe), as well as the majority of studies available on the topic.
3) The third independent variable used was tenure of the elected official represented in actual number of years served. Tenure was proven to be of little significance in the existing studies analyzed.

Statistical Technique

The research technique used to analyze the data is a specific type of multiple regression called multiple logistic regression. Multiple regression is a form of statistical analysis that seeks the equation representing the impact of two or more independent variables on a single dependent variable (Babbie, 2004, p.450). This research project analyzes three independent variables (campaign contributions, party, tenure) and the relationship on one dependent variable (record vote), so it is the ideal statistical method to use. Logistic regression is an extension of multiple regression except that in a standard multiple regression a number of weights are used to predict a value of the dependent variable and in a logistic regression the value that is being predicted represents a probability between 0 and 1 (George, 1999, p.234).

Operationalization Table: Table 4.1

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	**HYPOTHESES**	**DEFENITION**	**DATA SOURCE**
Support Limited Liability		Measure Vote: Yes =1 No = 0	Record Vote: House Bill 4
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE			
Net Support	+	The difference in contributions between Supporting PACs and Opposing PACs to HB 4	Texas Campaign Finance Reports: Texas Ethics Commission
Party	No Direction	Measure R = 1 D = 0	Legislative Reference Library: Biographical Data
Tenure	No Direction	Actual Number of Years Served	Legislative Reference Library: Biographical Data

Chapter 5
Results

Chapter Five will be the results chapter in which I analyze the empirical findings of my research and use my conceptual framework as a guide to answering each hypothesis outlined in the framework. The data gathered and presented in the methodology chapter will be significant in explaining the results of my research project. This chapter is important because it is basically an answer to the research questions, or hypotheses, developed in the conceptual framework and again detailed in the operationilization tables.

The results of the logistic regression run are:

Model Summary

The model summary explains how much variation there is in the dependent variable explained by independent variables and says that Chi square is not significant. This table is provided primarily as a diagnostic reference.

Table 5.1

Model Summary Table

Step	-2 Log Likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	16.247a	.310	.430

Variables in the Equation

The variables in the equation table are the true representation of the relationship of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Column B represents the natural log of odds and is a coefficient of the independent variables. Column S.E. represents the standard error, or how close the data comes to the linear regression line. Column Wald and df are primarily diagnostic values that account for the significant report and are really insignificant. The Sig. Column is the most important column because it shows the actual significance of the relationship of independent variables to the dependent variable. In this case none of the variables were smaller than .05. This shows that there is no relationship between any of the independent variables upon the dependent variable. In other words, campaign contributions, party, or tenure have no relationship on the record vote of legislators on House Bill 4. Column Exp(B) is used to find the probability of significance, but in this case since no significance was found, it is irrelevant.

Table 5.2

Variables in the Equation Table

	B	S.E	Wald	df	**Sig.**	Exp(B)
netcont	.000	.000	.820	1	**.365**	1.000
Party	20.313	19692.840	.000	1	**.999**	7E+008
Tenure	.131	.141	.858	1	**.354**	1.140
Constant	-.620	1.289	.231	1	**.631**	.538

1=Supported the bill
0=All other

Chapter 6
Conclusion

Chapter Six will be the conclusion of my research project which summarizes the paper and compares my findings to my research question. My research question will be restated and addressed according to the outcome of the research. The outcome of the research will be discussed in its relation to the future of special interest groups on policy formation and perhaps the future of campaign finance laws. My results will also be a reference for anyone else wanting to research this process in Texas.

The results of my research showed that campaign contributions (H1), party affiliation (H2), and tenure (H3) have no relationship on the overall final vote on House Bill 4 in the Texas Legislature during the 78th Legislative Session. This data showed that there is no relationship between any of the independent variables upon the dependent variable. In other words, campaign contributions, party, or tenure have no relationship on the record vote of legislators on House Bill 4.

Although the statistics did not show a significant relationship between campaign contributions and record votes, many factors could have contributed to this. One factor that could have hindered the results was the overwhelming majority vote on the passage of this legislation. The Senate voted 27 to 4 in favor and the House voted 110 to 34 in favor of House Bill 4. This large difference in “Yea” and “Nay” votes could have made the statistical regression less significant. Out of the 181 elected officials analyzed, 74 voted in favor of the bill and received contributions from supporting PACs and 11 voted no on the bill that had received contributions from opposing PACs. In conclusion, 85 out of 181 members voted according to what contributions they had received.

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