

# The Effect of Partisan Alignment on Interest Group Agenda Setting

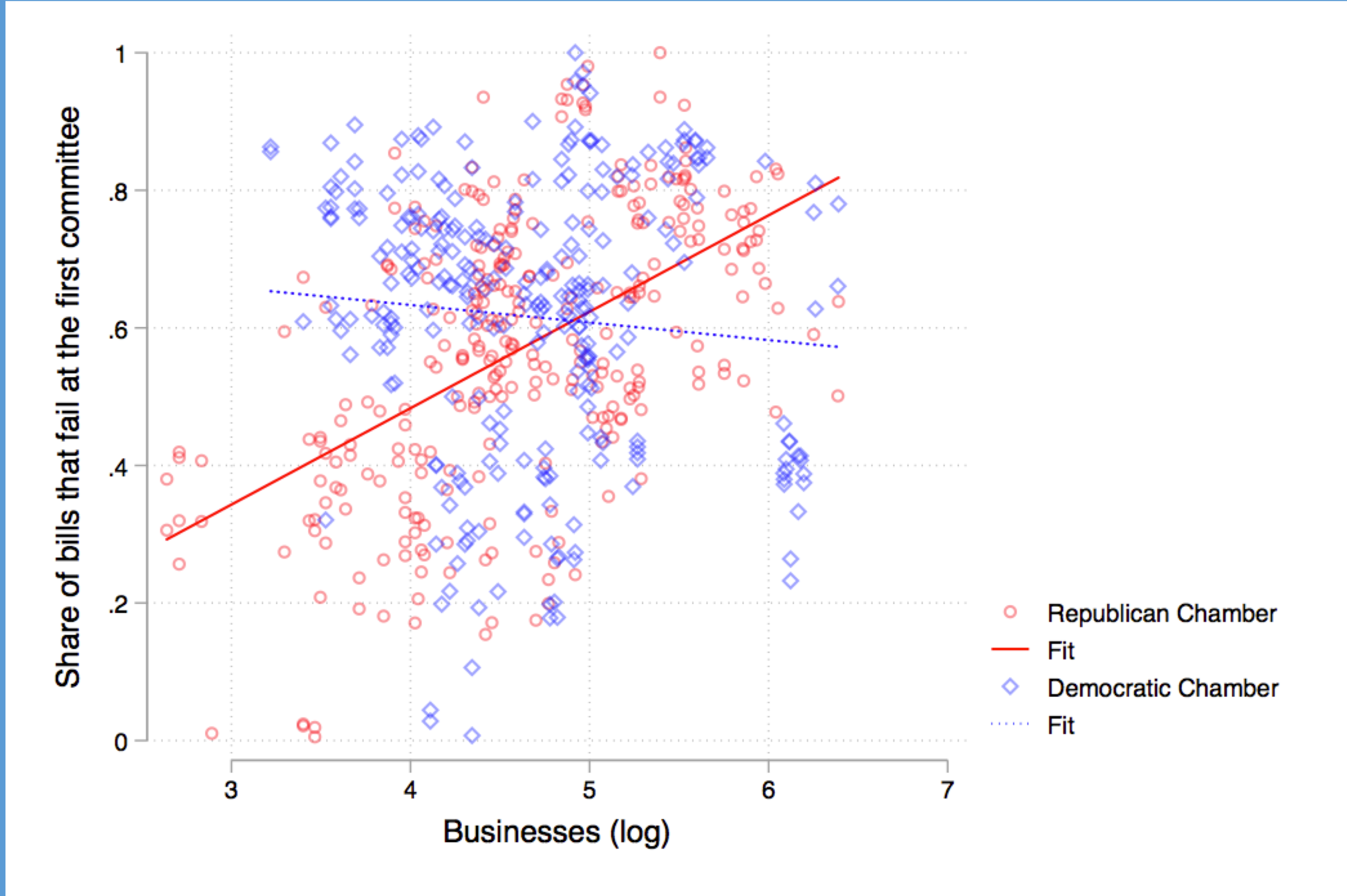
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## Overview

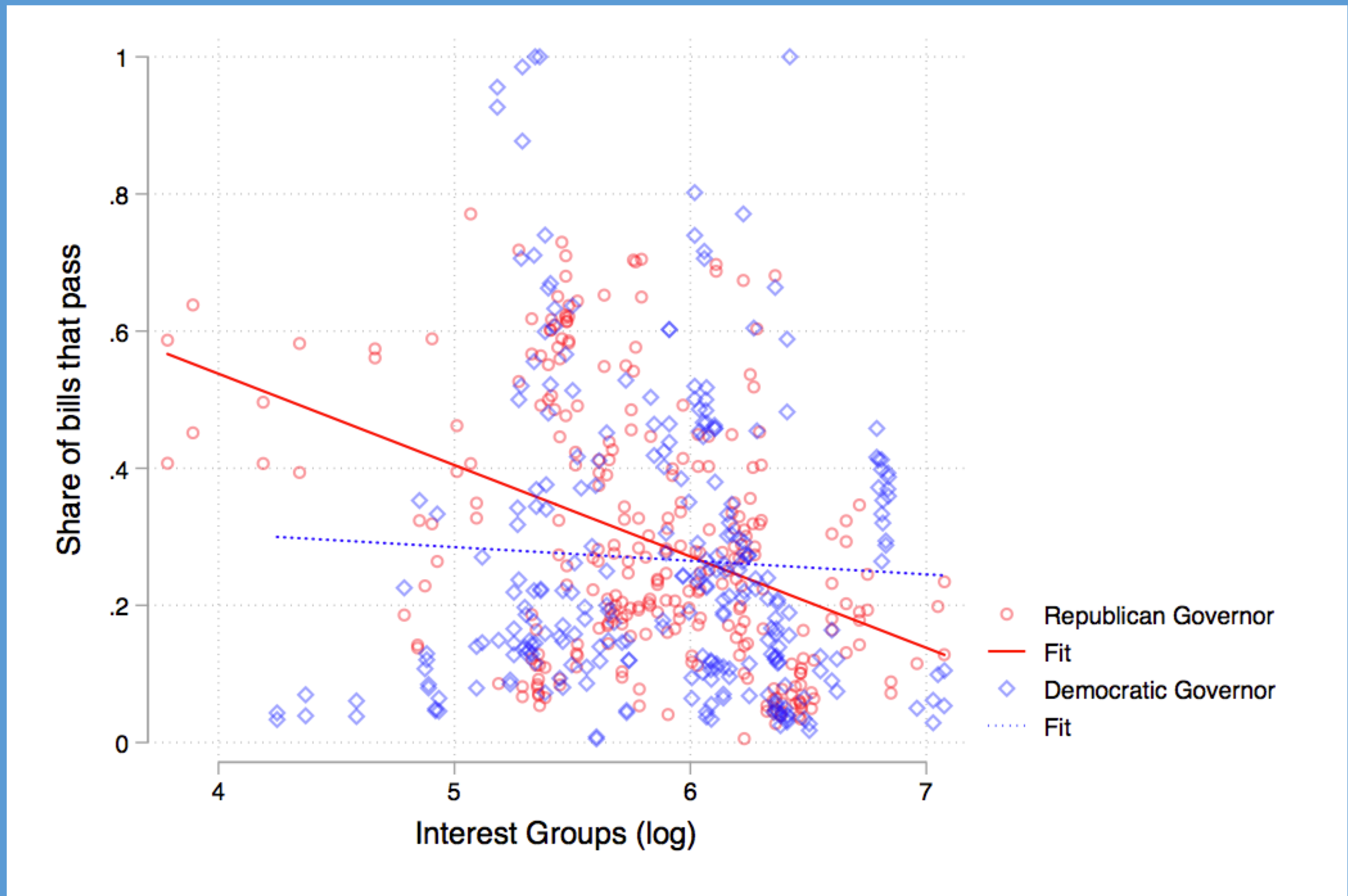
- Existing literature (the neopluralist school) has concluded that interest groups are reactive to legislative activity, not proactive.
- Our data provides the opportunity for scholars to closely observe how bills progress through each state legislative stage. This data can be related to observations of interest group populations in all 50 states.
- This evidence contributes to a “new wave of pluralism” by showing how interest groups can affect policy outcomes (negative agenda setting, at early stages), although it is dependent on partisan alignment (businesses are more influential with Republican control).

## Literature and Theory

- Interest groups will have influence. When? How?
  - Early in the process (Box-Steffensmeier et al, 2018)
  - By blocking legislation (McKay 2012)
  - If legislative allies have control over the process (Bawn 2012, Anzia and Jackman 2012)
- H1:** Business groups will have more influence in Republican controlled chambers, particularly when the majority party has power over the legislative calendar.



When a state’s governor is Republican, more interest group lobbying is associated with a lower share of bills being enacted into law.



State legislative bills are more likely to fail before floor consideration in states with more business lobbying, but only in chambers controlled by Republicans.

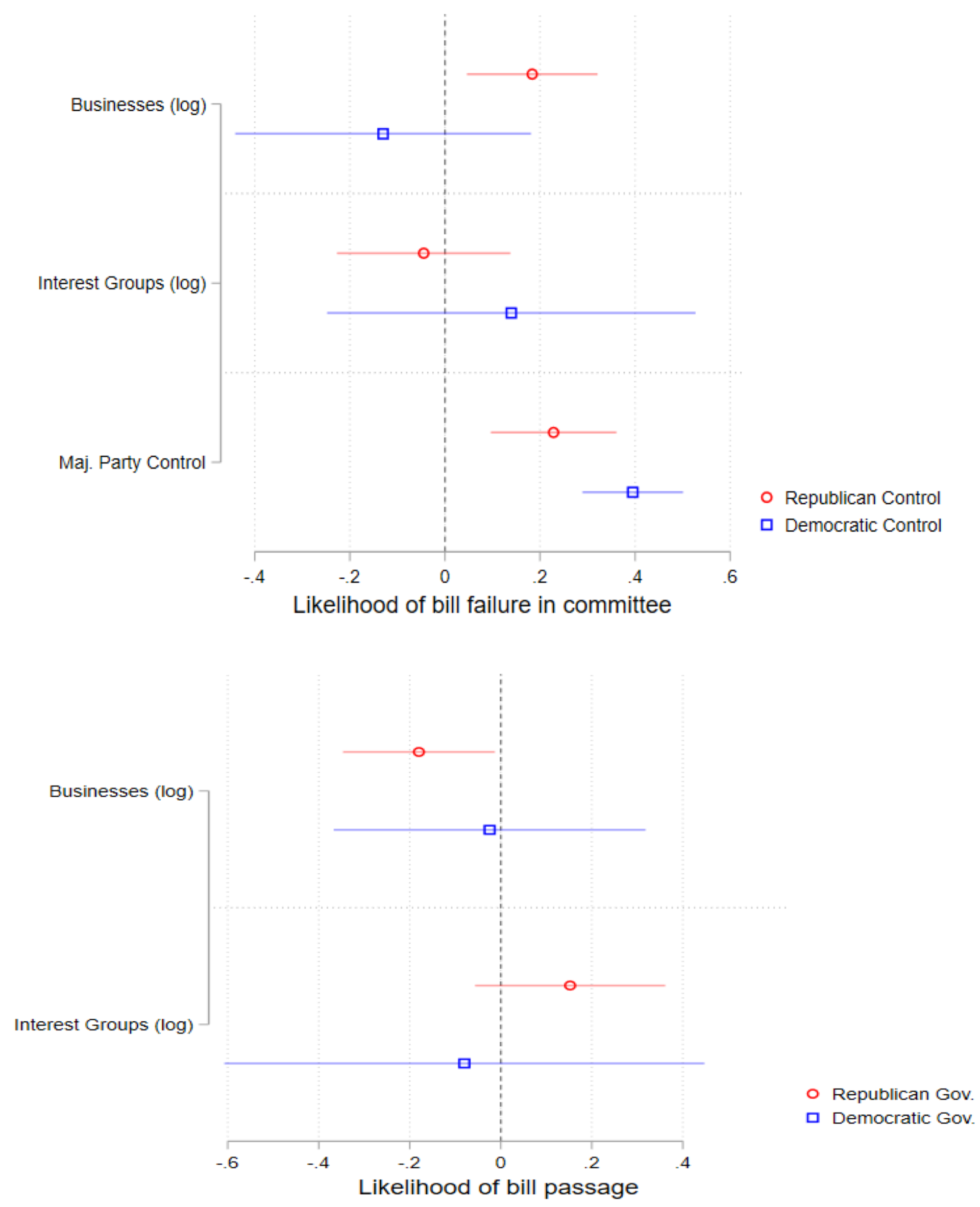
## Data

- We collected EVERY bill that’s been introduced in the state legislatures since 2010, and coded how far it progressed ([Open States](#))
- Number of interest groups and businesses registered to lobby in each state by year ([Holyoke 2019](#))
- Majority party agenda control ([Anzia and Jackman 2012](#))
- Partisan control ([Klarner 2014](#))

## Methods

- OLS, SE clustered by state (49).
- DVs: (1) %Bills fail before floor, (2) %Bills that pass.
- IVs: Logs of no. of groups registered to lobby (businesses and non-profits), majority party “non-reporting rights”

## Results



- There is a higher likelihood that bills fail at the committee stage when: (1) the majority party has “non-reporting” rights, (2) more businesses lobby and Republicans control the chamber.
- A lower share of pass in states that have Republican governors when there are more businesses registered to lobby.
- In summary, interest group activity can affect the agenda, but this behavior depends on the partisan control of state government.