Elizabeth Bell, Alisa Hicklin Fryar* and Tyler Johnson

Exploring Public Perceptions of Nonprofit Policy Advocacy

Abstract: Research on nonprofit advocacy has grown in recent years, and many nonprofit organizations have expanded and refined their efforts to influence public policies in ways they believe will benefit society. Despite the growing body of literature on nonprofit advocacy, there is substantial room for development on questions related to public perceptions of nonprofit advocacy activities. Utilizing an experimental design, we examine the ways in which the involvement of a nonprofit organization in the policy process can shift public opinion regarding a specific policy proposal. We also explore how these perceptions vary when we introduce political conflict that questions the effectiveness of the proposed policy. We find that in the absence of political controversy, the involvement of nonprofits in the policy process can significantly increase positive perceptions, relative to the control condition in which there is no mention on nonprofit involvement. However, we also find that the ways in which nonprofit involvement could boost support for a policy proposal may not hold when there is conflict over the policy in question.

Keywords: nonprofit advocacy, public policy, public opinion

Research on nonprofit advocacy and lobbying has increased substantially in recent years with many authors calling for more attention to this topic (Berry 2003; Guo and Saxton 2014; LeRoux and Goerdel 2009; Salamon, Geller, and Lorentz 2008; Schmid, Bar, and Nirel 2008). While nonprofit advocacy is not a new phenomenon, with many of America's earliest nonprofits organized around a mission to advocate for certain groups or policy initiatives, the literature has substantial room for development. Currently, most of the literature on nonprofit advocacy

*Corresponding author: Alisa Hicklin Fryar, University of Oklahoma, Political Science, 455 West Lindsey Street, Room 205, Norman, 73019, Oklahoma, United States, E-mail: ahicklin@ou.edu. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6677-6029
Elizabeth Bell, Miami University, Political Science, Oxford, Ohio, United States,
E-mail: ebell@miamioh.edu. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1021-9287
Tyler Johnson, University of Oklahoma, Political Science, Norman, Oklahoma, United States,
E-mail: tylerjohnson@ou.edu. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3519-0364

focuses on the determinants of nonprofit engagement in advocacy and lobbying and the implications of nonprofit advocacy for civil society (LeRoux and Feeney 2014; LeRoux and Goerdel 2009; Nicholson-Crotty 2007; Pekkanen, Smith, and Tsujinaka 2014; Salamon, Geller, and Lorentz 2008; Suárez and Hwang 2008). In this work, scholars have found that many nonprofit leaders—especially among 501(c)3 public charities—are reluctant to engage in the policy process, because they fear this activity could jeopardize their tax-exempt status and possibly undermine their positive reputations as neutral, mission-driven organizations and instead portray their organization as "too political" (Salamon, Geller, and Lorentz 2008).

These concerns about the (perceived and real) reputational and legal risks raise questions about the benefits of nonprofit advocacy. Many nonprofit organizations are known for their strong relationships with communities and their track record of involvement in and knowledge of their area of expertise. It would be reasonable to expect that the involvement of nonprofit organizations in the policy process could lead to greater support for policy change. In this article, we examine the potential effects of nonprofit advocacy by asking the following questions.

1. Is public support for a specific policy proposal influenced by whether a nonprofit organization is involved in the policy process?
2. Is public opinion influenced by the introduction of political conflict? Stated differently, is nonprofit involvement in the policy process viewed differently when it takes place in conflictual policy environments, compared to more neutral environments?

For practitioners, our study can inform nonprofit leaders about when and how their organization's influence (especially when made public) could influence support for a policy and the conditions under which their involvement may be seen as more "political," which could influence the general reputation of their organization and possibly impact fundraising and partnerships. For policymakers, this work offers more information on how partnerships with nonprofits in the policy process could influence policy support. And for scholars studying nonprofit organizations and advocacy, this analysis offers a new contribution to the body of knowledge on nonprofit advocacy, with a more policy-centric framing and the introduction of variation in organizational reputation and the role of political conflict.

We explore these dynamics through an experimental design in which individuals are presented with a scenario where a nonprofit organization has created legislation that is being introduced by a state senator. In these vignettes, we vary the type of 501(c)3 organization from a well-recognized 501(c)3 philanthropic private foundation—the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (hereafter referred to

as the Gates Foundation)—to a 501(c)3 organization primarily engaged in research and advocacy based on policy expertise—Complete College America (CCA). In the analysis, we compare these treatment groups to a control group in which the senator has introduced the bill without the involvement of a nonprofit organization.

The paper proceeds by situating the study within existing literature on nonprofit advocacy and lobbying[1]. Next, we present our experimental design and analytical approach. Finally, we present the results of the analyses and conclude with a discussion of the implications of the findings for scholars and nonprofit managers.

1 Nonprofit Advocacy and Democratic Governance

Scholars have documented the many ways in which nonprofits provide a source of social capital in building an active and informed civil society that is better able to represent the diversity of preferences in the public (Graddy and Wang 2009; LeRoux and Feeney 2014; Ott and Dicke 2015; Rasiah et al. 2017; Schneider 2007). Political theorists in the nonprofit sector highlight the role of nonprofits in providing an entity separate from government wherein citizens form connections and engage in political activism (Boris and Steuerle 2006; Clemens and Guthrie 2010). In theory, through the participatory governance structures, sponsorship of petitions and social causes, volunteerism, and grassroots engagement of communities, nonprofits are key in the development of a thriving civil society that forms the foundation of a well-functioning democracy (Douglas 1987; LeRoux and Feeney 2014; Ott and Dicke 2015; Powell and Steinberg 2006; Rasiah et al. 2017). Thus, nonprofit advocacy and lobbying "in the forms of representation and mobilization are regarded as legitimate and important activities for nonprofits to undertake" (LeRoux and Goerdel 2009, p. 515), in which nonprofits "speak for, act for, and look after the interest of their respective groups" (Pitkin 1972, p. 117). However, this existing work often examines nonprofit advocacy that is either primarily focused on efforts to advocate on behalf of the organization's clientele (Bass et al. 2007; Berry and Arons 2005; Fyall 2016, 2017; Fyall and Allard 2017; Fyall and McGuire 2015; Fyall and Levine Daniel 2018; Nicholson-Crotty 2009; Salamon, Geller, and Lorentz 2008; Wiley and Berry 2018) or efforts by large,

---

1 Many scholars have identified important differences between advocacy and lobbying (Lamothe and Bell 2018), while others use these terms interchangeably. Our study does not seek to investigate the difference among these concepts. We use "advocacy" as the more general term for our discussion.

national nonprofits whose central identity is policy advocacy at the national level (e.g., Planned Parenthood, National Rifle Association) (LeRoux and Feeney 2014; Pekkanen, Smith, and Tsujinaka 2014). Nonprofits that engage in service delivery and advocate on behalf of clientele face multiple barriers to advocacy activity (Fyall 2017), including practical limitations on staff time and resources (Salamon, Geller, and Lorentz 2008), legal apprehension (Lu 2018) and cultural barriers. In fact, many 501(c)3 public charities are wary of engaging in advocacy and lobbying for fear of losing tax exempt status or becoming too entangled in politics, which could tarnish reputations and lead to a decline in donations (Bass et al. 2007; Berry and Arons 2005; Fyall and Allard 2017). On the other hand, nonprofit advocacy organizations and philanthropic foundations are increasingly engaged in the policymaking process (Buffardi, Pekkanen, and Smith 2017; Grønbjerg and Prakash 2016; LeRoux 2009, 2011; LeRoux and Krawczyk 2014).

1.1 Growth in National Nonprofit Advocacy in Subnational Policymaking

As nonprofit advocacy has expanded and evolved, many of the more influential and well-funded organizations have developed strategic, aggressive efforts to change policies both at the national level, but more recently, with a stronger focus on states and localities, especially in areas like education policy (Bleiberg and Harbatkin 2018; Gandara, Rippner, and Ness 2017; Goss and Berry 2018; Reckhow and Snyder 2014; Reckhow and Tompkins-Stange 2018). In many cases, these organizations acknowledge the importance of subnational policymaking and the unequal distribution of policy expertise and resources across states. In most cases, the organizations view their advocacy work as an effort to improve the lives of clientele, but the connections between the nonprofit and the populations for whom they advocate may be weak or nonexistent (Andrasik and Mead 2019).

These organizations are often well funded and employ (or partner with) some of the nation's leading experts on the policy issues of interest. They can also be quite successful in building relationships with other national organizations that improve their ability to gain access to expertise and influence. As leaders in this space, philanthropic foundations serve as "political actors that seek to produce social change, not only by donating resources to nonprofits that promote causes, but also by supporting policy reform in a more direct manner" (Goss and Berry 2018, p. 4). This is especially the case in policy areas such as education:

> Philanthropy is commonly viewed as a charitable activity, and philanthropists have traditionally approached political advocacy tentatively, if at all. Yet major education foundations

are increasingly politically engaged… Coordinated, policy-focused, and advocacy-oriented philanthropy provides an important pathway for political influence among foundations (Reckhow and Snyder 2014, p. 193).

What is clear from existing literature is that foundations and nonprofit advocacy organizations serve as important interest groups that can shape social movements (Bartley 2007), policy discourse (Reckhow and Tompkins-Stange 2018), and public policy agendas and outcomes (Anheier and Hammack 2010; Callahan 2017; Goss and Berry 2018; Mintrom and Vergari 2009; Mosley and Galaskiewicz 2015; Prewitt 2012; Reckhow 2012; Suárez, Husted, and Casas 2018). What has been under-studied is whether the public considers the influence of philanthropic foundations and nonprofit advocacy organizations as legitimate, and how this activity may affect public support and donations to nonprofit organizations.

2 Citizen Attitudes about Nonprofit Policy Influence

Despite the concerns raised by some nonprofit leaders, we know very little about citizen attitudes on efforts by nonprofit organizations to influence the policy process. Generally, we know that "nonprofits are uniformly admired" and scholars have gone as far as to claim that "no one speaks of the dangers of too much nonprofit influence in the political system" (Berry and Arons 2003, p. 49). Surveys (mostly) support this claim, with 71 percent of Americans indicating that they trust nonprofits more than they trust companies and government institutions to solve some of the most pressing concerns of the time (Cordon 2010). Moreover, 79 percent of the American public believes that charitable organizations play an important role in speaking out on important issues (O'Neill 2009). Nonprofits, in general, enjoy higher levels of trust (Bekkers 2003; Cordon 2010; Hansmann 1980), and Americans have more confidence in charitable organizations that most other governing institutions, including local state and national governments, organized labor, corporations, the media, and Congress (O'Neill 2009). According to O'Neill (2009), an overwhelming majority of the public thinks that nonprofits are fair in their decision-making (76%), good at running programs and services (76%), and spend money wisely (61%).

But from a normative perspective, political activity by nonprofit organizations that are successful in advancing policy agendas without a direct connection to beneficiaries raises a number of questions about the legitimacy of this influence in a representative democracy (Grønbjerg and Prakash 2016; Mosley 2015). This in-fluence can be especially complicated in these policy arenas, given that the nature

of advocacy is usually one that draws on expertise to identify what is best for the populations in question, without substantial input from the population itself. Large, influential foundations have received criticism from other policy actors and academics (Andrasik and Mead 2019), but we have little information (in the literature or among practitioners) about the extent to which the public may also share these concerns.

3 Research Design

Our work is founded on two motivations – one based in practice and one focused on theoretical development. First, leaders of nonprofit organizations could benefit from knowing more about how advocacy activity could affect the reputation of an organization among the public. Given the importance of stakeholder trust and satisfaction for organizational reputation—arguably "one of the most important intangible assets of an NPO, and vital for organizational survival" (Schloderer, Sarstedt, and Ringle 2014, p. 111)—it is important to work toward a better understanding of how exposure to nonprofit policy advocacy activity impacts public perceptions (Sarstedt and Schloderer 2010; Willems, Jegers, and Faulk 2016).

Second, this study offers new opportunities to empirically test how the public views the influence of nonprofits in the policy process. We add to the discussion of nonprofit advocacy by using an experimental design to investigate (1) the influence of nonprofit engagement in policy formulation on public support and (2) whether the positive perceptions of nonprofit advocacy are durable enough to withstand the introduction of political conflict.

3.1 Survey Experiment

We explore our research questions in an experimental design where some individuals are presented with a scenario in which a state senator is introducing legislation created by a nonprofit organization, with a series of follow-up questions related to their perceptions of the policy and the senator. The policy in question is performance-based funding, which aims to improve outcomes in higher education by linking financial incentives for the colleges to their performance metrics. In these vignettes, the control (or baseline) group is told nothing about who created the legislation, just that the state senator is introducing it.

For our study, we chose to have two treatment groups to explore if any significant effects were attributable to a general support for nonprofits or if nonprofits might be perceived differently. We selected two 501c(3) organizations that are

currently active in national debates about this policy issue: one, a well-known charitable, private foundation—the Gates Foundation[2], and, the other, a policy organization with focused issue expertise—Complete College America (CCA). The three groups (baseline, Gates, and CCA) are the focus of our first analysis in this study.

To better investigate the dynamics at play, we also wanted to see whether the (expected) positive benefits of nonprofit involvement can withstand political conflict and criticism. In a second round of testing, we present the same vignettes, but we add expert testimony that is in opposition to the bill. With the addition of these groups (BaselineConflict, GatesConflict, CCAConflict), we can compare across organizations, as well as comparing the conflict/no conflict groups within each organization.

We designed the experimental survey data in Qualtrics and executed the survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk during the summer of 2016 (n = 591).[3] Participants were required to be Americans 18 years of age or older. The survey started with a standard pre-treatment questionnaire. In this questionnaire, respondents were asked demographic questions regarding gender, race and ethnicity, age, education, and income. Respondents then discussed their relationship with politics, answering questions on ideology, party identification, and recent voting

---

2 By virtue of being a private foundation, the Gates Foundation is subject to different regulations on advocacy and lobbying activity than other 501(c)3 public charities. Therefore, the results for the Gates Foundation may not be generalizable to 501(c)3 public charities broadly but instead narrowly to well-known philanthropic foundations.

3 For over a decade now, scholars have been using Amazon Mechanical Turk (or MTurk for short) as a reliable and affordable pool from which to draw survey respondents. MTurk is a crowd-sourcing website through which primarily businesses and academics hire members of the public to complete small tasks. Requesters set up these tasks (e.g., a survey), specify a number of participants needed, participant specifications (e.g., location, age), and a payment amount (in our research here, 1 USD); individuals registered with MTurk who fit the specifications and deem the payment acceptable then complete available tasks. The sample that emerges is the set of individuals who meet these parameters and successfully complete the task. Given the growing popularity of this resource in public opinion research, it is unsurprising that a related body of literature has risen to examine the pros and cons of using MTurk. The bulk of this literature (e.g., Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011; Huff 2015; Levay, Freese, and Druckman 2016; Mullinix et al. 2015; Paolacci and Chandler 2014; Paolacci, Chandler, and Ipeirotis 2010) has praised the credibility of MTurk participants, while simultaneously offering caveats regarding how those using MTurk must be conscious of how this pool of respondents might differ from those in other high-profile surveys and must consider the ramifications of those differences. We do not know with certainty the demographics of the universe of those registered to complete tasks via MTurk, but the aforementioned studies offer insight into the ways in which samples drawn from this universe are and are not representative. We address such questions later in this manuscript.

history. The pre-treatment questionnaire concluded with questions on how many were children living in the household. All these pre-treatment variables are included as control variables in our empirical examinations.

Following the pre-treatment questionnaire, survey respondents were randomly assigned to 1 of 6 treatment groups. In each group, the respondent read a simulated Associated Press story headlined "Hartman Introduces Performance-Based Funding Bill Aimed At State's Colleges and Universities." The story opens by discussing a state senator who introduced a bill linking his state's funding of colleges and universities to their performance. Each story also offered the respondent some information on performance metrics (student retention and graduation rates) on which colleges and universities would be judged, the extent to which colleges and universities depended on state funding (22–67% of their budgets), and some justifications from the senator on why he was introducing the bill (accountability, low graduation rates, incentivizing caring about students, helping young people succeed). Each story closes with a preview of the path the bill might take in the near future (assigned to committee and expected to receive a hearing). Where 5 of the 6 treatments differ from the baseline treatment (hereafter referred to as Treatment 1) is in additional information (in the form of extra paragraphs) offered to the respondent regarding the origins of the bill's language (stating that the bill's text was created by an outside group), the existence of a counterargument to Senator Hartman's position, or both. Table 1 summarizes these treatments, the differences in which we will now talk about in greater detail.

3.2 Nonprofit Treatments

In Treatment 2, the group behind the language of the bill is the Gates Foundation. Respondents are told of the origins of the Gates Foundation and that it is the "largest private charitable foundation in the world." Respondents also learn that

Table 1: Treatment content.

	Treatment number/name	Bill creator	Conflicting argument present?
1	Baseline	Unidentified	No
2	Gates	Gates Foundation	No
3	CCA	Complete College America	No
4	BaselineConflict	Unidentified	Yes
5	GatesConflict	Gates Foundation	Yes
6	CCAConflict	Complete College America	Yes

one of the missions of the foundation is to "ensure that all students who seek the opportunity are able to complete a high-quality, affordable postsecondary education that leads to a sustaining career." Respondents exposed to Treatment 3 read that the performance-funding bill was created by Complete College America (CCA), an education nonprofit created by a higher education commissioner/former state legislator. Individuals in this group learn that the mission of CCA is "to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees."

3.3 Introduction of Conflict

The counterargument to Senator Hartman's position offered in Treatments 4–6 comes from the perspective of a university president who chairs a council of higher education leaders. This counterargument states that colleges and universities have always deemed student success important. It points the finger at states for cutting funding and links those cuts to diminished support. It argues that the bill will hurt regional universities and community colleges the most. The counterargument closes by claiming that colleges and universities, should the bill pass, will water down standards or refuse to admit risky students.

Respondents receiving Treatment 4 received the information from the baseline treatment plus this counterargument. Respondents receiving Treatment 5 encountered the exact same material in Treatment 2 (the state senator introduced the bill created by the Gates Foundation) plus the aforementioned counterargument. Those individuals receiving Treatment 6 read the material from Treatment 3 (the state senator introduced the bill created by CCA) as well as the counterargument. The text of all treatments can be found in Appendix B. Actual newspaper articles, group websites, and policy debates were consulted in the process of writing the treatments.

Following the simulated news story, individuals assigned to Treatments 2, 3, 5, and 6 were required to correctly complete a multiple-choice manipulation check question identifying the bill's creator before proceeding to the post-test questionnaire; 86% of respondents were successful in doing so. They then answered sets of questions aimed at gathering attitudes on the politician discussed in the story, the group discussed in the story, and the issue discussed in the story. In this research, we focus on respondent perceptions of the importance and effectiveness of performance-based funding, the willingness of a respondent to support the state senator's efforts, and the extent to which the respondent believes the state senator is bought and paid for by special interests.

3.4 Respondent Demographics

In Table 2, we compare the demographics from our MTurk respondent pool to those from the 2016 American National Election Study.[4] Our sample differs in a few noticeable ways. It is clearly more educated than a typical sample of the general public. Our sample is several percentage points whiter than the 2016 ANES. Our sample is also younger. Finally, our sample is slightly more willing to identify as independent in terms of party identification than the sample in the 2016 ANES. These differences are important to highlight because they may limit the generalizability of our results—for instance, more educated people are generally more trusting of institutions, and therefore our sample may have a higher base level of support for the policy we present, regardless of the treatment group they are randomly assigned to. However, while these characteristics may limit external validity, they do not pose a threat to internal validity if there is evidence of balance across treatment groups.

In order to interpret the estimates as causal effects, the randomization has to be independent of the observable characteristics of the sample. We provide evidence of balance by modeling treatment assignment as a function of the set of covariates in Appendix Table A1. This analysis reveals that the joint significance tests are both not significant, suggesting that the randomization was effective. Thus, the estimates we present should be interpreted as the causal effect of nonprofit engagement in the policy process on public opinion. The descriptive statistics for the sample are presented in Table 3 below.

3.5 Hypotheses

We draw from public and nonprofit management research regarding organizational image and agency reputation to theorize as to how nonprofit involvement will shape public opinion (Carpenter and Krause 2012; Lee and Van Ryzin 2019; Santos, Laureano, and Moro 2020; Willems, Jegers, and Faulk 2016). In the context of public agencies, there are multiple theoretical dimensions that form an organizational image and reputation: 1) performance, 2) moral reputation, 3) technical

---

4 As mentioned in Footnote 3, scholars studying the demographics of MTurk survey pools recommend comparing one's sample demographics to those of well-established surveys in order to be cognizant of differences that might condition findings. For our comparison, we use the American National Election Study, which has existed since 1948 and is highly trusted within the American political behavior literature for its consistency and transparency. The ways in which our sample differs from the ANES (e.g., more liberal, more educated, more white) are differences common to many other MTurk samples (as discussed by the literature cited in Footnote 3).

Table 2: Demographic and political comparison of MTurk sample and 2016 ANES sample.

	MTurk sample	2016 ANES
Gender		
Male	53%	48%
Female	47%	52%
Race		
White (non-Hispanic)	80%	69%
Black (non-Hispanic)	7%	11%
Hispanic	5%	11%
Other/multiple (non-Hispanic)	8%	8%
Education		
Grade School/some High School	1%	1%
High School Diploma	12%	37%
Some College, no Degree	24%	31%
College Degree/Post Grad	63%	31%
Party identification		
Strong/Weak/Independent Democrat	51%	46%
Independent	24%	15%
Strong/Weak/Independent Republican	25%	39%

reputation, and 4) legal-procedural reputation (Carpenter 2010). Prior surveys indicate that the vast majority of the public believes nonprofits are fair in decision-making (legal-procedural reputation), good at running programs (performance), spend money wisely, and have an important role to play in speaking out on important issues (moral reputation) (O'Neill 2009). Moreover, 501(c)3 nonprofits enjoy higher levels of public trust than institutions like government (Bekkers 2003; Cordon 2010; Hansmann 1980). Therefore, we predict that the involvement of both the Gates Foundation and CCA will increase positive perceptions of policy and the senator sponsoring the legislation, especially in the absence of counter information. With no counter argument against the legislation, respondents will likely be subject to the "halo effect"—the pattern of judging something consistently on many dimensions because of the human preference for consistency—which has been found to previously impact perceptions of nonprofit brands and performance (Herman and Renz 1999; Hou, Du, and Tian 2009). Because respondents are likely to consider nonprofits as more trustworthy, this "halo effect" would manifest as respondents assuming a consistency in the philanthropic mission of the nonprofit with the worthiness of the policy initiative. Therefore, we predict that the involvement of the Gates Foundation and CCA will likely translate into positive perceptions of the policy initiative and the senator behind it.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Outcome Variables					
Policy importance	579	2.94	1.28	1	5
Policy effectiveness	578	2.88	1.37	1	5
Support for senator	569	2.87	1.31	1	5
Senator run by spec interests	558	2.98	1.08	1	5
Control Variables					
Female	591	0.46	0.50	0	1
White	591	0.80	0.40	0	1
Age	591	35.65	11.40	18	72
Education	591	4.24	1.46	1	7
In College	591	0.17	0.37	0	1
Income	591	2.73	1.36	1	7
Ideology	591	2.50	1.23	1	5
Party ID	591	3.35	1.81	1	7
Vote in Primary	591	1.74	0.89	1	3
Children	591	1.70	1.09	1	5

Hypothesis 1: *When the Gates Foundation and Complete College America are involved in the drafting of legislation, respondents will be more supportive of the policy and the senator.*

When respondents are exposed to a counter argument (opposing the legislation) that comes from an individual or organization viewed as having meaningful expertise and legitimacy, however, we predict that the positive reputational benefit may diminish. Returning to the Carpenter (2010) framework, a counter-argument from a credible source with relevant expertise may negatively impact the perceived technical reputation of the nonprofit organization involved in the policy process. Additionally, drawing on the work of Willems, Jegers, and Faulk (2016), we anticipate that the introduction of a counterargument may also suggest that some of the key, relevant stakeholders were not included in the process, and that the perception of exclusion could lead to diminished levels of trust and, ultimately, support of the policy. Thus, respondents faced with the counter argument may no longer be subject to the "halo effect" that can more easily exist when considering organizational activities in the absence of a comparison case, especially when the information provided is not consistent with the information included in the policy proposal that was drafting by the nonprofit organization (Herman and Renz 1999).

Therefore, we predict that the counter information will diminish the positive reputational benefit of nonprofit status by calling into question the technical reputation, but we also recognize that the effect of the other dimensions of reputation (performance, moral, and legal-procedural) may still be positive and significant—especially for a well-known philanthropic foundation like the Gates Foundation. Consequently, we predict that the magnitude of the positive reputational benefit will likely be smaller when respondents are presented with the counter argument that calls into question the effectiveness of the policy proposal.

Hypothesis 2: *When a counter argument is presented calling into question the effectiveness of the policy proposal, the positive reputational benefit from nonprofit involvement will diminish.*

4 Analytical Approach

To test these theoretical hypotheses, we model our set of dependent variables as a function of the treatment assignment and a set of covariates in the following OLS equation[5]:

$$Y_i = \alpha + T_i\delta + X_i\beta + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

In this equation, we model public perceptions of the policy proposal and beliefs about the senator (Y_i) as a function of the treatment groups (T_i), a set of control variables (X_i) and the constant (α) and error term (ε_i). We include a standard set of controls including gender, age, education, race, income, ideology, party identification, voting behavior and the number of children to increase the precision of the estimates.[6] However, we also estimate the models excluding these covariates and find that the results are consistent across specifications; these results are available from the authors upon request.

In the first set of analyses, we compare public perceptions when the state legislator introduced a policy (without nonprofit involvement) to those in which the Gates Foundation or CCA created the legislation, without introducing the counter information. In this way, the first set of analyses measures the impact of the involvement of nonprofit organizations in the drafting of legislation compared to the base prompt in which the senator introduces the legislation alone. Next, we

---

5 We also provide the results from estimating an ordinal logistic regression model in Appendix Table A3.
6 We control for the number of children because respondents with children are directly impacted by education policy changes and may react differently than respondents without children.

do the same comparison for the set of treatment groups that were presented with counter information on the topic. To improve clarity in the substantive interpretation of the results, the measurement of the dependent variables in the analysis are presented in Table 4 below.

We also provide a visual depiction of the variation across the treatment groups when we collapse the dependent variables in Figure 1. This figure reveals that there is substantial variation in the dependent variables across the treatment conditions, which will be explored further in the analysis below.

5 Findings

The regression analysis in Table 5 provides evidence on the impact of the nonprofit lobbying on our outcomes of interest. The top panel of these tables presents the treatment effects in the absence of counter information, while the bottom panel presents the treatment effects when a counter argument is presented to respondents.

We begin by discussing the treatment effects from the top panel when respondents are only reacting to the engagement of the nonprofits in creating the legislation without being exposed to a narrative in opposition to the policy. First, these results reveal that respondents are significantly more likely to believe the performance-based funding policy is important and effective when the Gates Foundation or when CCA has created the legislation, relative to the policy being introduced by the senator alone. These findings support Hypothesis 1 suggesting that, in the absence of counter information, respondents are significantly more likely to think the policy is effective and important when nonprofit organizations played a role in policy formulation.

Next, the top panel of Table 5 reveals that respondents exposed to the Gates Foundation treatment in the absence of counter information were more likely to support the senator. However, the Gates Foundation treatment did not significantly impact the likelihood that a respondent believed the senator was run by special interests. This suggests that the public views the influence of the Gates Foundation positively, when respondents are not exposed to counter information. Moreover, Table 5 also reveals that when respondents are not exposed to counter information, respondents were slightly more likely to support the senator when exposed to the CCA treatment ($p < 0.10$). Similar to the Gates Foundation results, exposure to the CCA treatment did not significantly impact the likelihood that respondents thought the senator was run by special interests.

So far, the results presented have focused entirely on the treatment effects for the top panel of Table 5, revealing significant impacts of nonprofit engagement in

Table 4: Measurement of dependent variables.

Outcome measure	Question wording	Measurement
Policy importance	Knowing what you know now about performance-based funding in higher education, how important do you believe it is?	5 – Highly important 4 – Important 3 – Neither important nor unimportant 2 – Unimportant 1 – Highly unimportant
Policy effectiveness	Knowing what you know now about performance-based funding in higher education, how effective do you believe it would be in achieving its goals?	5 – Highly effective 4 – Effective 3 – Neither effective nor ineffective 2 – Ineffective 1 – Highly ineffective
Support for senator	If your state senator did exactly what Senator Hartman did in the story you just read, how likely would you be to support his or her efforts?	5 – Highly likely 4 – Likely 3 – Neither likely nor unlikely 2 – Unlikely 1 – Highly unlikely
Senator run by special interests	Consider Senator Hartman, the legislator in the story you just read. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement: Senator Hartman is bought and paid for by special interests.	5 – Highly agree 4 – Agree 3 – Neither agree nor Disagree 2 – Disagree 1 – Highly disagree

Note: All of the questions summarized in the table also included an "Unsure/No Answer" choice which is coded as missing.

the policy process. The bottom panel of Table 5 reveals that the treatment effects for nonprofit involvement change when respondents are presented with counter information. The analysis presented in the bottom panel of Table 5, in which the respondents were presented with counter arguments in the treatment prompts, reveals almost entirely null effects. In line with Hypothesis 2, this means that the positive impacts observed in the previous analysis are not evident for the groups exposed to counter information. In fact, unlike the top panel of Table 5, the involvement of the Gates Foundation did not significantly increase support for the senator and increased the likelihood that respondents believed the senator was run by special interests. This suggests that the presence of counter information significantly shifted public sentiment regarding the involvement of the Gates Foundation and increased the likelihood that respondents would associate the involvement of the Gates Foundation as indicative of the Senator being run by special interests.
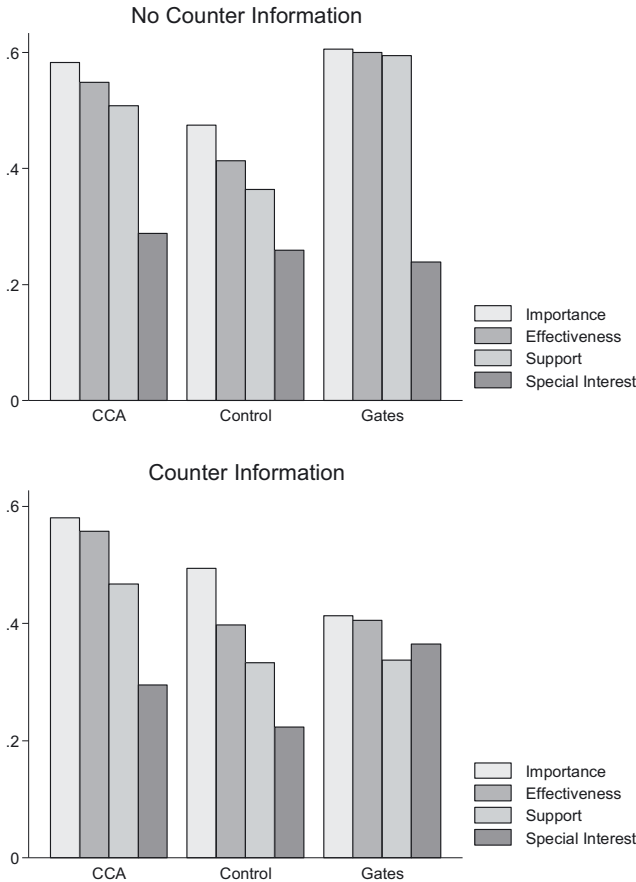
Figure 1: Comparing average responses across treatment groups: percent support or agree[7].

To investigate the possibility that the counter information treatment had differential impacts across the CCA and Gates Foundation treatment, we conduct a second order analysis presented in Table 6. In this analysis, we compare the Gates Foundation treatment group in the absence of counter information to the Gates Foundation treatment groups in the presence of counter information and do the same for the CCA treatment groups. Interestingly, when the treatment effects[7] for the Gates Foundation are compared across the presence and absence of counter

---

7 The calculations in the graphs are the percentage of respondents that either agree or strongly agree with the statement or support or strongly support the performance-based funding policy.

Table 5: Regression results: beliefs about performance-based funding policy and senator, by treatment group.

	(1) Policy importance	(2) Policy effectiveness	(3) Support for senator	(4) Senator spec interests
Treatments with no counter info				
Gates	0.527**	0.667***	0.442**	−0.092
treatment 1	(0.204)	(0.224)	(0.213)	(0.176)
CCA treatment 1	0.483**	0.363*	0.374*	−0.170
	(0.207)	(0.219)	(0.213)	(0.182)
Constant	2.798***	2.764***	2.416***	2.682***
	(0.537)	(0.618)	(0.594)	(0.415)
Covariates	X	X	X	X
Observations	213	207	207	211
R-squared	0.13	0.16	0.14	0.14
Treatments with counter info				
Gates	−0.203	−0.186	−0.056	0.358**
treatment 2	(0.192)	(0.222)	(0.211)	(0.169)
CCA treatment 2	0.068	0.153	0.216	0.130
	(0.203)	(0.226)	(0.219)	(0.197)
Constant	3.665***	3.446***	3.882***	2.465***
	(0.509)	(0.584)	(0.587)	(0.452)
Covariates	X	X	X	X
Observations	220	218	217	211
R-squared	0.10	0.07	0.09	0.07

Note: The n size in the top panel reflects the observations for the three groups (CCA, Gates, Control) that did not receive counter information. The bottom panel includes the three groups that did receive the counter information. Robust standard errors in parentheses ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

information, a statistically significant difference emerges for every one of the outcomes of interest. Exposure to counter information for respondents exposed to the Gates Foundation treatments reduced ratings of policy importance, policy effectiveness and support for the Senator. Moreover, exposure to counter information in the Gates Foundation treatment groups increased the likelihood that respondents believed the senator was run by special interests. However, the difference between the treatment groups in the presence and absence of counter information for the CCA treatments is not statistically different for any of the outcomes of interest.

Together, these results suggest that the involvement of nonprofit organizations in the creation of policy proposals is generally viewed more favorably among the public than legislation introduced solely by an elected official. Indeed, in the absence of counter information, the public is more likely to support policies and the senator when they have been created by nonprofit organizations compared

Table 6: Regression results comparing treatment effects in the presence and absence of counter information.

Comparing treatment effects in presence and absence of counter information	(1) Policy importance	(2) Policy effectiveness	(3) Support for senator	(4) Senator spec interests
Gates treatment with counter	−0.586***	−0.901***	−0.894***	0.572***
	(0.165)	(0.175)	(0.173)	(0.154)
CCA treatment with counter	−0.183	−0.238	−0.340	0.228
	(0.186)	(0.199)	(0.200)	(0.173)
Constant	3.664***	3.953***	4.044***	2.516***
	(0.460)	(0.479)	(0.511)	(0.386)
Covariates	X	X	X	X
Observations	276	269	269	263
R-squared	0.15	0.21	0.20	0.14

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$; the treatment variables are compared to the corresponding treatment group with the same organization but without the presence of counter information.

with policies that have been introduced solely by the state representative in their district. However, when the respondents are presented with counter information, this "halo effect" diminishes for the Gates Foundation. In fact, respondents were more likely to think that the senator is run by special interests when the Gates Foundation is involved in the creation of the legislation and when the counter information is presented.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

Nonprofit scholars have called for more attention to the engagement of nonprofit organizations in the policy process. Many studies have engaged this call for research by investigating the organizational antecedents of nonprofit advocacy activity or identifying the barriers to nonprofit advocacy and lobbying. This study takes a different approach by investigating how the public perceives nonprofit advocacy among a previously understudied and influential type of national nonprofit organization engaged in influencing state policy.

Our study reveals two major findings that contribute to the nonprofit advocacy and lobbying research. First, we find that the involvement of the Gates Foundation and CCA increases public perceptions of policy efficacy and support for the Senator sponsoring the legislation. Second, our findings suggest that, while nonprofit advocacy is viewed positively in the absence of salient political controversy, the

presence of controversy and counter information significantly shifts perceptions for respondents in the Gates Foundation treatment groups but not for respondents in the CCA treatment groups. Our findings indicate that when an expert calls into question the proposal created by Gates, the public begins to view the proposal negatively and are more likely to believe that the senator is influenced by "special interests," a term that is usually considered to be negative label attributed to partisan organizations that do not represent the best interests of citizens. In essence, when respondents are presented with a conflicting perspective that calls the effectiveness of the policy into question, the reputational benefits of the Gates Foundation diminish.

The implications of these findings are directly relevant for scholars interested in the role of nonprofit organizations in civil society and democratic systems of government. This study adds to the literature by providing evidence on the variation in public support for nonprofit involvement in policy formulation both in the presence and absence of political conflict. In addition, this study provides evidence on public support for advocacy activity by previously understudied types of nonprofit organizations that are influential in the policy process and do not reflect the typical connection to local communities or clientele.

These findings are among the first to explore in-depth public perceptions of nonprofit political activity and provide valuable insight for nonprofit scholars and practitioners alike. For nonprofit scholars, these findings provide a baseline for future exploration into public perceptions of nonprofit political activity. For nonprofit practitioners worried about the perception of political activity by their organization, these findings should provide some insight into public perceptions of advocacy and lobbying activity in the presence and absence of political controversy. In fact, our results suggest that, in the absence of a prevailing counter narrative, it might behoove politicians to partner with nonprofits in creating legislation.

Despite the important insight these findings contribute to nonprofit advocacy and lobbying literature, there are also limitations that should be built upon in future research. For instance, the results for the Gates Foundation may not translate to other nonprofit organizations—especially not 501(c)3 public charities that provide direct service delivery. The external validity of these results should be subject to empirical test in future research before drawing conclusions regarding how the public may respond to nonprofit advocacy in other contexts. Future work should examine the extent to which our findings for the Gates Foundation are a function of their reputation as a global philanthropic organization, the existence of criticism about the organization (though not widely known outside of highly engaged citizens), or the connection to a well-known name like Bill Gates. Future studies that test these dynamics would be poised to either falsify or support the

findings of this study and provide insight on how public perceptions shift in response to nonprofit advocacy activity by a variety of different nonprofit organizations.

Additionally, we hope that this study will contribute the long history of work about the normative implications of nonprofit advocacy, especially in spaces where the nonprofit organization is advocating for a broad group of beneficiaries, as opposed to an organization's clientele. Throughout this project, we grappled with questions about the ways to speak about advocacy work that utilizes a resource base that is well beyond what most nonprofit organizations enjoy to encourage the adoption of policies in communities that have no direct connection to the nonprofit, its staff, or its direct beneficiaries. As more nonprofits seek to influence policy change on a broader level, questions about who they represent and the weight given to their influence will inevitably motivate questions related to democratic representation, citizen involvement, and equitable political voice among diverse populations. With so many nonprofit organizations seeking to improve the lives of people through better policy design, we have many opportunities to examine these dynamics in the context of nonprofit advocacy going forward.

Appendix A: Balance test & alternative model specifications

Table A1: Seemingly unrelated regression results predicting treatment assignment.

	Gates Foundation		Complete College America	
	B	**SE**	**β**	**SE**
Female	−0.0429	(0.0443)	0.0287	(0.0442)
White	−0.0607*	(0.0359)	−0.00992	(0.0358)
Age	−0.684	(0.987)	−0.173	(0.984)
Education	0.0620	(0.129)	−0.0836	(0.128)
In College	−0.0156	(0.0337)	−0.0339	(0.0335)
Income	0.0266	(0.123)	−0.0168	(0.122)
Ideology	−0.0911	(0.110)	0.0894	(0.110)
Party ID	−0.171	(0.161)	0.248	(0.160)
Vote Primary	0.0262	(0.0788)	−0.0484	(0.0784)
Children	−0.0157	(0.0985)	0.0594	(0.0981)

The joint significance tests were both null ($p = 0.77$ & $p = 0.81$) Standard errors in parentheses; ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

Table A2: Main results including covariates.

	Policy support	Policy effectiveness	Support for senator	Senator run by spec interest	Policy support	Policy effectiveness	Support for senator	Senator run by spec interest
Gates No Counter info	0.528**	0.667***	0.443**	-0.0921				
	(0.204)	(0.224)	(0.213)	(0.176)				
CCA No Counter info	0.483**	0.363*	0.374*	-0.170				
	(0.207)	(0.219)	(0.213)	(0.182)				
Gates with Counter info					-0.203	-0.186	-0.0557	0.358**
					(0.192)	(0.222)	(0.211)	(0.170)
CCA with Counter info					0.0680	0.153	0.216	0.130
					(0.203)	(0.226)	(0.219)	(0.197)
Gender	0.278*	0.345*	0.232	0.191	-0.0764	0.0182	0.0656	0.0295
	(0.168)	(0.180)	(0.172)	(0.155)	(0.177)	(0.194)	(0.190)	(0.159)
White	-0.00136	0.102	-0.00531	0.0168	-0.59***	-0.336	-0.538**	0.227
	(0.235)	(0.254)	(0.225)	(0.189)	(0.195)	(0.228)	(0.236)	(0.187)
Age	0.00469	-0.00643	-0.0005	0.0150**	-0.00246	-0.00363	-0.00504	-0.00379
	(0.00862)	(0.00983)	(0.00923)	(0.00711)	(0.00852)	(0.00982)	(0.00927)	(0.00803)
Education	-0.160**	-0.178***	-0.107*	0.0564	-0.0768	-0.116*	-0.115**	0.0101
	(0.0616)	(0.0644)	(0.0645)	(0.0518)	(0.0538)	(0.0641)	(0.0579)	(0.0541)
In College	0.370	0.130	0.311	0.133	-0.555**	-0.531**	-0.577**	-0.0363
	(0.231)	(0.253)	(0.250)	(0.213)	(0.235)	(0.241)	(0.232)	(0.200)
Income	0.00527	0.00342	0.0241	-0.0943*	0.0182	0.0123	0.0381	0.00632
	(0.0639)	(0.0666)	(0.0671)	(0.0528)	(0.0616)	(0.0738)	(0.0674)	(0.0578)
Ideology	0.138	0.195	0.171	-0.32***	0.0736	0.106	0.000770	-0.0465
	(0.102)	(0.121)	(0.119)	(0.104)	(0.135)	(0.149)	(0.134)	(0.122)

Table A2: (continued)

	Policy support	Policy effectiveness	Support for senator	Senator run by spec interest	Policy support	Policy effectiveness	Support for senator	Senator run by spec interest
Party ID	0.0526	0.0720	0.123	0.0636	0.00403	0.0330	0.0964	-0.0276
	(0.0671)	(0.0801)	(0.0771)	(0.0691)	(0.0812)	(0.0928)	(0.0831)	(0.0725)
Vote in Primary	0.0508	0.0817	-2.47e-05	0.0813	0.145	0.0241	-0.131	0.0962
	(0.0952)	(0.104)	(0.0987)	(0.0805)	(0.0909)	(0.104)	(0.101)	(0.0836)
Children	-0.101	-0.127	-0.0773	-0.0132	0.0169	-0.0410	-0.105	0.154**
	(0.0954)	(0.0933)	(0.0941)	(0.0834)	(0.0894)	(0.102)	(0.0962)	(0.0769)
Constant	2.798***	2.765***	2.416***	2.682***	3.665***	3.446***	3.882***	2.465***
	(0.537)	(0.618)	(0.595)	(0.415)	(0.510)	(0.584)	(0.587)	(0.452)
Observations	213	207	207	211	220	218	217	211
R-squared	0.132	0.163	0.142	0.142	0.096	0.074	0.088	0.066

Robust standard errors in parentheses; ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

Table A3: Ordinal logistic regression results: beliefs about performance-based funding policy and senator, by treatment group.

	(1) Policy importance	(2) Policy effectiveness	(3) Support for senator	(4) Senator spec interests
Treatments with no counter info				
Gates treatment 1	0.723**	1.007***	0.696**	−0.126
	(0.336)	(0.347)	(0.328)	(0.318)
CCA treatment 1	0.694**	0.470	0.566*	−0.346
	(0.334)	(0.319)	(0.328)	(0.343)
Covariates	X	X	X	X
Observations	213	207	207	211
R-squared	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.05
Treatments with Counter info				
Gates treatment 2	−0.358	−0.319	−0.107	0.634**
	(0.315)	(0.312)	(0.312)	(0.304)
CCA treatment 2	0.147	0.223	0.306	0.200
	(0.347)	(0.329)	(0.321)	(0.358)
Covariates	X	X	X	X
Observations	220	218	217	211
R-squared	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02

Note: The n size in the top panel reflects the observations for the three groups (CCA, Gates, Control) that did not receive counter information. The bottom panel includes the three groups that did receive the counter information. Robust standard errors in parentheses ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.
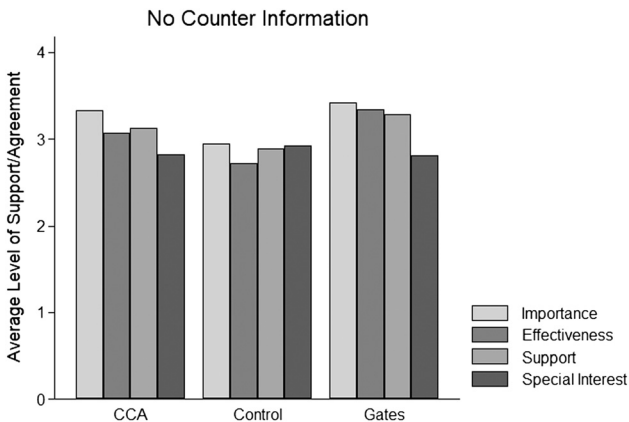

Figure A1: Comparing average responses on outcome measures, by treatment group.
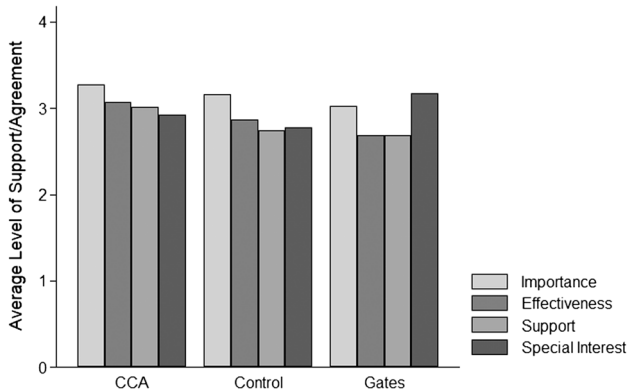
Figure A1: Continued.

Appendix B: Treatments

Treatment 1: Control with No Counter Information

Hartman Introduces Performance-Based Funding Bill Aimed At State's Colleges and Universities

By Mallory Urbik, State Politics Reporter, Associated Press

On Monday, the first day the state legislature reconvened for the 2016 spring session, State Senator Zachary Hartman (Springfield, 27th District) introduced Senate Bill 37, a bill that would link the state's funding of colleges and universities to their performance.

Should Senate Bill 37 pass, college and university funding would depend on factors such as student retention and graduation rates. State colleges and universities that failed to reach performance criteria in these areas (as decided on by the state) would risk losing state funding. State funding currently comprises anywhere between 22 and 67% of the annual budgets of colleges and universities in the state.

"The time has come for our state's colleges and universities to be held accountable for their performance," said Hartman at a Senate press conference yesterday afternoon in which he announced the bill. Hartman went on to state "we have a problem with low graduation rates in a time where a college degree has never been more valuable. For decades, universities have been funded almost exclusively on enrollment, giving them no incentive to care about student success." Hartman closed by arguing that state priorities needed to be aligned with

financial incentives to ensure colleges and universities do everything they can to help young people succeed.

Senate Bill 37 was assigned to the Senate Committee on Education and is expected to receive a hearing by legislators on the committee within the next two weeks.

Treatment 2: Gates Foundation

Added To Treatment 1 as Second To Last Paragraph: "The text of the bill was created by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation, launched in 2000 by the billionaire founder and chairman of Microsoft and his wife, is the largest private charitable foundation in the world. According to their website, one of the key missions of The Gates Foundation is to "ensure that all students who seek the opportunity are able to complete a high-quality, affordable postsecondary education that leads to a sustaining career.""

Treatment 3: Complete College America

Added To Treatment 1 as Second To Last Paragraph: "The text of the bill was created by policy experts at Complete College America, an education nonprofit established in 2009. Founded by Stan Jones, a former Commissioner of Higher Education and Indiana state legislator, Complete College America's mission is to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees."

Treatment 4: Control with Counter Argument

Added To Treatment 1 as Second To Last Paragraph: "Many university leaders disagree with Hartmans argument. "Student success has always been the most important part of our mission," said university president Laron Williams, chair of the State Council of College Leaders, an organization comprised of leaders of state institutions of higher education. "After years of state funding cuts, our universities are already struggling to provide the support our students need. If this policy is adopted, it will hurt the institutions that serve the students that need the most support – our regional universities and community colleges. This legislation will inevitably force institutions to either water down standards or refuse to admit any student that seems to be a risk.""

Treatment 5: Gates Foundation with Counter Argument

Added To Treatment 1 as Third and Second To Last Paragraph: "The text of the bill was created by policy experts at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation, launched in 2000 by the billionaire founder and chairman of Microsoft and his wife, is the largest private charitable foundation in the world. According to their website, one of the key missions of The Gates Foundation is to "ensure that all students who seek the opportunity are able to complete a

high-quality, affordable postsecondary education that leads to a sustaining career."

Many university leaders disagree with Hartman's argument. "Student success has always been the most important part of our mission," said university president Laron Williams, chair of the State Council of College Leaders, an organization comprised of leaders of state institutions of higher education. "After years of state funding cuts, our universities are already struggling to provide the support our students need. If this policy is adopted, it will hurt the institutions that serve the students that need the most support – our regional universities and community colleges. This legislation will inevitably force institutions to either water down standards or refuse to admit any student that seems to be a risk."

Treatment 6: Complete College America with Counter Argument

Added To Treatment 1 as Third and Second To Last Paragraph: "The text of the bill was created by policy experts at Complete College America, an education nonprofit established in 2009. Founded by Stan Jones, a former Commissioner of Higher Education and Indiana state legislator, Complete College America's mission is to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees.

Many university leaders disagree with Hartman's argument. "Student success has always been the most important part of our mission," said university president Laron Williams, chair of the State Council of College Leaders, an organization comprised of leaders of state institutions of higher education. "After years of state funding cuts, our universities are already struggling to provide the support our students need. If this policy is adopted, it will hurt the institutions that serve the students that need the most support – our regional universities and community colleges. This legislation will inevitably force institutions to either water down standards or refuse to admit any student that seems to be a risk."

References

Andrasik, K., and J. W. Mead. 2019. "Know Me Before You Speak for Me: Substantive Public Representation Among Nonprofits." *Public Performance and Management Review* 42 (1): 34–58.

Anheier, H., and D. Hammack. 2010. *American Foundations: Roles and Contributions*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Bartley, T. 2007. "How Foundations Shape Social Movements: The Construction of an Organizational Field and the Rise of Forest Certification." *Social Problems* 54 (3): 229–55.

Bass, G. D., D. F. Arons, G. Kay, M. F. Carter, and S. Rees. 2007. *Seen but Not Heard: Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

Bekkers, R. 2003. "Trust, Accreditation, and Philanthropy in the Netherlands." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 32 (4): 596–615.

Berinsky, A. J., G. A. Huber, and G. S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.Com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20 (3): 351–68.

Berry, J. M. 2003. *A Voice for Nonprofits*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Berry, J. M., and D. F. Arons. 2005. *A Voice for Nonprofits*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Bleiberg, J., and E. Harbatkin. 2018. "Teacher Evaluation Reform: A Convergence of Federal and Local Forces." *Educational Policy* 34 (6): 918–52.

Boris, E. T., and C. Eugene Steuerle. 2006. *Nonprofits & Government: Collaboration & Conflict*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Buffardi, A. L., R. J. Pekkanen, and S. R. Smith. 2017. "Proactive or Protective? Dimensions of and Advocacy Activities Associated with Reported Policy Change by Nonprofit Organizations." *VOLUNTAS*: *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 28 (3): 1226–48.

Buhrmester, M., T. Kwang, and S. D. Gosling. 2011. "Amazon's Mechanical Turk: A New Source of Inexpensive, Yet High-Quality, Data?" *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6 (1): 3–5.

Callahan, D. 2017. *The Givers: Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Carpenter, D. 2010. *Reputation and Power: Organizational Image and Pharmaceutical Regulation at the FDA*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Carpenter, D. P., and G. A. Krause. 2012. "Reputation and Public Administration." *Public Administration Review* 72 (1): 26–32.

Clemens, E., and D. Guthrie. 2010. *Politics and Partnerships: The Role of Voluntary Associations in America's Political Past and Present*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press. https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo8334058.html.

Cordon, L. 2010. "Survey Reveals Public Trust Higher for Charities Than Other Institutions." *Future Leaders in Philanthropy*. http://www.networkflip.com/survey-reveals-public-trust-higher-for-charities-than-other-institutions/.

Douglas, J. 1987. "Political Theories of Nonprofit Organization." In *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, edited by W. Powell. London: Yale University Press.

Fyall, R. 2016. "The Power of Nonprofits: Mechanisms for Nonprofit Policy Influence." *Public Administration Review* 76 (6): 938–48.

Fyall, R. 2017. "Nonprofits as Advocates and Providers: A Conceptual Framework." *Policy Studies Journal* 45 (1): 121–43.

Fyall, R., and S. W. Allard. 2017. "Nonprofits and Political Activity: A Joint Consideration of the Political Activities, Programs, and Organizational Characteristics of Social Service Nonprofits." *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance* 41 (3): 275–300.

Fyall, R., and J. Levine Daniel. 2018. "Pantries and Policy Implementation: Using Nonprofit Priorities to Understand Variation in Emergency Food Assistance." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 47 (Suppl. 4): 11S–33S.

Fyall, R., and M. McGuire. 2015. "Advocating for Policy Change in Nonprofit Coalitions." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 44 (6): 1274–91.

Gandara, D., J. A. Rippner, and E. C. Ness. 2017. "Exploring the 'How' in Policy Diffusion: National Intermediary Organizations' Roles in Facilitating the Spread of Performance-Based Funding Policies in the States." *The Journal of Higher Education* 88 (5): 701–25.

Goss, K. A., and J. M. Berry. 2018. "Foundations as Interest Groups." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 7 (3): 201–5.

Graddy, E., and L. Wang. 2009. "Community Foundation Development and Social Capital." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38 (3): 392–412.

Grønbjerg, K., and A. Prakash. 2016. "Advances in Research on Nonprofit Advocacy and Civic Engagement." *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 3 (28): 877–87.

Guo, C., and G. D. Saxton. 2014. "Tweeting Social Change: How Social Media Are Changing Nonprofit Advocacy." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 43 (1): 57–79.

Hansmann, H. 1980. "The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise." *The Yale Law Journal* 89 (5): 835–901.

Herman, R. D., and D. O. Renz. 1999. "Theses on Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 28 (2): 107–26.

Hou, J., L. Du, and Z. Tian. 2009. "The Effects of Nonprofit Brand Equity on Individual Giving Intention: Mediating by the Self-Concept of Individual Donor." *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 14 (3): 215–29.

Huff, C., and D. Tingley. 2015. "'Who Are These People?' Evaluating the Demographic Characteristics and Political Preferences of MTurk Survey Respondents." *Research & Politics* 2 (3): 1–12.

Lamothe, M., and E. Bell. 2018. "Nonprofit Lobbying." In *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance.* Springer International Publishing. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316267031_Lobbying.

Lee, D., and G. G. Van Ryzin. 2019. "Measuring Bureaucratic Reputation: Scale Development and Validation." *Governance* 32 (1): 177–92.

LeRoux, Kelly. 2009. "The Effects of Descriptive Representation on Nonprofits' Civic Intermediary Roles: A Test of the 'Racial Mismatch' Hypothesis in the Social Services Sector." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38 (5): 741–60.

LeRoux, K. 2011. "Examining Implementation of the National Voter Registration Act by Nonprofit Organizations: An Institutional Explanation." *Policy Studies Journal* 39 (4): 565–89.

LeRoux, K., and M. K. Feeney. 2014. *Nonprofit Organizations and Civil Society in the United States.* Routledge.

Leroux, K., and H. T. Goerdel. 2009. "Political Advocacy By Nonprofit Organizations." *Public Performance and Management Review* 32 (4): 514–36.

LeRoux, K., and K. Kelly. 2014. "Can Nonprofit Organizations Increase Voter Turnout? Findings from an Agency-Based Voter Mobilization Experiment." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 43 (2): 272–92.

Levay, K. E., J. Freese, and J. N. Druckman. 2016. "The Demographic and Political Composition of Mechanical Turk Samples." *SAGE Open* 6 (1): 2158244016636433, https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016636433.

Lu, J. 2018. "Organizational Antecedents of Nonprofit Engagement in Policy Advocacy: A Meta-Analytical Review." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 47 (Suppl. 4): 177S–203S.

Mintrom, M., and S. Vergari. 2009. "Foundation Engagement in Education Policymaking: Assessing Philanthropic Support of School Choice Initiatives." In *The Foundation Center.* https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/9427.

Mosley, Jennifer E.. 2015. "Nonprofit Organizations' Involvement in Participatory Processes: The Need for Democratic Accountability." *Nonprofit Policy Forum* 7 (1): 77–83.

Mosley, J. E., and G. Joseph. 2015. "The Relationship Between Philanthropic Foundation Funding and State-Level Policy in the Era of Welfare Reform." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 44 (6): 1225–54.

Mullinix, K. J., T. J. Leeper, J. N. Druckman, and J. Freese. 2015. "The Generalizability of Survey Experiments." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 2 (2): 109–38.

Nicholson-Crotty, J. 2007. "Politics, Policy, and the Motivations for Advocacy in Nonprofit Reproductive Health and Family Planning Providers." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 36 (1): 5–21.

Nicholson-Crotty, J. 2009. "The Stages and Strategies of Advocacy Among Nonprofit Reproductive Health Providers." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38 (6): 1044–53.

O'Neill, M. 2009. "Public Confidence in Charitable Nonprofits." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38 (2): 237–69.

Ott, J. S., and Dicke, L. A., eds. (2015). *The Nature of the Nonprofit Sector*, 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Paolacci, G., and J. Chandler. 2014. "Inside the Turk: Understanding Mechanical Turk as a Participant Pool." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 23 (3): 184–88.

Paolacci, G., J. Chandler, and G. P. Ipeirotis. 2010. "Running Experiments on Amazon Mechanical Turk." *Judgement and Decision Making* 5 (5): 411–9. https://ssrn.com/abstract=1626226.

Pekkanen, R. J., R. S. Smith, and Y. Tsujinaka. 2014. *Nonprofits and Advocacy: Engaging Community and Government in an Era of Retrenchment*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/30997.

Pitkin, H. 1972. *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press. https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520021563/the-concept-of-representation.

Powell, W. and R. Steinberg. 2006. *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*. Yale University Press.

Prewitt. 2012. *Using Science as Evidence in Public Policy*. https://www.nap.edu/catalog/13460/using-science-as-evidence-in-public-policy.

Rasiah, R., M. Tumin, L. M. Hameed, and I. Ndoma. 2017. "Civil Society Organizations in Opposition to Healthcare Commercialization: Protecting Access for the Poor and Middle Class in Malaysia." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 46 (3): 567–85.

Reckhow, S. 2012. *Follow the Money: How Foundation Dollars Change Public School Politics*, 1st ed. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Reckhow, S., and J. W. Snyder. 2014. "The Expanding Role of Philanthropy in Education Politics." *Educational Researcher* 43 (4): 186–95.

Reckhow, S., and M. Tompkins-Stange. 2018. "Financing the Education Policy Discourse: Philanthropic Funders as Entrepreneurs in Policy Networks." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 7 (3): 258–88.

Salamon, L. M., S. Geller, and S. Lorentz. 2008. *Nonprofit America: A Force for Democracy*. United States: Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies.

Santos, M. R. C., R. M. S. Laureano, and S. Moro. 2020. "Unveiling Research Trends for Organizational Reputation in the Nonprofit Sector." *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 31 (1): 56–70.

Sarstedt, M., and M. P. Schloderer. 2010. "Developing a Measurement Approach for Reputation of Non-profit Organizations." *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 15 (3): 276–99.

Schloderer, M. P., M. Sarstedt, and C. M. Ringle. 2014. "The Relevance of Reputation in the Nonprofit Sector: The Moderating Effect of Socio-Demographic Characteristics." *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 19 (2): 110–26.

Schmid, H., M. Bar, and R. Nirel. 2008. "Advocacy Activities in Nonprofit Human Service Organizations: Implications for Policy." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 37 (4): 581–602.

Schneider, A. J. 2007. "Connections and Disconnections Between Civic Engagement and Social Capital in Community-Based Nonprofits." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 36 (4): 572–97.

Suárez, D. F., H. Kelly, and C. Andreu. 2018. "Community Foundations as Advocates: Social Change Discourse in the Philanthropic Sector." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 7 (3): 206–32.

Suárez, D. F., and H. Hwang. 2008. "Civic Engagement and Nonprofit Lobbying in California, 1998-2003." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 37 (1): 93–112.

Wiley, K., and F. Berry. 2018. "Compassionate Bureaucracy: Assuming the Administrative Burden of Policy Implementation." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 47 (Suppl. 4): 55S–75S.

Willems, J., M. Jegers, and F. Lewis. 2016. "Organizational Effectiveness Reputation in the Nonprofit Sector." *Public Performance and Management Review* 39 (2): 454–75.