

Introduction of Civil Rights, Civil Liberties and Social Welfare Legislation by U.S. Representatives in Texas

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Background

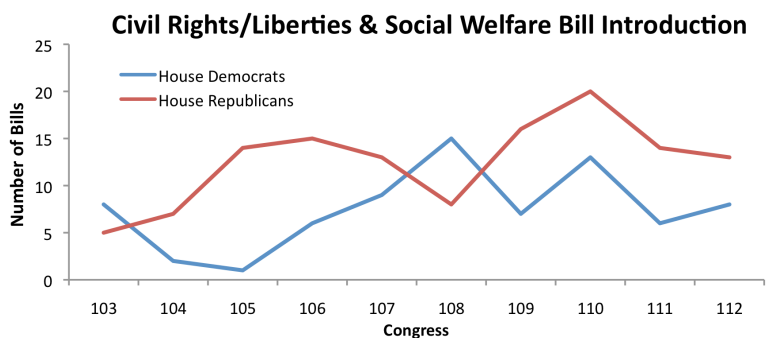
- In recent years, the media has frequently spotlighted controversial legislation that (whether intended or not) limits access to public services and/or civil liberties.
- A prime example of this is the voter identification proposal, which has been brought up in many states, including Texas.
- Civil rights organizations have come out strongly against voter ID, and Attorney General Eric Holder labeled these proposals “partisan” tactics.

Research Questions

- Is there a partisan element to the introduction of civil rights and social welfare legislation by U.S. Representatives in Texas.
- What is the difference between the Republican and Democratic parties in terms of frequency and type of civil rights/liberties and social welfare legislation introduced?

Methods

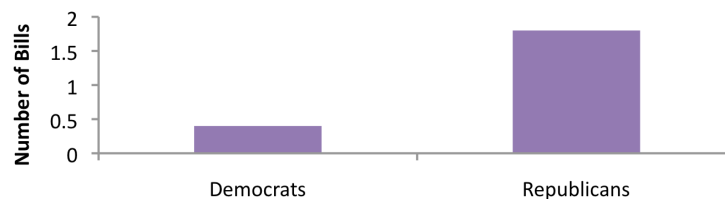
- Compile a list of all bills introduced by U.S. Representatives in Texas that use Policy Agendas Project’s topic codes **2**: “Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties” and **13**: “Social Welfare”
- Sort legislation into three categories: bills that would broaden/expand access by the public, bills that would limit/contract access by the public, and bills that would have no impact on the degree of access by the public



Service Access of Civil Rights/Liberties & Social Welfare Bills



Average Number of "Limiting Service Access" Bills Per Party, Per Congress



Findings

- The vast majority of civil rights/liberties and social welfare bills introduced by U.S. Representatives in Texas expand service access by the general public.
- The most popular types of bills introduced by either party center around Social Security issues, right to privacy, and access to government information.
- Republican U.S. Representatives in Texas introduce, on average, more than four times the number of “limiting service access” legislation per Congress than Democratic U.S. Representatives in Texas do.

Conclusion & Next Steps

- Although there does not appear to be a partisan element to the introduction of civil rights/liberties and social welfare legislation by U.S. Representatives in Texas, there is a partisan element when it comes to bills that limit access by the general public.
- Using a statistics program, additional research could look into whether specific congressional factors (racial makeup, religious affiliation, poverty status, education level, etc) influence a legislator’s frequency and type of bill introduction.

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