

FEDERALISM AND THE PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE: PARTISANSHIP AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL PRIORITIES¹

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State governments use many tools to convey their policy preferences to the federal government. Most studies of these tools focus on intergovernmental lobbying groups or individual state representatives in Washington, D.C. Though instructive, these studies fail to compare political parties' intergovernmental issue priorities. Our article fills this void by means of a longitudinal analysis of legislative resolutions submitted to the federal government between 1979 and 2011 by state legislators in Pennsylvania. This dataset reveals varying levels of support for federal policy among Pennsylvania's legislators, depending on their partisan affiliation.

Introduction

The primary method of studying state positions on federalism issues has been to examine the policy positions of intergovernmental lobbying groups (IGR), such as the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures. This research shows that states have difficulty achieving consensus on the details of intergovernmental policy issues. The IGR lobby generally seeks federal money and decision-making authority, but its members disagree on substantive statements about how these resources should be distributed. This disagreement is due primarily

to diverse memberships that produce cleavages that divide the IGR lobby. State officials construe intergovernmental priorities in light of their own personal policy and political goals. Consequently, they interpret federalism to suit their partisan views and the needs of their constituents.

This article examines one understudied cleavage that offers promise in explaining positions on federalism issues: partisanship. It explores the role of partisanship in determining intergovernmental priorities by examining 1,773 resolutions to the federal government that were introduced in Pennsylvania's General Assembly between 1979 and 2011. The article concludes that partisan issue positions rather than commitment to a theoretical concept of federalism is the primary determinant of what Pennsylvania's state legislators have asked of the federal government.

Literature

The division of responsibility for policy in the American federal system is fluid and adaptable (Elazar 1962; Grodzins 1966; Wright 1990). Daniel Elazar argues that the "federalism of the Constitution was crystal clear, just as the division and sharing of powers was left ambiguous" (1988, 43). A major issue in understanding American federalism is how states interact with Washington on questions of intergovernmental power. Do states prefer clearly delineated policy responsibilities so that they can retain decision-making capabilities without federal interference, or do they prefer federal policy intervention? Are positions on intergovernmental issues inherent in states, or are they dependent on other explanatory variables, such as partisanship?

Literature on Intergovernmental Lobbying

Literature exploring these questions focuses on the agendas of intergovernmental lobbying groups like the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) or the National Governors Association (NGA). Some studies examine the activities of individual organizations or genres of groups, such as regional or professional associations (Arnold and Plant 1994; Brooks 1961; Hall 1989; Weissert 1983). Others concern IGR lobbying on specific issues or during particular eras (Hays 1991; Levine and Thurber 1986; Marbach and Leckrone 2002). Case studies based on levels of policy conflict also exist (Cammissa 1995 and Haider 1974). Unfortunately, these groups have difficulty reaching consensus, not only because their memberships are diverse but also because they focus on spatial rather than material interests (Cammissa 1995, 129; Haider 1974, 226). Difficulty achieving quasi-unanimity on positions means that IGR groups address only a small range of issues, and they often do so only in general philosophic

terms rather than with concrete policy statements (Haider 1974, 217–18, Smith 1998, 356). Accordingly, groups take no positions on issues lacking consensus. Even when policy statements pass, the positions expressed do not represent state voices that were in the minority.

The IGR Literature and Cleavages among Subnational Officials

Priorities of the IGR lobbies do not accurately portray the multiplicity of subnational interests. The IGR lobbying literature, however, provides instruction concerning the cleavages preventing these officials from achieving consensus on the role of the federal government in intergovernmental relations. Elected officials are concerned with policy substance, but their primary goals are to ensure that they receive federal money and the authority to use funds with minimal restrictions (Cammissa 1995; Farkas 1971, 248–49; Haider 1974; Wallin 1998, 139–40). Consequently, they accept federal activity, seeking advantageous terms rather than rolling back the national presence in their policy realms (Nugent 2009, 50). Federal money allows state officials to “free ride” off the national government as they claim credit for implemented intergovernmental policies in hope of gaining electoral advantage (Nicholson-Crotty and Theobald 2010, 247).

This emphasis leads to cleavages as state and local officials attempt to reap advantages for their constituent interests. One cleavage is between elected and appointed officials (Beer 1978). Both sides advocate for more federal funding, but appointed officials prefer specificity from Washington to ensure that the money is spent on their policy interests. Conversely, elected officials like to use money at their own discretion (Haider 1974, 223). Most of the cleavages, however, are related to differences in spatial representation by subnational officials. Both Haider (1974) and Cammissa (1995) show that state and local governments often split over who should receive direct funding from Washington and which level of government should be assigned decision-making capabilities. Conflict among states is also attributable to regional differences (Hall 1989) and to issues related to size (Smith 1998, 362). Because this article focuses on a single state (Pennsylvania), intrastate cleavages are instructive. Such cleavages include: counties versus mayors (Haider 1974, 219; Marbach and Leckrone 2002, 54); large cities versus small cities (Haider 1974, 284); and rural versus suburban versus urban areas (Cigler 1995, 144; Haider 1974, 225–26).

Literature on Partisan Cleavages and Federalism

Unfortunately, the literature on IGR lobbying ignores the potentially divisive role that partisanship can play in stifling state consensus on federal policy activity. Some literature concerning political parties shows that

neither Democrats nor Republicans have defended theoretical federalism or the interests of state or local governments in the federal system. Scholarship cites three reasons for this anomaly: (1) a lack of centralized programmatic parties, (2) candidate-centered elections, and (3) the prevalence of ideology in defending the structure of government.

As to the first reason, Grodzins (1960) asserts that the design of American government thwarts strong political parties, thus making unlikely any coherent platform focusing on the operation of federalism. Parties are made national only by joining together in “interstate coalitions” based on the collectivization of parochial interests (Elazar 1972, 143). Epstein (1989) extends this analysis by arguing that the lack of programmatic parties in the United States releases partisans to focus on their discrete local needs rather than on more abstract concepts such as federalism.²

Candidate-centered elections encourage elected politicians to adhere to a personal agenda rather than to a party platform. Truman (1969, 47) contends that the individual ambition of various state and federal elected positions leads to the “development of largely independent, hostile, and internally cohesive factional groupings” within state parties. Hence, federal officials are more concerned with the impact of policy on their own ambitions than on the way it affects the powers of their home state. Chubb (1985) reinforces this point in noting that members of both political parties rely on centralizing power in Washington because the delivery of federal largesse to their constituents promotes politicians’ electoral success.

Finally, Nathan (1990, 251–56) finds that partisan belief on issues of federalism is more related to ideological goals than to fixed affiliation with structures of government interaction. He sees liberal Democrats as generally predisposed toward a centralized federalism reminiscent of Grodzins’s marble cake model, whereas he believes conservative Republicans favor contracting government and thus focus on a scheme of “dual federalism.” Adherence to these principles fluctuates, however, depending on which political party controls power in Washington. Conservative Republicans advocate devolution in times of liberal-Democratic retrenchment, but they favor centralization when they are in power so that they can cut the scope of the central government.

Many scholars, particularly during the early 1980s, attempted to construct voting indices for federalism. Like party support scores, these indices were designed to determine what types of legislators supported state and local autonomy in the federal system. All the studies using such indices found a mild to strong relationship between partisanship and support for state and local autonomy. Republicans in both houses of Congress were more likely to score higher on the federalism index than were Democrats (Schechter 1981; Caraley and Schlusell 1986; Hero 1987, 1989; Malaby and Webber 1991). Recent literature has found less support for this partisan

theory of federalism, particularly with regard to the last two presidential administrations, with both George W. Bush (Conlan and Dinan 2007; Milkis and Rhodes 2007) and Barack Obama (Conlan and Posner 2011) stepping out of the usual partisan roles related to intergovernmental relations. Support for or opposition to federal intervention on intergovernmental issues appears to be based more on policy preference than on theoretical federalism (Krane and Koenig 2005; Peterson 2005; Posner 1998, 36–56). This tendency receives little attention at the state level, but evidence suggests that partisanship and ideology affect opposition to federal mandates within state governments (Palazzolo et al. 2008; Regan and Deering 2009). In sum, even though neither party appears to be completely “federalism friendly,” partisan affiliation may be an important determinant of support for or opposition to federal policy activity.³

States as a Testing Ground for Understanding Cleavages

The most useful way to examine these cleavages is to study the intergovernmental policy positions of individual states. Scholars have generally neglected this topic, although several have made first attempts at exploration (Cingranelli 1983; Jensen 2010; Jensen and Emery 2011; Nugent 2009; Pelissero and England 1987; Smith 1998). These studies have been primarily descriptive in examining the activities of individual state lobbying or the intergovernmental activities of governors and their staffs. Missing from this literature is a longitudinal exploration of the intergovernmental priorities of states. This article addresses the scholarly void by using state legislative resolutions presented to the federal government to explore the specific policy topics important to Pennsylvania. Resolutions are policy positions passed by one or both houses of a state legislature that make requests of the federal government.⁴ Such resolutions have received scant attention in the literature, but they are a useful tool for understanding the intergovernmental policy preferences of states over time (Leckrone and Gollob 2010).

Resolutions are designed fundamentally to voice explicit preferences either supporting or opposing federal action across a wide range of policy issues (see the Appendix for an example). They lack policy content when they merely ask Congress to name a bridge or designate a date to commemorate a person or event. As the Appendix shows, however, most resolutions include serious statements of policy bolstered by solid evidence and a policy prescription. Our prior research polled legislators in several states on how and why they used resolutions to the federal government (Gollob and Leckrone 2011). We found two primary reasons for why legislators used resolutions. First, resolutions give state legislators a vehicle for transmitting preferences to Congress and entering them in the official record of legislative

deliberation.⁵ Second, resolutions contribute to the larger scope of agenda setting and deliberation that occurs in Washington. One state legislator said that resolutions might influence the policy agenda if “a critical mass of states express the same policy goal.”⁶ At a minimum, resolutions to the federal government help reinforce arguments being concurrently discussed by advocates for a state. We are not arguing that these resolutions influence Congress or that they affect policy outcomes (although prior research shows that state legislators believe resolutions are effective in conveying a policy position). At a minimum, resolutions are a valid measure for understanding what states want from the federal government.

Research Questions and Data

We assert that partisanship is a significant factor in determining the tone and content of state legislators’ statements on federalism. We test this proposition by analyzing resolutions introduced in Pennsylvania’s General Assembly between 1979 and 2011. Three questions guide our analysis. The first compares partisanship to other potential explanatory variables, whereas the two others take a more nuanced look at partisanship and federalism.

Our first question asks which of several variables affect Pennsylvania legislators’ support for or opposition to federal actions as expressed in resolutions. The variables include individual (sponsor/partisan identification), district (urban/rural dynamics), and state (regional influences) factors. Our second question addresses the level of partisan congruence by examining the policy issues of resolutions sponsored by Republican and Democratic state legislators in Pennsylvania. We analyze whether the rival political parties have different policy foci and whether they have differing levels of support for federal action across policy categories.

Finally, our third question considers whether partisan alignment between Harrisburg and Washington affects support for or opposition to Washington’s actions as expressed in resolutions. The literature cited above reaches no clear conclusion about the level of congruence on intergovernmental issues between members of a state party and their counterparts at the national level. Some scholars say state officials band together regardless of party to oppose undesired federal action. Others say the ideological predispositions of the participants affect their willingness to support a federal role in certain areas of policy. We test these ideas by analyzing the relationship between partisan support for resolutions and the partisan affiliation of the branch of government addressed in the resolution. We do so to determine whether partisan identification at the state level translates into support for or opposition to partisan policy proposals in Washington.

We answer these questions by using a unique dataset of legislative resolutions introduced in both chambers of Pennsylvania’s General

Assembly between 1979 and 2011 (the period corresponding to the 96th Congress through the first session of the 112th Congress). A total of 1,773 resolutions to the federal government were culled from Temple University's Pennsylvania Policy Database Project (PPDP). This project, funded by Pennsylvania's General Assembly, includes a usable database containing over 100,000 bills, resolutions, governors' speeches, state supreme court decisions, and print articles from the Commonwealth (see McLaughlin et al. 2010 and www.temple.edu/papolicy). Each piece of data was coded with one of 20 policy topic headings developed by the Policy Agendas Project (see Baumgartner and Jones 2002, 29–46 and www.policyagendas.org) and adapted to state politics by the PPDP.⁷

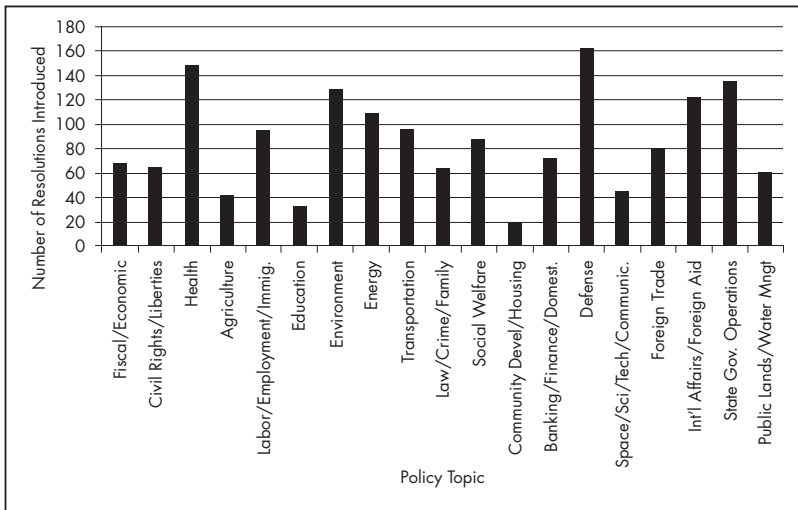
Some of the data provided by the PPDP include the primary sponsor of each resolution, the session in which it was introduced, information on whether the resolution was passed, and the policy code. The authors conducted additional analysis to assess the content and level of support for federal policy and mandates. Each resolution was analyzed to determine whether it supported or opposed existing policy or actions proposed by the federal government. In addition, criteria from the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1994) were used to determine whether resolutions mentioned a mandate.⁸

Between 1979 and 2011, legislators in Pennsylvania's General Assembly introduced 1,773 resolutions addressed to the federal government. Representatives introduced 1,288 of them; senators introduced 485. Only 133 of the resolutions were purely commemorative, meaning that they lacked either substantive policy content or policy prescriptions.⁹ Of the 1,640 substantive resolutions, 52% were addressed to Congress, 21% were directed at the president, and 16.5% spoke to both Congress and the president. Only 4.3% were aimed at the U.S. Supreme Court.

The resolutions were largely supportive of federal activity (62.7%). Mention of a mandate, however, made legislators less likely to approve of Washington's actions. Of resolutions with a positive tone, 91.4% did not mention a mandate. Conversely, 70% of resolutions mentioning a mandate opposed federal action.

As shown in Figure 1 below, the resolutions were broadly distributed across the policy codes. The codes used most often were for areas where federal control of policy is almost complete or where intergovernmental relations are extensive. Among the five most often used policy topics, defense (#1) and international affairs / foreign aid (#5) are primarily federal responsibilities; yet some components of these policy areas affect Pennsylvania's economy. For example, there was a strong focus on defense during the rounds of military base reductions that followed the end of the Cold War, given the economic consequences that base closures had on localities within the Commonwealth.

Figure 1
Resolutions Introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1979–2011.



Health (#2) and environment (#4) received attention because they are important intergovernmental programs. Indeed, health was Pennsylvania’s second largest area of expenditure between 1979 and 2011. The budgetary importance of this policy topic, along with Medicaid’s status as a shared intergovernmental program, helps to explain why state legislators paid so much attention to health. The environment was one of the top policy topics for a different reason: 46.3% of the introduced resolutions mentioned mandates. In fact, this topic had the most references to mandates. Legislators used it regularly to deride what they perceived to be federal overreach.

Government operations ranked third among the policy areas used. This category includes many topics related to the federal government that affect states, such as the census, election procedures, and intergovernmental relations. The last of these subcategories accounted for 3.2% of all resolutions to the federal government from Pennsylvania because it comprises discussion of mandates, block grants, and general state–federal relations. In short, the overall record of attention by Pennsylvania’s legislature to these specific issues is in line with expectations.

Results

Question 1: Variables Affecting Support for or Opposition to Federal Action.

The literature highlights several cleavages that prevent unanimity among state officials when creating an intergovernmental agenda. We argue

that of these variables, partisanship plays a significant role in determining state officials' attitudes toward federal action. We tested this argument by using logistic regression with support for federal policy as the dependent variable and measures of the contending explanations as the independent variables.

The units of analysis are 923 substantive resolutions introduced in Pennsylvania's General Assembly between 1992 and 2011 that address the activities of Congress, the president, or both branches. The dependent variable is the support for or opposition to (0=opposition, 1=support) existing or proposed federal policy as expressed in the resolutions. The independent variables include: sponsor party identification (0=Republican, 1=Democrat); the regional location of the sponsors' home districts in Pennsylvania (southeast, southwest, central, northeast, northwest dummy coded); and the percentage of the urban population living in the sponsors' legislative districts (0%–100%).¹⁰ Because longitudinal data for some of the independent variables are not available before 1992, the analysis includes only resolutions submitted between 1992 and 2011.¹¹

Data for the partisan identification of each sponsor were obtained through the PPDP. The PPDP provides the name of each resolution's primary sponsor, which we then paired with the sponsor's partisan affiliation. The second independent variable is the regional location of each sponsor's legislative district. The county (or counties) that each sponsor represents were identified using the Wilkes University Election Statistics Project (<http://staffweb.wilkes.edu/harold.cox/index.html>). The results were then linked to a regional location using the county–region alignment adopted by the Center for Opinion Research's Franklin and Marshall Poll of Pennsylvania (<http://www.fandm.edu/fandmpoll>).¹²

The final independent variable, urban/rural district dynamics, was collected through two sources. The first is the Census Bureau (2010), which began linking census data to state legislative districts beginning with the 2000 census. Using *State Legislative Elections: Voting Patterns and Demographics* (Barone, Lilley, and DeFranco 1998), we were able to extend our analysis back to 1992.

Results of the logistic regression show that both sponsor party identification and the urban characteristics of sponsors' legislative districts exhibit a statistically significant relationship with the tone of resolutions introduced in Pennsylvania's General Assembly. The positive coefficient for sponsor partisan identification ($B = .417$, $S.E. = .147$, $p < .05$) shows that Democratic sponsors are more likely than Republicans to be positive in their tone. The odds ratio of 1.52 indicates that Democrats are more likely than Republicans to introduce positive resolutions in the state legislature.

Because urban districts are generally liberal and thus likely to be represented by Democrats, state legislators representing urban districts are,

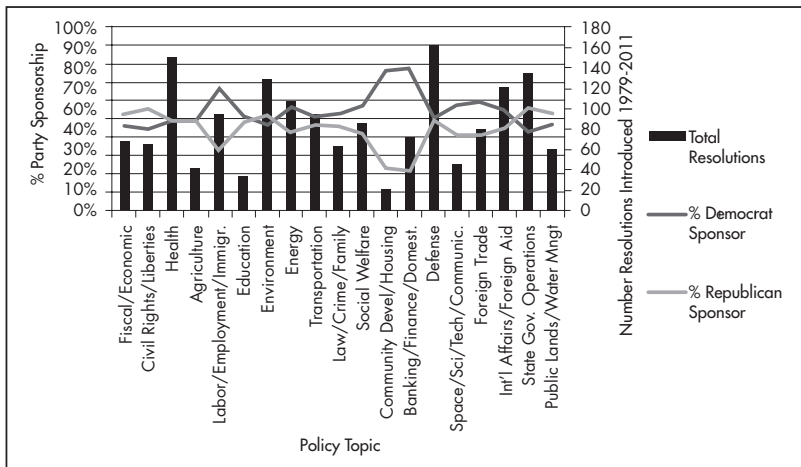
unsurprisingly, more positive in their resolutions than are rural legislators ($B = .006$; $S.E. = .002$; $p < .05$; $\text{Exp}(B) 1.006$). Although some alignment between regional location and urban/rural characteristics exists, the regions are large enough to act not simply as another measure of urban characteristics. In fact, the regional location of sponsors' legislative districts is not statistically significant.¹³ These findings suggest that partisanship does influence the views of Pennsylvania's state legislators on federalism, whereas regionalism does not.

Question 2: Partisan Congruence by Policy Issue.

The question whether Republicans and Democrats establish areas of issue ownership is important to the study of intergovernmental relations. If partisanship at the state level influences the content of messages the state sends to Washington, it might be possible to predict the future policy foci of a state in light of the partisan distribution within its legislature. Our dataset allows us to test whether partisanship had an impact on the policy topics of resolutions introduced in Pennsylvania's legislature between 1979 and 2011. Figure 2 below shows that partisan differences in most policy areas are generally small. Policy areas with a differential of less than 5% between Republican and Democratic sponsorship include fiscal/economic, health, agriculture, education, transportation, and defense.

Where levels of policy activity vary, however, political parties establish some areas of issue ownership. For instance, Democrats are more active

Figure 2
Party Sponsorship of Resolutions Introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1979–2011.

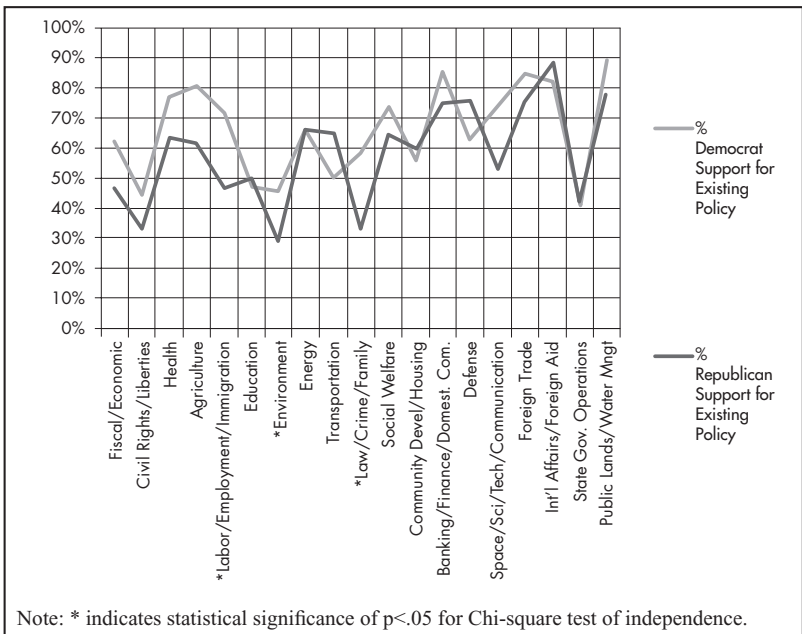


on energy, social welfare, international affairs, community development and housing, law/crime/family, labor/employment/immigration, banking/finance/domestic commerce, and space/science/communications. Republicans are more active on civil rights, environment, state government operations, and public lands. Additionally (as previously noted), resolutions addressing the environment frequently mentioned federal mandates, a tendency that may explain Republicans' emphasis on this issue. Further testing this relationship, a chi-square test shows a statistically significant association between sponsors' party identification and the policy topic of their resolutions,¹⁴ indicating a relationship between sponsor party identification and the policy issues of resolutions.

Partisan divides are more obvious when analyzing the tone of resolutions. Each resolution was coded using a measure to determine whether it expressed support for or opposition to existing or proposed federal policies. Figure 3 below reveals substantial differences between the political parties in their respective levels of support for federal action across policy domains.

Democrats supported federal activities 66% of the time versus 58% for Republicans. The 8% differential between parties is unsurprising given Republican ideology and rhetoric about small government and federalism.

Figure 3
Partisan Support for Existing or Proposed Federal Policy, 1979–2011.



Issue ownership is also supported, for there were statistically significant differences between Republicans and Democrats in their support of federal policy in the policy areas of environment, law/family/crime, and labor/employment/immigration.¹⁵

Analysis of support for or opposition to federal mandates provides further evidence that resolutions reflect partisan beliefs about the appropriate role of the federal government in state affairs. Republicans were more likely than Democrats to mention federal mandates (21% versus 16%). Environmental policy and government operations were the top two issues mentioning mandates for both the GOP and the Democrats. Not surprisingly, Republicans were also more likely than Democrats to oppose the imposition of mandates (89% versus 78%).

Question 3: Partisan Congruence across Levels of Government.

Federal–state relationships could be influenced by the partisan alignment between state legislators and the party in power in Washington. At issue is whether support for or opposition to federal activities is primarily a result of shared partisan priorities between the state and national political parties, or whether levels of support/opposition remain constant regardless of which party is in power nationally. If partisan alignment between state legislators and the federal government has an impact, we would expect to see more positive resolutions submitted by state legislators when their party is the majority party in Washington and the opposite when their party is in the minority there. This expectation is in keeping with the literature showing that party is a predictor of support for or opposition to presidential agendas (Grose and Middlemass 2010) and individuals’ support for or opposition to their party’s legislative program in the states (Jenkins 2008).

Partisan alignment was measured by comparing the partisan identity of each resolution’s sponsor with the majority party of the federal branch addressed in the resolution. For example, if a Republican state legislator introduced a resolution to a Republican president, then their partisanship is aligned. If the same sponsor introduced a resolution addressed to a Congress controlled by Democrats, then their party identity is not aligned. If a Republican state legislator introduced a resolution to both a Republican president and a Democratic-controlled Congress, then their party identity is split (given that the federal government is divided). The data analyze 1,640 substantive resolutions introduced in Pennsylvania’s General Assembly between 1979 and 2011.

The results in Table 1 below suggest that federal–state partisan alignment does not affect the tone of resolutions submitted in Pennsylvania’s legislature. State legislators of both parties exhibited only middling support of Washington when their party was in control nationally. They were more

supportive of Washington when their party dominated there than when it did not. Yet a chi-square test found no statistically significant relationship between tone and federal–state partisan alignment (sorted by partisan affiliation of sponsor).¹⁶

Table 1
PA Sponsor—Washington, D.C., Partisan Alignment on Support of Existing or Proposed Federal Policy, 1979–2011.

Partisanship of Resolution Sponsor	Republicans Hold D.C. Power	Democrats Hold D.C. Power	Divided D.C. Government
Democratic	50.4% Support	52.1% Support	63.5% Support
Republican	46.7% Support	40.6% Support	50.4% Support

The data show that state legislators were most supportive of Washington during periods of divided government in the nation’s capital. One plausible explanation is that state legislators’ support of their national parties is most important during periods of partisan division in Washington. Another possibility is that state legislators do not request major changes to the status quo regarding federal–state relationships during periods of partisan division in the nation’s capital. Instead, they try to protect those attributes of federal–state relationships that they view as positive. Finally, state legislators may attempt to influence divided government more by affirmation than by exacerbating existing partisan cleavages in Congress. Though plausible, these explanations require further testing before they can be validated.

A similar pattern emerges in substantive resolutions passed by Pennsylvania’s General Assembly between 1979 and 2011 (N=710). Table 2 below examines partisan alignment between Democratic- and Republican-controlled chambers in Harrisburg and partisan control in Washington.

Table 2
Harrisburg—Washington, D.C., Partisan Alignment on Support of Existing or Proposed Federal Policy, 1979–2011.

Partisan Control of PA Legislature	Republicans Hold D.C. Power	Democrats Hold D.C. Power	Divided D.C. Government
Democratic	42.5% Support	61.7% Support	70.7% Support
Republican	51.3% Support	42.2% Support	57.2% Support

Only a weak relationship exists between partisan control of the state legislative chamber that passed the resolution and party control of the federal branch to which it was addressed. A chi-square test finds a statistically significant relationship for Democratic alignment but not for Republican

alignment.¹⁷ If national party politics influenced the passage of supportive or oppositional resolutions at the state level, we would expect to see significantly more support when partisanship at the national and state level align. What is clear in Table 2 is that support is highest during periods of divided government and lowest when state–national partisanship is not aligned.

Conclusions and Future Research

This article has used a new means of assessing the intergovernmental agendas of states over time. A database of more than 1,700 resolutions introduced in Pennsylvania's General Assembly between 1979 and 2011 was constructed to examine the seldom studied topic of the relationship between partisanship and intergovernmental relations. State legislative resolutions sent to the federal government were used to determine whether partisan differences exist in the types of issues states raised with the federal government and whether levels of support for federal action vary. The study contributes three findings to the existing literature.

First, the dataset as a whole affirms prior research showing that state governments have accepted the federal government as the lead partner in American intergovernmental relations. Sixty-two percent of all resolutions viewed federal policy positively, whereas negative resolutions often related to displeasure with federal mandates. State officials thus appear willing to work cooperatively with the federal government as long as their authority to make decisions is not completely displaced.

Second, partisanship proved to be a statistically significant factor in determining support for or opposition to federal policy. Compared with other widely accepted explanations, partisanship significantly influenced support for or opposition to existing or proposed federal policy. Partisanship also had a significant relationship with the policy focus of resolutions. This important finding shows there is no innate state position on the policy activities of the federal government. Rather, the package of ideological and policy predispositions that define partisan differences significantly affects how state legislators and legislatures approach issues of intergovernmental relations.

Finally, we found some relationship between state partisanship and support for and opposition to party activities in Washington, especially when accounting for partisan control of the state legislature. Both political parties were more likely to support their own partisans in Washington than they were to aid their opponents. This pattern, combined with the previous finding, shows an interesting relationship between federalism and partisanship. Previous scholarship argued that the decentralized, candidate-centered nature of American political parties prevents a uniform, programmatic approach by state and federal officials to issues of intergovernmental relations. By contrast, our evidence shows that the

ideological predispositions of partisan affiliation often trump state officials' spatial identity. The intergovernmental agendas of state and federal officials are thus more nationalized than scholars have believed.

Drawing firm and generalizable conclusions from a single case study of Pennsylvania's General Assembly is difficult. Still, our conclusions go beyond the existing literature to promote deeper understanding of state attention to intergovernmental issues. Studies of national and regional intergovernmental organizations allow scholars to explore areas of state consensus on federalism issues. Studying state resolutions to the federal government provides a more nuanced understanding of federalism issues subject to partisan conflict. This method of analysis uncovers issues that would not be addressed by peak IGR groups because passage of their policy positions requires bipartisan super majorities.

Appendix
Example of a Resolution to Congress:
Pennsylvania House Resolution 775 of 2010

A RESOLUTION

Memorializing the Congress of the United States to refrain from imposing unfunded mandates on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its citizens.

WHEREAS, The taxpayers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are already facing the prospect of difficult budget cycles because of diminished tax revenues and growing public entitlement obligations; and

WHEREAS, This situation is expected to grow worse because of:

- (1) an end to Federal stimulus money;
- (2) unfunded pension obligations;
- (3) urgent infrastructure needs;
- (4) the General Assembly's other budgetary obligations; and

WHEREAS, According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 12% of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's population is now enrolled in Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, This enrollment costs the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania billions in public assistance programs, thus making welfare entitlements one of the top spending categories in the State budget; and

WHEREAS, The Urban Institute estimates the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will see an additional 818,390 people become eligible, representing a 25% increase in those enrolled in the Medicaid program if Medicaid eligibility is increased to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level as contained in HR No. 3590, passed by the United States Senate; and

WHEREAS, On September 9, 2009, the President of the United States promised that legislation being considered by the Congress of the United States would not add to the Federal deficit but was silent about states bearing the weight of unfunded mandates; and

WHEREAS, Data from the National Conference of State Legislatures shows the impact on states will be significant from this increase with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's added matching obligation to total \$2.31 billion in the 2014–2019 period; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress of the United States to refrain from imposing unfunded mandates on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its citizens; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the office of each United States Senator and to the office of each of the members of the United States House of Representatives.

Notes

1 The ordering of the authors' names is arbitrary, for both contributed equally to this article. Previous versions of this work were presented in 2012 at the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association and the State Politics and Policy Conference. The authors would like to thank the discussants and other panelists for their critiques. They would also like to thank their research assistant, Katrina Kelly, who collected portions of the dataset. Parts of this research were funded through a Widener University Faculty Development Grant.

2 Epstein implies that one of the reasons for the rise of intergovernmental lobbying organizations is the lack of a party devoted to protecting state and local governments.

3 The literature review focuses on the intergovernmental policy positions of elected officials. Additional evidence suggests that partisanship affects the stances of citizens (Kincaid and Cole 2008; Malhotra 2008) and scholars (Kincaid and Cole 2002) on issues of federalism.

4 Legislative resolutions directed to the federal government are also referred to as Memorials. For a more extensive overview of the origins and historical use of resolutions to Congress, see Leckrone and Gollob (2010).

5 Resolutions to Congress are entered in the Congressional Record. Abstracts of the resolutions are entered for resolutions submitted to the House of Representatives, whereas the full text becomes part of the official record for resolutions received by the Senate.

6 Although research on resolutions to the federal government is scarce, this practice reinforces conclusions from previous studies on a federal balanced budget amendment (Nice 1986) and opposition to REAL ID (Regan and Deering 2009).

7 This coding methodology has been widely used in the policy field, including databases such as the Congressional Bills Project (www.congressionalbills.org) and the international Comparative Agendas Project (www.comparativeagendas.org). For a bibliography of the research employing this coding scheme, see <http://www.policyagendas.org/biblio>.

8 The Pennsylvania Policy Database codes data by reading the abstract of the resolution created by the General Assembly's Legislative Reference Bureau. The abstract contains enough information for determining the policy topic of the resolution but not enough to understand exactly what is being asked of the federal government or whether a mandate exists. Consequently, this project examined the full text of resolutions when coding for tone and mandates.

9 The following is an example of a commemorative resolution: “A Resolution memorializing AMTRAK to designate the station at 30th and Market Streets in Philadelphia as the Pennsylvania Station.”

10 Early analysis examined several models with a variety of independent variables that were later dropped from the model used here. Independent variables excluded from this model include the average household income in sponsors’ home districts, the average Social Security income in sponsors’ home districts, and 10-year party competition in sponsors’ home districts. Because turnover is low in Pennsylvania’s General Assembly, sponsor partisan identity was highly correlated with the 10-year intradistrict party competition variable. Moreover, the region of Pennsylvania was highly correlated with both the average household income and the average Social Security income in the sponsors’ home districts.

11 $N=923$ substantive resolutions. The dependent variable included 376 resolutions coded as oppose and 547 coded as support. Resolutions were supported by 453 Republicans and 470 Democrats, with 214 of these representatives representing the southwest region of the state, 152 the central region, 134 the northwest region, 103 the northeast region, and 320 the southeast region. The average percentage of residents living in urban areas for these 923 cases is 66%.

12 The Franklin and Marshall College Poll treats Philadelphia and Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) as their own regions of Pennsylvania. We merged Philadelphia and Allegheny County with their appropriate regions (southeast and southwest, respectively).

13 The pseudo $R^2 = .03$

14 Chi-square test results: $\chi^2 = 48.24 (19), p < .01$.

15 Results of chi-square results for Democratic/Republican sponsor and oppose/support: $\chi^2 = 12.7 (1), p < .000$. Results for individual policy topics: Environment $\chi^2 = 3.9 (1), p < .05$; Labor/Employment/Immigration $\chi^2 = 5.6 (1), p < .05$; Law, Family and Crime $\chi^2 = 4.15 (1), p < .05$

16 Chi-square test results: Republicans $\chi^2 = 4.76 (2), p > .05$; Democrats $\chi^2 = 5.46 (2), p > .05$

17 Chi-square test results: Republicans $\chi^2 = 5.08 (2), p > .05$; Democrats $\chi^2 = 7.19 (2), p < .05$

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