

A Seat at the Table?
The Focus and Content of Black Policy Representation

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Abstract

Representing group concerns is a complex enterprise requiring sophisticated strategies and innovative approaches from elected representatives. Black policy representation can range from voting to support black concerns within the boundaries of the status quo to advocating alternatives to politics as usual by introducing ambitious policy proposals. Black representation is a story of balancing symbols with substance. Using a sample of legislators from the 104th Congress from districts with at least 15% black populations, I consider the effects of race and party on the focus and policy content of black interest bill sponsorship. I find that black legislators are more likely to advocate for black interests symbolically, but race and party differences disappear for substantive black policy representation.

Paper prepared for presentation at the American Politics Research Group, Department of
Political Science, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, November 14, 2008.

I'm not going to sit at your table and watch you eat, with nothing on my plate, and call myself a diner. Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner unless you eat some of what's on that plate."

- Malcolm X, *"The Ballot or the Bullet,"* 1964¹

With the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, black activists hoped to leverage their new voting power to elect a body of legislators, black and white, to champion their interests in the national legislature. As evidence of this strategy, black voters more than tripled the number of black legislators in Congress in the decade between 1965 and 1975, using their votes to increase their descriptive representation from a meager five black MCs in the 88th Congress to sixteen in the 93rd. But, as Malcolm X points out in his famous "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech, blacks wanted more than just a seat at the decision making table; they also wanted to share in the fruits of political membership and representation. A seat at the table was necessary, but not sufficient, to move the needs and wants of black citizens from the periphery of American politics to the center of deliberation. The expectation was that equality in the voting booth would provide a first step toward creating a new, inclusive, and responsive political reality for blacks (King 1967, 149-50).

The connection between the transformative goals of the civil rights movement and black representation in Congress has been understated or ignored in much of the existing literature. While research on racial redistricting has revealed an important trade-off between descriptive and substantive representation in Congress, it does not address the advocacy of black interests beyond roll-call voting (Epstein and O'Halloran 2006; Lublin 1997; Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996). Black and white Democrats may vote similarly on proposals that reach the House floor, but this pattern may not hold in other arenas of legislative activity. In part due to

¹ From a speech entitled, "The Ballot or the Bullet," delivered by Malcolm X on April 3, 1964.

the ability of congressional committees to act as gatekeepers, constraining the bills that come up for floor vote to those that can garner wide support of the majority party (Cox and McCubbins 2005), only rarely will roll-call votes break down on a potentially divisive racial dimension (Canon 1999; Whitby 1997; Hutchings, McClerking, and Charles 2001). Policy proposals offering alternatives far from the status quo will die in committee (Krehbiel 1991). Locating active commitment to black policy representation requires investigating earlier stages in the legislative process.

Transforming politics necessitates transformative leadership. Cathy Cohen (1999, 254) defines transformative leadership as “leadership which seeks fundamental change by appealing to a greater moral purpose, transforming both group members and political targets.” An analysis of bill sponsorship in Congress may provide insight into this type of advocacy that the analysis of roll-call votes cannot. Existing research suggests that black representatives will be more likely to vigorously advocate a black public policy agenda than other legislators. Black Democrats are the most consistently liberal representatives in the House (Tate 2003; Lublin 1997; Whitby 1997; Swain 1994). This suggests that they are also most consistently support the liberal policies at the core of the black political agenda.² Compared to other legislators, black representatives also more consistently vote to strengthen civil rights and voting rights legislation through both amendment and final vote stages (Whitby 1997). Canon (1999) finds that black representatives allocate substantially more resources to black issues through voting, bill sponsorship and cosponsorship, floor speaking, and staffing decisions than their white counterparts. Minta (2008) and Hall (1996) respectively, find that black legislators more intensely advocate issues that concern minorities in committee hearings and during floor debate. This positions black MCs to be the most likely source of a transformative black policy agenda.

² Jennings (2001) notes that the black agenda is more progressive and radical than the liberal agenda in Congress.

While white Democrats may “vote the right way” on issues of concern to black citizens, passive support of a black policy agenda may not translate into more demanding kinds of policy representation such as bill sponsorship.

Bill sponsorship, as compared to voting, is a relatively unconstrained activity that allows legislators great freedom in deciding how many bills to sponsor, what issues to tackle, and what purposes various bills will serve. Representatives’ legislative portfolios indicate their issue priorities (Hall 1996). Thus, one way for legislators to present themselves to colleagues and constituents is through the use of bill sponsorship to indicate support of particular issues or constituents’ interests.³ Research on bill sponsorship in the House finds that both race and party are important predictors of the degree to which legislators include black policy concerns in their legislative agendas (Tate 2003; Canon 1999). Previous work considerably advances the understanding of black representation beyond roll-call voting, but stops short of connecting the advocacy implicit in Cohen’s (1999) concept of the a transformative leader with what Guinier (1994) terms the “transformative vision” of the civil rights movement.⁴ Investigating this connection requires a research approach that considers both the focus and content of policy proposals. In this paper, *focus* refers to whether a bill is race-specific—does it directly name blacks as beneficiaries or take a more universal approach? *Policy content* refers to whether a bill is substantive or symbolic. If enacted, will the bill deliver material-resources to black Americans or is it symbolic, aimed more at giving voice to issues than securing tangible policy benefits? Structured around these questions, empirical research of black policy representation can examine

³Schiller (2000) provides a good account of senators’ use of bill sponsorship and possible relationships between bill sponsorship and representation. See Fenno (1978, chapters 3-4) for a discussion of the many ways representatives “present” themselves to their constituents.

⁴Guinier argues civil rights activists envisioned a “process of political mobilization, grassroots organization, articulation of a black social and economic agenda, and ultimately, achievement of ‘effective social change’” as the result of the Voting Rights Act (Briffault, 1995).

whether legislators vary the focus and content of the black interest bills they sponsor in predictable ways.

This paper has two goals. First, I develop a theory that accounts for the symbolic actions that representatives engage in to give voice to group concerns. Given that some MCs see “making good public policy at least as important as getting reelected,” (Hurley 2001) it stands to reason that a subset of representatives might approach bill sponsorship as transformative leaders rather than pragmatic compromisers focused only on immediate substantive gains. Typically dismissed as political-grandstanding (Canon 1999) or cheap talk (Mayhew 1974), what I call, *symbolic legislation* may actually be a legislator’s attempt to make good public policy. For instance, it is unlikely that Representative John Lewis (D-GA) expected to benefit electorally from pushing a bill guaranteeing homeless citizens the right to vote, yet he was original sponsor of the Voting Rights of Homeless Citizens Act across three consecutive congresses in the 1990s.⁵ This kind of policy representation would be invisible to most studies of representation or legislative politics.⁶ Making the case for why such activity as politically relevant is a contribution of this paper. My approach adds a balanced alternative to explaining black representation in purely substantive terms.

Second, I attempt to connect the expectations for advocacy articulated during the protest movements of the 1960s to black policy representation in a modern congress by examining the focus and policy content in black interest bill sponsorship. In the course of this effort, I address the following questions: Do MCs introduce legislation that broadly reflects object black

⁵ By standard accounts, Lewis was serious about pushing this bill. By the 105th Congress, he had recruited 71 cosponsors and recruited Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) to offer a companion bill in the Senate. The coding scheme is discussed later in the paper.

⁶ Recent work by Mayhew (2000) and others that shifts the focus of legislative politics research to “landmark” legislation, bills that not only get enacted, but also achieve some measure of greatness, threatens to further obscure this kind of activity. Mayhew acknowledges that in his analysis, “members not in the category of white males contributed on 2.6 percent of all MC actions in the 1950s, 6.1 percent in the 1960s, 7.6 percent in the 1970s, and 6.4 percent in the 1980s” (171).

interests, e.g., poverty remedies, education, and civil and voting rights? Do they present policy solutions in race-specific or universal terms? And, do legislators pursuing a black policy agenda offer mostly pragmatic policy solutions or do they include symbolic legislation in their portfolios?

Like previous research, I am interested in the effect of a legislator's race and party on black policy representation. My analysis shows that black policy representation is a routine part of the legislative agendas of some members of Congress.⁷ Transformative leadership is mostly the work of black legislators; however, legislators do not differ much when it comes to pushing substantive policy representation for blacks. In what follows, I briefly discuss policy focus and content in more detail, further developing my theory of symbolic representation along the way. Next, I discuss the data and methods followed by a reporting of the results. The paper concludes with some thoughts on the implications of this research for the literature on black representation.

Hunting Where the Ducks Are: Policy Focus and Black Representation

Both the focus and content of legislation are important for understanding how proposed policies map onto to black representation. A race-specific focus may indicate the bill initiator's perspective about whether the underlying problem addressed by the proposal is primarily about race or something else (Haynie 2001). Black politics scholars and black citizens are divided on which approach is most effective. Universal approaches may signal the mainstreaming of black politics and pave the way for increased legislative support for black policy demands (Swain 1994, Tate 2003). On the other hand, Smith (1996, 210) claims that black Americans "have no

⁷Because my sample includes only legislators from districts with black populations of 15% or greater, the results probably overestimate the level of black policy representation in Congress. MCs from districts less than 15% percent black likely are less responsiveness to black policy concerns. Of course, this proposition can be tested empirically and I take up this question in work elsewhere.

leaders” in part because black legislators have begun adopting more universal solutions to the problems confronting black America, rather than developing race-conscious strategies that “go hunting where the ducks are.” Despite this criticism, existing literature provides evidence that black legislators, more than others, propose policies that explicitly name blacks as beneficiaries (Baker and Cook 2005; Cobb and Jenkins 1996; Bratton and Haynie 1994). Canon (1999) found that among House members from districts with at least 25% black populations, nearly half of black legislators included bills having some racial content in their legislative agendas, compared to nearly none of the white members during the 103rd Congress. In a study of five state legislatures, Haynie (2001) found that majorities of black legislators introduced black interest bills and that they introduced more black interest bills proportionally than did their white colleagues. He found that black legislators were twice as likely as other legislators to make black policy representation a central feature of their legislative agendas.

Symbols or Substance: Black Representation and Policy Content

That some bills are sponsored for symbolic reasons is well recognized by legislative scholars. Sometimes legislators sponsor bills that seem aimed more at agenda-setting and position-taking than policy-making (Gross 1953, Mayhew 1974). Mayhew (1974, 62n) recounts a response from a representative in Clapp’s (1963) *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It*, who says, “I try to introduce bills that illustrate, by and large, my ideas—legislative, economic, and social. I do like being able to say when I get cornered, ‘yes, boys, I introduced a bill to try to do that in 1954.’ To me it is the perfect answer.” Mayhew assigns this type of activity little value and suspects that voters do the same; however, some members of Congress expect just the opposite and spend considerable time crafting legislative portfolios that anticipate district needs.

In these instances, bill sponsorship may function symbolically *to give a voice to issues*, rather than to necessarily implement new public policy (Edelman 1964; Elder and Cobb 1983).

Mayhew's misgivings notwithstanding, the fact that some legislation is symbolic does not make it expendable. Indeed, Elder and Cobb (1983:20-22) contend that, "since most people are not very vigilant in their monitoring of the political process and lack detailed information, they rely on symbolic cues in making their assessments" of policies and politicians. If, as I argue is the case, members of Congress introduce a subset of their proposals as first volleys in their attempts to reshape the terms of debate, then it seems likely that over time some portion of symbolic bills are either modified to become more appealing to mainstream legislators or that the political climate changes to make them more politically acceptable—and thus more like substantive bills. While some bills are clearly symbolic in nature, others are better characterized in relative terms. Bills that are more symbolic than substantive today may become more substantive over time through negotiations amongst legislators or change in the broader political environment.

Linking bill sponsorship to representation requires an acknowledgment of both the *substantive* and *symbolic* functions that legislation can fulfill. There is a difference between substantive bills and bills that have substantive impact. A bill can be substantive in focus and, in the absence of enactment, have no impact at all. An example of such a case is legislation written to ensure fair-lending practices in minority communities. If the bill were clearly targeted against specified lending practices and clear implementation mechanisms were outlined, the bill would have a substantive impact if it were enacted. The point is that the absence of enactment, and thus substantive impact, does not preclude it from having a substantive focus.

Symbolic legislation differs from substantive legislation in several ways. The key distinctions derive from the feasibility of implementation and the likelihood of substantive impact. Kingdon (1995, 200-201) describes five characteristics that separate feasible policies from those that are likely to fail: the former are technically feasible, are compatible with the values of policy community specialists, consider budgetary and other constraints, have the support of mass and specialized publics, and are supported by receptive politicians in the legislature.

Integrating symbolic responsiveness theories from Edelman (1964), Pitkin (1972), and Eulau and Karps (1977) with Kingdon's (1995) theoretical analysis of agenda-setting and policy formation, I develop a four-criteria measure to identify symbolic policy proposals.⁸ First, symbolic bills are often policy outliers, far from the median voter in the House or in the voting public, with little hope of attracting enough support to get reported from committee (Kingdon, 131-139). Second, symbolic bills target largely powerless groups with few resources for mobilization and of little threat to other members of Congress. Backing from powerful outside interest groups can assist in public relations wars, improving the chances of a bill that would otherwise likely fail (Sinclair 2006, 288-289). Third, symbolic legislation is often technically vague. That is, the details of action are unspecified and there are no identifiable implementation mechanisms. For instance, a bill that promised universal employment for the poor would be coded as symbolic because the targeted group is largely powerless to decisively influence the decision-making of most members, and the implementation is technically unfeasible. Finally, and most simply, symbolic legislation will have little or no tangible impact for the targeted group even if it is enacted. Three examples of symbolic legislation will illustrate these points.

⁸At a minimum, a bill must satisfy only one criterion in order to be classified as symbolic. In general, most symbolic bills will satisfy more than one criterion.

An easily recognized symbolic bill is the kind aimed at naming a post office after a civil rights leader or using a postage stamp to commemorate B.B. King. Although these bills objectively promote black interest and are often passed, their tangible impact is negligible. A more sophisticated form of symbolic legislation is the kind that seeks a benefit for the black community that is unlikely to be realized given the dominant policy moods in the country and in Congress. An example is H.R.40, a bill introduced by Representative John Conyers (D-MI) in every session of Congress since 1989.⁹ This bill called for a commission to study the need for and allocations of reparations to African Americans for slavery-related injustices. The first and last official action on the bill has typically been its referral to the Judiciary Committee. During the 103rd Congress, Conyers could not manage to get the bill reported from a subcommittee on which he sat as a member of the majority party despite having recruited 29 co-sponsors, including one Republican. In fact, of the 34 pieces of legislation originally sponsored by Conyers during the 103rd Congress, only 2 bills received affirmative votes in the House. This dismal record of legislative effectiveness did not prevent Conyers from touting his legislative agenda during the annual Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Weekend the following fall. Nor did it prevent him from hosting a legislative seminar on the issue of African American reparations during that event.

Still, symbolic legislation need not be characterized as entirely futile. A bill introduced in hopeless conditions during one Congress might find its moment of triumph in a future one, provided that the political climate sways in its favor. For example, Representative Ron Dellums (D-CA) introduced legislation establishing economic sanctions to protest apartheid in South Africa during every session of Congress for almost two decades before it was favorably reported

⁹ The first action on H.R. 40, a subcommittee hearing, occurred on December 18, 2007. The advancing of the bill from obscurity to a hearing rests in no small part on Conyers' ascendance to the chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee. The hearing was hosted by the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.

from committee and passed by the House in 1986. While substantive in its effects for black and white South Africans, the bill remains symbolic for African Americans in the United States because it fails to directly or indirectly affect their objective policy interests. For the most part, black interest in South African apartheid represents a symbolic attack on institutionalized racism. Legislative action in this area does not reflect the fulfillment of material policy objectives for the black community.

Substantive bills are those that directly or indirectly address black interests with narrow goals, clear implementation mechanisms, and tangible results if enacted. A bill sponsored to encourage economic development through the creation of empowerment zones and enterprise communities is an example of a bill coded as substantive.

Another type of bill presents a hybrid mix of symbolic and substantive goals. These hybrid bills are neither purely symbolic, nor purely substantive. Legislation sponsored to require the mandatory registration of handguns is one example. If gun registration actually results in a reduction of the number of guns in minority neighborhoods, then the legislation will have a substantive affect on black social well-being. The bill is symbolic, however—particularly in the context of the 104th Republican-controlled Congress—because it was outside the prevailing policy stream (Kingdon 1995).

Empirical research on symbolic representation is slowly emerging in political science. In a largely descriptive account of bill sponsorship by legislators in the 104th Congress, Katherine Tate (2003) identifies several potential purposes of symbolic bill sponsorship, three of which are relevant here. Symbolic bills can provide political cover, initiate or augment a larger political agenda, or address the concerns of groups that would otherwise not get addressed.¹⁰

¹⁰ The other two purposes are to influence the behavior of the White House and to persuade fellow members of Congress on policy questions.

Acknowledging the difficulty of determining legislators' motives, Tate (2003, 99) suggests that South Carolina senator and former Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond's resolution designating a week to honor historically black colleges and universities "smacks of political cover." Using a sample of 58 legislators from districts with at least 25% black populations during the 103rd Congress, David Canon (1999) examines the policy content of the bills members sponsored. While his definition of symbolic bills is narrower than the one that I present here, limited to "mostly commemorative legislation," such as naming a federal building after an African-American historical figure and identified in simple House and Joint resolutions, he finds that legislators introduced three times as many nonracial symbolic bills as racial ones. Symbolic bills attracted more cosponsors and more often made it past legislative hurdles than substantive bills (Canon 1999, 170-171).

In perhaps the most rigorous treatment of black policy representation to date, Baker and Cook (2005) examine what they call "material" and "cultural" bill sponsorships, rough equivalents to symbolic and substantive bills. Examining the entire Congress across the 102nd through 105th Congress, they find that black MCs, including black Republicans, were more likely to represent a black policy agenda regardless of policy content and with little or no electoral reward.

Data and Methods

An individual legislator is the unit of analysis in the study. My sample is drawn from a larger sample of districts included in the 1996 National Black Election Study.¹¹ Given the time-intensive demands of coding the focus and policy content of hundreds of bills, it seemed prudent to restrict my analysis to legislators from districts with black populations of 15 percent or more.

¹¹ See Tate (2003) for detailed information about sampling methods.

One hundred legislators fit this criterion. After removing the three MCs who failed to serve complete terms during the 104th Congress and the one Latino representative to simplify the race variable my sample included legislators from 96 of the original 252 districts and 33 of the 38 black Democratic House members included in the NBES.¹² I supplemented the NBES dataset with data on district characteristics such as the racial composition of the district, region, and the percent of the district that was classified as urban in the Census for each legislator. I also collected data on the seniority and party affiliation of each representative. The sample is mostly white (65.6%), heavily Democratic (74%), mostly southern (63.5%), and mostly urban (86.5%).¹³

I use Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis to examine which MCs include black policy representation in their legislative agendas, paying special attention to the focus and content of the bills they sponsor.¹⁴ Because of high multicollinearity between member race and the racial composition of congressional districts, I ran the models with and without the percentage of blacks in the district.¹⁵ The dependent variable is the percentage of total bill introductions by each member that reflects a black policy agenda, the racial focus, and the policy content— coded as symbolic, substantive or a hybrid mix.

Based on existing literature, I expect that, all else being equal, both the race of the legislator and the legislator's party affiliation will be important predictors of black policy representation.

¹² The excluded representatives, by name, are: Reps. Mfume (D-MD), Tucker (D-CA), Reynolds (D-IL) and Serrano (D-NY).

¹³ My sample overrepresents the south by 33.4% and Democratic legislators by 26.9%. It underrepresents white legislators in the 104th Congress by 25.4%. It also heavily overrepresents the share of urban districts.

¹⁴ Using an event count model is probably more appropriate for this data. Because most members did not sponsor any black interest bills, the data is overdispersed. This presents problems for OLS models, whereas a Negative Binomial Model better fits data distributed in this fashion. Canon (1999, 194) suggests that using the proportion of bills sponsored that have varying content helps to correct for the variation and instability in the data and this is the approach that I have taken in this project.

¹⁵ As presented in the tables, the standard model includes both the race of the member and the racial composition of the district. The amended model includes only the race of the member. I also ran the models without the race of the member. The racial composition of the district added far less explanatory power than the race of the member both in terms of the size of coefficients and the amount of variance explained.

The race of the member is the key explanatory variable for black interest bill sponsorship at the state and national level (Bratton 2002, Whitby 2002, Haynie 2001, Canon 1999, Cobb and Jenkins 1996). I also expect a positive relationship between Democratic legislators and black interest bill sponsorship. The descriptive statistics show that, in terms of the number of bills sponsored, Republicans are less likely to represent black interests through bill sponsorship than Democrats. The racial composition of the district, along with the percentage that is urban, and region are included as controls. Canon (1999) found that the racial composition of a district had a small, but positive effect on the proportion of members' legislative portfolios that contained racial or part-racial content.

Black Democrats sponsored 335 bills and amendments, introducing an average of 10.15 bills per member. White members sponsored 620 bills, averaging 9.84 bills each. Democrats averaged 10.3 bills each, for a total of 731 bill introductions, while Republicans – the majority party members— sponsored 224 bills with an average of 8.96 bills each. Each bill and amendment was coded for whether it promoted a black policy agenda, its race-specific focus, and for its symbolic or substantive policy content.¹⁶

Based on the coding scheme outlined here, a total of 190 bills were coded as beneficial to blacks. I first coded bills based on objective black interests, addressing housing accessibility, job creation and protection, improvement of the educational system, healthcare quality and accessibility, and civil rights. For instance, bills aimed at ending mortgage redlining practices, encouraging urban revitalization, and preventing crime were coded as black interest bills. I then coded bills in terms of their focus as described previously. Legislation aimed at increasing the

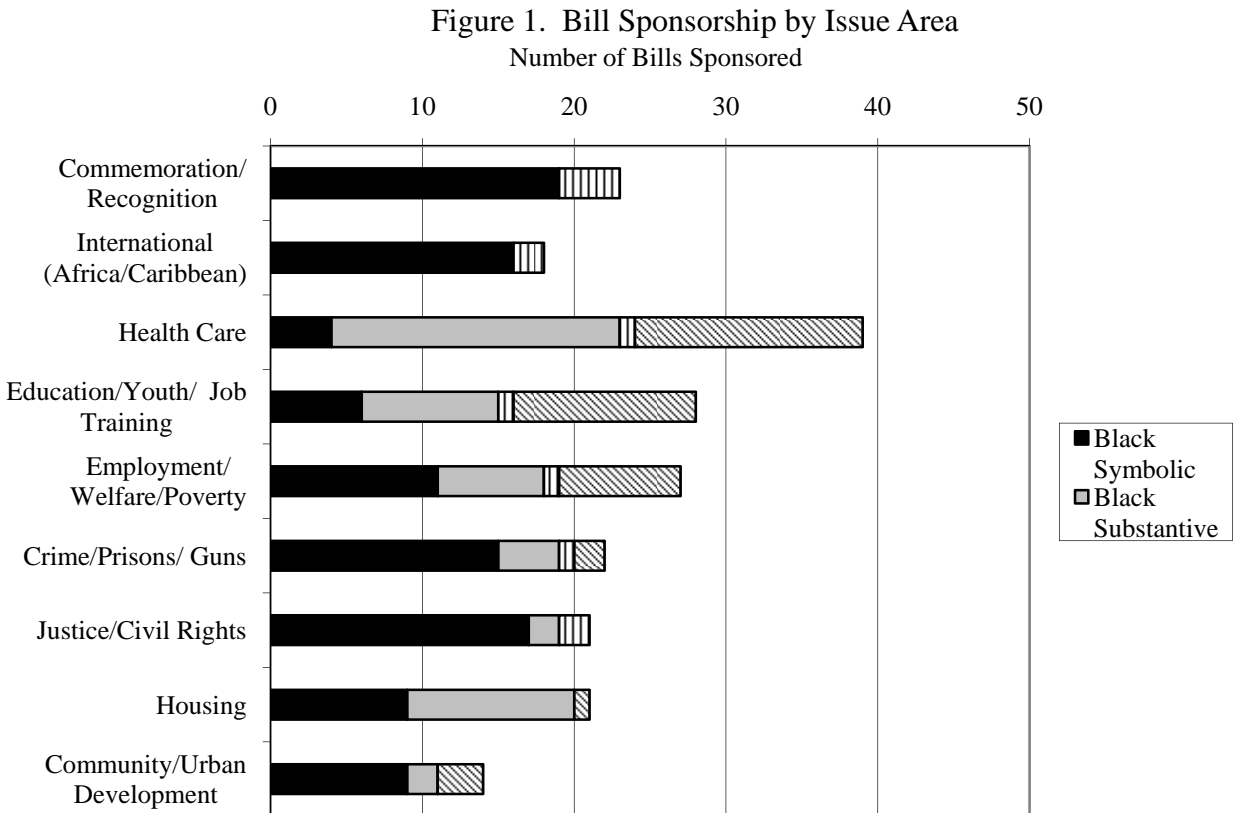
¹⁶ Through the course of this research I spoke with several legislative directors and assistants from Capitol Hill about my conceptualization of bills in this way. My interviews (not presented here) with them about their member's bill sponsorship behavior fit nicely into the conceptualization I develop.

number of black- and women-owned small businesses was coded as directly beneficial to blacks, while legislation seeking to raise the minimum wage was coded as universal.

Finally, I coded bills according to their symbolic or substantive content. Purely symbolic bills are mostly commemorative bills. Many of these are sponsored in the form of non-binding House resolutions that do not have the force of law, but rather give a sense of the sentiment of the House on a particular issue. These resolutions often pass the House by voice (as opposed to recorded) vote and are thus relatively low cost to sponsor and support with votes. Simple symbolic bills, such as the bill to mint a one-dollar coin with the likeness of the Reverend Martin L. King, Jr., are sometimes introduced as public bills (designated with H.R. rather than H.Res.) and were also coded as symbolic. Bills that addressed concerns of people of color and oppressed groups internationally, including a bill to increase the funding allocation for the African Development Fund, were coded as universal and symbolic because they neither directly affect American blacks, nor do they substantively affect African Americans' material or social well-being in the United States.¹⁷ Substantive bills, such as a bill to increase the funding resources for a local historically black university, are those that, if enacted, would have a substantive impact on black public policy needs. Others, including a bill requiring that a certain proportion of poor residents sit on public housing policy boards or one reducing funds for prison grants in favor of adding funds to crime prevention activities, are coded as hybrid legislation. Hybrid bills are neither purely symbolic nor purely substantive in their public policy affects.

¹⁷ The bill's chief aim is not to benefit American blacks although it is substantive in its effects for citizens of African nations. For that reason, it is coded as symbolically addressing American blacks' interest in and support of black people and people of color internationally.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the policy proposals by type and policy are sponsored by representatives in my sample.¹⁸ There are obvious differences between blacks and white representatives in the number of bills they introduce representing black concerns across all of the issue areas. There are also differences in the number of symbolic and substantive policy proposals across various issues. Issues that are reasonably considered substantive topics, such as health care, job training, and housing, appear to leave little room for symbolic agenda-setting. Black and white legislators engage in comparable amounts of substantive bill sponsorship; however, reframing policies to be more in line with the objective needs of blacks is mainly the activity of black representatives.



¹⁸ This figure was prepared by my research assistant at the University of Rochester, Stephen Gent. Using the same sample of bills as described earlier in the chapter, it codes bills as either substantive or symbolic, dropping the hybrid category.

Results and Discussion

During the 104th Congress, most of the bills introduced in the House did not address a black policy agenda, however a sizeable 20 percent did.¹⁹ Table 1 shows the likelihood of House members in the sample to introduce at least one black interest bill. Nearly 82 percent of black representatives introduced at least one black interest bill during the 104th Congress compared to a little more than one quarter of the white legislators. Democrats were more than twice as likely as Republicans to introduce at least one policy measure related to black interests. Blacks and Democrats were also considerably more likely than their racial and party counterparts to sponsor substantive, symbolic, and hybrid bills that benefited blacks directly or in a more universal fashion.

[Table 1 about Here]

As Table 2 shows, race and party were important factors in determining who sponsored black interest bills during the 104th Congress. Black House members sponsored 82.6 percent of the black interest bills in the sample, and Democrats sponsored 97.4 percent. Most of the bills were symbolic or a hybrid mix. Black members sponsored 158 pieces of black interest legislation, the lion's share of which were symbolic or hybrid bills. White members introduced substantially fewer black interest bills, but half of those were substantive. Republican House members sponsored only five black interest bills; two each were symbolic and hybrid.

[Table 2 about Here]

¹⁹ Canon (1999) reports similar results for bill sponsorship in the 103rd Congress (1993-94). Most of the bills sponsored during the Congress were non-racial in focus.

The majority of bills benefiting blacks did not directly name blacks as the beneficiaries. The party and race breakdowns in Table 2 show that no group sponsored more direct than universal bills. Slightly more than a quarter of the bills were race-specific. The remaining bills were universal, reflecting key elements of the black policy agenda such as disadvantaged populations, the poor, and inner cities, or housing and job discrimination, healthcare access, and improving education.

Table 3 reports the percent of their legislative portfolios that legislators devoted symbolic, substantive, and hybrid bills by member race and party. While 22.6 percent of the black interest bills sponsored had substantive policy content, only 17.1 percent of the bills sponsored by black legislators were substantive compared to 50 percent sponsored by white lawmakers. The majority of black representatives' bill introductions were symbolic or hybrid, while the content of bill introductions for white and Republican members was more evenly distributed (though the numbers were considerably smaller).

[Table 3 about Here]

The descriptive statistics presented in Tables 1-3 strongly suggest that the race and party of the member are important determinants of who sponsors legislation that is beneficial to blacks. Holding all other factors constant, does the member's race still predict a disproportionate share of black interest bill sponsorship? Table 4 shows an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis of black policy representation by the policy focus: all black interest bills, those that directly benefit blacks, and those that take a universal approach.²⁰

²⁰ To maintain the theoretical integrity of the models, I primarily report the results from the model that includes both the racial composition of the district and the race of the member as I theorize that both of these variables should

[Table 4 about Here]

The race of the legislator is the only variable that consistently reaches statistical significance in the models predicting the focus of black policy representation. Being a black legislator increases the percentage of an individual's legislative agenda devoted to black interest by a whopping 28 percent. Black representatives introduce three percent more universal black bills and one percent more race-specific black bills than white colleagues of either party.²¹ Neither the party of the member, nor the racial composition of the district reached statistical significance and the size of their coefficients was extremely small compared to the race of the member and the signs for both of the variables were contrary to my expectations.

[Table 5 about Here]

Analysis of symbolic or substantive policy content as a percentage of members' total bill introductions is presented in Table 5. Once again, only the race of the member reaches statistical significance. Black legislators devote 16.3 times more of their legislative portfolios to bills that champion symbolic black interests than white colleagues. Eleven times more of the policy proposals of black representatives reflect hybrid content. The signs for party affiliation and the racial composition in the district are in the expected direction with the exception of the negative,

affect black policy representation. In the rare cases where no variables reach statistical significance in the standard model, I report the results of the amended model that does not include the district's racial composition. With one exception (the sign for party in the model of indirect black interest bill sponsorship), the size and direction of the coefficients remains the same across the standard and amended models.

²¹ No variables reached statistical significance in the standard model of direct black interest bill sponsorship, so results are reported from the amended model.

though not statistically significant, relationship between Democratic members and hybrid policy content. The model explaining substantive policy content performs exceptionally poorly and not a single independent variable reaches statistical significance. Apparently, the variables that explain substantive bill sponsorship for blacks are quite different from those that explain other kinds of policy content.²²

The results show that the race of the member is an important predictor of black representation. Black representatives are more likely to sponsor legislation that “speaks” to black concerns than are their colleagues. Most black policy representation from black legislators is symbolic, which may have some implications for the policy expectations of African Americans. While black legislators clearly prioritize black policy representation higher than other members, their emphasis appears to be one more of symbols than of substance. White members appear to be more attuned to addressing material-based policy issues rather than broad African American concerns when they engage in black policy representation. Democratic members of Congress are considerably more likely than Republicans to sponsor black interest legislation, but the models failed to reject the null hypothesis that no difference exists between the two parties in terms of the percentage of their legislative portfolios that they devote to black policy concerns.

The results of the bivariate and multivariate analysis indicate that legislators, both black and white, take a de-racialized, universal approach to black policy representation. Typical black interest policy proposals are not race-specific and do not directly name blacks as beneficiaries.

²² One explanation for the failure of the substantive bill sponsorship model and for the unexpected null results for the party variable is that party simply masks an ideological component to bill sponsorship. To check for this possibility, I ran each of the models substituting Poole-Rosenthal Nominate scores for the party variable and, separately, including both party and ideology. The inclusion of member ideology did not add explanatory power to the models, nor did it achieve statistical significance. It also changed the sign of the party variable in some models. The race of the member maintained its robustness as an explanatory variable in each model.

Universal proposals that indirectly benefit blacks outnumber those that directly name them by nearly 3 to 1 regardless of the race of the legislator. To the extent that MCs advocate a black agenda through bill sponsorship, this advocacy is most often broadly targeted to benefit multiple groups, with blacks being one of many, including other racial and ethnic minorities, women, the poor, and the disadvantaged.

The findings in this paper comport nicely with Canon's (1999) conclusion that black representatives engage in a "balanced approach" to group advocacy. Their legislative agendas are more likely to include black interest policy proposals, and larger proportions of the proposals they sponsor are reflective of black interests than of their white colleagues' proposals, but they are also quite likely to sponsor bills that address the policy needs of other communities, including whites and other minority groups. White legislators in the sample are considerably less likely than black legislators to take a balanced approach to representing the policy needs of both black and white constituents, devoting only small portions of their overall legislative portfolios to the concerns of black Americans.

Conclusion

This paper had the objective of linking everyday legislative activities to black policy representation. To some extent, that goal has been accomplished. I find evidence that some members of Congress actively seek to use bill sponsorship to represent the policy concerns of blacks. Most of this advocacy is universal and symbolic and occurs primarily through efforts of black representatives. The reasons for this are several.

First, black legislators may be more likely to engage in black policy representation because of shared experiences with other blacks. This "linked-fate" theory of black

representation is supported by research showing that blacks as a group support government intervention to address economic and social disparities that disadvantage large numbers of blacks despite growing differences in socioeconomic status (Dawson 1994, Tate 1994).²³ Whitby (1997, 2002) characterizes this type of representation as “spontaneous” because policies that are good for the black population are also good for black representatives. Thus black representation comes “naturally” to black legislators because they are essentially representing themselves.

An alternative explanation is supported in research at the state level that finds evidence of a “transference phenomena” in black interest bill sponsorship over time (Bratton 2002). As the percentage of blacks in the legislature increases, white representatives sponsor fewer black interest bills, and black representatives sponsor more. In essence, white representatives transfer the primary responsibility of black policy representation to black legislators and devote a smaller portion of their bills to black agenda advocacy, while black legislators increase their bill sponsorship and, as their numbers increase, widely share the responsibility among other blacks in the legislature.²⁴

The reasons why black policy representation is largely symbolic and universal may lie in the very nature of the policymaking system. Astute politicians understand that the policy process in the House is difficult terrain for bills to survive. The use of legislation as a communication tool with constituents is a relatively easy and time-efficient means of responding to constituency interests and reinforcing the perception that their representative is “one of them.” Because individual legislators can claim successful policy outcomes as the result of their own hard work

²³ Tate (1994) finds some evidence of class differences in policy preferences among blacks, but also finds that these differences are mitigated by education and race identification so that highly educated blacks and those with strong race identification generally expressed support for liberal policies.

²⁴ Bratton (2002) also finds evidence of oppositional bill sponsorship behavior from Republican representatives as the percentage of blacks in the legislature increases. Over time, she finds that Democrats sponsor fewer bills that are contrary to black interests, while Republicans sponsor more. This line of inquiry is beyond the scope of this research, but is an important question for future research on black representation in Congress.

and attribute failed policy to a wide host of factors beyond their control, introducing legislating can often be a win-win situation for the initiator, regardless of whether real tangible benefits are awarded.

It is possible that symbolic legislation amounts, on occasion, to “cheap talk,” where representatives make promises they have no intention of fulfilling and, in effect, mislead constituents about their true intentions to faithfully represent them. According to game theorists, because cheap talk is unverifiable and cannot be falsified, rational actors usually discount its usefulness as a measure of other actors’ true intentions (Bianco 1994). A cheap talk account of representation through legislation fits well with Mayhew’s (1974, 63) conjecture that constituents probably give this activity “about the value [it] deserves.” However, what game theorists characterize as cheap talk may not actually be so “cheap” after all. Symbolic representation is a means for political actors to change the dimensions of debate, critique the status quo, and offer alternative ways of viewing political possibilities. Many types of non-legislative activities, including ideas in the form of legislative proposals, can have a rather large impact on Congress and on the nation (Lieberman 2002).

Johnson (1983, 81-82), argues that “speech acts” themselves (the communication of ideas, preferences, and strategies between actors) have “binding force” that shape actors expectations. Johnson (2000, 409) further suggests that symbolic actions gain traction as important forms of communication, not because they convey detailed messages, but rather because they present alternative views of political reality and future possibilities. The importance of symbols in political discourse lies in the power of symbolic acts to help define social and political possibilities for group members (Johnson 1993, 410). In this conceptualization, the communication of symbols can “help reveal options and identities that

might go otherwise unconsidered...give palpable existence to as yet unrealized possibility...” and help actors “redefine their options and identities” (Johnson 1993, 410). Thus, symbolic policy proposals like Representative Conyers’ (D-MI) black slavery reparations bill, Representative Lewis’ (D-GA) bill to protect the right to vote for the homeless, or Representative Dellums (D-CA) bill to establish a living wage and full employment for all Americans are not cheap talk, but rather serve as vehicles to redefine the political options for their key constituents.

It remains very likely that all constituents place high value on receiving substantive benefits in their communities. As Whitby (2002, fn. 8) notes, “a strong argument can be made that substantive bills are more important [than symbolic bills] because they have a greater effect on the livelihood of individuals.” In a choice between a symbolic benefit and a tangible one, the tangible one would likely win if voters could choose. This only makes sense. Yet symbolic benefits may well be perceived as a “means” to a tangible “end”—eventually. When symbols come, one expects that substance will follow. And given a choice between symbolic benefits and no benefits at all, symbolic benefits would likely be preferred. Thus, symbolic representation is not unimportant by any stretch.

Does this emphasis on symbolic representation mean that black constituents are not being well represented? The data presented here do not allow for a conclusive answer to this normative question. The black members in this study were more likely to advance black policy representation. They were slightly less likely to introduce substantive black legislation than they were to introduce symbolic legislation, but more likely than their white counterparts to act as transformative leaders by advocating black policy concerns. However, sponsoring good bills that go nowhere will not alleviate the problems that disproportionately affect the black

community. That said, we must recall that symbols do *matter*, just as the Lincoln Memorial *matters* to the American public or the Harold Washington Memorial Library *matters* to black residents in Chicago. In answer to Malcolm X's statement at the start of this paper, it is clear that blacks have taken a seat at the table. What is not so clear is whether they are getting the chance to eat what they really want.

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Table 1. Sponsors of Black Interest Bills (One or More)
by Member Race and Party, 104th Congress

	Black Members	White Members	Democrats	Republicans
Number of Members	33	63	71	25
Focus / Policy Content				
(All)	81.8 % (27)	27.0 % (17)	54.9 % (39)	20.0 % (5)
Direct	48.5 (16)	12.7 (8)	31.0 (22)	8.0 (2)
Universal	81.8 (27)	17.5 (11)	49.3 (16)	8.0 (2)
Substantive	30.3 (10)	12.7 (8)	22.5 (16)	8.0 (2)
Direct	9.1 (3)	4.8 (3)	7.0 (5)	4.0 (1)
Universal	30.3 (10)	7.9 (5)	19.7 (14)	4.0 (1)
Symbolic	66.6 (22)	11.1 (7)	65.1 (28)	4.0 (1)
Direct	48.5 (16)	6.4 (4)	26.8 (19)	4.0 (1)
Universal	45.6 (15)	4.8 (3)	25.4 (18)	0.0 (0)
Hybrid	66.6 (22)	9.5 (6)	36.6 (26)	8.0 (2)
Direct	6.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	2.8 (2)	0.0 (0)
Universal	63.6 (21)	9.5 (6)	35.2 (25)	8.0 (2)

Note: This table presents the percentage of members in each category that sponsored one or more of each type of bill. The number of members is in parentheses. The percentages should not sum to 100 because bill sponsorship in each category is independent of bill sponsorship in any other category.

Table 2. Number of Black Interest Bills Sponsored
by Member Race and Party, 104th Congress

	Total	Focus and Policy Content				
		Direct	Universal	Symbolic	Substantive	Hybrid
All Members	190	52	138	73	43	74
Race						
Black	158	43	115	65	27	66
White	32	9	23	8	16	8
Party						
Democrats	185	50	135	72	41	72
Republicans	5	2	3	1	2	2

Note: Sample includes 33 black representatives and 63 whites; 71 Democrats and 25 Republicans.

Table 3. Policy Focus of Black All Black Interest Bills Sponsored
by Member Race and Party, 104th Congress

Bill Type	All	Members by Race		Members by Party	
		Black Members	White Members	Democrats	Republicans
Substantive	22.6 (43)	17.1 (27)	48.5 (16)	22.2 (41)	20 (1)
Symbolic	38.4 (73)	41.1 (65)	24.2 (8)	38.9 (72)	40 (2)
Hybrid	40.0 (74)	41.8 (66)	24.2 (8)	38.9 (72)	40 (2)
Totals	100 (190)	100 (158)	100 (33)	100 (185)	100 (5)

Note: Number of bills in parentheses.

Table 4. Ordinary Least Squares Regression Bill Focus, 104th Congress

Explanatory Variables	Types of Bills Sponsored					
	All		Direct		Universal	
	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)
Representative Characteristics						
Race	28.2** (9.7)	34.8** (4.6)	0.67 (0.66)	0.99** (.31)	3.0* (.02)	2.9** (0.59)
Party	1.9 (5.2)	2.4 (5.0)	0.0 (0.35)	0.0 (0.35)	-0.1 (.68)	.01 (0.67)
Seniority	0.2 (0.2)	.14 (0.24)	-0.0 (0.02)	-0.0 (0.02)	0.0 (0.03)	0.0 (0.31)
District Characteristics						
Black	0.2 (0.25)	---	0.0 (0.02)	---	-0.0 (.03)	---
South	-4.2 (5.0)	-4.5 (5.1)	-0.0 (0.34)	-0.0 (0.34)	-1.4 (0.65)	-1.04 (0.65)
Urban	0.0 (0.12)	0.0 (0.12)	0.0 (0.01)	0.0 (0.01)	0.0 (0.02)	0.0 (0.02)
Constant	1.5 (12.4)	6.1 (10.9)	-0.56 (0.83)	-0.34 (0.64)	0.69 (1.6)	0.64 (0.65)
<i>F</i> -statistic	15.3**	18.3**	3.6**	4.3**	7.6**	9.22**
Adjusted R ²	.48	.49	.14	.15	.29	.30
Number of cases	93 ^a	93	93	93	93	93

Note: The dependent variable is the percentage of bills sponsored by a House member in each category. “All” is the percent of black interest bills sponsored by each member; “Direct” is the percent of black interest bills sponsored by each member that directly benefits blacks; and “Universal” is the percent of bills sponsored by each member that indirectly benefits blacks. Each category is divided by the total number of bills sponsored by each member.

^aThree members did not introduce a single piece of legislation in the 104th, Representatives Sisisky (D-VA), Bishop (D-GA), and Ford, Sr. (D-TN) and are not included in the regression analysis. Representative Melvin Watt’s legislative portfolio for the 104th consisted entirely of amendments to bills from the Republican Contract with America.

** p< .01 level, * p<.05 level, + p<.10 level (one-tailed test)

Table 5. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Policy Content, 104th Congress

Explanatory Variables	Types of Bills Sponsored					
	Symbolic		Substantive		Hybrid	
	B (SE)	b (SE)	B (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	B (SE)
Representative Characteristics						
Race	16.3* (6.9)	19.0** (3.2)	1.1 (4.8)	0.53 (2.3)	10.8* (5.5)	16.2** (2.6)
Party	2.4 (3.7)	2.6 (3.6)	2.4 (2.6)	2.4 (2.6)	-3.1 (2.9)	-2.7 (2.9)
Seniority	-0.0 (0.17)	-0.10 (.17)	0.0 (0.12)	0.0 (0.12)	0.20 (0.14)	0.19 (0.14)
District Characteristics						
Black	0.0 (0.17)	---	-0.0 (0.12)	---	0.15 (0.14)	---
South	-0.73 (3.6)	-0.84 (3.6)	-3.1 (2.5)	-3.1 (2.5)	0.16 (2.9)	-0.0 (2.9)
Urban	-0.0 (0.84)	-0.0 (0.08)	-0.0 (0.06)	-0.0 (0.06)	0.0 (0.07)	0.1 (0.07)
Constant	4.2 (8.8)	6.1 (7.6)	4.7 (6.2)	4.25 (5.4)	-8.0 (7.0)	-4.3 (6.17)
<i>F</i> -statistic	7.9**	9.6**	.83	1.01	10.52**	12.35**
Adjusted R ²	.31	.32	.01	.00	.38	.38
Number of cases	93 ^b	93	93	93	93	93

Note: The dependent variable is the percentage of bills sponsored by a House member in each category. “Symbolic,” “Substantive,” and “Hybrid” bills are the percent of black interest bills sponsored by each member that satisfy the criteria for each category based on the coding scheme described in the chapter.

^bThree members did not introduce a single piece of legislation in the 104th, Representatives Sisisky (D-VA), Bishop (D-GA), and Ford, Sr. (D-TN) and are not included in the regression analysis. Representative Melvin Watt’s legislative portfolio for the 104th consisted entirely of amendments to bills from the Republican Contract with America.

** p< .01 level. * p<.05 level, + p<.10 level (one-tailed test)

Appendix A
Summary Descriptives of Representatives in Sample

Descriptive Statistics for Representatives from Districts with 15 Percent Black Populations in the 1996 NBES Sample

Race	State	Representative	Party	Region	% Black
Black					
	AL	Earl F. Hilliard	Dem	South	68.00
	CA	Ronald Dellums	Dem	Non-South	32.00
		Julian Dixon	Dem	Non-South	40.00
		Maxine Waters	Dem	Non-South	43.00
	FL	Corrine Brown	Dem	South	55.00
		Carrie Meek	Dem	South	58.00
		Alcee Hastings	Dem	South	52.00
	GA	Sanford Bishop, Jr.	Dem	South	57.00
		John Lewis	Dem	South	62.00
		Cynthia McKinney	Dem	South	64.00
	IL	Bobby Rush	Dem	Non-South	70.00
		Cardiss Collins	Dem	Non-South	66.00
	LA	William Jefferson	Dem	South	61.00
		Cleo Fields	Dem	South	58.00
	MD	Albert Wynn	Dem	Non-South	58.00
	MI	John Conyers, Jr.	Dem	Non-South	69.00
		Barbara Rose Collins	Dem	Non-South	70.00
	MS	Bennie Thompson	Dem	South	63.00
	MO	William Clay	Dem	Non-South	28.00
	NJ	Donald Payne	Dem	Non-South	60.00
	NY	Floyd Flake	Dem	Non-South	56.00
		Edolphus Towns	Dem	Non-South	61.00
		Major Owens	Dem	Non-South	74.00
		Charles Rangel	Dem	Non-South	47.00
	NC	Eva Clayton	Dem	South	57.00
		Melvin Watt	Dem	South	57.00
	OH	Louis Stokes	Dem	Non-South	59.00
	PA	Chaka Fattah	Dem	Non-South	52.00
	SC	James Clyburn	Dem	South	62.00
	TN	Harold Ford	Dem	South	59.00
	TX	Sheila Jackson-Lee	Dem	South	51.00
		E. Bernice Johnson	Dem	South	50.00
	VA	Robert Scott	Dem	South	64.00
White					
	AL	Sonny Callahan	Rep	South	28.00
		Terry Everett	Rep	South	24.00
		Glen Browder	Dem	South	26.00
		Robert Cramer	Dem	South	15.00
	AR	Ray Thronton	Dem	South	18.00
		Jay Dickey	Rep	South	27.00
	CA	George Miller	Dem	Non-South	17.00
	DE	Al Michael Castle	Rep	Non-South	17.00
	FL	Pete Peterson	Dem	South	23.00
		Sam Gibbons	Dem	South	17.00

	GA	Jack Kingston	Rep	South	23.00
		Mac Collins	Rep	South	18.00
		Saxby Chambliss	Rep	South	21.00
		Charlie Norwood	Rep	South	18.00
	IL	Jerry Costello	Dem	Non-South	17.00
	IN	Peter Visclosky	Dem	Non-South	21.00
		Andrew Jacobs	Dem	Non-South	30.00
	KY	Mike Ward	Dem	South	18.00
	LA	Billy Tauzin	Dem	South	21.00
		Jim McCrery	Rep	South	27.00
		Richard Baker	Rep	South	18.00
		Jimmy Hayes	Dem	South	18.00
	MD	Wayne Gilchrest	Rep	Non-South	15.00
		Benjamin Cardin	Dem	Non-South	17.00
		Steny Hoyer	Dem	Non-South	19.00
	MI	Dale Kildee	Dem	Non-South	18.00
	MS	Roger Wicker	Rep	South	23.00
		G.V. Montgomery	Dem	South	31.00
		Mike Parker	Dem	South	41.00
		Gene Taylor	Dem	South	20.00
	MO	Karen McCarthy	Dem	Non-South	24.00
	NJ	Robert Andrews	Dem	Non-South	16.00
	NY	Daniel Frisa	Rep	Non-South	16.00
		Eliot Engel	Dem	Non-South	42.00
		Jack Quinn	Rep	Non-South	17.00
	NC	David Funderburk	Rep	South	22.00
		Walter Jones	Rep	South	21.00
		Fred Heineman	Rep	South	20.00
		Richard Burr	Rep	South	15.00
		Charlie Rose	Rep	South	19.00
		W.G. "Bill" Hefner	Dem	South	23.00
	OH	Steve Chabot	Rep	Non-South	30.00
		Tony Hall	Dem	Non-South	18.00
	PA	Thomas Foglietta	Dem	Non-South	52.00
		William Coyne	Dem	Non-South	18.00
	SC	Mark Sanford	Rep	South	20.00
		Floyd Spence	Rep	South	25.00
		Lindsey Graham	Rep	South	21.00
		Bob Inglis	Rep	South	20.00
		John Spratt, Jr.	Dem	South	31.00
	TN	Bob Clement	Dem	South	23.00
		John Tanner	Dem	South	20.00
	TX	Jim Chapman	Dem	South	18.00
		John Bryant	Dem	South	16.00
		Steve Stockman	Rep	South	22.00
		Chet Edwards	Dem	South	16.00
		Martin Frost	Dem	South	19.00
		Ken Bentsen	Dem	South	27.00
	VA	Herbert Bateman	Rep	South	18.00
		Owen Pickett	Dem	South	17.00
		Norman Sisisky	Dem	South	32.00
		L.F. Payne, Jr.	Dem	South	25.00
	WI	Thomas Barrett	Dem	Non-South	35.00

Appendix B
Description of Variables

Representative Characteristics	
Race	A Dummy variable coded as 1 for black representatives and 0 for white representatives.
Party	A Dummy variable coded as 1 for Democrats and 0 for Republicans.
Seniority	Number of years in office.
District Characteristics	
Percent Black	The percentage of the district population that is black based on data from the 1990 census.
Region ²⁵	A Dummy variable coded as 1 for southern districts, and 0 for non-southern districts.
Urban	The percentage of the district population that is urban.
Median Income	Median district income
Constituent Characteristics	
Education	Highest level of education achieved
Income	Personal income in current dollars
Race Identification	4-point scale measuring feelings of common fate between respondent and circumstances affecting other blacks. Based on how strongly blacks agreed with the statement, “what happens to other black people in this country affects what happens to me.” Coded 1 for low race-identification and 4 for high race-identification
Ideology	7-point scale measuring respondent’s self-identification as a liberal or conservative. Coded 1 for strong conservative and 7 for strong liberal.
Party	7-point scale measuring respondent’s self-identified party affiliation. Coded 1 for strong Republican and 7 for strong Democrat.
Descriptive Representative	A Dummy variable coded 1 for respondents with black representatives and 0 for those with white representatives
Partisan Representative	A Dummy variable coded 1 for respondents with representatives from their own party and 0 for those with representatives from a different party than their own.

²⁵ My measure for southern districts included the following 12 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia (see Cameron, Epstein, and O’Halloran 1996). Note that this definition of south is not the traditional measure based on the 11 states of the Old Confederacy that excludes Maryland, Kentucky, and Oklahoma. Nor is it the same measure as used by the 1990 Census that, in addition to the states included in my measure, also includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, and Maryland.