UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
Edmond, Oklahoma
Jackson College of Graduate Studies & Research

Term Limits and Interest Group Influence

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

By
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Edmond, Oklahoma

2009

Term Limits and Interest Group Influence

A THESIS

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

April 29, 2009

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Abstract Supporters of term limits argued that they would decrease interest group influence. Using data from 24 states from 1998 to 2008, this paper finds that this assumption is not the case. This analysis finds that states with term limits have higher numbers of lobbyists and campaign contributions than those states without term limits. This suggests that interest groups have become more entrenched in term limited states and have become more influence in the inexperience legislatures.

Introduction

Citizens have always wanted to be more influential in government, especially when the government enacts policies that contradict their preferences. Other than elections, the only way for society to directly influence policy is through initiatives and referendums. In the 1990s, the voters of many states used their power to pass initiatives to enact term limits on the members of their state legislatures. Over the years people have become increasingly disaffected by government and passed term limits as a result (Pomper and Weiner 127). This disaffection, though, was occurring throughout the entire nation.

In 2006 there were 15 states with term limits, but no other states have had term limits enacted since 2000 (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). They were enacted in three states in 1990, eight in 1992, one each in 1993, 1995 and 1996, and most recently in 2000 (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006) (see table 1). There were several underlying reasons why the citizens enacted term limits. For the most part, the citizens wanted the government to be responsive to their needs and not the needs of interest groups.

Term limits were extremely popular, so after they were enacted in the first few states, other states followed suit. This phenomenon also created an influx of research on term limits and citizens' dissatisfaction with government. However, it did not take long for the allure of term limits to subside. After the fascination diminished, so did the study of term limits. What research continues only examines term limits on a state by state basis, instead of nationally.

Term limits sparked a dramatic change in many states across the nation. However, most political scientists only examine the theoretical consequences of term limits. Very little has been done to determine the actual effects of term limits and whether or not the desired ones have occurred. I examine the effects that term limits have had on interest group influence in the state legislatures. I will examine literature that has been written on term limits and discuss the theories on their effects, including but not limited to interest group influence.

This paper examines the ways that interest groups influence state legislatures and will determine whether or not term limits have had an effect on those practices. Term limits have increased turnover rates, given more power to the executive branch and lobbyists, and have produced an inexperienced and less productive legislature (Bennett 2005; Birkholz 2005; Daggett 2005; Flake 2005; Moncrief 2005; and Rockefeller 2005). I hypothesize that term limits will increase the activity of interest groups. This hypothesis is in opposition to what term limit proponents would desire and against the arguments put forth. As stated earlier, citizens imposed term limits to stop interest groups; accordingly, interest groups should have less clout over legislatures.

To better understand term limits, I begin with a more detailed history of them. This section will explain the variations between different term limits imposed by states' citizens. Afterward, I discuss the different theories on term limits and interest groups and include testimony from former state government officials. Then, I describe my methodology for testing my hypothesis and provide the results of the regression. Finally, I summarize my findings, discuss any shortcomings and suggest any changes that need to occur.

History of Term Limits

The idea of term limits is nothing new. Term limits were first proposed during the first Congress of the United States but the amendments proposed were not ratified (Fett and Ponder 1993, 211). The issue was not considered again until 1943 (Fett and Ponder, 1993, 211). Interest continued to grow and from 1981 to 1992 more than 69 proposals were introduced to limit the tenure of Congressional members (Fett and Ponder 1993, 211; Petracca 1993, 701). By 1993, 15 states had passed amendments to their constitutions to limit the tenure of their United States representatives and senators (Fett and Ponder 1993, 211; Petracca 1993, 700). This, however, did not last long. In 1995, the Supreme Court ruled, in a 5-4 vote, that term limits on members of Congress were unconstitutional (U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton 1995). The Court argued that states do not have it within their power to change the tenure of members of Congress (U.S Term Limits v. Thornton 1995).

Even though the push for Congressional term limits was over, state term limits had just begun. In 1990 California, Oklahoma and Colorado had initiatives passed to limit the tenure of state legislators (Kurtz, Cain, and Niemi 2007, 12). Once those states enacted term limits the ball had been set in motion and 18 other states adopted similar initiatives

(Bowser, Chi, and Little 2006, 19). Not long after term limits were passed, the supreme courts of four states, Massachusetts, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming, declared they were unconstitutional (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). Massachusetts, Washington, and Wyoming's supreme courts ruled that it was impermissible to establish qualifications for holding government office in the statutes (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). Initiatives passed in Oregon can only change a single subject of the constitution. The Oregon Supreme Court ruled term limits unconstitutional because the initiative addressed more than one section of the state's constitution, which violated the single-subject rule (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). Two other state legislatures, Idaho and Utah, repealed their term limits (Bowser, Chi, and Little 2006, 21-22).

Table 1: States with Legislative Term Limits by Years of Enactment and Impact

State	Year Enacted	House Year of Impact	Senate Year of Impact
MAINE	1993	1996	1996
CALIFORNIA	1990	1996	1998
COLORADO	1990	1998	1998
ARKANSAS	1992	1998	2000
MICHIGAN	1992	1998	2002
FLORIDA	1992	2000	2000
OHIO	1992	2000	2000
SOUTH	1992	2000	2000
MONTANA	1992	2000	2000
ARIZONA	1992	2000	2000
MISSOURI[1]	1992	2002	2002
OKLAHOMA	1990	2004	2004
NEBRASKA	2000	n/a	2006
LOUISIANA	1995	2007	2007
NEVADA[2]	1996	2010	2010

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

[1] Term limits were effective in 2000 for eight current members of the House and one Senator in 1998.
[2] The Nevada Legislative Council and Attorney General have ruled that Nevada's term limits cannot be applied to those legislators elected in the same year term limits were passed. They first apply to persons elected in 1998.

The details of each initiative vary across states, and there are two different categories of term limits, in state legislatures; very lenient or very strict. The first is consecutive term limits, which mean that a legislator is limited to serving a certain number of years in a chamber and after a set period of time the legislator can run for election to the same office and serve up to the limit again (National Conference of State Legislatures 2008). The second is lifetime term limits, which means that once a legislator has served up to the limit for that particular office he or she is banned from ever running for that office again (National Conference of State Legislatures 2008). Consecutive term limits can be less restrictive because it is possible to rerun for the office in the future. Lifetime term limits are obviously the most restrictive because after a legislator is termed out of office he or she cannot run for that office in the future. However, he or she can run for a higher or lower office.

The states also vary in the number of years that legislators are allowed to be in office. The most common limit is eight years, but limits include the more strict six-year limit and the less strict twelve-year limit (Bowser, Chi, and Little 2006, 19). Several states have more strict term limits for their House of Representatives than they do for their Senate (National Conference of State Legislatures 2008). Nebraska and Oklahoma have a total number of years that a legislator can serve in the legislature (National Conference of State Legislatures 2008). However, unlike Nebraska's consecutive term limits, an Oklahoma legislator can only serve for a total of twelve years and after twelve years he or she is banned from running for the state legislature again for life (National

Conference of State Legislatures 2008). Subsequently, the most strict term limits would be those of six years with a lifetime ban and the most lenient would be those of twelve years and consecutive term limits. The following is a breakdown of term limited states, which shows the variation in term limit initiatives:

Table 2: Variations in Term Limits by Years and Type

Limit in Years	Consecutive	Lifetime Ban
6 House / 8 Senate		Arkansas, California, Michigan
8 total	Nebraska	
8 House / 8 Senate	Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maine, Montana, Ohio, South Dakota	Missouri
12 total		Oklahoma
12 House / 12 Senate	Louisiana	Nevada

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

Many of the states have similar restrictions on their legislatures, but with very different consequences. The following sections will discuss the current theories on the effects of term limits and the different consequences they have had on states. Some arguments state that interest groups have more influence now that term limits have come into effect, but have done little to prove their statements (Daggett 2005; Tabarrok 1994). I will explain the current theories on interest groups and how one can define lobbying activities. I also examine whether or not lobbyists have an influence on government, specifically state legislatures.

Literature Review

The focus of term limits has been on professionalism and how term limits have encouraged or diminished professional legislatures. There has been very little written on the impact that term limits have had on lobbyists' influence. Political scientists have yet to agree on how lobbyists influence government officials and have yet to agree on how to measure interest group influence, as an analysis of the literature will show.

The following is a review of the current literature on term limits, interest groups and lobbyists. I begin with term limits and include publications from former state legislators. I then analyze articles and books published about interest groups and lobbying. I use all of this to determine my measurements for my analysis.

Term Limits Literature

The majority of studies written on term limits were written before term limits impacted the state legislatures. Some of it was even written when term limits were first enacted by the earliest states. Several articles explain why the public supports term limits and many try to predict what the possible effects will be on the legislatures. Only a few try to explain some of the effects of term limits. This is problematic, especially from a policy evaluation point of view, because several states have term limits and do not know what impact they have had on the legislature.

In the 2005 winter edition of *Spectrum: The Journal of State Government*, there are several short articles on the effects of term limits in different states and overall. All of these articles, excluding that by Gary Moncrief, were written by former members of state governments. Gary Moncrief (2005) examined turnover in state legislatures due to term limits. Term limits have increased legislative turnover, however, it does depend upon the state (Moncrief 2005, 26). For those states that have a strict six-year term limit the turnover rate is going to be much higher than in those states with a twelve-year term limit (Moncrief 2005, 26). After term limits impacted state legislatures, the turnover rate increased dramatically and continues to increase (Moncrief 2005, 27).

Effects ultimately depend on the state and if the state's legislature has a history of high turnover. When it is high, term limits do not have a dramatic effect on turnover rates and any effect will only be minimal (Moncrief 2005, 27). Term limits have a significant impact on legislative turnover, but how turnover has affected the other branches of government is not acknowledged (Moncrief 2005, 27). They have given more power to the executive branch, at least in the case of the government of Maine (Daggett 2005, 37). This change is due to the fact that the turnover rate is much higher than it used to be, less experienced legislators control the legislature, and there is less cooperation (Daggett 2005, 37). This has actually given more power to the executive branch and the lobbyists (Daggett 2005, 37).

Bureaucrats have also benefited from the redistribution of power in Michigan (Birkholz 2005, 35). After term limits were implemented, the governor's office gained more power and the staff grew larger than that of the legislature (Birkholz 2005, 35). This was a result of most of the senior legislators being removed from office, which created an inexperienced and unknowledgeable legislature (Birkholz 2005, 35). Power also shifted to the bureaucracy because bureaucrats became the policy experts (Birkholz 2005, 35).

Term limits have encouraged the legislature to be less productive and the legislators to be inexperienced (Flake 2005, Bennett 2005). This made lobbyists far more important; they are a source of information not only to legislators but also to agencies because of the change in the legislature's composition (Daggett 2005, 37). Limited legislators, in Arizona, have had to turn to non-elected actors for information and assistance when deciding on complex policies (Flake 2005, 3). Legislators used to become experts in certain fields of policy, and legislators would look to each other for guidance; now, staff, lobbyists, and agencies have replaced the communication between legislators (Flake 2005, 31; Bennett 2005, 33). Term limits have also led to poor quality legislation being introduced and often passed (Flake 2005).

As some senators suggested, term limits have increased the power of lobbyists because term limited legislators rely more heavily on them for information and guidance (Flake 2005; Bennett 2005). On the other hand, most freshman legislators are more concerned with constituent issues and do not become entrenched in special interests (Rockefeller 2005, 34). Freshman legislators also spend their free time studying legislation instead of attending social events sponsored by lobbyists (Rockefeller 2005, 34). Exceptionally little has been written, specifically, on the impact that term limits have on interest groups, but Nelson W. Polsby (2003) argued that term limits can actually strengthen lobbyists. Some of the senators' arguments strengthened Polsby's statement and some contradicted it, but term limits have different results for different states (Moncrief 2005).

The National Conference of State Legislatures put together a study on term limits, and as part of the study interest groups and lobbying were included (Kurtz, Cain, and Niemi 2007, 119). There are more lobbyists under term limits and they are working much harder (Kurtz, Cain and Niemi 2007, 120). The behavior of interest groups has changed and interest groups in California, Colorado, and Maine state that more of their time has been devoted to giving information and providing resources to legislators (Farmer, Rausch Jr., Green 2003, 222). New, inexperienced legislators need the knowledge, resources, and information that lobbyists have, but most are distrustful of lobbyists (Kurtz, Cain and Niemi 2007, 120). While relationships may be built to ensure a future job for the senior legislators, the freshman legislators have to use interest groups to acquire more information because they are inexperienced. Both have to increase their campaign resources to run for higher office (Pomper and Weiner 2003, 122).

No change in the power of state interest groups was seen, however, and legislators did not seem to access interest groups differently after term limits (Kurtz, Cain and Niemi 2007, 121). On the other hand, testimony from legislators showed that lobbyists were relied more heavily on after term limits (Kurtz, Cain and Niemi 2007, 122). One legislator said that over ninety percent of the legislation was drafted or given to them by a lobbyist (Kurtz, Caine and Niemi 2007, 122). Interest groups have also become more involved in elections to secure relationships faster (Farmer, Rausch Jr., and Green 2003, 214). Approximately fifteen percent of those newly elected in 1998 and 2000 said that an interest group had asked them to run and only 7.4 percent elected in 1992 or before had been asked (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004, 57).

Thus, term limits have clearly changed the behavior of interest groups (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004, 57). After term limits were implemented there were significant increases in the amount of money contributed during the year after the election (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004, 57). The legislators began to rely more heavily on interest groups for guidance and they also relied on them for funding the campaign (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004, 63). Term limits have strengthened interest groups and have increased the number of lobbyists and groups (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004, 63).

In 1995, Karp (1995, 373) used survey data from the 1992 American National Election Study and other surveys to explain public support for term limits. There are four explanations for the support of term limits: “dissatisfaction with legislative performance, cynicism, self-interest, and ideological predispositions” (Karp 1995, 373). Similarly, in 2002, Stein, Johnson, and Post (2002, 460-462) examined public support for term limits and also used cynicism, self-interest, and ideology; however, they did include other variables. They included underrepresentation, Republican partisanship, individual versus institutional representation, and attentiveness as their theories about support for term limits (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 460).

Alexander Tabarrok (1994) examined the support for term limits and their effect on incumbency, interest groups, the executive, and the bureaucracy. Incumbent legislators become unresponsive to the demands of their constituents and avoid their responsibilities (Tabarrok 1994, 1). Also, term limits remove professional politicians from the legislature and bring the citizen legislator back to government (Tabarrok 1994, 2). On the other hand, term limits make legislators more responsive to public demands because they will not be accustomed to pork-barrel spending (Tabarrok 1994, 3). However, it is also argued that there will be many more freshman legislators more willing to ignore lobbyists (Rockefeller 2005; Tabarrok 1994). All of the authors try to make sense of why citizens pushed for term limits (Tabarrok 1994, 3).

Conventional wisdom would suggest that support for term limits on Congress and state legislators is because of dissatisfaction with the legislative body (Karp 1995, 374). Term limit initiatives were enacted during a time when approval ratings for states were at their lowest and approval ratings for Congress were in the 15 to 20 percent range (Karp 1995, 374). Citizens were similarly dissatisfied with state legislatures (Karp 1995, 374). Professional legislatures had the highest levels of dissatisfaction because they more closely resemble Congress (Karp 1995, 375). Approval ratings of individual legislators were dropping, which is interesting considering legislators are usually able to distance themselves from the institution (Karp 1995, 375).

People became dissatisfied with the political process and cynical towards the ability of the government to solve problems (Karp 1995, 375). Cynicism was used to explain support of term limits because other studies (Karp 1995) have shown that it is the most important factor when determining support for term limits (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002). In the 1980s only one in four Americans said that they trusted the government to do what was right, and survey data from the 1992 Center for Political Studies National Election Study showed a rapid decline in political trust (Karp 1995, 375). Term limits are thought of as a way for the citizens to express their discontent towards government and try to change it (Karp 1995, 376).

The last two theories, selfishness and underrepresentation, are less obvious and very difficult to evaluate (Karp 1995, 378; Stein, Johnson, Post 2002, 461). Term limits were passed as a selfish act of the citizens and even the political elites (Karp 1995, 378). Term limits destroy the incumbency effect and create more opportunity for minorities to become policymakers (Karp 1995, 377). During the term limit debate many issues were brought to the forefront (Karp 1995, 377). When citizens would hear about the different changes that term limits would have on the legislature they would vote according to what might benefit them the most (Karp 1995, 377). Underrepresentation is similar to the variable of self-interest and was used in the same way, to determine partisan effects (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 461). Underrepresented groups support term limits because term limits increase their likelihood of being elected to public office (Stein, Johnson, and Post 461).

The last explanation for term limit support was ideology, and it was based on the hypothesized effects of term limits (Karp 1995, 378). Conservatives support term limits because they theoretically weaken government, decrease wasteful spending, and legislators will be less likely to push for pork legislation under them (Karp 1995, 378). Republican partisanship, which is similar to ideology, increases the likelihood that someone will support term limits because Republicans believe term limits will limit wasteful spending, which is part of their party platform (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 461).

After examining ideology other variables were introduced (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002). Included in the study was the difference between individual partisanship and the party of the entire legislature (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 463). Individual versus institutional representation looks at the difference between individual members of the legislature and that of the entire legislature (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 463). This is very important because most individual legislators have higher approval ratings than the institution does and yet term limits were enacted on individual legislators (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 463). Finally, attentiveness was added because the more attentive people were to politics the more likely they were to know whether or not their legislators were representing their wishes (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 463).

The four explanations, cynicism, self-interest, dissatisfaction, and ideology, alone or together do not account for all of the support that term limits have received (Karp 1995, 385). Poor performance does not have an influence on term limit support but cynicism has the strongest and most consistent effect (Karp 1995, 385). Still, cynicism is not significant enough to explain all of the support for term limits. Ideology has very little to do with that support (Karp 1995, 387). Individual support for term limits is related to partisan identification and attentiveness to politics (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 472). Politically aware citizens who are represented by legislators of a different party are more likely to support term limits (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 472). They also find that Karp (1995) was correct because cynicism is moderately significant (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 472). However, more needs to be written on the topic because the focus has been on national legislative term limits and not state term limits (Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002, 460).

Gary F. Moncrief, Joel A. Thompson, Michael Haddon, and Robert Hoyer (1992) examined the effects that term limits have had on the stability of state legislatures, as did Cynthia Opheim (1994) and Wayne L. Francis and Lawrence W. Kenny (1997). Moncrief et al. (1992) wanted to determine how many freshman legislators, serving during the 1979-80 session, would be affected by term limits. Observed are the effects of twelve-year term limits on state legislature turnover rates, because most of the initiatives called for a twelve-year limit (Moncrief et al. 1992, 39). Several things were assumed because term limits in most states had not yet been enacted. First, the time served in one house would not count against time served in the other house and second, term limits only apply if the years are served consecutively (Moncrief et al. 1992, 39). This means that a legislator could serve twelve years in the House of Representatives and twelve years in the Senate. Also, that a legislator could serve, for example, six years in the Senate, sit out for a few years, and then return with the full twelve years available.

The result was that term limits would have very little effect on professionalization because most state legislators did not retain their office for longer than twelve years; six-year term limits had a more severe effect (Moncrief et al. 1992, 42). Over half of the legislators were predicted to be termed out of the state legislatures by the eight-year term limit (Opheim 1994, 55). Retention rate for those legislators in professional legislatures was much higher than those in citizen legislatures, and 37.5 percent of professional legislatures have had term limits imposed on them (Opheim 1994, 55, 57).

The same assumptions that Moncrief et al. (1992, 39) employed are also used by Opheim (1994, 51). The time served in one house does not count against time served in another house and the term limits only apply to years in office served consecutively (Opheim 1994, 51). These assumptions were applied to discover how many state legislators, who were serving in 1994, would be affected by a term limitation (Opheim 1994, 51). Data from thirty-five states that did not have term limits and fifteen states that had adopted term limits were used (Opheim 1994, 51). Retention rates in the House of Representatives in professional legislatures were much higher than those in hybrid or citizen legislatures (Opheim 1994, 57). However, retention rates in all term limited states were lower than retention rates in non-term limited states (Opheim 1994, 56). This is consistent with previous arguments on the same topic and only reinforces the argument that term limits have had an effect on the structure and professionalism of state legislatures.

Thus, in the more professional legislatures, seniority will be decreased and there will be more open seats, but in citizen legislatures it will be unlikely to decrease seniority because most legislators do not stay for twelve years (Moncrief et al. 1992, 44; Opheim 1994, 56). Term limits will not only create higher turnover rates because people are being removed from office, they will also generate more legislators running for higher office (Francis and Kenny 1997 248). Consequently, there will be even greater turnover rates than would have been expected (Francis and Kenny 1997, 248). Finally, the high turnover rates will create an inexperienced legislature (Francis and Kenny 1997, 251).

Similarly, Francis and Kenny (1997, 251) examined the effects of the six-year term limits, but they also examined eight-year term limits instead of twelve. The 1979-80 sessions were used to determine the effects of term limits on the exit rates of state legislators (Francis and Kenny 1997, 241). Included were the effects that senate turnover rates have had on house turnover rates (Francis and Kenny 1997, 241). Before term limits, state and national legislators chose reelection over seeking higher office and retiring from elected office 75 to 80 percent of the time (Francis and Kenny 1997, 241). This was because the chance of winning a race for higher office was unlikely, especially if there was an incumbent. With term limits there are more open seats, so the number of legislators running for higher office will increase (Francis and Kenny 1997, 241).

The turnover rate for state House of Representative's members was from 26 to 28 percent in 1979-80 and twenty-two percent in 1985-86 and the average turnover rate from 1982-92 was over 23.5 percent (Francis and Kenny 1997, 242). Consequently, after term limits, one-third to three-fifths of the legislators will be new members under eight-year term limits and an even greater number of new members will fill legislatures under six-year term limits (Francis and Kenny 1997, 251). This will create inexperienced legislatures and, in those states with more professional legislatures, the members will continue to seek higher office to maintain their political careers (Francis and Kenny 1997, 251). As a result, most of the legislatures will become full of inexperienced members (Francis and Kenny 1997, 251). In all states the turnover rates will increase, reaching approximately 45 percent (Francis and Kenny 1997, 251). This came to a similar conclusion as other studies (Moncrief et al. 1992); however, if the study is correct than turnover rates and professionalism in most states will not be affected because they have twelve-year limits (Francis and Kenny 1997, 251).

Related to the turnover rate is the fact that the legislators know they will be termed out soon and elect to retire from office before their term is over, therefore, creating more special elections (Caress 1996, 673). This has also led to a change in the behavior of legislators and the composition of the institution (Caress 1996, 673). This, in turn, has created an increase in special elections, specifically in California because incumbents do not always wait until election year to vacate their seat (Caress 1996, 673). In California, most of the special elections since 1990, the year term limits were enacted, have been because an incumbent pursued other career options (Caress 1996, 673). Every year there is an average of ten special elections. In 1993 there were 16, which is the highest it has ever been (Caress 1996, 673). Special elections are costly and the cost from 1990 to 1993 in California was thirteen million dollars (Caress 1996, 674). Because of the increase in special elections there has consequently been an increase in financial burden to the state (Caress 1996, 674). If special elections continue to occur more often there will be more of a financial burden to the public (Caress 1996, 674). This is an aspect of turnover and seat vacation that most people do not take into consideration. It is becoming increasingly important, especially during times of economic hardship.

Term limits also have an impact on legislative behavior. The time legislators have to devote to securing pork has decreased and there is a heightened priority placed on the needs of the state and on the demands of the constituents (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 271). Three categories of hypotheses are used to explain the effects of term limits on the legislature and its members: compositional, behavioral, and institutional (Carey, Niemi and Powell 1998, 271). After examining all three areas, the demographics of the legislatures with term limits are the same as before term limits were enacted (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 295). Term limits also decreased the amount of time legislators spent on securing pork for their districts, and they placed more attention on the needs of the state and their constituents (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 295). Term limits have also affected whether or not legislators will run for reelection (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 295). Before term limits over ninety percent of legislators ran for reelection;

however, since term limits there has been an increase in the number of incumbents retiring, even though they are permitted to run for reelection (Caress 1996, 672).

A survey of legislators was used to determine if term limits are associated with fewer career politicians and with a more diverse legislature, in terms of age, occupation, gender, religion, ethnicity, income, and other demographic characteristics (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 274). Also examined was whether or not "greater conservatism or ideological extremism" is the source of term limits (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 274). Term limits should make legislative service less appealing to those seeking a career in politics (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 274). Proponents believe that this will create more open seats, and therefore, attract individuals not aspiring to become career politicians (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 274). Furthermore, it should diversify the legislature because more women and minorities will be able to win a legislative seat (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 274).

The behavior of term limited legislators was examined and the focus was on whether legislators thought of politics as a career, whether or not they intended to run for reelection, whether or not they desired to seek higher office, and if they held a job outside of the legislature (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 275-276). The behavior of legislators has changed because more legislators are retiring and doing so midterm (Caress 1996, 674). Term limits affected the composition of the state legislature and have impacted agenda setting and consensus building in the California legislature (Caress 1996, 672). To measure the legislator's behavior, questions about their career aspirations were included in a survey (Carey, Niemi and, Powell 1998, 275). Term limit advocates have stated that term limits will limit the time legislators devote to securing votes and increase the amount of time for legislative duties (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 275). Taking that into consideration, legislators should spend less time campaigning, fund-raising, meeting with constituents and providing services to them, and spend more time developing legislation and creating legislative coalitions (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 275).

Because term limits have an effect on career aspirations, focus was given to the behavioral hypothesis of how the legislators conduct their campaigns. Specifically, whether or not they hire campaign managers and establish campaign headquarters (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 275). This may discourage legislators from running for reelection because of the increased cost. Many legislators have decided that reelection has too many costs associated with it (Caress 1996, 672). After term limits were enacted the number of incumbents not seeking reelection was about 20 percent higher than before (Caress 1996, 672). Only 70 percent of incumbents sought reelection after term limits were enacted (Caress 1996, 672). This, however, may not hold true in other states and it may not hold true in later years (Caress 1996, 673). This decrease in incumbents could have been created by other factors, especially taking into considering that, in 1992, reapportionment happened and historically incumbents leave if their seats become competitive (Caress 1996, 672).

Cary, Niemi, and Powell (1998, 276) also examined previous arguments made about the institutional effects that term limits may or may not have had. Term limits increase the power of the party and the power of the governors (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 276). Term limits decrease the power of interest groups because legislators do not require campaign contributions from groups. Some legislators become more reliant on interest groups for jobs after they are termed out (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 276). Likewise, the biggest effect term limits have is on the bureaucracy and executive branch (Tabarrok 1994, 5). Unlike Tabarrok (1994), Carey, Niemi and Powell (1998, 277) created a survey to determine the institutional effect. Legislators were asked about the influence of certain actors within the legislature and whether they perceived their powers to be increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 277). The same questions were asked about actors outside of the legislature and finally, using the legislator's tenure and nature of term limits in their state, the partisan effects of term limits were estimated (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 277). The results showed that there was not a dramatic change in the composition of state legislatures and the only difference between non-term limited states and term limited states was the number of women elected to office (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 280-281).

There are more women elected to term limited states; however, this cannot necessarily be contributed to term limits (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 281). It may have to do with the ideology of the state. There is also no difference in term limited and non-term limited states in the number of extreme conservatives and extreme liberals (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 281). Term limits have undermined responsiveness to constituents; however, term limited legislators are not less likely to seek politics as a career (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 290). Finally, the power of governors has increased while the power of party leaders has decreased (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, 296). The same results have been consistently found; however, nothing more has been done than theorize because term limits have only been enacted for eight years in some states and impacted for fewer in other states. Term limits have changed institutional behavior and have increased the power of the bureaucracy because they have reduced the tenure of committee chairs (Tabarrok 1994, 5). This is of concern because fewer senior legislators create an inexperienced legislature, less knowledge on specific issues, and more reliance on staff and agencies (Tabarrok 1994, 5). The reduced tenure in office also creates fewer relationships between the legislature and the bureaucracy to be made and thus, the executive branch becomes more powerful (Tabarrok 1994, 5).

One of the main reasons people examined the possible effects on tenure was because the longer a legislator was in office the more relationships with interest groups that legislator has (Tabarrok 1994, 4). Term limits reduce relationship building because new legislators are automatically put in office and senior legislators are termed out of office (Tabarrok 1994, 4). If the legislature is not really representing the public, then we should “throw the bums out”. The incumbency rate is so high that the public put in an institutional mechanism that will “throw the bums out” routinely (Tabarrok 1994, 4).

Proponents of term limits argued that they will reduce interest group influence (Tabarrok 1994, 3). However, term limits can also increase the cost of bargaining and making promises (Tabarrok 1994, 3). One reason for this is that term limits reduce the amount of time available to create relationships and the need to cooperate with others, considering there is an end in the future (Tabarrok 1994, 4). However, this may make interest groups lobby the parties instead of individual representatives (Tabarrok 1994, 4). Legislators may pass more legislation that will benefit their careers after being termed out of office (Tabarrok 1994, 4). In the end, the effects on interest groups will be minimal and if there is any effect it will be a change in whom they lobby (Tabarrok 1994, 5).

The behavior of legislators has changed dramatically and not in the way that the public hoped for (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998, Caress 1996 and Tabarrok 1994). When term limits were passed many voters did not think of the negative consequences. Instead, part of the appeal of term limits was the fact that they would stop wasteful spending and reduce the size of government (Erier 2007, 479). Term limits should decrease state spending levels because the legislators are not in office long enough to make relationships and secure pork for their constituents or special interests (Erier 2007, 479). Abbie Erier (2007) used the fiscal data from 48 states from 1977 to 2001 and compared those states with term limits to those states without term limits. Term limited states actually have higher levels of spending than those without (Erier 2007, 479).

To test the hypothesis, general spending was examined, which included spending on education, highways, welfare, and interest on debt (Erier 2007, 482). States with term limits have seen a much greater increase in their expenditures than non-term limited states (Erier 2007, 482). The growth rate of expenditures in term limited states has risen from 1.8 percent, before term limits, to 2.8 percent, after term limits (Erier 2007, 482). Expenditures in states without term limits have remained constant or only increased by less than half a percentage (Erier 2007, 482). Interestingly enough, spending in term limited states on education has not changed (Erier 2007, 482). However, spending on welfare, health, and highways and transportation has done so substantially (Erier 2007, 486). States with term limits spend 29 percent more on welfare and over 14 percent more on transportation than states without term limits (Erier 2007, 486). The largest adjustment in spending has been in health and health expenditures. In term limited states those expenditures are 31.5 percent higher than in non-term limited states (Erier 2007, 486). Not only do term limited states have higher spending but the amount continues to go up (Erier 2007, 480). Even though the numbers show that spending has risen in those states with term limits the reason is still unclear, but this article does show that the intended outcomes have not been produced (Erier 2007, 491). It is very clear that instead of cutting spending, spending has increased. There have been several unintended consequences and there may be others that come to light in the future.

Using the information above, I try to determine if term limits have actually increased the power of lobbyists, as the former government officials suggested. However, before I can do that I must determine what is meant by lobbyist influence and what the literature says about the topic. The writings on term limits are focused on a few areas, most of it was done before term limits impacted states, and none of it evaluates the effects across the entire nation. Similarly, examination of interest groups is limited in its scope because very little has been done to determine a statistically significant measure of influence. The next section discusses what has been written on interest groups and examines the different theories on interest groups.

Lobbyist Influence Literature

Interest groups have been examined for many years and political scientists have yet to come up with a simple and consistent way of measuring influence. Keith Hamm (1983) wrote about patterns of influence. Even though it is an older article the information provided is still applicable today. Even with the ethic reforms and the increase in regulatory committees, interest groups continue to behave in the ways described by Hamm (1983). He points to Morris Ogul's (1981) argument that when an interest group is trying to influence the decisions of a committee the interest group gives publicity to certain legislators in periodicals, invites legislators to speak at organization meetings, gives campaign contributions, provides legislators with tickets to dinners or theatrical shows, provides transportation, and other activities (Hamm 1983, 394). An interest group also testifies before Congress, holds breakfasts for Congressmen, and has its members contact their Representatives (Hamm 1983, 394-395). These actions have actually made members of Congress remove themselves from those committees that the interest groups did not want them on (Hamm 1983). They then joined the committees that the interest groups did want them to be members of (Hamm 1983, 395). Likewise, David Nice (1984) wrote on the impact interest groups have on the policymaking process in states. Interest groups communicate to the public issues that the parties will not address and, of course, perform the usual functions of providing research and information, drafts for speeches, and "strokes to the ego" (Nice 1984, 184).

Hamm (1983, 382) discussed how interest groups actually do these types of activities and first examined recruitment for committee positions and how exactly an interest group would be able to recruit legislators to certain committees. Buchanan (1963), who studied the California legislature, was added to explain interest group activities (Hamm 1983, 382). Interest groups provide campaign funds and endorsements during election years to gain the legislators' trust and support (Hamm 1983, 383). Looking at Buchanan (1963), Hamm (1983, 383) states, "The lobby would recommend supporters for powerful and strategic committee assignments, the supporters would request assignments strategic to the lobby, and the speaker would act upon the suggestions and requests." This is extremely important when considering the influence that interest groups have on state legislatures and their members. When this article was published the states had not been term limited yet, and therefore, interest groups had not been affected. However, using this information, especially the impact that campaign funds have, I can determine if there has been an increase in interest group influence since term limits were enacted.

Anthony Nownes and Patricia Freeman (1998) also tried to determine what techniques were used by groups in states, how much groups do, if the techniques differ across groups, and what types of groups were most active in states. State groups are more active and influential than those in Washington (Nownes and Freeman 1998, 88).

Several different categories were used to define lobbyist advocacy activities, including testifying at legislative hearings, contacting government officials, drafting legislation, informing legislators of a bill's effects, and having constituents contact legislators (Nownes and Freeman 1998, 88). Electoral activities, endorsing candidates, working on campaigns, and making campaign contributions were also included (Nownes and Freeman 1998, 91). Twenty-three different techniques were examined and the lobbyists and organizations used most of them, anywhere from 13 to all 23 (Nownes and Freeman 1998, 93).

The atmosphere of state politics allows lobbyists to flourish because citizens are not as salient on state issues and lawmakers are able to look to interest groups for help without being punished by his or her constituents (Nice 1984, 184). State legislators rely on lobbyists because their staff is very small and when lawmakers are new to the legislature they rely even more heavily on lobbyists to make their transition easier (Nice 1984, 184). If this is true then term limited states should have even more lobbyist influence because there are fewer senior legislators. New legislators rely more on lobbyists and term limited states always have a large supply of new legislators (Nice 1984, 184). Lobbyists who provide information, ideas for legislation, campaign assistance, and build the legislators' reputation usually get repaid in some way (Nice 1984, 184). To assess the influence of interest groups a large compilation of articles was used to determine how others have measured the power of lobbyists (Potters and Sloof 1996, 407).

After reviewing the definitions of interest group activities, four tactics were agreed upon (Potters and Sloof 1996, 407). Those tactics are what lobbyists use to persuade government officials (Potters and Sloof 1996, 407). Interest groups pressure and mobilize the citizens, give campaign contributions, lobby congress and the executive branch, and go to court (Potters and Sloof 1996, 407). Lobbyists and organizations say their most common activities are testifying at legislative hearings and contacting government officials directly (Nownes and Freeman 1998, 91). Other techniques that are universally used by lobbyists and interest groups are helping draft legislation, informing state legislators about a bill's effects, and having influential constituents contact legislators (Nownes and Freeman 1998). Eighty percent of the groups and lobbyists also state that activities like grass-roots lobbying, shaping policy implementation, drafting legislation and rules, raising new issues, talking to the media and several other informal activities are employed (Nownes and Freeman 1998). The electoral activities that the majority of the lobbyists and groups engage in are endorsing candidates, working on campaigns, and, similar to all of the other arguments, giving campaign contributions (Nownes and Freeman 1998).

The arguments are mixed as to whether or not campaign contributions actually affect how a legislator is going to vote and whether or not money influences government decision making (Potters and Sloof 1996, 408). Campaign contributions are thought of as investments to obtain a favorable outcome and in the legislature they are used to obtain a favorable policy (Potters and Sloof 1996, 408). The information on campaign contributions and how they actually affect a legislator's vote on policy is mixed (Potters and Sloof 1996). In some cases contributions have shown to have significant influence on voting behavior, while other times the influence of contributions is only moderate, however, it still exists (Potters and Sloof 1996). Even still, it may not have any influence over a legislators' voting behavior (Potters and Sloof 1996).

Total campaign contributions by organized labor had a significant impact on a legislator's voting behavior when it came to minimum wage issues (Potters and Sloof 1996). Nevertheless, there were shortcomings with this analysis because it only examined one interest group and it did not take into consideration the legislator's party affiliation. However, five political action committees of national associations were examined and the PACs were unable to change the voting outcome (Potters and Sloof 1996, 409). The other studies examined came up with mixed results when it came to committee voting as well. There is sometimes little to no influence on the voting behavior of legislators in committee and at other times there has been significant influence (Potters and Sloof 1996).

When it comes to lobbying, political scientists have yet to come up with a perfect definition but studies have shown that lobbying does have a significant influence on policy (Potters and Sloof 1996, 413). However, when examining voting on five bills, which two lobbyist groups endorsed a specific policy position, evidence was found that lobbyists were able to influence the legislators (Potters and Sloof 1996, 413). State per capita membership was used to measure the strength of the interest group and showed that the lobbyists were successful in influencing the votes of representatives (Potters and Sloof 1996, 413). Interest group testimony has a profound effect on how legislators voted for U.S. Supreme Court nominations (Potters and Sloof 1996, 413-414). Lobbying expenditures also had a significant impact on policy, specifically the National Education Association's impact on teaching salaries (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). The number of auto club lobbyists per capita had an effect on the number of required vehicle inspections and the number of registered lobbyists in an urban center reduced the number of days the center was in violation of emissions standards (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414).

Campaign contributions and lobbying alter a legislator's voting behavior, especially when bills have a narrow focus and low public visibility (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). The strategy of interest groups is oriented towards supporting like-minded legislators (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). When an interest group has a large number of members it is able to influence more legislators (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). A group's stake in influencing public policy is a positive determinant of both its political activity and its success (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). The relation between the number of potential participants of collective action and influence on policy outcomes is driven by both free-riding effects and effects on the group's resources (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). The same holds true for measures of concentration (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). The presence of an opposition or coalition force in the political arena hurts or helps a group's clout (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414). Strong electoral pressures on the public and the presence of a well-informed electorate seem to lower the influence of interest groups (Potters and Sloof 1996, 414).

When groups and lobbyists were asked where they were most active and which branch of government is most important to them, 90 percent of groups and 95 percent of lobbyists say that the legislature is a very important target of their activity (Nownes and Freeman 1998, 96). These groups and lobbyists also spend time within the other branches of government and more specifically interact with legislative committees (Nownes and Freeman 1998). In California, almost 80 percent of groups and 90 percent of lobbyists interact with more than five legislative committees; in South Carolina, 85 percent of groups and lobbyists interact with three or more committees; and in Wisconsin, 80 percent of groups and lobbyists interacted with three or more committees (Nownes and Freeman 1998). All of this is very important when examining interest group activities and how lobbyists influence government because it lists what activities are engaged in most often and on which branch most of that activity is focused. Thus, this shows that most of the efforts from lobbyists are made towards the legislative branch.

When it comes to the power those interest groups have over legislators, however, it is more psychological (Nice 1984, 185). The strongest influence an individual or group could have over an official would result from having the official perceive that his would-be influencer has the power to keep him in office or remove him from office (Nice 1984, 185). Candidates in Wisconsin were three times more likely than state wide officials to feel that interest groups were most important in determining electoral success (Nice

1984). State legislative candidates did not feel that political parties and campaign volunteers were as important as interest groups (Nice 1984). States with liberal interest group systems have higher Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits and similar welfare benefits (Nice 1984, 192-193). States where interest group endorsed candidates win elections more money tends to be spent on highways because most of those interest groups represented labor and business interests (Nice 1984, 192-193).

Even though the results are mixed on the degree of influence that lobbyists and interest groups have over certain areas and levels of government, there is still an impact and they are still very influential. Most is, however, limited to interest group influence in the national government and interest groups in states have a much different atmosphere in which to work. This helps me to determine which variables to use and which to leave out. Lobbyists use campaign contributions to influence legislators and they seem to have been very influential. The ways of defining influence are important; yet, for this paper some are impractical and immeasurable.

There are more lobbyists who are working harder and exercise more influence because legislators have to rely on lobbyists to provide them with resources and information (Kurtz, Cain, and Niemi 2007, 120). Term limits were proposed and adopted to decrease the legislators' interest in re-election, which would presumably reduce the need for campaign contributions from interest groups (Kurtz et al. 2007, 120-121). However, this does not seem to be happening. For an explanation of the impact of term limits, one can examine simple variables to measure interest group influence. Term limits have created an increase in lobbyist influence but little quantitative analysis has been done on the extent by which interest groups are becoming even more entrenched in state legislatures.

Data and Methodology

An examination of term limits and all of the various effects they have had on the legislature suggests that term limits have created legislatures that are less professionalized in a variety of ways. Term limits have created legislators that are inexperienced, lack knowledge, and are more dependent on other sources when first entering the legislature (Caress 1996; Francis and Kenny 1997; Moncrief et al. 1992; Opheim 1994). Turnover rates have also increased in those states with term limits, which in turn have increased the number of inexperienced legislators (Caress 1996; Francis and Kenny 1997; Moncrief et al. 1992; Opheim 1994). This then makes the majority of the legislators uninformed as to the workings of the legislature. As a result they then must rely on outside sources.

To assess the effects of term limits on lobbyists' influence I use a quasi-experimental design. Examination of policy effects at the state level rely on cross-sectional analysis, time series analysis, or a combination of the two approaches. Using a time dimension is helpful because I want to assess the consequences of term limits, which have impacted the states at different times. I make use of a combination and perform a cross-sectional time series analysis. Two separate regressions, fixed effects model and autoregressive model, examine the two dependent variables, lobbyists and contributions, for all 24 states. I apply a fixed effects model to correct for the state-specific bias in coefficients. Errors should be randomly distributed, and using groups can make the errors correlated with other errors from a given state or year. Because I am also using years I include an auto regressive model, which controls for the year-to-year correlation errors.

To determine if lobbyist activity is higher in those states with term limits, I draw on similar variables that were previously used by others. I use the most readily available information I could find from The Center of Public Integrity, The National Institute on Money in State Politics, and online government databases. As my dependent variables I use the natural log of (1) the number of registered lobbyists in each state for each year, and (2) the amount of campaign contributions given to each state each year. Using the log transformation allows me to retain cases with extreme values without violating the normality assumption. Using these, one can see that interest groups have grown in size and interest groups use money and information to influence legislators.

States are used as the unit of analysis because, even though term limits affect legislators, I want to evaluate the impact that term limits have had on the entire state legislature as a whole. I do not use all of the term limited states in my analysis because some of them have not been impacted yet or were just very recently impacted. I use all of the term limited states except Nevada, Louisiana, Arizona and Nebraska and I only use even years from 1998 to 2008.

My independent variable of interest is term limits in state legislatures and my dependent variable is interest group influence, measured by the number of registered lobbyists and campaign contributions. I use a 1 for term limited states and a 0 for non-term limited states. Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Dakota are my term limited states because they have been impacted by term limits for four years or longer. Louisiana, Nebraska, Arizona and Nevada are not used for many reasons. Louisiana was not impacted by term limits until 2007, so there has not been enough time for most legislators to be termed out. Nebraska is not used because it was only recently impacted. It was also excluded because it has a unitary legislature and is difficult to compare to other states. I also did not include Nevada because it will not be impacted until 2010. Arizona is left out because the state is not required to keep year-to-year figures of lobbyists' activities and its lobbyist disclosure laws are not similar to other states. Finally, I did not use Nevada because the legislature is only in session on odd years and does not report any lobbyist information at any other time.

I also only use non-term limited states that have complete data for the even years going back ten years ago. Eleven term limited states and 13 non-term limited states are included. This still gives me sufficient information to evaluate the differences between the majority of term limited states and non-term limited states. The fixed effects models include dummy variables for state effects. I code each state variable with a 1 for its corresponding state-year unit and a 0 for all other state-year units (Alabama variable is coded 1 for Alabama 1998, Alabama 2000… Alabama 2008 and coded 0 for Alaska 1998, Alaska 2000… Wisconsin 2008). This takes care of the effects that are not included in my other control variables and controls for heteroskedasticity, which can inflate t-scores and make insignificant variables appear significant.

The number of registered lobbyists and campaign contributions are the dependent variables that measure interest group influence. The number of registered lobbyists is used as the dependent variable to measure the volume of lobbying that happens in each state's legislature. The number of registered lobbyists is used as a measurement because it shows how many lobbyists there are communicating with legislators. When there are more lobbyists, interest group resources are more readily available to legislators. In addition, legislators in term limited states are inexperienced and not knowledgeable about policy (Francis and Kenny 1997; Moncrief et al. 1992). In the end, the new legislators look to someone for answers and lobbyists are thought of as policy experts.

When only a few lobbyists exist in a state, some legislators may not come into contact with them. The more lobbyists there are the more likely a legislator is to hear from multiple sources. Also, if there are more lobbyists the new, inexperienced legislators will have information available. Similarly, when there are more lobbyists for each interest, then the issue will become more salient to the legislators and there will be more opportunities for the legislators to use lobbyists. Legislators will also build relationships with lobbyists to ensure a job when he or she is out of office (Pomper and Weiner 2003). Therefore, the lobbyists will take advantage of this fact and interest groups will hire legislators that have been termed out of office, who might therefore, build relationships to gain employment. I hypothesize that the number of registered lobbyists will be larger in those states and years with term limits than in states without term limits, holding other factors constant.

The initial way lobbyists try to influence legislators is by giving money to their campaigns. In term limited states lobbyists do not have the leisure of developing long term relationships with legislators over time. The amount of campaign contributions is another dependent variable to measure interest group influence. It is used because I compare how much money is going into each state from interest groups to determine if those states with term limits are receiving more funds. All legislators, even term limited legislators, must run for office, and money is required to run a winning campaign. Term limits have increased the turnover rate, which in turn, has created more open races (Moncrief et al. 1992; Francis and Kenny 1997; Opheim 1994). This requires interest groups to build relationships more quickly by providing campaign funds. If they provide funds then the legislators will be more likely to return the favor. I hypothesize that campaign contributions will be higher in term limited states and years because long term relationships are not made between lobbyists and legislators.

The increase in open races is also requiring lobbyists to give more money each election year. Term limited states have more open races and lobbyists need to gain access to legislators. In term limited states lobbyists have to act quickly, which is why campaign contributions are a measurement of influence. Only even years are included because the majority of funds that come from interest groups come during election years and several states do not report contributions every year. I include campaign contributions since 1998 because by then most of the term limited states had been impacted by term limits.

I control for other factors by including political, social and economic variables. My political variables are percent of Republicans in the state legislatures and election cycle. After examining the literature on term limits, I found that term limits were supported by Republicans and those desiring to minimize spending and reduce interest group influence (Karp 1995; Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002). This does not necessarily imply which party uses interest groups more; however, it suggests that Republicans may find interest groups more objectionable than Democrats (Karp 1995; Stein, Johnson, and Post 2002). Therefore, I include several control variables in my regression. I control for percentage of Republicans in each state legislature for each year because, as stated above, one party may be less tolerant of lobbyists. If that party controls the legislature the number of lobbyists in that state may be less than if the party did not control the legislature. I then control for election cycle because contributions will increase or decrease depending on the year. During midterm elections there may be more contributions going towards state legislators. Interest groups do not have to support presidential candidates during midterm elections and regular election years may experience lower levels of contributions to states.

My demographic variables are percent of the population that is Hispanic, percent of the population that is black, and percent of the population that is 65 years of age and older in each state for each year. I include the percent of the population that is 65 years of age and older because the elderly vote more regularly and may oppose term limits because they would reduce incumbency. Therefore, the elderly would vote against term limits. States with high populations of elderly should have lower levels of lobbyists and campaign contributions under the assumption that incumbency is more likely. However, there are multiple interest groups that support senior issues; therefore, higher numbers of lobbyists would exist. I use the percent Hispanic and the percent black to control for the influence these groups may have on the number of lobbyists and contributions. There are also a large number of groups that represent minorities and in states with large populations of minorities more groups would exist. States with higher populations of minorities should have higher levels of contributions and lobbyists because legislators are continually being forced out of office or forced to run for higher office. Also, higher proportions of minorities could be associated with higher lobbyist influence because the influence of minorities tends to be suppressed where it could threaten the status quo.

Finally, I include economic variables to control for factors that would change lobbyists' influence, such as the percentage of unemployed and the median income. I control for both of these because they could create an increase in the number of lobbyists in each state. If a state has a high median income more lobbyists would exist because more businesses would exist. Business is the leading interest group in all states and in the nation; therefore, more businesses would create more lobbyists (Pomper and Weiner

2003). Unemployment can also have an impact on the number of lobbyists because business activity decreases during economic down-turns.

Results

I show the results for two separate regressions for each of my dependent variables. I ran fixed effects and auto-regressive models. The auto-regressive model uses a common autoregressive parameter because other models, such as the generalized least squares model, allow for heteroskedasticity errors within the cross-sectional time series analysis (Beck and Katz 1995, 634). The fixed effects model includes state dummy variables to control for state-specific effects that may bias coefficients. When running the regression I found that the number of registered lobbyists and campaign contributions were positively skewed because of a few outliers. To reduce the effects of outliers I use the natural log of both. This does not change any of the information; however, it does allow the variables to be normally distributed. The number of observations for all of the models is 144 (6 years times 24 states). The explained variance (Adjusted R^2) varies between each model, from .603 to .935. I show unstandarized regression coefficients and their significance levels (see Table 3).

Table 3. Effects of Term Limits on Lobbyists and Campaign Contributions, 1998—2008

	Lobbyists		Campaign Contributions	
Independent Variables	**Fixed Effects Model**	**Auto-regressive Model**	**Fixed Effects Model**	**Auto-regressive Model**
Term Limits	.141**	.088**	.378**	.432**
Percent Republican	.006**	.007*		.002
Midterm Election	.051	.004	.165	.218
Percent Black	.153**	.035**	.062**	.073**
Percent Hispanic	.022**	.033**	.084**	.077**
Percent over 65	.080**	.091**		.048*
Median Income		.005*		.019*
Unemployment		-.001		.027
Auto Correlation (rho)		.739		.277
Constant	4.11**	4.23**	15.49**	13.73**
Significant state dummies	13		4	
Adjusted R^2	.849	.935	.603	.804
N	144	144	144	144

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

The dependent variables are shown across the top row and the regression coefficients for each model appear below each dependent variable. Some of the control variables reached statistical significance, while others did not. The percent of Republicans in state legislatures is significantly associated with the number of registered lobbyists when controlling for year-to-year differences, and when controlling for state-specific effects. It is not significant in either model of campaign contributions. However, whether or not the year was a midterm election year is not statistically significant in any of the four models, meaning that the timing of midterm elections had no effect on lobbyists or campaign contributions. Both percent black and percent Hispanic are statistically significant in all four models. Similarly, the percent of the population that is over 65 years of age is significant in all models for lobbyists and slightly significant for the auto regressive model but it is not significant for the fixed effects model of campaign contributions. Median income is not significant in the fixed effects models, so it was dropped from those analyses. However, it is significant in the auto regressive models. Similarly, unemployment is not significant in the fixed effects models; therefore, I also removed it completely. Also, it is not statistically significant in any of the four models. I kept it in the autoregressive model because the t-score was higher than one and controls for year-to-year error.

I now turn to the independent variables of interest. Term limits are strongly associated with lobbyists and contributions when controlling for other factors. The term limit coefficients are also in the hypothesized direction. Term limits are significantly associated with campaign contributions and lobbyists, with term limits being positively associated with both lobbyists and contributions. The residuals are also symmetrically distributed about the predicted values. Therefore, term limited states tend to have more lobbyists and have higher amounts of campaign contributions than non-term limited states.

Discussion

Influence is very difficult to measure and determining whether or not a lobbyist has influenced a legislator is even more difficult. The two best-known techniques that lobbyists use are campaign contributions and lobbying. Every individual running for a government office has to have funds for campaigning, and the majority of funds are not from individual citizens. The fastest way to get a large amount of money is to receive a donation from a group. Interest groups are willing to give large amounts of money to candidates because they consider this as an investment (Hamm 1983; Potters and Sloof 1996). Contributions are the initial way that interest groups build relationships with and influence legislators. They increase trust between an interest group and a candidate (Hamm 1983). I, and others, argue that campaign contributions influence politicians. In some cases, campaign contributions have been shown to have a significant influence on voting behavior (Potters and Sloof 1996; Nownes and Freeman 1998). However, this is not always the case and some argue that campaign contributions do not have an impact. Sometimes contributions have no impact on how a legislator is going to vote (Potters and Sloof 1996; Nownes and Freeman 1998).

The best way to measure influence has not been decided upon; however, the most common ways lobbyists try to influence the legislature have been determined. Lobbyists say their most common activities are contacting legislators and making contributions (Nownes and Freeman 1998). It would be unfeasible to accurately document how many times a lobbyist communicates with a legislator so, in replace of that, I use the number of lobbyists, as do others (Hamm 1983; Nice 1984; Nownes and Freeman 1998; Potters and Sloof 1996). Interest groups cannot make legislators vote a certain way nor value certain ideals, but they can offer incentive to do those things. The act of lobbying is to persuade a person to do something, and that is why I use the most common activities of lobbyists as my measure of interest group influence. I hypothesize that those two activities will be more widespread in term limited states.

Term limits have impacted states in many different ways and this analysis shows that they have increased interest group influence. Senator Daggett (2005) saw the changes that were occurring in state legislatures and noticed that lobbyists were being relied on more heavily than they had been in the past. The number of lobbyists coming to the offices was increasing and policy information was being provided by lobbyists instead of senior legislators (Daggett 37). Similarly, my analysis has shown that lobbyists are more prevalent in term limited states. This may be because new legislators are inexperienced and must seek out information from any available source (Flake 2004; Bennett 2005; Kurtz, Cain, and Neimi 2007). On the other hand, some argue that freshman legislators do not trust lobbyists (Rockefeller 2005; Kurt, Cain, and Niemi

2007). New legislators will be more likely to ignore lobbyists because they are more concerned with constituent issues (Tabarrok 1994; Kurtz, Cain, and Niemi 2007). However, surveys given to legislators show more legislators seek out lobbyists for information than before term limits (Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. 2004; Kurtz, Cain, and Niemi 2007). This does not mean that lobbyists have actually influenced the decision making of legislators. Nevertheless, my study reinforces the testimony of the senators that lobbyists are more prevalent in term limited states.

My results also show that term limited states have higher levels of campaign contributions. This may be because term limited legislators are having to increase their campaign resources to run for higher office (Pomper and Weiner 2003, 122). Likewise, an increase in the amount of money contributed was seen after term limits were implemented (Sarbaugh-Thompson 2007). If a legislator desires a career as a politician in a term limited state than he or she will have to run for higher office, so the increase in campaign contributions is logical. My study also reinforces the idea that contributions have increased in term limited states.

Conclusion

The problems with doing quantitative research on term limits have been the difficulty finding data across states over time and the fact that term limits were enacted in different years and impacted states in different years. Some of the states have not had their legislators removed from office yet, and others have only very recently had legislators termed out. The effects of term limits in the states that have only recently been impacted may not have been felt yet. Also, states have varying disclosure laws. Some states only report even years, while some only report lobbyists' activity week by week. Many states do not report data in an easily accessible way and several states do not archive the data.

These are only some of the many reasons why political scientists do so few quantitative analyses of states nationwide. Term limits are even more problematic and the literature that has been written, thus far, is incomplete because a large amount of it only examines the theoretical implications of term limits. However, what does exist is limited in its scope because nearly all of them only look at how term limits affect the institutional composition and effectiveness, instead of whether or not the mechanism has accomplished the task the citizens created it to do. There are still several shortcomings with this analysis and as term limits impact more states, hopefully, the many consequences left undiscovered will be noticed. It does try to delve into an aspect of term limits that has yet to be fully examined. It also provides an example of the differences between term limited states and non-term limited states; though, it is still unknown whether or not term limits have actually caused the increase in lobbyists and contributions.

Both of the dependent variables were statistically significant. However, one shortcoming would be the fact that only two variables were used to measure interest group influence. More variables should be included to measure influence and more states should be added. The number of ex-legislators should be added to measure lobbyists influence because they are more trustworthy than traditional lobbyists. The number of ex-legislators that become lobbyists increases every year and their influence is much greater than anyone could have imagined (Bogardus 2006). However, this information is not readily available. Also, the number of bills authored by an interest group or lobbyist that are introduced into the legislature would be a useful measure of influence. Authoring legislation is a very common activity of an interest group (Nownes and Freeman 1998) and if that legislation was adopted by a legislator it would show that the interest group persuaded him or her to submit it. This information is even harder to obtain than the revolving door numbers, although it would be an excellent measure. It would also be difficult to obtain that information from every state and for every year that should included it an analysis.

It is difficult to measure influence and determine whether or not interest groups actually change the behavior of government officials. It is easy to list the activities engaged in but difficult to know if those activities make a difference. The limitation with my research is that I may not be measuring influence. If neither variables are a good measure of influence than it is still unknown whether or not term limits have increase lobbyists influence. However, term limited states do have higher levels of contributions and more registered lobbyists.

Another shortcoming would be the fact that I only used 24 states and six years in my analysis. A complete analysis should include all states and more years. Some of the states I used were much larger than other states. California is a term limited state and would clearly have more lobbyists than other states in the nation. This may skew the results; however, I did include Texas as a non-term limited state. Other control variables also need to be added. The economic variables were not very significant. Median income was only significant in the auto regressive model and unemployment was not significant in any of the models. This could mean that economic variables have no impact. Because term limits are political, more political variables need to be controlled for. Midterm elections were not at all significant and the percent Republican was only slightly so. On the other hand, the social variables were significant.

Once term limits have impacted all of the states a thorough examination can be conducted. Before term limits had actually impacted the majority of states, political scientists were hypothesizing the consequences. As a result, term limits are not yet understood. Term limits need to be explored to determine if those hypothesized effects actually happened and what the other effects were. Focus needs to be placed on the actual impact that term limits have made. In only a few more years all of the states with term limits will have been impacted and it is unknown whether or not term limits have been a positive addition to state legislatures. Political scientists should continue to study term limits if they are going to understand the consequences and understand how they have impacted state legislatures.

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