Foreign Influence in US Politics[*]

Marco Grotteria[†]   Max Miller[‡]   S. Lakshmi Naaraayanan[§]

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Abstract

We provide novel insights on the nature and scope of foreign lobbying and influence in US politics. To do so, we introduce a comprehensive dataset of date-stamped meetings between foreign agents and individual US legislators, spanning 2000 to 2018 and covering 146 countries, and 1,200 US legislators. From this new dataset, five facts emerge: (1) improvements in diplomatic relations with the US are associated with fewer meetings; (2) meetings are positively related to legislator law-making effectiveness and past employment connections with lobbyists while they are unrelated to political ideology; (3) foreign agents maintain connections with all legislators even after they depart from committees that are important to foreign countries; (4) around these meetings, foreign countries benefit from increased financial aid and assistance and advantageous product tariffs; and (5) meetings between representatives of a given foreign country and US legislators are associated to changes in the ethnic composition of registered voters and an increase in privately-sponsored foreign trips to these countries. Overall, these results provide the first large-sample evidence of foreign influence in US politics and present new observations to guide work in economics, public finance, and political science.

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1   Introduction

Policymaking and allocation of public resources respond to the concerns of both the general electorate and special interest groups (Grossman and Helpman, 1994, 1996; Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020). This conclusion is shaped by research documenting in a broad cross section of countries, including the United States (US), that large economic advantages accrue to domestic firms that maintain relationships with legislators through past employment or campaign contributions (Fisman, 2001; Khwaja and Mian, 2005; Faccio, 2006; Faccio, Masulis, and McConnell, 2006; Claessens, Feijen, and Laeven, 2008; Goldman, Rocholl, and So, 2013). At the same time, empirical evidence on foreign influence in US politics is scant, a fact that is hard to square with the intense public debate on the subject and the billions of dollars spent by foreign governments every year in foreign influence operations.

This paper exploits novel microdata on individual meetings between foreign agents, i.e., agents working in the US on behalf of foreign countries and US legislators.[1] Our study contributes to the existing literature in three ways. First, we characterize the nature and scope of connections between foreign agents and legislators by introducing a comprehensive dataset of meetings from 2000 to 2018. Second, we study which country and legislator characteristics relate to meetings between the two parties. We show that important changes to institutional country characteristics and diplomatic relations with the US are associated with meetings. Among legislator characteristics, lawmaking effectiveness, past employment connections with lobbyists, and membership of foreign affairs committee are important correlates of these connections. Third, we show benefits to foreign countries and legislators. Specifically, we document (a) an increase in foreign aid and financial assistance, (b) lower product tariffs, and (c) more corporate subsidies and government contracts to firms headquartered in the countries whose agents meet more often with legislators. We also document more meetings between representatives of a given foreign country and US legislators are related to (a) an increase in the share of registered voters with ethnic affiliations to the foreign country and (b) an increase in foreign trips to these countries sponsored by private organizations. Overall, our study

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[1]For brevity, we will refer to "US legislators" as "legislators."

provides novel findings and insights on the nature and scope of foreign lobbying and foreign influence in US politics.

Our primary data come from filings under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) containing individual meetings between foreign agents and legislators. The FARA, designed initially to fight Nazi propaganda, has been in place since 1938 and imposes reporting requirements on all foreign principals lobbying in the US. Prior work using these filings focuses only on either semi-annual summary reports that do not contain information on meetings or on small subsamples of meetings for specific countries over a few years (Gawande, Krishna, and Robbins, 2006; You, 2020; Montes-Rojas, 2013). In contrast, we link each meeting with a US legislator to a single foreign client represented by a foreign agent (lobbyist) using detailed supplemental filings submitted by the foreign agent semi-annually. In total, our dataset covers 146 foreign countries lobbying approximately 1,200 US legislators spanning 10 Congresses.

Using this new dataset, we identify foreign country and US legislator characteristics important for lobbying connections, conditional on being politically active. First, regarding foreign country characteristics, changes in political institutions, such as electoral democracy, are negatively associated with meetings. Moreover, changes in international relations with the US, defined as the bilateral distance in the way the foreign country and the US vote on important resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), is positively correlated to more meetings with legislators.

Second, focusing on legislator characteristics, we find that foreign agents meet disproportionately with legislators who are most effective at advancing bills through the legislative process or who are members of power committees, foreign affairs committee, and security and intelligence committee. Accounting for legislator fixed effects that allow us to identify changes in the relative importance of legislator characteristics, we find that only changes to lawmaking effectiveness and membership of the foreign affairs committee positively correlate with changes in meeting intensity.

Third, we find that past employment connections between the lobbyist working on behalf of the foreign country and the legislator are positively related to more meetings, but political ideology of the legislator is unrelated to meetings. Moreover, we find that foreign agents meet with *all* legislators, including low-ranked legislators, and even after

they leave important committees that affect resource allocation. These results speak to the importance of maintaining connections with legislators beyond the committee to which they are assigned at a given moment.

Next, using these data, we study benefits to both foreign countries and legislators around meetings. Of course, interpreting such an association is difficult since both parties organize meetings only when they want and agree to meet (i.e., meetings are endogenous). To circumvent this issue, in tests where we can cleanly link outcomes benefiting foreign countries to legislators, we exploit deaths as an exogenous shock to foreign country connections. This allows us to establish that meetings with legislators indeed identify political connections that provide benefit to foreign countries.

Focusing on aid received by foreign countries, we find that when foreign agents meet more with legislators, these countries are more likely to receive assistance from the US. On the intensive margin, more meetings are associated with larger aid and assistance. We show our results in a panel regression that flexibly controls for legislator, lobbyist and local economic characteristics. Using deaths as shocks to political connections, our estimates imply a substantial per-meeting loss of US$5.7 million in the form of aid to foreign countries.

We also study the relationship between meetings and actions on bills relating to lower product tariffs. First, we show that meetings positively relate to a legislator's propensity to sponsor a bill that is favourable to the foreign country. Second, we show that meetings between foreign countries and legislators sitting in a given committee are related to a larger probability that a favourable bill passes that committee or an unfavourable bill does not advance that specific committee.

Moreover, our dataset is unique insofar as we can even analyse whether there are benefits for firms headquartered in foreign countries whose agents meet with the legislators. Specifically, we document that when their country representatives meet more frequently with a legislator, these firms obtain more subsidies and government contracts in the state or congressional district represented by the legislator.[2] Exploiting legislator

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[2]We explore the robustness of these findings and show that the pattern holds up under a variety of specifications. We employ panel estimations at year-month levels to rule out differences in timing between meetings and resource allocation. Moreover, we conduct congressional-district level regressions and use legislator fixed effects to verify that legislators indeed allocate more resources when they meet

deaths as an exogenous shock to foreign country connections, we find a substantial per-meeting loss of US\$250,000 in the form of local subsidies and government contracts. In sum, we provide first large-scale evidence that foreign countries receive more resources after meeting with US legislators.

In terms of benefits to legislators, we rely on a novel dataset on voter registration that allows us to link the ethnicity of the electoral base to that of the foreign country meeting with legislators. Using this dataset, we document an increase in the share of registered voters with ethnic affiliations to the foreign country. Additionally, we leverage data on foreign trips by legislators to these countries sponsored by private organizations, and show that more meetings with legislators are associated with more foreign trips. Overall, our results provide evidence for the importance of connections for foreign lobbying and public policy in the US.

Related literature This is the first paper that characterizes the nature and scope of foreign influence in US politics. To do so, we introduce a novel dataset on the near-universe of meetings between foreign agents working on behalf of foreign countries and legislators, allowing us to study which legislator characteristics are key determinants of meetings. We provide new insights on the impediments to the effectiveness of the US legislative process, and on how access to politicians is gained and distributed in the economy, a question of both practical and theoretical relevance.

We add to the literature in political economics by showing that meetings between foreign agents and US legislators affect resource allocation. Theoretical models of lobbying stress the importance of special interest groups in determining trade policy, budget priorities, and public good expenditures (Grossman and Helpman, 1994, 2001; Persson and Tabellini, 2002). A host of papers test the implications of these models in the domestic context, mostly looking at trade tariffs (Goldberg and Maggi, 1999; Kim, 2017). We are the first to document that more frequent meetings are associated with larger foreign aid and assistance for these countries. By doing so, we contribute to the extant literature on foreign aid, which has linked aid to outcomes like higher consumption or economic growth (Dreher and Lohmann, 2015; Galiani, Knack, Xu, and Zou, 2017; Tem-

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more often with foreign countries representatives.

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ple and Van de Sijpe, 2017) or increased conflict (Nunn and Qian, 2014; Crost, Felter, and Johnston, 2014; Qian, 2015; Berman and Matanock, 2015).

In addition, our work highlights a novel indirect benefit of political connections for firms headquartered in countries whose representatives meet with US legislators. We show that firms benefit by receiving more local subsidies and new government contracts from the state or congressional district of the legislator who meets more frequently with their country representatives. These novel results add to the literature on local subsidies to firms (Slattery, 2018; Slattery and Zidar, 2020). Relative to prior work, our paper provides the first evidence that political connections sway subsidies toward firms whose governments meet more with them.

Our results on the indirect benefits for foreign firms also connect our work to the extant literature on the role of political influence on initial contract allocation and renegotiation (Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021; Ağca and Igan, 2020; Goldman, Rocholl, and So, 2013; Tahoun, 2014; Schoenherr, 2019; Fisman, 2001), the role of lobbying across and within industries (Kang, 2016), and the role of corporate philanthropy to influence rule-making and raising investors' political voice (Bertrand, Bombardini, Fisman, Trebbi, and Yegen, 2020; Bertrand, Bombardini, Fisman, Hackinen, and Trebbi, 2021).

Much of this literature proxies for political connections by relying on campaign contributions, donations, and past employment networks. In contrast, our dataset sheds light on the complementary role of political connections through the use of meetings with individual US legislators. This links our paper to work relying on the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), which regulates lobbying activities of all domestic interest groups. The LDA requires lobbyists to disclose the identity of the chamber of Congress or the federal agency contacted, but *does not* require disclosure of the identity of contacted persons, which we instead observe. While useful, the LDA data have left many questions unanswered regarding the identities of legislators and how intensely they were contacted (Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020). We add to the literature on domestic lobbying by providing a new and complementary direct measure of connections, allowing us to examine the scope, intensity of meetings, and their concomitant real effects on resource allocation for foreign governments and firms.

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Finally, we also contribute to the literature that seeks to estimate the value of political connections to firms. Changes in political connections relate to abnormal returns (Fisman, 2001; Jayachandran, 2006; Claessens et al., 2008; Ferguson and Voth, 2008; Goldman, Rocholl, and So, 2009; Cooper, Gulen, and Ovtchinnikov, 2010; Akey, 2015; Brown and Huang, 2020; Grotteria, 2021; Child, Massoud, Schabus, and Zhou, 2021), firm value (Faccio, 2006; Borisov, Goldman, and Gupta, 2016), profitability and revenues (Amore and Bennedsen, 2013; Cingano and Pinotti, 2013), and investment (Cohen, Coval, and Malloy, 2011; Akey and Lewellen, 2017).[3] Moreover, politically connected firms are more likely to receive government funding in times of crisis (Faccio, Masulis, and McConnell, 2006; Duchin and Sosyura, 2012; Adelino and Dinc, 2014; Acemoglu, Johnson, Kermani, Kwak, and Mitton, 2016). Our paper provides novel evidence that foreign firms indirectly benefit from political connections of their country representatives as they receive more state and local subsidies and government contracts from US legislators.

2 Data

In this section, we offer a description of the datasets used in the paper.

2.1 Foreign Agents Registration Act

To study foreign lobbying in the US, we construct a novel dataset that details all meetings with exact dates between lobbyists working on behalf of foreign clients and members of Congress.[4] Prior work on foreign lobbying focuses only on either a small subsample of meetings for specific countries over a few years or on semi-annual summary reports (Gawande, Krishna, and Robbins, 2006; Montes-Rojas, 2013; You, 2020; Lee, 2020). We also use the semi-annual reports to provide an overview of topics foreign countries lobby for in the US in Appendix B.

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[3]A recent literature also stresses the role of partisan affiliation on firms' choices and investment decisions: see for instance Colonnelli, Pinho Neto, and Teso (2020) and Kempf, Luo, Schäfer, and Tsoutsoura (2021).

[4]For brevity, throughout the text, we may refer to the "meetings between the foreign agents working on behalf of foreign countries and US legislators" as "meetings between foreign countries and US legislators."

However, there are two major drawbacks in these reports making them unsuitable to study the influence of foreign lobbying in the US. First, they do not contain information on the identities of individual US legislators with whom lobbyists meet, also a key issue in the broader literature on domestic lobbying that uses the LDA data. Second, there is no information on the date of the individual meetings between lobbyists and legislators.

We make progress on these issues by using detailed data from the supplemental statements filed under FARA. This confers two advantages. First, these filings cleanly link meetings between a representative of an individual foreign country and a specific US legislator. Second, they provide detailed information on individual meetings with legislators. This comprehensive dataset allows us to examine which US legislator or foreign country characteristics are related to more meetings, and simultaneously provide us with the unique opportunity to investigate the scope and nature of foreign influence in US politics.

We obtain our data from over 12,000 semi-annual lobbying disclosures made under the FARA from the US Department of Justice (DOJ). The FARA requires agents operating in the US (*foreign agents*) to register with the DOJ and file disclosures if they work on *covered activity* — political/lobbying activity or public relations — on behalf of a *foreign principal* (foreign corporation, foreign person, or foreign government). Importantly, FARA exempts activities that purely further commercial and trade interests (i.e., purchase and sale of property, services, or commodities) and that have no involvement in the public or political interests of a foreign government or political party.

We digitize and manually transcribe the supplemental filings, creating a dataset that covers more than 250,000 contacts to approximately 1,200 members of Congress by 500 unique lobbying firms.[5] Of all foreign principals 87.8% are foreign governments, 7.3% are non-profit associations, whereas 6.4% are foreign corporations.[6] We determine the country of origin for each foreign principal, allowing us to link each meeting with a unique foreign country.[7] This gives us 146 unique foreign countries as clients during the

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[5]Examples of popular legislators are included in Table C.1 and C.2.

[6]Foreign principals can fit in multiple categories, e.g., state-owned enterprises.

[7]For each foreign principal, we determine the country of origin using data from the World Bank and assign the associated geographical location using the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) three-letter country codes defined in ISO 3166-1. Throughout our analyses, we drop autonomous regions as they lack data on regional characteristics.

period 2000–2018.

We focus on question 12 and the corresponding attachments from all Supplemental Statements filed under FARA. Question 12, reproduced in Panel A of Figure 1, asks about political activities undertaken on behalf of foreign principals during the previous six-month period. The activities include public relations, policies sought to be influenced, any sponsored or delivered speeches, and lectures or TV broadcasts, among others. Importantly, in the corresponding attachments the lobbyist must report the date and subject of the meeting and which US legislator they met with, as seen in Panel B of Figure 1.

The penalties for non-compliance with FARA are quite severe. Violations are punishable by a fine of $10,000 and up to five years in prison. Since 2000, the DOJ brought 13 criminal FARA cases against 14 organizations and individuals that have reached resolutions to date.[8] This has resulted in 13 parties being convicted and 1 party having the charges dropped. Most famously, Donald Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort was sentenced to five years in prison for not registering his 2017 lobbying activities.

In comparison, the LDA requires lobbyists working on behalf of domestic agents to register with both the clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and secretary of the U.S. Senate on behalf of a client. LDA also suggests that violations are punishable by a fine of up to $200,000 per violation or up to five years in prison. However, from 1995 to 2017, there have been nine LDA enforcements settled via civil penalties of $200,000 or less, which could be related to the fact that the clerks of the House and Senate do not have the enforcement capacity of the Department of Justice, which oversees FARA (Thurber, Campbell, and Dulio, 2019).[9]

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[8]Examples of cases prosecuted under FARA can be found here.

[9]Only one criminal case, outside our sample, occurred in 2020 where lobbyist Jack Abramoff pled guilty to violating registration requirements under the LDA.

2.2 Country and legislator characteristics, outcomes of interest, and other data

We combine the resulting dataset of meetings extracted from FARA supplemental filings to data from a variety of sources on foreign countries' and US legislators' characteristics. Appendix A provides details about the data and the construction of variables.

Country characteristics. We collect several characteristics of foreign countries such as GDP, population, and civil violence from sources mentioned in Appendix A. Additionally, country-level trade flows using bilateral goods trade data come from CEPII (Gaulier and Zignago, 2010; Bailey, Gupta, Hillenbrand, Kuchler, Richmond, and Stroebel, 2021). We include data on political institutions and the electoral democracy index from the Varieties of Democracy Database. We rely on a time-varying measure of each country's political preferences based on votings on resolutions in the UNGA as estimated by Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten (2017). This measure is a common proxy of bilateral distance between foreign countries' political attitude and the US.

Legislator characteristics. We then merge data on US legislators' characteristics from a variety of sources. Data on election results and party affiliations come from the MIT Elections Lab, and data on House and Senate committee and sub-committee assignments from Stewart (2017). To measure lawmaking effectiveness, we use the Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES) developed by Volden and Wiseman (2014, 2018). This measure captures the ability of legislators to advance the bills they sponsor through the legislative process. Political ideology for each legislator is measured using the dynamic weighted NOMINATE (DW-NOMINATE) score, as developed by Poole and Rosenthal (1985, 2011). Under this measure, a score closer to 1 reflects a more conservative ideology whereas a score closer to -1 reflects a more liberal ideology. Finally, the employment history of all registered lobbyists (approximately 70,000 individuals) comes from the Washington Representatives and Open Secrets databases. This allows us to establish whether a lobbyist has worked in the office of a given legislator in the past.

Main outcomes of interest. In Section 4, we examine whether meetings between foreign agents and legislators are positively associated with benefits to foreign countries or US legislators. We extract data on trade policies relating to product tariffs from GovTrack. These data contain information on the identities of the sponsoring legislators and all actions on bills including the dates and decisions taken by committees and sub-committees. Further, we also rely on data on foreign aid and financial assistance to foreign countries granted by US agencies. To quantify benefits to foreign firms, we rely on the disbursement of state and local subsidies to foreign-owned firms, and the allocation of federal government contracts to such firms.

Additionally, we employ data on registered voters from L2, a leading non-partisan data vendor used by political campaigns and the academic literature (e.g., Allcott, Braghieri, Eichmeyer, and Gentzkow, 2020, Brown and Enos, 2021, Bernstein, Billings, Gustafson, and Lewis, 2022, Spenkuch, Teso, and Xu, 2021). L2 has complete coverage of the US voter population starting from 2014. The database also contains an estimate of the ethnic description of registered voters. The sample of non-US registered-voter population for which this description is available is about 10% of the total register voter sample. Using this dataset, we compute for each congressional district/state each year, the share of registered voters by party affiliation and ethnic affiliation to the foreign country.

Other data. We compute the fraction of foreign-born individuals within each county from the Current Population Survey (Autor, Katz, and Kearney, 2008). However, this dataset has limited geographical coverage, so we use this only in the appendix to shed light on whether country of birth of the congressional-district population relates to meeting intensity.

We collect data on the universe of posts on Twitter (i.e., tweets) by current and former members of the US Senate and House of Representatives from January 2010 to December 2018. We download all historical tweets and quote tweets for a total of 6,671,713 tweets. Our data include a timestamp and the complete text, which we then parse to extract any mention of a foreign country. We search for mentions of all foreign countries in our sample.

Lastly, we obtain data on all official foreign travels by members and staff of the US House of Representatives and US Senate as well as, for house members, any gift of foreign travels and travel-related expenses paid for by private individuals or entities for travel outside the House duties.[10]

3   Describing the variation in meetings

We begin by presenting an overview of the patterns in the data, which help us to motivate some features of our empirical specifications in the next section where we test whether meetings are related to changes in public policy and political outcomes.

3.1   Descriptive analysis

Figure 2 presents a yearly summary of the number of foreign countries met by each congressperson (Panel A) as well as of the number of congresspeople met by each foreign country (Panel B). From 2000 to 2018, both series display a visible growth in the annual average and the median number of meetings. Moreover, both distributions are highly skewed—the median foreign country meets with 20 legislators while the 90th percentile foreign country meets with almost 190 legislators.

3.1.1   Country characteristics

Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the countries in our sample for non-missing observations for all the variables we use in our analysis. The median country in our sample has a larger GDP than the median country in the World Bank database, median Log(GDP) in US$ millions of 12.03 vs 9.61, and a smaller population, Log(population) in thousands of 3.54 vs 4.15. Moreover, the sample countries have a greater trade exposure to the US, e.g., Log(Exports) in US$ millions are 8.04 vs 5.32 and Log(Imports) in US$ millions are 8.12 vs 5.09.

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[10]Common sponsors of these gift trips include the American Israel Education Foundation, a charitable organization affiliated with AIPAC, i.e., the America's pro-Israel lobby, or The German Marshall Fund of the United (GMF), a public policy think tank that seeks to promote cooperation and understanding between North America and the European Union.

In terms of institutional characteristics, the median foreign country in our sample is more politically polarized than the median country in the V-Dem database for the same period (0.15 vs -0.07) and has a higher political corruption index (0.59 vs 0.55). In terms of identities of foreign countries, Figure C.1 presents the heatmap of meeting frequency for specific years in the sample with varying color intensity representing the number of meetings with US legislators in a given year. Even though the data are representative of nearly every region across the globe, the countries in our sample are slightly tilted towards large economies.

3.1.2 Legislator characteristics

Personal. Table 2 reports the summary statistics for individual legislators where we collapse individual meetings at the legislator-country-year level. A foreign country holds on average 4.3 meetings every year with a given legislator. Moreover, the standard deviation in the meetings variable suggests large variation in the intensity with which they meet. When examining individual characteristics, we find that a foreign country meets with a legislator who is on average 59-year old and holds 16% of their meetings with women legislators and 8% of their meetings with underrepresented minority legislators (latin american or african american). Further, 16% of the legislators each year meet with foreign countries connected through a lobbyist who has worked in the legislator's office in the past. This corresponds to around 40% of the legislators meeting with lobbyists with past employment connection.

Political. House members represent 72% of all meetings and the average contacted legislator won their election with a vote share of 66%. Figure 3 presents the number of meetings with representatives and senators relative to the month they are elected into office. Both figures show occasional spikes and drops, but there are no well-pronounced patterns. In the case of senators, however, the number of meetings appears to go down right before biannual elections, which take place every 24 and 48 months after they are elected. Foreign countries also meet equally with legislators from the two major political parties. Democrats account for 50.2% of the meetings with foreign countries. Table 2 highlights foreign countries meet more often with legislators who, on average,

have served for six terms in the Congress.

Ideological. Foreign countries meet equally with legislators across the ideological spectrum—both conservatives and liberals—a finding that holds when examining different definitions of political ideology. Motivated by prior work, we focus on the first dimension of the DW-NOMINATE score, DW-NOMINATE 1, which captures the economic and governmental aspects of the ideological left-right spectrum. A second dimension of the score, DW-NOMINATE 2, captures differences within the major political parties on currency, nativism, civil rights, and lifestyle issues. Both measures have average values close to zero, implying foreign countries meet equally with legislators also across the ideological spectrum.

As an example, Figure 4 presents the contact pattern of foreign agents on behalf of the government of Turkey over time, where a contact is defined as a year-month with at least one meeting between a foreign agent and a legislator. The horizontal axis indicates the date of contact and the vertical axis indicates the DW-NOMINATE 1 score of the legislator they meet with. Each dot in the figure represents a contact. From the figure, we note that Turkey meets with legislators from both parties and across the ideological spectrum. This pattern is not unique to Turkey, but it is the norm. In our sample, foreign countries meet with legislators across different political ideologies and party affiliations consistently over time.

Legislator's importance for influence. Table 2 shows that foreign countries meet more often with legislators that belong to the party in control of the Senate. We also note that a foreign country meets with a legislator with an average legislative effectiveness score of 1.06. This score is approximately the cutoff for effectiveness in the top tercile among all legislators, suggesting that countries meet with legislators who effectively sponsor and advance bills through the legislative process.

Figure 5 plots the evolution of meetings with effective lawmakers. The horizontal axis indicates the meeting year, as the lawmaker effectiveness scores are only available at the annual frequency. The vertical axis plots the fraction of meetings with the most effective lawmakers relative to all the legislators a foreign country meets in a year. We consider

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three definitions of "most effective lawmakers"—top 5%, top 10%, and top 20% of legislators by LES score. Though not entirely unexpected, foreign countries meet relatively more often with the most effective legislators. For example, the fraction of meetings attributable to the most effective 20% of legislators is always larger than 20%, with a minimum of 20.84% in 2011. This result, that on average foreign countries meet more frequently with the most effective legislators, holds across definitions of effectiveness.

At the same time, Table 2 shows a foreign country has on average nearly 30% of their meetings with sub-committee chairs and 40% of their meetings with members of "power" committees, which groups together the rules, ways and means, and appropriations committees (Volden and Wiseman, 2014) . More importantly, 25% of the meetings are with members of the foreign affairs committee alone. Members of the armed forces (security and intelligence) committee account for 16.9% (17.2%) of meetings with foreign agents. Meetings with members of energy and commerce committee are fewer at 13%.

The average values reported in Table 2 hide substantial time variation in the meetings with a given committee in a year. Panel A of Figure 6 plots the percentage of meetings with members of foreign affairs, armed forces, security and intelligence, and energy and commerce committees over time. Foreign countries meet more with members of the foreign affairs committee, which increased by 10 percentage points over the sample period, and passed from 30% to 40% of all meetings in a given year. During the same period, meetings with Armed services and Security & Intelligence committee members more than doubled accounting for 10% of all meetings in 2000 and 20% of all meetings in 2018. Meetings with members of Energy & Commerce saw only a modest increase.

To understand the importance of committee chairs to foreign countries, for each committee-year we compute the number of meetings with chairs and the average number of meetings with members in the same committee. We then scale meetings with chair by the average number of meetings with members in the same committee in that year. This accounts for differences in committee sizes and highlights the importance of meetings with the committee chair relative to meetings with an average committee member. In Panel B of Figure 6 we plot this series over time for foreign affairs, armed forces, security and intelligence, and energy and commerce committees and we note considerable fluctuations for all committees. The figure suggests that foreign countries increase their

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meeting intensity with chairs in specific years, e.g., in 2014 they meet with the Security & Intelligence committee chairs 400 times more often than the average member of the same committee. We observe large fluctuations in the series of other committees as well.

Overall, these descriptive statistics are informative of the variation in the country and legislator characteristics which we explore in detail below. Our findings provide novel insights into the nature and scope of legislator links with foreign countries. We next proceed to relate meetings with country and legislator characteristics to understand which characteristics matter for connections with foreign countries.

3.2 Country and legislator correlates of meeting intensity

The descriptive statistics and visual patterns in Section 3.1 already provide a broad sense of the relationship between meeting intensity and legislator or country characteristics. In this section, we relate them more formally in a regression framework to control for potential confounds.

Importance of country characteristics. Table 3 presents the estimates from a regression of the natural logarithm of the number of meetings on time-varying country characteristics discussed above. In particular, we estimate:

$$\log(\text{Meetings})_{lft} = \gamma_f + \delta_{lt} + \beta \text{Country characteristics}_{ft} + \epsilon_{lft}, \tag{1}$$

where l represents the legislator being lobbied for, f represents the country for which the foreign agent is lobbying, and t represents the meeting year. The unit of observation is a legislator-foreign country-year triad. The empirical specification includes country fixed effects to control for unobserved time-invariant regional characteristics in addition to legislator-by-year fixed effects to allow for the relative importance of the legislator to vary over time.

Column 1 relates meeting intensity to the economic characteristics of countries without controlling for time-invariant country characteristics. We find that, on average, legislators meet equally with countries of varying size and trade exposures. When we relate meetings to conflict (column 2) and institutional characteristics (column 3), we

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find that political polarization and political unrest are positively associated with meetings while the electoral democracy index which is negatively associated with meetings. In column 4, we combine all the characteristics together to account for cross-correlations and find that controlling for legislator-year fixed effects there is no statistically significant relationship between the number of meetings and country's characteristics.

In column 5, exploiting within country changes in characteristics, we find that improvements in electoral democracy as well as increases in political corruption and polarization are negatively associated with meetings. Moreover, changes in international relations with the US, defined as the bilateral distance in the way the foreign country and the US vote on important resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), is positively correlated to more meetings with legislators. Lastly, in Appendix Table C.10, we show that for house members meeting frequency with the representatives of a foreign country is higher if a more significant fraction of her electoral base was born in that country.

Our analysis highlights important differences with respect to domestic lobbying. Unlike domestic lobbying where it is well established that large corporations, that have more government contracts, or political risk spend more to lobby US legislators, when we analyse the meeting intensity between foreign agents and legislators we fail to see a statistically significant relationship between the level of country's economic characteristics or exposure to the US and the frequency of meetings. Instead, our results point to a more nuanced relationship where meetings frequency is explained by changes in the institutional and political environment of the foreign countries. These results speak about the importance for countries of gaining and maintaining connections beyond direct short-term economic benefits.

Importance of legislator characteristics. To shed light on the relative importance of legislator characteristics, we modify our empirical specification to include country-by-year fixed effects, using variation in characteristics across legislators. In particular, we estimate:

$$\log(\text{Meetings})_{lft} = \gamma_{ft} + \delta_l + \beta \text{Legislator Characteristics}_{lt} + \epsilon_{lft}, \qquad (2)$$

where l represents the legislator being lobbied for, f represents the country for which the foreign agent is lobbying, and t represents the meeting year. As before, the unit of observation is a legislator-foreign country-year triad and we cluster standard errors at the country-level (Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan, 2004).

Table 4 presents the estimates from the regression. Column 1 relates meeting intensity to the political characteristics of legislators without controlling for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We find that, on average, a foreign country meets more often with senators, legislators who win by larger margins, and legislators who are connected to the lobbyist through past employment networks, i.e., the number of lobbyists at a lobbying firm who previously worked for a legislator as explained on page 57. The finding on the importance of past employment network complements evidence by Bertrand, Bombardini, and Trebbi (2014) who show that employment connections are positively related to campaign contributions by US lobbyists. Interestingly, foreign countries meet less often with legislators if they represent the party that controls the Senate. Finally, consistent with the descriptive analyses, foreign countries meet with legislators irrespective of party affiliation and seniority in the Congress.

Turning to ideological characteristics, in column 2 we find that meeting intensity is weakly negatively correlated with the legislator's political ideology. In column 3 we focus on legislator characteristics that may influence resource allocation for foreign entities. We do not find a statistically significant relationship between meeting intensity and the legislator's status as committee or sub-committee chair. However, we observe a positive relationship with the following committee memberships: Power committees, Foreign affairs, and Security and Intelligence.

Column 4 presents the empirical specification including all characteristics at once. We omit the "Democrat" indicator variable, as it is highly negatively correlated, -94%, with the DW-NOMINATE 1 scores. When considering the characteristics jointly, we find that the relative importance of a legislator, captured by the LES, and whether the legislator is a chairperson of a subcommittee is positively related to more meetings with foreign countries. Membership of power committees remains a significant determinant of meeting intensity together with membership of foreign affairs and security and intelligence committee. Finally, ideological characteristics are uncorrelated with meetings,

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which is in contrast to the extant literature using campaign contributions as a proxy for political connections (Wright, 1990; Battaglini and Patacchini, 2018). In sum, these associations highlight the relevance of political and legislative effectiveness as well as committee membership for meetings with foreign agents.

Additionally, we are interested in understanding whether, conditional on deciding whom to meet with, changes in legislator characteristics relate to meetings intensity. Such an analysis is informative on which characteristics matter for a connection to persist, a question previously unexplored in the literature. To do so, column 5 adds legislator fixed effects to our previous empirical specification and relates *within* legislator changes in characteristics to changes in meeting intensity. The results suggest an increase in a legislator's effectiveness, an increase in their vote margins, becoming a member of the foreign affairs committee and working with more connected lobbyists are all positively related to an increase in meetings. Moreover, as before, we find that foreign agents meet more often with legislators when they become senators, potentially due to an increase in the length of their term. Interestingly, changes in legislator ideology again do not explain variation in meeting intensity.

Overall, our findings provide new observations that meetings are associated with the effectiveness of the legislators, their status as member of specific important committees, in particular the foreign affairs committee, and past employment networks, but not their ideology.

3.3 The role of committee assignments

Next, we explore whether meetings between foreign countries and US legislators can be explained by committee assignments. Building on the observations described above, we focus on the foreign affairs, and the security and intelligence house and senate committees as well as important committees that in prior work have been shown to influence resource allocation in the US (Cohen, Coval, and Malloy, 2011; Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021).[11]

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[11]The committees influencing resource allocation include budgetary and oversight committees in the House of Representatives and in the Senate: House Committee on Appropriations; House Committee on Oversight and Reform; House Committee on Armed Services; House Committee on the Budget; House

We test whether foreign agents meet *less often* with legislators after they depart from important committees, holding constant the relative importance of the committee to foreign countries. In Table 5, we examine changes in meeting intensity around the time of departure of legislators from important committees. The committee assignments for legislators are available at the monthly level.

Given the granularity of our data we can account for several confounding factors. We control for local economic confounds through the inclusion of state-by-year-month fixed effects and for differences across Congresses that may influence meetings with legislators through the inclusion of Congress fixed effects. Our empirical specifications hold constant the relative importance of departing committees for foreign countries by including country-by-committee fixed effects. Additionally, we include legislator-by-committee fixed effects to control for influential legislators departing from the same committee at different points in their tenure. Finally, we also consider changes in meeting intensity can be driven by the relevant importance of the issue to a lobbyist rather than a foreign country (Bertrand, Bombardini, and Trebbi, 2014).[12] To do so, in some specifications we include lobbying firm fixed effects and account for lobbying firm switching issues in a predictable way when a legislator departs from a committee.

We organize our analyses at the committee-lobbying firm-month level. Results in Table 5 provide evidence that foreign countries continue to meet with *all* legislators even after they leave important committees. These results are inconsistent with the prediction of the short-term "quid-pro-quo channel" according to which foreign countries only meet politicians sitting in important committees in that specific moment. Our results are instead consistent with two alternative hypotheses: (1) an "information channel" that predicts that lobbyists and legislators exchange useful information, hence they continue to meet as frequently even if legislators leave these committees; (2) a quid-pro-quo channel that operates with long-term relations, e.g., legislators even after leaving a

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Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Senate Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Senate Committee on the Budget; Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

[12]The granularity of our data allows us to account for this explanation. Specifically, our sample consists of 500 unique lobbying firms with the median firm working on two topics on behalf of three foreign countries.

committee may be able to influence their colleagues, or may ascend in the future to even higher positions.

Overall, our results speak to the importance that maintaining connections with *all* legislators is essential to foreign countries beyond the committee to which legislators are assigned at a given moment.

3.4 Robustness

We further probe the validity of the meeting intensity as a measure of connection/interest in the foreign country by examining how it correlates with foreign official trips of the legislator to that foreign country or the frequency with which the legislator publicly mentions the foreign country on Twitter.[13] Results for both the official foreign trips and Twitter activity are in Table 6.

We study both the extensive and the intensive margins of official foreign trips and Twitter activity. In all specifications we include country fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics and state-by-year-month fixed effects for time-varying local economic confounds. We add legislator fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. Regarding foreign trips, we find that more meetings are significantly related to (a) a larger probability of trips to that foreign country whose representatives the legislator meet more often, (b) to a longer stay in the country. Regarding Twitter, we find that more meetings are also positively associated with (a) a higher probability of a mention of the foreign country in the legislator's tweets, and (b) more mentions of the foreign country in the legislator's tweets.

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[13]Recent work points to the important role of social media platforms in affecting political outcomes (Fujiwara, Müller, and Schwarz, 2021; Müller and Schwarz, 2021; Enikolopov, Makarin, and Petrova, 2020; Bursztyn, Egorov, Enikolopov, and Petrova, 2019; Acemoglu, Hassan, and Tahoun, 2018; Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017).

4 Benefits to foreign countries and legislators around meetings

Empirical specification. In this section, we examine benefits that accrue to foreign countries whose agents meet more often with legislators as well as benefits to US legislators. Of course, meetings are set strategically so there are also costs involved, e.g., potential reputational costs for legislators. However, we only test whether benefits accrue to foreign countries and US legislators around meetings.

We separate benefits into 3 categories: direct benefits to foreign countries including foreign aid and financial assistance and beneficial changes in US product tariffs; indirect benefits that accrue to firms headquartered in countries whose agents meet with legislators; direct benefits to legislators measured by the share of registered voters with ethnic affiliations to a foreign country the legislator meets often or privately sponsored trips outside the office duties.

For each of the above-mentioned benefits, using panel regressions, we relate meetings between legislators and foreign countries to the benefit. We study two margins of adjustment, and estimate the following panel regressions:

$$\mathbb{1}\{\text{Benefit} > 0\}_{lsft} = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta \text{Meetings}_{lsft} + \eta Controls_{ft} + \epsilon_{lsft} \tag{3}$$

$$\log(\text{Benefit}_{lsft}) = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta \text{Meetings}_{lsft} + \eta \text{Controls}_{ft} + \epsilon_{lsft}, \tag{4}$$

where l represents the legislator met with, s represents the state associated with the legislator, f represents the foreign country whose agents meet with the legislator, and t represents the meeting year.

As we are interested in studying both the intensive and the extensive margins of adjustments, we work with a balanced panel. Equation (3) quantifies the extensive margin, i.e., increase in the probability of the benefit of interest, and Equation (4) quantifies the intensive margin, i.e., increase in the value of the benefit. The coefficient of interest is β, identified by variation in meetings between multiple foreign countries and legislators. Standard errors are corrected for heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered at the country-level (Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan, 2004).

The empirical specification allows us to rule out concerns about location-specific and country-specific effects that may affect outcome variables for two reasons. First, state-by-year fixed effects are included to control for local economic confounds (e.g., state or regional macroeconomic trends) and general policies that potentially affect meetings or benefits. Second, country fixed effects are added to control for time-invariant country characteristics that may simultaneously drive meetings or the benefits to foreign countries or US legislators.

We also explore the robustness of our findings and examine whether the pattern holds up under a variety of specifications. When possible, we employ panel estimations at year-month levels to rule out differences in timing between meetings and benefits. We also employ congressional-district level regressions and use legislator fixed effects to confirm whether meetings with foreign countries representatives indeed positively relate to benefits.

Finally, while the panel regressions are informative of the association between meetings and benefits, it is unclear whether omitted factors and reverse causality drive the relationship. To circumvent such issues, we examine changes in benefits to foreign countries that unexpectedly lose a connection due to the death of a representative or a senator. The null hypothesis is that if connections to the legislators do not matter, then the loss through deaths should be unrelated to benefits. Note that we can perform such an analysis only in instances where we can cleanly link individual legislator decisions to benefits. We reject the null hypothesis, and provide novel evidence that larger benefits accrue to foreign countries whose representatives meet often with legislators, conditional on being *politically active*.

4.1 Direct benefits to foreign countries

Foreign aid. We begin by focusing our analyses on resource allocation to foreign countries themselves. Here, we rely on foreign aid given its importance in winning support in major international affairs, maintaining political regimes, or strengthening international alliances (Alesina and Dollar, 2000). Further, prior work highlights the importance of political relations in determining foreign aid and assistance (Kuziemko and

Werker, 2006; Sims, 1980). Hence, foreign aid offers a setting to examine the importance of meetings for resource allocation to foreign countries and an easy one where to quantify benefits.[14] Results are reported in Table 7.

Column 1 reports the results with only state-year fixed effects, finding that an increase in meetings with a legislator is positively associated with receiving aid and assistance from the US. On the intensive margin, meetings are associated with larger aid and assistance. These results are robust to adding controls, country fixed effects, and legislator fixed effects. We examine the relationship between meetings and foreign aid at the year-month level, as reported in Table C.3, and show that differences in timing between meetings and aid do not explain our results. Our results provide novel evidence that more and larger foreign aid are assigned to countries whose representatives meet more often with US legislators.

Trade policy. A large literature in economics proposes an important role for interest groups in the determination of trade policy (Grossman and Helpman, 1994). Much of this work has focused on domestic lobbying groups, but more recent work points to a disproportionate influence of foreign lobbying for trade policies (Hillman and Ursprung, 1988; Gawande, Krishna, and Robbins, 2006; Antràs and i Miquel, 2011). Given this, we focus on tariff bills that were ever sponsored in the Congress during our sample period. We manually classify bills as "favourable" ("unfavourable") to a particular foreign country depending on whether they propose lower (higher) product tariffs within specific trade agreements. We study actions on bills starting from the date at which the bill is sponsored by a legislator and follow the bills through their evolution within committees and Congress.

In our empirical specification, we examine two outcomes of interest. First, we study whether meetings relate to a legislator's propensity to sponsor a bill that is favourable to a foreign country. Second, we examine whether meetings between foreign countries and legislators sitting in a given committee are related to a larger probability that a favourable bill passes that committee or an unfavourable bill does not advance that

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[14]Prior work has highlighted the role of legislators in influencing federal agencies in the allocation of public resources (Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021).

specific committee.

We organize our analyses at the legislator-committee-foreign country-year-month level, allowing us to account for several confounding factors. The empirical specifications hold constant the relative importance of committees over time by including committee-by-year fixed effects. Additionally, we include legislator fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. Finally, we add country-by-year fixed effects to control for time-varying determinants of trade relationships.

Table 8 reports the results. In column 1, we find that more meetings in a given year-month are associated with a larger probability of a favourable bill being sponsored. This increase translates to a change from a baseline probability of 0.039% to 0.040% for every new meeting between foreign agents and legislators. In column 2, we focus on the sub-sample of effective legislators, defined as those that are above-median LES, and find that the estimates are similar for these legislators. In column 3, we find that more meetings with a legislator in a given committee are associated with a higher probability of the favourable bill passing that committee or an unfavourable bill not advancing that committee. Lastly, in column 4, as before, we find that the sensitivity of actions to meetings is similar across more and less effective lawmakers. Overall, these estimates suggest that the sensitivity of actions to meetings is perhaps large, which can be potentially explained by a very small baseline probability of action.

4.2 Indirect benefits to foreign firms

Next, we examine the indirect benefits to firms from countries that meet more often with legislators. The ability to capture indirect benefits is a unique feature of our comprehensive dataset. Specifically, meetings by country representatives with US legislators could influence resource allocation to foreign firms by reducing information asymmetries. We examine two settings: (1) state and local subsidies and (2) government contracts, which allow us to cleanly link meetings with legislators to increased resource allocation.

State and local subsidies. As a starting point, we focus on subsidies for two reasons. First, state and local governments spend billions of dollars in subsidies each year to

attract and retain firms, and local legislators use considerable discretion to allocate subsidies (Slattery, 2018; Slattery and Zidar, 2020).[15] Second, the localized nature of subsidies helps us to cleanly link meetings of foreign countries with individual US legislators to the subsidy received by foreign firms in that location. Together, these facts make subsidy allocation a nearly ideal setting to examine whether meetings and connections to legislators are associated to more frequent and larger subsidies.

Table 9 reports estimates from panel regressions examining both the extensive and the intensive margins. Column 1 reports the results with only state-year fixed effects, finding that an increase in meetings with a legislator is positively associated with receiving a subsidy from the state of the legislator. On the intensive margin, meetings are associated with larger subsidies. These results are robust to adding controls, country fixed effects, and legislator fixed effects.

In Appendix Table C.4, we show that our results are robust to examining this relationship at the congressional district level instead of the state. Across an identical set of empirical specifications as in Table 9, we find that more meetings with a representative in a congressional district are positively associated with greater subsidies. While encouraging, the results at the congressional district level come with two caveats. First, we extract the cities awarding the subsidy and link them to the congressional districts of the representatives using zip codes.[16] In doing so, when zip codes are associated with more than one congressional district, we apportion the subsidy across them equally. Second, these analyses can only be conducted for house of representatives, as senators run for the office in statewide elections. Even with these sources of noise, we consistently find a positive relationship between meetings and subsidy allocation.

Government contracts. Next, we focus on federal government contracts as prior work highlights the role of political influence on initial contract allocation and renegoti-

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[15]Slattery and Zidar (2020) note that in 2014, states spent US$5-$216 per capita on incentives for firms. The total state and local incentive spending amounted to at least US$30 billion, with the average discretionary subsidy to the tune of US$178 million. Moreover, discretionary subsidies are roughly 1/4 of total incentive spending within a state, thus highlighting the importance of legislator discretion in the subsidy allocation process.

[16]We use the crosswalk provided by the US Census Bureau for the 108th Congress to 111th Congress. For Congresses starting after 2010, we use the crosswalks provided by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

ation. Given the importance of political influence in this setting, we investigate whether foreign influence is a determinant of government contract allocation.

We begin by estimating panel regressions and report the results in Table 10. The specification in Column 1 includes only state-year fixed effects, finding that an increase in meetings with a legislator is positively associated with receiving new government contracts administered in the state of the legislator. On the intensive margin, meetings are associated with larger contract values. These results are robust to adding controls, country fixed effects, and legislator fixed effects.

Interestingly, the sensitivity of meetings to contract allocation is lower than it is on subsidies. One potential explanation for the lower sensitivity is that it reflects differences in the flexibility of the local legislator to influence state subsidies relative to federal government contracts. In particular, state subsidies are determined at the state level, hence meetings with a legislator can have large sway over their outcomes. In contrast, federal government contracts are allocated at the congress-level, meaning that contacts with any single legislator may matter less. Nevertheless, meeting with key legislators in important budgetary and oversight committees might still be important and ultimately influence contract allocation.

4.3 Deaths of legislators as shocks to connections

While the panel regressions are informative of the association between meetings and resource allocation, it is unclear whether omitted factors and reverse causality drive the relationship. For instance, in the case of aid, there is a possibility that a country with more aid at stake tends to meet more with legislators. To mitigate general concerns that unobserved factors that affect both meeting intensity and resource allocation, we study countries that unexpectedly lose a connection due to the death of a representative or senator.[17] The null hypothesis is that if meetings or connections to the legislators do

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[17]Deaths have been used to identify importance and ascribe value in several contexts including political ties (Faccio and Parsley, 2009; Brogaard, Denes, and Duchin, 2021), independent directors (Nguyen and Nielsen, 2010), executives and CEOs (Johnson, Magee, Nagarajan, and Newman, 1985; Bennedsen, Pérez-González, and Wolfenzon, 2020; Fee, Hadlock, and Pierce, 2013). We focus on deaths of legislators who are most effective in lawmaking, defined as those with above-median LES in the death sample, as they drive all the variation in outcomes of interest.

not matter, then the loss of a connection through deaths should be unrelated to resource allocation. Thus, the identification strategy estimates the effect of losing a connection by utilizing the clean link between local political activity and resource allocation, holding constant country-level and local economic conditions.

In particular, our empirical analyses compare the outcomes for a country exogenously losing a political connection (treated) relative to another country losing a political connection later (control). This analysis exploits the differences in the timing of losing political connection due to deaths. As before with panel regressions, we hold constant time-invariant unobservable country and time-varying location-specific characteristics by including country fixed effects and state-by-year fixed effects, respectively. Moreover, we restrict our analysis to outcomes within one year around the death of the legislator to mitigate issues related to overlapping election cycles.

We estimate the following difference-in-differences specification:

$$\mathbb{1}\{\text{Outcome} > 0\}_{sft} = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta\text{Lost connection}_{sf} \times \text{After}_t + \epsilon_{sft} \tag{5}$$

$$\log(\text{Outcome amount}_{sft}) = \gamma_f + \delta_{st} + \beta\text{Lost connection}_{sf} \times \text{After}_t + \epsilon_{sft}, \tag{6}$$

where Equation (5) quantifies the extensive margin and Equation (6) the intensive margin. Here, the coefficient of interest is β which can be interpreted as the effect of losing a political connection (treatment effect) conditional on being politically active and the set of fixed effects. Standard errors are double clustered at the country-event level and state or congressional-district level, depending on the unit of the analysis.

Next, we examine foreign aid and assistance granted by federal agencies in the US around deaths of legislators. We report results from this exercise in Table C.6. The estimates imply that countries that lose a connection with a legislator through death are 9.2 percentage points less likely to receive an aid and the aid amount they receive are 49 percent lower. Relative to the average aid value of US$795 million, this loss represents a total drop in foreign aid of US$402 million, translating to a per-meeting loss of US$5.7 million. Thus, the loss of a connection substantially reduces the foreign aid that the connected foreign countries receive.

Next, we report in Table C.7 our analyses using legislator deaths as a shock to

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connections. The estimates imply that firms whose countries lose a connection with a legislator through death are 5.2 percentage points less likely to receive a subsidy and the subsidies they receive are 55 percent lower. Relative to the average subsidy value of US$26 million, this loss represents a total drop in subsidy value of US$12 million, translating to a per-meeting loss of US$210,000.

We confirm that these results hold when we repeat the analyses at the congressional-district level.[18] The results are reported in Table C.8, which shows that the magnitude is very similar to our baseline estimate, suggesting the importance of political connections in influencing resource allocation. Thus, the loss of the connection of country representatives substantially reduces indirect benefits in the form of local subsidies that the foreign firms receive. Overall, our findings provide novel evidence of indirect benefits to firms when their country representatives meet more often with US legislators.

Next, we report in Table C.9 our analyses using legislator deaths as a shock to connections. The estimates imply that firms whose countries lose a connection with a legislator through death are 6 percentage points less likely to receive a new government contract and the contract value they receive is 48 percent lower. Relative to the average value of US$3.4 million, this loss represents a total drop in value of about US$2 million, translating to a per-meeting loss of US$25,000. Collectively, our findings establish that meetings affect resource allocation indirectly for firms in the form of government contracts.

4.4 Benefits to US legislators

Having documented benefits to countries around the time in which their representatives meet with US legislators, we now move on to analyse whether legislators also benefit around meetings with foreign country representatives. If legislators need to exert some efforts (i.e., meeting is *costly*), or there are potential risks involved in meeting with foreign country representatives, then in equilibrium we should also observe net benefits to legislators conditional on both parties agreeing to meet.

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[18]In these tests, we exploit variation among foreign countries connected to two legislators but unexpectedly lose connection to one. We do this by the inclusion of district-by-year fixed effects.

Voter registration by ethnicity. We analyse changes in voter registration at the state and congressional-district level, using a novel dataset that records voter registration for different ethnic groups, for the near-universe of the US voting population. In particular, for each state and congressional district we count the numbers of voters who are registered with the democratic party and divide this value by the total number of voters of a given ethnicity in the same area. We show our results in a panel regression separating between senators and members of the House of representatives. Specifically, we relate the number of meetings between an individual legislator and a foreign country to changes in the share of voters registered for the legislator's political party and who share ethnic affiliation to that foreign country.[19]

Table 11 presents the results. Column 1 focuses on Senators and finds a higher sensitivity of meetings with representative of foreign countries to the share of registered voters in their state. We find a similar higher sensitivity when we focus on House members in column. The empirical specification controls for time-varying location-specific confounds that can explain these patterns. Moreover, country fixed effects exploit within country changes in meeting propensity and hence rules out concerns regarding time-invariant country characteristics that simultaneously drive meetings and the share of registered democrats of a given ethnicity.

Privately-sponsored trips to foreign countries. Next, we examine legislators' trips sponsored by private organizations and interest groups to foreign countries around meetings with foreign country representatives. These trips have been shown to correlate positively with legislative effectiveness, providing legislators with more policy-relevant information, and help in building legislative coalitions in domestic politics (McGee and Moniz, 2021).

Table 12 presents the results. We study both the extensive and the intensive margins of privately-sponsored trips. In all specifications we include country fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics and state-by-year-month fixed effects for time-varying local economic confounds. We add legislator fixed effects to control for

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[19]The data provides a very granular disaggregation of political affiliation of individuals. Hence, when computing the share of registered voters, we consider all affiliations including *independent*, *non-partisan*, and *unknown*.

time-invariant legislator characteristics. We find that more meetings are significantly related to (a) a larger probability of trips to that foreign country whose representatives the legislator meet more often, and (b) to a longer stay in the country.

5   Concluding remarks

We introduce a new comprehensive dataset allowing us to study foreign lobbying and foreign influence in the US. Using date-stamped meetings between foreign countries and legislators, we show that important changes to institutional country characteristics and diplomatic relations with the US are associated with meetings. Among legislator characteristics, lawmaking effectiveness, past employment connections with lobbyists, and membership of foreign affairs committee are important correlates of these connections. However, contrary to prior work using campaign contributions, we find the representative's ideology is uncorrelated with meetings.

Using this new dataset, we show evidence of benefits to foreign countries and legislators. Specifically, we document (a) an increase in foreign aid and financial assistance, (b) lower product tariffs, and (c) more corporate subsidies and government contracts to firms headquartered in the countries whose agents meet more often with legislators. We also document more meetings between representatives of a given foreign country and US legislators are related to (a) an increase in the share of registered voters with ethnic affiliations to the foreign country and (b) an increase in foreign trips to these countries sponsored by private organizations. Overall, our study provides novel insights on the nature and scope of foreign lobbying in US politics.

Understanding how access to legislators is gained and distributed in the economy is an important question of practical and theoretical relevance. From a positive perspective, our study highlights the determinants of connections between foreign countries and legislators and examines the sources of influence for public policy. From a normative perspective, our paper's findings can guide efforts to design more effective political institutions. Lastly, our dataset provides new observations that can be used to inform the selection of alternative theoretical models of lobbying and we expect it to be useful to a large community of scholars in political economics and public finance.

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A. Example of question 12

12. During this 6 month reporting period, have you on behalf of any foreign principal engaged in political activity[5] as defined below?
    Yes ☑   No ☐

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail all such political activity, indicating, among other things, the relations, interests and policies sought to be influenced and the means employed to achieve this purpose. If the registrant arranged, sponsored or delivered speeches, lectures or radio and TV broadcasts, give details as to dates and places of delivery, names of speakers and subject matter.

See Attachment D

B. Corresponding attachment

Attachment D - Section III, # 12   **Reporting period – July 1 – December 31, 2007**

The Embassy of the People's Republic of China

Date	Office of	Met with	Issues Discussed
07-27-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	Chairman Wu visit
08-06-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	Chairman Wu visit
08-30-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	Chairman Wu visit
09-27-2007	The Speaker of the House	Nancy Pelosi	Chairman Wu visit
10-31-2007	House Ways & Means Committee	Jason Kearns	China-related legislation
11-29-2007	The Speaker of the House	Jon Stivers	China Bilateral relationship
12-07-2007	Senate Majority Leader	Michael Castellano	China-related legislation

Figure 1: *Notes*: Panel A reproduces the text of question 12 as it is in the official FARA supplemental statement. Panel B shows part of the attached document D, which details meetings with US legislators. These screenshots were taken from the following supplemental statement.

A. Number of foreign principals meeting with each congressperson
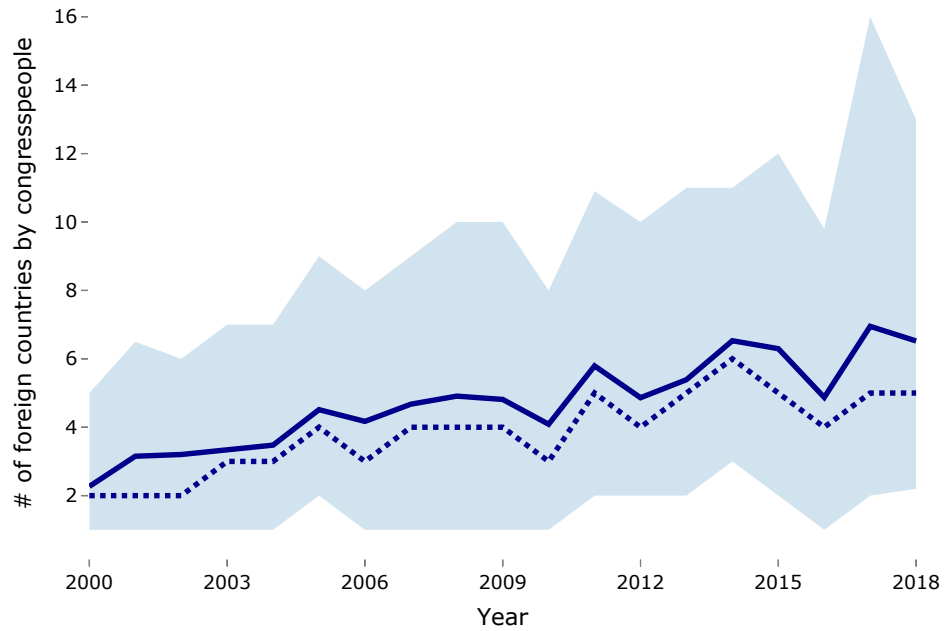
B. Number of congresspeople meeting with each foreign principal
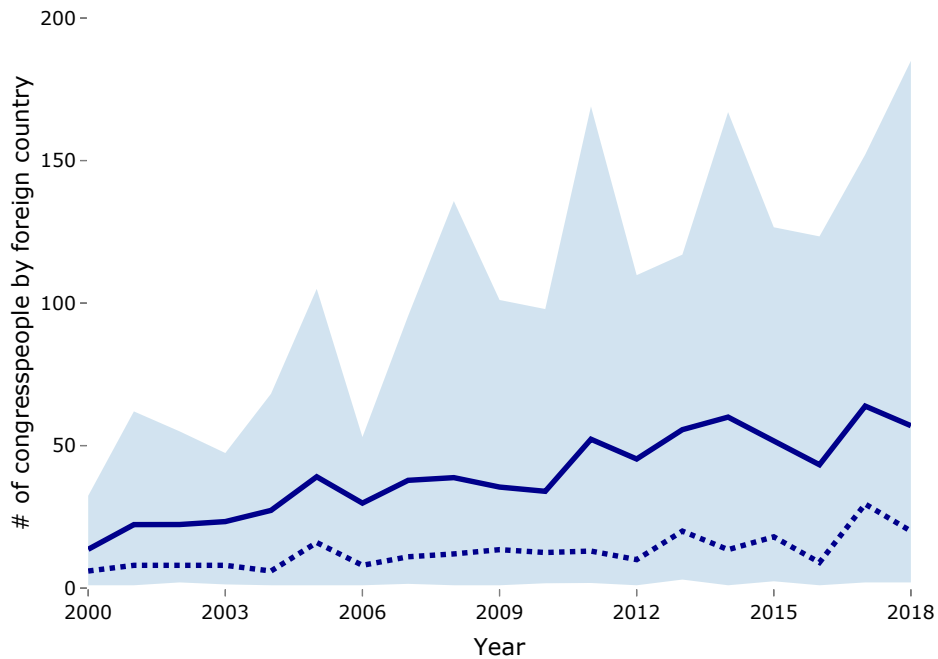
Figure 2: *Notes*: The figure presents the yearly summary of the number of foreign countries whose representatives met with each congressperson (Panel A) as well as of the number of congresspeople who meet with the representative of each foreign country (Panel B). The solid line represents the time series of the yearly average, the dashed line is the median, and the extremes of the shaded area are the 10th and 90th percentile.

A. Total number of meetings after election – House representatives
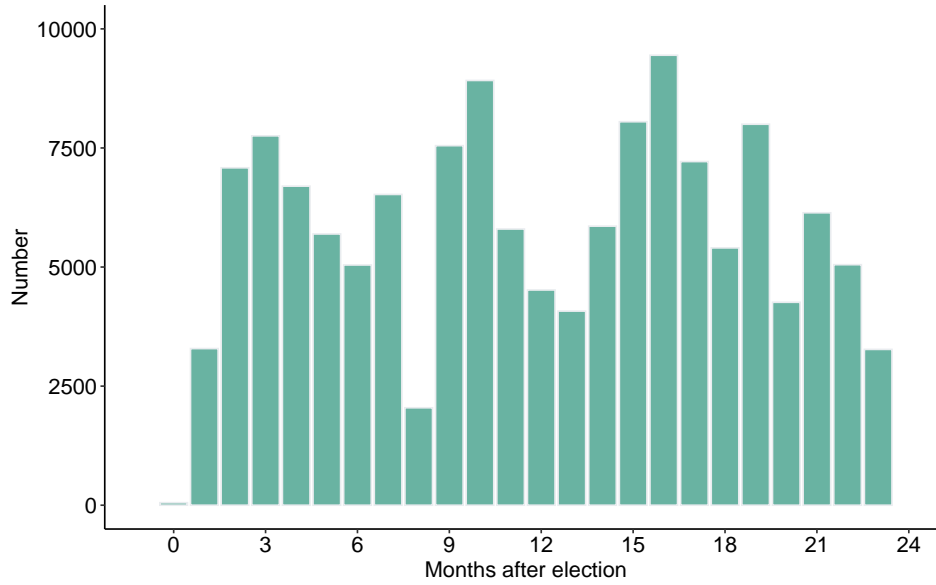
B. Total number of meetings after election – Senators
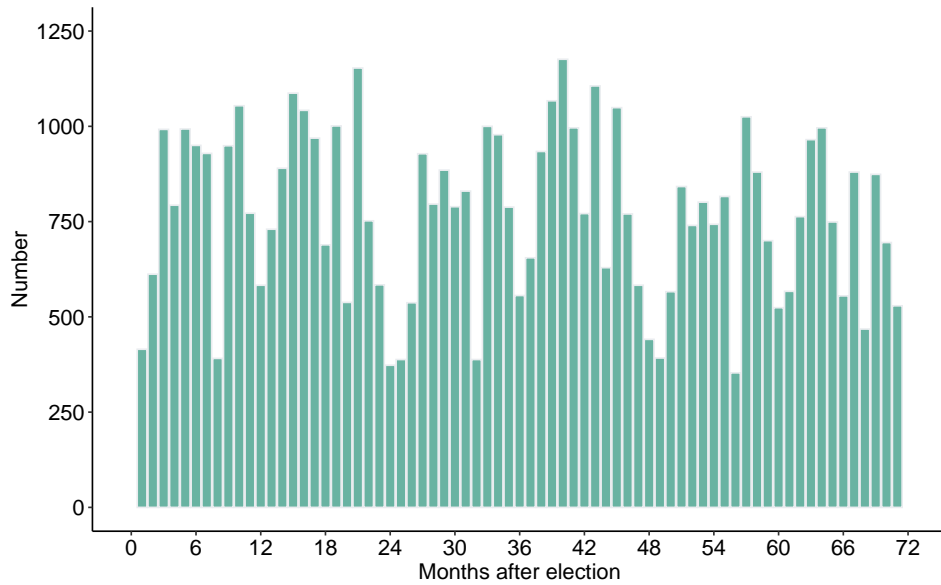
Figure 3: *Notes*: The figure shows the total number of meetings (vertical axis) in each month relative to when the legislator was elected or appointed (horizontal axis). Results for House members (Panel A) and Senators (Panel B) are reported separately because of their different terms: House members serve 2-year terms, while Senators serve 6-year terms.
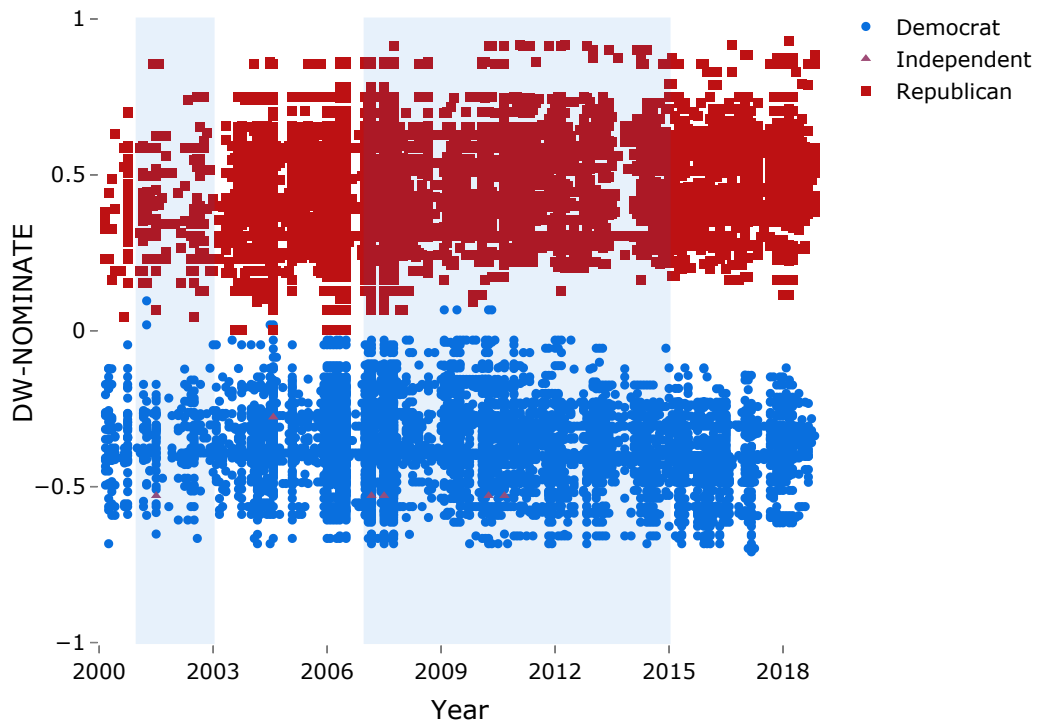
Figure 4: *Notes*: The figure shows the contact pattern over time for the government of Turkey. A contact is defined as a year-month with at least one meeting between a representative of a foreign country and a legislator. Each dot in the figure represents a contact. Contacts with republican legislators are shown as red squares, with democrats as blue circles, and with independents as violet triangles. The shaded area in the background is blue if democrats had the majority in the Senate. The vertical axis indicates the DW-NOMINATE 1 score from Poole and Rosenthal (2011).

Meetings with effective lawmakers
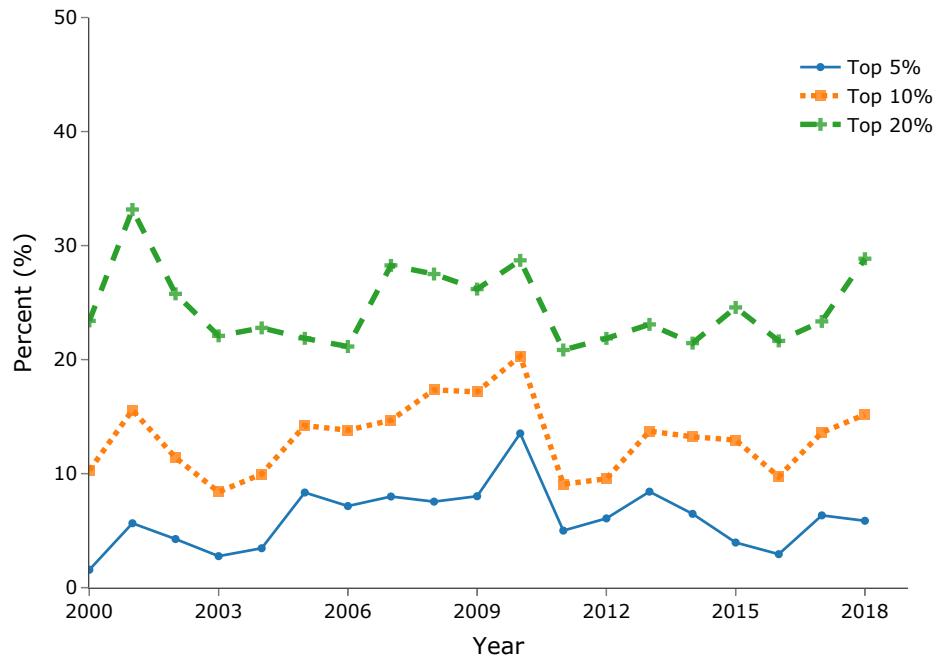
Figure 5: *Notes*: The figure shows the meetings with effective lawmakers over time for all foreign countries. We rank each legislator by their lawmaker effectiveness score (LES) from the Centre of Effective Lawmaking. We then compute the fraction of meetings with top 5% of legislators (blue circles), top 10% of legislators (orange squares), and top 20% of legislators (green crosses) relative to all the legislators a foreign country meets in a year.

A. Percentage of meetings with members of a given committee
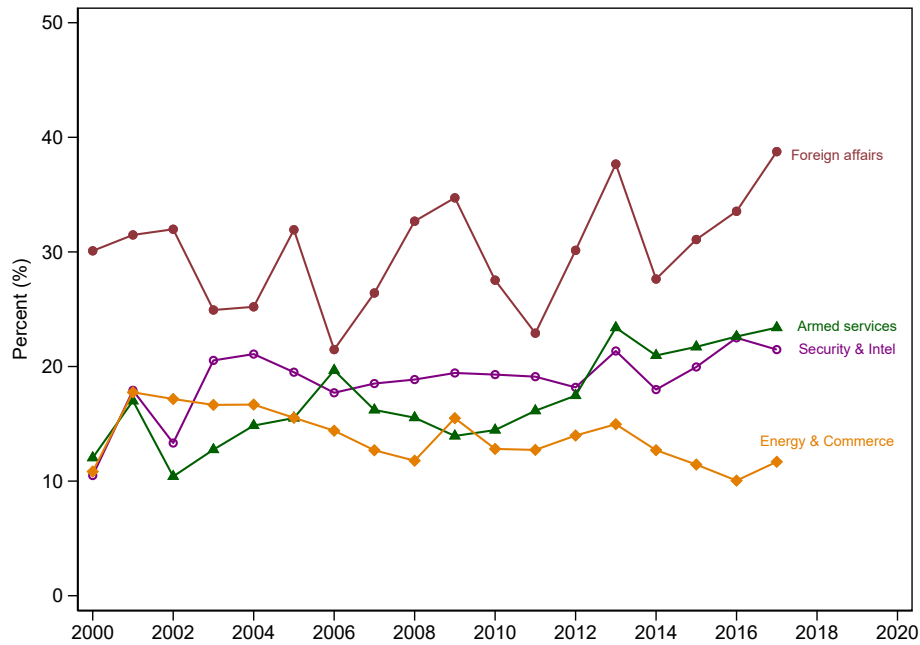
B. Meetings with chairs scaled by the average number of meetings with members in a given committee
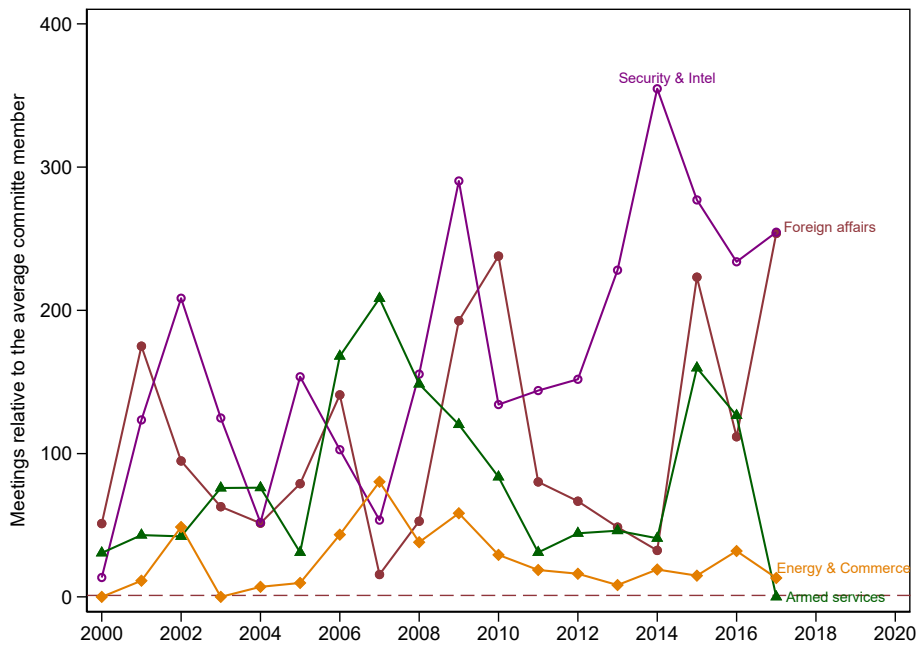
Figure 6: *Notes*: Panel A shows the percentage of meetings with a given committee relative to the total meetings each year. Panel B shows the meetings with chairs scaled by the average number of meetings with members in a given committee. The horizontal red dashed line is set at 1. This value represents the case in which the number of meetings of the committee chair is the same as the average number of meetings with members in the corresponding committee.

Table 1: Summary statistics: country characteristics

The table presents the descriptive statistics for the sample. We include the following country-level economic characteristics: total GDP in US\$ millions, total population in thousands, exports from and imports from the US in US\$ millions. We include the following characteristics relating to conflicts: total unrest from the Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data where we separate the number of times the country was a source or a target, the use of physical force to achieve political objectives by non-state actors (*Political Violence*) and the number of coups d'état during a given year. We include the following country-level institutional characteristics: transition to democracy comes from the Episodes of Regime Transformation (ERT) data which uses changes in electoral democracy index from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset to determine the start and end years of democratizations, electoral democracy index capturing the extent to which electoral democracy is achieved within the country, political corruption index which combines six distinct types of corruption and measures the level of corruption in a given year, political polarization capturing the extent to which political differences affect social relationships beyond political discussions, similarity in foreign policy preferences to the US based on voting on resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) measured using absolute distances between the ideal points of countries (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017), and the total number of US presidential diplomatic visits (Malis and Smith, 2021).

	N	Mean	Median	Std. dev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Economic			
GDP (Log)	36,733	12.067	12.034	1.774
Population (Log)	36,733	3.387	3.538	1.537
US Exports (Log)	36,733	7.946	8.043	2.185
US Imports (Log)	36,733	7.971	8.123	2.503
	Conflict			
Total unrest – source (Log)	36,733	4.298	4.605	1.438
Total unrest – target (Log)	36,733	4.255	4.477	1.384
Political violence	36,733	-0.436	-0.531	1.350
Coup	36,733	0.020	0.000	0.141
	Political			
Transition to democracy	36,733	0.119	0.000	0.324
Electoral democracy index	36,733	0.467	0.461	0.256
Political corruption index	36,733	0.532	0.589	0.272
Political polarization	36,733	0.155	0.089	1.236
Country political preference, UNGA Voting (Log)	36,733	0.977	1.105	0.327
US Presidential diplomatic visits (Log)	36,733	0.416	0.000	0.487

Table 2: Summary statistics: legislator characteristics

The table presents the descriptive statistics for the sample of individual meetings at the legislator-country-year level. *Meetings* is the number of times a foreign agent and a legislator met in a given year. *Age* is the age of the legislator, *Woman* is whether the legislator is a woman, *Underrepresented minority* is whether the legislator is from an underrepresented minority group. $\mathbb{1}_{Employment\ connection}$ is an indicator equal to one when at least one lobbyist engaged by the foreign country previously worked with the legislator. *House member* is whether the legislator is a member of the House of representatives, *Vote share* is the vote share in the elections, *Democrat* is an indicator capturing party affiliation, *Majority* captures whether the legislator is a member of the party in control of the senate, and *Seniority* is the number of terms a legislator has served in the Congress. We also include the following ideological characteristics: *DW-NOMINATE 1* and *DW-NOMINATE 2*. Lastly, we also consider characteristics that are important for influence and resource allocation. *Legislative Effectiveness Score* is the lawmaking effectiveness of the legislator, *Committee chair* and *Sub-committee chair* capture whether the legislator is the chair of either a senate or house committee or of a sub-committee. We also capture whether the legislator is a member of, either a senate or house committee, the following committees: (i) the rules, ways and means, and appropriations , (ii) foreign affairs, (iii) Security & Intelligence, (iv) Armed Services, and (v) Energy & Commerce.

	N	Mean	Median	Std. dev
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Meetings	44,941	4.344	2.000	6.202
Personal				
Age	44,941	59.135	60.000	10.557
Woman	44,941	0.164	0.000	0.370
Underrepresented minority	44,941	0.083	0.000	0.275
$\mathbb{1}_{Employment\ connection}$	44,941	0.159	0.000	0.365
Political				
House member	44,941	0.720	1.000	0.449
Vote share	44,941	66.037	63.000	12.803
Democrat	44,941	0.502	1.000	0.500
Seniority	44,941	6.224	5.000	4.655
Ideological				
DW-NOMINATE 1	44,941	0.040	-0.045	0.432
DW-NOMINATE 2	44,941	-0.043	-0.053	0.290
Importance for influence				
Majority	44,941	0.533	1.000	0.499
Legislative Effectiveness Score	44,941	1.060	0.651	1.322
Committee chair	44,941	0.092	0.000	0.289
Sub-committee chair	44,941	0.282	0.000	0.450
Power committee membership	44,941	0.397	0.000	0.489
Foreign affairs membership	44,941	0.248	0.000	0.432
Security & Intelligence membership	44,941	0.172	0.000	0.378
Armed services membership	44,941	0.169	0.000	0.375
Energy & Commerce membership	44,941	0.128	0.000	0.334

Table 3: Country characteristics and meetings intensity

This table relates meetings with US legislators to country characteristics. The unit of analysis is country-legislator-year triad. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the number of meetings in a year with US legislators, *Log (meetings)*. In column 1, we include the following country-level economic characteristics lagged by one year: total GDP in US$, total population, exports from and imports from US in US$. In column 2, we include the following characteristics relating to conflicts: total unrest from the Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data where we separate the number of times the country was a source or a target, the use of physical force to achieve political objectives by non-state actors (*political violence*) and the number of coups d'état during a given year. In column 3, we include the following country-level institutional characteristics: transition to democracy, electoral democracy index capturing the extent to which electoral democracy is achieved within the country, political corruption index which combines six distinct types of corruption and measures the level of corruption in a given year, political polarization capturing the extent to which political differences affect social relationships beyond political discussions, similarity in foreign policy preferences to the US based on voting on resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) measured using absolute distances between the ideal points of countries (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten, 2017), and the total number of US presidential diplomatic visits (Malis and Smith, 2021). All specifications include *Legislator×year* fixed effects and specification 5 includes *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions to estimate the coefficients. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively

Dependent variable	Log (meetings)				
Characteristics	Economic	Conflict	Political	All	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
GDP (in US$)	0.151			0.095	0.164
	(0.095)			(0.079)	(0.139)
Population	0.012			0.013	0.068
	(0.032)			(0.040)	(0.335)
US exports (in US$)	-0.023			-0.012	0.019
	(0.057)			(0.055)	(0.091)
US imports (in US$)	-0.102**			-0.080*	-0.036
	(0.045)			(0.042)	(0.046)
Total unrest (source)		0.145*		0.080	-0.087
		(0.084)		(0.065)	(0.062)
Total unrest (target)		-0.082		-0.055	0.082
		(0.087)		(0.085)	(0.082)
Political violence		0.007		0.005	0.187*
		(0.050)		(0.074)	(0.112)
Coup		-0.085		-0.185*	-0.032
		(0.102)		(0.111)	(0.115)
Transition to democracy			0.040	0.043	0.083
			(0.095)	(0.108)	(0.160)
Electoral democracy index			-0.491***	-0.387	-1.552***
			(0.174)	(0.236)	(0.581)
Political corruption index			-0.066	-0.059	-0.345**
			(0.059)	(0.045)	(0.160)
Political polarization			0.129*	0.091	-0.159*
			(0.068)	(0.062)	(0.084)
Country political preference, UNGA Voting (Log)			-0.199	-0.152	0.532**
			(0.198)	(0.201)	(0.250)
US Presidential diplomatic visits (Log)			0.029	0.044	0.038
			(0.103)	(0.105)	(0.081)
Country fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes
Legislator × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R²	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.26	0.37
Observations	36,733	36,733	36,733	36,733	36,733

Table 4: Legislator characteristics and meetings intensity

This table relates meetings with US legislators to individual legislator characteristics. The unit of analysis is a country-legislator-year triad. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the number of meetings in a year with US legislators, *Log (meetings)*. In column 1, we include the following legislator characteristics: whether the legislator is a member of the House of representatives (*House member*), natural logarithm of vote share in the elections (*Vote share*), an indicator capturing party affiliation (*Democrat*), member of the party that is in control of the senate (*Majority*), rank within the party (*Seniority*) and the number of lobbyists engaged by the foreign agent who previously worked with the legislators (*Employment connection*). In column 2, we include the following ideological characteristics: measures of legislator's political ideology, *DW-NOMINATE 1* and *DW-NOMINATE 2*. In column 3, we consider characteristics that are important for influence and resource allocation: lawmaking effectiveness of the legislator (*Legislative Effectiveness Score*), whether she is a senate or house committee and sub-committee chair (*Committee (Sub-committee) chair*), a member of rules, ways and means, and appropriations committee (*Power committee membership*). We also capture whether the legislator is a member, ranking member, or chair of, either a senate or house committee, the following committees: (i) the rules, ways and means, and appropriations , (ii) foreign affairs, (iii) Security & Intelligence, (iv) Armed Services, and (v) Energy & Commerce. All specifications include *Country×Year* fixed effects and specification 5 includes legislator fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions to estimate the coefficients. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	Log (meetings)				
Characteristics	Legislator	Ideology	Importance	All	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
House member	-0.062**			-0.003	-0.214***
	(0.027)			(0.031)	(0.053)
Vote share	0.138***			0.114***	0.100***
	(0.023)			(0.027)	(0.037)
Democrat	0.018				
	(0.031)				
Majority	-0.035**			-0.069***	-0.053
	(0.016)			(0.022)	(0.043)
Seniority	0.002*			0.003**	0.007
	(0.001)			(0.001)	(0.006)
Employment connection	0.023***			0.026***	0.018**
	(0.008)			(0.008)	(0.008)
Distance from median (ideology)		0.017		-0.046	-0.065
		(0.029)		(0.029)	(0.092)
DW-NOMINATE 1		-0.026*		-0.019	0.515
		(0.015)		(0.015)	(0.501)
DW-NOMINATE 2		-0.009		0.008	0.393**
		(0.008)		(0.009)	(0.176)
Legislative Effectiveness Score			0.004	0.008*	0.011**
			(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Committee chair			-0.011	-0.024	-0.003
			(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.021)
Sub-committee chair			-0.003	0.031***	0.022*
			(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.013)
Power committee membership			0.081***	0.066***	0.024
			(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Foreign affairs			0.211***	0.221***	0.146***
			(0.040)	(0.046)	(0.037)
Foreign affairs (chair)			0.019	0.019	0.075
			(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.058)
Foreign affairs (Ranking member)			0.078*	0.006	0.015
			(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.076)

Dependent variable	Log (meetings)				
Characteristics	Legislator	Ideology	Importance	All	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Security & Intelligence (chair)			0.099*	0.113**	0.093
			(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.057)
Security & Intelligence (Ranking member)			0.062	0.032	0.044
			(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.043)
Armed services			0.027	0.038	-0.011
			(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.033)
Armed services (chair)			-0.149***	-0.163***	-0.004
			(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.083)
Armed services (Ranking member)			0.194***	0.139***	0.138*
			(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.072)
Energy & Commerce			-0.034**	-0.030**	-0.037
			(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.030)
Energy & Commerce (chair)			-0.107	-0.141*	-0.183**
			(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.074)
Energy & Commerce (Ranking member)			-0.187***	-0.250***	-0.234**
			(0.066)	(0.073)	(0.101)
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes
Country × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.30	0.30	0.31	0.31	0.38
Observations	44,941	44,941	44,941	44,941	44,910

Table 5: Meetings around legislators switching important committees

This table presents regressions estimating the relationship between meetings with legislators around the time they switch out of important committees for resource allocation. Columns 1 and 2 focus on all legislators departing from important committees while columns 3 and 4 focus on top five legislators based on ranking within committees. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-lobbyist-year month. The dependent variable is, *Log (1+meetings$_t$)*, the natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators sitting on important committees. The independent variable of interest is *After x Switcher* which is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the US representative or senator switches out of an important committee. The important committees include: the House Committee on Appropriations, House Committee on Oversight and Reform, House Committee on Armed Services, House Committee on the Budget, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Senate Committee on the Budget, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. All regressions include: *Lobbying firm* fixed effects to control for time-invariant differences in lobbying firm characteristics, *Legislator × committee* fixed effects to control for influential legislators departing from the same committee at different points in their tenure, *Country × committee* fixed effects to control for relative importance of departing committee for foreign countries, and *State × year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	Log (1+meetings)			
	All legislators		*High-ranked legislators*	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
After x Switcher	0.001	0.002	-0.002	0.005*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Congress	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lobbying firm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator × committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country × committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State × year-month	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Observations	431,834	431,834	274,722	274,722

Table 6: Legislator foreign trips and Twitter mentions of foreign countries around meetings

This table presents panel regressions examining foreign trips and Twitter mentions of foreign countries by legislators around meetings. Panel A captures official trips by legislators to foreign countries around meetings. Official travels are trips undertaken by legislators to perform their official and representational responsibilities, and the trips are paid for by government sources. Panel B focuses on Twitter activity from their official and personal Twitter accounts. We consider all tweets, re-tweets, and quote tweets that mention a foreign country. In panel A of columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is $\mathbb{1}_{Trip>0}$, defined as an indicator for whether the legislator undertook an official travel to the foreign country with whose representatives they met with. The dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is *Log (1+# days)*, defined as the natural logarithm of one plus of total number of days of official trips to the foreign country with whose representatives they met with. In panel B, the dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Tweet>0}$, defined as an indicator for whether the legislator wrote a tweet mentioning a given foreign country in the same year-month of the meeting. The dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is, *Log (1+# tweets)*, defined as the natural logarithm of one plus of total number of tweets mentioning a foreign country in the same year-month of the meetings. The independent variable of interest is *Log (1+meetings$_t$)*, the natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators. All regressions include *Country* fixed effects to account for time-invariant country characteristics, and *State × year-month* fixed effects to control for regional trends. Additionally, specifications 2 and 4 in both panel include *Legislator* fixed effects to account for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Official foreign trips			
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Trip>0}$		Log (1+# days)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Legislator fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State × year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01
Observations	4,797,348	4,797,348	4,797,348	4,797,348

	Panel B: Twitter activity			
Dependent variable	$\mathbb{1}_{Tweet>0}$		Log(1+# tweets)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.004***	0.004*	0.004***	0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Legislator fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State × year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
Observations	4,797,348	4,797,348	4,797,348	4,797,348

Table 7: Meetings with legislators and aid received by foreign countries from the US

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and aid received by foreign countries from the US. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$, an indicator for receiving foreign aid from the US while in panel B the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Aid amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the aid amount received by a foreign country from the US. The independent variable of interest is *Log (1+Meetings$_t$)*, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Extensive margin					
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.551***	0.551***	0.551***	0.550***	0.550***	0.550***
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.77	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78
Observations	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348

	Panel B: Intensive margin					
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Aid amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	9.841***	9.844***	9.833***	9.835***	9.820***	9.822***
	(0.449)	(0.446)	(0.458)	(0.459)	(0.461)	(0.461)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76
Observations	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348	302,348

Table 8: Meetings around tariff bills

This table presents panel regressions examining product tariff bills advantageous to foreign countries around meetings with US legislators. The unit of analysis is politician-foreign country-year-month. In columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is, $\mathbb{1}_{Favourablebill}$, defined as an indicator for whether the legislator was sponsoring or co-sponsoring a product tariff bill favourable to the foreign country with whose representatives he/she met. The dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Favourableaction}$, defined as an indicator for whether a product tariff bills favourable to the foreign country passed a committee in which the legislator sat. The independent variable of interest is, $Log(1+Meetings_t)$, defined as the natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and a legislator. All regressions include: *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant differences in legislator characteristics, *Committee × year* fixed effects to control for importance of committees over time, and *Country × year* fixed effects to control for time-varying determinants of trade relationships. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Favourablebill>0}$		$\mathbb{1}_{Favourableaction>0}$	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.001***	0.001***	0.001**	0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Legislator fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Committee × year fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.06
Observations	4,797,348	1,468,116	1,934,513	964,077

Table 9: Meetings with legislators and local government subsidies to foreign firms

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and state-level subsidies granted to foreign firms. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm whose representatives meet with a US legislator, receives a subsidy from the legislator's state while in panel B the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Subsidy amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from that state. The independent variable of interest is *Log ($1+Meetings_t$)*, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Extensive margin					
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log ($1+Meetings_t$)	0.033**	0.033**	0.034**	0.034**	0.034**	0.034**
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10
Observations	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036

	Panel B: Intensive margin					
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Subsidy amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log ($1+Meetings_t$)	0.459**	0.456**	0.472**	0.473**	0.470**	0.471**
	(0.219)	(0.211)	(0.216)	(0.215)	(0.214)	(0.213)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10
Observations	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036	303,036

Table 10: Meetings with legislators and new government contracts to foreign firms

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings with US legislators and new government contract allocated to foreign firms in the state. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm, whose representatives meet with a US legislator, received a new government contract to be performed in the legislator's state while in panel B the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Contract amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the contract amount received by the foreign firm to perform the contract in that given state. The independent variable of interest is *Log (1+Meetings$_t$)*, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Extensive margin					
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.025***	0.025***	0.026***	0.026***	0.026***	0.026***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920

	Panel B: Intensive margin					
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Contract amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.266***	0.267***	0.280***	0.280***	0.281***	0.281***
	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920	302,920

Table 11: Share of registered voters with ethnic affiliations to the foreign country

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and the share of registered voters with ethnic affiliation to the foreign country whose representatives the legislator is meeting. The unit of analysis is politician-region-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in is the share of registered democrat voters belonging to a given ethnic group within a state (column 1) or a congressional district (column 2). The independent variable of interest is Log $(1+\text{Meetings}_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US senators from the respective state (column 1) or a House member from the respective congressional district (column 2). Democrat is a dummy variable equal to 1 if the legislator is from the Democratic party and 0 otherwise. All regressions include *Region × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	Share of registered democrats$_{t+1}$	
	Senate	House member
	(1)	(2)
Log (Meetings$_t$)	0.001	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Democrat	-0.014***	0.030
	(0.005)	(0.025)
Log (Meetings$_t$) × Democrat	0.009**	0.007**
	(0.004)	(0.003)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Region × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.88	0.89
Observations	1,256	2,733
Region	State	Congressional district

Table 12: Privately-sponsored trips to foreign countries

This table presents panel regressions examining privately-sponsored trips of legislators around meetings. The unit of analysis is politician-foreign country-year-month. In columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is $\mathbb{1}_{Trip>0}$, defined as an indicator for whether the legislator undertook a privately-sponsored trip to the foreign country with whose representatives they met with. The dependent variable in columns 3 and 4 is *Log (1+# days)*, defined as the natural logarithm of one plus of total number of days of the privately-sponsored trip to the foreign country with whose representatives they met with. The independent variable of interest is $Log(1+Meetings_t)$, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and legislators. All regressions include *State × year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies, *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics and *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Trip>0}$		Log (1+# days)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.002***	0.002***	0.004***	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State × year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
R^2	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Observations	2,292,048	2,292,048	2,292,048	2,292,048

INTERNET APPENDIX

A   Data sources and construction of variables

Elections.   For election data we rely on information from the MIT election lab which compile biennial documents from the Clerk of the US House of Representatives. In particular, we use state-level returns for elections to the US Senate and the US House of Representative until 2018. The data includes the election year, state, electoral stage (distinguishing between a general election, a runoff election, or a primary election), whether it was a special election, name of the candidates, their parties, details on votes, and the winner. These data give us a comprehensive dataset of all legislators seeking election to legislative office from 2000–2018.

Congressional committee assignment.   Data on Congressional committees come from Stewart (2017) who provide detailed information on committee membership for each legislator serving in Congress from 1993 to 2019 and calculate the first and last time they were on a committee. We make some corrections to the data. For example, six congresspeople in the House of Representatives and for seven Senators are assigned the wrong state, which we manually adjust. Moreover, we adjust the incorrect Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee identifiers for Sen. Jeffrey Chiesa. These data are then matched to the legislators found the in FARA data representing one of the fifty U.S states using a fuzzy matching algorithm. All matches that are not perfect are manually assigned the correct legislator.

Ideology and lawmaker effectiveness.   Congressperson effectiveness and ideology scores come from the Center for Effective Lawmaking. The lawmaker effectiveness scores were developed by Volden and Wiseman (2014, 2018), and capture the level of success that each Representative or Senator has in advancing their legislative agenda items through the lawmaking process. The lawmaker effectiveness score is calculated by first grouping their sponsored bills into three different categories capturing whether they are commemorative, substantive, or substantive and significant, and, second, assessing how far the bill progressed through the process of becoming a law. Therefore, higher LES scores are given to members with large portfolios, those who tackle significant issues (not just commemorative measures), and those whose bills advance further in the lawmaking process. The LES is normalized to an average value of one in each Congress. These data are then matched to the legislators found the in FARA data representing one of the fifty U.S states using a fuzzy matching algorithm.

To examine ideology, we use the DW-NOMINATE ideology scores for members of Congress, which are the seminal measures of legislator ideology based on Congressional roll-call votes created by Poole and Rosenthal (1985) and later refined by Poole and Rosenthal (2011). A value close to 1 represents a more conservative congressperson, while a value close to -1 a more liberal congressperson.

Lobbyist employment. Data on lobbyist employment come from two sources: the Revolving Door database from OpenSecrets and the Washington Representatives data. The Revolving Door database which is published by the Open Secrets research group contains information about individuals who have worked both as federal employees, and as lobbyists, consultants, or strategists. The core dataset containing 15,847 people was assembled from an online directory of lobbyists published by Columbia Books Inc. Additionally, publicly available sources are used to continuously update the database.

The level of detail differs between people. In the most complete cases, an individual's complete employment history is provided (e.g. the industries they have represented, their expertise, and their education history). The employment history includes the time period, the name of the employer, and the job title. Industries represented are identified based upon the amounts of money spent by clients which are classified into an industry-coding system. Assigning an expertise to a lobbyist is done by counting for each client the number of semi-annual lobbying disclosure reports that reference a particular issue. These issues are then categorized by industry.

Washington Representatives is a division of Columbia Books and Information Services which provides data on government relations and the lobbying industry. Over 44,000 lobbyists and government relations professionals are included.

To match these data with FARA, we match the names of the lobbying firms to all lobbying firms in the OpenSecrets and Washington Representatives data. Similarly, we match the employment history records of individuals to the US legislators with whom they worked. We then aggregate these data at the lobbying firm level to create the employment connection measure. For example, if Akin Gump has 2 employees that formerly worked in Mitch McConnell's office, their employment connection score with Mitch McConnell is equal to 2.

Country political ideology. Data on the political ideology of a country come from the Varieties of Democracy Database (V-Dem). In particular, we leverage their party ideology dataset which ranks the political parties within each country based on their stance on several broad categories, such as their left-right economic slant, views on minority and women's rights, and the level of populism, illiberalism, and anti-elite sentiment they display. To obtain the ideology distance between each country and legislators, we take a legislative seat share weighted average across all ideology categories, and calculate the absolute distance between this score and the ideology scores of the Democratic and Republican parties, and take an equal-weighted average across all ideology categories. This provides a uni-dimensional

distance through which we can assess the ideological closeness of a country to Democratic or Republican lawmakers.

Democratizations come from the Episodes of Regime Transformation (ERT) data. These data use changes in electoral democracy index (EDI) from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project to determine the start and end years of democratizations. V-Dem creates the EDI by surveying over 3,500 country-level experts and asking "to what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved." This is done in practice by combining information on the level of freedom of association, to what extend elections are free and fair, the level of freedom of expression, to what extent government officials are elected, and by examining the proportion of individuals in the country with voting rights. V-Dem then combines these 5 index categories both additively and using a five-way multiplicative interaction to produce a continuous index from 0 to 1. The ERT data locate democratization episodes using the EDI according to two main criteria. First, a democratization episode must begin with at least a 0.01 increase in the EDI. Second, the episode must have at least a 0.10 increase in the EDI before experiencing (1) an annual drop in the EDI of 0.03, (2) a cumulative drop in the EDI of 0.10, or a stasis period of 5-years or longer. A stasis period is defined as a period where no years see at least a 0.01 increase in the EDI. The end year of a democratization is determined as the final year prior to when the annual or cumulative decline threshold or the stasis period condition is met. V-Dem produces these data from 1900–2018.

Subsidies. Data on government subsidies come from Good Jobs Subsidy Tracker who provide data at the state and federal levels. Good Jobs provides data on the state and city issuing corporate subsidies along with the company name, ticker, and country of incorporation, where applicable. Good Jobs collects data from a variety of local, state, and federal sources, detailed here. To obtain data at the foreign principal level, we sum subsidies across the country of incorporation, state, and year.

Government contracts. We obtain information on government contracts awarded between 2002 and 2018 from USASpending.gov. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) mandates that whenever a federal contract, grant, loan, or other financial assistance award exceeds $25,000, it must be displayed on a publicly accessible website. This legislation was amended twice, in 2008 and 2014, to require recipients and government agencies to disclose further information relating to sub-recipients, direct agency expenditures, and the linkage between federal spending and federal agency programs.

The data includes details on the funding amount, the date of the transaction, the awarding and funding agency, sub-agency, the recipient country, and the location of the performance of the contract. Moreover, it also includes information on the type of assistance, e.g., whether it is a grant or a loan, and the type of recipient, e.g., whether it is part of the government or a small business.

We extract information on all government contracts awarded to foreign recipient countries at the

contract-level to match these data to foreign governments. We first drop all contracts awarded to US recipients from the universe of contracts, including those executed by US-owned businesses, and keep only contracts performed within the United States. We remove contract cancellations and terminations from our sample to ensure we capture new contract awards. We then aggregate the number of contracts and the total value awarded to each recipient country by the state of performance in each year.

Foreign aid. Data on foreign aid comes from ForeignAssistance.gov which is a website hosted by the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). It provides a comprehensive overview about US foreign assistance on multiple dimensions. Detailed information on the funding and implementing agencies are provided, as is the purpose of the appropriated aid. In particular, aid is differentiated by purpose into several categories: Agriculture, Commodity Assistance, Economics Growth, Education, Governance, Health and Population, Humanitarian, Infrastructure, and Other, whereas the latter differentiates Peace and Security, Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, Health, Education and Social Services, Economic Growth, Humanitarian Assistance, and Program Development and Oversight. For each entry the name agency to which funds were appropriated is provided. From the data we have dropped all observations where a transaction date was unavailable. Subsequently, we have collapsed the data on the country-executive department-year-month level, that is, for each country we obtain the amount of aid received from each US government agency for every month starting from October 2001. We also calculate the total aid for each year given to a country split by executive department. Note that some of the values we obtain from that process are negative. This is because aid is occasionally provided in the form of loans and for a given month or year a foreign country could be repaying more than it receives.

Twitter. We obtain Twitter data of the official and personal accounts for all US legislators serving as of 07 April 2022 using version 2 of the Twitter API. We download all historical tweets, retweets, and quote tweets from the years 2010–2021. Given our meeting data goes from 2000–2018, not all House and Senate members can be matched to the meeting data. Of the 535 congresspeople, we can match 348 to our meeting data. Since many Senators were previous House of Representatives members or governors, they are often present in our sample before being elected to the Senate. In total, we collect 6,671,713 tweets, and in the text, we search for mentions of all countries in our sample. In this search, we exclude the country Jordan as it is too often matched with the popular American first and last name. Similarly, we dropped tweets containing the word "Turkey" in November to exclude mentions of the popular American Thanksgiving cuisine. This selection yields 96,689 tweets which we match to country mentions, approximately 2% of the total sample.

Tariffs. Data on tariff bills are taken from GovTrack.us by searching the bill text and bill subject line for the word "tariffs." We then searched each bill for mentions of specific trade agreements using the list of terms shown at the bottom of the paragraph. This list of terms was then matched to all

countries affected by these trade agreements. This search yielded 469 bills over the period 2000–2018. We then went through the text of each bill to determine whether it increased or decreased tariffs or duties on products entering the United States. All bills that reduce tariffs or duties were categorized as "favorable"; all those that increase tariffs or duties were categorized as "unfavorable." Of the 469 bills, 244 were labeled favorable and 81 were labeled unfavorable, with the remainder being unclear on the direction they would alter tariffs. The 244 favorable bills yielded 2,969 unique country-bill observations, whereas the unfavorable bills yielded 298 unique country-bill observations, when matching countries to the trade agreements. Data were then collected on the sponsors and co-sponsors of these bills, the committees that oversaw them post-introduction, and the various actions that took place over the life-cycle of the bill. Data for sponsors and cosponsors were matched to the FARA meeting data by country, legislator and the year and month of bill introduction. Data for committees were matched to all senior legislators, where a senior legislator is defined as being in the top quartile of seniority within each party-committee pair. These data are then matched to the FARA meeting data by country, legislator and the year and month of all bill actions that took place in those committees. Committee bill actions are then categorized as "favorable" if the bill progresses through the legislative process or "unfavorable" if the bill does not pass that committee.

Trade agreement phrase list: free trade agreement implementation act; (cafta-dr); africa growth and opportunity act; (agoa); generalized system of preferences; (gsp); automotive products trade act; (apta); agreement on trade in civil aircraft; north american free trade agreement; nafta; caribbean basin initiative; (cbi); andean trade preference act; (atpa); andean trade promotion and drug eradication act; (atpdea); agreement on trade in pharmaceutical products; uruguay round concessions on intermediate chemicals for dyes; caribbean basin trade partnership act; (cbtpa); harmonized tariff schedule; caribbean basin economic recovery act; (cbera); united states-caribbean basin trade partnership act; united states-mexico-canada agreement implementation act; (usmca); trade agreement; trade act; trade partnership act.

Official foreign trips.   We obtain data on all official foreign travel undertaken by members of the House of representatives. These data are available in accordance with the Mutual Security Act of 1954 (Title 22 U.S. Code, Chapter 24, Section 1754) and the International Security Assistance Act of 1978. The disclosures contain detailed information on the arrival and departure dates, foreign country visited, and the expenditures incurred during the trip.

Privately-sponsored trips.   We obtain data on privately sponsored trips taken by members of the House of representatives from 2008 onwards. These data are available in compliance with the House ethics rules which mandates disclosure of all privately sponsored trips and their sponsors to the Clerk of the House (Rosenson, 2009; McGee and Moniz, 2021). The disclosures contain detailed information on the arrival and departure dates, foreign country visited, and the private agency sponsoring the travel.

B Summary of semi-annual reports

Our new comprehensive dataset of meetings between US legislators and lobbyists working on behalf of foreign countries separates us from the previous empirical literature on foreign lobbying. In fact, given that the DOJ, in addition to the detailed FARA filings, also publishes summary reports semi-annually, which are easily accessible, prior work trying to understand broad trends in foreign lobbying has mostly used those reports. Each report describes information on the lobbyist including their activities, nature of services, and money received for their political activities undertaken on behalf of foreign clients as reported in question 12. Importantly, these reports do not have information on the meetings lobbyists have with US legislators on behalf of their clients. Therefore, these summary reports are only suited to study broad trends in foreign lobbying in the US, and cannot be used to shed light on the scope and nature of foreign influence.

Following Lee (2020), we use the information from these reports to classify lobbying activities into 12 broad topics. To identify frequently lobbied topics, we selected key words relevant to each topic and coded the topic of lobbying incidents according to whether the key words were used to describe the incidents. The exact key words are below:

- **Trade:** trade; export; import; fta; nafta; cafta; drcafta; ftaa; naftas; kfta; caftas; korus-fta; tpp; transpacific partnership; gsp; mcool; tariff; custom; agoa; african growth and opportunity act, tpl; tariff preferential level; wto; gatt; mfn; antidump; dump; caribbean & basin; traders; exporters; imports; importers; sanction; commerc; food and drug administration; fda; food label

- **Economy:** financi; financ; fdi; tax; taxat; busi; econom; economi; debt; invest; investment; monetari; imf; bank; antitrust; scal; internat & monetari & fund; world & bank; exchang & rate; government & bond; securities & tax; securities & taxat; securities & exchang; securities &exchanges; securities & regulation; securities & regulations; securities & financial; secur & finance; oil; energy; appropriation

- **Security:** defence;defens; militari; nato; disarm; terror; counterterror; terrorist; antiterror; extremism; troop; peacemak; peacekeep; international & security; national & security; regional & security; security & relations; security & relationship; peace & process; peace & treaty; arms & sales

- **Diplomacy:** government relations; government relationship; government relationships; bilateral relations; bilateral relationship; bilateral relationships; diplomatic relations; diplomatic relationship; diplomatic relationships

- **Policy legal issues:** polici & consult; polici & counsel; polici & servic; polici & advic; polici & analysi; legal & consult; legal & counsel; legal & servic; legal & advic; legal & analysi; legal; law; political; act; legislation; s.[0-9]1,4; hr.[0-9]1,5; s-[0-9]1,4; hr-[0-9]1,5; public policy; foreign policy; US policy; us policy; resolution; settlement; regulat

- **Publicity:** media; news; newspaper; newspapers; newsletter; newsletters; enewslett; press; public & relations

- **Tourism:** tourism; tourist; tour; travel

- **Nuclear:** nuclear; atom; uranium

- **Visa:** visa; immigr; immigrat; immigrant

- **Foreign aid:** aid; usaid; economi & assistanc; militari & assistanc

- **Human rights:** human & rights; education; women; food assistance

- **Secession:** selfdetermin; self determin; self-determin

Panel A of Figure B.1 presents the evolution of the 6 most frequently listed topics over the sample period. We find that approximately one in four activities each year relate to publicity while one in ten activities relate to security. Over the sample period, lobbyists increased their engagement in diplomacy, while their engagement in economy and trade trended downwards. In addition to lobbying topics, we also classify the description of services into 5 broad topics which are presented in Panel B of Figure B.1. Lobbying services saw a significant uptick in 2010 and surpassed services related to promoting investment, trade, and tourism. By the end of 2018, more than half of the foreign agents report lobbying as their only service. Interestingly, there is a concomitant decrease in the promotion of investment, trade, and tourism around the same time as the uptick noted above. Further, we do not find any changes in consulting or fundraising activities over the sample period. These results reveal substantial heterogeneity in the role of lobbyists.

A next natural question is whether lobbyists specialize in providing issue-specific information to legislators, as indicated by prior work in the context of domestic lobbying (Bertrand, Bombardini, and Trebbi, 2014). To this end, Figure B.2 shows that the majority of lobbyists engage with legislators on fewer than three topics, suggesting that most lobbyists concentrate on a small number of topics in the foreign lobbying space.

Finally, we relate the number of topics engaged by the lobbyist on behalf of the foreign principal to the characteristics of the geographical region, where available. Specifically, we assess the relationship between foreign countries that lobby and several macroeconomic characteristics using data from the Word Bank. Specifically, we include data on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita to capture economic growth, total value of exports and imports to capture reliance on trade, and labour share as a fraction of GDP to capture the trend toward automation that may affect incentives of policymakers (Ramey and Ramey, 1995; Jones and Olken, 2005; Jones and Romer, 2010). Additionally, we include the annual average country conflict score from the Cline Center Historical Phoenix Event Data, which provides detailed information on the level of conflict within each country every year (Althaus, Bajjalieh, Carter, Peyton, and Shalmon, 2020). Finally, we include data on institutions and the electoral democracy index from the Varieties of Democracy Database.

Table B.1 presents the estimates from a regression of the natural logarithm of the number of topics on time-varying characteristics discussed above. In particular, we estimate

$$\log(\text{Number of topics})_{frt} = \gamma_f + \delta_{rt} + \beta \text{ Country Characteristics}_{ft} + \epsilon_{frt}, \tag{B.1}$$

where f represents the country of the foreign principal, r represents the topic lobbied for, and t represents the year. The unit of observation is a foreign principal country-topic-year triad. The empirical specification includes country fixed effects to control for unobserved time-invariant regional characteristics in addition to topic-by-year fixed effects to allow for the importance of topics to vary over time. Our results suggest no statistically significant and economically meaningful association between foreign country characteristics and the number of topics except for the share of labor compensation as a fraction of the GDP. Note that the number of observations vary across specifications because of missing values of country characteristics.

In summary, the associations between topics and country characteristics from the semi-annual reports are informative of the broad trends in foreign lobbying activities. However, there are two major drawbacks. First, the summary reports do not contain information on the identities of individual US legislators, also a key issue in the broader literature on domestic lobbying using LDA data. Second, there is no information on the individual meetings between lobbyists and legislators. Both these drawbacks render summary reports unsuitable to study foreign influence in the US.

A. Activities provided by the lobbying firm
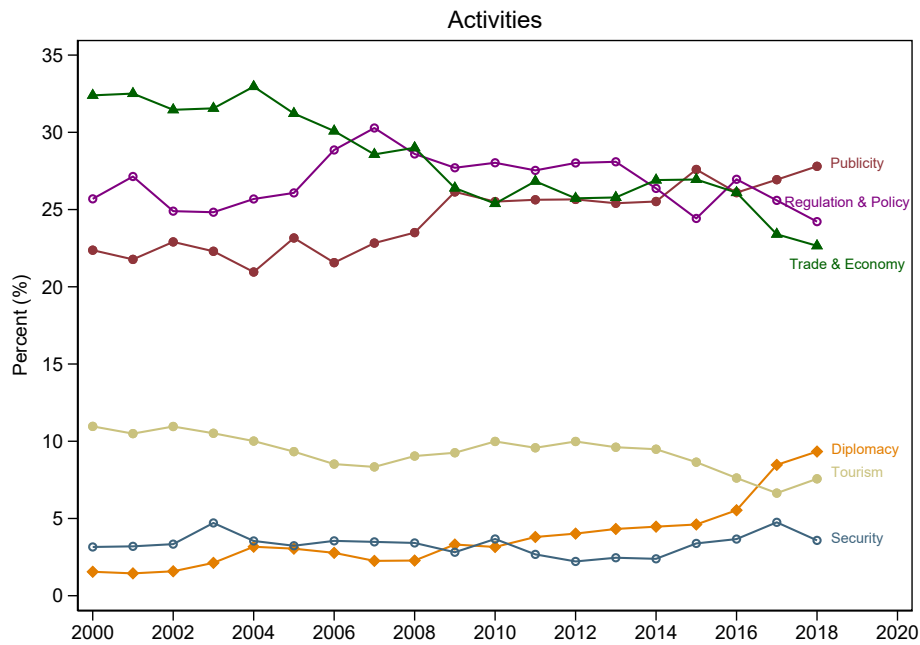
Activities

B. Nature of services provided by the lobbying firm
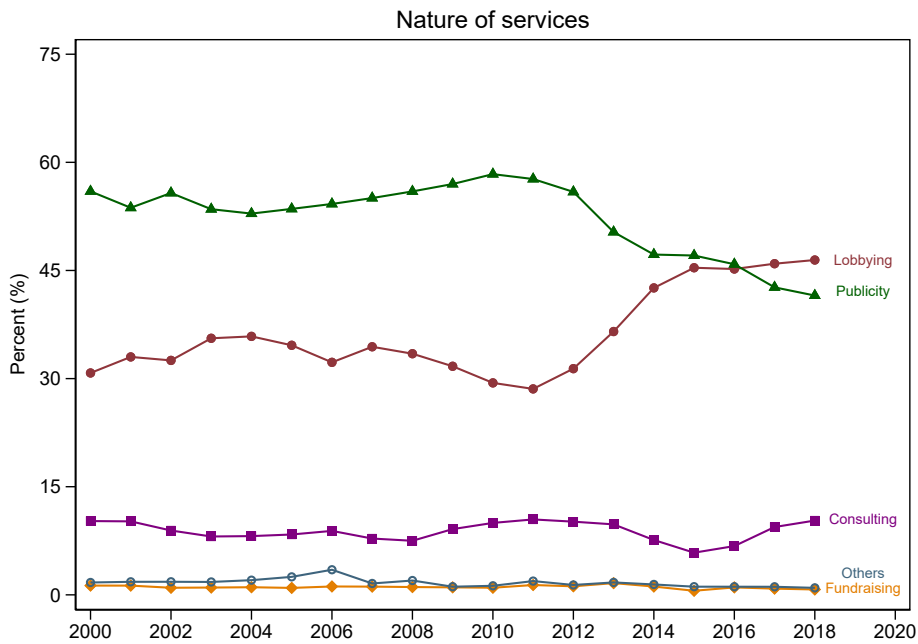
Nature of services

Figure B.1: *Notes*: The figure shows the fraction of activities belonging to each specific topic (Panel A) and each type of services (Panel B). The twelve lobbying topics are identified following the procedure outlined in Appendix B.

Lobbyist specialization
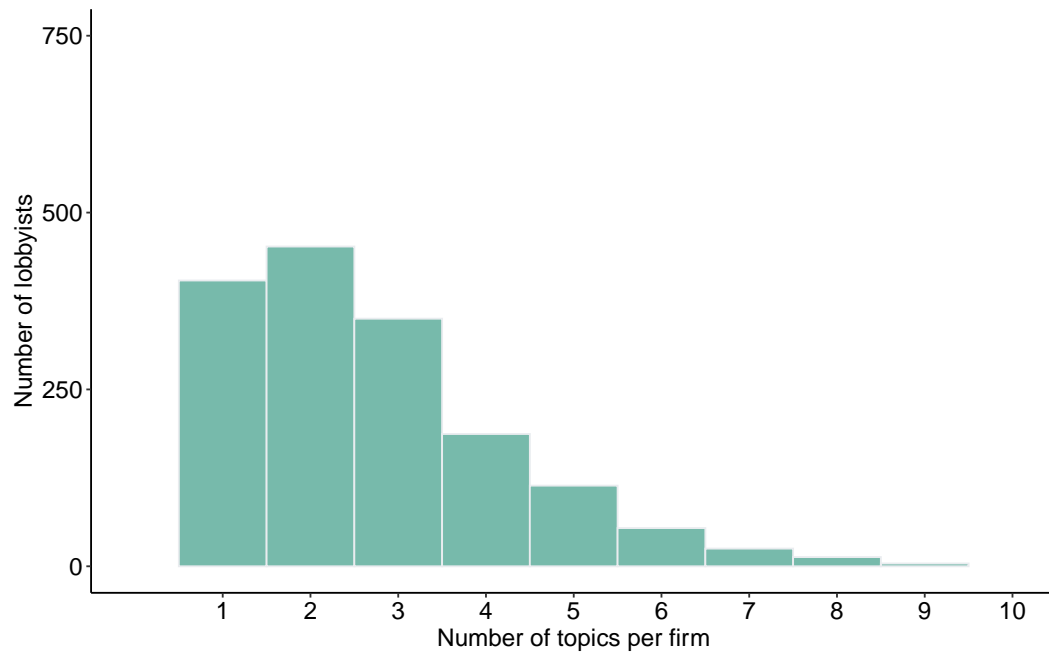
Figure B.2: *Notes*: The histogram shows the number of different topics each lobbying firm has worked on from 2000 to 2018 (horizontal axis), and the corresponding number of lobbying firms that have worked on a given number of topics (vertical axis). The twelve lobbying topics are identified following the procedure outlined in Appendix B.

Table B.1: Lobbying topics and foreign country characteristics: Report-level analysis

This table relates lobbying topics extracted from FARA semi-annual reports to foreign country characteristics. The unit of analysis is a country-topic-year triad. The dependent variable is *Log (Number of topics)*, i.e., the natural logarithm of the number of topics. We relate this to the following foreign country characteristics, namely: *Economic* (column 1), *Conflict* (column 2), and *Institutional* (column 3). Column 4 includes all the characteristics. *Economic* characteristics include: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*); *Conflict* characteristics include: total number of unrest events in the source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events in the target country (*Total unrest (target)*). *Institutional* characteristics include the extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *Topic × year* and *Country* fixed effects and are estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS). Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable	Log (Number of topics)			
Characteristics	Economic	Conflict	Institutional	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	-0.002			-0.011
	(0.026)			(0.027)
Population	0.103			-0.005
	(0.123)			(0.135)
Imports	0.041			0.017
	(0.096)			(0.100)
Exports	0.063			0.083
	(0.125)			(0.124)
Labour share	0.630*			0.792**
	(0.369)			(0.362)
Total unrest (source)		0.024		0.005
		(0.028)		(0.034)
Total unrest (target)		0.019		0.040
		(0.027)		(0.033)
Electoral democracy index			0.160	0.250
			(0.155)	(0.200)
Topic × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.41	0.41	0.40	0.42
Observations	4,412	5,696	6,011	3,887

C   Additional tables and figures

Table C.1: Top five legislators by meetings with unique number of foreign countries each year

The table reports the top five legislators by the unique number of foreign countries they meet with each year.

Year	1	2	3	4	5
2000	Trent Lott	Tom Lantos	Donald Payne	Norman D Dicks	Jim Kolbe
2001	Rick Santorum	Bill Nelson	Trent Lott	George F Allen	Tom Lantos
2002	Chuck Hagel	Tom Lantos	Henry Hyde	Trent Lott	Bill Frist
2003	Chuck Hagel	Doug Bereuter	Jim Kolbe	Bill Frist	Barbara Lee
2004	Chuck Hagel	Jim Kolbe	Richard G Lugar	Tom Lantos	Sam Brownback
2005	Dan Burton	Chuck Hagel	Mel Martinez	Howard L Berman	Jim Kolbe
2006	Mel Martinez	Norm Coleman	Charles B Rangel	Richard G Lugar	Chuck Hagel
2007	Tom Lantos	Norm Coleman	Chuck Hagel	Nancy Pelosi	Robert Wexler
2008	Howard L Berman	Richard G Lugar	John F Kerry	Chuck Hagel	Norm Coleman
2009	John F Kerry	Howard L Berman	Joseph Crowley	Johnny Isakson	Donald Payne
2010	Howard L Berman	John F Kerry	Orrin G Hatch	Shelley Berkley	Harry Reid
2011	John Mccain	Mark Steven Kirk	Robert Menendez	Karen Bass	James M Inhofe
2012	Marco Rubio	James M Inhofe	John F Kerry	Eliot L Engel	Gregory W Meeks
2013	Tim Kaine	John Mccain	Jeanne Shaheen	Edward R Royce	Chris Murphy
2014	Chris Murphy	Bob Corker	John Mccain	Marco Rubio	Robert Menendez
2015	Edward R Royce	Gregory W Meeks	Benjamin Cardin	Bob Corker	Jim Risch
2016	Edward J Markey	Jeanne Shaheen	Gregory W Meeks	Cory Gardner	Eliot L Engel
2017	Edward R Royce	Marco Rubio	Cory Booker	Lindsey Graham	Joaquin Castro
2018	Bob Corker	Robert Menendez	Eliot L Engel	Marco Rubio	Benjamin Cardin

Table C.2: Top five politicians by number of meetings each year

The table reports the top five politicians by the total number of meetings each year.

Year	1	2	3	4	5
2000	Donald Payne	Trent Lott	Tom Lantos	Norman D Dicks	Bob Graham
2001	Davis Tom	Trent Lott	Dana Rohrabacher	Henry Hyde	John Mccain
2002	Chuck Hagel	Trent Lott	Tom Lantos	Doug Bereuter	Barbara Lee
2003	Mike Simpson	Chuck Hagel	Doug Bereuter	Lincoln Diazbalart	Robert Wexler
2004	Roy Blunt	Ed Whitfield	Robert Wexler	Tom Lantos	Jim Kolbe
2005	Charles E Schumer	Robert Wexler	Betty Mccollum	Tom Lantos	Chuck Hagel
2006	Ed Whitfield	Dan Burton	Robert Wexler	John Mccain	Roy Blunt
2007	Gus M Bilirakis	Robert Wexler	Tom Lantos	Mich Mcconnell	John S Tanner
2008	Howard L Berman	Robert Wexler	John S Tanner	Donald Payne	Bob Filner
2009	Melissa Bean	Michael E Mcmahon	John F Kerry	Robert Wexler	John S Tanner
2010	Howard L Berman	Melissa Bean	Alcee Hastings	Steve Cohen	Lincoln Diazbalart
2011	Daniel K Inouye	Mark Steven Kirk	Mich Mcconnell	Chris Murphy	Roy Blunt
2012	Tom Marino	Jeanne Shaheen	Steve Cohen	Christopher Coons	James M Inhofe
2013	Chris Murphy	Jim Risch	Jeanne Shaheen	Tim Kaine	Karen Bass
2014	Michael R Turner	Tim Kaine	Chris Murphy	Gerald E Connolly	Jim Risch
2015	Tim Kaine	Gregory W Meeks	Mich Mcconnell	Benjamin Cardin	John Boehner
2016	Michael R Turner	Darrell Issa	Gerald E Connolly	Steve Cohen	Christopher Coons
2017	Chris Murphy	Tim Kaine	Cory Booker	Bob Corker	Gerald E Connolly
2018	Michael T Mccaul	Joe Wilson	Jim Risch	Todd C Young	Benjamin Cardin

Table C.3: Meetings with legislators and aid received by foreign countries, year-month analyses

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and aid received by foreign countries from the US. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year month. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$, an indicator for receiving a foreign aid from the US while in panel B the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Aid amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the aid amount received by a foreign country from the US. The independent variable of interest is *Log (1+Meetings$_t$)*, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and U.S. legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State × year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Extensive margin					
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.610***	0.610***	0.607***	0.607***	0.607***	0.607***
	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
Observations	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,876	1,923,876

	Panel B: Intensive margin					
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Aid amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	8.836***	8.834***	8.804***	8.799***	8.801***	8.796***
	(0.951)	(0.944)	(0.937)	(0.937)	(0.937)	(0.937)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year-month	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64
Observations	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,877	1,923,876	1,923,876

Table C.4: Meetings with legislators and local subsidies to foreign firms, district-level analyses

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings and congressional-district level subsidies granted to foreign firms. The unit of analysis is legislator-district-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm whose representatives meet with a US legislator, receives a subsidy from the legislator's district while in panel B the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Subsidy amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from that district. The independent variable of interest is *Log (1+Meetings$_t$)*, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective district. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *district × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general district policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Extensive margin					
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.003*	0.003*	0.003*	0.003*	0.003*	0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
District × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Observations	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238

	Panel B: Intensive margin					
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Subsidy amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.043*	0.043*	0.045*	0.045*	0.045*	0.045*
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
District × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Observations	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238	242,238

Table C.5: Meetings with legislators and government contracts to foreign firms

This table presents panel regressions estimating the relationship between meetings with US legislators and new government contract allocated to foreign firms in the state. The unit of analysis is legislator-state-foreign country-year month. The dependent variable in panel A is, $\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$, an indicator equal to one if a foreign firm, whose representatives meet with a US legislator, receives a new government contract from the legislator's state while in panel B the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Contract amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the contract amount received by the foreign firm to perform the contract in that given state. The independent variable of interest is *Log (1+Meetings$_t$)*, natural logarithm of one plus the number of meetings between representatives of a foreign country and US legislators from the respective state. In columns 2, 4, and 6, we include the following country characteristics as control variables: GDP per capita (*Gross Domestic Product*), total population (*Population*), total value of imports (*Imports*), total value of exports (*Exports*), share of labour compensation in GDP (*Labour share*), total number of unrest events at source country (*Total unrest (source)*), total number of unrest events at target country (*Total unrest (target)*), and extent to which electoral democracy is achieved (*Electoral democracy index*). All regressions include *State × year-month* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies. Specifications 3 and 4 additionally include *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics while specifications 5 and 6 further include *Legislator* fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

	Panel A: Extensive margin					
Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.008**	0.008**	0.008**	0.008**	0.008**	0.008**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Observations	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375

	Panel B: Intensive margin					
Dependent variable:	Log (1+Contract amount)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Log (1+Meetings$_t$)	0.075*	0.075*	0.076*	0.076*	0.076*	0.076*
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State × year-month fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
Observations	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375	3,636,375

Table C.6: Foreign aid received by foreign countries from the US around legislator deaths

This table examines changes in foreign aid received by the foreign country in one year around legislator deaths in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the country received aid from the US while in column 2 the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Aid amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of aid received by the foreign country. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the foreign country connected to a US representative or a senator in a state, respectively, loses the connection due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *State × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are double-clustered at the country-event and state levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Aid>0}$	Log (1+ Aid amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection × After	-0.092***	-0.494***
	(0.006)	(0.125)
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.76	0.90
Observations	787	782

Table C.7: Local government subsidies to foreign firms around legislator deaths

This table examines changes in state-level subsidies granted to foreign firms, whose country representatives met with a deceased US legislator, in one year around the death in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the foreign firms, whose country representatives met with the deceased US legislator, receives a subsidy from the legislator's state while in column 2 the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Subsidy amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from the legislator's state. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the firm whose country representatives are connected to a deceased US representative or a senator in a congressional district or state, respectively, where the subsidy is granted and this connection is lost due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *State × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are dobule-clustered at the country-event and state levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. They are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$	Log (1+ Subsidy amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection × After	-0.052**	-0.553**
	(0.021)	(0.254)
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.44	0.42
Observations	787	787

Table C.8: Local subsidies to foreign firms around effective legislator deaths, district-level analyses

This table examines changes in congressional-district level subsidies to foreign firms, whose country representatives met with a deceased US legislator, in one year around deaths in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is district-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the foreign firms, whose country representatives met with the deceased US legislator, received a subsidy from the legislator's district while in column 2 the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Subsidy amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the amount of subsidy received by a foreign firm from the legislator's district. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the firm whose country representatives are connected to a deceased US representative in a congressional district, where the subsidy is granted and this connection is lost due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *district × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds such as general district policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are dobule-clustered at the country-event and district levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. They are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Subsidy>0}$	Log (1+ Subsidy amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection × After	-0.041**	-0.667**
	(0.014)	(0.229)
Controls	No	No
Country × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
District fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.52	0.52
Observations	189	189

Table C.9: New government contracts to foreign firms around legislator deaths

This table examines changes in new government contract awards to foreign firms, whose country representatives met with a deceased US legislator, in one year around deaths in a difference-in-differences setting. The unit of analysis is state-foreign country-year. The dependent variable in column 1 is, $\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$, an indicator equal to one if the foreign firms, whose country representatives met with the deceased US legislator, received a new government contract from the legislator's state while in column 2 the dependent variable is, *Log (1+Contract amount)*, natural logarithm of one plus the contract value of the government contract received by the foreign firm from the legislator's state. *Lost connection* is an indicator variable taking the value of one if the firm whose country representatives are connected to the deceased US representative or senator in a congressional district or state, respectively, where the government contract is administered and this connection is lost due to the legislator's death. All regressions include *State × year* fixed effects to control for local economic confounds and general state policies and *Country* fixed effects to control for time-invariant country characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) in estimations. Standard errors are dobule-clustered at the country-event and state levels and are robust to heteroscedasticity. They are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.

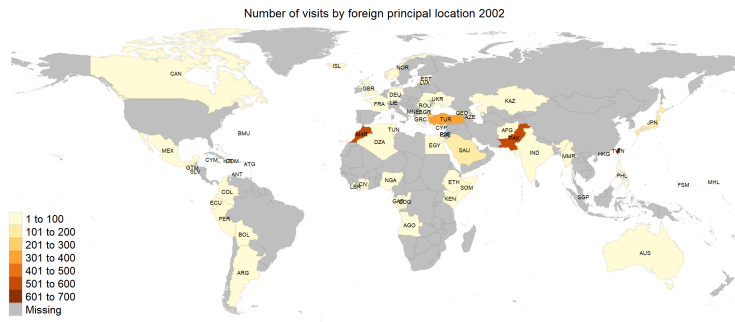| Dependent variable:	$\mathbb{1}_{Contract>0}$	Log (1+ Contract amount)
	(1)	(2)
Lost connection × After	-0.060***	-0.481**
	(0.018)	(0.178)
State × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.58	0.63
Observations	787	783

Table C.10: Importance of foreign country population in congressional district for meetings intensity

This table relates meetings with US legislators to individual legislator characteristics. The unit of analysis is a country-legislator-year triad. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the number of meetings in a year with US legislators, *Log (meetings)*. In column 1, we include the following legislator characteristics: natural logarithm of vote share in the elections (*Vote share*), member of the party that is in control of the senate (*Majority*), rank within the party (*Seniority*) and the number of lobbyists engaged by the foreign agent who previously worked with the legislators (*Employment connection*). We also include the following ideological characteristics: measures of legislator's political ideology, *DW-NOMINATE 1* and *DW-NOMINATE 2*, and distance from the median ideology in the congress. Lastly, we consider characteristics that are important for influence, i.e., lawmaking effectiveness of the legislator (*Legislative Effectiveness Score*), and whether she is a senate or house committee and sub-committee chair (*Committee (Sub-committee) chair*). We also capture whether the legislator is a member, ranking member, or chair of, either a senate or house committee, the following committees: (i) the rules, ways and means, and appropriations , (ii) foreign affairs, (iii) Security & Intelligence, (iv) Armed Services, and (v) Energy & Commerce. In columns 2 and 3, we consider *Fraction of country's population*, defined as the fraction of the electoral base that were born in the foreign country with whom the representative meets with. All specifications include *Country × Year* fixed effects while specifications 2 and 3 additionally include legislator fixed effects to control for time-invariant legislator characteristics. We use ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions to estimate the coefficients. Standard errors are clustered at the country level and are robust to heteroscedasticity. ***, **, * denote significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively.
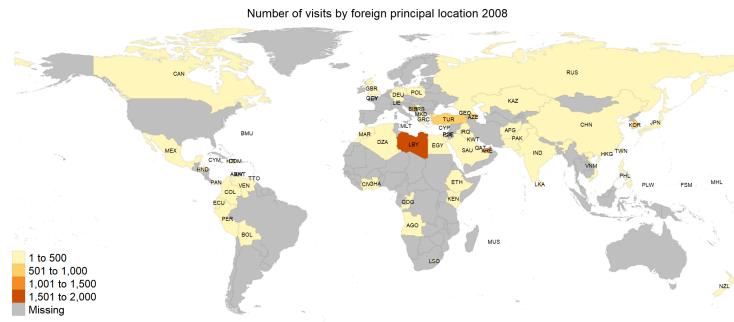
Dependent variable:	Log (meetings)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Fraction of country's population		0.017***	0.019***
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Vote share	0.192***	0.192***	0.131
	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.097)
Majority	-0.107	-0.108	-0.092
	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.129)
Seniority	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.033*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.017)
Employment connection	0.036***	0.036***	0.022*
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.011)
Distance from median (ideology)	-0.169	-0.170	-0.135
	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.300)
DW-NOMINATE 1	-0.051**	-0.049**	-0.437
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(1.958)
DW-NOMINATE 2	-0.013	-0.014	
	(0.013)	(0.013)	
Legislative Effectiveness Score	0.008	0.008	0.013
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Committee chair	0.079	0.073	0.017
	(0.059)	(0.056)	(0.075)
Sub-committee chair	0.058**	0.059**	0.063**
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Power committee membership	0.088***	0.088***	0.058
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.040)
Foreign affairs	0.194***	0.194***	0.113*
	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.063)
Foreign affairs (chair)	0.025	0.025	-0.012
	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.098)
Foreign affairs (Ranking member)	0.304***	0.306***	0.095
	(0.088)	(0.088)	(0.132)

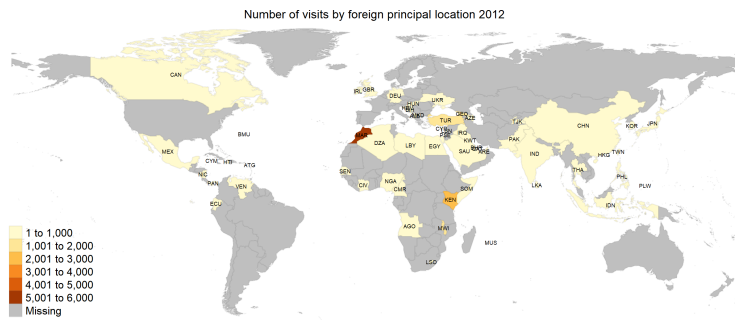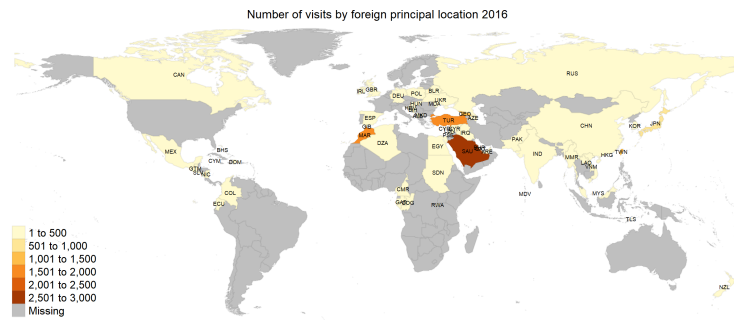| Dependent variable:	Log (meetings)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Security & Intelligence	0.039	0.036	0.040
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.044)
Security & Intelligence (chair)	-0.155	-0.168	0.052
	(0.121)	(0.125)	(0.125)
Security & Intelligence (Ranking member)	0.176*	0.182*	-0.013
	(0.095)	(0.096)	(0.099)
Armed services	0.053	0.050	-0.020
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.075)
Armed services (chair)	-0.071	-0.067	0.152
	(0.092)	(0.090)	(0.125)
Armed services (Ranking member)	0.404***	0.407***	0.455***
	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.162)
Energy & Commerce	-0.004	-0.003	-0.145**
	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.057)
Energy & Commerce (chair)	-0.373***	-0.370***	-0.371***
	(0.102)	(0.101)	(0.138)
Energy & Commerce (Ranking member)	-0.457**	-0.466**	-0.674***
	(0.208)	(0.209)	(0.220)
Legislator fixed effects	No	No	Yes
Country × year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.32	0.32	0.42
Observations	10,430	10,430	10,352

Figure C.1: Meeting intensity over time and foreign principal location

a 2002

b 2008

c 2012

d 2016

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