

# Mackenzie R. Dobson

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## Contact Information

University of Virginia  
Gibson Hall 1540 Jefferson Park Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA

dkx9za@virginia.edu

## Employment

Adjunct Instructor, Department of Political Science, University of Richmond  
Fall 2023, Spring 2024

Pre-doctoral Visiting Researcher, Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab,  
Rooney Center, Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame  
July 2024 - June 2025

## Education

### University of Virginia

Ph.D. Government, May 2026 (Expected)

***Dissertation: From Campaigns to Governance: Understanding Bipartisanship in State Legislatures***

*Committee:* Jennifer Lawless, Craig Volden, Justin Kirkland, Laurel Harbridge-Yong

*Field:* American Politics & Methodology

### Appalachian State University

M.A., Political Science, 2021

B.S., Political Science, 2020 (*Summa Cum Laude*)

## Academic Interests

U.S. politics, American political institutions, legislative institutions, bipartisanship, legislative effectiveness, representation, public policy, quantitative methods.

## Manuscripts Under Review

1. “I’m Coming Out! How LGBTQ Candidates Become Effective Lawmakers” *with Jacob M. Lollis*
2. “Cashing in on Capacity? How Social Class Drives Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Legislative Capacity” *with Jacob M. Lollis, Justin H. Kirkland, and Jeffrey J. Harden*
3. “Bipartisan Campaigners Become Bipartisan Legislators and Effective Lawmakers” *with Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman*

## Working Projects

1. “Campaigning on Compromise: Exploring the Influence of Bipartisan Language in State Legislative Campaigns”
2. “Instituting Compromise? How Legislative Institutions Prevent and Promote Bipartisan Lawmaking”
3. “Bipartisanship Secured: How Secure Majorities Lead to Cross-Party Collaboration”
4. “The Substantive Representation of LGBTQ Americans: Evidence from 1.6 Million State Legislative Bills” with Jacob M. Lollis”

## Conference Presentations

1. “Bipartisanship Secured: How Secure Majorities Lead to Cross-Party Collaboration” State Politics and Policy Conference. 2024.
2. “I’m Coming Out! How LGBTQ Candidates Become Effective Lawmakers” *with Jacob M. Lollis*. Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference 2023.
3. “Does Bipartisan Lawmaking Improve the Public’s Quality of Life? Evidence from the States” State Politics and Policy Conference. 2023.
4. “Professional Capacity and the Quality of Representation in U.S. Legislatures” *with Mackenzie R. Dobson, Justin H. Kirkland, and Jeffery J. Harden*. State Politics and Policy Conference 2023.
5. “Bipartisan Campaigners Become Bipartisan Legislators and Effective Lawmakers” *with Craig Volden and Alan E. Wiseman*. MPSA 2023.

## Invited Talks

1. Spring 2024: Junior Americanist Workshop Series (JAWS)
  - I’m Coming Out! How Voter Discrimination Produces Effective LGBTQ Lawmakers (*with Jacob M. Lollis*)

## **Fellowships & Awards**

1. State Politics & Policy Conference Best Graduate Student Poster Award, 2024
2. Center for Effective Lawmaking Small Grant, 2023 (**\$3,000**)
3. Summer Research Grant, Center for Effective Lawmaking, 2022 (**\$3,000**)
4. Tom Carsey Scholar, State Politics & Policy Conference, 2021 (**\$300**)
5. Summer Research Grant, Center for Effective Lawmaking, 2021 (**\$3,000**)
6. Politics Department Fellowship (Tuition & Stipend), University of Virginia, 2021-2026.

## **Professional Experience**

### **Research Director: Bipartisan Campaigners Project**

- Developed coding protocol alongside Dr. Craig Volden.
- Trained and managed a team of undergraduate students at the University of Virginia tasked with identifying, compiling, and assessing congressional campaign materials for members of Congress' first congressional campaign from 1955-2019.

### **Research Team Member: State Legislative Bill Text Team**

- Developed coding protocol alongside Dr. Andy Ballard.
- Developed and ran legislative bill website scrapers based on site APIs to collect archived legislation data.
- Pre-processed and managed legislative bill data from LegiScan for state legislatures from 2009-2024 and developed bill- (N= 1.6 million) and sponsor-level (N= 8.5 million) datasets.

### **Research Assistant**

- Jennifer Lawless, University of Virginia, 2023, 2024
- Justin Kirkland, University of Virginia, 2022, 2023.
- Rachel Potter, University of Virginia, 2022
- Adam Newmark, Appalachian State University, 2020, 2021

**Teaching  
Experience**

**Instructor of Record**

S2024, F2023: Introduction to Public Policy, University of Richmond

**Teaching Assistant**

S2024: Politics and the Political Economy of Development (Mark Schwartz)

F2023: Introduction to American Politics (James Caesar)

S2023: American Congress (Justin Kirkland)

F2022: Presidential Power (Rachel Potter)

**Service**

Editorial Assistant, American Journal of Political Science (Fall 2022)

**Programming**

R, Stata, Python, Latex, Qualtrics, Machine learning/Large language models (e.g., HuggingFace, Caret)

**Memberships**

American Political Science Association  
Midwest Political Science Association

**References**

**Jennifer Lawless**, Leone Reaves and George W. Spicer Professor of Politics,  
University of Virginia, [jl19jx@virginia.edu](mailto:jl19jx@virginia.edu)

**Craig Volden**, Professor of Politics & Public Policy,  
University of Virginia, [volden@virginia.edu](mailto:volden@virginia.edu)

**Justin Kirkland**, Associate Professor of Politics and Public Policy,  
University of Virginia, [jhk9y@virginia.edu](mailto:jhk9y@virginia.edu)