

Mackenzie Ridge Dobson

CONTACT INFORMATION	2015 Jenkins Nanovic Halls Notre Dame, IN 46556	(828)-460-8420 mdobson2@nd.edu
EDUCATION	University of Virginia , Charlottesville, VA Ph.D. Government <ul style="list-style-type: none">Field: American Politics & MethodologyDissertation: Reciprocity Under Majority Rule: Conditional Cooperation and Selective Bipartisanship in American LegislaturesCommittee: Jennifer Lawless (Co-Chair), Craig Volden (Co-Chair), Justin Kirkland, Laurel Harbridge-Yong Appalachian State University , Boone, NC M.A. Political Science B.S. Political Science (<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>)	2021 - 2026 2020 - 2021 2018 - 2020
AFFILIATIONS	Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab University of Notre Dame Researcher Quantitative Collaborative University of Virginia Graduate Student Affiliate Center for Effective Lawmaking University of Virginia Graduate Student Affiliate	2024 - Present 2022 - Present 2021 - Present
EMPLOYMENT	Visiting Scholar University of Notre Dame Researcher in Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab Instructor University of Richmond Adjunct Political Science Instructor	2024 - Present 2023 - 2024
ACADEMIC INTERESTS	Substantive: American political institutions, legislative politics, state politics, policy compromise, social networks, representation Methodological: Quantitative methods, text-as-data, large language models, machine learning, computational methods, panel data	

PEER-REVIEWED
PUBLICATIONS

1. Lollis, Jacob M., and **Mackenzie R. Dobson**. [I'm Coming Out! How Voter Discrimination Produces Effective LGBTQ Lawmakers](#). *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2025.

MANUSCRIPTS
UNDER REVIEW

1. Porter, Rachel, Jeffrey J. Harden, Emily Anderson, Gessica de Frietas, **Mackenzie R. Dobson**, Abigail Hemmen, and Emma Schroeder. [The Consequences of Elite Action Against Elections](#). Invited to Revise and Resubmit *British Journal of Political Science*.
2. **Dobson, Mackenzie R.** [Selective Reciprocity in Bipartisan Collaboration: How Majority Security Shapes Legislative Success](#). Under review.
 - Winner of the Best Graduate Student Paper on State Politics (2025), State Politics and Policy Conference
 - Winner of the Best Graduate Student Poster (2024), State Politics and Policy Conference
3. **Dobson, Mackenzie R.** [The Bipartisan Path Revisited: Collaboration and Legislative Effectiveness in the U.S. States](#). Under review.
4. **Dobson, Mackenzie R.**, Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. [Outcome-Consequential Campaigning](#). Under review.
5. **Dobson, Mackenzie R.**, Jacob M. Lollis, Justin H. Kirkland, and Jeffrey J. Harden. [Cashing in on Capacity? How Social Class Drives Citizens' Attitudes Toward Legislative Capacity](#). Under review.

WORKING
PROJECTS

1. Ballard, Andrew, **Mackenzie R. Dobson**, Martín Gandur, Craig Volden, and Alan Wiseman. Policy Agendas and Legislative Effectiveness in the American States: Classifying Policy Topics and Measuring Legislator Effectiveness with LLMs.
2. Rachel Porter, Jeffrey J. Harden, and **Mackenzie R. Dobson**, Electing Amateur Politicians to the U.S. Congress Reduces Bipartisan Collaboration.

TEACHING
EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record
University of Richmond

Public Policymaking in Congress and the States

2023 - 2024

Teaching Assistant
University of Virginia

Politics and the Political Economy of Development

Spring 2024

Introduction to American Politics

Fall 2023

American Congress

Spring 2023

Presidential Power

Fall 2022

CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS

1. Legislative Amateurs and Bipartisanship in the U.S. Congress. MPSA. 2025.
2. Selective Reciprocity in Bipartisan Collaboration: How Majority Security Shapes Legislative Success. Effective Lawmaking in the American States Conference. 2025.
3. Bipartisanship Secured: How Secure Majorities Lead to Cross-Party Collaboration. State Politics and Policy Conference. 2024.
4. I'm Coming Out! How LGBTQ Candidates Become Effective Lawmakers. Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference. 2023.
5. Does Bipartisan Lawmaking Improve the Public's Quality of Life? Evidence from the States. State Politics and Policy Conference. 2023.
6. Professional Capacity and the Quality of Representation in U.S. Legislatures. State Politics and Policy Conference. 2023.
7. Bipartisan Campaigners Become Bipartisan Legislators and Effective Lawmakers. MPSA. 2023.

INVITED TALKS

Junior Americanist Workshop Series
I'm Coming Out! How Voter Discrimination Produces Effective LGBTQ Lawmakers Spring 2024

FELLOWSHIPS &
AWARDS

Best Graduate Student Paper on State Politics
State Politics and Policy Conference 2025

Best Graduate Student Poster Award
State Politics and Policy Conference 2024

Center for Effective Lawmaking Grant Recipient
CEL Small Research Grant (\$3,000) 2024
CEL Small Research Grant (\$3,000) 2023
CEL Summer Research Grant (\$3,000) 2022
CEL Summer Research Grant (\$3,000) 2021

Tom Carsey Scholar Award
State Politics and Policy Conference (\$300) 2023

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	Network Analysis Topical Workshop ICPSR	2025
	Scraping State Legislative Bill Text Center for Effective Lawmaking Research Co-Director	2023 - 2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed coding protocol alongside Andrew Ballard. • Developed and ran legislative bill website scrapers based on site APIs to collect archived legislation data. • Pre-processed and managed legislative bills introduced in state legislatures from 2009-2024 and developed bill- (N= 1.6 million) and sponsor-level (N= 8.5 million) datasets. 	
	Graduate Instructor Seminar on the Teaching of Writing University of Virginia	2023
	Bipartisan Rhetoric in Congressional Campaigns Center for Effective Lawmaking Research Director	2021 - 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed coding protocol. • 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 Assistant University of Virginia	
	Jennifer Lawless	2023 - 2024
	Justin Kirkland	2022 - 2023
	Rachel Porter	2021 - 2022
	Appalachian State University Adam Newmark	2020 - 2021
	Reviewer <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i> <i>State Politics and Policy Quarterly</i>	
	Editorial Assistant <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>	2022 - 2023
PROGRAMMING	R, Python, Stata, L ^A T _E X, Qualtrics, machine learning/large language models (HuggingFace, Caret, SuperLearner)	
MEMBERSHIPS	American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association	

REFERENCES

Jennifer Lawless, Leone Reaves and George W. Spicer Professor of Politics,
University of Virginia, j119jx@virginia.edu

Craig Volden, Professor of Politics and Public Policy,
University of Virginia, volden@virginia.edu

Justin Kirkland, Professor of Politics and Public Policy,
University of Virginia, jhk9y@virginia.edu

Jeff Harden, Andrew J. McKenna Family Professor,
University of Notre Dame, jharden@nd.edu