

Rachel Porter

✉ rachel.porter@nd.edu 🌐 rachelporter.org 📱 [porter-rachel](https://porter-rachel.github.io)

APPOINTMENTS

University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame du Lac Assistant Professor of Political Science 2024 –
Assistant Professor, Political Science 2022 –
Computational Social Science Fellow, Lucy Institute for Data & Society 2022 –

EDUCATION

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ph.D., Political Science 2022
Fields: American Politics & Political Methodology
Dissertation: *Some Politics Are Still Local: Strategic Position Taking in Congress & Elections*
• Winner of the 2023 APSA E.E. Schattschneider Award
M.A., Political Science

The University of Georgia

B.A., Political Science & International Affairs 2016
• Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude

BOOKS

Colin R. Case and Rachel Porter. *Scaling the Meaning of Text: A Word Embedding Approach*. **Cambridge University Press**, Elements in Quantitative and Computational Methods in Social Sciences (Under Contract)

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

* = GRADUATE
STUDENT
COAUTHOR

[1] Rachel Porter, Jeffrey J. Harden, and Mackenzie R. Dobson*. 2025. [Electing amateur politicians reduces cross-party collaboration](#). **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences**.

- Coverage from The New York Times
- Collaborative project with the [Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab](#)

[2] Colin R. Case and Rachel Porter. 2025. [Conceptualizing and measuring early campaign fundraising in U.S. elections](#). **Political Science Research & Methods**.

[3] Rachel Porter, Colin R. Case, and Sarah A. Treul. 2025. [CampaignView, a database of policy platforms and biographical narratives](#). **Nature: Scientific Data**.

[4] Rachel Porter, Jeffrey J. Harden, Emily Anderson*, Mackenzie R. Dobson*, Abigail Hemmen*, Géssica de Freitas*, and Emma Schroeder*. 2025. [The Consequences of Elite Action Against Elections](#). **The British Journal of Political Science**.

- Collaborative project with the [Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab](#)

[5] Rachel Porter and Sarah A. Treul. 2025. [Evaluating \(in\)experience in congressional elections](#). **The American Journal of Political Science**.

- Coverage from [Brookings](#), [Vox](#), [FiveThirtyEight](#), [ABC News](#), [Politics in Question](#) podcast

[6] Rachel Porter, Sarah A. Treul, and Maura McDonald. 2024. [Changing the Dialogue: Descriptive Candidacies and Position Taking in Campaigns for the US House of Representatives](#). **The Journal of Politics**.

[7] Rachel Porter and Tyler Steelman. 2023. [No Experience Required: Early Donations and Amateur Success in Congressional Primaries](#). **Legislative Studies Quarterly**.

- Among the top 10 most-cited papers published in LSQ for 2023-2024

[8] Christina Ladam, Austin Bussing, Alexander Furnas, Josh McCrain, David Miller, and Rachel Porter. 2022. [Junior Americanist Workshop Series](#). **PS: Political Science & Politics**.

[9] Maura McDonald, Rachel Porter, and Sarah A. Treul. 2020. [Running as a Woman? Gender and the 2018 Congressional Election](#). **Political Research Quarterly**.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Under Review

Colin R. Case and Rachel Porter. [Strategic Heterogeneity in Issue Positioning: Evidence from Congressional Campaigns](#). (R&R at **The American Journal of Political Science**)

Colin R. Case, Emily C. Ommundsen, and Rachel Porter. [Bipartisan Campaign Messages are Credible Policymaking Signals](#).

Rachel Porter, Ben Francis* and William Kakenmaster*. [When Climate Hits Home: Local Economies and Pro-Environmentalism in Congressional Politics](#).

Working Drafts

Pamela Ban, Jaclyn Kaslovsky, and Rachel Porter. Social Class and Legislative Interaction.

James Bisbee, Patrick Y. Wu, Maggie Macdonald, Megan Brown*, and Rachel Porter. Small Dollars & Globalization: How Layoffs Translate to Costly Political Action.

Amy Brooke Grauley* and Rachel Porter. Does Identity Affect Representation? Candidate Backgrounds and Policy Positioning.

Jeffrey J. Harden and Rachel Porter. Information Limits in Observational Studies.

Rachel Porter. *Beyond the Party Brand: How Local Representation Persists in Nationalized Politics*. (Book manuscript)

Rachel Porter, Maggie Macdonald, and Megan Brown*. Small Donor Matching Programs Do Not Amplify Average Americans' Voices.

Rachel Porter and Sarah A. Treul. *The Amateur Advantage: Unpacking the Rise of Political Inexperience in Congress & Elections* (Book manuscript)

OPEN DATA

CampaignView: U.S. House Campaign Website Archive (2018-2022)
<https://campaignview.org>

Early Fundraising in U.S. Congressional Elections (2008-2020)
<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/FVLHCX>

U.S. House Candidate Biographical Data & Primary Election Outcomes (1980-2024)
<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/CYFIDH>

BOOK CHAPTERS

[1] Jamie L. Carson, Jason M. Roberts, and Rachel Porter. 2020. "The Nationalization of Congressional Elections" in *New Directions in Congressional Politics*, Routledge.

[2] Michael S. Lynch, Anthony J. Madonna, and Rachel Surminsky. 2016. ["Irregular Order: Examining the Changing Congressional Amending Process"](#) in *Party and Procedure in the United States Congress*, Rowland & Little.

PUBLIC WRITING

Rachel Porter and Jeffrey J. Harden. 3 November, 2025. ["Amateur hour in Congress: How political newcomers fuel gridlock and government shutdowns."](#) *The Conversation*.

Rachel Porter and Sarah Treul. 22 April, 2024. ["Evaluating \(in\)experience in congressional elections."](#) *American Journal of Political Science - Author Summaries*.

Sarah Treul and Rachel Porter. 20 April, 2018. ["Inexperienced candidates are becoming more common, but only in one party."](#) *Mischiefs of Faction - Vox*

Rachel Surminsky and Michael S. Lynch. 20 November, 2014. ["When Congress sues the president, it's likely to fail."](#) *The Monkey Cage - Washington Post*

GRANTS & AWARDS

Awards & Honors

E.E. Schattschneider Award for best dissertation in American politics, APSA	2023
Earle Wallace Award for Graduate Student Teaching, UNC Political Science	2019
Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society, University of Georgia	2016

External Funding

Unite America Elections Reform Grant. Expanding CampaignView for 2026. Total Award: \$36,407	2025
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Center for Effective Lawmaking Small Grant. Bipartisan Messaging in Elections. <i>Co-PI with Colin R. Case and Emily Cottle Ommundsen</i> Total Award: \$1,000	2024
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Unite America Elections Reform Grant. Measuring Issue Polarization. <i>Co-PI with Colin R. Case</i> Total Award: \$21,745	2024
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APSA Centennial Research Grant. JAWS CwC at MPSA. <i>Co-PI with Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas, Christina Ladam, Josh McCrain, and David Miller</i> Total Award: \$10,000	2022
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Social Science Research Council Social Data Dissertation Fellowship. Total Award: \$15,000	2020
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Internal Funding

Notre Dame Democracy Initiative Grant \$25,000 <i>Co-PI with James M. Curry and Jeffrey J. Harden</i>	2025
Notre Dame Franco Institute Small Grant. \$3,000	2025
Notre Dame ISLA International Travel Grant. \$1,000	2024
UNC Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship. \$20,500	2021
UNC Political Science Hughes Summer Research Award. \$2000	2020
UNC Political Science Darlene Walker Summer Research Award. \$3000	2019
UNC Political Science, Thomas M. Uhlman Fellowship. \$5000/year	2016-2021
UNC Political Science, Summer Research Fellowship. \$3000/year	2016-2021

TEACHING

University of Notre Dame

Instructor of Record

POLS 30005: The United States Congress FA 2023; SP 2024; SP 2025

POLS 40811: Quantitative Political Analysis SP 2023; SP 2024; SP 2025

POLS 60040: American Political Institutions (Graduate Seminar) FA 2022, FA 2024

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Instructor of Record

POLI 281: Data in Politics I FA 2019, SP 2020, FA 2020, SSII 2021

POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics SP 2019

Teaching Assistant

POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics FA 2018

POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics FA 2017, SP 2018

Odum Institute for Research in Social Science

Short Course Instructor

Collecting & Analyzing Text in R SP 2019, FA 2019, SP 2020, FA 2020, SP 2021

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

USC Schwarzenegger Institute, Pathways to Primary Reform (scheduled) 2026

Michigan State University, MARGIE Conference (scheduled) 2026

University of Iowa, Shambaugh Conference (scheduled) 2026

University of Notre Dame, Chambers of Democracy Conference (scheduled) 2026

University of Wisconsin-Madison, American Politics Workshop 2026

University of Toronto, Toronto Data Workshop 2026

Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy, Seminar Series 2025

Indiana University - Bloomington, Center for American Politics Conference 2025

UChicago Harris School of Public Policy, Effective Governance Conference 2025

University of Michigan, American Institutions Group Workshop 2025

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, American Politics Research Group 2025

University of Kentucky Martin School of Public Policy, Workshop Series 2025

University of Mississippi, Barbour Study of American Politics Conference 2025

Wesleyan University, Wesleyan Media Project Election Conference 2024

University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference 2024

University of Notre Dame, Keeping the Republic Conference 2024

UC San Diego, American Politics Workshop 2024

UC Berkeley, Winter American Politics Research Meeting 2024

Washington University in St. Louis, Stories that Win Symposium 2024

Georgetown University, American Government Seminar Series 2023

Women in Legislative Studies (WiLS) Seminar Series 2023

University of Chicago, American Politics Workshop 2023

Purdue University, Political Science Workshop 2022

University of Oklahoma, Carl Albert Center Conference 2022

University of Notre Dame, Rooney Workshop Series 2021

Bowling Green State University, Speaker Series 2020

Washington University in St. Louis, Political Science Speaker Series 2020

University of Georgia, Emerging Issues in Political Science Speaker Series 2020

Annual Conference Presentations

MPSA	2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026
PolMeth	(poster) 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023; (presentation) 2025
Women in Legislative Studies Conference	2023, 2025
APSA	2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
State Politics & Policy Annual Conference	2024
CBS-Princeton Money in Politics Conference	2024
Visions in Methodology Conference	2024
Frontiers in Money and Politics APSA Pre-Conference	2021, 2023
Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference	2020

VOLUNTEER & SERVICE

Discipline Service

Co-Organizer, Notre Dame Chambers of Democracy Conference (with James M. Curry and Jeffrey J. Harden)	2026
Co-Organizer, Shambaugh Conference on CampaignView (with Colin R. Case and Sarah A. Treul)	2026
Co-Organizer, MPSA Primary Elections Mini-Conference (with Sarah Anderson, Dan Butler, Colin Case, and Laurel Harbridge-Yong)	2024, 2025, 2026
Program Committee, PolMeth Annual Conference (organized by Emory University)	2025
Program Committee, Visions in Methodology (VIM) Conference (organized by Washington University in St. Louis)	2024
Co-Founder & Organizer, Junior Americanist Workshop Series	2020-2024
Co-Organizer, MPSA JAWS Mini-Conference (with Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas, David Miller, Josh McCrain)	2023

Referee: *American Journal of Political Science*; *American Political Science Review*; *British Journal of Political Science*; *Electoral Studies*; *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*; *Political Research Quarterly*; *Journal of Politics*; *JAMA Health Forum*; *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy*; *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*; *Legislative Studies Quarterly*; *National Science Foundation*; *Policy Studies Journal*; *Perspectives on Politics, Political Behavior*; *Political Science Research & Methods*; *Politics & Gender*; *Research & Politics*; *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*; *Social Science Quarterly*

Discussant & Panelist: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting; Frontiers of Money & Politics Pre-Conference at APSA; Copenhagen Business School Money in Politics Conference; Junior Americanist Workshop Series; Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting; Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting; Women in Legislative Studies Professional Development Seminar

Departmental Service at the University of Notre Dame

Co-Director, Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab	2023-Present
Field Chair, Methods	2024-2025
Member, Committee on Inclusive Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship	2023-2024
Co-Chair, Undergraduate Thesis Awards Committee	2024
Admission Committee Member, Lucy Institute Graduate Fellows Program	2023
Member, Graduate Policy Council	2022-2023

Departmental Service at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Graduate Student President, Department of Political Science	2021-2022
Program Coordinator, American Politics Working Group	2018-2020
American Field Representative, Department of Political Science	2018-2019

Undergraduate and Doctoral Student AdvisingDissertation Committee Member

Emma Schroeder (Notre Dame; In progress)
Abigail Hemmen (Notre Dame; Defended April 2026)
Haley Cohen (Columbia University; Defended May 2025)

Methods Paper Committee Member

Géssica de Freitas (In progress)
Adriana Pilar Ferreira Albanus (In progress)

Undergraduate Mentoring

Senior Thesis Advisor, Thomas Musgrave (Defended 2025)
Senior Thesis Advisor, Erik Johansen (Defended 2025)
Senior Thesis Co-Advisor, Julia Thomalla (Defended 2024, Best Thesis Award Winner)