

Legislators as Lobbyists*

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Abstract

While there is a substantial literature on congressional control over the bureaucracy, less attention has been paid to informal mechanisms of legislative control over federal agencies. We argue that legislators act as lobbyists of their constituencies by representing their district and state interests through direct communication with agencies. Moreover, this direct communication from legislators influences how agencies make decisions. We provide empirical evidence of this argument using original data on direct communication between members of Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) along with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) decisions made by the DOL between 2005 and 2012. We find that when legislators contact the DOL in support of TAA petitions, the petitions have a higher approval rate. Furthermore, when legislators contact the DOL after a petition has already been denied, the DOL is more likely to overturn its initial decision, from denial to approval of the petition.

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1 Introduction

“My constituents don’t need a go-between to get my attention. Why do you waste your money on a lobbyist when I’m being paid to be your senator? I was for anything that benefits West Virginia, and I was always going to be supportive.” (Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), 1989)

Congressional scholars have long observed how members of Congress take credit for benefits accrued to their constituencies by bureaucratic decisions, even if the legislator had little, or nothing, to do with the outcome (e.g., Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Grimmer, Westwood, and Messing 2015; Mayhew 1974). While the practice of credit claiming for such benefits is often assumed to be deceptive, the question of whether federal agencies are responsive to direct requests from individual members of Congress has not been empirically examined. Is this type of credit claiming just cheap talk? Or are members of Congress actually able to influence bureaucratic decisions?

Using original data, we measure the expressed preferences of legislators over agency decisions in order to provide a direct test of legislator influence. We argue that legislators act as lobbyists of their constituencies by representing their district and state interests through direct communication with agencies. Agencies have an incentive to respond favorably to legislators because they want to gain support in Congress to protect their budgets and priorities, but, given limited resources, agencies favor legislators who express strong preferences over decisions made by the agency via direct contact.

We provide empirical evidence of this argument by using novel data that allow us to examine the linkage between the expressed preferences of legislators and agency decisions. We examine the direct communication between members of Congress (House and Senate) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) along with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) decisions made by the DOL between 2005 and 2012. The TAA program is a federal entitlement program that assists U.S. workers who have lost or may lose their

jobs as a result of foreign trade. When a business or plant closes, the company, a labor union, or the group of affected workers may submit a petition to the DOL. The DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) then decides whether the workers lost their jobs due to foreign trade and either certifies (i.e., approves) or denies the petition. If the petition is certified, the workers are eligible to receive job training, job search or relocation allowances, reemployment services (e.g., resume writing and interview skills workshops) and other assistance.

There were more than 17,300 petitions submitted regarding the TAA during the time period and 75% of them were certified, while 25% were denied. We obtain the universe of the contact records (27,310) by members of Congress to the DOL during the time period. The contact data include the identity of the legislators, subject of the contacts, and the groups or organizations that legislators support in their contact. From this information, we are able to identify whether a contact is associated with a specific TAA petition, using a unique petition number. In total there are 1,277 TAA-related DOL contacts, and among them, we can identify 466 TAA petitions that are directly associated with legislators' contacts.¹

We examine whether TAA-related contacts by legislators to the DOL are associated with higher approval of the petitions, after controlling for district demographic characteristics, petitioner specific characteristics such as industry sector, and time trend. Establishing a causal link between contacts by members of Congress and the DOL's decisions regarding TAA petitions is challenging because contacts are not random. For example, petitioners who are particularly concerned about their petition's chances of approval may reach out to their representative or senators for help in hopes that the members of Congress will have influence over the agency. If members are more likely to contact the DOL when their constituents' petition has a grim prospect of being approved, OLS

¹TAA-related contacts that are not associated with a specific petition are those that did not mention specific TAA cases in the legislator's contact. Sometimes legislators express their opinions and concerns regarding TAA programs in their letters to the DOL, without addressing a specific case.

regression can underestimate the effect of member contact on bureaucratic decisions. In contrast, if members contact the DOL when their constituents' petitions are more likely to be approved, regression estimate can overestimate the effect of direct communication between a member and a federal agency. To address this concern, we take advantage of the panel structure of the data and include congressional district, industry, and year fixed effects to control unobservable but time-invariant characteristics in each dimension.

Furthermore, we attempt to establish the causal mechanism through our research design by also examining petitions that are initially denied in order to consider if subsequent contact on behalf of legislators leads the DOL to reverse its decision and overturn those denials. Such a finding would be consistent with our theory, suggesting that legislators' contact influences the DOL to approve a petition that was initially denied based on eligibility criteria. This design allows us to address the confounding issue of variation in petition quality because the initial denial suggests that these petitions were of a similar, weak quality. If, among these weak petitions, those with congressional support are overturned, it offers further support for our claim that legislators' intervention influences favorable decisions and not simply petition quality.

We find that, across different empirical specifications, members' contact on TAA-related matters has a positive impact on TAA petition approval rate. Some petitions are not explicitly or directly associated with a contact from a member but they are associated with "indirect" contacts such as the House representative or senators from the petitioner's district making a contact to the DOL, either on behalf of an individual constituent needing help receiving her TAA benefits or to express a broad concern or opinion on the TAA program without addressing specific petitions. We find that petitions that are associated with a member's direct contact to the DOL tend to have a higher approval rate, but indirect contacts do not have any significant effect on the approval rate. This suggests that federal agencies are very precise in their response to demand by members of Congress.

We also find that, among petitions that were initially denied, the DOL reverses its

negative decision at a higher rate when members of Congress contact the DOL requesting that the agency reconsider its decision. Petitioners who are denied eligibility for TAA can request administrative reconsideration of the determination. Petitioners who were approved can also ask for reconsideration to expand the coverage of TAA benefits. Among 17,309 cases in our sample, 2,299 cases were reconsidered for various reasons. We went through each reconsideration case and coded how the final decision had changed from the initial decision. We find that legislators' contact is associated with a 30% higher rate of overturn of the decision by the DOL, from denial to approval of the petition.

Our results demonstrate that legislators frequently take advantage of the bureaucracy's discretion by attempting to influence agency decisions and that they are often successful. This suggests that legislators use the bureaucracy as a backdoor for representing their constituencies. Investigative reports have describe how interest groups target members of Congress to influence the bureaucratic rulemaking process (Eichelberger 2013; Rivlin 2013). Our paper offers one potential mechanism indicating why contacting members of Congress may be effective way for interest groups and voters to influence bureaucratic decisions: Members can directly contact federal agencies to influence their decision making.

Our findings also have important implications for evaluations of policymaking power in Congress. While the *structure and process* literature has focused on the influence of congressional leadership and members who serve on the committee with oversight of a federal agency, our results suggest that serving on the committees that oversee the DOL - Education and Workforce in the House and Health, Education, Labor and Pension in the Senate - or holding a leadership position do not have significant influence on the decision on the TAA petition. The bureaucracy strategically responds to legislators who make a contact to address a specific petition. This suggests that a direct contact to the bureaucracy could provide a way for members with less institutional power to overcome the unequal power distribution in Congress. Even low-ranking legislators can affect outcomes for their constituents in the bureaucratic venue. Thus, our findings advance an

underappreciated approach to evaluating legislators and quality of representation.

However, the implications of this research are not solely normatively positive. If we expect agency officials to objectively implement policies, bureaucratic responsiveness based on political concerns could be problematic. Such responsiveness is particularly concerning if agencies are responding to individual legislators rather than to the collective authority of Congress.

2 Congressional Influence on Bureaucracy

An important and substantial literature explaining the relationship between Congress and the federal bureaucracy has focused largely on the loss and preservation of legislative control through delegation and oversight. Congress delegates authority to the bureaucracy but tries to reign in the bureaucracy's discretion over policy implementation through various instruments of oversight ranging from committee hearings to statute. Prominent studies established the enduring debate on the extent of congressional control through agency design and procedure (Balla and Wright 2001; McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast 1987, 1989; Gailmard 2002), committees (Aberbach 2001; Clinton, Lewis, and Selin 2014; Shipan 2004), fire alarms (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984), limitation riders (MacDonald 2010, 2013), and a host of other mechanisms.

However, this dominant debate has overshadowed an important strategic behavior, that individual legislators take advantage of the bureaucracy's discretion for their own personal political gain. Literature in American political development describes legislators' involvement in agency affairs, such as the creation of rural free delivery by the post office. This research explains bureaucrats' responsiveness to legislators during the Progressive Era, whether as contracted agents of the majority party (Kernell and McDonald 1999; Kernell 2001) or as a political strategy to gain autonomy by cultivating coalitions of support in Congress (Carpenter 2001a,b).

Fiorina's seminal work (Fiorina 1977) describes how members of Congress benefit from the bureaucracy's expansiveness and complexity. The bureaucracy's mistakes and unresponsiveness provide opportunities for legislators to engage in nonpartisan, and electorally advantageous, constituency service by using their influence with the bureaucracy to expedite benefits like social security checks. While Fiorina argues that agencies, motivated by higher budgets and program support, are responsive to legislators' requests for grants and expedited casework, he does not test his theory empirically.

Arnold (1979)'s study of House members and the bureaucracy offers empirical evidence showing that agencies strategically favor legislators who expand the agency's coalitions of support when geographically allocating funds. Agencies have an incentive to benefit legislators who have influence over the agency's budget, programs, and oversight, and thus favor members of the committee (as well as the Appropriations subcommittee) with jurisdiction over the agency. Agencies also reward their supporters and strategically distribute funds to the districts of legislators who are likely to oppose the agency's programs in order "to 'buy off' those members of the opposition who were most likely to reverse themselves" (p. 153). However, the study makes assumptions about the preferences and priorities of members of Congress rather than actually measuring demand from legislators.

Likewise, other research has examined the influence of local politics and elected officials on "street-level" activities by federal field offices (e.g., Chubb 1985; Scholz, Twombly, and Headrick 1991). This work uses measures such as party affiliation, ideology, and committee membership as substitutes for explicit demand, however, leaving the mechanism of influence unclear.

Thus, two important questions are left unaddressed: First, do legislators make specific requests to agencies, and, second, how do agencies respond to such requests? We argue that individual members of Congress directly communicate with agencies in order to influence bureaucratic decisions. When legislators reach out to agencies with requests, it signals to agencies the legislator's preference but also that the request is a priority for

the legislator. Agencies have an incentive to respond favorably to legislators' requests in order to build coalitions of support for their budgets and programs.

In fact, a systematic, empirical analysis of both the demand and supply side of the strategic interactions between individual members of Congress and federal agencies has yet to be conducted. We offer the first of such an analysis by combining two unique datasets related to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program.

3 Trade Adjustment Assistance

Congress created the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program with the passage of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 in order to help U.S. workers and firms that have been negatively affected by trade liberalization by providing job training, temporary income, and other assistance.² Revised and expanded since its original inception, TAA has become an integral, and ultimately politically required, component of U.S. trade policy. TAA is viewed as compensation for a concentrated constituency hurt by increased competition from imports and promoted as a means of transitioning the nation's workforce as industries and job opportunities change. TAA is often used to diffuse political opposition to trade policies that benefit the nation as a whole but are costly for workers in manufacturing and other dislocated industries (Kapstein 1998; Hornbeck 2013).

The TAA program is not without its critics, and ardent debates often accompany its reauthorizations.³ Among the criticisms, skeptics argue that the program is ineffective and expensive, with a projected cost of \$1.8 billion through 2020. Some argue that the failure of TAA to provide full compensation has promoted protectionist sentiment (Rodrik 1997). Historically, TAA's main opponents have been conservatives, with liberal members

²While there are TAA programs intended to assist import-competition firms (administered by the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration) (Margalit 2011; Hornbeck 2012) and specifically for farmers (administered by the Department of Agriculture) (McMinimy 2015), we focus on the Labor Department's TAA worker assistance program.

³Since the creation of TAA in 1962, there were 18 TAA reauthorizations, including the most recent reauthorization under the Trade Promotion Authority (H.R. 2146) in 2015 (Hornbeck 2013). Reauthorization occurs irregularly.

of Congress supporting the program even if they are not proponents of the accompanying trade agreements (Timiraos 2015).

To be considered under this program, a petition must be filed with the DOL by or on behalf of a group of workers who have lost or may lose their jobs or experienced a reduction in wages as a result of foreign trade.⁴ A petition may be filed by a group of workers, an employer of a group of workers, a Union, a State Workforce Official, or an American Job Center Operator/Partner. After the submission, the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance (OTAA) investigates a case to determine whether foreign trade was an important cause of the job loss.⁵ If the OTAA certifies the case, petitioners can apply to their State Workforce Agency for TAA benefits and services.⁶

Workers sometimes receive congressional help to accompany their petitions. Members of Congress contact the DOL in support of TAA petitions submitted by workers and companies in their districts and states (for an example, see Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's letter, Figure A3 in Appendix A). Legislators ask the DOL to certify petitions, citing various rationale. Some legislators even ask the DOL to reconsider or overturn previous denials of TAA petitions. For example, on May 6, 2008, Senator Olympia Snowe, a Republican representing Maine, wrote to the DOL to request that the agency "reconsider [the] decision not to give TAA benefits for 70 displaced workers," at the Fraser Timber Limited Sawmill in Ashland, Maine. Senator Snowe was referring to a petition (TAW Number: 62718) that the DOL denied on March 14, 2008. By May 13, 2008, the DOL had overturned their previous negative determination and certified the petition for the workers of the Fraser Timber Limited Sawmill. While such examples are suggestive, systematic evidence of congressional influence via direct communication has yet to be

⁴Figures A1 and A2 in Appendix A show a sample of TAA petition form.

⁵More specifically, the TAA group eligibility criteria include that the group of workers must have become totally or partially separated from their employment or have been threatened with total or partial separation and the role of foreign trade must be established. The role of foreign trade may be established in several ways, including an increase in competitive imports, a shift of production to a foreign country, a decrease in sales to a TAA-certified firm, or through identification by the United States International Trade Commission (USITC).

⁶<https://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/factsheet.cfm>

considered.

Of course, members of Congress certainly take credit for their efforts on behalf of workers, particularly when TAA petitions are successful. Congressional offices often disseminate press releases, sometimes containing the text of the letter or quotes from their conversation with the DOL, in order to notify their constituents of the legislator’s work. Once the congressional office is notified of a successfully certified petition, another press release is sent out announcing the good news with headlines such as, “At Gillibrand Urging, Department of Labor Will Provide Trade Adjustment Assistance for Laid-Off Electromark Workers,” (Gillibrand 2014). Clearly, members of Congress want constituents to believe that the legislator’s efforts are effective. We consider the validity of such claims by conducting the first empirical test of congressional influence that considers both the demand from legislators and the agency’s response.

4 Data and Stylized Facts

Our analysis focuses on the effect of congressional contacts with federal agencies on the decisions made by the agencies. To provide empirical evidence of this relationship, we utilize two main sets of data. First, we collect data on the direct communication between members of Congress and federal agencies. We submitted Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the U.S. Department of Labor in order to obtain records of communication (e.g., records of letters, faxes, emails, meetings) from members of Congress to the Labor Department. The documents we received in response to our FOIA requests included details such as dates, the name of the legislators, and summaries of the communication.

The documents contained records of over 28,000 contacts from members of Congress to the DOL from 2005 to 2012. We read the summaries of the contacts in order to identify communication about the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. We categorize the contact as *TAA Contact* if the contact was specifically related to a TAA petition

or the TAA program. For each member, we measure the total DOL contact and *TAA Contact*.

Table 1 presents the summary statistics for DOL contacts by members in each Congress. In the Senate, a member makes, on average, 31 contacts to the DOL and makes about 1.5 TAA-related contacts in each Congress. In the House, a member makes an average of 9 contacts to the DOL per Congress and 0.3 TAA-related contacts per Congress. There is significant variation in the contact frequency across members in the Senate and the House. For example, during the 110th Congress, Senator Byrd from West Virginia made 180 contacts to the DOL and Senator Bennett from Utah made only 2 contacts. In the House, Congressman Griffith (R-VA9) made 115 contacts in the 111th Congress when the average number of DOL contacts among House members was 9. Regarding TAA-related contacts, Senator Brown from Ohio made 22 contacts in the 111th Congress when 57 other senators did not make any contact on TAA petitions. In the House, Congressman Goode (R-VA5) made 30 contacts in the 110th Congress when 370 other House members did not make any TAA-related DOL contacts.⁷

Table 1: Summary Statistics of DOL Contacts

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Senate					
Contact	414	31.2	31.0	0	225
TAA Contact	414	1.5	2.9	0	22
House					
Contact	1767	8.6	9.0	0	115
TAA Contact	1767	0.3	1.1	0	30

Note: Unit of observation is member \times Congress (109th - 112th).

We obtain all TAA petitions submitted between 2005 through 2012 from the DOL website.⁸ TAA petitions include information about the name of the employer, location of

⁷In Table A1 in Appendix C, we present the top 10 members in each Congress in terms of TAA-related DOL contacts.

⁸<https://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/DownloadPetitions.cfm>.

a firm, whether a petition is made by workers, the company, or a union, standard industrial classification (SIC), estimated number of affected workers, decision, and decision date.⁹ In total, there are 17,309 petitions made during the period, and 75% of the petitions were approved. Out of the total number of petitions, 40% were submitted by companies, 30% by workers, 18% by state agencies, and 10% by various union organizations. Companies that produce motor vehicle parts and accessories (SIC code 3714) are the most frequent petitioners, and they are followed by plastic products producers (SIC code 3089).¹⁰

Table A3 in Appendix C presents summary statistics of the total number of petitions made and the percentage of approved petitions by state. States like North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, where manufacturing industries experienced significant competition with foreign producers, made up more than 20% of the petitions. Smaller states such as South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming had fewer petitions.

5 Which Members Contact DOL?

In this section, we examine which members contact the DOL. As we see in Table 1, there is significant variation in terms of contact targeting the DOL across members. Explaining this variation is important for understanding the reasons for the disparity in the degree to which constituencies are represented at the DOL. There are multiple factors that affect a member's propensity to contact federal agencies.

Previous work on Congress and the bureaucracy has assumed that inter-branch interactions are primary concentrated between the agency and the committees with oversight. Thus, a member's committee assignment and rank could affect her interaction with the DOL. Members who serve on committees that have direct oversight jurisdiction of the DOL, the Education and the Workforce Committee in the House or the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in the Senate, may contact the federal agency more

⁹Some petitions do not have information for SIC and the estimated number of affected workers.

¹⁰Table A2 in Appendix C provides the summary statistics on the total number of TAA petitions and the approval rate by year.

often because they are familiar with the issues and possibly because they believe their committee assignment offers them greater influence over the DOL, making their contact more likely to be effective. The same rationale could apply to members who serve on the Appropriations Committee that controls agency budgets or members of congressional leadership, who may contact the DOL more frequently believing that their requests carry more weight and are likely to pay off.

Additionally, a member’s party affiliation and DW-NOMINATE score could also affect the frequency of DOL contacts. Given that the DOL covers labor-related issues such as workplace discrimination, labor market regulations, and worker compensation, members who are more sympathetic towards those issues may contact the DOL more often. Regarding TAA-specific contacts, members’ own position on free trade could be related to the frequency of direct DOL contacts. To measure a member’s position on free trade, we collected voting records for 74 trade-related bills from the 108th through 112th Congresses. Drawn from voting records on these 74 measures, we constructed ideal points for each legislator that captures their ideological preferences on free trade (*Trade Ideal Point*).¹¹

Finally, district characteristics can influence the member’s interactions with the DOL. If her district has a higher manufacturing workforce or higher unemployment, there may be more constituency demand for the legislator to reach out to the DOL to help her constituents. We model a member i ’s contact to the DOL in the following way:

$$\text{Contact}_{it} = \alpha_s + \alpha_t + \beta_1 * I_{it} + \beta_2 * C_{it} + \beta_3 * D_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

, where i indicates a member and t indicates a Congress. I_{it} includes a member i ’s party affiliation and ideology, C_{it} includes a member i ’s committee assignment and leadership position in the Congress, and D_{it} proxies district specific characteristics such as demo-

¹¹Table A4 in Appendix C presents the list of trade-related bills that are used to generate *Trade Ideal Point*. Figure A4 in Appendix C shows the distribution of *Trade Ideal Point* and the relationship with the DW-NOMINATE scores.

graphics, income, unemployment, and union density.¹² Finally, α_s and α_t indicate state- and congress-fixed effect, respectively.¹³

Table 2 presents the results for the House.¹⁴ Columns (1) and (2) present the results for total DOL contacts and columns (3) and (4) presents the results when we examine TAA specific DOL contacts. First, members who come from a safe district and who serve on the Education and the Workforce Committee are more likely to contact the DOL. Second, members who come from a district with a higher ratio of senior, white, and lower education population tend to contact the DOL more often. Regarding TAA specific DOL contacts, committee assignment or leadership have no relationship with the direct communication with the DOL on TAA. Instead, members who tend to vote against free trade bills tend to contact the DOL more often on the TAA program. Demographic factors such as ratio of white population, educational attainment matter, and the manufacturing sector employment are positively related to the TAA specific contacts.

Table 3 presents the regression results for the Senate. Similar to the results from the House, committee membership or leadership are not associated with direct communication with the DOL. Instead, Senators who more often oppose free trade tend to contact the DOL regarding TAA more frequently. The senior population in the state and the density of public sector unions are also positively associated with senators' TAA specific contacts. Overall, these results show that constituency characteristics and members' position on trade-related bills affect how frequently legislators contact the DOL to address the TAA program. This finding is a departure from the previous literature which frequently cites committee assignment or leadership as factors that dominate the interaction between

¹²Sources of data: Demographics from the American Community Survey and the union data from unionstats.com (which constructs union membership and coverage measures from the monthly household Current Population Survey). Union density data are not provided at the congressional district level. Using the relationship file between congressional district and the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), we match union density at the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) into each congressional district level. unionstats.com provides a state-level union density. Committee membership, leadership, party affiliation, and other member characteristics are from the Almanac of American Politics.

¹³We include a state-fixed effect only for the House.

¹⁴For the summary statistics of the variables, see Table A5 in Appendix C.

Table 2: Which House Members Contact DOL?

	Total DOL Contact		TAA Specific Contact	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democrat	-1.036 (-0.78)	-0.758 (-0.63)	-0.224 (-1.33)	-0.146 (-0.91)
Vote Share	-4.647** (-2.50)	-3.467 (-1.79)	-0.112 (-0.49)	-0.0166 (-0.07)
Oversight Committee ^a	2.448 (1.92)	2.297 (1.82)	-0.0510 (-0.58)	-0.0527 (-0.53)
Leadership	0.0489 (0.05)	-0.273 (-0.31)	-0.00178 (-0.02)	0.0000326 (0.00)
Trade Ideal Point ^b	-0.766 (-1.50)	-0.680 (-1.43)	-0.167** (-2.22)	-0.149** (-2.02)
Senior Population	37.25*** (3.14)	22.18 (1.81)	2.427 (1.87)	1.017 (0.77)
White Population	1.440 (0.55)	10.45*** (3.37)	0.875** (2.43)	0.876** (2.14)
Lower Education ^c	15.32** (2.58)	-1.304 (-0.20)	1.216*** (3.33)	0.700 (1.34)
Unemployment	0.0110 (0.00)	15.00 (1.10)	-2.421 (-1.44)	1.410 (0.94)
Dem. Presidential Vote Share 08	1.318 (0.33)	3.903 (0.88)	0.899** (2.33)	-0.344 (-0.61)
Δ China Exposure ^d	0.110 (0.60)	0.323 (1.31)	-0.00888 (-0.48)	0.0258 (0.87)
(ln) Manufacturing Employment ^e	-2.232 (-0.40)	-10.87 (-0.97)	2.826*** (3.88)	2.206 (1.55)
Public Sector Union ^f	-6.295*** (-2.98)	0.700 (0.43)	-0.382 (-1.91)	0.00122 (0.01)
Congress FE	N	Y	N	Y
State FE	N	Y	N	Y
N	1751	1751	1751	1751
adj. R^2	0.049	0.142	0.065	0.153

Note: Unit of observation = member \times Congress. Standard errors are clustered at each member level. t statistics in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. **a.** 1 if a member serves on the House Education and the Workforce Committee. **b.** Negative trade ideal point means voting against the free trade legislation. **c.** Ratio of adult population in a district with high school or less than high school education. **d.** Change in Chinese import exposure per worker, 1990-2007 (Autor, Dorn, and Hanson 2013). **e.** Ratio of manufacturing employment share in district. **f.** Ratio of public sector workers who are union members.

legislators and federal agencies.

6 Do Contacts Affect TAA Decisions?

In this section, we investigate whether contacts made by members of Congress to the DOL are associated with the TAA decision by the DOL. We match each member’s DOL contact regarding TAA with the decision using a unique TAA petition number assigned by the DOL. Therefore, we are able to identify whether each TAA petition is associated with a contact by a member of Congress or senator to the DOL. The empirical specification is as follows:

$$\text{TAA Approval}_{ijst} = \alpha_j + \alpha_s + \alpha_t + \beta * \text{TAA Contact}_{ijt} + \Gamma \mathbf{X}'_{ijt} + \varepsilon_{ijst} \quad (2)$$

, where i indicates each TAA petition, j indicates the congressional district where the petition’s employer is located, s indicates the petitioner firm’s product type (Standard Industry Classification (SIC) 2 digit), and t indicates year. We include congressional district, product type, and year fixed effect to control unobservable district-, product-, and year-specific characteristics that could be associated with members’ TAA-related DOL contacts and TAA approvals.

The outcome variable is whether the DOL approved the TAA petition, and the variable **TAA Contact**_{ict} indicates TAA-related DOL contact by legislators from a petitioner’s district and state. We use two measures for the *TAA Contact* variable. First, we use the total number of members’ contacts on each petition (*Direct TAA Contact*). This captures a direct contact on each petition. Second, we subtract the total number of TAA-related contacts from House members from a petitioner’s district or senators from a petitioner’s state from the total number of direct contacts on each petition in each year (*Indirect TAA Contact*). Although those contacts may not address specific petitions, this indirect communication may also affect the approval decision of TAA petitions from a district

Table 3: Which Senators Contact DOL?

	Total DOL Contact		TAA Specific Contact	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democrat	-4.045 (-0.62)	-4.787 (-0.74)	-1.191 (-1.72)	-1.194 (-1.65)
Oversight Committee ^a	3.230 (0.70)	3.138 (0.68)	0.170 (0.28)	0.184 (0.29)
Leadership	-1.763 (-0.35)	-1.351 (-0.28)	-0.381 (-1.25)	-0.374 (-1.22)
Trade Ideal Point ^b	-4.911 (-1.03)	-4.833 (-1.00)	-1.441*** (-3.00)	-1.431*** (-2.98)
Senior Population	228.7 (1.16)	307.5 (1.37)	29.26** (2.20)	29.95** (2.03)
White Population	-51.06 (-1.44)	-53.62 (-1.48)	0.591 (0.32)	0.415 (0.22)
Lower Education ^c	192.6*** (2.78)	145.2 (1.74)	7.658 (1.69)	7.921 (1.37)
Dem. Presidential Vote Share 08	35.05 (1.46)	31.71 (1.40)	3.895 (1.82)	3.908 (1.77)
Δ China Exposure ^d	-1.452 (-0.75)	-1.592 (-0.80)	0.0741 (0.47)	0.0740 (0.45)
(ln) Manufacturing Employment ^e	57.23 (1.32)	65.37 (1.32)	5.514 (1.52)	5.440 (1.35)
Public Sector Union ^f	23.23 (1.38)	25.96 (1.57)	3.083** (2.33)	3.090** (2.35)
Congress FE	N	Y	N	Y
N	387	387	387	387
adj. R^2	0.147	0.150	0.166	0.161

Note: Unit of observation = member \times Congress. Standard errors are clustered at each member level. t statistics in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. **a.** 1 if a member serves on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. **b.** Negative trade ideal point means voting against the free trade legislation. **c.** Ratio of adult population in a district with high school or less than high school education. **d.** Change in Chinese import exposure per worker, 1990-2007 (Autor, Dorn, and Hanson 2013). **e.** Ratio of manufacturing employment share in district. **f.** Ratio of public sector workers who are union members.

where their representatives were active in contacting the DOL regarding TAA.¹⁵

\mathbf{X}' includes time-varying district demographic variables, TAA case specific variables such as a petitioner type, and the total number of non-TAA related DOL contacts made by House and Senate members who represent the district or state where the petitioner i 's district j is located in year t . It also includes characteristics of members of Congress such as committee assignment and majority party status.¹⁶ Table 4 presents the result.

First, direct TAA-related DOL contact by legislators is significantly associated with the likelihood of TAA petition approval. One more contact from a legislator regarding the petition is associated with a 2.6% higher approval rate. Column (4) presents the result when we use a dummy variable indicating whether there is any direct TAA contact for a petition, instead of the total number of direct TAA contacts made on the petition. When a petition is associated a direct TAA contact, the approval rate for that petition is on average 8% higher than the petitions with no contact from legislators.

Interestingly, neither indirect TAA contact nor the total number of non-TAA related DOL contacts from senators and House members are significantly associated with TAA approval. The usual variables for policymaking power such as leadership position or committee membership with oversight of the federal agency are not also associated with the approval rate. Given that federal agencies want to protect their budgets (e.g., Arnold 1979; Carpenter 2001b; Fiorina 1977), it is possible that legislators' membership in the Appropriations or Budget Committee may affect the DOL's decision. Table A7 in Appendix D presents the results, and this is not the case. This suggests that the DOL is very precise in its response to a member's direct request.¹⁷

¹⁵Imagine there is a petitioner A. For A, members of Congress made 3 contacts on the petition submitted by A and there are 10 total TAA-related contacts from a district where A's firm is located. Among those 10 contacts, 3 contacts addressed A's petition and the other 7 contacts addressed petitions that are submitted by other firms or workers from the same district as A. Under this scenario, *Direct TAA Contact* for A is coded as 3 and *Indirect TAA Contact* is coded as 7 (10 - 3).

¹⁶For a full set of controls included in the regression, see Table A6 in Appendix C.

¹⁷Federal agencies also want to protect their programs (e.g., Arnold 1979; Carpenter 2001b; Fiorina 1977). In the case of TAA, the program requires reauthorization by Congress. It is possible that bureaucrats at the DOL try to reward the petitions that come from the districts where members of Congress supported the TAA program extension, or try to buy off legislators who opposed the TAA program by

Table 4: DOL Contacts and TAA Approvals

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Direct TAA Contact	0.0339*** (3.28)	0.0285*** (2.97)	0.0264** (2.46)	
Direct TAA Contact Dummy				0.0799*** (3.72)
Indirect TAA Contact		-0.00154 (-0.95)	-0.000782 (-0.47)	-0.000775 (-0.47)
House Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.00148 (1.18)	0.00163 (1.46)	0.00164 (1.46)
Senate Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.000109 (0.55)	-0.0000413 (-0.20)	-0.0000392 (-0.19)
Senate Leadership		0.0231 (1.73)	0.0163 (1.05)	0.0166 (1.07)
Senate HELP Committee		-0.00351 (-0.20)	0.0127 (0.58)	0.0121 (0.55)
House Leadership		-0.00738 (-0.22)	-0.00155 (-0.06)	-0.00144 (-0.05)
House EW Committee		-0.0106 (-0.45)	-0.0287 (-0.94)	-0.0294 (-0.96)
Petition by Worker		-0.0977*** (-10.45)	-0.0799*** (-9.15)	-0.0798*** (-9.17)
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Member Characteristics Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
District FE	N	Y	Y	Y
SIC FE	N	N	Y	Y
N	17309	17270	15446	15446
adj. R^2	0.024	0.051	0.157	0.157

Note: t statistics in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the congressional district level. **a:** Whether senators who represented a petitioner's state were in leadership position. **b:** Whether senators who represented a petitioner's state were assigned on the Senate Health, Environment, Labor, and Pension Committee which oversees the DOL. **c:** Whether a House member who represented a petitioner's congressional district was in leadership position. **d:** Whether a House member who represented a petitioner's congressional district was assigned on the House Education and Workforce Committee which oversees the DOL. Other control variables are included in the regression but the results are not fully reported here. For the full results, see Table A7 in Appendix D.

Second, petitions that are initiated by companies, rather than workers, are more likely to be approved. One possible reason for this result could be that companies have resources and information that improve the quality of the petitions. However, given that the TAA petition form is fixed, as shown in Figures A1 and A2 in Appendix A, it is difficult for petitioners to signal the quality of the petition by, for example, writing a lengthy petition letter. However, companies may be more likely to take the time to submit petitions only when the case for assistance is strong. The DOL may view petitions from companies as more legitimate than worker-initiated petitions.

We have information about the estimated number of workers affected by international trade in each petition for 80% of the cases. The estimated number of workers may indicate the quality of the petition and this may affect the decision by the DOL. We present the regression result when we include the estimated number workers affected in Table A8 in Appendix C, and the main results hold. The number of affected workers is significantly and positively associated with the likelihood of petition approval, suggesting that the DOL considers the extent of the impact of factory closings when making TAA decisions.

The results presented in Table 4 show a robust association between a legislator's TAA-related direct contact with the DOL and the TAA approval rate. Although we include year, congressional district, and product type fixed effect, which controls unobservable but time-invariant characteristics of the petition, it is possible that members of Congress are more likely to contact the DOL if they think the TAA petition from their constituents has a good chance to be approved. We think that it is more plausible that constituents contact their member of Congress for help when they believe their petition will have difficulty getting approval based on eligibility criteria alone, thus underestimating the effects of our findings and offering a conservative test of our hypotheses. If constituents believe their petition is strong and likely to be approved, they have less need to seek congressional support. However, we address the possibility that legislators contact on

approving petitions from their districts. We test this hypothesis in Appendix E.

behalf of stronger petitions using a research design which exploits the unique data.

Specifically, we present other evidence that shows the effect of legislators' direct communication on agency decisions: DOL reversals of negative petition decisions. Workers who are denied eligibility for TAA may request administrative reconsideration of the termination.¹⁸ Petitioners who were approved also sometimes ask for reconsideration to expand the coverage of TAA benefits. Among 17,309 cases in our sample, 2,334 cases were reconsidered for various reasons. We went through each case that was reconsidered and checked how the final decision had changed from the initial decision.¹⁹ Of the petitions that were reconsidered, 22% of the cases stayed with the initial decision, 56% gained more coverage than the initial decision, and 14% of the cases overturned the initial decision, from denial to approval.²⁰

We examine whether TAA petitions, originally denied, are more likely to be overturned if legislators contact the DOL regarding the reconsideration of the case. Since the petitions were all initially denied, it suggests that they are all of similar, weak quality, offering us greater confidence that our results are due to the effect of congressional contact and not solely to petition quality. We exploit information on the timing of the contact and the DOL decision. We identify whether a contact from a member took place *after* the initial decision by the DOL on the TAA petition. TAA-related contacts that take place after the initial DOL decisions request the reconsideration of the petitions. Among all petitions reconsidered, we compare the overturn rate of petitions with members' contact which takes place after the initial decision to petitions with no such contact. In the regression, we also control the number of direct contacts before the initial decision for the reconsidered petitions if there was any such contact. Among 2,344 petitions that were reconsidered, 116 petitions (5%) had the contact from members of Congress before the initial decision.

¹⁸<https://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/petitions.cfm>

¹⁹For each case reconsidered, there is a document attached that shows the original decision and the final decision. Please check the following link for the example. <https://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/taa/taadecisions/taadecision.cfm?taw=81846>.

²⁰There are other categories such as the reconsideration decision was terminated before the final decision was made or made corrections in information.

Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5: DOL Contacts and Overturn of TAA Initial Decisions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Direct TAA Contact after Initial Decision	0.326*** (5.31)	0.320*** (5.15)	0.306*** (4.92)	0.341*** (4.56)
Direct TAA Contact before Initial Decision	-0.0697*** (-3.22)	-0.0779*** (-3.60)	-0.0805*** (-3.62)	-0.0860*** (-2.90)
Indirect TAA Contact		0.00310 (1.26)	0.00334 (1.28)	0.000966 (0.22)
Senate Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.000673** (2.08)	0.000550 (1.80)	0.000780 (1.50)
House Non-TAA DOL Contact		-0.00176 (-0.92)	-0.00178 (-0.95)	-0.00204 (-0.84)
Senate Leadership			-0.00936 (-0.80)	-0.0351 (-1.12)
Senate HELP Committee			0.0290 (0.92)	0.0881 (1.40)
House Leadership			-0.0108 (-0.47)	0.0564 (1.11)
House EW Committee			0.0242 (0.69)	0.0937 (1.71)
Petition by Worker			0.0841*** (4.55)	0.0736*** (3.50)
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
District FE	N	N	Y	Y
SIC FE	N	N	N	Y
N	2334	2334	2331	2331
adj. R^2	0.069	0.073	0.088	0.107

Note: t statistics in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the congressional district level. For a full set of controls included in the regression, see Table A6 in Appendix C.

When the DOL received contacts about petitions from members of Congress after an initial decision (denying TAA eligibility) had already been made, TAA petitions are 34% more likely to be overturned, moving a petition from denial status to approval status, than reconsidered petitions with no legislator contact associated with them. It is possible that members are more likely to contact the DOL regarding TAA if they expect a positive outcome and therefore we see positive associations between a member's TAA-related contacts and a higher approval and overturn rates. Due to non-randomness of the

agency contact, it is hard to establish causality. However, the fact that the relationships are robust even after controlling for petitioners' product type, districts characteristics, and time trend, and overturn decisions are not common suggests that legislators' direct communication with federal agencies may have a powerful influence on the bureaucratic decisions.

Petitions that are associated with contacts from members of Congress before the DOL's initial decision are less likely to be overturned from denial to approval. This intuitively makes sense. From the results presented in Table 4, we know that a member's DOL contact increases the approval rate of the TAA petition. These 116 petitions that were initially denied *despite* contacts from members of Congress to the DOL may have a lower quality of petition or include less justifiable cases. Therefore, it is not surprising that these petitions have lower overturn rate in the reconsideration decision. Similar to the results on the initial TAA decision, indirect contacts, non-TAA related DOL contacts, committee membership, or leadership positions are not associated with the DOL's overturn decision. This also offers strong evidence that bureaucrats are responsive only to members who clearly reveal their preferences through direct communication regarding the decisions that federal agencies make.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, we offer empirical evidence that members of Congress can influence decisions made by federal agencies via direct communication. We show that when members of Congress contact the DOL in support of TAA petitions, the approval rate is higher than when petitions are adjudicated without legislators' communication with the DOL. We also show that members' contacts requesting the reconsideration of a petition after the initial DOL decision are positively associated with the overturn rate of the initial TAA decision, from denial to approval.

These findings have implications for how we think about Congress, the bureaucracy, and the interactions between institutions. First, our findings offer a new way of evaluating members of Congress and quality of representation. When members of Congress credit claim for their efforts to secure favorable bureaucratic decisions, it is not just cheap talk. In fact, our findings suggest that direct communication is a powerful tool for members of Congress to control the priorities and resources of federal agencies. This mechanism of influence has been less studied compared to another control mechanism, agency design (Fox and Jordan 2011), but our results demonstrate that direct communication is an effective tool for legislators to address the issues of their constituencies by exploiting bureaucratic discretion.

Interestingly, we do not find evidence that agencies favor members of congressional leadership or the committee with jurisdiction, which departs from previous literature that emphasizes the institutional power of members of Congress to control the bureaucracy (e.g., Arnold 1979). What matters is whether a member of Congress spent time to write a letter for her constituents. This suggests that rank and file members without policymaking power in Congress have other channels they can use to influence the bureaucracy via direct communication. Even legislators who lack positions of institutional power in Congress can improve outcomes for their constituencies by increasing their attention and participation with agencies.

Second, we identify a mechanism of responsiveness and illustrate a process by which bureaucrats make efficient decisions: by responding to legislators' explicit requests. Our findings suggest that bureaucrats use explicit requests from members of Congress as a signal of a legislator's preference intensity. Bureaucrats fulfill legislators' requests in order to build support in Congress for their budgets and programs and to avoid the negative repercussions of angering legislators by not being responsive to their requests.

Finally, our findings have implications for our evaluations of unelected bureaucrats and representation. In fact, our results demonstrate bureaucratic responsiveness to members

of Congress. However, the implications are not wholly normatively positive; they suggest that bureaucrats may consider legislator preferences over evaluations of objective criteria.

While we limit the focus of this study to DOL decisions on TAA petitions, we suspect bureaucratic responsiveness to legislators' communication extends beyond TAA and even to other types of backdoor policymaking. Thus, important questions remain regarding the pervasiveness of this type of inter-institutional interaction across agencies, issue areas, and types of agency decisions. In addition to these questions, we plan to consider the effect of legislators' interventions on the public. For example, what, if any, effect does a legislator's contact with the DOL on behalf of TAA petitions have on her constituency's views of trade policy? Does the TAA program accomplish its goal of compensating for trade liberalization, and does it mitigate negative perceptions of trade among constituencies that bare the costs of imports?

In addition to considering these questions, we hope to advance an underappreciated approach to studying the interactions between Congress and the bureaucracy. While the previous literature has portrayed the bureaucracy as beyond the control of Congress, we offer a different perspective, illustrating the frequent, responsive interactions between individual legislators and the bureaucracy. We suggest that these types of interactions between individual members of Congress and the bureaucracy have been overshadowed by a focus on oversight and collective notions of congressional intent. These inter-institutional dynamics can inform and advance our understanding of Congress and the bureaucracy as well as our evaluations of representation and quality of governance.

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Appendix A. TAA Petition Form

Figure A1: TAA Petition Form

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration OMB No. 1205-0342
Expires: 4/30/2016



Petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Section 1. Petitioner Information

Provide petitioner information below. Three workers from the same firm completing this Petition Form must fill in all three columns. Other petitioners need only fill in the Petitioner 1 column. A union official completing this petition form should provide the name of the Union.

	<i>Petitioner 1</i>	<i>Petitioner 2</i>	<i>Petitioner 3</i>
a) Name	_____	_____	_____
b) Title	_____	_____	_____
c) Street Address	_____	_____	_____
City	_____	_____	_____
State, Zip	_____	_____	_____
d) Phone – Main	_____	_____	_____
e) Phone – Alternate	_____	_____	_____
f) E-mail	_____	_____	_____
g) Worker Separation Date	_____	_____	_____
h) Petitioner Type:	Three Workers <input type="checkbox"/>	Company Official <input type="checkbox"/>	Union Official <input type="checkbox"/> (Union Name _____)
(please check one)	State Workforce Office <input type="checkbox"/>	American Job Center <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Authorized Representative <input type="checkbox"/>
i) Describe the worker group on whose behalf this petition is being filed:	_____		

Section 2. Workers' Firm

Provide information on the firm employing the worker group. Complete items (a) – (g) regarding the employing firm. If the workers are doing work at a location that is different than the worker's employer (e.g., the petitioning workers are employed by a staffing agency but work at a manufacturing firm), also complete items (h) – (m) regarding the firm at which the workers perform their jobs.

NOTE: Workers completing this Petition Form must provide information for the location where they work. All other petitioner types may apply on behalf of more than one location. State offices and American Job Centers may file for workers at multiple locations of a firm within their State. If you choose to file on behalf of workers at more than one location, please attach additional sheets as necessary.

Employer (Firm)

a) Name of Firm _____

b) Street Address _____

City _____

State, Zip _____

c) Phone _____

d) Website (if known) _____

e) Describe the article produced or service supplied by this firm _____

f) How many workers have been or may be separated (if known)? _____

g) Is the firm or any part of the firm closing (if known)? If yes, when? _____

If the workers work at a location that is different from that listed in item a) and b), then fill out items h) through m) for that location:

h) Name of Firm _____

i) Street Address _____

City _____

State, Zip _____

j) Phone _____

k) Describe the article produced or service supplied by this firm _____


l) How many workers have been or may be separated (if known)? _____

m) Is the firm or any part of the firm closing (if known)? If yes, when? _____

Page 2 of 3 For more information, visit our Web site at <http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact> ETA-9042
Rev. March 2013

Figure A2: TAA Petition Form

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration OMB No. 1205-0342
Expires: 4/30/2016



Petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Section 3. Trade Effects on Separations

1. To the best of your knowledge, provide reasons why you believe that separations that have occurred or may be threatened at the workers' firm are due to foreign trade. (Example: Production has been/is being shifted to a foreign country, services are being outsourced to a foreign country, increased imports of articles or services, loss of business with a TAA-certified firm.)

2. If you possess any additional information or documents that you believe may assist in the determination of whether the worker group is eligible for TAA benefits, submit it as an attachment to the Petition Form. Check the box below if you have attached any additional information or supporting documents.

I have attached additional information or supporting documents.

3. Provide contact information for two company officials, one of whom should be a dislocated worker's supervisor. Either separately or together, these officials should be familiar with all of the following: employment, job functions, and sales or production at each job location.

	Official 1	Official 2
a) Name	_____	_____
b) Title	_____	_____
c) Phone – Main	_____	_____
d) Phone – Alternate	_____	_____
e) Fax	_____	_____
f) E-mail	_____	_____

Section 4. Affirmation of Information

The information you provide on this petition form will be used for the purposes of determining worker group eligibility and providing notice to petitioners, workers, and the general public that the petition has been filed and whether the worker group is eligible. Knowingly falsifying any information on this Petition Form is a Federal offense (18 USC § 1001) and a violation of the Trade Act (19 USC § 2316). For this petition to be valid, each of the petitioners listed in Question 1 must sign below and the Petition Form must be dated. By signing below, you agree to the following statements:

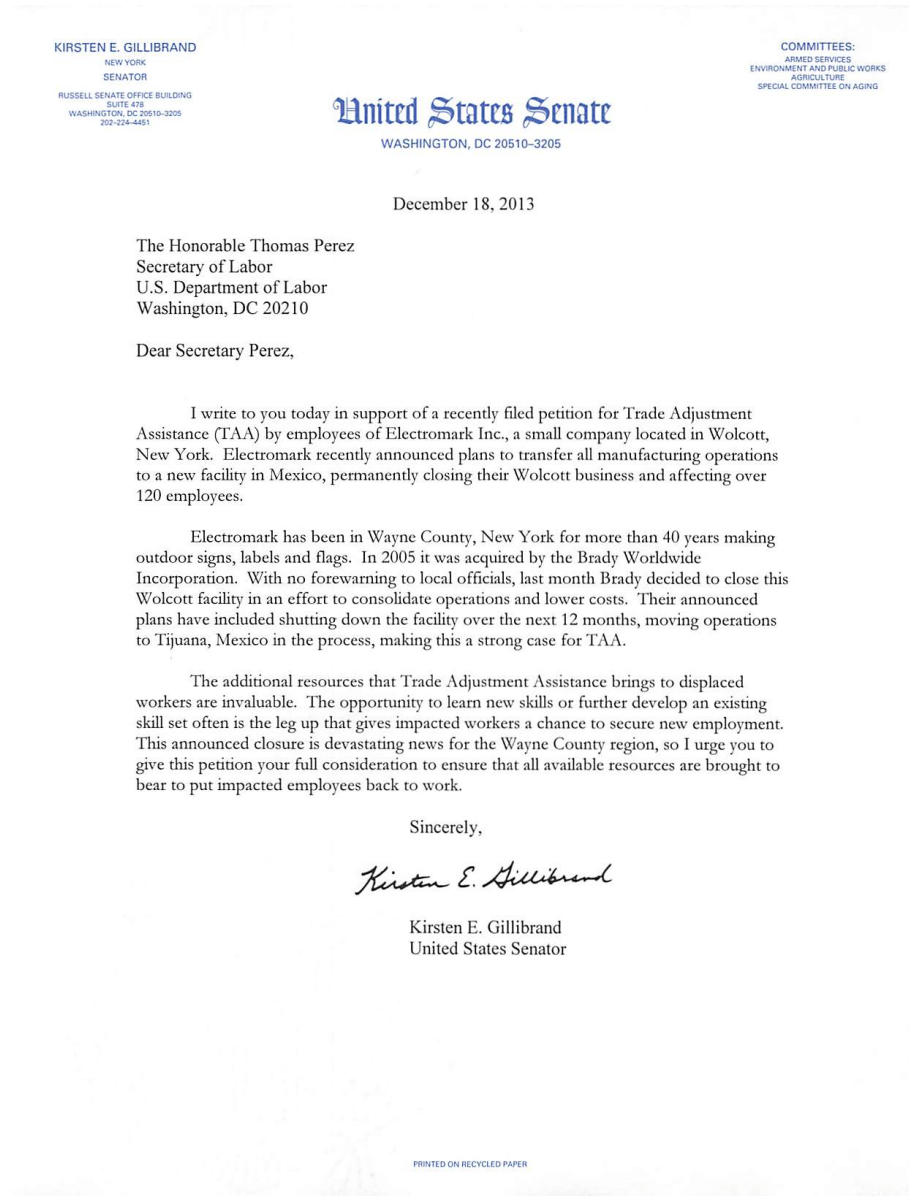
"I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief the information I have provided is true, correct, and complete."

a) Signature	_____	_____	_____
b) Name (Print)	_____	_____	_____
c) Date of Petition	_____	_____	_____

Page 3 of 3 For more information, visit our Web site at <http://www.dofeta.gov/tradeact> ETA-9042
Rev. March 2013

Appendix B. Senator Gillibrand Letter

Figure A3: Senator Gillibrand Letter



Appendix C: Tables and Figures

Table A1: Top 10 Members on TAA-related DOL Contact by Congress

Rank	109th Congress	110th Congress	111th Congress	112th Congress
<i>Senate</i>				
1	Collins (R-ME) 16	Snowe (R-ME) 18	Brown (D-OH) 22	Casey (D-PA) 20
2	Allen (R-VA) 14	Collins (R-ME) 17	Casey (D-PA) 20	Stabenow (D-MI) 7
3	Santorum (R-PA) 9	Brown (D-OH) 7	Snowe (R-ME) 16	Grassley (R-IA) 6
4	Byrd (D-WV) 9	Graham (R-SC) 7	Collins (R-ME) 14	Brown (D-OH) 6
5	Specter (R-PA) 7	Burr (R-NC) 6	Burr(R-NC) 8	Rockefeller (D-WV) 6
6	Reed (D-RI) 7	Obama (D-IL) 5	Webb (D-VA) 7	Cardin (D-MD) 5
7	Snowe (R-ME) 6	Specter (R-PA) 5	Byrd (D-WV) 6	Mikulski (D-MD) 5
8	Warner (D-VA) 5	Reed (D-RI) 5	Bingaman (D-NM) 5	Gillibrand (D-NY) 5
9	Obama (D-IL) 5	Warner (D-VA) 5	Warner (D-VA) 5	Hagan (D-NC) 5
10	Dodd (D-CT) 4	Casey (D-PA) 5	Specter (R-PA)	Webb (D-VA) 5
<i>House</i>				
1	Boucher (D-VA9) 10	Goode (R-VA5) 30	Michaud (D-ME2) 19	Critz (D-PA12) 3
2	McHugh (R-NY23) 6	Boucher (D-VA9) 11	Boucher (D-VA9) 9	Barletta (R-PA11) 3
3	Goode (R-VA9) 6	Michaud (D-ME2) 9	Murphy (D-PA8) 5	Dicks (D-WA6) 3
4	Hayes (R-NC8) 5	Foxx (R-NC5) 8	Platts (R-PA19) 5	Thompson (R-PA5) 3
5	Barrett (R-SC3) 5	McHugh (R-NY23) 6	Forbes (R-VA4) 5	Quigley (D-IL5) 3
6	Green (R-WI8) 4	Rogers (R-AL3) 3	Boehner (R-OH8) 4	Simpson (R-IN2) 2
7	Boehner (R-OH8) 4	Davis (D-CA53) 3	Obey (D-WI7) 3	Griffith (R-VA9) 2
8	Coble (R-NC6) 4	Murtha (D-PA12) 3	Cantor (R-VA7) 3	Baca (D-CA43) 2
9	Sanders (I-VA1) 3	Camp (R-MI4) 3	Baird (D-WA3) 3	Shuster (R-PA9) 2
10	Rangel (D-NY15) 3	Baird (D-WA3) 3	Wilson (D-OH6) 3	Visclosky (D-IN1) 2

Note: Numbers right next to the name indicate the total number of TAA-related contacts in each Congress. There are 17 more House members who made two TAA-related contacts in the 112th Congress but are not included in the Table due to space limit. Those members are: Frank (D-MA4), Latham (R-IA4), Brady (D-PA1), McDermott (D-WA7), Roe (R-TN1), Shimkus (R-IL19), Eshoo (D-CA14), Schwartz (D-PA13), Larson (D-CT1), Burton (R-IN5), Michaud (D-ME2), Kissell (D-NC8), Carnahan (D-MO3), Murphy (R-PA18), Clay (D-MO1), Cleaver (R-MO5), Markey (D-MA7).

Table A2: Summary Statistics of Petitions by Year

Year	Total TAA Petition	Approved (%)
2005	2,440	63.8
2006	2,133	67.8
2007	2,077	68.8
2008	2,163	74.9
2009	2,687	81.6
2010	3,158	76.4
2011	1,268	80.4
2012	1,410	84.8

Table A3: Summary Statistics of Petitions by State

State	Total Petition	Approved (%)	State	Total Petition	Approved (%)
AK	25	28	MT	71	77
AL	265	80	NC	1,463	76
AR	281	73	ND	10	60
AZ	174	75	NE	50	86
CA	1,260	75	NH	98	73
CO	280	75	NJ	393	76
CT	352	80	NM	45	75
DE	23	56	NV	38	73
FL	252	74	NY	742	76
GA	381	78	OH	968	74
HI	12	58	OK	118	72
IA	161	81	OR	460	61
ID	114	78	PA	1,325	68
IL	638	71	RI	115	80
IN	499	77	SC	461	75
KS	60	80	SD	14	100
KY	314	80	TN	562	77
LA	102	72	TX	699	74
MA	501	76	UT	71	76
MD	131	75	VA	350	79
ME	201	76	VT	49	89
MI	1,207	73	WA	367	72
MN	351	66	WI	600	69
MO	353	68	WV	120	75
MS	182	74	WY	1	100

Table A4: List of Trade-related Bills, 2003-2012

Congress	Year	Description	Congress	Year	Description
108	2003	Burma Import Sanctions	109	2006	Miscellaneous Tariff Cuts
108	2003	Singapore FTA	109	2006	Approve Dubai Ports World Deal
108	2003	Chile FTA	109	2006	Reject Raising Airline Investment Cap
108	2003	Cuba Travel Ban	109	2006	Internet Gambling Payments
108	2003	Country of Origin Labeling	109	2006	Vietnam PNTR
108	2003	Computer Export Controls	109	2006	AGO, ATPA Extension
108	2003	Oppose EU GMO Ban	110	2007	Eliminate Worker Visas
108	2004	Restrict Federal Outsourcing	110	2007	Ban Mexican Trucks
108	2004	Australia FTA	110	2007	Peru FTA
108	2004	Morocco FTA	110	2007	Farm Bill
108	2004	Miscellaneous Tariff Cuts	110	2007	Defund Visa Waiver Program
108	2004	Increase Foreign Doctors	110	2007	Andean Trade Preference Act
108	2004	Cut Market Access Program	110	2007	Expand Fam Exports to Cuba
109	2005	China Currency Sanctions	110	2007	Reduce Sugar Protection
109	2005	Cuba Travel Ban	110	2008	Suspend TPA
109	2005	DR-CAFTA	110	2008	Reduce Cotton Subsidies
109	2005	Protect US Trade Laws	111	2009	Ending Offshoring Act
109	2005	Withdrawn US from WTO	111	2010	Currency Reform for Fair Trade
109	2005	Restrict Contract w/ Offshoring Firms	111	2010	US Manufacturing Act
109	2005	Defund Approval of CNOOC	112	2011	Currency Exchange Rate Reform
109	2005	Bahrain FTA	112	2012	Export-Import Bank Reauthorization
109	2005	Maintain "Byrd Law"	112	2012	Eliminated Sugar Program
109	2006	Study of Foreign Debt	112	2012	Russia and Moldova PNTR
109	2006	100% Container Scanning	112	2012	Farm Bill
109	2006	Orman FTA	112	2012	Applying Countervailing Duly Law

Figure A4: Trade Ideal Point Estimates

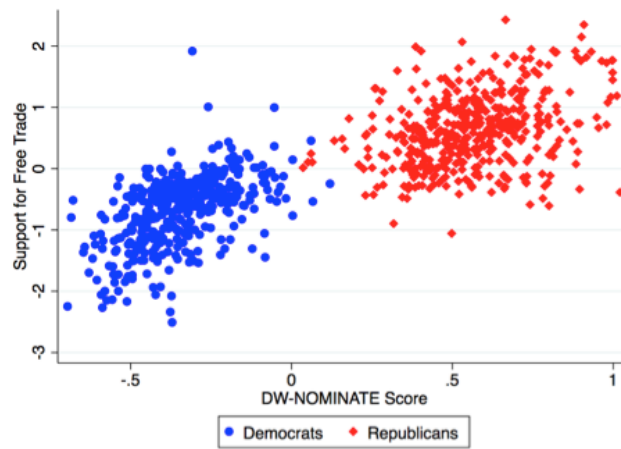
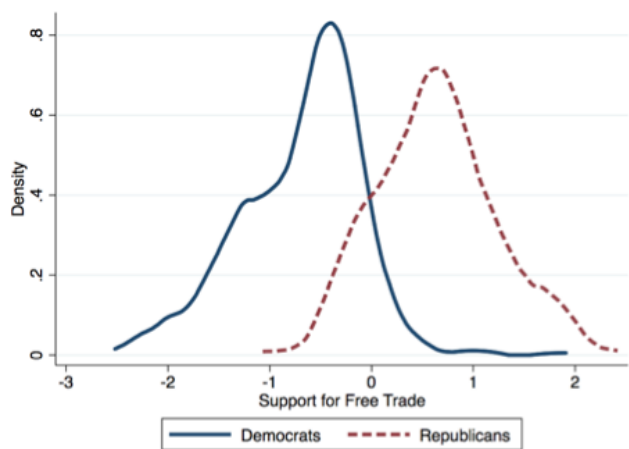


Table A5: Summary Statistics on Variables in Members' Contact Regressions

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
<i>House</i>					
Contact	1767	8.6	9.0	0	115
Democrat	1767	0.51	0.50	0	1
Vote Share	1767	0.67	0.12	0.30	1
Committee Chair	1767	0.23	0.58	0	1
Education and Workforce Com.	1767	0.05	0.23	0	1
Leadership	1767	0.06	0.24	0	1
Trade Ideal Point	1764	-0.09	0.97	-2.52	2.48
Senior	1767	0.12	0.02	0.05	0.28
White	1767	0.73	0.17	0.11	0.97
Low Education	1767	0.44	0.09	0.16	0.75
Gini	1767	0.44	0.03	0.36	0.60
(ln) Median Income	1767	10.8	0.2	10.0	11.5
Unemployment	1767	0.08	0.03	0.02	0.25
Dem. Presidential Vote Share 08	1758	0.54	0.14	0.23	0.95
Change in China Exposure	1754	3.43	1.86	0.64	13.50
Manufacturing Share	1754	0.20	0.07	0.03	0.52
Public Sector Union Ratio	1767	0.31	0.21	0	1
<i>Senate</i>					
Contact	414	31.2	31.0.	0	225
Democrat	414	0.50	0.50	0	1
Vote Share	409	0.61	0.09	0.39	1
Committee Chair	414	0.65	0.81	0	1
HELP Com.	414	0.20	0.40	0	1
Leadership	414	0.28	0.45	0	1
Trade Ideal Point	407	0.02	0.72	-1.87	1.73
Senior	414	0.13	0.01	0.06	0.18
White	414	0.78	0.12	0.24	0.96
Low Education	414	0.43	0.05	0.31	0.61
Gini	414	0.45	0.01	0.40	0.50
(ln) Median Income	414	10.8	0.1	10.4	11.1
Unemployment	414	0.07	0.02	0.03	0.15
Dem. Presidential Vote Share	414	0.52	0.10	0.34	0.93
Change in China Exposure	398	3.48	2.01	0.67	8.6
Manufacturing Share	398	0.21	0.08	0.07	0.38
Public Sector Union Ratio	414	0.14	0.13	0.02	0.70

Table A6: Summary Statistics on Variables in TAA Petition Regressions

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Certified	17,309	0.74	0.43	0	1
Direct TAA Contact	17,309	0.04	0.36	0	24
Indirect TAA Contact	17,309	2.7	4.1	0	34
House Non-TAA DOL Contact	17,309	4.2	5.5	0	72
Senate Non-TAA DOL Contact	17,309	37.3	31.9	0	176
Senate Leadership	17,309	0.62	0.61	0	2
Senate HELP Committee	17,309	0.07	0.29	0	2
Senate Appropriations (Budget) Committee	17,309	0.16	0.42	0	2
House Leadership	17,309	0.06	0.25	0	1
House EW Committee	17,309	0.04	0.21	0	1
House Appropriations (Budget) Committee	17,309	0.18	0.39	0	1
Senate Democrat	17,309	1.12	0.85	0	2
House Democrat	17,309	0.49	0.49	0	1
House Majority Party	17,309	0.54	0.49	0	1
Senate Majority Party	17,309	0.72	0.44	0	1
House President's Party	17,309	0.52	0.49	0	1
Senate President's Party	17,309	0.68	0.46	0	1
Estimated No. Workers	12,801	88.8	180.5	0	5224
Petition by Worker	17,309	0.29	0.45	0	1
(ln) Manufacturing Employment	17,270	0.24	0.08	0.03	0.52
Change in Manufacturing Employment	17,270	-4.91	2.81	-16.70	2.28
Senior Ratio	17,309	0.13	0.02	0.05	0.28
White Ratio	17,309	0.79	0.15	0.12	0.97
High School or Less Education Ratio	17,309	0.45	0.10	0.16	0.75
Unemployment	17,309	8.3	2.8	2.9	25.9
Public Sector Union Membership	17,309	0.33	0.22	0	1

Appendix D: Regression Results and Robustness Checks

Table A7: DOL Contacts and TAA Approvals: Full Regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Direct TAA Contact	0.0339*** (3.28)	0.0285*** (2.97)	0.0264** (2.46)	
Direct TAA Contact Dummy				0.0799*** (3.72)
Indirect TAA Contact		-0.00154 (-0.95)	-0.000782 (-0.47)	-0.000775 (-0.47)
House Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.00148 (1.18)	0.00163 (1.46)	0.00164 (1.46)
Senate Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.000109 (0.55)	-0.0000413 (-0.20)	-0.0000392 (-0.19)
Senate Leadership		0.0231 (1.73)	0.0163 (1.05)	0.0166 (1.07)
Senate HELP Committee		-0.00351 (-0.20)	0.0127 (0.58)	0.0121 (0.55)
House Leadership		-0.00738 (-0.22)	-0.00155 (-0.06)	-0.00144 (-0.05)
House EW Committee		-0.0106 (-0.45)	-0.0287 (-0.94)	-0.0294 (-0.96)
Senate Democrat		0.00916 (0.73)	0.00794 (0.63)	0.00791 (0.63)
House Democrat		0.000241 (0.01)	-0.0241 (-1.24)	-0.0241 (-1.24)
House Majority Party		0.00236 (0.31)	-0.00179 (-0.21)	-0.00215 (-0.25)
Senate Majority Party		0.000658 (0.05)	-0.00199 (-0.17)	-0.00209 (-0.18)
House President's Party		0.00786 (0.90)	0.00864 (0.87)	0.00879 (0.89)
Senate President's Party		-0.00530 (-0.45)	-0.00522 (-0.40)	-0.00515 (-0.39)
House Appropriations (Budget) Committee		-0.0148 (-0.89)	-0.00656 (-0.42)	-0.00605 (-0.39)
Senate Appropriations (Budget) Committee		0.0131 (0.89)	0.00217 (0.12)	0.00253 (0.14)
Petition by Worker		-0.0977*** (-10.45)	-0.0799*** (-9.15)	-0.0798*** (-9.17)
Senior Population		0.628 (0.58)	0.0984 (0.08)	0.115 (0.09)
White Population		-0.0645 (-0.27)	0.185 (0.71)	0.183 (0.70)
High School or Less Education		0.605 (1.68)	0.695 (1.82)	0.695 (1.82)
Unemployment		0.588 (1.46)	0.0699 (0.14)	0.0760 (0.16)
Public Sector Union Membership		0.000180 (0.58)	0.000522 (1.73)	0.000527 (1.74)
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
District FE	N	Y	Y	Y
SIC FE	N	N	Y	Y
N	17309	17270	15446	15446
adj. R ²	0.024	0.051	0.157	0.157

Note: *t* statistics in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the congressional district level.

Table A8: DOL Contacts and TAA Approvals (including Estimated Number of Affected Workers in the Regression)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Direct TAA Contact	0.0339*** (3.28)	0.0196** (2.29)	0.0159** (1.97)	
Direct TAA Contact Dummy				0.0505** (2.19)
Indirect TAA Contact		-0.00258 (-1.29)	-0.00262 (-1.29)	-0.00262 (-1.30)
House Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.00187 (1.51)	0.00105 (1.04)	0.00106 (1.05)
Senate Non-TAA DOC Contact		0.0000257 (0.11)	-0.0000123 (-0.05)	-0.0000136 (-0.06)
Senate Leadership ^a		0.00366 (0.17)	-0.00785 (-0.40)	-0.00766 (-0.38)
Senate HELP Committee ^b		-0.0117 (-0.40)	-0.00853 (-0.31)	-0.00898 (-0.33)
House Leadership ^c		0.000459 (0.01)	0.00718 (0.23)	0.00740 (0.24)
House EW Committee ^d		-0.0242 (-0.63)	-0.0415 (-0.97)	-0.0420 (-0.98)
Estimated No. Affected Worker		0.000134*** (3.50)	0.0000908*** (3.46)	0.0000884*** (3.37)
Petition by Worker		-0.114*** (-10.55)	-0.0796*** (-8.46)	-0.0795*** (-8.47)
Demographic Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Member Characteristics Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
District FE	N	Y	Y	Y
SIC FE	N	N	Y	Y
<i>N</i>	17309	12769	12749	12749
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.024	0.049	0.183	0.183

Note: *t* statistics in parentheses. ***p* < 0.05, ****p* < 0.01. Standard errors are clustered at the congressional district level. **a:** Whether senators who represented a petitioner's state were in leadership position. **b:** Whether senators who represented a petitioner's state were assigned on the Senate Health, Environment, Labor, and Pension Committee which oversees the DOL. **c:** Whether a House member who represented a petitioner's congressional district was in leadership position. **d:** Whether a House member who represented a petitioner's congressional district was assigned on the House Education and Workforce Committee which oversees the DOL.

Appendix E: TAA Reauthorization Voting and Petition Approvals

Since the creation of the Trade Adjustment Assistant (TAA) as a part of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, Congress has irregularly reauthorized the TAA program. There has been 18 votes to reauthorize the TAA program and the most recent reauthorization took place in January 2015 when President Obama signed into law a bill “Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015” (H.R.1295). During the time period of our study (2005 - 2012), there were six reauthorization votes on the TAA program (Hornbeck 2013). Table A9 shows the list of reauthorization activities between 2005 and 2012.

Table A9: TAA Reauthorization, 2005-2012

Year	Bill Title	Public Law	Extension Date ^a	Length ^b
2007	TAA Extension Act	P.L.110-89	Dec.31, 2007	3 months
2008	Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008	P.L.110-161	Dec. 31, 2008	1 year
2009	Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009	P.L.110-329	Feb. 2009	2 months
2009	American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009	P.L.111-5	Dec.31, 2010	2 year
2010	Omnibus Trade Act of 2010	P.L.111-344	Feb. 12, 2010	13 month
2011	The Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 2011	P.L.112-40	Dec.31, 2013	34 months

Note: This table is reproduced from page 16 in Hornbeck (2013). **a:** The date that the reauthorization allowed the extension of the TAA program. **b:** The length of the TAA program extension between the reauthorizations.

Our goal is to examine whether a member’s voting record on the TAA program has any influence on the DOL’s TAA approval decision. To do that, we need to identify voting records for each reauthorization act. There are a couple of issues. First, among the six TAA reauthorization acts, four of them are omnibus or appropriations bills. Given that omnibus or appropriations bills are large and include many different measures and diverse subjects other than the TAA program extension, it is difficult to use the voting record on those bills as a proxy for legislators’ position on the extension of the TAA program.

There are two bills that specifically addressed the TAA program. However, the TAA Extension Act of 2007 does not have recorded votes for either the House or the Senate. That leaves us with the 2011 law, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 2011. That law only has a recorded vote for the Senate, not the House. It does have a TAA-related amendment (S.Amdt.633). It is a Senate amendment, so senators voted directly on the amendment, while the House voted to adopt the Senate version of the overall bill (with the amendment). Therefore, we use the Senate vote on the amendment to the 2011 TAA Act to see whether senators’ voting record on the TAA program extension is associated with the TAA petition approval rate for years 2011 and 2012.

For each petition, we include a variable *Senators TAA Support* which indicates whether the senators who represented the petitioner’s state supported the 2011 TAA Act. The variable *Senators TAA Support* takes the value from 0 to 2: 0 if neither of the two senators

supported it, 1 if only one senator supported it, and 2 if both senators supported the 2011 TAA program extension bill. We run the equation (2) with *Senators TAA Support* for petitions for which results were decided in years 2011 and 2012. Table A10 presents the results. Given that the variable *Senators TAA Support* only varies at the state level, we cannot use the district or state fixed effect in this regression. Although we include all the variables in A5 in Appendix C and use the year and product time fixed effects, the results presented in Table A10 should be interpreted with caution. The DOL seems to approve petitions from the states where their senators supported the extension of the TAA programs at a higher rate, but this effect is not robust when we include a product-type fixed effect (SIC FE).

Table A10: Senators' Support for the 2011 TAA Act and TAA Approval, 2011-2012

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Direct TAA Contact	0.0289*** (2.84)	0.0573 (1.81)	0.385** (2.57)
Indirect TAA Contact		-0.00326 (-0.99)	0.00170 (0.46)
House Non-TAA DOL Contact		-0.000852 (-0.58)	-0.00227 (-1.08)
Senate Non-TAA DOL Contact		0.00103 (1.80)	0.00195** (2.30)
Senators TAA Support ^a		0.0460** (2.68)	0.0114 (0.31)
Senators TAA Support \times TAA Direct Contact		-0.0152 (-0.84)	-0.179 (-1.29)
Demographic Controls	N	Y	Y
Member Characteristics Controls	N	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y
SIC FE	N	N	Y
<i>N</i>	2678	2673	902
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.003	0.009	0.094

Note: *t* statistics in parentheses. ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the state level. This analysis is based on the petitions that the decision on the eligibility for the TAA program was made either in 2011 or 2012 **a**: 0 if none of the senators supported the 2011 TAA Act, 1 if only one senator supported the 2011 TAA Act, and 2 if both senators supported the 2011 TAA Act.