

**Shopping in the Political Arena:  
Strategic State and Local Venue Selection by Advocates**

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## **Abstract**

This article explores how advocacy organizations strategically select one or more venues for lobbying in a government system that provides multiple access points to state and local lawmakers. Advocates unable to make headway at the state level may refocus their efforts locally, convincing lawmakers in hitherto uninvolved venues to take-up an issue. The data used to test venue shopping hypotheses comes from a survey of charter school advocacy at state and local levels in three states. While ideological congruence between lawmakers and advocates matters, it also turns out that most advocates are also drawn to any venue actively working on an issue. Advocacy resources also limit the number of venues targeted and that implementing venues are targeted when they can be pressured by elected officials who support an advocate's policy preferences.

“Venue shopping” refers to the choices interest group advocates make regarding which policy-making institutions will be on the receiving end of their advocacy as they strive to mobilize political support for their members’ interests. Perhaps it will be a state legislative committee, a local implementing agency, or both. That this choice is strategic was demonstrated by Baumgartner and Jones (1993), who showed how advocates can successfully compete by steering issues from venues where they are disadvantaged to ones where they are favored by the prevailing norms and rules of the game. That these choices have consequences for democratic governance was shown by Schattschneider (1951), who argued that advocates entrenched in venues with sympathetic political officials can maintain a status quo favoring their interests in the face of negative public opinion. Growth in the diversity and competitiveness of state and national group communities (Baumgartner and Leech 2001; Nownes and Freeman 1998) makes it an increasingly common strategy, yet models of venue shopping are few and underdeveloped.

This article lays out a model of targeted advocacy within a set of venues distributed both vertically (state and local governments) and horizontally (reflecting the separation-of-powers) based on the congruence of policy preferences, but also shaped by venue characteristics (such as elected versus appointed officials, policy enactors versus implementers, and state versus local level) and limited by advocacy resources. Hypotheses predicting why advocates might target one or more venues based on these factors are proposed and then tested with data on charter school advocacy to shape education policy in three states. The analysis reveals that aligned policy preferences draw advocates, but advocates will also target venues where officials have decided to take-up an issue regardless of ideological congruence. Advocacy also becomes more strategic as lobbyists consider the advantages and constraints of geographically dispersed memberships, and while they prefer venues where officials are elected, they will target implementing agencies that

can be constrained by enacting venues. Finally, there is evidence of path-dependence where those lobbying a venue at one government level are likely to target other venues at that same level.

### **Venue Shopping in the Literature**

Growth in the scope of the federal government's authority as a result of the New Deal and Great Society programs, and then the shift to greater responsibilities for state and local levels with the New Federalism of the 1980s, has not only drawn more issues into the public purview, it has also blurred jurisdictional distinctions between policy-making venues within and across these levels, providing more political entrepreneurs with more opportunities to influence those issues. Ambitious policy-makers have expanded the issue jurisdictions of Congress and increasingly professionalized state legislatures (Talbert et al. 1995; King 2000; Loftus 2002), eroding once fairly clear delineations of responsibility between Washington, D.C., the states, and localities (Grodzins 1966) as they strive to claim control over issues once the province of other levels in the American federal system (Elazar 1994; Peterson 1995; Volden 2005) or thrust new responsibilities on those lower levels through mandates and grants-in-aid (Jensen 2000). Coupled with the expansion of the authority and independence of executive branch agencies (Hecklo 1978; Balla 1998), and broader standing rights before the courts (Orren 1978), these jurisdictional changes have opened up a much wider array of decision points in the governmental superstructure where interest groups may initiate or stymie new policies (Gais et al. 1984).

The growing size and ideological diversity of state and national lobbying communities (Gray and Lowery 1996; Baumgartner and Leech 2001) places greater pressure on new groups representing previously un-mobilized populations to exploit these pressure points in order to challenge, or at least get around, the hegemony of established interests (Hamm 1986). For them

more venues mean more opportunities to initiate, amend, redirect, or veto policies, a change political scientists are starting to recognize. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) show how groups have used fluid issue jurisdictions to steer nuclear power and tobacco policy into ideologically friendlier, if hitherto uninvolved, venues to bring about policy change. An important attractor of advocates to a venue in a federal structure like the United States, Constantelos (2010) argues, is the ideological compatibility of lawmakers and advocates, just as Olson (1990), Solberg and Walternburg (2006), and Howard (2007) find that preference similarity matters when deciding when and how to go to court. Holyoke (2003) and McKay (2011), however, argue that it is often the intensity of group conflict that pressures advocates to seek out new venues, though they and McQuide (2010) find that the ability to do so is limited by their resources. What is needed is a unified model of venue shopping based on preference alignment but that also incorporates characteristics of venue structure, attributes of the groups targeting one or more of them, and the possibility that lobbying one level shapes how, and even if, venues at other levels will be targeted.

### **Advocate Motivations, Venue Structure, and Hypotheses**

The first step is to draw a distinction between horizontal and vertical arrays of venues, “vertical” referring to the different government levels up and down the federal system. Horizontally across each level are several venues with general responsibilities for making policy on a broad range of issues, such as state legislatures, city councils, mayors, and governors, who then delegate responsibility for the implementation of these policies to administrative agencies.<sup>1</sup> These agencies, staffed by appointed and career professionals, are often designed to concentrate expertise on a fairly small set of related policies and maximize responsiveness to technical issues, scientific evidence, and the input of narrow but highly motivated interests (Kerwin 1999).

By contrast, institutions responsible for making decisions across multiple issue areas, like elected legislatures and city councils, are more sensitive to majoritarian principles and constituent pressures and must frequently make trade-offs between competing interests.

On what basis will advocates choose between these different types of venues, or choose to lobby several at once? Advocates often target lawmakers whose preferences for policy outcomes align with their own (Wright 1996), meaning they lobby their “friends.” Yet preference similarity, Jones (2001) argues, is rarely the sole determinant of political choices because the complex structures of public institutions empower some officials while hobbling others, even when the structures themselves are malleable. If venues are hierarchically arranged in a federal system and employ varying rules of membership and jurisdictional responsibility, then advocates, who must strive to represent member interests when an issue important to them is being debated, may have to target venues controlled by unsympathetic policy-makers *because* institutional rules allow or require that venue to have a crack at the issue. Just lobbying allies in “friendly” venues may amount to little more than wasted resources, which, following McQuide (2010) and McKay (2011), means there needs to be an additional qualifier on Jones’s institutional restriction of preference-based choices: that strategy is also shaped by the resources available to advocates. Strategic venue choices are thus the result of preference alignment shaped by institutional structure, but limited by resource availability.

Preferences and institutional structure also determine which venues are even potential lobbying targets on an issue. Institutional rules delineate jurisdictional boundaries between venues just as they concentrate individual preferences and policy expertise, such as on legislative committees (Squire et al. 2005), but when ambitious chairs decide to involve themselves in an issue by asserting jurisdiction they did not have before (Talbert et al. 1995) their venue becomes

a potential new target. Agencies with statutorily defined jurisdictions are also often run by appointed officials with specific preferences (Downs 1967), but sometimes they are required to implement policies they would otherwise prefer to avoid, or perhaps it is they who choose to extend their jurisdictions by taking up issues not clearly delegated to them (Niskanen 1971). Elected or appointed local venues with general or special responsibilities may also be forced to implement new policies under state or federal mandate and thus become targetable venues.

Thus, within an identified set of potential venues for an issue, the first hypothesis regards the alignment of policy preferences. The sheer number of organized interests lobbying state capitols and many city halls makes it prohibitively difficult for any single lobbyist to convince lawmakers to change their positions on issues, so they often do not try (Nownes 1999). Instead lobbyists target friends, officials with ideological and/or electoral needs already aligned with those of an interest group's members (Hojnacki and Kimball 1998; Nownes and Freeman 1998). Appointed agency officials also tend to prefer working with lobbyists who can help promote shared preferences (Yackee 2006). Knowing they will find allies there, advocates target these venues, helping officials enact new, mutually beneficially policy or defend the status quo. So: *H1: Ceteris paribus, advocates target venues with collective preferences closer to their own.*

The first alternative to this basic hypothesis, explaining why advocates might target a different or an additional venue to the ideologically friendly one, also involves preferences but begins to incorporate institutional structure. Lawmakers in a venue with general responsibilities but very different preferences from officials in other venues may decide to initiate policy change by taking-up an issue. A decision to suddenly act on an issue may also be the result of institutional requirements, such as an agency responding to directives from a legislature or chief executive to implement new policies, or elected and appointed city and county officials forced to

implement state or federal mandates. Just taking up a policy turns a venue into a focal point for advocacy because it is “where the action is,” and advocates, regardless of preferences, ignore action venues at their peril. Staying away signals that the lobbyist’s members are not stakeholders and concerns they may have regarding policy negotiations can be discounted. So:

*H2: Advocates are likely to target venues actively working on policy concerning them, regardless of preference congruence or whether venues are general-elected or specialist- appointed.*

A clearer example of the influence of structure is when officials in policy specialist venues sympathetic to a group’s preferences are forced to take-up and implement policy set by an overseeing generalist, enacting venue with more hostile preferences. On nearly every issue there is at least one venue responsible for policy implementation, probably a specialist venue of appointed officials, though even elected local school boards have implementation responsibilities. In a federal system implementing venues may actually be at lower levels of government than enacting venues (they cannot be higher as authority only flows downward). Higher levels may force lower ones to take-up disliked issues through un-funded mandates or conditional requirements on grants-in-aid (as Jensen 2000 argues is true with public housing).

When enacting venue officials succeed in their constraining efforts, agencies ideologically sympathetic to a group find their ability to implement policy the way they prefer eroded because they lose much of their discretionary authority and are thus no longer attractive advocacy targets. When preferences collide like this, research has found that implementing agencies can often retain their independence unless enactors aggressively use reporting requirements, budgets controls, and oversight hearings to constrain them (Balla 1998; Volden 2002). But if enactors are ideologically divided, either within a legislature or in conflict with an elected executive, the resulting conflict may leave implementers quite free to push the policies

they and their group ally desire (Shipan 2004; MacDonald 2007). Furthermore, Teske and Kulijev (2000) find that enacting venues often have difficulty reigning-in venues at lower levels, which may be especially true when lower venue membership is constituted by election and can claim independent legitimacy, such as local school boards resisting state education mandates.

*H3: The less discretion given an implementing venue, the more likely it is to be targeted by groups with preferences more congruent with those of the overseeing venue.*

Now the third factor, advocacy resources, must be incorporated. Resources are essential for gathering the information lawmakers need in order to know how best to serve the advocate's members with policies and subsidies (Wright 1996). So great can the information asymmetry between lobbyists and officials be regarding stakeholder preferences (favoring lobbyists), that the latter can be persuaded to change positions (Austen-Smith and Wright 1994). Resources are thus independent of preference congruence and allow groups to establish themselves in venues where lawmaker preferences are *incongruent* with an advocate's members. And, as McQuide (2010) points out, advocates with less resources can influence fewer officials and so will target fewer venues. So:

*H4: The greater the level of disposable financial resources an advocate possesses, the more likely he or she is to target any venue rather than just those with similar preferences.*

There is also a connection between structure and resource limitations that may appear in a federalist context as additional venue attributes are incorporated. Gray and Lowery (1996) argue that a group's political influence is proportional to its members' geographic distribution. A group with a widely spread membership will have constituent-oriented influence with more elected officials, including officials at higher levels of government where larger geographic areas are represented. A lobbyist whose members are heavily concentrated in a narrow geographic

area, such as a city, can use member resources to influence only one or two elected state legislators. Yet a concentrated membership may allow a lobbyist to still be a power-broker in a city's political establishment. The ability to mobilize members locally means this geographically concentrated resource can still translate into political power, giving that organization a prominent place in an elected mayor's governing "regime" (Stone 1989), or influence with a city's many agencies and governing boards (Hula et al. 1997) even as it avoids state venues. Groups with *large* memberships *not* geographically concentrated do not face this constraint and may feel their resources are just as effective in city venues as in state as long as venue officials are elected. So: *H5: The more geographically concentrated a group's membership, the more likely its advocate will target local venues, but geographically larger groups will target any elected member venue.*

### **Research Design and Analysis**

These venue shopping hypotheses are tested with data on advocacy at state and local levels by charter schools. Although not interest groups in the sense that they primarily exist to engage in political advocacy, they suffice for three reasons. First, like most groups, charters have well defined populations on whose behalf they may advocate. Unlike traditional public schools, to which students are assigned on the basis of geography, parents *choose* charter schools for their children, giving them a vested interest in the school's survival. Because school choice arouses fierce opposition from traditional education interests, such as teachers' unions and school board associations, the policy has become very politically contentious (Holyoke et al. 2007).

Second, while laws creating charter schools are proposed and enacted by state governors and legislatures, responsibility for implementation is often imposed on sometimes unwilling

local school districts, mayors, and city councils. Thus there are venues involved at both state and local government levels to which they can make their case, which makes this policy especially well-suited for studying venue shopping. Finally, charters often survive by obtaining government contracts and grants, regulatory exemptions and tax breaks (Henig et al. 2003), just like many corporations and nonprofits (Vogel 1989; Berry and Arons 2003). For all of these reasons charter schools are not atypical lobbying organizations.

In 2002 a survey was mailed to all charter schools in Arizona, Michigan, and Pennsylvania asking a number of questions regarding their organizational and pedagogical structures, and their political activities. The response rate was 35%, 270 schools, and showed no evidence of systematic over or under representation of any one state (Brown et al. 2004). These states have comparable venues and so the first task was to identify how frequently charter school leaders “actively initiated” contact with a venue choosing to or required to take an interest in charter school policy. One, for instance, was state legislators with no distinction made between upper and lower chambers (respondents often did not understand the distinction) to create a per-school observation of contact with the state legislature.<sup>2</sup>

Other venues included the governor’s office, the state education agency (implementing policy in Arizona), local school district boards (implementing policy in all three states), and district superintendents who often have oversight responsibilities for charter school curricula. Henig and Rich (2004) argue that mayors often play crucial roles in local education, from dispensing vacant buildings to charter schools for their physical location to taking over whole school systems, so they were also included. Thus there are six venues, three state and three local; members of four are elected (governor, legislature, school board, and mayor) and two appointed (superintendent and state agency, except in Arizona where the education secretary is

elected); three are generalist, multi-issue venues (governor, legislature, and mayor) and three specialist (state agency, school board, and superintendent). As shown in Table 1, the dependent variable is a simple binary indicator formed from the coded answers to closed-ended survey questions asking how frequently charter school leaders contacted officials in each venue.

---- Insert Table 1 about here ----

Some schools avoided advocacy, 42% lobbying in no venues and 31% in only one. Others were quite active, 12% targeting two venues and 15% lobbying in more than two, though only 2% targeted all six. In Figure 1 this is broken out by venue type and state with each bar indicating the percentage of schools lobbying “once a month” or “once a week.” Elected legislatures were the “hottest” venues, especially state legislatures where the policies were enacted, though elected local school boards also turned out to be venues of choice. Otherwise there is no clear attraction to elected member venues over appointed as governors and mayors were largely avoided, perhaps because governors, having initiated these policies, left oversight to legislatures (they are not action venues). There is only a hint of level preference for state venues.

---- Insert Figure 1 about here ----

While variable construction is summarized in Table 1, it is worth noting that the biggest challenge was constructing a preference measure comparable across all six venues making it possible to determine whether officials there were collectively supportive or opposed to charter school policy. The measure used was political party affiliation. Although many issues do not break along party lines, support and opposition to charter schools *does* divide sharply by party in these three states. Governors and mayors were coded based on known party affiliation.<sup>3</sup> State legislatures were assigned codes based on which party held the majority in both houses.<sup>4</sup> For local school boards and superintendents a geographic information system was used to obtain

maps of each school district containing one of the charter schools and election precincts were superimposed over it.<sup>5</sup> All precincts that had at least two-thirds of their area in the school district, and the superintendent it hired, were coded “Republican” if a majority of voters in these precincts voted for school choice proponent George W. Bush in 2004.<sup>6</sup> This assumes that these voters also shaped the make-up of these otherwise non-partisan elected school boards.<sup>7</sup>

Also, H4 holds that more available revenues means a school should be more likely to target any venue independent of ideology, which is measured with financial data. Yet a sharper test can also be achieved by testing for the opposite effect, that when a school is in debt resources will matter less and ideological congruence more (Alternative H4). To do this the revenue variable was reversed (higher values mean more debt) and multiplied by the ideology dummy so that the *more* a school is in debt, the *more* ideology matters.

### **Multivariate Analysis and Findings**

Advocates may target several venues at once, so the data was arranged so that there would be one observation of each school’s choice of whether to lobby each venue, six observed venue choices per school. Our dependent variable is the binary record of contact with each venue suggesting a logit model, but this creates two problems. One is level dependence. Perhaps schools prefer, or feel compelled, to lobby either a state or local venue because they are already working in another venue at that level, suggesting a nested quality to multi-level venue shopping. There may also be systematic differences in political cultures from one state to another that must be controlled for. To address these problems a mixed-effects logit model was used where the variables operationalizing our hypotheses and controls were estimated as fixed-effects (estimated as if it was a standard logit model) while differences between states and levels were estimated as

random-effects (controlling for between level and between state variation).<sup>8</sup> This model's estimates are given in Table 2's second column. To learn if one government level is systematically preferred over another, a binary variable was coded 1 if the observed venue was local and the model re-run with only state differences estimated as random-effects with these results in the last column.

---- Insert Table 2 about here ----

In the first model all hypotheses (counting Alternate H4 in place of H4) except H5 on geographically concentrated groups preferring local venues, are supported, and H5 *is* supported in the second model where a venue's level is used to estimate contact in the fixed-effects part of the equation. Consistent with the literature, the attraction of lobbying policy-makers with similar preferences draws advocates to venues where they are found. Yet while they still lobby their ideological friends in a multi-venue context, the story turns out to be more complex. Selecting venues is not an either/or choice, for with sufficient resources (seen in Alternate H4) advocates will target more and more venues, including those where preferences are not aligned.<sup>9</sup> The other variables explore other aspects of the multi-venue structure. Whenever officials in a venue, regardless of its type, location, or preference alignment, decide to take-up an issue, either because they wish to extend their jurisdiction or are just forced to by an enacting venue or higher-level mandate, lobbyists respond with advocacy (H2). In other words, whether venue officials are friendly, hostile, or indifferent, lobbyists must go where the action is in the federal system.

Yet the arrangement of venues in this system also allows advocates to be more strategic in their selections. Implementing venues where officials are appointed may be harder to pressure and H1 suggests that advocates are avoiding them when they are not already ideologically compatible. Yet this changes when officials in other venues with institutional authority over the

implementer, including venues at higher levels imposing mandates, are willing *and* able to force officials in the implementing venue to be sympathetic to charter school demands (H3).

Advocates for schools with geographically concentrated student bodies are also more likely to strategically lobby local venues rather than the state where their influence is diluted (H5). It is this institutional structure, both of individual venues and their relationship to each other in the federal hierarchy that makes lobbying strategy possible, especially when resources are limited.

That the constituent concentration hypothesis was only significant when the level variable was entered in the model (and was significant) suggests that it is worth further testing to see whether there is actually a level preference, or path dependence, in venue shopping as Constantelos (2010) suggests. If a venue at one level was lobbied, then perhaps it is more likely that other venues at the same level will also be lobbied. The original model was re-run with only state differences estimated as random-effects but now include a new binary variable in place of the original level indicator. For each school the venue most frequently lobbied was identified (in most cases it was state legislatures or local school districts) as well as whether it was at the state or local level and then removed that observation from the data set. For each school's remaining five venue observations a new dummy was coded 1 if the observed venue was at the same level as the removed venue and re-estimated the model (results available on request). The dummy indicating level path-dependence was positive and significant, and all of the other results remained unchanged in terms of signs and significance, indicating that charter schools were picking government *levels* to lobby as much as they were picking specific *venues*.

## Conclusion

Beyond these specific empirical results, this paper makes three contributions. First, it contributes to the emerging literature on strategic lobbying by laying out a simple but concise theoretical foundation applicable to many types of decisions lobbyists must make in the pursuit of member interests of which venue shopping merely one type. Much of the literature is about *how* advocates gain access and influence with policy-makers in different venues, but strategic lobbying is about *why* one action is taken, or why one venue is selected, instead of, or in addition to, others. Such decisions are primarily driven by preference alignment, but can also be directed towards other venues by institutionally imposed jurisdictions, venue compositions, and structured relationships, including the often contentious relationship between state and local venues as well as enacting and implementing venues. All choices are also constrained by the resources a lobbyist actually has.

This work also makes a direct, and hopefully significant, contribution to the emerging body of research on venue shopping. In this case venue selection in a federalist context, choosing between several different type of state and local venues, was explored. Future work might explore the interplay within horizontal levels of government in much greater detail, for here only a few simple venue characteristics and relationships were used. Or future work might focus on the even more complex relationship state and local venues have with the federal government. It would be interesting to see if the theoretical foundation used here applies to venue shopping in other federal systems, like the European Union which scholars have started studying in a multi-venue context (Constantelos 2007; Princen and Kerremans 2008; Ram 2010).

Finally, one other contribution of this work is that it uses the question of how advocates pick venues to lobby as a way to start bringing together a variety of different subfields of

political science research focusing on specific venues. This paper drew not only on the lobbying literature, but also on the literature on legislatures, implementing agencies, local political regimes, and on federalism. Indeed, there may be something unifying about questions of venue shopping and how this can pull together the scattered and isolated subfields of political science.

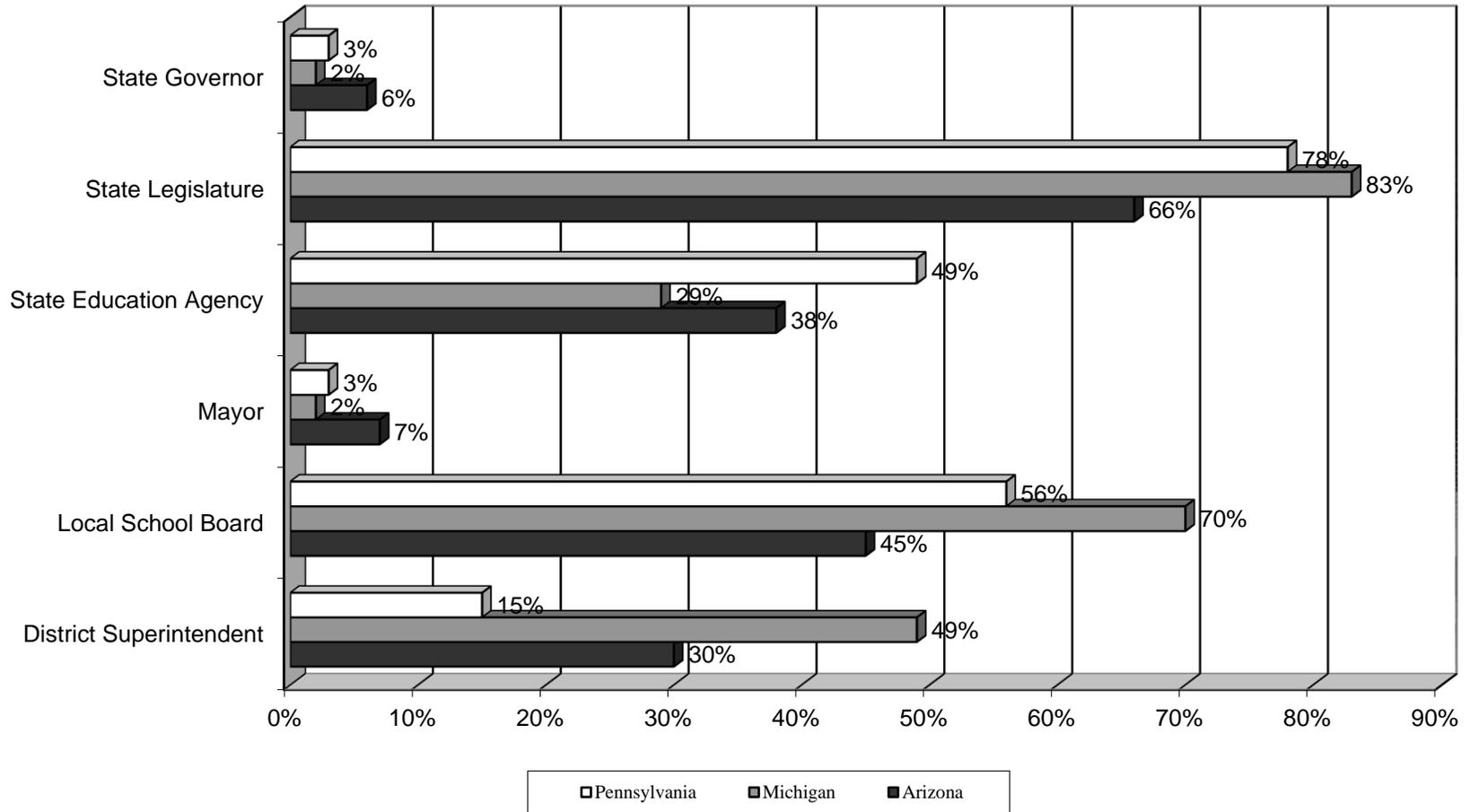
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**Figure 1: Percentage of Charter Schools Lobbying Each Venue**



**Table 1: Construction of Variables**

Variable Name	Variable Coding	Mean (S.D.)
Frequency of charter school leader contacting policy-makers in a venue (dependent variable)	From our survey 0 if “none to about once a year” 1 if “about once a month” or “weekly”	0.34 (0.47)
Policy-makers controlling a venue are supportive of charter school policy (H1)	Partisan affiliation of policy-makers controlling venue 0 for Democrats (unsupportive) 1 for Republicans (supportive)	0.65 (0.48)
Venue officials are actively working on charter school issues (H2)	Coded 1 for AZ and PA state legislatures and 0 for all others	0.12 (0.32)
Policy implementing venue is constrained by another venue so that it must support charter schools (H3)	0 if implementing venue (local boards and superintendents in all states plus state ed. agency in AZ) is local and opposed to charter schooling, and either state legislature or governor (but not both) are Republican. 1 if opposing implementing venue is at state level <i>or</i> both state legislature and governor are Republican. 2 if opposing implementing venue is at state <i>and</i> both state legislature and governor are Republican.	0.92 (0.96)
Charter school has disposable financial resources (H4)	From the GuideStar data base, total revenue – total expenditures.	20.89 (18.14)
Alternative H4	Disposable resources multiplied by the venue policy preference variable.	–0.57 (2.85)
School recruits students locally to find geographic breadth of students (H5)	From our survey. 0 for just district, 1 for more than one school district.	0.98 (0.12)
Venue is composed of elected officials	0 for no, 1 for yes.	0.67 (0.47)
School is located in state capital city	0 for no, 1 for yes.	0.19 (0.40)
School has government relations staff	From our survey, 0 for no, 1 for yes.	0.18 (0.38)
School is in an advocacy organization	From our survey, 0 for no, 1 for yes.	0.74 (0.44)
Observed venue is a local level venue	0 for state and 1 for local.	0.50 (0.50)

**Table 2: Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Venue Choice**  
ML Estimate (standard error)

Explanatory Variable	Controlling for State and Government Level Variation	Controlling for State Variation
Venue is Ideologically Friendly (H1)	0.97*** (0.24)	0.89*** (0.23)
Venue Officials are Actively Working on Issue (H2)	2.03*** (0.23)	1.96*** (0.22)
Implementing Venue is Constrained (H3)	0.92** (0.33)	0.78** (0.29)
School Has Disposable Resources (H4)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Disposable Resources X Venue Ideology (Alt. H4)	0.01*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.01)
School Recruits Students Locally (H5)	0.50 (0.28)	0.61* (0.27)
Venue is Composed of Elected Officials	-0.11 (0.15)	-0.08 (0.14)
Charter School is Located in the Capitol City	0.22 (0.17)	0.21 (0.17)
School has Staff Dedicated to Government Work	0.26 (0.16)	0.27* (0.16)
Implementing Venue Can be Constrained	-1.94*** (0.34)	-2.14*** (0.33)
Geographic Scope of Student Recruitment	-0.68 (0.59)	-0.75 (0.58)
School is Member of an Advocacy Organization	0.31* (0.15)	0.30* (0.15)
Observed Venue is Local	-	-2.51*** (0.60)
Constant	0.59 (1.06)	2.12* (1.02)
<i>F</i> - statistic	14.56***	14.30***
<i>N</i>	1,404	1,404

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < 0.005$

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, local level transportation authorities, school districts, economic development commissions, pollution control boards, and the like constitute more than half of all governmental units. The 1997 Census of Governments listed 87,453 local governmental units, including 13,725 school districts and 34,683 special districts (U.S. Census Bureau 2000, Table No. 490).

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<sup>2</sup> Nor did we ask about committee assignments. We also asked about the level of contact with the elected council of the city / town the school was located in, but we found that few school leaders indicated having contacted this venue.

<sup>3</sup> Governors were coded 1 if they were Republican, and in Pennsylvania the head of the state education agency was coded 1 because he was appointed by Governor Tom Ridge (R) while Michigan's head was appointed by a Democrat-controlled state education board. Arizona elected a Republican education secretary. Mayors in Pennsylvania are elected in partisan elections. Rather than go back to votes in the 2004 election as a source of data for non-partisan mayors in Arizona and Michigan, risking a multi-collinearity problem with our school board ideology measure, we investigated the histories of each mayor along with newspaper accounts to code them as Republican (coded 1) or Democrat. In a majority of cases the mayor either had a history in a party or went on to higher office in a partisan election. In the remaining cases we coded their affiliation based on party affiliation mentioned in their local newspapers.

<sup>4</sup> We obtained data on the percentage of Republicans in each chamber in 2002 and averaged them. Republicans controlled both chambers in Michigan and Pennsylvania, controlled the Arizona House and were tied with Democrats in the Senate, effectively dominating in all three.

<sup>5</sup> Precincts that were at least two-thirds in a school district were counted in their entirety.

<sup>6</sup> Votes were obtained through secretaries of state or from county departments of elections.

<sup>7</sup> This still left many local venues un-codable. Rather than drop these school-venue observations, we used a multiple imputation statistical technique to replace these missing ideology values, as well as missing observations on charter school revenue and expenses (see below for H4). In STATA we used the "mi" command structure. Because we are replacing three variables, and there is no relationship between missing ideology values and financial values, the multivariate

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normal regression method was used (“mvn” command) to estimate 10 iterations of the missing values with our dependent variable, all independent variables, and other school-level information variables in our data set, as is normal in such operations. In the end we had data on 234 schools.

<sup>8</sup> Since we ran the model in a multiple imputations setting, the STATA command took the form of “mi estimate: xtmeologit” followed by the dependent and independent variables.

<sup>9</sup> We tried to push this hypothesis further by creating a count variable of the number of venues each school contacted and estimated it with a poisson regression model using the resource variable as the predictor (results available on request). The estimate was positive and significant ( $p < 0.005$ ), but since the venue-specific variables could not be included, it is of limited value.