Article

Family Ties? The Limits of Fathering Daughters on Congressional Behavior

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Abstract

Scholars have long suggested that familial life can affect political behavior and, more recently, have found that fathering daughters leads men to adopt more liberal positions on gender equality policies. However, few have focused on the impact of fathering a daughter on congressional behavior, particularly in an era of heightened partisan polarization. Using an original data set of familial information, we examine whether fathering a daughter influences male legislators' (a) roll call and cosponsorship support for women's issues in the 110th to 114th Congresses and (b) cosponsorship of bills introduced by female legislators in the 110th Congress. We find that once party affiliation is taken into account, having a daughter neither predicts support for women's issues nor cosponsorship of bills sponsored by women. Our findings suggest there are limits to the direct effects of parenting daughters on men's political behavior, and that scholars should remain attentive to institutional and partisan contexts.

Keywords

Congress, cosponsorship, parenthood, gender, legislative behavior

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Sociologists and political scientists have long argued that family life influences political attitudes and behaviors (see, e.g., Elder & Greene, 2012; Glass, Bengtson, & Dunham, 1986; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002; Greenlee, 2014; Hellwege & Bryant, 2017). Although these studies are focused primarily on the influence of familial dynamics on the political behavior of the mass public, Ebonya Washingon (2008) sought to extend these insights to the study of congressional behavior. In her article, "Female Socialization: How Daughters Affect Their Legislator Fathers' Voting on Women's Issues," she suggests that previous studies of the behavior of members of Congress omitted an important explanatory variable from their analyses: the gender of representatives' children. Washington argued that, by increasing sympathy for women's issues and gender inequality, the experience of parenting daughters would lead legislators to adopt more liberal attitudes. Using roll call data from the 105th to the 108th Congresses, Washington found that as the number of daughters fathered by a representative increased, the likelihood that the representative supported bills favorable to women's interests, particularly those concerning reproductive rights, also increased. Washington's finding stimulated a new area of research regarding the influence of fathering daughters on the behavior of other male elites, such as judges (Glynn & Sen, 2015) and corporate executives (Cronqvist & Yu, 2017; M. Dahl, Dezső, & Ross, 2012).

Yet, in the years since Washington's study, much has changed within the institution of Congress. Most notably, party leaders, with the support of activists and affiliated interest groups, increasingly control the behavior of rank and file members through the strategic use of their agenda setting powers, committee assignments, staffing decisions, and campaign contributions (Aldrich, 1995; Binder, 1997; Cox & McCubbins, 1993, 2005; LaRaja & Schaffner, 2015; Pearson, 2015; Rohde, 1991; Theriault, 2008). Members of Congress have relatively little latitude to deviate from the directives of party leaders, and such pressures are thought to help explain rising partisan polarization in congressional policy making (Layman, Carsey, & Horowitz, 2006; Schaffner, 2011; Theriault, 2008). Given the dramatic increase of partisan polarization in Congress (for a review see Schaffner, 2011), does fathering a daughter continue to exert a discernable effect on the behavior of male legislators?

In this article, we build on Washington's research by examining the impact of fatherhood of daughters on both male legislators' support (via roll call voting and cosponsorship) for issues of import to women and their willingness to cosponsor legislation introduced by female members. Using data from the 110th to the 114th Congress, we find that once party affiliation is taken into account, fathering a daughter predicts neither support for gendered policies

nor a male member's probability of cosponsoring legislation with his female colleagues. These findings suggest that the partisan context within Congress may now suppress the observable influence of fathering daughters on the behavior of male members of Congress, and more generally that the effect of fathering daughters on elite behavior within an institution may be conditional on the intensity of polarization within that setting.

The Influence of Fatherhood of Daughters on Male Legislators

Scholars studying the behavior of women in Congress have long noted that parental status shapes policy preferences, self-presentation, and the ways in which women discuss their policy concerns (Carroll, 2002; Reingold, 2000; Shogan, 2001; Swers, 2002; Walsh, 2002).[1] However, scholars have rarely considered the potentially distinctive ways in which gender, parental roles, and familial composition may shape the legislative behavior of *men* in office.

One noteworthy exception is Washington's (2008) article on the impact of daughters on the roll call votes of legislators (see also Hellwege & Bryant, 2017). For the 105th to 108th Congresses, Washington found that being a parent of a daughter (as opposed to being the parent of a son) increased legislators' support for policy proposals in areas that are traditionally understood as "women's issues," and that this effect was particularly strong among Democrats.

Washington's findings were novel and provocative, but her work is not without limitations. First, the majority of her findings concerning the roll call voting of members of Congress on "women's issues" originated from models that included both male *and* female legislators. Although Washington controls for the gender of the legislator, she does not examine the *interaction* between gender and having daughters. Consequently, it is unclear whether her estimates of the effect of daughters on the legislative behavior of representatives hold for both men and women (see Tables 4-6 and Figure 2 in her article). As discussed above, recent research suggests that if daughters influence political behavior, this effect should be the strongest among men, because fathers of daughters (compared to mothers of daughters) obtain more novel information about gender issues from the experience of having female children (for a theoretical account, see Sharrow, Rhodes, Nteta, & Greenlee, 2018). It is, therefore, possible that her findings only apply to fathers in Congress, but this cannot be determined for certain given the modeling approach used in her article.

Second, and central to our study, Washington's analysis is now more than a decade old. Given the sharp increase in partisan polarization in Congress, it

is unclear whether her conclusions still hold (Layman et al., 2006; Schaffner, 2011). After all, a major consequence of partisan polarization has been to reduce the importance of nonpartisan factors in explaining legislators' behavior (Cox & McCubbins, 2005; Gerber & Schickler, 2017; Pearson, 2015; Theriault, 2008). For instance, empirical evidence suggests that partisan polarization has reduced the influence of gender on congressional roll call votes, as women in the Republican caucus become more conservative and men in the Democratic caucus have fallen in line with their female colleagues (Frederick, 2010).[2]

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The limitations of Washington's analysis suggests that further investigation into the relationship between fatherhood of daughters and legislative behavior (including its limits in a hyperpartisan environment) is warranted. Using data from the 110th to the 114th Congresses, we first explore if male (or female) legislators with daughters exhibit similar levels of support for policies that benefit women when compared with their counterparts with sons.[3] Roll call voting is the quintessential legislative behavior and the subject of an enormous empirical literature (see Theriault, Hickey, & Blass, 2011). Cosponsorship on key issues is also an important signal of support for a given piece of legislation (Fowler, 2006a; Kessler & Krehbiel, 1996; Rocca & Sanchez, 2008). Taking these two legislative behaviors together, and following the empirical results of Washington (2008), as well as the broader literature, which argues that fatherhood of daughters tends to induce more liberal attitudes in men (Oswald & Powdthavee, 2010; Sharrow et al., 2018; Warner, 1991; Warner & Steel, 1999), we might expect that male legislators with female children will be more likely than male legislators with sons to vote in favor of or cosponsor policies that benefit women. However, given the increasingly partisan nature of Congress during the period we examine, we hypothesize that the previously established effects of fathering a daughter on support for women's issues will be overwhelmed by the impact of party. That is, party will be the strongest predictor of support for women's issues (H_1).

Although partisan forces may overwhelm the ability of members of Congress to be influenced by personal familial characteristics, more informal and less institutionalized legislative behaviors may be more inoculated from the pressures of party leaders. Fathers of daughters in Congress may have different personal networks than fathers of only sons; these differences may, as we explain below, lead to different patterns of cosponsorship behavior. Using data from the 110th Congress, we consider whether male members with daughters differ from male members with sons in their proclivity to

cosponsor legislation that was introduced by their female colleagues. Cosponsorship is a vitally important legislative activity, wherein members signal support for policy positions to constituents (Koger, 2003; Mayhew, 1974), communicate information about their legislative preferences to other representatives (Kessler & Krehbiel, 1996), strengthen working relationships with other members (Fowler, 2006a), and build legislative coalitions (Wawro, 2001; Wilson & Young, 1997). Patterns of cosponsorship across legislators and bills also provide indications of an underlying network of social relationships among legislators (Burkett, 1997; Fowler, 2006a, 2006b; Skvoretz & Faust, 2002; Zhang et al., 2008).

In making decisions about what bills to cosponsor, legislators tend to gravitate to proposals sponsored by others who share similar characteristics—a phenomenon known as "homophily" in the social networks literature (Goodreau, Kitts, & Morris, 2009; Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003; Ruef, Aldrich, & Carter, 2003). Thus, coideologues, copartisans, and members with shared racial identities tend to cosponsor one another's legislation (Craig, Cranmer, Desmarais, Clark, & Moscardelli, 2015; Pellegrini & Grant, 1999; Rippere, 2016). Gender also influences cosponsorship behavior in Congress, at least on certain issues, although this research has focused primarily on the behavior of female legislators (Swers, 2002, 2005; Wolbrecht, 2002).[4]

Given the tendency toward homophily in cosponsorship networks, it is plausible that parentage of a child whose gender "bridges the gap" between legislators of different genders may serve as a basis for increased legislative collaboration across gender lines. If fatherhood of a daughter alone does not necessarily make male legislators more likely to support women's issues, as we hypothesize, their cosponsorship decisions may be contingent on the gender of the bill sponsor. Especially, given that female legislators are also more likely to promote legislation focused on creating more opportunities and equity for women (Gerrity, Osborn, & Mendez, 2007; Swers, 2002, 2016; Wolbrecht, 2002), there may be an interactive effect of the content of the bill and the gender of the bill sponsor. Thus, we hypothesize that male members of Congress who have daughters will be more likely than male members with only sons to cosponsor legislation introduced by female colleagues (H2).

Data and Methods

To investigate the influence of fathering daughters on male legislators' behavior in Congress, we use an original data set we collected for this purpose. Using the Congressional Biographical Directory,[5] we gathered information concerning the gender of each of the children of each member of the House for the 110th through the 114th Congress.[6] With the election of women to the

House of Representatives at increasing levels between the 110th and the 114th (Center for American Women in Politics [CAWP], 2017), these congressional sessions are especially useful for our purposes.

For each Congress, two research assistants coded the familial information for each legislator and the average agreement between coders was 92.2%. To strengthen confidence in the accuracy of the Congressional Biographical Directory data, we cross-validated a random 20% of the familial information on the presence and gender of representatives' children using member biographies posted on current and cached versions of their congressional websites (cached versions were obtained through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, https://archive.org/web/). Over 90% of the information between both sources matched. When disagreements occurred, we used the official information listed in the Congressional Biographical Directory for the sake of clarity and consistency.

As our units of analysis are legislators with children in each Congress for whom we can be certain about the gender of their children, the total number of observations is 1,499 legislator–Congress dyads. Of these 1,499 parent legislators, 1,210 are men and 239 are women. Note that we only include legislators with children in our analysis because selection bias limits our ability to compare parents to nonparents (i.e., the decision whether or not to become a parent is a not a random event, in many cases, see for example, G. Dahl and Moretti [2008]). As we are interested in the effect of having a daughter on legislative behavior, our main independent variable is an indicator for whether a male legislator has a daughter or not. Of the 1,499 legislators in the data set, 1,146 have at least one daughter and 303 only have sons. The mean number of daughters among all parents is 1.3 ($SD = 1$) and the median is 1.

Because theories about parenthood, gender, and behavior focus on *the event* of having a daughter (see, for example, Dinas, 2013; Sharrow et al., 2018), we use an indicator variable for the presence/absence of a daughter as the main independent variable in our analysis, rather than either the number of daughters in the family (as Washington does) or the proportion of all children in the family that are daughters.[7] We do, however, include robustness checks in the Supplemental Appendix for all analyses this article in which we use these alternative measures of experience with female children. The results with these alternative measures are very similar to all of those presented in the main text, though we do make sure to note below if and when they at all diverge.

Following Washington (2008), we also include a control variable for the total number of children a legislator has. The mean number of children is 2.6 ($SD = 1.2$) and the median is 2. To investigate the role of partisanship, we

include a dummy variable for a legislator's party affiliation. There are 696 Democrats and 753 Republicans. Whether a legislator has a daughter is also relatively equally distributed among Democrats and Republicans; 546 Democratic parents have at least one daughter and 600 Republican parents have at least one daughter.

Support for Women's Issues

For our first dependent variable, we draw on one of the same data sources that Washington (2008) uses in her study: American Association of University Women (AAUW) "voting record" scores.[8] For each Congressional session, the AAUW rates members of Congress on how well they supported AAUW's legislative priorities. All AAUW priority pieces of legislation for the 110th to 114th Congresses are detailed in the Supplemental Appendix.[9] The priority bills that AAUW identify generally fall under the categories of education (e.g., Title IX and/or proposals for addressing sexual violence on campuses), economic security (e.g., equal pay and parental leave), and civil rights (e.g., reproductive rights or gender-based discrimination). Note that the AAUW altered their method for scoring members of Congress after the 110th Congress. For the 110th, each legislator's rating is the percentage of the priority pieces of legislation on which the legislator voted in line with AAUW's position. After the 110th, the scores also take into account cosponsorship for some bills. Specifically, the rating is the percentage of the priority pieces of legislation on which the legislator voted in line with AAUW's position *or* cosponsored a bill that AAUW supports. Votes and cosponsorship are given the same weight in the voting record. Note that for this reason, even though AAUW has continued to call their score sheet a "voting record" for consistency's sake, our test can be interpreted as estimating the effect of having daughters on overall support for women's issues, as for all but one of the Congressional sessions this includes both roll call votes and cosponsorship. Although a bit less straightforward, we consider this dependent variable a marked improvement over the AAUW score that Washington (2008) used because it is a more comprehensive measure of support for legislation in women's interests.

Figure 1 plots the distribution of this variable for all legislators with children and then also separated by the gender of the legislator. The rating ranges from 0 to 100 with a mean of 53.9 for all parents and standard deviation of 38.8. The median AAUW rating for all parents is 55.

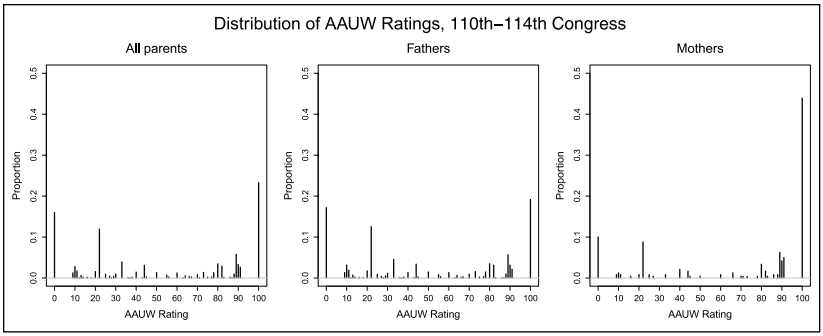

Figure 1. Distribution of dependent variable: Support for women's issues (rating by the AAUW).

Note. Plots show the distribution of our first dependent variable, legislators' support for women's issues in the 110th through the 114th Congress as rated by the AAUW, for all members with at least one child (left), fathers (middle), and mothers (right). Ratings on a scale from 0 to 100, registered as the proportion of bills the legislator voted in line with AAUW's stance (110th-114th Congress) and/or cosponsored a bill that AAUW supported (111th-114th Congress). AAUW = American Association of University Women.

Cosponsorship With Women Legislators

Although the AAUW scores take into account the substantive content of bills, we are also interested in the effect of the *bill sponsor's gender*. To investigate our second hypothesis, that male representatives who father a daughter are more likely to cosponsor legislation offered by female representatives, we utilize the McMillan, Phadke, Goist, and Denny (2017) cosponsorship network data, which was compiled from James Fowler's comprehensive information on individual legislative cosponsorship activity (Fowler, 2006a, 2006b). Here, we limit our analysis to the 110th Congress; Fowler only provides cosponsorship data up until the 108th Congress, with the 109th and 110th updated by Andrew Scott Waugh and Yunkyu Sohn. The 110th Congress, therefore, provides the most recent snapshot of this type of legislative behavior for which we also have familial information.

The McMillan et al. cosponsorship sociomatrix is structured so that *i,j* is the number of times House member *i* cosponsored a bill sponsored by House member *j*. We converted the sociomatrix for the 110th Congress into an edgelist so that each observation contains a dyad for each pair of legislators. Each edge was then weighted by how many times the "sender" legislator cosponsored a bill sponsored by the "receiver" legislator. Because we are interested in how having a daughter affects whether male legislators are more likely to cosponsor female legislators' bills, we limit our analysis to cases where the

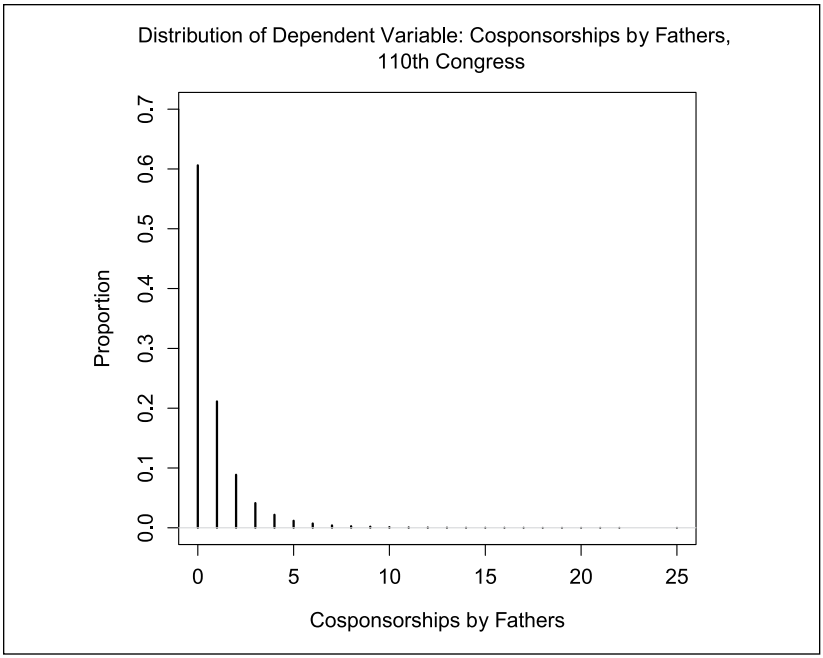

Figure 2. Distribution of dependent variable: Cosponsorships (number of cosponsorships between legislators where the cosponsoring legislator is a male legislator with at least one child).
Note. Plot shows the distribution of our second dependent variable, the number of cosponsorships in the 110th Congress between two legislators where the cosponsoring legislator is a father in Congress.

cosponsor was a male member of Congress with at least one child, and then assess whether the gender of his children or the gender of the bill sponsor increases the likelihood of a cosponsorship. Therefore, our dependent variable is the number of times a male legislator with children cosponsored a piece of legislation. For this subset of cosponsors, there are 46,393 edges out of 117,744 possible dyadic pairs. In other words, there are 46,393 instances where a male legislator with children cosponsored at least one bill sponsored by another legislator. Note that the unit of analysis here is at the legislator–legislator dyadic level; our analysis focuses on the nature of cosponsorship *between* two legislators. Figure 2 presents the distribution of this dependent variable. The number of cosponsorships between legislators, where the cosponsor is a male with at least one child, ranges from 0 to 25. The mean of this variable is 0.81 ($SD = 1.48$) and the median is 0.

For this analysis, we include several additional independent variables, including the gender of the sponsor of a piece of legislation. This is measured using an indicator for whether or not the sponsoring legislator is female. In addition, as partisanship drives most cosponsorship activity (Rippere, 2016), we include the party identification of both the cosponsor and sponsor as control variables. This allows us to examine whether the interaction of two legislators' party affiliations increases the frequency with which one legislator cosponsors the other's bill.

Results

Results: Support for Women's Issues

Our first test investigates whether having a daughter correlates with a higher AAUW rating, and thus greater support for women's issues. Table 1 presents the results from ordinary least squares regression models in which the dependent variable is AAUW rating. As we pool observations from the 110th to 114th Congress and considering the high levels of turnover in the House, we use cluster-robust standard errors at the legislator level and dummy variables for each Congressional session.

Although our theory leads us to focus on men with children (Model 1), Table 1 also includes a model for women with children (Model 2) as a point of reference. In the Supplemental Appendix, we show a model that pools these observations and includes additional interaction terms for estimating the effect of a legislator's gender and having a daughter on support for women's issues, as an alternative way to present our findings. The first three coefficients in Table 1 show the effect of having a daughter, being Republican, and the interaction of those two variables. In line with our expectations, neither the coefficient for having a daughter nor the interaction is statistically significant in Model 1 or 2, suggesting that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that having a daughter has no effect on support women's issues among fathers (or mothers) in Congress.

Republicans are, in general, much less likely to vote or cosponsor bills according to AAUW priorities. Republican men with only sons are rated about 71.4 points lower on the 100-point scale, compared with Democratic men with only sons ($p < .001$). Republican men with daughters are rated about 69.9 points lower than Democratic men with daughters. Considering Model 2, the results are nearly identical for mothers. As we anticipated, partisanship is far and away the strongest predictor of supporting legislation in women's interests.

However, it is difficult to support the claim that having a daughter has "no effect" based on a nonsignificant regression coefficient alone. Therefore, we

Table 1. Effect of Having a Daughter on Support for Women's Issues Using Ordinary Least Squares Regression.

Variables	Model 1 (fathers)	Model 2 (mothers)
Has daughter	−0.53 (1.55)	−0.25 (1.88)
Republican	−71.36** (1.86)	−71.93** (8.37)
Has daughter × Republican	1.51 (2.09)	1.50 (8.98)
Number of children	−0.27 (0.36)	−0.14 (0.81)
Congress (baseline: 110th)		
111th Congress	−25.33** (1.12)	−23.53** (3.67)
112th Congress	−23.56** (1.36)	−20.08** (3.43)
113th Congress	−4.85** (1.20)	−11.85** (2.90)
114th Congress	−9.05** (1.20)	−11.30** (3.23)
Intercept	103.25** (1.68)	107.98** (2.68)
Observations	1,210	239
Adjusted R^2	.89	.84

Note. Cluster-robust standard errors, clustered by legislator, reported in parentheses. Regression coefficients estimated using ordinary least squares. The unit of analysis is each legislator in the 110th-114th Congress (men in Model 1, women in Model 2) known to have at least one son or daughter. The dependent variable is the AAUW 0-100 score given by the AAUW to each legislator. This score was calculated by the proportion of bills the legislator voted in line with AAUW's stance (110th-114th Congress) and/or cosponsored a bill that AAUW supported (111th-114th Congress). AAUW = American Association of University Women.
**$p < .001$.

follow the suggestions of others to rule out that the range of potential estimates contains large, substantively meaningful effects (Gross, 2014; Hartman & Hidalgo, 2018; Lakens, 2017; Rainey, 2014). We calculate 90% confidence intervals for the coefficient estimate of interest in our model (Rainey, 2014). The lower bound of the confidence interval for the first coefficient in Model 1, the effect of having a daughter on AAUW rating, is −3.07 and the upper bound is 2.01, meaning that the increase on the 100-point AAUW scale for fathers of daughters could be as high as 2.01 at the 90% level, but that AAUW score could also decrease by as much as 3.07 points for fathers of daughters, which is in the opposite direction than previous literature and theory would have us expect. In both directions, neither the increase nor the decrease is substantively very meaningful. We interpret these results as further evidence that the effect of having a daughter on support for women's legislation is negligible.

Turning to the other variables in the regression model, our control for number of children is not statistically significant in either Model 1 or 2, indicating that the more children a male or female legislator has does not statistically

significantly affect their AAUW rating. Next, the dummy variables for each Congressional session are statistically significant and negative, indicating that compared with the baseline level of the 110th Congress, members have lower AAUW ratings in the later Congresses. Considering the change in measurement of the dependent variable after the 110th Congress, we are hesitant to meaningfully interpret this finding, though this could be explained by the "higher bar" of cosponsorship in the 111th to 114th Congresses (and thus, a lower AAUW rating). Future research should examine more closely whether legislators have indeed become less favorable toward legislation supporting women's interests over time, or whether this is an artifact of the data.

In sum, our analysis does not support the view that fathering (or mothering) daughters increases support for women's issues among male (or female) legislators with children. Rather, consistent with the literature on partisan polarization and our first hypothesis, we find that partisan identity drives members' support for legislation in women's interests.[10]

Results: Cosponsorship With Women Legislators

Next, we examine whether the number of cosponsorships by a male legislator with at least one child increases if (a) that legislator has a daughter and (b) the sponsor of the legislation is a woman. Recall that we limit our analysis to the 110th Congress for this section because it is the most recent Congress for which this type of cosponsorship data are available. Also recall that we are examining cosponsor–sponsor dyads in which the cosponsors are men with at least one child and whose children we could identify the gender of to make the most reliable comparison.

We estimate the effects of our independent variables on cosponsorship using negative binomial regression because our dependent variable is a count and heavily skewed toward zero as seen in Figure 2 (King, 1989). Negative binomial models account for an overdispersion in count data and allow the conditional variance to exceed the conditional mean. We additionally calculate robust standard errors clustered by the legislator–sender—that is, the cosponsor—because the unit of analysis is again at the dyadic level. Model 1 in Table 2 shows the results from the negative binomial model in which the dependent variable is the number of times that a male member of Congress cosponsored legislation.[11]

The main estimates of interest are the first three coefficients in the table for whether the male cosponsor has a daughter, the sponsor of the legislation is female, and the interaction between the two. If congressmen are more likely to cosponsor legislation with women if they have a daughter, then the coefficient for this interaction term should be positive and statistically

Table 2. Effect of Sponsor Gender and Having a Daughter on Number of Cosponsorships by Men Using Negative Binomial Regression.

Variables	Model 1 (all ties)	Model 2 (bipartisan ties)
Has daughter	−0.13** (0.01)	−0.021 (0.02)
Female bill sponsor	0.01 (0.06)	−0.18* (0.08)
Has daughter × Female bill sponsor	0.00 (0.02)	0.082 (0.07)
Republican	−1.80** (0.03)	−0.73** (0.05)
Republican bill sponsor	−1.05** (0.05)	
Republican × Republican bill sponsor	2.30** (0.05)	
Number of children	0.04** (0.00)	0.02** (0.01)
Intercept	0.43** (0.03)	−0.66** (0.05)
Observations	117,744	58,872
Log likelihood	−135,984.80	−46,522.43
AIC	271,985.70	93,056.85
Θ	0.83** (0.01)	0.53** (0.01)

Note. Cluster-robust standard errors, clustered by the "sender-legislator" (i.e., cosponsor), reported in parentheses. Regression coefficients estimated using a negative binomial model. The unit of analysis is each possible cosponsorship dyad in the 110th Congress in which the cosponsor is a male legislator known to at least have one son or daughter. Model 2 shows only *bipartisan* cosponsorship dyads, that is, the dependent variable is the number of times a male legislator with children cosponsored a bill introduced by someone of the opposite party. AIC = Akaike information criterion.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .001$.

significant. As seen in Table 2, however, the coefficient for this interaction term is effectively 0 (and needless to say, not statistically significant) suggesting that men are no more likely to cosponsor legislation if they have a daughter and the sponsor of that legislation is female. However, the coefficient for having a daughter is statistically significant and negative, indicating that men who have daughters are slightly less likely to cosponsor legislation in general, regardless of the sponsor's gender.

Due to the nonlinear and multiplicative nature of negative binomial regression coefficients, additional manipulation is necessary to substantively interpret our results. The left-hand plot in Figure 3 presents the predicted effect of having a daughter on the number of times a male legislator with children cosponsored a bill, conditional on the bill sponsor's gender. Congressmen who have daughters cosponsor 0.11 fewer bills if the bill sponsor is a female legislator, and 0.10 fewer bills if the sponsor is a male legislator.

These results confirm that party identification is a strong predictor of cosponsorship. We can again examine these effects using predicted

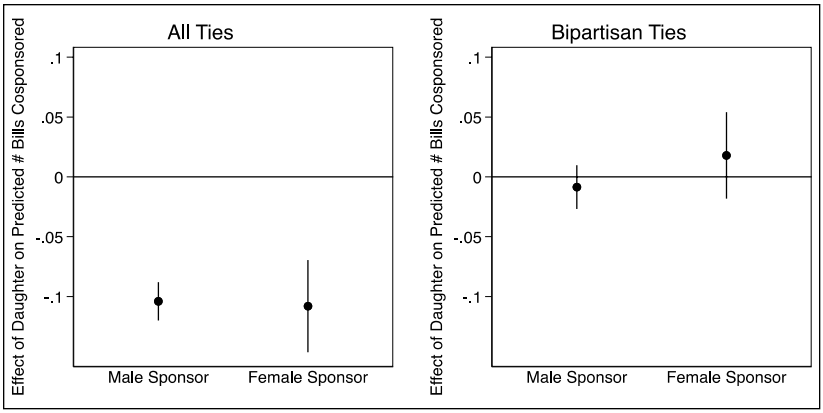

Figure 3. Predicted effect of having a daughter on number of bills cosponsored by men, conditional on gender of bill sponsor.
Note. The plot on the left depicts the effect of having a daughter on the predicted number of bills cosponsored by a male legislator with at least one child, conditional on the gender of the bill's sponsor. The plot on the right depicts the effect of having a daughter on the predicted number of *bipartisan* cosponsorships by a male legislator with at least one child, conditional on the gender of the bill's sponsor. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

cosponsorship counts. Holding other variables in the model at their means, when both legislators in the dyadic pair are Democrats, the predicted number of cosponsorships is 1.53. When they are both Republicans, the predicted number of cosponsorships is 0.88. Bipartisanship cosponsorship is much less common. Democrats cosponsor 0.54 bills that were sponsored by Republicans, and Republicans cosponsor only 0.25 bills that were sponsored by Democrats.

Although shared party drives most cosponsorship activity, it is possible that when male legislators *do* cross party lines to cosponsor a bill, the gender of their children and the bill's sponsor play a bigger role. Model 2 in Table 2 presents results from a negative binomial regression for which all intraparty edges were discarded and only cross-party edges are included. That is, the cosponsor and sponsor are of the opposite party for each observation in this analysis and the coefficients estimate the effect of having a daughter and the bill sponsor's gender on the number of *bipartisan* cosponsorships of a father in Congress. The right-hand plot in Figure 3 again presents the predicted number of bills cosponsored by fathers, conditional on the bill sponsor's gender, but only for these bipartisan ties. The findings for this analysis do not change much from those described above. The coefficient for the daughter variable is no longer statistically significant in this model, as well as in the models using alternate specifications of this variable (number of daughters,

proportion of daughters) in the Supplemental Appendix. Most importantly, the interaction term is still not statistically significant, suggesting that our second hypothesis is not supported: having a daughter does not significantly increase the rate at which male legislators cosponsor a bill sponsored by a female legislator of the opposite party. Thus, once again, we see that the power of partisanship diminishes any effect that fathering daughters may otherwise have on the cosponsorship behavior of male members of Congress.

Discussion

Washington's (2008) study of the link between congressional voting behavior and familial characteristics has influenced myriad scholarly investigations of the potentially transformative effect of having a daughter on both mass and elite behavior. Although influential, there have been few, if any, empirical investigations of whether these patterns persist in an era of extreme partisan polarization in Congress. In this article, we sought to further test the hypotheses derived from Washington's work and extend her analysis to cosponsorship behavior. We find little support for the continued influence of fatherhood of daughters on congressional behavior. First, in line with our hypothesis, our analysis of legislative support for women's issues in the 110th through 114th Congress found that, compared with fathers of only sons, fathers of daughters were not significantly more likely to support women's issues. These results held for mothers as well. Second, contrary to our hypothesis, we found no evidence that men with daughters more frequently cosponsor legislation with their female colleagues (of the same or opposite party) in the 110th Congress. Rather, we find that partisanship best explains both the formal legislative behavior of roll call voting and cosponsorship based on the *substance of legislation*, as well as the more informal behavior of choosing whose bills to cosponsor based on *personal characteristics of the sponsor*.

In accounting for these results, we believe that the institutionalized partisan context of Congress has increasingly limited the behaviors of male members of Congress. Unlike CEOs (M. Dahl et al., 2012) and judges (Glynn & Sen, 2015), whose decisions are not directly constrained by the pressure of political party loyalty, members of Congress appear to have increasingly become beholden to party directives, which may attenuate the effect of fatherhood of daughters on their political behavior. Our research suggests that male congressional members increasingly operate in a more constrained institutional environment in which their behaviors are heavily influenced by their partisan affiliations and the pressure to conform to their party's directives (Schaffner, 2011). Under such extreme conditions, it is unlikely that fatherhood of daughters is sufficient to shape the behavior of male legislators

above and beyond such institutional constraints. Our findings suggest that scholars should remain attentive to such contexts in future research.

To be sure, our work represents a first cut at a complex phenomenon. Going forward, future work should extend our analysis to earlier sessions of Congress to better trace the potential weakening of the relationship between familial structure and congressional behavior over time. Moreover, given the differing influence of partisanship in cosponsorship activity in the House relative to the Senate, scholars would be wise to explore whether similar dynamics exist in the Senate (Rippere, 2016). In addition, recent scholarship points toward the importance of birth order—and particularly first daughters—on men's political behavior (Greenlee, Nteta, Rhodes, & Sharrow, 2018; Sharrow et al., 2018). Because birth order of children of legislators was not retained in the Congressional Directory Biographies, we were unable to analyze any impacts of eldest daughters on men's legislative behavior; future work should parse these possible effects.

Roll call votes and cosponsorship are, of course, only two of many activities that legislators engage in during their time in Congress. Increasingly, scholars have turned to floor speeches, amendment proposals, campaign ads and mailers, and other legislative activities to more fully understand congressional behavior (e.g., Grimmer, 2013; Pearson & Dancey, 2011a, 2011b). It is possible that we were testing a "difficult case" in which partisan forces are still relatively strong, and there it is unlikely that we would find a statistically significant effect for fathering a daughter. Future work that examines the effect of parenthood on other legislative behaviors—those that are perhaps more inoculated from partisan polarization—may produce different insights than those we offer here.

Similarly, it is important to further examine cosponsorship data over time for potential network-level effects of parenthood and child gender. Very little is understood about how parenthood affects community-level behaviors among members of Congress. Our data are particularly amenable to such efforts, which would provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of whether, how and under what conditions the family structure of members of Congress affects the operation of the institution as a whole.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. Women's impact on legislative bodies, regardless of parental status and despite their underrepresentation, is well established in the literature (Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, & Carroll, 2018; Dodson, 2006; Dolan & Ford, 1998; Minta & Brown, 2014; Reingold, 2008). Although much of this work focuses specifically on women as a group, the literature also suggests many important differences *among* women, particularly with regard to party (Elder, 2008; Frederick, 2010) and race (Brown & Gershon, 2016; Hawkesworth, 2003).
2. Some evidence suggests that this may unfold differently in the Senate, where fewer women (particularly Republicans) have been elected to serve (Swers, 2013).
3. These later Congresses were more polarized than the 105th to 108th Congresses (Jacobson, 2013), on which Washington (2008) bases her analyses. The gap between Democrats and Republicans has grown over time, with Republicans driving much of the change in both chambers.
4. Such patterns have also been identified in state legislatures (e.g., Clark & Caro, 2013).
5. The official Congressional Directory Biographies can be found here: http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp
6. Some congressional biographies noted that a legislator had children but did not indicate the names or gender of the children. Other biographies contained no information about whether the legislator had children. As we are interested in how a child's gender affects parents' behavior, and thus only want to include observations for which we can be certain legislators had sons and/or daughters, these cases are dropped from the analyses.
7. Recent research finds little support for the proportion of daughters as a key predictor (Sharrow et al., 2018).

8. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is a long-standing feminist advocacy organization, comprised of both local- and national-level chapters, with the broad aim to pursue work which empowers women. They are particularly focused on addressing gender equity concerns in education and the workplace. They also produce research reports, advocate on issues of public policy, and fund both scholarly research and the work of local feminist organizations. For our purposes, their AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record "provides information about elected federal legislators through the votes they cast on issues that are critical to the Action Fund's mission," including on issues of "equal pay, education, campus sexual assault, campaign finance, human trafficking, and reproductive rights" (AAUW, 2017).
9. The AAUW voting record scoresheets are available online: https://www.aauwaction.org/voter-education/congressional-voting-record/
10. All of these results are robust whether we measure fathering a daughter using the number of daughter or proportion of daughters a member of Congress has. See the Supplemental Appendix for these models.
11. As with the analyses of AAUW ratings, the results we describe below largely remain the same whether we measure fathering a daughter using an indicator variable (presented here), a count variable for the number of daughters a father has, or the proportion of daughters in relation to all children. See the Supplemental Appendix for these models.

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