

Supplemental Appendix  
to  
“Polarizing the Electoral Connection:  
Partisan Representation in  
Supreme Court Confirmation Politics”

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## Supplemental Appendix

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In this appendix, we present some additional notes on our methods. We also include a supplemental table providing more information on the sample sizes in the nominee polls used. We comment on some additional analysis we did to see if our findings could be drawn out further. Finally, we present a series of figures showing estimates (with uncertainty) by state and party for all remaining nominees (highlighting Alito and Kagan as examples).

1. *Comprehensiveness of polls.* To produce estimates for as many nominees as possible, we searched the Roper Center’s *iPoll* archive. These nominees are the only ones with sufficient polling data. For nominees who featured in only a handful of polls, we gathered every poll containing sufficient demographic and geographic information on individual respondents. For nominees with a large number of such polls, we only used the polls closest to their confirmation vote. For Thomas, we only retained polls taken after the Anita Hill allegations surfaced. This ensures as much as possible that our estimates tap state opinion as it stood at the time of the vote.
2. *Interpreting a unit shift.* A unit shift in our opinion measures flips a fixed share of the state population, but an unfixed share of the party population. One cannot scale to both at the same time. Consider Senator Voinovich in 2009 (R-OH). A unit shift in support consisting only of in-party opinion holders means that 1% of the total number of opinion holders in Ohio switch from no to yes, where the switchers consist only of Republicans. Support goes from 53.0% to 54.0% overall in Ohio, but only Republicans change, so this shift means that 3.1% ( $= \frac{1}{32.2}$ ) of Republicans move from no to yes, increasing support among Republicans from 23.6% to 26.7%. Next, consider Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Now, a unit shift in opinion holder support consisting only of Democrats still moves total support in Ohio from 53.0% to 54.0%, but this means that 3.0% ( $= \frac{1}{33.3}$ ) of Democrats shifted from no to yes (83.8% becomes 86.8%). The unit shift in opinion holders correlates to a different size share within party because party sizes differ.
3. *Cell structure of data.* Technically, the MRP package in R converts this individual-level structure to an equivalent cell-level structure (of types) for the logistic regression, with counts of 1 and 0, and weights by cell. We use the more standard notation in the text.
4. Table SA-1 summarizes the number of respondents used in each of the nominee megapolls, as well as the number of polls used for each nominee.
5. *Do Senators behave differently depending on the extent of party control in their state?* We explored whether some senators showed more deference than others to their partisan constituents (their in-party median) or to the median of their state as a whole. Specifically, if the senator’s party is dominant in their state, is the party median listened to over the state median. Following ?, we started by defining a dominant party as one where it was larger than the independents and at least 5 percentage points larger in size than the opposing party. Then, where the senator’s party was dominant, there were 46 votes where the senator faced a choice between what the two medians wanted, and 80% of the time the senator went with the party median. When the senator’s party

Nominee	Number of observations	Number of polls
Alito	7,904	7
Bork	5,806	5
Breyer	1,524	1
Ginsburg	2,219	2
Kagan	8,207	8
Miers	1,008	1
Rehnquist	3,497	2
Roberts	7,191	8
Sotomayor	6,333	6
Souter	2,200	2
Thomas	3,540	4

Table SA-1: Summary of nominee polls

was not dominant, this dropped to 75%. However, the results were too dependent on the exact threshold chosen given the relatively small number of votes for us to form a clear conclusion. If the threshold for dominance were 10 percentage points in size, then these numbers were 77% and 76%. Or, if we compared the top half of the data to the bottom half, based on the two party split alone, the numbers were 76% and 75%. The most we can say is that it is possible that senators give extra attention to their fellow partisan constituents when that group is larger than the other partisan group. Sorting this out further would require an exploration of a much larger set of senate votes. This would be possible in future work with the MRP extensions we provide.

6. *Uncertainty around estimates.* In Figure SA-1, for each nominee, the top panels in the following figures depict the distribution of state-level opinion (among opinion holders) in each state, while the bottom panels are broken down by Democratic, Independent and Republican opinion. For each nominee, the states are ordered from lowest levels of state support to highest. The vertical lines connect the median estimate for each state (for the respective constituency). We also depict the uncertainty in the estimates: for each constituency and state, we plot the 95% confidence interval for each set of estimates (i.e the empirical distribution). To depict each distribution, we plot translucent dots such that the darker regions depict the center of the distribution and lighter region depicting the tails. For example, Republican support for Alito is more precisely estimated than the other subgroups for Alito and even than Democratic support for Kagan. For each nominee, the states are ordered from lowest levels of overall support to highest. There is substantial variance in opinion within the same constituency and across states. Variance across parties is even larger, with Democrats and Republicans far apart from each other in every state (for these nominees).

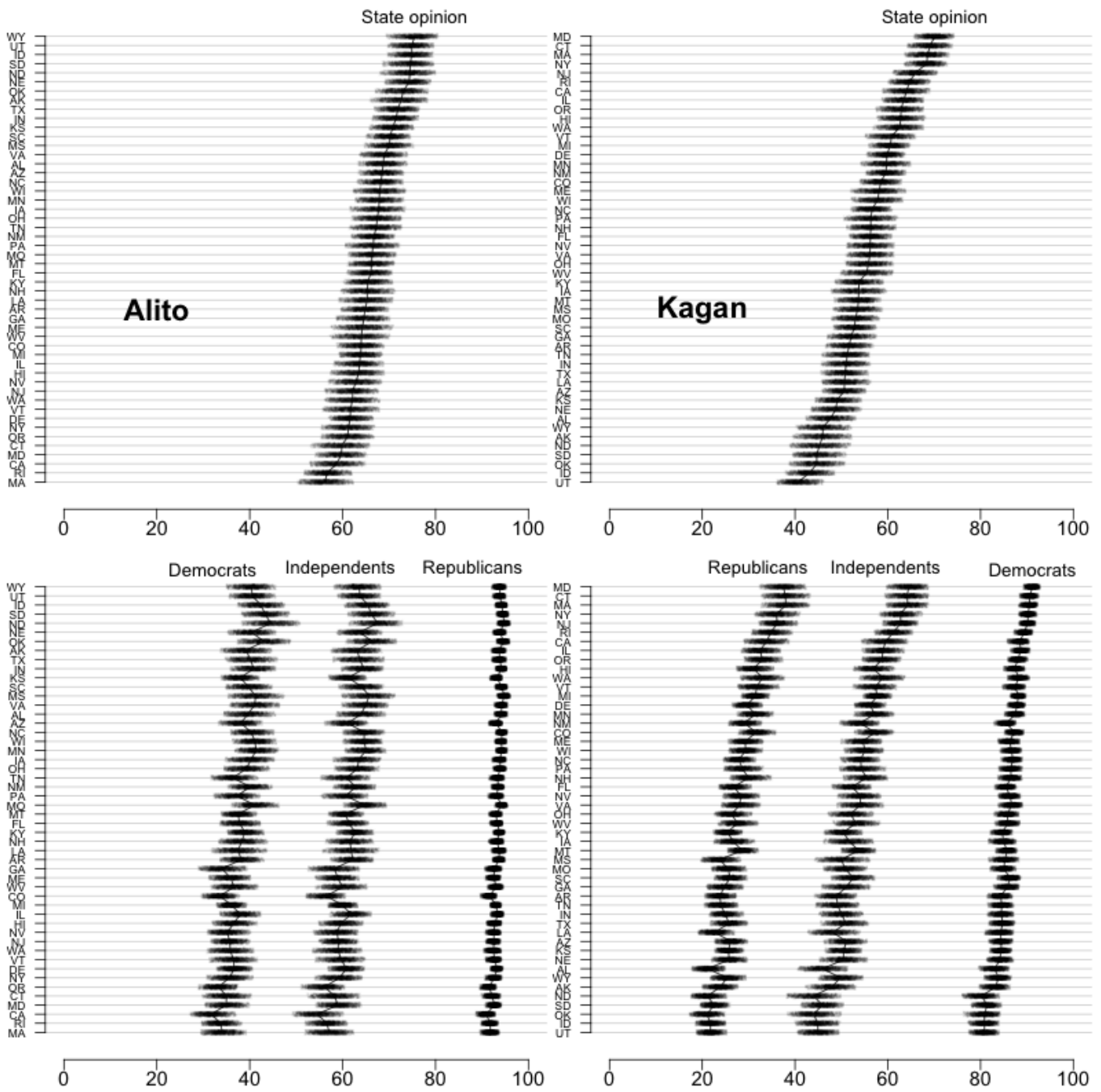


Figure SA-1: *Depicting estimates and uncertainty nominees by state and party.*



