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Funding Freedom, Raising Restriction: The Impact of Campaign Finance on Reproductive Rights

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Funding Freedom, Raising Restriction: The Impact of Campaign Finance on Reproductive Rights

In 2022, the Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade* (1973), a landmark case that constitutionally protected an individual's right to an abortion for over 50 years. The overruling case *Dobbs v. Jackson* returned jurisdiction on abortion to the states. Following the decision, state governments began to draft legislation to establish their stance on abortion in a post-*Dobbs* America. Consequently, abortion interest groups worked to ensure the public's opinions on abortion were heard by politicians. They dedicated funds to gubernatorial and state legislative election campaigns in hopes of electing political leaders who would pass legislation that aligned with their views on abortion and reproductive rights.

With the scene of abortion politics undergoing significant change in 2022, uncertainty remains around the effect of democratic practices such as campaign finance on abortion policy. Therefore, I ask, broadly, how does 2022 gubernatorial and state legislative campaign funding from abortion interest groups affect the restrictiveness of state-level reproductive rights policies in 2023 and 2024? Specifically, among states with gubernatorial elections in 2022, did states with greater pro-life interest group contributions and less pro-choice interest group contributions toward 2022 gubernatorial and state legislative elections pass more restrictive abortion and reproductive health policies in 2023 and 2024 compared to states with less pro-life interest group contributions and greater pro-choice interest group contributions toward 2022 state campaigns? To answer this question, I compare the relationship between the difference in pro-life interest

group spending and pro-choice interest group spending toward campaigns and parties in 2022 to the restrictiveness of abortion policies in 2023 and 2024 in 13 states.

Context and Significance

Since the 2022 Supreme Court ruling of *Dobbs v. Jackson*, which returned jurisdiction of abortion concerns to the states, many states across the U.S. have implemented legislative restrictions or total bans on abortion. During the 2022 midterm election following the *Dobbs* ruling, California voters passed Proposition 1, which states, “The state shall not deny or interfere with an individual’s reproductive freedom in their most intimate decisions, which includes their fundamental right to choose to have an abortion and their fundamental right to choose or refuse contraceptives,” constitutionally protecting the right to an abortion in the state (LegInfo, 2024). Consequently, California has become a safe haven for individuals seeking an abortion living in states where abortions are restricted. The number of abortions performed in California increased post-*Dobbs*, with non-California residents accounting for 16% of all abortion procedures in the state (Guttmacher Institute, 2024).

On a national scale, *Dobbs v. Jackson* instigated a wave of immediate changes to state abortion laws, setting a historic record for the number of ballot measures addressing abortion in a single election cycle. During the 2022 midterm elections, six states voted on abortion: California, Michigan, Vermont, Kansas, Montana, and Kentucky. California, Michigan, and Vermont all passed measures constitutionally enshrining the right to an abortion (Ballotpedia, 2022).

The effect of campaign finance on abortion politics holds great significance in the post-*Dobbs* era, as the influence of political elites on abortion has grown since jurisdiction has been returned to the states. Rebecca Kreitzer found that in conservative states, the gender and party composition of state governments has a disproportionately greater influence on abortion

policies compared to public opinion and religious forces. Her research found that although public opinion on abortion has remained steady in conservative states, abortion policies have grown more conservative, revealing the increased influence of state officials after the 2022 *Dobbs* ruling. Thus, the importance of interest groups, which theoretically bridge the gap between the general public and political elites within states, has grown. Furthermore, understanding how state public opinion, religion, and legislative composition influence existing policies can reveal motivations behind interest groups' dedication to supporting campaigns and pushing new abortion policies.

With abortion being a central issue in the 2024 election and California's nationwide importance to unrestricted reproductive health care, it is vital to understand what factors influence the passing of protective or restrictive policies in state legislatures and how these factors impact abortion politics. This knowledge will aid in future campaign funding efforts as it will reveal what is and is not effective, and to what extent, in pushing initiatives related to reproductive rights.

Literature Review

In evaluating existing research on the relationship between campaign finance and abortion policy, taking a geographic approach to synthesizing literature makes gaps in contemporary abortion politics strikingly evident. After the 2022 ruling on *Dobbs v. Jackson*, the abortion politics scene shifted from being dominated by the federal government to state governments. The geographic scope of abortion policies expanded and diverged, leaving room for changes in how abortion policies are enacted, the range of abortion and reproductive rights restrictions and protections that can be enacted, and the motivation behind the creation of state abortion policies.

A key study conducted by journalists Cady Inabinett and Emily Kennard reveals that after the Dobbs ruling, abortion-related lobbying at the federal level drastically increased for both anti-abortion groups and abortion rights groups. Their research organization OpenSecrets documents data at the federal level, detailing the contributions and expenditures of abortion interest groups toward federal campaigns. They also found that lobbying expenditures at the state level remained fairly similar in 2021 and 2022, with neither side of the abortion debate increasing their spending substantially (Inabinett and Kennard). However, this finding is the extent of their research on abortion lobbying at the state level. My research aims to fill this gap in the literature, as I observe lobbying at the state level in 2022. This will reveal which states display an increase in lobbying for abortion and the expansion or restriction of reproductive rights.

Their research also evaluates differences between abortion and anti-abortion groups, finding that large spending differences between pro-choice and pro-life advocacy organizations can be observed in lobbying at the federal level. They find that pro-choice groups spent almost double the amount spent by pro-life groups in the first quarter of 2023 (Inabinett and Kennard). This partisan pattern is also true in the spending data for the 2022 midterm election cycle, as abortion rights groups spent \$7.2 million more than anti-abortion rights groups (Inabinett and Kennard). A 2010 study adds nuance to partisan abortion lobbying research, finding that abortion-related PACs used monetary contributions toward Democratic and Republican candidates to convey the salience of the abortion issue among activists and the general public (Carmines et al.). However, the study only gathered data from the Federal Election Commission, missing state-specific expenditures by PACs toward state-specific elections. My research aims to fill the gap of how abortion lobbying differs by party and abortion position at the state level. Observing

interest group election contributions within different states will yield findings that connect state-level spending and state political party composition.

Research by Jacob M. Grumbach takes a step toward filling this geographical gap in his research on interest group activists and their impact on state legislatures. His findings align with Carmines et al.'s conclusion that pro-life groups orient themselves toward Republican political elites while pro-choice groups orient themselves toward Democratic politicians. Within this correlation, he finds that at the state level, individual interest group activists' contributions to state legislators' campaigns have substantial influence on these politicians' legislative behavior (Grumbach). Grumbach states that future research should not neglect the larger context of interest groups' expenditures, which my research aims to do. Rather than evaluating contributions from individuals associated with abortion interest groups, I am evaluating contributions made in the name of the organization, capturing monetary influence representative of abortion interest groups as a whole.

A foundational theory in abortion politics is the morality politics framework, which suggests that policies of high salience and technical simplicity regulate mortality and establish high levels of civic engagement, public opinion, and government representation as explanations for abortion policy (Haider-Markel, Kreitzer, and Roh). Kreitzer finds that government representation has a disproportionate effect on morality politics. Consequently, abortion policies are more heavily influenced by the motivations, beliefs, and actions of legislators. Therefore, interest groups, which directly influence the motivations of legislators in enacting new policy—for the sake of reelection and monetary support—hold a significant position in abortion politics. Haider-Markel and Roh find that national forces play a significant role in the morality politics framework. By evaluating the political campaign contributions of the National Right to

Life Committee and the National Abortion Rights Action League (the two main abortion groups at the time of the study) they found that national interest groups who directly partake in the lobbying of federal policies affect morality policy making at the federal level.

Using a similar research framework to Haider-Markel and Roh, except across and within different U.S. states, I will aim to support the theoretical assumption on morality politics I drew from Kreitzer's findings. By researching the effect of state-level interest group contributions on state abortion policies, I will ask whether, and to what degree, government representation affects abortion policy at the state level. This will be observed through the relationship between interest groups and gubernatorial and state legislative candidates, which make up state government representation. This perspective will expand the existing geographic scope of research on the influence of the morality politics framework on abortion policy.

Theory, Hypotheses, and Causal Mechanism

The theoretical frameworks shaping my research and hypotheses surround the topics of campaign finance, abortion policy, and state policies more broadly. I hypothesize that conceptually, higher spending from pro-life interest groups and lower spending from pro-choice interest groups toward gubernatorial and state legislative elections in 2022 leads to more restrictive abortion and reproductive health policies in 2023 and 2024 compared to states with lower pro-life contributions and higher pro-choice contributions. This hypothesis is undergirded by the causal mechanism that greater funding for candidates from reproductive policy interest groups supports media campaigns and voter mobilization, increasing their chance of election into office where they are likely to advocate for and implement policies that more severely expand or restrict reproductive rights and access. Research conducted on interest groups' electioneering activities found that direct candidate contributions are the most common strategy interest groups

use to promote their political positions (Hogan). Therefore, this aspect of campaign finance accurately reflects interest groups' values and holds substantial significance and political leverage in creating and passing state policies. Moreover, greater funding strengthens the reciprocal relationship between interest groups and candidates, motivating elected governors to pass legislation in favor of these groups' interests to ensure they continue to support their candidacy in future elections.

Considering the variables and causal mechanism, my operational hypothesis predicts that higher spending from pro-life interest groups and lower spending from pro-choice interest groups toward gubernatorial and state legislative elections in 2022 in 1000 USD leads to more restrictive abortion and reproductive health policies in 2023 and 2024 on my self-constructed restrictiveness scale compared to states with lower pro-life contributions and higher pro-choice contributions in 2022 in 1000 USD.

Research Design and Methods

My independent variable (X) is the difference between all pro-life interest group contributions and all pro-choice interest group contributions toward gubernatorial and state legislative candidates running in 2022 in fifteen U.S. states. I am measuring this variable by 1000 USD. Moreover, using continuous independent and dependent variables allows me to create a scatterplot and run a regression, which will help me better understand and visualize the relationship between my variables.

To gather data for this variable, I utilized the campaign finance database of each state in my study. These databases were often created and managed by the Secretary of State with search filters such as transaction type, typically categorized as 'Expenditures' and 'Contributions.' To search for contributions from abortion or reproductive health interest groups, I filtered my search

to 2022 and used seven distinct searches. The searches included two major pro-choice organizations, two major pro-life organizations, and three phrases related to my research topic: ‘NARAL,’ ‘Planned Parenthood,’ ‘Susan B. Anthony,’ ‘Right to Life,’ ‘reproductive,’ ‘pro-choice,’ and ‘pro-life.’¹ I evaluated the resulting transactions and selected all contributions made to gubernatorial or state legislature candidates. I calculated the sum of each contribution, yielding an aggregate value in raw USD for each state, which I scaled to 1000 USD.

Taking the difference between pro-life and pro-choice spending assigns positive values to pro-life contributions and negative values to pro-choice contributions and takes the sum of these directional amounts. This method allows my data to operationalize the concept of “higher pro-life spending” and “lower pro-choice spending” in one comprehensive value for each state.

My dependent variable (Y) is a numeric value representing the restrictiveness of abortion and reproductive health policies enacted in 2023 and 2024 for each of the fifteen states represented in my study. I am measuring this variable by creating an index that takes into account multiple factors of abortion policy including abortion bans based on gestational limits, funding or restrictions on abortion centers and crisis pregnancy centers (anti-abortion centers), expanded access or restriction to contraception or abortion medications, healthcare coverage policies, and criminal penalties or protections related to abortion. My index uses positive values to indicate restrictions on abortion or limitations to abortion or reproductive health access, with values increasing with greater restrictions or limitations. A value of ‘0’ is used for policies or limits that have no restrictive or protective effect on the legality of abortion or access to abortion

¹ Planned Parenthood and Reproductive Freedom for All (NARAL) were the top contributors among pro-choice interest groups in 2023-2024 (OpenSecrets). The phrases “Planned Parenthood” “NARAL” and “reproductive” were used as search functions to find contributions from these groups. “Pro-choice” was used to account for any additional contributions from related PACs or other interest groups that filed under a phrase including ‘pro-choice’ National Right to Life and Susan B Anthony Pro-Life America were the leading contributors among pro-life interest groups in 2023-2024 (OpenSecrets). “Pro-life” found numerous contributions from the National Pro-Life Alliance, which was the third top contributor.

or reproductive health services. Negative values are used for policies that expand access to and increase protection for abortion or reproductive health services; these values decrease with greater expansion or protection.

To gather data for abortion bans based on gestational limits, I used a data table created by Guttmacher tracking ‘Total Abortion Bans and Bans Based on Gestational Duration Currently in Effect’ for each of the 50 states. The table categorizes each state’s policy as a ‘Total Ban,’ ‘Ban in the first 18 weeks of pregnancy,’ ‘Ban after 18 weeks of pregnancy,’ and ‘No ban or gestational limit’ (Guttmacher Institute). To fit the structure of my index, I categorized ‘Total ban’ states as a 3 as a total ban most severely affects patients seeking an abortion. ‘Bans after 18 weeks of pregnancy’ states were given a 2, ‘Bans in the first 18 weeks of pregnancy’ states were given a 1, and ‘No ban or gestational limit’ states were given a 0 as this does not impact an individual’s access to abortion.

To gather data on individual policies, I used Guttmacher’s State Legislation Tracker and documented each enacted legislation listed related to abortion in 2023 and 2024 for each of the fifteen states in my study (Guttmacher Institute). I categorized each policy into one of the index factors and gave them a 1 or 2 value using the policy description provided by Guttmacher.

To yield values for the index, I gave each factor a different weight and calculated the sum of each abortion ban and total legislation score after calculating values using the weights. I gave bans and gestational limits 30%, abortion or anti-abortion center funding or restrictions 25%, contraception and medication access or restriction 20%, criminal penalties or protections 15%, and healthcare coverage 10%.² I assigned these weights based on the strength of the potential

² Justification for Weights: each weight is given relative to one another, in terms of how much a policy in the category expands or restricts access to abortion, to add to 100%
 Bans and Gestational Limits: 30% - These policies are the overarching abortion laws in each state, and dictate the broad legality of abortion, affecting all other factors related to abortion access
 Abortion or Anti-abortion Center Funding or Restrictions: 25% - Abortion clinics are where most abortions are sought out and performed, and are thus of vital importance to an individual seeking an abortion. (1/2)

effect that a policy in each category could have on overarching abortion access in each given state. For instance, gestational limits have the greatest weight as this policy dictates if or how long patients can seek an abortion regardless of the options for abortion they have access to in their state.

I chose this operationalization to comprehensively represent the impact that all abortion policies passed or maintained in 2023 and 2024 have on abortion access and the expansion or restriction of reproductive rights in each state. I also used the sum of each value, after weighting, to construct my index to ensure the number of policies passed in each state were considered.

One control variable I considered in my research is the results of the 2022 midterm election. Politico summarizes the results of the 2022 gubernatorial, Senate, and House elections by categorizing each state's government control as 'All Dem,' 'All GOP,' or 'Split.' This control variable is categorical and aided in the case selection for my research. To incorporate a balance of political leanings among state demographics in my research, I selected five states with full Democratic control: California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New York; five states with full GOP control: Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Tennessee, and Texas; and five states with split control: Arizona, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. By the nature of direct democracy, state election results reflect the political makeup of voters in a state. For this research, I will refer to state government control after the 2022 midterm elections as 'Partisan

Guttmacher found that in the United States, 96% of abortions were provided in abortion clinics in 2020 (Diep and Usha).

Contraception and Medication Access or Restriction: 20% - Contraceptives are widely used among individuals in the U.S., with 64.9% of women aged 15-49 using contraception in 2015-2017. Pregnancy prevention is an essential aspect of reproductive freedom, so I considered it to be more directly related to abortion and reproductive health access than the next two categories, but less related than policy related to abortion clinics.

Criminal Penalties or Protections: 15% - These policies do not directly impact immediate access to abortions, but the weight of penalties and consequences are still substantial. Most policies in this category punish or protect doctors or individuals aiding minors or adults with an abortion.

Healthcare coverage: 10% - Only one policy in my data fell under the healthcare coverage category. The policy did not directly relate to abortion access but rather impacted individuals participating in Medicaid programs

Composition' to imply that the majority political leaning of voters and the partisan makeup of the state government are the factors being focused on. The categories 'All Dem,' 'All GOP,' and 'Split' will instead be referred to as 'Democratic,' 'Republican,' and 'Split' The partisan composition of each state in 2022 may affect the amount spent by abortion interest groups in that year, as lobbying patterns may differ by political leaning. Partisan composition thus has the potential to influence the relationship between 2022 abortion lobbying and 2023-2024 abortion policy restrictiveness.

Another control variable in my research is whether states have enshrined the right to an abortion through direct democracy as of 2024. I used a bimodal variable, assigning states that have not passed a total abortion protection policy through direct democracy a '0,' and states that have a '1,' based on data on abortion laws by state from the Center for Reproductive Rights. This variable may influence the relationship between X and Y as governors or legislators in states that have passed abortion protections through direct democracy may be more inclined to pass more policies related to abortion and reproductive rights their constituencies have proven to value reproductive rights as a policy issue. In this case, passing more legislation related to the issue may increase their chances of reelection.

The unit of analysis of my study is states, using a design structure of multiple cases over time. I selected fifteen states based on the 2022 midterm election results, resulting in California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New York as the five Democratic states, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Tennessee, and Texas as the five Republican states, and Arizona, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin as the five Split states. My state selection also considered the accessibility of data for my independent variable, as some states had restricted access to their campaign finance databases. With only fifteen cases, my research is a small-n study. The

geographic and temporal scope of my study is fifteen U.S. states (California, Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Tennessee, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) from 2022 to 2024. More specifically, the temporal scope of my independent variable is 2022 while the temporal scope of my dependent variable is 2023 to 2024.

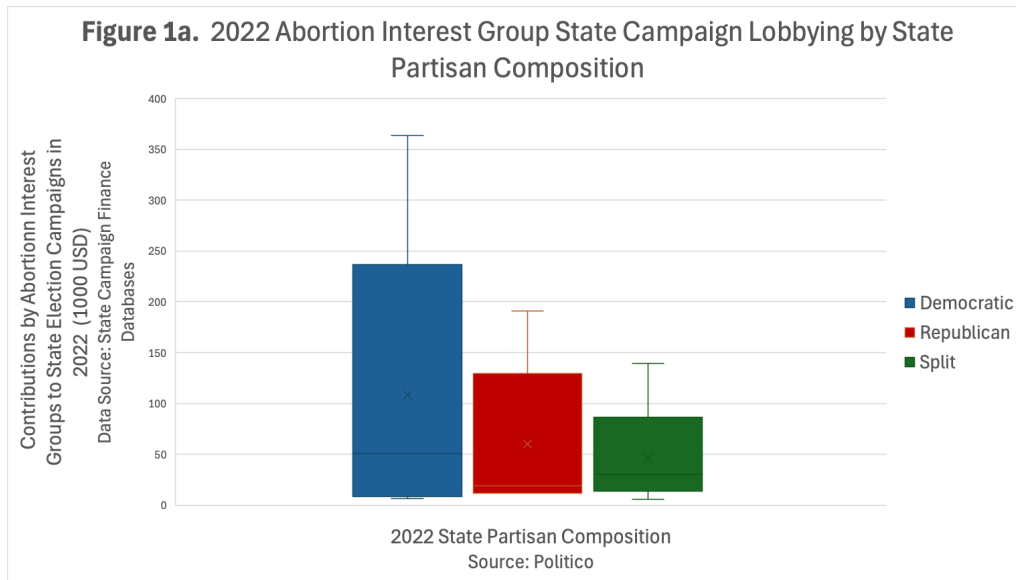
To test the strength and direction of the relationship between my independent and dependent variables, I ran a Pearson's r test as both variables are continuous. To test the statistical significance of the resulting correlation, I ran an OLS regression for the same two variables. These statistical tests will summarize my data and allow for analysis supported by comprehensive numeric values.

Results

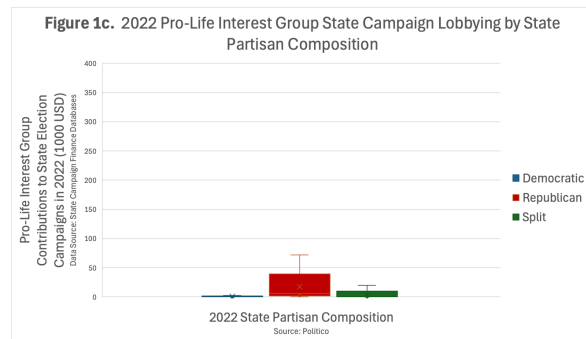
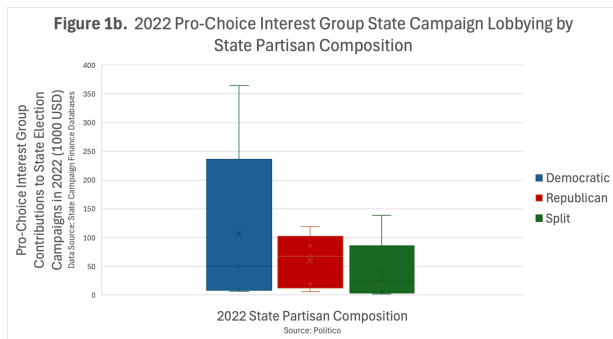
After compiling the 2022 campaign lobbying totals from abortion and reproductive health interest groups, I analyzed the data accounting for state partisan composition based on the 2022 midterm election results. As depicted in Figure 1a, total and average contributions from abortion interest groups toward state election campaigns vary by partisan composition. This figure does not represent the independent variable of my research, but rather the total contributions from both pro-life and pro-choice interest groups for each state. Abortion interest groups in Democratic Control states spent the most on candidates and campaigns, expending \$541,021 total and \$108,204 on average in each state. Groups in Republican Control states followed, spending \$301,610 total and \$60,320 on average. Groups in Split Control states contributed the least total and average amounts, spending \$231,031 in total and \$46,206 on average.

The outlier for my independent variable is seen in the maximum value of the Democratic plot, depicted by the top whisker of the figure. This value represents the total contribution

amount from abortion interest groups in California toward state campaigns in 2022; this total was \$363,872.90, the largest independent variable value in my dataset.



Data Source: State Campaign Finance Databases and Politico



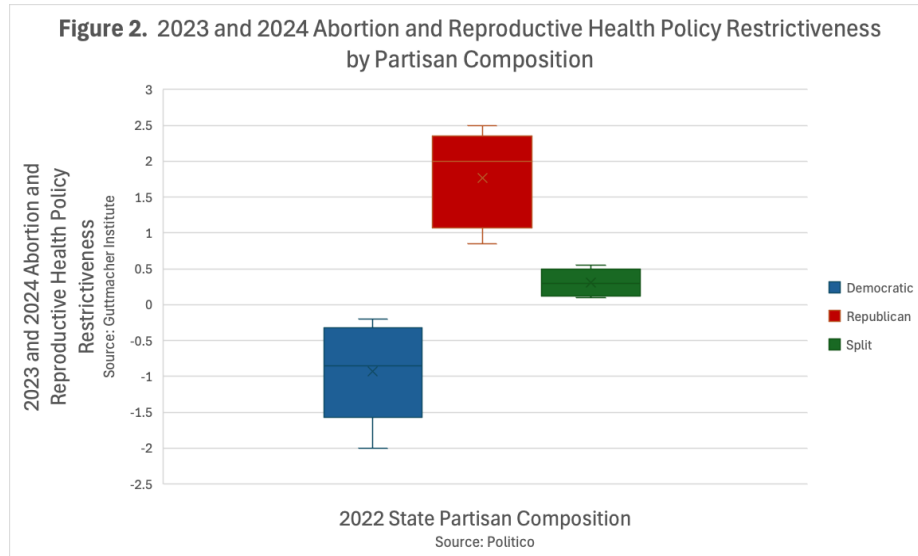
Data Source: State Campaign Finance Databases and Politico

To display the difference in 2022 spending between the two interest group types observed in my research, Figures 1b and 1c capture the spending data for the pro-choice and pro-life groups, respectively. Using the same format and scale as Figure 1a, the drastic difference in contributions from the interest group types and differences by state partisan composition can be observed in the figures. Pro-choice interest groups in Democratic Control states spent

\$538,766.22 total and \$107,753.24 on average on campaigns and candidates. Groups in Republican Control states spent \$296,762.9 total and \$59,352.58 on average. Groups in Split Control states contributed the least total and average amounts, spending \$203,600 in total and \$40,720 on average (Figure 1b). For pro-choice interest groups, the order of total and average contribution amounts by state partisan composition is the same as abortion interest groups overall, with groups in Democratic states spending the most, Republican states second most, and Split states last.

The order differs for pro-life interest group lobbying by state partisan composition with groups in Republican states spending the most, Split states second, and Democratic states last for total and average amount contributed. Groups in Republican states spent \$88,345.12 total and \$17,669.02 on average, groups in Split states spent \$21,431.05 total and \$4,286.21 on average, and groups in Democratic states spent \$3,505 total and \$701 on average.

Figure 2 depicts drastic variation among the restrictiveness of 2023 and 2024 state abortion policy by partisan composition. On my restrictiveness index that accounts for abortion bans and limits, the impact of restrictive policies, and the impact of protective policies, Democratic states scored an average of -0.93, Republican states 1.77, and Split states 0.31. Interestingly, there is no overlap in the abortion policy restriction level for any state of a different partisan composition.

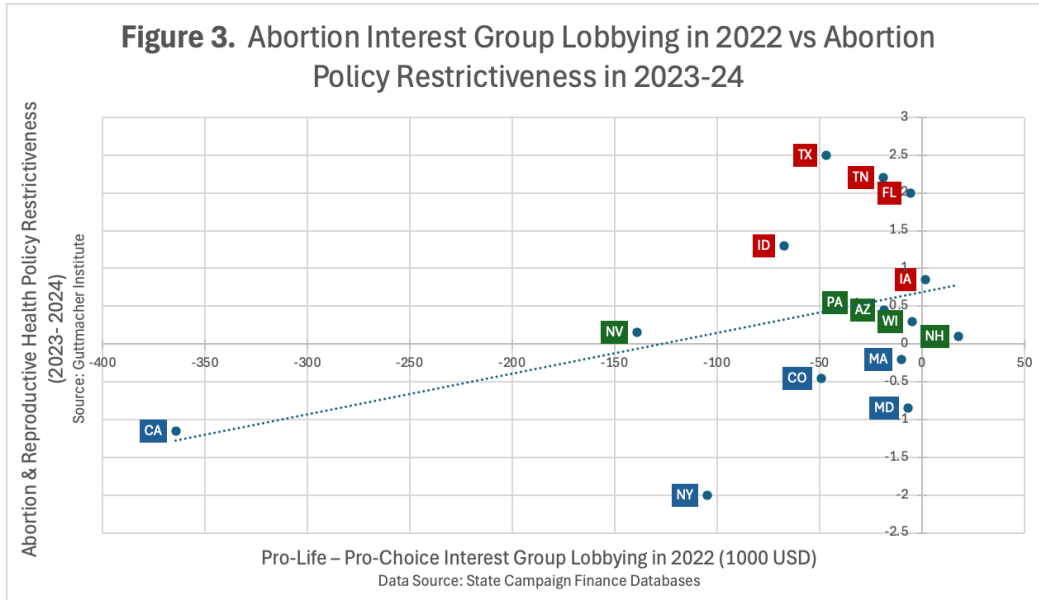


Data Source: Politico and Guttmacher Institute (Self-Constructed Index)

I measured the correlation between the difference between pro-life and pro-choice lobbying in 2022 and abortion and reproductive health policy restrictiveness in 2023 and 2024 by state using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and an OLS regression, as depicted by the dotted line in Figure 3. My Pearson's r-test yielded a correlation coefficient of $r=0.406537359$, indicating a positive moderate degree of correlation.

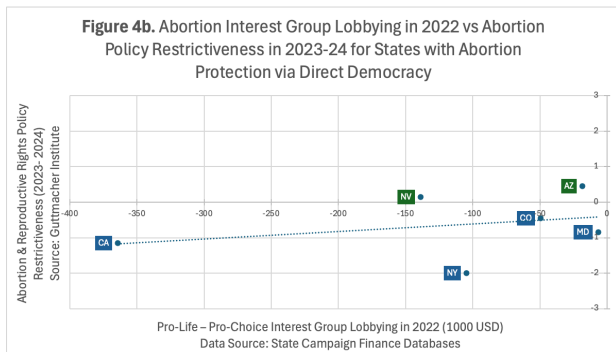
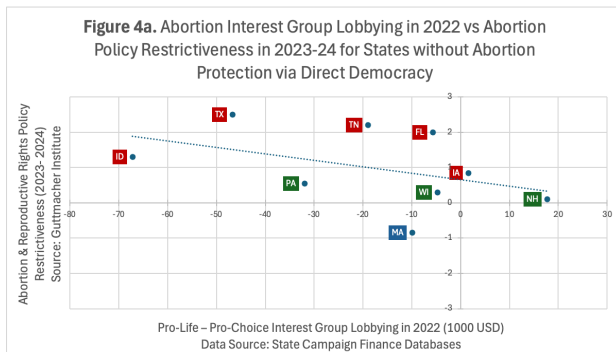
While the resulting Pearson's Correlation Coefficient indicates a moderate correlation, the data yielded a p-value of $p=0.0799$. Since $0.0799 > 0.05$, the correlation between the difference between pro-life and pro-choice interest group lobbying toward state campaigns in 2022 and abortion and reproductive health policy restrictiveness in 2023 and 2024 is not statistically significant and thus does not support my hypothesis.

The data labels display the state that each point represents, color-coded by partisan composition (Blue for Democratic, Red for Republican, and Green for Split). Reflecting the same finding from Figure 2, all data points for Democratic states lie below all data points for Split states, which all lie below all data points for Republican states.



Data Sources: Guttmacher Institute (Self-Constructed Index) and State Campaign Finance Databases

To explore the impact of voters’ direct effect on abortion policy, I controlled for whether states have passed abortion protection laws via direct democracy and ran an OLS regression for the resulting data of each category. The data showed no statistically significant correlation between my independent and dependent variables for states without abortion protection via direct democracy (Figure 4a) nor for states with abortion protection via direct democracy (Figure 4b) with p-values of $p=0.179264108$ and $p=0.495420872$, respectively.



Data Sources: Guttmacher Institute and State Campaign Finance Databases

Discussion and Research Implications

Despite the statistically insignificant correlation between my main independent and dependent variables, exploring the effect of campaign finance from multiple nuanced perspectives on the restrictiveness of state abortion policy yielded numerous findings illustrating a complex relationship among abortion interest groups, campaign funding, partisanship, and abortion policy. In exploring the relationship between state campaign finance and state abortion and reproductive health policy, I asked whether states with higher pro-life and lower pro-choice interest group contributions toward gubernatorial and state legislative elections in 2022 pass more restrictive abortion and reproductive health policies in 2023 and 2024 compared to states with lower pro-life and higher pro-choice interest group contributions more to state campaigns in 2022.

I first explored the impact of state partisan composition on abortion and reproductive health interest group lobbying and the restrictiveness of state abortion policy to understand the impact of political leanings among voters and state officials on my variables. I was surprised to find that on average, pro-choice interest groups spent, on average, 44% less in Republican states than in Democratic states. Despite the ruling on *Dobbs* in 2022, abortion interest groups in Republican states did not make substantial contributions to election campaigns to support candidates who could have pushed for protective abortion policies while in office. However, since my control variable encompasses the results of the 2022 election while most lobbying in 2022 occurred prior, this could be a result of my 'Republican' cases excluding states that demonstrate higher pro-choice lobbying. These states may be more likely to have Split government control as greater pro-choice contributions could have increased their chance of election into office, changing the partisan makeup of the state government.

As portrayed in Figures 1b and 1c pro-choice interest groups significantly outspent pro-life interest groups in state campaign contributions in 2022 across all partisan compositions. Notably, the average pro-choice spending amounts for all state partisan compositions were close in value to the total lobbying averages. The similar shapes and sizes of the box-and-whisker plots in Figures 1a and 1b, especially for Democratic states, indicate most of the total contributions are from pro-choice organizations. This implies contributions from pro-choice organizations may have a disproportionate influence on the dependent variable compared to contributions from pro-life organizations.

Evident in Figure 2, the lack of overlap between abortion policy restrictiveness data among Democratic, Republican, and Split states implies that partisan composition heavily influences abortion policy at the state level. States that elected full Democratic government control in 2022 used this to enact various protective abortion policies in 2023 and 2024, greatly reducing the overall restrictiveness of abortion policy in these states. State governments with full Republican control adopted a similar practice, implementing numerous restrictive abortion policies throughout 2023 and 2024. This implies that after jurisdiction on abortion was returned to the states and the 2022 midterm elections, Democratic and Republican governors and state legislators with full government control worked to take advantage of the next two years to enact policies aligning with their political ideologies on abortion access and reproductive rights. The low restrictiveness value for Split states is most likely a consequence of state-level political gridlock, which barred them from passing policies on a contentious issue such as abortion, and greatly reduced the likelihood of passing policies with greater protective or restrictive impact.

After running the Pearson's r-test and OLS regression for my main independent and dependent variables, I found a positive moderate correlation between the variables but a p-value

that does not support a statistically significant correlation. Thus, my research does not support my hypothesis that higher spending from pro-life interest groups and lower spending from pro-choice interest groups toward gubernatorial and state legislative elections in 2022 leads to more restrictive abortion and reproductive health policies in 2023 and 2024 compared to states with lower pro-life contributions and higher pro-choice contributions. Since my data does not support a statistically significant relationship between pro-life interest group lobbying and more restrictive abortion or pro-choice lobbying and less restrictive abortion, funding toward gubernatorial and state legislative campaigns may not be the most effective method for implementing change in the scene of state abortion politics and consequently, abortion restriction or access. Direct funding toward abortion clinics or crisis pregnancy centers or equitably distributing contraceptives may have a greater impact on reproductive health accessibility than instilling change through campaign funding. My research implies that with respect to abortion access and reproductive rights at the state level, policy change is difficult to influence as a civilian, even when utilizing monetary forces. Moreover, the incremental nature of policymaking at the state level is a possible explanation for the lack of correlation.

Research Limitations and Research Extensions

During the data collection process of my research, I ran into some obstacles with state campaign finance databases. While campaign finance laws require states to disclose campaign contributions and expenditures, some states require a login to access a separate site with search functions to explore the database. However, most states I encountered had accessible searchable databases. In some cases, the format of the contribution search function limited my capability to search the database for interest group contributions. Some states separated the search by ‘Contributor First Name’ and ‘Contributor Last Name,’ without having a search option for

business, PAC, or organization name, limiting the results to contributions filed under individual contributors. While these limitations barred me from accessing sufficient campaign finance data for many states, I could have searched the databases for all 50 states to yield a larger sample size. However, under the time constraints of this research, I was unable to do so. Moreover, I was constrained by the ‘Split’ category of my control variable for government control and state partisan composition. Only 6 states with a gubernatorial election in 2022 resulted in split government control after the 2022 midterm elections, and to ensure balance by political leaning in my research, I used the same number of Democratic, Republican, and Split states for my sample. A larger sample size would provide a more accurate representation of the relationship between abortion interest group lobbying and abortion policy restrictiveness.

An aspect of data that would strengthen my research and I would have liked to explore is the specific candidates being contributed to and whether they were elected in the 2022 midterm election. Using this as a control variable would allow me to observe the effectiveness of campaign funding from interest groups. I could control for contributions toward candidates who were elected and were not elected. I could then observe whether a correlation exists, or is stronger, between contributions toward successfully elected officials and the protectiveness or restrictiveness of abortion and reproductive health policies passed in 2023 and 2024. It also opens another avenue for observing the impact of campaign finance on abortion policy through contributions toward specific candidates and their voting record on abortion and reproductive health bills once in office.

Conclusion

With the sudden wave of state abortion laws after the Supreme Court’s ruling on *Dobbs vs. Jackson*, it is imperative to investigate what factors contribute to these laws and how these

factors affect the restriction and protection of reproductive rights. My research found that contributions from pro-choice and pro-life interest groups toward gubernatorial and state legislative campaigns in 2022 do not have a statistically significant correlation to the restrictiveness of abortion and reproductive health policies passed in 2023 and 2024. However, my research found that the restrictiveness and protectiveness of state abortion policies differ significantly based on the political party in control of the state government and the state's overall state partisan composition. This observation reveals the strength of partisanship in dictating state abortion policies, which has had an evident impact since the fall of *Roe* in 2022. This finding is consistent with Rebecca Kreitzer's finding that in conservative states, the party composition of state governments has an emphasized effect on abortion policies.

Although campaign funding from abortion interest groups was not found to have a significant effect on the protectiveness or restrictiveness of abortion policy, abortion interest groups can still influence abortion access and reproductive health at the state level through alternative methods. Individuals or organizations with a desire to instigate change in abortion access or reproductive health within states may opt to focus attention on immediate, community-based action. These implications are especially valuable following the 2024 presidential election, as there will be no change to abortion law at the federal level and states will continue to dictate their residents' access to abortion and reproductive health services.

Appendix

Figure 3 Regression Table

SUMMARY OUTPUT - Figure 3								
<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.406537359							
R Square	0.165272624							
Adjusted R Square	0.101062826							
Standard Error	1.194283739							
Observations	15							
<i>ANOVA</i>								
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	1	3.671255896	3.6712559	2.57394711	0.132644307			
Residual	13	18.54207744	1.42631365					
Total	14	22.21333333						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	0.68804388	0.362160189	1.899833	0.0798649	-0.09435564	1.4704434	-0.0943556	1.4704434
X Variable 1	0.005390258	0.003359771	1.60435255	0.13264431	-0.00186809	0.0126486	-0.0018681	0.0126486

Figure 4a Regression Table

SUMMARY OUTPUT - Figure 4a								
<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.43175944							
R Square	0.18641622							
Adjusted R Square	0.07018996							
Standard Error	1.0632773							
Observations	9							
<i>ANOVA</i>								
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	1	1.813311956	1.81331196	1.60390796	0.24586274			
Residual	7	7.913910267	1.13055861					
Total	8	9.72722222						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	0.65974321	0.442111526	1.49225517	0.17926411	-0.38568443	1.70517085	-0.3856844	1.70517085
X Variable 1	-0.0181746	0.014350758	-1.2664549	0.24586274	-0.05210874	0.01575956	-0.0521087	0.01575956

Figure 4b Regression Table

SUMMARY OUTPUT - Figure 4b								
<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.31871014							
R Square	0.10157615							
Adjusted R Square	-0.1230298							
Standard Error	0.94809903							
Observations	6							
<i>ANOVA</i>								
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	1	0.406516234	0.40651623	0.45224158	0.53812146			
Residual	4	3.595567099	0.89889177					
Total	5	4.002083333						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	-0.3975402	0.530658293	-0.7491454	0.49542087	-1.87088385	1.0758034	-1.8708838	1.0758034
X Variable 1	0.00214709	0.003192758	0.67248909	0.53812146	-0.00671742	0.01101161	-0.0067174	0.01101161

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