**LaGina Gause**  
**Protest in Congress**  
**Fluxx Request ID: R-2211-40714**  
  
**Reviewer 1:**  
  
*1. Does the project address an important and compelling question or set of questions? Is the question(s) framed appropriately in terms of prior theory and empirical work?*  
  
This project seeks to understand protest behavior by legislators in Congress. It develops a new, more comprehensive database of legislator protest behavior. The project then seeks to answer a variety of questions about the causes and consequences of protest activity. The project draws on a wide variety of literature and does a really good job of using an activity likely undertaken more often by minority legislators to shed light on a variety of important theoretical questions in the legislative politics literature.  
  
*2. Is the research design, the data and the proposed methodology appropriate to address the questions raised?*  
  
The design looks quite good to me. I think the triangulation to capture as wide a variety of protest activity as possible is important and useful. The combination of survey experiments with the descriptive portions of the data collection and analysis is also useful. The project does a lot on the descriptive front and has become more convincing in this iteration in its ability to test the implications of protest activity and how the public responds.  
  
*3. Do the qualifications of the investigator(s) suggest the capacity to carry out the project? Is additional expertise required?*  
  
Yes.  
  
*4. What is the likely contribution of this project?*  
  
The database that will be created with have spillover effects for other scholars. The project will also produce multiple publications addressing descriptive evidence on protest activity and its implications. The survey experiments will be helpful in nailing down what effects such behavior has. Should result in a book and/or multiple well-placed journal publications.  
  
  
**Investigator Response**

We thank Reviewer 1 for their close read of our proposal, and we are pleased that the project has become even more convincing in this iteration. Further, we are excited about the faith that Reviewer 1 has put in us to conduct the research and look forward to working on the database, book, and journal publications that we will produce with RSF’s support.

**Reviewer 2:**  
  
*1. Does the project address an important and compelling question or set of questions? Is the question(s) framed appropriately in terms of prior theory and empirical work?*  
  
The project is addressing an important and compelling question about protest by legislators. It will provide both descriptive data about the types, frequency, and causes of the protests, as well as the impact of them (particularly their impact on ordinary citizens' attitudes).  
  
*2. Is the research design, the data and the proposed methodology appropriate to address the questions raised?*  
  
The coding of CR and news stories sounds very promising and will be a wonderful resource, as the PIs map out the contours of legislative protest. The survey is also appropriate for the questions raised, although it is a pretty standard survey. The comments to the reviewers were excellent and really helped this reviewer, at least, have a much better sense of the proposed project.  
  
*3. Do the qualifications of the investigator(s) suggest the capacity to carry out the project? Is additional expertise required?*  
  
The investigators are qualified to carry out the project.  
  
*4. What is the likely contribution of this project?*  
  
The project will improve our understanding of representation, both substantive and descriptive. It will provide scholars with a greater understanding of how racial minorities and women legislators work to represent their constituents (both in their districts/states and their broader national constituents).  
  
*5. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the investigators to consider (theory, data, methods) that could potentially improve the project?*  
  
Here are a number of suggestions for the survey:

1) Have you piloted the names to ensure they clearly signal the race of the legislator? Are Marcus Smith and Keisha Smith identified as Black by respondents of all races/ethnicities? Is Alma recognized as a female Latina name by the vast majority of non-Latino respondents? And, are Craig Smith and Cindy Smith both seen as obviously white by the majority of your respondents? Since so much of your argument rests on respondents identifying descriptively with the legislator in the treatment, it's very important that your assumption of a match/mismatch is correct. You could ask respondents explicitly what race/gender the constituent is (making it appear perhaps as an attention check), but what would your plan be if a respondent either says DK or the wrong answer? You can't just drop them because this affects the randomization in your experiment.

2) Why is the partisanship of the constituents mentioned in the first (protest) treatment but not in the non-protest one? Someone might have more problems with a representative who only looks out for constituents of one party and have more negative opinions, independently of what they think of protest behavior.

3) Is the emotional tone of the protest important? The escort from the chamber for disrupting the debate already signals protest. In the protest treatment, though, the representative "yells" (which could be normal floor behavior, but in the context of a short blurb, could signal the individual is not calm), while in the non-protest treatment, the representative "proclaims." The latter might be the better choice for both.

4) The set-up of the experiment needs to be made clear to the respondents. Are they being asked to imagine that they are reading a news story about their own representative (which is implied in question 5? How plausible the scenario is will vary for respondents, depending on the ethnic/partisan homogeneity of where they live. Alternatively, are you asking respondents to think about hypothetical representative X of some unknown district/state, but whom respondents might support because their election has a national constituency? Either way, some of the follow-up survey questions have to be written in the conditional.

5) Reword question 8: it's unlikely that many respondents would support Congress "giving in" to one representative's preferences. How about asking whether Congress should discuss/set aside time to debate the representative's concerns?

6) Possible additions to the survey: trust in government? More personal and external efficacy measures? Perceptions of the House or Senate (in terms of racial, gender, partisan numbers)?

7) The participation questions all ask if the respondent has ever done an activity. Would it be more useful to know if they've done any of these in, say, the last 5 years? Are you trying to distinguish individuals who are more or less politically active? If someone protested once in 1980, that's a quite different person than someone who protested in the last 5 years (which would straddle both a Rep and Dem presidency).  
  
  
**Investigator Response**

We appreciate Reviewer 2’s confidence in our project on legislators’ protests, and we are thankful for the helpful feedback on the survey. We have made the following changes to the survey in response to Reviewer 2’s comments.

First and most significantly, we have added a brief description before each respondent receives the treatment to contextualize the experiment better (in response to point 4) and signal the race/ethnicity of the representative (in response to point 1). Before presenting the treatment to respondents, the survey will present a screen that says, “On the next screen is a news story about a [white/ Black/ Latinx] legislator who desires a greater leadership position in the [Republican/Democratic] Party. We are curious about your thoughts on the incident described in the news story. So, after reading it we will present you with a series of questions where you can share your thoughts.” In providing this context, we aim to clarify to respondents what we’re asking of them. Moreover, by explicitly stating the race/ethnicity of the representative, we ensure respondents are aware of the legislator’s racial/ethnic identity.

Relatedly, to ensure the set-up is clear to respondents (in further addressing point 4), we have aimed to clarify question 5 in our survey. We agree that the previous wording of the question was confusing. We have rephrased the question: “There are many ways that you can support a candidate running for office (e.g., vote for them in an election, volunteer for their campaign, donate to their campaign, encourage friends or family to support the candidate). How likely are you to support Representative [Garcia/Smith] in the next election?” In rewording the question, we aim to imply no longer that the respondent needs to imagine whether or not they would vote for a hypothetical representative. Rather, with this question, we aim to understand better if a respondent would provide support, broadly defined, for a representative they may or may not be able to vote for.

The revisions to question 5 also satisfy our theoretical interests in this project. Theoretically, we are interested in understanding the possible effects of legislators’ protests for descriptively represented respondents. Scholarship suggests that descriptive representatives provide surrogate representation to co-racial/ethnic individuals outside their congressional district (Mansbridge 2003; Broockman 2013). We want to know if a protest by a descriptive representative enhances the support, like donating to or volunteering for their campaign, that they receive from co-racial/ethnic individuals outside of their district. Moreover, we believe this research design provides a conservative test of the implications of legislators’ protests. If legislators are receiving support from constituents outside of their district, they likely would also receive support from constituents in their district who voted for them in the first place.

Third, we inadvertently excluded the partisanship of constituents in the non-protest treatment but will now include it thanks to Reviewer 2’s close attention to the survey design.

Fourth, we agree that using the term “proclaims” is better for both treatments. We will be making that change.

Fifth, we agree that “giving in” is not the best way to phrase question 8. We have changed the question to “Should Congress meet the demands of Representative [Garcia/Smith] on the Infrastructure Bill?”

Sixth, we agree that an individual’s perception of government and their position relative to it are valuable additions to the survey. As a result, we will add the following survey questions:

1. Trust in government scale consists of four questions:
   1. How often can you trust the federal government in Washington to do what is right? [Always, most of the time, about half the time, some of the time, or never]
   2. Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all people?
   3. Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don’t waste very much of it?
   4. How many people running the government are corrupt? [all, most, about half, a few, none]
2. The internal efficacy scale consists of four questions - respondents may choose responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree.
   1. How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you can’t really understand what’s going on
   2. How well do you understand the important political issues facing our country?
   3. How much do public officials care what people like you think?
   4. How much can people like you affect what the government does?
3. The external efficacy scale also has four questions - respondents may choose responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree.
   1. There are many legal ways for citizens to successfully influence what the government does
   2. Under our form of government, the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in office
   3. If public officials are not interested in hearing what the people think, there is really no way to make them listen
   4. People like me don’t have a say about what the government does

Moreover, it is a great idea to include a measure of respondents’ perceptions of the race/ethnicity and gender makeup of Congress. This question will help us better understand the respondent’s perception of inequality in Congress. We will now add the following to the survey:

1. Using a sliding scale from 0 to 100%, what percentage of the House of Representatives do you believe is:
   1. Black
   2. Latinx
   3. White
   4. Male/Female

Lastly, we agree that it’s helpful to put a time constraint on question 14. The question will now state, “Since 2016, have you ever done any of the following?” We have chosen 2016 instead of the last five years because Donald Trump’s presidential campaign marked a drastic increase in political engagement and provides a more identifiable moment from which respondents can communicate their political engagement.

In all, we are grateful for each of these suggestions and believe they will enable us to assess the political implications of legislators’ protests more accurately, particularly with respect to shifts in constituents’ political behavior and attitudes.

Broockman, David E. (2013). Black Politicians Are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks’ Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives. *American Journal of Political Science*, *57*(3): 521–536.

Mansbridge, Jane. (2003). "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 515-28.

**Reviewer 3:**  
  
*1. Does the project address an important and compelling question or set of questions? Is the question(s) framed appropriately in terms of prior theory and empirical work?*  
  
I was positively disposed toward this proposal in the first round and I remain impressed and excited about the project. The question is original/understudied, I think the scope of the inquiry is ambitious but realistic, and because of how the questions are framed, the findings will be meaningful no matter what they show. What better time to study legislator protest than one of the most divisive periods of partisan politics in US history?  
  
*2. Is the research design, the data and the proposed methodology appropriate to address the questions raised?*  
  
I am not a methods expert but to the extent that I assess sources for whether they are authoritative or not, this constitutes a thoughtful and reliable research design. AUs are so experienced and well-trained that I would expect nothing less.  
  
*3. Do the qualifications of the investigator(s) suggest the capacity to carry out the project? Is additional expertise required?*  
  
Yes, this is a highly qualified team with a track record of successful work in the field.  
  
*4. What is the likely contribution of this project?*  
  
This study will complement existing literature on partisanship, protest, legislator behavior and more. It will also pose a nice challenge to existing rational actor models of incumbent legislators.  
  
*5. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the investigators to consider (theory, data, methods) that could potentially improve the project?*  
  
The response to the masked comments is a model for how such responses should be composed. It is so thoughtful and detailed - I enjoyed reading it.  
  
  
**Investigator Response**

We appreciate the time and care Reviewer 3 has taken in reviewing this project in the first round and this one. Even more, we are humbled by their confidence in this project and our ability to bring it to fruition. This project is timely and important, and we are excited that Reviewer 3 agrees. Finally, we are elated that they enjoyed reading our responses to the masked comments. We intended to consider each reviewer’s comments thoroughly and are glad our intentions were well articulated and received.

**Reviewer 4:**  
  
*1. Does the project address an important and compelling question or set of questions? Is the question(s) framed appropriately in terms of prior theory and empirical work?*  
  
I am not sure how important this is. It is an intriguing and original window into Congressional behavior, which is hard to do. It might turn out to reveal actions that have genuine impact on legislation or electoral outcomes -- but I continue to worry that it is straining to find generalizable actions that are much more idiosyncratic, rare, and unpredictable in outcome than this research design is suited for.  
  
*2. Is the research design, the data and the proposed methodology appropriate to address the questions raised?*  
  
Imaginative and broad use of data sets, but I have several worries:

1) Misconduct and "words taken down" are really different from protest, -- I expect only a few cases will jump out as relevant and sufficiently important here (e.g. is not wearing a mask on the House floor really what they have in mind as protest?)

2) The frame is mostly about race/gender/ethnicity subordination in Congress, but I am not sure that is persuasive any longer -- the roles of Pelosi, Hakeem Jeffries, Warnock among others do not signal subordination in a way that the scholarly literature of a few decades ago point to. More generally, Dems. recognize that Blacks' and women's support is essential to Democratic party prospects, so this feels outdated.

3) The most prominent protests recently are on the right -- MTG, "you lie!" etc. That phenomenon seems largely ignored in the survey (e.g. no discussion of ideological extremism either in sample or in vignettes).

4) Fear of sanctions from protesting seems inconsistent with choice to protest as way to rise in party ranks and get constituent support -- were Lewis or Bush, or MTG, sanctioned in any way? In sum, I am not fully persuaded by the set up (seems outdated), and the research doesn't fully fit the set-up, in any case.  
  
*3. Do the qualifications of the investigator(s) suggest the capacity to carry out the project? Is additional expertise required?*  
  
Yes, both are well prepared with plenty of relevant experience, intellectual energy etc. I think this project would lend itself better to a set of carefully selected case studies and interviews, so I would want to find out about that kind of expertise.  
  
*4. What is the likely contribution of this project?*  
  
Hard to say -- imaginative idea, maybe revealing results about protest by elites who arguably have more political resources than almost anyone in the world. Or it might end up maybe straining for effect that isn't really there. Is that uncertainty a good reason to support the research? Maybe…  
  
  
**Investigator Response**

We appreciate Reviewer 4’s conviction that this project is an intriguing and original window into congressional behavior. We also acknowledge their concern that the project may not demonstrate an effect of protest on legislative or electoral outcomes. Nevertheless, we believe this project yields important contributions in several ways. First, we agree that outcomes are important and maintain that we have several research designs that will likely produce interesting results. Notwithstanding, understanding which legislators protest and when are independently important contributions. As we detail in the proposal, numerous news stories exist on legislators’ protests. Yet, to our knowledge, there is little comprehensive data or facts on the prevalence of protest behavior. We believe we will be the first to create and disseminate publicly available data on US legislators’ protests.

Second, without accurate data on legislators’ protests, we cannot definitively say that protesting is rare. Certainly, protest is a tactic used less frequently than other legislative behaviors. But just because something is infrequent does not mean it is undetectable and fruitless. Indeed, why would news outlets cover incidents of legislators’ protests if they were not meaningful? We have delineated in our proposal several ways that a legislator’s protest may positively or negatively impact them. We discuss campaign contributions, public opinion, and the ability of protest to influence a legislator’s colleagues in ways that could affect a legislator’s capacity to legislate and lead. We theorize that some legislators, namely marginalized legislators, are more likely to protest than others and that protest behavior will positively impact some legislators and could present negative or even minimal consequences for other legislators. Even if our hypotheses are incorrect, our findings will provide interesting insights into the calculus and implications of legislators’ protests. That is, if we are wrong, we still have more information about the influence of legislators’ protests than currently exists.

Lastly, we believe this data will lead to a better understanding of the constraints and tactics of marginalized groups within Congress. Our preliminary analysis of the CMPS survey data shows that support for a legislator’s protest varies in important and predictable ways. For example, Figures 3A-C show that Democrats and Black Americans support legislators’ protests, providing some support for our expectation that historically marginalized constituents may favorably view protesting as a way of addressing inequality and discrimination. We are hopeful to explore these outcomes further in our survey experiment.

Next, Reviewer 4 raises several concerns in response to **question 2** about the appropriateness of the research design, data, and methodology for addressing our project’s research questions.

The **first** concern is whether misconduct and “words taken down” constitute relevant and sufficiently important protest behavior. We assume that Reviewer 4’s comment is questioning the conceptual difference between observations captured in the Misconduct and “Words Taken Down” datasets and those more conventionally considered as “protest.” That is, are incidents such as Rep. Bobby Rush wearing a hoodie on the House floor or House Democrats staging a sit-in on the House floor in 2016 substantially and critically different from the observations captured in the Misconduct and “Words Taken Down” datasets? Notwithstanding, we deliberately depend on our theoretically- and literature-informed definition of protest instead of subjective understandings of protest behavior to avoid our own subjective assessments of what counts as protests to produce a theoretically and empirically rigorous analysis of legislators’ protest.

Recall that we define legislator protest as any activity that is (1) publicly observable and (2) disrupts regular day-to-day institutional functioning or violates institutional norms to (3) communicate or achieve a political goal, as opposed to a strictly personal one. We constructed this definition and subsequent dataset based on extant literature on legislative behavior, legislative norms, and social movement theory.

In our initial data collection, we relied on research assistants to sift through the misconduct data to collect only the incidents that fit this protest definition. Moreover, as we discuss in our proposal, the “words taken down” data fits this protest definition, particularly because they are public acts that defy institutional norms and functioning. We suggest that the motives for the actions are political and deliberate, given legislators’ awareness of the institution's norms. However, as is also stated in the proposal, we compare the “words taken down” data with data we collect from the congressional record and newspaper articles to ensure they are politically motivated.

Concerning Reviewer 4’s concerns that only a few cases from the Misconduct and “words taken down” data are relevant and sufficiently important, we wish to reiterate and elaborate on some points made within the proposal to hopefully assuage the Reviewer’s concerns. To begin, according to an additional preliminary analysis of the RA-coded Misconduct dataset that we had not included in the RSF proposal, between 1798 and 2022, of the 462 reports of misconduct identified by GovTrack, between 41-58 are considered protests. Thus, as captured by this dataset, 9-13% of all misconduct is an act of protest. This is a restricted and conservative estimate of protest given how GovTrack defines and captures “misconduct,” which is why we triangulate protest incidents across various sources. This misconduct dataset is constructed from letters of reproval, censures, and expulsions from Congress, investigations by the House Office of Congressional Ethics, House Committee on Ethics, and the Senate Select Committee on Ethics, as well as resignations believed to be related to an allegation of misconduct and felony convictions of misconduct. Therefore, this dataset only captures behavior that receives institutional attention in the form of (attempted) sanction, at the minimum.

Moreover, recall that the “Words Taken Down” dataset refers to data Alexander (2021) collected, capturing Rule XVII violations from the Congressional Record. This dataset represents decorum violations–incidents in which representatives used language/behavior in a way that is “unparliamentary” or engaged in “personality.” From the 80th through the 113th Congress, there were 254 incidents of Rule XVII violations. By assuming that legislators are aware of the decorum limits within which they are expected to operate and the possibility of sanction, we assume that they intentionally choose to speak or behave in a way that violates rules. So, each of these 254 incidents is an act of protest in that they are publicly observable rule violations/disruptions of day-to-day institutional functioning.

Given the definitional foundation of our empirical investigation, we argue that each incident of protest we observe is relevant and sufficiently important in that each act of protest is an example of a legislator using extra-institutional means to achieve a political end. Consequently, Reviewer 4’s question about whether not wearing a mask on the House floor is an act of protest in which we are interested speaks to this very dynamic. For example, when asked if she would continue to defy the mask mandate rules put in place in the House by Capitol Attending Physician by not wearing a mask, Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-CO) said, “If we cede our freedoms here, there is no chance for the people that I represent back home.” This quote speaks to the fact that Republicans who engaged in this protest behavior did so for political ends, drawing a line between divides over COVID-19 public health responses in Congress and amongst the general public.

Furthermore, such protest indicates that Republicans used individual mask mandate violations to supplement failed *institutional* attempts to challenge the mandates. For instance, a federal judge dismissed a case from Reps. Thomas Massie, Marjorie Taylor Greene, and Ralph Norman who sued Speaker Pelosi and Capitol Hill administrators over the mask mandate rule. Another example of such institutional attempts is that of Rep. Chip Roy delivering a speech against House masking rules, ultimately calling for the House to adjourn. Thus, we argue that representatives publicly refusing to mask on the House floor, thus violating rules, is a relevant act of protest.

Much of our theoretical interest in legislator protest is grounded in the fact that some legislators, whether for reasons related to ideological extremity, party power, or racialized-gendered disadvantage, must explore extra-institutional means by which to advocate for their policies and constituents. The form of these behaviors varies in degree and type (e.g., violating a decorum rule or staging a walk-out). We argue that the form of the protest depends on many factors: the constituency to which the legislator is attempting to appeal, the policy about which the legislator is concerned, the political process the legislator attempts to disrupt, and the position of the legislator–to name a few. Consequently, we believe that the nature of legislators’ protests is not a definitional problem but a dynamic we aim to evaluate theoretically and empirically.

To address Reviewer 4’s **second** concern under **question 2** that race/ethnicity-gender subordination is outdated in Congress, we first draw attention to recent literature we featured in the proposal that shows the continuing relevance of such dynamics. For instance, Dittmar et al. (2022) interviewed women from diverse racial backgrounds in the 114th Congress (2015-2017), highlighting how race, ethnicity, and gender intersect to inform legislators’ experiences. Such identities shape the issues and constituencies about which legislators care and for whom they are willing to advocate. The authors find that a “sense of responsibility to similarly situated women was common among the women”-- especially among the women of color they interviewed (ibid., p. 277). This finding implies that individuals who experience race/ethnicity-gender subordination are likely 1) more concerned with issues that impact subordinated constituencies and 2) more willing to go to great lengths, including protesting, to provide representation, given their shared experience with subordination. Such identities and experiences also shape legislators' experiences by constructing the barriers they must overcome due to institutionalized subordination.

Another example of recent literature we highlight in the proposal that speaks to the persistent relevance of race/ethnicity-gender subordination is that which explores how women, particularly Black women and women of color, must overcome and overcompensate for the disadvantages they face. Women do this, for instance, by collaborating with other women at higher rates than men (Holman et al., 2022). They base these findings on an analysis of over 140,000 bills introduced in 40 states in 2015, less than ten years ago.

To supplement the literature we highlighted in the proposal, we want to draw attention to additional, recent literature that demonstrates the relevance of race/ethnicity subordination in Congress. For one, the numerical underrepresentation of such groups persists. As late as the current and most diverse 118th Congress, the proportion of non-Hispanic white Congress members outpaces the proportion of white people in the US population 75% to 59%; indeed, this gap is about the same as it was in 1981. This numerical underrepresentation has implications for the tactics legislators use to run for office and represent their constituents. To be sure, consider Black women who are often discouraged from running for office (e.g., Brown and Dowe 2020; Brown & Allen Gershon 2020), are perceived as less electable on the campaign trail due to racialized and gendered expectations (e.g., Brown 2014), leading to structural barriers that perpetuate Black women’s undersized role in electoral politics (Brown & Allen Gershon 2020). Note that much of this literature was published in the last decade and speaks to experiences underrepresented legislators continue to amplify.

Other recent literature points to the persistence of racialized and gendered dynamics as contributing to race/ethnicity-gender subordination *inside* Congress. Brown & Allen Gershon (2020), who have published several recent articles and books on intersectionality and legislative politics, put it this way: “Legislative bodies are institutions that structure racial and gender hierarchies that persistently silence, exclude, and challenges the authority of women of color (Hawkesworth, 2003). Political institutions remain overwhelmingly populated and controlled by individuals from dominant groups (Rosenthal, 2002), which means that racism and gender biases are incorporated into the structure of the legislature because of the social practices of the legislators themselves (Johnson, 1997)” (p. 9-10). These dynamics contribute to the circumstances that may lead actions commonly viewed as normal legislative behaviors to be perceived as “personality” or norm violations worthy of sanction. That is, as we note in the proposal, the perception that Senator Elizabeth Warren was violating institutional norms by reading a letter by Coretta Scott King to oppose Jeff Session’s confirmation as US Attorney General was in many people’s perception due to her gender. A white male colleague silenced her but did not silence her white male counterpart, Sen Jeff Merkley, for the same behavior.

We also draw attention to other notable instances of *recent* and *prominent* protests that highlight the relevance of race/ethnicity-gender subordination in inclining some legislators to pursue extra-institutional actions in light of their institutional marginalization:

Even with Pelosi in the Speaker’s office and legislators like Rep. Clyburn in party leadership, in August 2021, Cori Bush, a Black woman representative (D-MA), slept on the steps of the US Capitol overnight to protest the House adjourning for summer recess without passing an eviction moratorium. She was later joined by several colleagues, Reps. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Ilhan Omar (D-MN), Jim McGovern (D-MA), and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). Moreover, in May 2022, Reps. Madeleine Dean (D-PA), Nikema Williams (D-GA), and Veronica Escobar (D-TX) led a march of Democratic women House members in protest around abortion rights restrictions outside the US Senate chamber.

The most recent example of legislators’ protesting that highlights the persistence of race/ethnicity-gender subordination as highly relevant is that of the “Tennessee Three.” On March 30, Reps. Justin Jones, Justin Pearson, and Gloria Johnson joined protesters at the Tennessee statehouse to demand stricter gun laws, bringing proceedings to a halt. Republicans responded by stripping Reps. Johnson and Jones of their committee assignments, and ultimately voting to expel Jones and Pearson–two young, Black representatives from their seats.

A quote from Rep. Pearson describes the thought process that led to his joining in the protest: “...It is not business as usual. Our lives are at stake and we're gonna fight for our lives just like they're fighting for the NRA. We will never shirk back from civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is what built this country. Resisting the status quo built the [country] into the institution that it is. It's our ancestors' resistance that got me here. I will not forget them or forget the struggles of people--especially children who march, children who were bitten by dogs, who were beaten. If I gotta get expelled, I'll take that.”

Many have reflected on the racialized dynamics highlighted in this case, given that the only representative spared expulsion was a white woman. Indeed, when asked why Pearson and Johnson were expelled, and she wasn’t, Johnson replied, “Well, I think it’s pretty clear. I’m a 60-year-old white woman, and they are two young Black men.” Johnson also noted a racialized tone with which Rep. Andrew Farmer spoke to Johnson and Pearson when he said, “Just because you don’t get your way, you can’t come to the well, bring your friends and throw a temper tantrum with an adolescent bullhorn.”

Moreover, California Rep Katie Porter remarked, “They were Tennessee legislators who went into the chamber and, admittedly, broke the rules on decorum, partly because they were being silenced when they wanted to talk - following the rules of decorum - about gun violence prevention … I also do want to say that rules of decorum are often used to silence people who do not have voices and, in this case, we are talking about two younger men, two black men, two people in the political minority in Tennessee …”

Given the multitude of *recent* scholarship and empirical examples that point to the profound relevance of race/ethnicity-gender subordination in Congress, we respectfully disagree with Reviewer 4 about the relevancy of our project. Our examples suggest that 1) race/gender/ethnicity subordination still exists within Congress and many legislative institutions throughout the United States. 2) Legislators often amplify the racial, gender, and ethnic dynamics that subordinate them. And 3) contemporarily, many subordinated legislators view protesting as a way to represent their marginalized constituents.

Nevertheless, we appreciate the opportunity to highlight some of the growing literature and commentary on this topic.

In response to Reviewer 4’s **third** methodological concern, we agree that ideological extremism is an important component of legislator protest. There certainly are prominent protests on the right that are substantively and theoretically important to our project, just as there are many highly visible protests on the left and even those between the ideological extremes. We also agree and would very much like to include ideology in our experiment. However, our survey, detailed in Appendix 2 of our proposal, already has 24 conditions that vary along four variables: Race/ethnicity of the legislator (white, Black, Latinx), Gender of the legislator (woman, man), Party of the legislator (Democrat, Republican), and whether the legislator engaged in protest (Protest, Non-Protest).  We could add ideology such that each respondent would view a Democrat, Republican, Conservative, or Liberal. However, that would expand the number of conditions to 48, and we, unfortunately, do not have the resources to expand the sample size required to do such a large experiment. Moreover, we assess ideology in other parts of the project (i.e., in our descriptive analyses, theoretical underpinnings of legislators’ protests, and exploration of consequences for campaign donations or legislative effectiveness).

In response to Reviewer 4’s **fourth** concern delineated under the **second question**, admittedly, we do not fully understand the concern about sanctions. So, it may be helpful for us to clarify how we view the relationship between sanctions and protests. We discuss sanctions in our proposal in two ways.

First, we consider sanctions as a possible constraint on protest behavior. Legislators will consider the possibility of facing sanctions when deciding if they should protest. For some, sanctions will deter engaging in protest. For others, particularly those for whom traditional institutional tactics are unresponsive, we contend that legislators may deem protesting to be worth the potential cost of sanctions.

Second, one way that we measure protest is with data on sanctions. However, as stated in the proposal, sanctions are neither necessary nor sufficient for protest behavior. There are many instances when protest occurs, but sanctions do not follow, just as there are many incidents of sanctions being imposed on behaviors that are not protests.

Perhaps some confusion lies over whether a protest that could result in sanctions better positions a legislator to achieve their goals, like rising in party ranks or appealing to constituents. At first glance, receiving sanctions and achieving goals may seem contradictory. However, take the example of Rep. Cori Bush. There’s evidence that her protest at the Capitol did resonate favorably with co-partisans in the public. Moreover, her protest not only directly impacted policy, but also turned her into a leader on the issue of equal housing. While not a formal leadership position, this certainly has raised her profile in the House and within the Democratic Party.

We hope this discussion has clarified how we view the relationship between sanctions and protests and satisfies Reviewer 4’s concerns about the role of sanctions.

In response to Reviewer 4’s comments in response to **question 3**, we appreciate that they believe we have the capacity to conduct the analyses delineated in the proposal, and we remain convinced that our proposed research designs will produce valuable and insightful findings.  Nevertheless, if case studies and interviews are ultimately needed, we have the skills and experience to conduct them successfully. Jennifer Garcia is a co-PI on another project where she has conducted in-depth interviews with communications directors of legislative offices in the U.S. House of Representatives. She has also conducted archival work at the Carter, Ford, and George H.W. Bush presidential libraries and the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives. Additionally, she has completed training in qualitative methods at the Institute of Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR). Alison Boehmer plans to attend IQMR this summer. Further, co-PI LaGina Gause has fielded a survey of elected officials and their staffers, and all three team members have expertise in conducting case studies.

Ultimately, this project will produce descriptive data and theoretically and empirically grounded insights into legislators’ protest behaviors. Even if our empirical findings do not support all of our theoretical expectations, we agree with the majority of the reviewers that this project will produce data and analyses that will appeal to audiences in political science and beyond, including scholars in sociology, ethnic studies, African American studies, gender studies, Latin American studies, history, and other disciplines. We also expect that this project will help inform popular conversations on legislators’ protests, and our research team has experience in joining those conversations.

Alexander, B. (2021). *A Social Theory of Congress: Legislative Norms in the Twenty-First Century*. Lexington Books.

Brown, Nadia E. (2014). *Sisters in the Statehouse: Black Women and Legislative Decision Making*.<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199352432.001.0001>.

Brown, Nadia E., and Pearl K. Dowe. (2020). “Late to the Party: Black Women’s Inconsistent Support from Political Parties.” In *Good Reasons to Run: Women and Political Candidacy*, ed. Shuana L. Shames, Rachel I. Bernhard, Miyra R. Holman, and Dawn L. Teele, 153–66. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Brown, Nadia E., and Sarah Allen Gershon. (2021). "“Glass Half Full: Cautious Optimism and the Future of Black Women Political Elites in America”." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 6(1): 3-15. doi:10.1017/rep.2020.44.

Dittmar, K., Wineinger, C., Sanbonmatsu, K. (2022). Studying Legislatures at the Intersection of Gender and Race: The View from the 114th Congress.*Politics Spotlight: Research on Race and Ethnicity in Legislative Studies*.

Holman, M. R., Mahoney, A., Hurler, E. (2021). Let’s Work Together: Bill Success via Women’s Cosponsorship in U.S. State Legislatures. *Political Research Quarterly*, *75*(3).

**Reviewer 5:**  
  
*1. Does the project address an important and compelling question or set of questions? Is the question(s) framed appropriately in terms of prior theory and empirical work?*  
  
Yes, this proposal addresses a very important and compelling question. It is framed appropriately in terms of theory and empirical work. This research will have a big impact on political science and beyond. It will be read and cited by scholars in sociology, African American studies, gender and women studies, and historians. Beyond academia I anticipate this will have a much broader appeal. This research will gain media traction and likely be picked up in a number of public-facing outlets. Finally, I full anticipate seeing the products of this research on classroom syllabi (both graduate and undergraduate) for many years to come. It is pressing topic and there is a big appetite for more research in this area.  
  
*2. Is the research design, the data and the proposed methodology appropriate to address the questions raised?*  
  
The design, data, and methodology are sound. The authors were careful to engage reviewer suggestions to improve the data strategy and I am confident in their ability to execute a sound empirical plan. This is important for drawing conclusions and inferences. The authors are well positioned to draw reliable conclusions from their proposed analysis.  
  
*3. Do the qualifications of the investigator(s) suggest the capacity to carry out the project? Is additional expertise required?*  
  
The investigators are extremely well positioned to execute this work. Both well trained technically and well steeped in the literature. Both investigators are extremely likely to produce the promised work. They have both the professional incentives to execute the work and a strong track record of having produced other high quality, high impact research. They have the institutional support necessary to allow them to prioritize this research. They are well connected in the research community which will allow them to continue getting feedback, to easily disseminate their work, and to reach desired audiences.  
  
*4. What is the likely contribution of this project?*  
  
The project makes theoretical and conceptual contributions to our understanding of how women, minoritized legislators, and intersectionally minoritized legislatures navigate the policy making process to advance a legislative agenda. This is extremely important given that 1) these groups are underrepresented in policy-making; and 2) the rules are set up to favor numeric majorities in Congress; and 3) these legislators tend to be only well represented in one party. Consequently they must make alternative efforts to navigate the legislative process and work within the system to advance their agenda. This is likely to be very highly visible research both within the discipline and public facing. This project will make data contributions to data --ultimately creating more research opportunities for other scholars in the future.  
  
*5. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the investigators to consider (theory, data, methods) that could potentially improve the project?*  
  
The revisions the authors made were spot on. They did a great job incorporating all of the comments from each reviewer. In particular I appreciate the engagement with intersectional literature, with legislative politics, and with new research on brawling. The authors were very thoughtful and through in their responses. This gives me the upmost confidence that these reviewers can navigate the review process to produce high-impact research and that they thoughtfully take feedback into account in a way that improves the research (not simply to check a box to satisfy the reviewers). Congratulations on an excellent proposal and a very creative idea! I look forward to seeing this research!  
  
  
**Investigator Response**

We are grateful for Reviewer 5’s confidence and anticipation of this project. We, too, anticipate that it will have scholarly and public appeal and can contribute broadly to our understanding of how legislators, particularly those facing marginalization, use protest to advance the interests of their constituents, their party, and themselves. We are grateful for all the constructive feedback we have received in both rounds of review. Moreover, we are enthused by Reviewer 5’s acknowledgment of our attempt to use all our feedback to improve the execution and communication of this captivating and conceivably highly impactful research project.