

Civil Legislative Discourse

Panel 6C: Auditorium

State Politics and Policy Conference

Department of Political Science, UC San Diego

La Jolla, March 21st, 2020 [10:30-Noon]

Chair

Nicholas P. Lovrich, Regents Professor Emeritus

Claudius O. & Mary W. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Political Science

School of Politics, Philosophy and Public Affairs

Washington State University

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PAPERS

Non-profits and Their Unique Perspective on the Civility in Legislative Processes: Does Non-rent Seeking Make a Difference?

Burdett Loomis and John Pierce, University of Kansas

The Connection Between Legislative Professionalism and Legislative Civility and Quality of Legislative Deliberation

William Schreckhise, University of Arkansas and Francis Benjamin, Washington State University

A Partial Replication of Fowler & Witt (Publius 2019): Multi-variate Modeling of Cross-State Differences in Lobbyists' Perceptions of Legislative Civility

Luke Fowler and Stephanie Witt, Boise State University

Political Culture, Historical Legacy, and Contemporary Levels of Civil Discourse in US State Legislatures

Christopher Simon, University of Utah and Nicholas Lovrich, Washington State University

Discussants: Steven Stehr & Sam Reed, **Thomas S. Foley Institute of Public Policy and Public Service,**
Washington State University



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DISCUSSANTS:

SAM REED

14TH SECRETARY OF STATE (3-TERM), PRIME MOVER FOR UNIVERSITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH ON CIVIL DISCOURSE IN
WASHINGTON

ORGANIZER OF MAINSTREAM REPUBLICANS OF WASHINGTON

STEVEN D. STEHR

SAM REED DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR IN CIVIC EDUCATION AND PUBLIC CIVILITY

THOMAS S. FOLEY INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & PUBLIC SERVICE

ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION DUE: ROB BOATRIGHT, CHAIR, DEPT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, CLARK UNIVERSITY³

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE (UNIV. OF ARIZONA)

**"I wish there was a way I
could wave a magic
wand and put back when
people were respectful
of each other and the
Congress was
working for the
good of the
country and
not just along
party lines."**



Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

American Politics



Image source: Atlantic



REACTIONS TO “CAVOURTING WITH THE ENEMY”



LEARNING FROM THE AUTO EMISSIONS TEST GUY

MIKE'S EMISSIONS TEST SHACK
STATE STREET, BOISE, IDAHO, MAY 2018

COMPLIMENTS OF GARY MONCRIEF, EMERITUS PROFESSOR, BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY





CENTRAL QUESTION

***HAVE HYPER-
POLARIZATION AND
THE WEAKENING OF
NORMS OF CIVIL
DISCOURSE TAKEN
PLACE AT THE STATE
LEVEL?***

- ALAN GREENBLATT'S JUNE, 2017 ARTICLE IN *GOVERNING* POSES THE CORE CONCERN

“CHECKS AND IMBALANCES: WITH A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS CONSUMING WASHINGTON D.C., STATE LAWMAKERS ARE UPENDING THEIR OWN NORMS AS WELL.”



THE WSU FOLEY INSTITUTE-SUPPORTED STUDY: 2018-19 NATIONAL SURVEY OF STATE LEGISLATIVE LOBBYISTS

Multi-institution effort by a team of 21 scholars at 11 universities in 11 states. They've been supported with funding from the *National Institute for Civil Discourse* at the Univ. of Arizona and have ongoing support from the *Thomas S. Foley Institute for Public Policy & Public Service* and the *William D. Ruckelshaus Center* at Washington State University.



RESEARCH TEAM & THEIR UNIVERSITY AFFILIATIONS

- **UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS – William Schreckhise**
- **UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS – John Pierce & Burdett Loomis**
- **BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY – Gary Moncrief (ret.), Stephanie Witt, Luke Fowler & Jaclyn Kettler**
- **BRADLEY UNIVERSITY – Megan Remmel & R. Craig Curtis**
- **OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY – Brent Steel, Claire McMorris and Leanne Giordono**
- **UNIVERSITY OF UTAH – Christopher Simon**
- **KENT STATE UNIVERSITY – Daniel Chand**
- **UNIV. OF NEVADA, RENO, UNLV, & WESTERN NEV. COLLEGE – John Tennert & Robert Morin**
- **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY – Michael Moltz**
- **DUKE UNIVERSITY – Leslie Winner & John Hood**
- **WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY – Francis Benjamin, Steven Stehr, & Nicholas Lovrich**

NATIONAL SURVEY OF STATE LEGISLATIVE LOBBYISTS, 2018-19

HIGHLIGHTS: 1) VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT EXISTS THAT CIVIL DISCOURSE IS ESSENTIAL TO LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY OF DELIBERATION; 2) LOBBYISTS ARE MORE NEGATIVE THAN LEGISLATORS REGARDING WEAKENING OF CIVILITY NORMS & CUSTOMS IN THE STATE LEGISLATURES; AND 3) SUBSTANTIAL VARIATION ACROSS THE STATES IS PRESENT WITH RESPECT TO NORM EROSION AND THE SHRINKAGE OF NON-PARTISAN SPACE.

SURVEY CHARACTERISTICS:

- COMPLETED SURVEYS = 1,200+ (on-line Qualtrics + mail follow-up)
- RETURNS FROM ALL 50 STATES
- AVE. RESPONSES PER STATE = 25+ [min = 14 (GA), max = 79 (OR)]
- OVERSAMPLES (30+) for AR, KS, ID, WA, UT, CA, NV, IL, IA, OH, PA, OR & NC
- MANY FORMER STATE LEGISLATORS; **DIVERSE** GROUP, INCLUDING AGENCY LIAISON PERSONNEL, NON-PROFITS, PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS, ETC.
- RICH COLLECTION OF COMMENTS AND COMMENTARIES

PRESENTATIONS MADE AND PLANNED: ACADEMIC CONCLAVES & PUBLIC FORUMS WITH REACTION PANELS

2019: Univ. of Arkansas, Oregon St. Univ., Univ. of Utah, Boise St. Univ.

2020: Washington St. Univ., Univ. of Nevada, Reno, Shippensburg Univ. (PA), Univ. of Kansas, Duke Univ., Texas A&M International Univ., California State Univ. Sacramento, and the *New England Political Science Association*