

**Online Supplemental Material for  
The Perception of Bias: The Association between Campaign Contributions and Bar Poll  
Ratings**

**DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

***Dependent variable***

Figure S-1 presents the distribution of impartiality ratings.

***Independent variables***

Unless otherwise noted, I adjusted campaign contribution variables for inflation using 2012 dollars. Model variables for campaign contributions ranged from “0” for no contributions to “1” for the highest dataset contribution. Some models use as a main explanatory variable the number of donors contributing at least \$150, which is the threshold for contributor disclosures under state law. These models also employ a key explanatory variable the number of donors who contributed \$1,000 or more, which is a plausible threshold for a large donation. Moreover, Illinois law requires campaign committees to report within five days single donor contributions of \$1,000 or more. I based the \$150 and \$1,000 contribution variables on face values unadjusted for inflation.

***Modeling***

The relationship between donations to judicial campaigns and perceived impartiality was measured as to overall contributions as well as three types of campaign contributors: attorneys, interest groups and political organizations. I applied linear regression analyses to the eight models using each independent variable with the sole control of *mean bar poll rating other than impartiality* (Models 1–8). Applying the McClure study variables along with the *uncontested election* and margin of victory variables, I modified Models 1 to 8 to include a broader range of statistical control (Models 9–16). The estimation method is OLS linear regression.

Table S-1 reports summary statistics for the variables used in the analyses.

Table S-2 reports results for models predicting bar poll judge impartiality ratings using various campaign contribution measures and a control for the mean value of the non-impartiality ratings from the bar poll.

Table S-3 reports results for the same models reported in Table S-2, but with a broader range of statistical control. The pattern in Table S-3 that the campaign contribution measure had a  $p$ -value less than  $p=0.05$  for Models 9 to 14 and had a  $p$ -value greater than  $p=0.05$  for Models 15 and 16 remained for various combinations of the margin-of-victory controls: when the closest election margin-of-victory control was the only included margin-of-victory control, when the primary election margin-of-victory control was the only included margin-of-victory control, when the

general election margin-of-victory control was the only included margin-of-victory control, and when none of the three margin-of-victory controls were included.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The predicted impartiality ratings in Model 1 measuring total contributions from all donors, holding all other variables at their mean, were 0.886 for the 40 judges receiving no contributions and 0.844 for the judge who received the largest contribution in the dataset. This difference represents an additional 4 percent of lawyers believing the judge will not act and rule impartially. The differences in the percent of lawyers holding the belief that the judge will not act and rule impartially were 6 percent (Model 2: all \$150+ contributors) and 5 percent (Model 3: all \$1,000+ contributors). The predicted impartiality scores in the models relating to attorney contributions were 8 percent (Model 4: all attorney contributions), 6 percent attorney (Model 5: \$150+ contributors) and 7 percent (Model 6: \$1,000+ contributors). There was a 2 percent difference in the percent of lawyers holding the belief that the judge will not act and rule impartially for the models involving contributions to interest groups and political organizations (Models 7–8). To assess the robustness of estimates, I removed the top 5 percent of cases for each campaign contribution predictor; the *p*-values continued to show an association between lower impartiality scores for Models 1, 2, 4 and 5.

To illustrate effect size estimates, Figure 2 graphically presents results from the full set of cases in Model 9 (total value of all contributions) with all other model variables at their mean. The difference in Figure 2 from the lowest value to highest value of campaign contributions represents roughly an additional 5 percent of lawyers indicating the belief that the judge will not act and rule impartially. Corresponding low/high differences in the percent of lawyers indicating the belief that the judge will not act and rule impartially were 8 percent (Model 10: number of total \$150+ contributors), 7 percent (Model 11: number of total \$1,000+ contributors), 9 percent (Model 12: total value of attorney contributions), 7 percent (Model 13: number of attorney \$150+ contributors), 8 percent (Model 14: number of attorney \$1,000+ contributors), 2 percent (Model 15: total value of interest group contributions), and 2 percent (Model 16: total value of political organizations contributions). Standard deviation differences from the lowest value to highest value of campaign contributions were 0.54 for Model 9 ( $p=0.022$ ), 0.88 for Model 10 ( $p=0.004$ ), 0.78 for Model 11 ( $p=0.021$ ), 1.02 for Model 12 ( $p=0.009$ ), 0.75 for Model 13 ( $p=0.002$ ), 0.91 for Model 14 ( $p=0.015$ ), 0.24 for Model 15 ( $p=0.567$ ), and 0.26 for Model 16 ( $p=0.268$ ). Even after removing the top 5 percent of cases for each campaign contribution predictor, the relationship between low impartiality scores and campaign contributions continued to produce statistically significant associations for Models 9, 10, 12, and 13.

Figure S-2 reports the predicted impartiality rating point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for various levels of campaign contributions that a judge received, ranging from \$0 (coded as 0) to \$516,0876.90 in 2012 dollars received (coded as 1), based on a linear regression from Model 9 with all other model variables at their mean.

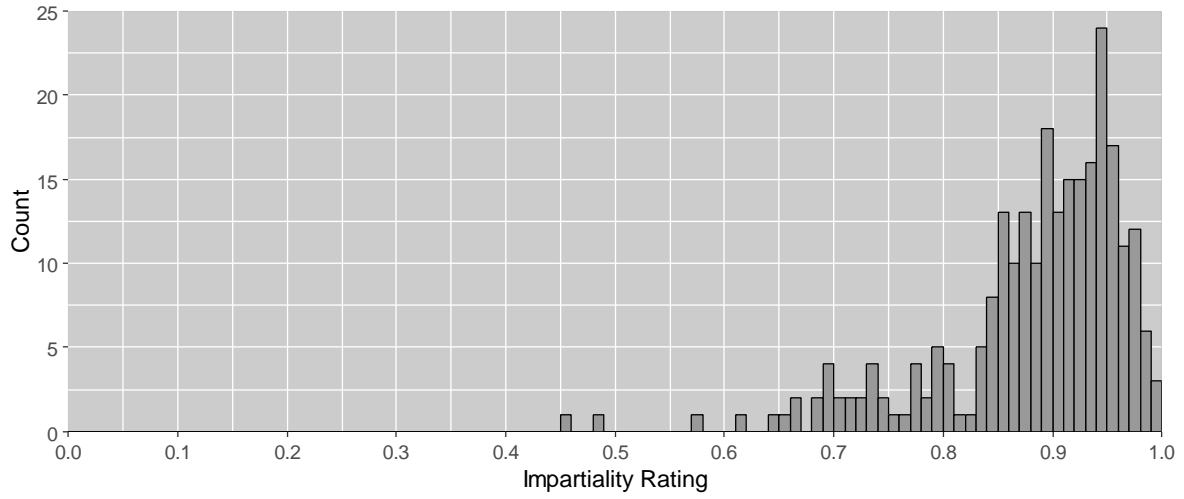


Figure S-1: Distribution of Impartiality Ratings

In this histogram, percentage ratings are presented as decimal fractions. E.g., 90% rating = 0.9, 75% rating = 0.75.

**Table S-1. Summary Statistics**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	5th percentile value	95th percentile value	Max
Impartiality bar poll rating	254	0.883	0.089	0.454	0.695	0.978	1
All contributions (2012 dollars)	254	42,098	64,317	0	0	111,748	516,087
Attorney contributions (2012 dollars)	254	9,223	26,779	0	0	37,927	359,000
Interest group contributions (2012 dollars)	254	2,088	8,706	0	0	8,465	127,129
Political group contributions (2012 dollars)	254	1,884	4,954	0	0	10,306	37,835
Number of donors who donated at least \$150	254	25.6	52.3	0	0	89	539
Number of donors who donated at least \$1,000	254	3.1	6.6	0	0	13	75
Number of attorney donors who donated at least \$150	254	10.4	18.9	0	0	46	155
Number of attorney donors who donated at least \$1,000	254	1.7	5.4	0	0	6	69
Mean bar poll rating other than impartiality	254	0.93	0.064	0.58	0.82	0.99	1.00
Number of years practicing law	250	25.9	6.189	8	17	36	45
Male	254	0.854	0.353	0	0	1	1
Illinois public university graduate	247	0.478	0.501	0	0	1	1
Graduate of a Top 50 law school	252	0.325	0.469	0	0	1	1
Career prosecutor	254	0.024	0.152	0	0	0	1
Prosecutor	250	0.504	0.501	0	0	1	1
Public defender but never a prosecutor	250	0.056	0.230	0	0	1	1
Private practice experience	254	0.858	0.349	0	0	1	1
Held elected office	250	0.264	0.442	0	0	1	1
Civic involvement	250	0.392	0.489	0	0	1	1
ISBA member	249	0.771	0.421	0	0	1	1
Uncontested election	254	0.331	0.471	0	0	1	1
Margin of victory in the primary election (decimal percentage)	254	0.660	0.405	0.0031	0.0410	1	1
Margin of victory in the general election (decimal percentage)	254	0.654	0.425	0.0005	0.0233	1	1
Margin of victory in the closest election (decimal percentage)	254	0.446	0.414	0.0005	0.0168	1	1

Table S-2. Prediction of Judge Impartiality Ratings								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total value of all contributions in 2012 dollars	-0.043* (0.021)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Number of total \$150+ contributors	---	-0.065* (0.026)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Number of total \$1,000+ contributors	---	---	-0.053 (0.029)	---	---	---	---	---
Total value of attorney contributions in 2012 dollars	---	---	---	-0.080* (0.034)	---	---	---	---
Number of attorney \$150+ contributors	---	---	---	---	-0.061** (0.021)	---	---	---
Number of attorney \$1,000+ contributors	---	---	---	---	---	-0.074* (0.033)	---	---
Total value of interest group contributions in 2012 dollars	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.022 (0.038)	---
Total value of political organization contributions in 2012 dollars	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.022 (0.020)
Mean bar poll rating other than impartiality	1.220*** (0.040)	1.223*** (0.040)	1.224*** (0.040)	1.224*** (0.040)	1.223*** (0.040)	1.223*** (0.040)	1.223*** (0.040)	1.221*** (0.040)
Constant	-0.248*** (0.038)	-0.251*** (0.037)	-0.253*** (0.037)	-0.253*** (0.037)	-0.250*** (0.037)	-0.253*** (0.037)	-0.254*** (0.038)	-0.251*** (0.038)
Observations	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	254
R <sup>2</sup>	0.789	0.790	0.788	0.790	0.792	0.789	0.785	0.786
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.787	0.789	0.786	0.788	0.791	0.788	0.784	0.784

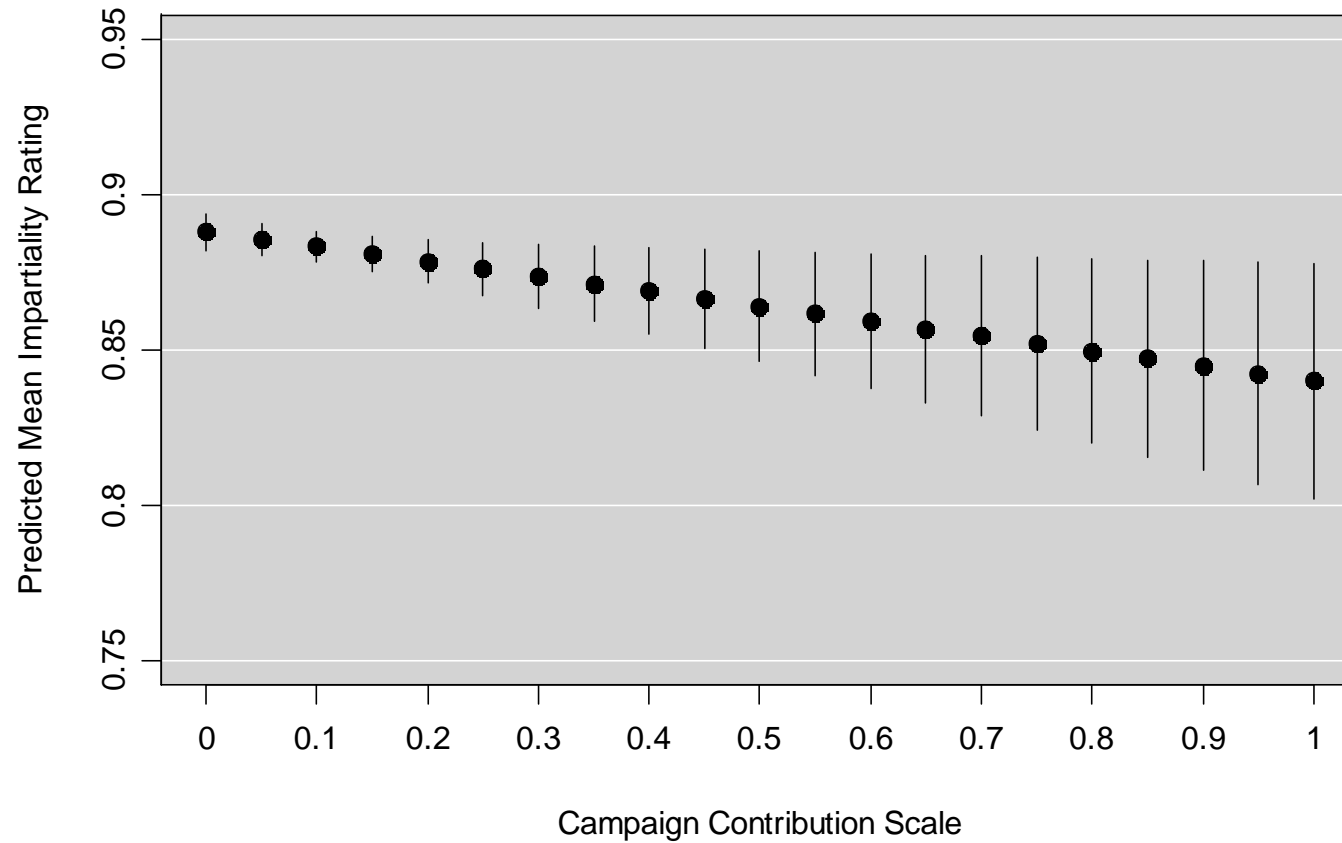
Note: The top line of a cell indicates the coefficient from a linear regression predicting judge impartiality ratings on a scale from 0 to 1. The parentheses in the second line of the cell contain the corresponding standard errors. Asterisks: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , and \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  (all two-tailed tests).

**Table S-3. Prediction of Judge Impartiality Ratings**

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Total value of all contributions in 2012 dollars	-0.048* (0.021)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Number of total \$150+ contributors	---	-0.078** (0.027)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Number of total \$1,000+ contributors	---	---	-0.069* (0.030)	---	---	---	---	---
Total value of attorney contributions in 2012 dollars	---	---	---	-0.090** (0.034)	---	---	---	---
Number of attorney \$150+ contributors	---	---	---	---	-0.067** (0.021)	---	---	---
Number of attorney \$1,000+ contributors	---	---	---	---	---	-0.080* (0.033)	---	---
Total value of interest group contributions in 2012 dollars	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.021 (0.037)	---
Total value of political organization contributions in 2012 dollars	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.023 (0.021)
Mean bar poll rating other than impartiality	1.222*** (0.042)	1.228*** (0.042)	1.223*** (0.042)	1.224*** (0.042)	1.226*** (0.042)	1.223*** (0.042)	1.222*** (0.043)	1.220*** (0.043)
Years as an attorney	0.001* (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	0.001* (0.000)	0.001* (0.000)
Male	0.000 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.000 (0.008)	-0.000 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.000 (0.007)	0.001 (0.008)	0.000 (0.008)
Illinois public university graduate	-0.000 (0.005)	-0.000 (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)	-0.000 (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)
Graduate of a Top 50 law school	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)
Career prosecutor	-0.053** (0.019)	-0.053** (0.019)	-0.054** (0.019)	-0.055** (0.019)	-0.052** (0.019)	-0.054** (0.019)	-0.055** (0.019)	-0.053** (0.019)
Prosecutor	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)
Public defender but never a prosecutor	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.012 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)
Private practice experience	0.001 (0.009)	0.001 (0.009)	-0.001 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.009)	-0.001 (0.009)	-0.001 (0.009)	0.001 (0.010)	0.001 (0.010)

Held elected office	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.007)
Civic Involvement	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)
ISBA Member	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)
Uncontested election	-0.019 (0.017)	-0.017 (0.017)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.017 (0.017)	-0.018 (0.017)
Margin of victory: Primary election	-0.001 (0.011)	0.000 (0.011)	-0.000 (0.011)	0.000 (0.011)	0.001 (0.011)	-0.001 (0.011)	-0.004 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.011)
Margin of victory: General election	-0.012 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.012 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.014 (0.011)	-0.014 (0.011)
Margin of victory: Closest election	0.011 (0.024)	0.009 (0.024)	0.010 (0.024)	0.010 (0.024)	0.008 (0.024)	0.010 (0.024)	0.013 (0.024)	0.014 (0.024)
Constant	-0.259*** (0.041)	0.267*** (0.041)	0.261*** (0.041)	0.261*** (0.041)	-0.263*** (0.041)	-0.262*** (0.041)	-0.262*** (0.042)	-0.258*** (0.042)
Observations	246	246	246	246	246	246	246	246
R <sup>2</sup>	0.804	0.806	0.804	0.805	0.808	0.804	0.799	0.800
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.789	0.792	0.789	0.791	0.793	0.790	0.785	0.785

Note: The top line of a cell indicates the coefficient from a linear regression predicting judge impartiality ratings on a scale from 0 to 1. The parentheses in the second line of the cell contain the corresponding standard errors. Asterisks: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , and \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  (all two-tailed tests).



**Figure S-2. The Association of Campaign Contributions Received and Predicted Impartiality Ratings**