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**Legislative Passage of Marijuana and PAC Contributions:  
An Analysis of Illinois and New York Political Donations**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Honors Studies in  
Political Science

By: Luke Elliott

Spring 2023  
Political Science  
J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Science  
University of Arkansas

## Acknowledgments

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I would be remiss if I did not thank my parents for their unwavering support. Without their encouragement I would not have been able to complete this work, nor have been as successful in my time at the University of Arkansas. Because of them, I stayed the course and finished the race.

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## Introduction

The War on Drugs has been and continues to be waged on Americans, primarily those of lower socioeconomic status. There have been developments that might be able to stem the tide of mass incarceration and the subsequent stripping of civil rights. States beginning with Colorado in 2012, have led the charge on the legalization of marijuana. Still, the plurality of these states who have legalized the substance has done some with a popular referendum rather than legislative action. (Hansen et al., 2023) Notably, New York and Illinois passed legislation in 2021 and 2019, respectively, to bring recreational marijuana sales into the fold of legality. However, a complicating matter arises when legislatures are introduced into the equation of ending the War on Drugs.

An elected official in office has many forces acting on them while they are at work. They must consider the opinions of their constituents, their own opinions, and what they must do to maintain their office. When considering these pressures on state legislators, it is essential to note that politicians rise in the ranks and onto better committees through seniority. Therefore, the longer someone has been in the legislative body, the higher position they will have and thus will have an increased ability to affect change. The reelection process requires substantial funding to reach the voters and secure their job. An effective fundraising method has been utilizing Political Action Committees (PACs). These are corporate entities with a particular ideological position that can donate limited funds to individual candidates. (Levy, 2023) These expenditures by PACs are protected speech as dictated by *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976). The *Buckley* case set the precedent that spending money is protected speech under the first amendment. (Jones, 2023) This jurisprudence would significantly expand in 2010 with *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010).

The *Citizens* case created stronger 1st amendment speech protections for corporate entities and repealed some restrictions created under the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of

2002. (Duignan, 2023) The liberalization of campaign finance political speech in the past decade has led to a substantial increase in political spending by PACs. Because of this increase, PACs have become a more significant force in the success of candidates. The influence of these ideological-driven bodies can have more effects than just the long-term success of a politician. This thesis will seek to determine how PAC and non-PAC contributions impacted the passage of New York Senate Bill S854A and Illinois House Bill 1438.

## Literature Review

The question of what effects political contributions have on elections, and the kinds of candidates that participate in campaigns have been studied since the beginning of ‘money as speech’ in America following *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976). The literature indicates that there was initially a focus on the effectiveness of campaign spending in getting individuals to vote for people. Erikson and Palfrey sought to determine this idea by looking at spending in federal races of incumbents and challengers to evaluate the effectiveness of translating support to votes. The study found that the “...model strongly suggests a nonlinear relationship between expected incumbent share of the vote and spending by both candidates”. (Erikson and Palfrey, 2000) This study demonstrated that the incumbent advantage in elections begins to dissipate as the polls start to break even between the two candidates and that the primary advantage for incumbents is the ability to surpass the fundraising of challenger opponents. Therefore, money is an elusive source of influence that can wax and wane with the perception of success. Because of this elusive nature of money, it is always challenging to create studies about the impact of money on politics.

Despite these difficulties, there seems to be an ideological likeness between contributors and those receiving the contributions. This relationship was studied by Bonica, who found that

there appears to be a correlation of ideological positions between the entities donating money and to whom they are giving it. (Bonica, 2013) Bonica did this by rating the conservatism projected by a particular candidate, determining the PACs that contribute to said candidates on the scale, and using a battery of statistical tools to propose a new method “to recover accurate and reliable ideological measures from contribution data.” (Bonica, 2013) Bonica found in the course that the ideal point of distribution for candidates was bimodal on party lines for candidates, but that PAC distribution was unimodal and split the difference between each of the parties’ mean ideological distribution. However, there are nuances within the PAC distribution, as Bonica found that,

“Labor and single-issue PACs tend to locate toward the extremes, but the vast majority of PACs associated with corporations or membership and trade groups locate between the positions of the party mean.”

Bonica’s findings hold explanatory power for the relationship between candidates and PACs but fail to consider the effect of PAC participation in the political process and the downstream impacts of the introduction and passage of legislation.

We know part of the motivation for donation is to seek favorable access to candidates. Fournaies and Hall observed that “,, industries that have the most to win or lose from new government regulation are the same industries that seem to coordinate and target their contributions towards incumbents.” (Fournaies & Hall, 2014) This is because these groups seek access to legislatures to disclose their ideas on matters relating to their field, most effectively done with direct communication and access to the legislators. They also found that “access-motivated interest groups generate approximately two-thirds of the financial incumbency advantage.” (Fournaies & Hall, 2014) So, strategic contributions by industries can significantly

impact who remains in office and, thus, who is more likely to be at the levers of power when trying to pass legislation. This fact is important to note as it applies directly to marijuana legalization. There are clear revenue streams to be had from the legalization, so industries interested in this could seek access to legislators to attempt to shape the boundaries of the regulatory landscape of legal marijuana. (Colorado Department of Revenue, 2023)

Barber confirms the results from the Fournaies and Hall 2014 study in his study of donation motivations. He found that PACs generally remain ideologically neutral, as in figure 3 of his study. (Barber, 2016) This is primarily due to PACs' nature of being focused on only a handful of issues. He also found that PAC contributions increased 150% when a candidate became an incumbent, which is more significant than ideological groups and individuals. Individuals who become incumbents have a better chance of becoming chairs of committees and, therefore, can promote the success of specific bills. Since PACs seem to have minimal ideological sway and instead seek to contribute to those who have a significant influence on the success of bills, it can be concluded that PACs broadly seek access with their contributions rather than ideological promotion.

The literature also suggests that PACs are particularly strategic as "...evidence affirms that PAC money flows to legislators who succeed legislatively on the group's policy interests". (Heberlig & Larson, 2022, p. 22) Heberlig and Larson found this using Volden and Wiseman's legislative effectiveness (LES) and issue area effectiveness (ILES) measures. They compared then compared them to the number of contributions from PACs. They confirmed "...that legislative effectiveness increases members' ability to attract PAC funds" and that "...conservatives, majority party members, party and committee leaders, senior members, and members in competitive districts raise significantly more from PACs." (Heberlig & Larson,



2022). This means that there would not be aimless contributions to legislators. Therefore, we could expect a trend of voting for bills that would have considerable financial impacts on the state, like the introduction of marijuana as a legal business venture.

Other studies more directly examine the relationship between corporate contributions and policy outcomes. De Figueiredo and Edwards analyzed the relationship between private corporations and the regulatory outcomes for telecommunication. Through their analysis of contributions from telecommunication companies to state legislatures, they were able to determine that “private money in the form of campaign contributions can influence public policy outcomes” and thus, focused private interests can have a substantial impact on the regulatory landscape via the promotion of candidates that are friendly to their interests as a corporation. (De Figueiredo and Edwards, 2007) It should be noted that there are mixed findings regarding the relationship between votes and contributions from corporations. In a study in 1997, Bronars and Lott sought to examine whether donations were contributed to alter how legislators voted or whether corporations were promoting the success of candidates that shared similar interests. They did this by investigating “...whether politicians' voting behavior changes between their second to last and last terms in office relative to those who had never received a special interest group's campaign contributions.” (Bronars & Lott, 1997) They assumed that since PACs are rationally seeking the most return on their money, they would not contribute to candidates in their last term and thus would have data from when they were receiving contributions and when they were not to determine the differences in voting patterns. Their findings rejected the notion that campaign contributions buy politicians’ votes. (Bronars and Lott, 1997) My thesis would fall more within the lines of De Figueiredo and Edwards, as the issue at hand is specific policy outcomes rather than changes in votes over time. Moreover, De Figueiredo and Edwards are

looking at state-level legislatures rather than Bronars and Lott, who looked at congressional legislators.

Idealists in this debate argue that money should be limited from the political system. John McCain, one of the propagators of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, stated in an interview that "... there's too much money washing around the political arena today." (Calhoun, 2012) This is not achievable without substantive side effects. A broad prohibition of corporate spending would have unforeseen consequences, which Hall and La Raja & Schaffner described in separate ways. Hall posits with his study that when corporate spending is banned, there is a "large increase in the Democratic party's share of the legislature," ranging from 13% to 18% increase share of the legislature for Democrats. Bans like this do not necessarily remove political spending from corporate entities, such as investing in communication with voters or lobbyists. This shift from direct support to candidates to indirect support methods is encapsulated by the hydraulic theory of money in politics, which states that money in politics acts "like water" and that it "find[s] a way to get around obstacles." (La Raja & Schaffner, 2015, p. 110) Forcing corporations away from direct support would create an influx of indirect support methods, therefore, obfuscating who the actors are in our system because there is no disclosure for activity independent from candidates. This is the predicament of banning corporate contributions to candidates.

## Research Question

This thesis asks if there is an influence from corporate contributions on the votes for the bill that legalized recreational marijuana in New York and Illinois. Drawing on the studies mentioned above, I would expect to find a statistically significant positive correlation between voting for the legalization of marijuana and the amount of PAC contribution a candidate receives due to their ability to have outliers such as single-issue organizations. I would also expect those who vote against such bills would have lesser PAC contributions and instead have higher non-PAC contributions as non-PACs would have fewer single-issue interests that would not account for issues like marijuana legalization.

## Hypothesis

To determine statistically significant trends, we must put the data set of contribution amounts (in-state PAC, out-of-state PAC, in-state other, out-of-state other, and total contributions) into SPSS's Pearson correlation calculation, indicating whether a trend is statistically significant. A simple regression will be computed if a trend is statistically significant. The hypothesis and the null hypothesis that will be used for the lower and upper chambers of New York and Illinois for both in-state and out-of-state contributions are as follows:

**1 H:** PAC contributions have an impact on the likelihood of voting yes on marijuana legalization.

**1 H<sub>0</sub>:** PAC contributions have no impact on the likelihood of voting yes on marijuana legalization.

**2 H:** Non-PAC contributions have an impact on the likelihood of voting yes on marijuana legalization.

**2 H<sub>0</sub>:** Non-PAC contributions have no impact on the likelihood of voting yes on marijuana legalization.

**3 H:** Total contributions have an impact on the likelihood of voting yes on marijuana legalization.

**3 H<sub>0</sub>:** Total contributions have no impact on the likelihood of voting yes on marijuana legalization.

Because of the studies cited, I would expect to find a statistically significant positive correlation between voting for the legalization of marijuana and the amount of PAC contribution a candidate makes. This is because PACs will tend to have outliers, such as single-issue organizations, that would promote the success of narrowly tailored legislation like marijuana legalization. I would also expect those who vote against such bills would have lesser PAC contributions and instead have higher non-PAC contributions, as non-PACs would have fewer single-issue interests that would not account for narrow issues like marijuana legalization. Finally, I would expect that there will be a statistically significant positive correlation between voting for the legalization of marijuana and the total amount of total contribution data. However, I expect a closer correlation in Illinois than in New York because New York applies the same \$5,000 annual cap for all corporations. (New York State Board of Elections, 2021) At the same time, Illinois allows PACs to contribute \$59,900 annually, and all other organizations are capped at \$12,000 annually. (Illinois State Board of Elections, 2021)

## Methods

Contribution data for the New York legislature was collected from the New York State Board of Elections (NYSBOE) online database. The contribution data for Illinois was collected from the Illinois State Board of Elections (ISBOE) online database. These states were chosen for their robust disclosure records and because they legalized marijuana via legislation rather than a popular referendum. All data for individuals who voted on their states' respective bills had their contribution disclosures downloaded, compiled, and filtered to exclude statistical static. This included the time that extended from 2 years before the passage of the year to the end of the calendar year when the bill was passed. Contributions from all party affiliates, in-kind contributions, and individual donations were also removed from the data pool as they are not the focus of this study. The remainder of the donations were designated into four categories: In-state PAC contributions, out-of-state PAC contributions, in-state donations that were not related to PAC spending, and out-of-state donations that were not related to PAC spending. Each state had various levels of ease in sorting out PAC and non-PAC spending. New York requires the contribution disclosure to denote which contributions originate from political entities such as PACs, while Illinois makes no such distinction. For Illinois, there had to be the manual sorting of names by various phrases such as "PAC," "P.A.C.," and "politic" that would indicate whether the party contributing was a PAC or not. If the party were denoted a PAC, then in a new column would indicate this with a "1" for PAC, or otherwise, it would be a "0". This means this introduces a heightened degree of human error for the Illinois data as PACs might not contain any searched phrases missed in the sorting. To determine statistical significance, I took each body of the legislatures and used SPSS's Pearson correlation calculation to determine the statistically significant variables concerning the bill's vote. If variables exceeded a significance

interval of  $P = .05$ , then I used a simple linear regression model to predict the effect of the contributions on the vote for these bills. This allows the information to be summarized efficiently and determine how much influence contributions have on the passage of legal marijuana in New York and Illinois.

## Variables

The dependent variable in this study is the legislator's vote on their respective bill. The independent variables of this experiment are the in-state PAC, out-of-state PAC, in-state other, out-of-state other, and total contribution amounts. PACs in this experiment are corporate entities designated as PACs or political groups by their disclosure information or in their name. PACs did not include labor organizations or party-specific groups. Non-PACs were all corporate entities not designated as PACs in the disclosures or their name. Non-PACs and the term "other" were used interchangeably in the correlation analysis for each state—the state associated with the address listed in the disclosures made in-state or out-of-state determinations. Total contributions in this study refer to the aggregate of all PAC and non-PAC contributions regardless of their state of origin. New York and Illinois were both limited to a specific timeframe. New York contributions were isolated from those made between 1/1/2019 to 12/31/21, and Illinois contributions were isolated from 1/1/2017 to 12/31/19.

## Results

To determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the contributor's category and the legislator's vote, the aggregate amounts for each category were subjected to a Pearson Correlation equation which would produce a single figure representing the direction and strength of the relationship between the variable. Positive integers mean that the relationship

trends towards yes. The closer the number is to 1, the tighter the correlation between the two variables. If a relationship was statistically significant between the two variables, then the output would denote the number with two or one asterisks depending on the strength of the relationship. Two asterisks mean that the figure exceeds a 99% confidence interval, meaning there is a 1% chance of an error determining the relationship. One asterisk means that the figure exceeds a 95% confidence interval which means there is a 5% chance of an error determining the relationship. Their statistically significant status indicates which variables are worthwhile for regression analysis.

**Table 1 - New York Assembly Correlations**

**Correlations – New York Assembly**

		Party 0D 1R	Incumbent 1 or not 0	Vote for bill 1Y 0N	In state PAC	Out state PAC	In State Other	Out State Other	Total
Vote for bill 1Y 0N	Pearson Correlation	-.788**	0.069	1	-.214**	0.090	-.248**	-0.111	-.253**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.402		0.009	0.274	0.002	0.179	0.002
	N	149	150	150	149	149	148	149	147

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

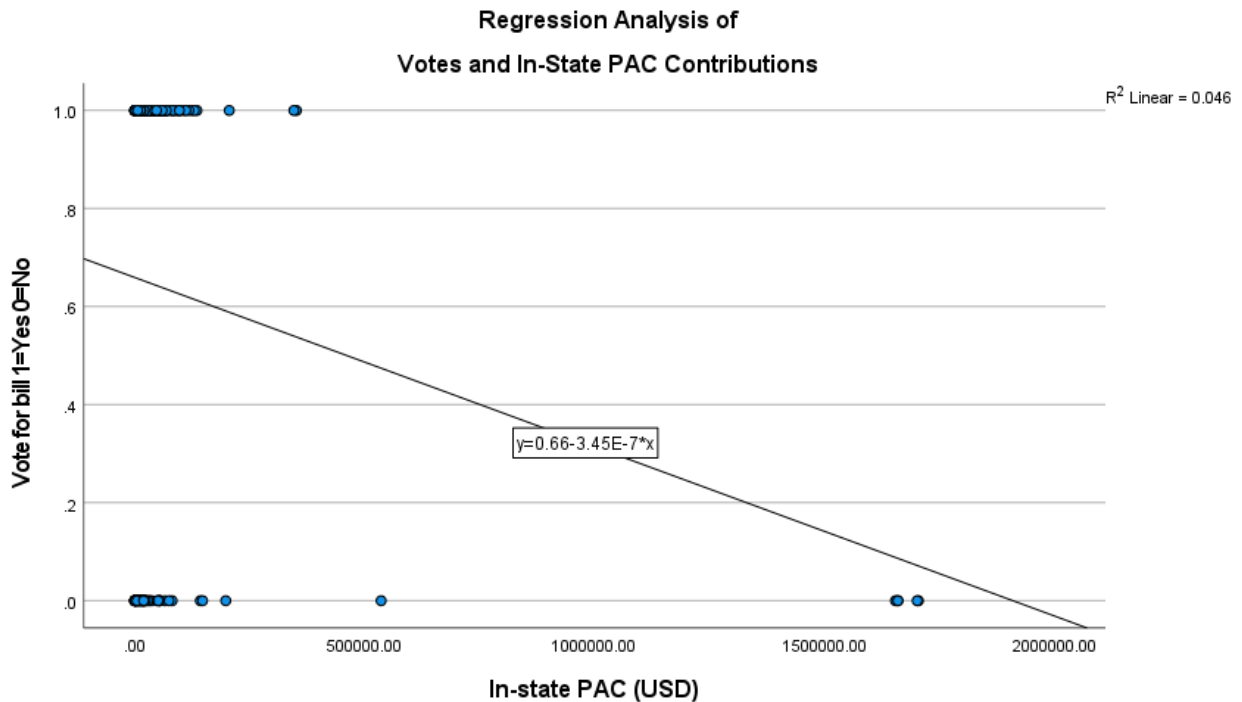
The Pearson correlation shows that we can accept the null hypothesis related to the out-of-state PAC and other contributions; therefore, the hypothesis that out-of-state contributions impacted the New York Assembly is rejected. However, the null hypothesis for in-state PACs, non-PACs, and total contributions can be rejected. Thus, we can accept the hypotheses that there are statistically significant correlations between the votes and these kinds of contributions in the New York Assembly.

To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between votes and the various contributions, each statistically significant variable was subjected to a simple regression analysis to elucidate the relationship. After completing this regression, I created scatter plots for each variable to illustrate the data.

The New York Assembly was by far the outlier in this study. They not only had some of the lowest R-squared values but also, this was the only body with a negative trend between contributions and votes. R-Square values represent how much of the variance is captured by the line of best fit of the data. However, it is essential to note that because the line accounts for extraordinarily little variance in the data set, the relationship's accuracy would improve by removing outliers. Without further analysis of the data, it is difficult to state with any certainty the change in the relationship between contributions to the New York Assembly and their votes once these outliers are removed. Given the maximum \$5,000 contribution limit, this is an exorbitant sum of money to influence the Assembly. This means that over time, a candidate would require 2,300 unique in-state PACs, 1,560 unique in-state non-PACs, or 1,034 donors donating the maximum \$5,000 per calendar year to reach a monopoly of influence on a 'no' vote on this bill in the New York Assembly.



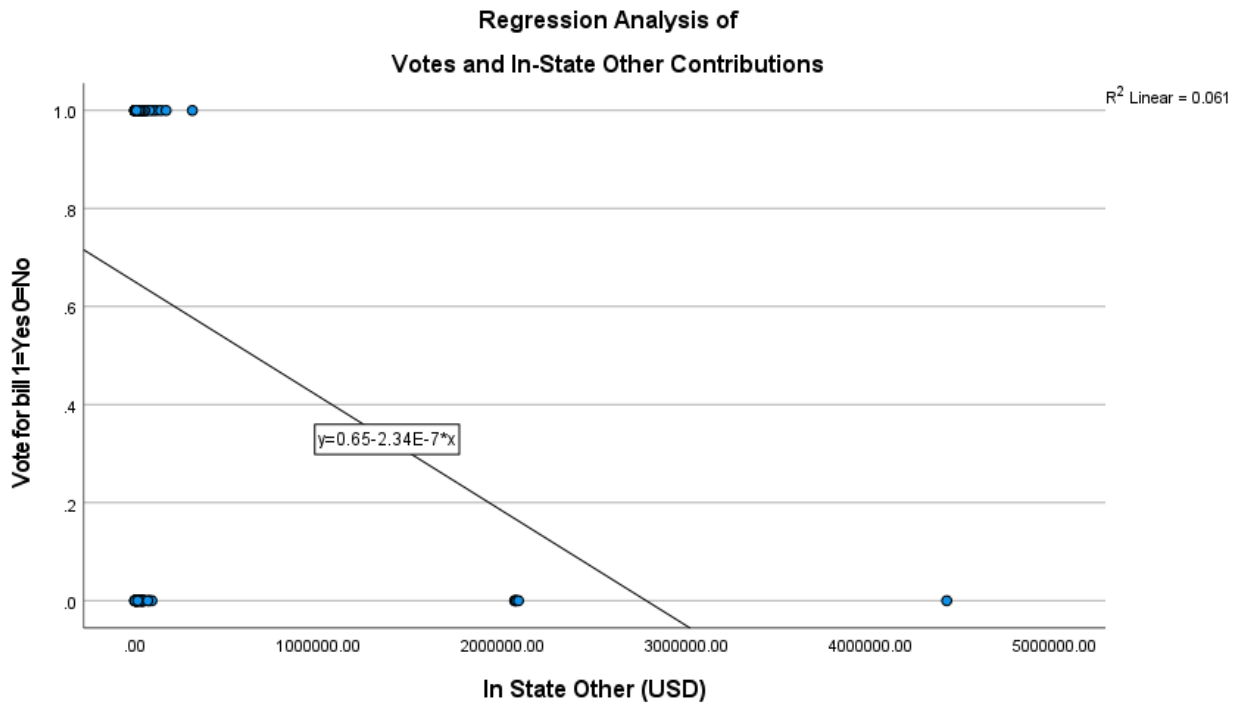
## Graph one



Graph 1 illustrates the negative relationship between money contributed by in-state PACs and the likelihood of how the candidate will vote. Simply put, the more money in-state PACs donate, the more likely a candidate will vote no. We could expect a no-vote on this bill if a candidate could accumulate \$1,913,043.48 from in-state PACs in the New York Assembly. The line of best fit on graph one also only captures 4.6% of the variance in the data; therefore, the outliers significantly impact the line of best fit.

There was also a statistically significant relationship between votes and in-state non-PACs. Graph 2 illustrates the negative relationship between these variables. Much like all data in this study, the r-squared value is low and indicates that the line of best fit only accounts for 6.1% of the data variance.

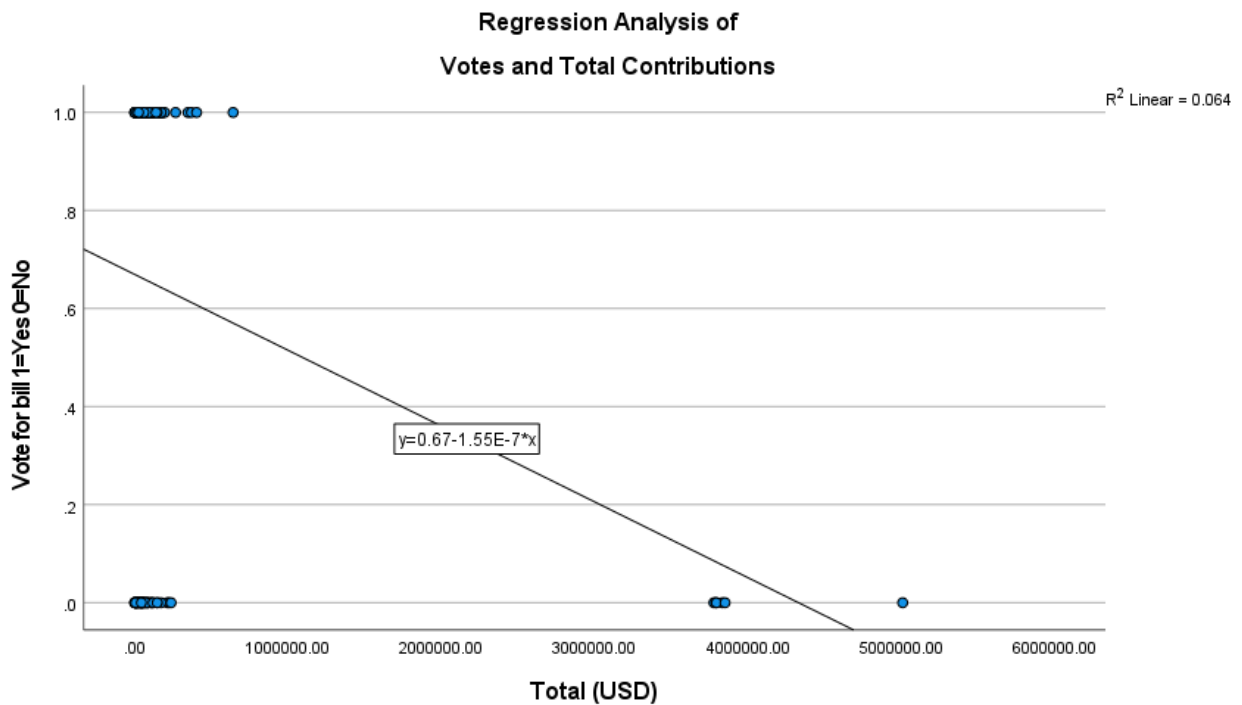
## Graph two



Graph two shows that for in-state non-PAC contributions, you could expect a no-vote from the candidate if they raise \$2,777,777.78. This number is found by using the regression slope displayed on the line of best fit and substituting the Y variable with 0, the value attributed to a no-vote, and solving for X.

The last statistically significant contribution amount for the New York Assembly is the total amount of contributions. The more money a candidate received in aggregate contributions, the more likely they were to vote no. The r-square was still low in this category as the line of best fit only accounts for 6.4% of the total contributions and votes variance.

### Graph three



Graph 3 shows the relationship between total contributions and votes. This regression analysis indicates that we could expect a no-vote if a candidate could accumulate \$4,322,580,65 in total contributions.

### Table 2 - New York Senate Correlations

The identical Pearson correlation analysis was applied to the New York Senate. Those that the SPSS application found statistically significant and thus those requiring further analysis were denoted with either one or two asterisks depending on the confidence interval the correlation table produced.

### Correlations

		Party 0D 1R	Incumbent 1 or not 0	Upper1 or lower0	Vote for bill 1Y 0N	In state PAC	Out state PAC	In State Other	Out State Other	Total
Vote for bill 1Y 0N	Pearson Correlation	-.859**	0.169	. <sup>a</sup>	1	.362**	.372**	0.042	0.234	.297*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.185			0.004	0.003	0.742	0.064	0.018
	N	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63

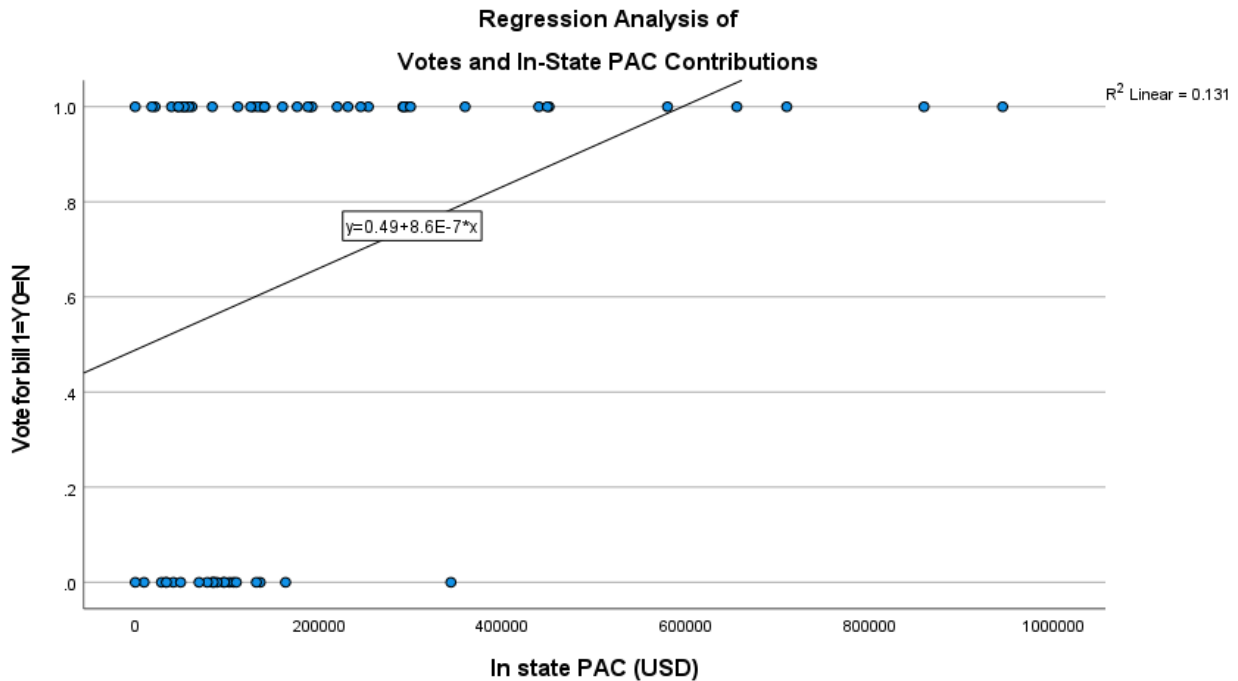
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation shows that we can accept the null hypothesis for both in-state and out-of-state other contributions. However, the null hypothesis can be rejected for in-state and out-of-state PACs' contributions and total contributions. Thus, we can accept the hypotheses that statistically significant correlations exist between the votes and the in-state and out-of-state PAC contributions and total contributions in the New York Senate.

After accepting the hypothesis that there is a relationship between votes and in-state PACs, out-of-state PACs, and total contributions, there must be a simple regression analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the votes and the various kinds of contributions. The New York Senate had one of the better results from this analysis, as the range of variance explained by the line of best fit was 13% to just under 9%. Although extremely low, it suggests a positive relationship between the money contributed and the resulting votes. The variance between the yes and no votes are much more pronounced than in the New York Assembly, lending credence to the idea that this result is less reliant upon outliers in the data set. However, a relatively low amount is required for a yes from out-of-state PACs.

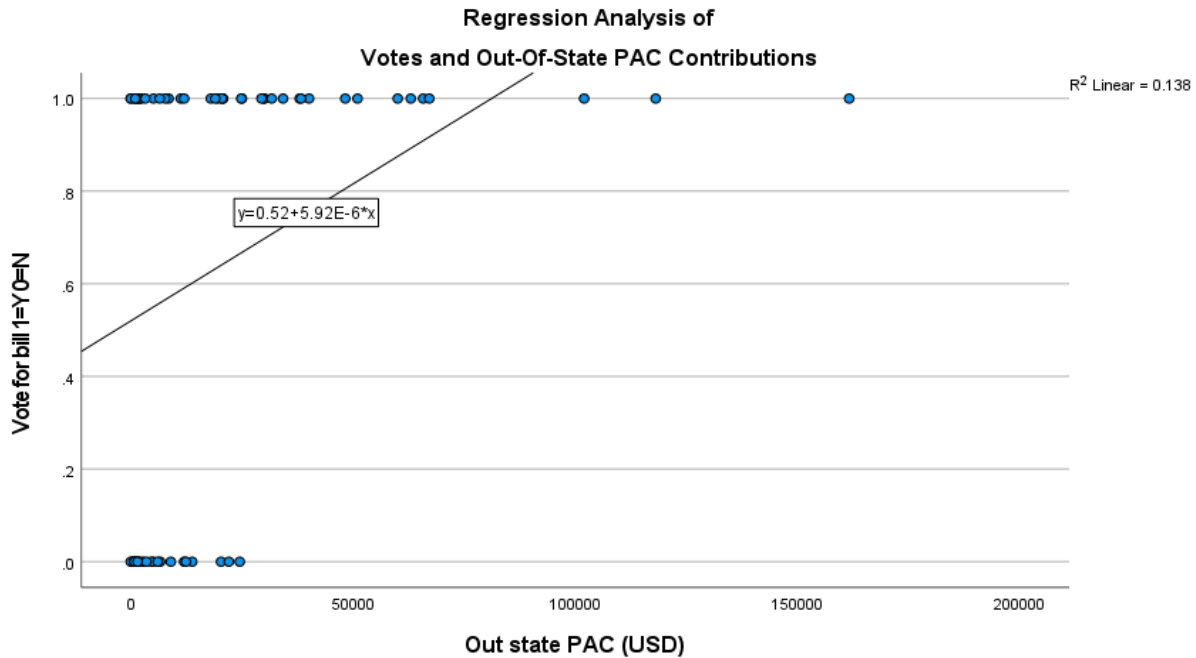
## Graph four



Graph four illustrates the positive relationship between the votes and in-state PAC contributions, and from this model, we would expect a yes vote for every \$586,206.90 contributed.

The second notable contribution category for the New York Senate was out-of-state PACs. The correlation table indicated this with the two asterisks next to the correlation value. Because it was flagged as statistically significant, it was analyzed using a simple regression analysis which in turn created a regression formula that created a line of best fit, as displayed in graph 5. The r-square for this regression is still low at .136, meaning that the line of the best fit only accounts for 13.6% of the variance.

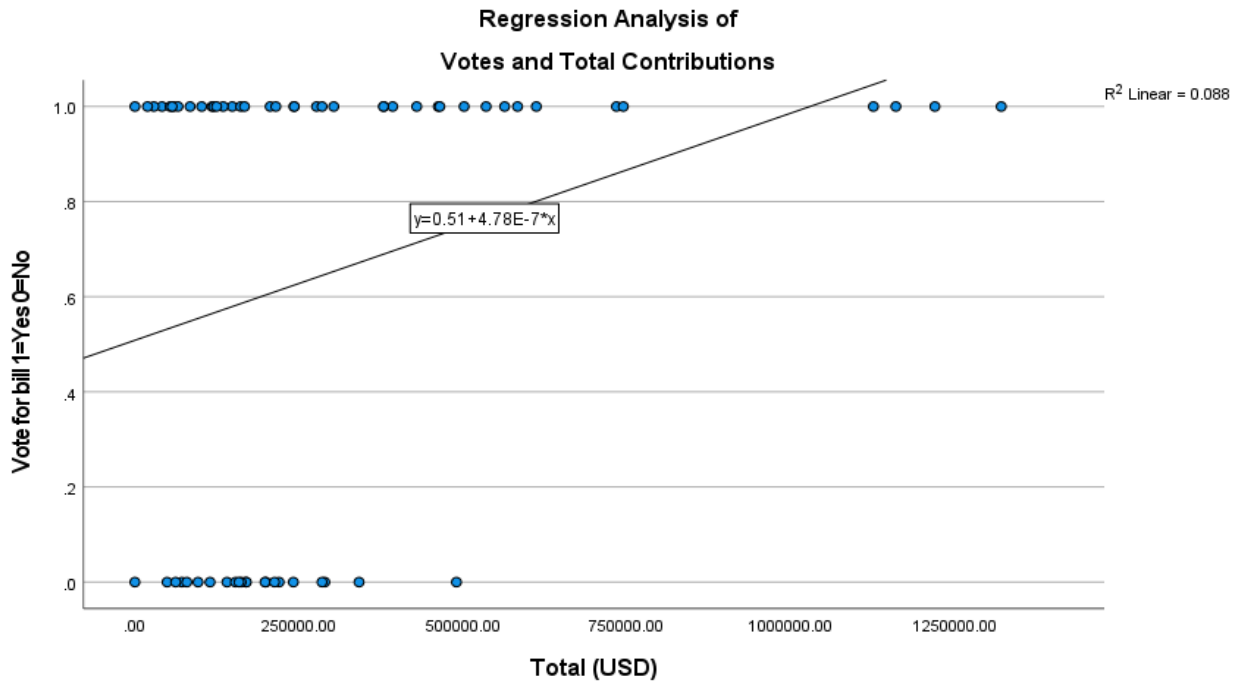
## Graph five



Graph five shows that the amount of contributions required from out-of-state PACs to account for a yes is only \$81,081.01. This is the second lowest amount in the study and the lowest for the state of New York.

The total contributions from corporate entities were the last category for the New York Senate deemed significant. The data relating to the votes and the total amount of contributions were analyzed using simple regression, and it produced the line of best fit as displayed in graph six. The r-square value for this regression is low and only accounts for 8.6% of the variance in the data set.

Graph six



Graph six illustrates the regression analysis. The line of best fit generated from the analysis suggests that the required amount to reach yes is \$1,025,104.60 when only considering the total amount of contributions.

Notably, the amounts needed for influence are high. This is because New York has tighter campaign finance contribution limits than Illinois. New York has a hard cap of \$5,000.00 per calendar year for any corporate entity. This cap diffuses the amount of financial support any single entity can contribute, decreasing the ability to reach these critical funds. The category amount that would be most subject to influence is the New York Senate via out-of-state PACs with an expected amount of \$81,081.01 to completely inform the senator. When accounting for the \$5,000.00 limit, there would have to be 17 different corporate entities contributing the maximum \$5,000.00 to reach the lowest threshold of \$81,081.01.

We now look at the Illinois legislature to compare the mixed trends of the New York legislature. The contribution data for the Illinois house was put through a Pearson correlation, and the results are displayed in Table 3 below. All the figures that were found to be statistically significant surpassed a confidence interval of .01, the highest level of scrutiny in this study,

**Table 3 – Illinois House Correlations**

		<b>Correlations - Illinois House</b>						
		Party D 0 R 1	Vote for bill 1Y 0N	In state PAC	Out state PAC	In State Other	Out State Other	Total
Vote for bill 1Y 0N	Pearson Correlation	-.838**	1	0.151	.249**	.376**	.260**	.260**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000		0.111	0.008	0.000	0.005	0.006
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

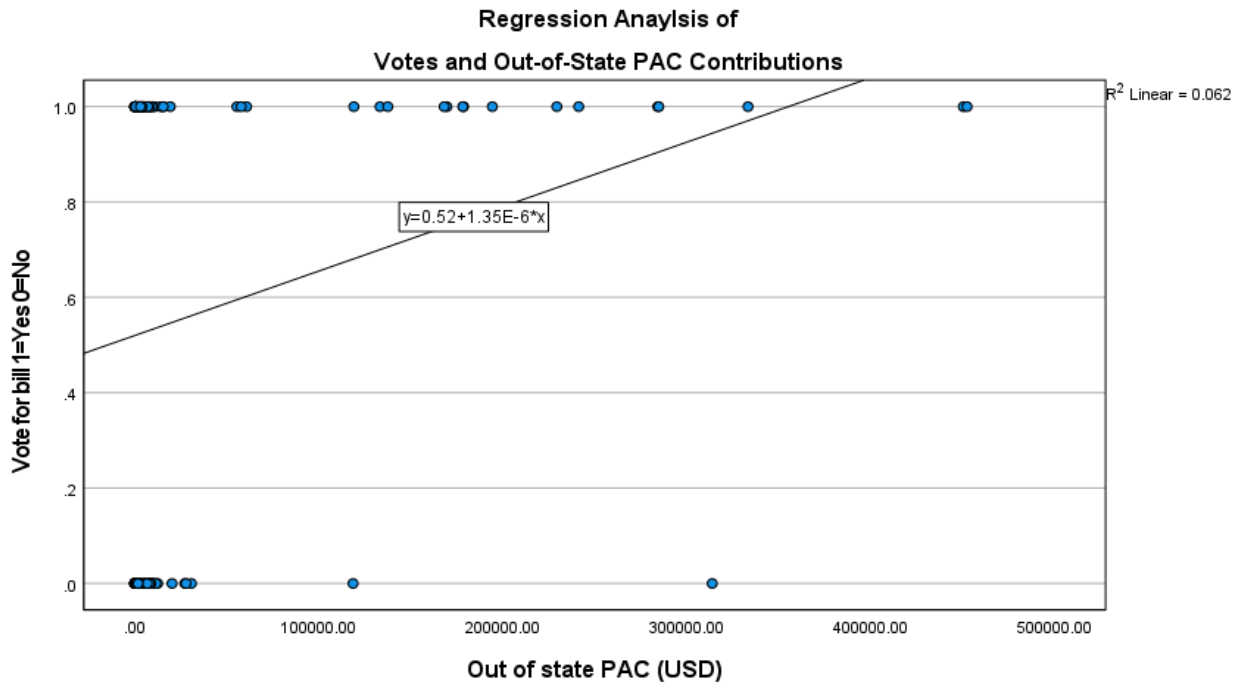
The table shows we can accept the null hypothesis for the in-state PAC contributions. Therefore, the hypothesis of a statistically significant correlation between votes and in-state PAC contributions is rejected. However, the null hypothesis for out-of-state PACs, in-state other, out-of-state other, and total contributions can be rejected. Thus, we can accept the hypotheses that statistically significant correlations exist between the votes and out-of-state PACs, in-state other, out-of-state other, and total contributions in the Illinois House.

The Illinois House had the strongest correlation of all the legislative bodies examined. The range of R-square remained low, much like all other bodies examined, and thus the line of best fit could only account for 6% to 14% of the variance depending on the specific body examined. Despite these low R-square values, the models still suggest a positive relationship between the contributed funds and the likelihood of voting yes.



Graph eight shows a scatterplot of the contributions from out-of-state PACs to the Illinois House. The contribution data from the out-of-state PACs was analyzed using a simple regression formula to determine the contribution amount to impact the vote.

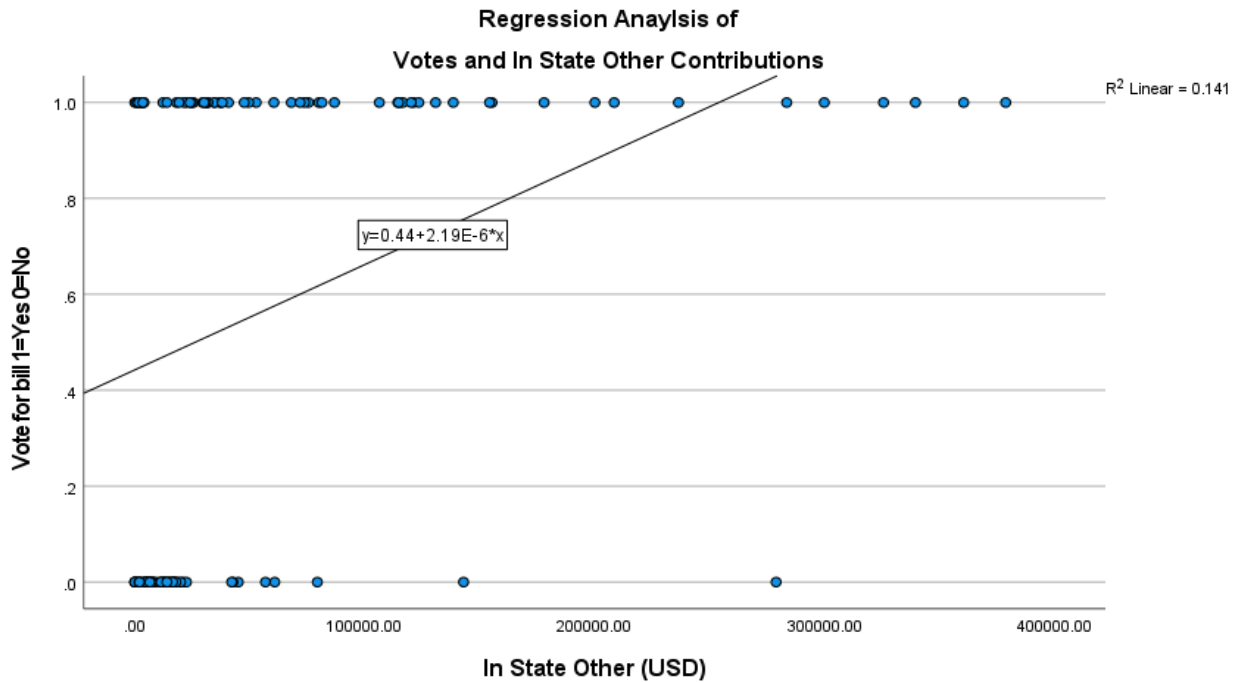
### Graph eight



The regression analysis found that out-of-state PAC contributions require \$355,555.56 for a yes. This supports the positive relationship between voting yes and out-of-state contributions that the correlation suggested this specific contributor.

The second kind of contributor that was indicated to be statistically significant was the in-state non-PACs that contributed to the Illinois House. The regression analysis created a line of best fit with the highest r-square value, which indicated that it accounted for 14% of the variance, the highest in this study.

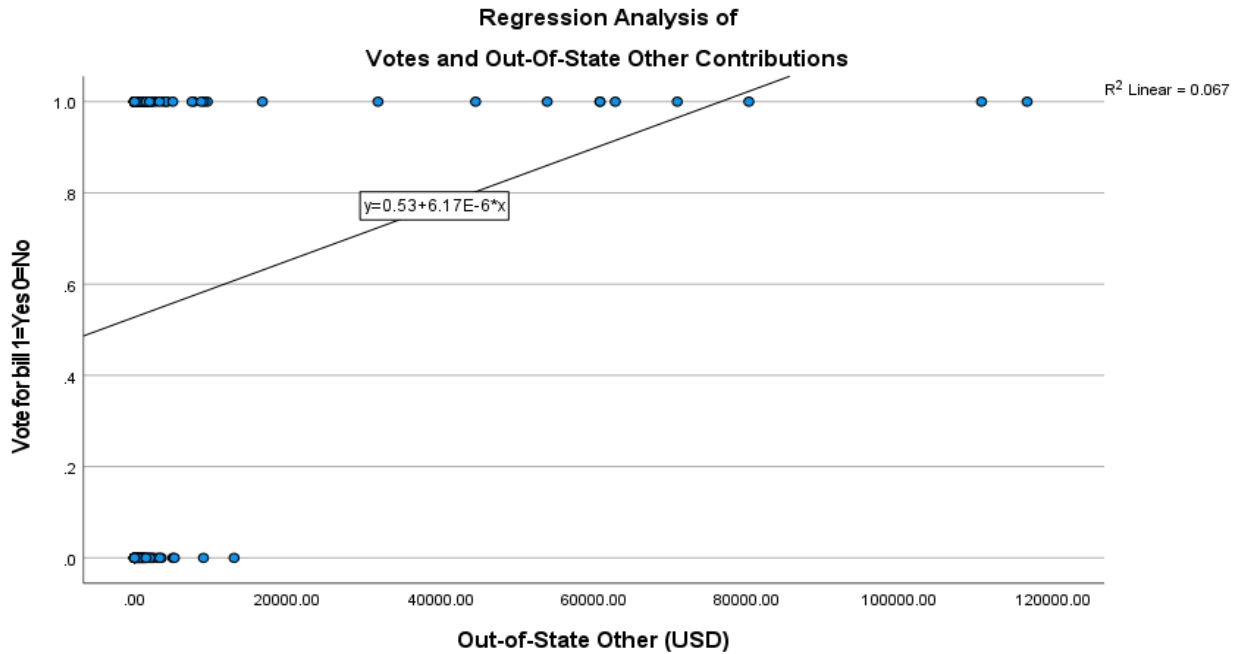
## Graph nine



Graph nine illustrates the positive relationship suggested in the correlation output. It shows that the likelihood of voting yes increases as the total amount of contributions from in-state non-PACs increases. If in-state non-PAC contributions reach \$255,707.76, we could expect a yes from an Illinois state representative.

The third kind of contributor that was found to be statistically significant for the Illinois House was out-of-state non-PACs. The regression analysis on this contribution type created a line of best fit that accounted for 6.7% of the variance in the data. Despite this, the model still suggests a moderate positive relationship between the contributions from out-of-state non-PACs and the votes on the bill.

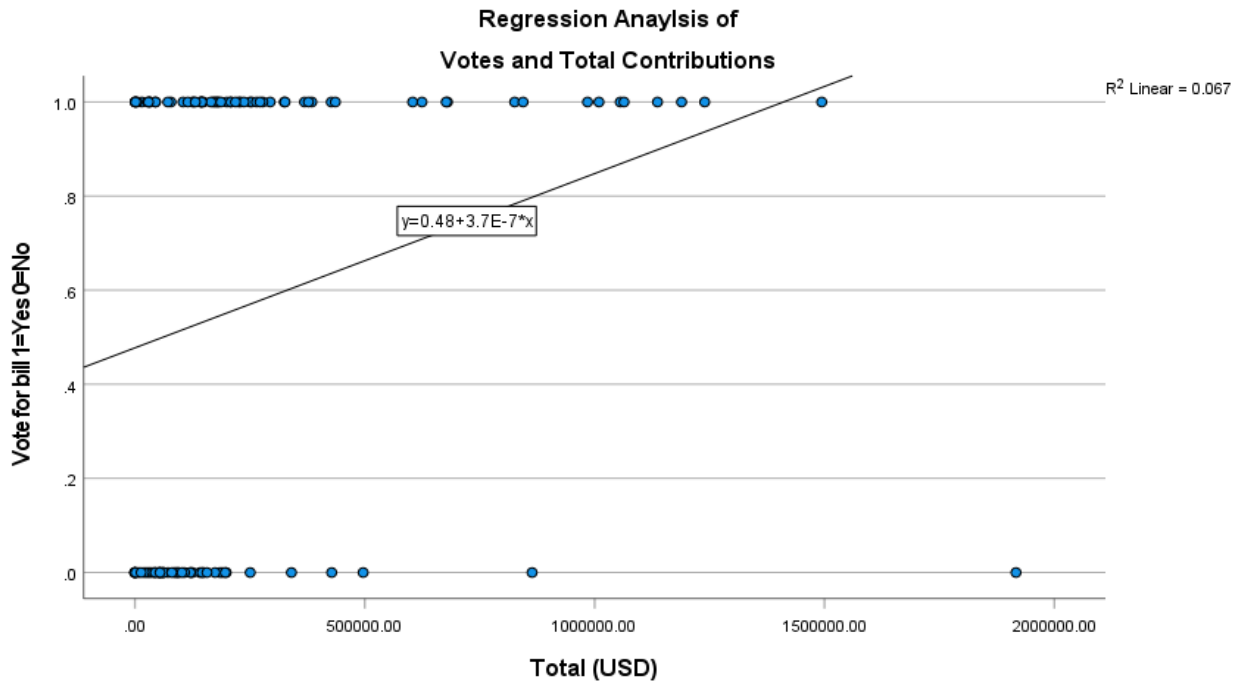
Graph ten



Graph 10 elucidates this moderate positive relationship between out-of-state non-PAC contributions and the votes. The model indicates that this relationship required the least amount of contributions, amounting to \$76,175.04 for a yes. If out-of-state non-PACs donate \$76,175.04 to a member of the Illinois House, we would expect a yes from the legislator.

The last statistically significant contribution category for the Illinois House was the total amount of contributions. The regression analysis had a low r-square value of .067, meaning that the line of best fit only accounted for 6.7% of the variance. The regression analysis still effectively shows the relationship in detail.

## Graph eleven



Using the regression output and setting it equal to one, we could expect that for total contributions, it would require \$1,405,405.41 for a yes from an Illinois Senator. This is illustrated in Graph eleven, which displays the amount each senator received from total contributions and their votes on the bill.

The final body examined in this study was also the least impacted by contributions. In-state non-PACs were the only kind of contributor that was flagged as significant in the Illinois Senate. This can be seen in Table 4, denoted with one asterisk. This single asterisk indicates that this kind of contributor only surpassed the lower threshold of a .05 confidence interval. Therefore, the significant finding is more tenuous than if it surpassed a .01 confidence interval.

**Table 4 – Illinois Senate Correlations**

**Correlations**

		Vote for bill 1Y 0N	Upper 1 or lower 0	Incumbent 1y 0n	Party D 0 R 1	In state PAC	Out state PAC	In State Other	Out State Other	Total
Vote for bill 1Y 0N	Pearson Correlation	1	. <sup>a</sup>	.283*	-.750**	0.226	0.204	.289*	0.193	0.255
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.035	0.000	0.095	0.132	0.031	0.157	0.058
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	55	56

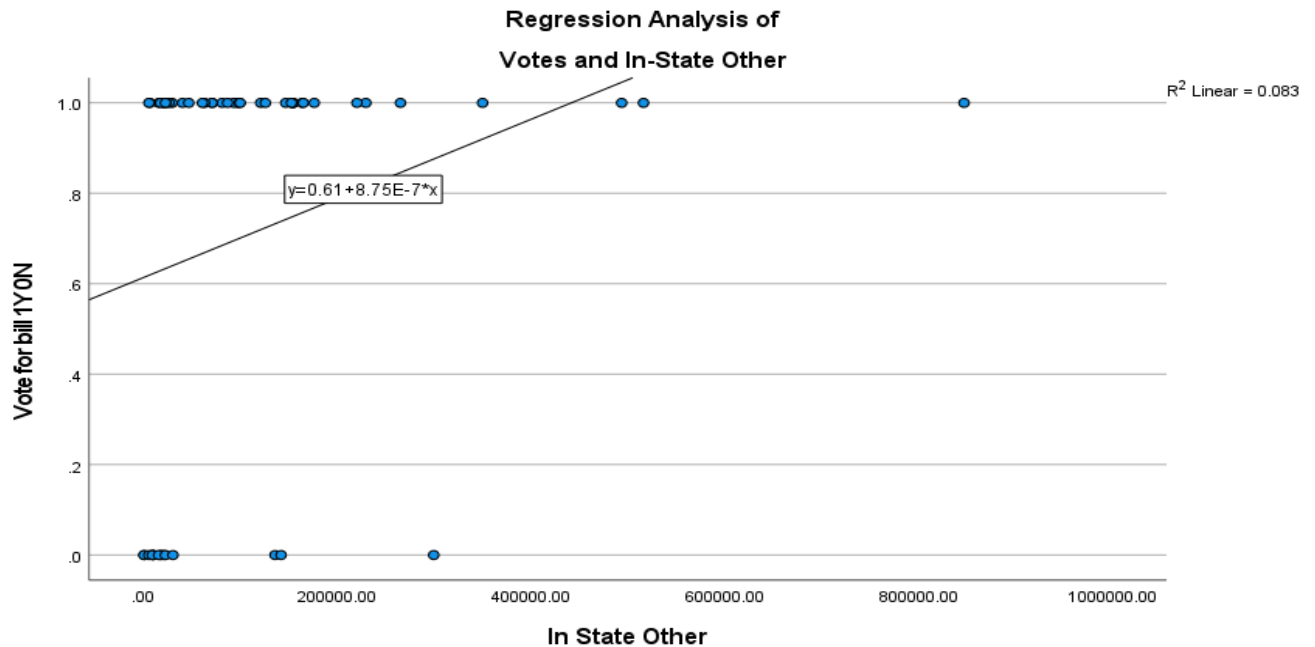
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation shows that we can accept the null hypothesis for the in-state PACs, out-of-state PACs, out-of-state other, and total contributions. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a statistically significant correlation between votes and the in-state PACs, out-of-state PACs, out-of-state other, and total contributions are rejected. However, the null hypothesis for in-state other can be rejected. Thus, we can accept the hypotheses that statistically significant correlations exist between the votes and the in-state other contributions in the Illinois Senate. However, this value only exceeds a confidence interval of  $P = .05$  rather than the heightened level of scrutiny,  $P = .01$ , creating a more considerable margin of error.

The regression analysis for the Illinois senate was limited to just the in-state other contributions as that category was the only one indicated to be statistically significant. The R-square value was also meager, meaning that only 8% of the variance is accounted for by the line of best fit. However, graph 12 still indicates a positive relationship.

Graph twelve



Graph twelve illustrates the relationship between total contributions and the vote on the bill. The regression output suggests that if \$445,714.29 were raised from in-state non-PAC entities, we would expect an Illinois Senator to vote yes on this bill.

My assumptions that PACs would positively impact the votes, non-PACs will have a negative impact, and total contributions would have a positive impact were partially confirmed in this study. The only non-PAC group having a negative impact was the outlier of the New York Assembly. All other non-PACs were found to have a positive relationship between voting and the amounts received. PACs did appear to mostly have a positive impact on the voting for the bills, which was expected. Finally, total corporate contributions did appear to mostly have a positive impact on the votes in question.

The findings of this study primarily support the assertion by De Figueiredo and Edwards that there is a positive relationship between corporate corporations. The one exception to this is the New York Assembly. The New York Assembly was the only legislative body with a

negative relationship between the votes cast and the contributions. Other than this group, every other body examined supported the assertion of De Figueiredo and Edwards. It was found that there was a positive relationship between the various kinds of contributors and voting yes on this bill which was in line with their findings.

Table five summarizes all the kinds of contributors analyzed in this study and the expected amounts required to achieve influence.

**Table five**

Which Body of Legislature	Kind of Contributor	Vote	Amount Required	Regression Output
New York Assembly	In-State PAC	No	\$1,913,043.48	$y = .66 - 3.46E-7 * x$
New York Assembly	In-State Other	No	\$2,777,777.78	$y = .65 - 2.34E-7 * x$
New York Assembly	Total	No	\$4,322,580.65	$y = .67 - 1.55E-7 * x$
New York Senate	In-State PAC	Yes	\$586,206.90	$y = .49 + 8.6E-7 * x$
New York Senate	Out-of-state PAC	Yes	\$81,081.01	$y = .52 + 5.92E-6 * x$
New York Senate	Total	Yes	\$1,025,104.60	$y = .51 + 4.7E-7 * x$
Illinois House	Out-of-state PAC	Yes	\$355,555.56	$y = .52 + 1.35E-6 * x$
Illinois House	In-State Other	Yes	\$255,707.76	$y = .44 + 2.19E-6 * x$
Illinois House	Out-of-state other	Yes	\$76,175.04	$y = .53 + 6.17E-6 * x$
Illinois House	Total	Yes	\$1,405,405.41	$y = .48 + 3.7E-7 * x$
Illinois Senate	In-State Other	Yes	\$445,714.29	$y = .61 + 8.75E-7 * x$

## Conclusion

This study falls within the general findings of the studies discussed in the literature review, as data presented here suggest that various sources of contributions influenced the passage of New York Senate Bill S854A and Illinois House Bill 1438. There were statistically significant relationships between at least one subsection of contributors and the legislator's vote on their respective bills for each of the legislative bodies. However, the data does call for further examination as the variance prevents the findings from being immediately applicable to political science.

At first look, there is a relationship between various kinds of contributions and the vote on legal marijuana in New York and Illinois. The New York Assembly was the only body where the correlation between money and votes trended towards a 'no' vote. The New York Senate, Illinois House, and Illinois Senate all had a correlation that trended towards a 'yes' vote. The Illinois House had more kinds of contributors that exceeded the statistical significance threshold, while the Illinois Senate had the least amount of contributors that exceeded this limit. The precise reason for the variance between the upper and lower house in Illinois is unknown, but this variance could decline with more research on other bills in Illinois.

These findings fall within the expectations of the study. I postulated that there would be a statistically significant positive correlation between voting for the legalization of marijuana and the amount of PAC contribution a candidate receives, a negative correlation between voting for the legalization of marijuana and the amount of non-PAC contribution a candidate receives, and positive correlation between voting for the legalization of marijuana and the total amount of contributions. This was partially confirmed, but not along the lines that were expected. There were PACs with a positive correlation and non-PACs with negative correlations, but they seemed to turn on which body the contribution was given. For example, every legislative body trended positively except the New York Assembly which trended negatively. This was the source of anomalous results in the study. This was most likely due to extreme outliers within the 'no' votes which would skew the data in such a way that it could make the body trend towards no.

This study does have clear limitations. Super PACs were not accounted for in this study as they are not required to disclose their amount because they use their financial resources independently of campaigns and enjoy a 501(c) tax status which precludes them from disclosing how much they spend. This contributes to the issue in this pursuit of endogeneity which refers to



the difficulty of isolating a single variable and finding its' corollary. Endogeneity is often an issue in the study of campaign finance as the forces leading to a result cannot be summarized in a single figure. Moreover, this study did not include measurements of public opinion or tracking of legislators' ideological positions over time. The introduction of these figures and the expansion to other state legislatures would aid in the further research of state legislatures and contributions.

The general findings of this study should encourage confidence in the regulations of the system. It has been clear that the expected amounts required to influence a yes or no vote outpace the yearly limits on contributions to candidates. The concerns regarding the trend of liberalization of campaign finance are understandable. Nevertheless, given the data presented in this study, it is not warranted. The limits placed on contributions have yielded the intended result of shifting the influence from corporate entities to individuals who can vote.

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