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"More Evidence Concerning CBC Members' Ineffectiveness"

In December 2021, we wrote about the ineffectiveness of Black leadership; especially the Congressional Black Caucus' (CBC's) inability to gain approval for important legislation during the 117th Congress while holding the deciding votes in closely divided houses of the US Congress. This Analysis Brief goes further by delineating our efforts to assess CBC members' effectiveness.

Models

Here we present a description, an interpretation of, and results from simple cursory cross-section econometric regression models. (Readers who are unfamiliar with econometric regressions should go directly to the "Interpretation of Models" section.) The models follow somewhat Atlas *et al* (1995), and are characterized by the following equation:[1]

Equation 1: $\ln SNBPC_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 SSPIP_i + \beta_3 SORS_i + \beta_4 S/NBSCD_i + \varepsilon_i.$

Where ln means natural logarithm, SNBPC is for state i's net benefits per capita for 2020 (Federal Government payments to, less revenue from, state i; these values are designated as "Balance of Payments" by the Rockefeller Institute of Government (RIG)); the βs (betas) are estimated coefficients; SSPIP is for the share of state i's population that is in poverty during 2020; SORS is for state i's over-representation in the US Senate during the 116th Congress; S/NBSCD is for the share/number of Blacks (CBC members) in state i's congressional delegations during the 116th Congress; and ε is the error term.[2,3,4,5,6] We develop four models that differ in their inclusion of SBSCD and NBSCD variables and in their exclusion of the SORS variable (see Table 1).

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[1] See Atlas, C. M., Gilligan, T. W., Hendershott, R. J., and Zupan, M. A. (1995). "Slicing the Federal Government Net Spending Pie: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why." *American Economic Review*: Vol. 85, No. 3; pp. 624-29.

[2] The RIF's "Balance of Payments" statistics are available at https://rockinst.org/issue-areas/fiscal-analysis/balance-of-payments-portal/ (Ret. 042622). These statistics should not be confused with International Transactions statistics.

[3] The states' poverty share statistics are from the US Census Bureau: "Percentage of People in Poverty by State Using 2- and 3-Year Averages;" https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.html (Ret. 050122).

[4] The SORS variable is an Atlas *et al*-like measure and is derived as a binary variable that assumes the value 1 if a state's population is less than 2 percent of the US population in 2020—i.e., the percentage required to garner 2 Senate seats in a world of perfect representation. The variable assumes the value 0 otherwise. The related population statistics are from the US Census Bureau; https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-state-total.html (Ret. 050122).

[5] The statistics on the share/number of Blacks (CBC members) in states' congressional delegations are derived from the US Congress data; https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Data/Black-American-Representatives-and-Senators-by-Congress/ (Ret. 050122).

[6] Members of the 116th Congress were primarily responsible for determining Federal revenue and expenditure policies for 2020.

The regression models were operationalized using Microsoft EXCEL's Data Analysis Tool, without correcting for violations of standard regression assumptions, such as multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity.

Interpretation of Models

The models help determine whether the share/number of Blacks (CBC members) in states' congressional delegations (S/NBSCD) contribute in a positive and statistically significant way to explaining the per capita net benefits (SNBPC) that states derive from their engagement with the Federal government—after controlling for the share of states' populations that live in poverty (SSPIP) and states' over-representation in the Senate (SORS). The SSPIP variable is generally thought to be positively correlated with the SNBPC variable. Atlas *et al* find that a SORS-type variable is a significant explainer of SNBPC. We can conclude that an increasing share/number of CBC members in states' congressional delegations helps generate greater SNBPC if the β_4 coefficients are positive and statistically significant. Such a result signals that CBC members are effective in helping generate increased net benefits per capita for states.

Results

Table 1 presents the econometric regression models' results.

Table 1.--Explaining States' Net Benefits Per Capita from the US Government for 2020

Line No.	Regressors/Statistics	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
1	Intercept (β_1)*	8.485 0.000	8.597 0.000	8.611 0.000	8.644 0.000
2	Share of state's population in poverty (β_2)*	5.158 0.003	5.509 0.001	5.176 0.004	5.578 0.001
3	State's over-representation in the US Senate (β_3)*	0.185 0.059	0.063 0.588		
4	Share (Models 1 and 3) / Number (Models 2 and 4) of Black members in state's delegation to the US Congress (β_4)*	-0.029 0.916	-0.065 0.083	-0.081 0.772	-0.077 0.011
5	Adjusted R Square	0.177	0.230	0.129	0.241
6	F Statistics	4.516	5.869	4.623	8.786
7	N	50	50	50	50
8	Degrees of Freedom	46	46	47	47

Source: BlackEconomics.org. *--The first cell entries are estimated coefficients. The second cell entries are P-values.

Table 1's key results on line 4 show that the β_4 coefficients for the S/NBSCD variable carry a negative sign throughout. The variable is not statistically significant in Models 1 and 3, but is statistically significant at the 10 percent and 5 percent levels in Model 2 and 4, respectively. The variable is expressed as a number, not as a share, in the latter two models. Based on these results, we adopt Model 4 as the model for drawing conclusions.

Conclusion

Model 4 in Table 1 causes us to conclude that a one-unit increase in the number of CBC members in a state 2020 congressional delegation is associated with a slight (0.077 percent) decrease in the state's net benefits per capita vis-à-vis the Federal Government. In other words, at the margin, CBC members are ineffective in generating increases in net benefits per capita for their states.[7] Applying this result liberally, Black Americans do not benefit materially by electing additional CBC members to their state's congressional delegation. **Therefore, the cursory models presented in this Analysis Brief indicate that CBC members appear to be ineffective in improving the plight of Black Americans—especially when it comes to generating increases in per capita net benefits from the Federal Government.**

BlackEconomics.org welcomes efforts to broaden and deepen this research.

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[7] Of the 57 Black voting members of the 116th Congress, only two were Republicans. The remaining 55 were Democrats and members of the CBC.