

GRANDSTANDING AND DELIBERATION IN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

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May 11, 2023



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Sasse: “I wouldn’t.”

Graham: “Well that’s your right. If you’ve gotta go somewhere else, go. We’re gonna do what this committee needs to do.

Grandstanding



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Characteristics of Committee Hearings

Purpose

- Problem
- Policy Implementation
- Proposed Solution



Grandstanding

Statement

Score

“And I am very glad that you did not read your entire statement. Because if it was like what we heard, I only shudder at the consequences. This must be an election year. I thought that statement, from my good friend, was needlessly alarmist and partisan. You know, I yearn for the days when Americans pulled together and politics stopped at the water’s edge, especially in moments of uncertainty and some crisis around the world. I think it is a serious mistake to just have a political policy of blaming everything on the President...” “

93.11



Grandstanding

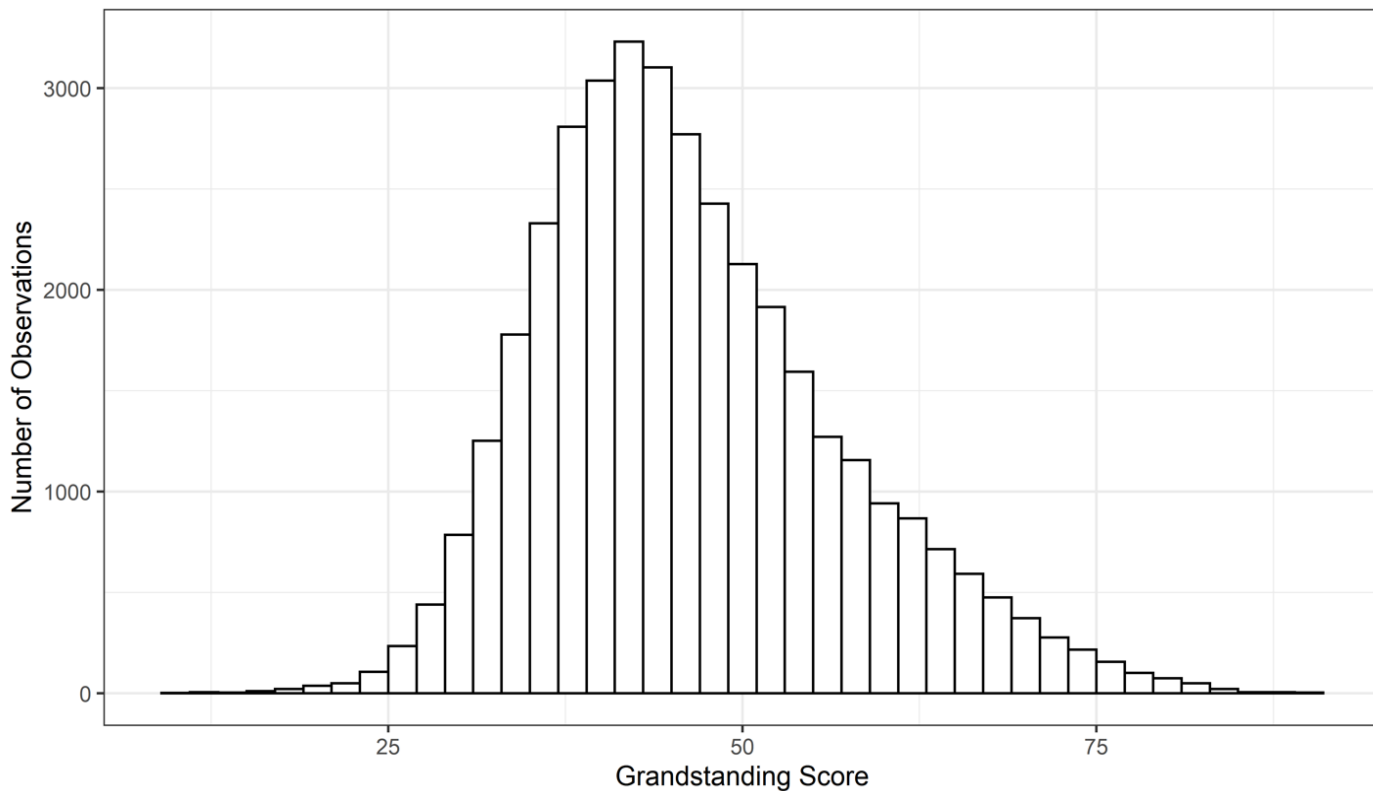
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Rep. Cooper’s Average Grandstanding Score in this Hearing	80.87

Member-Hearing-level Grandstanding Scores

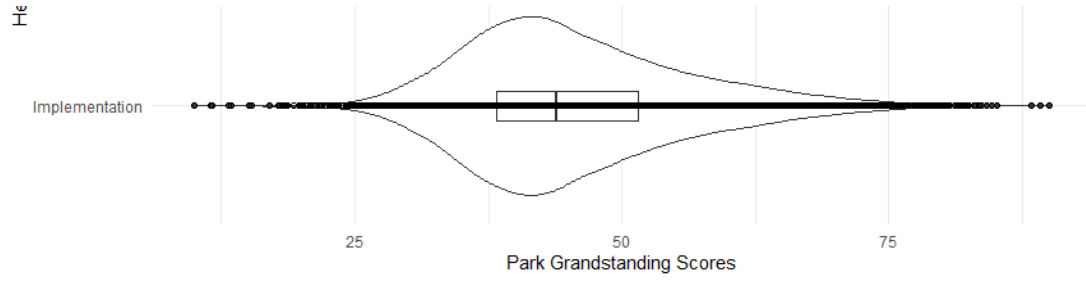


Hypotheses

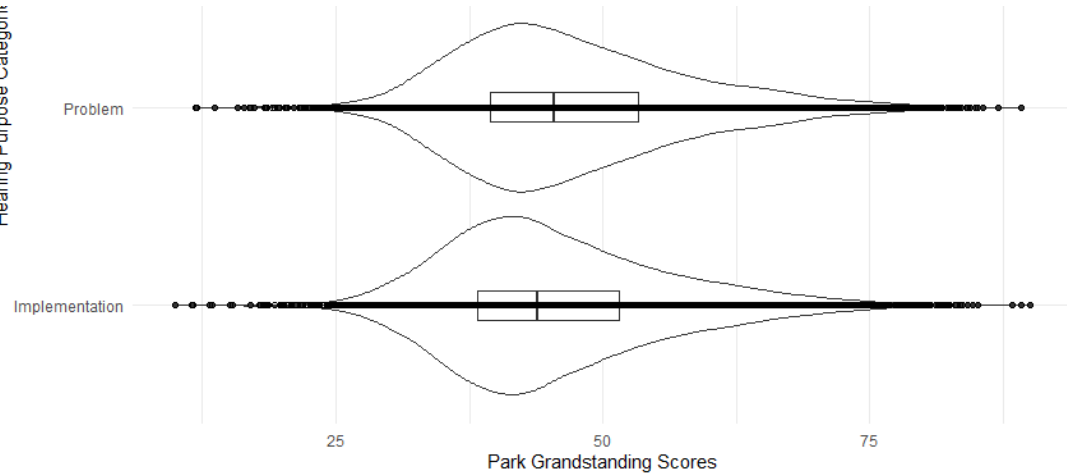
Problem Hypothesis: Grandstanding is more prevalent in problem-focused hearings.

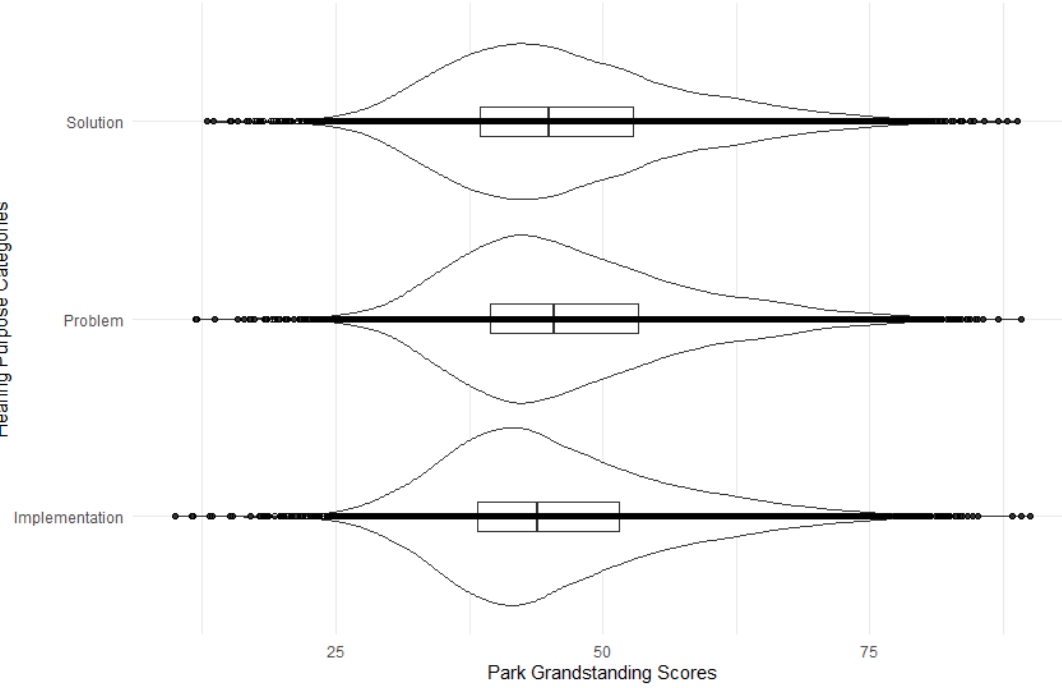
Solution Hypothesis: Grandstanding is less prevalent in solution-focused hearings.

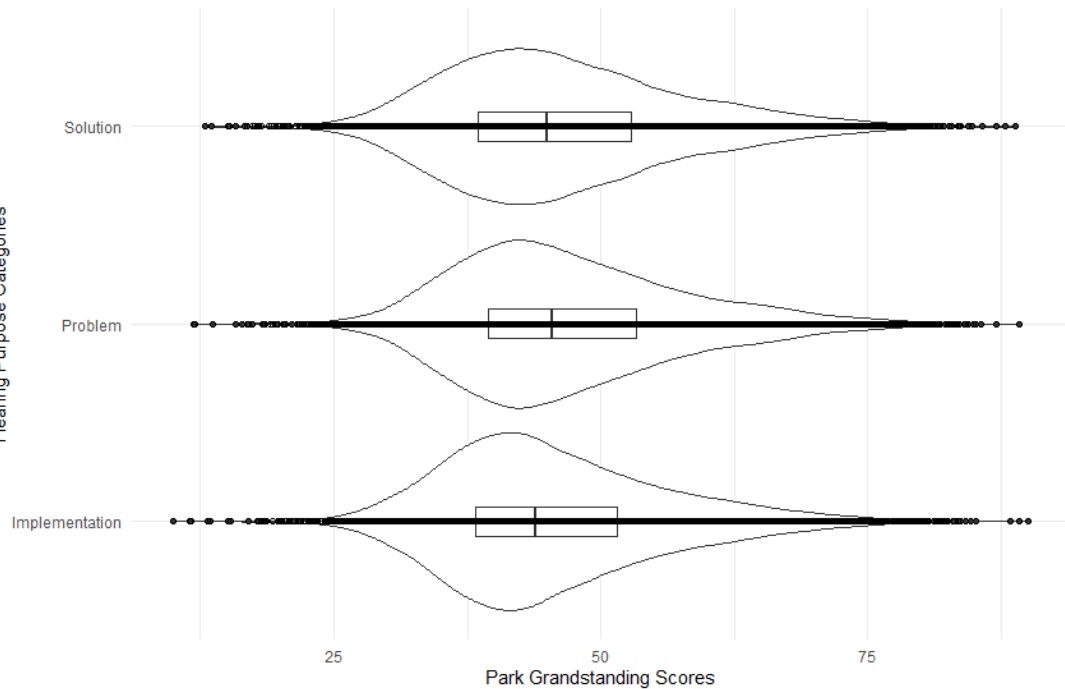
Legislative Solution Hypothesis: Grandstanding is even less prevalent in solution-focused hearings involving proposed legislation.



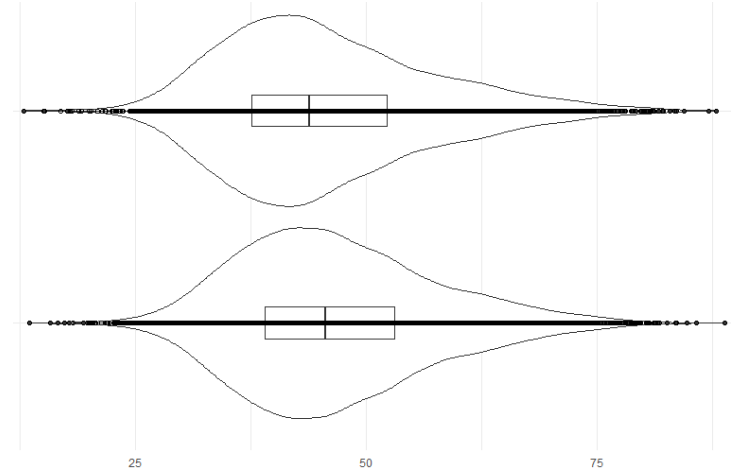
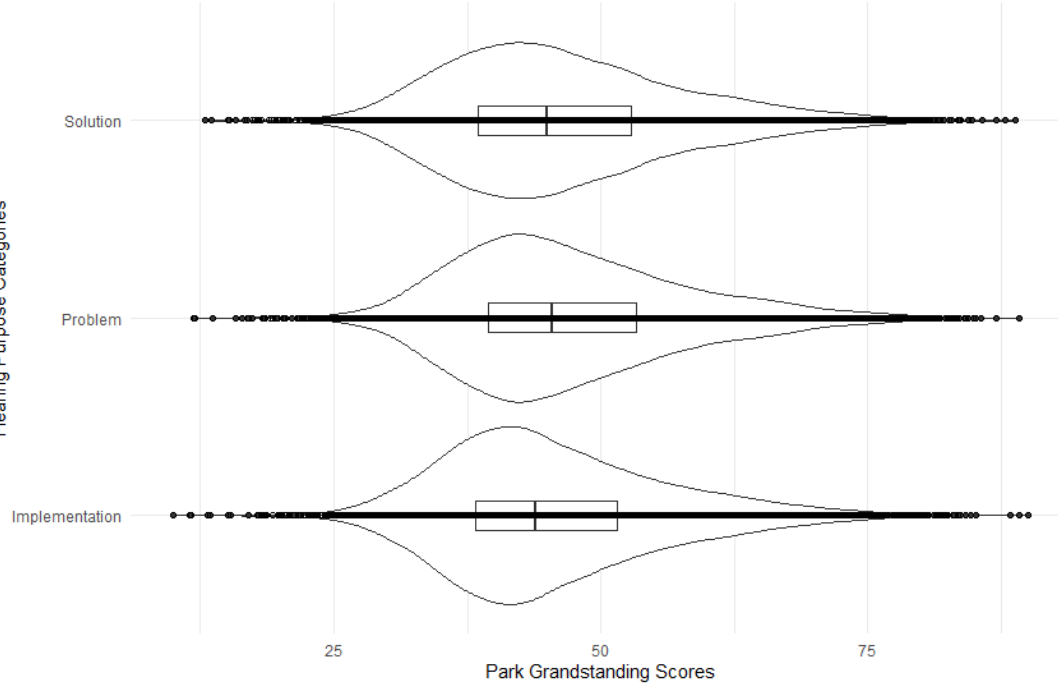
Hearing Purpose Category







Category Comparison	Estimated Difference of Means	p-value
Solution – Problem	-0.65	< 0.00001
Problem – Implementation	1.41	< 0.00001
Solution – Implementation	0.76	< 0.000001



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Multivariate Analysis

Unit of observation: Each member in each hearing

DV: Member's average grandstanding score in a hearing

Fixed Effects:

- Presidential administration
- Congress
- Committee
- Major Topic
- Member

Other Controls:

- Minority party status
- One-sided testimony
- Field hearings
- Member as witness
- Issue MIP
- Number of witnesses
- Unified government
- Committee first-term members

Results

Problem hearing	0.83 (0.13) ***
Solution hearing	0.42 (0.15) **
Legislative hearing	2.049 (0.69) **
Solution X Legislative	-2.052 (0.72) *

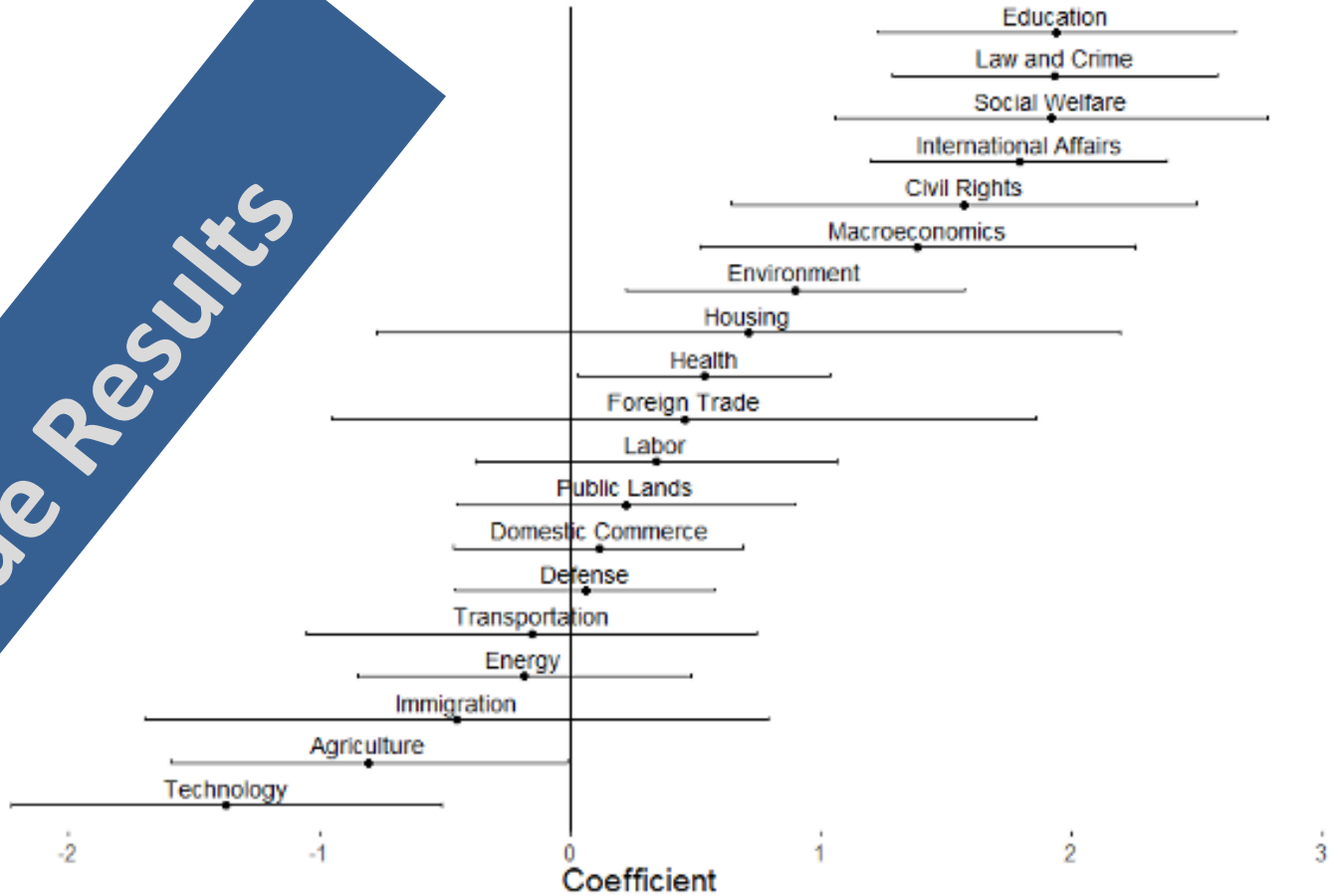
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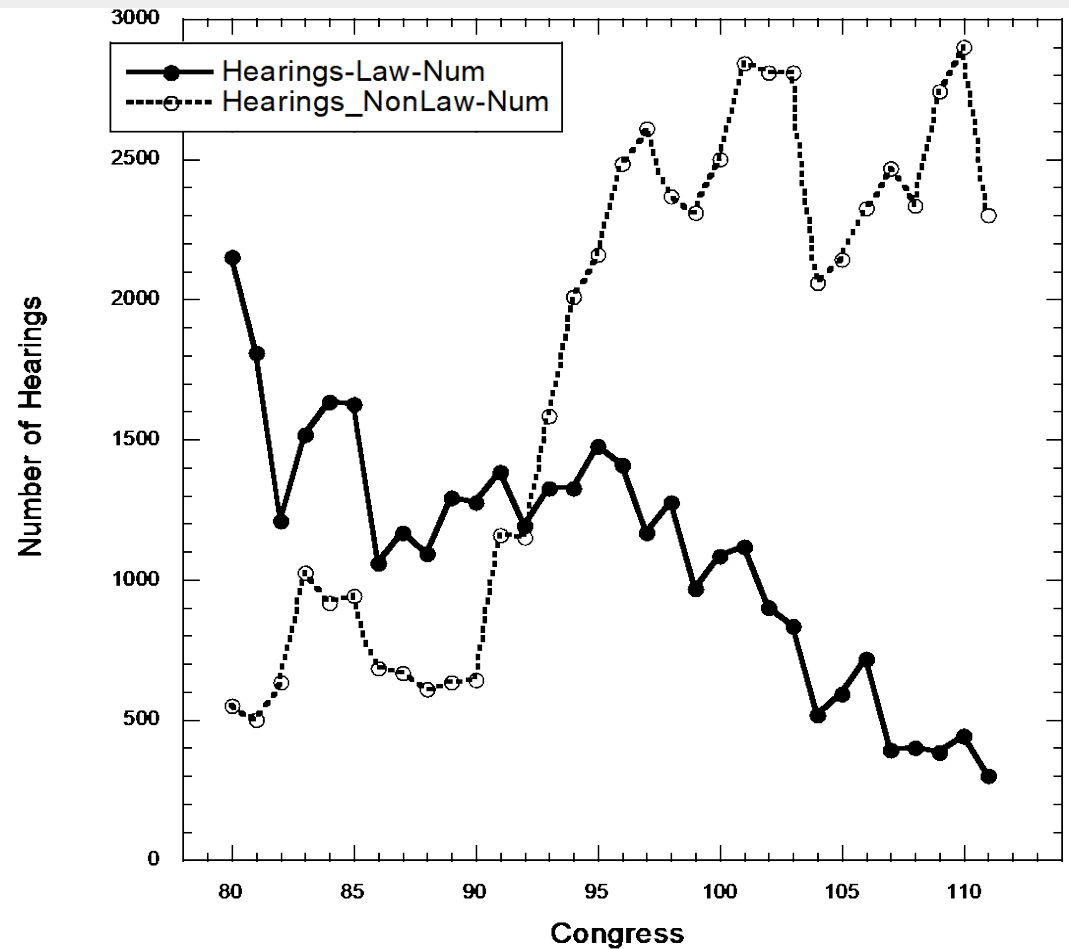
Controls

One-sided testimony	0.68 (0.12) ***
Field hearing	-0.38 (0.32)
Legislator as witness	1.16 (0.20) ***
Issue MIP %	0.06 (1.02)
No. of witnesses (log)	-0.57 (0.09) ***
Unified government	-1.10 (1.26)
Minority Party Legislator	2.19 (0.15) ***
<u>Cmte</u> first-term members %	0.02 (0.01) †

Issue Results



Relatively More Opportunities for Grandstanding



Conclusions

Grandstanding in committee hearings happens in a predictable way.

- A bit more grandstanding in problem hearings
- Less grandstanding in solution hearings
- Even less grandstanding in legislative-based solution hearings
- Grandstanding varies by issue
- More opportunities for grandstanding