

**Quid pro quo in independent campaign support by special interest groups?
Evidence from congressional roll call voting
(Patrick Balles, Ulrich Matter, and Alois Stutzer)**

This paper studies whether independent campaign expenditures affect legislative behavior in the U.S. Congress. While prior research has focused primarily on direct campaign contributions, we examine whether outside spending by interest groups—officially uncoordinated with candidates—correlates with congressional roll-call voting. We combine data on direct contributions and independent expenditures from OpenSecrets with roll-call votes from the U.S. House of Representatives between 2005 and 2018 and interest-group bill positions compiled by MapLight. Our analysis covers more than 1,100 bills across multiple policy domains and exploits within- and between-legislator variation.

We find that independent expenditures are systematically associated with legislators' voting behavior, even after controlling for constituency preferences and legislator fixed effects. We further test whether local media scrutiny moderates these patterns and find little evidence that media-market congruence constrains the association between independent expenditures and legislative behavior.