Religious Influences on Voting Behavior During the 54th Session of the Montana State Legislature: Catholics and the Religious Right

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Religious Influences on Voting Behavior During the 54th Session of the Montana State Legislature: Catholics and the Religious Right

Honors Thesis
by
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Sociology Department
April 19, 1996
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the
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April 19, 1996
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Introduction

There has been a great deal of interest in religious influence on voting behavior among legislators during the election of 1994 and to the present.

This project explored the influence of Roman Catholic social justice teachings on the Catholic and religious right members of the Montana legislature in 1995. The relationship between religious affiliation of the legislators and voting was explored using the voting records of the Montana State legislators on several bills monitored by the Montana Catholic Conference, the liaison for the Montana bishops to the legislature. The votes were controlled for sex, political party, area of the state in which legislators reside, and occupation.
Literature Review

A variety of background literature examined the relationship between Catholic teaching and the voting of Montana legislators. The theories and research findings regarding the relationship between religion and politics can be categorized as follows: 1) Marxist theories versus Weber's model, 2) Political Socialization, 3) Churches and Party Affiliation, 4) Catholic Social Justice Teaching, 5) "Religious Right", and 6) Abortion.

Marx v. Weber

Karl Marx and Max Weber are two major theorists who have differing views of the influence of religion. According to Marx, religion has little social structural influence. Rather, it is the economic system which determines political, religious, and social structures (Marx, in Fromm, 1966). Ritzer (1992) states that Marx "appeared to be almost totally preoccupied with the economy," a preoccupation often referred to as economic determinism.

In contrast, Weber sees religion as an independent and major influence on the political, social, and economic structures (Weber, in Miller, 1969). Weber attributes the rise of capitalism in the West to the key role played by the Protestant religion (Ritzer, 1992), specifically, by the Protestant Work Ethic.

Political Socialization

An important issue to be explored in any discussion involving religious
influence in politics is political socialization. Political socialization involves both theoretical frameworks and empirical data concerning the influence that parents, churches, peers, teachers, and other role models have on the political development of children, primarily in early life. Dawson and Prewitt (1969) focus on organizational religion's important role in political socialization. Churches do not need to be overtly organized for political purposes to exert such influence; they accomplish this through informal political education and mobilization. For instance, churches take stands and issue pronouncements on social and political affairs (Dawson et al., 1969).¹

Churches and Party Affiliation

Although there is little available research on the relationship between individual politicians' voting records and their religious identification, studies have been conducted at the institutional level. Members of certain religious denominations tend to support specific political parties (Penning, 1986; Huckfeldt, Platzer, Sprague, 1993, Kellstedt, Green, Guth, and Smidt, 1994). For instance, Catholics tended to support Democratic candidates. Non-religious voters were found to be more liberal. Kellstedt et al., 1994, found that in the 1992 election, Evangelical Protestants tended to support George Bush; Mainline

¹ Andrew Greeley found that some ethnic family structures are more conducive to transmission of political values to the next generation. For example, Italian-American Catholics are the best able to directly transmit political values to their children than are Irish-American Catholics(Greeley, 1977).
Protestants tended to support Bill Clinton or Ross Perot; and Catholics tended to support Clinton.

One of the most recognized names in the field of religious influence on political behavior among Catholics is Andrew Greeley. Greeley found that ethnic Catholics (Irish, Italians, Polish, Germans, and Scandinavians) tend to vote more frequently with the Democratic Party than the Republican Party, although they do not identify themselves with the "liberal" label (1977). In fact, Greeley writes that 25% of ethnic Catholics dislike "pure" liberalism. Irish Catholics rank highest in political participation, as well as in activism. Almost all ethnic Catholics are above the mean in voting turnout, as well, with the Polish Catholics having the highest ranking (Greeley, 1977).

Some of Greeley's work has focused on the Catholic "migration" from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. Although Catholics are still more likely to vote Democratic, some have become more conservative. A 1994 Voter News exit poll reported that 55% of Catholics voted Republican (Gerner, 1995).

**Catholic Social Justice Teaching**

Catholic social justice teaching following the Industrial Revolution was initially formulated by Pope Leo XIII in a major encyclical entitled *Rerum novarum* ("The Condition of Labor") in 1891. The encyclical stated that the Church has a right and a responsibility to speak out on social issues. The main points of the encyclical concerned the promotion of human dignity and workers' rights (*Rerum novarum*, 1891).
Several other major Church and papal encyclicals appeared throughout the next century, including: *Quadragesimo anno* ("Reconstruction of the Social Order"), written by Pope Pius XI, 1931, which addressed capitalism and private property; and *Laborem exercens* ("On Human Work"), written by Pope John Paul II, 1981, which states that employers need to provide benefits for workers, sufficient wages, and health care and unions are again supported.

In addition to papal documents, the United States Catholic Conference and the National Council of Catholic Bishops have described their positions on various issues. The most pertinent of recent pastoral letters by the U.S. Bishops is "Economic Justice For All," issued in 1986. This document states that the poor have the most urgent claim on the nation and that the Church must be a model for making this claim known and fulfilled.

The Catholic Church has specific teachings on workers and employers. All workers, regardless of occupation, position, or status have the right to a just wage. A just wage must allow the worker to adequately support his or her family and live in decent accommodations in dignity. It is the responsibility of all people to make sure this happens: the employer is required to pay a just wage, but the consumers of goods and services must concomitantly pay a fair price to


enable the employer to pay such a wage. Workers are also entitled to form labor organizations or unions in order to insure that they are paid fairly and have decent working conditions.\textsuperscript{4} Unions are necessary to prevent the exploitation of workers. However, unions should not become more powerful than the management, to prevent fearful employers from taking steps to prevent unions from forming. A balance should be found so that both the worker and employer are allowed to live with respect and dignity.

With regard to social inequalities the U.S. Catholic Conference advocates a "preferential option" for the poor. This comprises putting the needs of the less fortunate ahead of all other needs. This teaching requires that Catholics attempt to remove prejudices and discrimination; whether racial, sexual, age, or any other injustices, from all aspects of life.

Another application of Catholic social justice teaching is in the area of health care. All people, including the poor, are entitled to adequate health care.\textsuperscript{5} People should not be forced to suffer physically for ailments which are easily or potentially treatable. When people die from diseases because of lack of access to adequate health care it is considered a needless injustice which should be remedied. Proposed health care reforms must include benefits that will serve


\textsuperscript{5} Pope John Paul II, \textit{Laborem exercens}, 1981.
everyone, especially those without health care. True reforms are encouraged, as opposed to "band-aids" to cover up the problem.

Health care is a part of the broader Catholic Church teaching supporting a "consistent life ethic". Whether this life issue involves abortion, capital punishment, or euthanasia, the Church respects the dignity of all human life because all humans are created by God and in the image of God.\(^6\) For Catholics, life begins at conception, and any ending of this human being instigated by another human being is the destruction of an innocent life. The Church teaches that capital punishment should only be used as a final resort to protect society, for instance, when an individual is not able to be protected by the existing means of incarceration.\(^7\)

Given these teachings, the role of the Montana Catholic Conference is to support and implement them in the political arena at the state level.

"Religious Right"

The teachings of the "religious right" are not as clearly delineated, but this position generally tends to espouse ultra-conservative ideologies. The religious right has developed over many years under different names, including "The Moral Majority" and "The Christian Coalition". The Christian Coalition was


\(^7\) Given the advanced prison system which we have in the United States, it appears unnecessary to ever execute a convicted murderer. U.S. prisons would appear to be more than adequate to protect members of society.
founded by Pat Robertson in 1989 as an organization predominantly composed of Protestants, although recently, some conservative Catholics have tended to agree with some of the Christian Coalition positions (Gerner, 1995). The Coalition's message emphasizes a very conservative (some would say distorted version) of "Christian values" and a strong anti-abortion stance. The organization also decries what it perceives to be the lack of family values in America today. The members of the Christian Coalition tend to be portrayed as sympathetic to the Republican Party. The religious right also has become a strong political force. In 1994, 60% of all of the candidates supported by the religious right won their political races (Gerner, 1995).

Despite its purported Christian identity, the religious right does not generally support traditional Christian values, such as worker's rights, health care, or other social gospel stands.

Abortion

There is a great deal of research concerning religious affiliation, abortion, and political views. Tamney, Johnson, and Burton (1992) found that people who are pro-life are more likely to base their vote on a candidate's abortion stand

8 In a 1992 Gallup Poll, 64% of American voters said that religious values are "very important." This could indicate that the religious right's constituents are theirs because of the perceived family values of the religious right.

9 In 1991, the membership was 57,000 and in 1993, 450,000 people claimed to be members.
than people who are pro-choice. The Tamney et al., study indicates that religious affiliation has more influence on abortion than does party affiliation. In addition, they found that religion was very important in mobilizing political action on the abortion issue. Professor William Dinges of Catholic University of America sees abortion as "the catalyst which has galvanized the transdenominational right" (Gerner, 1995).

In terms of church attendance and stand on abortion, an inverse relationship exists for people who attend pro-life churches only infrequently and their support for abortion: that is, if a person attends church less frequently, they are more likely to be pro-choice. The authors also found that among frequent church-goers the parish was more influential than the neighborhood in which the person lived. If the person attended a pro-life church but lived in a pro-choice neighborhood, they were still more likely to be pro-life.

Jelen, O'Donnell, and Wilcox (1993) found that Roman Catholics are less likely than others to approve of abortion. Huckfeldt et al. (1993), found that people who attend Catholic services regularly are more likely to be pro-life. Non-Catholics who live in primarily Catholic environments are the most likely of all groups to favor abortion. Jelen et al., speculate that this may be related to mobilization in opposition by the minority directed at Catholics in power. Non-catholic church members tend to be less stringent on abortion than their pastors.
Research Questions

Based on the preceding review of the literature the following research questions were formulated:

1. Are Catholic legislators more likely to be Democrats?
2. Are religious right legislators more likely to be Republican?
3. Are Catholics more supportive of the Montana Catholic Conference's positions than other legislators, including members of the religious right?
4. Are the Montana legislators more likely to vote according to the teaching of their religion or the stance of their political party?
5. Are those legislators who are neither Catholic nor affiliated with the religious right more likely to vote with the position of the Montana Catholic Conference or with that of the religious right?
6. Are legislators more likely to vote according to their economic interests or according to the teaching of their religion or stance of their party?
Methods

Sample

For this study the voting records of the 54th session of the Montana State Legislature in 1995 were utilized. The Montana Legislature meets biannually for 90 days, from January into April, every odd numbered year. The following demographic and bill-related information concerning the Montana legislature was obtained from the Legislative Council.

The Montana State Legislature consists of 150 members, 50 in the Senate and 100 in the House of Representatives. Of the 150 members in the 54th session, 52 (34.7%) were Democrats and 98 (65.3%) were Republicans, none were independent or from other parties.

Demographically, the majority (114 or 76%) of legislators were males, while the remaining 36 (24%) were females. The mean age of the legislators was 53.7 years. However, nearly a third (47 or 31.3%) of the legislators were in the age range of 40 to 49 years, and 39 (26%) were in the range of 50 to 59 years of age. Eighteen (12%) were less than 40 years old, while 45 (30%) were more than 59 years of age.

The legislators were divided into four areas of the state in which they resided, Northwest, Southwest, Central, and East. The Northwest includes the counties of Missoula, Flathead, and Toole, and the major cities of Missoula and Kalispell. The Southwest includes the counties of Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, 

\[10\] Two males are less than 30 years of age, both are 26 years old.
and Beaverhead, and the cities of Helena, Butte, and Dillon. The Central
includes the major counties of Cascade, Gallatin, and Yellowstone, and the
major cities of Great Falls, Bozeman, and Billings. The East includes the
counties of Sheridan, Custer, and Richland; and the towns of Miles City, Sidney,
and Plentywood. Sixty-two (41.3%) legislators in the study resided in the Central
part of Montana. Forty-two (28%) of the legislators resided in the Northwest.
Twenty-seven (18%) members lived in the Southwest and the remaining
nineteen (12.7%) members lived in the East.

The only available indicator of social class for the study was occupation\(^1\). The
largest group of legislators was employed in agriculture (38 or 25.3%). The
next largest occupation group work in human services (27 or 18.0%). Forty-four
(29.3%) were in employed in business. Twenty (13.3%) were employed in small
business and 24 (16.0%) were in corporate business. The legal profession had
nine (6%) members in the legislature, and the same number was employed in
labor. The remaining 23 (15.3%) of the legislators either did not list an
occupation or did not fit into one of the above categories\(^2\).

Data concerning religious affiliation were not available from the Legislative

\(^1\) The data concerning occupation were categorized as follows: agriculture (farming
and ranching), law, corporate business (larger and typically multi-state), small business
(owners and operators of local business), human services (teaching, nursing, and
counseling), labor (construction and railroad engineers, etc.), and not available.

\(^2\) It is possible that some of those who did not list an occupation have retired and
did not list their previous occupation.
Council, so the study relied on three sources: a) clergy, b) the executive director of the Montana Catholic Conference, and c) current legislators. Twenty (13.3%) were reported to be Catholic legislators. Forty-three (28.7%) of the members were classified as affiliated with the religious right. Three members (2%) were listed as "both", that is, they were both Catholics and reported members of the religious right. The religious affiliation of the remaining 84 (56%) legislators were coded as their religion being "not available". Those who were neither Catholics nor members of the religious right are described herein as "other".

Bills

The primary dependent variables of this study were the legislative bills. Over 1096 bills were introduced during the 54th Montana state legislative session: 639 were introduced in the House of Representatives and 457 in the Senate. Of the 1096 bills introduced, 643 were signed into law by Governor Marc Racicot. Three-hundred-sixty-five bills died or were tabled in committee. Sixty-six remaining bills were either voted down or indefinitely postponed; 14

13 This may not include all the Catholics in the legislature, but rather only those reported at the time of the interviews. The term "Catholics" throughout this paper will indicate only the reported Catholics unless otherwise specified.

14 The "religious right" members are not necessarily a part of the Christian Coalition or any other organized religious right group; they were gathered through subjective reports given by religious lobbyists and current legislators who had labelled them "religious right".

15 For the purposes of this paper bills that died or tabled in committee will simply be referred to as "died in committee."
died in process; and eight were vetoed by the governor.

During the 1995 legislative session, the Montana Catholic Conference took a position (either as a proponent or opponent) or monitored 67 bills, resolutions, and joint resolutions. The Montana Catholic Conference supported a total of 27 bills, opposed 12 bills, and monitored 28 bills. For this study, 17 bills were chosen as indicators of either support or opposition to major Catholic social teachings. Of these 17 bills, ten were presented in both the Senate and House of Representatives; one was brought to the floor of the House of Representatives but not to the Senate; and six bills died in committee.

The above bills were categorized reflecting the content and/or purpose of the bill.

1. *Life-Abortion* included three bills: HB 442, HB 482, and SB 292. All of these were anti-abortion legislation.

2. *Social Gospel* included four bills: HB 39, HB 123, HB 276, and SB 179 (all of these bills died in committee.) These concerned labor issues including the minimum wage, "right-to-work", and child labor.

3. *Life-Health* included two bills: HB 511 and SB 385. Both of these dealt

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16 For this paper the term "bills" will refer to bills, resolutions, and joint resolutions unless otherwise stated.

17 The bills which died in committee or process have smaller voting numbers since all of the legislators were not able to vote on them. They are used because they yield important results.
with health care issues.

4. *Crime* included four bills: HB 240, HB 450 (which died in committee), HB 540, and SB 66. These all dealt with aspects of crime or reform of the criminal justice system.

5. *Militia* included three bills: HB 160, HB 491, and HJ 18 (which died in committee.) The Montana Catholic Conference took a stand against these bills because it felt they were in the interests of newly arising anti-government militia groups.18

6. *Moral* included one bill: HB 83 (which only went to the floor of the House of Representatives.) This bill involved revising the law regarding the crime of obscenity and obscene material.

[A listing of these categories, titles of bills, position of the Montana Catholic Conference, and final status of the bills is located in Appendix A.]

The votes of each legislator were examined to determine whether or not a legislator's vote was in support of, or in opposition to, the Montana Catholic Conference. Therefore, the study's relevant dependent variable was "support" or "opposition" relative to the Conference's stand on a particular bill, rather than the

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18 This classification was included because during 1995 there had been incidents involving the Montana Freemen, a group of anti-government citizens. The Freemen had shot at a helicopter flying over their ranch and later in March, 1996, there was a standoff between federal agents and the Freemen at a ranch in Jordan, MT.
actual vote on that bill.\textsuperscript{19} The bills were coded according to the six content and/or purpose categories mentioned earlier. In the case of outliers, individual bills were examined as well. Finally, the study controlled for religion, party, sex, and occupation of the sample of legislators.

Statistics

The chi square statistic was used to analyze the relationship between legislators' religious affiliation and their voting records. Social scientist Babbie has certain reservations when using statistical significance. He states that, "Statistical significance is too easily misinterpreted as 'strength of association,' or 'substantive significance'" (Babbie, 1992, 456). Therefore, the following analysis also considers substantive trends in the data which did not meet statistical significance.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to summarize the data, create tables and graphs, examine relationships, and perform tests of significance.

\textsuperscript{19}

The terms "supported" or "opposed" when referring to a bill mean support or opposition to the Montana Catholic Conference. The terms "yes vote" and "no vote" will refer to the legislators actual vote on a bill.
Analysis

Ninety percent of the Catholics were Democrats. This is in sharp contrast to the religious right, of which 100% were Republicans. Thirty-four (40.5%) of the "others" were Democrats and 50 (59.5%) of them were Republicans.

Seventy percent of those employed in human services were Democrats compared with 29.6% of the Republicans. In other fields there were interesting trends. Eighty-seven percent of the farmers and ranchers were Republicans. Seventy-seven percent of legislators employed in small and corporate types of business were Republican, and only 22.7% of those in business were Democrats.\(^{20}\) Fifty percent of the Democrats worked in either the human services or labor industries. At the same time, 68.4% of the Republicans worked in agriculture or small and corporate business.\(^{21}\)

Some interesting results were found when comparing occupation with political party, controlling for religion. Thirty percent of the Catholics were employed in the human services field. All were Democrats. The religious right legislators drew only 4.7% of their membership from the field of human services. Overall, the data indicate that Democrats appeared to be from occupations that indicated a lower socioeconomic status.

\(^{20}\) None of the Democrats are employed in corporate business.

\(^{21}\) It is interesting to note that of the 23 legislators that did not specify their occupation 14 or 60.9% are from the religious right.
When correlating religious affiliation with the area of the state in which legislators resided, it is interesting to note that 70% of the Catholics were from either the Northwest or Southwest regions. On the other hand, 58% of the religious right lived in the Central and Eastern parts of Montana. Fifty-eight percent of those whose religion was not available were from the Central and East, and 41.7% of the "others" were from the Northwest and Southwest areas of the state. This data indicates that the Catholic population is more concentrated in the western part of Montana, thus allowing more Catholics to be elected to the legislature from the Northwest and Southwest.

Controlling for party and area of state residence, 59.2% of the Republicans were from the Central and East, while 55.8% of the Democrats were from the Northwest and Southwest. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the above data.

**Life-Abortion**

The first set of bills examined were the *Life-Abortion* bills. All three bills were supported by the Conference. Eighty-six percent of the Republican legislators and 14.5% of the Democrats supported the position of the Conference on the three bills. The majority (89.1%) of the religious right supported each of these bills, compared to only 23.3% of Catholics. When controlled by party, one Catholic did not vote on any of the three abortion bills. This does not appear to be coincidental since the bills were voted on on separate days during the session.
Table 1

Religion by party, sex, occupation, and area of state
% (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Catholic (n)</th>
<th>Religious Right (n)</th>
<th>N/A (n)</th>
<th>Both (n)</th>
<th>Total* (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>90.0 (18)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>40.5 (34)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>34.7 (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>10.0 (2)</td>
<td>100.0 (43)</td>
<td>59.5 (50)</td>
<td>100.0 (3)</td>
<td>65.3 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>80.0 (16)</td>
<td>76.7 (33)</td>
<td>75.0 (63)</td>
<td>66.7 (2)</td>
<td>76 (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>20.0 (4)</td>
<td>23.3 (10)</td>
<td>25.0 (21)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>24.0 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>10.0 (2)</td>
<td>14.0 (6)</td>
<td>35.7 (30)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>25.3 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>15.0 (3)</td>
<td>4.7 (2)</td>
<td>4.8 (4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>6.0 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp Business</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>25.6 (11)</td>
<td>14.3 (12)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>16.0 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>20.0 (4)</td>
<td>14.0 (6)</td>
<td>10.7 (9)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>13.3 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>30.0 (6)</td>
<td>4.7 (2)</td>
<td>21.4 (18)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>18.0 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>10.0 (2)</td>
<td>4.7 (2)</td>
<td>6.0 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>6.0 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15.0 (3)</td>
<td>32.6 (14)</td>
<td>7.1 (6)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>15.3 (23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>40.0 (8)</td>
<td>27.9 (12)</td>
<td>25.0 (21)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>28.0 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>30.0 (6)</td>
<td>14.0 (6)</td>
<td>16.7 (14)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>18.0 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>25.0 (5)</td>
<td>51.2 (22)</td>
<td>40.5 (34)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>41.3 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>5.0 (1)</td>
<td>7.0 (3)</td>
<td>17.9 (15)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>12.7 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total = % (n) of 150 Legislators
Table 2

Party by religion, sex, occupation, and area of state

% (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>34.6 (18)</td>
<td>2.0 (2)</td>
<td>13.3 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>43.9 (43)</td>
<td>28.7 (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>65.4 (34)</td>
<td>51.0 (50)</td>
<td>56.0 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3.1 (3)</td>
<td>2.0 (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>65.4 (34)</td>
<td>81.6 (80)</td>
<td>76.0 (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>34.6 (18)</td>
<td>18.4 (18)</td>
<td>24.0 (36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>9.6 (5)</td>
<td>33.7 (33)</td>
<td>25.3 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>9.6 (5)</td>
<td>4.1 (4)</td>
<td>6.0 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp Business</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>24.5 (24)</td>
<td>16.0 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>19.2 (10)</td>
<td>10.2 (10)</td>
<td>13.3 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>36.5 (19)</td>
<td>8.2 (8)</td>
<td>18.0 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>13.5 (7)</td>
<td>2.0 (2)</td>
<td>6.0 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11.5 (6)</td>
<td>17.3 (17)</td>
<td>15.3 (23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Area of State</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>32.7 (17)</td>
<td>25.5 (25)</td>
<td>28.0 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>23.1 (12)</td>
<td>15.3 (15)</td>
<td>18.0 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>38.5 (20)</td>
<td>42.9 (42)</td>
<td>41.3 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>5.8 (3)</td>
<td>16.3 (16)</td>
<td>12.7 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total = % (n) of 150 Legislators
18.1% of the Catholic Democrats supported the Conference as compared with 66.7% of the Catholic Republicans. The "others" were split on the issue with 53.6% in support; and all of the "both" legislators were in support of the Conference position.

Sixty-six percent of the males and 45% of the females supported the Conference position on the three abortion bills. Eighty-nine percent of the religious right males supported the bills as compared with 27.3% of the Catholic males. Among females, 90% of those in the religious right and only 8.3% of those among Catholics supported the recommendation of the Conference on abortion. Sixty-two percent of the "other" males voted with the Conference position compared with 28.6% of the "other" females.

Sixty-one percent of the legislators supported the position of the Conference on HB 442, a bill that clarified the requirement that a physician must perform an abortion. Ninety-one percent of the religious right, 54.3% of the "others", and 21.1% of the Catholics voted along the lines of the Conference position ($x^2=31.62, p<.001$). When controlling for party affiliation, 89.4% of the Republican legislators and 9.8% of the Democrats voted with the Conference position ($x^2=88.28, p<.001$). Controlling for sex, 67.0% of the males and 44.4% of the females supported the Conference's recommendation ($x^2=5.79, p<.05$). See Figure 1.

Similar results were found on HB 482, a bill that would require parental consent for a minor to receive an abortion: and SB 292, a bill requiring that
Figure 1

Support of Abortion Bills by Sex

Physician Perform  Parental Consent  Right-to-know
women be given information regarding abortion options and a 24 hour waiting period to receive an abortion.

With regard to the abortion bills, party, religion, and sex were the significant variables associated with the voting patterns of the Montana legislators. Democrats were more likely to oppose the Conference position while Republicans were more likely to support it. This issue also appeared to be split along gender lines. No more than 48% of the females supported the Conference position on these bills and no less than 63% of the males supported the Conference position on abortion.

When controlling for religion, the Conference position received no more than 28% support from Catholics while the support from the religious right was very high, always above 88%. Tables 3, 4, and 5 indicate the religious support on these bills.

**Social Gospel**

The *Social Gospel* bills were the next to be examined. The bills all dealt with labor issues: HB 39 and SB 179 (minimum wage), HB 276\(^{23}\) (child labor), and HB 123 ("right-to-work."

The party of the legislator was a very significant factor in determining

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\(^{23}\) This bill concerned exempting caddies from the existing child labor laws. At the committee hearing the Montana Catholic Conference and a member of the clergy testified. This bill probably would have had little trouble moving through the process, but the strong presence of the Catholic Church in opposing the bill, it died in committee.
Table 3
Religion by Support of Catholic Conference
HB 442, Clarify that Physician Must Perform Abortion
\% (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Rel. Right</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>21.1 (4)</td>
<td>90.5 (38)</td>
<td>54.3 (44)</td>
<td>100 (3)</td>
<td>61.4 (89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oppose</td>
<td>78.9 (15)</td>
<td>9.5 (4)</td>
<td>45.7 (37)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>38.6 (56)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( x^2 = 31.62, p < .001 \)

Table 4
Religion by Support of Catholic Conference
HB 482, Parental Notification of Abortion
\% (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Rel. Right</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>27.8 (5)</td>
<td>88.4 (38)</td>
<td>56.0 (47)</td>
<td>100.0 (3)</td>
<td>62.8 (93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oppose</td>
<td>72.2 (13)</td>
<td>11.6 (5)</td>
<td>44.0 (37)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>37.2 (55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( x^2 = 24.96, p < .001 \)

Table 5
Religion by Support of Catholic Conference
SB 292, Women’s Right to Know Concerning Abortion
\% (n)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Rel. Right</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>21.1 (4)</td>
<td>88.4 (38)</td>
<td>50.6 (42)</td>
<td>100.0 (3)</td>
<td>58.8 (87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oppose</td>
<td>78.9 (15)</td>
<td>11.6 (5)</td>
<td>49.4 (41)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>41.2 (61)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( x^2 = 31.09, p < .001 \)
support (HB 276, \(x^2=7.20, p<.01\); similar results are found on the other two bills).

Of the five Democrats who voted on all three of these bills, only in one instance was a Democrat in opposition to the Conference position. Of the 10 Republicans who voted only six (20\%) of the votes were in support of the Conference position on the three bills. This is obviously one of the most partisan votes examined in this research.

A large voting split was seen among the legislators when controlled for religion. For example, on HB 276, all of the Catholics supported the Conference position, compared with only 20\% of the religious right (\(x^2=6.66, p<.1\)). The statistical significance was marginal, due to the small membership in the committee.

Looking at all three bills together, only one Catholic vote was in opposition and only one religious right vote was in support of the Conference position.

When controlled for occupation, all of the votes of those employed in agriculture were in opposition to the Conference position. In terms of other occupational differences, there were few. This may have been a result of the small sample used in "died in committee bills."

An interesting reverse trend was apparent in the "Right-to-Work" bill, HB 123. This type of legislation is typically supported by conservatives and opposed by liberals. The Montana Catholic Conference was in opposition to this type of legislation because it might allow employers to "break" unions and was contrary to various Church documents, including *Rerum novarum*, which emphasize the right of workers to organize.
All of the Democrats and seven of the 12 (58.3%) Republicans supported the Conference position on HB 123. All of the Catholics and religious right also supported the Conference position.

The reversal of Republicans from opposition to support for the Conference on these types of bills deserves some analysis. Figure 2 illustrates this trend.

HB 123 had a large number of opponents, mostly from labor occupations, who attended the committee hearing on the bill. It was necessary to hold the hearings in a larger room. Several of the opponents testified before the committee. When the vote was taken there appeared to be several hundred labor workers present. It is possible that the large turnout of opponents, the promise of Republican Governor Marc Racicot to veto the bill, and the strong lobbying by the Montana Catholic Conference and Catholic clergy may have prompted the Republican and religious right legislators to reverse their trend of voting against the Conference position on Social Gospel bills. As a result of this "grass roots" movement, these legislators may have been aware of the possibility that many Montana citizens were interested in the legislation, this may have influenced their votes.

**Life-Health**

The next set of bills examined were the Life-Health bills. The first bill, HB 511, was opposed by the Conference; it was very limited and changed only minor provisions regarding health care delivery. Most legislators did not support the Conference position on this bill. Only 23.1% of the Democrats and 3.1% of
Figure 2

Republican Support on Social Gospel Bills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Percentage of Support for ConfERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HB 36</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB 176</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB 276</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB 123</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum wage, Child labor, caddies, "Right-to-work"
the Republicans supported the Conference position \( (x^2=14.74, p<.001) \). When controlling for religion, 20.0% of the Catholics, 2.3% of the religious right, 12.2% of the "others", and none of the three listed as both Catholics and religious right supported the Conference position. In total only 10.1% of the legislators supported the Conference position on HB 511.

The next Life-Health bill, SB 385, provided medical coverage for children not eligible for Medicaid, this bill was supported by the Conference. In contrast to HB 511, this bill was supported by over 89% of the legislators. Only one Democrat opposed the Conference position and 14.7% of the Republicans. All of the Catholics supported it. However, 66.7% of the opposition to the Conference position came from the religious right.

Religious beliefs appear to be a factor in contributing to the opposition to the Conference position on this bill \( (x^2=14.49, p<.01) \). See Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Support of MT Catholic Conference by Religion**

*SB 385, Authorize Medical Services for Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Rel. Right</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>100.0 (19)</td>
<td>76.2 (32)</td>
<td>95.0 (76)</td>
<td>66.7 (2)</td>
<td>89.6 (129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oppose</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>23.8 (10)</td>
<td>5.0 (4)</td>
<td>33.3 (1)</td>
<td>10.4 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( x^2=14.49, p<.01 \)
Crime

It is interesting to note that on two of these bills; HB 240, a bill that would establish a juvenile justice study commission, and HB 450, a bill that would mandate trial as adult of those 12 and over who commit certain crimes, there was overwhelming support for the Conference position. Only 10.9% of the legislators opposed the Conference position on HB 240. Sixty-three percent of those who opposed the Conference position on this bill were from the religious right and none were Catholic ($x^2=12.60$, p<.01).

Democratic legislators were more likely to support the Conference position on HB 240 ($x^2=9.25$, p<.01). All of the Democrats who voted on HB 240 supported the Conference position while 16.5% of the Republicans opposed it.

The only person in opposition to the Conference position on HB 450 was from the religious right and was employed in corporate business.

SB 66, a bill that would mandate sentences for repeat offenders, was supported by 19.3% of the "other" group. Only 15% of the Catholics supported the Conference position and 4.8% of the religious right. Once again Democrats were more likely to support the Conference position than the Republicans, 31.4% and 5.2% respectively ($x^2=18.87$, p<.001).

The religious beliefs of legislators appeared to be the most significant factors in the vote on HB 540, a bill that would revise the youth court act ($x^2=42.01$, p<.001). Table 7. Catholics were more likely (86%) to support the Conference position than any other group. Only 4.7% of the religious right and
Table 7

Religion by Support of Catholic Conference
HB 540*, Generally Revise Youth Court Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catholic (%)</th>
<th>Rel. Right (%)</th>
<th>N/A (%)</th>
<th>Both (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>85.0 (17)</td>
<td>4.7 (2)</td>
<td>36.1 (30)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>32.9 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oppose</td>
<td>15.0 (3)</td>
<td>95.3 (41)</td>
<td>63.9 (53)</td>
<td>100.0 (3)</td>
<td>67.1 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2=42.01, p<.001$

Table 8

Occupation by Support of Catholic Conference
HB 540*, Generally Revise Youth Court Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agric (%)</th>
<th>Law (%)</th>
<th>Small Buss (%)</th>
<th>Corp Buss (%)</th>
<th>Human Service (%)</th>
<th>Labor (%)</th>
<th>N/A (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td>10.8 (4)</td>
<td>66.7 (6)</td>
<td>55.0 (11)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>59.3 (16)</td>
<td>66.7 (6)</td>
<td>26.1 (6)</td>
<td>32.9 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oppose</td>
<td>89.2 (33)</td>
<td>33.3 (3)</td>
<td>45.0 (9)</td>
<td>100.0 (24)</td>
<td>40.7 (11)</td>
<td>33.3 (3)</td>
<td>73.9 (17)</td>
<td>67.1 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2=42.66, p<.001$

*The vote on HB 540 is before the amendments; at this time the MT Catholic Conference did not support the bill.
36.1% of the control group supported the Conference position. Party was also very significant in this bill ($\chi^2=104.18$, $p<.001$). Eighty-seven percent of the Democrats and 4.1% of Republicans supported the Conference position.

With respect to occupation, there was stronger significance ($\chi^2=42.66$, $p<.001$). Table 8. Over 50% of lawyers, small business, human services, and labor employees supported the Conference on HB 540. In agriculture and corporate business, the support rates were 10.8% and 0% respectively.

**Militia**

Religion and party were the most important factors concerning HB 160, a bill that would limit Federal authorities' power in criminal investigations. All of the Catholics, 4.7% of the religious right, and exactly 50% of the "others" supported the Conference position on this bill ($\chi^2=52.28$, $p<.001$). All of the Democrats were in support of the Conference position as compared with only 11.3% of the Republicans ($\chi^2=109.04$, $p<.001$).

When controlled for occupation on HB 160 there were significant differences ($\chi^2=36.29$, $p<.001$). The groups most likely to oppose the Conference position were occupied in agriculture and corporate business. This may be that farmers tend to be more independent and more sympathetic to the views of the militia.

An interesting contrast to those employed in agriculture was human services. Seventy-eight percent of those employed in human services supported the Conference position. This may be related to the fact that many work for
government agencies.

The findings on HB 491, a bill that clarified that the sheriff was the chief law enforcement of the county, were similar to HB 160. When controlled for religious affiliation there was significance \( (x^2=15.46, p<.01) \). Ninety-five percent of the religious right opposed the Conference position as compared with 45% of the Catholics. There was also significance when controlled for party \( (x^2=52.37, p<.001) \). Ninety-six percent of the Republicans opposed the Conference position as compared with 55.8% of the Democrats.

There were only 18 votes on HJ 18 (it died in committee) but significance is still present. This resolution was to encourage Montana citizens to own guns. When controlled for religion 100% of the Catholics and all but one of the "others" supported the Conference position. In contrast, five of the seven religious right members opposed the Conference position \( (x^2=7.63, p<.05) \). All of the Democrats supported the Conference position and exactly half of the Republicans \( (x^2=4.50, p<.05) \). When controlled for occupation five of six of those in agriculture supported the Conference on HJ 18 \( (x^2=10.88, p<.05) \).

**Moral**

The only bill classified as *Moral*, HB 83, was legislation to revise the crime of obscenity and to provide for the forfeiture of obscene material. Religious beliefs were significant on this bill \( (x^2=23.22, p<.001) \). Only one Catholic voted in support of the Conference, but 81.3% of the religious right supported the Conference.
Party affiliation was also significant ($x^2=43.57, p<.001$). Seventy-six percent of Republicans supported the Conference and 93.9% of the Democrats opposed the Conference.

This bill may not be an accurate indicator of religious influence because other factors other than those measured may have influenced the support or opposition to this bill. For example, the issue of civil liberties was involved.
Qualifications

Data were unavailable on legislators' degree of church attendance.\textsuperscript{24} However, a study done by Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves (1993) states that people may not be attending churches as often as they report. If this is accurate, then church attendance may not be as influential as previously thought. If people are reporting attendance inaccurately then it is very difficult to determine political behavior patterns.

\textsuperscript{24} With the Catholics, simply because they were known to be Catholic by the sources used, it is known that they attended more frequently. That is, because they were known to be Catholic they attended more often, thus enabling others to determine their religion.
Discussion

Catholics and Democrats were more likely than the religious right and Republicans to support the Montana Catholic Conference position on the 17 bills examined.

Catholics exhibited more support for the Conference on ten bills the religious right, on four bills.25 The "others" were more likely to support one bill.26

Catholic legislators voted with the Conference on three of the Social Gospel bills (HB 39, HB 276, and SB 179.), the two Life-Health bills (HB 511 and SB 385), two of the Crime bills (HB 240 and HB 540), and all three of the Militia bills (HB 160, HB 491, and HJ 18). On the other hand, the religious right were more in line with the Conference on all three Life-Abortion bills (HB 442, HB 482, and SB 292) and on the Moral bill (HB 83.) The "others" were more likely to support one Crime bill (SB 66.) [This summary is presented in Appendix B.]

When controlling for party, Democrats exhibited more support for the Conference on 13 bills. The Republicans were more likely to support four bills.

The Democrats were more supportive of all four Social Gospel bills (HB 39, HB 123, HB 276, and SB 179.), the two Life-Health bills (HB 511 and SB 385), all four Crime bills (HB 240, HB 450, HB 540, and SB 66), and all three

25 All of the Catholics and religious right supported the Conference position on HB 123. This bill was not "given" to either religious group and was left out of the total.

26 All of the Catholics and the "others" supported the Conference on HB 450. This bill was not "given" to either religious group and was left out of the total.
Militia bills (HB 160, HB 491, and HJ 18). The Republicans exhibited more support for the Conference on the same four bills as the religious right; all three Life-Abortion bills and the Moral bill. [This summary is presented in Appendix C.]

To relate these votes to the research questions stated earlier:

1. **Are Catholic legislators more likely to be Democrats?**

Catholics in the Montana legislature were much more likely (90%) to be Democrats. This would appear to support the findings of Greeley (1977), Penning (1986), Huckfeldt et al. (1993), and Kellstedt et al. (1994) that Catholics tend to be Democrats.

There are no data concerning Montana Catholics switching political parties. However, it is important to note that all of the Catholic legislators who were also affiliated with the religious right were Republicans. This may indicate that Catholics who agree with the stance of the religious right may choose the Republican Party.

2. **Are religious right legislators more likely to be Republican?**

Legislators affiliated with the religious right were much more likely to be

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27 There is some evidence to indicate that Catholics are switching parties. In Commonweal magazine it was reported that in the 1994-95 session of the U.S. Congress the Catholic Republican membership was 63 members, in 1947-48 this number was 14, in 1959-60 it was 14, and in 1967-68 it was 24. This trend could be in response to the abortion issue or possibly, the upward social mobility of many Catholics and their concomitant attitude change toward a more conservative ideology, as Greeley suggests.

28 In exit polls done by Voter News in 1994, 5% of Catholics identified themselves as religious right, and 90% of these voted Republican.
Republicans (43.9%). All 43 are members of the Republican Party, and all those who were both Catholics and religious right were members of the Republican Party.

3. Are Catholics more supportive of the Montana Catholic Conference positions than other legislators, including members of the religious right?

The answer to this research question appears to be that Catholic legislators do tend to support the Montana Catholic Conference position more than any other group. They supported the Conference position on more bills than any other religious group, with the exception of their votes on the abortion and the moral bills. Likewise, Democrats supported the Conference position more than Republicans. Religious and political affiliation were correlated in this instance, since Catholics composed 38.5% of the Democrats in the 54th legislature.

4. Are the Montana legislators be more likely to vote according to the teaching of their religion or the stance of their political party?

One might examine this according to Karl Marx’s and Max Weber’s theoretical models. Marxist theory would predict that the legislators would follow influences such as economic interests, whereas Weber’s theory would argue that legislators would follow their religious ideals. This study’s findings were too complex to fit exclusively into either Marx’s or Weber’s model.

For instance, among Catholics it is difficult to distinguish whether votes were influenced by religion or by party since most Catholic legislators were
Democrats. However, there are indications that Catholic legislators were more likely to vote with their party rather than their religion, particularly on the issue of abortion. With the exception of the obscenity bill, that may have been obscured by other issues, abortion was the only significant issue on which Catholics did not have the highest degree of support for the Conference position.\textsuperscript{29}

Overwhelmingly, Catholics tended to vote with their party, rather than according to the recommendation of the Montana Catholic Conference on the abortion bills. Only 23.3\% of the Catholics supported the Conference position on abortion, with only 17.1\% of that support coming from Catholic Democrats.

In the research cited in the literature review, Huckfeldt et al. (1993) found that Catholics were more likely to be pro-life. Among the Montana Catholic legislators, this was not the case. Interestingly, previous studies have shown that those who attend pro-life churches infrequently also tend to be pro-choice. Without knowing the attendance frequency of the Catholic legislators of this study it was not possible to examine the relationship between attendance and voting record. A study including attendance frequency and political party affiliation could be conducted to investigate this.

Tamney et al. (1992) found that pro-life people are more likely to base their vote on the abortion position of the candidate. Because of the large

\textsuperscript{29} On the \textit{Moral} bill Catholics also exhibited the lowest support percentage, but this could be explained by the civil liberties issues in the obscenity legislation.

38
proportion of Catholics in Western Montana it would seem that Western Montanans would be pro-life. Again, this did not appear to be the case, since most Catholic legislators were from the West and most voted pro-choice. This could be explained by one or more of the following: 1) Catholics in Western Montana are more pro-choice than other Catholics nationwide, 2) the Catholics in Western Montana do not realize their legislators are voting pro-choice, or 3) other issues are more significant to the electorate. It is possible that if the constituents of the Catholic legislators knew that their elected representatives were voting pro-choice they might be less likely to re-elect them.

The discrepancy among Catholics on the abortion issue makes it nearly impossible to determine if, on the other issues, they are voting with their party or according to their religion. However, on the other issues examined in this study, members of the Democratic Party appeared to be in agreement with the Catholic Church. To determine which is more influential, other issues need to be examined in which the Church and Party are in disagreement.

The same question now applies to religious right legislators; that is, did they follow their religious ideologies or their party when voting on legislation in the Montana legislature? Again, this is difficult to determine. However, the consistency (80-90%) with which the religious right voted as a bloc (much more than the other Republicans) supports Weber's theory. Even though the religious right's teachings are not as delineated as those of other religions, the group's members do appear to be consistent in their votes. A reason for this may be that
the religious right formed primarily to politically protect member's religious beliefs; thus, their religious affiliation guided their political action.

5. **Are those legislators who are neither Catholic nor affiliated with the religious right more likely to vote with the position of the Montana Catholic Conference or the religious right?**

   It was found that on nine of the bills (discounting abortion), the "others" voted in a manner more similar to that of the Catholics than to the religious right legislators. The "other" legislators voted more closely with the religious right on only four bills. However, there was an interesting difference by sex: the "other" males voted similarly to the religious right males on the abortion bill, whereas the "other" females voted similarly to the Catholic females.

6. **Are legislators more likely to vote according to their economic interests, the teaching of their religion, or stance of their party?**

   Using occupation as the sole indicator of social class provided a limited definition of class. Most of the human services workers were members of the Democratic Party, and most of those in agriculture and business were Republicans. Those employed in agriculture and corporate business were significantly more likely to support HB 540, in opposition to the Conference position.

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30 Because the Catholic and religious right legislators had the same level (100%) of support on HB 123 it was left out of this comparison. Only 55.6% of the "other" group supported HB 123, much lower than the other two groups.
Future research might be conducted to determine the relationships among class, political and religious affiliation, and voting behavior of legislators. The research would be best served if occupation, education, and income level were utilized to determine social class.
Conclusion

Because of the lack of research regarding the influences of religious teachings on legislators' voting behavior, this would be one excellent area for further investigation. Specifically, the research could be focused on the influence that the Catholic Church and State Catholic Conferences have on legislators, given that the Catholic Church has very specific and particular positions on social issues. Additional research should also be conducted to determine how religions can influence politics in other ways. As seen in two bills (both Social Gospel) the immediate presence of the Montana Catholic Conference and clergy may have played an important role in the vote of the legislators. Knowing that the Church is "for" or "against" particular legislation, and the manner in which the Church responds to show its support or opposition to a bill, apparently has an important influence on the legislators' voting. The symbolism of the Montana Catholic Conference and clergy may have significant influence on the legislators' votes.

In addition, constituent interests may play a major role in the voting of legislators; an example of this was apparent in the hearing on HB 123, when a conservative trend was reversed, possibly because of the large turnout of Montanans.

Finally, additional and more specific research should be done to examine the issue of Catholics migrating from the Democratic party to the Republican
party. Is the upward social mobility of Catholics the reason for this "migration," or is it because of specific stands of the Democratic party, such as on the issue of abortion?

Continued research regarding all of these issues is important in understanding the influence of religion on political views.
Appendix A

Classification, Bill Number, Title, Montana Catholic Conference Position, Final Status

1. Life-Abortion

HB 442 - Clarify that Physician Must Perform Abortion. Support. Signed by Governor.


2. Social Gospel


SB 179 - Increase Minimum Wage for Certain Employees to $5 an Hour. Support. Died in Committee.

3. Life-Health

HB 511 - Create Health Care Advisory Council; Repeal Health Care Authority. Oppose. Signed by Governor.

SB 385 - Authorize Provision of Medical Services for Children Ineligible for Medicaid. Support. Signed by Governor.
4. **Crime**


HB 540 - Generally Revise Youth Court Act. Oppose original form (votes taken from original bill.) Signed by Governor.

SB 66 - Life Without Parole Sentence for Specified Number of Major Violent Offenses. Oppose. Signed by Governor.

5. **Militia**


HB 491 - Clarify that Sheriff is Chief Law Enforcement Officer of County. Oppose. Died in Process.

HJ 18 - Encourage Gun Ownership to Protect State and Its People. Oppose. Died in Committee.

6. **Moral**

HB 83 - Revise Crime of Obscenity & Provide for Forfeiture of Obscene Material. Support. Adverse Committee Report Adopted (died in process; only reached House floor.)
Appendix B

Percentage of Support of MT Catholic Conference by Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Religious Right</th>
<th>Other</th>
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Appendix C

Percentage of Support of MT Catholic Conference by Party

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


