

Molly Elizabeth Reynolds

Experience

The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC

Interim Vice President and Director, Governance Studies, 2025-present

Senior Fellow, Governance Studies, 2019-present

Fellow, Governance Studies, 2015-2018

Education

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Ph.D., Joint Program in Political Science and Public Policy, August 2015

M.A., Political Science, December 2012

Dissertation Title: *Exceptions to the Rule: Majoritarian Procedures and Majority Party Power in the U.S. Senate*

Dissertation Committee: Richard Hall and Charles Shipan, co-chairs; Kenneth Kollman, Elisabeth Gerber

Smith College, Northampton, MA

B.A., Government (major), Economics (minor), 2006

Magna cum laude, with Highest Honors in Government

Awards, Fellowships, and Affiliations

- *Lawfare*
 - Contributing Editor, 2025-present
 - Senior Editor, 2022-2025
- Faculty Affiliate, Center for Effective Lawmaking, University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University, 2019-present
- Member, Working Group on Senate Rules and Norms, McCain Institute and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the Study of the United States Senate, 2024-25
- Member, Revitalizing the House Task Force, Hoover Institution and Sunwater Institute, 2024
- Emerging Scholar Award, Legislative Studies Section, American Political Science Association, 2019
- Carl Albert Award for Best Dissertation in Legislative Studies, Legislative Studies Section, American Political Science Association, 2016
- Gerald R. Ford Fellowship, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan (\$20,000), 2014-15
- Gerald R. Ford Research Grant, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan (\$1,854), 2014-15
- Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy Research Grant (\$7,500), 2013
- Margaret Ayers Host Award, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan (\$5,000), 2013
- Centennial Spring/Summer Fellowship, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan (\$6,000), 2012
- Summer Collaboration Fellowship, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan (\$3,000, with Richard L. Hall), 2012

- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, Honorable Mention, 2009, 2010, and 2011
- Rackham Merit Fellow, University of Michigan, 2009-2015
- Dawes Prize for the Best Undergraduate Work on Political Science, Smith College, 2006
- Phi Beta Kappa, Smith College, 2005 (elected as a junior)

Books

Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the U.S. Senate (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2017).

Financing the 2020 Election, co-edited with John C. Green (Washington, D.C.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2023).

Peer-Reviewed Publications

“The Personal or the Partisan? The Politics of House Appropriations Amendments, 1985-2016,” *Congress and the Presidency* 46.1 (May 2019): 28-59.

“‘Big Money’ Wasted? Issue Advertising and Legislative Voting on the Affordable Care Act,” *Political Research Quarterly* 71.1 (March 2018): 102-114, with Richard L. Hall

“Putting the Brakes on Greased Wheels: The Politics of Weak Obstruction in the United States Senate,” *Congress and the Presidency* 44.3 (October 2017): 344-368, with Daniel B. Magleby

“Targeted Issue Advertising: The Inside Ends of Outside Lobbying,” *Journal of Politics* 74.3 (July 2012): 888-902, with Richard L. Hall

Work in Progress

“Our Ability to Continue Legislating Must Remain Beyond Question”: Proxy Voting in the House of Representatives During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” with Geoff Lorenz (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

“Who Fights the Good Party Fight? Individual Incentives to Engage in Partisan Messaging in the U.S. Senate”

Book Chapters and Selected Non-Peer Reviewed Publications

“Norms and Rules in the Contemporary Budget Process,” in *Folkways of Congress*, Brian Alexander, ed. (Brookings, forthcoming).

“Trump and Congress,” in *The Trump Legacy*, Julia Azari, Bert Rockman, and Andrew Rudalevige, eds. (University Press of Kansas, forthcoming).

“Congress,” in *Developments in American Politics* 10, Gillian Peele, Ray La Raja, Jon Hebert, Andrew Roe, eds. (Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming).

“Carrying the Conflict: The Politics of the Budget and Appropriations Process in the Contemporary Congress,” in *Congress Reconsidered*, 13th ed., Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce Oppenheimer, Ruth Bloch Rubin, and C. Lawrence Evans (CQ/Sage, 2025).

Vital Statistics on Congress, The Brookings Institution, on-going (last update November 2024).

“Unorthodox Legislating in Trump's Senate,” in *Disruption: The Senate During the Trump Era*, Sean Theriault, ed. (Oxford, 2024).

“This Is What’s Become of the House,” *New York Times*, November 17, 2023.

“How Partisan and Policy Dynamics Shape Congressional Oversight in the Post-Trump Era,” with Naomi Maehr, The Brookings Institution, July 2023.

“Just How Unorthodox? Assessing Committee Deliberation on the Components of Omnibus Spending Bills,” with Peter Hanson, *The Forum*, 21.2 (Spring 2023): 213-238.

“‘A Free-Range Chicken that Can Run Wherever the Majority Wants It To’: Budget Reconciliation and the Contemporary U.S. Senate,” *The Forum*, 19.4 (Winter 2022): 629-647.

“What Mitt Romney Doesn’t Understand About the End of the Filibuster,” *New York Times*, January 19, 2022.

“The Politics of the Budget and Appropriations Process in a Polarized Congress,” in *Congress Reconsidered*, 12th edition, eds. Lawrence Dodd, Bruce Oppenheimer, and C. Lawrence Evans (Washington, D.C.: CQ/Sage, 2021).

“Blue Metros and Red States: The View from Washington,” in *Blue Metros, Red States: The Shifting Urban/Rural Divide in America’s Swing States*, eds. David F. Damore, Robert E. Lang, and Karen A. Danielsen (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2021).

“Divided Government, Disruptive President: Congressional Oversight of the Executive Branch in the 116th Congress,” with Jackson Gode, The Brookings Institution, July 2021.

“Making Congress a Better Place to Work,” *Brookings Blueprints for American Renewal and Prosperity*, The Brookings Institution, February 2021.

“Tracking Oversight in the House in the 116th Congress,” with Jackson Gode, *Wayne Law Review*, 66.1 (2020): 237-258.

“Improving Congressional Capacity to Address Problems and Oversee the Executive Branch,” *Policy 2020*, The Brookings Institution, December 2019.

“The Decline in Congressional Capacity,” in *Congress Overwhelmed: The Decline in Congressional Capacity and the Prospects for Reform*, eds. Lee Drutman, Kevin Kosar, and Tim LaPira (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

- “The Office of Management and Budget and the Congressional Budget Process: The View from Capitol Hill,” in *Executive Policymaking: The Role of OMB in the Presidency*, eds. Meena Bose and Andrew Rudalevige (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2020).
- “Members of Congress Have Lost Control Over Spending,” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, August 27, 2020.
- “Categorical Politics in Action: Gender and the 2016 Presidential Election,” with Nancy Burns and Donald R. Kinder, in *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 3rd edition, ed. Adam J. Berinsky (New York: Routledge, 2019).
- “Improving Congressional Capacity to Address Problems and Oversee the Executive Branch,” *The Brookings Institution*, December 2019.
- “The Truth That White House Lett Just Laid Bare,” *New York Times*, October 9, 2019.
- “The 2018 Midterms in the Mountain West,” Brookings Mountain West, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, April 2019.
- “The President and Congress,” in *The Obama Legacy*, eds. Andrew Rudalevige and Bert Rockman (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2019).
- “Financing the 2016 Congressional Elections,” with Richard L. Hall, in *Financing the 2016 Elections*, ed. David B. Magleby (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2019).
- “What If You Could Pick the Pivot? Budget Reconciliation and Pivotal Politics in the Contemporary Congress,” *Journal of Politics* 80.3 (July 2018): 1069-1075
- “Is It Even Possible to Succeed as House G.O.P. Speaker?” *New York Times*, April 12, 2018
- “Trump’s Problem Isn’t the Filibuster. It’s the Republicans,” *New York Times*, April 5, 2018
- “Yes, Congress Could Shut the Government Down Tomorrow. It Probably Won’t,” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, January 18, 2018
- “Congress Just Averted a Government Shutdown—But Maybe Not for Long,” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, December 8, 2017 (with Sarah Binder and John Sides)
- “This Is Why the Congressional Budget Process is Broken,” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, October 16, 2017
- “Procedural Politics at the Start of the 115th Congress,” *Extensions: A Journal of the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center*, Summer 2017
- “Considering the Budget Resolution in the Senate: Challenges and Consequences of Reform,” *The Brookings Institution*, May 2017

- “Congress Just Dodged a Government Shutdown. Here’s What Comes Next,” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, April 28, 2017
- “How the Health-Care Debacle Exposed Republicans’ Serious Weaknesses, None of Which are Going Away Soon,” *New York Post*, March 24, 2017
- “Fiscal Fights of the Obama Administration,” with Phillip Wallach, *The Brookings Institution*, December 2016
- “5 Tips on How U.S. Presidents Can Work Best with Congress,” with Tony Lucadamo, *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, December 1, 2016
- “End of the Honeymoon?” with Jeff Chidester and Tony Lucadamo, *Miller Center at the University of Virginia*, November 2016
- “Four storylines in competitive House races could shape the nation’s future,” *Las Vegas Sun*, September 26, 2016
- “What Congress Has, and Hasn’t, Accomplished on Spending Legislation,” August 5, 2016, *WSJ Washington Wire*
- “What a smaller Republican House majority could mean for Paul Ryan,” April 11, 2016, *WSJ Washington Wire*
- “From Base Closings to the Budget: Exceptions to the Filibuster in the United States Senate,” in *Party and Procedure in the United States Congress*, 2nd ed., eds. Jacob Straus and Matthew Glassman (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016).
- “Restoring Congress as the First Branch,” with Kevin R. Kosar, Lee Drutman, Paul Glastis, Yuval Levin, and Jonathan Rauch, *R Street Policy Study No. 50*, R Street Institute, January 2016
- “The Politics of Gender,” with Nancy Burns, Ashley E. Jardina, and Donald R. Kinder, in *New Directions in Public Opinion*, 2nd edition, ed. Adam J. Berinsky (New York: Routledge, 2015).
- “Truth and Reconciliation,” with Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, *The New Republic*, April 20, 2009.
- “Assessing the 110th Congress, Anticipating the 111th,” with Sarah Binder, Thomas Mann, and Norman Ornstein, *Mending the Broken Branch*, vol. 3, The Brookings Institution, January 2009
- “Could Congress Be Waking Up?” with Thomas Mann, *New York Times*, January 19, 2008
- “One Year Later: Is Congress Still the Broken Branch?” with Sarah Binder and Thomas Mann, *Mending the Broken Branch*, vol. 2, The Brookings Institution, January 2008
- “Is the Broken Branch on the Mend? An Early Report on the 110th Congress,” with Sarah Binder and Thomas Mann, *Mending the Broken Branch*, vol. 1, The Brookings Institution, October 2007

“A New, Improved Congress?” with Thomas Mann, *New York Times*, August 26, 2007

“Is Congress on the Mend?” with Thomas Mann, *New York Times*, April 28, 2007

Conference Papers

“Our Ability to Continue Legislating Must Remain Beyond Question”: Proxy Voting in the House of Representatives During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” with Geoff Lorenz, presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Montreal, Canada.

“Just How Unorthodox? Assessing Committee Deliberation on the Components of Omnibus Spending Bills,” presented at the 2018 Congressional Rules and Procedures Conference, University of Georgia and the 2018 Conference on Effective Lawmaking, Vanderbilt University

“The Politics of Legislative Fluff,” with Pamela McCann, presented at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“The Decline in Congressional Capacity,” presented at The State of Congressional Capacity Conference, New America Foundation, March 2018

“The Personal or the Partisan? The Politics of House Appropriations Amendments, 1985-2016,” presented at the 2017 Congress and History Conference, Washington, D.C., and the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA

“Using Procedural Change to Obscure the Causal Chain: Creating Delegation Exceptions in the U.S. Senate,” presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Procedural Change for Policy Gain: Creating Majoritarian Exceptions in the U.S. Senate,” presented at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.

“Restraining the President through Majoritarian Rule Change in the United States Senate,” presented at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Picking the Pivot: Use and Consequences of the Budget Reconciliation Procedures in the United States Senate,” presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Rules, Roll Calls, and Representation: Special Rules and the Roll Call Record in the House of Representatives,” with Daniel B. Magleby, presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Issue Advertising and Legislative Voting on the Affordable Care Act,” with Richard L. Hall, presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Designing State Legislative Institutions: The Case of Tax and Expenditure Limitations,” presented at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“The Cost of Doing Business: Obstruction, Roll Calls, and Unanimous Consent in the United States Senate,” with Daniel B. Magleby, presented at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Partisan Gender Gaps and Racial Divides,” with Nancy Burns, Ashley E. Jardina, and Donald R. Kinder, presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Seattle, WA

“Issue Advertising and Roll Call Voting,” with Richard L. Hall, presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL

“Issue Advertising and Legislative Advocacy,” with Richard L. Hall, presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.

Selected Invited Presentations

2025: Environmental and Energy Study Institute; Center for Effective Lawmaking; Princeton University Program on Law and Public Policy; University College London; Travers Conference, University of California-Berkeley; Jefferson Educational Society

2024: Embassy of Finland; George Washington University School of Public Health; Miller Center for Public Affairs, University of Virginia; American Enterprise Institute; Abundance 2024; Society for the Rule of Law

2023: American Political Science Association; Environmental and Energy Study Institute; Cato Sphere Summit; American Association for the Advancement of Science; George Washington University School of Public Health

2022: Harvard Law School; University of Albany; American Association for the Advancement of Science; Crystal Bridges Foundation

2021: University of Miami; New America; Hofstra University; Princeton University’s Gerrymandering Project; Taubman Center for American Politics and Policy at Brown University; Bipartisan Policy Center

2020: Wayne State Law School; American Enterprise Institute

2019: Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice Section, American Bar Association; Lafayette College; Brookings Mountain West/University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2018: Yale University (American Politics and Public Policy Workshop); National Community Action Foundation; Brookings Mountain West/University of Nevada, Las Vegas; The Hoover Institution; University of North Carolina (American Politics Workshop)

2017: University of Oklahoma (Carl Albert Center); University of Southern California (Price School Governance Salon); New America/R Street Legislative Branch Capacity Working Group; American Association for the Advancement of Science; The Hoover Institution; American University (Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies); American Network of Community Options and Resources; Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

2016: Brookings Mountain West/University of Nevada, Las Vegas; National Budgeting Roundtable; University of Virginia (American Politics Workshop)

2015: House Democracy Partnership/National Democratic Institute Parliamentary Exchange Program

Past Professional Experience

Research Assistant, Professors Nancy Burns and Donald Kinder, University of Michigan, 2010-2015

Research Assistant, Professor Kenneth Kollman, University of Michigan, 2010

Research Assistant, Professor Michael Traugott, University of Michigan, 2009

Senior Research Coordinator, Senior Fellows Thomas Mann and Sarah Binder, Governance Studies, The Brookings Institution, 2006-2009

Teaching Experience

Smith College, Picker Semester in Washington:

Instructor, Government 411: The Policy Process in an Age of Polarization and Government 413: Seminar in Political Science Research, 2019-present

George Mason University:

Instructor, Public Administration 540: Public Policy Process, 2017-2019

University of Michigan:

Instructor, Political Science 311: American Political Processes, Summer 2014

Instructor, introductory American politics module for incoming international masters' students, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, August 2014

Graduate Student Instructor, Political Science 326: American State Politics (Professor Jenna Bednar), Fall 2010; Fall 2011

Graduate Student Instructor/Administrative Assistant, Political Science 111: Introduction to American Politics (Professor Kenneth Kollman), Winter 2012

Additional Training

Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Summer Institute, Princeton University, Summer 2012

Pedagogical Training

University of Michigan Graduate Teacher Certificate, Fall 2014

Sweetland 993 (half-semester training for upper-level writing instructors), Fall 2010

POLSCI 993 (one-semester instructor training), Fall 2010

Center for Research on Learning and Teaching GSI Teaching Orientation, Fall 2010

Institutional and Departmental Service

Member, Brookings Press Advisory Committee, Brookings Institution, 2024-present

Member, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Search Committee, Brookings Institution, 2024-2025

Member, Presidential Search Committee, Brookings Institution, 2022-2023

Co-convener (with Camille Busette), Brookings Institution Seminar Series on Racial Equity in Research, 2021-present

Co-moderator (with Michael O'Hanlon and Sarah Binder), Brookings Institution Pechman Lunch, 2018-present

Brookings Institution Inclusion and Diversity Committee

- Co-chair, 2018-present
- I&D Representative, Rubenstein Fellow Selection Committee, 2019-2021
- Governance Studies representative, 2016-present

Co-President, Graduate Association of Political Scientists (GAPS), University of Michigan, 2012-2013

Co-Coordinator, Interdisciplinary Workshop on American Politics, University of Michigan Department of Political Science, 2011-2012

Member, Admissions Committee, Joint Doctoral Program in Political Science and Public Policy, Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan, 2012

Member, Women's Caucus, University of Michigan Department of Political Science, 2009-2015

Professional Service

Co-Coordinator, Women in Legislative Studies Professional Development Series, 2022-2023

Member, Editorial Board, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 2021-present

Member, Advisory Committee, US 2050, Peterson and Ford Foundations, 2018-2019

Chair, Emerging Scholar Award selection committee, Legislative Studies Section, American Political Science Association, 2020

Chair, Subgroup on Improving Committee and Floor Procedures, and Member, American Political Science Association's Congressional Reform Task Force, 2019

Chair, Carl Albert Award selection committee, Legislative Studies Section, American Political Science Association, 2017

Reviewer for: *American Journal of Political Science*; *Journal of Politics*; *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Research and Politics*, *Congress and the Presidency*, *Political Research Quarterly*; *Science*; University of Chicago Press

Conference discussant: Bridging the Gap (2024); Women in Legislative Studies Conference (2024); Congress and History Conference (2024); Women in Legislative Studies Conference (2023); Women in Legislative Studies Conference (2022); American Political Science Association (2022); American Political Science Association (2021); American Political Science Association (2020); Midwest Political Science Association (2018); American Political Science Association (2017); Midwest Political Science Association (2011); "Presidential Power in the United States: Emerging Research," University of Michigan (2014)

References

Available upon request.

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