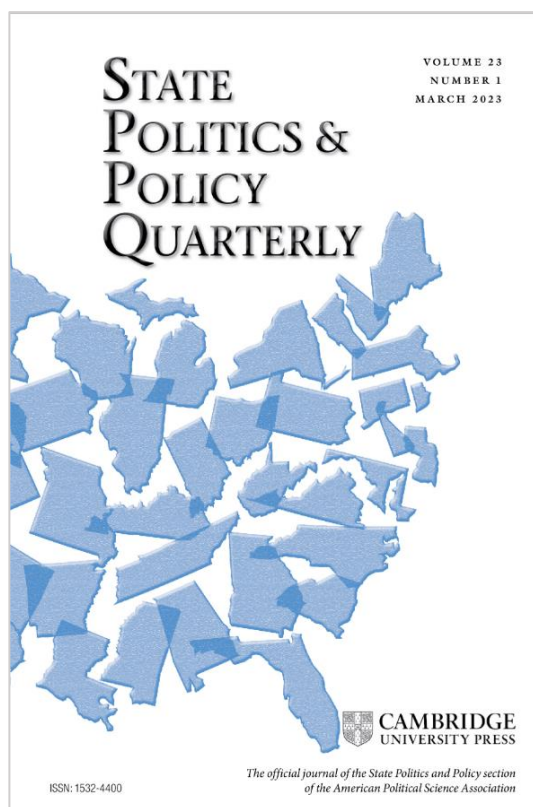


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### ABSTRACT:

Do reserved seats yield substantive representation for traditionally marginalized groups? To answer that question, we turn to a remarkable and little-studied institution: reserved seats for Native American tribes in the Maine House of Representatives. Tribal representatives, who can participate in debate but lack a vote, have represented tribes in Maine's House of Representatives since statehood in 1820. We take advantage of a 1995 rule change that allowed tribal representatives to initiate legislation, and an original dataset of pro-tribal bills, to estimate the effect of reserved seats on the production of pro-tribal bills. We find that once tribal representatives were allowed to write bills, they produced over half of all tribal-related legislation during a 36-year period. Legislators with tribal constituents sponsored fewer relevant bills after the reform but continued to cosponsor pro-tribal legislation. Although our results show tribal representatives contribute to the legislative process, we caution that reserved seats are not a panacea for improving Indigenous representation.

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