

# The CCA Working Group on Cooperation Across Domains



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Professor Victor holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Washington University in St. Louis (2003). She joined the faculty at George Mason University's Department of Public and International Affairs in fall 2012. In 2005 she served as an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellow, where she worked for Senator Kent Conrad. Her research has been published in the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *P.S.: Politics & Political Science*, *American Politics Research*, and elsewhere.

Does connectivity through legislative networks increase the likelihood of reaching bipartisan agreements in Congress? While the contact hypothesis suggests connectivity may reduce prejudice toward out-group members, legislators face strategic incentives to associate with political adversaries. To discern the effect of legislative connectivity on bipartisan agreement, I advance the theory that legislators who voluntarily connect to political opponents will have greater likelihood of agreement than those who are coerced to connect, in part because volunteerism signals a willingness to forge bipartisan relationships. Competing hypotheses are tested on a large dataset of congressional activity and relationships covering the period 1993-2016. Results show a small, positive effect of voluntary connectivity and negative effect of involuntary connectivity on bipartisanship, with heterogeneity across policy areas. The normative implications of the findings suggest forced bipartisanship may backfire, but opportunities for voluntary cross-partisan interactions may moderately increase the frequency of bipartisan agreement.

**This event is open to everyone.**

# Don't Make Me Do It: Bipartisanship and the Importance of Volunteerism in Legislative Networks in Congress

Monday, February 24  
4pm  
Room 6051  
15 Seminary Place,  
New Brunswick

**RUTGERS**  
School of Arts and Sciences