Package 'filibustr'

December 5, 2025

Title Data Utilities for Congressional Research

Version 0.5.1

Description Provides easy-to-understand and consistent interfaces for accessing data on the U.S. Congress. The functions in 'filibustr' streamline the process for importing data on Congress into R, removing the need to download and work from CSV files and the like. Data sources include 'Voteview' (<https://voteview.com/>), the U.S. Senate website (<https://www.senate.gov/>), and more.

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URL <https://feinleib.github.io/filibustr/>,
<https://github.com/feinleib/filibustr>

BugReports <https://github.com/feinleib/filibustr/issues>

Depends R (>= 4.1.0)

Imports cli, dplyr, haven, httr2, labelled, lifecycle, purrr, readr, rlang, rvest, stringr, tidyr, tools

Suggests carrier (>= 0.3.0), curl, knitr, mirai (>= 2.5.1), quarto, testthat (>= 3.0.0)

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Author Max Feinleib [aut, cre, cph] (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9604-3533>)

Maintainer Max Feinleib <mhfeinleib@gmail.com>

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Contents

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congress_in_year   *Calculate the Congress number of a given year*

Description

This function gives the number of the Congress for a specified calendar year.

Usage

```
congress_in_year(year)
```

Arguments

year   Either a number or a Date object. Cannot be earlier than 1789, the year of the
              first Congress.

Details

A new Congress begins in every odd-numbered year, starting in 1789. For example, 2021-2022 was
the 117th Congress.

Value

A positive whole number.

Examples

```
congress_in_year(1800)
congress_in_year(2022)
```

---

current_congress   *Calculate the current Congress number*

Description

This function gives the number of the Congress for the current calendar year, using `Sys.Date()`.

Usage

```
current_congress()
```

Details

A new Congress begins in every odd-numbered year, starting in 1789. For example, 2021-2022 was the 117th Congress.

Value

A positive whole number.

Examples

```
current_congress()
```

---

get_hvw_data   *Get replication data from Harbridge-Yong, Volden, and Wiseman (2023)*

Description

`get_hvw_data()` returns replication data from:

Harbridge-Yong, L., Volden, C., & Wiseman, A. E. (2023). The bipartisan path to effective law-making. *The Journal of Politics*, *85*(3), 1048–1063. doi:10.1086/723805

Usage

```
get_hvw_data(chamber, local_path = NULL)
```

Arguments

chamber	Which chamber to get data for. Options are:

  • ″house″, ″h″, ″hr″: House data only.
  • ″senate″, ″s″, ″sen″: Senate data only.

These options are case-insensitive. Any other argument results in an error.

Note: Unlike the Voteview functions, there is no ″all″ option. The House and Senate data do not have the same number of variables, or the same variable names, so it is not trivial to join the two tables.

You *must* specify either House or Senate data, since there is no "default" option.

local_path	(Optional) A file path for reading from a local file. If no local_path is specified, will read data from the Harvard Dataverse website.

Details

The replication data is available at the Harvard Dataverse (doi:10.7910/DVN/EARLA4).

The House and Senate data come from the files HarbridgeYong_Volden_Wiseman_House_Replication.tab and HarbridgeYong_Volden_Wiseman_Senate_Replication.tab, respectively.

The data spans the 93rd through 114th Congresses (1973-2016).

These datasets have been dedicated to the public domain under [CC0 1.0](CC0 1.0).

Value

A tibble.

Examples

```
get_hvw_data("senate")


get_hvw_data("house")
```

---

get_les   *Get Legislative Effectiveness Scores data*

Description

get_les() returns Legislative Effectiveness Scores data from the Center for Effective Lawmaking.

Usage

```
get_les(chamber, les_2 = deprecated(), local_path = NULL)
```

Arguments

chamber   Which chamber to get data for. Options are:

- "house", "h", "hr": House data only.
- "senate", "s", "sen": Senate data only.

These options are case-insensitive. Any other argument results in an error.

Note: Unlike the Voteview functions, there is no "all" option. You *must* specify either House or Senate data, since there is no "default" option.

There are non-trivial differences between the House and Senate datasets, so take care when joining House and Senate data. Important differences include:

- **Legislator names** are formatted differently. The Senate data has first and last name columns, while the House data has a single thomas_name column.
- **The** year **column** refers to the first year of the Congress in the House data, but year refers to the preceding election year in the Senate data. Thus, the year for House members is one after that of senators in the same Congress.

les_2   **[Deprecated]** This argument is now unnecessary, as the 2025 LES dataset includes both LES Classic and LES 2.0 scores in the same dataset. If provided, this argument will be ignored (with a deprecation warning). This argument will be removed in a future release. See the **LES Classic and LES 2.0** section below for more information on the two methods.

local_path   (Optional) A file path for reading from a local file. If no local_path is specified, will read data from the Center for Effective Lawmaking website.

Details

See the Center for Effective Lawmaking website for more information on their data.

The Legislative Effectiveness Score methodology was introduced in:

Volden, C., & Wiseman, A. E. (2014). *Legislative effectiveness in the United States Congress: The lawmakers*. Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139032360

LES Classic and LES 2.0:

The Center for Effective Lawmaking created a new version of LES starting in the 117th Congress. LES 2.0 credits lawmakers when language from their sponsored bills is included in *other legislators' bills* that advance through Congress and become law, not just their own sponsored bills. LES 2.0 is only available starting in the 117th Congress (2021-present). LES Classic goes back to the 93rd Congress (1973-present).

See the LES methodology page for more information on these methods.

Value

A tibble.

Examples

```
get_les("house")
get_les("senate")
```

---

get_senate_cloture_votes

Senate cloture motions and votes

Description

get_senate_cloture_votes() returns a tibble of the number of cloture motions, cloture votes, and successful cloture votes in the Senate during each Congress since 1917.

Usage

```
get_senate_cloture_votes()
```

Details

The data is sourced from the official Senate website, specifically https://www.senate.gov/legislative/cloture/clotureCounts.htm.

Value

A tibble with the number of cloture motions, cloture votes, and successful cloture votes in each Congress.

Examples

```
get_senate_cloture_votes()
```

---

get_senate_sessions   *Start and end dates of Senate sessions*

Description

get_senate_sessions() returns a tibble with the beginning (convening) and ending (adjournment) dates of each legislative session of the Senate.

Usage

```
get_senate_sessions()
```

Details

The data is sourced from the official Senate website, specifically https://www.senate.gov/legislative/DatesofSessionsofCongress.htm.

Senate sessions explained

That webpage provides this explanation of Senate sessions:

Prior to the 74th Congress (1935-1937), the first session of a Congress officially began on March 4 of odd-numbered years and ended at midnight on March 3 of odd-numbered years. Since 1935, in accordance with the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, Congresses have begun and ended at noon on January 3 of odd-numbered years. Each two-year Congress typically includes two legislative sessions, although third or special sessions were common in earlier years.

The session column

The session column is type factor, with the following levels:

```
levels(get_senate_sessions()$session)
#> [1] "1" "2" "3" "4" "S"
# Note: That's a letter S, not a number 5!
```

The Senate has had just 2 sessions in each Congress since 1941, so if you are just working with more recent data, you could convert this column to numeric. However, if you are working with pre-1941 data, you will likely be dealing with special sessions (denoted "S"), not just numbered sessions.

Value

A tibble with the begin_date and adjourn_date of each session of the Senate.

Examples

```
get_senate_sessions()
```

---

get_voteview_cast_codes

Key to Voteview cast codes in individual member votes

Description

get_voteview_cast_codes() returns a tibble with definitions of the 10 cast codes used in Voteview's member votes data (i.e., the cast_code column in the data frames from get_voteview_member_votes()).

Usage

```
get_voteview_cast_codes()
```

Details

For more information on these cast codes, visit Voteview's article on the member votes data.

Value

A tibble.

See Also

get_voteview_member_votes(), which uses these cast codes.

Examples

```
get_voteview_cast_codes()
```

---

get_voteview_members   *Get data on members of Congress from Voteview*

Description

get_voteview_members() returns a tibble of data on members of Congress, sourced from Voteview. Members in the data include Senators, Representatives, and Presidents. Each row is one member in one Congress (i.e., each member is listed once for every two years in office).

Usage

```
get_voteview_members(chamber = "all", congress = NULL, local_path = NULL)
```

Arguments

chamber   (Optional) Which chamber to get data for. Options are:

- "all", "congress", "hs": Both House and Senate data (the default).
- "house", "h", "hr": House data only.
- "senate", "s", "sen": Senate data only.

These options are case-insensitive. If you explicitly pass a different value, it will default to "all" with a warning.

Note that presidents are included in all datasets. Therefore, reading *both* "house" and "senate" data will duplicate data on the presidents. The recommended way to get all data is to use the default argument, "all".

congress   (Optional) A whole number (to get data for a single Congress), or a numeric vector (to get data for a set of congresses).

If not provided, will retrieve data for all Congresses by default. If specified, Congress numbers cannot be greater than the current_congress() (i.e., you cannot try to get future data).

local_path   (Optional) A file path for reading from a local file. If no local_path is specified, will read data from the Voteview website.

Details

See the Voteview website for more information on their data.

Please cite this dataset as:

Lewis, Jeffrey B., Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, Adam Boche, Aaron Rudkin, and Luke Sonnet (2025). *Voteview: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database*. `https://voteview.com/`

Value

A tibble.

The tibble includes data on the member's office, party, and ideology. See Voteview for descriptions of specific columns.

Parallel downloads with mirai

If you have installed the packages **mirai** and **carrier**, then the Voteview functions can download Voteview data from multiple Congresses in parallel.

To download Voteview data in parallel, use `mirai::daemons()` to create parallel processes. If you are downloading Voteview data for many Congresses, this can provide a significant speed-up.

See `vignette("parallel-downloads")` for full usage details.

Examples

```
get_voteview_members()

# Get data for only one chamber
# NOTE: the President is included in all data
get_voteview_members(chamber = "house")
get_voteview_members(chamber = "senate")


# Get data for a specific Congress
get_voteview_members(congress = 100)
get_voteview_members(congress = current_congress())


# Get data for a set of Congresses
get_voteview_members(congress = 1:10)
```

---

get_voteview_member_votes

Get data on the votes of individual members of Congress

Description

`get_voteview_member_votes()` returns a tibble that lists how each member of Congress voted in recorded (roll call) votes in the House and Senate. Members are identified by their ICPSR ID number, which you can use to join with additional member data from `get_voteview_members()`.

Usage

```
get_voteview_member_votes(chamber = "all", congress = NULL, local_path = NULL)
```

Arguments

chamber   Which chamber to get data for. Options are:

- "all", "congress", "hs": Both House and Senate data (the default).
- "house", "h", "hr": House data only.
- "senate", "s", "sen": Senate data only.

These options are case-insensitive. If you explicitly pass a different value, it will default to "all" with a warning.

congress   (Optional) A whole number (to get data for a single Congress), or a numeric vector (to get data for a set of congresses).

If not provided, will retrieve data for all Congresses by default. If specified, Congress numbers cannot be greater than the current_congress() (i.e., you cannot try to get future data).

local_path   (Optional) A file path for reading from a local file. If no local_path is specified, will read data from the Voteview website.

Details

See the Voteview website for more information on their data.

Please cite this dataset as:

Lewis, Jeffrey B., Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, Adam Boche, Aaron Rudkin, and Luke Sonnet (2025). *Voteview: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database*. https://voteview.com/

Value

A tibble.

Parallel downloads with mirai

If you have installed the packages **mirai** and **carrier**, then the Voteview functions can download Voteview data from multiple Congresses in parallel.

To download Voteview data in parallel, use mirai::daemons() to create parallel processes. If you are downloading Voteview data for many Congresses, this can provide a significant speed-up.

See vignette("parallel-downloads") for full usage details.

See Also

get_voteview_cast_codes() for a dictionary of the cast codes in this data.

Examples

```
get_voteview_member_votes()

# Get data for only one chamber
get_voteview_member_votes(chamber = "house")
get_voteview_member_votes(chamber = "senate")

# Get data for a specific Congress
get_voteview_member_votes(congress = 110)
get_voteview_member_votes(congress = current_congress())


# Get data for a set of Congresses
get_voteview_member_votes(congress = 1:3)
```

---

get_voteview_parties   *Get data on congressional parties from Voteview*

Description

get_voteview_parties() returns a tibble with information on the parties (aka caucuses) in each
Congress. The party information includes a party's ICPSR code, number of members, and DW-
NOMINATE scores.

The parties of the President, Senate, and House are listed in the data. Each row is one party in one
chamber for each Congress (i.e., each party is listed once for every two years).

Usage

```
get_voteview_parties(chamber = "all", congress = NULL, local_path = NULL)
```

Arguments

chamber   (Optional) Which chamber to get data for. Options are:

- "all", "congress", "hs": Both House and Senate data (the default).
- "house", "h", "hr": House data only.
- "senate", "s", "sen": Senate data only.

These options are case-insensitive. If you explicitly pass a different value, it will
default to "all" with a warning.

Note that presidents are included in all datasets. Therefore, reading *both* "house"
and "senate" data will duplicate data on the presidents. The recommended way
to get all data is to use the default argument, "all".

congress   (Optional) A whole number (to get data for a single Congress), or a numeric
vector (to get data for a set of congresses).

If not provided, will retrieve data for all Congresses by default. If specified,
Congress numbers cannot be greater than the current_congress() (i.e., you
cannot try to get future data).

local_path   (Optional) A file path for reading from a local file. If no `local_path` is speci-
                    fied, will read data from the Voteview website.

Details

See the Voteview website for more information on their data.

Please cite this dataset as:

Lewis, Jeffrey B., Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, Adam Boche, Aaron Rudkin, and Luke Sonnet
(2025). *Voteview: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database*. `https://voteview.com/`

Value

A tibble.

Parallel downloads with mirai

If you have installed the packages **mirai** and **carrier**, then the Voteview functions can download
Voteview data from multiple Congresses in parallel.

To download Voteview data in parallel, use `mirai::daemons()` to create parallel processes. If you
are downloading Voteview data for many Congresses, this can provide a significant speed-up.

See `vignette("parallel-downloads")` for full usage details.

Examples

```
get_voteview_parties()

# get parties for only one chamber
# NOTE: the President is included in all data
get_voteview_parties(chamber = "house")
get_voteview_parties(chamber = "senate")


# get parties for a specific Congress
get_voteview_parties(congress = 100)
get_voteview_parties(congress = current_congress())


# get parties for a set of Congresses
get_voteview_parties(congress = 1:10)
```

---

get_voteview_rollcall_votes

Get data on congressional roll call votes from Voteview

Description

`get_voteview_rollcall_votes()` returns a tibble with information on recorded (roll call) votes
in the House and Senate.

Usage

```
get_voteview_rollcall_votes(
  chamber = "all",
  congress = NULL,
  local_path = NULL
)
```

Arguments

chamber   Which chamber to get data for. Options are:

- `"all"`, `"congress"`, `"hs"`: Both House and Senate data (the default).
- `"house"`, `"h"`, `"hr"`: House data only.
- `"senate"`, `"s"`, `"sen"`: Senate data only.

These options are case-insensitive. If you explicitly pass a different value, it will default to "all" with a warning.

congress   (Optional) A whole number (to get data for a single Congress), or a numeric vector (to get data for a set of congresses).

If not provided, will retrieve data for all Congresses by default. If specified, Congress numbers cannot be greater than the `current_congress()` (i.e., you cannot try to get future data).

local_path   (Optional) A file path for reading from a local file. If no `local_path` is specified, will read data from the Voteview website.

Details

See the Voteview website for more information on their data.

Please cite this dataset as:

Lewis, Jeffrey B., Keith Poole, Howard Rosenthal, Adam Boche, Aaron Rudkin, and Luke Sonnet (2025). *Voteview: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database*. `https://voteview.com/`

Value

A tibble.

Parallel downloads with mirai

If you have installed the packages **mirai** and **carrier**, then the Voteview functions can download Voteview data from multiple Congresses in parallel.

To download Voteview data in parallel, use `mirai::daemons()` to create parallel processes. If you are downloading Voteview data for many Congresses, this can provide a significant speed-up.

See `vignette("parallel-downloads")` for full usage details.

Examples

```
get_voteview_rollcall_votes()

# Get data for only one chamber
# NOTE: the President is included in all data
get_voteview_rollcall_votes(chamber = "house")
get_voteview_rollcall_votes(chamber = "senate")


# Get data for a specific Congress
get_voteview_rollcall_votes(congress = 100)
get_voteview_rollcall_votes(congress = current_congress())


# Get data for a set of Congresses
get_voteview_rollcall_votes(congress = 1:10)
```

---

read_html_table   *Scrape an online HTML table*

Description

`read_html_table()` returns an HTML table at a specified URL and CSS element as a dataframe.

Usage

```
read_html_table(url, css)
```

Arguments

url	A string giving the URL to read from.
css	A string giving the CSS element to select.
	SelectorGadget (<https://selectorgadget.com/>) is a useful tool for finding the code for the CSS element you need. See rvest::html_element() for more information.

Value

A tibble.

Examples

```
# The table used in `get_senate_cloture_votes()`
# NOTE: `get_senate_cloture_votes()` performs some cleaning on this table
read_html_table("https://www.senate.gov/legislative/cloture/clotureCounts.htm",
                css = ".cloturecount")
```

```
# A table from Baseball Reference
read_html_table(url = "https://www.baseball-reference.com/friv/rules-changes-stats.shtml",
                css = "#time_of_game")
```

---

year_of_congress   *Get the starting year of a Congress*

Description

This function gives the first year for a specified Congress number.

Usage

```
year_of_congress(congress)
```

Arguments

congress   A positive whole number.

Details

A new Congress begins in every odd-numbered year, starting in 1789. For example, 2021-2022 was the 117th Congress.

Value

A positive whole number, representing the first year of the given Congress. This year will always be an odd number.

Examples

```
year_of_congress(1)
year_of_congress(118)
```

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