

Electoral Margin, Party Pressure and legislative votes: Marginality Theory Reconsidered*

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Marginality theory suggests that safer legislators are more likely to deviate from constituency preference when voting in Congress. However, empirical analysis yields mixed results. I reconsider the marginality theory and argue for no direct relationship, but an indirect relationship between legislators' electoral margins and their voting behavior. I propose that party pressure is the mitigating factor linking electoral margin and congressional vote. When party pressure pulls legislators away from their constituency preference, electoral margin is positively correlated with legislator support for the party position; when party pressure is absent, electoral margin does not affect legislative voting behavior. These hypotheses are tested against the 2008 bailout vote and the 108th through 110th Congress. My results suggest that electoral margin have a significant impact on party votes, yet the effect only exists for the majority party.

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Introduction

Scholarly debate around marginality theory is far from reaching consensus. Some argue that legislators' electoral margin is negatively related to their responsiveness in legislative roll call votes, while the others argue that such relationship is absent. While both sides find strong empirical evidence supporting their respective claims, there is a lack of convincing theoretical arguments that explain the existence or absence of the relationship. On the one hand, legislators have strong incentives to represent constituency opinions in roll call votes because of electoral pressure. On the other hand, legislators do sometimes deviate from constituency preferences in spite of the electoral cost. It was not clear why and in what circumstances legislators would deviate from constituency preferences. I find that it is less than satisfying to simply argue that higher electoral margin is directly related to a lower level of responsiveness.

In this paper I intend to fill in the void and provide a theoretical argument of an indirect relationship between electoral margin and legislative votes. I argue that party pressure serves as the mitigating factor. There is no direct relationship between electoral margin and legislative votes. The “default” position on legislative votes is constituency preference, and electoral safety does not necessarily lead to less responsiveness. However, when party pressure comes into play and pulls legislators to the opposite direction of constituency preferences, electorally safer members are more likely to be pressured. Under the party pressure, safer members are more likely to yield and deviate from constituency preferences, because they can afford to do so.

To test the hypothesis, I divide my empirical analysis into two parts. The first part is a case study of votes on the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, which commonly referred to as the “bailout vote”. The House voted on the bailout plan twice, and my results suggest that representatives who switched to support the party position in the second vote have significantly larger electoral margins. The second part of the analysis is on the party voting of the 108th through the 110th Congress. I find that safer House members were indeed more likely to yield to party pressure and vote against constituency preferences.

Background

Marginality theory argues that electoral margin plays a role in legislative decisions, in that electoral margin “...[sensitizes the legislator] to the wishes of constituents in his quest for support at the next election” (MacRae 1952: 1046). A substantive amount of literature follow the general premise and find empirical evidence supporting the marginality hypothesis. Early work such as Sullivan and Uslaner (1978) as well as recent work such as Griffin (2006) find a direct, positive relationship between district-level electoral competitiveness and legislative responsiveness. Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart (2001b) finds that ideological convergence between legislators and constituencies are conditional on candidate electoral margin.

In spite of the empirical support, this theoretical explanation of a direct relationship between electoral margin and voting behavior seems less than sufficient. By implying that safer members are less sensitive to constituency preferences, and marginal members more sensitive to the same, marginality theory sidesteps the possible importance of

constituency preferences for safer legislators. There have been plenty of theories arguing that regardless of electoral status, legislators have a permanent interest in maximizing electoral capital by voting with their constituencies as much as possible (e.g. Mayhew 1976, Bartels 1991), Groseclose (2001) argues that sufficiently advantaged candidates tend to moderate, thus deviate away from district ideological extremes. Recent research has also provided abundant empirical evidence suggesting that district competitiveness is not related to legislative responsiveness (e.g. Bartels 1991, Fiorina 1973, Gulati 2004) Kousser, Lewis and Masket (2007) and Butler (2009) find that regardless of electoral status, legislators modify their own roll call decisions in order to adapt to a changing constituency.

In general, different sides of the debate held opposite theories, and the empirical analysis yielded mixed results. In attempt to reconcile the puzzle and explain why safer legislators and marginal legislators behave so similarly, some research suggests that safer legislators better reflect constituency preferences, because the candidate-constituency ideology congruence was the reason for winning the election in the first place (e.g. Deckard 1976, Erikson and Wright 1980). Others suggest that what observers measure as “safe” electoral margins may not be perceived as wholly safe by the legislators in question. Regardless of how confidently they won reelection, legislators never really feel safe electorally, causing safer members and marginal members to behave similarly. (e.g. Cohen 1984, Jacobson 1987, Ansolabehere, Brady and Fiorina 1992)

However, the puzzle remains. If we expect a very high level of constituency loyalty from both marginal and safer representatives, then we should not observe any deviation from constituency preferences. However, legislative voting records show that congresspersons are not always loyal to constituency preferences; they do sometimes vote against constituency preferences and with their parties’ positions.

In fact, deviation from constituency preferences may even occur on salient issues. Jacobson (1993) provides the interesting example of the 1990 budget proposal. The budget proposal was highly unpopular among the American people. Although it intended to raise taxes and cut entitlement spending, it was voted in the House of Representatives twice and was eventually passed. A similar and more recent case is the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (popularly referred to as the “bailout”). Although also highly unpopular among many members’ constituencies, the bailout vote nonetheless was eventually passed by Congress and enacted into law.

To reconcile the puzzle and better understand when legislators choose to vote against constituency preferences, I argue that incumbents do not automatically deviate from constituency preference even with electoral safety. Unlike marginality theory, which argues for a direct relationship between electoral margin and responsiveness, I believe that legislators’ decision to deviate is not voluntary, but rather, strategic. Incumbents act based on their electoral capital, calculate if and when to vote against constituency opinion. An incumbent’s electoral capital is related to multiple election factors such as previous election margins, current election perspectives, challenger quality, etc., I believe that previous election marginality is the most prominent indicator of legislators’ electoral capital.

Marginality: the Electoral Capital

Voting against constituency preferences is costly. Previous research suggests that “Out of step” roll call votes can have a significant negative impact on legislators’ electoral fortune. On the aggregate level, Canes-Wrone, Brady and Cogan (2002) finds that for both safe and marginal incumbents, increased party extremity votes lead to decreased probability of reelection. In the analysis of individual roll call votes, Bovitz and Carson (2006) finds that about 15% to 20% of “key” roll call votes have a significant impact on incumbents’ electoral margin.

What is worth noting, however, is that although “out of step” votes may hurt incumbents’ electoral margin, they rarely prevent incumbent reelection (e.g. Jacobson 1993, Bovitz and Carson 2006). This finding is also supported by the fact that congressional incumbents enjoy a high reelection rate. Indeed, if “defecting” from constituency preferences can easily cost incumbents reelection, we should observe very few cases in which incumbents defect. The fact that legislative votes are a result of both party support and constituency loyalty indicates that legislators’ voting decisions are highly strategic. By carefully evaluating their electoral capital, legislators make decisions to vote along or against constituency preferences. Should a legislator vote against constituency preferences and spend some electoral capital, she can, in most cases, control the potential damage within acceptable range.

Of course, safer legislators with more electoral capital may preserve this capital for reelection rather than spend it on unpopular votes. However, even if individual legislators were unwilling to use their electoral capital, their parties were unlikely to leave them alone. I agree that marginality, *per se*, may not have a direct relationship to legislative voting behavior. When there is a conflict between constituency position and party position, electoral margin comes into play, and safer legislators are more likely to yield and vote along the party line.

The reasons for the impact of electoral margin on legislative decisions via party pressure are two-fold. First, when the party leadership needs to influence legislative outcomes and decide which members to pressure, party leaders are likelier to choose safer members rather than marginal members, knowing that safer members have more electoral capital to spare. Indeed, “parties can influence legislators’ votes but party leaders minimize the extent to which members vote against their own electoral interests (Lebo, McGlynn and Koger 2007: 464).” When party leaderships need to make a strategic decision, they tend to be “...leaning on less vulnerable members to support the party’s proposals even when constituents may not have been enthusiastic about them. (Griffin 2006: 913)”

Second, safer legislators are also more likely to yield to party pressure, because they can afford to vote against constituency preferences. In the case of the bailout votes, there had been strong support among party elites for the bailout proposal. Considering the situation of two rank-and-file members who both believe that the proposal is desirable, yet both have constituencies against the bailout. If one is electorally more secure than the others, then who has a higher probability of supporting the bailout? The argument is that because the safer can afford to vote against constituency preference, she is then more likely to yield to party pressure and support the party position.

Jacobson (1993) shows that such strategic calculation was indeed the case for his high-profile example: there was a relationship between electoral vulnerability and the 1990 budget vote. Marginal legislators were less likely to support the budget proposal. Safer representatives, on the other hand, can better afford to support the budget vote because they “were in a position to absorb the anticipated political damage without risking their careers” (Jacobson 1993: 376). By acting strategically based on electoral capital (or lack thereof), legislators passed the budget proposal without suffering substantially in the subsequent 1990 midterm elections.

If extant research avoids considering the missing link of party pressure when considering the relationship between electoral margin and legislative votes, an important part of the story is perhaps missed. To understand how party pressure and electoral margin interact, it is necessary to analyze the features of both factors.

Party Pressure and Electoral Margin

After hypothesizing party pressure as the mitigating link between electoral margin and legislative voting behavior, the relationship between electoral margin and legislative votes should not be considered in an “all or nothing” fashion. The reason is that party position and constituency preference are not always in conflict. Previous research on electoral margin and legislative responsiveness tend to consider constituency representation and party votes as interchangeable concepts. While some measure responsiveness as voting along constituency preferences, the others measure responsiveness as voting against party positions. While these two concepts are highly correlated, to better clarify the theory, however, it is necessary to notice these two concepts also differ in significant ways: for example, voting along constituency preferences can also mean voting along party position, as long as constituency and party share the same position. This distinction is important. I argue that electoral margin affects legislative votes conditional on party pressure; I also argue that party pressure affects legislative votes conditional on electoral margin. Only when party position and constituency preferences are in conflict do electoral margins come into the fray.

In other words, when party members are not pressured to support the party position, both safer and marginal members have incentives to vote along constituency preferences. Therefore, electoral margin should not have an effect on legislative votes when party pressure is not present or very weak, but an effect should be visible when party pressure is present and strong.

An entire literature on party government theory is implicated once this hypothesis is made. Cox’s and McCubbins’ (2005)’s “party cartel” theory argues that the majority party will exert strategic pressure (both in committee and on the House floor) on specific members to ensure that the majority party’s roll rate approaches zero. Snyder and Groseclose (2000a) finds that political parties have both statistically and substantially strong influence over the final results of close votes. Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart (2001a) finds that discrepancies between legislators’ revealed preferences and their actual voting decisions are caused by party pressure. In about 55 percent of roll call votes in Congress, party pressure is not “on.” Yet when it is “on,” party pressure tends to have a significant influence over the final results of congressional votes.

A number of studies argue that party influence is rarely prevalent on the final passage of congressional votes (e.g. Krebiel 1993, 1998). However, even Krebiel could not reject the empirical effect of party pressure.

To visualize the relationship and interactions among party pressure, electoral margin and legislative votes, Figure 1 presents my alternative interpretation of marginality theory: a two-way interactive relationship between electoral margin and party pressure, and their effects on legislative votes.

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

To empirically examine my theory, I start with a case study of the bailout votes, and then proceed to an aggregate level analysis of the relationship between electoral margin and party votes.

Case Study: the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, commonly referred to as the bailout plan, was a piece of highly visible and controversial legislation in 2008. The bailout case is of special interests to this paper because the two votes on the bailout plan revealed and recorded changes in revealed preferences among the legislators. The original bill failed by a vote of 205-228 in its first attempt to pass the House of Representatives on September 29th, 2008. The Senate then stepped in and debated, amended and eventually passed a revised version of the bailout plan, giving the House a second chance to vote on the bailout. Within a week, on October 3rd, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 passed its second House vote, 263-171, and was officially enacted into law upon President Bush's signature.

The bailout plan raised considerable controversy among the public as well as among legislators. Some commentators argued that using the taxpayers' money to take care of the mess left by Wall Street was "just wrong".¹ Multiple polls showed that the majority of the public were against Wall Street bailouts.² During the time of the bailout, some legislators reported receiving thousands of phone calls and emails a day opposing the bailout.³ In spite of the public opposition, supporters of the bailout plan argued that the bailout was necessary to deal with the economic crisis by rescuing the beleaguered financial market. The president, both parties' leaders, and some other prominent political actors, including both parties' candidates in the 2008 presidential election, Barack Obama and John McCain, actively advocated on behalf of the plan in attempt to save the economy.

Extensive news coverage of the bailout vote suggests that parties and constituencies were pulling towards opposite directions. While voters expressed dislikes of the bailout proposal, party leaders believed it was necessary. The bailout case is a situation where there was a conflict between constituency opinion and party position, and party pressure seems to be "on". My theory suggests that electoral margin should play a role in

¹ <http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=ZGE5MmE0YmRiODA3YTRiNzZlN2FmNDU5N2l0ZDc3YTE=>

² <http://www.gallup.com/poll/106114/six-oppose-wall-street-bailouts.aspx>

<http://www.latimes.com/media/acrobat/2008-09/42527811.pdf>

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/25/business/25voices.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&ref=washington&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin

legislators' bailout voting decisions. Specifically, I expect safer legislators to be more likely to support the bailout vote.

Two-stage Analysis

To analyze factors behind legislators' voting decisions on the bailout proposal, I include variables that are generally considered to be related to congressional votes. The main explanatory variable, electoral margin, is measured as incumbent's two party vote share from the previous congressional election. If there was a primary and a runoff, votes from the primary was counted. I control for legislators' partisan affiliation and ideology, and I also take into consideration of legislators' ideological extremity. Observations of the bailout votes suggested that the bailout votes resemble an "Ends against Middle" pattern. Nokken (2003) and Hussey (2009) also argue that it is not uncommon for extreme legislators to vote together against the moderates on certain legislations. Therefore, I include DW-Nominate score as well as its squared term to control for both legislators' ideology and their ideology extremity.

The most direct beneficiary of the bailout proposal is the financial industry. Therefore, I control for variables such as the PAC contribution each legislator received from the financial industry from the previous election cycle and the size of financial assets in each states. Because the bailout vote was very close to reelection, it is therefore necessary to control for whether a legislator chose to retire after the session. I also control for seniority, measured as the number of terms served in the Congress, and district ideology, measured as Republican vote share from previous presidential election. The descriptive statistics are presented in the Appendix.

The statistical analysis of the bailout votes consist two parts. First I conduct a two-stage logit analysis with the two bailout votes as dependent variables. The first-stage analyzes factors influencing the first bailout vote. The results suggest that legislator's ideological extremity, seniority, etc. have statistically significant influence on legislators' voting decisions of the bailout. The second-stage analysis examines the second bailout vote. Among the independent variables I include the predicted probability of supporting the first bailout vote, because the two bailout votes are in theory related. However, because of the inclusion of the predicted probability, all statistical significance is washed out for other variables. The regression results are presented in the Appendix.

Unlike the 1990 Budget vote, electoral margin does not turn out to be statistically significant in terms of predicting probabilities of supporting the bailout plan. However, it is too early to conclude that party pressure and electoral margin do not affect the bailout votes. There are 56 switchers from the first vote of the second vote, and all switched from opposing the bailout to supporting the bailout. In other words, all switchers switched from supporting the constituency position to supporting the party position. It is necessary to examine factors behind the switching. I hypothesize that party pressure is the factor that makes some legislators switch via the electoral margin variable.

Switcher Analysis

To examine what makes some legislators to switch, I construct a multinomial analysis. The dependent variable contains three categories, nay-nay voters coded as 0, switchers as 1, and yea-yea voters 2. The multinomial logit regression result suggests that electoral margin is the factor that makes people switch: the switchers obtain a larger electoral

margin compared to both nay-nay voters and yea-yea voters. The results are presented in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

To better understand the switching, it is important to note that in-between the two votes, electoral margin does not change for each representative. Therefore, it can not be electoral margin, per se, that contributes to the vote change. Rather, it has to be some other factor, which did vary in between the two votes, that influence legislators' voting decisions via the electoral margin factor. My theory argues for a relationship between party pressure and congressional votes conditional on electoral margin, and the finding is consistent with my theory. While there is a lack of direct measure on party pressure, the qualitative evidences on the bailout vote suggest that party leaderships tried to pressure party members to support the bailout proposal in between the two votes. The manifestation of party pressure is that make safer legislators switched their vote from nay to yea. Arguably, party pressure could manifest itself through other venues. It is possible that instead of choosing safer legislators, party leaders choose the ones who are ideologically moderate, or the ones with a larger financial industry at stake in home states. However, among all the potential factors, party pressure seems to present itself through electoral margin.

Electoral Consequence Analysis

If voting along party line and against constituency preference is costly, then does a high-profile roll call vote like the bailout vote affect incumbents' reelection fortune? To answer this question, I examine the extent to which the bailout vote actually affect the electoral outcome of the 2008 house election. The dependent variable is incumbents' two party vote share. The dependent variable includes the bailout votes, and standard controls such as previous election, seniority, district ideology, incumbent and challenger spending, and challenger quality. See descriptive statistics in Appendix.

Table 2 below presents the logit analysis of the bailout vote on the 2008 election. The regression results suggest that the bailout did not seem to have a statistically significant impact on the incumbents' election fortune. In the analysis conducted by Bovitz and Carson (2006), the authors find that 15% of Democratic "key" roll call votes have significant impact on electoral outcomes. The bailout vote seems to belong to the other 85%. One possible reason why such a high-profile vote did not make a dent on the electoral outcome is its timing. By the time the bailout votes are casted, the reelection is already very close. The challengers had already presented themselves, election campaigns were also in the running, it is entirely possible that voters have already decided on their voting decisions. Therefore, the bailout votes, though highly unpopular, did not have its chance of influencing voters' decisions. This finding suggests that for strategic politicians, if calculate the electoral capital carefully, supporting a partisan position against constituency preference was indeed affordable.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

Electoral margin and party unity voting: the 108th through the 110th Congress

Research Design

In the second part of the empirical analysis, I examine the relationship between electoral margin and party votes. The notion behind this research design is similar to the case study of the bailout vote. The key problem for designing an empirical test to examine my theory is the difficulty of measuring party pressure. It is not plausible to directly measure the existence and the degree of party pressure on legislators in individual legislative votes. When party leaders make reward promises or twist some arms, they do not leave records behind for political scientists to analyze. What can be measure, however, is the potential *effect* of party pressure. In the bailout case, from qualitative evidence I can presumably argue that the bailout vote is a partisan vote and the switching is possibly a result of party pressure. Therefore, when electoral margin appears to have an impact on the bailout vote, the argument can be made that electoral margin is related to legislators' (switched) support to party position.

By analyzing the potential effect of electoral margin on party unity score, I am examining the effect of electoral margin on the legislative votes that may be under the influence of party pressure. Ideally, I would have both electoral margin and party pressure as explanatory variables, and have congressional vote as the explained variable. In this research design, I have electoral margin as one of my explanatory variables, and I have both party pressure and congressional votes grouped together, measured as party unity score, as the explained variable.

The dependent variable, party unity score, is compiled by *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*. To explain party voting, I include legislator ideology, district ideology and electoral margin as the explanatory independent variables. Part of the variance in party unity score should be explained by district ideology and incumbent ideology. When party position is in line with constituency preference and a legislator's personal preference, the legislator almost certainly would vote for the party position. When party position is not in line with constituency preference, however, my theory predicts that this part of party voting should then be explained by legislators' electoral margin. I expect to see a positive relation between electoral margin and party unity score. The model is:

$$\text{Pr (Party Unity Score)} = b_1 \cdot \text{Legislator ideology} + b_2 \cdot \text{District ideology} + b_3 \cdot \text{Electoral margin} + b_4 \cdot \text{Control variables} + \text{Constant}$$

Data and results

Party unity score measures how often a legislator votes along her party line. Therefore, the independent variables in the model need to measure not ideology, but ideological extremity. Legislators' ideological extremity is measured as the squared term of the DW-Nominate score. I choose not to use the absolute value because while both measure the ideological extremity of legislators, the absolute value of DW-Nominate score is highly correlated with other independent variables. District ideological extremity is measured by presidential vote share from the previous presidential election. I subtract the Republican vote share in the district by 50 and take its absolute value. For a district where a Republican presidential candidate won with 52 percent of the votes, for example, the district ideology extremity measure is 2. Descriptive statistics is Appendix Table A4.

The regression results of the 108th through 110th Congress reveal some interesting patterns. First, the coefficients of electoral margin point to the expected direction, and its impact is substantive: for Republicans in the 108th Congress, one percent increase in electoral margin leads to a 6.4 percent increase in supporting the party position. For Democrats in the 110th Congress, one percent increase in electoral margin leads to 7.7 percent increase in supporting the party position in the first session, and 8.8 percent in the second session.

The second pattern is that electoral margin seems to matter only for the majority party. The Republican Party was the majority party in the 108th Congress and the Democratic Party the majority party in the 110th Congress. This finding about majority party makes intuitive sense. One explanation is that because electoral margin affects congressional votes through party pressure, the impact of electoral margin is related to the majority party status. Only the majority party can plausibly achieve electoral success by pressuring its members, therefore, only the majority party has incentives to pressure its members based on its members' electoral margin, and this is why electoral margin matters only for majority party members.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

[TABLE 4 HERE]

Discussion and Conclusion

My analysis supports the theory that a non-negligible relationship exists between legislators' electoral margin and their voting behavior through the mediating factor of party pressure. Instead of dismiss the potential impact of electoral margin on legislative votes, I call to the attention an improved version of marginality theory. By taking party pressure into greater account, I argue that political party leadership and individual legislators, both strategic political actors, inevitably take into consideration electoral margin when making legislative decisions.

The findings also have strong normative implications. The relationship of electoral margin, party pressure and congressional votes suggest that higher electoral margin may not directly decrease representation, it may indirectly related to lower representation if party pressure comes into the fray.

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Appendix

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics for the Bailout Votes Analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
bailout vote (first)	.471	.499	0	1
bailout vote (second)	.605	.489	0	1
DW-Nominate	.026	.509	-.922	1.364
DW square	.259	.195	.0064	1.86
electoral margin	66.1	12.1	32.69	100
financial assets	246.5	173.3	4.4	605.2
finance PAC	9.41	1.13	0	81.4
seniority	5.90	4.33	1	27
retirement	.055	.228	0	1
district ideology	50.1	14.3	9	78

Table A2: Two-stage logit regressions

Independent Variable	First bailout vote	Second bailout vote
Party ID	-.412 (.799)	-.050 (1.16)
DW-Nominate	-.241 (.973)	-.195 (.986)
DW squared	-2.51 (.786)	-2.25 (3.17)
district ideology	-.008 (.015)	-.022 (.021)
electoral margin	-.008 (.011)	.017 (.015)
financial assets	.000 (.000)	.000 (.001)
finance PAC	.045 (.013)	.037 (.055)
seniority	.091 (.030)	.027 (.122)
retirement	.475 (.522)	.412 (.835)
Predicted probability		.698 (5.92)
constant	-.313 (1.51)	.362 (3.28)
number of observations: 353		number of observations: 353
LR chi square: 62.21		LR chi square: 60.65
Probability > chi square: 0.0000		Probability > chi square: 0.0000
Pseudo R square: 0.1271		Pseudo R square: 0.1294
Log likelihood: -213.5		Log likelihood: -204.0

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients in Bold = Significant at 0.05 level.

• = p-value < 0.1.

Table A3: Descriptive Statistics for the Electoral Outcome Analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
electoral margin 2008	68.5	13.6	39.9	100
electoral margin 2006	66.1	12.1	32.6	100
incumbent spending	140.3	117.6	17.4	1286.7
challenger spending	48.2	104.3	0	720.5
challenger quality	.131	.337	0	1
district ideology	50.1	14.3	9	78
seniority	5.90	4.33	1	27
unemployment	6.20	1.22	3.5	8.9

Table A4: Descriptive Statistics of Party Unity Analysis

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
108 th Congress				
party unity 1 st session	92.7	7.21	51	100
party unity 2 nd session	91.9	7.38	59	100
electoral margin	68.3	13.0	45.0	100
ideology extremity	.243	.168	.0019	1.201
district extremity	11.2	8.88	0	45
leadership	.034	.181	0	1
African American	.086	.281	0	1
109 th Congress				
party unity 1 st session	92.1	7.46	59	100
party unity 2 nd session	90.6	8.74	54	100
electoral margin	68.1	12.6	24.3	100
ideology extremity	.262	.178	.003	1.39
district extremity	11.6	8.47	0	41
leadership	.034	.182	0	1
African American	.082	.275	0	1
110 th Congress				
party unity 1 st session	92.7	7.78	58	100
party unity 2 nd session	94.3	6.76	57	100
electoral margin	66.1	12.1	32.69	100
ideology extremity	.259	.195	.0064	1.86
district extremity	11.4	8.43	0	41
leadership	.053	.224	0	1
African American	.087	.283	0	1

Figure 1 Effect of party pressure on congressional votes

	Safer legislators	Marginal legislators
Party pressure “on”	Effect present	No Effect
Party pressure “off”	No effect	No Effect

Table 1: Multinomial Logit Regression (base category 1 switchers)

Independent Variable	Category 0 nay-nay voters	Category 2 yea-yea voters
Party ID	-1.09 (1.28)	-1.51 (1.26)
DW-Nominate	.394 (1.53)	.539 (1.49)
DW square	1.83 (1.19)	-.988 (1.19)
electoral margin	-.041 (.016)	-.031 (.015)
financial assets	-.0003 (.0011)	.0004 (.0010)
finance PAC	-.022 (.020)	.012 (.017)
seniority	.109• (.056)	.160 (.054)
retirement	.584 (1.09)	.983 (1.08)
district ideology	.047• (.024)	.012 (.022)
constant	.987 (2.07)	2.60 (1.98)
number of observations:	353	
LR chi square:	79.15	
Probability > chi square:	0.0000	
Pseudo R square:	0.1150	
Log likelihood:	-304.63533	

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients in Bold = Significant at 0.05 level.

• = p-value < 0.1.

Table 2: Dependent Variable: Incumbents' Electoral Margin in the 2008 House Election

Independent Variable	Coefficient	
electoral margin 2006	.445 (.048)	.477 (.048)
Incumbent spending	-.016 (.006)	-.014 (.006)
challenger spending	-.036 (.007)	-.037 (.007)
challenger quality	-1.32 (1.45)	-1.37 (1.45)
district ideology	-.221 (.038)	-.231 (.037)
seniority	-.007 (.116)	-.007 (.116)
unemployment	-1.72 (.422)	-1.73 (.411)
bailout yea-yea voters	1.24 (1.03)	
bailout switchers		-.466 (1.41)
constant	63.8 (5.27)	64.7 (5.23)
number of observations: 390		
F(8 , 381) : 51.2		
Probability > F: 0.0000		
R square: 0.5192		
Adjusted R-squared : 0.5091		
Root MSE : 9.532		

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients in Bold = Significant at 0.05 level.

• = p-value < 0.1

Table 3: Dependent variable: Party Unity Score (Republicans only)

Session	108 th Congress		109 th Congress		110 th Congress	
	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
ideology extremity	7.96 (1.83)	17.61 (1.87)	9.04 (2.06)	12.3 (2.97)	19.9 (2.35)	14.1 (2.00)
district extremity	.065 (.060)	.077 (.061)	.245 (.064)	.273 (.093)	.430 (.091)	.423 (.077)
electoral margin	.036 (.026)	.064 (.027)	-.002 (.031)	-.021 (.045)	-.010 (.063)	-.023 (.054)
leadership	3.00 (1.64)	2.73 (1.66)	3.16 (1.91)	4.49 (2.76)	4.12 (2.63)	2.90 (2.24)
constant	88.7 (1.84)	82.1 (1.90)	87.6 (1.97)	85.1 (2.85)	78.94 (3.63)	83.9 (3.09)

Note: OLS regression. Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients in Bold = Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4: Dependent variable: Party Unity Score (Democrats only)

Session	108 th Congress		109 th Congress		110 th Congress	
	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
ideology extremity	58.93 (4.88)	53.7 (5.03)	58.6 (4.73)	59.9 (5.17)	21.0 (2.37)	12.4 (2.28)
district extremity	.060 (.053)	.129 (.055)	.057 (.058)	.029 (.063)	-.062 (0.42)	-.066 (.041)
electoral margin	-.027 (.035)	-.007 (.035)	-.037 (.038)	.003 (.042)	.077 (.026)	.088 (.025)
leadership	3.21 (2.42)	2.14 (2.47)	3.44 (2.39)	2.72 (2.61)	-.091 (1.19)	.204 (1.15)
African American	-.061 (.053)	-1.36 (1.38)	-.767 (1.36)	-.303 (1.48)	1.09 (.983)	.932 (.947)
constant	82.3 (2.38)	81.1 (2.45)	83.1 (2.53)	79.7 (2.76)	86.1 (1.71)	88.5 (1.65)

Note: OLS regression. Standard errors are in parentheses. Coefficients in Bold = Significant at 0.05 level.