Introduction to the American Political Process

Legislative Behavior: The Committee Model Part II
Congressional Committees

- Woodrow Wilson: “Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst Congress in committee-rooms is Congress at work.”

- Why Committees?
  - Institutional Reasons
  - Personal Reasons
    - The Trinity of Congressional goals: reelection, power, public policy
Congressional Committees: Effects

- Assignment to committees
  - Committee on Committees
  - Role for self-selection

- The possibility of bias
  - Preference outliers
  - Advantages and disadvantages
Committees and Policy

- Relationship between Committees and the Floor Median
- Importance of Rules
Case 1

- Under closed rule: committee would not kill bill (i.e., no gatekeeping power used), but committee will move legislation closer to their ideal point.

- Under open rule: result is median.
• Under closed rule: result is status quo; committee kills bill.

• Under open rule: result is status quo; committee kills bill.
Case 3

- Under closed rule: committee gets what it wants
- Under open rule: result is median or SQ', whichever is closer to C.
- Evidence that moderate committee are more successful
Placing Members in Space

How do we know where MOC and Senators Stand?

- NOMINATE scores
- ADA score
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## ADA Scores

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