Congressional Candidates

17.251/252
Fall 2016
The Hierarchical Structure of Running for Office
Data via US Department of the Interior. These images are in the public domain.
8th District 1998

Geography

Watertown
Belmont
Cambridge
Somerville
Chelsea

Boston
8th District 1998
Candidates

- Mike Capuano (Somerville mayor) (19,439)
- Ray Flynn (former Boston Mayor) (14,829)
- George Bachrach (former state sen. & almost-Rep.) (12,166)
- John O’Connor (rich husband) (11,035)
- Marjorie Claprood (former state rep & radio personality) (10,358)
- Chris Gabrieli (rich guy) (5,732)
- Chris Yancy (Boston city council) (4,460)
- Susan Tracy (former state. Sen.) (2,855)
- Tom Keane (Boston city council) (2,150)
- Alex Rodriguez (1,799)
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8th District 1998
District Support

Mike Capuano (Somerville mayor) (19,439)
Ray Flynn (former Boston Mayor) (14,829)
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Capuano Support
Strategic Choice and Political Careers

\[ E(a_i) = P_i U_i - C_i \]

\[ E(a_j) = P_j U_j - C_j \]
Some important considerations

- Variations in variable values
  - across time
  - cross-sectionally
- Factors that affect the calculus of progressive ambition

\[ E(a_i) = P_i U_i - C_i \]
Factors that Affect the Calculus of Progressive Ambition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U_L vs. U_H</th>
<th>P_L vs. P_H</th>
<th>C_L vs. C_H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| -Scope of legislative authority  
-Political and policy resources within the institution  
-Pay and perquisites  
-Springboard effects | -National forces  
-Party identification in the districts  
-Redistricting  
-Scandal | -Opportunities foregone  
-Number and quality of challengers  
-Fund-raising efficiency  
-Efficiency of translating money and volunteer time into votes |
Pay and Perquisites of state legislatures (some examples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
<th>Travel allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>$10/day (C)</td>
<td>$4,308/month plus $50/day for three days during each week that the legislature actually meets during any session (U).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>$90,526/year</td>
<td>$141.86 per day for each day they are in session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>$17,341/yr</td>
<td>$173/day (U) set by the Legislative Services Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>$60,032.6 /year</td>
<td>From $10/day-$100/day, depending on distance from State House (V) set by the legislature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>$200/two-year term</td>
<td>No per diem is paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>$14,947.34/yr</td>
<td>No per diem is paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>$20,000/yr</td>
<td>$131/day during session (U) set by compensation commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U = Unvouchered  
V – Vouchered  
C = Calendar Day

Source: National Conference on State Legislatures  
Quote removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see Mehta, Seema. "L.A. County Board of Supervisors: 5 jobs politicians especially covet." Los Angeles Times. September 6, 2013.
## Variation in state legislative capacities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Legislature</th>
<th>Time on the Job</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Total Staff/legislature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green (Used to be Red)</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>$81,079</td>
<td>1,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray (Used to be White)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$43,429</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold (Used to be Blue)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>$19,197</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National tides

• Retiring from the Senate
  – 1994: 0R, 3D (+8R)
  – 1998: 1R, 3D (0)
  – 2002: 4R, 1D (+2R)
  – 2006: 6R, 0D (+6D)
  – 2010: 5R, 3D (+6D)
  – 2014: 2R, 5D (+9R)

• Retiring from the House
  – 1994: 0R, 34D (+52R)
  – 1998: 10R, 12D (+5D)
  – 2002: 12R, 6D (+8R)
  – 2006: 21R, 0D (+30D)
  – 2010: 8R, 11D (+63R)
  – 2014: 14R, 10D (+13R)
Why the midterm loss?

- Surge and decline effect
- Strategic voters
- Strategic politicians
Surge and decline effect*

*Similar to Erikson & Wright’s “withdrawn coattails” effect
Strategic voters*†
(not to scale)

Policy = w(President’s ideal point) + (1-w)(Congress’s ideal point)

†Similar to Erikson and Wright’s “ideological balancing,” but more precise.
Strategic voters
(not to scale)

Pres’l election year

Midterm w/ Dem. pres.

D
Dd
Dr
Rd
Rr

D
Dd
Dr
R
Strategic Candidates

\[ R^2 = .38 \]

\[ R^2 = .28 \]
Strategic Candidates

\[ R^2 = .38 \]

\[ R^2 = .28 \]
Incumbents, challengers, and open seat candidates

• Incumbents
  – Incumbency advantage

• Challengers
  – Challenger quality

• Open seat candidates
  – The free-for-all
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010

Dem. pct., 2008 = 56.0%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 48.5%
Diff = -7.5%
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010--incumbents

Dem. pct., 2008 = 56.6%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 49.0%
Diff = -7.6%
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010---Dem. open

Dem. pct., 2008 = 68.5%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 53.1%
Diff = -15.4%
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010—Rep. open

Dem. pct., 2008 = 37.4%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 36.8%
Diff = 0.6%
2010 summary
(compared to 2008)
2010 summary
(compared to 2008)
2010 summary
(compared to 2008)

Inc adv. = \((7.6 + 7.8)/2 = 7.7\)
Incumbency Advantage: Primaries


Incumbency advantage

• Why does it exist?
  – Audience participation
Incumbency advantage

• Why does it exist?
  – Franking, etc.
  – Constituency service
  – Redistricting
  – Smarter candidates
  – Spending advantage
Incumbent-protection
gerrymandering

• Frank Wolf (Figure 4.1 in Analyzing Congress)
Geography of Northern Virginia
2001-2010 districts
2011-2020 districts
2011-2020 districts
Effect of 2011 Redistricting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Republican before</th>
<th>Republican after</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 (Wolf)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (Cantor)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WASHINGTON — In one of the most stunning primary election upsets in congressional history, the House majority leader, Eric Cantor, was soundly defeated on Tuesday by a Tea Party-backed economics professor who had hammered him for being insufficiently conservative.

The result delivered a major jolt to the Republican Party — Mr. Cantor had widely been considered the top candidate to succeed Speaker John A. Boehner — and it has the potential to change both the debate in Washington on immigration and, possibly, the midterm elections.

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The Incumbency Spending Advantage
(Update of Fig. 4.2)

Figure 4.2: Average Campaign Fund Raising in House Races, 1974-2014 (2014 dollars)
(Challenger) Candidate Quality: 2010

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No prior office</td>
<td>Held prior office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger won</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total challengers</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidate Positioning Add-on
Effect of candidates leaving, 2012

![Graph showing the effect of candidates leaving in 2012.](image-url)
Effect of candidates leaving, 2014
Effect of candidates leaving, 2016
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