Contents

ably especially relevant to the American context. For decades, scholars have noted that European legislators are much more loyal to their parties than members of the US Congress. In part, this is a contrast of nominating and electoral rules; US politicians must win their own nominations and then compete in general elections in geographically defined single-member districts. However, this chapter also suggests that American voters expect their legislators to represent their districts first and foremost and may interpret excessive partisanship as evidence that a member of Congress has forsaken his or her district on behalf of party interests.

Of course, the experiments described in this chapter are limited to a particular point in time and space. How well do they explain patterns of congressional elections? The next two chapters build on our analysis by testing the claim that American voters punish party loyalty by incumbent politicians. As we do so, we focus on cumulative patterns based on millions of votes, but our intuition is based on the in-depth analysis of the sample we interviewed in this chapter: at the margin, many voters are uneasy with strongly partisan legislators.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Electoral Costs of Party Loyalty in Congress

Coauthored with Jamie Carson and Ellen Key

The biggest legislative battle of President Obama's first two years in office was undoubtedly over health care reform. In mid-March of 2010, the House Democrats were still short the votes needed to pass the Senate's version of the bill. Among the final Democrats to agree to vote yes was four-term incumbent Tim Bishop of New York's First Congressional District, representing eastern Long Island. Bishop waited as long as he could to make his decision. He had hoped to avoid casting the vote that was unpopular in his district, but the party needed his help, and he ultimately acquiesced. His announcement of support finally came late Friday afternoon on March 19. When the bill was passed two days later, Bishop was one of 219 yes votes, giving his party an important legislative victory but putting him in a difficult position with his constituents.

In fact, Bishop had been comfortably elected in his previous elections to Congress. In his first three reelection campaigns, his percentage of the two-party vote had been 56 percent, 62 percent, and 58 percent. But 2010 was to be a tougher battle. Bishop's 2010 Republican opponent, Randy Altschuler, was a local businessman who would not have stood much of a chance in a typical year. But Altschuler was well funded and filled the airwaves with commercials tying Bishop to his party and its leader. "Bishop votes with Pelosi 97 percent of the time" was a consistent tag line in his advertisements. Bishop did all he could to fight back—even blitzing the district with former president Clinton in the waning days of the campaign. An extensive and seesaw recount followed the election, and the contest

was the last in the country to be decided. Altschuler finally conceded on December 8, and Bishop was certified the winner by 593 votes.

Bishop's narrow victory illustrates how party loyalty can have severe consequences for an incumbent seeking reelection. While it is rare that a single legislative vote will have such detrimental electoral effects, legislators often worry that a *pattern* of controversial roll call votes may result in defeat during the subsequent election (Arnold 1990; Bovitz and Carson 2006). At the same time, legislators may accept some electoral risk to pass a bill for the sake of their party's overall goals. Realizing that their members often pay a price for their loyalty, party leaders strategically balance the party's collective interests against the electoral fortunes of individual members.

This chapter moves from laboratory tests to election results: collectively, do voters in congressional elections punish legislators for being too partisan?[1] We find that they do: controlling for other factors, legislators pay an electoral price for voting with their parties, especially those who represent competitive districts. As in the previous chapter, we are careful to distinguish between the effects of party loyalty and ideological extremism. In a series of tests, we find that ideological preferences are not directly related to election outcomes; they help us explain why legislators are loyal to their party (or not), but they do not directly explain why incumbent legislators gain or lose electoral votes. We also find evidence that—as one might expect, and even hope—legislators anticipate their electoral vulnerability when they are casting votes. Legislators and party leaders anticipate whether a particular member of Congress (MC) will face a difficult or easy reelection contest and factor this into their decisions about how loyal each MC should be to his or her party. Of course, party leaders trying to gain seats are unlikely to ask endangered legislators to take a lot of risks on behalf of their parties. Instead, we find that "safe" legislators vote with their party more often and pay little penalty for doing so, so that electoral costs are minimized by allocating risk to otherwise secure members.

These results offer a correction to a long tradition of testing whether MCs lose elections or vote share by being too ideological. Once we compare and contrast this explanation with the effect of party loyalty, we find that partisanship is a much stronger factor in elections. This is also a more satisfying account of the relationship between voting and elections because we can provide an answer to the question, why do legislators cast votes that could cost them the next election? It is not clear why a legislator would vote her ideology to the extent that she risked losing the next election.[2] Our party-based account, on the other hand, provides such an explanation: legislators cast votes that hurt their reelection prospects as a contribution to the collective reputation of their party.

This chapter highlights one of the most important features of American political culture. To an extent rarely seen elsewhere in the democratic world, voters do not simply focus on the party affiliations of candidates. Rather, the legislative records of incumbents are scrutinized and legislators are held individually accountable for their cooperation with their party organization. Consequently, both legislators and citizens have an uneasy relationship with political parties: however useful and essential parties may be, cooperating as a party will remain costly for legislators who deviate from their constituents' preferences to help their parties win.

4.1 Legislative Voting and Elections: Prior Research

A basic model of democratic representation is that citizens send representatives to act in their best interests for a fixed term. After each term, citizens (aided by challengers, interest groups, and the media) can evaluate the incumbent's record to determine if he or she has truly acted in their interests. In this system, an ambitious politician will strive to take positions that her constituents will reward and avoid positions they view as too extreme (Kingdon 1989; Mayhew 1974b). Legislators must be cautious about every vote because they cannot fully anticipate which votes will be critical to their campaign, so they must act as if any vote is a possible campaign issue (Fenno 1978, 142). We expect, then, that legislators who wish to continue their legislative careers will generally cast votes of which their constituents approve. Of course, constituents vary in their level of organization, information, and importance in the electoral process (Fenno 1978), so legislators may face complex choices as they weigh the preferences of different subgroups of constituents (Arnold 1990; Bishin 2000, 2009).[3]

Despite the electoral incentives to satisfy their constituencies, however, we often observe legislators casting votes that are disapproved of by (some of) their constituents. Our account, explained in chapter 2, focuses on the tension between collective party goals and the preferences of the constituents of party members. In order to achieve collective goals as a party, members must sometimes cast votes that are unpopular in their

home districts with the expectation that the benefits of cooperating as a party will exceed these costs.

Another reason legislators may cast unpopular votes is that they are indulging in *agency slack*—acting on their own intense policy views rather than conforming to the views of their constituents (Bianco et al. 1996, 151). Several previous studies have tested this claim by studying the role of *ideological* extremity in affecting vote share for incumbents and suggested this relationship is constant across all districts (see, e.g., Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Erikson 1971). Similarly, legislators may believe that they are acting in their constituents' best interests by defying their current *expressed preferences*, and they may hope that they can justify their decisions with the aid of time and persuasion.

In the context of research on legislative voting and elections, "ideological extremity" commonly refers to the relative proximity of an actor's policy views to other actors in the same game. Often the "game" is a spatial model of elections in which the selection and success of candidates are a function of how close their preferences match those of key actors (e.g., Downs 1957; Rogowski 2014; Stone and Simas 2010) or a spatial model of legislating in which the selection or success of bills depends on their proximity to key actors, given a distribution of legislators' preferences that is fixed and known. Conceptually, "ideology" implies an interrelated *pattern* of political views that is relatively stable over time. In practice, legislators' ideology is typically inferred from their behavior, not their views, using an applied item response model (Noel 2014, 69–71). As such, the term "ideology" is a misnomer: we do not really measure the coherent worldviews in legislators' heads. Instead, we have summary statistics of legislators' voting patterns (such as the DW-NOMINATE scores we use below) that are influenced by legislators' multilayered constituencies, including donors (Fenno 1978); the partisan socialization and primary selection process; the congressional party apparatus, which is a primary information source about policy proposals, a social group that promotes common bonds among partisans, and a source of rewards and punishment; and a legislator's own policy views.[4] These scores are constrained so that legislators' ideology can evolve over time, but in steady increments. This constraint is consistent with the meaning of ideology: while a legislator's coherent worldview may evolve with intellectual reexamination, we should look for a different explanation for rapid fluctuations in voting patterns.

There is some observational evidence that legislative voting affects elections. Using electoral and survey data from 1952 to 1968, Erikson

(1971) found that conservatism among Republican legislators had a pronounced, negative effect on their vote margins, while recent studies have found that ideologically extreme voting is linked to decreased vote share (Ansolabehere et al. 2001; Erikson and Wright 2001). In a key article, Canes-Wrone et al. (2002) examine the relationship between members' electoral margins and their overall ideological support as reflected by Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) scores. Using data from the 1956–96 elections, they find that incumbent legislators tend to receive smaller electoral margins as their ADA scores become more extreme— MCs are indeed held accountable for their roll calls. Canes-Wrone et al. also find that the electoral effect of being "out of step" is as important as campaign spending and facing an experienced challenger and that the penalty for ideological extremism affects both "marginal" and "safe" legislators.[5]

These prior studies have focused on the relationship between *ideological* patterns of roll call votes and electoral outcomes. Conceptually, this means the extent to which a legislator's guiding political ideas deviate from the mainstream of American politics, but in practice it means the extent to which a legislator votes for positions that are considered out of the political mainstream. But are voters really most likely to punish *ideological* voting and not other patterns of roll call voting? As demonstrated in the previous chapter, what we know about the individual psychology of voters tells us that voters see excessively partisan legislators as lacking independent-mindedness, while ideological consistency may actually be seen as a positive trait.

There are two ways that party unity can lead to electoral problems for an incumbent. The first is that challengers and other actors may criticize an overall pattern of party loyalty. This is often framed to link legislators to members of their party who are unpopular in the district or state, such as "Johnson votes with Speaker Pelosi 99 percent of the time" (or Newt Gingrich or Harry Reid). Carson (2005), for example, finds that experienced challengers are more likely to emerge and run against legislators who vote with their party on salient roll call votes. This would make sense if a high level of party loyalty enables challengers to portray incumbents as betraying their constituents' interests for the sake of party interests. A second mechanism is that party loyalty may be costly on specific votes: An incumbent who votes with his or her party to pass a critical piece of legislation (like the 1993 Democratic budget, the 2003 Medicare expansion, or the 2009–10 Affordable Care Act) may face criticism for a single

act of loyalty. But this criticism is possible as part of a pattern that creates multiple opportunities for opponents to cherry-pick especially controversial votes. In both of these ways, challengers and the opposition party can use a pattern of partisan voting to portray an incumbent as too partisan for a district.

At the same time, it is not obvious that party unity will be a net cost. Some constituents—especially activists and donors affiliated with an incumbent's party—may prefer higher levels of party loyalty. This support may derive from general support of the MC-affiliated party agenda or a sophisticated expectation that each MC will cooperate with other party factions and intense policy demanders. This party base may function as a centrifugal force on congressional parties, encouraging MCs to be more loyal and to take greater risks to achieve their party's agenda or else suffer a decrease in voter turnout or campaign resources. Harbridge and Malhotra (2011) find, for example, that moderate and weakly partisan citizens approve of legislators with bipartisan voting records, while citizens with strong party affiliations *disapprove* of legislators who cross party lines. Bafumi and Herron (2010) find that these polarizing forces seem to influence candidate selection, as districts that flip party control swap partisan Republicans for partisan Democrats (and vice versa).

4.2 Party Unity in House and Senate Elections

We wish to build on the experimental results in the previous chapter by exploring the effects of *Party Unity* on the electoral success of members of the House running for reelection from 1978 to 2010 and for senators doing the same from 1974 to 2012. Our dependent variable is the incumbent i's percentage of the two-party vote share by year t. We exclude cases in which incumbents were unopposed or the major party challenger received fewer than 1,000 votes. This leaves 4,170 House races from 1978 to 2010 and 543 Senate races from 1974 to 2004. For House incumbents in our sample, the mean vote share was 65.7 percent with a standard deviation of 10.0 percent. For senators, the mean is 58.4 percent with a standard deviation of 10.8.

Our key variable is each incumbent's level of Party Unity in the two-year Congress preceding each election t. We collected *Party Unity* scores for individual representatives from Congressional Quarterly (CQ) Almanacs. CQ generates these scores by (a) identifying every roll call vote on

which most Democrats voted against most Republicans and (b) calculating the proportion of these votes on which each legislator voted with his or her party.[6] Unity varies from a theoretical minimum of 0 to 1 with an actual minimum of 0.039 for Larry McDonald's (D-GA) House voting in the Ninety-Fifth Congress and 0.16 for Senator Clifford Case's (R-NJ) voting in the Ninety-Third Congress.[7]

This variable provides three forms of variation: individual legislators change their unity over time, the unity of legislators varies within a Congress, and there is variation as a district (or state) changes its representative/senator over time. There is a great deal of variation across legislators, of course, but legislators also vary over the course of their careers. Figure 4.1 illustrates the average range between House representatives' lowest and highest party unity scores during their House service, grouped by the number of two-year terms each member has served. The range tends to increase over time, with MCs serving eighteen or more years varying (on average) 20 percent or more. Even at the low end, however, MCs who serve two terms change (on average) 5 percent from one term to the next.

We view *Ideological Extremism* as one source of party unity in roll call voting. We use DW-NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal 2007) as measures of incumbents' ideological views on liberal-conservative economic issues. These scores are derived from roll call votes and place legislators relative to each other and, to some extent, relative to other legislators over time.[8] We use the first dimension scores, which explain much
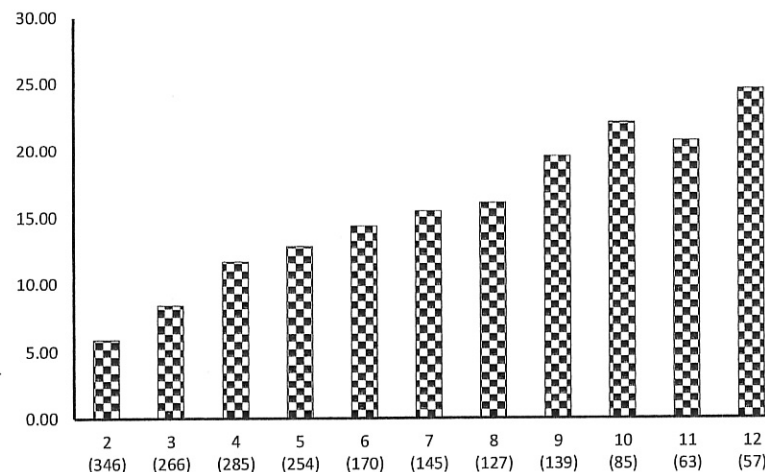

FIGURE 4.1. Average range in House members' party unity score by terms of service, 1978–2010

of the variance in legislative voting. Since the NOMINATE scale is centered at or near zero, we use the absolute value of these scores as a measure of Ideological Extremism; higher values on this variable suggest that the legislator has a noncentrist or "extreme" voting record. In conjunction with other factors, we expect that ideological extremism is correlated with higher levels of party unity.

The long history of scholarship on congressional elections has established several important factors that determine electoral fortunes, and we control for these factors. These include prior electoral success, the partisanship of the district, challenger quality, incumbent and challenger spending (when available), freshman status, presidential approval, the change in real disposable personal income, in-party versus out-party status in relation to the president, and majority status. We explain the operationalization of each below.

We control for legislators' electoral security with $IncumbentVote_{t-1}$, the incumbent's vote percentage in the previous election.[9] To conserve the many cases where new senators are appointed in the middle of another's term, we do not include this variable for the Senate analyses.

District Partisanship is the presidential two-party vote share of each incumbent's party candidate in his or her district (or state for senators) in the preceding presidential election. This vote share is a good measure of the partisan tendencies of a constituency (Levendusky 2009), and it helps us understand the extent to which legislators who vote with their parties on key votes are cross pressured (Jacobson 2009). *Challenger Quality* indicates whether the opposite-party challenger has previously held elected office (1 = yes, 0 = no). This is a classic proxy variable for challenger quality (Jacobson 1980). *Spending Gap* controls for the influence of challenger and incumbent spending. It is measured as the difference in the natural logarithm of dollars spent by the incumbent and the challenger (Jacobson 1980, 40).

Freshman is coded 1 for legislators running for reelection after their first term in office. These legislators are especially likely to be defeated, often because they were elected in electoral waves that quickly recede. *In Party* is coded 1 for legislators who are members of the president's party, 0 otherwise. *Midterm* controls for effects of midterm elections and is coded 1 for midterm elections with a president of the legislator's party, −1 with a president of the opposite party, and 0 in presidential election years. *Presidential Approval* and *Change in Personal Income* are also coded by in-party status, so a popular president and growth in income levels are

likely to help members of the president's party and hurt those in the out-party.[10] *Senate Majority* is a dummy variable coded 1 if the senator is in that chamber's majority.

To account for the causal ordering of our hypotheses, we use a two-stage estimation technique.[11] The use of single-stage models is common in the congressional elections literature (see, e.g., Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Jacobson 1993) but does not reflect the strategic decisions that members and leaders make as they decide how much each member should contribute toward party goals. Thus a two-stage modeling strategy has three distinct advantages over single-stage estimation techniques. First, *Party Unity* is an endogenous variable that is influenced by, and influences, a legislator's electoral margin. Party leaders look ahead to upcoming elections to decide which legislators' arms will be twisted to gain greater loyalty. Since we also expect voters to react to levels of *Party Unity*, this implies reciprocal causality and makes a two-stage model appropriate for estimation purposes.[12]

Furthermore, a two-stage approach corrects for the effects other independent variables in the model have on *Party Unity* such as *Freshman* status, *District Partisanship*, and *Presidential Approval*. By modeling these complex relationships we get a better estimate of how these variables affect election results.

A third advantage of a two-stage approach is that it allows us to test whether revealed preferences (measured by DW-NOMINATE) are an *antecedent* variable in the relationships between members' actions and their electoral fortunes. That is, we expect that, controlling for district partisanship and other influences, legislator ideology is a good predictor of unity but not a direct a predictor of vote share—as we have seen in chapter 3, voters are more likely to punish legislators for being too partisan rather than simply being too ideological. Our two-stage model tests both steps—preferences predicting unity and unity predicting election results.[13]

Our interest in correcting the endogenous relationship between party unity and electoral success does not imply that all other variables are strictly exogenous. Indeed, we anticipate that expectations about an incumbent's success in upcoming elections will affect the incumbent's decision whether to retire, a quality candidate's decision whether to challenge an incumbent, and donors' decisions to allocate donations across candidates. In the case of challenger emergence and campaign finance, failure to account for endogeneity may inflate the estimated effects of these control variables, because the expectation of incumbent failure leads to the emer-

gence of experienced, well-funded challengers rather than (or in addition to) the existence of such challengers causing a decrease in incumbent vote share. In the case of incumbent retirement, legislators who retire because they believe that their voting records will lead to their defeat are dropped from our analysis. For this reason, their exclusion may lead to our results being *understated*; if these endangered incumbents had run for reelection, we would observe the effects of their roll call voting. While it would be ideal to treat each of these variables as endogenous, we are severely constrained by the lack of available instruments. For each endogenous variable, we would need a new instrumental variable that predicts incumbent retirement, challenger emergence, and campaign fundraising but *not* incumbent vote share. Given the scarcity of such variables, we have focused our attention on our key explanatory variable: party unity.

Figure 4.2 compares our strategic model (right) to the Canes-Wrone et al. model (left). For us, *Ideological Extremity* only has its effect through *Party Unity*. In addition, we consider two endogenous variables—the two arrows between *Party Unity* and *Incumbent Vote Share* indicate the reciprocal causality that demands a two-stage approach. Finally, we expect the level of *District Partisanship* to affect the relationship between *Party Unity* and *Incumbent Vote Share*.

These are controversial points, of course, and some readers may worry that by removing *Ideological Extremity* from our *Vote Share* equation we

fail to give *Extremity* a fair chance to demonstrate its relative value in a head-to-head matchup with *Party Unity*. Thus, to provide comparable single-stage estimates, we also present abbreviated results with voting extremity tested for its direct effects on *Incumbent Vote Share*. This allows us to evaluate its impact relative to unity.

Taken together, our model of general election vote margins at the second stage of the simultaneous equation model is

$$IncumbentVote_{it} = \tau_{2t} + \gamma_1 \widehat{Unity}_{it} + \beta_0$$
$$+ \beta_1 District_{it} + \beta_2 Challenger_{it} + \beta_3 SpendGap_{it}$$
$$+ \beta_4 Freshman_{it} + \beta_5 InParty_{it} + \beta_6 Midterm_{it}$$
$$+ \beta_7 Approval_{it} + \beta_8 \Delta Income_{it} + \beta_9 IncumbentVote_{it-1} + \upsilon_{it}$$

where τ_{2t} is the election year effect, υ_{it} is the overall error component, β_0 is the estimated constant, β_1 to β_9 are regression coefficients, and γ_1 is the estimated effect of predicted values of the endogenous variable $\widehat{Unity}_{it}$, which is estimated in this first-stage equation:

$$\widehat{Unity}_{it} = \tau_{1t} + \delta_1 District_{it} + \delta_2 Challenger_{it} + \delta_3 SpendGap_{it} + \delta_4 Freshman_{it}$$
$$+ \delta_5 InParty_{it} + \delta_6 Midterm_{it} + \delta_7 Approval_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta Income_{it}$$
$$+ \delta_9 IncumbentVote_{it-1} + \theta_1 Extremism_{it} + \theta_2 Unity_{it-1}$$

Here, θ_1 and θ_2 estimate the effects of the instrumental variables excluded from the second stage and $Unity_{it-1}$ is the lagged value of party unity for legislator i, which is a useful instrument.[14] We include this variable because we expect that it will help us generate better estimates of the true effect of party unity. To do so, we assume that incumbents' party unity from the previous Congress (three or four years ago) has little systematic effect on the upcoming election; typically, legislator i's party unity in Congress $t - 1$ was an issue (or not) in the previous election, after which voters are more likely to focus on the incumbent's recent behavior. Also, τ_{1t} estimates the effects of each election year for the first-stage model. To explore our data fully, we estimate several models that deviate slightly from these equations, but all preserve the same overall structure.[15]

4.3 Results

Our first results test the basic claims that incumbents suffer a loss of two-party vote share as their party unity increases and that party loyalty goes
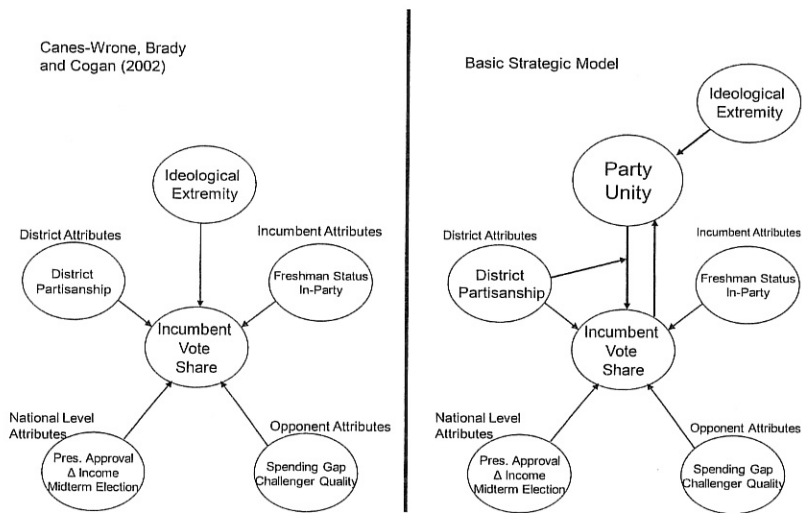

FIGURE 4.2. Model comparisons

down when incumbents feel electorally vulnerable. Next, we test varia-
tions on these claims: we determine whether vulnerable or secure legis-
lators are more likely to lose vote share as a result of their partisanship,
we control for campaign spending, and we test for interactive effects. Last,
we present a model that uses change in vote share as the dependent vari-
able, which controls for factors that are stable for each legislator, such as
ideology.

4.3.1 Vote Share Declines with Party Unity

Table 4.1 shows estimates of four variants of our basic House model.
Model 1 presents our base model, while model 2 incorporates the share of
the two-party vote an incumbent received in the previous election (*Vote-
share_{t-1}*) as a control variable. Whether we include it or not, our results
reliably confirm that legislators pay a price for party loyalty. Overall, the
models do quite well, with model 1 explaining 49 percent of the variance
and model 2 explaining 62 percent of the variance in incumbent vote
share.[16]

The results tell us many things about the process of incumbent reelec-
tion. To begin, the character of the district is very important in predicting
vote share. Not surprisingly, legislators tend to do better as their constit-
uents' support for the incumbent's presidential candidate increases. In-
cumbents do worse when they are challenged by experienced politicians,
with quality challengers costing an average of 4.3 percent in model 1 and
2.8 percent in model 2. Finally, when we control for other electoral factors,
freshman legislators fare better than we would otherwise expect. This sug-
gests that the real liability is the appearance of vulnerability. Legislators
who barely won the last election may continue to face difficult elections,
but once we control for this pattern, freshmen legislators actually gain
electoral share as they attain the electoral benefits of holding office.

The national political climate also has a strong influence on House
elections. As prior research has shown, members of the president's party
find that their electoral fates are partially tied to presidential approval
ratings and the state of the national economy. Controlling for these pat-
terns, members of the president's party tend to lose vote share in midterm
elections (Jacobson 2009). MCs thus have an incentive to influence these
macrolevel conditions if they can, particularly presidential approval and
the state of the national economy.

The main finding of our four models is that incumbents' party unity

TABLE 4.1. **Explaining House incumbents' share of the two-party vote, 1978–2010**[†]

	1978–2010			
	Model 1 Coef. (se)	*p*-value <	Model 2 Coef. (se)	*p*-value <
Voteshare_{t-1}			0.48 (0.01)	.000
District Partisanship	46.89 (1.09)	.000	25.48 (1.17)	.000
Quality Challenger	−4.27 (0.29)	.000	−2.78 (0.27)	.000
Spendgap	−0.56 (0.03)	.000	−0.44 (0.03)	.000
Freshman	0.56 (0.27)	.019	0.41 (0.25)	.049
Presidential Approval (coded by in-party)	0.04 (0.01)	.000	0.10 (0.01)	.000
Midterm Election (coded by in-party)	−1.80 (0.24)	.000	−3.10 (0.22)	.000
Δ Personal Income (coded by in-party)	0.65 (0.14)	.000	−0.09 (0.14)	.249
In-Party	−1.80 (0.22)	.000	.11 (0.21)	.625
Party Unity[††]	−10.10 (1.01)	.000	−5.69 (0.94)	.000
R^2	0.49		0.62	
Observations	4170		3594	
Groups	17		17	
Obs/Group Min/Avg/Max	101 / 245.3 / 308		89 / 211.4 / 269	
Instruments excluded from second stage	Extremity, Party Unity_{t-1}		Extremity, Party Unity_{t-1}	
F-test of Excluded IVs (*p*)	3556 (.000)		3061 (.000)	
Sargan χ^2 statistic (*p*)	2.47 (0.12)		2.33 (0.13)	
Effect of Extremity on Unity in First Stage	$z = 15.82, p < .000$		$z = 14.74, p < .000$	
Extremity in Second Stage	Model 1b[†††]		Model 2b[†††]	
	Coef. (se)	*p*-value <	Coef. (se)	*p*-value <
Party Unity[††]	−5.91 (1.22)	.000	−3.57 (1.21)	.001
Extremity	0.92 (1.01)	.364	−0.50 (1.01)	.310

Notes: Group Min = minimum size of a group; Avg = average size of a group; Max = maximum size of a group
[†] Fixed effects panel-data models with instrumental variables and 2-stage least squares (2SLS). The results of both ran-
dom effects models and multilevel random coefficient models are nearly identical.
[††] Instrumented variable.
[†††] Models are otherwise the same as above, but we show only the key results; *p*-values are based on one-tailed tests.

has a significant detrimental effect on their reelection vote share. Holding
all other variables constant, voters clearly tend to punish legislators for
voting too often with their party. This is the effect that forces party leaders
to balance legislative goals (and the collective electoral benefits they can
achieve) against the costs to individual members.

The results of model 1 suggest that a fifty-point increase in a House
member's *Party Unity* score cost nearly 5 percent of the vote share in the
next election—an effect similar to a quality challenger running against the
incumbent. This effect is diminished in model 2 when we control for the
effect of electoral security, but it is still statistically significant.

The tests of our modeling approach help clarify the relative roles of
ideology and partisanship in congressional elections. First, *Ideological Ex-*

tremity <u>should not be used</u> in a model predicting incumbent *Vote Share*.[17] *Ideological Extremity* is an excellent predictor of party loyalty, but it is party loyalty that has the direct effect on vote share. When we compare the effect of the two variables head-to-head in the last two rows of table 4.1, it is *Party Unity*—not *Extremity*—that costs vote share.[18] Since *Ideological Extremity* fails to approach statistical significance in either of these revised models, we gain confidence that it is an *indirect* predictor of incumbent vote share—voters seem to penalize high levels of partisan loyalty by representatives, not the underlying ideology that may predict their voting record. *Party Unity*$_{t-1}$ also serves as a useful instrument—it predicts *Party Unity*$_t$ but not *Voteshare*$_t$. This is supported empirically by the Hansen-Sargan χ^2 tests that indicate our instruments are properly excluded from the second-stage equation.[19]

Similar patterns are evident in our analysis of Senate elections, shown in table 4.2. Senators are punished for party loyalty to roughly the same

extent as House members are in the fuller model 4 of table 4.1. *State Partisanship* is naturally a good positive predictor of *Vote Share*, as is the president's party at the *Midterm* dummy variable (negative), *Challenger Quality* (negative), and the *Spending Gap* (positive). Variables for *Presidential Approval*, *Personal Income*, and the president's *In-Party* fail to reach significance.

As in the House models, it is clear that *Ideological Extremity* is not directly related to electoral outcomes for senators. We find in the first stage of the model that extremity is a powerful predictor of the frequency with which a senator votes with her party, but all our tests indicate that extremity is not a direct cause of *Vote Share*.[20] When we ignore this and move *Extremity* to the second stage, it is not significant, while the effect of *Party Unity* grows in magnitude, becoming more strongly negative. Thus for both the House and the Senate, the story is clear: *Party Unity* leads directly to a loss of *Vote Share*, and *Ideological Extremity* does not.

4.3.2 Electoral Risk Predicts Party Unity

Our analysis also finds reciprocal causality between incumbent vote and *Party Unity*. A major claim of our strategic model is that parties attempt to win legislative contests while minimizing electoral costs. Thus party leaders will be less likely to ask vulnerable legislators to cast votes that will cost them electoral support and instead will tend to ask more secure legislators to cast unpopular votes. These judgments are grounded in the expected vulnerability of some party members. When legislators are perceived to be vulnerable, their party unity should decrease. In table 4.3, we test this expectation by reversing the causal sequence of our earlier models.

For the House, we predict changes in the level of *Party Unity* from one Congress to the next and find that vote share in the election to follow is a strong positive predictor ($p < .001$) of levels of *Party Unity*, so a 10 percent increase in future vote share correlates with a 1 percent increase in party unity.[21] In the Senate, this is again the case ($p < .05$), albeit with a weaker relationship. In addition, we can see some of the causal factors predicting changes in party unity. Legislators who are more ideologically extreme tend to increase their level of unity from one Congress to the next, controlling for electoral safety. That is, not only does *Ideological Extremity* predict levels of *Party Unity*, but it also forecasts the inclination to increase the level of *Party Unity* controlling for an MC's chances for reelection.

TABLE 4.2. **Explaining Senate incumbents' share of the two-party vote, 1974–2004**[†]

	Coef. (se)	z
Constant	60.00 (3.52)	17.03***
State Partisanship	0.16 (0.06)	2.72**
Quality Challenger	−5.81 (0.97)	−5.97***
Spendgap	2.41 (0.20)	12.21***
Presidential Approval (by in-party)	2.80 (2.52)	1.11
Midterm Election (by in-party)	−2.89 (1.30)	−2.22*
Δ Personal Income (by in-party)	0.20 (0.26)	0.77
In-Party	−0.99 (1.31)	−0.76
Party Unity[††]	−11.22 (3.55)	−3.16***
R^2 within/between/all	0.44 / 0.23 / 0.43	
ρ	0.076	
Observations	418	
Groups	16	
Obs/Group Min/Avg/Max	18 / 26.1 / 29	
Instruments excluded from second stage	Extremity, Party Unity$_{t-1}$, Majority Party, Freshman	
F-test of Excluded IVs (p)	370.99 (0.00)	
Sargan χ^2 statistic (p)	0.83 (0.84)	
Effect of Extremity on Unity in first stage	21.17 (3.59) 5.90***	

Rerunning Above but with Extremity in second stage	Coef.	(se)	z
Party Unity[††]	−13.53	(6.28)	2.16*
Extremity	−114.91	(552.54)	−0.21

Notes: Group Min = minimum size of a group; Avg = average size of a group; Max= maximum size of a group
[†] Fixed effects panel-data models with instrumental variables and 2SLS. The results of both random effects models and multilevel random coefficient models are nearly identical.
[††] Instrumented variable.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, one-tailed tests.

TABLE 4.3. **Explaining change in party unity using future incumbent share, House 1978–2010 and Senate 1974–2004**[†]

	House		Senate	
	Coef. (se)	Z	Coef. (se)	Z
Extremity	15.42 (2.87)	10.81***	33.41 (0.051)	6.53***
Party Unity$_{t-1}$			−0.68 (0.06)	−11.13***
Voteshare$_t$[††]	0.105 (0.015)	6.97***	0.003 (0.001)	2.37*
District/State Partisanship	−8.17 (0.95)	−8.64***	−0.034 (0.057)	−0.60
Δ In-Party	−0.17 (0.08)	−2.17*		
Presidential Approval	0.046 (0.008)	6.04***		
R^2	0.03		0.29	
Observations	4009		270	
Instruments excluded from second stage	Spendgap, Challenger Quality, Voteshare$_{t-1}$		Spendgap, Voteshare$_{t-1}$	
F-test of Excluded IVs (p)	1552.96 (0.00)		70.49 (0.00)	
Sargan χ^2 statistic (p)	1.61 (0.45)		0.62 (0.43)	

[†] This a pooled-cross sectional time series model with instrumental variables and two-stage least squares. The dependent variable is the change in Party Unity from one Congress to the next, here calculated as a percentage, so the hypothetical range is −100 percent to 100 percent change, and the actual range is −47.4 to 77.0 percent.
[††] Instrumented variable. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, one-tailed tests.

4.3.3 Close versus Safe Districts

We expect that the penalty legislators pay for voting with their party depends on the partisan tendencies of their districts. A Democratic legislator with a record of high party loyalty, for example, should pay a much higher penalty in a heavily Republican district than in a highly Democratic district. Indeed, in very lopsided districts, legislators may find that party loyalists who *prefer* legislators who are loyal to their party (adding to the grievance parameter described in section 2.4.3) provide an electoral bonus for high levels of party unity. Figure 4.3 shows the effect of *Party Unity* in sixteen models—we show the key result in four subsets of our 1978–2010 House sample and do so for both the two-stage and one-stage models. The first eight models show the effect of party unity in the eight models of table 4.1. The next eight models parse our cases by presidential vote. They show the effect of party unity (in one-stage and two-stage models) for districts where the presidential candidate of the incumbent's party received (a) less than 40 percent of the two-party vote (n = 280), (b) less than 50 percent (n = 1106), (c) less than 65 percent (n = 3268), and (d) more than 65 percent (n = 908). The primary result is that party unity has a clear negative effect on incumbent vote share in districts that supported the presidential candidate of the opposite party. This effect
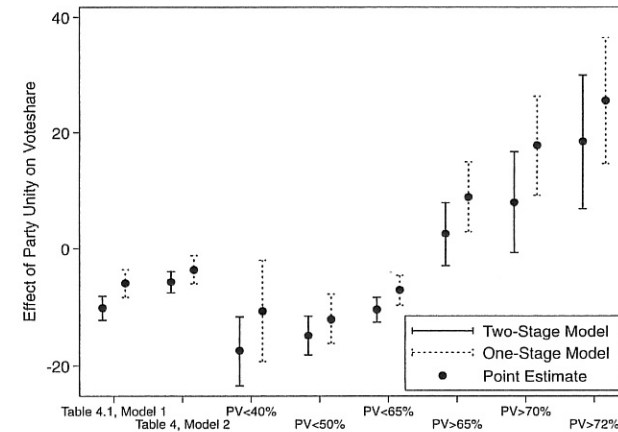

FIGURE 4.3. Effect of party unity on vote share in sixteen models: Coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals

is diminished to near-zero in districts in which the incumbent's presidential candidate received 50 percent to 65 percent of the vote. This means that in more competitive districts, *Party Unity* has a clear negative relationship with voters' decisions.[22] In fact, in the 508 elections where the incumbent's party won above 70 percent, *Party Unity* actually tips from being punished to being rewarded.

As for the Senate, figure 4.4 shows that when the presidential candidate of the senator's party receives around 40 percent of the vote, senators pay a very steep price for partisan loyalty. As the state looks more aligned with the senator's party, the effect of unity is less harsh, but always a significant factor.

4.3.4 Explaining Change in Vote Share

Next, we use a dynamic-panel approach to test our expectations and present the results in table 4.4. A dynamic panel reconceives each observation as the change from one Congress to the next—that is, we seek to explain changes in incumbent vote share ($\Delta Voteshare = Voteshare_t - Voteshare_{t-1}$) based on shifts in key variables during the same time frame. For example, $\Delta Party\ Unity$ measures the increase or decrease in the incumbent's party unity score relative to the preceding Congress.[23]

This approach holds constant any factors that do not change from one election to the next, such as candidate valence and district characteristics.
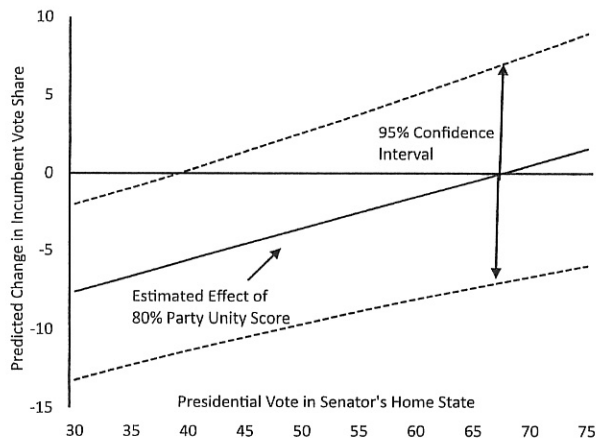
FIGURE 4.4. State partisanship and the negative effects of party unity, Senate

TABLE 4.4. **Dynamic model of house incumbent share, 2000–2010†**

	Coefficient (se)	p-value <
Δ District Partisanship	−34.99 (3.96)	.000
Δ Quality Challenger	1.60 (0.32)	.000
Δ Spending Gap	0.22 (0.02)	.000
Δ Presidential Approval (coded by in-party)	−0.27 (0.02)	.000
Δ Midterm Election (coded by in-party)	0.71 (0.32)	.013
Δ Δ Personal Income (coded by in-party)	−0.018 (.18)	.921
Δ Frosh	0.11 (0.26)	.678
Δ Party Unity ††	−0.48 (.21)	.010
R^2	0.45	
Observations	1073	
Groups	5	
Obs. per Group min/avg/max	117 / 214.6 / 258	
Instruments excluded from second stage	Δ Extremity, Δ In-Party, Party Unity$_{t-1}$	
Anderson LR test (p)	49.43 (.00)	
Sargan χ^2 statistic (p)	1.57 (.46)	

† Fixed effects panel-data model with instrumental variables and two-stage least squares. The results of both a random effects model and a multilevel random coefficient model are nearly identical.
†† Instrumented variable. One-tailed tests.

In particular, this strategy ensures that the incumbent's ideology is perfectly accounted for in the analysis. Since a legislator's underlying ideology is stable—and thus unchanging—between elections, its effect on vote share should be constant.[24] We focus on 2000 to 2010 because it is the period when the challenge of distinguishing between party and ideology is most acute.

The *Party Unity* coefficient tells us how much better (or worse) a House member will do compared to her last reelection if the incumbent's party unity score increases from the last Congress. The results indicate a considerable loss: a 1 percent increase in party unity correlates with a 0.48 percent decrease in vote share. Even for legislators who have already won at least two elections, voters can still dole out a hefty punishment for increased party loyalty regardless of how "safe" legislators perceive themselves to be. For the Senate (results not shown), too many cases are lost to make strong assertions, but the effect for Δ*Unity* is roughly the same size as for the House.

4.3.5 The 2010 Midterms

A final testing ground for our hypotheses at the legislator level is the critical 2010 midterm election, in which the Republicans regained majority status in the House by gaining sixty-three seats. To some extent, the Democrats' loss is attributable to structural factors: as the president's party in a midterm election with a struggling economy, some seat loss was expected. But the ambitious Democratic legislative agenda of 2009–10, passed over the nearly unanimous opposition of congressional Republicans, meant that high levels of partisanship defined the 111th Congress.

We see the 111th Congress as a high-stakes partisan contest between Democrats making a maximum effort to enact an ambitious agenda while Republicans risked their party brand on a strategy of maximum opposition. High-profile votes on health care, financial reform, and economic stimulus focused attention on members' positions. Our analysis of the 2010 House election shows that overall levels of partisanship were costly for legislators even beyond these high-profile votes: controlling for constituent partisanship and other factors, a 10 percent increase in *Party Unity* was correlated with a 3 percent decrease in incumbents' reelection *Vote Share*. This effect was stronger than during either of the 1956–2004 or 1978–2004 periods. Of course, as in the Tim Bishop story above, legislators were not naïve about the costs of being team players—they conditioned their party loyalty upon their constituents' preferences. In addition, members of both parties were rewarded with spending projects for supporting Democratic positions, which suggests that Democratic Party leaders were able to use their legislative influence to reward allies.

Before getting to those results, let's quickly review the history of the 111th Congress. The Democrats made large gains in the 2006 and 2008 elections and then won the White House with the promise of "change you

can believe in." They thought they had received a mandate for an ambitious policy agenda and, additionally, a responsibility to fix a national economy devastated by a financial breakdown in 2008. The main Democratic agenda consisted of (1) a $787 billion economic stimulus bill to ameliorate the economic crisis and fund key Obama initiatives like "green jobs" and school reform; (2) an ambitious overhaul of the health care system; (3) a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions to reduce the effects of climate change; (4) reform of the nation's financial regulation system; and (5) comprehensive immigration reform, including a provision for undocumented aliens to become citizens (Koger 2009).

The congressional Democrats moved swiftly and enacted the stimulus into law by February 2009. After that, House Democrats passed climate change (June 2009), health care (November 2009), and financial regulation (December 2009). In 2010, the House completed health care and financial regulation bills, some second-tier bills, and additional targeted economic stimulus measures. By the end of the Congress, the stimulus bill, health care reform, and financial reform became law. The House passed climate change legislation, but the Senate did not act on the issue, and neither chamber tackled immigration reform. These votes provided high-profile examples Democratic Party unity. Citizens who did not follow each roll call vote by their representatives could still use these votes to understand the links between their own legislators and the Democratic agenda.

Congressional Republicans responded with a strategy of solid opposition to the major measures of the Democratic agenda. This was a strategic choice; Democratic leaders sought their cooperation in writing these major bills, but Republicans believed their electoral interests would be harmed by public cooperation and supporting the Democrats' landmark legislation. Instead, Republicans denied their support and denounced the Democratic bills as reckless increases in the influence and expense of government. This strategy coincided with the emergence of a small-government "Tea Party" movement, which threatened incumbents and "establishment" candidates in Republican primary elections.

This Republican strategy forced Democrats to form majorities from their own membership to pass their bills and to take full public responsibility for their agenda. This meant that Democrats from swing districts ended up giving their challengers ample fodder for critical campaign ads. Indeed, as explained in chapter 2, passing major legislation posed a collective action dilemma for Democratic leaders—the party's reputation and base of support would improve if their agenda succeeded, but at the mar-

gins, individual legislators would suffer increased electoral risks to help provide this collective good.

4.3.6 Analyzing the 2010 Election Results

Looking at this single recent election provides us with data to test some additional hypotheses. Principally, we compare our results for overall *Party Unity* to the effects of *Presidential Support, Party Unity on Key Votes*, and individual roll call votes. As before, we expect that the costs of maintaining party reputation will be borne by legislators whose districts share their partisan outlook, while legislators from districts that are marginal or lean to the opposing party will enjoy greater latitude to defect from the party position. Figure 4.5 shows the relationship between *Party Unity* (vertical axis) and the 2008 two-party presidential vote (coded by incumbent party) for each House member. The members of both parties have a high baseline of party unity (66 percent for Republicans, 69 percent for Democrats), and then their unity tends to increase steadily with the presidential vote.

There are also major subgroups within each party. Figure 4.6 illustrates the relationship between party unity and district partisanship for
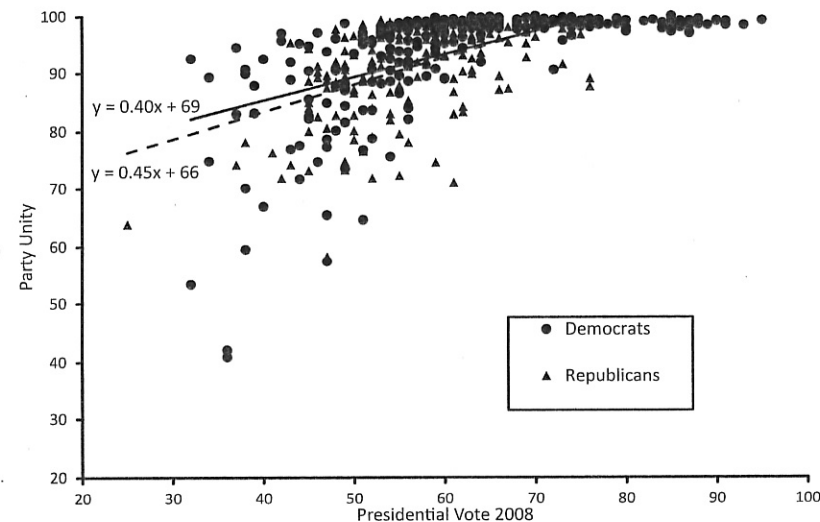

FIGURE 4.5. Constituency partisanship and party unity, 111th Congress
The data on party unity are from voteview.com; the data on presidential vote are from swing stateproject.com.
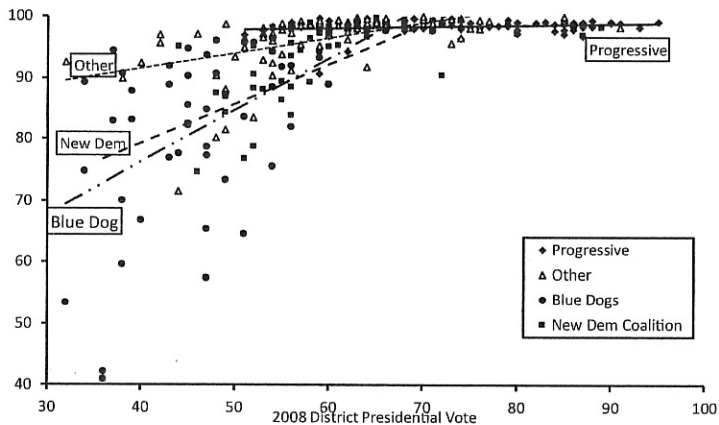
FIGURE 4.6. Partisanship and constituency for House Democratic subgroups
Trend lines are based on a bivariate regression.
Sources: Blue Dog membership is from voteview.com, Progressive caucus membership is from http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov, and NDC membership is from http://ndc.crowley.house.gov.

FIGURE 4.7. Partisanship and constituency for House Republican subgroups
Trend lines are based on a bivariate regression.
Sources: RSC, http://rsc.tomprice.house.gov; Republican Main Street Partnership, http://www.republicanmainstreet.org/.

House Democrats with distinct markers for members of the moderate Blue Dog Caucus (circles), Progressive Caucus (black triangles), moderate New Democratic Coalition (NDC; squares), and nonaffiliated Democrats (empty triangles). These subgroups differed in their responsiveness. Progressive Caucus members voted consistently with their party regardless of their constituency partisanship, while Blue Dogs and NDC members exhibited a higher rate of responsiveness to district partisanship.

We can also subdivide the Republicans into members of the conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC) and the moderate Republican Main Street Partnership (RMSP), as shown in figure 4.7. Like the Progressive Democrats, RSC members (circles) exhibit a high level of partisanship that does not vary significantly, even for RSC members from marginal districts. On the other hand, RMSP members (triangles) and unaffiliated Republicans (empty diamonds) vary significantly from a baseline of 59 percent unity based on their district partisanship.

Next we turn to regression models to explain *Vote Share* in 2010. Using the additional data on caucuses and specific votes gives us some additional insights beyond the 1956–2004 analyses above. In addition to the high-profile votes that a House majority party must win for the sake of its reputation, there are dozens of votes on amendments and procedural agenda setting. We expect that hi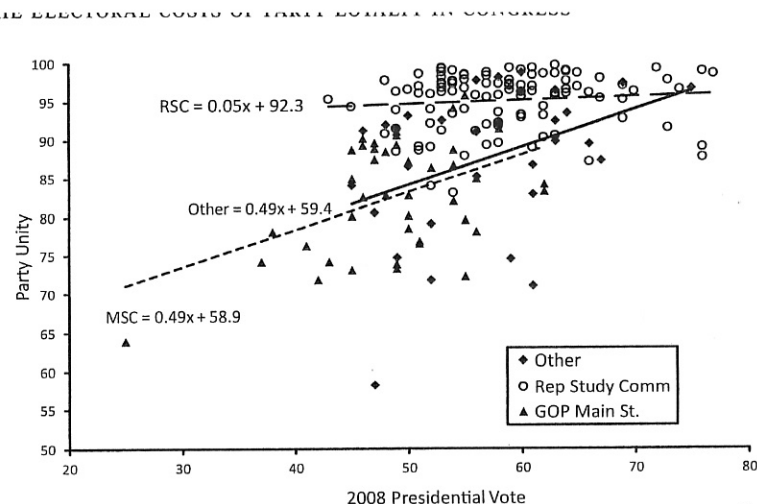gher rates of *Party Unity* on this broader set of contested votes will be associated with a lower reelection vote share. In the 2010 elections, for example, the National Republican Congressional Committee ran attack ads against incumbent Democrats for "voting with Pelosi" (equivalent to *Party Unity* scores).

We compare the cost of *Party Unity* across all party votes against subsets of salient roll calls: *CQ Key Vote Unity* on all Congressional Quarterly "key votes" that were party votes and *Presidential support* scores calculated by Congressional Quarterly on a subset of roll calls on which President Obama took a public position.[25] We do so to determine whether voters are most likely to note and punish partisanship on these somewhat salient votes or whether they are more likely to learn about and evaluate partisanship across the entire roll call record. Like Brady et al. (2011) and Jacobson (2011), we also test the influence of highly salient votes on Democratic agenda items—health care, financial regulation, cap and trade, and the stimulus bill.

As before, we use an instrumental variable approach, but in order to avoid using a roll call–based measure as an instrument, we instead use membership in the Blue Dog, Progressive, and RSC caucuses to get predicted values of *Party Unity*. In doing so, we assume that caucus membership is correlated with party unity (it is) and not directly correlated with

incumbent vote share. That is, few citizens vote for or against a legislator based on his or her affiliation with one of these congressional caucuses.[26] We estimate variations of this model substituting *Party Unity* on Congressional Quarterly *Key Votes* and *Presidential Support* (separately for each party).

Turning to the results, shown in table 4.5, our key finding is that there is a significant penalty for party loyalty: a 1 percent increase in *Party Unity* was correlated with a .3 percent decrease in vote share. For the dozens of Democrats who received 45 percent to 49.9 percent of their 2010 vote share, the penalty for party loyalty made a noticeable difference and was entirely within their own control.[27]

TABLE 4.5. **Analysis of 2010 House incumbent vote share, second stage of 2SLS**

	Party Unity (All) Coefficient (se)	CQ Key Vote Unity Coefficient (se)	Pres. Support (GOP) Coefficient (se)	Pres. Support (Dems) Coefficient (se)
Party Unity†	−0.301 (0.104)**			
CQ Key Vote Unity†		−0.199 (0.073)**		
Presidential Support†			0.556 (0.326)#	−0.243 (0.111)*
Democrat	−14.848 (1.342)***	−16.113 (1.636)***		
2008 Presidential vote	0.877 (0.052)***	0.899 (0.060)***	0.949 (0.144)***	0.849 (0.048)***
Pork Projects (FY 2010)	−0.028 (0.039)	0.012 (0.033)	−0.059 (0.068)	
Dem. Pork Projects	0.078 (0.055)	0.036 (0.047)		0.039 (0.027)
Spending Gap	−0.196 (0.031)***	−0.192 (0.031)***	−0.214 (0.050)***	−0.149 (0.043)***
Freshman	−3.747 (0.951)***	−3.727 (.936)***	−4.185 (1.907)*	−3.289 (0.982)***
New Democratic Coalition	−2.220 (0.972)*	−1.113 (.960)		−1.651 (0.785)*
GOP Main Street	−1.259 (1.344)	−0.522 (1.236)	−4.671 (3.514)	
Constant	47.037 (8.023)***	35.680 (4.496)***	1.084 (14.680)	27.569 (7.759)***
N	389	389	155	234
Centered R^2	0.777	0.528	0.521	0.404
R^2 of excluded instruments	0.207	0.173	0.078	0.181
Sargan test of excluded Instruments (p-value)	0.365	0.189	—	0.031

† Instrumented. Instruments used: membership in the Blue Dog Caucus, Republican Policy Committee, and Progressive Caucus.
#$p < .10$, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$, one-tailed tests.

When we estimate the same model using *CQ Key Vote Loyalty*, the estimated electoral loss is lower and the R^2 is reduced, suggesting that the penalty for party loyalty is *not* the product of a few key votes. *Presidential Support* also cost Democrats, while Republicans may have *gained* vote share for moderating their opposition to President Obama.[28] The coefficients for *2008 Presidential Vote*, *Spending Gap*, and *Freshman* have the expected effects, while the sizeable coefficient for *Democrat* reflects the structural disadvantage the party faced in 2010. Interestingly, pork projects[29] were correlated with *Party Unity* (implying that they were a reward or enticement of some sort) but did not have a direct relationship with electoral vote share.

Next, we test the claim that, in addition to a general pattern of party loyalty, legislators paid an extra penalty for helping the Democrats pass major agenda items. The logic of this test is that high-profile roll call votes may have special significance in voters' evaluations of legislators. Incompletely informed voters may not follow each roll call vote or procedural choice, but they can understand and evaluate incumbents' choices on landmark legislation. Compared to similar work (Brady et al. 2011; Jacobson 2011; Nyhan et al. 2012), we estimate the effect of these votes while controlling for each legislator's overall pattern of party loyalty. We focused on five key votes: the conference report on the stimulus bill (February 13, 2009), final passage of the bill to "cap and trade" carbon emissions (June 26, 2009), final passage of health care reform (November 7, 2009), concurring with the Senate's health care reform proposal (March 21, 2010), and the conference report for revising the financial regulation system (June 30, 2010). We recalculated the 2SLS model with each vote as an additional second-stage variable.[30]

Figure 4.8 presents the estimated effect of each vote on reelection, controlling for overall *Party Unity* and other variables. The estimated effect of each vote is shown as a large dot with a 95 percent confidence interval (the dotted lines). With the exception of the vote to concur with the Senate health care bill, the effect of *Party Unity* was robust ($p < .05$ in each analysis) in each model. The stimulus and cap-and-trade bills did not have a clear *additional* cost above the general pattern of partisanship exhibited by each member. Also, the final passage vote on the health care bill has a substantively significant (−3.1 percent) effect but is only significant at the $p < .1$ level, which implies that the effect of this vote could vary significantly across members. However, the effect of the vote to concur with the Senate's health care bill in March 2010 was stronger (−4.8 percent) and
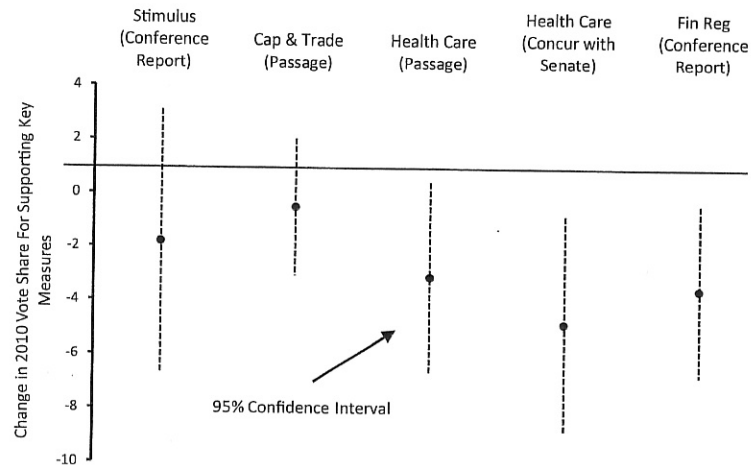
FIGURE 4.8. Effects of key votes on reelection vote share

statistically significant, suggesting that this particular vote was especially costly. Finally, the vote on financial reform appears to have cost around −3.6 percent in vote share on average, and this effect achieves conventional levels of statistical significance. While these are obviously different policy proposals with distinct political circumstances, it is noteworthy that the political costs seem to increase with proximity to Election Day.

Whether we measure partisan loyalty in terms of overall *Party Unity*, subsets of key votes, support for President Obama, or individual roll call votes, the central finding is that members of both parties paid a price for their partisanship. At the margins, this helps explain why some Democrats survived the 2010 elections while others lost their seats because they helped their party pass its ambitious agenda.

This leads to two possible interpretations. The first is that some individual Democratic incumbents may have been better off if they broke with their party more often, even if it meant the failure of Democratic priorities. While this may have helped individual Democrats avoid especially costly votes, it would have meant failure to pass major legislation despite a once-in-a-generation combination of unified government with large congressional majorities. The effect of this failure on the Democratic Party reputation and the support of core Democratic constituencies would probably also be very costly. Thus the Republicans' decision to present a united front against the Democratic agenda, in terms of both

votes and public criticism, forced the majority party to face a stark trade-off between their collective party reputation and the loss of dozens of House seats. This implicitly validates the strategic calculus at the heart of the theory presented in this book.

A second view is that the Democratic majority successfully enacted a set of landmark laws without gaining enough political benefit to offset the risk to marginal Democratic legislators. Even after we consider the structural disadvantages the Democrats faced, the Democratic Party's losses in the 2010 elections were very high (Brady et al. 2011). We cannot know if a less ambitious policy agenda would have been a safer electoral strategy, since a middle-of-the-road agenda of incremental proposals would have left Democratic groups and liberal activists severely disappointed and unenthusiastic about helping the Democrats survive the 2010 cycle. But our results do suggest that the same agenda, pursued more quickly and at a greater distance from the 2010 Election Day, may have reduced the Democrats' electoral losses. In the long term, the Democrats can hope that the policy successes of the 111th Congress will yield political dividends, particularly if public support for the Affordable Care Act increases over time.

4.4 Conclusion

Chapters 3 and 4 began with a simple but important premise: citizens evaluate legislators based on their roll call voting records, including their loyalty to their political parties while in office. While past research on the effect of roll call votes on legislative elections has focused on the relationship between legislators' ideology and electoral outcomes, we posit that this approach overstates the influence of ideology on congressional elections. The literature on individual voting behavior shows that voters are more likely to use partisan cues than ideology when choosing between candidates (e.g., Kinder 1998; Mann and Wolfinger 1980). Voters may simply not understand political ideology as a distinct concept separate from political parties; they may know very little about candidate ideology per se; and if they do know about candidate ideology, they may be inclined to respect ideological "mavericks" as principled and conscience-driven.

On the other hand, both our experiments and our analysis of election results find that voters seem to view legislative partisanship as disloyalty

to local interests. By directly testing the effects of party unity in Congress, we find that incumbent House members' and senators' vote share declines the more they vote with their own party on issues that divide the two major parties. While ideological extremity is correlated with party unity, we find that it has little *direct* effect on vote share. Moreover, party unity is almost twice as costly for members from moderate districts compared to lopsided districts, as defined by presidential vote share. Our findings suggest that many legislators face electoral costs for siding with their parties on divisive issues, even in this partisan era.

As we conclude our look at individual-level election results, we should note that further research in this area would help develop the strategic parties framework. For example, it is unclear whether legislators are more likely to be pilloried for a single "wrong" vote (on behalf of a party goal) or for a *pattern* of party unity. In practice, we observe both types of claims in campaign ads. It would be useful to know more about the mechanism by which legislative partisanship becomes a campaign issue or how partisanship is incorporated into campaign themes (e.g., tying a local MC to an unpopular party leader or as proof that the local MC is "out of touch" or has "gone Washington"). Finally, it would be useful to explore the role of legislative partisanship in fundraising and primary election campaigns to determine if these aspects of the campaign structure increase individual-level electoral incentives for MCs to be loyal to their parties.

In the next chapter, we go up one further level of aggregation and study the parties as whole entities. In that setting, we are able to see both the electoral consequences of increased party unity as well as their legislative results. Parties are careful to avoid the electoral costs we define here but must weigh these costs against the collective benefits of legislative victory. In trying to maximize both electoral and legislative victories, we will see the parties engaging in strategic interaction over the course of American history.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Effects of Legislative Behavior on Aggregate Election Outcomes

The previous two chapters have shown how voters punish legislators who exhibit high levels of party loyalty. In chapter 3, experimental data showed punishments being doled out by voters to strong partisans, and in chapter 4 we saw these patterns again in the reelection efforts of congressional incumbents. Here we focus on the big picture: how the partisan balance of the chambers of Congress varies according to party-level patterns of partisan cohesion. In this chapter, we also study the other side of partisanship—legislative success. Do victories in the legislative arena translate into collective victories in the electoral sphere?

As discussed in chapter 2, legislators are willing to take the risks that partisan unity entails for the sake of enhanced party reputation and public policy that they prefer. Here we can see the dual effects of partisan cooperation. First, there is the direct negative effect that unity has on election outcomes. Second, there is the indirect and positive effect of party unity leading to legislative victories that enhance party reputations and bolster reelection campaigns. This reputational benefit provides an answer to the skeptic's question: why would a legislator ever forsake constituency interests in favor of party cooperation (Krehbiel 1993, 1999)?

One additional focus of this chapter is on the role of the president in the legislative process and in the strategic and reputational goals of parties. Among the many key works on congressional parties, the role of the president is often marginalized or omitted entirely. But this is a costly oversight. The popularity and electoral successes of presidents are important factors in congressional elections (Jacobson 2009; Lewis-Beck and Rice 1984). Because presidential initiatives are a key component of