

# Does the Ideological Proximity Between Congressional Candidates and Voters Affect Voting Decisions in Recent U.S. House Elections?\*

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Abstract: Do citizens hold congressional candidates accountable for their policy positions? Recent studies reach different conclusions on this important question. In line with the predictions of spatial voting theory, a number of recent survey-based studies have found reassuring evidence that voters choose the candidate with the most spatially proximate policy positions. In contrast, most electoral studies find that candidates' ideological moderation has only a small association with vote margins, especially in the modern, polarized Congress. We bring clarity to these discordant findings using the largest dataset to date of voting behavior in congressional elections. We find that the ideological positions of congressional candidates have only a small association with citizens' voting behavior. Instead, citizens cast their votes "as if" based on proximity to parties rather than individual candidates. The modest degree of spatial voting in recent Congressional elections may help explain the polarization and lack of responsiveness in the contemporary Congress.

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Do citizens hold their congressional candidates accountable for their policy positions? Recent studies reach extremely different conclusions on this important question. The bulk of the electoral studies on the effect of candidates' ideological positions on their vote shares find that ideological moderation has only a small influence on candidates' vote margins, especially in the modern, polarized Congress. Examining elections between 1956-1996, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) find that shifting from the middle of their party to the extremes lowers an incumbent's vote share by "1 to 3 percentage points." Wilkins (2012) extends their analysis to the present and finds that the electoral reward for moderation in Congress has shrunk even further in recent years, and is close to zero in the last decade.<sup>1</sup> Based on data from over 400 US House elections from 1996 to 2006 where successive challengers competed against a common incumbent, Montagnes and Rogowski (2015) "uncover no evidence that challengers increase their vote shares by adopting more moderate platform positions." Hall and Snyder Jr (2013) find that "a one standard deviation move to the right" only increases the Democratic candidate's vote share by "1.3 to 2 percentage points." Finally, Hall (2015, 24-25) finds that ideological extremity harms candidates in open-seat races, but has little or no effect in races with incumbents.

This macro-level evidence that candidates, and especially incumbents, only pay a modest electoral penalty for ideological extremity should not be surprising in light of the increasing levels of polarization in the modern Congress. If citizens are holding legislators accountable for extreme policy positions, then legislators should have a strong incentive to cast votes that represent the median voter in their districts (Black, 1948; Downs, 1957). Thus, legislators should converge on the median voter and there should be a very tight association between the views of constituents in each district and the roll call voting behavior of their representative. But a large body of work shows that legislators do not converge on the position of the median voter (Ansolabehere, Snyder Jr, and Stewart III, 2001; Levitt, 1996). In addition, there is only a modest relationship between district preferences and legislators' roll call voting

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkins (2012) finds that "as polarization substantially increased during the 1990s and 2000s, the penalty for extremism in the 1990s got smaller and in the 2000s, the penalty was no longer significant."

behavior (Clinton, 2006; Lee, Moretti, and Butler, 2004; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2013).

In light of these studies, it is somewhat surprising that a number of recent survey-based studies appear to find normatively reassuring evidence that candidate positioning has a large effect on citizens' voting choices. These survey-based studies examine whether voters are more likely to support candidates with similar positions either on individual issues or on an ideological scale. Ansolabehere and Jones (2010) find that "the public collectively hold[s] politicians accountable" and Jones (2011) finds that "the buck stops with members of Congress for the positions they take." Similarly, Nyhan et al. (2012) finds that "members who are out of step, even on a single salient vote, really can end up out of office." Shor and Rogowski (2016) find "robust evidence that vote choice in congressional elections is strongly associated with [the] spatial proximity" between voters and candidates. As a result, "candidates... have ... incentives to advocate policies that reflect district preferences."

Both of these sets of findings cannot simultaneously be true. If ideological moderation only leads to a small gain in incumbent vote share, it is unlikely that "vote choice in congressional elections is strongly associated with [the] spatial proximity" between voters and candidates.<sup>2</sup> Given the findings in the classic literature on congressional elections, it is far more likely that candidate positioning has only marginal effects on the vote choices of citizens.

In this study, we bring clarity to the discordant findings in previous studies. We use new statistical tests and the largest dataset to date of citizens' policy positions and voting decisions in congressional elections. Our dataset includes the policy positions, ideal points, and voting decisions of over 75,000 voters in 1,100 electoral contests between 2006 and 2012. We show that the results in previous survey-based studies are conflated by the association between voters' *ideology* and their *ideological distance* from candidates. By failing to separate

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<sup>2</sup> This is especially true given the fact that candidates' quality and their spatial positioning is often conflated in observational studies. For instance, Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002) only control for variation in the quality of incumbents via their campaign spending levels. If other, unobserved aspects of candidates' quality is correlated with their levels of ideological extremity (e.g., more moderate candidates are higher quality in other respects), this is likely to lead to upwardly biased estimates of the effect of candidate positions on voter margins.

voters' and candidates' positions, these studies find artificially high levels of spatial voting.<sup>3</sup> We find that citizen policy positions are directly associated with their voting probabilities, with more liberal citizens being more loyal Democratic voters and conservatives being more loyal Republican voters. However, we find that the ideological positions of congressional candidates have only a modest effect on citizens' voting decisions.

Our model also enables us to examine the relationship between legislator vote shares and legislator positions (cf. Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan, 2002; Wilkins, 2012). For each district, we can calculate the change in vote share that would result from a one standard deviation move toward the center by the legislator. Consistent with previous electoral studies, but unlike most recent survey-based studies, we find that ideological moderation has a relatively small effect on the vote share of incumbents. Similarly to most aggregate electoral studies, but unlike previous survey-based studies, we find that incumbents in recent congressional elections are unlikely to increase their vote share more than 1-2% by taking more moderate positions.

Our results have broad implications for representation and democratic accountability in the United States. Most importantly, our results show that incumbent legislators face few electoral consequences for unrepresentative positions in recent congresses (cf. Wilkins, 2012). Legislators do not appear to be bound by the policy views of their particular constituents, as long as they can claim to belong to the political party their constituents prefer.<sup>4</sup> This helps explain the broad patterns of divergence between the parties (Poole and Rosenthal, 2000; Lee, Moretti, and Butler, 2004), and very weak responsiveness to the preferences of constituents (e.g., Clinton, 2006), that we observe in the contemporary Congress.

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<sup>3</sup> The conflation of voters' and candidates' ideology is illustrated by Adams et al. (2016). This study finds that "liberal and conservative voters are substantially more responsive to candidate ideology than more centrist voters." This finding is inconsistent with a spatial model of voting, which predicts that moderates should be most responsive to changes in candidate positions. However, it can be easily explained by the conflation of voters' ideology and their spatial distance from candidates among liberal and conservative voters.

<sup>4</sup> Note that our findings do not suggest that legislative candidates can take any position at all. For instance, ideologically extreme candidates that take positions far outside the bounds of their party's platform may still face electoral consequences (Hall, 2015).

# Theories of Proximity and Party Voting

In *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Downs (1957) argues that vote choices are a function of the spatial proximity between the ideal points of voters and parties. This spatial voting model was easily extended to the proposition that citizens should be more likely to vote for legislators and other elected officials that share their ideological preferences, spawning a long literature in spatial voting theory (e.g., Enelow and Hinich, 1984). In a related line of research, called directional voting theory, scholars argue that voters support candidates whose spatial positions are on the same side of the political spectrum as their own positions (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989).<sup>5</sup> The common element of both of these theories is that they imply that individual candidates' positions should influence citizens' voting decisions.

For many years, there was “surprisingly little direct evidence supporting [the spatial voting model’s] main assumptions” (Ansolabehere and Jones, 2010, 583). However, the explosion of large-sample surveys in recent years has facilitated a renaissance in scholarship on voter behavior in congressional elections. Over the past few years, a number of prominent studies have found support for the spatial voting model in congressional elections. Shor and Rogowski (2016) find that vote choice in congressional elections is associated with the voters' spatial proximity with congressional candidates.<sup>6</sup> In two similar studies, Ansolabehere and Jones (2010) and Jones (2011) evaluate the impact of incumbents' issue positions on citizens' voting behavior. They find that respondents are more likely to vote for incumbents that share their issue positions. Simas (2013) finds evidence that voters consider their ideological proximity to congressional candidates and “punish candidates who take positions that are too far out of line.” Joesten and Stone (2014) use district experts to place candidates and survey respondents onto the same ideological scale. They conclude that “proximity voting is common” among voters in congressional elections. Finally, Nyhan et al. (2012) find that legislators' positions on health care reform and other salient votes affected voters' decisions

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<sup>5</sup> Tomz and Van Houweling (2008) use survey experiments to adjudicate between theories of spatial and directional voting. They find that spatial voting is four times more common than directional voting.

<sup>6</sup> See also Jessee (2009) for a similar analysis at the presidential level.

in the 2010 congressional elections.

Another theoretical perspective is that congressional voters are primarily casting their ballots on the basis of their partisan alignment with candidates rather than their spatial proximity. Indeed, political scientists often forget that early spatial voting theorists such as Downs (1957) and Hotelling (1929) focused on parties rather than individual candidates and legislators. In these theories, voters take proximity into account, but only of the national political parties. The party-focused perspective is not unique to spatial voting theory either. The traditional theory of partisan identification holds that party is an enduring attachment, much like religion, with primarily affective roots (Campbell et al., 1960; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). Party attachments are formed early in life and are very stable thereafter. Policy views and vote choices are both determined by party identification, which is the dominant force in voters' political lives. Policy determinations are more or less epiphenomena of party, and voters are relatively ignorant about policy and legislative activities. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2004) ground the importance of party identification in a concept of social identification. People identify with parties because they think of themselves as being similar to other people in their party.

One element of early theories of party identification that has earned more emphasis over time is the notion of party as a cue or heuristic. More recent work argues that party labels help voters figure out the policy positions of elected officials (Conover and Feldman, 1989; Popkin, 1991; Snyder and Ting, 2002). This enables voters to make a Downsian calculation about which candidate is better from a policy perspective. They can cast their ballots rationally without knowing much about the positions of individual candidates by simply voting for the candidate whose party reflects their general policy views, rather than making detailed evaluations of particular candidates (Sniderman and Stiglitz, 2012).

An important limitation of previous survey-based studies is that they fail to distinguish candidate-centered versus party-centered accounts of spatial voting. Most importantly, most of the recent survey-based studies use the spatial proximity between voters and candidates

as their key independent variable without accounting for the direct effect of voters’ issue preferences or ideology (e.g., Joesten and Stone, 2014; Shor and Rogowski, 2016; Simas, 2013).<sup>7</sup> As a result, they cannot determine whether *voter ideology* or *candidate ideology* is determining citizens’ vote choices.

## Distinguishing Alternative Theories of Voting

In order to examine the empirical implications of the spatial voting models, we use the following theoretical framework. Consider a voter whose ideal policy in some policy space occurs at  $v$ , and an election where the Democratic candidate has ideal point  $d$  and the Republican has ideal point  $r$ . According to the candidate-centered notion of spatial voting, voters should vote, with error, for the candidate who has an ideal point in some sense “closer” to their own. Votes are cast with error, but voters are more likely to vote for their favored candidate as the spatial advantage of their favored candidate grows. Simply put:

$$P(y = R) = f(\delta(d, v) - \delta(r, v)) \tag{1}$$

where  $\delta$  is a distance function,  $f$  is some well-behaved increasing function on  $[0, 1]$ <sup>8</sup>, and  $y$  is the vote cast, with  $y = R$  indicating a vote for the Republican candidate. The most common distance functions used in the spatial voting literature are quadratic utility (i.e. Jessee, 2009) and linear or absolute value utility (i.e. Adams et al., 2016). Alternatively, Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) propose that distance be measured by the product of the absolute value of the distances of the voter and the candidate from some neutral point, calling this “directional voting.” In order to avoid conflating the effect of voters’ *ideology* and their *ideological distance* from candidates, we separate the positions of voters and candidates in each of the equations below.

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<sup>7</sup> In other cases, a fine-grained variable is used to measure proximity whereas a noisier measure is used to capture the direct effect of ideology. For instance, Ansolabehere and Jones (2010) measure agreement on political issues to capture proximity, but use broad self-identified ideological categories to measure ideology.

<sup>8</sup> In our parametric analysis we will employ both linear and logistic link functions for  $f$ .

## Quadratic Utility Model vs. Party-Centered Voting

The quadratic spatial utility model of voting behavior can be operationalized as follows:

$$\delta(d, v) - \delta(r, v) = (d - v)^2 - (r - v)^2 \quad (2)$$

$$= d^2 - 2dv + v^2 - r^2 + 2rv - v^2 \quad (3)$$

$$= d^2 - 2dv - r^2 + 2rv \quad (4)$$

The key testable implication that flows from Equation 4 is that there should be a negative interaction between  $d$  and  $v$  and a positive interaction of  $r$  and  $v$ . This is what allows the effect of  $r$  and  $d$  to depend on the distance to the voter. This formulation can be contrasted with the theory that more conservative voters are more likely to vote for Republican candidates. Indeed, we hypothesize that the probability of voting for a Republican candidate does not depend on the distance between candidates and voters, but rather the distance between voters and their respective parties. Since the positions of the parties are constant across contests in any given year, the party-centered theory predicts that more conservative voters should be more likely to vote for the Republican candidate and more liberal voters should be more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate. In other words, a party-based theory simply predicts that the coefficient on  $v$  should be positive.

The prediction of Equation 4 that spatial voting implies interactions between  $d$  and  $v$  and  $r$  and  $v$  is also subtly different from the simpler theory that more moderate candidates should get higher vote shares. Indeed, the empirical regularity of higher vote shares for moderate candidates could be partially explained by the fact that more extreme candidates tend to have lower valence, which could cause lower voter share. Empirically, Stone and Simas (2010, 378) show that lower quality, or valence, candidates tend to take ideologically extreme positions.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, candidates with greater knowledge, skills, and resources tend to take positions that are closer to the middle of the ideological spectrum. They also

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<sup>9</sup> By candidate quality, they mean advantages that candidates have that are not intrinsically tied to voter policy considerations, such as “qualities and skills that relate to character and job performance” and “skills and resources instrumental to waging an effective campaign.”



tend to win elections at higher rates. If it's true that more extreme candidates have lower valence, then more liberal Democrats should improve the chances of the Republican (and so the coefficient on  $d$  should be negative) and more conservative Republicans should have lower chances (the coefficient on  $r$  should be negative as well). Combining this hypothesized valence effect and party-centered voting, we predict a positive effect of  $v$  and a negative effect of  $d$  and  $r$  on the likelihood of voting for Republican candidates.

### Linear Utility Model

The linear spatial utility model of voting behavior has the subtlest predictions of the various manifestations of spatial voting. Under this model, the effect of  $v$ ,  $d$ , and  $r$  all depend on the relative positions of the candidate and voter.

For voters who are between the two candidates, linear spatial voting looks quite similar to our theory, which predicts a positive effect of  $v$  and a negative effect of  $d$  and  $r$ . Assume  $d < v < r$ . Then

$$\delta(d, v) - \delta(r, v) = |d - v| - |r - v| \tag{5}$$

$$= (v - d) - (r - v) \tag{6}$$

$$= 2v - d - r \tag{7}$$

Just as in our party-centered theory, the predictions are a positive coefficient on  $v$  and a negative coefficient on  $d$  and  $r$  (e.g., voters are less likely to support the Republican when the candidates move to the right, since this implies that the left-of-center Democrat is more ideologically moderate and the right-of-center Republican is more ideologically extreme). However, consider the case where the voter is to the left of both candidates,  $v < d < r$ :

$$\delta(d, v) - \delta(r, v) = |d - v| - |r - v| \tag{8}$$

$$= (d - v) - (r - v) \tag{9}$$

$$= d - r \tag{10}$$

In this case the ideological position of the voter should have no effect on their voting behavior, and the effect of the Democratic candidate's position is reversed. Likewise, if the voter is more conservative than either candidate,  $d < r < v$ :

$$\delta(d, v) - \delta(r, v) = |d - v| - |r - v| \tag{11}$$

$$= (v - d) - (v - r) \tag{12}$$

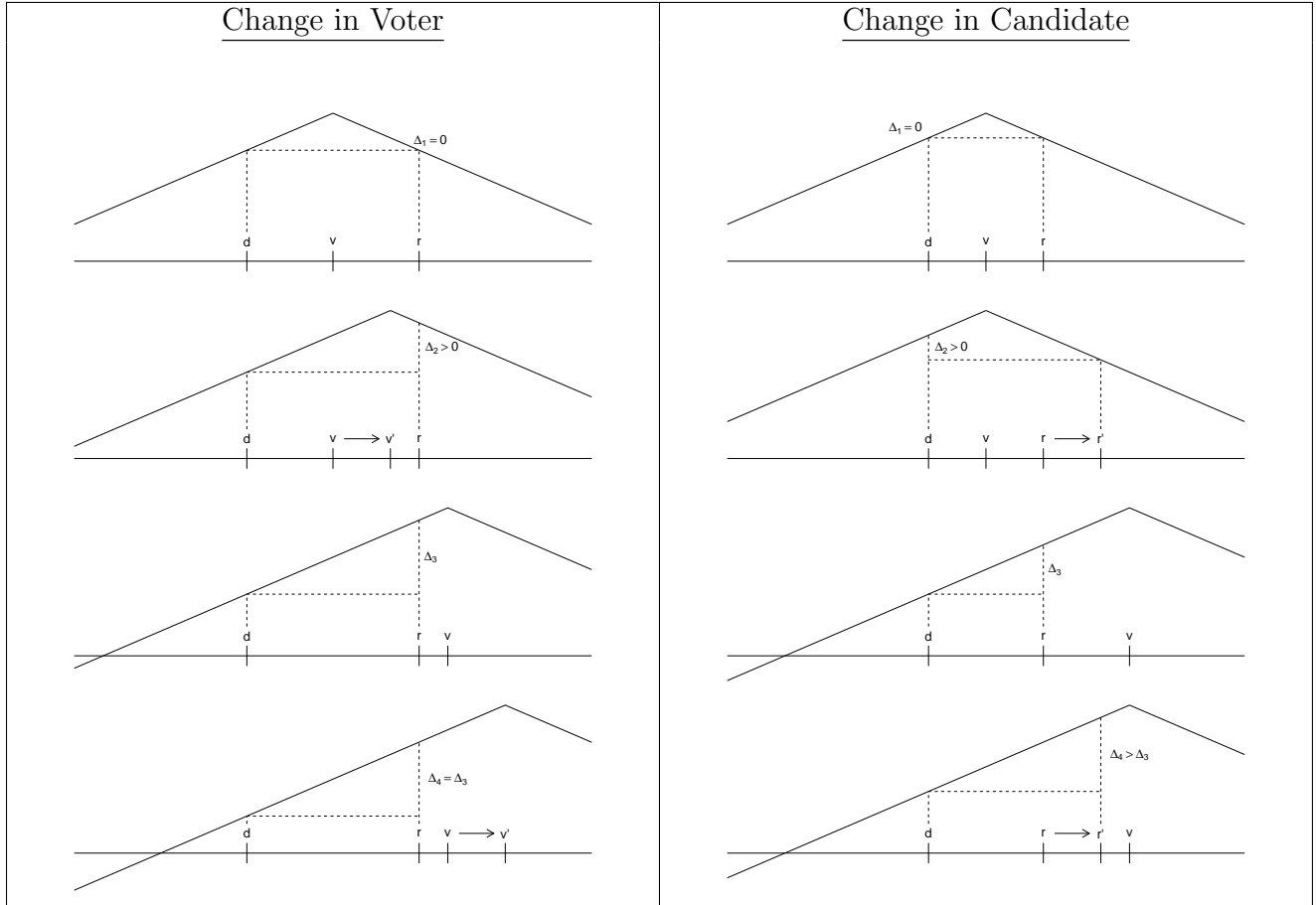
$$= r - d \tag{13}$$

For voters who are more conservative than either candidate,  $v$  has no further effect on the likelihood of supporting the Republican, and the likelihood of supporting the Republican is *increasing* in their conservatism. So for all voters who are either more liberal or more conservative than the candidates in their election, the effect of  $v$  should be 0. This is the sense in which the effect of  $v$  depends on the positions of the candidates for linear utility.

Figure 1 demonstrates the predictions of linear utility in graph form. The first column examines the effects of changes in *voters' ideological positions* ( $v$ ) for voters in between the two candidates, and voters to the right of both candidates. The top two rows show that for voters in between the two candidates, more conservative voters are more likely to vote for the Republican. The bottom two rows show that the position of the voter ceases to matter once the voter is to the right of both candidates. The likelihood of supporting the Republican is not higher for more conservative voters because the difference in utility between the two candidates is the same.

The second column of Figure 1 shows the effect of changes in the position of the *Republican candidate* ( $r$ ). The first two columns show that for a voter between the two candidates, when the Republican candidate moves to the right the voter's preference for the Democrat increases. However, the bottom two rows show that for a voter to the right of both candidates this move has the opposite effect: the voter's preference for the Republican increases. The effects in Figure 1 are analogous when we examine voters to the left of both candidates and changes in the positions of voters and Democratic candidates.

**Figure 1: Effects on Utility for Linear Utility Functions**



*Note: In each panel,  $\Delta$  represents the utility difference for the voter ( $v$  or  $v'$ ) of the two candidates,  $d$  (the Democrat) and  $r$  or  $r'$  (the Republican). This diagram demonstrates some of the consequences of assuming linear utility.*

## Data

We use two sources of data to evaluate the association between candidate positions and voter decision-making in congressional elections. First, following classic studies, we evaluate the predictions of the quadratic and directional voting models using the relationship between incumbent positions and citizens' voting behavior from 2006-2012. For this analysis, we pool together the 2006-2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Surveys. In all, we have information on 178,742 survey respondents. We have information on self-reported vote choices in congressional elections for approximately 80,000 of these respondents in contested races

with incumbents running for re-election.<sup>10</sup> Data on legislators’ party and estimates of legislators’ roll call positions come from Poole and Rosenthal’s DW-NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal, 2000). Data on legislators’ incumbency status are derived from Gary Jacobson’s data on congressional elections and research by the authors. Finally, we classify “leaners” (those who identify themselves as Independents but say they lean towards one party or the other) as partisans for all of the substantive analyses that follow.<sup>11</sup>

For our measure of respondents’ ideology, we use ideal point estimates made available by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) based on policy responses from all CCES surveys during this period.<sup>12</sup> However, we only use the respondents from even-year surveys for this study. We use the pre-election survey for respondents’ policy questions, and the post-election panel for their vote choice. Each of these surveys asked between 14 and 32 policy questions to 30,000-55,000 Americans.<sup>13</sup> To validate the ideal point estimates for voters, Table 1 shows the strong relationship between symbolic ideology and our scaled measure of citizens’ ideal points.

**Table 1:** Symbolic Ideology and Citizen Ideal Points

Symbolic Ideology	Mean Ideal Point
Very Liberal	-1.30
Liberal	-1.03
Moderate	-0.31
Conservative	.83
Very Conservative	1.34

Unlike some other recent studies (e.g., Joesten and Stone, 2014; Shor and Rogowski, 2016), in the first portion of our analysis we focus explicitly on incumbent positions and eschew any attempt to estimate the positions of challengers (i.e., we focus on  $r$  and  $v$  for Republican incumbents and  $d$  and  $v$  for Democrats.) We rely on the assumption that the

<sup>10</sup> Note that each of these surveys name both the challenger and incumbent candidates in each contest.

<sup>11</sup> This choice does not significantly affect the results.

<sup>12</sup> See the Supplementary Appendix for more details on both the survey sample and the ideal point measures.

<sup>13</sup> The Supplementary Appendix shows all of the questions used in the ideal point model.

positions taken by challengers and incumbents are uncorrelated. This appears to be very close to the truth in 2010, where there is a correlation of only 0.05 between Democratic and Republican candidates' positions in the data provided by Adams et al. (2016). This design has the merit of enabling us to pool across multiple election cycles. It mirrors the strategic situation faced by incumbents, for whom the position of potential challengers is typically unknown.

Focusing on incumbents simplifies the analysis by allowing us to focus on the effects of one candidate's position.<sup>14</sup> However, to account for the fact that these theories all depend on *both* incumbent and challenger positions, we also use data from Adams et al. (2016) that include the latent, ideological positions of voters, challengers, and incumbents in the 2010 election on a common scale. The ideal points of voters are based on their responses to policy questions on the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). The ideological positions of candidates are based on their responses to the National Political Awareness Test (NPAT) survey. The positions of voters and candidates are bridged onto a common scale using common questions on the CCES and National Political Awareness Test survey.

## Visualizing Legislators' Positions & Constituent Voting

Do candidate positions affect voting behavior in Congressional elections? As a first cut, we examine how often voters break ranks with their party to vote for candidates whose positions are more similar to their own. One simple way to analyze this is to separate our data into voter-legislator pairs, one for each combination of voter and legislator partisanship (Democratic-Democratic, Independent-Democratic, Republican-Democratic and so

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<sup>14</sup> A substantial benefit of excluding challengers from the analysis is that it enables us to avoid some stubborn methodological problems. We are interested in whether voters constrain the roll call voting behavior of their representatives. For challengers who fail to unseat the incumbent, roll call voting itself is a hypothetical, counterfactual. Their ideal points are not available from roll call data. There have been a variety of promising attempts to measure challengers' spatial positions from auxiliary data (e.g., Bonica, 2013). But several recent papers have shown that these existing methods are inadequate for estimating counterfactual candidate positions in Congress (Hill and Huber, 2015; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2016).

on).<sup>15</sup> For each pair, we separate voters into three groups based on their ideology, depending on whether they are in the liberal, moderate, or conservative tercile of the entire population. In each of these categories, we graph a loess curve of the percent voting for the incumbent across the range of incumbents' ideal points (DW-Nominate scores).<sup>16</sup> This is similar to simply graphing a point for each category of voter ideology and each category of legislator ideology. Each of the panels in Figure 2 subset our data based on respondent and legislator party identification. The first row shows Democratic voters, the second row shows Independent voters, and the third row shows Republican voters.

The theory of proximity voting has a simple prediction: liberals should be more likely to vote for more liberal legislators and conservatives should be more likely to vote for more conservative legislators. Moderates should be more likely to vote for more moderate legislators. In other words, each of our lines should have a slope representing the sensitivity of the vote choice to legislator positions. If the slope is flat, then either citizens are not voting spatially or the role that these considerations play in their decision is small.<sup>17</sup> In the case of directional voting, the slope should be even steeper: as legislators go from the “wrong” side of the “neutral point” to the “right” one, the voters should switch en masse from voting against them to for them. If the neutral point is between the two parties, then voters should always vote for the party on their side of the neutral point (all lines should be at 100% or 0%), and voting should be completely determined by ideology, not party.

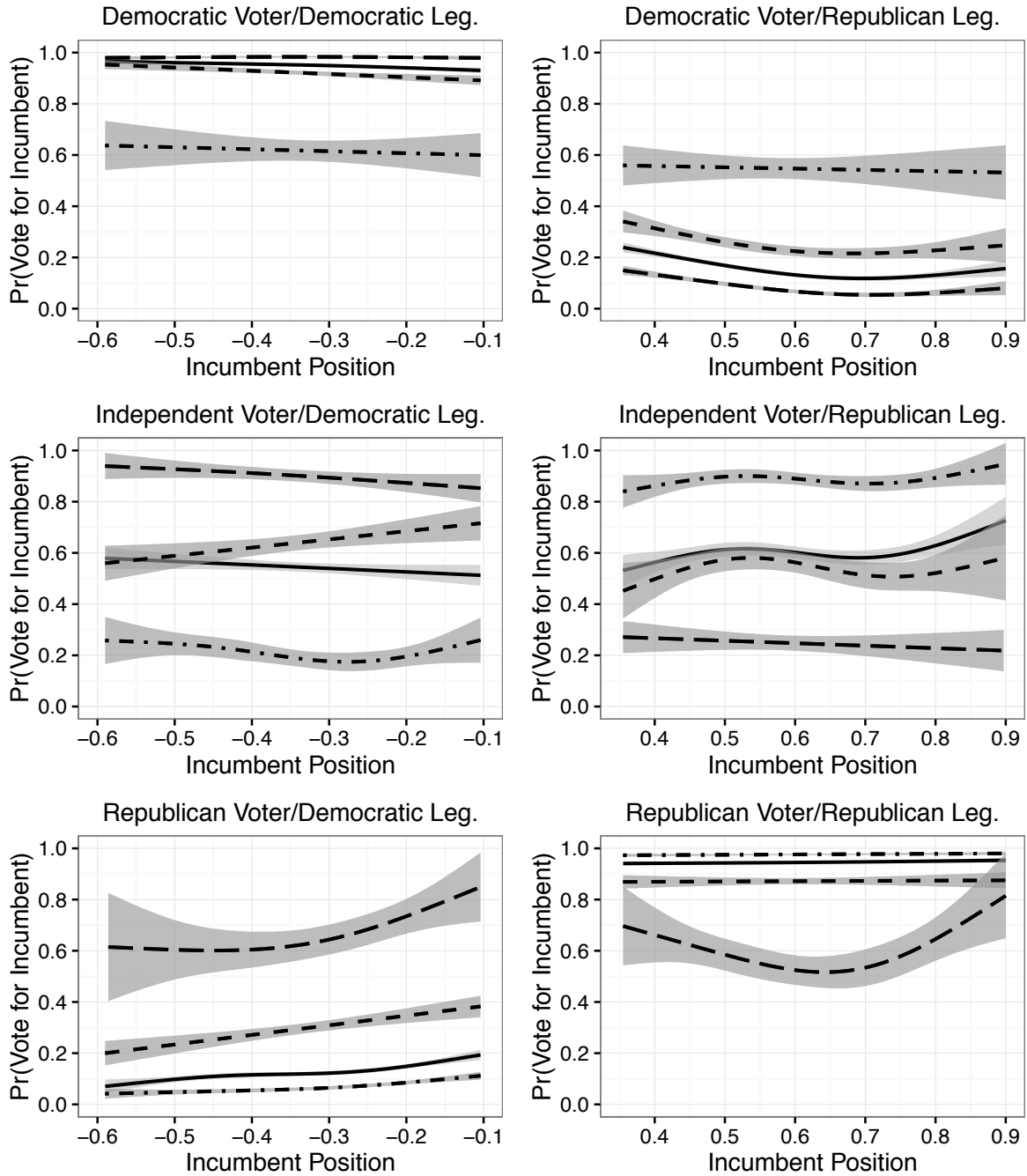
Looking first at the graphs for Democratic voters (top row), the most salient pattern is that all of the curves are generally flat. Indeed, over 98% of liberal Democratic voters support Democratic incumbents, and upwards of 90% oppose Republican incumbents, virtually regardless of the legislators' positions. 67% of Democrats are in the liberal tercile.

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<sup>15</sup> All of the analyses that follow focus on contested races. But the results are the same if we analyze all races.

<sup>16</sup> All of the curves are weighted using respondents' survey weights.

<sup>17</sup> Of course, it is always possible that voters are capable of using a proximity voting rule, but that the use of such voting rules is not prevalent enough to matter. It is also possible that they use a proximity voting rule, but with respect to an orthogonal space or notion of position.



**Figure 2:** Spatial Voting in the U.S. House: 2006-2012 – This graph shows non-parametric loess curves of the relationship between legislators’ DW-Nominate scores and the probability that respondents at various ideological levels support them on election-day. The y-axis is the probability of voting for the incumbent and the x-axis is the incumbent’s DW-NOMINATE score. Each line is a loess plot for a set of voters within a given tercile of ideology, where these terciles are defined by the entire population, rather than the terciles within a particular cell. The line made up of long dashes represents the liberal tercile, the long made up of short dashed represents the moderate tercile, and the line made up of dots and dashes represents the conservative tercile. The solid line is the mean for the entire population in each cell. The top row of the graph shows loess fits for Democratic respondents, the second row is for Independent respondents, and the last row is for Republican respondents. The first column is for Democratic legislators and the second column is for Republican legislators.

Next, we examine the graphs for Independent voters (2nd row). Several recent, prominent papers suggest that Independents are highly responsive to legislators' roll call positions (Jessee, 2009, 2012; Shor and Rogowski, 2016). However, Figure 2 indicates there are only very modest associations between the vote choices of Independents and legislators' roll call positions in our data (see also Adams et al., 2016).

Finally, the bottom row of Figure 2 shows the association between legislators' positions and constituents' decisions on election day for Republican voters. The plot shows that Republican voters are slightly more likely to support moderate Democratic incumbents. However, there is no consistent association between the probability that Republican voters support Republican incumbents and the incumbents' ideology. Overall, over 97% of Republicans support Republican incumbents, and over 90% oppose Democratic incumbents, virtually regardless of the legislators' positions. 78% of Republican voters are in the conservative tercile, while only 3% are liberal. For this 3%, there is a relatively strong association between the positions of Democratic incumbents and vote choice. This is the only instance in which we see a substantively large relationship between candidate ideology and citizens' voting decisions. Due to the small size of this group, however, the aggregate effect is small.

Looking across the plots, a remarkable feature of these results is the strength of both respondents' party and ideology as a predictor of vote choice. The effect of ideology is captured by the differences in the levels of the lines within each panel, and the effect of party is captured by the differences in the lines going down the plots in each column of graphs. A cursory glance shows that these effects are substantial. Even moderate Democrats overwhelmingly support Democratic incumbents, and moderate Republicans overwhelmingly support Republican incumbents. These individuals have the same ideology and differ only in party identification. However, individual ideology also has a substantial independent effect. For instance, Democratic voters who are conservative support Democratic incumbents about 60% of the time. Republican voters who are liberal support Republican incumbents at about the same rate. Overall, Figure 2 indicates that the direct effects of party and voter ideology



dwarf the effect of legislator position. The difference in the levels of the lines within and across panels is vastly greater than the difference between the two endpoints of the lines.

The fact that individual ideology has a strong independent effect on vote choice is not evidence for the proximity model, because it contains no notion of distance. However, it does provide evidence that party attachment may not be purely affective. If voters' policy positions drive the extent to which they reliably support their party, then the spatial distance between the voter and the *party* is a sensible explanation. It may be the case that voters think or act spatially with reference to parties, but not candidates.

## Parametric Results

While our non-parametric analysis suggests little reason to believe that the roll call positions of legislators influence voters' decisions on election day, the link between the graphs and the theoretical predictions are somewhat loose. To make a clearer connection between theory and evidence, we next turn to a parametric, regression-based framework that encompasses the theoretical predictions discussed earlier.

### Testing the Quadratic Voting Model

First, we evaluate the predictions of the quadratic voting model in Equation 4. This yields the regression model:

$$P(y = R) = v + v^2 + d + d^2 + dv + r + r^2 + rv + \text{controls} \quad (14)$$

As we discussed earlier, in the first section of our analysis we focus explicitly on incumbent positions and eschew any attempt to estimate the policy positions of challengers (i.e., we focus on  $r$  and  $v$  for Republican incumbents and  $d$  and  $v$  for Democrats.) We rely on the assumption that the positions taken by challengers and incumbents are approximately uncorrelated, and thus can be treated as orthogonal from one another.

Columns (1) and (2) of Table 2 show the results of a linear probability model using data on incumbents' spatial positioning and citizen voting behavior in the 2006-2012 congressional elections. Recall that the main prediction of the quadratic spatial voting model is that both the coefficients on candidates' ideology and the interaction between candidate and voter ideology should be large and significant.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the main prediction of the party-centered models is that voting behavior should be driven by voters' ideology and party identification rather than candidate positioning.

In column (1), we show the effect of candidate positioning among incumbent Democrats. The results indicate that more liberal voters are more likely to support Democrats and more conservative voters are more likely to support Republicans. Indeed, even within party, a standard deviation move to the right among citizens is associated with a 24% increase in the probability that they support the Republican candidate. However, the evidence is weaker for the idea that citizens vote spatially based on their proximity with individual legislators. Indeed, the interaction term for legislator ideology and citizen ideology, which captures spatial voting, indicates that a one standard deviation move toward the middle by Democratic legislators only makes conservative voters 1.7% more likely to support an incumbent Democrat (and vice versa for liberal voters).

Column (2) shows much the same story for incumbent Republicans. A one standard deviation move to the right among citizens is associated with a 15% increase in the probability that they support the Republican candidate. Once again, the evidence is weaker for the idea that citizens vote spatially based on their proximity with individual legislators. Indeed, the interaction term for legislator ideology and citizen ideology indicates that a one standard deviation move toward the middle by incumbent Republicans only makes conservative voters 2.2% less likely to support an incumbent Republican (and vice versa for liberal voters).

Finally, column (3) shows the results using *both candidates* in congressional races in

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<sup>18</sup> The main effect of candidate positioning is not dispositive since it could be confounded by the association between candidate positioning and valence.

**Table 2:** Spatial Voting in Congressional Elecitons

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Vote for Republican Candidate		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Citizen Ideology	0.201*** (0.006)	0.186*** (0.005)	0.221*** (0.003)
Citizen Ideology Squared	0.039*** (0.002)	-0.040*** (0.002)	-0.006** (0.003)
Democratic Candidate Ideology	-0.051* (0.027)		-0.003 (0.002)
Dem. Candidate Ideology Squared	-0.008 (0.013)		0.0004 (0.001)
Republican Candidate Ideology		-0.118*** (0.019)	-0.013*** (0.002)
Rep. Candidate Ideology Squared		0.044*** (0.010)	-0.006*** (0.001)
Citizen Ideology: Dem. Candidate Ideology	-0.017*** (0.005)		-0.004*** (0.002)
Citizen Ideology: Rep. Candidate Ideology		0.022*** (0.004)	0.005*** (0.002)
Independent	0.245*** (0.005)	0.260*** (0.006)	0.314*** (0.007)
Republican	0.471*** (0.005)	0.468*** (0.005)	0.487*** (0.006)
Constant	0.107*** (0.015)	0.411*** (0.009)	0.278*** (0.005)
Observations	36,626	41,169	20,337
R <sup>2</sup>	0.725	0.678	0.774
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.725	0.678	0.773

*Note:*

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

2010.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the other models, this model controls for the positions of both the Democratic and Republican candidates rather than only the position of the incumbent. However, the substantive conclusions are similar to the ones in columns (1) and (2) which only include incumbents. A one standard deviation move to the right among citizens is associated with a 22% increase in the probability that they support the Republican candidate. But there is no effect on voting behavior due to changes in the ideological position of Democratic candidates, and only small effects due to changes in the positions of Republican candidates. There are also only modest interactions between candidates' positions and the ideology of voters.

Of course, these results are based on a linear probability model, which could attenuate some of the effect of candidate positioning. They also fail to separate voters by party. Thus, we also estimate each model using a logistic regression.<sup>20</sup> The downside of this model is that the results are less readily interpretable than the linear probability model. As a result, we graph the results to make it easier to visualize them. Figure 3 shows the results for incumbents in the 2006-2012 elections and Figure 4 shows the results for both challengers and incumbents in the 2010 election.<sup>21</sup> The graphs mirror the descriptive patterns in Figure 2. They show evidence that citizens vote spatially, but the substantive impact of spatial voting is small.

The left panel of Figure 3 shows the effect of the ideological positions of Democratic incumbents' on the voting behavior of different groups. Democratic incumbents' positions have no effect on the behavior of Democratic voters, and only modest effects on the voting behavior of Independents and Republicans. The right panel of Figure 3 shows similar results for incumbent Republicans. Republican legislators can gain a few percentage points among moderate Independents by moderating their positions. They can also gain about 10 percentage points among Democrats. Overall, Figure 3 shows that the ideological positioning

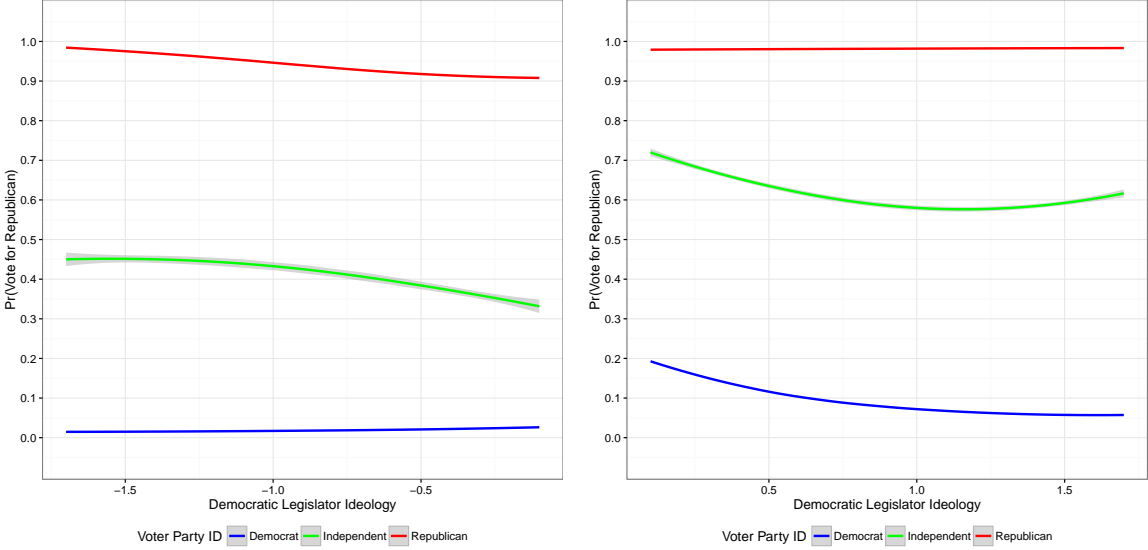
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<sup>19</sup> For this analysis, we matched the data on candidates' ideal points in the replication data of Adams et al. (2016) with our master dataset on voters' preferences and voting behavior. This enables us to utilize common measures of voter ideology across all three regression models in Table 2.

<sup>20</sup> These models interact all coefficients with voters' party identification.

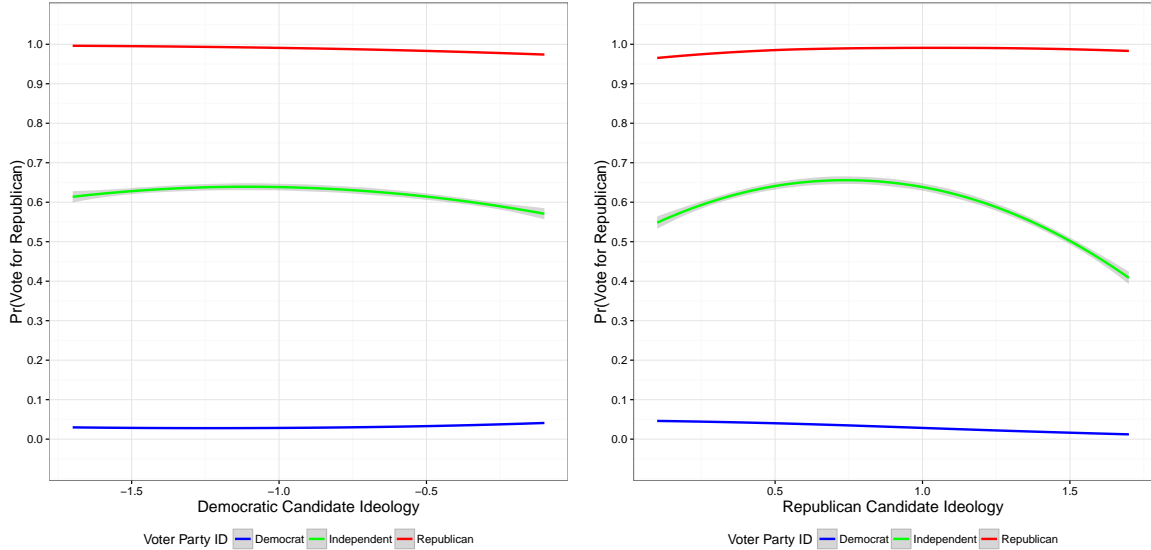
<sup>21</sup> The graphs are on a logistic regression of the model in Table 4 where voters' party ID is interacted with the other terms in the model.

of incumbents rarely improves their electoral performance by more than a few percentage points among any subset of voters, and the average effect is much lower than that. Figure 4 also shows similar results using the data from Adams et al. (2016). Overall, the ideological positioning of candidates has modest effects on the probability that any particular group of voters will support them. In contrast, we see massive differences in voting behavior between conservative Republican voters and liberal Democrats.



**Figure 3:** Effect of Incumbent Positioning (2006-2012): This graph shows the increase in the probability that voters in each party support the incumbent if the incumbent changes their position. For simplicity, voters in each party are assigned the average ideology of people in their party. The plot is based on a logistic regression of the model in Table 4, columns 1 and 2.

Overall, the results in Figures 3 and 4 are strongly consistent with our party-centered theory of spatial voting, including the notion that more extreme candidates tend to have lower valence. There is some evidence for candidate-centered spatial voting, but these effects are substantively small, consistent with the aggregate-level evidence that candidate moderation has a limited effect on vote shares.



**Figure 4:** Effect of Candidate Positioning (2010): This graph shows the increase in the probability that voters in each party support the candidate if the candidate changes their position, holding the other party’s candidate’s position fixed. For simplicity, voters in each party are assigned the average ideology of people in their party. The plot is based on a logistic regression of the model in Table 4, column 3.

## Testing the Linear Voting Model

Testing the quadratic voting model does not actually require us to place candidates and voters onto the same scale. However, it is necessary to place candidates and voters onto the same scale in order to test the predictions of the linear voting model.<sup>22</sup> In this section, we use the replication data of Adams et al. (2016) to do this. These data include estimates of the positions for voters and both candidates that all lie on the same ideological scale. Recall that the linear voting model makes a sharp empirical prediction: the coefficient on voters’ ideology should be equal to 0 for voters whose preferences lie exterior to those of the candidates. Voters’ preferences should only have an effect for voters that lie between the two candidates. To examine this hypothesis, we estimate separate linear probability

<sup>22</sup> It is important to note, however, that the task of estimating voter positions in the space of legislators is a difficult one. It requires assuming equivalence between some set of behaviors that are driven by policy position: for instance, that casting roll call votes in a legislature can be considered equivalent to answering survey questions about roll call votes, or that campaign contributions are given to more spatially proximate candidates. Lewis and Tausanovitch (2013) and Jesse (2016) find that existing attempts to jointly scale voters and legislators in the same space mostly fall short.

regression models for voters that lie to 1) to the left of the Democratic and Republican candidates, 2) between the ideological positions of the two candidates, 3) to the right of the two candidates.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 3**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Vote for Republican Candidate		
	Left (1)	Middle (2)	Right (3)
Voter Ideal Point	0.086*** (0.006)	0.180*** (0.005)	0.031*** (0.008)
Republican Candidate Ideal Point	-0.023*** (0.008)	-0.026*** (0.006)	0.055*** (0.010)
Democratic Candidate Ideal Point	0.026*** (0.007)	-0.0004 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.005)
Independent	0.194*** (0.011)	0.444*** (0.008)	0.253*** (0.019)
Republican	0.611*** (0.011)	0.673*** (0.006)	0.316*** (0.017)
Constant	0.185*** (0.019)	0.216*** (0.016)	0.583*** (0.025)
Controls	X	X	X
Observations	6,875	15,465	3,482
R <sup>2</sup>	0.473	0.698	0.233
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.472	0.698	0.230
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Column (1) of Table 3 shows the results for voters whose ideological position lies to the left of the two candidates. The results show that Democratic voters to the left of both candidates are slightly more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate when they

<sup>23</sup> We find substantively similar results with logistic regression models.

adopt more liberal positions, and more likely to support the Republican candidate when the Democratic candidate adopts more conservative positions. In contrast, they are less likely to vote for the Republican when the Republican candidate adopts more conservative positions. Column (2) of Table 3 shows the results for voters whose ideological position lies between the two candidates. For these voters, the position of the Democratic candidate actually has no effect on their vote, while a move to the right by Republican candidates makes them slightly less likely to support the Republican. Finally, Column (3) of Table 3 shows the results for voters whose ideological position lies to the right of the two candidates. Once again, the position of the Democratic candidate has no effect on the voting behavior of these voters. But they are more likely to support conservative Republicans.

Overall, these results align with the predictions of spatial voting theory. Candidate positions do matter. But it is important to note that all of the effect sizes are substantively small. For example, a one standard deviation move to the right by Democratic candidate only leads to a 2.5% decline in the probability that liberal voters will support them. In contrast, there are massive differences in voting behavior between Democratic and Republican voters. There are also big point estimates on voter ideology in all three columns.

## **Constituent Perceptions of Roll Call Positions**

Spatial voting is a theoretically and intuitively appealing idea that has motivated a wide body of work in political science for decades. Why don't voters make choices on the basis of policy proximity with individual legislators? One answer comes from seminal research on representation in the 1960s, which found that citizens have only vague notions of legislators' roll call positions (Miller and Stokes, 1963). For instance, only 56 percent of American National Election Study respondents correctly identified their representative's position on the resolution in 1991 authorizing the first President Bush to conduct the Persian Gulf War (Alvarez and Gronke, 1996). Moreover, only 63 percent of ANES respondents correctly



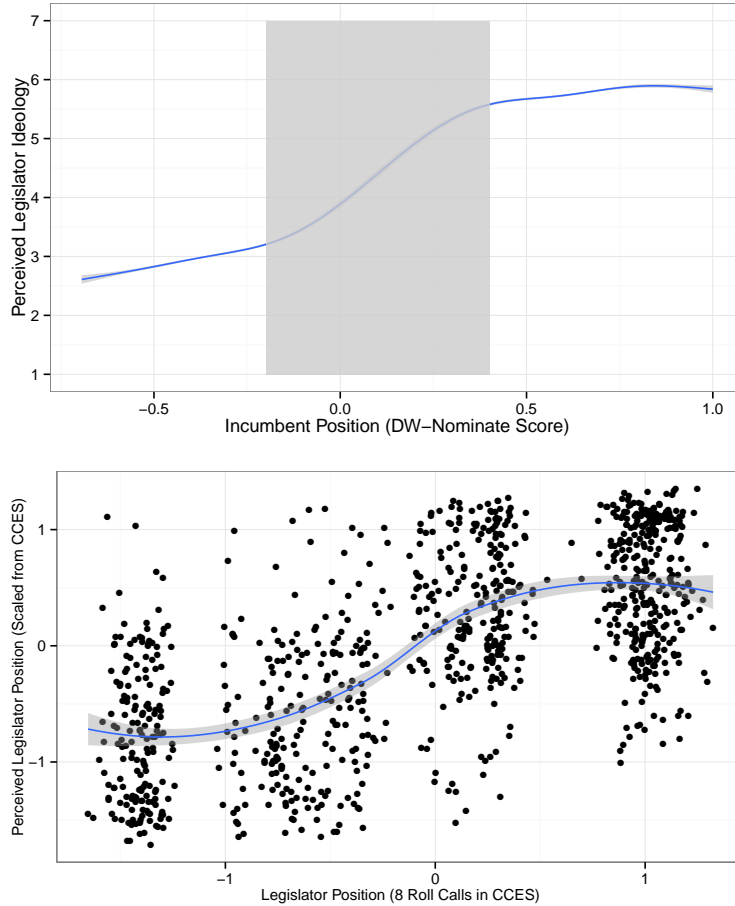
identified their representatives' votes on the budget-balancing Budget Resolution of 1993 (Lipinski, 2001). However, more recent research suggests that many contemporary voters may have accurate perceptions of legislators' roll call positions (Ansolabehere and Jones, 2010), but they "know less about the positions taken by moderate senators and have a harder time aligning their levels of policy agreement with a senator with their evaluation of that senator if she frequently votes against her party" (Dancey and Sheagley, 2013).

We reassess citizens' knowledge levels about incumbents' spatial positions using our large survey sample of over 150,000 voters in the 2006-2012 congressional elections. We take two approaches to examining whether citizens understand legislators' roll call positions. First, we examine the relationship between constituents' perception of legislators' symbolic ideology on a 7-point scale and their actual roll call positions (top-panel of Figure 5). We find that citizens are very capable of differentiating between Democrats and Republicans. Overall, there is a correlation of .71 between the perceived ideology of legislators and their actual DW-Nominate scores. However, our findings suggest that while voters are capable of differentiating between parties, they are less capable of differentiating within parties. When we subset the data by legislators' party, there is only a correlation of .14 between the perceived ideology of Democratic legislators and their actual DW-NOMINATE scores and an even weaker correlation of .09 between the perceived ideology of Republican legislators and their actual DW-Nominate scores.

One possible explanation for the weak within-party correlations between actual and perceived legislator ideologies we observe is that the 7-point scale on the CCES is not granular enough to distinguish legislators within each party. For instance, it's possible that most Democrats are a "2" or a "3". To examine this possibility, we re-examined data on voters' perceptions of legislators' positions on eight roll call votes from the 2006 CCES (Ansolabehere and Jones, 2010).<sup>24</sup> We scaled both the perceived and actual positions of legislators on these

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<sup>24</sup> The 2006 CCES asked about voters' perceptions of legislators' roll-call votes on (1) a ban on partial-birth abortion, (2) federal funding for stem cell research, (3) extending capital gains tax cuts, (4) ratifying CAFTA, (5) immigration reform, (6) bankruptcy reform, (7) tax breaks for energy companies, and (8) reauthorizing the Patriot Act. See Ansolabehere and Jones (2010) for more details.



**Figure 5:** Perceived vs. Actual Ideal Points – The top panel in this graph shows the relationship between the perceived ideology of House members on a 7-point scale and their actual ideal points. The grey region in the middle of the top panel shows the ideological space where few legislators reside. The bottom panel shows the relationship between the perceived ideology of House members based on respondents’ perceptions of their votes on eight salient roll calls and their actual ideal points based on their votes on these bills.

eight votes using an IRT model (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers, 2004).<sup>25</sup>

The bottom panel of Figure 5 shows the results of this analysis. There is a clear relationship between the perceived and actual ideal points of legislators on these eight roll calls. However, there is a considerable degree of error in respondents’ perceptions of legislator positions. The overall correlation between the perceived and actual positions of legislators on these eight roll calls is .66. When we subset the data by legislators’ party, however, there

<sup>25</sup> Note that given that we only have eight items in this scale, there is probably significant measurement error in our estimates of both perceived and actual legislator positions. However, the measures of actual positions are correlated with legislators’ DW-Nominate scores at .90.

is only a correlation of .28 between the perceived positions of Democratic legislators and their actual ideal points on these roll calls and a correlation of .10 for Republican legislators. We should note that these 8 items distinguish more effectively between Democrats than Republicans, possibly explaining the difference between these two correlations.

Overall, the evidence suggests that most voters understand the party label of their representative and they can effectively differentiate between Democrats and Republicans in Congress. But voters only have a dim awareness of ideological differences between legislators within each party. Condorcet’s jury theorem demonstrates that sometimes only a dim awareness is necessary for voters to make good decisions as a group under some circumstances (Condorcet, 1785). Nonetheless, voters are only slightly better than a coin flip at telling whether one Democrat is more or less liberal than another. Even if individuals are trying to make proximity-based judgements, lack of knowledge adds noise to individual spatial decision making, to the point where it may be easily swamped by other considerations.

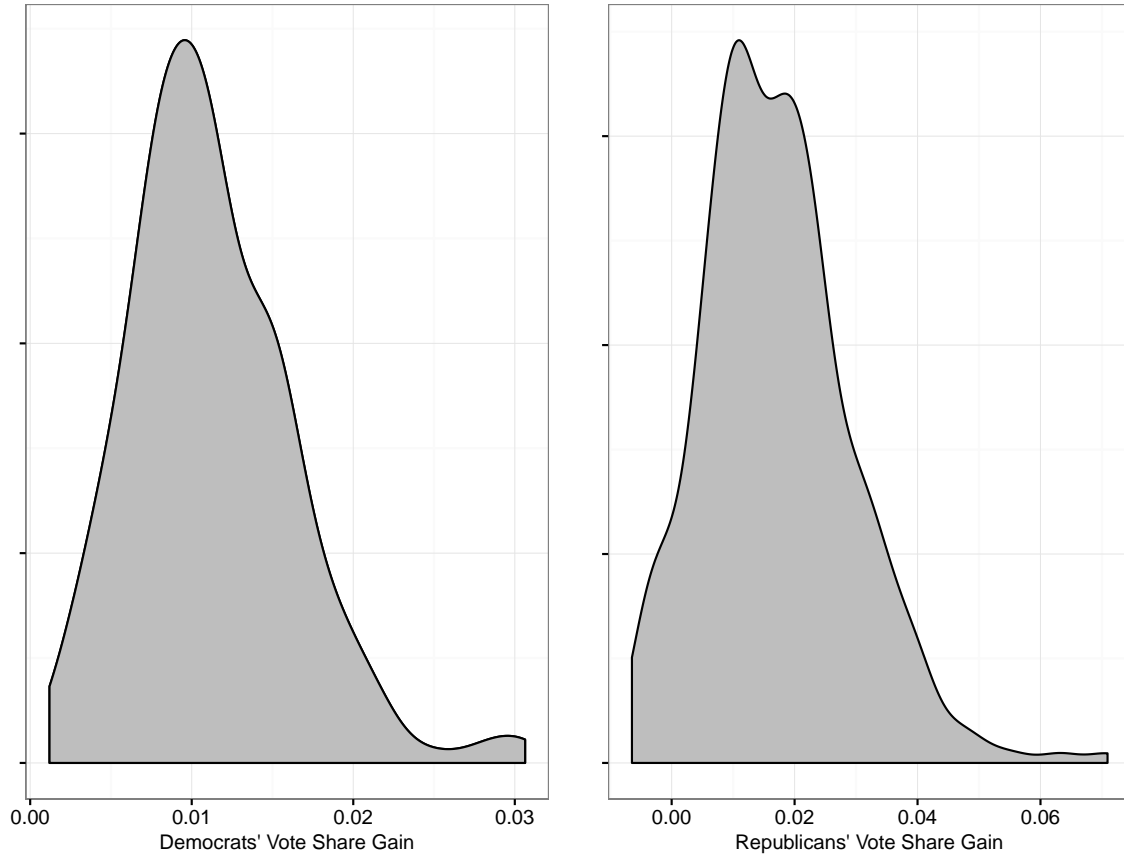
## Extrapolating Legislator Vote Shares

Having examined what these results mean for theories of electoral accountability and spatial voting, what do they imply for representation in American politics? Our model enables us to examine the relationship between legislator vote shares and legislator positions (cf. Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan, 2002; Wilkins, 2012). We simulate vote shares for each legislator in the 2006-2012 elections from the sample of their actual electorate in our dataset using a model derived from the models presented in Table 2.<sup>26</sup> For each district, we calculate the change in vote share that would result from a one standard deviation move toward the center by the legislator. Note that due to our large sample of voters’ ideal points, we have an average of roughly 350 people in every congressional district.

Figure 6 shows the predicted increase in vote shares from a one standard deviation move

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<sup>26</sup> We use a logistic regression form of these models, which is more difficult to interpret but more appropriate for modeling a binary vote choice.



**Figure 6:** Relationship between Representatives' Ideal Point and Expected Vote Share in the U.S. House: 2006-2012 – This graph shows the distribution of potential vote gains from legislators that moderate their position by one standard deviation. The left panel shows the expected vote gains among Democratic incumbents, while the right panel shows the expected vote gains among Republican incumbents.

toward the center by each legislator. The left panel shows the kernel density plot of predicted changes in vote share for all districts represented by Democrats, and the right panel shows this density for all districts represented by Republicans. For Democrats, moderating their position by one standard deviation increases their vote share by an average of 1.1%. In every case, Democrats are projected to change their voteshares by less than 3%, and in the large plurality less than 2%. For Republicans, moderating their position by one standard deviation increases their vote share by an average of 1.7%. Likewise, in every case Republicans would increase their voteshares by less than 7%, and most of these changes are less than 3%.

Overall, legislator positions appear to have relatively small cumulative effects on their

vote shares. It is important to note that our results are distinct from those of recent survey-based studies, in large part because we disaggregate *voter ideology* and *candidate ideology*. However, they are very similar to those of aggregate-level studies such as Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan (2002).

## Conclusion

The Founding Fathers thought that frequent elections were the key mechanism for ensuring that the “will of the people” is carried out. This electoral connection provides the foundation for the study of congressional behavior and lawmaking and for theories of representation more broadly. A number of recent studies have provided an empirical foundation for the assumption that voters in recent congressional elections hold their representatives accountable at the ballot box for their roll call voting behavior (Ansolabehere and Jones, 2010; Jessee, 2009; Jones, 2011; Shor and Rogowski, 2016). Yet these studies are puzzling considering the modest rewards for candidate moderation in most macro-level electoral studies, as well as the polarization and lack of responsiveness in the contemporary Congress.

In this study, we provide an individual-level explanation for the lack of support for the spatial voting model’s core predictions in the modern House of Representatives. Unlike most recent survey-based studies, we separate the effect of voter and candidate ideology rather than conflating them into a measure of the proximity between voters and candidates. We find that voters’ policy preferences are highly predictive of which party they will support: liberal voters almost always support Democrats and conservative voters almost always support Republicans. However, we find that *candidates’* roll call positions have relatively small effects on citizens’ voting behavior. Indeed, our results suggest that candidates only gain a percentage point or two in congressional elections from ideological moderation. Thus, our evidence suggests that there are few incentives for legislators to take ideologically moderate positions in the modern Congress. Our findings help resolve the disparity between other

survey-based studies, which have generally supported the spatial voting model, and aggregate studies of congressional elections, which show relatively small effects of candidate positioning (e.g., Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan, 2002; Wilkins, 2012; Montagnes and Rogowski, 2015).

One potential explanation for the small effect of candidate ideology on voting behavior is that voters have difficulty differentiating liberal Democrats from moderate Democrats, and conservative Republicans from moderate Republicans. In contrast, voters are quite capable of distinguishing between the parties.<sup>27</sup> They may be able to roughly observe the proximity of their own desired policies to the policies supported by each party, and vote accordingly.<sup>28</sup> Thus, our findings are consistent with work that attempts to incorporate spatial voting in the context of party reputations (e.g., Sniderman and Stiglitz, 2012). The electoral connection in Congress *may* be alive and well, but at the level of parties rather than individual legislators.

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<sup>27</sup> Of course, it is possible that spatial voting for candidates may have been more important in earlier eras when the parties were less polarized.

<sup>28</sup> However, it is important to note that this theory is observationally equivalent to several others. It may be the case the voters attempt to vote on the basis of candidate positions, but do so with extremely low acuity. Alternatively, the strength of affective party attachments may determine both policy positions and votes. Future work should seek to distinguish between these potential theoretical mechanisms.

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## Online Appendix A: Ideal Point Model

For our measure of respondents’ ideology, we use ideal point estimates made available by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) based on policy responses from all CCES surveys during this period. To estimate voters’ ideological positions, Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) assume that all survey respondents have a quadratic utility function with normal errors (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers, 2004). Each item presents individual with a choice between a “Yes” position and a “No” position. They use the two-parameter IRT model introduced to political science by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004), which characterizes each response  $y_{ij} \in \{0, 1\}$  as a function of subject  $i$ ’s latent *ability* ( $x_i$ ), the *difficulty* ( $\alpha_j$ ) and *discrimination* ( $\beta_j$ ) of item  $j$ , and an error term ( $e_{ij}$ ), where

$$\Pr[y_{ij} = 1] = \Phi(\beta_j x_i - \alpha_j) \tag{15}$$

where  $\Phi$  is the standard normal CDF.  $\beta_j$  is referred to as the “discrimination” parameter because it captures the degree to which the latent trait affects the probability of a yes answer. The “cut point” is the value of  $\alpha_j / \beta_j$  at which the probabilities of answering yes or no to a question are 50-50. We assume a one-dimensional policy space because a two-dimensional model shows little improvement in terms of model fit. The ideal point,  $x$ , for individual  $i$  signifies the “liberalness” or “conservativeness” of that individual. We orient the ideal point estimates so that lower values are associated with politically left preferences and higher values with politically right preferences.

Table A1 shows our survey sample, and Table A2 shows the complete list of survey questions that we used to jointly scale respondents from the 2006-2013 Cooperative Congressional Election Studies. The questions are a mix of items from the common content and modules that we created. Note that we only used respondents from the 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 CCES surveys in this study because the odd numbered year respondents do not indicate congressional vote choice. All of the questions are dichotimized in the scaling model.

**Table A1:** Data Sources for Voters

Survey	Total Sample Size	Post-Election Sample that Indicated a Vote Choice	Post-Election Sample in Contested Race
CCES 2006	35,919	22,046	16,842
CCES 2008	32,800	17,895	14,584
CCES 2010	55,488	32,004	26,922
CCES 2012	54,535	29,999	22,755
Total	178,742	101,944	81,104

**Table A2:** Survey Question Text

Variable	Survey	Question Text
v2072	CCES 2006	Raise minimum wage to \$7.25
v2092	CCES 2006	Should we take action on climate change?
v2103	CCES 2006	Amendment banning gay marriage
v3019	CCES 2006	When should abortions be allowed?
v3022	CCES 2006	Climate change is real
v3024	CCES 2006	Social security privatization
v3027	CCES 2006	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
v3060	CCES 2006	Ban late-term abortion
v2102	CCES 2006	Expand funding for stem cell research
v3063	CCES 2006	Expand funding for stem cell research
v2101	CCES 2006	Path to citizenship or strict enforcement
v3069	CCES 2006	Citizenship opportunity for illegal immigrants
v3072	CCES 2006	Favor/oppose raising minimum wage
v3075	CCES 2006	Extend capital gains tax cuts
v3066	CCES 2006	Withdrawing troops from Iraq
v3078	CCES 2006	Free trade agreement with Central America
q34	CCES 2006	Support state voter ID laws
cc06_v2072	CCES 2007	Raise minimum wage to \$7.25
cc06_v2092	CCES 2007	Should we take action on climate change?
cc06_v2103	CCES 2007	Amendment banning gay marriage
cc06_v3019	CCES 2007	When should abortions be allowed?
cc06_v3022	CCES 2007	Protect environment over jobs/economy
cc06_v3024	CCES 2007	Social security privatization
cc06_v3027	CCES 2007	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
cc06_v3060	CCES 2007	Ban late-term abortion
cc06_v3063	CCES 2007	Expand funding for stem cell research
cc06_v3075	CCES 2007	Extend capital gains tax cuts
cc46	CCES 2007	Withdrawing troops from Iraq
cc06_v3078	CCES 2007	Free trade agreement with Central America
cc34	CCES 2007	Expand SCHIP - health care for children
cc38	CCES 2007	Surveillance of foreigners in US
cc12x_5	CCES 2007	Build a wall between US and Mexico
cc310	CCES 2008	When should abortions be allowed?
cc311	CCES 2008	Protect environment over jobs/economy
cc312	CCES 2008	Social security privatization
cc313	CCES 2008	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
cc316b	CCES 2008	Raise minimum wage to \$7.25
cc316c	CCES 2008	Expand funding for stem cell research
cc316e	CCES 2008	Fund health insurance for children
cc316a	CCES 2008	Withdrawing troops from Iraq
cc316f	CCES 2008	Support/oppose amendment banning gay marriage
cc316g	CCES 2008	Federal assistance for housing crisis
cc316d	CCES 2008	Eavesdrop overseas without court order
cc316h	CCES 2008	Extend NAFTA to Peru & Columbia
cc316i	CCES 2008	U.S. government bank bailout

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Variable	Survey	Question Text
cc417	CCES 2008	Government guaranteed health insurance
cc422	CCES 2008	Carbon tax to reduce emissions
cc419_6	CCES 2008	Require photo ID to vote
cc09_51	CCES 2009	Take action against global warming
cc09_54	CCES 2009	Amendment banning gay marriage
cc09_53	CCES 2009	When should abortions be allowed?
cc09_55	CCES 2009	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
cc09_59a	CCES 2009	Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
cc09_59b	CCES 2009	Hate Crimes Act - include LGBT
cc09_59c	CCES 2009	American Recovery & Reinvestment Act
cc09_59d	CCES 2009	Expand SCHIP - health care for children
cc09_59e	CCES 2009	Renewable energy funding, carbon caps
cc09_59f	CCES 2009	Require health insurance
cc09_59g	CCES 2009	Appoint Sotomayor to Supreme Court
sta302_1	CCES 2010 Module	Increase funding for job training programs
sta302_2	CCES 2010 Module	Reduce government regulation
sta302_3	CCES 2010 Module	Employers should offer childcare
sta302_4	CCES 2010 Module	Increase minimum wage
sta302_5	CCES 2010 Module	Support workers right to unionize
sta302_6	CCES 2010 Module	Eliminate federal unemployment programs
sta302_7	CCES 2010 Module	Include sexual orientation in anti-discrimination laws
sta302_8	CCES 2010 Module	Include gender in anti-discrimination laws
sta303_1	CCES 2010 Module	Universal healthcare
sta303_2	CCES 2010 Module	Expand tax-free medical savings accounts
sta303_3	CCES 2010 Module	Allow importation of prescription drugs
sta303_4	CCES 2010 Module	Expand Medicare prescription drug coverage
sta303_5	CCES 2010 Module	Tax credits to offset insurance costs
sta303_6	CCES 2010 Module	Expand child healthcare programs
sta303_7	CCES 2010 Module	Providing healthcare is not responsibility of government
sta304a	CCES 2010 Module	Allow same-sex marriage
sta304c	CCES 2010 Module	Funding for stem cell research (existing)
sta304d	CCES 2010 Module	Funding for stem cell research (new embryos)
sta304e	CCES 2010 Module	Affirmative action for federal contractors
sta304f	CCES 2010 Module	Continue federal affirmative action programs
sta305_1	CCES 2010 Module	Private social security accounts
sta305_2	CCES 2010 Module	Increase payroll tax to ensure social security viability
sta305_3	CCES 2010 Module	Decrease benefits to retirees to ensure social security viability
sta305_4	CCES 2010 Module	Increase social security benefits with cost of living
sta305_5	CCES 2010 Module	Raise the retirement age to ensure social security viability
sta306_1	CCES 2010 Module	Require welfare recipients to work
sta306_2	CCES 2010 Module	Federal block grants for welfare
sta306_3	CCES 2010 Module	Housing assistance for welfare recipients
sta306_4	CCES 2010 Module	Abolish federal welfare programs
307a	CCES 2010 Module	Public health insurance option
307b	CCES 2010 Module	Monetary limits in malpractice lawsuits
307c	CCES 2010 Module	Require balanced federal budget
307d	CCES 2010 Module	Government funds to stimulate economy
sta312	CCES 2010 Module	Free trade agreement with Central America
sta314	CCES 2010 Module	Expand funding for stem cell research
sta315	CCES 2010 Module	Citizenship opportunity for illegal immigrants
sta317	CCES 2010 Module	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
sta319	CCES 2010 Module	Path to citizenship or strict enforcement
sta320	CCES 2010 Module	Increase minimum wage
sta321	CCES 2010 Module	Extend capital gains tax cuts
sta322	CCES 2010 Module	Amendment banning gay marriage
sta360a	CCES 2010 Module	Eliminate the minimum wage
sta360b	CCES 2010 Module	Government guarantee standard of living
sta360c	CCES 2010 Module	No taxes for low-income families
sta360d	CCES 2010 Module	Prohibit incomes above \$1 million
sta360e	CCES 2010 Module	Eliminate food subsidies for children
sta360f	CCES 2010 Module	Tax rate the same for rich and poor
sta360g	CCES 2010 Module	No government assistance for low-income
sta360h	CCES 2010 Module	Government should provide universal jobs
sta360i	CCES 2010 Module	Rich should pay higher tax rate than poor
sta360j	CCES 2010 Module	Minimum wage should be \$15/hour

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Variable	Survey	Question Text
sta361a	CCES 2010 Module	Ban some high-fat foods from restaurants
sta361b	CCES 2010 Module	Government standards for prescription drugs
sta361c	CCES 2010 Module	All public buildings accessible to handicapped
sta361d	CCES 2010 Module	Government-enforced nutrition standards
sta361e	CCES 2010 Module	No limits on pollution from businesses
sta361f	CCES 2010 Module	Government-enforced advertising standards
sta361g	CCES 2010 Module	All motorcyclists required to wear helmets
sta361h	CCES 2010 Module	Ban sale of energy-inefficient appliances
sta361j	CCES 2010 Module	Privatize the Post Office
sta361k	CCES 2010 Module	Military burden shifted to private contractors
sta361l	CCES 2010 Module	Government takeover of bad companies
sta361m	CCES 2010 Module	Require power plants to reduce emissions
sta361n	CCES 2010 Module	Require residential carbon monoxide detectors
sta362a	CCES 2010 Module	Hold BP executives liable for oil spill
sta362b	CCES 2010 Module	Require public schools to teach creationism
sta362c	CCES 2010 Module	Limit ATM fees to \$1
sta362d	CCES 2010 Module	Eliminate Environmental Protection Agency
sta362e	CCES 2010 Module	Deport all illegal immigrants
sta362f	CCES 2010 Module	Grant all illegal immigrants citizenship
sta362g	CCES 2010 Module	End subsidies for green energy
sta362h	CCES 2010 Module	Government-funded high-speed railroad
sta362i	CCES 2010 Module	Felons should have right to vote
sta362j	CCES 2010 Module	Prohibit construction of 9-11 site mosque
sta362k	CCES 2010 Module	Ban late-term abortion procedures
sta370a	CCES 2010 Module	Require business-provided health insurance
sta370b	CCES 2010 Module	Require all people buy health insurance
sta370c	CCES 2010 Module	Limit damages in malpractice lawsuits
sta370d	CCES 2010 Module	Medical experts decide which tests insured
sta370e	CCES 2010 Module	Patients pay more for "ineffective" treatments
sta370f	CCES 2010 Module	Public insurance entity for low-cost insurance
sta380a	CCES 2010 Module	Government funds to insure all children
sta380b	CCES 2010 Module	Right of patients to sue HMO
sta380c	CCES 2010 Module	Make it harder to obtain abortion
sta380d	CCES 2010 Module	Allow the death penalty for some crimes
sta380e	CCES 2010 Module	Require license to purchase handgun
sta380f	CCES 2010 Module	Allow gays to serve in military
sta380g	CCES 2010 Module	Federal law to allow school prayer
sta380h	CCES 2010 Module	Flat tax law for all Americans
sta381a	CCES 2010 Module	Eliminate regulations for businesses
sta381b	CCES 2010 Module	Protect environment/natural resources
sta401a	CCES 2010 Module	Government help insure all children
sta401b	CCES 2010 Module	Government help employers pay for insurance
sta401c	CCES 2010 Module	Eliminate the estate tax
sta401d	CCES 2010 Module	Social Security privatization
sta401e	CCES 2010 Module	Easier for labor unions to organize
sta401f	CCES 2010 Module	Federal funding for stem cell research
sta401g	CCES 2010 Module	Extend federal ban on assault weapons
sta402	CCES 2010 Module	Same-sex marriage in your state
sta403a	CCES 2010 Module	Increase the minimum wage
sta403b	CCES 2010 Module	Government reduce income inequality
sta403c	CCES 2010 Module	Government reduction of federal taxes
sta403d	CCES 2010 Module	Government vouchers for private school
sta403e	CCES 2010 Module	Amendment banning gay marriage
sta405a	CCES 2010 Module	Increase federal funding to public school
sta405b	CCES 2010 Module	Government-funded universal health care
sta406a	CCES 2010 Module	Should the government restrict immigration?
sta406b	CCES 2010 Module	Should the government restrict gun sales?
sta411c	CCES 2010 Module	Health insurance for low-income children
sta411d	CCES 2010 Module	Assist homeowners facing foreclosure
sta411e	CCES 2010 Module	Extend NAFTA to Peru & Columbia
sta411f	CCES 2010 Module	U.S. government bank bailout
sta412	CCES 2010 Module	Carbon tax to reduce emissions
sta413	CCES 2010 Module	Guaranteed universal health insurance
sta430a	CCES 2010 Module	Housing vouchers for homeless
sta430b	CCES 2010 Module	Maintain welfare-to-work requirements

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Variable	Survey	Question Text
sta430c	CCES 2010 Module	Provide food stamps to legal immigrants
sta430d	CCES 2010 Module	Continue Medicaid for welfare-to-work
sta430e	CCES 2010 Module	Federal poverty aid through religious orgs.
sta430f	CCES 2010 Module	Additional funding for state Medicaid
sta430g	CCES 2010 Module	Tax credits for businesses with childcare
sta430h	CCES 2010 Module	Federal aid for states with more immigrants
sta430i	CCES 2010 Module	Prohibit state laws denying immigrations services
sta430j	CCES 2010 Module	Increase quota for skilled immigrants
sta430k	CCES 2010 Module	Collect fingerprint data from visa applicants
sta450	CCES 2010 Module	Federal income tax level
sta451	CCES 2010 Module	Support same-sex marriage
sta460a	CCES 2010 Module	Path to citizenship for immigrants
sta460b	CCES 2010 Module	Increase border security with Mexico
sta460c	CCES 2010 Module	Drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants
cc324	CCES 2010	When should abortions be allowed?
cc325	CCES 2010	Protect environment over jobs/economy
cc326	CCES 2010	Amendment banning gay marriage
cc327	CCES 2010	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
cc332a	CCES 2010	American Recovery & Reinvestment Act
cc332b	CCES 2010	Expand SCHIP - health care for children
cc332c	CCES 2010	Renewable energy funding, carbon caps
cc332d	CCES 2010	Require health insurance
cc332e	CCES 2010	Appoint Kagan to Supreme Court
cc332f	CCES 2010	Financial Reform Bill
cc332g	CCES 2010	End Don't Ask, Don't Tell
cc332h	CCES 2010	Overseas surveillance of foreigners
cc332i	CCES 2010	Federal funding for stem cell research
cc332j	CCES 2010	U.S. government bank bailout
cc321	CCES 2010	Belief in climate change
cc341a	CCES 2011	American Recovery & Reinvestment Act
cc341b	CCES 2011	Expand SCHIP - health care for children
cc341c	CCES 2011	Renewable energy funding, carbon caps
cc341d	CCES 2011	Require health insurance
cc341e	CCES 2011	End Don't Ask, Don't Tell
cc341f	CCES 2011	Overseas surveillance of foreigners
cc341g	CCES 2011	Federal funding for stem cell research
cc341h	CCES 2011	U.S. government bank bailout
cc354	CCES 2011	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
cc353	CCES 2011	Amendment banning gay marriage
cc352	CCES 2011	When should abortions be allowed?
cc351_1	CCES 2011	Citizenship opportunity for illegal immigrants
cc351_2	CCES 2011	Increase patrols of U.S.-Mexico border
cc351_3	CCES 2011	Allow police to question suspected immigrants
hsu301	CCES 2011 Module	Guaranteed universal health insurance
hsu302	CCES 2011 Module	Protect right of workers to unionize
hsu303	CCES 2011 Module	Government reduce income inequality
hsu304	CCES 2011 Module	Reduce regulation of private sector
hsu305	CCES 2011 Module	Raise minimum wage to \$10
hsu306	CCES 2011 Module	Allow corporations unlimited campaign contributions
hsu310	CCES 2011 Module	Allow same-sex marriage
hsu311	CCES 2011 Module	Allow LGBT to legally form civil unions
hsu312	CCES 2011 Module	Ban or limit contraceptive use
hsu313	CCES 2011 Module	Ban sex between persons of same gender
hsu314	CCES 2011 Module	Require 24-hour waiting period for abortion
hsu320	CCES 2011 Module	Raise taxes a few hundred dollars
hsu321	CCES 2011 Module	Raise taxes on rich (\$250,000+/year)
hsu322	CCES 2011 Module	Reduce tax break for homeowners
hsu323	CCES 2011 Module	Make retirees pay for Medicare
hsu324	CCES 2011 Module	Increase capital gains taxes
hsu325	CCES 2011 Module	Increase taxes on corporations
hsu326	CCES 2011 Module	Reduce Medicaid benefits for low-income
hsu327	CCES 2011 Module	Eliminate student loan subsidies
hsu328	CCES 2011 Module	Reduce federal worker pensions
hsu329	CCES 2011 Module	Make deep cuts in defense spending
hsu330	CCES 2011 Module	Increase retirement age to 68



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Variable	Survey	Question Text
hsu360	CCES 2011 Module	Fine businesses that hire illegal immigrants
hsu361	CCES 2011 Module	Allow states to deport illegal immigrants
hsu362	CCES 2011 Module	Allow police to ask for immigration documents
hsu363	CCES 2011 Module	Deport all illegal immigrants
hsu364	CCES 2011 Module	Remove fence on border with Mexico
hsu365	CCES 2011 Module	Same treatment of Mexican & Canadian immigrants
hsu367	CCES 2011 Module	Allow states to admit immigrants
hsu370	CCES 2011 Module	Federal government should protect environment
hsu371	CCES 2011 Module	Require power plants to reduce emissions
hsu372	CCES 2011 Module	Eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency
hsu373	CCES 2011 Module	Require 10% electricity renewable statewide
hsu374	CCES 2011 Module	Require 25% electricity renewable statewide
hsu375	CCES 2011 Module	Government should protect endangered species
hsu376	CCES 2011 Module	States should set pollution limits
hsu377	CCES 2011 Module	States should keep waterways clean
hsu378	CCES 2011 Module	Support coal plant within 25 miles of home
hsu379	CCES 2011 Module	Support wind power plant within 25 miles of home
hsu380	CCES 2011 Module	Support oil/gas drilling within 25 miles of home
hsu381	CCES 2011 Module	Power plants near home should be regulated
cc350	CCES 2011	Should we take action on climate change?
ucm301	CCES 2012 Module	Guaranteed universal health insurance
ucm302	CCES 2012 Module	Protect worker right to unionize
ucm303	CCES 2012 Module	Government reduce income inequality
ucm304	CCES 2012 Module	Reduce regulation of private sector
ucm305	CCES 2012 Module	Raise the minimum wage to \$10
ucm306	CCES 2012 Module	Allow corporations unlimited campaign contributions
ucm307	CCES 2012 Module	Allow drilling in Alaskan Wildlife Refuge
ucm321	CCES 2012 Module	City should provide health benefits to same-sex partners
ucm322	CCES 2012 Module	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in city
ucm323	CCES 2012 Module	Subsidize mass transit for low-income in city
ucm324	CCES 2012 Module	Subsidies for residential solar energy in city
ucm325	CCES 2012 Module	Ban smoking in local bars/restaurants in city
ucm326	CCES 2012 Module	Require local residents to recycle in city
ucm327	CCES 2012 Module	Reduce pension for government employees in city
ucm328	CCES 2012 Module	Tax breaks to incentivize businesses to move in city
ucm329	CCES 2012 Module	Limit how much landlords can raise rent in city
ucm330	CCES 2012 Module	Offer subsidized housing to homeless in city
ucm331	CCES 2012 Module	Eliminate tenure for school teachers in city
ucm332	CCES 2012 Module	Close city parks to save money
ucm333	CCES 2012 Module	Close city libraries to save money
ucm370	CCES 2012 Module	Require parental permission for teen abortion
ucm371	CCES 2012 Module	Require 24-hour waiting period for abortion
ucm372	CCES 2012 Module	Require photo ID to vote
ucm373	CCES 2012 Module	Legalize casino gambling in states
ucm374	CCES 2012 Module	State law capping property taxes
ucm375	CCES 2012 Module	Take away union right to bargain
ucm376	CCES 2012 Module	Allow LGBT to legally form civil unions
ucm377	CCES 2012 Module	Allow same-sex marriage
ucm378	CCES 2012 Module	In-state tuition for illegal immigrant graduates
ucm379	CCES 2012 Module	If your state opted out of Medicaid expansion
ucm380	CCES 2012 Module	Allow death penalty for convicted murderers
ucm381	CCES 2012 Module	Require waiting period for gun purchases
ucm382	CCES 2012 Module	Raise the minimum wage to \$8
ucm401	CCES 2012 Module	Set limits on CO2 emissions
ucm402	CCES 2012 Module	Require 10% electricity renewable statewide
ucm403	CCES 2012 Module	Require 25% electricity renewable statewide
ucm404	CCES 2012 Module	State gasoline tax less than \$0.25/gallon
ucm405	CCES 2012 Module	Renewable energy tax on electricity bill
ucm406	CCES 2012 Module	Require more efficient use of electricity
ucm407	CCES 2012 Module	Set limits on CO2 emissions
ucm408	CCES 2012 Module	State should prepare for climate change
cc321	CCES 2012	Should we take action on climate change?
cc324	CCES 2012	When should abortions be allowed?
cc325	CCES 2012	Protect environment over jobs/economy
cc327	CCES 2012	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies

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Variable	Survey	Question Text
cc326	CCES 2012	Amendment banning gay marriage
cc332a	CCES 2012	House Budget plan - cut Medicare/Medicaid
cc332b	CCES 2012	Simpson-Bowles plan - 15% cuts
cc332c	CCES 2012	Middle Class Tax Cut Act
cc332d	CCES 2012	Tax Hike Prevent Act
cc332e	CCES 2012	Religious exemption for birth control coverage
cc332f	CCES 2012	Free trade agreement with Korea
cc332g	CCES 2012	Repeal Affordable Care Act
cc332h	CCES 2012	Approve Keystone XL pipeline
cc332i	CCES 2012	Support ACA - required health insurance
cc332j	CCES 2012	Allow Gays in the Military
cc322_1	CCES 2012	Citizenship opportunity for illegal immigrants
cc322_2	CCES 2012	Increase patrols of U.S.-Mexico border
cc322_3	CCES 2012	Allow police to question suspected immigrants
cc322_4	CCES 2012	Fine businesses that hire illegal immigrants
cc329	CCES 2013	Allow same-sex marriage
cc332a	CCES 2013	Prohibit abortions after 22nd week
cc332b	CCES 2013	Simpson-Bowles plan - 15% cuts
cc332c	CCES 2013	Repeal Affordable Care Act
cc332d	CCES 2013	Approve Keystone XL pipeline
cc332e	CCES 2013	Allow internet sales to be taxed
cc332f	CCES 2013	Violence Against Women Act
cc332g	CCES 2013	Block NSA collection of phone records
cc332h	CCES 2013	Decentralize education decision-making
cc327	CCES 2013	When should abortions be allowed?
cc328	CCES 2013	Protect environment over jobs/economy
cc330	CCES 2013	Affirmative action for discriminatory companies
cc325	CCES 2013	Should we take action on climate change?
cc13_320a	CCES 2013	Background check for all gun sales
cc13_320b	CCES 2013	Prohibit publication of names of gun owners
cc13_320c	CCES 2013	Ban high-capacity gun magazines
cc13_320d	CCES 2013	Ban assault rifles
cc13_320e	CCES 2013	Easier to apply for concealed-carry permit
cc326_1	CCES 2013	Citizenship opportunity for illegal immigrants
cc326_2	CCES 2013	Increase patrols of U.S.-Mexico border
cc326_3	CCES 2013	Allow police to question suspected immigrants
cc326_4	CCES 2013	Fine businesses that hire illegal immigrants