

Partisan Signaling and Agenda Control in the U.S. House of Representatives

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Abstract:

Theories of partisan influence in Congress suggest that the leadership can influence vote choices and legislative outcomes. Cox and McCubbins (2005) have theorized and Cox and Poole (2002) have found that party strength is most evident on procedural matters. In this paper, we take advantage of a new source of data providing updates from the Majority Leader's Office that at times indicate the leadership's positions on upcoming legislation and scheduled floor votes. Utilizing these data from recent congresses, we seek to offer a more nuanced explanation of voting in the U.S. House of Representatives. Whereas others have implicitly assumed that the party influences all procedural votes, our preliminary findings suggest that not all procedural votes are created equal. In fact, these floor updates indicate that the majority party offers direction on some procedural votes (e.g., ordering the previous question and special rules), but not on others (e.g., the motion to recommit). Our findings have direct implications for individual voting behavior and legislative outcomes in Congress.

Proponents of partisan influence in Congress (e.g., Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Cox and McCubbins 2005, 2007; Rohde 1991) believe that legislative outcomes can be manipulated for both electoral and policy benefits. Generally, these scholars argue that party organizations have two ways of manipulating these outcomes—negative and positive agenda control. The former often entails keeping divisive legislative proposals off the agenda, especially if party leaders suspect that the outcome is in doubt (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Gailmard and Jenkins 2007). Positive agenda control, on the other hand, typically entails arm-twisting, vote buying, or other aggressive tactics associating with whipping (Rohde 1991). These strategies help to ensure that the majority party is disproportionately successful in obtaining their desired policy outcomes.

Both negative and positive agenda control seek to balance both electoral and policy goals in Congress (Mayhew 1974). For instance, Cox and McCubbins (2005) posit that party leaders attempt to keep divisive votes off the agenda that might otherwise result in legislative defeats, which could adversely harm the party's brand name or reputation. Nevertheless, the nature of the legislative process dictates that controversial policies have to be voted on in Congress from time to time in order to bolster the party's record of accomplishments. To avoid getting "rolled" on divisive issues, party leaders seek to ensure near unanimous support on procedural matters that dictate the manner in which controversial bills are debated and considered on the floor.¹ These procedural factors are less visible to constituents for the purposes of reelection, but are essential to the party for ensuring legislative passage (Cox and Poole 2002; Finocchiaro and Rohde 2008).

Recent work has confirmed the theoretical intuition that these procedural votes are of the highest priority to party organizations (see, e.g., Cox and Poole 2002; Roberts 2005; Snyder and Groseclose 2001). These and other scholars have found that party effects are more prevalent on

¹ A party (or group of members) is rolled when it votes against a measure that nevertheless passes.

procedural votes and that legislators are more receptive to party pressure on these types of votes. As such, party leaders are more aggressive in seeking to influence votes on procedural matters given that they can mean the difference between victory and defeat on the floor. The workhorse of the parties in this regard is the whip system of Congress. Legislators within this system serve as loyal agents of the party leadership to ensure that rank-and-file members fall in line on tough votes that occur in Congress (Burden and Frisby 2004; Evans and Grandy 2009).

To date, party theorists have done an excellent job describing the macro-level concepts and rationale behind *why* parties seek to influence procedural votes in Congress. Much less attention has been devoted to the micro-level factors associated with *how* party leaders seek to specifically manipulate procedural outcomes. Even before whipping occurs, legislators are often given guidance on how to vote, yet very little is known about this agenda-setting process. In order to shed light on this important process, we utilize a new source of data providing updates from the Majority Leader's Office that indicate the leadership's positions on upcoming legislation and scheduled floor votes. Utilizing these data from the 110th and 111th Congresses, we seek to offer a more nuanced explanation of partisan signaling ("weak whipping") and voting in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The organization of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we review the theoretical literature on agenda control and party influence in Congress. From there, we place whipping in the broader institutional and procedural context and discuss how it can facilitate party leaders' goals. We next introduce the data employed in our analysis, particularly as it pertains to how the party leadership sets the agenda on procedural matters. We present descriptive evidence before turning to more systematic analysis of how often legislators vote with the leadership on whipped votes. The final section concludes and discusses the implications of our findings.

Theories of Partisan Agenda Control in Congress

The past two decades has witnessed an explosion in the growth of scholarship detailing the influence of political parties in Congress. Initially, students of congressional politics set out to address the resurgence in parties after a substantial decline in the preceding decades (see, e.g., Rohde 1991). Soon thereafter, Krehbiel (1993) challenged this view of parties by arguing that for party influence to be significant, it must be documented independently of legislators' own personal preferences. In response to this challenge issued by Krehbiel, a number of attempts were made in the ensuing years to demonstrate that parties did indeed independently influence legislative outcomes in Congress (see, e.g., Aldrich and Rohde 2000; Binder, Lawrence, and Maltzman 1999; Cox and Poole 2002; Snyder and Groseclose 2000).

During the last decade, emphasis has gradually shifted away from the question of whether parties matter in Congress to how exactly parties influence policy outcomes. In the view of Cox and McCubbins (2005), the primary influence of Congress is through negative agenda control. In particular, the majority party will block legislation from coming to the floor if such legislation is likely to split or highlight divisions within the party. This is often accomplished through the practice of using restrictive rules issued by the Rules Committee to prevent members of the minority from introducing controversial amendments (on this point, see also Marshall 2005). Alternatively, the Rules Committee can simply refuse to issue a rule to any legislative proposal that may threaten to fracture the party. By blocking unpopular initiatives, the majority party increases its efficiency and protects its brand name, which facilitates legislators' electoral and policy goals.

This negative agenda-centered theory of party influence contrasts with the perspective of party influence offered in a series of papers by Aldrich and Rohde. In their view, party leaders

influence legislative outcomes by means of a mix of both positive and negative agenda control. More specifically, the ability of party leaders to increase the discipline of rank-and-file members is conditional upon both intraparty homogeneity and interparty heterogeneity. As the majority party becomes more homogenous, the leadership has more discretion in choosing when and how to employ its agenda power. Typically, this will entail arm-twisting, promising favors, engaging in vote buying, and whipping recalcitrant members on crucial or important votes (see, e.g., Aldrich and Rohde 2000).

In building upon these theoretical perspectives, other scholars have sought to further refine how parties specifically influence legislative outcomes. These scholars have largely done so by focusing on positive agenda control. In particular, they highlight what types of issues and votes party leaders choose to pressure rank-and-file members. For instance, Snyder and Groseclose (2000) utilize a simple scaling technique and find that party pressure is elevated on procedural and platform-type votes.² In a follow-up, Cox and Poole (2002) take issue with the size of the party effects Snyder and Groseclose report. However, they do report strong findings for increased party effects on procedural votes – such as votes on special rules or chamber organization. Furthermore, in his response to Krehbiel and Meirowitz (2002), Roberts (2005) finds elevated party pressure on another procedural tool, the motion to recommit.³

Finocchiaro and Rohde (2008) further investigate the interrelationship between positive and negative agenda control. They argue that the distinctions between the two are not as clear as the previous literature suggests. In particular, they examine votes on questions to order special rules and votes to adopt special rules from 1953 to 2002. They find that – contrary to the

² Platform-type votes include most economic issues – such as budgets, social security and the debt ceiling.

³ The motion to recommit can only be offered by an opponent of a bill at the conclusion of debate. If the motion is successful, it sends the bill back to the parent committee (Oleszek 2007). As Roberts (2005) notes, supporters of the bill can amend the motion.

expectations outlined by Cox and McCubbins (2005) – the majority party was often “rolled” on these procedural roll calls (on this point, see also Carson, Monroe, and Robinson n.d.). They emphasize that success on those votes was highly conditional on the amount of power allotted to and exercised by party leadership. As such, the authors conclude that, “useful and important analytical distinction(s) between positive and negative agenda control is not as clear in practice as it is in theory when we consider the construction of procedural terms for floor consideration of legislation” (Finocchiaro and Rohde 2008: 22).

Partisan Agenda Control and Procedural Signaling

Implicit in the preceding theoretical discussion is the notion that legislators rely on certain cues when making important voting decisions. At the most basic level, legislators rely on their underlying ideological attitudes, which may or may not be especially intense on a given issue. When the attitudes are not well defined, legislators may be pulled in conflicting directions by their constituency, party organizations, and special interests (Arnold 1990). On certain issues, ideological, partisan, and constituency interests may closely align with one another. However, on more controversial and salient issues, considerably more divergence might emerge among these interests, forcing representatives to make much more difficult and consequential decisions (Kingdon 1989).

As much as possible, the party leadership attempts to make roll call voting decisions as easy as they can for its members on most legislation that comes before Congress. While the majority party wants to win, it frequently does not need its entire membership to fall in line to do so. Moreover, the party leadership is preoccupied with maintaining its majority status and doing so occasionally requires placating representatives who represent cross-pressured districts (Arnold

1990).⁴ In order to maximize the likelihood the party will win while simultaneously minimizing its loss of seats, the party leadership must be strategic in choosing when to pressure members on controversial legislation or key votes. Thus, when the party leadership finds it has more votes than necessary to pass a bill (or realizes they will not have enough votes to be successful), it will release extraneous, cross-pressured members to vote with their constituencies. These legislators might otherwise find it difficult to support the party position on controversial legislation (King and Zeckhauser 2003).

Often, the pivotal vote is the underlying rule or vote on procedure and not the substance of the legislation. Simply stated, congressional rules govern the manner in which a bill is debated, amended, and considered on the floor. By dictating the amendment process, rules have the ability to centralize proposal power under the majority party leadership. In other words, the leadership determines what gets voted upon on the floor and what does not (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Cox 2000; Rohde 1991; Smith 1989). Despite their importance, rules are often less salient to constituents given the complexity associated with them. Indeed, votes on special rules often lack the “traceability” of amendment or final passage votes that would otherwise attract negative attention from constituents or special interests (Arnold 1990).

In light of the preceding discussion, we should expect to see greater evidence of partisan influence at the procedural stage of the legislative process. This is not to say that whipping does not occur at later stages of this process. In fact, Evans and Grandy (2009) document the role of whipping in Congress, particularly on final passage votes. As they contend, the whip system in Congress is utilized largely to facilitate the passage of legislation, especially when it appears as though legislators are wavering in their support of key tenants of the majority’s agenda. Over

⁴ As Mayhew (1974: 99) argues, “There is no member of either house who would not be politically injured—by being made to toe a party line on all policies (unless of course he could determine the line).”

time, the whip system has become much more important in Congress as the size of partisan majorities has been reduced and polarization among the membership has increased (Burden and Frisby 2004; Evans and Grandy 2009).

Despite recent scholarship documenting the importance of the whip system in Congress, little systematic research has examined the micro-level processes associated with party pressure. For instance, we simply do not know when, how, and under what conditions the majority party leadership instructs members at the procedural stage of the legislative process. In many cases, these instructions should occur when the party needs member support and the outcome is uncertain. However, as many rules are technical in nature, the party will often provide as much guidance as possible to alleviate problems associated with information asymmetry when it comes to voting on procedural matters. In the next section, we discuss how the majority leadership has begun utilizing emails to deliver floor updates on upcoming procedural votes in Congress.

Data on Partisan Signaling

The primary data for this paper are the Democratic Leader's floor update emails for the second session of the 110th Congress and the first session of the most recent Congress, the 111th.⁵ The majority leader's office sends these updates to Democratic members and their staff while Congress is in session multiple times throughout the day.⁶ Generally, there is a morning email (separate from the *Daily Leader*) that describes the legislative agenda for the day. Then as votes approach, the office sends out additional emails. On some votes, the emails provide simple instructions such as vote yes or no. For amendments, the emails frequently give a one or two sentence description of the substance of the amendment. The emails will often give warnings

⁵ The emails are forwarded to one of the authors on a real time basis from a Democratic staff member.

⁶ The Majority Leader also sends out the *Weekly* and *Daily Leader*, that lays out the expected votes for the day or week. These emails do not include any instructions.

that the Republicans might offer dilatory motions such as the motion to adjourn or force a vote on approval of the House journal.

Figure 1 provides an example of one email and instructions. For two votes, the motion to adjourn and the special rule, there are instructions to vote yes. For the two substantive votes, there are no instructions. We want to be clear that these instructions are not the same as traditional whipping of rank-and-file members since we have no evidence of the leader's office counting votes or "twisting arms." In addition, since the leader sometimes sends these emails only minutes before (or even after a vote has started) there is no time to do anything other than to offer the leader's position.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the different types of votes taken by the House and the proportion of the time the party offered instructions during the 110th and 111th Congresses.⁷ It is clear from the table that the party gives the majority of instructions on procedural votes while only offering a few instructions on substantive votes. In fact, the majority party *never* provided instructions on the final passage of a bill or conference report, which is largely consistent with the theoretical story presented above.

Within the procedure category, the leadership frequently gives instructions on two types of important positive agenda setting votes – moving the question on a special rule, and then the vote on the rule. It is essential that the party win on these votes because a loss can concede agenda setting powers to the minority party. Instructions were commonly provided on motions to adjourn since losing this vote could shut down the session prematurely if offered by the minority Republicans, or cause the House to stay in session beyond a desired date when the motion is put forward by the majority party. Finally, the leadership frequently supplied

⁷ The PIPC program at Duke University coded the vote types for the 110th Congress while the authors coded the votes for the 111th Congress.

instructions on motions to table. Generally, a motion to table is utilized to dispense with other motions that might force the majority to take an uncomfortable vote (Tiefer 1989). To gain a better idea of how the party leadership utilizes these instructions across the two congresses in our analysis, we turn to more systematic tests in the next section.

Expectations and Preliminary Findings

As noted above, the majority party leadership relies on instructions in order to signal to members how they would like them to vote on important procedural matters. As such, the first question we consider here is the extent to which instructions make a difference. If they matter at all, we should find a greater proportion of Democrats supporting their party's leadership position on votes with instructions compared to votes without instructions. In order to measure the party position on votes without instructions, we initially compared how the majority leader, Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and the majority whip, James Clyburn (D-SC), voted. If they both voted the same way, we used that position as the party position. If they differed, or one of them did not vote on a procedural matter, we coded the way the majority of the party voted as the party's position.

In Table 2, we perform a series of difference of means tests to determine if rank-and-file members are more likely to vote with the party when they receive instructions. For all types of votes, the results appear mixed. During the 110th Congress, members were more likely to vote with the party when there were instructions, but this does not appear to be the case for the 111th Congress.⁸ Again, this is not especially surprising given our earlier discussion. When it comes to voting on substance, members must walk a fine line in terms of balancing constituent and

⁸ Although we can only speculate as to why this may be the case, one possible explanation may be that this coding includes all unanimous and near-unanimous votes. This could inflate party unity scores on less controversial, and therefore, non-whipped legislative votes.

party pressure. Substantive votes are highly traceable, but procedural votes are less so. Thus, examining the two together could distort our overall interpretation. As such, we narrow the focus exclusively to procedural votes.

When we shift to just procedural votes, we find consistent evidence across the two congresses as rank-and-file members were significantly more likely to support the party on votes with instructions. Although the differences appear small at first glance, a difference of one percent of the Democratic majority corresponds to roughly 2.35 votes in the 110th Congress and 2.56 in the 111th Congress.⁹ This indicates that instructions are effective and may mean the difference between winning or losing on an extremely close procedural vote (which could lead to the failure of a major majority party substantive initiative). These results are consistent with our expectations about the overall lack of traceability on procedural votes.¹⁰

Results

In the previous section, our findings suggest that partisan instructions are effective from a leadership perspective. As noted, they could mean the difference between a handful of key votes on important procedural matters. We shift our focus in this section to examine why individual Democrats are more or less likely to support the party's preferred position on votes with partisan instructions. To measure party support, we calculated the percent of the time each member voted in accordance with the leadership's directives. This variable ranges from a high of 1 for both congresses to a low of .63 in the 110th Congress (Nick Lampson, D-TX) and .33 in the 111th Congress (Walt Minnick, D-ID).

⁹ Again, as footnote 8 indicated, we are also including unanimous and near-unanimous votes in these calculations, which likely biases the results against our expectations.

¹⁰ Additionally, on dilatory motions (approving the journal and the motion to adjourn), we find no difference across both congresses.

Our theoretical expectations here are relatively straightforward. In general, we expect that rank-and-file members who are ideologically close to the party leaders should vote with the party more often. In contrast, as these members move further away from the leadership, their propensity to defect should increase. We measure this variable, *Distance from Majority Leader*, as the absolute difference between an individual representative's NOMINATE score and Steny Hoyer's NOMINATE score (-.65 in the 110th Congress and -.66 for the 111th Congress). Since the majority leader's office sends these instructions, we feel that Hoyer's NOMINATE score is an appropriate baseline measure.¹¹

We also expect members from districts with a strong Democratic base should also vote with the party more often. This conjecture holds for two reasons. First, a Democrat with a strong base does not always have to decide between voting with her district and voting with the party. On most votes, the two positions are similar enough that when a member votes with the party, she is also voting with her constituents. However, members who represent districts with a smaller Democratic base are often forced to cast votes that either support the party or the voters back home. Second, we also expect that the amount of Democratic support in the district and a member's electoral safety should be highly correlated.¹² As such, members from strong Democratic districts can support the party more often, even if it means occasionally voting against the district, and still feel secure about returning to Congress year after year. We measure *Democratic base* as the Democratic presidential candidate's share of the two-party vote in the election prior to the respective Congress.

¹¹ An alternative measure might be Speaker Pelosi's NOMINATE score. However, since the Speaker does not regularly vote, her NOMINATE score may not be an accurate reflection of the leadership's position (Poole and Rosenthal 2007).

¹² The two correlate at an average of .76 for both congresses.

Next, we also expect that candidates who faced a primary challenge should support the party less compared to legislators who did not have to contend for their party's nomination. If a member has to worry about a challenge from within her own party, she usually needs to be particularly careful not to stray from the district's views on the issues. While most constituents do not pay attention to procedural votes, a primary challenger will likely use a high (or low) party support score as a way to show the member is out of touch with the district. To measure this concept, we include a dichotomous variable, *Primary Challenge*, coded one for members who faced a primary challenger and zero otherwise.¹³

Additionally, we include a dichotomous variable, *Freshman*, to determine if freshman members are more or less likely to support the party leadership. From one perspective, it would make sense for freshmen to be more deferential to the party given that they are new to the job and often must seek guidance elsewhere in terms of how to vote (Kingdon 1989). Members in the party leadership provide a good source for cues in this sense and can often reward loyal freshmen with campaign money for their next election (Cann 2008). An alternative perspective emphasizes the individual ideological qualities of those members. In the 110th and 111th Congresses, the Democratic Party saw an influx of members from more conservative House districts, which could result in an increased propensity for member defections among these freshmen legislators.

The dependent variable for this part of our analysis is the percent support for the party's position on votes carrying instructions. Since our dependent variable is continuous, we use OLS as our estimation procedure. Votes where the member abstained or was not present at the time the vote was taken were coded as missing.

¹³ Since some members face only token competition in a primary, we coded members who received 90 percent or more of the primary vote as a zero. Freshmen legislators were omitted from this coding.

Table 3 presents our results for both the 110th and the 111th Congresses.¹⁴ For both of these congresses, members were significantly less likely to support the party position as the ideological distance increased. This result is strong in both Congresses. Not surprisingly, member ideology plays an important role in the decision-making process for individual rank-and-file legislators. When it comes to the size of the Democratic base in a legislator's district, members with a larger base support the party more often, although the result is only significant at the .06 level for the 111th Congress. This clearly indicates that constituency pressure influences members of Congress as they appear to be taking it into consideration when deciding how to vote with the leadership.

For the remaining control variables, we find that legislators in the 110th Congress who faced a primary challenger supported their party .011 percent less compared to members who ran unopposed in the primary election. This suggests that legislators are cautious about appearing too extreme at times in terms of voting with the leadership, especially if they suspect they might face a serious primary challenge. Interestingly, we found no support for this hypothesis in the 111th Congress. Lastly, freshmen were less likely to support the party's position when given instructions for the 111th Congress, but not the 110th Congress. As noted above, however, this result is not especially surprising given the number of moderate Democrats first elected to the House in 2008.

Conclusion

In this paper, we set out to accomplish three things. First, we wanted to document the micro-level role that the majority party plays in signaling legislators in terms of how to vote on

¹⁴ A test for heteroskedasticity indicated it was appropriate to use the Huber/White/sandwich estimator of variance in place of the "normal" standard errors.

important legislation. Although we are continuing to learn much about the whip system and its role in positive agenda control in Congress (see Evans and Grandy 2009), we know significantly less about the influence of party leadership prior to votes occurring on the floor. In particular, this paper has shown that the majority party is cognizant of the balance legislators must maintain in order to get reelected and support the party platform. As such, the leadership is strategic about choosing when to issue instructions on various types of votes. Specifically, the party leadership is more likely to signal positions on procedural matters where traceability is much lower and the risks to legislators are reduced (Arnold 1990).

The second goal for this paper was to begin to document an as yet understudied aspect of the legislative process. Prior research has often tried to measure the leadership's position on key votes taken in Congress. Unfortunately, since the Speaker typically does not vote on all matters before the House, it can be difficult to derive a position for the majority party leadership. The data that we employ in this paper clearly offers a viable, alternative specification that future work can utilize to tap into the majority's position on votes taking place in the House. Use of this measure could be important to students of congressional politics seeking to determine the role of party in influencing rank-and-file member behavior.

Our third and final goal in this paper was to apply the measure of partisan signaling to the individual decision-making processes used by rank-and-file legislators. Specifically, we wanted to determine what factors led to members adopting the majority party's position. In particular, we found that legislator ideology and constituency influence were important predictors in this decision calculus. The further legislators are from the majority party leadership's position, the less receptive they are to the signals they receive from the leadership. Furthermore, legislators are more likely to be receptive when their constituency is sympathetic to the party's position.

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Figure 1 – Example of Floor Update



Leader's Floor Update

The House is now taking the following votes:

- 1) **Adjournment Resolution** (H.Con.Res. 172) - To provide for the House to adjourn for the August District Work Period – **VOTE YES – 15 minutes**
- 2) **H.Res. 691** - Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2749 - Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009 - **VOTE YES – 5 minutes**
- 3) **H.R. 2728** - William Orton Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act (Rep. Lofgren - House Administration) Suspension bill – **5 minutes**
- 4) **H.R. 2510** - Absentee Ballot Track, Receive, and Confirm Act (Rep. Davis (CA) - House Administration) Suspension bill – **5 minutes**

Next votes: about an hour on motion to recommit and final passage of H.R. 2749 - Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009 (Rep. Dingell – Energy and Commerce).

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Table 1 – Vote Types by Congress

| Vote Type | 110 th Congress | | 111 th Congress | |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| | Total Votes | % Instructions | Total Votes | % Instructions |
| Substantive and Suspensions | | | | |
| Final Passage of a Bill | 45 | | 48 | |
| Final Passage of Conference Report | 4 | | 4 | |
| Final Passage of Resolution | 2 | | 1 | |
| Final Passage of Joint Resolution | | | 1 | |
| Passage of a Bill under Suspension of the Rules | 133 | | 103 | |
| Passage of a Joint Resolution under Suspension of the Rules | 2 | | | |
| Final Passage of Concurrent Resolution | 7 | 14.3 | 6 | 66.7 |
| Passage of a Concurrent Resolution under Suspension of the Rules | 18 | | 15 | |
| Passage of a Resolution under Suspension of the Rules | 86 | | 87 | |
| Straight Amendments | 82 | | 224 | 2.2 |
| Passage over Presidential Veto | 5 | 20.0 | | |
| Motion to Suspend the Rules and Concur | 6 | | 1 | |
| Procedural | | | | |
| Motion to Reconsider | | | 16 | |
| Appeal of the Chair's Ruling | 2 | 50.0 | | |
| Motion to Recommit to Conference | 1 | | 1 | |
| Motion to Rise from the Committee of the Whole | 3 | 100.0 | 1 | |
| Passage of Special Rule | 65 | 80.0 | 51 | 86.3 |
| Motion to Commit | | | 3 | 33.3 |
| Motion to Consider | 5 | 100.0 | 5 | 80.0 |
| Motion to Refer | 2 | | 1 | 100.0 |
| Motion to Order Previous Question | 1 | | | |
| Election of Speaker | | | 1 | |
| Motion to Recommit | 35 | | 31 | |
| Motion to Instruct Conferees | 10 | | 4 | |
| Motion to Table | 38 | 65.8 | 24 | 75.0 |
| Motion to Recede and Concur | 16 | | 6 | |
| Previous Question on Special Rules | 68 | 82.4 | 27 | 88.9 |
| Dilatory | | | | |
| Motion to Approve House Journal | 13 | 92.3 | 5 | 100.0 |
| Motion to Adjourn | 39 | 79.5 | 14 | 50.0 |
| Miscellaneous (non dilatory) | | | 4 | |

Table 2 - Percent Party Support by Instructions

| Vote Type | Percent Democratic Support | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| | 110 th Congress | | 111 th Congress | |
| | Instructions | No Instructions | Instructions | No Instructions |
| All | .981 | .969* | .957 | .963 |
| Procedural | .983 | .945* | .956 | .936* |
| Dilatory | .977 | .976 | .951 | .985 |

* Difference statistically significant at p = .05

Table 3 – Member Specific Democratic Party Support

| Variable | 110 th Congress | 111 th Congress |
|---|--|--|
| | Coefficient (Robust Standard Error) | Coefficient (Robust Standard Error) |
| Absolute Distance from Majority Leader | -.320* (.061) | -.567* (.070) |
| Democratic Base | .001* (.0002) | .0006† (.0003) |
| Primary Challenge | -.011* (.005) | .003 (.009) |
| Freshman | -.003 (.007) | -.018* (.008) |
| Constant | .936* (.009) | .996* (.024) |
| <i>N</i> | 236 | 257 |
| F | 12.62* | 30.91* |
| Adjusted R ² | .52 | .67 |

* $p < .05$, † $p < .06$