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THE DYNAMICS OF VOTING IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: 
CHANGE AND STABILITY IN ROLL-CALL DECISIONS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate

School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to explain when and why members of the House of Representatives reverse their voting positions on controversial, recurring issues. Students of Congress have long argued that members rarely alter their voting patterns, both because members' personal policy preferences show a high degree of stability and because members wish to avoid the appearance of inconsistency. I contend that voting stability has limits, and that these limits are related to the use of the vote history as a decision cue: members exhibit "bounded stability" in their voting behavior, adhering to past positions much of the time, but becoming more likely to defect when the vote history contains less value, even when their actual policy views have not changed. I argue that attention is an important part of this process, helping to determine when members will reassess the vote history's value.

I provide new evidence for systematic change in voting through quantitative case studies of three distinct, recurring issues in the contemporary House: the antiabortion Hyde Amendment, foreign aid appropriations, and minimum wage increases. A fourth case--the slavery-related "gag rule" from the antebellum period--provides a basis for historical comparison. In each of the four cases, I explore members' long-term voting histories using event history analysis. The results demonstrate that members change their
positions in response to institutional, electoral, and constituency factors; it also suggests that attention-shifting factors in the decision environment can redefine member choices and that crosspressuring among decision influences leads to greater instability in voting.

Within the study of congressional decision making, my findings suggest that prior scholarship has overstated the importance of stability in congressional voting. On a much broader level, by challenging the dominant view of position stability and elaborating on the few studies that reveal position change, the research demonstrates that members do not function simply as placeholders for a fixed viewpoint in the House for their entire careers. Congressional voting has a dynamic component, and this fact ultimately implies that the House can move in new policy directions even without mass shifts in composition through electoral mechanisms.
To Mom, Dad, and Lynda
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I have been fortunate also to work among colleagues at Ohio State who have made my research more careful and my thinking more broad than it otherwise would have been. My fellow graduate students have contributed in varying ways to the development of this work. Most significantly, Ed Hasecke's input and carefully-offered critiques have had a great impact, helping me to sharpen the argument and, later, to deal with issues of interpretation and presentation. Tobin Grant provided incisive suggestions, and Kevin Scott patiently assisted me with methodological questions. Conversations with Kim Conger and Quin Monson were also helpful. I thank each of them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Come Senators, Congressmen, please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway; don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt will be he who has stalled
'Cause the battle outside raging
Will soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a changin'

—Bob Dylan (1963)

In the vast body of research that explores congressional decision making, one axiom is virtually universally accepted: members of Congress rarely change their voting positions. The reasons for this principle are at the core of political scientists' understanding of goal-oriented congressional behavior. To the extent that the reelection goal motivates members, they should find that maintaining stable, consistent long-term positions allows them to build constituent trust and avoid charges of vacillation. Similarly, where goals of making good public policy are more prominent, members' personal ideological viewpoints are likely to inform their voting decisions, and personal ideology should provide a consistent decision cue time after time. Even more broadly, regardless of the specific goal or set of goals that a particular member harbors, we can
expect that members will vote consistently because they rely on past votes as a reliable foundation for present decisions. It is hardly surprising, then, that congressional scholars describe member voting as overwhelmingly stable—one recent study forcefully argued that “contemporary members of Congress do not adapt their positions during their careers but simply enter and maintain a fixed position until they die, retire or are defeated” (Poole and Rosenthal 1997, 74).

But overlooked amidst this broad, intuitive picture of stability is a sizable amount of substantively significant position change. Even a glance at members’ voting records on recurring decisions reveals fascinating patterns of stability and change. House members’ periodic votes on increases in the federal minimum wage provide an illustration. During the 50 years in which Congress has considered wage increases, numerous members have reversed their positions on the issue. Jamie Whitten (D-MS), for instance, voted consistently in favor of wage increases from 1949 through 1972, but abruptly switched into opposition in 1974 and continued to oppose wage increases until he left the House in 1995. By contrast, William Poage (D-TX) cast one “yea” vote on a minimum wage increase in 1949, reversed positions, and consistently opposed subsequent increases until his resignation in 1978. More recently, John Porter (R-IL) followed a similar pattern, voting for a wage increase once (in 1989) and then opposing the increases thereafter. Still other members show a complete absence of vote stability on the issue: Floyd Spence (R-SC) never cast two consecutive minimum wage votes in the same direction during the 1972-1999 period.
As an additional illustration, consider the annual roll-call on the House foreign aid appropriations bill. James Davis (D-GA) voted in favor of foreign aid appropriations from the inception of the modern aid program in the late 1940s through 1957—at which time he began voting against the appropriation, and he continued to oppose the annual bills through the end of his tenure in 1963. Guy VanderJagt (R-MI), who served from 1965 through 1993, voted against foreign aid during his first several congresses, but he began voting in favor of the appropriations in 1969 and continued to do so until he left the House. A more recent example is Larry Combest (R-TX). A foreign aid opponent during his early years in Congress (1985-1988), Combest became a supporter of aid in 1989 and proceeded to support aid appropriations through 1996.

Decision patterns like these raise numerous theoretically important questions about congressional voting. Are all members equally likely to display the position stability that we usually expect? If not, do individual members change their positions in a systematic fashion on controversial issues? Are some institutional and contextual factors more important than others in bringing about systematic position change? Is position change more likely in certain issue contexts than in others? Do members develop greater voting consistency over the course of their careers? Do the usual assumptions of voting stability apply equally well across congressional history? While these questions are critical to our understanding of congressional decision making, answers are difficult to find among existing research approaches.

Though the prevalent stability assumption is grounded in sound ideas about member behavior, it has resulted in a lack of individual-level empirical research on
position change in member behavior. Typically, research has looked at voting from a cross-sectional perspective or, when the temporal element is considered, through the lens of aggregate voting patterns that tend to obscure important dynamics. In turn, students of Congress have overlooked important features of voting decisions and the larger representational relationship that are embodied in the dynamics of voting continuity and change.

In the broadest sense, we cannot fully evaluate how representation is effected through congressional voting when we fail to see vote choices as having dynamic components. The representational relationship between member and constituency should be seen fundamentally as a process (Fenno 1978; 2000), an evolving connection that may emphasize varied priorities and behaviors at different times. Member decision making on specific issues may vary according to the unfolding representational relationship—members may alter their decisions in response to changes in the origin and magnitude of constituency trust. An understanding of the representational process, as manifested in congressional voting, requires more than a snapshot view of member behavior.

Even more basically, evaluating the representational connection demands that we consider whether members of Congress actively respond to changes in issues, to changes in constituency opinions and interests, and to changes in the institutional environment. Regardless of the specific representational role that a member may undertake, we should expect contextual changes to induce changes in decision making. If they do not, it is difficult to argue that members are functioning actively as representatives rather than mere placeholders for particular positions.
Of course, the political responsiveness of individual members leads us to another broad question that cannot be answered adequately without exploring the dynamic nature of decision making: can change occur in Congress' policy output through shifts in the positions of individual representatives, or is policy change a goal that can be attained only through the replacement of incumbent members with new representatives? Modern American democracy operates under the guiding assumptions that policy change is possible and that established political institutions should be the focus of agitation for change. Despite the roadblocks to swift change that are inherent in the American system, voters and activists alike assume that elected representatives will respond to demands for change. These assumptions highlight the crucial democratic importance of change within institutions—a phenomenon about which we know relatively little in the case of Congress. Political science cannot provide a full description of democratic representation in Congress without an empirical understanding of individual member decision making as a dynamic process.

Beyond the broad representational implications, our ability to explain congressional voting is limited by the assumption of stability in vote choice. Viewing member decisions as largely static, congressional scholars typically construct empirical models of vote choice that employ a series of exogenous variables to explain the variation between members' vote choices at discrete points in time. This approach, as others have noted (Van Doren 1990; Weisberg 1978), excludes from analysis the important variation

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1Research suggests that policy change does indeed occur with some regularity, whether as a result of member position change or replacement of incumbents (Page and Shapiro 1983; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995).
within the voting behavior of individual members on recurring issues. This intra-member variation contains information that will allow us to paint a more nuanced picture of the decision process. In particular, given that existing theories of congressional voting predict an overall pattern of stability in congressional voting, any systematic patterns of position change that appear within a broader picture of stability become especially instructive. The strength of the pressure toward stability implies that factors that predict position reversals are powerful theoretical variables.

I contend that individual members change their positions on recurring issues more frequently and more systematically than most existing scholarship implies—and, as the above discussion illustrates, I believe that the dynamic nature of individual decision making can affect the way we explain congressional behavior more broadly. To theoretically demonstrate the potential for instability in voting, I present an overall argument about the origin of position change (detailed in Chapter 3) that is grounded in some of the same ideas that typically lead to assumptions of stable voting. I focus on the utility of past votes ("vote history" in Kingdon's [1973] terms) as a decision cue on regularly recurring choices. Members make their choices with limited information and multiple goals in an uncertain environment (Arnold 1990; Jones 1994); as a result, they cannot and do not behave as omnisciently-rational decision makers, and they seek decision shortcuts that will allow them to best advance their goals under these pressured decision circumstances. Under usual conditions, their most reliable shortcut for voting in a way that will best satisfy (or least harm) their goals is to follow their vote history on the issue. But it is in this reliance on the vote history that I also find systematic tendencies
toward defection from past positions. Members exhibit a kind of "bounded stability" in their over-time voting behavior, adhering to past positions much of the time, but becoming more likely to defect when the vote history contains less value as a decision making cue.

In this research, I model this process of decision making on repeated choices, specifying empirically where the boundaries of vote stability can be found and how the same member's choices on virtually identical questions can fluctuate from one time to the next. The raw material for my empirical modeling of long-term choice is roll-call voting patterns on recurring issues, and the primary tool for exploring this data is event history analysis, a form of regression analysis that models how individual behavior or characteristics change over time in response to changes in other variables. Using this technique, I show that we can view each House member as being at risk, over time, of reversing his or her position on recurring questions, and I demonstrate that this risk is increased or decreased by a series of theoretically-related factors. I also use this approach to present an empirical picture of how the vote history evolves through a series of repeated roll-call votes, holding the expected influences on members' votes constant.

I create these models of decision stability and change in a series of quantitative case studies. My research centers on the processes that affect individual members' choices on individual, recurring issues, and this focus requires me to isolate series of individual roll-call positions on distinct questions. Three of the four cases I examine are from the contemporary Congress (i.e., post-World War II); they represent key controversies within three of the main issue areas in which Congress legislates--social
policy, economic policy, and foreign policy. A fourth case reaches back to the antebellum House and allows for a preliminary comparison of stability in the contemporary and nineteenth century contexts. Each issue provides a lengthy series of highly similar roll-call votes stretching over many years, allowing me to construct a vote series for each House member and then to use those vote records—and the evidence of stability and change contained within them—to build issue-specific models of the vote history and position change.

The research I present in the subsequent chapters is intended to demonstrate the prevalence of systematic position change in congressional voting, to specify the factors that affect member position change and stability across time, and to illustrate the significance of position change in the larger understanding of congressional decision making. These are the central objectives. But along the way, several auxiliary objectives will be met. One is to introduce a new and potentially illuminating approach to the study of congressional roll call behavior. While roll-call analysis is one of the more well-tilled fields in the study of American politics (see Weisberg, Heberlig, and Campoli 1999, ch. 24 for an overview), studies that present voting as a process over time are few. In a recent commentary in the Legislative Studies Section Newsletter, Timothy Nokken (2001) noted with approbation the recent increase in time-conscious congressional research but observed that the roll-call record is not well-suited to quantitative time-series analysis. By using event history analysis to study congressional roll-calls in this research, I demonstrate that time-sensitive large-n quantitative analysis can be conducted on the

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2 For a discussion of case selection, see Chapter 3.
ready record of House votes, and I demonstrate that doing so leads to important new conclusions about congressional decision making.

A second auxiliary objective (or perhaps, byproduct) of this research is to shed light on congressional policy making in the four issue areas of the case studies. Though this is not a policy study per se, the cases represent significant and controversial areas of Congress' work (past and present); by showing how voting choices and change take place on these issues, I believe the case studies add to a specific understanding of why Congress does what it does in these areas. The concluding sections of the case study chapters discuss how the empirical results inform not only the broader theory I am testing but also the politics of each issue.

**Chapter Outline**

Chapters Two and Three set the stage for the core of the analysis. Chapter Two surveys the state of research on congressional voting, with a particular focus on the way in which existing research treats voting over time and changes in member positions. Along with reviewing the limited work that has uncovered some evidence of position change, I detail the theoretical and methodological shortcomings that have led most scholars to reach the suspect conclusion that members of Congress are merely placeholders for particular issue positions. In Chapter Three, I synthesize a conception of member decision that points toward the theoretical reasons to expect members to change their positions in predictable ways. I also introduce the event history approach that forms the basis of the quantitative analysis in the later chapters; a brief discussion of case selection for the case studies appears here as well.
Chapters Four through Seven present the results for each of the four cases. In each chapter, I offer a short history of the issue's consideration in Congress, and I review what academics or journalists have said about the decision making politics on the issue. The remainder of each chapter consists of hypotheses, quantitative results, and discussion. Chapter Four takes up the Hyde Amendment, a highly controversial recurring vote pertaining to Medicaid abortion funding. Chapter Five turns to the annual House vote on foreign aid appropriations, a salient congressional foreign policy decision that offers an especially lengthy series of roll-calls. Chapter Six looks to a domestic economic issue—the periodic votes to increase the minimum wage—as an example of a visible position-taking vote on a constituency issue. Finally, in Chapter Seven, I compare these three contemporary cases with the evidence of vote histories and position changes in the antebellum House. I explore voting on the "gag rule," a bitterly controversial procedural vote in the 1830s and 1840s that prevented the House from considering abolition petitions for a decade. Chapter Eight concludes by drawing out the commonalities among the cases and assessing the meaning of the findings for congressional decision making.
CHAPTER 2

STABILITY, CHANGE, AND VOTE CHOICE: LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING WORK

...[T]here is substantial variation in the roll call careers of individual members even though aggregated data can, on occasion, lure us into concluding that nearly all members are extraordinarily consistent in their intracareer roll call activity... Summary statistics are just that. (Hibbing 1991, 105-106)

Given the profusion of existing roll-call voting studies, it is not surprising that questions about stability and change have received some attention in the past. Research that uncovers and explains systematic voting change, however, is relatively rare in the large body of voting studies. For both theoretical and methodological reasons, much congressional research either overlooks or explicitly rejects the significance of systematic position change and instead assumes voting choices to be stable. When evidence of change has been unearthed, existing work provides only a sketchy picture of it. In this chapter, I will set the context for the research presented in subsequent chapters by assessing what prior research has—and has not—had to say about change and stability.
**Time and Member Voting**

The theoretical perspective on member change I offer (outlined in Chapter Three) posits a process that requires us to view member positions in a long-term perspective. In order to explore the empirical reality of position change and its multiple sources, roll-call studies would need to explore the dynamics both of member positions and of exogenous forces in an over-time, long-term context. However, existing literature on congressional decision-making most often takes a cross-sectional perspective on the causes of member positions. Most research that does account for time either views voting at a high level of aggregation or in single-variable, descriptive analysis (I expand on these problems later in this chapter).

Research that considers the complex causes of vote positions is primarily cross-sectional. In other words, empirical roll-call analyses tend to look at both member positions and their causes in a snapshot, correlational perspective. Two limitations result from this static point of view. Obviously, a cross-sectional view of congressional voting cannot reveal systematic long-term change in member positions. But, more importantly, the static viewpoint provides an incomplete understanding of the causes of member positions. Without observing the connection between changes in exogenous forces and changes in positions, we cannot paint a nuanced picture of congressional decisions—either temporally or cross-sectionally.

Several congressional scholars have issued critiques of roll-call studies that redirect our attention to approaches that examine change in the long-term, highlighting the pathologies of cross-sectional decision studies. In one such critique, Weisberg (1978)
contends that many of the findings in the seminal roll-call studies (Cherryholmes and Shapiro 1969; Clausen 1973; Kingdon 1973; Matthews and Stimson 1975) need to be reassessed in terms of theoretical criteria for their significance. He concludes that broad theories of congressional voting must provide "verisimilitude to the process being modeled" in addition to demonstrating some improvement over a baseline naïve model (1978, 574).

In describing directions for future modeling of voting decisions, Weisberg argues that both long-term and short-term decision factors must be incorporated into a model of voting; changes over time must also enter into such a model since "legislative voting is longitudinal, dynamic, and incremental" and "sources of change can be evaluated in terms of how they deflect" a member's established voting history (Weisberg 1978, 571-572). Further, Weisberg recognizes the distinction between short-term and long-term influences on voting and instructs researchers to devise temporal analyses that will draw out this distinction. To the extent that theory-building can proceed inductively through empirical work, the Weisberg critique suggests that the process of developing decision theories for Congress is not complete without individual-level assessments of change.

In a similar analysis, VanDoren (1990) provides an incisive critique that isolates fundamental problems at several levels with existing roll-call analysis. One critique is especially important for the interpretation of all such research: roll-call decisions reflect a clear bias as explanations for congressional outcomes as a whole since roll calls are influenced by pre-floor processes. In studying roll-call votes as a dependent variable, "one is estimating the conditional effect of factors given that a proposal has received
committee approval and given that a roll-call occurs" (VanDoren 1990, 322). Other critiques in the VanDoren analysis, however, are aimed specifically at the cross-sectional nature of most roll-call research. He contends that the "explanation of policy position variation across members" (i.e., cross-sectional analysis of roll-calls) fails to explain the changes we observe in congressional policy, since the relative positions of members remain the same in most instances (1990, 312). And, cross-sectional roll-call studies have failed to reveal (convincingly, at least) the relative importance of constituency influences and ideology. While VanDoren gives us cause for general pessimism about explaining congressional decisions with roll-calls, he does argue that studying member decisions over time can help correct for some of the biases, particularly those that are introduced by studying exogenous variables on the basis of cross-member variation only (1990, 332). Temporal studies of individual roll-call behavior remain subject to VanDoren's critique that roll-calls are a highly unrepresentative subset of congressional decisions, yet the element of time will cure the cross-sectional pathology of measuring individual positions relative only to cross-sectional observations of other members.  

To the VanDoren and Weisberg critiques, I would add at least one more: quite simply, research on roll-call behavior has looked at voting empirically in ways that lead us to conceive of voting theoretically as discrete choices, each made independently of a longer process of decision and representation. We know that each roll-call does not take place in a vacuum, that a series of votes precedes and likely will follow it. Yet our

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3 Nokken's recent opinion article on time and congressional studies (2001) echoes the general call for time-sensitive Congress research that VanDoren and Weisberg issued in previous decades.
empirical tendency to understand a member’s vote relative to other members’ simultaneous votes rather than in relation to past and future votes encourages us to overlook the dynamic features of member decision making. These assessments of the roll-call literature highlight the need for a comprehensive study of individual roll-call voting over long periods of time. Such an approach, which has not yet been pursued in any detail or with recently developed methodological tools, can overcome existing modeling problems as well as shed new light on our theoretical interpretation of congressional decisions.

An analogy from the judicial politics literature may serve to underscore the importance of temporal research in revealing unexpected facets of individual decisions. The debate over the relative importance of Supreme Court justices’ attitudes and legal considerations (particularly precedent) is at the center of judicial decision-making scholarship, and the most common mode of studying the predictors of Supreme Court decisions seems to be through cross-sectional analyses of justices’ positions on the merits of cases. A recent series of articles has considered the decades-old question of attitudes-versus-precedent through the new lens of individual change. Segal and Spaeth (1996) test the importance of *stare decisis* by comparing justices’ votes on landmark cases with their votes on “progeny” of those cases. A justice who dissents from the Court’s decision on the landmark case would have to switch the direction of his vote on the progeny case if he or she were to follow precedent. Segal and Spaeth find support for the attitudinal model by demonstrating that justices rarely change their positions; justices continue to dissent according to their personal preferences even after the Court has set a new precedent (see 15 [Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.])
also Brenner and Stier 1996). Without the temporal perspective that the Segal and Spaeth method provides, it becomes much more difficult (if not impossible) to assert the causal impact of legal factors on Supreme Court decisions. The same is true of member positions in Congress and the complex causal factors that produce them.

The Assumption of Stability and the Aggregate-Data Problem

Taking a step back and looking at the congressional decision literature over the last several decades, one observes a sharp disconnect between the research of the 1970s and the 1990s. The well-known series of roll-call studies from the behavioral era highlighted a multitude of factors that influence congressional voting. This earlier era of work demonstrated that congressional roll-call decisions result from numerous sources, including party (MacRae 1958), constituency (Miller and Stokes 1963; Fiorina 1974), interest group influence (Smith 1984), presidential power (Edwards 1980), as well as the positions of other members (Matthews and Stimson 1975). Within this lineage of scholarship, a debate always raged over the relative importance of members' personal policy preferences and the exogenous influences on their choices. Though some scholars explained congressional voting patterns largely by ideological alignments (Schneider 1979), others described voting in ways that reflected more complicated decision factors (e.g., Clausen 1973; Kingdon 1973).

More recently, the dominant perspective in congressional decision research portrays members as seekers of policy outcomes who, when faced with a vote decision, choose policies and procedures that lead to outcomes closest to their ideal point. This preference-based understanding tends to set aside the content of member preferences as a
question of theoretical and empirical interest, focusing instead on what can be learned by assuming member preferences as given (e.g., Krehbiel 1998). Making this assumption, congressional scholars have answered a host of important questions in the post-behavioral era, particularly with regard to strategic behavior (Wilkerson 1999), coalition building (Groseclose and Snyder 1996; Laver and Shepsle 1996), as well as bargaining and interbranch relations (Binder 1999).

While allowing significant advances in the study of institutions, the preference-based approach has also led to a subtle bias against revealing the pervasiveness of position change. Personal preferences for outcomes—which reflect the collective influence of constituency, ideology, and many other forces—are unlikely to change significantly over the course of a member’s career. The assumption of stable preferences, then, is reasonable, but it leads to an implicit assumption that members are unlikely to change their positions. Observing that this assumption contradicts evidence of change throughout the political world, Bryan Jones recently observed that under the “preference-satisfaction approach . . . one must assume either rapidly changing preferences or rapidly changing mechanisms for aggregation to account for [policy outcome] change” and that “in the preference-satisfaction approach one is almost forced to stress stability” (1994, 23). Jones argues that outcome preferences can remain stable while calculations about how best to achieve those preferences can vary according to policymakers’ attention to goals—an argument about position change that I will take up in more detail in Chapter Three.
The theoretical assumption that position change is unlikely seems to be associated with similar empirical biases that obscure systematic individual-level change. The use of aggregate vote scores is especially common in empirical tests of preference-based models—in which the scores represent preferences—and other analyses have relied more directly on the summary scores as indicators of members' ideological positions, sometimes as a basis for conclusions about stability and change. The work of Poole and Rosenthal (1991a; 1997; 2001), which makes the strongest empirical statement of stability, illustrates the limitations of conclusions about position change drawn from aggregate measures. The well-known Poole and Rosenthal model is highly parsimonious and uses each year's full set of roll-call votes to generate estimates of member positions that suggest a unidimensional explanation for congressional voting. In terms of stability, Poole and Rosenthal use their summary scores to show that correlations between overall voting scores across congresses exceed .95. From this finding, they conclude that "changes in preferences must occur almost entirely through the process of replacing retired or defeated legislators" (1997, 58). Examining individual members, Poole and Rosenthal find that vote scores correlate at very high levels over time and that these scores move only very small distances from one congress to the next. They argue that "contemporary members of Congress do not adapt their positions during their careers but simply enter and maintain a fixed position until they die, retire or are defeated" (1997, 74) and that "there may be changing minds, but they are not in Congress" (Poole 1998, 12).

Though the preference-based measures of a member's position are useful in many empirical applications, the measures also paint with broad strokes that can conceal the
position variation within the member's overall ideological stability relative to his or her fellow members. The conclusions that Poole and Rosenthal draw have been taken as evidence that any position change in Congress is purely idiosyncratic; however, the NOMINATE coordinates reflect only the aggregated voting pattern for each member on several hundred bills in each session, and they are a blunt instrument for describing the processes of voting stability and change. Abstract measures of a member's position are convenient for modeling their spatial interaction with other political actors and as rough indicators of ideological location, but the measures paint with broad strokes that can conceal the position variation within the member's overall ideological stability relative to his or her fellow members.

Much of the small body of existing research on individual-level position stability relies on aggregate voting scores as a dependent variable, though the most direct evidence of position change—and the individual factors associated with it—should be found at the level of the individual roll-call position. In contrast to the Poole and Rosenthal analysis, a few recent articles have found some limited evidence of position change at the aggregate level. Stratmann (2000) uses party unity and ADA scores to show that party voting is sensitive to member tenure and that ideological positions are sensitive to redistricting, and Nokken (2000) uses party support scores to highlight voting dynamics.

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4 It should be noted that Poole and Rosenthal generally limit their claims about stability to overall ideological consistency and do not state directly that changes on individual issues will not occur. Arguing that "members of Congress die in their ideological boots" (Poole 1998, 3) is not equivalent to arguing that members do not make systematic changes in individual vote positions, though this seems to be the assumption that scholars have drawn from Poole and Rosenthal's work.

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among congressional party switchers (see also Hager and Talbert 2000).\(^5\) This line of research has usefully reopened the possibility of systematic position change instead of assuming stability, though the aggregate dependent variable most likely narrows the evidence of change that these recent analyses are able to uncover.

Earlier behavioral work offers similar evidence for limited position instability using data that is aggregated not only across votes but also across individuals. Hibbing (1991), for instance, aggregates roll-calls by member cohort and compares data across years on factors such as party support and conservatism in order to paint a picture of members' roll-call careers. He finds some evidence for changing roll-call careers within the larger picture of stability, though he notes that the aggregate data conceals more dramatic changes within individual careers (102-105).\(^6\) A more wide-ranging study by Sinclair (1982) examines party and coalition voting scores on the standard Clausen (1973) dimensions across several time periods through the mid-twentieth century. Sinclair highlights the apparent responsiveness of House members to changing contextual factors, showing that policy change can result even without major electoral upheavals. However, Sinclair (like Hibbing) is ultimately unable to supply causal evidence of

\(^5\) Other aggregate evidence suggests the presence of electorally-driven position change (Elling 1982; Hibbing 1984). Hibbing's analysis is especially intriguing, providing support for John Kenneth Galbraith's notion of a "liberal hour"—a time period immediately before elections in which members increase their support for government transfer payments. See also Stone 1980 for some evidence that responsiveness is associated with electoral marginality.

\(^6\) According to Hibbing, some members such as Walter Baring (D-NV) and Wayne Aspinall (D-CO) underwent dramatic shifts in voting after a decade or so in Congress, but his analysis does not provide any direct explanation for these changes.
member responsiveness to constituencies because she reaches her conclusions through interpretation of aggregate voting patterns.

In short, most of the existing literature on position change in Congress has been limited in its ability to paint an accurate picture as a result of theoretical assumptions about preferences, data aggregation issues, and, in some cases, a combination of both problems. The existing studies vary in the extent to which they find any instability in member positions, but few are able to present causal evidence for individual-level shifts (see below for several exceptions). The research I present in subsequent chapters aims to paint a more complete and systematic picture of how change and stability operate across individual members’ voting careers.

An example may be helpful here in highlighting the advantages of studying individual members rather than a subset of Congress at a higher level. Examining an entirely different research question, Hojnacki and Kimball (1998) ask individual-level questions about how interest groups make decisions about targeting members for lobbying activity. They distinguish their work from other studies of Congress and organized interests by looking at the group-member dyad for the first time. In doing so, they are able to perform actual empirical tests of the connection between issue, organization, and legislator characteristics and the decision to lobby at the committee level. The Hojnacki and Kimball work is notable for its individual-level approach to an individual-level question—an approach that was lacking in the literature on Congress and groups just as it is also lacking in the literature on roll-call voting and position change.
Existing Findings on Position Change

Although most work on congressional voting either assumes stability or looks at change from an aggregate perspective, a relatively small body of existing literature—primarily from an earlier era in which fewer methodological tools were available—does examine the question of long-term position change at the individual level using individual data. Broadly speaking, this line of research provides some limited evidence that individual changes follow from several sources: interbranch influences and pressure from the public (Asher and Weisberg 1978; Kingdon 1973), electoral signals of aggregate opinion shifts (e.g., Baum and Weisberg 1980; Brady and Sinclair 1984), changes in issue context (see Burstein and Freudenburg 1977 for an early analysis and Jones 1994 for an updated perspective), and simple attitude change (Hibbing 1991). Though these works highlight some systematic position change, most examine only one correlate of change, and some do not directly examine causality at all. None provide a full, multivariate comparison of voting patterns on a continuous issue over time. Newer, more precise research tools permit a reexamination of these earlier analyses in order to tell a more detailed story about change in member positions. In the section that follows, I provide a brief overview of what these earlier studies have suggested about position change and stability.

A few works argue that change among "external forces"—or a change in signals from other branches and from aggregate public opinion—can affect large numbers of decision-makers at one time and lead to substantial position change. Asher and Weisberg (1978) present one of the most systematic such treatments at the level of the individual
member. Examining several issue areas, the authors find that the forces that propel position change vary across issues, although they do not present evidence for each influence on each issue. Both the annual roll-call on increasing the federal debt ceiling and the annual foreign aid appropriations legislation show responsiveness to external forces. On the debt ceiling increase, Asher and Weisberg find that presidential leadership exerts a strong effect: members of each party are “more willing to support debt ceiling bills when their party controls the White House” (1978, 406). This effect is most prominent among members who are predisposed to oppose the debt increase. Members who consistently favor debt increases are unlikely to shift into opposition simply because a president from the opposition party also favors the increase.

Foreign aid legislation, by contrast, shows a different effect of the same external force. On the annual foreign aid appropriations legislation, Asher and Weisberg reveal a “presidential loyalty” effect. Members who are consistent supporters of foreign aid show a tendency to switch into opposition when their partisan leaves the White House. The authors enhance their explanation of “presidential loyalty” through factor analysis, which reveals that the dimensionality of foreign aid legislation shifted during the time period they study (late-1940s through mid-1970s). Asher and Weisberg conclude that “loyalty effects dominate with policy disaffection causing decreased support for foreign aid over the years, but that disaffection is reflected in voting only when it would not embarrass the

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7 The Asher and Weisberg analysis focuses on sources of change that are more “systematic” than “idiosyncratic”; the authors include in the latter category personal scandals and changes in individual contexts. Though I rely on the Asher and Weisberg account as a starting point for my work, the conception of change that I propose views these more “idiosyncratic” sources of change as theoretically important and potentially observable in a systematic way.
president of one’s own party” (410). Change on foreign aid and debt management, then, appears to be related to significant shifts in members’ field of external forces, particularly with regard to presidential influence. A few pieces from around the same time suggest a similar destabilizing potential from external forces (Clausen and Van Horn 1977; Kingdon 1973, 257).

Though constituency-related effects are central to most explanations for roll-call decision making, the constituency is usually viewed as an unlikely source of position change in voting. Much of the literature on congressional decision points to the conclusion that the constituency requires a high level of consistency (Bianco 1992; Fenno 1978). There are a few hints of constituency effects in the aggregate-level research: Stratmann (2000) shows that members change their voting patterns in response to significant districting changes (see also Glazer and Robbins 1985). And, Sinclair’s work (1982) at the aggregate level implies a constituency effect, although her exploration is indirect. She argues that alignment shifts in congressional voting are the products of both member replacement and member responsiveness to constituency interests. Overall, the existing evidence for constituency-driven position change is sparse and tends to focus on districting-driven changes rather than on constituency factors that might produce position change in members with continuous districts.

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4 Several empirical shortcomings in the Asher and Weisberg analysis will be addressed in the research I propose. First, the analysis examines only one set of theoretically-relevant factors on each issue dimension. In other words, the work is unable to speak to the relative importance of several sources of change that may operate simultaneously. Second, as Hibbing (1991, 87-89) notes, most of the Asher and Weisberg findings are based on a comparisons of a few data points in time. As a result, the authors cannot specify how votes may fluctuate over time or, in the case of one-time change, when members decide to change.
Shifts in issue context are another possible source of change pinpointed in the earlier literature. The Vietnam War, in particular, provided a dramatic change in the definition of numerous congressional issues in the 1960s and 1970s, and several pieces of behavioral research trace changes in voting to its effects. Burstein and Freudenberg (1977) look for evidence that position change coupled with member replacement to yield Congress’ dramatic shift in support for the war. The authors assume that issue change—obviously quite stark on the Vietnam issue in the late 1960s—and the associated opinion shifts were the driving force behind any conversion that took place, and they proceed to test how much conversion followed from issue change. By comparing shifts on major Vietnam-related legislation in the Senate, Burstein and Freudenberg demonstrate that a sizable proportion of continuing members converted to opposition late in the 1960s. Though their analysis does not provide a strong empirical basis for asserting issue change as the source of position change, the work does strongly suggest that issue redefinition can lead to position change. Burstein and Freudenburg conclude that “the importance of conversion underscores the fact that it is possible to change policies without changing personnel; in cases such as [Vietnam], changes may in fact be initiated by incumbents, with replacement functioning to solidify those changes once they are begun . . . ” (1977, 997-998).\footnote{This distinction between replacement and conversion is an important one, and some of the literature on change in Congress is concerned with the relative contribution of the two factors in yielding policy change (e.g., Brady 1978; Brady 1988; Brady and Sinclair 1984; Brady with Stewart 1982; Burstein and Freudenberg 1977; Nye 1994; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Stone 1980; Sinclair 1977; there is also an analogous literature on replacement and conversion among Supreme Court justices—see Baum 1992; Rowland and Carp 1983). In this study, I am concerned primarily with explaining behavior of members (conversion), though understanding conversion along with replacement is ultimately important for explaining policy outputs. Despite the behavioral focus of this research, I do briefly turn to this crucial}
Other work finds issue change effects on foreign policy and other issue dimensions. Clausen and Van Horn (1977, 631) reveal evolving dimensions of national security voting as the Vietnam war fostered issue change, and Wilcox and Clausen (1991; 1992) show additional long-term changes in dimensions as public debate has shifted; government management and social welfare dimensions, in particular, have collapsed on each other. Asher and Weisberg (1978) also show civil rights issue-evolution effects on member positions. A second dimension of civil rights voting evolved through the 1960s, and the new dimension featured more partisan voting on such Republican-opposed policies as busing. LeoGrande and Brenner (1993) demonstrate similar issue change effects on congressional funding for the Nicaraguan contras.

Bryan Jones (1994) presents a more updated perspective on issue change, arguing that members have preferences on several dimensions of an issue, but that circumstances shift the weight that they place on these preferences. In his example of the House vote on the supercolliding superconductor, members faced an issue that tapped both a deficit reduction (avoid new spending) dimension and a public investment (government-promoted research) dimension. In 1991, members placed more weight on the public investment dimension and approved funding for the superconductor. In 1992, the "pressures of 'antideficit fever'" called members' attention to the deficit reduction dimension, and a total of 79 members switched from supporting the spending to opposing it (Jones 1994, 78-79). Susceptibility to this shift was determined in part by other

question of replacement, conversion, and policy change in Chapter Seven's empirical findings and discussion.

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contextual factors—region (essentially a surrogate for constituency) in particular (98).

Jones shows that issue change is an important source of individual level change, just as earlier scholars had done, but he adds the theoretical advantage of suggesting one way in which issue changes affect members’ decision calculi. I have borrowed this theoretical perspective to understand issue change, and I have extended it to argue that issue change can affect the prospective evaluation of constituency reactions and thus lower the value of the voting history (see Chapter Three).

An additional source of long-term position change might be found within the members themselves, according to a few earlier works. All members grow both older and (we hope) wiser during their tenures, and changed perspectives could lead to systematic change in voting. In other words, attitude change on the part of members could be expected to yield behavioral effects. Empirically, Clem (1977) offered an early test of the conventional wisdom that a member grows more conservative as tenure and age increase, finding that a substantial proportion (just under half) of members did become more conservative across a 20-year time span while very few became more liberal. Hibbing (1991) has revisited this research on change across member tenures; according to his aggregate evidence, participation drops as length of tenure increases, and party support declines significantly over time when participation is controlled (Hibbing 1991, 89-92). He finds some evidence of increased conservatism over time, and this effect seems to be specified by ideology (liberals move to the middle while conservatives are less likely to move). But, when Hibbing disaggregates the analysis in order to correlate voting records

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from early in members' tenures with voting late in their tenures, he finds that stability is generally the rule.\(^{10}\)

Though these analyses suggest possible attitude changes, it is particularly difficult to isolate the effects of attitude among other influences, and it is also unlikely that many members shift their core attitudes (or policy preferences) across their careers (see Baum 1992 for a similar argument about the Supreme Court). More recent work (Jones 1994), which informs the arguments I make about position change, operates on the premise that attitude change may indeed occur in isolated cases but that attitude change is never necessary in order to observe position changes on roll-calls. Rather, a member's own perceptions and calculations about the consequences of a vote lead him or her to weigh different issue preferences or different factors more heavily, leading to changes in position even when the underlying preferences for policy outcomes remain stable. While there is some impressionistic evidence that attitude change could affect position stability, the difficulty of separating attitude change from other factors, coupled with the rareness of the phenomenon make it difficult to draw conclusions on this point. My arguments in Chapter Three paint a picture of change and stability that is independent from—and more likely than—change resulting from attitude shifts.

In addition to the work that presents possible causes for lasting shifts in long-term positions, a series of related works portray change in a more short term, and often idiosyncratic context. For instance, Smith (1984) contends that positions may fluctuate fairly frequently and that change may come from different sources over time. He argues

\(^{10}\) On attitude change at the state level, see Grenzke 1982.
that members are satisficers and will turn to simple decision cues from a variety of cue-givers—such as interest groups—on each vote (Kingdon 1973). From Smith’s perspective, the relative impact of decision influences will vary from one decision to the next, particularly in an environment where resource and time advantages fluctuate. Using evidence from NEA lobbying activity, Smith supports this conjecture, and presents a broader argument for “the existence of short-term change in the voting decisions of members of Congress.” He argues that “if advocates are to develop winning coalitions, they must induce some members to take positions that are not consistent with their historical positions” and that “more complete models of legislative voting need to emphasize both the stable and dynamic elements of voting” (Smith 1984, 59). And, although Smith focuses on interest group evidence, the same mechanism of short-term change might also be attributed to “‘if you need me’ pledges” (King and Zeckhauser 1999), logrolling, a strong push from the White House, or temporary electoral considerations. If Smith is correct, short-term position fluctuation can result from the same attention-shifting mechanisms that also produce more lasting change, which I describe in subsequent chapters. But it should be noted that on recurring, highly visible issues, position change seems more likely to occur in the form of permanent shifts in long-term patterns since, in order to defect, members would need to perceive that the

\[\text{Floor voting patterns might not be the only short-term fluctuations of interest: members may also change positions between committee and floor voting. It may be more difficult, however, to assume that these changes are sincere rather than strategic, and at least one author argues that there is very little systematic committee-to-floor position change (Unekis 1978).}\]
current or prospective value of their consistent vote histories had diminished substantially (but they would retain the incentive for consistency in their new position).

Summary

The research discussed in this chapter demonstrates that there is some evidence for position change, and it points toward some causal mechanisms that produce that change. Past congressional scholarship gives reason to believe that individual position change may not be entirely idiosyncratic. However, no existing work adequately examines the systematic causes of change. The trend in recent work is to set aside the individual change question by assuming preferences as given and by measuring preferences in a way that is biased toward a conclusion of overwhelming stability (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). Most roll-call analysts simply fail to look at voting decisions as a process, and researchers who have looked at change typically have deployed aggregated data in the quest for answers to ultimately individual-level questions. The earlier behavioral roll-call decision research asks questions about the components of preferences and attempts to parse out the causes of voting patterns, but most of this research fails to answer the change question adequately. Virtually all of the earlier behavior studies I reviewed above examine one change source and therefore cannot speak to the relative importance of the correlates of change. Thus, the studies have left us wondering where causality may really lie (e.g., Hibbing 1991). Most fail to examine causality at all; they simply describe voting patterns and assert the apparent causes (e.g., Burstein and
Freudenberg 1977, Sinclair 1982). And, many offer only snapshots of voting at a small number of time points, making it difficult to capture a detailed picture of change (e.g., Asher and Weisberg 1978, LeoGrande and Brenner 1993).

Very recently, a few researchers have revisited the question of individual position change and have begun to bring updated techniques to bear on the underexplained variation in voting over time. As I described earlier in the chapter, most of the recent work looks at voting in the aggregate, but it nonetheless has resurrected a question that seemed to have been largely dormant during the 1980s and 1990s as most researchers accepted the preference-driven assumption of member stability. Stratmann (2000) has produced interesting results on cross-career changes in party voting and on responsiveness to redistricting, and Nokken's research (1999; 2000) uses natural quasiexperiments (e.g., party switching) to explain behavioral shifts. Even some who approach voting research from the ideological-preference perspective have found interesting evidence of change, as in Jenkins' (2000) comparison of ideological voting in the U.S. House and the Confederate House of Representatives. The renewed interest in change and time in voting decisions, I believe, reflects both the inadequacy of the stability assumption and the utility of new methodologies in reexamining that assumption. In the next chapter, I explain how one newer method, event history analysis, can be used to explore individual-level vote histories—an approach that the other recent studies of change have not yet taken.
Though the assumption of stability is woven into most congressional voting research, theories of congressional voting and decision making—taken as a whole—do provide a basis for understanding change. Decision theories have established several ideas that can be brought together to construct an explanation for why and when we should expect to see members change positions. One crucial building block is the concept of vote history (Kingdon 1973; 1977; see also Asher and Weisberg 1978): simply stated, empirical research indicates that members follow past votes in making present decisions. Another is the cognitive limitations of decision-making in the congressional environment of multiple influences and high uncertainty (Jones 1994), and still another is the importance of attention and prospective evaluations in assessing choices and alternatives (Arnold 1990; Jones 1994). In this chapter, I will draw together these elements and discuss how behavioral change can be explained and anticipated. After presenting the theoretical underpinnings of the study, I briefly discuss the specific,
empirically observable correlates of change that follow from the theory (specific hypotheses are presented in the individual empirical chapters). The remainder of the chapter addresses methodological issues, focusing in particular on the choice of event history methodology and the specific quantitative modeling decisions that shape the subsequent chapters.

**Bounded Stability: The Theoretical Origins of Vote Change**

To the extent that position change is present in Congress, it does occur against a background of overall position stability. Members of Congress inhabit an uncertain world, one in which their prospects for the future hinge on an array of factors that often lie beyond their control. At the same time, members of Congress are goal-oriented, pursuing the goal of reelection as well as goals of personal and party power and good policy. Meanwhile, members are human beings: they have finite capacities for information processing, and they face a constant flow of information and, often, multiple considerations in decision making. They rely on decision shortcuts and other tools for cognitive economy, perhaps to an even greater extent than most other people as a result of the highly complicated tasks that they face. As Jones argues in some detail (1994, ch. 2), decision makers exhibit only bounded rationality; they compartmentalize and do not process and evaluate all potential aspects of a choice in each instance (see also Kingdon 1977, 568-569).

Each of these characteristics contributes to the value of voting stability. Since members face a considerable degree of uncertainty about how their actions will function as instruments for achieving their goals, members tend to behave conservatively: other
things being equal, their past decisions provide the most reliable information about how a
decision will affect their objectives. In addition, position stability itself has inherent
value in the member’s pursuit of the reelection goal. Members recognize not only that
their past decisions are reliable estimates of how to satisfy the constituency but also that
maintaining stable, consistent positions on salient issues helps to build constituent trust,
allowing both long-term electoral success and greater freedom to pursue nonelectoral
goals.12

These tendencies are at the core of the notion of a vote history. Both Kingdon
(1973; 1977) and Asher and Weisberg (1978) portray members’ records of past votes as a
decision cue. By relying on the vote history, members make an economical and
sometimes conscious13 choice to follow their past behavior, a practice that Kingdon found
to be of “major importance” in 43 percent of the issues in his original study (1973, 254).
The Kingdon research also makes clear that members’ early choices on an issue are more
fraught with uncertainty, and later choices on a recurring issue become easier when a
member is satisfied with the goal-related consequences of the early choices. For instance,
commenting on his repeated votes on the Adam Clayton Powell election controversies in
the late 1960s, one member told Kingdon that he “voted to seat Powell last time” and
“expected quite a reaction. But it didn’t materialize. So this time it wasn’t a problem”

12 See Fenno (1978) for the classic treatment of constituent trust, its consequences, and the activities that
foster it. Bianco (1994) provides a contemporary reworking of the trust concept, highlighting the value of
consistency.

13 Kingdon’s interview accounts (1973, 254-257) illustrate that reliance on the vote history is often a
conscious strategy on the part of members.
As it does in many cases, the vote history served as a reliable and efficient cue for this member on a choice that had potentially serious consequences.

Stable positions over time, then, are a characteristic feature of Congress because of members' multiple goals, decision-making limitations, and uncertainty about the effects of their decisions. These factors lead to a close adherence to the vote history on recurring choices, and thus to position stability. But, against this background of stability, we also find members changing their long-term positions. Members leave the comfortable confines of their historically-established positions when something convinces them that their past position has lost value as a decisional shortcut and as the best way to satisfy their goals (particularly electoral goals) with low risk. Change can best be comprehended as the result of the "bounded stability" of member positions. Stability is not universal; it is bounded by the limits of the vote history's utility.

From this perspective, understanding voting change becomes a matter of knowing when members will devalue their vote history. Jones (1994, 64-66) provides an important background element for understanding this process by highlighting the significance of attention in decision making. Only one, or a few, aspects of a complex decision may be emphasized when a decision maker makes a particular choice, and the aspects emphasized are a function of the decision maker’s attention to those facets. In

\[14\] Though I focus here on the vote history as a key explanation for decision stability, I should stress that stability would obtain in many cases even if the vote history were irrelevant. Ideology, in particular, would lead members to demonstrate consistent behavior time after time on some issues even if members suffered from complete amnesia about past positions. But I base my argument about change on the vote history in order to demonstrate where change could, theoretically, originate. It not only comports with what interview research suggests about economical decision making but also sets up a testable explanation for how change could occur when personal predispositions remain constant.

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other words, they do not necessarily integrate their preferences for all of the goals or issue
dimensions that the choice potentially implicates. In the case of the vote history and
congressional decision, I argue that members adhere to the vote history after making an
initial choice on an issue as long as their attention is not called to other dimensions of the
policy choice or to other environmental influences of the decision. Factors that either
shift their attention—or prevent them from settling on particular dimensions of the
decision—will be likely to depreciate the vote history’s value and make position change
more likely.

Several general types of changes may lead an individual member to reassess the
vote history in this way. On one hand, the set of factors in the decision environment that
informed a member’s vote in previous years may have changed so substantially as to gain
the member’s attention and lead her to reevaluate her position. The member’s reelection
constituency, for instance, may have shifted its opinion to such a degree that she no
longer believes her previous position is electorally tenable. Or, at an even more basic
level, the content of the legislation could have changed, calling the value of the vote
history into question by changing the substantive (or symbolic) meaning of the vote.

Aside from a change of actual input from the relevant actors, position change
could also result from changed perceptions of the decision-making context. The member
may perceive that some change in the political environment has the potential to alter the
meaning of a particular vote and, in turn, change the reaction among a set of relevant
actors. These sorts of changes can divert the member’s attention toward a particular
aspect of a decision, changing his perception of how a choice will impact his goals. If
perceptions of meaning and consequences change, the member will reassess the informational value of the past vote as a decision shortcut. Because members assess only a subset of the possible considerations in any decision, any force that shifts their attention to a different aspect of the decision has the potential to call the vote history into question. Returning to the reelection goal as an example, though many constituency-related factors inform a member's initial calculation of how one decision will affect reelection, an attention-getting event related to the decision has the potential to change the political meaning of that issue and therefore activate constituents who were previously inattentive on the issue. Perceiving this possibility, members may shift their voting position, either temporarily or permanently.

Finally, for some members, the argument about uncertainty, attention, and the vote history implies that position instability will be more likely at any point in time because of particular characteristics. For members who face continually sharp conflicts between important decision influences, the vote history itself may contain much less value as a decision cue. On a recurring conflicted choice, the member's attention may focus intermittently on one factor or another, and the vote history may never be of enough value to produce a stabilizing effect. In short, we can expect members who experience

\[\text{\textsuperscript{15}}\text{Arnold's (1990) incisive theory of congressional decisions parallels this argument, though Arnold uses his theory mostly to explain congressional outputs rather than individual positions.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{16}}\text{Note my treatment of member preferences. Members have relatively stable underlying personal preferences for policy outcomes on each issue. When their vote pattern exhibits change, it is not necessarily their policy preferences that have changed. Rather, the attention that the members pay to a particular dimension of an issue or element of their decision calculation has shifted (see Jones 1994, ch. 3). This assumption is one reason why I do not test any direct hypotheses about attitude change.}\]
enduring crosspressures among central decision factors (what Kingdon might call "conflict in the field of forces") will be distinguished from their colleagues by more frequent position change.

This discussion points toward the bounded nature of stability in congressional voting and highlights the systematic ways in which the forces of stability reach their limits. Members rely on the vote history and demonstrate consistency because of features inherent in congressional decision making. Change in position becomes more likely when members encounter factors that diminish the value of the vote history as a tool against uncertainty. Below, I translate some of these general factors into specific potential sources of change, which in turn will be translated into testable hypotheses in Chapters Four through Seven.

The institutional context—specifically, the partisan control of the presidency and the House—is one source of change in the vote history's value. Changes in White House party control are assumed to affect member decisions in the presidency literature (e.g., Bond and Fleisher 1990; Edwards 1980; 1989), and Asher and Weisberg (1978) provide some empirical evidence for a White House effect on position change. Theoretically speaking, a member of the new president’s party may find that his attention is shifted from other constant goals (especially reelection) to a Washington-power goal. The vote history, then, may decrease in value as a cue, and the member may shift in the direction of the president’s position. Meanwhile, for members who are copartisans with the departing president, the decision may suddenly shift to other bases when the White House consideration is removed. A similar shift in the decision calculus should follow from a
change in the majority party control of the House. Recent theories of party power recognize that the reelection goal requires members to place significant value on the integrity of the party label (e.g., Cox and McCubbins 1993). Moreover, a cohesive majority party is more likely to obtain the agreement of its members on roll-calls (Rohde 1991); the majority party possesses both the carrots and the sticks needed to focus members on decision-making goals other than simply reelection. Consequently, a switch in party control can have the same destabilizing effect on member positions as a White House switch—members may evaluate their roll-call decisions in terms of different goals. The vote history may lose value as a decision cue, based as it is on a past record from different circumstances.

Unlike the institutional context, which affects many members at one time, a more individualized impact on stability and change should be found in each member's electoral situation. We know from the writings of Fenno (1978; 2000) that trust is central to the constituent-representative connection. Fenno portrays the Washington policy making career as directly connected to home style; members cultivate the trust of their constituency over time through consistent voting and appropriate presentation of self. Once this trust is built (and members move from the expansionist to the protectionist stage of their careers), members gain a measure of freedom to pursue a policy career. As members enjoy more electorally secure positions, their attention may shift to new aspects of recurring decisions, and the existing vote history loses value. But electoral security may affect stability in a different way as well. Members who have only a very tenuous grip on their House seat will be more likely to place lower value on the vote history as
they consider behavioral changes on electorally important issues that might expand their reelection constituency. The effect of the electoral situation on stability and change, then, is curvilinear: members with margins of victory that approach either the greatest or the narrowest margin should be more likely to change their positions, while members with middling victory margins should place the highest value on the uncertainty-reducing vote history.

Perceived changes in the meaning of an issue—particularly when signaled by dramatic events—are also likely to change the value of the vote history. A member who looks prospectively to how a decision will affect his goals in the future will consider the possibility that a decision will activate previously inactive constituencies (Arnold 1990), to the detriment of his reelection goal. Similarly, the weight that the member places on the constituency may be shifted by a change in the decision environment that brings the reelection goal to the forefront over other goals. In bringing about changed attention to or perception of the constituency, dramatic events are one of the most powerful influences on a decision-maker’s calculations (Jones 1994; Kingdon 1995). In a decision-making context where information is limited and members are satisficers, dramatic events can signal issue change and shift attention, rendering the voting history less useful to members.

The effects of constituency on stability appear more directly through the signal of constituency interest on an issue. I have presented vote history as a tool for economical decision making that is relied on most when a member’s attention to particular influences remains constant. However, when a member’s constituency presents conflicting interests
on a recurring issue, the member should be less confident in the vote history as the opposing interests contend for, and likely shift, the member’s attention over time. It is the members with the clearest constituency signals on an issue who should demonstrate the greatest consistency; members who receive more conflicted constituency messages should show a higher level of position change.

Conflicting considerations from sources other than the constituency may also diminish the member’s trust in the vote history. As I argued more generally earlier in the chapter, crosspressuring among members’ goals can lead to greater instability. The most common sort of multiple-goal crosspressuring in the literature involves the conflict between personal views ("good policy" goal) and party pressures (power, party reputation, and reelection goals) (e.g., Bond and Fleisher 1990; 2001). For members in this situation, position change should be more likely as the member responds to the conflict between these two goals and experiences more frequent shifts in attention to these considerations. A small amount of existing work (Fleisher 1993; LeoGrande and Brenner 1993) presents evidence that moderates, who were more subject to crosspressures, are associated with greater position change.

The dynamics of the vote history itself may affect stability and change in member positions. The vote history’s value increases as a member casts repeated votes on an issue over time. The vote history contains more information as it grows longer—information that provides the member with more reassurance that, other things being equal, the consistent position is the one that will best advance her goals. This logic also implies that the vote history should be least valuable when it contains little information,
that is, on the first several decisions a member makes on a recurring issue. These first
decisions are subject to prospective calculations about constituency reaction, party
rewards and punishments, and so forth—calculations that may or may not prove to be
accurate. We can expect, then, that in the first few instances of a recurring policy
decision, members may find that the vote history is a less useful cue than it is on a choice
that is being revisited after many previous iterations. Indeed, for a member who has
found his goals hurt by his vote history, the vote history in the early years of a policy may
serve as a negative cue, pointing him in the opposite direction from the previous position.

A final theoretical influence on position change and the vote history is the content
of legislation itself. Though many issues on the congressional agenda reappear year after
year (see Asher and Weisberg 1978, 394-396), few bills are perfectly identical in content
from year to year. On final roll call votes, specific wording and amendments will alter
the question that faces members from year to year—sometimes subtly, other times in very
dramatic and controversial ways. Minor changes to complex legislation are unlikely to
affect member positions on roll calls, but significant reformulations of a recurring bill
could make the vote history less reliable, particularly if coalition leaders highlight the
changes as being of electoral or policy significance (Arnold 1990). This effect is
important primarily because it is necessary to separate the position changes that
intuitively follow from significant changes in legislative content and the changes that
occur independently of legislative content. In the analyses in subsequent chapters, I
operationalize and control for major fluctuations in content in order to specify the effects
of the influences discussed above.
Accounting for changes in content also allows me to address potential concerns about the implications of simple spatial voting models for the arguments I make in this research. If we think of members as arrayed on a issue dimension and faced with choices (status quo and new policies) on the same dimension, then it follows that changes in legislative content that move a proposed bill to the left or right would change the cut points for voting on the bill, leading to position reversals among members who were picked off by the moving cut point. A pure spatial explanation would, in fact, attribute all position change to this sort of disturbance in legislative location (or, maybe, to movement in member preferences). Though the analysis I present in subsequent chapters is intended neither to counter the spatial approach directly nor to model decisions according to a spatial explanation, the coding for content—and its significant impact on position change—in each case should address the concern that position change results from the movement of the cut point rather than changes in member decision making.

**Roll Call Voting and Event History Analysis**

In light of the shortcomings in the congressional decision literature, the theoretical perspective on individual change I have outlined in this chapter requires a new methodological approach to analyzing roll call choices. What is needed is an empirical analysis that examines individual member positions and the factors that potentially explain those positions over extended periods of time. Toward that end, I employ event history analysis, a tool that allows me to ask both whether a member chose to defect from her original position and whether that change is associated with specific factors by systematically accounting for when the changes occur. Event history, a type of maximum
likelihood estimation, allows modeling of the “hazard rate,” or the likelihood that an individual member will “fail” (diverge from the previous state) at a given point in time (see Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997; 1999). The method allows the researcher to associate the likelihood of leaving one condition and entering another with various time-varying or time-invariant covariates. In terms of my theory, event history can tell us how shifts in a member’s decision context or particular characteristics of an individual member affect the likelihood of vote switching on a recurring issue.

In modeling position change, I employ the Cox proportional hazards model, a nonparametric model that allows the researcher to “estimate the effects of individual characteristics on survival time without having to assume a specific parametric form for the distribution of time until an event occurs” (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997, 1432). Other approaches to hazard modeling require specification of the underlying hazard rate. In the analysis, I do not make a priori assumptions about the overall shape of duration dependence, but I do have an interest in empirically determining the dynamics of the baseline hazard rate over the course of members’ vote histories. For this purpose, the Cox model is particularly appropriate in my application since it allows me to extract the baseline hazard (i.e., the risk of change over time when other factors are held constant) without specifying it in advance.

Moreover, the Cox approach permits me to address repeated events (i.e., members who switch their positions more than once) in a relatively straightforward way using the variance-corrected conditional risk set approach to handle multiple-observation repeated events data (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001a; Cleves 1999; Prentice, Williams, and
Peterson 1981). Conditional risk set modeling permits estimation of a separate baseline hazard for each event strata (in this case, a member’s first position switch, second position switch, etc) while allowing for a single estimate for each covariate’s effect across all strata. This approach to repeated events does require conscious choices about how to specify the unfolding of time across repeated events. One treatment of time—the one I employ in this research—measures time as elapsed time, counting time continually from the time of entry (i.e., start of observation) regardless of whether a subject has failed (i.e., switched positions). An alternative approach to repeated events in the Cox model uses interevent time: it resets the clock after each failure (Prentice, Williams, and Peterson 1981; see Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2001a for a discussion). The time-from-entry (elapsed time) model is more appropriate when the multiple events are developing simultaneously rather than sequentially, though there does not seem to be universal agreement in the literature over the relative merits of the two approaches. Here, I employ the elapsed time method because I conceive of members as developing a risk of switching not necessarily just the first time but also a second or third time from the time of their first vote.

One important issue inherent in the use of any Cox model is that of proportional hazards: the model is predicated on the assumption that each covariate has “a proportional and constant effect” (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 1997) on the hazard rate.

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17 Since the number of members who switch more than a few times is small, the number of observations in strata beyond the third is low, and any members at risk for changes beyond the third are combined with the third strata. The exception to this is in the foreign aid analysis (Chapter Five). Because a much longer series of votes is available on this issue, observations beyond the eighth failure are combined with the eighth strata.
over time, and violations of this assumption have serious consequences for the estimates. Schemper (1992) observes that testing power decreases in the presence of nonproportional hazards, both for the covariates with nonproportional hazard ratios and for other covariates in the model that have proportional effects on failure. In each model presented in subsequent chapters, I have conducted tests based on Schoenfeld residuals to check for violations of the proportionality assumption, and most of the models presented contain a violation in one or more covariates. Correcting this problem involves including an interaction of each offending variable with ln(time) to model the relationship between the covariates and analysis time so that the direct effects of each variable can be measured (on this technique, see Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001b).

The format of data for event history analysis is critically important, so a brief discussion of data setup is warranted here. For all models presented in Chapters Four through Seven, analysis was conducted using STATA 6.0, and the conditional risk set models were generated using the general data structure and command format outlined by Cleves (1999, 37-38). Because time-varying covariates are used in each of the duration models, the data sets include observations for each subject (member) on all variables at each point in time when a vote was taken. Table 3.1 provides a visual illustration of this

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18Because each chapter's analysis covers somewhat different historical time periods and operationalizes the general concepts in issue-specific ways, the data sources for this research are numerous. Sources for variables used in individual chapters are referenced in those chapters; several general sources should be mentioned here. Roll call data and basic information on members is from ICPSR study number 9822 (100th Congress and earlier) and from Keith Poole's online update to that collection (after 100th Congress) except where otherwise noted in the text. Some district demographic information and electoral margin data for 1960 through 1996 were provided by David Lublin (1997) and recoded by the author; additional demographic data and electoral information for pre-1960 and post-1996 was added as noted in the chapters. And, DW-Nominate data used to create the partisan crosspressuring variables was provided by Keith Poole (see Poole and Rosenthal 2001).
data format. Note that each House member appears in the data set in multiple observations, one for each vote a member cast on the issue (when the member was eligible to vote). Where \( t > 0 \), each observation in the data set represents an opportunity for a member to switch, regardless of whether a switch actually occurred (see Table 3.1). For each observation, the data set includes information on time—measured relative to the beginning of the member’s vote history not according to calendar time—as well as indicators for the occurrence of position switching (failure) and values for covariates.

**Case Selection**

A fundamental premise of this study is that the strongest evidence of individual position change should be found at the level of the individual vote on a recurring issue. In Chapter Two, I criticized much of the previous work for seeking evidence of change at high levels of aggregation—for instance, by using voting scores as a dependent variable. In order to look at change at the individual level, it is necessary to turn to individual issues, though moving from aggregate scores to individual votes entails some loss of generalizability, at least on the surface. To gain greater leverage on the question than a single case study would provide, I have selected a series of four issues which differ in

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19 Data in Table 3.1 is a sampling of subjects and variables taken from the minimum wage data set used in Chapter Six.

20 The indicator for position change equals 1 wherever a member’s vote at \( t-1 \) is the opposite of the vote at \( t \). There are two exceptions to this coding. First, paired and announced yea and nay positions were equated with votes for the purposes of determining position change (contemporary analyses only). In addition, members who missed one vote in the series were still “eligible” to be coded as having changed positions if the vote at \( t-2 \) was the opposite of the vote at \( t \) and the vote at \( t-1 \) was missing. This rule was followed in each case except the Hyde Amendment analysis, where missing votes were most rare.

21 Looking at single issues is necessary to test the arguments I have set forth: the vote history as a concept implies issue-specific behavior, or at least the possibility of it.
important ways; I have then applied the same quantitative approach to each issue in an attempt to draw out the similarities and differences between the cases.

Several criteria entered into the selection of the four cases. In several ways, the cases are intentionally similar. For the analysis I have described, an issue needs to be recurring not only in topic but also in detail. The House must have considered the same question on repeated occasions and have taken recorded votes on each occasion—otherwise, there is obviously no empirical record of voting dynamics. While this requirement limits the range of cases available for this analysis, the conclusions about the vote history and change should not necessarily be limited to the cases that meet this criteria. In fact, given the starkly conspicuous nature of these vote records, these cases should carry with them a particular disincentive for position change. The four cases were selected for the stringent test that they provide for my theory. Since generalizability is more difficult to establish with a case study approach, I present evidence of position change where we would least expect to find it, with the assumption that the patterns found may be even more prevalent on choices without these characteristics.

For the sake of comparing across the cases, the four issues are also distinct in key ways, most importantly, in the general policy area that they address. One strand of the congressional decision literature (Clausen 1973; Wilcox and Clausen 1991) portrays member decision making as an issue-specific process, with specific influences having greater impact depending on the issue area. Although post-behavioral scholars have challenged issue-specific theories (Poole and Rosenthal 1991a; see also earlier work by Schneider [1979]), some evidence clearly suggests that members employ different
decision rules on each of several general issue dimensions. At least one study also offers preliminary evidence for issue-specific patterns of position change (Asher and Weisberg 1978).

The three contemporary cases I have selected—the Hyde Amendment, foreign aid appropriations, and minimum wage increases—represent three distinct areas of current congressional policymaking. Minimum wage increases deal with a traditional, constituency-oriented domestic economic policy issue. Foreign aid appropriations are at the center of Congress' regular foreign policymaking role. And the Hyde Amendment, with its antiabortion implications, represents the emerging social policy controversies of the last several decades of the twentieth century. Though these three issues make up only a minuscule portion of the roll call votes cast in a given year, they represent a sizable portion of the broad issue areas in which the House is involved.

To provide a broader basis for testing the theory—essentially, to demonstrate that the vote history concept and sources of instability are not artifacts of post-World War II American politics—I present a fourth quantitative case study from the antebellum period of congressional politics. The battles over the slavery-related "gag rule" began in the early days of the second party system in the mid-1830s and lasted for a decade; they provide an unusually clear basis on which to examine consistency and change in an era when party alignments, electoral factors, and issue debates differed significantly from what we see in contemporary congresses.
The four cases, then, will allow me to draw out the commonalities as well as the differences in voting patterns across issues and political eras. In the four chapters that follow, I review the history and politics surrounding each case, specify how the theories outlined in this chapter translate into issue-specific hypotheses, and use event history techniques to provide a picture of position stability and change.
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<th>ICPSR (ID number)</th>
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<th>VOTE (1=vote for increase)</th>
<th>VCHG (1=vote change at time $t$)</th>
<th>WHGAIN (1=MC's party gained WH)</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
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*Data represents all observations and a sampling of variables for three subjects in the minimum wage voting analysis (Chapter Six).

Table 3.1: Sample of Data Set Format for Repeated Events Duration Modeling

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CHAPTER 4

POSITION CHANGE ON A CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL ISSUE:
THE HYDE AMENDMENT

The first issue for analysis—the anti-abortion Hyde Amendment—is also the issue that presents the strongest challenge for my theory. The Hyde provision, which is inserted annually into the Labor/HHS (previously Labor/HEW) appropriations legislation, restricts the use of Medicaid funds for provision of abortion. Since it taps directly into a high-conflict and high-visibility domestic social policy area, the Hyde Amendment embodies the polarized social issue debates of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s—and the entrenched positions that accompanied those debates. Because attentive publics watch member positions on these issues closely, and because these issues involve strong personal policy views on the part of most members, social issues like abortion encourage members to choose a position cautiously and maintain that position religiously.

Members' votes on the controversial Hyde Amendment, then, become a public indicator of their abortion position, and members have a very strong incentive to show their consistency with this indicator. Although the Hyde Amendment has a significant public policy impact, the votes also appear to be a classic example of position-taking: it
is essentially a "judgmental statement . . . prescribing American governmental ends" on the larger abortion issue. As a result, stable positions should be the rule on the Hyde Amendment over time. Because it is such a challenging test, if we observe position change with systematic causes in the case of the Hyde Amendment, it is reasonable to suppose that systematic position change is a more broadly relevant feature of House voting. Members have clear reasons for consistency on the Hyde Amendment, but if my theoretical arguments in Chapter Three are supported, we should find that members leave the comfort of their vote history when uncertainty about its value increases.

The Political Context of the Hyde Amendment

The Hyde Amendment itself emerged in the mid-1970s as one of several legislative responses to the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. In the wake of Roe, anti-abortion activists and members of Congress sought out ways to limit abortion without violating the letter of the Court's majority opinion in Roe (O'Connor 1996, 68-69). The Hyde restrictions on Medicaid funding were part of a larger series of congressional abortion funding prohibitions that extended to foreign aid funding (1979), District of Columbia appropriations (1981), Defense Department appropriations (1982), and federal employee health benefits (1984) (Craig and O'Brien 1993). These restrictions seem to reflect the majority view in the American public, which has both supported abortion rights and opposed federal funding for abortion (Gelb and Palley 1979, 379; Wetstein 1996).

The first House attempts to restrict Medicaid funding came shortly after the Roe decision, when Rep. Angelo Roncallo (R-NY) proposed a broadly restrictive amendment

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22 From Mayhew's (1974, 61) position-taking definition.
to the 1974 HEW appropriation. The amendment, which the House defeated easily because of concerns over its possible extension to birth control devices, was the beginning of abortion opponents’ two-year struggle in both the House and the Senate to pass Medicaid restrictions (see Craig and O’Brien 1993, 110-117). Henry Hyde’s (R-IL) 1976 amendment was the first restrictive provision to pass the House; the amendment barred use of appropriated funds to pay for or promote abortions under any circumstances (Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1976, 796).^23^23

Since 1976, some form of the Hyde restrictions has found its way into each year’s final appropriations. However, the issue did not subside as a source of controversy in the House after the 1976 decision, and the House has taken a roll-call vote on a version of the Hyde Amendment numerous times between 1977 and 1997. Most debate over the Hyde provisions has centered on the extent of the exceptions, if any, that could be made to the funding ban. In some years, House members had the opportunity to cast a roll-call stating an absolute for-or-against position on funding restrictions, but in other years, members chose between a more-restrictive and a less-restrictive version of the Hyde Amendment. Typically, the restrictive version of the amendment provided exceptions only in the case

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\(^{23}\) The Hyde Amendment never saw final passage in the House-passed format in 1976. Rep. Silvio Conte (R-MA) brokered a compromise with the Senate that yielded modified language, which allowed Medicaid funding for abortions in the case of the life of the mother (Craig and O’Brien 1993, 118). Hyde himself opposed this liberalized language (O’Connor 1996, 69), and Conte’s compromise became a significant topic of debate during the 1977 appropriations process (Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1977). In fact, some have suggested that the so-called Hyde Amendment would be better labeled the “Conte Amendment,” since it is Rep. Conte’s compromise that allowed the provision to become law (Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1989, 299).
of risk to the life of the mother, and the less-restrictive version allowed for exceptions in
the case of life, pregnancy as the result of rape or incest, and even a risk to the mother’s
health (Congressional Quarterly Almanac, various years).

Several unique features of Hyde Amendment politics stand out. Despite the small
changes in roll-call content from year to year, most members seem to have viewed the
Hyde decisions consistently as a signal of support or opposition for the anti-abortion
viewpoint; both the original intent of the amendment as an anti-Roe measure (O’Connor
1996) and the tendency for activist groups to polarize the Hyde question in pro- and anti-
choice terms (Gelb and Palley 1979) have reinforced this trend. For the purposes of my
analysis, the Hyde Amendment’s relatively constant content makes it a particularly
suitable issue for over-time study of member positions. However, since the content of the
Hyde Amendment debate shifted notably after the 1992 elections (Congressional
Quarterly Almanac 1993), I have limited my analysis to the 1976-1989 period when the
debate remained fairly constant.24

Hyde Amendment voting over the 1976-1989 period shows a high degree of
stability; most members hold a consistent position on each of the seven House roll-calls.
Given the strong pressures toward stability in congressional voting generally, and in
abortion voting specifically, this level of stability is as expected. That a number of

24 Seven roll-calls (or six position-change opportunities) are available from this time period since the Hyde
provision was written into the committee Labor/HHS bill in several of these years. No roll-calls were taken
on the Hyde issue between 1990 and 1993. See Appendix A for a specific list of bills in the analysis.
position-switches occur at each opportunity for change is thus particularly notable. On average, 22 members (or about 7% of the average number of members who were eligible to switch each year) change their positions each year.25

In another notable feature of Hyde Amendment politics, the White House’s issue position does not appear to have been a strong factor in shaping Hyde voting between 1976 and 1989. During the 1977-1980 period, when a Democratic president might have been expected to exert a liberal pull on some members’ Hyde Amendment decisions, Carter retained an ambivalent position on the abortion funding issue (Craig and O’Brien 1993, 164). There is, then, little variation in White House position on the issue that would lead members to switch positions in response to changes in White House control (cf. Asher and Weisberg 1978).

Finally, anecdotal accounts suggest that the politics of the Hyde Amendment have been influenced strongly by salient events related to abortion. Craig and O’Brien (1993) argue that the 1989 Webster case, which represented the first serious threat to the substance of the Roe decision, ignited a wide, renewed national debate over abortion. The victory margin for abortion opponents narrowed in 1989, and contemporary reports point toward a significant amount of member conversion within this changing vote alignment (Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1989, 304). Hyde voting, at least on the surface, appears to be shaped by changes in issue context that call members’ attention to potential new implications of their abortion position.

25 Roll-call data through the 99th Congress were taken from ICPSR study number 9822. Data for the 100th and 101st Congresses were coded by the author from Congressional Quarterly sources.
Hyde Amendment Hypotheses & Operationalization

As described in Chapter Three, one source of instability in a member's positions should be cross-pressures in her decision calculus, particularly when the cross-pressures implicate multiple goals. The vote history is a less reliable tool for members who face opposing pressures from their party's position and their ideological leanings. Members who are on the "wrong" side of the ideological spectrum (i.e., conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans) should find the vote history to be a less useful tool as they are buffeted by these crosspressures:

H1: Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans will be more likely to exhibit position change than liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans.

Hypothesis One is tested in the analysis through a dummy variable indicating members whose DW-Nominate score places them on the opposite side of the House's ideological mean from most of their fellow partisans.

Another member characteristic—religious affiliation—should also affect position stability. Though religion has been less-extensively examined as a correlate of roll-call voting than other factors, several analyses have shown a clear role for religion in explaining pro-choice and pro-life votes in the House. Members from socially conservative religious backgrounds are far more likely to support abortion restrictions

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26 DW-Nominate scores (available from Keith Poole's website at http://voteview.uh.edu/dwnl.htm) are coded for each member in each Congress in the data set. A description of the DW-Nominate procedure can be found in Poole and Rosenthal (2001). Though I critique NOMINATE scores as indicators of individual-level position change (see Chapter Two), they clearly are useful as indicators of a member's aggregate voting position relative to the rest of the House. It is in this capacity that they are used to construct the crosspressuring measure.

27 A dummy variable for party affiliation (Democrat=1) is also included as a control variable.
(Visnovskis 1980; Tatalovich and Daynes 1981; Tatalovich and Schier 1993), even when party affiliation is taken into account (Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph 1999). Given the clarity and strength of this position source for most members, we should expect that members with conservative religious affiliations will hold more tenaciously to their position.

H2: Members of Congress from socially conservative religious traditions—specifically evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Mormons (see Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph 1999)—will be less likely to change positions on the Hyde Amendment than other House members.

Hypothesis Two is tested in the analysis through a dummy variable indicating religious conservative members. I also test a related hypothesis—that Democrats who are affiliated with a conservative church will experience crosspressuring similar to the broader ideological-partisan crosspressuring in Hypothesis One. During this time period, the two parties moved steadily further apart on the abortion issue, and Democrats with socially conservative religious backgrounds may have found themselves subject to strongly conflicting considerations in their vote choice:

H3: Democrats from socially conservative religious traditions will be more likely to change positions on the Hyde Amendment than other members.

This hypothesis is tested with a dummy variable that indicates Democratic religious conservatives.

Constituency interests form another category of potential influences on position change. Members with constituencies that send a very strong pro- or anti-abortion signal

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28 The data is the same as was used in Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph 1999. I thank Tobin Grant for making this data available to me.
should be less likely to change their positions on the issue. In the Hyde case, obviously the most desirable measure of constituency interest would be a dynamic indicator of district-level public opinion on abortion; however, no such measure is available. District-level demographic proxies for constituency opinion, despite their drawbacks as a measure, have been used in vote-choice analyses of the Hyde Amendment (Visnovskis 1980) and are readily available for the time period under study. The specific hypothesis for constituency interests, then, posits that:

H4: Members representing constituencies with more extreme characteristics on factors related to abortion opinion will be less likely to change their positions over time.

Several studies have demonstrated that socioeconomic status is strongly related both to public opinion on abortion (Wetstein 1996) and to congressional abortion voting (Visnovskis 1980). To test Hypothesis Four, I have included a variable indicating the percentage of the district with college degrees. To capture the curvilinear nature of Hypothesis Four, the actual variable reflects the absolute value of the mean-centered college education proportion.29

Beyond direct perception of current constituency interest, constituency influence can occur through a member’s anticipation of constituency reactions as a result of attention-shifting or issue-redefining events. In the Hyde case, the escalation of the abortion debate surrounding the Webster decision in 1989 heightened the state of alert among pro- and anti-abortion forces in a way that was likely to gain the attention of House members. As Arnold’s (1990) depiction of member behavior would suggest,

29 The census-based district demographic data as well as the district electoral data were provided by David Lublin (Lublin 1997).
members should have reconsidered the consequences of their position, recognizing the possible changed consequences of their votes.

H5: The Supreme Court's consideration of the *Webster* case increased the likelihood that members would defect from their established position on the Hyde Amendment in 1989.

In the analysis, the hypothesis is tested through inclusion of a dummy variable indicating the member's 1989 vote.

The sixth hypothesis also specifies an impact for constituency considerations on the value of the vote history. Fenno's work on member careers and constituency-related behavior leads us expect that members who are especially safe electorally have built the sort of trust that allows them freedom to consider goals other than immediate electoral considerations. At the same time, we would expect members who have only a very tenuous grip on their House seat to consider behavioral changes that might expand their reelection constituency on an electorally important issue. A curvilinear hypothesis emerges:

H6: Members with margins of victory that approach either the greatest or the narrowest margin will be more likely to change their positions on the Hyde Amendment.

Hypothesis Six is tested using the absolute value of the incumbent's 2-party percentage of the vote (mean-centered); higher values on this variable should be associated with a higher risk of position change.

Since the vote history itself is a weapon against uncertainty, it follows that members will find the vote history the least useful when it contains the smallest amount of information. Members' first decisions on an issue are subject to prospective
calculations about constituency reaction, party rewards and punishments, and so forth—calculations that may or may not prove to be accurate. Since some members will find that their early vote position actually hurt their goals, the vote history may provide less of a cue for members who have only voted on an issue once:

H7: Other things being equal, members will be most likely to defect from their previous Hyde Amendment position on the second vote they cast on the issue.

In the analysis, I offer evidence to support the hypothesis by displaying the change in baseline hazard rates at each of the points in time and comparing those at the second vote to the subsequent time points.

Variation in bill content can also be expected to increase the likelihood of change, and I include two control variables for content in order to isolate the other systematic influences on change. Though the Hyde votes are very similar over time, and though members viewed the votes largely as statements of position on abortion, the exceptions to the Hyde provisions were important points of debate in some years. Two general categories of exceptions were pertinent: exceptions for cases of rape or incest and exceptions for the health of the mother. In order to code this content, I viewed each vote as posing a decision between a status quo (sometimes the committee bill, sometimes an amended bill or conference report) and the proposed new position. Indicator variables in the analysis mark whether or not the status quo and the new bill were differentiated by a rape/incest provision and/or a mother’s health provision. In years without these content codes, the vote involved a more extreme choice between full funding for Medicaid

61
abortions and absolutely no funding at all, as in the original 1976 Hyde vote (see Appendix A for details on content coding).

Analysis

The event history analysis provides some specific support for the hypotheses and some general support for the systematic nature of position change. Table 4.1 shows the results of the conditional risk set Cox model for time to vote change. The model accounts for varying baseline hazard rates across multiple events (repeated vote changes for the same member) while estimating one coefficient across all strata for each covariate. The variance-corrected approach that I employ measures time as the duration from each member’s first vote on the Hyde issue (elapsed time).

Diagnostic tests of an initial model (not shown) indicated potential violations of the proportional hazards assumption on which the Cox model is predicated. While a global test of proportional hazards (based on Schoenfeld residuals) shows no overall violation of the assumption ($\chi^2=10.72$, df=9, $p=0.2951$), tests for the individual covariates revealed that the control variable for party affiliation exhibited significantly nonproportional effects ($\chi^2=4.12$, df=1, $p=0.0425$). Following Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn’s (2001b) recommended approach, the time-dependency of this variable’s effect is corrected using an interaction of party and ln(time).

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30 Only three strata are used because of very low numbers of observations in strata beyond the second. In other words, a member’s third and fourth vote changes are combined for purposes of estimating the baseline hazard rate.

31 See Chapter Three for discussion of specific modeling choices.
The corrected model, overall, suggests that several factors increase the risk of a member defecting from her previous position on the Hyde Amendment. When the member is from a conservative religious tradition, her position is less likely to change when compared with other members, supporting Hypothesis Two. However, members who experience ideological crosspressuring as well as those who experience conflict between their religious and partisan affiliations on the abortion issue are significantly more likely to change their positions.

Similarly, when other effects are controlled, the environmental changes surrounding the 1989 vote (H5) appear to have produced an increased risk of change ($p < .05$) as well. The proxy measure of constituency opinion (percent college-educated) also yields the hypothesized effects—members from very high-SES or very low-SES constituencies were less likely to change their positions. Hypothesis Six, however, receives no support: members’ risk of position change is not significantly related to their 2-party vote shares in the previous House election. This result could reflect the fact that abortion is such a visible issue that members have an unusually strong incentive to retain a consistent position regardless of electoral circumstances.32

Finally, it is noteworthy that legislative content variations appear to exert a modest effect on the risk of position change. Though the mother’s health exception is not related to position change, members did show increased risk of change when the

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32It can be argued that electoral effects may have only a linear effect—that is, that the risk of change increases as the two party vote share increases. Testing this alternative hypothesis also yields statistically insignificant results for the electoral variable while the other findings in the model remain virtually unchanged.
legislation involved a choice between broad Hyde restrictions and more limited restrictions with exceptions for rape or incest ($p < .10$). This increased risk probably reflects the preferences that some members hold for a moderate policy on federal funding. In other words, even though most members viewed Hyde votes as broader statements on abortion rights, some did alter their positions when they were faced with a choice between a more-restrictive and less-restrictive Hyde Amendment (rather than between a more-restrictive amendment and no amendment at all).

The substantive impact of the covariates also sheds light on the dynamics of member position change. Ideologically crosspressured members exhibit a 71% higher risk of position change compared with non-crosspressured members. The percentage decrease in hazard rate between members from conservative religious traditions and other members is a substantial 60%, and, even more notably, Democratic members with conservative religious affiliations experience a 231% greater risk of position change. Meanwhile, members from extreme districts on the SES measure were 63% less likely to change positions, and the 1989 contextual changes, independent of the other factors, produced a 93% increase in the hazard of position change above the other years.33

Hypothesis Seven, which suggests that members are more likely to switch positions on their second vote (first change opportunity) than on any other vote in the series, is the one hypothesis that remains unaddressed. Since the Cox model explicitly accounts for the duration of time since a member entered the data set, there is no

33 Note that these percentage change values are not analogous to the probability change values (from logit/probit) that are more familiar in political science research.
covariate in the model to indicate the effect of time. Rather, the plot of the hazard rate over time indicates how the baseline risk of change progresses over a member's Hyde Amendment vote progression. Figure 4.1 shows the baseline hazard for the first strata of the analysis (members' first, and usually only, vote switches). From the first change opportunity (second vote) to the second opportunity (third vote), the baseline hazard rate is cut sharply. Of course, this visual evidence from the baseline hazard rate does not constitute a formal hypothesis test of Hypothesis Seven, but it is suggestive of a declining pattern of change over the course of a member's vote history. Table 4.2 provides some additional evidence to support the tentative conclusion that members are more likely to switch on their second Hyde vote than they are on later votes. The number of members changing position is much higher, relative to the number of stable members, when the vote history consists of only one vote. In fact, position changes make up about 10% of votes at the first opportunity for change, a figure that drops sharply thereafter.

Summary: Position Change and the Hyde Amendment

Voting patterns on the Hyde Amendment support the theory that members employ their vote histories to make decisions amidst uncertainty and that position change results from factors that erode the vote history's usefulness to the member. Several factors, including crosspressuring, exogenous events, and members' religious considerations, seem to have affected the vote history's value in the case of the Hyde Amendment.

34 Though the change hypothesis only applies to the first opportunity for change, when the policy is either new or new to the member, it is worth nothing that the hazard plots for the other strata do not display the same trend as that for the first strata. The second and third strata show higher risk of change in the middle range of the time period, though I am reluctant to draw conclusions about these patterns from these two strata since they contain many fewer cases.
In general, the story of position change in the Hyde case appears to focus heavily on the effects of crosspressuring—members whose personal proclivities conflicted with their party's abortion position were far more likely to change positions. This effect points toward the generally lower value of the vote history among crosspressured members, and it also relates to factors specific to the abortion issue. Adams (1997) describes the evolution of congressional abortion politics as a polarized partisan issue during the time period of analysis; party unity on abortion increased dramatically during this time. Change among conservative and religious Democrats, in particular, may in part reflect the realignment of party abortion positions during this time.

Constituency factors influenced the risk of change when viewed through the lens of demographics: members from the most SES-homogeneous constituencies were much less likely to switch positions than those from more middling districts. However, the expected impact of constituency as viewed through electoral factors was not supported by the statistical analysis.

Hyde Amendment voting did follow predicted patterns, however, on early-history switching and on the effects of exogenous events. Regardless of when in calendar time they cast their first vote, position change was especially likely on members' second Hyde Amendment votes. The vote history contained less reliable information for the member, and may even have served as a negative cue if a member reaped negative consequences from an early position. The Supreme Court's 1989 Webster decision, as a redefining event closely watched by attentive publics, also appears to have altered some members' decision calculi.
In the context of a controversial domestic social issue, members show a propensity to change their established positions under certain systematic circumstances. As a first test of the perspective outlined in Chapter Three, this result provides some evidence of a possible broad trend in congressional behavior. The Hyde Amendment presents a compelling initial case because members are particularly likely to maintain consistent positions on the issue—its content is more nearly identical across years than the content of most issues, and more importantly, the Hyde votes are highly visible positions, targeted by interest groups and issue voters as position indicators. Since these features of this social issue should make change more rare than it is in less visible, less simple, and less controversial issues, the findings of systematic change are especially notable. But, because patterns of change might vary significantly depending on the issue context, I turn to several other recurring questions to establish these patterns further.
Note: Vote numbers represent the number of votes a member has cast at a given time.

Figure 4.1: Plot of Baseline Hazard Rate for First Strata (first position change), Hyde Amendment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>RSE</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>% Change in Hazard Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat of Roe overturn dummy</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td>.298</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>92.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-party vote share (abs. value)</td>
<td>-.393</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party (Democrat=1)</td>
<td>-.797</td>
<td>.723</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party-ideology crosspressed (crosspressed=1)</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>71.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Religious Tradition (Catholic, Evangelical, or Mormon=1)</td>
<td>-.927</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-60.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious-Conservative Democrat</td>
<td>1.197</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>230.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of district college educated, abs. value</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>-63.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape/incest provision</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>63.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-of-mother provision</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party*ln(time)</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of observations=2171
N of subjects=718
N of failures=129

* Dependent variable is duration to vote change. Baseline hazard rates stratified by order of failures (failures beyond third combined with third strata). Efron method for tied observations. See Appendix A for list of bills in the analysis.

% \Delta h(t) = \left( \frac{e^{\beta X_1} - e^{\beta X_2}}{e^{\beta X_1}} \right) \times 100. In the case of dummy variables, change is calculated from \(X=1\) to \(X=0\). See Boix-Steffensmeier and Jones (1999, 109).

\(^c\) Denotes mean-centered variable

Table 4.1: Cox Proportional Hazards Conditional Risk Set (time from entry) Model of Vote Change on House Hyde Amendment Roll Calls, 1976-1989*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Previous Votes</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91.08%</td>
<td>93.37%</td>
<td>94.62%</td>
<td>91.37%</td>
<td>93.75%</td>
<td>97.53%</td>
<td>92.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.92%</td>
<td>6.63%</td>
<td>5.38%</td>
<td>8.63%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
<td>7.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Observations</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Hyde Amendment Vote Switching across Member Vote Histories
CHAPTER 5

POSITION CHANGE ON FOREIGN POLICY: FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATIONS

"... When I first entered Congress, I voted for foreign aid bills for a while, but then I saw that they passed anyway and there was no reason to take the flak back home, so I voted against them. But I'm not up for election this year, so I figured, what the hell?"

--Democratic House member, explaining his position change on foreign aid after meeting with a persuasive lobbyist (qtd. in Feuerwerger 1979, 130)

"When we were in the minority, I voted against foreign aid. Now it's the Republicans who have to appropriate foreign aid. Egypt and Israel and some other countries need the money. And we are reducing the total. So I'll bend, and I'll support foreign aid."

--Mac Collins (R-GA), explaining his foreign aid reversal after the 1994 elections (qtd. in Fenno 2000, 145)

During nearly every session of Congress since the Truman administration, the House has voted to fund the American program of financial assistance to foreign nations. Members whose careers span several decades of the postwar era have developed an extraordinarily lengthy and well-established voting history on the foreign aid
authorization and appropriation legislation; for most members, the votes are routine annual decisions, classic opportunities to reduce uncertainty by following past choices. Yet the foreign aid votes also foster more conflict among House members than any other major budget legislation, and members defect from their entrenched vote histories with some frequency. Ten percent of the foreign aid appropriations votes cast between 1954 and 1997 signaled a change from members’ previous positions on the legislation. Particularly given foreign aid’s general public unpopularity, why would members risk calling attention to their voting pattern by switching positions? What would lure them away from the benefits of consistency? Do members change only when bill content shifts, or are other factors also related to position change? And what can patterns of change show us about foreign policy voting in the House? This chapter will address these issues.

The choice of foreign aid as an issue for analysis allows me to explore the ways in which position change is unique in the foreign policy realm. Much of the existing work on House voting contends that foreign policy roll-calls follow different patterns than those of domestic social or economic policy. Early empirical research found that foreign policy decision-making was more loosely tethered to constituency opinion and more strongly connected to Washington politics and policy goals (Clausen 1973; Miller and Stokes 1963). At the same time, more recent literature suggests that events in international politics are a strong force shaping congressional foreign policy activity

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35 Of the 14468 repeated individual roll-call votes cast, 1456 were in conflict with the previous year’s position.
(Henehan 2000), and we know that domestic politics surrounding international involvement have disrupted voting patterns on foreign policy in the past (Clausen and Van Horn 1977). Because the correlates of foreign policy voting do not always parallel those of domestic voting, this chapter analyzes position change on foreign aid, the issue most central to the House’s regular foreign policy role.

The Political Context of Foreign Aid Voting

Overview

The House’s primary power in the foreign policy process is the power of the purse. As a result, the annual decision on funding levels for the foreign aid program provides House members with their strongest opportunity to influence American foreign policy or, at the very least, to engage in public position-taking on the administration’s foreign policy direction. According to Feuerwerger, “members have given foreign aid primacy among their foreign policy concerns,” in part because the foreign aid budget “is the major annual executive branch request of Congress in the area of foreign policy” (1979, 7). Hinckley (1994) notes that foreign aid’s importance in Congress relates to two factors. First, aid policy “suits the congressional character” because of its basis in budgetary politics, and second, foreign aid can serve as an “all-purpose weapon,” allowing Congress to pursue multiple—or even conflicting—objectives in a single legislative act (102-103).

Modern foreign aid politics in Congress began in the late 1940s, when the ancestor of the current foreign aid program was first formulated in order to ensure political stability among key allies (Ruttan 1996). The European Recovery Program and
related policies received strong support in the immediate postwar period and illustrated
the utility of military and economic assistance as an instrument for achieving Cold War
foreign policy objectives. During the earliest years of foreign aid politics, the House
sometimes authorized and appropriated the aid program through omnibus and
supplemental legislation (as in 1950), and in other years voted on portions of the program
in separate legislation, allowing members position-taking opportunities on individual
components (as in 1949). As the Cold War developed, aid programs were gathered under
the annual Mutual Security Act, first passed in 1951, which involved a broader set of
targets for American aid, and the funds appropriated under the Act quickly shifted in the
direction of overt military aid at the expense of economic assistance.36

By 1953, foreign aid had become a small but established part of the federal
budget, and congressional politics of foreign aid began to follow routinely the annual
budgetary process. The president, whether Republican or Democrat, submitted a foreign
aid budget request each year that was too high to be accepted by the median member of
the House. The authorization and appropriations processes provided an opportunity for
House members to cut back on the president’s request in two stages: the authorization
bill would first make substantial cuts, usually in targeted areas of the request, and then the
appropriations bill would cut beyond the authorization level, frequently in an across-the-
board manner (see Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1967, 700; also Hinckley 1994,
110). This two-stage process not only allowed the House to alter the administration’s aid

36 Except where noted, the general discussion of aid authorization and appropriation politics is based on the
author’s research in Congressional Quarterly Almanac (various years).
program substantively but also permitted individual members annual opportunities for position-taking on foreign aid. Authorization bills received annual roll-call votes in each year from 1953 though 1969, with authorization votes occurring somewhat more sporadically thereafter, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. The House voted even more regularly on the appropriations bills, with annual roll-calls in every year since 1953, except for 1980 and 1982-1987.

The key difference between foreign aid authorization and appropriations voting is that House authorization bills typically involve a great deal more nonbinding, sense-of-the-Congress rhetoric on a multitude of foreign policy issues (Hinckley 1994). The content of the annual authorization, then, is more sensitive to each year’s strongest international controversies, especially those that involve conflict between the White House and members of Congress. Foreign aid appropriations bills, on the whole, are less riddled with broad policy statements and controversial measures. Yet, the appropriations bills receive a high degree of opposition, especially in comparison with the opposition that other House appropriations bills receive. The appropriations bill serves as a clear opportunity for members to go on record supporting or opposing a program that constituents view skeptically. And, for the purposes of understanding member vote histories, the appropriations bill makes member positions clearer than the somewhat more volatile authorization legislation.37 Although the same broad temporal trends affect

37 The differences between the authorization and appropriations bills are rooted in the differing orientation toward foreign aid between Foreign Affairs and Appropriations committee members (see Fenno 1973, 224).
voting on both bills, I use the appropriations votes in order to avoid the sometimes mercurial positions on authorization bills.

*Member Positions and Vote History*

The foreign aid appropriations decision tends to elicit polarized position-taking activity among most House members. Justifications for aid voting center on general opposition to American foreign assistance or broad support for the goals of the aid program; the member arguing against “funneling money overseas” is more common than the member voting nay based on a small portion of the bill’s content. Especially since congressional foreign aid activity closely paralleled anticommunist policy activity during the Cold War (Henehan 2000), we have reason to believe that the typical member cast his or her foreign aid vote as a broad position statement. This feature of foreign aid decisions makes the annual vote a classic opportunity for developing and following a coherent vote history—and it also makes foreign aid a good case to examine for influences that pull members away from that established history.

Ideology (McCormick and Wittkopf 1992), constituency (Feuerwerger 1979; Rieselbach 1966), and administration influences filtered through party ties (Asher and Weisberg 1978; Kesselman 1961; 1965) all have a role in shaping this general foreign aid position, according to past research. Since this is an issue without obvious effects on most constituencies, policy views appear to be a key component of many members’ vote histories. Consider this explanation from a California Republican in the 1970s:

> Foreign aid hasn’t worked. We need the rifle, not the shotgun approach. We had a noble aim in foreign aid in the post-World War II period—rebuilding Europe. It worked. But in the 1950s and 1960s, we
began pouring money into developing nations well beyond their capacity to absorb it, and the programs failed. Military assistance is not much better. We have always armed both sides of a conflict. It's like putting boxing gloves on a kid, and telling him not to use them. Once you put a rifle in a man's hand, you can't control what he'll do with it. (quoted in Feuerwerger 1979, 58)

But, given the general public unpopularity of foreign aid programs, electoral concerns can easily outweigh policy concerns in shaping the vote history for some members, as this Oklahoma Democrat illustrated in his explanation:

Ninety percent of my constituency is against foreign aid. I can go against them on certain issues, but on foreign aid it's not worth taking the time to try to educate my constituency up to the point where 50 percent will approve of the aid. (quoted in Feuerwerger 1979, 60)

Overall, the existing evidence suggests that House members arrive at a stable vote history on foreign aid votes as a result of a few key factors. Supporters of aid tend to be those with policy predispositions toward aid or party affiliations that align them with the White House. Opponents seem to be either philosophical opponents of aid or those who sense isolationist constituent pressures. Given these factors that undergird voting stability, the questions remaining to be answered in this chapter's analysis are (1) who defects from these established positions and (2) under what circumstances. First, though, it is important to consider the over-time variations in bill content that could affect members' reliance on the vote history.

Aid Levels and Support Levels

Each foreign aid appropriations bill since 1953 has included appropriations for military and security aid as well as economic assistance. The most enduring line of conflict over American foreign aid centers on the relative balance of these types of aid,
and the balance has varied through the last four decades. In the mid- to late-1950s, overt funding for security and military objectives received a higher priority from the Eisenhower administration and from Congress (Ruttan 1996, ch. 5). With Kennedy's inauguration, however, came a substantial reworking of the American aid program. Though Cold War security objectives remained central, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 shifted aid allocations in the direction of economic development assistance that was “designed to support improvement in the lives of [the] poor in developing countries so that they would then be less likely to look to communism for relief” (Ruttan 1996, 93).

The Foreign Assistance Act has remained the legal basis of the foreign aid program since 1961, though the key balance of military and economic aid has continued to shift somewhat in response to internal (Payaslian 1996) and external political factors. Some years during the 1970s saw a sharp increase in military aid as a result of increased aid to Egypt and Israel. Even more significantly, the revived anticommunism of the Reagan/Bush era led to dramatic increases in military aid to developing nations. Figure 5.1, which shows the inflation-adjusted total military and security aid appropriation in each year’s bill, illustrates this fluctuation over time. Figure 5.2 displays the military appropriation as a proportion of total aid allocations in each appropriations bill.

Just as international politics and domestic ideologies have shaped the military aid proportions, domestic and foreign considerations have also influenced the total amount of annual appropriations to aid programs (military and economic combined). Figure 5.3

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38 Note that these figures reflect the amounts appropriated in the House-passed appropriations bill only. In most years, the total amount allocated varied somewhat as a result of conference negotiations.
illustrates the inflation-adjusted total appropriation from each House-passed appropriations bill. Obviously, total aid amounts are far from constant over time; allocation amounts reflect not only the direction of administration priorities but also intermittent and temporary increases in aid amounts to cover specific needs.

As I explained above, these fluctuations do not preclude the assumption, for analytical purposes, that most members view this bill in a broader, “yes-or-no” perspective that lends itself to reliance on the vote history. These changes in aid amounts are not uncontroversial, however, and anecdotal evidence shows that the balance of aid types affects some members’ skepticism of aid. A few excerpts from floor debates illustrate this controversy. For instance, concerned about 1957’s cuts in military aid, Gerald Ford (R-MI) argued that

We have made the reductions in the wrong areas. . . . We ought to increase the funds related to our own security and reduce the funds in those other non-military areas.

Richard Wigglesworth (R-MA) issued a similar defense of the remaining military aid in the 1957 bill:

Our whole system of national defense is based on the allied forces supported by military features in this bill. . . . It saves us tremendously in terms of both military manpower and dollars.

Although aid amounts are the clearest year-to-year variation in content of the appropriations bill, other bill contents obviously have the potential to affect vote positions. Controversial amendments in some years have affected some members’ positions, according to anecdotal evidence and members’ own explanations; however, these effects seem to be limited. There is one exception—the 1998 appropriations vote—to this generally limited effect of small content variations. In 1998, President Clinton’s budget request included a $17.9b contribution to the IMF (in the wake of the Asian financial crisis)—a budget item that exceeded the size of the previous year’s entire foreign aid budget by more than $4b. When House Republicans severely cut the president’s request (to $3.4b), over 100 Democrats who previously had supported aid appropriations switched into opposition. Because of this highly anomalous shift in the debate (and the resulting observable behavioral change), I have ended the vote series for analysis at 1997 rather than extending it through the 106th and 107th Congresses.
By contrast, some members have voiced opposition to defense-heavy aid legislation, as illustrated by Wayne Hays' (D-OH) 1960 argument against organizing "military assistance groups in underdeveloped countries, where the people do not want guns." For still others, such as George Andrews (D-AL) in 1958, the overall level of spending justified opposition:

I believe these programs will eventually wreck the economy of our country—we may never find a stopping place.

Because of the evidence that aid levels are a key influence on member positions, the event history analysis in this chapter will control for aid levels over time (and for the relative proportion of military aid) to capture this aspect of foreign aid politics.40

**Foreign Aid Hypotheses and Operationalization**

As the above discussion illustrates, foreign aid appropriations are a far more complicated policy issue than the Hyde Amendment. The sources of position change are more difficult to isolate empirically on foreign aid, but similar factors should shape the endurance of vote histories in both cases. The hypotheses are similar, then, but the long time frame of the foreign aid case allows testing of a few factors—especially the partisan institutional context—that are not testable in the much shorter Hyde case.

The first foreign aid hypothesis relates to the effect of White House partisan control, and it follows not only from the theory outlined in earlier chapters but also from existing work on foreign policy (and, specifically, foreign aid) voting. The discussion in Chapter Three suggests that a change in party control of the White House is an event that

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40 Excerpts from floor debate in this paragraph are from 1957, 1958, and 1960 editions of *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*. 

shakes up the predictability of the political system; this shake-up should lead members to reassess how their vote histories apply to the new circumstances. In the foreign policy context, previous work leads us to believe this effect is especially strong because of the particular importance of the president in this policy area (Clausen 1973; Rieselbach 1966), and because the foreign aid funding process involves Congress ceding a considerable amount of authority to the executive (Hinckley 1994; Haviland 1958). In foreign aid, though, there is some evidence to suggest that this effect is one-sided—research on Cold War-era foreign aid voting depicted change patterns in terms of “presidential loyalty” but not “presidential leadership” (Asher and Weisberg 1978). In other words, members stick with a supportive position when a president of their party is in office and become more likely to defect when their president leaves office (see also Kesselman 1965). Here, I rely on the more general hypothesis suggested by the theory I have outlined while noting the specific effects that have appeared in earlier bivariate analyses:

H1: When partisan control of the White House shifts, members will be more likely to change their position on foreign aid, other things being equal.

A similar shift in the decision calculus should follow from a change in the majority party control of the House. The reversal of party leadership is a sharp contextual change that should cause members to reevaluate their vote history as a tool for making economical decisions. The vote history may lose some utility for members of the new majority as the stakes of disagreement with the party grow greater, but it may also lose utility for members of the old majority as they recalculate the connection between their
goals and their decisions. These shifts are rooted both in the (primarily electoral) value that members place on the integrity of the party label (Cox and McCubbins 1993) and in the nature of majority party leadership. A cohesive majority party is more likely to obtain the agreement of its members on roll-calls (Rohde 1991); the majority party possesses both the carrots and the sticks needed to focus members on long-term party policy.

H2: When partisan control of the House of Representatives shifts, members will be more likely to change their position, other things being equal.

It is worth noting here that both House and administration party shifts may coincide with controversial changes in aid allocations and aid amounts. If it is these content shifts that lead to vote change among members, then there is no position change that derives directly from the influence of party or White House leadership. Although every content change cannot be controlled, the controls for bill content will help isolate the independent effects of party and administration changes on position shifts.

Other hypotheses closely parallel the Hyde Amendment analysis. As with any issue on which members develop an uncertainty-reducing vote history, the earliest years of a member's decisions are those in which past votes are the least reliable as a cue. The tentative, prospective calculations that a member must make in choosing a first position may quickly be reassessed if the vote history—which itself contains a relatively small amount of information for the member—is called into question by any key actors in the member’s environment:

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41 The first session of the 104th Congress, for instance, brought not only a new Republican majority and leadership, but also significant changes in the appearance of the foreign operations appropriation. Total spending fell sharply compared to the previous year, but the cuts were almost entirely in the area of bilateral and multilateral economic aid. The ratio of military aid to the bill’s total allocation increased over the previous year. See Figures 5.2 and 5.3, as well as Doherty 1995.
H3: Other things being equal, members will be most likely to defect from their previous foreign aid position on the second vote they cast on the issue.

Hypothesis Four reflects the effect of cross-pressuring on the value of the vote history. Members who face conflicts between personal policy goals and partisan (reelection and power) goals should be those who are most likely to shift their positions in an attempt to maintain the delicate balance between the two goals. The operationalization of this principle is identical to that in the Hyde Amendment chapter:

H4: Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans will be more likely to exhibit position change than liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans.42

The fifth hypothesis relates again to electoral factors. Members in especially safe electoral circumstances should experience greater freedom to pursue multiple goals and may find the vote history a less necessary tool. Meanwhile, members with very narrow victory margins may choose to defect from the vote history in an attempt to gain greater security; thus, it should be the members with more middling victory margins who rely on the predictability of the vote history:

H5: Members with margins of victory that approach either the greatest or the narrowest margin will be more likely to change their positions on foreign aid.

I again use the absolute value of the incumbent’s 2-party percentage of the vote (mean-centered) to test this hypothesis.

A final hypothesis deals with issue change (policy redefinition) and the influence of dramatic events. Existing accounts suggest that the routine politics of foreign aid decision making have been disturbed at least twice during the period under study--by the

42 For Hypothesis Four, members are coded as crosspressed if their ideology places them on the “wrong” side of the chamber mean value.
Vietnam war and by the end of the cold war. As with the *Webster* decision in the Hyde Amendment case, the late Vietnam war period and the rapid termination of the cold war brought high levels of uncertainty about foreign policy and, in turn, about the meaning of foreign aid decisions in Congress. Members can be expected to shift their attention to different aspects of the policies and their decision environment, and to devalue the vote history as a central cue in foreign aid decisions in these contexts:

H6: Members will be more likely to reverse their positions on foreign aid in the late Vietnam era and at the end of the cold war.

In the analysis, this hypothesis will be tested using dummy variables for the votes in the years 1968-1972 and 1990-1991.

Each of the models that I discuss below includes variables for these specific hypotheses as well as control variables for bill content. As I discussed above, the foreign operations appropriations bill varies in its total funding level as well as in the proportion of total allocations that are earmarked for direct military and security purposes. To capture this annual variation, I have coded the total aid allocation (adjusted for inflation) and the proportion of military aid for each year. As a result, I have greater confidence that the effects that emerge for the above hypotheses are the independent result of the hypothesized influences, rather than the result of the legislation posing different questions to legislators.43 One additional control is included to account for missing votes in the series during the omnibus budgeting period of the 1980s. No “clean” aid appropriations

43 Funding levels were coded by the author from *Congressional Quarterly* sources and from bill text and summaries accessed through THOMAS (thomas.loc.gov). Dollar figures were adjusted by the author to 1983 levels.
roll calls were taken during the years 1982 through 1987; because of this large inconsistency, an indicator is included in the model for continuing members in 1988 (who voted in both 1988 and 1981), on the assumption that unspecified effects will generate instability in the positions of those members during that period.

Analysis

The results of the repeated-events Cox model for 1953-1997 House foreign aid voting appear in Table 5.1. Since preliminary analysis indicated that several covariates in the model exhibited significant violations of the proportional hazards assumption, the model includes interactions of several covariates with \( \ln(\text{time}) \) to allow for accurate interpretation of the independent variables' effects (see Chapter Three for a discussion of this procedure).

Hypothesis One receives fairly strong support, although the effect is not universal as the hypothesis suggests. White House influence over copartisans is limited in that members show a strong, statistically significant tendency to switch positions when their party’s president leaves the White House, but when their party gains the White House, there is no statistically significant increase in the risk of position change. The substantive impact of losing White House party control on the risk of position change is large: members overall are about 57% more likely to switch when the White House changes hands. It seems that there is “party loyalty” without “presidential leadership,” as Asher and Weisberg (1978) found for the pre-1975 period.

\[\text{For further discussion of this modeling choice and of the variance-corrected approach that I employ, see Chapter Three.}\]
Examining the effects of House partisan control (H2) is a more difficult task since there are only two party control changes in the 1953-1997 period: a Democratic shift in the 1954 elections and a Republican shift in the 1994 elections. Looking at the model, we can see no statistically significant effect of House party change on vote switching. Neither gaining nor losing House party control affects position change at statistically significant levels. Though this pattern does not provide clear support for Hypothesis Two, recall that the test looks for the effect of House control change independent of major changes in legislative content that accompany these control shifts. Since the analysis controls for bill content, the results seem to suggest that the House changes had minimal redefining effect for members independent of the content changes that also occurred.

As in the Hyde Amendment case, the length of members’ vote histories proves to be another important determinant of how tenaciously they hold their positions (H3). On foreign aid appropriations, members experience the greatest risk of making their first position change at the time of their second vote. Figure 5.4 shows the baseline hazard rate for the 1953-97 period.45 These graphs are edited to show only the first twenty time points—a handful of outliers who survive beyond $t=20$ experience a very high risk of change at the end of their careers and would skew these graphs considerably. For all other members, the highest change rate, by far, is at the time of the second vote. Just as in the very different Hyde Amendment issue, we can see that members develop a foreign

45 Hazard and survival plots for the subsequent position changes (two through eight) show a visually similar pattern, though the hazard plots appear more volatile in later strata (which contain many fewer members) and do not all feature such a sharp drop after the second vote.
aid vote history quickly, and position changes are most likely very early in the series of votes. After several votes are cast, the pattern becomes a reliable cue that members are more reluctant to ignore.

The variable for partisan/ideological crosspressuring provides some support for the hypothesis (H4) that partisans on the “wrong” side of the ideological divide will be more likely to change their positions. Members who were crosspressured on foreign aid find the vote history to be less reliable and, in turn, show a risk of position change that is 75\% higher than noncrosspressured members, other things being equal.

The hypothesis that members with very high and very low victory margins (based on the two-party vote) are more likely to change (H5) receives no support in the event history models. The coefficient for the mean-centered absolute value of vote share is not statistically significant.\textsuperscript{46} What is interesting, however, is that member vote share is not entirely irrelevant to foreign aid voting. When the dichotomous foreign aid votes are pooled and regressed on a similar set of predictors (in a logit model), higher vote shares prove to be a positive predictor of voting for aid appropriations. Taking the vote change and vote choice models together, we can see that members were no more likely to defect from their positions in very safe or unsafe electoral circumstances, but members in safer seats seem to have felt more free to vote for aid.

\textsuperscript{46}The same result obtains if vote share is coded in a linear fashion—that is, if we test the plausible alternative hypothesis that members become more likely to change positions as their vote share increases.
Finally, issue change has a substantively and statistically significant effect on foreign aid position change (H6). The Vietnam controversy and the end of the cold war\textsuperscript{47} created disjunctures that led to less reliance on the vote history, \textit{even when} we control for the legislative content changes that accompanied the issue change. Under circumstances of issue change, members were 39% more likely to switch positions than they were in other years.

Along with the hypothesized covariates, each of the event history models contains control covariates for content, and these controls are empirically related to member position change. The adjusted total aid appropriations for each year is significantly and strongly related to change. Members were about 67% more likely to change their positions when aid levels were high than when they were low—a finding that indicates that overall spending levels were an important source of controversy that led some members to turn away from the vote history and reevaluate their position. The total proportion of military aid, another potential source of controversy, does not exhibit the same influence on position change.\textsuperscript{48} Though these control measures are not directly related to my general hypotheses, their relevance in the model indicates, as we would expect, that the content of each year's appropriations bill affects members' calculations. Since overall bill content is represented in the model specification, we can be more

\textsuperscript{47}The two effects, coded separately, each have a statistically significant and positive effect on the risk of change.

\textsuperscript{48}One additional included control—the indicator for members who cast a continuing vote in 1988—is also significant, picking up and controlling for the effect of the interrupted vote set in the mid 1980s.
confident that the findings about the hypothesized influences are independent of major fluctuations in bill content.

**Party-Specific Effects**

Because the data series for foreign aid contains significantly more votes than any of the other individual cases, it is possible to subdivide the data set to examine the change and stability patterns among the members of the two parties. Table 5.2 displays separate event history models for Democratic and Republican party members through the 1953-1997 time period. Viewing the party members separately, we can see that a few of the hypothesized effects appear to apply differentially across the parties in the foreign aid case. First, Democrats experience only party loyalty effects on the White House change hypothesis, as the full model suggested, but there is evidence that Republicans were more likely to change both when their party lost the White House and when it gained it, though the latter is a much weaker effect. Looking at the bivariate relationships between “yes” and “no” position changes and administration shifts provides a little more information to help complete this story. Changes from “yes” votes to “no” votes are the only Democratic position changes that show a bivariate relationship ($\chi^2=56.34, p<0.001$) with administration change—and that relationship holds only for changes to Republican control. Republican members show a statistically significant higher level of changing to “no” votes from “yes” votes when Republicans take the White House ($\chi^2=27.38$, 89
Thus, party loyalty effects hold for Democrats, but Republicans were more willing to defect from their vote history to follow their presidents' leadership.

The other institutional hypothesis regarding House party control—which was not supported in the full model—receives some mixed support in the party specific models. Though the hypothesized effect does not appear in the Democrat model (as in the full model), Republican members were more likely to change foreign aid positions at the time when they gained control of the House, and the effect is statistically significant. These separate and somewhat confusing effects, especially on the House change variable, reflect some of the weaknesses of my case study approach. For each party, only one House change in each direction occurred during the time period, and therefore the idiosyncracies of those specific cases inherently affect the ability to test the general hypotheses.

On the crosspressuring variable, some case-specific differential effects also appear. Crosspressured Democrats, whose party leaders controlled the House for most of the analyzed time period, were much more likely to switch positions. Crosspressured Republicans, on the other hand, were less likely to change their positions than other members. Part of the difference between the two parties may relate to differential strength of crosspressuring for the two parties—conservative Democrats may have felt greater party pressure than liberal Republicans, due to Democratic House control during most of the period. It is also noteworthy that liberal Republicans were much more likely

\[ p<0.001 \].

There is also a weak and statistically significant bivariate relationship between Republicans changing to a "no" vote and a change to Democratic White House control \( (\chi^2=3.73, \ p=0.053) \).
than other members to support foreign aid during both of these periods. Since these crosspressured members are among the most reliable supporters of aid in this period, it is not surprising that they are not likely to fluctuate in their positions—though this runs counter to my generic hypothesis about crosspressuring and position change.

These differences in the change patterns of Democrats and Republicans, while mostly reflecting intuitive political patterns, demonstrate some of the limitations and complexities of the case study approach to this research question. But, to the extent that the hypotheses receive qualified support, even when the full event history model is broken down into separate party models, the foreign aid case continues to point toward the importance of systematic change within the stability of House voting.

Summary: Position Change and Foreign Policy

When compared to the relatively simple Hyde Amendment issue, the complex foreign aid appropriations decision presents a much more difficult case for examining the correlates of position change. Yet, despite its more multifaceted foreign policy politics, foreign aid voting is subject to generally similar patterns of decision stability and change. Throughout the 1953-1997 period, members entered the House and developed a vote history on foreign aid that allowed them to make economical and goal-oriented decisions. Just as was the case with the Hyde Amendment, the foreign aid vote history was of greater value to members as their voting careers developed: the first vote on aid was not always the one that dictated all subsequent votes since members reevaluated their earliest votes and—more often than in any subsequent year—reversed their first decision before

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49 Based on pooled logit analyses of vote choice.
settling into a consistent pattern. The vote history takes time to develop, then, and its value increases as it contains more information.

Many members chose to defect from these reliable vote histories, though, under particular circumstances. One of the clearest findings in the event history analysis is one that confirms and extends past findings (Asher and Weisberg 1978; Kesselman 1965) that presidential influence is crucial in foreign aid voting. Members relied less on their vote history when party control of the White House shifted to the opposition party—presidents could hold members in support of foreign aid even when they might have been pulled in other directions—but new presidents (particularly Democrats) were not as able to drag aid opponents into the fold. The Hyde Amendment and foreign aid are also similar in that partisan crosspressuring seems to complicate members' use of the vote history, making them more likely to change positions across time as they respond to changing attention to their field of forces.

The foreign aid and Hyde Amendment cases provide an interesting basis for comparison, and they show some consistent patterns that say a great deal about stability and change in House voting. Some of the conflicting findings, however, require me to make further comparisons in order to tell a more complete story about position change. Chapter Six, in which I will turn to domestic policy decision making on minimum wage levels, will expand my base for such comparison.
Figure 5.1: Total Military Aid Appropriation in 1983 Dollars, 1953-1999 Appropriations Bills
Figure 5.2: Proportion of Total Foreign Operations Appropriations Allocated to Military and Security Aid, 1953-1999 Appropriations Bills
Figure 5.3: Total House-Passed Foreign Operations Appropriation, in 1983 Dollars, for 1953-1999 Appropriations Bills
Note: Vote numbers represent the number of votes a member has cast at a given time.

Figure 5.4: Plot of Baseline Hazard Rate for First Strata (first position change), Foreign Aid Appropriations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>RSE</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>% Change in Hazard Rate&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party (Democrat=1)</td>
<td>-.280</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>-24.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of Military Aid</td>
<td>-.087</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Aid Appropriations</td>
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<td>.032</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>66.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House Party Change: Gain</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House Party Change: Loss</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>57.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Party Change: Gain</td>
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<td>.534</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Party Change: Loss</td>
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<td>.413</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosspressured (crosspressured=1)</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>75.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Redefinition</td>
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<td>.075</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>38.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-1987 Dummy</td>
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<td>.158</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>118.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-party vote share, abs. value&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.607</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Aid Appropriations * ln(Time)</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>House Party Gain * ln(Time)</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.298</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>House Party Loss * ln(Time)</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosspressured * ln(Time)</td>
<td>-.487</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party * ln(Time)</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of observations=14411
N of subjects=1818
N of failures=1425

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variable is duration to vote change. Baseline hazard rates stratified by order of failures (failures beyond eighth combined with eighth strata). Efron method for tied observations. See Appendix B for list of bills in the analysis.

<sup>b</sup> Calculated predicted change from (mean-1 s.d.) to (mean + 1 s.d.) using the formula

\[
\% \Delta h(t) = \left( \frac{e^{\beta(x + 1)} - e^{\beta(x - 1)}}{e^{\beta(x - 1)}} \right) \times 100.
\]

In the case of dummy variables, change is calculated from X=1 to X=0. See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1999, 109).

<sup>c</sup> Denotes mean-centered variable

Table 5.1: Corrected Cox Proportional Hazards Conditional Risk Set (time from entry) Model of Vote Change on House Foreign Operations Appropriations Roll Calls, 1953-1997<sup>a</sup>
### Table 5.2: Corrected Cox Proportional Hazards Conditional Risk Set (time from entry) Models of Party-Specific Vote Change on House Foreign Operations Appropriations Roll Calls, 1953-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β</th>
<th>RSE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>RSE</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Military Aid&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.199</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.466</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Aid Appropriations&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>White House Party Change: Gain</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.877</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.006</td>
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<tr>
<td>White House Party Change: Loss</td>
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<td>.134</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
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<td>House Party Change: Gain</td>
<td>-.899</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Party Change: Loss</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>.738</td>
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<td>Crosspressured (crosspressured=1)</td>
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<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>-.207</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.043</td>
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<td>Policy Redefinition</td>
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<td>.097</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.198</td>
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<td>.111</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982-1987 Dummy</td>
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<td>.200</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.044</td>
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<td>2-party vote share, abs. value&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>.524</td>
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<td>Total Aid Approp. * ln(Time)</td>
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<td>.022</td>
<td>.023</td>
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<td>House Party Loss * ln(Time)</td>
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<td>.279</td>
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<td>Crosspressed * ln(Time)</td>
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<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.141</td>
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N of observations: 8556 5855
N of subjects: 984 838
N of failures: 837 588

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variables are duration to vote change. Baseline hazard rates stratified by order of failures (failures beyond eighth combined with eighth strata). Efron method for tied observations. See Appendix B for list of bills in the analysis.

<sup>b</sup> Calculated predicted change from (mean-1 s.d.) to (mean + 1 s.d.) using the formula

\[
\%\Delta h(t) = (\frac{e^{(\beta_1(x_1-1)-\beta_2(x_2-1))}-1}{e^{(\beta_1(x_1+1)-\beta_2(x_2+1))}}) * 100.
\]

In the case of dummy variables, change is calculated from X=1 to X=0. See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1999, 109).

<sup>c</sup> Denotes mean-centered variable
After great congressional debate and with widespread public support, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) into law on June 25, 1938, establishing for the first time a federal minimum wage. Though the Act, which would establish a minimum wage of 40 cents an hour by 1945 ($3.62 in 1998 dollars), signaled a dramatic change in national labor policy, the long process of compromise had yielded a significantly weakened piece of legislation that lacked, among other things, a long-term provision to adjust the new minimum wage for inflation.\textsuperscript{50} By 1949, just four years after the original target wage had been reached, the FLSA wage floor was equivalent to just $2.74 in 1998 dollars, and labor interests began to push for amendments to the original Act. Congress adjusted the wage in 1949—but not before a rancorous debate over the minimum wage policy and its role in the American economy.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50} In fact, the House made a specific decision not to delegate control of the wage level to a Wage and Hour Board and instead to maintain control of wage levels (Seltzer 1995).

\textsuperscript{51} Historical information on the FLSA is drawn from Grossman 1978 and Waltman 2000, as well as from various editions of the \textit{Congressional Quarterly Almanac}. 

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This pattern of falling minimum wage real values followed by congressional action to drag the minimum wage levels back up has continued through to the present day. On most occasions, the House has passed the periodic minimum wage increases with oversized majorities that overshadowed vociferous minorities. In each case, the minimum wage vote has provided a distinct opportunity for opponents and supporters to take a visible position on an issue that is of great symbolic importance to the key constituencies of labor and business. Since the electoral connection on the minimum wage is clear for most members, and since the issue also raises basic philosophical questions about the role of government in the economy, we would expect that members would show a high degree of consistency in their voting over time.

Like the previous two chapters, this chapter seeks to explain when and why members exhibit position change by defecting from the usually reliable, uncertainty-reducing vote history on an issue that is controversial, recurring, and relatively similar in content over time. The periodic minimum wage votes present an opportunity to make safe and economical decisions, yet 11.5% of the repeat votes cast on the issue between 1949 and 2000 represented a position change. Did members respond to constituency signals on this highly visible issue? Did presidential influence sometimes outweigh the power of the vote history? Did the vote history gain value as members cast longer series of votes on the issue? And, given the patterns uncovered in the previous chapters on a divisive social issue and on a central foreign policy issue, does a constituency-oriented domestic issue with strong electoral implications exhibit similar or contrasting patterns of change?
The Political Context of Voting on Minimum Wage Increases

The intermittent House attempts to increase the federal minimum wage all follow a relatively similar pattern. The real value of the minimum wage falls relatively quickly after each congressional increase (see Figure 6.1), and congressional liberals and/or a Democratic president begin to push for a new round of FLSA revisions. Typically, the initial serious proposals involve a substantial increase in the wage level (frequently beyond the real value after the last increase) along with expansions in the number of workers covered by FLSA and, often, proposals to index the minimum wage to inflation and obviate future minimum wage debates. Pre-floor processes then produce a much more narrow piece of legislation with a more limited increase in the wage floor (frequently less than the real value after the last increase, see Figure 6.2), significant constraints on the breadth of coverage, and a graduated roll-out of the new wage over a period of several years. With the exception of two years in which the president had publicly signaled opposition to the wage bill, some version of the scaled-back legislation then has passed the House floor by a wide margin. The very wide margin of victory reflects the very limited probable impact of the final bill’s provisions and, therefore, the importance of symbolism and position taking in the final vote decision (see Waltman 2000, ch. 1 on symbolism in minimum wage policy).

Although there are subtle variations in the details of each year’s bill, the final House vote usually brings about a polarized debate over the minimum wage policy in

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52 On the possible reasons for the precise timing of the increases, see Sobel 1999. Congress appears to have timed the implementation of every increase in the minimum wage to coincide with an impending congressional election.
general. Supporters point out the difficulty of supporting a family at the devalued
minimum wage levels and make appeals based on the importance of just compensation
for labor. Opponents stress the economic arguments against regulating the labor market
and the possible consequences of that regulation in unemployment levels (Waltman 2000,
101). In short, the debate and vote on the House bill are opportunities for members to
send clear position messages to key constituencies, whether they be labor unions or small
business interests.

Some version of this process has taken place 13 times since the FLSA was
originally passed. Two of the final floor votes—in 1973 and in 1989—are not
appropriate for inclusion in a longitudinal analysis of vote positions because the bills
were passed under public veto threats by the president, making the question facing
members fundamentally different. The remaining eleven votes (including a vote on a
revised, presidentially-supported bill in 1989) offer a consistent series for analysis. As
described below, one major variation in bill content—the size of the proposed wage
change—is coded in the event history analysis. Details on the eleven roll call votes are
provided in Appendix C.

Member Positions and Vote History

Though the House votes on increases in the minimum wage have never posed a
dichotomous choice between maintaining or scrapping the FLSA, members have seen the
votes as opportunities to take sides on the general policy. In his analysis of minimum
wage economics and politics, Levin-Waldman (2001, 101) argues that “each legislative
debate over further amendments [has] appeared to offer an opportunity to rehearse the

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same arguments that had typically been heard before.” The minimum wage votes—like
the votes on the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid appropriations—are a classic context
in which members can develop and rely upon a vote history to make economical
decisions.

Past research on congressional minimum wage voting has suggested several key
factors that appear to shape vote positions (and by implication, the vote history).53 A
number of economists have focused on the impact of district or state economic conditions
as an indicator of constituency interest in minimum wage policy. Members with a sizable
small-business constituency (Uri and Mixon 1980) as well as members with a high
proportion of teenage (Silberman and Durden 1976), low-wage (Bloch 1975), or black
workers (Kau and Rubin 1978) appear to be more likely to vote against minimum wage
legislation. Union membership (measured at the state level) is consistently associated
with member support for minimum wage legislation (Bloch 1975; Kau and Rubin 1978;
Levin-Waldman 2001; Seltzer 1995; Silberman and Durden 1976; Sobel 1999; Uri and
Mixon 1980). And, while ideological effects are fairly straightforward, with liberals
more likely than conservatives to support the minimum wage (Kau and Rubin 1978;
Poole and Rosenthal 1991b), there is some contradiction in the literature over whether

53 Because of their inherent interest in the causes and consequences of wage and hour policy, economists are
responsible for most of the quantitative research into the correlates of minimum wage voting (Bloch 1975;
Kau and Rubin 1978; Levin-Waldman 2001; Poole and Rosenthal 1991b; Seltzer 1995; Silberman and
Durden 1976; Sobel 1999; Uri and Mixon 1980). Levin-Waldman, in particular, notes the absence of
political scientists from the research on the politics of the minimum wage, calling research on Congress and
wages “almost exclusively the province of economists” (2001, xii). For exceptions, see Waltman 2000 and
party membership has a significant effect (Kau and Rubin 1978; Levin-Waldman 2001; Uri and Mixon 1980).

The forces shaping member vote histories, then, appear to be the usual suspects: constituency interests, ideology, and (to some extent) party. Some of the findings in the economics research on minimum wage voting, though, seem theoretically suspect from a political science perspective: the argument that low-wage workers, for instance, will recognize the putative negative effects of wage floors on low wage employment and punish members who support them (e.g., Silberman and Durden 1976) runs contrary to what political scientists would expect from working-class opinion and voting behavior. The connections that the economists find between these demographic variables and congressional voting are more likely to reflect the vocal elite interests in areas with a large low-wage sector.

Because of these theoretical flaws, and because most economic literature on minimum wage voting is several decades old and does not include more recent roll-calls, I have constructed a pooled logit vote-choice model to illustrate the correlates of minimum wage voting before I explore the factors that lead to position change. Table 6.1 shows the results of this model, where the dependent variable equals “1” when the member supported final passage of the minimum wage bill (standard errors are clustered on the ICPSR member i.d. number to correct for interdependence of events). The model indicates that the congruity of member partisanship with the president as well as higher levels of constituency union membership (state-level) increase the probability of voting for wage increases. Members with larger margins of victory in their most recent
election are less likely to vote for the increases. The distance of the member's state-level manufacturing wage from the proposed new minimum (a measure of potential state economic impact) does not show a significant effect. Interestingly, both dimensions of Poole and Rosenthal's DW-Nominate scores (proxies here for ideology) have an impact on voting, with more economically and socially conservative members less likely to support the wage increases. The ideological variable also washes out the effect of party. The pooled logit model, overall, supports most of the findings in past models and points toward factors that are likely to establish a firm vote history. Below, I combine these findings with my general theory of position change to suggest hypotheses about when members defect from the vote history.

**Minimum Wage Hypotheses and Operationalization**

Though none of the economists' models of minimum wage voting incorporate a White House effect on vote choice, the model in Table 6.1 provides some empirical evidence that voting is related to presidential influence as filtered through party loyalty. Since wage increases frequently are presidential agenda items, the president is at least nominally an important player in minimum wage politics. As discussed in previous

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54 This interesting finding supports the claim that minimum wage voting has a significant symbolic and electoral component, as Sobel (1999) implies. Other things being equal, members who are electorally safer appear to feel more free to vote against minimum wage legislation, though this effect does not quite reach conventional levels of significance in the model shown.

55 I include both ideological measures because Poole and Rosenthal (1991b) find both the social/civil rights dimension and the economic dimension to be important in minimum wage voting (to varying extents over time). The importance of the second dimension reflects the degree to which the early years of the minimum wage debate involved sectional controversy related to the North/South wage differential and the attempt of northern Democrats such as FDR to reform the South's economy. Walter Lippmann observed that the FLSA was "in truth a sectional bill disguised as humanitarian reform" (qtd. in Levin-Waldman 2001, 99).
chapters, a change in the presidential context of recurring votes can cause members to reevaluate their vote histories:

**H1:** When partisan control of the White House shifts, members will be more likely to change their position on minimum wage increases, other things being equal.

As was the case with the Hyde and foreign aid analyses, my general theory about the value of the vote history implies that members find past voting patterns more reliable as they contain more information. As members develop a longer vote history, they become less likely to defect from their past positions since the vote history represents a more valuable cue. Stated in the reverse, members are more likely to change their positions on early votes since the value of previous votes can easily be called into question by signals from key actors:

**H2:** Other things being equal, members will be most likely to defect from their previous position on the minimum wage on the second vote they cast on the issue.

As in the previous chapters, the baseline hazard rate will be used as a basis for exploring the risk of position change across the member’s vote history.

For some members, ideology and party may again work as crosspressuring forces on minimum wage voting. The vote history should be less reliable to members who face these conflicting cues, particularly since party cues may vary in their salience from year to year. The decision factors that allow most members to establish a comfortable vote history remain unsettled for members with party/ideology crosspressuring:

**H3:** Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans will be more likely to exhibit position change than liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans.
Hypothesis three is again tested through a dummy variable that equals “1” for members whose DW-Nominate (first dimension) score places them on the “wrong” side of the chamber mean score.\footnote{This measurement roughly parallels the operationalization that Bond and Fleisher (2001) use in their recent study of crosspressuring and moderation.}

Particularly on a domestic issue with such a clear electoral connection (Sobel 1999), constituency considerations are a key factor in formulating vote decisions and a vote history. As discussed above, even the imperfect lens of geographic constituency demographics provides a view of constituency effects on minimum wage vote choice. Voting consistency over time follows from a member’s desire for economical decisions that are safe approximations of the best choice for the members goals, as chapters one and two described. Constituency factors that make the vote history a less coherent cue should, then, be associated with higher levels of position change as members seek positions that satisfy their goals:

H4: Members representing constituencies with more extreme characteristics on factors related to interest in the minimum wage will be less likely to change their positions over time.

Following the existing vote choice analyses, I use the union density level of the non-agricultural workforce as a general indicator of constituency interest in minimum wage legislation (coded as the absolute mean-centered value of the measure to capture distance from the average level).
The union data, which is available only at the state level for the time period under analysis,\textsuperscript{57} is coded for the exact year of the roll call, except where noted.\textsuperscript{58}

The final hypothesis also specifies an impact for electoral politics on the value of the vote history. Extrapolating from Fenno's work on member careers and constituency-related behavior, we would expect to find that members who are especially safe electorally have built the sort of trust that allows them freedom to consider goals other than immediate electoral considerations. At the same time, we would expect members who have only a very tenuous grip on their House seat to consider behavioral changes that might expand their reelection constituency on an electorally important issue. A curvilinear hypothesis emerges:

\textbf{H5:} Members with margins of victory that approach either the greatest or the narrowest margin will be more likely to change their positions on minimum wage increases.

\textsuperscript{57} Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn (1997, 336-337) employed a complex method of imputation that allowed them to estimate union membership at the level of the individual House district to analyze the 1993 NAFTA roll-call. While this approach provides a much more appealing measurement of district interest, the data needed to construct the measurements are not available in a time series covering the lengthy period of this study. The state-level data, with all of its limitations as an indicator of geographic constituency interest, is the only consistent measure available across the 1949-2000 time period. The Box-Steffensmeier, et al. district-level measure for the 103d Congress is highly correlated with the 1996 state-level data in my analysis (r=.851, p<.01).

\textsuperscript{58} Data for non-agricultural unionization levels for 1949 and 1955 is from Troy (1957). All other annual state union density values were estimated by Hirsch, Macpherson, and Vroman (2001) and were made available by Barry Hirsch at http://www.trinity.edu/bhirsch. Data for the years 1960 and 1961 are not readily available; for these years, data for the year 1964 (the earliest year for which Hirsch, et al. estimated union density) is substituted.
Hypothesis Five is tested using the absolute value of the incumbent’s 2-party percentage of the vote (mean-centered); higher values on this variable should be associated with a higher risk of position change.59

Analysis

These five hypotheses are tested in the Cox repeated-events model presented in Table 6.2. As was the case in the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid analyses, tests based on Schoenfeld residuals from a preliminary model (not shown) indicated significant violations of the proportional hazards assumption on several of the variables. Following Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn (2001b), the reported model includes an interaction of each of the two offending variables (party control dummy and the party loss of White House dummy) with ln(time) to model the relationship between the covariates and analysis time so that the direct effects of each variable can be measured.

The hypothesis that White House influence (filtered through party affiliation) affects vote stability (H1) again receives support in the case of the minimum wage. The Cox model includes dummy variables for White House change to the member’s party and from the member’s party at each point in the vote series. The White House effects prove specific to these directions: members are significantly more likely to switch positions when an opposition president takes office, but they show no significant pattern of vote change when their party has gained the White House. As discussed in Chapter Five, this

59 Electoral margin data for the 1960 through 1996 cases were provided by David Lublin (1997). Popular vote totals for 1949, 1955, and 2000 cases are from the official Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election publications provided by the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

60 See Chapter Three for a discussion of the variance-corrected repeated events model employed here.
type of White House effect suggests a pattern of presidential loyalty among members but not a pattern of direct presidential influence, other things being equal.

As Hypothesis Three suggests, members who face crosspressuring between their ideology and partisanship are significantly more likely to change positions at any point in time, according to the model in Table 6.2. Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans appear to find the vote history a less informative cue than their respective liberal and conservative copartisans. The impact of crosspressuring proves to be fairly sizable, with crosspressured members 132% more likely to change positions than non-crosspressured members.

In contrast to the Hyde Amendment case, in which constituency interests affected members' reliance on the vote history, the minimum wage case shows no statistically significant effect for the constituency interest variable (though the coefficient is correctly signed). Despite the fact that members with strong union constituencies are more likely to support minimum wage legislation (see Table 6.1), members with unusually high or low union density rates in their state were no more likely to switch positions than other members (Hypothesis Four). It should be noted that the insignificance of the union variable may be related to the imprecision of the available union density data—union data at the congressional district level for the full time period may show a significant relationship.

Perhaps the most striking finding in Table 6.2 is the strong support for Hypothesis Five; members with very high and very low margins of victory were significantly more likely to change their positions than members with middling victory margins. The
substantive impact of the electoral variable is significant, with extremely safe or unsafe members experiencing a 42% greater risk of position change at any given point. Comparing the minimum wage model with the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid models, we see a stark contrast in the importance of overt reelection considerations. Electoral margins consistently showed no effect on the consistency of member behavior in the foreign policy and social policy realms; however, the minimum wage apparently holds more electoral salience in the minds of members. When members were in a maintenance phase, seeking cues for a safe decision, the vote history appears to be most important and voting is more stable. But when members are either in a very safe situation—with non-electoral goals taking precedence—or in an extremely marginal situation where holding and expanding the most recent victory margin is crucial, position change becomes considerably more likely on the minimum wage.61

Also in contrast to the distinct patterns on the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid, the minimum wage vote history does not appear to increase consistently in value over time (Hypothesis Two). As the hazard plot in Figure 6.3 shows, the risk of position change is relatively high at the member’s first opportunity to switch (second vote), and it does drop off at the third vote (\(r=2\)), but it then reaches its highest level at the fourth vote (\(r=3\)). Subsequent to the fourth vote, the risk of position change drops off markedly. In sum, members do find the minimum wage vote history more valuable as it contains more information, but unlike the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid vote histories, the

61The electoral effects may be more robust at the "safe" end of the spectrum. When an alternative hypothesis—that vote share has a linear effect, with safer members more likely to switch than less safe members—is tested, the linear vote share variable is statistically and substantively significant.

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minimum wage vote history does not monotonically increase in value from the earliest repeated vote. Instead, members appear to fluctuate for their first several votes in an attempt to find a workable position on this highly visible and electorally salient issue.

Along with the variables for the hypothesized relationships, the minimum wage Cox model contains two variables included as controls for additional expected influences on vote stability. As in the other cases, partisanship is related not only to the vote position but also to the risk of changing that position. Setting aside constituency based differences, the Democratic party was the party most closely allied with labor interests during the 1949-2000 time period, and we would expect Democrats to be more closely tethered to their minimum wage positions as a result. The negative significant coefficient for partisanship in the Cox model reassures us that this effect is controlled in the examination of the other theoretically-specified variables in the model. Similarly, since content is not perfectly constant across the eleven votes in the analysis, the model contains a variable designed to capture the most important variation in content—the size of the proposed minimum wage increase in the final House bill. The inflation-adjusted increase amount is indeed related to position stability; larger (i.e., more controversial) increases fostered significantly higher rates of defection. The significance of this content control suggests that the theoretical variables in the Cox model are, as I claim, picking up considerations other than simple changes in the legislation before the House.

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62 The centrality of the wage level in pre-floor negotiations over bill content is testament to the wage level’s importance (see Waltman 2000 for illustrative legislative histories).
Summary: Position Change and Domestic Policy

The picture of stability and change presented by the minimum wage case supports this study’s general theoretical argument: past decisions do provide members with highly reliable information about the effect of votes on member objectives, but members will defect from the vote history when uncertainty is high as a result of conflicting pressures or when the prospective value of the vote history is called into question by an important change in the member's decision environment. Notably, members switched positions on the minimum wage more frequently when their party's president left the White House (as in the foreign aid case) and when they faced conflicting pressures between their partisanship and ideological leanings (as in both previous cases).

These similarities across the domestic, foreign, and social policy cases support the claim that, across divergent issues, the same types of factors increase members’ uncertainty about the value of past decisions. But the differences that emerge among the three cases are equally interesting and instructive. Though the probability of position change generally declines over the vote history for all three issues, the risk of vote change after $t=2$ on the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid drops off precipitously, whereas the risk of change remains high through several more votes on the minimum wage. The stability of a member’s minimum wage vote position is still related to the length of the vote history, but a highly reliable vote history takes longer to develop in the case of this domestic economic issue.

Just as vote positions remain unstable longer on the minimum wage, so also are they more susceptible to the influence of members’ immediate electoral concerns. We
know that Congress has timed many of its minimum wage increases (and, in fact, the original FLSA itself) to coincide closely with national elections (Sobel 1999) and that prominent reelection constituencies—labor and business groups—take strong positions on the increases each time they are considered. Moreover, we know that members are somewhat willing to make adjustments in voting on direct constituent benefits in order to gain short-term electoral advantage (Hibbing 1984), and that electorally marginal members are somewhat more likely to support minimum wage increases (see table 6.1). It is not surprising, then, to find that minimum wage voting is more volatile among members whose electoral positions are insecure and who may engage in entrepreneurial voting behavior in an attempt to attain a larger victory margin. And, in keeping with Fenno’s (1978, ch. 7) notion of the linkage between home style and the Washington career, it is also not surprising to find that members with unusually comfortable margins of victory are also especially likely to change positions. A well-developed trust relationship may allow members to engage in more shirking on an issue surrounded by strong constituency connections as well as polar philosophical positions. The most distinct aspect of minimum wage stability and change, in comparison to the other two contemporary cases, seems to be the close connection between position change and extreme levels of electoral security and insecurity.
Note: Wage values adjusted by the author to 1983 dollars.

Figure 6.1: Adjusted Annual Values of the Federal Minimum Wage, 1949-2000
Note: Wage values adjusted by the author to 1983 dollars.

Figure 6.2: Existing and House-proposed New Minimum Wage Values (Inflation-adjusted), 1949-2000
Note: Vote numbers represent the number of votes a member has cast at a given time.

Figure 6.3: Baseline Hazard Rate Plot for House Minimum Wage Voting 1949-2000 (first strata)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>RSEb</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party (1=Dem)</td>
<td>-.2729</td>
<td>.3593</td>
<td>.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosspressuring (1=Crosspressed)</td>
<td>-.3139</td>
<td>.2308</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House controlled by member's party</td>
<td>.2121</td>
<td>.0967</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership</td>
<td>.0337</td>
<td>.0068</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of wage change</td>
<td>.2236</td>
<td>.1552</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW-Nominate, 1st dimension</td>
<td>-7.3700</td>
<td>.5358</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW-Nominate, 2nd dimension</td>
<td>-.9636</td>
<td>.2028</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member's share of 2-party vote</td>
<td>-.5636</td>
<td>.3946</td>
<td>.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.2354</td>
<td>.4358</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=4420
Pseudo R²=.42

* Dependent variable: Vote on minimum wage increase (1=support increase).
See Appendix C for a list of bills in the analysis.

b Standard errors are robust standard errors, clustered on each member's unique i.d. number.

Table 6.1: Pooled Logit model of House Member Vote Choices on Minimum Wage Increases, 1949-2000*
Table 6.2: Corrected Cox Proportional Hazards Conditional Risk Set (time from entry)
Model of Vote Change on House Minimum Wage Roll Calls, 1949-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>RSE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Change in Hazard Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party (1=Dem)</td>
<td>-1.3928</td>
<td>.1822</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>-75.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosspressuring (1=Crosspressed)</td>
<td>.8427</td>
<td>.1657</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>132.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House change to member's party</td>
<td>-.1393</td>
<td>.1680</td>
<td>.407</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House change from member's party</td>
<td>.7145</td>
<td>.1903</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>104.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership (abs. value)</td>
<td>-.0097</td>
<td>.0127</td>
<td>.444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of wage change (1983 dollars)</td>
<td>.4485</td>
<td>.1896</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>36.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member's share of 2-party vote (abs. value)</td>
<td>1.8508</td>
<td>.6758</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(Time) x Party</td>
<td>.1112</td>
<td>.2445</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(Time) x WH change from member's party</td>
<td>-.5222</td>
<td>.2340</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of observations=2767  
N of subjects=1208  
N of failures=296

* Dependent variable is duration to vote change.  
Baseline hazard rates stratified by order of failures (failures beyond third combined with third strata).  
Efron method for tied observations.  
See Appendix C for list of bills in the analysis.

* Calculated predicted change from (mean + 1 s.d.) to (mean - 1 s.d.) using the formula  
\[ \% \Delta h(t) = \left( \frac{e^{\beta X_1} - e^{\beta X_2}}{e^{\beta X_1} + e^{\beta X_2}} \right) \times 100. \] In the case of dummy variables, change is calculated from X=1 to X=0. See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1999, 109).

* Denotes mean-centered variable
On December 3, 1844, the House of Representatives voted to repeal a standing House rule that had formally barred the chamber from even considering the abolition of slavery or the slave trade. The vote reversed a policy that the House had adopted, in one form or another, since 1836; it also signaled the effective end of a decade-long battle that featured countless passionate floor speeches and dozens of sharply divided roll-call votes. In the course of this battle over the "gag rule," the controversy evolved from a chiefly partisan dispute with sectional undertones into one that displayed the polarizing forces that would drive the nation apart in the subsequent two decades. The gag rule debate in the House of Representatives was, in the words of historian William Freehling, "the Pearl Harbor of the slavery controversy" (qtd. in Miller 1995, 3)—one of the first serious skirmishes on the long road to the Civil War.

The rule (Rule 21) specified "that no petition, memorial, resolution, or other paper praying the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or any State or Territory, or the slave trade between the States or Territories of the United States in which it now exists, shall be received by this House, or entertained in any way whatever." (See Congressional Globe, 28 Cong 2, 28 Jan 1840, 150). As discussed below, the gag rule was imposed as a resolution rather than in a standing rule prior to 1840.
The votes cast in the six Congresses that considered the gag rule question provide a fascinating opportunity to consider the sources of position stability and change in a context very different from the late-twentieth-century setting of the issues analyzed in chapters five through seven. The electoral connection (Mayhew 1974) and other aspects of congressional behavior that are central to our understanding of the contemporary Congress were less important in the nineteenth-century context (Kernell 1977; Polsby 1968; Young 1966). At the same time, my general propositions about position change should extend to the antebellum era: representatives should establish a stable vote history on the recurring gag rule question, but factors that increase their uncertainty about that position over time should lead to reversals. The primary purpose of this chapter will be to illustrate the application of that general principle in the case of the gag rule, but a secondary purpose is to show the combined importance of position change and member replacement in explaining the House’s reversal on the gag rule question. In the process, I will also provide a systematic, if preliminary, analysis of decision making on an issue that (despite its importance) has received disproportionately little attention from historians.

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64 I have selected the gag rule as a test case for exploring nineteenth-century voting dynamics for several reasons. The first is its amenability to over-time analysis. I searched through several sources—including Alexander 1967, Brady 1973, Castel and Gibson 1975, and the ICPSR #9822 codebooks—in order to identify roll-call votes that reappeared in nearly identical form during the mid-nineteenth century. Since the congressional agenda was more volatile in this earlier period than in the post-World War II House, long series of repeated roll-calls were more rare, and the gag rule represented one of the few "clean" cases for studying long-term voting positions. A second reason for selecting the gag rule is the simple, polarized question that the gag rule votes presented to members. As I argue in Chapter Three, such votes present a stringent test for empirical questions about position change, though the findings about member voting should extend to more complex decisions.
and virtually no attention from political scientists studying congressional decision making.\textsuperscript{65}

**The Gag Rule Controversy: A Brief History**

The gag rule had its beginnings far from Washington, D.C., with the upsurge of the abolitionist social movement in the early 1830s. Though abolitionist sentiment was not a new phenomenon, it emerged as an organized and more widespread movement by 1833, when the American Anti-Slavery Society was organized (Ludlum 1941, 204), impelled in part by religious revival and the British anti-slavery movement (Barnes 1964). The incipient abolitionist movement began to publicize its views widely through publications (such as William Lloyd Garrison’s *Liberator*) and other means, quickly inducing violent attempts—in the North as well as the South—to suppress abolitionism (Ludlum 1941, 204-205).\textsuperscript{66} The abolitionists accompanied their efforts at grassroots persuasion with direct appeals to the federal government for the abolition of slavery.

Relying on the right to petition guaranteed in the First Amendment, abolitionists took up a campaign of submitting petitions to Congress, seeking redress on the specific topics of “the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia, prohibition of slavery in the territories, and the abolition of the slave trade between the

\textsuperscript{65}A few quantitative historians have explored the gag rule as an illustrative case (e.g., Feinberg 1971) or along with other sectional controversies of the period (Alexander 1967), and Binder’s recent analysis of party development and congressional procedures looks very briefly at a gag rule vote (Binder 1997, 99-104). Several more traditional historical treatments of the gag rule are cited in the text.

\textsuperscript{66}Other events during this same time frame that were not directly connected to the organized abolition movement also increased southern alarm at the threat to slavery as an institution. The Nat Turner slave rebellion of 1831, along with the serious (but ultimately unsuccessful) efforts in the Virginia legislature (1832) toward a gradual program of abolition were among these events (Norton, et al. 1991, 189-191).
states" (McPherson 1963, 177). During the 24th Congress, House members began to receive these petitions in mass quantities. While Congress had remained detached from the slavery question for the fifteen-year period following the Missouri Compromise, the influx of petitions—coupled with the visible anti-slavery agitation around the country—put the issue unavoidably back on its agenda (Ludlum 1941). When abolition petitions had been received in the past, they had been shuffled off to committee where they died a quiet death (Rable 1975, 69), but that procedure would not be followed amidst the heightened tensions of the 24th Congress.

Several historians have chronicled the legislative history of the first gag rule in the House, as reported in the Congressional Globe. They agree that the events immediately leading to the gag began with a series of petitions presented on the House floor by New England representatives in December 1835, requesting that slavery in Washington, D.C. be abolished (Ludlum 1941; Rable 1975). Though the petitions (and others that followed in the next few months) were quickly disposed of, southerners (and some northern Democrats [McPherson 1963]) were aghast that the abolition issue had surfaced in the House chamber. The southern press and state legislatures expressed indignation throughout the early months of 1836, and the House engaged in debates that dealt not only with the immediate issue of the disposition of the abolition petitions but also with the larger question of slavery (Rable 1975, 71-72, 74-75).

Regional and partisan outrage at the petitions culminated in voting on a series of resolutions Henry Pinckney (D-SC) presented in May. Pinckney had secured the creation of a select committee (in January) to consider the petition issue; the committee was
specifically instructed to offer reasons why Congress could not regulate slavery in the states and should not regulate it in D.C. (Ludlum 1941, 206; Rable 1975, 75). The resolutions that the committee recommended in May included statements to this effect, as well as the first gag rule, which resolved “that all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers, relating in any way, or to any extent whatever, to the subject of slavery, or the abolition of slavery, shall, without being either printed or referred, be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever shall be had thereon” (Congressional Globe 24 Cong 1, 26 May 1836, 505). This Pinckney gag resolution passed the House, 117-68. The coalescing Second Party System (and the upcoming 1836 presidential election) lent a partisan tone to this early decision. Though historians seem to disagree over the extent to which partisanship was central (see McFaul 1975), the shaping of the first gag rule appears to have been a Democrat-dominated process, with Whigs largely excluded (Rable 1975, 83; Miller 1995, 143). And, the gag rule clearly served the interests of a congressional Democratic party that was relatively unified on nonslavery issues: it had the potential to maintain intersectional unity, and it was well-suited to the Democrats’ concern with national government power (see Silbey 1985 on the issue alignments of the antebellum Democrats).

Though the gag rule solved the immediate dilemma of how to deal with the influx of abolition petitions, it did not eliminate the slavery debate in the House; it merely refocused it. Opposition to the first gag rule could be found on both ends of the

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67Note that this first instance of the gag “rule” was not a standing House rule but rather a resolution that required renewal at each new session.

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continuum of viewpoints on slavery. A small contingent of (mostly Whig) southern congressmen vociferously contended that the gag rule was a concession to the abolitionists. The gag and its accompanying resolutions implied that Congress had the power to abolish slavery in D.C., a position that the extreme southern contingent argued was unconstitutional on its face (Rable 1975). Allies of the abolitionists, of course, saw the gag rule as unconstitutional for a different reason: it implicitly denied the right to petition the government. This apparent limiting of the First Amendment ultimately had the effect of aiding the cause of the abolitionists in the North, even among those who previously saw the abolitionist movement as extreme: the gag rule connected "abolitionism with the constitutional right of petition" and won new sympathizers among northern citizens and members of Congress (Barnes 1964, 111; McPherson 1963, 178-180).

The adoption of the gag rule, then, fragmented and redirected—but did not eliminate—the House slavery controversy. Those who opposed the gag and/or supported abolition found a panoply of ways to attack the gag. Cleverly-worded petitions continued to be presented, mostly as an effort to call public attention to the issue (Mark 1998, 2225). John Quincy Adams (W-MA) was among a handful of representatives who led the charge against the gag rule, offering petitions against the rule itself and—in thinly disguised form—against slavery, keeping passions surrounding the issue heated.68

68 Adams’ petitions included a request for an examination of "how to make effective the constitutional guarantee of a republican form of government, when 13 slave States had governments 'absolutely despotic, onerous, and oppressive' to a great part of their populations," a suggestion for making "an amicable division of the Union by a line running between the free and the slave States," and a proposal for "the removal of the seat of government farther North, where the principles of the Declaration of Independence 'are not treated as a mere rhetorical flourish'" (Ludlum 1941, 213, 217). See Miller 1995 for a detailed
The continuing controversy surrounding the gag rule and abolition petitions made the renewal of the gag a critical priority for a coalition of southerners and northern Democrats in the late 1830s. The regular votes on renewing the gag rule became a regular, contentious feature of the first several months of most House sessions. Both the lame-duck session69 of the 24th Congress and the first regular session of the 25th Congress began with a flurry of abolition petitions, but in each case, a gag rule identical to the Pinckney resolution was adopted after several weeks of conflict (see Appendix D for information on all roll-calls included in this chapter’s quantitative analysis). The lame-duck session of the 25th Congress, however, began with nearly immediate adoption of the gag rule before the petition debate could even begin (Ludlum 1941, 208-214).

The first regular session of the 26th Congress (January 1840) began with a significant shift in the politics of the gag rule. The session began as the others had, with attempts to introduce abolition petitions along with days of debate about a gag rule. But the outcome would be more extreme in this case. According to McPherson, the large "buildup of petitions at this session, the deepening economic depression, and the advent of a presidential election combined to create an atmosphere which favored the granting of extremist demands" (1963, 180). Those demands led to a new version of the gag rule with two notable new features. First, the gag was incorporated into the House’s standing

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69 During this period, the House usually began its regular sessions in December of the odd-numbered years; there was also usually a lame-duck session running from December of the even-numbered years through March of the odd-numbered years.

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rules⁷⁰ (Rule 21), and second, the wording was revised to indicate that abolition petitions would not even be received, in contrast to the previous policy of automatically tabling the petitions (Congressional Globe, 28 Cong 2, 28 Jan 1840, 150; Ludlum 1941, 215). In the 26th and subsequent Congresses, then, the onus shifted to the abolitionists and their allies to rescind the standing rule. Adams made unsuccessful efforts to strike the rule in both the lame duck session of the 26th Congress and the regular and lame duck sessions of the 27th (Ludlum 1941, 215-219). The Whig party’s ascension to control of the Congress and the White House (1840 elections) failed to transform the issue in the 27th Congress, despite the partisan dimensions of the initial gag rule vote (see Table 7.1 for a summary of congressional and White House partisan control during this time period).

It was in the 28th Congress that the established pattern of gag rule politics shifted significantly. The 1842 elections were the first post-reapportionment elections, and they had yielded an unusually high turnover, even in 19th century terms: only 24 percent of incumbents were returned to the 28th Congress. The Whigs lost their majority, and the overwhelmingly Democratic House was initially not expected to produce any change in the gag rule ritual, which had been initiated in part as a result of Democratic politics (Miller 1995, 470-471). Adams’ traditional opening volley—the amendment to exclude the gag from the rules being adopted—was narrowly defeated. But the House continued to struggle through December and January over the adoption of a set of rules. A select

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⁷⁰ Other controversies had prevented the adoption of rules at the start of the session (Ludlum 1941, 214), apparently allowing the gag rule debate to meld with the adoption of the House rules.
committee (created by an Adams motion) reported in January a set of rules that excluded the gag, and weeks of debate followed during late January and February of 1844 (Ludlum 1941, 220; Miller 1995, 473). In a crucial vote, the House refused (by a vote of 85-107\(^1\)) an amendment from George Dromgoole (D-VA) that would have restored the gag to the set of rules proposed by the Adams committee.

This vote, along with several others\(^2\) in the first session of the 28th Congress, reflected a shift toward majority opposition to the gag rule. However, the gag rule was not ultimately removed in this session—the House rejected the full set of rules (without the gag) at the end of its drawn-out battle, renewing the House rules from the 27th Congress instead. But at the beginning of the lame duck session of the 28th Congress, Adams’ efforts at repealing the gag rule were finally successful. The House repealed the rule by a vote of 108-80 (Ludlum 1941, 221-222; Miller 1995, 473-477), and the proponents of the rule never successfully restored it, despite attempts at the beginning of the next session. The Whiggish New York Tribune celebrated the outcome, saying “The absurd and tyrannical XXVth (formerly the XXIst) Rule of the House . . . has been

\(^{71}\) The Congressional Globe, and historical sources relying on it, report this vote as a 86-106 division (Congressional Globe 28 Cong 1, 27 Feb 1844, 333). I rely here on ICPSR (#9822) data, which indicates an 85-107 split.

\(^{72}\) A note on selection of roll-calls for the quantitative analysis. The House cast many recorded roll-calls related in some way to the gag rule during the 1836-1845 period, and I have attempted to identify the votes that provide the purest measure of member positions on the gag from each session in which the issue was debated. I have relied on several historical sources (Alexander 1967; Ludlum 1941; Miller 1995) to separate key votes in the gag rule battle from those that are connected substantially with other matters (usually, with the adoption of the full set of rules). I have also excluded votes taken in a spring 1841 special session: a gag rule battle ensued, as usual, at the beginning of this session, but President Tyler had called the session for narrow purposes, and the House eventually resolved to temporarily gag all subjects unrelated to the economic reasons for the special session (Ludlum 1941, 216).
repealed by a decisive vote! The Sage of Quincy has won a proud victory for the Rights of Humanity” (qtd. in Miller 1995, 477).

**Voting on the Gag Rule**

Historians and political scientists have conducted very little analysis of roll-call voting on the gag rule. But, existing historical analysis places importance on both partisanship and sectional factors. Some consensus exists on the importance of partisanship to the early votes on the gag rule. McFaul argues that the original 1836 gag rule was issued in defense of “Democratic policy of nonintervention with the South,” and “more than anything else reflected anxieties over disunion” (1975, 33), an argument echoed in Rable’s (1975) analysis of the original gag. Other analyses provide impressionistic (Miller 1995) or quantitative (Alexander 1967) evidence that, as the debate entered its later years, partisan voting alignments on the issue were blurred and regional alignments strengthened. Alexander, in particular, shows that the gag rule votes scale well with other sectional issues (e.g., Texas annexation) that emerge and divide the parties during the 1840s.

In Table 7.2, I provide some systematic evidence that supports the existing interpretations of gag rule voting during this time period. The table displays the results of a pooled logit regression model with votes on the gag rule as the dependent variable (vote to impose gag = 1). The series of dummy variables for regional party affiliation (with northern Whig as the baseline category73) strongly supports the argument that sectional

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73 The small number of third-party members (Anti-masons, Nullifiers, etc.) are excluded from the regression models in this chapter.
effects explain much of the voting on the gag rule. Compared to northern Whigs, southern Democrats and southern Whigs were significantly more likely to vote for the gag rule across the time period. For northern Democrats, however, the model does not suggest a significant difference in gag rule voting from northern Whigs—though, as I will explain in more detail shortly, the temporal changes in the patterns of northern Democrat voting may explain the insignificance of this variable. As a group, northern Democrats moved from nearly unanimous support for the gag rule at the start of the time period to majority opposition by the end (see Figure 7.2).

Beyond the regional party effects, surrogate measures for ideology (1st and 2nd dimension DW-Nominate scores) show independent, statistically significant effects on vote choice, but two other possible factors in member voting—alignment with the House majority party and status as an exiting “lame duck” during the last session of a Congress—do not show statistically significant effects. In short, the pooled logit model provides general support for the idea that regional and party factors affected gag rule voting, but as is usually the case with analyses that do not explicitly account for time and change, it does not tell the full story, as we will see.

Gag Rule Hypotheses and Operationalization

The dynamics of members’ gag rule positions can be analyzed in a way that parallels the contemporary-issue analyses in the previous chapters, but the specific hypotheses and operationalizations in the gag rule case vary somewhat as a result of both data availability and the specific political context of the issue. The general forces producing stability and change should be similar if my arguments about member positions
extrapolate to the antebellum context, but the gag rule model cannot perfectly parallel the hypothesis testing in the twentieth-century cases.\textsuperscript{74}

I have argued in the abstract that members will find their vote history to be a less reliable cue—and that they will be more likely to change positions—when important factors in their decision-making process suggest conflicting choices. Evidence from the Hyde amendment, foreign aid, and minimum wage cases has supported this general proposition. In the gag rule context, this sort of crosspressuring is most likely to emerge between the partisan and regional forces that competed for members' allegiances (Alexander 1967) during the 1830s and 1840s:

H1: Members who are cross-pressured by their partisan and regional alliances—southern Whigs and northern Democrats—should be more likely to change their positions on the gag rule.

This hypothesis is tested through a series of regional party variables for northern and southern wings of the two major parties (northern Whig is the baseline category). Coding

\textsuperscript{74} In particular, the electoral-margin hypothesis—which would be fascinating to explore in the antebellum period, given the general assumption of lesser electoral focus—cannot reliably be tested here, both because of the incomplete election data and because of the prevalence of multimember districts. The analysis of lame duck members takes the place of the margins hypothesis in this chapter. Another variable tested in each of the other analyses, White House partisan control, is excluded from this analysis for substantive reasons. The gag resolutions and standing rules were, of course, passed without formal presidential involvement. Though it would be simplistic to say that presidential politics were entirely irrelevant to the gag issue (see, e.g., Miller 1995, ch. 12), the president had no formal power in the process since the gag rule was a matter of internal House business.

\textsuperscript{75} The argument here is not that region, by itself, has some magical effect on member behavior—it serves as a proxy for the combination of ideological and constituency factors that set northern and southern members apart on slavery-related matters (though the qualitative extent of these differences during this decade is the subject of some controversy—see McFaul 1975 and Silbey 1985, ch. 6).
of region divides states into northern and southern groups, following the ICPSR regional categories and including border states in the southern groups.76

Under the party-competitive conditions of the recently-emerged second party system, shifts in the partisan institutional context should also change members’ calculations. Historical accounts suggest that the gag rule at least began as a tool of Democratic majority-party governance (Miller 1995; Rable 1975), giving us reason to suspect that the emergence of a Whig majority in the 27th Congress and the return to a Democratic majority in the 28th would affect members’ calculations about the meaning of the gag rule. Members who might have supported the gag rule in support of the larger majority party agenda—or voted against it in opposition to that agenda—may shift their positions in response to changed partisan context:

H2: When partisan control of the House of Representatives shifts, members will be more likely to change their gag rule position, other things being equal.

Though the lack of reliable electoral data makes a direct test of electoral-margin effects impractical in the gag rule case, a glimpse at electoral effects is available by examining the specific behavior of lame-duck members across the time period. In the antebellum era, Congress typically met first in a regular session beginning late in the odd-numbered years and then met after the election of the next Congress for a short “lame duck” session beginning in December of the even-numbered years. Since many members in these “lame duck” sessions had either retired or been defeated, they were casting votes

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76Whig and Democrat party coding generally follows the corrected party variable coding in the Poole and Rosenthal NOMINATE data sets. For the 24th Congress, in which Poole and Rosenthal retain Jacksonian and anti-Jacksonian party labels, I have relied on the party coding in the ICPSR #9822 data set, with conflicts between the 24th and later Poole and Rosenthal codings cross-checked with the current Biographical Directory of the United States Congress (http://bioguide.congress.gov).
without regard for electoral pressures, to the extent that reelection was a central goal. If this contextual change led to reassessment of priorities—moving ideological considerations ahead of constituency considerations, for instance—then position change would become more likely for lame ducks:

H3: Non-returning members serving in lame duck sessions will be more likely to change their position on the gag rule than those who have been reelected to the next Congress.

Generally, the gag rule resolutions were similar in content from year to year. Though the “yea” position of the vote differed depending on whether members were voting to add the gag or rescind it (see Appendix D), the content of the rule was usually short, simple, and consistent. The exception to this came in January 1840, when the House voted to make the gag a standing rule (described in more detail above). Members may have changed positions on this vote—the fifth in the 12-vote series—because of its even more controversial content, and the event history model accounts for this possible content effect:

H4: The 1840 change in the gag rule (from a resolution for automatic tabling of abolition petitions to a standing rule excluding them from being presented) increased the likelihood that members would defect from their established position on the gag rule on that vote.

As I have argued in the other case studies, the assumption that the vote history provides an uncertainty-reducing cue for members suggests that position change should be most likely when the vote history is shortest and should become less likely as the vote history becomes more established, holding constant the other factors that affect position change:
H5: Other things being equal, members will be most likely to defect from their previous position on the gag rule on the second vote they cast on the issue.

As in the previous chapters, this hypothesis is tested in the event history analysis through examination of the baseline hazard function for the first strata of position changes, rather than through a formal hypothesis test with a covariate in the model.

Event History Analysis

Sources of Individual Position Change

The Cox repeated-events (time from entry) proportional hazards model presented in Table 7.3 tests the five hypotheses using individual-member position change data.\(^7\) Diagnostically, the Cox model presented in Table 7.3 performs adequately: a global test of proportional hazards (based on Schoenfeld residuals) shows no overall violation of the assumption ($\chi^2=3.15$, df=6, $p<0.78$), and tests for the individual covariates also showed no significant violations.

The covariate effects in the model point toward several conclusions about position changes on the gag rule. First, northern Democrats and southern Whigs were far more likely (about 262% and 146%, respectively) to change their positions than their northern Whig colleagues,\(^7\) but southern Democrats showed no statistically significant increased likelihood of position change. In short, there is a strong tendency toward position shifting among members whose partisan affiliation conflicted with regional interests on the gag rule question. The partisan control hypothesis (H2), however, is not supported: members

\(^7\) See Chapter Three for a discussion of the variance-corrected repeated events model employed here.

\(^7\) The baseline category is northern Whigs, though similar conclusions are reached when southern Democrats are used as the baseline category.
showed no increased risk of position change at the first vote after a change in the House majority party, when other factors are controlled. The model also does not support the "lame duck" hypothesis (H3); in fact, lame duck members appear to be somewhat less likely (34%) to change positions, though this effect is significant only at the .10 level. Content change, in the form of the shift from the gag resolution to the standing rule, does affect member decisions (H4), with members showing about a 97% greater likelihood of position change on the standing-rule vote than on other votes, on average (p < .055). Figure 7.1 displays the baseline hazard rate across members' vote histories on the gag rule, and it clearly shows that the vote history hypothesis (H5) receives less support in the gag rule case than in the contemporary cases. The baseline risk of change does decline between the second and fifth votes—though not monotonically—suggesting some tendency for greater stability over time, but the risk of change returns to higher levels in the later votes in member vote histories. The baseline hazard pattern is much more difficult to interpret in this case, in part because of the small proportion of members who remain in the House long enough to cast a seventh and eighth vote, and in part because the changeable politics surrounding the gag rule seem to have prevented a statistically-clear pattern of stability from developing.

Conversion and Replacement

Systematic individual member conversion was present over the series of gag rule votes, and it is likely to have contributed to the change in the policy (see additional

79 A number of voting members remained in office for the full 12-vote series; however, no position changes occurred after a member's eighth vote.
discussed below). But there remains the related question of how member replacement contributed to the declining support for the gag rule and whether replacement and conversion were both significant sources of vote reversals. To provide some tentative evidence for the replacement effect, I have generated a second event history model of gag rule voting, treating congressional districts as the observational units rather than individual members. In essence, this approach asks what factors affect the likelihood of a district’s “vote” on the gag rule changing (whether by same-member conversion or new-member replacement). This model, displayed in Table 7.4, includes a series of dummy variables indicating (1) whether each vote in time was cast by a replaced or continuing member and, (2) if the member was continuing, the regional party affiliation of the member. The excluded comparison category in this series is replacement by a member of the same political party, since dummies are included for all other permutations of replacement and continuity (opposite-party replacement and the various types of continuing members).

Before discussing the replacement results, it is important to note that data availability severely limits the conclusions that should be drawn from this model. Because multimember districts were used in a number of areas (and in several states) during part or all of this time frame, any analysis that tracks district representation over time is limited to a nonrandom sample of House districts. The districts and states using multimember districts are scattered around the nation and are represented by members
from both major parties, so the bias in the available sample of districts may be minimal, but the limits of the sample should nonetheless be kept in mind.80

This exploratory model highlights the relative importance of both replacement and conversion.81 Relative to the excluded category of same-party replacement, opposite-party replacement significantly increased (580%) the risk of a changed vote position on the gag rule. But at the same time, among continuing members, both southern Whigs and northern Democrats showed heightened risk (398% and 434%, respectively) of producing a changed position when compared to members who replaced representatives of the same party. Aside from these replacement and conversion effects, the content change variable does not exert a statistically significant effect on the risk of change in this district-based model. Though these findings are only suggestive of the relative replacement and conversion effects, it is extremely interesting to note that opposite-party replacement and conversion among crosspressured members each were more likely to produce vote reversals than same-party replacement was. The task that remains is to specify more precisely how replacement and conversion worked to produce policy change.

80 Multiple-member districts excluded from the district data set include all AL, CT (24th Congress only), GA, MO, MS, NH, NJ, and RI districts, plus MA-1, MD-4, NY-3, NY-8, NY-17, NY-22, NY-23, PA-2, PA-4, PA-13. The at-large members in FL, IA, and TX are excluded automatically since they served in only one Congress (29th) and cast only one vote in the data set. With regard to bias in the exclusion of districts, it appears that these districts are slightly more southern and more Democratic than those that are included in the data set.

81 Nonproportionality problems in this model are corrected using interactions of ln(time) and the offending variables (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001b).
Position Change, Replacement, and Policy Change

The event history models have shown most clearly that party/region crosspressuring among continuing members and replacement by members of the opposite party are key sources of instability in gag rule voting. That information provides a basis for looking even more closely at specific position reversals and developing a more fine-grained explanation for how gag rule voting evolved across these six Congresses. I will look in turn at the effects of crosspressed-member conversion and opposite-party replacement.

The patterns of member position change indicate that crosspressed southern Whigs and northern Democrats were extraordinarily likely to change their positions over time, though a closer analysis indicates that the changes in these two groupings of crosspressed members had somewhat different effects on the House’s gradual movement from a 117-68 vote in favor of the gag to a 108-80 vote against it. It is the northern Democrats whose voting patterns seem to have changed most dramatically. During the first two votes on the gag rule, in 1836 and 1837, better than 80% of northern Democrats voted for the gag rule; yet by the tenth vote (February 1844), only about a quarter of northern Democrats were supporting the rule. Figure 7.2 visually illustrates the evolution of northern Democratic voting. The huge downward spike in support on the January 1840 vote—the vote that established the standing rule—demonstrates that northern Democrats were becoming somewhat squeamish about the gag policy. Once the more stringent gag rule became the status quo, many northern Democrats voted pro-gag for
several more years, but support decayed very rapidly in the 28th Congress, setting the stage for the defeat of the gag.

Position reversals among continuing northern Democrat members in the early 1840s are a part of the explanation for this change in support. Much of the decline in northern gag rule support resulted from continuing northern Democrats changing permanently from support to opposition in the 27th and 28th Congresses. Figure 7.4 displays the permanent (i.e., sustained through the end of the gag rule) position changes in these two Congresses according to member party and region. Overall, nineteen House members changed their positions permanently from gag rule support to opposition in these two Congresses, while just five members permanently moved in the opposite direction. Among those changing permanently to opposition, fifteen were northern Democrats. A significant part of the story of the gag rule’s demise is found in the unstable positions of northern Democrats, who gradually chose alignment with northern Whig colleagues over alignment with their southern copartisans on the slavery-related gag rule. This change reflects the conflict that continuing northern Democrats likely faced between viewing the gag rule as an instrument of Democratic intersectional unity and viewing the gag rule as a tool for advancing southern sectional interests.

In contrast to the tendency among southern Democrats, southern Whigs did not change their gag rule positions in a way that contributed substantially to the House’s reversal on the issue. Only four southern Whigs moved permanently from support to opposition during the 27th and 28th Congresses (three of the four were border state Whigs). Though position change among southern Whigs is not a major part of the story
of policy change, these crosspressured members should have been more likely to change positions, given their regionally-based reasons to support the ostensibly pro-slavery gag rule and their partisan reasons to oppose the gag on the basis that it was in large part a Democratic political tool. In the event history model, Southern Whigs exhibited a higher risk of position change than did the non-crosspressured members, and overall, southern Whig support from vote-to-vote on the gag rule was somewhat volatile (see Figure 7.3), though always high. Many of the southern Whig position changes occurred early in the gag rule’s history, suggesting that staunchly proslavery, deep south Whigs were uncertain about whether to favor the gag rule’s effective solution to the perceived abolitionist menace or oppose the Pinckney gag rule’s implicit acknowledgment of the government’s power to regulate slavery in the District of Columbia. Though this uncertainty and resulting instability supports my argument about crosspressuring, the southern Whig position changes did not play a major part in the gag rule’s demise.

The model in Table 7.4 showed that along with individual position change, member replacement is also an important source of vote change. The contribution of replacement to policy change can be further illuminated by identifying which replacements led to important vote reversals. With the caveats about my replacement data in mind (see above), Figure 7.5 shows the number of permanent district vote changes that originated in member replacement during the 27th and 28th Congresses. Two features are noteworthy. One is that a small, but substantively meaningful, number of northern Democrats who replaced their own partisan colleagues reversed the position of their predecessors on the gag rule, and six of those eight members produced a permanent anti-
gag reversal. More significant is the larger number (14) of northern Whigs who replaced Democrats during this time period and reversed the Democrat's position on the gag rule permanently. As the graph shows, there were many fewer permanent replacement-originated changes in the direction of support for the gag rule during these two Congresses. Even though this analysis reflects only a sampling of the universe of districts, it highlights the importance of replacement along with conversion as a source of policy change.

Numerically speaking, the ultimate end of the gag rule in 1844 resulted in large part from growing opposition (via both conversion and replacement) among the group of members that formerly provided some of the rule's strongest support. Other factors were certainly at work, however, along with position change and replacement. The House experienced an unusual decrease in its membership in the post-1840 reapportionment (due to a modification in the calculation procedure), and the seat losses affected the South disproportionately. In the pre-reapportionment 27th Congress, the North already held an advantage in the House (about 60% of members were northern), but the 28th Congress brought a 12-seat net loss for the South and a northern seat advantage of about 63 to 37 percent. In sum, the regional polarization that emerged through member conversion in the 27th and 28th Congresses, the replacement of pro-gag northern Democrats with anti-gag Democrats and Whigs, and the replacement of pro-gag southern members with anti-gag northerners through reapportionment all helped to bring about the end of the gag rule.
Summary: Position Change and the Gag Rule

The analysis in this chapter illustrates the principle that significant and systematic instability can be found amidst the overall stability in member voting, and it shows that this principle is not an artifact of late twentieth century politics. On a defining and unusually publicized issue in the newly partisan antebellum House, members defected from their established positions in non-idiosyncratic ways and, in the process, helped to produce an important policy change. As in the Hyde Amendment case, position change on the gag rule is especially noteworthy because the votes represent uncomplicated statements of position on a short, simple, politically charged motion—exactly the sort of situation in which we would expect members to have little reason for change. Though I make no claim that this pattern is generalizable to every House vote in this era, it seems reasonable to assume that systematic position change was a feature on other questions in the antebellum Congress, especially since the incentives for stability were probably unusually strong in the gag rule case.

The analysis in this chapter demonstrated that several factors were related to individual position change on the gag rule. First, members who faced this era's strongest crosspressuring force—partisanship versus regional loyalty—displayed the greatest likelihood of position change. Both northern Democrats and southern Whigs were much more likely to defect from their established vote history than their noncrosspressured counterparts. Closer examination of the patterns of change for northern Democrats and southern Whigs showed some differences in the substantive changes made by the two crosspressured groups. Northern Democrats showed general instability in their voting

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positions that reflects the greater uncertainty of those members about the meaning and consequences of the gag rule vote, but northern Democrat position reversals became especially likely as the policy entered its later years. Continuing northern Democrats shifted in large numbers from support to opposition and contributed to policy change. Southern Whigs also displayed instability that most likely followed from conflicting ideas about the meaning of the votes, but the bulk of southern Whig position change came in the form of fluctuations early in the series of votes. Along with these important patterns of crosspressuring and change, the event history model showed the importance of content variation in affecting the risk of change—members experienced a heightened risk of change at the time when the gag rule policy moved from a simple House resolution to a standing rule refusing all abolition petitions.

By contrast, institutional factors (House party change) and electoral factors (lame duck status) and the length of the vote history (hazard plot) do not show the expected effects. These insignificant effects may be related to a few features of the era and the specific case. The institutional pressure of House party change may be less relevant in this specific case as a result of the timing of the party change in the analysis: Whigs gained, and quickly lost, control of the House during the early 1840s, when the partisan divisions on the gag rule were beginning to fade in favor of a regional split. Electoral influences may be weaker in this era of high voluntary turnover (Kemell 1977) than in the contemporary Congress, leading to behavior that does not vary markedly with electoral context. Similarly, the oddly-shaped hazard plot for the risk of change over the vote
history may reflect the limitations of the data. Few members remained in Congress long enough to cast a fifth or sixth vote (or for that matter, an eleventh or twelfth vote) on the gag rule issue, so the shape of the hazard plot is likely affected by a few cases.

Comparing the gag rule to the contemporary cases, we can see that the findings do not uniformly parallel those in the other cases, but they do conform to several trends. In particular, the event history analysis shows that members who are especially likely to shift their attention to different conceptions of the decision over time—those who are caught between two conflicting influences—are at much higher risk of position change than those who can settle more comfortably into a vote history. And, content variations clearly affect the risk of change, as the other three cases have demonstrated. But the gag rule case also suggests that some of the findings in the contemporary cases may be specific to the modern Congress, especially those that relate to the electoral connection and the lengthy tenure of today’s representatives.

Finally, the analysis in this chapter illustrates that time-sensitive analysis of long-term voting positions can lead to important political and historical insights. This analysis has highlighted the major changes that were emerging in the congressional parties well before the 1850s, when realignment occurred. Political scientists and historians emphasize abolition and slavery as the primary issue in this breakdown of the party system, but that breakdown is typically traced to the mid-1850s (Brady 1988; Silbey 1985). A few scholars who have looked specifically at how aggregate House voting

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82 Forty-four percent of members remain long enough to cast a fourth vote, but only 17 percent cast a fifth vote.
unfolded during the period have found some evidence that intersectional partisan agreement began to waver somewhat in the 1840s, as a result of slavery-related issues (Alexander 1967; Poole and Rosenthal 1997). The evidence presented here from the gag rule shows that individual-level, over-time analysis of voting can shed additional light on changing party alignments. We can see that in the early 1840s—a time when party unity is often presumed to have been extraordinarily high (even on slavery; see Silbey 1985, ch. 5)—some stark sectional disagreement had already evolved, in part through conversion of continuing members. Signs of the dramatic partisan shakeup of the 1850s were evident a decade earlier in House members' gag rule votes.

Position reversals on recurring issues in congressional decision making contain a great deal of information about both the causes of congressional voting and, ultimately, the evolution of congressional policy outputs—information that enhances our understanding of contemporary and historical congressional activity. In the next chapter, I will outline my general conclusions about the nature of change and stability in congressional voting and draw out the findings about and comparisons between the substantive cases.
Note: Vote numbers represent the number of votes a member has cast at a given time.

Figure 7.1: Baseline Hazard Rate Plot for House Gag Rule Voting (Individual member model, first strata)
Note: vote numbers correspond to numbering of roll-calls in Appendix D.

Figure 7.2: Northern Democrat Gag Rule Voting, 1836-1845
Note: vote numbers correspond to numbering of roll-calls in Appendix D.

Figure 7.3: Southern Whig Gag Rule Voting, 1836-1845
Note: Bars indicate number of members who switched gag rule positions during 27th-28th Congresses and remained in the House and sustained their new position through the 28th Congress.

Figure 7.4: Permanent Member Position Changes in the 27th and 28th Congresses
Figure 7.5: Permanent Replacement Position Changes in the 27th and 28th Congresses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>House Control</th>
<th>Senate Control</th>
<th>President (Party)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(24 other)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839-41</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dem, 124-118</td>
<td>Dem, 28-22</td>
<td>Van Buren (Dem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Whig, 133-102</td>
<td>Whig, 28-22 (2 other)</td>
<td>Harrison/ Tyler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6 other)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Whig)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843-45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Dem, 142-79</td>
<td>Whig, 28-25 (1 other)</td>
<td>Tyler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 other)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Whig)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845-47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Dem, 143-77</td>
<td>Dem, 31-25</td>
<td>Polk (Dem)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: CQ Guide to Congress, 1974*

Table 7.1: Political Control of Congress and Presidency, 1834-1844 Elections
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>RSE^b</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Democrat</td>
<td>1.652</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Democrat</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Whig</td>
<td>1.784</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House controlled by Member’s Party</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW-Nominate, 1st Dimension</td>
<td>-7.792</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW-Nominate, 2nd Dimension</td>
<td>2.908</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lame Duck Member</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>.385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=2239
Pseudo R^2=.63

^a Dependent variable: Vote on gag rule (1=support gag). See Appendix D for a list of bills in the analysis. Model excludes third party members. Covariates for eleven dummy variables for vote-specific effects not displayed.

^b Standard errors adjusted for clustering on ICPSR member i.d.

Table 7.2: Pooled Logit Model of House Member Vote Choices on the Gag Rule, 1836-1845^a
|                          | Beta  | RSE  | p    | % Change in Hazard Rate*
|--------------------------|-------|------|------|------------------------
| Southern Democrat       | -.495 | .481 | .303 | 262.31                 
| Northern Democrat       | 1.287 | .368 | <.001| 262.31                 
| Southern Whig           | .898  | .396 | .023 | 145.52                 
| House Party Change      | -.069 | .384 | .856 | 145.52                 
| Change to Standing Rule | .677  | .353 | .055 | 96.77                  
| Lame Duck Member        | -.447 | .235 | .057 | -36.08                 

N of observations=2041
N of subjects=772
N of failures=125

* Dependent variable is duration to vote change.
Baseline hazard rates stratified by order of failures (failures beyond third combined with third strata).
Efron method for tied observations.
See Appendix D for list of bills in the analysis.

b Calculated predicted change from (mean-1 s.d.) to (mean + 1 s.d.) using the formula
\[ \% \Delta h(t) = \left( \frac{e^{(x_{mean} - x_{1})} - e^{(x_{mean} - x_{2})}}{e^{(x_{mean} + x_{2})} - e^{(x_{mean} - x_{2})}} \right) \times 100. \] In the case of dummy variables, change is calculated from X=1 to X=0. See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1999, 109).

Table 7.3: Cox Proportional Hazards Conditional Risk Set (time from entry) Model of Member Vote Change on House Gag Rule Roll Calls, 1836-1845 *
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>RSE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>% Change in Hazard Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing southern Whig (CSW)</td>
<td>1.607</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>398.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing northern Democrat (CND)</td>
<td>1.675</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>433.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing northern Whig (CNW)</td>
<td>-1.194</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-69.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing southern Democrat (CSD)</td>
<td>1.235</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite Party Replacement</td>
<td>1.917</td>
<td>.638</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>580.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to Standing Rule</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(time) x CSW</td>
<td>-1.264</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(time) x CND</td>
<td>-.896</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(time) x CSD</td>
<td>-1.950</td>
<td>.520</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(time) x Party Replacement</td>
<td>-.639</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of observations = 1962  
N of subjects = 203  
N of failures = 230  

* Dependent variable is duration to vote change.  
Baseline hazard rates stratified by order of failures (failures beyond third combined with third strata).  
Efron method for tied observations.  
See Appendix D for list of bills in the analysis.

* Calculated predicted change from (mean - 1 s.d.) to (mean + 1 s.d.) using the formula  
\[% \Delta h(t) = \left( \frac{e^{(\beta X + \lambda) - e^{(\beta X + \lambda) + \sigma^2 / 2}}}{e^{\lambda / 2}} \right)^* 100.\]  
In the case of dummy variables, change is calculated from X=1 to X=0. See Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1999, 109).

Table 7.4: Cox Proportional Hazards Conditional Risk Set (time from entry) Model of District Vote Change on House Gag Rule Roll Calls, 1836-1845 *
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Summary of Argument and Findings

The votes that members of Congress cast are the end result of complex decision processes that bring multiple, and sometimes conflicting, goals and influences into consideration. In this environment, members must find decision rules and cues that allow them to simplify these choices—that is, to economically identify the vote choices that will best advance (or least harm) their goals in an uncertain context. One of the most reliable cues for making such choices on the many recurring congressional issues is a member’s record of past votes. As I discussed in Chapter Three, and as a number of congressional scholars have delineated in the past, the vote history serves as a tool against uncertainty in decision making. Coupled with consistency’s inherent value for members’ reelection goals, reliance on the vote history helps to produce considerable long-term stability in member positions.

This stability, of course, has been supported by aggregate empirical evidence and has become something of an article of faith in political scientists’ understanding of
congressional voting. In contrast to this general presumption of stability, the arguments and evidence I have presented show congressional voting to be more dynamic, characterized by *bounded* stability. Since members follow the vote history as a simplifying, uncertainty-reducing tool for achieving their goals, they will display consistency in voting only when circumstances remain relatively constant and they believe that the vote history's information about choices and consequences applies in the present situation. Consequently, understanding when stability will be overtaken by change is a matter of recognizing how and when a member's *attention* is diverted from one decision influence to a conflicting one, or from one goal to another, or from one definition of an issue to another.

This perspective has pointed us toward the possibility of systematic and relatively regular position change *among individual members*\(^3\) in a way that dominant theoretical and empirical perspectives have not. Much recent work proceeds from assumptions about member preferences (frequently equated with ideology), assumptions that imply that vote positions should remain constant on constant questions except in the unlikely event of an ideological conversion experience. When we view voting through a broader empirical and theoretical lens, recognizing the inherent shortcuts and attention-shifting in

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\(^3\) As Chapter Three emphasized, the theoretical perspective I offer is derived in part from the arguments that Bryan Jones (1994) and Douglas Arnold (1990) have made about the limitations of decision making and policy outputs. Both of those authors illustrate how consistency, uncertainty, and attention shifts each affect the stability and instability of congressional policy *outputs*, but neither takes up (empirically) the individual-level mechanism--member position reversals--that must produce this kind of shift.
congressional decision making, it becomes easier to conceive of members of Congress as somewhat more dynamic decision makers—and to look for real-world evidence of that dynamic.

Such evidence has been provided in this dissertation. I have traced the vote history where it can best be found: in the votes of individual members cast over long periods of time on issues that the House considers almost habitually in near-identical form. This systematic examination of vote histories has demonstrated that members permanently reverse their long-term positions, or fluctuate in their choices, when sharp changes in the decision context summon their attention and lead them to devalue the vote history (though the correlates of change vary somewhat by issue context). Significant, redefining events have the capacity to shift member attention to different conceptions of an issue and lead to position change. Changes in the partisan institutional context, in a similar way, can call members' attention to other goals and influences, leading them to abandon the vote history as less relevant to the current circumstances. For the individual member, electoral considerations are also of importance since the uncertainty-reducing power of the vote history is of greater value when members' seats are not overwhelmingly safe but not so threatened as to encourage expansionist, entrepreneurial voting behavior. Even more basically, the value of vote history can simply vary across the life-cycle of a recurring issue; at the time of earlier choices, members' records contain less information and are therefore of less value than at later times, other things being equal. And for some members in particular, the vote history is always a flimsy tool. When sharply conflicting considerations afflict a member year after year, small shifts in
attention originating from those sources seem to make the vote history less of a bulwark against uncertainty.

**Position Change Across Issue Contexts**

Evidence in the three contemporary cases supports each of these suppositions about position change (with some additional support from the historical case), but significant variations in stability and change did appear across the issue areas. Table 8.1 clarifies the similarities and differences in effects. In each case, crosspressuring exerts a negative force on the value of the vote history, increasing the likelihood of position change. Similarly, the controls for content variations in the legislation also show significant effects in each case: changes in content increased the likelihood of change. And, in each of the three contemporary cases, the vote history increased in value—or, the risk of defecting from the previous position decreased—as members cast more votes on the issue and developed a more established history. Issue change, as signaled by redefining events, affected this risk in the two cases in which it could be operationalized (the Hyde Amendment and foreign aid). The risk of change increased significantly when issue change called members’ attention to new definitions of a recurring policy—and signaled potential changes in the active constituencies surrounding the issue.

Other influences receive only issue-specific support, either because of data limitations on particular issues or because the event history tests support the hypotheses in only some cases. The president’s influence on his fellow partisans, tested in the foreign aid and minimum wage cases, shows the limited responsiveness of members to

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*4 In several of the cases, greater departures in content from vote to vote led to greater risk of change.*

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White House factors. In both cases, members reevaluated the vote history and became more likely to change when their party’s president left the White House, but the propensity to change did not increase when a member’s party took control of the White House. In other words, presidential positions seem to affect members’ initial calculations (and the departure of the president signals a reevaluation of voting), but new presidents do not demonstrate a capacity on these issues to pull established opponents of a policy into the fold. The influence of the House partisan context is not demonstrated as clearly in the cases. In the foreign aid case and the historical (gag rule) case, changes in House partisan control do not generally affect members’ tendency to follow the vote history (though some differential party effects appear in the foreign aid case).

Electoral and constituency factors were also uneven, but sometimes important, predictors of change. In the minimum wage case, members with very wide or very narrow margins of victory were significantly more likely to defect from the vote history’s cue than members maintaining an average margin of victory. On this issue, the vote history was of less value when members were more secure in reelection and could turn to other goals or when reelection was so uncertain that some members reversed positions in an attempt to expand their victory margins. Constituency effects on stability could also be seen through the proxy measure of issue-related demographics; however, effects were significant only in the Hyde Amendment case for this measure.

That patterns of change and stability would vary along issue-specific lines was anticipated by the design of this study and, largely, the variations across areas reflect comprehensible differences between the cases. For instance, the representative domestic
policy issue—minimum wage increases—illustrates the influence of election considerations on stability more clearly than the other cases, and this is as we might expect since the minimum wage is the issue with the strongest electoral overtones among the three issues. We can also see some evidence of variation between the three contemporary cases and the historical case: the value of the vote history over time, for instance, does not follow as predictable a pattern. While these results might reflect the specific context of the case, the established careerism and stronger electoral connection of the contemporary House are plausible explanations for the clearer electoral/constituency and vote history effects on the modern issues.

Though the specific cases were selected for their value in painting a general picture of voting change and stability, the analysis of long-term voting patterns in each of the four cases has rendered important insights about the specific issues. In the Hyde Amendment case, the event history analysis gives us reason to think that the liberal direction of abortion policy in the early 1990s resulted from conversion that followed from contextual change; similarly, it illustrates the importance of position change among crosspressured congressional partisans in the process of gradual partisan realignment on abortion (see Adams 1997 for general evidence of the realignment). The foreign aid analysis provides new evidence that supports earlier claims about the limited nature of presidential influence in House foreign policy voting; the party-specific models also show that majority party control can affect members' foreign policy decisions. The event history model of minimum wage voting portrays this issue as one in which position-
taking behavior (Mayhew 1974) is particularly important, and it offers evidence in the domestic arena for the same limited kind of presidential influence that we find in the foreign policy realm. And, as Chapter Seven outlines, the antebellum case shows that—as a result of both conversion and replacement—House members had begun to realign along sectional cleavages well before the 1850s, when scholars typically pinpoint the collapse of the Second Party System. These case-specific insights reflect the substantive value in examining voting as an over-time process.

Implications for Congressional Studies

As I have argued at several points in this work, I am presenting this evidence in part to call attention to the dynamic nature of congressional decision making, a concept of theoretical and empirical significance that is frequently set aside in contemporary analyses of Congress. As students of Congress have focused on spatial analysis of Congress—often to useful theoretical ends—the complexity of, and temporal variation in, member positions has often been lost in the assumption of consistency. Moreover, the ready availability and potential generalizability of aggregate position measures has led scholars to look past the variation in individual vote positions (with a few key exceptions: see Chapter Two). As Hibbing has argued, this empirical perspective can “lure us into concluding that nearly all members are extraordinarily consistent in their intracareer roll call activity” (1991, 105).

Revisiting and analyzing individual change in congressional voting advances our conception of member decision making in several ways. At the most basic level, it demonstrates the facts that (1) position change occurs with greater frequency than is
typically presumed and (2) it results from systematic rather than idiosyncratic sources. The cases examined in the preceding chapters show that, in these examples, about ten percent of the repeat votes cast represented stark reversals of previous positions (and, of course, that most of these reversals can be theoretically explained). These cases were selected for their unusual content continuity, visibility, and regular recurrence—all factors that should produce greater stability in these cases and, in fact, bias any analysis of change in the direction of stability. As a concept, the vote history does not require the kind of predictable repetition found in these cases in order to serve as a general cue for decision making; it can be useful in more varied circumstances. And, since shortcutting and limited-attention decision making are general features of member vote choices—not just on identically recurring issues—it is probable that the kinds of shifts in attention and behavior that I have demonstrated (and that Jones [1994] demonstrates in policy outcomes) are features of congressional voting that are common beyond the types of votes analyzed in this study. The argument that members hold their positions tenaciously and never reverse their votes is an exaggeration.

On another level, examining change in congressional voting restores time to a central place in explanations for voting, and this perspective allows us to examine and explain members’ choices relative to their own past positions in addition to their colleagues’ positions at the same point in time. By looking at voting temporally rather than cross-sectionally, we can witness the changes wrought by, for example, a change in White House control or in a member’s electoral position that we would be unable to consider in a cross-sectional analysis. In other words, some influences that are important
elements of member choices—many of which are illustrated in this study—cannot be studied through cross-sectional analysis. The approach I have taken introduces an entirely new way to study congressional roll call voting while accounting for time and history and, thus, to better describe congressional decisions.

An additional implication for congressional scholarship is the reemphasis on complexity in congressional decision making that follows from studying voting over time and recognizing members as goal-oriented individuals who are also limited in their decision-making capacity. The last three decades of research on congressional voting have seen the pendulum of explanation move from the very complex (see Kingdon's schematic [1977, 575]) to the highly abstract and simplified (e.g., Krehbiel 1998). I do not argue that one perspective or the other exclusively represents the truth of congressional voting; the former provides a more accurate picture of the process while the latter affords strong predictive ability and theoretical elegance. Although both approaches have value, the consensus of recent scholarship seems to be at the simplified end of the pendulum swing, to the benefit of prediction and, perhaps, to the detriment of nuanced explanation. By taking advantage of very current research methods, as I have done with event history analysis, to reapply and refine the earlier, more complex models, it is possible to strike a better balance between the older and current paradigms.

**Implications for Representation**

As I argued in Chapter One, viewing individual congressional voting over time is important not only for narrow methodological and theoretical reasons but also for broadly conceptual purposes. Explanations of member behavior that focus on each choice as if it
were abstracted from the past (and future) lead us to misrepresent the representational relationship between members and their constituencies. Representation should be recognized as a process that unfolds across time. On one hand, members’ choices may be partly path-dependent (as Fenno 2000 argues with regard to representational style), representation is a process that is not static; we expect representatives to show responsiveness to changing constituency input, to the evolving representational relationship, and to new conceptions of old issues. Of course, these are normative statements that can be evaluated empirically. The approach that I have taken in this work provides at least a preliminary empirical glimpse at policy representation as a process.

Though the persistent problem of conceptualizing and measuring constituency interest/opinion prevents me from focusing my analysis in detail on the constituency relationship, I am able to show that representatives are more than placeholders for a fixed position. Changes in issues and, to some extent, electoral and constituency factors are related to member position change; these findings point toward the dynamic component of representation.

I should add that I am not able to draw directional conclusions about member responsiveness to change within the constituency, though this is obviously another empirical question of great interest (see below). The evidence I find for position change does not show that members are moving in the policy directions in which their constituents are moving; in fact, the change I uncover could reflect shirking as much as it is evidence of delegate representation. So the representational implication of this research is not to show that members are or are not directly responsive; instead, it shows
that members do reverse their policy positions, and that they do so in response to some factors that are related to the constituency and others that are not. This movement shows that representation can be dynamic—members are moving in ways that can take them closer to or further from the policy interests of their constituents—but the normative implications for representational style and focus must await additional research.

Limitations and Further Research

This work has set out a critique of stability assumptions and findings in existing congressional decision literature, synthesized a theory of “bounded stability” that explains when and why we should find position reversals, described a new empirical approach to using roll calls to study time and voting, and has provided evidence that largely supports the theory in the context of four separate cases. There is a great deal more that can be done with the methodology I have employed, and there is additional research needed to provide a more complete answer to the question of member positions and time in congressional decisions.

Some of the needed work reflects inherent limitations in the analysis I have provided. First, my quantitative case study methodology places limits on the generalizability of these findings, though I have made every effort to select cases that (1) represent a fair cross-section of major House decisions and (2) impose a stringent test as votes on which stability should be strong. The case studies are not fully representative of congressional decisions, though, and limitations of data availability have prevented me from comparing all hypotheses across all cases with identical operationalization. As a result, one direction for future work is to identify additional cases on which these tests
can be matched more precisely across cases. Though I believe that some initial
generalization is possible based on my results, greater generalization is clearly desirable.

Another area for future research is the further extension of event history
methodology in the study of congressional voting, particularly in examining specific
hypotheses in an over-time context. My findings have shown, for instance, that long-
standing questions about presidential influence in Congress can be viewed in new light
through this approach. Another old and methodologically-plagued question that may be
seen from a new perspective is the issue of member responsiveness to the constituency
(as discussed above). Though the modeling limitations (as well as data availability)
currently prevent me from directly comparing movements in constituency opinion/interest
and changes in member positions, advancements in event history models should make
such empirical questions of responsiveness more tractable. Rapid advancements have
been made in the area of competing risks and repeated events modeling, though there is
not currently a straightforward approach to dealing with roll call data in its raw,
“directional” form (i.e., Member X voted “nay” at \( t = 1 \) and “yea” at \( t = 2 \)). When event
history models can easily account for multiple position reversals and for the direction of
positions over time, analysis of roll call questions from this perspective will be even more
advantageous.86

Additional work should also apply this approach to better understand the
differences between short term and long term position change. My theoretical arguments

86 Therneau and Grambsch (2000, 216-229) briefly discuss a flexible approach to competing risks questions
that is potentially applicable to a directional study of voting positions over time.
point in the direction of both types of change and, in this work, I have not made a sharp empirical distinction between the two types. But additional work could focus specifically on short-term changes and short-term influences. Smith's (1984) arguments about interest groups and decision making as well as Unekis' (1978) limited findings about committee-to-floor vote changes could be explored using this methodology.

Finally, at a more qualitative level, further analysis could explore members' explanations and justifications for vote reversals. We assume members find electoral value in maintaining consistent positions, and we know that effective explanation of controversial Washington behavior is a crucial part of effective home style (Fenno 1978). It would be particularly illuminating—both of Fenno's home style arguments and of representational implications of position change—to see when and how members choose to justify their vote changes before their constituencies.

Though there remain many avenues for additional research on the question, the evidence presented here points very strongly toward a dynamic understanding of how members of Congress make voting decisions. When faced with the same visible, controversial question on consecutive occasions, a minority of members chooses to forego the safety of their established position and cast a contradictory vote. They choose to do so for a number of empirically-comprehensible reasons related to their own uncertainty and to the attention they pay to aspects of their complex decision environments. The result is that both policy representation and congressional policy outputs consist of considerable change in the general context of stability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partisan/inst. context</th>
<th>Social Policy (Hyde)</th>
<th>Foreign Policy (foreign aid)</th>
<th>Domestic Policy (minimum wage)</th>
<th>Antebellum House (gag rule)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>+ (WH loss)</td>
<td>+ (WH loss)</td>
<td>n.s. (House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral context</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue change</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituency signal</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosspressuring</td>
<td>+ (party/ideo.)</td>
<td>+ b</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of vote history</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content changes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Length of vote history hypothesis tested through visual inspection of hazard plots rather than hypothesis tests.

*bSee Table 5.2 for significant party-specific effects on these variables.

+ : affects risk of change at conventional levels of statistical significance
n.s.: not statistically significant
( shaded box: not tested)

Table 8.1: Summary of Issue-Specific Findings on Position Change
## Appendix A

### Roll-Calls in the Hyde Amendment Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Related Bill</th>
<th>Date of Vote</th>
<th>Amendment/ Motion Description</th>
<th>Content Coding</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Position Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>HR 14232</td>
<td>24 Jun 1976</td>
<td>Hyde Amendment, 2nd vote</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>199-165</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>HR 7555</td>
<td>17 Jun 1977</td>
<td>Hyde Amendment</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>201-155</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>HR 12929</td>
<td>13 Jun 1978</td>
<td>Wright amendment</td>
<td>Rape/Incest, Health</td>
<td>198-212</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>HR 4389</td>
<td>27 Jun 1979</td>
<td>Obey Amendment</td>
<td>Rape/Incest, Health</td>
<td>180-241</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>HR 3913</td>
<td>22 Sept 1983</td>
<td>Conte Amendment</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>231-184</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>HR 4783</td>
<td>9 Sept 1988</td>
<td>Natcher motion</td>
<td>Rape/Incest</td>
<td>216-166</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>HR 2990</td>
<td>11 Oct 1989</td>
<td>Boxer Amendment</td>
<td>Rape/Incest</td>
<td>216-206</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B

### ROLL-CALLS IN THE FOREIGN AID ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Date of Vote</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Position Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>HR6391</td>
<td>7/22/1953</td>
<td>289-115</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>HR10051</td>
<td>7/28/1954</td>
<td>266-128</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>HR7224</td>
<td>7/11/1955</td>
<td>251-123</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>HR12130</td>
<td>7/11/1956</td>
<td>284-120</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>HR9302</td>
<td>8/15/1957</td>
<td>252-130</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>HR13192</td>
<td>7/2/1958</td>
<td>253-126</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>HR8385</td>
<td>7/29/1959</td>
<td>279-136</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>HR12619</td>
<td>6/17/1960</td>
<td>259-124</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>HR9033</td>
<td>9/5/1961</td>
<td>270-123</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>HR13175</td>
<td>9/20/1962</td>
<td>249-144</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>HR9499</td>
<td>12/16/1963</td>
<td>250-135</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>HR11812</td>
<td>7/1/1964</td>
<td>231-174</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>HR10871</td>
<td>9/8/1965</td>
<td>239-143</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>HR17788</td>
<td>9/20/1966</td>
<td>234-141</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>HR13893</td>
<td>11/17/1967</td>
<td>167-143</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>HR19908</td>
<td>9/19/1968</td>
<td>174-139</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>HR15149</td>
<td>12/9/1969</td>
<td>200-195</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>HR12067</td>
<td>12/8/1971</td>
<td>214-179</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>HR16705</td>
<td>9/21/1972</td>
<td>169-141</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975 (FY75)</td>
<td>HR4592</td>
<td>3/13/1975</td>
<td>212-201</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976 (FY77)</td>
<td>HR14260</td>
<td>6/29/1976</td>
<td>238-169</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>HR12931</td>
<td>8/14/1978</td>
<td>223-162</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>HR4473</td>
<td>9/6/1979</td>
<td>224-183</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>HR4559</td>
<td>12/11/1981</td>
<td>199-166</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>HR4637</td>
<td>5/25/1988</td>
<td>328-90</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>HR3743</td>
<td>11/20/1989</td>
<td>310-107</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>HR5114</td>
<td>6/27/1990</td>
<td>308-117</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>HR2621</td>
<td>6/19/1991</td>
<td>301-102</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>HR4426</td>
<td>5/25/1994</td>
<td>337-87</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>HR1868</td>
<td>7/11/1995</td>
<td>333-89</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Except where noted, each year's roll call is the final passage vote for foreign operations appropriations for the following fiscal year.

For the vote change analysis, paired and announced positions are equated with roll call votes, so these roll-call totals are not perfectly identical to those in the change models for each year.
### APPENDIX C

**ROLL CALLS IN THE MINIMUM WAGE ANALYSIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Date of Vote</th>
<th>Vote *</th>
<th>Position Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>HR5856</td>
<td>8/11/49</td>
<td>361-35</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>HR7214</td>
<td>7/20/55</td>
<td>362-54</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>HR12677</td>
<td>6/30/60</td>
<td>341-72</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>HR3935</td>
<td>3/24/61</td>
<td>341-78</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>HR13712</td>
<td>5/26/66</td>
<td>303-93</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>HR7130</td>
<td>5/11/72</td>
<td>330-78</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>HR12435</td>
<td>3/20/74</td>
<td>375-37</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>HR3744</td>
<td>9/15/77</td>
<td>309-96</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>HR2710</td>
<td>11/1/89</td>
<td>382-37</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>HR1227</td>
<td>5/23/96</td>
<td>281-144</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For the analysis, paired and announced positions are equated with roll call votes, so these roll call totals are not identical to those in the change model for each year.
## APPENDIX D

### ROLL-CALLS IN THE GAG RULE ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Congress/Session b</th>
<th>Date of Vote</th>
<th>ICPSR 9822 Vote #</th>
<th>“Yea” position</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Position Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24/1 26 May 1836</td>
<td>225 Gag</td>
<td>117-68</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24/2 18 Jan 1837</td>
<td>383 Gag</td>
<td>129-69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25/2 21 Dec 1837</td>
<td>90 Gag</td>
<td>122-74</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25/3 12 Dec 1838</td>
<td>381 Gag</td>
<td>128-78</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>26/1 28 Jan 1840</td>
<td>124 Gag*</td>
<td>115-105</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26/2 9 Dec 1840</td>
<td>657 Gag</td>
<td>82-58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27/2 6 Dec 1841</td>
<td>295 Anti-gag</td>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>27/3 12 Dec 1842</td>
<td>836 Gag</td>
<td>106-102</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>28/1 4 Dec 1843</td>
<td>31 Anti-gag</td>
<td>91-95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28/1 27 Feb 1844</td>
<td>159 Gag</td>
<td>85-107</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28/2 3 Dec 1844</td>
<td>451 Anti-gag</td>
<td>108-80</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>29/1 1 Dec 1845</td>
<td>31 Gag</td>
<td>85-121</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes vote to make gag rule a standing House rule

b Session numbers parallel the Congressional Globe's classifications during these congresses.

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LIST OF REFERENCES


*Congressional Globe*. Various volumes. Washington, DC.


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