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CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS AND THE RERUN
PHENOMENON: A STUDY OF CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT
AND INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGE.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1978

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Thomas Allen Kazee
1978
CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS AND THE RERUN PHENOMENON:  
A STUDY OF CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT 
AND INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGE 

DISSERTATION 

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for 
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate 
School of The Ohio State University 

By 
Thomas Allen Kazee, B.A. 

* * * * * 

The Ohio State University 
1978 

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To
My Mother and Father
And to
Sharon and Nicole
I owe a debt of great gratitude to the Ohio State University, whose aid and support for the past four years has been generous and invaluable. The Graduate School, through a Graduate Student Alumni Research Award, was very helpful at a critical point in the study. I am particularly appreciative of the efforts of Herb Asher, whose patience and genuine concern were instrumental in seeing this project through to completion. Herb Weisberg and Aage Clausen also were generous with their time and skill during the last sixteen months. I want to thank the Political Science Department of Tulane University, whose offer of a position was very timely. My wife is particularly greatful. I would be remiss if I did not also mention my friends in Twinsburg and Columbus, on whose support and encouragement I have depended for a number of years. Finally, special thanks and love to Sharon, who is surely as responsible for this work as its author.
VITA

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  Executive and Bureaucratic Politics. Professor Randall Ripley

Minor: Comparative Politics

  Comparative Political Behavior. Professor Bradley Richardson

  Western Europe and Great Britain. Professor Bradley Richardson
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Every two years in the United States voters in 435 congressional districts go to the polls to select their representatives to Congress. This phenomenon has been widely studied and written about as researchers have sought answers to various questions. Who is likely to become a candidate? How are candidates selected? How are elections won—or lost? What sorts of attitudes do candidates hold? What happens to the winners—and the losers—as after the election?

These questions have led political scientists to study various aspects of the electoral process, including political recruitment, candidate strategy, and voting behavior. That is, students of Congress have been interested in explaining how certain people get to be candidates, how they go about winning elections, and how voters choose between challengers and incumbents.

Studies in this area have focused almost exclusively on successful candidates. For example, a substantial amount of research on candidate recruitment deals with incumbent
career patterns. Only at the individual level has much research been conducted which concerns itself with both incumbents and unsuccessful candidates. A similarly narrow perspective has been adopted by those looking at congressional elections, with little attempt being made to relate electoral data analysis to the broader problem of candidate recruitment.

Traditional Perspectives

Studies of candidate recruitment and of congressional elections generally fall into four basic categories. Two categories are explicitly recruitment-oriented, with two of an electoral nature. The first two perspectives might be called "patterns of recruitment" and "candidate personality." As suggested above, the former is concerned with tracing career patterns of legislators, either from a sociological, individual perspective, or by developing an institutional "structure of opportunities" framework; the latter suggests that certain personality types are more likely to be recruited, and that personality has important consequences for candidate and electoral behavior.

Electoral study has concentrated largely on campaigns and incumbents. The campaign perspective deals with questions of strategy, such as "how to become a candidate and/or win elections." This handbook style approach is not well suited to analysis or explanation, but does provide interesting descriptions of political strategies utilized by
candidates.

The incumbent perspective concerns the development of incumbency advantages. Research in this area has attempted to determine the magnitude of those advantages and to see if they are changing over time. It has also attempted to discover why incumbency advantages exist, focusing largely on the use of congressional perquisites by incumbents and on possible changes in mass voting behavior relative to incumbency.7

The four types of analysis just described are instructive and provide detailed accounts of the prevailing patterns of political recruitment and candidate behavior. Little effort has been made, however, to relate recruitment to campaign conduct and election outcome. Any study of political recruitment which does not consider the implications of these factors is incomplete. I intend to demonstrate that the prevalent mode of recruitment study—that dealing with who the candidates are (or worse yet, who the winners are)—fails to consider the important role played by electoral forces.

Clearly, the process of recruitment involves much more than that short period of time between an individual's expressed desire to become a candidate and his getting the nomination. Broadly construed, recruitment includes a variety of factors, some over which the potential candidate has little control, such as socioeconomic status,
race, and sex. Other factors, such as initial political interest and experience within the American political framework, certainly help determine who will be motivated to seek office. Post-nomination experiences, such as conduct of the campaign and election outcome, can hardly be underestimated as influences on the recruitment process. A given congressional election not only chooses a legislator, but structures the context under which candidates will be recruited. It eliminates some potential candidates, opens the door for others, and sets the initial conditions under which individuals—and political parties—must play the recruitment game.

In order to more directly consider the impact of electoral experience on this process, I shall look at a number of candidates who have run for Congress several times. Individuals who have run more than once are in a unique position to evaluate candidacy along its entire continuum, from initial political interest through their several congressional contests to the present time.

The specific units of analysis will be repeat candidates, that is, challengers who have run against the same incumbent at least twice. The term "rerun" is used to refer to such contests, for successive races between identical challengers and incumbents are literally re-run elections.

Rerun elections occur quite often. In fact, approximately ten percent of all congressional elections are
of this type. In any given congressional election year, about forty races feature the same choices of major party candidates who ran against each other in the preceding election.

These elections are interesting in and of themselves, but their primary value is that in studying them, much can be learned about the process of political recruitment. It will be clear that recruitment is not quite so conceptually distinct as has been suggested, and is in fact inextricably linked with the campaign decisions a candidate must make and with the results of congressional elections. Thus, rerun elections provide a unique vantage point from which to study recruitment as a process, and particularly to analyze the interrelationships between the various factors which make up that process.

Rerun Elections and Political Recruitment

Rerun elections facilitate the study of political recruitment from an analytic as well as descriptive perspective. One of the weaknesses of the traditional perspective has been its tendency to stop short of analysis, to describe the paths leading to candidacy, with little effort being made to fit the usual modes of candidate recruitment into the broader context of American politics. The present effort will attempt to increase our analytic ability, to suggest consequences and explanations for the patterns observed. In order to do this, however, one must begin
by studying—and describing—the "candidate experience."

A discussion of that experience necessarily includes a description of "recruitment strategies." This should not be confused with electoral strategy or other similar considerations, but rather deals with how a person goes about getting nominated. The recruitment strategy concept is applicable both for those who have, in a sense, recruited themselves, and for those who were more directly recruited by other actors. In the case of the former the intent is to describe personal strategies, in the latter to evaluate the impact of external forces on the individual's decision to run.

Rerunners make a contribution to this descriptive aspect of recruitment study in that they have approached candidacy both as a newcomer and as an experienced nominee. In theory, such candidates should be able to use that experience to their advantage in securing the nomination. Particularly interesting might be a comparison of first-run strategies and subsequent nomination attempts.

Rerun elections are also a productive vehicle for an analysis of candidate cost. The evaluation of cost, or risk (a related concept), is a consistent theme in the recruitment literature. That is, most studies of candidacy agree that running for office necessarily implies certain costs or risks an individual must take in terms of his personal or political life. Repeat candidates have a broad
experiential base from which to evaluate those costs. One should thus be able to more precisely define and describe them, but—perhaps more important—to investigate what implications that evaluation has for the type of candidate who runs for Congress. Are perceived costs and actual costs similar? This is important since potential candidates may underestimate costs—either intentionally or unintentionally—in order to rationalize their decision to run. If perception of cost is overrated, this might explain the relatively large number of candidates who want to try again. Or perhaps the political costs inherent in candidacy are so severe that only strongly committed persons, such as rerun candidates, decide to make the effort.

The rerun election is also an appropriate context from which to focus on the election itself as a recruitment factor. This means simply that aside from serving its more direct purpose of electing public officials, the election may serve as a recruiting force, eliminating certain individuals and selecting others as future candidates. This is the obvious case for winning candidates, since winning a seat in Congress almost automatically implies future candidacy. Quite simply, most congressmen run for their seat again.

For losers, the importance of election outcome as a recruitment incentive is less clear. From the individual perspective, attitudes acquired during the campaign and as
a result of losing may determine the candidate's disposition to remain active politically. Such attitudinal factors can operate independent of objective standards of success. In a broader sense, elections may serve as recruiting devices by weeding out ineffective candidates, or by rewarding candidates who may have improved the party showing in a given district.

To what extent do political parties influence candidate selection? Is there, for example, a structure of rewards for effective political candidacy at the state or district level of party organization? Parties may serve as the initiating force for many candidates by recruiting from the ranks of party workers, or at least those affiliated with the party in some capacity. On the other hand, one might conclude that political parties may have very little impact on congressional candidate recruitment, that most challengers are self-starters who only seek party support after having committed themselves to candidacy.

This is also an appropriate context for the analysis of differences in congressional recruitment between parties. One party may recruit from the pool of losing congressional candidates to a much greater extent than the other. Such an aggregate pattern may not indicate an overt strategy to recruit experienced candidates, but a lack of party effectiveness in attracting viable new candidates in districts held by the opposition party.
In sum, the relationship of candidate recruitment to party effectiveness, challenger performance, and incumbent strength can be more fully explained on the basis of findings pertaining to rerun elections. The crucial point is that rerun elections provide a context amenable to analysis. Here, propositions can be tested to an extent not possible in more traditional studies of congressional candidacy.

Attitudes held by rerun candidates, as they relate to the contextual factors discussed above, also have important implications for political recruitment. Rerunners are able to evaluate such factors as party effectiveness and support from the unique perspective of having interacted with them a number of times. For example, initial congressional candidacy may involve a set of preconceptions relating to the role of political parties in recruiting and campaigning, preconceptions which may not be supported by actual experience as a candidate. The second time around, however, the rerun candidate should have a more complete picture of who to see, who to please, and who to ignore. Of course, this may vary depending upon the type of rerun candidacy being analyzed. A close loss may encourage organizational support, community contributions, and a greater effort by supporters in general. On the other hand, a hapless rerun candidate may find that the sources of support which did exist have dried up, that to run again involves a calculation of even greater cost than was encountered in the
first election. Whatever the circumstance, rerun candidates should possess substantial knowledge of the recruitment process, and realistic evaluations of the context of political candidacy.

The phenomenon of rerun elections generates a set of questions which bear directly on recruitment. Perhaps the most central question concerns the nature of rerun candidacy. What advantages— or disadvantages— accrue to the rerun candidate? Do they find financial support difficult to obtain? How about the second campaign— are contributors more or less willing to support a proven unsuccessful candidate? Did most rerunners feel that they could win before deciding to run?

A number of additional questions might also be addressed within the rerun context. Do rerun candidates perceive the impact of national political trends on their electoral performance? How did initial performance influence the candidate's decision to try again? A strong showing, even though unsuccessful, may suggest that the losing candidate has enough clout— in terms of potential success the next time— to have the nomination if he wants it. A weak showing may have the same effect, for a potential new challenger may feel he has little chance of success even if he gets the nomination. All of these calculations relate to congressional recruitment primarily because they help decide who is likely to try for the nomination and who is likely
to get it. Most important, all of the unanswered questions deal explicitly with the phenomenon of rerun congressional elections.

Resource Acquisition, Incumbency, and Electoral Performance

It was suggested above that any complete study of political recruitment must include considerations of campaign experiences and electoral performance. The three concepts are linked because recruitment is not a distinctive event which can be easily encapsulated and described. As a process, recruitment is continuous, affected by influences which occur both before and after the nomination.

This proposition has particular validity for the rerun candidate. In fact, it may be argued that his decision to run again—his "re-recruitment," so to speak—is a product of initial experience as a candidate. That is, whether or not a defeated candidate runs again depends primarily on the conduct of his first campaign—his experiences, strategies, and the outcome of the election itself.

It is important, however, to identify several aspects of rerun elections which may not seem explicitly related to recruitment. Two such aspects which can be clearly discerned within the rerun context are resource acquisition and incumbency advantage. Both evolve, at least implicitly, from a concern with recruitment, since they are important factors which must be dealt with by congressional candidates
as they seek to be elected.

In any congressional election there are limited amounts of resources available to the candidates. The kinds and amounts of resources available depend upon the district situation. For example, the composition of the district may affect resource availability. Thus, a Democratic candidate in a heavily Republican district will usually have fewer sources of potential support than his opponent. The party organization can be a factor, too. A tightly-knit, well organized party, or an organization able to mobilize scarce resources, may make the struggle unbalanced from the outset.

Candidates who have run and lost more than once, particularly against the same candidate, are seasoned veterans of the resource struggle. They exist as potentially valuable sources of information concerning strategies to acquire and utilize those resources. Having tried and failed, it is reasonable to expect to see variation in the strategies they have adopted. A one-time loser may lament his inability to tap potential sources of support, or perhaps to complain that such sources do not even exist in his district. The rerun candidate, on the other hand, is in the unique position of being able to vary his strategies to acquire resources, or to vary his utilization of them. Put more simply, rerun challengers are able to answer the rhetorical question often voiced by losers: "What might I have done differently?"
Along this same line of reasoning, rerun candidates are able to evaluate the impact of incumbency and to act upon those evaluations. From the perspective of the challenger, how important are incumbency advantages and what strategies do they adopt to combat or neutralize those advantages? Where available, empirical indicators of incumbency advantages will be used (campaign spending, for example) to see if rerun candidates are able to more effectively challenge those advantages in their second attempt. The repeat challenger should be well qualified to discuss the effect of incumbency, being that he has been in the challenging position several times. This investigation of incumbency uses the important natural control rerun elections insure: the candidates are the same in both elections.

The last important influence on the process of political recruitment is the election itself. How successful are repeat candidates? Do they win more elections than regular challengers? Are they relatively more successful against incumbents? Are repeat challengers seen as "losers," in the distinctly negative sense, or are voters likely to recognize and reward a repeat challenger? Answers to these questions are sought to determine if there is a kind of "incumbent challenger" effect. More fundamentally, to what extent are challengers--losers--perceived by voters?
Several strategies might be adopted to discover the nature of voter recognition of rerun candidates. Recognition levels of rerun and first-time challengers can be directly measured by looking at survey data. And, differences in recognition can at least be inferred by comparing rerunners with regular challengers in terms of overall electoral success. It can easily be determined, for example, if rerun candidates win a greater share of elections than regular challengers. Rerun candidates can be compared with regular challengers in similar districts to see whether rerunners are more successful in their second attempt than comparable non-rerun challengers.9

The consideration of electoral performance completes the cycle, for an election serves as the first step in the biennially-renewed process of congressional recruitment. Theoretically, the slate has been cleared; an incumbent is in office and the opposition searches for new challengers. In reality, most of the same actors remain and most of the same interests want to be served.

The recruitment-related impact of elections concerns challenger performance. Some challengers did well, others poorly. All were affected by the experience. Who returns? That is, how many of the challengers will be repeat candidates? Who are the rerunners—close losers or hopeless idealists? Compared to the set of regular challengers, do more rerun candidates come from competitive congressional
districts or from non-competitive districts? If in fact a greater proportion of rerun challengers run in competitive districts than regular challengers, one has at least inferential support for the hypothesis that relative electoral success is rewarded—either by parties or by primary voters. This finding would also suggest relatively successful candidates are more likely to seek the nomination again. However, if the opposite pattern obtains, this suggests that rerun candidates are basically sacrificial lambs put up to carry the party banner in hopeless districts, in districts in which the pool of potential candidates is extremely small, or in districts in which weak parties are unable to recruit stronger candidates.

An Outline of the Rerun Approach

The chapter immediately following will be devoted to methodology, with specifics as to the methods used and decisions made as the study progressed. Following it will be an overview of the rerun phenomenon. This involves a detailed look at all aspects of rerun elections— their number and distribution, their outcome, the partisan affiliation of the incumbents and challengers, and their frequency over time. The reader thus has a better overall picture of congressional elections in general and rerun elections in particular.
The discussion following the rerun overview, consisting of four chapters, concerns the effects of several related concepts—challenger electoral performance, campaign financing, incumbency advantages, and candidate attitudes—on the recruitment process. Following is a brief summary of the substantive questions considered, and a look at how they are treated in the study.

1. How successful are rerun challengers and incumbents at the polls? This chapter is an analysis of electoral data relating to congressional elections. Several measures of candidate performance are utilized, ranging from a simple win/loss dichotomy to more sensitive percentage indicators. Particular attention is paid to the relative competitiveness of the districts in which candidates seek office.

2. How successful are rerun challengers and incumbents at acquiring financial resources? The focus is on the differences between challenger and incumbent spending, especially those differences in various competitive situations. Public record data concerning receipts and expenditures by congressional candidates are utilized for this part of the analysis.

3. What kinds of advantages do incumbents hold in congressional elections? This chapter, though related to the electoral performance discussion, looks specifically at the evolution of incumbency advantages in recent years.
and identifies areas in which those advantages seem to be greatest. Incumbent perquisites are considered, as are data relating to voter recognition of rerun and regular candidates. The chapter concludes with a discussion of various explanations for the "incumbency effect."

4. How do rerun challengers evaluate candidacy? Here, a set of attitudes held by a number of congressional challengers is described. Challenger perceptions of cost, satisfaction, party support, and a variety of other attitudes are discussed as they relate to candidate selection. Consideration is also given to the implications of these attitudes for recruitment, emphasizing the ability of candidates to reconcile a number of seemingly contradictory perceptions. That is, the task is to explain the relationship between empirical reality and challenger perceptions of that reality.

The above questions, though specifically asked relative to rerun challengers, should provide answers applicable to a broader population of congressional candidates. In this sense, the rerun phenomenon serves as a vehicle for the study of a number of electoral and recruitment-related concerns. Thus, as the study progresses it will become clear that the emphasis on rerun elections quite naturally—and justifiably—involves consideration of (and sometimes emphasis on) other actors in the electoral environment. This is particularly apparent in the analysis of election
and campaign finance data. The rerun phenomenon is no less important even in these parts of the study, however, for it is the comparison of rerun and regular challengers, and rerunners and incumbents, which is central to the argument. It is on those comparisons that the bulk of the research is based.

The final chapter briefly summarizes the findings, and includes a discussion of the policy implications of the patterns observed. In that chapter I hope to demonstrate that rerun elections are more than an interesting anomaly in the domain of congressional politics. Their real importance lies in what they have to say about the process of electing United States congressmen. Much can be learned from their lack of success.
CHAPTER NOTES

1. This approach is best exemplified by the work of Donald Matthews, *The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1954), and others, dating back to the sociological studies of Weber, Mosca, Pareto, Michels, and Lasswell. For a brief review of recruitment literature (and a distinction between "elite" and "social background" theories), see Richard Born, "House Incumbents and Inter-Election Vote Change," *Journal of Politics* (November 1977): 1008-1034. Born includes the work of Floyd Hunter and Robert Dahl in the elite recruitment area.


3. This does not mean to imply that these four categories are all inclusive. Rather, it is to summarize those areas of research which most directly bear on the recruitment of congressional candidates.


CHAPTER NOTES (continued)


8. Schlesinger and others discuss the social milieu from which most legislators originate. Kenneth Prewitt reports that, "on balance, it is advantageous to be white, male, Protestant, college educated, in a prestige occupation, above average in income, and native stock, preferably of Anglo-Saxon descent." The Recruitment of Political Leaders: A Study of Citizen-Politicians, (N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill & Co., 1970), p. 23.

9. Success is relative, for a close loss may be considered failure (if victory was expected) and a seemingly resounding defeat success (if a loser substantially improved his party's showing in that district).
CHAPTER II

METHODS

As suggested in the first chapter, the research strategy developed herein attempts to answer several questions. Those questions symbolize an interest in four substantive areas: campaign finance, incumbency advantage, candidate electoral performance, and challenger attitudes. Two primary sources were tapped to investigate those areas of interest. Specifically, the research consists of extensive study of the public record relative to congressional elections (electoral and financial) and interviews with a number of rerun candidates.

Time Frame and Definitions

The time frame used is 1946 to 1976. During this postwar period, voters across the country went to the polls to select congressmen sixteen different times; eight times to select a president, eight times in so-called "off-year" elections. This period of time includes a large number of individual congressional elections, with almost seven thousand separate contests taking place during that thirty-year
span. The subset of rerun elections in this period is also quite large, with over six hundred elections fitting the rerun criteria.

The analysis of the public record first consisted of identifying those congressional elections of greatest interest. Data for all rerun contests, of course, are included, along with information concerning "regular" congressional elections. Regular elections are those in which an incumbent of one major party faces a challenger of the other. All other elections, be they in open districts or in districts in which the incumbent is unopposed, are not included in the analysis.

Electoral data are used to measure the performance of different types of candidates in different situations. Thus, not only is the percentage of vote received by each candidate in each district of interest, but, also, the competitiveness of those districts. For this purpose, competitive districts are defined as those in which the challenger in the previous congressional election received at least forty-five per cent of the two-party vote. Non-competitive districts are those in which the challenger received less than forty-five per cent of the vote.¹

The rationale for classifying competitiveness based on the previous election is related to the decisions a potential candidate must make in seeking office. After all, the primary focus is on candidate recruitment, and electoral
performance is important only because of its profound influence on that process. Interested individuals at some point evaluate their chances of achieving electoral victory. Those chances must be measured largely in terms of past party performance in the district. Thus, degree of competitiveness has meaning for recruitment in that it structures the context under which evaluations of electoral prospects are made.

One problem for an analysis heavily dependent upon electoral data is the redrawing of congressional district boundaries. Though this was not a problem of great magnitude during much of the period in question, in certain years the number of redistricted states and districts was substantial. Also, in recent years redistricting generally involved greater change in geographic boundaries and in numbers of voters affected than in the earlier postwar period.

A simple decision rule was adopted to deal with this problem. The name of the incumbent, rather than district number or geography, was used to identify districts to be included in the analysis. Thus, rerun and regular districts were identified by the presence of an incumbent, even if small changes had occurred in district boundaries during the intervening period. Open districts, districts in which the incumbent was unopposed, or districts in which redrawn boundaries had thrown two incumbents together, were not included.
Electoral Performance

The congressional election data are used to measure candidate performance during the 1946-1976 period. Several different measures of performance are utilized. The first is a dichotomous classification of victory or defeat, yielding a measure of electoral success for various groups of candidates. The second is a measure of improvement, a calculation of the number of candidates in a given year who increased their party's share of the vote from the previous election. The third measure is a calculation of average gain or loss by the various types of candidates (e.g. rerun-regular, Democrat-Republican, competitive-non-competitive), and is expressed in percentage of the district vote.

Note that all of the performance measures involve pairs of elections. That is, performance of a rerun candidate is measured relative to his first congressional candidacy. In the case of the percentage measure, for example, this means that a rerun candidate who received 44.3 per cent of the vote his first time, and 46.6 per cent the second, is said to have improved his performance 2.3 per cent. A regular challenger's performance is measured by comparing his vote total to that of his party's candidate in the same district two years earlier.

To summarize, the performance of candidates is measured in three ways: how many candidates of each type have won elections, how many of each type of candidate improved or
did not improve upon the party performance in the preceding election, and a measure of the magnitude of the increase or decrease.

**Campaign Financing**

The investigation of campaign financing utilizes data collected by the interest group *Common Cause* and the Federal Election Commission. *Common Cause* collected detailed information on campaign spending by all congressional candidates for the 1972 and 1974 elections. Figures for 1976 were compiled by the FEC. Data concerning candidate receipts are also available for the 1972 and 1976 elections. These three elections represent the only years in which comprehensive information on campaign financing from all congressional districts is available.

**Incumbency**

The third area of interest, incumbency advantages, is studied largely through the use of the same data discussed above. That is, the electoral information for the 1946-1976 period and the campaign finance data for the 1972-1976 period are again used. In this case, the specific aim of the analysis is a more complete understanding of the incumbency effect, rather than general discussion of electoral trends.
In this context, use is also made of several of the national surveys conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan. The focus is on those items included in various years in the survey which concern voter name recognition of congressional challengers and incumbents. The recognition levels of challengers in regular and rerun districts are compared. A sufficient number of districts in which rerun candidates challenged incumbents were included in several of the surveys to make such a comparison possible.

Candidate Interviews: The Sample

Interviews were conducted with twenty-five rerun candidates during March, April and May of 1978. Five of the interviews were personally conducted, the remainder by telephone. Of the five personal interviews, three took place in the candidate's home, two in business offices. All twenty of those interviewed by telephone were contacted at their residences. The home environment proved to be quite productive, since time constraints were not likely to intervene and interruptions less likely to occur. In most instances, the initial contact consisted of an explanation of the purposes of the study, the candidate's consent to participate, and an appointment to call back for the actual interview.
The in-person interviews ranged from seventy minutes to two hours in length, with an average of eighty-six minutes. The telephone interviews were generally less lengthy, ranging from twenty-five minutes to one-hour, with a forty minute average.

The sample of rerun candidates was selected with several criteria in mind. First, a distribution that included relatively equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans, and candidates who ran in competitive and non-competitive

Table 1. Distribution of Candidate Interviews by Party Affiliation and District Competitiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>Row Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

districts, was desired. Some degree of success was achieved in securing this distribution (see Table 1). Note that interviews were conducted with eleven Republicans (five competitive, six non-competitive) and fourteen Democrats (five competitive, nine non-competitive). Though most of the interviews were with Midwestern rerun candidates
(sixteen of twenty-five), a broader distribution was achieved by interviewing four candidates from Western states, three from Southern states, and two from states in the East.

Most of those interviewed were recent candidates. In fact, seventeen of the rerunners had last been defeated in 1976. The least recent challenger—and the only individual who ran before 1970—had been a candidate in 1964 and 1966.

Table 2. Congressional Elections in Which Interview Sample Participated, 1964-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Interview Candidates Running</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Elections in Which Sample Participated:</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight challengers first ran in 1970, two in 1972, and fourteen in 1974. Due to the fact that three of the candidates actually ran four consecutive times, the sample participated in a total of fifty-six congressional elections (see Table 2).

Though considerable effort was exerted to insure a diversity of respondent characteristics, it should be apparent that the sample is not statistically representative in
any sense. Rather than test verifiable hypotheses, the interviews serve to encourage speculative generalizations. Several other researchers have used this interview technique with excellent results, particularly in the recruitment field. Thus, while the lack of statistical representativeness should be recognized, it should not detract from the utility of the method.

**Questionnaire Design and Application**

The questionnaire used for the personal interviews covered a number of topics, ranging from candidate background to future political plans. Particular attention was focused on the candidate-party relationship, factors influencing the decision to become a candidate, differences between campaigns, incumbency advantages, and personal attitudes toward candidacy (rewards, satisfaction, etc.). In all, the in-person questionnaire contained fifty-six separate items.

The questionnaire used for the telephone interviews was somewhat revised, though the areas mentioned above were again emphasized. The revision consisted of eliminating several items, identified during the personal interviews, as being less useful. This allowed a speedier and more efficient focus on points of primary concern during the telephone interviews. This is, of course, an important consideration for the researcher with limited resources. The revised questionnaire contained thirty-three separate
items, with several questions from the original instrument being removed. The excluded items were those which appeared to elicit redundant responses, or those least related to the basic theoretical interests of this study (see Appendix for the complete questionnaire).

A Final Note

Before the reader begins his consideration of the findings which follow, one final point should be mentioned. The organization of the research, and of the methods used, should not be read to indicate clear lines of separation between areas of theoretical concern. In fact, it is the crux of the argument that recruitment can best be understood only by considering the interrelationship of various factors.

The interview findings, for example, while helping to answer the fourth substantive question (How do challengers evaluate candidacy?), are also applicable to other areas of interest. The questionnaire was structured so that responses relative to electoral performance, campaign financing, and incumbency advantages would not only be included, but emphasized. This is an important point, for although the chapter structure reflects the need to consider certain concepts separately, this is a methodological, rather than theoretical, consideration.
CHAPTER NOTES


2. Of course, this strategy means that a relatively small number of districts are included in the analysis which were not strictly comparable in a constituent or geographical sense from one election to the next. However, several analyses suggest that redistricting, especially in the pre-1970 period, had little effect on the electoral fortunes of incumbents. See Charles S. Bullock III, "Redistricting and Congressional Stability, 1962-1972," Journal of Politics 37 (May 1975): 569-575; and John A. Ferejohn, "On the Decline of Competition in Congressional Elections," American Political Science Review 71 (March 1977): 166-176.

3. The regional breakdown is that used by the Congressional Quarterly. See Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report Vol. 34, p. 3161. The regions are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
<th>West</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER NOTES (continued)

4. See, for example, the earlier cited works of Barber, Huckshorn and Spencer, and Kingdon in this area. Though in several of these cases the samples were more systematically drawn (e.g. Kingdon), the technique is similar. The basic theoretical difference here is that the focus is on the relationship of recruitment to a variety of supposedly "external" factors (election outcome, incumbency, etc.), rather than a narrower conception of the topic.
Rerun elections are seldom explicitly mentioned in the literature on congressional elections. As of this writing only one journal article has specifically dealt with rerun elections, though recently at least one other researcher has recognized the utility of the rerun concept for the study of incumbency advantages. Lacking a substantial literature base, the goal in this chapter is to extensively review the rerun phenomenon, integrating relevant findings when most appropriate.

Before proceeding further, it seems wise to clearly define the types of congressional elections dealt with here. Rerun elections, of course, feature identical major party candidates in successive elections. However, there are two variations of the rerun type, with differences of sufficient degree to merit their separate consideration and evaluation throughout the study.

The most common rerun election is that in which a defeated challenger returns to face the same incumbent in
the following election. In the 1946-1976 period, 477 of these elections have taken place, or 6.8 per cent of all congressional contests. The second kind of rerun election features a defeated incumbent returning in the next election to face the challenger who unseated him. Though this also clearly fits the rerun definition, any consideration of electoral performance or incumbency effects must take account of the fact that the challenger and incumbent have reversed roles. While this reversal precludes their being considered with the more common variety of rerun election, it does provide a new and potentially rewarding perspective of incumbency advantages. One might examine, for example, the performance of ex-incumbents relative to "incumbent challengers"—i.e. normal rerunners. Is it an electoral advantage to be a former incumbent? If so, how great is that advantage? This unique kind of rerun election facilitates the measurement of such effects. Former incumbent rerun elections have occurred 132 times in the postwar period (1.9 per cent of total congressional elections). Combined, the two kinds of rerun elections constitute 8.7 per cent of total congressional elections in the 1946-1976 period.

The most common type of congressional contest consists of a major party incumbent opposing a "fresh" major party challenger, with no significant minor party opposition. About three-fifths (59.1 per cent) of congressional races
are of this type. They are referred to throughout the analysis as "regular" elections.

Other congressional elections, such as those for open seats, at-large contests, and elections with significant third party opposition, are excluded from the analysis. By also excluding uncontested districts, that is, by considering only those races in which the incumbent faced major party opposition, the sample contains 78.8 per cent of all postwar congressional contests.

Rerun Frequency

The number of rerun elections has remained relatively stable throughout the period of analysis (see Table 3). As a percentage of total congressional elections, reruns have varied from a high of 12.4 per cent in 1960 to a low of 5.7 per cent in 1974. The only sustained period of decline in the number of rerun elections occurred from 1970 to 1974. During this time, the actual number of reruns dropped below thirty for three consecutive years. The decline is illustrated by comparing overall percentages for the 1946-68 period (9.3 per cent) and the 1970-1976 period (7.0 per cent).

By separating rerun elections into non-incumbent and ex-incumbent categories, however, it can be seen that the recent decline in rerun elections is largely due to a substantial decrease in reruns featuring ex-incumbents. The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent Reruns</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent Reruns</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per Cent Total Congressional Elections&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Per Cent Contested Elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Percentages based on combined non-incumbent and ex-incumbent rerun elections.
years which were identified above as those of rerun decline (1970-1974) are precisely those years in which ex-incumbent reruns have diminished most dramatically. The number of non-incumbent reruns has remained remarkably stable during the postwar period. In Table 4, the sixteen election year

Table 4. Non-Incumbent and Ex-Incumbent Rerun Elections, by Sub-Period, 1946-76.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Period</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-1952</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-1960</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-1968</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1976</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

set is collapsed into four equal subsets. Note that while non-incumbent reruns have shown no consistent pattern of increase or decrease, ex-incumbent reruns have monotonically declined. By the last period, ex-incumbents were challenging the candidates who defeated them only about one-fifth as often as they were in the first period.

The decreased occurrence of ex-incumbent reruns can be more emphatically demonstrated by isolating and comparing two equal periods of time during the postwar era. From 1948 to 1954, 33.9 per cent of all rerun elections were of
the ex-incumbent type. From 1970 to 1976, although the number of non-incumbent reruns was nearly identical to the earlier period (109 and 112, respectively), the percentage of ex-incumbent reruns dropped to 8.2 per cent.

Several explanations could be advanced to explain the decrease in ex-incumbent reruns in recent years. Possibly, it is evidence of a perceptual phenomenon: ex-incumbents are very much aware of the advantages accruing to incumbents and believe that these advantages put the incumbent in a very strong position. The new incumbent would now have at his disposal all of these tools, and consequently would be very difficult to unseat (particularly since he had been successful without those advantages).

An alternative explanation might be that recently defeated incumbents are somewhat older than similar incumbents in the earlier postwar years, and thus are less likely to try for office again after losing. To test this explanation requires data about the age of defeated incumbents, information not included in this study. However, it seems a plausible suggestion that such a factor could at least contribute to the observed pattern.

Another possible explanation is that in recent years a higher proportion of defeated incumbents have lost due to some impropriety on their part or on the part of close associates. It seems reasonable to assume that such ex-incumbents would be less likely to try again for the
congressional seat, at least in the short run.

**Regional Distribution**

The regional distribution of rerun elections is summarized in Table 5. Clearly, the largest number of rerun elections occur in the Midwest, both in absolute numbers and in per cent of regional elections. A little more than one of every eight congressional elections in the Midwest is a rerun election. In the East and West, the number of rerun contests is somewhat less, with approximately one of every eleven (in the East) and one of every twelve (in the West) being of this type. The South has the fewest number of rerun elections, with only about four per cent—or one in twenty-five—featuring identical choices. As a proportion of contested districts, the number of rerun contests in the South is much higher, approaching the level of the East and West regions.

Separating non-incumbent and ex-incumbent rerunners makes little difference in terms of regional occurrence. Proportionally, ex-incumbent reruns are somewhat more likely to occur in the East than in any other region. About one-third (33.6 per cent) of Eastern reruns are of the ex-incumbent type, compared to 24.7 per cent in the Midwest, 21.1 per cent in the West, and 8.5 per cent in the South. The low number of Southern ex-incumbent reruns is due to its traditional one-party nature; very few Democratic incumbents
Table 5.  Regional Distribution of Non-Incumbent and Ex-Incumbent Rerun Elections, 1946-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per Cent Total</th>
<th>Per Cent Contested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages based on combined non-incumbent and ex-incumbent rerun elections*
were ever defeated in general elections, so the number of ex-incumbents likely to run again is very small. More will be said about this later in the chapter, however.

Table 6 lists the twelve states with the highest percentage of rerun elections (both types combined). Iowa heads the list, with almost one of every five elections a rerun contest. Note that five of the top eight states are in the Midwest, and that none of the twelve are in the South.

The South is well represented in the bottom group of states, however. Six of the ten lowest rerun states are Southern (see Table 7). In fact, of the 428 congressional elections in Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana between 1946 and 1976, only three were rerun elections. Note also that no Eastern states, and only one Midwestern state, are in the bottom ten. Such regional variations are better understood when rerun partisanship is considered, a relationship addressed in the next section.

Rerun Partisanship

The partisan distribution of rerun candidates is quite similar to that of regular challengers for the period of analysis. Of the 609 rerun challengers, 51.4 per cent were Democrats, 48.6 per cent Republicans. Of 4112 regular challengers, 51.9 per cent were Democrats, 48.1 per cent Republicans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Rerun Elections</th>
<th>Per Cent Total Elections(^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Includes contested and uncontested elections.
PLEASE NOTE:

Dissertation contains small and indistinct print.
Filmed as received.

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Rerun Elections</th>
<th>Per Cent Total Elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes contested and uncontested elections.*
There is evidence of substantial difference between the parties at the regional level, however. In the Midwest, for example, almost two-thirds of all rerunners are Democrats, while in the South about three-fourths of all rerunners are Republicans (see Table 8). This undoubtedly reflects the partisan divisions within those regions, especially in the South (as suggested above). East and West rerun candidates are nearly equally divided between the parties, with both slightly weighted toward Republican rerunners.

A look at the degree of district competitiveness within the regions helps to explain this pattern, at least for the South. Not only are most Southern rerunners Republican, the great majority of these Republicans (71.9 per cent) run in non-competitive districts. This seems to reflect the difficulty in recruiting new candidates in strong one-party areas. Once "sacrificial lambs" are discovered, run them as long as they are willing.

This explanation is less satisfactory in the Midwest. Though most rerunners are Democrats, they are actually more likely to run in competitive districts (46.5 per cent) than Republican rerunners (41.3 per cent). In the Midwest, a nearly opposite rationale for running more than once seems to be operating. Instead of conforming to the sacrificial lamb model, Midwestern Democrats seem to be re-running in expectation of success. Analysis of the years in which the
Table 8. Rerun Candidate Party Affiliation, by Region, 1946-70.a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>129.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(170)</td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>(262)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>159.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(61)</td>
<td>(102)</td>
<td>(163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>157.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>(45)</td>
<td>(85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(311)</td>
<td>(295)</td>
<td>(606)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIncludes non-incumbent and ex-incumbent rerunners.
majority of Democratic reruns occurred supports this interpretation. Almost one-third (32.4 per cent) of all Democratic reruns in the Midwest took place in four years—1948, 1958, 1964, and 1974—while only 4.3 per cent of Republican reruns occurred during those years. In each of those elections a great number of Democratic challengers successfully unseated Republican incumbents.

This explanation suggests that the large number of Democratic rerunners during these particular years is a result of the potential for success existing at the time the decision to run for office is made. In each of the four electoral situations being discussed, Democrats might have logically expected to do very well. In two of the elections, the Democrats were the out-party in an off-year race. Assuming that Democrats were aware of the pattern of success for the party not in the White House during off-year elections, they could expect strong performances. In one of the election years (1964), Democratic congressional candidates were running on the coattails of a landslide presidential winner. Though in 1948 Harry Truman perhaps was not seen by many candidates as an ideal "ticket-header," it is a fact that Democrats ran extremely well that year. Though this argument is somewhat oversimplified, it is not unreasonable to assume that potential candidates are aware of the "electoral climate," or context, of a given election year, and that those perceptions influence recruitment-related decisions.
In the particular case at hand, the frequency of Midwestern rerun Democrats during those four years is not explained by the presence of a large number of ex-incumbents. Only 16.4 per cent (9 of 55) were defeated incumbents seeking to regain their seats. The argument that Democrats prospects were perceived as particularly bright during these elections is offered further support by the extremely small number of Republican rerun candidates in each of the four years. Although Midwestern Republicans average 7.3 rerun candidacies for the other twelve congressional election years, in each of the four Democratic sweep years under scrutiny only a single Republican challenger was a rerun candidate. The point is simply being made that, at least for Democrats in the Midwest, the number of reruns may depend on expectations of success. For Republicans in the South, the pattern is obviously quite the opposite. Reruns are likely to occur in those districts in which expectation of success is minimal.

By closely examining state-by-state rerun occurrence, it can be seen in several of the states that rerun candidates of one party substantially outnumber those of the other party. In Table 9, five states are listed whose rerun candidates are predominantly Republican, and five states with predominantly Democratic rerun candidates.

The party skewing of rerun candidates in certain states is mentioned because it suggests that forces may be operating
Table 9. States With Skewed Party Distribution of Rerun Candidates, by Party, 1946-76.\(^a\)

I. Predominately Republican

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Rerun Republicans</th>
<th>Number of Rerun Democrats</th>
<th>Per Cent Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Predominately Democratic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Rerun Democrats</th>
<th>Number of Rerun Republicans</th>
<th>Per Cent Democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Includes non-incumbent and ex-incumbent rerunners.
at the state party level to encourage or discourage rerun candidacies within those states. In Oklahoma, for example, is it the norm for Republican losers to try again? Perhaps the party apparatus is so weak that viable new candidates are not recruited to challenge Democratic incumbents, or perhaps the party leaders decided not to contest entrenched incumbents. Note that seven of the nine Oklahoma reruns occurred in non-competitive districts. This pattern also is apparent in Missouri, with eleven of fifteen Republican reruns in non-competitive districts.

A similar effect can be noted in two of the five predominantly Democratic states. In Ohio, 71.1 per cent of Democratic reruns are in non-competitive districts. In Massachusetts, fully four-fifths of all Democratic reruns are non-competitive. Indiana, Iowa, and Kansas, however, show a near reversal of this pattern, with a combined figure of 73.8 per cent (31 of 42) competitive Democratic reruns.

These seemingly quite different patterns emphasize the degree to which parties and party organizations vary. In Missouri and Oklahoma (for Republicans), and Ohio (for Democrats), the high proportion of non-competitive rerunners might indicate weak party organization. In these states the "out party" is unwilling—or unable—to recruit new challengers is less than ideal electoral situations.
A somewhat different interpretation is that in states such as these one of the two parties—or both, in certain instances—make explicit decisions not to "waste" the energy to recruit new challengers. Rather than denoting weakness, then, large numbers of non-competitive rerunners within a state may indicate strategic choices by party leaders to sacrifice unwinnable districts in order to concentrate on those in which success is more likely. This seems applicable to a state like Ohio, for example, in which the leadership of the Democratic party focuses on northern, urban (i.e., more Democratic) districts.

The clump of Midwestern states with a high percentage of competitive rerunners of both parties suggests that a strong electoral performance there is likely to lead to repeat candidacy. Party strength may not be involved, for it is probable that strong as well as weak parties would encourage such candidates to run again.

Without other indicators, any inferences made here about the strength of state party organization based on the frequency of rerun occurrence are speculative. However, several conclusions can be reached concerning the relationship between party and district competitiveness. In districts which are clearly non-competitive, the rerun sacrificial lamb requires little party effort in terms of recruitment and less in terms of party support. In other districts, a competitive performance is likely to earn a second chance
for the challenger. Again, party effort toward recruitment is minimal, but not because the party is weak or strong. In fact, considerable party effort may be needed to encourage the candidate to run again, and even more effort to get him (or her) elected.

In Table 10 partisan and regional differences in rerun election types are considered. Note that very few rerun elections, particularly ex-incumbent reruns, occur in the South. This is not a surprising finding, due to the long term Democratic dominance in that region. Only recently

Table 10. Regional and Partisan Distribution of Non-Incumbent and Ex-Incumbent Rerun Elections, 1946-76.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Democrats Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Democrats Ex-Incumbent</th>
<th>Republicans Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Republicans Ex-Incumbent</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

have Republican Party candidates been on the ballot in many Southern districts, and even fewer have been elected. Thus, few non-incumbent reruns have occurred, though their number has increased as Republican congressional fortunes rise. And, of course, the scarcity of defeated incumbents
precludes there being many ex-incumbent reruns.

In the Midwest, the proportion of Republican ex-incumbents is quite high. This seems to be a combination of several factors. As suggested above, it seems to reflect an attitude among Midwestern Republicans that a defeated incumbent should be given the opportunity to regain his seat. It also indicates the traditional strength of the Republican Party in the Midwest; many congressional seats now controlled by Democrats were once in Republican hands. Between 1946 and 1960, forty-six ex-incumbent reruns took place in the Midwest. Thirty-one of them (67.3 per cent) were defeated Republican incumbents.

The low percentage of Republican ex-incumbent reruns in the West is inexplicable. Only five of forty-six (10.9 per cent) Western Republican rerunners were ex-incumbents, and three of those occurred in 1946. Since then, only two of forty-two rerun candidates are ex-incumbents. This has occurred in a region which has been as competitive as the East and Midwest, at least in terms of competitive districts. In fact, the West ranks second in percentage of regional competitive districts. The Midwest has the highest proportion (27.5 per cent competitive), followed by the West (26.1), the East (22.0), and the South (9.4). Another possible explanation can be rejected when the number of defeated Republican incumbents in the West during this period is calculated, since each defeated incumbent is a
candidate for ex-incumbent rerun status. From 1946 to 1974, a total of forty-two Republican incumbents lost their congressional seats. Only two decided to challenge the Democrat who defeated them the next time around. Perhaps state Republican parties in the West regard defeated incumbents as having had their chance, or perhaps ex-incumbents have no desire to risk another potentially unsuccessful campaign. Even if these speculations are correct, the data do not suggest explanations as to why this pattern should be peculiar to the West.

Rerun Performance

It is an established fact that most incumbents in the United States, at all levels of government, are reelected. A 1973 study reported that state governors are successful about 65 per cent of the time, state legislators between 70 and 90 per cent, city councilmen about 50 per cent, and U.S. senators more than 80 per cent. At the head of the list, however, are U.S. congressmen. In the postwar period more than 90 per cent of all sitting congressmen who sought to remain in office were reelected. Considering only the group of regular elections, the incumbent success rate for the 1946-1976 period is 92.4 per cent. That is, over nine of every ten incumbents who face a new challenger for their congressional seat are reelected.
Incumbents who face the same challenger they defeated in the previous election are less successful. The success rate for incumbents running against a rerun candidate is 83.1 per cent. From the challenger perspective, 16.9 per cent of all rerun candidates have been successful, as opposed to 7.6 per cent of regular challengers.

Both non-incumbent and ex-incumbent challengers are more successful than regular challengers. The success rate for non-incumbent challengers is only slightly higher than the regular level, however, with 10.9 per cent unseating incumbents. Ex-incumbents win at a much higher rate, with 38.6 per cent being successful.

The party differences in success rates are quite substantial. Overall, Democratic rerunners are slightly more successful than Republican rerun candidates, winning 19.6 per cent of the time compared to 14.9 per cent for the Republicans. Both types of Democrats are relatively successful, with an ex-incumbent rate of 33.9 per cent and a non-incumbent rate of 16.1 per cent. Republican non-incumbents, however, win only 4.9 per cent of the time, with ex-incumbents winning 41.9 per cent of their contests.

Lest Republicans take much comfort from that healthy ex-incumbent success rate, it should be pointed out that the pattern has changed dramatically in recent years. In fact, not a single Republican ex-incumbent rerunner has won a congressional election since 1966. Only six ex-incumbent
Republicans have even tried. The drop in Republican fortunes at the congressional level in terms of defeating Democratic incumbents is almost absolute. In the 1968-1976 period, the figures for Republican challengers look like this: 2.8 per cent of regular challengers have won (20 of 709), 1.2 per cent of non-incumbent rerunners have won (1 of 81), and 0.0 per cent of ex-incumbent rerunners have won (0 of 6). It is no wonder that Republicans have seemingly decided to adopt an open district strategy in future congressional elections. Democrats, while also finding it difficult to defeat incumbents, are not as seriously affected by this trend. Corresponding success rates for Democrats in the 1968-1976 period are: 5.8 per cent for regular Democratic challengers (37 or 640), 17.7 per cent for non-incumbent rerunners (11 of 62), and 16.7 per cent for ex-incumbent rerunners (3 of 18).

Rerun candidates have been incredibly successful in certain election years (see Table 11). In 1948, for example, twelve of fifteen ex-incumbent Democrats and six of twelve non-incumbent Democrats defeated their opponents, a combined success rate of 64.3 per cent. Regular Democratic challengers that year were successful only a little more than one-fourth of the time (25.5 per cent). Again in 1974, exactly one-half of the twenty Democratic rerun candidates won congressional elections (two of three ex-incumbents and eight of seventeen non-incumbents), compared
Table 11. Success Rates of Rerun (Non-Incumbent and Ex-Incumbent) and Regular Congressional Challengers, by Party, 1946-76.

I. Democrats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regular(^{a})</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1.3 (149)</td>
<td>0.0 (9)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>25.6 (180)</td>
<td>50.0 (12)</td>
<td>50.0 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>.9 (122)</td>
<td>0.0 (20)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>.8 (124)</td>
<td>5.5 (18)</td>
<td>14.3 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>5.4 (166)</td>
<td>27.8 (18)</td>
<td>28.6 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>2.6 (151)</td>
<td>12.0 (25)</td>
<td>0.0 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>17.7 (130)</td>
<td>31.0 (29)</td>
<td>66.7 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2.0 (101)</td>
<td>4.0 (25)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>3.1 (128)</td>
<td>0.0 (9)</td>
<td>0.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>25.4 (134)</td>
<td>33.3 (15)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>.9 (111)</td>
<td>0.0 (12)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>0.0 (140)</td>
<td>0.0 (6)</td>
<td>0.0 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>4.1 (145)</td>
<td>53.5 (6)</td>
<td>100.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1.6 (122)</td>
<td>6.3 (16)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>19.2 (130)</td>
<td>47.1 (17)</td>
<td>66.7 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>3.9 (105)</td>
<td>0.0 (17)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals  7.7  16.1  33.9
(2136)   (254)   (59)

\(^{a}\) Figures in parentheses are total N's from which percentages are calculated.
Table II (continued).

II. Republicans

Per Cent Successful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>34.7 (95)</td>
<td>0.0 (11)</td>
<td>91.7 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>0.0 (78)</td>
<td>0.0 (14)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>15.1 (119)</td>
<td>0.0 (8)</td>
<td>45.5 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>10.3 (80)</td>
<td>0.0 (6)</td>
<td>0.0 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1.1 (88)</td>
<td>13.3 (15)</td>
<td>0.0 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>3.8 (105)</td>
<td>15.4 (13)</td>
<td>33.3 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>3.9 (111)</td>
<td>0.0 (12)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>14.9 (134)</td>
<td>0.0 (16)</td>
<td>16.7 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>6.2 (129)</td>
<td>0.0 (16)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>7.7 (146)</td>
<td>7.1 (14)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>15.9 (176)</td>
<td>29.4 (17)</td>
<td>60.0 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>3.0 (135)</td>
<td>3.8 (26)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1.5 (134)</td>
<td>0.0 (19)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>5.5 (144)</td>
<td>0.0 (11)</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2.2 (135)</td>
<td>0.0 (4)</td>
<td>0.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>5.7 (161)</td>
<td>0.0 (21)</td>
<td>0.0 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(223)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to a regular candidate success rate of 19.2 per cent. For Republicans, 1950 and 1966 stand out as extraordinarily successful years for rerun candidates. In both years the rerun success rate was more than twice the regular challenger success rate, although in 1950 all eight non-incumbent rerunners lost. This again reflects the unique Republican dependence on ex-incumbents I discussed above. Even in a year in which regular Republicans were somewhat successful (15.1 per cent) and ex-incumbents were quite successful (45.5 per cent), not a single non-incumbent rerun Republican won.

Table 11 also illustrates an important point regarding potential electoral success. It has been pointed out that regular congressional challengers are successful about once in fourteen tries, with rerun challengers successful about once in six tries. However, these are averages, and are clearly irrelevant for a potential candidate trying to decide if he can win a given election. The context in which that attempt is made is all-important. The 1943 congressional election is a convincing example. Almost one-third of all Democratic challengers (regular and rerun combined) were successful that year (30.8 per cent), while not a single Republican challenger—from a total of ninety-one candidates—was successful. The party roles were nearly reversed two years later. Only one of 142 Democrats defeated a Republican incumbent, while twenty-eight
Republican challengers ousted Democratic incumbents (18.9 per cent).

The decisions an interested individual must make concerning the possibility of success are thus clearly dependent on the context of that particular election. A relatively strong candidate may fall victim to a national trend, while a relatively weak candidate may be swept into office by the same forces. It is equally clear, however, that within the context of a given election year, a rerun candidate—non-incumbent or ex-incumbent—is more likely to be successful than a regular challenger.

District Competitiveness

During the 1946-1976 period, 41.6 per cent of rerun elections were competitive, compared to 20.9 per cent of regular elections. This is true of both non-incumbent and ex-incumbent reruns. Non-incumbent reruns are competitive 30.8 per cent of the time (147 of 477), with ex-incumbent reruns being competitive 79.5 per cent of the time (105 of 132). The extremely high incidence of ex-incumbent competitiveness is to be expected, since the districts in which they were once incumbents were competitive enough to allow someone to defeat them.8

Regionally, competitive elections occurred less frequently in the South than in the non-South in both regular and rerun districts (see Table 12). The absolute
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>13.1(^a)</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(747)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3365)</td>
<td>(532)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Per cent of regional challengers in competitive districts.
differences are nearly equal: regular non-South districts are 10.6 per cent more likely to be competitive than those in the South; in rerun districts, the non-South—South difference is 10.1 per cent.

The number of competitive districts, both regular and rerun, has declined. Table 13 collapses the sixteen election year set into three periods. The first covers the 1946-1956 period, a total of six different national election years. The second two periods, 1958-1966 and 1968-1976, each contain five different election years.

Note that the decline in the number of regular competitive districts occurs in the third period. The decline is quite substantial—8.7 percentage points—and the timing of its occurrence is easily identified. In fact, in 1968 (the first year in period three) the percentage of regular competitive elections fell to 15.3—the lowest ever to that point—and declined to its 1974 low point of 11.7 per cent.

In terms of rerun elections, the pattern is quite different, though just as dramatic. The number of competitive rerun districts was more than fifty per cent for the first period, but fell to 37.1 per cent in period two. It has continued its decline, though as a greatly reduced rate, in period three. Again, the timing is quite apparent; in 1958 the proportion of competitive rerun districts fell to 30.2 per cent, and never again reached the fifty per

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent Rerun</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent Rerun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>23.6(^a)</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1463)</td>
<td>(167)</td>
<td>(76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1300)</td>
<td>(165)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1349)</td>
<td>(145)</td>
<td>(23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Per cent challengers of that period in competitive districts.
cent level. By referring to Table 13, it can be observed that the decline occurred only among non-incumbent rerunners. This category decreases in much the same way as the regular competitive category, though the decline is during the second period, rather than the third. As expected, ex-incumbents do not follow this pattern.

While much has been written about the significance of the overall decline in competitive congressional districts, the implications of the decline in competitive rerun districts—or at least its timing—are not altogether clear. Since the regular district decline had not yet surfaced during the second period, its appearance among rerunners may be evidence of their growing awareness of incumbent strength. Though the number of competitive districts remained constant, the number of candidates in competitive districts who were willing to run again declined quite substantially. Did such challengers, individuals who might have been rerunners in an earlier period, decide that the advantages of incumbency had become insurmountable? If so, their expectations—or fears—were fulfilled during the 1968-1976 period, when the proportion of regular competitive districts also fell.

Finally, the large number of rerun elections held in non-competitive districts itself is significant. About seven of every ten non-incumbent rerun candidates ran in districts in which they failed to receive forty-five per
cent of the vote the first time around. And in most cases, the rerun candidate received far less than forty-five percent of the vote in that first attempt.

Summary

In this chapter rerun elections have been observed from a number of perspectives. When possible, rerun elections were compared with regular elections, and an important distinction between non-incumbent and ex-incumbent reruns was made. The findings are summarized below.

On the average, about one in twelve congressional elections is a rerun election. The majority of rerun elections are of the non-incumbent type, though about one-fifth feature ex-incumbents. Rerun elections are much more likely to be competitive than regular elections, both in the South and non-South, though competitiveness is at a lower level in the South generally. The number of rerun elections per election year has remained relatively stable across the period of analysis, with a slight decline being noted in the 1970-1974 period. This decline was largely due to a diminishing number of ex-incumbent reruns.

The Midwest is the region in which rerun elections are most likely to occur. In fact, in several states about one in six congressional elections is of the rerun variety. Though rerun elections are least likely to occur in the South in absolute numbers, there is less difference between
it and other regions if only contested districts are considered.

Several interesting patterns were observed within regions for the rerun candidate group. For example, the great majority of Midwestern rerunners are Democrats, while nearly three-fourths of Southern rerunners are Republicans. It was also noted that in several states rerun candidates tend to be of the same party, suggesting that the number of reruns within states may serve as an indirect measure of party effectiveness. In the Midwest, expectation of success seems to encourage rerun candidacy, but in the South rerunners (especially Republicans) seem to fulfill a need for "sacrificial lamb" candidates.

Non-incumbent and ex-incumbent rerun candidates win more often than regular challengers, particularly in certain sweep years in which one party is extremely successful. However, the decline in frequency of ex-incumbent reruns—precisely the challenger group most likely to be successful—has the effect of reducing success rates among all challengers. This pattern is most apparent among Republican ex-incumbents, only six of whom have sought to regain seats since 1966.

*     *     *
In the next chapter, the electoral efforts of postwar congressional challengers are analyzed in greater detail. This includes extensive discussion of the fortunes of various groups of rerun and regular candidates, utilizing several performance measures to identify those who have been most successful—and least successful—during this time. The goal is to establish the electoral context in which congressional recruitment in the United States takes place.
CHAPTER NOTES


3. The regional distribution is described and listed in the preceding chapter (p. 31).

4. 1976 is not included, since incumbents defeated then could run again in 1978.


6. Ackerman, p. 179. Ackerman uses the term "crucial districts" to describe those with a 55-45 split.

7. This is based on comments made by several Republican Party officials and reported in the Washington Post in a series of articles in November and December 1977 and January 1978. It is discussed at greater length in Chapter Six.

8. In fact, if the definition of competitiveness was perfect, every district in which an incumbent was defeated would be considered competitive. What better criteria of competitiveness than the potential for the out-party to unseat the incumbent? This is what the 45-55 distinction attempts to measure. The fact that almost fifteen per cent of districts with ex-incumbents running are non-competitive merely reflects the fact that the ex-incumbents received less than 45 per cent of the vote when they were defeated.
CHAPTER IV

CHALLENGER ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE

In this chapter the electoral performance of congressional challengers in the postwar period is described and evaluated. The first step is to develop a data-based profile of that performance, a task undertaken in the following pages. This is followed by an analysis of the findings in light of earlier research on congressional elections, including extensive discussion of the relationship between challenger performance and district competitiveness (the so-called "vanishing marginals" phenomenon).

As suggested in the previous chapter, this strategy represents something of a shift in focus from the rerun phenomenon to congressional challengers in general. Such a shift is dictated by the underlying assumption of the study: that rerun challengers are important because of the light they shed on the process of political recruitment and, in this case, on the process of electing congressmen. Thus, while the conclusions reached in the chapter concern all congressional challengers, it will be clear that the findings relating to rerun performance are an instrumental
part of the analysis.

* * *

The electoral performance of a candidate in a congressional election may be measured in several ways. The first, and most obvious, is whether the candidate won or lost. Winning, of course, is the ultimate goal of the political candidate. A second measure of candidate performance is "improvement." In the case of the congressional challenger, the candidate seeks to improve upon the performance of his party's nominee in the previous election. Losing challengers may feel the effort has not been entirely unsuccessful if they are able to increase their party's share of the district vote. This consideration is especially relevant for the rerun candidate, for his decision to run again may be based upon his initial performance. If it is a strong showing—and an improvement upon party fortunes in previous elections may be interpreted in this way—the candidate may run again.

Electoral improvement may also have an important influence on other actors in the candidate's environment. Party officials, potential contributors, and media representatives may see more in elections than simple winners and losers. The party may encourage candidates who show unexpected strength to run again, and discourage those who do not. The national party organization may "target" certain
districts as areas in which challenging candidates have a chance to win. In much the same way, potential contributors may want to back only candidates who show electoral promise. The media may label certain candidates as "up and coming" based on their electoral performance, even if that performance did not result in victory.

Clearly, measures of electoral performance must be utilized which consider more than simple victory or defeat. To that end, two types of improvement measures will be used. The first is dichotomous, noting only whether a candidate did or did not increase his party's share of the two-party vote in the district. This general measure provides an important indication of overall trends, such as party success in a given election year. One might say, for example, that in 1946 87.3 per cent of Republican challengers increased the party share of the district vote. It is also useful in specific cases because evaluation of candidate performance may often reflect a simple dichotomy—the candidate either did or did not improve party performance.

The second improvement measure involves calculating mean electoral change for certain categories of candidates. As described in Chapter Two, this is done by calculating the difference between the percentage of the two-party vote received by a candidate in one election and the percentage of the vote received by the candidate of the same party in the next election. Those differences are summed and
divided by the number of candidates in question. The resulting quotient represents the mean improvement—or lack of improvement—by candidates in that category. A positive number indicates that those candidates have, on the average, improved upon the performance of their party's candidate two years earlier. Of course, a negative figure indicates poorer performance.¹

Electoral Performance: Winning Elections

In the preceding chapter the relative success rates of rerun and regular congressional challengers were discussed. One finding, for example, was that rerun challengers were about two and one-half times more likely than regular challengers to defeat incumbents. It was also found that Democratic rerun candidates were slightly more likely than Republican rerunners to be successful (19.6 per cent and 14.9 per cent, respectively). For regular candidates, party differences were almost nonexistent. The success rate for regular Democratic challengers in the 1946-1976 period was 7.7 per cent, compared to 7.5 per cent for regular Republican challengers.

As might be expected, the majority of successful challengers run in competitive districts. In fact, of all congressional challengers running in competitive districts during the 1946-1976 period, more than one-fifth (22.3 per cent) defeated incumbents. Only about one in twenty of
the non-competitive challengers (4.7 per cent) was successful.

The fact that even one in twenty of these challengers was successful—and in supposedly "non-competitive" districts—needs some explanation. Methodologically, it indicates that the competitive—non-competitive distinction is not perfect. As with any dichotomization of data, cases near the cutting point are less distinct conceptually than the dichotomization implies. For example, a district which cast 44.9 per cent of the vote for a given candidate is classified as non-competitive, while a neighboring district giving a candidate 45.0 per cent of the vote—an increase of only .1 percentage point—is considered competitive.

Substantively, the competitiveness distinction cannot account for subjective perceptions which may influence the electoral process. A candidate who receives forty-two per cent of the vote in a newly redistricted district, or in a district which had never cast more than thirty per cent of the vote for his party's candidate, may feel that he has a chance the next time around. Party leaders or other influential people in the district may share that perception, increase their efforts on behalf of the candidate, and succeed in getting their candidate elected.

This distinction also fails to consider external events which may influence congressional elections. A particularly
unpopular issue position or evidence of personal impropriety may place a "safe" incumbent in danger, thus causing a statistically non-competitive district to be highly competitive.

Despite the limitations of the competitiveness distinction, the fact is that more competitive than non-competitive candidates are successful. This is especially true of rerun competitive candidates. Table 14 shows that nearly one-third of the rerun candidates running in competitive districts unseated incumbent congressmen. By rerun type, competitive ex-incumbents won 42.9 per cent of the time, non-incumbents 25.2 per cent. Both figures are higher than the success rate for regular challengers in competitive districts. Only about one in five (19.3 per cent) of the regular competitive challengers was successful.

The difference in success rates between rerun and regular challengers in non-competitive districts is not nearly so large--2.1 per cent (regular non-competitive and combined rerun non-competitive). Thus, although rerun challengers fare better in both kinds of districts, the advantage is especially apparent in competitive districts.

The success rates just discussed represent averages for the 1946-1976 period. They do not reveal that there has been a definite pattern of decrease in the number of successful congressional challengers during that span of time. Stated in another way, it is becoming increasingly difficult
Table 14. Per Cent Successful Congressional Challengers, by District Competitiveness and Type of Election; 1946-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Election</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Overall Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td>Non-Incumbent</td>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(861)</td>
<td>(143)</td>
<td>(248)</td>
<td>(1109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3250)</td>
<td>(354)</td>
<td>(361)</td>
<td>(5611)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures in parentheses are N's from which percentages were calculated.*
for challengers--rerun or regular--to defeat incumbents.

This pattern is especially pronounced for challenging candidates in competitive districts. Table 15 collapses the 1946-1976 period into three periods of approximately equal length. For the entire population of elections, the challenger success rate has fallen from 11.1 per cent during the 1946-1956 period, to 10.2 per cent in the 1958-1966 period, and to 4.9 per cent in the final period.

The decreasing rate of success is observable for all but one of the groups of challengers shown in Table 15, but is less severe in the non-competitive categories. The largest group, regular non-competitive candidates, has never had a particularly high rate of success. Rerun non-competitive candidates, while somewhat more successful than their regular counterparts, also have great difficulty in getting elected. However, there is evidence in this category of some decline in the rate of success, most noticeably in the final period.

Competitive challengers have evidenced a striking decline in electoral success. Overall, the success rate for rerun and regular candidates in competitive districts has been approximately halved from the earliest to the latest period. In fact, by the 1968-1976 period, only one in ten regular challengers in competitive districts was getting elected. This represents a decrease of 12.2 percentage points from the immediately preceding period.
Table 15. Per Cent Successful Congressional Challengers, by Period, District Competitiveness, and Type of Election, 1946-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Non-Competitive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.2 (345)</td>
<td>21.5 (311)</td>
<td>9.3 (205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.7 (1117)</td>
<td>5.6 (989)</td>
<td>3.3 (1114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.1 (1705)</td>
<td>10.2 (1499)</td>
<td>4.9 (1516)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td>54.4 (57)</td>
<td>26.2 (61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.8 (118)</td>
<td>36.8 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.8 (118)</td>
<td>36.8 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td>39.3 (28)</td>
<td>23.9 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.7 (74)</td>
<td>0.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.7 (74)</td>
<td>0.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td>15.0 (20)</td>
<td>25.0 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4 (56)</td>
<td>0.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.4 (56)</td>
<td>0.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Figures in parentheses are N's from which percentages are calculated.
The decline in rerun success in competitive districts is due almost entirely to ex-incumbents. When rerun candidates are separated by type, the percentage of successful ex-incumbents drops from 54.4 per cent, to 39.3 per cent, and finally to 15.0 per cent. Non-incumbent rerunners, however, have consistently remained around the twenty-five per cent mark.

It seems clear that while a pattern of decline was developing during the first two periods (note that all competitive categories show percentage decreases from period one to period two), the 1968-1976 period decline was of much greater magnitude. The rate for regular competitive candidates fell 1.7 points from period one to two, but 12.2 points from period two to three. Similarly, the rate for ex-incumbent rerunners fell 15.1 points from period one to two, but 24.3 points from two to three. The overall success rate, which had dropped less than one full point during the second period, plummeted 5.3 points during the third.

The decline of success rates in competitive districts is most apparent for Republican challengers. Since 1968, Republicans have had only ten successful candidates in competitive districts—out of 130 elections. This is a success rate of 7.7 per cent, which compares with a 24.4 per cent success rate for the preceding 1946-1966 period.

Democrats in competitive districts have fared only slightly better. During the 1968-1976 period, 21 of 131
Democrats unseated Republican incumbents, for a success rate of 16.0 per cent. This is compared with a 1946-1966 rate of 19.1 per cent.

So while competitive candidates of both parties showed a substantial decrease in their ability to wage successful campaigns against incumbents, the Republicans clearly suffered the most. In fact, Democratic challengers were able to successfully unseat Republican incumbents in competitive districts more than twice as frequently as their Republican counterparts in the 1968-1976 period. This difference can be somewhat misleading, however. If the results for 1974 are subtracted, in which eleven of nineteen competitive Democrats won, the 1968-1976 Democratic success rate is 8.9 per cent. This is still slightly higher than the Republican rate, but much less so.

Electoral Improvement

As a measure of electoral performance the win-loss dichotomy is somewhat insensitive. That is, it fails to provide much information about many of the cases under analysis. Since very few challengers ever win, the great majority of cases are simply designated as "loss." Therefore, it seems wise to look at the number of challengers who, while losing, are improving upon the performance of the party nominee in the preceding election.
At the overall level, about half the challengers show improvement (49.5 per cent), about half do not. A similar pattern emerges when candidate partisanship and regular-rerun status are considered. Looking at the marginals in Table 16, one can see that Democrats and rerunners are slightly more likely to improve than Republicans and regular candidates, but the differences are small. The same is true for rerun and regular cell percentages, with the variation between highest and lowest cells only 4.3 per cent. The differences between types of rerun candidates are much greater, with 62.9 per cent of ex-incumbent rerunners improving, compared to 47.7 per cent of non-incumbent rerunners.

A greater degree of variation exists when district competitiveness is considered. Candidates in competitive districts are much less likely than their non-competitive counterparts to increase their party's share of the two-party vote (see Table 17). Barely more than one-third (34.5 per cent) of all competitive candidates improved party performance. This conclusion seems especially interesting in light of earlier findings that competitive candidates were much more likely to win elections.

A look at the cell percentages reveals that the lack of improvement among competitive candidates is almost entirely due to regular competitive candidates. Both types of competitive rerun candidates improve their performance.
Table 16. Per Cent Congressional Challengers Improving Electoral Performance, by Party and Type of Election, 1946-1976.

Challengers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1964)\text{a}</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td>(222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2127)</td>
<td>(59)</td>
<td>(250)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4091)</td>
<td>(132)</td>
<td>(472)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\text{a}Figures in parentheses are N's from which percentages were calculated.
### Table 17. Per Cent Congressional Challengers Improving Electoral Performance, by District Competitiveness, 1946-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent Regular</th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent Rerun</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent Regular</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent Rerun</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(856)(^a)</td>
<td>(105)</td>
<td>(140)</td>
<td>(1101)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3235)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>(332)</td>
<td>(3594)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4091)</td>
<td>(132)</td>
<td>(472)</td>
<td>(4695)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Figures in parentheses are N's from which percentages were calculated.
greater rate than regular challengers in competitive districts. Only a two per cent difference exists between the combined rerun percentage for candidates in competitive and non-competitive districts, but a 24.2 per cent difference exists between competitive and non-competitive regular candidates.

Some evidence was found above to indicate that the drop-off in challenger performance in terms of winning elections—especially for candidates in competitive districts—was most pronounced during the 1968-1976 period. The same conclusion can be reached when challenger performance is measured in terms of electoral improvement.

In Table 18, the postwar years are collapsed into three periods, and the data are displayed by district competitiveness and rerun-regular status. Clearly, competitive categories show the greatest decrease in electoral improvement. Although the competitive rerun improvement has declined steadily, by decomposing the rerun category into non-incumbent and ex-incumbent types, it is seen that the decrease in the non-incumbent improvement rate is minimal. The extremely high improvement rate for ex-incumbents during the first period (when they occurred frequently: N=57) inflates the overall rerun percentage. The regular competitive rate sharply decreases during the final period, falling to 15.8 per cent. By the last period, less than one in six regular challengers was able to increase his party's
Table 18. Per Cent Congressional Challengers Improving Electoral Performance, By Sub-period, District Competitiveness, and Type of Election; 1940-1976.

**Regular**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Non-Comp.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(344)</td>
<td>(1113)</td>
<td>(1457)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(309)</td>
<td>(984)</td>
<td>(1293)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(203)</td>
<td>(1138)</td>
<td>(1341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(856)</td>
<td>(3235)</td>
<td>(4091)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rerun**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ex-Incumbent</th>
<th>Non-Incumbent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex-Incumbent</td>
<td>Non-Incumbent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(59)</td>
<td>(116)(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(69)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(52)</td>
<td>(56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(65)</td>
<td>(180)</td>
<td>(245)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Figures in parentheses are N's from which percentages were calculated.
share of the two party vote.

The sharpness of the decrease in improvement among regular competitive candidates can be illustrated by looking at the year-by-year figures for that category (see Table 19). The drop-off in improvement percentages is clearly delineated. The 7.1 per cent figure for 1968 was one-third of the previous low year (1956), and while the following years show some increase, the rebound is not nearly to pre-1968 levels.

**Improvement as Vote Change**

The second measure of vote improvement utilized is mean district vote change for congressional challengers. This is calculated simply by noting the change in the percentage of the vote received by the challenger in successive elections, then summing and averaging those changes by category of challenger. A positive quotient indicates that challengers are increasing their share of the vote, conversely, a negative figure indicates a decrease in vote share.

For the entire period of analysis, the average congressional challenger lost .2 per cent of the two party vote. In substantive terms this may be interpreted as meaning that if a challenger ran in a district in which his party's candidate had received 40.0 per cent of the vote two years earlier, he might expect to receive 39.8 per cent
Table 19. Yearly Percentage of Regular Congressional Challengers in Competitive Districts Improving Party Performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per Cent Improved</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>(66)²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>(52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>(71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>(61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>(62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>(72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>(55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>(71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>(31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>(55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²Figures in parentheses are N's from which percentages were calculated.
of the vote when he runs. Since this figure represents an average of all challengers, Democrats and Republicans, rerunners and regular candidates, and competitive and non-competitive candidates alike, it actually tells very little. At best, it indicates that incumbents have had something of a statistical advantage during the 1946-1976 period.

The year-by-year performance means are charted in Figure 1. Note that challengers have gradually lost ground in their battle against incumbents, with the trend being most noticeable in recent years. In fact, if the means for the three subperiods, 1946-1956, 1958-1966, and 1968-1976, are compared, one sees that the trend is clearly established. In the first period, challengers averaged +.6 per cent, or actually gained nearly a percentage point against incumbents. By the middle period, the advantage switched to incumbents, with challengers losing .3 per cent. In the most recent period, challengers had slipped to a -.9 figure.

Party Trends

Analysis of performance averages by party reveals that the decline in overall challenger improvement is largely due to Republican slippage. Democratic challenger scores for the three periods have fluctuated, from a +.4 score during the 1946-1956 period, to a -.3 score for the 1958-1966 period, and back to +.4 for the 1968-1976 period.
Figure 1. Mean Vote Change for Congressional Challengers, 1946-1970.
Republican scores have steadily declined, from +.9 to -.4 to -2.0.

To get a clearer picture of the Republican decline, party performance trends are shown in Figure 2. The full sixteen election year set is collapsed into eight pairs of adjacent elections. Figure 2 demonstrates that Republican challengers did not run as well as Democratic challengers during six of the eight two-election pairs. In fact, aside from the 1966-1968 pair, Democrats have consistently fared better than Republicans since 1954-1956.

Presidential and Off-Year Performance

The use of election year pairs helps to control for short-term fluctuation, and serves to increase the number of cases from which mean vote change is calculated. However, substantively it may be somewhat misleading, since in each pair an off-year election is followed by a presidential election. This procedure effectively cancels out any variation between the two that might otherwise be discovered. For example, it might be interesting to evaluate the performance of Democratic challengers in off-year elections with a Republican in the White House, or the performance of Republican challengers in an election year in which the Republican presidential candidate was successful. That is, some means is needed to systematically consider the specific context in which congressional elections take place.
Figure 2. Paired Election Year Vote Change Means for Democratic and Republican Congressional Challengers, 1946-1976.
Generally, congressional election years fit into four categories: two presidential, two off-year. Presidential years vary according to the party of the winning presidential candidate. In 1948, 1960, 1964, and 1976 the Democratic presidential candidate won, and in 1952, 1956, 1968, and 1972 the Republican candidate was elected. Off-years vary according to the party of the incumbent president. In 1946, 1950, 1962, and 1966 the incumbent was a Democrat, and in 1954, 1958, 1970, and 1974 a Republican. Expectations as to challenger performance in each category are quite simple. Democratic challengers should do well in years with a successful Democratic presidential candidate (presidential "coattails" or "tide") and in off-year elections with a Republican presidential incumbent (the "out-party" effect). Democrats should not do as well in years with a successful Republican presidential candidate and in off-years with a Democrat in the White House. The opposite patterns should obtain, of course, for Republican congressional candidates. Though the correctness of these expectations has often been demonstrated, here the focus is on the magnitude of the presidential and off-year influence, differences between parties in terms of that influence, and differences between rerun and regular candidates.

In Table 20, mean vote change is calculated for the four groups of candidates in the specific electoral situations described above. The columns represent the four
Table 20. Mean Vote Change of Congressional Challengers in Four Election Year Situations, by Party and Candidate Status, 1946-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rerun\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>Democratic Challengers</th>
<th>Republican Challengers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Successful Democrats</td>
<td>Successful Republicans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Challengers</td>
<td>+.9 (69)</td>
<td>+.1 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>+2.2 (518)</td>
<td>-2.0 (519)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td>-2.0 (66)</td>
<td>+2.1 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Challengers</td>
<td>-1.1 (519)</td>
<td>+1.0 (470)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td></td>
<td>+3.2 (519)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Figures in parentheses are total N's from which mean is calculated.

\textsuperscript{b}Non-incumbent rerunners only.
election year types, the rows the party affiliation and
erun or regular status of each challenger. Ex-incumbent
rerunners are excluded, due to small N sizes in a number of
cells. Each cell entry represents the mean vote change
for all challengers of that party in that type of election
year. For example, the .9 figure in the upper left cell
is the mean vote change for non-incumbent rerun Democrats
in 1948, 1960, 1964, and 1976; that is, years in which
Democratic presidential candidates were successful.

The expectations relating to challenger performance
are confirmed in all cases. If one were giving advice to
potential challengers, Democrats should run if they think
their presidential nominee will win, or if a Republican is
President in an off-year situation. Republican challengers
should run in opposite circumstances. Note that the mean
vote changes are much greater in off-year elections for
both rerun and regular challengers. The absolute difference
(or gap) between Democratic and Republican challengers is
9.0 (rerun) and 7.5 (regular) in off-year elections with a
Democratic incumbent president. In off-years with a Repub­
clican incumbent, the corresponding differences are 8.2
(rerun) and 10.9 (regular). During presidential years, the
differences are much smaller. With a Democratic presiden­
tial candidate successful, the gap is 2.9 for rerunners and
3.3 for regular candidates. In Republican years, the fig­
ures are 2.1 (rerun) and 3.0 (regular).
Stated another way, for Democratic and Republican congressional challengers alike, the "best" year to run is an off-year election in which the opposite party controls the presidency. By arranging the vote change averages shown in Table 20 from positive to negative for each party and each type of candidate, the various situations in which challengers seek office can be evaluated (see Table 21). Listed from "best" to "worst," they are: 1) off-year—opposite party incumbent president; 2) presidential year—same party incumbent president; 3) presidential year—opposite party incumbent president; and 4) off-year—same party incumbent president.

Using challenger success rates rather than mean vote change, substantially the same pattern emerges (Table 22). The best-to-worst order is identical for three of the four groups of candidates, with only regular Democrats varying from this pattern. The single most successful candidate group is rerun Democrats in the off-year—opposite party incumbent context, with over one-third of these challengers defeating Republican incumbents.

Non-incumbent rerun challengers are more successful than their regular counterparts in all four Democratic categories, and two of the four Republican categories. As reported in the preceding chapter, non-incumbent Republican rerunners are markedly unsuccessful, at least compared to Democratic rerunners. This group of Democrats is about
Table 21. Congressional Challenger Mean Vote Change: "Best-to-Worst" Election Year Situations, 1946-1976.\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election Year Situation:</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
<th>Regular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td></td>
<td>+4.7</td>
<td>+4.5</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
<td>+3.2</td>
<td>+0.9</td>
<td>+2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td></td>
<td>+4.3</td>
<td>+4.4</td>
<td>+5.3</td>
<td>+5.4</td>
<td>+5.1</td>
<td>+4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}N sizes from cells in Table 4.7.

\textsuperscript{b}Non-incumbent rerunners only.
Table 22. Success Rates of Congressional Challengers in Four Election Year Situations, 1946-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year Situation:</th>
<th>Off-Year/ Opposite Party President</th>
<th>Presidential Year/ Same Party President</th>
<th>Presidential Year/ Opposite Party Pres.</th>
<th>Off-Year/ Same Party President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rerun&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34.3&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; (70)&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>17.4 (69)</td>
<td>7.9 (63)</td>
<td>3.6 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>11.0 (571)</td>
<td>16.6 (518)</td>
<td>1.3 (537)</td>
<td>1.6 (510)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td>9.6 (52)</td>
<td>5.4 (56)</td>
<td>1.5 (67)</td>
<td>0.0 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>16.8 (519)</td>
<td>5.7 (470)</td>
<td>5.2 (519)</td>
<td>1.5 (468)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Non-incumbent rerunners only.

<sup>b</sup>Percentage of winning candidates.

<sup>c</sup>Figure in parenthesis is N from which percentage is calculated.
four times more likely to win than non-incumbent rerun Republicans.

**District Competitiveness**

Without question, the variable having the greatest influence on challenger performance is district competitiveness. For the 1946-1976 period, the average challenger in a competitive district lost 3.1 percentage points; for non-competitive districts, the average challenger gained .7 points. District competitiveness thus accounted for a 3.8 point absolute difference in challenger performance.

In Figure 3 the trend for the entire period is charted. The effect of district competitiveness is striking. In every year, the average for non-competitive candidates was considerably higher than the average for competitive candidates. The smallest difference between averages is .9 points (in 1946), the highest is 8.5 points (in 1974). Notably, the differences between performance averages are increasing. This trend is especially pronounced since 1966. The pre-1966 average difference between competitive and non-competitive scores is 3.0 points. The 1966-1976 average difference between competitive and non-competitive scores is 5.9 points, or almost double the earlier period's average.

Interestingly, though non-competitive candidates win very few elections, they usually are able to improve district
Figure 3. Mean Vote Change for Congressional Challengers in Competitive and Non-Competitive Districts, 1946-1976.
party performance. In fourteen of the sixteen postwar election years, the sign for the non-competitive performance average is positive. On the other hand, only one of the sixteen averages for competitive districts is positive.

The decline in the fortunes of challengers in competitive districts has occurred in both parties. Figure 4 is nearly a mirror-image of the overall party trends shown in Figure 2, except that the graph has been tilted to the right. Although Democrats have been performing well relative to Republicans, the performance of competitive candidates of both parties has severely deteriorated. By 1974-1976, Democratic challengers in competitive districts were losing an average of 4.6 points per election, with Republican challengers losing an average of 7.7 points.

Rerun v. Regular Performance

Being a rerun candidate conveys some advantage over regular candidates. The performance score for all rerun candidates (non-incumbent and ex-incumbent) during the post-war period is +.3, for regular candidates, -.2. At this level of analysis, being a rerun challenger is worth about a one-half point advantage over regular challengers.

In Figure 5, the mean vote change figures for non-incumbent rerunners and regular challengers are shown. During the early period (1946-1956), regular candidates consistently ran ahead of non-incumbent rerunners, though the magnitude
Figure 4. Paired Election Year Vote Change Means for Congressional Challengers in Competitive Districts, by Party, 1946-1976.
Figure 5. Paired Election Vote Change Means for Congressional Challengers in Rerun and Regular Districts, 1946-1976.
of the difference was not great. Since 1956, however, in each election year pair non-incumbent rerunners have done better than regular challengers. Again, the differences are quite small, though the pattern is consistent.

As might be expected, district competitiveness has an important influence on the performance of rerun and regular candidates. In terms of overall scores, the category with the strongest performance is the regular non-competitive group, averaging +.8 percentage points for the 1946-1976 period. Rerun non-competitive candidates are next, with a +.5 score. Also scoring in the positive range are the rerun candidates in competitive districts, with a +.1 average. Finally, regular challengers in competitive districts fall to the -4.0 level.

The dramatic difference between regular competitive candidates and the other groups is shown in Figure 6, which charts the trends for the four challenger categories (ex-incumbent excluded) during the postwar period. Several important points should be made about the patterns present in Figure 6. First, regular challengers in competitive districts have experienced great difficulty in improving their performance against incumbents. More significantly, their level of performance has steadily—and drastically—declined throughout the period of analysis. Excepting only the 1962-1964 upswing in regular competitive performance, the trend has been downward. By the 1974-1976 election year pair,
Figure 6. Paired Election Year Vote Change Means for Congressional Challengers, by District Competitiveness and Type of Election, 1946-1976.
regular candidates in competitive districts averaged losing 7.9 percentage points per election. This represented a 6.8 decline from the 1946-1948 figure.

Non-incumbent rerun challengers in competitive districts have not declined in a like manner, maintaining a relatively consistent pattern of performance. In fact, since 1966-1968, this group has shown substantial evidence of improvement, moving from a -2.7 score to .2 in 1974-1976.

There seems to be little difference between the electoral performance of regular and non-incumbent rerun challengers in non-competitive districts. Regular candidates seem to do slightly better, especially in the early part of their period, though non-incumbent rerunners have closed the gap somewhat since 1962-1964.

Discussion

A basic finding of this study is that the number of competitive congressional districts has declined. This is not surprising, for several other students of incumbency advantages have noted this pattern. Edward Tufte, David Mayhew, Morris Fiorina, and John Ferejohn, among others, have discussed the so-called "vanishing marginals" phenomenon. These researchers have largely concerned themselves with evaluating alternative explanations for their findings.
An early explanation, advanced by Tufte, suggested that legislators in certain states have made conscious—and successful—attempts to gerrymander districts to the advantage of incumbents. Albert Cover has recently summarized the redistricting evidence, and concluded that this explanation is unacceptable. To test the gerrymandering hypothesis, he compared incumbent performance during the 1960-1970 period in redistricted areas and in districts which were geographically constant over a two election-year set. Though he finds that redistricted incumbents did quite well during this time, they did not do significantly better (in the statistical sense) than non-redistricted incumbents. He also finds that the number of marginal seats has decreased at about the same rate for redistricted and untouched districts, a finding one would not expect if gerrymandering were leading to an increase in safe seats.

Further evidence which is not consistent with the redistricting hypothesis is the timing of the increase in incumbency advantages. If this theory is correct, one might expect the greatest improvement in incumbent performance to be during the period in which legislatures operated in a relatively uninhibited fashion to gerrymander districts to incumbent advantage. However, the greatest increase in these advantages has occurred during the time in which court decisions make blatant gerrymandering more
difficult than ever.

Finally, as Cover points out, "the advantage of incumbency has apparently also increased for Senate incumbents... if Senators have benefited from the same mechanism that operates on House incumbents, then that mechanism does not involve redrawning district boundaries."^8

The research reported here focuses on several other possible explanations for the increase in the advantage of incumbency. To do this, I utilized challenger electoral performance as a measure of incumbency effects, an alternative to the oft-used count of marginal districts. Using this measure, the most important finding was that although challenger performance has suffered relative to incumbents in all districts, the decline in competitive districts is much more pronounced (for example, see Figure 3).

The fact that the "incumbency effect," whatever it may be, is manifested most clearly in competitive districts has several implications. If the effect is the result of incumbent behavior (perquisite utilization, for example), then it seems to be effective—or is perhaps only used in competitive districts. The explanation implied here is plausible: incumbent advantages result from the use of incumbent techniques, and those techniques are normally applied only in districts in which the incumbent senses an electoral threat. Any explanation which suggests that all incumbents use their "seat protective" mechanisms to
more or less the same degree is not supported by the evidence: incumbency advantages have not substantially increased in non-competitive districts.

The perquisite utilization argument has been advanced by several researchers. Mayhew and Cover cite evidence to indicate that incumbent perquisites have been vigorously expanded. These perquisites, many of which have clear electoral uses (free mailing, trips home, etc.), can be utilized by the incumbent to heighten his profile in the district and insure reelection. Richard Born also suggests that this may be the case, stating that "there seems every reason...to believe that...the electoral safety enjoyed by House incumbents will continue or even increase in the near future. [Recent House] actions have increased the availability of many perquisites of office with potential electoral value" (emphasis added).

Fiorina states, however, that even though this argument is intuitively attractive, it "has a more serious problem than whether we like it." Specifically, if the improvement in incumbent performance is linked to perquisite utilization, there should be an increase in incumbent name recognition, or at least an increase in the gap between incumbents and challengers. Neither pattern is apparent (see Table 23). In fact, survey research on incumbent and challenger name recognition indicates that
both may be somewhat less well known now than several years ago, and that the gap between incumbents and challengers

Table 23. Voter Awareness of House Candidates in Contested Districts, 1958-74.a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Incumbent Aware</th>
<th>Challenger Aware</th>
<th>Comparative Advantage of Incumbent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>+20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>+23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


has lessened. Thus, although there is evidence that perquisites are increasing, "there is no indication in the data that incumbents really profit greatly from the use" of those perks.13

Fiorina contends that even more important than perquisites are constituent services. These services, or casework, "take up perhaps as much time as [lawmaking and porkbarreling] combined."14 Congressmen use casework to solidify their electoral advantage over challengers. Even though the number of people who are aware of the incumbent
is fairly constant, congressmen capture a greater share of that constant because the content of the information has changed. Voters now perceive the incumbent to be their guardian against the bureaucracy, perhaps the only person in Washington able to effectively battle against it.

The Fiorina argument is quite convincing, one of the reasons being that it accounts for the relatively unchanged levels of candidate recognition, yet also is consistent with the thesis that increased incumbent strength is the result of changes in voting behavior. The latter argument, advanced by Burnham, Erikson, Ferejohn, and others, suggests that party identification is being replaced by incumbency as a cue to guide voters with otherwise low levels of political information. As with party identification, information costs for the voter are low. Incumbency also may serve as a useful alternative to a voting cue which was no longer "reliable" in the turbulent political world of the late-1960's. However, Fiorina rightly questions an implicit assumption in the cue-transfer argument. If voters are rejecting party identification because they "have more information about the issues and candidates on which to shape their votes," why switch to a "simpleminded" incumbency cue? The casework—in incumbency advantage thesis identifies what it is about incumbents that generates voter support: they have the capacity to provide services for the constituents that challengers do not.
Rerun Challengers and the Incumbency Effect

If the Fiorina argument is valid, a pattern of declining performance among all challenger groups should be apparent. This is true because all incumbents have access to the casework mechanisms Fiorina describes. The findings reported here, however, show that the non-competitive decline in challenger performance is very slight. Not too much should be made of this point, since—as stated above—it seems reasonable to assume that incumbents who sense little electoral threat are less motivated to fully exploit their casework potential.

Of course, the relationship between casework and the congressman may be more complex than this suggests. Electoral threat, or even the desire to insure reelection through maintaining constituency contacts, are not the only reasons a congressman engages in casework. The composition of the district, for example, may dictate the type of casework load the incumbent faces. Very secure incumbents in relatively homogenous districts may not have to cope with many constituent demands. Similarly secure incumbents in heterogenous districts may, whether or not they are so inclined, be forced into activist casework roles. Fiorina at least implicitly recognizes that variation exists in the amount of constituent services performed by congressmen. As he states, "in order to account for the decline of the marginals we do not need to claim that all congressmen have
opted exclusively for an ombudsman role and that all constituents now think of their congressman in nonprogrammatic terms" (emphasis in the original). Thus, the lack of an incumbency effect in non-competitive districts is not necessarily evidence which does violence to Fiorina's thesis.

At the very least, however, one should see evidence of incumbent strength among all challenger groups in competitive districts. Furthermore, one should surely see this effect in competitive districts in which an incumbent is facing the same challenger who nearly defeated him two years earlier. Realizing that this same challenger is going to run again, the incumbent would be expected to utilize all resources available to him which are effective in securing votes, especially constituency casework. By looking back to Figure 6, it is clear that the expected pattern does not emerge. Non-incumbent rerun challengers in competitive districts have not consistently declined in their performance against incumbents; in fact, they have shown substantial improvement precisely during the period (1970-1976) in which incumbents have dramatically improved.

Table 24 (see also Figure 6) summarizes the several electoral improvement measures used in this chapter. Here the comparison involves only challengers in competitive districts, non-incumbent rerun and regular. By every measure used, competitive non-incumbent rerunners do remarkably well against incumbents. Their success rate has actually
Table 24. Competitive District Electoral Performance of Regular and Non-Incumbent Rerun Challengers, 1946-76.

A. **Winning Elections** (% candidates successful):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. **Improvement** (% candidates improving district performance):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. **Improvement** (mean vote change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Rerun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-56</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-66</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-76</td>
<td>-7.2</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
increased in the third period while regular competitive challengers have declined 12.2 points; their per cent of districts improving has declined only slightly (6.4 points from period two—compared to 18.8 points for regular competitive challengers); and their mean vote change has actually gone up .6 points while regular competitive challengers have fallen 3.4 points (paired-year means are charted in Figure 6).

How can this be explained? Competitive rerun challengers do not have access to casework mechanisms (nor have they ever had such access—remember, we are speaking of non-incumbent rerunners). In this sense, competitive rerun challengers are no different than any other challengers, rerun or regular, competitive or non-competitive. Thus, to attribute incumbent advantages to the constituency service capacities of incumbents clearly cannot explain why these competitive rerunners do so well. And this is not an exaggeration—relatively speaking, competitive rerunners do very well, winning approximately one of every four confrontations with incumbents. Born looked at data concerning rerun challengers, though he did not distinguish between competitive and non-competitive rerunners. He found that such challengers did "only slightly better" against incumbents than regular challengers, concluding that any campaign skill a rerun candidate may possess does not help much in getting votes. This misses the point.
The fact that non-incumbent rerun challengers even held their ground against incumbents—rather than slipping back as other challenger groups have—indicates that constituency service is an inadequate explanation of increasing incumbency advantages.

An "Incumbent Challenger" Effect?

Has any progress been made toward identifying a "better" explanation? An incumbency effect—some incumbency effect—is apparent. Is it due to redistricting? This possibility seems to have been justifiably discounted. Possibly due to the use of incumbent perquisites? There is no evidence of increased voter recognition of incumbents. How about buying votes with casework? Maybe so, but it doesn't work against a competitive challenger who runs twice, a challenger who has no apparent means to counter constituent services.

The only thing that rerun challengers have that other challengers do not is that they too, in a sense, are incumbents. This seems to be evidence of an "incumbent challenger" effect. If so, it suggests that Perren, Burnham, and Erikson are closer to the mark than Fiorina might believe, that incumbency itself is a valuable commodity. Though there is little evidence of increased name recognition, it is a fact that voters behave as though they more readily recognize incumbents. Is it a measurement
problem? Are the name recognition indicators insensitive to the subtle differences between rerun and regular challengers? Perhaps voters, though not able to name incumbents or challengers outside the voting booth, react favorably to names they recognize once inside.

Gary Jacobson makes precisely this point, contending that low levels of candidate recognition "may be an artifact of the way 'candidate familiarity' is measured. Surely voters may recognize the incumbent's name when they see it on the ballot without necessarily being able to recall it when asked by an interviewer" (emphasis in the original). 21 Furthermore, Alan Abramowitz and Jacobson both find that voter's ignorance of a candidate's name does not preclude expressing an opinion about that candidate.22

The type of subtle recognition posited here, difficult to measure but very real as a factor influencing voting behavior, would help explain the patterns of incumbent and challenger performance described. The names of incumbents—be they actual incumbents or incumbent challengers (rerunners)—are more likely to be recognized by voters when casting their ballots. In a district in which incumbents are running against first-time challengers, the advantage is all to the former. In a district in which an incumbent faces a rerun challenger, no clear advantage is present.

Still, how do voters become "sensitized" to incumbents? Clearly it is not an automatic process, affecting all
voters in all districts, a point amply demonstrated by the lack of an incumbency effect in non-competitive districts. In safe districts, being an incumbent conveys relatively little electoral advantage; of course, no added advantage is needed. However, if an electoral threat is perceived, incumbents are likely to make use of whatever devices are available to insure their reelection. The evidence suggests that some identifiable mechanism is in fact available to incumbents which they use to their advantage in close elections. But since at least one group of competitive challengers is not disadvantaged, the "tool" must be available to both challengers and incumbents. The evidence further suggests that this tool is effectively utilized by some challengers (non-incumbent rerunners) and not by others (regular candidates).

Whatever this mechanism may be, its utilization varies a great deal depending on the candidate and the nature of the district. A logical candidate for this distinction, and the direction I turn next, is campaign money. In the following chapter, the possibilities of this argument are more completely explored by focusing on the financing of congressional campaigns. The available data are analyzed, highlighting differences between candidate spending in competitive and non-competitive districts and by rerun and regular challengers. An attempt is then made to summarize and integrate the findings relating to incumbency advantages
and campaign finance, tying up loose ends and clarifying the explanation of the incumbency effect.
CHAPTER NOTES

1. Note that the calculation of mean vote change does not consider the degree of change relative to the previous election. For example, a change measure could be calculated by determining the difference between vote shares in two consecutive elections, and dividing by the base year percentage \( \frac{t_2 - t_1}{t_1} \). This would provide some measure of proportional change in each district. A 10 per cent increase in a district in which the party received 20 per cent of the vote two years before would thus be a 50 per cent improvement \((30-20 \div 20)\), whereas a similar 10 per cent increase in a district in which the candidate's party had received 45 per cent of the vote two years before would mean a 22.2 per cent improvement \((55-45 \div 45)\). Substantively, this type of measure can be misleading, for the second candidate's increase—while proportionately much less—has a greater effect (he won!). Generally, the closer to competitiveness one gets, the smaller the increment of change, the larger the denominator (i.e., per cent in first election), and therefore the smaller proportional change. This isn't really what I want to measure. Also, the straight vote change averages have been used by a number of other researchers in this area (e.g., Cover, Mayhew, and Erikson).

2. There is a substantial difference between success rates of ex-incumbent rerunners in non-competitive districts, with the ex-incumbent percentage about five times as great as the non-incumbent figure (see Table 14). Note, however, that this figure is based on only twenty-seven cases, two-thirds of which occurred in 1946, 1948, and 1950, years in which considerable numbers of defeated incumbents (technically non-competitive) returned to defeat the candidates who unseated them. Since 1950, only nine non-competitive ex-incumbent reruns have occurred, only 9.8 per cent of total ex-incumbent reruns during that period.

3. The use of election year pairs does not bias the means, a plausible argument since each pair is an off-year election followed by a presidential election. To test for any possible bias, election year pairs were calculated for each presidential-off-year pair (i.e., the opposite pairs) for regular competitive challengers (the group which shows the greatest degree of change). This procedure results in fifteen means, calculated for 1946-1948, 1948-1950, etc. Not only is the general
pattern of diminishing performance for this group apparent in the fifteen mean set, but the "new" means (seven in number, for each presidential—off-year pair) do not deviate in a consistent direction from the "old" means. Also, the magnitude of the deviations is quite small, with an average deviation (absolute value) of 1.1, and a greatest deviation of 1.9.

4. The ex-incumbent exclusion has relatively little effect, in no case resulting in an absolute difference between mean change values for all rerunners and non-incumbent rerunners only exceeding 1.2 (the mean absolute difference is .6). The differences also do not bias the rerun means in a consistent direction.


7. Cover, p. 531.

8. Ibid., p. 531.


11. Ibid., p. 1022.


13. Ibid., p. 23.


15. Ibid., p. 51.


18. Ibid., p. 52.


20. One should not be overly critical of Born, for he did not separate rerunners according to district competitiveness. This has the effect of diluting the strong performance of competitive rerunners.


CHAPTER V

CAMPAIGN FINANCING

It was suggested in the first chapter that the acquisition of resources by candidates plays an important role in the process of recruiting and electing congressmen. Candidates, and those considering being candidates, must consider and confront the difficulties inherent in acquiring those resources.

The most aggressively pursued resource is, of course, money. There is wide agreement among political influentials and political candidates that money is a prime requisite for the serious congressional candidate.\(^1\) Though it is not necessarily true that more money means more votes, most candidates believe that a clear relationship exists between money spent and votes received.\(^2\)

In terms of recruitment, party officials and community activists are interested in candidates who will be able to attract adequate support, or in candidates who have an independent financial base. David Leuthold found, for example, "that to some extent the success of a political party depends upon its ability to attract candidates who are willing to
commit significant personal resources in order to be elected." This consideration may also be relevant for so-called "sacrificial lambs," who have no source of campaign money other than their own funds.

Clearly, money is an extremely important part of a congressional campaign. This chapter seeks to identify who the winners are in the campaign money struggle by looking at challengers and incumbents, rerun and regular candidates, and Democrats and Republicans. Particular attention will be given to the effect of district competitiveness on campaign financing.

The analysis begins with several expectations. First, it is expected to be more difficult for challengers to get financial help than it is for incumbents. A number of researchers have found this to be the case. Alexander notes that incumbents have a basic advantage in that they have a record in office, which leads to contributions from constituents or interests who approve of the congressman's views or performance. Leuthold also points out that incumbents are likely to get money from individuals or groups who contributed to previous campaigns. Further, he finds that incumbents are more likely than challengers to receive out-of-district contributions—especially from national level committees—due to their being more widely known.

Incumbents are also likely to be more successful in acquiring financial resources simply because they are more
likely to win than challengers. Speaking of the incumbent-challenger distinction, Alexander states that "it is more accurate to say that money tends to be contributed to those who appear likely to win...and this most often is the incumbent." Jacobson also makes this point:

The expectation that a candidate will do well may bring campaign contributions. Suppose it is possible to make a rough prediction of the outcome prior to the election; if campaign contributors act as "rational investors" who, other things being equal, invest more in a campaign they expect to be successful...contributions to candidates should increase with their probability of election.

He notes further that "candidates who are well known and who have political experience raise money more easily." Such candidates can be expected to have a larger number of contacts and more potentially profitable associations than challengers. Finally, in terms of available resources, incumbents may have money remaining from earlier campaigns.

A second expectation is that candidates running in competitive districts will be able to acquire more financial resources than those running in non-competitive districts. This is true for challengers since, by definition, those running in competitive districts have a larger pool of potential support—in terms of voters who voted for their party's candidate two years before—than non-competitive challengers. The competitive challenger also is more likely to win than is his non-competitive counterpart. One
certainly expects difficulty in securing financial support in a hopeless electoral situation.

Contributions should also be more easily acquired by incumbents in competitive districts, primarily because they are able to more easily demonstrate their immediate need. For example, Jacobson concludes that "incumbents are able to expand their financial resources in response to a serious challenge." Incumbents in competitive districts also may devote more time to tapping financial sources, whereas safe incumbents may not "waste" the effort.

The third expectation concerns rerun challengers. Specifically, rerun challengers in competitive districts should have more money to spend than regular challengers. Rerunners are "incumbents," in the sense that they have been involved in a campaign before, have more experience, more contacts, and possibly money left from the previous campaign. Having received at least forty-five per cent of the vote in their initial campaign, competitive rerun challengers have demonstrated their electoral potential.

The non-competitive rerun challenger, on the other hand, has demonstrated not only his inability to defeat the incumbent, but even to mount a serious challenge. It is likely that in most cases the non-competitive rerun candidate is running in a strong one-party area, and oftentimes is funding his own campaign. It seems reasonable to conclude that he is reluctant to match his initial expenditures
in obviously hopeless campaigns. The first time non-competitive candidate is more likely to spend more of his own money, and also is more likely to get help from contributors who view him as a "fresh face," one who at least has not demonstrated his inability to win.

Expectations concerning party and campaign financing are somewhat less direct than those above. Though one might expect Republican candidates to have greater financial resources than Democratic candidates, owing to the traditional bases of support for the parties, such a conclusion is simplistic. As Jeff Fishel reports, though "Republicans are usually thought to be better organized, richer in resources, more adept at their deployment...this is not upheld by the data." He found that party differences, at least in 1964, were quite small. Similarly, Alexander found that in 1972 total party expenditures in congressional elections were very close, with Democrats spending $20.2 million and Republicans $18.8 million. Candidate party affiliation is probably less important an influence on the acquisition of campaign resources than is expected election outcome. Competitive challengers and incumbents, regardless of party, are likely to receive and spend more money than their non-competitive counterparts simply because they are perceived to have a better chance to win.
Campaign Financing: 1972-1976

The above set of expectations concerning campaign financing is tested by analyzing campaign spending figures for the 1972, 1974, and 1976 congressional elections. Those three elections are the only years for which comprehensive figures for all candidates are available. The 1972 and 1974 figures were gathered by the interest group Common Cause. The 1972 figures cover a nine month campaign period from April, 1972 until the end to the year, while the 1974 figures concern the sixteen month period from September, 1973 until the end of 1974. The information on the 1976 election was compiled by the Federal Election Commission, and covered the twenty-four month period beginning January 1, 1975 and ending December 31, 1976.

The primary concern here is with the ability of congressional candidates to acquire financial resources. The most direct indicator of this ability is total money received—i.e., campaign receipts—reported by the candidate. However, the available data for the three election years deals with campaign spending. Data on campaign receipts is available only for the 1972 and 1976 elections. In order to maintain a consistent focus, all findings (unless otherwise noted) will be reported in terms of spending. Where appropriate and most relevant, campaign receipts will be discussed. In any event, it should be pointed out that the differences between receipt and spending figures,
especially for challengers, are quite small. In 1972, for example, the difference between average challenger spending ($32,769) and receipts ($32,070) is only 2.1 per cent. For incumbents, the difference between receipts ($57,784) and expenditures ($49,920) is somewhat greater—15.8 per cent. This can be explained by the fact that incumbents, especially in non-competitive districts, tend not to spend all the money they receive.

*  *  *

Average spending totals for all rerun and regular congressional candidates (and for challengers and incumbents separately) are presented in Table 25.17 Looking first at the spending averages for all candidates, note that a pattern of increasing spending is apparent. By 1976, the average congressional candidate spent nearly $70,000 in his campaign.

Table 25. Campaign Spending by Congressional Challengers and Incumbents, 1972-1976.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Incumbents</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$32,769</td>
<td>$349,920</td>
<td>$413,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(316)</td>
<td>(316)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>$38,586</td>
<td>$32,564</td>
<td>$50,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(316)</td>
<td>(316)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>$51,017</td>
<td>$84,669</td>
<td>$67,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(327)</td>
<td>(327)</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures represent average spending totals; N's in parentheses.
for office. Of course, a great deal of variation in spending occurred, from a number of candidates who spent nothing at all to the $554,358 spent by Ron Paul, the Republican incumbent of Texas' 22nd District.\textsuperscript{18}

Another indicator of increased congressional spending is the number of districts in which the combined spending by the general election candidates exceeded $250,000. In 1972, twenty-four districts combined spending exceeded that figure. By 1974, the total was up to thirty-eight districts, and by 1976, sixty-three districts had combined spending in excess of $250,000. However, sixteen of those 1976 contests involved elections for open seats.\textsuperscript{19}

As expected, incumbents spent more money, on the average, in each of the three election years. The disparity between incumbent and challenger spending is quite substantial. In actual dollars, the average incumbent outspent the average challenger by $17,151 in 1972, by $23,978 in 1974, and by $33,652 in 1976. By expressing challenger spending as a percentage of incumbent spending, it is clear that the gap between challengers and incumbents seems to be increasing. In 1972, challenger spending represented 65.6 per cent of incumbent spending, but by 1976 the figure had fallen to 60.3 per cent.

The second expectation is also confirmed: candidates in competitive districts substantially outspent those in non-competitive districts (see Table 26). In 1972 and 1976,
in fact, competitive candidate spending was nearly double that of non-competitive spending. The 1976 gap between


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Non-Competitive</th>
<th>Per Cent Non-Competitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$71,422</td>
<td>$36,608</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>77,145</td>
<td>45,933</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>106,316</td>
<td>54,969</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure represents Non-Competitive spending expressed as percentage of Competitive spending.

competitive and non-competitive candidates exceeded fifty thousand dollars.

Several interesting facts emerge when candidate status (i.e., challenger or incumbent) is controlled. Table 27 demonstrates that competitive candidates—both challengers and incumbents—spend more than non-competitive candidates. However, the gap between competitive and non-competitive candidates is much greater for challengers than it is for incumbents. This fact can be more clearly demonstrated by expressing non-competitive candidate spending as a percentage of competitive candidate spending for both challengers and incumbents (see Table 23).

Note that in each year the gap between challenger spending in non-competitive districts and competitive
Table 27. Congressional Candidate Campaign Spending, by District Competitiveness and Candidate Status; 1972-76.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Incumbents</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Incumbents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Non-Competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$68,635</td>
<td>$27,120</td>
<td>$74,208</td>
<td>$46,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(273)</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>$65,741</td>
<td>33,842</td>
<td>$66,549</td>
<td>$56,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(47)</td>
<td>(269)</td>
<td>(47)</td>
<td>(269)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>$96,728</td>
<td>35,717</td>
<td>$115,884</td>
<td>$74,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(245)</td>
<td>(82)</td>
<td>(245)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28. Non-Competitive Candidate Spending Expressed as Percentage of Competitive Candidate Spending, by Candidate Status; 1972-75.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Competitive</th>
<th>Non-Competitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challengers</td>
<td>Incumbents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
districts is much greater than the similar gap for incumbents. Non-competitive challengers spend about two-fifths as much as competitive challengers; non-competitive incumbents slightly more than three-fifths as much as competitive incumbents.

Another way of expressing the disparity between competitive and non-competitive challenging candidates is by comparing challenger and incumbent spending in similar districts. The result is that challengers in competitive districts are seen to be able to compete much more effectively—in terms of money spent—than non-competitive challengers. In 1972, challengers in competitive districts spent 92.5 per cent as much as incumbents; non-competitive challengers only 58.8 per cent as much as non-competitive incumbents. In 1974 the comparable percentages are 74.2 for competitive challengers, 58.3 per cent for non-competitive challengers. The picture is the same in 1976, with a figure for competitive challengers of 83.5 per cent, and only 48.1 per cent for non-competitive challengers. It seems clear that while incumbents in non-competitive districts are at a disadvantage in securing financial help when compared to incumbents in competitive districts, this disadvantage is much greater for non-competitive challengers.

Without question, district competitiveness is a crucial variable in the struggle for campaign funding. By looking back at Table 27, one sees that—despite the overall
advantage incumbents have over challengers in securing resources—competitive challengers spent more than non-competitive incumbents in each year under consideration.

Rerun Candidates and Campaign Financing

An important expectation regarding campaign financing was that rerun candidates would spend more than regular candidates. In Table 29, spending averages for regular and non-incumbent rerun challengers and incumbents are presented. The expectations are upheld for both challengers and incumbents for two of the three years, and in the third (1972) the differences between spending averages are quite small. It is also interesting to note that incumbents facing rerun challengers spent considerably more money in 1974 and 1976 than incumbents facing regular challengers.

Table 29. Congressional Candidate Campaign Spending, by Type of Election and Candidate Status, 1972–1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
<th>Incumbents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Rerun(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$33,012</td>
<td>$29,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(288)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>37,256</td>
<td>45,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(294)</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>48,316</td>
<td>53,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(284)</td>
<td>(37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Non-incumbent rerunners only.
The increased spending by rerun challengers cited above does not allow them to cut into the financial advantages held by incumbents, however. For although rerun challenger averages are higher, so are the averages for their incumbent opponents. In 1976, for example, the average rerun challenger, although outspending regular challengers by about $20,000, was still outspent by his opponent by about $33,000. The regular challenger was outspent by his incumbent opponent by an almost identical $34,000. The same pattern obtains for the 1972 and 1974 election years.

The hypothesis above was that the overall pattern of increased spending by rerun candidates would vary depending upon the competitiveness of the districts. The expectation was that non-competitive rerun challengers would be at a disadvantage in the resource struggle, with competitive rerun candidates being proportionately advantaged.

Table 30 shows that this is indeed the case for rerun challengers. In Table 30, challenger spending is expressed as a percentage of incumbent spending, controlling for district competitiveness. In two of the election years (1972 and 1974), competitive rerun challengers actually outspent their incumbent opponents. At each of the three time points, competitive rerunners were able to more nearly match incumbent spending than were regular competitive challengers.

On the other hand, non-competitive rerun challengers could not match non-competitive regular challengers in their
Table 30. Challenger Campaign Spending Expressed as Percentage of Incumbent Spending, by District Competitiveness and Type of Election, 1972-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of Election</th>
<th>District Competitiveness</th>
<th>Non-Competitive</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Non-Competitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Non-Year</td>
<td>89.2 (50)</td>
<td>59.9 (250)</td>
<td>129.6 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td>Non-Year</td>
<td>66.6 (41)</td>
<td>59.1 (253)</td>
<td>144.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Rerun</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>51.7 (62)</td>
<td>49.9 (222)</td>
<td>81.0 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Non-incumbent rerunners only.*
financial battle against incumbents. By 1970, non-competitive rerunners were spending only about three-tenths (28.3 per cent) as much as their incumbent opponents, while regular non-competitive challengers were spending about one-half (49.9 per cent) as much as their opponents.

Parties and Finances

For the period in question, overall spending averages for the two major parties are nearly identical. Though Republican candidates outspent Democrats in two of the three years (see Table 31), the greatest difference between averages is only $2,225.

Table 31. Campaign Spending by Democratic and Republican Congressional Candidates, 1972-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$40,652</td>
<td>$42,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(316)</td>
<td>(316)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>51,313</td>
<td>49,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(315)</td>
<td>(316)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>66,730</td>
<td>68,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(327)</td>
<td>(327)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall averages conceal the fact that substantial variation exists within parties, depending on district competitiveness and candidate status. Republican incumbents, for example, consistently outspend democratic incumbents, at times by a considerable amount. The average difference between Republican and Democratic incumbent spending is
Challenger spending, on the other hand, seems much more sensitive to the short-term perceptions of election outcome discussed above. For example, though Republican challengers outspent Democratic challengers in 1972 and 1976 (by relatively narrow margins), in 1974 Democratic challengers outspent Republicans by more than three to one (see Table 32). Nineteen seventy-four, of course, was an extremely poor year for Republican congressional candidates. More evidence for this interpretation is offered by the fact that in 1974 the average Democratic challenger outspent the average Democratic incumbent by almost $14,000.

Several basic facts about campaign financing can be noted by focusing on challengers and controlling for district competitiveness. The first concerns a difference between parties, the second a similarity. Note in Table 33 the extremely low levels of campaign spending by Republican non-competitive challengers, and particularly by non-competitive rerun Republican challengers. The average rerun...
Table 33. Campaign Spending by Congressional Challengers in Non-Competitive Districts, by Type of Election and Party, 1972-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democratic Regular</th>
<th>Democratic Rerun&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Republican Regular</th>
<th>Republican Rerun&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$23,830</td>
<td>$23,942</td>
<td>$30,602</td>
<td>$13,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(102)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(148)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>54,146</td>
<td>30,276</td>
<td>15,926</td>
<td>7,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(123)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(150)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>32,963</td>
<td>28,724</td>
<td>39,707</td>
<td>5,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(71)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(151)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Non-incumbent rerunners only.

Republican in a non-competitive district (the three years combined) spent only $8,587 in his campaign. There seems to be a very clear pattern of non-support for rerun Republicans in non-competitive districts. Non-competitive rerun Democrats also spend very little, but the averages are much higher than those of similar Republican candidates.

The second observation concerns rerun spending in competitive districts (see Table 34). Without exception, competitive rerun candidates outspent competitive regular candidates of both parties. The difference in each case is substantial, ranging from a low of about $17,000 for competitive Democrats in 1976, to about $72,000 for 1974 competitive Democrats.

**Challenger Campaign Spending: The Missing Link?**

The extremely high spending levels of non-incumbent rerun challengers in competitive districts, especially when
Table 34. Campaign Spending by Congressional Challengers in Competitive Districts, by Type of Election and Party, 1972-1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democratic Regular</th>
<th>Democratic Rerun</th>
<th>Republican Regular</th>
<th>Republican Rerun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$855,971</td>
<td>$87,158</td>
<td>$80,726</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>71,732</td>
<td>133,393</td>
<td>35,003</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>66,315</td>
<td>83,721</td>
<td>110,250</td>
<td>141,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Non-incumbent rerunners only.

compared to spending levels of regular challengers in competitive districts, may explain the incumbency advantage patterns observed in the preceding chapter. It was noted then that regular competitive challengers had suffered a marked decline in their electoral performance, particularly in the last decade. The performance of non-incumbent rerunners in competitive districts, however, had not declined in a like manner. In fact, these challengers had experienced a slight upturn in electoral performance in recent election years. A review of the available evidence led to the conclusion that some mechanism exists—a mechanism available to challengers as well as incumbents—which is responsible for the increase in incumbency advantages. Incumbent perquisites and constituency casework, as tools not available to challengers, could not satisfactorily explain this pattern.

Of the explanatory mechanisms considered, campaign spending most adequately accounts for the differential way
in which incumbency advantages are manifested. No significant incumbency effect is seen in competitive rerun districts, precisely the districts in which challenger spending is greatest. In fact, in such districts rerun challengers averaged spending $110,396 in the 1972-76 period, only $6387 less (5.8 per cent) than incumbents.

No substantial incumbency effect is evident in non-competitive districts, where incumbent campaign spending is much less than in competitive districts. Incumbents in non-competitive districts spend less than two-thirds as much as incumbents in competitive districts.22

The most apparent incumbency advantage is in the regular competitive situation, and it is in such districts that incumbents spend about twenty-five per cent more than their regular opponents. This incumbent—regular challenger gap is about four times as great as that between incumbents and rerun challengers.

Perhaps the proper comparison is not between incumbents and challengers at all. Jacobson contends that "spending by challengers has a substantial impact on election outcomes, whereas spending by incumbents has relatively little effect; the evidence is particularly strong for House elections." His rationale is that challengers need to make up the distance between themselves and incumbents in terms of name recognition, and use campaign monies to that end. "Since nonincumbents have the most to gain from
campaigning, it is not surprising that their level of spending has a greater impact on the outcomes of elections than does that of incumbents.\textsuperscript{23}

This interpretation suggests that it is most important to compare spending levels between subgroups of challengers; for example, between rerun and regular challengers. The assumption is that the electoral performance of challengers, but not incumbents, is positively related to the amount of money spent during the campaign.

If such a comparison is made, one might expect competitive district rerun challengers to spend more than competitive regular challengers. This is indeed the case. Looking back to Table 34, we see that the relationship holds in every case, regardless of challenger party affiliation.\textsuperscript{24} In fact, in the 1972-1976 period, competitive rerunners spent, on the average, 53.3 per cent more than competitive regular challengers. The absolute difference between averages—$38,367—is about equal to what a candidate would have spent "against stiff opposition" in an entire campaign only ten years earlier.\textsuperscript{25} If Jacobson is correct in his contention that challengers can cut into the advantages of incumbents by spending large amounts of money, then perhaps the findings regarding challenger electoral performance reported in earlier chapters are not surprising. Is it coincidental that competitive rerunners spend a great deal more money—and do much better at the
polls—than competitive regular challengers?

An alternative way to approach the problem is to compare spending levels of successful and unsuccessful challengers. If spending is related to success, winners should spend a great deal more than losers. In Table 35, this comparison is made. The averages reported are for rerun and regular challengers combined, though the unsuccessful group includes only those challenger who ran in competitive districts. This is done to insure group comparability, since an average computed for all unsuccessful challengers would include many who had no chance to win and thus spent very little money. Also, successful challengers disproportionately run in competitive districts.

Table 35 demonstrates that successful challengers substantially outspent their unsuccessful counterparts. In fact, in 1972 and 1974, the ratio of successful to unsuccessful spending was more than two to one. Even in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Spent by Successful Challenger</th>
<th>Average Spent by Unsuccessful Challenger</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>$132,344</td>
<td>$65,975</td>
<td>$66,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>97,795</td>
<td>44,664</td>
<td>53,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>(35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>135,153</td>
<td>90,966</td>
<td>44,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unsuccessful challengers from competitive districts only.
1976, when unsuccessful spending was much higher, successful challengers spent 48.6 per cent more. Not only do successful challengers spend more than unsuccessful challengers, most spend more than incumbents. Of the fifty-eight challengers who defeated incumbents in this period, thirty-one outspent their opponents.

Though the comparison in Table 35 relates to all challengers, the same pattern is apparent when only rerunners are considered. The small number of cases prohibits an identical test for rerun challengers, but an indirect comparison is possible. In 1974, for example, six rerunners ran in competitive districts (for which spending data are available), and all won. Five of the six successful rerunners outspent their incumbent opponents, with a mean spending figure for all six rerun candidates $7,293 higher than the figure for the incumbents. By 1976, incumbents seemed to have learned their lesson. Of nineteen incumbents opposing rerunners in competitive districts, fourteen outspent their challengers. All fourteen of those incumbents won. Moreover, the average incumbent in 1976 spent $19,178 more than his rerun competitive opponent. The high proportion of incumbents in competitive districts who defeated rerun opponents in 1976 conceals the fact that competitive rerunners were doing relatively better than competitive regular challengers (and also spending more money than them). It does, however, offer further support
for the argument that spending and electoral performance are associated.

Review and Concluding Observations

By looking at campaign spending, the relationship of several mechanisms in the electoral process can be more clearly explained. It is probably true that incumbents develop an advantage over challengers by generous use of their perquisites of office and by attention to the needs of constituents through their casework capabilities. The effect of these mechanisms is pronounced. It also seems clear that incumbents who perceive an electoral threat more fully utilize the advantages of office. Thus, the incumbency effect is most apparent in competitive districts. This effect is also increasing due to a lessening of the impact of party identification as a cue for voters in congressional elections. Voters with little confidence in party labels may turn to names they recognize in deciding for whom to vote. To this point, the game is heavily weighted in favor of incumbents, for only they have access to the mechanisms of incumbent advantage.

It is equally clear, however, that challengers do have an effective weapon to combat incumbent strength. By spending large amounts of money, even if those expenditures are matched by incumbents, challengers can neutralize the recognizability advantage possessed by their
opponents. Having "pulled even," so to speak, challengers are in a better position to reap the rewards (or, of course, to suffer the consequences) of a given election year. For example, a challenging Republican in a year with a strong Republican presidential candidate might run ahead of past Republican congressional candidates in that district, but if the Democratic incumbent has built up a significant advantage, the improvement may not be enough to win. If the Republican challenger spends a great deal of money during his campaign, however, he may lessen his opponent's recognition advantage, and actually defeat the incumbent given the added impetus of his party's presidential contender.

If it is true that money is the only—or at least the most effective—way for challengers to compete with incumbents in terms of recognizability, it suggests that campaign finance strategies and utilization will become increasingly important in the future. Two related questions thus need to be answered. What are the sources of campaign money, and to what degree do those sources influence the policy-making activities of recipients?

There has been a great deal of change in recent years in the laws regulating campaign finance and in the sources of campaign contributions. The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 and the Revenue Act of the same year sought to control political spending and to require fuller disclosure
of the sources of funds. The FEC Act has been amended several times (once in response to a Supreme Court ruling), but the basic changes in campaign financing that resulted from its passage have remained. Most important, the requirement that the identity of contributors be disclosed has lessened the impact of single large donations—not because such contributions are illegal, but because of the increased "political risk for those who would undertake such practices."

The diminution of "fat cat" contributions has not resulted in lower spending levels of congressional candidates. Clearly, the money is coming from somewhere. At least one new source is the PAC, or political action committee. The FEC reforms allow a union or corporation or interest group to form a PAC and give up to $5000 to congressional candidates. PAC's have proliferated at a remarkable rate, with less than 100 in 1974, about 300 in 1976, and almost 600 in 1978. Common Cause reported that these groups spent $22.6 million in the 1976 congressional elections, with an estimated doubling of that figure in 1978.

If the increase in political action committees is indicative of a broader trend toward a diversification of money sources, especially of those out of the candidate's district, this suggests that the ability of single contributors to influence the policy-making behavior of legislators is lessened. However, as congressmen come to increasingly
rely on money to finance campaigns, they may feel a degree of pressure to listen to the policy advice of a number of contributors. Money, after all, buys influence only to the degree that it buys access to the congressmen. The greater the number of money sources, the greater the number of communication channels with at least the potential for influencing congressional decision-making. Paradoxically, then, the diversification of financial sources may lead to increased policy input of the interest groups who are footing the bill. While this may be less conspiratorial than the image of the "purchased" congressman, it reflects both the increased reliance on money in campaigns and increases in the variety of groups willing to hand out that money.30

* * *

In the next chapter, a number of considerations relevant to incumbency advantages are discussed. A specific look is taken at recognition levels of rerun challengers, campaign spending levels of newly elected incumbents, and the timing of the increase in incumbency advantages. The causality question is addressed: does money mean better electoral performance or does perception of likely success lead to greater success at fundraising? The discussion also deals with challenger perceptions of incumbency. This evaluation emphasizes that the pattern of incumbent
advantages described has an important impact on the broader process of congressional candidate recruitment.
CHAPTER NOTES


9. Ibid., p. 472.

10. Charles Vanik, an Ohio Democrat from a very safe district (79 per cent of the vote in 1974), reported campaign receipts of $65 during the 1976 campaign.


13. Allen Russell, in the paper cited above, argues that "campaign spending...responds to the expected closeness of the outcome of the election." (p. 6) In terms of
argument advanced here, expected closeness of the outcome is a surrogate for potential campaign success. For most challengers, the closer the election is perceived to be, the greater their chances of defeating the incumbent. In its study of the 1972 election, Common Cause also found a relationship between plurality and cost, namely, that "the closer a race was, the more expensive it was likely to be." See Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, December 1, 1973, p. 3130.

14. Of course, in a given election year, one party may be at a clear electoral disadvantage, and thus have greater difficulty in generating financial support. For example, although one may assume that a larger pool of money is potentially available for Republican challengers, this pool is not likely to be fully utilized in an obviously weak Republican year.


17. Dollar amounts reported here are not corrected for inflation. Note also that open districts, unopposed candidates, etc., are not included in the calculations.


19. Ibid., p. 2299.

20. Ex-incumbent rerunners were not included in the calculation of rerun spending. This has little effect on the spending averages, with ex-incumbent challengers running once in 1972, three times in 1974, and six times in 1976.

21. It is unfortunate that reliable campaign spending figures are available only for the 1972, 1974, and 1976 elections. The relatively small number of rerun elections in 1972 and 1974 lessens one's confidence in those averages. This problem is especially acute since the rerun populations for 1972 and 1974 are
heavily skewed toward Democratic candidates. In fact, in both of those years there are no Republican competitive rerun candidates. These are important considerations if one accepts the earlier reasoning that perceptions of expected party success substantially affect campaign financing. This explanation would account for the low level of rerun spending in 1972. Assuming that 1972 was perceived to be a strong Republican year by candidates and contributors, and considering that most of the rerunners were Democrats, one would expect lower spending levels. The data are consistent with this interpretation.

22. However, non-competitive challengers also spend considerably less than competitive challengers. Why not a substantial advantage here? This seeming discrepancy relates to variation in the effectiveness of campaign spending between challengers and incumbents. This is discussed at some length in the next chapter.


24. Remember, of course, that there were no rerun Republicans in competitive districts in 1972 and 1974.

25. This is based on an estimate made by the treasurer of the Democratic National Congressional Committee in 1962 and reported in Leuthold, p. 74. It refers to large city districts, with suburban or rural districts costing even less.

26. For example, complete data is available for only five competitive rerunners in 1972, and six in 1974. And in both of those years, there is no way to compare successful and unsuccessful competitive rerunners, since in 1972 all five candidates lost and in 1974 all six won.

27. Alexander, pp. 131-137.

28. Ibid., p. 4.


30. The opposite argument is that legislators are able to be more independent if there are a number of small contributors rather than one or two large ones. To
some extent, this is a matter of degree. Is it desirable to have a congressman who represents a big interest on a major issue (and is perhaps independent on all others), or a congressman who represents the interests of a variety of smaller contributors on all issues (and is independent on none)? Of course, this completely neglects the congressman's desire (or need) to represent non-financial constituent interests.
CHAPTER VI

A REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE: INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGES

The discussion of incumbency and congressional elections has taken several steps. First, in Chapter Four the development of incumbency advantages in the postwar period was described. The major finding was that the impact of incumbency has not been felt across the board, i.e., by all groups of challengers, but has been concentrated largely among challengers in competitive districts. This is not unimportant, for the incumbency effect is most apparent in the districts in which it will have greatest influence on the selection of congressmen. Simply put, these advantages have worked to insure the reelection of most incumbents. Furthermore, the proportion of these being reelected continues to increase.

In Table 36, the percentage of incumbents reelected in each election year since 1946 is shown. The percentage of successful incumbents who sought reelection only once fell below 83.3 per cent, with a peak of 98.4 per cent in 1968.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Seeking Re-election</th>
<th>Number Successful</th>
<th>Per Cent Successful</th>
<th>Overall Per Cent Successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This number represents the total number of candidates in rerun and regular districts only, all others excluded.

Includes all incumbents seeking reelection (from Cover, p. 525.)
Incumbent success rates, while consistently high, have increased even more so since 1968. The 1968-1976 overall rate is 95.1 per cent, compared with an 89.8 per cent success rate for the corresponding five-election year period 1958-1966. The success rate for the first period (1946-1956) was slightly lower, with "only" 88.8 per cent of incumbents winning.

A similar pattern emerges when electoral performance is measured in terms of improvement. The number of challengers who were able to do better than their party's nominee in the previous election steadily decreased during the 1946-1976 period. As suggested above, this identifies the area in which incumbents were showing the greatest improvement: regular competitive districts. During the 1968-1976 period less than one in six regular challengers in competitive districts was able to improve party performance.

By looking at the yearly improvement percentages for regular competitive candidates, the timing of the dramatic improvement in incumbent performance could be pinpointed. In 1966, 67.6 per cent of incumbents in regular competitive districts increased the share of the vote they received in 1964. That percentage was very close to figures for earlier election years. In 1968, however, 92.9 per cent of incumbents in similar districts improved on their 1966 performance. In succeeding years, the improvement percentage never fell to pre-1968 levels.
The analysis of improvement as vote change corroborated these findings, at the same time yielding a better measure of the magnitude of the increase in incumbent advantages. While overall challenger performance relative to incumbents had deteriorated, the most dramatic evidence of decline was found in competitive districts (Chapter Four, Figure 3), and especially in regular competitive districts (Figure 6). The timing was again during the late 1960's, with average incumbent performance improving by almost seven percentage points for the 1966-1968 election year pair.

An additional finding was that the improvement in incumbent performance during this period was not a one party phenomenon, but affected both competitive Republicans and competitive Democrats. Even though congressional party fortunes fluctuated, competitive incumbents of both parties were doing relatively better than they had ten or twenty years earlier (Figure 5).

These findings are not surprising, and are consistent with the conclusions of other research efforts in this area. A consensus now seems to exist that incumbency advantages are real and on the increase. Earlier researchers, however, were concerned with separating an "incumbency effect" from various other potentially intervening factors. For example, a number of writers looked at the effect of "presidential pull" or "presidential tide" on the performance of incumbents in congressional elections. In another
work, Charles O. Jones suggested that an "incumbent party" effect was extremely strong, since candidates of the same party as the departing incumbent won about three-fourths of the time. \(^3\)

Robert Erikson was the first to attempt to statistically separate the effects of incumbency from other variables. Using multivariate techniques, Erikson concluded that incumbency accounted for about two percentage points in congressional elections. \(^4\) In a subsequent study he reported that the advantage had grown to about five percentage points. \(^5\)

Several other authors have agreed with Erikson's finding that incumbency advantages are increasing. Warren Lee Kostroski, in his study of the Senate, found that party has steadily declined as a factor influencing votes in Senate elections, "while the importance of incumbency has experienced an almost commensurate increase." \(^6\)

One More Time: Explaining Incumbency Advantages

While there is wide agreement as to the existence of incumbency advantages, there is considerable variety in the number of explanations offered to account for them. One of the most frequently mentioned explanations is the so-called "cue transfer" argument. Several researchers (e.g., Ferejohn, Cover, Kostroski, Burnham, and Erikson) have discussed this possibility, concluding that as party identification breaks down as a voting cue, it is likely to be replaced by
Cover contends that very strong evidence to substantiate this hypothesis is the defection of voters identifying with the challenger's party. He found that since 1972 about half of those identifying with the challenger's party have deserted their party's congressional candidate in contested elections involving an incumbent. These voters are as likely to support the incumbent candidate as they are the candidate of their own party. As Cover explains, "the decline of partisanship has led to patterns of voting behavior favoring incumbents."7

The cue transfer argument, however, does not really constitute a separate linkage mechanism, for although it tells us that incumbency may be replacing party identification as a voting cue, it doesn't tell us how this is occurring. The implicit assumption in this argument is that voters are likely to use incumbency as a guide because they know who the incumbents are. By implication, then, incumbents are more recognizable to voters than are challengers.

Several related hypotheses have been developed to identify the linkage(s) responsible for the increase in incumbent recognition. These suggested linkages (all of which have been discussed earlier in this study) are summarized below:
the objective: increasing candidate recognition
Candidates          Linkages          Electorate
                          Incumbents          Perquisites
                          Casework          Voters
                          Challengers       Campaigns (spending)

Two points should be made regarding this diagram.
First, incumbents have access to all three linkage mechanisms, whereas challengers have access only to one: campaigns. Of course, this may be the most important mechanism, since challengers who spend large amounts of money are less disadvantaged relative to incumbents than are challengers who spend less (see Chapter Five).

The second point is that each mechanism attempts to explain the increase in incumbency advantages in terms of name recognition. That is, voters become more aware of who the incumbent is by their congressman's use of perquisites, constituency service, or campaign expenditures.

The perquisite utilization mechanism, advanced by Mayhew and Cover, among others, suggests that incumbents increase recognition levels by utilizing the benefits of office for political purposes. In Table 37, a number of congressional perquisites allegedly responsible for this effect are listed.
Table 37. Various Congressional Perquisites, 1977.

1. Thirty-three round-trips home each year at public expense, a minimum of $2,250 or 10% of the total cost.
2. A $7,000 personal expense allowance for each member.
3. A stationery allowance—which can no longer be pocketed--of $6,500 a year.
4. Almost unlimited franking privileges to mail official non-political material to constituents.
5. A telephone and telegraph allowance of at least $6,000 a year.
6. Extra postage, called a "constituent communication allowance," of $5,000 a year.
7. Unlimited U.S. telephone calls between 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. weekdays and all day on weekends and holidays for payment of a single small fee.
8. An allowance of $255,144 a year to hire staff in Washington and in the home district.
10. Free medical care and drugs provided by the Capitol physician. Low rates at Bethesda Naval Hospital.
11. Reimbursed rental for 1,500 sq. ft. of home district office space at the highest local rate, and a $27,000 allowance for furniture and equipment, which belongs to the government.
12. Cut-rate life insurance.
13. Free use of the research staff of the Library of Congress.
14. Generous retirement pay, now being recomputed under the raised salary. Previously as high as $35,680 after 32 years of service, it will be increased. (Annual salary: $57,500)

The casework linkage was posited in a work by Fiorina, in which he describes the development of a "Washington establishment." This hypothesis attempts to account for the fact that voter recognition of incumbents does not appear to have increased in recent years. According to Fiorina, the extent of recognition may not have increased, but the content has changed. "An increasing incumbency advantage is quite consistent with a constant informational advantage if information about the incumbent has grown increasingly noncontroversial in content and correspondingly positive in its impact." Though Fiorina is talking about changes in the content of voter perceptions, it is still a linkage based on candidate recognition.

The campaign spending link also relies on candidate recognition as the way in which resources (monies) are translated into votes. Here, however, there are two somewhat distinct arguments. The first suggests that money can be effectively used by both challengers and incumbents, but is most often used only by the latter group.

The second argument, one advanced most recently by Jacobson, also assumes that money is available for use by incumbents and challengers, but that it is clearly effective only for challengers. Relatively few challengers are able to "attract" enough money to make optimum use of this resource, however. This interpretation attempts to explain how challengers can, by spending large amounts of money,
close the recognition gap between themselves and incumbents, even if incumbents spend equal or greater amounts of money.

The two perspectives are not necessarily exclusive. The object of campaign spending—candidate recognition—is finite. Once candidate recognition in a district has reached a certain point, it may not be realistic to expect it to go any further. In such districts researchers may find that incumbent spending is not associated with greater recognition levels nor, presumably, better electoral performances. In non-competitive districts, where one might expect recognition levels of challengers as well as incumbents to be lower, increased incumbent spending may be effective. Challengers are much less likely to have reached the "recognition limit," thus, their spending in competitive and non-competitive districts may have great effect.

One final point needs to be made before proceeding further. Though the diagram on page 157 is not a causal model, it clearly suggests causality. Thus, some explanation of the implied ordering of causal factors is necessary. This study has argued that in the world of campaign financing, three things are crucial: perception of likely success, the ability of a candidate to raise funds, and electoral performance. For a candidate to be very successful at raising funds, it is paramount that he convince
potential benefactors that he has a chance to win. If he is successful in creating that perception—whether it is sound or not—he is likely to get more money, and consequently to run a stronger race on election day. (Of course, how strong may depend on how wisely the money is spent.)

The essence of this process is that the more successful a candidate is in creating an image of probable victory, the more likely that image will turn out to be true. This reasoning is not circular, for campaigns and elections have distinct beginnings and endings. That is, the second Tuesday of November ends that particular electoral cycle. However, there is continuity between elections, for the candidate's performance in one election will play a major role in the perception of his chances the next time around, and thus his ability to raise money in that campaign. 10

**Further Considerations: Measuring Name Recognition**

As suggested above, a problem with much of the incumbency research, particularly that which seeks to establish a link based on name recognition, is that indicators of this recognition have not shown the expected increases. It was argued in Chapter Four that recognition levels may be increasing, but that the indicators were not sensitive enough—or perhaps asked the wrong questions—to detect such a pattern.
In order to find out whether rerun challengers are recognized by more voters than regular challengers, I utilized the national election surveys conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan. Several researchers have noted that these surveys (see Table 23) show no substantial increase in the recognition of incumbents or challengers. But, if one finds that rerun challengers are recognized to a greater degree than other types of candidates, or if rerun recognition is increasing, then perhaps the indicators are capable of measuring something of significance. The assumption is that recognition levels of rerun challengers are dissimilar to regular levels due to rerun behavior—such as spending more money than regular challengers.

Table 38 reports the percentage of voters aware of incumbents, all challengers, and rerun challengers in 1958


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aware of Incumbent</th>
<th>Aware of Challenger</th>
<th>Aware of Rerun Challenger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIncludes all challengers.

and 1974. A reasonable expectation might be that voters are more aware of rerun than regular challengers, especially
since previous chapters show that rerun performance has not decreased as much as regular performance in the postwar period. Instead, Table 38 indicates that rerunners are somewhat less likely to be recognized than regular challengers, and have in fact decreased by nine percentage points between the two election years.

This finding can be interpreted in a number of ways. The first is that rerun challengers are in fact less recognizable than regular challengers, and that my expectations were unsound. A second interpretation is that the indicators of candidate name recognition are not very useful, that—as argued above—they are insensitive to subtle differences in the nature of that recognition.

Admittedly, the choice of interpretations is not attractive. The "rerunner is less recognizable" argument is distinctly counterintuitive: does multiple candidacy lead to voter recognition? Even the recognition of a non-competitive rerunner as a "two-time loser" is recognition, albeit of a negative sort. Perhaps this sampling of rerun districts is overly non-competitive. If so, the "less recognizable" interpretation seems slightly more plausible (if only because one might expect competitive candidates to have higher recognition levels).12 The second interpretation—that the indicators are weak—makes more intuitive sense.13 Unfortunately, it is only on such common sense grounds that the data can be rejected, for
they do not support the expected positive relationship
between rerun candidacy and challenger recognition levels.
In this case, the common sense interpretation seems more
appropriate.

**Variations in Incumbent Behavior**

Thus far, incumbency advantages have been viewed
almost solely from the perspective of challengers. How do
challengers offset incumbent advantages? Which challengers
are most successful in doing so? It might also be advisable
to look at the problem from the incumbent's perspective. Are increases in incumbent advantages at least
partially due to changes in the behavior of incumbents
themselves? For example, Cover analyzes the performance
of first-term incumbents in seeking reelection. Though
he is interested in the "sophomore surge" as a measure of
the magnitude of incumbency advantages, perhaps the performance of these congressmen can tell us something about
the role of the incumbent in the reelection process.

Several researchers have found that congressmen have
become increasingly preoccupied with reelection as a pri-
mary goal (e.g., Mayhew, Fiorina). If this is true, one
might expect to see newly elected incumbents more aggres-
sively pursuing avenues of making themselves known to their
constituents than were incumbents twenty or thirty years
ago. If these incumbents are successful this should be
reflected in the various measures of electoral improvement. Specifically, one would expect to see a pattern of vote change in which first-term incumbents are doing better than incumbents who have been in office more than one term. However, this pattern should be most apparent for freshmen incumbents in the 1966-1976 period, since it was during this time that incumbency advantages increased most substantially.

In order to test this hypothesis, I have analyzed the performance of regular candidates in competitive districts during the 1946-1976 period. I have dealt only with regular competitive candidates for several reasons. It has already been shown that the pattern of increased electoral improvement is most dramatic for competitive candidates, particularly for those in regular districts (for example, see Figure 6). Thus, there is little reason to expect significant change in other types of districts. In terms of theory, this seems reasonable since incumbents in non-competitive districts have little incentive to fully utilize the instruments available to them. The expectation, however, is that rerun competitive challengers have some ability—due to their status as "incumbent challengers"—to offset the advantages of incumbency.

Stated another way, if the hypothesis is incorrect, the performance of first-time incumbents in regular competitive districts should be no better—perhaps even
worse—than the performance of multiple term incumbents in similar districts during the post-war period. It is plausible, in fact, that first-term incumbent performance would lag behind that of other incumbents. This would be true if incumbents accumulate a degree of expertise in getting re-elected over a period of years. New incumbents, "green" as they are at the game of incumbent perpetuation, would not be expected to do as well the first time they run for reelection. The data are presented here using the same methodology of previous chapters, that is, expressing average vote change in terms of challenger performance. Thus, a negative figure should be interpreted as denoting improved incumbent performance, the strength of that improvement dependent on the magnitude of the figure. Of course, a positive figure indicates that challengers, not incumbents, are improving.

The vote change averages for challengers in regular competitive districts during the postwar period are presented in Table 39. An initial observation one might make is that the performance of challengers who have opposed non-freshmen incumbents has been relatively consistent. Although some decrease in challenger performance is evident, especially in recent years, the average vote change falls within a relatively narrow range of values. This is apparent when the average for three sub-periods during 1946-1976 are computed. The average for the
Table 39. Average Vote Change for Challengers in Regular Competitive Districts, by Incumbent Status; 1946-76.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per Cent Change</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>Per Cent Change</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>+1.9</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>+1.0</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>-6.3</td>
<td>(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>(26)</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>(40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
<td>(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
<td>(32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
<td>(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>-10.0</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>-5.4</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>-8.7</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>-10.9</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>-7.0</td>
<td>(31)</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern for challengers opposing freshmen incumbents is less stable. In the first several election years, challengers actually gained percentage points against freshmen incumbents (1946-1950). This was followed by a period of relative stability (1952-1966), in which challenger performance fell within the zero to -5.0 range. In 1968, however, challenger performance versus freshmen incumbents plummeted to -10.0 percentage points. In the next four election years, the best challengers could do against incumbents was -5.4 points (1970). The average for the 1968-1976 sub-period fell to -7.9 points, compared with values of -0.6 (1946-1956) and -2.4 (1958-1966) for the preceding sub-periods.

The sixteen election year set is collapsed into eight election year pairs in Figure 7. As mentioned earlier, this procedure displays the data with some of the yearly fluctuations "ironed out," and with proportionately increased N sizes from which the vote change averages are calculated. Note that while it is true that the averages for both groups of challengers are fairly consistent in their decline, the groups have switched their relative positions on the graph. Between 1946-1948 and 1958-1960 challengers opposing freshmen incumbents consistently outperformed those opposing non-freshmen incumbents. However,
Figure 7. Paired Election Year Vote Change Means for Challengers in Regular Competitive Districts, by Incumbent Status, 1946-1976.
following a period of fluctuation (1962-1968), the positions of the challenger groups have been reversed. In the latter period (1970-1976), challengers opposing freshmen incumbents were doing more poorly than challengers opposing non-freshmen.

The pattern during the earlier period is consistent with the "accumulated experience" hypothesis. It seems that during this period a positive relationship between incumbent experience and electoral performance exists: the longer in office, the stronger the performance. From 1968 to 1976 this interpretation no longer is supported. At least in regular competitive districts, first-term incumbents are showing greater improvement over their performance in the election two years earlier than are multiple term incumbents.

The performance of the 1974 class of freshmen Democrats in the House certainly lends support to the argument that freshmen incumbents are very aggressively pursuing their electoral interests. Twenty-six Democrats were elected to the House in 1974 by margins which classify those elections as "competitive." Of those twenty-six freshmen incumbents, twenty-three were re-elected in 1976.16 A definite "sophomore surge" seems evident for this group of challengers. But how can one argue that this group—or any other group of freshmen incumbents—is more aggressive than a similar group of non-freshmen?
One way to test the assumption that freshmen incumbents are working harder to retain their seats than non-freshmen incumbents is to look at campaign spending figures for both types of candidates. In 1976, sixty-two incumbents of both parties were running for reelection in regular competitive districts. Thirty-five were freshmen incumbents, twenty-seven non-freshmen. In Table 40 I have calculated average spending totals for freshmen and non-freshmen incumbents of both parties. Note that both Democratic and Republican

Table 40. Average Freshman and Non-Freshman Incumbent Spending, by Party, 1976.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incumbents</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Non-Freshman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>$120,168</td>
<td>$98,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>$113,781</td>
<td>$65,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>(26)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$115,423</td>
<td>$94,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

freshmen spent more—72.3 and 18.4 per cent, respectively—than non-freshmen. Overall, the average freshman incumbent in 1976 spent $20,911 (22.1 per cent) more than the non-freshman incumbent. These findings suggest that freshmen congressmen facing reelection may indeed be contributing to the clear increase in the advantage of incumbency seen
Concluding Observations

If some degree of legislative turnover and a healthy environment for candidate recruitment are societal goals, we need to think hard about the consequences of unparalleled incumbent success. How concerned should we be that in the last decade nineteen of every twenty incumbents who sought reelection were successful?

One practical consequence of incumbent success seems to be a shift of focus by the minority party in Congress. Some evidence suggests that the Republican Party, at least in 1978, concentrated on open-seat races rather than challenging incumbent Democrats. The party did so even though many Democratic incumbents ran in historically Republican districts—as many as forty-five, by Republican count.

The chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) defends this strategy by arguing that in open-seat races "at least we start even." He blames incumbency perquisites for the difficulty in defeating seated congressmen, claiming that perks "have enshrined the younger Democrats in their districts and made them unbeatable."

An added consequence of the high incumbent success rate is the difficulty in recruiting challengers. Though the evidence here is not very complete, in at least several districts in 1978 Republicans found it difficult to attract
candidates. The NRCC claims that in one traditionally Republican district a party selection committee worked for more than three months to find an opponent for a recently elected Democratic incumbent. That incumbent received fifty-nine per cent of the vote in 1976 and was believed to be unbeatable in 1978.\footnote{19}

The inability to recruit qualified challengers is a serious consequence of incumbent entrenchment. Of course, the problem may be overstated. Though the data gathered here do not speak directly to this point, the candidate interviews reported in the next chapter suggest that political activism and hopes for rewarding legislative careers are far from dead in the United States.
CHAPTER NOTES

1. The incumbent success rates reported here refer only to the districts which have been analyzed throughout the study (i.e., rerun and regular districts), and thus are not identical to rates reported elsewhere (e.g., Albert Cover, "One Good Term Deserves Another: The Advantage of Incumbency in Congressional Elections," American Journal of Political Science (August 1977): 525.) The differences between reported rates are extremely small.

2. The "presidential tide" work is by Milton C. Cummings, Jr., Congress and the Electorate (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1966); the reference to "presidential pull" refers to the work of Barbara Hinckley, "Incumbency and the Presidential Vote in Senate Elections," American Political Science Review 64 (September 1970).


8. This argument may also reflect a widely held belief of observers of Congress. See, for example, The Washington Post, November 19, 1978, November 25, 1978, December 23, 1978, and January 9, 1979, which published a series of articles called "The Incumbency Game," in which congressional perquisites are examined as techniques used by incumbents "to enhance their reelection chances." One article was entitled "Free Mail Helps Re-Elect Congress," on page A1, and continued on an inside page as "Free Postage Helps Congressmen Keep Winning Elections."

10. This "model" of campaign finance operates in a greatly simplified world, of course. It does not consider that other reasons for contributing money to a campaign might exist (as discussed in the preceding chapter), or that the evaluation of the efficacy of money in campaigns (or even how to use it) is imperfect. I would argue, however, that the ordering and relative importance of the factors discussed is accurate.

11. The rerun percentages were calculated by looking at those districts in 1958 and 1974 in which rerun challengers opposed incumbents, and which were included in the CPS survey during those years. The respondent N sizes in both cases are somewhat small (1958 N=89, 1974 N=56).

12. Due to small N sizes at this level of analysis, controlling for competitiveness was impractical. This control might have made, based upon earlier findings, a considerable difference. Presumably, voters would be more aware of competitive candidates of all types than non-competitive candidates.


15. Ideally, the data should reflect exact incumbent performance. Unfortunately, the data collected for this study were for challengers only, and the signs are not exactly reversible. This means that a challenger average vote change of -1.8 does not automatically mean that incumbents gained exactly +1.8 per cent of the vote. Small deviations in the data due to the presence of small third or fourth party candidates or other intervening factors may result in very slight differences between mean vote change figures for challengers and incumbents. Since the differences are so small, this methodological consideration in no way hampers the interpretation of the data.

16. One of the three not reelected, Howe of Utah's 2nd District, had been convicted of solicitation charges during his term in the House.

17. The evidence presented here should not be overstated. After all, the data are for a single election. One might argue that freshmen incumbents have always spent
more than non-freshmen, due to a sense of electoral insecurity or an inefficient utilization of funds. In the least, I do contend that the data are consistent with the interpretation that freshmen incumbents in recent years work very diligently to retain that office.


CHAPTER VII

CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

The preceding chapters look at congressional candidacy primarily from a quantitative perspective. That is, several of the measurable aspects of candidacy are discussed, such as votes received and dollars spent. The analysis of electoral data is obviously relevant for any study of congressional elections, but it tends to underemphasize the human component of political candidacy. This is particularly important if the fundamental concern is candidate recruitment. Attitudes and perceptions held by politically active individuals help determine whether they will seek—or not seek—elective office.

In order to discover what kinds of attitudes result from experience as a congressional candidate, a number of interviews were conducted. The interview subjects all were rerun candidates, having run at least twice, with several running three or four times. Of twenty-five total interviews, sixteen were with candidates in the Midwest, four in the West, three in the South, and two in the East.
Political Background of the Sample

Almost without exception, the respondents recalled a childhood and early adult life with great political content. Only sixteen per cent of the candidates reported that their interest in politics was recent. The remainder reported an active interest in politics well before their adult years. ²

A nearly equal percentage recalled a great deal of family political exposure as they were growing up.³ Of those who could recall, almost two-thirds (14 of 22) reported a considerable amount of political discussion or involvement in their families. Only three respondents recalled very little of this type of exposure. Democratic candidates were somewhat more likely to report high levels of family politicization than were Republicans. Ten of thirteen Democrats who responded to this item reported a high degree of political exposure, compared to only four of nine Republicans. In fact, of the eight candidates who recalled some or very little childhood political content, six were Republicans.

The finding that most of the candidates developed an early interest in politics and came from politically active—or at least aware—families, is hardly surprising. A number of researchers have found that political actives tend to come from more politicized backgrounds than "average"
Americans. Prewitt, for example, found that "family ties, school experiences, and exposure to the drama of politics are childhood experiences which ushered 90 per cent of those interviewed into the active stratum."^4

A majority of the rerun candidates seem to have followed a pathway into the active stratum that Prewitt calls "politically socialized," that is, individuals whose political activity is a "continuation of prior involvements."^5 A smaller percentage of candidates—those who report more recent political interest and involvement—fall into the "politically mobilized" category. Four of the respondents were politically mobilized, in this sense. Prewitt's third pathway, "lateral entrants"—individuals who are directly recruited into political office—fits only one of the respondents. This candidate, an attorney, became involved in politics only after considerable pressure by political influentials in his district.

While it is clear that nearly all of those interviewed came from politically aware backgrounds, there is some variation in the routes they took to congressional candidacy. A large majority (76 per cent) of the candidates worked at some time in their careers for the party, but relatively few (28 per cent) ever held elective office.^6 There is little variation among those reporting party work when controlling for party affiliation or district competitiveness. The same is true of candidates who once held
elective office if only party affiliation is considered. However, there is a greater tendency for candidates who ran in competitive districts to have held prior elective office than candidates in non-competitive districts. One-half of the competitive rerunners interviewed—compared to only one-fifth of the non-competitive rerunners—have held elective office before.

Several explanations may be advanced to account for this finding. Perhaps prior officeholders are more attractive candidates in the eyes of the "kingmakers"—party officials, community influential, and the like. Officeholders have proven vote-getting ability. Thus, when a district seems ripe for victory, these individuals are sought out and encouraged to run. Alternatively, one might argue that those holding elective office are more strongly motivated, or have greater ambition for higher political office, and thus are more inclined to run for Congress in districts in which those ambitions might be fulfilled.

The latter explanation is consistent with Black's findings concerning ambition and the structure of the political system. He concludes that "each step in a political career sequence alters one's evaluation of the other step." Ambition, he argues, may develop as a result of investments already made; that is, offices already achieved. The evidence in this case seems to support just such an interpretation. The respondents were asked, "Did the party
leaders seek you out to run or did you decide to run on your own?" Of those that could be classified as self-starters, most came from competitive districts. More strikingly, of the ten competitive rerunners, eight were self-starters. A much smaller percentage of non-competitive rerunners (47 per cent) identified themselves as self-starters.

The differences in attitude are perhaps best summarized by looking at the statement of a competitive Democrat—at one time a county prosecutor—who said, "I made a decision...that I would eventually run for the United States Senate. Congress would probably be the first shot." Compare this to the comment of a non-office-holding Republican in a non-competitive district:

I ran for the office basically as a service to the party. They needed a candidate—a sacrificial lamb...I never asked for much. I recognized my role. In terms of rewards—monetary rewards—they gave me a job afterwards. So in that sense losing didn't hurt.

These comments seem to reflect two fundamentally different attitudes concerning congressional candidacy. As Black states, the office-holder's evaluation of political alternatives becomes more positive "as the political investment increases...The net effect is the development of higher levels of ambition in the politician." The non-office-holder's level of ambition, never having been stimulated
Seven Shared Challenger Attitudes

Though there is considerable variation in the attitudes held by the rerun challengers interviewed, it became apparent as the research ensued that several common themes were emerging. Regardless of party affiliation or district competitiveness, the group of respondents demonstrated a considerable degree of consensus in a number of areas, including candidate satisfaction, perception of party support, importance of money as a campaign resource, attitudes toward incumbency, and general orientation to the political system. What follows is a review of seven basic attitudes shared by most of the candidates in the interview sample.

1. Running for Congress is a personally rewarding experience. If one can generalize about any one attitude political candidates share, it is that being a candidate is rewarding.9 Of the twenty-five candidates interviewed, only one gave unequivocally negative responses. Several had mixed emotions, or could recall negative experiences during their campaigns, but nearly all were quite positively oriented toward their own candidacies. The degree of positive feeling was somewhat unexpected, considering that none of the respondents had actually won a congressional election. To some extent a positive reaction might have been
anticipated simply because each of the respondents had lost once but had chosen to run again. This might be building into the sample some positive bias. While this point is valid, it can hardly account for the near unanimity of opinion observed.

The positive affect expressed by the candidates mostly concerned personal satisfaction rather than fulfilled political aspirations. That is, few of the challengers felt that their candidacy had had a positive effect on their careers, or that it had advanced themselves politically. Rather, most felt that candidacy was an educating and expanding personal life experience. One candidate, a Democrat in a non-competitive district, mentioned that during her campaigns she felt better informed than at any other time in her life:

I felt very on top of what was going on in my world. I felt bright and sure of myself and I grew a lot in my ability to relate to people's problems. I liked myself a lot when I was running.

Another challenger, a Republican in a competitive district, described candidacy as:

A personal catharsis... It really has been one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. It is an incredible thing to go through.
A competitive Democrat commented:

I have nothing but good things to say about it. It was probably the most exciting, interesting, and challenging experience that I have ever had.

And finally, a Democrat who was twice defeated by large margins said candidacy "is very worthwhile, from an aesthetic point of view. I think it was probably the best experience of my life."

For others, being a candidate—even a losing candidate—reinforced feelings of personal accomplishment and efficacy in a political system of overwhelming proportions. As one challenger put it:

Even though I didn't win it was an experience rewarding enough that I really didn't feel like a loser. Psychologically, I felt like a winner...I proved that from nowhere someone could get involved and with the right amount of effort and a little direction could almost be a United States congressman.

The rewards of candidacy might also be directly related to ego gratification, or perhaps an urge to be recognized. As one respondent candidly remarked:

When you see hundreds—perhaps several thousands of people—overtly expressing their interest in you, hell, it does wonders for the ego. Especially when you make a pitch before a group of people and you hear thunderous applause, it's like being on the stage.
The widespread positive affect which is found among these candidates helps explain the existence of the so-called "sacrificial lamb" candidate. With very little likelihood of electoral success other forces are surely operating to motivate such candidates to run. The self-described sacrificial lamb quoted earlier who "recognized his role" in the election, nevertheless described candidacy as:

Exhilarating...even if you lose, you come away a better person. You are better able to add to society. I don't know of a candidate like myself who is bitter.

2. Most candidates feel they have a chance to win.  
Another somewhat surprising finding concerned the number of candidates who felt they might defeat the incumbent. This perception was shared by challengers in competitive and non-competitive districts. Of the fifteen challengers who ran in non-competitive districts, only two stated without qualification that they thought they would lose each time they ran. Ten of the respondents felt they had some chance to win, and two were confident that they would win. Several of those challengers who said they were pessimistic about their chances nevertheless admitted harboring hopes that the impossible might happen. One candidate remarked that this attitude is common among sure losers:
There is a syndrome among sacrificial lamb candidates which I call the "perhaps" or "maybe" syndrome. It is a feeling that, despite the odds, perhaps I can beat the incumbent. Even if the odds are fifty to one, perhaps that lightning bolt will strike.

One can see clear evidence of this attitude in the comment of a candidate who was decisively defeated four consecutive times. Asked why he decided to make a fourth attempt, he said:

...I think I did very well my third time. I proved my point. So everything was established for the fourth time, and it should have been won. But it wasn't won...

Another candidate in a non-competitive district, a Democrat, commented that both times he ran he had an "enormously strong conviction" that he would win. But, as he now remarks, "hindsight says there was very substantial naiveté going on."

There is evidence of the tendency to believe victory is possible even in the most unlikely situations. One of the candidates interviewed ran twice in a district in which his party's nominee had never received as much as thirty per cent of the vote. After getting twenty-two per cent of the vote in his initial attempt to unseat the incumbent, he explained his decision to run again by saying:
I had no illusions of grandeur... I felt there was a chance—a slim chance—but I felt as long as there was a chance I'd take it... I'm not easily dissuaded to quit. I'm a hangdog type.

Another challenger, running in a district in which the incumbent had received over seventy per cent of the vote in the previous two elections, felt he might be able to win by playing a waiting game: "We thought that if we could stick around for a couple of times just by sheer attrition we could pull it off." As Jeff Fishel paraphrased Boss Plunkitt's epitaph, "He seen no opportunities but he took 'em anyway."

The tendency for candidates to believe they can win, especially those in non-competitive districts, may be an attempt to justify the considerable effort required to mount a congressional campaign. One can only speculate as to whether the candidate actually has convinced himself that he can win, or instead is talking a good game to generate support and sustain interest in the campaign. Either way, this attitude serves to rationalize involvement in an otherwise hopeless struggle.

Kingdom found that winning candidates engage in a similar practice. Successful candidates tend to perpetuate uncertainty about the outcome—to run "scared"—so that campaign workers and contributors will be encouraged to maintain a maximum effort.12
Kingdon also reports that past election statistics are strongly relied upon as indicators of probable election outcome. If this is true of congressional candidates, how then to explain the tendency for challengers in non-competitive districts to believe they can win? Surely, past statistics cannot be the basis for their beliefs. Perhaps challengers are engaging in pure self-deception. Or, if Kingdon is correct, perhaps winning candidates are so successful in creating uncertainty that their opponents begin to believe them. As one challenger in an extremely non-competitive district commented, "[the incumbent] keeps telling everyone I'm the toughest candidate he's ever faced...that I could win almost anywhere else." In effect, by increasing the hopes of challengers he has previously defeated, the incumbent is maximizing his own chances for reelection. As long as two and three-time losers are able to retain their party's nomination in non-competitive districts, incumbents are not likely to face new, and possibly more effective, opposition.

3. Congressional elections are isolated phenomena. That is, few of the candidates suggested that external forces--such as presidential elections--had a significant impact on the outcome of their particular contests. Since all of the candidates ran in at least one presidential election year, this lack of mention is surprising. As losers, it seems likely that a number of challengers would
have rationalized their defeats by saying that a weak presidential nominee in a given year had hurt their election effort. For example, Democratic candidates in 1972 might be expected to blame their defeat on the McGovern nomination. Likewise, in 1974 Republicans could cite national dissatisfaction with the Watergate scandal. However, of six Democrats running in 1972, only two suggested that the McGovern candidacy hurt their chances, and of seven Republicans running in 1974, only one mentioned Watergate.  

This finding might suggest that candidates are not very sensitive to electoral events on a broader level. Or, it might suggest that candidates feel voters are acutely aware of the personalities and issues in the congressional race in their district, and decide on that basis. Whatever the case, this perception results in strengthening the candidate's belief that campaigns are very important in deciding the outcome of elections. Correspondingly, challengers are likely to devalue party trends and "presidential tide" as determinants of electoral performance.

This could account for the number of candidates who run again after an election in which they do "surprisingly" well. For example, regular Democrats in 1974 increased their share of the two-party vote by about seven percentage points (see Chapter Four). Two years later, seventeen Democratic challengers ran again, ten in non-competitive
districts. To emphasize, this means that ten Democratic candidates—all who received less than forty-five per cent of the vote in an extremely strong Democratic year—decided to run again. And, if earlier findings in this study offer any indication, most of them felt they had a chance to win. The only explanation seems to be that many candidates are insensitive to the electoral "climate" of a given election year.

The interview sample included five of the ten non-competitive Democrats mentioned above. Of those five, only one suggested that any external factor affected his electoral performance. In that solitary instance, the candidate mentioned that the resignation of President Nixon prior to the 1974 campaign hurt his chances of defeating the incumbent. Two of the five attributed their losses to the power of incumbency, and one felt he did not devote enough time to building up support "among people who were ready to make a change."

Leuthold found a similar lack of appreciation of electoral trends in his study of San Francisco area congressional candidates. He concluded that "candidates often did not realize that they had no chance of winning." For example, one of the Democratic candidates he interviewed felt that he might win because the Democratic gubernatorial nominee had carried his district in 1958. As Leuthold states, "he overlooked or did not weigh appropriately the
fact that 1958, a year of Democratic triumphs across the
nation, was not likely to be repeated." Leuthold attri-
butes this misperception to a lack of experience, finding
that experienced candidates gave more serious and accurate
consideration to their chances. Inexperience should be
less of a factor for rerun challengers, however. As rerun
candidates, they have been intimately involved in at least
two congressional campaigns, and many have been involved
in other campaigns in a non-candidate capacity. Though
inexperience is certainly a factor, perhaps the tendency to
perceive campaigns in relative isolation is a result of
what Kingdon calls "a human tendency to believe the world
in which they live revolves around themselves." For
many challengers, to perceive themselves as passive actors
in a drama over which they have little control would be to
deny the essence of candidacy itself. That is, feelings
of personal efficacy and satisfaction, as well as the image
of the community activist, are less likely to develop for
the "faceless" candidate.

Of the candidate perceptions discussed here, perhaps
this is the attitude which distinguishes rerunners from
regular challengers. The lack of mention of external events
is extremely surprising. Though there is evidence that the
respondents rationalized thier losses (in the Kingdon
sense) they do not choose the most convenient vehicle for
that rationalization: unavoidable national trends or
events. This may be at the heart of the rerun experience, for, as I argue above, to acknowledge the existence of uncontrollable forces is to question the decision to run again. Such a consideration is particularly appropriate for those candidates who ran a second time in years which were disastrous for their party, e.g., Democrats in 1972 or Republicans in 1974. Lacking a comparative sample of non-rerun candidates, the "uniqueness" of this perception is speculative. It would, however, explain why the candidates demonstrated little inclination to rationalize in the expected manner.

4. He who spends most wins. While this may be somewhat of an overstatement, it accurately reflects the attitude of a majority of the challengers interviewed. The problem of campaign financing was often introduced into the conversation by the candidates before any mention was made by the interviewer.

For several of the challengers, winning elections was simply a manner of spending enough money. As one candidate put it, "there was only one reason I didn't win in 1974, and that was a failure of money sources." Another complained about a state party chairman who didn't make a strong enough effort to raise funds for the candidate's campaign:
If he would have believed as much as I did that I could have won, he would have put forth more effort and raised more money. We would have spent more money and we would have beat the guy.

The same candidate attributed his loss to spending by the incumbent:

We were just overwhelmed by a tremendous amount of money that was poured in the last ten days or two weeks—we weren't able to cope with that.

Another challenger felt the same way, saying that:

...the one thing that defeated me, without question, was the fact that I had no means to get the word out. This simply shows the power of money in a campaign...

Even in highly non-competitive districts, the importance of spending large amounts of money was emphasized. One candidate, after being soundly defeated the first time, felt that to win the second time "all I had to do was work a little harder and spend a little more money."

Another candidate, running in a district which had not given his party's candidate thirty per cent of the vote in ten years, said of his district: "It could change with the right amount of money." Only one candidate expressed doubt that heavier expenditures would tip the scales in his favor. Analyzing his two defeats, the candidate admitted that "it is only speculative that spending large amounts of money would have made any difference." Speculative indeed,
for the candidate received 10.1 and 8.7 per cent of the vote, respectively, in his two tries for office.

The perceived ability to defeat the incumbent is clearly a factor in how much financial support a candidate receives. Said one challenger:

Most people who know anything about contributing to a political campaign want to be sure that their investment is not going to be wasted. They like to see whether the guy has got a chance.

The same candidate suggested that the timing of contributions is very important:

It is a question of money—and when it becomes available. In both of my campaigns, the bulk of the money came very late, at which time it was almost too late to do a proper job of spending it.

One challenger mentioned the difficulty in getting funds after having already lost once, particularly if the second election is during a presidential year. Contributors may feel their money is better spent on the national campaign. In spite of this difficulty, the challenger felt that enough contributions could have been generated. She only half-jokingly summarized what many candidates feel:

The funds could have been raised. We just weren't sophisticated enough about how to do it and I think we were still pretty naive about what you needed to buy the office (my emphasis).
The belief in the importance of money in congressional campaigns may be related to the "isolated campaign" perception discussed above. Whether or not money does have a major impact is an empirical question, but surely its importance is overemphasized by many challengers. It strains credibility to believe that money alone could change the outcome in many districts. However, if one assumes that candidates feel campaigns are isolated occurrences, then almost anything can be achieved. This group of candidates, like those surveyed by other researchers, "believe in the ability of the good campaigner to produce the result he wishes."19 This attitude exists despite considerable evidence that candidates and campaigns usually have little to do with election outcomes.20

Some of the perceptual similarities observed among congressional challengers may explain why many candidates are recruited and, in this instance, why some run again. From the challenger's perspective, elections are rewarding, even if they lose. And most feel that if only enough money can be raised, they just might be able to pull off a miracle. Anything is possible, of course, because a well-thought out campaign can produce results in the relatively parochial world of congressional elections.

Oversimplified? Perhaps, but just such a chain of assumptions can be detected in the responses given by many candidates. Furthermore, if such assumptions are made it
can be easily seen how individuals decide—even in demonstrably non-competitive districts—to run for Congress.

5. **Party organizations do not help candidates very much.** It can be said with some confidence that defeated candidates for Congress do not hold their respective party organizations in high regard. This negative orientation is shared by candidates of both parties, regardless of district competitiveness and level of party organization. One of the more vituperous evaluations of party support was offered by the candidate who said:

> You have to understand that the party has been controlled by a bunch of lamebrains. When parties are powerful they tend to draw forward a bunch of numbskulls. We threw out all the deadwood after 1974.

Another candidate summed up a long list of things the party failed to do by saying, "It wasn't what they didn't do for me, it's what they don't do for anybody."

Both of the above comments were made by Republicans, one in a competitive district, one in a non-competitive district. Democrats were equally negative in their evaluations. Several criticized the lack of party financial support—a common theme among challengers of both parties—especially if the district had not been "targeted" as winnable. A four-time loser (a Democrat) commented that:
The party just does not have the money they would like to have...The state party would not send a nickel in here, because it had been marked off as a district that couldn't be won. It was the same with the national party...At no time that I have ever run has the party ever put money into this district.

A Republican loser expressed similar sentiments:

That's a problem with the Republican Party. They neglect districts no matter how good the candidate is. If they figure they can't win based on the registration, they just ignore it. They'll pour money into open districts. They will not put money into districts with a strong incumbent regardless of the quality of the candidate running against him. I've seen them waste $500,000 on a district no matter how bad the candidate was.

A Democrat complained about party organization in general:

A significant problem for Democrats is the lack of organization...which creates divisiveness...Each candidate has to build his own organization. It's very personalistic.

Lack of party organization is synonymous with party weakness. The ineffectiveness of the out-party organization in a one-party area is particularly acute. A non-competitive Republican said that his party was:

...virtually nonexistent. Out of 350 precincts that are entitled to elect precinct delegates, last year there were 54 elected. Prior to that time there were only 25.

A Democrat in a non-competitive district echoed those sentiments, although in his case it enabled him to keep
the nomination during four consecutive campaigns. The third time he won the primary despite party opposition:

That just shows what kind of party we've got when they couldn't beat me. (The party backed candidate) spent $25,000, with the party endorsement, and I still beat them. I spent $3,000 and didn't do a damn thing.

The only positive evaluation of party support made by a candidate did not relate to his campaign, but to that of his opponent. The challenger attributed his loss to a strong Republican effort:

The effective thing about his campaign was the Republican Party. They were there regardless—whether he showed up or not, their people were there...They had the money to back them in the district. They're a tough organization.

It is interesting to find that both competitive and non-competitive candidates are critical of party organization. Challengers whose chances are negligible might be expected to register negative opinions, for their requests for assistance—financial and otherwise—are not likely to be granted. Leuthold found this to be true, concluding that sure winners and competitive candidates were more likely than sure losers to have their requests fulfilled by party organizations. Since sure winners didn't need much help, most of the resources went to competitive campaigns.21
At the general level, competitive candidates have been shown to be more successful acquiring and utilizing resources. Several political commentators have noted the relationship between intensity of electoral competition and the level of political spending. Arnold Heideheimer, Alexander Heard, David Adamany, and Leuthold all have found this relationship to exist in a number of political settings. More recent studies have found a similar relationship. Of course, the findings reported in Chapter Five also support such a conclusion.

It is thus revealing that the competitive candidates interviewed were particularly critical of the lack of financial assistance they received from their party organizations. The candidates were critical not only of the lack of direct financial support by their parties, but also of party ineffectiveness in helping cultivate other sources of support. As one challenger put it:

They could do a lot just supporting the candidate's effort to raise funds. But they don't bother...They're just totally inept...A lot of people think somehow or other magically the party gives you plenty of money, and that you actually make a little from the campaign. The party...in total donations in my campaigns, gave me zero dollars.

Challengers of both parties were also critical of the level of party support they received. Thus, even though there are fundamental differences in the bases of financial support for the parties, and even though the structure of
party fund raising and disbursement differs substantially between the parties, losing challengers on both sides are dissatisfied.

The almost consensually held belief among losing congressional challengers that parties are ineffective, and that they could have done much more to help their campaigns, may be related to the set of attitudes discussed earlier. Unsuccessful candidates are faced with the reality of losing, yet few are willing to attribute their losses to such irresistible, impersonal forces as presidential pull or "national mood." Lacking something tangible—or personal—to blame, candidates focus on those purveyors of broken promises: party organizations. Pinning the blame for defeat on ineffective party organization seems especially plausible for the challenger of he can associate it with his inability to get enough money. The reasoning is direct and attractive: "I could have won with enough money, and I didn't get enough money because of our incompetent (county, state, national) party leaders."

6. Running for Congress is a difficult job. Perhaps the most neglected area in the literature concerning political candidacy is personal cost. That is, with few exceptions studies of recruitment and candidacy ignore a central question: What price does an individual pay by being a political candidate? What sacrifices—personal, financial, occupational—must he make?
Several works have dealt to some extent with these questions, though the focus is often from a biographical (or autobiographical) perspective. Even then, the story is usually told through the eyes of an incumbent—a winner. Leuthold does offer an excellent summary of the factors considered by candidates, including economic, occupational, family, and other personal considerations. The neglect of these factors by students of Congress is unfortunate, for it seems that they weigh heavily on the minds of most congressional candidates. In fact, it is nearly a universal opinion among this group of challengers that being a candidate is a tough job.

Several items on the questionnaire dealt with the respondent's evaluation of costs associated with political candidacy. The responses fell into three basic categories: personal, psychological, and financial-occupational. Psychological costs are those relating to the emotional or intellectual aspects of candidacy, while personal costs relate to more specific, tangible concerns.

A candidate's personal life is often dramatically altered during the campaign. The basic problem is lack of time. Campaigning is a time-consuming commitment, particularly for a challenger whose name and appearance are unfamiliar to most voters. One candidate, a woman who was otherwise very favorably disposed toward candidacy, said that her family:
...just didn't have much of a mother for a substantial period of time...I gave up any time for myself, and I gave up a lot of sleep, and I gave up meeting my responsibilities to my family and to my law practice.

Several of the respondents spoke of the physical punishment one undergoes as a candidate. One mentioned that he developed tendinitis in his arm during the campaign: "I literally wore out my arm from shaking hands." A Republican who ran two extremely hard campaigns in a competitive district said:

...you push yourself so hard...in general, it really taxes you...you have to be a bear for physical punishment...

Another competitive Republican stated:

The sacrifices in terms of your personal life are overwhelming. The basic rule of politics is that you are spending time with people who don't like you.

Though the personal sacrifices candidates must make were often mentioned, they seemed to be the kind of sacrifices that "come with the territory," and thus were easier to accept. One of the candidates just quoted, for example, added that the costs make it "a growth experience, and that's good." Psychological costs, those associated with emotional or intellectual upset, were not as easily rationalized. Perhaps this is true because costs of this nature are less predictable and consequently less easily
prepared for. One candidate was upset by the roles he had to play during the campaign. Because of his low name recognition level, he and his family set up a street corner booth and "sold the gospel" to passersby. It was an experience he did not enjoy:

It's hard to believe you're running for such a serious office. You have to play the clown to get votes. People said, "Oh, we saw you, we'll vote for you." They don't have the slightest idea what is in my heart or what is between my ears. It's all part of the American way.

Another candidate found it difficult to ask family and friends for other than their vote. For him, the toughest part of candidacy was:

...the requirement of taking advantage, if you can use those words, of so many close personal relationships, in terms of being required to ask them for financial contributions and ask them for their time.

Several candidates had a difficult time adjusting to other actors in the electoral environment. Of voters:

People tend to be close-minded, they won't listen to you...you feel like you are beating your head against the wall.

And of opponents:

One of the real sacrifices which most people in this business sort of discount, but which I never really quite got over—was the personal villification.
In terms of measurable costs, the most often mentioned candidate sacrifice was financial. Though this varied, depending primarily on the challenger's occupation, most of the candidates (17 of 25) mentioned some form of financial hardship due to their candidacy. All eight of the candidates who claimed no financial sacrifice ran in non-competitive districts. In fact, several of the candidates remarked that they specifically refused to use personal funds in their campaigns. As one said:

My feeling was that people who were willing to run for the office—under the circumstances we had—could not be expected to do their own financing...I made an issue of the point that I would try to run the best campaign that I could on the basis of the money that other people raised.

This should not be taken to imply that non-competitive candidates often do not make heavy financial sacrifices. Almost half (7 of 15) of the challengers in non-competitive districts said that running for Congress represented a considerable financial investment. In fact, one non-competitive candidate claimed that he had been set back in his career at least several years, and that, including savings, his campaigns probably cost him around $30,000.

Several candidates were forced to give up any further immediate political ambitions due to lack of personal funds. One such candidate, a Democrat in a Midwestern district, said that he had gone into debt "very, very
substantially," and that he wanted to run a third time (when the incumbent was retiring), but could not:

Lack of money became a foreclosing factor in 1974. I didn't have any doubt I could have won the 1974 election. I did not run at that point because of one reason—finances.

The expenditure of personal funds often required to sustain a campaign is sometimes aggravated by occupational problems. Quite simply, it is difficult to make up campaign deficits if you can't hold your job. Two candidates, one a Democrat, the other a Republican, were forced to seek other jobs when employers looked unfavorably upon their political activities. The Republican, a public relations consultant for a major retailer, explained that:

There was no way in the world I could be a partisan political candidate and represent my employer in a public affairs capacity... Some clients I had attracted simply weren't interested in being represented by a political candidate. One, there is the question of stigma, and two, they wonder how you can be serious as a candidate and still give them much of your time and attention.

The Democrat expressed similar thoughts, saying:

People in business...don't really like having an employee who is spending as much time in politics as I was. It definitely creates a dual interest and your employer recognizes that it is hurting your effort toward his end.
Of course, public knowledge that an employee is a candidate can have the opposite effect. As one challenger described his employer's attitude toward his candidacy:

There is a sense of pride in having someone like me around. Not me personally, but the idea that we have this guy who ran for Congress and he's kind of nifty and he's on TV and stuff.

It is clear, however, that this sort of employer attitude is somewhat unusual.

7. Incumbency is a powerful factor in a congressional campaign. Asked about their opponents, the most prevalent perception held by this group of challengers dealt with the power of incumbency. It was not unusual for the challengers to mention this power prior to their being explicitly asked about incumbency. As one of the respondents interjected:

Somebody someday ought to write a book on incumbency. This thing that's going on with incumbency, with the computerization of voting lists and so on, has a very active possibility of simply derailing the representative form of government. The people are voting for the incumbent regardless of issues. They are voting for the incumbent based on whether or not they've gotten letters from him. These people actually think they've gotten letters from the congressman. It's unbelievable. The only people who really know how powerful this is are the most suspect group—the people who ran against the incumbent and lost...There are two ways you can beat the incumbent. Either shoot him or have your sister seduce him on national TV.
As you might suspect from the tone of the remarks, the challenger in question was somewhat embittered by his experience. He had been narrowly defeated twice following hotly contested campaigns. In his response, however, is a commonly held perception by those interviewed: incumbents are extremely difficult to defeat due to the advantage of office.

The challenger's reference to letters sent by the incumbent was echoed by many of those interviewed. Though the section of the questionnaire relating to incumbency advantages was basically unstructured, a large majority of the challengers specifically mentioned devices used by incumbents to increase their chances for re-election. The franking privilege was mentioned by a number of the candidates, with two candidates relating that they were even on the incumbent's mailing list.

Though the challengers were aware of the difficulty candidates face in defeating incumbents, and though that difficulty is due (they argue) to the nature of incumbent privileges, there was a considerable lack of consensus about restricting those privileges. Though no item on the questionnaire specifically dealt with restricting incumbent advantages, ten of the respondents mentioned possible reforms. Six were in favor of some kind of restriction, especially on the franking privilege and the use of the "non-political" congressional newsletter. Four
respondents, however, argued that no limitations should be placed on the use of privileges by the incumbent.

Though most of those favoring restrictions were not specific about what kinds of reforms should be adopted, several candidates suggested joint mailing privileges, laws restricting newsletter mailing for a longer period prior to the election than now exists, and restricting incumbent spending to a level below that of challengers.

One of those who opposed restrictions on the use of incumbent perquisites felt that such advantages are "natural," and broadened this further to say that he was "totally opposed to any restriction on how a candidate may use campaign funds." Perhaps the reluctance on the part of challengers to limit the instruments of incumbent advantage is due to the fact that challengers are seeking to become incumbents. One candidate, after saying that he felt incumbent advantages were "unfair," added:

But the name of the game is staying elected... and these people are going to give themselves advantages. It's very easy for me to say things should be changed, but in all honesty, I just wonder what I'd do if I were up there...how hard I'd fight to change it.

And, as several candidates stated, regardless how "unfair" those advantages are, they would not hesitate to use them if elected:
Getting elected. That's the tough part...
Once a guy is elected, that's it. I told
my people, "we get in, they'll never get
us out."

Said another:

Incumbency advantages are unbelievable. If
I win this time I assure you no one will
touch me. That's how strong those advan-
tages are.

Not surprisingly, all three of the above comments were
made by challengers in competitive districts, men who were
very nearly elected.

Several of the candidates also suggested that the
incumbent has advantages beyond congressional perquisites
or campaign contributions. Incumbency itself confers upon
the holder a kind of preeminence, allowing him to bypass
obstacles challengers confront daily. As one candidate
said, the incumbent was particularly effective during the
latter stages of the campaign, getting appearances in the
district not available to the challenger—"the kinds of
appearances incumbents have by snapping their fingers."
Another challenger commented that the incumbent:

...has entree into every group in the commun-
ity. He uses his image very effectively. When
a congressman comes and talks to you, it's not
as though he is coming and asking for something,
it's as if he is coming and reporting to you.
When a candidate comes, he says 'please support
me'—he is asking for something. It's a real
psychological disadvantage.
Another of those interviewed related an instance in which he had originally been scheduled to speak to a bipartisan rally after the incumbent had spoken. The incumbent refused to speak under those arrangements:

He made it known in no uncertain terms that he would speak when he wanted—he had the prerogative, he was the incumbent. (emphasis added)

That same candidate complained that "we don't have statesmen, we have politicians. All they are interested in is re-election...perpetuating themselves."

Probably the most revealing finding from the interviews came from those candidates who ran in competitive districts. Ten of the respondents faced incumbents in competitive situations, and of that group, four remarked that it is not likely that they would work to restrict incumbent privileges if elected. In fact, these challengers planned to utilize them to keep their seats. Nearly all of the strong anti-privilege comments came from non-competitive challengers. This suggests, at least, that the likelihood of any future restriction in this area by way of newly elected congressmen is remote. If anything, the heightened desire to remain in office on the part of new incumbents could lead to increased congressional perquisites and less reform. 30
Challenger Attitudes and Political Recruitment

Before continuing, it seems wise to review the six common challenger attitudes just discussed:

1. Running for Congress is a personally rewarding experience.
2. Most candidates feel they have a chance to win.
3. Congressional elections are isolated phenomena.
4. He who spends most wins.
5. Party organizations do not help very much.
6. Running for Congress is a difficult job.
7. Incumbency is a powerful factor in a congressional campaign.

Read individually, the observations may seem unrelated. However, it is the interrelationship between attitudes which determines, to a large extent, who runs for office and how campaigns are conducted.

The first three perceptions provide an important stimulus to candidate recruitment. To emphasize this point, read the converse of each statement. That is, if being a candidate is generally unsatisfying and unrewarding, if most candidates feel they have no chance to win, and if elections are perceived as being subject to forces over which candidates have no control, it is difficult to imagine why anyone would run for Congress. Even if some candidates were motivated to run, one would have reason to be wary of the quality of those individuals. Such an attitude
would be warranted because the first three perceptions are associated with qualities we presumably value in our leaders. That is, our leaders should be independent individuals, personally decisive, exhibiting aggressiveness and strength. We would like them to be self-confident, able to begin a difficult task and see it through. The assumption is that individuals possessing these characteristics are not likely to run if they do not perceive candidacy in a manner consistent with the first three statements.

This is not an argument that the three statements are valid or describe electoral reality. On the contrary, this study has shown that the second and third perceptions are not supported by the available evidence. In this instance, however, empirical reality is not the most important consideration. As long as individuals perceive candidacy as they now seem to, it will continue to be an attractive career choice.

The fourth and sixth perceptions have an opposite affect on the process of candidate recruitment. Running for Congress is a difficult job, one made even more difficult be the impact of money on electoral outcomes. Again, whether money is that crucial a factor is irrelevant. If potential candidates believe it to be the case, and if they do not have access to large amounts of money, they are not likely to seek office. Similarly, if the
sacrifices a candidate must make in terms of his personal life, his psychological needs, his financial situation, and his job are too great he will choose other career alternatives.

The fifth perception, that parties are not much help in campaigns, has a more ambiguous impact on the recruitment of political leaders. At first inspection, it might seem to discourage potential candidates who feel they need all the help they can get during their campaigns. For many candidates, this may indeed be the case. However, it seems equally plausible that a weak party organization—perceived or real—may actually stimulate recruitment. Politically interested individuals who feel that the nomination can be secured without recourse to political kingmakers and smoke-filled rooms will be more likely to seek office in a weak party environment. As several candidates stated, in such districts "the nomination is there if I want it."

A Note on Campaign Strategy

As noted in the introductory chapter, one point of interest in conducting the interviews was the comparison of initial and subsequent electoral strategies. The assumption was that strategies would change from one campaign to the next, particularly since the first try for office had been unsuccessful. By comparing the different strategies
utilized by challengers, some measure of the effectiveness of various campaign techniques could be made.

Surprisingly, most of the respondents claimed that their strategies in fact varied little from one campaign to the next. Other than some variation in the "mix" with which certain techniques (media, personal contact, etc.) were used, very little fundamental change in campaign strategy took place. That is, few of the challengers described any shift in the utilization of campaign funds, (e.g., from purchasing radio time to pamphleteering, or from hiring staff to buying newspaper space), or in personnel (e.g., from one area of the district to another).

This lack of change reflects, to a certain extent, the scarcity of campaign funds, and the limitations such scarcity imposes. Thus, a first-time challenger with little money must use those techniques which are least expensive; walking the district, bumper stickers, etc. The second time around, regardless how much the challenger desires television exposure or district-wide mailings, if the money isn't there he may be forced into a repeat of his first campaign.

Of course, the lack of flexibility may also be related to the lack of success this group has in common. Even the candidates in competitive districts, who had larger campaign chests than their non-competitive counterparts, exhibited a tendency to stick to tried-and-true campaign strategies.
This was not true of everyone interviewed, for several challengers suggested that they spent more money in the second campaign on techniques which were perceived to be effective the first time around. In general, however, it was apparent that many of the rerunners felt that the campaigns they conducted were as effective as could be expected, within resource constraints. And there is the rub, for perhaps the rerunners are correct in assuming that the quality of campaign strategy is less important than quantity—more is better. Considering the importance attributed money by this group, this perception is hardly surprising.

*       *       *

It is clear that the seven perceptions summarized in this chapter are a mixed bag. Three perceptions seem to work to enhance recruitment (rewards, chances, isolated phenomena), two tend to discourage recruitment (money, difficulty), and the impact of two may depend largely on the competitiveness of the electoral situation (parties, incumbency). What happens when the perceptions are combined? How do they—as a package—affect political recruitment?

In the next chapter those questions are addressed by looking at pieces of evidence concerning rerun and regular elections, campaign financing, incumbency advantages, and candidate attitudes. By considering congressional
candidacy from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, one can arrive at a fuller understanding of the process of political recruitment.
1. A complete description of sample selection criteria and sample composition, along with detailed information concerning interview methodology, is included in Chapter Two.

2. Respondents were asked: When did you first get interested in politics? How did this come about?

3. Respondents were asked: Was there much political discussion or involvement in your family?


6. The candidates were asked: Were you ever active as a party worker? When? Have you ever held an elective office before?


8. Ibid., p. 159.

9. The candidates were asked a series of questions concerning their orientation to candidacy. The questions were: 1) What kind of experience was running for office for you? Could you relate specific experiences that make you feel that way? 2) Was political candidacy any different than you expected? If it was different, how did it differ from your expectations? 3) Could you tell me about specific experiences you either liked or disliked about your campaigns? 4) Did you find political candidacy an enjoyable experience? 5) Most of the things you have mentioned have been on the (positive/negative) side. What about some of the (opposite) aspects of running for office?

10. Respondents were asked: "Did you think you would win the first time you ran? How about the second time you ran--were your chances better then, about the same, or worse?


13. Ibid., p. 89.

14. I am speaking of spontaneous mentions as candidates were responding to questionnaire items concerning election outcome (see Note 15, below).

15. Respondents were asked: 1) What would you say were the principal reasons for the election turning out as it did in your district the first time you ran? 2) How about the second time you ran? Were the reasons for the election turning out as it did any different then? 3) How much was the vote affected by traditional party loyalties—people voting for you because you belong to one party and for your opponent because he belongs to the other?


18. As discussed in Chapter Five, the amount of money spent by challengers, but not incumbents, may be related to the number of votes received. See Gary Jacobson, "The Effects of Campaign Spending in Presidential Elections," *American Political Science Review* 72 (June 1978): 469-491.


CHAPTER NOTES (continued)


24. Of course, this is not meant to suggest that parties are expected to be the main source of campaign funds. For example, Clem found that parties were not the primary provider of funds in any of the seven campaigns he analyzed (Clem, p. 243).

25. See Adamany, especially Chapter Five (pp. 126-178).


28. The candidates were asked: 1) What were some of the attitudes of your family and friends about your decision to run? 2) What types of sacrifices did you have to make to run for Congress? For example, was your candidacy difficult for you financially? 3) How about your job--did running for office create any conflicts there? See also Note 10.

29. Only three items specifically mentioned incumbency advantages. They are: What advantages did your opponent have that you did not?; Specifically, how did your opponent use his status as the incumbent against you during the campaign?; and How about the second election? Did your opponent use his status differently than he did the first time?

30. In fact, a recent House action to limit the amount of postal patron mailing a member can make has had the effect of increasing the number of such mailings, since more members have taken advantage of a provision in the law which allows "occupant" mailing totaling six times the number of postal patrons in the district. Washington Post, November 25, 1978, sec. A, p. 1.

31. Many studies have been done of personal characteristics desired in political leaders by voters. For a list of characteristics and a review of the work in this area, see Leuthold, p. 24.
CHAPTER VIII

RECRUITMENT, INCUMBENCY, AND REPRESENTATION

The study began by professing an interest in political recruitment, yet has spent a great deal of time talking about campaign finance, election outcomes, and incumbency advantages. That such phenomena are interesting stems from a belief that candidate recruitment and the general electoral context are conceptually inseparable. That is, potential candidates must made a number of decisions which are clearly campaign-related. Will sufficient resource support be available? How can the gap between the challenger and incumbent be narrowed? Can the challenger win? Will the reward be greater than the cost? The task in this chapter is to consider what implications the answers to these questions have for the recruitment process. Also, in this chapter the problem of incumbency and representation is considered. Have incumbency advantages worked to minimize electoral sanctions? If so, will this result in "poorer" representation, since elections may no longer hold legislators accountable? Such questions are clearly of
concern for this study, for, as Richard Fenno notes, "the problem of running for office cannot be separated from the problem of representing while in office."¹

**Electoral Reality and Challenger Perceptions**

The analysis of congressional elections has surely made one point strikingly clear: most challengers lose. Indeed, it seems a reasonable assumption that many men and women regard a negative evaluation of their electoral chances as a foreclosing factor, thus deciding not to become candidates. Despite these generally long odds against success, however, many other individuals do decide to run.² They are able to reconcile electoral reality and their own ambitions in a number of ways.

First, for many individuals candidacy seems to be an end in itself. As one writer has concluded, "the reward is in the running rather than in the winning."³ Similarly, some individuals may view candidacy as a way to work for the party, or to fulfill civic obligations. For others candidacy may be an occupational boost, a unique way to advertise themselves that might not otherwise exist. For a variety of reasons, then, just being a candidate may be enough.

Potential challengers are further able to reduce any dissonance in their perceptions of candidacy by minimizing realistic evaluations of eventual success and maximizing
their "lightning might strike" fantasies. This so-called "syndrome of maybe" seems to be quite pronounced, and is apparent even in those individuals who have no practical chance to win.

The consequence of the intellectual and emotional processes many candidates undergo is to reduce the importance of electoral reality as a barrier to political recruitment. This is clearly true for the sample of rerun candidates interviewed here. Losing the first time—and sometimes the second and third time—did little to diminish their desire to become candidates again. It is not a great leap to imagine that many people considering candidacy, never having actually tested the cold electoral waters themselves, view these barriers as even less intimidating.

Finances, Parties, and Recruitment

Though candidates are often able to minimize probable election outcome as a determinant of their decision to run, they are still faced with the problems of campaign financing and weak party organization. In an earlier chapter it was reported that challengers rate money very highly as a campaign resource, and that most desire a great deal of party support. Yet it was also found that a basic inequity exists between challengers and incumbents in terms of money spent, and that most challengers agreed that party support had been woefully ineffective. How are candidates--
and people considering becoming candidates—able to resolve these inconsistencies?

The financial question is difficult, one which seems answerable only if the impact of district competitiveness on the decision to run is considered. As reported in Chapter Five, there is a wide disparity between challenger and incumbent spending. That disparity is most apparent, however, in non-competitive districts. Non-competitive challengers, though sharing their competitive counterparts' belief in the efficacy of money, are not likely to perceive the difficulty in obtaining it as critical. In such districts non-electoral considerations (personal satisfaction, community obligation, etc.) are more likely to be at the root of candidate motivation. In short, non-competitive challengers value candidacy for reasons not related to winning; thus, their inability to get much money is not as important as it might be for competitive candidates.

An additional finding in Chapter Five was that candidates in competitive districts were able to compete on relatively even terms with incumbents for campaign monies. This is crucial, for if competitive challengers could not generate significant support, then they could not be very successful (they believe) at the polls. The empirical truth of the perceived high correlation between money and votes is not at issue. As long as challengers feel that money—a lot of money—is essential to run an effective campaign, and
as long as those in competitive districts are able to successfully acquire it, candidate recruitment will be enhanced.

Party weakness, as discussed in the preceding chapter, may actually serve to stimulate recruitment by leaving the field wide open for interested individuals. It would be more of a problem for recruitment if the process were dependent upon strong party organizations systematically working to attract qualified candidates. In most congressional districts, however, it seems that initial contacts are made from citizens to parties, rather than vice versa. Three-fifths of the candidates interviewed explicitly described themselves as self-starters. In sum, it seems safe to say that the role parties play in political recruitment, at least in the initiating stage, is minimal.

Personal Cost and Recruitment

The difficulties inherent in candidacy, mainly in the form of personal sacrifices candidates must make, probably do serve to limit the number of individuals who consider running for office. These sacrifices are most apparent for competitive candidates, since in closely contested elections personal costs tend to be highest. Non-competitive challengers are much less likely to be deterred from running by cost considerations.

Several factors work to mitigate the negative impact of personal cost on candidate recruitment. First, even
though complaining of sometimes severe sacrifices that were necessary, most candidates still felt that the effort was worthwhile and very rewarding. Second, the extent of personal cost cannot be determined before the candidate has actually run. It is likely that during deliberations leading to candidacy some degree of rationalization takes place. Also, promises of support—whether they are kept or not—probably serve to alleviate a potential candidate's fears that costs might be prohibitive. Finally, though personal sacrifice is more likely to be a consideration for competitive candidates, this is at least partially offset by the fact that they are more successful in acquiring financial resources. Thus, challengers who pay the highest material price for their candidacy also generate the greatest degree of resource support.

Incumbency and Recruitment

One arrives finally at the question of incumbency effects and political recruitment. Incumbency, as it is perceived by congressional challengers, is a two-edged sword. That is, the value of incumbency in terms of winning elections has grown to the point that it may serve to discourage possible candidates from making the effort. This effect would seem to be especially pronounced for candidates who have a realistic chance to win—i.e., those in competitive districts—and is less important for non-competitive
or "sacrificial lamb" candidates. Challengers with little chance to win are less likely to base their decision to run on electoral criteria.

An alternative interpretation is that challengers are actually encouraged to seek office because of incumbent strength. To explain, one should look more closely at the individuals who make the decision to run for Congress. By and large, challengers (particularly those in competitive districts) tend to be relatively successful men and women, often young, and presumably located in stable career situations. While not always wealthy, this assumes that most challengers are earning a sufficient income to preclude their seeking office for purely financial reasons. These generalizations certainly obtain for the group of rerun candidates interviewed for this study.

What would happen if the congressional career were characterized by a high rate of turnover, personal insecurity, and difficult reelection campaigns every two years? Would many individuals occupying otherwise successful, secure stations in life be motivated to run for office? But if a candidate, once elected, was fairly certain that he could retain the office at his pleasure, would not his incentive to run be greater? The incentive might be greater still if the new career promised financial stability at least commensurate with his previous occupation. Add to the package the inviting prospect of personal recognition that
goes along with being a congressman, and the attractiveness of candidacy is further increased.

The fact is that incumbent invulnerability, as it is perceived by potential challengers, has the consequence of stimulating candidate recruitment. It serves to largely defuse the otherwise discouraging prospect of biennial reelection that incumbents must face. Paradoxically, even though incumbency advantages make it exceedingly difficult to defeat incumbents, they also make the congressional career extremely attractive. To repeat the interview comment of one rerun challenger, "If I win this time I assure you no one will touch me."

The attractiveness of incumbency is even more pronounced in open districts. Though the interview sample did not contain any open-district candidates, one need only imagine how seductive candidacy must be for an individual who doesn't have to face an incumbent. For such potential candidates, incumbency advantages are a one-way street: if elected, they can only serve to make the position more secure.

**Representation and the "Unbeatable" Incumbent**

Though incumbency actually works to stimulate recruitment, how about the type of candidates who are recruited? Is incumbency an end in itself? Do congressmen have a higher obligation than merely getting reelected? The
question is clear: is the recruiting process producing lawmakers or reelection machines?

To answer this question requires consideration of the forces operating on those seeking office and those already there. The crucial relationship in this area is that between electoral sanctions and legislator behavior. Kenneth Prewitt argues that for electoral electoral accountability to exist two conditions must be met: ambition for office and sensitivity to the power of voters. Clearly, the first condition is met, as the number of people willing to run for Congress—sometimes several times—is substantial. As to the second condition, Fenno points out that:

No matter what the objective measures of political scientists may tell us about their electoral safety, members of Congress feel uncertain and vulnerable—if not today then yesterday, if not yesterday then tomorrow. A congressman who describes his or her seat as "safe," will implicitly add, "because and so long as I work actively to keep it safe."

The feeling of electoral uncertainly felt by incumbents is clearly related to a perception that he or she is being watched. Kingdon noted the existence of this perception, arguing that constituents influence incumbent behavior through the "rule of anticipated reactions." Incumbents anticipate constituent reaction to their behavior, modifying their behavior to match constituent desires.

The problem of representativeness should thus be addressed at two levels, one empirical, the other perceptual.
Despite the empirical fact that very few incumbents are defeated at the polls, congressmen perceive the existence of potentially severe and immediate electoral sanctions. The contradiction—if one exists—may be due to a misperception on the part of political scientists rather than congressmen. Fenno points out that thirteen of the eighteen members he interviewed had at least one electoral margin below fifty-five per cent, and Erikson reports that between 1965 and 1972—the time when incumbent performance substantially improved—thirty-five per cent of members leaving the House did so because of electoral defeat.

The fact remains, though, that well over ninety per cent of incumbents who seek reelection are successful. Furthermore, there is little indication that this pattern is likely to dramatically change in the future. The possibility of the dissolution of the relationship between electoral sanctions and representativeness should not be ignored. If in fact those sanctions do not exist—and if legislators begin to believe that they do not exist—then a serious problem of unrepresentativeness may develop. As Prewitt noted (in a somewhat different context), we may be faced with making "representative democracy work in the face of unrepresentative governors." As Prewitt noted (in a somewhat different context), we may be faced with making "representative democracy work in the face of unrepresentative governors." As Prewitt noted (in a somewhat different context), we may be faced with making "representative democracy work in the face of unrepresentative governors."
emphasis on casework (noted by Fiorina and others), may reflect the perception of most congressmen that such activities are necessary to insure reelection. According to Mayhew, at least, the desire for reelection is the single most important determinant of congressional behavior. The question of representation may thus have to be rephrased, for perhaps we shouldn't ask "Is representative democracy working?", but "Who is getting represented?" Fenno points out that it is difficult to know precisely who it is that congressmen respond to, though, at the general level, "House members are more accountable and more responsive to their supportive constituencies than they are to the remainder of their constituents." A possible danger here is that "supportive constituencies" may come to be defined as those who are paying for campaigns. As Fenno says, congressmen "feel more accountable to some constituents than to others because the support of some constituents is more important to them than others."¹⁰ If money is as important for the serious office-seeker as I suggest in Chapter Five, the danger of congressmen becoming accountable to monied interests is increased.

Though this danger should not be minimized, several of the patterns dealt with in Chapter Five suggest that the money-representation linkage is far from direct. It may in fact be less direct now than in the past. If disclosure laws frighten away large, single, "strings attached"
contributions, and if money increasingly comes from a multiplicity of diverse, often out-of-district political committees, than the ability of any one individual or group of individuals to influence policy is diminished. Furthermore, Fenno's observations of the activities of congressmen while in their constituencies suggests that relatively little time is spent with those who have made financial contributions to their campaigns. In this sense congressmen adopt a "home style" because that is where the voters are, and voters decide elections.

* * *

I conclude with several observations relating to the major substantive concerns of this study. First, it is quite clear that within the framework of the present situation a substantial amount of candidate recruitment takes place. Despite the discouraging success rate of challengers, despite the growth of incumbency advantages and perquisites, and despite the considerable price one pays to be a candidate, many individuals continue to pursue a congressional career. This is happening precisely at a time in which those choosing such a career are very likely to be disappointed. These seemingly conflicting patterns occur simultaneously because both challengers and incumbents are concerned with only one question, "Can I win in this district?" Incumbency advantages and vanishing marginals,
concepts so dear to the hearts of political scientists, are probably irrelevant for most candidates. They will remain so as long as congressional elections are two-person, single district contests not directly dependent on the performance of national parties.

This situation is not likely to change in the near future, subject only to change in the perception of electoral safety on the part of congressional incumbents. If the perception of threat lessens and incumbents begin to see themselves as unbeatable, the linkage between electoral sanctions and representation may begin to dissolve. If representation is a tenet of democratic theory, this would not bode well for the interests of constituents, or for the consideration of public policy in our largest legislative body. I conclude on an optimistic note, however, for if incumbents perceive a realistic electoral threat in a time in which nineteen of every twenty are returned to office, it is not likely that a strong sense of incumbent security will ever develop.
CHAPTER NOTES


2. Of course, a relatively small number of challengers may in fact stand a good chance of being elected, depending on the district circumstances.


5. Fenno, p. 233.


APPENDIX

RERUN CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Before beginning this interview, I would like to emphasize that all responses are strictly confidential and that you will not be referred to by name in the dissertation.

I'd like to start the interview with some questions about your early introduction to politics.

1. When did you first get interested in politics? How did this come about?
   1a. Was there much political discussion or involvement in your family?

2. Were you ever active as a party worker? When?
   2a. What led you to become active then?

3. Have you ever held an elective office before? Please specify.
   (IF YES)
   3a. Why did you seek that office?
   3b. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you while serving in the ____________?

Now let's go to the circumstances surrounding your decision to run for Congress the first time.

4. What was your personal situation prior to receiving your party's nomination for Congress?
   4a. What was your occupation then? Are you still doing that kind of work?
   (IF NOT)
   4b. What kind of work are you doing now?
5. Could you give me a description of the events leading up to your decision to run for Congress?

5a. Did the party leaders seek you out to run or did you decide to run on your own?

5b. When did you first talk to a party official about running for Congress in this district?

5c. In making up your mind whether to run or not, what factors did you take into account? Which would you say were most important?

5d. What support did you have when you decided to run?

5e. What opposition was there to your running?

5f. What were some of the attitudes of your family and friends about your decision to run?

6. Did you have opposition in the primary the first time you decided to run?

6a. How much were you worried about it? Why was that?

6b. Was there anything about the primary campaign that made a difference in the outcome of the general election?

7. In general, is there much competition within your party's primary in your congressional district?

8. Which is usually the more important election in your district—the primary or the general election?

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the elections in which you ran for Congress.

9. Did you think you would win the first time you ran?

9a. How about the second time you ran—were your chances better then, about the same, or worse?

10. In retrospect, how might you have improved your chances when you ran for Congress?

10a. How about the second time—could you have improved your chances then?
11. What would you say were the principal reasons for the election turning out as it did in your district the first time you ran?

11a. Did the vote in your district reflect a nationwide trend?

12. How much was the vote in your district affected by national issues?

13. How much was the vote in your district affected by other state or local contests?

14. How much was the vote affected by traditional party loyalties—people voting for you because you belong to one party and for your opponent because he belongs to the other?

15. How much was the vote affected by what people felt about your experience and personal qualities?

16. How about the second time you ran? Were the reasons for the election turning out as it did any different then?

17. How extensive a campaign did you conduct the first time you ran?

17a. How about the second time? Did your second campaign differ substantially from the first? How did it differ?

18. What were the main things you tried to emphasize the first time? How about the second time?

19. What methods did you use to reach the people in your district in your campaigns? Did you try different methods in your second campaign?

19a. How much did you use radio and TV?

19b. How much did you use newspapers?

19c. How much did you use literature or newsletters?

19d. How much did you use personal appearances and rallies and things like that?

20. What methods did your opponent use to reach the people in your district?
20a. Was there anything about your opponent's campaign that you think was particularly effective? What was that?

21. Would you try different methods to reach the people—or perhaps vary the amount you used them—if you were to run again?

22. Was there anything about your opponent's campaign that worked to your advantage? What was that?

23. How supportive was your party when you ran? How about the second time—was the party more or less supportive then, or about the same?

23a. Could your party have done more to help your election effort? In what way?

24. What kinds of support did you receive when you ran for Congress? Please be specific.

25. What types of sacrifices did you have to make to run for Congress? For example, was your candidacy difficult for you financially?

26. How about your job—did running for office create any conflict there?

27. Are there any other sacrifices you had to make to run for Congress?

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your congressional district—that is, the district in which you ran for Congress.

28. Would you say that most of the people, some of the people, or very few of the people in your district are really interested in and keep up-to-date on the issues?

29. How much do you think the people of your district knew about your own stands on issues?

30. How much do you think the people of your district knew about you as a person?

31. Are there any interest groups or lobbies that are particularly strong in your district? What are they?

31a. What would you say makes these groups so powerful—what are the reasons for their influence?
31b. Did any of these groups provide you with support?

32. Of course districts differ a good deal in terms of their social characteristics. From this point of view, what are the important features of your district?

33. How about the relative strength of the parties in your district? Has the district over the years usually been a district safe for your party, safe for the opposition, a fairly close district, or what?

33a. Do you think this is changing any? How?

34. How strong is the party organization in your district?

35. How important is the party organization in deciding who will run for Congress?

35a. How important is the party organization in determining the outcome of the general election in your district?

36. How many years have you been living in your district?

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about what it is like being a candidate for Congress.

37. What kind of experience was running for office for you? Could you relate specific experiences that make you feel that way?

38. Was political candidacy any different than you expected? If it was different, how did it differ from your expectations?

39. Could you tell me about specific experiences which you either liked or disliked about your campaigns?

40. Did you find political candidacy rewarding? For example, was it an enjoyable experience?

40a. In what ways was it enjoyable and/or rewarding? How might it have been more so?

41. Most of the things you have mentioned have been on the (positive/negative) side. What about some of the (opposite) aspects of running for office?

42. How did the fact that you lost the election affect your evaluation of running for office?
Now I'd like to talk about your second campaign a little more.

43. When did you make the decision to run for Congress the second time?

44. What particular factors motivated you to try again?

45. How did the fact that you lost the first time influence your decision to run again?

46. Did the sources of support for your campaign change the second time you ran?

46a. Did the amount of help you received increase, decrease, or stay about the same the second time you ran?

Let's talk a little now about your opponent, the incumbent congressman.

47. What advantages did your opponent have that you did not?

48. Specifically, how did your opponent use his status as the incumbent against you during the campaign?

48a. How about the second election? Did your opponent use his status as the incumbent differently than he did the first time?

Now, I'd like to discuss your plans for the future.

49. Do you plan to run for Congress again in the future?

50. Do you plan to run for any other elective office?

51. If you do not plan to run for Congress again, what advice would you give to the candidate who will be running against the incumbent in this district?

52. What effect did running for office have on your career or on your career choices?

52a. What effect did the fact that you lost the election have on your career?

53. What is your feeling about politics in your future generally? Do you plan to make politics a career?

53a. If you do not plan to make it a career, what role will politics play in your life, if any?
54. In making your decisions about career possibilities, what are some of the factors you will be taking into account?

Now, in concluding this interview I'd like to ask you a few final questions.

55. May I ask your age?

55a. How old were you when you first ran for office?

56. Are there any concluding comments that you might want to make? Is there anything you would like to add to what you have said about your campaign experiences?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


