Congressional Candidates

17.251/252
Fall 2016
The Hierarchical Structure of Running for Office
8th District 1998

Geography

Watertown
Belmont
Cambridge
Somerville
Chelsea
Boston
8th District 1998
Candidates

- Mike Capuano (Somerville mayor) (19,439)
- Ray Flynn (former Boston Mayor) (14,829)
- George Bachrach (former state sen. & almost-Rep.) (12,166)
- John O’Connor (rich husband) (11,035)
- Marjorie Claprood (former state rep & radio personality) (10,358)
- Chris Gabrieli (rich guy) (5,732)
- Chris Yancy (Boston city council) (4,460)
- Susan Tracy (former state. Sen.) (2,855)
- Tom Keane (Boston city council) (2,150)
- Alex Rodriguez (1,799)
8th District 1998
Schematic of support

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8th District 1998
District Support

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Capuano Support
Strategic Choice and Political Careers

\[ E(a_i) = P_i U_i - C_i \]

\[ E(a_j) = P_j U_j - C_j \]
Some important considerations

• Variations in variable values
  – across time
  – cross-sectionally

• Factors that affect the calculus of progressive ambition

\[ E(a_i) = P_i U_i - C_i \]
Factors that Affect the Calculus of Progressive Ambition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$U_L$ vs. $U_H$</th>
<th>$P_L$ vs. $P_H$</th>
<th>$C_L$ vs. $C_H$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Scope of legislative authority</td>
<td>- National forces</td>
<td>- Opportunities foregone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Political and policy resources</td>
<td>- Party identification in the districts</td>
<td>- Number and quality of challengers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within the institution</td>
<td>- Redistricting</td>
<td>- Fund-raising efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pay and perquisites</td>
<td>- Scandal</td>
<td>- Efficiency of translating money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Springboard effects</td>
<td></td>
<td>and volunteer time into votes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pay and Perquisites of state legislatures (some examples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
<th>Travel allowance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>$10/day (C)</td>
<td>$4,308/month plus $50/day for three days during each week that the legislature actually meets during any session (U).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>$90,526/year</td>
<td>$141.86 per day for each day they are in session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>$17,341/yr</td>
<td>$173/day (U) set by the Legislative Services Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>$60,032.6/year</td>
<td>From $10/day-$100/day, depending on distance from State House (V) set by the legislature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>$200/two-year term</td>
<td>No per diem is paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>$14,947.34/yr</td>
<td>No per diem is paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>$20,000/yr</td>
<td>$131/day during session (U) set by compensation commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U = Unvouchered  
V – Vouchered  
C = Calendar Day

Source:  National Conference on State Legislatures  
Local

Janice Hahn Announces Run For LA County Supervisor
February 18, 2015 6:23 AM

There is a place where you will reconnect with history
Peru, land of hidden treasures peru.travel
At weekly downtown meetings in a cavernous chamber, the supervisors make decisions on law enforcement, healthcare delivery, food safety regulation, taxes and land development that can affect a population larger than that of all but seven states. They spend $25 billion a year in public money, often with little oversight.

"There's really no checks and balances," said Rep. Janice Hahn (D-San Pedro), whose father served on the panel for four decades and whose family name adorns the county's giant Hall of Administration where the board convenes. "They create laws, they execute laws and sometimes they even sit in judgment of their own laws."

The benefits are considerable. Each supervisor is allotted $3 million a year for staff, cars, office expenses and pet projects, on top of a $179,000* annual salary.

The public and the media pay less attention to the board than to City Hall leaders two blocks away in the Civic Center, partly because of the dizzyingly complex array of state and federally mandated social programs that officials spend much of their time managing.

*Salary of U.S. members of Congress:  $174,000.

### Variation in state legislative capacities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Legislature</th>
<th>Time on the Job</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Total Staff/legislature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green (Used to be Red)</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>$81,079</td>
<td>1,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray (Used to be White)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$43,429</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold (Used to be Blue)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>$19,197</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National tides

-50% -40% -30% -20% -10% 0% 10% 20% 30% 40%

Election year


Midterm change

House

Senate

- Retiring from the Senate
  - 1994: 0R, 3D (+8R)
  - 1998: 1R, 3D (0)
  - 2002: 4R, 1D (+2R)
  - 2006: 6R, 0D (+6D)
  - 2010: 5R, 3D (+6D)
  - 2014: 2R, 5D (+9R)

- Retiring from the House
  - 1994: 0R, 34D (+52R)
  - 1998: 10R, 12D (+5D)
  - 2002: 12R, 6D (+8R)
  - 2006: 21R, 0D (+30D)
  - 2010: 8R, 11D (+63R)
  - 2014: 14R, 10D (+13R)
Why the midterm loss?

- Surge and decline effect
- Strategic voters
- Strategic politicians
Surge and decline effect*

*Similar to Erikson & Wright’s “withdrawn coattails” effect
Strategic voters*†
(not to scale)

*Policy = w(President’s ideal point) + (1-w)(Congress’s ideal point)

†Similar to Erikson and Wright’s “ideological balancing,” but more precise.
Strategic voters
(not to scale)

Pres’l election year

Midterm w/ Dem. pres.
Strategic Candidates

\[ R^2 = .38 \]

\[ R^2 = .28 \]
Strategic Candidates

$R^2 = .38$

$R^2 = .28$
Incumbents, challengers, and open seat candidates

- Incumbents
  - Incumbency advantage
- Challengers
  - Challenger quality
- Open seat candidates
  - The free-for-all
Incumbency advantage: The Picture

FIGURE 2
U.S. HOUSE ELECTION WITH MAJOR PARTY OPPOSITION, 1846–1986

Percent


Note: No data shown for election years ending in “2” and “4”.
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010

Dem. pct., 2008 = 56.0%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 48.5%
Diff = -7.5%
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010--incumbents

Dem. pct., 2008 = 56.6%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 49.0%
Diff = -7.6%
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010---Dem. open

Dem. pct., 2008 = 68.5%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 53.1%
Diff = -15.4%
A simple look at incumbent advantage in 2010—Rep. open

Dem. pct., 2008 = 37.4%
Dem. pct., 2010 = 36.8%
Diff = 0.6%
2010 summary
(compared to 2008)

Dem. pct. 2010 - Dem. pct. 2008

Open, Rep.

Open, Dem.

-7.6%

0% +0.6%

-15.4%

ddempct

mean_ddempct
2010 summary (compared to 2008)

-7.8%

+7.6%

Dem. pct. 2010 - Dem. pct. 2008
2010 summary (compared to 2008)


Dem. pct. 2010 - Dem. pct. 2008

Open10  ddempct  mean_ddempct

-7.8%  +7.6%  Inc adv. = (7.6 + 7.8) / 2 = 7.7
Incumbency Advantage: Primaries

Incumbency advantage

• Why does it exist?
  – Audience participation
Incumbency advantage

• Why does it exist?
  – Franking, etc.
  – Constituency service
  – Redistricting
  – Smarter candidates
  – Spending advantage
Incumbent-protection gerrymandering

- Frank Wolf (Figure 4.1 in Analyzing Congress)
Geography of Northern Virginia
2001-2010 districts
2011-2020 districts
2011-2020 districts
2011-2020 districts
Effect of 2011 Redistricting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Republican before</th>
<th>Republican after</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 (Wolf)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (Cantor)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WASHINGTON — In one of the most stunning primary election upsets in congressional history, the House majority leader, Eric Cantor, was soundly defeated on Tuesday by a Tea Party-backed economics professor who had hammered him for being insufficiently conservative.

The result delivered a major jolt to the Republican Party — Mr. Cantor had widely been considered the top candidate to succeed Speaker John A. Boehner — and it has the potential to change both the debate in Washington on immigration and, possibly, the midterm elections.
The Incumbency Spending Advantage
(Update of Fig. 4.2)

Figure 4.2: Average Campaign Fund Raising in House Races, 1974-2014 (2014 dollars)
(Challenger) Candidate Quality: 2010

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenger</td>
<td>No prior office</td>
<td>Held prior office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>won</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total challengers</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidate Positioning Add-on
District conservatism

Candidate conservatism

District conservatism

Candidate conservatism
Effect of candidates leaving, 2012

[Graph showing trends for Leaving, Retiring, Higher office, Def. in primary]
Effect of candidates leaving, 2014
Effect of candidates leaving, 2016