

The Value of Committee Assignments in Congress since 1994

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Abstract. Using the Grosewart method of computing the value of committee service, we examine whether the “Republican takeover” of the House in 1995 led to a change in how members of Congress value service on committees. Our results confound a simple set of hypotheses and conventional wisdoms concerning the congressional committee system since 1995. In both the House and Senate, “power committees” have retained their positions of privilege on the value pecking order. In the House, less-valued committees have shuffled their relative standing in recent years, but on the whole committee service is as valuable as it once was. In the Senate, the value of lower-ranked committees has generally declined over the past decade, suggesting that committee service on the whole is more onerous in the Senate, but not the House, since 1995.

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There is no doubt that congressional politics and the substance of national politics changed as a consequence of the Republican takeover of Congress following the 1994 election. In the House, especially, the number of committees is smaller, the resources available to committees to do their work are reduced, and party leaders have more direct say in how committees conduct their business. Committee chairs are no longer doled out according to seniority, but according to merit, which is heavily weighted by effectiveness in pursuing policy partisanship and helping the party reach its electoral goals.

At the same time, there *is* doubt about the degree to which these changes spawned deep institutional shifts, and whether the most visible changes were merely cosmetic. Committees are still the workhorses of Congress. Members have many things competing for their time, and working hard at committee work is just one of them. If the committees really have become eviscerated, as some have suggested, why should rank-and-file members care about their service on them? If they are shells of their former selves, why would the prospect of chairing one be held out as a carrot to help induce rank-and-file strivers to help achieve the parties' goals?

In short, although events have seemed to conspire to challenge the privileged place of committees in the congressional firmament over the past decade, we cannot simply assume that because party leaders and their followers regard the role of committees differently from how they did in past, that committee service is no longer valued. Such assumptions must be tested.

The purpose of this paper is to examine closely an important institutional detail of Congress and how it has changed since 1994 --- the value that members ascribe to their service on standing committees. Many of the most visible developments in congressional politics since the turnover suggest that committee service may have become less valuable in the past decade, especially in the House, and especially among the lower-ranked committees in the House.

We analyze congressional committee transfers during the 96th through 109th Congresses and seek to answer three basic questions. First, did the institutional reforms enacted in 1994, which transferred a considerable amount of power from committees and committee chairs to the House leadership, cause a change in how the average member of Congress values service on different committees? On the whole, the answer is “yes,” although the detailed pattern is complicated.

We also examine whether committee values have remained stable in the U.S. Senate, where despite a similar turnover in party control, we did not observe the large number of institutional reforms passed in the House. We find that despite relatively few institutional changes, committee values in the Senate have also changed significantly since 1995, and in ways that we would have initially expected in the House, not the Senate.

Finally, we examine whether the two major parties ascribe different values to committees. We find that the two parties have not valued committee service differently over the past two decades, either before or after the Republican takeover in 1995.

This paper will progress as follows. In the next section, we will review the Republican takeover of Congress and subsequent reforms in the 104th Congress. We will then briefly discuss the model developed by Groseclose and Stewart (1998) that we use to estimate committee values. With an understanding of the model we will present our data and findings for

both the House and Senate. Finally, we will offer our concluding statements and directions for future work in this field.

Background: Committee Changes Since 1994

The committee system in the United States Congress has been characterized by brief periods of major changes followed by long stretches of stability. After 20 years of relatively few changes, the early and mid 1990s brought about another moment of significant transformation and alteration for Congress and the committee system alike. The push for reform gathered steam during the 102nd Congress after two scandals, an era of perceived abuses by senior members, and increasing partisan disputes led to high turnover and general dissatisfaction among many members of Congress (Deering and Smith 1997). Although initial efforts for change as recommended by the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress during the 103rd Congress were not successful, the Republican Revolution of 1994 and the passage of significant portions of the Contract with America in the first weeks of the 104th Congress brought major changes to Congress and the committee system that are still present today. The majority of the discussion here will focus on the House, as the changes in the Senate have been few and rather mild in comparison.

Republican Reforms in the House

In July 1991 Representatives Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.) and Bill Gradison (R-Ohio) introduced H. Con. Res. 192, a resolution calling for the creation of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. Senators David Boren (D-Okla.) and Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) introduced companion legislation (S. Con. Res. 57) in the Senate. After a decade of rising partisan and ideological tensions many members felt the time was ripe to push for much needed change. However, these

efforts were not well received by leadership and committee chairs in either chamber, and no action was taken for over a year.

Two scandals reported near the end of 1991 led to a great number of retirements, as implicated or embarrassed members chose not to face reelection. The resulting turnover combined with dwindling public support of Congress as an institution provided the necessary push to force leaders to address the calls for change. On August 6, 1992 H. Con. Res. 192 was passed by both chambers, creating a 28-member bipartisan Joint Committee that would begin meeting in late November of that year (Winneker 1992). The committee was instructed to make a complete study of the organization of Congress, including the committee system and report back no later than December 1993. The Committee's chances for success were judged not great right from the outset. A combination of inadequate funding, unclear goals, partisan bickering, and intrachamber differences made progress difficult. Most problematic for the Committee was the lack of any real desire for large scale change from the Democratic leadership in both chambers and the outright opposition to any jurisdictional change from many committee chairs (Adler 2002).

The Joint Committee released a three volume report at the end of 1993; the format of the report highlighted the problems inherent in using a joint committee to reform the two chambers. Each chamber, along with the Committee, produced its own volume for the report, as well as holding separate hearings and markup sessions (Deering and Smith 1997). Though the Committee's report suggested many of the reforms that would make up the backbone of the Contract with America, their recommendations were met with varied reviews, partisan conflicts, and a lack of commitment from the leadership. Accordingly, the Committee's proposals languished and no reform was forthcoming (Love 1994). It would take the elections of 1994 and

the subsequent change in membership and party control before significant reforms could be achieved.

Viewing their sweeping election victory as a clear mandate, Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and the Republican Party in the House went to work quickly on organizing, introducing, and passing their landmark package of Congressional reforms and policy changes collectively known as the Contract with America.¹ Though the Contract with America was large and comprehensive, the reforms that would affect committees and their members were brought up for a vote and passed immediately on January 4, 1995 (Sheffner 1995). A majority of these reforms were passed with overwhelming bipartisan support (Koopman 1996) indicating that many members, not just the newly elected Republican majority, were interested in seeing changes to the committee system implemented. The Contract altered the organizational and jurisdictional structure of committees, changed the way members and chairs were elected to committees, and revamped many committee procedures all in an effort to improve committee operation while transferring much of the power that had previously been located in the committees and subcommittees, specifically with committee chairs, to the majority leadership (Deering and Smith 1997).

The most apparent and striking changes brought about by the Contract was the elimination of three standing committees (District of Columbia, Merchant Marine and Fisheries, and Post Office and Civil Service) along with 31 subcommittees. (See Table 1.) The jurisdictions of the eliminated committees were mostly transferred to an expanded Committee on Government Reform and Oversight (Davidson and Oleszek 2004); other issues, such as financial institutions, transportation, and nonmilitary nuclear policy, were also juggled and some

¹ For more detailed discussion of the lead up to the Republican takeover and the Contract with America, see Dodd and Oppenheimer (1997).

committee names were altered to reflect Republican policy priorities (Deering and Smith 1997; Sinclair 2000; Evans and Oleszek 1997a).² Though the elimination of these committees was mostly uncontroversial (Adler 2002), the threat of further jurisdictional realignment or committee elimination forced many Republicans to alter their policy stances to appease leadership and maintain jurisdictional control (Owens 1997).³

[Table 1 about here]

In addition to the elimination of committees, the Republican leadership also altered committee sizes and partisan composition. First, the number of available seats was decreased on many committees. House Oversight was the only committee to gain a significant number of seats during the 104th Congress, and that was to accommodate its expansion of jurisdiction owing to the abolition of the D.C. and Post Office committees. Further, each committee was limited to only 5 subcommittees with the exception of Appropriations (13), Government Reform and Oversight (7), and Transportation and Infrastructure (6) (Smith and Lawrence 1997). The party divisions were generally less favorable to the majority party than before, which primarily reflected the tight majority held by the Republicans in the 104th Congress. However, the Rules Committee continued to have a greatly outsized delegation for the majority party, now the Republicans.

Budget reform and budget cuts were vital components of the Contract. Congressional committees were not excluded from these budget cuts. Besides the elimination of committees as discussed above, staffing levels for committees and subcommittees were cut by over a third from the previous Congress. The Republicans also put subcommittee funding and staff under the

² Since the 104th Congress, the most striking change to committee jurisdictions was the creation during the 108th Congress of the Select Committee on Homeland Security with legislative and oversight jurisdiction (Davidson and Oleszek 2004).

³ For example, some Republicans on Ways & Means needed to shift their position on welfare assistance in order to ensure that welfare remained under their jurisdiction (Owens 1997).

control of the full committee chair and eliminated the additional staff members previously allocated to the ranking minority member and subcommittee chairs (Smith and Lawrence 1997).

Beyond simply shifting the jurisdictions for some committees, Gingrich and the Republican leadership went one step further and began usurping some of the committees' turf with the use of ad hoc legislative task forces. These task forces served as a means of hashing out policy disagreements and legislative agendas before even sending legislation to committees. The agenda setting and deliberation of policy alternatives being carried out by task forces had typically been the responsibility of the committee of jurisdiction. By skipping the committees and relying on task forces, the Republican leadership was able to come to the table for policy debates with an aggressive strategy and a well-defined coalition. However, task forces also limited opposition voices in the construction of legislation, preventing opportunities for bipartisan compromises as well as precluding public hearing and full deliberation. Gingrich was so fond of utilizing task forces as a means of maintaining control of the policy process that in many cases task force drafted legislation was brought to the floor ahead of similar committee legislation (Deering and Smith 1997). The use of task forces decreased significantly once Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) became Speaker. The task forces had angered many senior Republicans, thus, Hastert pledged to return the legislative tasks to the committees. Even when he did try to use task forces, Hastert was often unsuccessful --- which nonetheless did not prevent him from relying on task forces at certain critical junctures (Evans 2001).

The Republican leadership was also successful in stepping over committee jurisdictions by utilizing the Rules Committee along side of legislative task forces to maintain tight control over the policy process. By utilizing rider amendments, the leadership was able to ensure desired policy outcomes on the floor in spite of disloyal committee work. Though this practice

was not widely utilized for all legislation during the 104th and 105th Congress, most major legislation was restricted in some fashion. Over 80 percent of major legislation was issued special rules during the 105th Congress (Deering 2003). Over time, the practice has grown beyond major legislation, to affect minor bills, as well. By the 108th Congress 76 percent of *all* legislation was affected by the Rules committee (Schickler and Pearson 2005). The combination of tight solidarity during committee hearings and mark up sessions and leadership control over post-committee outcomes has severely diminished the potential for committees and their chairs to operate as the independent bases of power they once were.

While the elimination of committees and reliance on task forces were the most outwardly obvious reforms, changes in how committee members and chairs are selected was arguably the most important. Prior to 1995 Republican members were assigned to committees by the Republican Conference's Committee on Committees. Votes on this committee were weighted by the size of each state's congressional delegation and assignments were typically based on the seniority system. Before the 104th Congress, Gingrich created a new Steering Committee modeled on the old Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. The Steering Committee was dominated by the Republican leadership with the Speaker chairing the Committee and holding a quarter of the votes while the Majority Leader was responsible for about an eighth of the votes (Owens 1997). Voting on the Committee was also held by secret ballot (Leighton and Lewis 2002).

The result of this new format for selecting committee members and chairs was an erosion of the seniority system in favor of a more loyalty-based system. Loyal freshmen and sophomore members were now able to get key committee assignments over more senior members.

Accordingly, in the 104th Congress six freshmen won seats on Appropriations while there were three freshmen on Ways and Means, and even one on Rules (Loomis 2000).

Recent research has shown that party loyalty has become important not only for freshmen looking for key assignments, but for continuing members looking to improve their committee portfolios. Leighton and Lopez (2002) find that majority party members who are more loyal to the party in one Congress are more likely to have more valuable committee portfolios in the next Congress, *ceteris paribus*. More strikingly, they estimate the cost of party loyalty to the member's reelection hopes and find that the higher the cost of loyalty the higher the value of committee portfolios in the next term, again *ceteris paribus*. Heberlig (2003) also finds that members who make larger financial contributions to party committees and candidates increase their likelihood for transfer to a power or prestige committee.

In addition to the erosion of the seniority system for appointing members to committees, the Republican leadership also sought to limit the number of committees members could serve on. Without obtaining a special waiver House members were now limited to service on two full committees and four subcommittees at one time (English 2003). This limit did not cross over to the Senate, where individuals continued to serve on an ever increasing number of committees (Sinclair 2005).

While these changes in appointing members to committees aimed to ensure party loyalty at large, Republican changes with respect to committee chairs were meant to transfer legislative control from committee chairs to the party leadership while preventing committees from becoming the independent bases of power and influence they had been during the Democratic era. The first move was to institute a three term (six years) limit for service as a committee or subcommittee chair. While the Contract with America also called for an eight year limit for the

Speaker, this rule was repealed during the 106th Congress, while term limits for committee chairs remained, which further strengthened the Speaker with respect to the chairs (Schickler and Pearson 2005).⁴

Committee chairs were also no longer selected on seniority alone, but by a vote of the Steering Committee. This allowed the most loyal junior members to rise above senior members for chairs on key committees and subcommittees. While Democrats had used this strategy in the past, most notably in 1975, Aldrich and Rohde (2005) argue that Gingrich's actions were different. In 1975 the push to override the seniority system was demanded by large segments of the rank-and-file. In 1995, the push came primarily from Gingrich and the Republican leadership. The shift to the selection of chairs by the Steering Committee also sent a signal to those who were selected that their future tenure depended on their continued loyalty to the leadership (Ornstein and Schenkenberg 1995). In the 108th Congress Republican Conference rules were changed to state that, "The Chairman on each committee has an obligation to ensure that each measure on which the Republican Conference has taken a position is managed in accordance with such position on the Floor of the House of Representatives" (Davidson and Oleszek 2004). It is telling that in the 109th Congress, nearly half of the standing committees in the House (10 of 21) have a chair who is not the most senior member of that panel, and none has ascended to the post assuming that seniority alone was an entitlement to the position.

While the committee chairs became subordinate to the party leadership, they did gain power with respect to subcommittee chairs, at least temporarily. Committee chairs were now able to select subcommittee chairs and, as mentioned earlier, subcommittee staffing now reported to the full committee chair, not the subcommittee chair (Schickler 2001). However, in 2002 the

⁴ During the 106th Congress there were pressures to lift the committee chair term limits by senior chairs who were now reaching their final term. However, vocal opposition from members poised to move into vacated chairs kept these changes from going through (Dodd and Oppenheimer 2001).

Republicans changed this practice as well, by moving the power to select subcommittee chairs to the Steering Committee (Aldrich and Rohde 2005).

To further limit the power of committee and subcommittee chairs the Republican leadership has altered or eliminated many procedures that had allowed chairs great freedoms in conducting committee business. First, the use of rolling quorums and proxy voting was eliminated, while sunshine rules were strengthened. Without rolling quorums, a committee must have a majority of members present to conduct committee business (Deering and Smith 1997). Stronger sunshine rules made it more difficult to close committee sessions. The elimination of proxy voting required all members who wished to vote in committee to be present for the vote (Sinclair 2000). With these restrictions in place, committee chairs could no longer operate with the free reign they were accustomed to.

The Contract with America also opened up committee chairs and members to a greater level of public scrutiny. All public hearings were required to be broadcast unless the subject matter involved sensitive information. Also, all votes cast in committee were required to be recorded and published in committee reports (Evans and Oleszek 1997a).

The final procedural change made by the Republican leadership involved the elimination of multiple referrals of legislation while retaining split and sequential referrals. This allowed the Speaker to assign a committee of primary jurisdiction, which would be responsible for guiding the legislation to the floor (Smith and Lawrence 1997). However, multiple referrals were brought back in the 108th Congress due to debates over jurisdiction between Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means over health policy (Davidson and Oleszek 2004).

Not only were the changes of the 104th Congress sweeping, the Republicans have made these changes more enduring than in previous eras by actually including them in the Rules of the

House. While most changes of the nature discussed here would normally have been handled in the Party Caucus or Conference, the Republicans chose to change the Rules of the House so their reforms might endure even if they were to lose majority control of Congress (Evans and Oleszek 1997b). (However, the fact that a new majority party can still change the rules back may make this reform nothing more than a symbolic move by the Republican leadership to display their commitment to reform.)

Changes with the Appropriations committee during the 104th Congress provide an excellent example of how these Republican reforms worked in practice. What was once a very collegial and bipartisan committee, Appropriations suddenly became the main arm of the Republican Party as they tried to push through the Contract with America. In the 103rd Congress there were only 14 committee votes that were considered partisan, while this number shot up to 133 for 1995 alone (Aldrich and Rohde 2005). Although some of this shift can be attributed to the increasing polarization of House membership at large, the huge change on Appropriations was a reflection of leadership priorities (Aldrich and Rohde 2000). With budgetary cuts a vital aspect of the Contract, Republican leadership used the Appropriations committee to bypass other established and entrenched intracommittee relationships that would not be as receptive to leadership desires. To successfully manage the Appropriations Committee, Gingrich utilized many of the rule changes discussed above.

First, Robert Livingston (R-La.) was selected “acting chair” immediately following the elections in 1994, despite the fact that John Myers (R-Ind.) was the most senior Republican. Livingston was only the fifth-ranked member and was officially elevated to the chair at the beginning of 1995. Further, of the eleven new appointees to Appropriations, seven were freshmen and the other four were in their second term (Aldrich and Rohde 2000). Key members

met with Gingrich, where he informed them they would be cutting programs that had long been funded; if they did not like it, they should speak up so they could be replaced. Members appointed to Appropriations were even required to go through an interview process with the leadership and sign a pledge of loyalty, stating they would support leadership positions on all budgetary matters (Deering and Smith 1997; Davidson and Oleszek 2004). The leadership also used the Rules Committee to allow appropriations bills to contain more legislative language than would have normally been accepted. Leaders made it clear that if the appropriations bills contained language they desired, they would facilitate the writing of rules that protected the Appropriations Committee's handiwork (Aldrich and Rohde 2000).

While Appropriations was very important for Contract legislation in 1995, the Republican leadership backed off from their reliance on the committee in 1996 and 1997 and Appropriations returned to "normal" and less partisan charged relations. However, in 1998 Appropriations again became a leadership vehicle and was given more legislative responsibility which increased partisanship as well as leadership control once again (Marshall, Prins, and Rohde 2000).

The changes set into motion by the Contract with America in 1995 have for the most part remained in place to the present day. Still, following the heady days of the 104th Congress, and the replacement of Gingrich by Hastert, some signs of a re-assertation of committee autonomy *vis-à-vis* the leadership have emerged. Since 1999, for instance, leadership has been more apt to include committee chairs in weekly leadership meetings. The use of legislative task forces has declined.

In general, the leadership has reopened itself to the rank and file members and looked for consultation and teamwork when deciding and pursuing a legislative agenda (Andres 1999).

Nonetheless, the Speaker and leadership are still very much in control of the policy process, especially when we compare the Republican era with the committee dominated periods during Democratic control of Congress.

The Senate has been less roiled by partisan attacks on traditional committee norms since 1994, and thus provides an interesting point of comparison. Republican members are still assigned to committee by the nine-person Committee on Committees, while Democrats are assigned by the twenty-five member Steering and Coordination Committee. Republicans still routinely follow the seniority system while the Democrats are not as rigid (Ornstein, Peabody, and Rohde 1997). In July 1995, the Senate Republican Conference did vote to adopt a six-year limit for committee and subcommittee chairs. However, unlike their peers in the House, they were unsuccessful in giving the floor leader a great deal of influence in selecting committee chairs. Instead, the Senate Republican Conference now uses a secret-ballot format to elect chairs; if a Conference majority does not settle on a nominee, then the floor leader is allowed to present a nominee (Deering and Smith 1997). Thus, it appears that changes in the Senate have been very mild in comparison to the House reforms.

What then should we expect following the Republican reforms? The first, and most obvious, hypothesis would be that the value of serving on committees should be significantly reduced in the post-1994 era in the House, but not in the Senate. For many of the reasons mentioned above, members of Congress may not be able to use committees and valuable seats to drive policy in a desired direction. As power has shifted from committees and specifically committee chairs to the leadership, committee seats and chairmanships may not hold the same value to members. Seniority violations for committee seats and chairmanships also decrease the certainty for members that they will be able to rise to a prominent position on a valued

committee over the course of their career. Groseclose and Stewart (1998) found that the value of committee service tended to decrease after committee reforms in 1974. We expect a similar pattern after 1994.

However, while we expect committee values to decrease in general, certain specific committees may indeed become more valuable. Groseclose and Stewart (1998) find that, so-called power and prestige committees have been highly valued over time, surviving the Watergate-era reforms as uncontested rulers of the roost. For the period between 1949 and 1991, power committees such as Ways and Means and Appropriations were highly ranked, according to the Groseclose and Stewart (“Groseclose”) method, while constituency based committees such as Veterans Affairs were less desirable (Groseclose and Stewart 1998).

While we continue to expect that members regard service on the traditional power committees in the House as unambiguously better than serving on the narrower policy and constituency committees, we would not be surprised if there were some changes on the margins. Consider the example of the Appropriations Committee that was previously discussed. On the one hand, Appropriations still carries great clout in guiding appropriations decisions, big and small; even though greater party loyalty is expected from Appropriations members, the committee is still given significant latitude in matters that are unrelated to partisan battles. Does the majestic jurisdiction of Appropriations still make it a dominant committee of choice, or are the requirements of party loyalty so great that service on it is now just considered spear-carrying for the leadership?

There is also the matter of party and how it interacts with changes since 1994. Nowadays, more is expected of Republican committee members than of the Democrats, and thus committee service may be considered more of a burden to Republican than to Democrats. On

the other hand, if the war stories told over the past decade are true, Democrats are often simply ornamental afterthoughts on most committees. Nowadays is it better to be the loyal foot soldier for a demanding majority party leadership or a freewheeling gadfly for a minority party leadership looking for any policy victory, big or small, it can muster?

Finally, if the formal changes that have beset the House committee system over the past decade have generally diminished the value that House members place on serving on those committees, we should not observe parallel changes in the Senate. This is not to say that we should observe *no* changes in the Senate. Senators also partake of the general partisan environment in which House members operate, and the Senate has also been subject to conflict over its committee system, too. Still, the Senate committee system has not had to confront the same assault as the traditional House system, and thus we should observe a different set of changes in the Senate than in the House, if we observe any fundamental changes at all.

Methodology and Data

The central empirical question in this paper is whether the new Republican era in the House of Representatives has ushered in a new era in which committee service is regarded differently, overall and in relation to particular committees, than before. Operationally, the question we ask is whether committee service has become more or less valuable to House members as a consequence of the changes we discussed in the previous section. We suspect that in the House, committee service has become less valuable, since the rewards of seniority are less certain and the committees have less latitude than before in guiding policymaking.

To measure “committee value,” we rely on an econometric technique developed by Groseclose and Stewart (1998; Stewart and Groseclose 1999) that uses transfers between committees to estimate cardinal values of committee service for particular committees. The

technique rests on the premise that members of Congress (MCs) have a veto over whether they relinquish one committee assignment in return for another. Thus, when we observe a member giving up an assignment on Judiciary in order to acquire an appointment on Appropriations, we assume that this is evidence that *at least that member* values serving on Appropriations more than serving on Judiciary.⁵ Furthermore, when we observe a member give up seats on Judiciary and Science in order to acquire a single seat on Ways and Means, this is evidence that this member values serving on Ways and Means more than he values the combined benefits of serving on both Judiciary and Science. In addition, when a member relinquishes a seat on House Administration and receives no other as compensation, this is evidence that the member regards service on House Administration as so burdensome as to depress lifetime income, become the costs in time and effort of attending to committee business exceed the policy and tangible benefits to serving on the committee.

More formally, the Grosewart method treats an individual's decision to give up one committee for another as a revealed preference. Let v_j^i represent the value to member i of serving on committee j . A member is said to prefer a seat on committee j to committee k if and only if $v_j^i > v_k^i$. v_j is defined as the *average* valuation of committee j among all members and $v_j^i = v_j + e_j^i$ where e_j^i equals the distance between member i 's value of committee j and the average value of committee j . This method assumes the e_j^i 's are identically and independently $\sim N(0, \sigma)$. Thus, when a member transfers from Committee A to Committees B and C the probability of seeing this transfer over a transfer from B and C to A is $\Pr(e_a^i - e_b^i - e_c^i < ([v_c + v_c - v_a]/\sigma)) = \Phi((v_a^i + v_b + v_c)/\sigma)$.

⁵ By "value" we think in lifetime income terms, where income consists of an array of benefits to the member, ranging from intangibles such as making a difference on policy to tangibles such as fundraising benefits and possible future employment in the private sector.

The Grosewart method uses probability statements such as these to construct a likelihood function to describe observed transfers and obtain estimates of the v_j 's (Groseclose and Stewart 1998, Stewart and Groseclose 1999).⁶ The v_j 's we estimate are now values with cardinal meaning. For example, a committee with a value of 2 would be at least as valuable to the average MC as seats on two committees, each with a value of 1. Additionally, negative values allow us to identify so called "burden committees," or committees for which the average member would prefer no committee assignment than an assignment to the burden committee.

To sum up, the Grosewart procedure can be seen as an improvement over previous methods in the following ways. First, this method takes into account where committee transfers are coming from or going to. Further, this process is able to accommodate many-for-many and null transfers (transfers where a committee is gained without giving anything up or a committee seat is relinquished with no new assignment). Also, the Grosewart method solves for committee values simultaneously. The method provides goodness of fit measures with known statistical properties while being less sensitive to data problems such as the "sparse cell problem." Finally, the Grosewart method assigns cardinal values to congressional committees which allow us to not only construct a rank ordering of committees, but also get a better sense of how much more highly valued certain committees are in comparison to other committees while also allowing us to identify "burden committees."

The data we use were taken from the House and Senate Journals, supplemented with the *Congressional Record*, for the Congresses covered. The raw data are available from the authors via the web.⁷ Unlike most studies of committee assignments, this data is drawn directly from the

⁶ For a more detailed and rigorous description of the Grosewart method as well as coding rules, please see Groseclose and Stewart (1998).

⁷ http://web.mit.edu/17.251/www/data_page.html

official appointment resolutions, rather than secondary sources such as the *Congressional Directory* or *CQ Weekly Report*.

Results: Committee Values, 96th to 109th Congress

The main goal of this paper is to understand how committee values have changed since 1994, if at all. In order to do that, we have constructed a transfer database that spans the 96th to 109th Congresses.

We begin by comparing results reported by Groseclose and Stewart (1998) for the 81st to 102nd Congresses with the results we get when we analyze the entire data that will be the focus of the remainder of the paper. Table 2 provides estimates of committee values for our entire period of this paper (96th to 109th Congresses) along with previous estimates for the 81st to 102nd Congress as reported in Groseclose and Stewart (1998).⁸

[Table 2 about here]

We use Figure 1 as an aid in comparing and interpreting these coefficients. To help make the coefficients more intuitive to interpret, we have taken the coefficients in Table 2 and converted them to the corresponding probability estimates associated with the coefficients. Keep in mind that the committee value coefficients are z -scores. Consider the coefficient for Judiciary in the most recent period in Table 2 (0.55). Using the cumulative normal curve, a z -score of 0.55 is associated with a probability value of .71. One interpretation of the Judiciary Committee coefficient, then, is that 71% of House members during this period would agree to serve on

⁸ Groseclose and Stewart (1998) omit select committee transfers from their analysis. In reviewing the *Congressional Record* and the resolutions that provide for committee transfers, it is clear that House members do not make a distinction between service on the select Intelligence Committee and the standing committees. Therefore, we include House Intelligence in our estimates of committee value.

Throughout the remainder of this paper, we use the names of the committees as they appeared in the 109th Congress.

Judiciary if given the opportunity, and if the opportunity did not require giving up an existing committee assignment.

[Figure 1 about here]

There are several advantage of relying on these probability estimates for interpretation, rather than z -scores. One is graphical --- scores tend to bunch in the .25-.75 range, which makes it difficult to distinguish the bulk of committees in a graph of coefficients. One is substantive --- it is easy to be misled by the largest value coefficients, because at the upper end of committee values, the coefficients themselves can vary significantly even though the probability of accepting an appointment to a committee might change only slightly. Consider the two coefficients associated with Appropriations in Table 2 --- 5.08 for the 81st – 102nd Congress period and 2.08 for the 96th – 109th Congress period. The probability associated with a z -score of 5.08 is essentially 1.00;⁹ the probability associated with a z -score of 2.08 is .98. Thus, although the coefficient associated with Appropriations was more than sliced in half across the two periods, the associated reduction in the probability of accepting a a cost-free assignment to Appropriations was only reduced by 2% points.

Note a couple of things in examining Table 2 and Figure 1. First, although the actual coefficients do differ across the time periods, they are also highly correlated, among committees that were in existence throughout the entire post-war era. The Pearson correlation coefficient is .92; the Spearman (rank-order) correlation coefficient is .74. This is perhaps not surprising, considering that there is a seven-Congress overlap in the two analyses. On the whole, there are two classes of committees across the two era, a small number of highly desirable committees (Rules, Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Commerce), and a larger number of less desirable ones.

⁹ More precisely, it is .9999981.

Nonetheless, it is also important to note that the general trend of value coefficients across time has been downward. Probably the most interesting drop in substantive terms has been the drops of Armed Services and International Relations which, in the immediate post-war Congresses, challenged the “power committees” in attractiveness. In the post-Watergate era, these committees declined in value, so that they have more recently been about as attractive as run-of-the-mill constituency committees.

The pattern in the Senate is a little less clear. Table 3 provides Senate values for the same two periods, with the estimates for the 81st – 102nd Congresses as reported in Stewart and Groseclose (1999). Figure 2 graphs the probability values associated with these coefficients. On the whole, there is a positive correlation between the committee values in the earlier period compared to the later period ($r = .74$), but the correlation is less than with the House. We hasten to add that the number of transfers involved in the Senate analysis is smaller than the House analysis, and therefore more variability should be expected across the two time period.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the details of the differences are intriguing, and suggest that there is more going on than simply small-sample-size variability.

[Table 3 about here]

[Figure 2 about here]

Although Finance and Appropriations remain highly ranked across periods, other committees such as Veterans Affairs and Rules and Administration have changed greatly (moving up a great deal). Groseclose and Stewart (1999) noted that senators tended to regard their committees more similarly to one another than did House members. This shows up in the

¹⁰ This is easily seen in comparing the standard errors of the comparable analyses in Tables 2 and 3. The Senate standard errors as a whole are roughly twice the size of the House standard errors. The number of observations underlying the Senate analysis is always less than half the House observations.

smaller variance in committee coefficients in the Senate analysis compared to the House.¹¹ This difference between the chambers has continued into the most recent years. The Senate committees with the highest values in the earlier period have decreased slightly (with the exception of Finance) while the committees with the lowest values (such as Environment and Public Works) have grown in value and are now statistically indistinguishable from the majority of other committees. In fact, exactly half of the committees in the recent period are indistinguishable from zero while a few other committees, such as Foreign Relations, have seen their significantly positive values approach insignificance.

Changes in House committee value since 1995

While these comparisons between the two long time periods are interesting, we are most interested in understanding how values changed after the switch in party control in 1995. Although many of the reforms that were noted in the previous section actually began in the 103rd Congress, we set the break in the time series at the 104th Congress, for two reasons. First, the House abolished three standing committees at the start of the 104th Congress, and so breaking the analysis with the 103rd Congress would create complications in dealing with these committees. Second, although many of the Republican House committee reforms formally began in the 103rd Congress, the greatest interest in understanding how the House committee system has evolved in recent times is associated with how things changed once the Republicans were the majority party in the House.

Thus, in the remainder of this section we compare the most recent six-Congress period with the eight-Congress period that immediately preceded the 104th Congress (96th—103rd

¹¹ The standard deviation in coefficients among the House coefficients for the Groseclose/Stewart analysis is 1.37, compared to 0.82 for the Senate. For the current paper, the standard deviation in House coefficients is 0.75, compared to 0.60 for the Senate.

Congress). Table 4 provides estimates for committee values in the House for each of these two periods. Figure 3 reports the coefficients graphically.

[Table 4 about here]

[Figure 3 about here]

From these data it appears that our first hypothesis regarding a general decrease in committee values in the House is not correct. Although by visual inspection it appears that there was considerable churning the value of committees across the two time periods, particularly among the least-valued committees, it does not appear to be the case that committees as a whole became less valued by House members following the Republican take-over. Among the power committees, only Rules appears to have fallen significantly in value, and that may be due to a precipitous drop in the number of transfers involving Rules in the first place. Among the middle rank of committees, a few have increased in value (notably Judiciary and Transportation) and a few have fallen (notably Standards of Official Conduct and House Administration).

We can conduct a chi-squared test to see whether the two sets of coefficients for the House committees reported in Table 4 are different from the set of coefficients estimated for the entire period, which were reported in Table 2. Doing that, we can reject the null hypothesis that the coefficients are equal for committees that existed across both periods with a high degree of confidence. Thus House members have valued service on particular committees differently since the 104th Congress, compared to the period immediately prior, but the reshuffling in committee values has moved some committees up and some down, leaving the net value of serving on House committees roughly the same across time.

Senate comparisons since 1995

In the introduction we speculated that we would not see a great amount of change in the Senate values after the party switch in 1995, since many of the reforms passed in the House did not carry over to the Senate. In Table 5, we have replicated the previous House analysis, now focusing on the Senate. That analysis shows, quite contrary to our expectations, that there has actually been a significant amount of change in the value associated with service on Senate committees since 1995.

[Table 5 about here]

[Figure 4 about here]

As with the House analysis, we can easily reject the hypothesis that the coefficients from the two time periods are equal. What is more interesting is the pattern of committee value change across the two periods. In the Senate, unlike the House, the least-valued committees overall have experienced a reduction in value over the past decade. Like the House, the power committee, on the whole, continue to be highly prized. Below that, it is a different story. The only significant exception is Commerce, which rocketed from near the bottom of the committee hierarchy immediately after Watergate to near the top in recent years.¹²

Because our intention in this paper was to focus on the House, for the moment we leave the Senate changes for further research and speculation. Because of the shorter leash put on House committees over the past decade, we would not have been surprised to discover a decline in committee values among House committees; we *are* surprised to discover this sort of pattern among the Senate committees, however.

¹² Perhaps the most unexpected committee ranking in both periods is the Veterans Affairs committee, which was number 1 in the earlier period and number 3 in the later period. Veterans Affairs is a small committee that has had almost no transfers off over the past two decades, which accounts for its high ranking..

Changes among parties in the House

The final application of the Grosewart method we will exploit for this paper is the ability to examine changes in committee values across each era by party. The question remains whether the average member of one party values committee assignments differently from the average member of the opposition party. Further, we might expect that the average member of a party values committees differently depending on whether they are in the minority or majority party. For this final section we will focus on the House only, since breaking the Senate data apart by party leaves too small of a sample to obtain reliable estimates.

Table 6 displays estimates of committee values for the entire period (96th--109th Congress) broken down by party; Table 7 displays these estimates broken down not only by party but also by era (pre- and post-1995).

[Tables 6 and 7 about here]

The first thing we note from Table 8 is that there has not been a great deal of difference in how the parties have ranked committee service in the House since the Watergate era. The visual conclusion of no difference is confirmed with the χ^2 test, which easily fails to reject the null hypothesis that the coefficients are equal across the eras.

Examining the whole period may mask differences that emerged between the parties with the Republican takeover in 1995. Thus, we report in Table 7 value coefficients estimated for each party, before and after the 104th Congress. As with Table 6, when we perform χ^2 tests to see whether the party coefficients are equal within each sub-era, we easily fail to reject the null hypothesis of equal coefficients for both time periods.

The only individual coefficient that deserves attention in Table 7 is that associated with the Rules Committee for the Democrats in the later period. The coefficient, which is essentially

zero, suggests that Democrats over the past decade have been indifferent about serving on the Rules Committee. A close examination of the data matrix underlying this analysis reveals that this seeming demotion of the Rules Committee among Democrats is due to the small number of transfers that have involved the (small) Rules Committee since the 104th Congress. Since the 104th Congress, only three Democrats have been involved in transfers to or from the Rules Committee --- two transferred off and one transferred on. Democratic members of the Rules Committee have basically stayed put in the past decade.¹³ Also note that the standard error of this coefficient is huge, compared to the other standard errors, which is also a product of the small number of observations involving Democrats and the Rules committee since 1995. Therefore, the seemingly anomalous results with the Democrats on the Rules Committee illustrate a limitation of the Grosewart method (or any committee ranking method) when it depends on a small number of observations for a committee.

Conclusions

In this paper, we set out to answer a simple question: have committee values in the House and Senate changed since the change of party control in 1995? Despite strong expectations that changes in the rules and norms associated with House would significantly affect the value that House members associated with committee service, the changes we do observe in committee value are not obviously associated with these changes in rules and norms. Committee values have indeed changed across eras, but not necessarily at the level or in the direction we had expected. In both the House and Senate, the prestige committees have largely retained their place of honor. In the House, lower-ranked committees have shuffled their ranking, but the net

¹³ A couple of transfers involving Democrats have happened mid-Congress, but we have discarded these sorts of transfers for this paper.

effect has been a wash. In the Senate, lower-ranked committees have become somewhat less valuable in recent years.

In the days immediately following the Republican takeover of Congress in 1995, many pundits predicted a loss of power for Congress, as the institutional underpinnings of committee power were eroded, and with it, presumably the primary feature of Congress that provides its policy expertise. At the same time, the past decade has seen Republican leaders use the promise of committee chairmanships as the most significant inducement to get its most senior and ambitious members to contribute more to common policy and electoral goals. These inducements would be hollow if the committee system in fact was becoming less valuable. What our results, admittedly preliminary, suggest, is that the parties have continued to ensure that committee membership is a valuable commodity. Said another way, the quality of committee service is just as much a common pool resource for party leaders as policy and electoral goals. At least at this point, we can find scant evidence that the Republican House leadership has raided the good name of committees to achieve other goals.

This paper is a first cut at the analysis, and obviously subject to fine tuning. Assuming these results stand up to further error-checking, the next step will be to use the value coefficients estimated here to test other hypotheses associated with the politics of the Republican rise to power in 1995. For instance, using the post-1995 coefficients, have more loyal party members received better committee portfolios over the past decade than have renegades? It is in helping to answer questions such as these that the technique explored in this paper will have its greatest utility.

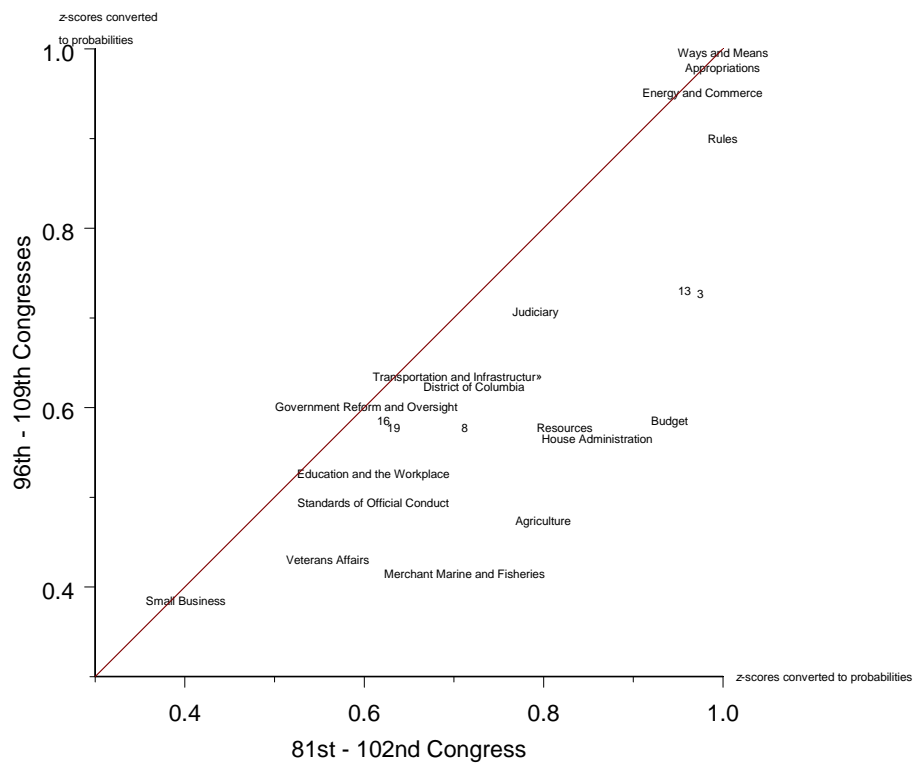
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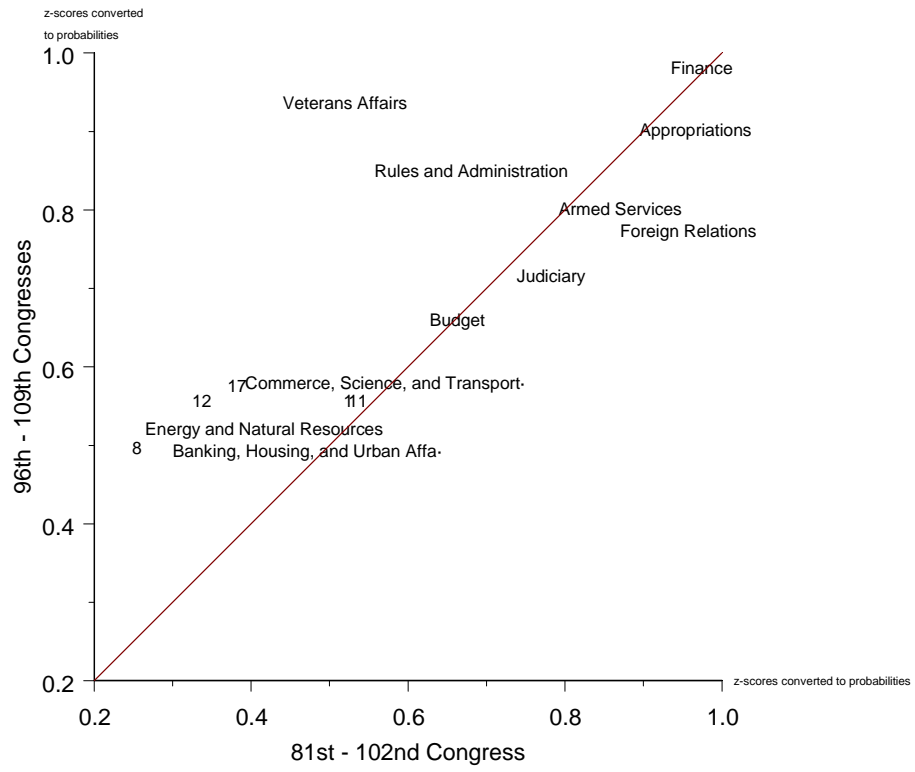
Figure 1. Comparison of House committee coefficients between 81st—102nd Congresses and 96th—109th Congresses. (Coefficients from Table 2.)



Committee legend:

- 3 Armed Services
- 8 Financial Services
- 13 International Relations
- 15 Merchant Marine and Fisheries
- 16 Post Office and Civil Service
- 19 Science
- 21 Standards of Official Conduct

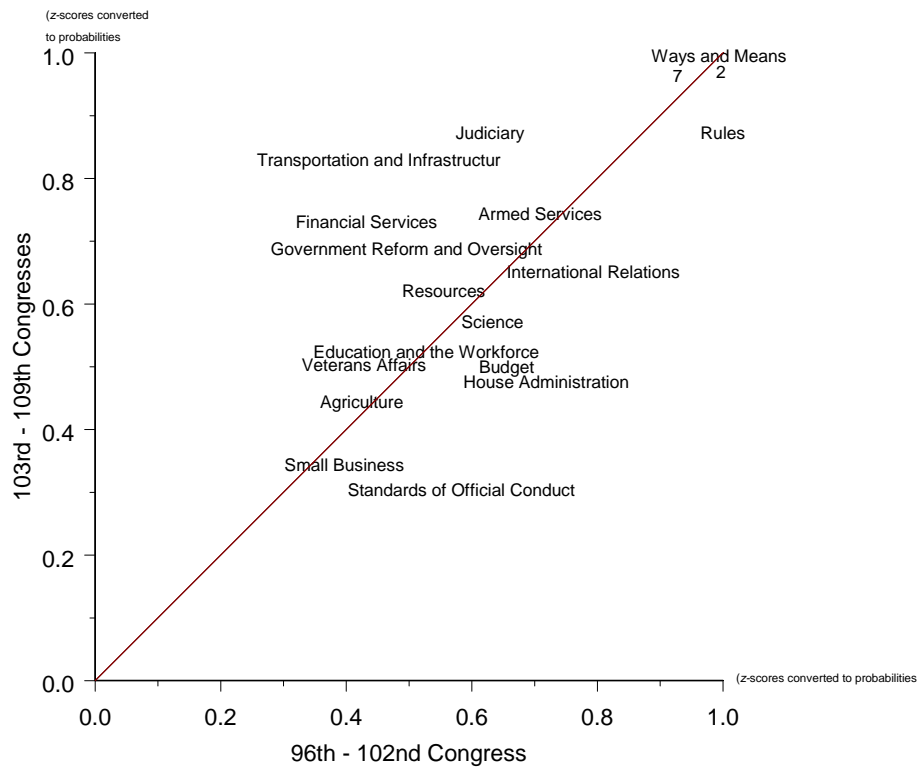
Figure 2. Comparison of Senate committee coefficients between 81st—102nd Congresses and 96th—109th Congresses. (Coefficients from Table 3).



Committee legend

- 1 Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- 8 Environment and Public Works
- 11 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- 12 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- 17 Small Business and Entrepreneurship

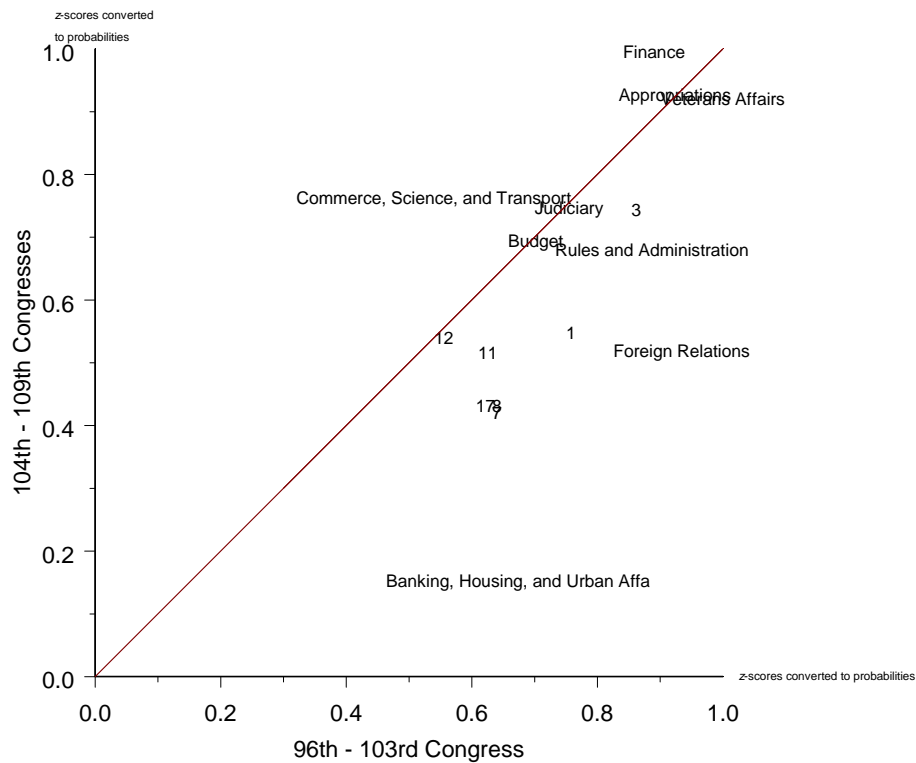
Figure 3. Comparison of House committee coefficients between 96th—103rd Congresses and 104th—109th Congresses. (Coefficients from Table 4.)



Committee legend

- 2 Appropriations
- 7 Energy and Commerce

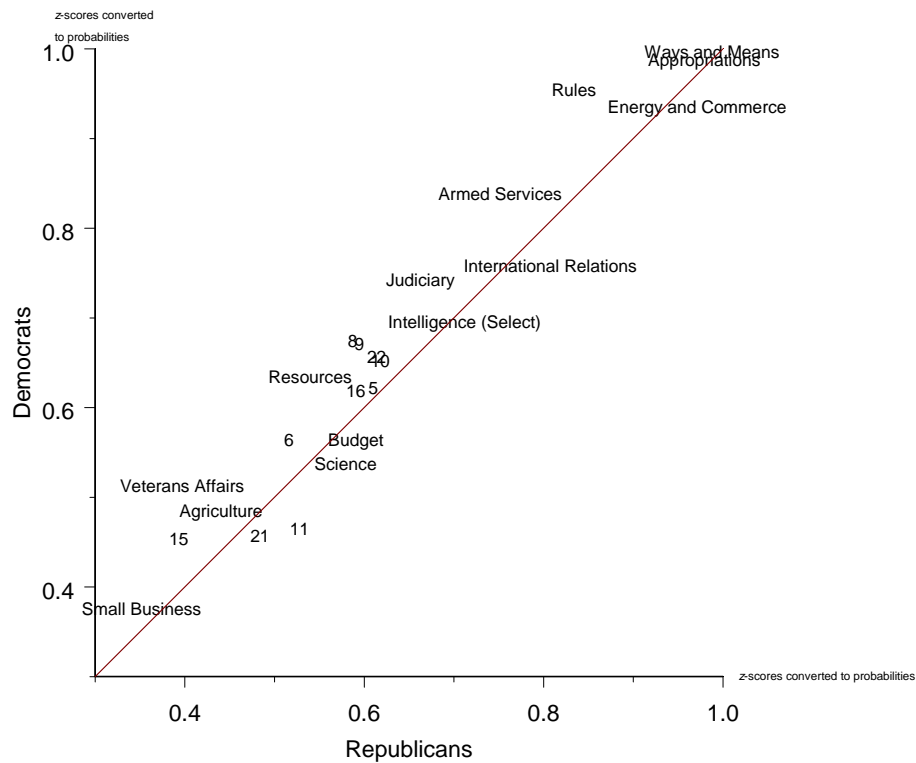
Figure 4. Comparison of Senate committee coefficients between 96th—103rd Congresses and 104th—109th Congresses. (Coefficients from Table 5.)



Committee legend

- 1 Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
- 3 Armed Services
- 7 Energy and Natual Resources
- 8 Environment and Public Works
- 11 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- 12 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
- 17 Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Figure 5. Comparison of House committee coefficients between Democrats and Republicans, 104th—109th Congresses. (Coefficients from Table 6.)



Committee legend

- 5 District of Columbia
- 6 Education and the Workplace
- 8 Financial Services
- 9 Government Reform and Oversight
- 10 Homeland Security
- 11 House Administration
- 15 Merchant Marine and Fisheries
- 16 Post Office and Civil Service
- 23 Veterans Affairs
- 24 Ways and Means

Table 1: Committees and Subcommittees in the House, 103rd and 104th Congresses

Committee	Number of subcommittees		Number of seats		Party ratio (majority:minority party)	
	103rd	104th	103rd	104th	103rd	104th
	Cong.	Cong.	Cong.	Cong.	Cong.	Cong.
Agriculture	6	5	45	49	1.50	1.23
Appropriations	13	13	60	56	1.61	1.33
Banking and Financial Services	6	5	51	50	1.50	1.23
Budget	0	0	43	42	1.53	1.33
Commerce	6	5	44	46	1.59	1.19
D.C.	3	---	11	---	1.75	---
Economic & Educational Opp.	6	5	42	43	1.80	1.26
Government Reform & Oversight	6	7	38	50	1.31	1.23
House Oversight	6	0	19	12	1.71	1.40
International Relations	7	5	44	43	1.44	1.21
Judiciary	6	5	35	35	1.50	1.33
Merchant Marine & Fisheries	5	---	46	--	1.56	---
National Security	6	5	55	55	1.50	1.20
Post Office & Civil Service	5	---	24	---	1.67	---
Resources	5	5	43	45	1.87	1.25
Rules	2	2	13	13	2.25	2.25
Science	5	4	55	50	1.50	1.17
Small Business	5	4	44	41	1.32	1.16
Standards of Official Conduct	0	0	14	10	1.00	1.00
Transportation & Infrastructure	6	6	63	61	1.63	1.18
Veterans' Affairs	5	3	33	33	1.75	1.20
Ways and Means	6	5	38	36	1.71	1.40
Total	115	84	860	770	1.56	1.25

Note: Committee names are those used in the 104th Congress, except for the three standing committees that were abolished in the 104th Congress.

Sources: *Congressional Directory*, 103rd Congress (June 25, 1993); 104th Congress (May 5, 1995).

Table 2: House committee values, 81st - 109th Congresses

Committee	96th-109th Congress			81st-102nd Congress		
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Rank	Coefficient	Std. Error	Rank
Ways and Means	2.84	0.41	1	∞	n/a	1
Appropriations	2.08	0.23	2	5.08	0.59	2
Energy and Commerce	1.68	0.19	3	2.00	0.25	4
Rules	1.29	0.28	4	4.47	0.68	3
International Relations	0.62	0.13	5	1.72	0.19	6
Armed Services	0.61	0.17	6	1.96	0.25	5
Intelligence	0.57	0.18	7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Judiciary	0.55	0.22	8	0.81	0.21	11
Homeland Security	0.55	0.15	9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transportation and Infrastructure	0.35	0.14	10	0.55	0.17	15
District of Columbia	0.32	0.41	11	0.59	0.14	12
Government Reform and Oversight	0.26	0.15	12	0.26	0.13	20
Budget	0.22	0.08	13	1.56	0.3	7
Post Office and Civil Service	0.22	0.22	14	0.31	0.15	17
Financial Services	0.20	0.13	15	0.56	0.17	13
Science	0.20	0.14	16	0.34	0.17	16
Resources	0.20	0.15	17	0.93	0.17	9
House Administration	0.17	0.16	18	1.08	0.17	8
Education and the Workplace	0.07	0.15	19	0.28	0.17	18
Standards of Official Conduct	-0.01	0.14	20	0.28	0.15	19
Agriculture	-0.06	0.18	21	0.84	0.2	10
Veterans Affairs	-0.17	0.16	22	0.15	0.15	21
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	-0.21	0.21	23	0.56	0.15	14
Small Business	-0.29	0.15	24	-0.25	0.21	22
N	1391			1503		
LLF	-739.19			-681		
n/a = not applicable						

Sources: Coefficients for the 81st-102nd Congress from Groseclose and Stewart (1998).
Coefficients for the 96th-109th Congress computed by the authors.

Table 3: Senate committee values, 81st - 109th Congresses

Committee	96th-109th Congress			81st-102nd Congress		
	Coefficient	s.e	Rank	Coefficient	s.e	Rank
Finance	2.14	0.32	1	1.95	0.33	1
Veterans Affairs	1.55	0.56	2	0.05	0.48	11
Appropriations	1.31	0.25	3	1.83	0.26	2
Rules and Administration	1.05	0.29	4	0.47	0.21	6
Armed Services	0.86	0.23	5	1.13	0.25	4
Foreign Relations	0.76	0.22	6	1.72	0.25	3
Intelligence	0.59	0.20	7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Judiciary	0.58	0.28	8	0.78	0.26	5
Budget	0.42	0.20	9	0.42	0.23	7
Commerce, Science, and Transportation	0.21	0.28	10	0.2	0.26	8
Indian Affairs	0.21	0.37	11	n/a	n/a	n/a
Small Business and Entrepreneurship	0.20	0.18	12	-0.3	0.37	14
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs	0.15	0.22	13	-0.42	0.22	15
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	0.15	0.27	14	0.06	0.29	10
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions	0.15	0.18	15	0.09	0.23	9
Energy and Natural Resources	0.06	0.20	16	-0.21	0.21	13
Environment and Public Works	0.00	0.23	17	-0.66	0.26	16
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	-0.01	0.23	18	-0.05	0.24	12
N	460			681		
LLF	-248.29			-366.23		
n/a = not applicable						

Sources: Coefficients for the 81st-102nd Congress from Stewart and Groseclose (1999).
Coefficients for the 96th-109th Congress computed by the authors.

Table 4: House committee values by era, 96th - 109th Congresses

	104th-109th Congress			96th-103rd Congress		
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Rank	Coefficient	Std. Error	Rank
Ways and Means	∞	--	1	2.50	0.49	3
Appropriations	1.94	0.29	2	2.73	0.56	2
Energy and Commerce	1.85	0.25	3	1.46	0.30	4
Judiciary	1.16	0.39	4	0.33	0.29	10
Rules	1.16	0.37	5	∞	--	1
Transportation and Infrastructure	0.97	0.23	6	-0.12	0.19	17
Armed Services	0.67	0.25	7	0.55	0.25	7
Financial Services	0.63	0.20	8	-0.17	0.20	19
Homeland Security	0.53	0.15	9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Government Reform and Oversight	0.50	0.21	10	-0.01	0.22	16
International Relations	0.40	0.19	11	0.82	0.19	5
Intelligence	0.35	0.19	12	n/a	n/a	n/a
Resources	0.32	0.23	13	0.14	0.20	14
Science	0.19	0.22	14	0.34	0.21	9
Education and the Workforce	0.07	0.22	15	0.07	0.20	15
Veterans Affairs	0.02	0.28	16	-0.18	0.21	20
Budget	0.01	0.12	17	0.40	0.11	8
House Administration	-0.05	0.24	18	0.58	0.24	6
Agriculture	-0.13	0.23	19	-0.19	0.29	21
Small Business	-0.39	0.23	20	-0.26	0.20	22
Standards of Official Conduct	-0.50	0.25	21	0.21	0.17	13
District of Columbia	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.28	0.41	11
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	n/a	n/a	n/a	-0.16	0.21	12
Post Office and Civil Service	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.31	0.23	18
N	669			722		
LLF	-340.65			-364.95		
n/a = not applicable						

Chi-sq test that coefficients for the 96th-103rd Congress period equal the coefficients of the 104th-109th Congress period: $\chi^2(df=22) = 67.16, p < .0000001$.

Table 5: Senate committee values by era, 96th - 109th Congresses

Committee	103rd-109th Congress			96th-102nd Congress		
	Coefficient	s.e.	Rank	Coefficient	s.e.	Rank
Finance	∞	--	1	1.23	0.45	4
Appropriations	1.48	0.41	2	1.43	0.37	3
Veterans Affairs	1.44	0.62	3	∞	--	1
Commerce, Science, and Transportation	0.73	0.42	4	0.10	0.43	16
Judiciary	0.68	0.36	5	0.69	0.54	8
Armed Services	0.67	0.34	6	1.09	0.36	6
Budget	0.52	0.32	7	0.53	0.29	9
Rules and Administration	0.48	0.54	8	1.21	0.40	5
Intelligence (Select)	0.47	0.22	9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	0.13	0.31	10	0.70	0.55	7
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs	0.11	0.31	11	0.14	0.32	15
Indian Affairs (Select)	0.10	0.40	12	n/a	n/a	n/a
Foreign Relations	0.06	0.32	13	1.51	0.38	2
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions	0.05	0.27	14	0.32	0.27	13
Small Business and Entrepreneurship	-0.16	0.40	15	0.31	0.23	14
Environment and Public Works	-0.16	0.31	16	0.36	0.40	11
Energy and Natural Resources	-0.19	0.30	17	0.36	0.28	12
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	-1.01	0.45	18	0.45	0.30	10
N	238			222		
LLF	-119.39			-107.53		

n/a = not applicable

Chi-sq test that coefficients for the 96th-103rd Congress period equal the coefficients of the 104th-109th Congress period: $\chi^2(df=16) = 42.74, p < .0003$

Table 6: House committee values by party, 96th - 109th Congresses

Committee	Overall Rank	Democrats			Republicans		
		Coefficient	Std. Error	Rank	Coefficient	Std. Error	Rank
Ways and Means	1	2.26	0.45	1	∞	n/a	1
Appropriations	2	2.04	0.34	3	2.36	0.41	2
Energy and Commerce	3	1.90	0.30	2	1.54	0.24	4
Rules	4	0.97	0.48	4	1.72	0.40	3
International Relations	5	0.87	0.27	7	0.71	0.19	6
Armed Services	6	0.68	0.28	15	1.00	0.26	5
Intelligence (Select)	7	0.56	0.19	6	0.52	0.24	8
Judiciary	8	0.42	0.32	8	0.66	0.31	7
Homeland Security	9	0.30	0.20	5	0.40	0.19	12
Transportation and Infrastructure	10	0.29	0.59	14	0.41	0.18	11
District of Columbia	11	0.28	0.20	10	0.32	0.57	14
Government Reform and Oversight	12	0.24	0.29	17	0.45	0.23	10
Budget	13	0.23	0.10	13	0.17	0.12	17
Post Office and Civil Service	14	0.23	0.23	12	0.31	0.35	15
Financial Services	15	0.22	0.24	20	0.46	0.19	9
Science	16	0.20	0.19	11	0.10	0.22	18
Resources	17	0.10	0.20	16	0.35	0.26	13
House Administration	18	0.07	0.19	9	-0.08	0.30	21
Education and the Workplace	19	0.04	0.19	19	0.17	0.24	16
Standards of Official Conduct	20	-0.04	0.21	18	-0.10	0.20	22
Agriculture	21	-0.15	0.28	21	-0.03	0.23	20
Veterans Affairs	22	-0.26	0.28	24	0.04	0.23	19
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	23	-0.27	0.21	22	-0.11	0.31	23
Small Business	24	-0.38	0.24	23	-0.31	0.21	24
N		708			681		
LLF		-381.94			-343.94		

Chi-sq test that coefficients for the Democrats equal the coefficients for the Republicans:
 $\chi^2(df=24) = 26.63, p < .32.$

Table 7: House committee values by party and era, 96th - 109th Congresses

Committee	96th-103rd Congress						104th-109th Congress					
	Democrats			Republicans			Democrats			Republicans		
	Coeff.	s.e.	Rank	Coeff.	s.e.	Rank	Coeff.	s.e.	Rank	Coeff.	s.e.	Rank
Agriculture	-0.15	0.40	17	-0.34	0.43	21	-0.34	0.41	19	-0.01	0.29	18
Appropriations	∞	--	1	∞	--	1	1.61	0.38	4	2.43	0.51	2
Armed Services	-0.17	0.36	18	1.44	0.46	4	0.70	0.36	7	0.59	0.37	8
Budget	0.41	0.14	9	0.38	0.18	11	0.01	0.17	14	0.02	0.17	17
District of Columbia	0.28	0.59	11	0.25	0.58	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Education and the Workforce	0.07	0.22	14	0.58	0.71	8	-0.08	0.43	18	0.11	0.26	15
Energy and Commerce	1.74	0.50	4	1.18	0.39	5	2.28	0.50	2	1.69	0.32	3
Financial Services	-0.41	0.30	22	0.05	0.28	18	0.42	0.32	9	0.92	0.28	6
Government Reform and Oversight	-0.04	0.25	15	0.09	0.48	16	0.40	0.36	10	0.55	0.28	10
Homeland Security	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.84	0.27	6	0.38	0.19	12
House Administration	0.81	0.30	5	0.17	0.46	14	-0.07	0.30	17	-0.04	0.42	19
Intelligence (Select)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.28	0.33	12	0.39	0.24	11
International Relations	0.81	0.27	6	0.88	0.28	6	0.28	0.28	13	0.57	0.28	9
Judiciary	0.41	0.39	8	0.61	0.48	7	1.44	0.85	5	1.02	0.44	5
Merchant Marine and Fisheries	-0.18	0.30	19	-0.03	0.33	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Post Office and Civil Service	0.33	0.30	10	0.43	0.37	10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Resources	0.12	0.23	13	0.49	0.47	9	0.46	0.34	8	0.29	0.32	13
Rules	∞	--	1	∞	--	2	-0.03	0.90	15	1.65	0.48	4
Science	0.49	0.26	7	0.10	0.38	15	0.31	0.36	11	0.14	0.28	14
Small Business	-0.13	0.25	16	-0.40	0.34	22	-0.65	0.39	21	-0.20	0.29	20
Standards of Official Conduct	0.14	0.22	12	0.29	0.28	12	-0.38	0.41	20	-0.59	0.33	21
Transportation and Infrastructure	-0.19	0.29	20	-0.09	0.27	20	1.65	0.57	3	0.87	0.28	7
Veterans Affairs	-0.31	0.27	21	0.08	0.34	17	-0.07	0.52	16	0.10	0.34	16
Ways and Means	1.99	0.49	3	∞	--	1	∞	--	1	∞	--	1
N	433			287			275			394		
LLF	-221.49			-131.92			-136.95			-196.50		
n/a = not applicable												

Chi-sq test that coefficients for the Democrats equal the coefficients for the Republicans for the 96th-103rd Congress period: $\chi^2(df=22) = 20.75, p < .46$; Chi-sq test that coefficients for the Democrats equal the coefficients for the Republicans for the 104th-109th Congress period: $\chi^2(df=21) = 20.75, p < .20$