

# Parties as Organizations: Implications of the American Party System

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November 9, 2017



## All-is-Forgiven Policy

- ▶ For students who improve their performance consistently, especially on the final compared with the midterm, *the midterm grade will be discounted or completely ignored. It is possible to fail the midterm and earn an A in the class!*
- ▶ While there is a strong (but not perfect) correlation between performance on the midterm and the final, every year there are students who benefit (sometimes spectacularly) from the *all-is-forgiven* policy.
- ▶ If you need get it now.
- ▶ Policy works *under assumption* that there is close to perfect participation in the course and steady improvement on the remaining essay assignment (i.e. the essay must show evidence of significant improvement from midterm performance).

# Senate GOP Efforts to Repeal & Replace the ACA

## *New Defections Signal End for Health Bill*

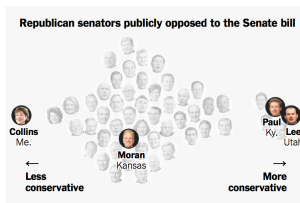
### Trump Calls On Congress to Pass Repeal-Only Plan

By THOMAS KAPLAN

- Senators Jerry Moran of Kansas and Mike Lee of Utah said they would oppose the bill to replace the Affordable Care Act, leaving it short.
- President Trump said Congress should "start from a clean slate." Senator Mitch McConnell said he would push a measure to repeal the law now and replace it later.

2087 Comments

- 'We Will Return,' Trump Tweets About Health Care



### A Battle Begins as Republicans Look to Pass a Budget

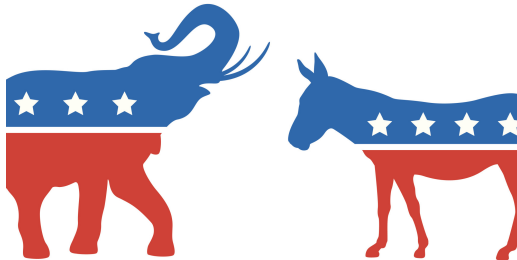
By ALAN RAFFEPORT

Having failed so far to agree on a health care overhaul, a fractured Republican Party must now tackle a spending plan.

- ▶ Using the course concepts, what explains Senate Republican's failure to follow the House GOP Majority and repeal the ACA?
- ▶ Does their failure surprise you? What does this say to party strength in the U.S. Congress?

# Agenda

- 1 What is a Political Party?
- 2 Overcoming Collective Action
- 3 Procedural Cartel (Partisan) Model



- ▶ Opening Question: What do you think this quote by E.E. Schattschneider means with regards to the American party system: “*Modern democracy is **unthinkable** save in terms of political parties?*”

# Recap: Parties Solving Collective Action Problems

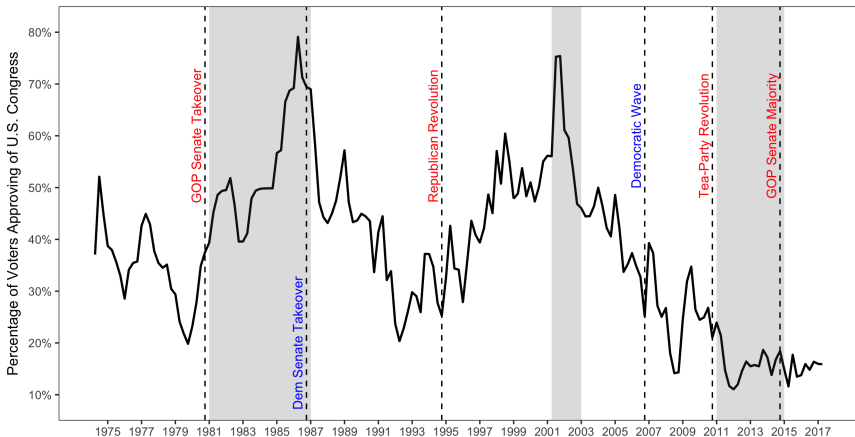
## Political Parties and Problems of Collective Action

<b>Arena:</b>	<b>Collective Action Problems</b>	<b>Parties Help Solve by:</b>
Electorate	Free riding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rational abstention</li> <li>• Rational ignorance</li> </ul>	Branding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of collective responsibility</li> <li>• Heuristic; party id.</li> </ul> Mobilization
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination of politicians' ambition</li> <li>• Getting elected to office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nomination (agenda setting)</li> <li>• Mobilization</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> </ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transaction costs for making policy.</li> <li>• Coalition maintenance</li> </ul>	"Long" coalition; ready-made support for party policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda control and the problem of cycling.</li> <li>• Imagine a President Perot or Blumberg...or Trump?</li> </ul>

## What is a *Responsible* Political Party?

- ▶ What is Fiorina's argument about the party behavior in Congress during the 1970's?
- ▶ *DOCR Thesis*: Decline of Collective Responsibility & inability of parties to secure cohesion to tackle "big problems"
- ▶ What does this mean?
- ▶ Voters unable to tease out various party policy positions or even agree on *who* to blame & who to reward (collective accountability)
- ▶ Gives rise to electoral "blind spot" creating incentive for *individual accountability*...implications for party cohesion?
- ▶ Parties mainly collection of group interests that agree on set of agenda items & that work to give nominations (with resources) to candidates with a *credible agreement* towards that agenda

# Voter assessments of the Collective Congress



*N = 1,395 national polls & shaded areas indicate divided control of Congress. Quarterly estimates derived from dyad ratios model (Stimson 1998).*



# Voter assessments of the Congressional Parties



*N* = 264 national Democratic polls & 321 Republican polls. Quarterly estimates derived from dyad ratios model (Stimson 1998).

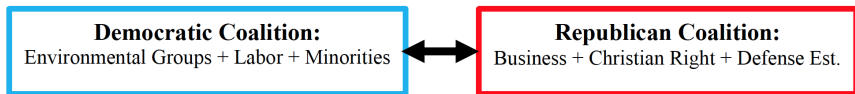
## Parties as a Function of *Group Interests*

- ▶ What in the Madisonian framework & electoral system undermines collective accountability?
- ▶ Fiorina asserts that parties are merely collection of organized interests, what does this mean?
- ▶ How do these interests use nominations? Is this a principal-agent relationship?
- ▶ Group Interests (teachers, lawyers, interest groups, etc.) are *main* unit of interest
- ▶ What are the incentives of office holders in this theory?
- ▶ Parties are collection of fragile “long” coalitions. . . parallels with *Federalist 10*?

# Parties as *Long Coalitions*

## Parties and Coalition Maintenance

Parties form a “long” coalition:



What kinds of issues might divide each party's coalition?

- Are there issues that might tempt groups to defect from one coalition to another?
- What are the advantages of remaining in the coalition by smoothing over differences?

Source: Stone (2016) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

# Overcoming Collective Action in Government

- ▶ What's the fundamental problem of collective action in the legislature?
- ▶ *Parties in-government consist of office-holders who have preferences*
- ▶ Remember, collective action fundamentally about securing *public goods*
- ▶ What does this mean?
- ▶ Parties in government are plagued by competing incentives among their members
- ▶ Consider the following simple Prisoner's Dilemma

*Game Theory: The Prisoner's Dilemma*

<i>Player 1 Choice</i>	<i>Player 2's Choice</i>	
	Cooperation	Defection
Cooperation	(2,2)	(1,4)
Defection	(4,1)	(0,0)

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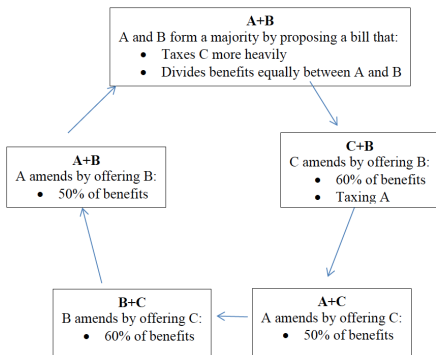
*Payouts in parenthesis. Assume one-shot game.*

## Collective Action in Government

- ▶ How does this game parallel to the struggle parties have in delivering public goods?
- ▶ Parties can either form long or narrow coalitions, longest coalitions could be a coalition of *all* legislators
- ▶ This is the *norm of universalism*, each legislator receives something as member of a “long coalition”, what’s the downside to this?
- ▶ The fear here is that this can lead to *legislative cycling*, where no single faction constitutes a majority and thus infinite bargaining can occur between members
- ▶ Consider if players (legislators) are worse off under cycling

### The problem of cycling in legislatures

Imagine there are three factions or voting blocks: A, B, and C. No single faction constitutes a majority; any two factions can form a majority:



Parties solve this problem by controlling the agenda. If A and B are in the same party, the party prevents amendments offered by C that would split the coalition.

Source: Stone (2016) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

## Parties Solving Collective Action *in Government*

- ▶ Premium on *setting the agenda* for House & Senate party leaders
- ▶ What do party members get out of delegation of agenda setting powers to party leaders?
- ▶ **Stable coalitions** & distinct public goods that *distinguish* party brands
- ▶ What happens “in-government” contributes to how parties solve collective action problems in electoral arena, how?
- ▶ Heuristic & raw mobilization efforts by parties benefit all candidates running under the party brand (ex: coattail effect in presidential years)
- ▶ Politicians are *office-seeking* and what parties do in government reduces cost of election (**key: distinct public goods/policy wins**)



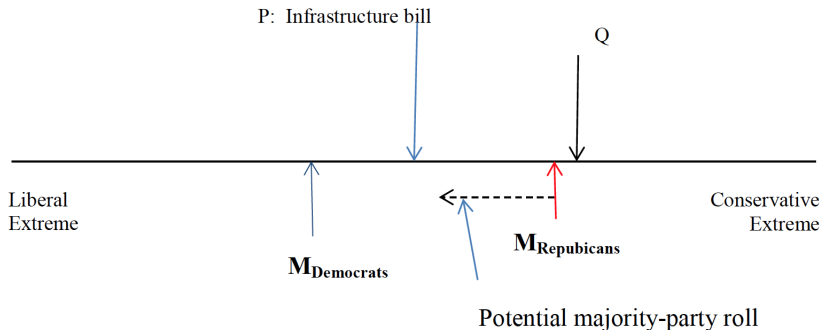
# The *Partisan* Model in Congress

## Critical Elements of the Theory:

- ① Members seek re-election, policy, & majority status
- ② Party brand/reputation important for re-election & winning majority (explicitly collective accountable model)
- ③ Party brand/reputation depends on legislative record
- ④ Building a legislative record involves overcoming collective action problems:
  - ▶ All would like more for their own districts
  - ▶ Party label is a public good, free-riding incentive
- ⑤ Primary way of solving collective action problems is delegation to central authority: party leaders, including committee chairs.
- ⑥ Key resource that is delegated is agenda control:
  - ▶ Party leaders, rules committee & substantive committees
  - ▶ Cartel assures that all positions are in hands of senior party leaders.
  - ▶ Negative agenda control: prevent majority party from being *rolled*

## What is a Majority-Party *Roll*?

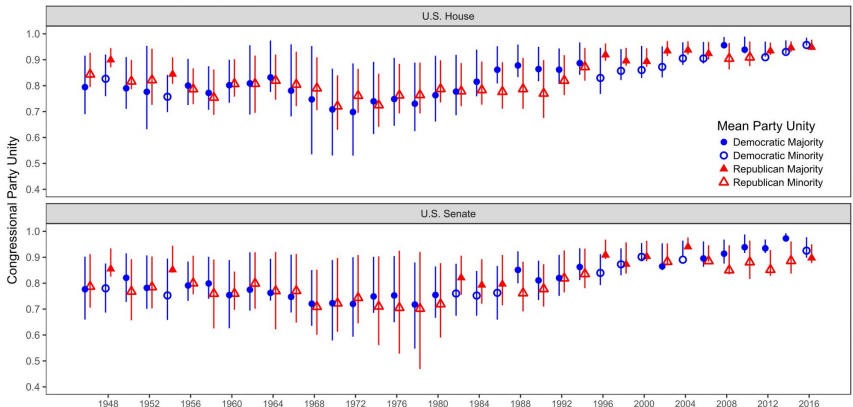
Majority-party roll occurs when the **majority-party median voter** opposes legislation & passes. Ultimately, responsibility of the Speaker to keep majority rolls off the agenda. Consider  $P$ , a Trump infrastructure bill &  $Q$ , the status quo. Will it require a majority-party *roll*?



## Limits to Party's Efforts

- ▶ Why would parties in government be limited in ability to solve collective action problems?
- ▶ American political parties generally thought of as being *weak* parties, why?
- ▶ Parties limited in coercing their members to vote against self-interest, why?
- ▶ American parties gaining strength in party unity, why? Implications for collective accountability?
- ▶ Recall ***greater correlation*** between presidential & congressional election outcomes: ↑ nationalization of elections & collective accountability
- ▶ Comparative parties known for *formal* means of party discipline (withholding campaign funds, denying nominations primarily)

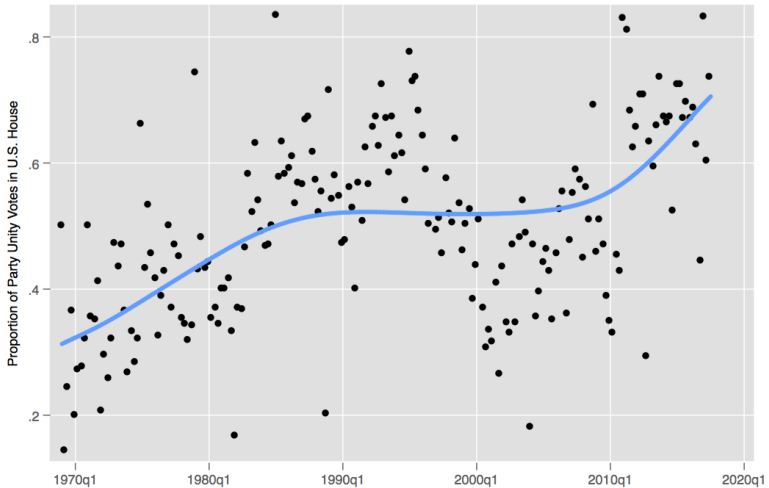
## Congressional Party Unity during the Post-War Period, 1946-2016



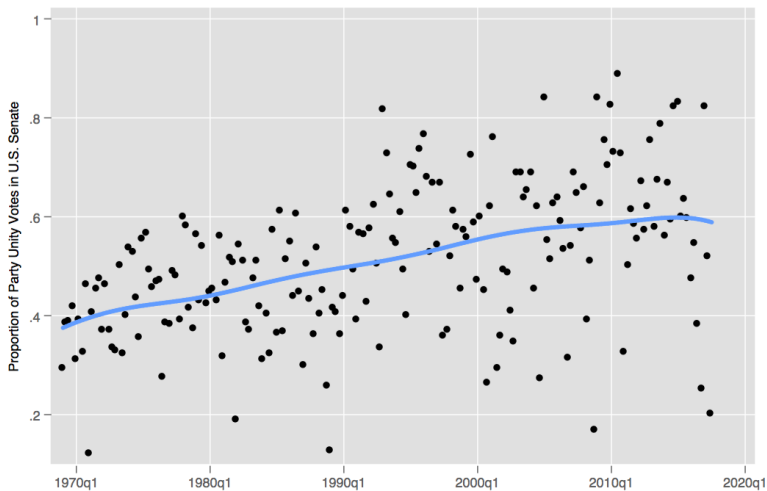
Point ranges indicate distance between 25% percentile to 75% quantile with respect to party unity.

Carlos Algara: @algaraca / Data: Rvoterview Scrape

# Greater Partisan Conflict in the U.S. House



# Greater Partisan Conflict in the U.S. Senate



## Key Points:

- ▶ Traditional view is that parties are dysfunctional “teams” of politicians individually accountable
- ▶ Parties fundamentally “long coalitions” and aggregation of group interests in society
- ▶ Group interests work towards giving nominations to like-minded candidates
- ▶ Parties are comprised of “long coalitions”, akin to a collection of factions
- ▶ Legislatures comprised of members with varying self-interest
- ▶ Parties in government help solve collective action by setting the agenda & providing members with stable coalitions & operating like a procedural cartel
- ▶ Parties in government strengthen brand & heuristic, necessary mechanism of overcoming collective action in electoral arena