

# Understanding Congress & Its Members

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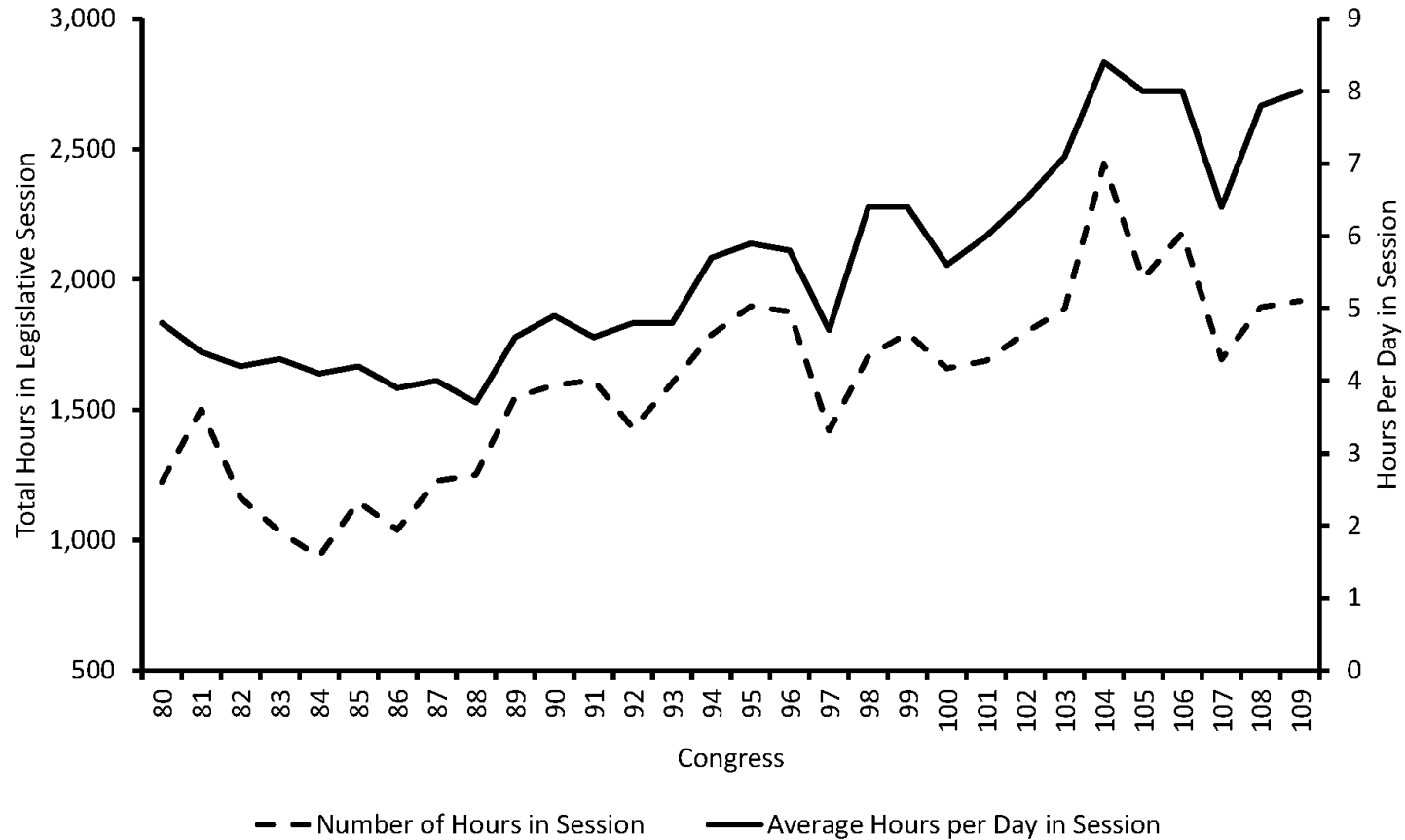
Hyatt Regency Crystal City  
Arlington, VA  
April 11, 2016



# DEALING WITH THE CONTEMPORARY CONGRESS:

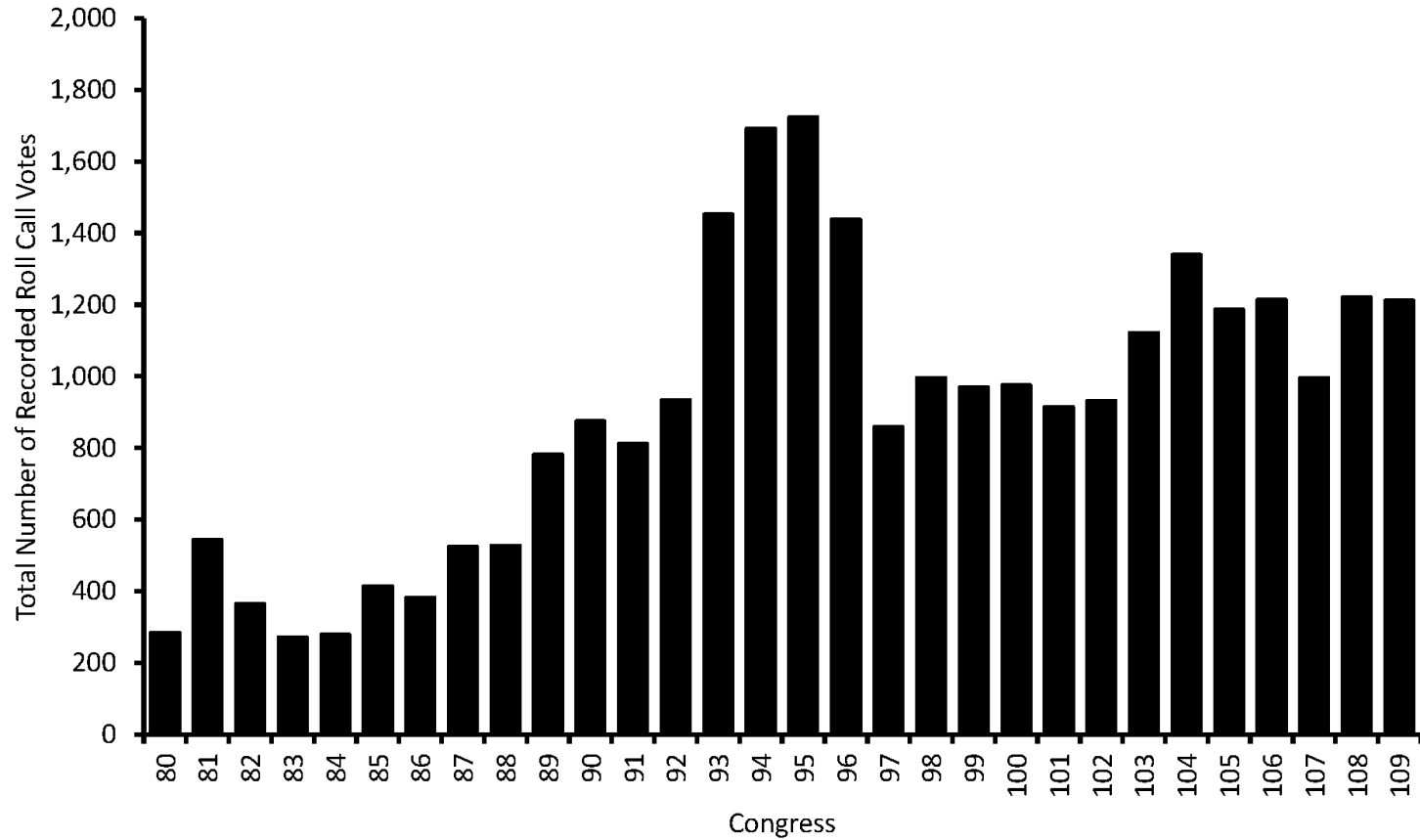
Congress from the inside looking out &  
Congress from the outside looking in

# Time Demands on Members, 1947-



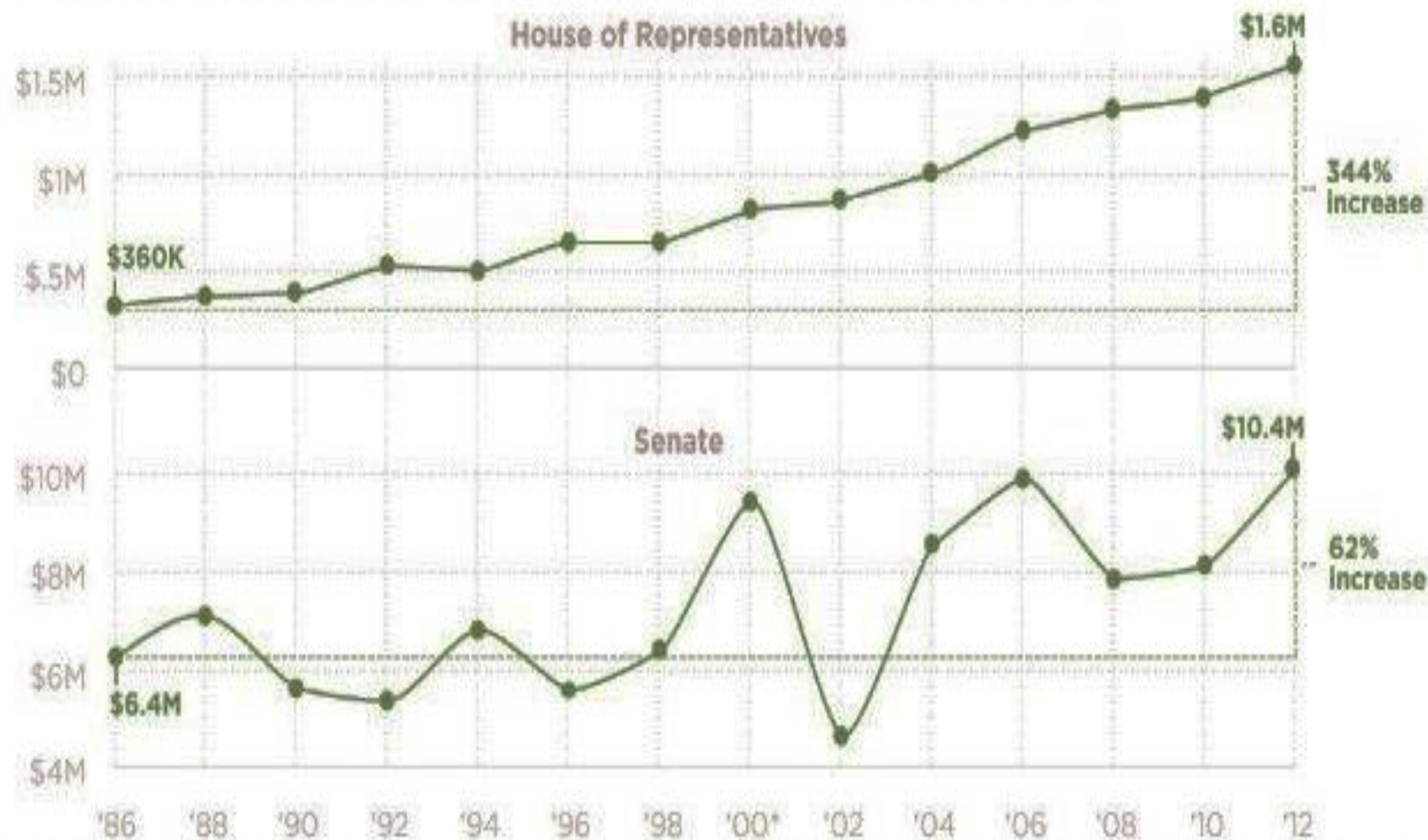
Source: James M. Curry (2015)

# Decision Demands on Members



# The cost of winning congressional elections

Here is the average cost of winning elections in the House and Senate since 1986 in 2012 dollars.



\* Jon Corzine spent \$63,209,506 to win the U.S. Senate seat in New Jersey; Hillary Clinton spent \$29,941,194 on her Senate win in New York. The remaining Senate winners spent an average of \$4,737,365. \* Inflation adjustment based on average 2012 Consumer Price Index.  
Source: Campaign Finance Institute

# Fundraising Time Demands

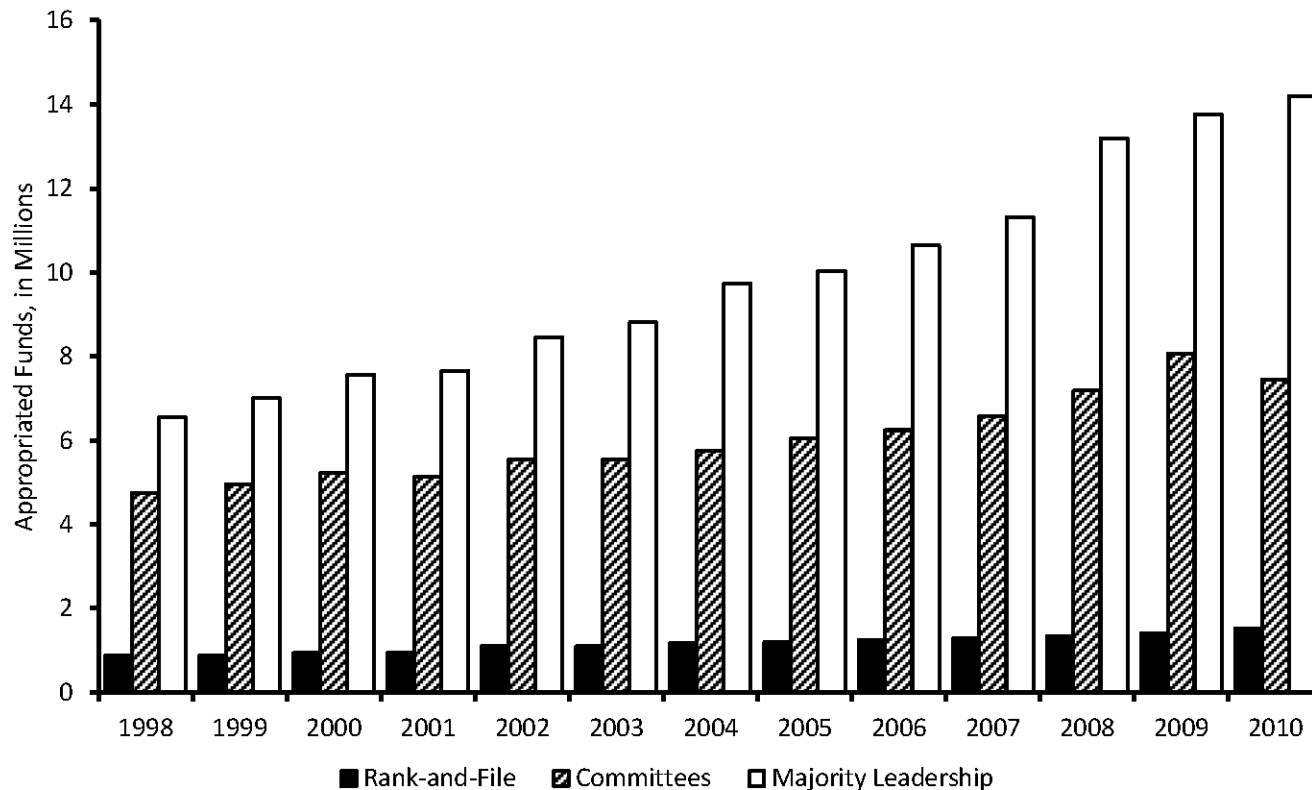
## MODEL DAILY SCHEDULE - DC

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 hours	Call Time
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1-2 hours	Constituent Visits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 hours*	Committee/Floor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 hour	Strategic Outreach Breakfasts, Meet & Greet, Press
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 hour	Recharge Time

HuffPost

Source: Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee

# Dependent on Party and Committees Leaders for Policy Analysis



Source: James M. Curry (2015)

# THE DEMANDS OF PARTY

Always strong, but much stronger today



# Why is party so important to members?

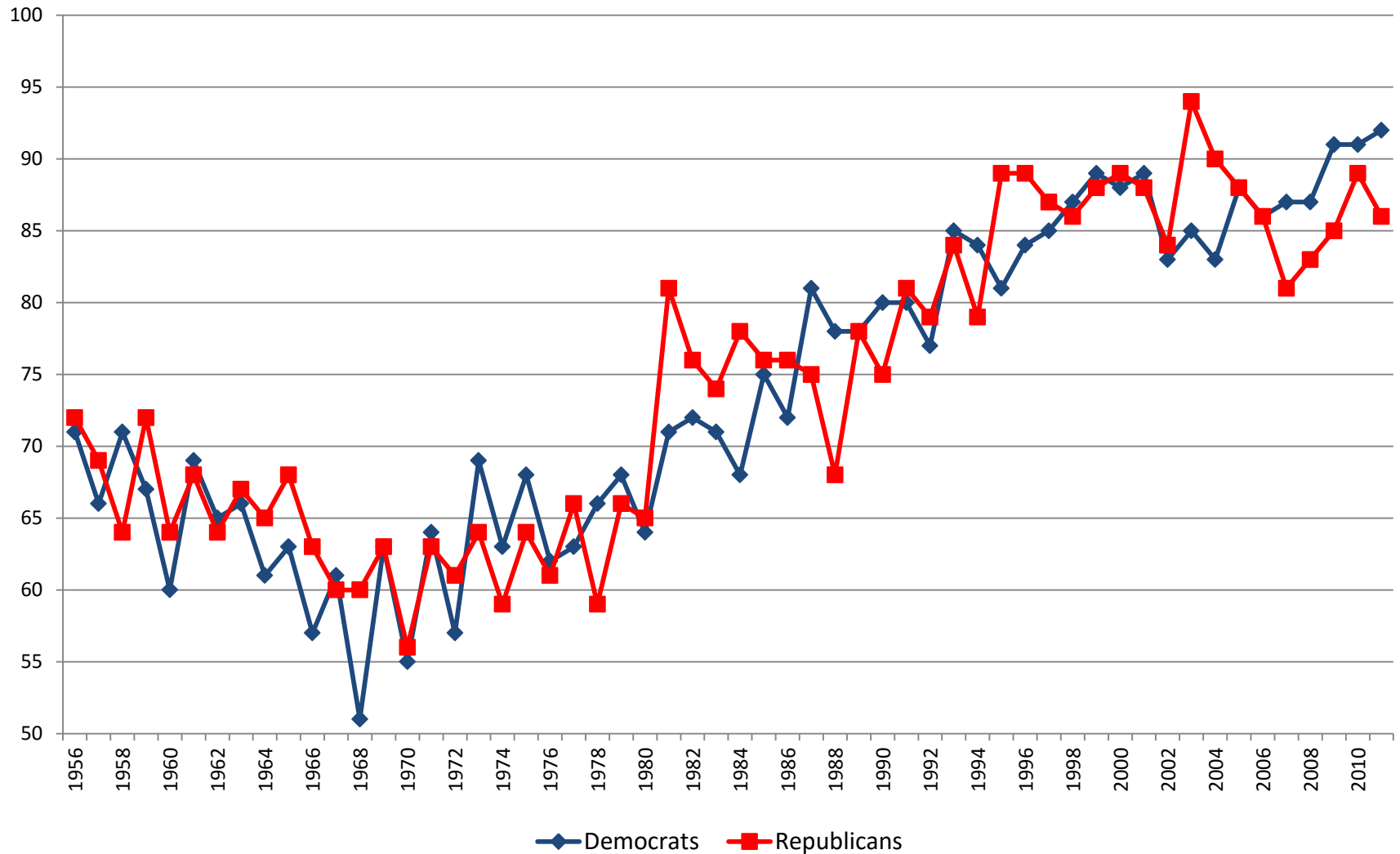
Parties are members' base of political support.

Majority control of Congress determines:

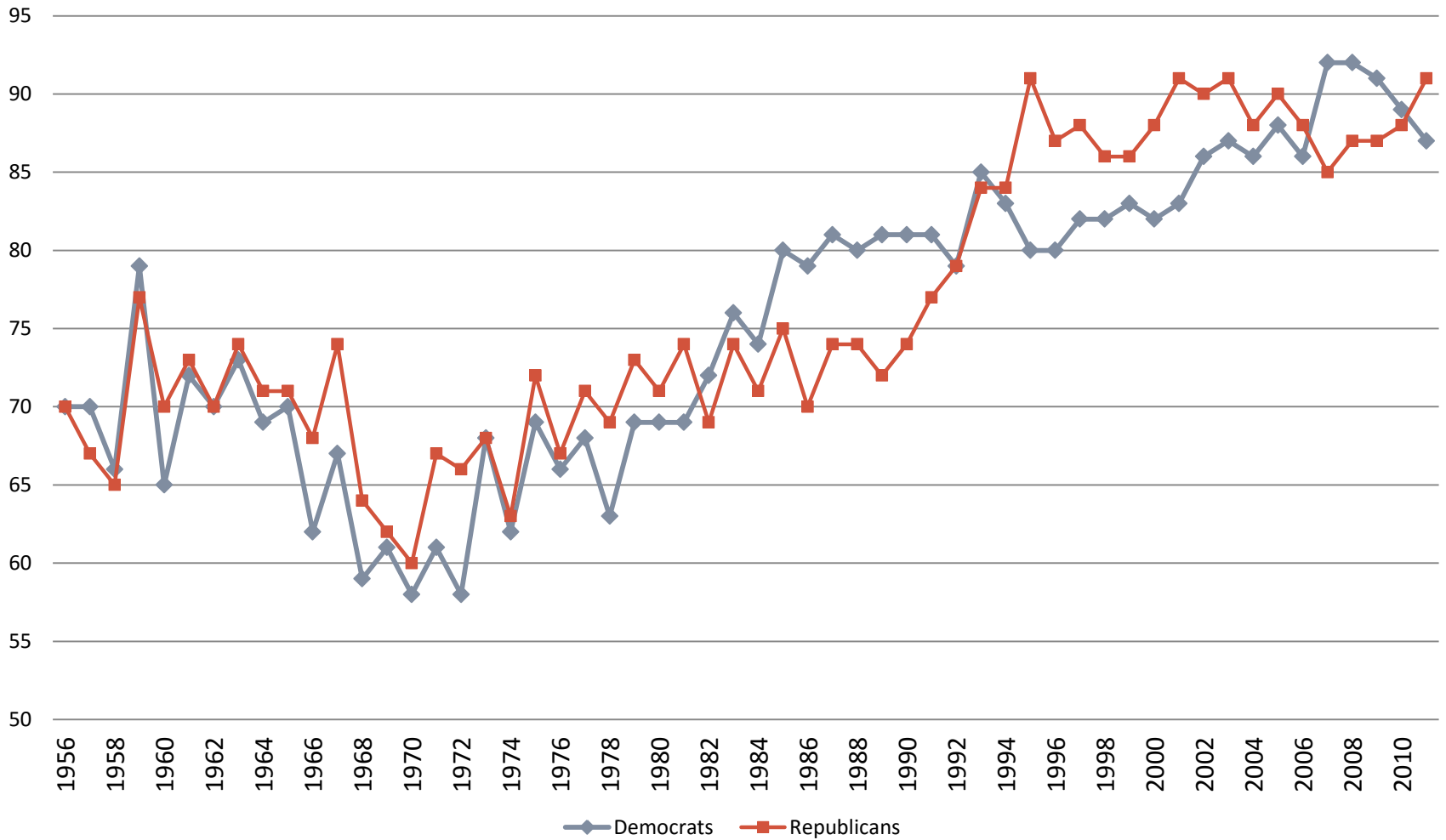
- Who controls the floor agenda
- Who holds ALL committee chairs

Party is by far the single best predictor of how members will vote. Even more true today.

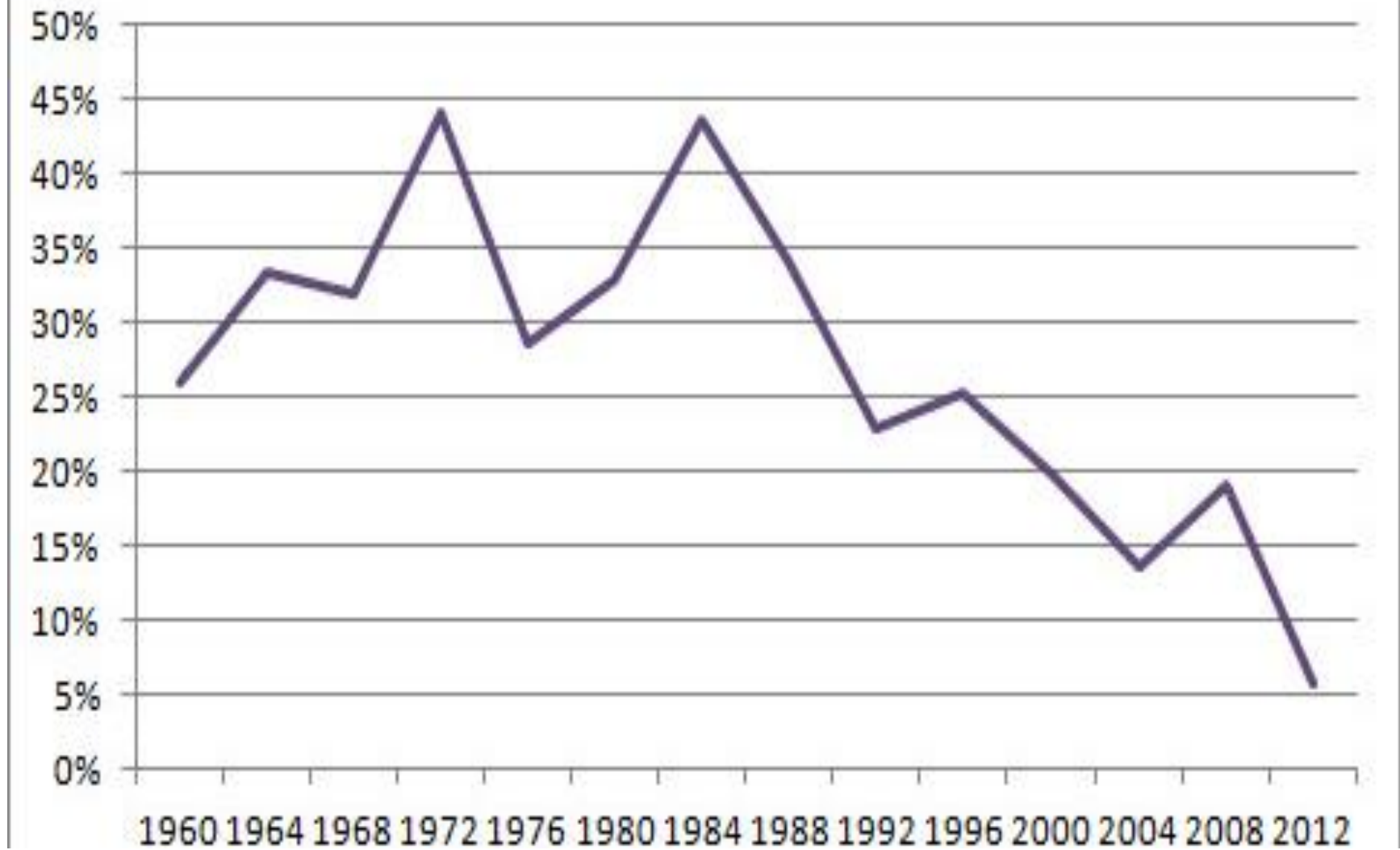
# Party Loyalty in the U.S. Senate



# Party Loyalty in the U.S. House

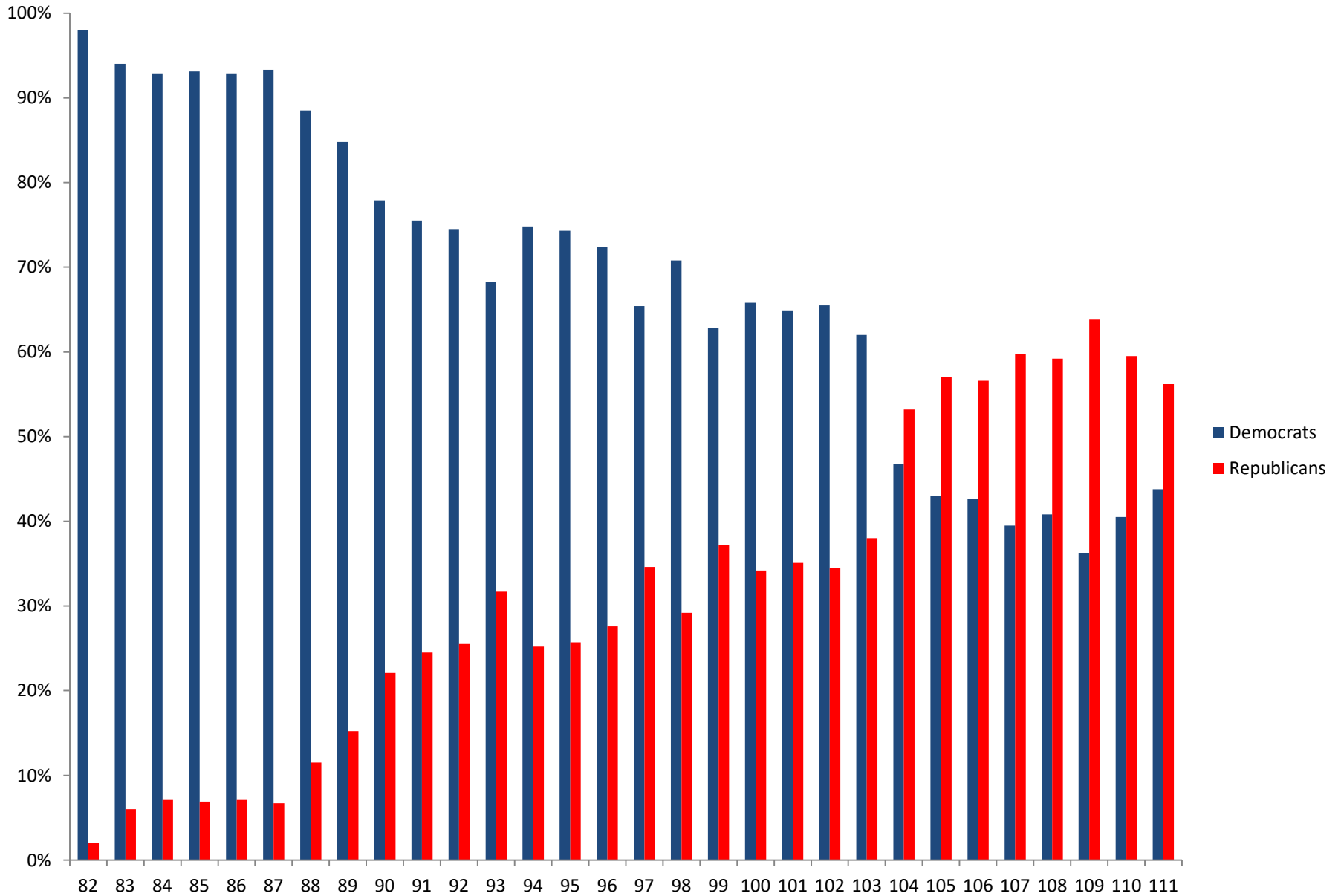


## Plunging share of ticket-splitting House districts

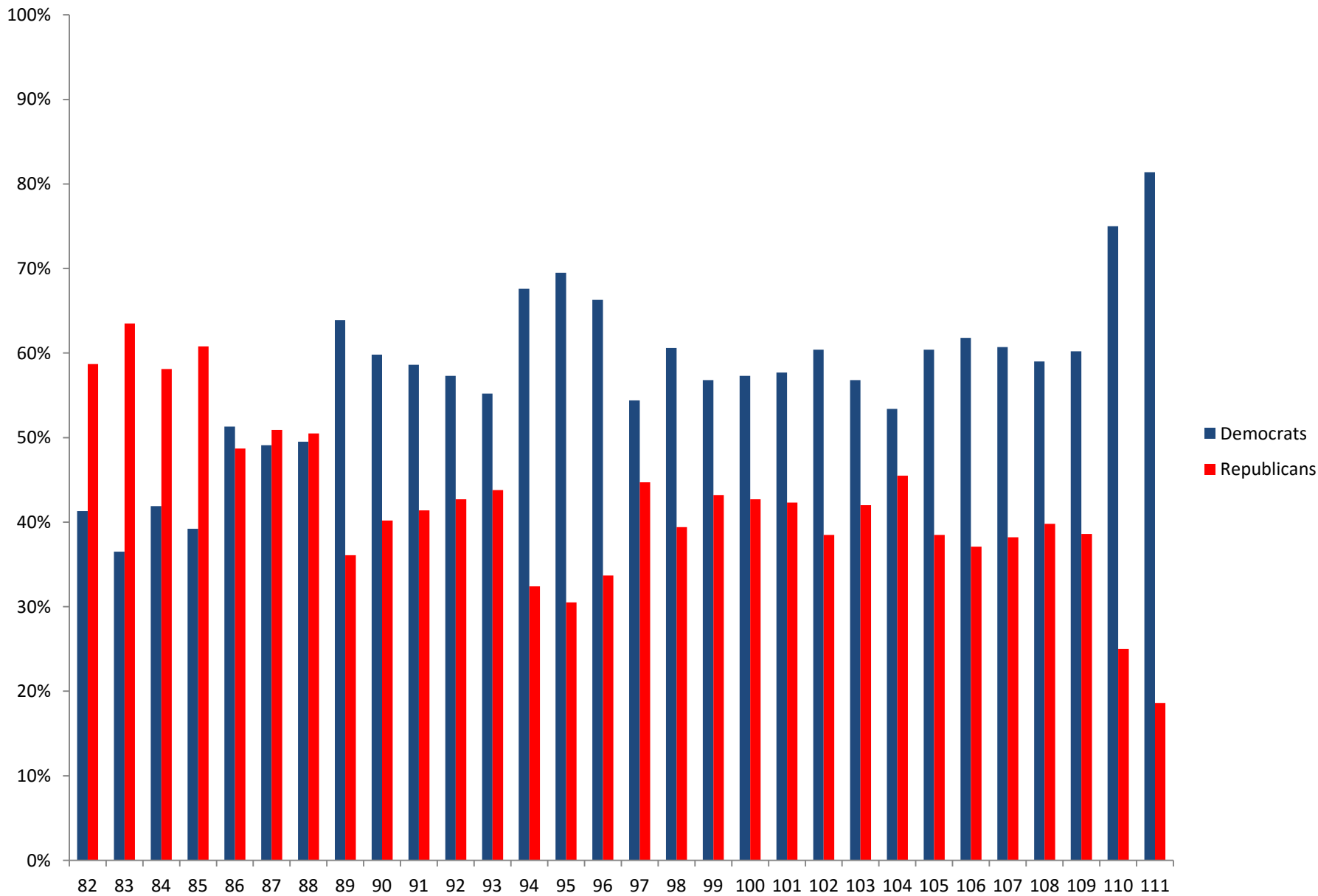


Source: Vital Statistics on Congress, 2013

# Party Affiliation of House Members from the South, 1951-2010

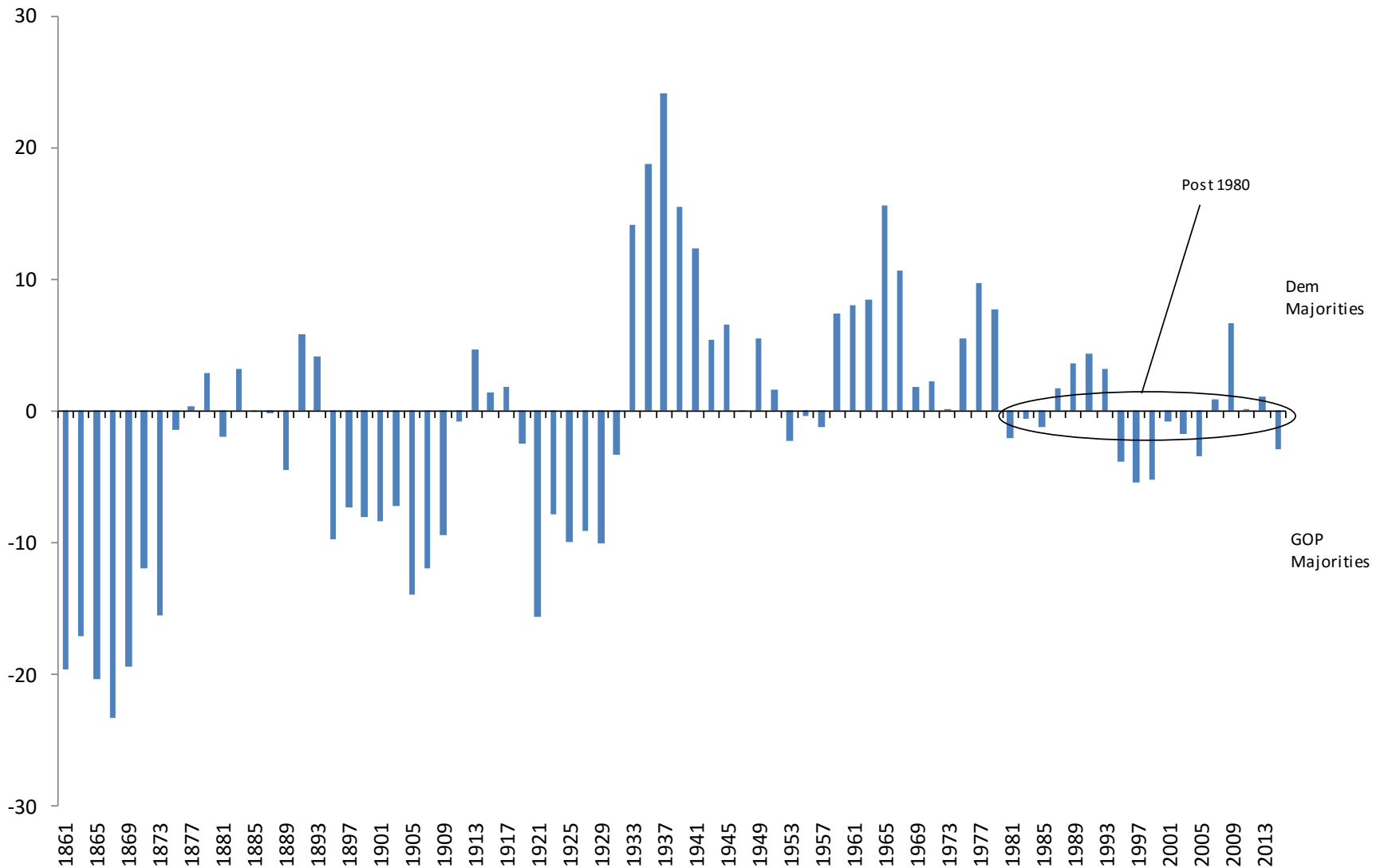


## Party Affiliation of House Members from the Northeast, 1951-2010



# PARTY COMPETITION FOR CONTROL OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

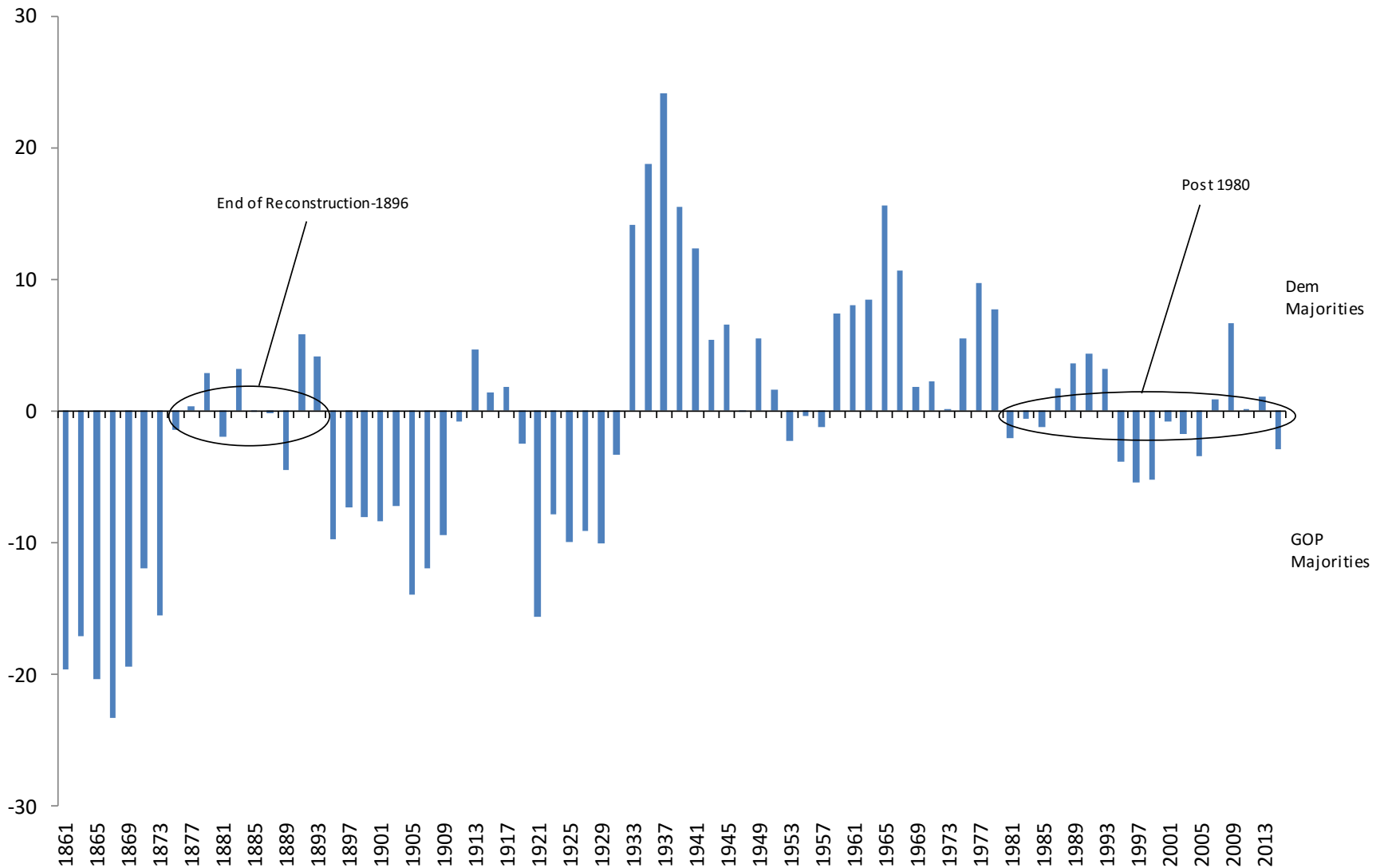
Fierce & evenly matched in the post-1980 era



### Index of Party Competition for Control of U.S. Governing Institutions, 1861-2016

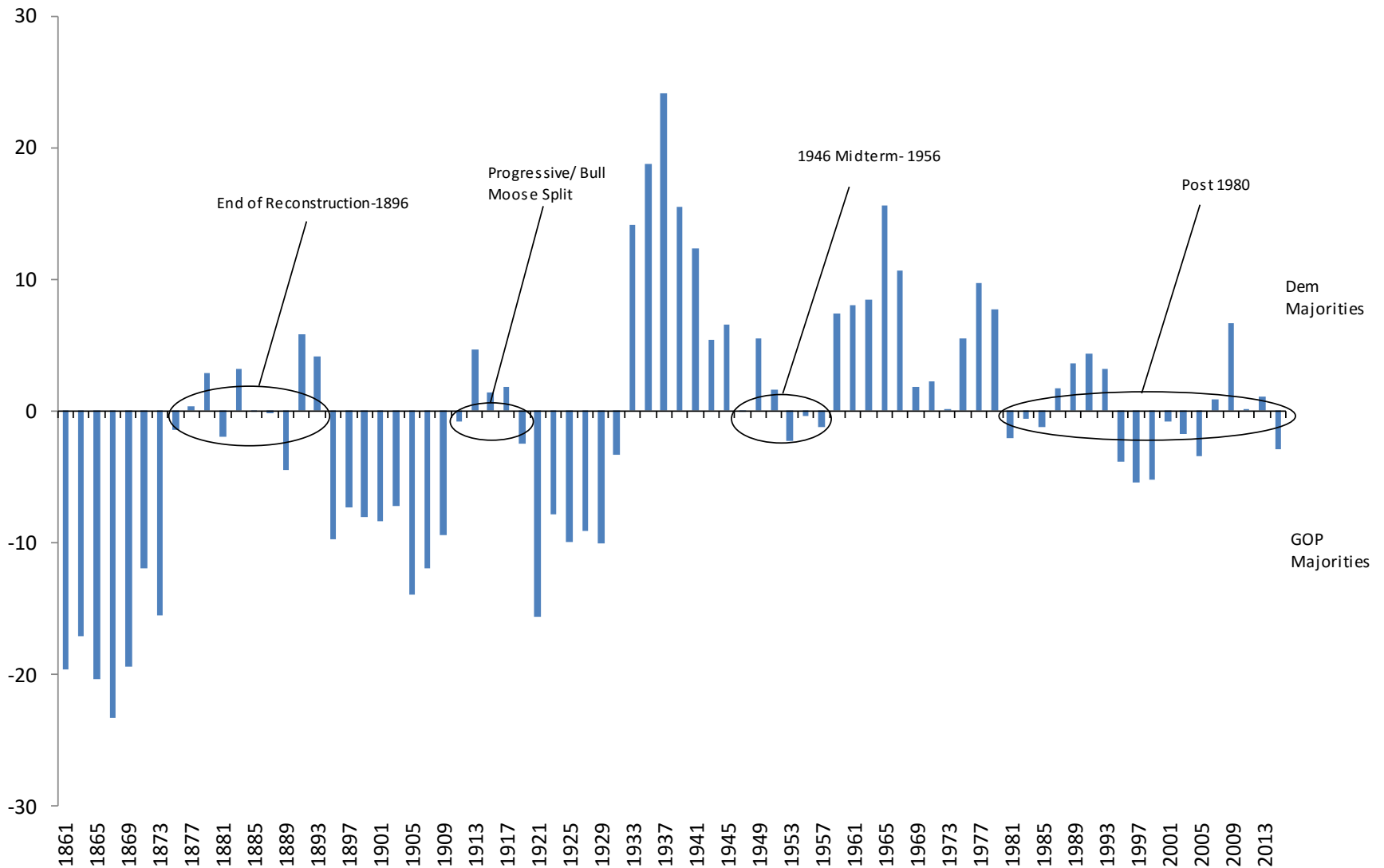
*Index is the average of the Democratic party's share of the national presidential vote, its share of House seats, and its share of Senate seats. 50 is subtracted from the average to differentiate Democratic and Republican majorities.*





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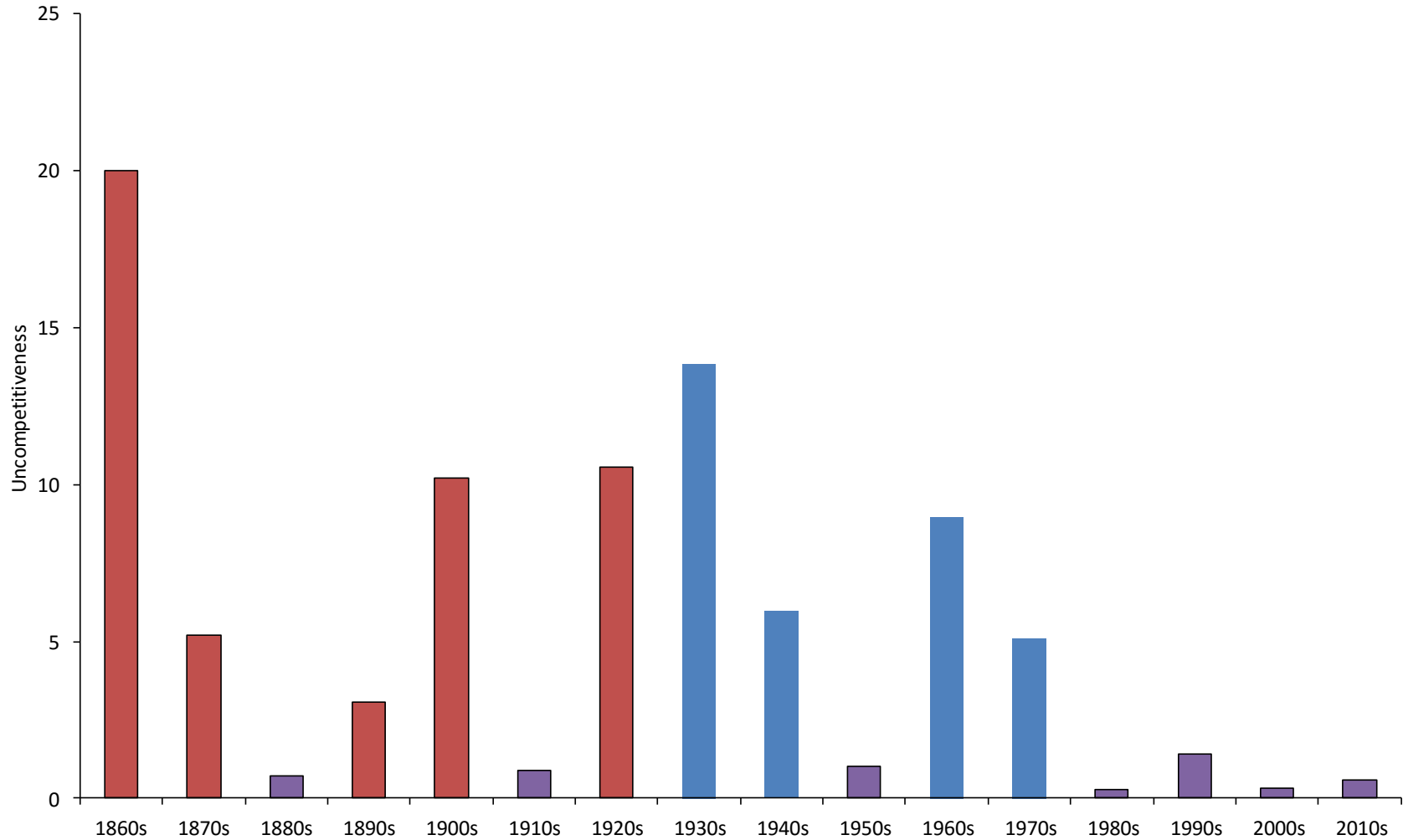
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# Party Competition, 1861-2016

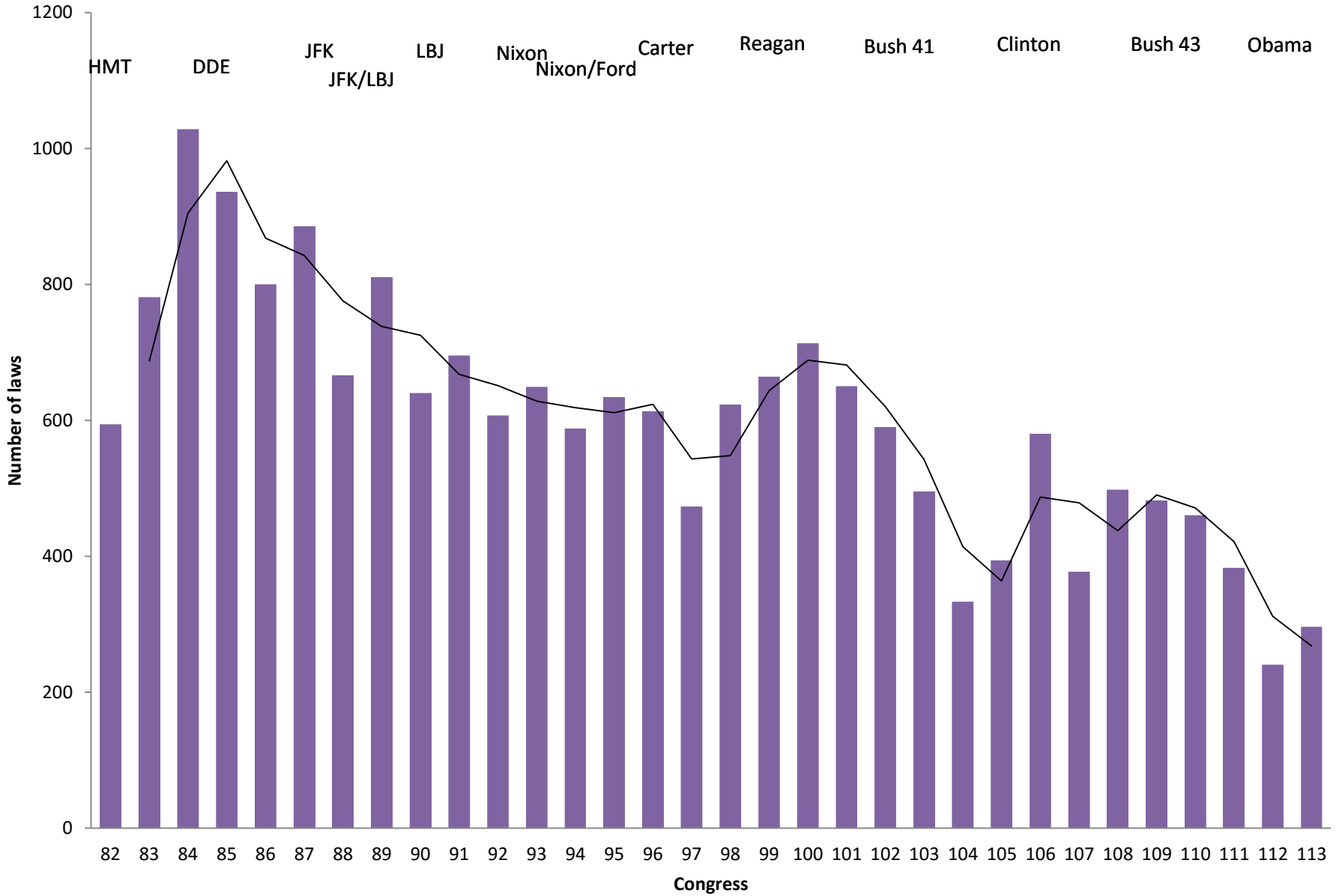


*Higher bars indicate increasing dominance by one party, with Democratic-leaning eras shown in blue, Republican eras in red, and evenly balanced decades in purple.*

# HOW TO BE HEARD IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT?

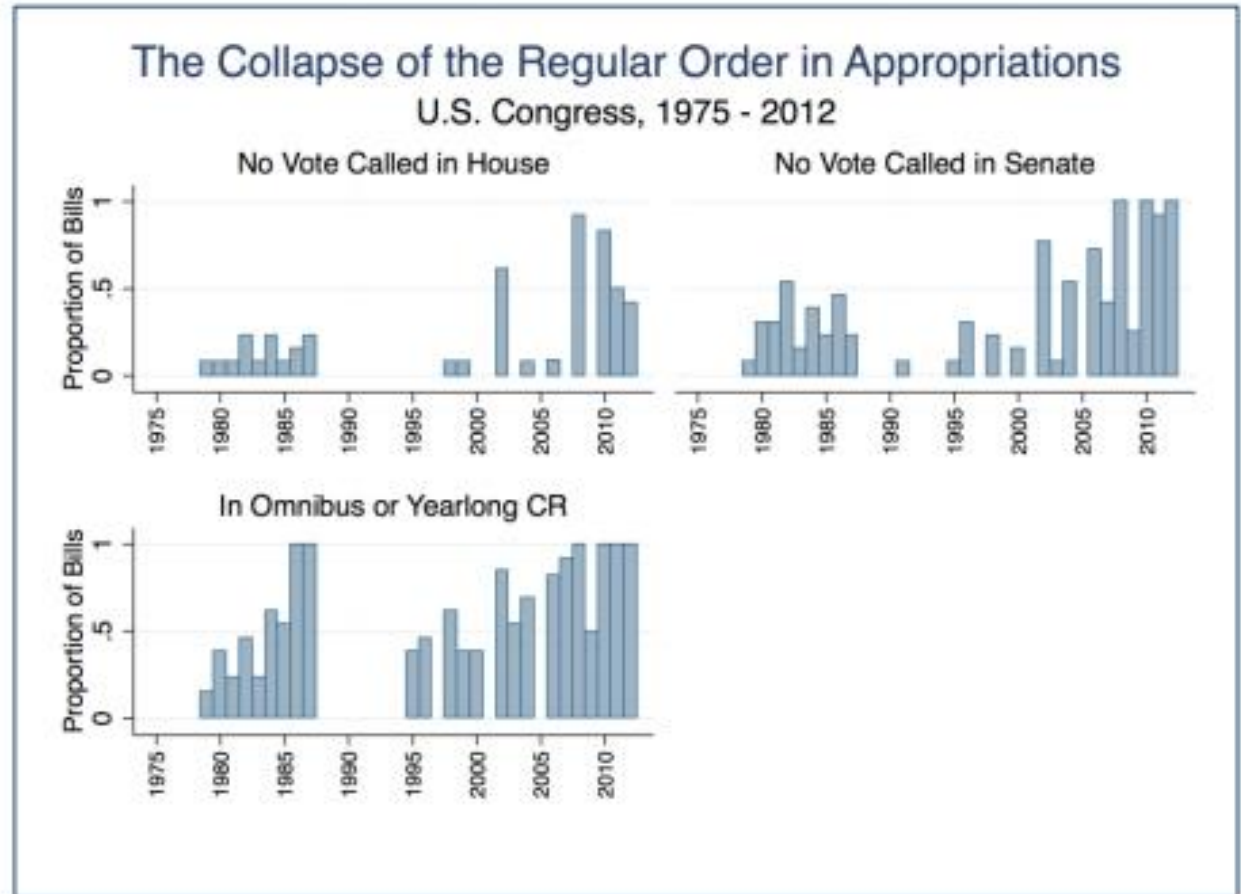
The need for legislative allies.

# Legislative Productivity, 1951-2015



# Appropriations

- Delayed
- Centralized
- Bundled



Source: Hansen (2015)