# At What Price? Party Taxation and Member Advancement in the U.S. House

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**Abstract**

How do members of Congress secure influential committee positions or leadership roles? Although a question receiving substantial academic attention, financial contributions to party organizations, what we term a "party tax", has received limited recent analysis. We revisit this mechanism with new data and updated methods by examining member contributions as indicators of willingness and capacity to support party goals financially. Our findings suggest that such contributions are particularly consequential for members occupying elite committee and leadership positions, consistent with theories of concentrated institutional power. Highlighting partisan differences, effects are more pronounced among Republicans. Using change-point analysis, we find formal institutionalization of party dues produced meaningful shifts, particularly among rank-and-file members, rather than codifying existing practices. Addressing causal concerns, we apply coarsened exact matching, showing that members ascending to more powerful positions subsequently increase their party contributions–reinforcing a feedback loop where financial supporters are rewarded with desirable placements. Together, our results underscore a strategic process by which monetary contributions facilitate access to institutional power and further entrench partisan resource flows.

**Keywords:** party tax, committee assignment, fundraising

# 1 Introduction

*"Committee assignments, then, are less about qualifications than they are about cash—or, to put it another way, cash is the chief qualification you need."*

*— Ken Buck (2017), Republican Congressperson from CO*

That legislative committees play pivotal roles in the careers of members of Congress (MCs) is well-established. Based on this premise, it is assumed that MCs actively seek committee assignments they deem valuable, as such positions offer opportunities to take positions, claim credit, and secure particularized benefits for their constituents (Fowler, Douglass, & Clark Jr, 1980; Frisch & Kelly, 2006). Although recent developments have exposed the vulnerability of party leadership power, logic still suggests that party leaders, who control these assignments, occupy strategically advantageous positions. This further implies that party leaders, who allocate positions, are desirably situated. This authority should be valued, and leaders should be potentially capable of extracting rents from aspiring committee members and leaders. Therefore, committee assignment allocations should be understood as the outcome of bargaining between party leaders and rank-and-file members.

Scholars identify multiple motivations driving legislators to seek specific committee assignments, including leadership roles. These motivations often arise from geographical, electoral, and personal background considerations (Masters, 1961; Fenno, 1973; Shepsle, 1978; Deering & Smith, 1997; Frisch & Kelly, 2006). Geographically, members whose districts house firms or workers affected by a committee's jurisdiction may seek seats on those committees to better represent constituent interests. From an electoral standpoint, legislators—especially those facing competitive races—may pursue high-profile committee

assignments that offer greater visibility and media exposure. As for personal background, legislators may gravitate toward committees aligned with their professional experience—for instance, lawyers seeking seats on the Judiciary Committee or accountants aiming for Ways and Means—where prior knowledge may reduce their workload and enhance their effectiveness (Frisch & Kelly, 2006; Francis & Bramlett, 2017). Regardless of the specific motivation, strategic committee placements can serve as instruments through which MCs pursue their broader political and career objectives.

In line with these motivations and anticipating our empirical approach, recent studies emphasize that MCs prefer assignments on intensively lobbying committees. A key incentive is the potential for enhanced electoral support, particularly in the form of campaign contributions and related assistance from interest groups (on interest group engagement and issue alignment, see Powell and Grimmer (2016)). At a minimum, members serving on relevant committees tend to receive more targeted financial support from aligned interest groups. For example, Fouirnaies and Hall (2018) find that when state legislators join new committees they receive significant increases in contributions from interests tied to the committee's jurisdiction. Moreover, such high-profile committee placements may facilitate post-congressional career opportunities through the "revolving door", as former MCs leverage their experience and networks in the private sector (Bertrand, Bombardini, & Trebbi, 2014).

Although members' preferences over committee assignments vary, demand for certain committees clearly exceeds supply. In these situations, party leaders may play a key role in determining who receives specific placements. Prior to 1994's Republican Revolution, seniority was the predominant factor guiding committee assignments, particularly during the era of powerful committee chairs, and deviations were uncommon (Cann, 2008). However,

post-1994 saw a shift toward prioritizing party loyalty over seniority, especially as the House became characterized by narrow majorities. Both parties have since emphasized unity and internal cohesion to advance their legislative agendas, elevating the influence of party leaders, such as the House Speaker, reasserted their authority and increasingly prioritized party unity and loyalty to advance their legislative agendas. Many studies concluded that rank-and-file self-selection plays a limited role in determining committee assignments, and that party leaders exert substantial influence instead (Westefield, 1974; Shepsle, 1978; Cox & McCubbins, 2007; Jenkins, 2022).

Naturally, many legislators also aspire to become party leaders. These leaders, in turn, have their own strategic preferences who should receive such placements. Two commonly cited considerations are aiding electorally vulnerable members, especially when chamber control is in jeopardy, and rewarding or incentivizing party loyalty (Adler & Cayton, 2021; Pearson, 2015). By using committee assignments as tools for electoral support and internal discipline, party leaders can advance both the caucus' collective interests and their own leadership positions.

This presents a challenge in analyzing the roles of vulnerability and loyalty in the committee assignment process. Although measuring electoral vulnerability is relatively straightforward, capturing legislative loyalty is more complex. The most common proxy is party unity, the frequency that a member votes with party leaders. For instance, Leighton and Lopez (2002) argue that members consistently voting with party leaders are more likely to be rewarded with high-value committee assignments. Similarly, Asmussen and Ramey (2018) use roll-call behavior to measure loyalty. They show that members siding with leadership—even at the potential cost of alienating their constituents—are often compensated

with desirable committee seats. However, as these studies imply and as we elaborate later, the cost of demonstrating loyalty through voting is not uniform across members. For some, constituency preferences closely align with party leadership positions, while others represent districts where such alignment is weak or even oppositional. In the latter case, demonstrating loyalty entails a greater trade-off, potentially conditioning voting behavior. Ideally, then, a loyalty measure not confounded by constituency alignment is desired.

An alternative tangible measure of party loyalty is the extent to which legislators kick up money to the party for its collective efforts. Party leaders are incentivized to procure resources from their members, especially those electorally secure (which is easily controlled), to induce financial support of the party's electoral goals. This dynamic enables the implementation of a "party tax," whereby members willing and able to pay substantial dues may be rewarded with valuable committee [or party leadership] positions. For example, related to party leaders' desires to grow relevant campaign finance kitties, Currinder (2008) found when doling out desirable committee positions leaders looked favorably on MCs with fundraising prowess. Importantly, unlike roll-call voting, financial contributions to the party are unlikely to incur electoral penalties, as they do not entail visible policy trade-offs or direct conflicts with constituency preferences. Monetary support offers a tangible and less politically risky act of loyalty to party leadership.

Such financial transactions between committee members and party leaders have received some recognition in the political community but analytic treatment in recent years has been limited. Notably, the group Issue One (https://issueone.org) has trumpeted that holders of desired committee seats pay de facto party taxes (Beckel (2017); see also Burgat (2017)).[1]

[1]As we will discuss, in more recent years members are assessed explicit dues once in a given position

Lawmakers interested in seats on those influential committees are expected to raise sufficient monies to help fund party efforts:

> We are here to let you in on a dirty secret in Washington: To serve on the most influential committees in the U.S. House of Representatives, lawmakers are expected to raise a certain amount of money for their respective political parties. The sums involved have become astronomical–more than $1,000,000 for the most coveted spots. And neither party can claim the moral high ground: Democrats and Republicans alike expect this of their members.

Although existing studies have identified various factors influencing committee assignments, most paid limited attention to the role of member contributions to their party. Moreover, those addressing this relationship in the past tended to offer static analyses, examining isolated associations between financial contributions and committee positions rather than exploring broader temporal dynamics (Heberlig, 2003; Larson, 2004; Heberlig & Larson, 2012). Specifically, a possible recursive process by which campaign contributions help secure influential committee assignments, which, in turn, enhances a member's fundraising appeal, is largely overlooked. Similarly, limited attention has been paid to findings that committee leaders disproportionately reap the benefits of the assignment process, potentially weakening the coercive leverage party leaders hold over rank-and-file committee members. Even in instances where a party tax is thought to exist, this claim has not been adequately reconciled

(regardless of specific committee); the undiagnosed issues are whether ex ante giving matters for allocating positions, whether explicit dues increase giving, and whether unfulfilled assessments risk committee seats and leadership positions.

with the rarity of overt punishments, such as revoking committee seats. Although informal sanctions may be more difficult to observe, stable committee memberships could suggest that most members either comply with their dues obligations or contribute more than they otherwise would. Still, as we discuss in greater detail below, evidence—though not comprehensive—suggests that many members fail to meet their assigned fundraising goals. Some, such as Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez or members of the Republican Freedom Caucus, publicly rejected the legitimacy of these financial obligations, further complicating the presumed efficacy of the party tax system.

Our study provides an important update by examining how the dynamics of congressional advancement have evolved amid increasing formalization of party fundraising expectations with new data and updated methods. We analyze the existence, scope, and consequences of a party tax in Congress. Focusing on 2003–2022—a period spanning both before and after the apparent institutionalization of formal dues—we consider members' financial contributions to their party's campaign arms as an operationalization of this tax. This time frame enables assessing whether formalizing dues represents a structural break in party-member dynamics. In contrast to earlier periods when seniority and party unity were stronger determinants of advancement, we show that financial contributions have become even more important to leadership and for prestigious committee positions, particularly within the Republican Party. Our results highlight the shifting balance of factors structuring congressional career trajectories in the contemporary era.

Our findings indicate that the party tax meaningfully effects all committee members: the prospect of obtaining or retaining valued committee positions induces elevated contributions. Consistent with the distinction between "cardinals" and "clerics," committee leaders

contribute not only more in absolute terms, but a larger share of their total fundraising to the party. Our results also suggest that party leaders themselves contribute significantly, indicating that they must put their money where their collective mouths are. Using OLS and matching, we show that members who ascend to high-value positions subsequently attract more contributions—unsurprisingly—and also respond by increasing their financial support to party institutions. These dynamics reveal a reinforcing cycle: members contribute more to secure influential posts, which then enhance their fundraising capacities, thereby enabling even greater contributions to the party. This cycle appears to boost a member's political capital both within the party and in the broader legislative arena.

Moreover, institutionalizing formal dues did more than codify preexisting norms: It shifted financial burdens more heavily onto non-leadership members. Finally, dues are more binding for Republican members. This supports claims that committee assignment processes differ by party. It is also consistent with research suggesting that the Republican Party functions as a more ideologically unified organization, while the Democratic Party operates as a coalition of groups (Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016). Accordingly, the GOP may place greater emphasis on party fundraising as a marker of loyalty and organizational discipline.

The remainder of our analysis begins by providing background on the mechanisms through which parties accrue campaign funds from members of Congress. We then articulate hypotheses concerning how imposing a party tax may influence the relationship between party leaders and rank-and-file members. Following this, we evaluate the empirical support for these hypotheses using data on member contributions and committee appointments. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for theories of party organization, leadership power, and intra-party bargaining.

# 2 Parties and Campaign Dollars

Parties receive contributions from multiple sources: individuals, corporations, political action committees (PACs), and their MCs. Per the latter, there is a long anecdotal history of legislators contributing to their party or copartisan MCs to forge ahead in Congress.[2] How Representative Henry Waxman became chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee's health care subcommittee in 1978 might be the first well-known example. At a time when directing internal contributions to achieve personal goals was uncommon, and both parties mainly decided committee leadership via seniority, a two-term representative contributing $24,000 to committee colleagues vaulted over senior colleagues (Baker, 1989).[3]

After the 1994 election that ushered in the Republican Revolution, patterns thought set in stone changed. First, seniority was no longer the sole criterion determining committee leadership. In 1995, the Republicans led by newly installed Speaker Gingrich, weighed other factors in assigning chairs and committee slots for several committees (Appropriations, Energy, Commerce, and Judiciary) (Cox & McCubbins, 2007). Loyalty to party leaders appeared to become much more important than previously to secure critical positions (Maltzman, 1997; Cox & McCubbins, 2007).

Second, both parties prioritized collecting campaign funds more efficiently.[4] The GOP's

[2]Although we focus on giving to parties, for an analysis of member-to-member giving see Powell (2015).

[3]Waxman represented a safe, prosperous, Hollywood district—winning 17 elections without serious competition—and had ready access to campaign dollars despite not needing them for reelection.

[4]Indeed, party fundraising's ascending role may partially explain heightened House polarization. One claimed reason for party leaders no longer needing to be in the party's ideological middle is that MCs are incentivized to select non-median leaders capable of providing more funds to the rank and file (Heberlig,

securing the House majority after four decades in the minority implied future electoral uncertainty (Bonica & Cox, 2018; Hopkins, 2018). Chamber control has been up for grabs, with partisan switches in 2006, 2010, 2018, and 2022. For each party, accruing campaign funds became increasingly important. Previously, members raising substantial monies preferred hoarding excess cash rather than following party leaders' suggestions to share their wealth (Jacobson, 1985; Kolodny & Dwyre, 1998). While pre-1994 parties were seemingly insufficiently incentivized or able to induce MCs to relent, subsequently each developed programs more strongly encouraging members to loosen their purse strings (Heberlig & Larson, 2012). Kanthak (2007) also reveals that leadership-aspiring legislators strategically consider recipients' ideological positions and that parties can channel individual ambition to serve collective party goals.

Beginning with the 2007-2008 election cycle, both the Democratic and Republican parties formalized financial contribution expectations for their members. The DCCC began setting specific fundraising targets that varied by member status, with higher expectations placed on committee chairs and party leaders. For the 2019–2020 cycle, these targets ranged from 150,000 dollars for freshmen and members with limited fundraising capacity to 1,000,000

Hetherington, & Larson, 2006). Speaker Nancy Pelosi, long-time Democratic leader, is a well-known example. Although NOMINATE scores showed Pelosi's ideology left of her party's median, she proved an outstanding fundraiser. Pelosi, who became Speaker in 2007, helped the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) achieve a better than 11 to 1 cash advantage over its Republican counterpart that year (Currinder, 2008). Her Democratic Leader successor, Hakeem Jeffries (also to the party median's left), followed in her path: In his first year at the helm in 2023, he gave the DCCC $99,000,000. In turn, this party fundraising focus provides interest groups with a channel to influence the policy process. Group leaders likely have reason to believe that they are giving to someone who can impact outcomes.

dollars for the Speaker. The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) implemented a comparable system (Currinder, 2008; Zeleny, 2006).[5]

To facilitate compliance, party leaders introduced penalties for members failing to meet their financial obligations. For example, the DCCC withheld access to institutional resources, including phone services and other amenities, from underperforming members (Eilperin, 2006). In contrast, members meeting or exceeding their goals were reportedly rewarded, either through committee leadership appointments or legislative favors, such as advancing their sponsored bills (Heberlig, 2003; Hasecke & Mycoff, 2007; Cann, 2008; Pearson, 2015).

In summary, party fundraising emerged as a critical marker of loyalty beginning in the 1990s and was formally institutionalized in the following decade. This shift contrasts with the scholarly tendency to operationalize party allegiance through members' propensity to vote with party leaders (Krehbiel, 1993; Frisch & Kelly, 2006; Cox & McCubbins, 2007; Asmussen & Ramey, 2018). While we elaborate several caveats below, party fundraising may be a more appropriate loyalty metric in the current context of heightened polarization and persistent uncertainty over chamber control. Party unity voting is often constrained by constituency preferences (Grier & Munger, 1991; Krehbiel, 1993), particularly for members representing swing districts or electorates whose policy preferences diverge from the party line. By contrast, financial support for the party——whether through direct contributions to party committees or assistance to electorally vulnerable colleagues——may present fewer political costs. MCs can align their votes with district preferences, which naturally positions

[5]Party leaders' contributions are particularly notable, as questions arise regarding who would enforce penalties if a leader failed to meet expectations. Presumably, potential reactions by fellow party leaders or by members generally for failure to contribute sufficiently could threaten a shirking leader.

some closer to the party than others, while still signaling loyalty through monetary contributions. For party leaders, these contributions represent a valuable resource that can be leveraged to promote cohesion and discipline (Cann, 2008; Cann & Sidman, 2011). Members offerring financial support may, in turn, find their individual goals——such as securing or retaining desirable committee or leadership posts——more attainable. Yet, for this logic to hold, we must assess whether such allocations reflect a system of incentives and sanctions and, critically, identify for whom the party tax carries the greatest force.

However, only a few scholars have paid attention to potential changes in the way positions are distributed (Herrnson, 1997; Sorauf, 1994). Heberlig (2003), studying the 102nd-107th Congresses, finds that incumbent contributions to party committees or other candidates positively correlated with transfers to prestige committees. Larson (2004), investigating elections from 1990-2000, points out that members in the leadership or possessing surplus campaign monies became more likely to contribute to party campaign committees.

As mentioned, the world once the two parties formalized fundraising requirements circa 2008 has received scant scholarly attention. An obvious question, which our analysis answers, is whether such actions made the observed effects stronger or changed them in other unanticipated ways?

# 3 Hypotheses

Thus, prior research has not fully examined the influence and broader implications of member contributions to the party. Nor has it systematically contrasted the pre- and post-institutionalization periods. Here, we advance and test a set of hypotheses that capture

these dynamics.

In doing so, we investigate whether members' financial contributions to their parties increase their likelihoods of securing more valuable institutional positions——whether as rank-and-file committee members, committee chairs, or legislative party leaders. We additionally assess if obtaining such positions enhances members' abilities to raise campaign funds, thereby enabling them to contribute even more to the party. We also examine if these patterns evolve over time, with particular attention to the institutionalization of formal party dues as a potential structural break.

More specifically, with the caveat that a compelling research strand emphasizes committee leaders accruing most rewards, there is reason to believe that MCs making higher party contributions will more likely be named to high-lobby intensity committees or chosen as committee leaders. If true, they can use the influence attached to these jobs to procure additional contributions, facilitating greater party giving to bolster their positions.

This suggests a possible feedback loop by which financially capable and strategically inclined members translate monetary support into increased party influence. Donations would not only signal loyalty but facilitate access to valuable committee or party positions that, in turn, improve members' fundraising capacities and overall influence within the party hierarchy.

This logic implies five individual-level hypotheses, some admittedly more controversial than others:

**Hypothesis 1**: *MCs contributing more to their party have higher likelihoods of getting more valuable positions.*

**Hypothesis 2**: *Procuring more valuable positions (e.g., as committee or party leaders) requires MCs to donate more to their party.*

**Hypothesis 3**: *Those with valuable positions raise more campaign funds prior to their next elections.*

**Hypothesis 4**: *MCs holding more influential positions—such as committee or party leadership—–raise more campaign funds ahead of their next election.*

**Hypothesis 5**: *Upon ascending to more valuable positions, MCs provide more campaign funds to their parties as they share their improved fundraising positions with them.*

Support for these hypotheses would underscore the importance of legislative parties and suggest that individual MC fundraising ability is of paramount importance. Alternatively, we may find other factors conditioning when parties exercise influence and mitigating the role of fundraising prowess.

Beyond this, our discussion of how the post-1994 evolved leads us to posit a *structural* hypothesis. We expect that the system changed roughly when party leaders moved to institutionalize expectations about party member support:

**Hypothesis 6**: *Assuming institutionalizing expectations matters, there will be a structural break in the underlying relationships.*

As we discuss in more details later, we do not specify a preordained time for a structural break. We allow the data to inform us via a change-point analysis. If no break is identified, our hypothesis lacks support and any changes are a matter of degree rather than underlying

structure differences.

Finally, although we lack a corresponding hypothesis, we examine whether the two parties are equally effective in using the dues system to generate resources. The literature on parties often suggests that internal operations differ markedly; we examine whether this is the case.

# 4 Data and Methods

Except for delineating high-lobby intensity committees, measuring key concepts to examine our hypotheses is straightforward. Per the former, we initially match individual report-level expenditure data from LobbyView (Kim, 2018) for the 108th-117th Congresses, along with the stated lobbying issues on which the monies were spent, to the corresponding committee using Bertrand et al. (2014)'s jurisdiction list. This produces a lobbying expenditure number for each Congress-committee pair.[6] Ranked by intensity, except for the Education Committee in the 108th Congress, the top five committees are identical by Congress, with slightly different orderings (Table 1).[7] We then link this lobbying intensity to individual committee memberships (Stewart, 2021).[8]

[6]Alternatively, we could measure intensity by number of lobbyists or lobbying presence as calculated by aggregating in-house and outside lobbyists (Drutman, Grossmann, & LaPira, 2014). We choose expenditures because they constitute the most fine-tuned intensity measure.

[7]Our list is similar to Open Secrets' (Beckel, 2017) "A" committees (Appropriations; Energy & Commerce; Financial Services; Rules; and Ways & Means), indicating that popular committees are more heavily lobbied.

[8]For reasons that should be obvious, we also collect data on whether MCs are in the party leadership.

Table 1: Most Intensively Lobbied Committees—108$^{th}$ to 117$^{th}$ Congresses

| Ranking/Congress | 108 | 109 | 110 | 111 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Energy (1.26 B) | Energy (1.40 B) | Energy (1.73 B) | Energy (2.28 B) |
| 2 | Ways (460 M) | Ways (547 M) | Ways (638 M) | Ways (795 M) |
| 3 | Financial (367 M) | Financial (445 M) | Judiciary (611 M) | Appropriations(679 M) |
| 4 | Appropriations(317 M) | Appropriations(435 M) | Financial (497 M) | Financial (617 M) |
| 5 | Education (213 M) | Judiciary (330 M) | Appropriations(381 M) | Judiciary (478 M) |

| Ranking/Congress | 112 | 113 | 114 | 115 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Energy (2.69 B) | Energy (2.54 B) | Energy (2.43 B) | Energy (2.40 B) |
| 2 | Ways (916.14 M) | Ways (975.10 M) | Ways (1.06 B) | Ways (1.01 B) |
| 3 | Financial (795.69 M) | Financial (715.63 M) | Judiciary (861.07 M) | Financial (625.95 M) |
| 4 | Appropriations(704.68 M) | Appropriations(586.22 M) | Financial (669.44 M) | Appropriations(515.37 M) |
| 5 | Judiciary (473.86 M) | Judiciary (444.08 M) | Appropriations(512.17 M) | Judiciary (512.06 M) |

| Ranking/Congress | 116 | 117 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Energy (2.49 B) | Energy (2.03 B) |
| 2 | Ways (1.15 B) | Ways (765 M) |
| 3 | Financial (649 M) | Financial (510 M) |
| 4 | Appropriations(553 M) | Appropriations(414 M) |
| 5 | Judiciary (499 M) | Judiciary (357 M) |

*Notes*: Committees are Education, Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, Financial Services, Judiciary, Education and Labor, and Appropriations; numbers in parentheses are aggregated lobbying expenditures in billions (B) and millions (M) of nominal dollars.

Given our interest in whether members on high-intensity committees give more to their parties, we collect data on members' relevant campaign finance donation activities (Federal Election Commission, 2023). We include MCs' campaign contributions to (1) national party committees from individual campaign committees (including MCs' principal campaign committees and other affiliated committees); (2) House colleagues from their principal campaign committees and other affiliated committees; (3) House colleagues from their leadership PACs

(LDs); and (4) member parties from their LDs.

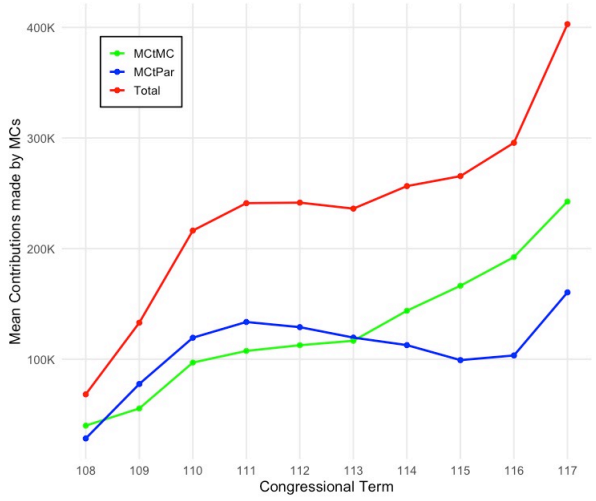
Table 2 provides descriptive statistics by contribution types, while Figure 1 depicts temporal changes in the means of contribution types. With MC by Congress as our unit of analysis, we have 4161 total observations. Overall, average total contributions made by MCs to other MCs and their own parties, contributions made by MCs to other MCs, and contributions made by MCs to their parties increase over time. A huge jump is witnessed between the 108th to 110th Congresses for every contribution category, which is consistent with parties stepping up their efforts to encourage MCs to contribute.

Table 2: MCs' Direct and Leadership PAC Contributions to Parties and Fellow MCs

| Type of Contribution | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MCs to Parties | 4,161 | 101,908 | 278,402 | 0 | 11,385,414 |
| MCs to MCs | 4,161 | 22,121 | 47,038 | −2,000 | 991,000 |
| MCs' LD to Parties | 4,161 | 5,581 | 20,233 | −4,500 | 495,444 |
| MCs' LD to MCs | 4,161 | 103,607 | 306,786 | 0 | 4,557,539 |

*Notes*: Contributions in first two rows from campaign and affiliated committees; those in last two rows from leadership (LD) PACs. Contributions in nominal dollars.

Figure 1: Mean Contributions Made by MCs to Parties and other MCs (108th to 117th)




Although available for isolated cases, we unfortunately lack comprehensive data on expectations for each member's party contribution.[9] We can calculate the "revealed tax rate", the total contributions to parties by an MC/total funds raised by an MC (Table 3). The observed range is huge, from 0% to 94%, with a mean of 8%. Some MCs make no party contributions (e.g., certain first-term legislators trying to secure their initial reelections), others transfer almost all funds to the party.[10] Reporting on the dues systems depicts a complicated situation. For example, in 2016 the House Republican Freedom Caucus was

[9]DCCC lists have been made public for 2012 (Schweizer, 2013), 2014 (BuzzFeed), 2020 (The Intercept), and 2022 (Politico). Interestingly, as we examine shortly, despite some strident claims, only about one-fifth of members in these years provide at least 90% of their dues goals, with those with higher goals (i.e., further up the hierarchy), who are more senior, and who are less electorally vulnerable tending to give higher percentages. We cannot assess whether the same patterns characterized Republicans or hold in other cycles.

[10]To reiterate, the party sets an absolute member amount rather than a tax rate. While reporting and available data make it clear that certain MCs fall short, with others meeting and even exceeding their targets, for many legislator-Congress pairs we are necessarily uncertain.

said to be boycotting the NRCC to the tune of $10,000,000; the reaction was said to be both House leadership pleas to reconsider and sanctions, such as lack of invitations to party events. Overall, "Getting politicians to fork over their hard-raised cash is a recurring problem for the NRCC and DCCC" (Bade & Caygle, 2016). This suggests that the taxation system works less smoothly than critics depict.

Table 3: Revealed Tax Rate and its Components

| Contribution | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average Total Money to Parties | 4,161 | 107,489 | 282,754 | 0 | 11,400,414 |
| Average Total Money to Other MCs | 4,161 | 125,728 | 332,442 | −2,000 | 4,783,162 |
| Average Total Contributions | 4,161 | 233,217 | 542,503 | −1,647 | 14,221,414 |
| Average Contributions Received by MCs | 4,161 | 1,773,402 | 2,439,277 | 5 | 81,084,464 |
| Tax Rate | 4,161 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.00 | 0.94 |

*Notes:* Revealed tax rate calculated as total MC donated to parties or other MCs/amount received by MC.

We can employ this revealed tax rate to distinguish what a member holding valuable positions—be it as party leader, committee chair or minority ranking member on any House committee, or sitting on either a top 3 or top 5 lobbying intensity committee—gives versus others. We measure party leadership broadly, as a dummy variable scored one if the MC is Speaker, majority/minority leader, whip, deputy whip, campaign/steering/policy committee chair, caucus secretary, or assistant Speaker, and use dummy variables for committee chair or ranking member status ("CMTE Chair & Ranking"), and membership on either the 3 or 5 most intensively lobbied committees ("Top 3 CMTE" and "Top 5 CMTE"). Analogously, we define an encompassing variable, "All Positions."

These tax rate differences (Table 4)[11], comparing the group being considered (treatment mean) to all others (control mean), show that MCs holding valuable positions transfer a significantly higher percentage of campaign funds to parties than others. Differences are particularly striking for party and committee leaders, while also significant for those on top committees.[12] Our results are consistent with party leaders being fully vested in party success (or at least maintaining their own party positions) and committee leaders funneling to parties a good deal of the considerable extra perks of their positions.

Table 4: Tax Rates: Leaders and Key Committee Members Relative to Other MCs

| | Party Leadership | Chair and Ranking | Top 3 CMTE | Top 5 CMTE | All Positions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Treatment Mean | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.10 |
| Control Mean | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.05 |
| $t$-value | -8.37 | -10.95 | -4.44 | -9.13 | -15.68 |
| $p$-value | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

*Notes*: Means measured in percentages of campaign dollars contributed. Control groups consist of all other MCs.

# 5 Analysis and Results

We examine our hypotheses by initially running a trio of regressions to determine the relationships between three sets of variables:

(1) MCs' lagged total contributions ($Contributions_{it-1}$) to their parties and colleagues (summing party and party colleague donations) and whether they currently hold valuable positions ($Positions_{it}$), where $i$ is the member and $t$ is the term; (2) Holding valuable po-

[11]We return to this table in evaluating Hypothesis 5.

[12]Results are analogous when we substitute contribution amounts.

sitions and MCs' electoral contributions received ($Recipient_{it}$); and (3) MCs' contemporary contributions to their parties and party colleagues ($Contributions_{it}$) and holding valuable positions.

Specifications for these analyses are:

$$Positions_{it} = \alpha + \beta Contributions_{it-1} + \delta Positions_{it-1} + \lambda X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

$$Recipient_{it} = \alpha + \beta Positions_{it} + \delta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}, \quad (2)$$

$$Contributions_{it} = \alpha + \beta Positions_{it} + \delta X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}. \quad (3)$$

The control variables in each equation, $X_{it}$, have six common measures:

1. *Seniority*, measured in terms;
2. *Majority*, coded one for majority party MCs and zero otherwise;
3. *Freshman*, coded one if a new House member and zero otherwise;
4. *Marginal District*, coded one if the election margin is less than 10% and zero otherwise;
5. *Party Unity*, how frequently legislators vote with their parties (Kelly & Lesniewski, 2025; Lewis et al., 2025); and
6. *Lagged (LES) Legislative Effectiveness Score*, as measured by Volden and Wiseman (2014).

For equation (1) we add a dummy variable, *Nontop Committee Leaders*, for those leading committees not defined as top committees; such MCs likely prefer their positions to rank-and-file slots on high-lobby intensity committees. For equations (2) and (3) we account for

the *Number of Committees* that MCs are on, as it can affect fundraising abilities. Given the dependent variables, we use logit to estimate equation (1) and OLS for equations (2) and (3).

We strengthen our causal claims by taking two additional steps. First, for the analysis of equation (1), we follow best practices from similar studies and methodological guidance on robust estimation strategies (Wilkins, 2018) by including a lagged dependent variable. *Previous* is coded one if the MC held the same valued position in the prior term, and zero otherwise. Given the institutional stability of valued positions, especially for more senior MCs, the association between *Previous* and *Positions* should be strong and positive. Table 5, which presents the number and percentage of MCs retaining valued positions across congressional terms, as well as the frequency and proportion of MCs who move into such positions from one term to the next, shows the expected relationship. Second, given the nonrandom assignment of valued positions makes inferring causality problematic even when controlling for covariates, we reestimate Equation (2) with matching. Matching is a viable alternative when randomization is not possible. Although not fully eliminating potential omitted variable bias, it reduces the possible bias from nonrandom assignment relative to OLS (Dehejia & Wahba, 1999; Imai & van Dyk, 2004). Specifically, matching improves covariate balance between treatment and control groups (Imai & van Dyk, 2004) and reduces vulnerability to model misspecification (Ho, Imai, King, & Stuart, 2007). We use coarsened exact matching, which produces superior covariate balance and has advantageous statistical properties relative to other techniques (Iacus, King, & Porro, 2012). Within the matched pairs, we compare the effect of holding valued positions on both received contributions and subsequent donations. Although matching drastically reduces numbers of observations, it

minimizes confounding influences from other characteristics that might interfere with causal inference.

Table 5: Movements to High Value Positions

| | Party Leadership | Comm. Leaders | Top 3 CMTE | Top 5 CMTE | All Positions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of MCs | 215 (5.2%) | 419 (10.1%) | 1469 (35.3%) | 2436 (58.5%) | 2675 (64.3%) |
| Movements | 85 (2.0%) | 128 (3.1%) | 469 (11.3%) | 445 (10.7%) | 533 (12.8%) |

*Notes*: Number of MCs and percentages is relative to our total of 4,161 cases.

Results for equation (1) are consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2 (Table 6).[13] Relationships between party contributions and acquiring valuable positions are positive. Findings also correspond to influence being very much hierarchically distributed.

Per Hypothesis 1, getting on highly lobbied committees even as a rank-and-file member requires MC financial sacrifice. Nor, contrary to Hawkings (2017), are assignment outcomes consistent with providing positions to electorally vulnerable MCs (who should not be expected to provide large sums to their parties).

As for Hypothesis 2, results for committee leaders and extended House leadership are substantively stronger. Overall, increasing contributions tenfold is associated with an 18% increase in the odds of holding any valuable positions. For MCs, such an increase corresponds to 15% and 12% higher odds of being on a Top 3 or a Top 5 committee, respectively; for committee and party leaders, these odds are 37% and 251% higher. Collectively, these findings underscore the financial expectations placed on those seeking institutional power and their rewards, and that monetary support to the party is a key currency for advancement.

Although not central to assessing our hypotheses, several additional results are worth

[13]See the complete results in Appendix Table A1 to A3.

noting. One is that other features previously emphasized, seniority and party unity, are less important than might be expected. Seniority is only positively and significantly associated with committee leader positions. It is insignificant or even significantly negatively related for other roles. The seniority norm is implied to have declined compared to previous findings (Cann, 2008). As for party unity, although coefficients are uniformly positive, none are statistically significant, suggesting that it plays a lesser role for position assignments than it once did (Heberlig & Larson, 2012).

A second point is that our results are not a function of subsets of prestigious positions. We conduct subgroup analyses of committee leadership by examining each of the top five committees individually—Ways and Means, Appropriations, Financial Services, Energy and Commerce, and Judiciary—and combining all remaining (non–top five) committee leaders into a sixth group.[14] Across all committee-specific comparisons, fundraising is consistently a significant predictor of advancement (see Appendix, Table A4).

Thus, with respect to our first two hypotheses, our findings suggest that financial contributions have become a central currency for securing desirable committee and leadership positions in Congress. These results echo prior findings (Heberlig, 2003; Heberlig et al., 2006; Heberlig & Larson, 2007), which show that members more likely to be appointed to prestigious committees tended to provide greater financial contributions to parties or colleagues. Compared to the more stable majorities of the pre–Republican Revolution era,

[14]For example, in the Ways and Means subgroup analysis, we compare all members who served on the Ways and Means committee to those who held no valuable positions. This approach allows us to assess the effect of fundraising on advancement within a more homogeneous institutional setting, comparing committee insiders to outsiders under comparable advancement opportunities.

today's heightened competitiveness has increased the stakes for parties seeking control of the chamber(Pearson, 2015).

Our findings also show that seniority only continues to play a meaningful role in the selection of committee leaders. Unlike advancement to party leadership positions or prestigious committee assignments, a strong positive association between committee leaders appointments and seniority remains, even among Republicans. This suggests that, although the party increasingly values financial contributions and loyalty in many areas, the committee leaders selection process remains a hybrid system. Seniority no longer guarantees advancement, but it remains an important credential weighed alongside other factors. This partial persistence of seniority norms is consistent with previous research (Deering & Wahlbeck, 2006), which finds that institutional reforms weakened-—but not entirely eliminated-—the informal expectation that more experienced members are more suitable candidates for key committee leadership positions. In short, seniority remains a presumptive basis for the selection of committee leadership.

Our observed party-level differences are consistent with prior research suggesting that the structure of political advancement in the Democratic and Republican parties differs (Heberlig & Larson, 2012; Pearson, 2015; Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016; Thakur, 2023). As noted by Pearson (2015), relative to Republicans, Democrats continued to rely more heavily on seniority and caucus deliberation, while the GOP, especially since the 1995 reforms, increasingly prioritized fundraising performance and partisan loyalty, often at the expense of seniority norms. This is reflected in institutional differences between the two parties. For example, there is a six-year term limit for Republican committee chairs and ranking members, a rule that weakens the seniority system and potentially induces GOP MCs to

place greater emphasis on fundraising capacity compared to Democrats.

Finally, a key distinction between our study and earlier work (Pearson, 2015; Heberlig & Larson, 2012) involves loyalty voting. While prior research finds that roll-call loyalty consistently contributes to advancement, albeit without increasing over time, our results from the 108th to 117th Congresses indicate that its influence has become minimal. Across multiple types of positions, party loyalty voting is either statistically insignificant or substantively negligible. This suggests that, in the contemporary House, campaign contributions have not only surpassed legislative loyalty, but have effectively displaced it as the dominant criterion for political advancement.

Table 6: Odds Ratios for Acquiring Positions by Party

| | Variables | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | log(Contribution) | 1.15*** | 1.12*** | 1.37** | 3.51** | 1.18*** |
| | | [1.08, 1.22] | [1.05, 1.19] | [1.09, 1.71] | [1.51, 8.16] | [1.13, 1.24] |
| | Party Unity | 1.01 | 1.02 | 1.00 | 1.04 | 1.01 |
| | | [1.00, 1.03] | [1.00, 1.03] | [0.97, 1.03] | [0.96, 1.13] | [1.00, 1.03] |
| | Seniority | 0.97 | 0.91*** | 1.11*** | 0.91** | 1.00 |
| | | [0.93, 1.01] | [0.86, 0.96] | [1.07, 1.15] | [0.85, 0.97] | [0.95, 1.05] |
| Democrats | log(Contribution) | 1.07 | 1.05 | 1.11 | 2.70 | 1.12* |
| | | [0.96, 1.20] | [0.95, 1.17] | [0.89, 1.38] | [0.71, 10.27] | [1.02, 1.23] |
| | Party Unity | 1.01 | 1.01 | 0.98 | 0.99 | 1.01 |
| | | [0.99, 1.04] | [0.99, 1.03] | [0.95, 1.02] | [0.95, 1.03] | [0.99, 1.02] |
| | Seniority | 1.00 | 0.92 | 1.17*** | 0.93 | 1.04 |
| | | [0.96, 1.04] | [0.84, 1.01] | [1.12, 1.23] | [0.86, 1.01] | [0.95, 1.14] |
| Republicans | log(Contribution) | 1.21*** | 1.17** | 1.76 | 5.67*** | 1.23*** |
| | | [1.09, 1.35] | [1.06, 1.29] | [0.99, 3.14] | [2.18, 14.78] | [1.10, 1.38] |
| | Party Unity | 1.01 | 1.02 | 1.03 | 1.26** | 1.02 |
| | | [0.97, 1.05] | [0.99, 1.04] | [0.96, 1.10] | [1.09, 1.46] | [1.00, 1.05] |
| | Seniority | 0.92* | 0.86*** | 1.08*** | 0.80* | 0.97 |
| | | [0.86, 0.98] | [0.82, 0.91] | [1.03, 1.12] | [0.68, 0.95] | [0.91, 1.02] |

*Notes*: 95% Confidence Interval in brackets. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Turning to Hypotheses 3 and 4, Figure 2 presents the relationships between occupying

valuable positions and MCs' next-term MC contributions. The results are broadly consistent, positive, statistically significant, and robust across specifications. Each position measure is associated with increased contributions received in the following term. The magnitude of the coefficients follows a clear hierarchy: the largest effects are observed for party leaders, followed by committee chairs and ranking minority members, then members of Top 3 committees, and finally members of Top 5 committees. Consequently, the aggregate position measure falls in the middle of this distribution. This pattern reinforces the inference that influence and value across congressional roles are distributed highly asymmetrically.

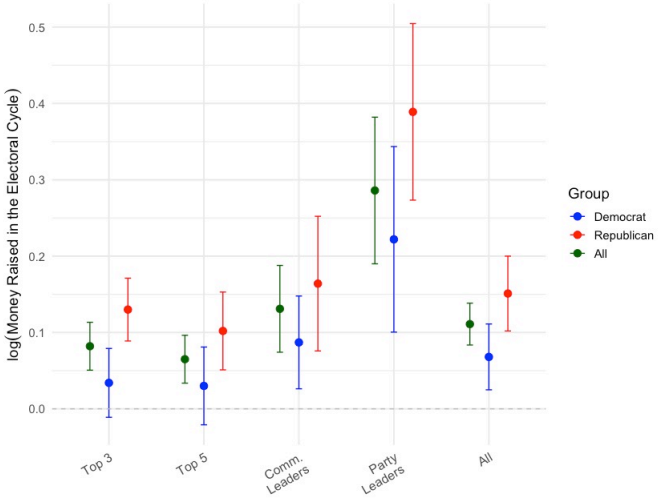
Results for some control variables are also notable. For example, those who are senior, ideologically extreme, and are on more committees receive fewer contributions. One possible explanation is that such members are less easily persuaded and influenced by interest groups, making them worse "investment" targets (Adler & Cayton, 2021). The negative result for number of committees shows that holding a position on exclusive committees or in the leadership can be be associated with more contributions than holding several nonexclusive committee seats. On the other hand, freshmen and marginal district MCs receive more contributions, which can be explained by party-sponsored "Frontline" programs designed to help those considered vulnerable.

Figure 2 also illustrates the estimated effects of holding different positions on money raised in the subsequent electoral cycle.[15] Across all models, party leaders exhibit the largest fundraising advantage, followed by committee leaders, members of top committees (Top 3 and Top 5), and the composite all positions category. While all effects are positive, their

[15]Full results can be found in Tables A5–A7 in the Appendix.

magnitudes differ substantially across parties. Coefficients associated with Republican members are consistently larger than their Democratic equivalents for each position type. This suggests that institutional advancement within the GOP is more strongly tied to campaign fundraising capacity. Estimates for the full sample lie between the partisan-specific values, consistent with averaging across asymmetric partisan dynamics. These results support the hypothesis that influence and value associated with congressional positions are highly uneven, and that parties differ in how effectively they translate institutional roles into fundraising advantages.

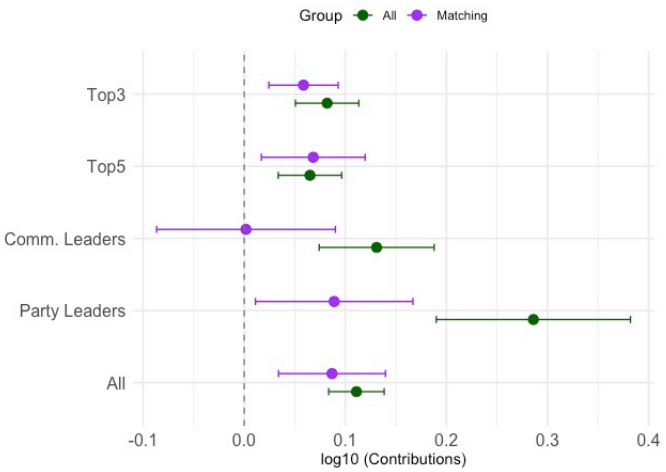
Figure 2: Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (Dem, Rep, and All Parties)




Our matching results (Figure 3), which account for the potential misattribution of greater fundraising to advantageous positions, are generally robust. After matching, prestigious committee assignments, leadership roles, and major positions continue to significantly boost members' fundraising. In contrast, committee chairs and ranking members do not exhibit a fundraising advantage. A plausible explanation is that members with characteristics similar

to chairs and ranking members may simultaneously hold other positions that are more conducive to fundraising. Compared to the full sample estimates, the matched sample results are generally more conservative.

Figure 3: Future Received Contributions: Comparisons between OLS and Matching




Examining Hypothesis 5, the results shown in Figure 4 provide suggestive evidence, as those in valuable positions not only gained additional dollars but allocated larger percentages of their funds to the parties and colleagues.[16] Again, moving further up the hierarchy appears to be associated with substantial behavioral differences. Distinguishing by party (Figure 4), all coefficients are positive and significant but Republican relationships are once more stronger.[17] It is worth noting that the coefficients for Democratic chairs and ranking members appear smaller. This pattern is consistent with earlier evidence suggesting that seniority remains a stronger factor for Democrats. Consequently, Democratic MCs holding

[16]To reiterate, the calculated tax rate is a function of money given to the parties relative to the money the MC raises; the party sets expectations about the absolute amount to be provided.

[17]Full results can be found in Tables A8–A10 in the Appendix.

these positions may have less incentive to contribute compared to their GOP counterparts, as they recognize that their advancement is less closely tied to financial contributions. In summary, we have support for the contention that party taxes have a bite, with effects conditioned by hierarchical position and party.

Figure 4: MCs' Donated Contributions to Parties and Colleagues (All, Dem, and Rep)

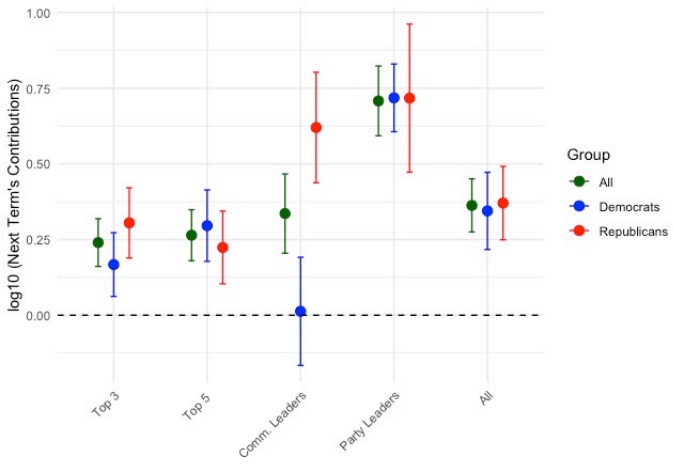
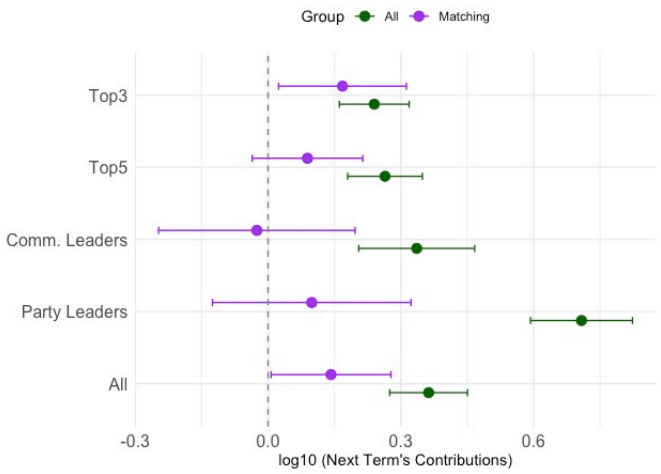



Figure 5 compares the results between the OLS and matching methods. The positive relationship between current positions and future contributions remains consistent across most positions. Notably, MCs holding valuable positions donate significantly more. For other positions, however, only MCs serving on the Top 3 committees show a significant increase in contributions to their party. The generally insignificant coefficients for other positions likely suggest that, once MCs secure a position, they have less incentive to continue donating to the same extent. This is consistent with incumbents, especially when majority control remains stable, facing a lower risk of losing their positions due to insufficient financial contributions as compared to procuring them in the first place.

Figure 5: Future Donated Contributions: Comparisons between OLS and Matching




Finally, turning to Hypothesis 6, we employ the Zeileis, Hothorn, and Hornik (2008) model-based recursive partitioning (MOB) method to check whether there is a structural change (i.e., we reestimate the model shown in Table 6 for all parties). This tests parametric instability and, if it is uncovered, splits the model (in our data, by Congress) where the instability exists.

As shown in Table 7, not all positions exhibit the same breakpoint across samples, but the most common breakpoint appears at the 109th Congress (for Top 5 committees, party leadership positions, and overall valued positions), consistent with the notion that about this time meaningful codification was occurring (Currinder, 2008; Zeleny, 2006). Before the breakpoint, the coefficients for contributions are smaller and statistically insignificant. After, the relationship between contributions and position acquisition becomes stronger and more significant.

Examining the data separately for Democrats and Republicans reveals a divergent pattern. For Democrats, many positions—such as Top 3, Top 5, and committee leadership

roles—either exhibit no structural break or show no significant changes before and after the breakpoint. Moreover, when a breakpoint exists, the coefficients for contributions tend to decrease after the breakpoint, which contrasts with the trend observed in the full sample.

In contrast, for Republicans, breakpoints are found across all types of valued positions, with most occurring around the 109th Congress. Although the exact breakpoints may vary slightly across positions, the overall pattern is consistent: The relationship between contributions and position attainment is generally weaker and less significant before the breakpoint, but becomes stronger and more statistically significant afterward. This again suggests that the internal reward-and-punishment system tied to contributions operates more effectively among Republicans.

There are several possible explanations. First, as foreshadowed, Republicans have a stronger incentive to create and implement the system of rewards and punishments based on party contributions. Republicans regained the majority for the first time in a long time in 1994, but since then have often won the majority by narrow margins. Gaining sufficient funds is a top priority for the Republican leadership in such circumstances. Creating a system of rewards and punishments based on fundraising performance makes sense. Second, consistent with claims that the Democratic party is less ideological and more a coalition of groups (Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016), factions within the Democratic party may have played a deterring role. Notably, when the Democratic Blue Dog coalition was strong and had many members, it publicly opposed the party dues requirement (Bresnahan, 2007). This made it more difficult for the Democratic leadership to collect party dues from other members.[18]

[18]In the appendix (Table A11-A13), we present a descriptive analysis using the sporadic available Democratic data on the extent that MCs meet prescribed leadership-defined dues.

Table 7: Breakpoint Analysis

| | *Different Positions (All)* | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Top3* | | *Top5* | | *Comm. Leaders* | | *Party Leaders* | | *All Positions* | |
| Terms | 108-115 | 116-117 | 108-109 | 110-117 | 108-117 | - | 108-109 | 110-117 | 108-109 | 110-117 |
| log(Contribution) | 1.18** | 1.07 | 1.02 | 1.12** | 1.34** | - | 3.35** | 3.38* | 1.10 | 1.19** |
| | [1.10, 1.26] | [0.88, 1.30] | [0.87, 1.20] | [1.04, 1.21] | [1.13, 1.57] | - | [2.15, 5.21] | [1.49, 7.63] | [0.96, 1.26] | [1.10, 1.28] |
| Control | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | *Different Positions (Democrats)* | | | | | | | | | |
| | *Top3* | | *Top5* | | *Comm. Leaders* | | *Party Leaders* | | *All Positions* | |
| Terms | 108-115 | 116-117 | 108-111 | 112-117 | 108-117 | - | 108-110 | 111-117 | 108-109 | 110-117 |
| log(Contribution) | 1.10 | 1.01 | 1.16 | 0.98 | 1.11 | - | 18.65** | 1.72* | 1.34** | 1.07 |
| | [0.98, 1.24] | [0.80, 1.29] | [0.97, 1.38] | [0.86, 1.12] | [0.87, 1.42] | - | [4.00, 86.82] | [0.99, 2.96] | [1.05, 1.70] | [0.96, 1.19] |
| Control | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | *Different Positions (Republican)* | | | | | | | | | |
| | *Top3* | | *Top5* | | *Comm. Leaders* | | *Party Leaders* | | *All Positions* | |
| Terms | 108-115 | 116-117 | 108-109 | 110-117 | 108-111 | 112-117 | 108-109 | 110-117 | 108-109 | 110-117 |
| log(Contribution) | 1.22** | 1.18 | 0.96 | 1.23** | 1.09 | 3.94** | 2.00 | 9.44** | 1.02 | 1.30** |
| | [1.11, 1.34] | [0.84, 1.66] | [0.79, 1.17] | [1.10, 1.37] | [0.82, 1.46] | [2.44, 6.35] | [0.52, 7.65] | [4.30, 20.71] | [0.86, 1.20] | [1.18, 1.44] |
| Control | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes*: 95% Confidence Interval in brackets. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

# 6 Discussion and Conclusions

Our analysis advances our understanding of congressional committees and legislative parties by illuminating how coveted positions are allocated—and revealing the consequences of those allocations—in today's highly competitive House environment. By applying new data and analytic methods, we demonstrate that conventional views of intra-party advancement warrant important qualifications.

First, while parties can clearly extract additional resources from members who hold high-ranking committee and leadership positions, this party tax does not bite equally. Even after formal dues systems were institutionalized, many rank-and-file members meet their electoral and career goals without approaching their assigned contribution targets, contrary to alarmist claims from critics such as Representative Buck or Issue One.

Second, the two major parties differ in their ability to enforce this system. Despite internal conflicts over leadership (e.g., frequent turnover among top House Republicans), the GOP appears more effective than the Democrats at securing member contributions. Intriguingly, party leaders themselves contribute substantial sums—likely a credibility strategy to justify demanding funds from others and to signal commitment to collective goals. Thus, "strong" parties impose real costs on their leadership.

Third, we reaffirm that committee influence is highly concentrated among leaders, but with some nuance. Although these positions confer substantial benefits, a significant portion of these gains is recycled back into party coffers and to colleagues. In this respect, our findings both support and refine the "cardinals versus clerics" framework: Committee cardinals wield outsize power but must also share more of the spoils than rank-and-file members.

Fourth, our change-point analysis shows that formalizing party dues was impactful. It did more than codify existing norms, it produced shifts in legislator behavior, especially among non-leadership members, with effects varying by party.

Finally, as underscored by using coarsened exact matching to address causality, we uncover a reinforcing feedback loop: Financial supporters are rewarded with desirable positions that further boost their fundraising capacity. This cyclical process deepens the entrenchment of partisan resource flows and magnifies the strategic value of monetary contributions.

Having established the nuanced reality of the party tax, future research should examine if financial contributions offer a more robust measure of party loyalty than using roll-call voting. Given observed partisan and temporal variations, we will need to pay careful attention to whether any results are general or are conditioned by the party or period being analyzed.

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Table A1: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Different Positions across Terms (All Parties)

| | *Dependent Variable: Positions* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
| Log(Contributions) | 1.15*** | 1.12*** | 1.37** | 3.51** | 1.18*** |
| | [1.08, 1.22] | [1.05, 1.19] | [1.09, 1.71] | [1.51, 8.16] | [1.13, 1.24] |
| Party Unity | 1.01* | 1.02† | 1.00 | 1.04 | 1.01† |
| | [1.00, 1.03] | [1.00, 1.03] | [0.97, 1.03] | [0.96, 1.13] | [1.00, 1.02] |
| Seniority | 0.97 | 0.91*** | 1.11*** | 0.91** | 1.00 |
| | [0.94, 1.00] | [0.87, 0.95] | [1.07, 1.16] | [0.85, 0.97] | [0.95, 1.06] |
| Freshmen | 1.11 | 1.85** | 0.16† | 0.00*** | 1.86** |
| | [0.62, 2.01] | [1.26, 2.71] | [0.02, 1.21] | [0.00, 0.00] | [1.27, 2.72] |
| Marginal Dist | 0.89 | 0.79 | 0.77 | 0.85 | 0.86 |
| | [0.71, 1.11] | [0.56, 1.11] | [0.54, 1.10] | [0.34, 2.13] | [0.66, 1.13] |
| Majority | 1.25** | 1.63** | 0.81 | 0.88 | 1.33* |
| | [1.06, 1.46] | [1.13, 2.35] | [0.56, 1.18] | [0.53, 1.45] | [1.05, 1.67] |
| LES | 1.00 | 1.05 | 1.02 | 0.95 | 0.95 |
| | [0.92, 1.09] | [0.95, 1.16] | [0.93, 1.11] | [0.84, 1.08] | [0.88, 1.01] |
| Previous Positions | 18.20*** | 230.43*** | 64.21*** | 73.06*** | 43.34*** |
| | [6.08, 54.43] | [110.37, 481.38] | [35.05, 117.67] | [33.04, 161.55] | [19.69, 95.41] |
| NonTop Comm Leaders | 0.66 | 0.23*** | | | |
| | [0.37, 1.18] | [0.10, 0.49] | | | |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 4,139 | 4,139 | 4,139 | 4,139 | 4,139 |
| Log-Likelihood | -1,912.9 | -1,246.1 | -671.7 | -455.7 | -1,576.0 |

*Notes*: 95% Confidence Interval in brackets. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. A value of 0.00 suggests an approximation near zero.

Table A2: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Different Positions across Terms (Democrats)

| | *Dependent Variable: Positions* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
| Log(Contributions) | 1.07 | 1.05 | 1.11 | 2.70 | 1.12* |
| | [0.96, 1.20] | [0.95, 1.17] | [0.89, 1.39] | [0.71, 10.21] | [1.02, 1.23] |
| Party Unity | 1.01 | 1.01 | 0.98 | 0.99 | 1.01 |
| | [0.99, 1.03] | [0.98, 1.03] | [0.94, 1.02] | [0.95, 1.04] | [0.99, 1.03] |
| Seniority | 1.00 | 0.92† | 1.17*** | 0.93† | 1.04 |
| | [0.96, 1.04] | [0.84, 1.00] | [1.12, 1.22] | [0.85, 1.01] | [0.95, 1.14] |
| Freshmen | 0.96 | 1.45 | 0.49 | 0.00*** | 1.73† |
| | [0.39, 2.38] | [0.65, 3.23] | [0.06, 4.16] | [0.00, 0.00] | [0.93, 3.24] |
| Marginal Dist | 0.85 | 0.76 | 0.46 | 0.52 | 0.98 |
| | [0.63, 1.15] | [0.42, 1.36] | [0.15, 1.38] | [0.17, 1.58] | [0.61, 1.56] |
| LES | 1.03 | 1.19† | 0.99 | 1.04 | 1.12† |
| | [0.84, 1.26] | [0.99, 1.44] | [0.71, 1.38] | [0.92, 1.17] | [0.99, 1.26] |
| Previous Positions | 18.28*** | 242.44*** | 86.70*** | 116.67*** | 41.04*** |
| | [5.91, 56.53] | [114.87, 511.51] | [44.60, 168.60] | [46.13, 295.29] | [19.23, 87.61] |
| NonTop Comm Leaders | 0.54 | 0.38* | | | |
| | [0.25, 1.13] | [0.16, 0.90] | | | |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2,056 | 2,056 | 2,056 | 2,056 | 2,056 |
| Log-Likelihood | -937.1 | -619.7 | -290.5 | -247.9 | -765.6 |

*Notes*: 95% Confidence Interval in brackets.†p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. A value of 0.00 suggests an approximation near zero.

Table A3: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Different Positions across Terms (Republicans)

| | *Dependent Variable: Positions* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
| Log(Contributions) | 1.21*** | 1.17** | 1.76† | 5.67*** | 1.23*** |
| | [1.09, 1.34] | [1.06, 1.29] | [0.98, 3.15] | [2.18, 14.72] | [1.10, 1.38] |
| Party Unity | 1.01 | 1.02 | 1.03 | 1.26** | 1.02 |
| | [0.96, 1.06] | [0.99, 1.05] | [0.96, 1.10] | [1.09, 1.47] | [0.99, 1.04] |
| Seniority | 0.92* | 0.86*** | 1.08*** | 0.80* | 0.97 |
| | [0.86, 0.99] | [0.82, 0.91] | [1.03, 1.13] | [0.68, 0.95] | [0.93, 1.02] |
| Freshmen | 1.07 | 1.99** | 0.00*** | 0.00*** | 1.87* |
| | [0.61, 1.88] | [1.29, 3.06] | [0.00, 0.00] | [0.00, 0.00] | [1.17, 2.99] |
| Marginal Dist | 0.95 | 0.77† | 0.89 | 1.62 | 0.75** |
| | [0.69, 1.31] | [0.58, 1.02] | [0.51, 1.55] | [0.49, 5.38] | [0.61, 0.93] |
| LES | 1.06 | 1.17* | 1.03 | 1.03 | 0.96 |
| | [0.97, 1.16] | [1.04, 1.32] | [0.95, 1.11] | [0.97, 1.09] | [0.88, 1.05] |
| Previous Positions | 18.76*** | 356.47*** | 47.03*** | 47.04*** | 48.76*** |
| | [6.32, 55.70] | [199.86, 635.63] | [23.32, 94.75] | [14.57, 151.79] | [21.02, 113.22] |
| NonTop Comm Leaders | 0.68 | 0.00*** | | | |
| | [0.37, 1.23] | [0.00, 0.00] | | | |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2,082 | 2,082 | 2,082 | 2,082 | 2,082 |
| Log-Likelihood | -962.7 | -599.6 | -363.9 | -188.6 | -793.7 |

*Notes*: 95% Confidence Interval in brackets. †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. A value of 0.00 suggests an approximation near zero.

Table A4: Odds Ratios of Acquiring Positions across Different Committees

| | Ways | Financial | Energy | Appropriations | Judiciary | Nontop Chairs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Log(Contributions) | 1.71** | 1.11* | 1.35*** | 1.29*** | 1.01 | 1.70** |
| | [1.20, 2.44] | [1.02, 1.21] | [1.17, 1.56] | [1.12, 1.49] | [0.92, 1.11] | [1.20, 2.41] |
| Party Unity | 1.04 | 0.99 | 1.01 | 0.98 | 1.13*** | 1.00 |
| | [0.99, 1.09] | [0.97, 1.01] | [0.96, 1.06] | [0.95, 1.01] | [1.08, 1.19] | [0.96, 1.04] |
| Seniority | 1.04 | 0.97 | 1.00 | 1.06† | 1.04 | 1.22*** |
| | [0.96, 1.13] | [0.93, 1.02] | [0.94, 1.06] | [1.00, 1.13] | [0.98, 1.11] | [1.12, 1.34] |
| Freshmen | 0.19 | 6.25*** | 0.35 | 0.89 | 3.96* | 0.40 |
| | [0.02, 1.47] | [3.71, 10.52] | [0.08, 1.49] | [0.36, 2.20] | [1.30, 12.05] | [0.08, 1.92] |
| Marginal Dist | 1.04 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.82† | 0.33** | 0.51** |
| | [0.83, 1.29] | [0.83, 1.17] | [0.81, 1.22] | [0.68, 0.99] | [0.18, 0.63] | [0.32, 0.82] |
| Majority | 2.02* | 1.38** | 1.71** | 2.24*** | 1.24 | 0.75 |
| | [1.17, 3.49] | [1.06, 1.80] | [1.16, 2.53] | [1.55, 3.24] | [0.94, 1.63] | [0.52, 1.09] |
| LES | 0.86** | 0.86** | 0.84*** | 0.75*** | 1.04 | 1.10 |
| | [0.78, 0.95] | [0.77, 0.96] | [0.76, 0.93] | [0.67, 0.84] | [0.93, 1.16] | [0.94, 1.28] |
| Previous Positions | 58.05*** | 102.36*** | 63.95*** | 78.31*** | 38.48*** | 16.69*** |
| | [20.86, 161.52] | [48.42, 216.41] | [30.30, 134.87] | [36.55, 167.75] | [7.60, 194.78] | [6.97, 39.94] |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,860 | 2,086 | 2,001 | 2,031 | 1,827 | 1,671 |
| Log-Likelihood | -419.5 | -723.5 | -548.6 | -533.2 | -540.0 | -312.0 |

*Notes*: Odds ratios reported; 95% Confidence Interval in brackets. †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A5: Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (All Parties)

| | *Dependent Variable: log(Recipient Contributions)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
| Different Positions | 0.082*** | 0.065*** | 0.131*** | 0.286*** | 0.111*** |
| | (0.016) | (0.016) | (0.029) | (0.049) | (0.014) |
| Party Unity | −0.003*** | −0.003*** | −0.003*** | −0.004*** | −0.004*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Seniority | −0.009*** | −0.010*** | −0.013*** | −0.010*** | −0.011*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Freshman | 0.063*** | 0.062*** | 0.038* | 0.058*** | 0.069*** |
| | (0.020) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.019) |
| Marginal Dist | 0.224*** | 0.227*** | 0.223*** | 0.225*** | 0.230*** |
| | (0.020) | (0.021) | (0.020) | (0.021) | (0.021) |
| Majority | 0.069*** | 0.068*** | 0.076*** | 0.076*** | 0.067*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.015) |
| LES | 0.014** | 0.014** | 0.009* | 0.015*** | 0.013** |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Number of CMTE | −0.039*** | −0.038*** | −0.052*** | −0.038*** | −0.030*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.009) |
| Constant | 6.274*** | 6.267*** | 6.323*** | 6.323*** | 6.242*** |
| | (0.098) | (0.097) | (0.102) | (0.105) | (0.095) |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 4,141 | 4,141 | 4,141 | 4,141 | 4,141 |
| $R^2$ | 0.178 | 0.174 | 0.177 | 0.198 | 0.185 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{\dagger}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table A6: Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (Democrats)

| | *Dependent Variable: log(Recipient Contributions)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
| Different Positions | 0.034 | 0.030 | 0.087*** | 0.222*** | 0.068*** |
| | (0.023) | (0.026) | (0.031) | (0.062) | (0.022) |
| Party Unity | −0.004*** | −0.004*** | −0.004*** | −0.004*** | −0.004*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Seniority | −0.008* | −0.008* | −0.011** | −0.008* | −0.009** |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Freshman | 0.083* | 0.084** | 0.068 | 0.087** | 0.090** |
| | (0.044) | (0.042) | (0.043) | (0.042) | (0.041) |
| Marginal Dist | 0.245*** | 0.247*** | 0.245*** | 0.249*** | 0.249*** |
| | (0.044) | (0.044) | (0.044) | (0.044) | (0.045) |
| Majority | 0.353*** | 0.352*** | 0.359*** | 0.352*** | 0.356*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.008) | (0.011) | (0.009) |
| LES | 0.024** | 0.025** | 0.020** | 0.025*** | 0.024** |
| | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.008) | (0.009) | (0.010) |
| Number of CMTE | −0.036** | −0.035** | −0.042*** | −0.027** | −0.029** |
| | (0.014) | (0.015) | (0.014) | (0.012) | (0.014) |
| Constant | 6.368*** | 6.363*** | 6.378*** | 6.358*** | 6.337*** |
| | (0.134) | (0.131) | (0.136) | (0.137) | (0.131) |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2,058 | 2,058 | 2,058 | 2,058 | 2,058 |
| $R^2$ | 0.244 | 0.244 | 0.247 | 0.267 | 0.249 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{\dagger}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table A7: Money Raised in the Next Electoral Cycle (Republicans)

| | *Dependent Variable: log(Recipient Contributions)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leaders | All Positions |
| Different Positions | 0.130*** | 0.102*** | 0.164*** | 0.389*** | 0.151*** |
| | (0.021) | (0.026) | (0.045) | (0.059) | (0.025) |
| Party Unity | −0.002 | −0.002 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.003 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Seniority | −0.011*** | −0.012*** | −0.016*** | −0.011*** | −0.013*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Freshman | 0.040 | 0.036 | 0.009 | 0.030 | 0.045 |
| | (0.026) | (0.032) | (0.027) | (0.029) | (0.029) |
| Marginal Dist | 0.204*** | 0.208*** | 0.204*** | 0.205*** | 0.214*** |
| | (0.028) | (0.028) | (0.029) | (0.030) | (0.028) |
| Majority | −0.299*** | −0.302*** | −0.278*** | −0.291*** | −0.306*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.010) |
| LES | 0.015*** | 0.015** | 0.009 | 0.015** | 0.013** |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) |
| Number of CMTE | −0.036*** | −0.034*** | −0.058*** | −0.044*** | −0.026** |
| | (0.011) | (0.012) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.012) |
| Constant | 6.474*** | 6.481*** | 6.592*** | 6.621*** | 6.478*** |
| | (0.189) | (0.188) | (0.192) | (0.198) | (0.182) |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2,082 | 2,082 | 2,082 | 2,082 | 2,082 |
| $R^2$ | 0.142 | 0.131 | 0.131 | 0.157 | 0.146 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{\dagger}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table A8: MCs' Donated Contributions to Parties and Colleagues (All Parties)

| | *Dependent Variable: log(Contributions)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leader | All Positions |
| Different Positions | $0.240^{***}$ | $0.264^{***}$ | $0.336^{***}$ | $0.708^{***}$ | $0.363^{***}$ |
| | (0.040) | (0.043) | (0.067) | (0.059) | (0.045) |
| Seniority | $0.026^{***}$ | $0.024^{***}$ | $0.019^{***}$ | $0.026^{***}$ | $0.020^{***}$ |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Freshman | $-0.522^{***}$ | $-0.502^{***}$ | $-0.584^{***}$ | $-0.530^{***}$ | $-0.487^{***}$ |
| | (0.077) | (0.077) | (0.077) | (0.077) | (0.077) |
| Marginal Dist | $-0.325^{***}$ | $-0.310^{***}$ | $-0.332^{***}$ | $-0.331^{***}$ | $-0.300^{***}$ |
| | (0.082) | (0.082) | (0.082) | (0.082) | (0.082) |
| Majority | $-0.114^{***}$ | $-0.118^{***}$ | $-0.102^{**}$ | $-0.098^{**}$ | $-0.117^{***}$ |
| | (0.042) | (0.041) | (0.041) | (0.041) | (0.041) |
| Party Unity | $0.026^{***}$ | $0.026^{***}$ | $0.027^{***}$ | $0.025^{***}$ | $0.025^{***}$ |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Lagged LES | $-0.013$ | $-0.012$ | $-0.021$ | $-0.006$ | $-0.011$ |
| | (0.023) | (0.022) | (0.021) | (0.022) | (0.022) |
| NonTop Comm Leaders | 0.124 | $0.217^{\dagger}$ | | | |
| | (0.095) | (0.116) | | | |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 3,167 | 3,167 | 3,167 | 3,167 | 3,167 |
| $R^2$ | 0.141 | 0.142 | 0.138 | 0.149 | 0.150 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{\dagger}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A9: MCs' Donated Contributions to Parties and Colleagues (Democrats)

| | *Dependent Variable: log(Contributions)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leader | All Positions |
| Different Positions | 0.167*** | 0.296*** | 0.013 | 0.718*** | 0.345*** |
| | (0.054) | (0.060) | (0.091) | (0.057) | (0.065) |
| Seniority | 0.030*** | 0.026*** | 0.030*** | 0.026*** | 0.019*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) | (0.006) |
| Freshman | −0.536*** | −0.503*** | −0.567*** | −0.537*** | −0.508*** |
| | (0.121) | (0.119) | (0.120) | (0.120) | (0.120) |
| Marginal Dist | −0.540*** | −0.519*** | −0.545*** | −0.541*** | −0.520*** |
| | (0.131) | (0.130) | (0.131) | (0.131) | (0.130) |
| Majority | 0.277** | 0.271** | 0.282** | 0.299*** | 0.293*** |
| | (0.110) | (0.109) | (0.111) | (0.109) | (0.109) |
| Party Unity | 0.026*** | 0.025*** | 0.027*** | 0.025*** | 0.026*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Lagged LES | 0.025 | 0.023 | 0.022 | 0.028 | 0.021 |
| | (0.022) | (0.021) | (0.022) | (0.020) | (0.020) |
| NonTop Comm Leaders | −0.084 | −0.027 | | | |
| | (0.120) | (0.159) | | | |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,604 | 1,604 | 1,604 | 1,604 | 1,604 |
| $R^2$ | 0.201 | 0.211 | 0.196 | 0.219 | 0.212 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{\dagger}$p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table A10: MCs' Donated Contributions to Parties and Colleagues (Republicans)

| | *Dependent Variable: log(Contributions)* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Top 3 | Top 5 | Comm. Leaders | Party Leader | All Positions |
| Different Positions | 0.305*** | 0.224*** | 0.620*** | 0.717*** | 0.370*** |
| | (0.059) | (0.061) | (0.093) | (0.125) | (0.062) |
| Seniority | 0.017 | 0.015 | 0.006 | 0.019 | 0.014 |
| | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| Freshman | −0.506*** | −0.508*** | −0.572*** | −0.522*** | −0.468*** |
| | (0.099) | (0.100) | (0.099) | (0.099) | (0.099) |
| Marginal Dist | −0.168 | −0.165 | −0.178† | −0.178† | −0.139 |
| | (0.103) | (0.104) | (0.104) | (0.104) | (0.103) |
| Majority | −0.725*** | −0.730*** | −0.698*** | −0.730*** | −0.750*** |
| | (0.094) | (0.095) | (0.095) | (0.094) | (0.094) |
| Party Unity | 0.023*** | 0.023*** | 0.022*** | 0.022*** | 0.022*** |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Lagged LES | −0.012 | −0.009 | −0.019 | 0.005 | −0.001 |
| | (0.034) | (0.033) | (0.030) | (0.032) | (0.032) |
| NonTop Comm Leaders | 0.379 | 0.580*** | | | |
| | (0.149) | (0.142) | | | |
| Term FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,563 | 1,563 | 1,563 | 1,563 | 1,563 |
| $R^2$ | 0.107 | 0.102 | 0.111 | 0.105 | 0.111 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

## Evidence From Internal Party Documents

We ideally would have party taxes assigned for all members for all years, but such information is unavailable. Various media outlets have provided these numbers via "Member Dues Reports" in a few instances for Democrats (?, ?, ?). Such reports actually include information about several kinds of money that MCs were expected to pay: expected party dues, DCCC funds raised, and money given to vulnerable incumbents (Frontline & R2B Raised/Given). Beyond such direct expenditures, sometimes MCs were attributed "Points," as a function of financially supporting the party or hosting campaign events for the party and their colleagues. Members with higher points are believed to be rewarded with valuable positions (?, ?).

Table A11 in the Appendix summarizes data from these reports. As discussed, there are different dues and DCCC raised goals for different positions. Dividing all positions into four tiers in declining order of financial expectations: (1) MCs in the Leadership/Exclusive Committee Chairs; (2) DCCC Chairs/ Chief Deputy Whips; (3) Non-Exclusive Chairs and members of Exclusive Committees are in the third tier; (4) other MCs. Notably, only 15% of MCs paid off the dues, and 17% of MCs achieved the DCCC raised goal. MCs with higher-tier positions are more likely to pay off dues and achieve the DCCC goal. For example, 32% of first-tier MCs paid off dues, but only 10% of fourth-tier MCs did so. Similarly, 37% of first-tier MCs achieve the DCCC goal, but only 17% of fourth-tier MCs do so.

Regression results (Table A12) show that whether members paid off their dues or achieved their raised goals is not significantly related to the tier of their positions for the next term (though the direction is correct). However, the aggregated amount of their dues, DCCC

raised, and Frontline and R2B Raised has a significantly positive effect on their tiers of position in the next term. In addition, member points are significantly and positively correlated with the MC's position in the next term. We also look at the possible factors that affect Democrat MCs to pay off their party dues (Table A13). The amount of one's goal is positive but not significantly correlated with whether MCs paid off their dues. However, if we compare the percentage of the dues they pay, the coefficient is positive and significant, meaning that MCs with higher dues requirements are more likely to achieve the goal because those MCs usually hold valuable positions and can use their influence to raise more funds. We also find that senior members are more likely to pay off or provide more dues, while freshmen and MCs from the marginal district are less likely to fulfill the requirement. These results are consistent with our intuitions.

Table A11: Relationship between Dues and MC Behavior for Democrats (Selected Years)

| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dues Goal | 729 | 252,195 | 123,996 | 28,409 | 1,000,000 |
| Dues Received | 729 | 158,174 | 1,180,633 | 0 | 30,000,000 |
| Dues Gap | 729 | 94,021 | 1,171,711 | −29,700,000 | 700,000 |
| Whether Paid off Dues | 729 | 0.15 | 0.36 | 0 | 1 |
| DCCC Goal | 729 | 550,128 | 2,172,508 | 17,045 | 30,000,000 |
| DCCC Raised | 729 | 651,356 | 6,015,732 | 0 | 139,687,538 |
| DCCC Gap | 729 | −101,228 | 4,305,151 | −109,687,538 | 3,222,764 |
| Whether Achieve DCCC Goal | 729 | 0.17 | 0.37 | 0 | 1 |
| Frontline & R2B Raised/Given | 729 | 112,104 | 418,825 | 0 | 5,197,792 |
| Member Points | 729 | 22.38 | 76.35 | 0 | 781 |

*Notes*: Data from DCCC lists for 2012, 2014, 2020, and 2022. Contributions in nominal dollars.

Table A12: Future Positions and Financial Support to the Democratic Party

| *Dependent Variable: Tier of the Position in the Next Term* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Paid off Dues | −0.094 | | |
| | (0.071) | | |
| Achieve DCCC Goal | −0.006 | | |
| | (0.079) | | |
| Dues Paid | | −0.012 | |
| | | (0.012) | |
| DCCC Raised | | −0.017 | |
| | | (0.012) | |
| Frontline & R2B Raised/Given | −0.012 | −0.005 | |
| | (0.011) | (0.011) | |
| Total Money Paid to the Party | | | −0.030* |
| | | | (0.012) |
| Member Points | −0.001*** | −0.001*** | −0.001*** |
| | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) |
| Current Tier of Positions | 0.671*** | 0.656*** | 0.661*** |
| | (0.039) | (0.041) | (0.040) |
| Observations | 729 | 729 | 729 |
| $R^2$ | 0.588 | 0.589 | 0.589 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.584 | 0.585 | 0.585 |

*Notes*: Robust standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. These regressions exclude MCs who retire in the next term.

Table A13: Factors Determining Democrats' Likelihood of Paying Party Dues

| | *Dependent Variable* | |
|---|---|---|
| | Paid Off (Logit) | Percentage (OLS) |
| log(goal) | 1.036 | $0.138^{***}$ |
| | [0.638, 1.681] | (0.042) |
| Seniority | $1.075^{**}$ | $0.016^{***}$ |
| | [1.035, 1.116] | (0.004) |
| Freshman | 0.375 | $-0.165^{***}$ |
| | [0.129, 1.086] | (0.040) |
| Marginal Dist | $0.260^{**}$ | $-0.245^{***}$ |
| | [0.103, 0.658] | (0.033) |
| Observations | 884 | 884 |
| $R^2$ | – | 0.166 |
| Log Likelihood | −353.087 | – |

*Note:* 95% confidence intervals (Logit) and robust standard errors (OLS) in parentheses. $^{*}$p<0.05; $^{**}$p<0.01; $^{***}$p<0.001.