COLLECTIVE AND COMPONENT CONSTITUENCIES: SPILLOVER FROM HIGH PROFILE STATEWIDE RACES INTO RACES FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

by

GREGORY J. WOLF

(Under the Direction of Jamie L. Carson)

ABSTRACT

It is widely known that turnout is substantially lower during midterm elections than it is in presidential elections. However, little research has addressed how turnout varies state by state. It is hypothesized that competitive high profile races increase turnout. Additionally, increases in turnout should impact races down the ballot through coattail effects. These hypotheses are tested in on- and off-year elections, expecting different results due to the presence of the presidential race at the top of the ticket in on-years. The results indicate competitive high profile races significantly increase turnout. Additionally, states with same-day voter registration have higher turnout rates than states that do not. Coattails are extended from the presidential race to House races in on-years and from Senate and gubernatorial races in off-years. Surprisingly, Senate races are the only types of races that see enhanced coattail effects when the race is competitive and they are negative in nature.

INDEX WORDS: elections, congress, constituency, coattails, turnout

COLLECTIVE AND COMPONENT CONSTITUENCIES: SPILLOVER FROM HIGH PROFILE STATEWIDE RACES INTO RACES FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

by

GREGORY J. WOLF

B.A., The University of Pittsburgh, 2007

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2009

COLLECTIVE AND COMPONENT CONSTITUENCIES: SPILLOVER FROM HIGH PROFILE STATEWIDE RACES INTO RACES FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

by

GREGORY J. WOLF

Major Professor: Jamie L. Carson

Committee: Ryan Bakker
Michael Crespin

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2009

DEDICATION

For Kahra.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Jamie Carson for his guidance and support throughout this project. Without Jamie's help who knows what this thesis would look like. Jamie, I am very grateful for your comments and encouragement.

Second, I would like to thank Ryan Bakker for helping me with the methodology in this project, as well as teaching me the skills that will benefit me in future projects. Ryan, I would also like to thank you for buying the beverages that helped so very much in getting through this project.

Third, I would like to thank several people who have contributed greatly to my academic development at the University of Georgia: Mike Crespin, Paul Gurian, Arnie Fleishman, and Audrey Haynes. I cannot thank you enough for your support and guidance since I arrived on campus a mere two years ago. Likewise, I would also like to thank David Barker at the University of Pittsburgh for stimulating my interest in political science as an undergraduate, and ultimately helping me to realize I wanted to pursue this interest at the graduate level.

Fourth, I would like to thank Elliot Slane and Brandon Gorman. Elliot and Brandon, I cannot thank you enough for your friendship these past couple years. Our conversations, while often quite ridiculous, have also been intellectually stimulating. Elliot, I cannot thank you enough for helping me come up with the term "collective constituency," which is used throughout this thesis. I would also like to thank Carrie Parker Eaves, with whom I have had just about every class with throughout my tenure at UGA. I am not sure I would have made it through some of those courses without you.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their love and support. Without you I certainly would not have made it this far in my academic career, let alone life. I cannot thank you enough.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of elections in the United States is an area that has been well covered in the American politics literature. This is especially true for congressional elections. However, only a small amount of research has examined the behavior of component constituencies outside of examining presidential coattails. I seek to fill a part of this gap in the literature by evaluating the impact that senate and gubernatorial races have on concurring elections for the U.S. House of Representatives. To do so, I borrow significantly from the presidential coattail and midterm loss literatures. This approach allows me to examine how up-ticket races affect House elections in both on- and off-year elections, which differ drastically when it comes to the participation of the citizenry. Through my analysis I hope to shed light on what may drive turnout in on-year and off-year elections, as well as how up-ticket races affect concurring elections in the smaller component constituencies, which make up their collective constituency.

The loss of seats by the president's party in Congress during midterm elections is a central part of the analysis presented here. This seat loss has been attributed to the theory of "surge-and-decline" (Campbell 1960; Campbell 1991, 1987, 1985), referendum on the president (Campbell 1985; Cover 1985, 1986; Rudalevige 2001; Simon, Ostrom, and Marra 1991; Tufte 1975), or a presidential penalty (Campbell 1985; Erikson 1988). While this paper does not explicitly seek to answer this question, it is a motivating factor in its theoretical grounding. Surge-and-decline theory attributes midterm loss to the absence of presidential coattails and differences in the voting public. The focus here is on the differences in the voting public and how turnout is affected. In midterm elections turnout suffers due to the lack of a high-profile election on the ballot, which discourages turnout (Campbell 1960; Cover 1985; Campbell 1987). This decline in turnout, along with the absence of presidential coattails, can contribute to the loss

of congressional seats in midterm elections. However, in this paper I propose that the decline in turnout and seats varies between states, depending on the presence of competitive, high-profile races on the ballot, namely Senate and gubernatorial elections. Competitive, high-profile races should affect turnout within each state, which could benefit or hurt candidates in races for the House of Representatives, depending on whether or not they are of the same party as the candidates advantaged in the state's higher profile races. Thus, a state's high profile races may be able to mitigate or further encourage the decline of support for the president's party in House races based upon senate and gubernatorial coattails in midterm elections and whether or not they are helped or hindered by the coattail effects. While coattails have been examined at the presidential level (Calvert and Ferejohn 1983; Campbell 1986; Campbell and Sumners 1990; Jacobson 1976; Kritzer and Eubank 1979; Press 1958), there is a void in the literature on how races for statewide offices affect smaller, overlapping constituencies (see however Hogan 2005). I examine how these races affect turnout and support for House candidates in both on- and off-years to look for differential effects as well as state-level differences in presidential midterm loss.

The first section of this paper reviews the literature on presidential midterm loss and coattail effects. In the second section, I outline my central arguments and provide theoretical background to support my expectations, as well as some alternative theories. The third section describes the data and variables, and provides hypotheses for each variable included in the analysis. The fourth section provides details on the methods and presents the results of the analyses. Lastly, I conclude and offer a discussion on the implications of the results.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Turnout in midterm elections is typically lower than it is in presidential election years. This is because presidential elections carry a higher profile than off-year elections where the race of highest profile is typically a Senate or gubernatorial race. As turnout is lower in midterm elections, the makeup of voters is different in these elections than it is in presidential years. Because the actual voting public is different, in addition to migration from state to state, dissimilar results from the election two years prior are very common (Campbell 1960). This almost always incurs a midterm loss for the president's party in Congress. For years, scholars have attempted to find an answer to the reason for this gain and loss of seats between presidential and midterm election years. In presidential years, the gain of seats in the House of Representatives by the president[-elect]'s party has widely been attributed to "coattails," as an array of scholars have argued (Calvert and Ferejohn 1983; Campbell 1986; Campbell and Sumners 1990; Jacobson 1976; Kritzer and Eubank 1979; Press 1958). Similarly, a theory of "surge and decline" attempts to explain not only the gain of seats by the president's party in on-year elections, but also seat loss in off-year elections. The decline in midterm elections has further been explained as a referendum on the president or simply as presidential punishment. Below I review these explanations and later develop a testable theory on how they relate to the question at hand.

Coattail Effects

Coattails have been defined as "the effect that one race has on a separate yet simultaneous race" (Thorson and Stambough 1995, pp. 210). When referring to coattails, people generally think of how the winner of the presidential election carries congressional candidates to victory by increasing their vote margin. While coattails are not as strong as they were during the

era of party ballots, they are encouraged by a federal election day featuring party cues. Voters use this cue as a shortcut in deciding whom to vote for in races further down the ballot (Mondak and McCurley 1993). Successful presidential candidates are able to pull some of their party's candidates with them into office. These candidates featured lower on the ballot are said to be riding the presidential candidate's coattails (Jacobson 2004).

There are three ways in which presidential coattails can affect congressional elections and the candidates who ride in on them: (1) enlarge a candidate's margin of victory, (2) narrow a candidate's margin of defeat, and (3) carry candidates into office in close contests who otherwise would not have won (Campbell 1986, pp.165). Clearly the presence of coattails can significantly affect vote shares and, in some cases, outcomes.

One of the first works to provide evidence of coattail effects was Press (1958). Press showed that coattails are real and that they could carry House candidates to victory. From that time until the late 1970s and early 1980s, coattails had been thought to exert a considerable amount of influence on the congressional vote and seat swing during on-year elections. However, the Republican Party's inability to take back control of the House of Representatives during a period in which they were winning the presidency led many scholars to question the effect of presidential coattails. These scholars (Calvert and Ferejohn 1983; Kritzer and Eubank 1979; however see Born 1984) found that coattails have decreased over time and were not considerably strong to begin with.[1]

The shortening of coattails does not at all mean they are no longer influential. Research suggests that the shortening of presidential coattails in House elections was overestimated and that the advantaged party can carry about three more additional seats than expected in on-year

[1] Calvert and Ferejohn (1983) find that the effectiveness of presidential coattails decreased considerably since the middle twentieth century. Additionally, they state that they were not that strong in 1956. They attribute this to the rising incumbency advantage in Congress and diminishing effects of partisan influences in determining vote choice.

elections (Campbell 1986).[2] Additionally, coattails may only be effective under certain circumstances. Flemming (1995) finds evidence that coattails can have an impact in competitive open-seat House races. These results suggest that coattail effects may not be uniform and may only be influential under particular circumstances.

What determines the influence of coattails varies between individual voters and the electoral context (Mondak 1990; Mondak and McCurley 1993). These effects are more pronounced for voters who largely prefer one presidential candidate over another. Additionally, voters' sensitivity to local politics decreases coattail effects because these voters are more likely to vote for their House candidates based upon their qualifications and ideals, rather than using partisan cues. On the other hand, voters who are less aware are more likely to rely on cues that result in coattail voting. It is this type of problem that makes it difficult to disentangle coattail votes from preferential votes in aggregate analyses.

While coattails may explain congressional gains and losses in presidential years, they offer no explanation as to why the party that benefits from coattails in on-year elections is punished two years later in the midterm elections. Reasons for congressional seat loss in off-year elections may be due to reduced voter turnout, which is composed of a different type of electorate.

Midterm Loss

The loss of congressional seats by the president's party in midterm elections has been well established. However, the cause for this loss remains under question by scholars of congressional elections. Since this phenomena was noticed by scholars about fifty years ago theories have varied in what the cause is.

[2] Campbell and Sumners (1990) similarly find modest coattail effects in Senate elections from 1972 through 1978.

Campbell's (1960) "surge-and-decline" was the first theory that sought to explain this trend. The theory explains congressional seat gains in on-year elections and seat losses in off-year elections and is based on differences in turnout and support between electoral cycles. The difference between on- and off-year elections, Campbell argues, is a function of high and low stimulus elections, respectively. On-year turnout is higher because the high stimulus elections draw core and peripheral voters to the polls, whereas only core supporters show up in low stimulus elections incurring lower turnout. The peripheral voters in on-year elections tend to have weaker partisan attachments than the core voters and these voters enhance the coattail length of the winning presidential candidate, which can carry congressional candidates to an improbable victory. Additionally, weak core voters may be drawn away from their partisan attachment by the presidential race, and this may have down-ticket effects.

The turnout thesis is supported in later work by Cover (1985) that finds there is a difference in turnout between high- and low-intensity elections. Additionally, James Campbell (1987, pp. 968) revises the surge-and-decline theory and says "the surge of interest and information in presidential elections affect[s] the turnout of peripheral partisans and the vote choice of independents." This revised theory criticizes the original theory for not providing an understanding of individual voters and their behavior in on- and off-year elections.

An alternative approach to surge-and-decline is that of a referendum on the president (Cover 1985). This argument suggests that the decline in support for the president's party can be attributed to presidential popularity and economic conditions (Tufte 1975). Further evidence suggests that both low presidential approval and a struggling economy hurt the president's party at the polls in midterm elections (Cover 1986; Rudalevige 2001) and that the president's party suffers even more during the midterm of the president's second term (Abramowitz, Cover, and

Norpoth (1986). While these variables incur a negative bias towards the president's party in the congressional vote, they do not explain the decrease in turnout. Additionally, local economic conditions do not influence votes for Congress, yet national economic conditions do (Rudalevige 2001). However, these effects have been found to have an indirect and modest (at best) effect in midterm elections (Waterman, Oppenheimer, and Stimson 1991).

A similar alternative to the referendum is that of a presidential penalty. This thesis proposes that the electorate will penalize the president regardless of approval ratings, economic conditions, or any other factors that may influence vote choice (Erikson 1988). Put simply, the president's party is going to lose seats. This is a result of citizens being more likely to hold negative views about the president at the midterm (Kernell 1977; Lau 1985) and then using them as a cue in the voting booth. These negative attitudes give the appearance of a "protest vote." The presidential penalty is also comprised of voters seeking to balance power between the president and Congress. Thus, the presidential penalty, as Erikson describes it, is a combination of negative voting and balance theory and is completely independent of coattails, surge-and-decline, a referendum, or any other factors unique to the electoral cycle or political environment. While there is some support for this argument, an explanation as to why this is the case remains at large.

Another alternative is that the short-term forces which are absent in off-year elections cause the electorate to "regress to the mean" (Cover 1985, pp. 614). In other words, the party that over-performed in the previous election performs at normal levels, thus reducing its vote share from the previous election. This alternative approach has been termed the "exposure thesis" (Oppenheimer, Stimson, and Waterman 1986; Waterman, Oppenheimer, and Stimson 1991). The exposure thesis argues that there is a "normal" seat split in Congress and that the

overexposed party will lose seats and the seat split will return towards the equilibrium. However, Gaddie (1997) finds that exposure is only significantly related to seat change in open-seat races. Additionally, Finnocchiaro (2003) suggests that approval of Congress explains midterm seat loss. These findings suggest that presidential seat loss is not entirely, or perhaps at all, related to the electorate's feelings about the president and his administration.

As Campbell (1985) says, these theories can be combined into two types. The first of which are coattails/surge-and-decline theories, and the second of which are referendum and punishment theories. Few studies have combined the two. Campbell's results show that both theories work together, but that the presidential vote in the on-year election is the most significant predictor of seat-loss in the following off-year election. Presidential approval and the economy are also significant predictors as well, but not nearly as strong. However, none of the research to date has examined differences in the electoral contexts between states (Campbell 1985, 1991).

Chapter 3: Theory and Hypotheses

As mentioned above, coattails are the effect that a race on the top of the ticket has on a separate and concurrent race lower on the ticket. In House elections these effects have only been studied examining presidential coattails. A part of the puzzle that has not been examined is the effect coattails have in midterm elections, where the cause of seat loss remains nebulous. My thesis is that coattails are present in midterm elections in that the election of senators and governors may exert influence on the concurring House elections. The thought here is that these more prominent elections for statewide seats of higher prestige may have spillover effects into the races in their component constituencies, namely House races. Thus, the research presented here seeks to find whether senate and gubernatorial races influence turnout and electoral outcomes between states. In doing so, I hope to show that the decline in midterm elections varies from state to state based on statewide electoral context.

The key aspect in studying these effects is that only a third of the Senate's seats are up for election every two years and thirty-nine states hold their gubernatorial elections during the midterms. Thus, observable differences between states holding senate and/or gubernatorial races can be detected, which provides the opportunity for a "quasi-experimental" design. It is expected that states holding these high profile elections should see more competitive House races, as this is an extension from the top of the ticket down to the lower races.

Since Senate and gubernatorial races are of greater profile than House races, coattails extended from these races should carry House members beyond what their vote share would be if the up-ticket race(s) were absent. This is expected because states with higher profile races should see higher voter turnout than there would be if such a race were absent (Jackson 1997). This leads to the following hypotheses:

H_1: States holding senate and gubernatorial elections in off-year elections will see an increase in normal turnout compared to states where such races are absent.

However, such an increase in statewide turnout may be conditional on the competitiveness of the high profile statewide races. Where Senate and gubernatorial races are competitive there should be greater than normal turnout. Similarly, where these races are uncompetitive turnout should not be higher than normal. Thus,

H_2: States with competitive Senate and/or gubernatorial races will have greater than normal turnout rates than states with less competitive Senate and/or gubernatorial races.

If turnout does in fact increase due to the presence of competitive high profile elections compared to states where these races are absent, it is expected that they will impact the down ticket races within these states. In this study these races are elections for the House of Representatives. Thus, the coattails from the Senate and/or gubernatorial race should advantage one candidate over another within the states' House elections. As noted above, coattails can (1) enlarge a candidates margin of victory for winning candidates, (2) narrow the margin of victory of defeat for losing candidates, and (3) carry candidates into office in close contests who otherwise would not have won (Campbell 1986, pp.165). Thus, the advantaged candidate in the high profile contest should exert coattails that could potentially carry a would-be losing House candidate to victory. In the context of midterm elections and the inherent decline in seats for the president's party, the coattails should either enhance or mitigate decline effects within the states. In states where the advantaged Senate candidate is of the president's party and is in a competitive race, House candidates should be able to better fight off the presidential penalty, leading to less of a decline in the respective state's House seats for the president's party. In contrast, in states where the advantaged senator is of the party opposing the president and is in a competitive race, House candidates of the president's party should be penalized more than if the Senate race were

absent. This House candidate is at a disadvantage because their opponent is reaping the benefit of coattails exerted by the Senate candidate within their respective state. This penalty hypothesis can be stated as:

H_3: If the advantaged senate and/or gubernatorial candidate is of (opposite) the president's party, House candidates of the president's (opposition) party will garner a lower (higher) vote share than expected.

To sum up the argument, it is expected that states with competitive Senate and gubernatorial races will have higher than normal turnout in midterm election years compared to states without such elections. States that hold both elections should see higher turnout than states that are only holding one such election. The higher than normal turnout benefits one party over another, creating coattails for the advantaged senate and/or gubernatorial candidate which the House members in that respective state can ride to a larger than expected victory or loss or an unexpected win or loss.

Thus, the research here seeks to examine the differences in midterm decline across states by comparing the electoral contexts of each state. States with high profile races should see an enhanced or mitigated decline, whereas states with no such races should exhibit a normal regression to the mean (Cover 1985; Oppenheimer, Stimson, and Waterman 1986; Waterman, Oppenheimer, and Stimson 1991). If a much greater decline is observed, then the results would suggest that the president's party is punished more in states where there is a Senate or gubernatorial race on the ballot. If there is less decline then high profile races may mitigate presidential losses in midterm elections. Additionally, if we observe similar outcomes across states regardless of up-ticket races, the results may suggest that the presidential penalty and/or referendum is the greatest determinant of midterm elections.

Same-Day Voter Registration

The design of this research allows for the inclusion of same-day voter registration effects, adding to the quasi-experimental design. States with same-day voter registration allow unregistered voters to show up at the polls on election day and cast a ballot. This innovation makes it easier for eligible citizens to vote because it means there are fewer hoops to jump through, thus reducing the costs of voting. Due to making participation in the democratic process easier, turnout in states that provide same-day registration to their citizens is typically higher (Fenster 1994). Therefore, it is expected that states that have same-day voter registration will have higher than normal turnout.

H_6: States with same-day voter registration will have higher turnout than states that do not have same-day voter registration.

However, because unregistered voters may be less politically motivated and therefore less likely to turn out, it may take a competitive race to ease their costs of voting. Thus, it is expected that states with competitive high profile elections and same-day voter registration will observe higher turnout than states where there are less competitive profile races and same-day voter registration. The next section describes the data and the variables included in the analysis.

Chapter 4: Data and Description of Variables

In order to find differential effects in decline between states in off-year elections we must first find whether or not there is a difference in turnout between states relative to national turnout in states that hold high profile elections. Additionally, off-year turnout needs to be compared to on-year turnout to evaluate how turnout differs between these different types of elections. Upon determining the effect that high profile races have on turnout we can evaluate how this increase in turnout affects House race outcomes while evaluating differences between on- and off-year elections.

Turnout

To evaluate whether or not there are differences in turnout due to Senate and/or gubernatorial races in off-year elections, I will test the turnout hypotheses outlined above in all on- and off-year elections from 1980 through 2006. A description of all variables can be found in Table 1. The years included in the analysis are chosen because turnout data for the voter eligible population are available from 1980 onward.[3] Additionally, states with two Senate races are included twice, only differing in variables respective to each Senate race.[4]

The response variable in the turnout model is each state's deviation from normal, or national, turnout in each election year. This is done by subtracting the national turnout percentage from each respective state's turnout percentage. Turnout from 1980 through 2006 is measured as the percent of the voter eligible population that turned out to vote. The use of the voting eligible population has been argued to be a better representation of turnout because it excludes those who are, obviously, ineligible to vote. Additionally, turnout rates are not

[3] Turnout data for both the voting age and eligible population since 1980 were obtained from Michael McDonald's website, which is http://elections.gmu.edu/. Voting-age turnout rates prior to 1980 were obtained from various editions of the Books of the States because only data from 1980 forward were available from Michael McDonald.
[4] This is similarly done in the latter analysis as well.

comparable across states because ineligible voters are not evenly distributed across the states (McDonald and Popkin 2001; McDonald 2002).

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The independent variables of interest are the presence and competitiveness of Senate and gubernatorial races on the ballot. Race competitiveness is controlled for by using the absolute value of the difference in the two-party vote and subtracting it from 100. For instance, a Democratic candidate who won with sixty percent of the vote would have a twenty percent victory margin. Thus, this observation would be given a value of 80 points. Similarly, a Democratic candidate that received forty-eight percent of the vote would have lost by four percent. However, because the competitiveness variable is not concerned with which party wins and competitiveness only, the absolute value is taken and the observation would be given a value of 96.[5] When one of these races is absent it is given a value of zero, considering the most competitive of races would be a fifty-fifty split and given a value of 100. Ideally using dummy variables to differentiate between states that do and do not have Senate and gubernatorial races would be ideal, but they are perfectly collinear with the race competitiveness variables. Thus, giving them a value of zero and coding the most competitive elections as 100 is the appropriate way to account for this difference. Additionally, during on-year elections statewide presidential competitiveness is included in the analysis. Races in which there was only one major party candidate running were treated as if there were no race. Likewise, races in which a third party candidate received more than five percent of the vote are excluded.

As noted above, same-day voter registration has shown to increase voter turnout. A dummy variable is used to indicate which states have this innovation.[6] This variable is expected

[5] Data for both Senate and Gubernatorial returns were collected from Cook, McGillivray, and Scammon (2007).
[6] Data on which states have same-day voter registration were obtained from the Books of the States.

to be significant and in a positive direction, as it is anticipated that states with this innovation will increase turnout, particularly when the high profile races within the state are competitive. To account for this condition I include interactions between same-day voter registration and both Senate and gubernatorial race competitiveness. In on-year elections this variable is also interacted with competitiveness of the presidential race.

Lastly, because voters are more likely to participate in the democratic process when they are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, I include controls for presidential approval and economic conditions. The percentage of respondents approving of the president's job in office in the Gallup poll approximately a week prior to the election is used to control for presidential approval (Edwards 1990).[7] When presidential approval is high, turnout should not increase; low approval should increase turnout because the public is likely to be dissatisfied with the president and his party. Likewise, economic conditions should impact voter turnout. Economic conditions are measured using the Misery Index for the observed year. These data were obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Higher values should increase turnout, as dissatisfaction with the president's party should be higher.

Spillover Effects in Component Constituencies

If, as expected, state-by-state turnout is affected by the presence of high profile races and voter registration laws, it is further expected that there will be spillover into races featuring their component constituencies. The data in this section include all congressional elections from 1980 through 2006. To test this question in on- and off-year elections, a separate models are run for each and how these variables are measured can be found in Table 2. In order to be consistent though time and be sensitive to presidential reward and punishment in on- and off-year elections,

[7] For some elections the closest measure of approval to the election was last taken in June. These data were obtained from Ragsdale (2008).

respectively, the dependent variable is the Democratic vote share for each contested House race in all years analyzed.[8] Because I am interested in observing differences in midterm decline between states, the data are split into two samples: on- and off-year elections. This approach will show the effect that Senate and gubernatorial races have in midterm elections, as well as presidential elections. Uncontested races and those without candidates from the two major parties are dropped from the analysis, as I am interested in partisan effects from the top of the ticket downward.[9] Similarly, races in which a third party candidate garnered more than five percent of the vote are excluded.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

In order to capture presidential, senate, and gubernatorial influence on the House vote, I include each candidate's vote share for their respective race.[10] For on-year elections all three races of influence are included in the model; in off-year elections only senate and gubernatorial races are included. It is expected that in on-year elections there will be presidential spillover and senate and gubernatorial influence will be insignificant, but in the off-year model senate and gubernatorial influences will be significant.

Remember that the primary thesis of this paper is that spillover effects should matter most when high profile races are competitive due to increased participation. Thus, it is important to account for the competitiveness of these high profile races. To do this I use a dummy variable indicating whether or not the presidential, Senate, or gubernatorial race was competitive. This competitiveness variable controls for races that are decided by 2.5 percentage point or less in

[8] Data for this variable were generously provided by Gary Jacobson.
[9] Additionally, all races from Louisiana are excluded due to a lack of concurrence between Senate, House, and gubernatorial elections.
[10] Data for senate, and gubernatorial vote shares were obtained from Cook, McGillivray, and Scammon (2007) and are measured statewide. Data for presidential vote shares were obtained from Gary Jacobson and are measured at the district level.

each state.[11] By itself this variable is relatively meaningless, as it tells us nothing about vote shares for House races. However, in order to find the effect that high profile races have on House races their vote shares must be interacted with the competitiveness variable of their respective race. Therefore, I interact presidential, Senate, and gubernatorial vote shares with their respective race competitiveness variable. This specification allows me to evaluate coattail effects when races are competitive and uncompetitive.

However, midterm elections are also influenced by effects outside of coattails/surge-and-decline, so it is important to include variables that account for presidential referendum/penalty (Campbell 1985). Presidential approval and economic conditions are included to account for these effects. Economic conditions are measured the same as in the previous model, but the inverse of presidential approval is taken when the president is Republican in order to keep consistency with the response variable.

Because I am also interested in how turnout affects these races, the deviation from normal turnout is included in the model. This is the same variable used as the response variable in the turnout model. As with the turnout model, I run the model using the voting eligible population from 1980 through 2006. Since close races are expected to have higher turnout, it is also expected that higher than normal turnout will drive vote shares toward a 50/50 split, while lower than normal turnout will benefit the candidate already expected to win. Unfortunately there is no good way to directly test this relationship; a significant effect is expected, however the sign of the variable is not hypothesized.

While the above variables are expected to explain how up-ticket races affect vote shares in races for the House of Representatives, there are other contextual factors that influence House elections. These factors are incumbency, open seat races, the presence of a quality challenger,

[11] The measure for presidential effects is measured at the congressional district level.

and candidate expenditures.[12] The increasing incumbency advantage in the House has made it easier for incumbents to hold their seats, and thus incumbents are difficult to defeat (Ansolabehere et al. 2000; Cover 1977; Desposato and Petrocik 2003; Jacobson 1987; Mayhew 1974). Additionally, open seat races are affected differently by coattail effects because they are open to more outside influence (Flemming 1995; Mondak 1993) and have more potential for seat change (Jacobson 1990a). Incumbency is coded as 1 for Democratic incumbents, -1 for Republican incumbents, and 0 for open seats. It is expected that effects in open seat races will be much greater than in races where there is an incumbent because they tend to be more competitive (Jacobson 1990a, 2004). The presence of a quality challenger often poses a more formidable threat to incumbents and even so in open seat races (Jacobson 1978, 1989, 1990; Green and Krasno 1988, 1990). Quality challengers are determined by whether or not a candidate has won an election for political office prior to their House candidacy. The presence of a quality challenger is coded as 1 for Democratic quality challengers, -1 for Republican quality challengers, and 0 when both candidates are quality challengers or non-quality challengers in open seat races. Quality challengers should also diminish the effect of up-ticket spillover into House races more than unqualified challengers. This is because they bring more to the table than non-quality challengers and should give voters more to consider than partisan attachments.

Candidate spending in House races is also an influential factor in the share of the vote. Jacobson (1978, 1990) finds that the more incumbents spend, the more their share of the vote decreases. This is due to challengers gaining more name recognition and legitimacy in the electorate and incumbents spending more trying to fight them off. However, Green and Krasno (1988, 1990) find that the value of incumbent and challenger spending are nearly equal. As these studies have shown, measuring campaign spending has been no easy task. First, campaign

[12] Data for these variables were generously provided by Gary Jacobson.

spending has diminishing returns. To control for this characteristic, the log of campaign spending is used. However, the literature also notes that a candidate's campaign spending is endogenous to their opponent's campaign spending. That is, candidates tend to increase expenditures as they become more vulnerable to defeat, and their opponents react to their spending. The strategic actions of candidates, namely campaign spending, may become correlated with the error term, which represents variables omitted that may also determine vote shares. This could result in biased estimates which could misrepresent the true relationship between spending and electoral outcomes (Green and Krasno 1988, 1990; Jacobson 1978, 1990). To bypass this problem I follow previous research and use two-stage least squares (2SLS) estimation to purge Democratic and Republican spending of their covariance with the error term. The first stage uses expenditures of the same party's candidate in the previous election as an instrument for spending in the observed year.[13] Doing so results in predicted values for lagged Democratic and Republican expenditures. These predicted values are then used in place of the original spending variables in the second stage of the analysis. The expectations for candidate expenditures are that Democratic expenditures will increase the two-party share of the Democratic vote and that Republican expenditures will decrease this vote share.[14]

[13] This research follows that of Green and Krasno (1988) in using lagged spending as an instrument for current spending. This approach assumes that spending at time *t-1* has no impact on votes at time *t*.
[14] Ideally, including a variable to account for redistricting would be included. However, due to data limitations this variable is not included in the presented analysis.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings

Voter turnout varies from state to state, based upon the independent variables included in the analysis, as well as other demographic and time considerations. In order to account for these various factors I use random-effects general least-squares regression. Using random-effects GLS allows for each state, grouped by *i*, to have its own intercept to control for demographic, contextual, and other unobserved factors while still accounting for time-point factors by indexing election years through *t*.[15, 16] The spillover model uses 2SLS due to endogenous regressors, as outlined above.

Turnout Effects

The turnout model seeks to explain differences in turnout across states, controlling for the electoral contexts within each state as well as national trends. The dependent variable is statewide deviation from normal (i.e. national) turnout. Thus, the estimates for both on- and off-year elections explain their influence on each state's deviation from normal turnout. The results for on-year and off-year elections can be found in Table 3.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

In on-year elections the competitiveness of the presidential race can, and does, increase turnout. For every one percent that the presidential race gets closer turnout increases by approximately 0.04 percent. Similarly, gubernatorial closeness increases turnout 0.02 percent for each percentage the race tightens. Senate races have no impact. The significance of the presidential race is not surprising. The race for the presidency is the more followed race in the nation and receives, by far, the most coverage. States that receive the most attention may have an increased fervor which entices its citizens to participate in the political process. Additionally,

[15] Because forty-nine of the fifty states are included in the analysis there are forty-nine groups. Louisiana is excluded because of their propensity to not hold concurring elections.

[16] Generally, the model can be expressed as $Y_{it} = \alpha_i + X_{it}\beta + u_{it}$

as the race tightens voters may feel that they can actually make a difference, and thus show up at their local polling place. This is what is commonly referred to as the Downsian voter (Downs 1957). Gubernatorial races turning out significant and Senate races not may be attributed to the fact that very few states hold gubernatorial elections during on-years.[17] One criticism may be that 0.04 and 0.02 percent are relatively small increases in turnout. However, these small increases in turnout represent thousands of voters who can affect the outcome of the race. Likewise, these voters who would not have turned out otherwise are also likely to impact races further down the ticket.

Off-year elections tell a similar story. The results indicate that the competitiveness of both senate and gubernatorial races increase turnout. These results were expected as turnout should increase when there are high profile races on the ballot. The competiveness of these races drives turnout, which supports the hypotheses presented above. As senate races increasingly become competitive by a percentage, turnout increases by 0.03 percent. Likewise, as gubernatorial races become more competitive turnout increases by approximately 0.07 percent. As stated above, these represent thousands of voters and could potentially affect tight races. Thus, while these effects are not particularly strong, they could affect races at the margins.

Lastly, in both on- and off-year elections states that provide the option of same-day voter registration see much greater turnout than states that do not provide this convenience. The presence of same-day voter registration is good for approximately a 2.7 percent increase in the deviation from normal turnout in both on- and off-years. These results suggest that same-day voter registration has a significant impact on statewide turnout. Generally, states that have same-day voter registration experience greater turnout than states that do not. Same-day voter

[17] Only eleven of the forty-nine observed states held gubernatorial elections in 2004, compared to thirty-five states that held gubernatorial races in 2006.

registration is a convenient way to allow unregistered voting-eligible persons to participate in the democratic process. Clearly, this innovation, currently enacted by only nine states, boosts citizen political participation.[18]

The results of the turnout model provide some important findings. First, there are significant differences in predictors of turnout between on- and off-year elections. On-year elections are driven by the presence of the presidential race being on the ballot. As the presidential races becomes more competitive, turnout increases. Second, high profile races in off-year elections significantly impact turnout. The competitiveness of these high profile races increase turnout. Simply put, as a race becomes increasingly competitive, turnout increases as well. This effect is even greater in states with same-day voter registration. While these effects are not large, they represent thousands of voters that can alter electoral outcomes in very tight races. Third, same-day voter registration significantly increases turnout in both on- and off-year elections. This effect is approximately 2.7 percent among the voter eligible population. Now that we know the influence that high profile races can have on turnout in off-year elections, we can test how these races impact races lower on the ballot, specifically races for the House of Representatives.

Collective Spillover into Component Constituencies

As mentioned above, this part of the analysis seeks to explain how senate and gubernatorial races affect races in their component constituencies. Senators and governors represent statewide constituencies. However, there are a number of component constituencies that make up this larger, collective constituency. One way these component constituencies can be broken down is into House districts. Therefore, I can measure the impact that races for statewide office have on smaller races in the state. It is important to remember that when voters

[18] This includes North Dakota, which does not have voter registration.

go to the polls on election day when both high profile and down ballot races are present that they are voting as a part of their collective constituency and a component constituency of that state. Thus, there are possible spillover effects from these high profile statewide races into races that involve their component constituencies.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

The results suggest that there are significant differences between on- and off-year elections. However, these differences are to be expected. In on-year elections presidential candidates extend significant coattails to members of their own party in House races. For every one percentage increase in vote share the congressional candidate receives a 0.25 percent increase in support.[19] This finding is consistent with previous research which suggests that presidential coattails exhibit a small, but significant effect (Calvert and Ferejohn 1983; Campbell and Sumners 1990). While this effect may be small, extremely tight House races could be decided upon the strength of presidential coattails. Interestingly, these effects are not more pronounced in states where the presidential race is highly competitive.[20] Senate and gubernatorial candidates, as opposed to presidential candidates, exert no such influence during on-year elections, which is expected because the presidential race is the driving force in the election.

Nearly all of the control variables are significant in the predicted direction. The misery index in the observed year is negative, suggesting that as the economy improves the Democratic vote share tends to decrease. This may reflect the propensity of the voting public to elect Democrats during periods of economic upheaval. As the economy improves, voters may relax importance that economic conditions have in their vote choice and choose candidates based on

[19] Interestingly, these effects are not more pronounced as the race within each House district gets tighter.
[20] This may be due to homogeneity within each House district.

other factors. These other factors may benefit the Republican Party. Interestingly, as presidential approval increases in favor of the Democratic Party, Democratic vote shares actually decrease. This finding is interesting as it is contrary to the conventional wisdom that presidential popularity can be used as a general proxy for partisan support nationwide.[21] Additionally, statewide deviation from normal turnout has no impact on vote shares in the House. This may indicate that any increase or decrease from normal turnout is equal between all partisans.

All of the congressional race controls are also significant and are all in the expected direction. Incumbency provides candidates with approximately an 11 percent cushion compared to challengers and candidates in open-seat races. Being a quality challenger or not facing a quality challenger is similarly beneficial, although only for approximately 3.2 percent of the vote. Additionally, Democratic and Republican expenditures, instrumented through a lagged measure of logged expenditures using 2SLS, are significant in the expected direction. Democratic spending increases Democratic vote shares and Republican spending increases Republican vote shares. However, the coefficients for these variables are nearly identical suggesting that they often cancel each other out when all else is held constant. However, this is where the benefit of incumbency and being a quality challenger, or not facing one, are truly advantageous.

While the results for on-year elections are interesting, the results for off-year elections are what is of particular interest in this study. Specifically, the interest lies in how Senate and gubernatorial races affect down ticket House races. The results indicate that these high profile races have a significant influence on races for the House of Representatives. For every one point increase in Senate vote share, their party's House candidates can gain about a 0.01 of a percentage in their vote shares. Additionally, gubernatorial candidates exert coattails of about

[21] Diagnostics suggest that this is not a problem of collinearity.

0.03 percent for House candidates as gubernatorial candidates increase their vote share by one percent. Clearly, Senate and gubernatorial candidates extend coattails, albeit small ones, to House candidates. While these effects may be considered rather small, they could mean the difference between a win and a loss in an extremely tight race.

The primary thesis of this paper is that there is spillover from high profile races into races lower on the ballot when these high profile races are competitive. When considering this possibility it is not surprising that there are not large spillover effects across all races. The results indicate that the hypothesis that competitive high profile elections can exert significant spillover into races comprising of their component constituencies is supported, albeit in the opposite direction.

For Senate races decided by 2.5 percent or less, candidates decrease their own party's House candidate's vote shares. This result is puzzling, as it suggests that for each additional percentage point that a candidate receives in a competitive Senate race, they hurt House candidates in their state by 1.5 percent. Ultimately, Senate candidates can hurt House candidates by up to 3.75 percent, easily enough to mean the difference between a win and a loss in a tight race. Gubernatorial candidates, on the other hand, do not extend coattails to candidates for the House of Representatives. This may be a distinction made by the voters between congressional and state-level races. The punishment of House candidates of the same party when Senate races are competitive may indicate that voters desire a divided Congress, which supports the argument that voters want divided government (Jacobson 1990b).

All of the controls included in this part of the analysis are significant. In off-years, contrary to on-years, as the Misery Index increases Democratic House candidates benefit. For every one point increase in the Misery Index, Democratic House candidates pick up about 0.15

percent. Presidential approval is also significant; as presidential approval increases (moving in the Democrats favor), Democratic candidates' vote shares for the House increase. This result falls in line with the expectations outlined above. As in the on-year models, incumbency, quality challenger, and Democratic and Republican expenditures are in the predicted directions. More specifically, incumbency is worth about 10.5 percent of the vote share and being a quality challenger, or not facing one (for incumbents), is good for just over three percent, nearly the same as in on-year elections. Expenditures follow the same pattern as they do in on-year elections, although it appears that Republican spending matters more than Democratic spending. However, because these are predicted values of a lagged logged variable it is difficult to place any substantive meaning on them.

As a whole, the results from this section show that high profile up-ticket races exert significant influence on races involving their component constituencies. During on-year elections the presidential ticket extends coattails that spillover into House races. In off-year elections senate and gubernatorial races have spillover effects into their component constituencies, as broken down by House districts and their respective races. Interestingly, there are not stronger effects for competitive presidential races and, in off-years, these effects actually hurt candidates of the same party for Senate races.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

At the outset of this paper the goal of determining how high profile races affect races further down the ballot was presented. Specifically, I sought to examine how presidential seat loss in the House of Representatives can either be enhanced or mitigated by the presence of concurring high profile races. The results show that candidates for the presidency, Senate, and governorships, exert significant coattails that can alter races for the House of Representatives. However, when a Senate race is competitive House candidates of the benefitted candidate's party are hurt by about 1.5 percent. Therefore, it is very possible for congressional candidates in a state with a tight Senate race to fight off the presidential punishment that comes in off-year elections, if you are of the opposite party of the advantaged Senate candidate. These spillover effects can be attributed to increases in turnout. Turnout can significantly alter electoral outcomes because as more and more eligible voters enter in the electorate, the more diversified that voting public becomes. As this group becomes more diverse it should increase the variation we see in electoral outcomes and produce closer races. Thus, it is important that we know what increases turnout and how it affects these outcomes. The results presented above show that the competitiveness of high profile races increase turnout. Additionally, same-day voter registration increases turnout. These increases in turnout should affect turnout in races lower on the ballot, provided there is little ballot roll-off.

The second stage of the analysis shows that Senate and gubernatorial candidates can extend coattails, albeit small ones, to candidates for the House of Representatives. While these effects are not large, they could be the difference between a win and a loss in very tight races. More importantly, highly competitive Senate races extend significantly large, negative coattails to candidates for the House. This spillover effect can hurt House candidates by up to 3.5 percent

when the Senate race is nearly deadlocked. This effect can be rather substantial in midterm elections when House candidates of the president's party try to stave off the almost inherent punishment they face for being associated with the president. However, when high profile races benefit the president's opposition party, punishment can be more devastating than predicted. The results suggest that while Senate candidates may benefit, they hurt their states respective House candidates. Thus, while we constantly see seats controlled by the president's party drop following midterm elections, Senate seats may have the propensity to increase.

Spillover effects from high profile races to races lower on the ballot may be small, but they can be very significant at the margins. Likewise, the chances of a Senate race being decided by less than 2.5 percent are not great, but is not out of the ordinary. However, when this does occur there can be significant repercussions. Coattails may contribute just enough support to get House candidates elected, or lose an election, depending how the candidate relates to the winning Senate candidate.

What does this mean for representation and accountability? For one, the results suggest that voters may prefer a divided Congress. While one or two seat swings in the House are unlikely to make a difference, this can have an effect on state delegations. After all, when Senate races are not competitive, this typically means that a state is relatively homogenous in terms of its political ideology. However, in states where partisanship is nearly split Senate races are likely to be more competitive and the dispersion of House seats is more likely to be evenly divided between the Democratic and Republican parties. The findings also support the idea that voters desire divided government to keep checks and balances in place. In this case it appears as though voters may prefer a divided Congress, when the opportunity presents itself. By splitting their votes for Senate and the House voters are making it more likely that the chambers will be

split as well. Such a scenario bestows the opportunity for the enactment policies that are supported by both parties and their partisans. It terms of individual representation, it allows each representative to know that the voters can, and will, vote for candidates of either party. Knowing that they are on the hot seat, representatives in both the Senate and House should be more responsive and accountable to their respective constituencies.

Yet, there are other implications of the findings reported here. It is possible that spillover effects influence who runs for the House in the first place. When considering whether or not to run for Congress prospective candidates may wait for an election in which they may be able to benefit from an up-ticket race, thus increasing their chances of winning. While anticipating how competitive a high profile race is difficult, in deciding whether or not to run prospective candidates surely anticipate how the electoral context will affect their chances of winning. The benefit of coattails may further entice prospective candidates to enter the race.

Thus, the results suggest that high profile up-ticket races can exert significant influence on races in their component constituencies. However, the research in this area is far from complete. A better understanding as to how these component constituencies differ in their voting patterns from their collective component is desirable. Why do these constituencies differ in their partisan makeup? What factors at the component constituency level significantly impact results at the collective constituency level? Are the differences between component constituencies and the collective constituency a result of homogeneity within the components? Further examining statewide constituencies and states' component constituencies is essential to understanding these questions as well as providing greater insight to how voters behave when voting for different political offices.

References

Abramowitz, Alan I., Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning. 2006. "Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections." *Journal of Politics* 96(1):75-88.

Abramowitz, Alan I., Albert D. Cover, and Helmut Norpoth. 1986. "The President's Party in Midterm Elections: Going from Bad to Worse." *American Journal of Political Science* 30:562-576.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, Jr., and Charles Stewart, III. 2000. "Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Measure the Incumbency Advantage." *American Journal of Politics* 44:17-34.

The Book of the States (various eds.). Lexington, KY: The Council of State Governments.

Born, Richard. 1984. "Reassessing the Decline of Presidential Coattails: U.S. House Elections from 1952-1980." *Journal of Politics* 46:60-79.

Burden, Barry C. 2002. "United States Senators as Presidential Candidates." *Political Science Quarterly* 117:81-102.

Calvert, Randall L. and John A. Ferejohn. 1983. "Coattail Voting in Recent Presidential Elections." *American Political Science Review* 77:407-419.

Campbell, Angus. 1960. "Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24(3):197-418.

Campbell, James E. 1991. "The Presidential Surge and its Midterm Decline in Congressional Elections, 1868-1988." *Journal of Politics* 53(2):477-487.

_____. 1987. "The Revised Theory of Surge and Decline." *American Journal of Political Science* 31(4):965-979.

_____. 1986. "Predicting Seat Gains from Presidential Coattails." *American Journal of Political Science* 30:165-183.

_____.1985. "Explaining Presidential Loss in Midterm Elections." *Journal of Politics* 47(4):1140-1157.

Campbell, James E. and Joe E. Sumners. 1990. "Presidential Coattails in Senate Elections." *American Political Science Review* 84(2):513-524.

Carson, Jamie L., Erik J. Engstrom, and Jason M. Roberts. 2006. "Redistricting, Candidate Entry, and the Politics of Nineteenth Century U.S. House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2):283-293.

Cook, Rhodes, Alice V. McGillivray, and Richard M. Scammon. 2007. *America Votes 2005-2006: Election Returns by State*. Washington D.C.: C.Q. Press.

Cover, Albert D. 1986. "Presidential Evaluations and Voting for Congress." *American Journal of Political Science*30 (4):786-801.

_____. 1985. "Surge and Decline in Congressional Elections." *Western Political Science Quarterly* 38(4):606-619.

_____. 1977. "One Good Term Deserves Another: The Advantage of Incumbency in Congressional Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 21:523-542.

Desposato, Scott W. and John R. Petrocik. 2003. "The Variable Incumbency Advantage: New Voters, Redistricting, and the Personal Vote." *American Journal of Political Science* 47:18-32.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.

Edwards, George C. 1990. *Presidential Approval*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Erickson, Robert S. 1988. "The Puzzle of Midterm Loss." *Journal of Politics* 50(4):1011-1029.

Fenster, Mark J. 1994. "The Impact of Allowing Day of Registration Voting On Turnout in U.S. Elections From 1960 To 1992." *American Politics Research* 22(1):74-87.

Finocchiaro, Charles J. 2003. "An Institutional View of Congressional Elections: The Impact of Congressional Image on Seat Change in the House." *Political Research Quarterly*56(1):59-65.

Flemming, Gregory N. 1995. "Presidential Coattails in Open-Seat Elections." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20(2):197-211.

Gaddie, Ronald K. 1997. "Congressional Seat Swings: Revisiting Exposure in House Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 50(3):699-710.

Green, Donald P. and Jonathon S. Krasno. 1990. "Rebuttal to Jacobson's New Evidence for Old Arguments." *American Journal of Political Science* 34:363-372.

_____. 1988. "Salvation for the Spendthrift Incumbent: Reestimating the Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 32:884-907.

Hetherington, Marc, Bruce Larson, and Suzanne Globetti. 2003. "The Redistricting Cycle and Strategic Candidate Decisions in U.S. House Races." *Journal of Politics* 65(4):1221-1234.

Hogan, Robert E. 2005. "Gubernatorial Coattail Effects in State Legislative Elections." *Political Research Quarterly* 58(4):587-597.

Jackson, Robert A. 1997. "The Mobilization of U.S. State Electorates in the 1988 and 1990 Elections." *Journal of Politics* 59(2):520-537.

Jacobson, Gary. 2004. *The Politics of Congressional Elections* 6th ed. New York: Pearson Longman Press.

_____. 1990a. "The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections: New Evidence for Old Arguments." *American Journal of Political Science* 34:334-362.

_____. 1990b. *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government: Competition in U.S. House Elections, 1946-1988.* Boulder: Westview Press.

_____. 1989. "Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-86." *American Political Science Review* 83:773-793.

_____. 1987. "The Marginals Never Vanished: Incumbency and Competition in Elections to the U.S. House of Representatives, 1952-1982." *American Journal of Political Science* 31:262-271.

_____. 1978. "The Effects of Campaign Spending in Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 72:469-491.

_____. 1976. "Presidential Coattails in 1972." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40:194-200.

Kernell, Samuel. 1977. "Presidential Popularity and Negative Voting: An Alternative Explanation of the Midterm Congressional Decline of the President's Party." *American Political Science Review* 71(2):44-66.

Kritzer, Herbert M. and Robert B. Eubank. 1979. "Presidential Coattails Revisited: Partisanship and Incumbency Effects." *American Journal of Political Science* 23(3):615-626.

Lau, Richard R. 1985. "Two Explanations of Negativity Effects in Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 29:119-138.

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection* 2nd Ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Miller, Warren E. 1955. "Presidential Coattails: A Study in Political Myth and Methodology." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 19(4):353-368.

Mondak, Jeffery J. 1990. "Determinants of Coattail Voting." *Political Behavior* 12(3):265-288.

Mondak, Jeffery J. and Carl McCurley. 1993. "Cognitive Efficiency and the Congressional Vote: The Psychology of Coattail Voting." *Political Research Quarterly* 47(1):151-175.

Oppenheimer, Bruce I., James A. Stimson, and Richard W. Waterman. 1986. "Interpreting U.S. Congressional Elections: The Exposure Thesis." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 9(2):227-247.

Press, Charles. 1958. "Voting Statistics and Presidential Coattails." *American Political Science Review* 52(4):1041-1050.

Rohde, David W. 1979. "Risk-Bearing and Progressive Ambition: The Case of Members of the United States House of Representatives." *American Journal of Political Science* 23:1-26.

Rudalevige, Andrew. 2001. "Revisiting Midterm Loss: Referendum Theory and State Data." *American Politics Research* 29(1):21-46.

Simon, Dennis M., Charles W. Ostrom, Jr., and Robin F. Marra. 1991. "The President, Referendum Voting, and Subnational Elections in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 85(4):1177-1192.

Thorson, Gregory R. and Stephen J. Stambough. 1995. "Anti-Incumbency and the 1992 Elections: The Changing Face of Presidential Coattails." *Journal of Politics* 57(1):210-220.

Tufte, Edward E. 1975. "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 69(3):812-526.

Waterman, Richard W., Bruce I. Oppenheimer, and James A. Stimson. 1991. "Sequence and Equilibrium in Congressional Elections: An Integrated Approach." *Journal of Politics*53(2):372-393.

Table 1: Description of Variables for Turnout Effects	
Variable	*Measurement*
Deviation from Normal Turnout	Difference between statewide and national turnout
Presidential Competitiveness (Two-Party)	100 - Absolute Value of the Difference between the statewide two-party vote for President
Senate Competitiveness (Two-Party)	100 - Absolute Value of the Difference between the statewide two-party vote for Senate
Gubernatorial Competitiveness (Two-Party)	100 - Absolute Value of the Difference between the statewide two-party vote for Governor
Same-Day Voter Registration	1=state has SDVR, 0=otherwise
Misery Index	Misery Index for year *t*.
Presidential approval	% Approval for the President in the Gallop Poll for the month preceding the election

Table 2: Description of Variables for Spillover Effects

Variable	*Measurement*
Democratic vote share	% of the vote received by the Democratic candidate in a House election
Presidential coattails	Pres. statewide vote share by the Dem. Candidate
Senatorial coattails	Dem. Senate candidates' statewide vote share
Gubernatorial coattails	Dem. Gubernatorial candidates' statewide vote share
Competitive Presidential Race	1=race was decided by 2.5 points or less, 0=otherwise
Competitive Senate Race	1=race was decided by 2.5 points or less, 0=otherwise
Competitive Gubernatorial Race	1=race was decided by 2.5 points or less, 0=otherwise
Interaction between Presidential Coattails and race competitiveness	Presidential coattails * Competitive Presidential Race
Interaction between Senate coattails and race competitiveness	Senate coattails * Competitive Senate Race
Interaction between gubernatorial coattails and race competitiveness	Gubernatorial coattails * Competitive gubernatorial race
Deviation from Normal Turnout	Difference between statewide and national turnout
Same-Day Voter Registration	1=yes, 0=no
Misery Index	Value of the Misery Index in year *t*
Presidential approval	% Approval for the President (subtracted from 100 when the president is Republican)
Incumbency	1 for D incumbents, 0 for open seats, -1 for R incumbents
Quality challengers	1 for D quality challengers and D Incumbents not facing a Q.C., -1 for R quality challengers and R incumbents not facing a Q.C., and 0 where both are quality or nonquality challengers.
Democratic Expenditures	Predicted Values of lagged Democratic Expenditures (see text)
Republican Expenditures	Predicted Values of lagged Republican Expenditures (see text)

Table 3: The Impact of Presidential, Senate, and Gubernatorial Races on Statewide Deviation from Normal Turnout in On- and Off-Year Elections.

	On-Year	Off-Year
	Coef.	Coef.
Presidential Competitiveness	0.038**	-
	(0.015)	-
Senate Competitiveness	0.005*	0.033***
	(0.003)	(0.005)
Gubernatorial Competitiveness	0.020**	0.066***
	(0.010)	(0.013)
Same-Day Voter Registration	2.692***	2.732**
	(0.889)	(1.341)
Presidential Approval	0.009	-0.006
	(0.019)	(0.018)
Misery Index	0.043	-0.040
	(0.040)	(0.067)
Constant	-3.329*	-2.393
	(1.800)	(1.690)
sigma u	5.310	5.991
sigma e	2.315	3.667
rho	0.840	0.727
R^2	0.14	0.19
N	347	343
Groups (*i*)	49	49

Notes: Random-effects GLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
Statistical significance: $*p \leq .10$, $*p \leq .05$, $***p \leq 0.001$.

Table 4: Spillover Effects in On- and Off-Year House Elections from 1980 - 2006

	On-Year		Off-Year	
	Coef.	Coef.	Coef.	Coef.
Presidential Coattails	0.255***	0.248***	-	-
	(0.028)	(0.028)	-	-
Competitive Presidential Race	-0.192	-19.913	-	-
	(0.593)	(32.056)	-	-
Pres. Coattails * Competitive	-	0.396	-	-
Presidential Race	-	(0.644)	-	-
Senate Coattails	0.008	0.008	0.013^	0.014^
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Competitive Senate Race	-0.639	46.331	-0.021	85.488*
	(0.674)	(39.884)	(0.647)	(37.314)
Senate Coattails * Competitive	-	-0.942	-	-1.693*
Senate Race	-	(0.796)	-	(0.741)
Gubernatorial Coattails	-0.005	-0.006	0.027***	0.029***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Competitive Gubernatorial	-2.077	-139.929	-2.118**	45.326
Race	(1.481)	(114.272)	(0.743)	(54.789)
Gubernatorial Coattails *	-	2.760	-	-0.946
Compet. Gub. Race	-	(2.271)	-	(1.093)
Deviation from Normal	0.001	0.004	0.007	0.000
Turnout	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Misery Index	-0.228***	-0.241***	0.176**	0.153*
	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.067)	(0.068)
Presidential Approval	-0.057^	-0.055^	0.129***	0.127***
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Incumbency	10.963***	10.965***	10.461***	10.490***
	(0.245)	(0.245)	(0.276)	(0.277)
Quality Challenger	3.244***	3.266***	3.134***	3.128***
	(0.214)	(0.214)	(0.222)	(0.222)
Democratic Expenditures	2.032***	2.023***	1.828***	1.811***
	(0.206)	(0.207)	(0.235)	(0.235)
Republican Expenditures	-2.308***	-2.309***	-2.298***	-2.290***
	(0.195)	(0.193)	(0.225)	(0.225)
Constant	46.277***	46.759***	46.894***	47.293***
	(3.601)	(3.627)	(3.560)	(3.578)
R^2	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.75
N	2071	2071	1981	1981

Notes: 2SLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.
Joint hypothesis tests confirm significant interactive relationships.
Statistical significance: ^ $p \leq 0.10$, * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.