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# When Party Does Not Matter: An Examination of Conditions that Influence a Senator to Vote Against Party Leadership

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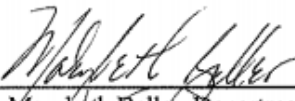
**WHEN PARTY DOES NOT MATTER: AN EXAMINATION OF CONDITIONS THAT  
INFLUENCE A SENATOR TO VOTE AGAINST PARTY LEADERSHIP.**

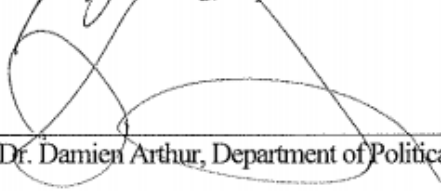
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In  
Political Science  
By  
Alexander Phillip Collins  
Approved by  
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Dr. George Davis


Marshall University  
December 2016

## APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Alexander Phillip Collins, affirm that the thesis *When Party Does Not Matter: An Examination of Conditions That Influence a Senator to Vote Against Party Leadership*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the Master of Arts in Political Science and the College of Liberal Arts. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

  
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## ABSTRACT

The United States Senate as the upper chamber of the United States Congress possesses great power and responsibility. The way that the 100 men and women who make up the chamber vote has long been of importance to those of us in the field of political science. This paper will look at influences that affect a senator's decision to vote against leadership. The research will test these influences simultaneously in order to find the degrees of influence each has. The research will focus on the Senate from 1994 – 2008, when the Gingrich senators led to an increasingly polarized body but *Citizens United* had not yet changed the rules of campaigning.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

United States senators all share certain similarities. They are elected to a six-year term, two serve every state, and when their names appear on a ballot, they are listed beside their party affiliation. That affiliation to voters is a cue to where that candidate stands in regards to social and fiscal ideas and policies. However, that letter plays a much larger role than just indicating to the voter where a candidate stands. In fact, party affiliation permeates the very core of the Senate itself. The two main parties elect leaders to control floor action, bring members of the party together to pass bills, and to fight for the common party agenda. The party leadership has the ability to punish or reward members for the way they vote and are responsible for creating party unity within the chamber. For senators, party matters because it is what helps them get elected, it is what decides which bills will be a priority, which committee assignments a senator may get, where federal projects will be sent, and how federal dollars will be allocated. As a senator there are three things that can further goal attainment: to be in the majority party in order to influence floor action, the passage of bills, and the direction of the chamber; to be seen favorably by your fellow senators who can support your legislation; and, more importantly, to be seen favorably by the party leadership who can reward you, and your state, for your loyalty to the party.

Since the rise of the Gingrich Senators<sup>1</sup> (1987 onward) party has become king in Washington. It is rare to see members of opposite parties coming together to support a common piece of legislation unless they are from the same state and share similar concerns. The news outlets make sure to remind the public of a senator's political affiliation during controversies,

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<sup>1</sup> See page 24 for more information on Gingrich Senators. This term is used in the article "The Gingrich Senators and Party Polarization in the US Senate" (Therriault and Rohde 2011).

interviews, or campaign coverage. The public is constantly reminded of where Party A stands on certain issues as a cue for them to vote for/against a candidate who is a member of said party.

However, party cannot possibly be the only thing that matters in the Senate. If it were, members would never vote against party because nothing else would matter to them. And yet they do. A good example of a rogue senator is Lincoln Chafee, a United States senator from Rhode Island who was appointed to the Senate to fill the vacancy left by his father's death in November of 1999. Out of the 1409 observations I have made in this study, Lincoln Chafee is in the top 3.5% of senators who voted against leadership on key issues. Seeing something like this makes one wonder, "Why?". This paper explores this question and investigates the circumstances under which United States senators are willing to break from party in roll call votes. Senator Chafee's case, I think, is paradigmatic. One of the reasons senators break from party is due to ideological differences between members and party leadership. In Chafee's case, at least, it seems to be a distinct ideological difference that is responsible for the high number of votes that broke from leadership. After all, in the Senate politics are much deeper than just Democrats versus Republicans. It is also a battle of individuals and how they will vote. As Senator Barry Goldwater once said to his party leadership when they pressured him to support legislation he did not like "You have one vote, and I have one vote, and we'll just see how this thing turns out" (Lott 2002, 32-34).

In order to better understand what truly influences senators' votes we must understand what can be observed and how these observations can be used to make meaningful comparisons. In this research, party leadership is used as an indication of how the party should vote. The individuals elected into leadership positions are given the power to control their respective parties, as discussed in the literature below, thus making party leadership a logical place to look

for direction on any given issue. The terms party and leadership are used interchangeably throughout the thesis and both refer to the chamber leadership of the party (Majority Leader/Whip and Minority Leader/Whip).

Personal beliefs, friendships, and backroom deals influence senators' votes (Fenno 1978; Caro 2002). This thesis focuses on what aspects can be observed, calculated, and analyzed in the time frame available. The variables, identified in the literature, that influence a United States Senator's roll call vote, in regards to voting with or against leadership, are proximity to next election, committee assignment, number of party seats in the Senate, tenure, margin of victory in the last election, and ideology (Griffin and Newman 2005, 1216; Fowler 2005, 199-300; Aldrich 2011; Figlio 2000; Lindstadt and Vander Wielen 2011; Thomas 1985; Abrams, Hanson, Van Houweling, and Shepsle 2009; Gruenbaum 2015; Debacker 2009, 651-2; Fowler 2005; Stratmann 2000, 666; Poole 2007; Binder and Maltzman 2002, 190; Hare and Poole 2014; Poole and Rosenthal 1985; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2009; Everson, Valelly, and Wiseman 2006; Carroll, Royce, Lewis, Lo, and Poole 2008; Bonica, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2013; Volden and Bergman 2006, 73-74; Aldrich 1995; Fleisher and Bond 2004, 436-7; Lawrence, Maltzman, and Smith 2006, 36).

Previous studies fail to compare the magnitude of effect each of these variables has on senators' votes. This study compares the variables and shows the magnitude that each has on a senator's roll call vote in relation to leadership. Ultimately, two of the variables in the model are insignificant, while the remaining four are all found to be significant and have varying degrees of influence. On top of filling a hole in the literature, this research adds two unique elements to our understanding of senators' votes. First, while it might be assumed that ideology would have the largest effect on senators, due to the fact that ideology is the main force behind the different

political parties, this research tests that assumption and finds support for it. This research uses the variables indicated in the literature as independent variables and tests them using a common dependent variable: votes against leadership<sup>2</sup> on the most important problems of the year, as coded by Gallup. Voting against leadership is the common dependent variable used in order to discover the individual pressure exerted by the independent variables when tested in conjunction with one another. Using votes against leadership as the dependent variable is the second unique contribution as it is a variable created by this researcher and serves as a way to measure an observed action in the Senate as well as to provide researchers, senators, and advisors an important insight into the chamber. It should be noted that the literature reviewed does not necessarily look at votes against leadership but rather looks at influences at a roll call vote in general. If research can determine which senator is more likely to vote against leadership, the leadership could in turn use the research in order to tighten the ranks, pull in the loose ends, and prevent some votes against the party leadership. This could be done in multiple different ways. For example, leadership could increase pressure on said senator, favor key bills of the senator, and/or send more money and federal projects to said senator's state.

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<sup>2</sup> The researcher is well aware of the Party Unity Score data available on Voteview.com. Party Unity Scores look at all roll call votes that a senator was present for and in which more than fifty percent of Republicans voted differently than fifty percent of Democrats. The score is calculated for an individual senator by subtracting the number of party unity votes in which the senator voted with a majority of their party from the total number of party unity roll call votes. By allowing a senator to miss votes and for those to be excluded from their party unity score the data does not control for missing roll call votes for political reasons such as avoiding a vote against party. Party Unity Scores also look at all roll call votes, even those that may not be considered as important to certain regions of the nation. These down sides led this researcher to develop a new measure of party loyalty. My dependent variable looks at only roll call votes that fall into the top five non-economic problems, as calculated by Gallup, for that year. It also counts missing a vote as a vote against leadership as a way to hold a senator accountable.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States' Senate was a compromise from the very beginning. James Madison suggested in the *Federalist Papers* that the Senate should be a body that was smaller than the House, while featuring members who serve for a longer length of time. That body, which featured equality among the states, would require that federal legislation had to be approved by a majority of the people as well as a majority of states before it could become law. (Madison, 1788). Woodrow Wilson saw the Senate as “a body of individual voices” which, as he saw, was critical to the success of the Senate. If any one voice was silenced or treated as less than another the muting of that voice would result in the muting of a specific state or region of the United States as a whole and would defeat the purpose of the Senate as it was created (Wilson 1911, 121). Even with the introduction of the popular vote and party rule, the Senate maintained its original intent. Majority Leader George Mitchell came to realize with time that the right of unlimited debate is sometimes abused, but is still a gift that must be protected and preserved in the United States Senate (Lott 2002, 81-82). Majority Leader Tom Daschle, who rose to the leadership of the Senate during the confusing first session of the 107th Congress<sup>3</sup>, has said that the Senate is all about building alliances, understanding how each member works, and piecing together a majority vote underscoring the idea that while parties might exist, each senator is a free agent who must be herded into the flock one piece of legislation at a time (Daschle 2003, 76-77).

While senators are one of one hundred separate members and are free to act in the best interests of their states, they still come together to form a coalition, normally based on party

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<sup>3</sup> In 2001 the majority status of the Senate changed three separate times, from Democrat to Republican back to Democrat.

identity, in order to advance the ideas of the whole and thus be more successful together (Aldrich 2011, 27-64). To best discuss the conflict between individual and party, I will divide the literature review into two sections. First, I will look at areas in which the party leadership is able to exert influence. Second, I will look at the areas where the party leadership is not able to exert significant influence and therefore opens a door to dissent within the chamber. This divide within the Senate, between party control and external control, will provide an understanding of the chamber and why it is so surprising when members vote against party leadership. It will also highlight the variables that matter, show why they have mattered, and provide clarity to the complexity of influences on a senator. For the purpose of this paper, the terms “party” and “leadership” will be used interchangeably.

### **1 - The Controllable Body (Party Power)**

As with any large group of which cooperation is expected, some control mechanisms must be in place. In the United States Senate these mechanisms are placed in the hands of party leadership, individuals elected to lead their respective groups in order to accomplish favorable legislation. In the Senate the body is controlled in many different ways. The majority leader, as one might think, is granted more control than the minority leader. The majority leader has the right of first recognition on the floor. This allows the majority leader to have control of which bills will be debated first, which amendments will be taken up first, and, therefore, the control of which legislation is more likely to pass. Both party leaders have control over the committee assignments, which is where the majority of legislative work is completed. Along with this control is the fact that the Senate has become more polarized over time and the leadership’s ability to control its members has increased along with it (Therriault and Rohde 2011).



Control is also exercised through different aspects of asset apportionment. Internally, leadership has gained greater assets in the form of money, personnel, and staff to help run their offices since 1985, while individual senators and committees have seen marginal increases or sharp decreases, making them work with less and thus rely on leadership more (Lee 2008, 203-04). Another aspect of leadership control is that of external asset apportionment. This is the ability of senators to gain outside resources through a variety of internal processes. First, a prominent committee appointment<sup>4</sup> could bring in donations from organizations trying to influence committee member decisions (less prominent committee appointments are less likely to receive donations) (Stewart, III and Groseclose 1999). Second, leadership has grown into a campaigning arm of the body and senators are often granted leadership positions by the amount of money they can bring to the table to help fellow party members in reelection campaigns. Leaders can also withhold money from members who are not loyal (Heberlig, Hetherington, and Larson 2006). Third, members can help out fellow senators and allies by way of member-to-member contributions. Here members will attend campaign rallies or fundraisers along with a fellow senator in order to increase donation amounts or ticket sales (Powell 2015). This type of quid pro quo has led to new loyalties. The three aspects together create a controllable body.

**Leadership Control.** Finding a balance between organization and control has varied over time in the United States Senate, which has long been seen as one of the greatest deliberative bodies in the world, a body that wasn't supposed to be overly controlled by a single majority party (Binder and Smith 1998, 401). The Senate was set up in a way that much of the work has to

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for a rank ordered list of Committees.

be completed under unanimous<sup>5</sup> consent, using senators who represent entire states, and have long prided themselves on not being like the House, where the majority can easily manipulate the floor session to its advantage (Theriault and Rohde 2011). Even though the Senate majority has less floor control doesn't mean that leadership in the Senate is powerless, but rather more limited in the approaches that can be used to control the senators. Some of the most prestigious positions in the Senate (after the two leadership posts for each party) are the appointments to certain committees.

Committees are vital to the success of the Senate and, while not entirely surprising, not all committees are considered equally desirable by individual senators. For the most part, committees can be ranked in order of importance, from 1 to 19, with the Finance Committee topping the list and the District of Columbia Committee coming in last (before it was abolished in the 95<sup>th</sup> legislature) (Stewart, III and Groseclose 1999). Due to the varying degrees of prestige each committee has, many senators want to have their pick of which committees they serve on and, more importantly, which committees they chair or have ranking member status within, if they are granted that privilege. However, these positions are more or less appointed by the party leaders<sup>6</sup>, who do so by assigning/withholding seats to those members that were loyal/disloyal to the party in the past (Schneider 2006).

Committee assignments are not the only influence that party leadership can grant to members who fall in line, nor are they the only way that a member can be punished. On one hand, a party leader can grant or withhold favors from party members based on past party

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<sup>5</sup> Most of the work in the Senate has traditionally been completed under Unanimous Consent Agreements, agreements between senators on how the floor session will be conducted. These agreements can cover anything from a vote on legislation to a debate on a certain amendment (Theriault and Rohde 2011; Binder and Maltzman 2002).

<sup>6</sup> The actual process varies between the parties. See "Committee Assignment Process in the U.S. Senate: Democratic and Republican Party Procedures" by Judy Schneider (2006).

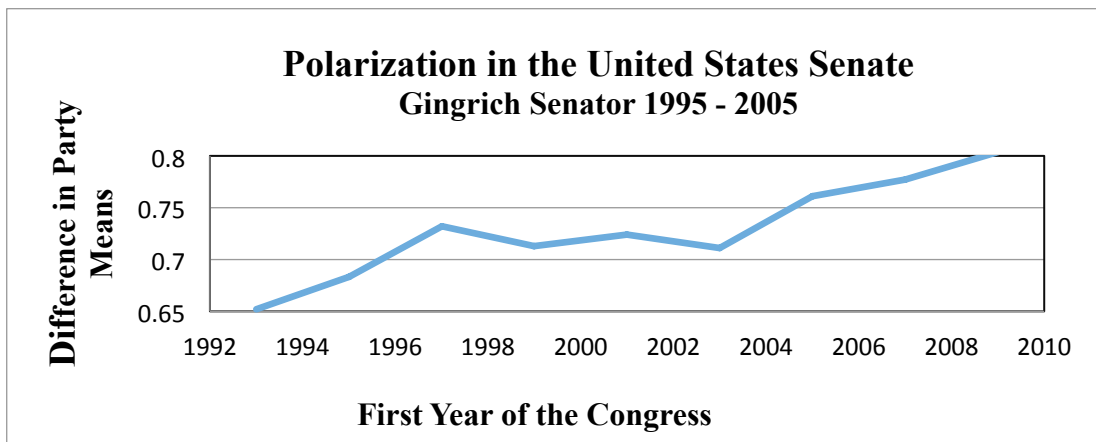
loyalty. Some of these favors include the passage of key bills a particular senator favors, campaign donations, the visitation of party officials to a senator's district, and federal projects directed to a certain state, which would bring jobs and resources (Snyder and Groseclose 2000). On the other hand, some punishments might include the removal from a certain committee assignment, the killing of a senator's favored bills, or possible relocation of federal projects and funds to a more loyal senator's state (Snyder and Groseclose 2000).

These benefits and punishments allow the leadership, when necessary, to threaten the caucus into a roll call vote. If a member truly wants to be influential either for personal reasons, re-election viability, or the benefit of his state he will need the party's support. If voting against the party on an issue could potentially mean the loss of the senator's committee seat on a prestigious committee, and with it the ability to send money back home to the district which would hurt the state and (in theory) the likelihood of reelection, the likelihood of the senator voting against the issue decreases in order to avoid such blowback. Similarly, if a senator is on the fence about supporting an issue, but could receive campaign donations or federal projects in return for support, the senator might be more likely to vote in favor of the issue and reap the benefits that it brings. This truly is the carrot or stick approach at work in the Senate.

**Polarization.** Over the course of time the Senate has become much more polarized. This effect is normally attributed to gerrymandering, which traditionally has only been thought of as having an effect on the House. However, gerrymandering started to affect the Senate in the 1980s and has continued to do so ever since (Theriault and Rohde 2011). As the districts that compose the House of Representatives, in order to create safe districts, became more and more conservative/liberal, the effect began to spill out of those districts and affected the state as a whole. As Representatives rose in prominence some began to run for the Senate, and since they

came from an extremely conservative/liberal district, with name recognition and a record of public service, they began to get elected, which led to more conservative/liberal senators and the systematic removal of moderate or cross-pressured<sup>7</sup> senators. From 1985 to 2008 this resulted in a total of thirty three “Gingrich Senators” who had served in the house after Gingrich’s election and were then elected to the Senate and were measurably more conservative than non-House Republican senators. The newly minted senators remained party loyal because the voters also changed with the candidates to elect more extreme party candidates. Those who are most active in politics are normally the extreme ends of the spectrum, leading to the support of extreme candidates in the primaries (which sees low turnout) and therefore an extreme candidate’s election in the general election (Theriault and Rohde 2011; Fleisher and Bond 2004, 430-441). As this trend grew, so too did the polarization within the chamber. See Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1. Polarization in the United States Senate**



Source: Carroll et al, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> A senator who is cross-pressured is pulled in two directions: toward one extreme end of an ideology by the party and more toward the other ideological side by the constituents. For example, a senator may be a registered Democrat serving a largely Republican state. In the Senate the senator is pressured to vote the more liberal agenda with the party but the more conservative state pressures the senator to vote in line with their conservative ideology.

As members who were ideologically similar began to fill the Senate, the majority's ability to control the floor agenda increased (Fleisher and Bond 2004, 437). Those legislative issues that had once divided the chamber, but were hard to pass due to a wide range of ideologies within both parties, became more prominent, which, in turn, led to more votes on issues that divided the chamber along party lines (Lee 2008, 200). The increase over the floor agenda does not mean that the majority party is completely in control. After all, the body operates on unanimous consent agreements and is supposed to treat all senators as equals, even if some consent agreements are stricter than others and directly affect the outcome of the vote (Theriault 2008). The Senate does have some negative agenda control that is able to prevent some measures from coming to the floor (Gailmard and Jenkins 2007; Binder and Smith 1998). The majority leader, who has the right of first recognition on the Senate Floor, can slightly control the floor agenda by means of bringing forth bills the majority supports, setting up the order of amendments to be offered on a bill, or attempting to alter the rules of the Senate (Cox and McCubbins 2005). As the polarization in the Senate increased, starting in 1984, so too did the power of the party which now had a controllable caucus (Theriault and Rohde 2011). A part of the power, which has yet to be discussed, is asset control within the Senate.

**Internal Asset Apportionment.** With the increased polarization, it has become necessary for party leadership to increase their share of personnel, resources, and authority in order to facilitate the operations of the Senate. The idea of authority is one that has been present in the Senate since parties became central to government. The idea of a party leader and whip is to have central figures who draw in ideas, make decisions, and implement them, often times through coercion. Members of the Senate naturally give up some of their autonomy in order to fit into the party structure, which ultimately decides the fate of bills and committee assignments

within the Senate (Aldrich 2011). Of course, the amount of control the party has depends on how many seats it has and congruence of ideology (Patty 2008, 641-643; Stratmann 2000, 670; Levitt 1996, 434).

In order for the leadership to operate efficiently they need personnel and financial resources. The increase of personnel and financial resources available to the leadership grew at the expense of individual legislators and committees. From 1985 to 2001 funds funneling into the leadership office and the amount of personnel working there increased by 69% and 108% respectively, while the individual legislators and committees saw either a steep decrease (22% in staff for committees) or a minimal increase (1% in staff for individual senators) (Lee 2008, 203-204). While the committee personnel have decreased in number, the importance of committees to the legislative process has not decreased.

**External Asset Apportionment.** While committee assignments are important, and an assignment on a prominent committee could lead to external donations to be used in reelection efforts, they are not the most crucial aspect of a reelection campaign. Senators have their own campaign staff, fundraising events, donors, etc. For many senators, money plays a huge role in the decision making process. After all, elections are very expensive to run and those with the most money often win. There are many studies that look at the roll of lobbying groups and the money they spend (Drutman 2015; Hoffman 2016; Koger and Victor 2009). However, the aspect of member-to-member contributions remains a significant aspect of financing in politics pre-*Citizens United*<sup>8</sup> (Aldrich 2011). Many senators, like those in leadership positions or committee chairs, have much more money and are willing to share it to be voted into leadership positions

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<sup>8</sup> *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* was a Supreme Court Case decided on January 21, 2010. The case lifted the restrictions on corporate and union expenditures campaigning for or against through Political Action Committees.

and/or for loyalty on roll call votes from within the party. In fact, having money to distribute to other members is considered more important than seniority in deciding many committee assignments and leadership positions (Aldrich 2011).

Beginning with the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1993-1995), those elected to leadership positions were more ideologically extreme and were seen as key fundraisers for the party. Those elected into leadership positions spent around 30 times as much as party leaders elected prior to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress who were chosen for being middlemen and not for the handouts they could give (Heberlig, Hetherington, and Larson 2006). Eleanor Powell (2015), found that roll call votes are traded for financial support, such as a top legislator showing up to speak at campaign dinners and thus raising ticket prices and donations. Her research showed that, for each campaign fundraising speech given by one senator on behalf of another, the receiving senator would be more likely to support legislation sponsored by the fundraising colleague (Powell, 2015). These member-to-member transactions have led to a new ball game of sorts, one in which money can actually buy votes both from within the chamber and without.

In short, the leadership is positioned in a way to take control and lead the caucus. When a party is cohesive and the two parties are vastly different, then leaders within the chamber are more likely to have greater influence over policymaking decisions (Lawrence, Maltzman, and Smith 2006, 36). However, not everyone in a caucus wants to be controlled on every issue and it is truly those who defy power that raise the question, “Why?”.

## **2 - Dissent from Within**

To think of a senator as only being controlled by the party would completely take individual aspects out of the equation. Instead of thinking of control as a one-way street that has no counter measure, think of it more as a battle ground. The leadership tries to hold party

members in line while personal measurable aspects influence them to act as individuals and not drones. Many aspects can influence senators' roll call votes. Election proximity will influence how a senator votes based on how close they are to reelection. Margin of victory in the senator's last election will make a senator feel more or less secure and could change his loyalty to party. Tenure will affect how deeply engrained personal ideology is and how well a senator knows the constituents' wants/needs and how closely he or she is expected to follow them. Individual ideology, when used as a measure of distance, can show how far apart members of the same party are from the party leadership and by extension how much harder they are to control. Party seats will allow for more influence over the legislative process by means of more committee seats, more votes the party accounts for, etc. These aspects together create a force that pushes back against leadership control.

**Election Proximity.** Besides financial stability, a major factor in how a senator votes in a roll call situation is his election proximity. After all, under normal circumstances no amount of money could convince the public to elect an individual with a proven record of voting contrary to the state's interests or political beliefs (Fleisher and Bond 2004, 436-7). The literature shows that voters have short memory spans. Senators are very much aware of this fact and their roll call votes show it. In fact, roll call votes have been seen as an area that can be changed by the constituency, even if only by a small amount, whereas a roll call vote would change significantly if the constituents replaced their senator with a candidate from a different party (Griffin and Newman 2005, 1216). As a result, senators begin to vote more in line with their constituents as elections draw nearer, in hopes to retain their seats.

As one might expect, elections bring with them a heightened attention to senators and the parties. This is a fact that parties and individual senators are aware of and they react to it



accordingly. After each election the parties and the individuals to face election next look at the results. Did the voters elect the more liberal candidate or the more conservative candidate? Did this change from the last election? By what margin did that candidate win? After the election parties and individuals shift their ideology in the Senate<sup>9</sup> to better position themselves to win in the next election. The parties do not necessarily come closer together; rather, it just means that they both shift, which could happen in identical or differing amounts (Fowler 2005).

This reflection period means that the two years prior to a senator's bid for reelection is the most important; it is the time in which senators really start to act in accordance with what their constituents want. In other words, the two years prior to an election is when we can expect to see a change in a senator's vote to more closely mirror that of his home state. We should also see less shirking<sup>10</sup> in this period of time, as compared to the previous four years (Figlio 2000, 279-81). We should also expect to see less shirking during times of large news coverage or whenever an individual senator feels that he or she is being watched closely, like during a scandal or a major event within the family or state, etc. It is during these times that a senator believes the constituents are watching and will thus act more in line with what they believe the constituents want. This change in voting pattern lasts until such a time that the attention on the senator shifts somewhere else (after the election or scandal has passed) and then the senator returns to previous voting patterns (Lindstadt and Vander Wielen 2011; Thomas 1985).

Not only does the amount of political shirking matter to the constituents, so too does the idea of "what have you done for me lately" (Abrams et al. 2009). Senators want to give their constituents something to remember before an election happens. The Senate gives substantially

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<sup>9</sup> This effect happens in both chambers but for the purpose of this paper only the Senate is the primary focus.

<sup>10</sup> Shirking is the idea of voting contrary to the will of the constituents (Figlio 2000, 279-82).

more money and projects to states that have a senator in an election cycle (in-cycle) than it does to those states that do not have a senator in-cycle, thus giving incumbents an advantage in that election. This finding was true for incumbents in both parties, regardless of majority or minority status in the Senate (Abrams et al. 2009). However, not every circumstance in the Senate treats those incumbents that are in-cycle as equals. When it comes to amendments, minority members in-cycle see more of their amendments being voted on and/or passed than those minority members who are out-of-cycle, while the majority saw no difference between in and out-of-cycle senators on votes and/or passage of amendments that they presented (Gruenbaum 2015). An explanation for this phenomenon is that members begin to soften their ideology as elections draw near; this softening allows for a minority party senator running for reelection to propose an amendment that isn't far from what the majority would support while retaining the support of the minority party who hopes to win the upcoming election and take over as the majority.

Another aspect to be considered is what happens when a senator is no longer running for reelection and therefore his election proximity becomes irrelevant? The term preceding retirement for a senator sees a few significant changes in behavior and influence, namely, voter influence falls to zero and the influence of the support constituency is cut nearly in half (DeBacker 2009, 651-52.). A senator not running for reelection effectively becomes a free agent and votes according to conscience, party preference, or lobbying agendas, etc. However, for those senators running for reelection, the proximity to next election matters. The literature leads me to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: As the proximity to the next election increases, a senator will be more likely to vote against leadership.

**Margin of Victory in Last Election.** Reelection truly is a scary time for those who literally have to put their future in the hands of the voters, assuming that some sort of meaningful opposition exists, which is not always the case. This power, held by the people, is supposed to hold the elected officials in line. Those who do not stand for the people and represent their wishes will, in theory, find themselves out of a job. This begs the question: can certain factors lead to desensitization to the will of the people? The answer, according to the literature, is yes. Just as a senator who decides not to run for reelection views the constituency differently, so too is there a difference between senators whose party picked up seats in the last election as compared to senators whose party lost seats in the last election (Fowler 2005).

As an individual senator's margin of victory increases the punishment for shirking decreases (Filgio 2000, 277). The opposite holds true for an individual who wins by a small margin. The senator could not afford to turn off voters back home, especially those in the center of the political spectrum, if he or she wants to have any hopes of winning future elections (Fowler 2005, 9). To put it simply, an individual who has won by a large margin is not as heavily punished for political shirking. Thus it is more easily absorbed compared to those with smaller margins of victory. The literature leads me to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: As a senator's margin of victory increases, so too will the senator's votes against leadership.

**Tenure.** The effects of margin of victory and election proximity must be considered in conjunction with how long a senator has been in office. The literature shows that tenure changes voting patterns, ideology, and election considerations, etc. Thomas Stratmann finds that younger senators are more likely to vote with their party due to the fact that they do not yet understand how to ascertain their constituents' wants, needs, or feelings (Stratmann 2000, 666). Junior

senators vote with the party because the platform is, in theory, what the party members support, a virtual snapshot of where the members stand on issues (Aldrich 1995). Until a newer senator can determine the will of his constituents, the party is seen as a good surrogate. Newer senators will vote more frequently in line with the party (Stratmann 2000).

On the other side of the coin is the idea that, with tenure, senators become more secure in their ideology and rarely change positions. This idea of secure ideology is especially true for those on the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum. As a senator's ideology becomes more extreme his roll call votes become more stable (Poole 2007). Those who hold extreme ideological preferences have less wiggle room compared to those more in the center who can be convinced either way since their ideology is more neutral (Poole 2007). The literature leads me to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub>: As a senator's tenure increases, he or she will be less likely to vote with leadership.

**Ideology.** While ideology is, at its core, an internal influence, it is very much dependent on external factors. As the literature prior to this subsection has identified, roll call votes can be swayed in different ways. Ideology is the primary factor that cues individuals to which political party they most closely align. These parties then play a role in the Senate, which can be described as a body split into partisan camps. Now the more complicated explanation of the Senate, and the reason why this study is even possible, is that within the parties are individual senators who have completely different ideologies who come together in an attempt to create a functional government. Part of the problem is when members' ideologies do not match up to their party on a particular issue. This divide forces them to decide between their beliefs and the beliefs of the party leadership. New senators are guided primarily by their own limited understanding of the Senate and often follow the lead of other party members in making a roll

call decision, while senior senators normally vote with their own ideology that they have been able to develop (Stratmann 2000).

Ideology is the driving force behind the parties and is calculated on an individual's attitude toward policies. Some common examples where we typically see an ideological divide deal with policies focused on gun control, abortion, and LGBT protections. Ideology also comes into play in something such as approving a presidential appointment to a lower level federal court (Binder and Maltzman 2002, 190). Here ideology of the senator(s) from that state who share the political party of the president is (are) used to determine where that appointee would fall on the ideological spectrum (if neither senator is from the same political party as the president then the ideology score of the president would be used) (Binder and Maltzman 2002, 193). Considering that every senator has his own ideology, which can be used as a proxy for presidential appointments, the distance between senators' ideology becomes important when considering which measures have the support to pass and which senators may need some convincing to support certain legislation. The literature leads me to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub>: As a senator's ideological difference grows further from that of the leadership's average ideology score, he will be more likely to vote against leadership.

**Number of Seats in the Party.** The more seats a party controls, the more votes the party has at its disposal. As the party seat control increases above 50%, the power and control that party has would increase as well. When a party controls more votes than is necessary to pass a measure, it can stand to allow some members to vote contrary to the party position for any reason while still ensuring that the party preference is achieved (Aldrich 1995). However, the pressure to control party member votes can multiply when the majority's control is limited and/or when the party loses seats in the chamber (Volden and Bergman 2006,73-74). Leadership in both

parties matters when it comes to roll call votes because the minority can filibuster at 41 votes, ideological divide leads to uncertain votes by members, and losing seats only intensifies these factors on both sides. The literature leads me to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>5</sub>: The more seats a party has in the Senate, the more likely a senator will vote against leadership.

### **3 – Literature Shortcomings**

The influences on a United States Senator's roll-call vote can be quite varied and can come from external or internal sources. The literature, while detailed and complex, still has one major shortcoming; it fails to look at all of the variables to see the degree of influence each has. In order to find degrees of influence I use votes against party leadership to find the magnitude of effect each influence exerts on a senator's vote compared to leadership preference.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 1 – Research Question

Which of the following variables has a greater impact on a senator's willingness to vote against his party's leadership: proximity to next election; committee assignment; number of party seats in the Senate; tenure; margin of victory in previous election; or a senator's ideological difference from the leadership?

#### 2 – Methodology

The Senate is the focus of this research because it provides geographic consistency, equal representation among the states, and it allows for the measurement of varying election proximities between the members. There is also considerably less research on the Senate compared to the House. This research is predicated on the idea that parties matter. In a pre-*Citizens United* Senate, resources were more limited and party support was a huge asset in reelection efforts. Often times this support was controlled in large part by the party leadership within the chamber. In particular, this research is an attempt to show that while parties matter due to their power and resources, they are not all that matters. The research will also consider determinates identified in the literature: election proximity (which varies due to the three class system<sup>11</sup> which allows the researcher to see a difference between senators); committee assignments; party seat control; individual margin of victories; and senators' ideological scores in relation to the average score of the party's chamber leadership.

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<sup>11</sup> Each senator is sorted into either Class 1, 2, or 3. These classes determine when a senator will face reelection. The classification is uniform for the senate allows for only one-third of the Senate to be up for reelection every two years.

### **3 – Operationalization of the Variables**

**Votes Against Leadership.** This research will review roll call votes on the top five non-economic issues of the year based on research conducted by Gallup. Limiting the research to the top five areas of concern allows for an analysis that focuses on top concerns of constituents where a senator should be held to a higher standard of responsiveness (the constituents care more about these issues and will, in theory, pay more attention) while removing issues of low priority to constituents. These issues should be important to all senators regardless of the state or region they represent. For this reason, the research makes no distinction between Southern Democrats or Northern Democrats as is usually the case in political research. The roll call votes will be analyzed to create a tally for each senator. The total number of votes against leadership will be divided by the total number of roll call votes (where leadership was united) in that dataset to create a percentage of times a senator voted against leadership. The database will feature observations that are created by looking at individual senator's votes by year. This method means that some senators may be present for all 15 years and thus create fifteen different observations within the database, while others are present for only one and therefore only create one observation. Because the database is set up in a way that measures a senator's vote against a unified leadership vote, it excludes the possibility of a member in a leadership position from being able to vote against themselves. For this reason, I removed any individual who served in a leadership position during the given year.

**Proximity to Next Election.** Election proximity will be coded on a scale of 1 to 3 with the number corresponding with the terms of the election cycle the senator is currently serving with larger numbers representing a senator who is closer to facing reelection.



**Margin of Victory.** Margin of victory will be coded with the actual margin of victory in the senator's last election by taking the winning senator's vote percentage and subtracting from it the next highest challenger. If a senator was appointed to office, and therefore was not elected, a margin of victory would not be available for that senator and so it will be recorded as missing data.

**Tenure in Office.**<sup>12</sup> Term in office will be coded with one point for every year in office, giving all first year senators a 1. The larger the number, the longer the senator has been in office. A senator appointed to office, or an elected senator who took office late, will be given credit for the year in which they took office regardless of the month or day.<sup>13</sup>

**Ideological Difference Score.**<sup>14</sup> Ideology will be coded following the senator's DW-Nominate score<sup>15</sup>. NOMINATE scores estimate where a legislator falls on an ideological scale based on observed roll-call votes. DW-NOMINATE is a weighted version of these scores that allows comparison of ideology across years and between legislators who have never even served together (Hare and Poole 2014). The use of the NOMINATE score in political research is long (Poole and Rosenthal 1985; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2009; Everson, Valelly, and Wiseman 2006; Poole et. al. 2008; Bonica, et. al., 2013). Suffice it to say that the NOMINATE

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<sup>12</sup> The tenure variable includes previous time as a United States Senator, as a senator would still be experienced even if time in office was not necessarily consecutive.

<sup>13</sup> If senators were appointed to office in March of any given year they will be given a 1 for that year and their tenure will increase every year they are in office thereafter. The same is true for senators appointed to office in December of any given year. They would have seniority over the senators that start their term in January of the next year and the tenure variable in this database represents that distinction.

<sup>14</sup> This is a measure I created for the purpose of this research.

<sup>15</sup> If a senator changed parties during a year that senator was included twice, once as a member of each party.

score has been tried and shown to be a valuable resource in the field of political science<sup>16</sup>. I take the DW-NOMINATE scores of the leader and the whip of the party, and average their scores to get a leadership ideology score<sup>17</sup>. The ideological difference score, then, will be the difference between the leadership average ideological score and a senator's ideological score. This score will be recorded in the absolute form in order to remove any negative difference since all that matters is the difference, not the direction of the difference (more liberal or more conservative). I set the database up in a way that measures senators' votes against a unified leadership vote. This means that those in leadership could never vote against themselves and thus would only skew the data. For this reason, I removed any individual who served in a leadership position during the given year.

**Committee Appointment.** Committee appointments will be used as a control variable. This will be accomplished using Stewart, III and Groseclose's scale, (See Appendix B) (1999).

**Party Status.**<sup>18</sup> My research will control for a senator's status as a member in the majority or minority party by using a dummy variable. Majority party members will be coded with a 0 and minority party members will be coded with a 1.

**Party Seat Share.**<sup>19</sup> The number of seats controlled by the party to which the individual senator belongs.

#### 4 – Data Sets

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<sup>16</sup> DW-NOMINATE scores are compiled by Royce Carroll, Jeff Lewis, James Lo, Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. They can be easily accessed on their website [Voteview.com/dwnomin.htm](http://Voteview.com/dwnomin.htm)

<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that if the leadership of a party changed during a year I averaged all leaders of the party for the year together and used that number as the ideology difference score.

<sup>18</sup> Independents were coded as Democrats (the party with whom they caucused).

<sup>19</sup> In instances where the seat share changed during a year the number of seats were averaged together to create one number for the year.

Data for this study comes from multiple sources. I use Carroll, Lewis, Lo, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal's (2015) DW-Nominate scores, a measure of political ideology (Carroll et al 2015). This database is widely used and accepted as a major measure of political ideology and can be found freely online (Binder and Maltzman 2002; Binder and Smith 1998; Fleisher and Bond 2004; Theriault and Rohde 2011; Roberts and Smith 2003). I use Baumgartner and Jones' (2016) database on roll call votes found at Comparative Agendas Project which separates roll call votes into major topics as coded by Gallup's Most Important Problem (Baumgartner and Jones 2016). Gallup's Most Important Problem rank for each year was also found at Comparative Agendas Project (Baumgartner and Jones 2016). This database is widely used and accepted and provides this thesis with a database of all roll call votes in the Senate that have been coded with intercoder reliability thus removing any researcher bias on my part (Baumgartner, Jones, and Wilkerson 2011). The United States Senate webpage contains a vast amount of information that is utilized heavily in this research, particularly with regard to tenure, party seat control, leadership of each party, and each senator's election class. Committee assignments are gathered from the Congressional Directory for each session of Congress<sup>20</sup>. Margin of victory data comes from the Federal Election Commission (with the exception of certain special elections which are gathered on a case by case basis)<sup>21</sup>.

## **5 – Time Frame**

This thesis will consider Senatorial roll call votes between the years of 1994 and 2008. This time frame covers the Gingrich years in which polarization in the Senate greatly increased and ends before the *Citizens United* ruling could affect campaigning and reelection efforts. This time frame is also important because it encompasses the beginning of the Republican Revolution,

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix F.

Gingrich's famous Contract with America, and highlights the true polarization in the Senate created, in part, by the former House, now Senate, members who served with Newt Gingrich. By limiting the research to this time frame I am able to see how the Senate works in a highly polarized time (Theriault and Rohde 2011). Ending prior to *Citizens United* provides consistency in the way money was raised and spent in the Senate. It also allows for future research to compare the effects of a polarized Senate before and after the *Citizens United* case. This time frame also puts leadership above party with regard to power over a senator. Because members relied on party money and leadership positions were often awarded based on the amount of money a member could contribute to other members of the party, leaders were not necessarily beholden to the party but senators were heavily motivated to follow leadership direction for the benefits they could receive.

## **6 – Equation**

I will use OLS regression to test the effect of the variables, discussed above, in determining a senator's vote against leadership. My equation is  $y$  (% of votes against leadership) =  $a + b_1$  proximity to election +  $b_2$  number of seats in the party +  $b_3$  tenure in office –  $b_4$  margin of victory + ideological difference score +  $e$ .<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Necessary diagnostic tests of the database are provided in Appendix C.

## CHAPTER 4

### OLS REGRESSION RESULTS

**Table 1. Determinants of Senators' Votes Against Leadership**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.721	.727		3.742	.000
Ideology Difference	28.325	1.54	.436	18.370	.000
Party	3.547	.377	.225	9.398	.000
Tenure	.080	.020	.108	3.931	.000
Election Proximity	.718	.230	.074	3.122	.002
Committee	-.050	.084	-.015	-.595	.552
Margin of Victory	.005	.012	.012	.459	.647

Dependent Variable: Percentage of Vote

N= 1399<sup>23</sup>

R<sup>2</sup> = .236

Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .233

The table rejects my second hypothesis that a senator with a higher margin of victory would be more likely to vote against leadership due to the fact that the Margin of Victory variable was not significant. It also shows that the control variable Committee does not have a significant impact on the likelihood that a senator would vote against party. I therefore remove these variables and produce a new model:  $y$  (% of votes against leadership) =  $a + b_1$  proximity to election +  $b_2$  number of seats in the party +  $b_3$  tenure in office + ideological difference score +  $e$ .

<sup>23</sup> N increases in Table 2 to 1409 due to the removal of the Margin of Victory variable, which saw ten observations with missing data. By removing this variable, those observations were once again included in the regression and caused the N to increase.

**Table 2. Determinants of Senators' Votes Against Leadership Using Only Significant Variables**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.514	.580		4.333	.000
Ideology Difference	28.338	1.530	.437	18.522	.000
Party	3.448	.375	.218	9.199	.000
Tenure	.087	.018	.117	4.942	.000
Election Proximity	.781	.228	.081	3.425	.001

Dependent Variable: Percentage of Vote

N = 1409

R<sup>2</sup> = .236

Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .233

Removing the two insignificant variables did not have an effect on my R<sup>2</sup>.

Table 2 paints a picture about the influences on a senator's roll call vote after the removal of the two insignificant variables. It demonstrates that my model can account for 23.6 percent of the variation on the percentage of votes against leadership. This number, while low, is not surprising considering the model cannot account for personality, backroom trades, negotiations, or the like. Table 2 also shows that Ideological Difference Score is the largest determinant of a senator's vote against party (.437) followed by Party (.218), then Tenure (.117), and then Election Proximity (.081). These numbers can be seen in the column titled "Beta." The assumption that ideology would have the largest amount of influence on a senator's willingness to vote against leadership is shown to be correct. This should not be surprising considering that ideology is truly the driving force behind politics. The public elects senators they feel closely align with their policy beliefs, often times based on the political party they have membership in. Then, senators of the same party come together to elect party leadership in an attempt to unify and guide the party in the senate. While these parties are formed along common ideological beliefs no two members feel exactly the same way about an issue. As Aldrich discussed, working

in a party format allows for the policy positions of an individual to pass more often than working alone (Aldrich 2011, 27-64). However, when ideology differs too far we see breaks, as highlighted in the regression, where party status cannot rectify the difference and a member breaks from the leadership's intended party position.

The regression shows that these four variables do indeed influence senators' roll call votes. It also shows there is a varying degree of influence that each variable exerts on the dependent variable. It is safe to say that the four variables can create unique influences on senators depending on where they stand. For example, senators who have a high Ideology Difference Score and are members of the minority party would be more likely to vote against their party compared to senators who have an equally high Ideology Difference Score but are members of the majority party.

In relation to the literature, the regression supports the notion that ideology matters. In fact, it has the largest effect in influencing senators to vote against party. For every standard deviation increase in Ideology Difference Score we can expect to see, on average, an increase of 3.45% a standard deviation in Percentage of Vote against leadership, holding all other variables constant. See Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2. A Scatter Plot of the Ideological Difference Score Variable in Relation to the Percentage of Vote Variable**

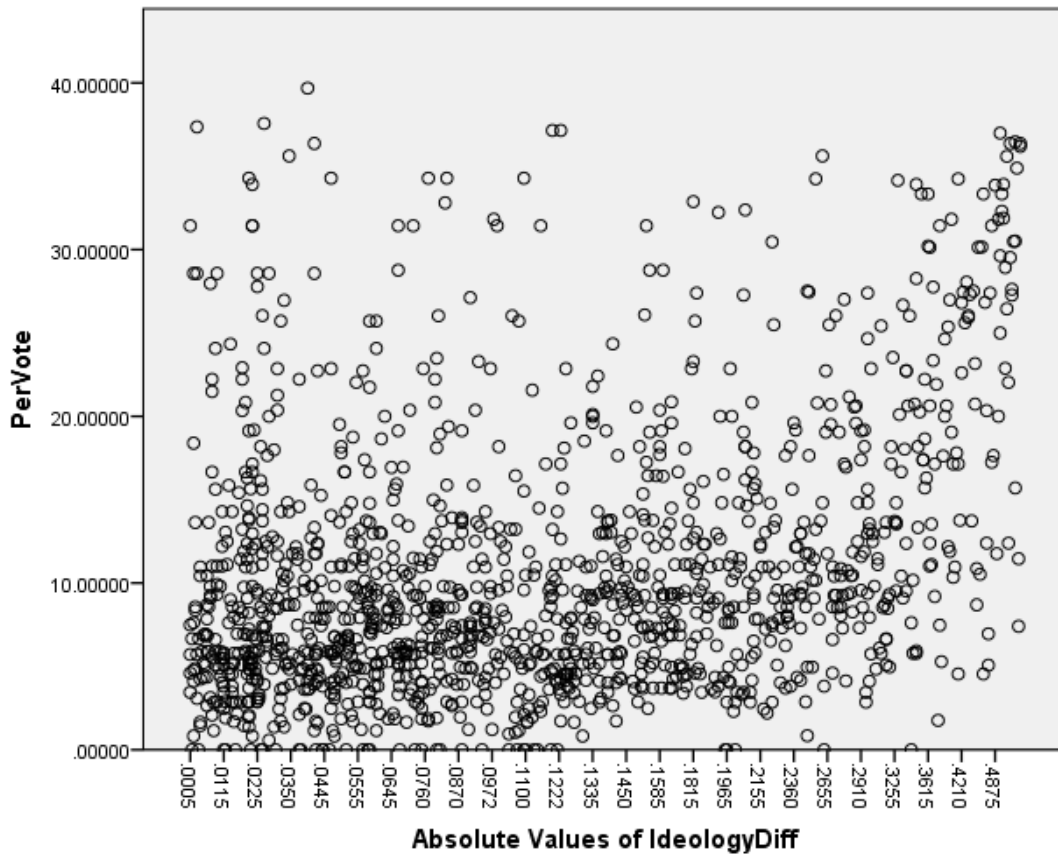
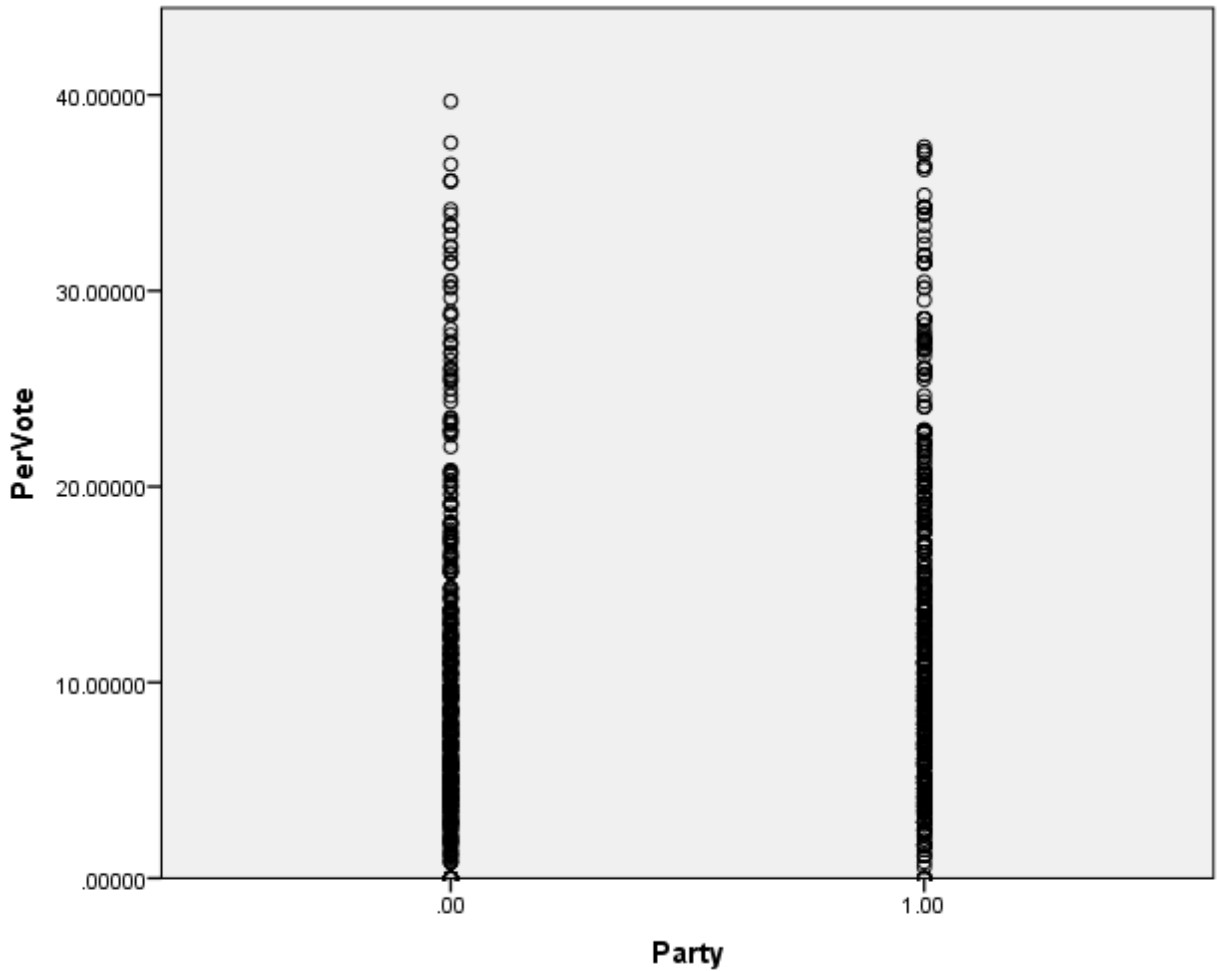


Figure 2 shows us that senators with greater ideological differences from leadership are more willing to consistently vote against leadership. There are a few outliers throughout the chart but as the difference increases one can clearly see an upward cover showcasing a larger percentage of votes against leadership.

The regression shows that party status matters as well. The literature suggested that the number of seats in the party matters. However, this research shows that status in the majority or the minority party matters more than the number of seats each side owns. For every standard deviation increase in Party we can expect to see, on average, an increase of 1.72% a standard deviation in Percentage of Vote against leadership, holding all other variables constant. See Figure 3 below.



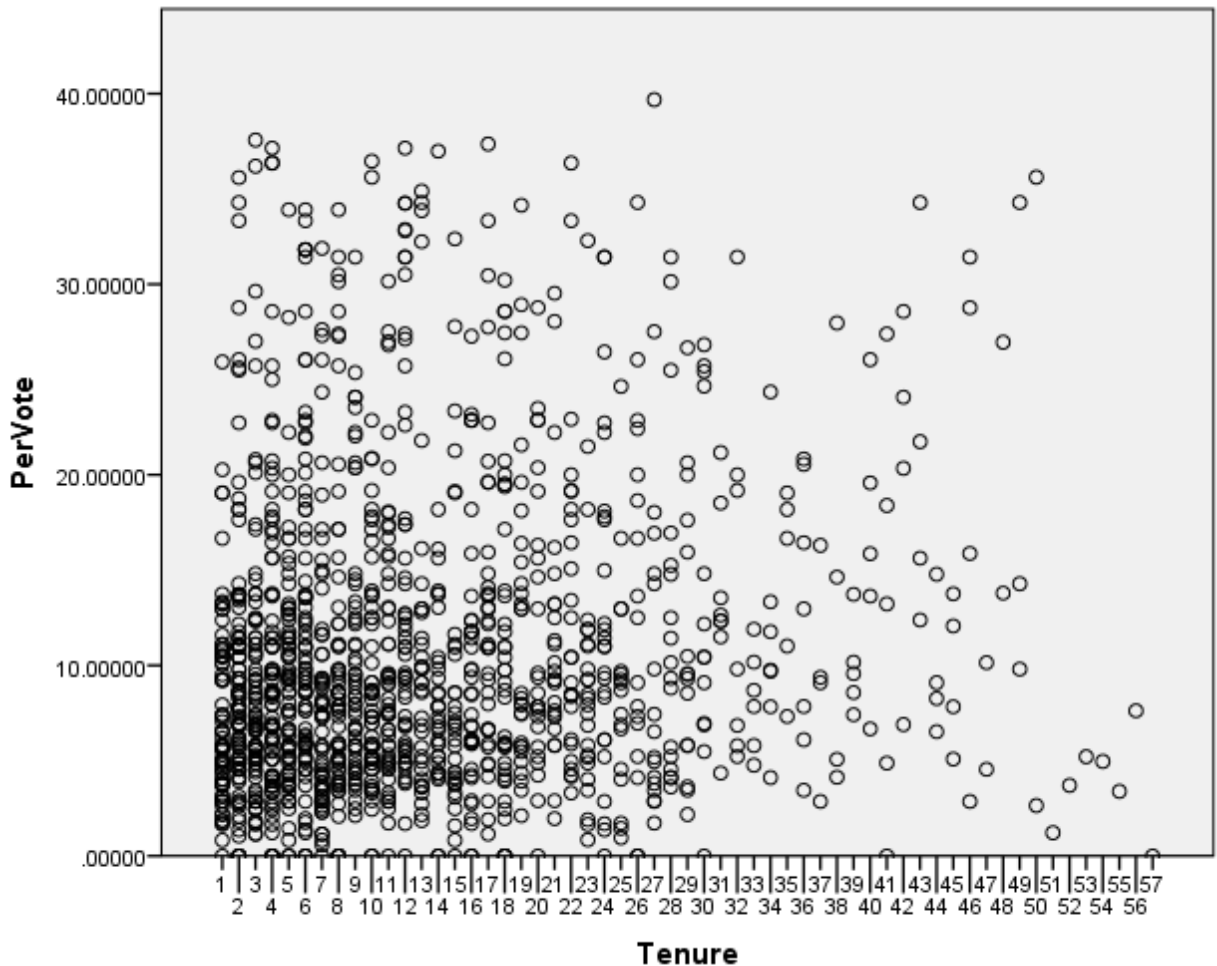
**Figure 3. A Scatter Plot of the Party Variable in Relation to the Percentage of Vote Variable**



In the figure above .00 = majority party and 1.00 = minority party. The table demonstrates that while the majority party does feature votes against leadership, as displayed on the left, the minority party featured more consistent observed votes against leadership.

The literature also suggested that as senators become more senior, their ideologies become more solidified and thus they are more likely to vote in line with their own beliefs and not just in line with party leadership. The regression supports the notion that as tenure increases, so too does a senator’s vote against leadership percentage. For every standard deviation increase in Tenure we can expect to see, on average, an increase of .92% a standard deviation in Percentage of Vote against leadership, holding all other variables constant. See Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4. A Scatter Plot of the Tenure Variable in Relation to the Percentage of Vote Variable**



The figure above demonstrates two things. First, the Senate is largely composed of senators with less than 20 years of experience in the chamber. Second, the scatter plot shows that the more tenured senators are more willing to vote against leadership.

Finally, the literature pointed out that how close the next election is matters. Senators are broken into three “classes” or election groups. Each class is up every six years in alternating turns, meaning that every two years one class is up for reelection. The research provides support that as election draws closer senators are more likely to vote against leadership. For every standard deviation increase in Election Proximity we can expect to see, on average, an increase

of .64% a standard deviation in Percentage of Vote against leadership, holding all other variables constant. See Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5. A Scatter Plot of the Election Proximity Variable in Relation to the Percentage of Vote Variable**

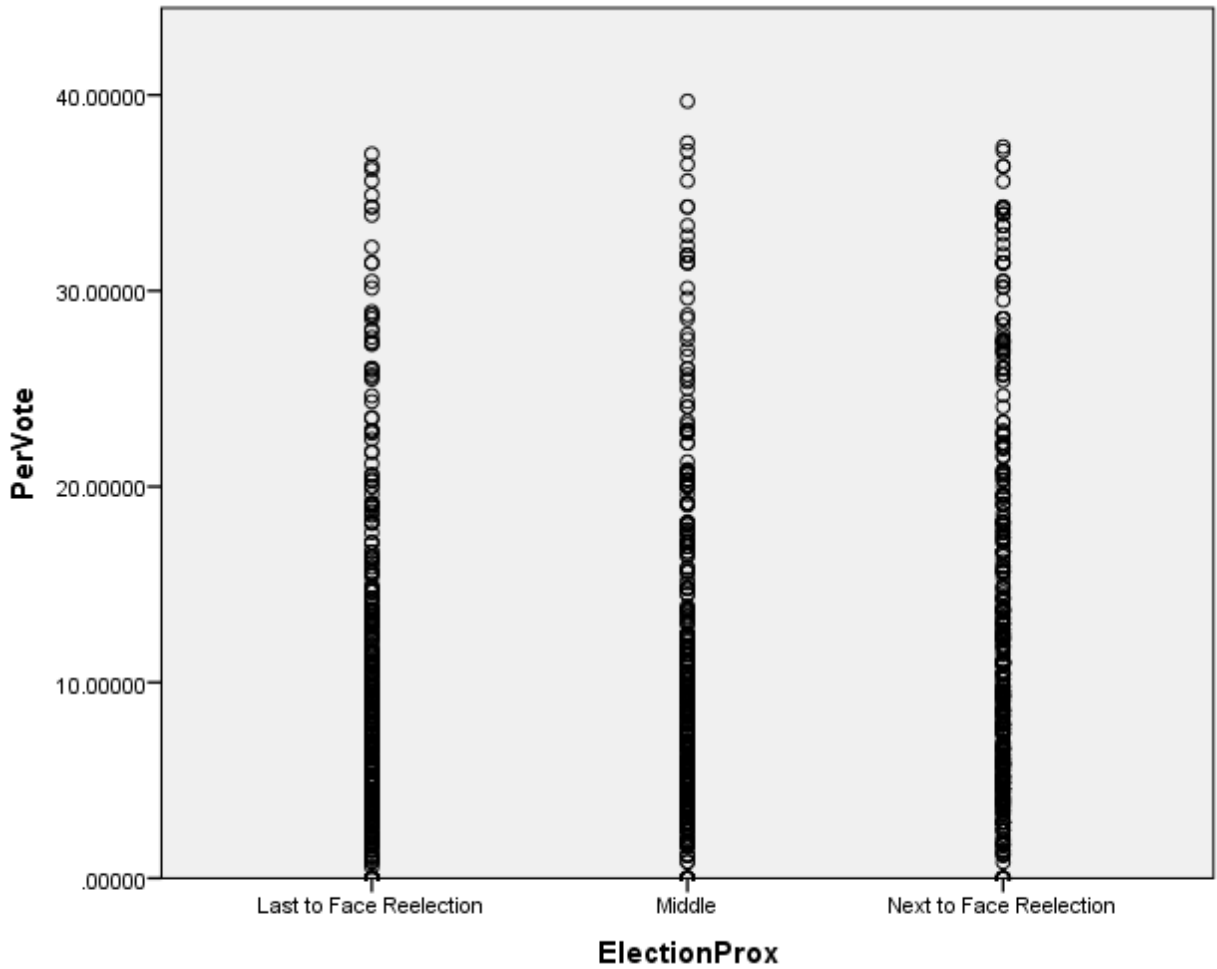


Figure 5 shows that senators facing reelection next more frequently demonstrate a willingness to vote against leadership. The observations in the stack on the left are less consistent at the bottom, compared to the two stacks before it, and it features a more consistent group at the top end of the votes against leadership section.

The model shows that senators do have outside influences on the way they vote. Even though party leadership in this time period is extremely powerful and potentially beneficial or detrimental to senators, the leadership does not have complete control over how a senator will

vote in every roll call situation. This model clearly shows that outside forces do in fact influence the votes of senators. This research does not say that the influence is uniform across every senator, nor does it say that every senator is affected by each and every influence. It is important to remember that senators are simply people and people are unique and act in varying ways. This research also cannot be used to make solid predictions about senators and the way they vote. It can be used to make broad predictions that senators who measure high in these categories are likely to have a higher percentage of votes against leadership on the most important non-economic problems of the year. This study is beneficial to the field of political science because it demonstrates a rank order of the influences on senators that expands our understanding of senators and the way they vote.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

As the case of Lincoln Chafee in the introduction illustrates, ideology is a vital factor in explaining why senators vote against leadership. However, ideology isn't the only vital influence at play. The data finds that ideology, tenure, party status, and election proximity all influence a roll call vote against leadership. The research presented a newly created use for DW-NOMINATE scores, that of an ideology difference score, by averaging together leadership's DW-NOMINATE scores and calculating how far each senator within that party fell from their respective leadership's average. The other three variables found to be significant (tenure, party status, and election proximity) are shown to influence the senator in roll call situations, but to varying degrees. The data also establishes that ideology exerts the most influence on a senator's roll call vote with regard to voting against leadership. The order of magnitude, following ideology, is party, tenure, and election proximity.

The research failed to support my second hypothesis, as margin of victory increases votes against leadership would increase, and failed to support that committee assignments influence a senator's roll call vote. While committees are not created equal (Stewart, III and Groseclose 1999) and the assignment of senators to committees can be used to reward loyalty or punish disloyalty (United States Congress), the leadership does not always use committee assignments as a reward or punishment, nor does this reward or punishment tactic always work. The appointment to committees plays no significant role in roll call situations with relation to supporting or opposing the leadership position. This finding does not discount that committees have varying degrees of power and can be used for political games; this finding only shows that,

at least in the congressional years used in this research, that committee assignments did not exert any real significant influence.

It is a bit more complicated to explain why margin of victory was not significant in the model. First, the literature talked about margin of victory of senators in the most recent election as a measure of success for the party (Fowler 2005). The literature suggested that the party as a whole would move to the left or the right based on how the people voted (Fowler 2005). This movement is to better accommodate the median voter in an attempt to earn their support in the next election. The candidate or party that is closer to the median voter will win its support and, with it, the election (Congleton, 2003). My variable measured the margin of victory for an individual senator from the previous election. That number is up to six years old and the world, voter base, and issues at hand are much different than the election that happened just two years ago. The margin of victory from six years prior is simply outdated and over shadowed by newer events, activities, and actions of the senator. The literature also suggested that a senator with a higher margin of victory would face less punishment from voters for political shirking (Figlio 2000). However, shirking against the state interests does not equate to voting against party. This research does not discount the literature about the importance of margin of victory. Rather, it would suggest that using a margin of victory that is up to six years old does not help an analysis when looking at influences on a United States Senator's roll call vote against leadership.

The model resulted in a relatively low explanatory power for why senators vote against leadership. This finding does limit the effect of the research in that there is much more happening either in the background that cannot be observed or in other variables missed in the research. While the model is able to predict which traits will influence senators to vote against leadership, it cannot predict the types of legislation on which a senator will break from party and

cannot be applied uniformly to all senators. Those who rank high in the four variables tested above are more likely to vote against leadership compared to those who rank low in the variables listed above. However, just because a senator has certain measurable traits that would suggest a higher likelihood of voting against leadership does not mean that those traits that cannot objectively be measured will not contradict the variables used in the models. Simply put the research provides insight into senators and the influences that act upon them but there are several influences that, at least for now, were not measured or controlled for. Influences such as personal beliefs, friendships, loyalties, backroom deals, secret agreements, and day to day attitudes were not included in this research. Furthermore, when dealing with a body that is made up of one hundred different personalities, beliefs, and ways of acting it is nearly impossible to create a statistical test that can control for the human element. In fact, those who may be considered “outliers” did not show any trends to suggest why they are outliers. My research looks at what is measurable, produces a finding, and is subject to human whims.

## **1- FUTURE RESEACH**

This thesis is simply my first step into the exploration of United States Senators’ roll call votes. While the results were not ground breaking, they were illuminating and suggest ways to build upon this research and discover more about influences on a senator’s roll call vote. First, future research could update this research to look at the post-*Citizens United* Senate to see how the new campaign money laws have affected senatorial leadership power. This approach would help to highlight if *Citizens United* has had an effect on the influence of leadership and, if so, to what extent. The comparison between the pre and post Senates could be most eye opening. Second, future research could add in data on personality traits, behaviors, etc. This data could be gathered by following senators around as Richard Fenno did or by a new research

technique/database. Third, future research could use a time series analysis and follow a senator, from their first year in office until the last year they serve in office. Following a senator throughout their career would allow us to see a very real shift in voting behavior as the influences change with time. A time series analysis would allow the research to be broken down to an individual level as well as to see real time variation in the variables.



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## APPENDIX A: OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Integrity

October 26, 2016

Alexander P. Collins  
214 Bias Fork Road  
West Hamlin, WV 25571

Dear Mr. Collins:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*When Party Does Not Matter: An Examination of Conditions That Influence a Senator to Vote Against party Leadership.*" After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP  
Director

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## **APPENDIX B: RANKED ORDER OF COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS<sup>24</sup>**

1. Finance
2. Appropriations
3. Foreign Relations
4. Armed Services
5. Judiciary
6. Rules and Administration
7. Budget
8. Commerce
9. Aeronautics (removed before the years included in this database)
10. Labor and Human Resources
11. Agriculture
12. Veterans Affairs
13. Banking
14. Post Office and Civil Service (removed before the years included in this database)
15. Energy and Natural Resources
16. Small Business
17. Governmental Affairs
18. Environment and Public Works
19. District of Columbia (removed before the years included in this database)

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<sup>24</sup> Ranking of Senate Committees gathered from “The Value of Committee Seats in the Senate, 1947-1991” by Charles Stewart III and Tim Groseclose (p. 967, 1999).

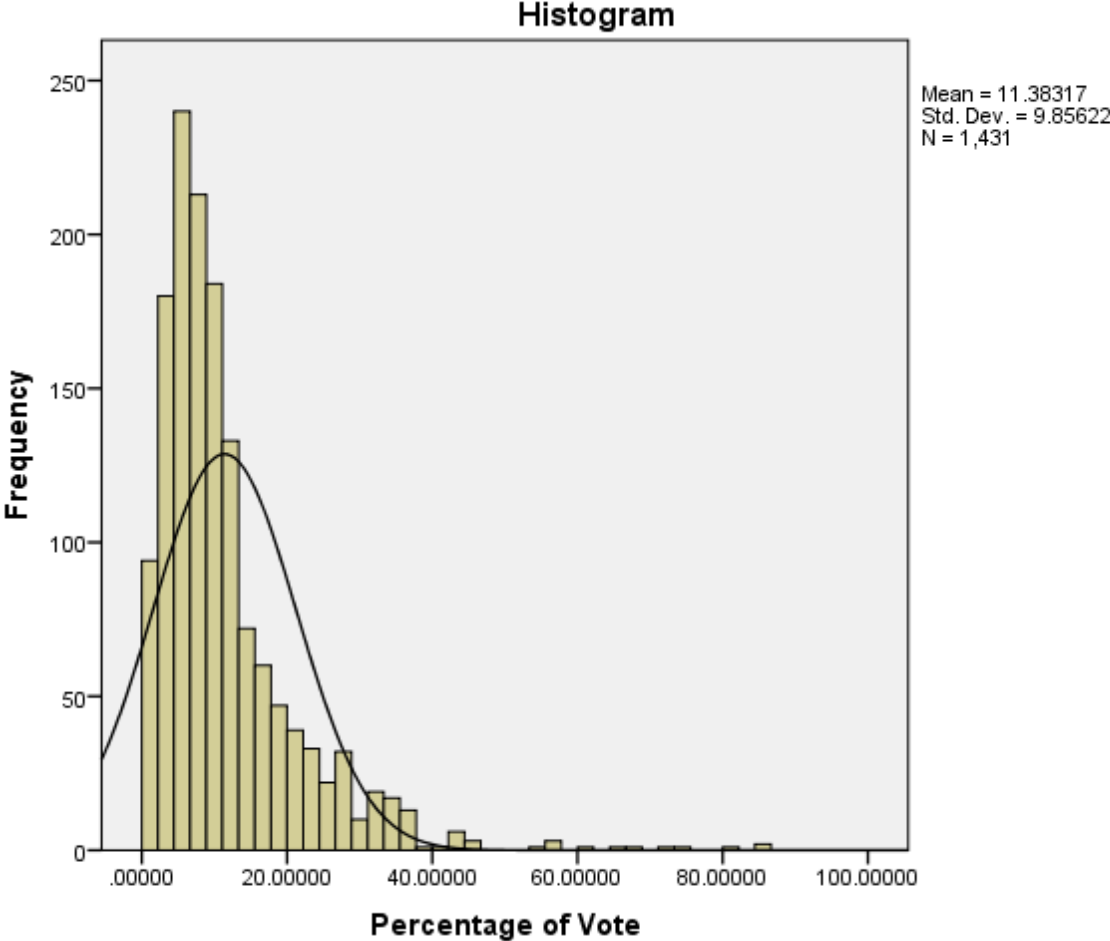
## APPENDIX C: DIAGNOSTIC TESTS OF THE VARIABLES

**Table 3. Overview of the Variables Before the Removal of Statistical Outliers**

	Party	Percentage of Vote	Margin of Victory	Tenure	Election Proximity	Committee	Party Seat	Ideology Difference
N Valid	1431	1431	1421	1431	1431	1424	1431	1431
Missing	0	0	10	0	0	7	0	0
Mean	.4668	11.3831735	21.6441	13.01	2.02	3.24	50.285	.137662
Std. Error of Mean	.01319	.26054961	.46186	.282	.024	.063	.0980	.0032521
Median	.0000	8.6956522	16.8800	10.00	2.00	3.00	50.500	.099000
Std. Deviation	.49907	9.85621686	17.41040	10.673	.893	2.381	3.7062	.1230214
Skewness	.133	2.564	.988	1.276	1.146	2.039	-.097	1.361
Std. Error of Skewness	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065

When checking for statistical outliers only one was found: Percentage of Vote. The variable had a skewness of 2.564 and was well over the established norm of 2. The Committee variable had a skewness of 2.039 which is just over the norm of 2 and so I did not make any modifications to it.

**Figure 6. Distribution of Observations in Percentage of Vote Before the Removal of Statistical Outliers**



The figure shows the distribution of the variable. To remove skewness from the database I removed all observations that had a Percentage of Vote score over 40.

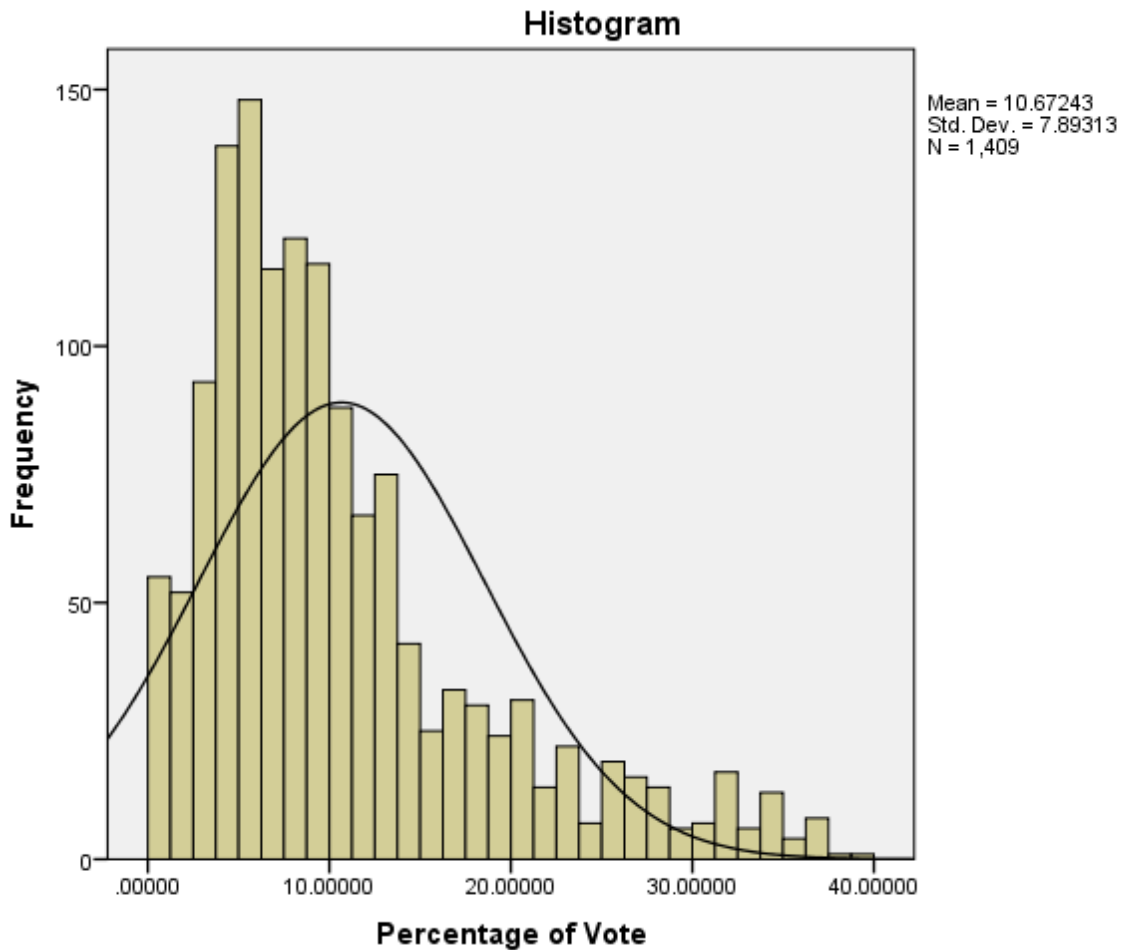


**Table 4. Overview of the Variables After the Removal of Statistical Outliers**

	Party	Percentage of Vote	Margin of Victory	Tenure	Election Proximity	Committee	Party Seat	Ideology Difference
N Valid	1409	1409	1399	1409	1409	1402	1409	1409
Missing	0	0	10	0	0	7	0	0
Mean	.4649	10.6724285	21.5576	12.97	1.99	3.23	50.286	.136935
Std. Error of Mean	.0132 9	.21027803	.46367	.284	.022	.064	.0991	.0032406
Median	.0000	8.5714286	16.8800	10.00	2.00	3.00	51.000	.099000
Std. Deviation	.4989 4	7.89313245	17.34261	10.664	.817	2.379	3.7193	.1216424
Skewness	.141	1.298	1.002	1.280	.018	2.053	-.100	1.349
Std. Error of Skewness	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065	.065

The table above shows the corrected database after the removal of statistical outliers. The Percentage of Vote variable is now well within the established norm of 2 and the Committee variable is still only slightly above 2.

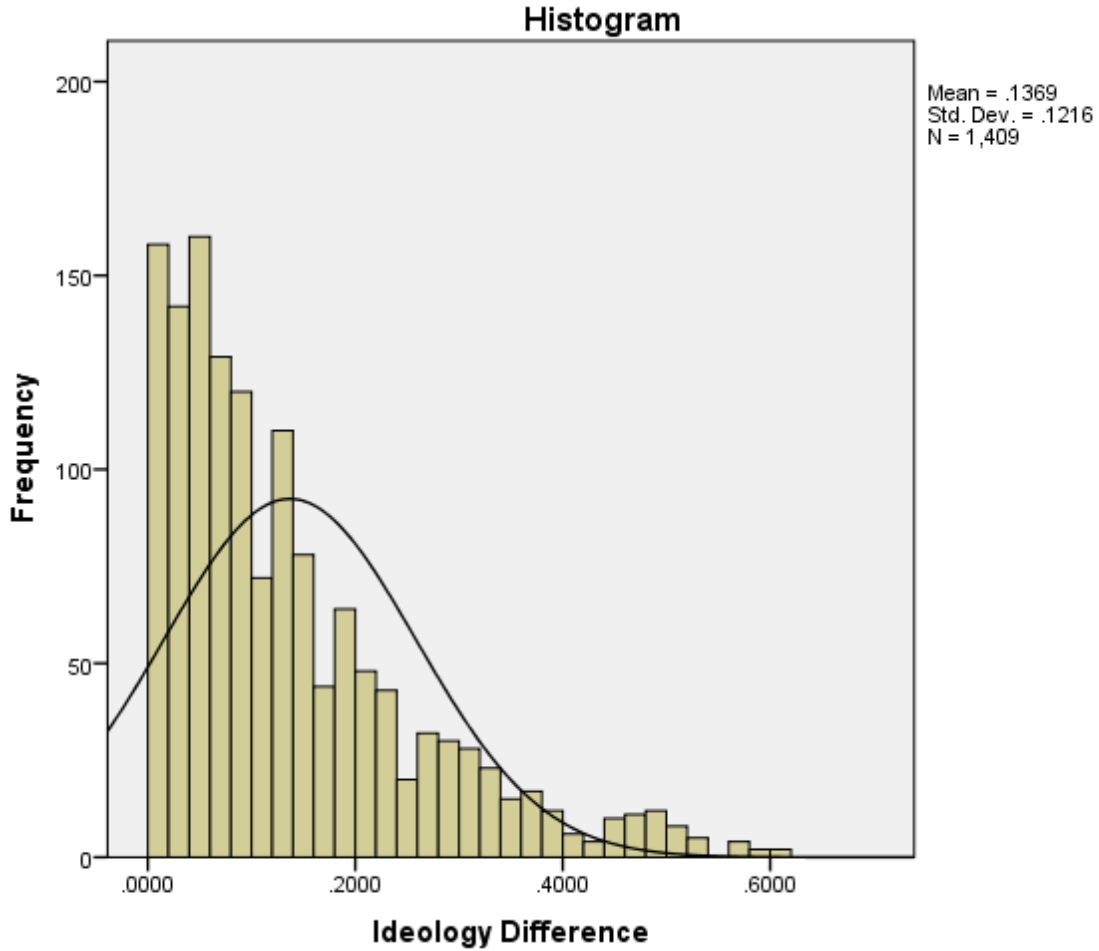
**Figure 7. Distribution of Observations in Percentage of Vote After the Removal of Statistical Outliers**



The Figure above shows the adjusted distribution of the variable in the observations after the removal of statistical outliers.

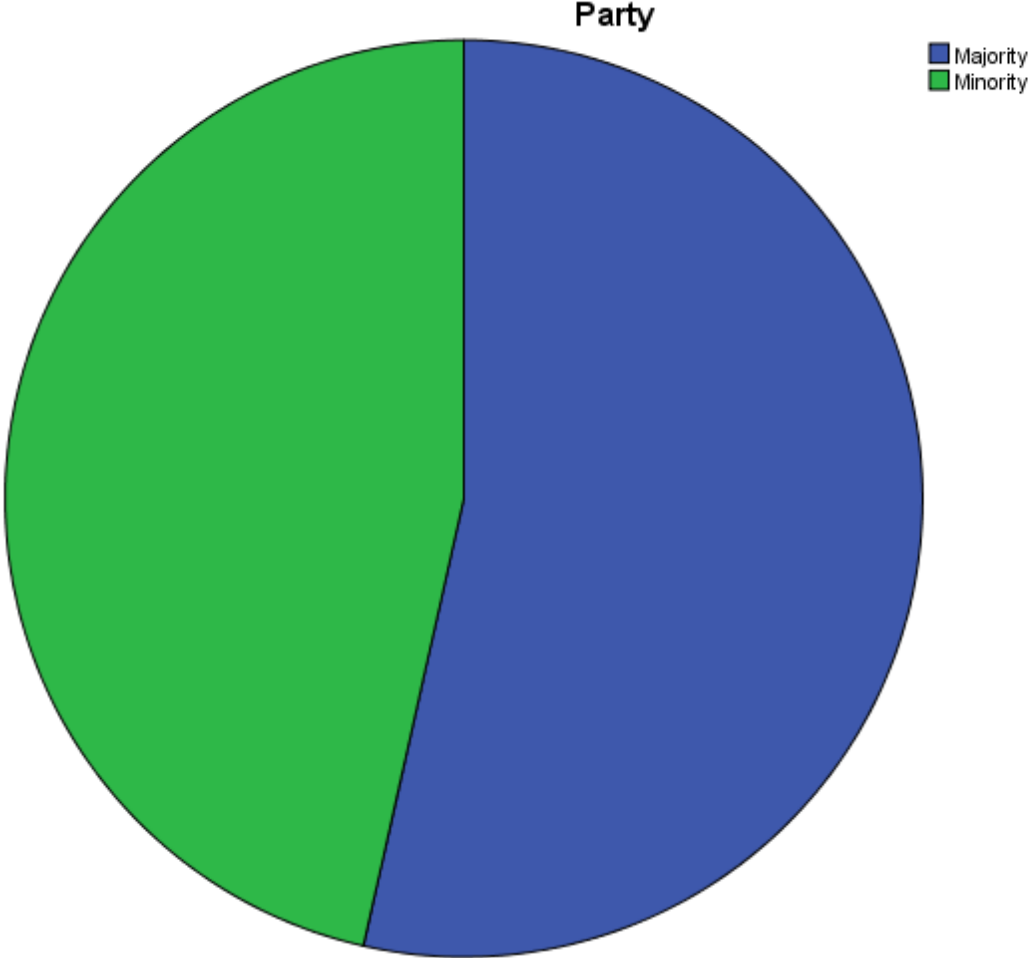
The twenty-two observations that I removed had a large amount of missed roll call votes. In many cases this was due to campaigning activities for the Presidency and includes senators John McCain, Barack Obama, and Hillary Clinton in 2008 as well as John Kerry and John Edwards in 2004.

**Figure 8. Distribution of Observations in Ideology Difference Score**



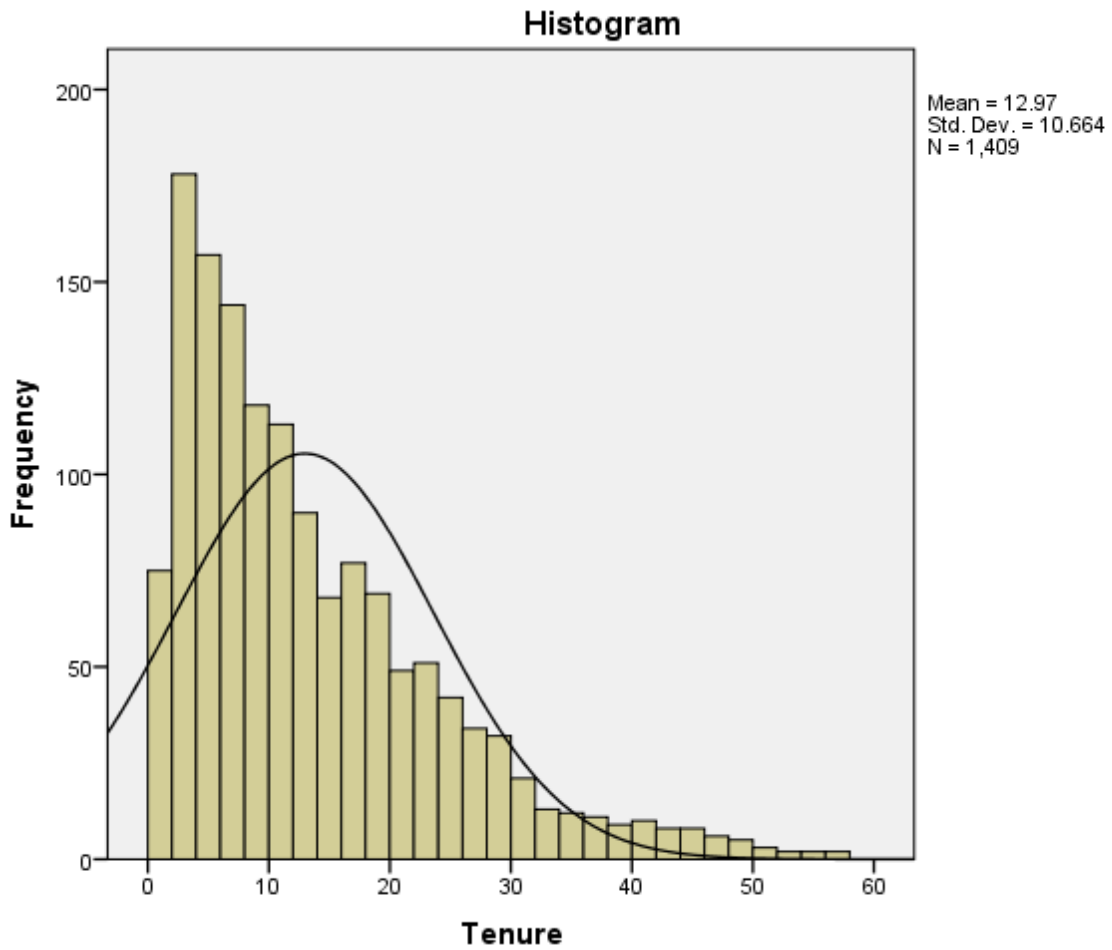
The figure shows the range of ideology difference scores within the observations. Most senators fell less than .2 points away from the party leadership while a large percentage was quite a bit higher.

**Figure 9. Distribution of Observations in the Majority and Minority Party**



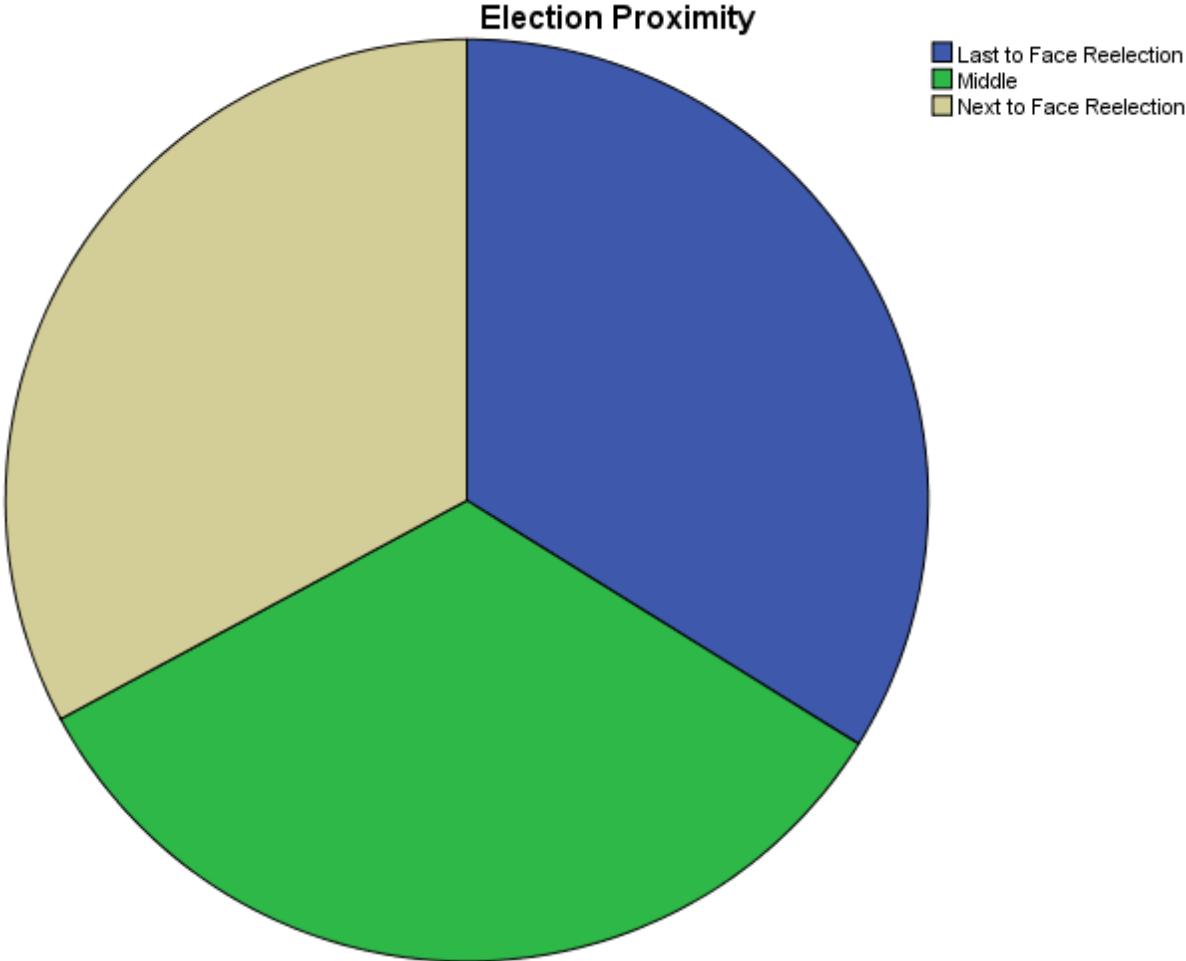
The pie chart shows the split between majority and minority party but more importantly it highlights the fact that during the legislative years studied the majority was relatively close in membership to the minority.

**Figure 10. Distribution of Observations in Tenure**



The figure shows the tenure of members in the senate. The histogram shows that the Senate is primarily made up of senators with less than 20 years of experience in the United States Senate.

**Figure 11. Distribution of Observations in Election Proximity**



The United States Senate is set up in such a way that almost one-third of all seats will be up for election every two years. For this reason the pie chart is almost exactly cut into thirds.

**Table 5. Multicollinearity Check**

		Ideology Difference	Party Seat	Committee	Election Proximity	Tenure	Margin of Victory	Party
Ideology Difference	Pearson	1	.238**	.048	-.014	-.062*	-.050	-.136**
	Correlation		.000	.073	.607	.019	.059	.000
	Significance		1422	1422	1415	1422	1422	1412
	N							
Party Seat	Pearson	.238**	1	.009	-.039	-.108**	.022	-.851**
	Correlation		.000	.737	.138	.000	.416	.000
	Significance		1422	1422	1415	1422	1422	1412
	N							
Committee	Pearson	.048	.009	1	-.123**	-.358**	-.205**	-.009
	Correlation		.073	.737	.000	.000	.000	.723
	Significance		1415	1415	1415	1415	1415	1411
	N							
Election Proximity	Pearson	-.014	-.039	-.123**	1	.134**	.031	.081**
	Correlation		.607	.138	.000	.000	.241	.002
	Significance		1422	1422	1415	1422	1422	1412
	N							
Tenure	Pearson	-.062*	-.108**	-.358**	.134**	1	.389**	.097**
	Correlation		.019	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Significance		1422	1422	1415	1422	1422	1412
	N							
Margin of Victory	Pearson	-.050	.022	-.205**	.031	.389**	1	-.010
	Correlation		.059	.416	.000	.241	.000	.713
	Significance		1412	1412	1411	1412	1412	1412
	N							
Party	Pearson	-.136**	-.851**	-.009	.081**	.097**	-.010	1
	Correlation		.000	.000	.723	.002	.000	.713
	Significance		1422	1422	1415	1422	1422	1412
	N							

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows the correlation between all of the independent variables calculated for this research. The table shows that none of my variables, with the exception of Party and Party Seat, present a multicollinearity problem to this research. Party and Party Seat are two variables that look at the same thing but in a slightly different fashion. Party is a dummy variable that separates senators into the majority or the minority party to see if there is a variation in how the two vote. Party Seat looks at how the amount of seats the party that an individual senator belongs to affects a senator's roll call votes. Regressing these variables on one another confirmed that multicollinearity exists. Because of the multicollinearity problem, I ran singular regressions using both variables and chose Party as the prominent variable to be included in this research (See Appendix D).



**APPENDIX D: JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOOSING PARTY OVER PARTY SEAT**

**Table 6. Determinant of Senators' Votes Against Leadership Using Only Party Variable**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	9.375	.238		33.123	.000
Party	2.790	.415	.176	6.722	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Percentage of Vote  
 N = 1409  
 $R^2 = .031$   
 Adjusted  $R^2 = .030$

Table 6 shows that those in the minority party are more likely to vote against leadership compared to those in the majority party.

**Table 7. Determinant of Senators' Votes Against Leadership Using Only Party Seat Variable**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	19.559	2.843		6.880	.000
Party Seat	-.177	.056	-.083	-3.134	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Percentage of Vote  
 N = 1409  
 $R^2 = .0071$   
 Adjusted  $R^2 = .006$

Table 7 shows that as the number of seats in a party grows, above 50, members are less likely to vote against party.

In order to avoid a multicollinearity issue within the research I had to exclude either party or party seat from the database. After running each variable through a regression independently and seeing that both variables told the same story, albeit in a different way, I chose the variable with the highest explanatory value. The regressions above serve as justification for excluding Party Seat and retaining Party.

## **Appendix E: Sources Used to Determine Committee Assignments**

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 1994. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 1995. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 1996. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

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United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2000. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2001. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2002. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2003. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2004. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2005. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2006. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2007. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

United States Congress. Joint Committee on Printing. 2008. Official Congressional Directory. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

## Appendix F: Sources Used to Calculate Margin of Victory

- Federal Election Commission. 1989. *Federal Elections 88*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission.
- Federal Election Commission. 1991. *Federal Elections 90*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission.
- Federal Election Commission. 1993. *Federal Elections 92*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission.
- Federal Election Commission. 1995. *Federal Elections 94*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission.
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- Federal Election Commission. 2001. *Federal Elections 2000*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission.
- Federal Election Commission. 2003. *Federal Elections 2002*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission.
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- Lucy Burns Institute. 2016. “Ron Wyden.” [https://ballotpedia.org/Ron\\_Wyden](https://ballotpedia.org/Ron_Wyden) (December 1, 2016).
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- “Senate Races.” 1992. *CQ almanac 1991* (47<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal91-846-25199-1108681> (December 1, 2016).
- Texas. Secretary of State. “1993 Special Election.” [http://elections.sos.state.tx.us/elchist6\\_state.htm](http://elections.sos.state.tx.us/elchist6_state.htm) (December 1, 2016).

Most margin of victory calculations were possible using the Federal Election Commission's report of election results tallies. However, four senators came into office during special elections that were not recorded in Federal Election Commission's report and required outside sources.