Electoral Incentives and Partisan Conflict in Congress:
Evidence from Survey Experiments

Supporting Information

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This document contains supporting information for the article "Electoral Incentives and Partisan Conflict in Congress: Evidence from Survey Experiments." These tables contain robustness checks for the main analyses presented in the paper.

Predicting Bipartisan Bill Cosponsoring with District Ideology

We first present aggregate-level data showing that members from competitive (general election) districts are less likely to engage in partisan conflict and more likely to join cosponsorship coalition with members of the opposing party. Our dependent variable is the percentage of bills a member cosponsors on which at least 20% of the bill's cosponsors are from the party opposite the party of the bill's original sponsor. As shown in Table 1 of the paper, as the normal presidential vote for a party increases, there is a significant negative effect on bipartisan cosponsorship activity. Table 1 shows that this result holds under both and OLS and quasi-binominal specifications, and hold either including or excluding member fixed effects.

Table A1 of this document replicates the OLS results from Table 1 using alternative definitions of a bipartisan cosponsorship. We estimate a series of specifications using more stringent definitions of bipartisanship—bills on which at least 30%, 40%, and 50% of the bill's cosponsors are from the party opposite the party of the bill's original sponsor. As shown in the first four columns of Table A1, the effect of the normal presidential vote in the district on bipartisan cosponsoring is negative and significant in all specifications (excluding member fixed effects). Similar results are obtained when including member fixed effects (see columns (5)-(8) of Table A1).

Bipartisan cooperation could occur through shared features of members that are unrelated to district preferences. A full dyadic member-to-member model specification with controls for region/state and veterans status, among other things, is beyond the scope of the analysis (which

looks at each member across all bills). However, even when we condition on region and veterans status, the effect of the normal presidential vote on bipartisan cosponsorship frequency is statistically significant in all specifications. As shown in Table A2, even when subsetting members by region (presuming that shared geography may increase cosponsoring across party lines), the coefficient associated with "Normal Presidential Vote" emerges as negative and significant. Similarly, members who are military veterans may be more likely to cosponsor with one another due to shared experiences and views on military issues. As shown in Table 3, even among subsets of veterans and non-veterans, the effect of district competitiveness is negative and significant.

Experimental Studies

As described in the paper, we conducted two survey experiments as part of the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) which was administered by YouGov/Polimetrix over the Internet. As shown in Table A4, distributions of several demographic and political variables are similar between the 2008 CCES and the 2008 National Election Study (NES), which was conducted face-to-face with the national probability sample.

For both studies, randomization was successful. As shown in Table 5, the distributions of key variables were statistically and substantively similar between experimental conditions.

In Study 1, we showed that when the legislative activity of Congress is framed as being characterized by partisan conflict, people have less confidence in the legislative branch as an institution. This is true not only for Independents, but for Americans across the partisan spectrum. Table 2 in the paper presents OLS regressions predicting a five-point scale of confidence in Congress. Respondents receiving information showing Congress to be bipartisan were significantly more likely to express confidence in Congress. This result is not moderated by

strength of partisanship. Table A6 re-estimates the specifications of Table 2 using ordered logistic regression. We obtain similar results for both the main and interactive treatment effects. In Table A8, we also include consumer confidence as an independent variable in the OLS regression model to explain addition variance in the dependent variable. Consumer confidence was operationalized as the average of six items in the common content of the CCES (cc302, cc303a, cc303b, cc303c, cc303d, cc303e) measuring respondent perceptions of the national economy, current business situations, the current employment situation, future general employment, and future personal income. Again, we obtain similar results for both the main and interactive treatment effects.

In Study 2, we showed that Americans were not more favorable to members of Congress who exhibited a less polarized voting record, but there was significant heterogeneity by strength of partisanship. We randomly presented half of respondents with information suggesting that a member was bipartisan, and presented the other half with information suggesting that the member engaged in partisan conflict. The dependent variable was a five-point scale assessing approval of the member's job performance. As shown in Table 3 of the paper, whereas strong partisans were actually negatively affected by bipartisan legislative behavior, this effect was offset by approval of bipartisanship among Independents and weak partisans. Table A7 re-estimates the specification of Table 3 using ordered logistic regression. We obtain a similar null finding for the main treatment effect, which is the result of a positive treatment effect among weak partisans and Independents and a negative treatment effect among strong partisans. In Table A9, we also include consumer confidence in the OLS regression model and obtain similar results for both the main and interactive treatment effects.

Table A1: OLS Regressions Predicting Percent of Cosponsored Bills that are Bipartisan by Member (103rd-109th Congresses)

	(20%)	(30%)	(40%)	(50%)	(20%)	(30%)	(40%)	(50%)
Normal Presidential Vote	-.61***	-.50***	-.36***	-.23***	-.18***	-.15***	-.13***	-.10***
	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)
Majority Party Member	.26	-2.22***	-5.09***	-6.72***	-3.30***	-4.88***	-6.41***	-6.29***
	(.38)	(.35)	(.29)	(.24)	(.37)	(.40)	(.33)	(.28)
Female	-3.44***	-2.49***	-1.58***	-.17	——	——	——	——
	(.56)	(.52)	(.43)	(.34)				
Age	.01	.01	.01	.00	——	——	——	——
	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)				
Tenure	.24***	.30***	.20***	.24***	——	——	——	——
	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.03)				
House Leadership	-12.40***	-10.26***	-9.12***	-6.55***	-2.05	-1.24	-2.16	-1.21
	(1.72)	(1.59)	(1.30)	(1.05)	(1.86)	(1.98)	(1.66)	(1.39)
Divided Government	3.86***	.92*	.14	-2.92***	3.13***	.10	-.43	-3.63***
	(.47)	(.44)	(.36)	(.29)	(.33)	(.35)	(.29)	(.24)
Majority Seat Share	.01	-.37***	-.76***	-1.02***	-.13	-0.57***	-.89***	-1.19***
	(.09)	(.08)	(.07)	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)	(.06)	(.05)
Presidential Election Year	2.45**	-.02	-.77	-.73	2.58***	.08	-.73	-.89*
	(.78)	(.72)	(.59)	(.48)	(.47)	(.50)	(.42)	(.35)
Constant	87.00***	93.05***	96.07***	95.35***	88.60***	101.47***	101.74***	108.83***
	(5.36)	(4.97)	(4.08)	(3.30)	(7.42)	(7.89)	(6.61)	(5.54)
Member Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	3033	3033	3033	3033	3033	3033	3033	3033
R^2	.34	.27	.27	.33	.83	.76	.75	.75

***$p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$ (two-tailed)

Table A2: OLS Regressions Predicting Percent of Cosponsored Bills that are Bipartisan by Member (103rd-109th Congresses) – Conditioning on Region of Member

	New England	Midwest	South	West	Pacific
Normal Presidential Vote in District	-.62***	-.56***	-.61***	-.33***	-.55***
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)	(.10)	(.05)
Majority Party Member	3.77***	1.20	-.70	-5.47**	-.32
	(.83)	(.85)	(.61)	(1.69)	(.94)
Female	-3.54**	-2.57	-3.35**	-1.71	-3.36**
	(1.11)	(1.36)	(1.06)	(1.90)	(1.13)
Age	.08	.10*	-.01	-.07	-.10
	(.05)	(.05)	(.02)	(.12)	(.05)
Tenure	.22	-.04	.54***	.56	.06
	(.12)	(.12)	(.09)	(.36)	(.14)
House Leadership	—	-12.58***	-15.89***	—	2.49
		(2.58)	(2.61)		(5.43)
Divided Government	3.76***	3.44***	5.77***	2.93	1.00
	(.91)	(1.03)	(.77)	(1.88)	(1.07)
House Majority Seat Share	-.28	.12	.61***	.21	-1.23***
	(.18)	(.20)	(.15)	(.37)	(.21)
Presidential Election	1.57	2.27	3.97**	.69	1.13
	(1.50)	(1.69)	(1.28)	(3.13)	(1.77)
Constant	100.14***	75.15***	55.74***	65.96**	153.90***
	(10.50)	(11.77)	(8.84)	(22.63)	(12.38)
N	603	726	1022	171	490
R^2	.54	.27	.38	.16	.39

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed)

Table A3: OLS Regressions Predicting Percent of Cosponsored Bills that are Bipartisan by Member (103rd-104th Congresses) – Conditioning on Veteran Status of Member

	Veterans (103-104)	Not Veterans (103-104)
Normal Presidential Vote in District	-.77***	-.85***
	(.01)	(.07)
Majority Party Member	-6.69***	-7.94***
	(1.70)	(1.48)
Female	—	-.62
		(2.04)
Age	.06	-.03
	(.13)	(.10)
Tenure	-.21	-.02
	(.28)	(.27)
House Leadership	-21.83***	5.45
	(5.57)	(6.72)
Divided Government	-.08	2.13
	(1.71)	(1.49)
Constant	104.54***	110.76***
	(8.23)	(5.42)
N	197	192
R^2	.32	.50

***$p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$ (two-tailed)

Table A4: Comparison of Sample with 2008 ANES

	2008 CCES	2008 ANES
Gender		
Female	50.8%	55.0%
Male	49.2	45.0
Age		
18-24	5.7	11.0
25-34	13.0	18.2
35-44	17.4	15.9
45-54	26.5	20.6
55-64	20.2	15.1
65+	17.2	19.2
Race		
White	76.4	79.4
Black	9.8	12.0
Other	13.8	8.6
Education		
High School and Below	64.0	62.1
Associates Degree	6.8	10.4
Bachelors Degree	20.4	18.0
Graduate Degree	8.8	9.5
Party Identification		
Republican	28.5	25.7
Democrat	35.5	34.1
Independent/Other	36.0	40.2
N	1000	2323

Appendix A5: Randomization Checks

	Study 1		Study 2	
	Partisan	Bipartisan	Partisan	Bipartisan
Gender				
Female	51.2%	50.4%	50.9%	50.7%
Male	48.8	49.6	49.1	49.3
	$\chi^2(1) = .06, p=.81$		$\chi^2(1) = .01, p=.94$	
Race				
Nonwhite	24.7	22.5	22.5	24.7
White	75.3	77.6	77.5	75.3
	$\chi^2(1) = .71, p=.40$		$\chi^2(1) = .66, p=.42$	
Education				
Less HS	4.5	4.1	3.7	4.9
High School	37.7	37.6	39.0	36.3
Some College	23.5	20.6	21.9	22.3
Associates	7.3	6.3	7.8	5.8
Bachelors	18.2	22.7	19.4	21.4
Post-Graduate	8.8	8.8	8.3	9.3
	$\chi^2(5) = 3.78, p=.58$		$\chi^2(5) = 3.54, p=.62$	
Party Identification				
Strong Democrat	26.1	25.7	22.5	29.1
Weak Democrat	7.8	11.4	9.1	10.1
Independent	36.5	15.5	38.8	33.4
Weak Republican	7.3	9.0	8.7	7.6
Strong Republican	22.4	18.4	21.0	19.8
	$\chi^2(4) = 6.29, p=.18$		$\chi^2(4) = 7.09, p=.13$	
Age	48.9	50.1	49.2	49.7
	$p=.22$		$p=.61$	
N	510	490	485	515

Table A6: Ordered Logistic Regressions Predicting Confidence in Congress (Study One)

β_1: Bipartisan Version	.27[*] (.12)	.01 (.20)	.01 (.20)
β_2: Strong Republican	-.78[***] (.17)	-.88[***] (.22)	——
β_3: Weak Republican	.13 (.24)	-.12 (.34)	——
β_4: Weak Democrat	.83[***] (.23)	.54 (.34)	——
β_5: Strong Democrat	1.52[***] (.17)	1.30[***] (.22)	——
β_6: Bipartisan Version x Strong Republican	——	.22 (.33)	——
β_7: Bipartisan Version x Weak Republican	——	.52 (.47)	——
β_8: Bipartisan Version x Weak Democrat	——	.56 (.45)	——
β_9: Bipartisan Version x Strong Democrat	——	.48 (.32)	——
Strong Partisans	——	——	.20 (.18)
Weak Partisans	——	——	.19 (.25)
Bipartisan Version x Strong Partisans	——	——	.39 (.26)
Bipartisan Version x Weak Partisans	——	——	.52 (.34)
γ_1: Age	-.63[*] (.31)	-.64[*] (.31)	-.77[*] (.31)
γ_2: Male	-.55[***] (.12)	-.57[***] (.12)	-.64[***] (.12)
γ_3: White	.02 (.15)	.02 (.15)	-.27 (.15)
γ_4: Education	.20 (.22)	.18 (.22)	.45[*] (.21)
γ_5: Media Use	-.62[**] (.23)	-.59[*] (.24)	-.69[**] (.23)
N	987	987	987
Pseudo R^2	.09	.09	.03

***$p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$ (two-tailed). Cutpoints available from authors upon request.

Table A7: Ordered Logistic Regressions Predicting Approval of Members of Congress (Study Two)

	All Respondents		Democrats		Republicans	
β_1: Bipartisan Version	.25	1.11***	.42*	1.34***	.02	.80*
	(.13)	(.22)	(.18)	(.30)	(.19)	(.33)
β_2: Strong Partisans	.67***	1.64***	.69**	1.65***	.60**	1.59***
	(.15)	(.21)	(.20)	(.30)	(.22)	(.32)
β_3: Weak Partisans	-.01	-.07	.05	.25	-.10	-.41
	(.19)	(.27)	(.26)	(.39)	(.28)	(.38)
β_6: Bipartisan Version x Strong Partisans	——	-1.80***	——	-1.72***	——	-1.90***
		(.29)		(.40)		(.44)
β_7: Bipartisan Version x Weak Partisans	——	.09	——	-.50	——	.77
		(.37)		(.52)		(.55)
γ_1: Age	-.29	-.41	-.49	-.62	.03	.01
	(.33)	(.33)	(.45)	(.46)	(.49)	(.50)
γ_2: Male	-.18	-.15	-.12	-.08	-.28	-.26
	(.13)	(.13)	(.18)	(.18)	(.20)	(.20)
γ_3: White	.06	.06	.23	.24	-.21	-.18
	(.16)	(.16)	(.20)	(.20)	(.27)	(.27)
γ_4: Education	-.10	-.16	.13	-.04	-.29	-.26
	(.23)	(.23)	(.32)	(.32)	(.35)	(.36)
γ_5: Media Use	.47	.45	.12	.18	.84*	.72
	(.25)	(.25)	(.34)	(.34)	(.37)	(.38)
N	965	965	528	528	437	437
Pseudo R^2	.02	.04	.02	.04	.02	.05

***$p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$ (two-tailed). Cupoints available from authors upon request.

Table A8: OLS Regressions Predicting Confidence in Congress (Study One)

β_1: Bipartisan Version	.03[*]	.00	.01
	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)
β_2: Strong Republican	-.10^{***}	-.11^{***}	——
	(.02)	(.03)	
β_3: Weak Republican	.01	-.02	——
	(.03)	(.04)	
β_4: Weak Democrat	.10^{***}	.07	——
	(.02)	(.04)	
β_5: Strong Democrat	.16^{***}	.13^{***}	——
	(.02)	(.02)	
β_6: Bipartisan Version x Strong Republican	——	.02	——
		(.04)	
β_7: Bipartisan Version x Weak Republican	——	.05	——
		(.05)	
β_8: Bipartisan Version x Weak Democrat	——	.05	——
		(.05)	
β_9: Bipartisan Version x Strong Democrat	——	.05	——
		(.03)	
Strong Partisans	——	——	.03
			(.02)
Weak Partisans	——	——	.03
			(.03)
Bipartisan Version x Strong Partisans	——	——	.04
			(.03)
Bipartisan Version x Weak Partisans	——	——	.05
			(.04)
γ_1: Age	-.06	-.06	-.08[*]
	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)
γ_2: Male	-.06^{***}	-.06^{***}	-.07^{***}
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
γ_3: White	.00	.00	-.04[*]
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
γ_4: Education	.02	.02	.05[*]
	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)
γ_5: Media Use	-.07[*]	-.06[*]	-.09^{**}
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
γ_6: Consumer Confidence	.04	.04	-.08[*]
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Constant	.38^{***}	.39^{***}	.48^{***}
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
N	970	970	970
R^2	.21	.21	.08

***$p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$ (two-tailed)

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Table A9: OLS Regressions Predicting Approval of Members of Congress (Study Two)

	All Respondents		Democrats		Republicans	
β_1: Bipartisan Version	.02	.11***	.04*	.13***	.00	.08*
	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.03)
β_2: Strong Partisans	.07***	.17***	.08***	.17***	.06**	.16***
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.03)
β_3: Weak Partisans	.01	.00	.01	.04	-.01	-.03
	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)	(.04)
β_6: Bipartisan Version x Strong Partisans	——	-.18***	——	-.17***	——	-.19***
		(.03)		(.04)		(.04)
β_7: Bipartisan Version x Weak Partisans	——	.00	——	-.06	——	.08
		(.04)		(.05)		(.06)
γ_1: Age	-.02	-.03	-.03	-.04	-.01	-.02
	(.04)	(.03)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
γ_2: Male	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.01	-.04	-.03
	(.01)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
γ_3: White	.01	.01	.02	.03	-.01	.00
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
γ_4: Education	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.02	-.02
	(.03)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)
γ_5: Media Use	.05	.04	.02	.02	.08	.07
	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
γ_6: Consumer Confidence	.05	.06	.02	.04	.07	.07
	(.03)	(.03)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Constant	.49***	.45***	.49***	.44***	.50***	.46***
	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
N	948	948	518	518	430	430
R^2	.04	.09	.04	.08	.05	.12

***$p<.001$; **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$ (two-tailed)