Political Warriors: The Ugly Side of Party Polarization in Congress

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THE GINGRICH SENATORS
The Roots of Partisan Warfare in Congress

Party Polarizers
The Gingrich Senators
The Roots of Partisan Warfare in Congress

Party Polarizers

and

Partisan Warriors
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The Roots of Partisan Warfare in Congress

Sean M. Theriault

Party Polarizers

and

Partisan Warriors
For some time, I've had a growing conviction that Congress is not operating as it should. There is much too much partisanship and not enough progress; too much narrow ideology and not enough practical problem-solving. Even at a time of enormous national challenge, the people's business is not getting done.

--Senator Evan Bayh (D-IN)
February 2010
“For some time, I’ve had a growing conviction that Congress is not operating as it should. There is much too much partisanship and not enough progress; too much narrow ideology and not enough practical problem-solving. Even at a time of enormous national challenge, the people's business is not getting done.”

--Senator Evan Bayh (D-IN)  
February 2010
Does too much partisanship
Does too much partisanship = not enough progress?
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Does too much narrow ideology = not enough practical problem-solving?
Does too much partisanship = not enough progress?

Does too much narrow ideology = not enough practical problem-solving?
or
or
or
Political Warriors
Sen. Cruz (R-TX) took the floor at 2:40pm ET and said he intends to speak “until I am no longer able to stand.”
U.S. SENATE DEFUNDING HEALTH CARE LAW

Sen. Cruz may temporarily yield to other senators for questions but must remain on his feet & in the Senate Chamber to continue to control the floor.
Republican and Democratic Party Favorables, 1992-2013

Next, we'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. ... Please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of _____.

- The Democratic Party -- % Favorable
- The Republican Party -- % Favorable
Congressional Job Approval

Recent trend

% Approve

GALLUP
The Bipartisan Budget Commission
The Bipartisan Budget Commission

34 Cosponsors – 13 Democrats and 21 Republicans
The Bipartisan Budget Commission

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On Jan. 19, President Obama endorsed the idea
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The Bipartisan Budget Commission

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On Jan. 22, Hutchison and Ensign withdrew

On Jan. 26, the amendment is defeated, 53-46
Secret Santa
Secret Santa

Republicans

Went

Didn’t

22

25
### Secret Santa

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Reducing health care costs by eliminating payments for fraudulent claims and prohibiting coverage for abortion drugs and erectile dysfunction drugs for rapists and child molester.

Amendment by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) March 2010
“Reducing health care costs by eliminating payments for fraudulent claims and prohibiting coverage for abortion drugs and erectile dysfunction drugs for rapists and child molester.”

Amendment by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK)
March 2010
## Roll Calls on Amendments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Congress</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>111th</td>
<td>Tom Coburn (R-OK)</td>
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<td>Tom Coburn (R-OK)</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>110th</td>
<td>Jim DeMint (R-SC)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>103rd</td>
<td>Jesse Helms (R-NC)</td>
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<td>104th</td>
<td>Paul Wellstone (D-MN)</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>108th</td>
<td>Robert Byrd (D-WV)</td>
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<td>104th</td>
<td>Tom Harkin (D-IA)</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>103rd</td>
<td>John McCain (R-AZ)</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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A Couple of Cases...

Boxer (D-CA)
A Couple of Cases...

Boxer (D-CA)
A Couple of Cases...

Boxer (D-CA)
A Couple of Cases...

Boxer (D-CA)

Kyl (R-AZ)
A Couple of Cases...

Boxer (D-CA)

Kyl (R-AZ)
Roll Calls on Amendments

103rd
Roll Calls on Amendments
Roll Calls on Amendments

[Bar chart showing the number of roll calls on amendments for each session from 103rd to 112th, with the 104th session having the highest number, and the total on the right.]
Putting it All Together...

Democrats in the 109th Congress
Putting it All Together...

Democrats in the 109th Congress

Party Polarizers

Political Warriors
Putting it All Together...

Republicans in the 111th Congress
Putting it All Together...

Democrats in the 109th Congress

Republicans in the 111th Congress
Preliminary Findings
Preliminary Findings

• Warfare is carried about by relatively few warriors
Preliminary Findings

• Warfare is carried about by relatively few warriors

• A good proxy...
Preliminary Findings

• Warfare is carried about by relatively few warriors

• A good proxy…

• but probably not the best
Political Warfare Behavior
Political Warfare Behavior

• Amendment Support
Political Warfare Behavior

• Amendment Support

• Cosponsorship
Political Warfare Behavior

- Amendment Support
- Cosponsorship
- Donating Against Incumbents
Questions?